

32963

Beachside shops prepare for 'Night of Lights' Friday **P.42**

INSIGHT

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Answering the call

Vero Beach's Volunteer Ambulance Squad **P.30**

Answering the call:

By Michelle Genz, Staff Writer, Photos by Tom McCarthy Jr.



It's a favor no one wants to have to ask for, getting a ride to a doctor's appointment.

You're already feeling crummy, embarrassed, or awkward. You don't want anyone making a fuss over you. And you don't want to impose on a friend and ask them to cool their heels for goodness knows how long in a waiting room before driving you home again.

Enter the scions of ambulance service, the five Volunteer Ambulance Squad's little white "toaster" minivans, and their five full size counterparts, equipped with wheel chair lifts.

These civilian versions of the red-light-and-siren variety aren't handling emergencies so much as urgent aggravations, appointments for everything from just another niggling aspect of aging, to essential treatment for on-going medical issues like wound care, cancer or kidney failure.

For the cost of a phone call, and a little forethought – calling a couple of weeks in advance all but assures a ride on a given day at a given hour – Vero Beach residents in need of transit to and from non-emergency health-related care can turn to the Volunteer Ambulance Squad.

Last year the service provided 10,000 trips, an 11 percent increase over the previous year. That costs about \$125,000 a year, with fuel alone costing \$1,200 just last month – off-season. Because it gets no money from any government agency, it costs taxpayers nothing. It also receives no funding from United Way.

Though it can't be verified, some say Vero's squad is the only such service of its kind -- anywhere. Highly organized and generously funded – largely by the largess of barrier island residents – the fleet of vans, some of them equipped for wheelchairs, conveys patients to appointments via a central station on the east side of the Barber Bridge.

At the station, one paid director stays on the radio to guide the drivers to their destinations if necessary, and to coordinate schedules among the otherwise all-volunteer staff.



INDIAN RIVER COUNTY VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE SQUAD

Dick Atkinson prepares to begin his shift.

The Volunteer Ambulance Squad

If not unique, the squad's level of organization, owning and maintaining its own vehicles, certainly has no peer anywhere near Vero Beach; the company that insures the charity says it has never heard of any such organization anywhere.

Driven by a brigade of undercover do-gooders, whose sunny dispositions dismiss any implied slight when users of the service do or do not tip (there is no charge for the service, though donations are appreciated), the squad has attracted literally generations of volunteers since its genesis in the 1960s.

"You have a relationship with the people you drive," says retired dentist Dick Atkinson, a driver with the squad. "That's part of it, for me. I spent most of my life treating people in a therapeutic setting in my office. You developed a relationship with patients that long term becomes like an extended family. I can't practice dentistry anymore, but this kind of keys into that feeling."

Stan Nevin, who lived throughout Africa and Latin America in his career with the United States Agency for International Development, feels volunteering this way for one day a week puts purpose into his otherwise leisurely life in retirement, playing tennis and enjoying friends.

In other words, it's work.

"I look forward to it -- and I'm pleased when it's over," he says.

With only one fund-raising effort a year -- a mailing, chiefly to residents in the 32963 zip code -- the group raises enough money to pay the director, the fuel costs, the maintenance, utilities and the negligible rent the city charges for use of its building, next to a city boat launch and dog park.

When the squad finally squirrels away enough to buy another vehicle, those extra wheels are quickly mobilized.

April Hargett, the service's head who volunteered for four years -- as did her father, Jack Chamberlain -- before becoming the director in 1997, says she turns away 15 to 20 prospective riders a week who can't be

worked into the schedule; they turn down all same-day calls. "If they call three weeks in advance, we turn down almost no one," Hargett says.

Doctors -- and dentists too -- are referring more and more patients to the service, particularly for rides to dialysis and chemotherapy. Apart from those referrals, and a listing in a guide for services to senior citizens, the Volunteer Ambulance Squad mainly finds its "fares" by word of mouth.

It used to be they found them by accident -- literally -- or incapacitating illness. The squad has its roots in emergency transport started in the '60s, when funeral homes, which used their hearses to transport patients to the hospital, suddenly faced new legislation that made it financially impossible for them to do so.

Despite protests from government agencies from the city to the state, a local band of citizens pooled their efforts and modeled a service from similar organizations in their hometowns.

Two funeral homes donated a couple of aging ambulances, and a county commissioner donated a house trailer for offices; more than 125 people volunteered their time. Eventually the operation expanded with squads in Fellsmere and Sebastian, with a driver, first-aid worker and fully-licensed EMT on board for each ride. The squad was said to have become a model for others around the country.

Then in the late '80s, the hospital's paramedics began answering more and more calls, and in 1989, the county took over paid emergency transport.

That's when the volunteer squad changed its focus to non-emergency services.

Today about 40 volunteers regularly drive people door-to-door, help maintain the vehicles, or handle calls.

And there are regular customers for the service. Over time, the drivers, many of them island residents retired from high-powered professions, get to know their passengers. They share concerns for their health and the occasional anecdote -- many having to do with their "tips" -- or lack thereof.

Those "tips" add up to about \$12,000 that goes toward covering operating costs in the course of the year. One customer regularly donates \$20 for each trip she takes. Others have asked "Do I need to tip?" and when the driver explains that any money given would be a donation to the cause, they have opted not to.

That always brings a chuckle from the drivers.

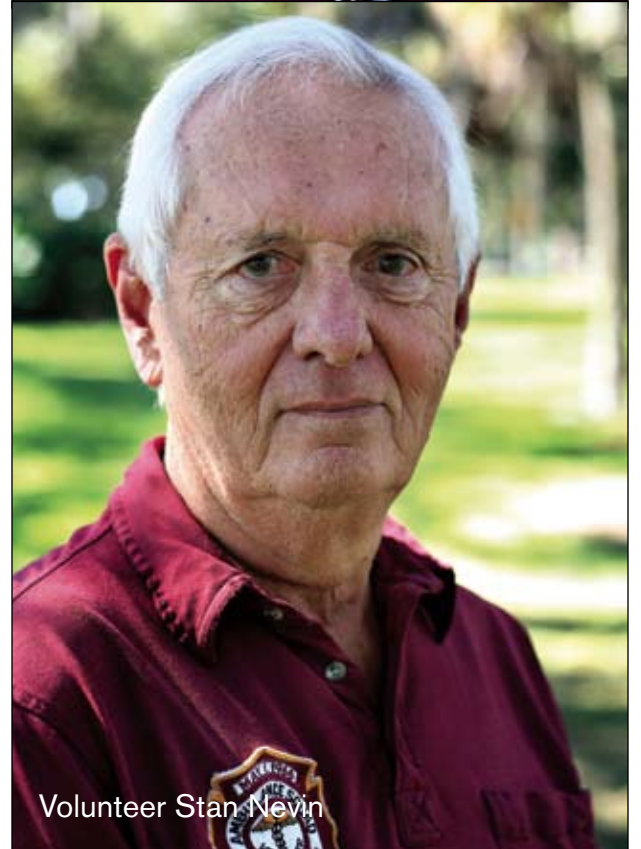
"A certain percentage thinks their taxes are paying for this, so they don't donate," says Nevin. "Most people give \$2 -- because that's what the Community Coach charges. They think that's the charge for this. And we're grateful for it."

Nearly all the drivers get around without navigational systems. Talked down by Hargett, who mans the radios with a bank of maps on her office wall, they regard learning the county's roadways as a welcome challenge. "Navigation systems take all the sport out of it," jokes Atkinson.

"We've never had a terminally lost driver," says Charlie Thayer, treasurer of the squad's board. "They've all shown up again." ●



Volunteer Dick Atkinson



Volunteer Stan Nevin



Afghanistan: The speech that wasn't given

BY JIM HOAGLAND, WASHINGTON POST

My fellow Americans,
This is not the speech you expected to hear. But my wordsmiths are tied in knots writing an acceptance speech for the only Nobel Peace Prize ever awarded for making speeches. So I am going to tell you how I really feel about Afghanistan. Which is: *steamed*.

I want to accomplish three goals in this speech without naming them.

First, to let those know-it-alls, Generals Petraeus and McChrystal, know one more thing: This is the last big troop increase you get, so make it work.

I am not going down the incrementalist road that wrecked Lyndon Johnson's presidency. This is not July 1965, when Westmoreland jumped the shark of escalation in Vietnam and then never stopped asking for more troops. For all the trouble he has been, Dick Hollbrooke helped by recalling that history in the shadowboxing that dominated my long war council meetings.



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Joe Biden has been good in there, too. He's been willing, though not happy, to be characterized in the media as being ready to bug out now. This helped us push back against McChrystal's effort to box me in at 40,000 additional U.S. soldiers.

Denis McDonough, my strategic communications man, sold Biden-as-dove brilliantly. Wasn't somebody just saying I should promote Denis? Maybe it was Denis?

Never mind. That tactic won me room to maneuver toward a more realistic number of, say, 23,000 new combat troops, 5,000 additional trainers and a "NATO surge" of 5,000 foreign troops.

That's my second unspoken goal: to come out of this buildup speech without losing the left of the Democratic Party -- while being able to refute John McCain's charges that I ignored my own generals. Triangulation lives.

Bush put the generals in the limelight to sell the Iraq surge after he lost all credibility, and David Petraeus's performance was dazzling. Which presents two big problems. Petraeus is the only person who could get the Republican nomination in 2012 and make a serious run against me. (I get paid to think ahead.)

And if the generals box me in, civilian control of the military in this country becomes a mockery. Clinton was afraid of the military; Bush was deep in hock to it. I've got to get the right balance back.

That's why I need Bob Gates and Jim Jones. Those who scoffed at my keeping on Bush's defense secretary, and then making a retired Marine four-star I hardly knew my NSC guy, were not thinking that moments like this would come. I already was.

Gates has maneuvered flawlessly through my waterboarding-by-leaks on Afghanistan. He will sell my final number to the uniforms as the "floor" for U.S. troops that Petraeus argues we need for three years. But Gates knows I will make it a ceiling.

We can't afford an open-ended commitment. I put Peter Orszag, as good a budget overseer as you can find, front and center for the photographers in that last war council. Many missed it, but NBC's Andrea Mitchell got it right away. No wonder she's married to Alan Greenspan.

I will bet that Stan McChrystal never drew up a budget in his life.

Jones tells me these Special Operations commanders are used to getting whatever they ask for, especially since September 11th. Nobody on the Hill will deny them anything.

Jones is also squeezing the Europeans to join the battle and is getting results, even from the Germans. What is it Jones says? Maybe the worst thing of all would be to be perceived to lose in Afghanistan and then have the Europeans say: Well, you never asked for more help at the crucial time. Makes sense to me.

We have sent NATO members the numbers we think they can and should provide, country by country. That new secretary general, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, is pulling out the stops, visiting the capitals to get commitments.

"Say it now, pay it later," we tell the Europeans. They have until mid-2010 to deploy their new units. But I need pledges now so I can get across that this is NATO's war, not Obama's war. That's unspoken-goal number three.

So I have frontloaded the speech with allusions to this being about an exit strategy, without boxing myself in on timing, and am presenting the "civilian surge" as being as essential as the troop buildup.

That helps set up my Oslo speech. And who knows? It may even work out that way. If God blesses us all. ●

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Once again, Russia seems to be living up to Winston Churchill's famous description of being "a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma."

