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Oil prices are double what they were a year ago. **P.44**

INSIGHT

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Unique Families

Islanders grateful for the miracle of adoption

UNIQUE FAMILIES: Islanders grateful for miracle of adoption

Story by Alina Lambiet, Staff Writer
Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.

It was pizza night with my daughter. A young, very sweet waitress took our order. Are you babysitting for a friend, she asked, in that nonchalant way people ask when they want to know what's up – why the child across the table looks nothing like me.

No, she's my daughter, I said. She was perplexed. And embarrassed. She hurried off with our order. And that is one of the milder incidents I've experienced as an adoptive mother, with two children who don't look a thing like each other, or us, for that matter.

And so it was, that after a few years in Vero Beach, living on the barrier island where I spent my nights but commuted to West Palm Beach most days, that I wondered whether we had done the right thing in moving away from South Florida, where I could find adoptive families in every flavor – where adoption was no novelty.

What if there were so few like us – families built not by bloodlines but through adoption – that our children would always be unique? Even during their adoptions, both completed abroad, he in Russia, she in Guatemala, I had found adoptive families in Fort Lauderdale and Miami, Melbourne and Orlando. Vero? None came across my search.

And so it came as a happy surprise to me, a kismet of sorts, that after a few weeks working at **Vero Beach 32963**, when I finally felt I was living here and not just passing through, I found them, one by one, in unexpected places – other families who knew just what a miracle it was to be in a family like ours.

The Shines - Melissa, Joel and Lola

Melissa Shine's weight class was full, all of us sweaty and tired. She was running a little behind. By the time we finished stretching, a tiny little thing in a pink skirt and t-shirt bounced over to Shine, brought in by a friend. Without hesitation, the exhausted gym class oohhed and aaahhed as mother and daughter connected.

Lola, you see, had come to find her mother. She has jet black hair and rosebud lips, an alabaster complexion and dark piercing eyes. She is a beauty -- and who could resist a cute baby bouncing across the floor to her mother? Not a one of us.

Lola had just started walking, Melissa told us, as that tiny wisp of a toddler lit up the room, not unlike her equally gorgeous mother. Later, a friend at the gym would tell me the Shines had just adopted Lola, and wasn't she the spitting image of her mother?

Yes, I thought, and made that mental note that adoptive mothers make – I should ask Melissa about Lola one day, and let her know about my kids. You just never know. We are unique families. Most of us want to support one another as our kids grow.

It was several months later that as I was looking for feature stories for **Vero Beach 32963**, I contacted the Children's Home Society, the state foster care and adoption agency, about possibly doing a piece on local adoption.

They sent me Shine's phone number and I pieced the connection immediately – she was *that* Melissa, the gym instructor, the same woman who drives us like a taskmaster and in that oh-so-sweet Georgia twang would tell our Monday night class, "Come on, add more weight for those squats!"

We sat down one afternoon, the four of us – Shine, Melissa's husband Joel, Lola and me at their Central Beach home. Well, Lola didn't sit much, she bounced around the house in that happy, comfortable way kids do when they belong somewhere, when their toys are exactly where they should be and a request for juice or milk will be answered.

The Shines had been trying for a baby. Mother Nature hadn't really delivered and, since they always talked about adopting anyway, they decided to just start their family that way. Instead of quietly looking for an agency, they started to spread the word to friends, family, business associates.

"We told everybody," said Melissa. "You never know who is going to know someone who knows someone who is considering adoption."

Considering adoption. That's a tough point for the Shines. Why don't more women with unexpected pregnancies consider adoption? The Shines pointed to one single phone call that spoke volumes: Melissa called the Indian River County School District reaching a staffer who works with high schoolers who become pregnant. "I remember asking how many girls get pregnant each year and they said about 30. But I was told none ever places the babies for adoption."

While many keep the babies, others abort.

Her husband, Joel, doesn't understand it. He's sensitive to what a birthmother goes through, the difficult choice it is to give someone else the honor of raising that child. But how does a child raise a child? "Are they telling these girls that there are thousands of families who want to adopt children, who can give them a good home? This is a responsible choice."

The Shines waited and kept telling as many people as possible about their decision to adopt. Melissa reached out to crisis centers, local doctors – anyone who might have contact with a pregnant woman who might want to consider adoption.

Then, in 2008, came a break. Melissa's mother in Georgia had a coworker who knew a woman who wanted to place her fourth child for adoption. "We were like five people away from her," Melissa says. "You just never know."

It was complicated. They had to travel out of state and the adoption would be an interstate one, requiring specialized attorneys. There was the issue of a birthfather who wasn't around but had to consent, and the possibility that the young woman could change her mind. Joel and Melissa were hopeful, but guarded. They created that mental barrier just in case, because open adoptions aren't easy. Adoption is not for the faint of heart.

Cautiously, they proceeded. Melissa spent time



On the Cover: Melissa and Joel Shine with their adopted daughter Lola.

This Photo: Lola Shine

with Lola's birthmother, got to know her and her other children. The Shines flew to be with her a few weeks before Lola was born on May 21. In June 2008, little Lola came "home" to Vero Beach, where the many friends here "were so supportive," said Melissa.

For the Shines, their persistence and openness generated a successful adoption. They will keep in touch with Lola's birthmother in the years ahead. For themselves, for Lola, for her birthmother. But don't suggest to the Shines that they are particularly wonderful – like me, they are grateful to the women who carried our babies and gave us the chance to love them, be parents to them, raise them to be strong men and women.

We talked for awhile about how they deserve the credit for such a selfless choice, based on what's good for the child.

"There really are two options if they're going to

have a baby," said Joel. "And adoption is a responsible option. It is a selfless decision. I don't think birthmothers realize what they do for families like us. For us, we became an instant family. My nephew suddenly had a cousin. It changed my life."

A good change. So good they'd like to adopt again – and soon.

Ms. Balint

"We're sisters now," she says to me, her straw-colored hair flitting about as she nods like she's telling me a big secret. "It's forever now. We know what the other has been through. What it means to be adopted."

Meet my new friend, Claudia Balint. Most people around town know her only as Ms. Balint, third-grade teacher, Osceola Magnet School.

I met her one night after work, when a friend suggested we grab dinner at the Vero Beach Hotel

and Spa. I was tired. Claudia arrived late, but in that fill-the-room-with-laughter way that she has, kicked off our little party.

We started chatting about her teaching at Osceola. I have a little one there, I told her, first grade. We joked about funny things elementary school kids do. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out she's a cool teacher.

At one point, she stops, tickled by the things her students do and say, and tells me what she says to her class when they absolutely must behave: "Don't act crazy outside the classroom. Everyone out there needs to think I'm really, really tough and making your life miserable. But in the classroom, we can have fun."

Sounds like my kind of teacher.

For some reason, I tell her my children are adopted. She's so excited the veins in her neck start popping. She's adopted too. "And look, I turned out just

fine!" More roaring laughter. I find it wraps around me like a blanket.

She gets me. Without saying a word, she knows exactly how much I love my kids and just how scared I am to do the wrong things. "You know, they are going to be just great," she assures me, eyebrows raised, like she checked the crystal ball before arriving that night.

On another evening over dinner, she tells me her story.

Claudia was adopted shortly after her birth in 1959. She's a redhead, freckled, robust. She has a gregarious personality that draws you in; she is the life of the party. Her mother was a petite strawberry blonde with green eyes. She wasn't very tall, and had a love for all things frilly. Her father, a quiet, funny storyteller, was starting his own insurance firm when they adopted Claudia.

By contrast, Claudia wasn't petite or into frilly

Alina, Isabel, Jose and Gregory Lambiet



things. By the age of 12, Claudia was 5'10 and taller than her parents.

These days, she lives in John's Island with her father, keeping him company since her mother's death.

She has a brother too, adopted when she was 2, long before anyone thought of having open adoptions (where adoptive families and birthparents share some information, or stay in touch for the sake of the child).

When she talks about her mother, the woman who raised her with equal parts toughness and love, she lights up like a beacon. She adores her, and it is evident she grieves her loss still.

"My mother was wonderful. She desperately loved me. She desperately wanted a child. I was the answer," she says.

At times, she stops telling me her story, reminded of things she said and did to her mother – to both of her parents -- and wished she hadn't. Her teens were rough, she said. She wasn't sure where she belonged. There were so many questions. But isn't adolescence rough for everyone, adopted or not?

She describes herself as a free spirit, always doing or saying the wrong things. She is certain she made her parents crazy. But they loved her anyway.

She knows now how foolish she was to romanticize a birthmother who might be out there, looking for her. Times were different then and people who adopted and those who placed their children for adoption, often chose to keep things secret, even from their own families.

"My mother was amazing to have adopted – she had nothing to go by, no internet, nothing," says

Claudia. "And yet she did it although there was such a stigma."

As an adult, Claudia sought out her birthmother. It was no Hollywood reunion. She was rebuffed.

Then, after her birthmother died, she connected with other relatives. She describes it as interesting. But they are not her family. Now she is centered those who are her family – her parents, her brother – those who raised her and love her no matter what.

"Look around you. We are everywhere, and people like us are changing the definition of family."

Which is why Claudia basks in being adopted. In so many ways, it defines her. She knows she was raised where she belonged. She's mystical about it even – certain in some way we all choose our parents. She wants others to know how wonderful it is to be the child of an adoption, and how lucky those involved can be.

"I am my mother's daughter," she says. "And it's important for people to recognize that adoption is a gift. For everyone involved."

I ask Claudia what she does when she has an

adopted child in her classroom. Does she connect? Yes, when they tell her, she makes sure they know it's all great.

"I love having them in my classroom. I tell them, 'I'm just like you.' A lot of times they are surprised. They see someone who is grown up who is like them... and that is a big relief. I always tell them, we pick our parents and we are exactly where we should be."

Exactly where we should be

My husband and I fell in love with Vero Beach sometime in 2000. Just the two of us. With no thoughts about future children, we bought a house on the barrier island and came north on weekends from South Florida.

By early 2004, we adopted 7-month old Gregory from Russia. In 2006, Isabel, from Guatemala, made us four. Gregory is our wild child – always busy, the tinkerer who can take things apart and put them back together again. Persistent and driven, he's an extrovert. Isabel, on the other hand, is all girl. A pint-sized diva who has taken to wearing a princess crown around the house night and day. We joke that perhaps she stems from Mayan royalty.

They couldn't be more like us if we shared genes. These days, it feels like we're home, exactly where we should be. We are around people who celebrate families like ours – at their schools, our neighborhood, with friends.

Raising kids isn't easy, no matter the circumstances by which they arrived. There are the financial worries, the educational worries, all the adjustments we make. But our kids will face hurdles and challenges



Third grade teacher Claudia Balint reads to her class at Osceola Magnet School.

that biological children won't. Will they seek answers to questions that have no good answers? Of course.

"Get ready," says Claudia. "They will push every emotional button you have. I know I did."

So whatever comes for all of us, the Shines, Claudia, all the other families I've come across, all of us are committed to being open about adoption and how important it can be to change the world for a child, the dynamics of a family, the face of a community.

Look around you. We are everywhere, and people like us are changing the definition of family. And all of us will tell you, as difficult as it might be on our hearts now and then, adoption is so worth it. ●

Adopting in Florida

Although there are many private adoption attorneys and agencies, the state's primary adoption and foster care provider is Children's Home Society. CHS, a non-profit, manages about a third of all children in Florida's foster care system. To reach the Treasure Coast Division, call 772-489-5601.

In the latest census count in 2000, about 1.6 million children in the United States were adopted (and under the age of 18), including foreign adoptions and adoptions by relatives – accounting for less than 3% of the population of all children under 18. These numbers are expected to rise in the next census in 2010.

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5 myths about a president's first year

BY CHRIS CILLIZZA,
WASHINGTON POST
PHOTO: EPA



It has been nearly a year since Barack Obama was sworn in as the 44th president of the United States. So what can his first year in office tell us about the next three?

Everything, most armchair historians say: The first year of a presidency is a make-or-break opportunity for an administration to assert control of Congress, achieve its legislative priorities and impress the American people with its effectiveness.

Many of Obama's supporters also buy into this idea. They can be heard comparing the president's first year in office to that of Franklin D. Roosevelt, and otherwise describing the year's achievements in effusive terms.

Meanwhile, the president's critics gleefully compare his job approval numbers, which have steadily dipped during this first year, to those of past presidents. They say these numbers show that the more people get to know Obama, the less they like him -- and the less they will like him in the years to come.

But a closer look at history suggests that both too much and too little can be made of a president's first year in office.

1. Congress is your willing handmaiden.

In the afterglow of the 2008 elections, when the country had not only overwhelmingly elected Obama president but had also handed Democrats wide majorities in the House and Senate, many in the Democratic Party had the sense that after years of frustration, a progressive agenda would finally be enacted.

