

What's the  
**Big Idea?**



CELEBRATING FIVE YEARS  
OF VEGGIETALES FUN!

# I'll do it myself!

Writing, animation, sales, marketing, finance, distribution ...there is a lot involved in the creation of a new video series. But with the zeal of youth I thought, "How hard could it be? I'll do it all by myself!"

That was my plan, but it wasn't God's. Even after I realized I needed a small staff, I still tried to do all the "important" stuff myself. When it was time to design t-shirts—"I'll do it!" When our first ad campaign came up—"I'll write it! And lay it out!" Even as our staff grew to 10, then 20, I still scrambled to learn—and own—every area of the business.

Then, around last Christmas, it seems God grew tired of waiting for me to notice what I was doing wrong. So He used a business book that studied visionary companies, *Built to Last*, to point out the error of my approach. Reading and thinking, it dawned on me that I was spending all my time trying to make great products, and none of my time trying to make a great company. For the first time I asked myself the question, "What does God ultimately want me to contribute to society? A video series? A movie? A TV show? Or a visionary company that will make great videos, movies and TV shows for the next 150 years?"

Framed that way, the answer was obvious. I set a 20-year goal: to build Big Idea into a top five family media company with a Christian worldview, and to make it the most trusted family media company in the world.

Then I set out to find the people to help make it happen. In March, we brought in Mark Buczek to run the studio.

- 2 Mark brought years of experience managing technology-driven production at Viacom New Media and Microsoft. Diane Teigiser joined us in April to build our consumer products business (toys, clothes, etc.—the fun stuff!) Formerly a senior executive with toymaker Tomy, Diane brought almost 20 years of experience in the toy business. In May, Bob Patin came aboard to help me run Big Idea, bringing invaluable experience as the CEO of a \$3 billion financial services company and an expert in business strategy and organizational development. In October, a nationwide search brought Brian Lum to head up our design studio. Brian's experience directing visual merchandising for the Disney Stores assures that our commitment to creative excellence and design innovation will be seen in all that we do, not only in videos.

Most importantly, each one of these people is as committed to Big Idea's mission as they are gifted in their field.

So as we celebrate five years of pointing people toward God, I realize that Big Idea is no longer the company I built to help me make *VeggieTales*®. Big Idea is now a company that exists to find amazingly gifted people, and turn them loose to shine God's love into the hearts and minds of a hopeless generation in the most creative ways imaginable.

Junior Asparagus was right. God's way is the best way!



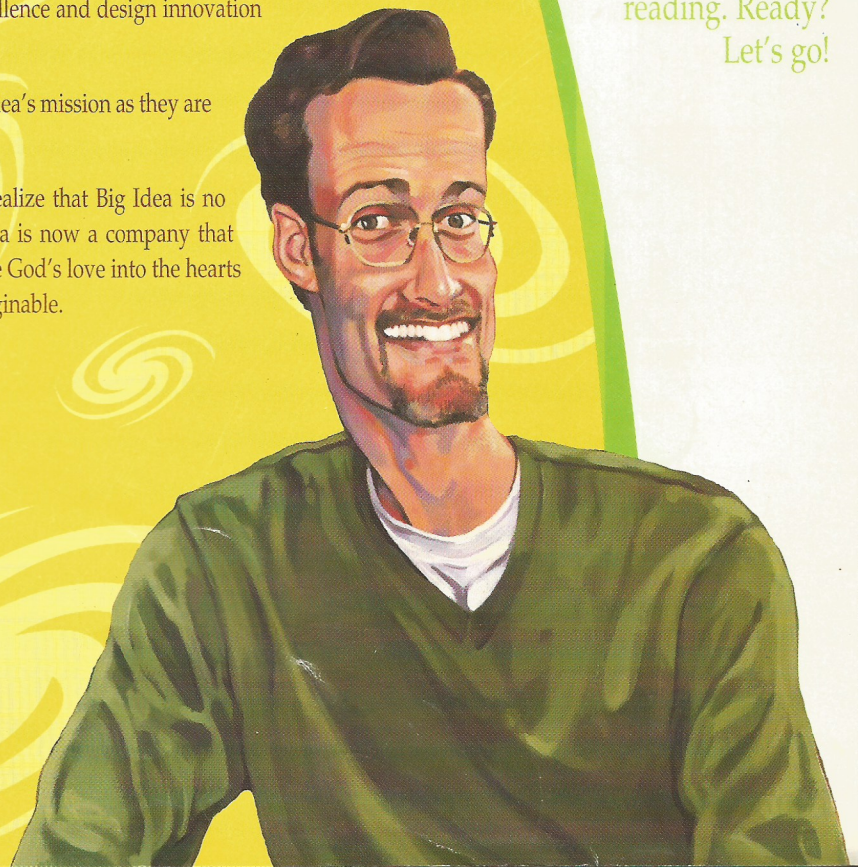
Phillip Vischer  
CEO/Chief Creative Officer



*If you like to talk to tomatoes  
If a squash can make you smile  
If you like to waltz with potatoes  
Up and down the produce aisle...*

*Have we got a company  
history for you!*

Welcome to our brief history of Big Idea™ Productions! Why so brief? Because we practically did fall off the turnip truck just yesterday! So, if you're interested in what we're all about and where we came from, then keep on reading. Ready? Let's go!



# Big Idea

## and how it grew

### It all started with a little seed...

There once was a little boy whose father liked to make up stories for his three kids. The little boy loved the stories so much that a storytelling seed began to grow inside of him. That little boy was Phil Vischer, who is now the "head tomato" at Big Idea. As Phil grew, he learned how to weave stories using whatever technology he could find—sock puppets, G.I. Joes, even towels and washclothes!

### From puppets to peas in a pod

In 1984, Phil met up with Mike Nawrocki through their Bible college's puppet team. "We found a creative dynamic together that really worked," Phil says. So when Phil began creating animated vegetables in the early '90s, he asked Mike to help bring them to life.

Mike wasn't Phil's only recruit. After meeting his future wife Lisa at a Bible

conference, the two hit it off and became a singing, songwriting duo of their own. Since their marriage in 1990, Lisa has become an integral part of Big Idea's growth.

### How do your veggies grow?

At first, Christian publishers were not sold on *VeggieTales*®—they didn't want to take a chance on a dancing cucumber. But Phil pressed on.

Money was scarce, but friends and family believed. So did a handful of volunteers and early staff members, including animators Rob Ellis and Chris Olsen and music producer Kurt Heinecke. They advertised to the public that the first *VeggieTales* episode would be available for Christmas, 1993. Then, working 100-hour weeks in a ramshackle, rented office, they made their deadline—barely. Five hundred copies of *Where's God When I'm S-Scared?* were shipped—just three days before Christmas!

One copy was purchased by Word Music, a Nashville company that liked what it saw. They brought *VeggieTales* into Christian bookstores, freeing the creative team to focus on their

mission—great stories! These stories unfold not only in videos but also in books, music CDs and a host of other *VeggieTales* products.

### A tomato with a mission

As they say, the rest is history. *VeggieTales* are now available at stores such as Wal-Mart and Target, as well as at Christian retailers. Kids around the country (and older folks, too!) love their veggies. To date, more than 6 million copies have been sold.

Yet, at the end of a successful 1997, Phil had what he describes as an epiphany. "I was spending all my time making great products, but none of my time making a great company. It occurred to me that what the world needs even more is a company committed for the long run to telling stories that make the world a better place."

Since then, Phil has worked to bring in top managerial talent from companies such as Disney and Microsoft to help steer Big Idea toward its new goal. But there is one thing Phil says will never change: "We will always put the needs of the kids before the needs of the stockholders. It's more important to help kids than to make money. That goal drives everything we do."

### Future plans

Phil's plans for Big Idea are bigger than Jonah's whale. *VeggieTales* characters will be showing up all over—on TV and in feature films, radio, music and more.

"We are also about to start building a studio complex where everyone can come and visit and see our animators and storytellers at work," he says. What once was just a guy with a dream is now 70 talented people working toward a common goal. What started in a spare bedroom will soon move into a two-and-one-half-acre production complex.

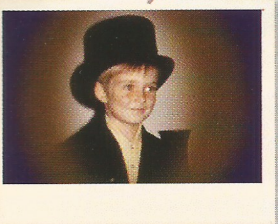
What is Big Idea's ultimate goal? "Twenty years from now, if you ask a parent on the street to name the top five family media companies, we want Big Idea to be one of them," says Phil. "And when you ask which company they trust the most, they'll say Big Idea."

We think that sounds like a goal worth its weight in cucumbers—or tomatoes, carrots, green onions, potatoes and even French peas!

For a look at more on the history of Big Idea, turn the page!



# the History



**1972**  
Six-year-old Phil begins telling stories as a junior puppeteer.

**1975**  
Phil makes his first animated film at the age of 9.

**1980**  
Phil gets his first computer at age 14, decides to become a filmmaker.



**1984**  
Phil and Mike Nawrocki meet at Bible college.



**August 1988**  
Phil and Lisa meet at a Bible conference. The pair hit it off, sitting on a dock and improvising songs together.

