

A NIGHT ON PALOMAR MOUNTAIN WITH BROWN DWARF DISCOVERER - SEE PAGE 28

SAN DIEGO WEEKLY

Reader



Mayor Golding with Bob and Elizabeth Dole, summer of 1996

Grand Old SCAM

Last year's Republican Convention was supposed to put San Diego on the map and boost Mayor Susan Golding's political aspirations. But a little more than a year after the delegates



Signs left on stands at GOP Convention

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

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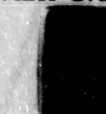
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LETTERS

We welcome letters pertaining to the contents of the Reader. You may phone them in by calling 619-235-8000, ext. 460, address them to Letters to the Editor, Box 5803, San Diego, CA 92161-5803, fax them to 619-231-0486, or e-mail them to letters@sdreader.com via the Internet. Please include your name, address, and telephone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Knee-Jerk Rigmorale

If ignorance is bliss, then clearly Patrick Groff's virulently xenophobic spew (Letters, December 4) against Abe Opinar's otherwise brilliantly even-minded treatment of Muslims in San Diego is a case in point. In the form of a letter, it is more than patently apparent that the extreme Shi'ite sect is not representative of its Sunni counterpart or the state of Islam in general. Rather, Groff's inept literary pretension is nothing more than the same knee-jerk rigmorale that compels God-fearing, truck-driving, wife- and kid-beating Americans to dial in death threats and throw rocks at the very same mosque Abe Opinar wrote about. Perhaps Groff would do well to learn that long words do nothing to conceal an abysmally bigoted point of view and that the shadow suspicion is quickly dispensed by the light of logic and both honorable men and women who bring it. All hail Lucifer.

Name withheld

Where's The Fork?

I just want to know where the darn "Tin Fork" column is. Man, I'm going to stare this week if I can't find a cheap place to eat.

Name withheld

It's Pretty Stupid

I'd like to make a comment on the person who writes the "Blurt" music scene. I read in an earlier edition of the Reader about some complaints about the editor — about the writer of that column — and I didn't really think much about it, but lately I've been noticing the articles. It's mostly this crap I mean, in this article (December 4), they just talk about the one member of the band who happens to be a female who's well-endowed, and that's like, the whole thing they wrote about. It's pretty stupid. I'm finding more and more of this

happening again. Maybe you should talk to this person or do something about it. We want a more in-depth look at our San Diego bands.

Name withheld

Wonderful

I love the Reader! First thing I look for is whatever Judith Moore has written. Second, I De Wyze. Third, "Kid Stuff." Judith really hit a home run on her Thanksgiving piece — wads, strays, and grace ("How Far We Came to Be Here," November 26). Poignant and sensitive. Wonderful.

Many thanks for all your efforts. Patrick Daugherty is wasted on sports stuff. Move him around. We need him.

Irene Hedrick
University Heights

Let Them Be The Test Guinea Pigs

I was calling in regard to the November 26 "City Light" called "Dirty Water," where it mentioned the Toilet-Tap project. I talked about Howard Wayne's statistics on the project. He mentioned that even when people are given the option of higher standards, 75 percent of the respondents opposed the project. A good way to test this project would be to feed the revitalized water over to the County and City Administration Buildings for five years. Let them be the test guinea pigs for five years to determine whether there are any unhealthy effects from consuming sewage.

Name withheld

Who Is Gina Arnold?

After reading Gina Arnold's review on the upcoming Möller "Cris show," I Of Note, November 26, I ask, who is Gina Arnold?

Name withheld

Councilman Vargas Should Know Better

In the matter of Mr. Poppell versus Councilman Vargas it appears rather strange that the city attorney will defend Mr. Vargas. "City Light," November 30, One might expect a public official to use better judgment before making false charges against another person.

Why should the taxpayer pay for Mr. Vargas's blunder? He should certainly know better, especially since he is an attorney.

Will the taxpayer also be obliged to pay for any possible settlement or fine?

