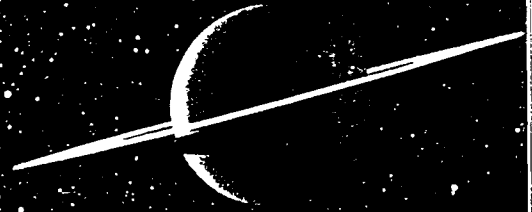


Public Affairs in Private Places • An Interview with Ray Bradbury

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Celestial Seasonings' Mo

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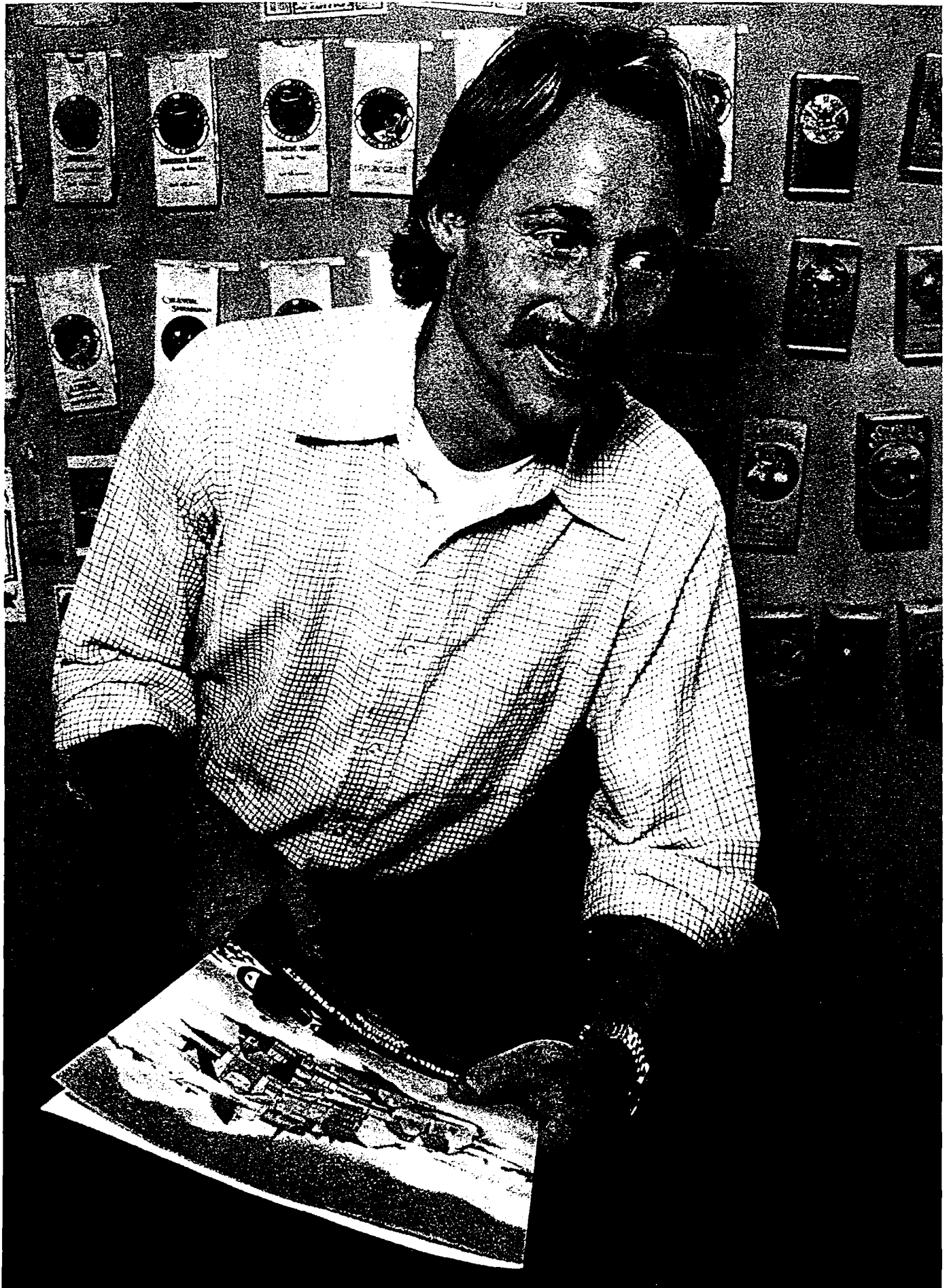


PHOTO: RHODA POLLACK

Celestial Seasonings' Mo Siegel:

On the Threshold of a Dream

by JAMES B. MEADOW

Siegel has built his cottage industry into a \$14 million business. But wait until you hear his next idea . . .