Vladimir Putin defied that description.

By May 2008, when his eight years as president ended, Mr. Putin had clearly and purposefully turned Russia into a "managed democracy," cutting back political and human rights, leading an aggressive foreign policy, and reintroducing state control of giant corporations, especially oil and gas. No question about intentions there.

But mystery again shrouds the Kremlin's high walls, as people inside and outside Russia wonder what direction it is headed in. The uncertainty poses a particular problem for the White House, which is attempting to press the "reset button" in strained relations with Moscow. It needs Russian cooperation on front-burner issues such as Iran and the war in Afghanistan.

Until recent months, it's been assumed that Mr. Putin, now the prime minister, still runs Russia; that his protégé, President Dmitry Medvedev, is his political lapdog. Mr. Medvedev, however, appears to be straining at the leash. Will he eventually slip his collar?

In speeches, he sounds as if he wants to steer Russia away from the Putin model. In his Internet manifesto in September, in his state-of-the-nation speech in early November, and two weeks ago, when addressing his colleagues in the United Russia party, Medvedev sharply criticized much of what his mentor had built up (without naming names, of course).

He's railed against state-run corporations and Russia's unhealthy addiction to fickle revenues from natural resources. He's warned about a foreign policy in which Moscow puffs up its chest (Soviet style?).

A lawyer by training, he's come out swinging for rule of law, and he lectured United Russia – widely criticized for fraudulent regional elections in October – that it must learn to win elections honestly. Fighting worsening corruption is also high on his list (an estimated third of Russian gross domestic product goes to paying bribes).

All of this in the name of "modernizing" Russia – and all welcome by the West if his ideas are fulfilled.

But Russia's youthful, Internet-savvy president has taken pitifully few steps to back up his shake-things-up rhetoric, which stretches to the beginning of his presidency.

He makes a dash here and there – last week, for instance, he ordered an investigation into the prison death of a lawyer who advocated for greater transparency in Russian business. He also fired the Kremlin's longtime media adviser – a Putin ally – for abuse of office.

Medvedev's inaction prompts speculation. Is he truly interested in a different direction from Putin, but simply not in a political position to carry out his plans? Or is he merely Putin's valve to vent frustrations within a managed democracy? Perhaps the two are really on the same page, but trying to satisfy different audiences.

Indeed, Putin has since endorsed Medvedev's state-of-the-nation speech, which emphasized the need for economic modernization. "I am sure this call reflects the mood of all Russian society," Mr. Putin said at the United Russia conference.

The truth is, no one really knows where the Putin-Medvedev relationship is going – perhaps not even both men themselves, though the answer should become clearer the closer Russia moves to the 2012 election, when Putin is qualified to again run for president.

This uncertainty makes trying to take sides a dangerous guessing game. The US has no choice but to deal with the ambiguity as best it can – to use its leverage where it can, to argue in both countries' interest where it can, and to disagree where it must.

Medvedev may be Russia's next Gorbachev. Wouldn't that be nice. But don't count on it. ●

Medvedev vs. Putin?

Mystery returns to the Kremlin

BY THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, PHOTO: EPA



Fast-forward: The jobless scary movie

BY DAVID IGNATIUS, WASHINGTON POST

For a political horror show, fast-forward to the summer of 2010: The unemployment rate is stubbornly high, hovering between 9.3 and 9.7 percent.

Companies are wary about hiring more workers because the economy remains soft. Small businesses, which normally power a recovery, are caught in a credit squeeze.

In this scenario, the jobs outlook will remain bleak for another year. The unemployment rate will remain well above 8 percent in 2011. And the economy won't bounce back completely for five years after that.

The Democrats, in our scary 2010 movie, will be heading toward the mid-term elections hoping to preserve their 81-seat margin in the House. Vulnerable incumbents will be clamoring for more economic stimulus, but the Obama administration will be constrained by the huge budget deficits needed to bail out the economy after the 2008 financial crisis.

I wish that this economic forecast were just a bad dream. But it's drawn from the minutes of the Federal Reserve's Nov. 3-4 meeting, released last week. It's a genuinely troubling document, as much for its political implications as for its number-crunching.

It draws a picture of a nation of unfair and unequal sacrifices, where Wall Street is recovering even as Main Street continues to pay the bills.

If the Fed's projections are right, the public is going to be very angry next year -- at big business and at the elected officials who have spent trillions of dollars without putting the country fully back to work.

Lou Dobbs, the voice of populist anger, may become the nation's hottest politician. President Obama, who has struggled to find a centrist consensus for economic policies, may be tossed like a cork on a stormy sea.

The Fed struggled to answer the basic question that is haunting administration policymakers: Why has unemployment remained so high, even as the economy has started to grow again and the stock market has been on a tear?

The Fed's answer is that businesses, having been burned by the recession, are wary about adding more workers or making new investments. Like consumers who have just discovered the virtues of saving, their prudence -- however sensible on an individual basis -- is a collective drag on the economy.

"Business contacts reported that they would be cautious in their hiring," the Fed minutes note. "Indeed, participants expected that businesses would be able to meet any increases in demand in the near term by raising their employees' hours and boosting productivity, thus delaying the need to add to their payrolls."

If hiring hasn't bounced back, neither has lending. "Bank loans continued to contract sharply in all categories," the Fed reports. Big businesses may be able to get money, but smaller firms "faced substantial constraints in their access to credit." This credit squeeze, in turn, will "restrain hiring at small businesses, which are normally a source of employment growth in recoveries."

Putting the numbers together, the Fed predicts that despite a growing economy, unemployment will be 8.2 to 8.6 percent during 2011, down only about a percentage point from 2010. And here's the scariest line of all in the Fed minutes: "Most participants anticipated that about five or six years would be needed for the economy to converge fully to a longer-run path" and a normal job market.

Looking toward next year's congressional elections, strategists will have to calibrate the politics of high unemployment.

The four states with the highest jobless rates as of October are all Democratic strongholds: Michigan, at 15.1 percent; Nevada, at 13 percent; Rhode Island, at 12.9 percent; and California, at 12.5 percent. And if you look at the states where Democrats gained their 21 House seats last year, the list includes eight states where unemployment in October was above the national average of 10.2 percent.

The politics of rage aren't pretty. But in this case, it's hard to argue that the anger isn't justified. The Fed's analysis shows what we see in the daily stock market summaries. People on the top are recovering their losses; people on the bottom are out of work and out of luck.

I admire Obama's effort to make responsible economic choices in this environment and his refusal to demagogue issues such as financial reform. But he will need all the political genius he showed during the 2008 campaign -- and which he has displayed too little lately -- to handle what's coming at him next year. ●

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The wrong scapegoat: Give the Fed its due

BY ROBERT J. SAMUELSON, WASHINGTON POST

Ever since its creation in 1913, the Federal Reserve has grappled with a daunting political contradiction. The Fed is charged with preventing the collapse of the financial system, whose health is essential for the “real economy” of production and jobs.

But financial bailouts usually occur when mistakes or misdeeds by bankers make them public pariahs. To do its job, then, the Fed protects—or seems to protect—an unpopular, disgraced, and undeserving group. We are now witnessing this contradiction in full bloom.

The Fed has become a congressional scapegoat for assorted economic frustrations: 10.2 percent unemployment; expensive rescues of fragile financial institutions; outsize Wall Street bonuses; and the crisis itself. The denunciations transcend rhetorical outbursts.

The House Financial Services Committee recently voted to require the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to “audit” the Fed’s monetary policy—its efforts to influence interest rates and credit conditions. In the Senate, Christopher Dodd, chairman of the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee, has proposed stripping the Fed of all powers to regulate financial institutions—its actions to police lending and management practices. These powers would go to a new agency.

Lost in this politically charged climate is the reality that the Fed, more than any other government agency, arguably stopped last fall’s financial panic from becoming a global depression. The Fed pumped out more than \$1 trillion in new credit, created special lending programs to support faltering segments of the credit markets, and rescued financial institutions, notably AIG, whose bankruptcy might have triggered a chain reaction of failures.

These were seat-of-the-pants responses, taken in the midst of crisis and pervasive uncertainty. We will never know what might have happened without them. The second-guessing now occurs when there’s less fear and more information.

What’s also overlooked is that the Fed isn’t the supersecretive, unaccountable agency of political stereotype. In 2009 Fed officials from chairman Ben Bernanke on down have testified 32 times before congressional committees. The Fed makes detailed disclosures about its policies.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, the Fed’s activities are already widely audited. Deloitte & Touche examines the Fed’s financial statements, which are published. The GAO can audit many Fed activities, including its banking regulation and supervision of the payments system. What it’s barred from auditing is the conduct of monetary policy, including relations with foreign central banks.

Congress has so far sensibly put this off limits.

“Audit” has a different meaning in the context of the GAO than in everyday usage. It means examine, investigate, evaluate, and, often, criticize. It’s not just number crunching. The GAO could be used by Congress to influence or intimidate the Fed through selective investigations, which would involve access to the Fed’s internal documents and interviews with policymakers.

The Fed might be pressured to finance government deficits or to adopt an “undue focus on the short term,” vice chairman Donald Kohn testified before Congress. This is not inevitable, but even the impression that the Fed’s “independence” is compromised could perversely undermine confidence in the dollar, leading to higher interest rates or a rapid fall in the dollar’s foreign-exchange value.

Massive projected government budget deficits compound the effect. Similar objections apply to Dodd’s proposal to end the Fed’s power to regulate financial institutions. If the present crisis teaches anything, it is that the Fed needs to know more—not less—about large financial institutions.

The Fed isn’t infallible. Its mistakes contributed to the crisis. Its present low-interest-rate policy poses dangers of fostering inflation or new “asset bubbles.” But the congressional Fed bashing poses greater dangers. Ironically, the destructive remedies now being peddled are part of “financial reform” legislation. If this be “reform,” we’d be better off without it. ●

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Worrying again about deflation in Japan

BY THE ECONOMIST

Judging by the shrill comments from Wall Street, Japan's biggest problem is its huge public-sector debt, which has grown to nearly twice the size of the country's GDP. But it isn't. Far more pressing is deflation.

Two weeks ago, the new government of Yukio Hatoyama acknowledged what has been obvious for months: that prices are falling again after a three-year hiatus. This is worrying not just for Japan; countries such as America and Britain have more similarities with Japan than is commonly acknowledged.

Sadly neither the Hatoyama administration nor the central bank has shown any intention of tackling the latest incarnation of the deflationary curse.

That is a grave miscalculation. Prices in Japan may not yet be in a downward spiral, but deflation is entrenched: even the Bank of Japan acknowledges that prices may fall for at least another two years.

The more they do so, the bigger the burden of Japan's debt becomes, and the more households and firms are likely to retrench. As it is, high real interest rates act as a powerful brake on Japan's incipient recovery.

Japan may have muddled through such scares before, most recently after a five-year splurge of liquidity unleashed by the Bank of Japan between 2001-06. There may be some complacency that because deflation did not spiral downwards then, it will not do so this time.

But a few years ago the world economy was strong and Japan could export its way back to health. This time around, global conditions are weaker and the yen is one of the world's strongest currencies.

It is a credit to Japan's exporters that they are doing well despite such conditions. Largely thanks to them, Japan's economy jumped forward in the third quarter, though there are already signs that the pace of recovery may be slowing. But to nail deflation once and for all, bolder steps by monetary and fiscal authorities are needed.