Are the people of this city supposed to pay for any blunder public officials commit? It would seem to me that if anyone makes such uncalculated slanders, he or she should pay for his or her own defense. Proceed with caution for the offender, especially when the offense is not committed on city business, see a very bad precedent.

Hans Jorishoff
Hillcrest

Reader
SD WEEKLY

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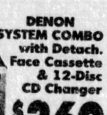


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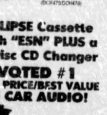


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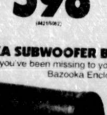
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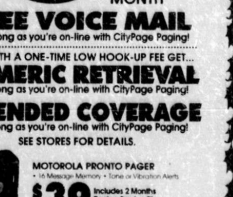


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CITY LIGHTS

128-page primer himself in his version of the 1893 *McGuffey Reader*, widely used by itinerant teachers and families living beyond the reach of formal schooling for much of the middle to late 19th Century. He colored in the children's faces so they would appear black. (The copyright on the *McGuffey*, he pointed out, has long since lapsed.) From 'a to z', words are used to illustrate the letters of the alphabet which are accompanied by 189 woodcuts. A series of gradually more challenging reading lessons follows. They tell how, like about wooden hats, chickens and pees and battle the girls and boys, flannel and with antebellum drawings.

In addition to including the printers, students will take part in spelling bees, creative activities, essay writing, art projects and other traditional pursuits that of course, they will do so. In the trip to the library, spending at least three hours there a week. Meredith intends to develop to supplement ordinary weekend leisure activities. "We don't want people to do anything that day they would normally do. We watch television. To be a good basketball star, they know that they have to spend hours and hours every day on the basketball court. We want them to know they have to spend hours and hours a day with the book as if they want to become an intellectual giant."

Meredith said he chose San Diego as his first San Diego site because of the entire state's response. Martin and his church had to the library club. "They must have sold 10,000 of my books," Meredith said. They used Meredith's books and a lecture series he gave at fundraisers for the church. Martin said.

"We're building a new church because we've forgotten the one we're in," she said. With two services, it's a standing room-only on Sundays. In addition to the library club, the church runs a soup kitchen once a month and otherwise helps out the needy. Linda Vista also supports five different choirs and sponsors youth soccer and track teams.

In essence, we do realize educate ourselves," Martin said. "You go to school and listen to your teacher, but you come home and do your research. But everybody doesn't have encyclopedias in their homes. Everybody doesn't have computers, so what James wants to do is show people you can learn on your own, you can learn at your own pace."

In his home state of Mississippi, Meredith reports, Democrats have been enthusiastic about his project. Here in San Diego, the public library and the Lynn Whitehouse, whose responsibilities include co-track programs, said last week that she hadn't heard of Meredith's library schools. But she added, "I hope he does come, it fits right in."

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CITY LIGHTS

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continued from page 5

These are just my thoughts, my guesses about why Blancornelas broke his own rules for reporting on drug traffickers. "Twice in the fall, in September and November, Blancornelas appeared publicly — and was photographed appearing publicly — with the federal district attorney. And there he was in September at a military compound south of Tijuana, watching a whole bunch of marijuana and cocaine being burned. Standing there with the federal district attorney. And he was photographed again with him in November. It was Blancornelas's way of telling the drug lords that he was receiving very dangerous information from one of the top sources in the country. It was his way of saying he had very dangerous information and that he wasn't afraid to print it. To understand who you have to understand the incredible level of corruption and violence that the drug lords have caused. They've touched every level of society, every level of the government and the military. "I imagine an American journalist might wonder why a Mexican journalist would expose himself to these risks. But like I said, we grew up aware of these risks. Sometimes the risks are greater, sometimes less, but they're always there. I'm still conscious of them. I write occasional pieces for *Siete Días*, the weekly newspaper in Mexico. I'm on the editorial board there. And when I write, I'm aware of how my words might affect some reader, how I might end up in the cross-hairs of some nut's rifle. I don't think the attack on Blancornelas has changed anything. Being a journalist in Mexico is still like being a policeman: you might get shot at, but what keeps you going is your love for your job. I say that things haven't changed, but I noticed something very odd (ironically). I was at this press conference about the raid on 50 homes of suspected drug traffickers involved in the attack on Blancornelas. The commander of the federal judicial police was there, and he was giving the journalists a hard time. At one point he implied that we journalists were all involved with the drug traffickers. And when he said that, the journalists got angry. They really went after him. They started yelling. They started asking him really hard questions. I'd never seen anything like it before. And the amazing thing was that the commander backed down. He apologized. He said he was only joking."

