

BACKCHAT

BY JOHN COONEY

Where's a street-map when you need one?

IT MAY NOT SOUND THAT FUNNY now, but it was funny at the time. And my wife and I are still giggling. We'd arranged, you see, to have dinner with friends. Our friends live across town, and we'd been there before, so they shouldn't have been hard to find. But they WERE, thanks to our modern, state-of-the-art devices! And, instead of arriving on time, we were 30 minutes late!

The drama began as we backed down our driveway. "Remember how to get there?" my wife asked. "Not sure," I admitted, "but we've got Lulu, so she'll know!" We own one of these GPS-satellite gadgets that tell you where to go ... and Lulu's the nice English lady who talks to us from somewhere inside this thing.

My wife turned the gadget on, but it needed a street-name – which neither of us could recall. "No problem," I declared. "It'll be on my iPhone." Which it *should've*

been, because I'd put it *in* there. But my wife couldn't find it, no matter how hard she searched.

"Google their surname in the White Pages," I suggested, pulling over. But the only address that Google came up with was (don't ask me how) ... in New York!

We had a choice at this point: get grumpy or see the funny side. And, by now, we were laughing fit to burst.

"Let's phone them and ask," I proposed. So, stifling her giggles, my wife called and got our friends' street-name. But now Lulu required the exact suburb as well – and it was only after trying every suburb we could think of that we finally hit on the right one.

However, just as Lulu came on air and began giving directions, my wife accidentally turned her off and had to start the whole process again.

We were hysterical now, with tears in our eyes. But it wasn't over yet.

When my hee-hawing, quivering co-pilot tried to clip the now-working GPS onto our dashboard, it slipped out of her hands ...

... and Lulu (can you believe this?) plopped face-down into a soft strawberry dessert that my wife had placed carefully on the floor!

THE NEXT TIME JOHN (GRAPEVINE'S FOUNDER) GOES ANYWHERE IN THE CAR, HE'S GONNA USE ONE OF THOSE OLD-FASHIONED BOOKS WITH STREET-MAPS.

