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Use of electronic health records spreading in Vero. P54

'Opera on the River' raises funds for Cultural Council. P12

Hundreds take part in Relay for Life of the Beaches. P10

32963 Insider

Nancy Pelosi takes no chances in Vero

How large a security detail do you need to safely stroll around the grounds of Windsor?

Apparently more than a half-dozen agents if you are House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, judging from reports of her stay as a houseguest in the upscale island community this past weekend.

After a Palm Beach fund-raiser on Saturday, Pelosi came up to Vero where she stayed at the Windsor home of a long-time friend -- and attended mass at Holy Cross on Sunday.

More restaurants close their doors

Two restaurants that were favorites of barrier island residents have closed their doors.

The first to announce plans to shut was Carmel's, which notified long-time patrons by email that it was closing for good on April 15th.

A subsequent email offered Vero friends of the restaurant a neat farewell present: The opportunity to buy a bottle of '05 Chappellet, Cabernet Sauvignon, Pritchard Hill Estate for the bargain price of \$100.

Then came word that Ti Amo Sempre closed its doors following dinner this past Saturday.

The restaurant was just finishing its second season in the south beach building that used to house Monte's.



A fashion show is the highlight of a luncheon benefit for the Hibiscus Children's Center. Story, page 14.

Photo: Tom McCarthy Jr.

We all paid to kill watchdog on electric bills

BY LISA ZAHNER
STAFF WRITER

Would you donate a buck to fund an effort to squash legislation that would have forced the Vero Beach Electric Utility to seek state approval of future rate hikes?

If you're a Vero electric customer, you did just that this year, as the city's 34,000 customers paid \$35,000 in annual dues to the Florida Municipal Electric Association to fight tooth and nail against the bill introduced by Rep. Debbie Mayfield to place Vero Electric under Public Service Commission jurisdiction.

Yet again, the City of Vero Beach is fighting its taxpayers and ratepayers with their own money.

Even worse, electric ratepayers not only ponied up the membership dues to the organization which lobbied against

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Tea Party expects big crowd Friday at Holman

BY LISA ZAHNER
STAFF WRITER

The first Indian River Tea Party event in 2009 drew an estimated 3,500 people and was organized by a small band

of entrepreneurs who put up their own cash to front the event.

An even larger crowd is expected for this year's Tea Party scheduled for noon Friday at Holman Stadium, with con-

servatives motivated by what they see as big-government spending, passage of the healthcare bill and continued economic strife.

Still a fledgling operation,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Feud between Wheeler and Flescher takes an ugly turn

BY LISA ZAHNER
STAFF WRITER

It's no secret in county circles that Commissioners Gary Wheeler and Joe Flescher don't like each other.

Over the years, since Flescher's split with Wheeler

resulted in the defeat of charter government, the animosity has bubbled out in back-handed remarks, both from the dais and in private -- such as Wheeler saying he was grateful for Florida's Sunshine Laws because they gave him a reason not to talk to Flescher.

Then there was the controversial and highly publicized incident where Wheeler accidentally sent an R-rated email from his home internet account to Flescher's home email in July 2007, depicting bare-breasted women. Wheeler apologized, and State

Attorney Bruce Colton put the matter to rest, saying poor taste was not an ethics violation.

But the allegations and vitriol go much deeper, according to police reports which Wheeler has been showing to

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Silver Sunrise: Elegant living on Marsh Island. Page 71.



Joe Flescher Photo: Tom McCarthy Jr.

Wheeler and Flescher

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anyone he hears is considering supporting Flescher for re-election.

The documents, independently obtained by **Vero Beach 32963**, show that on March 6, 2008, Wheeler reported that his county-issued Palm Pilot valued at \$623 had been stolen from the commissioners' private lounge located through doors behind the dais, where officials can take a break during long meetings.

As the investigation proceeded, Wheeler accused Flescher of being the culprit.

The Vero Beach Police Department investigated the case, and in addition

to interviewing a variety of witnesses, viewed surveillance tapes that they say show Flescher placing something about the size of a Palm Pilot into the floor of the back seat of his vehicle.

Flescher has denied the claims, and investigators did not find enough evidence to bring charges, though the investigation is still classified as open.

According to the incident report, the matter was investigated by City of Vero Beach Police Detective Lt. Kevin Martin as grand theft. Martin declined to comment on the case.

Martin initially interviewed Wheeler, Wheeler's assistant Darcy Vasilas and County Administrator Joe Baird.

Baird put Martin in touch with Facilities Manager Lynn Williams, who



Gary Wheeler Photo: Tom McCarthy Jr.

provided copies of surveillance videotapes recorded and kept by the county. Martin obtained and viewed footage of the hallway outside the lounge and footage from the commissioners' parking area.

In the tapes, according to the police report, Flescher was observed entering the lounge, where he was alone for about two minutes before exiting.

Others observed entering and/or exiting the lounge prior to Flescher were Wheeler, Vasilas, who came in to get two notebooks Wheeler had left for her, and then Commissioner Sandra Bowden, who left at the same time as Wheeler and only came back for a couple of seconds to get something to cover her head to protect her hair from the rain outside.

The other video showed the door and the commissioners' parking area. The tape showed Flescher leaving last that evening, removing something police said appeared to be a Palm Pilot from his right front jacket pocket, and placing it on the floor in the back seat of his vehicle.

Bowden and Flescher were interviewed about the Palm Pilot, as was Assistant County Administrator Mike Zito, after Martin was told that Flescher had gone to Zito requesting to see video recordings of the parking area.

According to the police report, Flescher wanted to see if he could find evidence that Wheeler had spat on his vehicle. Flescher asked to see tapes from March 7, the day after the Palm Pilot was reported missing, though the report indicates that the complaint Flescher made about the alleged spitting incident was about two weeks earlier than March 7.

Wheeler was not asked by police about the spitting accusation, but when asked by **Vero Beach 32963**, he denied spitting on Flescher's vehicle.

Zito, who said he was very irritated to have wasted his time being questioned about the incident by the police, confirmed Flescher's interest in

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Electric bills

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and ultimately killed the Mayfield Bill; electric customers also in large part fund the salaries, benefits and pensions of the top city staff not to mention the salaries and health insurance of City Council members fighting to keep the city bound to rates 35 percent higher than Florida Power and Light.

The FMEA's reason for existence is to promote and defend the right of municipalities to own and operate electric utilities, and to pad their general funds with the revenues.

The Mayfield Bill threatened to chip away at the autonomy of those utilities, called munis, because the PSC would force them to justify not only their current rates and revenue requirements, but to get approval for any rate increases.

FMEA Executive Director Barry Moline, whose organization represents the interests of 30 city or county owned utilities, appeared before the local legislative delegation in January to oppose the Mayfield bill.

Not willing to accept defeat when the bill passed muster with State Senators Joe Negron and Mike Haridopolos -- over the staunch opposition of delegation chairman Rep. Ralph Poppell -- the FMEA took its fight to Tallahassee.

On March 17, Rep. Mayfield told our sister publication, *VeroNews.com* that the chairwoman of the committee that needed to pass and forward the bill onto the House floor to a vote had informed her she was refusing to place the bill on the agenda, therefore killing it before it saw the light of day.

April 8 was the last scheduled committee meeting where the bill could have been discussed and voted on, and it was never on the list of things to do. The chairwoman, Rep. Dorothy Hukill, represents parts of Volusia County.

"She told me she would not 'agendaize' the bill because she was afraid that it would set a precedent," Mayfield said. "But if there are other constituents being served by other municipal utilities who are having the same problems that we're having in Vero, why shouldn't those utilities also come under PSC regulation?"

Mayfield said lobbyists hired to protect the financial and political interests of city and county-owned utilities have been working the halls in Tallahassee hard in the past few weeks. She was visited three times by attorney Bill Peebles, a lobbyist who serves as FMEA's legal counsel on legislative and regulatory issues.

"Bill Peebles tried to get me to drop the bill," she said. "I don't know if he's also been talking to other members about the bill."

After the *VeroNews.com* story where Mayfield urged constituents to con-

tact Hukill's office, her staffers say she was chastised for bringing a deluge of nasty calls and emails upon the office of not only a fellow House member, but a fellow Republican.

Hukill, who is running for Congress, needs the support of the voters of New Smyrna Beach, which has a municipal electric utility with rates just slightly lower than here in Vero, putting them 33 percent higher than FP&L -- a prime candidate for PSC intervention.

Neighboring Daytona Beach, and Port Orange, where Hukill lives and pays her utility bills, are served by FP&L.

The FMEA's Moline further infuriated activist, electric ratepayer and south beach resident Dr. Stephen Faherty by writing an Op-Ed published in the local daily strongly opposing Mayfield's legislation.

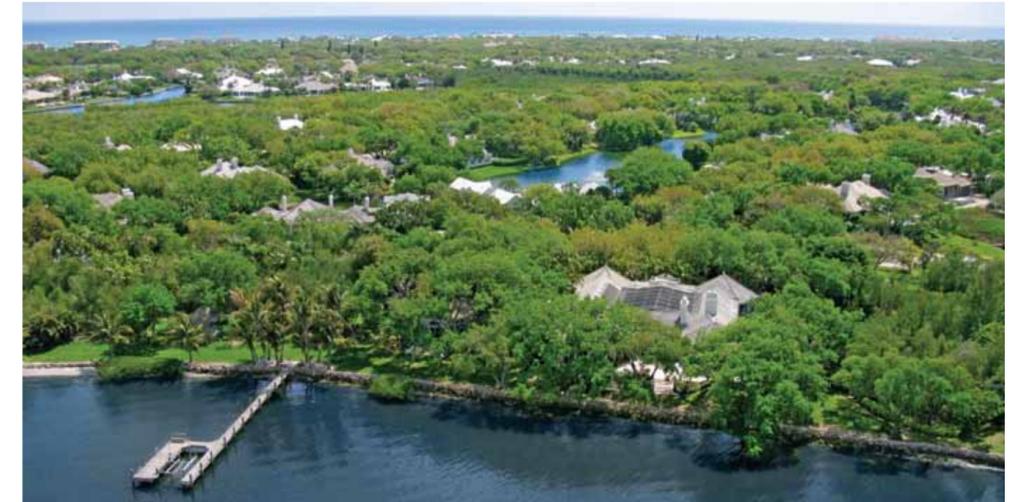
"The FMEA says they believe that the most local control is the best when it comes to utilities -- so why

did they, a statewide organization, get involved?" Faherty asked. "It seems to go against what they stand for."

Last week, the city called for any and all ideas to cut expenses going forward with "no crazy ideas" to be left out. Well, Faherty has one for the suggestion box.

"If Mayor Sawnick is truly serious about cutting the budget, I think they should eliminate the membership to FMEA and save us all \$35,000," Faherty said.

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Tea Party

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the Indian River Tea Party managed to secure the popular U.S. Senate hopeful Marco Rubio, who is a Republican, as its keynote speaker and also netted enough donations this year to offset expenses.

But what the local Tea Party group has yet to do is to figure out how to channel the angst and excitement into civic action here at home.

Aside from the 2009 event, it hosted a candidate forum before the Vero Beach City election and issued a letter signed by its executive committee on the pros and cons of the city's efforts in signing \$2 billion contract with its electric supplier.

In terms of the Tea Party's future, Chairman Toby Hill said the committee will take it one year, one event at a time -- that there are no immediate plans to expand its mission or scope.

"We haven't sat down and said, 'wow, look what we have created, now what are we going to do with it?'" he said.

The Indian River Tea Party Executive Committee consists of Hill, president of The Hill Group; Paul Tanner, president of Sonshine Audio-Video; Karl Zimmermann, former Indian River County Tax Collector and Realtor with



George and Judy Schmidt promote the Tea Party event at Holman Stadium to passersby while standing at the corner of U.S. 1 and 17th Avenue. Photo: Keith Carson

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Constitution is a living document, but instead a blueprint.

The local group Hill now leads to espouse these beliefs was formed somewhat by accident by Hill's wife, Tuny.

"She was going to go meet this man she met on the internet in a park to talk about the Tea Party," Hill said. "So I called him up and told him that he'd been emailing with my wife and asked to meet him."

That man was Paul Tanner and, after thoroughly vetting him as not only legitimate, but a card-carrying conservative, Hill told Tanner he'd round up a handful of influential friends to form a committee and put on the event.

That Tea Party a year ago was held on April 15th on the campus of the Indian River County Administration Building, a location they saw as the doorsteps of the seat of power. They had less than three weeks to organize, fund and promote the event.

One area where the Indian River Tea Party has inserted itself into local politics is the goings-on surrounding the Vero Beach Electric Utility. The Tea Party issued a position paper on electric issues in early 2010.

"With exception of the controversial \$50 million 'exit penalty', we believe that, among the options defined into the RFP process, the choice of OUC was a good one. The problem stems from a failure to evaluate all of the available options, when the decision was made to leave FMPA," the letter states.

"It was a serious mistake not to apply the same rigorous consideration to the option of exiting (selling) the power business and relying upon a direct, independent supplier like FPL for service.

"Given that the City was pursuing a 20-year, \$2 billion business decision, it was imperative to rigorously consider this option at the time the RFP process was conducted."

Hill, an Orlando native and 30-year resident of Vero Beach, said he thinks the electric issue has helped to get citizens engaged in the public discourse, not only in the Tea Party, but in other efforts.

Commissioner Bob Solari, himself a frequent and vocal opponent of how government runs its business, said he hopes the Tea Party sticks to its original mission and does not become just another advocacy group.

"We don't need another political group," said Solari, who supports the Tea Party mission but feels it should operate outside the halls of government, like its namesake predecessor, challenging the seat of power.

Hill disagrees that the Tea Party needs to be subversive to be relevant.

"We're not anarchists," he said. "The original Tea Party was not about disbanding government; it was about taxation without representation."

Treasure Coast Sotheby's International Realty; north barrier island resident John Marr; Chuck Mechling, president of On Site Management Group and developer of Pointe West and Collier Club; and Bill Friesell, former CEO of Citicorp Diner's Club Inc.

Hill said the Tea Party believes in three basic tenets: limited government, fiscal and individual responsibility and the free market system.

"What the Tea Party is about is to say, 'Wake up America, your government is on a spending binge,'" Hill said. "With deficit spending, there has been a slow erosion of our liberty nipping at our heels."

"In America, we don't guarantee you success, we guarantee you the same opportunity everyone else has," he said.

Corporate welfare and Wall Street bailouts are as distasteful to Hill as the recently passed healthcare reform bill and programs called a "safety net" by liberals.

"We're not in favor of bailing out businesses, they should have been allowed to go belly up," he said. "It's competition and the free market that keeps us lean and mean."

Hill said the Tea Party members will hand out pocket-sized copies of the U.S. Constitution and that they encourage citizens from all walks of life to immerse themselves in the original language and become strict constructionists -- those who do not believe the

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Wheeler and Flescher

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

the videotape, according to the report.

Flescher stated that he had "fully cooperated (with the investigation) and answered all of my questions," Martin wrote in the report.

"At that point, I told Commissioner Flescher he was now a person of interest in this case and he needed to speak with me concerning this issue; additionally, I mentioned that it might be in his best interest to take a polygraph examination. He ignored this suggestion and reiterated he had fully coop-

erated with the investigation," Martin wrote.

Martin asked Flescher again to answer more questions and submit to a polygraph, but he declined.

A cleaning person working as a contractor for the county had entered the lounge to tidy up after Flescher and,

since she also had access, she was questioned and said she never saw the Palm Pilot in the lounge. She submitted to a polygraph examination upon request and was cleared.

The case remains unsolved. "Due to lack of evidence, and the

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Wheeler and Flescher

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failure of Commissioner Flescher to submit to further questioning, this case is to be declared inactive pending further information," the report reads, adding that videotapes and a recording of the interview with Zito were retained in the detective's file.

Though Wheeler's Palm Pilot was placed on the usual registry of stolen items with local pawn shops, it has not turned up and Wheeler verified that it has not been recovered or found by him.

Despite the fact that no charges were filed, Wheeler thinks the facts of the case are damning and that showing the police report to people is "a public service."

"I think it's the right thing to do," Wheeler said. "I don't like to be vindictive. Anyone who is possibly voting for Joe Flescher needs to know who they are voting for, about his character."

Flescher, in response, points out that he has a history in law enforcement and is a Christian, and says he

considers what Wheeler is doing a smear campaign.

Flescher says the whole affair was "absolutely" a setup, a "fabrication" and says Wheeler's actions reek of revenge for his support of Wheeler's opponent Gary Parris in the most recent election, not to mention retribution for his voting against charter government.

"He said he'll fix me and I guess he's done it, or he's trying to do it," Flescher said.

"My campaign has actually benefited from what he's been doing, as people are tired of this. It's upsetting because this is not what government is about."

"I'm not running against Gary Wheeler in this election but it seems that he's running against me," Flescher said. "He said that he would take me out of office."

Flescher is running in the Republican primary against former Vero City Councilman Charlie Wilson and against former Sebastian City Councilwoman Dale Simchick, who received Wheeler's endorsement several months ago.

Island group hails beach work



Congressman Bill Posey with Indian River County Tax Collector and former Chairwoman of the Florida Republican Party Carole Jean Jordan and barrier island Realtor and former Indian River County Tax Collector Karl Zimmermann. Photo: Tom McCarthy Jr.

BY LISA ZAHNER
STAFF WRITER

At last week's Barrier Island Coalition annual banquet, the politics of sand was on the minds of the nearly 100 people -- about 20 of them current or former elected officials -- listening to the speeches and award presentations.

Coalition Chairman Bill Glynn, who emceed the program, said beach restoration and the dedicated people

who have fought for it and worked on it will keep Vero Beach from becoming "Vero Seawall."

"Our barrier island has 10 percent of the population and 4 percent of the infrastructure and that 4 percent is the beaches," Glynn said. "And the 10 percent of the population we have pays 41 percent of the ad valorem (property) taxes."

On behalf of members of about 30 barrier island organizations, Glynn

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Island group

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

presented Outstanding Citizen Awards to Rep. Ralph Poppell (who was absent due to the legislative session), who helped grease the regulatory wheels in Tallahassee for the experimental, large-scale use of upland sand; and to Commissioners Peter O'Bryan and Joe Flescher, who have crusaded for the upland sand project.

O'Bryan's focus has been on breaking through onerous scientific and environmental barriers and busting up the off-shore sand monopolies to reduce the cost of beach restoration for the taxpayers.

Flescher has pushed to keep the money local to provide temporary but high-paying construction and trucking jobs for 100 or so of the county's unemployed.

No one during the ceremonies mentioned that the project continues to have mounting costs and delays. The question of whether the use of upland sand will ultimately cost less and make sense in future restoration project appears to be far from clear.

Flescher and O'Bryan cheerfully accepted the honor as potential campaign supporters from the financial, real estate and business community looked on – and they need that support.

Both are engaged in heated Republican primary races to keep their seats on the county commission.

O'Bryan cited statistics of \$750 million in market value of property within the Sector 3 replenishment zone and an estimated \$9.8 million in tax revenue to the county, showing that he's studied the political demographics of sand.

"We're all working hard to bring the project to completion. It's a team effort," O'Bryan said in his acceptance speech, giving kudos to county staffers and to the Sebastian Inlet Taxing District.

County Administrator Joe Baird and the county Public Works Director were

there to show their support, as well as Marty Smithson of the Sebastian Inlet Taxing District, which contributed \$4.68 million to help fund the project as part of their required efforts to mitigate erosion caused by the inlet's jet-ties.

Glynn, who also chairs the Indian River County Beaches and Shores Preservation Committee, said the Barrier Island Coalition does not endorse, but only recommends candidates, and that they wait until qualifying closes to do so.

In regard to the north beach sand project -- which is costing county taxpayers nearly \$15 million to date -- he characterized it as a "win-win" for the barrier island.

Glynn suggested that residents who have been waiting to get their sand for more than six years should be "dancing in the streets" as they are now receiving 317,000 cubic yards of high-quality material to shore up their oceanfront property.

"We were on the verge of losing some very expensive property and ruining peoples' lives," Glynn said of those pockets of beach that were severely eroding.

Keynote speaker Rep. Bill Posey, though not directly involved in restoring the area's beaches, received the final of four awards for his conservative stands on many issues ranging from healthcare reform to cap-and-trade energy policy.

"It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that if we don't protect our beaches, the Keys will be in Gainesville," Posey said to the group of local dignitaries assembled in the banquet room at the newly renovated Surf Club resort on S.R. A1A.

Other speakers included local financial advisor and Coalition member Bob Anderson, who stated that residents in the north county beach project are going to have some of the "best-quality sand" possible when the project is completed.

County Coastal Engineer James Gray also informed the audience that the first leatherback turtle nest had been found in the new sand that has been put on the beaches.

This is hopeful news, since the success of the upland sand as turtle-nesting habitat will determine the viability of using it in Phase Two of the project next winter.

Though sand miners and Ranger Construction, the contractor on the project, have been working seven days a week to catch up, the beach replenishment project is still running weeks behind.

The final two weeks remaining will see a tight squeeze to get every last area -- including Baytree and Marbrisa, which are set to be the final beaches completed -- renourished prior to the April 30 deadline.

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A model walks the runway in an outfit from Cooper and Co. at the Catwalks & Cupcakes Blue Ribbon Luncheon and Fashion Show to benefit Hibiscus Children's Center.

People

Mom's sandals were made for walking to fight cancer

BY BARBARA YORESH
CORRESPONDENT

Maureen Pfeil had promised to walk in her mother's shoes – sandals, actually – and raise money to fight cancer.

On Friday night, she did just that at the beachside Relay for Life, the night-long annual walk that raises money for cancer research.

"I'm wearing Mom's sandals for relay. I found these in her closet and they will stay on the track all night even if I'm not in them," she said with a chuckle. "Mom was tireless in her effort to raise money for the (American Cancer Society). I'm here for her – it's all for her."

Pfeil walked the track with her father, Fred Manney, in memory of her mother, Joan, who died in November of colon cancer. Pfeil did just fine, and was fetted as a "star supporter" for raising \$1,500 or more for the cause.

The American Cancer Society (ACS) Relay for Life of the Beaches turned Riverside Park's broad fields into a camp site to host 27 teams of more than 400 relayers as well as sponsors and hundreds of volunteers of all ages dedicated to fighting cancer while celebrating survivors and remembering those lost to the disease. Included were eight teams from St. Edward's School from grades 6-12 as well as parents and faculty.

Although rain had been forecast, the spirit of hope, love, support and deep emotion must have pushed it away as rain clouds gave way to bright sun, a glorious sunset and starlit skies.

With a theme of "Relay Back in Time," teams chose an era and dressed up in attire reminiscent of times from the Stone Age to the present.

Some participants wore tie-dyed garb of the 1960s and others chose



Women from "The 60s" group hold hands as they finish up the Survivors' Walk at the beginning of the Relay for Life at Riverside Park. Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.

Flintstones-styled faux animal skins, Roman togas and wild west cowboy hats.

Event participants hoped to raise \$95,000 and were expected to exceed that goal by the end of the relay.

Relay for Life is the main volunteer-driven cancer fundraising event of the the cancer society, beginning at nightfall and continuing non-stop until the following day. Yet there would be no actual finish line until a cancer cure is found.

Relay for Life of the Beaches event chair Michelle Carter, a Vero Beach attorney and former nurse heading the effort for her second year, said, "I do it because it matters. Relay for Life is not only life changing, it is life saving."

Carter knows how cancer can devastate patients and families.

"Being a nurse had everything to do with my decision to get involved with the ACS. I welcomed the volunteer opportunity and I truly believe that relay has been a gift to me. I'm proud of what I and the teams were able to contribute and I get back many fold. It's a difference we can make," Carter said.

Money raised by Relay for Life events in 5,000 communities nationwide --and in 21 other countries -- supports cancer research, prevention programs, community awareness, patient support programs and early detection and treatment programs. Cancer kills 500,000 Americans each year. One in three people will receive a diagnosis of cancer during a lifetime. And because of its prevalence, cancer touches countless lives.

Grammy Award nominee, pastor and founder of the U.S. Dream Academy Wintley Phipps performed the national anthem, delivered the invo-



Volunteers help set up luminaries as the sun sets on the Relay For Life at Riverside Park.

cation and led a rousing rendition of "God Bless America" during opening ceremonies.

Also featured were a silent auction and live entertainment to help keep relay team members perky and motivated during the night-long event which concluded at 10 a.m. Saturday.

Especially meaningful was a Lumina Ceremony conducted after nightfall to remember those lost to cancer. White bags imprinted with the names of cancer victims rimmed the entire track and were internally lit by glow sticks which cast a soft light of eternal remembrance.

Relay for Life of the Beaches is one of three relays held countywide, according to Kris Altman, event coordinator and cancer society community representative for Indian River County. Other Relay for Life events will be held April 16-17 at Sebastian River High School and April 23-24 at Vero Beach High. Volunteers are crucial to the success of Relay for Life, Altman said.

"In Florida, we (the ACS) have about 200,000 volunteers and only 400 paid employees. All these events are volunteer driven and this is very much a community event. This organization does so much good and the ACS is so donor-dollar diligent. Michelle is an amazing leader and these teams are highly dynamic. Cancer never sleeps and neither do we. The relay is a party for a purpose because cancer touches everyone. It helps us get the word out about what we do and where to get help," Altman said.

Scott Cogburn, a young Publix team captain, noted he participates because "cancer affects the whole community not just the person who has it."

Nancy Madsen, executive director of the cancer society for the Treasure Coast area, walked several laps around the track and explained the importance of Relay for Life.

"This is spectacular and we're fortunate to have such a generous community to support this. We'll go over our goal. I spent 33 years working in radiation therapy and I've seen many treatment improvements over the years because the ACS funds research," Madsen said.

Relay for Life began in 1985 when surgeon Gordy Klatt tried to do more for his patients by seeking donors to sponsor his all-night walk to raise money for cancer research and other programs. While walking the track throughout the night, he realized that if his efforts were multiplied, a difference would be made. Klatt raised \$27,000 for cancer that year and a movement was born. To date, an estimated \$3 billion has been raised by Relay for Life events that vow to "celebrate, remember and fight back."



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People

Opera on the River to benefit Cultural Council

BY MARY SCHENKEL
COLUMNIST

The magnificent Saint Andrews Island home of Kurt and Marilyn Wallach was the ideal setting for an exceptional Opera on the River fundraiser to benefit the Cultural Council of Indian River County.

Aptly titled Palacio del Rio, the exquisite riverfront home added an extra dimension to an evening of glorious music.

The lovely breezes blowing in from the river tossed a few hairdos, but it was far better than the rain which had been expected. Taking credit for the ideal conditions, Kurt Wallach smiled and said, "I had to get up early this morning to order this perfect weather."