Energy is eternal delight.

—William Blake

I'm always three-quarters into the future.

—Mo Siegel

Someday, when the whole world is hooked on Red Zinger tea; when an ecological coup d'état has overthrown the car and all things non-recyclable in favor of the bicycle and the natural alternatives; when innocent people eschew Twinkies and Coca Cola and other sugar-sated foodstuffs; when joke books become *de rigueur* at board meetings; when everyone has learned to speed read; when the family reigns supreme; when political leaders are revered not reviled; when the planet's ethos is receptive-eclectic enough to embrace the essences of Gandhi, Lincoln, Einstein, Disney, Thomas Watson and David Thompson—when that day comes, Mo Siegel, ideas pulsating in his head like lasers, will still be sprinting through the universe, heedless of rest, aching to do it all while there's still time.

But wait. What was that all about? Who is this Mo Siegel and what has he done to rate such an introduction? Haven't we gotten ahead of ourselves? Won't those disillusioned people who lobbed rocks through his office windows in protest of his corporate decisions and spiritual readjustments feel their labors were in vain? Shouldn't we heed the words of one resolute individual who warned "If I read another 'Mo Siegel Prince of Light' story, I'll vomit?"

Probably. But when you're dealing with someone whose idea of idling is to run at 60 mph; who, according to one friend, has been a "seething over-achiever"; who last relaxed in 1970; who admits to having "three thousand ideas I've never used"; who aspires toward political greatness; and who,

by the way, co-founded and impatiently oversees the largest herb tea company on the North American continent, well, it's no mean feat to maintain an everyman pace. To hang around Mo Siegel is to learn how to cope with being perennially winded.

By now, bits and pieces of the Mo Siegel-Celestial Seasonings saga have been chronicled in a plethora of diverse publications. *People*, *New Times*, even the *Des Moines Register* have recounted how with little more than a few friends, a gunny sack and an affinity for herbs, Siegel built Celestial Seasonings into a \$14 million business. Siegel has been photographed spitting, smiling, leading herb walks in the foothills, you-name-it. Depending on what you read or whom you talk to, he is a visionary, a sell-out, a hippie, a calculating businessman, a flake, a fake, or the new messiah, Seventies style. But, ultimately, whether any, all or none of these evaluations apply is really beside the point. At 28, an age when a good many American males are still emerging from the throes of puberty, Mo Siegel has boldly wedded herb tea—and its healthy, charismatic benefits—to a stubborn national consciousness. And, for the most part, he has done this without bowing before the inviolable commandments of Big Business.

A trip through the Celestial domain reveals a jumble of hip-comfortable offices governed by industrious people oblivious to the stylistic niceties of business fashion. T-shirts, dungarees, sneakers, cut-offs, halter tops and lumpy crew-neck sweaters all mingle without self-consciousness or audacity, making no statement to the button-down world other than their owners are more comfortable this way.

But don't be misled into the belief that Celestial is the last refuge of the Love Generation; these people are not

just laid-back—they're sharp; the direction they're pursuing is more likely to offer a panorama of the Eighties than the Sixties. It may take a little while to realize that, at Celestial, what you see is not always what you get, but once you do, you can deal with little vignettes like a sweet-faced, exquisitely long-haired blonde girl, sandaled feet up on her desk, telephone to her lips, blithely informing someone, "I'm sorry, but three million dollars is simply not acceptable!"

Inner Scrambling

No one exemplifies this juxtaposing of identities better than Mo Siegel himself. With each of his roles—businessman, father, Believer, husband, environmentalist, and herbalist to name a few—he consummates a fusion so intense that even as one has temporarily achieved the position of protagonist, the others are off in the wings, elbowing each other for position, impatient to seize center stage, unmindful of the fact that they're all related, all in this thing that is Mo Siegel's *gestalt* together. This inner scrambling is mirrored by a reflexed juggling act of ideas, poses, interests and responsibilities which Siegel evolved to improve and perfect his one man perpetual motion show. "Life is very short on this planet," he says, "I don't want to miss any of it."