**OPEN FOR BUSINESS**

**Spring 1989**  
Phil quits his job and opens his own company, aiming to create cutting-edge stories. He ends up doing mostly corporate logos and charts. Phil says, "I want to be telling stories! This is

boring!" Starts kicking around stories and characters on his own.



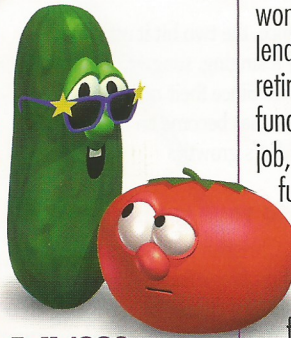
**1990**  
Wedding bells: Phil marries Lisa.



**January 1991**  
Genius is born: Larry the Cucumber first appears in the rarely seen, 12-second film, *Mr. Cuke Screen Test*.

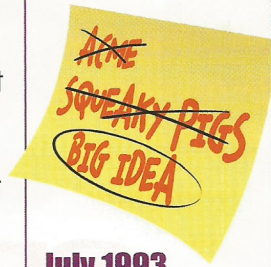


**July 1992**  
Bob the Tomato joins Larry the Cucumber, making his film debut in *VeggieTales Promo—Take 38*. New characters debut in *VT Promo: Archibald & Mom Asparagus and Lobster*.



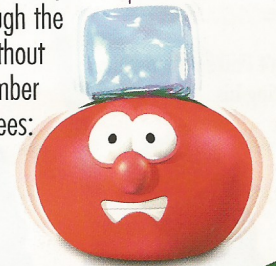
**Fall 1992**  
Phil uses the promo film to seek investment money, without success.

**Spring 1993**  
Lisa auditions to voice the role of Junior Asparagus, lands the part. Church friend Kurt Heinecke signs on to produce the music for *VeggieTales*.

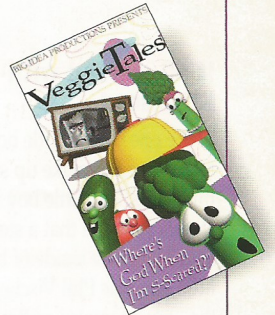


**July 1993**  
Friends and family won't let Phil give up, lending him their retirement and college funds. Phil quits his job, goes to work full-time to create the first 30-minute *VeggieTales* film. Big Idea Productions is born!

**August 1993**  
Phil realizes he can't finish the first *VeggieTales* episode alone, hires two recent art school grads and rents an office where they work through the winter (without heat). Number of employees: three.



**December 1993**  
*Where's God When I'm S-Scared?* released, becomes the first full-length, 3-D computer animated children's video ever produced in the United States.



**May 1994**  
Word Music agrees to take *VeggieTales* into Christian bookstores.

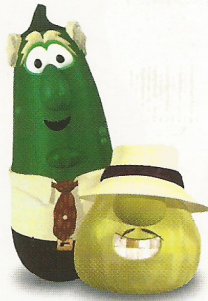


# BIG



### July 1994

Big Idea outgrows its old home, rents the front office space of a screw-manufacturing plant. Employees complain about "machine oil smell," but at least there's heat!

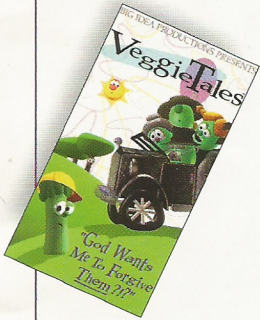


### November 1995

Release of episode #4: *Rack, Shack & Benny*. Fresh new VeggieTales characters created: George, Mr. Lunt and Mr. Nezzzer.

### Year-end 1995

Copies sold total 130,000. Number of employees: six.



### August 1994

VeggieTales episode #2 is completed: *God Wants Me to Forgive Them?!?*

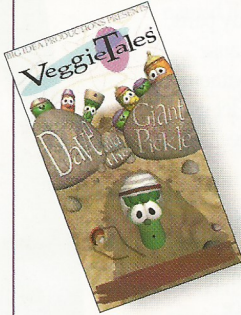
### March 1995

The third VeggieTales episode, *Are You My Neighbor?* is released.



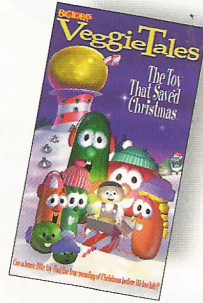
### April 1996

The fifth VeggieTales episode, *Dave and the Giant Pickle*, debuts.



### October 1996

Completion of the sixth VeggieTales episode, *The Toy That Saved Christmas*. Big Idea outgrows screw factory, moves to 7,000 square feet of office space in Chicago's West Loop.



### Year-end 1996

Word of mouth spreads—total videos sold grows to 750,000. Number of employees: 12.

### March 1997

"VeggieMania" explodes! The millionth copy of VeggieTales is sold!



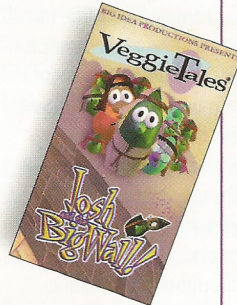
### April 1997

*Larry-Boy and the Fib from Outer Space!*, the seventh VeggieTales episode, is released.

### November 1997

Sales of VeggieTales videos reach 2 million copies. *Josh and the Big Wall!*, the eighth original VeggieTales video, is released.

Number of employees: 35.

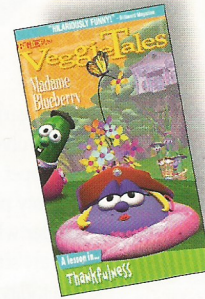


### March 1998

The first two VeggieTales episodes are released nationwide to stores like Wal-Mart, Target and Musicland.

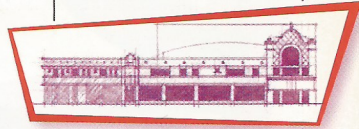
### July 1998

*Madame Blueberry*, #9, is released. VeggieTales joins *Barney*, *Sesame Street*, *Disney* and *Rugrats* as the second quarter's top five children's video properties.



### December 1998

*The VeggieTales Christmas Spectacular!* airs nationwide in prime-time on PAX TV. By year's end, more than 7 million VeggieTales videos have been sold. Big Idea's story is reported by *Newsweek*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *CBS This Morning*. Number of employees: 65+.



### 1999

Next fall, Big Idea will move into a two-and-one-half-acre studio complex in Lombard, Illinois, that will include a Big Idea retail store and a restored 1920s movie theater. The development, designed to house up to 350 employees, will be open to the public for daily tours and special events.



TM

# BOB &

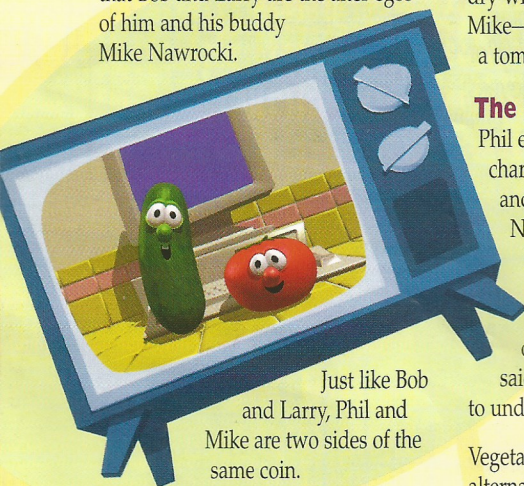
## THE DYNAMIC DUO

**One's short; the other's tall.  
One is red; the other's green.  
One is a little bit serious;  
the other's a little bit goofy.**

Bob and Larry are the craziest duo to come along since, well, since Ernie and Bert, Fred and Barney, the Road Runner and Wile E. Coyote. They are more different than similar. Opposites attract, so they say, and these two vegetables are constantly bumping elbows (oops! Veggies don't have elbows, do they?).

### Just a twinkle in their eyes

Phil Vischer (the voice of Bob and the creator of the dynamic duo) says that Bob and Larry are the alter egos of him and his buddy Mike Nawrocki.



Just like Bob and Larry, Phil and Mike are two sides of the same coin.

They met in 1984 as freshmen at the same Bible college. Mike was an aspiring pediatrician who loved to work with kids. As he explains, "I started out to be a doctor and ended up a cucumber."

In those early days, Phil and Mike were involved in drama and created a live puppet show. Mike was the voice of a goofy puppet named Soupy—a character whose personality is strangely similar to the Larry we know today.

Later, working together at a production house in Chicago, the two began experimenting with different video production techniques. Phil was working in 3-D animation, Mike in 2-D graphics, painting and editing. After making several short films on weekends with borrowed equipment, Phil suggested they produce a show called "The Phil and Mike Show"—a kind of lighthearted, variety show. But this project, aimed at teens, never got off the ground. Soon, Phil returned to thoughts of animation and it became clear that their two personalities—the serious, often dry-witted Phil and the lighthearted Mike—would soon be replaced by a tomato and a cucumber.

