

Up Front

TRADEMARK TIFFS

HALLMARK RAISES A CYBER STINK

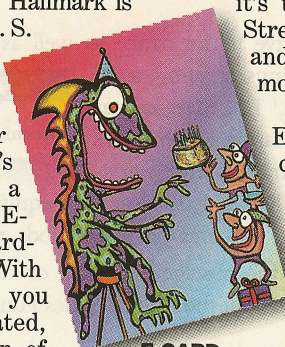
GIANT HALLMARK IS OUT TO squelch an upstart rival in the nascent field of E-mail greeting cards. Hallmark is asking the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office to yank tiny cardmaker Greet Street's trademark for a product called E-greetings awarded last May. With E-greetings, you pick an animated, musical version of Greet Street's off-beat paper cards online and E-mail it.

Hallmark, which sometimes calls its own product E-greetings, argues that the term is

generic and should not have been granted a trademark. Hallmark points out that the Trademark Office denied a mark last June for an almost identical term, E-greeting, to a company named Global Concepts. The agency says it's unclear why Greet Street's mark got a yes and Global's—only a month later—a no.

Greet Street says E-greetings isn't a commonplace term and points to other trademarked names such as E-book. To date, E-mailed greetings aren't an economic presence in the \$7 billion card industry. Greet Street won't

debut E-greetings until Feb. 3. Price: \$4.95 each. Hallmark's alternative, launched last fall, is free thus far. □

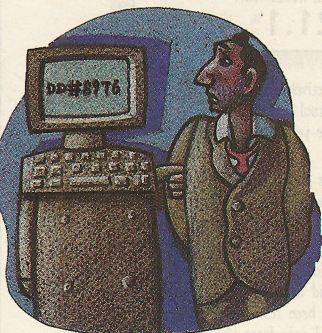


E-CARD

by Greet Street

SOFTWARE HARDBALL

THE DEADBEAT PARENT TRAP



DEADBEAT DADS AND MOMS beware. The feds are upgrading their creaky and ineffective databank for states to track down parents who skip town and avoid child-support payments. Before, the Health & Human Services Dept.'s computer took weeks to do a search. With new software in place, that's cut to a couple of hours.

The databank will really get cranked up next October when, under the 1996 welfare reform law, employers will be required to report all new

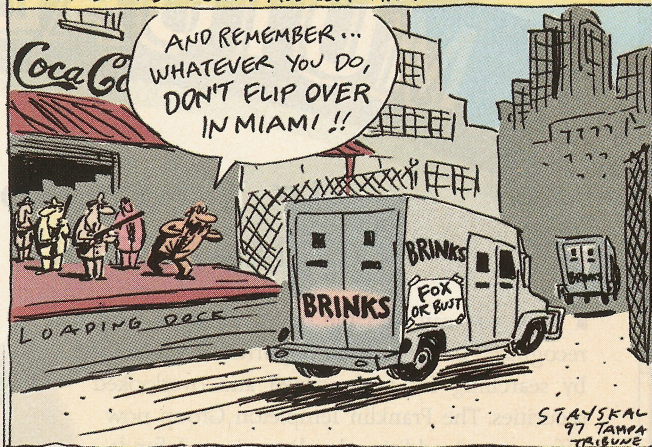
hires to the states. The goal is to halve the \$5.8 billion in child support that goes uncollected yearly.

The reason the feds help play bloodhound is that many of the deadbeats' kids are on welfare. In 1995, 54% of the 19.2 million single parents abandoned by their mates had offspring on Aid to Families with Dependent Children. Single parents left in the lurch who aren't welfare clients can use the tracking services, too.

Errant parents can be crafty, repeatedly changing jobs or adopting multiple Social Security numbers. The HHS database aims to get past these ruses by letting states pool information about parents on the lam. Not everyone is sure the new scheme will raise much money. Many deadbeat parents are destitute, says Michael Tanner of the libertarian Cato Institute. *Elena Maria Lopez*

DRAWN & QUARTERED

SUPER BOWL 30-SECOND ADS COST \$1.2 MILLION



I-WAY PATROL

A NEW GIG FOR YOUR PHONE: NET SURFER

A LONGSTANDING QUEST FOR many companies is how to tap into the Internet without a computer, so they can hook nontechie buyers. One answer came last year from Philips/Magnavox and Sony. Their Webtv is a set-top box that lets folks surf the Web via the familiar television.

Next comes the good old telephone. A promising Internet "appliance" on display at the recent Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas was iPhone. Planned for a national rollout by fall, it is a joint product of CIDCO, a maker of caller ID and smart



IPHONE: Look ma, no PC

screen phones, and InfoGear, a developer of Internet-access devices and software. The phone contains a 7.4-in. backlit VGA monochrome touch screen large enough to let somebody view a complete Web page with no scrolling up and down. Touch a phone number at a Web site to make an instant call. iPhone has a small key-

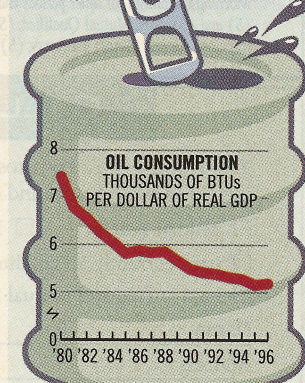
board that slides out from under the console for you to compose E-mail.

The question is: Will consumers pay the price? iPhone will cost about \$500. Webtv, at \$300, beats that handily—although a PC can cost \$1,000 or more. *Edward C. Baig*

THE BIG PICTURE

OIL IS BURNING UP

U.S. energy conservation has long been improving. But, measured by consumption relative to economic activity, there was no progress last year. More oil was used partly because of a 5% increase in cold days and a preference for less-fuel-efficient vehicles.



SOURCE: AMERICAN PETROLEUM INSTITUTE

FOOTNOTES Total shopping-center square footage, by state: California, **621** million (the most); Wyoming, **6** million (the least)