

Television D3  
Movies D5

# He turns Chicken to draw crowds

## Entertainer sinks his beak into zany role

By Andy Mead  
Herald-Leader staff writer

In the summers, he dreamed of growing up to play shortstop for the San Francisco Giants. In the winters, he wanted to be a goalie for the Montreal Canadiens.

Sometimes he wanted to be Bob Hope, so he could make people laugh. Or maybe a sports writer, so he could go to all the games.

This being America, he grew up to be all those things, plus feathers. Ted Giannoulas grew up to be the San Diego Chicken.

It was hot in the small, sparse dressing room at the University of Kentucky's Memorial Coliseum last week when The Chicken waddled in.

What The Chicken didn't need was heat. His head-to-foot down parka already was very warm under the wings.

He had just spent a half hour looking foolish with the UK Lady Kats volleyball team and a few members of the Wildcats basketball team to promote the volleyball game and basketball practice coming up this weekend. It was still several hours before he would make his debut as wrestler Jerry "The King" Lawler's manager in Rupp Arena.

It was time to for Superman to turn back into Clark Kent.

The Chicken — that's his official, trademark name — topped off his chicken head. He detached his chicken tail. Still wearing the funny feet, he flopped down on a narrow bench and unzipped his chest feathers to reveal a sweat-soaked T-shirt that said "HEAVY METAL" across the front.

Pausing in the poultry-to-person metamorphosis, he sipped a Coke and mopped his brow, perhaps considering his own twisting of Harry Truman's aphorism: "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the chicken."

Then the man who turned a \$2-an-hour college job into a reported \$1 million-a-year show-biz phenomena started talking about his life as a professional chicken.

For one thing, Giannoulas said, he never puts "chicken" on the line of his income tax return where it asks for occupation.

"I'm an 'entertainer,'" he said. "If I put down 'chicken,' some computer would spit it out and send off a red alert."

For another thing, being a chicken isn't nearly as easy as it looks, he said.

He makes 250 performances a year, including 118 one-nighters in a row during baseball season. That adds up to about a half million miles a year.

"This is one chicken who likes to cross a lot of roads," he said. "I really have little time for hobbies or anything but this. Nearly every waking moment is spent toward the betterment of the chicken act."

"I'm not married — no wife would stand for this — and I'm on the road too much to have a family."

Giannoulas hasn't always been The Chicken, of course. When he was a kid — he was born in London, Ontario, which is near Detroit — he was sometimes Zorro.

"When I was little — maybe from the time I was 3 till I was 8 or 9 — I was very extroverted," he said. "I was a class clown, a rambunctious little clown. I did bizarre things, like dressing up like Zorro and running around the neighborhood."

"I guess what I'm doing now is revert-



The San Diego Chicken made an appearance at a recent wrestling match at Rupp Arena.

ing back to that little tyke."

He became The Chicken by chance. It happened early in 1974, when he was a journalism student at San Diego State University. A guy from a local radio station told Giannoulas and bunch of fellow students that he wanted someone to wear a chicken suit for a couple of weeks. Giannoulas, who stands 5-foot-4, was the only one who could fit into the suit.

"I wasn't looking for a route to Hollywood, just the \$2-an-hour and a job that was better than washing dishes," he said.

A star was born.

The way the radio station figured it, Giannoulas would put on the chicken suit and show up at a few Padres games to plug the station. By 1979, he was still at it, in the view of the station, getting a little too big for his beak.

The station wanted to fire him. He went to court and won, emerging as a free-agent Chicken. Only in America.

Tension filled the air at Rupp Arena Thursday night in the moments before The Chicken's appearance.

Jerry "The King" Lawler had put his Southern Heavyweight Championship

(Turn to TED, D4)

WEDNESDAY  
Shopping

## Are heat pumps best way to home fuel efficiency?

By Leon Taylor  
Herald-Leader staff writer

With five fireplaces, doors of glimmering glass and a French Provincial design, J.W. Davis Jr. owned the finest igloo in Lexington.

At least, it seemed like an igloo, with heat pumps that rarely climbed above 50 degrees Fahrenheit on an extremely cold night. The winter of 1979 was memorable. "I froze to death," said Davis, a Lexington developer.