The evening was filled with beautiful music from the moment guests arrived. As they mingled out at the riverfront pavilion sipping on wine and champagne, guests were treated to the virtuoso sounds of the Sarasate



Karen and Joshua Zarandona

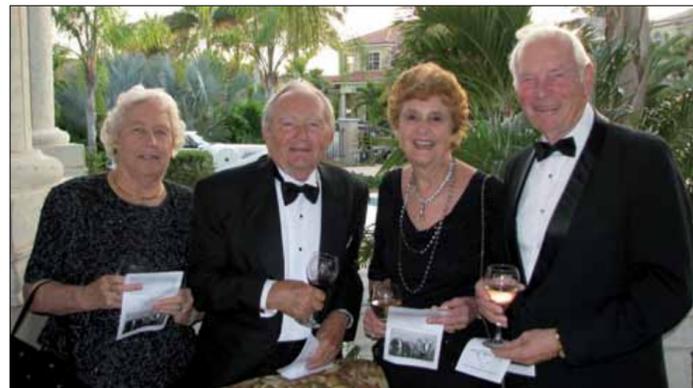


Margie and Buddy Segal with Pam Alderman and John Putinski

Photos: Mary Schenkel

Strings, a new string quartet formed this year featuring Matt Stott, Violin I; Tom Fritz, Violin II; Wendy Karabensh, Viola; and Joseph Loehnis, Cello.

When they later paused for a break, I spoke with Tom Fritz, founder of the Indian River County Public Strings program and a member of the Vero



Jeanne and Del Peterson with Deirdre and Hal Bugbee



Karl Steene, Susan Grandpierre, Barbara Hoffman and Gretchen Rose

Beach Chamber Orchestra and the Vero Beach Concertante. He put in a little plug for the Chamber Orchestra, which he co-founded with Linda and Paul Spiwak, and told me that their next concert is at 7 p.m. Sunday, April 18 at the Vero Beach High School's Performing Arts Center.

Fritz said with pride when introducing Matt Stott, Vero Beach High School

Orchestra Director, "His Orchestra has been chosen by the Florida Orchestra Association as the number one orchestra in the State of Florida. Because of that designation, the association will be holding its convention in Vero Beach and Matt has been asked to give a clinic at the convention on developing successful orchestras."

Fritz also introduced Joseph Loeh-

People



Marilyn and Kurt Wallach



Matthew Stott, Tom Fritz, Wendy Karabensh and Joseph Loehnis



Don and Evelyn Mayerson

nis, a fellow Vero Beach Chamber Orchestra member, who formerly played with the Green Bay Symphony in Wisconsin, and by day is a professional golfer in West Palm Beach.

As guests moved into the living room to listen to performances by soprano Angela Mortellaro and baritone Sean Christopher Stork, I caught up with Cultural Board Chair Susan Grandpierre who said she was thrilled with the turnout, the music and the delightful surroundings.

"We've been thinking about this for months. It's so great to see it all just as wonderful as I'd imagined," she said with great enthusiasm. "It's been a labor of love."

Grandpierre said the guests were a terrific mix of opera lovers and Cultural Council supporters, but added, "We had some great publicity and people seemed to come from everywhere."

"There's just something about opera; the voices, the beautiful music, the emotion - I always get choked up," said Grandpierre as we listened to the first pieces.

When asked why he and his wife chose to open up their home for the event, Wallach replied, "Well, we get the pleasure of enjoying beautiful operatic music with all our friends, and at the same time we're doing something to benefit the Cultural Council."

Mary Jayne Kelly, Executive Director of the Cultural Council, said that the Cultural Council was grateful for their support and added, "It's such a wonderful setting for an event like this."

Gretchen Rose chaired Opera on the River with help from Cultural Council Board Chair Susan Grandpierre, Vice Chair Barbara Hoffman and board member Karl Steene, and Kelly credited them for the event's success. "They all worked very hard to put it together and to make it happen."

The classically trained tenor Joshua Zarandona acted as the emcee for the

evening and his equally talented wife, Karen, the Director of Music at St. Sebastian Catholic Church, accompanied the soloists.

Mortellaro is versed in operatic and concert repertoire and has appeared with the Chautauqua Opera, Orlando Opera, Aspen Opera Theater, The Chautauqua Symphony, The Orlando Philharmonic, City Music Cleveland, and Rice University Opera.

Stork gained recognition in Florida in both operatic and barbershop singing and was featured by Florida State Opera and First Coast Opera in *The Magic Flute*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Falstaff*, and most recently *La Boheme*.

Mortellaro and Stork initiated their performance with the lively duet,

Cinque, dieci, venti, trenta from *The Marriage of Figaro* by Mozart. Mortellaro enthralled guests as the coquettish Musetta singing *Quando m'en vo* from Puccini's *La Boheme*. Stork finished out the first half with the arias *Questo Amor* from Puccini's *Edgar* and the lively *Rivolgete a lui lo sguardo* from *Così fan tutte* by Mozart.

During the intermission, I spoke with Gretchen Rose who discovered and arranged for the talented young artists to perform. "I've always had a great interest in music; I've been singing since I was a little girl," said Rose, adding that she had been a voice major at Michigan State and had sung professionally.

She had high praise for accompa-

nist Karen Zarandona saying, "Karen is amazing; she's phenomenal. She can play anything. She didn't even have the music until tonight but I knew she would be wonderful."

The second half of the evening featured more outstanding performances, including Mortellaro singing *Il Bacio* by Ardit, and *Chi il bel sogno di Doretta* from Puccini's *La Rondine*. Stork also sang *Lonely House* from *Street Scene* by Weill, and the pair finished with a rousing *La ci darem la mano* from *Don Giovanni* by Mozart.

Adrienne Drew catered the event with a delicious assortment of hors d'oeuvres, passed by a number of volunteers who had been recruited by Barbara Hoffman.



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People

'Catwalks & Cupcakes' benefits childrens' causes

BY MARY SCHENKEL
COLUMNIST

Bright spring colors predominated at the Catwalks & Cupcakes themed Blue Ribbon Luncheon and Fashion Show to benefit the Hibiscus Children's Center, from the stylish ladies who support the organization, to the exquisite clothing and jewelry on the models.

It was quite obvious that everyone involved had worked tirelessly to make the annual luncheon a truly impressive event.

The runway fashion show, put on by Cooper and Co., is Vero Beach's major fashion event of the year.

The luncheon and show were held at the Oak Harbor Clubhouse, and as guests entered, they were greeted by Hibiscus Children's Center CEO Tom Maher, and Board President Stacey Barnett, and were then treated to mimosas and champagne, offered by several gorgeous guys dressed in casual fashions from G.T. Rhodes.

There were several new additions

to the social hour this year, including boutique shopping from The Dori Collection of Beverly Hills and the opportunity to have makeovers by several Chanel representatives. As an added incentive for some of the must-have items, all of the show's participants were offering a percentage of everything purchased that afternoon to the Hibiscus Children's Center.

As guests caught up with one another, perused the numerous silent auction items, and purchased some last minute raffle tickets for the prizes that had been donated, I chatted briefly with Dee Rotondi, who co-chaired the event along with Kolette



Daisy Whitehill, Nadja Ricci, Raquel Tilton, Libby Goracy and Andonia Kleopolos Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.



Kolette Koch, Nancy Stewart and Dee Rotondi

Koch and Nancy Stewart. Rotondi and her husband divide their time between Vero and Boston and while she has only been involved with the organization a little more than two years, she has obviously thrown herself into it wholeheartedly.

"This event is a great opportunity for people to see a professional show with beautiful fashions from Cooper & Company, right here in Vero Beach, while coming together for a common cause," said Rotondi.

As guests continued to arrive, I ran into Suzanne Bertman who was admir-

ing a lovely heart locket worn by Susan Kamer.

"I started collecting heart jewelry years ago; this one came from an antique shop in Philadelphia," Kamer explained of the delicate gold and Persian turquoise piece.

Daisy Whitehill, looking exceptionally chic in her white feathered hat, laughed about it and said, "I wore it at the Kentucky Derby a couple of years ago when the Queen was there."

I got to know Nikki Pfeiffer when we took a jewelry class at the Museum, and she excitedly showed me an intri-

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People

The Blue Ribbon Campaign was initiated in 1989 as a way to raise public awareness and promote child abuse prevention efforts and this Blue Ribbon Luncheon and Fashion show is held annually in recognition of National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Funds raised at the event help the staff of the Hibiscus Children's Center to protect and care for the children who reside at the Center, for weeks, months or even years.

As guests began their meal, tearoom models went from table to table enticing guests with a stunning selection of jewelry from Veranda.

The delicious lunch included a mixed green salad, tender coconut shrimp and sautéed chicken breasts in a Frangelico sauce and, again keeping with the theme, decadent choco

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16



Marie Olvey, Kristin Dobson, Karan Morein, and Margaret-Anne Evans



Sue Scully, Barbara Bryant and Helen Hild

cate bracelet she made for the silent auction. "It's free-form beading with pearls and a cameo," she said with a great big smile. "Isn't that cool?" And yes, it was.

Carole Casey, looking glamorous after her Chanel make-over, showed me the delightful centerpieces she and others on the committee had created.

"The challenge was to make centerpieces that looked like cupcakes, to go with the Catwalks and Cupcakes theme," explained Casey. "We took flower pots, wound pleated silver paper around them to look like little cupcake wrappers, added 30 to 50 carnations to make each one look like a cupcake, and finished them off with a ribbon and proper bow."

A true labor of love, the project took the committee more than six hours to complete. The centerpieces, and the cake-holders that displayed them,

went home with one lucky guest from each table. Also in keeping with the theme, bottles of Sauvignon Blanc were at each table from Cupcake Vineyards.

Mistress of Ceremony Christie Knight welcomed everyone and introduced Angela Lowe of the Hibiscus Children's Center, who spoke eloquently of the work done by the organization; providing a safe haven, care and support to severely abused and neglected children.

"They deserve an opportunity," said Lowe of the children who live at the Center. "They have experienced what we cannot even imagine."

The Blue Ribbon Campaign was initiated in 1989 as a way to raise public awareness and promote child abuse prevention efforts and this Blue Ribbon Luncheon and Fashion show is held annually in recognition of National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

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People



Ladies watch the parade of fashion as models dressed in outfits from Cooper and Co. work the runway. Catwalks and Cupcakes Blue Ribbon Luncheon and Fashion Show, held at the Oak Harbor Club, is a benefit for the Hibiscus Children's Center.



Ornately decorated cupcakes made up the dessert course at the Blue Ribbon Luncheon and Fashion Show at Oak Harbor Club.

late cupcakes with pretty little orchid shaped candied flowers.

You meet the most interesting and engaging people at Hibiscus Children's Center events and this time was no exception. Table mates Nina Heyer, whose husband Mark owns Classic Carwash, equestrian and beginning polo player Libby Goracy, and Andonia Kleopoulos, whose husband Ni-

kita is a well-known anesthesiologist at Indian River Medical Center, made the afternoon's festivities particularly enjoyable.

Goracy summed up the cohesive feeling of the organization when she said, "I've met my best girlfriends because of Hibiscus. Not only do I get to do things for others but meeting all these wonderful friends has been a

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

huge blessing for me."

The tall, willowy models, who then took to the runway for the main event, definitely looked like they've never eaten a cupcake in their lives. Cooper and Company's Melinda Cooper presented a delightful mix of fashions that began with colorful, eye-catching resort wear in turquoises and bright sherbet-like corals and pinks off-set by white pants.

A mixed selection of patterns and solids highlighted jacketed outfits suitable for work or play, and a dazzling assortment of elegant cocktail dresses and evening gowns completed the collection.

The co-chairs treated the guests to an additional little surprise, bringing out three adorable children to walk the runway in fashions from Twirl and to help with the raffle prize drawing.

At the close of the show, Stacey Barnett thanked the sold-out crowd for their support and gave particular thanks to the event sponsors, vendors and to Melinda Cooper and Christie Knight for their help with the event, saying, "Every time we ask, they are there for us."

People

Shores bridge player attains 'grand life master' status



Janine Frobouck concentrates as she competes in a sectional bridge tournament at the Vero Beach Bridge Center.

Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.

BY MICHELLE GENZ
STAFF WRITER

The beaches, the natural beauty, the... bridge club? People come to Vero Beach for the obvious reasons. But on a triangle of land in an underused area of downtown, a former bowling alley now is home to the seventh largest member-owned bridge club in America. Now in its 50th year, the club boasts more than 800 members.

At the top of the heap is Reanette Frobouck, who crosses the bridge to

play bridge nearly every day of her seasonal stay here - she lives the rest of the year in Pittsburgh.

It was a 2008 win at a national championship that, along with a mention in the New York Times, was an essential step in attaining a goal Frobouck set for herself when she first came to Vero: a ranking of grand life master.

Two weeks ago, she reached the ranking's other watermark: a total of 10,000 points in competition. Frobouck joins the elite of duplicate bridge, becoming the one-in-a-thousand grand life mas-

ter, the highest possible ranking by the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL). Only one other person in the local club, staffer Candy Griffey, the director, holds that title as well.

Under the glare of fluorescent lights, in a vast unadorned room, several hundred institutional folding chairs, four to a table, make a grid on a plane of industrial carpet. A sea of stoney-faced players, the majority of them women, study their hands. The constant snapping of cards being thumbed and arranged is audible over the roar of

air handlers, the sort of sound a diver hears underwater as bivalves pop their shells.

That outsider sensation pervades in other ways, as there, amidst the apparent calm, the players contend with the well-masked menace of serious competition. A sign on the wall warns against "unacceptable behavior," from mere "badgering" and "gloating" to "profanity, threats and violence," and mandates the muzzling of "constant and gratuitous lessons and analysis at the tables."

The place has all the levity of a high-school SAT test.

Yet this is where Vero's bridge addicts get their fix, where unseen lobes deliver cerebral smack-downs and the thrill of the perfectly firing neuron keeps them coming back.

This is where Reanette Frobouck comes to play her game, five days a week, for three hours or more. "It's one of the reasons we came here, because it had this large bridge population in one location," she says. "In Pittsburg, I have to travel around. People rent out spaces to play. Here it's all at the club, and during season, it's a huge group."

Frobouck, a former elementary school teacher, bought a home here with her husband Stephen for his theoretical "semi-retirement," she says with a raise of an eyebrow, following the sale of his communications firm ComNet Ericsson to Tyco International, in 2001.

"He thinks it's great" that she plays bridge with such zeal, she says. "He works while I play."

Frobouck wears her wry sense of humor well - the oversized, round, red frames of her glasses give her a look of having just gotten a punch line. With a sportive haircut, a tan and a bril

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People

liant smile, she could be mistaken for a golfer. But last Sunday, the only golf on the agenda was playing out on the TV of her home in the Shores, as a muted Tiger Woods grimaced through the Augusta National.

Meanwhile, she was planning her own packed tournament schedule. After spending all day Thursday and Friday in a tournament at the Vero bridge club, Frobouck eagerly took off for the mountains of Tennessee, where she is spending the week playing in a regional tournament – the largest in the nation. The following week, she heads for Fort Lauderdale and another week-long competition.

When she gets home, the club is planning a little party in her honor, she says. Odds are, it will be an affair with a sense of decorum; the Vero club is a well-dressed bunch, mannerly and helpful, known for encouraging beginners. "They are well-known for their hospitality," says Frobouck. "If there's a new player, they're very welcoming."

But in the bridge world at large, Frobouck says, it isn't always that way.

"There are some really, really, really strange people who play bridge," she says with a laugh. "You don't find them at the Vero Beach Bridge Club. But I see

them when I go to tournaments."

Those events are hardly luxury affairs – the hotels, she says, need to be affordable to accommodate the average player; Frobouck only switches hotels when she comes across a "total dump," as she puts it.

As for the occasional odd-duck player, for Frobouck, they are part of the game's allure. By its nature, bridge is a game that pleases people with powerful brains. It requires high-functioning working memory and an ability to use past plays to analyze the cards of others. Duplicate bridge is fiercely fair: players have to cope with exactly the same hand, so that chance is removed as a factor.

What fascinates Frobouck is how complex the game is with such a limited vocabulary – essentially, the numbers one through seven, the names of the suits, and a handful of terms for the bidding.

"Learning to play bridge is like learning a language," says Frobouck.

"Just think of communicating with those words, how they operate and change within the context of what your opponents are doing," she says. "There are hundreds and hundreds of books written using this very limited vocabu-

lary," she says. "The nuances these few words can take on are very, very sophisticated."

Apart from bridge, Frobouck does not consider herself much of a game player. Though her father was an excellent card player, who played with his buddies every Monday night, Frobouck had only dabbled at canasta before coming to bridge as an adult. Her husband, then in law school at Duquesne University, had two unmarried aunts who played competitive bridge.

"I thought, this sounds like fun," she says. "I took some lessons at a club we belonged to, and then I didn't play again for a long time."

Though she ran 10k races for a while, nothing else in her life strikes her as an example of the competitiveness or tenacity involved in her pursuit of the highest reaches of bridge.

"It was only after we came down here eight years ago that I really got serious about it," she says.

"I had a goal: I really wanted to see if I kept on playing, if I could reach grand life master."

Last week, the ACBL listed 169,915 members. Of those, only 196 had reached grand life master status.

The title is earned not only by points

won at sanctioned tournaments, but by winning one of a handful of selected tournaments.

Hers was her win at the Senior Swiss Teams national championship in Las Vegas two years ago, which earned the mention in the New York Times.

With that under her belt, it was apparently only a matter of time before she had the 10,000 points required.

It was a fellow bridge club member here who saw her name on the national ACBL website and told her of her rank. "I knew I was getting close," she says.



Janine Frobouck smiles as she prepares to bid during a bridge game at the Vero Beach Bridge Center.

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An old Florida family and their art. P.22

Artists Sean and Shannon Sexton in Sean's home studio on their ranch in west Vero

Arts/Theatre

Design district blossoms with aid of island art lovers



Visitors to Gallery 14 peruse the art during the Spring Gallery Stroll.

Photo: Tom McCarthy Jr.

BY MICHELLE GENZ
STAFF WRITER

Painter and photographer Dorothy Hudson has proof people are crossing

the bridge from the beach to come to downtown Vero's art shows.

Last week, Hudson, one of 14 artists who show at Gallery 14, greeted a couple at the arts district's Spring Stroll

whose photo she had shot a few weeks ago, as they passed her walking down the beach.

The couple were not aware of that moment, until they happened in to the gallery Tuesday night and Hudson pointed out the painting she had rendered from the photo.

"They just loved it when they saw it," says Hudson. The unwitting subjects could soon turn into collectors, if they buy the painting as Hudson hopes.

It took more than serendipity to get the crowds that followed. The gallery stroll was one of four held in the past year in the area dubbed "Downtown Dine and Design" – or 3-D -- several years ago in an effort to brand the galleries' events. The two-block area between 14th street and Old Dixie Hwy., just north and south of the one-way crossroads of State Road 60, has seen vacated spaces increasingly fill with arts-oriented businesses. With the area already a popular restaurant ven-

ue, the galleries have capitalized on a before- and after-dinner crowd to give people a reason to stay the evening.

Chiefly through the efforts of the artists of the three cooperative-style galleries, many of them beachside residents themselves, the periodic strolls have turned the area into a destination. Already, some artists claim they are having their strongest season ever. They are hoping the area's success will lure more local artists to keep working studio and gallery space in the common neighborhood.

The April stroll was not as well attended as February's, in which galleries paired up with local restaurants which provided hors d'oeuvres, or an even more successful one last summer. But it drew a sizeable crowd eager to spend time, and apparently money, in Vero's downtown.

Those galleries reported several solid sales at the event, adding that people who came through are now com-

Arts/Theatre

ing back to consider works a second time. All remarked that people were seriously looking at works of art.

"Sometimes they head straight back to the room where the wine is, and move on to the next place like they're afraid it's going to run out," says Sue Gwinn of the Artists Guild Gallery. "We've had nights where we had to run out and buy more. But this time, it wasn't so much about that. People were really looking at the art."

The Guild space sold about several pieces of art totaling around \$1,000 – the gallery's works tend to be lower-priced than those at other galleries on the street

Gallery 14 noticed the same phenomenon. "We're getting more sales as a result of more – and different – people knowing we're here," says Hudson of Gallery 14.

"The 3-D arts district strolls get a different group of people than we get at our typical openings," she says. Those openings are by invitation; the strolls are open to the public and include shops and businesses as well.

"Everybody loves the strolls," says Gwinn. "I think it makes people just feel braver. During regular hours, they know that if they open that door, it's going to make a lot of noise and ring the bell and somebody's going to want them to ring bells in the cash register too. But on the nights of the strolls, they all think, 'Well, I can just walk in with everybody else.'"

Chris Johnson, a sculptor at Tiger Lily Studios, felt people stayed longer and asked more questions of the artists, a sign that genuine interest in the arts community may be growing.

Tiger Lily did not serve wine for this event, only lemonade and cookies, and Johnson felt it made for a more deliberative crowd. "There was an opportunity to start conversations with people," says Johnson, who makes abstract sculpture with found objects. "People were enjoying talking to the artists," she says. "They were really here to look at the art, and they stayed longer to look at the art. They like to see where it's made and how it's made. When you get people involved in the process of art, they become interested."

"We had a lot of people that were in for the first time, who are discovering the area. There's no objection anymore to coming over here (from the island)," says Johnson, who herself lives on the barrier island. "People brought guests over all season long, friends they thought might like something they had seen."

Johnson says the group is noticing people returning after the strolls, proof that the events are not "a one-shot thing."

"We have sales during the openings, but a lot of times, people come back the following week. Something registers with them that they want to come back and see."

Several artists have received commissions, including Sharon Sexton, who last week was putting finishing touches on a set of decorative clay house numbers for a townhouse complex.

"There's a whole buzz about the area," says Johnson. "People are enthusiastic that the area exists, and that they can see lots of kinds of things."

That's the advantage of having all these places move here. If I'm going to look at galleries, I like to be able to zig-zag across the street."

In addition to the three cooperative art galleries, other shops offer original art, including Tropic Art and Frame, Decorative Arts and Tulaa Boutique, which sells clothing and accessories. Several of the downtown's dozen or so restaurants also sell artwork hung as part of their décor.

Two other shops offer craft supplies: Downtown Beads and the newly relocated Dragonfly Quilt Shop. Both were

open for the stroll as well.

Johnson says for several of the Tiger Lily artists, the season has been the most lucrative they have ever had. Two have been picked up by art galleries elsewhere: Glenda Taylor, a ceramicist, is having a solo show in South Carolina at the end of May, and Jill Pease, a painter, has been invited to show at a gallery in Connecticut.

Weak economy notwithstanding, the experience of buying art may be more emotional, overriding cautious budgeting families may be implementing of late.

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Arts/Theatre

An old Florida family leaves legacy of art, land

L. L. ANGELL
COLUMNIST

From a cramped house trailer, with their little daughter in tow, Sean and Sharon Sexton started building their dream house by hand, on the 600-acre ranch started by Sean's grandfather, the Vero legend Waldo Sexton.

Treasure Hammock Ranch, a few miles northwest of the Indian River Mall, is now part of a publicly-held trust, spared from development in perpetuity while the Sextons continue to manage it. Like the land they live on, the Sextons, too, are Vero treasures, creating poetry and art, much of it for public view.

Indeed, the house they built was paid for by that creativity, Sean Sexton says. "We built this house with money we made from art not the ranch," says Sean.

Married nearly 30 years now, with two grown children, their partnership has a part in all their pursuits.

Sitting at a long wooden table on the

screened porch that looks out on 300 head of grazing cattle, a soaring hawk, and hammocks hiding a dozen species of native wildlife, Sean checks his "raggedy-ass felt hat" and reflects on what has made it all work. "It is magic," Sean says.

Surrounded by their own paintings and sculptures, as well as the work of friends - and various dogs and cats, the Sextons drink in a breeze blowing in from the garden.

The eclectic mix inside and out seems commonplace now: the 12-foot long piece of pine tree, bulldozed and brought inside; various stained glass windows; the hanging light above the bar from one of his grandfather's beachside restaurants; and even French doors salvaged from a John's Island dumpster.

Even the story of how they met has an odd twist-of-fate feeling: Sharon, then 22, was taking adult ballet classes from a local dance teacher, who invited Sean Sexton, also 22 at the time, to sketch the dancers. That teacher, Chris



Sean Sexton, Ranch Landscape, 6 feet by 6 feet, oil on canvas



Sean Sexton was inspired to draw by his first-grade teacher who told him he was a "real artist."

Dale, would later marry Sean's father Ralph Sexton.

"When we first met," says Sean, "Sharon was not in full blossom, but by God, she's turned into a real artist. We have created a lot of art married to each other."

"I grew up in a house filled with art," says Sharon. "And I always painted and made art."

Sharon Sexton, 55, was the daugh-

ter of artistic parents, her mother a painter, and her father a successful interior designer in Fort Lauderdale. The family vacationed at Summer Place, where her mother, still painting at age 90, now lives.

An original member of Tiger Lily Studio and Gallery in the downtown arts district, Sharon Sexton moved to Vero Beach "to be an artist" after high school, supporting herself in part by working on lawn crews at John's Island. She took an ad in the paper offering herself as a muralist; many families will remember the huge dragon she painted in the children's section of the old public library.

Today, her paintings, sculptures, and ceramics celebrate her beloved Florida, unspoiled and undeveloped. From paintings of turtles swimming underwater to sculptures of purple

Arts/Theatre



Shannon Sexton sketches on a linoleum block at her ranch home. Photo: Tom McCarthy Jr.

gallinules, Sharon's art is inspired by the natural world.

Not that art and ranching do not sometimes conflict. One morning last week, Sexton's planned day at Tiger Lily working on a pottery commission was delayed, when, just as she was leaving for work, a calf she is caretaking in a small pen suddenly got frisky and bumped into her, leaving her fresh clothes covered with manure.

Sharon's paintings and sculptures sell well; she says her primary collectors are on the beach. But she may be best known for her public art.

The four 10-foot-tall tiled pillars at Royal Palm Pointe are hers. At Temple Beth Shalom, she recently completed a wall honoring donors, comprising three arches with hand-sculpted tiles of fruit from the Holy Land. Ten years ago, she created another donor wall, this one for Hospice House, made of tiles she created with images of native botanicals.

In a sense, Sharon Sexton's public art is a continuation of the architectural sculpture - if you could call it that - of her in-law, Waldo Sexton, eccentric builder of local landmarks like McKee Jungle Gardens, the Ocean Grill and the Driftwood Hotel.

Those family businesses proved a steady source of employment for Sean: he bussed tables at Waldo's restaurant starting at 13; at the Patio Restaurant on the mainland, he worked as night manager when he was 17.

The next year, he headed off to Gainesville and eventually the University of Florida, where he earned a degree in Animal Science. He came home, prepared to take on the full-time job of running the ranch -- with one stipulation.

"I told my Daddy I would farm Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, but I would paint Tuesdays and Thursdays," he says with a grin. "And maybe steal a

day on the weekend."

It was a familiar request for his father. Sean has been drawing since he was little, inspired by his first-grade teacher who told him he was a "real artist."

"I believed her," he says. "That's how I have thought of myself ever since." It was at Gainesville's Santa Fe Community College that he first became inspired to write. He pulls out a marble-covered composition book, bulging with folded drawings of people and animals, annotated by his small steady handwriting.

"I took an experimental English class and we had to keep a journal. Instead of just writing, I made drawings and just went wild. The English teacher kept my journal as an example, and I got it back from her just before she died," says Sean, who began writing poetry after being "infected" with a love for writing.

Sean has kept a journal ever since. "I have about 100 journals. Keeping them is necessary to my survival."

