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Indian River Shores told big money at stake in Census. P20

'Superbugs' challenge schools, gyms, hospitals. P28

Robertson seeks recognition for Atlantic Classical Orchestra. P24

32963 Insider

The tale of two chefs

The chef who for the past two years has been the face of the Oriente restaurant has left the Costa d'Este hotel, and is now preparing to launch his own beachside restaurant.

David Rodriguez, whose Cuban-fusion creations introduced a variety of new tastes to the island dining scene, is hoping to open a wine and tapas bar in Central Beach in June.

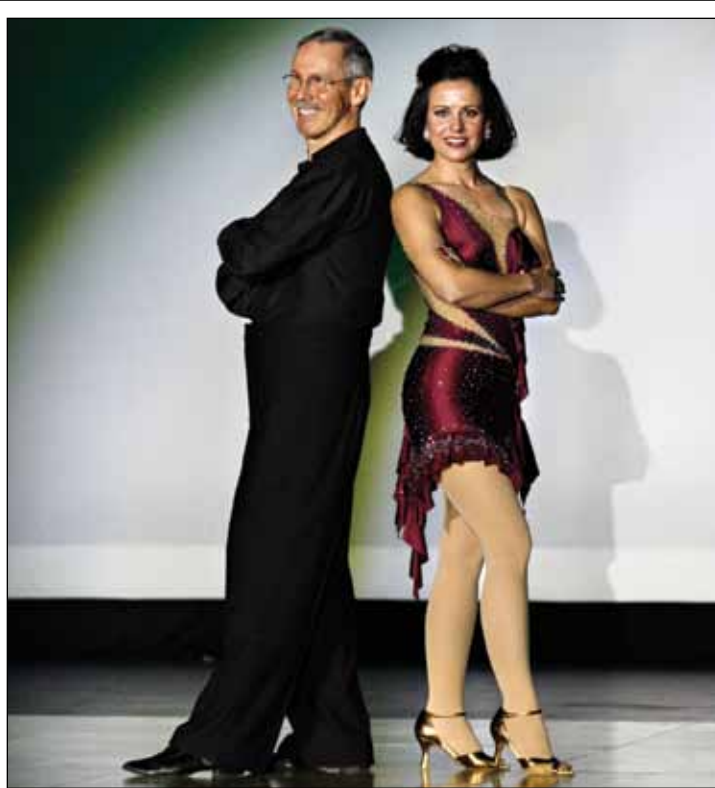
"I want to stay on the beach. That's where all my clients are," Rodriguez told us. He said his new restaurant will feature "small plates, reasonably priced. A lot of people don't like to sit down to a big meal. I'm a big fan of the small-plate concept."

Meanwhile, Scott and Alice Varricchio are putting final touches on their splendid new restaurant, the Citrus Grillhouse, which may open as early as next week.

The Varricchios had a party for friends and family this past Sunday, and everything appeared pretty much ready to go.

About the only notables absent were a television crew that spent all day last Thursday filming for a new Food Network series on start-up restaurants.

After a day of shooting, the producer decided the Citrus Grillhouse was "too organized" – too few start-up challenges remaining – and the remainder of the shooting was cancelled.



Winners of Dancing with Vero's Stars Rebecca Emmons and Joseph Wynes. Story and more photos on Page 12.
Photo: Tom McCarthy Jr.

City of Vero may have found an out on water and sewer

BY LISA ZAHNER
STAFF WRITER

Dragged reluctantly into collaborating on a study which could put Vero's water and sewer utilities out of business and leave top staff out of a job, the city may have found a politically expedient loophole for ending consolidation talks.

Last week, the Indian River County Planning and Zoning Commission approved amendments to the county's Comprehensive Plan – the county's long-term plan, so to speak – calling for county residents currently hooked up to city water and sewer services to either be served by a new

consolidated entity or just by the county as of 2017.

When Vero's Water and Sewer Utility Director Rob Bolton discovered this, he alerted City Manager Jim Gabbard.

The city manager, in a series of meetings with individual City Council members, gave them his views on what is being characterized as the county's lack of good faith.

Earlier this month, the County Commission approved a recommendation arrived at jointly with the City and the town of Indian River Shores to hire consultants to study the various permutations of utility service to the three jurisdictions.

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Beachside hotels filled with visitors

BY ALINA LAMBIET
& MILTON R. BENJAMIN
STAFF WRITERS

If you think the barrier island seems a bit crowded at the moment despite the dire forecasts earlier this winter – well, you're right.

Beachside hotels are pretty much filled to the brim, with guests from the Northeast and Midwest, some coming for baseball, some just for fun and rest. Then there was the most talked-about local visitor, Jennifer Lopez, spotted a couple weekends ago at Costa d'Este and, we're told, house-hunting

on the north barrier island a few miles south of friend and fellow Miami Dolphins' co-owner, Gloria Estefan.

"Business has been phenomenal," said Monica Smiley of Costa d'Este. "We're sold out through the end of the week. February was strong. March has been insanely strong."

In any case, lots of people are walking the streets of Ocean Drive, where several weeks ago on a Saturday they might have come across Harry Belafonte and his third wife, Pamela, doing a little shopping. While the Belafontes were reportedly staying with



her parents, many of those in town at the moment are guests at the local hotels.

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Replenishment of beaches slips behind schedule

BY LISA ZAHNER
STAFF WRITER

Construction was halted last week on the north county beach replenishment project.

High winds and downpours called off all progress both at the mines and on the beaches for more than a day, putting the already-behind-schedule project in a little deeper hole.

Processing at the Ranch Road Lake mine just west of the Quail Valley Golf Club

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Neither rain nor wind puts a damper on art Under the Oaks. Page 10.

Water and sewer

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

At the same time, the County's own zoning board was moving forward with a policy to eliminate any city-run services from the picture.

A tape recording of Councilman Ken Daige's meeting with Gabbard and Bolton reveals that the city's top managers view the county planning commission's exclusion of all but two options in the comp plan – even as the County Commission is approving study of a broader set of options – as an inexcusable case of double-dealing.

“We're getting some feedback from that side that it's either a consolidation

or a termination of the agreement in 2017,” Bolton told Daige. “There's no room for cooperatives, there's no partnerships.”

Gabbard then said, “There's no status quo.”

Mike Hotchkiss, who heads up engineering and planning for the county's utility, says the county is just facing reality.

“With our county customers on the city system facing 60 percent increases in the near future, we feel that doing nothing is not an option,” Hotchkiss said.

Bolton, who earns \$110,000 annually for directing the city's water and sewer systems, has staunchly defended the view that Vero needs to main-

tain an independent water and sewer system.

Bolton has raised concerns about the city being overwhelmed with wet-weather discharge, and contends the public health and safety considerations of having redundant city and county systems to keep the sewage running in the right direction -- away from customers' homes -- are reason enough to keep the city's aging system operational.

The city's water and sewer systems employ 82 full-time workers whose futures would be up in the air if the county took over serving residents currently served by the city. Six employees are already expected to lose their jobs due to mid-year budget cuts

in April, leaving Bolton leading a team of 75.

The county already has a customer service department, payment facilities and adequate engineering and administration to serve the additional customers. It has -- or is planning to build -- the capacity to accept wastewater and to provide drinking water and re-use water for irrigation to all the customers. That means increased staffing requirements would be limited to meter reading and technical personnel to maintain the additional lines, pumps and lift stations.

Another joint meeting with all the elected officials from Vero, the county and Indian River Shores -- at the request of Vero Beach -- is expected to take place in the next few weeks.

Should Vero leaders come away less than comforted from those talks that their utility is about to be stripped out from under them, Vero's participation in the joint process might be on borrowed time.

“The city continues to play the game where they want to keep everybody, as Charlie Wilson says, held hostage, and clearly that game is over,” said Vero Councilman Brian Heady.

Meanwhile, Shores officials and customers were fully expecting to have at least the basic information required to move ahead toward a decision for the town -- whose franchise expires in 2016 -- by early summer. The prospects of that happening at this time seem dim at best, if the Shores is forced to rely on the joint process for answers.

“These people are just doing their job recommending to us a consultant,” said Shores Mayor Bill Kenyon. “Then we'll decide whether we want to play the game or we get out of it.”

Meanwhile, Vero's water and sewer system, which ended the 2008-09 fiscal year owing the city's general fund \$93,000, is again running in the red to the tune of \$450,000. The overruns are partly due to the new and controversial \$11 million deep-well injection plant and nearly \$900,000 of capital improvement projects desperately needed this year, for which the city might have to borrow more money.

The county system, flush in operating cash, keeps looking like the fiscally safer option for customers wishing to have a well-managed operation providing water and sewer service.

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While Gabbard and Bolton may have been taken by surprise by the major revisions to the county comp plan, they weren't the only ones. Commissioner Wesley Davis was not informed nor consulted, and found out via a call from Vero Beach 32963 asking for a comment on the city's reaction.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Shores told big money at stake in response to Census

BY LISA ZAHNER
STAFF WRITER

In 2000, the response of residents of the Town of Indian River Shores to the U.S. Census was as dismal as that of the response of Gifford and Fellsmere – fewer than 60 percent of residents filled out and mailed in their 10-question card.

“Our response was very low,” said volunteer Nan Warner, who is coordinating efforts for the Shores as part of the Complete County Committee. The highest response was Sebastian at 74 percent, and the county as a whole had a 63 percent response.

What's the big deal, one may ask? The big deal is that census numbers are used for divvying up about \$400 billion in federal funding to state and local governments. Warner said Indian River Shores lost out on approximately \$2,200 per person, per year, for everyone not captured in the 2000 census.

Based on the town's own figure of 3,800 residents at a 60 percent response rate, that means about 1,500 people were not captured in the last census. That translates into a loss of \$33 million in funding to the local government over a decade.

“I want it all to be better this time, for the response in the whole county to improve,” Warner said. “It's only 10 questions and they don't ask for your Social Security number, just names. It's all confidential for something like 80 years.”

As Warner has pointed out in her many presentations, including one to the town council, the census does not share information collected with other government agencies such as the Internal Revenue Service.

Warner said the misconception is that people need to complete the census where they vote, or where they have their homestead or residency for tax purposes.

“It has to do with where you put your head on April 1,” she said.

The primary confusion in Indian River Shores is many residents are part-timers, only here for a few weeks or a few months of the year. But the rule is that every person in the county is to be counted wherever they are living on April 1, 2010, provided that they are at least a part-time resident.

Councilwoman Frances Atchison last week asked the council to approve sending a letter she'd written to all residents of the Shores, but the idea was shot down without a vote.

Despite Atchinson's insistence that the town should be worried about again being shorted on federal funding due to a low response to the census, the general feeling was there was

enough publicity out there about the census that Shores residents should be able to “get it.”

“I have got to assume that there are clear instructions that come with the packet,” Councilman Mike Oschner said. “We've got a town of really smart people here. I think they can follow instructions. The low response is prob-

lematic, but I don't think the letter is going to help with that.”

The Shores may take the issue up again on March 25, which Atchinson said would be too late to do any good. In lieu of official correspondence from the town, Warner has spoken to several homeowners associations and John's Island recently sent out an email to

all residents emphasizing the importance of participating in the census.

Residents who do not respond will be contacted by a paid census worker on or about May 1. Warner said this is another reason, for the Shores, that sending in the survey is important.

“By May 1, a lot of people will be gone,” she said.

First shell of the season



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

treasure grows. But the first piece found each season holds special meaning. It signals another long stretch of

perfect days and even sweeter nights. That's what life is like when you come home to John's Island.

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Beach replenishment

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

had been going on seven days a week, nearly 24 hours a day with two dredge teams in play to keep feeding the never-ending stream of dump trucks arriving for loads of sand.

That stopped when the drenching rain thwarted processing efforts. After the sand is processed, it must also be tested for grain size, quality and contaminants prior to being loaded up for its trek to the beach.

The combination of high winds, surf and rain shut down the construction of dunes on Thursday afternoon and no work took place on Friday.

With 41 percent of the allotted time elapsed and only 24 percent of the

sand thus far delivered, getting the remaining 225,000 cubic yards of sand on the beach will mean an increased per-day volume of 5,300 cubic yards if weekends are used.

Ranger has estimated that its trucks carry about 17 cubic yards each, so that's about 310 trucks per day, 10 hours per day or about one truck every two minutes crossing the Wabasso causeway.

Sand mine operators are reportedly bringing in a third dredging crew to process the additional material. This week is expected to be one of the most productive weeks of the project, so the county and barrier island residents will be watching the progress.

To date, Ranger has not been working weekends -- presumably to mini-

mize disruption to local residents and to avoid paying its workers overtime -- but those days may be over. If only weekdays are used from here on out, it would be virtually impossible to finish in time.

"Although the contractor is still on a Monday through Friday schedule, we expect him to begin working weekends to catch up," said county Public Works Director Chris Mora.

No work, except for the planting of shore-stabilizing vegetation using only lightweight vehicles, can be done after May 1 due to sea turtle nesting season.

On the beach, approximately 5,500 linear feet of dune have been constructed of which 2,500 linear feet (nearly one half mile) of the dune plus

berm fronting Sea Oaks have been completed and surveyed. The remaining 3,000 linear feet have not been fully constructed to date, Mora said, reflecting the latest progress report given to commissioners on Tuesday.

The total length of beach in Phase One of the project is about three miles, from Golden Sands Park south to the northern end of John's Island. Phase Two of the project from Treasure Shores Park south to Golden Sands will be undertaken this fall should the upland sand's performance pass muster with regulators and sea turtle interests.

For comparison's sake, the county could have received permits to complete the project with pumped-in offshore sand as early as November, and with mobilization and construction

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time of about 45-60 days, the Mid-western-based dredge company could have completed the project in early January.

But had the county gone with offshore sand and had it already in place, the recurring cold and stormy weather which started around Jan. 6 may have

washed much of that sand away.

Approximately \$2 million in change orders to the original \$7.3 million contract for the project were expected to be hammered out this week, but those, too have been delayed and should appear on the March 23 Board of County Commissioners agenda.

All told, with the additional permitting and design work, monitoring, processing, testing and construction costs -- plus an additional 115,000 cubic yards of sand, the cost of the project is approaching \$15 million.

The county had budgeted only \$13.1 million and is banking on a large

portion being covered by state cost-sharing dollars, for which it has not yet applied. Those dollars are funded via documentary stamp revenues from real estate transactions and the disbursement of those funds is completely at the discretion of the state government.

Heady and Daige on the attack, but very differently

BY LISA ZAHNER
STAFF WRITER

Councilmen Brian Heady and Ken Daige stand alone, often on a similar mission to pry information out of the City of Vero Beach so they can give answers to the populist movement that produced some amazing upsets

in last fall's municipal election.

But as time passes, it is clear that Heady and Daige consistently come up one vote short on their efforts for openness, and to get much done in City Hall.

In the past few months, as Heady railed over whose hands held the original copies of the utilities contract

with Orlando, Daige has tried to help open up the debate and to assist Dr. Stephen Faherty get a 4-month-old records request filled for some critical data related to the sale of the electric utility.

But neither man was able to accomplish much, except for throwing a temporary "unofficial" wrench into the plans to install red-light cameras.

The three other council members -- Tom White, Sabin Abell and Mayor Kevin Sawnick -- seem to be the current voting bloc that prevents much of Heady and Daige's efforts to bring change and openness to Vero government.

"I often know what the level of support is from the rest of the council and on some things I just know it's not there," Heady said. Daige seemed less resigned, more hopeful.

"I bring everything out on the table, out on the dais," Daige said. "The people who have supported us expect good government and they expect me to do my job and move things forward. The point is to debate and maybe the votes will be there to keep things moving."

To the staffers and at least a couple of council members, Heady is like your eccentric uncle who comes to visit, tells embarrassing family secrets at the dinner table, plays the television too loudly and just won't leave. Daige is like the ever-present fire ants in your back yard; they keep popping up somewhere else, digging here and digging there.

"I don't like to call it digging," Daige said. "I'm just getting more information."

For his part, Heady views the November 2009 election as a mandate.

"People were angry enough to elect me and Charlie Wilson. That's saying something," Heady said. "They sent

me here for a reason."

Daige also ran on a platform of change -- a less mutinous form of change, but change nevertheless -- but was defeated in the election. He subsequently was named to the seat vacated by Wilson more because council members could tell he'd done his homework.

During his 14-month hiatus from the council between November 2008 and January 2010, Daige tried to get to the bottom of what he saw as many efforts at subterfuge on behalf of the city.

Daige tried to find out why it appeared as if the city was already constructing a controversial \$11 million deep-well injection facility at the airport prior to final approval from the council.

Concerned about the growing black hole that was the city's pension plan, Daige pressed for answers and filed an untold number of public records requests. He was often met with delay, resistance and even bills for hundreds of dollars for documents and staff time in order to meet his requests.

Daige often spoke from the podium, presenting facts and figures to no avail, as he and his arguments were generally ignored by both elected officials and staffers. Daige's supporters have reportedly urged Daige to recapture that spirit of skepticism they saw while he was out of office and bring it to the dais once again -- and their support in November might depend upon it.

"I got the message about utilities. I got the memo," Daige said.

"People don't want the long version of the story, they just want their bills to go down," he said. "It's my job to keep an eye on the bottom line of that bill to make sure it continues to go down."

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Water and sewer

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

"I honestly did not know about that, about those changes to the water and sewer portions," Davis said, adding that he was aware amendments were being offered, as he had personally worked on some changes to land development regulations with the Agriculture Advisory Committee.

"I can very much understand why the city would be upset at that," Davis said. "But my position has not changed from what we all agreed upon in October."

All along, Davis said he wanted to look at all the options, but that the customers -- not the employees or the various territories that the city or county would want to gain or protect -- would be the number one priority in any decision he made about how to ultimately solve the problem.

"I've said that if we go through all of this and find out that the way we're doing it now is the best way to go, I'll bow out and we'll leave it that way," he said. "But if there's a better, cheaper way to provide service to the county customers, especially those in the south beaches, we need to know."

The county policy changes are slated to come before the Board of County Commissioners in a workshop with the Planning and Zoning Commission in mid-April. Davis said he would be

willing to push for all four options -- consolidation, termination, collaboration and status quo -- to be included in the comp plan.

While the city accuses the county of having a hidden plan, top city staffers including retiring Finance Director Steve Mailliet have floated their own trial balloon -- the idea that the city taxpayers would be "better off" if Vero retreated into the city limits and focused its efforts on providing service only to city customers.

This plan, however, has no research or financial analysis behind it.

Should Indian River Shores and the county pull their customers out in 2016 and 2017 respectively, the burden of financing the city's water and sewer infrastructure would be borne by just the remaining 60 percent of current customers.

Commissioner Bob Solari has publicly stated that this scenario would cause the city to have "no business model" to function going forward. It would also leave no way -- except for borrowing huge sums -- to fund the planned move of the city's wastewater treatment plant from its location southwest of the 17th Street Causeway to the airport.

This single project, according to the city and county's estimates, could cost as much as consolidating the area's water and sewer systems.

Beachside visitors

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

If you doubt the town is full, try going to one of the island restaurants without a reservation. For the past several weeks, hour-long waits have been common.

At the Vero Beach Hotel and Spa, February wreaked a little havoc on the numbers, largely because of the northeast's record blizzards which forced snow-bound travelers to cancel vacation plans. But March is proving to be a great month, said Marco Scherer, general manager.

"While we are at about the same occupancy as last year, we're ahead on our rates," said Scherer.

The hotel is seeing a lot of visitors from the Midwest (a new target market for them) as well as the Northeast; people are coming to Vero for the first time and staying longer -- five to seven nights at a time, said Scherer.

"We've had to hire another full time concierge on staff to help with all the guests," he said. "I think this season is going to be slightly better than last year, and that's good since it's a bit shorter."

At The Caribbean Court, the boutique hotel on South Ocean Drive, occupancy has been full, said Boris Gonzalez, the owner and manager. "It's been fantastic; this has been one of our

best periods ever," he said.

A lot of return business, plus more family and friends recommending the property for out-of-town guests, seems to be the fuel for his numbers, he said.

"We've had to turn people away, particularly those who wanted extended stays," said Gonzalez. "We're seeing a lot of friends of friends, friends of family who come for a visit, learn about Vero and then come back," said Gonzalez. "Or they come to the restaurant (Maison Martinique) and recommend the hotel to friends."

Recession? Gonzalez is optimistic. "I don't know. It's definitely getting better and better."

At the Surf Club, the recently remodeled hotel is just becoming fully operational but reports that as of the end of March, it will be fully booked. The Surf Club and the beachside Holiday Inn are getting a lot of business from Russ-Matt families -- the families accompanying high school and college baseball from up north who are coming to Dodgertown for tournaments.

"The end of March, we're at 100 percent occupancy," said Natalie Frankel, general manager of the Surf Club. "It's definitely picking up."

Interestingly, Costa d'Este also is benefiting from the RussMatt tournaments. "We're getting a lot of parents of the baseball players," Smiley said.

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Heady and Daige

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Heady, on the other hand, doesn't have to worry about an election until 2011. Attending nearly every City Council meeting for two decades, Heady has been shut down -- successfully and unsuccessfully -- and repeatedly hauled off by the Vero Beach Police Department a dozen or so times for making provocative comments and accusations.

To this day, Heady calls the imposition of the three-minute time limit on public comment "the Heady button" and his arrests his "special deluxe tours" of the back of the police depart-

ment. But Heady said the things he's learned since he's been on the Council are far worse than things he suspected the city and its officials might be doing over the years.

Though they share a goal for government in the sunshine, Daige and Heady go about it with very different styles. Heady creates bluster and drama, often evoking both cheers and jeers from the same people at the same meeting.

"Some of the details are painful," Heady said. "The reason I have to do this is in order to get through the interrogatories to get to the core issue. You have to circle the wagons to make the case."

As for his most recent push -- the

epic saga of the hunt for the original electric contract with the Orlando Utilities Commission which was kept in Massachusetts for 22 months -- Heady said he was trying to transform what seems like a minor point into a larger argument over what's important.

"I lost people because I went on too long about the city manager and the city attorney having not safeguarded a \$2 billion document. I think that's worth going on too long about," he said. "Despite what people might think, it's not enjoyable for me to sit up there and debate what may or may not be a cause for action of the termination of two of the charter officers."

Where Heady is abrasive, Daige

works more quietly, methodically, chipping away at issues trimming and pruning here and there. Daige agrees that the devil is truly in the details, so he burrows into documents, meets with constituents and matter-of-factly clues the public in to private meetings and to city business that doesn't make its way to the council agenda.

Heady refuses to meet with top city staffers in private, often inviting "witnesses" from the public or the media in to see, hear and do things with him -- by ambush, if necessary.

"Jim Gabbard keeps saying that I need to come to his office to meet with him. I don't have private meetings with the city manager because I don't have any private business with him," Heady said.

If the staff does manage to slip Heady some information in private, within minutes he calls a half dozen people in his network to broadcast the news. When Heady has something to say, he demands an audience.

If no one at the city will listen to him, Heady has no problem taking his case to Indian River Shores or to the Board of County Commissioners. Scoldings from Councilman Tom White and feeling the power of the gavel from Mayor Kevin Sawnick only seem to encourage Heady to be outspoken.

"I've been going to city meetings longer than he (White) has been in the city and I've been going to public meetings longer than the Mayor (who is 28) has been alive," Heady said.

Daige still goes into the private meetings with Gabbard, but he brings a city clerk and a tape recorder with him. Then, during his matters at the end of meetings, he lists the dates and topics of these "private" meetings and invites the public to read the minutes, thus leaving staff scratching their heads as to why they bothered with the private meetings.

Heady balks at the private meetings. "When they call you into a room and tell you that they're going to do something and tell you that you're the only one against them doing it, that everyone else is voting for it to put pressure on you to play along, I don't think that's right," Heady said.

Daige, on the other hand, is far more polite and civil -- addressing Gabbard by title as "Mr. City Manager" and City Attorney Charlie Vitunac as "Mr. City Attorney."

Working with the people he's got to work with, Daige said he's been trying to instill a sense of urgency into a city whose culture it has been to delay and deflect issues until they reach the level of a crisis. He hopes he can get more done, and quickly.

"If you've noticed lately, I have been using the word 'now' and putting time limits on doing things, what part of 'now' don't they understand?" Daige asked.

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PEOPLE

Dan Crisafulli and instructor Asya Dimitrov dance the Paso Doble at the Dancing with Vero's Stars event to benefit Indian River Healthy Start Coalition.

P.12

Dancing with Vero's Stars

People

New Humiston Park a big hit with visitors



Vero Beach mayor Kevin Sawnick addresses the crowd at the grand opening of Humiston Park. Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.

IAN M. LOVE
STAFF WRITER

Humiston Park, which three years ago was the subject of much debate as the city considered trading park land for parking spaces, was re-opened Saturday and hailed by officials for the cooperation between Vero Beach and the developers to refurbish the once bleak southern end of Ocean Drive.

The battles between the developer, Flamevine Partners, and groups against the project to rebuild an acre of dilapidated beachfront property with condominiums, retail space and a restaurant, along with \$1 million on improvements to the park, were a distant memory on Saturday.

"I think this is a shining example of what public and private partners can do," said Mayor Kevin Sawnick.

However, the development issue was one of the most contentious in

front of the City Council in 2007 and early 2008, pitting the developer and those in favor of rebuilding the old site where Crusty's restaurant once stood and those who were against the expected traffic congestion, some loss of access to the beach, and the loss of 10 percent of the green space at Humiston Park.

As part of the deal the developers needed the city to abandon the north half of Flamevine Lane, but they committed the \$1 million to improve Humiston as part of the deal.

Despite the loss of some green space, most in attendance Saturday were pleased with the way the public part of the project turned out.

The changes included widening the sidewalks in front of the park, improving the lighting and the building of a two-foot retaining wall along Ocean Drive. In addition, 22 more parking spaces were added to area around Humiston Park.

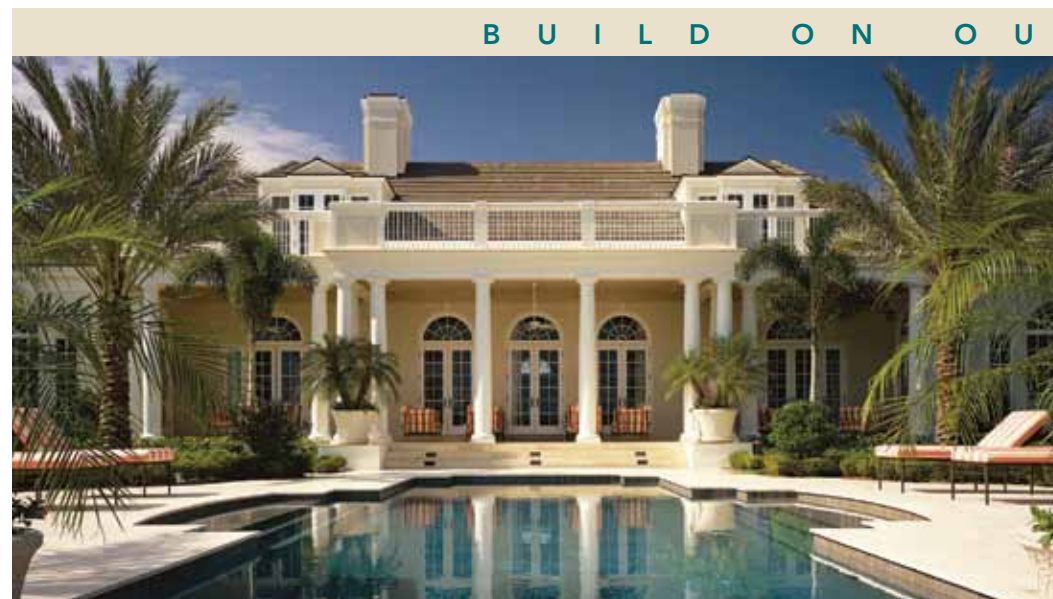


From their seats on the new sitting wall at Humiston Park, Dick and Linda Stahl listen to the Southwind jazz/pop ensemble as the sun sets.



Joseph Koch, 5, throws a baseball while Summer Allen and Leslee Stephens soak up some sun shortly after the grand opening of Humiston Park.

"Two years ago there was a four-foot wide sidewalk and the ground then sloped up to the park," said Public Works Director Monte Falls. "Now you have a pedestrian plaza, where people can gather for events like Art in the Park. People from all walks of life are enjoying it."



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Date change for Laurel Awards

The Cultural Council of Indian River County 15th Annual Laurel Awards has been rescheduled and will now take place on Friday, April 23.

The event will still be held at the Riverside Theatre Lobby and Waxlax Stage. The evening kicks off at 6 p.m. with a cocktail reception and heavy hors d'oeuvres; followed by the Laurel Award presentation at 7 p.m. Tickets to the Laurel Awards are \$50.

The Volunteer/Cultural Leadership Award will be presented to Cathie Callery for her community wide volunteer activities including her service on the board of Vero Heritage, which seeks to preserve the historical integrity of The Heritage Center in downtown Vero Beach.

The Business/Philanthropic Award will honor Falasiri Oriental Rugs owner Jafar Falasiri, who has underwritten the weekly "Cultural Connection" in the Press Journal newspaper for 10 years. The page has highlighted thousands of cultural events and showcased hundreds of Treasure Coast artists.

The Cultural/Professional Leadership Award will be presented to former U.S. diplomat Warren Obluck, who has taught the Vero Beach Museum of Art Film Studies courses since 2000 and has been affiliated with the museum since directing its OffCenter Cinema Club in 1998.

The Artist Leadership Award will honor Del and Jean Peterson for their contributions to the Vero Beach Art Club. Del has worked on advertising and publicity for the Club's "Under the Oaks" Fine Art and Crafts Show for 15 years and Jean has served as former club president, newsletter editor and publicist.

The Carolyn K. Eggert Award will be presented to Roman and Joan Ortega-Cowan, for their work bringing world-class opera to the area through the Vero Beach Opera, where Roman serves as artistic director, and Joan serves as president.

As this is the 15th Anniversary of the Cultural Council of Indian River County, founding members of the organization will also be honored at the event.

The Cultural Council provides networking avenues for nonprofits and artists through information-sharing and collaboration. It also provides technical and professional development regarding nonprofit management issues. It also promotes local artists and facilitates public art exhibitions in county buildings.

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People

A night of dance with Vero's stars at Waxlax



The audience waits for the dancers to take the stage at the Waxlax Center at Saint Edward's School. Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.



Judge Andrew Currie watches from the stage as instructor James Martin and Annamarie LaBella dance their way to the second runner-up position with an acrobatic Fast Lindy.

BY MARY SCHENKEL
COLUMNIST

Rebecca Emmons and her partner Joseph Wynes earned the coveted mirrored trophy ball as the Grand Prize Winners of Dancing With Vero's Stars. With sequins, sparkle and fancy footwork, celebrity dancers and their professional dance partners wowed the 500 guests who had come to cheer on their favorites and support a great cause.

The event is a fundraiser for the Indian River County Healthy Start Coalition, which provides programs that guarantee all pregnant women have access to prenatal and infant services. Dancers were judged in equal parts by the money they raised for the non-profit organization as well as the scores given by the judges. Every dollar donated equaled one vote and was later combined with the judges' scores to determine First and Second Runners-up and the Grand Prize Winner.

Last year's inaugural event, held at the Elks Lodge in Vero Beach, proved so popular that the venue was changed to the considerably larger Waxlax Center for the Performing Arts at Saint Edward's School.

Leslie Spurlock, Healthy Start Coalition Executive Director was pleased with the new venue and remarked on how wonderful it was to have the professional lighting, stage help and box office. Spurlock, who was going to be running things backstage, said with a smile, "I'm like the stage mother back there."

Dancers mingled with the guests during the cocktail hour, getting some last minute encouragement from their supporters, along with additional donations to give a boost to their overall scores. I ran into Carole Casey who was with a large contingent of Annamarie LaBella fans from Grand Harbor where LaBella works. "What a doll. She's so cute and so wonderful to all of us at Grand Harbor."



Instructor Shari Tessier and David W. Busch dance the Lindy Hop on stage at the Waxlax Center.

As guests took their seats inside the auditorium, there were definite cheering sections for each of the dancers; some complete with noise-makers.

Professional dancers from the Royal

Ballroom Dance Team gave a taste of what was to come with an entertaining showcase demonstration. Emcee Hamp Elliott introduced Healthy Start Coalition Board Member Georgia Irish

People



Sitting between sjudges Andrew Currie and Lance Sexton, Gretchen Rose gives a score of 10 to Bob Kane and Cheryl Gerstner's performance.

and Board President Joe Coakley, who once again co-chaired the event, and returning judges Lance Sexton of Melbourne Ballroom, Andrew Currie of Dance Space and Gretchen Rose of Island Home Interiors, and then it was on to the competition.

Videos of the couples practicing and talking about the whole experience lent a nice introductory touch and preceded each dance performance.

The lineup was decided by a random drawing and Kerry Bartlett, Executive Director of the Indian River Community Foundation and her partner Oleg Dimitrov from Royal Ballroom drew the difficult first spot, leading the competition off with a fiery Paso Doble. Admitting that the dance was a bit outside her comfort level, Bartlett said that she wanted to show her nieces that with a lot of hard work you can do anything you set your mind to.

At only five feet tall, a petite Annamarie LaBella, Event Director at Grand Harbor, packed a big punch in a high-energy Fast Lindy with her partner James Martin from the 14th Avenue Dance Studio. The lively routine was filled with flips and lifts, proving, as judge Rose commented, "Good things come in small packages."

David Busch from Southern Eagle Distributing and his partner Shari Tessier from 14th Avenue Dance Studio were next to take the stage, dancing the Lindy Hop. After saying in his video piece that he was going to "bring it," he did just that; lifting his partner with ease and looking like he was enjoying himself.

A confident looking Awilda Rivera, General Manager of Costa d'Este Beach Resort showed off her Latin moves with dance partner Joe Tessier of the 14th Avenue Dance Studio. The great hip action and fluid movements of their Salsa charmed the audience and the judges, earning her the first 10

of the evening.

Cheryl Gerstner, Broker/Owner of Palm Pointe Realty showed grace and poise, dancing the Night Club Two-Step with her partner Bob Kane of Dance on Space Coast. The elegant performance beautifully showcased her previous ballerina training as the couple glided across the floor.