Or not. While Congress has passed several of Obama's agenda items -- the expansion of the Children's Health Insurance Program; the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which makes it easier for women and others to sue for wage discrimination; the economic stimulus package -- it has been more of a roadblock than a thoroughfare on other priorities, including health-care reform.

Although health-care legislation will likely be signed into law, the president has acknowledged that its path through Congress has been neither as speedy nor as smooth as he had hoped.

The past two U.S. presidents also found that having their party in control of Congress didn't guarantee anything: Bill Clinton couldn't get health-care reform through a Democratic-led Congress in 1993 and George W. Bush's efforts at reforming Social Security following his 2004 reelection failed miserably, despite Republicans in charge of Congress.

Recent history provides cautionary tales for lawmakers who might be inclined to rubberstamp a newly elected president's agenda.

According to the American Presidency Project at the University of California at Santa Barbara, the Democratic-controlled House and Senate voted in lockstep with Clinton 86.3 percent of the time in 1993 and 86.4 percent of the time in 1994 -- setting the stage for Republicans to take over Congress in that year's midterm elections.

In 2004, congressional Republicans voted with Bush 81 percent of the time, then lost 30 House seats to Democrats.

2. Nothing gets done legislatively after the first year.

Most presidents consider their first year in office their best chance to enact their most ambitious legislative priorities. It's far enough ahead of the midterm elections to get nervous members of Congress on board and three years before the next presidential

election -- so they'll have time to reposition themselves if support for their agenda goes south.

Obama clearly saw things through this first-year-or-bust prism as he simultaneously pushed health-care and carbon cap-and-trade legislation.

The problem with treating the first year as a bell and end-all? It ain't necessarily so. Ronald Reagan overhauled the country's tax code six years into his presidency, and Bush signed a bill regulating the accounting industry -- the Sarbanes-Oxley Act -- in the summer of 2002.

The best predictor of legislative momentum isn't the political calendar but the events that motivate public cries for action.

3. Your party's base abandons you.

The bases of the two parties don't understand or care much about the sausage-making aspects of how policy is constructed in Washington. They want action and they want it now.

And so when Obama didn't manage to bring all U.S. troops home from Iraq, reform the health-care system and abandon the "don't ask, don't tell" policy for gays in the military (among other things) in his first week in office, there was consternation within the Democratic base.

But that consternation rarely turns into large-scale abandonment. President Jimmy Carter was widely disliked among the party's base following his victory in 1976 -- so much so that Sen. Ted Kennedy challenged him in 1980. Carter still won.

Clinton's "Third Way" centrism didn't sit well with the party's base but he still was reelected in

1996 and party liberals became his staunchest defenders during impeachment proceedings.

Ultimately, members of the base come to understand that they are better off with a president who agrees with them most if not all of the time than one from the opposite party who will work against their priorities.

4. The first 100 days don't really matter.

The first 100 days do matter, and for one simple reason: You never get a second chance to make a first impression. The transition from candidate to president turns out to be difficult for even the most skilled politician. At precisely the moment when all eyes are on the new commander in chief, the ideas and optimism of the campaign trail crash into the reality of how things are done in Washington.

Famously influential first 100 days like those of Roosevelt, who used his initial few months in office to grow government at a rapid rate to try to pull the country out of the Great Depression, and Reagan, whose first 100 days were dominated by an effort to undo many of the government-growing policies put in place five decades before by Roosevelt, were marked by intense activity, broad change and wide-ranging political consequences.

The Obama presidency began with a flurry of accomplishments -- passage of a \$787 billion economic stimulus package, approval of his \$3.6 trillion budget and the allocation of money from the Troubled Asset Relief Program to bail out the nation's banks -- that shaped everything that came after.

But the first 100 days can also matter in ways no one anticipates: Although Obama seemed to defy po-

litical gravity in his first few months, the actions he took during that period led to a rallying of the Republican base and an erosion of support among independents.

5. After the high of winning the election, your approval ratings have nowhere to go but down.

Most presidents arrive in office with approval ratings in the 60s, as the American public -- an optimistic bunch -- proves itself willing to give the newly elected leader the benefit of the doubt.

Where the numbers go from there depends on what the president does. Bush, who came into office on the shakiest of electoral grounds, pursued a decidedly conservative agenda on the home front and a go-it-alone approach to foreign policy that (understatement alert!) didn't sit well with the American people.

Except for an extended bounce after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, his public support steadily declined over the years, from 57 percent when he entered office to 34 percent when he left.

Clinton, on the other hand, encountered some ups and downs at the start of his presidency, but because of centrist policies and a thriving economy, he managed to end his presidency with two-thirds of the country approving of the job he had done.

Reagan followed an arc similar to Clinton's. He took office with the lowest approval rating (51 percent) of any U.S. president in the modern era. Eight years later, because of a popular foreign policy, tax cuts and a sunny leadership style, he left office with a sky-high approval rating second only to Clinton's among post-World War II presidents. ●

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Year end reflections of two of our columnists

The Redskins' season a tragedy of literary proportions

BY JIM HOAGLAND, Washington Post

The Greek tragedies endure because they teach us that life is worth living in spite of the anguish and pain that mark so much of our existence. This has helped me understand and empathize with even the Washington Redskins through this dismal season.

Until now. I'll come back to the Skins, and how they destroyed a historical optimist's frame of reference in just 10 seconds last week, in a moment. First, some context:

I started journalistic life as a sports columnist before migrating to covering world politics and foreign policy. The continuum was clear: Where else do you get to judge so astutely who is a (tragically flawed) hero and who is just a bum? Or record the runs, hits and errors of politics, the trickiest game that exists?

To cover sports or politics is to write about human character confronting extremes of ambition and stress. This is also now true of writing about finance and economics in the wake of the Great Meltdown of 2008. We understand more now about the character of the people who have run Citigroup, Goldman Sachs and AIG than we ever thought we would want or need to know.

This is as it should be. It is the music, not the words or the quarterback rating, that counts. The aura or feeling that a Fidel Castro, Saddam Hussein, Nelson Mandela, Francois Mitterrand or Bill Clinton radiates and leaves with you -- the essence of character -- endures long after their usually scripted responses have faded from newspaper clippings and memory.

Moreover, I grew up in a slowly desegregating American South and learned that people can be led to change for the better. Fate and geography had dealt me the hand of historical optimism as a life philoso-

phy, which usually helps a Redskins fan enormously. Until a week ago Monday night, I had looked on this Redskins season (4-10) as Shakespearean or perhaps Greek.

I was confident that this tragedy would contain life lessons for us all. That it would illuminate Joseph Conrad's description of "man, indomitable by his training in resistance to misery and pain," or even William Faulkner's 1949 Nobel Prize prediction that "man will not merely endure: he will prevail."

Now I know how Bad Blake feels as he hits the rockiest of bottoms in "Crazy Heart," Jeff Bridges's wrenching new film about an alcoholic country singer. With one play that had the force of a family intervention, the Redskins have convinced me that my life has to change. I need football rehab.

It happened when the Skins tried what I would describe as a gate-swinging ersatz forward pass that blew up in their faces. For me, this moment -- which you have to see to believe or understand -- says at least as much about the human condition in this grim decade as the Senate's contorted deliberations on health insurance reform or nuclear disarmament negotiations.

When the Redskins shifted almost all of their offensive line to the left side of the field and left their punter in the middle, naked of protection and logic, to hurl the ball frantically skyward as an army of New York Giants converged to hurl him frantically to the Earth, Shakespeare and Aeschylus went out the window.

It had all turned in an instant to Franz Kafka and William Burroughs, to the absurdity and cruelty of life, to the dead end of Sartre, who could be heard muttering in his grave that hell is the Redskins.

"Yep, that pass definitely looked like it was thrown by a giant cockroach," Joel K. Estes of Rock Hill, S.C. (an inveterate sports fan and my brother), responded when I mentioned the Kafka analogy to him. He found the play on YouTube after hearing it described as "the ugliest play in the history of football." Mr. Estes did not demur.

So excuse me for not writing this week about the Copenhagen climate conference, which may well have succeeded by failing as thoroughly as did the Redskins. Serious leaders can now strip away the hype,

cynical "green" marketing and egregious self-promotion that dominate much of the response to a serious threat to global stability. We can see more clearly the dangers of financial fraud and environmental damage that a global cap-and-trade system pose, and we can move instead toward a carbon tax regime.

But there I go again -- preaching historical optimism even as the Redskins have warned me that I need to change. Tell me, Doc: Can I be cured? ●

Democracy's demolition derby

BY ROBERT J. SAMUELSON, Washington Post

It's been an education, my four decades in Washington journalism: an anniversary that prompts this personal reflection. In 1969, I arrived as a young newspaper reporter. Journalism appealed to me because it offered an excuse to learn about how things worked -- to satisfy my curiosity -- and provided an antidote to shyness.

It was a license to ask people questions. I have never regretted my decision, in part because I always doubted I could do anything else. I wasn't smart enough to be an engineer and would have been a lousy lawyer, chafing at representing other people's beliefs. The pursuit of truth seemed a higher calling.

This was a common conceit among journalists of my generation. We would reveal what was hidden, muddled or distorted. The truth would set everyone free. It sustained good government. We were democracy's watchdogs and clarifiers.

One thing I learned is that these satisfying ideas are at best simplifications -- and at worst illusions. Truth comes in infinite varieties; every story can have many narratives. There are always new facts, and sometimes today's indisputable fact qualifies or rebuts yesterday's.

I started with the naive notion that, by exposing and explaining how the world worked, I would in some small way contribute to better government and a saner society.

What I discovered firsthand is what I already knew intuitively: Democracy is a messy, often short-sighted, unreasoned and selfish process. People have interests, beliefs and prejudices that, once firmly entrenched, are not easily dislodged -- and certainly not by logic or evidence.

Good information does not inexorably lead to good government. "Never underestimate the difficulty of changing false beliefs by facts," the economist Henry Rosovsky once said.

People do change their minds, but experience has more influence than argument. World War II convinced most Americans that the isolationism of the previous decades was mistaken. The high inflation of the 1970s (and not essays about inflation's evils) convinced most people that economic policy had gone disastrously wrong. And so on.

During my time in Washington, the quantity of information has increased but its quality has decreased. The explosion of advocacy organizations, interest groups and "think tanks" -- along with the growth of cable television and the Internet -- has bloated the supply of studies, factoids, sound bites and blog posts.

The decline in quality reflects the polarization of political elites, of both left and right. More raw information flows through political or philosophical filters

that screen out facts and arguments that do not fit the approved viewpoint or advance "the cause." (Note, however, that the polarization mainly affects political elites, not the general public. I agree with political scientist Morris Fiorina of Stanford University, who argues that most Americans are more "pragmatic" than "ideological.")

Journalism has evolved similarly. When I started, most print reporters were anonymous. They had bylines, not much more. With three television networks (ABC, CBS and NBC), the number of well-known TV journalists was small.

There really was a "mainstream media" of top papers, newsmagazines and networks. Their ethos was "objectivity," even if most editors and reporters knew it was an unattainable ideal.

Now journalism is a jumble. Just who is a reporter and who is an advocate is often blurred. Some journalism is openly partisan. Hardly anyone values anonymity. Reporters and editors have become multimedia self-promoters. They blog and tweet; they do TV and radio.

Although career advancement and political bias have always influenced journalism, their impact has increased. The "marketplace of ideas" often resembles a demolition derby -- victory goes to the most aggressive.

I haven't escaped this. I never intended to become a columnist, but writing a column was part of my job at National Journal magazine in the 1970s, and the column later moved to The Post and Newsweek. I also do some radio and TV.

A column is inherently analytical and opinionated. Offended by many liberal and conservative dogmas, I aspire to the "sensible center." Whether I succeed, I'm still trying to do what I've always done: Explain things to myself and my readers; provide enough information so that even people who reject my viewpoint and values will emerge knowing more.

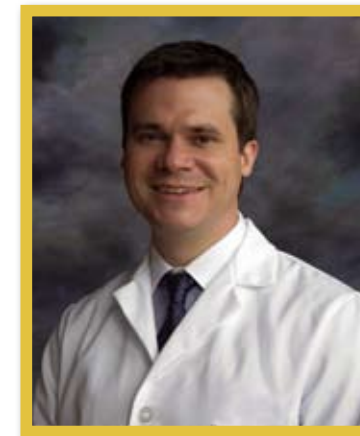
In a democracy, information is power, but you can never know whether it will make us better or worse off. Journalism's contribution, though not always constructive, is essential.

At our best, we do serve as watchdogs at all levels: Watergate is but one spectacular example. We do illuminate crucial facts and clarify popular confusions. But too often, our conformist and crusading instincts make us complicit in episodes of collective folly, delusion or vengeance.