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⁶ San Diego Reader December 11, 1997.



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Carlesimo. He tendered a lame excuse as to why his apology had been so long in coming. It was a man thing, Spewell said; see, he had not been able to reach Carlesimo on the phone and wanted to apologize in private before he did so publicly. Spewell refused to take questions and referred reporters to his super-expensive talking mouths. Spewell's talking mouths said things like: "I am actively denying him the right to play for a year." "He has no right to play overseas. All the good players have been taken in Europe." "Without Carlesimo we were deprived of his right to work."

The talking mouths said things like: "The NRA is effectively denying him the right to earn a living for a year." "He has no opportunity (to play) overseas. All the good jobs are already taken in Europe." "Without a hearing, he was deprived of his right to work."

work. All the good jobs in Europe are taken. A lot of other people choke somebody and nothing happens to them."

For ten bucks, what do you think the judge would say? (1) "Gee, you're right, we

can't be denying your right to work just because you committed a felony." (2) "It's a bitch about the European job situation. Have

ou thought about Latin America? (3) You
ome into my court with this horseshit on
our breath. How does two years in

But Sprewell has more money than you or I and can hire whomever he wants to

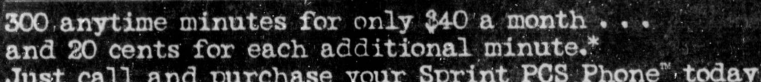
ake up seem down. Now the money is in. Sprowell is out \$25 million, he'll want that back. Johnnie Cochran will rake big bucks

or very little work. The Warriors will suddenly be way under the salary cap. Sprewell's agent, accountant, and assorted hangers-on

BA will have to make sure this doesn't backfire and cost them a lawsuit.

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Grand Old SCAM

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

departed from what turned out to be the most expensive political convention in the nation's history, auditors for the Federal Election Commission (FEC) have accused city hall, the Republican convention committee, and the convention's San Diego host committee of skimming or breaking the law. Funding the fire is the fact that the convention's largest benefactor — with a gift of \$1.5 million — was tobacco giant Philip Morris, and the executive director of the host committee was Jack Ford, son of ex-President Gerald Ford and a longtime Golding friend and political ally.

If draft allegations of improper disclosures and violations of federal prohibitions against out-of-town contributors are upheld by the full commission during a meeting, next month in Washington, D.C., San Diego taxpayers may have to foot the expense of legal bills and fines that could be imposed by the FEC for flouting federal campaign financing laws. At the very least, the national Republican party may be forced to refund to the government \$3.7 million in allegedly misspent federal funds, and the charges could prove an unwelcome diversion for Golding's senate campaign, already facing rocky times in the wake of a California poll dousing a slip in her statewide support.

The alleged shenanigans by San Diego and Republican party officials harken back to 1972, when Richard Nixon was forced to move the GOP convention from San Diego to Miami after revelations that Nixon's department officials cut deals in exchange for convention cash from T&T, the conglomerate that owned Sheraton Hotels. That scandal rankled San Diego's *Union-Tribune* publisher and Nixon's intimate Jim Copley, who long had coveted the chance to be the hometown host of Nixon's re-nomination. Copley died two years later.