Dan Crisafulli, Managing Director of Rock City Gardens did a terrific job with some impressive lifts, dancing both the Rumba and the Paso Doble with his partner Asya Dimitrov of Royal Ballroom. Crisafulli told the audience that the learning experience had opened up a whole world that he hadn't known existed.

Wearing a glittery sequined costume, Attorney Rebecca Emmons, with Stewart, Evans, Stewart and Emmons, P.A., danced the Cha Cha with her partner Joseph Wynes of Desire to Dance. Wynes had said in the video that Emmons was a quick learner and the lessons evidently paid off as she entertained us with an energetic and sassy number.

The second playful Cha Cha of the evening was performed by Paralegal Brenda Lloyd of Robin Lloyd and Associates, P.A., dancing with Harry Sark of Royal Ballroom. Wearing a fringed costume that swayed with her hips and a smile that lit up the stage, the audience could tell she was having a great time.

A dashing tuxedo-clad Tony Della Porta, President of Della Porta Construction was the last of the nine dancers to compete. Della Porta and his partner Patti Rooney, an experienced dancer and contestant in last year's competition, showed class and style dancing a smooth and graceful waltz.

A brief intermission gave the audience a chance to stretch their legs, nibble on some delectable desserts and add a few more votes for their favor-

ite dancers, who all seemed relieved that the hard part was over. A few of the guests mentioned that they'd love to be considered for next year's competition, including Marcia Loewinger who said with a laugh and a shimmy, "It's got to be something with a lot of hip action. You have to let loose and have fun."

Guests returned back inside and, as votes were tallied, Awilda Rivera showcased another of her talents, with a wonderful rendition of the song, "I Don't Want to Lose You Now" while Joe and Shari Tessier of 14th Avenue

Dance Studio danced a Rumba. A sexy, sultry Argentine Tango was performed by Asya and Oleg Dimitrov of Royal Ballroom and the Swingsation Team from 14th Avenue Dance Studio entertained with a jumping Jive.

And then the moment everyone was waiting for arrived. The trophy for Second Runner-up was awarded to Annamarie LaBella and her partner James Martin. The First Runner-up trophy went to David Busch and partner Shari Tessier and the Grand Prize Winners were Rebecca Emmons and her partner Joseph Wynes.

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People

‘Fiesta’ brings out flavors of Spain for Red Cross



Ray McGowan, Grahame and Shirley Walker, and Jane Cammann

Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.



Indian River Fire Fighter Paramedics Theresa Brook, Roger Lightle and Donna Garofalo



Scott Alexander and Gail Lulley



Sue Jackson and Barbara Leigh

BY MARY SCHENKEL
COLUMNIST

Guests arriving at Costa d'Este last Wednesday evening were greeted by the rhythmic sounds of a Spanish guitar, artfully played by Don Soledad, luring them into an evening that highlighted the fabulous flavors of Spain.

The event was “An Affair to Remember, a Wine and Food Fiesta” to benefit the American Red Cross North Treasure Coast Chapter.

The first stop on the Spanish tour took place in the resort's Crystal Room, where guests sipped glasses of sparkling wine and perused a variety of silent auction items donated by local

businesses.

While we were milling around, I spoke with Ray McGowan, a retired Exxon Mobile executive who moved to Vero Beach eight years ago and joined the local American Red Cross board shortly thereafter. “I arrived just after the tsunami that devastated Southeast Asia and went to the Red Cross office

to donate,” said McGowan. “I met Sarah [Ruwe] and she invited herself to my house to speak with me about their capital campaign. I’ve been with them ever since.”

Smiling at his remark, Ruwe, the American Red Cross North Treasure Coast Chapter CEO, said, “Ray has been a wonderful asset; not only

People



Janet Baines and Lloyd Elston

through valuable donations but we also get his sweat equity.”

There were a number of firefighters on hand in support of Jay Morgan, a former Indian River County Firefighter who lost his battle with cancer in December. Morgan was also a recovering alcoholic and event's presenting sponsor; the Health Promotion Foundation, created the Jay Morgan Lifesaver Patient Aid Fund for Hanley Center Gate Lodge in Vero Beach in his name so that others could be given a chance to fight the addiction.

Before heading outside for the tapas and wine tasting portion of the evening, guests were treated to an entertaining historical skit, performed by several players from Riverside Theatre, portraying figures such as Christopher Columbus, Ponce de Leon and Clara Barton.

I got a brief history lesson of my own from attorney Robin Lloyd, who served as board chairman prior to the 2004 storms and who has been involved with the Red Cross more than 40 years.

According to Lloyd, nurses have always been the backbone of the Red Cross, harkening back to European battlefields in the late 1800s and Clara Barton's establishment of the American Red Cross after tending to wounded during the Civil War.

The organization is recognized for its disaster preparedness and assistance, but their help in providing emergency communication between troops and family members is less well known.

“When I served in Vietnam, it was the Red Cross who delivered word to me that my son had been born,” said Lloyd. “They’re still doing that now; they help families who need to get an emergency message to someone serving overseas.”

We ran into Doris Sleeper whom I had met years ago when she manned the Red Cross office in Sebastian. That building was blown down during the 2004 hurricanes and she is now the Director of Safety and Preparedness in the Vero Beach office. “I love it; I like making a difference in saving lives,” she said with her usual enthusiasm.

“I’ve had a few occasions where it’s really made a difference, and that makes it all worthwhile.”

After the skit, guests wandered out by the pool for the tapas and wine tasting portion of the evening, thrilled that the breezes coming off the ocean were more balmy than blustery.

Twelve different wines, representing the various regions of Spain, were available at stations set up around the deck, carefully selected by sponsors Southern Wine and Spirits, Premiere Beverage and Republic National Distributing Company.

Chef Ray Mumford had prepared a delightful selection of savory dishes to pair with the wines, including luscious Florida cheeses and heirloom tomatoes, mini crab croquettes, grilled baby lamb chops and both tuna and Florida lobster ceviche.

Ruwe said the organization wants to grow this into a signature fundraiser. “All the money raised goes to support local efforts; fire response and training volunteers to be ready in a disaster.”

The Red Cross sprang into action for Deirdre McDonagh when her apartment caught fire.

“It was January 6, my father's 86th birthday, and the apartment I’d just moved into had an electrical fire. Lisa, from the Red Cross, told me not to worry; that they’d have a place for me to stay.”

McDonagh explained that the Red Cross also provided her with money for food and clothing and helped her to find a new home.

“I’d always thought they were huge and only helped with major disasters like in Haiti,” said McDonagh. “I had no idea they did things locally like this. I’m telling you, they rock.”

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People

Riverside Theatre gala a throwback to Sin City



Marlynn and Bill Scully, Anne and Herb Gullquist

Photos: Mark Schumann



Sherry and Dave Brown

STAFF REPORT

The Riverside Theatre's annual gala took place Saturday, March 13 drawing a crowd of about 200 who danced and played games of chance for a good cause – our local theatre.



Bill and Laura Buck



Sandra and Ron Rennick

"Diamonds and Denim in Old Las Vegas" drew out the ladies and gents wearing their best in denim, their Stetsons and plenty of bling.

Since the theme was indeed tied to Sin City, most of the partygoers enjoyed various games of chance for charity, along with plenty of entertainment, some great food and revelry.

The theater's lobby became the Flamingo Hotel and its stage, the Flamingo Cabaret. These venues then hosted performances from mind

reader Mark Stone, pianist Corey Pfeiffer and belly dancer Aisha.

The Dixie Highway Band entertained guests who munched on barbecue to tunes that mixed country and western, rock and big band swing.

"I think everyone was pleased," said Riverside Theatre's director of membership Alaina Haas following the "Diamonds and Denim" event. "We had a really good turnout and everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves."

Monies raised go towards the the-



Square dancers Angelo Cerniglia, Walter Wells, Chelsea Wengler

ex-pec-ta-tions

[ek-spek-tey-shuhns]

1. the act or the state of expecting; to wait in expectation. 2. the act or state of looking forward or anticipating. 3. expectant mental attitude: a high pitch of expectation.

ex-ceed-ing ex-pec-ta-tions

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Incoming Tide

People

Scott Varricchio: 'Blessed with a beautiful location'

MICHELLE GENZ
STAFF WRITER

If Scott Varricchio ever imagined himself living in Florida, it was with a golf club in his hand, not a wooden spoon. The one-time aspiring golf pro-turned-chef is now stirring the pot at Citrus Grillhouse, getting ready to open his first restaurant.

In Incoming Tide, Vero Beach 32963 looks at newer residents in our community. Here is Scott Varricchio's story:

As a steady stream of curious visitors filed through the oceanfront restaurant's doors last weekend, thrown open to the wild winds off the ocean, Scott Varricchio's crew prepared for a pre-opening cocktail party last Sunday. With a welcoming wave from the front porch, he was playing proud host to his new Vero family.

The memories of big Sunday dinners with his Italian family in the Bronx may be distant now, but clearly he retains the sensibility. Varricchio was still a little boy when his father, a New York State policeman, moved the family to Ithaca. For Scott, it was a wonderful childhood, with two universities supplying sports teams to root for, and practice fields to share. He and his brother were sports nuts, but more than any other, golf was his passion. "My dream was to be the next Jack Nicklaus," he says.

He was teaching golf in the summers in Ithaca and spending winters in Florida working on his game, when in the midst of Q-school – the qualifying tournaments for the PGA tour, he got the urge to learn to ride a motorcycle. A friend was showing him the basics when Varricchio hit sand and went down. The left side of his body was hurt just badly enough to ruin his game, he says.

So at 23, he gave up on golf and took a job working for his best friend from childhood, a Cornell business school graduate who owned a manufacturing and engineering firm in Linden, New Jersey. The company designed and made hoses and fittings for all sorts of uses, from gardens to tankers. With 40 employees, it was small enough to serve as a model for all aspects of business. "It was my college education," Varricchio says. "He gave me my business background."

Meanwhile, another of his childhood friends from Ithaca was opening his first restaurant, in Soho. Tom Valenti was already becoming one of the most talked-about chefs in New York, and Varricchio, a serious home cook



Chef Scott Varricchio's new beachside restaurant, Citrus Grillhouse, is set to open soon.

Photo: Tom McCarthy Jr.

himself, had talked to him about his own interest in food, asking his opinion of culinary school. "Don't waste your time," said Valenti. So Varricchio proposed a sort of internship, working every weekend with Valenti at Casabel, for no pay, learning the ropes of a restaurant kitchen.

"I killed lobsters, I peeled carrots, I washed dishes," he says. "I did everything."

From there, Varricchio got his first paying restaurant job, as an assistant pastry chef at La Cote Basque, the venerable French restaurant. After putting in a 60-hour week, he got his first pay-

check – for \$140. "I thought, 'I've made a grave mistake. I can't pay my bills.' I made more in one day at the engineering firm than in a whole week in the restaurant." So he called his old boss back and arranged to work at the hose manufacturer on his one day off.

The training was intensive. Under Lincoln Carson, the pastry chef, he learned to make tuiles, to temper chocolate, to make ice cream, and other sweets, a half- dozen of which might appear in a single dessert on La Cote Basque's menu.

Meanwhile, Tom Valenti was opening Butterfield 81; he asked Varricchio to be a line cook. Then Lincoln Carson called from his new post at Picasso in Las Vegas's Bellagio Hotel. He flew Varricchio out for an interview. "I took the job on the spot."

For a lark, he invited his dad to make the drive to Vegas with him. When they were seated at the ultra-glamorous restaurant for dinner, servers appeared with a table that was set next to theirs, and proceeded to load it with platters

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People

of food. "Welcome, chef," they said.

Until that moment, Varricchio had presumed his parents were still annoyed that he had chosen to go into the restaurant business. The extraordinary spread changed all that. "My dad looks at me and says, 'You're going to be ok.'"

In fact, Las Vegas didn't suit him. Apart from playing golf, he found it boring. When his contract was up, he headed east to work as executive sous-chef at Ouest, Valenti's latest restaurant, in May of 2001. "That was our real gem," he says.

Sadly, the success would be overshadowed by the tragedy of 9/11 a few months later. "That really was a defining moment in my career," he says. They closed the restaurant, and Valenti immediately began working on a benefit for the families of those killed in the World Trade Center's Windows on the World restaurant. "Each chef called three more chefs, and they called three more, and we all decided that on Oct. 11, we would have a night around the country where restaurants can participate in a fundraiser."

"Windows of Hope" raised \$24 million.

Varricchio stayed on for eight years with Valenti, both at Ouest and at yet

another of his restaurants, 'Cesca. By then, Varricchio was living in the guest cottage of an estate in Greenwich, Conn., rising at 3:30 in the morning to drive into the city to work.

Midway through his tenure, he and Valenti came down to Vero Beach as guest chefs for the Treasure Coast Food and Wine Festival. It was in the months following the 2004 hurricanes; hotels were closed, so they stayed in the home of John and Susan McCord in John's Island. "Instantly they made us feel at home," he says. "We met more and more John's Island families, and the people were so gracious and so thankful. I've never been so nurtured by a group of people."

After two days of cooking, they were scheduled to fly back to New York. But a blizzard hit up north, and flights were cancelled. So their hosts invited ten couples and threw one more dinner party. "We just made random stuff and it was a hoot," he says. There was no hesitation when they were invited back the next year. "We said, hell, yeah, we'll go back down there."

That year, he hit it off with the event's planner, Allison Ritter, a newly-single mother of two, whose parents, Bob and Karen Ritter, have a home in John's Is-

land. They soon got into a schedule of Friday to Sunday visits. "I was heading out to LaGuardia every Friday afternoon and taking a 5:55 am flight out of West Palm to get back to work by 8 am Monday."

Nearly three years ago, he moved to Vero Beach. The couple married, and Varricchio went to work at the John's Island Beach Club. He also began scouting locations for a restaurant. At first, he was interested in the historic power plant in downtown Vero Beach, saying it has "the most beautiful bones of any space in Vero." But the project appeared to be too much delayed. Meanwhile, the \$30 million Ocean Park development next to Humiston Park began to take shape. Developer Steven Mulvey who headed up construction of the project for Flamevine Properties, had hoped to lease the space. But Varricchio's investors wanted to buy. Finally a deal was worked out: a reported \$1.5 million for the 4,700-square-foot space.

Allison Ritter Varricchio, in addition to managing three children, is Scott's partner in the business; in a downstairs storage space, amidst boxes of stemware and supplies, is a rolling playpen for baby Bobby. He has two sisters, Isa-

bella, 11, and Allie, 9.

"We're blessed with a beautiful location," he says, inviting in the crowd dispersing from the weekend St. Patrick's Day parade. Indeed, the view of the ocean rivals any in Vero, considerably closer to the surf than competing oceanfront restaurants. With weathered barn-board floors and airy pastel walls, Varricchio has created a space with echoes of Vero's historic Sexton properties, but with clean, minimalist lines and a gleaming open kitchen. Though he bills the place as "a community restaurant," it's clear it will be more than a burger joint.

As a line chef offered up a sample from an enormous bowl of pure crabmeat, brightly dressed with only lemon juice, zest and chives, and his signature braised short ribs with horseradish cream and mustard oil, Varricchio seemed poised for a hit, preparing for a pre-opening cocktail party last weekend.

The same night, Varricchio's father James Varricchio, a judge in the town of Enfield, arrived to see his son's first baby, five month old Bobby, and to see his son's first restaurant.

"We are very close," says Scott Varricchio. "I can't wait to see him."

Incoming Tide

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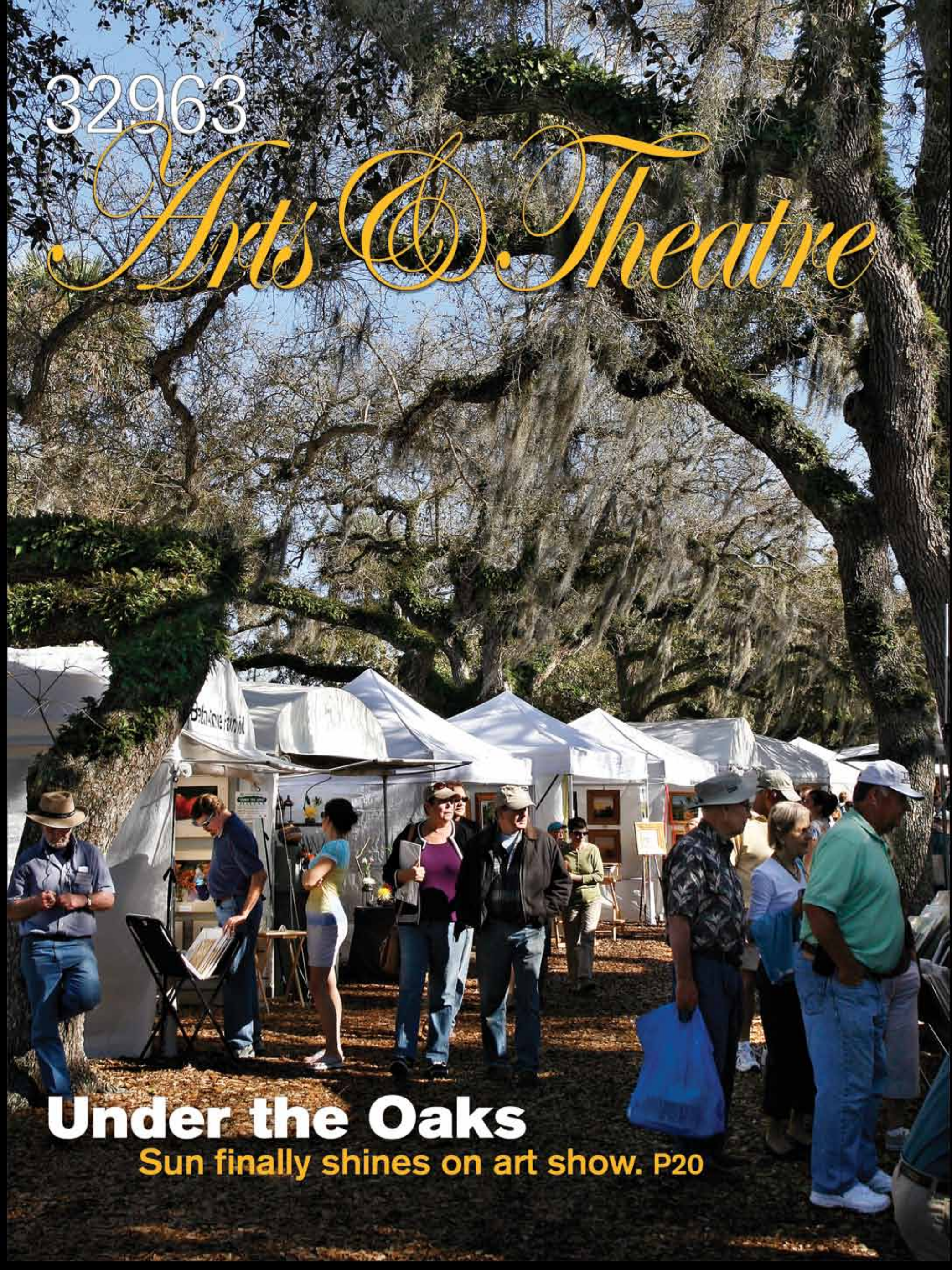
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Arts/Theatre

Big turnout for Under the Oaks despite rain

BY MARY SCHENKEL
COLUMNIST

Torrential downpours Thursday and Friday canceled the opening day of Under the Oaks at Riverside Park, but it didn't dampen the spirits of the Vero Beach Art Club committee members who hosted the show or the artists who participated.

The artists, sponsors and invited guests who gathered Friday night at the Vero Beach Museum of Art for the opening night buffet dinner had sloshed through ponds of water to get there, but umbrellas and soggy thoughts were all left at the door.

Artists for the show come from all over the United States and Canada, and one from as far away as Israel. Despite the rain, by Friday morning all but 35 of the 210 artists had checked in and were ready to go. Artists had helped one another set-up their tents and all thoughts were focused on better weather Saturday and Sunday.

And Mother Nature delivered just



Tom and Nancy Shaver admire the bronze sculptures by artist Carl Wagner. Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.

that, saving the show with two beautiful sunny days.

It's been quite an experience for first year co-chairs Chris Pierce and Sharon Sandel. "It was a total drowner today (Friday); we swam," said Sandel with

a resigned smile. "Some tents had 4 inches of water. This liquid sunshine doesn't cut it."

Lionel Ogilvie, a Vero Beach Art Club member, is the show manager. "When we hit the dirt, he takes over," said Pierce. And, because of extensive flooding in the park, his grounds people had to do some major rearranging, picking up whole tents and moving them to drier ground.

This is the 59th year for the highly regarded show and its superior status is maintained through its stringent rules and quality control. "Teams walk around the show, checking to make sure that only original

Under the Oaks Winners

ACRYLICS	
First	Maija Baynes
Second	Z.L. Feng
Third	Jon Smith
Merit Award	Zhou Yu
WATERCOLOR	
First	Sue Archer
Second	Steve Rogers
Third	Lori Jenkins
Merit Award	Carol Fitzsimmons
GRAPHICS/MIXED MEDIA/PASTEL	
First	Robin Frisella
Second	Helen Gotlib
Third	David Hunter
PHOTOGRAPHY	
First	Allen Teger
Second	George Rhodes
Third	Karen O'Hanlon
Merit Award	Robert Clibbon
Honorable Mention	Dave Archer
SCULPTURE	
First	James E. Barnes
Second	Claire May
Third	Richard Skelton
Merit Award	John C Sewall
POTTERY	
First	Patrick Dragon
Second	Tim Peters
Third	Lynn Fisher
Merit Award	Ken Jensen
Honorable Mention	Brenda McMahon



James Sgro, Kevin Hagerty and Amy Nichol check out some of Phil Skoczen's large, vibrant oil paintings.

works are hung. They can sell prints, but they must be clearly marked as such," said Pierce.

An extensive jury process whittled the group down to about one-third of the 600 artists who had applied. Under the Oaks features one-of-a-kind works in a variety of mediums, including oil, acrylic, watercolor, pottery, creative crafts, pastels, sculpture, photography and jewelry. About one-quarter of the artists are Vero Beach Art Club members, there are a few other local artists and the rest are from out of town.

Christina Tascon, Office Manager for the Vero Beach Art Club introduced me to Yoram Gal, an artist from Israel who had clearly traveled the greatest distance to participate in the show. When I asked how he first learned of Under the Oaks, Gal said

"I was in the United States doing a show and saw this one listed as a top show. I started this show in 2005 and won best watercolor; I've been allowed in every year since."

I spoke for a while with Vero Beach resident Lee G. Smith, who has participated in the show for the past eight years.

"I came from Cape Cod and had done outdoor shows there." Indicating that she generally does quite well at the show because of its high attendance Smith said with a smile, "I go home happy."

Even though it rained today, artists live for the beauty in life and that's what we're focused on," said Sandel. "We're looking to have a wonderful show going forward."

Fortunately for all involved, Saturday and Sunday proved to be picture perfect days with what appeared to be record-setting attendance. If the number of cars were any indication, it looked like all of Vero Beach had descended on the park.

As I arrived Sunday, I ran into David Wagner who had already visited many of the booths. "There's a fantastic variety of artists, an absolutely gorgeous setting and a perfect spring day - it's a great show. Congratulations to all involved."

We were joined by County Commis-

sioner Peter O'Bryan and his wife, Susan. The commissioner remarked on the perseverance of the artists. "It doesn't look like any dropped out. They hung in there and we appreciate them sticking it out."

Ann Donnelly told me a touching "rose story" behind the charming watercolor painting she had just purchased from Janet Rogers. Rogers won the Best in Show award for another of

her paintings.

"My husband, who passed away three years ago, gave me a rose when we first met and from then on we had roses everywhere, all the time -- at home, on cruises, in hotel rooms, no matter where we went, there were roses."

Their favorites were the peachy-pink colored Sonia Roses that were featured in the softly hued watercolor. "They have a sweet minty smell; they're lovely."

Gary and Donna Dulac were delighted to have won third prize in the

jewelry category; especially as this was their first show in 10 years.

"We couldn't remember how to set up the display, but I found an old picture of us at a show and we copied it. It was like riding a bike," Donna said with a laugh.

Local artist Judy Burgarella was having a good show and remarked that the rain had made it an interesting show.

"It's been a bonding experience. People who do tent shows are used to rolling with the punches.

"Artists are happy people and they find joy in everything they do."

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Arts/Theatre

Seeing art through the eyes of Joel Johnson

BY L. L. ANGELL
COLUMNIST

Fate can touch a person, when he's young, and in a single electrifying moment, change his life forever.

That's what happened in Edinburgh, Scotland when the artist Joel Johnson was on a U.S. amateur basketball team, playing exhibition games throughout Europe. While sightseeing with his coach and teammates, Johnson wandered into the National Gallery of Art.

"I was running all over the place, looking at paintings by Rembrandt and El Greco. I thought it was fantastic," says Johnson. "My teammates were all just sitting there. I said, 'What's the matter guys, are you tired or something?'"

Throughout the rest of the tour, Johnson was the only player to visit the different cities' museums. "My coach told me, 'I know I should be interested, Joel, but I'm just not.'"

Johnson, on the other hand, was so riveted that he decided to become an



"After the Rain-Venice", 16 x 16 1/2, watercolor 2008

artist, then and there. Quite simply, the experience changed his life.

Today, at 59, Johnson is a nationally recognized watercolor artist. His painting, "Venetian Red" is currently in the 7th Biennial National Art Exhibition, a juried exhibit in Punta Gorda. He will be one of six artists in a group

exhibition, Waves of Motion, at the A.E. Backus Gallery in Ft. Pierce, April 14 to May 15. In 2005, Johnson won awards at the International Watermedia XIV Exhibition and the American Watercolor Association's National Watercolor Exhibition.

His paintings are all about light. "What inspires me is what I end up seeing. Art is a way of seeing. I'm looking for the light," he says. "That's the key to my work."

Once he has found an image where light and shadow are conveying a mood, the work becomes an internalized process. It may take years for a particular image to germinate, he says. Other times, something speaks to him quickly and he begins drawing right away.

For the past 30 years, Johnson has lived and worked as a full-time artist. Happily, Johnson never experiences a block or inability to paint. He is al-

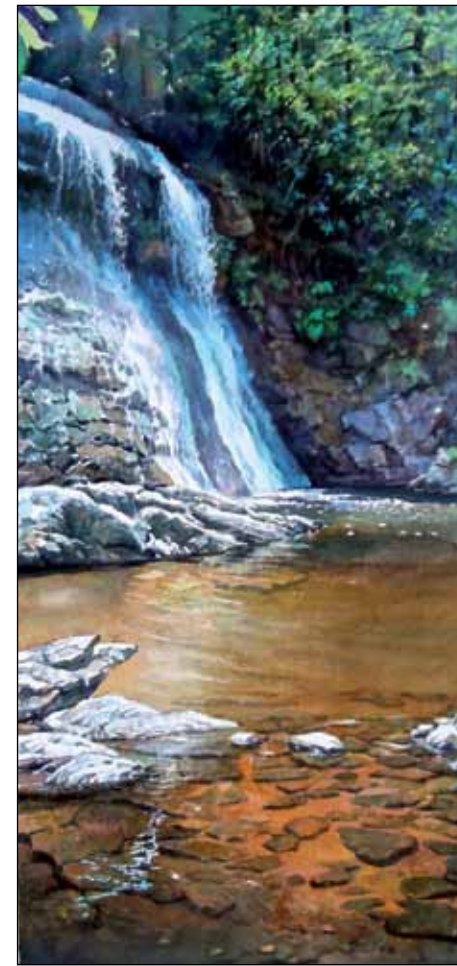


Bridge Reflections Venice, 13 x 9, watercolor 2009

ways moving towards the next work.

Johnson calls his home studio a sanctuary, working from a seated po-

Arts/Theatre



"Waterfall", 25 x 12 inches, watercolor, 2009

sition when he paints and draws as opposed to at an easel. He listens to classical music, finding it inspirational as it provides "a tonal quality that ironically creates a quiet space."

The music separates Johnson from the physical realm of day-to-day life and helps transport him to the mental realm where he can create.

Not that his work is relaxing. His workday includes time spent planning, drawing out images, actually painting, and the business end of the art world.

As a way of getting out of the studio, Johnson has taught at the Vero Beach Museum of Art for the past four years, since moving here with his wife, Denise, from Vail Valley, Colorado to a home near St. Edward's Upper School.

"We moved here to be nearer Denise's family," says Johnson. "A friend had told me about Vero. The art museum is a big draw. We wouldn't have moved here if it were not such a good one."

Johnson will teach Intermediate Watercolor Studio in the museum's spring term plus a three-day workshop titled Reflections in Watercolor.

Much of his work features water, its luminosity, translucence and movement conveyed in scenes from waterfalls to Venice. But he is equally masterful at capturing the light and shadow, as in his epic "San Xavier" painting of the church shows an extraordinarily challenging aerial perspective.

Johnson's paintings seem distinc-

tively of the American West, with an expansiveness and presence that hold the viewer.

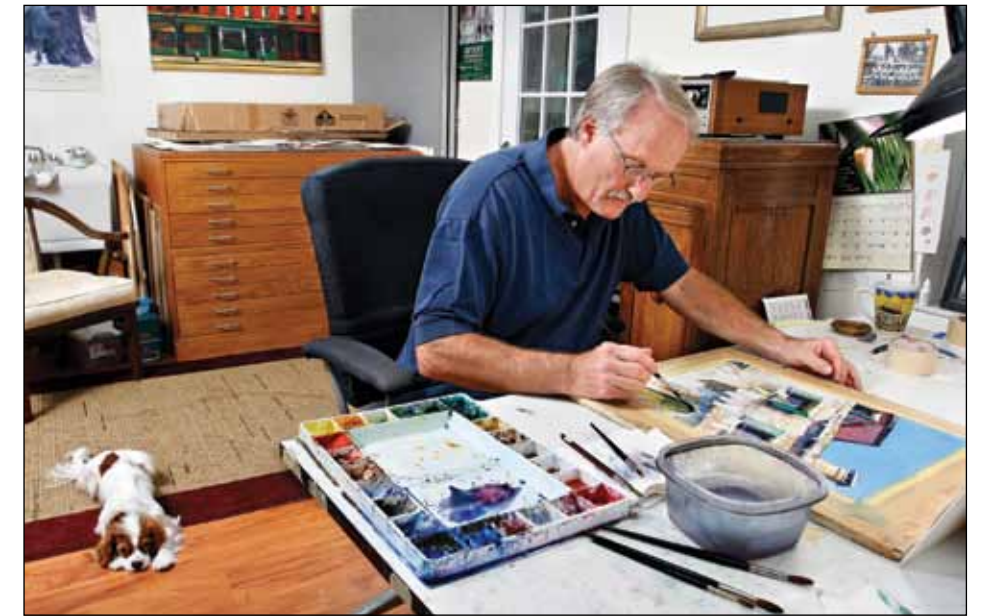
He has come a long way since his early days, as an art student in Salt Lake City. "I used to draw portraits of people in bars and they'd pay me \$20," he says.

Today Johnson divides his work into categories: architectural still-lives, European and figurative paintings, landscapes and portraits. "If you're going to make a living at this, you can't wait for the mood to inspire you. You have to be self-motivated," says Johnson. "The making of money is a prime motivator, but it's not the only reason to paint."

Says Johnson, "It is in the process of creating that we transcend the object, and express those feelings that represent the deeper essence of who we are."

His classes at the museum are very popular and fill quickly.

Johnson laments that a lot of today's art doesn't speak to the people because it has become merely decorative.



Joel Johnson works on one of his watercolor paintings at his home studio.

Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.

"It's there like elevator music," says Johnson.

"Life is too short to try to figure out what other people think," he says. "In my mind it's not a question of, will it

sell, or will it be liked?" he says.

Johnson will teach Intermediate Watercolor in spring term at the Vero Beach Museum of Art, which begins March 23rd. 772-231-0707.

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Arts/Theatre

Robertson still seeks name recognition for ACO

MICHELLE GENZ
STAFF WRITER

Like the two towns that host him, the greatest challenge facing Atlantic Classical Orchestra's music director Stewart Robertson is figuring out how to make something big out of something small. Just as the towns of Vero Beach and Stuart have made big names for themselves as small towns, so must Robertson muster name recognition for his orchestra while maintaining the very intimacy that makes hearing it so unique.

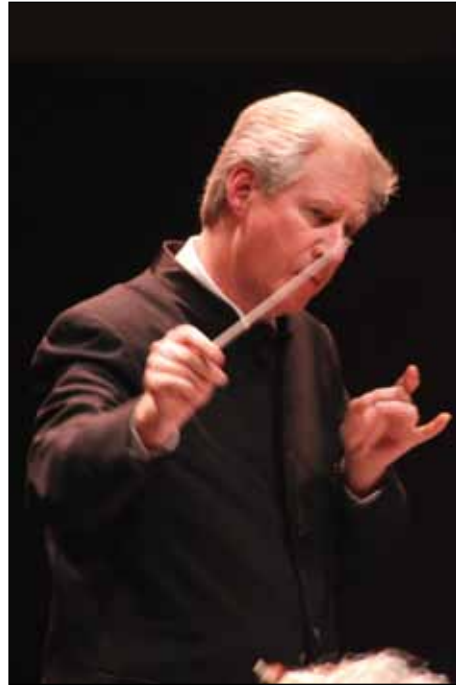
It frustrates him that such a high-caliber group still elicits low-name recognition. "It's a little bit of a frustration to me that we have this really first-rate chamber orchestra in the community and it's not really very well known," he says. "People are still saying, 'Atlantic what?'"

Stepping onto the stage of intimate venues in both places – Stuart's Lyric Theatre and in Vero, the Waxlax Center at St. Edward's School, he master-

fully guides a cluster of musicians for an audience that glows with pride of place. Like passers-by on small-town sidewalks, the faces on stage become familiar to the audience, close enough to see every wince and grin and tapping toe. Talent quickly comes to the fore, and favorites emerge from one performance to the next.