For me, there remains the personal pleasure of discovery and a faith that the unfettered pursuit of truth -- no matter how contentious or futile -- has stand-alone meaning. It's called freedom. ●

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In the days ahead, we will find out whether the Vero Beach City Council – absent the candidate who polled the most votes for change in the last election – has the courage to instruct the City Manager and the City Attorney that they need to answer questions about city business from reporters.

The City Manager and City Attorney appear to have recently decided on their own – with no input from the Council, for which they putatively work – that they will no longer take phone calls from Vero Beach 32963 reporter Lisa Zahner.

Lisa, who has been the point person for months on our continuing coverage of the City of Vero Beach electricity debacle, on the Grand Jury investigation, and on the city's million dollar payments to Boston lawyers and consultants, has not made herself popular with City Manager Jim Gabbard or his former brother-in-law, City Attorney Charles Vitunac.

As a result, when Lisa phones the City Manager's office to get his input on stories, she is told by his secretary that Gabbard has given instruc-

tions that he does not wish to speak to her. Vitunac simply does not return calls.

Instead, the only way we now find out the City Manager's perspective on stories is when his pet reporter for the local daily runs his comments as though they were the revealed truth being handed down from on high. At times, the local daily's City Hall stories almost remind us of the old days when Izvestia was the official newspaper of the Soviet Union.

We suppose that in refusing to talk to Lisa, the city leadership is hoping that Vero Beach 32963 will assign a less seasoned reporter to coverage of City Hall who will ask fewer troublesome questions.

Guess what? That isn't going to happen. This is not, of course, the first time an angry local official has refused to talk to a reporter. But what makes this situation both different and troublesome is that regardless of their own view of their status, neither Gabbard nor Vitunac is an elected local official.

Gabbard and Vitunac are municipal employees – high ranking employees, true, but nevertheless employees – hired by the City Council. So what we would normally expect under circumstances like this is that the Council would instruct its employees to answer legitimate questions from this community's news reporters.

Ahh, but will it? Neither former Mayor Sabe Abell nor his predecessor, Tom White – two of the four who remain on the council -- has been any too enthusiastic about a number of our stories over the past year, some of which have suggested that they were frequently more managed by city staff than vice versa.

Can the last insurgent standing, council member Brian Heady, somehow persuade Mayor Kevin Sawnick to join him in getting the City Council to stand up for what's right, and putting an end to this nonsense. We'll see.

In the meantime, we will continue to do our best to get the facts on what is going on here, talking to those who will talk to us, and filing more public records requests where necessary. This is, after all, the public's business we are talking about -- not to mention the spending of public dollars -- and we cling to hope the City Council will soon come to a similar conclusion and issue instructions accordingly. ●

Alice in Wonderland: A new electricity puzzler

Last week, the interim Vero Beach Utilities Director, longtime customer service manager John Lee, said he is planning to send out bills to homeowners in January based on lower power costs even though the city will not actually receive a bill for lower costs until February.

How's that again? Are we now being told that an interim Utilities Director can unilaterally decide to lower or raise our electric bills at his whim, in a way that is not directly tied to the previous month's power costs?

While we certainly are not opposed to lower electric bills, this may be the most bizarre thing we have heard yet. Where does a city staffer in an acting position get this kind of authority?

As we understand the situation, the city's bills from its current power provider, the Florida Municipal Power Agency, have not gone down in recent months as we were promised – and Vero will get one final bill from FMPA for the month of December that presumably will be another whopper.

One would then imagine that in a rational world, these charges would be passed through to electric customers in January. Ahh, but like Alice, we now seem to be living in a world where even numbers behave erratically.

Follow this closely. Lee told the local daily that the electric charges in bills he mails out in January will be based on projections by the city's consultants of the reduced power costs that Vero hopes it will ultimately receive later this winter from the Orlando Utilities Commission, its new power provider.

Again, where does he get this authority? And what about that last whopping bill from the FMPA. Does it simply disappear?

Well, of course not. But Lee said he plans to stretch out the amount of money owed – so with a little luck, just as was the case this year, year-round residents can once again pay higher than necessary electric bills come the dog days of next summer. ●

The News Business: Contributions for news coverage?



When we first encountered this ad, we thought the world of journalism had gone mad.

Underneath the ad, the text said: "If you value the **Miami Herald's** local news reporting and investigations, please consider a voluntary payment for the news that matters to you."

How's that again? Has it come to this? Florida's largest newspaper is now asking readers to make contributions to defray the expense of reporting?

Well, that is exactly what is happening. A column written by Executive Editor Anders Gyllenhall went on to say this idea originated with a longtime reader who had called with an unusual response to one of the **Miami Herald's** investigative projects. As an online customer of the **Miami Herald**, he said, he wanted to make a contribution to support aggressive journalism.

"I'd be glad to pay," he said. "Can I send a check?" The **Miami Herald** said the first few days of its experiment with running this solicitation at the end of its online stories had "elicited an encouraging steam of gifts," while also provoking "an array of reactions, here and across the country, since this has drawn attention as the first effort of its kind."

"Some readers say they see this as a logical step, while others have made fun of the move. Some think that including the form with stories is an awkward step, while others think we're being too low-key about it and should come on stronger with the appeal," Gyllenhall said.

We personally feel very conflicted about this approach. On the one hand, begging for contributions to support reporting seems a bit embarrassing. On the other hand, asking readers to support the cost of

professional journalists providing critical information about their communities may be one of the few ways to keep newsrooms like that of the **Miami Herald** alive.

As all of our readers on the barrier island know, we charge nothing – zero, zip, nada – for the 80-page newspaper we deliver each week to all 11,081 residential mailboxes in zip code 32963.

Meanwhile, the **Press Journal** keeps raising its subscription price – while giving our community less and less in the way of reporting. A subscription to the **Press Journal** now costs \$234 a year. What a bargain!

If 10 percent of the households who receive **Vero Beach 32963** were to send us a voluntary contribution of that amount, we could hire five (5) additional reporters!

Frankly, **Vero Beach 32963** would be an even better newspaper if we could afford to employ more reporters.

While our reporters are first-rate, there are only so many hours in the day. We do our best to keep up with the goings on at Vero Beach City Hall and with the County government, but we simply don't have the time to look into things at the School Department or the Health Department – both of which have long struck us as areas crying out for some investigative reporting.

Given our limited resources, it is little short of amazing that in the past year, **Vero Beach 32963** has been able to focus attention on the outrageous electric situation, to have killed the ill-conceived scheme to start a municipal employee health clinic, and to have exposed the millions the city has squandered on Boston consultants and attorneys.

But after more than a decade in which Vero Beach has been the beneficiary of no serious reporting by the local daily, there are literally dozens of situations begging for a closer examination by investigative reporters.

So we find ourselves asking, if the **Miami Herald** has the courage to experiment with a new approach as unusual as soliciting voluntary contributions, shouldn't we give it a try as well?

Well, we have for the moment decided to pass. It just doesn't feel right.

But we may be wrong about this. Things are changing. And we would like to invite you to tell us what you

think of the **Miami Herald** idea. Are we making a mistake in not offering you the opportunity to put up some money, and ask us for more? If readers want more investigative reporting of the many things that cry out for it in our community, shouldn't we be willing to do it?

At the same time, we don't want you to conclude your barrier island newspaper is on the same slippery slope as so many daily newspapers. With a highly literate beachside readership that likes the content we are providing, **Vero Beach 32963** is doing just fine.

But if enough of you are ready and eager to support more investigative journalism, we probably are willing to give the contribution approach a try. If you want to write a check in support of more digging into some of the strange goings on around here, well, we know how to dig.

As a first step, what we suggest is that you let us know what you think. Are you anxious to make a contribution to help fund more aggressive journalism? Either write us or email us at publisher@verobeach32963.com. We will report back in a few weeks on what you and your fellow readers are saying. ●

IT JUST KEEPS GETTING SADDER

As if you need another reason to become depressed about the local daily newspaper, here is its list of the most viewed articles on its website, TCPalm, in 2009 (we are not making this up).

1. Visitor defecates on Fort Pierce woman's porch.
2. Fort Pierce woman calls 911 three times when McNuggets run out.
3. Woman charged with solicitation of prostitution in Port Salerno.
4. Facebook for filthy rich' prospers despite bad economy.
5. 20-year-old dream taking shape in backyard.
6. Bag of cocaine 'shot out' of suspect's body at St. Lucie County gas station when he relaxed, deputies say.
7. Fort Pierce woman throws table leg through window, chokes boyfriend when he won't buy her more Natural Ice beer, police say.
8. Man arrested in Fort Pierce claims Iraq service entitles him to free M&M's.
9. Deputies: Man hits wife in head with bottle at school.
10. Tiger Woods' Jupiter Island home far from finished.

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Invite us to cover social and charitable events or Talk to us about news stories by calling 226-7924 or E-Mail us at editor@verobeach32963.com.

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Vero Beach 32963 is mailed each week during season – and every other week during the summer – to every occupied residential address in zip code 32963.

If you or someone you know living on the barrier island is not receiving Vero Beach 32963 by mail, please contact us so that we can immediately make arrangements for you to enjoy what has fast become the most widely read newspaper serving the barrier island.

While Vero Beach 32963 is increasingly widely available in the clubhouses of Grand Harbor, Oak Harbor, Regency Park and other communities on the mainland, a growing number of readers who do not live in zip code 32963 have asked if it can be mailed to their homes. We will be happy to mail each issue of Vero Beach 32963 to you anywhere in Florida for a one-time payment of \$59.95 (which doesn't even cover our postage and handling).

You can subscribe by either (1) mailing the address you would like the paper to be mailed to and your full credit card information (including three-digit access code and zip code to subscribe@verobeach32963.com, or stopping by our office at 4855 North A1A. Your copies of Vero Beach 32963 will come every week until May 13th 2010, when we resume publishing bi-weekly. For more information, please call us.

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1900± SF, Lanai, Wet Bar, Golf Views
213 Silver Moss Drive : \$820,000



NEW LISTING

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Partially Furnished, 2000± SF, Lake Views
453 Silver Moss Drive : \$879,000



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#396 - 2BR/2BA, 2400± SF : \$1,290,000
#294 - 3BR/3BA, 2700± SF : \$1,600,000



900 Beach Road Condominiums

#285 - 2BR/2BA, 2280± SF : \$1,260,000
#382 - 2BR/2BA, 2280± SF : \$1,290,000
#281 - Renov. 3+BR/3.5BA, 2600± SF : \$2,295,000



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310 Sabal Palm Lane	\$1,725,000
70 Paget Court	\$1,750,000
306 Island Creek Drive	\$1,995,000
460 Indian Harbor Road	\$2,100,000
751 Shady Lake Lane	\$2,300,000
290 John's Island Drive	\$2,300,000
20 Dove Shell Lane	\$2,300,000
561 Sea Oak Drive	\$2,450,000
389 Island Creek Drive	\$2,450,000
90 Dove Plum Road	\$2,600,000
71 Cowry Lane	\$2,700,000
120 Sago Palm Road	\$2,750,000
601 Sea Oak Drive	\$2,800,000
180 Orchid Way	\$2,950,000
220 Indian Harbor Road	\$2,950,000
580 Indian Harbor Road	\$2,950,000
311 Llwyd's Lane	\$2,995,000

351 Indian Harbor Road	\$3,375,000
140 North Shore Point	\$3,400,000
150 Clarkson Lane	\$3,650,000
370 Indian Harbor Road	\$3,650,000
241 Sea Oak Drive	\$3,690,000
360 Palmetto Point	\$3,850,000
310 Island Creek Drive	\$3,995,000
228 Island Creek Drive	\$4,050,000
640 Indian Harbor Road	\$4,450,000
330 Palmetto Point	\$4,650,000
391 Sabal Palm Lane	\$4,750,000
30 Gem Island Drive	\$5,450,000
21 Sago Palm Road	\$5,700,000
664 Ocean Road	\$5,750,000
255 Island Creek Drive	\$6,950,000
646 Ocean Road	\$7,500,000
801 Shady Lake Lane	\$7,500,000
141 Gem Island Drive	\$8,900,000
Homesites	
580 Sea Oak Drive	\$825,000
541 Sea Oak Drive	\$1,100,000