The Bank of Japan can start by being more assertive. It is almost as if it is so exasperated by the flaky achievements of its previous anti-deflationary efforts that it would rather sit back and wait for a recovery.

But that is a defeatist attitude. If nothing else, it should publicly revive discussion of alternative plans to reflate the economy. If the recovery falters, the Bank of Japan could go further, exploring the use of negative interest rates on bank balances, which would encourage banks to lend money rather than hoarding it at the central bank.

Such extraordinary measures would almost inevitably lead to a weaker yen, which would irritate Japan's trading partners. But Japan cannot get out of the deflationary mess if the yen keeps strengthening.

Hatoyama's administration, meanwhile, should stop pestering the Bank of Japan about deflation and face up to its own responsibilities. In the short

run that includes keeping fiscal-easing measures in place, at least until there is less deflationary slack in the economy. (So far the government has prevaricated about the need for continued fiscal stimulus.)

In the longer term, it should strive to raise Japan's trend rate of growth, which many reckon has fallen to about 1 percent a year from 1.5-2 percent previously, as the population shrinks. That means boosting productivity through labor-market reform, immigration policies and free trade, none of which the ruling Democratic Party of Japan has been keen on so far.

Its goal of prompting growth in the underachieving domestic side of Japan's economy is a fine one, and certainly there is room for huge productivity improvements in some areas, particularly agriculture. But that should not come at the cost of harming exporters, which the DPJ has myopically threatened to constrain through union-friendly wage controls.

In short, Japan needs a double-barreled big bang to jolt its economy back to life. If that threatens to spook investors, the authorities should have up their sleeve a credible long-term plan to restore order to public finances -- but one which should be put in place only when growth is on a firmer footing and deflation has been truly licked.

If the consequence of all this additional stimulus is a weaker yen, so be it. It will be a small price to pay if the eventual result is more openness and buoyancy in one of the world's largest economies. ●

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VERO'S MAYORAL OFFICE, Part II

Okay, we have all had our good laugh over Ol' Sabe hanging tough in the Vero Beach Mayor's office. It's way past time to get this behind us.

Almost a month after Kevin Sawnick was elected the new Vero Beach mayor, and Sabe was bumped down to vice mayor, the fact that Sabe is still holding out in the only half-presentable office allocated to an elected Vero Beach public official has become a major embarrassment.

From what we hear, Sabe spent last week trying to explain to people who saw our two front-page photos – one of his office, the other of Sawnick's office – that this really was much ado over nothing.

He even mustered support for this view from the so-called Mayor of the Airwaves, who opined that the new younger mayor "showed elegance in letting his elder remain in his office." What kind of fuzzy thinking is that?

We had not realized previously that age is the new standard for which a Council member gets the lone nice office. If that is to be the criteria, it could be decades before poor Kevin Sawnick – still only 28 -- gets to sit in the mayoral chair.

But the real issue here is not Kevin's graciousness, nor Sabe's lack of judgment on this matter.

The issue comes in the fact that Vero Beach has a "weak mayor" form of government, in which the ma-

jor functions of the mayor are to preside over City Council meetings, cut ribbons, *and* welcome distinguished visitors to our community.

This latter responsibility is where the mayoral office becomes of some significance, and where the current situation passes from a source of chuckles to a source of mortification.

In case our photos last week did not fully illustrate the difference in the two offices from the standpoint of receiving visitors, we decided to run a couple more photos this week – one at right showing the reception area for Sabe's office; the one at left showing the gauntlet through the City Clerk's file cabinets that a visitor needs to run to reach Sawnick's interior office. ●



You get the picture, and we would hope that after 28 days, Sabe finally will get it as well. If not, next week provides another opportunity for more office photos.

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

How charities survive challenging times

BY JEREMIAH A. HALL, CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

America's charities have faced a tough 2009. By most accounts, 2010 will be worse. Donations are down and other sources of funding are drying up. Cultural institutions are among the hardest hit.

New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art, whose fundraising efforts once focused on major gifts for new exhibitions and additional space, now appeals to donors merely to support operations. As donations fall, the load on service charities is rising. Despite a 6 percent decline in contributions this year, the Salvation Army is juggling a fivefold increase in demand for services.

Out of all this trouble, one positive trend has

emerged: Charities are focused as never before on efficiency, cutting costs while maintaining services and finding new ways to survive.

"Nonprofits are certainly adapting and getting creative," says Kim Klein, author of the book "Reliable Fundraising in Unreliable Times." "I really defy any for-profit corporation to be as efficient and creative as a nonprofit."

Nonprofits have no choice. Donations are down 9 percent this year at the nation's top charities, according to The Chronicle of Philanthropy, an industry publication. Some 77 percent of charities let fundraisers go or cut fundraising spending.

"There's an enormous amount of attention being placed on efficiencies and measurement," says Ken Berger, president of Charity Navigator. "Most nonprofits are focusing on that right now."

Next year will be worse, predicts Robert Ottenhoff, chief executive officer of GuideStar, a firm that provides financial data on nonprofits. "Foundations, who contribute significantly to nonprofit efforts, were willing to go deeper [into endowments to keep up giving] in 2008. But with endowments down, foundations aren't likely to repeat [that]."

Add to that a dramatic decline in state government grants and corporate giving, and it becomes clear that nonprofits' streams of funding are drying up. Particularly worrisome for nonprofits and their clients are states like Florida and California, where unemployment is high and state budgets are especially tight.

To keep operating, many nonprofits are starting with the basics – better targeting of donors and cleaning up accounting programs to pinpoint savings, says Ms. Klein. She points to Amnesty International, which uses advanced technology to analyze giving patterns in order to maximize donations while reducing the overall frequency of fundraising campaigns throughout the year.

Some charities are aggressively deploying new technologies' social networking to extend their fundraising efforts. Doctors Without Borders, which typically relies on direct appeals, recently launched a tool modeled after a sports event where donors are asked to raise money from their friends and family. The hoped-for result: an army of donors.

"There's a lot experimenting going on right now with social media," says Stacy Palmer, editor

of The Chronicle of Philanthropy. "But it's way too early to say whether it's working or not."

Another survival tactic: cooperating with rivals. "We're starting to see a number of nonprofits with similar missions sharing administrative functions," says Daniel Borochoff, president of the American Institute of Philanthropy, a charity watchdog. "That's something most thought would never have occurred."

The Center for Nonprofit Advancement, a Washington-based group that helps local nonprofits, created a program called "Back Office in a Box," which pools nonprofits, enabling them to share financial management and accounting resources.

Some donors are pushing for those consolidations. The San Francisco Foundation recently recommended that the city reduce the nearly \$500-million a year it spends on outside social-service organizations by helping some of the 7,000 local nonprofits cut costs, merge, or close.

To make up for the cuts in staff, some charities are also using more volunteers. "With unemployment high, many nonprofits are relying on volunteers to stay afloat," says Klein.

According to the Corporation for National & Community Service, more than 61.8 million Americans volunteered this year – an increase of about 1 million from last year (see chart). Ironically, the increase has many potential volunteers struggling to get called back, or being placed in jobs that don't match their skills.

But the strategic use of volunteers remains a boon for many organizations. One San Francisco nonprofit, the Jewish Voice for Peace, enlisted 14 volunteers to help with fundraising. "The team ... ended up raising \$40,000 more than last year," says Klein, who advises the organization. "That's more than what the existing staff would have been able to do."

Even with the greater attention on efficiencies, many nonprofits won't survive, watchdogs say. There are simply too many, says Mr. Ottenhoff. "This is the time that we'll see a lot of consolidation."

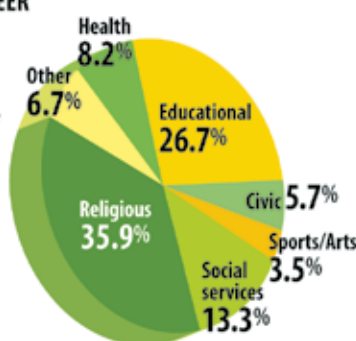
But Klein hopes that nonprofits will remain optimistic. "With so much attention focused on deliverables and outcomes, I just hope that [nonprofits] will continue to experiment. It's crucial for everyone." ●

Giving time

Some 61.8 million adults donated about 8 billion hours of service in the US in 2008, according to the Corporation for National & Community Service, an independent agency in Washington, D.C. That figure has remained relatively flat over the past several years.

WHERE PEOPLE VOLUNTEER

But less-formal ways of serving in communities increased, the agency reports: 31 percent more Americans worked with neighbors in 2008 than in 2007. Also: Some 441,000 more young adults (ages 16 to 24) volunteered in 2008 than in 2007, up 5.7 percent to more than 8.2 million.



TOP FOUR ACTIVITIES

And 78.2 percent of the nation's volunteers made a charitable contribution or nonmonetary donation of \$25 or more in value, compared with 38.5 percent of nonvolunteers.

Raise funds	26.9%
Collect/distribute food	23.6
General labor	20.9
Tutor/teach	19.7

SOURCE: VolunteeringInAmerica.gov

RICH CLABAUGH/STAFF

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251 John's Island Drive	\$1,725,000
321 Sabal Palm Lane	\$1,795,000
701 Shady Lake Lane	\$1,850,000
306 Island Creek Drive	\$1,995,000
460 Indian Harbor Road	\$2,100,000
221 Clarkson Lane	\$2,200,000
751 Shady Lake Lane	\$2,300,000
290 John's Island Drive	\$2,300,000
20 Dove Shell Lane	\$2,300,000
389 Island Creek Drive	\$2,450,000
71 Cowry Lane	\$2,700,000
120 Sago Palm Road	\$2,750,000
601 Sea Oak Drive	\$2,800,000
400 Indian Harbor Road	\$2,850,000
180 Orchid Way	\$2,950,000
220 Indian Harbor Road	\$2,950,000
311 Llwyd's Lane	\$2,995,000

351 Indian Harbor Road	\$3,375,000
140 North Shore Point	\$3,400,000
150 Clarkson Lane	\$3,650,000
370 Indian Harbor Road	\$3,650,000
241 Sea Oak Drive	\$3,690,000
35 Waxmyrtle Way	\$3,750,000
228 Island Creek Drive	\$4,050,000
380 Island Creek Drive	\$4,100,000
640 Indian Harbor Road	\$4,450,000
391 Sabal Palm Lane	\$4,750,000
30 Gem Island Drive	\$5,450,000
21 Sago Palm Road	\$5,700,000
664 Ocean Road	\$5,750,000
71 Dove Plum Road	\$6,895,000
255 Island Creek Drive	\$6,950,000
646 Ocean Road	\$7,500,000
801 Shady Lake Lane	\$7,500,000

Homesites

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
225 Coconut Palm Road	\$1,750,000
270 John's Island Drive	\$2,300,000
80 Stingaree Point	\$2,300,000
100 Stingaree Point	\$2,600,000
13 Sea Court	\$3,775,000
60 Gem Island Drive	\$4,150,000
1 Sea Court	\$4,350,000
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777 Sea Oak Drive #717, 2BR/2BA	\$450,000
777 Sea Oak Drive #710, 3BR/3BA	\$525,000
231 Silver Moss Drive... (UNDER CONTRACT)	\$579,000
111 John's Island Drive, #17	\$675,000
223 Silver Moss Drive	\$685,000
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
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#224	\$395,000
#237	\$395,000
#235	\$445,000
#243	\$450,000