And if proximity of the performers were not enough to cement the music in listeners' minds, Robertson goes another step. He speaks. Immediately before each performance, he offers a lecture to the audience, particularly about any new music he may be introducing. In addition, this year, for the first time, he has offered two-hour seminars at the local campuses of Indian River State College. "It's been so successful that we're doing it next year," says Robertson.

Back in 2004, when Robertson first met with the board of the Atlantic Classical Orchestra, he clearly struck the right chord. His was a world-class resume, with a Grammy nomination



Atlantic Classical Orchestra's music director Stewart Robertson

to boot. The 20-year-old professional orchestra was looking to replace its founder and conductor Andy McMullan, who was retiring. Out the blue, Robertson made it known he was interested. The local group could not have been more pleased: a musician of Robertson's stature was nearly unimaginable for the small-town orchestra.

Since then, progress has continued, though marketing is still a major effort.

"I think we're really gaining momentum," he says. "The audience is recognizing the orchestra's personality."

Key to that personality is its size. ACO is a chamber orchestra – albeit a large one. It plays pieces that are written for a far smaller number of musicians than a full symphony orchestra.

With a permanent home in Carmel Valley, Calif., and a castle in Scot-

land as well, Robertson has scored an eclectic life for himself. At 62, he and his wife of 38 years, Meryl, will wrap up the season here next week with a final concert, before heading off to Scotland for three weeks, then to Fort Worth to conduct an opera in late May, off to New York for his usual summer stint at Glimmerglass and finally San Jose in September, to stage the West Coast premier of a contemporary opera, "Anna Karenina."

By then he should know if his winter home next year will be Vero Beach. This year, he rented an apartment in Stuart, concentrating on promoting the ACO's presence there. Stuart recently expanded its ACO audience by adding a late afternoon performance on the same day as its regular evening concert.

Robertson's career had its genesis at home in Glasgow, Scotland, listening to his accountant father play piano by ear. Eventually Robertson asked to take piano lessons. But when football became more interesting than practicing scales, his father told him if he didn't practice, he would stop paying for his lessons.

"I called his bluff, and lost." Music fell to the wayside until high school, when a friend who played the violin urged him to join the school orchestra. Robertson went to sign up, and the teacher auditioned him by having him play the piano. "I managed to play the slow movement of Beethoven's 'Moonlight Sonata,'" Robertson says. "Managed" may have been an understatement. The teacher was so impressed that he told Stewart he could join the orchestra, but only if he resumed his piano studies.

"I must have had some native ability," he says. "But I had to come crawling back to my dad and ask him for lessons again, and promise to practice. That teacher did me a huge favor, because I was very undisciplined and very unfocused."

At 17, he entered the Royal Scottish Academy of Music, studying piano, composition and conducting. After graduation, his mother insisted he earn a degree in education from Bristol University. "It was a bit of a pact with the devil," he says, in order to get them to continue helping pay for his education. "My mother always said if you're going to study music, you have to have a fallback position."

As it turns out, he never needed one. Robertson went on to conduct at the opera houses of Cologne and Zurich and Scottish Opera, where he became music director of the touring company.

Arts/Theatre

base ever since. His wife Meryl developed an interest in modern dance and ballet, and has worked with the dance department at the Hidden Valley Institute of the Performing Arts there.

Meryl Robertson also manages Robertson's elaborate travel arrangements.

It is his reputation in recording circles that could prove most useful in ACO's efforts to gain recognition as a "world-class orchestra," as it lately likes to bill itself. Robertson has recorded on four major labels; his recording of Sir Richard Rodney Ben-

nett's opera "The Mines of Sulphur" was nominated for a Grammy in 2007.

"Recording is a wonderful intellectual exercise," he says. "It's a big rehearsal-performance game. You have to be able to rehearse quickly, to get things to maximum performance very quickly."

In some cases, the works he has recorded are the only recordings ever made.

If he is successful in arranging a recording with ACO, the exposure could be invaluable for expanding the orchestra's reputation. "It's a way of

cataloguing your work, validating it," he says. "People can touch it, they can hold it, they can listen to it. It's a burning ambition of mine to have ACO represented in a record catalogue."

Beyond ACO's musicianship, there is an esprit de corps at ACO that Robertson says is rare among orchestras these days. "They have an absolutely unique spirit. Making music is a joy for them."

ACO's final performances of the season are March 25 in Vero Beach, and March 26 in Stuart. Visit www.aco-music.org for more information.

LOCAL LEADERS AND RESIDENTS ARE HELPING BUILD A STRONGER INDIAN RIVER COMMUNITY THROUGH DONOR-DRIVEN PHILANTHROPY

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Sitting, l-r Rebecca Allen; Ann Marie McCrystal; Susan R. Hopkins; Dace B. Stubbs. Standing, l-r William L. Frick; Edward Michael; Scott E. Alexander; Kerry A. Bartlett, Executive Director; Samuel A. Block; Alma Lee Loy; David C. Brown; Henry (Buzzy) Wurzer; and, Richard G. McDermott.

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Arts/Theatre

Violinist Elmar Oliveira lights up the Waxlax



American solo violinist Elmar Oliveira

BY RICHARD ARMITAGE
COLUMNIST

If there was any doubt that American solo violinist Elmar Oliveira has a direct connection to Beethoven, it was put to the test on Thursday night at St. Edward's School's Waxlax Center for the Performing Arts as the fortunate audience, in from the semi-flooded parking lot, assembled to hear one of the greatest musical events ever performed in Vero Beach.

The mother of all violin concertos, Beethoven's magnificent D Major, fabled for its difficulty, was the main event of the evening.

Despite its reputation as a violin soloist's major career maker or breaker, Oliveira delivered it flawlessly to an awestruck audience.

The first movement begins as if it is a symphony, until the solo violin introduces itself, quietly but insistently, with the same invention.

A musical dialog follows, perhaps an argument as to who's in charge, until the five drum taps that opened the work repeat as if to command that the violin will be the leader.

The thematic discourse continues until the long cadenza at the end of the first movement.

There, the violinist must prove mastery of his instrument despite Beethoven's demands for beauty, almost as if the very difficulty he imposes impedes its full achievement.

At the start of the second move-

ment, the concert hall was pin-drop quiet, the audience clearly realizing it was witnessing something extraordinary.

The second movement, a largo of remarkable beauty, let the orchestra back in the competition for leadership, while the violin embellished the theme with graceful ornaments of mind-bending virtuosity.

The third movement followed the second with no interruption.

Based on a dance-like theme, the third movement was a rondo, with violin and orchestra taking turns leading and following.

The simple theme was repeated a number of times, frequently developing the energy that would usher in the work's conclusion, only to relapse into another variation, to the audience's delight.

In the end, the violin again asserts its dominance and closes with unsurpassed bravura.

The Waxlax audience leapt to its feet in a real standing ovation for the soloist and orchestra who worked so hard together to bring about this masterpiece.

The display of admiration required four or perhaps five curtain calls to be adequately expressed, and that probably wasn't enough given the depth and precision of the performance.

Elmar Oliveira and the members of the ACO had to have left the stage knowing that no orchestra and soloist could have performed better.

Certainly the audience seemed to think so.

Before the intermission, the orchestra played two pieces of 20th century music also noted for their difficulty

and demands. The first was Michael Torke's "Adjustable Wrench," described as a defining example of post-minimalist style. The music was fugal in construction and circular in structure.

The second was Darius Milhaud's "La Creation du Monde," a jazz-inspired work that produced a perception of the classical.

Though difficult to understand, the audience apparently enjoyed it thoroughly as did the orchestra in playing it.

The Series IV Concert, the last of this season, will be March 25 at the Waxlax Center.

The program will include a finished version of Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony, Schumann's Piano Concerto in A Minor with Tom Poster as soloist, and Paul Dooley's Pomo Canyon air.

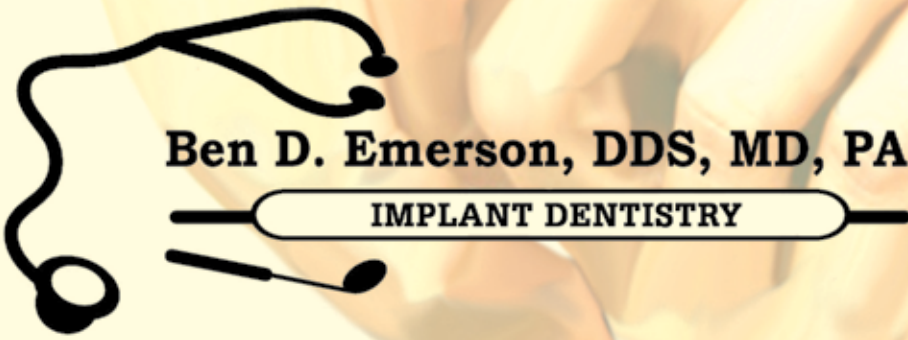
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HEALTH

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MRSA

'Superbug' is growing concern

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Health

'Superbugs' challenging schools, gyms, hospitals

BY SANDRA RAWLS
COLUMNIST

Former Beachland Elementary first grade teacher Debbie Green remembers the summer day in 2007 when she learned her trim and athletic 20-year-old-son was battling a frightening infection that seemed to come out of nowhere.

"I was going to my own retirement party when I got the call he was at the hospital. It was very scary," said Green of son Kevin's infection.

A bump on the point of his elbow, likely from a small cut he didn't know he had, was found to have an aggressive staph infection. Weeks of treatment with a cocktail of antibiotics were needed to rid of the aggressive organism.

Such staph infections are growing in frequency and aggressiveness, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Almost unheard of some 30 years ago, drug-resistant bacteria are more common, creating an



Ashleigh Spero wipes down exercise equipment at Quail Valley River Club to ensure sanitary conditions for exercisers.
Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.

urgency among health care providers, schools, health clubs – virtually anywhere people congregate in numbers. Staphylococcus or staph includes

32 species of bacteria that are ubiquitous in the environment. Most live harmlessly on the skin and mucous membranes of humans and other or-

ganisms. MRSA is any strain of Staphylococcus aureus that has become resistant to large groups of antibiotics. Any break in the skin can be at risk for a MRSA infection.

Drug resistant bacteria. The words bring a chill, conjuring up stories of "flesh eating" organisms that kill a third of those who contract them, and ever-evolving pathogens that elude treatment. The most common these days is MRSA, which became the bug of the moment several years ago after it began spreading in gyms, health clubs and school, creating skin infections that were sometimes difficult to treat by common drugs.

These bugs continue to be aggressive, says Dr. Laurie Melton a Vero Beach infectious disease specialist.

"I see five or six cases of infection with strong staph or MRSA very day," she says. "This type of infection is very virulent and can move rapidly. About 30 percent of the population is carrying it around on their skin and don't know it."

Health

The first community-acquired MRSA began to appear in the mid-1990s from Australia, New Zealand, the United States, the United Kingdom, France and Canada. These new strains have quickly become the most common cause of cultured skin infections in persons seeking emergency medical care in urban areas of the United States.

Overuse of long-established drugs like penicillin is often mentioned in the development of stronger germs. The livestock industry in particular is under fire for the practice of employing large amount of antibiotics, which we in turn consume, leading to drug resistance in the bacteria that survive.

"The drug companies are not creating the new generation of drugs," said Melton, who regularly attends confer-



Infectious disease doctor Laurie Melton

ences on infectious organisms. "The bugs are smart. They evolve. It takes a great deal of time and money to do the research and development to create a new antibiotic, and the return is not

so great for the drug companies who have to give lots of it away."

Health clubs, business offices, school gyms, nursing homes and hospitals are all under scrutiny for safe

practices.

The Quail Valley fitness club has recently added another full-time cleaner to its already thorough daily regimen to make sure no infectious

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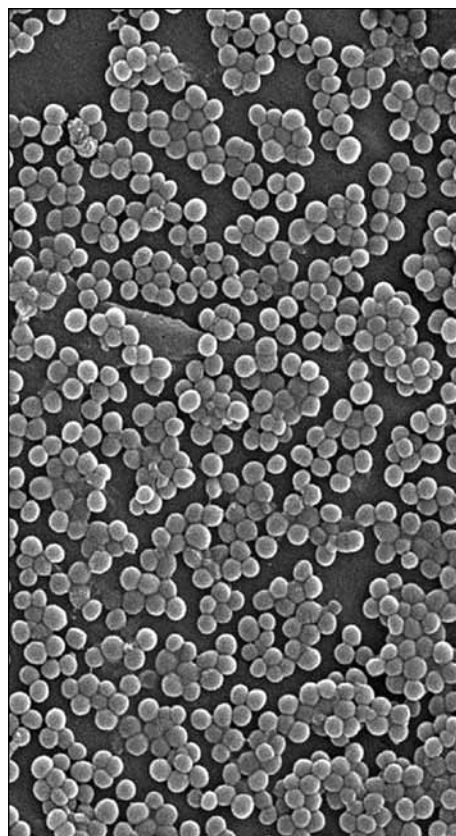


Health

How to spot a staph infection

Most staph infections, including MRSA, will look like a bump or infected area on the skin. You should look for skin that is:

- Red
- Swollen
- Painful
- Warm to the touch
- Full of pus or other drainage
- Accompanied by a fever



SEM micrograph of MRSA.

germ agents are lurking in sparkling corners or on equipment.

Kim Palmer, fitness club manager at the Moorings, describes additional stations for hand sanitizers that been have installed in the past year, and the frequent wipe downs of equipment and mats.

The Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta suggests using towels as germ barriers in all gyms and fitness clubs.

"We have an outstanding daily service for towels and personal wipes for hands and equipment available through the club," Palmer said. "We provide an environment for our members that's as germ-free as possi-

ble. We also have twice weekly cleaning of the entire fitness area."

And there's no denying the bad bugs are out there. The CDC says MRSA accounted for only 2 percent of total reported staph infections in 1974, but by 2004 the number had risen to 63 percent, 20 percent of which were fatal.

The majority of these were health care related deaths of persons who were very ill or in long-term care. Healthcare-related MRSA infection has become a recognized group of drug resistant staph strains. It now

The CDC says MRSA accounted for only 2 percent of total reported staph infections in 1974, but by 2004 the number had risen to 63 percent, 20 percent of which were fatal.

kills about 18,000 Americans annually, mostly in hospital settings.

Patricia Gould, manager of Infec-

tion Control and Employee Health at Indian River Medical Center describes the thorough processes employed to isolate and contain patient infections.

"We have increased screening of patients. Anyone with MRSA is isolated and a computer alert goes in their file for the future. We have the hand washing and alcohol wipes in halls, elevators and posted information all around the hospital. We educate all family members and do nasal screens for all patients in at-risk groups," she says, referring to the well known hab-

Health

Operating rooms around the country have taken steps to improve infection control. Indian River Medical Center practices pre-admittance preparation for patients scheduled for surgery. Before ever coming to the hospital, surgery patients wash according to instructions the night and morning before with specified detergents and often betadine.

it of germs hiding out in the warm, wet environment of the human nose.

She also describes their system of private rooms only and the lack of carpet anywhere in the hospital which make the facility less germ-friendly.

Operating rooms around the country have taken steps to improve infection control. Indian River Medical Center practices pre-admittance preparation for patients who are scheduled for surgery.

Before coming to the hospital, surgery patients wash according to

instructions the night and morning before with specified detergents and often betadine.

Incidences of healthy persons who have not had recent hospital stays have risen almost as fast as those contracted in hospital settings, however. By 2007, the Journal of the American Medical Association found 15 percent of MRSA cases were in healthy persons not exposed to healthcare situations. These cases are now called community acquired cases. These cases appear at Welton's office and at Indian River Medical Center.

The first community-acquired MRSA began to appear in the mid-1990s from Australia, New Zealand, the United States, the United Kingdom, France and Canada. These new strains have quickly become the most common cause of cultured skin infections in persons seeking emergency medical care in urban areas of the United States.

Around Vero Beach, steps are being taken to keep the bad bugs away. Large public fitness clubs like Christ's Family Fitness face a bigger challenge than private clubs due to fre-

Anyone with a break in their skin can be infected, so what's the best way to prevent a MRSA infection?

• Cover the skin break, cut or wound with a bandage so the staph bacteria can't get in.

• If you have an open wound, wash it daily with soap and water.

• If you are engaged in contact sports or other close contact with people in a way that might introduce infection to the wound, make sure you shower and wash those areas that have been in contact with others.

• Don't share towels, razors or other implements that might transmit the bacteria to your skin.

• Wash your hands frequently.

• Avoid others with a known staph infection, and tell others if you have one.

• Wash and dry all clothing, towels and bed linens in hot water if they come in contact with staph bacteria.

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Health

quently changing members, and the fact that children and adults share facilities.

Owner Steve Wade introduced additional measures to prevent exposure to infectious agents in October.

"When the news of Swine Flu was looking bad in the fall, we added more precautions.

"Doorknobs, doors, handles, everything is cleaned daily. We encourage use of double towels for barriers on equipment and the equipment is cleaned daily. We have posted the

need to cover your mouth when coughing, have gels and soaps available everywhere."

"We took what the CDC and our trade organization, the International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association recommended and combined them. We take it all seriously."

St. Edward's School, also fully engaged with precautions for Swine Flu, has added extra cleaning of their gym and cafeteria.

"And we had special assemblies at the upper and lower schools about



Mueller Hinton agar showing MRSA resistant to oxacillin disk.

how infections are spread," says Elizabeth Thomason. "Our whole student body and staff are very aware of germ control issues, and we've been very successful."

For the Green's, Kevin's experience was enough to make them fully aware of the need for precautions.

"We learned how important it is to notice any small cut or tear in the skin," says Kevin's dad, Michael Green.

"We saw the bump had gotten larger and was warm to the touch, but we had no idea it might be this serious. We were lucky."

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INSIGHT

MARCH 2010, ISSUE 12

P.34

Why we must fire bad teachers

Why we must fire bad teachers

The relative decline of American education at the elementary- and high-school levels has long been a national embarrassment as well as a threat to the nation's future. Once upon a time, American students tested better than any other students in the world. Now, ranked against European schoolchildren, America does about as well as Lithuania, behind at least 10 other nations.

Within the United States, the achievement gap between white students and poor and minority students stubbornly persists—and as the population of disadvantaged students grows, overall scores continue to sag.

For much of this time—roughly the last half century—professional educators believed that if they could only find the right pedagogy, the right method of instruction, all would be well. They tried New Math, open classrooms, Whole Language—but nothing seemed to achieve significant or lasting improvements.

Yet in recent years researchers have discovered something that may seem obvious, but for many rea-

sons was overlooked or denied. What really makes a difference, what matters more than the class size or the textbook, the teaching method or the technology, or even the curriculum, is the quality of the teacher.

Much of the ability to teach is innate—an ability to inspire young minds as well as control unruly classrooms that some people instinctively possess (and some people definitely do not). Teaching can be taught, to some degree, but not the way many graduate schools of education do it, with a lot of insipid or marginally relevant theorizing and pedagogy.

In any case the research shows that within about five years, you can generally tell who is a good teacher and who is not.

It is also true and unfortunate that often the weakest teachers are relegated to teaching the neediest students. For these children, teachers can be make or break. “The research shows that kids who have two, three, four strong teachers in a row will eventually excel, no matter what their background, while kids who have even two weak teachers in a row will never recover,” says Kati Haycock of the

Education Trust and coauthor of the 2006 study “Teaching Inequality: How Poor and Minority Students Are Shortchanged on Teacher Quality.”

Nothing, then, is more important than hiring good teachers and firing bad ones.

But here is the rub. Although many teachers are caring and selfless, teaching in public schools has not always attracted the best and the brightest. There once was a time when teaching (along with nursing) was one of the few jobs not denied to women and minorities. But with social progress, many talented women and minorities chose other and more highly compensated fields.

One recent review of the evidence by McKinsey & Co., the management consulting firm, showed that most schoolteachers are recruited from the bottom third of college-bound high-school students. (Finland takes the top 10 percent.)

At the same time, the teachers' unions have become more and more powerful. In most states, after two or three years, teachers are given lifetime tenure. It is almost impossible to fire them.

In New York City in 2008, three out of 30,000 tenured teachers were dismissed for cause. The statistics are just as eye-popping in other cities. The percentage of teachers dismissed for poor performance in Chicago between 2005 and 2008 (the most recent figures available) was 0.1 percent. In Akron, Ohio, zero percent.

In Indian River County in the past two years, we could find no evidence of a teacher being let go for poor classroom performance, though at least two teachers in the last two years have been removed from the classroom for improper contact with students. (One teacher was charged with sexually molesting a 15-year-old Sebastian River High School student and gave up his teacher's license as part of a plea deal to avoid going to trial, the other was dismissed for striking a student at the Alternative Education Center.)

Beth Weatherstone, president of the Indian River County Education Association, which represents the teachers in the district, said under the current system principals have the right through the first three years to weed out teachers who are not cut out for the classroom. In the state-mandated

system, teachers are on probation their first 97 days and may be let go for any reason.

Teachers are then offered one-year contracts for their second and third years, leaving the school district the option of hiring them back or not. Teachers are monitored throughout the year by administrative staff and are evaluated at the end of the year to determine if they have a future in teaching. However, after the probationary period has been met, they are given a professional services contract and can only be let go for cause.

While Weatherstone insists procedures are set out in the contract for firing a poor teacher, in no other socially significant profession are the workers so insulated from accountability. The responsibility does not just fall on the unions. Many principals don't even try to weed out the poor performers (or they transfer them to other schools in what's been dubbed the “dance of the lemons”). Year after year, about 99 percent of all teachers in the United States are rated “satisfactory” by their school systems; firing a teacher invites a costly court battle with the local union.

Over time, many schools have succumbed to a defeatist mindset. The problem is not the teachers, went the thinking—it's the parents (or absence of parents); it's society with all its distractions and pathologies; it's the kids themselves. Not much can be done, really, except to keep the assembly line moving.

In the past two decades, some schools have sprung up that defy and refute what former president George W. Bush memorably called “the soft bigotry of low expectations.” Generally operating outside of school bureaucracies as charter schools, programs like KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program) have produced inner-city schools with high graduation rates (85 percent). There are now 82 KIPP schools in 19 states and the District of Columbia, and, routinely, they far outperform the local public schools.

KIPP schools require longer school days and a longer school year, but their greatest advantage is better teaching.

It takes a certain kind of teacher to succeed at a KIPP school or at other successful charter programs, like YES Prep. KIPP teachers carry cell phones so

students can call them at any time. The dedication required makes for high burnout rates. It may be a calling for only the chosen few.

Yet those few are multiplying. About 20 years ago, a Princeton senior named Wendy Kopp wrote her senior thesis proposing an organization to draw graduates from elite schools into teaching poor kids. Her idea was to hire them for just a couple of years, and then let them move on to Wall Street or wherever. Today, Teach for America sends about 4,100 grads, many from Ivy League colleges, into inner-city schools every year.

Some (about 8 percent) can't hack it, but most (about 61 percent) stay in teaching after their demanding two-year tours. Two thirds of TFA's 17,000 alumni are still involved in education and have become the core of a reform movement that is having real impact.

It is difficult to dislodge the educational establishment. In New Orleans, a hurricane was required: since Katrina, New Orleans has made more educational progress than any other city, largely because the public-school system was wiped out. Using non-union charter schools, New Orleans has been able to measure teacher performance in ways that the

teachers' unions have long and bitterly resisted.

Under a new Louisiana law, New Orleans can track which ed schools produce the best teachers, forcing long-needed changes in ed-school curricula. (The school system of Detroit is just as broken as New Orleans's was before the storm—but stuck with largely the same administrators, the same unions, and the same number of kids, and it has been unable to make any progress.)

The teachers' unions—the National Education Association (3.2 million members) and the American Federation of Teachers (1.4 million members)—are major players in the Democratic Party at the national and local levels. So it is extremely significant—a sign of the changing times—that the Obama administration has taken them on. Education Secretary Arne Duncan is dangling money as an incentive for state legislatures to weaken the grip of the teachers' unions.

To compete for \$4.3 billion in federal aid under the Race to the Top program, states get extra points for getting rid of caps on the number of charter schools (a union favorite, since charter schools are often nonunion) and allowing student scores to be used in teacher evaluations.

IRCEA's Weatherstone sees warning signs on the horizon for the local teacher's union in Tallahassee in a bill working its way through the current Legislative session. Senate Bill 6 would extend teacher's probationary contracts to five years and make the pacts annual after that, thereby eliminating the professional service contract. The bill would also tie teachers' pay to student semester-ending test scores.

The bill has already cleared a Senate Education panel, and the teacher's union has started airing television commercials against the proposed changes.

Measuring teacher performance based in part on the test scores of their pupils would seem to be a no-brainer. New Orleans uses student scores to measure teacher effectiveness. But it's prohibited by law for tenure decisions in states like New York, where the teachers' union has long been powerful.

It will take a quiet revolution to improve American schools. Some educational experts have noticed an uptick in the academic quality of new teachers, at least at the high-school level, possibly because the recession has limited other job opportunities. One of the unions, the AFT under Randi Weingarten, seems to realize that sheer obstructionism won't work.

"One of the most hopeful things I've seen is that the union people don't want to spend so much time defending the not-so-good teachers anymore. I think the pressure of accountability is paying off," says Haycock of the Education Trust. "They know they will be held responsible if they are defending teachers who aren't any good."

Some teachers resent the reform movement as a bunch of elitists denigrating loyal and hardworking teachers—of whom, of course, there are many. But others welcome a boost in status that would come with higher standards.

"You know, the Marine Corps never has any problem meeting its enlistment goals, because it's an elite corps, and people want to be part of something that is seen as the best," says Daniel Weisberg, general counsel of The New Teacher Project and coauthor of "The Widget Effect," a critique of teacher-evaluation programs. In Europe, where teachers enjoy more social prestige and higher salaries, schools have no trouble attracting new teachers with strong academic records.

Before the American public-education system can regain its lost crown as the envy of the world, local politicians and school administrators will have to step up. At Central Falls High School in Rhode Island, half the students drop out of school, and proficiency in math measured by state exams stands at a pitiful 7 percent among 11th graders.

Under state pressure, the local superintendent, Frances Gallo, tried to improve scores by requiring teachers to work 25 minutes longer each a day, eat lunch with students once a week, and agree to be evaluated by a third party. The teachers, who make about \$75,000 a year, far more than average in this depressed town, balked. They wanted another \$90 an hour.

So Gallo took a brave and astonishing step: she recommended firing all 74 teachers. Her boldness was praised by Education Secretary Duncan—and supported by President Obama. The teachers' union initially squawked that everyone was unfairly "blaming the teachers," but then last week backed off under a storm of media pressure and accepted the new rules requiring teachers to spend more time with the students.

The Central Falls High story was a notable breakthrough, but there is a long way to go. The media are beginning to root out the more outrageous examples: last year the *Los Angeles Times* ran a long series

documenting the unwillingness of the education bureaucracy to fire bad teachers (like the one who told a student who attempted suicide to "carve deeper next time" and another who kept a stash of pornography and cocaine at school; both are still teaching).

The Indianapolis Star reported how Lawrence Township schools had quietly laid off—with generous cash settlements and secrecy agreements—a teacher

accused of sexually assaulting a student; another accused of touching students and taking photos of female students; another accused of kissing a high-school student; and a fourth with a 20-year history of complaints about injuring and harassing students, including a 1992 rape allegation.

At the time the story ran last summer, all four teachers still held active teaching licenses. While

these horror stories are sensational, what's also disturbing is the immunity enjoyed by the thousands of teachers who let down their students in more ordinary ways. Many more teachers are overworked, underpaid, and underappreciated. Maybe they'd get more respect if the truly bad teachers were let go.

Vero Beach 32963 staff writer Ian M. Love contributed to this story. ●

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Israel-Palestinian talks: More than a mere charade?

It was a wretched beginning to what had been hailed as the hopeful resumption of peace talks, albeit indirect ones, between the Israelis and Palestinians under the aegis of an American mediator.

Barely had America's vice president, Joe Biden, begun a visit to Israel to herald a new era of compromise and goodwill than it was announced that 1,600 houses would be built for Jewish settlers on the Israeli-annexed eastern rim of Jerusalem that Palestinians see as part of their future capital.

Palestinians were united in fury. Peace-making outsiders viewed the action as the illest of omens. Biden sharply "condemned" it as "precisely the kind of step that undermines the trust we need right now."

A sheepish-looking Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel's prime minister, let his aides claim lamely that he had been unaware of the decision. The next day his minister of interior apologized, conceding that the timing was unfortunate, but said that the announcement was merely a "routine, technical" step. Unsurprisingly, all this only increased skepticism about the promised new round of talks.

Netanyahu's own intentions are still fuzzy. His embrace of the notion that Israel and Palestine should exist side by side, professed in a speech

at Bar Ilan University last June, is still hedged with conditions that, in many eyes, suggest it was a tactical ploy rather than a bid for a durable deal.

Though embarrassed by the interior ministry's aired intention to build Jewish houses in East Jerusalem,



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

he did nothing to countermand it or to scold the minister. Nor has he seriously reined in Jerusalem's blustery mayor, Nir Barkat, who has also been encouraging Jewish settlement in previously all-Palestinian areas.

It is unclear how much the "proximity" talks will differ from the recent efforts of America's dogged envoy, George Mitchell, who has been shuttling between the parties for more than a year.

Meetings will now be held between each of the two sides and the Americans, one at a time, but not yet directly between the main pair. Some Israelis hint that negotiations could take place in the same building but in different rooms.

Worse for the Palestinians, Netanyahu apparently wrung an assurance from the Americans (before Biden's embarrassment) that concessions offered by his predecessor, Ehud Olmert, to the Palestinians' president, Mahmoud Abbas, would not mark the point of departure for new negotiations.

Instead, the parties will go back to the long-dormant "road map" laid out by George Bush seven years ago. Israel, then led by Ariel Sharon, broadly accepted it but with a long list of reservations.

President Shimon Peres, a former prime minister, has been urging Netanyahu to be flexible and, as a sign of seriousness, to dump some of his hard-line coalition partners and bring into government the centrist Kadima Party. That is led by a former foreign minister, Tzipi Livni, who made some modest headway in previous talks with the Palestinians. This could yet happen. Without it, almost no one expects much if any progress.

For his part, Abbas fears that Netanyahu lacks the desire and the Americans the clout to bring about two states. The Palestinian leader is conscious of his own weakness.

His first demand is that Israel stop Jewish settlement-building in East Jerusalem. But privately he may think that, as a preliminary step, negotiating new borders would be more productive.

He hopes that Israel, even under Netanyahu, may, with an American nudge, consider withdrawing almost to the 1967 line, as long as land swaps let the bulk of Israeli settlers stay put within an adjusted border.

When the two parties last formally talked, Abbas proposed swapping 1.9 percent of the West Bank for equivalent slices of Israel, whereas Netanyahu's predecessor, Ehud Olmert, offered 6.5 percent (and later suggested a lower figure). The Palestinians are looking to Mitchell to try his luck, early on, to narrow that gap, which could give momentum to wider negotiations.

To impress the Israelis, Abbas could be more forthright to his own people about his readiness to swap land. If Netanyahu wanted to generate goodwill, he could also give Abbas' Palestinian Authority more power in the 60 percent of the West Bank still under Israel's control.

He could let Palestinians launch more projects there and halt Israeli demolition of Palestinian homes. He could reduce the number of Israeli military incursions into Palestinians' West Bank towns and let more West Bank Palestinians visit Muslim shrines in the heart of Jerusalem.

If proximity talks merely prolong the impasse, the stock of America -- and Barack Obama -- in the region will fall still further. Mistrust between Palestinians and Israelis will rise, perhaps even sparking another intifada (uprising) like the one that erupted after talks at Camp David failed in 2000.

"It's a bit of a joke," says a Palestinian negotiator bitterly. "We've been in direct negotiations with the Israelis for 17 years, and all that we can agree is not to formally meet."

At the suggestion of the 22-country Arab League, which gloomily endorsed the proximity plan at a meeting in Cairo, the talks will last only four months. If they stall, some Arab diplomats say

the league could withdraw its offer of 2002 to accept a comprehensive peace with Israel in exchange for its withdrawal to the 1967 lines.

The Arabs say they may reverse their endorsement of the talks. But America's allies -- Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia -- are loath to adopt the confrontational stance of the rejectionists. Hamas, the Palestinian Islamist group that refuses formally to accept Israel's existence, was delighted by Biden's embarrassment.

Al-Quds al-Arabi, an Arabic-language daily published in London that often echoes broad Arab opinion, derided the plan. Rigor mortis, it said, had set in among Arab and Muslim leaders. The Palestinians, it seems, must wait for their state for a good while yet. ●

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If the Iraq war is over, who gets the win?

Iraq’s parliamentary elections two weeks ago, which the White House hailed as “historic” and a “milestone,” and Newsweek’s recent cover, featuring President George W. Bush on the USS Abraham Lincoln and a “Victory at Last?” headline, serve as the backdrop for the debate, though it started earlier.

Last month, Vice President Biden declared that Iraq could be “one of the great achievements of this administration.” Pete Wehner, a former Bush White House official, took Biden and President Obama to task a couple of weeks ago for opposing Bush’s troop surge, which he called “one of the most impressive and important acts of political courage in our lifetime.”

And the New York Times’s Tom Friedman is passing out kudos to Bush and Obama alike while

saying it’s all up to the Iraqis now -- everyone gets a trophy!

Yet, as Washington Post polling analyst Jennifer Agiesta pointed out, public interest in the war reached its low point this month, after peaking during Bush’s troop surge in 2007, when the war was consistently rated as the most important problem facing the country, according to monthly Gallup polls.

As of this month, by contrast, only 2 percent of Americans considered Iraq the top challenge, with unemployment (31 percent), the economy (24 percent), and health care (20) percent) all dominating our collective consciousness instead.

So, is it time to declare victory and start putting Iraq behind us? Not quite, says Dominic Tier-

ney, the author of “Failing to Win: Perceptions of Victory and Defeat in International Politics.”

In Iraq, victory won’t become evident with a surrender document, a key battle or a symbolic moment, like an election, but through a series of “incremental gains,” much like a war on poverty, said Tierney, a Swarthmore political scientist. “It would take years of Iraq as a stable ally in the Middle East before we can look back and say it was all worth it,” he said.