### The birthing process

Phil experimented with other characters. Before he developed Bob and Larry, he tried a candy bar, a Nerf ball, and even considered a bunch of bananas with British accents and guitars. The "rocking bananas" were outlawed by Phil's mom—she said they were just too difficult to understand.

Vegetables were the next viable alternative, but the concept sounded a bit strange to everyone he told. "A show about vegetables? All vegetables? Couldn't there just be a little girl who had vegetable friends?"

In the end, the vegetables won. They were easy to animate, had no legs, no arms, and they could bounce!

Larry was "born" first, says Phil, in the winter of 1991. He was the result of much experimentation with new techniques in animation. The creative process began with Larry's eyes.

### Seeing is believing

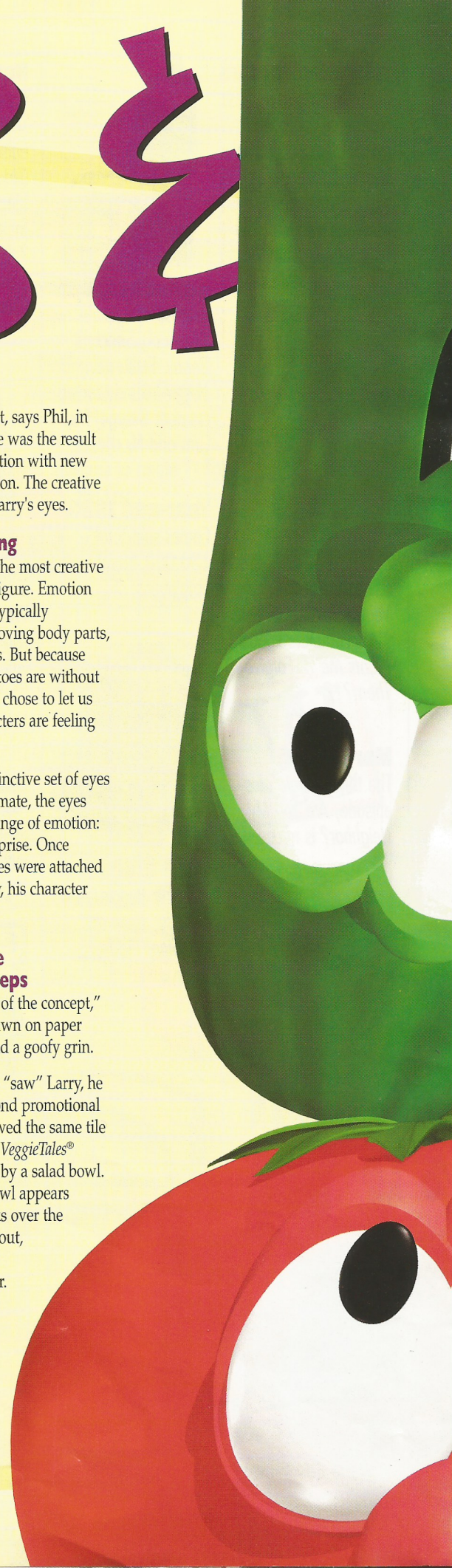
Eyes are usually not the most creative part of an animated figure. Emotion and action are more typically expressed through moving body parts, such as arms and legs. But because cucumbers and tomatoes are without such extremities, Phil chose to let us "see" what the characters are feeling through their eyes.

Phil developed a distinctive set of eyes for Larry. Easy to animate, the eyes could show a wide range of emotion: anger, happiness, surprise. Once Larry's expressive eyes were attached to his cucumber body, his character came to life.

### Larry enters the world... baby steps

"Larry was the proof of the concept," says Phil. He was drawn on paper with one big tooth and a goofy grin.

The first time anyone "saw" Larry, he appeared in a 12-second promotional scene. The scene showed the same tile countertop we see in *VeggieTales*® videos today, topped by a salad bowl. From that ceramic bowl appears Larry. The cuke peeks over the edge, sticks his head out, and jumps out of the bowl onto the counter. It was a silent movie (Larry did not sing Silly Songs yet... be patient!). Phil used that first video to try to sell his idea for



# LARRY

*VeggieTales*®. He had big dreams for Larry, but he could not find a company to finance his vision. So, he went back to the drawing board.

## The birth of a tomato

Larry needed a sidekick, so Phil developed Larry's companion: a short, round tomato, a serious-minded guy named Bob.

Bob first appeared in a two-minute film in the summer of 1992, the first talking video. Working together, Phil and his friend Mike created the voices of Bob and Larry (respectively).

*VeggieTales Promo Video—Take 38* starred Bob and Larry together. In this speaking debut, Bob makes a passionate plea for someone—anyone—to support *VeggieTales*. In the spirit of Martin Luther King, Jr., he cries, "I have a dream!"

In typical fashion, while Bob is making his serious speech, Larry is seen in the background, running back and forth, looking for his blue, plastic, wind-up lobster.

Support still did not come in. Since money was getting tight, Phil went back to work—and back to the drawing board with Bob and Larry.

## Bob and Larry grow up

Sheer determination and a great sense of humor kept the project going. While Phil was working to support his family and his computer programs, Bob the Tomato learned how to

sing, dance and do all kinds of other technical stuff.

With each new animation technique and each new character, the veggie family grew. Bob and Larry were not fledgling veggies anymore. Rather, they were full-fledged characters who often, says Phil, "wrote themselves."

The characters are fun to act, because they let their creators act through them. "I am fairly shy," claims Phil, "but through Bob and Larry, I can entertain people without having them look at me."

## Chips off the old blocks

Where would Laurel be without Hardy? What would Abbott do without Costello?

With the creation of two distinctly different characters, the animated veggies came to life. With two characters instead of one, the dialogue and conflicts come naturally; their personalities drive the story line. When you have two forces that are slightly opposed, they bring out the interesting quirks in each other.

Bob is the "business guy," the teacher, the authority figure. He is the one who is motivated to change the world—and sometimes, the challenge makes him a bit cranky.

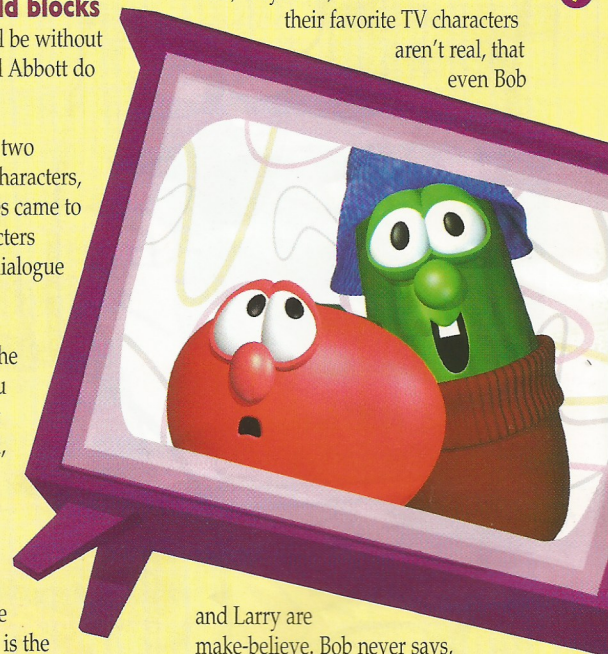
Larry is the adventurous one, the cucumber who will try anything. He is carefree and more than a little bit goofy.

Bob is deliberate. Larry, spontaneous. Bob wants to make TV shows to change the world. Larry just wants to make you smile.

## Bob and Larry and God's love

While some TV characters tell kids that they care about them, Bob and Larry have a different message. At the end of each video, the two pals come out and say, "Remember, God made you special and He loves you very much."

