

# THE UPPER WEST SIDE RESIDENT

## Yuppie Scum or Scuppie Yum?

BY GERSH KUNTZMAN

Don't judge Charles Failla by his pinstripes or his keen business acumen. Don't judge him by his taste for the finer things in life, like pilot lessons and fancy coffees. Don't even judge him by the electronic organizer he quickly whips from his pocket every time he gets an idea which can make him more money.

Well, actually, go ahead and judge Charles Failla by all those things. After all, he's a Yuppie—and he's not ashamed of it either.

That's because Failla, an Upper West Sider who works as a fundraiser for the Metropolitan Opera among other segments of New York's high life, is not your average money-hungry urban professional.

Oh, he's money-hungry all right, but he tempers his drive with a strong social conscious. That makes him, he says, a Scuppie.

"Hey, the '80s are over," Failla said, downing a cappuccino recently. "Scuppies still want to make money, but we want to do it without screwing over people. In the '90s, people and corporations will act ethically and environmentally because that's where the money will be."

Failla, who's sunk several thousand dollars of his own money into his crusade, hopes to make his money off the sales of his Scuppie poster (see inset), t-shirts and a future book deal (all printed on biodegradable material, of course). And if the world's social consciousness is raised by hearing

about the Scuppie, all the better.

"I want this to be perfectly clear," he said. "I'm not in this because I'm this warm and fuzzy guy who wants to save the world. My top goal is to make money. Number two is gain a feeling of accomplishment for myself. And number three is to promote the idea of socially conscious Yuppieism. But I'm no hypocrite, that's definitely number three."

And Failla's not naive enough to think that a few Scuppie posters being sold at Bedlam Bar are going to change the world. But like an Earth Day rock concert, Failla's posters may plant a seed of social conscious in peoples' heads.

"Sure, after Earth Day, people still left trash all over the place, but they also left with a subtle sense of environmentalism," Failla said. "So that next time they went into a store to buy one item, something inside them said, 'I don't need a bag' when the clerk offered one. That's a big change of behavior."

But the bottom line is we're talking about nice Yuppies here. Not the kind of people you saw in *Wall Street* but the new, reconstituted kind you see today in sappy, but increasingly prevalent, cinematic miscarriages like *The Doctor or Regarding Henry*. Is the social climate really changing?

"I don't buy it," Chicago Tribune columnist Bob Greene, the man credited with coining the term "Yuppie," told *The Resident*.

"The word 'Yuppie' was invented as a derogatory term," Greene said. "I mean, did you ever hear anyone use the term as a compliment? That generation was always described with negative terms. Even 'hippie,' which has taken on a romantic nostalgia, was originally meant to deride. And today, you never hear someone who's proud to say 'I'm a Yuppie.'" Except Charles Failla.

Let's face it, we all know a Scuppie. He's usually that annoying person who yells at you whenever you buy IBM (military and South African ties), Nestle chocolate (Third-World transgressions) or Exxon gas (remember the oil spill? And you shouldn't be using un-renewable fuel anyway!). And then when you hit back that he's not exactly living ascetically, he'll tell you about his all-Green investment strategy.

But to Failla, there's nothing wrong with that. "If I can make money without screwing people, I'm happy."

There's no schizophrenia in having a socially conscious component and a Yuppie component of one's personality, according to Failla. And he backs that up by donating a portion of his Scuppie poster

## SCUPPIE

Hair held in perfectly disheveled-but-just-right place by non-aerosol, all-natural mousses—avoid all "hair stylists" not animals.

Skin protected by water-based SPF 15 for safe enjoyment of the outdoors.

A good looking, reasonably priced, 100% cotton shirt—no emblems of respect or medals awarded to anyone.

A stylish, non-synthetic, imported jeans in a pen that not only organizes a ton, but made from massed berries.



Reusable canvas shopping bag—filled mainly with organically grown vegetables, mass fish caught without hooks or our friend Flipper, and a package of condoms for the safe enjoyment of life's finer moments.

Satchel containing the profits from a stock portfolio made up of companies that use no toxic blood by harvesting cells.

Roller blades—suitable for exercise as well as non-polluting "rides" to work.

SCUPPIE /skap-ee/ n. (Socially Conscious Upwardly-mobile Person)  
 1. A person who works in the forest but can't afford to buy a house in a suburb.  
 2. Like this or similar in the past use of paper, Scuppie is also used to describe all other types of people.  
 3. Scuppie is a trademark of the author of this article. All rights reserved. © 1988 Gersh Kuntzman.

sales to community-based charities.

The rest will go towards his flying lessons and his new computer.