551 Sea Oak Drive	\$1,100,000
381 Sabal Palm Lane	\$1,250,000
225 Coconut Palm Road	\$1,750,000
270 John's Island Drive	\$2,300,000
13 Sea Court	\$3,775,000
60 Gem Island Drive	\$4,150,000
1 Sea Court	\$4,350,000
662 Ocean Road	\$4,900,000
810 Manatee Inlet	\$5,300,000
Townhouses, Cottages and Island House	
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777 Sea Oak Drive #720, 2BR/2BA	\$400,000
777 Sea Oak Drive #714, 2BR/2BA	\$450,000
431 Silver Moss Drive, #104	\$485,000
777 Sea Oak Drive #710, 3BR/3BA	\$525,000
111 John's Island Drive, #17	\$675,000
777 Sea Oak Drive #702, 3BR/3BA	\$685,000
777 Sea Oak Drive #725, 3BR/3BA	\$685,000
777 Sea Oak Drive #707, 3BR/3BA	\$695,000
401 Silver Moss Drive	\$695,000
777 Sea Oak Drive #701, 3BR/3BA	\$710,000

1111 John's Island Drive, #12	\$775,000
251 Silver Moss Drive	\$825,000
173 Silver Moss Drive	\$850,000
233 Silver Moss Drive	\$850,000
111 John's Island Drive, #4	\$975,000
111 John's Island Drive, #5	\$975,000
111 John's Island Drive, #19	\$1,775,000
Island House (590-660± SF efficiencies)	
#120	\$199,500
#117	(NEW) \$190,000
#118	(NEW) \$190,000
#151	\$250,000
#230	\$275,000
#210	\$287,500
#147	\$294,412
#121	\$295,510
#144	\$346,013
#224	\$395,000
#237	\$395,000
#235	\$445,000
#243	\$450,000

Condominiums

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600 Beach Road #331, 2BR/2BA	\$775,000
500 Beach Road #210, 2BR/2BA	\$795,000
450 Beach Road #322, 2BR/2BA	\$795,000
100 Ocean Road #111, 2BR/2BA	\$825,000
850 Beach Road #178, 2BR/2BA	\$905,000
700 Beach Road #158, 3BR/2BA	\$975,000
950 Beach Road #193, 3BR/2BA	\$1,000,000
850 Beach Road #277, 2BR/2BA	\$1,200,000

100 Ocean Road #112, 3BR/2BA	\$1,275,000
500 Beach Road #203, 3BR/2BA	\$1,275,000
500 Beach Road #104, 3BR/2BA	\$1,300,000
800 Beach Road #172, 3BR/3BA	\$1,350,000
300 Ocean Road #1E, 3BR/3BA	\$1,400,000
700 Beach Road #148, 3BR/2BA	\$1,400,000
700 Beach Road #149, 3BR/2BA	\$1,400,000
500 Beach Road #211, 3BR/2BA	\$1,550,000
500 Beach Road #311, 3BR/3BA	\$1,600,000
250 Ocean Road #3C, 3BR/3BA	\$1,600,000
850 Beach Road #375, 3BR/4.5BA	\$2,275,000
1050 Beach Road #3H, 3BR/4BA	\$2,400,000
400 Ocean Road #184, 3BR/4.5BA	\$2,950,000
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800 Beach Road #169 & #371	110 Coconut Palm Road	130 Sago Palm Road	291 Sabal Palm Lane	210 Live Oak Way
600 Beach Road #135 & #330	241 Sundial Court	500 Beach Road #109	281 Sea Oak Drive	1150 Beach Road #3L
111 John's Island Drive #3, 4, 5 & 10	750 Beach Road #303	100 Ocean Road #212	950 Beach Road #391	353 Silver Moss Drive
400 Beach Road #133, #222 & #228	381 Sabal Palm Lane	250 Ocean Road #2C	321 Island Creek Drive	231 Silver Moss Drive
450 Beach Road #120, #223 & #324	650 Indian Harbor Road	1000 Beach Road #295	400 Ocean Road #183	652 Ocean Road
351 Sea Oak Drive	401 Indian Harbor Road	850 Beach Road #375	191 Terrapin Point	



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AFTER HEALTH CARE, WE NEED SENATE REFORM

BY EZRA KLEIN, WASHINGTON POST



PHOTO: EPA

On Dec. 8, 1964, Mike Manatos wrote a letter that explains what's wrong with the Senate in 2009.

This wasn't, of course, the subject of his letter. Manatos was no futurist; he was Lyndon Johnson's liaison to the Senate, and he was writing to update his bosses on Medicare's chances in the aftermath of the 1964 election. Surveying the incoming crop of senators, Manatos counted a solid majority in favor of the president's effort. "If all our supporters are present and voting we would win by a vote of 55 to 45," he predicted.

That letter would never be written now. In today's Senate, 55 votes isn't enough to "win," or anything close to it; it's enough to get you five votes away from the 60 votes you need to shut down a filibuster. Only then, in most cases, can a law be passed.

The modern Senate is a radically different institution than the Senate of the 1960s, and the dysfunction exhibited in its debate over health care -- the absence of bipartisanship, the use of the filibuster to obstruct progress rather than protect debate, the ability of any given senator to hold the bill hostage to his or her demands -- has convinced many, both inside and outside the chamber, that it needs to be fixed.

This might seem an odd moment to argue that the Senate is fundamentally broken and repairs should top our list of priorities. After all, the Senate passed a \$900 billion health-care bill last week.

But consider the context: Arlen Specter's defection from the Republican Party earlier this year gave Democrats 60 votes in the Senate -- a larger majority than either party has had since the '70s. Democrats also controlled the House and the presidency, and were working in the aftermath of a financial crisis that occurred on a Republican president's watch.

This was a test of whether a party could govern when everything was stacked in its favor.

The answer seems to be, well, not really. The Democrats ended up focusing on health-care reform's low-hanging fruit: the bill the Senate ultimately passed does much more to increase coverage than it does to address the considerably harder problem of cost control, it strengthens the existing private insurance system and it does not include a public insurance option.

And Democrats still could not find a single Republican vote, which meant they had to give Nebraska a coupon entitling it to a free Medicaid expansion and hand Joe Lieberman a voucher that's good for anything he wants. If the Senate cannot govern effectively even when history conspires to free its hand, then it cannot govern.

To understand why the modern legislative process is so bad, why every Senator seems able to demand a king's ransom in return for his or her vote and no bill ever seems to be truly bipartisan, you need to understand one basic fact: The government can still function if the minority party has either the incentive to make the majority fail, or the power to make the majority fail. It cannot function if the minority party has both.

In decades past, the parties did not feel they had both. Cooperation was the Senate's custom, if not its rule. But in the 1990s, Newt Gingrich, then the minority whip of the House, and Bob Dole, then the minority leader of the Senate, realized they did have both. A strategy of relentless obstruction brought then-president Bill Clinton to his knees, as the minority party discovered it had the tools to make the majority party fail.

Unfortunately, both parties have followed Gingrich's playbook ever since. According to UCLA political scientist Barbara Sinclair, about 8 percent of major bills faced a filibuster in the 1960s. This decade, that jumped to 70 percent. The problem with the minority party continually making the majority party fail, of course, is that it means neither party can ever successfully govern the country.

Jeff Merkley, a freshman Democratic Senator from Oregon and former speaker of Oregon's House of Representatives, spoke to this issue in an interview last week.

"When you use the word filibuster," he said, "most of us in America envision it as the ability to speak at length and even delay progress by taking hours. I count myself among those Americans." He sighed. "But it's not a filibuster anymore. It's a supermajority requirement. And when that becomes commonly used, it's a recipe for paralysis."

Tom Harkin, the veteran Iowa Democrat who chairs the Senate's influential Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, was even more dismayed by recent events. His efforts to curb the filibuster began in the 1990s, when he was in the minority. "People say I only worry about this because I'm in the majority," he said Tuesday. "But I come at this with clean hands!"

Back then, his partner in the effort to reform the filibuster was Lieberman. "The filibuster," Lieberman said at the time, "has become not only an obstacle to accomplishment here, but also a symbol of a lot that ails Washington today." Lieberman has since stopped worrying and learned to love obstructionism. But Harkin hasn't.

This isn't just a Democratic concern, though Democrats, being in the majority, are the ones raising it now. In 2005, Senate majority leader Bill Frist nearly shut the chamber down over the Democratic habit of filibustering George W. Bush's judicial nominees. "This filibuster is nothing less than a formula for tyranny by the minority," he said at the time.

Potential solutions abound. Harkin would eliminate the filibuster while still protecting the minority's right to debate. Under his proposal, bills would initially require 60 votes to pass. Three days later, that threshold would fall to 57. Three

days after that, 54. And three days after that, 51.

Merkley has some other ideas. One is to attract Republicans to the project by phasing the filibuster out six or eight years in the future, when we can't predict which party will initially benefit.

There is real promise in Merkley's approach. The danger of reforming the Senate is that, like health-care reform before it, it comes to seem a partisan issue. It isn't. Members of both parties often take the fact that neither Democrats nor Republicans can govern effectively to mean they benefit from the filibuster half the time. In reality, the country loses the benefits of a working legislature all the time.

But members of both parties have become attached to this idea that they can block objectionable legislation even when they're relatively powerless. This is evidence, perhaps, that both parties are so used to the victories of obstruction that they have forgotten their purpose is to amass victories through governance.

Either way, a world in which the majority can pass its agenda is a better one, a place where the majority party is held accountable for its ideas and not for the gridlock and inaction furnished by the Senate's rules.

Law professor Lawrence Lessig often compares the dysfunctions of the Congress to the woes of an alcoholic. An alcoholic, he says, might be facing cirrhosis of the liver, the loss of his family and terrible debt. Amidst all that, the fact that he drinks before bed at night might not seem his worst problem.

But it is the first problem, the one that must be solved before he can solve any of the others. America, too, is facing more dramatic problems than the Senate rules: A coming budget crisis, catastrophic climate change and an archaic and inefficient tax system, to name a few. But none will be solved until we fix the dysfunctions of the Senate. ●

Obama's smart pick for cyber security czar: Howard Schmidt



BY THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

After far too long, President Obama finally appointed a "cyberczar" last week. Howard Schmidt has the credentials to coordinate the government's defense against digital sabotage. Will he also have the authority?

Appropriately, his experience is as deep as the cyberthreat is wide. Mr. Schmidt has been involved with cybersecurity in government (the George W. Bush administration), in the private sector (at eBay and Microsoft), in law enforcement (at the FBI), and internationally (heading up a nonprofit dedicated to this problem). He has both technical and policy know-how.

He also served in the military, which this month confirmed that Iraqi insurgents learned to intercept video feeds from unmanned drones. (The signals have since been secured.)

Schmidt's job is immense -- to orchestrate the military and civilian branches of the federal government as they try to ward off cyberattacks from hackers, terrorists, governments, criminals, and others. That translates, for instance, into preventing the disabling of electric, transportation, financial, and other critical networks.

Cyberattacks on public and private digital systems in the US are increasing. In 2006, the Pentagon counted 6 million attempted intrusions on its computers; last year, it was 360 million. US businesses have also lost billions of dollars in intellectual property to hackers.

In November, the Government Accountabili-

ty Office found a 200 percent increase in reports of cybersecurity "incidents" at federal agencies between 2006 and 2008. The GAO warned of "significant weaknesses" and "pervasive vulnerabilities" at the agencies.

While Americans may picture Afghanistan when they think of war, cyberattacks on the US occur daily. On Tuesday, the Wall Street Journal reported that the FBI is investigating a hacking into Citigroup Inc. that resulted in the theft of tens of millions of dollars -- supposedly by Russian criminals. (Citigroup disputed the story, and said no one had lost any money.)

Earlier this year the media reported foreign infiltration of the electric grid, penetration of Air Force air-traffic control, and the theft of top-secret information on a fighter jet.

Back in May, when President Obama announced he would create an office of cybersecurity in the White House and appoint a cyberczar, he promised to make protecting digital networks a "national security priority." But he has had a hard time filling this czar job. Reportedly dozens of candidates were approached, but many bowed out because of concern of too much responsibility without real authority.

Schmidt enters his job as key agencies move forward with big plans to improve cybersecurity.

The Pentagon's has a new Cyber Command meant to manage its offensive capabilities (disruption of enemy systems) and defensive ones. The State Department, in a reversal from the previous administration, is talking with Russia and the United Nations about "cyber arms control" and international strengthening of Internet security.

The US Department of Homeland Security has just opened a cyberwatch-and-warning center for the nation's technology infrastructure. Meanwhile, more than a dozen bills related to cybersecurity have been introduced in Congress.

Schmidt will have to make sure these various efforts work together -- and work, period. But as if that weren't enough, he'll need to put his imprint on a new national strategy for cybersecurity.

As this challenge balloons, the government may have to take a more hands-on approach -- for instance, setting cyber-safety standards for the technology sector just as it eventually did for the auto industry.

