



then I swapped out of a sculpture class into an upper level design course. My professor recommended me for an internship at a small local design firm called Stone McLaren, even though I didn't know a thing about design. The owners, a husband and wife, offered me a full-time job before I graduated."

So his career in design began as a happy accident—he sort of stumbled into the field. But design appealed to him: "It was a mother lode of jargon and terminology, the kind of stuff I like." Aptitude tests at the time suggested a career on stage or street performing—design provided some creative relief and allowed him to perform for others.

Soon, he grew restless at Stone McLaren. He quit and went to work for the Tacoma Chamber of Commerce where he became Tacoma's "King of Two-Color" while promoting the rich business climate of the town. After a few years, he abdicated his throne, setting his sights on that magical place of Space Needles, dahlias, coffee beans, and the smell of fish—Seattle.

#### BIG FISH

In 1992, Marks rented a small office in lower Post Alley in Pike Place Market. "I couldn't even afford a cup of Seattle coffee back then," he recalled. "The drunks thought my front door was a toilet, but I loved it right away. It was so Pan-Asian, and you still can't throw a stone here without hitting a designer." Or, at least near First Avenue, a hooker.

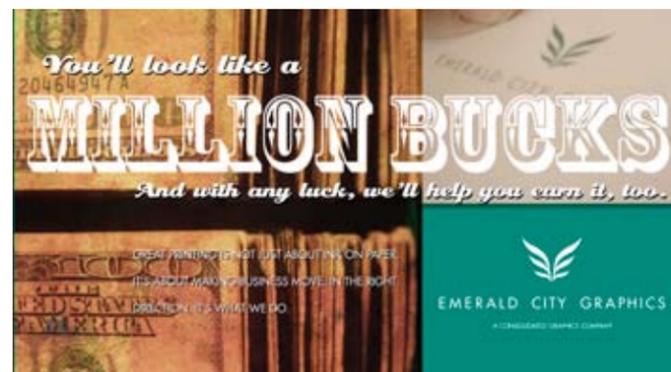
Marks immersed himself in the community and AIGA. He helped launch LINK (more on this later). His career took off, too, as his tiny office in Pike's Market began to get the market bustle. He commuted across the alley. But bigger teams needed bigger space, so he soon exchanged it for a larger studio nearby. Next he annexed the space adjacent to it and laid out a wad of money renovating it. Then he added more people which all meant the need for more income. Marks set out to line up a bunch of Mr. Big Clients to keep the engine humming.

However, the frantic pace and pressure proved enervating for him. Marks grew unhappy. He loved his team. He loved his studio. He loved his shag carpeting and his shower. From the common rooftop deck overlooking the Elliot Bay and the distant Olympic Mountains, Marks had an existentialist version of a "come to Jesus moment." He realized he had to seek a new direction.

From his overlook, Marks considered his options: Was the answer to bigness more big badness? Would bigness bring happiness? Was the point of bigness really where happiness would begin? Why do I live in a place that always smells like rotten fish while others live near rose gardens?

"It was hell," says Marks reflecting on those troubled times. "I never slept. I just made more time and it was all desire pouring out as action. Not sustainable. I thought that by getting bigger, I'd be able to step aside and do more projects I loved. But instead, oddly enough, it got harder."