How is this different? "Well, sooner or later," says Phil, "kids discover that their favorite TV characters aren't real, that even Bob

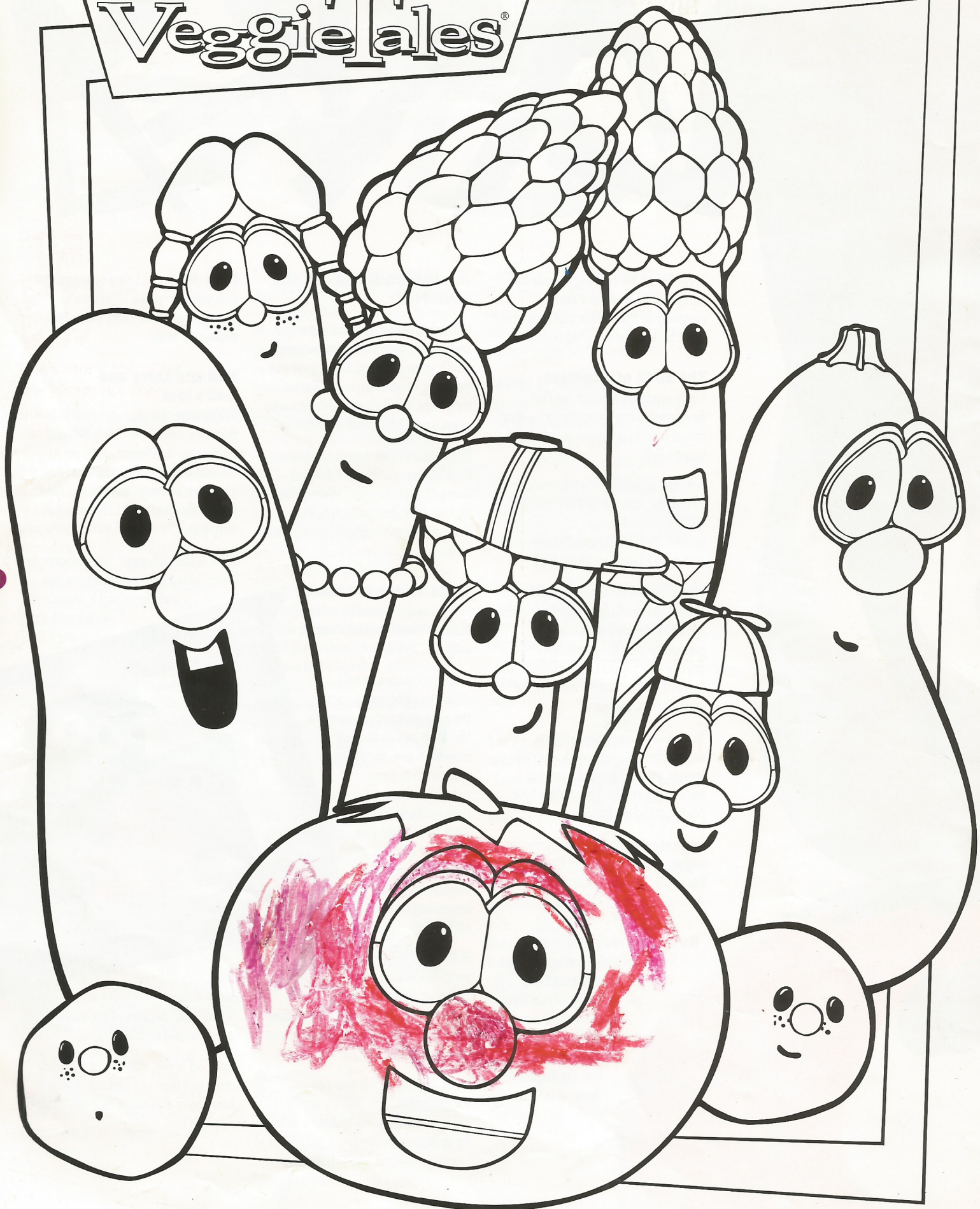


and Larry are make-believe. Bob never says, 'I love you,' because at the end of the day, it would be meaningless."

But God is real. His love is infinitely more real than any cartoon. Bob and Larry have a message that can change a child's life.

BIGIDEAS

# VeggieTales®



8



# BIG IDEA™

PRESENTS  
BOB AND LARRY IN:

## SIGNS AND WONDERS

# HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

BOOF!

WRITTEN BY JOHN DUCKWORTH • ILLUSTRATED BY KEVIN DZUBAN • LETTERED BY BOB PINAHA

LARRY, IF WE DON'T GET THIS SIGN UP WHERE FOLKS CAN SEE IT, NOBODY WILL KNOW ABOUT OUR FIFTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION!

NO PROBLEMO, BOB! I'LL JUST TOSS THESE ROPES OVER THE TREE BRANCHES...

...AND YOU CAN PULL THE SIGN UP WITH YOUR TEETH!

# YANK POP

MUBBY BAT  
WUBBIN PUG A  
GOOB IBEA.\*

\*TRANSLATION:  
"MAYBE THAT WASN'T  
SUGH A GOOD IDEA."

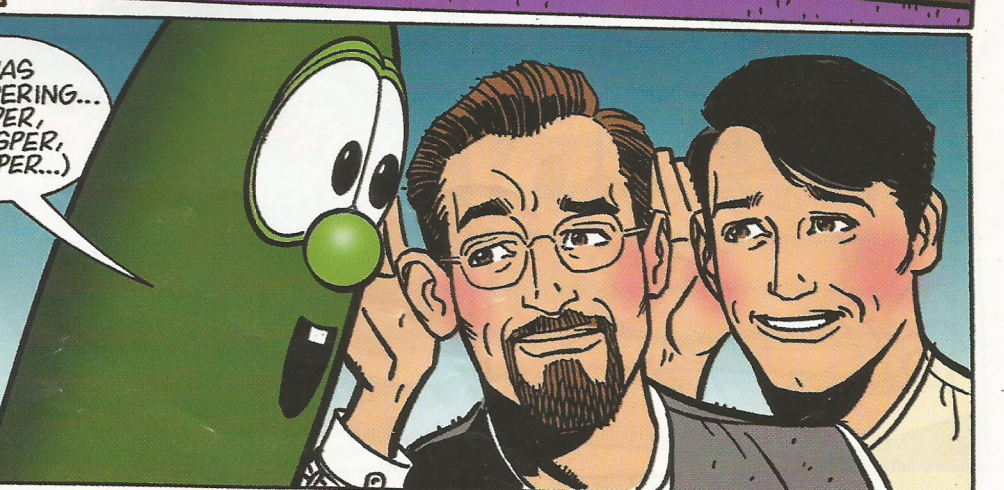
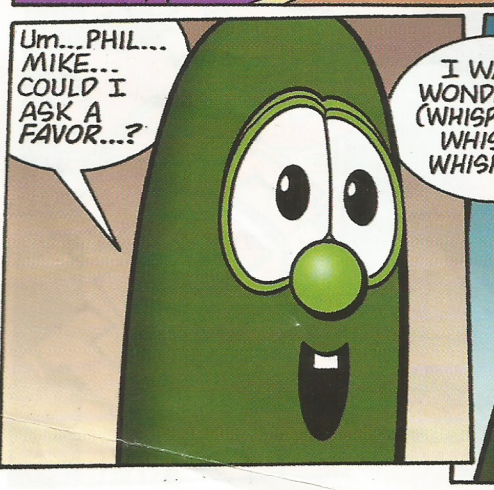
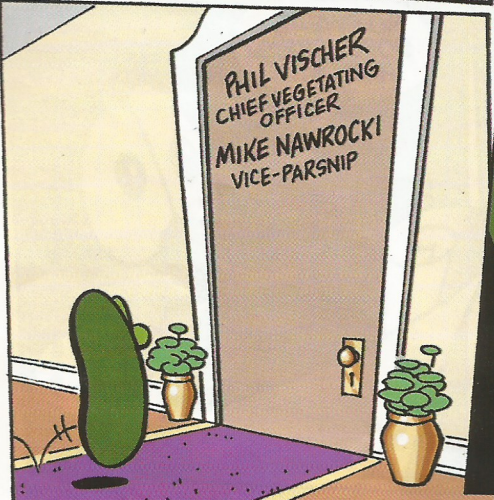
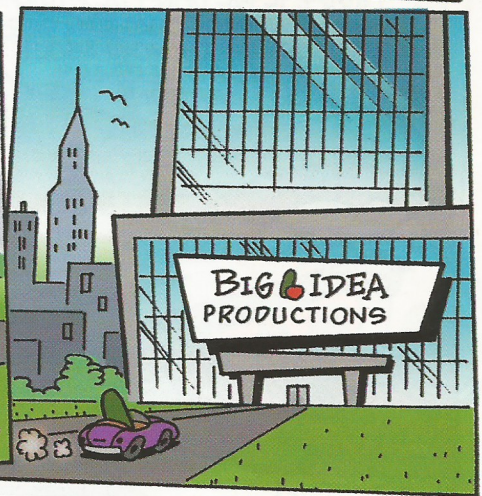
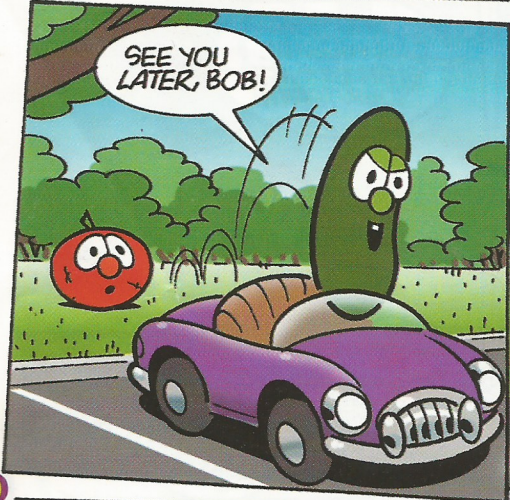
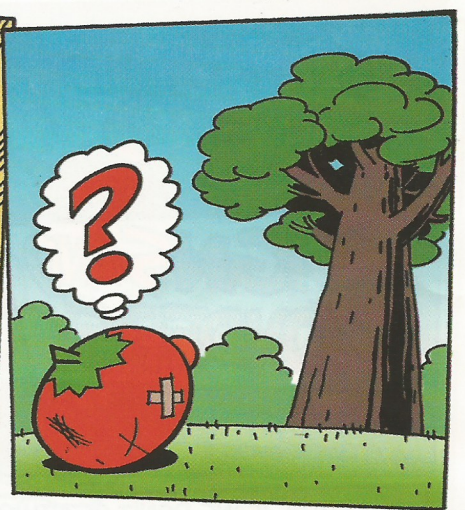
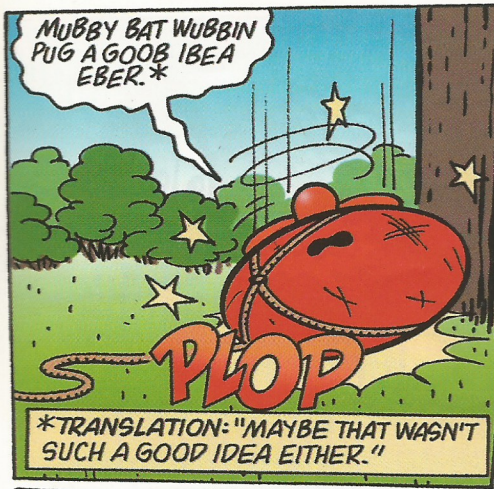
NO SWEAT,  
BOB! HERE'S  
PLAN B...