His first volume published this summer by the University of Florida's Anhinga Press. He's pleased that the book will be ready in time for the Florida Literary Arts Coalition in St. Augustine in the fall.

In his journals, he also records the life of the ranch. During the hurricanes Frances and Jeanne, in 2004, Sean drew what he saw blowing sideways out his windows and poured out his worries on the page.

"I was convinced that they would all be dead by morning," he says, turning to a drawing of the cattle turned with their backs to the wind. "We lost two old cows," he says. "They died shortly after the hurricanes. They'd just run out of gas."

That moment, told in simple terms, reflects a running theme in Sean Sexton's work: man's relationship with

time and the inevitability of death. But what will not "run out of gas" is the ranch itself.

Three years ago, the county bought the development rights for Treasure Hammock Ranch for \$12 million, preserving the 600-acre property forever. It was funded by a referendum passed by taxpayers in 2004 to preserve agricultural lands, cultural heritage sites, and natural resources in the county, just as development of western grove and ranchlands became rampant.

The purchase of the ranch's devel-

opment rights was the first in the state aimed at conserving agricultural land. It was not without controversy; some residents felt public access was too limited. Nevertheless, there are annual tours given by various organizations, including the Pelican Island Audubon chapter, the Native Plant Society, the Indian River Land Trust and the Lifelong Learning Institute.

Florida wildlife photographer Bob Montanaro has created a website devoted to a year in the life of the Sexton ranch at floridacattleranch.org.

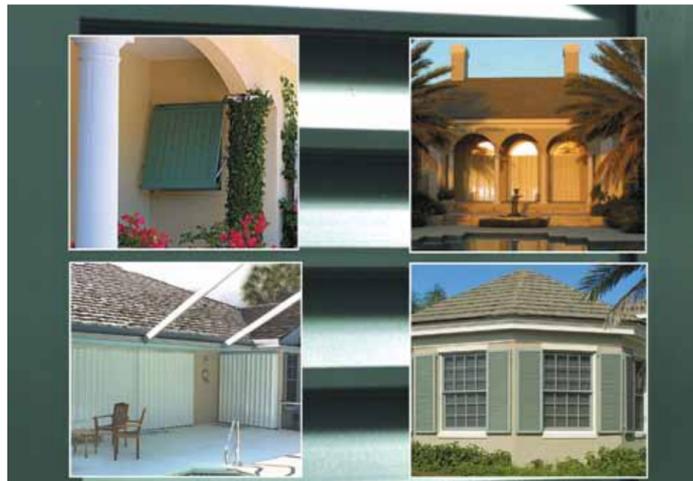
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Arts/Theatre

Athena Society buys two paintings for Museum



Edward Willis Redfield (1869-1965), "The Delaware Valley", c. 1906, Oil on canvas 32 1/8 x 40 3/16 inches



Conrad Marca-Relli (1913-2000), "Untitled", 1950 Oil on canvas, 6 x 50 inches

BY MICHELLE GENZ
STAFF WRITER

It may be the most prestigious shopper's club around, its purchases the most considered. Last week, the Athena Society enjoyed another of its

spring sprees, when the acquisitive art-lovers who contribute an extra \$5,000 to the Vero Beach Museum of Art, in addition to holding the \$1,500 Chairman's Club-level memberships, spent their dues on two more paintings to be added to the museum's permanent collection.

Capping a lavish dinner at the museum, spirited last-minute lobbying, and the final balloting, the group opted to buy two works of four proposed by museum director Lucinda Gedeon and curator Jennifer Bailey Forbes. All four works had been transported to Vero Beach

from various galleries and private collections, to hang in the museum's lobby for viewing for several weeks.

The 76 members of the Athena Society – which this year included eight new couples – chose a spring landscape of American impressionist Ed-

Arts/Theatre

ward W. Redfield. The 32- by 40-inch oil, entitled "The Delaware Valley," depicts a hilly vista in the area where Redfield lived and worked, Buck's County, Pennsylvania.

Redfield is considered a preeminent member of the school known as the Pennsylvania impressionists. A believer in the "strenuous life" ethos of Teddy Roosevelt, and famous for painting snowy scenes outdoors in grueling conditions, Redfield was known as a master of painting in "one go," as one of his teachers called it. The technique shows itself in the canvas the Athena Society chose to acquire, with energetic brush strokes evoking the fleeting newness of spring.

The painting won out on the first vote over three other paintings, including a bold abstract expressionist oil of horses and human figures by Bob Thompson, and another more abstract work by Conrad Marca-Relli.

"There was a lot of buzz about the Thompson and the Marca-Relli," says Gedeon. "But there's always a group that's more traditional. So I knew the Redfield could get a lot of votes. And it won."

After that first vote, the group had the option of buying another painting, or rolling the remaining funds over to the next year. In a second vote, it chose to buy the abstract expressionist work of Marca-Relli, a key figure in the post-war avant-garde art world of Greenwich Village, and founder of "The Eighth Street Club," a group of artists that included Franz Kline and Willem de Kooning. The oil, in black, orange and amber tones, reflects the influence on Marca-Relli and his cohorts of French surrealist Joan Miro.

"At the point of this painting – 1950, Jackson Pollack had just had his first one-person show," says Gedeon. "They were looking back at Gorky, who in turn was influence by Miro."

The painting marked a departure from Marca-Relli's more representational scenes of cities and carnivals of the previous decade, and feature what Gedeon refers to as "bio-morphic" shapes, amoeba-like ovals that disappear from his later works of primarily squares and rectangles, many of which were collages.

Last year, the dinner party was capped by an extraordinary gesture, when one patron stepped to the podium to whisper she would buy and donate a work that had been passed over but that the museum particularly wanted. There was no such dual-climactic impulse purchase this season. But Gedeon was pleased that as philanthropy takes on "a different tenor," the Athena Society continues to draw an enthusiastic group.

"People are looking very carefully

at how they've given in the past," she says. "Many are narrowing their giving, some are giving less to more. What's remarkable about the Athena Society is the shared experience."

Membership in the Athena Society, established in 2003, includes other benefits besides the grand gesture of adding to the museum's small but expanding collection: members can take part in other gatherings throughout the year, including art tours in other cities as well as lectures by art historians in members' homes.

The works of art considered for pur-

chase this year are on display in the lobby of the museum. Along with the Redfield and the Marca-Relli, there is a 1981 work called "Table II" by the living artist George Tooker, whose paintings of figures in egg tempura are in a haunting and distinctive style – inspired in part by 14th Century Italian painters, Dutch masters and Mexican muralists.

The other work not purchased is a large-scale figurative expressionist painting by Bob Thompson, an African-American modernist painter whose career spanned only seven

years. The painting, Tancredi et Erminia, was painted in 1965, a year before Thompson died of a drug overdose at the age of 28. A pre-med student at Boston University before he turned to art, Thompson quickly rose to become an important artist with a much anticipated career. His works are considered among the most distinctive of modern American art.

Thompson's paintings, like the works of the other artists considered for purchase by the Athena Society, are included in the collections of America's premier art institutions.

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BY CHRIS KRAUL
LOS ANGELES TIMES

I've often fantasized about retracing the steps of such naturalists as Charles Darwin, Alexander von Humboldt and William Bartram, who saw exotic places and recorded, in detail, the plants and animals they described so vividly on their expeditions.

But the armchair naturalist in me didn't want to work too hard or subject myself to the tribulations they suffered as they circumnavigated the globe, climbed the South American Andes or slogged through the swamps of the Southeastern United States, all places where one might encounter sharks, bugs, snakes, piranhas, jaguars and crocodiles. So, I kept deferring on the grounds of time, cost and discomfort.



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The hills and forest of Ecuador feature some of the most diverse species of orchids on the planet, including the Eleanthus orchid.

My visit to Mindo, in a cloud-forested valley of the same name, helped me realize that I didn't have to set sail

or strap on the crampons to see spectacular and exotic life forms. Mindo is an easy-access epicenter of biodiversity in northwestern Ecuador teeming with hundreds of orchid and bird species, all framed by spectacular Andean scenery in a cool, temperate climate.

During my two days traipsing around Mindo — a 90-minute-drive from Quito, the capital—I spied scores of plant and bird species that I thought I'd have to travel much farther to see. There were netherworldly orchids (about 4,000 species grow in Ecuador) and vibrantly colored bromeliads and dozens of rare birds, including toucans, cocks-of-the-rock, quetzals and swarms of hummingbirds and parrots.

Ecuador's biodiversity so engaged me that I thought of it as the ultimate persuasion for preservation, here and elsewhere. Bigger picture: Surely the

Travel



Source: ESRI
LORRAINE WANG Los Angeles Times



Toucans dine alfresco at El Séptimo Paraíso, a resort with a nature preserve.

but the supporting cast is just as impressive: I saw two-story-high tree ferns, ancient cedars, giant hibiscus and philodendrons with leaves as big as elephant ears. I was agog at the enormous shiny silver leaves of the umbrella-shaped cecropia trees that some experts say can grow as much as 6 feet a year.

ranks of protectors would swell, I reasoned, if they were to come away with the same understanding I did.

The smaller picture was just as satisfying. Although I'm no "orch-idiot," as the locals call rabid orchid fans willing to surmount any obstacle to catch a glimpse of one, I am fascinated by these plants, masterpieces of nature's handiwork. I saw scores of orchids along the several trails I hiked and in many of the 50 private reserves that locals have created to appeal to amateur, leisurely naturalists like me.

Ecuador's stable and temperate climate in the highlands makes it a veritable flora factory. With nearly \$600 million in shipments, Ecuador is the second leading exporter of cut flowers (Colombia is first) to the U.S.

Orchids may be the showstoppers,

level, particularly after noon. Moss covers many of the trees. In this botanical caldron, orchids, bees, hummingbirds and the other pollinators they depend on thrive.

Mindo is well-known in birder circles, I'm told. The valley is a perennial high scorer in the Audubon Society's annual global bird count. Every De-

ember, localities around the world compete for the most bird species spotted, and Mindo, where as many as 400 have been counted some years, consistently places in the top 10.

As for birds, I found strikingly beautiful specimens seemingly everywhere. Actually, I didn't find them; they found me. Toucans frolicked in the trees during my visit to the Cabañas Armonía hostel's orchid garden. Ten minutes out on one of our expeditions up an abandoned road, a brilliantly red cock-of-the-rock eyed us imperiously from a tree branch 50 feet away. The birds with their puffed heads and brilliant red color are prize sightings, and I "bagged" mine from the seat of my guide's van. Hummingbirds by the dozens fluttered just outside my room and around the 500-acre nature reserve of my hotel, El Séptimo Paraíso (Seventh Heaven). Best of all, unlike the journeys undertaken by my naturalist heroes, my trip involved no sacrifice of creature comforts. Mindo, a town of about 15,000, and its environs are filled with a variety of hotels, from basic to luxury. Seventh Heaven, where rooms go for about \$150 a night, was on the expensive side of the spectrum. On the other end is the Cabañas



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Travel



Hikers explore a cloud forest. The area around Mindo is an easy-access epicenter of biodiversity in northwestern Ecuador teeming with hundreds of orchid and bird species, all framed by spectacular Andean scenery in a cool, temperate climate.

Armonía, perfectly adequate and going for \$16 per person a night.

Part of Mindo's charm is that it is preternaturally quiet, broken only by bird calls. It helps that a road built 20 years ago that connects Quito with the coast bypassed Mindo. The old road, which runs through town, has become

a rarely traveled byway that serves as a path for nature-loving bikers or sightseers in vans.

A good guide is essential to a successful trip because he or she will see and hear things, particularly in dense, foggy forest, that inexperienced interlopers would miss. Thanks to a recom-



A tree frog is at home in its tree-forest environment.

mendation from a friend in Quito's tourism industry, I got a great one: Kurt Beate, a multilingual German-Ecuadorean who has led tours throughout the country.

Even as a 34-year veteran, Beate is still passionate about his country and its embarrassment of natural riches and is generous with his knowledge of Ecuadorean flora and fauna. During my two days with him, I was treated to a nonstop flow of fascinating digressions, including how to identify certain birds by their calls, including hummingbirds (a strange clicking sound); quetzals (a descending trill); umbrella birds (a moo-ing sound, which is why Ecuadoreans call them bull birds) and toucans (a call in which they seem to be telling us, "Dios te de" or, in English, "God will provide.")

On the way to Mindo from Quito, Kurt insisted that we make two stops, both of which proved unforgettable. The first was at Pululahua Crater, the innards of an extinct volcano 17 miles northwest of Quito that is now a na-

tional park. From a parking lot, we walked a couple hundred yards up to the crest of the crater to see the floor, its miles spread out before us, 1,000 feet below. Apart from a few houses and the crater floor's green carpeted pastureland, it looked as though it might have erupted yesterday.

The other stop was at the privately owned 100-acre Pahuma Orchid Reserve (admission \$4), about midway on the drive. We took an hourlong hike through the mists to Pahuma's summit, passing several trailside orchids along the way, before descending to feast our eyes on more than 100 orchids and bromeliads growing in an outside nursery.

"Every plant is a surprise," Kurt said smiling, after he photographed a blazingly pink epidendrum orchid. Its myriad tiny blooms reminded me of a pomegranate turned inside out.

It wasn't all beauty during my two days in Mindo. The hike at Pahuma was a beast, straight up into dense tropical forest and thick cloud and dampness that tends to come on after 1 or 2 in the afternoon. We gained more than 800 feet of altitude in less than an hour. I was glad I had a plastic poncho and good weatherproof hiking boots. The mist and darkness made spotting orchids and other plants difficult. Fortunately, Kurt was adept at that.

But the rest of the time, I was back in my laid-back explorer mode, including my drive with Kurt up the abandoned Mindo-Quito road, where thanks to his telescopic "view-scope," we saw several roadside orchids and the cock-of-the-rock. There was also my morning stroll through Seventh Heaven's 800-acre reserve, with its flocks of clicking hummingbirds, and my pleasant walk around Cabañas Armonía's orchid garden, where I encountered the colorful and mysterious geometry of a dracula orchid. It was just the right blend of education and enlightenment for the lazy man.

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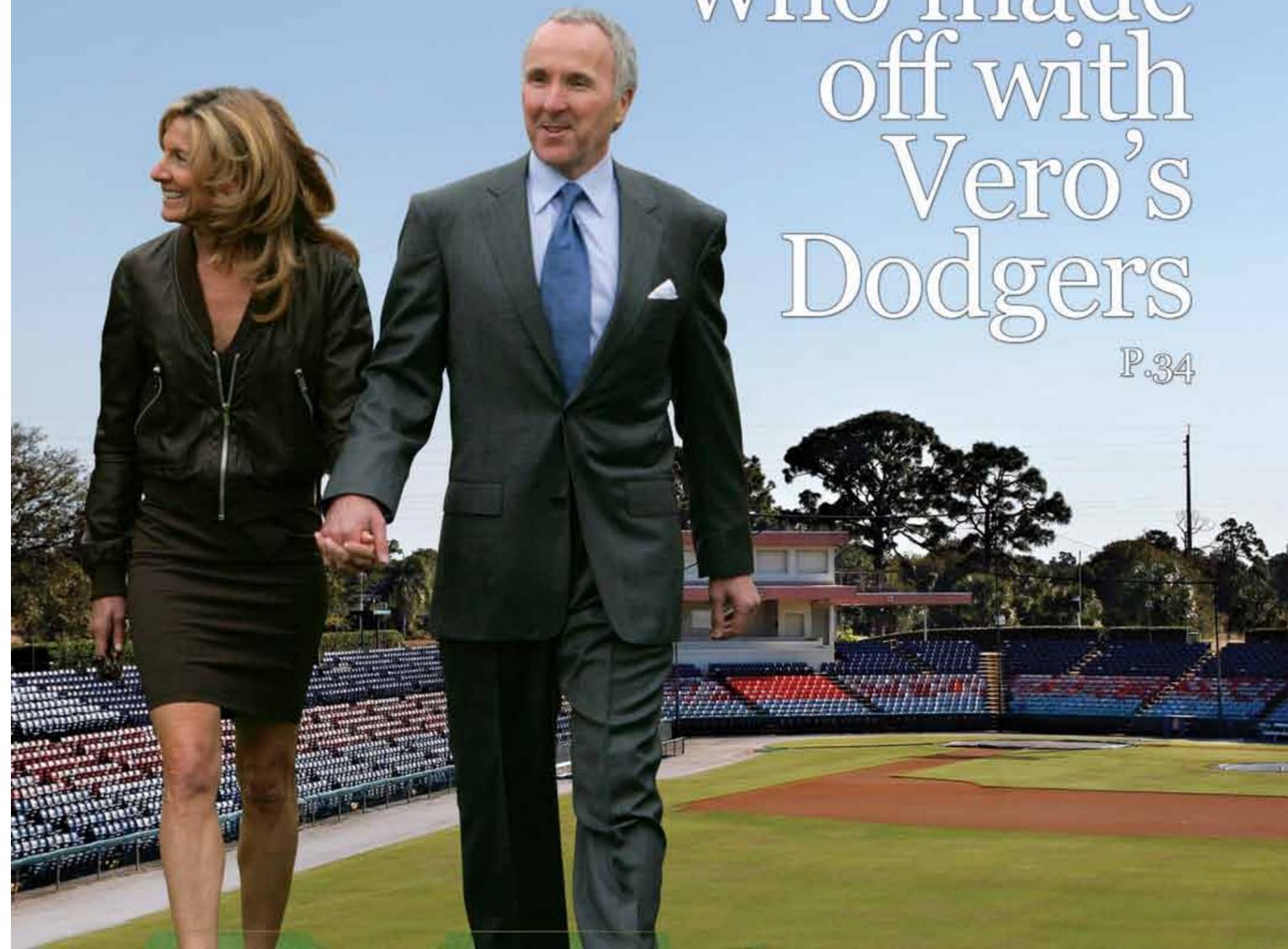
How America pulled itself back from the brink P.30

INSIGHT

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No longer smiling
The couple
who made
off with
Vero's
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STORY BY DANIEL GROSS, WASHINGTON POST WRITERS GROUP

The comeback country:

How America pulled itself back from the brink



In the wake of the 2008 financial meltdown and the deep, long recession that followed, the decline of America has become the preferred intellectual preoccupation of the elite—left, right, and center.

Joseph Stiglitz, the Nobel-winning economist, has argued that the Obama administration's tepid response to the recession and the financial meltdown will sandbag the U.S. recovery. Historian Niall Ferguson has made the case that high debt and profligate spending will cause the downfall of a once mighty empire. Harvard economist Ken Rogoff frets that the U.S. could become the next Greece.

In January, French President Nicolas Sarkozy, once dubbed *l'Américain*, delivered a blistering speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos that criticized the U.S.-led model of global capitalism.

After the failure of Lehman Brothers in September 2008, industries and institutions tethered to the easy-money era were nearly sliced in half. And so was America's economic self-esteem. Between the end of 2007 and the first quarter of 2009, \$9 trillion of wealth evaporated. The relentless boom of China, India, and Brazil, with their cheap labor and abundant natural resources, emerged as a frightening new threat.

The collapse coincided with other foreboding omens: \$4-a-gallon gas, the rise of the tea parties, an ungovernable Senate, an oddly blasé White House, unrepentant banks, and stubbornly high unemployment. The broad measure that tallies frustrated part-timers and those who have given up remains at 16.9 percent.

If the U.S. doesn't tumble back into recession, the consensus holds, we'll face a Japan-style lost decade. A 2009 NBC/*Wall Street Journal* poll found that only 27 percent were confident their children's standard of living would be better than their own.

Bleak is the new black.

But the long-term decline of the U.S. economy has been greatly exaggerated. America is coming back stronger, better, and faster than nearly anyone expected—and faster than most of its international rivals.

The Dow Jones industrial average, hovering near 11,000, is up 70 percent in the past 13 months, and auto sales in the first quarter were up 16 percent from 2009. The economy added 162,000 jobs in March, including 17,000 in manufacturing. The dollar has gained strength, and the U.S. is back to its familiar position of lapping Europe and Japan in growth.

Among large economies, only China, India, and Brazil are growing more rapidly than the U.S.—and they're doing so off a much smaller base. If the U.S. economy grows at a 3.6 percent rate this year, as Macroeconomic Advisers projects, it'll create \$513 billion in new economic activity—equal to the GDP of Indonesia.

★★★★★★★★

So what accounts for the pervasive gloom? Housing and large deficits remain serious problems. But most experts are overlooking America's true competitive advantages. The tale of the economy's remarkable turnaround is largely the story of swift reaction, a willingness to write off bad debts and restructure, and an embrace of efficiency—disciplines largely invented in the U.S. and at which it still excels.

America still leads the world at processing failure, at latching on to new innovations and building them to scale quickly and profitably. "We are the most adaptive, inventive nation, and have proven quite resilient," says Richard Florida, sociologist and author of *The Great Reset: How New Ways of Living and Working Drive Post-Crash Prosperity*.

If these impulses are embraced more systematically and wholeheartedly, the U.S. can remain an economic superpower well into the current century.

So what will our new economy look like once the smoke finally clears? There will likely be fewer McMansions with four-car garages and more well-insulated homes, fewer Hummers and more Chevy Volts, less proprietary trading and more productivity-enhancing software, less debt and more capital, more exported goods and less imported energy. Most significant, there will be new commercial infrastructures and industrial ecosystems that incubate and propel growth—much as the Internet did in the 1990s.

The current pessimism is part of a historical economic inferiority complex. To hear some critics tell it, things have been going south in this country since the cruel winter in Jamestown, Va., in 1609, when most of the settlers died. And for most of the 19th century, America was the immature, uncouth cousin that required huge infusions of European capital to build its railroads.



The U.S. emerged from World War II as the globe's industrial, financial, and technological leader by default—the rest of the developed world had destroyed much of its industrial capacity. Yet Americans were insecure about their rising status. In the 1920s, many Progressives returned from Mussolini's Italy convinced that Il Duce had a superior economic model.

During the New Deal, bankers and industrialists earnestly fretted that Franklin Roosevelt would ruin the nation's prospects for growth by establishing a new safety net. The U.S.S.R.'s launch of the sputnik satellite in 1957 inspired fears that the Soviet Union's presumed technological lead would allow it to triumph in the Cold War.

And in the 1980s, Japan threatened the U.S. with exports of electronics and cars and by buying trophy properties like Rockefeller Center and the Pebble Beach golf resort. "The Cold War is over, and Japan won," as Sen. Paul Tsongas put it in 1992.

Of course, the declinists were often wrong—Rockefeller Center and Pebble Beach returned to U.S. ownership within a decade. Just as exuberant projections are generally made precisely at the top (remember Dow 36,000?), prophecies of long-term decline usually gain traction after we've suffered a catastrophic fall.

This time around, the chorus of naysayers reached its climax in March 2009, when Federal Reserve chairman Ben Bernanke was widely mocked for his identification of "green shoots" of recovery. In the first quarter of 2009, the economy was shrinking at a 6.4 percent annual rate. By the fourth quarter it was growing at a 5.9 percent rate.

Consider the scope of that swing: the growth rate of a \$14.5 trillion economy shifted by 12.3 percentage points in about nine months. Like a massive sailboat pivoting 180 degrees in choppy seas, this wrenching turnaround produced a massive wake, and induced nausea among many of its passengers.

★★★★★★★★

The recovery came quickly because the public and private sectors reacted with great speed. In the 1990s, Japanese policymakers deliberated and delayed before embarking on a program that included interest-rate cuts, a huge stimulus program, expanded bank insurance, and the nationalization of failed institutions. In 2008 and 2009 it took the U.S. just 18 months to conduct the aggressive fiscal and monetary actions that Japan waited for 12 years to carry out.

And the patient responded to the shock therapy, as the credit markets and financial sector bounced back. Since the announcements of the Treasury-imposed stress tests in May 2009, banks have raised more than \$140 billion in new equity capital. In August 2009, not even the most cockeyed optimists could have projected that within four months, Bank of America, Citi, and Wells Fargo would return \$100 billion in borrowed funds to the taxpayers. But they did.

CIT Group, the small-business lender that lost its way in an ill-timed foray into subprime, is a perfect example of those quick reflexes. It filed for Chapter 11 on Nov. 1, 2009. In five weeks it wiped out \$10.4 billion in debt (including \$2.3 billion of TARP funds) and emerged from bankruptcy. It has brought in a new CEO—John Thain, who had run the New York Stock Exchange and Merrill Lynch—and is now focusing on its core business of lending to small and midsize firms.

"Restructuring, whether it is done out of court or bankruptcy, is an accepted genre in the U.S., whereas overseas it still carries much more of an onus," says Stephen Cooper, a founder of Zolfo Cooper, which pioneered the business of administering triage to seriously wounded companies.

Fixing broken financial structures is only the beginning. In periods of slack demand, the single most important factor that drives profitability is the ability to do more with less. Here again, Americans seem to have an innate competitive advantage.

Whether it was Frederick Taylor, the inventor of scientific management, walking around Victorian-era factories with stopwatches, timing workers' motions; or Henry Ford perfecting the assembly line; or W. Edwards Deming developing total quality management; or Walmart's insanely effective supply chains—the pursuit of efficiency is as American as apple pie.

In this crisis, companies embraced cost cutting and efficiency. From the fourth quarter of 2008 to the fourth quarter of 2009, productivity rose 5.8 percent. In 2007 and 2008, productivity growth was 1.7 percent and 2.1 percent, respectively.

★★★★★★★★

In the short term, the ruthless pursuit of efficiency translates into the uncomfortable—and unsustainable—dichotomy of rising profits and falling employment. But the focus on efficiency is creating new business opportunities for smart companies. At

BigBelly Solar, a Needham, Mass.-based firm whose solar-powered trash compactors reduce the need for both labor and energy, sales doubled in both 2008 and 2009.

"Cities and institutions like universities and park systems are eager to do more with less," says CEO Jim Poss. Leasing 500 compacting units has allowed Philadelphia to cut weekly pickups from 17 to five, and will save it \$13 million over 10 years. BigBelly employs fewer than 50 people, but like many businesses in fast-growing markets it indirectly supports a much larger number of jobs.

At Mack Molding, an Arlington, Vt., contract manufacturer, 35 workers are kept busy on two shifts producing compactors. "When you add the employees at the more than 50 component suppliers, this work is supporting another 180 jobs," says Joan Magrath, vice president of sales and engineering at Mack Molding. BigBelly compactors, which are entirely made in the U.S., have been exported to 25 countries. It's a drop in the bucket. But thousands of startups and small businesses are trying to crack the markets developing at home and abroad.

In fact, since bottoming in April 2009, exports

have risen smartly, from \$121.7 billion in April 2009 to \$142.7 billion in January 2010—an increase of 17.3 percent. Boeing will deliver about 460 commercial planes in 2010, up from 375 in 2008, with the vast majority going to non-U.S. buyers.

All well and good, the skeptics note, but we've got a long way to go. To recoup the 8.2 million jobs lost since December 2007, it'll take four years of growth at 170,000 jobs per month. And by definition, it's hard to identify the next transformative economic force—the next steam engine or interstate-highway system.

White House economic adviser Larry Summers tells a story about the economic summit in Little Rock after the 1992 election. In the thousands of pages of briefing papers and policy briefs, one word didn't appear: Internet.

