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Vero finance chief bails on 2011 budget

BY LISA ZAHNER
STAFF WRITER

The head of the city's finance department quietly announced his retirement last week – preparing to bail out March 30, ahead of what is expected to be the city's worst budget year in recent memory.

Finance Director Stephen J. Maillet spent 25 years as a city employee. He has been the staunchly loyal and enthusiastic cheerleader of a tight-knit team of top city staffers who promised lower utility bills under a contract with Orlando, who recently failed to explain why the city accepted delivery of tens of thousands of barrels of fuel oil to run electric units that might soon be mothballed, and who promised that annual 5 percent furloughs for employees could prevent further layoffs at city hall.

Maillet was also a vocal supporter of the idea that the city should retreat – and serve only utility customers within its borders.

With his impending departure, which will occur on the very first day he could retire with a full 25 years under his belt, the city will have

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



COVER PHOTOS: TOM MCCARTHY JR.

Beach replenishment costs go 'up and up and up'

BY LISA ZAHNER
STAFF WRITER

If the county commission and the contractor putting tons of sand on north county beaches don't come to a

financial agreement soon, work could stop before the beach replenishment project is completed.

Indian River County and Ranger Construction are squabbling over a half million

here, a half million there. But the bottom line is the price tag on the so-called bargain sand project is rising, inching towards the \$15 million mark.

"The price keeps going up and up and up, almost ev-

ery time Chris (Mora) comes before us. I'm starting to regret Chris showing up," said Commissioner Bob Solari of the county's public works director. "What I'd like to see is

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Ron Rennick catches fossil fever

BY MICHELLE GENZ
STAFF WRITER

Ron Rennick Sr., Harvard-educated art collector and auctioneer, has fossil fever.

He caught the bug from Vero amateur fossil hunter James Kennedy, finder of the now-legendary fossilized elephant bone, etched with a striding mastodon or mammoth, believed to date from the Ice Age as the oldest work

of art in the hemisphere.

While Vero real estate auctions used to consume his weekends, Rennick recently was found on a gorgeous Sunday afternoon not standing in front of a room filled with prospective homebuyers, but parking his Jeep where Oslo Road dead ends into the Indian River.

Grabbing a hoe out of the back of the Jeep, he ventured

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



March 11, 2010

Volume 3, Issue 11

Newsstand Price \$1.00

News 1-8
Arts 19-26
Books 51-53
Calendar 80-83
Dining 68
Editorial 42

Faith 72
Games 54-57
Health 28-32
Insight 33-58
Passages 84
People 9-18

Pets 67
Real Estate 74-79
St. Ed's 73
Style 61-66
Travel 59-60
Wine 69

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Beach replenishment

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

for us to get put on a path of resolution with this and to get a better idea of what our total costs are going to be.”

Though the dispute is not yet at the point where workers will be walking off the site of the north barrier island beach sand project, county commissioners and Ranger Construction need to find a solution to keep the dump trucks running.

“While the dispute is going on, we’re still working and the mines are actually working 24 hours a day, seven days a week right now to mine and process the material,” said county coastal engineer James Gray.

Nearly one fifth of the sand to complete the 317,000 cubic yard first phase of the project has been delivered and close to 6,000 linear feet of beach and dunes in front of Orchid, Sea Oaks and Disney’s Vero Beach Resort has been shored up with the trucked-in sand.

The original contract for nearly \$7.3 million included the cost of transporting sand from three sand mines, which would each provide one-third of the sand.

When it was determined that a coarser sand would be needed to be able to place the entire 487,000 cubic yards on the beaches, the supply chain was altered and one mine, Ranch Road Lake, the closest mine to the jobsite located just west of the Quail Valley Golf

Club, is now providing 90 percent of the sand.

The county is contending that -- based on reduced fuel and trucking costs -- it should have a credit of up to \$500,000 coming from the consolidation of material being supplied from the Ranch Road Lake mine.

“We’re still trying to look out for the county’s best interests... but we want a reduction for the trucking,” said County Administrator Joe Baird.

Baird said the staff, not wanting to write a “blank check,” calculated a fuel reduction of \$264,000 alone, not taking into account wear, tear and time. Commissioner Joe Flescher, who represents District 2 where the sand is being dumped, agreed.

“I believe that if it’s 20 or 30 miles that we’re not moving sand, that’s a whole lot of diesel fuel that we’re not using and that you’re not using,” Flescher said to Ranger Construction executive Bob Schafer during the last county commission meeting.

On the other hand, Ranger Construction and Ranch Road Lake mine owner Steve Smith counter that producing the coarser sand requires more intense processing and necessitated the mining of sand from a different part of the mine than was originally intended, so the county should have to pay more for that.

Ranch Road Lake brought in a second dredge machine and team to operate it, and Smith is listing this as an additional financial burden -- tacking about \$490,000 more onto the taxpayers’ bill.

“The conditions of the bid changed,” Ranger Construction’s Schafer said, adding that he and the sand suppliers worked with county staff to come up with material that would allow the county to place the full complement of sand on the beach, instead of the 50 percent reduction that would have been required of the finer, lower quality sand.

County Attorney Alan Polackwich, who acknowledged he had to get up to speed on the saga of the sand project, told commissioners that the sand now being required is still within the parameters of the original bid specifications and that there may have been some confusion.

Schafer brought forth email correspondence from project engineer Mike Walther of Coastal Tech saying the proposed increases seemed “reasonable” and accused the county of not negotiating with Ranger Construction in good faith.

“We never said we would do this for free,” he said, reminding commissioners that cost increases came up as early as September.

Commissioner Wesley Davis, who has been a friend to the upland sand providers, said he was not sold on what might be seen as horse trading with the processing and transportation costs.

Ranger Construction brought back a change order of \$984,000 for additional testing of sand -- which it has subcontracted out to an Orlando firm -- and for the added costs at the sand mine for dredging and processing the coarser sand.

County Commissioners approved \$493,000 of the change order to cover the required mobilization/demobilization and the on-site testing. It kicked back the rest.

“The task is to produce the material and that’s what they contracted for,” Gray said. “As far as the extra time or whatever at the mine, that’s within the scope.”

Rennick

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

down to a nearly impenetrable stand of mangroves. There, as water filled his sneakers and muck sucked at the soles, he slogged along, poking at clots and rocks and shells, hoping for some ancient bit of bone to leap from the murk of millennia into the brilliant winter sunlight of modernity.

Where ditches drain into canals, and canals into the Indian River, Rennick the realtor sees not waterfront property, but thirsty ancient elephants which unlike some other species, needed a long daily drink, lumbering along paths to watering holes, where early man lay in wait.

What has come over Rennick, who originally was supposed to be auctioning the epic bone this spring, but who now is urging Kennedy to further postpone the sale?

Rennick seems to have become consumed with the idea that Kennedy’s find – combined with the century-old discovery of Vero Man, the human remains found alongside the bones of Ice Age plants and animals, and now the renewed subject of intensive local fundraising – strongly suggests our community was the shared destination of man and beast more than 10,000 years ago.

“It’s a fascinating journey we’re on,” says Rennick. “We’re learning more and more all the time.”

Last fall, Rennick was talking as if a sale of Kennedy’s bone was imminent. A world-wide auction was supposed to have taken place in February. Today his plan appears in flux.

In the last two weeks, top anthropologists and even a renowned art historian have descended on Vero Beach, with the bone given near-iconic status in its own little glass shrine in the Vero Beach Museum of Art. One lecturer after another has stepped up to tout not only its apparent validity but even its artistic merit.

Beyond his own fee or commission, which Rennick has not made public, Rennick wants his client, Kennedy, to make the most he can for his tenacity and keen eye.

But he has also become convinced that the world deserves to see Kennedy’s discovery. Rennick is trying to finagle a way for Kennedy to still pay his bills, and at the same time, keep the bone and allow it to be studied and displayed.

“James needs an income strategy. If we could somehow find a way for him to make some money, he would probably not sell it right away,” says Rennick. “He thought it would be great if he could be hired on as an archaeological assistant somewhere and travel the world doing this. There’s also some income to be had in marketing the image itself – hats, t-shirts. That’s the sort

of thing we’re working on.”

Sometime in the coming week, Rennick, Kennedy and Kennedy’s longtime advisor and fellow fossil hunter Gene Roddenberry, a local attorney, will meet to discuss their next move. Meanwhile, Kennedy is fielding renewed calls from the nation’s top natural history museums, including the Smithsonian Institution.

“He’s got a tough decision,” says Rennick. “I’m not pushing to sell it now. I think he could get more if he

waited. But he needs to be able to take care of his family.”

Last week, more than a thousand people showed up at the Emerson Center to hear four esteemed scientists make the case for careful excavation of the site known as Vero Man. The week before, nearly 4,500 people came to see the bone on display for the first – and possibly only – time in the Vero Beach Museum of Art.

It is in part due to this groundswell of interest that Rennick has changed

his mind, and wants to postpone the auction. Indeed, last month he and his wife flew to Las Vegas to check out the market for a fossil auction that included a T-rex – it didn’t sell.

But the delay may also be owing to his own intense interest in what may lie underneath Vero’s real estate.

Rennick grew up on a farm in Licking, Missouri. He got his first taste of anthropology plowing the fields one day, when he glanced down at the dirt

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

First shell of the season



Her mom always collected shells and colorful beach glass, and the tradition lives on. Every year, the family

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City finance chief

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

no manager on hand with any long-term experience creating an annual budget. He will also be the second department head to leave amid the utilities controversy.

Two weeks ago, Vero Beach 32963 laid out in grim terms the budget pressures pushing against Vero from all directions -- sinking property values, decreased state cost-sharing funds, rising healthcare costs and a money pit of a pension system, coupled with the prospect of losing about \$11 million siphoned off the utility bills of county and Indian River Shores residents.

Likely, there will be painful cuts to city staffing and services in the coming months.

No doubt, after serving as Finance Director since 1992, these revelations were no surprise to Maillet.

Maillet, who declined requests to be interviewed about his retirement, has been accused of using a creative form of accounting -- allowing failing funds and departments to run in the red by borrowing from other city departments and funds that were in the black-- to keep Vero's flagging finances afloat.

The result, however, has been fi-

nancial reports and budgets that are so bifurcated and compartmentalized that it's nearly impossible for the non-accountant to figure out exactly what's going on with the taxpayers' money.

For example, when Vero Beach 32963 asked for a simple budget-to-actual report for one city department, with previous year-over-year comparisons, the newspaper was told the city does not capture information that way.

In order to find out if a department had gone over its budget, we were provided with general ledger books and told to figure it out.

"It's important that if a council member, a citizen or a member of the media asks to see A, B, C and D, that the finance department be able to provide that information," said Councilman Ken Daige.

"We need to see that this happens going forward."

.....

Maillet got an unexpected start in city government some 30 years ago.

In the 1970s when he was graduating from Georgetown University with a degree in international affairs and serving as a payroll sergeant in the U.S. Army National Guard, Maillet was called in to participate on some

international projects with China -- and a career in politics seemed to be in his future.

He worked his way through college as a cashier at a Safeway grocery store, moved to Florida in March 1980, and went to work as a night auditor at a Holiday Inn while earning a second degree in accounting at Rollins College's Brevard campus.

While working as an internal auditor and budget analyst for the City of Melbourne, Maillet applied for an operations accountant job with the City of Vero Beach and was hired in April 1985.

Commissioner Bob Solari, who served one term on the Vero city council, said that, in his opinion, Maillet's retirement should not be viewed as a crisis, but as an opportunity.

"I think the city has a great opportunity to strengthen their finance department, if they go about the process in the right way and take the time to look hard for someone that will significantly strengthen the city," he said.

Councilman Ken Daige agreed that Maillet's retirement is a chance for the city to move forward and to possibly take a different direction in the area of finance.

"It does no good beating up this

one or that one for things in the past. We need to look at how we can do things better going forward," Daige said. "I believe in good government and in using the taxpayers' money in the best possible ways."

Vero needs someone with a strong planning and analysis background if it is to tackle some of the tough issues coming up -- potentially selling the electric utility, cutting back on health care benefits, and a possible water and sewer consolidation. A strong finance director could also compensate for the weaknesses of other top city leaders.

"The city manager has a lot of strengths, but as a former police chief, I don't believe that finance is one of them," Solari said. "That's not a problem for the city if he surrounds himself with someone who is very strong in that area."

.....

The finance director's job entails the oversight and management of \$141 million in the city's various budgets and funds and the supervision of the 32 employees in the accounting, budget, information systems, purchasing and warehouse divisions of the Finance Department, including cashiers who collect utility payments.

Just as the city attorney is expected

to provide non-political, objective legal advice based on fact, the finance director is tasked with making sure all the decision makers -- both politicians and staff -- have fact-based fiscal information.

Maillet came under fire in January and February for coming out in

favor of the City of Vero Beach pulling back into its city limits to serve only city utility customers. He made a speech before the Finance Committee on Jan. 20 saying this plan was in the "best interests" of the city taxpayers and said city residents were being dehumanized by all the debate about

selling off the electric utility.

A few weeks earlier, Maillet and Gabbard met with the budget task force of the Taxpayers Association of Indian River County and stated that the city could remain financially sound if it cut its losses and let the county and Indian River Shores cus-

tomers go elsewhere.

Commissioner Bob Solari took Maillet to task on this, wondering why staff was making such policies without the direction of or consent of the City Council. Solari also asked for any reports, models or data being

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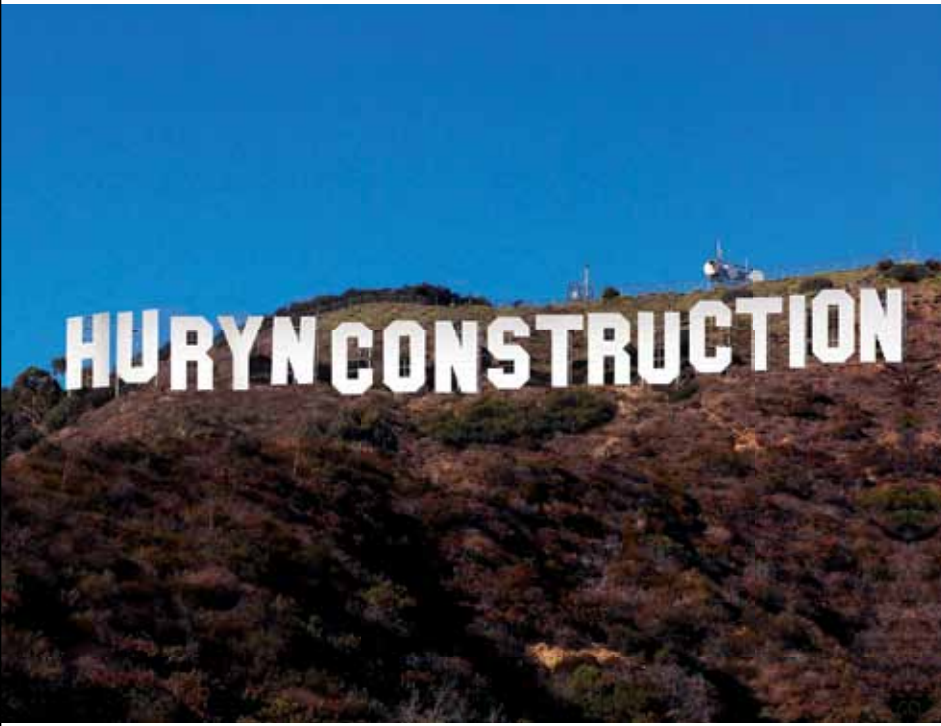


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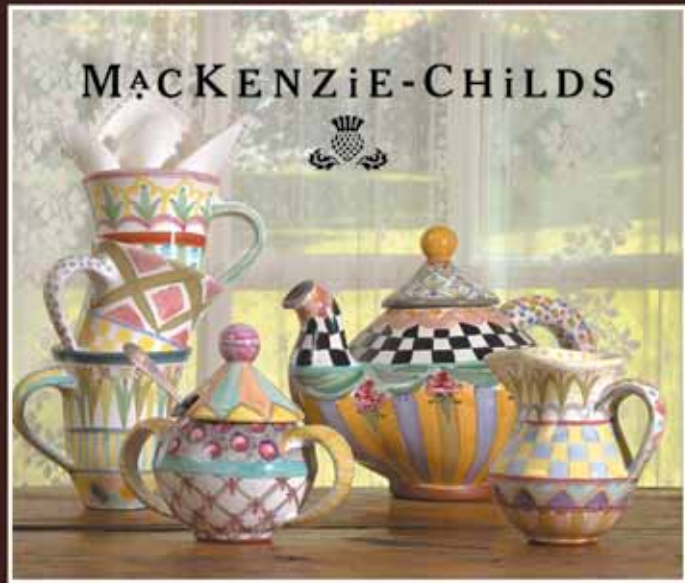
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City finance chief

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used by Maillet or other city staff to support such a move.

Maillet had no data to send to Solari to fulfill his public records request because no studies, schedules or models had been conducted. The finance director admitted that he and Gabbard were making statements based on no more than a hunch and a working knowledge of the city's current finances.

"The utility issue is just one example where the city is looking at making policy without having the data to back it up. There was never any independent financial analysis," Solari said.

Solari said this independent analysis -- as he receives at the county when decisions are made -- is not the sole factor in policymaking.

"I don't mean that the best financial choice is always the right choice," Solari said, noting that elected officials must look at the whole picture and all the parties affected by a decision. "If there's a valid political argument to do something else, it's still important to have the financial analysis. It's not valid to say you don't need the data, even if you make a political decision."

The problem seems to be two-fold -- the analysis is not being produced, and analysis also is not being requested by the city manager or by elected officials before they make a decision.

Daige said he almost always requests more information than what is provided in the council backup in the way of financial data before weighing in on an issue.

"It's up to the individual council member," Daige said. "If I feel that I need to go further to get what I need to make a decision, it's my responsibility to do that, to go get more information."

When scenarios are developed around an issue, consultants usually take on the job and only analyze the options that they're directed to by staff and the council.

"To me, there are two types of accountants: one type reports on what has happened and the other plans for the future, for what will or could happen," Solari said.

For the past two decades, Solari said the city has had the past-reporting type of accountant and it really needed the future-planning type. From what he could gather, Maillet inherited antiquated, ledger-based public accounting systems laid out by former Finance Director Tom Nason in the 1970s and carried them through -- virtually unchanged -- into the new millennium.

"I may be wrong, but I think Mr. Maillet's predecessor set up the finance system and that person prob-

ably knew what he was doing and what he was looking at," Solari said. "And Mr. Maillet just took over what was already in place."

Already the city has been searching for a Director of Electric Utilities since R.B. Sloan resigned in November, so Maillet's retirement will leave yet another void in the city's leadership at a key moment.

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This month Maillet was scheduled to begin a series of annual meetings with the city's finance committee, which was dragged out of mothballs in January to brainstorm approaches to the impending budget crisis.

Though Gabbard said in a memo to the City Council that he would immediately begin the search for Maillet's replacement, it is expected to take some time to get someone new on board.

In the interim, Maillet's staff will need to fill in the gaps and get the city through the upcoming budget season, with workshops scheduled throughout the summer. Fortunately for the city, Maillet leaves his assistant finance director Jackie Mitts on the job.

Mitts, a 59-year-old barrier island resident, was first hired by the city in 1972 as a clerk typist for the building department, for which she was paid \$2 per hour. She worked on and off for the city over the next six years as a temporary employee, joining the staff full time in 1978. She's been there ever since, now making \$76,000 per year, and serves as Maillet's right hand at the helm of the finance department.

In a letter recommending a promotion and raise for Mitts in December 2007, Maillet wrote that "Jackie has the skills and training to run the department and is ready for additional assignments and duties."

Solari said he thinks the staff should be able to fill in the gaps until a replacement can be hired.

"I think the staff is more than capable of carrying out the day-to-day responsibilities, as they have been doing," he said.

Daige said his top priority, in the interim, is for the staff to maintain "good order" in the budget process while the position is vacant. Though the council will not have a say in who is hired to replace Maillet, Daige said he has some high expectations of Gabbard as he makes his selection.

"The way it is done, Gabbard would be doing the hiring, but this is what I am looking for from the city manager, that he knows what the city needs and he knows what the issues are," Daige said. "I would expect that he make a wise and prudent choice so we can make some positive changes and move forward."

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Rennick

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

and saw a smooth stone the size of his hand. Today the Osage Indian relic sits on a shelf in his study, along with dozens of other artifacts in his collection.

In 1973, after finishing at Harvard and earning an MBA, Rennick moved to Vero Beach – his then-wife had family here. Rennick was 24. He invested in an apartment building downtown, eventually adding a few fixer-upper old houses and a duplex until he owned 100 rental units.

In 1979, he bought an old laundromat on Old Dixie Highway downtown, and turned it into an antiques store

and real estate office. The next year, he got his license as an auctioneer, one of first Realtors to do so on the Treasure Coast.

Ten years later, he moved his shop and office to a space on Royal Palm Pointe, and bought the building five years later, selling off part to investors a few years after that. At the time he and his family were living in Central Beach.

Five years ago, he moved into the upstairs apartment, renovating it into an elegant sun-filled space with a long terrace overlooking boat slips below, and beyond, a stunning view of the river.

It was on a real estate expedition

that Rennick first learned of Vero's archaeological significance in – of all places, Belize. He had gone there in the early 1970s to look for land to buy. "I remember my dad talking about land in Missouri costing fifty cents an acre in the depression. I heard land was four dollars an acre in Belize, so I went to check it out."

There, he met two amateur archaeologists who, on hearing where he was from, told him about Vero Man, the human remains discovered in 1915 alongside the bones of Ice Age plants and animals. Up until that point, almost no one believed that man and beast coexisted during that era.

James Kennedy's find, at least ac-

cording to every scientist who has examined it thus far, finally lays the Vero Man controversy to rest. People have been enjoying Vero's real estate for at least a decamillennium.

Kennedy came to Rennick soon after he discovered the etching. The two had known each other for ten years or so, Kennedy stopping by Rennick's shop from time to time to sell him a fossil; because of epilepsy, the otherwise robust and highly energetic Kennedy cannot work a traditional job. He also tends to health issues of both his mother and his longtime girlfriend.

In the heady days following the discovery of the etching, the cash-strapped Kennedy saw his life turn around overnight. He turned down a cash offer of over \$100,000 from the University of Florida. With national museums including the Smithsonian asking to display the specimen, Kennedy became increasingly protective, hiding the bone in a vault in a secret location.

With Roddenberry's guidance, he approached national auction houses like Sotheby's and Christie's but they demanded additional testing that would have required leaving the bone at various labs.

An ever-anxious Kennedy decided to stick with those who made him comfortable: Roddenberry for advice, and the hometown auctioneer, Ron Rennick.

Rennick and Kennedy entered into an agreement late last summer to auction off the bone, Rennick promising an ambitious marketing campaign to get the word out worldwide.

Meanwhile, scientists who had taken the cause of the fossil to heart all but panicked at the thought of it potentially disappearing into the hands of a private collector who could hoard it or resell it or turn it into a belt buckle.

But under the glare of all the attention, Kennedy seems to have risen to the occasion. At the lecture in the Vero Beach Museum of Art, he took the podium to answer a potentially awkward question – where exactly had he found the artifact? He answered the crowd of 500 for a full five minutes, articulate and informed, and as impassioned as ever. One witness described his composure that like of "a Microsoft executive."

Kennedy seems happy to have his Ice Age artist share the spotlight with that other celebrity of yesteryear, Vero Man.

The site of that discovery nearly 100 years ago, a canal just north of the County Administration building, presumably still holds valuable Ice Age fossils. Working through the Indian River County Historical Society, state university scientists are desperately hoping \$500,000 can be raised to do a thorough excavation of the area.

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32963 PEOPLE



EcoFest

Environmental Learning Center celebrates 14th Anniversary

People

Stetsons and stilettos brought out to fight cancer



Dianne and Vinnie Parentela



Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.

Marni Parent and Denise Davis Helms



Artists Barbara Sharp, Terri Finethy and Maggie Irvin look at the full collection of boots made for the Citrus Gala & Cattle Barons Ball.



Allison Boland, Bill Curtis and Heidi Hill

BY MARY SCHENKEL
COLUMNISTS

Guests got duded up in their best western-wear for a special 10th Anni-

versary Stetsons and Stilettos themed Citrus Gala and Cattle Barons' Ball to benefit the American Cancer Society. The event was held at the Paris Air hangar, turned country chic with hay

bales, greenery and white picket fencing. Red tablecloths were adorned with tiered candle holders, which gave the room a warm glow later in the evening as the lights were turned down.

Cowboy boots far outnumbered the few determined ladies teetering in their stilettos, but there were plenty of Stetsons and cowboy hats, dusters and fringed jackets, and an abundance of

boleros and western styled jewelry. The best looking cowboy boots of the night were actually made of clay. Artisan Heidi Hill's hand sculpted, western-style clay boots had been artistically transformed by a group of local artists to help "Give Cancer the Boot." The gorgeous works of art were on display in all their vibrant glory for guests to ogle over and examine, and decide which ones they'd be bidding on during the live auction.

For the special "stepped up" anniversary party, organizers opted to take a turn from their usual boot-stomping country music and chose the always amazing, New Orleans jazz sounds of Bobby and the Blisters for entertainment and dancing. Dinner, catered by Bono's Barbeque and Grill, included a delicious mix of filet mignon, pulled pork, coconut shrimp and all the tasty fixings.

The best looking cowboy boots of the night were actually made of clay. Artisan Heidi Hill's hand sculpted, western-style clay boots had been artistically transformed by a group of local artists to help "Give Cancer the Boot." The gorgeous works of art were on display in all their vibrant glory for guests to ogle over and examine, and decide which ones they'd be bidding on during the live auction.

He may have been wearing a black cowboy hat, but Dr. Rob Callery, co-owner of the Ocean Oaks Dental Group, is really one of the good guys and I spoke with him during dinner. Callery is currently president-elect of the American Cancer Society, Indian River County Unit board of directors and, like many others, got involved because of family members stricken with the disease. "Every single relative in my family, on both my parents' sides, has had some form of cancer and every death has been from cancer."

When I asked what he saw as the most important focus for the American Cancer Society, he said, "Research and prevention are the biggest things. The American Cancer Society has had more Nobel Prize winners in the research field than any other organization."

Bidding on the 12 western-styled boots began after dinner, presided over by auctioneer Reed Hartman. Beth and Ray Smith, of Long Shad

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

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People



Dr. Rob Callery, Cathie Calery, Randy Wytrval, Betsy Craig, Cathy Hart, Rebecca Rickey and Gary Embrey

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

ows Cattle Co. were the evening's big winners, taking home four of these elegant works of art.

"They're gorgeous and they're perfect for us," said Smith, who plans to put them on mantles and on the boardroom conference table. He said that he has attended every Citrus Gala

& Cattle Barons' Ball and added, "I'm a cancer survivor and my parents both died of cancer. It means a lot."

Betsy Craig, who works at the American Cancer Society office and lost her



Light-up boot mugs at the American Cancer Society's Citrus Gala and Cattle Barons Ball

parents and husband to cancer, was top bidder on Barbara Sharp's stunning boot. "I've been looking at these boots for the last few months at the office and this was one of my favorites. I might just leave it at the office for a while. I spend so much time there; it's nice to make it pretty."

After the auction, Alyson Fogle, a young cancer survivor, spoke movingly to the group about her battle with acute lymphocytic leukemia and her experiences at the American Cancer Society's R.O.C.K. (Reaching out to Cancer Kids) Camp at Boggy Creek. For one week each summer, R.O.C.K. Camp offers children and teens with cancer the opportunity to experience the fun and adventure of camp without having to feel different from other kids. A "Call from the Heart" solicited donations from guests so that other children might be able to attend.

In 1997, Fogle's family learned that she had the disease; she was just 4. Five years later, while she was undergoing treatment at St. Mary's in New Orleans, they first heard about R.O.C.K. Camp.

"It's been a privilege to attend," she told the group, and added that this summer she will be a counselor in training.

Throughout the night, guests could also bid on a selection of silent auction items that had been donated by local businesses, try their luck at the Cattle-men's Gaming Tables or show off their ring-tossing abilities at the always popular wine toss.

I watched as Chris Pegg amassed an ever growing pile of chips at the craps table. He laughed when I asked if he was always that lucky and said, "I've never done this well in real life. I started out with \$20 and it's now up to \$210. It's an unbelievably hot table."

Despite the fact that the chips were ultimately as valuable as Monopoly money, he seemed to be thoroughly enjoying his run of good luck.

Proceeds from the Citrus Gala and Cattle Barons' Ball support the mission of the American Cancer Society in the fight against cancer through research, education, advocacy and service, so that everyone can celebrate more birthdays.

People

Touch a Truck Festival lifeline to working parents



Gene and Sherry Waddell with Carolyn and Jack Veeneman

Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.



Wanda Lincoln, Jay Anglada and Betty Ann Ludington

BY MARY SCHENKEL
COLUMNIST

The Touch a Truck Family Festival, scheduled for March 27 at the Indian River County Fairgrounds, kicked off with an invitational Preview Party for sponsors and supporters of Childcare Resources.

The event took place inside the Indian River Shores Community Center and in a large tent set up behind the building that was decorated with red and white balloons, bright red and white checked napkins and colorful truck centerpieces. The Heritage Blue Grass Band played out on the back porch so that guests could enjoy their rustic down-home sounds from either spot.

During the cocktail hour, I chatted for a while with Nicole Williams, who volunteered to help at last year's festival and this year is chairing the main event. "We've added a train this year and we're hoping for more than 50 trucks. We've also got bounce houses, a petting zoo, hayrides, face painters and lots of other activities," said Williams.

"We've got everything - fire trucks, front-end loaders, semis; you name it. The kids crawl all over them, open all the doors and climb inside, honk the horns; they love it. The girls like it just as much as the boys and a lot of the adults really enjoy it too. I was amazed at the big rigs; it's like an apartment back there with a bed, bathroom, TV - everything."

Childcare Resources board member Wanda Lincoln added, "It's a great

day and it's inexpensive. It's only \$20 for an entire family of six, and that includes everything except food." Families can bring their own picnic lunches or purchase from food vendors.

Childcare Resources fills the gap for those working parents who make too much to qualify for government subsidized childcare programs, by providing tuition assistance for Pre-K

children at one of the seven childcare centers Childcare Resources is partnered with. The goal of the preview party was to raise enough funds to pay one year's tuition for one child.

I spoke with Geny Canello, a Childcare Resources parent who was volunteering at the event, and whose 4-year-old son attends the Maitland Farms preschool. "Maitland is great," said

Canello. It has lots of activities and he loves it. It's on a farm so he's also learning about animals and plants." Canello has two other school-aged children and said she also appreciates the emails she receives from Childcare Resources about other programs and services throughout the community

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

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People



Nicole Williams, Summer Ottesen and Kathy Leingang



Trudy and Don Rainone with Jane and Bill Haight



Up for auction at the Childcare Resources Touch a Truck VIP party were sterling silver pigs and a ring by Judith Ripka.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

that they might be able to utilize.

Also volunteering at the event were parents Heidi and James Yates whose 3-year-old daughter Angel is enrolled at Maitland. A very pregnant Heidi said they hope to send their new baby (due in 10 days) to the infant and toddler center being developed by the organization at Trinity Church.

After speaking with the Maitland Farms parents, I sought out Sandy Khale and asked how the school came about. "I started it 32 years ago in my living room with 12 children; six years later we built a separate building. I had a vision of an organic type school where children could learn by doing; touching and feeling. I thought it would be a great start for them to become lifelong learners."

Today her school has 18 teachers and 110 students, from 22 months to 5 years old. "Over the years it has evolved to have more working families. Pre-school is so important to get children excited about learning."

Just before dinner, Board President Erin Grall spoke briefly, thanking sponsors and encouraging contributions to enable children to start their critical early learning years with an ed-

ucation. She also enthusiastically described some of the great raffle items, including a Richard Petty Driving Experience and an airboat adventure, and auction items including a private screening for 50 guests at the Majestic Theatre.

As guests lined up for the terrific pulled-pork barbeque dinner, I caught up with Trudie Rainone who was displaying a gorgeous ring that would be auctioned later in the evening. Sterling silver with a huge canary crystal and diamonds, the ring had been donated by New York designer Judith Ripka. "I told her about Childcare Re-

sources and the event, and she said she would love to help. The next day she sent me the ring," Rainone said with delight.