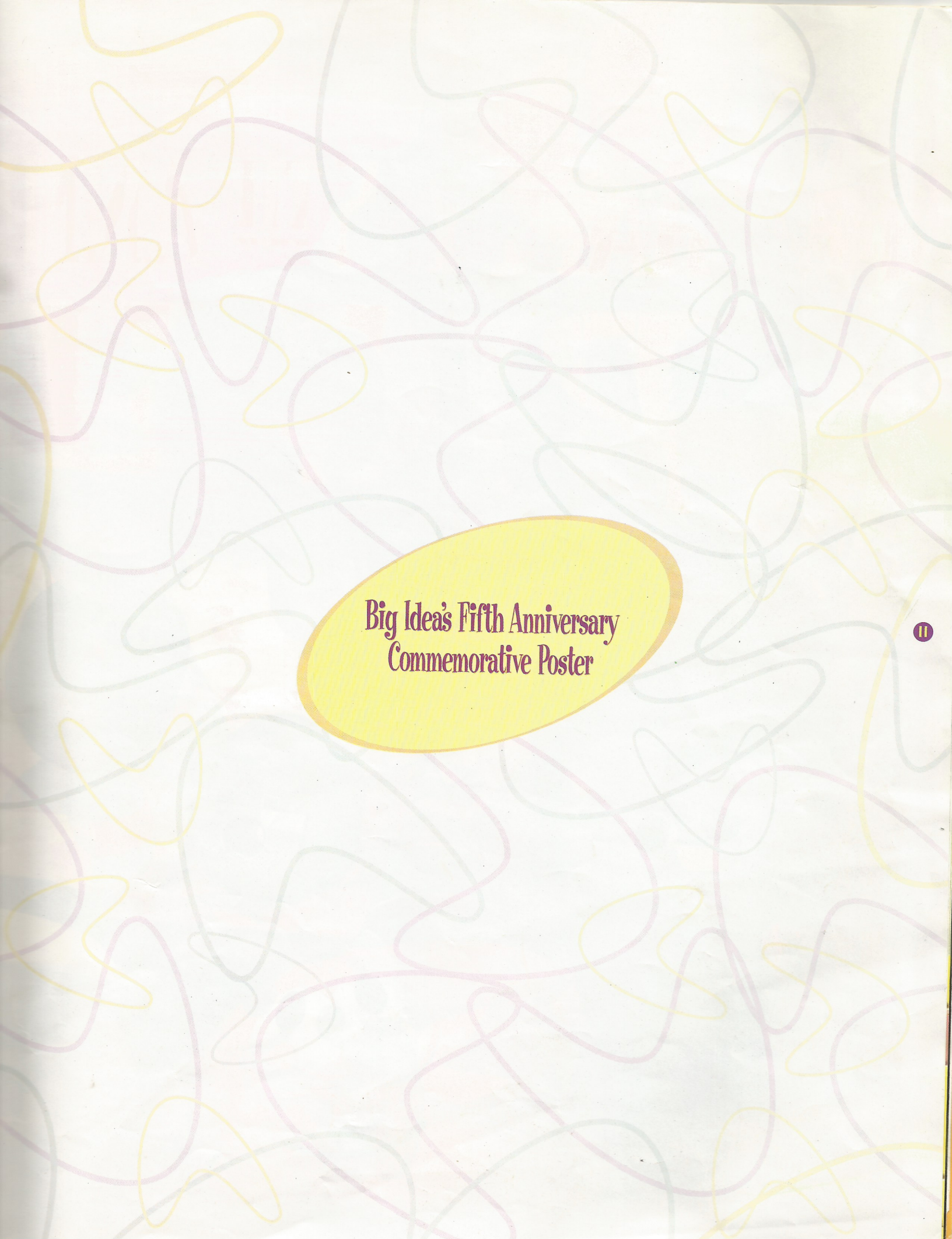
... WE TIE THE ROPES  
AROUND US, THEN  
CATAPULT OVER  
THE TREES!

BUT--

# SPRING!

# SPLAT





**Big Ideas's Fifth Anniversary  
Commemorative Poster**

HAPPY 5<sup>TH</sup> ANN  
BIG W



ANNIVERSARY  
DINNER!



**Yes!** Send me one year's worth of

(please print)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

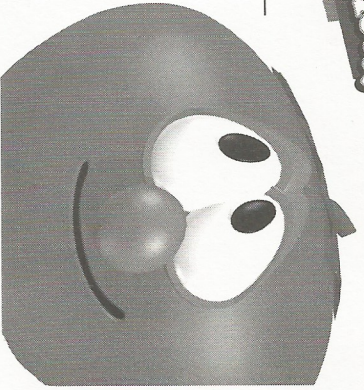
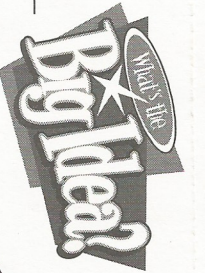
City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my check for \$7.95 (U.S. dollars)





WELL... OKAY, LARRY. BUT ONLY THIS ONCE!

JUST FOR THE ANNIVERSARY!

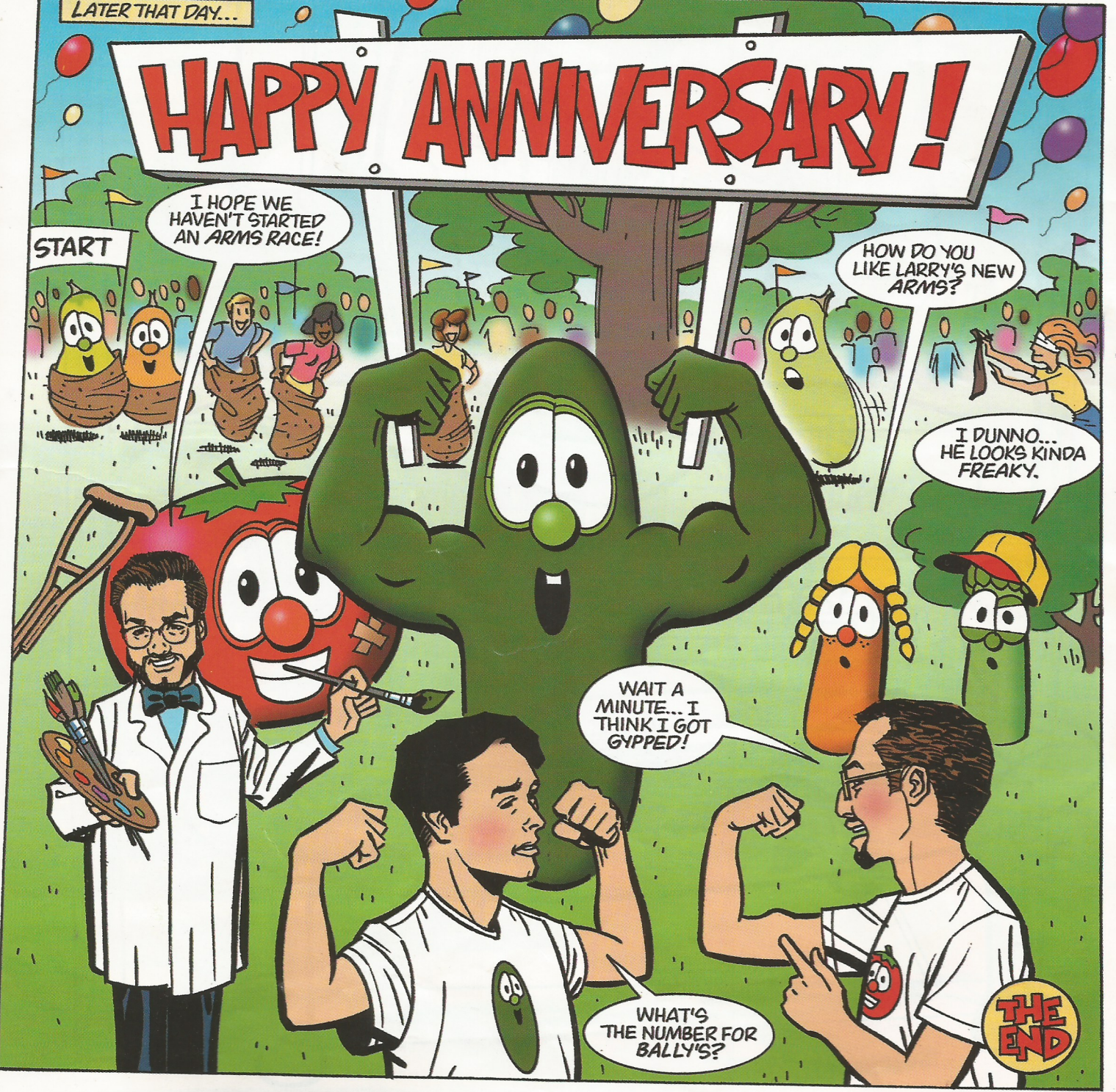
...THANKS, GUYS!