Today’s triumphalism could easily dissipate, Tierney fears, if U.S. casualties jump or violence rises as Iraq puts together a new government. But as the United States struggles with wars abroad and political gridlock at home, even temporary public indifference to Iraq may feel like a strange sort of victory.

BY CARLOS LOZADA, WASHINGTON POST

turned in a wheelchair to Ramadi, after leg surgery and the amputation of his arm, to urge his fellow Sunnis to vote.

If toughness were enough, Iraq would be the greatest country on earth. But the hard, stoical qualities that help the Iraqis survive sometimes prevent them from making the compromises and deals that are necessary for effective governance.

The best thing about Sunday’s election, judging from early results, is that no party won so big that it can form a government on its own. Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki’s coalition (improbably called “State of Law”) will dicker with the Shiite religious party of Vice President Adel Abdul Mahdi, which will bargain simultaneously with the secular party headed by former prime minister Ayad Allawi. And everyone will be trying to woo the Kurds.

This will be democracy Iraq-style, something closer to a day spent haggling in the souk than a visit to the Lincoln Memorial.

I called Allawi in Baghdad on Thursday to get a sense of how the political horse-trading will proceed. Initial election results suggest that his Iraqiya coalition won in two northern provinces, Diyala and Salahuddin. He said that he is already talking with other factions, trying to gain support for a nonsectarian “government of reconciliation” that reaches across the parties.

All the candidates are bartering for votes, but Allawi’s contacts are typical: He said he is talking with Jawad al-Bolani, the Shiite interior minister; Sheik

PHOTOS: EPA



Iraqi Vice-President Adel Abdul-Mahdi

Primeminister Nouri al-Maliki

Iraq's former Prime Minister and head of Iraqi national movement Iyad Allawi

Election puts Iraq’s future in Iraqi hands

BY DAVID IGNATIUS, WASHINGTON POST

Iraq is the country that refuses to die: Saddam Hussein tried to break his people by torture and poison gas, but he failed. America arrogantly mismanaged the first years of its occupation and nearly triggered a civil war, but the Iraqis held on. Iran tried to choke its neighbor, assassinating Iraqis it didn’t like and bribing the country’s politicians.

Somehow, the Iraqi nation not only survived these catastrophes but is also becoming the Middle East’s most freewheeling democracy.

Last Sunday’s election shouldn’t be seen as a

victory celebration, least of all by the United States. There’s more pain and violence ahead, and there will be moments when analysts will be wondering anew if Iraq can hold together.

But at least the country truly belongs to its people now. The politicians of the new Iraq are a mercurial, conniving and sometimes corrupt crew. But they’re Iraqis, and arguably that’s the only thing that really matters.

Iraq’s resilience -- its sheer, stubborn staying power -- can be seen in three images of a Sunni politician named Qassim Mohammed Fahdawi, who is the governor of Anbar province. When I met him in Ramadi in December, he was pitching a group of

visiting Americans about investment opportunities in Anbar, handing out a glossy supplement that had been printed by the Financial Times.

Just three years before, this had been al-Qaeda’s home base in Iraq, and now he was talking bond guarantees.

It sounded too good to last, and it was: On Dec. 30, Fahdawi was badly injured in an al-Qaeda suicide attack at the very compound where he had been making his investment pitch two weeks before. About 30 people were killed and dozens more wounded.

The third snapshot comes in the run-up to Election Day. Fahdawi defied doctors’ orders and re-

Ahmed Abu Risha, the head of the Sunni Awakening movement; Abdul Mahdi, a leader of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq; Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani; and followers of Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr.

Allawi offered to negotiate with Maliki, too, if he backs a nonsectarian government.

Allawi hopes a government can be formed late this month or early next. Few others are that optimistic. They worry about a protracted period of political bargaining and a power vacuum in Baghdad that allows a new round of sectarian fighting. Preventing this downward spiral is the challenge for Maliki, Allawi and the others. But it’s their country now, to make or break.

In the darkest days of the Iraq war, it was tempting for Americans to think that we could walk away from the mess we had created. Things look better now than anyone could have imagined in 2006, but the United States still has a moral and strategic obligation to help this fragile democracy move forward -- not least because of the thousands of American lives that were lost in the years leading up to Sunday’s election.

As a guide for the future, I still like Barack Obama’s line from the campaign: “We must be as careful getting out of Iraq as we were careless getting in.” ●



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1: It keeps getting sadder

First, we had to get used to the idea of seeing Russ Lemmon's stray thoughts on the front page of the local daily paper instead of news stories. Now, in its latest retrenchment, the daily -- having dispensed with one of its editorial writers -- appears to have decided that on some days, it will offer us the musings of Lemmon and his Stuart News counterpart on the Opinion Page in place of editorials.

Soon, we suppose, the local daily's motto will be "All Lemmon, all the time."

But wait. It gets worse. This past Monday's offerings weren't even fresh Lemmon drops. They turn out to be stale, several-day-old items -- recycled from the internet. In what Editorial Page editors (an increasingly endangered species) will view in horror as a new Scripps low, the daily now seems intent on substituting "some highlights from our online blogs" for editorials.

For those not into this internet stuff, these blogs are online mini-columns where Scripps columnists dash off a few sentences on subjects that either the writer himself or an editor deemed not worthy of coverage in the print paper. Talk about setting the bar low.

The headline on the first (we're not making this

up) read: "The upside of the recession might be fewer shark attacks."

This one was written by Eve Samples, whose columns in the Stuart daily are generally better than Lemmon's (pretty clear which paper Scripps views as the more important).

This item went on to quote someone from the University of Florida speculating that a reduction from 32 Florida shark attacks in 2008 to 19 in 2009 might be attributed to the recession reducing the number of times "people can afford to put gas in their cars and go to the beach."

Now, our guess is that this item was chosen to be the lead on the daily's editorial page this morning because of the tremendous amount of interest it drew on the internet. From the time it was posted last week until its appearance in the daily paper this morning, the number of online readers who had commented on it was -- wait a minute -- zero.

Oh well, let's move on to the second headline: "This Senate race is shaping up to be fascinating -- and a little disgusting."

This item recycles the week-old story of Governor Crist's stupid remark on Fox News suggesting that the \$130 that Marco Rubio, his Republican opponent in the primary race for the U.S. Senate, spent on a haircut may actually have gone for a back wax.

Samples posted it in her blog on March 9th, and again, fascinated readers weighed in with -- hmmm, again zero comments. But six days later, here it is again in the editorial column of the local daily, providing us with the full text of that segment of the Fox News interview. Perhaps the editors felt readers might find it *more* "disgusting" if they were given a chance to read it at breakfast.

Then finally, we get to a well-aged Lemmon blog item from last Thursday. You've got to like people who can craft a lead sentence like this one: "When I pulled into the Press Journal's parking lot Wednesday, a big bus was parked on the side of the street."

See the bus. See the big bus. See the big bus parked on the street.

Turns out one of the college baseball teams taking part in the RussMatt competition at Dodgertown was buying some food at Boston Market. And, the item goes on to inform us, they also have had meals at Sonny's, Applebee's and Subway. We unfortunately were left to speculate where they gassed up the bus.

This item did not rise to the level of news -- even by the local daily's standards -- last week when it

happened, and must have missed the cut as one of this past Sunday's Page One Lemmon Drops. So why was it finally making an appearance in the editorial column (!) the following Monday?

With the local daily, things just keep getting sadder and sadder. ●

2: Getting 32963 up North

Next week on the facing page, you will find a box telling readers who go north at the end of the season how they can continue receiving Vero Beach 32963 -- for a nominal fee that does not come close to covering our costs -- while summering in some cooler part of the country.

Well, at the risk of dissuading some of you from signing up for a summer subscription, we want to caution you in advance that you are probably not going to receive the paper on the kind of regular schedule you have become accustomed to here on the barrier island.

While we put paid-subscription copies into the mail at exactly the same time each Wednesday that we mail to the 11,000 homes in 32963, many of the papers going to addresses outside our zip code seem to disappear into the U.S. Postal Service version of the Bermuda Triangle.

Even subscription copies mailed to Grand Harbor, or Sebastian, emerge from a mail truck days late. And last summer, we fielded a number of anguished calls from Michigan, Connecticut and other points north telling us the paper didn't show up for more than a week after the publication date.

Alas, we are helpless in the face of this. We sure can't afford to FedEx or UPS the paper to you (as one hopeful reader suggested), and that leaves us (and those of you who *do* subscribe) to the not-so-tender mercies of the Post Office.

Unfortunately, Post Offices outside our area don't seem to realize how eager you are to see each issue of Vero Beach 32963 -- so mailmen appear to deliver it whenever the spirit moves them.

If you are ready to face the frustration of erratic delivery again this summer, we thank you for your perseverance and support. But don't say we didn't warn you. ●

Gov. Charlie Crist is scheduled to be in Vero Beach tonight for the Republican Party's Lincoln Day Dinner.

Party rules dictate that Gov. Crist, not Senate candidate Crist, will be at the podium at Pointe West. But in this fevered election year, it's hard to tell the difference.

It's not so difficult to get a read on where Indian River County Republicans stand in the topsy-turvy senatorial contest between Crist and former House Speaker Marco Rubio.

For the record, the local Republican brass isn't taking sides, though the invitation to Crist might suggest something.

The leadership's decision not to conduct a straw poll is another indicator. Can anyone remember the last time Crist won one of those?

Since Crist was invited to speak here, his political fortunes have tumbled precipitously. What was once a 30-point advantage for the governor in statewide polls has turned into a 30-point deficit.

Now, less than five months until the GOP primary, Crist's coronation waltz looks more like a death march. Rumors persist that Crist will have to pull a Joe Lieberman and run as an independent if he has any shot at claiming the Senate seat that once seemed his for the taking.

But while Crist was raising buckets of money from big donors, Rubio was catching fire with the Republican rank and file and Tea Party activists, including many in this county.

At least two big local fund-raisers are scheduled for Rubio in the coming weeks.

Several leading Republicans, including key office holders speaking on background, say they are committed to the former Miami legislator.

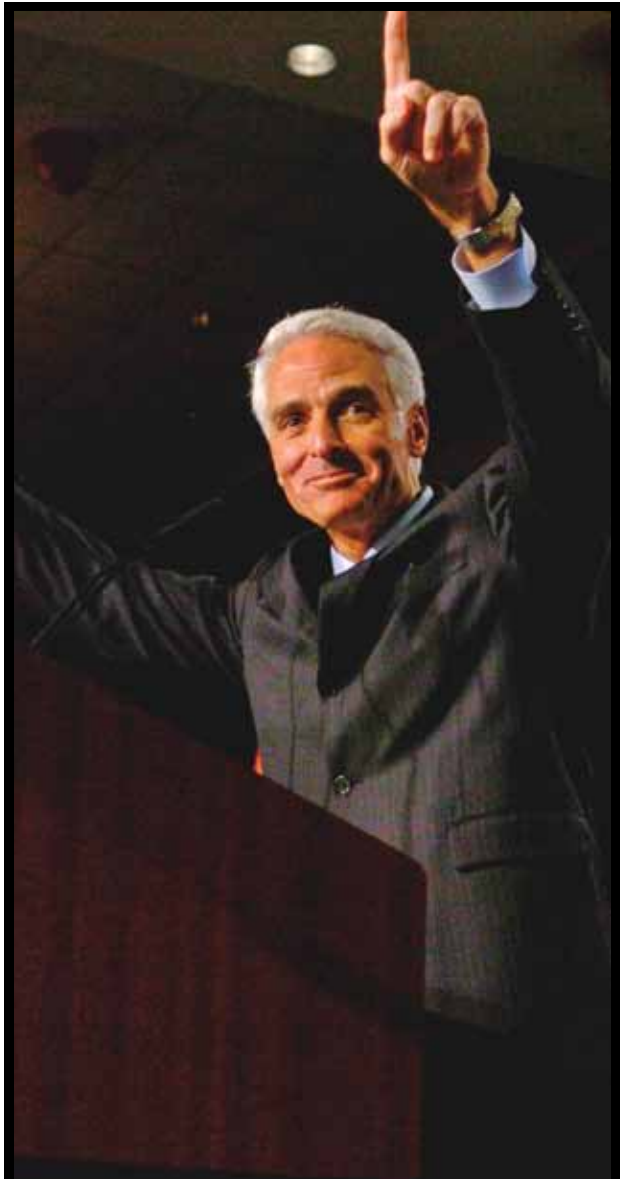
"I'd be surprised if Rubio doesn't take this county by a wide margin," said one elected official.

"It was a big mistake to invite Crist (to the Lincoln Day event)," said a longtime party leader who noted there were audible boos when the decision was announced at the Executive Committee. "This is a conservative county."

The latest polls suggest that a landslide is building statewide. Public Policy Polling reported last week that, among self-described "conservatives," Rubio holds a commanding 70-17 lead over Crist.

Crist, who has jumped deftly from the state Senate, to education commissioner, to attorney general to lieutenant governor, may have hit the wall. The PPP survey found that Republicans are so disgusted that 56 percent say they want him out of office altogether.

"The poll shows the sentiment of America these



Local Republicans losing enthusiasm for Crist

BY KENRIC WARD, COLUMNIST

days," said Everett Wilkinson, state coordinator for the South Florida Tea Party. "Crist and (Barack) Obama policies just aren't popular, and the Rubio campaign has done a masterful job of portraying those two together."

In a fight for his political life, Crist's vaunted political instincts seem to be MIA.

The night before PPP released its stunning results, the governor was on Greta Van Susteren's Fox News show dishing snide, snarky speculation about Rubio getting a "back wax" along with his \$135 haircut.

If any man would know anything about back waxing it would be Charlie Crist.

The more Crist cozies up to Obama on stimulus spending, cap and trade and health care, the more ammunition he gives Rubio.

While playing the "centrist" card might work well in general elections, Crist has badly miscalculated the mood of conservatives -- the folks who make or break candidates in Florida's GOP primaries.

For them, Rubio is right on the issues and Crist is a quintessential politician whose philosophy is based on sticking a wet finger in the air.

By bailing out of the governor's office after one term (the first time anyone's done that in decades) Crist affirms his reputation as an inveterate job hopper.

Fact is, Crist has little to show for his tenure in the governor's mansion. He's certainly no Jeb Bush.

He's exhibited no enduring commitment to education reform. He's demonstrated no principled stand on fiscal matters at a time the state cries out for leadership.

His budget this year -- which calls for a preposterous \$2.7 billion increase -- was dead on arrival at the Legislature.

For months, Florida's chief executive dithered while the Obama administration laid plans to ax 7,000 space jobs at Cape Canaveral.

While the "People's Governor" pimps the press by touting his cosmetic "open government" initiatives, two of his biggest gambits were sealed behind closed doors: the Everglades payoff to Big Sugar and the Seminole casino deal. Beset by court challenges, it's anyone's guess whether either of these ventures will go anywhere.

In the charismatic young Rubio, the telegenic Crist appears to have finally met his match. The governor will undoubtedly get a respectful, polite reception at tonight's dinner, but I'm betting a larger and more enthusiastic crowd would be on hand if Rubio were at the dais. ●

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British prime minister Gordon Brown

HARD REIGN IN BRITAIN

BY ALEX MASSIE, LOS ANGELES TIMES / PHOTOS: EPA

How unpopular is Gordon Brown? According to one Conservative member of Parliament, even “a monkey on a stick” could defeat the British prime minister in the forthcoming general election.

Just one in four voters believes Brown has the “necessary character” to be prime minister, and his approval ratings remain so staggeringly low that even normally unflappable pollsters confess themselves astonished by the public’s level of disdain for him.

Nevertheless, come the May election, many Brits will hold their noses and vote for him anyway.

The polling trend is clear: Two months ago, David Cameron’s new-look Conservatives enjoyed a double-digit lead and seemed set to return to government with a show of strength after 13 years in the wilderness.

Now the latest tracking polls put the Tories just six points ahead of Labor -- a lead that, thanks to the quirks of the current district boundaries, might not be enough to give Cameron an overall majority in the House of Commons. Dreams of a Tory landslide have been consigned to the Department of Wishful Thinking.

So where has it gone wrong for Cameron’s Conservatives? An unpopular government led by a charmless and dour Brown -- hated by much of his own party, who has presided over the most spectacular economic bust in half a century -- could still end up holding the most seats in a “hung Parliament” in which neither party wins a majority. Whichever party wins, though, the question will be whether victory is an advantage.

The one certainty in this election is that it will deliver few spoils. Whereas Tony Blair inherited a growing economy in 1997, this year’s prime minister will be charged with tackling a grave fiscal crisis at a time when the British public has little more faith in the political process than the average American.

Britain’s deficit will reach 13% of GDP this year, and economic growth in the last quarter of 2009 was an anemic 0.3%. It’s only a slight exaggeration to say that the difference between Britain and Greece is that Britain at least has possession of the Elgin Marbles.

Even if the Conservatives do win a narrow majority, a Prime Minister Cameron will be beholden to both the bond markets and his own rebellious backbenchers, many of whom are suspicious of the modernizing makeover Cameron has launched.

The latter will press for much tighter immigration controls and a tougher line with the European Union; the former will insist on public spending cuts to prove that the new government has the toughness and the courage to tackle the deficit.

Consequently, the differences between the parties are smaller than might be expected, centering instead on the timing and the extent of spending cuts, not their necessity. Labor argues that immediate reductions will imperil economic recovery; the Conservatives counter with the argument that failing to get a grip on spending endangers Britain’s Triple-A credit rating.

So far, both campaigns have been oddly defensive. Brown asks voters to take “a second look at Labor” and “a long, hard look” at the Tories. That “better the devil you know” message is not an especially positive one, and it concedes, implicitly, Labor’s own unpopularity. But exhausted by 13 years in government, Labor has few cards to play and even fewer messages to sell.

Not that the Tories’ electioneering has been especially inspiring either. The party kicked off the campaign with Cameron promising that “we can’t go on like this. I’ll cut the deficit, not the NHS.” Neither pundits nor voters were reassured by this.

The deficit remains an abstract problem as far as the electorate is concerned, while commentators were not convinced by the seriousness of a party pledging to cut spending, except those elements of public spending, such as the National Health Service, that are popular.

Worse still, this argument risked endorsing Labor’s own argument that cuts should be made judiciously and should spare popular programs. It was, in other words, the worst of all worlds: pledging too much while simultaneously offering little reassurance to a nervous electorate.

Like Barack Obama, Cameron asks voters to embrace “A Year of Change,” but few voters show signs of believing that the Conservatives can deliver change the people want. The lack of enthusiasm for five more years of Brown is all but matched by the lack of enthusiasm for the opposition.

Cameron’s modernization of the Tory agenda -- revamping the party’s approach to the environment and poverty and other areas of traditional Tory weakness -- remains incomplete. The party prom-

ises a “post-bureaucratic age” in which power will be diffused and devolved to local communities, but, however worthy this may be, it’s a phrase that only a policy wonk can love and remains too abstract a message for the ordinary voter.

At the same time, Cameron’s promises to mend Britain’s “broken politics” and “broken society” run

as Margaret Thatcher transformed Britain’s economic fortunes. That pledge seems out of date now that “hard” economic issues have returned to dominate the political agenda.

Crafting a message and a strategy that assuages the bond markets and the electorate in equal measure is difficult and perhaps even impossible. Yet that’s



Leader of the opposition David Cameron

into the iron buffers of public cynicism. That agenda was forged in happier economic times; it seems ill-equipped for an age of austerity. Once upon a time, Cameron promised to transform society just

what Cameron and his economic team must do. The odds remain that the Conservatives will end up with a modest win. But that could be, in the end, just the beginning of Cameron’s troubles. ●

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Why successful Germany needs to change

BY THE ECONOMIST

Elsewhere in the world, Europe is widely regarded as a continent whose economy is rigid and sclerotic, whose people are work-shy and welfare-dependent, and whose industrial base is antiquated and declining -- the broken cogs and levers that condemn the old world to a gloomy future.

As with most clichés, there is some truth in it. Yet the achievements of Germany, Europe's biggest economy, tell a rather different story.

A decade ago, Germany was the sick man of Europe, plagued by slow growth and high unemployment, with big manufacturers moving out in a desperate search for lower costs. Now, despite the recession, unemployment is lower than it was five years ago.

Although Germany recently ceded its place as the world's biggest exporter to China, its exporting prowess remains undimmed. As a share of GDP, its current-account surplus this year will be bigger than China's.

This feat gives the lie to the picture, common in America and Asia, of Europe as a washed-up continent incapable of change. And, for the rest of Europe, there is a lot to be said for having a strong economy at the continent's geographical and political center.

Yet Germany's success is paradoxically also causing problems for its neighbors -- problems which they, and Germany, need to address.

Germany's impressive flexibility is the consequence of old virtues combined with new ones. The old consensus-building management system helped employers keep unions on side when costs needed to be held down. The famous Mittelstand (small and medium-sized firms, often family-owned) went through its operations, step by step, judging what to do in Germany, what to send abroad and what to outsource.

At the same time, economic policy took a new, liberalizing, direction. The Schröder government introduced reforms to the labor market and welfare systems in 2003-04; spurred on by those, and by competitive pressures from Europe's single currency, German business ruthlessly held down real wages.

Unit labor costs fell by an annual average of 1.4 percent in 2000-08 in Germany, compared with a decline of 0.7 percent in America and rises of 0.8 percent and 0.9 percent in France and Britain respectively.

Although last year's recession hit Germany hard, its economy is in much better shape now than it was a decade ago -- a point that should be noted in France, where President Nicolas Sarkozy has taken to railing against outsourcing, and in southern Europe, which bends over backwards to preserve over-generous wages and restricted labor markets.



The German Bundestag (Parliament)

Germany is rightly proud of its ability to control costs and keep on exporting. But it also needs to recognize that its success has been won in part at the expense of its European neighbors.

Germans like to believe that they made a huge sacrifice in giving up their beloved D-mark 10 years ago, but they have in truth benefited more than anyone else from the euro. Almost half of Germany's exports go to other euro-area countries that can no longer resort to devaluation to counter German competitiveness.

While Anglo-Saxons were throwing money around, Germans kept saving. Domestic investment has not kept pace. The result of Germans' prowess at exporting, combined with their reluctance to spend

and invest, has been huge trade surpluses. Germany's excess savings have been funneled abroad -- often into sub-prime assets in America and government bonds in such countries as Greece.

It would be absurd to maintain that a prudent Germany is responsible for Greece's profligacy or Spain's property bubble (though a few heroic economists have argued this). But it is true that, within a single-currency zone, habitual surplus countries tend to be matched by habitual deficit ones.

Imbalances cannot be sustained forever, whether they are deficits or surpluses. Yet surplus countries tend to see themselves as virtuous and deficit countries as venal -- the implication being that the burden of adjustment should fall on the borrowers.

Germany's response to the troubles of Greece, Spain and other euro-area countries has followed just such a line.

It is certainly true that Germany's neighbors have a great deal of work to do. France, Italy and Spain need to follow Germany in loosening up their labor markets; Italy, Spain and Greece need to tighten their public finances.

But Germany also needs to push ahead with liberalization. Its web of regulations is too constricting; its job protection is too rigid; its health, welfare and education systems still need big doses of change; its service sector is underdeveloped.

Nor do all the changes Germany needs to make mean cutting government back. Too few women are in full-time work, partly because child-care support is lacking. The country's demographic prospects are dire.

A bold program of German structural reforms would do much to boost consumption and investment -- and, in turn, to raise Germany's GDP growth, which remains disturbingly feeble. Germany can also afford growth-boosting tax cuts without ruining its public finances.

If only Germany would lift its head, it would see that this is in its own wider interest, both because it would be good for German consumers and because it would help the euro area to which it is hitched.

Europe's single currency, like the European Union itself, owes much to past German leadership. When that goes missing, both the currency and the club tend to suffer -- and Germany is foremost among the losers. ●

Serious effort at tax reform long overdue

BY EZRA KLEIN, WASHINGTON POST

Congress is ready for a nap. The financial crisis was a year-long emergency. Health-care reform has been a seemingly endless grind. No one quite knows what to do about jobs. Cap-and-trade seems doomed in the Senate, which means all the work the House did to pass its bill was for nothing.

The election looms. There's not a lot of enthusiasm for taking on another big, complicated issue that will be distorted by interest groups and screamed about on cable networks and ripped apart on op-ed pages.

But there is some. A lot of it is coming out of Sen. Ron Wyden's office. Wyden (D-Ore.) -- last seen pushing a bipartisan, comprehensive health-care reform bill that would have passed in a landslide if pundits and experts had votes in the Senate -- is Congress's Energizer Bunny when it comes to proposing ambitious policy overhauls. His next target is tax reform.

As well it should be. There aren't many free lunches left in Washington. But from a policy, if not a political, standpoint, tax reform is one of them. Economists of all stripes agree the tax code has become so complex and inefficient that we're raising less money than we could with a simpler tax code that offered lower rates.

Think about that: We could cut taxes for most Americans while keeping revenue steady.

The problem, of course, is that not everyone agrees those breaks and loopholes and deductions and exemptions and deferrals and exclusions are bad.

Save for a couple of big-ticket tax items -- the mortgage interest deduction, for example -- the politics for most of the sections you'd want to clean from the tax code pit a tiny group of beneficiaries who are committed to preserving their sweetheart deals against the vast majority of Americans who have no idea that the tax code contains that deal in the first place.

"Every interest group around will be lined up saying if you take our tax break, Western civilization will end," Wyden predicts.

Luckily, he isn't alone on this one. Sen. Judd Gregg, the ranking Republican on the Budget Committee, has joined him. The bill they have crafted shows the ways that tax policy is, and isn't, an ideologically polarized issue.

Republicans and Democrats get into a lot of fights about how high taxes should be and what they should fund. But Wyden and Gregg have largely sidestepped those fights by holding revenue more or less steady and are simply attempting to clean up the code.

"We think there's very fertile ground for a bipartisan initiative, which takes the tax laws and makes them dramatically simpler and maintains their progressive nature," Gregg says.

The Wyden-Gregg plan takes the six income brackets currently on the books and compresses them into three (15 percent, 25 percent and 35 percent). It gets rid of the alternative minimum tax.

It triples the standard deduction available to all taxpayers, which means that people don't need to spend as much time trying to itemize deductions and figuring out ways to game the system. It kills off the existing six corporate rates and eight corporate brackets, and replaces them with a flat corporate tax of 24 percent. And it reduces the task to a one-page form.

The result of all these changes? The average cor-

poration and taxpayer would pay quite a bit less. But the system wouldn't be bringing in less money because fewer people would escape their burden altogether.

That last bit is particularly important, says Bob McIntyre, director of Citizens for Tax Justice. "If you're getting rid of loopholes and lowering rates, you get winners and losers, not just losers. So all of a sudden

Rather than creating programs, we create tax credits.

The irony is that writing policy this way actually results in more spending because the funding grows automatically. A program needs Congress to vote to give it more funding. A tax deduction simply requires more people who qualify to take advantage of it, or more accountants who figure out how to make it look



Democratic Senator Ron Wyden of Oregon and Republican Senator Judd Gregg of New Hampshire

it's not only one side that cares. That's especially true on the business side, which is where the real action is in tax reform and lobbying. That's the dynamic that makes tax reform possible."

And even if the project proves difficult, we're long overdue for tax reform. Most experts think you've got to scrub the code every 10 or 15 years, much like ship owners have to dock the boat every so often and shear the barnacles from the hull. For a while, we were doing that: We had tax reform in 1954, 1969, 1976, 1986, and then . . . nothing.

We've gone 25 years without a serious effort at tax reform. That's 25 years that corporations and interest groups have spent complicating the tax code. No wonder 60 percent of us have someone else prepare our taxes.

Reforming the system has been made more difficult by another trend: We've begun running more of our social policy through the tax code.

like their clients qualify for it.

Which is just one more reason to take a good, long look at the tax code. Since Congress doesn't need to re-evaluate each bit of it every year, a lot of breaks and credits and deductions survive long past their sell-by date. Congress might be tired, but on this issue, it's been slumbering for too long.

"This is the first major total tax reform effort put forward by bipartisan senators in 25 years," Gregg says. It's about time. ●

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Obama's illusions of cost-control

BY ROBERT J. SAMUELSON, WASHINGTON POST

"What we need from the next president is somebody who will not just tell you what they think you want to hear, but will tell you what you need to hear."
-- Barack Obama, Feb. 27, 2008

One job of presidents is to educate Americans about crucial national problems. On health care, Barack Obama has failed.

Almost everything you think you know about health care is probably wrong or, at least, half wrong. Great simplicities and distortions have been peddled in the name of achieving "universal health coverage." The miseducation has worsened as the debate approaches its climax.

There's a parallel here: housing. Most Americans favor homeownership, but uncritical pro-homeownership policies (lax lending standards, puny down payments, hefty housing subsidies) helped cause the financial crisis.

The same thing is happening with health care. The appeal of universal insurance -- who, by the way, wants to be uninsured? -- justifies half-truths and dubious policies. That the process is repeating itself suggests that our political leaders don't learn even from proximate calamities.

How often, for example, have you heard the

emergency-room argument? The uninsured, it's said, use emergency rooms for primary care. That's expensive and ineffective. Once they're insured, they'll have regular doctors. Care will improve; costs will decline. Everyone wins. Great argument. Unfortunately, it's untrue.

A study by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation found that the insured accounted for 83 percent of emergency-room visits, reflecting their share of the population. After Massachusetts adopted universal insurance, emergency-room use remained higher than the national average, an Urban Institute study found.

More than two-fifths of visits represented non-emergencies. Of those, a majority of adult respondents to a survey said it was "more convenient" to go to the emergency room or they couldn't "get [a doctor's] appointment as soon as needed." If universal coverage makes appointments harder to get, emergency-room use may increase.

You probably think that insuring the uninsured will dramatically improve the nation's health. The uninsured don't get care or don't get it soon enough. With insurance, they won't be shortchanged; they'll be healthier. Simple.

Think again. I've written before that expanding health insurance would result, at best, in modest health gains. Studies of insurance's effects on health are hard to perform. Some find benefits; others don't. Medicare's introduction in 1966 produced no reduction in mortality; some studies of extensions of Medicaid for children didn't find gains.

In the Atlantic recently, economics writer Megan McArdle examined the literature and emerged skeptical. Claims that the uninsured suffer tens of thousands of premature deaths are "open to question." Conceivably, the "lack of health insurance has no more impact on your health than lack of flood insurance," she writes.

How could this be? No one knows, but possible explanations include: (a) many uninsured are fairly healthy -- about two-fifths are age 18 to 34; (b) some are too sick to be helped or have problems rooted in personal behaviors -- smoking, diet, drinking or drug abuse; and (c) the uninsured already

receive 50 to 70 percent of the care of the insured from hospitals, clinics and doctors, estimates the Congressional Budget Office.

Though it seems compelling, covering the uninsured is not the health-care system's major problem. The big problem is uncontrolled spending, which prices people out of the market and burdens government budgets.

Obama claims his proposal checks spending. Just the opposite. When people get insurance, they use more health services. Spending rises. By the government's latest forecast, health spending goes from 17 percent of the economy in 2009 to 19 percent in 2019. Health "reform" would probably increase that.

Unless we change the fee-for-service system, costs will remain hard to control because providers are paid more for doing more.

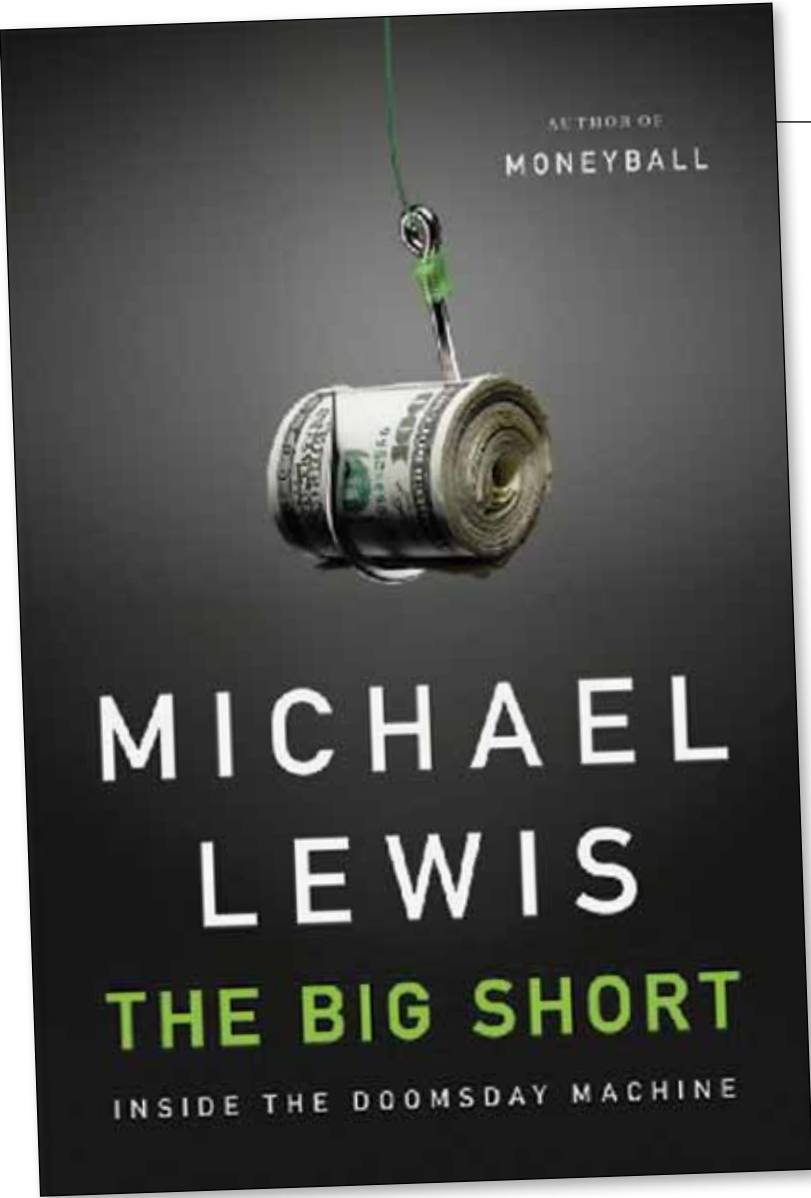


Obama might have attempted that by proposing health-care vouchers (limited amounts to be spent on insurance), which would force a restructuring of delivery systems to compete on quality and cost. Doctors, hospitals and drug companies would have to reorganize care. Obama refrained from that fight and instead cast insurance companies as the villains.