Susan Chenault, who agreed to serve as campaign chair for the new center at Trinity, said they hope the center will become a prototype for the state. "We're about halfway to our goal of \$275,000. It's so important; money invested in early education is an investment in the future."

Admission to the March 27 Festival is \$5 per person or \$20 per family (up to six people) and children under 3 are free. Event proceeds support Child-

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People

Shop 'til you drop at St. Edward's Trunk Show



Gini Kessler and Letha Reinheimer peruse the bag selection from Queen Bea Studio at the St. Edward's Trunk Show. Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.



Margaret Anne Evans watches as Stephanie MacWilliams tries on a ring from the Julie Collection...

BY BARBARA YORESH
CORRESPONDENT

It was hardly a stroll through an oh-so-bland mall devoted to teenybopper shoppers and it surely wasn't a school bake sale fundraiser featuring mom's homemade brownies.

It was, however, a delightful shopping bazaar extravaganza presented by the St. Edward's School Parents Association as a fundraiser which has become an eagerly anticipated annual event by sophisticated and stylish area shoppers who seek unusual, well-made and well-priced boutique goods.

The St. Edward's 18th Annual Trunk Show held last weekend kicked off Friday from 6 to 8 p.m. with a VIP Shopping Party by invitation or by tickets

available at the door for \$25 per person.

The event featured wine and luscious hors d'oeuvres as well as first dibs on an incredible selection of merchandise that would make any shopaholic literally green with envy.

The event was chaired by Kate Gaier and proceeds directly benefit student enrichment programs at the school.

An eager and devoted committee of parent volunteers coordinates and presents the major trunk show which was set up in various areas of the beautiful St. Edward's Middle and Upper School campus on the riverside of A1A.

Self-described "first grade mom" Kelly Holm of Vero Beach greeted arriving shoppers.

"This is my fourth year as a (trunk

show) volunteer. It's fun to do and get to shop at the same time. This show has such a following. People come back year after year," she said.

Susan Temple, who will chair next year's event, serves as president of the Parents Association.

"The proceeds go right back to (benefit) the children which is great. This is the third year we've done a preview

and people like to come and get first choice.

"The community is unbelievable helping out. They love the trunk show," Temple said.

Forty-nine carefully selected vendors from throughout the United States offered a stunning array of mer-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

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People



The gym at St. Edwards upper school fills with shoppers and vendors for the St. Edward's Parents Association 18th Annual Trunk Show.



Sebastian Vigneault, 9, tests out one of the toys at the Lighten Up booth at the Saint Edward's Trunk Show.

tive plates he planned to present to his wife, he said.

"I think this show is wonderful for us. It opens up the school to the larger community. It's a fundraiser but it's also a friend-raiser. There have been great parents putting this together and they've done a great job and should get the credit. This is an important weekend for us," Mersky said.

Catalina Pines, a St. Edward's Parents Association mom with children in the first and second grade was also instrumental in the coordinating the event and happily busy assisting throughout the show.

"We do what we can for a wonderful school. This show is gorgeous and everyone comes with great energy. It's quite a big production and it's fun and good for the community.

"I'll always help and I'm thrilled to be a part of this," Pines said.

Shoppers were equally thrilled with the dazzling assortment of merchandise and many were repeat buyers.

"It's incredible. I do this every year and I think it gets better every year. I love what they do and all this unique stuff. I'm doing extremely well (with purchases)," said beachside resident Maureen Kleinknecht with a broad smile.

Her sentiments were echoed by Jean Ueltschi who was having great fun selecting classically designed, quality costume jewelry that convincingly replicated the look of designer pieces.

She wore a stunning necklace of various types, colors and shapes of stone beads which she had purchased four years ago from the same vendor.

"I'm having so much fun. This looks exactly like a Paloma Picasso bracelet that's \$12,000," she said.

"For the last decade I've had more fun shopping at this show than in New York. There's such a diverse group of vendors.

"This is one of the best events and it's such a plus for Vero Beach. I love coming every year," Ueltschi said.

Incoming Tide

People

Living "creatively" with Lange Sykes

MICHELLE GENZ
STAFF WRITER

Lange Sykes had a great job in a great city, San Diego, and before that, he lived in Malibu. But for all their pluses, both places lacked one thing: his family. At 24, Sykes has returned to Vero Beach, changing careers while furthering his talents: sculptor, angler, son and grandson. In Incoming Tide, we share our conversations with people recently relocated here. Here's how Lange Sykes looks at life - from both coasts now.

It didn't take Lange Sykes long to sign up with the Vero Beach Art Club when he settled back into Vero Beach last fall. For him, it's a familiar group: by age 15, he was already teaching classes at the Vero Beach Museum of Art.

Less than two months after his arrival, he won first prize in sculpture in the club's popular Art by the Sea show for his Tarpon on the Fly, a realistic bronze of the giant-scaled sport-fish

rising from the water's surface.

For Sykes, going into real estate was more than just the default career option when he decided to move here from California. His family has sold homes here when there weren't many here to sell. Sykes' grandmother, Esther Paxton Tobey, had worked in the field since the early 1960s. His mother, Carolyn Lange, is now his coworker: she is a Realtor with Treasure Coast Sotheby's, the firm Sykes has just joined.

"It's what I always heard around the dinner table," says Sykes, who earned his Realtor's license six weeks ago.

Sykes' listings book is already loaded and he's showing homes daily, he says. He thinks he has a particular skill to offer: an expertise in local waterways, acquired in a childhood spent fishing in the Indian River Lagoon. "I fished this river since I was a toddler," he says. "I know it like the back of my hand. If people want waterfront property, if they have a boat they need to get in and out, I'm able to offer that knowledge."

Thorpe had been in touch with

Sykes for several months prior to his arrival, discussing options here while Sykes debated leaving his job in San Diego. There, he worked for a military contracting company that specialized in relocating personnel from the Navy and the Marine Corps. And the work wasn't all work: he frequently captained a 55-foot yacht for one of his clients, and had fulltime access to a 25-foot-sailboat; he is now an avid sailor.

That job, which has a lot of similarities with his work placing homes with people now, was his first real job since graduating from Pepperdine University in Malibu. There, he majored in fine arts on a full scholarship. Growing up the only child of a single mom, Sykes went to Beachland Elementary and Gifford Middle School, and spent two years at St. Edward's. But it wasn't a good fit for him, he says, and he ended up transferring to Sebastian River High School, enrolling in its International Baccalaureate program.

It was at Sebastian that he met Mike Tozzolo, son of Wayne and Vicki Toz-

zolo, now a Marine serving in Afghanistan. Mike became Lange's best friend, and when he got accepted at the University of Florida, Lange expected to join him there. But at the last minute, he got a letter from Pepperdine, offering a full ride. He decided to jump coasts, and is very glad he did.

"It was an absolutely incredible experience, totally different from what I would have had," he says.

"I went from a small town to an even smaller town - Malibu has a population of 13,000. So I'd already learned the lessons of a small town: you don't want to burn bridges or close doors that you might want to walk through some day."

Sykes began in studies in pre-med, but eventually switched to fine arts when a passion for sculpture that began in boyhood classes at the Vero Beach Museum of Art became his singular focus. Using a foundry in Oxnard to cast his work wrought from the labor-intensive lost-wax method, he concentrated on marine-themed imagery.

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People

Incoming Tide



Lange Sykes sits with his dog, Bessie, and part of his bronze sculpture "Tarpon on the Line."

Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.

His senior show was a collection of bronze and fiberglass sculptures of billfish and boats emerging from various planes – walls, floor, table; there is even a pair of arms – cast from his own – holding a rod and reel. The show was staged at Malibu's Weisman Museum.

Now that he is working in high-end real estate, he is hoping to attract commissions for his art, envisioning tailoring his marine-theme sculptures to waterfront vistas and poolside gardens. "I would love to build sculptures specific to the local and space, say,

from a palm tree, to the ground, to the water. I like to use the space to determine the parameters of the piece, and let the space determine the subject matter too. I've done big installation pieces before, and I really enjoy them." Sykes won commissions in Califor-

nia, but for now, he expects to make his living in real estate.

"I don't really call myself an artist," he says. "I like to say I live creatively."

That would be an apt description for the way he melds his art, his job and his love of the water in an event he is helping to organize next month. March 26, Treasure Coast Sotheby's is hosting a cocktail party and art show at one of the firm's listings, a luxurious home in Orchid Island. The \$50 admission will go towards the Coastal Conservation Association, a sport-fishing advocacy group that Sykes has followed since his was a kid.

Sykes says the firm expects to send out 3,000 invitations. So far a number of local artists and gallery owners have committed to participating, he says, including George Beckman, Rita Ziegler, Joe Thompson and Lillie Taylor. Officials from the state chapter of the sport-fishing organization are also expected to attend.

Meanwhile, Sykes is making the most of visits with his grandmother Esther Paxton Tobey, his face lighting up at the thought of her. "Aside from my mother, she is the coolest woman ever," he says. "She's full of life and incredibly dynamic."



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32963
Arts & Theatre



Arts/Theatre

Collage artist takes on social, everyday issues



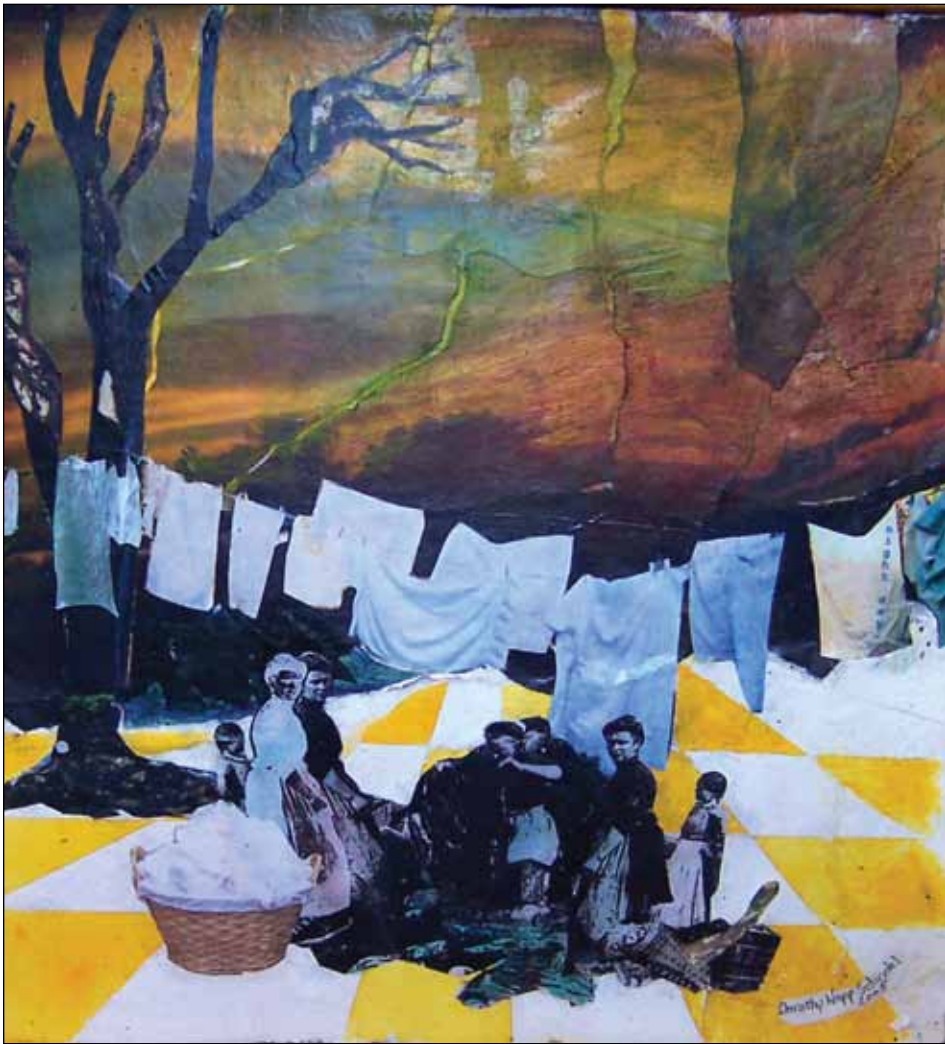
Some of the over 200 pieces featured in the third annual Small is Big! juried show and sale at Gallery 14 Photo: Tom McCarthy Jr.

L. L. ANGELL
COLUMNIST

She is a theater director, scenic designer, museum educator, author and visual artist, plus a wife, mother and grandmother.

To comprehend her many talents means looking at Dorothy Napp

Schindel the same way you'd look at a vast exhibition of beautiful art — one painting at a time. Life and art work together for Schindel, a native New Yorker who's fallen in love with Vero since moving to Jungle Trail in 2004. And a big part of her life here revolves around Gallery 14, where she shows her collages and is the director of pub-



"Never Done", Mixed Media Collage, 15 x 15

licity and public relations.

Schindel beams as she welcomes some visitors into the gallery. It has been a whirlwind week and last night was the grand performance — the opening of the gallery's newest exhibition, Small is Big, a juried miniature show and sale.

"We had a glorious opening last night," says Schindel. "Hundreds of people attended and there were many

happy winners."

It had been an exceedingly busy few days. At the same time that Sebastian artist Francis Mesaros was taking down his exhibition of paintings and rolling his player piano out the door, the 250 pieces in the Small is Big exhibition were going up.

That's a lot of art on the move and in the midst of it all was Schindel. Fortunately, not much seems to rattle

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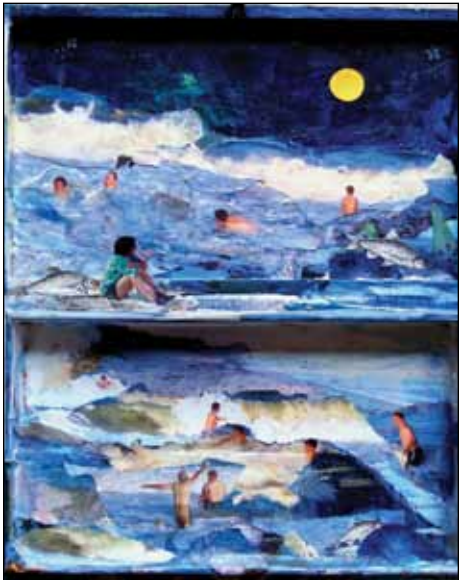
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Arts/Theatre



"The Sea was as Wet as It Could Be", Mixed Media Collage in Cigar Box, 27 x 39, 2008

Schindel. She excels at multi-tasking.

Before her current incarnation as a collage artist, Schindel worked for 45 years as a theater director, educator and scenic designer.

The New York Times raved about her scenic designs in the 1984 revival of "The Mad Woman of Chaillot" at the Studio Theater on Long Island. "Studio Theater has hit its zenith in set and costume design on this production," said the Times. "The fantastic sets and costumes are almost characters in their own right."

"I create collages that combine elements of my own photography, art papers, paints, inks...found images, antique photos or abstractions. The collages are created through a process of tearing, cutting, layering and under/over glazing with glues and pigment."

Graduating from Columbia University in the 1960s, she forged innovative programs bringing theater into museums. With her company DramaMUSE Associates, she created and implemented drama based theater productions for a number of museums including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Queens Museum of Art and the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian.

She is currently the museum director of the Becket Historic Quarry in the Berkshire Hills of Massachusetts where she and her husband live approximately five months a year.

The other seven months Schindel is here. She says her move to Vero with husband Stephen was a natural since she grew up near the water in Long Island.

"Once people grow up near the sea, they want to get back to it — the salt in the blood syndrome," she says.

Today, living north of 510, in what she calls the wilder section of Jungle Trail, just four minutes from the beach, Schindel is inspired to capture the area's natural beauty in her collages.

Art has always been at the center of her life. Close proximity to New York meant easy access to great art.

"I attended the famed Brooklyn Museum Art School," she says. "One of the unique aspects of the classes was traveling from gallery to gallery, with

folding stool, sketch pad, charcoal and pastels — sketching everything."

Schindel was on her way to becoming an artist when she made a major discovery — the theater.

"When I was in the sixth grade, we were taken to see Carmen at the old Metropolitan Opera House," she says. "At intermission, we stayed in our seats and they parted the curtains so we could watch them changing the sets. And that was it. I was dumbfounded. I couldn't move. I decided that I would somehow combine theatre and visual arts."

As a teenager, she did an apprenticeship at the Gateway Playhouse on Long Island, along with Gene Hackman and company actor Robert Duval, and she developed her multiple interests in acting, directing, and scenic design.

Schindel discovered that drama itself is the perfect medium for teaching.

"There isn't anything that can't be taught with drama," says Schindel. "Experiential drama means learning

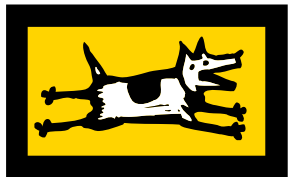
CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

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Arts/Theatre

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

bies. Young children learn by engaging in dramatic play. That's why creative dramatics is so important. But in most schools drama stops in the lower grades."

It was in the midst of directing DramaMUSE, as well as being a wife to financial analyst Stephen Schindel and the mother of two daughters, and writing two published books, that Schindel realized she needed to relax. The family lived in lower Manhattan at the time, near the Cooper Union School of Visual Arts.

"They were offering a collage course on Monday nights. It was an advanced course and I'd never made collages," says Schindel.

Her first assignment was to make three collages to bring to class.

"That week I got hold of every book I could find on collage. I turned our living room into a studio," she recalls.

The class was an inspiration. Schindel put three of her collages in an art show in the Berkshires that summer and, to her delight, people bought them.

When the Schindels moved to Vero she quickly put some of her collages

on the website of the Cultural Council of Indian River.

"I got an email from Deb Gooch that she'd seen my work online. She asked if I'd be interested in joining Gallery 14," says Shindel. "I thought about it for two months because it's a big commitment financially and emotionally to be a partner."

Gallery 14 is a corporation, a partnership of 14 permanent artists.

"Every month we rotate our work to a different place in the gallery as well as bringing in new work," Schindel says. "That puts a lot of stress on the artists because we have to constantly produce."

In her artist's statement, Schindel writes: "I create collages that combine elements

of my own photography, art papers, paints, inks...found images, antique



"River of Hope", Mixed Media Collage 24 x 30

photos or abstractions. The collages are created through a process of tearing, cutting, layering and under/over glazing with glues and pigment. The pieces are often framed within hand-made wooden structures that are designed and built by my husband Stephen Schindel."

A talented artist with a social conscience, much of her work addresses contemporary issues.

"River of Hope" was inspired by a call to artists to take a look at the Housatonic River, which runs through Mass. and CT.

To capture this complex scene, Schindel took hundreds of pictures of the river at various places. "River of Hope" was chosen to be one of 26 works displayed at the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge, Mass.

About "Never Done" a collage concerning the nature of laundry, Schindel says, "Laundry always weighs heavily on my mind. To make this I used actual images of me hanging laundry with images from vintage photos."

Schindel also creates collages that celebrate the natural beauty she sees around her.

"Crotons" is bright and vivid with clean lines. She put the actual croton leaves onto her archival ink flatbed printer and printed their images onto two different types of paper—thick and thin. Next, she cut them out and created the collage using acrylics and lots of painting and peeling.

Finally, "The Sea was Wet as Could Be" was inspired by a visit from Schindel's daughters, sons-in-law and

five grandsons romping on Wabasso Beach one Christmas.

"They were all in the sea and I thought of the poem 'The Walrus and the Carpenter' by Lewis Carroll," she explains.

"The juxtaposition of the happy romping in the sea worked for me with the poem."

Schindel snapped hundreds of photos that day, then tore and reconfigured them in a blue-painted cigar-box with words from the poem weaving in and out. It's a magically happy piece and pure Florida.

Schindel creates works on commission and can be contacted at Gallery 14.

Small is Big, a juried show and sale, is on exhibit through March 27.

And Schindel continues to create theater. As a member of the Temple and active in the Sisterhood, she utilizes her theater background to create an annual service celebrating women's roles in Jewish history.

This year she focused on three women, one of whom was Hannah Senesh, an Hungarian trained to parachute into Yugoslavia during World War II to save Jews from deportation to Auschwitz.

Senesh was caught and executed by firing squad at 23. In these dramas, Schindel has illuminated many fascinating characters including those from the Bible.

Gallery 14 is located at 1911 14th Avenue. Call 772-562-5525 or visit www.gallery14verobeach.com.

Arts/Theatre

Adventures inspire jewelry designs by visiting artist



Laurie Stewart checks out the Temple St. Clair Jewelry at Veranda with the help of Phoebe Magee, Cathy Jetson and the jewelry designer herself. Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.

BY BARBARA YORESH
CORRESPONDENT

She's a Southern "girl" now based in New York City's Soho district whose forbearer was the Massachusetts Puritan minister Cotton Mather, perhaps best remembered for his involvement in the Salem witch trials of the late 17th century.

Her maternal grandmother was admired by F. Scott Fitzgerald and was among the first -- despite a threatening curse above the burial chamber door -- to enter King Tut's Egyptian tomb. Her family knew the son of Jacques Cousteau and as a teen, she would join Cousteau-led expeditions to Antigua and Roatan, Honduras.

So what would someone with such a colorful past be doing in Vero? All grown up, Temple St. Clair is a jewelry designer whose stunningly unique

jewelry designs set in shimmering 18 karat gold adorned with luscious and rare colored gemstones and diamonds were featured last week at Veranda at 3325 Ocean Drive.

St. Clair was also on hand to present her latest collection which left customers oohing and aahing with delight.

"Just look at the jewelry. It's all fabulous...She has a huge Vero following," said Veranda owner Cathy Jetson.

It is from her illustrious, adventurous and genteel roots that St. Clair found early inspiration to study history, nature and culture as well as a travel. After graduation from a Swiss boarding school, St. Clair enrolled at Smith College and opted to spend her junior year in Florence, Italy. She later returned to Florence for graduate studies and traveled widely throughout the region.

It was in Florence that St. Clair



Temple St. Clair Jewelry at Veranda

found her transformation from scholar/collector to jewelry designer. While visiting, her mother decided to find an ancient coin to have made into a necklace. The rest, as they say, is history.

Her pieces, which are fabricated in Italy using time-honored methods by master goldsmiths, are sold by more than 100 select retailers in the United States and abroad.

"My pieces are extremely wearable and collectible and made in a fine jewelry tradition. Each object I create contains the soul of the artisans of Florence," St. Clair said.

One customer from Minnesota purchased a signature amulet evocative of a Faberge egg as well as cherub pendant.

"I've looked at them for as long as I can remember. They're fabulous and I'm thrilled," she said.

As a lover of the sea, St. Clair donates 40 percent of the proceeds from the sale of a dolphin-themed collection to an organization devoted to saving dolphins from slaughter by Japanese fishermen.



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Arts/Theatre

Atlantic Classical Orchestra celebrates 20th



Regine Rohde, Sissy Hennessey, Marlene Putnam and Katie Ahrens

Photos: Mary Schenkel

BY MARY SCHENKEL
COLUMNIST

Twenty years ago Andrew McMullan, newly transplanted from Maine to Vero Beach, felt that what the area was missing was a local, professional orchestra.

Instead of taking the "someone should" approach, this musical visionary utilized his skills as a conductor and successful businessman and took matters into his own hands, creating the now world-class rated Atlantic Classical Orchestra. He was also pragmatic enough to realize that Vero could not support an orchestra on its own, and had widened the arena to include the equally sophisticated town of Stuart.

At a 20th Anniversary Celebration Gala at the Moorings last week, ACO patrons and board members from

both Vero Beach and Stuart gathered to celebrate the extraordinary development of this jewel of the Treasure Coast.

The evening provided an opportunity to honor Andrew McMullan and his wife Jean, who continues to work tirelessly behind the scenes, Music Director and Conductor Stewart Robertson, ACO Chairman Kevin Grady of PNC Wealth Management, and numerous others who have contributed to the overwhelming success of the Atlantic Classical Orchestra.

McMullan passed the baton in 2004 to the Grammy-nominated Robertson and Grady has been tremendously instrumental in garnering financial support for the organization.

The ACO Friends committee opted for a Flying High into the Future theme for the gala, with a decor that included colorful bunches of balloons to set the mood, and hot-air balloon ride auc-



George and Anne Sofronas with Heidi and Lorne Waxlax



Ron Aronberg, Cathy Walker, Linda Aronberg, Shirley Wertz, Sandie and Mike McGuinness

tion items to reinforce the idea. To celebrate the momentous occasion, the stylish ladies in attendance had dressed in shimmering silks and beautifully beaded gowns, complemented by jewelry that sparkled with under-

Arts/Theatre



Jean and Andy McMullan, ACO Founder and Music Director Laureate



Shirley Zemsky, Stewart Robertson, ACO Music Director and Conductor, and Sydelle Blatt



Bebe and Kevin Grady, ACO Chairman

stated elegance. And of course, there is nothing classier than a man turned out in a finely-tailored tuxedo.

Many Atlantic Classical Orchestra supporters have been with the organization since its inception, and continue to draw newcomers into the fold. Raz Allen became involved in its second year, and began playing piano with the orchestra in 1996. "I played the Mahler piece this past January, but I'm now going to retire to make way for the young people," Allen said somewhat wistfully.

Jean McMullan had nothing but praise for Stewart Robertson, who she said took the burgeoning orchestra and has developed it into a world class orchestra. "He had the added experience and background to make it a real gem of an orchestra. It's gone further than we'd ever hoped. The other day,

one of the players told me that he had never worked with a conductor as fine as Stewart."

She remembered back to the orchestra's early days, when it was comprised of both professional and top-notch amateur musicians; within four years, all were professional. "As it grew in quality, top players began approaching the orchestra to play. They were coming to us," said McMullan.

Jean also remarked on the wonderful support the organization has received from board members, sponsors and audiences in Stuart and Vero Beach, and particularly from Robert-

son and Grady. "We've been very lucky to have Kevin and Stewart; they were two miracles."

Following the cocktail hour, guests were treated to a concert by a ten-piece orchestra, made up of ACO musicians, playing a delightful program of Viennese music. The orchestra started up again after a delicious crab cake and filet minion dinner, topped off with a decadently rich opera cake, so that guests could enjoy some ballroom dancing.

When I caught up with Robertson I asked how he had first learned of the orchestra. "I was Music Director for the Florida Grand Opera based in Miami and I kept hearing musicians talking about this great little orchestra up the coast. Andy is really unique. To have started an orchestra like this is really amazing. Just getting the funding was an amazing undertaking."

"We're in good shape now and I think we have developed a real personality for the orchestra. People know us for doing an audacious mix of contemporary with conventional. I choose it very carefully. There's a huge

body of music out there that people don't know, and some of these pieces are ravishingly beautiful."

Asked about plans for the future, Robertson said he will continue to polish the orchestra's performance and added, "I feel very keen personally that the orchestra should make some recordings. It's at a point now that would justify it and it's a great calling card for the orchestra. Similarly it could maybe expand to other cities or we could take it on tour."

Other honored guests at the event included sponsors Virginia and Warren Schwerin, ACO Executive Director Lawrence Kopp, and board members from Stuart and Vero Beach; ACO board member John Beckert was the evening's master of ceremonies.

In addition to the Concert Series, performed in Vero Beach at the Waxlax Center for the Performing Arts, a Chamber Music Series, held in partnership with the Vero Beach Museum of Art, was introduced to great acclaim in 2009, allowing patrons to enjoy Sunday afternoon concerts in the Museum's Leonhardt Museum.



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Arts/Theatre

My Vero

St. Patrick's: Getting into the green of things

BY MARY SCHENKEL
COLUMNIST

Saint Patrick's Day Celebrations

They say that everyone is Irish on St. Patrick's Day. The actual day is Wed., March 17, but most of our area's green-themed festivities happen this weekend. The first of two parades begins beachside at 10 a.m. Saturday, March 13 along Ocean Drive from Flamevine Lane to Azalea Lane.

If you miss that one, the second parade, sponsored by the Vero Beach Elks Lodge, begins at 1 p.m. Sunday, March 14 and marches along 14th Avenue from 17th Street to the Community Center in downtown Vero Beach.

Saturday evening at 6 p.m. Irish eyes will be shining as the Florida

Irish American Society presents Tony Kenny and the Celtic Nights, a celebration of Irish music, comedy, song and dance at the Vero Beach High School Performing Arts Center. 564-5537

Family Festivals

The National Wildlife Refuge System, enacted 107 years ago by President Teddy Roosevelt, began right here in Indian River County with the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge. Exhibitors, wildlife shows, children's activities, live entertainment and historical reenactments will be featured at the 18th Annual Pelican Island Wildlife Festival, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, March 13 at Riverview Park in Sebastian. Free parking and admission.

For more than 30 years, Firefighters and 4-H Club members have teamed up for the Firefighters' Indian River County Fair, which runs from March 12 through March 21 at the Indian River County Fairgrounds. With midway rides and carnival games, 4-H livestock competitions, live entertainment and contests, exhibits and all variety of festival food, it's ten full days of family fun.

Fundraisers

There are an estimated 6,000 victims of domestic violence every year on the Treasure Coast. Unfortunately, as that already alarming number continues to increase, so does the need for SafeSpace shelters and outreach programs. Thrust into the national

spotlight when her sister Nicole Brown Simpson was murdered, Denise Brown has become an advocate for victims and will be the keynote speaker at the annual Every Woman is My Sister Luncheon, 11:30 a.m. Friday, March 19 at Oak Harbor Club to benefit SafeSpace. Tickets are \$125. (772) 223-2399

The Cultural Council of Indian River County 15th Annual Laurel Awards Presentation, scheduled for 6 p.m. Friday, March 19, will feature a cocktail reception and awards presentation at Riverside Theatre's Lobby and Waxlax Stage. In recognition of the organizations 15th Anniversary, the event will also honor its founding members. 2010 Laurel Awards will be presented to Cathie Callery, Jafar Palasiri, Warren Obluck, Del and Jeanne Peterson, and Joan and Roman Ortega-Cowan. Tickets are \$50. 770-4857

The Mental Health Association wants you to relive yesteryear, recapturing cheek to cheek dancing and swooning to a Big Band Era 18-piece band at their Swingin' Away the Blues fundraiser, 6 p.m. Saturday, March 20 at the Polish American Club. The evening features a gourmet dinner and dancing all night to swing away the blues. Tickets are \$125. 569-9788.

Get a sneak peek at some of Indian River County's dream homes with the Junior League of Indian River 17th Annual Tour of Homes, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, March 20. Your day begins and ends at the Grand Harbor Clubhouse, with a continental breakfast at 9:30 and live entertainment and light snacks from 4:30 to 6:30 after the tour. Six spectacular homes will be featured on the tour, fashioned by leading architects, contractors and designers. Advance tickets are \$35. www.VeroTourOfHomes.com

Flamingos and foursomes will be tickled pink at the third Annual Flamingo Fling Golf Tournament, 1 p.m. Sunday, March 21 at the Club at Pointe West to benefit area breast cancer patients through the American Cancer Society. A 9-hole Senior Tournament has been added for Sunday, March 14 at 2 p.m. 770-3401

Brides-to-be will find all they need to plan the perfect wedding at the Treasure Coast Bridal Expo and Fashion Show on Sunday, March 14. The expo begins at 1 p.m. at the Heritage Center followed by the fashion show at 3 p.m. at the Courthouse Executive Center across the street. Admission is \$7 and proceeds benefit Vero Heritage, Inc., which maintains the landmark Heritage Center.

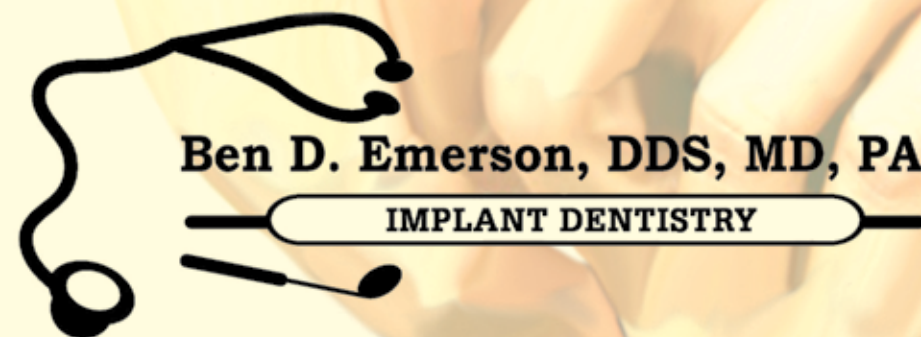
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Health

Laser helps give patients new outlook on life

BY SANDRA RAWLS
COLUMNIST

Health treatments for the eye are making such advancements, some procedures offered locally require less than a day of recovery.

