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SURFING THE WAVES OF POPULAR CULTURE
BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 2006

Surfing Through The Obits

I love reading obituaries and today's NYTimes has two good ones. [The first is about William Gottlieb, the jazz photographer who captured legends like Billie Holiday and Miles Davis at their peak.](#) Whatever image springs to mind when you think of them, chances are Gottlieb snapped it. But this is the passage that caught my eye:

In 1941, he quit his advertising job to do graduate study in economics and teach low-level classes at the University of Maryland, but continued his column. He said he left the university after it refused to let him teach a course on jazz, for fear it would overly praise black people.

[Then there's a piece on actress Alida Valli](#) (who starred in "The Third Man") which has this head-spinning transition:

Rather than comply with the dictates of the fascist government, Ms. Valli retreated into hiding and in 1944 married Oscar de Mejo, a Surrealist painter and composer, whose most successful song was "All I Want for Christmas Is My Two Front Teeth."

Life doesn't get quirkier than that.

POSTED BY MICHAEL IN NEW YORK AT 8:39 PM



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