Many of the current allegations center around a city-run, tax-deductible foundation intended to allow Copley's widow, Helen to

donate \$500,000 to defray expenses of the 1996 GOP convention. Copley — famous for hosting elaborate parties for political insiders and the media at each quadrennial GOP convention — had, like her husband, aspired to bring the Republican to San Diego, at least in part to exorcise the ghost of the 1972 debacle. Copley's oldest lieutenant, *Union-Tribune* editor-in-chief Herb Klein, a

San Diego

But in the frantic bidding war between cities for convention hosting rights, San Diego had always been regarded by most insiders as an underdog. Contrary to what Republicans would like to see, it was a fact that the city's convention center was too small. Although party officials complained to report to the bid, the city was too low, in private they were more worried about whether the city could come up with enough to provide the kind of extravagance they and the Democrats had become accustomed to in a large city. Under federal law, Democrats and Republicans must receive about \$12.4 million of taxpayer money to run for their respective conventions. By accepting bid funds, the parties are, supposed to agree that the city will spend no more than that for the convention's benefits, however, \$12.4 million is just the beginning.

The law has a loophole allowing cities the right to the convention to establish local committees which for private donors for additional convention support. Money for the host committee is supposed to come from local sources — corporations and individuals who have direct ties to the community. The law also required to ensure that donors are spending their money to promote the city where the convention is being held at seeking to buy the favors of the political party they're backing it.

Cities like New York, Chicago, San Francisco and Los Angeles are filled with big companies and wealthy individuals who are legitimately interested in the world's best. San Diego, on the other hand, is not. Much of the industry here is made up of small companies and specialists in art and design that can be counted on to give up money for both Republicans and Democrats as long as the price of bringing their conventions to town. The big savings and loans, including Home Federal and Great American, once the financial institution



Union-Tribune photo

one-time Nixon staffer, also held a feverish desire to have the convention here. Their aspirations dovetailed with Golding's wish to turn the national spotlight on herself prior to making a bid for the U.S. Senate. Thus, the stage seemed set for success when, in the fall of 1994, Golding announced that she was going to Chicago to cut a deal with Republican officials to bring the convention to



Herb Klein



Alex Spitzer



Susan Golding on Republican convention fund



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of Ronald Reagan's rise to the presidency, were wiped out in the scandals of the 1980s. Thus, when Susan Golding, as comptroller by then-City Manager Jack McGovern and a contingent of San Diego dignitaries — including then-City Attorney John Witt and then-Assistant City Attorney Curtis M. Fitzpatrick — and

Mark Braden, a Washington lawyer hired to represent the city in its convention bid, traveled to Chicago in December of 1994 to negotiate the city's proposed financial package to GOP bigwigs, skeptics abounded. But after a six-hour bargaining session, Golding emerged to tell a *Union-Tribune* reporter that

"things went well. We even laughed some of the time." Others were not as sanguine. The *Union-Tribune* reported at the time that the deal with the Republicans called for the city to come up with \$20 million, more than \$16 million of that to be from private donors, to be solicited by the host committee. Golding said

that the cost was "capped" at \$23 million. But that price would prove badly underestimated. If San Diego were restricted to gathering money from local sources, where would all that private money come from? That dilemma would later lead host committee fundraisers, led by Golding, to stretch the defini-

tion of a San Diego company to include Manhattan-based Philip Morris.

By the time the final balloon had dropped, total convention costs had grown to more than \$47 million, including the \$12.4 million in federal funds. The balance of about \$35 million consisted of \$23 million raised from pri-

vate donors by the host committee and \$12.8 million more from city taxpayers. \$5.2 million of the host committee's take was channeled to it through a tax-exempt foundation the city council established called the "Special Events Fund."

Although much of that money would come from out-

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San Diego Road (November 11, 1997) **25**

The city also argued that the Special Events Fund might also have theoretically been used to raise funds for the Super Bowl, and donations made to it were therefore not "restricted" to the Republican convention. The FEC staff rebutted, quoting a long list of donors who accompanied their checks with personal letters to Golding earmarking their money for the convention.