He's telling people what they want to hear, not what they need to know. Whatever their sins, insurers are mainly intermediaries; they pass along the costs of the delivery system. In 2009, the largest 14 insurers had profits of roughly \$9 billion; that approached 0.4 percent of total health spending of \$2.472 trillion. This hardly explains high health costs.

What people need to know is that Obama's plan evades health care's major problems and would worsen the budget outlook. It's a big new spending program when government hasn't paid for the spending programs it already has.

"If not now, when? If not us, who?" Obama asks. The answer is: It's not now, and it's not "us." Pass or not, Obama's proposal is the illusion of "reform," not the real thing. ●



If you read only one book about the causes of the recent financial crisis, let it be Michael Lewis's, "The Big Short."

That's not because Lewis has put together the most comprehensive or authoritative analysis of all the misdeeds and misjudgments and missed signals that led to the biggest credit bubble the world has known.

What makes his account so accessible is that he tells it through the eyes of the managers of three small hedge funds and a Deutsche Bank bond salesman, none of whom you've ever heard of. All, however, were among the first to see the folly and fraud behind the subprime fiasco, and to find ways to bet against it when everyone else thought them crazy.

Nor would anyone -- including Lewis, I'm sure -- claim this is an even-handed history that reflects the differing views of investment bankers, rating-agency analysts and industry analysts, all of whom he holds up to ridicule for their arrogance, their cynicism and their relentless incompetence.

In many ways, this is the same smart-alecky Michael Lewis who brilliantly exposed and skewered the ways of Wall Street 20 years ago in "Liar's Poker," written when he was fresh out of the training program at the once-mighty but now forgotten Salomon Brothers.

But as he says in his introduction, those days of \$3 million salaries and \$250 million trading losses look almost quaint compared with the sums made and lost by the most recent generation of Wall Street fraudsters and buffoons.

What's so delightful about Lewis's writing is how deftly he explains and demystifies how things really work on Wall Street, even while creating a compelling

narrative and introducing us to a cast of fascinating, all-too-human characters.

In "The Big Short," we meet Steve Eisman, a second-generation Wall Streeter whose foul mouth and total lack of social graces made it easy for others to dismiss his relentless criticisms of the subprime mortgage industry as far back as the 1990s, when he first characterized it as nothing more than a Ponzi scheme.

There's Michael Burry, a physician turned stock picker with an antisocial personality (later diagnosed as Asperger's) who becomes the first money manager to buy a credit default swap on subprime mortgage bonds.

There's Greg Lippmann, a prototypical bonus-grubbing Wall Street bond salesman who early on sees the potential of the subprime swaps market and becomes the leading evangelist for betting on the housing market's collapse.

And there's Charlie Ledley, Jamie Mai and Ben Hockett, three young financial hustlers from Berkeley, Calif., who set up a hedge fund in a Greenwich Village art studio, go looking for a long shot and find it in supposedly AAA-rated securities cobbled together from BBB subprime junk.

From their tales, we learn that Wall Street banks think nothing of stealing the trading strategies of their clients and peddling them to other customers. We learn that the investment bankers knew as early as 2006 about the rising default rate on subprime mortgages but engaged in elaborate ruses to hide that reality from ratings agencies and investors.

We learn that when investor demand for subprime mortgages outstripped the supply, Wall Street filled the gap by creating "synthetic" mortgage-backed securities whose performance would mirror that of the real thing.

We learn that Goldman Sachs and other banks conspired to inflate the price of mortgage-backed securities well into 2007, even when they knew the true value was falling, only marking them down in value

after their own hedging strategies were in place. And we learn that top executives were largely clueless about the risks their organizations were taking.

For me, the most memorable chapter in Lewis's tale involves Burry's struggle to keep his fund alive in 2007 and early 2008 as longtime investors lost faith in his strategy to "short" the housing market and began demanding their money back.

BOOK REVIEWS

Although home prices had begun to fall and mortgage defaults were rising quickly, Wall Street's securitization machine had managed to prop up the price of mortgage securities while forcing down the value of the bets Burry had placed against them. And even after the market crashed and Burry's strategy was vindicated with a \$720 million profit, not a single investor called to say thanks.

"What had happened was that he had been right, the world had been wrong and the world hated him for it," Lewis writes. "And so Michael Burry ended where he began -- alone, comforted by his solitude."

There is nothing subtle about the dark portrait Lewis creates of the financial community. Through his lens, all bond salesmen are out to cheat their customers, all top executives are clueless and all ratings analysts are second-raters who could not get jobs in investment banks.

Even footnotes drip with sarcasm, such as this one regarding a less-than-forthright statement by Morgan Stanley chief executive John Mack to his investors on how his firm managed to lose \$9 billion on subprime securities: "It's too much to expect the people who run big Wall Street firms to speak in plain English, since so much of their livelihood depends on people believing that what they do cannot be translated into plain English."

Even discounting for its generalizations and exaggeration and limited frame of reference, however, "The Big Short" manages to give us the truest picture yet of what went wrong on Wall Street -- and why. At times, it reads like a morality play, at other times like a modern-day farce. But as with any good play, its value lies in the way it reveals character and motive and explores the cultural context in which the plot unfolds.

What Lewis writes of two of his characters, young Ledley and Mai, might just as well apply to Lewis himself, or to us:

They "had always sort of assumed that there was some grown-up in charge of the financial system whom they had never met; now they saw there was not." ●

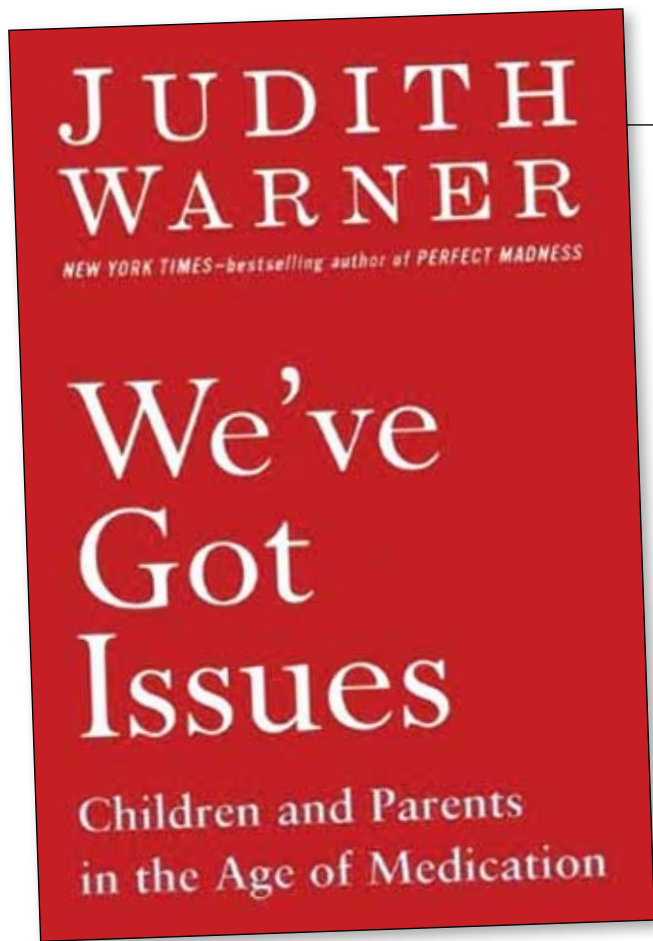
The Big Short by Michael Lewis
Norton, 266 pp., \$27.95.
Reviewed by Steven Pearlstein
Book World

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I opened Judith Warner's new book with a certain dread, fearing that I would have to slog through yet another polemic about the overuse of stimulants and other psychiatric drugs in America's children.

Instead, I found a refreshing surprise: a confession by the author that she had indeed gotten a book contract and embarked on her research with that mindset, only to change her views after talking with the parents of mentally ill children.

"I was erecting a whole intellectual edifice based on ignorance," admits Warner, who writes frequently for the New York Times and is also the author of "Perfect Madness: Motherhood in the Age of Anxiety."

Nowhere did Warner encounter mothers or fathers eager to medicate healthy kids for trivial reasons.

Instead, she found parents struggling to find and afford decent treatment for children disabled by their symptoms or their behavior, parents who had turned to psychiatric medicines only out of desperation -- and a society that persists in stigmatizing mental illness, blames parents when kids are affected, and has done far too little to ensure that such kids can get access to treatments that have been shown to work.

Instead of an epidemic of over-treatment, Warner describes an epidemic of under-treatment of children with mental illness. "Five percent of kids in America take psychotropic drugs," she writes -- stimulants, antidepressants or other psychiatric medications -- while "five to 20 percent have psychiatric issues." (The lower fraction represents those who are extremely impaired, and the higher one includes those with at least minimal impairment.)

Among the disadvantaged, the majority of mentally ill children receive no treatment at all, while many others are prescribed drugs or combinations that are inappropriate for their problems.

Warner's stories attest that even belonging to a rich, well-educated family with health insurance is no guarantee that a child with autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or depression will be properly diagnosed and treated.

But what about the startling numbers: a tripling since the 1990s in the number of U.S. children receiving mental health diagnoses, a recent government estimate that 8 percent of children have ADHD, a 3,500 percent increase between 1991 and 2006 in the number of kids identified as autistic in special education programs? Aren't they evidence of over-diagnosis?

Warner argues, convincingly in my

view, that much of the increase in such diagnoses is explained by better recognition and understanding of children's behavioral and emotional symptoms, as well as the development of effective treatments for disorders like ADHD, depression and obsessive-compulsive disorder, and of special educational strategies and services for children with autism and dyslexia.

Children who a generation ago might have been written off as "weird" or "bad" or "retarded" now have much to gain from being evaluated by a mental health professional, so families are more likely to seek help.

Diagnostic baskets have also undeniably gotten bigger: There is now a spectrum of autism disorders, and the prevalence of ADHD nearly doubled after psychiatrists expanded the diagnosis to include kids who, while not hyperactive, are so inattentive that they can't focus on schoolwork or other activities.

In addition, there may well be a true increase in the frequency of disorders such as depression, anxiety and autism in children -- but to confirm and measure such an increase, we'd need evidence from serial population-wide studies that asked the same questions and used the same definitions over decades, and such studies don't exist.

Warner traces the roots of anti-psychiatry sentiment in the United States back to the social rebellion of the 1960s, but she puts the blame for stoking public distrust on the actions of some practitioners -- and especially on recent revelations of prominent psychiatrists' financial ties with the pharmaceutical industry.

She condemns the dangerous, unapproved use of certain antipsychotic drugs in children and the Food and Drug Administration's slowness to act on evidence that some antidepressants increase the risk of suicide in teenagers.

But she is even more concerned about the damage done to children through failure to recognize and treat mental illness.

Children with autism who don't receive appropriate treatment and interventions are far less likely to live independently as adults than those who do. Failure to recognize and treat anxiety or depression in kids may place them at higher risk for far more serious episodes of depression later.

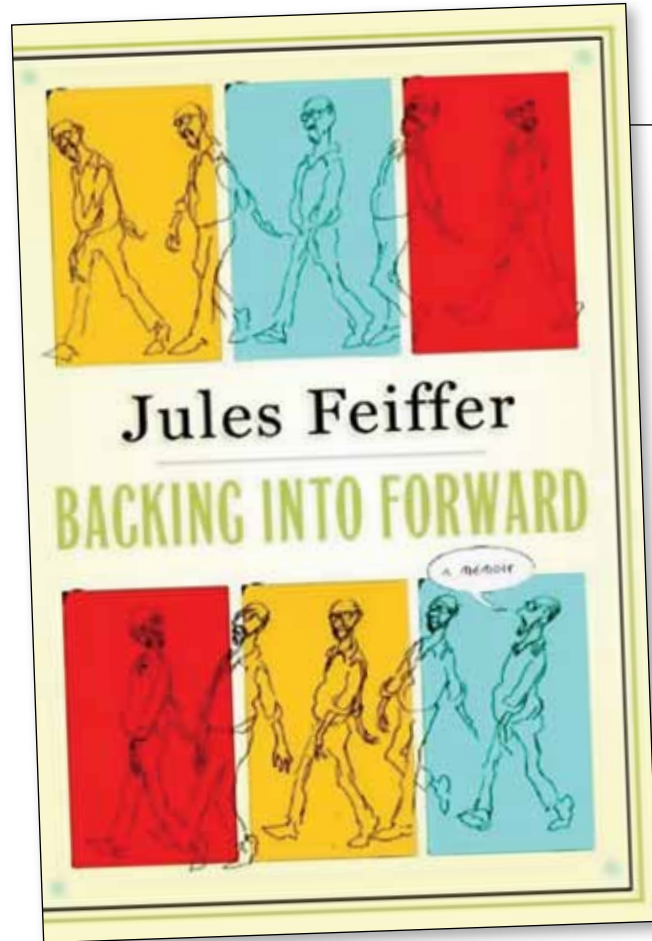
Interweaving stories of children and families with scientific information and well-researched arguments, Warner makes a compelling case that as a society we should do much more.

Among her prescriptions: better insurance coverage (including coverage of non-drug treatments like cognitive behavioral therapy), more financial support for mental health services, an increase in the number of trained child psychiatrists, a research agenda that will speed identification of the most effective psychiatric medications in children, and quality control to reduce the frequency of inappropriate diagnosis and substandard treatment.

Perhaps more than anything, she has come to believe, families of kids with "issues" need love and support from the doctor treating their mentally ill child. "The idea is almost laughable, really," she writes. "But it shouldn't have to be." ●

We've Got Issues by Judith Warner
Riverhead, 320 pp., \$25.95.
Reviewed by Susan Okie, MD
Book World

BOOK REVIEWS



Whether newspapers live or die, the prognosis for the comic strip doesn't look promising. The extinction of the form not much more than a century after its birth would represent only a very minor tragedy too, given the rise of the graphic novel -- who would shed a tear for "Hagar the Horrible" in the age of "Fun Home" and "Jimmy Corrigan: The Smartest Kid on Earth"? -- except it would also mean we no longer live in a world with a berth reserved for the likes of Jules Feiffer.

True, Feiffer created much more than just comic strips. He has written two novels and a handful of children's books, illustrated Norman Juster's children's classic "The Phantom Tollboth" and scripted off-Broadway plays as well as the films "Little Murder" and "Carnal Knowledge." His first collection of long-form comics, "Passionella and Other Stories," made the bestseller lists in 1959, and the animated short based on his military satire "Munro" garnered an Oscar.

Yet Feiffer's legacy will be his Pulitzer Prize-winning comic strip, which ran weekly in the Village Voice and in some hundred other papers for more than four decades. As he declares in the expansive, charming memoir "Backing Into Forward," he was, from the start, "heart and soul, a newspaper strip man."

A fearful nebbish born half a year before the stock market collapse of 1929 -- "one of the few boys in the history of the Bronx who lived through an entire childhood without a bone fracture" -- Feiffer floundered in school but repeatedly charmed mentors into supporting him generously. Will Eisner permitted a teen Feiffer to pen scripts for "The Spirit" and then offered him a one-page strip of his own.

During the Korean War, an enlightened supervisor of the Signal Corps Publications Agency encouraged the budding cartoonist to write and draw "Munro," his first longer comic-strip narrative, on the government's time.

Feiffer struggled in the early 1950s, pitching strips to syndicates and book publishers between

nights out in Greenwich Village, and only out of desperation did he waltz into the offices of the newly founded Village Voice in the fall of 1956. The paper's editor, Dan Wolf, told Feiffer that, sure, they would print his comic strips as long as he didn't expect to be edited or paid for the work.

Telling the tale of his apprenticeships and teenage fantasies, the lusts and terrors of his early adulthood, Feiffer eschews the self-serving approach of some celebrity autobiographers, instead concentrating on just how rudderless he has been. "Time and again," he writes, "I discover how dismally dim I am about myself or how I really feel."

(Feiffer trusted just one person: his shrink. Naturally, then, in his Voice strip, first titled "Sick Sick Sick" and later just "Feiffer," he scribbled disarmingly familiar characters battling around the neurotic bons mots and therapeutic jargon of the times.)

He knew whereof he parodied: In his early 20s, Feiffer reports having been too inhibited even to masturbate, let alone fornicate with a woman, and by the time his comics appeared in the Voice, he had already spent years in therapy, working through the rage and guilt he felt toward his mother, an overbearing fashion designer, and his milquetoast father, whom he describes as "not very significant in my life -- or his own."

Condensed and punched up, Feiffer's neuroses fueled the strips. An early example features Oedipus on an analyst's sofa, speaking in the vernacular ("Did I know she was my mother?"), and a couple of years later Feiffer published what he proudly

calls "the first Jewish Mother cartoon," the punch line of which reads, inevitably, "But listen -- so long as he's happy." What Mort Sahl, Lenny Bruce, Mike Nichols and Elaine May laid bare on stages, in other words, Feiffer distilled into his cartoons.

Success followed rapidly, with book deals, a monthly retainer from Playboy and invitations to the ritziest parties. The cartoonist kidded around with fellow artists David Levine and Maurice Sendak, cajoled Hugh Hefner to witness the 1968 Chicago riots up close and personal, and took breaks from stays at Yaddo to visit Bernard Malamud alongside Philip Roth.

A pop culture junkie among the intellectuals, self-conscious about his lack of a college edu-

BOOK REVIEWS

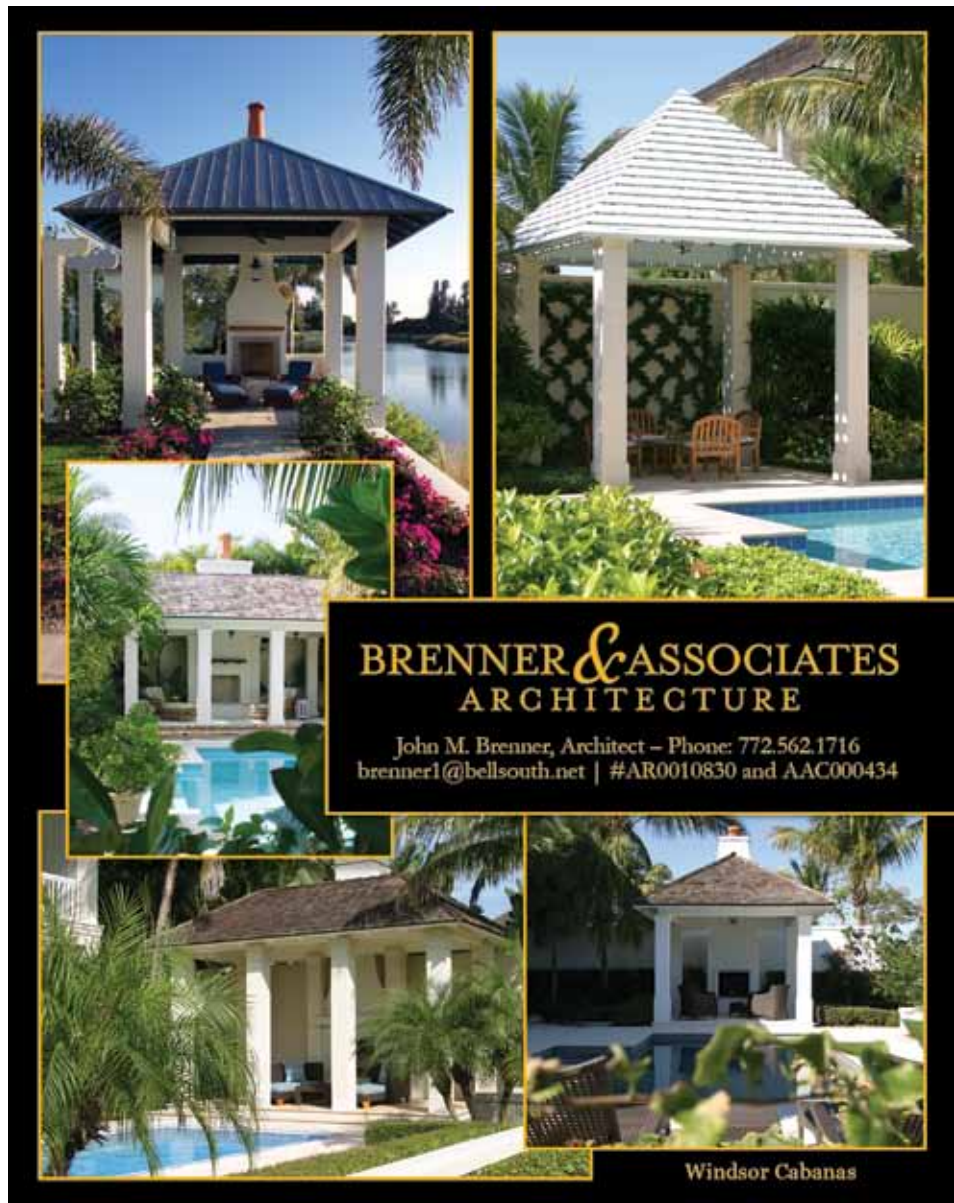
cation, Feiffer relishes encounters between high-brows and pop stars in which the celebrities win: He gleefully recounts introducing a star-struck Norman Podhoretz, the Commentary editor, to Lauren Bacall, who promptly brushed him off.

The memoir covers vast swaths of time, skipping energetically from Feiffer's political activism to detailed accounts of his creative process to sweet asides about his kids, and then back again.

He acknowledges, in three comic-strip pages that close the book, that he has neglected a few salient details, including his testimony at Lenny Bruce's New York obscenity trial.

Delightful as this frank memoir is, one cannot help but wonder how much sharper "Backing Into Forward" might have been as an autobiography-in-comic-strips. The book brilliantly captures adolescent confusion and self-loathing, the ambitions and working life of an unconventional artist in an era uncertain about its arts, and the furies of a political radical who watched the United States descend into gloom, but -- as a review in this paper remarked on the publication of Roth's "Portnoy's Complaint" -- when it comes to these subjects, "all of it is better told in a Feiffer cartoon." ●

Backing Into Forward by Jules Feiffer
Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, 450 pp., \$30.
Reviewed by Josh Lambert
Los Angeles Times



Chess COLUMN

JUST WHAT EXACTLY IS A UNITED STATES CHESS FEDERATION-RATED TOURNAMENT? BY HUMBERTO CRUZ - CHESS COLUMNIST

From time to time in this column I refer to rated tournaments sanctioned by the United States Chess Federation. So I've been asked a lot, what is the federation and what does it mean that a tournament is rated?

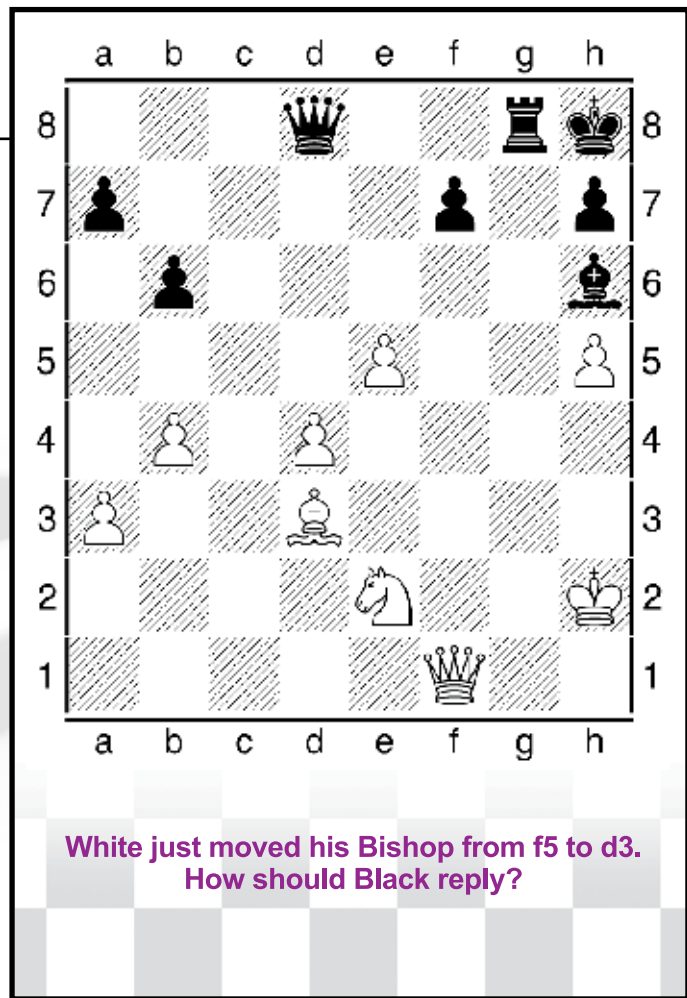
The chess federation or USCF for short is the not-for-profit governing body of organized chess in the United States. Detailed information is available at its Web site, www.uschess.org. To play in USCF-rated tournaments, you must be or become a member of the federation.

A USCF-rated tournament – all major tournaments in the United States, including the U.S. championship, are USCF-rated – is one in which the players receive a national rating based on their performance. A rating is a number that estimates a player's strength compared to all other rated players across the country, and fluctuates up or down depending on the player's results.

Why play in rated tournaments? Many players who play only informal games say they want to play "just for fun." Other players, however, find rated games more stimulating and conducive to higher levels of concentration and better chess, which to them is more fun.

If you've never played in a rated tournament before, you are by definition unrated. Once you've played four rated games, you receive a provisional rating. The rating remains provisional until you have played 25 rated games. You gain the most rating points by beating opponents who are rated higher than you – and you lose the most by losing to a lower-rated player.

Today's diagram is from a game played during a USCF-rated tournament at the Indian River County Chess Club. White's Bd3? allowed Black the winning continuation ...Qh4 check!; Qh3 Qf2 check; Kh1 Qe1 check; Kh2 Bf4 check! (a deflection theme) and Black won.



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

DIRECTOR HAS TO REFEREE SHOUTING MATCH BY PIETER VANBENNEKOM - BRIDGE COLUMNIST

Flustered Flo thinks of herself as a very ethical bridge player and thus was surprised during a recent duplicate pairs tournament to find herself in a bit of a shouting match that eventually made the Director come wandering over.

Naturally, the shouting match came during a the bidding of a board with very unusual hands against her eternal nemesis, Smug Sam, the only one capable of pushing Flo's buttons and making her ...well, flustered.

West Dealer; both sides vulnerable. Flo is East and her partner, Loyal Larry is West. Smug Sam sat South and his partner, Shy Shem, is North.

After Sam had bid 2 Clubs, the overcall in an opponent's suit, Loyal Larry couldn't help himself and looked at Sam rather curiously. Although he didn't say anything, the question mark was written all over his face.

"You may ask my partner what it means," said Sam.

"That's alright," said Larry, "I don't think I'll ask."

"Too bad," said Sam, "I was kind of hoping you would."

"Okay then, I'll ask," said Larry, just before Flo could kick him under the table to shut up – she desperately wanted him to be loyal to her, not to Sam. "What does it mean?" "I think it's Michaels," replied Shem, shyly. "I think he has two five-card suits in the unbid suits and he wants me to pick my best one. Two Hearts"

Shem went on at some length about what he thought his partner's bid meant and Flo started to interrupt; "Come on, that's enough. You shouldn't have told him a second time to ask what the bid meant and now you're getting way too much information. You guys might as well tell each other every card you have," she said irritably, her voice rising.

"Well, he didn't have to ask but he did," said Sam, his voice also rising, "and now you can't prevent Shem from giving his answer."

Even though Shem's answer was totally wrong – an overcall after a takeout double can never be Michaels – Sam now knew what he needed to know (that his partner had a Heart stopper) so he bid 3 No-Trump and play commenced.

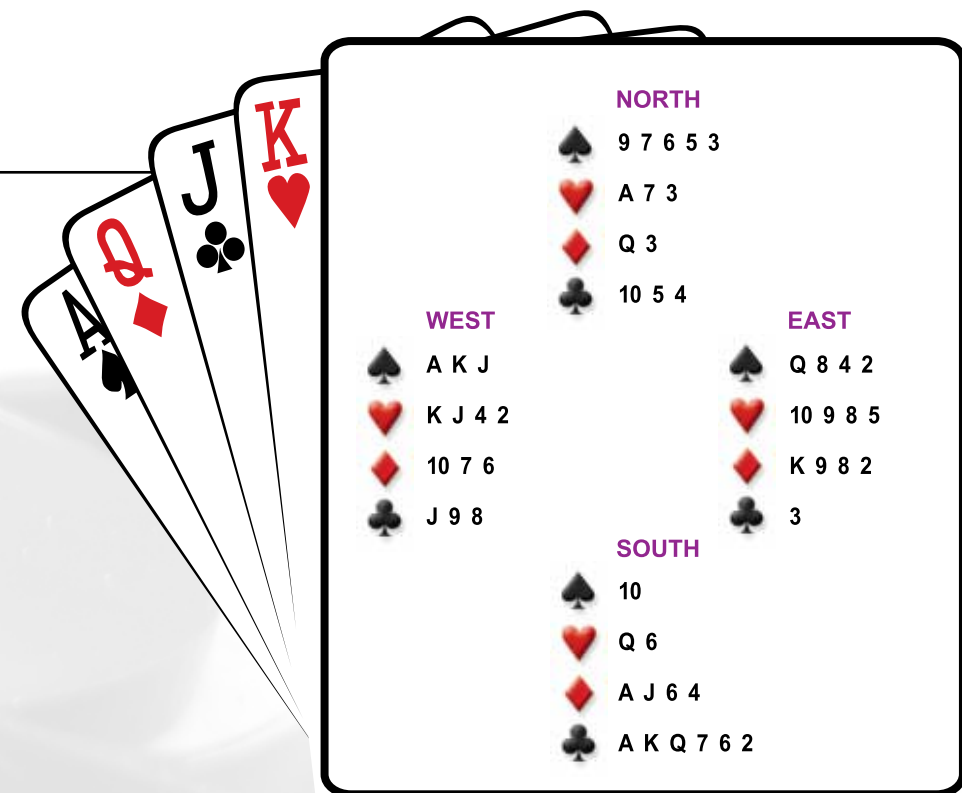
However, by this time other tables had looked up at the commotion and the tournament Director had wandered over to ask what was the matter, so Flo belatedly launched her protest. The Director had one question for Sam: "Was Shem's answer correct?"

"No it wasn't," Sam admitted.

"Well, you should have disclosed that before play started," the Director said, "and you shouldn't have urged Larry a second time to ask your partner, either, but it doesn't rise to the level of a violation for which I can impose sanctions, so play on. But remember guys, try to play nice!"

The actual playing of the hand was uneventful after the big argument. Following the opening Diamond lead, Sam's South hand took two tricks in Diamonds, ran off six in Spades and took dummy's Ace of Hearts for his nine tricks to make the Game. He conceded the rest.

Flo went home at peace with herself, even though she'd lost the hand to Sam – as usual. She figured she'd scored a moral victory. The Director himself had implied Sam wasn't playing "nice." Of course Sam, smug as he was, probably wouldn't care – and that gnawed at Flo a little, because she was competitive enough herself.



The bidding:	East	South	West	North
	1 Club	Pass	Pass	Double
	Pass	1 Spade	Pass	2 Clubs
	Pass	2 Hearts	Pass	3 No-Trump
	All pass.			
Opening lead:	6 of Diamonds.			