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450 Beach Road #220, 2BR/2BA	\$725,000
700 Beach Road #355, 2BR/2BA	\$725,000
750 Beach Road #304, 2BR/2BA	\$749,000

600 Beach Road #331, 2BR/2BA	\$775,000
450 Beach Road #322, 2BR/2BA	\$795,000
500 Beach Road #210, 2BR/2BA	\$795,000
850 Beach Road #178, 2BR/2BA	\$935,000
700 Beach Road #158, 3BR/2BA	\$975,000
1000 Beach Road #297, 2BR/2BA	\$995,000
950 Beach Road #193, 3BR/2BA	\$1,000,000
850 Beach Road #277, 2BR/2BA	\$1,200,000
900 Beach Road #285, 2BR/2BA	\$1,260,000
500 Beach Road #203, 3BR/2BA	\$1,275,000
900 Beach Road #382, 2BR/2BA	\$1,290,000
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400 Beach Road #133, #222 & #228	750 Beach Road #303
450 Beach Road #120, #223 & #324	381 Sabal Palm Lane

800 Beach Road #172, 3BR/3BA	\$1,350,000
300 Ocean Road #1E, 3BR/3BA	\$1,400,000
700 Beach Road #148, 3BR/2BA	\$1,400,000
700 Beach Road #149, 3BR/2BA	\$1,400,000
1000 Beach Road #298, 2BR/2BA	\$1,450,000
500 Beach Road #211, 3BR/2BA	\$1,550,000
500 Beach Road #311, 3BR/3BA	\$1,600,000
1000 Beach Road #294, 3BR/3BA	\$1,600,000
250 Ocean Road #3C, 3BR/3BA	\$1,600,000
900 Beach Road #281, 3BR/3.5BA	\$2,295,000
1050 Beach Road #3H, 3BR/4BA	\$2,400,000
400 Ocean Road #184, 3BR/4.5BA	\$2,950,000
400 Ocean Road #186, 3BR/3BA	\$2,950,000

650 Indian Harbor Road	1000 Beach Road #295	400 Ocean Road #183
401 Indian Harbor Road	850 Beach Road #375	191 Terrapin Point
511 Sea Oak Drive	381 Sea Oak Drive	1 Dove Shell Lane
103 Island Creek Drive	430 Coconut Palm Road	531 Sea Oak Drive
130 Sago Palm Road	291 Sabal Palm Lane	210 Live Oak Way
500 Beach Road #109	281 Sea Oak Drive	1150 Beach Road #3L
100 Ocean Road #212	950 Beach Road #391	353 Silver Moss Drive
250 Ocean Road #2C	321 Island Creek Drive	231 Silver Moss Drive

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Exclusively John's Island



Shelly, Randy, Marilyn and Dean Yeager browse the kitchen wares at The Gifted Cook on Ocean Drive.



Laurie Plecha does some leisurely Black Friday shopping

Beachside shops prepare for

While on the other side of the bridges, shoppers camped out in the wee hours of Black Friday for the bargains found by being at the front of the line as big-box stores opened, the start of the Christmas shopping season was a quieter, gentler experience along Vero's Ocean Drive.

Island shops and the shoppers who frequent them were more than happy about that.

Under picture-perfect azure skies, Ocean Drive was full of couples and young families, grandparents and grandchildren shopping, leisurely, for holiday fare. And early word from businesses on the beachside thoroughfare was that sunny skies may be in store for 32963 businesses this holiday season.

"We had lots of people; it was a good day," said Sarah LaPlant, a long time sales person at The Gifted Cook. "In our case things look like they are picking up. People were looking for bargains, but also their Christmas presents."

LaPlant was grateful for the cooler weather and the steady flow of customers throughout Friday and into the weekend.

At Shells & Things, store manager Margaret Reynolds was especially optimistic.

"It was better than last year, the traffic flow was better and our sales ticket rings were higher. Friday, Saturday and Sunday all look really good," she said. "You never know what the season is going to bring just coming off those three days, but it looks good. People were buying."

Reynolds said other store employees were telling her the same thing. They were having good days.

But the big test for beachside shops is not Black Friday, but "Night of Lights" Friday – this Friday, Dec. 4th – when shops all along Ocean Drive, Cardinal Drive, Beachland Boulevard and the side streets in between will be open from 4 to 8:30 for a special evening of shopping and hospitality.

Then the following day, on Saturday, Dec. 5th, five miles to the north in Indian River Shores, The Village Shops will be hosting "Christmas in The Village"

– an opportunity to combine more island Christmas shopping with a wine tasting at the grand opening of the new Chelsea's.

This weekend should give us a good sense of how the Christmas season is going to go for barrier island merchants, and we will have a full report next week. ●



Faye Faulkner peruses the items for sale at Shells & Things on Black Friday. "I love to come to this place because they have beautiful things," she said.





at Twig Swim and Sportswear Shop on Ocean Drive.



Michael Giglio looks through the menswear at Tusk Clothing and Gifts for Men on Azalea Lane.

'Night of Lights' Friday

BY ALINA LAMBIET,
STAFF WRITER,
PHOTOS: TOM MCCARTHY JR.



Some of Shells & Things' eclectic tree ornaments hang on display in the store.



Kristen Sholes prepares to begin pilates mat excercises with the rest of her class under the instruction of golf/pilates instructor Mike Wright.

By Michael Bielecki, Correspondent
 Photos: Tom McCarthy Jr.

Golf Pilates comes to Vero Beach

Golf is a way of life for many in and around the barrier island. The November-December issue of Where to Retire Magazine named Vero Beach one of the best places to retire, and golf was a major factor. With more than 20 golf courses in the area and sunshine year-round, the community is a paradise for any golfer favoring golf cleats over ice cleats in February. With so much golf to play, proper body con-

ditioning can make the difference between enjoying several rounds a week or struggling physically through one round every couple of weeks. For golfers striving to avoid injury and get the most out of their game, there is a new option for conditioning: a Pilates routine incorporated into a fitness routine has become a virtual fountain of youth for golf's elite. Mike Wright, one of the foremost authorities on golf fitness, recently spent several days at Pilates of

Vero preparing the staff to teach his Mike's Wright Golf Pilates™ program. "I certainly think Pilates reverses the aging process and it allows you to play better golf," said Wright, a Master Golf Fitness Instructor with the Titleist Performance Institute. "Your body is your most important piece of golf equipment. We lose about 10 percent of our flexibility for every 10 years we age. Most people don't really get a full range of motion when they exercise, and Pilates gives you that."

Chester Clem
 Attorney at Law

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Bonnie Caffray and Joe Purcell run through an exercise during a golf/pilates class at Pilates of Vero.

Pilates of Vero owner Jayne McAllister considered it a major coup to get Wright down to Vero Beach. She discovered him one night while watching the Golf Channel. "I contacted him, and he said he only works with one studio in each market," said McAllister. "After checking us out, he liked our training and the apprenticeships (McAllister had over 600 hours worth) we did to gain Pilates certification."

Before going through Wright's program, McAllister and her staff had to take golf lessons from a golf pro. "We had to get instruction on the address position, the swing process and swing faults so we could understand the biomechanical principles of the game," said McAllister. "We spent a lot of time on injury prevention, which was invaluable. We learned how to put a golfer through a series of evaluation tests and how to design the best program for that client."

One of the reasons why Wright, 58, has become such a golf guru stems from the injuries he suffered playing golf years ago. At the age of 12, he started doing Tai-Chi and Martial Arts. By 18, Wright was a Tai-Chi instructor and very active in sports. After college, he was working in the corporate world, living a more sedentary lifestyle, and overeating.

Aside from golf, he'd strictly been weight training to stay in shape. By age 40, Wright had a ruptured disc in his back, plantar fasciitis (irritation and swelling of the thick tissue on the bottom of the foot) in both feet and a torn rotator cuff.

"After a round of golf, I'd have to lie on the bed flat for an hour or two with an ice pack on my back," said Wright. "I had sciatica that ran from my back all the way down to my heel. This went on for a few years, and visits to the chiropractor, an orthopedist and a massage therapist only helped so much. Instead of being hurt every once every three months, I was only hurt once every six. I wanted to get in shape and get better."

After going through this for five years, he discovered Pilates, and his body rejuvenated quickly. "I was so injured and all the doctors wanted to operate," said Wright. "There was just something about Pilates that attracted me to it. After doing Pilates for a year, it was all gone," said Wright.

Wright left the corporate world to become a personal trainer, a massage ther-

apist and finally a medical exercise specialist. He opened his Pilates studio in Washington, DC, 12 years ago, where most of his clients are politicians, lawyers and executives.

"If people had any idea of the benefit, they would at least try one session out," said Wright. "You don't have to play like a pro, but everyone wants to play better. I can be with a client 20 minutes and tell how they hit a golf ball without watching their swing. I can read what your body does when you swing."

Before leaving town, Wright taught a class of six golfers at Pilates of Vero. The ages of the students ranged from the mid-20's to mid-60's, but each had a common goal—to be a better golfer. "Vero Beach has all these baby boomers. Many are here to play golf," said Wright.

Joe Purcell, a retiree from New York, came to the class seeking longevity. "I've had friends who've had their swing restricted due to injury and it frustrates them," said Purcell, a client at Pilates of Vero. "I want to gain strength and flexibility through Pilates so I can continue playing golf."

Another local golfer looking to improve was Stephanie Doran. As a regular client of the studio, she's already reaped the benefits of Pilates training, "Before coming here, my balance was off and my flexibility was bad," said Doran, who previously had trouble walking down stairs. "Thanks to Pilates I've made gains in these areas, as well as in my overall strength."

McAllister, who holds multiple linguistic degrees from Cambridge University in England, began her study of Pilates 11 years ago. Along with being a certified Mike Wright's Golf Pilates Apparatus Specialist, she is a Pilates Method Alliance certified instructor.

"The big difference with Pilates and other types of training is that we don't just focus on the big muscles," said McAllister. "If you are working the large and small muscles you can increase your flexibility. With just big bulky muscles you can't be flexible. We preach the four 'S' principles: strength, stability, stretch, stamina."

No stranger to instructing elite clientele, McAllister teaches professional surfers among other clients.

She says that the genius of her work is in its simplicity, and is excited to bring Pilates to Vero Beach's rich golf culture.