So it's no surprise more and more residents are choosing to have corrective eye surgery, as well as advanced treatments for cataracts.

One local practice, the New Vision Eye Center, is offering an advanced optical laser called the Allegretto Eye-Q Lasik device, which is able to reduce treatment to just a few seconds in most cases, and recovery often to one day.

The laser has a tracking system which maps the cornea and customizes the delicate work on thin tissue. That means that cataract sufferers with astigmatism can have that corrected too, walking away without the need for eyeglasses.

The new instrument follows the curvature and structure of each individu-

al eye faster than any system between Palm Beach and Orlando, according to its developers.

"Your eyes are something you use every day of your life," says Dr. Paul Minotty, the president and a founder of New Vision Eye Center, which opened in 2009. "Taking care of them is a lifelong process. It excites me to have more and better ways to look after people. I believe in comprehensive care," he said, stopping amid the easy going hubbub of his practice, where 35 employees, including three other ophthalmologists, create an energized, friendly atmosphere.

A long time resident of Vero Beach, Minotty is known for his friendly, talkative style with patients. He and Dr. Roger J. Meyer, and Dr. David J. O'Brien are all part of the New Vision team and have known each other for years.

Meyer and O'Brien joined Minotti soon after he created Vero's Florida Eye Institute in 1986, and they left the Institute shortly after he did in 2009 to



Dr. David O'Brien reviews patient Al Scott's chart before performing a Conductive Keratoplasty procedure at the New Vision Eye Center. Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.

rejoin him at the New Vision Eye Center in the Kutrell building last summer.

Dr. Stephen M. Tate joined the practice in September. The group plans to

build a new 19,000-square-foot building with a surgery center at 1055 37th place by the end of next year.

Cataract sufferers also can receive

Health

novel specialized treatment at New Vision. Minotty has performed more than 30,000 cataract operations, making him Vero's most experienced surgeon for this condition.

Cataracts produce clouding in the lens, obstructing the passage of light leading to vision loss and blindness if untreated. Half of the world's blindness is due to this condition.

Surgery to replace the lens was until recently a process that required an injection to anesthetize the eye and area around it, and several days or longer recovery. Sometimes sight was not completely restored.

The laser employed by the Allegretto machine, called an excimer laser, depends on a "pseudo-molecule" produced by an inert gas, a reactive gas, and electrical stimulation of just the right kind. The ultraviolet light that's produced is great for work on the eye, disrupting the surface of the cornea with ablation rather than burning, resulting in faster healing and less likelihood of infection.

But the past five years have seen a transformation of treatment. Simple drops are now used to prepare the patient. The old lens is removed with an ultrasound instrument that emulsifies and removes it. Tiny incisions are used for this process and small foldable lenses are inserted into the eye.

New Vision's hand held device that removes the old lens, an Infiniti torsional phacoemulsification system by Alcon, is the most advanced on the Treasure Coast, say its doctors.

Recovery is usually overnight with many patients even playing golf the next day.

The majority of cataract sufferers need additional attention, however. Most have some form of astigmatism, generally not treated in their past, and are wearing glasses that remain when the cataract surgery is completed.

Astigmatisms are caused by irregular curvatures in the cornea, causing some of the light rays entering the eye to never come to a discrete point. The expanded treatment range of the Allegretto system means New Vision can correct these problems. Cataract patients come away without need for any correcting eyewear.

Macular degeneration is another condition that brings patients into New Vision. Meyer, a retina specialist, has watched treatment improve dra-



Al Scott meets Dr. Paul Minotty before undergoing a Conductive Keratoplasty by Dr. David O'Brien at The New Vision Eye Center.

matically the past 15 years.

"You get a breakdown in the layers of the retina," says Meyer. "We can't cure the dry kind, but lifestyle choices

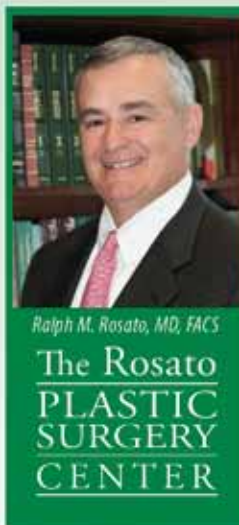
make a difference in slowing the progression of the disease. You have to stop smoking. We recommend eating leafy greens, and plenty of vitamin A,

B and E and beta carotene in the diet; also fish oil and lutein. Wear good sun

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

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Health

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

glasses and a hat."

"The wet version, due to abnormal growth of blood vessels, can be treated with cold and hot lasers, and more recently with the drugs Lucentis and Avastin. These are effective, but require injections every four to 12 weeks."

He explains research into DNA and RNA has led to the new drugs that work by inhibiting the action of VEGF, a growth factor for blood vessels.

"No treatment is perfect," he says. "We try to optimize therapy by fine tuning, using a combination of treatments in just the right way, for each patient."

General eye exams, diabetes-related eye disease and cataracts are all conditions that come in every day to New Vision.

Tate's specialties include cataract and multifocal intraocular lens surgery, glaucoma and retina conditions.

Those who have had treatment at New Vision rave about the results, especially with the new laser.

Joey and Michelle Stawara are a husband and wife who shared a familiar malady, imperfect eyesight requiring glasses.

On Feb. 18 they shared a same-day solution. They both had corrective eye surgery using the Allegretto system.

Results were "totally incredible," says Michelle Stawara, a Beachland Elementary teacher whose sight was so impaired even eyeglasses could barely assure clear vision.

For years she could not have contacts fitted, and even had to wear glasses to get up at night.

"I was so nervous, really nervous, but also excited," says Michelle Stawara.

"I had a severe astigmatism and a very thin cornea that just couldn't be worked on before. I couldn't even see the big E on the charts. On Feb. 18, each eye took just 27 seconds and it was done."

Michelle had to rest her eyes for several days, but was back in her classroom teaching the next week.

"After 33 years of glasses, I can drive at night, teach, and have no glasses for anything," she says, adding that complete correction of her sight may still require up to several more months of healing. "No more glasses. It's unbelievable."

That makes the doctors in the practice very happy.

"We ophthalmologists love gadgets," says O'Brien, a specialist in the cornea. "The eye itself is like a fancy type of gadget."

It sure is, a camera, in fact.

Lenses, layers of tissue, shafts of light, focus, and sharp images that be-

come less sharp over time are some of the features requiring knowledge of physics and chemistry for proper understanding.

The laser employs the science of both.

New Vision can track "any eye, any time," quips doctor O'Brien.

The device is so sophisticated it can shut itself off instantly if any movement occurs outside a planned procedure.

"This machine does things that were impossible in Vero a year ago," says Carrie Ludicke, the Center's Public

Relations Director.

And talk about physics. The laser employed by the Allegretto machine, called an excimer laser, depends on a "pseudo-molecule" produced by an inert gas, a reactive gas, and electrical stimulation of just the right kind. The ultraviolet light that's produced is great for work on the eye, disrupting the surface of the cornea with ablation rather than burning, resulting in faster healing and less likelihood of infection.

Results are bringing in patients like the Stawaras who had put it off for

years.

"The new machine made us decide it was time," says Joey Stawara. "I'm a golfer. Dr. Minotty told me my condition was more like a 3-foot put, while Michelle was more a 40-footer downhill with a twist. Dr. O'Brien called the machine's maker to be sure Michelle's problems were within its abilities, and then we went ahead."

"As for me, I went home, took a nap, and was watching TV that night with perfect vision after 30 years of glasses."

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Health

Salmonella prompts processed-food recall

BY LYNDSEY LAYTON
WASHINGTON POST

Thousands of types of processed foods – including many varieties of soups, chips, frozen dinners, hot dogs and salad dressings – may pose a health threat because they contain a flavor enhancer that could be contaminated with salmonella, the Food and Drug Administration said Thursday.

Officials believe the public health risk is low, and as off press time no one is known to have fallen ill as a result of the contamination. But manufacturers voluntarily recalled 56 products last week, and that number is expected to balloon in the coming weeks into what could be one of the largest food recalls in U.S. history.

"We don't know precisely how large this recall will get," said Jeff Farrar, associate commissioner for food protection at the FDA. "The potential amount of products . . . is very large."

Salmonella was detected early last month in one lot of the flavor enhancer – hydrolyzed vegetable protein, or HVP – made by Basic Food Flavors, as well as inside the company's Nevada manufacturing facility, the FDA said. The company, one of only a handful that make HVP, has an extensive customer list that includes condiment makers McCormick and Trader Joe's. The additive, which comes as a powder or a paste and is mixed into foods to give them a meaty or savory flavor, is similar to monosodium glutamate, or MSG.

The contamination is believed to date to September 2009, meaning millions of pounds of potentially tainted HVP – all of which the company has recalled – was shipped in bulk to foodmakers over five months. Many of those companies then sold their products to other clients, complicating the chain and making it hard for federal officials to gauge the scope of the problem.

"This can potentially be in over 10,000 products," said Michael Hansen, senior scientist at Consumers Union.

The FDA has posted on its Web site a searchable list of products being recalled by manufacturers. It can be found at <http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/HVPCP/>.

Federal officials said the public health threat is low because most products containing HVP are cooked during processing or carry cooking instructions for consumers, so any salmonella would be destroyed be-

fore the food was eaten. Ready-to-eat products, such as chips and other snack foods, would carry greater risks.

In recent days, FDA officials have told food makers that their products do not need to be recalled if they can document that foods containing HVP were heated to appropriate temperatures.

Because of the number of products

involved and the uncertainty of the risk, officials have been struggling to find the balance between protection and alarm.

"They're trying to come to some reasonable decision about how to protect the public health but not be so cautious as to be ridiculous and throw out tons and tons of product that may be fine," said Don Schaffner, a professor

of microbiology professor and food-safety expert at Rutgers University, who has been advising several food-makers that bought HVP from Basic Food Flavors.

FDA officials declined to say when they or state health officials last inspected the Nevada plant, or whether the company had a history of sanitation problems. The FDA was still at

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Health

tempting to determine what caused the contamination.

The company did not return calls seeking comment.

The salmonella bacterium is usually found in animal or human feces. Most healthy people infected with salmonella recover without treatment but experience fever, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain.

Salmonella infections can cause serious problems and even death in the young, the elderly and those who have immune systems that are com-

promised.

The agency learned about the problem after a foodmaker found the bacterium in a shipment of HVP and reported it under a new law that requires companies to notify the federal government if they detect contamination in a product or ingredient. Before September, the food industry was not required to alert the government to contamination.

"The FDA identified this before any major outbreak [of illness], and I think that is very good news," FDA Commis-

sioner Margaret A. Hamburg said.

Joshua Sharfstein, deputy commissioner of the FDA, said the outbreak underlines the need for the Senate to pass a food-safety bill that has stalled since the House approved it last year.

The bill would require companies such as Basic Food Flavors to take actions aimed at preventing contamination in the first place.

"We want to be able to set up preventive standards, so we don't have situations like this at all," Sharfstein said.

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32963

This won't hurt a bit: Curbing unneeded tests **P.48**

INSIGHT

MARCH 2010, ISSUE 11



P.34

Billionaire bubble: Reflections on the internet boom and bust



Billionaire bubble: Reflections on the internet boom and bust

There was a time, as 1999 rolled into 2000, when it seemed as if everyone was rich. Or, at least, as if they *could* be rich. They had equity. Or a big idea. Or a lock on friends-and-family shares in an IPO. With tech stocks soaring and venture capital money flowing, cashing in on the cyber revolution seemed a worthy bet.

That was then, of course. It's been a decade since the tech-fueled NASDAQ reached its all-time high, on March 10, 2000, having nearly doubled itself in just a

year. It was a dizzying peak reached thanks in part to a spectacular rise in the valuations of companies that had hitched their wagons to the Internet.

Later, it would be called a bubble, and much of the paper wealth it had created would evaporate. But in the spring of 2000, anything seemed possible.

The excitement played out in some iconic moments, such as when PSINet paid an estimated \$100 million to put its name on the Baltimore Ravens Stadium or when MicroStrategy would spring for an all-company Caribbean cruise. And early success stories

such as AOL or UUNet—with their tales of millionaire secretaries and 20-something moguls—enhanced the mystique.

Though many predicted the boom would end, no one knew exactly when. As it turned out, the March 10 peak would be followed by a jolting downward slide. Small companies would feel the pinch quickly—as the venture capital disappeared and the window for IPOs slammed shut. Larger companies would ride it out longer. But by early 2001, it was clear the highflying boom days were over. By 2003, the tech bust had wiped out

an estimated \$5 trillion in tech company market value.

So, what was it like inside one of the biggest business booms in history—and the bust that followed? We talk with 10 tech players and observers who experienced the boom from a variety of vantage points about the excitement of the time and the shock of seeing it fall apart.

THE PLAYERS: Elie Ashery, co-founder of Newsletters.com; Susan Defife Askew, digital media consultant; Sanju Bansal, co-founder of MicroStrategy; Steve Case, co-founder of AOL; Michael Chasen,

co-founder of Blackboard; Raul Fernandez, founder of Proxicom; Shannon Henry, co-founder of online site Cooking with Friends; Paula Jagemann, founder of eCommerce Industries; Mario Morino, founder of Venture Philanthropy Partners; and Mark Walsh, former AOL executive.

A NEW REALITY

By late 1999, tech's rise was in high gear. Venture capitalists were pouring billions into high tech companies.

Walsh: I'd labored in relative obscurity for 13 years. The joke was, "It's the business of the future and always [will] be." It was always "someday." Well, that day started to arrive. What was energizing was that you really felt like you were writing the book.

Chasen: In 1999, probably north of 30 competitors all come out of nowhere offering similar versions of our software for free. Some of them had incredible investors behind them and a lot of hype. We had investors calling us up saying, "Have you thought about converting yourselves to an eyeball model or a page

view model?” I’d like to say we were so smart, but we ... literally couldn’t figure out how to make it work.

Askew: There were very few women entrepreneurs who raised venture capital -- less than 2 percent of VC money went to women. I would present at venture conferences ... and there would be 60 presenters, and two would be women.

Morino: When people think about entrepreneurs, they always think about them being young, and the reality is that they cover the age range. We did an informal survey in 1998 or 1999 of anybody dealing with the Internet, and the average age was 48.

WORKING ROUND-THE-CLOCK

The work ethic for this new class of entrepreneurs was full immersion -- long hours and nonstop networking.

Walsh: It was absolutely all-consuming. ... When your personal net worth is growing in ways that are really shocking to you, it’s really hard to turn it off.

Jagemann: My husband bought me a horse for Christmas. He used this as a ploy to get me some downtime. He would crawl in my office with this picture of this horse and go, “I’m lonely.”

Ashery: You had the drag factor -- that was: Are you married, do you have kids, do you have an over-indulgent and protective girlfriend? These were drag factors, and you couldn’t have a drag factor.

Ashery: It was, “Who can we jump into bed with, and how many partnerships can we have just for bragging rights?” A lot of it was ego-driven.

GETTING BIG, FAST

Many companies believed that success meant grabbing market share at almost any cost -- and dealing with a fickle, sometimes irrational, stock market.

Jagemann: The focus was on getting big, fast, even at the cost of negative profitability. There was very little scrutiny of the company because we had so much momentum and such horsepower. Our employee meetings were all just rallies.

Walsh: Back then, as one of my colleagues of AOL once said to me, “Days are weeks, weeks are months, months are years.” There was very little time to stop and think. And speed is not a great structure to make important decisions.

Morino: In retrospect, the comment of “irrational exuberance” probably applies to everybody. I

think people who’d been around for a while knew that something would give way at some point. [But] they got caught up in the momentum and forgot about the basics. It’s not a matter of how they allowed it; they thrived on it.

Fernandez: In 1999, [Proxicom’s] stock went up, I think, 30 percent in the five days between Christmas and New Year’s Eve. It wasn’t anything we did or said in the marketplace -- it just happened. “Party like it’s 1999” could never have been so fitting. The company was worth \$6 [billion] or \$7 billion. I was worth over a billion. It was just surreal.

MAKING MILLIONAIRES

For a lucky few, hard work or just the right timing, would bring life-changing good fortune.

Walsh: I brought my executive assistant to AOL with me, and I got her a nice option grant--a few thousand shares. She became wealthy beyond her expectations. That’s at the secretarial level.

Case, on how many millionaires AOL created: At one point, I was told it was a couple thousand.

Morino: Some of it was really merit-ocracy-based, and some of it was market timing. I think one thing people don’t give enough credit for is serendipity. When I left Legent, we sold 1 million shares at \$48 a share. It went up a little after that, and there were some down periods. The next time it reached \$47.85, I sell a million shares. Just picture a U. I sell a million at the top of the U on the left and then sell another million on the right.

BASKING IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The public became fascinated by the new economy, and suddenly all eyes were on tech, which had a new cachet-- and the means to spend lavishly.

Henry: The political people used to be the rock stars, and now you have the tech people ... [who] are philanthropists and sports owners, really becoming these money and intellectual rock stars.

Walsh: I was invited to have lunch with then-Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers. It was Steve Case and Jerry Levin at Time Warner and Eric Schmidt [now chief executive of Google]. ... Summers was asking what should Treasury be doing to make the Internet grow faster and stronger and better. I was like, How cool is this? We’ve all sort of arrived.

Fernandez: Michael Jordan became my partner. You can’t even dream that stuff.

Jagemann: We had this great vibrant purple carpeting; the wood was blond; lots of glass. I’m a huge U2 fan ... so all the artwork was signed U2 memorabilia, all the conference rooms were named after albums. I remember thinking, We’re doubling our expenses.

Ashery: There were crazy parties. I remember going to Internet World in New York, and each company had their own party, and they would rent out huge hotel banquet rooms or entire posh restaurants and blow a half-million dollars for the night.

Case: As the CEO of the company, I was going to be a kind of visible evangelist ... for the industry.

NO WAY OUT

By January 2001, the big fold was on. With the industry awash in layoffs and shutdowns, for many the party was over.

Askew: Everybody got scared. Investors wanted the ships to turn overnight, and those ships couldn’t turn overnight.

Fernandez: [I would] go around to our offices and focus them on things they could control -- good

customers, good product, good work -- and really move them away from looking at the stock price. Because it was just going to depress you.

Walsh: [The] enthusiasm and just kind of fantasy that drove the bubble up turned into wrath and ire and vengeance when the bubble popped. The stuff people used to post on these stock bulletin boards -- threats of violence, false accusations of executive behavior.

STARTING OVER

Some tech entrepreneurs took the money they made and headed into the sunset -- to focus on charity, or family, or their golf swings. But for others, the end of the boom wouldn’t mean a retreat from tech.

Askew: There was an initial overreaction that the Internet was not as important as people thought it was going to be. Those of us in the business knew that the Internet was not dead, that yes, people will shop on-

line. And, lo and behold, that’s where we are now.

Walsh: In the ‘90s, it took a lot of time and a lot of money and a lot of technology to make something cool happen on the Internet. Now, it takes very little money, very little time and very little technology.

Jagemann: I’m happy that we sold and the investors didn’t lose and those employees that stayed are okay, but the employees who have not continued with the company did not get a payoff. ... That keeps me

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32963 INSIGHT | MARCH 11, 2010 | COVERSTORY PAGE 36

PAGE 37 COVERSTORY | 32963 INSIGHT | MARCH 11, 2010

awake at night. ... I still have the same amount of energy and innovative ideas, but I think I've mellowed. I was cocky. Now, I'm confident.

Case: I did enjoy the AOL journey. The first

10 years really were about the pioneering building phase, and even though the second 10 years was where the fame and fortune came, I kind of enjoyed the first 10 years more.

Askew: There's a Garth Brooks song called "The Dance," and there's a line that says, "I could have missed the pain, but I'd have had to miss the dance." And I wouldn't have missed that dance. ●

THE PLAYERS



ELIE ASHERY, 35

Then: Co-founder of Newsletters.com, a clearinghouse for market research reports that raised \$11 million in funding and later was sold for an undisclosed amount. The company's technology is still in use today.

Now: Chief executive of Gold Lasso, a marketing software company that he co-founded in 2006 by buying \$5 in used computer parts at auction and flipping them on eBay for \$8,000.



SANJU BANSAL, 44

Then: Co-founder, with Michael Saylor and Thomas Spahr, of MicroStrategy, a business intelligence technology provider whose stock rose to \$333 per share but during the bust (and amid an accounting scandal) fell to just over \$1. MicroStrategy eventually stabilized and even grew. It recently reported quarterly earnings of \$100 million for the first time in its history.

Now: Vice chairman of the board, executive vice president and chief operating officer of MicroStrategy.



STEVE CASE, 51

Then: Co-founder of AOL, which had grown to \$163 billion in value by the time it announced its merger with Time Warner on Jan. 10, 2000. Case resigned as chairman in 2003. In late 2009, Time Warner spun off AOL, which announced plans to restructure and laid off 1,000 employees.

Now: Chairman and chief executive of Revolution, a family of emerging companies that Case founded in 2005.



RAUL FERNANDEZ, 43

Then: Founded Proxicom, which developed e-commerce solutions, in 1991 with \$40,000 he'd saved for a down payment on a house. The company went public in 1999 and saw its value top \$6 billion. Proxicom was bought by Dimension Data in 2001 for \$427 million.

Now: Co-owns the Washington Capitals, Washington Wizards and Washington Mystics, and is chairman of ObjectVideo, which develops security camera software.



MARK WALSH, 55

Then: The former AOL executive became chief executive of Vertical-Net, a flagship B2B company. It was valued at \$12.5 billion at its peak but sold for \$15 million in 2007. Walsh, along with other executives, was named in investor lawsuits that were later dismissed.

Now: Venture capitalist, political commentator and chief executive of start-up GeniusRocket, an online marketplace for advertising and marketing services.



PAULA JAGEMANN, 43

Then: Started as an administrative assistant at UUNet and at age 28 made \$18 million in the company's 1995 IPO. In 1998, she founded Onlineofficesupplies.com and later eCommerce Industries, for which she raised \$92 million in funding. In 2007, the company sold for \$95 million.

Now: Is founding the start-up Someone With, an Internet and print catalogue for cancer patients and survivors.



MICHAEL CHASEN, 38

Then: Co-founder of Blackboard, a software provider for educational institutions. Blackboard followed a traditional business model of charging customers to use its software and waited until 2004 to go public.

When the bubble burst, Blackboard "ended up doing around \$40 million in revenue and just about breaking even," Chasen says.

Now: President and chief executive, Blackboard, which has offices in 10 cities worldwide..



MARIO MORINO, 66

Then: Co-founded software company Legent and later the nonprofit Morino Institute. In the late '90s, he mentored entrepreneurs through Netpreneur, a tech networking organization. In 2000, Morino founded investment group Venture Philanthropy Partners.

Now: Chairman, Venture Philanthropy Partners.

SHANNON HENRY, 40

Then: Washington Post columnist covering the high tech industry.

Now: Co-founded the online site Cooking with Friends.

SUSAN DEFIFE ASKEW, 48

Then: Chief executive of Womenconnect.com, an online business community for women, which she founded out of her home in 1994. In late 1999, the company was valued at \$25 million by a potential buyer but would go unsold and be shuttered in August 2000.

Now: Digital media consultant, mostly for early stage technology companies.

East Jerusalem: Creating 'facts on the ground'

STORY BY THE ECONOMIST, PHOTO: EPA

Even as the Americans strive to jump-start fresh talks between Israelis and Palestinians, the Israeli government has been using the hiatus to intensify the re-fashioning of East Jerusalem, which the Palestinians see as their future capital.

This week the city's Israeli mayor, Nir Barkat, unveiled his latest plan to turn Palestinian districts into Jewish biblical heritage parks.

Fearing that their half of the city is being cast in an increasingly Israeli mold, Palestinian stone-throwers clashed with Israeli forces on the Haram al-Sharif, or Noble Sanctuary, which Muslims venerate for its al-Aqsa mosque, Islam's third-holiest shrine, and which Jews revere as the site of the biblical Temple.

While George Mitchell, Barack Obama's envoy, is yet again bidding to open "proximity talks" between the two sides, the Palestinians have been literally losing ground.

Unlike previous Israeli prime ministers, who built on the open hilltops above Arab population centers in the West Bank and on the edge of Jerusalem, Binyamin Netanyahu and his officials are concentrating on Jewish settlements bang in the midst of them.

Parking lots and conservation areas, rich with Israeli symbols, are sprouting across East Jerusalem. Settlers with state protection are opening religious schools there. Scarcely a week passes without an Israeli newspaper heralding new Jewish housing units being built in Arab districts.

Israeli archaeologists are scraping away the eastern parts of the city's Arab surface in search of a Jewish past. Last month one of them declared she had "probably" found King Solomon's city walls.

Inside the Old City itself, the Israeli government's East Jerusalem Development company has begun to interrupt the main Palestinian artery into the ancient center, for sewage works.

Barkat says the project will improve services, but Palestinians fear it presages fresh archaeological digs aimed at exposing Jewish ties along the pilgrims' route to the Temple that Jewish groups from the religious right seek to rebuild. To fulfill millennial Jewish yearning to restore the tabernacle, the company is also repairing what it says are ancient ablution pools.

Beneath the Old City's Muslim quarter, the company says it will open its extension to 9,000 square meters of biblical quarries this summer and could yet link them to other subterranean routes, giving Israelis and tourists access from one end of the Old City to the other without having to pass an Arab or the trinket shops on which many Palestinian traders depend.

The digging feeds Arab fears that Israel is eroding the very foundations on which the Arab districts, and in particular the al-Aqsa mosque, are built. Parts of Silwan, on the eastern slopes below the Old City, are already precariously propped up on iron stilts, to facilitate the excavation of King David's biblical city, which is said to lie beneath.

A settler outfit called Elad has turned the site into Israel's third-largest tourist site and is laying Jewish heritage trails through the adjoining valleys.

So far the number of new settlers in Palestinian areas is fairly small. All but 3,000 of Jerusalem's 200,000 settlers live in outlying neighborhoods that ring the city and avoid the built-up areas where

the city's 270,000 Palestinians still live.

But the zealots who opt to move into Arab districts bring with them the armed support of the Israeli state. The housing ministry has recruited hundreds of security people who, says a guard, are empowered to arrest and shoot on sight to protect



Thousands of Palestinians demonstrate in East Jerusalem against planned Jewish settlements in the predominately Muslim neighborhood

the settlers. "What Arab East Jerusalem?" asks a settler in an Arab area. "Today it's all Jewish."

Can the Palestinian Authority, which runs a fledgling state on the West Bank, do anything to salvage its putative capital, other than plaintively cry "theft"? Efforts to rouse international ire have had mixed success.

Last year America's Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, berated Barkat for his plan to demolish Arab homes to create a biblical tourist park in the valley below the Old City, where David is said to have composed his psalms. Wary of a foreign outcry if the bulldozers move in, Netanyahu has publicly asked Barkat to slow down. But Barkat seems unfazed.

The Palestinians are ill-equipped to bar the encroachment. In 1996, when he became prime minister for the first time, Netanyahu's decision to open a tunnel alongside the al-Aqsa compound sparked a Palestinian uprising that left scores dead. Since then, Palestinian clout in the city has eroded.

Whereas Palestinians recently cried foul when Netanyahu added two shrines in the West Bank that are holy to Muslims as well as to Jews in his latest list of Israeli heritage sites, they hardly stirred when he included David's City, in East Jerusalem.

One reason for the apparent futility of Palestinian dissent is the Israeli security barrier that bites into the West Bank and runs through chunks of East Jerusalem. It prevents most West Bank Muslims from reaching the city's holy places and has cleft its Arab districts in two, leaving tens of thousands of Arab residents on the wrong side.

Further impeding access, traffic lights flick green only briefly for cars from Palestinian districts while staying green for cars from Jewish settlements for minutes.

And Israel's interior ministry is stripping ever more East Jerusalem Palestinians of residency papers. In 2008 nearly 4,600 lost them, 20 times the previous years' average.

Severed from its West Bank feeder towns, Ramallah and Bethlehem, Arab East Jerusalem at night feels like a ghost town sunk in neglect. Streetlights have long ceased to work.

Israeli gendarmes cruise past in military vehicles, but Israeli ambulances have sometimes been told not to venture into Palestinian areas to answer emergency calls.

Some say Bill Clinton, when negotiating as president in the late 1990s, unintentionally speeded Israel's encroachment. What is Jewish would stay Jewish, he said, and what is Arab would stay Arab. Instead of cementing the status quo, his words may have spurred Israel on to establish "facts on the ground" before someone calls a halt or negotiations begin anew. ●

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A sober approach to sanctioning Iran

STORY BY DAVID IGNATIUS, WASHINGTON POST,
PHOTO: EPA

The cynical (and usually correct) critique of economic sanctions was summed up this way by a retired U.S. diplomat named Douglas Paal: "Sanctions always accomplish their principal objective, which is to make those who impose them feel good." The Obama administration is struggling to craft a new round of U.N. sanctions against Iran that achieves more than this feel-good impact. The ambitious goal is "to cut off the revenues that fund Iran's nuclear and

missile programs," says a senior administration official. "We are going to put as tight a squeeze on Iran as we possibly can," adds a diplomat from one of the members of the U.S.-led coalition that is beginning to discuss a new sanctions resolution at the U.N. Security Council. The resolution will target the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and its vast network of companies, which the United States estimates may include up to one-third of Iran's total economy. One focus of the proposed sanctions may be the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines, a 115-vessel fleet that analysts believe has carried cargo for the country's nuclear program. Another target might be the IRGC-owned construction company Khatam al-Anbiya.

Prince Saud al-Faisal, the Saudi foreign minister, traveled to China late last week to enlist its support against Iran. The Saudi message to Beijing, according to one U.S. official, is: "If you don't help us against Iran, you will see a less stable and dependable Middle East." Meanwhile, a high-level Israeli group also visited China last weekend, according to the Financial Times. The delegation included Stanley Fischer, the governor of Israel's central bank. The Israeli visit led one prominent energy expert to speculate privately that if sanctions fail to alter Iranian behavior, the Israelis might use military means to halt Iran's oil exports.

The campaign against Iran was the central topic during a recent visit to Washington by the UAE's foreign minister, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed al-Nahyan. He urged administration officials to include Iran's vulnerable neighbors in the Gulf Cooperation Council -- Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman and others -- in their planning for dealing with Iran. The trick for the Obama administration is to craft a sanctions plan that hurts the Iranian government without causing too much pain for the Iranian people. That's one reason the administration is wary of a congressional proposal for sanctions against Iran's imports of refined petroleum products -- a step that would probably harm the public more than the regime. Officials talk about "targeted" sanctions that focus on the Revolutionary Guard Corps and its military-industrial complex of companies. But this effort is the diplomatic equivalent of "precision bombing" -- in practice, some collateral damage is inevitable, which could help President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad rally support for his hard-line government.

What's certain is that the Iranian nuclear issue is heading into a more intense phase of confrontation -- starting with the push for tougher U.N. sanctions. The Gulf countries have been asking what the administration plans to do if the sanctions don't work: That's the big foreign policy question of 2010, and Washington is beginning now to think about the answer. ●

The UAE has al-

ready boosted its oil exports to China as part of this pressure campaign. Shipments have increased from about 50,000 barrels per day last year to 120,000 now, with a goal by year-end of up to 200,000 barrels. Over the next few years, the UAE is offering to increase that export volume to China to about 500,000 barrels per day, which would nearly equal the current Iranian total.

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The fake goods are everywhere

STORY BY THE ECONOMIST

Thanks to the rise of the Internet and of extended international supply chains, and more recently, to the global economic downturn, counterfeit goods are everywhere. Fake Porsches and Ferraris zoom along the streets of Bangkok.

A German bank has discovered an ersatz gold ingot made of tungsten in its reserves, according to a German television channel investigating persistent reports that many of the world's financial institutions have been similarly hoodwinked. NASA, America's space agency, has even bought suspect materials.

