

Julius Hargittay is betting you will laugh at his work

BY FRANK TOUBY

Julius Hargittay is betting his life's savings than he can make you laugh.

The Mississauga graphic artist says he doesn't want to think about how much he has spent already to launch his monthly humour magazine, *Canadian Jester*.

"Actually," says Hargittay, "I'll settle just for making people chuckle."

"Canadians take themselves too seriously and I think they'll appreciate a chance to look at the humorous side of themselves," he says.

Hargittay himself is an exquisitely polite and mild-mannered Hungarian. His humour is quick, but subdued.

Inviting you into his Ellengale Drive home, he says in his best Transylvanian accent: "Welcome to my ho-o-me."

You check to see if two fangs are protruding from under his lip-length mustache.

Nope.

Just a grin.

Hargittay works in Toronto as a graphic artist

for a major publishing house. It keeps him going while he works on his real love, *Canadian Jester*.

"It is 100 per cent Canadian," he says. "There are no taboos; no sacred cows. But we aren't going to be dirty for the sake of dirt like the *National Lampoon*."

He pictures *Jester* as a *Canadian Punch* — "after we get going strong with it."

He's looking for original humour from Canadians, either written or graphic.

"I like short crispy stuff. It can be political, sexual, social sick — if it's good and if it's funny we'll use it."

He doesn't believe in dirty jokes, he says, "just bad jokes."

Nor does he turn thumbs down on old jokes.

"There's no such thing as an old joke, just old men. A joke is always new to a newborn baby."

Issue number one of *Canadian Jester* is already on the newsstands, selling at 50 cents a copy.

Hargittay's foremost contributor at the moment is Toronto caricaturist and cartoonist Ted Michener, who does the covers and a bit inside.

The second issue is in the works now and should be available this week.

While his inaugural issue was printed on newsprint, the second 32-page issue will be half glossy magazine stock and half newsprint.

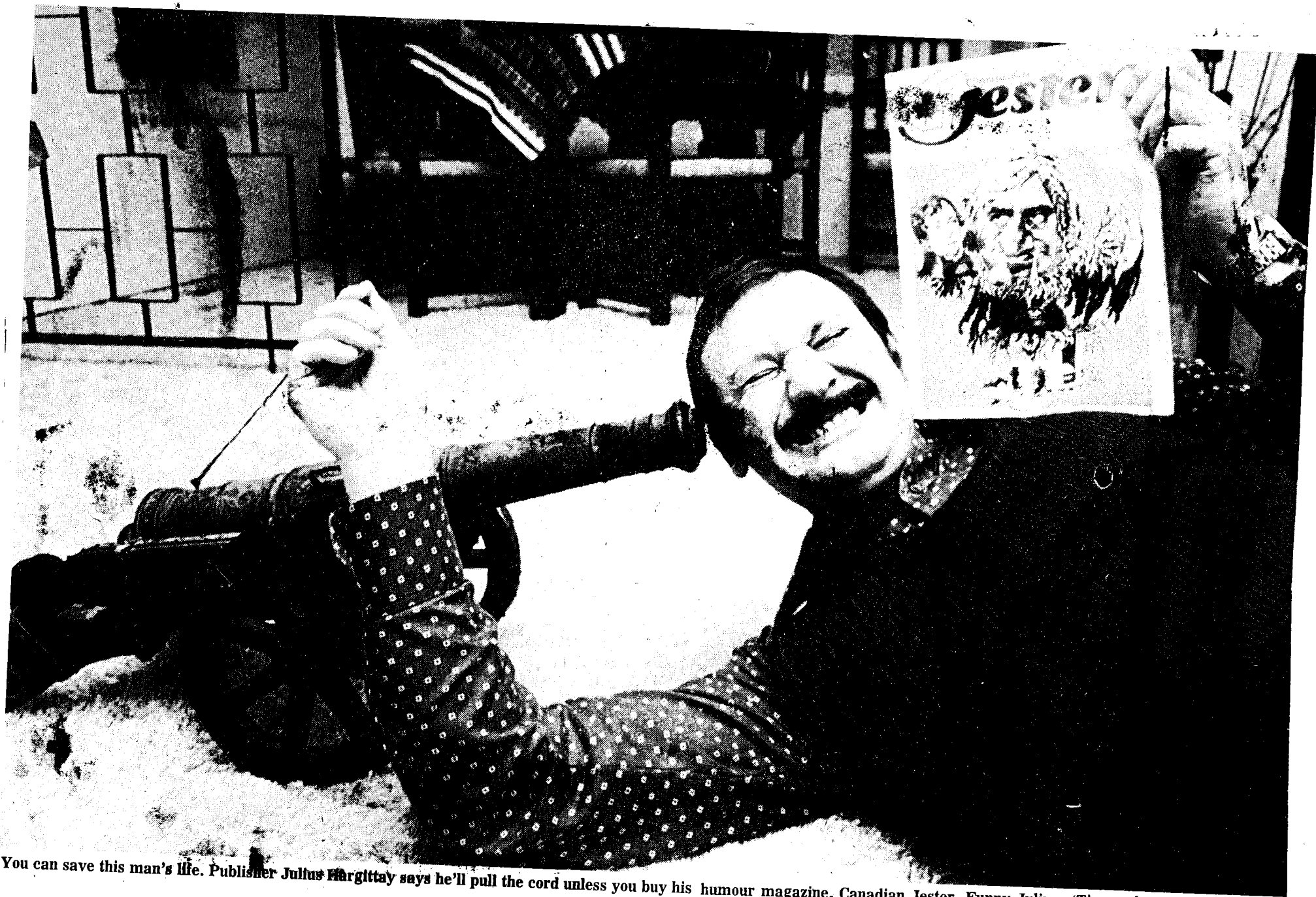
Already Hargittay has sold some subscriptions at \$4 a year and expects *Jester* number two to be circulated in Ottawa, Montreal and Vancouver. The first issue, 15,000 copies, was circulated only in the Golden Horseshoe and as far north as Owen Sound.

"It's a big gamble," he says, wiping his forehead. "I should take a year off work before you see me. I hope it will be a year or I'll just break."

Hargittay is seeking contributions from any Canadian artist or writer interested in doing humour. The pay scale is low, he says, "but it will go up when mine goes up."

"A lot of people said, 'ha, ha, stupid, you'll lose your shirt,'" he says. "But I'm betting I'll have the last laugh. 'Although even if I lose, I can't really lose,'" he says. "If I can make people smile I've done my job. And in this rotten world a smile means a lot."

Hargittay's mailing address for persons interested in contributing as writers or artists is: *Reflections Creative Art*, P.O. Box 33, Mississauga, Ont. L5A 2Y9.



You can save this man's life. Publisher Julius Margittay says he'll pull the cord unless you buy his humour magazine, Canadian Jester. Funny Julius. (Times photo by Ray Saitz).