Finally he installed furnaces — and defected to Columbia Gas of Kentucky Inc. in its growing war for customers disenchanted with electric pumps.

It's no cold war, either. Gas and electric utilities are fighting for each other's customers to make up for the sales they have lost to conservation and mild weather. "The gas companies found that demand didn't move as much as they thought it would, and the electric utilities are sitting around with a lot of underused power plants," said Leonard Hyman, a utilities analyst for Merrill Lynch in New York. "It's the free market in action."

COLUMBIA HAS saved its sharpest attacks for the heat pump. Its radio commercials present a young couple shouting to one another over a clanging pump. Finally, they switch to gas and normal conversation.

Columbia's electrical rival, Kentucky Utilities Co. Inc., counters with ads depicting a no-nonsense Lexington resident who has used heat pumps for 14 years and praises their "efficiency, reliability and economy."

Heat pumps achieve these virtues by doing things backward. In winter, they squeeze heat from the frosty outdoors and electrically pump it inside; in summer, they pump the heat back out.

That saves energy and money, said Maurice Hendrick, a KU research engineer. A pump is twice as efficient as electrical furnaces, which must use up electricity to create heat as well as to move it. And though a pump can cost nearly \$2,000, it replaces both a furnace and an air-conditioner.

Many residents are sold on pumps. In the Bluegrass area, more than 60 percent of the residences that hooked up to electricity this year opted for heat pumps, KU said.

The surge began in 1972, when Columbia ran short on gas and stopped providing hookups to new homes, said its district marketing manager, Robert Colin. Newcomers flocking to Lexington often had to choose between heat pumps and parkas.

COLUMBIA LIFTED the moratorium in 1979, but the damage was done. Heat pumps had become a formidable competitor, increasingly attractive as gas prices soared.

But Columbia gas prices for residents rose only 4 percent this year and may rise even less next year, Colin said. Consequently, the utility is back in the fight. Of the new homes in the Harrod Hills subdivision, 99 percent chose gas over electricity, when they had a choice.

To lure KU customers, Columbia argues that heat pumps work poorly below 30 degrees and require a backup unit.

Most pumps come equipped with the unit — but even that doesn't suffice for a large house, said Davis, whose home on Turkey Foot Road is 4,200 square feet.

In addition, critics say a heat pump lasts only 10 years — compared with a furnace, which may live to a ripe old 30.

The pump is also prone to breakdowns. "The compressor runs almost 24 hours a day in cold weather, so the wear and tear is greater," said an analyst of utility engineering.

However, most manufacturers offer a service contract on pumps for the same price as on furnaces with air conditioners, Hendrick said.

THE BOTTOM LINE is this: "Gas is probably still cheaper," said Bob Fehr, a University of Kentucky data center director who advises the county extension service on heat pumps.

But that may quickly change: Gas is in shorter supply — and its long-term prices more likely to rise — than coal, which supplies most electricity in Kentucky.

In addition, heat pumps provide something money can't buy: cleaner air. The trend toward saving energy by insulating homes has led, paradoxically, to indoor pollution: smoke from cigarettes, radon from building materials, perhaps nitrogen dioxide from gas appliances. It is "highly likely" that heat pumps can eliminate the problem by bringing in a breath of fresh, outdoor air, said a prestigious think tank, the Harvard Energy Project.

(Turn to ARE, D4)

## Collier's daughter interviews for book

Kay Collier Stone's research for the book she's writing about her father, the late University of Kentucky football coach Blanton Collier, has turned up enough material for two books, she said.

Right now she's waiting for Cleveland Browns' owner Art Modell to recuperate from quadruple bypass surgery so she can visit northern Ohio to do another interview with him. She's already interviewed former Browns' quarterback Otto Graham and has Jim Brown, now in California, on her schedule.

The manuscript's working title is *Football's Gentle Giant: The Blanton Collier Story*. Mrs. Stone said the title "surfaced from some old clippings I found. It was a phrase sports writers used to use to describe Daddy."

In the heat of the campaign, who was having a quiet lunch at Stanley Demos' Coach House on Monday but gubernatorial candidate Martha Layne Collins and her daughter, Maria?