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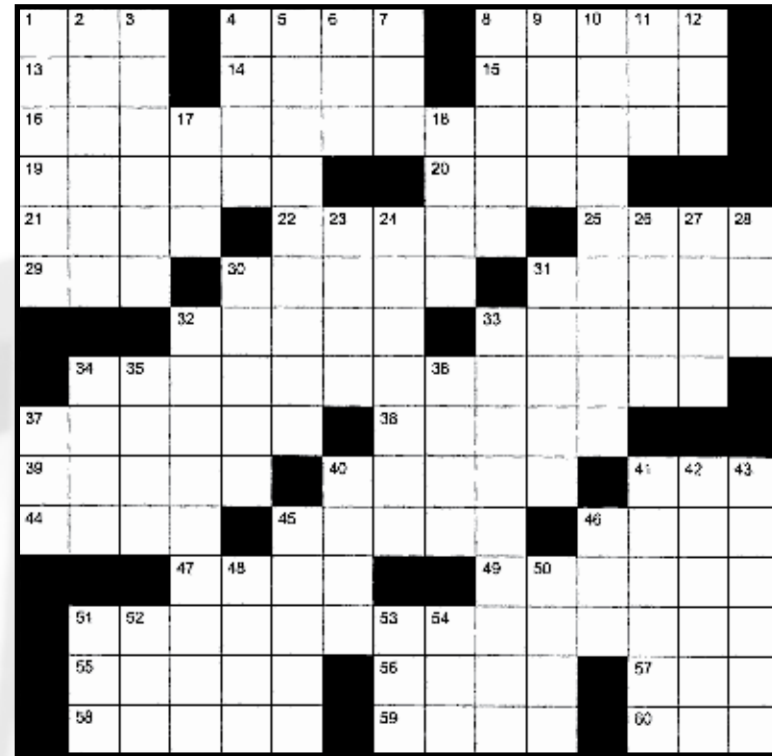
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Crossword

SOLUTIONS TO LAST ISSUE ON PAGE 83

SHIFTING GEARS



The Christian Science Monitor | By Dan Bazer | Edited by Charles Preston

ACROSS

- 1 Maxwell Anderson's "___ Seed"
4 Freebie
8 Timeouts
13 Have a bill
14 Wiesel
15 Mile High Center designer
16 Have second thoughts
19 Place for mascara
20 Seckel, for one
21 Holly
22 "Beverly Hillbillies" Buddy
25 Muslim leader
29 Poetic preposition
30 ___ fell swoop
31 Old hat
32 S. American bird with a haunting call
33 Jack mackerel
34 Flip-flop
37 Soup legume
38 Kowtow
39 ___ barrel: stuck
40 Dissuade
41 Play part
44 El ___, Texas

DOWN

- 1 Bowling, alfresco
2 A short time
3 Wheeler ___
4 Road to Mandalay town
5 Down to earth
6 River, in Spain
7 Griffey, Sr. or Jr.
8 Up
9 Lazarus, of poetry
10 Amy Grant offering
11 "___ Cents a Dance"
12 Caesar, of TV
17 Put the kibosh on
18 Olympic weapon
23 Dunderhead

- 24 Pocket billiards
26 Playwright Connelly
27 Helm position
28 Blanc or Brooks
30 Where Ephesus was
31 Morley, of "60 Minutes"
32 Pork barrel largess
33 Columbia River fish
34 Sanskrit spirit
35 Pocket lettuce
36 "Sufficient ___ the day": Matthew 6:34
37 Eliminate excess
40 Challenge
41 Teem
42 Tree
43 Casually dressed
45 Like the Artful Dodger
46 Hardworking bug
48 Camelot lady
50 Kon-Tiki Museum city
51 Some players use these: abbr.
52 Weed killer?
53 Go for
54 Classic lead-in

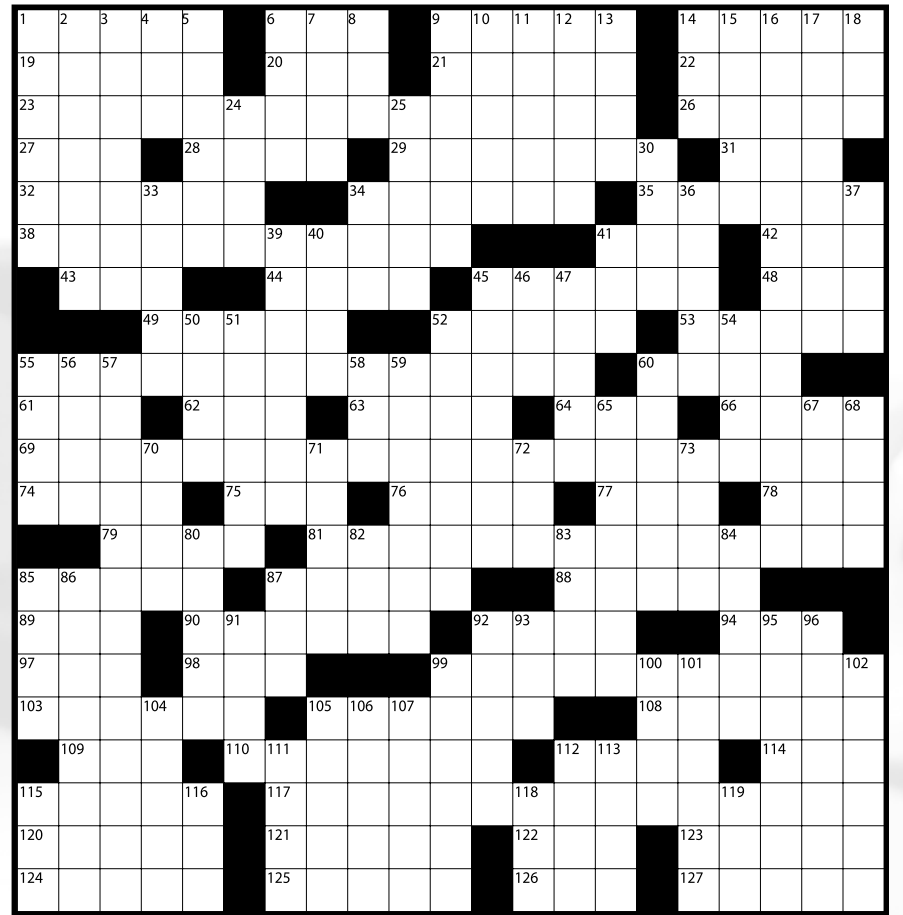
NOTE: Not that this puzzle is really about the Oscars, but it's the kind of thing I think about during the commercials.

ACROSS

- 1 Founded: abbr.
6 Item in a java jacket
9 "Is that ___?" ("You don't say!")
14 ___ still!
19 Word after belly
20 Imitate
21 Explosive stuff, for short
22 Nabisco treats
23 ___ O ___ S ___ C ___ A R
26 Tavern salute
27 Spanish queen born in Scotland
28 Old word for a spread
29 Hits ___ (satisfies)
31 Scanned symbol on a prod.
32 Hard ___ (unpleasant)
34 Paper section
35 Some cephalopods
38 ___ O ___ S ___ C ___ A R
41 "Says which?"
42 William in "Body Heat"
43 Florida feature
44 Italian car
45 Esther replaced her as queen, in the Bible
48 Actor Mineo
49 Mary-Kate or Ashley
52 Place to sit a spell
53 Mother-of-pearl
55 ___ O ___ S ___ C ___ A R
60 Way
61 Burger content, perhaps
62 Price place
63 At some time or other
64 Old information?
66 Heyerdahl's second papyrus boat

DOWN

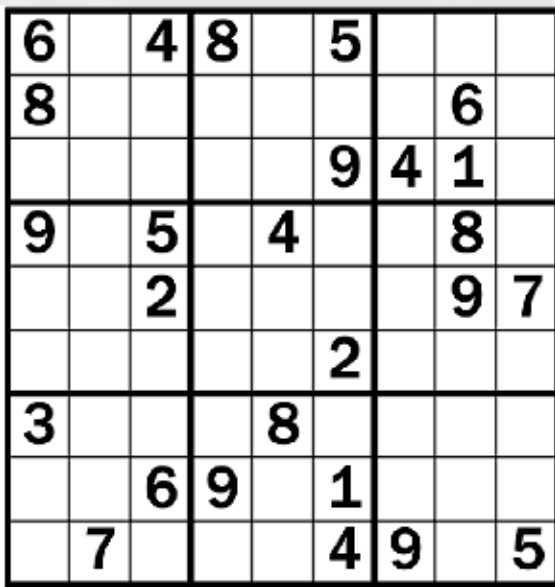
- 1 "___ of this bread" (John 6:58)
2 Meek sort
3 Doggedly funny comedy group, Firesign ___
4 Old nuclear org.
5 Actress Shields
6 "Law & Order" job
7 Doing
8 Louvre pyramid designer
9 News bigwig
10 April 15 participant
11 "This is only ___"
12 Dice game
13 Lawn mower brand
14 The opposite of
15 In ___
16 ___ O ___ S ___ C ___ A R
17 ___ O S C ___ A R
18 Darned ending
24 Steve's co-host at this year's Oscars
25 March honoree, briefly
30 Track habitué
33 "___ Like It"
34 Infamous kidnapping org.
36 World's largest producer of rice
37 Not working
39 Pieces ___ (pirate movie booty)
40 "Mod Squad" dude
41 LBJ's veep
45 Expressed one's opposition, on a ballot
46 Mr. Parseghian
47 "Beat it"
50 D-Day vessels
51 Interference
52 Historic region of France
54 Gillette razor
55 Name in tennis lore



SPACED OUT AT THE OSCARS

By Merl Reagle

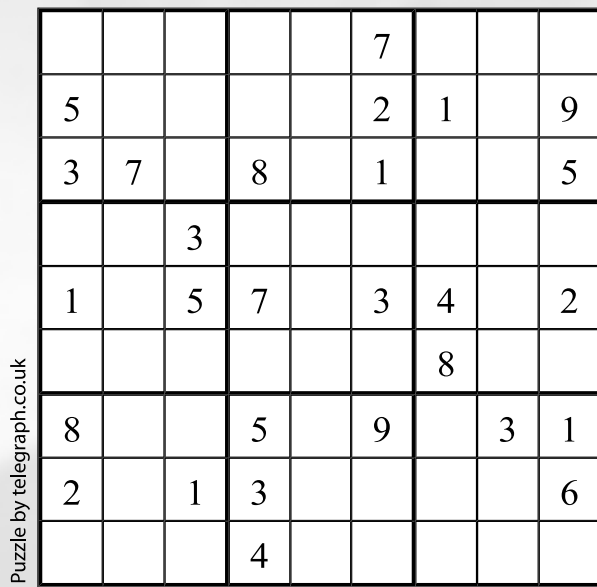
Sudoku



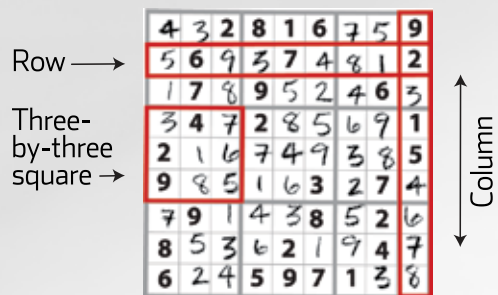
★★★★☆

How to do Sudoku:

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



★★★★☆



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Thailand turning the tide after devastating tsunami

BY BEVERLY BEYETTE
LOS ANGELES TIMES

In the maze of dive shops, souvenir stores and cafes tucked behind Tonsai beach on Phi Phi Don island, shop-keeper Mab Pat waited for paying customers. "People come," she said, "but they don't buy."

On one wall was a T-shirt emblazoned: "2001 Bomb Alert. 2002 SARS. 2003 Bird Flu. 2004 Tsunami. 2005 Earthquake. What next?"

What next, it turned out, was civil unrest and a worldwide recession, the latest blow to the resorts of southern Thailand. No small matters, but not as devastating as the events of Dec. 26, 2004.

On that day a 9.0 underwater earthquake off Sumatra triggered a tsunami that killed a quarter-million people throughout South Asia and devastated hundreds of villages in Indonesia, India, the Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

Six provinces in Thailand along the Andaman coast, home to some of Thailand's best-known resort islands, including Phuket and Phi Phi, were hit about two hours after the quake. Nearly 6,000 people died.

Five years later, tourist-dependent Phuket and Phi Phi have mopped up and tried to move on. Hotels have been repaired or reinvented with new names. In and near Phuket, dozens of new hotels, many of them deluxe, have opened or are to debut by 2011.

Things are not quite back to normal, I learned on my visit, my second since the tsunami tragedy.

Besides the swine flu epidemic, there have been reports, as recently as April 2009, of anti-government protests in Bangkok. The U.S. State De-



Wat Chalong is largest and most important of Phuket's 29 Buddhist temples.

Photos: Beverly Beyette

partment warns tourists of the potential for political violence in Bangkok and in the far south near the border with Malaysia, but not specifically in Phuket, 500 miles south of Bangkok.

Then there is the faltering economy. Top-end hotels are discounting rooms and spa services as Phuket grapples with filling 42,000 hotel rooms – and 5,000 more to come by 2011. All this is in the face of 3 million fewer foreign visitors to Phuket in the last two years and hotel occupancy rates that have dipped from 66% in 2007 to 57% in the first quarter of 2009.

"And today they spend less," said Bangornrat Shinaprayoon, director of the Phuket office of the Tourism Authority of Thailand.

So Shinaprayoon is focusing on selling Phuket as an "amazing value." It's true: Phuket is a relatively inexpensive destination, where you can find top-end restaurants and luxury hotels

or backpacker lodgings and modest meals.

New properties include four Courtyards by Marriott, the minimalist B-lay Tong at Patong Beach and the Rixos Premium Khao Lak, on the site of a Sofitel that was destroyed by the tsunami. Coming in March is the Westin Siray Bay Resort & Spa. Other properties slated to open in 2010 are the Regent Phuket Cape Panwa and the Yamu, a boutique hotel with designer Philippe Starck's imprint. A Four

Patong Beach, merchants told me of losing everything in the tsunami. Tourism fell by half in 2005, bumped up in 2006, then fell again.

I had returned in November to see how things had changed in the wake of all that had happened. I found every imaginable amenity, as well as friendly and accommodating people, and at no time did I feel in any danger, although I stayed out of the seedier places at night.

Sun-seekers – many of them Aussies



Southwest Thailand, home to the resort islands of Phuket and Phi Phi, has battled back from the devastation of 2004's powerfully destructive tsunami. Travel writer Beverly Beyette, who visited a year after the tsunami, returned again recently. Rebuilt and new hotels abound, and boats travel the Andaman coast, ferrying day-trippers to such destinations as Koh Khao Phing Kan, where, across an inlet, visitors can see the vertical little island of Koh Tapu, where Scaramanga, the villain in the 1974 James Bond film, "The Man With the Golden Gun," hid his laser weapon.

Points by Sheraton Phuket at Makham Bay is to open in January 2011.

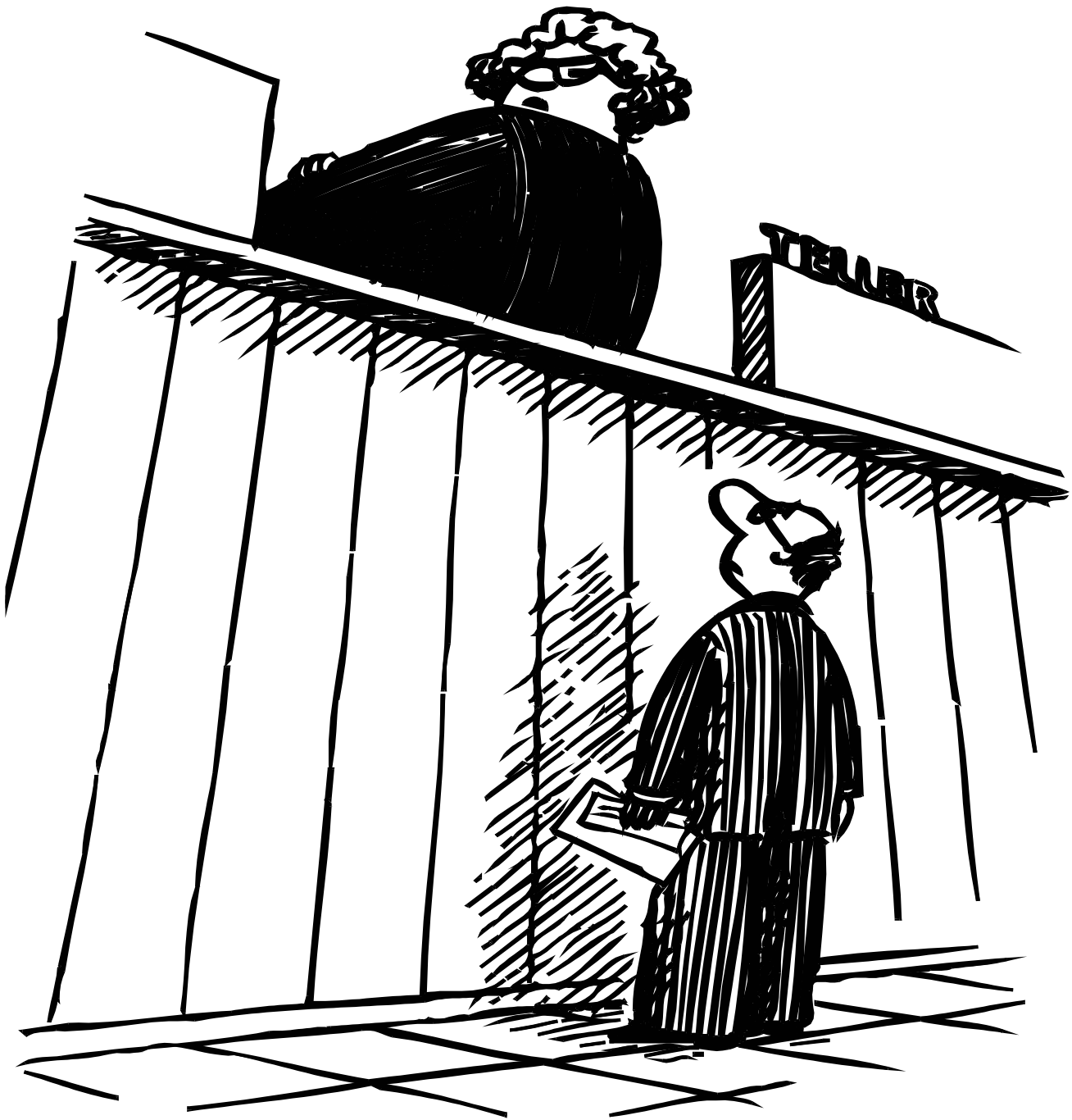
When I visited Phuket and Phi Phi a year after the tsunami, I saw beachfronts where only crumbling foundations and swimming pools remained and shredded long-tail boats washed onshore. At small shops along Phuket's

– have returned to Patong Beach, the largest and most popular of Phuket's 17 sandy strands.

Above them, a few parasailers swooped over Patong Bay. But there weren't enough takers for the pedicures, manicures, massages and hair weaves offered by women who set up

THE CASE OF THE VANISHING CHECKING ACCOUNT (PART 2)

BY JAY MCNAMARA



Have you noticed that banks are having image problems? Mine suffered a severe one on a recent Friday when I learned that it had closed my checking account without warning. I went into my bank to cash a check and came out with the knowledge that my account was closed and my money was in limbo, or maybe Cleveland.

The account had an assortment of electronic transfers each month. Like magic, money came in from various sources and money went out to essential services such as electricity, phone, and cable TV. That these relationships had been severed was a financial and lifestyle calamity. Where would the incoming deposits go? What would the services do when they couldn't access my account for payment? I had a dark inkling of what the utility company would do.

I went through the same emotional stages associated with the news of a serious ailment; disbelief, fear, paranoia, anger, and in this case, revenge. The bankers who explained that my account was closed looked at their computer monitors and my credit card as though I had handed them a treatise on astrophysics. They stared in bewilderment as they tapped away at their machines, shaking their heads.

They knew with complete confidence that what happened was my fault, that I was one of those customers the bank had to tolerate in the big scheme of things, that they could laugh at my predicament as soon as I left the branch. I was good grist for entertaining their friends. "This guy's account disappeared. He screwed up somehow. You should have seen the look on him. I could barely keep a straight face. Hysterical."

At the end of the day, I was told that although my account had been closed, the balance was in the mail in the form of a check. I would simply have to open a new account. Easy for them to say. Wasn't I the one to be promising the check was in the mail? They said that on Saturday I would receive expert help by phone. Fat chance.

As I drove home, I wondered how many of my electronic partners had already determined that I had no account. Would the electricity be on? Would the phone work? Would there be cable? Had American Express received my electronic payment?

Wait a minute. Had my identity been stolen? Who was I, anyway? How many forms would it take to get a new identity? Could I upgrade? Was I a deadbeat? Was I losing my mind?

I plotted my options, none of which included continuing my relationship with the bank. Since I would be faced with rearranging my electronic transfers, I might as well start anew. Every single bank in the United States has an office in Vero Beach. You can't be serious about money management without Vero on your office map.

I had my work cut out for me. On Monday, I would be making scores of phone calls. I would be driving to the electric company to deal with the situation in person, just to be sure. I would be dealing with the federal government over my social security payment. Each of the many entities involved would have its own unique requirements.

One thing I was sure of. No banker would be calling on Saturday. (To be continued)



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Travel



Night markets are popular in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

shop on Oriental rugs on the sand. Opposite the beach, visitors strolled past the jumble of tourist-targeted souvenir, T-shirt and bikini shops, tat-tattoo and teeth whitening parlors. But few, it seemed, were buying. In his tailor shop called High Versace, Hom Perkhas waited for customers. He said he had lost everything in the tsunami and started over. Now, he said, “people are scared because of the economy. Everybody is the same as me in Phuket. Sometimes three days, zero customers, and costs keep rising. No tourists, no job, no eat, no sleep.” Outside, Crayon-colored little taxis – tuk tuks – lined up at the beach, waiting for fares.

Return to Phi Phi

I also was eager to return to Phi Phi, which lies 30 miles off Phuket and was hard hit by the tsunami. I wondered what had become of the people I’d met there five years ago, in particular Ibrahim Ngankaeng. I’d come across him sitting among flattened coconut palms in front of a sign that read “Return to Paradise.” Ngankaeng, then 64, had told me he lost his wife and two grandsons in the tsunami, as well as

his rental bungalows and restaurant. I thought I had booked a one-hour speedboat trip to the island but, through a miscommunication, found myself on Tropical Andaman’s all-day snorkeling adventure, which did not stop at Tonsai, the main village on Phi Phi. I explained my predicament, and the crew members -- bless them -- agreed to make an unscheduled stop at Loh Dalam Bay, where I could wade ashore and make the short walk across the island to Tonsai beach. At midday, I was to hire a long-tail boat to rejoin the snorkelers down the coast. Somehow, it all worked out. At Loh Dalam, I stopped at a small shrine, almost hidden, where tsunami victims are remembered with plaques and pictures. A young man appeared, pressed some incense into my palm and disappeared. Armed with Ngankaeng’s name, I set out for Tonsai and before long found someone who directed me to Areda restaurant, the name of his former establishment. It was Ngankaeng’s new place, but he was in Phuket that day. An employee told me that the 500-seat open-air dining spot had opened in 2006 and that Ngankaeng had remarried three years ago.

My next stop on Tonsai beach was the Phi Phi Island Cabana Hotel, where guests were splashing in the pool. Ninety-six guests and staff died in the tsunami, and when I visited in 2005, that pool was cracked and empty, and soggy mattresses and mud-caked tables had been stacked in what is the now-reopened ballroom. The hotel has been so thoroughly repaired that it appeared as though nothing had happened. On a hot, sunny November day, day-trippers were disembarking from the ferry from Phuket at the big new concrete pier at Tonsai, some heading for new beach restaurants. I couldn’t believe this was the same place. Like Phuket, Phi Phi had come back.

Phuket excursions

I then turned my full attention to Phuket, where I spent four nights, staying at three hotels in three areas, sampling the many faces of the city. There’s Patong Beach, with neon and night life, prostitutes and “lady men” (transvestites or transsexuals). There’s Phuket city, crowded and disorderly and fascinating, and there’s the historic town, with its old shop houses shaded by arcades and its Sino-Portuguese mansions. Finally, there are the luxe hideaway beach resorts. Soon after arrival, I plunged into a full day of sightseeing, starting with a drive through the old Chinese neighborhood – a vestige of Phuket’s 19th century tin mining boom – with its “dragon houses,” whose doors and windows resemble the mouth and eyes of a dragon. I passed rows of little open-front, tin-roofed shops selling hardware and motorcycle parts, auto seats and wooden doors, flowers and food. There was a garden shop with elephant statuary, a Starbucks, a dinosaur park. Dodging bikes and motorcycles, I traveled the narrow coastal road, stopping to take in the sweeping view from Prom Thep Cape in the south. I was wilting in the heat and humidity by the time I checked in at the cool, dark lobby of the Indigo Pearl, where I welcomed a cold towel and iced tea. This hotel, formerly the tsunami-damaged 1980s-era Pearl Village Resort at Nai Yang beach, closed for eight months and reopened in 2006 with a new look and a new name. It is spectacular, sort of tin-mine-industrial chic punched up with Thai silks and jewel colors. My second hotel, the Twinpalms at Surin Beach, is also a beauty. At check-in, I was told I’d been chosen at random for an upgrade to one of the 21 new residence suites. (I don’t think

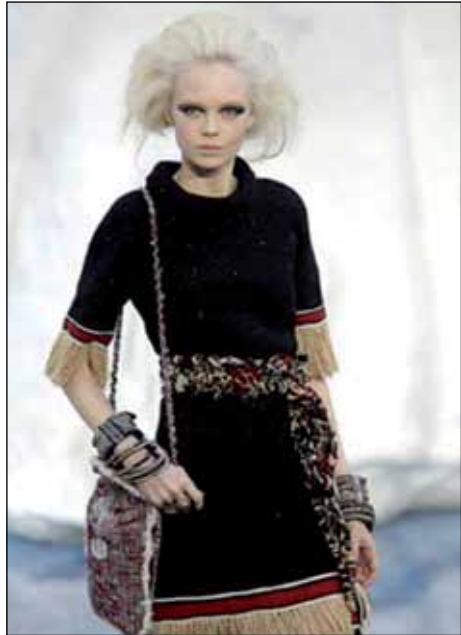
the management knew I was a journalist; I had not booked using my by-line name, so I accepted this as pure luck, though in my windblown state I hardly looked like a future prospect for a \$1,360 a night suite.) And what a suite – a spacious town house with private pool, where I cooled off with the champagne set out by my butler. For my last night, I chose the Burasari, a boutique hotel just off the beach at Patong. As I walked into the open-air lobby, a musician sitting cross-legged on a daybed played Thai music on a Chinese cymbalo, a stringed instrument struck with a hammer. It was all quite exotic. One day I visited Wat Chalong, largest of the city’s 29 Buddhist temples. I also visited Big Buddha, a work in progress atop a mountain. It’s being funded by donations and will be the largest Buddha in Thailand, 146 feet tall and 82 feet across at the base. Visitors are invited to contribute for Buddha’s marble lotus seat. Another day I went island-hopping in Phang-nga Bay on Asia Canoe Thailand’s double-deck boat. First stop: Koh Khao Phing Kan, where I made my way past the souvenir stalls to an inlet to see the vertical little island of Koh Tapu. It’s where villain Scaramanga hid his laser weapon in the 1974 James Bond film, “The Man With the Golden Gun,” and is now known as James Bond Island. Puzzlingly, it’s a huge tourist attraction. Maybe you have to be a Bond aficionado. Later, I went ashore at Koh Panyee, where a Muslim village with more than 1,000 inhabitants sits on stilts over the water. These descendants of settlers who came from Indonesia subsist on fishing and tourism. Our guide whisked us past the vendors – many of them elderly Muslim women – so we could peer into small, dark living spaces with bird cages hanging outside and take in the spicy aromas of cooking food. He told us not to pay to pose with a baby gibbon, because a baby can be captured only by killing its mother. (In 2005, I visited Phuket’s Gibbon Rehabilitation Project, which rehabilitates animals mistreated as tourist attractions.) At Koh Phanak, we piled into inflatable canoes, sailed through an opening in a cave and into a mangrove swamp. As my raft passed under low-hanging stalactites, my paddler warned, “Lay down!” The formations barely missed my nose. On my last night in Phuket, as I sat in Misty’s Bar inside the Burasari’s gardens, a drenching tropical thunderstorm pelted the roof. It was a W. Somerset Maugham moment, and it

Style

Paris Fashion Week: Clean lines and clean air



Chanel, Fall 2010



BY BOOTH MOORE
LOS ANGELES TIMES

In her second runway show for Céline, Phoebe Philo proved she is fashion’s new pacesetter. When the first model stepped onto the white-carpeted runway earlier this week in a navy blue funnel-neck coat cut with military precision and a pair of riding boots with sensible, metallic gold block heels, it was clear this show was about wardrobe solutions, pure and simple, in a range of neutral shades. These were clothes designed by a woman to answer a woman’s needs. A glossy black leather A-line skirt paired with a white lace patch-pocket T-shirt was dressed up enough to go from day to night. And a black double-face wool skirt with a panel cut out in front, topped by a white silk blouse with long neckties left to flutter in the breeze, was for those times when it is in a working woman’s interest to show some leg. Worn over a cream silk tunic with



long shirrtails, a boxy black jacket and cigarette pants provided a fresh alternative to the suit, and a black shift with

CONTINUED ON PAGE 62


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Style

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 61

deep leather patch pockets was for the woman who wants a go-to black dress with a little something extra.

Philo, a former design assistant to Stella McCartney, was creative director at Chloé beginning in the late 1990s. She is credited with making that fashion house cool again (remember the Chloe Paddington bag?), before re-signing in 2006 to spend more time with her family in her native Britain. (Now, Chloé is designed by Hannah

MacGibbon.)

Last year, Philo was brought in to head Céline, the French sportswear label owned by luxury conglomerate Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy, and she appears to have the magic touch again. The clean-front khaki miniskirts and natural-colored suede topcoats arriving in Zara stores now? They look an awful lot like Céline spring.

While Philo was promoting clean lines, Karl Lagerfeld was promoting clean air.

The Chanel designer created a win-



Celine, Fall 2010



ter wonderland under the soaring glass ceiling of the Grand Palais on Tuesday, with icebergs imported from Sweden that were literally melting at

the models' feet.

As they trudged along in Chanel rain boots, dragging their shaggy fur coats through pools of water, the message

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Style

Celine, Fall 2010



In her second runway show for Céline, Phoebe Philo proved she is fashion's new pacesetter. When the first model stepped onto the white-carpeted runway earlier this week in a navy blue funnel-neck coat cut with military precision and a pair of riding boots with sensible, metallic gold block heels, it was clear this show was about wardrobe solutions, pure and simple, in a range of neutral shades.

was this: Global warming is not chic.

The arctic theme – show invitations came with a polar bear sketch done by Lagerfeld himself – played out on the runway in earthy-looking patchwork knits, textured bouclé shifts trimmed in folkloric fringe, and winter white

mohair sweater dresses shaded with cool blue. The faux fur was flying everywhere, with wild and woolly fur pants, waders, mukluk boots, and bloomers as well. Tweed jackets, explorer backpacks and chain-handled bags were trimmed with fur. With frosty hairdos, Lagerfeld's ice queens wore winter white dresses that mixed beaded embroidery and fur, carrying clear Lucite purses that resembled ice cubes.

The topic of climate change is risky for a fashion designer, not only because of the environmental impact of apparel manufacturing but also because the traditional notion of fashion encourages consumption. But what keeps Chanel so vital is that Lagerfeld continues to put the clothes in the context of the here and now.

Even as one lavish fur after another came out the idea of investment dressing came to mind in contrast to the clutter of fast fashion.

Because not only is a Chanel jacket made well enough to stand the test of time, but there is also very little chance that it will ever look dated.

Buying less, but buying better. Maybe luxury could be eco-friendly after all.

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Question: Hair guy, with all your exposure to lots of people, what is the word on the street as to a good place to eat & hang out in this town?
- M.C.Q. of Indian River County

Answer: Well A.C., you most definitely don't know me, or just how unaware I can be of "Date Night" things. Let me start by saying, I'm a father of two young boys and see the inside of a restaurant about 4 times a year. Furthermore my idea of a good place to eat is generally based on how kid friendly it is. For me to make a recommendation is just not within my personal comfort zone. I am a simple man with simple needs. Now that said, I am indeed exposed to the most sophisticated people and by my assumption, sophisticated pallets. The one spot that has spontaneously popped up in the course of conversation has been Greenhouse Café. It is in the old down town area, across from the post office. No, I cannot endorse it. No, I have not been, but the folks are all talking about this place and how fine a job was done

done on the remodel and the beautiful out door area. If this was one of those 4 times each year I go on a no kids date with my wife, it would fall very high on my list, just to see what the buzz is about. Let me know what you thought about it and I'll pass it on. Good Luck! When heading out to a new place and on the off chance you encounter some humidity, don't forget to use some anti-humidity or anti-humectants to keep your hair smooth and shiny. My new love affair is with a product from the A/G company called Spray Varnish. It's a high gloss spray in finisher. Like something Barbie her self might use, at about \$25 a bottle it's a luxury item, but man its cool.

Enjoy your night out and keep those questions coming!
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Lanvin shows its edges; Viktor & Rolf goes for versatility

BY BOOTH MOORE
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Lanvin's Alber Elbaz is the creator of a specific brand of imperfect glamour that has dominated clothing design over the last few years.

Because of him, asymmetrical ruffles, organza and grosgrain ribbon trim, and unfinished seams have taken over T-shirts, jackets and dresses at every chain store on the planet, including J. Crew and Ann Taylor. And that doesn't include what he has done for the costume jewelry industry with his ribbon-strung pearls.

So Elbaz was right to sense that it is time to move on to something stronger, more aggressive and less frilly.

Elbaz's fall collection for Lanvin, shown last week during Paris Fashion Week, was inspired by Africa in winter. Not that he's been there, he explained after the show. It was a trip taken from his couch, where he began thinking about primitive shapes and patterns, circles and squares.

Alber Elbaz's fall collection was inspired by Africa in winter, with cuts that managed to look feminine. Viktor Horsting and Rolf Snoeren offered a collection for all sizes

That vision resulted in a look focused on sharp cuts rather than soft drape.

Although it was architectural, it was still feminine. Shoulders, for example, were a focal point, and yet the models did not look like linebackers.

For daytime, a striking pumice-colored jacket had an interesting Cubist feel, and an oversize, cocoa-colored coat struck a balance between power and elegance with dropped shoulders, a cinched waist and a skirted bottom.

Although the thrust of the collection was day wear, there were some stunning evening looks, too, includ-



Viktor and Rolf, Fall 2010

ing a fierce black shift dress that had a shoulder line with a sharp, papery edge, and a row of crystals down the back. The incredible fan pleating radiating toward one shoulder on a gold lame blouse was mirrored by the pleating at the hip of the black skirt worn underneath. You could sense Elbaz's touch in every fold.

The drama built to a finale with a tribal edge. Short dresses and jackets were embellished with patches of fur, the glint of primitive-looking jewels and feather collars. "I wanted to bring back the purity of design," Elbaz said, "but keep it emotional."

Mission accomplished. And although Elbaz originally wanted his models to make a dramatic entrance descending a spiral staircase, he changed his mind at the last



Lanvin, Fall 2010



minute. They made a dramatic exit instead, walking up the stairs and wreaking havoc on the production, hair and makeup setup in the process.

"I would rather see women going up than coming down," the consummate showman explained.

Bravo.

At Viktor & Rolf, the show was the thing. At a time when the fashion industry is redefining what luxury means, designers Viktor Horsting and Rolf Snoeren pulled back the curtain, and put the nuts and bolts of the design process center stage on their runway, transforming one garment into another and another in front of our very eyes.

It was similar to what Dolce and Gabbana did in Milan, when they used footage of workers in their atelier as a backdrop for their runway show. The message? The human touch is what you get when you pay designer prices. Luxury, in other words, is personal.

Horsting and Snoeren didn't miss a beat, dressing and undressing model Kristen McMenamy in 23 layers of costume changes. With Lindsay Lohan and "CSI" actor Gary Dourdan looking on from the front row, the event was a comment on the specta-

Lanvin's Alber Elbaz is the creator of a specific brand of imperfect glamour that has dominated clothing design over the last few years.

cle of fashion, too.

A runway show must have entertainment value, something these designers have delivered from Day 1. And that's especially true now that runway performances are brand advertisements competing for eyeballs on the Internet like everything else.

Not surprisingly, the clothes were quite versatile, with crystal-studded pulls to release the bustle on a black evening gown, and a dress unzipping and reversing into an anorak. Coats were enormous, allowing them to be layered upon layers. Which meant that this was a collection for all shapes and sizes, from Lohan to the bodacious Beth Ditto, who was also sitting front row.