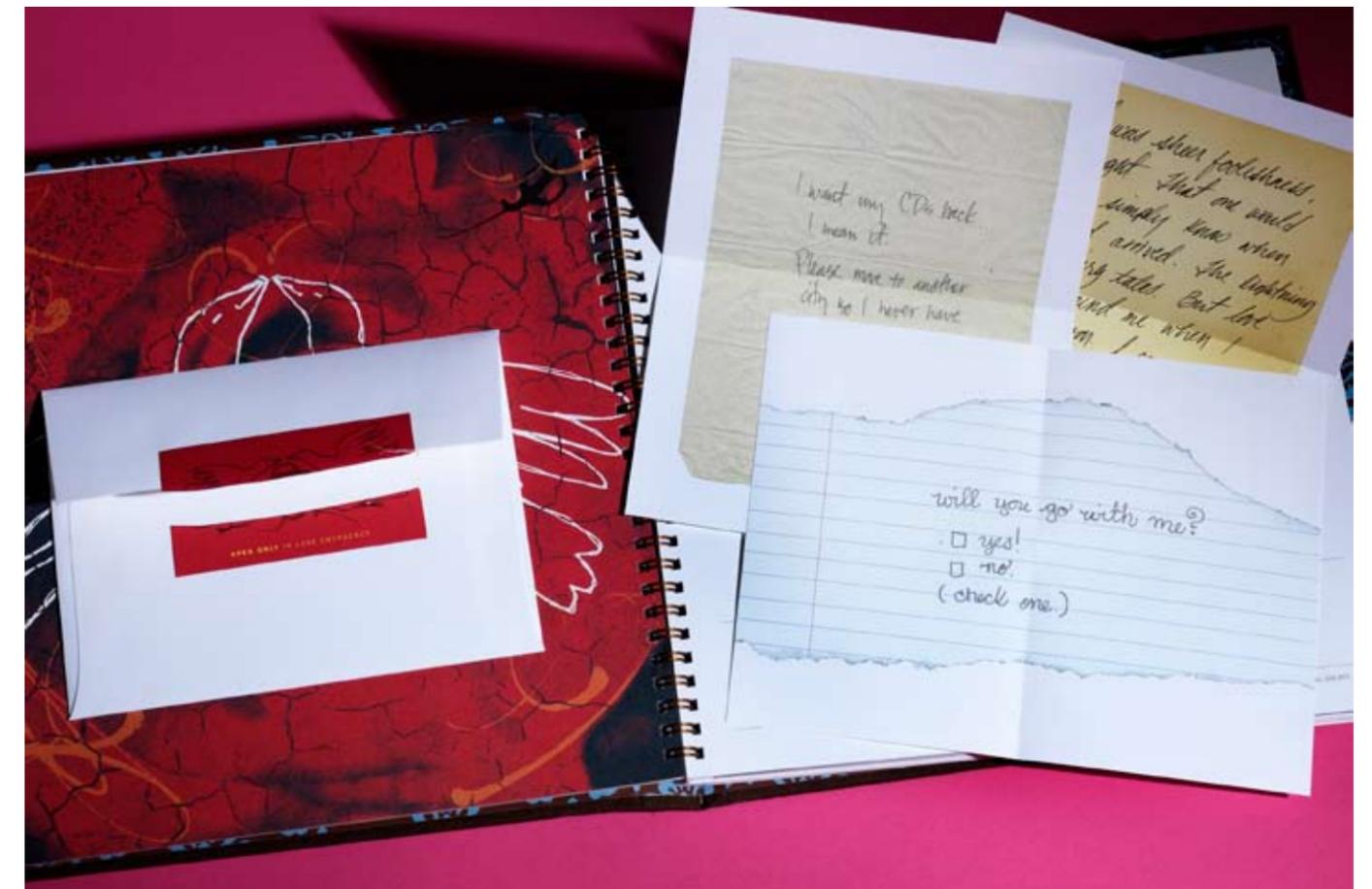
He realized that the bigger you were, the more you worked for others, not yourself. You became a hostage to circumstance. You did not get to work with the Big Cheese, but rather small curd middle managers who took pleasure in making you wait or redo perfectly competent work. Trapped only by the need for their money, he instead lived without any other purpose, control, or direction. Even being the King of Two Color in Tacoma was a better role than being surrounded by people whose only real daily decision was which stall they'd select for their afternoon BM.



**EMERALD CITY GRAPHICS** THIS IDENTITY SUITE IS RECENT AND I'M STILL FORMULATING HOW I FEEL ABOUT IT, BUT I THINK IT'S A WIN. WE TRIED TO CRAFT EVERY POINT OF CONTACT THEY HAVE WITH CLIENTS THAT WE COULD. THIS IS ONE WHERE WE HAVE TO WALK THE TIGHTROPE OF DOING SOMETHING WE THINK IS COMPLETELY APPROPRIATE AND WORTHY OF THE CLIENT, BUT ALSO KNOWING THE AUDIENCE IS OUR PEERS. THANKFULLY, ONE OF THE GREAT GIFTS OF GETTING OLDER IS NOT CARING ABOUT THINGS THAT DON'T REALLY MATTER.

"When you come to a fork in the road, take it." It's one of Berra's best quotes. It reminds us that sometimes the best decisions are left unmade. Ask Terry Marks.