Therefore, it is not uncommon for Mo to be dictating a letter to his secretary as he talks to someone on the telephone while all around his untidy desk sit the participants in a company meeting. Nor is it very surprising that Siegel has resisted America's mania for running in favor of his bicycle because "I always feel I'm jogging just to jog, whereas when I ride my bicycle to work, I'm riding my bike to get somewhere, so I'm accomplishing my exercise as well as my travel at the

same time." Besides, when Mo's riding his bicycle he can also collaborate with his mini-dictaphone—thereby exercising, travelling and working at the same time that he strikes a small blow against the Brown Cloud. (Siegel is an environmentalist who practices what he preaches. Not only does he almost never drive his Volvo to work—cycling or hitchhiking usually suffice—he also makes sure Celestial maintains a low pollution profile. In the formative years of the company, teabags were attached to tabs [which featured pithy inspirational sayings] via a plastic string. Bowing to the wishes of his employees and a customer referendum, Siegel eighty-sixed the strings—and the enormously popular tabs—because plastic is not biodegradable.)

Mo the Pooh

Such singleminded dedication to maximum accomplishments within a minimum of time and/or space could have easily led Mo Siegel to the cheerless myopia of the compulsive overachiever. But, *au contraire*, Siegel is impish, cheerful, and downright pleasant. His secretary will often finish one of Mo's dictaphone tapes only to hear her boss' voice suddenly escape from the machine with a joke he just had to tell her. Similarly, in the middle of board meetings, Siegel has been known to pick up one of the book of jokes he always keeps around and either read a few aloud or urge those in attendance to borrow it.

Such harmlessly eccentric behavior tends to color people's views of Mo in a curious way. During a recent conversation, Wyck Hay, co-founder of Celestial and vice president of marketing, was engaged in explaining the difference between a person with resources and a resourceful person. Labeling Mo one of the latter, Hay sought to come up with an example. Without much hesitation, he likened Mo to Winnie the Pooh.

While indirectly comparing Mo Siegel to Winnie the Pooh is not all that outrageous a concept, please don't dwell on it. In fact, dwell on very little when you're around Mo Siegel because he doesn't; changes and shifts are his standard bill of fare. While the ideas and monologues that go whizzing past your ears may have come out of the same mouth, it's often hard to tell from which chambers of Siegel's vast percolating thought bank they

sprang. This kind of random sponsorship of ideas can lead to creeping paradox. For instance . . .

It is no surprise to Siegel that Celestial is where it is and where it is going. "Seven years ago I felt capable of and very willing to build a one hundred million dollar company," he says. "I feel comfortable with big things; I get angry with small things. I can't feel complete with small things. I like to do things in a big way . . . it's fun!" Maybe ten minutes later (time is difficult to gauge around Mo Siegel: so much happens so quickly) he is warning, "Anything complicated doesn't have to be. Seek the simple solutions." In other words, through seeking the simple solutions, Mo Siegel raised his tea company from a cottage industry to a corporate Leviathan.

A Pastiche of Heroes



PHOTO: RHODA POLLACK

Yet the inconsistent, enthusiastic sprawl of Siegel's imagination and energies becomes somewhat more fathomable when you realize he's drawing on an incredibly eclectic list of heroes—and with someone as impressionable as Mo Siegel, *heroes* is the word. In between deftly answering bits and pieces of three separate questions, Siegel rhapsodized about Abraham Lincoln ("truly, one of the most truth-seeking persons"), Walt Disney, Will Rogers ("which means I love humor"), Gandhi, Mark Twain ("I love his freshness, but, y'know, sometimes he was just plain rude!"), Tolstoy, Da Vinci, Christ, Einstein, and Thomas Watson, founder of IBM.

IBM?

"Some people find it shocking that I like Watson," acknowledges Siegel, "but IBM has accomplished so much and has established a very high ethic in their business. IBM is an inspiration to me at making their employees happy. Did you know that nobody

from IBM has ever applied to us for a job? And we get applications from all sorts of people at different companies."

Five minutes later (approximately), as he was rounding the bend of a question concerning his sponsorship of the Red Zinger Bicycle Race, Siegel interrupted himself, and pleased with this newest stray thought, chirped in his high-pitched voice, "Oh—I like David Thompson, too!"

Comparing Mo Siegel to Winnie the Pooh is not all that outrageous a concept.