Plus sizes and petites all rolled into one. Now that's a novel idea.

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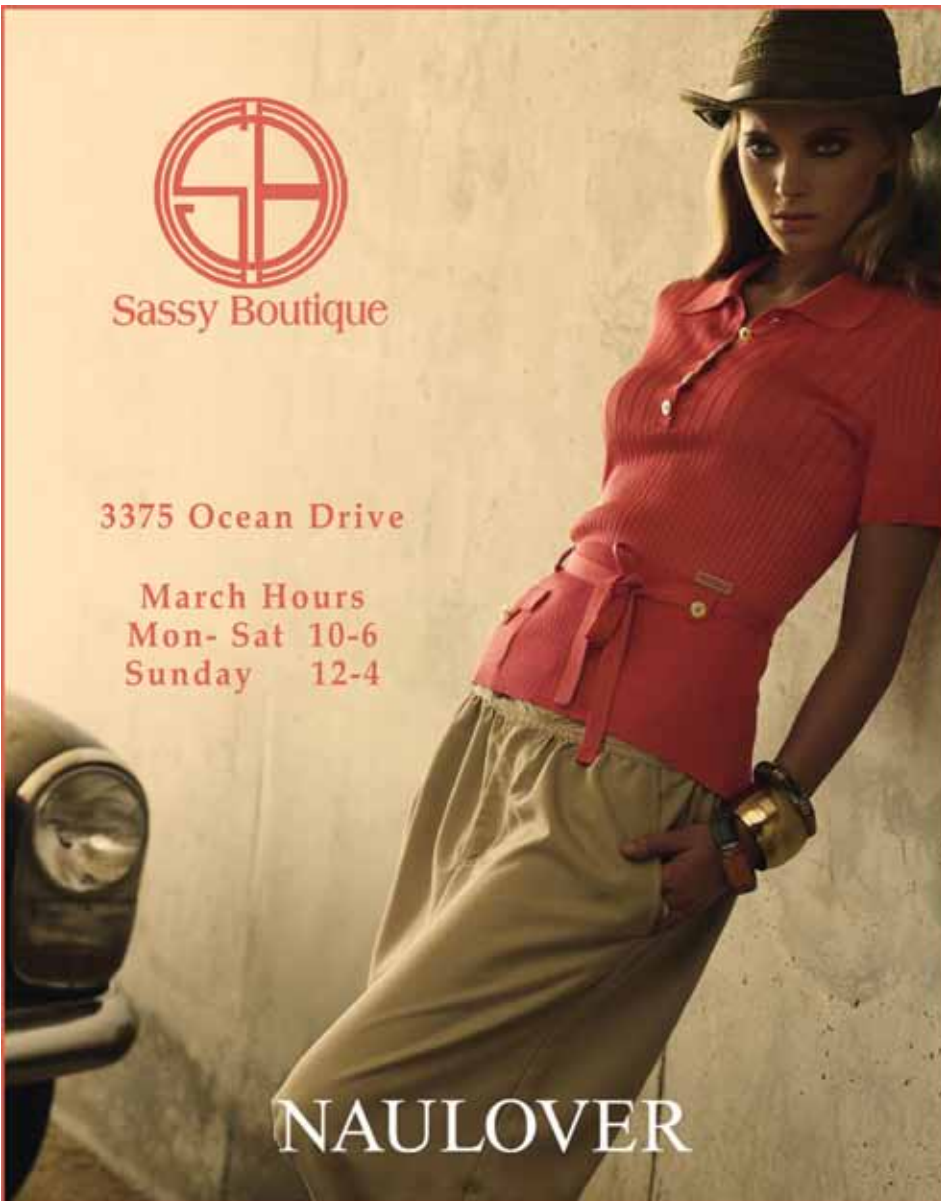
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Style

Old Spice speaks to the ladies, man

BY ADAM TSCHORN
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Since launching online just over a month ago, Old Spice's "Smell like a man, man" commercial has been a viral Internet sensation; the original 30-second ad had logged 4.3 million hits by late last week, making it the sixth-most watched YouTube video of the last 30 days, and it caused a nine-fold increase in monthly traffic to OldSpice.com in February.

You'd need to be barricaded in your man cave to have missed the suave fellow with the six-pack abs, towel wrapped around his waist, who steps out of the shower and brandishes a bottle of body wash. The ads have run as part of movie theater previews too.

"Hello ladies," he says. "Look at your man. Now back to me. Now back at your man. Now back to me. Sadly, he isn't me. But if he stopped using lady-scented body wash and switched to Old Spice, he could smell like he's me."

That's Isaiah Mustafa, actor and former pro football player, who, in over-the-top mock earnestness, exhorts males of the species to drop the girlie goop and "smell like a man, man."

One moment he's on a boat, brandishing an oyster filled with "tickets to that thing you like" the next, he's got a handful of diamonds.

The 30-second ad, packed with quirky wink-and-a-nudge humor, ends with a camera pulling back, revealing the shirtless Mustafa on horseback. He then — quite unnecessarily — tells us, "I'm on a horse."

It's a combination of witty ad copy and over-the-top delivery that, since its debut Feb. 4 on the Old Spice Facebook fan page, has spawned parodies, a Twitter #imonahorse hashtag, an on-



line campaign to land Mustafa a "Sat- The ad starring Isaiah Mustafa, an actor and former pro football player, has logged more than 4 million hits on YouTube. Photo: Procter & Gamble

urday Night Live" hosting gig and even an entry in UrbanDictionary.com.

But perhaps what's most notable — especially given that the 73-year-old brand's clipper ship and hoary sea captain have long made it seem like the unofficial scent of older male relatives everywhere — is who it's aimed at.

"In recent memory we haven't targeted women directly," Old Spice's brand manager James Moorhead said. "So our goal was to find a way to reach out to them."

We wanted an ad that men and women would enjoy together." It's significant that it ran in theaters on Valentine's Day and that before airing on television, it was released to Old Spice's Facebook fan page "where we can tell that a quarter of the fans are female," Moorhead noted.

It would be easy to contrast it with the other 800-pound gorilla of the body wash market, Unilever's Axe brand, which, according to research firm Mintel International Group, owns the biggest share of the mass retail market (with \$51.1 million in sales

for the year ending last August; Old Spice High Endurance and Old Spice Red Zone accounted for \$44.8 million). Especially with Axe's reputation for risqué taglines and ads filled with sexy women and props like tennis and soccer balls.

Especially when Old Spice's Facebook page also throws in a Web application called "My Perpetual Love," which, Mustafa explains in an accompanying video, offers men the opportunity to be "more like him" by e-mailing their females and tweeting their sweets a continual string of virtual love notes.

(Sample: "You are the apple of my eye, not the one in my lunch. That'd be cannibalism.")

But the creative team at Portland, Ore., based Wieden + Kennedy, the ad agency that's been helping the Procter & Gamble-owned brand reach the armpits of America by aiming at the funny bone for the last three years, denies that it has Axe in particular in the cross hairs.

"There are a couple different brands out there," said Wieden + Kennedy's Eric Baldwin, one of the creative directors behind the ads.

"This was more of an acknowledgment that a lot of times, it's the girlfriend or significant others that are doing the purchasing. So we thought a dual message would be effective."

Also key in reaching both sexes is

leveraging the laugh factor. "Categories like deodorants and body washes tend to be what we call 'low involvement,'" Moorhead said. "So humor is a great way to spark interest and create a deeper connection with the brand."

Wieden + Kennedy's efforts there extend far beyond the print and video ad campaigns.

As Old Spice's "digital agency of record," it manages the Facebook page, Twitter feed and extremely humorous online product descriptions.

Claims like: "Even if you lit yourself on fire and stood in the blast radius of a nuclear bomb, this stuff would not stop working," might not exactly pass muster with truth in advertising laws but sure make a memorable impression.

Old Spice's Moorhead says it's too early to tell how the popularity of the new ad will translate into sales.

"We feel it's got tremendous legs and that it's going to lead to strong business results," was all he'd say. But the brand doesn't appear to be resting on its scented laurels.

"We just launched a line of [antiperspirant] scents named after places you might want to go," he said. "They've got names like Matterhorn, Fiji, Denali and Cyprus."

Although no one was willing to discuss the upcoming marketing campaign for that, we have an idea that might work:

The camera focuses in on Isaiah Mustafa in the middle of a blizzard. He's wearing lederhosen and no shirt, and has a feather in his Tyrolean hat and a rope clenched in his teeth.

"Hello, ladies, I'm scaling the summit of the Matterhorn."

"And I'm on a horse."

Pets

'Henry Higgins' finds his fair lady and a loving home



Henry's pursuit of a squirrel takes him up a tree.

Photos: Gail Cohen

BY CISSY SUMNER
COLUMNIST

Seven years ago, John's Island resident Gigi Smithers found herself dogless. Not willing to commit to full time pet care, Smithers thought dog sitting might suit her needs.

Enter Henry Higgins, a handsome Norwich terrier in need of attention. Henry's owner had been going through some major life changes and poor Henry's needs were not being met. After two days in Smithers' care, Henry claimed this fair lady as his own and never went back.

Henry came to Smithers with a host of health problems. Henry is subject to seizures and had eye and heart prob-

lems. With the help of a holistic veterinarian and tender loving care, Henry overcame his problems and turned into a handsome healthy dog.

Norwich terriers were bred in England for their ability to hunt small vermin. Henry is a true example of his ancestry and is a dedicated squirrel hunter. Smithers and Henry patrol MacWilliams Park searching for squirrels to chase. Smithers helps as the spotter and Henry is in charge of pursuit. While Henry will climb the occasional tree, he has never successfully captured any squirrels.

Henry was just over 3 years old when he came into Smithers' life. Now at 11, this former Mayor of the dog park is slowing down. He has become selective with his playmates. He still likes to



Henry and Gigi at the dog park

be around the dog park, but avoids big dogs and rough play. Henry loves children, in fact, he loves all people, and is a regular attendee to many beachside events.

Little did Smithers know that her temporary dog walking job would lead

to a lifetime of love with Henry Higgins.

Is your pet an Island Pet? Email Cissy Sumner, CPDT-KA at bddogtraining@bellsouth.net to nominate your pet!

YOUR PET'S HEALTH

By Dr. Randy Divine and Dr. Laura Baldwin



Question: I've decided to adopt a new puppy after losing my loyal companion of 16 years. It's been a long time since I have had a puppy. Where do I begin?

The most important thing for new pet's are wellness exams. Many genetic disorders may be diagnosed early like orthopedic diseases and heart disease so that early treatment is possible and preventative measures may be taken to extend pet's lives. Divine Animal Hospital offers complete physical exams including orthopedic evaluation, otoscopic exam with digital Welch Allyn otoscopes to allow for excellent visualization of the ear canal and ear drum, screening ECG, blood pressure, and vaginocopy in females in addition to routine examination. A thorough exam is the most important part of your pets annual vaccination and examination regime. Pets cannot tell us about the symptoms they're experiencing that may be signs of serious illness. We often have to look past the surface to understand our pet's health.

We review all vaccinations previously given and make recommendations for booster vaccinations if needed. We will help you choose vaccinations based on your pet's risk category. We also talk about spaying/neutering, nutrition, and behavioral training.

Your pet's first exam is a great time to preform baseline blood testing. This enables us to measure any changes for the rest of your pet's life. Studies have shown 15% of pets that seem healthy by physical exam alone have underlying problems that can only be detected by testing. Doing regular wellness exams over your pet's lifetime helps us to find and intercept potential health problems before they have a chance to threaten your pet's well being. Many common diseases in pets including obesity, diabetes, and kidney disease are easily treatable or manageable if they are caught early enough.

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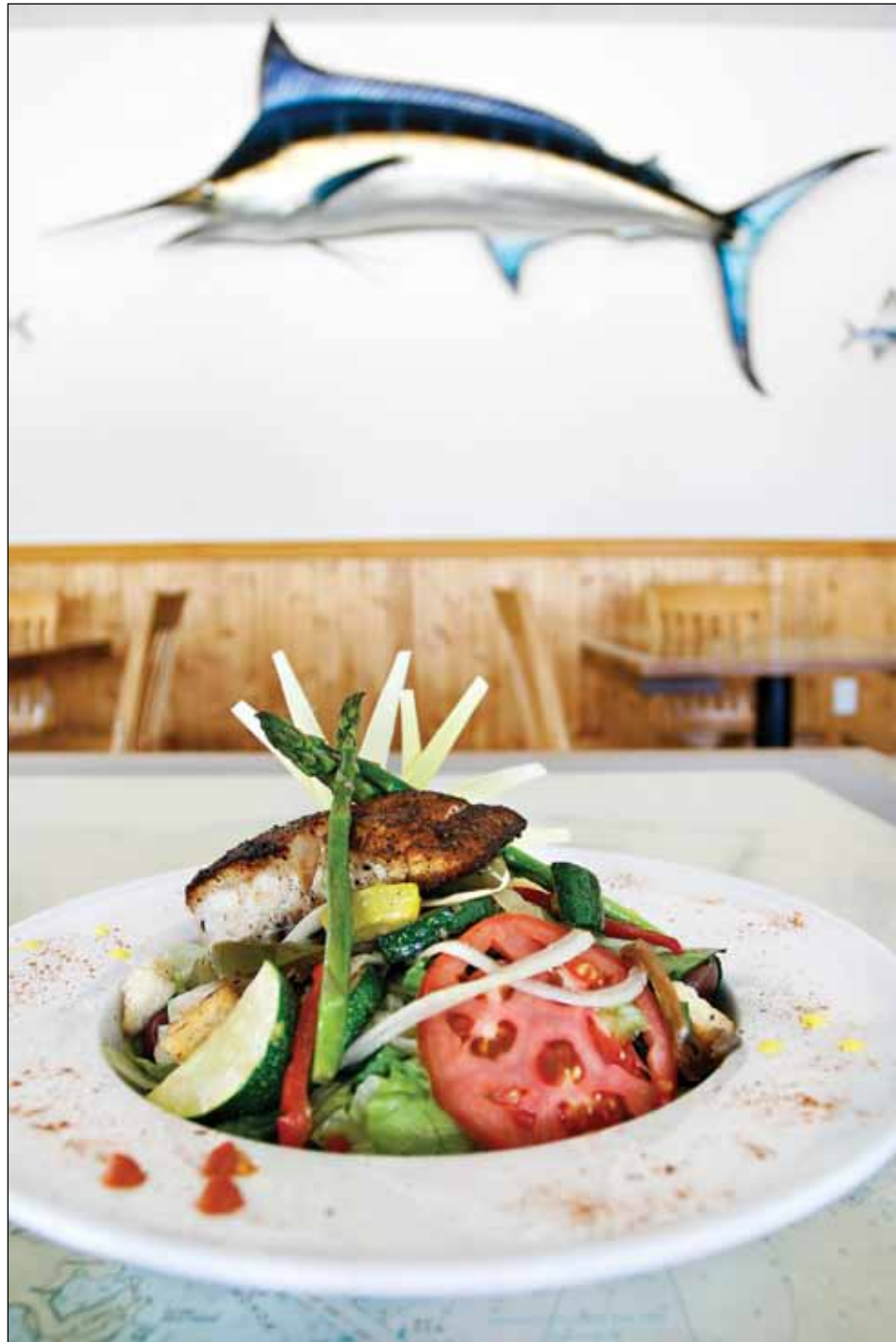
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Dining

Restaurant Review

Long Point Café: Fresh fish for dinner, two nights a week



Fresh, blackened dolphin, mixed greens salad with sautéed vegetables.

Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.

BY TINA RONDEAU
COLUMNIST

A mile and a half north of the bridge over the Sebastian Inlet, a roadside café next to a bait-and-tackle shop serves breakfast and lunch six days a week to campers at the adjacent Long Point Park, fishermen and an assortment of locals.

But on Fridays and Saturdays, the Long Point Café also serves dinner to a pretty much full house which increasingly includes visitors from our barrier island community.

While we would not be inclined to rate this among the area's top restaurants, two nights a week, the Long Point Café proves it is hard to go

wrong when you are serving really, really fresh fish. And the fish served at the Long Point—generally dolphin and grouper—are as fresh as it gets.

The restaurant, which you can easily miss driving north toward Melbourne on A1A, turns out to be more tastefully decorated than you would guess from the road, with blonde wood tables and chairs spaced nicely in a room adorned with an assortment of mounted gamefish.

On a recent visit earlier this month, we somehow failed to receive the complementary Florida smoked fish dip—a spicy specialty of the Long Point—and started our meals with soups.

Our companion and I enjoyed the



Airy dining room at the Long Point Café

shell fish bisque (\$4.25), and my husband had the fish chowder (\$4.25). The bisque was creamy smooth and tasty; the pale and lumpy chowder, however, even with bacon bits sprinkled on top, was a fairly tasteless affair (though somewhat better after the addition of considerable salt). Go for the shell fish bisque.

For main courses, I ordered the salmon and shrimp entrée (\$22), a six-ounce filet of wild-caught North Atlantic salmon; my husband ordered the fish of the day, a grilled piece of grouper (\$24). Our companion had the day's special, a pesto marinated shrimp risotto (\$20) with sun-dried tomatoes.

The consensus was that my husband had the better of the entrées, a gorgeous filet of the whitest grouper imaginable. It couldn't have been fresher and only a splash of lemon was needed.

I would give my salmon and shrimp dish a mixed review. The salmon was excellent; the shrimp served on a skewer might have been good, but they had not been properly deveined and some were sandy. The seafood was accompanied by a very tasty medley of al dente vegetables.

The day's special also was very flavorful, though it should have been called something other than risotto. The rice was clearly not the Arborio most commonly associated with risotto—nor was it Carnaroli or Vialone Nano. We inquired what type of rice had been used, and after first being told it was a secret (?), were informed it was arroso (kind of sounded like someone in the kitchen decided to see if we recognized the Spanish word for rice with an added "o.")

With the pesto and sun-dried tomatoes, the special was a nice dish and these shrimp were tasty—but it simply was not a risotto.

For dessert, I ordered a Boston

cream pie (the chocolate syrup on top left something to be desired), while my husband and companion enjoyed a very good Key Lime pie. The Long Point gets their Key Lime pie from the Florida Key Lime Pie Company of Cocoa, which also provides Key Lime pie to several locations on our island.

Dinner for three with a modest but decent bottle of wine (the Long

Point has a pretty modest wine list) came to about \$110 before tip.

If you are craving good fresh seafood, are looking for a change from Vero restaurants, and want to go somewhere new on a Friday or Saturday night (keep in mind they are only open two nights a week), the Long Point Café is worth a try—particularly if you live toward the northern end of our barrier island.

It's not a "must visit" like the 12A Buoy in Fort Pierce, which we reviewed two weeks ago. But if you try the Long Point, you are likely to leave happy. Be sure to call ahead for a reservation.

PS. The breakfasts here—which we have not tried—sound extremely interesting. One of their specialties is the Eggs Benedict Grouper, where fresh grouper substitutes for the ham. I don't feel too confident about this, but I am increasingly thinking I have to try it.

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

When is a California Zinfandel not a Zinfandel?

BY W. BLAKE GRAY
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Zinfandel is often called California's indigenous wine, but its story is not that simple. Some of the best Zinfandel-based wines from the state's best and most historic vineyards can't use the grape name on their labels.

In these bottles, Zinfandel leads a supporting cast of grapes in a traditional blend that is now outright discouraged—both by federal law and a skeptical market.

Those who love these wines say that while Zinfandel may be the star of these vineyards, it's even better with a supporting cast. "Zinfandel's like Beyoncé: She's beautiful, she's talented, but the women dancing behind her, they're not bad either," says JC Cellars winemaker Jeff Cohn.

The story goes back before Prohibition, but is causing controversy today. According to federal law, for a wine to be called Zinfandel or any other varietal name, it must contain at least 75% wine from that grape. The law is designed to protect consumers, but one consequence is that it has created several generations of American wine drinkers who believe a varietal wine is always better than a blend.

That's certainly not the case when it comes to old-vine, single-vineyard Zinfandel. In fact, it's a denial of California history. When these historic vineyards were planted a hundred years ago and more, grapes were almost never planted purely by variety. Zin was almost never planted by itself; it was planted in a mix of vines called a "field blend."

A few of those vineyards endure, and they are a source of some of the most interesting—and authentically Californian—wines in the state.

"We've always found that the mixed vineyards are better than the straight Zinfandel vineyards," says Ridge Vineyards vice president of vineyard operations David Gates. "They have greater depth of flavor. We pick all the grapes together and co-ferment them all together."

Yet the biggest organization of Zinfandel producers in the state, Zinfandel Advocates and Producers, or ZAP, forbids wines not labeled "Zinfandel" from being poured at its events.

At a ZAP tasting in San Francisco in January, some of the state's most famous wineries, including Ridge and Ravenswood, broke the group's rules and poured field blends anyway.

"Field blends would be California's



Morgan Twain-Peterson, left, makes a Bedrock Heirloom Wine that's half Zin. His dad, Joel Peterson, makes a Ravenswood wine labeled Zinfandel

main wine if it wasn't for Prohibition," says Ravenswood winemaker Joel Peterson. "This is a topic whose time has come."

In this state, Zinfandel historically was the main grape, valued for its large crops (from young vines), resistance to heat and cheerful red fruit flavors.

But growers usually also planted Petite Sirah for body, Alicante Bouschet for color and thick handling-resistant skin, Carignane for perfumey high notes and any number of other grapes for various reasons, including simply to hedge their bet on what would ripen best.

Most of those old field-blend vineyards have been grafted over multiple times to follow the whims of the varietal market. But a few have been maintained—mostly in Sonoma County—and are now a precious resource as they hold some of the oldest vines in the state.

Joel Peterson and his son Morgan Twain-Peterson own one such vineyard, called Bedrock. Twain-Peterson, currently writing his Master of Wine dissertation on field blends, calls it one of the four greatest old vineyards in Sonoma Valley, along with Monte Rosso, Old Hill Ranch and Pagani Ranch.

Bedrock has the most interesting history.

It was originally planted in 1854 by William Tecumseh Sherman and Joe Hooker, who would become better known in the next decade as Civil War generals. After the root louse phylloxera treated the grapevines like Sherman treated the South, in 1888 the vineyard was replanted by George Hearst, father of media mogul William Randolph Hearst.

Twain-Peterson says he has identified 18 grape varieties in the 152-acre

vineyard, which his family bought in 2005, and he's not sure he's found them all yet. But the main grape is, of course, Zinfandel.

Peterson makes a Ravenswood wine labeled as Zinfandel from Bedrock Vineyard, and it's excellent: great black cherry fruit, a pretty, perfumey aroma and a long finish.

But Twain-Peterson, proprietor of Bedrock Wine Co. at age 29, makes an even more interesting wine

because he doesn't separate the Zin grapes. Calling it "Bedrock Heirloom Wine," Twain-Peterson estimates that it's 50% Zinfandel, 25% Carignane and 25% "other stuff," including Mourvèdre, Syrah, Alicante Bouschet, Petite Sirah and whatever else looks ripe

when the pickers arrive.

It's a tremendous wine, spicy and complex, with red and black fruit flavors along with exotic notes of cinnamon and turmeric and a fascinating aroma that would put an expensive cognac to shame. "This is the quintessential California wine," Twain-Peterson says.

ZAP is not rushing to support field blend producers. Its board of directors had a heated debate last year before ruling that promoting field blends—would detract from the group's promotion of Zinfandel.

"ZAP has worked since 1991 to get people to figure out what Zinfandel is," Twain-Peterson says. "In 1991, putting Zinfandel on a bottle of red wine was a step of courage. Mixed blacks are the next level of discussion."

Fortunately for field blend fans, the past is not dying with the vines. Several growers are planting more of them.

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Dining

Kinder, gentler green garlic mellows out the menu

LOS ANGELES TIMES

Long before “Twilight” and “True Blood” and the Modern Age of Vampires, garlic was used as a talisman: a panacea against bad spirits in the Middle Ages and against illness during the Crusades. Even those of us who happily load our soups and stews with dozens of the pale cloves can tell why it was hung across doorways to prevent entrance. Mature garlic can be overwhelming, even relentless; a single raw clove minced on a board is capable of determining the course of an entire meal, whether you want it to or not.

But imagine garlic without its bite, the autocracy of its properties calmed, even made subtle. You don’t need a spell for this one, just a farmer.

Green garlic, also called young garlic, is exactly what it sounds like: the green shoots of immature garlic bulbs that have been picked early. A pile of the delicate stalks discovered on a market stand in the early weeks of spring can seem like a sudden gift, a dirt-clad promise of fava beans and English peas and the approaching burst of full-on spring produce.

But when home cooks and restaurant chefs started grabbing up the piles of green garlic, many farmers turned the accidental crop into a purposeful one, often planting extra rows just for early harvest.

Green garlic, a handful of which resembles a bunch of shapely scallions, is delicate in flavor, with the dominant notes of mature garlic restrained. Imagine the platonic ideal of garlic rather than the squat overlord that usually sits in your dry goods bin.

Unlike full-grown bulbs of garlic — which have been dried and come papered with thin layers of husks, as if they’ve been wrapped in parchment — green garlic can be used in its entirety. The long green stalks, the pale tender bulbs, even the roots can be eaten. Just wash them carefully; as with leeks, another allium, the dirt that engenders the plants can become embedded between the layers as they grow.

Especially if it’s quite young, treat green garlic like you would scallion, mincing the whole stalk and adding it to omelets, stir-fries and soups. It’s even mild enough to add raw to salads. The garlic flavor will be there, but as background music, able to accompany other flavors rather than override



A single raw clove of garlic minced on a board is capable of determining the course of an entire meal, whether you want it to or not.

them. When cooked, green garlic mellows further, becoming even sweeter and slightly nutty.

Evan Funke, chef de cuisine of Santa Monica’s Rustic Canyon Wine Bar & Seasonal Kitchen, uses the season’s first bunches of green garlic to make soup, loading the broth with it and adding it to the soup’s delicate bread-and-ricotta dumplings.

Funke, who trained in Italy, first sautés the whole green garlic stalks in olive oil and then chops them and mixes them into the dumplings, called strangolapretti, or “priest stranglers,” which he poaches in the garlic soup. Sautéing the garlic in the hot pan not only wilts the stalks but also caramelizes them slightly, bringing out nutty, earthy flavors.

Funke loves the adaptability of green garlic and tries to take advantage of the short time it’s in the markets. Early spring can come in mid-February in Southern California, and green garlic is usually gone by April. Funke puts it into soups like the one with strangolapretti, or pairs it with diver scallops and chickpeas, or makes salsa verde from it. Funke also dredges the carefully washed roots in a little cornstarch and deep-fries them, then adds the fried roots to dishes as an unusual garnish.

Mélie chef-owner Josiah Citrin, whose restaurant is a few blocks from Rustic Canyon and who, like Funke, shops at the nearby Santa Monica farmers market, likes to use green garlic too. That’s in contrast with mature garlic, which he dislikes so much that when he uses it in his restaurant, he triple-blanches it first. Green garlic is another thing entirely, and Citrin will match it with seafood, making a

mousseline out of the greens for his loup de mer.

That you can so easily pair green garlic with delicately flavored fish tells you a lot about the mild beauty of the plant. Sautéed next to a fillet of skin-on wild sockeye salmon in the olive oil that is being used to baste the fish — a technique learned from Providence restaurant’s chef-owner Michael Cimarusti — the green garlic infuses the oil with subtle flavor. Toss into the pan a few blanched fava beans, which hit the early-spring stalls at about the same time as the garlic, and you have a lovely, deeply colorful dish.

Green garlic also suits pasta, particularly whole wheat spaghetti, the nutty flavor of which highlights the mellow garlic. Instead of mincing the garlic, sauté the stalks whole so they intertwine with the pasta when tossed with it in a bowl. Top colorful plates of pasta and green garlic with eggs fried in the garlic-laced oil — and an abundant amount of coarse black pepper

and sea salt — and you have a rustic dish that takes only about 15 minutes to make.

Although farmers can grow garlic year-round, it’s usually planted in the fall and harvested in late spring, which means that green garlic will appear for a month or two at most in early spring.

Peter Schaner of Schaner Family Farm plants California white garlic and Peruvian pink garlic and pulls the young garlic plants from the fields as early as January and as late as June, however. Crates of young garlic, emerald green and with dirt still clinging to them, were stacked near his market stall on a recent morning in Santa Monica. Schaner doesn’t plant specifically for the green garlic that’s drawing a small crowd of chefs to the back of his truck. “It’s all the same. I just pick it earlier,” he says.

A few stalls down, Barbara Spencer of Windrose Farm brings green garlic from her Paso Robles fields, where she plants a crop expressly to harvest it early. Spencer says they plant small whole bulbs, using up the little bulbs that are too small to sell. Because of the colder climate where she and her husband, Bill, farm, they begin their harvest later than the Schaners do. “Let’s call it March, maybe April,” Spencer says, with the circumspect view of a farmer.

Unlike mature garlic, which requires caution and even avoidance (think full sun and the sign of the cross), green garlic can be used with cheerful abandon.

Load your market basket with the stuff, fill your soup pot, decorate the threshold of your kitchen. Green as grass, garlic is an invitation to dinner.

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On Faith

Don't go down with the ship if you're at wit's end



BY REV. DRs. CASEY AND BOB BAGGETT
COLUMNISTS

Not long ago we ran across the curious tale of the ship, Pelicano. As author Max Lucado tells it, from 1986 to 1988 the Pelicano sailed the seas in search of a port, but no one allowed her to dock. Why? The problem lay in the fact that her cargo was 15,000 tons of trash. This was the trash which had accumulated in the summer of 1986, when Philadelphia's municipal workers went on strike. The trash piled higher and higher, and all domestic sites refused it. So it was burned and placed in the belly of the Pelicano. Though the ship's owners thought they could unload their cargo somewhere, they were turned away from every port. Finally, having exhausted all options, the owners of the Pelicano were at wit's end. They simply sunk the ship in the sea.

Now, we may never be ship owners with such undesirable cargo, but many of us probably have experienced the feeling of being overloaded, bogged down, overwhelmed, and encumbered by a mess not even of our own making. We may even feel we have been going from port to port, seeking help to get rid of the mess, but no one is willing or able to relieve us of it. Like the owners of the Pelicano, we may find ourselves at wit's end, and fear the only solution is to go down with the cargo of concerns we carry.

Well, before we sink under the stress of the situation, we might consider some of the timeless insights Rev. Raymond Holcomb offers. His advice is deceptively simple, but we think, incredibly wise. He suggests these three faithful remedies to apply in the face of paralyzing circumstances.

First, when you find yourself at wit's end with nowhere else to turn, get back to meaningful work. Life was not created by God to be stagnant. When we humans set to work, every fiber in us, mental, spiritual and physical, stretches, strengthens and grows. But let us become idle, and we begin to decline. A dependable antidote to despair is purposeful activity.

Secondly, when we are wit's end and don't know what to do for ourselves,

we can get busy doing something for someone else. The great psychiatrist, Alfred Adler, used to tell his depressed patients that in a short two weeks they might be cured, not by medication, not by therapy, not by any other active intervention on their behalf, but by thinking every day of some way to help someone else.

We may feel we have little to offer

others, and yet a tiny gift of hope, love, or friendship could make all the difference to someone else. And when we effect such a change for someone's life, our lives are blessed, too.

Finally, when we reach our wit's end, we can embrace faith more fully. True, religious devotion is often called into question in difficult times. But our belief is the clearest way back from wit's

end. Or as one patient and trusting believer put it: "If your knees knock, kneel on them!"

Remember, even when we think we are at wit's end, no problem of ours is beyond the wisdom and the power and the love of the God. So don't go down with the ship... get to work, help someone else, and trust in the God you know and love to see you through.

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St. Eds

St. Ed's baseball team past 'growing pains'

BY RON HOLUB
COLUMNIST

The growing pains that St. Edward's School varsity baseball team went through last season have one short year later been eliminated with improvement on the field and bigger numbers in the win column.

Sporting a 6-3 mark heading into a 20-day layoff for interim week and spring break, the Pirates have 14 more regular season games between March 24 and the opening round of district playoffs April 26th. It will take only one more win to surpass their victory total from a year ago, when they finished at 6-15.

Seven key returnees from the corps that struggled through 2009 have already established a solid backbone for the team through the early part of 2010. This group is hardly a bunch of graybeards with only one senior on the lean 10-man starting lineup plus one, roster. An assortment of seventh and eighth graders from the middle school

team will be brought-up to fill in for bench strength and utility duty. Depth could be an Achilles heel at some point.

Athletes can wilt in the face of harsh experiences, or work hard to improve their game. Although these core veterans were bruised by tough competition in the past, the way they have responded so far this season indicates that this is a baseball team on the rise.

Fourth year coach Jim Peters believes that the talent on the field has developed to a level that allows for an instructional surge on the mental aspects of the game. "We were in almost every game last year except for giving up the big inning," Peters said. "You could see the guys dropping their heads and losing confidence. That's what a young team has to avoid."

The coach wants to shore up the smarts in all phases of the game on every pitch. He believes sound mental preparation enhances performance on the mound, with the glove and in the batter's box.

"The pitching staff is ready to take

the next step," Peters explained. "They're fine athletically. Assistant coach Rusty Meacham (former pro) helps our pitchers by teaching about command and pitch selection in certain situations. That's all about growth and staying close in tight ball games."

Sophomores Jared Jillson and Jay Schulte, freshman Anderson Proctor and senior Danny Ordenez form the four-man starting rotation. Ordenez and junior Collier Proctor provide the primary bullpen help, but it can be all hands on deck depending on game circumstances and recent work loads.

One of the biggest sore spots last year was a defense that kicked the ball around way too much and had a tendency to toss it away when someone finally did pick it up. That will be a work in progress again this year, and once again Peters plans to use the cerebral option.

"With a small roster, you don't have players in set positions all the time," said Peters. "Everyone on the field must be ready on every single pitch and not

get caught off-guard. We want them on the balls of their feet and taking creep steps, not back on their heels."

A series of chess moves shuffles the defense at the start of every game and with every pitching change. Toiling on the hill removes Jillson from short, Schulte from behind the plate, Anderson Proctor from first or third, and Ordenez from covering center field. Those guys are all accomplished position players.