Counterfeiting "used to be a luxury goods problem," says Therese Randazzo, who is in charge of protecting intellectual property at America's customs service. Now people are trying to traffic counterfeit items that have a "wider effect on the economy," she says, such as pharmaceuticals and computer parts.

The OECD estimates that the international trade in counterfeit and pirated goods was worth around \$250 billion in 2007.

The International Anti-Counterfeiting Coalition, a lobby group, says the true figure is actually closer to \$600 billion, because the OECD's estimate does not include online piracy or counterfeits that are sold in the same country as they are made. Counterfeit goods make up 5-7 percent of world trade, according to the IACC.

Several factors have contributed to the growth of counterfeiting in recent years. The shift of much of the world's manufacturing to countries with poor protection of intellectual property has provided both the technology and the opportunity to make knock-offs.

The Internet in general, and e-commerce sites like eBay in particular, have made it easier to distribute counterfeit goods. MarkMonitor, a firm that helps companies defend brands online, estimates that sales of counterfeit goods via the Internet will reach \$135 billion this year.

The recession in the rich world may also have given a boost to counterfeit goods. Frederick Mostert of the Authentics Foundation, an anti-counterfeiting group, has noticed a "spike" in knock-offs this recession, as consumers short of money trade down from the real thing.

In 2008 the value of fake goods seized at America's borders increased by nearly 40 percent over the year before. It subsequently fell by 4 percent last year -- far less than the 25 percent decline in imports overall. In Europe in 2008 customs services confiscated more than double the previous year's haul of counterfeit goods.

Businesses, which feel the revenues lost to counterfeiters all the more acutely in a downturn, are making an even greater effort to root out impostors. Complaints from Louis Vuitton, a luxury-goods firm, for example, led to nearly 9,500 seizures of knock-offs last year, 31 percent more than in 2008.

Lawsuits brought by companies against manufacturers and distributors of counterfeits are at an all-time high, says Kirsten Gilbert, a partner at Marks & Clerk Solicitors, a British law firm.

The technology used to counter pirates is also becoming more sophisticated. Holograms are a cheap

way to distinguish real items from fakes, although counterfeiters are getting better at copying them. Special inks, watermarking, and other "covert" technologies (meaning those invisible to the naked eye) are becoming more popular as a result.

Many "brand protection" firms have also started to peddle radio-frequency identification (RFID) tech-



nology to help companies track shipments. This allows firms to tag boxes and crates with chips which send out signals identifying them as authentic.

The most foolproof technique for identifying genuine goods involves incorporating materials with special genetic markers into the packaging or product itself. Firms or officials can then literally check an item's DNA to ensure that it is real.

This is more expensive than other anti-counterfeiting measures, but companies with very valuable wares, such as the grandest wineries, are splurging on it.

Online brand-protection services, which track counterfeiters on the Web for their clients, are also thriving. OpSec Security, which provides physical and online brand protection, has seen revenues from its online monitoring business grow by more than 20 percent annually for the past two years, even as revenues for its shipping services declined (because companies are shipping fewer items).

MarkMonitor raised the price of its online brand-protection service by 18 percent last year because demand was so high. America's biggest firms

spend \$2 million-4 million a year to combat counterfeiting on average -- a figure that is growing along with Internet shopping.

Governments are also boosting their efforts to crack down on counterfeiting, which deprives them of tax revenue in addition to harming legitimate businesses.

For every dollar invested in the fight against counterfeiting in America, the government receives \$5 in extra tax revenue, estimates the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. In recent years France and Italy have enacted laws that threaten consumers who buy fake goods with steep fines and even imprisonment.

America appointed its first "IP czar" last autumn and is developing a new enforcement strategy. The European Union has formed an anti-counterfeiting "observatory" to collect better data and disseminate tips on how best to detect fake goods.

The EU, America and Japan, among others, are also discussing a new treaty, called the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA), that would strengthen international controls on counterfeits and piracy. It is expected to be launched later this year.

But in China, where 80 percent of the world's fake goods are thought to be produced, officials are loath to crack down on a thriving local business. China is not expected to sign ACTA -- undermining it before it has even been unveiled. ●

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Advice on lowering your electric bill

Just when you thought you had heard it all, the editorial page editor of the local daily newspaper offers some much appreciated advice on how to cope with Vero Beach's outrageous electric bills.

He is, of course, not a customer of Vero Beach Utilities but is on FP&L; yet he gloats about an electric bill which last month was under \$100, and says he is "sorry for folks who have to pay more each month in electric bills."

Then he discloses how he achieves these wonderfully low bills. He keeps the temperature of his house "between 77 and 79 in summer," we are told, and this winter, "it's gotten as low as 59 one morning around Christmas."

He goes on to add, "As "Vero Beach Vice Mayor Sabin Abell told me Friday, electric use is a matter of choice."

Well, Mr. Supercilious Editor, eating is a matter of choice, too. But just as most of us choose to eat three squares a day, most also choose to turn on the heat when the winter temperature inside our homes sinks into the low-60s.

And since air conditioning was installed in most Florida homes built in the last half century, we gen-

erally tend to keep our house temperature in the summer somewhere under 79, though we do recall Sabe's famous remark last summer – his official response as a City Council member being asked to do something – suggesting that when fall came, constituents could open their windows.

But these equally fatuous comments by the editorial page editor of the local daily paper are amazing, to say the least. Surely, he understands that the

problem is Vero's absurdly high rates – not whether customers can keep their bills down by keeping the heat and air conditioning turned off.

His final thought was: "Preparation, conservation and a good sweat suit in winter will help you keep your bills low, too." Right. And by the same logic, we can think of ways to reduce your newspaper bills. This editorial page column really does hit a new low. ●

For health care, how about a Plan C

THE WASHINGTON POST

The dilemma posed by President Barack Obama's health-care proposal was aptly captured by Berkshire Hathaway chief executive Warren Buffett last week in an interview on CNBC. The status quo is unacceptable, the noted investor said; the current proposal is deficient.

"If it was a choice today between Plan A, which is what we've got, or Plan B, what is in front of – the Senate bill, I would vote for the Senate bill," Buffett said. "But I would much rather see a Plan C that really attacks costs."

The United States is in trouble. Its federal debt, slated to grow year by year, could sap economic growth, endangering prosperity at home and leadership abroad. Rising health costs are one of two major causes of that projected debt.

A year ago, Obama promised health-care reform that would expand access for the uninsured while reducing costs and not worsening the federal deficit. He says he has delivered. But the proposal that he has asked Congress to approve raises questions.

One involves his decision to postpone until after his presidency, even if he serves two terms, the implementation of a "Cadillac tax" on expensive health plans. That postponement, budget director Peter Orszag and health policy adviser Nancy-Ann DeParle acknowledged, has been taken by "skeptics" as "further evidence of the administration's wavering fiscal resolve."

Count us among the worriers. The tax is key for two reasons. It would raise revenue needed to pay subsidies to the currently uninsured; Obama chose the politically easier option of extending the Medicare tax to unearned income of the

wealthy, thus making it more difficult down the road to prevent Medicare from going bankrupt.

And, by discouraging expensive plans, such a tax would be the single most effective tool to reduce the cost growth. Obama's unwillingness to fight for the tax now, even at a reduced level, raises the danger that it will never be imposed. By 2018, an expensive new entitlement will be draining funds from the Treasury; there will be no turning back on that.

Obama's top aides wrote that they are confident that Congress in 2018 will be willing to let happen what it won't allow now – or what Obama chose not to fight for now. Senior officials also argue that the delay gives employers and insurance companies a "glide path" to begin adjusting to their plans with less disruption.

We think that it is not asking too much, given the dire fiscal straits, for Washington to show that it can swallow distasteful medicine while, and not after, it passes out the candy.

"We have to have something that will end the constant increase in medical costs as a percentage of GDP," Buffett said. "I would try to get a unified effort, say this is a national emergency to do something about this. We need the Republicans, we need the Democrats ... I believe in insuring more people. But I don't believe in insuring more people till you attack the cost aspect of this."

As Obama scrambles to assemble majorities in the House and Senate, some legislators continue to explore options for more fiscal soundness, including some kind of fail-safe mechanism that would push Congress to act if projected savings do not materialize.

Those who care about both access and fiscal responsibility could even now insist on a Plan C.

Who owns the grass roots on growth?

BY KENRIC WARD, COLUMNIST

Even amid a historic economic slump, Florida's age-old growth battle isn't over. It's just starting a new phase.

Amendment 4 on the November ballot promises to be one of the most controversial and hotly contested in state history. Brace yourself.

That Florida Hometown Democracy got this far is a testament to the persistence of its founder, Palm Beach attorney Lesley Blackner, and her band of supporters. Dogged by the state Chamber of Commerce, the Associated Industries of Florida, the Florida Home Builders Association, the Florida Association of Realtors and virtually every other business group, FHD still managed to collect the 611,000 signatures required to qualify for a statewide vote.

Amendment 4 would, if approved by 60 percent of the voters on Nov. 2, require that all comprehensive land-use changes passed by local governments be put to a public referendum. By giving citizens the final say in the process, developers would have to sell their projects to more than three city councilmen or commissioners.

This kind of grass-roots democracy throws a wrench in the growth machine, and, so, it has earned the enmity of politicians who benefit from their cozy relationship with developers. Incumbents who support FHD are about as rare as polar bears in the Everglades. They think "representative democracy," as practiced by them, works just fine.

In the sincerest form of flattery, the state chamber tried to push a rival amendment designed to confuse the public and nullify FHD. They got the Legislature to pass a signature revocation law to peel back petitions. Business groups also bankrolled a series of court challenges and appeals attempting to block ballot access. Ultimately, they all failed.

The will of dedicated supporters, including the Indian River Neighborhood Association, which helped FHD get the requisite signatures in this county, eventually prevailed.

In the early days, the FHD campaign got a considerable assist from what was then a steroidal housing boom, which was paving over thousands of acres every week and creating congestion everywhere.

The boom went bust, of course, and now Amendment 4's opponents are seizing on that.

"The top five issues today are jobs, jobs, jobs,

the economy and jobs," says Mike Caputo, a Miami-based political consultant who has done election work for the chamber.

In a weird way, angst over the economy has pumped new life into the development industry. Though they may be out of money, builders are politically energized as never before -- and they've co-opted Blackner's grass-roots formula to give FHD a dose of its own medicine.

has come out against Amendment 4.

"It takes away control of development. It stops timely development," said Everett Wilkinson, coordinator of the South Florida Tea Party.

Wilkinson's statement may confirm the suspicions some have had about the Tea Party's true agenda and allegiance, but it also resonates with taxpayers who are increasingly suspicious of anything they think will retard job creation.



A newly named opposition group, Citizens for Lower Taxes and Stronger Economy, "is organized down to the precinct level," Caputo says.

Its director, Ryan Houck, has spoken at more than 200 business functions around the state and the group is readying a ground war of door-to-door politics and an air blitz of saturation TV advertising.

Watch for Florida Chamber of Commerce President Mark Wilson to pound home his message: "If you like the recession, you'll love Amendment 4."

To show how far the grass roots have turned against FHD, even the populist-oriented Tea Party

While Blackner's crew has its true believers, her opponents, thanks to a lousy economy, finally have a clear and powerful message: Just Vote No.

"Houck has the troops from every local chamber lined up and waiting for orders. Lesley is herding cats," Caputo observes.

As long as jobs are Job One, even the pure concept of citizen-based democracy will be a tough sell with Florida's electorate. Getting to 60 percent this fall could be impossible.

"I expect to see a lot of compression in this contest," Caputo says. "It's tight and getting tighter." ●

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370 Indian Harbor Road	\$3,650,000
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360 Palmetto Point	\$3,850,000
380 Island Creek Drive	\$3,900,000
228 Island Creek Drive	\$4,050,000
330 Palmetto Point	\$4,650,000
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1000 Beach Road #294, 3BR/3BA	\$1,350,000
650 Beach Road #345, 3BR/2BA	\$1,400,000
700 Beach Road #148, 3BR/2BA	\$1,400,000
700 Beach Road #149, 3BR/2BA	\$1,400,000
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130 Sago Palm Road
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100 Ocean Road #212
250 Ocean Road #2C
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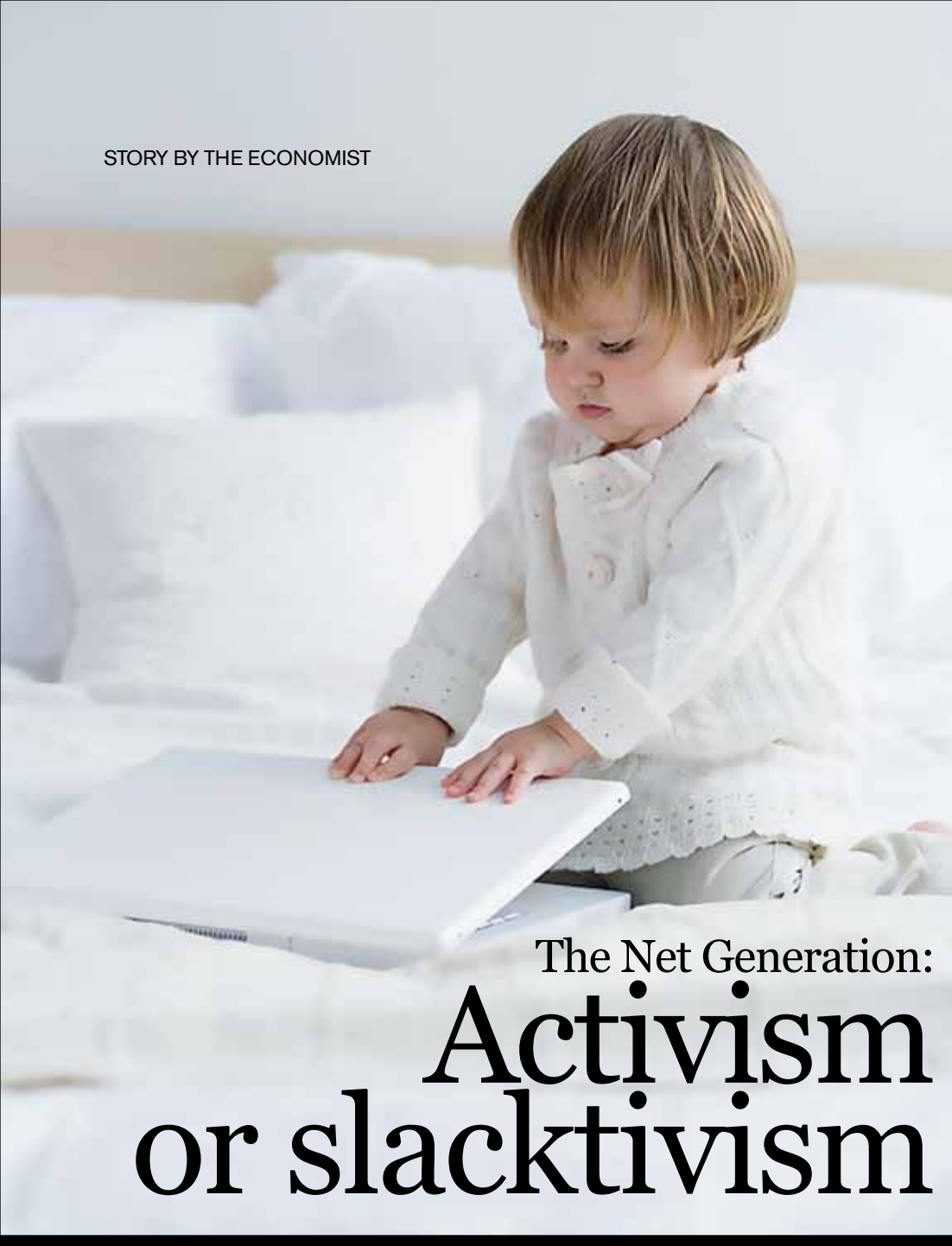
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They are variously known as the Net Generation, Millennials, Generation Y or Digital Natives. But whatever you call this group of young people -- roughly, those born between 1980 and 2000 -- there is a widespread consensus among educators, marketers and policymakers that digital technologies have given rise to a new generation of students, consumers, and citizens who see the world in a different way.

Growing up with the Internet, it is argued, has transformed their approach to education, work and politics.

"Unlike those of us a shade older, this new generation didn't have to relearn anything to live lives of digital immersion. They learned in digital the first time around," declare John Palfrey and Urs Gasser of the Berkman Center at Harvard

Law School in their 2008 book, "Born Digital," one of many recent tomes about digital natives.

The authors argue that young people like to use new, digital ways to express themselves: shooting a YouTube video where their parents would have written an essay, for instance.

Anecdotes like this are used to back calls for education systems to be transformed in order to cater to these computer-savvy students, who differ fundamentally from earlier generations of students: professors should move their class discussions to Facebook, for example, where digital natives feel more comfortable.

"Our students have changed radically. Today's students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach," argues Marc Prensky in his book "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants," published in 2001.

Management gurus, meanwhile, have weighed in to explain how employers should cope with this new generation's preference for collaborative working rather than traditional command-and-control, and their need for constant feedback about themselves.

But does it really make sense to generalize about a whole generation in this way? Not everyone thinks it does.

"This is essentially a wrong-headed argument that assumes that our kids have some special path to the witchcraft of 'digital awareness' and that they understand something that we, teachers, don't -- and we have to catch up with them," says Siva Vaidhyanathan, who teaches media studies at University of Virginia.

Michael Wesch, who pioneered the use of new media in his cultural anthropology classes at Kansas State University, is also skeptical, saying that many of his incoming students have only a superficial familiarity with the digital tools that they use regularly, especially when it comes to the tools' social and political potential.

Only a small fraction of students may count as true digital natives, in other words. The rest are no better or worse at using technology than the rest of the population.

Writing in the British Journal of Education Technology in 2008, a group of academics led by Sue Bennett of the University of Wollongong set out to debunk the whole idea of digital natives, arguing that there may be "as much variation within the digital native generation as between the generations."

They caution that the idea of a new generation that learns in a different way might actually be counterproductive in education, because such sweeping generalizations "fail to recognize cognitive differences in young people of different ages, and variation within age groups." The young do not really have different kinds of brains that require new approaches to school and work, in short.

What about politics, and the idea that, thanks to the Internet, digital natives will grow up to be more responsible citizens, using their technological expertise to campaign on social issues and exercise closer scrutiny over their governments? Examples abound, from Barack Obama's online campaign to activism on Twitter.

A three-year study by the MacArthur Foundation found that spending time online is "essential for young people to pick up the social and technical skills they need to be competent citizens in the digital age."

But discussions about "digital citizens" run into the same problems as those about digital natives: there may simply be too much economic, geographic, and demographic disparity within this group to make meaningful generalizations.

After all, not everyone born between 1980 and 2000 has access to digital technology: many in the developing world do not. It is true that the Internet can provide an outlet for political expression for people living under repressive regimes. But those regimes are also likely to monitor the Internet closely.

And in some cases there is, in effect, a new social contract: do what you like online, as long as you steer clear of politics. Government-controlled Internet-access providers in Belarus, for example, provide servers full of pirated material to keep their customers happy.

There is also a feeling of superficiality about much online youth activism. Any teenager can choose to join a Facebook group supporting the opposition in Iran or the liberation of Tibet, but such engagement is likely to be shallow.

A recent study by the Pew Research Center, an American think tank, found that Internet users aged 18-24 were the least likely of all age groups to e-mail a public official or make an online political donation. But when it came to using the Web to share political news or join political causes on social networks, they were far ahead of everyone else.

Rather than genuinely being more politically engaged, they may simply wish to broadcast their activism to their peers. As with the idea that digital natives learn and work in new ways, there may be less going on here than meets the eye. ●

Racism explains a lot of white opposition to Barack Obama, say some Democrats. It would be foolish to dismiss this argument out of hand.

Bigotry cannot explain, however, why Obama's approval rating among white Americans has fallen since he took office, from roughly 60 percent to 40 percent. As the president pointed out in September: "I was actually black before the election."

White voters have changed their view of Obama not because of his skin color, but because of what he has done -- and what he has failed to do -- since he took office. And although he is not on the ballot this year, this matters. The less people admire the president, the less likely they are to vote for his party in the midterms.

Consider David Peel, a white Tennessean we met outside a hardware store in Millington. He had just bought some spare wheels for his trailer, which he planned to use for his weekend mission work: helping to rebuild a school playing field in a poor, black district of nearby Memphis.

As a Christian, he says, he does not believe in race: "We are all brothers and sisters." He thinks Obama is a nice guy, but naive.

He thinks it was a lousy idea to try terrorists in civilian courts, where a judge could "release them with a stroke of a pen." He is appalled that the Obama administration wants terrorists to be swiftly informed of their right to remain silent. "If we Mirandize these guys, we aren't going to get anything out of them," he says.

In 2008 Peel voted for John Tanner, a Democrat, for the House of Representatives. Tanner is the kind of Democrat who does best in the South: pro-gun, pro-life, fiscally hawkish and a co-founder of the moderate-to-conservative caucus of "Blue Dog" Democrats. But he is retiring this year.

Peel is thinking of voting for a Republican, any Republican, to replace him. Since Peel is a trial lawyer, this would be against his economic interests, but moral issues matter more, he says. And top Democrats "are not remotely in touch with any of the people walking out of this store," he adds, gesturing at the hardware shop behind him.

He is not alone: although most of the counties that make up Tanner's district have been Democratic since the 19th century, the smart money says the seat will go red this year.

Democrats have a Caucasian problem. It is not new: no Democratic presidential candidate



has won the white vote since Lyndon Johnson. Obama actually did better among whites than John Kerry did.

But in the past year white voters have become

grumpier, and this is especially true of white males. There is even talk of a repeat of 1994, when a surge of "angry white men" helped Republicans take over both chambers of Congress.

Sixteen years ago, it was blue-collar white men who were the angriest. This year, too, they are smarting. The recession has hit hardest the most macho trades, such as building and manufacturing. Two-thirds of the jobs destroyed since it began belonged to blue-collar men.

Black men have been worse affected than whites, but their loyalty to Obama and his party is unshakeable. Not so for white men, whose unemployment rate was a comfortable 3.9 percent in 2006 and still only 6.8 percent when Obama was elected, but is now a painful 10.3 percent. Those who can no longer provide for their families feel emasculated. Those who still have jobs fear losing them.

Since Democrats now run Washington, Democrats get most of the blame. And white men are disproportionately skeptical of Obama's proposed solutions. Seven out of 10 prefer small government to big government.

"I don't like the way they're giving away all that money," says Steve Roberts, a welder in Arkansas. "I think you should work for your money."

Perhaps in reaction to unified Democratic control in Washington, white men (among others) have grown more conservative in the past year. Support for gun rights rose from 51 percent to 64 percent between 2008 and 2009. Ballot initiatives to protect "hunters' rights" will pull deer shooters to the polls.

All this spells trouble for Democrats in swing states and districts. Because the party did so well in 2006 and 2008, it is defending a lot of seats in "enemy territory."

Because incumbent Democrats in such seats are nervous, many are reluctant to support Obama's most ambitious reforms. And a slew of Democratic retirements is tilting the field yet further towards the Grand Old Party.

It will take more than a posse of piqued pale males to hand the Republicans control of Congress in November.

White men are a shrinking share of the electorate: 36 percent in 2008, down from 43 percent in 1994. But still, the Democrats can hardly afford to alienate the nation's largest ethnic group. And with the economy in the doldrums, it is not only white men who are angry. ●



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This won't hurt a bit

STORY BY SHARON BEGLEY,
WASHINGTON POST WRITERS GROUP



When the White House and Congress were struggling last year to keep the cost of health-care reform from exploding, they got most of the industry to ante up. Pharma agreed to give up \$80 billion in revenue over the next decade, hospitals kicked in \$155 billion in foregone Medicare and Medicaid payments, and medical-device makers grudgingly agreed to a \$20 billion tax.

But one big player refused to put any money on the table: doctors. The American Medical Association pledged to support health-care reform only if its members' incomes didn't take a hit.

That doctors demanded protection for their wallets strikes Howard Brody, a family physician at the University of Texas Medical Branch, as "ethically ques-

tionable," and not only because he thinks doctors have a moral obligation to help get the nation's health-care bill under control. The bigger problem is that "doctors rip off the system with inappropriate care," says Brody.

An estimated one fifth to one third of U.S. health-care costs, at least \$500 billion a year, goes toward tests and treatments that do not benefit patients—routine CT scans in the ER, antibiotics for colds, Pap tests for women who do not have a cervix, and ...

What comes after the ellipsis is the question of the hour. Brody recently proposed, in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, that every medical specialty identify five procedures—diagnostic or therapeutic—that are done a lot and cost a lot but provide no benefits to some or all of the patients who receive them.

Five is just a suggestion, high enough to be meaningful but low enough to exclude procedures in which

the science is still open to debate, such as annual mammograms for women under 50. "I'm pretty convinced that each specialty could come up with 15 or 20, but in calling for five I think we can find uncontroversial ones," says Brody.

It's not just about saving money, either. Any time a doctor performs a procedure, there is the risk of medical error and side effects, such as an elevated risk of

cancer from CT scans. Unnecessary care kills 30,000 Americans every year, estimates Dr. Elliott Fisher of Dartmouth Medical School—and that figure includes only Medicare patients.

Medical groups have not exactly beaten a path to Brody's door, so we contacted several to see if they would play along. Reactions ranged from "we do no unnecessary care" (dermatology) to "only five?" (emergency medicine).

Allen Lichter, CEO of the American Society of Clinical Oncology, nominates what he calls "nth-line therapy"—the third or fourth or fifth chemotherapy drug for a patient whose cancer has not been felled by the first or second. "I don't know what *n* should be," he says. "But at some point chemotherapy has an extremely low chance of extending life and a high chance of shortening life due to toxicity."

Experts in internal medicine are already well along in identifying items for Brody's list. "I hate to say it, but it's true: doctors sometimes do things that do not benefit patients and can even be harmful," says Stephen Smith of Brown University medical school, who is spearheading the effort.

Nominations, all from physicians, include antibiotics for upper-respiratory infections (the drugs kill bacteria, not the viruses that cause colds), Pap tests for women under 21 ("solid research shows that they find things that lead to unnecessary interventions but would clear up on their own," says Smith), and me-too drugs that are no more effective than older versions (anything other than diuretics for first-line treatment of high blood pressure).

High-tech tests are also in Smith's crosshairs. For coronary calcium scans, he says, "there is no evidence they lead to better outcomes. In low-risk patients, high coronary-artery calcification still means the patient is at low risk for heart disease and nothing needs to be

done other than the usual 'heart healthy' behaviors. In a high-risk patient, aggressive efforts at reducing risk factors need to be undertaken regardless of the coronary-artery calcification."

Similarly, thyroid testing in a patient with no symptoms "rarely yields an abnormal result," Smith says, and so "is not worth doing" on a symptom-free patient. Smith's team will "field test" these and other nominees this spring by asking hundreds of doctors if they agree. Eventually, docs who pledge to avoid unhelpful procedures might display some sort of emblem.

Smith's group is also considering nixing X-rays and MRIs for lower-back pain: the scans often spot something that is unrelated to the pain. About 80 percent of adults over 40 have a bulge or other deformation in their lower back that makes surgeons think "operate"—but no pain. So when such an "abnormality" shows up on a CT or MRI, attributing a patient's pain to it is probably nonsense.

In fact, the vast majority of lower-back pain is caused by muscle sprains and strains that don't show up on scans, and for which surgery is no more effective (and is more dangerous) than over-the-counter pain meds, time, rest, and exercise. Although lower-back pain typically resolves within six weeks, many patients refuse to wait, and surgeons and radiologists have financial incentives to see that they don't.

A 2009 study found that Americans spent \$85.9 billion for imaging, surgery, drugs, and doctors' visits for lower-back pain—most of it for no benefit. "The use of MRI within six weeks of the start of lower-back pain is not only not useful, but it increases the number of surgeries, treatments, and costs," says anesthesiologist Ray Baker, president of the North American Spine Society, whose members do those very things.

Baker, who "applauds" Brody's call to arms, believes there are enough data to "draw a circle around"

other procedures that are his members' bread and butter. For instance, at least 351,000 spinal fusions were performed in 2007, reports the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, at a cost of \$26.2 billion.

Yet except in the tiny fraction of cases in which the pain is caused by fracture or tumor, they're useless—but financially irresistible, points out Shannon Brownlee in her 2007 book *Overtreated: Why Too Much Medicine Is Making Us Sicker and Poorer*.

At \$75,000 per spinal-fusion procedure, medical-device makers, hospitals, and surgeons have every reason to keep the gravy train rolling. "We doctors are extremely good at rationalizing," says Brody. "Somehow we manage to figure out how the very best care just happens to be the care that brings us the most money."

Doctors who want to eliminate unhelpful procedures have their scalpels aimed at several other surgeries. Brody nominates arthroscopic surgery for osteoarthritis of the knee. A 2004 study showed that it is no more effective at restoring mobility and reducing pain than sham surgery.

In other words, all the benefits reflect a placebo response on the part of patients, who think, "Docs in surgical scrubs, high-tech surgery, gleaming OR—this will certainly help me." But orthopedic surgeons still do the surgeries, which cost about \$6,000.

They are not the only physicians who ignore the findings of clinical trials. Two studies last year in the *NEJM* showed that vertebroplasty, in which cement is inserted through a needle into the spine to stabilize vertebrae, is no more effective at reducing pain and disability than fake surgery (anesthesia, small incision for the needle, no cement).

That suggests it is the hope and expectations of patients, not the procedure, that help. Yet about 170,000 vertebroplasties are done every year, at a typical cost of \$5,000. Surgeons protest that their vertebroplasty patients hug them in relief that their pain has vanished. But "we saw 'miracle cures' in the sham-surgery group, too," says David Kallmes of the Mayo Clinic, who led one of the studies.

Every year cardiac surgeons perform bypasses on thousands of patients who have one or two blocked arteries, and cardiologists do angioplasty (with and without stenting) on thousands more. But five large clinical trials have shown that, except in an emergency, inserting a stent (to prop open a clogged artery) does not reduce the risk of heart attack or death any better than treating with drugs first (and stenting only if the pain persists).

Interventional cardiology nevertheless carries on to the tune of about 500,000 elective angioplasties a year, at \$51,000 each, including in patients who should get drugs instead. Hospitals can get \$20,000 from private insurers for angioplasty, Brownlee found, almost half of which is pure profit. "Advocates say, 'We do it differently' or 'The clinical trials focused only on particular populations of patients, and we do these surgeries only where appropriate,'" says Nordin Hadler, professor of medicine

at the University of North Carolina and author of the 2009 book *Stabbed in the Back: Confronting Back Pain in an Overtreated Society*. "These arguments walk a fine line between hubris and quackery."

No one is saying cutting back on unnecessary medicine will be easy. There is a reason for every procedure doctors perform. The fact that the reasons are sometimes financial or legal (protecting against malpractice claims) makes them no less powerful.

Few doctors have the training in statistics and trial design to understand what the science says about various therapies. And many honestly believe their patients are different from those in a study that found no benefit from some procedure. But if they're right about that, points out Baker of the spine society, it means there are no data that the procedure benefits those patients.

Consumers, too, are a powerful force for unnecessary medical care. Parents insist the ER do a CT scan on a child who bumped her head; runny-nose patients won't leave their internist without a prescription for antibiotics.

"In a busy practice, it's sometimes easier to write the prescription than to talk the mom out of it," says pediatrician Beth Pletcher of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. And the heart patient who doesn't believe that pills could possibly be as effective as surgery? "Angioplasties, stents, and bypass have attained 'entitlement' status," notes Hadler.

Why do insurers pay for unnecessary care? Partly because they're battle-weary, having been successfully sued for refusing to cover, for instance, high-dose chemo plus bone-marrow transplants for breast cancer—which turned out to be not just useless but, for thousands of patients, deadly.

"The abrasion that would result from even more intervention by health-care plans becomes problematic," says Joe Singer, vice president for medical affairs at HealthCore, a subsidiary of the insurance giant WellPoint. Translation: insurers have had it with trying to refuse coverage for useless procedures, since they can simply raise premiums—yours and mine—to cover the cost.

Perhaps, since so much useless care reflects financial incentives, financial disincentives might reduce it. In a paper last month in *PLoS Medicine*, R. Scott Braithwaite of the New York University School of Medicine and colleagues suggested that insurance cover 100 percent of effective diagnostic tests and treatments, but little to nothing for less effective ones.