Indeed, Mo Siegel likes and loves many things, and one of the joys of hanging around with him is witnessing his excesses of unabashed emotion. For the most part, the braintrust at Celestial are either Mo's friends or soon will be—this you can blame on Mo Siegel's irresistible enthusiasm and warmth. When Barry Zaid applied for the position of Celestial design director he received a long-distance call from Siegel during which Mo gushed, "We feel blessed that you'd consider working with us." (Today Creative Director Zaid likes his job so much he equates it with "coming in and playing with my friends.") John Odbert, Celestial head of Human Resources (a.k.a. Personnel—"Celestial Seasonings is great with words," laughs Creative Director Zaid) remembers "days when things are going well, when Mo will come up and hug me and say, 'John, I'm so glad you're here . . . I love you!'"

The Gospel According To Siegel

While all this might seem decidedly aberrant behavior for a corporation executive, it's perfectly logical for Mo Siegel. As Chairman of the Board (and close Siegel friend) John Hay says, "Mo's got the revelation on his side. He deals with people as his brothers."

Siegel's religious convictions have already received a surfeit of commentary in a variety of publications. The "truth, beauty, goodness" and "Fatherhood of God, Brotherhood of Man" credos of Celestial Seasonings, along with Siegel's enthusiastic reiteration of the virtues of faith, religion and service have been examined and interpreted by media pundits to a

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deadly dull extreme. But the precepts still work for Siegel. His devotion to Christ and the more beneficent tenets of Christianity (particularly reflected in his reverence for the *Urantia Book*, a sort of lengthy New Age Bible combining the story of the life of Jesus with discourses on the blessings and righteousness of a true Christian life) have impregnated his life and corporate philosophy.

Although he asserts "There's nothing sacred about our business; there's no divine light on us; we could fall as easily as the next guy." In the past he has talked about a beneficent force in the universe wanting Celestial Seasonings to go forth and prosper. Even John Hay muses that "the angels of commerce seem to have helped us out more than usual." Over and over, Siegel has reaffirmed how service—not profit—is Celestial's ultimate end: "Something has gotta be good and needed by the public or we won't do it . . . I really want to make the world healthier."

Seeing the Light

What saves this sort of quasi-sermonizing from being hopelessly dogmatic is Siegel's ingenuous style of expression and obvious belief. But Mo Siegel not only sounds like a reasoned proselyte, there are times he looks like one. In fact, one of the first and most telling images of him is that of a missionary: The light hazel eyes which dart about, ever lit by faith and enthusiasm, reinforce a callow face which even his auburn moustache can't ripen. His fair, freckled skin and reddish hair somehow lend an air of delicacy to his features; you can almost see that fair skin blistering under a tropical sun as you half wonder why Brother Mo doesn't put on his pith helmet before going off to convert the

heathens. But, ultimately, it's the high, sing-song voice which best gets the Word across—an oft-impassioned voice, brimming with conviction, safely-seductive, never threatening.

Like a missionary, Mo Siegel has won a goodly share of converts. Many of these are among the growing congregation devoted to Celestial Seasonings' healthy teas. They are the ones who flood Celestial with letters of thanks and praise, letters which contain passages like "When you drink Celestial Seasonings herb tea you can savor the smells of summer in the dead of winter. When you put honey in it, all of the flowers that delighted you from May until October bloom again from November to April." But other converts come from among his aides-de-camp, many of whom came from secular, starched-collar backgrounds only to see the light.

John and Wyck Hay are two such people. Their grandfather was financier Herbert L. Dillon, the man who helped set up General Motors before retiring at 35. John, a business graduate from back east, was on his way to becoming a banker until he met Mo. Though Wyck Hay remembers his

Gushed Mo to one job applicant, "We feel blessed that you'd consider working with us."

older brother as "having no spiritualism or religion" before arriving in Colorado, John says flatly "Mo and I got together because of a mutual belief in God." Indeed, back then something must have inspired John to sell his brand-new, just-off-the-boat Datsun 240Z and invest the resultant \$800 net profit in the desperate coffers of Celestial Seasonings. Perhaps it was the same thing that inspired him to take up the study of the *Urantia Book* under Mo's tutelage. Meanwhile, Wyck Hay, insouciant, glib, and outwardly very worldly, is under no illusions about why he's where he is: Mo's to blame. "Why else," he asks rhetorically, "would me and John get cajoled into the herb tea business?" For his part, John admits that before he met Mo, "I didn't know what an herb was."