All of this is a tall order, not doable unless the new cyberchief is perceived as acting on behalf of the commander in chief. The White House insists that Schmidt will have regular and direct access to the president from his office at the National Security Council. Mr. Obama will have to show that this is true, or else his cyberczar will be a czar in name only. ●

Oil prices top \$78 a barrel – double the cost of a year ago



BY RON SCHERER, CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, PHOTO: EPA

Energy traders are blaming the cold weather for a late-year rise in the prices of crude oil and natural gas. Yes, the freeze that has extended from the Midwest to the mid-Atlantic states is helping to boost demand for anything that takes the chill out of the house. The result: Natural-gas prices have soared 78 percent in the past 30 days, and even home heating oil is up 2.5 percent. The price of a barrel of oil is now more than \$78 – about double the price of a year ago. With oil prices looking to head higher, 2009 will mark the biggest one-year gain in the price of crude since 1999. Oil is up over 75 percent so far

in 2009, fueled by the economic recovery which is expected to boost oil demand. According to AAA, the price of a gallon of gasoline is \$2.58, compared with \$1.65 a year ago. “The rising energy cost is about \$70 billion out of our purchasing power,” says David Wyss, chief economist for Standard & Poor’s in New York. “While it’s not like [the summer of 2008] when gasoline hit \$4 a gallon, it’s a lot of money – about half the amount of the proposed new stimulus bill.” In the case of oil, one reason for rising prices is a surprise decrease of 4 million barrels in the US inventory. “Some of the rise is probably related to the cold

weather and the heating-oil demand,” says Phil Flynn, a Chicago-based senior market analyst at PFG Best. But much of problem, he adds, was the weather-related closure of the Houston Ship Channel, which kept tankers from unloading oil.

“A lot of the problem seemed to be an import problem in the Gulf Coast, which I think will be resolved as the weather improves,” Mr. Flynn says.

But east of the Mississippi, the weather is not expected to improve anytime soon. Arctic temperatures will be around for at least the next two weeks, says AccuWeather meteorologist Paul Pastelok in State College, Pa.

“There might be a day or two when it goes back to normal, but most places east of the Mississippi will be below normal,” he says.

In New York, he says, temperatures will be five or six degrees colder than normal over the next 15 days. It’s even worse for Baltimore and Washington, where it will be seven or eight degrees below normal. Chicago will be five degrees colder than normal.

“On top of that ... it’s cold not just here, but in Europe and Asia,” Mr. Pastelok says. The colder weather in those places could also increase demand for energy.

Energy traders are watching more than just the weather. Recently, another factor has been whether the US dollar was rising or falling. When the dollar has dropped, traders have bought commodities, such as oil, as a store of value. That has sent the price of oil up.

Yet now, says energy analyst Mike Fitzpatrick of MF Global in New York, traders are watching the dollar-oil relationship in terms of the economy.

“If the dollar rises because buyers [of US dollars] think the US economy is coming back, then oil will rise,” Mr. Fitzpatrick says. “But if the dollar rises because of rising Treasury yields – reflecting concern about inflation and the huge amount of re-financing [of Treasuries] that has to be done – oil will go down in price.”

If interest rates rise, the cost of borrowing will rise for businesses, he reasons. This would ultimately depress demand for oil. ●

Wall Street bailout – the great sideshow of 2009

BY ROBERT B. REICH, Los Angeles Times

In September 2008, as the worst of the financial crisis engulfed Wall Street, George W. Bush issued a warning: “This sucker could go down.” Around the same time, as Congress hashed out a bailout bill, New Hampshire Sen. Judd Gregg, the leading Republican negotiator of the bill, warned: “If we do not do this, the trauma, the chaos and the disruption to everyday Americans’ lives will be overwhelming, and that’s a price we can’t afford to risk paying.”

In less than a year, Wall Street was back. The five largest remaining banks are today larger, their executives and traders richer, their strategies of placing large bets with other people’s money no less bold than before the meltdown. The possibility of new regulations emanating from Congress has barely inhibited the Street’s exuberance.

But if Wall Street is back on top, the everyday lives of large numbers of Americans continue to be subject to trauma, chaos and disruption.

It is commonplace among policymakers to fervently and sincerely believe that Wall Street’s financial health is not only a precondition for a prosperous real economy but that when the former thrives, the latter will necessarily follow. Few fictions of modern economic life are more assiduously defended than the central importance of the

Street to the well-being of the rest of us, as has been proved in 2009.

Inhabitants of the real economy are dependent on the financial economy to borrow money. But their overwhelming reliance on Wall Street is a relatively recent phenomenon. Back when middle-class Americans earned enough to be able to save more of their incomes, they borrowed from one another, largely through local and regional banks. Small businesses also did.

It’s easy to understand economic policymakers being seduced by the great flows of wealth created among Wall Streeters, from whom they invariably seek advice.

But if 2009 has proved anything, it’s that the bailout of Wall Street didn’t trickle down to Main Street. Mortgage delinquencies continue to rise. Small businesses can’t get credit. And people everywhere, it seems, are worried about losing their jobs. Wall Street is the only place where money is flowing and pay is escalating.

The real locus of the problem was never the financial economy to begin with, and the bailout of Wall Street was a sideshow. The real problem was on Main Street, in the real economy. Before the crash, much of America had fallen deeply into unsustainable debt because it had no other way to maintain its standard of living.

President Obama and his economic team have

been telling Americans we’ll have to save more in future years, spend less and borrow less from the rest of the world, especially from China. This is necessary and inevitable, they say, in order to “re-balance” global financial flows. China has saved too much and consumed too little, while we have done the reverse.

In truth, most Americans did not spend too much in recent years, relative to the increasing size of the overall American economy. They spent too much only in relation to their declining portion of its gains.

The year 2009 will be remembered as the year when Main Street got hit hard. Don’t expect 2010 to be much better – that is, if you live in the real economy. The administration is telling Americans that jobs will return next year, and we’ll be in a recovery. I hope they’re right. But I doubt it. Too many Americans have lost their jobs, incomes, homes and savings. That means most of us won’t have the purchasing power to buy nearly all the goods and services the economy is capable of producing.

As long as the great divide between America’s have-mores and have-lesses continues to widen, the Great Recession won’t end – at least not in the real economy. ●

Robert Reich, Secretary of Labor under President Clinton, is a professor at the University of California Berkeley

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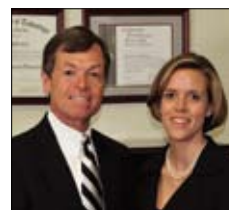
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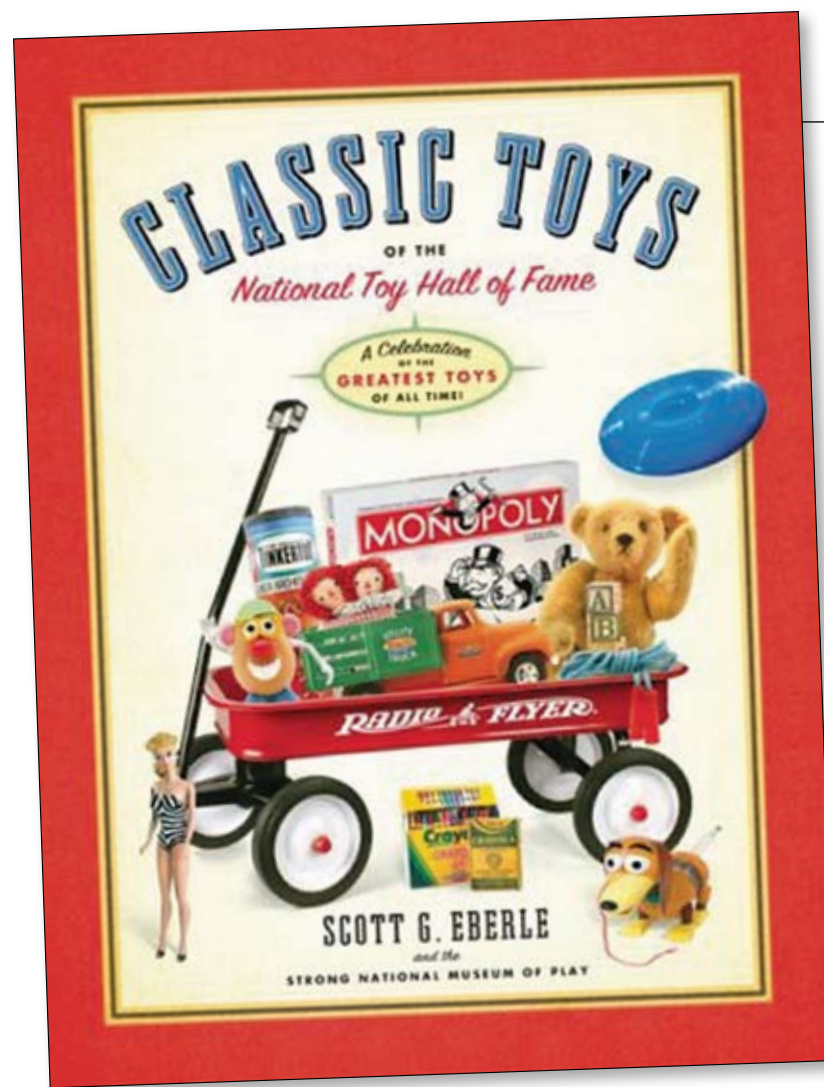


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a key benefit of parenthood too seldom acknowledged: Having children allows us to play with our old toys again.

Barbie and G.I. Joe, jigsaw puzzles, Lincoln Logs, Slinky, Lego, Mr. Potato Head, Tinkertoy, Etch A Sketch, jacks, Play-Doh, Monopoly, Silly Putty, kites, baby dolls, Lionel trains, teddy bears, Tonka trucks -- is there anything better in life than being a little kid on Christmas morning about to unwrap such treasures?

Let me answer that: Nope, there probably isn't. But second best is being a mother or father sitting down on a blustery afternoon to play Candy Land with a 3-year-old or curling up with her brother to read "The Little Engine That Could" or "Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel."

Except for the books, all these childhood favorites are included in the wonderful oversize album "Classic Toys." Anyone born in the 1940s and '50s, especially, will find here more Proustian moments than can be counted: Hula-Hoops, View-Masters, adjustable metal roller skates, an Easy-Bake Oven.

There's even a close-up of a pristine 64-count box of Crayola Crayons, the size that came with a built-in sharpener. You know the one: It's the box that you coveted when you had to make do with the broken crayons that your mother kept in an old tin cookie canister on a shelf next to the coloring books.

There's no doubt that "Classic Toys" will entice even the most hard-nosed Scrooge or hardhearted Grinch to waste a lot of valuable, billable time simply smiling over pictures of Radio Flyer wagons, wooden rocking horses and fancy Duncan yo-yos. Those of a more sentimental nature may simply find themselves aching with nostalgia. But the pictures are only half the story here.

Don't neglect Scott G. Eberle's fact-filled essays. "Today 90 percent of American girls own a Barbie doll," he writes. "The average American girl owns ten. If the billion Barbies sold to date were laid coil to toes, they would circle the earth more than seven times." After this striking opening, Eberle chronicles the iconic doll's history and metamorphoses, without shying away from the controversies. He even quotes "talking" Barbie's immortal line: "Math class is tough!"

Perhaps today's Barbie would know, though I didn't, that six Lego blocks can combine in 102,981,500 ways. Or that the word yo-yo was given to the toy by a Filipino, and that it means "come, come" in Tagalog.

Nor was I aware that architect Frank Lloyd Wright's son John Lloyd Wright was the genius behind Lincoln Logs. But I do know, from rueful experience, all about "steelies," which came from truck roller-bearings and could smash your ordinary cat's-eye marbles to smithereens.

As Eberle stresses, many of the classic toys are also the simplest. One of the unexpected charms of this book lies in extended entries on the cardboard box and the stick.

Eberle writes of the former, so suitable for being transformed into a fort, a robot or a sled: "In the days before recycling took hold, before hurried deliverymen used box cutters to reduce a cardboard container to flat sheets and trucked them away, a new appliance turned into a neighborhood event for kids. . . . Because boxes cost nothing and also because there is no such thing as making a mistake with discarded cardboard, kids could manhandle these boxes, experiment with them."

As many parents will acknowledge, younger children often find a present's packaging more exciting than the present itself.

Eberle explains the significance of this in a passage that also summarizes the vital importance of free play: "Creativity is the key to why the cardboard box can join a list of most memorable toys. Toys that challenge kids' imagination, toys that strengthen their brains and bodies, toys that invite cooperation and competition over and over again are the toys that endure."

Eberle -- vice president for interpretation at the Strong National Museum of Play -- has obviously thought much and well about how childhood pastimes can influence our entire lives.

At the end of his essay on the erector set, he offers a moving meditation on the decline of tinkering in an age when scientific and technological advances have grown more and more corporate "and the effects of individual discovery, harder to discern." Once upon a time, a teenage boy could work on an old junker in the back yard and turn it into a sleek street machine -- no more.