You really think you need an MRI for the back pain that started last week? It's on your nickel. ●

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Will Millennials become the chump generation?

BY ROBERT J. SAMUELSON, WASHINGTON POST

The “generation gap” endures as a staple of American political and social analysis. The notion that the special circumstances and experiences of each succeeding cohort imbue it with different perceptions, beliefs and values seems intuitively reasonable and appealing.

It’s also flattering. In a mass-market culture, belonging to a distinct subgroup, even if it numbers many millions, contributes to a sense of identity. In

a 1969 Gallup poll, 74 percent of Americans believed in the generation gap. A poll last year found that 79 percent now do.

Between then and now, of course, generations have shifted. Then, it was baby boomers (those now 46-64) arrayed against the World War II and Depression generations. Now it’s “Millennials” (those 29 or younger) and Gen Xers (30 to 45) vying with boomers and Americans 65 and over.

The precise generational boundaries are somewhat arbitrary, and other individual differences (income, religion, education, geography) usually

count for more. Still, generational contrasts help plot change and continuity in America.

Consider a study of the 50 million Millennials 18 and over by the Pew Research Center. The report found some surprising and some not-so-surprising developments. Surprising (to me): Almost two-fifths of Millennials have tattoos, up from a third among Gen Xers and from a seventh (15 percent) among boomers.

Not surprising: Millennials are the first truly digital generation. Three-quarters have created a profile on Facebook or some other social networking site. Only half of Gen Xers and 30 percent of boomers have done so. A fifth of Millennials have posted videos of themselves online, far more than Gen Xers (6 percent) or boomers (2 percent).

Every younger generation shows more racial and sexual openness. Half of Millennials favor gay marriage; among boomers and older Americans, support is a third and a quarter, respectively. Only 5 percent of Millennials oppose interracial marriage, compared with 26 percent among those 65 and over.

The deep slump has hit Millennials hard. According to Pew, almost two-fifths of 18- to 29-year-olds (37 percent) are unemployed or out of the labor force, “the highest share . . . in more than three decades.” Only 41 percent have a full-time job, down from 50 percent in 2006.

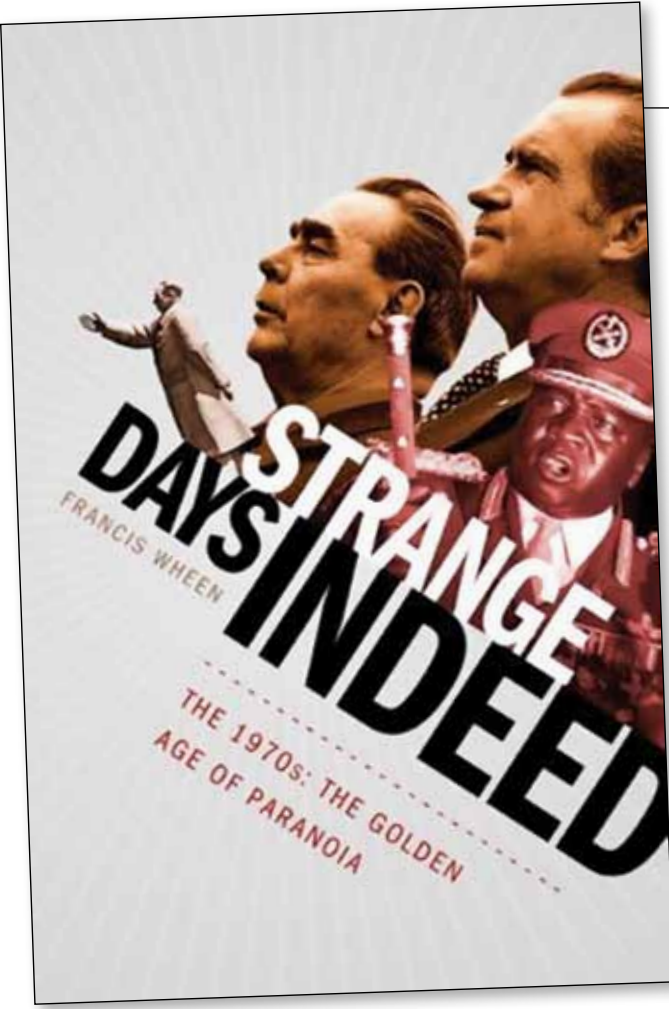
Proportionately, more Millennials have recently lost jobs (10 percent) than those over 30 (6 percent). About a third say they’re receiving financial help from their families, and 13 percent of 22- to 29-year-olds have moved in with parents after living on their own.

Writing in the Atlantic, Don Peck argues that many Millennials, overindulged as children and harboring a sense of entitlement, are ill-prepared for a “harsh economic environment.” They lack the persistence and imagination to cope well.

Regardless, more bad news may lie ahead. As baby boomers retire, higher federal spending on Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid may boost Millennials’ taxes and squeeze other government programs. It will be harder to start and raise families.

Millennials could become the chump generation. They could suffer for their elders’ economic sins, particularly the failure to confront the costs of baby boomers’ retirement.

This poses a question. In 2008, Millennials voted 2 to 1 for Barack Obama; in surveys, they say they’re more disposed than older Americans to big and activist government. Their ardor for Obama is already cooling. Will higher taxes dim their enthusiasm for government? ●



Some historians believe in the great man theory of history. Not Francis Wheen. In “Strange Days Indeed,” Wheen advances what might be called the “crazy man theory of history.” And it makes perfect sense because he’s writing about the 1970s, when world leaders exhibited astonishing levels of lunacy.

Wheen revels in stories of leaders going bonkers: Richard Nixon rants about Jews, gays and liberals, and late one night he takes his valet to the deserted House of Representatives and orders him to make a speech.

Mao Zedong -- who never bathes, preferring to be rubbed clean by a servant with a hot towel -- purges his harem, banishing three women he suspects are fans of his rival Lin Biao, who also avoids bathing because he’s deathly afraid of water.

Mao’s wife, Jiang Qing, pops tranquilizers to calm her fear of noises and gets so stoned that she falls off her toilet and breaks her collarbone. Convinced that Lin Biao poisoned her pills, she orders her doctors interrogated while the Politburo watches.

Wheen’s not making this stuff up, folks. It really happened! He dutifully footnotes his sources and they are perfectly respectable works of history, biography and autobiography that the rest of us somehow missed.

In Africa, President Francisco Macias Nguema of Equatorial Guinea executes his rivals in a sports stadium while loudspeakers play the song “Those Were the Days, My Friend.” And Ugandan dictator Idi Amin proclaims himself “Lord of All the Beasts of the Earth and Fishes of the Sea” and forces British businessmen to carry him into a cocktail party in a sedan chair.

Meanwhile, in jolly old England, deposed Prime Minister Harold Wilson summons two reporters to his home and urges them to investigate a non-existent plot to overthrow the British government.

“I see myself as the big fat spider in the corner of the room,” Wilson mumbles. “Sometimes I speak when I’m asleep. You should both listen. Occasionally when we meet, I might tell you to go to the Charing Cross Road and kick a blind man standing on the corner. That blind man may tell you something, lead you somewhere.”

Whew! If you judge a book by how many exclamation points you scrawl in the margins, “Strange Days Indeed” is a masterpiece indeed, a mind-blowing work of nonfiction black humor.

Wheen, a veteran British journalist, does not confine his narrative to the nuttiness of the era’s rulers.

“The insanity was contagious,” he writes, and it spawned urban guerrillas who murdered and kidnapped in the name of idealism -- Germany’s Baader-Meinhof Group, Uruguay’s Tupamaros and, in the United States, the Symbionese Liberation Army, which killed a school superintendent, kidnapped heiress Patty Hearst and concluded its communiqués with the goofy slogan “Death to the fascist insect that preys upon the life of the people.”

Wheen shows how pop culture reflected the paranoia of the ‘70s in Thomas Pynchon’s paranoid novel “Gravity’s Rainbow” and a slew of conspiracy-themed movies: “The Conversation,” “Chinatown,” “Executive Action” and “Three Days of the Condor.”

And let’s not forget the bizarre ‘70s bestseller “Chariots of the Gods? Unsolved Mysteries of the Past,” which theorized that the human race was spawned by the ancient mating of apes and aliens -- a theory that certainly could help explain the ‘70s (and every other decade).

“Is there one plot going on between the scenes in America? Are there many plots? Is there no plot?” asked novelist Norman Mailer in a drunken 1973 speech in which he announced his plan to form a “people’s FBI” to spy on the FBI and the CIA.

Mailer admitted that he was “very paranoid,” but maybe his fears were founded in fact. After his death in 2007, the FBI released its file on him, which revealed that the G-men were

BOOK REVIEWS

poking around in his mailbox and knocking on his door, posing as deliverymen.

Wheen doesn’t explain what, if anything, all this madness means, but somehow that didn’t bother me, perhaps because his anecdotes are so jaw-droppingly delicious. I do have one quibble, though: I don’t believe the subtitle. Were the ‘70s really “The Golden Age of Paranoia”?

What about the ‘30s, with Stalin’s purges and Hitler’s rages? Or the ‘50s, with McCarthyism and duck-and-cover drills? Or, for that matter, the decade we just exited, with its secret prisons, its birthers and trutheers, its suicide bombers, shoe bombers, underwear bombers?

Obviously, the Golden Age of Paranoia shows no sign of ending.

That’s why we need Francis Wheen to keep reminding us that humans are a loony species and that much of history is a record of the various forms of lunacy arising in different eras. I suggest that some great university endow a Distinguished Chair of Paranoia Studies and invite Wheen to sit in it while he continues his delightfully hilarious and frighteningly serious work. ●

Strange Days Indeed by Francis Wheen
PublicAffairs, 344 pp., \$26.95.
Reviewed by Peter Carlson

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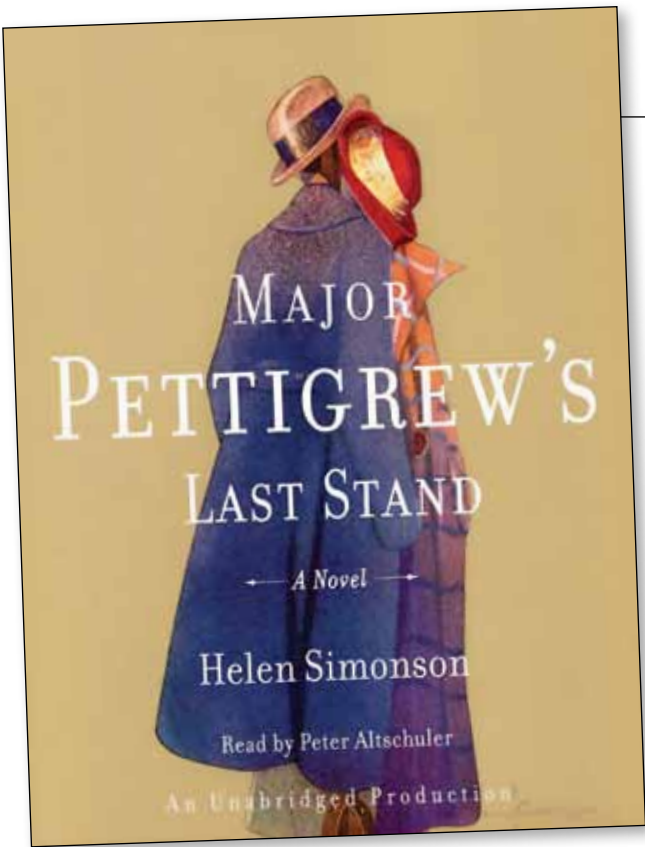
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With two months till Mother's Day, there's no excuse for another last-minute FTD bouquet of dyed carnations: Get Mom a copy of "Major Pettigrew's Last Stand," by writer Helen Simonson.

This thoroughly charming novel wraps Old World sensibility around a story of multicultural conflict involving two widowed people who assume they're done with love. The result is a smart romantic comedy about decency and good manners in a world threatened by men's hair gel, herbal tea and latent racism.

Ernest Pettigrew -- that's *Major* Ernest Pettigrew, to you -- insists on "careful, impeccable behavior." The retired British army officer sees himself as a lone defender of responsibility and tradition, which means that he's in a constant state of repressed irritation.

In fact, he's a walking thesaurus of irritation. We see him annoyed, dyspeptic, displeased, disapproving, disappointed, dismayed, horrified, outraged, angry, appalled, exasperated, resentful, wincing and flinching! But "I was raised," he says calmly, "to believe in politeness above all," and watching him hold to that rule even when he's convinced that "everyone is a complete idiot" is a constant source of comedy in these pages.



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BOOK REVIEWS

dled fields full of late rye and the acid yellow of mustard."

The community fancies itself "a utopia of multicultural understanding," but as the story develops, we see that the village has a rather more complicated attitude about how good citizens from different ethnic groups should interact. The leading town figures consider it a bold act of ecumenism to hold a hymn sing with the Roman Catholics.

The white citizens of Edgecombe St. Mary, captured here with a nice satiric edge, are happy to encourage a class of immigrant laborers and shopkeepers, so long as they know their place. And for entirely different reasons, that separatist attitude is shared by the most conservative elements of the Pakistani community, which fear contamination from their materialistic neighbors.

Simonson sets several interconnected subplots in motion that explore the complexity beneath the surface of this idyllic little village. Armed with an unimpeachable sense of righteousness, Major Pettigrew plots to retrieve a valuable gun from his late brother's estate without appearing -- to himself or others -- to plot anything untoward.

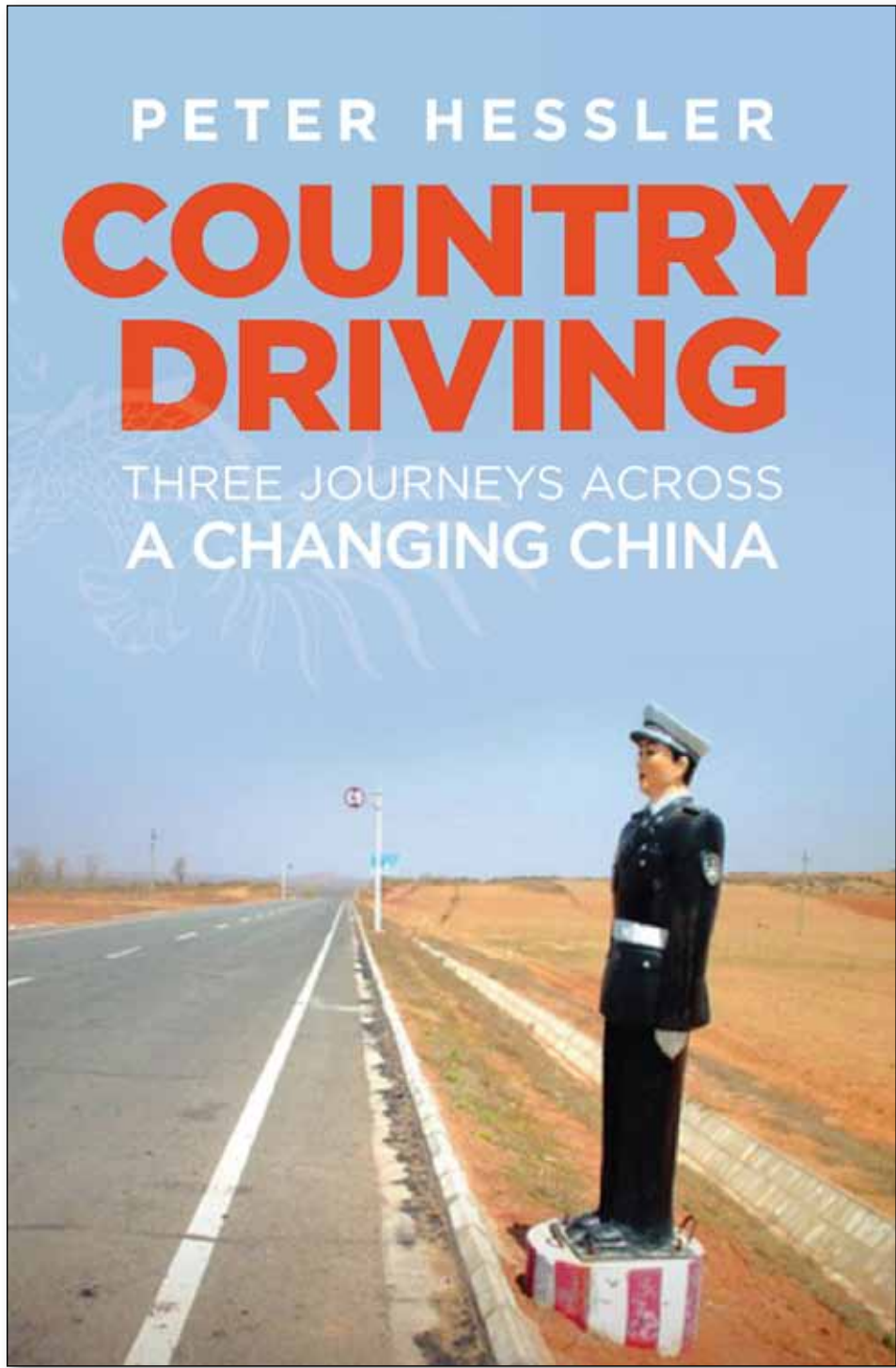
Mrs. Ali labors under the conservative demands of her late husband's Muslim family, who expect her to quietly turn over her shop and retire to appropriate invisibility. Real estate developers threaten the ancient design of the town; Major Pettigrew's shockingly shallow son hopes to cash in on the deal.

And all these disparate crises come crashing together at the club's annual dinner-dance with an ill-conceived "Mughal Empire" theme, a hilariously choreographed evening of romance, drunkenness, racial tension and violence.

When depicted by the right storyteller, the thrill of falling in love is funnier and sweeter at 60 than at 16. The stakes are higher, after all, and the lovers have stored up decades of peculiarities and anxieties.

With her crisp wit and gentle insight, Simonson is still far from her golden years (she's only 46), but somehow in her first novel she already knows just what delicious disruption romance can introduce to a well-settled life. ●

Major Pettigrew's Last Stand
by Helen Simonson, Random House, 358 pp., \$25.
Reviewed by Ron Charles, Book World



At a tourist spot in Beijing in the 1980s, Chinese used to line up to have their photos taken standing next to a car. In those days, most Chinese had never even ridden in an automobile, let alone dreamed of owning one. Today, new cars and new drivers are pouring onto China's new roads at a breathtaking pace.

Peter Hessler, who covered China for The New Yorker, spent much of the past decade exploring the effects that this is having on that nation. In *Country Driving*, his third book on China, Hessler takes a road trip across China, following the Great Wall.

When not on the road, Hessler is living in a village north of Beijing, or watching a factory town spring up in southern China -- the result of a new road being built in the area.

China's automotive era is still in its early stages. In 2001, the year Hessler got his Chinese driver's license, China had only one vehicle for every 128 of its citizens -- the same ratio that the United States had in 1911.

But the country's love affair with the car is growing rapidly -- and not always comfortably. Hessler's description of China's new drivers is hilarious -- and frightening. He visits a driving school where students must first learn how to open and close a car door and where beer is consumed during the lunch break.

Hessler notes that, with about one-fifth the number of vehicles as the US, China has twice the annual number of traffic fatalities.

"Country Driving" is sprinkled with Hessler's humorous encounters with a state-owned car rental company. The rental agent insists that he return the vehicle with exactly the amount of gas he starts with (sending out a car with a full tank of gas "would never work here," the agent explains).

Yet that same manager is unconcerned that Hessler broke the "Beijing-only" clause and took the car on a wild journey through Inner Mongolia and other remote provinces. At the time of the trip, Hessler was also breaking a law that required foreign reporters to get permission for such trips. He managed to avoid authorities, at least for awhile, by camping out or staying in truckers' dorms.

Light-years away from the glitzy hotels and restaurants of Shanghai and Beijing, Hessler wanders into small, isolated towns where young people have left for work in the big cities, leaving only the elderly and their grandchildren.

We hear a lot nowadays about China's economic success, but Hessler reminds us that it is still a poor country where farmers earn a few hundred dollars a year on half-acre plots and job applicants falsify their documents to win coveted factory spots that pay 40 cents an hour.

We see how

BOOK REVIEWS

Hessler's village neighbors are dismissed as country bumpkins by city folk, and how the gap between prosperous cities and poor rural areas is widening.

"Country Driving" tells us much about contemporary China even when Hessler is not on the road. His long-term stay in that northern village gives him a rare opportunity to observe the intricacies of local politics and corruption.

When he first moves there, the roads are unpaved and there are no businesses. Later, China's massive road-building campaign and the dramatic increase in car ownership in Beijing bring Chinese tourists to the area. Villagers seize the opportunity to earn money by running country-style restaurants. But prosperity also brings work-related stress.

Hessler has an eye for the small details that show the villagers' way of thinking. When his neighbors allow Hessler to take their son sightseeing in Beijing, Hessler is surprised that the boy's mother doesn't pack him a toothbrush, let alone a change of clothes.

But the boy's mother doesn't see the necessity. "He's only going for three days," she explains. Hessler's comment to readers: "American parents fill minivans whenever a child travels five blocks."

In the third portion of the book, the term "boom town" takes on a literal meaning as construction crews use dynamite to flatten mountains to make way for buildings. Like a speeded-up scene from time-lapse photography, a road, factories, and workers appear in a matter of months.

Hessler is allowed to sit in on the hiring process for one factory, where a boss openly states that poorly educated girls who aren't good looking make the most docile employees. Most workers want to earn as much money as possible in the shortest period of time. Factories that boast of overtime work and few days off are the most attractive, Hessler explains.

It's just one of the insights presented in "Country Driving" -- a fascinating road trip through a land in transition. ●

Country Driving by Peter Hessler
Harper, 448 pp., \$27.99.
Reviewed by Mike Revzin
Christian Science Monitor



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Chess COLUMN

IF YOU DON'T WRITE YOUR MOVES DOWN, MANY CHESS RULES CANNOT BE OBSERVED BY HUMBERTO CRUZ - CHESS COLUMNIST

Rather than a question, it sounds more like a plea. "Do I really," some of my students ask, "have to write the moves down?"

The answer is an emphatic yes.

Writing the moves down during a chess game is not only an excellent habit to get into but also necessary to observe the rules of the game. (For a primer on chess notation, go to the United States Chess Federation Web site at www.uschess.org and click on "New to Chess?").

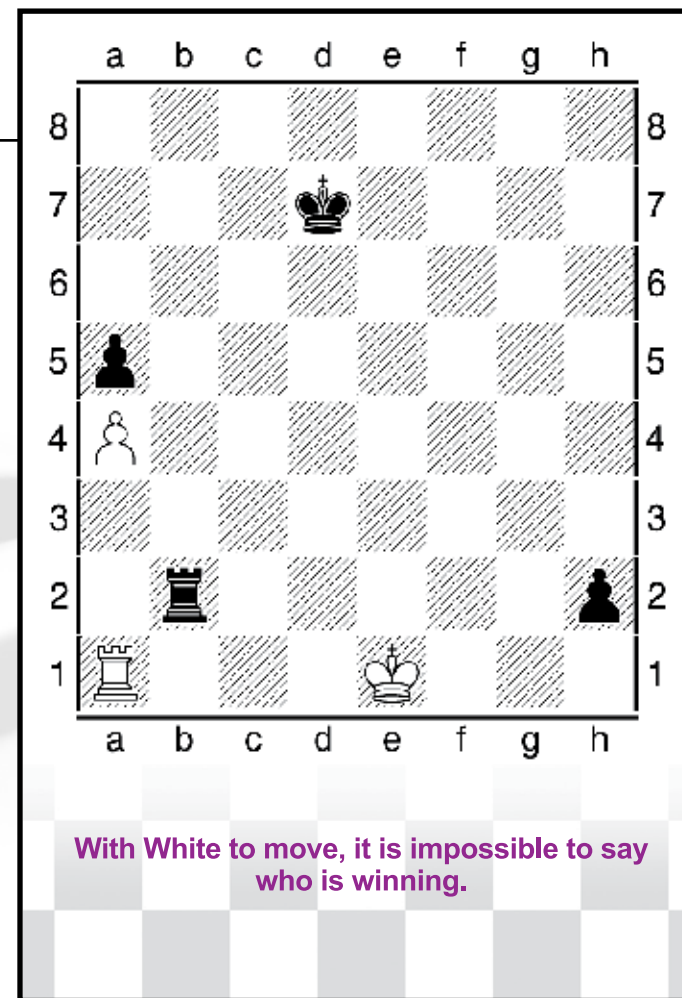
Knowing chess notation allows you to follow and enjoy games in books, magazines, Web sites and of course this column, and to preserve and review you own games. Beyond that, without a record of the moves many chess rules cannot be enforced.

A threefold repetition of the position, for example, can result in a draw. But how can you be sure the same position has occurred three times without a record of the moves? Ditto for the 50-move rule, which allows a draw after 50 consecutive moves without a capture or pawn move.

Or let's say you realize your opponent made an illegal move some moves earlier. The illegal move is allowed to stand if 10 legal moves have been made since, and you need a record of the moves to verify that.

Or take castling (and the position in today's diagram). Castling is illegal if the King and/or Rook have moved previously. Just by looking at the position, you can't tell. If White can castle, then White wins by castling long, checking the Black King and capturing the Black Rook next. But if White cannot castle because his King and/or Rook had moved previously, then White is lost as Black will queen the "h" pawn.

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



Bridge COLUMN

WHEN ESTHER BECAME A DIS-ESTHER
BY PIETER VANBENNEKOM - BRIDGE COLUMNIST

Flustered Flo's regular bridge partner, Loyal Larry, became unavailable for their customary Wednesday night duplicate club tournament at the last moment because of a family emergency, so she called her neighbor Esther to play with her for once.

Flo often wondered why Esther didn't have a regular partner, but she appeared glad to get the invitation and said she'd hurry out of the house to make it on time. Esther would have to skip dinner altogether because there wasn't even time to stop at a fast-food drive-through window, but she was willing to make that sacrifice.

Hungry Esther and Flustered Flo were doing quite nicely until they came up against Flo's eternal nemesis, Smug Sam, in the diagrammed deal.

Smug Sam held the South hand and his partner, Shy Shem, was North. Flo had the zero-points West hand and her partner Esther as East was the Dealer; East-West vulnerable.

The redouble by Shem, who for once wasn't shy at all, was one of those bids of a Riverboat Gambler who goes for either tops or bottom, or a bid born out of the philosophy, "Hey, I don't have to play it; my partner does" – or a combination of both.

Sam found the correct counter-intuitive play on the first trick, resisting the urge to ruff the opening Heart lead in dummy (with that line of play, he'd eventually have to lose a Heart anyway plus the Ace of Spades and the failed finesse to the King of Clubs for Down One).

Instead, he let the Heart ride, ditched a Club from dummy and East's Ace won (ducking the Ace achieves nothing for East, since South would then have enough Trumps in dummy to ruff all his remaining Hearts). After cashing the Ace of Spades, East returned a Trump, the best lead since he saw that Declarer would try to use trumps in dummy for a cross-ruff. Sam with the South hand took the Trump trick in his hand and collected his winning King-Queen of Hearts, dumping dummy's last Club and a Spade.

He then ruffed his last Heart in dummy, ruffed a Spade in his hand, got back to the dummy with the Ace of Clubs, ruffed another Spade in his hand, ruffed his last remaining Club with dummy's last Trump, ruffed another Spade in his hand and claimed.

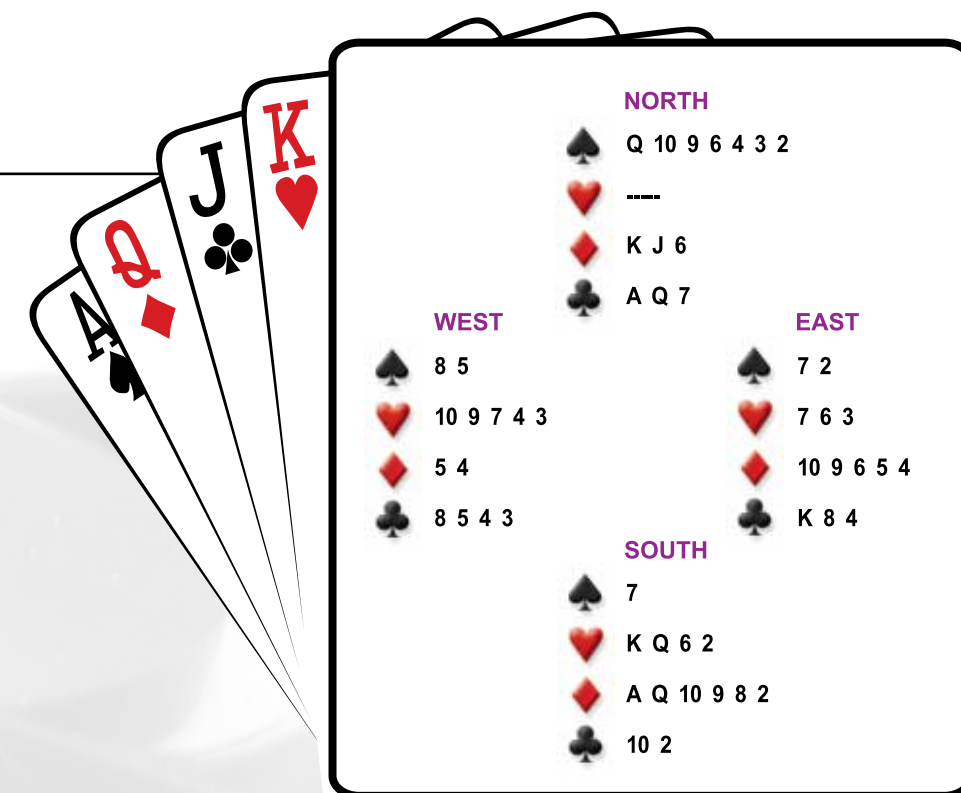
A tricky transition game but doable. The hands were computer-dealt and the computer's own analysis confirmed 5 Diamonds should be made by South (if somehow North gets to play the hand, he can even make an overtrick for 6, the computer said).

It would have been a mistake to draw another round of Trumps on Trick Four since Sam needed all dummy's Trumps for ruffing. And as Declarer he really didn't care if the Trumps split 2-2 or 3-1. With his continuous cross-ruff, all his remaining Trumps were higher than anything the opposition had – so eventually they'd be forced to under-ruff.

That minus-1,000-plus score doomed Flo's chances in the tournament, and she wasn't very gracious to her partner responsible for the disaster with her ill-advised double. "I've heard it said that when you make a mistake, you turn from an Esther into a Dis-Esther," said Flo. "Now I think I know why you haven't been able to find a regular partner."

"Give me a break," said Esther. "I rushed out of the house to play with you and missed dinner. I was so hungry I couldn't think straight. And it didn't help that Sam recounted in great detail how this was his second tournament of the day, but he hadn't gone home in between. He'd stayed in town to eat a delicious drippy French melt, even though it wasn't exactly on his diet program."

"So it's all your fault," Flo said, looking daggers at Sam again, "as usual."



The bidding:	East	South	West	North
	1 No-Trump	2 Diamonds	Pass	2 Spades
	Pass	3 Diamond	Pass	5 Diamonds
	Double	Pass	Pass	Re-double
	All pass			
Opening lead: 4 of Hearts.				