"We have two instructors who are qualified to teach Mike Wright's Golf Pilates™ program," said McAllister. "I know I can really bring what I know about Pilates to golf." ●



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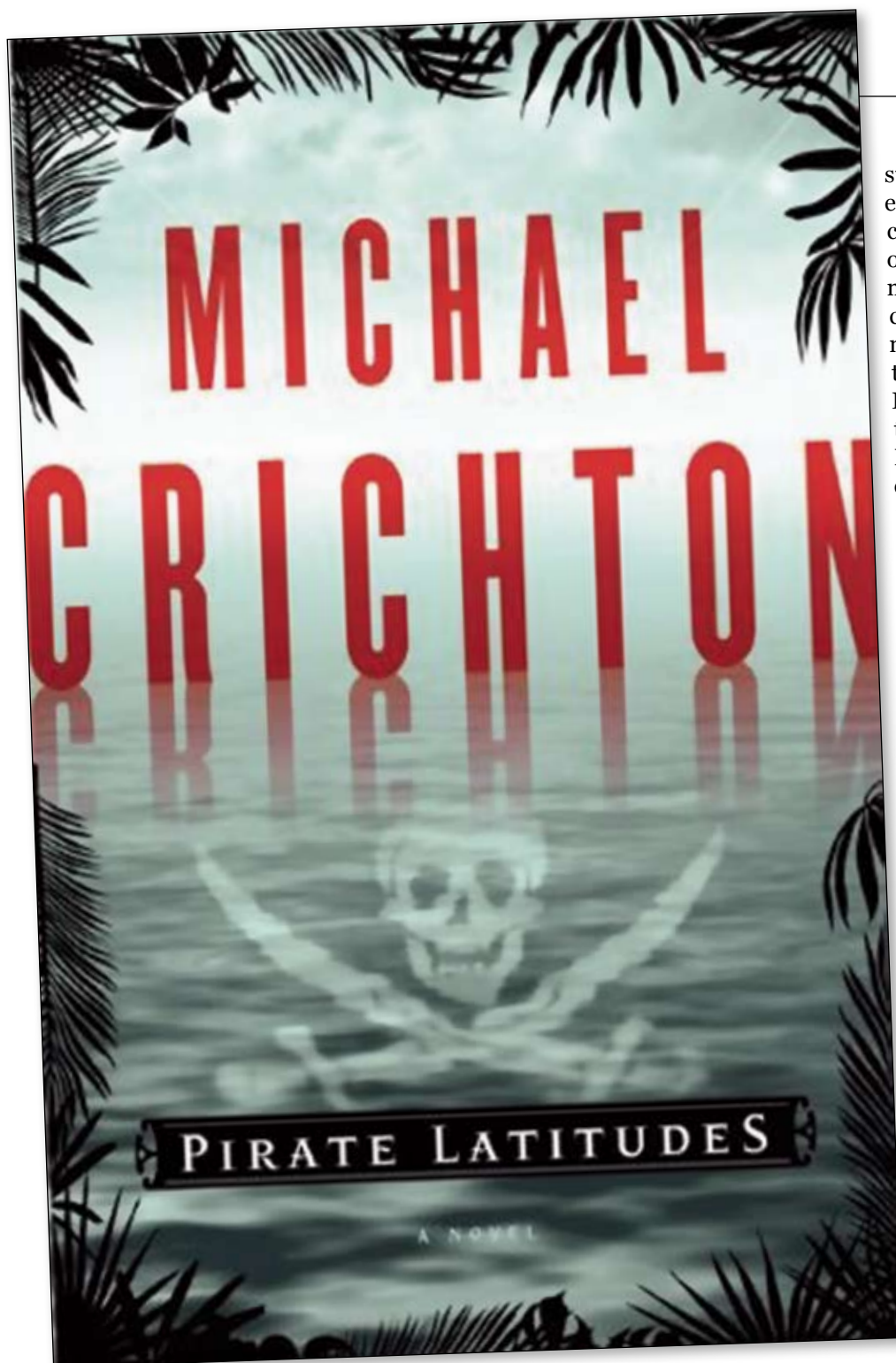


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Crichton opens the story in 1665 in “a miserable, overcrowded, cutthroat-infested town” on the island of Jamaica, a wealthy if precarious British settlement deep in Spanish territory. King Charles II has signed a fragile treaty with Spain, but English pirates -- who euphemistically call themselves “privateers” -- continue to operate whenever and wherever opportunity arises.

“Let me explain to you certain pertinent facts,” the governor says in a rather too clunky bit of exposition, but tell your inner 14-year-old to hang on: Once we get past this first section, “Pirate Latitudes” howls along till the very last page.

The hero of this buccaneer adventure is Charles Hunter, captain of the *Cassandra* and “the most valued pirate in all these waters.” Women call him a “bastard, a rogue, a cut-throat vicious rascally whore-son scoundrel” and then lick their lips and wink at him.

Using some special genetic technique developed in “Jurassic Park,” Crichton

has crossbred Johnny Depp and Daniel Craig to create the coolest, handsomest, daringest sea dog in the world. (Guys, if you don’t want to be Charles Hunter, have your testosterone level checked immediately.)

When he gets word that a Spanish ship loaded with gold has arrived at a nearby island, Hunter can’t resist the prize. No matter that 300 men failed in their attack on that impenetrable fortress just last year or that the commander is a notorious villain who finds “the screams of his dying victims restful and relaxing.”

Sooner than you can say “Shiver me timbers,” Hunter has assembled his piratical A-Team: Don Diego de Ramano, the Jew, is an explosives expert who makes fuses from rats’ entrails; Mr. Enders, the barber-surgeon, is the best sea artist in Jamaica; Lazue, the transvestite, is a deadly marksman who exposes her breasts in the heat of battle to disorient the enemy; Bassa, the Moor, had his tongue cut out, but he’s just the man to scale a sheer 400-foot cliff of naked rock; and finally Sanson, the Frenchman, is “the most ruthless killer in all the Caribbean.”

Crichton sends this motley crew off to the isle of Matanceros, which means “slaughter” in Spanish and may be the subtlest omen in his blood-soaked tale. “None of us will survive,” a crewman tells Hunter, and that’s not just the grog talking.

Inside the eight-sided fort surrounded by 30-foot walls lurks that bilge-sucking villain who could flog the Penguin and Dr. No with one hand tied behind his back. He’s a real Spanish charmer named Cazalla, who chokes his victims to death on their own testicles or lets rats chew off their faces. When thwarted, he shrieks, “Fools!” and shakes with uncontrollable rage.

The adventure that follows is a sort of “Great Train Robbery” with an eye patch and a peg leg -- one impossible deadly fix after another. “It was unheard of,” Crichton reminds us, “an insane thing to do”: from sword fights in burning buildings filled with gunpowder to crossbow attacks on sinking ships.

Fortunately, Hunter is indestructible, the kind of guy who can jump 30 feet and still look suave in a puffy shirt, while dispatching battalions of Spanish soldiers: stabbed, crushed, strangled, drowned, shot, pierced and blown to smithereens.

Even when he’s “lost his mizzen top and his mainsail rigging on the leeward side,” our Cap’n Hunter takes on man-eating sharks, ship-crushing sea monsters, drum-thumping cannibals and ocean-dumping hurricanes.

And of course, no tale of high-seas adventure could come back to port without picking up a saucy wench in distress. This is, after all, a booty call in every sense. Hunter and Lady Sarah Almont bicker like sworn enemies through much of their voyage. Will they end up in bed? Does Polly want a cracker?

The only distraction from these rip-roaring pages is fantasizing about which Hollywood pinup will traipse around deck in her underwear delivering lines like, “What will you vagabonds have with me? I presume I am in the clutches of pirates.”

As in any Crichton novel, all of this breakneck adventure is decorated with little bits of historical and technical instruction that float down like parrot feathers here and there.

We learn how a 17-man crew loads, aims and fires a cannon -- “two and a half tons of hot bronze.” We learn that 17th-century pirates craved gold but considered platinum worthless. And we learn enough about sailing wooden ships through coral-lined shoals to pilot one ourselves.

But Crichton always had a perfect sense of how much (or how little) background most readers really wanted. He may stop a moment to explain the jury system required by Parliament in 1612 or the predictive nature of waves, but then he’s quick to shout, “Hoist anchor! Lively with the lines!” and we’re off again.

If you’re on the lookout for some light adventure this holiday season, thar she blows! ●

Pirate Latitudes by Michael Crichton,
Harper, 312 pp., \$27.99
Reviewed by Ron Charles
Book World

Hoist the Jolly Roger above the best-seller list, ye mateys, ‘cause Michael Crichton has just published a swashbuckling pirate thriller.

The popular author of “Jurassic Park” and “The Andromeda Strain” went to Davy Jones’s locker last November, but his assistant found a finished draft of “Pirate Latitudes” on his computer, and Harper has plundered this booty like a chest of gold doubloons that washed up on shore.

The first print run is a million copies, and Steven Spielberg has already signed on to produce the inevitable movie version, so drop sail and prepare to be boarded.

Although plenty of novels are ripped to shreds in Hollywood’s shark-infested waters, “Pirate Latitudes” should enjoy smooth sailing to the silver screen. This hilariously exciting book already reads like a film treatment, jumping from one cinematic, doom-filled episode to the next as it cuts its bloody way through the encyclopedia of piracy from “Ahoy” to “Yo-ho-ho.”

BOOK REVIEWS

In 1947, jazz great Louis Armstrong got himself a new gadget -- a tape recorder, fresh out on the consumer market. It was a big, boxy machine that he set up in concert halls and jazz joints to record his six-piece All Stars so he could listen to each show in his hotel room and thin out the weak spots for the next gig.

Before long, however, this work tool became a plaything -- and, a couple of generations later, a treasure trove for Terry Teachout, author of the new and compelling biography "Pops: A Life of Louis Armstrong."

"He started leaving it on and making audio vérité tapes of chunks of his life -- dinner parties, getting high in the dressing room after a gig, trying to get his wife into bed," says Teachout, national drama critic for the Wall Street Journal. "He saved all these tapes. There are 650-odd of them."

While the tapes have been available to scholars since 2002, Teachout is the first biographer to make full use of them, says Michael Cogswell, director of the Louis Armstrong House Museum in Queens, NY. And although Teachout says the tapes don't contain any major revelations, they infuse "Pops" with the insights of an eavesdropper.

"Armstrong, although he was very self-aware, was also a very unself-conscious man," Teachout says in his art-filled apartment on Manhattan's Upper West Side. "He knew what he was. He knew he was a very important figure in the history of American art. And so he saved everything that he could. But in making these tapes, he's entirely unself-conscious. He just records parts of his life. . . . He is the only major jazz musician who has left behind a very large volume of documents of this kind."

He also left behind a wealth of photographs. One uncredited shot in the book captures the portly Armstrong in a messy hotel room, wearing nothing but white briefs, his trumpet lying in an open case in the foreground and the tape recorder perched on a table in the back.

Teachout himself is a heavyset man with a wide, expressive smile and glasses that make him look owl-ish. He speaks in long, discursive paragraphs, his diction precise, his tone a bit arch and bearing no hint of Missouri, where he grew up in a small town.

Sitting on a couch, a leg tucked underneath him while traffic whooshes by a couple of floors below, Teachout explains that it took five years to research and write "Pops," about half the time he invested in his first biography, "The Skeptic: A Life of H.L. Mencken," which came out in 2002. He is also the author of 2004's "All in the Dances: A Brief Life of George Balanchine."

The Mencken book, he says, taught him how to write a biography. The Balanchine was more of a life in brief, spun out quickly to take advantage of the strong critical reaction to the Mencken book. "Pops" is a return to full-form biography, and Teachout hopes it will reawaken our sense of Armstrong's creative genius. (Jazz's cultural standing is a recurring theme for Teachout, who ignited an online jazz-world brawl in August over a column in which he asked whether the music form could be "saved," implying that it was imperiled.)

The book has revelations for those unfamiliar with Armstrong's life and career. Teachout believes that few outside the jazz-studies world recognize Armstrong's talent as a writer -- he was the author of two memoirs.

Nor do people know that he was "threatened with murder" by the Chicago mob, that lip damage led him to add more of what became his signature gravelly vocals to his performances or that "it really wasn't so much his musicmaking but his film career that made him a real star."