Factory Blues

You can bet he does now. Today, Hay helps oversee a company that will do \$14 million worth of tea business during the current fiscal year, even as it

slowly, inexorably snakes out into new markets like cold drinks, hot drinks (the non-tea variety), body care products, food supplements, and perhaps publishing. Next year, Celestial will move its headquarters, equipment (six warehouses worth), and fleet of trucks to a 16½-acre site out near Hayden Lake, where 126,000 sq. ft. of office and plant space will be gobbled up. Certainly Celestial Seasonings is no longer—as one miffed employee satirically called it—"a new age love and light company," adding, "the reality is we're a factory. Maybe the only air-conditioned factory in Boulder, but a factory nonetheless."

Someone else at Celestial, a bit less hostile at the company's directions, explained "We're not a family anymore. We're more like a community."

Which is why more than a few Celestial workers have fallen prey to bitter disillusionment, a disillusionment that has led some to leave the company while inciting a (very) few others to the self-appointed role of spiritual guerillas charged with performing symbolic acts of protest. Which is to say there have been occasions (infrequent but real) when rocks have been hurled through Siegel's office windows. No one at Celestial is pointing any fingers at suspects—or saying much at all—but the broken glass is sufficiently eloquent to express the anger behind the vandalism. Originally, like faithful pilgrims, many young people had made their hegira to Boulder, to share Mo Siegel's work, to assist a man who placed loving service to mankind above all. Now they feel betrayed by *their* company's unslackened growth (*one thousand percent* in the last four years) and they're furious. Though generous employee benefits (\$1 a week for major medical coverage, \$1.50 for tasty hot lunches, no time clocks in favor of an "honor system") still abound, some pilgrims still aren't buying the new corporate thrust. To many, priorities have become twisted; the smell of profit is growing stronger than the scent of service. While growth or stasis (and hence, demise) are usually the only options open to corporations, a lot of good-hearted, commercially-naive people thought Mo's company would be different. But Celestial Seasonings is irrevocably Big Time and for many that means the death of The Dream.

Among the hired hands there is also a growing disdain for what they perceive is the alacrity with which the boss' "Prince of Light" image is being

developed and enriched. What's wrong, they wonder, with leaving some of Mo's warts visible? Why does he have to be homogenized for public consumption? At least one Celestial Seasonings person made sure I found out that all the people Mo had recommended I speak to were sent memos requesting they have an audience with the prez before their interview with the media.

Who's a Hippie?

While Mo Siegel probably has less to hide than most of us, and while he is certainly a personable fellow who favors the laid-back, mountain-casual look, that's hardly the entire story. Bill Jordan, city desk editor for the *Boulder Daily Camera*, says of him, "Hey, this guy's no hippie. He's a businessman: If he had walked into the insurance business or a junkyard, he'd be making a million dollars anyway.

"I interviewed him once for over an hour; we talked about all sorts of things—our jobs, our families. But during that time, I never got the feeling that his primary interest was anything other than selling tea, doing business, and having his company mentioned in the newspaper on Monday."

During one of our chats, Siegel was briskly tossing out ideas as effortlessly as a riverboat gambler shuffling the deck. He was cheerful and engaging, seemingly enjoying himself. Yet from time to time he would surreptitiously glance at his watch. He wouldn't look at it directly, mind you, just took quick peeks at it in such a way as to make this ordinary act somehow seem clandestine. It was as if Mo Siegel didn't want to be caught behaving like a businessman with more pressing things to do than converse with a writer. He was forgetting to seek the simple solution.

But he *is* a businessman in charge of a corporation and that iron fact has altered things.

"Mo's not as easygoing as he used to be," opined John Hay. "He seems to be more fascinated with the business world than I am; he likes the corporate structure game." Pressed a bit, Hay allowed that "Mo seems to have lost a little of that spiritual vivaciousness that he used to have; so have I. But Mo spends an awful lot of time thinking about business and new products." Maybe even more than he likes.

Dimes to Nickels

One morning, as Siegel was shadow-boxing his way through a host of urgencies, a worker from the backroom came into his office. Though they seemed to know each other well, there was an awkward hesitancy on the softspoken worker's part as he asked Mo "if you've got some time today to talk. There's just some, y'know, stuff on my mind that I'd like to discuss with you." Siegel, too, seemed to feel awkward as he agreed to the suggestion but not the time. He had so much to do that day, meetings to attend, products to sample, that, "gee, maybe next week we could do it." His disappointment barely perceptible, the worker said "sure" and quietly exited.