City records obtained under the California Public Records Act indicate that Golding and Jean Andrews, a professional fundraiser paid

The Union-Tribune
Copley had "volunteered" to help
after previously telling
her as
interest money.
In a July 1996 memo to

In a July 1996 memo to Klein and host committee chairman Jerry Parsky, Andrews wrote about using Chargers owner Alex Spanos to raise money from Greek

A sheet of fundraising "talking points" prepared by

"talking points" prepared by Fred Bush for Pacific Telesis chairman Phillip Quigly makes no mention of the local source limitation and in fact appears to encourage out-of-town

California's convention," the memo says. "The companies in California must set the precedent and an example for other corporations around the country to follow. If California does not support the Convention, why should a company from New York or Texas?"

into the host committee from across the country. The money was used for everything from hunting to television production to lavish media events. Communications giant AT&T

Copley's money, donated to the tax-deductible Special Events Fund foundation, went to logistical support for a huge fireworks show and invitation-only outdoor extravaganza the Copley Press threw for the national media.

In his response to the auditor's report, the city attorney contended that Golding's many mailings and fundrais-

many mailings and fundraising sessions in her city hall offices were designed to "showcase our great city" and not to channel contributions to a particular convention." The de-

"If the committee with the staff that happened, and I always agree," the spokesperson says, "then you've got

is a corporate... which is a no-... contribution is... period. What I'd... without saying it

...which con-
siders are being
...this is what
...they don't al-
...ains FEC
... Snyder,
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tribution. A corporate not allowed, trying to say a thousand

...the law committee and been aware of it from the beginning and were not in compliance with the law. They could not have been charged with the crime," the committee said. "The direct consequence is that by law, the committee is not authorized to recommend a different recommendation than that," she said. The investigative committee will testify. "They will be discussing the meeting with the FBI and the FBI commission." If the audit is approved by the state, the committee will be able to recommend a different recommendation than that.

borne by the committee on Arise audit staff at the Committee that the

to make a differentiation than . . . At this stage of . . . on, city repre- . . . it be allowed to . . . ly people who . . . ing this at the . . . be FEC staff . . . missioners."

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"Host committees are set up to promote the city and the commerce of the city. But what is involved in that report is that they were more or less going beyond the scope of what they were set up to do. They were supposed to promote their city, not to build otherwise impermissible funds into a publicly funded convention."

Teddie Kibel, a spokesman for the San Diego chapter of the American Lung Association, says she is not surprised to hear of the auditors' findings, but she usually remarks after meetings with host committee executives that local and executive director Jack Ford and executive director James Ford had been in the city. From tobacco

diaries included \$106,000 made to the host committee and \$306,638 made by the city to delegate and press credentials; \$44,000 paid by the host committee to the city for a "voter tabulation system" on

Allegedly improper expenses

Golding and Jean Andrews, a pro-fundraiser paid by the city, along with Klein and host committee fundraiser

scoured the nation for special-interest

larians, but a penalty paid will not be something to become public investigation) and the city's findings

Morris. "This money that is available from the tobacco industry is adding people to a lethal production and killing 400,000 Americans every year," says Morris. "I have seen thousands of people in San Diego have paid with their lives to smoke a product to which Philip Morris wants to make these contributions."

According to Kelly, Foster, Susskind, and other host committee members reacted the following association nor did they initially say anything. But he didn't care what the source of the money was. They were given take-always money from whatever it came to them.

"The host committee portrayed the convention as though it was some sort of civic event, like a Fourth of July fireworks show, but I don't see why we should give up our social interests," says Kelly, who worries that the contribution to the tobacco companies made by the host committee may influence city council votes on pending anti-smoking ordinances.

"I think everybody would agree that this whole thing about soft money contributions isn't just a scandal, I don't think Americans are concerned with making this specific interest groups aren't driving hard bargains with soft money."

The FEC audit argues that the host committee was as influential to the city "as appears to be the [Host] Committee was involved with officials of the

San Francisco Police Department," says David L. Smith Associates, Inc., for a variety of television production services. The audit also says that there should have been baked at direct contribution expenses.