Then there was Armstrong's womanizing -- four marriages and "numerous dalliances in between and during" -- and his daily joint, a habit that in 1931 led to a nine-day jail stint in Los Angeles after he got caught lighting up between sets outside Frank Sebastian's Culver City Cotton Club.

"Most people, I suspect, don't know that he smoked marijuana every day," Teachout says, although he acknowledges that a jazz musician using drugs wouldn't really astonish anyone. "But people who know about Armstrong in the general way that most of us know about Armstrong, I think they're going to be surprised."

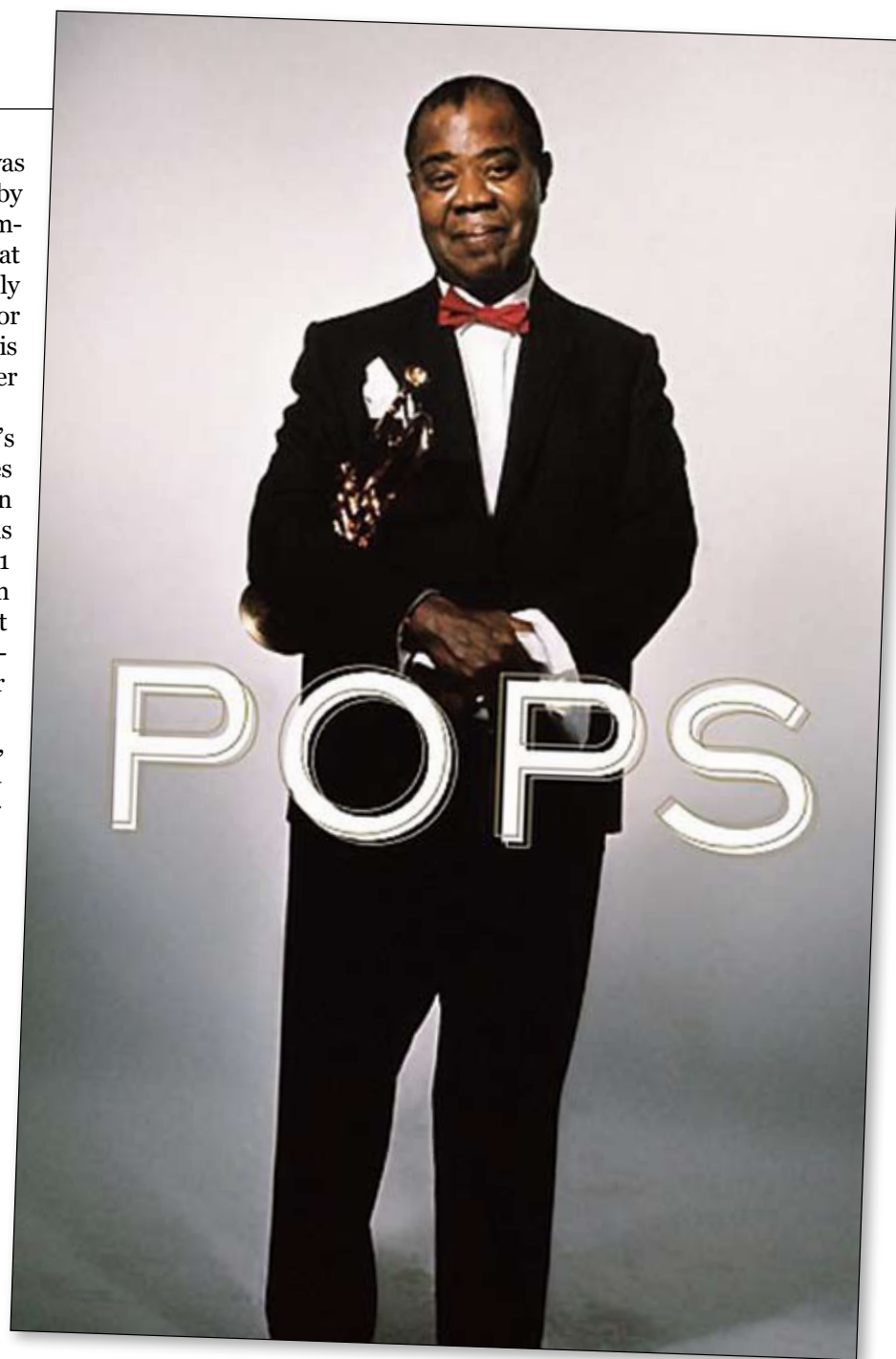
At its heart, "Pops" is about one of the 20th century's most interesting and enduring popular performers, with a compelling life story to match.

"He was born in New Orleans in 1901, on the toughest block in town, his mother was a whore, and at the end of his life, everybody in the world knew who he was," Teachout says. "He was the first great influence in jazz... Remember that 'Hello, Dolly!' knocked the Beatles off the top of the Billboard charts [in 1964]. It was the last jazz single ever to be a No. 1 record in the United States."

Armstrong's rise was not easy. He performed about 300 nights a year and lived out of a suitcase. In the early days, he bounced back and forth between Chicago and New York, endured Jim Crow humiliations during tours of the South and struggled to pursue music without getting overwhelmed by the details of running a jazz orchestra. (Eventually, he turned the business side over to white managers.)

Still, after revolutionizing jazz in the 1920s, Armstrong was in the vanguard of black entertainers who crossed over to white mass culture, leading an integrated band, appearing in movies and becoming a regular first on radio and then on television.

"He was even more effective on television than he was in the films. In the films, he played these stereotypical Uncle Tom-like roles, because that was what you got to play if you were black in the 1930s and 1940s," Teachout says. "On television, he played himself performing as a musician, and he was one of the most frequently seen people on TV throughout the 1950s and 1960s... He had the personality, and



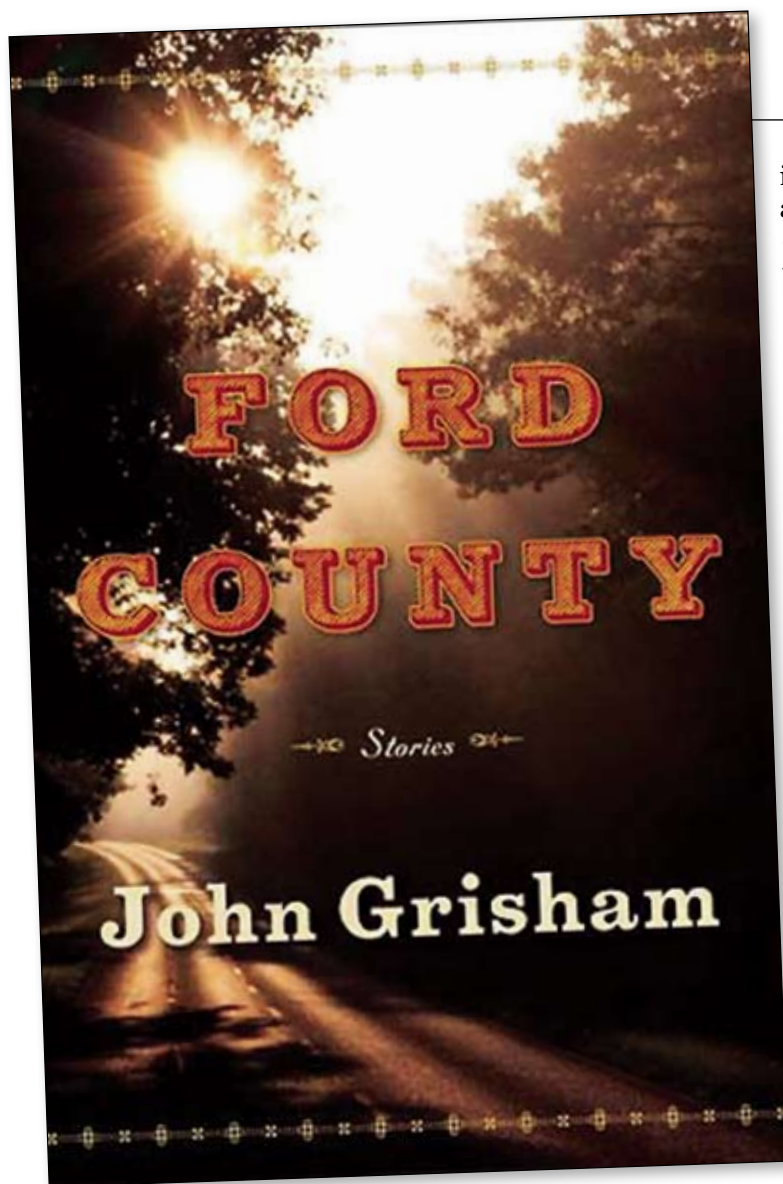
he was able to make use of media that brought that personality into the homes of ordinary people."

Yet Armstrong's mugging -- he saw himself as an entertainer as much as a musician -- irked critics and some fellow black jazz performers, such as beboppers Dizzy Gillespie and Miles Davis, who thought his shtick was too close to minstrelsy.

"The implication was clear," Teachout writes, summing up dismissive comments by Gillespie. "Armstrong may have been an artist, but he was also an old-time accommodationist who went along to get along."

Still, even the new beboppers had to join the old guard in recognizing Armstrong's role as a musical trailblazer. Teachout cites a Time magazine profile of Armstrong from 1949, as bebop was beginning to replace big band jazz. In it, there's a quote from legendary drummer Gene Krupa: "No band musician today on any instrument, jazz, sweet or bebop, can get through 32 bars without musically admitting his debt to Armstrong. Louis did it all, and he did it first." ●

Pops: A Life of Louis Armstrong
by Terry Teachout,
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 476 pp., \$30
Reviewed by Scott Martelle
Los Angeles Times



ing legal injustice and, most entertaining of all, a trio of wayward 20-somethings entrusted with making a much-needed blood donation on behalf of an injured neighbor.

These last appear in the collection's first story, "Blood Drive," a picaresque that sends the three young men from Box Hill, Mississippi, to Memphis. A neighbor's son, injured in a construction accident, is in the hospital and needs blood.

Calvin, Roger, and Aggie wind up shotgunning six-packs on rural roads and, as the evening drags on, their blood donation occurs at a Memphis blood bank rather than the hospital. It's a nod to their desire to scrounge up money for a strip club rather than visit their injured neighbor in the hospital and help him out.

At the blood bank, Calvin and Aggie pass out when confronted with the blood-collection needles, prompting an onlooker to ask, "Who are these bozos?"

"Mississippi," the attendant answers.

Grisham takes delight in these ne'er-do-wells. Their encounters with a zealous homeowner along the way — as well as the dreary gentlemen's club with its watered-down beer and downtrodden dancers — pay New South homage to Faulkner's "The Reivers."

"Blood Drive" also marks the introduction of one of Grisham's most unfortunate verbal tics: the mangling of the Southern colloquialism y'all. Throughout this collection, it is written "ya'll," as in "ya will," instead of "you all." That a life-long Mississippian, not to mention an army of editors at Doubleday, can't figure out to how spell y'all is downright disheartening. Bless their hearts.

For the amateur copy editor in this reader, it's distracting every time it's (mis)used, and it's used quite often in "Ford County."

It's also part of a larger dialogue and dialect problem afflicting Grisham. As Strunk & White and many others advise, when it comes to dialect, less is more. Much more.