To be sure, though, there have been changes for the better as well. In years past Mo Siegel was the guy who wanted, no *needed* to do it all—pick the herbs, create the teas, design the packages, compose the pithy sayings, the whole shebang. Recalls Wyck Hay, "When someone would ask Mo for his two cents, he'd throw in dimes. Today, it's only nickels.



"He's lightening up; he's learning what it's like to delegate authority and concentrating on doing his visionary thing." Adds Bunky Moore, head of Celestial's research and development department and Mo's friend for ten years. "Sure, Mo is an ambitious man, but the most important thing about him to recognize is his intentions are altruistic and visionary in a sincere manner."

What you also must recognize is that, like many visionaries, Mo can lose his way amid the here and now because his mind is off pursuing something in the great beyond; the time/space continuum can't always apply to him. And since he's always pushing the go button, Mo's need for high-octane fuel must be considerable. This is one reason why after several years in the fold, Mo Siegel is no longer a vegetarian: He just figured he could

get quicker, easier, more efficient energy from a diet that included meat (even though he still feels slightly guilty about the switch). The quicker you can fill your nutritional needs, the quicker you can begin racing around. With this in mind, it's no surprise that Mo's friends concur he's terrible at relaxing. "Maybe he does when he sleeps," offered John Hay about the man who works an average of 70 hours a week.

All Aboard

Examples of the Siegel Express abound. Not only has he already completed three speed-reading courses ("I'm starting to turn into an aggressive reader"), he reckons he has been sick only once in the last seven years—mainly because he has no time to get sick. His wristwatches are forever going on the blink, a predicament that his wife Peggy theorizes is caused by Mo's pulse rate simply overpowering the poor timepiece into a breakdown.

Wyck Hay recounts tales of late night visits from Mo during which an excited Siegel will attempt to entice Wyck into trying some new Celestial tea iced—unmindful of the glass of wine in his friend's hand or the sleepy look in his eyes. A brief pause on the slopes of Aspen is often enough time for Mo to suddenly query Wyck, "Do you think people know the tea tins we may be using soon are recyclable?" Even family vacations almost invariably include some business errands for dad. And, during the course of one interview Mo periodically (and often from out of nowhere) touched upon subjects which ranged from his plans to rework Boulder's traffic logistics with wider bicycle lanes painted in "nature colors"; to how to increase voter turn-out by providing a tax deduction for those who vote; to how too many people thought his tea had been named after the Red Zinger Bicycle Classic and how he's "not sure the race is selling Red Zinger—I gotta tighten up on that one"; to where to show the promotional film of the race ("How about intermissions at rock concerts?"); to how he loves playing with his kids ("Do you have any kids? Aren't they just great!"); to his concerns about the failure of leadership in this country; to how Pelican Punch tea needs to be improved; to . . .

Siegel the Pol

And yet, of all the ideas and visions that collide, mesh and then burn away
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inside his brain, a most persistent one is the dream of political office. Most anybody who has talked with Mo Siegel has at some point been told that Mo wants to be Secretary of State. Not right away, you understand, but, oh, maybe 15 to 20 years in the future because "I hope to reach my potential when I'm in my fifties."

"I feel committed to leaving the world a better place, and the Secretary of State has the tools to do something," says Mo. "I've so many ideas on how to make the American government better and how we should take the proper role in world leadership."

Since most of the people you and I know don't talk much about becoming Secretary of State, the initial reaction to Mo Siegel raising that possibility is one of can-this-boy-be-serious? But then it dawns on you—damn right he is. And, what's more, it almost makes some kind of screwy sense. For one, unlike many of today's and tomorrow's potential leaders, Siegel has thought long and seriously about ways to do something about the leadership crisis. For another, he's a highly respected and well-liked businessman, none too naive about international commerce (Celestial imports many of its herbs and has several growing foreign markets). In addition, he's far from a flower child when it comes to politics, maintaining more than casual acquaintances with Tim Wirth and Dick Lamm. And if you're looking for someone to stand up to the Russians, well, during a three-week citizens exchange group tour of the Soviet Union, Mo showed his mettle (he also chronicled his trip in a 76-typewritten page tome of impressions and observations). Not only did he politely badger bureaucrats and officials with questions about the quality of goods



PHOTOS BY: RHODA POLLACK

Siegel and Celestial's creative director Barry Zaid share a light—but hectic—moment.

and life in their country, he incurred the wrath of at least one tour guide by forthrightly asking her how many people Soviet history books credit Josef Stalin with murdering. As if that kind of question wasn't forward enough, Mo followed it up with an inquiry about how much of the Soviet fleet was ensconced in the Gulf of Finland. Finally, like any potential candidate, Mo, as a friend observes, "likes being famous. After all, in future elections, they'll have to know his name."