Smith Associates' \$6.7 million San Diego task backed up by the San Diego host committee was \$750,000 more than the \$100,000 that the City of San Francisco, hometown of Geraldine Rosenthal, Bush Daily, featuring a walking tour of the city, and the American Lung Association. In its response to the auditors criticism, the Republican Air Force said that the video, which was never shown, was created to "entertain the audience during a planned half at the convention proceedings."

In addition, the arrangements committee maintained, the expenditure was permissible under a regulatory provision concerning cost reimbursement payments for "those expenses incurred for welcoming and entertaining attendees to the city, such as expenses for information booths, restrooms, etc." According to the audit report, the host committee "acknowledging that the city had borne paid this expense," has asked the arrangements committee for reimbursement.

To become final, the audit report must be approved by four members of the Federal Election Commission's auditor staff. "The staff makes recommendations to the commis-

following in 1992
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 is process.” ■
 —Matt Peiser

San Diego Reader November 11, 1997 **27**

1000

San Diego Reader (December 11, 1997) **27**

Magical Dwarf's Sad Orbit

Never has a telescope told so much in so short a time!

The astronomers on Palomar Mountain have gone to bed after a night of viewing, and now on this warm morning, the sky clear and the observatory dome a brilliant white against the blue, school groups wander around. I'm early for my meeting with an astro-physicist who'll be using the 200-inch Hale telescope tonight, and so for now I wander around too. By a doorway a teacher and a group of kids, 11 or 12 years old, sit in a circle. The teacher asks a question.

"How many of you know what diversity is?" No one answers. "That's not good," she says, and begins to explain. I hurry away—I've heard enough of that educational buzzword, hammered onto cliché, and it seems to me that in this place of all places the kids should be left to wonder. But then, climbing the stairs to the gallery I think that maybe it's the right question to ask here. After all, the big eye at Palomar has looked out onto all kinds of diversity, a diversity in the infinite scene. This is the Big Daddy, where the lines were drawn between us and billions of galaxies, where the universe continues to be plumb. This is the big eye on the pond of the Big Bang.

Inside the building the instruments sit, awaiting night. I look at the posters, the collection of facts written years ago by the looks of it. Operation began in 1948. The reflecting dome weighs 1000 tons. The telescope itself weighs 550 tons. The 200-inch mirror, transported cross-country five decades ago, weighs 14.5 tons. The approximate range—"well over one billion light-years" or, in terms of miles, a followed by 21 zeroes—is a precomputer range that has increased tenfold with the application of digital imagery.

Snicker noises and young voices break the stillness. A teacher follows them, talking about the telescope as soon as she reaches the top of the stairs. She says that light comes in through the dome, hits the mirror, and is reflected up to the top of the telescope to "prime focus." She says the telescope can move with the stars, that it is aligned with the north star and parallel to the earth's axis.

"Does anyone want to be an astronomer?" she asks. One kid says he wants to be an astronaut. Another wants to be an astrologer.

"Astronomy is good too," she says. "How many of you want to go to the moon?" The teacher raises her hand. But none of the kids do.

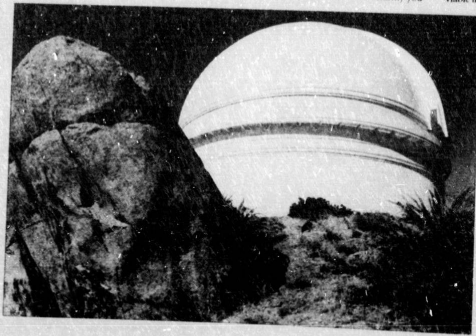
"How many of you want to go to a planet?"

Two hands shoot up. "I want to go to Jupiter!" "I want to go to Pluto!"