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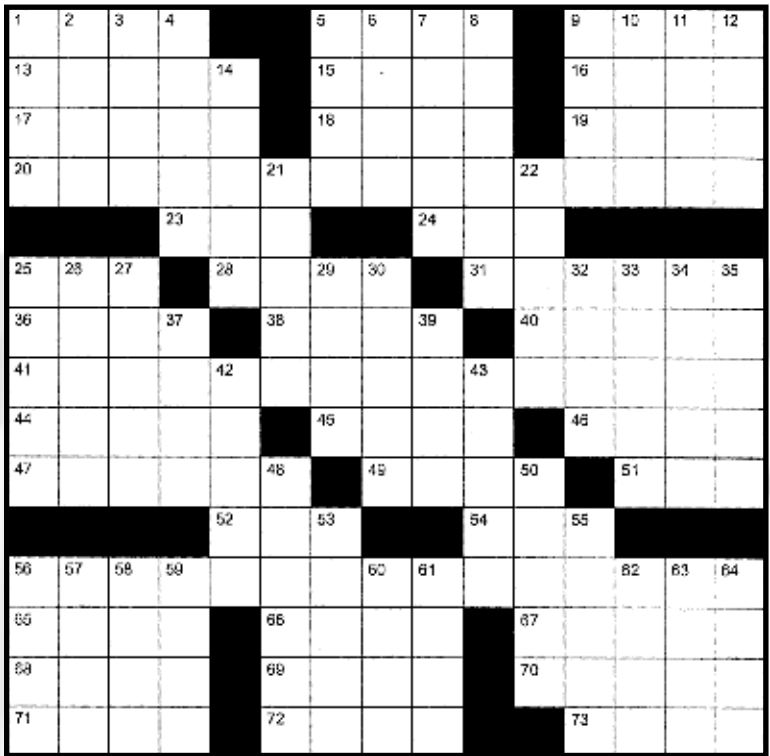
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Crossword

SOLUTIONS TO LAST ISSUE ON PAGE 83

BUYLINES



The Christian Science Monitor | By Murray Rieger | Edited by Charles Preston

ACROSS

- 1 Some gliders do it
- 5 Cartoonist's lightbulb
- 9 It could be prime
- 13 Prufrock's creator
- 15 Daring
- 16 Sinister
- 17 Estate residence
- 18 Jacques' sweetie
- 19 Summer spot
- 20 Investor's buy
- 23 Verily
- 24 Biblical verb ending
- 25 Pussy foot
- 28 Have the lead
- 31 Vatican City locale
- 36 Ahmadinejad's place
- 38 Nile bird
- 40 Cut, as grass
- 41 Investor's purchase
- 44 Moon Unit ____
- 45 Before phone or graph
- 46 Nothing more than
- 47 Declare
- 49 Stale in a day
- 51 Can. monetary unit
- 52 Car of yesteryear
- 54 Dawn goddess
- 56 Investor's buy

DOWN

- 1 Fibrous plant
- 2 Winged
- 3 National League team
- 4 Daft
- 5 Support beam
- 6 Fuller edifice
- 7 Slur over
- 8 "____ Fideles"
- 9 Change decor
- 10 With: Fr.
- 11 Part of a clock sound
- 12 Lodge brothers
- 14 Kilmer poem
- 21 Proportion
- 22 Gould's "The Panda's ____"
- 25 Kind of pie

- 26 Spheres
- 27 Distorts
- 29 Border on
- 30 Come to fruition
- 32 Space
- 33 Had in one's portfolio
- 34 Director Almodovar
- 35 Automotive Henry's son
- 37 Ix-nay!
- 39 Only
- 42 Author John Le ____
- 43 Stair post
- 48 Harness ring
- 49 Really sentimental
- 53 Fla. citrus center city
- 55 Bombay boss
- 56 It flows
- 57 Mayberry lad
- 58 Apportion
- 59 TV's enunciating equine
- 60 Not ____ many words
- 61 A long time
- 62 "On the Waterfront" site
- 63 Vocalist Fitzgerald
- 64 Took a taxi

ACROSS

- 1 What "mark twain" refers to
- 6 "Time to unwind!" letters
- 10 Acronym that omits the T for "targeted"
- 14 Proud ones, often
- 19 Coming-or-going greeting
- 20 Ship part
- 21 "How interesting"
- 22 Tapanade ingredient
- 23 Malingering, e.g.
- 24 Lake of the Bass Islands
- 25 Depilatory brand
- 26 City near Lake Titicaca
- 27 Start of a quip about California
- 31 "Stop playing with your food!"
- 32 ____ reservations
- 33 Arizona's motto, "Datat ____"
- 34 "CSI" test subject
- 37 Worthless
- 41 Quip, Part 2
- 45 Liver spread
- 46 Recorded intro?
- 47 Verb that sounds like a letter
- 48 Unemotional
- 49 Quip, Part 3
- 55 Bridge support
- 56 Apartment number in a long-running comic strip
- 57 Odes and such
- 58 Olympics dueler
- 60 "____ emergency"
- 62 Love from ____
- 63 Good name for a lawyer
- 64 2-for-1 event
- 67 Quip, Part 4
- 70 Traffic sound
- 71 Legal org.

DOWN

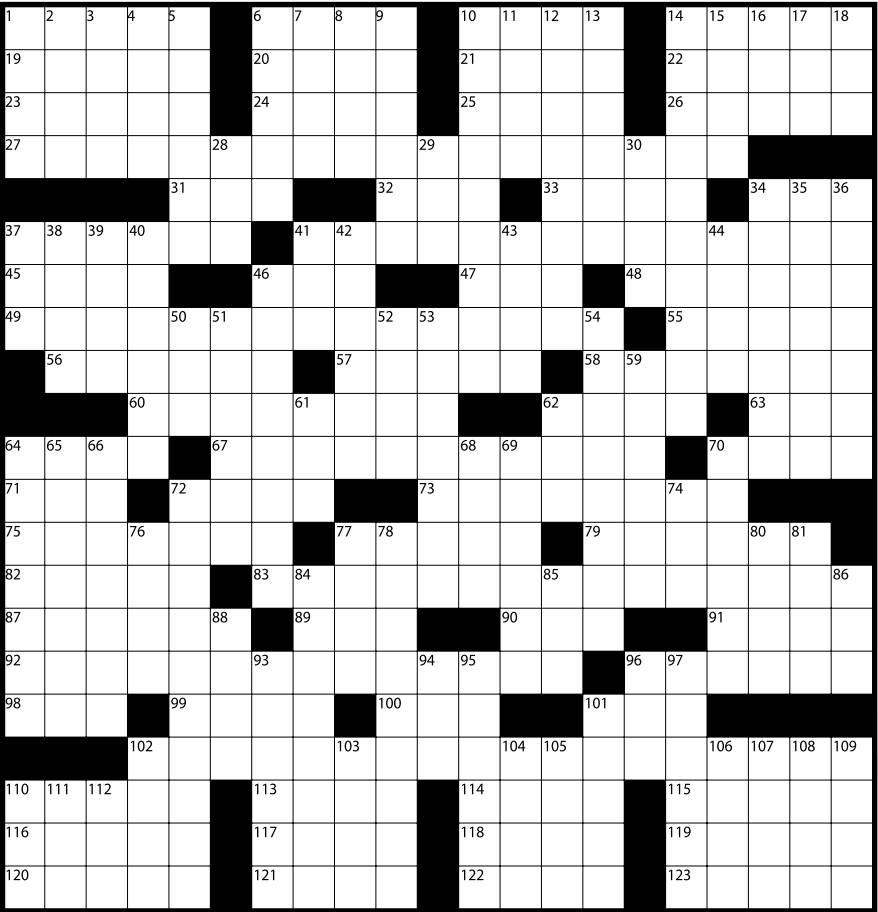
- 72 Ersatz: abbr.
- 73 Meet, as expectations
- 75 Guys with mowers
- 77 Motrin rival
- 79 One of the Seven Sisters
- 82 Suck up, as soup
- 83 Quip, part 5
- 87 Margarita preference
- 89 Western treaty grp.
- 90 Super finish?
- 91 Washstand pitcher
- 92 Quip, part 6
- 96 Court cutup
- 98 One way to vote
- 99 Breath freshener
- 100 Nth degree
- 101 Dinghy propeller
- 102 End of quip
- 110 Where "besuboru" is played
- 113 Bank holding
- 114 Intro to space
- 115 "The Nutcracker" heroine
- 116 Apply, as pressure
- 117 "Winnie ____ Pu" (Latin version of Milne's classic that became a bestseller in 1960)
- 118 Poker player's words
- 119 Spoken for
- 120 Wizards and Redskins, e.g.
- 121 Catch sight of
- 122 Reminiscent of
- 123 Skulker

ACROSS

- 6 On ____ (secretly)
- 7 Spiritual adviser
- 8 First name in tennis lore
- 9 Like berries and melons
- 10 Guest-bathroom amenities, often
- 11 Gaffer Aoki
- 12 Rudolph's ilk
- 13 Bordered
- 14 Well-positioned driver at Indy
- 15 "Such a pity"
- 16 Doozy
- 17 "Mogambo" first name
- 18 Declares, to R. Crumb
- 28 Calendar square
- 29 Wee bit
- 30 Sharing pronoun
- 34 Actor in many Brooks comedies
- 35 Bye week, in publishing
- 36 "The airport, ____ on it!"
- 37 Book balancer
- 38 Undivided, as attention
- 39 WWII invasion beach
- 40 Classic cartoons, ____ Melodies
- 41 Sardonic
- 42 Piled up
- 43 Actress in Kong's hand
- 44 Ending meaning "eater"
- 46 Violinist Niccolo
- 50 Author Follett or Kesey
- 51 "____ in peace ..."
- 52 American-born Jordanian queen
- 53 Makes impure
- 54 Mob-probing senator of the 1950s

DOWN

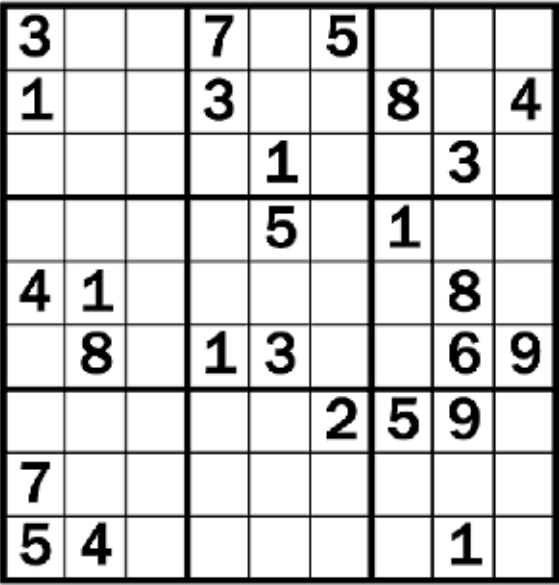
- 59 Online purchase option
- 61 Waited, perhaps
- 62 Total wonderment
- 64 Does a vocal "thumbs down"
- 65 Marine rock-clinger
- 66 Manager Tony of baseball
- 68 "Long live ..."
- 69 Cowboy's 7 p.m. greeting
- 70 Michael on "The Office" et al.
- 72 Tools
- 74 Half a fly
- 76 Shootout shout
- 77 What "there oughta be"
- 78 Take a bath, perhaps
- 80 Periodic table abbr.
- 81 Korea's Syngman
- 84 They may be flared
- 85 Understood
- 86 Add wrong, e.g.
- 88 Activate, as an alarm
- 93 Bad way to be caught
- 94 Homer's voice, ____ Castellaneta
- 95 Bovine soup ingredient
- 96 Salsa container
- 97 Builds
- 101 Be ____ mind (agree)
- 102 Welcoming
- 103 Sushi wrap
- 104 It means "half"
- 105 The Phantom of the Opera
- 106 Personal flair
- 107 Hypnotist's last word
- 108 Realm
- 109 Reb's opponent
- 110 ____ black
- 111 Paul Bunyan's tool
- 112 ____ green



IDLE THOUGHTS

By Merl Reagle

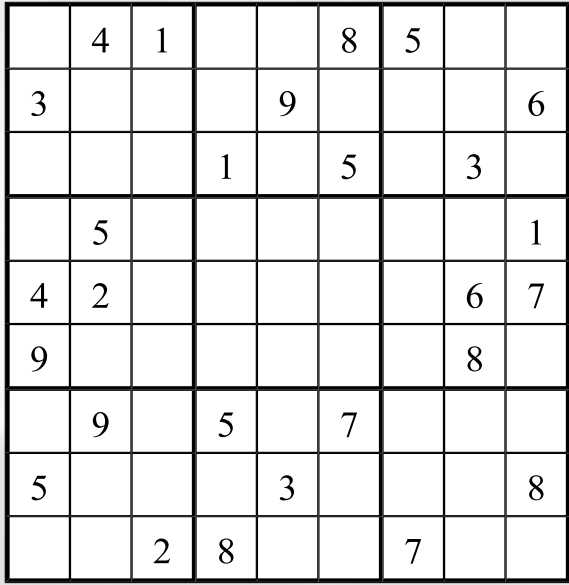
Sudoku



☆☆☆☆☆

How to do Sudoku:

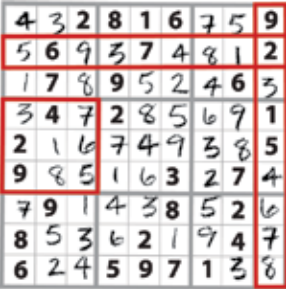
Fill in the grid so the numbers 1 through 9 appear just once in every column, row and three-by-three square. See example (right).



★★★★☆

Row →

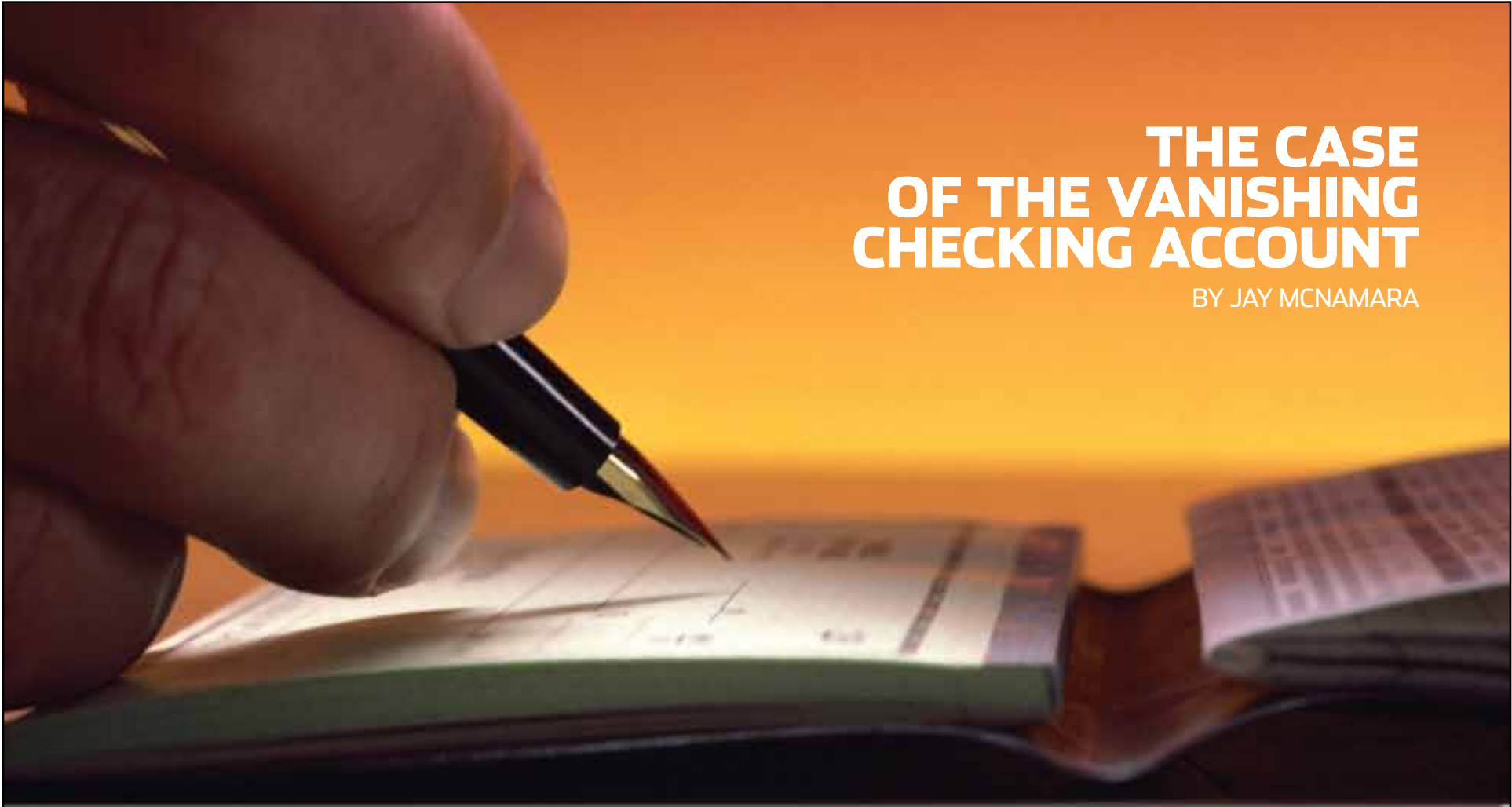
Three-by-three square →



Column

Real estate advertisement for Shamrock Real Estate Corp. featuring properties like Sterling Bay Condo, Ocean Drive home, Riomar pool home, and Artist's Paradise. Includes contact info and a logo.

Real estate advertisement for Shamrock Real Estate Corp. featuring properties like Grand Harbor penthouse, Ready Now lakefront models, New Listing lakefront home, and Ready for Polo? beautiful features. Includes contact info and a logo.



On a recent Friday, I stopped off at my local bank branch to cash a refund check from my insurance company. That’s right, a refund check from my insurance company. I had reduced my home coverage from what I believed were excessive levels.

But who knows? After the storm damage is done, you have no idea what the reaction of the adjustor will be. “I’m sorry, Mr. McNamara, you are not covered for tsunami waves.” He would point to page 16 of my contract to prove the point.

Insurance is a roll of the dice like many other aspects of life. I have friends who are self insured, serious gamblers. They won’t need to get the bad news from an adjustor. The storm will tell them.

In the bank branch, it was crowded. Could people be cashing Friday paychecks? I doubted it. No one in the area had a job as far as I knew. Not because of the Great Recession. The folks in this neighborhood stopped working eons ago.

I ran my card through the gizmo in front of the teller and entered my pin. Next, I would be asked how I wanted my \$310. Then, there would be the “have a nice day” exchange, or maybe “have a nice weekend.”

Instead, the teller told me there was no account in my name!

This took a little while to sink in. I handed her my card and asked her to check to make sure. There was much tap-tap-tapping before she said, “This account is closed. It has a zero balance.”

“Where is my money,” I asked? It seemed like a good question. The lady said, “I can’t tell from the record. I can only tell you that your account is closed.

I decided to do my Cagney imitation, rub a half grapefruit in her face. But, I didn’t have a half grapefruit with me. You never do when you need one.

I decided to do Bogart, light two cigarettes, give one to her, and ask her the tough questions, like did she pack her own bags before coming to the bank, and did a stranger give her something to bring to the bank. But, I don’t smoke. Besides, my fedora and trench coat were in the car.

I heard this voice. “Sir, did you hear me, I think you should see one of our officers.” “Sorry,” I said, “ my mind was wandering, just like my dough.”

The officers are the people in every bank branch who sit at desks playing card games on their computers and checking the sales items at Macy’s. There were two of these people, except today they were busy with customers. There were lots of papers piled on the two desks. The officers were on their phones, talking alternatively with the customers and the experts on the other end, bank employees in far away places, like where my money had gone.

At long length, a lady beckoned me to sit at her desk. She looked suspicious as I explained my plight. “Well,” she said, “accounts don’t just get closed.” Precisely, I thought. She began tap-tap-tapping. “Hmmm, she said, your account was closed a few days ago.” “Where do you think my money is? It’s a large amount, you know.” I felt like I was in some twilight zone. The ramifications of the situation began to arise in my mind.

“You know,” I said, “I have a number of electronic transactions that involve the account, money coming in from direct deposits and money going out to pay the bills, such as the electric, the phone, and cable TV.” I was sure there were other key players that I couldn’t think of offhand. She was still tapping.

Finally, she looked up. “Your account was closed and a check for the balance was mailed to you yesterday.” This was taking on some humorous overtones, dark humor at that. The bank was giving me “the check is in the mail” story, turning the tables on the customer.

The bank was closing. The doors were locked. I was the only customer left. All the employees remaining were now in on the story, dismissive that I had no part in the closing of the account. Whoever heard of such a thing? The customer is never right.

Finally, I was told that a bank team of experts was going to be put on the case, that I would be hearing from them on Saturday, that my check would arrive by then. They bade me farewell. “Have a nice weekend!” (to be continued)

Western Panama an ecotourism adventure

BY SUSAN CARPENTER
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Racing through a Panamanian archipelago by sport boat, I couldn’t help but feel like James Bond. It was just me and a mustachioed driver, speeding toward a remote island where I would spend a few decadent days at an eco-resort, hiking the rain forest, sunning myself by an infinity pool and sucking down rum cocktails to a soundtrack of rolling, tropical surf.

That’s how I spent this past Christmas — as far away from reality as possible — because my reality was that I didn’t have my son for the holidays. My ex and I alternate Christmases, which works great when it’s my year. When it’s not, I wallow in misery. At least that’s how I’ve spent previous years. I vowed I wouldn’t do that again.

Solution: a weeklong getaway to the tropics.

I looked at my short list, and there was Panama, billed as an up-and-coming Costa Rica, thanks to its abundance of animals, the eco emphasis and its dollar-stretching economics.

It also appealed to my contrarian nature. Tourists have been gawking at the Panama Canal for nearly a century, watching ships wend their way through the series of locks that bridge the Atlantic and Pacific.

But the onetime Spanish colony is increasingly popular for areas that are less engineered and more untouched by humans, especially its islands (more than 1,600 of them), its coasts and its wildlife, attractions that have given rise to ecotourism and the medical tourism with which it is often paired. U.S. institutions, such as Johns Hopkins University, have partner facilities in Panama that offer procedures for little more than half of what they would cost in the U.S., and the beach resorts are used for recovery.

I wasn’t in the market for a triple bypass or boob job — yet — just the flora and fauna I knew I could find in the western part of the country. So I planned my six days to include a cloud forest first and then a beach resort. I flew in to the capital on a Monday night and immediately flew back out the following morning, arriving in the western city of David, Panama’s second-most populated city, and traveling by car to the more remote Chiriquí Highlands for the first part of my trip.

When I arrived in David, my driver greeted me with a sign bearing my name. Turns out “Susan Carpenter” was the only English he spoke during



The Cala Mia ecoresort off Panama’s western coast has 11 cabanas, which don’t have in-room telephones, and there was no cellphone service. The resort runs on solar power.

the 45-minute drive from David to Boquete, where I planned to shake the travel cramps from my legs with a hike along the Quetzal Trail, a narrow forest path that zigzags uphill and across streams.

Where I was headed was bonito mejor, my driver, Orlando, told me, blowing a kiss to underscore his point. As we drove along the tree-lined highway connecting David to one of its burgeoning eco-tourism districts, I did understand a few things despite the language barrier: that a Toyota Corolla with 208,000 miles doesn’t have enough zip and shouldn’t be passing cargo trucks on one-lane roads, that iguana is the predominant road kill and that it’s pretty pathetic to be an Angeleno who does not speak Spanish.

About half an hour into the drive, Orlando slowed to pick up what looked like a hitchhiker. But, no, it was Alvaro, the English-speaking guide who would take me on my trek of the Quetzal Trail, past corrugated metal lean-tos housing the indigenous workers who harvest the onions, corn, coffee beans and strawberries grown in this lush mountainous terrain, past howler monkeys and up toward an enormous waterfall where flocks of quetzals, the gorgeous, green-tailed birds, are known to fly.

We saw no one else on this three-hour hike, which began under a fine mist that escalated into a downpour, despite the fact that December is billed as the start of the dry season.



The view from a private cabana at the Cala Mia eco resort.

Nor did I see the bird for which the trail was named, just a rainbow of butterflies and Panamanian flora — birds of paradise, hibiscus and bougainvillea — not unlike what you might see in a Southern California landscape.

We were safely tucked away in Orlando’s Corolla when the sky really decided to open. The many locals we passed on the road weren’t as lucky. We were off to the 39-room Valle Escondido Resort & Spa, the hotel my travel agent had booked. I was dismayed as soon as I passed through the gates of the community, one of several such enclaves cropping up in western Panama and catering to American and European retirees who build out-of-place mansions on lands once used for local agriculture.

Panamanian in an idealized, Vegas sort of way, Valle Escondido is a lush, luxurious estate made up of a hotel, townhome complex and country club, complete with a golf course, indoor swimming pool, spa, restaurant and bar.

I couldn’t wait to leave and go into town.

I’m the sort of traveler who wants



Source: ESRI
Los Angeles Times

to experience the local culture, so although Valle Escondido was nice, it wasn’t my kind of place. It wasn’t of the people but removed from them.



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Travel



Skateboarders practice their moves in Panama's 500-year-old Casco Antigua neighborhood. Downtown Panama City is in the background

At the recommendation of the desk clerk, I took a taxi. The two-minute trip in a small pickup truck painted yellow and decked out in cabbie stripes cost \$2 and took me to the only restaurant in town that serves Panamanian cuisine. The dimly illuminated and largely empty Sabroson was staffed with Spanish-speaking locals who danced to Shakira as they served me a buffet-style dinner of marinated chicken, fried rice, salad and fried bananas, which I washed down with a box of pear juice for \$2.75.

It was still early, so I wandered through the town, a mix of subsistence-level groceries and American-targeted real estate offices, restaurants, hotels and tourist operators. As I strolled the potholed street — there are no sidewalks — I came upon the small dessert shop, Choka Chetta's. Intrigued, I stopped in and ordered a bowl of locally grown strawberries, which were served with a ladle of melted chocolate bars, a mound of whipped cream — and a dollop of disdain from the shopkeeper, who should have been pleased with getting the \$3.75 she charged for this confection but instead seemed wary.

I couldn't blame her. Just a few years earlier, this was a small town populated mostly by locals, but now the American influence is unmistakable.

I walked back to the hotel in a driving but warm, rain, which was lovely for an Angeleno who almost never sees it, and rested up for the following day's activity: whitewater rafting.

The driver, who also turned out to be the rafting guide, was exactly on time the next morning, at the brutal-for-vacation hour of 7. Scooping up two other couples on the way, we raced northwest on the Pan-American Highway, then took secondary roads and, finally, a treacherous deep-in-the-jungle dirt road. Twenty minutes from the river we would be rafting, the driver slowed to pick up another man who seemed to appear out of nowhere. He was the driver who would move the van from the head of the river to its tail and pick us up a few hours later.

I know how to swim — not well, but I can — but I had never been whitewater rafting. In fact, I'm terrified of water, especially "Deliverance"-style rapids. Hoping to conquer my fear before I die, I signed up.

Arriving at the base of the Talamanca Mountain Range just miles from the Costa Rica border, we were greeted by guards who let us through the gate that would lead us to the churning Chiriqui Viejo — a river that would soon no longer exist as I was seeing it. Construction is underway to dam it for hydroelectric power to support

development spurred by a Panamanian policy that encourages foreign settlement. For a \$300,000 investment in Panamanian banks, business or real estate, Americans can gain citizenship — and a long list of benefits that include no taxes on foreign earned income, fewer business regulations and a high quality of living for less than in the U.S.

My rafting partners were American and Swiss. There was Alan, an Oklahoma State University electrical engineering professor who had grown up in Panama; his wife, Karen; Priska, a university researcher; and Thomas, a horticultural economist. All had rafted previously. I was the newbie.

I'd signed up for the introductory, sissy version of whitewater rafting: Class 2 rapids. But the previous night's rains had elevated the waters to a Class 3. I was nervous when I strapped on my life vest and helmet, and the circling birds didn't help. They weren't any of the country's exotic 940 identified species of bird. They were vultures.

I got in anyway, willing myself to stay in the boat as we plowed our way through the serpentine, foaming waters and observed the lizards, birds and monkeys our multitasking guide was spotting as he expertly steered our inflatable raft. Half of the paying customers had fallen into the river by the time we pulled over to a sandy inlet for a lunch of ham sandwiches. I wasn't one of them.

What's the saying? "No swimming within an hour of eating"? That's about how long it was when our dinghy, back on the water after lunch, nearly cap-sized and jettisoned me almost 50 feet downstream. Tiny, our guide, earned a good tip for fishing me out with a rope before my head made contact with a boulder. Although my unplanned, boat-free ride down the river was terrifying when it happened, once I was safely back onboard, I realized I had had a fantastic time.

Our journey ended at the Costa Rican border about four hours after we'd first pushed off from the muddy shore, cascading through rocky rapids, under trees filled with squirrel monkeys and rocks populated with preening birds, the names of which I'll never know. This is, of course, where Panama's own tourist journey begins, piggybacking on the hugely successful eco-tourism trade of its northern neighbor, which is built on the same sort of lush tropical paradise that Panama is now trying to leverage.

After a 90-minute van ride in wet jeans, I was actually looking forward to Valle Escondido, where I made a bee line for the sauna and a thorough de-pruning. I tried to ignore the Hummer

in the country club parking lot when I walked outside and into town.

I was to meet my rafting buddies at 7 for dinner at the place at which I wished I'd been booked — the Panamonte, an old country-style inn housing a spa and Boquete's best restaurant.

It was only 4:30, but I was hoping to book a last-minute snorkel adventure through the local tourist agency. Christmas was just two days away, and, though I already had my hotel reservation booked at an island eco-resort, I was growing anxious about being alone with nothing to do. I wanted distractions. In this fast-growing tourist destination, I was fairly sure a Christmas booking was possible — for a price. And it was, for \$90 and a minimum of three people. I planned to ask the Swiss.

Meanwhile, I invested in a backup plan at the local market: a second-hand Janet Evanovich novel (no doubt read by an earlier tourist) and a bottle of Chilean Syrah.

Even the lovely, locally caught trout dinner at the Panamonte wasn't enough to persuade the Swiss to be my substitute family for Christmas.

So midday on Christmas Eve, I made the two-hour journey from Valle Escondido to the coastal town of Boca Chica, where I hitched a ride on a speedboat that would take me to the tiny Cala Mia boutique hotel, off Panama's western Pacific coast. It looked as though it would be just the Syrah and Evanovich and me for Dec. 25.

It wasn't. I spent my day as a sort of international orphan, having breakfast with a Texas couple who were in Panama to shop for beachfront property; hiking the lush island and spotting howler monkeys with a couple from England and then having lunch; and dining on locally caught lobster with a family from Seattle for dinner.

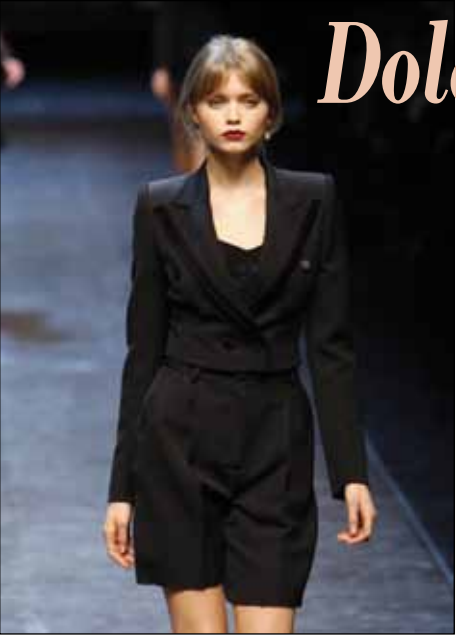
The island resort, founded three years ago by a European couple, is run on solar power and supplied, at least in part, with locally grown produce and its own dairy operation. One of the 100, mostly deserted islands that make up the Archipelago de Chiriquí, the sun-dappled island and its warm ocean breeze were a wonderful distraction.

I didn't go snorkeling, but I did manage to take a few strolls along the island's private beach and also polish off my Evanovich novel sitting on the private porch of my grass-thatched cabana as I sipped a concoction of rum and pineapple.

All of it was wonderful; I'm happy I went, and I'd do it again. But if I had to do it over, I'd make sure to bring a friend to enjoy the sunsets and surf

Style

Back to the classics, goodbye to cheap knockoffs



Dolce & Gabbana, Fall 2010



them, designers are redefining luxury as something timeless and personal.

For many who showed during Milan Fashion Week, which ended Monday, that meant returning to what they

became famous for in the first place, designing clothes that won't go "in" and "out" in a season, and putting an

CONTINUED ON PAGE 62



BY BOOTH MOORE
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Milan grows up and covers up. That was the takeaway from the fall/winter 2010 collections, which weren't as much about in-your-face showmanship and trends as they were about the value of heritage and craft. Facing competition from the glut of inexpensive fast fashion available at places such as H&M and Zara, where knock-offs of runway styles hit the racks long before the originals that inspired

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Style

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 61

emphasis on the human touch. This season, we saw larger-sized models at Prada, celebrity outcasts Lindsay Lohan and Courtney Love front row at Roberto Cavalli and the Internet inviting everyone to the party, with more shows than ever being streamed live. It was almost as if the fashion industry joined together in a chorus of "Kumbaya." Maybe during the upcoming Paris shows, Vogue's Anna Wintour will serve milk and cookies.