Mrs. Collins said the two don't get to spend much time together with the election just four weeks away, so she invited her daughter to lunch. Miss Col-

**Beverly Fortune**  
Herald-Leader  
Lifestyle columnist



lins is a student at the University of Kentucky.

Also lunching at Demos' was Gary Sandy, who played the station manager on "WKRP in Cincinnati." Sandy, who owns a farm in Sunrise, Ky., gets back occasionally to visit his parents, who live there.

There's a new interest in bridge that hasn't been seen in years, and Mary Andrews McVey is riding the crest of its popularity.

Her KET series, "Bridge Basics," is airing on stations from New York to California, and the demand for more programs has been so great that a new series called "Play Bridge" had its premiere last night. Earlier this year her intermediate guide, also called *Play Bridge*, was published.

The October issue of *Popular Bridge* magazine features Mrs. McVey on the cover.



Mary Andrews McVey is on the cover of a bridge magazine.

"A cover girl at my age," Mrs. McVey said, joking. "The wildest things happen if you live long enough."

Margaret Jones, the acting head of UK's Spanish program is very pleased that people "are beginning to realize Spanish isn't just used to work off college requirements. It plays a role in international business and commerce."

That translates into more job pos-

sibilities for Spanish majors, a prospect that would make any department chairman happy.

To get the year off on an upbeat note, the Spanish department is adjourning en masse to El Torito Restaurant and Cantina this afternoon for a fiesta, "just to eat and chat," said Mrs. Jones. "People who are interested can stop by."

"But make sure you can speak Spanish."

## Karen DeCrow to speak at UK law conference

Karen DeCrow, former president of the National Organization for Women, will be the main speaker at a conference on "Women and the Law" this weekend at the University of Kentucky.

Described as one of the 100 future leaders of the United States by Time magazine, Ms. DeCrow will speak on "Will There Always Be a Gender Gap in the Law?"

The conference will include sessions on a variety of ways the law touches women's lives, ranging from employment discrimination, childbirth and the law, and planning for divorce to criminal and constitutional law issues.

It is sponsored by UK's Women Law Caucus, the university's Continuing Education for Women program and the American Bar Association's law school division.

The workshops will be held at the UK Student Center, beginning with registration at 9 a.m. Friday. Two sessions are scheduled for Saturday morning; the conference will conclude with Ms. DeCrow's address at 1:30 p.m. that afternoon.

A graduate of the University of Syracuse law school, Ms. DeCrow is the author of four books.

Ms. DeCrow was invited to Ken-

tucky by law professor Carolyn Bratt, also a Syracuse law graduate who knew Ms. DeCrow in New York.

Conference organizers hope to reach not just women lawyers, "but women in other professions as well," said law student Robin Gwinn.

The UK Women's Law Caucus was formed in the late '60s when few women were in law school and they felt they needed an organization to help them, explained Ms. Gwinn.

But enrollment figures at UK have shifted dramatically in the past 15 years. Forty-five percent of the current first-year law class are women and 40 percent of the total 460-member student body are women, Associate Dean Paul Van Booven said.

Registration fees will be established on a sliding scale. The cost will be \$5 for students and unemployed people; \$10 for those with a yearly income of \$10,000 to \$20,000; and \$15 for participants with an income of more than \$20,000.

In connection with the law conference, jazz and blues singer Linda Tillery will give a concert at 8 p.m. Friday in the UK Center for the Arts.

Tickets for the concert will be \$6, \$7 and \$8 and may be purchased at the door. The concert is co-sponsored by Amber Moon Productions.

# Ted Giannoulas feathers his career

From Page D1

Wrestling title on the line against Jesse "The Body" Ventura.

There was even more at stake: Giannoulas was in Lawler's corner, wearing his chicken suit. A second suit was displayed at ringside. The deal was that if Lawler lost, he would have to wear the second chicken suit. If Ventura lost, his manager, Jimmy Hart, would have to wear the suit.

But first, The Chicken had some entertaining to do. As the loudspeaker blared Devo's "Whip It," he beat the stuffings out of a stuffed referee.