Be spare and be careful. Too many exchanges here read as if they're straight out of "Hee-Haw," with "I guess thangs're okay" and "Damn, son,

you're makin' more noise than a horse eatin' corn" serving as typical examples.

In short, too often these Mississippians seem to speak the way Hollywood would have them speak. At other times, they suffer from excessive exposition and tin-ear philosophizing. A homicidal kidnapper morphs into Clarence Darrow when he asks his victim, "[I]s this justice, or is it just another courtroom victory? The two have little in common."

When it comes to greed and motivation, Grisham's aim is much sharper. Two of the best stories involve naked avarice. In "Fish Files," a no-luck work-a-day attorney finds an unexpected way of shedding his humdrum life, while "Quiet Haven" offers an amusing account of an opportunist who specializes in retirement homes.

"Casino" also works in this vein, with romantic revenge spurring a cuckold into becoming a mercenary card sharp, with satisfying (and humorous) results.

"Fetching Raymond" is the weakest of the bunch. It's a depressing tale of an aimless, low-rent pair of brothers and their mother driving to the state prison to bring home the body of a younger brother after his execution. It meanders and drags on, with few surprises or insights beyond the dreariness of repeated mistakes and poor judgment.

Grisham closes with the Southern Gothic-tinged "Funny Boy," pairing a young white AIDS patient with an aging black woman. Set in 1989, the story conveys the misguided prejudice and ignorance surrounding AIDS cases then and, to some degree, now.

"Ford County" marks an interesting departure for Grisham. These stories fail to convey the relentless narrative pull of his more familiar works, including his two most recent novels, "The Associate" and "The Appeal."

Grisham aims for more of a sweet-tea-on-the-porch pacing here, but, in doing so, abandons his strongest writing muscle.

Early interviews for the book seem to confirm his enthusiasm for working in a different form, so it's likely we'll be hearing from the citizens of Ford County again in the future. Readers, meanwhile, have already offered their verdict, with yet another No. 1 title for Grisham. ●

Ford County by John Grisham,
Doubleday, 308 pp., \$24
Reviewed by Erik Spanberg
Christian Science Monitor

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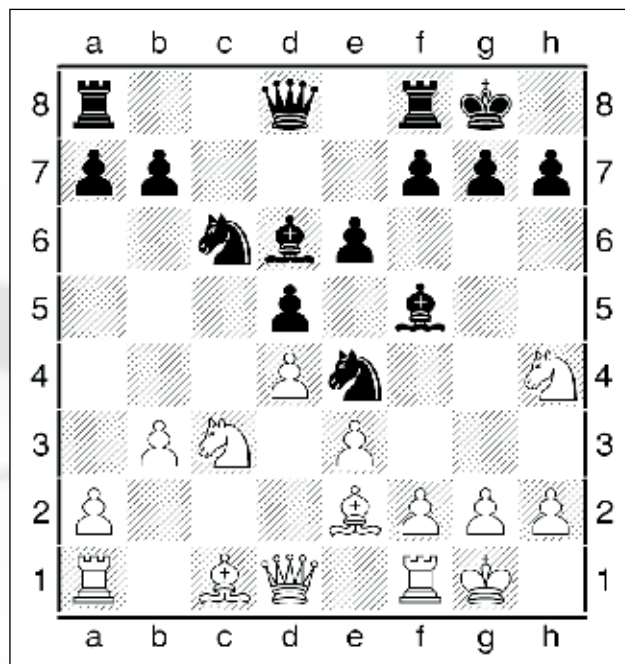
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FOR THE LOVE OF CHESS BY HUMBERTO CRUZ - CHESS COLUMNIST



If White captures Black's Bishop with Nxf5, should Black take the Knight back with ...exf5?

Capturing back not forced, not always best

When your opponent captures one of your pieces, the natural reaction is to capture it back if you can. But taking back is not always the best move. That's part of what makes chess so fascinating and complicated.

Rather than just taking back, you may be better off capturing a piece other than the one that captured yours, or mounting another threat against your opponent. If that threat includes giving check, you can gain valuable time – called a “tempo” in chess – to carry out your plan.

Let's go back to a game I discussed in this column on Oct. 15. In that game, played at the Indian River County Chess Club, Black obtained a winning edge after playing ...Ne4 and reaching the position in the diagram. I said that White's best move was Nxe4 but that Black would still win a pawn after ...Bxh2 check, Kxh2 Qxh4 check, Kg1 Bxe4.

But what if instead of Nxe4, White played Nxf5, capturing Black's Bishop, a reader asked. Wouldn't the game be about even after ...exf5? The answer is that Black would not play ...exf5 but rather...Nxc3, attacking White's Queen and Bishop. After the Queen moved away with, say Qc2, Black would continue with ...Nxe2, putting White in check. White must get out of check (for example, with Qxe2) and Black finally captures back the Knight on f5, coming out a Knight ahead.

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

THE BRIDGE COLUMN BY PIETER VANBENNEKOM - BRIDGE COLUMNIST

The trouble with being dealt a really long, beautiful suit is that you tend to stare yourself blind on it. You figure you just have to bid it.

When she picked up her cards in a recent duplicate pairs tournament, Flustered Flo could hardly believe her eyes. In all the years she'd been playing bridge, Flo couldn't recall ever having been dealt a 9-card suit. Afterward, she realized it was probably more of a curse than a boon, because she got a big fat bottom on the hand, helping her and her partner, Loyal Larry, finish dead last in the tournament.

Naturally, the tempting hand had to come against her perennial nemesis, Smug Sam, who was a little lucky finding an unbeatable Slam to take tops on the hand.

East-West vulnerable; West dealer:

The bidding:	West	North	East	South
	1 Club	Pass	1 Spade	2 Hearts
	3 Clubs	Pass	Pass	3 Hearts
	4 Spades	Pass	Pass	5 Hearts
	6 Spades	All pass		

Opening lead: Queen of Clubs

As is evident from the bidding, Flo could have passed 3 Clubs and let East-West take a lousy 110 points on the hand, which would have her pair a tops on the hand. Incidentally, Smug Sam was horrified to hear his partner pass his 3 Clubs bid.

Of course Flo should have passed the 4 Spades bid by Smug Sam as well, but she couldn't leave well enough alone. Flo bid 5 Hearts as a sacrifice because she figured (correctly) that Sam and Shem had an easy Game in 4 Spades.

When Smug Sam jumped to 6 Spades, it was a close contest between Flo and Sam's own partner Shem as to which one of them was more surprised, aghast and appalled.

The playing of the hand was actually pretty uneventful, certainly an anticlimax to the suspenseful bidding. Shem only gave up a Club to Larry's King from the North hand but didn't lose anything else. As South, all Flo could do was passively throw away Heart after Heart -- all 9 beautiful cards in the longest, and most useless, suit she was ever dealt.

“Thanks for bidding me up there, Flo,” Sam said, smugly. “I was horrified when my partner passed my 3 Clubs.”

“You're welcome, I guess,” said Flo, still flustered. “I understand you going to 4 Spades, but what made you think you had a shot at 6? That's really socking it to me.”

Flo's once-in-a-lifetime flop

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

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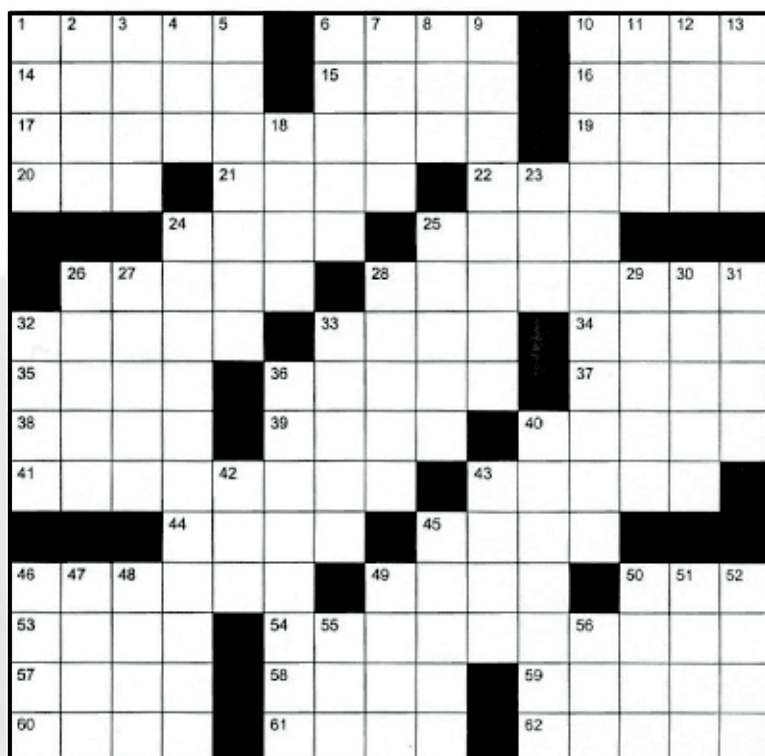
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Crossword

SOLUTIONS TO LAST ISSUE ON PAGE 75

STRAIGHT FORWARD



The Christian Science Monitor | By Bill Brandt | Edited by Charles Preston

ACROSS

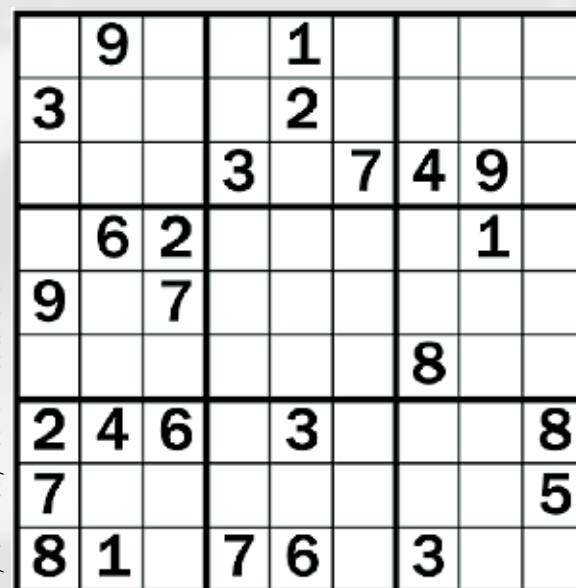
- 1 Poetic upbeat
- 6 Voice
- 10 Thick slice
- 14 Showy
- 15 Marine carnivore
- 16 Buddhist canon
- 17 Air
- 19 Being: L.
- 20 Material
- 21 Row
- 22 Means of stability
- 24 Camera part
- 25 Sheepshank or granny
- 26 Thin glutinous mud
- 28 Abductor
- 32 Memo listings
- 33 Cordage fiber
- 34 Int'l relief organization
- 35 The Wise Men
- 36 Monarch
- 37 Egg on
- 38 City map
- 39 Word of lament
- 40 Inundation
- 41 Part of a Turkish house reserved for men
- 43 Banquet
- 44 Unit of weight, in India

- 45 Exhaust
- 46 Boiled, hulled corn
- 49 Bench
- 50 Harem room
- 53 Margarine
- 54 Between cities
- 57 Scheme
- 58 Requirement
- 59 Smiling
- 60 Without: Fr.
- 61 Jewels
- 62 Miss Millay, and others