Missoni, Fall 2010

A cynic might say that all this inclusiveness is just good business when business isn't good, especially now that consumers are getting fatter and older. Or that feel-good fashion could itself be a passing trend. But whatever



the reason and the outcome, it was refreshing. Dolce & Gabbana opened their show with a black-and-white film of seamstresses from their atelier painstakingly sewing each bead and button. It was a reminder of why a designer

jacket costs so much, and what you are really getting when you spend \$2,000 at Dolce & Gabbana versus \$20 at H&M.

On the runway, the clothes were

CONTINUED ON PAGE 63



Style

Gucci, Fall 2010



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 62

an elegant representation of the duo's timeless design codes. Superbly tailored jackets worn with lacy underthings, crochet-knit suits, a mix of leopard print and polka dots, floral embroidered coats, and the Sicilian-style black lace corset dresses that

Facing competition from the glut of inexpensive fast fashion available at places where knockoffs of runway styles hit the racks long before the originals that inspired them, designers now are redefining luxury as something timeless and personal.



started it all.

At Gucci, the winning formula for designer Frida Giannini was not the latest flashy trend ready to be copied.

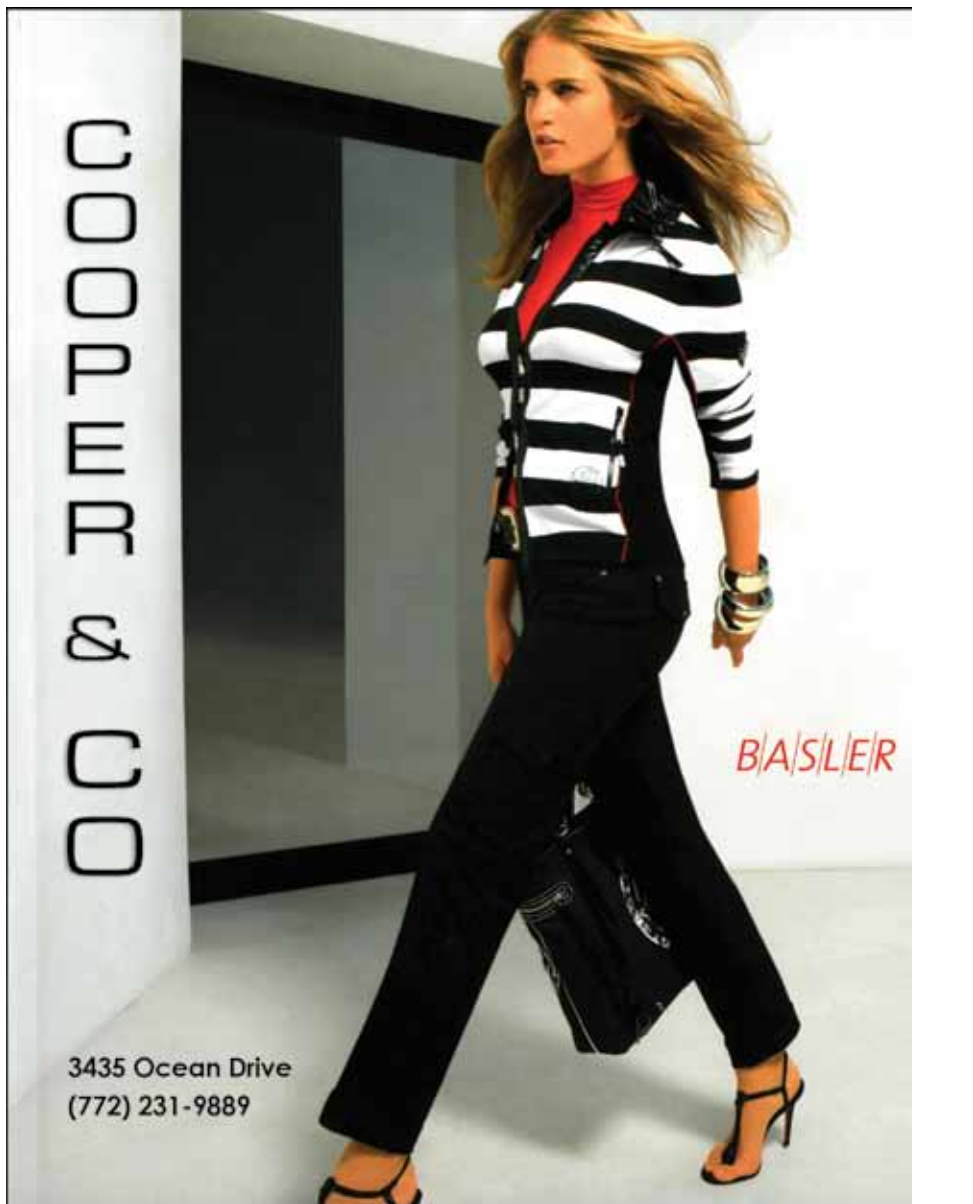
It was luxe, 1970s-inspired sportswear in a soothing neutral palette. Among the offerings: skinny straight pants with fold-over waists; asymmetrical silk skirts and dresses with modest cutouts; and a glove leather shift dress



coat with a removable knitted mink lining. Need more evidence that the Gucci rock chick has grown up? Python-patterned Chantilly lace dresses and a shift sparkling with ombre tortoise-colored sequins looked to be for the woman who hits home just before the sun rises.

with beaver fur at the neckline. Outerwear was strong, too, including a fox-trimmed suede topper, and a camel

CONTINUED ON PAGE 64



Ask the Hair Guy

Mark Rodolico

Colorist / Stylist
www.askthehairguy.com

A word from The Hair Guy: Our thoughts and prayers go out to my dear friend Tony and his family as they go through this ordeal with their 2 1/2 year old son Makani. God bless you and keep you!

Question: My hair person used a semi or demi permanent color on my hair. Is this going to fade out faster than a Permanent color?
- M.C.Q. of Indian River County

Answer: Well MCQ, this may sound a bit like a cop out, but I would need more information to answer this one. Here is what I mean. The big differences between Permanent, Demi- Permanent and Semi-permanent color are 1) The size of the color molecules 2) The delivery system 3) The PH of the product. Each of which do a very different job. **Permanent** Color contains ammonia and an H2O2 developer and has 3 distinct actions that happen in one movement. First it opens the hair shaft, second it removes some of your natural pigment and lastly deposits artificial pigments that are impregnated with O2 by the developer (makes em' big) and trapped in your hair. **Demi-permanent** colors have some large and some small color molecules that are gently delivered to the hair shaft with minimal disruption to your natural hair color

and only part of the dye load is impregnated with O2 if any. Most Demi colors are slightly Alkaline in nature as part of its delivery system. A true Semi-permanent color has No ammonia, No lift of the natural pigment and tends to be Acidic in its composition. A true Semi can even have healing properties and shine up the hair like a clear gloss on a cars paint job. The truth is however, each depending on their application and/or pretreatment of the hair, can become permanent. Conversely, I have yet to meet an artificial color that doesn't fade. So, is it therefore not permanent? The reality is, a quality long lasting hair color formulation depends on 3 things. Formulation, Application and what you do or don't do at home.

Thanks for asking The Hair Guy. Keep those questions coming!
www.askthehairguy.com

Mark's at the Pointe Salon & Boutique is home of The Hair Guy
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Or online: www.marksatthepointe.com

This is NOT your Grandmother's Day Spa.

Style

Roberto Cavalli,
Fall 2010

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 63

In a season when there has been so much talk about “real” clothes, there was plenty of opportunity for Giorgio Armani. It’s a pity he did not seize the moment to show what he can do – and has done – for the Everywoman. Instead, he concocted yet another party-time fantasy, dwelling too long on the

bad ideas, such as funny fringed hats and jarring, two-toned cocktail dresses (Note: Orange and black should only be worn together on Halloween), and not long enough on the good. The new Armani jacket, which fastened at one side with a wave effect, and drawstring shorts, for example, could have been fodder for the what-to-wear-to-work discussion, too.



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Style

‘Mad Men’ inspired: In Milan, designers go retro feminine

Alberta Ferretti,
Fall 2010

BY BOOTH MOORE
LOS ANGELES TIMES



Holloway) may well be the fashion icon of the fall season.

The dominant look was the fit-and-flare dress in sketchy windowpane checks, with a full, swishy skirt. Some

versions also had darts emphasizing the bust, or ruffles framing it.

Other key pieces included A-line

CONTINUED ON PAGE 66

“I wanted to see something that wasn’t trying so hard to be new.”

That was how Marc Jacobs explained his fall 2010 collection last week in New York. And the sentiment seems to be carrying over to Milan, where so far, designers are banking on retro femininity for fall, from D&G’s ski bunnies to Prada’s sexy secretaries.

Using a set that brought to mind Internet Age information overload, with walls covered in pie graphs and fragments of geopolitical jargon, Miuccia Prada harkened back to the simpler “Mad Men” era of padded bums and beehive hairdos, while referencing some of her own past work.

This was the first Prada women’s show to be webcast live, beaming her

clothes around the world in a nano-second. But on the runway, the collection – including A-line leather skirts as glossy as a vinyl record; elaborately embroidered, jet-beaded skirts; and coats that must have required hours of old-fashioned handwork – made a case for slowing down.

The clothes were prim but also a tad subversive, as if to say that underneath the proper façade of the woman who wears them lurks the soul of a sex kitten. There were even a couple of fuller-figure models, suggesting that “Mad Men’s” sexy secretary Joan Harris (née

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Style

Gianfranco Ferre,
Fall 2010

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 65

skirts with ruffled hems, cigarette pants and matching sleeveless tops, chunky cable knit sweaters worn belted over matching skirts, and coats with double-layer fur and ribbed knit collars.

Accessories were reworked Prada classics: thick knee socks tucked into dainty pointed-toe sling backs with bows or chunky-heeled, square-toe loafers, sweater knit frame purses and new riffs on old cat's eye glasses.

Prada seemed to be supporting the idea that just because it's fast and new doesn't mean it's better. That may seem like a strange value for the fashion industry to embrace, but it is one that high-end designers are grabbing onto to survive the tidal wave of inexpensive fast fashion.

Call it the slow fashion movement.

Alberta Ferretti's feminine vision was even softer and more lulling than Prada's. The palette included nudes, greens and blacks. And while quietly glamorous crystal- and ruffle-trimmed tulle cocktail dresses and wool suits (the skirts had kick pleats) may be fa-

Prada,
Fall 2010

Rather than being overwrought and overdone as some of Tommaso Aquilano and Roberto Rimondi's Ferre collections have been in the past, this one followed the trend toward uncomplicated, easily understandable clothes. One of the best looks was a simple pair of high-waisted sparkly wool trousers, worn with a leather tie-front blouse.

The designers also seemed to be making a serious bid for the red carpet with a stunning, one-sleeved black gown with a gold-braided leather side panel.

At D&G, it was all about ski bunnies in fur bloomers, Fair Isle sweaters and mukluk boots.

The sweater-dressing theme played out on Fair Isle print chiffon blouses and skirts, a Fair Isle print bodysuit, even Fair Isle print jeans. And a wrap-front leather jacket, with a ribbed collar and cuffs.

miliar territory for the designer, it was all perfectly lovely.

At Gianfranco Ferre, everything was designed to accentuate a woman's curves: pencil skirts with suggestive slits, satin-seamed wool dresses and coats with extra wide belts.

Pets

By popular demand: The cats of Seagrape



Yoshi, Tora and Mama cat

BY CISSY SUMNER
COLUMNIST

This week we have a refreshing change of pace. We have island cats! Meet this collection of kitties belonging to Peggy Fisher of Seagrape Drive.

Youngest of this group is a beautiful Blue Point Siamese named Tora, or to be more precise, Tora Tora Tora! As a tiny kitten, she attacked anything that moved. Tora was adopted to honor the empty place left by her predecessor, Taifu.

The name Taifu, also a Blue Point Siamese, means tornado in Japanese. It seems Tora is following in Taifu's footsteps. Also part of the family is Yoshi, adopted child, yet another Sia-

mese feline.

The only non-Siamese cat in the family is Mama Cat, a formerly feral cat who joined the Fisher household after an encounter with a bobcat. I understand there was a dramatic naked rescue involved. I am sorry there are no photographs available!

Poor Momma cat lost a few of her nine lives on that day. Since then she has come to enjoy the safe life of a loved indoor pet.

Fisher understands cats do need opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. However, free roaming cats can become lost, injured or victims of predators. To keep her pets safe, Fisher has come up with a way to allow her cats to enjoy being outside by teaching them to walk on a leash. This gives



Tora and Yoshi hanging out

the cats supervised time to enjoy a more natural environment.

As an extra bonus, the Seagrape cats prefer to relieve themselves outdoors rather than use an inside litter box.

Fisher begins leash training when the cats are kittens. While the cats take a bit of time getting used to the leashes, they soon begin to enjoy their outings.

She finds training is easier when there is an adult leash trained cat to

follow.

Fisher and her cats enjoy the best of both worlds. With some training and a lot of love, the cats of Seagrape enjoy the safety of being indoor pets with the pleasure of the great outdoors.

Is your pet an Island Pet? Email Cissy Sumner, CPDT-KA at bdbdogtraining@bellsouth.net to nominate your pet!

YOUR PET'S HEALTH

By Dr. Randy Divine and Dr. Laura Baldwin



Anal Gland Disease

One of the most common causes of scooting in pets is anal gland disease. The anal glands are located to either side of the rectum, opening onto the surfaces at the four o'clock and eight o'clock positions. They secrete a brownish fluid with strong odor when pets defecate or when they experience fear or stress. The anal glands function in marking of territory and communication. Both dogs and cats have anal glands and both species may have problems although they are more common in dogs.

When anal glands become blocked due to thickened secretions or changes in stool consistency (diarrhea), pets cannot express glands on their own and this results in discomfort. Common signs in addition to scooting include obsessive licking or looking at the rear end, sitting down suddenly, or restlessness. Pets will need manual anal gland expression preferably by a veterinarian since the glands are easily ruptured and may need to be flushed. If anal sacs repeatedly become blocked, infection (anal sacculitis can result). Early anal sac infections may be treated with flushing and antibiotics; however, anal gland abscesses can result over time. Anal sac abscesses result in a painful, swelling that may be warm to touch. Since this is painful for pets, they need to see us as soon as possible as surgical drainage and flushing is usually necessary under anesthesia. Pets may run fever or show signs of aggression or lethargy. Anal sac abscesses may rupture producing an open, draining wound. Owners may mistake blood present for bloody stool. Although the pain decreases after anal gland has ruptured, pets still need to be examined and placed on antibiotics. If pets have chronic anal gland issues, surgery to remove the anal sacs may be performed (anal saccullectomy) at Divine Animal Hospital. The best way to resolve anal sac problems is to bring pets in at first sign of disease. It's important to examine pets for other potential causes of scooting including parasites, vaginitis, and skin infections or allergies. At Divine Animal Hospital we offer complete physical exams including minimally invasive vaginoscopy, orthopedic exam, blood pressure, and screening ECG.



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Dining

Restaurant Review

The Tides: After 10 years, still a beachside favorite

BY TINA RONDEAU
COLUMNIST

It was exactly ten years ago this month that chef Leanne Kelleher launched her own restaurant, The Tides. From the very beginning, this restaurant has been a big hit with beachside diners. And after a decade, it remains a favorite – packed from opening to closing this season most every night.

So we were a bit concerned several weeks ago when our dinner was not up to the standard we have come to expect from The Tides.

But that less-than-happy visit provided an excellent reminder of the credo we adhere to in reviewing restaurants. Before writing, always dine at least twice.

Don't draw conclusions – positive or negative – based on a single visit. Any chef will tell you there simply are too many things that can go wrong in the kitchen on any given night in even the finest restaurant.

So the good news is that a return visit to The Tides this past week again persuaded us that with Leanne in her kitchen, “all's right with the world” – and a wonderful meal quickly erased any earlier thoughts of The Tides ebbing.

We'll start with our most recent visit, because it was totally consistent with The Tides we have come to know and love.

Arriving for our reservation (you absolutely need one), we were promptly ushered to our table.

This year's new addition to The Tides front-of-the-house lineup, Valerie Martin (yes, that Valerie; Leanne years ago understudied her husband, Chef Yannick, at Café du Soir) was quickly at tableside to take our wine order.

For starters on this visit, my husband had a special beet salad (\$10) in a buttermilk and lemon dressing (excellent) while I had the tasty arugula salad (\$10), a very light salad tossed with Fuji and Washington apples, goat cheese crumbles, candied cashews in an apple Champagne vinaigrette.

Our companion, however, probably had the best of the appetizers – the evening's special soup, a creamy five-onion concoction (\$8), which she gave high grades.

For entrees, I had the herb crusted rack of lamb (\$38), two roasted Colorado lamp chops in a Dijon herb crust, perfectly cooked medium rare, served in a cabernet lamb sauce, and accom-



The Tides' Steakhouse Special: prime tenderloin of beef pan roasted with stilton herb butter, port wine reduction and crispy shallots served with roasted fingerling potatoes and asparagus.

Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.

panied by chateau potatoes and seasonal root vegetables. The lamb was superb.

My husband had the steak house inspired filet mignon (\$35), sterling silver Angus prepared with crispy smokehouse bacon, walnuts, stilton herb butter and a port wine reduction, and accompanied by roasted fingerling potatoes and crispy shallot strings.

He rated the steak a “10,” though he confessed that he would have preferred our companion's garlic mashed potatoes.

In addition to the mashed potatoes, she enjoyed the herb crusted chicken saltimbocca (\$26), a delicious dish that consists of chicken cutlets, lined with prosciutto, rolled up with spinach and fresh mozzarella cheese. Yummy.

For dessert, we opted for the cherry cobbler with vanilla ice cream and a round of espressos.

If this sounds like another great dinner at The Tides, it was. So what's up with our previous visit?

Well, that one started at 8:45 with neither Valerie nor Claudia Arens (the superwoman who runs the front of the house) in sight, and we were put into a 20-minute holding pattern at the bar -- when we needed food more than another drink -- while waiting for a table to be cleared.

Once seated, for appetizers on this evening, my husband had the oysters 222 (\$14) – a half dozen oysters consisting of two flash fried crispy cornmeal crusted oysters served with a tasso remoulade; two baked oysters stuffed with fresh spinach, applewood bacon,

Vermont cheddar cheese, and pernod cream; and two oysters stuffed with lump crab, shrimp, horseradish and roasted red peppers.

While I could go into detail, suffice it to say that on this night, none of the three oyster preparations was wonderful. I ordered the portabella BLT (\$10), consisting of a large portabella mushroom surrounded by wilted spinach, sundried tomatoes, pancetta, and topped with gorgonzola cream. The portabella, I regret to say, was about the size of a Michelin tire – and more or less tasted like one.

Our companion had the best of the appetizers, a bowl of seafood chowder – a light and flavorful concoction which she pronounced excellent. Entrees on this evening were more successful. Our companion had the grilled Atlantic swordfish (\$32), a very nice piece of herb marinated swordfish (alas, a bit overcooked) and served with jumbo lump crabmeat, vegetable Israeli couscous and asparagus.

My husband had one of the evening's specials, a pound and a half Maine lobster (\$\$), removed from the

shell, and served with drawn butter and roasted potatoes. The lobster was perfectly prepared and very tasty.

I had the fish of the day -- a lovely piece of cobia in a Creole and crustacean sauce. It, like the swordfish, was a trifle overcooked, but it was served with silky smooth mashed sweet potatoes. Delicious.

For desserts on this occasion, I had the key lime cheese cake in a key lime emulsion (delicious) and our companion had the cobbler.

Even with a full house, the layout at the Tides -- with the tables well spaced among several rooms, as well as outside on the patio -- makes for a relaxing dinner atmosphere.

The dining experience also benefits from the attentiveness of one of Vero's top veteran wait staffs.

Dinner for two with a modest bottle of wine, before tip, will run you ap-



Ever since its inception 10 years ago, The Tides has been, and remains, a favorite among beachside diners.

proximately \$140.

As it starts a second decade, The Tides remains right up there near the top of the island restaurant list. On a good night, it can be *very, very* good. Our hope is that you visit on a good night.

I welcome your comments, and encourage you to send feedback to me at tina@verobeach32963.com

The reviewer dines anonymously at restaurants at the expense of Vero Beach 32963.

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Dining

Wine Column

Two pinot noirs: One speaking French, the other ‘Murrican

BY DAVE MCINTYRE
WASHINGTON POST

I suffered cognitive dissonance a few weeks ago over pinot noir. I lunched on Monday with Richard Sanford at his Alma Rosa Winery in Santa Barbara County over beef stew and his 2006 and 2007 La Encantada Vineyard pinot.

He had just driven me around the Santa Rita Hills in the Santa Ynez Valley, an appellation he pioneered by planting Sanford & Benedict vineyard in the 1970s and creating Sanford winery in 1980. He explained how the hills running east-to-west – unique in California, where most run parallel to the Pacific – channel the ocean breezes and fog into the valley and moderate the temperatures.

Despite being just a two hour drive from Los Angeles, the Santa Rita Hills region counts as a “cool-climate” for winegrowing. Ideal for pinot noir, in other words.

The Alma Rosa La Encantada 2007 Pinot Noir (\$45) is rich and spicy, and



tightly focused in a way that draws you closer with every sip. I gave it three stars (“exceptional”) when I profiled Sanford in the Post last August.

It has what I love about California pinot noir – delightful floral aromas, good acidity and balance, and a lingering, silky finish.

The 2006 was even better; Sanford described its aroma as “a day-old rose, just at the height of its power and on the edge of decline.” I couldn't dis-

agree.

Two days later, back in snowy Washington, D.C., I had lunch with Becky Wasserman, her husband, an influential broker and exporter of fine French wines, primarily from Burgundy.

Shewas here as part of a U.S. tour celebrating her 30 years in business. She and Sanford seem to share a similar aesthetic – a preference for wines grown organically and manipulated as little as possible in the winery in order to achieve the purest expression of the fruit. Only Wasserman's pinots speak French, while Sanford's speak ‘Murrican.

After five days in Santa Barbara County, sampling dozens of wines in various styles, my initial taste of Burgundy was a shock. It was a Domaine Alain Burguet 2006 Gevrey-Chambertin “Clos la Justice” (\$70), and at first sip it seemed unpleasantly astringent. Where's the fruit? I wondered.

But my palate was attuned to California pinot noir; after a few sips, the fruit emerged, then the Burgundian earth and finesse that characterizes

the French expression of pinot noir.

As we tasted the Domaine Michel Lafarge Volnay 2006 (\$55), with its subtle, silky texture, I thought of my lunch two days earlier with Sanford. Back in the 1960s, when he was looking to use his geology degree after a stint in Vietnam, it was a bottle of Volnay given by a friend that inspired him to plant grapes.

He told me he does not remember the producer, but he recalls the flavors, the texture, and the inspiration it gave.

Is the Alma Rosa La Encantada the equal of the Domaine Lafarge Volnay? Yes – and here's why I say that. The Alma Rosa is not and can never be a Volnay. But it is a beautiful expression of the Santa Rita Hills and of California pinot noir, just as the Lafarge is a beautiful expression of Volnay.

Burgundy will always have an advantage in that no one dislikes a good Burgundy, while Burgundy fans will discount California for not having the right soils or climate to make a Burgundy. Sanford has every reason to be proud of his pinot.

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Dining

Slow-smoking baby-backs in the great indoors

BY NOELLE CARTER
LOS ANGELES TIMES

The other day, I just couldn't shake the thought of slow-smoking some ribs. I was in the mood for Memphis-style baby backs, the meat fall-off-the-bone tender, a simple dry rub tantalizingly complicated with deep hickory notes, the flavors drawn out with a tart vinegar-Dijon mop.

There's a primal wonder to smoked food — that such depth of flavor can come from so simple a technique. And then, of course, there's the lure of the sunny afternoon spent in a lawn chair with a cold beer while you're waiting, patiently, for the Weber to work its magic.

But then it started raining.

The audacity of winter. I took a good long look at my kettle grill through the kitchen window as it rained, but those ribs wouldn't stop dancing through my head, like a song that just wouldn't let go.

Of course, not all smoking needs to be done outdoors, and I was not going to let the weather get in my way. Before long I was rummaging through the cupboard, looking for my large roasting pan. I grabbed a cooling rack, some heavy foil and a baking tin for a makeshift drip container and soon I was ready to smoke. Right in the kitchen. Right on the stove top. Rain or no rain.

Stove-top smoking is certainly not a new concept: Scatter some wood chips in a roasting pan, put the meat on a rack to sit above it. Loosely cover the pan and heat. Watch for the chips to start smoking and cover tight, then smoke to desired doneness. Voila.

There's nothing complicated about stove-top smoking and I'd even argue



that it's probably easier to master than smoking outdoors. You don't have to mess with charcoal or vents, deal with chambers or manage chips or pellets for hours on end.

On the stove top, you regulate the heat by adjusting the burner knob. It's easy to set up (make a smoker from kitchen odds and ends as I did, or buy a commercially made one). And though you'll smell the aroma of the smoke, most of it should be contained within the pan (you may get a faint whisp, but nothing to set off the fire alarm).

But like everything, stove-top smoking does have its limitations. First is size: Since the smokers have to be small enough to fit on the stove, you may not have the surface area you get with a regular smoker or grill.

Further, because the smoke is tightly contained, stove-top smokers can impart flavor quickly, so you'll need to keep a careful eye on them to make

sure food doesn't come out smelling like a campfire.

And, of course, you may miss the glory of the great outdoors, getting a sunburn as you wait for that brisket to finish.

I cleaned my rack of baby backs and massaged a dry rub into the meat. I then refrigerated them, uncovered, overnight to form a pellicle (that tacky surface you want so the smoke — which is particulate — will adhere).

The next day I gently smoked them using no more than a few tablespoons of fine hickory chips smoldering over moderately low heat. After an hour the ribs were nicely smoked, the meat mostly done. I moved the rack to a baking dish and poured over a little of my "mop," covered the dish tightly and continued to steam the ribs in a low oven until tender (I knew they were done when the meat tore easily from the bone).

To finish the ribs, I uncovered the dish and broiled them for just a couple of minutes to crisp the edges. I had my smoked ribs — almost as rich and flavorful as anything I could've smoked outdoors.

It's amazing the depth of flavor just a little smoke can impart to a dish. But there's more to it than mere "smokiness." You'll find a great variety of character, depending on the type of wood used and its intensity.

Woods range from assertive hickory to delicate apple. Cherry is pronounced and pecan lends a fragrant nuttiness. Mesquite can be either delicately sweet or overwhelmingly assertive depending on how (and how much) it is used. It's not hard to find alder chips (popular in the Northwest) or corncob (possibly best known in the Northeast). Or try flavored hard-

woods — say, wine casks or bourbon-soaked oak.

For stove-top smoking, look for small chips or shavings; they smolder more readily than larger chips.

Experiment with different woods, and when you're comfortable, try blending. Like spice blends, smoker blends can impart distinct, layered flavors and lend amazing depth to a dish, whether you're smoking a tough cut of meat or delicate fish or vegetables.

Try adding aromatics to the blend, such as herbs, spices or citrus peel. I recently smoked beef short ribs using a blend of hickory and oak chips to which I added fresh minced rosemary. I smoked the ribs for an hour to flavor, then finished them in the oven, braising them with garlic and red wine. The result was a richly complex dish, full of depth and flavor.

You can even smoke without any wood at all. I've tried riffing on classic tea-smoked duck with other birds and seasoning blends. I love game hens for their great flavor — and they're small enough to make perfect single servings. Dry-brine the hens with a little five-spice powder, brown sugar, fresh grated orange peel, ginger and garlic. Roast them until they're almost done, and then smoke the birds over very high heat using a wok.

Of everything I've smoked, though, probably my favorite is pork belly. Marinate the meat in a simple brine with maple syrup and a little bourbon for a few days in the fridge.

Then gently smoke the pork belly over apple wood for about an hour, until it is tender and the smoke has had a chance to infuse its flavor. Slice and serve it right away.

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On Faith

Fear or steer: Moving forward in troubled waters



BY REV. DRs. CASEY AND BOB BAGGOTT
COLUMNISTS

This story may be closer to legend than fact, but when we heard it last week, it gave us pause.

Here's the story: It seems that one evening, the royal yacht of the queen of England set sail with the queen and many of her guests aboard. The ship was the pride of the fleet, and its captain was a highly capable and experienced man. In fact, the captain of the queen's yacht had held his position proudly and without incident for 36 years.

But on this night, something highly unusual happened. Suddenly, the

captain saw lights approaching, dead ahead.

He tried raising the approaching vessel by radio. But there was no answer. So he went to his signal light and began flashing in Morse code saying, "This is Her Majesty's royal yacht. Give way immediately."

A message quickly flashed back, "Cannot give way."

The captain was stunned by the effrontery of this message. He angrily flashed a reply, "You are addressing the captain of the Queen's yacht. I have been the master of this ship for 36 years, and I am ordering you to move out of the way!"

There was a long pause. Then the message came blinking back, "This is bosun's mate Jones here, and I have been the keeper of this lighthouse for two years..."

Well, true or not, it's an amusing story about mistaken signs and inappropriate responses.

And it may offer us some insight into our own circumstances.

In this period of economic uncertainty, haven't some of us felt a little like the captain of the Queen's yacht? We may feel we've successfully steered our ships through many waters in the past and had anticipated smooth sailing from here on out.

But now, we find ourselves surprised by looming and unexpected obstacles. It appears, in fact, that real danger may lie dead ahead.

What do you do when confronted by unanticipated difficulty, or hardship, or grief?

Some of us have the tendency to respond like the captain of the Queen's yacht – trying to forge ahead brashly without altering course, and maybe even blaming others for the problems.

But as our little fable shows, such a response to threatening circumstances is neither sensible effective, nor wise.

What is a better response?

It's been said that the most frequently given command in the scriptures is "Fear not!" Perhaps that describes the

best attitude to take in addressing any problem.

If the first step we take in any crisis is to adopt an attitude of calm composure and confidence, we are less likely to compound difficulties by unfairly blaming others.

We are also more likely, when calm and unafraid, to accurately assess our circumstances and steer around dangerous obstacles in our paths.

And how is it possible to eliminate debilitating fear from our lives and remain calmly effective in any situation?

Well, that takes a lifetime of thoughtful reflection and prayerful self-assessment for most of us.

But as people of faith, it is possible when we learn to trust in capacities beyond our own, and to adopt a perspective that sees beyond the present dilemma.

Is there a lighthouse in your path? Maybe it will turn out to be less an obstacle than a source of illumination for the way ahead!

St. Eds

Rebuilt boys lacrosse team working out the kinks

BY RON HOLUB
COLUMNIST

The first half of the regular season for the St. Edward's School varsity boys lacrosse team turned out to be a classic case of what might have been.

A pair of close defeats and a frustrating tie proved costly as the Pirates labored to a 2-2-1 record in their first of two encounters with all five FSHAA District 9 opponents. The entire slate of 10 regular season games currently scheduled for 2010 will be played within the six-team district.

Before any of the teams faced-off in earnest, second-year Head Coach Kent Smith pegged Vero Beach High School and Melbourne Central Catholic as the toughest teams to beat. Conversely, the conventional wisdom held that St. Ed's would likely finish ahead of the other three district teams.

The FHSAA operates a single class format for all lacrosse schools regardless of student population or program maturity. Consequently, it is not unusual to find a vast differential in the strength of lacrosse teams within a particular district.

Given the nature of the schedule, Smith didn't have to wait long for feedback on the preseason prognostications. Thus far the results have been mixed.

The Pirates have settled into third place with only an outside chance of moving up in the standings. The playoffs are set for early April at Vero Beach High School. The top four finishers will advance to vie for the district crown.

Smith targeted the district championship for his team, but some doubt has been tossed in by the way the first half went down. The Pirates have already fallen to Vero and Melbourne on home turf and will have to meet those two in rematches on the road.

The ride has been a bit bumpy from the outset. The whole team wasn't fully assembled until game three. Pending the arrival of additional players from soccer and basketball, temporary reinforcements from the junior varsity were called upon to supplement the varsity roster for the start of the season.