GET US AN ARTIST, PLEASE--PRONTO!

LATER THAT DAY...

# HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!



I HOPE WE HAVEN'T STARTED AN ARMS RACE!

START

HOW DO YOU LIKE LARRY'S NEW ARMS?

I DUNNO... HE LOOKS KINDA FREAKY.

WAIT A MINUTE... I THINK I GOT GYPPED!

WHAT'S THE NUMBER FOR BALLY'S?

THE END

BIG IDEAS

VeggieTales®





# How do you spell Veggie?

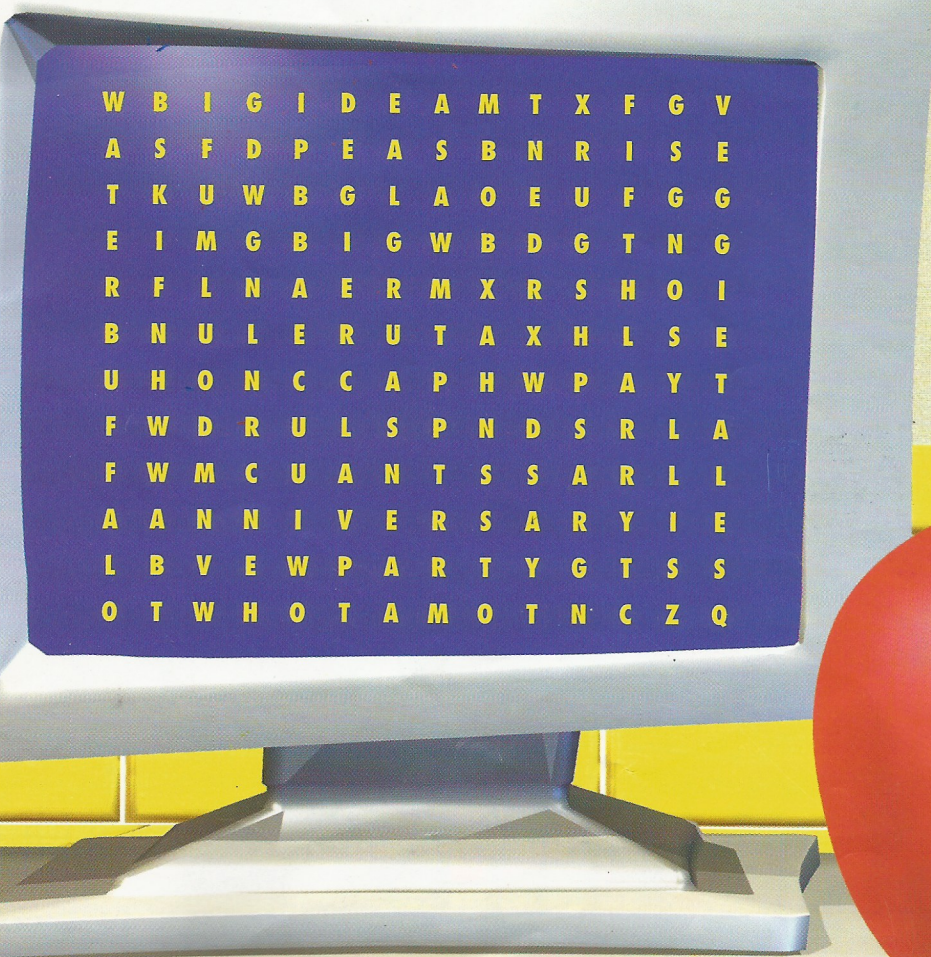
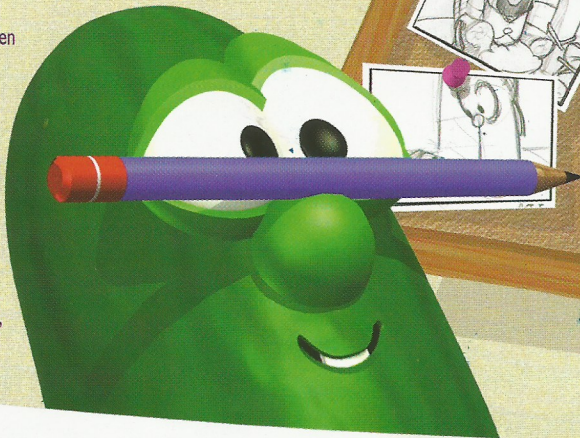
## ACROSS

3. 1998 was Big Idea's \_\_\_\_\_ anniversary.
5. Larry the \_\_\_\_\_.
7. The name of the VeggieTales Christmas story is "The Toy That \_\_\_\_\_ Christmas."
8. The name of Bob and Larry's computer friend.
11. The voice of Bob the Tomato is Phil \_\_\_\_\_.
12. The first VeggieTales video is titled "\_\_\_\_\_ When I'm S-Scared?"
13. The most recent VeggieTales video to come out was "\_\_\_\_\_ Sing-Along 2!"
14. The character Larry plays in the second half of "Where's God When I'm S-Scared?"
16. Junior's father is a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.
17. The song Bob and Larry sing to make Junior feel better in "Where's God When I'm S-Scared?" is called "God Is \_\_\_\_\_."

18. Bob the \_\_\_\_\_.
19. He was the first VeggieTales character created.

## DOWN

1. The computer program Big Idea uses to animate VeggieTales.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Asparagus.
4. The name of the toy that saved Christmas.
6. Mike \_\_\_\_\_ is the voice of Larry the Cucumber.
9. The city where Big Idea Productions is located.
10. Mr. Lunt is a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ gourd.
15. Larry's superhero alter ego.
19. The voice of Junior Asparagus is \_\_\_\_\_ Vischer.



W B I G I D E A M T X F G V  
 A S F D P E A S B N R I S E  
 T K U W B G L A O E U F G G  
 E I M G B I G W B D G T N G  
 R F L N A E R M X R S H O I  
 B N U L E R U T A X H L S E  
 U H O N C C A P H W P A Y T  
 F W D R U L S P N D S R L A  
 F W M C U A N T S S A R L L  
 A A N N I V E R S A R Y I E  
 L B V E W P A R T Y G T S S  
 O T W H O T A M O T N C Z Q

## Now that's a Big Idea!

Search Qwerty's screen for the words listed here. Remember, the words can go up, down, backwards and even at an angle!

- BOB
- LARRY
- BIRTHDAY
- PARTY
- FUN
- TOMATO
- CUCUMBER
- PEAS
- ASPARAGUS
- SILLY SONGS
- BIG IDEA
- WATER BUFFALO
- FIFTH
- ANNIVERSARY
- VEGGIETALES

Turn the page for all the answers!