"How many want to go beyond the planets?" This gets a big response. About half the kids raise their hands. Somehow that figure seems right, and could maybe stand for the whole, that half would want

to use it. Which could be true, depending on the proposal. The teacher sighs, through the creek of his elbow and looks at prime focus while the kids mill around. Then he yells, "Let's continue," which causes weaker noises and high pitched voices to drain down the stairway and out of the building.

When you look at astronomy you



Palomar Observatory

to explore the universe, while the other half are staying rooted to the ground.

They leave and another group arrives. This teacher looks a little tired and stressed out. "Don't test me now," he says to one boy. But he admires the telescope, and the 200-inch mirror, the reflection to prime focus, and the polar axis bearing, and then for this group. Holding a thumb and forefinger up, like he's proposing a toast, the teacher asks, "To any of you know how much a short glass, how much a nigger-bowl?"

There's a silence, but then a couple of thick-limbed answers that see they do. "When they clean the mirror," he says, they take a nigger of liquid aluminum, and they expel it, they superize it, and out the mirror with it. It's a very heavy-duty process.

One of the kids wants to know if they can go inside the room and see the telescope. "No," the teacher says. "You have to be doing very important research, with a university, and there is a five-year waiting period

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is called a spectrum. The most familiar image we have of a spectrum is the rainbow. But the light we see, from blue to red, is a tiny portion of the electromagnetic spectrum, which ranges from the very short gamma-rays to the long radio wavelengths. Light traveling through the universe for millions and billions of years, passing through galaxies and gas clouds and solar atmospheres, takes on characteristics from its passages. In a way, the light writes its own book. Limin Lu was reading the book, the message in the light.

Quasars are believed to be in the center of galaxies, Limin Lu said. "Some of the light we see from quasars was emitted 10 billion years ago, when the universe was 10 billion years younger." (The universe is now "roughly" 15 billion years old, he said.) "The light has passed through galaxies, and gases. Everything between us and the quasar has left its imprint upon this light. All gases leave some signature on the light, they all take out a little piece of the spectrum. That which has been removed from the spectrum is the 'absorption line.' By looking at the absorption lines you can tell what's between the quasar and us," Lu said.

Was it like geology? I asked, like looking at a cliff wall and seeing a history of the earth? "Yes, similar to geology," he said. "But a different kind of signature. Supposing you have a galaxy between the quasar and us. Each element, such as



Limin Lu and Peter Chen in the control room.

hydrogen or carbon, creates a set of absorption lines on a spectrum. From the set of absorption lines, we have a way of figuring how far away the galaxy is. You can trace the age. You can see galaxies at 10, 8, 5, or 3 billion years. I look at galaxies of different ages. I'm looking at quasars in all directions of the sky, looking back 10 to 15 billion years."

One way to think of quasars

and the study of their light is through the "flashlight" in the forest analogy. You could think of a quasar as a big flashlight, way out there in space, shining through the forest of other galaxies and illuminating the many trees. Lu was looking at the light and at the trees.

Lu also explained that he looked at redshifts, the shift of absorption lines to longer wavelengths caused by galaxies moving

away from our solar system. Some move so fast they are approaching the speed of light (186,000 miles per second). Lu was looking at the redshifts of other galaxies, also imprinted on the spectrum of the quasar — the trees in the forest.

Perhaps you could say that Lu was signing down a beam of light 10 billion years old, and surveying the universe. We went

other imprints, indications of magnesium, of carbon, of oxygen — all signatures along the way. "We know the big bang produced hydrogen and helium, nothing else. These other elements are produced by stars, by atomic burning. When you see the heavier elements, you know that some stars have exploded. By looking at the light you can tell in principle how many stars have exploded and when."

You could think some strange things about this light and how it stood in relation to us. Say for convenience sake that *Homo sapiens*, or *Homo something-else*, have been around for a million years. That's one ten-thousandth of the total time of the light of a ten billion-year-old quasar. I'm told — so that when a quasar's light was 99.9999 percent of the way along its path to earth, we were up, carrying rocks and tools. Then in one ten-thousandth of a percent we learned how to write, to build telescopes, to make images, and with the 8-inch stretched out — *Palaeolithic* time to be. The light passed over the moon to earth in less than a second, and someone at the observatory looked up, caught a piece of that light, and how long it had traveled, where it had been, and what it had been through. Such was the spectrum of things.