Beyond creating jobs for those who built and maintain it, the Internet functions as a powerful platform on which all sorts of new businesses—and ways of doing business—can be rolled out. And constructing entirely new ecosystems is another discipline at which the U.S. excels. "In a reset, we get great individual innovation," notes Richard Florida. But more important is the rise of systems innovation, like Thomas Edison

and George Westinghouse building electrical systems. "That leads to new models of infrastructure and new kinds of consumption."

Apple launched the iTunes Music Store in April 2003 with a single product: songs selling for 99 cents. Seven years later, iTunes is a much larger business: hardware like the iPhone, iPod Touch, and iPad; audiobooks, movies, ringtones, apps, and e-books.

It's a boon for retailers, movie studios, independent coders, analytics firms, and accessories makers—the market for cases, sleeves, and headphones for i-devices is north of \$1.5 billion annually. In late March, the venture-capital firm Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers doubled the size of its two-year-old iFund, which backs app makers, to \$200 million.

Now consider two interrelated systems: energy and auto manufacturing. In the past two years, the old policy of subsidizing housing and Wall Street has been replaced by a new one that seeks to boost national operating income through efficiency. Skepticism about the potential for millions of "green jobs" to materialize overnight is warranted. But in some areas, a process similar to the iTunes experience is developing.

The Danish wind-turbine maker Vestas in recent years has announced investments of nearly \$1 billion in wind-turbine-manufacturing plants in Colorado, which, when completed, will directly employ about 2,500 people. But Vestas has also attracted a dozen-odd suppliers, including components producers like Aluwind, PMC Technology, Bach Composite, and Hexcel.

And it's not just about the hardware. Renewable Energy Systems Americas, the largest manager of wind farms, moved its corporate headquarters to Broomfield, Colo., in 2008. Last month Colorado mandated that 30 percent of the state's energy be produced from renewable sources by 2020.

A similar dynamic is playing out in the wounded auto industry, in which even small gains in efficiency can produce big economic gains. Simply improving the mileage of the U.S. fleet by one mile per gallon would save 6.1 billion gallons of gas per year, or \$17 billion at today's prices.

To help the industry respond to a new mandate that the U.S. car and light-truck fleet reach average fuel efficiency of 35.5 miles per gallon by 2016, up from 20.5 today, the Energy Department is providing loans and loan guarantees to large companies—Ford has received \$5.9 billion in loans to transform several factories—and to startups like Fisker Automotive.

Henrik Fisker, a veteran auto executive born in Denmark, started his eponymous company in August 2007 to produce a premium plug-in hybrid. "The U.S. is traditionally a nation of innovators, but the reason it makes the most sense to be here is because the consumer is also willing to take risks," he says. Fisker raised \$250 million in venture capital, snapped up engineering talent on the cheap, and has tapped into the automotive supply chain, which is eager for new business.

Last October the company bought a recently shuttered General Motors plant in Wilmington, Del., for the knockdown price of \$18 million. Armed with a \$528.7 million federal loan guarantee, Fisker plans to spend more than \$150 million retooling the plant. But the rollout of electric and plug-in hybrids also has the potential to create its own ecosystem—dealers, charging stations, accessories, software applications. Henrik Fisker says: "The development of this industry will influence how we make electricity in this country."

Such Silicon Valley bravado may ring hollow in a period of diminished expectations. Yet even amid

its historic humbling, the U.S. has shown an ability to bring new ideas to global scale rapidly. At Davos, where the world seemed to celebrate the demise of America as a vital economic force, the hottest ticket was the party thrown by Google. Elites elbowed for position at the bar, danced poorly, and tapped out text messages on their iPhones, made by...Apple.

Google and Apple are the nation's third- and

ninth-largest companies by market capitalization, respectively, with a combined value of \$398 billion. Now consider that in early 2002, in the wake of the last meltdown and the post-Enron crisis in American confidence, their combined value was a few billion. Google was a privately held company with about 600 employees. Now both are iconic global brands, major exporters, and spurs to innovation

and growth—they represent America the way Chevrolet and McDonald's once did.

The last two expansions have been 120 months and 92 months, respectively. If the U.S. continues to adapt as it has, and if it produces a few more game changers like Google and Apple, there's no reason that the expansion that started in July 2009, against all the odds and predictions, can't last just as long. ★





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The folks who took Dodgers from Vero

STORY BY MEGHAN DAUM, LOS ANGELES TIMES

For those who think Los Angeles Dodgers owners Frank and Jamie McCourt were less than honorable in their dealings with Vero Beach, the notion that they have been less than honorable in their dealings with each other should come as little surprise. But their current divorce proceedings – being played out in the Los Angeles media – provide some additional perspective on the fine people who acquired the Dodgers in 2004 and unceremoniously ditched Vero Beach in 2008. The following story and column from the Los Angeles Times suggest how fortunate we are to no longer have these people anywhere near our community.

mouth likes of me has had a washer and dryer at home since my mid-30s. At the very least, I hope Jamie has one of those metal laundry baskets with wheels.

The other McCourt-inspired quandary I've been chewing on is more fundamental. It's one of those existential questions for which there may seem to be many answers but which, upon mindful consideration, may guide us to one great truth.

That question: How should a person accurately measure his or her "lifestyle"? Furthermore, what does "lifestyle" (a word as overused in the contemporary culture as, well, "contemporary culture") mean anyway? Does it refer to the quotidian facts and rituals of our real lives (the dollars in our bank accounts, the location and convenience of our laundry facilities), or is it something more fantasy-based?

Does lifestyle refer to the thread count of our actual sheets or the thread count of the ones in catalogs that we pore over while lounging in a bed made up with products we bought at Wal-Mart? Is it a literal state of being, or ultimately a state of mind?

I raise these questions because Jamie McCourt has requested just under a million dollars a month in temporary support, an amount characterized in the legal filing as "wholly consistent with the parties' marital lifestyle." This lifestyle reportedly included a personal hair stylist and makeup artist, private jets and monthly mortgage payments on seven homes -- all in her name -- of about \$415,000.

Before you jump to the standard conclusions about acqui-

sitional zealotry of the female kind, bear in mind that, according to attorneys, Frank spent as much as \$80,000 on a recent vacation and bought \$52,000 worth of clothing since last November.

Meanwhile, on top of the soap opera details, there's the core issue at stake in the McCourt wrangling: Are the Dodgers community property and is Jamie entitled to half-ownership in the club?

But what somehow remains most compelling about this case isn't the prurient details -- Jamie McCourt's alleged affair with her driver, for example -- or even who gets the Dodgers, it's the emotions stirred up in us ordinary citizens when we read about people who receive daily home visits from hair stylists.

Schadenfreude may come first, but then it's also easy to feel sorry for the McCourts. Not for all they stand to lose now but for something they lost long ago: the pleasure of salivating over what you don't have.

I don't know about you, but this is a pleasure I enjoy daily. Though the lifestyle to which I've become accustomed isn't lacking the essentials or even a lot of non-essentials, I'd be lying if I said what I'm accustomed to doesn't involve thinking about having more.

In fact, what's most satisfying about my lifestyle may be, ironically enough, the fantasies that result from its being less than entirely satisfying. In other words, while I wouldn't refuse a set of 800-thread Egyptian cotton sheets, something in me suspects it's as much fun to look at them in catalogs as it is to sleep in them as a matter of course.

Likely-to-be-unfulfilled longing is, in many ways, central to what it means to be human, especially an American human.

And if what you're accustomed to precludes that kind of desire, doesn't it also deny you a certain kind of humanity?

Which may be the real undercurrent playing out in the McCourts' nasty divorce. That and all the laundry schlepping. If Jamie needs anything, it's a trip to the household appliance department at Sears. ●

BY CARLA HALL & VICTORIA KIM, LOS ANGELES TIMES



Frank and Jamie McCourt

On the day Frank and Jamie McCourt first appeared in court on their divorce, each side castigated the other for selfish, extravagant behavior, and one lawyer even reached for that icon of excess, Marie Antoinette.

Divorce attorney Sorrell Trope, representing Dodgers owner Frank McCourt, told Los Angeles Superior Court Commissioner Scott Gordon that even though the doomed French queen may not have actually said of the bread-starved masses, "Let them eat cake," the line "is insightful to this case itself."

Lawyers representing the two sides argued over her request for \$988,845 a month in temporary spousal support. Lawyers for Frank said he is receiving \$5 million in annual income and that he could reasonably give his wife \$150,000 a month.

Lawyers for Jamie argued he has access to \$18 million annually. "Mr. McCourt wants to maintain the marital lifestyle," her divorce attorney, Dennis Wasser, said, "and he wants to erase Mrs. McCourt from the Dodgers, from the marital lifestyle -- erase her, period."

Frank, who fired his wife last fall as Dodgers chief executive shortly before she filed for divorce, and Jamie did not cross paths as they entered the courtroom minutes apart.

Jamie, wearing a cream-colored dress, watched calmly, never flinching, as Trope lambasted her requests as "obscene." Frank, in a dark, pinstriped suit, remained similarly stoic as his wife's attorney scoffed at his contention that the recession had hit him hard.

In court, the estranged couple's lawyers managed to agree on one thing: They were representing wealthy people battling over money.

"Every need, every want these people had was met," said Wasser, who detailed a lifestyle of seven lavish homes, private jets, hotel suites and daily visits from hairstylists for both Jamie and Frank.

Later, Trope argued the \$18-million annual income figure attributed to Frank was farfetched. "I'm apologizing for the fact that my client only makes \$5 million a year," Trope said. "It's kind of ludicrous, isn't it, these numbers we're talking about?"

That said, Trope launched a scathing attack on "Mrs. McCourt's needs." He said that she uses one of the Holmby Hills houses only for its swimming pool and "the other is just a shack she uses to store furniture."

"I mean, where are we? This is like 'Alice in Wonderland,'" said Trope, who suggested that Jamie rent out most of the properties to support herself.

But he also offered sobering words about his own client, who he said lived partially on borrowed money -- albeit to support Mrs. McCourt's lifestyle, he argued.

"You know, in a marriage, one of the spouses is usually the one that drives a lifestyle," Trope said outside court after the hearing. "... And in this particular marriage, Mrs. McCourt drove this extravagant lifestyle."

Jamie's lawyers said that was a distorted picture of their relationship. "This is a lifestyle they created together," Kump said.

Frank now lives in a condo at the Montage Hotel in Beverly Hills, paying at least \$30,000 a month. His lawyer Anne Kiley said, "Thirty-thousand a month to live in the Montage, as opposed to the house she swims in at \$90,000 a month."

It is unclear when the commissioner will rule on spousal support. ●



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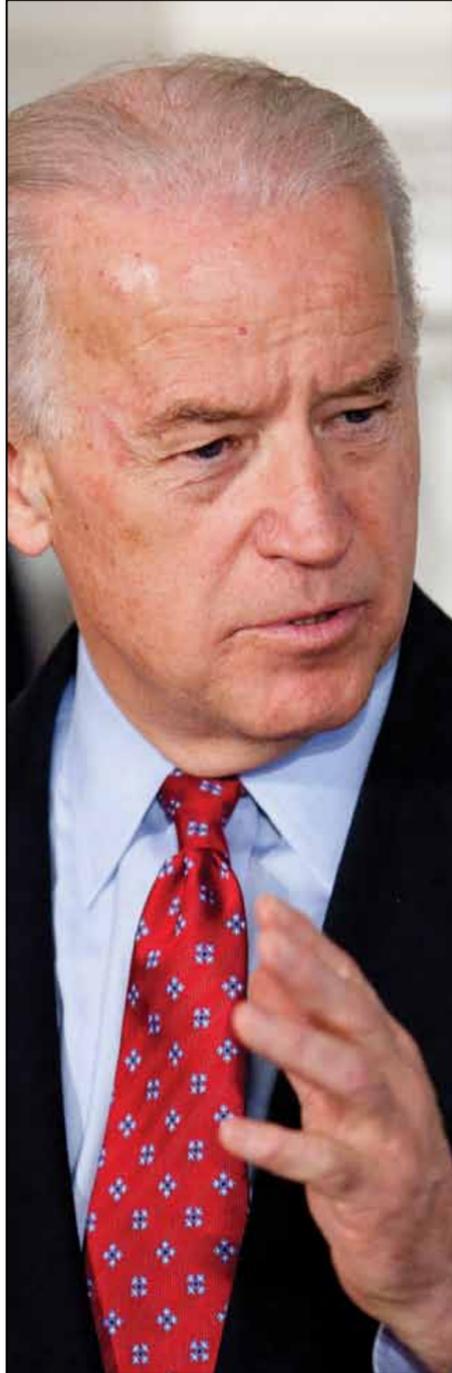
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Biden: Good news from Iraq

BY DAVID IGNATIUS, WASHINGTON POST

Vice President Biden didn't use the jinxed phrase "mission accomplished." But he offered an optimistic assessment of Iraq after last month's parliamentary election, saying that Iran's covert bid for influence there had been "clobbered" and that Baghdad appears headed toward an "inclusive" coalition government.

"Politics has finally broken out in Iraq," Biden said in an interview. "Everyone is in on the deal, and it's real."

Biden's upbeat comments came days after a new wave of attacks raised fears that Iraq might be slipping back toward sectarian violence. His staff proposed the interview last week in an effort to counter these worries and to show where U.S. "red lines" are drawn in this delicate post-election period.

Biden said he has "made it clear to everyone involved" that the United States believes the March 7 election was fair and opposes any illegitimate effort to overturn the result. He said that next year the United States will still have up to 50,000 troops in Iraq "that will be able to shoot straight" and it would consider any government request for help if major sectarian violence were to resume.

The vice president is always enthusiastic, and this conversation was no exception, with Biden hitting all the positive "talking points." But he also offered some detailed evidence that Iraqi politicians are converging toward some form of coalition government.

Biden began by discussing the three bloody attacks that have taken place this month. He said that at least two were the work of remnants of al-Qaeda in Iraq, but that this group's "capacity is significantly diminished" and that it is failing in its goal "to set the sectarian spark again" and disrupt the formation of a government.

The al-Qaeda attacks have prodded the Iraqi government to "keep the foot on the pedal" against the terrorist threat, Biden said. The tempo of daily counterterrorism operations increased last week to a dozen or so, compared with one or two a day just after the election. The Iraqis have also agreed to share more intelligence with the United States.

As for Iran's bid for influence, Biden was emphatic in arguing that it had failed. He disclosed that Tehran had spent up to \$100 million to back the Shiite religious

parties and subvert the Iraqiya bloc, a secular Sunni-Shiite alliance headed by Ayad Allawi, the former prime minister. Bolstered by a strong Sunni turnout, Iraqiya ended up winning the largest number of seats.

"It was a real stick in the eye of the Iranians," Biden said of Tehran's unsuccessful campaign to steer the election outcome. What's more, he said, Tehran's post-election effort to pressure Iraqi leaders who visited Tehran "has turned out to backfire." Iraqi politicians had discovered "there's a real price to be paid . . . if it looks like you are seeking the approval or following the direction of the Iranians or any neighbor."

Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and some other Shiite politicians had initially indicated that they would challenge the election results. But Biden noted that according to a new U.S. poll, 80 percent of Iraqis thought the voting was fair. Those opposing a recount now include two key Shiite leaders, Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani and Ammar al-Hakim, head of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, known as ISCI.

Biden refused to take sides regarding who should be the next prime minister. He praised Allawi as "the guy who reached across Sunni and Shiite," but he also credited Maliki for refusing to join an all-Shiite coalition before the election. He also had kind words for ISCI and the Kurdish parties.

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The trickiest question for an Obama administration that campaigned on a program of withdrawal from Iraq is how to stay active there, even as American troops come home by the end of next year. Biden said that question comes up in nearly every conversation he has with Iraqis -- "Now you guys are sticking, right?"

"We plan on staying engaged," Biden said he told Maliki last week -- especially in the non-military areas that the United States hopes will part of a stable, long-term relationship.

The paradox of Iraq is that to get out successfully, the United States must show that it's still involved for now. The vice president's comments send the right signal. ●

Negotiations: Compromising with the Taliban

BY DOYLE McMANUS, LOS ANGELES TIMES

Some day the war in Afghanistan will end. If it's like most civil wars, it will end in negotiations -- in this case, negotiations with the Taliban. And that's if we're lucky; the leading alternative to a negotiated settlement is a Taliban victory.

In fact, a negotiated settlement is what U.S. and NATO forces say they are fighting for, even though those negotiations will have to include a group most Afghans fear and Americans loathe.

"The outcome of this insurgency and counterinsurgency will be a political outcome, crafted by Afghans," Army Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, the American military commander, told me at his Kabul headquarters recently. The goal of the current United States-led offensive, he said, is to strengthen the government and weaken the insurgents so that when negotiations come, they can produce "reasonable outcomes."

But how soon should negotiations begin and with whom? And what should we consider a "reasonable outcome?"

Next month, Afghanistan's mercurial president, Hamid Karzai, plans to convene a national *jirga*, or assembly, that will bring together many of the country's contesting tribes and factions.

To Karzai's supporters, the peace *jirga* is an act of statesmanship, the beginning of a conversation that could nudge the Taliban and other insurgent groups onto a path toward national reconciliation.

Karzai, a member of the Pashtun ethnic group like most of the Taliban and about 40 percent of the Afghan population, has called the insurgents "our disenfranchised brothers" and has already talked with some of their leaders.

The opposition in Kabul, dominated by non-Pashtun groups, scoffs at the idea that the Taliban's leaders are ready for reconciliation.

The issue divides the NATO alliance too. Last month, Britain's foreign secretary called for faster progress toward negotiations.

The Obama administration is more skeptical. It would like to see Karzai broaden the government's base of support, especially if that would also mean some Taliban factions giving up the fight. But the administration also worries about a step into the unknown by an increasingly unpredictable leader.

Some U.S. officials worry that Karzai will start negotiating too soon. They'd rather give Obama's surge of 30,000 additional troops a

chance to move the balance of power in the government's favor this summer.

The skeptics also worry about what military planners call the "end state." What kind of country, they ask, will Afghanistan become? The choices will depend in large part on the results of this summer's fighting. The best scenario is that the insurgency collapses and democracy blossoms. But that doesn't appear likely.

More plausible is a divided insurgency in which dissident Taliban factions and individuals agree to stop fighting. This scenario would be helped by a successful "reintegration" plan to offer em-

ployment and protection to defectors. So far, Karzai's efforts in that regard have been ineffective. But at some point, negotiations will almost certainly have to include the main body of the Taliban, the brutal Islamists who ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001.

Otherwise, a European diplomat here warned, "the insurgency will break out again -- because disenfranchised groups will feel they have no recourse . . . and they will seek support from extreme Islamist groups, which takes us back to Al Qaeda."

That is going to mean hard choices and an imperfect ending. ●

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The future of the American newspaper

Two weeks ago, we were one of the 300,000 Americans who headed out on a Saturday morning to buy an iPad.

It wasn't that we were anxious to be the first kid on our block to have this latest technology marvel. But in the days running up to the iPad launch, we had read one story after another on how this was going to be the future of the American newspaper.

Now, stories on how anything other than the 80 stapled pages of paper you currently are holding in your hands is going to be the future of newspapers tend to get our attention.

When we launched **Vero Beach 32963** two years ago, we were convinced that the printed paper still had a bright future among educated people who genuinely liked to read. We continue to think that, and the incredible support of readers and advertisers suggests many of you agree.

But then we began reading those stories about the iPad. The New York Times, it seemed, was launching its very own app. USA Today was rolling out an iPad app. The Wall Street Journal, we were told, was hopping on board.

"It's a wonderful thing," gushed Rupert Murdoch, CEO of the News Corporation, which owns the Wall Street Journal. "If you have less newspapers and more of these, that's OK. It'll be more economic. It may well be the saving of the newspaper industry."

Well, Murdoch knows a lot more than we do – a very smart man indeed – so we became a bit nervous. But on this, we have concluded he is totally wrong.

After two weeks of playing with the iPad (*playing* is probably exactly the right word), we feel highly confident in predicting that not even one tenth of one percent of **Vero Beach 32963** readers will soon forsake their print newspapers and start reading their news on Apple's new tablet.

It's clumsy and awkward to hold. It's not especially easy to use. And there's always the risk – under normal newspaper-reading circumstances -- of dropping it into the toilet. (*Maybe risk is not the right word. Maybe we should have said temptation.*)

In offering these views on the iPad, we feel compelled to protest we are not Luddites. We have owned PCs since IBM introduced the original grey

box in the 1980s. We have worked with Microsoft. We offer not one but two newspapers on the internet: **VeroBeach32963.com** and the Indian River County online daily, **VeroNews.com**.

For many younger people, and a few that are not that young, internet news sites have become the



preferred way to get news and information. If you like getting your news online, and you haven't seen **VeroNews.com**, you are missing the best thing that has happened to the Indian River County media world in years.

VeroNews.com gives you a website – updated on a minute-to-minute basis – where you not only get the latest breaking news from all of Indian River County, but get it without wading through all those stories you could care less about from Fort Pierce, Port St. Lucie, Jensen and Stuart.

Day after day, the staff of **VeroNews.com** beats the pants off Scripps' bizarrely named tcpalm.com on breaking stories, providing not only faster and more comprehensive coverage of this community – but in many cases, video reports otherwise un-

available in a county with no VHF television station.

The response to this has been little short of amazing. We refuse to play the BS game of tcpalm.com and brag of getting six gazillion clicks (whatever that means; clicks do *not* mean viewers). But during the month of March almost 15,000 different readers visited the **VeroNews.com** site – and 6,028 readers of **VeroNews.com** returned to the site day-after-day to check in on the latest news of Indian River County.

If **VeroNews.com** were a daily paper, that would mean a circulation of more than 6,000 only eight months after launch – not bad for a newspaper that doesn't offer crosswords or comics.

But while **VeroNews.com** displays just fine on an iPad, the fact is you get a far better experience viewing it on a regular laptop or desktop computer. The reason: Apple's latest marvel does not support "Adobe Flash" the way most web browsers do, and therefore will *not* let you view the popular **VeroNews.com** video reports and slideshows.

Not only is the iPad not better than print; in some ways, even for the digital news generation, it is not better than less expensive and more versatile personal computers.

Other considerations might give a newspaper reader pause as well. The least expensive iPad at the moment is \$500, and to use it, you need a WiFi connection. But Apple will soon have a solution for that problem – a new version of the iPad, due out later this month with an entry price of \$629, which will let you connect to AT&T's relatively slow 3G network for an additional \$14.99 per month (\$29.99 a month if you are a frequent user). How lucky can you get?

Then of course once you are connected, there's the cost of those newspapers. The Wall Street Journal, for example, is charging \$3.99 per week with a monthly credit card charge of \$17.29 for full iPad access. (*In contrast, you can get both the print and online versions of the Wall Street Journal for \$2.69 per week for a monthly bill of \$11.67!*)

From this, you may infer that we do not view the iPad as the "saving of the newspaper industry." And you would be right. Apple has produced a marvelous new device; we feel certain many of those buying it will find interesting things to do with it. But sorry, Rupert. The future of newspapers it is not. ●

Research favors Florida school reform

BY KENRIC WARD, COLUMNIST

While the local daily this past week regurgitated apocalyptic tales from terrorized teachers and dragooned parents, the truth about Florida's school reform initiatives was still out there.

That truth is being told by national education researchers, who have weighed in on the much-abused Senate Bill 6 and House Bill 7189, which would abolish tenure for new teachers and reward the most effective teachers with better pay.

After this performance-based approach won final legislative approval last week, a once-supportive Gov. Charlie Crist began waffling. At press time, it was unclear whether he would veto it before the Friday deadline. A veto would surely doom his chances of winning the GOP nomination for U.S. Senate.

But research, not politics, is what counts, and here's what some leading scholars are saying:

TERRY MOE, STANFORD UNIVERSITY

"For more than a decade, Florida has been the nation's leader in education reform. HB7189 continues this reformist tradition: calling for fundamental changes in teacher tenure, evaluation, and compensation that are designed to promote a higher quality workforce and give teachers stronger incentives to perform..."

"(Teacher) unions not only oppose pay for performance, they don't even want teacher performance to be measured -- and they have done ev-

erything they can to undermine well-intentioned efforts to design and implement reasonable systems of evaluation and compensation.

"They are dedicated to 'proving' that these systems don't work by (a) using their power to defuse and hobble them and then (b) using the hobbled programs as evidence that pay for performance doesn't work.

"The unions' opposition is not going to stop. It simply has to be overcome by policy makers who are truly dedicated to reform, and are unwilling to let the unions control public education."

CHESTER FINN, MANHATTAN INSTITUTE

"Associating teacher evaluations with student performance, and rewarding teachers accordingly, is now all but taken for granted in state after state -- and by prominent national figures, including President Obama and Education Secretary Arne Duncan..."

"The folly of teacher tenure and the protection it inappropriately affords to classroom failures has become far more widely recognized."

ERIC HANUSHEK, HOOVER INSTITUTION

"Florida is showing additional leadership by moving aggressively on issues of teacher quality. It would do away with teacher tenure for newly hired teachers. And it would require that half of teacher pay increases be based on student performance.

"Who could be against these ideas? Certainly parents and students cannot be. But just as cer-

tainly, the teachers unions are aghast that anybody would want student outcomes to play a prominent role in teacher retention decisions.

"Florida is poised to lead the nation in crafting student policies. No wonder the fight is being fought so hard there."

Diane Ravich, an education official in the Bush administration, has argued that standardized test scores should "never" be a basis for compensation programs.

But Moe says it is nonsensical to leave testing out of the equation. He cites the balanced approach built into Florida's reforms:

"Student gain scores (the differences in the level of a student's achievement from the beginning of the year to the end) are widely regarded as the best way of measuring what students learn during the year.

"Unlike simple levels of student achievement, these differences in levels inherently tend to factor out and control for most (not all) of the 'other influences' that Diane worries about."

And that's just half the evaluation criteria. The other 50 percent of any annual performance review involves a more subjective assessment on a variety of academic criteria.

The little-acknowledged fact remains that performance-based compensation for teachers has been on the books in Florida since 1999. It simply hasn't been implemented.