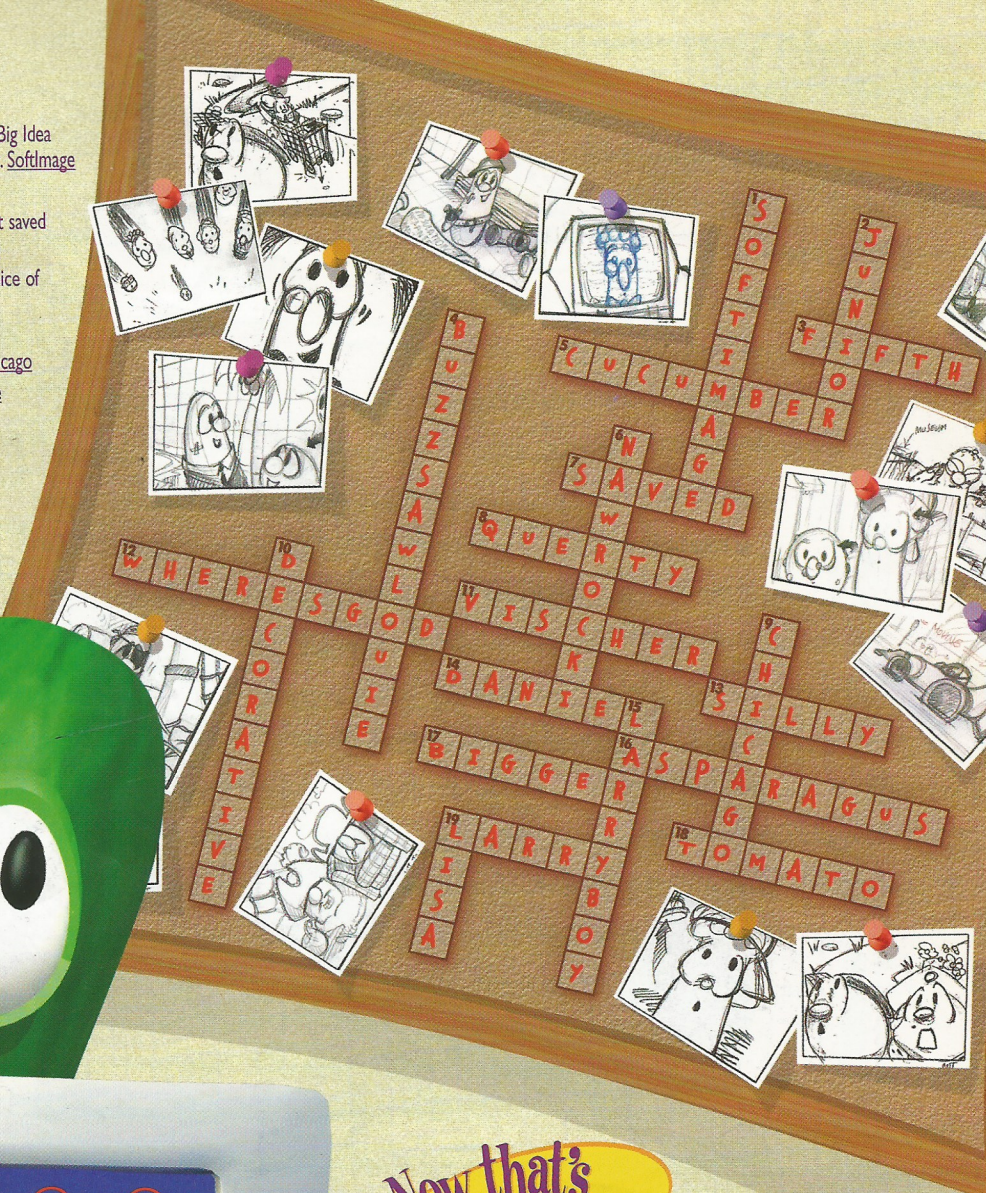
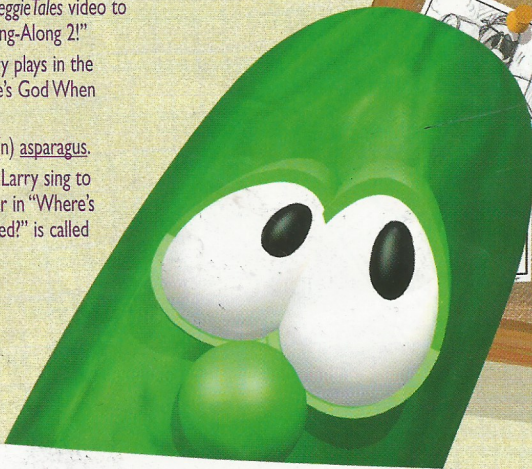
# How do you spell Veggie?

## ACROSS

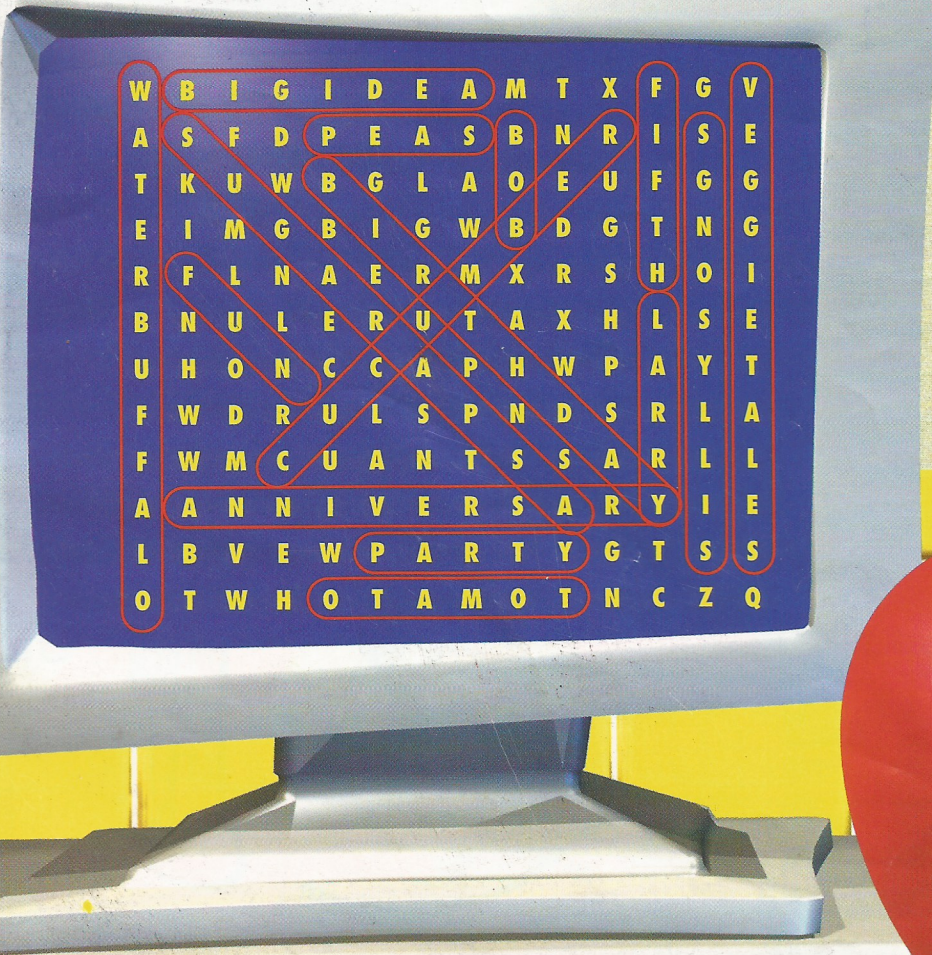
3. 1998 was Big Idea's fifth anniversary.
5. Larry the Cucumber.
7. The name of the VeggieTales Christmas story is "The Toy That Saved Christmas.
8. The name of Bob and Larry's computer friend, Qwerty.
11. The voice of Bob the Tomato is Phil Vischer.
12. The first VeggieTales video is titled "Where's God When I'm S-Scared?"
13. The most recent VeggieTales video to come out was "Silly Sing-Along 2!"
14. The character Larry plays in the second half of "Where's God When I'm S-Scared?" Daniel.
16. Junior's father is a(n) asparagus.
17. The song Bob and Larry sing to make Junior feel better in "Where's God When I'm S-Scared?" is called "God Is Bigger."
18. Bob the Tomato.
19. He was the first VeggieTales character created, Larry.

## DOWN

1. The computer program Big Idea uses to animate VeggieTales, SoftImage.
2. Junior Asparagus.
4. The name of the toy that saved Christmas, Buzz-Saw Louie.
6. Mike Nawrocki is the voice of Larry the Cucumber.
9. The city where Big Idea Productions is located, Chicago.
10. Mr. Lunt is a decorative gourd.
15. Larry's superhero alter ego, Larry-Boy.
19. The voice of Junior Asparagus is Lisa Vischer.



18



Now that's a Big Idea!

Wow! Look! Qwerty has the answers circled in red!

- |          |               |
|----------|---------------|
| BOB      | PEAS          |
| LARRY    | ASPARAGUS     |
| BIRTHDAY | SILLY SONGS   |
| PARTY    | BIG IDEA      |
| FUN      | WATER BUFFALO |
| TOMATO   | FIFTH         |
| CUCUMBER | ANNIVERSARY   |
|          | VEGGIETALES   |



BIG IDEA PRODUCTIONS

Presents

LARRY-B OY  
AND THE RUMOR WEED



JULY 1999!

# God wants me to do what? OK!

22

Meet Mike Nawrocki,  
Cocreator of *VeggieTales*®,  
Writer/Director

What do you get when you combine *The Muppets*, *Monty Python*, *Sesame Street*, and uh, the produce aisle? The wacky mind of Mike Nawrocki, cocreator of *VeggieTales*® and voice of Larry the Cucumber.

