

[The Karma Kat](#)

Category : [June 1990](#)

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PUBLISHER'S DESK

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One reason HINDUISM TODAY is able to provide so much original information each month (things not available anywhere else in the world) is that many people contribute their knowledge and skills. Nearly 100 housewives, businessmen, professors, journalists and artists help us to share the dharma worldwide. This month I want to tell you about two such good souls and introduce our newest staff member, Karma Kat.

Karma Kat is our own comic strip, which you will enjoy each month. Karma Kat will entertain and enlighten us about the Hindu experience. I laughed at his T-shirt on page 23 and can hardly wait to see what happens to him next month. Karma Kat's Kreator is Barry Geller. Barry was born in California in 1932, works as a graphic designer and lives with wife Nan in Aptos, California. They have two married daughters, a son in college and two granddaughters, with another grandchild on the way. Spiritual life is very important to them. They practiced TM for 14 years. Feeling the need for a personal master and a more devotional path, they met Swami Prakashanand Saraswati in 1985 and become his devotees. Actually, Swamiji came to their home first! Says Barry, "I'm a practical kind of person. So when a saint showed up on my deck, I couldn't ignore the significance of it all."

Barry told us he is an illustrator and designer by profession, "but I've always been a cartoonist at heart. So when our editor asked for a cartoonist, he responded. Together they discussed what would be uplifting and fun, and Karma Kat was born (April 10, 1990 which gives him Leo ascendant, moon in Libra). Karma Kat is completely created on the Macintosh computer.

Barry Geller graduated from UCLA with a B.A. in Art in 1954, did post graduate work at the L.A. Art Center, then spent 30 years in the commercial art field. His illustrations have appeared in a dozen major magazines like Fortune and The Saturday Evening Post. Barry was the illustrator/designer of The TM Book, a number one best seller with close to a million copies sold. These days he does TV packaging and designs "books" of iron-on craft patches for creating your own T-shirt art. If you like Karma Kat and have a project for Barry, he can be reached at (408) 688-0396. If you want Karma Kat in your own regional publication, contact us, or Barry.

In the center of the paper this month you will see a major educational section on The Four Schools of Vaishnavism. Patita Pavanadas (Miles Davis) helped us get this started, and we are grateful for his hours of effort. The final piece was written by Graham Schweig, who worked late into the night several times to meet our deadline. This is an outstanding work, easy to understand, full of information. Graham, who is 37 now, was drawn toward India early. At 15, he looked into the world's spiritual traditions and was deeply moved by the Bhagavad Gita. He immediately became a vegetarian, and from that day has had "an intense personal interest in the Vaishnava tradition." He's been to India 7 times - to live, study, research and travel.

Today Graham lives in Virginia where The Institute for Vaishnava Studies (founded by him and colleagues in 1980) is affiliated with American University's Dept. of Philosophy and Religion. He is married, has two children, owns a couple of natural health food stores and works on publishing. He has directed research projects to "further the knowledge and appreciation of Vaishnava heritage" in cooperation with Harvard, the Smithsonian and the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. Graham is now working on his Ph.D. at Harvard (he has degrees from the American University, University of Chicago and Harvard). You will learn a lot from Graham's detailed work. Hinduism is so vast and wonderful - no wonder a lifetime can be spend in the study of it finding something new at every turn. Our staff enjoyed working with Barry and Graham this month. Thanks to you both.

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