It's time to move forward...with or without our lame duck governor. ●

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601 Sea Oak Drive	\$2,800,000
381 Sea Oak Drive	\$2,940,000
180 Orchid Way	\$2,950,000
580 Indian Harbor Road	\$2,950,000
311 Llwyd's Lane	\$2,995,000
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150 Clarkson Lane	\$3,650,000

35 Waxmyrtle Way	\$3,650,000
310 Island Creek Drive	\$3,700,000
640 Indian Harbor Road	\$3,950,000
330 Palmetto Point	\$4,150,000
281 Pelican Way	\$4,700,000
391 Sabal Palm Lane	\$4,750,000
301 Indian Harbor Road	\$5,350,000
21 Sago Palm Road	\$5,700,000
664 Ocean Road	\$5,750,000
225 Sago Palm Road	\$6,700,000
801 Shady Lake Lane	\$6,750,000
255 Island Creek Drive	\$7,250,000
170 Loggerhead Point	\$9,650,000
Homesites	
580 Sea Oak Drive	\$825,000
541 Sea Oak Drive	\$1,100,000
551 Sea Oak Drive	\$1,100,000
381 Sabal Palm Lane	\$1,250,000
280 Sea Oak Drive	\$1,450,000
270 John's Island Drive	\$2,300,000
80 Stingaree Point	\$2,300,000
100 Stingaree Point	\$2,600,000
1 Sea Court	\$3,500,000
13 Sea Court	\$3,775,000

662 Ocean Road	\$3,900,000
60 Gem Island Drive	\$4,150,000
810 Manatee Inlet	\$5,300,000
Townhouses, Cottages and Island House	
431 Silver Moss Drive, #105	\$350,000
777 Sea Oak Drive #720, 2BR/2BA	\$400,000
777 Sea Oak Drive #717, 2BR/2BA	\$410,000
777 Sea Oak Drive #714, 2BR/2BA	\$450,000
431 Silver Moss Drive, #104	\$485,000
777 Sea Oak Drive #710, 3BR/3BA	\$525,000
111 John's Island Drive, #15	(NEW) \$575,000
263 Silver Moss Drive	\$625,000
401 Silver Moss Drive	\$625,000
777 Sea Oak Drive #701, 3BR/3BA	\$665,000
777 Sea Oak Drive #702, 3BR/3BA	\$685,000
777 Sea Oak Drive #725, 3BR/3BA	\$685,000
777 Sea Oak Drive #707, 3BR/3BA	\$695,000
467 Silver Moss Drive	\$750,000
111 John's Island Drive, #12	\$775,000
213 Silver Moss Drive	\$820,000
251 Silver Moss Drive	\$825,000
293 Silver Moss Drive	\$825,000
173 Silver Moss Drive	\$850,000
111 John's Island Drive, #4	\$865,000

111 John's Island Drive, #5	\$865,000
291 Silver Moss Drive	\$975,000
111 John's Island Drive, #19	\$1,775,000
Island House (590-660± SF efficiencies)	
#117	\$155,000
#118	\$157,000
#121	\$165,000
#120	\$185,000
#147	\$225,000
#251	\$248,000
#151	\$250,000
#210	\$287,500
#144	\$290,000
#237	\$395,000
#224	\$414,500
#235	\$445,000
#243	\$450,000
Condominiums	
950 Beach Road #192, 2BR/2BA	\$710,000
550 Beach Road #221, 2BR/2BA	\$710,000
600 Beach Road #331, 2BR/2BA	\$725,000
700 Beach Road #355, 2BR/2BA	\$725,000
750 Beach Road #201, 2BR/2BA	\$730,000
750 Beach Road #304, 2BR/2BA	\$749,000

100 Ocean Road #104, 2BR/2BA	\$750,000
700 Beach Road #159, 3BR/2BA	\$750,000
100 Ocean Road #111, 2BR/2BA	\$825,000
750 Beach Road #106, 3BR/2BA	\$895,000
850 Beach Road #178, 2BR/2BA	\$905,000
850 Beach Road #277, 2BR/2BA	\$975,000
950 Beach Road #193, 3BR/2BA	\$1,000,000
800 Beach Road #269, 3BR/3BA	\$1,050,000
100 Ocean Road #112, 3BR/2BA	\$1,150,000
900 Beach Road #382, 2BR/2BA	\$1,190,000
1000 Beach Road #396, 2BR/2BA	\$1,190,000
700 Beach Road #148, 3BR/2BA	\$1,250,000

700 Beach Road #149, 3BR/2BA	\$1,250,000
900 Beach Road #285, 2BR/2BA	\$1,260,000
800 Beach Road #172, 3BR/3BA	\$1,350,000
1000 Beach Road #294, 3BR/3BA	\$1,350,000
300 Ocean Road #1F, 3BR/3BA	\$1,475,000
700 Beach Road #150, 3BR/2BA	\$1,495,000
250 Ocean Road #3C, 3BR/3BA	\$1,600,000
850 Beach Road #375, 3BR/4.5BA	\$2,275,000
850 Beach Road #279, 3BR/3.5BA	\$2,450,000
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323 Silver Moss Drive	460 Indian Harbor Road	700 Beach Road #250	100 Ocean Road #212
120 Sago Palm Road	141 Gem Island Drive	311 Indian Harbor Road	250 Ocean Road #2C
380 Indian Creek Drive	241 Sea Oak Drive	110 Coconut Palm Road	1000 Beach Road #295
720 Beach Road	71 Dove Plum Road	850 Beach Road #375	241 Sundial Court
389 Island Creek Drive	300 Ocean Road, #1E	381 Sea Oak Drive	750 Beach Road #303
360 Palmetto Point	8 Sea Court	430 Coconut Palm Road	450 Beach Rd. #120, #223 & #324
251 John's Island Drive	730 Beach Road	291 Sabal Palm Lane	111 John's Island Drive #3, #4 & #5
221 Clarkson Lane	900 Beach Road #181	281 Sea Oak Drive	111 John's Island Drive #10 & #17
453 Silver Moss Drive	800 Beach Road #169 & #371	950 Beach Road #391	381 Sabal Palm Lane
1050 Beach Road #3H	400 Beach Road #101	321 Indian Harbor Road	650 Indian Harbor Road
351 Indian Harbor Road	400 Beach Road #133 & #222	400 Ocean Road #183	401 Indian Harbor Road
306 Island Creek Drive	400 Beach Road #228 & #230	191 Terrapin Point	500 Beach Rd. #109, #311, #202



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Britain's uninspired election: Too close to call?

BY THE ECONOMIST

Whatever they tell you in school, not all elections matter equally. Sometimes the government isn't in any danger of losing its grip; sometimes no one would notice if it did. The British general election on May 6 is not one of those. It does matter, and not just because the party in power for the past 13 years is more likely than not to lose.

It matters domestically because Britain, after a decade and a half of strong, steady growth, has been knocked off track by savage recession and turmoil in the financial world it once dominated. Its public finances are in an almighty mess, its budget deficit at a postwar high of 11.8 percent of GDP.

Britain has lost its political bearings too. The New Labor model, which aimed at social justice paid for by the fruits of more or less free-market capitalism, ran out of puff roughly when the money did. The state has grown, personal freedom has shrunk, and it is not clear that people are much the better for it.

The election matters outside Britain as well. Britain's is the single most reliable voice for open markets, inside and outside the European Union. It has been ready to act on behalf of others, not just at gunpoint in Sierra Leone or Iraq or Afghanistan, but also in spearheading aid for the world's poorest.

When banks around the globe were going belly-up, Britain came up with answers fastest, and it must be an important part of worldwide re-regulation.

Some things will be the same whoever wins. Free trade and open markets, for example, are in the DNA of this island nation. But others will not. It is hard to have influence in Europe if you do not have allies there; and, with money tight at home, some will be more inclined to spray it around the world than others.

All this argues for deep thinking and radicalism. But 2010 does not feel like 1979, when the Conservatives under Margaret Thatcher swept to power, bashed the unions and privatized state industries. Nor does it evoke 1997, when Tony Blair's New Labor jettisoned socialism and espoused the Third Way.

This time Labor, under Gordon Brown, the Conservatives, led by David Cameron, and the Liberal Democrats, under Nick Clegg, have been so busy

blaming each other for what went wrong that there is little talk of what needs to happen if things are to go right.

Missing in electoral action is any compelling view of what Britain should aim to be when it emerges from what will inevitably be a long, wrenching fiscal workout: that it is, or could be, a country which



Who will get the keys to No 10?

PHOTO: EPA

lives within its means, pays the state to do what it can do effectively and no more, stops subsidizing failure through bloated benefits rolls and educates its young to hold down serious jobs in an economy in which the government stops hogging the capital markets, complicating the tax code and heaping up regulation.

The biggest issue in this campaign is getting the public finances under control without snuffing out economic recovery. Brown argues that he brought Britain through recession, and that the risk of relapse is great enough that no change of management, or early wielding of the fiscal ax, can safely be contemplated.

Cameron blames Brown for much of the present fiscal mess, which he says he will deal with more effectively. The Lib Dems would wait until recovery is entrenched, like Labor, and then slice at spending.

But a pre-electoral discretion has overwhelmed all three. The Tories lost ground in the polls after vowing fiscal austerity last autumn, and are now talking more about tax cuts than spending cuts. Nobody is saying much about how they would fix things. The second issue is public services.

Blair made efforts to introduce competition and choice into public-service delivery, but Brown was never a fan. The dearth of money now must put reform front and center. The Tories have some plausible ideas about health care and even better ones about freeing schools from local authorities. It would be good to hear more from both parties.

The third issue is, broadly, Britain's place in the world. There are hard choices to make. Even before the crisis there was not enough money for all the equipment the armed forces thought necessary to respond to a range of unknowable future threats.

Until a few weeks ago, the outcome of this election seemed obvious. The worst recession since the war, an unpopular prime minister, fatigue with a party too long in power and a fresh-faced Tory leader who hugged hoodies rather than deporting migrants all conspired to give the Conservatives a lead reliably in the double digits.

But Labor's prospects have recovered a bit along with the economy and Cameron has failed to eradicate a deep historical hostility to his party.

The electoral system is biased against the Tories anyway, support for smaller parties is growing and voters -- who are, after all, choosing constituency MPs rather than a prime minister directly -- have all sorts of reasons, from potholes to fiddled expenses, to defy nationwide predictions.

It is far from clear what the country will end up with. But one thing is sure: bigger and bolder thoughts are needed. ●

Why more nuclear cuts will be hard

BY HOWARD LaFRANCHI, CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

As he signed a new treaty with Russia last week that will reduce the nuclear weapons in U.S. and Russian arsenals by one-third, President Obama called the milestone "one step on a longer journey" that "will set the stage for further cuts."

But if Obama found reaching a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) more arduous and frustrating than he had anticipated -- Obama missed his original deadline of early December for reaching an accord -- moving on to additional arms cuts will be even more daunting.

Appearing in a glittery reception hall in the Czech capital of Prague alongside Mr. Medvedev, Obama offered a partial list of the next steps he hopes to take: further reductions in strategic weapons, cuts in the tactical weapons the two countries have focused on Europe, and an effort to reduce stockpiles of non-deployed weapons on each side.

The next stretch of the nuclear-reduction path is likely to be considerably steeper, however, arms experts say.

First, the treaty signed last week must win the support of 67 U.S. senators for ratification. But it raises the ire of some conservative policymakers who say the cuts invite instability by tempting other nuclear powers (particularly China) to contemplate achieving nuclear parity.

For its part, Russia is worried about what impact a smaller arsenal might have on its superpower self-image. Moreover, it is likely to resist any reductions in tactical weapons, partly because it sees them as a guarantee against NATO's superior conventional forces.

"For the Russians, because of the deterioration of the conventional weapons projection capability, nuclear weapons are more important in their overall military doctrine," says Andrew Kuchins, director of the Russia and Eurasia Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

"That gets to the question of how possible or how difficult future agreements are going to be [for] getting to a next round of reductions with the Russians."

It is important not to "oversell" the significance of the new START, says Kuchins. The U.S. and Russia, with a new limit of 1,550 nuclear warheads each, will remain by far the world's predominant nuclear powers.

But the treaty is nevertheless significant, he adds: First, for what it says about the considerably improved US-Russia working relationship under Obama, and then for the message it sends to the rest of the world.

Kuchins says it is "extremely important" that the agreement was reached before the Non-Proliferation Treaty review conference at the United Nations in May. The 1970 treaty calls for nuclear states like the U.S. and Russia to reduce their arsenals in exchange for non-nuclear states foregoing



Russian President Dmitry Medvedev (R) and US President Barack Obama (L) sign the 'New START Treaty', a new Russian-US nuclear arms control pact, at the Prague Castle, in Prague.

PHOTO: EPA

any pursuit of nuclear weaponry.

Obama mentioned this in his Prague statement, when he said that "together" the U.S. and Russia "are keeping our commitments under the NPT, which must be the foundation of global non-proliferation."

But nuclear arms experts say both the U.S. and Russia are going to have to increasingly take China into account as they contemplate any further nuclear arms reductions. That said, the new START, with its reduction to 1,550 warheads, is not yet likely to cause China, with about 200 deployable strategic warheads, to come running, says Roger Molander, a nuclear arms expert at the RAND Corp. in Arlington, Va.

"You could see [the U.S. and Russia] skipping the next bilateral stage to go to the multilateral, but you can already contemplate the Chinese saying, 'Are you guys kidding me? You're at 1,550, and you say you want me to come in on negotiations?'" Molander says. "Call me when you get to 800 to 900."

He adds: "New START is a good start. But all these other problems -- the Chinese, tactical and non-deployed weapons -- are going to have to be addressed if we want to get to further reductions." ●

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Will the U.S. have too few workers by 2018?

BY LAURENT BELSIE, CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

UPS expects to hire up to 25,000 drivers in the next five years.

These are good jobs. The average salary is \$74,000 a year. So why are there so many vacancies in such a poor economy?

Retirements. The company's baby boomers are expected to leave, and UPS will need new drivers to take their place.

By some estimates of the workforce, so many boomers could retire in the next few years that the US could find itself with too many jobs and too few workers to fill them.

Wait! This is great recession America, U-shape recovery-land, home of the weak job market. We're not going to have too many jobs, right?

"With nearly 10 percent of the American labor force unemployed ... it may come as something of a surprise that within less than a decade, the United States may face exactly the opposite problem -- not enough workers to fill expected job openings," write Barry Bluestone and Mark Melnik, authors of a study by the Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy at Northeastern University in Boston.

That's typically what happens after recessions: a glut of workers turns into a labor shortage as the economy booms, they argue. By their calculations,



the US could create 14.6 million new nonfarm payroll jobs between 2008 and 2018 and have only 9.1 million additional workers to fill them (9.6 million if you figure some people will hold more than one job).

So in eight years, the U.S. could have 5 million or more jobs left unfilled if current trends continue.

Those current trends represent a crucial caveat: The study assumes that baby boomers will continue to retire at recent rates. And lately, boomers have been making noises that they may stick around on the job past retirement age.

In 1990, for example, only about 17 percent of Americans aged 65 to 75 had

jobs, according to government figures. This year that proportion is expected to rise to 25 percent.

Then, government and some other forecasters think that rise will begin to level off. Others say the trend will continue through at least 2030: Ever-growing numbers of boomers will keep working.

"There are lots of reasons to stay in the labor force when your earnings are good and your benefits are there," says Julie Zissimopoulos, an economist at RAND and co-author of a study on the subject released last week. It's not just the impact of the recession, she adds. "People are living longer. If you live longer, you have to save longer."

So which will it be for post-recession America: too many or too few jobs? It's something of a coin toss right now.

"Boomers are going to retire from the jobs that they've had to do so that they can do the jobs that they want to do," says Matt Thornhill, president of The Boomer Project, a market research and consulting firm in Richmond, Va. That may be new careers or brand new businesses that they start.

One thing is clear: They won't follow the model their parents set. ●

BOOK REVIEWS



now blessed us with "Mencken on Mencken," which, he says, "seeks humbly to be the fourth of Mencken's 'Days' books, including writings written over a period of nearly fifty years and focusing on numerous facets of his life and thought that the three earlier books address only glancingly or not at all."

Well, I wouldn't go quite that far. The "Days" books are sui generis. Even though they originally were written as discrete pieces for the New Yorker in the late 1930s and early '40s, they have the feel of carefully structured narratives.

Despite Joshi's heroic effort to give similar shape to the many miscellaneous newspaper and magazine pieces collected here, "Mencken on Mencken" may be a welcome footnote to the "Days" books, but it is not their equivalent. Divided into four sections -- "Memories of a Long Life," "Author and Journalist," "Thinker" and "World Traveler" -- the book is uneven.

The reminiscences about youth and journalism are wonderful, the rest somewhat less so. But it's all Mencken, and if you're even half as addicted to him as I am, you'll be thrilled to have yet more of him to read.

The more than 50 pieces reprinted here were originally published between 1900 (when, at not quite 20, Mencken was already a three-year newspaper veteran) and 1948 (the year he suffered the stroke that left him debilitated until his death in 1956) and appeared in a number of places: the Sun and the evening Sun of Baltimore, the New Yorker, the Smart Set, Vanity Fair and others.

For the most part the best pieces show Mencken in a reflective, reminiscent mood -- though there are more than a few flashes of his wit and his ability to deliver a knockout punch -- and thus provide yet another reminder that the Sage of Baltimore had a sentimental, nostalgic side as well as an acerbic one.

"I am glad I was born long enough ago to remember, now, the days when the town had genuine color, and life here was worth living. I remember Guy's Hotel. I remember the Concordia Opera House. I remember the old Courthouse. Better still, I remember Mike Sheehan's old saloon on Light Street -- then a mediaeval and lovely alley; now a horror borrowed from the boom towns of the Middle West.

"Was there ever a better saloon in this world? Don't argue: I refuse to listen! The decay of Baltimore, I believe, may be very accurately measured by the distance separating Mike's incomparable bar from the soda-fountains which now pollute the neighborhood -- above all, by the distance separating its

Three decades ago I experienced an epiphany. In 1980 I was book editor of the Washington Star but living in Baltimore, which made me acutely aware of the impending centennial of that city's most famous native son, Henry Louis Mencken, to be celebrated that September.

I was 40 years old but had never read Mencken; I don't remember why, but it was a serious omission. I thought I should take note of the centennial in my regular Sunday column in the Star, so I made plans to read and review "A Choice of Days," a selection of Mencken's autobiographical essays being published to mark the occasion.

I was completely blown away. I'd never read prose -- at least journalistic prose -- as rich, original and forceful as Mencken's. I roared with laughter at his reminiscences of a boyhood in late 19th-century Baltimore and of his newspaper apprenticeship on the long-departed Baltimore Herald.

In an instant I went from someone who'd never read Mencken to one who couldn't stop reading him, and I have been thus ever since. Late in 1980 I contracted to write his biography. That project had to be set aside when various professional complications arose, but in 1992 Knopf did me the honor of asking me to edit his posthumous memoir, "My Life As Author and Editor," which it published the following year.

At the time I assumed that this memoir, along with the "Days" books -- "Happy Days," "Newspaper Days" and "Heathen Days" -- and "Thirty-Five Years of Newspaper Work" (1994), constituted the sum of Mencken's autobiographical writing, but now it is my pleasure to report that I was wrong.

S.T. Joshi, an independent scholar who has written or edited four previous books on Mencken, has

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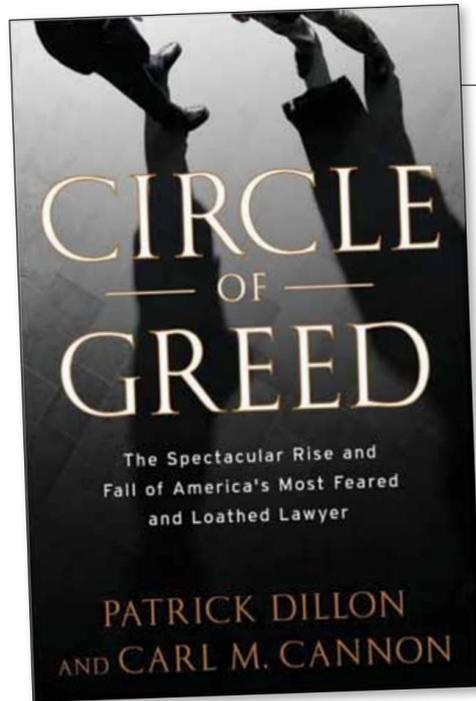
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There was a time, not so long ago, when even the most cold-blooded CEOs could be stopped in their tracks by six little words: "Bill Lerach is on the phone."

William S. Lerach was the West Coast partner for the New York law firm Milberg Weiss, which made an art of suing corporations on behalf of stockholders who believed -- often at Milberg Weiss' urging -- that they had lost money because of executives' lies about the rosy condition of their businesses.

Lerach, who was based in San Diego, ostensibly was looking out for the little fish in an investment sea of sharks. Indeed, he and his partners did recoup losses for small investors caught in the churn of insider trading and other schemes, winning jury awards or out-of-court settlements totaling more than \$40 billion.

But these were not altruistic acts. Milberg Weiss pocketed payouts with each victory -- ersatz Robin Hoods taking a piece of the action.

So powerful -- and feared -- were Lerach and his colleagues that Congress curtailed their area of law under the 1995 Private Securities Litigation Reform Act, known informally as the "Get Lerach Act," which was intended to make it harder to file speculative lawsuits.

In "Circle of Greed: The Spectacular Rise and Fall of America's Most Feared and Loathed Lawyer," veteran journalists Patrick Dillon and Carl M. Cannon point out that the new law actually made firms such as Milberg Weiss stronger by weeding out others without the resources to mount expensive, time-consuming cases in hopes of a big payout.

Lerach responded to the law by pushing Proposition 211, a 1996 California initiative that would have granted at the state level many of the tools Congress had taken away. Lerach was particularly hated in Silicon Valley, where his legal attacks were seen as opportunistic shakedowns (although there was also plenty of chicanery as the 1990s dot-com bubble grew).

The companies there created a political war room to fight the measure, which voters turned down by a substantial margin -- one of the few times corporations managed to get the better of the Pittsburgh-raised lawyer.

But greed begets greed, and Lerach and several of his partners eventually gave way to its seductions in an astounding collapse that paralleled some of the great cases and scandals -- Charles H. Keating Jr.'s Lincoln Savings and Loan debacle, Ken Lay and his den of thieves at Enron -- on which they had made their names.

The crime at the core of Lerach's downfall seems minor compared with the massive frauds and deceptions that have come to define the modern corporate era. To file their lawsuits, Milberg Weiss often surreptitiously paid people to be plaintiffs, overseeing a small cottage industry of investors who would buy a few shares of stock hoping to lose money on them, so they could then sue for millions.

Paying clients, however, is illegal, and Lerach was sentenced to two years in federal prison. (He was released on March 8.)

Dillon, editor of California Monthly magazine, and Cannon, deputy editor of PoliticsDaily.com, wade into this swamp to make sense of who did what to whom and why. For the most part, they pull it off, portraying Lerach -- who cooperated with the

BOOK REVIEWS

book but had no say in its final form -- as a power-driven egomaniac who fell to those oldest of vices, greed and hubris.

In essence, Lerach -- aggressive, competitive -- thought he was too smart to get caught. But in a chain of many links, some are bound to fail. A couple of Milberg Weiss' professional plaintiffs, caught up in other crimes, began cooperating with investigators in 1999, and Lerach's career started its slow death spiral, culminating in a guilty plea to federal conspiracy charges in September 2007.

It's a complicated story, and Dillon and Cannon are hobbled a bit by the scope of the lawsuits in which Lerach was involved as well as a large and shifting cast of characters.

Since the book pivots on legal cases, "Circle of Greed" spends a lot of time in the courtroom. But the authors might have benefited from a sharper scalpel. Testimony drones on, some quotes suck the life out of dramatic moments, and midway through the book you lose track not only of what case they're writing about, but why.

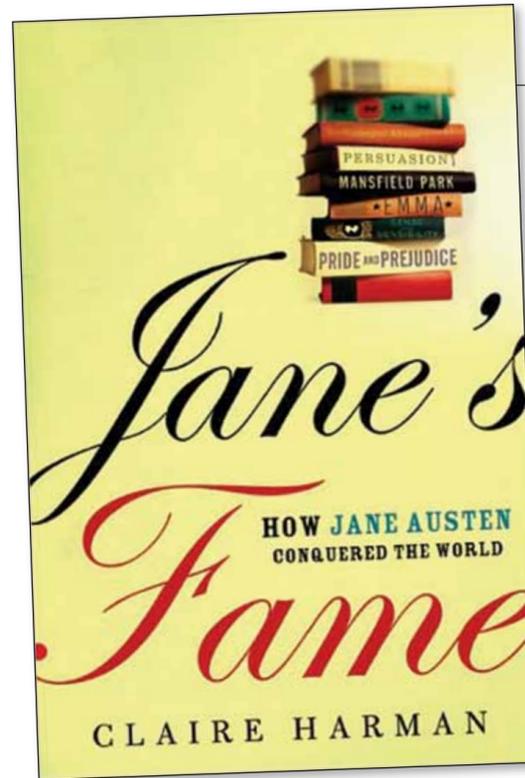
And yet, such bumpy stretches are worth the patience. Ever since 1994 and Newt Gingrich's "Contract With America," the role of trial lawyers in American corporate life has been the political issue that won't go away. Pro-business reformers see them as a form of legalized extortion bleeding cash from companies even when no overt crime can be proven.

Forced to choose between an expensive legal battle or a cheaper settlement, it makes more sense to buy out the lawsuit than defeat it.

Yet defenders of trial lawyers see them as the great equalizer -- watchdogs making sure corporations behave as they should.

Dillon and Cannon don't make a call on that. But "Circle of Greed" provides crucial context for understanding both the shenanigans of corporate crooks and the motivations and practices of the lawyers trying to get rich by holding them accountable. In the end there are no good guys, but then only the naive ever expected there would be. ●

Circle of Greed by Patrick Dillon and Carl M. Cannon
Broadway Books, 516 pp., \$28.
Reviewed by Scott Martelle
Los Angeles Times



Why is the world obsessed with Jane Austen? What is it about her life and novels that propelled her from a Regency writer of limited renown to a cottage industry?

The answer, like Austen's novels, is deceptively simple, masking a complex web of factors, from her marketing by her family to the lack of verifiable information that makes it so easy for us to project our fantasies onto her.

In *Jane's Fame: How Jane Austen Conquered the World*, with its only partly tongue-in-cheek subtitle, Claire Harman traces the phenomenon that is "Jane."

Neither literary criticism nor biography, "Jane's Fame" instead tracks Austen's image from a novelist who had difficulty getting published and opened to mixed reviews to that rare combination of canonized and cult author, coupled with both Shakespeare and zombies. (Harman points us to an amusing YouTube montage of bodice-ripper scenes from Austen film adaptations set to "It's Raining Men," easily Googled as of this writing.)

The first take on Austen came from her nephew, James Edward Austen-Leigh, who cast his aunt in the role of the ideal Victorian woman -- modest, unambitious, and certainly not inclined to let writing interfere with her "domestic duties."

It was from Austen-Leigh's "Memoir of Jane Austen" that the image of Jane's fiction as a "little bit of Ivory" began, creating an association of "smallness" with the novels that took on a life of its own, clinging to Austen herself, who, ironically, was probably tall.

The family's initial reluctance to reveal Jane Austen's true face to the public provided the perfect mystique for speculation in the ages to follow.

Though her focus is on the stories others have told of Austen, Harman has her own story to tell, too,

Harman's Austen is neither sweet nor retiring, but a fire poker -- a metaphor evoked by her bearing and manner, according to a contemporary visiting her household. Think tall, strong, and "formidable," not small and sweet.

Austen-Leigh is a convenient straw man and Harman clearly enjoys quoting his inaccuracies only to knock them down. Austen, she argues, was more hardheaded businesswoman than the self-effacing maiden aunt Austen-Leigh would have us believe.

Harman also emphasizes the literary nature of the household that fueled her ambition. Austen's oldest brother, who published a short-lived literary journal, was an aspiring poet and considered the writer of the family by their mother. Her cousin was close to the celebrated novelist Fanny Burney d'Arblay and this proximity may have influenced Austen both artistically and in her approach to selling her novels.

Likewise, Austen's art did not come effortlessly, but through extensive drafting and revision, involving pinning slips of paper with new text to an earlier draft, "a nineteenth-century version of cut and paste."