Good pitching stops good hitting more often than not, so mind games tend to be most pronounced when batters dig in at the plate. "You get three strikes to hit with," Peters urges his hitters. "Don't swing at the pitcher's pitch (if the count is in your favor)." Something as simple as good communication from batter-to-batter about what a pitcher is throwing can lead to the quality at-bats that the coach would like to see.

The starting lineup of Collier Proc

CONTINUED ON PAGE 74

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St. Eds

tor, Ordonez, Jillson, Schulte, junior Connor Rodman, Anderson Proctor, and juniors Chris French, Tim Smith and Randy Tilton has been collectively productive in terms of on-base percentage. Five of the nine have reached base at least half the time.

That, of course, sets the table for some crooked numbers on the scoreboard. The Pirates have scored eight or more runs in each of their six wins.

Collier Proctor leads the way with a .440 batting average from the top of the order. Four more are at .300 or better. Jay Schulte has two homers, including a grand slam, and 14 RBI's. Rodman, the Proctor brothers and Jillson have all had big run producing games.

All four starting hurlers have recorded at least one win, with Schulte and Anderson Proctor bagging two each. Amazingly, Jillson, Schulte and Ordonez have all fired one-hitters. Not to be overshadowed, Anderson Proctor has 18 K's and a team low 2.40 ERA across 15 innings. Ordonez takes the "fireman-of-the-first-nine-games" award with two saves.

As the lone senior and team captain, Ordonez has embraced a quiet leadership role on the field and in the dugout. "I try to lead by example," he



Anderson Proctor helps pitch the Pirates to a towering 22-2 win over Lake Worth Christian School.

Photo: Tom McCarthy Jr.

said. "It really doesn't matter where I play on the field or where I bat in the lineup just as long as I'm helping the team in some way. It's a young team,

but it's also one of the more mature teams I've played on. We have fun on and off the field, but when it's game time we are determined to do well."

Jillson projects an attitude essential for a number one starter on any pitching staff. "I'm able to see a guy on the other team and get him out without any help," he said, referring to staring down a hitter from sixty feet, six inches away. When it doesn't always work out like that for the sophomore, he finds other ways to contribute off the hill by banging out hits from the heart of the batting order and with slick fielding up the middle at shortstop.

Schulte energizes the team in his role as a one-man battery. He bats clean-up and catches when he isn't pitching. He has the only two round trippers for St. Ed's so far this season, and he really enjoys touching them all. "It feels good when you make solid contact and really hit it far," said Schulte. "It's kind of like seeing a big watermelon when you hit it just right. Jogging around the bases, seeing the team come out and cheer you on, it's just a good feeling altogether." Schulte credits assistant coach Todd Mosel with helping to fine tune his swing.

Schulte alternates between pitching and donning the "tools of intelligence" but he will always find himself penciled-in at number four in the batting order. "I'd like to think my hitting is a little better than my pitching," he said. "But my favorite position is definitely catching. You have to know every play and what to do with the ball at all times. It's kind of like being a quarterback on a football team."

Which brings us to the quarterback

of the football team. "I'd say we have some pretty good team chemistry," Collier Proctor offered. "We don't really have a weak link. We've even had a few middle school kids play with us and their abilities have really impressed me. I'm pretty positive about the outlook. We should be good the rest of this year and even better next year."

Collier's younger brother Anderson impressed his coach as an eighth grader and is coming into his own as a freshman. "Coming up (to the varsity) last year I really didn't know what to expect," Anderson said. Then I got used to the pitching and started hitting the ball really well. It just all fell into place." Juniors Conner Rodman and Chris French have transferred back to St. Ed's following sophomore years at other schools. Both attended St. Ed's as freshmen. "I came back this year and our team has improved a lot," Rodman said. "The players have all matured and gotten stronger. I feel good about our team this year. I think we can go pretty far."

Coach Peters agrees. He has a talented and versatile stable of players who are amenable to coaching and willing to work hard in practice. The guys trust their instincts and abilities, yet they have bought into the value of mental acuity.

"We have a very good nucleus going right now and a very good coaching staff (Meacham, Mosel, Dean Mays and Ross Partee)," Peters stated. "I'm very happy with the program. We are in a tough district (13-2A) with John Carroll, King's Academy and American Heritage, all state powers. But we are going to have a good future here."

Living

Supersizing it – not just for food anymore

BY MARY MACVEAN
LOS ANGELES TIMES

It can be a bit delicate to ask a furniture shopper: "Oh, sir, um, maybe, ah, you'd like to see something a bit, hmmm, sturdier?"

We are as a sitting-in-chairs public, big. Bigger than we ought to be, health authorities frequently tell us. And bigger than many standard chairs of years past were made to hold comfortably.

So the scale of furniture has increased over the last decade — to suit both the size of homes and the size of their occupants, said Max Shangle, professor and chairman of the furniture design department at Kendall College of Art and Design in Michigan.

Some plus-size furniture proudly flaunts its generous proportions, but in many cases, manufacturers and retailers rely on subtle marketing.

Shangle said he knew of a company that made a "wonderful" dining room table and chairs, but the chairs were a bit fragile. So the company added three other styles of seating, including a bench it said would suit families with children.

"In reality, the bench was for folks who wouldn't fit in the chair," Shangle said.

He also cited a popular "mother-daughter" chair, the chair-and-a-half advertised as a cozy spot for two people to sit. "I know full well the chair was also sold to folks for whom a single chair would be a little tight," he said.

Consider those inexpensive folding chairs parents often tote to their kids' soccer games, said Kevin McGrain, senior vice president and general brand manager of KingSize/BrylaneHome. His company did, and realized its customers could be left standing on the



Ikea's Poang chair made to hold up to 375 lbs.

sidelines.

So it introduced the Plus Size Living Collection last year that includes a portable cloth chair that the company said can hold up to 800 pounds.

"The initial response was phenomenal," McGrain said. The chair has a much stronger construction than the typical \$40 version — and hence a higher price tag, about \$100.

"It's just like apparel," McGrain said. "They don't want to look or feel any different than the regular customer."

Through furniture, observers can track changes over time in human size, home size and fashions. Chairs no longer need to accommodate hoop skirts, for example, and seat heights have gone up as humans have grown taller, Shangle said.

Of all American adults age 20 to 74, about 46% were overweight or obese in 1960, according to the National Center for Health Statistics. By 2005-06, that number had risen to about

73% for Americans 20 or older.

The growth of our girth has prompted the Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturer's Assn. to revise its test load standards used in the industry to evaluate product safety and durability. The standard for general purpose office chairs is now 250 pounds, up from 220.

"What we have noticed is people wanting bigger, more comfy, cozy sofas," said Heather Neubaur, manager at the Room & Board store in Culver City, who emphasized that the demand was driven by all consumers, not just heavy people.

Cushioning is just one of the issues in making furniture for heavy customers. Unlike the stereotype of pratfalls, a heavy person isn't likely to collapse a couch or an easy chair.

"I have yet to have a wood frame break," said Denis Devlin, store manager at Munro's Fine Furniture in Costa Mesa. "The biggest concern is the strength of the cushioning."

So for a person who weighs more than 300 pounds, a couch frame is best constructed with eight-way hand-tied coils, several experts said.

Width is another consideration. Take Finnish designer Alvar Aalto's classic 1933 Armchair 401, whose distinctive bent birch frame has a seat that's 62.5 centimeters wide. Then look at IKEA's popular Poang chair, nearly identical in form and launched about 40 years later. It's 68 centimeters wide, and the company's website said the chair was made to support up to 375 pounds.

Francois Bruneau's Canadian company, DFC Woodworks Inc., has for about a decade made an Adirondack chair called the Grand, with a 500-pound capacity and a seat that's 2 inches wider than first-class airplane

seats, he said.

"It came about from a dealer of mine," Bruneau said. "The dealer was a bit larger, and he wanted a chair for himself and his sister. We started building a custom chair for him, and we said, 'Wait a minute — there are a lot of bigger people out there.'"

Munro's sells a recliner made by the Norwegian company Ekornes that comes in small, medium and large — the largest designed to hold up to 300 pounds, Devlin said. Munro's also carries sturdy, elegant dining room furniture made by Amish craftsmen in Indiana that, while they don't have a stated weight capacity, could hold just about anyone, he said.

McGrain and others said Chinese factory-made furniture generally has a one-size-fits-all approach, leaving larger customers with few choices.

But even big international companies can adapt. When IKEA first crossed the ocean to the land of large more than 20 years ago, it was in for a bit of a shock.

It found that people were buying lots of vases, and the executives couldn't quite make sense of it, spokeswoman Janice Simonsen said. Eventually, it became clear that Americans were using them as glasses. She also relayed the story of an executive resorting to carrying a plastic Thanksgiving turkey back to headquarters to persuade the company to build larger dining room tables.

"The first year or two we didn't fully understand what our customer in the U.S. was looking for," Simonsen said from the company's U.S. headquarters in Conshohocken, Pa. "Why people prefer larger in the States I don't know. Is it that people are larger, or is it just preference? I couldn't say."

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Real Estate

Developer to put 5 Sea Oaks residences up for auction



Four condominiums in the Villas by the River at Sea Oaks are to be sold at auction Saturday.

Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.

BY LISA ZAHNER
STAFF WRITER

During what is shaping up to be a busy month for barrier island real estate, the rare opportunity to buy, at

auction, five brand-new properties is will occur this Saturday.

Sea Oaks developer Jacques Brion has hired Indian River Auction and Appraisal to market and sell four condominiums in the Villas by the River

section and one courtyard home at The Preserve at Sea Oaks.

Many real estate auctions end up being a bit of a let-down for buyers and sellers as sometimes nothing meets the seller's minimum reserve

and, at the end of the day, no one gets the keys to a new home.

"The buyers don't know for sure that something is going to happen," said Rick Baker, co-owner of Indian River Auction and Appraisal. "They

Real Estate

don't know if something is going to sell or not sell, so fewer buyers show up."

The format of this auction, however, could be called a hybrid between an absolute auction -- where the high bid, whatever it is, wins -- and one completely controlled by the seller's minimum reserve. The first auction will go to the highest bidder, regardless of price, according to Baker. The winner of that bid will have his or her choice of any of the five residences up for sale. Then the other four remaining properties will be auctioned subject to acceptance by Brion, the seller.

Baker will serve as the principal auctioneer and County Commissioner Wesley Davis, Baker's business partner, will work as associate auctioneer as the pair handles the selling off of the condos and courtyard home, which represent nearly all of Brion's original inventory of new construction.

"He wants to liquidate the remaining units that he has," Baker said. "He wants to sell all of the units at once."

Auctions can be nerve-wracking -- both for the bidders and the sellers -- but for the disinterested observer, it's just plain exciting to watch. There's the anticipation, the rapid-fire calling, the pacing in the ring, shifting and shrugging from the bidders. It's the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat, the sense that anything could happen.

"We do what I consider a real auction," Baker said, relying on his 16 years of experience. "It's open with the public bidding."

Davis agreed that every auctioneer's style and strategy is a little bit different. He said he and Baker have both been fielding a fair amount of calls about the auction, so they're looking forward to having a good crowd and putting their skills to the test -- bringing out the competitive



The fourth floor view from one of the Villas by the River condominiums looks out over the Indian River Lagoon.

nature in buyers, and therefore, the best possible prices for their client.

"The process we're using originated in Kentucky; it's 80 years old and it works no matter what we're selling," he said. "I truly feel that it's good for the buyer and good for the seller."

Five properties might be a pretty big deal for the barrier island, but Baker and Davis have moved much more in one go -- their record is 455 individual parcels in a single day's auction in Okeechobee. Last month, they sold seven parcels in one auction.

"The auction method, when you have multiple properties, it cleans it

all up quickly and neatly," said Davis, who started in the auction business 10 years ago.

To get the best possible result for Brion, his auctioneers have used mail, email and print advertising to entice buyers and brokers across Florida's east coast to visit Sea Oaks on Saturday.

"The auction process is an old process," Baker said. "And if it's done right, you address the needs of the buyer and you're up front with them, the prices will go toward the market value."

Local Realtor Bill Baysura, an associate with Dale Sorensen Real Estate,

has sold several condos at Sea Oaks in the past few years and he said the community has a lot to offer. He said the Beach Club is a big draw with clients who look at Sea Oaks, as well as the fact that the club has a new chef who has been getting rave reviews. Other amenities that make Sea Oaks attractive are the laid-back style of living, the half-mile of beach that is currently being replenished and the prime location on the barrier island.

With the Atlantic Ocean on the east, the Indian River Lagoon on the west, the Cairns Conservation Area to the south and Disney's Vero Beach Resort to the north, Sea Oaks is located just

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Real Estate



A bedroom at Villas by the River offers a third floor view of the Indian River Lagoon.



Granite countertops and stainless steel appliances adorn the kitchens in the four condominiums in Villas by the River.

south of the Wabasso Causeway and is fringed by beach. The website describes it as "a one of a kind community in an unspoiled natural setting. Sea Oaks offers a relaxed and unpretentious lifestyle."

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The Courtyard Home at the Preserve features a ceramic-tiled kitchen and custom cabinetry.

ing lighted courts, a tennis clubhouse with fitness center, pro shop and three on-staff tennis professionals for instruction and tournaments.

It has a Georgian style oceanfront clubhouse with fine dining, oceanfront pool and community activities. Apart from the Beach Club, there are one dozen private pools scattered throughout the community, both on the ocean and river.

Within the gates of Sea Oaks are three restaurants and a 48-slip marina which can accommodate vessels up to 40 feet.

What's for sale, what's selling

Four condominiums in Villas by the River are being auctioned off. They are units 1, 2, 4 and 6 at 8875 W. Orchid Island Circle. All four units are three bedroom, three bath condos with 2,500 square feet of living space and a private two-car garage for storage. They all feature granite counter-

tops, stainless steel kitchen appliances, crown moldings and wraparound terraces with a view of the Indian River Lagoon.

The Courtyard Home at the Preserve is located at 1353 Winding Oaks Circle West and is a three bedroom, three and one-half bath house with a den and a guest house.

It is a two-story home with a total of 2,650 square feet under air in the main house, 258 square feet under air in the guesthouse and a 502-square foot garage. It is masonry construction, has a private, walled courtyard with pavers, French doors and hurricane panels.

One of the very homey features is the breakfast nook in the ceramic-tiled kitchen with custom cabinetry throughout.

"I think the Courtyard home will be a great buy: new construction in a great community on the barrier island," Baysura said. "The condos that are going to be auctioned are great

Real Estate



The master bathroom at the Courtyard Home at the Preserve



The Courtyard home features a private, walled courtyard.

construction and finishings, but probably not the best views in Sea Oaks."

Baysura said both he and his clients who have properties for sale at Sea Oaks are watching the auction closely and he has at least one Sea Oaks resident and investor in barrier island properties who might jump in and bid if it looks like he can get a deal.

Baker said other Sea Oaks residents who know the values to be had right now are also paying attention to how the auction is shaping up.

"I have received calls from some people who have smaller condos in Sea Oaks and who are now living on the ocean who would like to move to the river," he said.

Davis said that, for him, the river location backing Historic Jungle Trail would be a huge selling point. The dirt road which begins at the end of Old Winter Beach Road in Indian River Shores and runs west of Sea Oaks and then picks up north of County Road 510 and runs behind Windsor and eventually back east to A1A is a favorite with joggers, cyclists and

Multiple Listing Service, there are five contingent sales – including four pending short sales – and there have been five closings.

When real estate – especially condominiums, which are normally last to recover from a downturn – has been on the market for some time, it's tough to tell what prices will be at auction because there's not a whole lot to use for comparison.

The properties and prices at Sea Oaks range from two-bedroom tennis villas starting at \$225,000 to four-bedroom Lakeview Estates starting at \$1.2 million and four-bedroom Dunehouse luxury oceanfront residences starting at \$1.4 million. Units in the same vein as the five properties up for auction are listed at \$850,000 to \$1 million.

"I think the market is the market and you can ask whatever you want to ask for a home or for land, but if it's not in the market range of what people are willing to pay, it's not going to sell," Baker said.

Unlike some barrier island condo communities, Sea Oaks allows pets, no more than two cats or dogs per condominium unless authorized by the association board. Owners are permitted to lease their units, but some restrictions apply and leases are subject to association approval.

birding enthusiasts – not to mention folks who want to try their luck with a fishing pole.

"I remember as a kid my mom dropping us off there and spending the day fishing. It's a great spot," Davis said.

The big factor limiting sales right now, Baysura said, is that people can't sell the properties they are in and they need to do that to have the liquidity to upgrade or to replace their current housing with something that's newer.

Of the 25 single-family homes listed for sale in Sea Oaks, there have been three closings and there is one contingent sale pending. Of the 48 condominiums up for sale on the

buyers must pay a 10 percent premium, which funds auctioneer's fees, referral fees to brokers and the marketing efforts for the auction. Documents in the auction packet also state that buyers shall be required to join Sea Oaks Beach and Tennis Club at a membership of \$5,000, which is apart from the price of the property being purchased.

The auction takes place at 11 a.m. Saturday, March 20. For more information or to request a bid information packet, call Indian River Auction and Appraisal at 567-0551.

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Calendar

MARCH

Through March 26

Tiger Lily Art Studios and Gallery spring show, Visions~Dreams~Possibilities. 778-3443 or www.tigerlilyvero.com.

Through March 30

Artists Guild Gallery features Muci Clemens' Reflections of Light exhibit, and Retrospective, celebrating the Guild's 20th Anniversary. 299-1234, or www.artistsguildgalleryvero.com.

Through March 27

SMALL is Big! Miniature juried show and sale at Gallery 14. 562-5525 or www.gallery14vero.com

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 18

Jazz in the Garden at McKee Botanical Garden, 6 - 8 p.m. featuring the California Citrus Trio. \$9 adults, \$8 seniors, \$5 children ages 3 - 12, members free. Reserve a boxed dinner for \$15. 794.0601.



Mary Hyde, 11, and her father, Michael E. Hyde, lead the beachside St. Patrick's Day Parade up Ocean Drive.

Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.

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 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 lit up for the last time at Dino Night at McKee Garden, 6 to 8 p.m. Exhibit becomes extinct March 30. Adults \$9, seniors \$8, children \$5, members free. 794.0601 or www.mckeeGarden.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.tcjazzsociety.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 Club at Pointe West to benefit Indian River County breast cancer patients through the American Cancer Society of IRC. \$75 golf and dinner; \$35 dinner only. 770-3401

March 21

Poker Run to benefit Homeless Family Center, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. leaving from the Club House Grill. \$10 entry fee. 473-7638

March 21 - 23

The Vero Beach High School Symphonic and Jazz Bands will perform the 17th Annual Red, White & Blue Concert, "American Musical Legends" on Sunday at 2 p.m., Monday and Tuesday at 7 p.m. in the Vero Beach High School Performing Arts Center. Tickets \$12; \$6 for Veterans. 564-5537

March 23

Cause for Paws Preview Party, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Orchid Island Beach Club to benefit the Humane Society of Vero Beach and Indian River County. 388-3331, Ext. 12.

March 23

Cocktails with a Twist to benefit Planned Parenthood with cocktails, hors d'oeuvres and a dance exhibition. Tickets \$75. (561) 472- 9953.

March 25

The Love of Literacy Authors Series culminates with a Love of Literacy Luncheon, 11:30 a.m. at Bent Pine Golf Club, featuring Haiti Partners co-director Kent Annan, author of Following Jesus

Calendar

mainstreetvero.com

March 26 - 27

The Saint Edward's Theatre Department presents Butterflies are Free, by Leonard Gershe, for two performances: Friday at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, at 7:30 p.m. at the Waxlax Center for the Performing Arts. 492-2373

March 27

The Emerson Center Speaker Series presents Jim Leher, novelist and commentator of The News Hour with Jim Lehrer. 778.5249 or www.theemerson-center.org

March 27

Childcare Resources' second annual Touch a Truck 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Indian River County Fairgrounds. 567.3202 or www.childcareresourcesir.org.

March 27

Inaugural Vero Road Rally Magnifique (VRRM), 2 to 7 p.m. to benefit Sun-Up of Indian River. 770-6626 or www.sunupofir.org.

March 27

Cause for Paws Main Auction to benefit the Humane Society of Vero Beach and Indian River County. 6 to 8:30 p.m. at

the Vero Beach Museum of Art. Tickets \$100. 388-3331, Ext. 12.

March 27

Garden Conservancy's Open Days Program self-guided garden tour. (888) 842-2442 or www.opendaysprogram.org.

March 27

Tennis Marathon to benefit the Homeless Family Center. 6 p.m. to midnight at the Jungle Club and 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. at The Boulevard Village and Tennis Club. 321-7800

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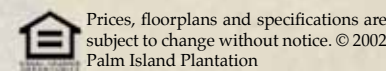


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Calendar

March 27 – 28

The Garden Club of Indian River County presents “Waldo’s Way” a Home Standard Flower Show at the historic and eclectic homestead of Elsebeth & Waldo Sexton. \$10 entry fee. 567-4602.

March 27 – 28

27th Annual Vero Beach Spring Boat Show at Riverside Park, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free parking and admission. 562-7922 or www.verobeachboatshow.com.

March 28

The Vero Beach Art Club presents Art in the Park, Outdoor Art Exhibit & Sale, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. by Humiston Park on Ocean Drive. 231-0303 or www.VeroBeachArtClub.org

March 28

Vero Beach Opera presents Gianni Schicchi & Suor Angelica: Stetson University productions of two one-act operas featuring their young artists, chorus and orchestra. 564-5537

APRIL

April 1 – 30

The Artists Guild Gallery presents The Florida Collection: Colors of Nature, Life and Beauty, featuring guest artist Louise Jones-Takata. Free opening reception, 5 to 7 p.m. Friday, April 2. 299-1234



The band from the Florida Irish-American Society of Vero Beach plays as the beachside St. Patrick’s Day parade makes its way up Ocean Drive.

April 4

Meet the Easter Bunny at McKee Botanical Garden and enjoy lunch at the Garden. Noon to 5 p.m. 794.0601 or www.mckeebgarden.org

April 5

Riverside Theatre’s Distinguished Lecturer Series features former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, at 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. on the Stark Mainstage. 231-6990

April 6

Spring Stroll Open House in the Vero Beach Downtown Dine and Design District, 5 to 9 p.m. Maps available at galleries and participating businesses in the 3D District. 562-5525.

April 7

Catwalks and Cupcakes Blue Ribbon Luncheon and Fashion Show 11 a.m. at Oak Harbor Clubhouse to benefit Hibiscus Children’s Center. Tickets \$125. 978-9313 x 313

April 8

The free Emerson Center Humanities Series presents From Hard Times to Hard Rock, with Patsy West, relating the history and stories of Seminole Indian Tribes. 7 p.m. 778-5249

April 9 – 10

Relay for Life of the Beaches, 6 p.m. Friday until 11 a.m. Saturday at Riverside Park to benefit the American Cancer Society of Indian River County. 562-2272

April 10

Saint Edward’s School will host a 12-hour Swim-a-thon for Life, 10 a.m. to

10 p.m. at the St. Edward’s Becker Pool to benefit the American Cancer Society. Entry to swim is free; all ages encouraged. 532-5969 or 559-0607.

April 10

Sustainable Living Expo at the Vero Beach Community Center, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

April 10

All day Latin Festival with Latin music, food, film and dance, beginning at 11 a.m. at Pointe West to benefit the Sebastian Charter Junior High School and several other local charities. 321-8545

April 10

Oceanside Business Association’s free beach concert series, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. along Ocean Drive

April 11

The Vero Beach Art Club presents Art in the Park, Outdoor Art Exhibit & Sale, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. by Humiston Park on Ocean Drive. 231-0303 or www.VeroBeachArtClub.org

April 11

The Indian River Symphonic Association presents the Brevard Symphony Orchestra with conductor Christopher Confessore; Postcards from America theme includes pieces by Smith, Dvorak, and Grofe, and features cellist Julie Albers. 7:30 p.m. at the Community Church of Vero Beach. 778-1070

April 15

Fifth Annual Dan K. Richardson Humanitarian Banquet to benefit Gifford Youth Activity Center honors Dr. Hugh and Ann Marie McCrystal, 5:30 p.m. at Holy Cross

Calendar

Catholic Church Parish Hall. \$125 per person. 794-1005 x 34

April 15

Kaleidoscope VII dinner and concert, presented by the Academy for the Performing Arts at the Community Church of Vero Beach. Free concert at 7:30 p.m.; pre-concert dinner is \$12 adults and \$6 children. 562-7265

April 16

9th Annual Holy Cross Knights of Columbus Golf Tournament, 1 p.m. Friday, April 16 at the Bent Pine Country Club (men, women and seniors) to benefit the Backpack Program. Registration \$125. 794-9965

April 16 – 17

Hibiscus Festival presented by Main Street Vero Beach and Vero Heritage, Inc. on 14th Avenue in historic downtown. Friday, April 16 Miss Hibiscus Pageant, Saturday April 17 all day festival and evening 60’s Party with Beatles Remembered band. www.mainstreet-verobeach.org

April 16-17

Overnight Florida ranch experience at Quail Creek Plantation with Audubon Warden Chop Lege, hosted by Friends of Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute. \$195 members; \$225 nonmembers. 772-465-2400 ext. 559

April 16 – May 2

Disney’s Mulan, Jr. at Riverside Children’s Theatre. 231-6990

Solutions from Games Pages in March 11th/2010 Edition, Issue 11

3	6	8	7	4	5	9	2	1
1	7	2	3	9	6	8	5	4
9	5	4	2	1	8	7	3	6
6	9	3	8	5	4	1	7	2
4	1	7	6	2	9	3	8	5
2	8	5	1	3	7	4	6	9
8	3	1	4	6	2	5	9	7
7	2	9	5	8	1	6	4	3
5	4	6	9	7	3	2	1	8

Sudoku Page 56

7	4	1	3	6	8	5	9	2
3	8	5	4	9	2	1	7	6
2	6	9	1	7	5	8	3	4
6	5	3	7	8	4	9	2	1
4	2	8	9	5	1	3	6	7
9	1	7	6	2	3	4	8	5
8	9	6	5	1	7	2	4	3
5	7	4	2	3	9	6	1	8
1	3	2	8	4	6	7	5	9

Sudoku Page 57

H	A	N	G	I	D	E	A	R	A	T	E
E	L	I	O	I	H	O	I	D	E	V	I
M	A	N	O	R	A	M	I	E	D	E	C
P	R	E	F	E	R	K	E	D	S	I	D
A	W	Y	A	E	T	H					
I	R	A	N	I	R	I	R	M	O	W	E
Z	E	H	O	C	O	U	P	O	N	O	V
Z	A	P	P	A	T	E	L	E	M	E	R
A	S	S	E	T	I	N	E	W	S	S	O
C	O	M	M	E	R	C	I	A	L	P	A
A	P	E	R	R	A	N	G	P	H	I	L
S	I	T	E	L	S	E	Y	I	E	L	D
I	C	E	D	T	A	O	S	D	R	A	F

Crossword Page 56 (BUYLINES)

D	E	P	T	H	T	G	I	F	M	I	R	V	P	A	P	A	S
A	L	O	H	A	H	U	L	L	I	S	E	E	O	L	I	V	E
F	A	K	E	R	R	I	E	N	A	I	R	L	A	P	A	Z	
T	H	E	O	L	D	Q	U	E	S	T	I	O	N	G	O	E	S
C	R	U	M	M	Y	W	H	Y	D	O	W	E	D	R	I	V	E
P	A	T	E	P	R	E	A	R	E	S	T	O	L	I	D		
A	P	A	R	K	W	A	I	A	N	D	P	A	R	K	S	T	R
T	H	R	E	E	S	P	O	E	S	Y	E	P	E	I	S	I	T
S	A	L	E	O	F	A	F	A	R	S	U	E					
S	A	L	E	O	F	A	F	A	R	S	U	E					
A	B	A	I	M	I	T	L	I	V	E	U	P	T	O			
Y	A	R	D	M	E	N	A	L	E	V	E	V	A	S	S	A	R
S	L	U	R	P	I	N	O	S	A	N	G	E	L	E	S	T	H
N	O	S	A	L	L	O	A	S	I	O	R	E	W	E	R		
A	N	S	W	E	R	I	S	W	E	D	O	N	T	J	E	S	T
Y	E	A	M	I	N	T	M	A	X	O	A	R					
W	E	P	A	R	K	O	N	T	H	E	F	R	E	W	A	Y	
J	A	P	A	N	L	I	E	N	A	E	R	O	C	L	A	R	A
E	X	E	R	T	I	L	L	E	I	M	I	N	T	A	K	E	N
T	E	A	M	S	E	P	Y	L	I	K	E	S	N	E	A	K	

Crossword Page 57 (IDLE THOUGHTS)

April 18

In recognition of National Crime Victims Rights Week, local singers will participate in Vero Sings for the Victims, 3 p.m. at the Waxlax Theater for the Performing Arts at St. Edward’s School. Tickets \$20. 231-4262

April 19

Ducks Unlimited annual Fabulous Hunt Feast to raise funds for Wetlands Conservation, 5:30 p.m. at the Vero Beach Country Club. Tickets are \$100. 633-3936

April 23

Cultural Council of Indian River County 2010 Laurel Awards, honoring cultural leaders in the community, will be presented at a cocktail party from 6 to 9 p.m. at Riverside Theatre. (postponed from March 19) Tickets \$50. 770-4857

April 24

Faith communities, including the Community Church, Holy Cross Catholic Church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, and Unity Center will gather at 8 a.m. at the Indian River Mall for assignments for the Vero Beach Second Annual Day of Service. All are invited; projects are listed on www.irccdayofservice.org.

MAY

May 1

2nd Annual Bounce-Tacular Family Fun Day at Riverside Park to benefit the Samaritan Center for Homeless Families. 770-3039

May 1

11th annual Pioneer Family Dinner, this year honoring the Carter family, 6:30

p.m. at the Heritage Center. Tickets \$45. 770-2263

May 2

Treasure Coast Chorale, songs of faith and inspiration, 7 p.m. at the First Baptist Church. Free (772) 567-4311

May 3

VNA’s 20th Annual Golf-A-Thon will be held at The Moorings Club. Twelve local golf professionals tee off at sun up and play 135 holes to benefit the VNA and Hospice. .

May 7 - 8

Sixth Annual Offshore Big 3 Fishing Tournament to benefit Hibiscus Children’s Center leaves from the Ft. Pierce City Marina. Captain’s party 6 p.m. Friday, tournament Saturday. \$225 per boat. 978-9313 x 313

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32963 Passages

NAME	AGE	SUBDIVISION	DATE
Lideen, Mildred	89	Castaway Dunes	3/6/2010
Marriott, Phillip	73	Seagrove	3/5/2010
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

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.

Vero Beach 32963 / March 18, 2010

Page 85

Featured Real Estate Sales on Barrier Island

Real Estate

Here are some of the top recent barrier island sales

Subdivision: Floraton, Address: 796 Reef Road



Listing Date: January 11, 2010
Original Price: \$1,995,000
Sold: March 4, 2010
Selling Price: \$1,600,000
Seller's Agent: Clark French
Premier Estate Properties

Subdivision: Riomar, Address: 736 Riomar Drive



Listing Date: March 30, 2009
Original Price: \$799,000
Sold: March 10, 2010
Selling Price: \$635,000
Seller's Agent: Lucy Hendricks
Norris & Company

Subdiv.: Robles del Mar, Address: 5601 Highway A1A, #207N



Listing Date: October 30, 2009
Original Price: \$195,000
Sold: March 10, 2010
Selling Price: \$175,000
Seller's Agent: Christine Hughes
Dale Sorensen Real Estate

Subdiv.: Village Spires, Address: 3554 Ocean Drive, #102N



Listing Date: March 30, 2009
Original Price: \$379,000
Sold: March 4, 2010
Selling Price: \$150,000
Seller's Agent: Mac Thompson
Seaside Realty

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Real Estate

Real Estate Sales on the Barrier Island: March 4 to March 10



Our featured barrier island sale this week is of an oceanfront home on a one-acre lot in Seagrove.

The four-bedroom home with almost 6,500 square feet of living space, located at 176 Ocean Way, was listed in March 2007 with an asking price of \$4.6 million.

The price was subsequently dropped to \$3.8 million, and then in March 2008 to \$3.3 million. The sale closed on March 10th for \$2.5 million.

Both the seller and the purchaser of the home were represented by Cheryl Gerstner of Palm Pointe Realty.

SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCES AND LOTS

SUBDIVISION	ADDRESS	LISTED	ORIGINAL ASKING PRICE	SOLD	SELLING PRICE
RIOMAR	736 RIOMAR DR	3/30/2009	\$ 799,000	3/10/2010	\$ 635,000
OCEANAIRE HEIGHTS	9575 SEA GRAPE DR	10/22/2009	\$ 237,600	3/8/2010	\$ 126,500
FLORALTON BEACH	796 REEF RD	1/11/2010	\$ 1,995,000	3/4/2010	\$ 1,600,000

TOWNHOMES, VILLAS AND CONDOS

SUBDIVISION	ADDRESS	LISTED	ORIGINAL ASKING PRICE	SOLD	SELLING PRICE
ROBLES DEL MAR	5601 HIGHWAY A1A #207N	10/30/2009	\$ 195,000	3/10/2010	\$ 175,000
OCEANSIDE	1441 OCEAN DR, #101	3/2/2009	\$ 140,000	3/4/2010	\$ 110,000
VILLAGE SPIRES DEVEL	3554 OCEAN DR. #102 N	3/30/2009	\$ 379,000	3/4/2010	\$150,000

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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
4BR/Office/5.5BA estate on nearly 3/4 acre homesite includes separate 1BR/1BA detached guest cabana. Fabulous views! **\$2,275,000**

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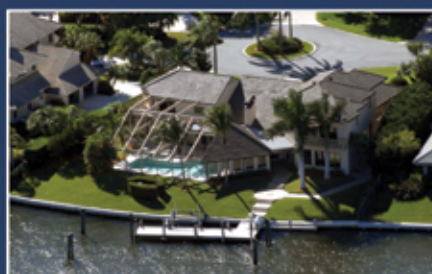
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