Because of Eberle's sharply written text, "Classic Toys" isn't just a sentimental journey into childhood: It's also a work of incisive cultural commentary and a pleasure to read. Still, one may ask: Where are squirt guns and hand puppets and plastic airplane models and sand buckets? And what would childhood be like without chalk for drawing on sidewalks?

No doubt these and many other old reliables will be added to the National Toy Hall of Fame in years to come. But in the spirit of the season -- and of this fine book -- I am going to close by revealing the secret of happiness: Find a small child and either make, buy or borrow as many wooden blocks as you can.

You want lots of blocks, big ones ideally, and they should be of various lengths and include arches and other shapes. Then clear some space in the living room. You might even want to move some of the furniture. Now, together with your associate engineer, build the biggest and absolutely best castle ever. Take your time. Take all the time in the world. ●

Classic Toys of the National Toy Hall of Fame
By Scott G. Eberle and Strong National Museum of Play, Running Press, 264 pp., \$29.95
Reviewed by Michael Dirra
Book World

BOOK REVIEWS

BOOK REVIEWS



This very attractive book, with a cover that subtly recalls a Miles Davis LP from over half a century ago, is a study of how the notion of "cool," with all its elegance and purity, was co-opted by wretched American corporate types who, in true fairy-tale fashion, killed the cool golden goose that they thought was going to lay them golden eggs.

To put it more plainly, the author sets up his work with three short biographies of early jazz icons -- Bix Beiderbecke, Lester Young and Miles Davis -- and lays out what he thinks they stood for, both in their music and in the outer world.

Then, in just a few following chapters, he takes some dizzying leaps to places where readers may have trouble following him. Gioia's contention is that the mantle of cool passed all too soon from these aloof, original, extremely gifted musicians to another set of equally iconic but very public figures, such as Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods.

Jordan and Woods were hired to endorse Nike and General Motors, who traded on their images to sell running shoes and cars.

In an evolution of events no one expected, "square" personalities like Rush Limbaugh began to intone from the radio, Bob Dole endorsed Viagra, and comparatively unprepossessing contestants like Susan Boyle appeared on "Britain's Got Talent." That, according to the author, signified the death of the whole idea of "cool." (The term "square" is mine here. Gioia never uses it.)

The author is a musician, music historian and very active businessman. Thus, he's looking at the world through a pair of spectacles with two very different lenses: jazz and commerce. As far as I can see, his perceptions and insights about jazz, the actual "birth of the cool" (as a mind-set as well as a point of view about musicianship) are flawless.

His chapters on Beiderbecke, Young and Davis are what reviewers like to call lapidary; they are jewel-like,

particularly the pages about Miles playing with Charlie Parker in the early New York days. The prose is so strong, simple and evocative that it brings the reader almost to tears with longing.

What wonderful nights! What insanely terrific music! What a marvelously enchanted meeting of minds and sensibilities! The book is worth much more than its price for these three chapters alone.

Whenever I open a book about jazz, I turn to the index and look for Lennie Tristano, the incredible pianist; Lee Konitz, the luminous alto sax player; and Warne Marsh, the tenor player who captured some of the most beautiful sounds in the world. These three, coming roughly between Young and Davis, were the epitome of "cool," elusive, smart and aseptically pleasing.

They were far, far from famous -- that was part, I suppose, of what made them cool in the first place. They're here in these pages, very respectfully and accurately treated, which is one proof, I believe, that the author knows what he's talking about. And if I have trouble following his reasoning about American business, I'm sure it's my fault, not Gioia's.

But on Page 102, after having established the historical origins of the word "cool" as it pertains both to jazz and to American lifestyle, the author, without much warning or fanfare, begins to substitute "trend," "trendiness" and "trend-setting" for "cool."

So that while Davis used to play, for instance, with his back to the audience, and Lester Young, when he

didn't like a certain turn of events, would take a whisk broom from his pocket and brush off his shoulders and, according to a fellow musician, "was so quiet that when he talked each sentence came out like a little explosion" -- suddenly, this meticulous attention to a certain kind of personal manners turns into a heavy commercial drama having to do with Nike, Michael Jordan, those Air Jordans, the crass mercantile selling of image and then the making of billions of dollars.

What is "cool," anyway? Maybe it's Warne Marsh, almost totally obscure and penniless, coming in late to a fourth-rate Hollywood nightclub, playing like an angel with a couple of sidemen, but never speaking to or even acknowledging another human being. Then dying in an obscure San Fernando Valley nightclub, sliding off a

stool (as I heard the story) while playing "Out of Nowhere." Incomparably cool, in life and in death.

It's hard to see how this translates into running shoes or the Gap pushing T-shirts, but if the author says it does, I believe him. I would just say, though, that squares always existed side by side with cool, and the squares were always in the majority: Arthur Godfrey strumming his ukulele and singing "She's Too Fat for Me" was concurrent with Miles, not after him.

And although the author says that in the 1950s people were too cool to sing old songs, there was always Kate Smith shouting out "God Bless America" and hitting much the same vibe as Susan Boyle in 2009. Even in its heyday, the "cool," as a way of life, was followed only by a minority -- that's what made it cool.

I don't believe you can buy or sell "cool." As the author says, if you try, it dies in your hands. But is that whole mind-set actually, really, dead? I hope not, but who knows?

This double-vision book looks at an obscure branch of American vernacular music and pairs it with a particularly creepy branch of American advertising. It will force you to think about making connections you haven't made before. ●

The Birth and Death of the Cool
By Ted Gioia, Speck, 251 pp., \$25
Reviewed by Carolyn See, Book World

Why do people have children? There are, of course, multiple reasons. According to biology, we're just doing what comes naturally -- passing on our genes. The Old Testament commands us to be fruitful and multiply.

Historically, the family has provided the foundation of society, offspring serving as field hands for the farm or heirs to the business and the estate. Often peer pressure plays a role: All our friends start having babies, and we join the trend -- it seemed like a good idea at the time.

All these are cogent reasons to account for the mystery of why one day we're tooling around in a red Miata and the next we're driving to soccer games in a dented minivan. Still, all these sound, practical explanations for progeny do overlook one crucial element,

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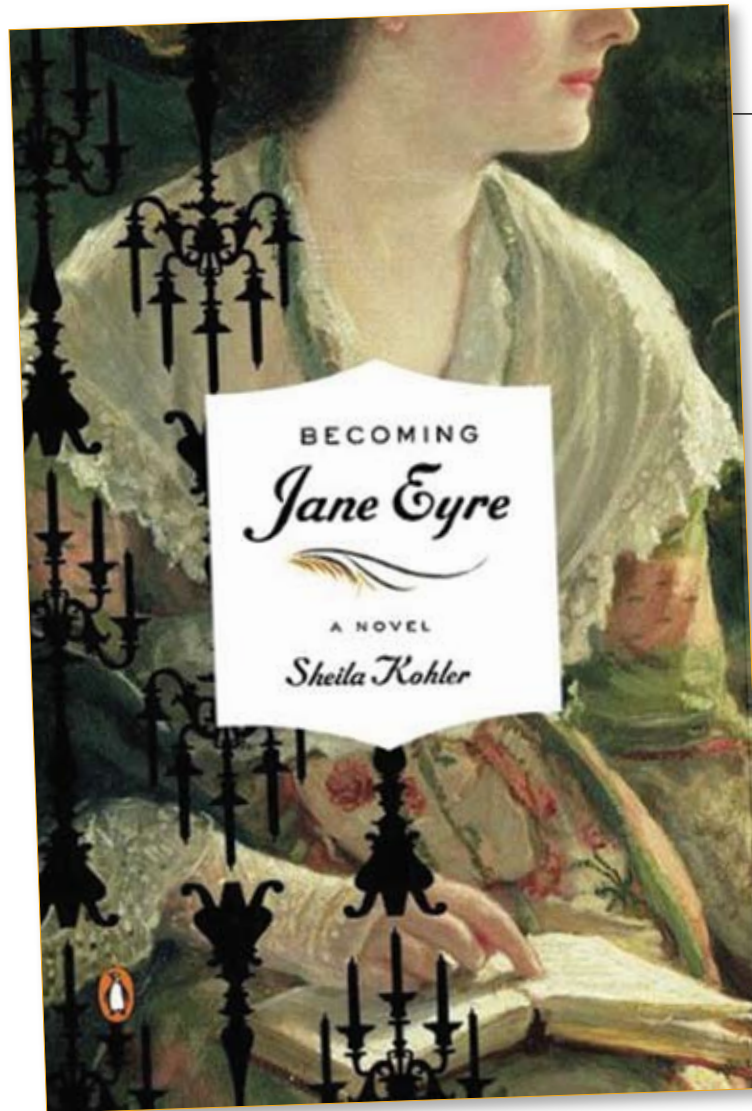
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most 70 years before the undead crawled into "Pride and Prejudice," and a new film version (sans zombies) is underway, starring Mia Wasikowska with Michael Fassbender as the brooding Mr. Rochester.

A fair number of talented writers have transformed Brontë's most famous novel into exceptionally creative and memorable books of their own: Daphne du Maurier's "Rebecca" (1938) generates almost as much devotion among certain circles as "Jane Eyre" itself; Jean Rhys's "Wide Sargasso Sea" (1966) is one of the classics of 20th-century feminist fiction; Jasper Fforde's "The Eyre Affair" (2001) launched his fantastical career.

And now we have this exquisite fictionalized biography of Brontë called "Becoming Jane Eyre."

If you know "Jane Eyre" and love it, don't deny yourself the pleasure of this intense little companion book. South African-born Sheila Kohler, who now teaches at Princeton, sinks deep into the details of Brontë's life to re-create the atmosphere of her tragic, cloistered family.

Parallels between Charlotte and her famous heroine are an irresistible subject of critical inquiry, and even if those parallels are sometimes drawn too baldly in "Becoming Jane Eyre," Kohler's novel remains a stirring exploration of the passions and resentments that inspired this 19th-century classic.

The story begins in a silence so complete that you can hear Charlotte's pencil scratching on paper. She's nursing her stern though needy father, who's recovering from eye surgery that has left him temporarily (they hope) blind.

The horror of her mother's long illness and death still hangs over this family, but there's a more recent cause for sadness: Charlotte's novel, "The Professor," has just been rejected, and the poet Robert Southey has written her a condescending note: "Literature cannot and should not be the business of a woman's life."

In desperation -- for money, for recognition, for a way out of "solitude, darkness, and despair!" -- Charlotte decides to try once more. "She dares to take up her pencil and write for the first time in her own voice," Kohler says. "She will write out of rage,

out of a deep sense of her own worth and of the injustice of the world's reception of her words. She will write about something she knows well: her passion."

The story begins in 1846 and runs until Charlotte's death nine years later, a remarkable period that saw her emerge from obscurity as the daughter of a Yorkshire clergyman to become one of the most celebrated writers of the day.

BOOK REVIEWS

Kohler's method is highly impressionistic, concentrating expansively on some moments while brushing over whole years elsewhere. The brief chapters sometimes concentrate on other characters, allowing Charlotte's perennially dying father (who outlived them all) to give his own anxious testimony, along with her sisters, Anne and Emily, and even a servant, who finds the dreary Brontë family hardly worth the wage.

But this story is always Charlotte's, and it's always quietly hypnotic. We follow her memories of that deadly boarding school we know as Lowood. We see her studying and then teaching in Brussels under the tutelage of a capricious but mesmerizing married man who stole Charlotte's heart and then cast it aside (William Hurt, Timothy Dalton, Orson Welles?).

And everywhere, we catch impassioned echoes of "Jane Eyre": "Do you think," Charlotte screams at her choleric teacher, "I don't feel what other people do, that I don't long for the same things as you!"

"Becoming Jane Eyre" is motivated largely by Charlotte's desperate thirst for revenge: "She will vanquish all those arrogant fools, all those hateful asses, who have passed her by without a glance. How they have humiliated her, again and again. . . . Let her employers get down on their fat knees and beg her pardon!"

Generations of smart, capable, overlooked women (and men) have responded to that pent-up anger, but Kohler also wants to give Brontë a larger, more noble purpose that makes her a forerunner of the feminist movement: "She would like to reach other women, large numbers of them. She would like to entertain, to startle, to give voice to what they hold in secret in their hearts, to allow them to feel they are part of a larger community of sufferers. She would like to show them all that a woman feels: the boredom of a life confined to tedious domestic tasks."

Kohler shows another side of Charlotte's life, too, the complicated tensions of living in close quarters with talented writers: Emily, Anne and Charlotte had made a pact to publish their works under a single pseudonym, Currer Bell, but the asymmetrical success of their books puts enormous pressure on that agreement.