The crowd went crazy. They laughed. They screamed. They shouted the words to the song: *Whip it. Into shape. Shape it up. Get straight. Go forward. Move ahead.*

Giannoulas is right when he puts "entertainer" on his tax form. Whether the sport's baseball, football, volley-

ball, you name it — he plays the crowd just right.

He's a major draw: A Rupp Arena official estimated that about a quarter of last week's wrestling crowd were first-timers pulled in by The Chicken. He's helped set attendance records at stadiums and ball parks across the country. That's why he's coming back to Lexington on Friday for the volleyball game — UK wants to set a NCAA attendance record. The old record of 7,500 people is, ironically, held by UK's Friday night opponent, No. 1-ranked Hawaii.

The Chicken went on last week, by the way, to play an important role in helping Lawler retain his title. Then, when Hart had to put on the extra chicken suit, The Chicken hit him with a flying drop kick that made the feathers fly.

The Chicken has no groupies.

"I meet a nice chick every once in a while, but no one knows what Ted looks like," he said.

That's right. No one really knows what Ted Giannoulas looks like. The

Chicken has been seen by millions in person and on television, but the face behind the beak is anonymous.

Everyone at the game recognizes The Chicken with his bright yellow beak and big blue eyes. After the game, the man with brown eyes and a drooping brown moustache walks out unnoticed with a (chicken) suit bag slung over his shoulder.

"I never allow myself to be photographed without the costume," Giannoulas said. "It adds a lot of mystique to the character; it's a fun thing, a frivolous thing. To see me in public without the costume would be like seeing Santa Claus without a beard."

In the exclusive world of professional chickens, Giannoulas is at the top of the pecking order.

He doesn't mind cackling about how much he doesn't like the competition. College mascots don't bother him, he said, but he would like to scratch those professional pretenders.

"I'd put all those guys on waivers," he said. "A lot of them are just guys wearing Halloween costumes."

"Some of them feel they can just outright steal my material. That really ruffles my feathers. And there's always the chance that I will go into this guys town and do my act, then they will say 'Hey, he stole that idea from our owl.'"

Now 28 and into his 10th year as The Chicken, Giannoulas realizes he can't keep up this pace forever. He plans to stay at it another four or five years, then hang up his wings and try a more conventional comedy act.

There is also a possibility of someone doing a film about his life as The Chicken, he said.

It may be called *Poultrygeist*.

## UK hopes Chicken will draw crowd

The Chicken will put in his second Lexington appearance in two weeks on Friday at a women's volleyball game at the University of Kentucky's Memorial Coliseum.

The No. 5-ranked UK Lady Kats will play the No. 1-ranked University of Hawaii Rainbow Wahines, who are the defending national volleyball champions.

The game begins at 9 p.m. Admission is \$1. UK students with a valid ID

get in free.

Kentucky basketball coach Joe B. Hall will be master of ceremonies and, at midnight, the Wildcat men's basketball team will hold its first practice of the season.

UK officials hope the combination of volleyball, basketball and The Chicken will draw enough people to set a new NCAA volleyball attendance record. The current record of 7,500 people is held by Hawaii.

## Are heat pumps best energy value?

From Page D1

If pumps pique your interest, consider these tips:

- Check the warranty closely.
- If you live near a reliable well, look into water-source pumps. These draw their heat from underground water, which has a constant mild temperature even in winter, so they work well even in sub-30-degree weather,

said an engineering analyst. However, Fehr notes that they aren't practical for the Lexington area.

• Ask your neighbors to recommend a reliable serviceman. "Eventually, it must be serviced," Fehr said. "And you want someone who has been in business for a while."

• If you buy a pump, clean the filters three times a year. "The easiest way to ruin a heat pump is to block the air flow," Fehr said.

• Don't turn down the thermostat at night or during absences, then turn it up. This engages the back-up unit, which is less efficient, Hendrick said.

• If you're truly undecided, consider a dual system. For instance, Davis can switch to his gas furnaces for prompt heat on bitterly cold days — and, when winter relents, switch back to heat pumps to save energy. It's the best of both worlds, he said: "I'm tickled to death."


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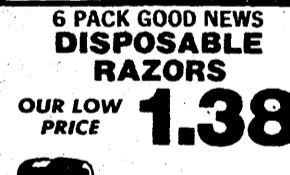
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