Tall and thin, more like a stalk of asparagus than a cucumber, Mike's casual and friendly demeanor makes him a fun guy to get to know.

Born in Ohio, Mike moved around a lot as a kid because his father was in the military. By the age of 13, he had lived in Ohio, Japan, Southern California, Colorado and Washington, D.C. It was there in D.C., during Mike's junior high years, that his dad had a life-changing experience: he realized how much God loved both him and his family. Not long after that, Mike took after his dad and decided to follow after Christ, too.

Looking back, Mike can see how God prepared him for what he does now—writing silly *VeggieTales* songs and stories with the message “God made you special, and He loves you very much!”

Mike has always loved music, telling stories and helping kids. While growing up, he was involved in drama and performing in musicals at his church and school. But when it was time to go to college, Mike's sole dream was to become a doctor. “At the core of it for me was wanting to help kids. I wanted to go into pediatrics,” Mike says.

After completing his degree at the University of Illinois, he applied to the Peace Corps to teach biology in Africa. He was accepted. Around the same time, however, Mike had been working with Phil Vischer on the beginnings of *VeggieTales*. Says Mike, “How do you explain to your parents that after all that studying, you're going to make cartoons instead of becoming a doctor?”

“OK, God, what do you want me to do?” he asked.

Well, he turned down the Peace Corps, canceled his plans for further medical schooling, and joined his college buddy to pursue the *VeggieTales* phenomenon.

“Even though I had made all of these big plans for myself, it went a different way, and that's great,” Mike said.

Just think, Larry the Cucumber could be taking out tonsils instead of singing Silly Songs! *Now that's a frightening thought.* Thanks, Mike. You did the right thing.

Speaking of Silly Songs, ever wonder where Mike comes up with these goofy ideas?

“What I try to do is have something in there that has affected me so I can relate to it. Like the hairbrush thing,” says Mike. “I was looking for my razor one morning, and that turned into ‘The Hairbrush Song.’ It's just the way I am—to take a silly part of something and go with it.”

He continues: “Using real human emotion helps me hold onto it and also helps others to identify. Silliness by itself is just kind of annoying.”

To Mike, making a show is more than just coming up with something silly, knowing how to work the software, or moving objects from one place to another on the computer. “You've got to know how to make a character real,” he says. “What is the character thinking? Why is he saying what he is saying? Do his actions match his words and his personality? The same things that make a real person interesting also make an animated character interesting. It's not until you can relate to the character that the character becomes funny, or engaging, or lovable. Animation is the art of giving life to something that didn't have life before.”

Well, Mike has definitely helped give life to Larry and many

other *VeggieTales* characters over the last five years. But what about when he's not dreaming up a script or humming a new song? Outside of the office, Mike loves spending time with his wife, Lisa, and his new baby girl, Alejandra. He goes to movies and the theater with Lisa, works on projects around their house—and picture this: Salsa dances!

So, what does Mike Nawrocki hope to accomplish at Big Idea in the next five years? Basically, more of the same—using his creativity to reach more kids with messages that are God-centered.

“It's just unbelievable for me to think that I sit here and do my cucumber voice and my writing, and it goes out and affects children,” Mike says. “Who would want more than that? It's just perfect.”

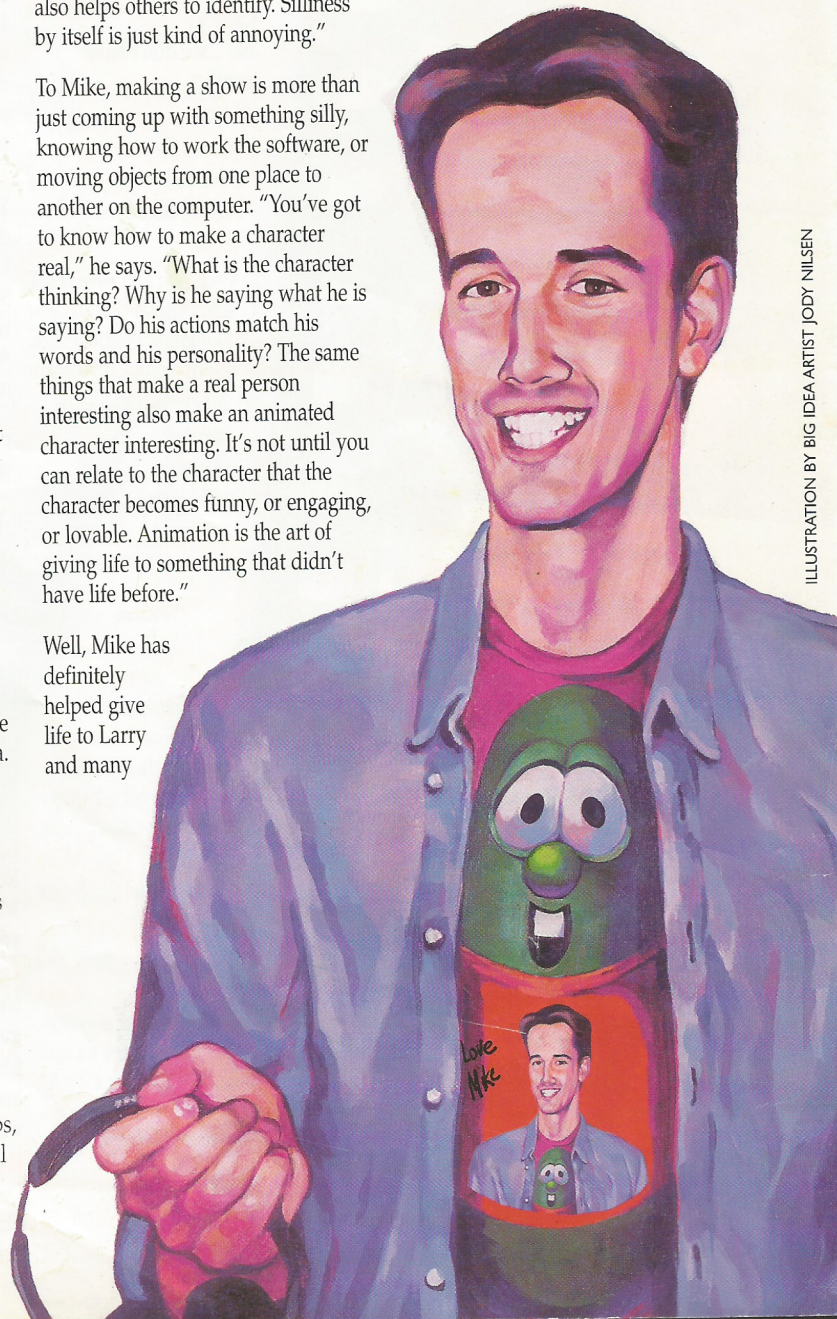


ILLUSTRATION BY BIG IDEA ARTIST JODY NILSEN



## Our Mission

### What We Believe

The irresponsible use of popular media (TV, film, music, video games, etc.) has had a profoundly negative impact on America's moral and spiritual health.

The same media, used responsibly, can have an equally positive impact.

The best way to improve people's lives is to promote biblical values and encourage spiritual growth.

### Our Core Values

Personal and corporate integrity

Creative excellence and design innovation in all we do

The prioritization of people over products and profits

### Our Core Purpose

To markedly enhance the moral and spiritual fabric of our society through creative media.

### Our 20-Year Goal

To build Big Idea into the most trusted of the top five family media brands - known as the leader in the reintroduction of biblical values to popular media.

**The world is full of media companies that are out to make a buck. The world desperately needs a media company that is out to make a difference.**

**BIG IDEA™**

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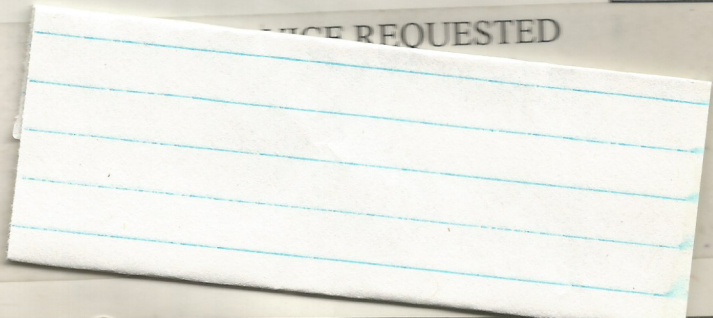
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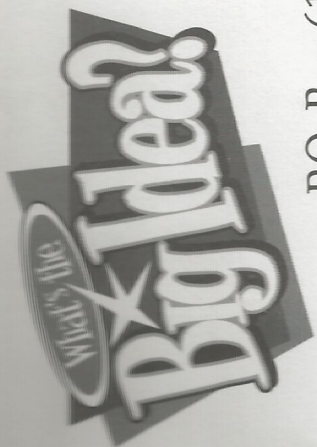


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