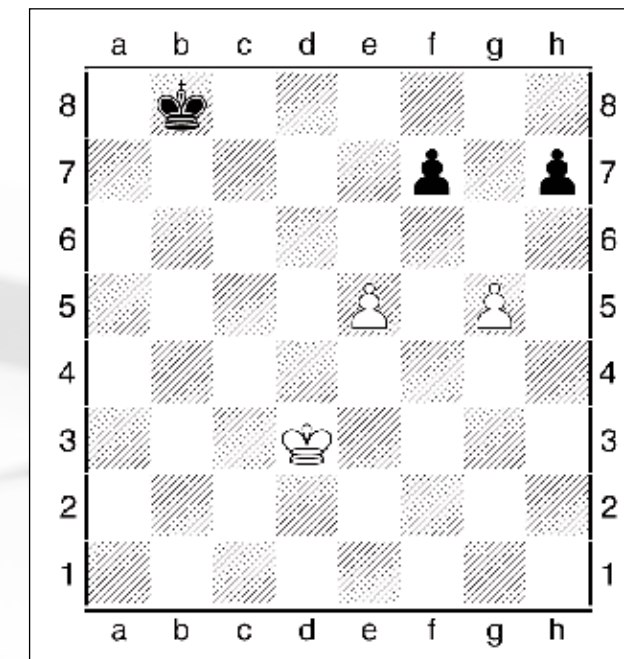
And then, of course, there's the even larger problem of their precocious, shamelessly spoiled brother, who first absorbs all their father's hopes and then inspires all his despair. Kohler depicts him as Heathcliff and the first Mrs. Rochester spun together, a vampiric young man full of charm but driven by addictions that threaten to drag this remarkable family into the flames.

And yet despite everything that befell the Brontës, Charlotte eventually attained some of the wealth and domestic happiness she imagined at the conclusion of "Jane Eyre."

If only, Dear Reader, real life would stay frozen at that triumphal moment of "The End." Kohler moves us swiftly and poignantly past that, into the haunting silence that swept over this windblown house when the last of those talented siblings was finally laid to rest. ●

Becoming Jane Eyre
By Sheila Kohler, Penguin, 234 pp., Paperback, \$15
Reviewed by Ron Charles
Book World

FOR THE LOVE OF CHESS BY HUMBERTO CRUZ - CHESS COLUMNIST



Grandmaster Pal Benko composed this "White to play and win" study from a local game.

County championship playoff ending featured in national magazine

An endgame that decided the 2009 Indian River County Chess Club rated championship is featured in this month's issue of Chess Life, the national magazine of the United States Chess Federation (see Web site www.uschess.org).

In his popular column "Endgame Lab," Grandmaster Pal Benko took the ending of the game between Harold Scott and me and turned it into a couple of endgame studies, composed but real-life-looking positions that illustrate one or more basic ideas or themes.

The actual ending occurred in the fourth and last game of a playoff match for the club rated championship. Scott, playing Black, had pawns on f7 and h7 and his King on d4. I had pawns on e5 and g5 and my King on f6. With Black to move, Scott found the only way to draw: ...Ke4.

Afterwards, searching through databases of 4-million-plus chess games, neither of us could find a game where the position occurred. Scott sent it to Benko for his consideration and the grandmaster, a virtuoso of endgame composition, published it and used the main idea to create a couple of studies, one of which is shown in today's diagram.

The main solution: 1. Ke4 Kc7 2. Kf5 Kc6 3. Kf6 Kd5 4. e6! fx6 5. Kg7 e5 6. Kxh7 e4 7. g6 e3 8. g7 e2 9. g8(Q)+ wins. (In the actual game, had Scott played ...Kd5 instead of ...Ke4, I would have won with e6!, the "pawn break" idea illustrated in the study).

Humberto Cruz is a United States Chess Federation correspondence chess master and certified tournament director. He can be reached at askhumberto@aol.com.

THE BRIDGE COLUMN BY PIETER VANBENNEKOM - BRIDGE COLUMNIST

Flustered Flo is an elegant, urbane widow who sells real estate in 55+ gated communities. Her husband died almost 10 years ago and her oldest son recently told her: "Mom, it's been long enough; it's time," and posted her profile on a dating site.

Flo was a tad disappointed that one of the few nibbles she got was from an elderly gentleman in Arkansas, who said his hobbies were tinkering with his classic pickup truck and hunting possum. She was glad to have the opportunity to engage in some more intellectual pursuits in her weekly duplicate pairs bridge tournament instead. Since her regular partner Loyal Larry was still unavailable, at the tournament director's urging, she agreed to play one more time with Desmond, although the last time she'd had occasion to dub him "Disloyal Desmond" in a fit of frustration.

She and Desmond were doing pretty well this time -- until they came up against Flo's eternal nemesis, Smug Sam, and his partner, Shy Shem, in the diagrammed deal. Flo was sitting North and Desmond was South. Shy Shem was West and Smug Sam was East. Both sides vulnerable; South Dealer.

The bidding: South Pass, West 3 Spades, North Double, East 4 Spades. All pass.

The 4 Spades contract went Down 2 Vulnerable Not Doubled for just a 200-plus score for Flo and Desmond. North-South collected two tricks in each of the minor suits and one Heart for a total of five.

But the real fireworks started in the post-mortem. Flo was very unhappy to see that she'd gotten a bottom on the hand -- and therefore a tops for Sam and Shem, which helped them place first over-all in the tournament. Every other time the hand was played, North-South got the contract in Hearts, most often in 4 Hearts, making one or two overtricks, although one pair actually bid and made the 6 Hearts.

Against 6 Hearts, that West shifted to a Diamond on the second trick after collecting his Ace of Spades, catching his partner's Jack in a finesse and thereafter the small Slam was cold.

"With my double on his 3 Spades I really wanted you to bid," Flo scolded her partner afterwards.

"I was going to bid 4 Hearts if Sam hadn't raised to 4 Spades," Desmond feebly tried to defend himself. "But jumping in at the 5 Level with a suit to the 8 was a little rich for me."

"Sure, Sam's raise to 4 Spades was a good tactic to scare us off -- typically something Sam would do," replied Flo. "But you shouldn't have let him. Say 5 Hearts. With my double, I was goin' huntin'."

Games

About possums and pickup trucks

NORTH			
♠	J 7 3	♥	A K Q 9
♦	A K 9 6	♣	9 6
♠	Q 4	♥	J 10 3
♦	J 5 4 3	♣	K J 7 5
SOUTH			
♠	2	♥	8 7 6 5 4
♦	8 2	♣	Q 10 7
♠	10 4 2	♥	A Q 8 3
♦	2	♣	

I didn't read Charlotte Brontë's "Jane Eyre" until I was an adult, but I still reacted with all the whiny complaints of a 14-year-old boy. Unfortunately, I was teaching it to 14-year-old boys at the time, so I had to feign a certain amount of enthusiasm.

But a funny thing happened on the way to education: While John Knowles's "A Separate Peace" grew thinner and sillier to me every year, "Jane Eyre" blossomed into one of my favorites. With the plot's smoldering melodrama, the heroine's boundless suffering ("Unjust! Unjust!") and those outrageous villains, it's a captivating book, a chance to luxuriate in your own private fantasies of aggrieved victimhood.

Adaptations of Brontë's work haven't reached the fever pitch of Jane Austen knockoffs, but "Jane Eyre" got zombies in a 1943 Val Lewton horror movie, al-

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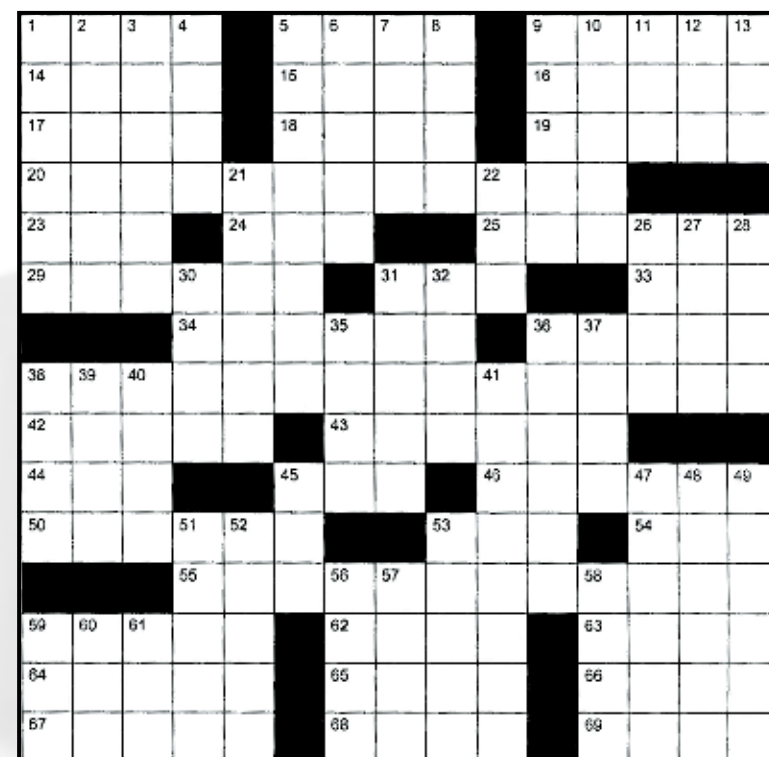
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NATE

Crossword

SOLUTIONS TO LAST ISSUE ON PAGE 75

GO TEAM GO



The Christian Science Monitor | By A.J. Santora | Edited by Charles Preston

ACROSS

- 1 Asian desert
- 5 Comics' Andy
- 9 Bricklayer
- 14 Toward the mouth
- 15 Played in unison
- 16 Up there
- 17 One of the Jackson five
- 18 Sound
- 19 Restaurant stop
- 20 Last-ditch play
- 23 Printer's need
- 24 Master
- 25 Say it again
- 29 Social room
- 31 Kind of ski
- 34 Force
- 36 "Blue ___ Shoes"
- 38 The ultimate in football
- 42 Entreat
- 43 MN ___ Range
- 44 Teen follower
- 45 ___ Paese
- 46 For shame!
- 50 Body muscle
- 53 Prickly case
- 54 Donkey in Dijon
- 55 Monday morning pundits

- 59 Summer TV fare
- 62 Desertlike
- 63 Superman's love
- 64 Of an acid
- 65 Gossip maven Barrett
- 66 Former Atlanta arena
- 67 Electron tube
- 68 Nervous
- 69 Walk in water

DOWN

- 1 Kind of novel
- 2 Late author Fallaci
- 3 Dyed fabrics
- 4 Hero
- 5 Underground passage-way
- 6 Love a lot
- 7 Insignificant
- 8 Little Bo sound?
- 9 Pool shot
- 10 Shame
- 11 The sun in Spain
- 12 Eggs: L.
- 13 Edward, for short
- 21 Estates
- 22 Gallery fare
- 26 Copied
- 27 Pop drink
- 28 Long, of Louisiana
- 30 Cools off
- 31 Precious one
- 32 House add-ons
- 35 Fleshy fruit
- 36 Outskirts area
- 37 Apartment, to a realtor
- 38 Set-to
- 39 Craving
- 40 Ball ___ hammer
- 41 Part of SNL
- 45 Swimsuit top
- 47 Puget Sound city
- 48 Severe
- 49 Comedienne O'Shea
- 51 Ocean resident
- 52 Light weight
- 53 Person
- 56 Hard to find
- 57 Trampled, with on
- 58 In the rigging: naut.
- 59 Fishpole
- 60 Yale male
- 61 Classic car

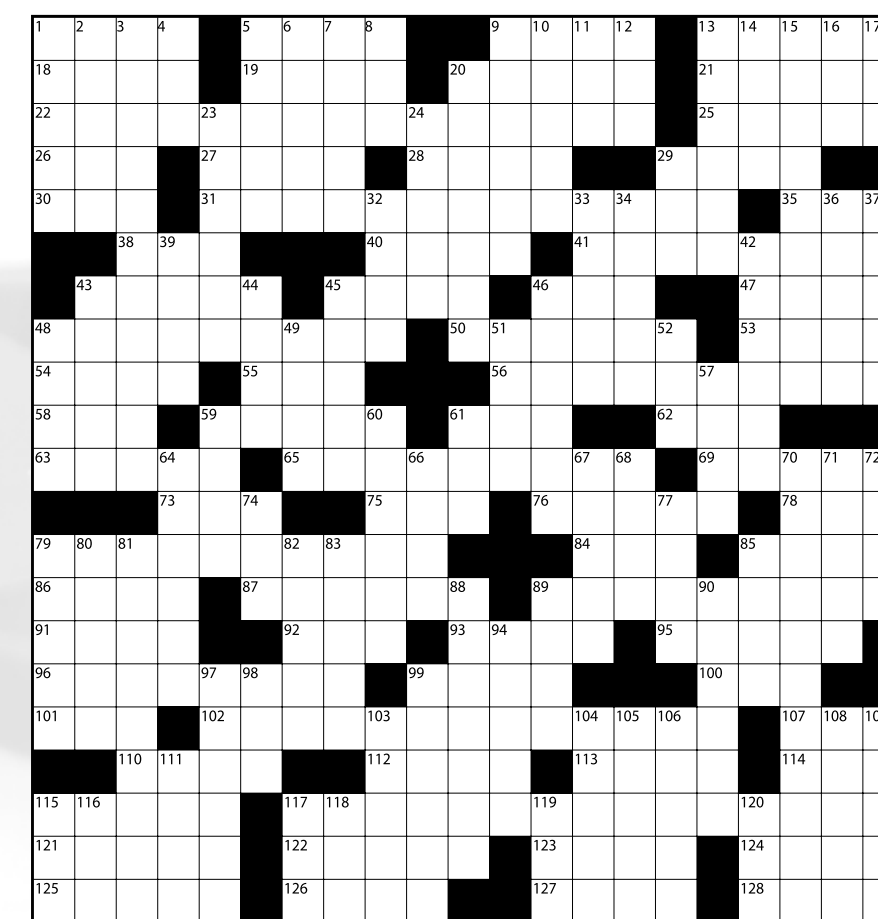
NOTE: The crossword puzzle turns 96 years old tomorrow (Dec. 21), so here's a puzzle celebrating the first word across in that first 1913 brainteaser.