The absence of historical markers or political controversies in her novels, rather than being a deficiency, may have stemmed

from an anxiety over becoming dated, so conscious was Austen of her reading public and so frustrated was she by the long delay in the publication of "Northanger Abbey," the first and most topical of her works.

Such delays, though discouraging, may have helped Austen to hone her stylistic innovation. "The longer Austen remained unpublished," Harman posits, "the more experimental she became, and the more license she assumed with bold, brilliant moves." Without a readership other than her intimates, Austen remained free to develop her distinctive voice.

Major literary figures that followed tended to fall into camps that either disparaged or lauded Austen -- Mark Twain among the former (but then, who did he like?), and her heirs appar-

BOOK REVIEWS

ent, James, Forster, and Woolf, among the latter. But the image of World War I soldiers reading Austen in the trenches, or Churchill turning to "Pride and Prejudice" for comfort while bedridden with influenza in the darkest days of 1943, most vividly convey Austen's position as a cornerstone of British culture.

Harman notes Austen's universal appeal, too, as testified to by the Parisian anarchist Félix Fénéon, who read "Northanger Abbey" while in prison and was so taken with its class critique that he translated it into French, thereby becoming Austen's first Marxist critic.

Harman caps her book by analyzing our culture's current Austen-mania generated by the proliferation of film adaptations.

Since the most salient take-away conveyed by "Jane's Fame" is that these biopics, prequels, and sequels reflect more on us than they do on Austen herself, one can only wonder what future generations will deduce from "Pride and Prejudice and Zombies" or "Mr. Darcy, Vampire," about the mores of the early 21st century. ●

Jane's Fame by Claire Harman
Henry Holt & Co., 304 pp., \$26.
Reviewed by Elizabeth Toohay
Christian Science Monitor

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Chess COLUMN



SOLVING CHESS PUZZLES A FUN AND EFFECTIVE WAY TO LEARN

BY HUMBERTO CRUZ - CHESS COLUMNIST

"The chess puzzles are ants," my 6-year-old grandson Julian declared, "and I am the anteater."

That's a colorful expression for a kindergartener – and a child's way of saying that solving chess puzzles is a fun and confidence-boosting way to learn the game and get better at it.

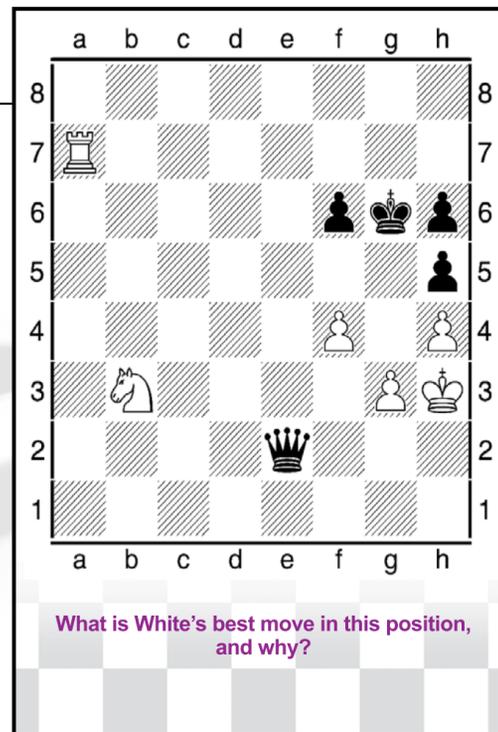
Solving chess puzzles – positions in which you are asked to find the best move for one side, a move that usually illustrates a common tactical trick or theme – can be the most effective way for beginners to develop and sharpen their "chess vision." Having this vision – the ability to recognize and, at a higher level, bring about and take advantage of common patterns that occur again and again in chess games – will decide many of them in your favor.

Arguably no player is a better living proof of this statement than Hungarian-born Grandmaster Susan Polgar, a former woman's world champion now living in Texas who was solving puzzles – and winning children's tournaments – at 4 years of age.

Her advice to beginners and even intermediate players: Don't worry about learning complex openings or memorizing long strings of moves at this stage. Focus instead on learning basic chess principles, such as control of the center, piece development and King safety, and spend some time each day solving chess puzzles.

During a recent family trip, I used one of Polgar's instructive puzzle books, "Chess Tactics for Champions," while conducting "chess camps" for my grandsons, Aidan and Julian (that's the name we give to chess lessons). Julian came up with the "anteater" analogy after solving four puzzles in a row, including the one in today's diagram.

So, are you smarter than a kindergartener? White's best move is f5 check, forcing the Black King to capture the White pawn with ...Kxf5. White then continues Nd4 check, forking Black's King and Queen and then capturing the Queen with a decisive advantage.



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

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Bridge COLUMN

CLICKING WITH YOUR PARTNER

BY PIETER VANBENNEKOM - BRIDGE COLUMNIST

Flustered Flo isn't one of those bridge snobs who only enjoy playing Game or Slam hands. She's very much aware that you can score a top in a duplicate tournament on a hand with a nice 2 Spades or 2 Diamonds contract even more than with a cold Game in 4 Hearts or 3 No-Trump – those often turn into flat hands.

That's why Flo was so frustrated when she missed scoring a top on the diagrammed deal with the South hand. Once again she played with her replacement partner, Desmond, since her regular partner, Loyal Larry, was away again visiting his daughter.

The board was played four times. Three times it resulted in a positive score for East-West in 2 Diamonds. The fourth time, when Flo's perennial nemesis Smug Sam played the South hand with his partner Shy Shem as North, North-South wound up in 2 Spades and made an overtrick for the only positive score for North-South.

Even against the best defense, West makes 2 Diamonds. After North leads his top Hearts on the first two tricks and South indicates his doubleton by playing high-low, South gets a ruff on the third Heart lead. He gets back to the North hand with the Ace of Spades, but West ruffs the fourth Heart lead with his top trump on the board, and all he loses down the road is one more Club trick to make his contract.

Flo had suspected that 2 Spades her way would make, and to confirm her suspicion, she sought out Sam after play was over.

"How did you get to 2 Spades?" she asked.

"Easy, I doubled East's 1 Spade bid. Apparently no other South dared open his or her mouth with just 6 points so all the Wests took the contract in 2 Diamonds. My double encouraged my partner to bid 2 Spades and that was passed around."

"Correction," Flo replied. "I did double as well, but my partner passed."

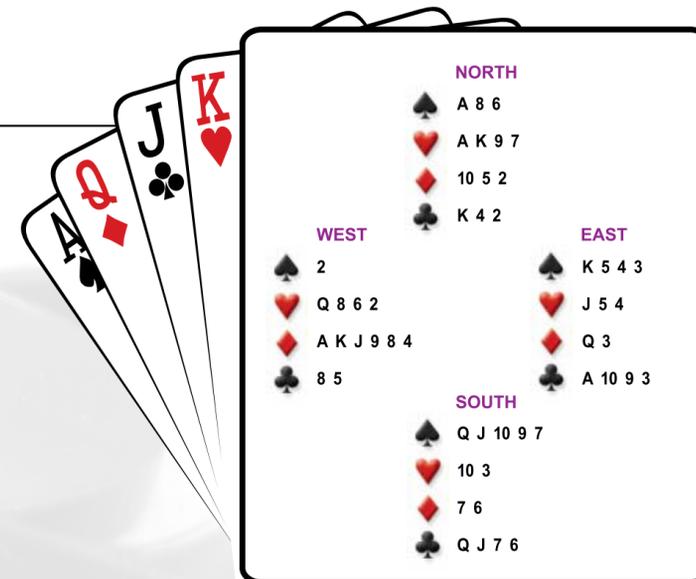
"Did you hear that, Desmond?" Flo turned to her partner. "You should have bid 2 Spades. What did you think my Double of his Spade bid meant?"

"I wasn't sure," Desmond admitted. "I never heard of that convention. We never agreed on negative doubles, so I didn't think that was it. I thought it was safest just to pass."

"Well, did you think about what it COULD have meant?" insisted Flo. "I wasn't doubling for penalties, so by process of elimination, the only thing it could have meant was that East took my bid. You wanted me to bid a five-card suit with your double and I was trying to tell you I had five Spades."

"I guess we just didn't click, Flo," said Desmond.

"Just my luck to be playing with Disloyal Desmond instead of Loyal Larry," Flo thought, but she managed to keep that thought to herself. Instead, she put on her nicest smile as she bade him goodnight and said, "Thanks for coming out tonight, Desmond."



East Dealer, no one vulnerable.

The bidding:

East	South	West	North
Pass	Pass	1 Diamond	Double
1 Spade	Double	2 Diamonds	All pass

Opening lead: King of Hearts

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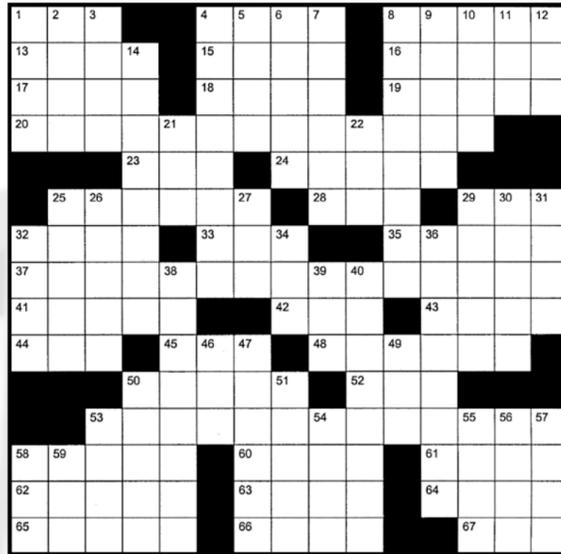
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Crossword

SOLUTIONS TO LAST ISSUE ON PAGE 75

CELESTIAL



The Christian Science Monitor | By Jay Lerner | Edited by Charles Preston

ACROSS

- 1 Neckpiece
- 4 Thaw
- 8 Plebe
- 13 Legendary king of the Huns
- 15 Mimic
- 16 Old-womanish
- 17 Goatee spot
- 18 Ms. Lollobrigida
- 19 Gangling
- 20 1978 Beatty/Christie movie
- 23 Popular 1970s band
- 24 Con games
- 25 Certain photos
- 28 "___tu": Verdi aria
- 29 Pie-mode connection
- 32 Tony, the puppeteer
- 33 Charged particle
- 35 Records
- 37 1943 Lamarr/Powell movie
- 41 "Amo, amas, I love ___"
- 42 Pedro's uncle
- 43 Desire
- 44 Q-U connection
- 45 A Thumb
- 48 Grosse___, Mich.
- 50 He had a golden touch

DOWN

- 1 "Art of Fugue" composer
- 2 Will-___-wisp
- 3 Saturn attachment
- 4 Southern blooming tree
- 5 Monumental
- 6 Belonging to singer Horne
- 7 Hypnotic state
- 8 Disaster
- 9 Author Nin
- 10 Force
- 11 Lodge member
- 12 Josephine, of mysteries

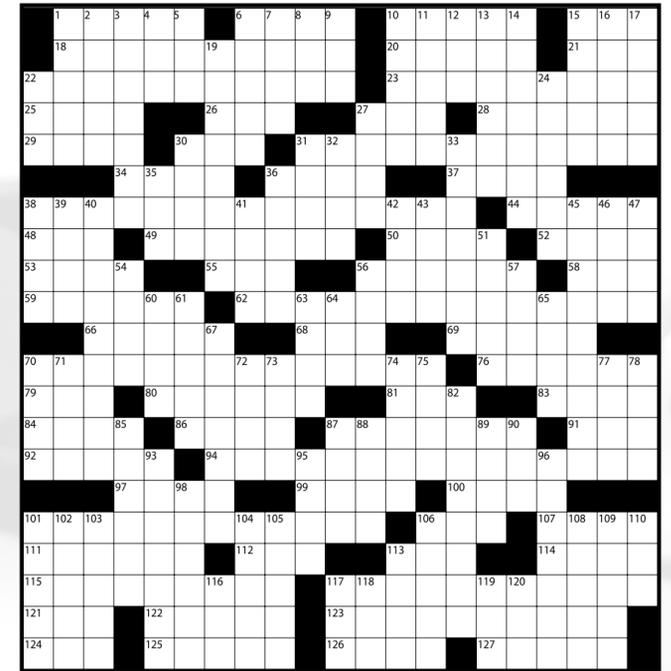
- 14 Vents disapproval
- 21 Architectural addendum
- 22 Widespread conflict
- 25 Comic Mort's family
- 26 Trick alternative
- 27 Part of the old USSR
- 29 Nautical position
- 30 Shelf
- 31 "___sow.."
- 32 Have the lead
- 34 After taxes
- 36 Plentiful
- 38 Pass the summer
- 39 Tuck's partner
- 40 Legal alternative
- 46 A canticle is one
- 47 Run
- 49 Favor follower
- 50 Mineral
- 51 Denude
- 53 ___-Tibetan
- 54 Roll call response
- 55 Annul
- 56 Madame Bovary
- 57 Exigency
- 58 Classifieds
- 59 "___ as a Stranger"

ACROSS

- 1 Flatten on impact
- 6 Aussie hatchlings
- 10 Assigns numbers to
- 15 "___ go jump in the lake!"
- 18 Hordes on horses
- 20 Bay window
- 21 Staff sgt., e.g.
- 22 Like a forgotten library book?
- 23 Actor who played Steve McQueen's righthand man Delgetti in "Bullitt"
- 25 Hard march
- 26 Shoe-size letters
- 27 Japanese menu item
- 28 Singer-actress Kazan
- 29 1950s studio co-founder
- 30 Banned spray
- 31 Film with two Fondas
- 34 Carol word
- 36 She can sing in Gaelic
- 37 "So ___ to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy" (Kipling)
- 38 Independent, as some agencies
- 44 Sweetheart
- 48 Asian river, the ___
- 49 Processions
- 50 French harp player?
- 52 Somewhat, in music
- 53 Injure severely
- 55 Retired flier
- 56 Golf events
- 58 Louisiana-born slugger
- 59 Oust
- 62 The parent dogs in "101 Dalmatians"
- 66 Pianist Claudio
- 68 Cruet filler

DOWN

- 5 "Mazel ___"
- 6 Boca Raton bird
- 7 Manner
- 8 Inuit knife
- 9 One way to turn: abbr.
- 10 Roping show
- 11 On ___ (hot)
- 12 French-born diarist
- 13 Bowler
- 14 Actor Everett et al.
- 15 "Yes ___"
- 16 Flip ___
- 17 Sharpened
- 19 Captious critics
- 22 Timothy's drug
- 24 Tears to pieces
- 27 New York archbishop
- 30 Hindu god
- 31 Free, in a way
- 32 Comical Louis and Science Guy Bill
- 33 Emilio of "Sesame Street"
- 35 "Alley ___"
- 36 Put an ___ (halt)
- 38 Killer whale of film
- 39 Nation on a gulf
- 40 Pesky things
- 41 Grating tone
- 42 O'Hara's place
- 43 By and by
- 45 Not small
- 46 Opera opening
- 47 Learning method
- 51 Deserted
- 54 Game show legend
- 56 Asia crosser
- 57 ___ precedent
- 60 Part of town
- 61 Strong tastes
- 63 Zero
- 64 Jazz job
- 65 Function
- 67 Perfect
- 70 Complain



THE ONGO-ING INVESTIGATION

By Merl Reagle

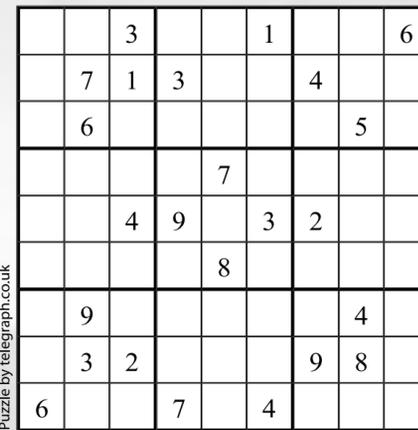
Sudoku



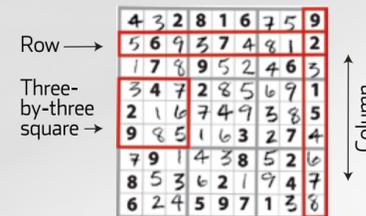
☆☆☆☆

How to do Sudoku:

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



☆☆☆☆





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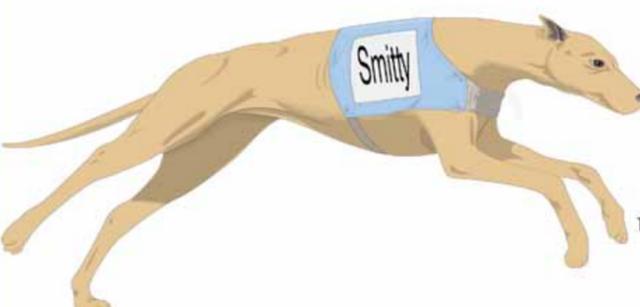
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MY ACHING BACK (Part 2) BY JAY MCNAMARA

When your back hurts as much as mine did, you will try anything to relieve the pain. I had explored a variety of techniques including those of a hot shot Park Avenue doctor who had supposedly helped President Kennedy. Nothing worked.

One day I walked into a meeting at my office and one of the men there noticed my halting manner of walking and especially sitting, which was a major challenge. "What's your problem," he asked? After a brief discussion, he said, "I bet that yoga will help you. It did me."

That day, I bought a paperback copy of Richard Hittleman's "Thirty days of Yoga." It was a book of about two dozen basic yoga positions, elementary holds meant for beginners. I was skeptical that this 99-cent book would offer any help.

What happened was so amazing that I have been doing yoga ever since, decades later. Within a few days I felt great. I was able to walk and move around, even sit and get up without pain. After all the trips to experts and their exotic treatments, I was cured in the most simple way, without a hassle and for less than a buck.

I later learned that the yoga worked because my problem was brought on by compacted muscles in my lower back. I had jogged my way into a painful back. With yoga, I could jog again and live free of pain.

It was my introduction to Eastern medicine -- what I think of as a preventive discipline -- with Western medicine more inclined to fixing you once you are broke. Lately, it appears that the two are merging.

I practiced my beginner's yoga religiously and my back never bothered me. Then, years later, living on the campus of Stanford University, undergoing radiation treatments for prostate cancer, I had plenty of time to indulge in the many Eastern therapies that were offered in the area. One, of course, was yoga. I had the opportunity to add a few positions to my simple repertoire.

As we know, any discipline can be taken to a higher order if one wishes. My level of yoga worked for me. I was not going to study in India, or learn to walk on hot coals or steel nails. That was before I was introduced to Bikram yoga. Not in India, but here in Vero Beach. Bikram yoga is not taking your yoga level up a notch. It's an entirely new experience.

Imagine being in mirrored room, with the temperature at more than 100 degrees, a dry heat much like a sauna. Then, under expert guidance, imagine going through 84 classical yoga positions during a ninety-minute session. The instructor instructs in a nonstop educational cadence throughout.

You have prepared for this by bringing a yoga mat, a very large towel, a small towel and water, lots of it. You are going to perspire big-time. The heat enables the body to stretch beyond its normal limits while it eliminates a multitude of toxins from the body.

Like all Eastern approaches to health, Bikram provides multi benefits. The system is designed to stimulate each organ, gland, muscle, and system of the human body. It is intended to provide health maintenance and disease prevention.

Adherents believe that Bikram can reverse the effects of aging, reduce the effects of stress and strain, regulate the metabolism, and help cure chronic disease. As with many Eastern approaches, there is little scientific evidence that any of this is true. But, there is ample anecdotal evidence of its efficacy.

My first experience with the instructor, Maggie, here in Vero Beach, left me out of gas and out of water. I could not finish the entire 90-minute routines, and was in the pre-beginner stage in getting into the various positions, many of which were new to me, despite my decades of yoga practice.

By the end of the second session, I was already improving. I brought a giant container of water and didn't run out. I found myself over the next few days feeling a sense of exhilaration and enhanced energy. By the third session, I was not arriving in trepidation. I was looking forward to the experience. I was becoming a believer.

Each of us has to manage our health on an individual basis, hopefully taking preventive measures in order to avoid having to undergo serious curative procedures which Western medicine provides. If you take advantage of some of the Eastern disciplines, you may find yourself enjoying good health into a ripe old age.

I have long been a proponent of yoga, but now am an avid participant in Bikram yoga. I don't have an aching back. I recommend it to anyone. And if you try it, don't forget to bring the water. Lots of water.

Jay McNamara plans to spend the summer taking his yoga to a higher order, and will resume his column in the fall.



32963

HEALTH

The road to ^{P.54} electronic health records

Health

Road to electronic health records long and bumpy

BY SANDRA RAWLS
CORRESPONDENT

Primary Care of the Treasure Coast recently made headlines when a patient refused to pay a \$50 one-time fee to assist their transition to electronic medical records and medication prescribing.

While the fee had nothing to do with the recently-passed health care reform, it highlights the promises and uncertainty a new era of health care is bringing to medical practices in Vero Beach.

Medical providers for years have been looking to put more of their practices on electronic, paperless systems. But in the coming years, they are expected to accelerate the process of converting to electronic medical records under legislation included in the stimulus package. In fact, the package contains incentives for practitioners and hospitals to go paperless.

"Where we're heading is a medical system that's similar to banking information-wise," says Randy King, director of information systems at Indian River Medical Center. "You can bank and get information from all over the world on your home computer. The various systems over lap. It's still at least 10 years away, but having all medical records accessible to hospitals, doctors, and patients is where we're going."

And while technology is often seen as the central solution to drive change in any industry, it can be a thorny thicket. Electronic medical records, saver of paper and trees, and catalyst for a more integrated and automated medical care, can give anyone a headache. And it's expensive.

The goals are grand ones. Immediately, the elimination of paper records for one. We all know those rooms full of coded paper files, representing years of tests and treatments, with workers spending a lot of time retrieving and returning them. Laptops and specialized software systems could bring all that to a satisfying end.

And then there are the loftier, more long-term goals. King talks about seamless information flow between doctors' offices and hospitals, insurers, and patients themselves, all sharing records.

Not only paper, but time and labor could be saved, and in theory mistakes could be avoided and overlaps in insurance coverage or drug therapies would be simpler to sort out. All that will soon be here, the futurists say, but



Randy King, Director of Information Systems at Indian River Medical Center, stands with one of the center's new Workstations On Wheels. Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.

around the country and here in Vero, the path can get a little rugged.

"There is a very high learning curve in all this, lots of retraining," says Randy King. "And there is a whole lot of cost. Laptops, wireless systems for some situations, cabled computers in others. And you have to scan in your paper records to get started, so there is lots of scanning of documents and scanners are needed. Practices need to think and be careful about the vendors they use. Do you want top of the line or out-of-the-box components you can even get at Wal-Mart?"

He mentions that some insurance companies "dangle a carrot" to doctors, with financial incentives for elec-

tronic prescribing in particular.

Standards for information exchange are key concerns in integrating systems as the larger vision comes to life, and "of course security. People are very concerned about HIPAA (the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) regulations. There are people who don't want any of their personal information released and so on."

Most medical practices questioned by 32963 are somewhere in the middle of converting to electronic records and a little skittish about discussing exactly where. Primary Care of the Treasure Coast, Vero's largest primary care practice, and dermatologist Larry Lands-

man's office were among those that declined to comment at all.

Exactly what does the new law say to create all the tension and fuss? Didn't many offices already have electronic medical records? Many offices indeed use electronic records, but some only for billing purposes. At the end of 2008 the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics estimated what they describe as "fully functional" electronic medical record systems were only present in 6.3% of American doctor's offices, not including those used for billing.

All that changed last year. When President Obama signed the \$787 billion economic stimulus package on Feb. 17 2009, it included the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) act which encourages the adoption of electronic health records (EHRs) through incentive payments to doctors.

Some \$19 billion in grants and loans are set aside for infrastructure and incentive payments under Medicare and Medicaid for providers who adopt certified electronic health records technology. The grants and loans include \$17 billion for incentives, with \$2 billion allotted to encourage adoption of Health Information technology. Doctors are eligible to each receive up to \$44,000 from Medicare for "meaningful use" of a "certified" EHR program beginning next year. These payments will be spread over 5 years, but to get the maximum benefit, sign up should be completed by 2011. Those reimbursed by Medicaid can receive up to \$63,750, spread over five years.

No surprise that "meaningful use" recommendations include dozens of objectives, standards, and measures that have still not been clarified although they are supposed to be by summer, according to the Florida Medical Association.

One of the meaningful use recommendations, however, is clear – electronic prescribing of medications. Studies by the American Medical Association have shown using an electronic prescribing system can "improve the safety, quality, efficiency, and cost effectiveness of patient care."

But change is slow in coming. At a local Publix pharmacy on U.S. 1, one worker estimated that fewer than 30% of the prescriptions arriving are in electronic form.

Doctors and hospitals are being told what tasks they should be using their

Health



Medical records Technician Mary Brigham prepares patients' medical charts to be processed and scanned into the Indian River Medical Center's electronic file system.

electronic records for (meaningful use), and what EHR software features are needed to accomplish those tasks. They are also being told how the government is going to measure those tasks and whether or not they are being performed to their satisfaction.

Physicians that choose not to embrace what the government is offering will forego thousands in incentive payments, but starting in 2015, they will be penalized by way of decreased Medicare and Medicaid payments.

Primary care doctors, their numbers dropping, and the increased need for their specialty as more people join the ranks of the insured, get extra incentives. A 10 percent bonus will go to any doctor spending most

of his time giving primary care to elderly patients. By 2014 Medicaid reimbursement will be ramped up to 100% of the Medicare rate. Participation in the new reimbursement plan is also linked to the joining the push for EHRs.

Some practices, such as long time family practitioner Dr. Terry Swezey, are making no changes, not participating at all. Others, like Indian River Walk in Care are already using electronic records.

"We are in the early stages of this process," says Randy King. "Even here at the hospital we are not going to be completely without paper. We call what we're doing paper-lite."

Nurse Katrina Kirkland at Oslo Urgent Care says they are working on their own version of paper-lite.

"It's really hard to get to no paper at all," she says. "With so many different companies like Intergy or Praxix for electronic records software, it will be a very hard thing to get everyone together into one big system."

Practices with more than one office like Doctors' Walk In Clinic based in Tampa or Treasure Coast Community Health where patients may make follow up visits at a different location than their initial visit, have a particu-

larly complex task in eliminating paper medical records.

Dr. Stephen Dicky, CEO of Doctor's Walk In Clinics, outlines a long process they embarked on beginning in 2006, and says it was worth it. "We realized intangible benefits are often difficult to measure. Now we can identify problems like longer wait times, and better allocate resources."

The Information Services group at Indian River Medical Center is keen to find new ways to eliminate paper use in medical records any way they can. Last summer, coding supervisor Marie Munro suggested putting daily hospital reports on line instead of the old way of automatic printing.

This is only one step taken in the last year to stop automatic printing of various reports at the hospital. Munro loves paper saving, calling herself, "a major tree-hugger for years."

The struggle to sort out vendors, meaningful use, and the complex requirements that go with the new incentives for electronic records seems likely to keep medical offices busy in Vero for the rest of the year.