**O'NEIL CALENDAR** A CALENDAR FOR O'NEIL PRINTING IN PHOENIX. RULE 29 DESIGNED IT AND WE WORKED ON COPY, CONCEPT, AND ILLUSTRATIONS. IN ADDITION TO ASKING CATHIE BLECK AND JOEL NAKAMURA TO ILLUSTRATE IN THIS, I UPPED OUR STREET CRED BY DOING ILLUSTRATIONS MYSELF FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY. WE USED A FEW TAKES ON THE LOVE NOTE TO COVER THE FACETS OF ROMANTIC LOVE. I ADMIT THAT I ONCE MADE A NOTE WITH THE BOXES TO CHECK.





Rather than leaping from his rooftop overlook, Marks chose life, his own. He got small and life began to taste again. He began once more to do the kinds of things he loved: short films, short stories, and children's book illustrations and writing. He took a course on sales development that helped illuminate ways to attract the kinds of clients who were more interested in his work than being "pleased."

#### FLOWER POWER

Marks realized he had to make more time for himself. This meant less all-nighters and more sunrises. And daybreak included the added incentive of the girl at the flower market on the corner of First Avenue and Pike Street who came every morning to set out her colorful wares. Marks fell in love. Laura Gildersleeve, a young woman of natural good looks from Ketchikan, Alaska, sold sunshine every day in a city famous for clouds and rain. Marks, notorious bachelor, proposed to her in the summer of 2005 and married her Jan. 7, 2006.

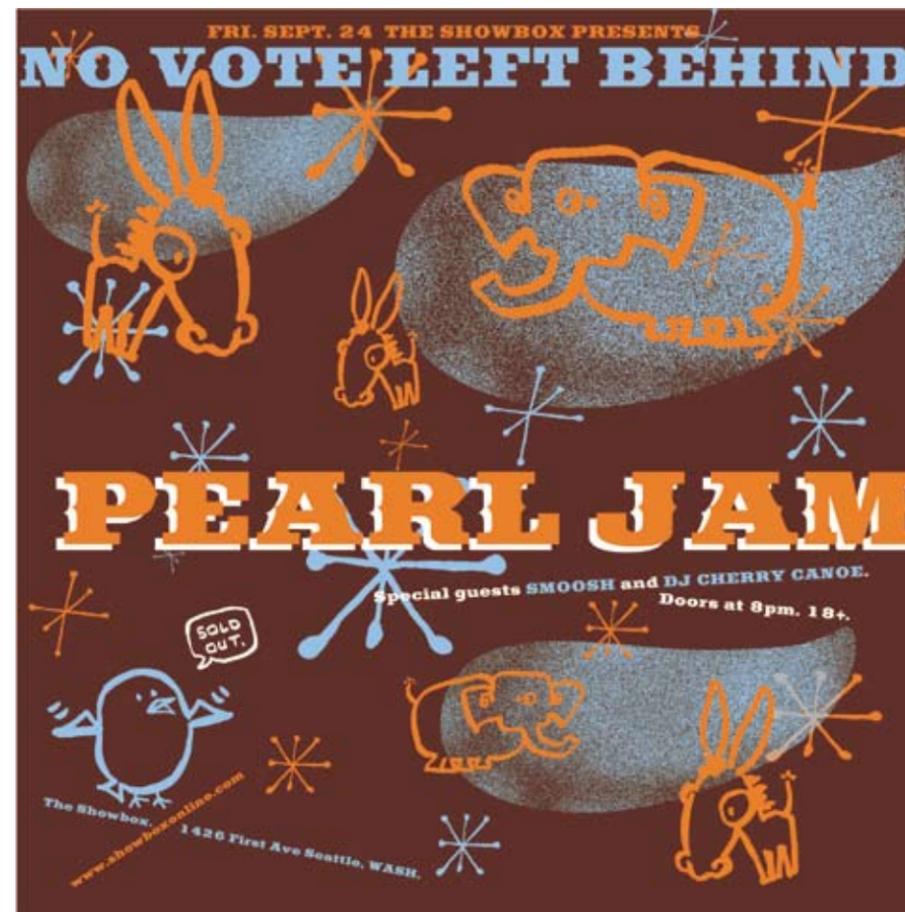
A lot has changed for Marks since last summer. After more than a decade, last fall he left the pandemonium of Pike's Market and moved out to the breezy and quirky Fremont neighborhood five miles away on the northwest shore of Lake Union. The Marks' crew is small: himself plus his friends A.J. Andrade and Julie Young.