In game two, the Pirates learned the pitfalls associated with underestimating an opponent. The Pine School varsity program is brand new this year and the Pirates sprinted out to a quick 4-0 advantage before easing off the accelerator and being forced to scramble for a 9-9 tie (called by darkness).

"That was sort of a wake-up call for



St. Edwards' junior Eddie Moor fights to move the ball up field against Matt Maguire in a hard fought home game against Melbourne Central Catholic.

Photo: Tom McCarthy Jr.

our team," Smith lamented.

St. Ed's finally benefitted from a full contingent of players for their first meeting with Vero Beach. "We did have our team together, but we were only practicing as a full team for three days," Smith said. "They (VBHS) walked into our stadium thinking that they were going to blow us out. I knew otherwise."

In that sense, Smith was not overly discouraged by the 13-10 setback. "We look forward to the next time we play them (March 26 at Vero Beach High)," he said. "We are very evenly matched."

The next game had to be the one that stung the most. A razor thin 3-2 loss in overtime to Melbourne dropped the record to 1-2-1.

Dormant for the better part of three quarters, the offense sprang to life late against Melbourne to force an overtime.

The Pirates overcame a 2-0 deficit with a pair of late tallies to forge a tie. The momentum appeared to be with them going into the extra session, but a soft bouncer trickled just inside the post to end the strange, low scoring affair in favor of Melbourne.

The Pirates traveled to Melbourne to close out the first half and came home with a 7-2 triumph against Holy Trinity Episcopal. It was a swing game of sorts that kept St. Ed's ahead of the three presumed also-rans.

A revamped 2010 varsity roster includes eight seniors, 10 juniors and one freshman. "Any time you lose 14 players (seniors from 2009) from any team, that hurts," Smith said. "A number of those guys were key players

The guys expected to pick up the offense haven't disappointed. Through five games, 12 players have scored at least once. The leading goal producers are junior Kevin Corr (7), senior Adam Katz (6), juniors Eddie Moor (6) and J.D. McGee (6), and senior Will Peckham (5).

Peckham has crafted a stellar high school career in three sports (football, soccer, lacrosse) as well as in the classroom.

The lone freshman on the squad, midfielder Devon Kahle, has lit the scoreboard once and Smith sees a bright future for his youngest player. "He's a great athlete, really fast," Smith said. "He has a lot to learn but a freshman making the varsity team really says something."

The defense, anchored by seniors Chris Campana, Jacob Fojtik and junior Paul Coella, has held consecutive opponents to a total of five goals. Goalie Parker Young deserves a lion's share of the credit for the stingy defense.

Catholics, Mormons, Assemblies of God growing

FROM THE NATIONAL
COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

The number of Americans who belong to the Catholic Church – the nation's largest Christian body – showed a significant year-over-year increase, but the No. 2 Southern Baptist Convention, along with most mainline Protestant denominations, reported continuing declines, according to the National Council of Churches.

Both the Southern Baptists and

Catholics reported membership losses in the 2009 Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches; but in the 2010 edition, the Catholics reported a rebound, with a 1.5 percent growth rate, to more than 68 million members.

Membership figures reported in the 2010 Yearbook were collected by the churches in 2008 and reported to the Yearbook in 2009.

The Latter-day Saints grew 1.71 percent to 5,873,408 members and the Assemblies of God grew 1.27 percent

to 2,863,265 members, according to figures reported in the 2010 Yearbook. Other churches that continued to post membership gains are Jehovah's Witnesses, up 2 percent to 1,092,169 members, and Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.), up 1.76 percent to 1,053,642 members.

Churches reporting the highest membership losses are the Presbyterian Church (USA), down 3.28 percent to 2,941,412; American Baptist Churches in the USA, down 2 percent to 1,358,351; and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, down 1.92 percent to 4,709,956 members.

Southern Baptists remained the second largest in the U.S., at 16.3 million members, but that figure represented a 0.2 percent drop from 2009 and the second consecutive year of decline.

The NCC's annual Yearbook is regarded as one of the most reliable recorders of church membership in North America.

The 10 largest Christian bodies remain unchanged from last year's list, with one exception. The Assemblies of God moved up to the No. 9 spot, switching places with the Presbyterian Church (USA), which now finishes last on the Top 10 list.

The 10 largest Christian bodies re-

ported in the 2010 yearbook are:

1. The Catholic Church: 68.1 million, up 1.49 percent.
2. Southern Baptist Convention: 16.2 million, down 0.24 percent.
3. The United Methodist Church: 7.8 million (U.S.), down 0.98 percent.
4. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: 5.9 million (U.S.), up 1.71 percent.
5. The Church of God in Christ: 5.5 million, no change.
6. National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc: 5 million, no change.
7. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: 4.6 million, down 1.62 percent.
8. National Baptist Convention of America, Inc.: 3.5 million, no change.
9. Assemblies of God: 2.9 million, up 1.27 percent.
10. Presbyterian Church (USA): 2.8 million, down 3.3 percent.

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Living

A kitchen space (on a budget) for a food lover and cook

BY JURA KONCIUS
WASHINGTON POST

Kitchen renovations often are triggered by small disasters. For renowned Washington baker Mark Furstenberg, his began with a leaky espresso maker that flooded his condo and the one below.

A valve on his fancy restaurant machine got stuck while Furstenberg, founder and former owner of Marvelous Market and the BreadLine, was out of town. To dry out his kitchen, he had to take out a chunk of the floor and remove some cabinetry. And so the room sat, for three years, while he decided what to do. In the meantime he was baking, cooking and entertaining.

"I just lived with this kitchen that had a hole in the floor," Furstenberg says. He got a lot of grief about it from friends, who nonetheless continued to come over for his parsnip and potato puree, roasted cauliflower, short ribs and, of course, crusty whole-grain breads.

Until last year, Furstenberg did his best to ignore the fact that his kitchen, the heart of a three-bedroom condo in a stately 1910 building, was a mess. But he was spending more time there testing recipes and developing menus

in his role as restaurant consultant.

And he was working on a book about the lost art of breakfast and on plans for a retail bakery that serves breakfast. While attending a conference on Southern food and culture in 2008, he met Beverly Farrington of Huntsville, Ala., an interior designer who is also a foodie. Soon after, she came over for dinner while visiting Washington, and they started brewing a renovation plan.

"I had decided it was time to redo," says Furstenberg, "But I didn't have a huge budget. She saw this wreck of a kitchen and said, 'I'll help you.'"

Even if you ignored the flood damage, Furstenberg's 1970s kitchen with outdated appliances, Formica counters and almond laminate cabinets was not a showplace. Farrington was jazzed by the challenge of working with the man who brought artisan bread to Washington 20 years ago and developed the bread program for the Culinary Institute of America in Napa Valley.

"I've done so many trophy kitchens for people who eat takeout all the time," says Farrington. "How fun to do something for someone that really cooks."

Last year, they negotiated a design to serve Furstenberg's needs and bud-

get, featuring two work areas, one for baking and one for cooking, each with its own countertop material, prep sink and cleanup space.

The adjoining breakfast nook would be removed to expand the work space. There would be lots of natural materials: cork, wood and marble. Storage for his vast cookware arsenal, flours and spices would be provided by hanging racks and open metro-style metal shelving. They shopped at Ikea and Lumber Liquidators for good design at good value. "I wanted no designer appliances, nothing showy," says Furstenberg.

Furstenberg could not be without

a kitchen for long. "I was a terrible client because I was determined not to have the same problems everyone else had," he says. He'd been hoping for two weeks of downtime, but it turned out that for a month he could not bake or simmer or caramelize. And the finishing work took a few more weeks.

It was worth the wait. He is still happily arranging his Tunisian couscous screen, baker's peel and stockpots

in all the corners and shelves. "Now I have a semiprofessional working kitchen that is really quite glamorous," he says.

The espresso machine that caused the mess is in storage. "The machine rebelled against having been deprived of its true life function," to work in a restaurant, he says. He will install it in the bakery he plans to open in the District before the end of the year. Says Furstenberg, "We've been through a lot together."

All the right ingredients in
Mark Furstenberg's kitchen

When assembling the ingredients for Mark Furstenberg's new kitchen, designer Beverly Farrington focused on function, cost-effectiveness and comfort to please the famed bread-maker. Here are some specifics:



Countertops to match the task.

Furstenberg wanted two work areas, one for baking and one for cooking. The classic choice, honed Carrara marble, is great for making bread and rolling out pastry. The oak butcher block in the cooking area provides the perfect chopping surface, plus it adds

Living

warmth and was economical.

Large, deep sinks.

Two 30-by-17-by-9-inch sinks made of Blanco's Silgranit, a natural stone composite, were installed for easy cleanup of large pots and pans. They also hide a dinner party's worth of dirty dishes. The sink in the baking area is white; in the cooking area, slate gray. The height of the Blanco commercial-style satin nickel spray faucet (Model 440630) allows you to attack the deepest baked-on stock pot with ease.

Tile backsplash.

The bluish-gray ceramic tiles from Ideal Tile store in Northwest bring in subtle color.



Restaurant-style metal shelving.

Nexel's metro-style wall-mounted shelving is easy to clean and is adjustable. Because he has worked in commercial kitchens for decades, Furstenberg wanted to keep that look for his own.

Lighting for many tasks.

Fortunately, large windows in the kitchen provide a lot of natural illumination. Farrington and Furstenberg added three types of lighting from Ikea: track lighting, under-cabinet lighting and inside-cabinet lighting.

A comfortable floor to stand on.

Eco-friendly cork was chosen because it's the most forgiving choice for cooks who are on their feet all the time.

Cork is durable and absorbent. They selected a warm honey color from Lumber Liquidators.



Flexibility for baking.

Two under-counter stainless-steel ovens were installed. The cooking area has a Capital commercial-style gas range with four burners, a grill and an oven. In the baking area, there is a Miele electric wall oven.

Stainless-steel major appliances. Furstenberg bought a Bosch dishwasher, which he isn't fond of because



he doesn't like the way the dishes dry. The Maytag fridge with bottom freezer is working well for him.

Off-the-shelf cabinets.

Instead of costly custom cabinets, they chose natural maple cabinets by Aristokraft, available in standard sizes.

The upper cabinets were dressed up with a coat of Steely Gray paint



by Sherwin Williams and were given frosted-glass fronts. The Spann hardware by Ikea is brushed nickel.

Open shelves.

Furstenberg likes to keep frequently used items within easy reach. His pot lids are lined up on maple racks from the Container Store.

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Real Estate

\$7 million John's Island home a rare spec build



This brand-new home on the John's Island sound was designed to wrap around the pool courtyard to make the most of the view.

Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.



The coffered ceilings and exquisite details make the mahogany-paneled study a cozy retreat or a comfortable fourth bedroom.

gent the community is about timing of construction and design parameters -- can take two years or more. So the fact that Croom had already broke ground on its newest spec offering prior to the stock market meltdown of 2008 is not surprising. The fact that Croom followed through and finished the home -- to the original opulent size and design -- is a testament to the company's faith that buyers will soon develop a greater appetite for \$7 million homes, given a coveted location and exceptional quality.

"The thinking behind it was that there are very few new waterfront homes for sale in John's Island," Lyons said. "That was the impetus for getting it done."

Three of the other recent spec homes in John's Island are priced in

of a Members and Guests Weekend at John's Island. In between a round of golf and an evening social, the afternoon open house was a popular stop for the neighbors and out-of-town guests.

Croom Construction employee Charlene McEachern, after greeting the curious, said the eventual buyer might not have toured the home during the open house, but that such events help create a buzz -- especial-

ly when a new home is as stunning as this 6,600-square-foot escape on John's Island Sound.

"Most of the people who came through already live here and some of them brought their guests," she said. "But hopefully they will all tell their friends."

Designing and building an ultra-luxury home is not an easy or quick process. From concept to certificate of occupancy -- depending on how strin-

BY LISA ZAHNER
STAFF WRITER

Though Realtors have expressed growing concern about the dwindling inventory of spec homes on the barrier island, few fresh offerings are popping up on the horizon. The newly unveiled home at 255 Island Creek Drive in John's Island is one of the exceptions.

About 80 people flocked to an open house event there on Saturday as part

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Real Estate



Decorated by Susan Smith of Spectrum Interior Design, the home can be purchased furnished for \$7,250,000 or unfurnished for \$6,950,000.

the \$3.5 to \$4 million range. One larger home, a five-bedroom model on Sabal Palm Lane, is listed at \$4,750,000. By launching this latest home on the market -- fully furnished at \$7,250,000 or unfurnished at \$6,950,000 -- Croom is clearly banking on both a turnaround and on the lure of John's Island pulling in the right buyer.

"We had finished one and sold it, literally the day we got the certificate of occupancy, so we started this one, it's about two years in the making," said Croom Vice President David Lyons.

The timing of the John's Island Beach Club getting a major facelift was one factor in Croom's decision to invest in the community at the time, instead of building somewhere else. Croom's long history with John's Island was another.

Lyons said his favorite part of the house is actually outside the walls.

"The rear pool courtyard and view is

mott, who said she would love to redo her kitchen at home, admired the way the kitchen flows into the comfortable family room and then onto the patio.

"I love the outdoor living space, I would spend all my time out here," McDermott said, looking out at the pool area with infinity-edge spa on the waterfront.

Interior Designer Susan Schuyler Smith of Spectrum Interior Design has made the most of the covered patio with a built-in gas grill and fireplace, allowing for year-round entertainment, and enjoyment of the view of the John's Island Sound.

"It's just so peaceful, it's got a serene feel to the house," McDermott said of the decor.

Smith carried a subtle maritime theme throughout the rooms with a soft green on the walls and furnishings, limestone and walnut floors and handsome mahogany throughout the house and featured prominently in the wood-paneled study, giving the option of a third bedroom in the main house. Detached and located across a covered breezeway are the fourth bedroom encompassed in the guest cabana on the northeast side of the house and the two-car garage on the

southeast side, with a fountain courtyard in the middle.

Achieving the perfect balance between finishing a home in furnished, move-in condition and preserving a blank canvas for the buyer who would want to move their own furniture in and create their own space, the team of Moulton Layne, Croom Construction and Spectrum created an appealing addition to the high-end barrier island spec home market.

In late February, Croom celebrated the completion of the home by hosting a customer appreciation event for its clients, attracting about 120 people.

Few players in today's spec home game

Tom Zugelter, president of Zugelter Construction, said his small, family-owned firm, which doesn't get too deep into new home speculation, sold its last spec project prior to the market downturn and didn't start another. Zugelter said he just got lucky in not having millions in assets stranded in a spec home over the past couple of years.

"I've got some lots and \$60,000 worth of plans ready to go, but the



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Real Estate



The master bedroom suite opens onto the pool courtyard and comes complete with custom, recessed wood-frame screen doors to enjoy the breeze off the John's Island Sound.

homes are not appropriate for this market," Zugelter said. "There is such a large inventory of existing homes that are extremely well priced."

For the investor who has the liquidity or the ability to borrow enough to buy a multi-million-dollar home, Zugelter said there are deals offering 40 percent or more off the top list prices.

"I think there are going to be people who see the value in these homes, especially on the oceanfront," he said. "The guys who have purchased some of these homes on the ocean are very smart buyers."

Looking forward, Zugelter said builders will look at opportunities for

buyers to find something unique in the market when sinking money into spec homes, whether it be a desired location, deep-water dock facilities or club amenities.

"If I were to do anything right now, I would build something in the Moorings on the water and try to bring it in at the \$2 to \$3 million range," he said. "Some people don't even care about the house, they just want to know how far they are from the main channel."

With builders like Zugelter with stockpiled plans for dream houses already in hand, local architects are not seeing even the beginnings of the stirring of potential investors in new spec homes. The scant but steady number

of older homes being remodeled are keeping not only the builders, but also the architects in business.

James Russell Stein, property manager for Harry Gandy Howle architects since 1988, said renovations are about 70 percent of the business right now. Howle has offices on Ocean Drive and specializes in barrier island custom homes.

"Most of the time, they begin just wanting to do upgrades because they got a good deal on an old, tired house," Stein said. "But then they realize that they need a couple more bedrooms or a larger porch."

As a result, Stein said, buyers have gotten smart, looking for properties



Just off the entry hall, a charming mahogany desk was added as a "catch all" for mail and packages. The hallway leads to the fully-equipped utility and laundry room.

with room to expand, because adding a second story can often lead to unforeseen and expensive problems for homeowners and architects to solve.

Vero Beach architect John Brenner said he used to get about 60 percent of his business from the construction of spec homes, but now he's concentrating almost exclusively on designing custom homes and custom home renovations.

He said he enjoys the creativity, synergy and efficiency of working on a spec home team.

"Working with professionals, even if it's for a smaller fee, is less time consuming and more organized," he said. "You also get to know what to expect in the people you work with, because the contractors who do use me tend to hire me over and over again."

Stein said the desire of builders to sell vacant lots has created some new work for architects, as he's been asked to draw up preliminary plans for some builders to give buyers a vision of what

Real Estate



The gadget-laden chef's kitchen was designed with all the high-end appliances tucked behind custom mahogany cabinetry. The kitchen also features a pantry room, an icemaker, pot filler and four-drawer dishwasher.

kind of home could be best be built on loosening the purse strings for major



Guests can stay in privacy and luxury in this spacious cabana with bedroom and sitting room, full bath with dual vanities and walk-in closet, all separate from the main house.

the land.

Brenner and Stein agreed that development in communities like John's Island, Windsor and Orchid is "builder driven," so the current lack of new starts in spec homes leaves potential buyers to look at mostly existing homes. This is fueling the renovation business as buyers want what the new homes.

Tight financing creating a bottleneck

The recent credit crunch, combined with the overall slump in real estate and the number of foreclosures nationwide has made banks wary of

speculative projects.

"The upper real estate market is not super bad," he said. "The inventory of spec homes is going down because the problem that builders are having is that they just can't get financing."

During Vero's real estate boom, Stein said builders could invest \$3 to \$4 million in land and construction, sell the spec home for twice that and turn over a \$3 to \$4 million profit, giving them not only the cash to pay off the loans, but also some working capital to start the next spec home.

"When people do spec homes, they're not expecting a 5 or 6 percent return, they're expecting 20 or 30 percent. Those days are over, at least right

now," he said. "The banks don't want to have anything to do with the real estate market."

The other option – outside of a bank – for funding used to be a large pool of private investors.

"Some of the problems with the private investors diving into the spec homes is that a lot of them have taken huge hits in the stock market," Stein said.

A silent business partner was involved with Croom on this most recent John's Island home recently listed for sale. Lyons said that, although financing can be a challenge right now, investors with substantial collateral and good credit can still borrow enough to build a spec home.

"The biggest concerns the banks have are whether or not the appraisals will total out to justify the loans," Lyons said.

Lyons said finding adequate data on comparable sales has also made things more tricky for banks and for those hoping to borrow.

"This has all made it more difficult, but it's not impossible for the right investor," he said.



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Calendar

MARCH

Through March 30

Artists Guild Gallery features Muci Clemens' Reflections of Light exhibit, and Retrospective, celebrating the Guild's 20th Anniversary. Opening Reception for both on Friday, March 5 from 5 to 7 p.m.

Through March 27

SMALL is Big! Miniature juried show and sale at Gallery 14 with free Gala Reception Friday, March 5 from 5 to 8 p.m. 562-5525 or www.gallery14verobeach.com

March 11

Box Lunch Bingo to benefit the Senior Resource Association, 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Heritage Center. \$80 for six bingo cards or \$150 for 12. 469-2060.

March 11

Atlantic Classical Orchestra presents Torke Adjustable Wrench, Milhaude La Creation du Monde and Beethoven Violin Concerto performed by Tchaikovsky Competition Gold Medalist Elmar Oliveira. 8 p.m. at the Waxlax Center for the Performing Arts at St. Edwards School. (866) 310-7521 or www.acomusic.org.

March 11

The free Emerson Center Humanities Series presents In Their Own Words, a



After a major remodel, the grand opening for Humiston park is set for Saturday, March 13.

Photo: Tom McCarthy Jr.

March 11 – 28

The award winning musical The Sound of Music will be performed at the Vero Beach Theatre Guild. 562-8300

March 12

Jambalaya, a Las Vegas-style show produced by Chris Foster and Mark Wygonic with dance, music, and aerial acrobatics, 8 p.m. at the Vero Beach High School Performing Arts Center. Portion of proceeds benefits Cultural Council and VBHS Choral Dept. Tickets \$25 - \$50. 564-5537.

March 12 – 14

Under the Oaks Fine Arts & Crafts Show presented by the Vero Beach Art Club, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. March 12 & 13, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. March 14 at Riverside Park. 231-0303 or www.VeroBeachArtClub.org

March 12 – 21

Indian River County Firefighter's Fair at

the Indian River County Fairgrounds. www.firefightersfair.org

March 13

Beachside Saint Patrick's Day Parade, 10 a.m. along Ocean Drive between Flamevine and Azalea.

March 13

18th Annual Pelican Island Wildlife Festival, 10 am to 6 pm at Riverview Park in Sebastian, celebrates the 107th Birthday Celebration of Pelican Island and the National Wildlife Refuge System. www.pelicanislandfriends.org

March 13

Second Annual Dancing with Vero's Stars to benefit the Indian River County Healthy Start Coalition pairs dance instructors with local celebrity dancers to perform in competition at the Waxlax Center for the Performing Arts at Saint

What is Sally Daley up to?

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We were amazed!

She gave up a large commission because she was totally honest and sincere and informed us of things that others would have never told us.

A very grateful, Eugene Epstein

PS: I paid for this myself because I never met a person like her before. You can reach her directly if you choose at 772-231-9938.

Calendar



Womens Professional Soccer team the Washington Freedom play a scrimmage match during practice at Dodgertown ahead of Friday's preseason game against the Chicago Red Stars at the Hobart Soccer Complex in Vero Beach.

Photo: Tom McCarthy Jr.

Edward's Upper School. 563-9118 or www.irchealthystart.org

March 13

Florida Irish American Society presents Tony Kenny and the Celtic Nights, a Magical Celebration of Irish Music, Comedy, Song and Dance, 6 pm at the Vero Beach High School Performing Arts Center. Tickets \$20 and \$25. 564-5537

March 13

Riverside Theatre's Annual Gala, An Evening in Las Vegas, is a throw-back to the days of old Vegas with music, dancing and gambling. 6 p.m. Tickets \$125. 231-6990

March 13

Oceanside Business Association's free beach concert series, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. along Ocean Drive

March 14

Saint Patrick's Day Parade, 1 p.m. along 14th Avenue in Downtown Vero Beach, sponsored by the Vero Beach Elk's Lodge.

March 14

The Knights of Columbus of Holy Cross, St. John of the Cross and St. Helen's parishes join for a St. Patrick's Dinner Celebration 1:30 p.m. at the St. Helen's Catholic Church Parish Center. 569-6642

March 14

Treasure Coast Bridal Expo and Fashion Show at the Heritage Center and the Courthouse Executive Center from 1 to 4 p.m. to benefit Vero Heritage, Inc. Admission \$7. 770-2263

March 15

Vero Beach Museum of Art International Lecture Series, 4:30 p.m. presents Ulrich Boser, author of The Gardner Heist: The True Story of the World's Largest Unsolved Art Theft. 231-0707

March 15

The Indian River Symphonic Association presents the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra with conductor JoAnn Falletta; includes pieces by Barber, Ravel and Rachmaninoff, and features pianist Fabio Bidini. 7:30 p.m. at the Community Church of Vero Beach. 778-1070

March 18

Lincoln Day Dinner, fundraiser for the Republican Party, 6 p.m. at the Club at Pointe West. Tickets \$125. 234-6803

March 18

Jazz in the Sculpture Park themed Contemporaries Art after Dark party, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Vero Beach Museum of Art

March 19

Every Woman is My Sister Luncheon to benefit SafeSpace, 11:30 a.m. at the Oak Harbor Club. Tickets \$125. 772-223-2399

March 19

Cultural Council of Indian River County 2010 Laurel Awards, honoring cultural leaders in the community, will be presented at a cocktail party from 7 to 9 p.m. at Riverside Theatre. Tickets \$50. 770-4857

March 20

17th Annual Tour of Homes presented by the Junior League of Indian River, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tickets \$35.00 or four for \$120.00 in advance; \$40.00 event day. www.VeroTourOfHomes.com.

March 20

See 30 life-sized dinosaurs in a whole new light at Dino Nights at McKee Garden, 6 to 8 p.m. Adults \$9, seniors \$8, children \$5, members free. 794.0601 or www.mckee garden.org

March 20

Jazz at Noon with JB Scott's Swingin' Allstars at the Vero Beach Yacht Club, doors open at 11 a.m.; concerts start at 12:30 p.m. 234-4600 or www.tjazzsociety.org.

March 20

Vero Beach Opera presents Marcello Giordani in concert, with Maestro Steve Mercurio conducting the Brevard Symphony Orchestra. 564-5537

March 20

Swingin' Away the Blues to benefit the Mental Health Association, 6 p.m. at the Polish American Club; dinner and dancing to an 18 piece band. Tickets \$125. 569-9788

March 21

Flamingo Fling Golf Tournament at The



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32963 Passages

NAME	AGE	SUBDIVISION	DATE
Gillick, Anne	92	Coquina Place	3/5/2010
Cummings, Charles	95	John's Island	2/28/2010
Ehlinger, John	92	Indian River Shores	2/27/2010
Byers, G. Ellsworth	92	Central Beach	2/24/2010
Yagobi, Ray	74	Central Beach	2/20/2010
McBride, Thomas	57	Treasure Cove	2/20/2010
Parks, Lewis	95	The Moorings	2/19/2010
Brown, Catherine	82	John's Island	2/19/2010
Caldwell, Richard Clark	65	John's Island	2/19/2010
Copeland, John	73	John's Island	2/12/2010
Paterno, Charles	90	Indian Trails	2/11/2010
Larson, Oscar	95	Smuggler's Cove	2/10/2010
Christoffers, Walter 'Dutch'		Old Orchid	2/9/2010
Staunton, John	87	Sea Cove	2/7/2010

At your request, we now will provide an updated list each week of island residents who have passed away during the past month. If you know of seasonal residents who passed while out-of-town, we would appreciate being informed so we can include them in this list. Please email this information to passages@verobeach32963.com.

Featured Real Estate Sales on Barrier Island

Real Estate

Here are some of the top recent barrier island sales

Subdiv.: Seaquay Condo, Address: 4800 Highway A1A, #507



Listing Date: December 31, 2008
Original Price: \$1,045,000
Sold: March 1, 2010
Selling Price: \$817,500
Seller's Agent: Susan Hart
 Norris & Company
Buyer's Agent: Alex MacWilliam
 Alex MacWilliam Real Estate

Subdivision: Smugglers Cove, Address: 1555 Smugglers Cove



Listing Date: September 14, 2009
Original Price: \$750,000
Sold: March 1, 2010
Selling Price: \$670,000
Seller's Agent: Jane Schwiering
 Norris & Company
Buyer's Agent: Jane Schwiering
 Norris & Company

Subdivision: The Moorings, Address: 1030 Treasure Lane



Listing Date: August 11, 2008
Original Price: \$825,000
Sold: March 1, 2010
Selling Price: \$535,000
Seller's Agent: Joanne Quail
 Norris & Company
Buyer's Agent: Joseph Schlitt
 Coldwell Banker Ed Schlitt

Subdiv.: Bethel by the Sea, Address: 442 Indian Lilac Road



Listing Date: October 20, 2009
Original Price: \$359,000
Sold: March 1, 2010
Selling Price: \$340,000
Seller's Agent: Peter Robinson
 Laurel Agency
Buyer's Agent: Ann Darling
 Coastal Signature Properties

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Real Estate

Real Estate Sales on the Barrier Island: Feb. 25 to March 3



Our featured sale this week was of a 10-year-old courtyard residence built by Barth Construction overlooking the golf course at Windsor. This 12,000-square-foot home at 10617 Charleston Drive was listed by Premier Estate Properties last November for \$4.5 million. The sale for \$3.5 million closed on March 2. Both the seller and the purchaser of the home were represented by Kay Brown of Premier Estate Properties.

SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCES AND LOTS

SUBDIVISION	ADDRESS	LISTED	ORIGINAL ASKING PRICE	SOLD	SELLING PRICE
BETHEL BY THE SEA	442 INDIAN LILAC RD	10/20/2009	\$ 359,000	3/1/2010	\$ 340,000
1030 TREASURE LANE	1030 TREASURE LANE	8/11/2008	\$ 699,000	3/1/2010	\$ 535,000
1555 SMUGGLERS COVE	1555 SMUGGLERS COVE	9/14/2009	\$ 750,000	3/1/2010	\$ 670,000
852 FLAMEVINE LN	852 FLAMEVINE LN	1/21/2010	\$ 300,000	2/26/2010	\$ 315,000

TOWNHOMES, VILLAS AND CONDOS

SUBDIVISION	ADDRESS	LISTED	ORIGINAL ASKING PRICE	SOLD	SELLING PRICE
VERO TOWERS	275 DATE PALM RDM #405	11/18/2009	\$ 162,500	3/3/2010	\$ 155,000
VISTA DEL MAR	5400 HIGHWAY A1A, F-8	9/22/2008	\$ 150,000	3/1/2010	\$ 130,000
SOUTH PASSAGE	704 SPYGLASS LN	4/24/2009	\$ 350,000	3/1/2010	\$ 310,000
SEAQUAY CONDO	4800 HIGHWAY A1A, #507	12/31/2008	\$ 1,045,000	3/1/2010	\$ 817,500
OCEAN TOWERS	2701 OCEAN DR., #1-A	7/3/2009	\$ 350,000	3/1/2010	\$ 260,000
RIVERSIDE GARDENS	200 GREYTWIG RD #307	12/10/2009	\$ 280,000	3/1/2010	\$ 265,000
PARK SHORES	301 PARK SHORES CT #301B	6/8/2009	\$ 215,000	2/26/2010	\$ 182,500
PORPOISE BAY VILLAS	300 HARBOUR DR. #106A	11/28/2009	\$ 235,000	2/26/2010	\$ 225,000
SEA PLACE CONDO	4025 SILVER PALM DR, #11	11/16/2009	\$ 225,000	2/26/2010	\$ 190,000
SOUTH PASSAGE	1106 SPYGLASS LN	5/17/2007	\$ 340,000	2/25/2010	\$ 250,000

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20 BEACHSIDE DR, #101—3,810 A/C SQ. FT.
3BR/Study/4BA oceanfront residence with private elevator entry, French doors, stone terrace with summer kitchen. \$2,050,000



281 SEABREEZE COURT—GOLF ESTATE
Newly constructed 4BR/Study/5.5BA, two-story residence on estate-size homesite with picturesque views. \$2,995,000 New Home/New Price



406 INDIES DRIVE—GOLF ESTATE
Exquisite 4BR/Study/4BA+2 Half BA residence overlooks 2 large lakes and scenic 18th Fairway. Infinity pool & spa. \$2,750,000



70 BEACHSIDE DR, #203—2,252 A/C SQ. FT.
Recently remodeled 3BR/3BA Ocean Club corner residence. Stone floors throughout, granite, pristine. \$1,295,000 (Furn. Avail.)



909 ORCHID PT WAY—COURTYARD ESTATE
4BR/Study/3.5BA residence with separate 2-story guest cabana, courtyard. Intracoastal access via kayak/canoe. \$1,595,000



920 ORCHID PT WAY—LAKEFRONT ESTATE
Exquisite 3BR/Office/4.5BA estate enjoys lush views of sparkling lake and 3rd green. Delightful outdoor living. \$2,050,000



825 PEMBROKE CT—COURTYARD LIVING
3BR/Study/4.5BA courtyard residence includes a separate 1BR/1BA guest cabana. Picturesque lake and golf views! \$998,000 Estate Sale



120 SEASPRAY LANE—GOLF ESTATE
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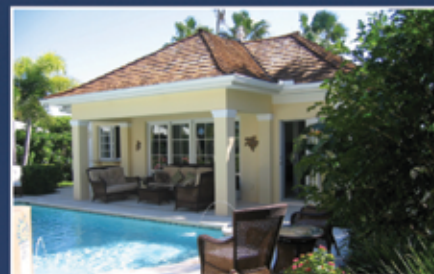
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