Will becoming "fully functional" be the order of the day?

Stay tuned.

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Healthcare overhaul won't stop premium hikes

NOAM M. LEVEY
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Public outrage over double-digit rate hikes for health insurance may have helped push President Obama's health overhaul across the finish line, but the new law does not give regulators the power to block similar increases in the future.

And now, with some major companies already moving to boost premiums and others poised to follow suit, millions of Americans may feel an unexpected jolt in the pocketbook.

Although Democrats promised greater consumer protection, the overhaul does not give the federal government broad regulatory power to prevent increases.

Many state governments – which traditionally had responsibility for regulating insurance companies – also do not have such authority. And several that do are now being sued by insurance companies.

"It is a very big loophole in health reform," Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) said. Feinstein and Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.) are pushing legislation

to expand federal and state authority to prevent insurance companies from boosting rates excessively.

At least in the short term, regulators will be able to do little more than require insurers to publicly explain why they want to raise rates. Consumer advocates believe that will not be an effective deterrent against such premium increases as the 39% hike that Anthem Blue Cross sent some California customers last year.

"The irony here is that it was the Anthem rate increase that breathed new life into the healthcare bill," said Jerry Flanagan, medical policy director of Consumer Watchdog, a longtime supporter of tougher premium regulation. "But there is nothing in this bill to guarantee that it doesn't happen again."

The new law doesn't prevent rate increases such as Anthem Blue Cross' double-digit hike last year. 'It is a very big loophole,' says Sen. Dianne Feinstein, who is pushing regulatory legislation.

The lack of muscle is stoking concerns that more rate jumps – and an angry backlash from ratepayers – could undermine support for implementing the whole healthcare overhaul.

Insurance industry officials say that talk of more regulation is misguided and have urged federal officials to focus instead on containing rising medical costs, which help drive up premiums.

"Politicians are much more comfortable looking at healthcare premiums," said Karen Ignagni, president of America's Health Insurance Plans, the industry's Washington-based lobbying arm.

Ignagni, as well as some independent healthcare experts, says policymakers should look at ways to control what hospitals and other providers charge, although few elected officials have shown much appetite for doing so.

Obama endorsed Feinstein's insurance proposal earlier this year, including it in the healthcare blueprint he unveiled in February as Democrats were struggling to revive their proposals. But congressional rules prevented



Sen. Dianne Feinstein

Stepping up regulation doesn't promise to be easy. Insurance companies in Maine and Massachusetts have sued state regulators who tried to block rate hikes.

ket.

In Maine, where an aggressive Bureau of Insurance reviewed 186 rate filings in 2009, regulators focus on the

so-called individual market, where people buy coverage if it is not available through their jobs.

Maine is now battling Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield, which regulators last year blocked from raising premiums an average of 18.5% on its individual customers.

Many states do far less, often requiring insurers only to file their proposed rate increases with the state insurance commissioner before passing them along to consumers. New York switched to that approach in 1996, a move that state regulators say resulted

in "excessive rate increases."

A handful of states, such as Missouri, do not even require insurers to publicly disclose rate hikes.

The new federal healthcare legislation would step up oversight of health insurers in states with such limited regulation.

The bill directs the secretary of Health and Human Services to work with state regulators to develop a process for reviewing proposed premium increases to determine if they are "unreasonable." Insurers that propose such hikes would be required to post

Democratic leaders from including the rate control provision in the final healthcare package.

Many consumer advocates believe this enhanced regulation – known in the industry as "prior approval" authority – is the only real way to protect ratepayers from insurers, particularly for-profit companies under pressure to generate returns that satisfy Wall Street investors.

Prior approval requires insurers to submit proposed rate increases to regulators, who can then comb through companies' financial and actuarial data to see if the proposals are justified. Insurers cannot raise premiums without explicit permission from the regulator.

Some states have given prior-approval authority to their insurance commissions and have used it to force down premiums.

In New York, the state insurance department reduced nearly a quarter of the proposed premium increases between 1990 and 1995, according to a recent department analysis.

More recently, state regulators in Kansas successfully pushed Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas to reduce a proposed premium increase for some of its elderly customers, according to state insurance commissioner Sandy Praeger.

California, which does not have power to block health plan hikes, has been using similar authority to control property and auto insurance premiums for more than 20 years, said Dwight M. Jaffee, a real estate and finance professor at UC Berkeley's Haas School of Business. "It has been very successful," said Jaffee, who studied the state's experience.

Health insurance is more complicated than property and auto coverage, however. And even the most active state regulators typically cannot investigate every proposed change in every segment of the insurance mar-

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justifications on their websites. For the first time, all insurance companies would have to dedicate at least 75% of their premiums to paying medical claims; this would reduce the proportion of companies' revenue that could go to administrative expenses, such as executive salaries and stockholder dividends. Some analysts believe that requirement could restrain premium growth.

"These provisions are powerful forces that will help end sky-high premium hikes," said Nick Papas, a spokesman

for Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius.

Monday, the department announced it will accelerate the development of new regulations.

But more intensive oversight would not begin until 2014, when states set up new regulated insurance markets, or exchanges, where consumers who do not get insurance at work would shop for coverage. The healthcare bill allows regulators to ban insurers from the exchanges if their rates are deemed unjustified.

Even some regulators wary of greater Washington control over state affairs say that more federal protections may be needed before then.

"Some consistency there is probably warranted," said Praeger, a Republican and former head of the National Assn. of Insurance Commissioners. Praeger criticized Obama's original proposal to give the federal government authority to block rate increases.

But she said last week that the insurance commissioners association is now talking with the administration about how the federal government could set a stronger minimum national standard for regulating medical insurance companies.

That could encourage more states to require insurers to get state approval

before raising premiums.

On Capitol Hill, Feinstein said she is looking at ways to move her premium regulation bill forward, perhaps by attaching it to other legislation with bipartisan support.

Stepping up regulation doesn't promise to be easy. Insurance companies in Maine and Massachusetts have sued state regulators who tried to block rate hikes.



Karen Ignagni, president of America's Health Insurance Plans.

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Style

Barrier island weddings make life a beach



Ornately decorated cakes from Frosting sit on display among all of the other vendors' wares at the Beach Wedding Bridal Show at the Surf Club Hotel. Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.

BY BARBARA YORESH
CORRESPONDENT

The engagement has been formally announced, the calendar consulted to set a wedding date and so far, at least, prospective in-laws are on their best behavior. So where to hold the nuptials?

Well, for local brides-to-be, the ocean is a popular destination -- the just-so wedding experience. Our beaches have become the "in" place to get married, according to organizers and vendors at "A Beach Wedding" bridal show held for the first time Sunday at the newly remodeled oceanfront Surf Club Hotel at 4700 N. A1A. Event admission benefited the Gif-

ford Youth Orchestra with eight string orchestra members on hand to entertain show attendees.

"Brides from Vero love something beachy about their weddings. I think couples of any age can do it and some like the informality of not having a 'frou-frou' wedding. It's lucky to be able to get married here," said event coordinator Susan Haggard of Susan Loy Bridal of Vero Beach.

The idea to coordinate a beach-themed bridal show stemmed from Haggard's experience as a designer of custom bridal head pieces as well as through networking with businesses in her role as marketing manager for the Senior Resource Association. She is also writing a book entitled "Plan-



Hand-crafted leather sandals from Stephen Bananno Sandals.

geared to beach themes. I realized that these wouldn't really fit at other (more traditionally-themed) bridal shows so I decided to do a beach show. It's a real niche market," Haggard said.

The idea appealed to Patricia Joseph, director of sales and marketing at the Surf Club Hotel, which is re-introducing itself to locals after it got a facelift. The hotel can accommodate 160 people in its ballroom and has a perfect seaside and pool location for weddings, said Joseph.

"The beach is a big deal. People say they want to get married with their feet in the sand. Many of the brides truly want a beachside wedding and it isn't always about the price. It's about being on the ocean and the casual environment," Joseph said.

The one predominant trend about beachside weddings seems to be individuality. "It's really about the bride having her day," Haggard said. "The guys (grooms) usually get left behind but

CONTINUED ON PAGE 60

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Style

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 59

we hope to give the couple a real one-on-one talk with the vendors and make it fun."

Whatever works for the couple, their family and guests is what bridal vendors will gladly provide.

Grooms-to-be attending the show were given a break from wedding planning at CigarMatch, a beachside-based outdoor portable cigar lounge courtesy of owner Paul Tripaldi.

"We're here to keep the guys happy.

We have a mobile tobacco license and can set this up at a wedding, restaurant or event. And they do give out cigars at weddings. It's something to celebrate," Tripaldi said

Photographers Vic and Marina Verola of the Moorings offered innovative digital bridal photography and videos. Wedding albums of today often feature acrylic or ostrich-skin covers in a calendar-style format. Hollywood-style video "highlights" can be filmed so couples can post their wedding on YouTube or other video and social net-



Hand-crafted jewelry from A Bead Above.

working sites.

"Most brides today like a more informal photo-journalistic style but the parents still like traditional shots. What has changed in wedding trends is that they want all their images and there can now be 1,000 or more of them," Vic said.

Bride-to-be Bonnie Haley, fiancé Joe Beasock and future mother-in-law Cindy Beasock, all of Vero Beach, attended the show to get some ideas for their May 2011 nuptials which will feature a lavender color scheme.

"We're not sure yet of a beach wedding but we're trying to find the most economical ideas and still have a nice wedding, Haley said.

When asked why he decided to accompany the most important women in his life to a bridal show, Beasock didn't miss a beat.

"I'm here because it makes her happy," he said with a loving glance at his future bride.

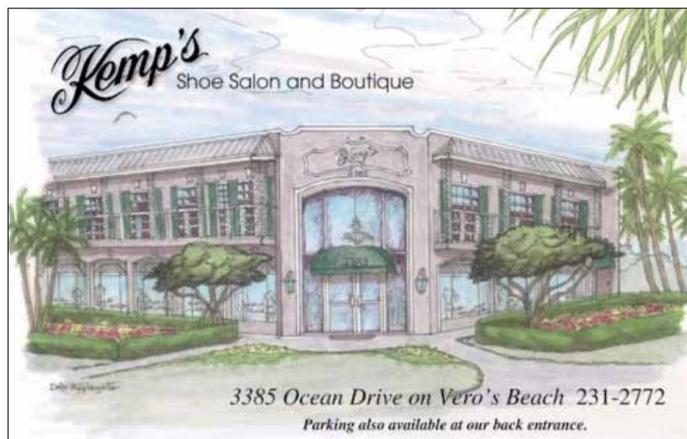
Krystal Murdock and William Mitchell of Sebastian plan to be married in about six months and both



A floral arrangement from Pink Pelican Florist

agree they want a beach wedding and were getting helpful tips about ways to do it.

"We'll definitely have the ceremony on the beach," Murdock said.



Style



A dress by Venus stands on display with other dresses from Meredith's Bridal and Formal wear at the Beach Wedding Bridal Show at the Surf Club Hotel.



Italian made shoes from Shannon Britt Shoes.

Of course bridal wear is a major decision and couples attending "A Beach Wedding" had unlimited options from white formal gowns and tuxedos to white jeans.

And although the traditional long, white wedding gown is still popular, Haggard said many brides

are opting for more visual impact by choosing vibrantly colored sashes or accessories for their gown as well as for bridesmaids' dresses. Beach brides who want to wear veils are choosing shorter veils of stiffer material to withstand ocean breezes.

"Each bride wants to be absolutely beautiful in what she wears whatever the style. They want to do something unique that hasn't been done by their friends and they're doing what they want," Haggard said.

Meredith and Dave Ryder of Meredith's Bridal & Formalwear of Melbourne said couples planning evening

weddings still like the formal elegance of black and white.

"Strapless gowns are still in but now they're making gowns with detachable straps and bolero jackets for the ceremony that can come off for the reception," Meredith Ryder said.



Beaehy bridal headbands from Susan Loy Bridal, LLC.

She noted that beach weddings often feature shorter-length white or ivory bridal gowns and bridesmaids' dresses hued in colors of the sea or brightly colored with other tropically inspired patterns.

While bridesmaids' gowns have traditionally been the bane of those who must wear them, today's styles and economic considerations have changed that wear-only-once purchase.

"Now they're making dresses that can actually be worn again," Meredith said.

Accessorizing a bridal gown usually



The Gifford Youth Orchestra performs in the entryway to the Beach Wedding Bridal Show at the Surf Club Hotel.

meant borrowing a string of mom's or grandmother's pearls. Although that classic adornment is still popular, brides on the beach want something a little less formal and trendier – such as a choker of multi-colored simulated sea glass beads, according to Penny Batson of A Bead Above on Royal Palm Pointe.

"Black and white is big for evening weddings with lots of freshwater pearls and we'll also do a knotted tra-

ditional strand of pearls and combine it with floral beads or maybe a blown glass starfish," Batson said.

Wedding cakes have also changed and might not be cakes at all but rather trendy cup cakes in flavors mom never baked. Beach wedding couples might choose a fabulous custom-designed sandcastle cake by Frosting Cupcakes & Confections of Cardinal Drive.

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Question: Dear Hair Guy, a couple of weeks ago I noticed that in your style section appeared models with very bushy eyebrows. What is up with that?
- JojoCandy, Vero Beach

Answer: Well Jojo, Don't panic! As with many trends in Hair fashion, what we see on the runway is typically an exaggeration and one person's opinion at the time. I mean lets face it, as far back as the early works of art like Erythra Sibl and Testa Feminine Di Profilo by Michelangelo Buonarroti, we can find contradiction within his own body of work, some fine brows some thick brows. More recently a 20th century artist fashionista, like Frida Kahlo, we see an example of the outrageous eyebrow making not only a fashion statement but helping to put her on the map. Look at Stars like Brook Shields, famous for her fury brow. We can question what "we the people" behold as beautiful. Is it a generational thing? In the 1940's gals like Gene Tierney known for her "shining eyes" had a fullish brow. In the 1950's gals like Audrey

Hepburn had thick brows, while Elizabeth Taylor had embraced a thick base shaped upward to a finer, thinner end. How about the 1970's where ladies like, Farrah Fawcet and Suzanne Sumers, took a more natural approach, softly shaped and clean, but mostly undisturbed. So here is my point. Don't let what you see on the red carpet or on the runway put you in a panic. The folks you see in fashion forward magazines and pictorials are out to get noticed and set a trend. We, people in the business of fashion, know that the translation of what we see up there, versus what we will use in the general population, will be most subdued by comparison. Look, beauty is in the eye of the beholder not the other way around. Make an appointment and I'll get you hooked up, my treat. Keep those questions flowing! www.askthehairguy.com

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This is NOT your Grandmother's Day Spa.

Yes, even clothing can be recycled

BY SUSAN CARPENTER
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Call it the Forever 21 effect, or fast fashion. Americans are buying, and discarding, clothes more quickly than ever. The average American throws 54 pounds of clothes and shoes into the trash each year. That adds up to about 9 million tons of wearables that are sent into the waste stream, according to the Environmental Protection Agency — a 27% increase in a mere eight years.

Although resale shops are a good option for clothes that still have some fashion value, and charities will take items that are well past their prime, there are still an awful lot of ink-stained dress shirts and moth-eaten sweaters that find their way to the dump.

What to do with that favorite old shirt you ruined by inadvertently spilling a glass of red wine down its front, or that well-worn pair of slacks that finally split at the seams, or that dress



Give + Take owner Dora Copperthite shows off some of her recycled wares.

fect of a pair of 501s, which found that the amount of water used to grow the cotton was rivaled by the amount owners used to wash their jeans. That finding led to Care Tag for Our Planet, which started showing up on Levi's late last year, instructing owners to wash their jeans in cold water, to wash them less often, to air dry them rather than use a clothes dryer and, when they no longer want them, to donate them instead of throwing them away.

The Gap, which last weekend concluded a 10-day blue jean recycling event, collected about a quarter-million jeans that will be turned into insulation.

Patagonia, a pioneer in using recycled materials in its active wear since the '90s, has been running a garment recycling program

since 1995 called Common Threads. The program has collected 13,000 pounds of clothes, which are shipped off to Japan, broken down and turned in to new Patagonia items such as rain parkas. Despite their long journey, Patagonia spokeswoman Jen Rapp says that recycling clothes, rather than making them from raw material, saves 72% in energy costs and 76% in CO2 emissions.

Recycling plastic that is used in textiles saves 57% of the energy used to make them from virgin materials, or about 1 ton of CO2 emissions for every ton that is recycled, according to the Natural Resources Defense Council. Patagonia's goal: that 100% of its clothing either be made from recycled material or be recyclable. Right now, the company says 70% of its offerings are recyclable.

Customers who want to recycle their Patagonia gear can do so by returning items to Patagonia retailers and dealers such as REI, or by mailing items to the company's Nevada-based service center.

Dora Copperthite is doing her own form of clothing recycling. Her Give + Take Boutique in Playa del Rey, Calif., is like a large public clothing swap that lets people trade their clothes for others. For a \$20 monthly membership fee, women who've tired of their Prada handbag or H&M romper can have them valued for points that are then traded for other items.

The partnership evolved out of a Levi's study of the environmental ef-

fect of a pair of 501s, which found that the amount of water used to grow the cotton was rivaled by the amount owners used to wash their jeans. That finding led to Care Tag for Our Planet, which started showing up on Levi's late last year, instructing owners to wash their jeans in cold water, to wash them less often, to air dry them rather than use a clothes dryer and, when they no longer want them, to donate them instead of throwing them away.

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Open since November, Give + Take has about 124 members and 1,000 items, the latter of which are divided into three categories: designer, cheapies and free.

"For me, it's an environmental cause. We have so much excess," said Copperthite, who donates whatever isn't swapped to Goodwill. "The green movement is big on shopping in your own closet. What I'm doing, you're not only shopping in your own closet but the closets of hundreds of ladies."

Then there is the trash to fashion trend.

Most people wouldn't be caught

junky past.

Recycling plastics into clothes "is nothing new and it's a good idea," says Gregory Unruh, director of the Lincoln Center for Ethics in Global Management at the Thunderbird School of Global Management in Phoenix and author of the book "Earth, Inc." "The trick is that the material recovery costs are cost effective, and usually they are. It makes a lot of sense, and a lot of companies are trying to move in that direction."

Unruh cited Patagonia, Capri Sun and Coca-Cola, the latter of which has long recycled its soda pop empties



A sandal made of recycled materials

dead wearing a shower curtain in public. Few would cover themselves in spent coffee grounds, or wrap their bodies in old fishing nets — at least knowingly.

But there's a growing trend among clothing manufacturers who are turning all kinds of trash into fashion these days.

Dated audiotapes. Old signs and office chairs. They're all being recycled into clothes that are sold by well-known retailers.

"Our evolution toward using trash as our supply chain came through our desire to reduce the impact our clothing has on the planet," said Jen Rapp, director of communications and public relations for Patagonia, the Ventura-based manufacturer that is largely credited with birthing, then mainstreaming, the trash-to-fashion trend.

In 1993, Patagonia began recycling old plastic water and soda bottles, and then combining them with a small amount of virgin polyester to make polar fleece jackets. More recently it's expanded the concept with old shower curtains, recycled garments, cutting-room floor scraps and polyester signs that are broken down to their molecular level, spun into threads, woven into textiles and cut into long underwear, technical gear such as rain jackets and other items that give no hint of their

into its own branded clothing line. H&M, Sears' suit maker EcoGir and the handbag line Matt & Nat also use recycled plastic bottle textiles in their designs. According to Unruh, recycling waste uses less energy and creates fewer greenhouse gas emissions than sourcing virgin materials.

"There's new technology to make apparel out of recycled products other than plastic bottles," said Harris Liu, president of Southern California apparel broker Caerus & Muse.

Liu is hoping his Asian textile manufacturer, which fuses spent coffee grounds with yarns made from recycled plastic and spins them into athletic gear that controls odor and blocks UV rays, will expand its contract with Starbucks in Taiwan to coffee and fast food chains in the U.S.

Eco-Panda, of Whittier, is turning old fishing nets into bikinis. Sanuk, the Cardiff by the Sea-based maker of casual footwear, including popular closed-toe sandals, has expanded its recycling efforts (using textiles made from recycled water bottles) to incorporate old tires and yoga mats, both of which are used for soles. The old tires are sourced within 100 miles of where the shoes are made in China.

"Instead of ending up in landfills," said Sanuk founder Jeff Kelley, "they end up on the bottoms of people's feet."

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Dining

Restaurant Review

Patti's Bistro: Best choice for Maine lobsters



Patti's homemade chocolate cake. Reserve your lobsters. When we went for a photo, the day's allotment had been sold. Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.

BY TINA RONDEAU
COLUMNIST

Back last summer, when many of you were enjoying Maine lobster somewhere along the New England coast, we got to craving a couple of lobsters of our own. Not Florida lobsters, mind you; Maine lobsters. So drawn to an ad promising one-and-a-half pound steamed Maine lobsters at a very low price, we phoned in our reservations.

We had driven past Patti's Bistro a number of times without noticing it. The restaurant sits back from US1 on the south side of Sebastian, in a tired strip mall anchored by an office of the Indian River Tax Collector. Frankly, as we pulled in off the highway and drove across the huge empty parking lot toward Patti's, our expectations weren't high.

Imagine our surprise when we walked through Patti's entrance into a warm, charming room of burnished gold, with a mirrored wall that makes the restaurant appear twice its cozy size. As we awaited the hostess, noting that virtually every table was filled, the unobtrusive stylings of live guitarist Dave Elliott added to our delight.

Who would have guessed?

Within seconds, we were greeted by Patti herself (if you have been there more than once, you not only will be greeted but hugged), who showed us to an inviting table attractively set with golden plates.

The lobster special, it turned out, included an appetizer and dessert. It was an amazing \$21.95 when we first encountered it last year, and it still is close to the best dining buy around at \$23.95.

Since that first visit last summer, we have been back to Patti's a half dozen times – almost always for Maine lobsters. It's not that they do not have other appealing entrees; it simply is that the lobsters are consistently bigger and better than those you get elsewhere. They generally come with a baked potato or rice, and steamed veggies.

But among other dishes we or our

companions have sampled at Patti's are the sauerbraten (\$17.99), the eggplant parmesan (\$15.99), an individual Beef Wellington (\$21.99), and the Wiener schnitzel (\$17.99).



Patti's Bistro, located inconspicuously off of US-1 in Sebastian, has developed a very loyal following since opening four years ago.

Both the sauerbraten, a tangy German form of pot roast, and the Wiener schnitzel, a breaded veal cutlet (two of several German dishes on the menu), were nicely complemented by sides of red cabbage. The sauerbraten also was accompanied by a large potato dumpling, and the Wiener schnitzel came with egg noodles.

My husband dined on the Beef Wellington, a filet mignon coated with pâté, then wrapped in puff pastry and baked. Prepared to perfection, he said, and accompanied by mashed potatoes and a medley of al dente vegetables. Our guest on one visit had the eggplant parmesan, a very nice rendition of this dish served with a side of spaghetti.

While the salads that come with dinner – a house salad or a Caesar – are nice, my recommendation is to start with Patti's excellent soups. The golden onion soup, always on the menu, is light and tasty; the soup du jour is frequently even better. On one visit, it was a tasty beer and cheese soup, on another a tangy Manhattan clam chowder, and most recently, an excellent corn and crab bisque.

For dessert, you don't want to consider any options to the chocolate cake – a delicious light chocolate cake, topped with a dab of whipped cream. Just the right end to the meal.

While Patti's has a very limited wine list, it does prove that you can get a decent bottle of wine which nicely complements your meal for under \$25.

Dinner for two at Patti's, before tip, runs between \$60 and \$70.

This restaurant – open now for four years – has a very loyal following. It seems busier early rather than late, so if you are interested in dining before 7 (or want to reserve one of the Maine lobsters), a reservation is strongly recommended.

The service here is beyond attentive, the food is solid, and the restaurant is not that bad a drive for residents of the northern end of the barrier island. If you are looking for a change from the usual spots, why not give Patti's Bistro a try.

Once you have tried the lobster, it won't long before Patti is hugging you on repeat visits.

I welcome your comments, and encourage you to send feedback to me at tina@verobeach32963.com.

The reviewer is a beachside resident who dines anonymously at restaurants at the expense of Vero Beach 32963.

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Dining

Wine Column

With spring at hand, looking ahead to a rosé future

BY DAVE MCINTYRE
WASHINGTON POST

Does the arrival of spring have you craving rosé? Some wine drinkers crave it year-round. In fact, they prefer rosé to most red wines. Each spring and summer they search wine store shelves looking for the new releases.

Kay and Dick Efron have a tried-and-true method of finding rosés they like. "We use color as a guide, because it seems to work," they explained in an e-mail. "We don't buy from Anjou or Provence, because they are pale compared to the Costieres de Nimes that please us. We also find winners from Spain using color as a guide. We buy one bottle to try within a few weeks, then hurry back if we find a winner."

The Efrons wondered about the market for rosé: Will the growing popularity of pink wine mean a wider selection will be available? Will it push up prices?

Yes to both, I answered. Increased demand has resulted in a wider selection, but popularity comes with a



Costieres de Nimes roses

price. The dollar's continued weakness against the euro also puts pressure on

price. French rosés that just a few years ago sold for under \$10 have in recent vintages crept into the \$15 neighborhood. That's a significant hike. I suggested they might look for rosés from Chile and Argentina, where some bargains around \$10 can be found.

And they were concerned about rosé's seasonality. As the selection dries up in the fall, the Efrons find themselves stocking up like squirrels hoarding acorns. It would be nice if the growing interest in rosé resulted in more of it being available through the winter. I think they'll have to continue their late-summer buying sprees. For better or worse, rosé is considered a hot-weather wine.

There is also a market preference for fresh rosé – meaning the previous year's vintage. So this year we will see a bunch of 2009s, and

any 2008s or remaining 2007s will be on closeout. I advise the Efrons and all rosé fans to seek out those closeout bins, because many rosés hit their peak in their second year after harvest.

Just a few years ago, almost all Spanish rosés on the market were two years old, as traditionally Spaniards prefer an extra year of age on their rosado. That seems to have changed; last year I noticed more and more Spanish 2008s, which led me to believe the winemakers were responding to the market's preference for freshness.

A question asked another email echoed an occasional lament I hear from readers. "I enjoy your wine reviews, especially the monthly value selections," a reader wrote, "but wonder why almost zero of the wines you review are available at the big liquor stores?"

My response: I tend to favor unfamiliar wines from smaller producers and importers, and those wines are more likely to be found at specialty wine stores.

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Rob Demick, part of a band from First Presbyterian Church, sings during St. Edward's 12-hour Swim-a-thon for Life.



Chris Hammett, of Deep 6, leads a scuba dive session to let kids try the activity during St. Edward's 12-hour Swim-a-thon for Life.
Photos: Keith Carson



Junior Brandon Pappalardo, 17, swims during St. Edward's 12-hour Swim-a-thon for Life April 10th.

BY MICHAEL BIELECKI
CORRESPONDENT

St. Edward's Upper School played host to the First Annual Relay for Life Swim-a-Thon Celebration this past Saturday.

Swimmers gathered to swim for the duration of the 12-hour event to show their support for the American Cancer Society.

Organizing the event was St. Edward's Aquatics Director Dave Underill.