He has been able to put more focus into helping nonprofits, a concentration of his energies since his arrival in Seattle in the early '90s and his hand in helping to launch Seattle's successful LINK program, a nonprofit that helps high school students develop confidence through arts (six area high schools participate, and \$20,000 in LINK scholarships are awarded each year). This year will be Marks' 11th on the LINK board. He will host the annual Art With Heart fundraiser this year, too.

Recently, tmarks Design worked on a public information plan for the Puget Sound area's SoundTransit and FindARide.org. The work focused on the client's Special Needs Transport initiative and involved creating a site interface accessible to both the vision- and hearing-impaired. Within the past year, tmarks Design also finished work for Powerful Voices, a nonprofit that works with adolescent girls, as well as fundraising materials for the Experimental Education Unit at the University of Washington that pairs normally developing children with children who have autism and/or Down's syndrome.



**CRUMBLY** THESE ARE FROM THE BOOK I WROTE AND ILLUSTRATED CALLED, **MR. CRUMBLY DREAMS A TIGER**. IT'S A STORY ABOUT FEAR AND DESIRE. INSPIRED BY A C.S. LEWIS QUOTE, HE DEEMS WE DESIRE NOT TOO GREATLY, BUT TOO LITTLE. LIKE CHILDREN MAKING MUD PIES IN A SLUM, WE DO SO ONLY BECAUSE WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT IS MEANT BY THE OFFER OF A HOLIDAY AT SEA. NOT BAD.



**POSTERS** WE LEAD CHARMED LIVES AND OCCASIONALLY GET TO DO THINGS THAT ARE FUN. CASES IN POINT: POSTER FOR PEARL JAM AND THIS ONE FOR A LECTURE I DID ON BEING AN ASIAN AMERICAN DESIGNER.

**JACK CROSS** WAS INCLUDED BUT NO CAPTION--TERRY, PLEASE SEND INFO FOR THIS.

# JACK CROSS

And there are other projects: Marks and his colleagues are at work on interactive games for kids with special needs, creating a book on letterpress for the Friends of Hatch (Show Print) Foundation, and working on an identity for an international church in the Philippines. He is also working on some new short feature films (à la Eddy Wang) "just for fun."

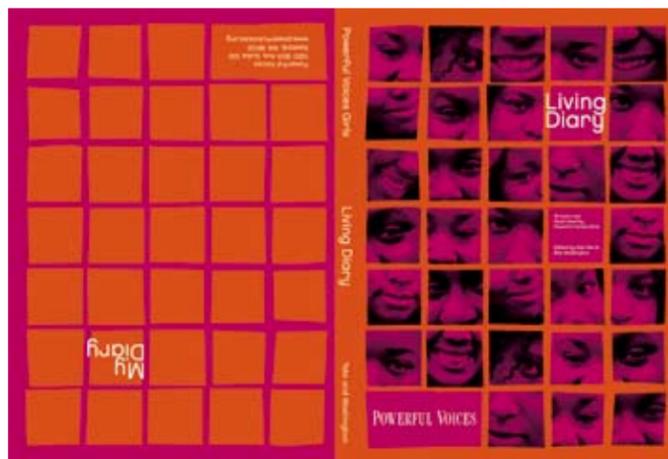
He attributes his interest in good causes to his father, who spent 38 years in service to the American Red Cross. "We were always volunteering for something," he told Terry Stone in an interview for the AIGA Los Angeles website. The first time I met Marks was at the AIGA biennial conference in Seattle in 1995, standing in front of a TV in a hallway at the Sheraton, pitching conference-goers on the importance of the then-nascent LINK and asking for contributions. In this respect, Marks has not changed, except for the fact that he can do more of what he loves.