DOWN

- 1 Culture medium
- 2 Appraise
- 3 Basement pump
- 4 Simplified Esperanto
- 5 Methods or plans of procedure
- 6 Remains
- 7 Ogle
- 8 Sailor
- 9 Flowering shrub
- 10 Dramatic
- 11 Bind
- 12 And
- 13 Funeral structure
- 18 Evergreen
- 23 Negative prefix
- 24 Restrictions
- 25 Certain hawks: pl.
- 26 Not fresh
- 27 Licit
- 28 Russian peasant
- 29 One of the Cyclades
- 30 Disease of rye
- 31 Marsh plant
- 32 Little demons
- 33 Jane Fonda film
- 36 Acquiring fresh vigor
- 40 Characteristic
- 42 Calendar abbreviation
- 43 Dread
- 45 Obtrusive plants
- 46 Rabbit moves
- 47 Spanish jar
- 48 Inferior in quality
- 49 Stalk
- 50 Port in Scotland
- 51 Artist Charles ____ Gibson
- 52 Colony creatures
- 55 Born
- 56 Disencumber

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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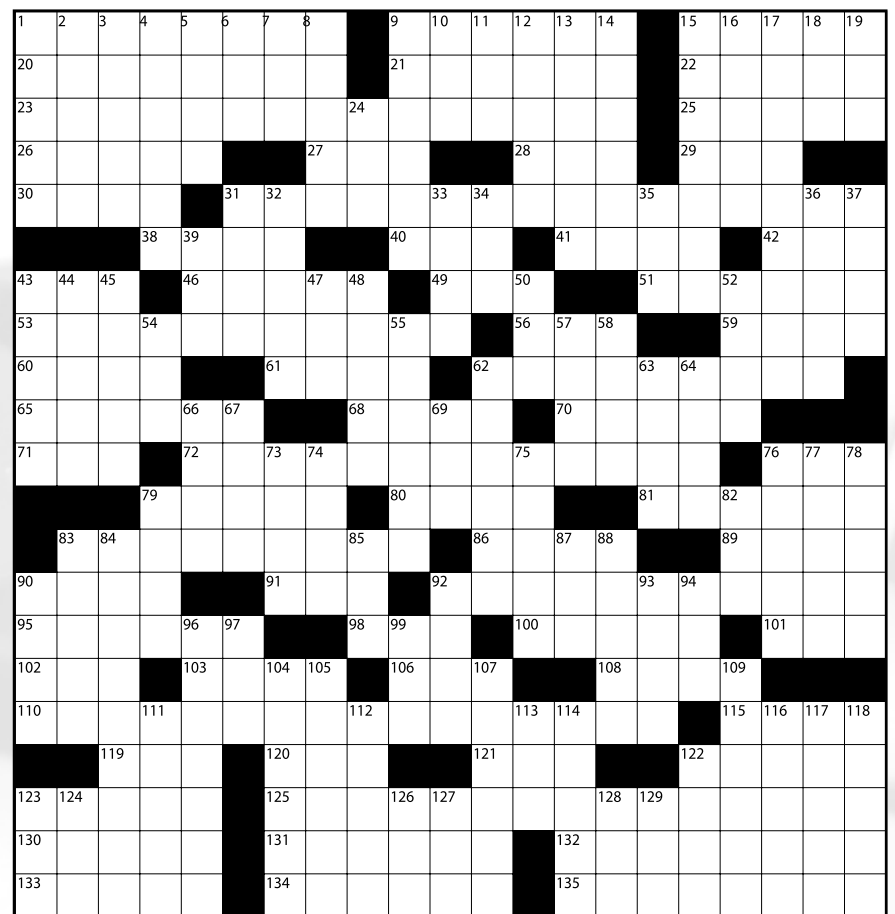
ACROSS

- 1 Corrected
 9 Stuff
 15 Astonish
 20 Texas Panhandle city
 21 Kahlo's husband
 22 Typesetting machs.
 23 Cat's new "I've chased my last rodent" attitude?
 25 "Goldfinger" prop
 26 Play the market
 27 Stripe
 28 Cert. accessways
 29 Start to whiz
 30 "Auld Lang ____"
 31 Washed oneself thoroughly?
 38 CAT, for one
 40 Revealing Julie Andrews film
 41 Where Waterford is
 42 Where Naples is: abbr.
 43 Rotating the other way: abbr.
 46 Plasty preceder
 49 He influenced Baudelaire
 51 Victimized clay guy on "SNL"
 53 All-natural cat drink from Celestial Seasonings?
 56 It made the Metro
 59 "Who ____?"
 60 Singer about Alice
 61 Mtn. info
 62 With 72 Across, where cats dream of living?
 65 Help PBS, e.g.
 68 Tiller intro
 70 Brown shades
 71 Vegan's staple

- 72 See 62 Across
 76 NBA great Unseld
 79 Gem engraving
 80 To see, in Toulouse
 81 Gawdy
 83 With 92 Across, cat's sing-along instruction?
 86 Lady of Spain
 89 Cream classic, "____ Glad"
 90 Actor who played a TV surgeon
 91 "Of all people" preceder
 92 See 83 Across
 95 Food
 98 Actress Joanne
 100 Aquarium fish
 101 Roget wd.
 102 Sea predator
 103 Taft's birthplace
 106 Mode intro
 108 Stable food
 110 Cat's favorite Ingmar Bergman film?
 115 Confiscate
 119 D and C, in D.C., for ex.
 120 Commotion
 121 Cash extension?
 122 Battle participants?
 123 Indian of Sonora, Mex.
 125 Cat's favorite play?
 130 Give the slip to
 131 Nabisco's ____ biscuits (1898)
 132 Water wings?
 133 County fair critter
 134 Video categories
 135 Post-Christmas events

DOWN

- 1 Tirades
 2 Atlanta university
 3 Paris parent
 4 Wears away
 5 Urgent
 6 Project finish?
 7 Shade tree
 8 Column type
 9 Kids' wheels
 10 Juice-drink brand
 11 "____ got it!"
 12 Actress Pola
 13 It can be nursed
 14 Greetings
 15 Orthodontist, at times
 16 Went for the gold?
 17 Heavenly swimmer?
 18 Place with a keeper
 19 Rough fig.
 24 January's Jr.
 31 Actress Turner
 32 Brit's fireplace
 33 L-____
 34 Home of "Real Sports"
 35 Chair part
 36 Stan's partner
 37 Mickey's creator
 39 Trucker's compartment
 43 Blokes
 44 Sophia married him
 45 Aviator Post
 47 In need of ipecac
 48 Funny Cheri
 50 Trip requirement?
 52 Smithereens
 54 Piece of pier gear
 55 Change with time
 57 Water pitcher
 58 A single time
 62 Square dance maneuver
 63 Crow
 64 Arizona city
 66 Type of score
 67 Sailors' saint
 69 Ring decision, briefly
 73 Wet
 74 Marquand sleuth
 75 Vonnegut's Kilgore
 76 Scaredy-cats
 77 Opinion piece
 78 Demonstrated
 79 TV's Clampetts, e.g. abbr.
 82 Fix
 83 Handbill
 84 Harem girl
 85 Newman classic
 87 Walk this way?: abbr.
 88 Power, for one
 90 With, in Vichy
 92 Hungarian sheep dog
 93 Saver's options
 94 Jazzman Adderley
 96 Spy-film file
 97 ____ Na Na
 99 Cheery word?
 104 Snug bug's place
 105 Queer bird
 107 "____ saying ..."
 109 Stanley's shout
 111 Piano piece
 112 Word on a door
 113 Extinct volcano, Mauna ____
 114 007 foe's first name
 116 Part of CAT
 117 Peachy N.H. city?
 118 Sen. Kefauver
 122 Dines
 123 "You rang?"
 124 Other rte.
 126 Profit add-on?
 127 Celebrating work
 128 "In excelsis ____"
 129 First Chief Justice John



THE FURRY THOUGHT OF YOU

By Merl Reagle

Puzzle by telegraph.co.uk

	8	2		3		7		
		3	7			9		
4				1				
8			5		9			
							7	
			1	7	4			9
			2					3
		4			1	2		
		9		4		1	5	

★★☆☆☆

Row →

Three-by-three square →

4	3	2	8	1	6	7	5	9
5	6	9	3	7	4	8	1	2
1	7	8	9	5	2	4	6	3
3	4	7	2	8	5	6	9	1
2	1	6	7	4	9	3	8	5
9	8	5	1	6	3	2	7	4
7	9	1	4	3	8	5	2	6
8	5	3	6	2	1	9	4	7
6	2	4	5	9	7	1	3	8

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Column

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President Obama greeting Michaela and Tareq Salahi during a receiving line in the Blue Room of the White House before the State Dinner with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India, on 24 November 2009. The Salahis had not been invited to the gala dinner but managed to get by security and attend for a brief period.

Reality Check by Jay McNamara

Two disparate items in the Times recently caught my eye. One was a big front page story of the White House party crashers. The second was a small back-of-the-paper snippet about the release of a CD from Frank Sinatra.

It was from a 1980 concert at Carnegie Hall, one I had the good fortune of attending. Earlier in my life, Sinatra had bought me lunch. I had a special appreciation of him from that occasion. It has only been enhanced by my love of his music, which increases as I grow older.

A friend of mine has satellite radio in her car, but only listens to one of the dozens of channels available, the one devoted to Sinatra. I understand her allegiance completely. Such talent as his is timeless. Bing Crosby thought that perhaps once in an age, an extraordinary talent comes along. "Too bad Sinatra came along in mine," he said.

Balloon Boy, the White House Hustler, and others have achieved a disproportionate claim on our attention spans. That these people have no real talent, just a fierce desire for fame and fortune, is a reflection of the Immodesty Age in which we live.

The reality of Reality TV, of course, is that it is fake. It is generated from a different reality, the high cost of television production, dwindling audiences, and diminishing advertising revenues. The costs of producing a quality TV show are large and include writing talent, acting prowess, and extensive production. The costs of a reality show require small amounts of creativity, low talent expense, and minimum production values.

As people select from the several hundred choices available on TV, and from the Internet and its thousands of options, it is hard to amass a large group of them at any given time. Shows with little real singing or dancing talent can succeed.

The greatest reality show of all, football, continues to win the ratings game. But, with cheap reality show entry costs, you don't need that many viewers to make a buck. So, there is no limit to where these shows can go. "The real politicians of Indian River County?"

With people with real talent, there is an authenticity about them that is almost tangible. My lunch with Sinatra came about when the owner of the Concourse Plaza Hotel invited my father and me to watch a Yankee game in his box. The hotel was just up the hill from Yankee Stadium and was the stomping ground of many famous people. Sinatra was the fourth person seated in the box.

At age ten, I had a vague idea who he was, a singer that young girls were crazy about. He crooned. They swooned. I had no interest in the music or the girls. I was occupied by the greats on the diamond. To me, Sinatra was the skinny guy who happened to be with us. However, he called me "Master John" and offered me every product being hawked by the passing vendors; hot dogs, ice cream, and Cokes. I never said no.

But, beyond my appreciation of his generosity, I sensed the greatness that emanated from him. People in those days didn't crowd celebrities demanding autographs. But, there was enough respectful attention paid to him for me to recognize that this was no ordinary guy. He was the real deal, not a flimsy figment of someone's imagination.

They do it their way. He did it "My Way."