"It's a 12-hour continuous swim relay," said Underill. "One lane is reserved for continuous swimming, and we've got another part of the pool for people who are swimming laps for their sponsors."

Fresh off a season where he sent more SES swimmers to the regional swim meet than ever, Underill was to be heading up the charity event.

"We've got one kid who raised \$850 in sponsorship money... spon-

sors have been pledging either a flat amount of money, or they've just given a designated amount of money per lap to the participant."

Aside from the action in the pool, there were activities spread all throughout the day for everyone.

Local fitness guru John Sammartano put on a kick-boxing demonstration in the afternoon, and was happy to be part of event.

"I got a call from Coach Dave about a month ago, he asked me to come out and help promote cancer awareness," said Sammartano. "After a soft-step aerobic routine, we brought the punching bags out for a kick boxing demonstration."

There were also yoga, SCUBA, and zumba demonstrations throughout the day for people who preferred to stay dry.

The Corner Stone Band played later in the afternoon, and events closed with a "dive-in" movie. The

movie Happy Feet was shown on the wall of the SES gym, while people watched it from the comfort of a flotation device in the pool.

Underill wants to make the Swim-a-Thon Celebration an annual event

at SES, which just spent \$50,000 renovating the aquatics facility. "It's such a great cause," said Underill. "St. Edward's is happy to show its support for the American Cancer Society, and we can't wait to do it again next year."

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Pets

Senior citizen? Nani leaves pups in the dust



Nani, a King Charles Spaniel, is an avid agility dog.



Nani, seen here going through the obstacle course in agility training.

BY CISSY SUMNER
COLUMNIST

Cavalier King Charles Spaniels are sweet dogs known for their loving dis-

positions and versatility.

No Cavalier is more versatile than Nani, a 13-year-old wonder dog who shares her life with Carlton resident Rachel Richard.

Richard is an avid competitor in many canine sports. Fittingly, she picked Nani up as a puppy on her way to a weeklong agility camp. Nani was exposed to dog sports from her first

coming up in the near future. A Canine Performance Event in Palm Bay to be followed by that organization's national competition in Kissimmee, Fla. She will be trialing in the veteran category. I don't think there will be many other 13-year-old dogs competing.

In addition to her agility titles, Nani has also achieved awards in AKC tracking and rally obedience. She is an experienced Therapy Dog. Her kind and loving nature made her a hit at the assisted living homes. The patients love to see her perform her tricks. Nani is happy to bring you a tissue to blow your nose.



Nani's fun and loving nature make her a great Therapy Dog; she often visits assisted living facilities.

Richard has this to say about Nani, "The day in Richard's life. Nani is from one of the original breeders of Cavalier King Charles Spaniels in Maine. According to Richard, "Her adaptability is amazing. She travels beautifully and is happy just going where I go." That is a good thing since they travel annually from Buffalo to Vero Beach, with occasional stops to compete on the way.

At age 13, Nani is a senior citizen in the agility world. To this day she still loves to do agility. Nani loves to go to practice and hates waiting for her turn to run.

She has achieved championships in many of the different venues of agility. Richard and Nani have two trials

joy that Nani has brought to my life has been amazing. She is always willing to try new things. The patience she has shown with the younger dogs in the family has been wonderful. She doesn't always play with toys anymore, but is right next to me when I am playing with the young ones. As if to say 'Don't forget me, I love play too.' I treasure every day that Nani is still with me. Her name is Naniloa which is Hawaiian and means most beautiful. She has lived up to her name in every way." Email Cissy Sumner, CPDT-KA of Best Behavior Dog Training at bbdog-training@bellsouth.net to have your pet featured in Island Pets.

YOUR PET'S HEALTH

By Dr. Randy Divine and Dr. Laura Baldwin



Divine Animal Hospital Offers Laser Periodontal Treatments

Gingivitis and periodontal disease are common in small breed dogs like Yorkshire terriers, Maltese, and Chihuahuas. Regular dental cleanings help improve breath and pet's ability to eat; however, they are also essential to overall health as bacteria in the mouth that get into the bloodstream cause infections in distant organs including the heart and kidneys. Routine dental cleanings involve an oral examination where each tooth, the gums, and the soft tissues of the mouth and throat are examined for growths or tumors, tonsillitis, broken teeth or cavities, or other abnormalities. Scaling and polishing of teeth are performed to clean not only the teeth but the periodontal tissue, necessary extractions are performed, and a protective sealant may be applied. The interval between dental cleanings has been neglected up to this point and we are searching for ways to extend the interval between dental cleanings and improve the appearance and health of teeth and gums.

Class IV Laser therapy is a noninvasive and painless way to reduce the inflammation of gingivitis, relieve discomfort, and reduce tartar build up. The laser works on a cellular level to block several pain mediators, promote increased DNA production and increased cell turnover, kill bacteria, and promote tissue regeneration and repair.

One session performed at the time of dental cleaning followed by monthly treatments are suggested for most pets; however, treatments are based on individual patient needs and response to treatment. Laser therapy treatments are noninvasive and non-painful and take less than 10 minutes to complete. Pet parents may drop off pets for treatments or be present for treatments. To schedule Laser therapy, contact Divine Animal Hospital.

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On Faith

Assessing your life, and pursuing the 'Pearl'

BY REV. DRs. CASEY AND BOB BAGGOTT
COLUMNISTS

How do you assess your life's contribution? If applause and appreciation from the world are the measures, there are bound to be disappointments. Are there other measures of a life's contribution, besides public approval?

In thinking through that question

recently, we were reminded of a book entitled, Theodore Rex, a biography of Teddy Roosevelt. It clearly elucidated the controversies, criticisms, and conflicts that Roosevelt faced a hundred years ago. Yet Roosevelt's biographers noted that despite the sometimes severe criticism Roosevelt faced, he stood amazingly firm in the face of it and seemed virtually impervious to whatever harsh commentary was

thrown his way.

His own life philosophy, and a clue into his ability to handle the intense criticism he sometimes faced, is found in a speech he gave at Sorbonne University in 1918.

Here are his words: "It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit

belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."

Roosevelt's words ring like a challenge across the years, don't they? He clearly believed that the measure of a life does not lie in its achievements, but its efforts; not in its successes, but its struggles toward some worthy purpose. Would you agree? Have you been, in Roosevelt's words, a "cold and timid soul" - unwilling to push hard, dare much, care deeply? Or have you given your all for the pur-

poses of your life? And if you have, what are the worthy purposes toward which you struggle?

We've always found Jesus' parable of the "Pearl of Great Price" particularly meaningful to us, as we prioritize how to spend our time and energy. Jesus reminds his hearers that a merchant, who recognized a pearl of great value, would sell everything else he owned to buy it.

The parable challenges us to become astute in recognizing the relative worth of things - and then to pursue the most valuable. For Jesus the most valuable thing to pursue was the Kingdom of Heaven - God's own Realm.

What about you? What do count as most valuable in life? And are you pursuing it with all your heart and soul? If you are, then we hope you will not be deceived into believing that the measure of your life lies in the world's applause and approval; but that you will, instead, find your satisfaction in pursuing that "Pearl."



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Living

Writer dreams of how to feather her empty nest

BY MICHELLE GENZ
STAFF WRITER

The antiques in Ron Rennick's shop were like amuse-bouches before a meal: heading to the back of his art and antiques shop recently, where newly arrived interior designer Sarah Duquette had set up shop and was throwing a little party, it struck me as counterintuitive: we had to pass by so many pretty things, without even turning something over for a price – when what we were celebrating, after all, was decorating.

It feels as if it's been since the hurricanes that I have paid attention to the look of my home. I'm still trying to get the new baseboards painted, the last post-roof-leak repair.

In a couple of months, my youngest child goes off to college. Clearly, the emptied nest needs feathering.

Enter the lovely Duquette. Perpetual smile, flowing curls, and most importantly – forgiving demeanor. This was a woman who could step into my house



Sarah Duquette sits in her new office in Royal Palm Pointe

Photo: Tom McCarthy Jr.

—over my dogs, past peeling paint, into the kitchen, settle in at the counter, and not raise an eyebrow at the faint haze of flour on it, two days after rolling out a pie crust.

When I took Sarah up on a free consultation – the first 10 visitors to her opening party got one – I was expecting a good laugh with her.

I love my house – don't we all love our own? – but I wouldn't expect a trained professional to stomach it. For starters, I don't dust – I excavate. I live on a dirt road in the country, and I believe in open windows. Trucks barrel past; clouds roll in. Sheen is not an option on my surfaces.

The tread on my running shoes, on that dirt road, could renourish Indian River Shores' beaches, if I could ever remember to stomp in the right places.

Then there are the dogs. In the dewy mist of mornings here, my happy, happy dogs perfume themselves in fields of polo ponies, the wafts of which only seem to hit me when it's too late, and they have returned to dry their damp fur on the down sofa that has become their Turkish towel.

As my children move on to college and beyond, I have re-entered their rooms with open garbage bags, and, teary-eyed, been unable to condemn to the trash the unchecked clutter of their childhoods.

Through it all, though, there has been life in my house – some might say

a little too much, in too many forms.

Sarah Duquette understood. She moved here from Maine. Sarah has dogs, and kids, and a husband, and they seem to like to make messes. They have been renovating houses their whole marriage – they just redid a beauty on the river here.

She did not laugh when she walked inside. Instead, she went right to work. There was no talk of budgets, or scope: she knew I mainly needed to preen. Through a mental rolodex of colors, she tuned in to recurring hues – the day-lily orange of a little girl's dress that jumped out of a lithograph over the fireplace, and in her mind applied itself to the back face of the bookshelves. The grey-blue milk paint of an old cupboard suddenly would be washed across the ceiling.

The glossy majolica plates on the walls of my foyer inspired buttercream enamel on the moldings.

Delicious, she kept saying, as if it were whetting her appetite.

And so it went. In less than an hour, the prospect of change had zinged my spirit like music on a dingy day. She jotted down names of colors, places they should go, and vowed to come back.

"I've got to finish," she says, insisting I take up more of her time.

But I hope she never finishes. Some dreams you never want to wake from. Besides, painting always makes such a mess.

Real Estate

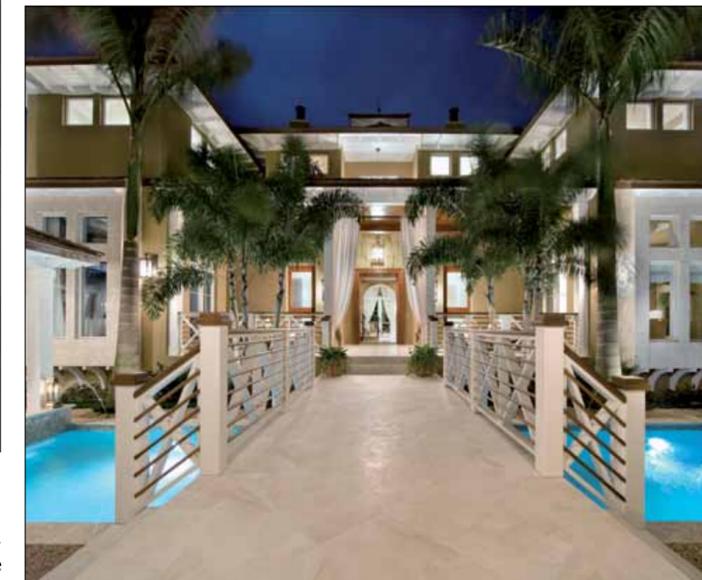
Silver Sunrise offers stunning lines, architecture



The dramatic entry to the Silver Sunrise home at Marsh Island makes the most of multi-tiered rooftops, lush landscaping and warm, inviting lighting.

"They really are perfectionists and Graciella especially strives to make everything absolutely perfect," Grove said. "With this particular home, I

and bushes beneath. Then the whole place is set off by the natural beauty of the surrounding waters of the lagoon. In addition to being beautiful, Silver



Just over the marble footbridge is the poolside courtyard with gazebo and fireplace for outdoor entertaining.

BY LISA ZAHNER
STAFF WRITER

If there's one house on the barrier island market that exudes charisma, it's the waterfront home referred to as Silver Sunrise, in the enclave of Marsh Island.

Designed and decorated by husband-and-wife team of Horacio Gonzalez and Graciela Blanco of Silver Sea Homes in Altamonte Springs, when lit up at night, the home could pass for something on the set of CSI Miami or, for those of us who remember the 1980s, Miami Vice.

The concept of the Argentinian architectural team is to create a home that is the "object of desire" of its owners.

The nearly 5,000 square feet of living space flows seamlessly into the outdoor living space, which seems to spill over into the private harbor of Marsh Island. A dock on the Indian River Lagoon is included with the home, which is listed at \$2,495,000 million with Norris and Company's Jane Schwiering, Gena Grove and Andrew Harper.

Grove said she is amazed at the creativity and the opulent, romantic and elegant home created by the architect-designers.

would say they have succeeded."

The home's multi-dimensional rooflines and dramatic entryways make a stunning first impression that continues with winding waterscapes that wrap around interior courtyards and a functional floor plan that embodies the Florida lifestyle.

The lush landscaping around this home, built in 2007, nestles swaying palms with tropical flowering plants

Sea Homes boasts that their projects are built to last and to hold up well in a tropical, seaside environment.

"Through constant research, Silver Sea remains on the leading edge of technology and building materials to create distinctive homes that meet the demands of modern day living and endure for generations to come," according to their documents.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 72

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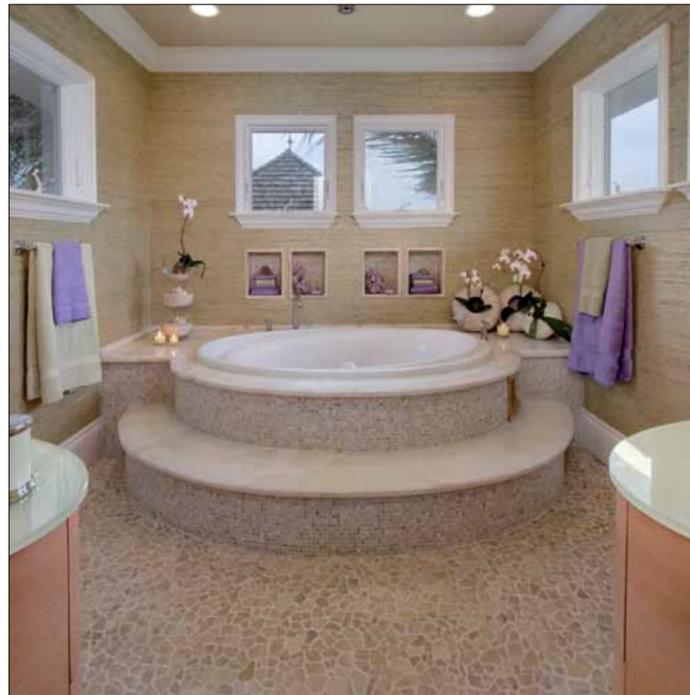
Real Estate



The kitchen offers all the features a budding gourmet chef would want and has a cozy kitchen nook for enjoying casual meals.



The Master Suite with sitting area features loads of natural light and windows for mild, spring days and a remote-controlled gas fireplace for chilly nights.



One of the Guest Suites boasts another relaxing option in the Kohler Purist oval spillover bubble massage bath.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 71

deliciously decorated it, blending her European roots with her passionate Argentinian heritage to instill the home with dramatic ideas of what could be done with the home in the

way of furnishings and window treatments by a creative buyer and a good design team.

The Great Room features Crema Europa marble with walnut flooring, wood-beam ceiling and raffia wall covering, bronze wall sconces and

Real Estate



The home's four full baths with the Master Suite featuring the home-spa Kohler Custom Shower Experience with steam, overhead showering panels and six programmable user settings.

antique solid bronze lighting fixtures. The double-high limestone fireplace has detailed carving and remote-control operation.

The home is currently arranged with a master suite and two guest suites, a family room and an observatory, but it can be configured as a four-bedroom if so desired. There are four full baths and one powder room conveniently located throughout the residence.

Design details of the master suite include double crown molding, Belgium silk walls and a gas fireplace. In the master bath, the master or mistress of the house can enjoy the spa-like environment of the Kohler Custom Shower Experience with steam generator and six programmable user controls.

The bathroom is decorated in the Escale Suite by Kohler, which takes its inspiration from Japanese ceramic tableware. The floor features Carrara marble and ocean blue mosaic.

The walls are appointed with the textured, iridescent granite and mica collection of wall coverings, which create the look and feel of real stone. For entertainment or staying up on the news, the bathroom comes equipped with a flat screen television and surround sound with four speakers.

The first guest suite is designed in Japanese style with onyx pebble flooring in the bathroom and a Kohler purist oval spillover bubble massage bath and chrome fixtures throughout. Above the suite spin two Anderson fans with extra-long wood blades.

The second guest suite incorporates more of a British Colonial feel with antique brass finish sconces, Gulf Breeze wallpaper by Ralph Lauren, conical

bell sinks in vibrant brushed nickel, sisal flooring from Italy and a bathroom that combines marble walls, porcelain designed to resemble sturdy sheets of hammered copper, gold and steel.

The kitchen nook and formal dining area offer alternatives for both casual and more elaborate meals, with the poolside gazebo offering the perfect place for an after-dinner drink or coffee with a view of the harbor.

The community of Marsh Landing lies just north of the Wabasso Causeway west of A-1-A, near the premier

developments of the Orchid Island Golf and Beach Club and just down the road and around the corner from Windsor.

The Marsh Island Clubhouse, designed by the award-winning architectural firm of Ferguson & Shamamian and Interior Decoration by New York designer James Andrew, is located at the head of Marsh Island's protected harbor.

Nestled between the marina and Marsh Island's 2.2 acre lakefront preserve, the Marsh Island Clubhouse

provides architectural inspiration for the remainder of the community. The architecture of Marsh Island is reminiscent of turn-of-the-century design from the lifestyle of Florida's past, mingled with modern construction and building materials.

The community, which when it is built out will have a maximum of 32 homes, is deed restricted and abides by strict architectural guidelines. There is 24-hour gated security and Marsh Island is governed by a homeowners association.

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32963 Passages

NAME	AGE	SUBDIVISION	DATE
Smith, Donald	77	St. John's Island	4/7/2010
Riley, Howard	81	Indian River Shores Center	4/7/2010
Thayer, Bruce	87	Seagrove	4/2/2010
Day, Joel	72	Central Beach	3/31/2010
Farrington, Paul	82	Vista Spires South	3/26/2010
Hicks, Lawrence James	82	Sea Oaks	3/21/2010
Goade, Mary	88	Sea Oaks III	3/18/2010
Flaherty, Thomas	85	John's Island	3/15/2010
Marsden, Jeanne	89	Central Beach	3/14/2010
Christy, F. Leonard	91	River Mews Condominiums	3/11/2010
Lideen, Mildred	89	Castaway Dunes	3/6/2010
Marriott, Phillip	73	Seagrove	3/5/2010
Gillick, Anne	92	Coquina Place	3/5/2010

At your request, we now will provide an updated list each week of island residents who have passed away during the past month. If you know of seasonal residents who passed while out-of-town, we would appreciate being informed so we can include them in this list. Please email this information to passages@verobeach32963.com.

Featured Real Estate Sales on Barrier Island

Real Estate

Here are some of the top recent barrier island sales

Subdivision: Riomar, Address: 912 Greenway Lane



Listing Date: December 8, 2009
Original Price: \$650,000
Sold: April 1, 2010
Selling Price: \$600,000
Listing Agent: Karen Abell
 Alex MacWilliam - Charlotte Terry
Seller's Agent: Charlotte Terry
 Alex MacWilliam - Charlotte Terry

Subdivision: Seasons, Address: 9130 Spring Time Drive



Listing Date: September 16, 2009
Original Price: \$625,000
Sold: April 1, 2010
Selling Price: \$525,000
Listing Agent: Sherry Brown
 Norris & Company
Seller's Agent: Colleen Lafferty
 The Lafferty Group

Subdivision: Southwinds, Address: 2250 Southwinds Blvd.



Listing Date: February 21, 2008
Original Price: \$625,000
Sold: April 1, 2010
Selling Price: \$520,000
Listing Agent: Judy Hargarten
 The Moorings Realty Sales Co.
Seller's Agent: Judy Hargarten
 The Moorings Realty Sales Co.

Subdivision: Central Beach, Address: 205 Greytwig



Listing Date: February 4, 2010
Original Price: \$500,000
Sold: April 1, 2010
Selling Price: \$490,000
Listing Agent: Sally Woods
 Dale Sorensen Real Est
Seller's Agent: Rosemarie Wilson
 Re/Max Connection

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 <p>Valvoline Expresscare of Vero Beach Quick Lube Owned and Operated by Superior Auto Service 1212 23rd Street - Vero Beach, FL (Corner of U.S. 1 and 23rd St) 772-778-6645 UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT</p>	<p>The Dock ReBuilders A TrendBuild Company Even if you are down to your last piling... we can ReBuild your dock! Call 772.234.6445 today for a free estimate! Decking - Structure - Pilings - Repairs - Accessories - Lifts - Rebuilds - Maintenance Licensed & Insured CGC1505897 Vero Beach www.thedockrebuilders.com</p>	<p>Computer Limits Indian River County's Only Complete Computer Service Center Since 1999 518 21st St. (Miracle Mile), Vero Beach 772-569-9978</p>
<p>M-maison Furniture • Gifts • Soap • Lotion Clothing • Stationary • Accessories Linens • Vintage Items • Candles 23 Royal Palm Pointe • 770-5848</p>	<p>Coastal Quality Concrete (772) 770-2094 No Job To Small Concrete Restoration • Decorative Stamped Concrete Spray Deck • Pool Deck Restoration • Concrete Reseal Plus New Concrete Patios, Driveways, Sidewalks</p>	<p>Giving you peace of mind & PROFESSIONAL service while you are away Home Watch: We organize and monitor regular maintenance of your home as determined by the homeowner. Personal Concierge: We offer a wide range of unique services for homeowners. Opening & Closing Up Home prior to arrival & after departure OCEANSIDE Property Management (772) 766-4580 www.oceansidepm.com</p>
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<p>Indian River Private Duty Nursing ...the care you deserve Homemakers • HHAS • Complimentary Supervisory Visits 24 Hour On-Call Nurses • Licensed, Bonded & Insured 3201 Cardinal Drive 231-4442 Lic#NR30211405</p>	<p>Surfaces STONE & CONCRETE Specializing in the Design, Installation & Restoration of stone, tile and wood floors. 3954 US Highway One, Vero Beach, FL 32960 (772) 778-2622 * (772) 778-2644 fax</p>	<p>TRUSTED NEIGHBOR HOME WATCH Vacation & Seasonal Watches • Vacant Home Monitoring Return Preparations • Home Improvement Coordination There when you can't be YourTrustedNeighbor.com Licensed (772) 978-9392 Bonded</p>

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Real Estate

Real Estate Sales on the Barrier Island: April 1 to April 7



The first week in April saw a luxury condo in the Moorings lead a moderately active week of real estate sales.

The spacious three-bedroom unit at 1250 West Southwinds Boulevard, overlooking the landscaped grounds and ocean, was placed on the market in March 2009 for \$859,000.

The sale closed on April 6th for \$780,000. Both the seller and the buyer in the transaction were represented by Terri McConnell of The Moorings Realty Sales Company.

SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCES AND LOTS

SUBDIVISION	ADDRESS	LISTED	ORIGINAL ASKING PRICE	SOLD	SELLING PRICE
BETHEL BY THE SEA	415 CONN WAY	1/28/2010	\$ 335,000	4/5/2010	\$ 283,000
RIOMAR	912 GREENWAY LANE	12/8/2009	\$ 650,000	4/1/2010	\$ 600,000
RIVERSIDE PARK	205 GREYTWIG ROAD	2/4/2010	\$ 500,000	4/1/2010	\$ 490,000
SEASONS	9130 SPRING TIME DRIVE	9/16/2009	\$ 625,000	4/1/2010	\$ 525,000

TOWNHOMES, VILLAS AND CONDOS

SUBDIVISION	ADDRESS	LISTED	ORIGINAL ASKING PRICE	SOLD	SELLING PRICE
SOUTHWINDS	1250 SOUTHWINDS BL W #214	3/12/2009	\$ 859,000	4/6/2010	\$ 780,000
WEST PASSAGE	1001 BAY RD #109	8/1/2009	\$ 545,000	4/5/2010	\$ 450,000
SOUTHWINDS	2250 SOUTHWINDS BL #323	2/21/2008	\$ 699,000	4/1/2010	\$ 520,000
CORALSTONE CONDO	1324 CORAL PARK, #303	1/20/2010	\$ 165,000	3/31/2010	\$ 95,000
RIVERWALK	4601 HIGHWAY A1A #207	1/13/2010	\$ 199,900	3/25/2010	\$ 170,000

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10 BEACHSIDE DR, #201—3,810 A/C SQ. FT.
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927 ORCHID PT WAY—LAKEFRONT ESTATE
Elegant 3BR/Study/3.5BA estate on homesite with expansive lake vistas and Intracoastal access via kayak/canoe. **\$2,300,000**



514 WHITE PELICAN CIRCLE—GOLF ESTATE
3BR/Library/4.5BA/Office residence overlooks 5th green with morning sun and ocean breezes, summer kitchen, pool & spa. **\$1,985,000**



906 ORCHID POINT WAY—GOLF ESTATE
3BR/Library/3.5BA estate with golf & lake views, exquisite architectural details, lush landscaping. **\$1,950,000 (Furnished)**



698 GROVE PLACE—GOLF COTTAGE
Charming 3BR/3BA residence on spacious, lushly-landscaped corner homesite with golf views. Lanai, summer kitchen, heated pool. **\$980,000**



51 CARIBE WAY—COURTYARD LIVING
3BR/Study/3.5BA courtyard home includes sep. 1BR/1BA guest cabana. Fabulous golf and lake views. **\$699,900 (Furn. Avail.) New Price**



120 SEASPRAY LANE—GOLF ESTATE
4BR/Office/5.5BA estate on nearly 3/4 acre homesite includes separate 1BR/1BA detached guest cabana. **\$2,100,000 Under Contract**



70 BEACHSIDE DR, #202—2,236 A/C SQ. FT.
Spacious 3BR/3BA Ocean Club residence enjoys southern exposure, majestic ocean views and wraparound stone terrace. **\$1,295,000**

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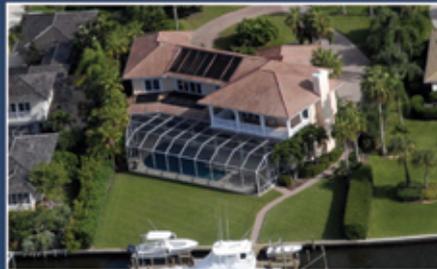
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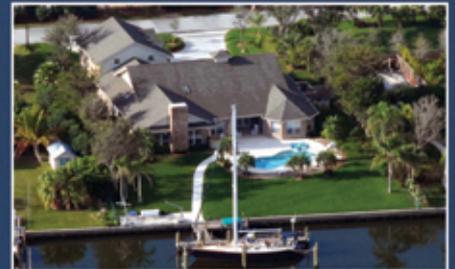
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Gracious Waterfront
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