"I do these things not to prove I'm a nice guy or to win karma points; I do it because I know that we get by giving away," Marks says. "I know that our legacy isn't forged in acquisition or con-

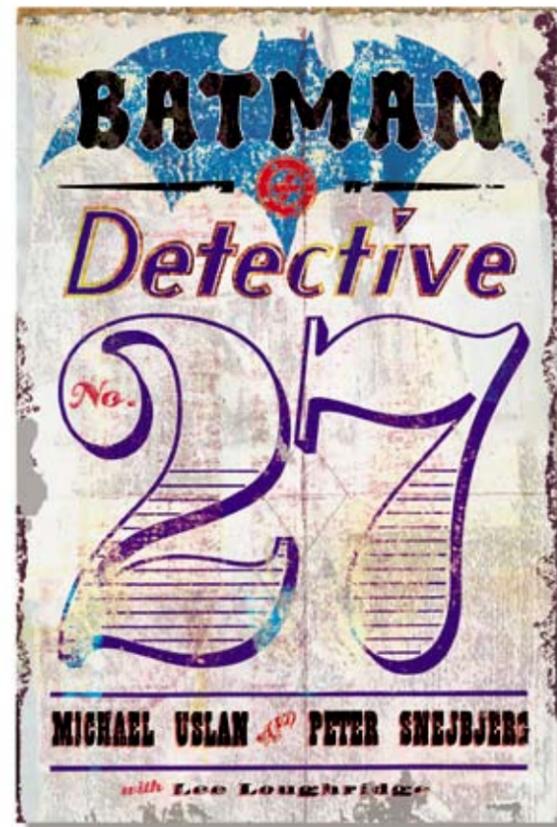
quest, but in our relationships. It's not about reaching the top, but how we deal with those along the way. When we do something for a nonprofit or a friend, we do it because there is something true about what we can see in their work, not simply 'good.' There [are] a million good causes—ones that resonate, that have a sense of mission, and these you have to champion. They are true, and we almost have no choice but to help."

At 40, Marks may not have all of life's answers—he hasn't yet been asked all of life's questions—but he has learned from things life has thrown his way. He is not afraid to try new things nor to stick his neck out to help others.

True talent has no job title, no job description. You just do what you have to do to keep it fresh and real. Repetitive motion can kill a creative. Just don't ask people like Marks to label themselves. He has made his name by choosing not a single direction in life, but many—by making not choosing a valid choice. ■



CHARLES LAFITTE  
FOUNDATION



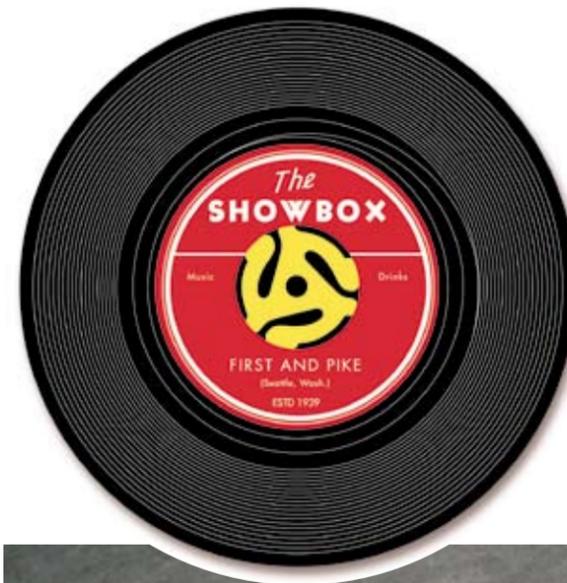
Teen Titans

CAPER

POWERFUL VOICES IS A GREAT ORGANIZATION THAT WORKS WITH YOUNG WOMEN TO HELP THEM GROW IN KNOWLEDGE, HOPE AND COURAGE. THEY GO INTO JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITIES TO WORK WITH THE GIRLS. THIS DIARY CAN BE USED FROM BOTH DIRECTIONS: ONE TO READ THE WORK OF SOME YOUNG WOMEN, AND THE OTHER TO USE IT AS AN ACTUAL DIARY.

CHARLES LAFITTE FOUNDATION THIS IS A NON-PROFIT FUNDING ENTITY THAT DONATES HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS TO WORTHY CAUSES. THE ENTITY NEEDED TO SEEM APPROACHABLE, VITAL, AND CREDIBLE.

DC COMICS THIS IS A GREAT JOY FOR ME. MY EARLIEST MEMORY IS TO BE A COMIC BOOK ARTIST. NEVER MADE IT, BUT I GET TO DO LOGOS FOR MANY TITLES AND A COVER ON OCCASION.



Believe it or Not; Few people know of Marks' remarkable secret talent: he can say "Hello Kitty" in 25 different languages. "OK, maybe five. And it's simply 'hello.'"