ACROSS

- 1 "Dollar Diplomacy" president
- 5 Inventor's middle name
- 9 Key of Beethoven's Symphony No. 1: abbr.
- 13 Castaway creations
- 18 Hosp. areas
- 19 Sodium hydroxide, in lab shorthand
- 20 Perfect-season coach
- 21 ___ opportunity
- 22 Reference duo
- 25 Big bay NE of Maine
- 26 Monk's title
- 27 Bygone avian
- 28 Steinbeck title word
- 29 XXXI tripled, plus X
- 30 Uncle who wants you
- 31 Like George or Kramer on "Seinfeld"
- 35 You might get it when you're out
- 38 Pellet gun ammo
- 40 Lap dog, informally
- 41 Local self-government
- 43 Collector's item
- 45 Mail courtesy, briefly
- 46 Gathered dust
- 47 Norway's patron saint
- 48 Reality show pioneer, perhaps
- 50 Sail material, often
- 53 Pathfinding puzzle
- 54 Blow a mean horn
- 55 Code-cracking org.
- 56 1996 gangster film starring Christopher Walken
- 58 Hosp. areas
- 59 Goofs off
- 61 "So ___"
- 62 Pine goo
- 63 Andy on "Taxi"
- 65 Beach Boys hit
- 69 Deputized bunch
- 73 ___ festive mood
- 75 It's poured in pints
- 76 Stews
- 78 Put a jinx on
- 79 Carnival treat
- 84 Connelly's title
- 85 Disorderly slack
- 86 Author Hubbard
- 87 Have a cross ___
- 89 Beach-movie fave
- 91 Pod veggie
- 92 What's missing from Vegas?
- 93 Deity of desire
- 95 Name of the dog in "The Family Circle"
- 96 Stages, as a Civil War battle
- 99 Political coalition
- 100 Striped official
- 101 E.T. on TV
- 102 Icon of samurai cinema
- 107 Follow follower
- 110 Man, in Italian
- 112 Flaky mineral
- 113 Gen. Robert ___
- 114 Bullet-buying grp.
- 115 Type of bat used in baseball practice
- 117 From who-knows-where
- 121 Vicuna's environs
- 122 Chancy choices
- 123 He's Harvey in "Milk"
- 124 Puny piglet
- 125 Positive feature
- 126 Calls and raises
- 127 Rock extractions
- 128 Park Avenue pooch

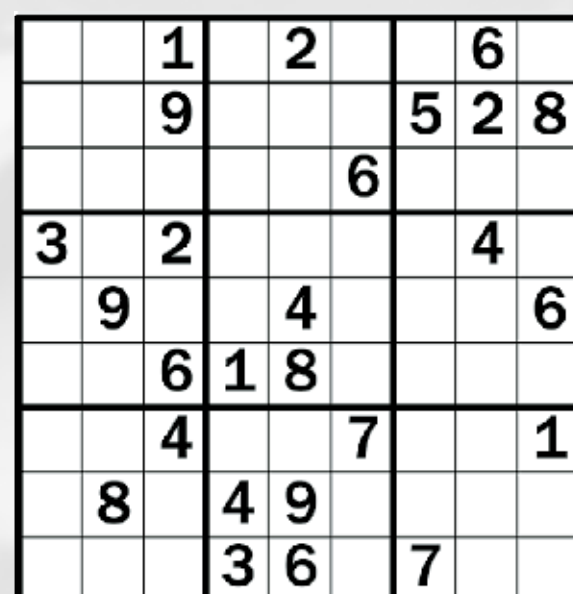
DOWN

- 1 Squabbles
- 2 Legend creator
- 3 Tightrope walker
- 4 Disapproving sound
- 5 Bother
- 6 Alan and Cheryl
- 7 A ___ silence
- 8 Troubleshooter's word
- 9 "___ and immaculate in every thought" (Shak.)
- 10 Plex prefix
- 11 Word with pro or star
- 12 Madison or Monroe: abbr.
- 13 Send out a new 1040
- 14 85 Down, in Hermosillo
- 15 Railway of suspended cable cars
- 16 Little bit
- 17 Like some grins
- 20 Ruined one's meal?
- 23 Includes, as a tip
- 24 Mother-daughter hand-me-downs?
- 29 Spy device, briefly
- 32 ___ the crack of dawn
- 33 Site of many Chicago touchdowns?
- 104 Not as many
- 105 Arm bones
- 106 Bright aquarium fish
- 108 Crime scene find
- 109 Year-end visitor
- 111 S-shaped molding
- 115 Flying monitor: abbr.
- 116 Young ___
- 117 Tree ornament shape, often
- 118 "A pox on thee!"
- 119 Parque zoológico denizen
- 120 Savings option



PUZZLE PARTY
By Merl Reagle

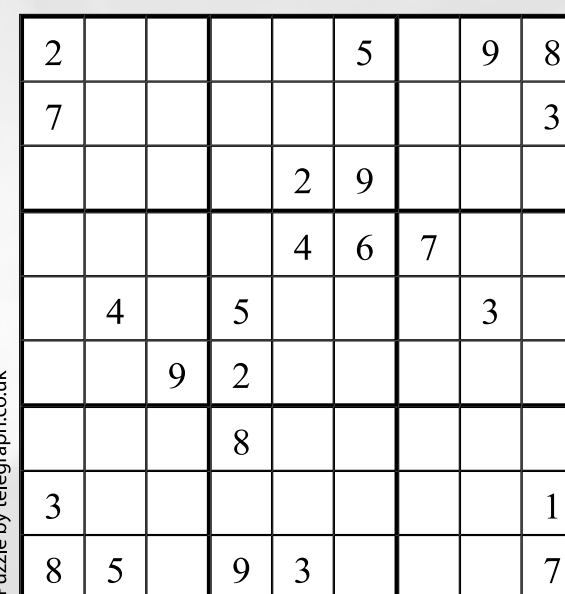
Sudoku



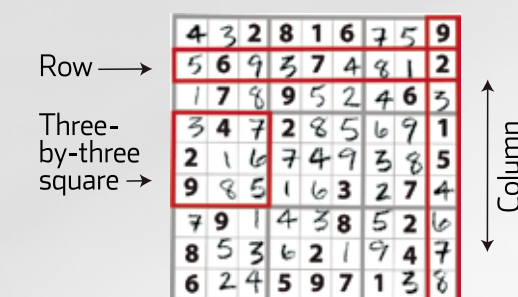
★★★★☆

How to do Sudoku:


Fill in the grid so the numbers 1 through 9 appear just once in every column, row and three-by-three square. See example (right).



★★★★★

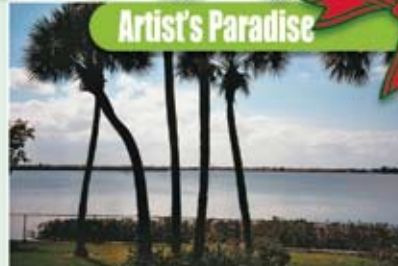


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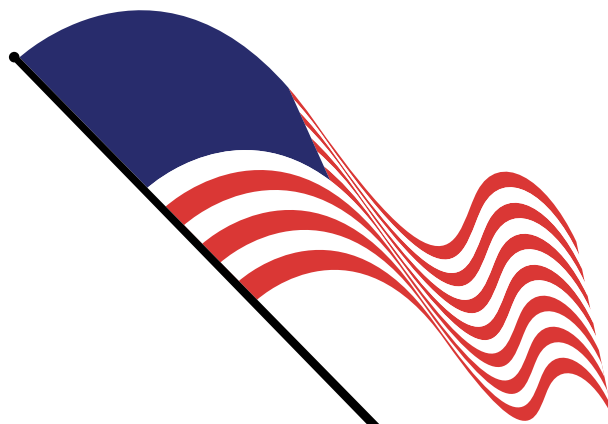
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Peace On Earth

by Jay McNamara



You might think from what you hear and see that the entire world is at war. Even though we are leaving a decade of disasters, there is hope that we might achieve some sense of world peace down the road. In fact, using the U.N. definition of war, there are three ongoing ones, Afghanistan/Pakistan, Iraq and Somalia. The drug war in Mexico has killed a slew of people, too and there are a half dozen conflicts that don't qualify, killing less than 1,000 people per year.

I have been a student of warfare since I was introduced to the subject courtesy of the U. S. Marines. As you can imagine, this is something about which the Corps is knowledgeable, having been in a war on average every seven years since the nation's beginnings. That's a ton of history, and a ton of wars. My advanced degree in the subject occurred in an unlikely manner.

What could be a better room upgrade than moving from a tent in the boondocks to a suite in the generals' quarters? I can't think of any, but it is one that I enjoyed many moons ago when I became a General's Aide. Fortune smiled and plucked me from a tent camp with none of the basics of modern living and dropped me into the generals' quarters, which had the conveniences you might expect.

The assignment became more special when a man named David Shoup became Commander of the 3rd Marine Division. Shoup's exceptional talents were illustrated by his Phi Beta Kappa key and his Medal of Honor. The latter is an honor rarely given to someone who lives through the valor for which one is commended. Sometime, you might read his on Wikipedia.

Marine officers are instructed at length about war from all its aspects, including when to engage, when to disengage, knowledge of the enemy, weaponry, strategy and tactics. Many months go into this study, involving classroom and in-the-field learning. Based on what I hear these days from the mouths of senior politicians, the average lieutenant is better schooled than them on the subject.

It was Shoup's goal not to fight the last war, a common criticism of generals. Working hand-in-hand with the Naval Chief of the Seventh Fleet, plans and maneuvers were orchestrated to avoid the mistakes of the Korean War. Shoup often said, "Marines will never fight on the ground in the East again." He meant that Marines will not fight unwinnable wars against enemies with mobile, limitless troops in geographically hostile territories.

In Korea, Marines captured hills from the enemy, only to see the enemy embedded on other hills. There weren't and aren't enough troops to take and maintain all the hills if there is an enemy with little respect for life and an ability to operate on minimum portable rations. Shoup's goal was to prevent this from happening again. It was just before the U.S. placed advisors into Vietnam.

Instead, we were trained to strike targets strategically, only putting boots on the ground for short times, often through helicopter sorties from the sea. The idea of occupying foreign territories was not within the mandate that Shoup created. Marine headquarters in Washington shared this understanding.

Beneath his tough veneer, Shoup was fierce in his care for the grunts under his tutelage and frequently arrived unannounced at troop training exercises. Once, I saw him at five in the morning turn a field mess into a quandary because he found the chow unacceptable. He wanted the men cared for, trained and not put in harm's way unless absolutely necessary.

And so it was, to the surprise of the Corps, that Shoup was promoted over a group of senior ranking officers to the position of Commandant. He served four years, basically overlapping the Kennedy presidency, prior to the Vietnam war. I believe that by having his ear, Shoup influenced Kennedy's views on Vietnam. Historians will continue to debate what Kennedy might have done.

After he left the service, Shoup was vocal in his opposition to the war. However, new leaders decided otherwise. Peace was not to be. Since politicians start wars that soldiers must fight, we can only hope that the future will provide us with wise leaders. There's still hope that we can achieve the unachievable: Peace on Earth. Let's drink to that. Happy New Year.