In the beginning

Peggy Siegel—like many political wives—has developed a healthy distaste for the intrusions of the media in her family's life and is adamant in refusing interviews. But Mo is at home with notoriety, sometimes relishing the attention in a way that seems to go beyond future political considerations. Perhaps the limelight feels good because there were earlier times when Mo Siegel felt anonymous, unloved.

About his childhood Mo Siegel is politely evasive (indeed, one of the few times he can be accused of obvious evasion at all)—probably because it wasn't a particularly happy one. A native Colorado country boy who did most of his growing up on an isolated ranch near Palmer Lake, Siegel lost his mother when he was three. His relationship with his father, a strict, non-sense Jewish businessman-cum-pharmacist, was often strained. Severe asthma prevented Mo from playing with the ranch's animals, and possibly instilled in him innate feelings of inferiority, of being left out, common to those afflicted with the illness.

As a boy he developed a keen interest in herbs and plants, and parlayed that interest into some pocket money

by selling wild raspberries and chokecherries to neighbors. When he wasn't picking herbs, he was doing other odd jobs. Joe Siegel emphatically taught his children the work ethic and today earns words of respect and thanks from his only son. But there never seems to have been time nor room for the loving synergisms that Mo so easily fuses with so many people. Today, Mo Siegel is as committed and loving a father to his kids as you could ask for: there's always room for *his* family. (There's also room for others. As Mo was showing a visitor around his house, one of his seven-year-old son's friends knocked at the screen door. With a "Hey, how you doin', buddy?" Mo welcomed the boy into the house, affectionately tousling his hair. In return, Mo received a hug that was both exuberant and touching.)

Because his father felt he needed more discipline at school, Mo was sent to the Roman Catholic Abbey School in Canon City. During his tenure there he embraced Christianity—albeit a Christianity far less institutionalized and far more personal than Catholicism. However, a son's change of faith is often the prelude to an intense family crisis.

Credit where its due

Today, however, Siegel's closeness with his two older sisters (he also has a younger half-sister) implies some sort of reconciliation. A conversation with one of them, Shari, was underscored by countless exclamations of pride and love for the millionaire businessman who is still "my kid brother." And, as if she were trying to set something straight in a mind other than her own, Shari emphasized that she be quoted that "Mo did not inherit his business from his father. Mo did it all on his own. He must get the credit."



Indeed he should. While it would be terrifically unfair to ascribe the phenomenal success of Celestial Seasonings to one man, it would be equally wrong to pretend that without Mo Siegel Celestial would have ever been. True, a family effort built it, a communal labor of love and faith and some goofiness; but it was *his* idea. And whatever his failures and whatever his success, the essential thing about Mo Siegel is he never lets either of them get in the way of his next idea. Once, in a whisper that was at once cute, boyish, conspiratorial and dead serious, he leaned close and said, "You gotta be a dreamer."

Once he sold juicers, painted houses, carried sandwich-sign boards, worked construction and helped promote concerts. ("We'd like to thank God for the sunshine and you people for showing up.") Once, as the "Poet of Aspen" he roamed that town, his rib cage-length hair set off by an outrageous leather mad-hatter's top hat as he shuffled to the Sixties beat of peace-love-joy.

Now? Now it's 1978 and he's come so far you wonder if he knows the real distance, if perhaps he hasn't become a little disoriented by it all. But if he's a little dazed, he's still game as hell for that next looming vision, the one that will help him help mankind. Even the disaffected pilgrims shouldn't doubt Mo Siegel's ultimate dreams.

... Another interview, this one conducted in a parking lot near his office, is almost over. Siegel has been asked to describe himself, and phrases like "very energetic" ... "reasonably strong-minded" ... "deeply committed to making life good for people" follow. Then, after a pause, he offers "hard-driven person."

The late afternoon sun is blasting his face. Suddenly it's the missionary's face you see. The eyes seem a bit tired, but still filled with eagerness.

Why are you hard-driven, Mo?

Instantly, the eyes fill with a dark light; they become curious, perplexed, almost vulnerable. He answers quickly, in a breathless sort of half-astonishment.

"I don't know."

His face is very close. Almost self-wary now, the eyes look back at his questioner, silently uttering the unspoken question that asks—

Do you?

Then, quickly now, the eyes clear and you can tell something is going on behind them. The missionary has been

temporarily banished and another role has scrambled to center stage. And though you can't tell which one it is, you can tell that all's right with the world: Mo Siegel has got an idea. ■



PRIVATE AFFAIRS Cont.

you call, ask for Philippe.

Le Petit Gourmet Catering (4182 East Virginia Avenue, 388-5791) is wonderful. The food is delicious, the service polished, and the appointments elegant. Bill Bown, Le Petit's indefatigable, extravagant owner, is intense about maintaining the high quality of his three-million dollar (his figure) operation. The operation, as well as Bill Bown, is "dazzling, simply dazzling," as he himself will tell you. There are mountains of magnificent silver serving pieces, lovely gold and white Sanga china, linen cloths and napkins (in seven colors), International Silver Fallsmouth pattern flatware, and beautiful stemware. Le Petit Gourmet is a marvel—it caters six to twelve parties a day and manages to make each one individual and personal. According to Bill Bown, "if a hostess is obligated to 150 people, it is still a one-on-one situation." Le Petit profits from the genius of Bown—he is not only able to originate party ideas, but he carries them through from the invitations (he suggests a "May we expect you?" instead of an RSVP) and flowers to the food and music. He is a stickler for good design (his taste is generally this side of impeccable), and good food. Since there is no standard menu, it is difficult to quote a complete lunch or dinner. The cuisine is American-Continental with French overtones—and most definitely gourmet. Dinners average \$25 per person; lunch starts at about \$8 per person. There is a portal-to-portal service charge of \$7 per hour, per staff member, a bar set-up charge of \$.75 per person, a mileage charge of 20¢ per mile if you are over 20 miles out of town, and on and on. Everything is

extra except the food, china, glasses, silverware, linens, etc. In addition, you must furnish your own liquor and wine, since Colorado law prohibits caterers from selling alcoholic beverages. For those of you who require Kosher food, Le Petit Gourmet can oblige. It is, according to Bill Bown, the largest Kosher caterers in the west. Quality doesn't come cheap though. Le Petit Gourmet is very expensive. But is also very good.

Moveable Feast (559 Madison, 399-6654), a fairly new and growing catering service, is quite good and somewhat unique in Denver. Nancy Singular and Mary Clark, the pretty, soft-spoken owners, do not like beef and prefer not to serve it. Aside from that, their menus are flexible: Turbin of sole, salmon mousse, a breast of veal stuffed with prosciutto, spinach, and gruyere cheese, crown roast of lamb. Their hors d'oeuvres are rather unusual—quiche made with thin filo dough, meat pastry, cream cheese with grand marnier, pita bread filled with Greek souvlaki, spanakopetta. Buffet dinners run about \$15 per person, a cocktail party should cost \$7 to \$8 per person. An Eggs Benedict breakfast with seafood quiche is \$10 per person. Nancy and Mary love doing ethnic dinners and they do them well, be they Russian, Italian, Greek, or Chinese. Moveable Feast will cater for no fewer than 20 guests and no more than 100.

Plain and Fancy (3640 East Nobles Road, 770-1932), a small, personalized catering service, specializes in "home cooking." They will come to your home, fix dinner, serve and clean-up, or bring the food prepared to the point where you can finish it off yourself, and claim it as your own makings. The food is good, substantial, well-prepared and moderately-priced. A dinner of chicken breast with sausage stuffing, rice pilaf, sweet and sour cold carrots, salad, chocolate mint pie, is \$6 per person. They will do a glazed ham, egg souffle brunch for \$4 per person, and a crepe brunch with home-made apricot coffee cake for \$3.50 per person. The ladies take no gratuities, only the tax. Of course, if you need to rent chairs, tables, dishes, etc., it is extra. Sandy Wischmeyer and Lovey Jo Hall, who run Plain and Fancy are non-pretentious, warm and "down home." When they are serving at your house, they wear long dresses with white pinafore aprons. Get the picture?

Bagel Nosh (7777 East Hamden Avenue, 755-7550), a thriving, bustling