Who could say what would happen in the next few thousandth of a percent? Limin Lu and I agreed to

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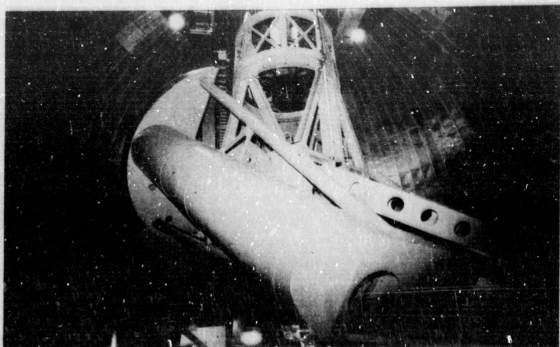
meet later that day, and that I would watch him do some work with the telescope. I asked if I could possibly see the dome open from the inside, see the "shutters" open up. It had to be something to see, I said. He smiled and said yes, it was something to see.

I returned to the gallery, where it was cool and quiet and still as a pharaoh's tomb. Three kids came up the stairs, with their mother. They looked around and talked, but then there was another sound on the stairs, a slow and laboring step, and hard breathing. A man reached the top, turned, and still gasping for breath, looked at the telescope. When he could talk he asked the woman, "Are you interested in engineering?"

"Sometimes, when I can understand it, when it's simple," she said.

He pointed up to the dome roof. "This opens up, the light comes in, bounces off there, at a collector up there. One thing I remember thinking is, it is amazing."

Later I wandered over to another observatory, the Oscar Meyer 60-inch telescope, where I met Ben Oppenheimer, an astronomer and grad student at Caltech. Ben invited me to dinner, and so I got to visit the Monastery where the astronomer's stay. Dinner was good at the Monastery, no doubt about it — pot roast, boiled potatoes, carrots, salad, bread, iced tea and lemonade, and strawberry sundae.



Palomar telescope

Maybe it's premature to call someone an astronomer while they're still in graduate school, but it would probably be okay in Ben Oppenheimer's case because he and another graduate student had discovered the first brown dwarf — an object not quite a star, not quite a planet, orbiting another star. Oppenheimer, who was 25, had grown up in New York City, gone to Columbia Uni-

versity, and then on to Caltech. On his second night of observing at Palomar, Oppenheimer and Dave Gilmore, a grad student from Johns Hopkins, photographed Gliese 229B, a brown dwarf in companionship with the star Gliese 229A. The Gliezes were 17 light-years away. The discovery made the front page of the New York Times, and there was an article in the journal Science. A study

of the light showed that Gliese 229B is 20 to 50 times bigger than Jupiter, and much like Jupiter in composition, with vast quantities of water and of methane. Over the course of a year the Hubble space telescope took a look, and it was determined that the orbit of Gliese 229B around Gliese 229A was about 400 years.

At dinner, talking of his brown dwarf, Ben said with a

little laugh, "It's sad."

"What's someone asked, 'That I won't be able to see an entire orbit?'"

Mark Colavita asked the position of Gliese 229B. Colavita, a scientist from the Jet Propulsion Lab, was running the interferometer project — a telescope with two far-flung mirrors that direct a starlight through oppo-

sing beam tubes, manipulating it in a laboratory to get mea-

surements of star distances and stellar atmospheres.

"Twenty-one degrees south," Ben said.

"Too faint for the interferometer," Colavita said.

In 50 years, Ben said, Gliese 229B will have moved 4 degrees in its 360-degree orbit.

"You can call it Gliese 229B, the first 45 degrees," Colavita said.

There was a problem with the name too, Ben said. "Brown dwarf" is so unexciting. Astronomers don't seem to be able to come up with colorful names.

"How about 'golden dwarf?'"

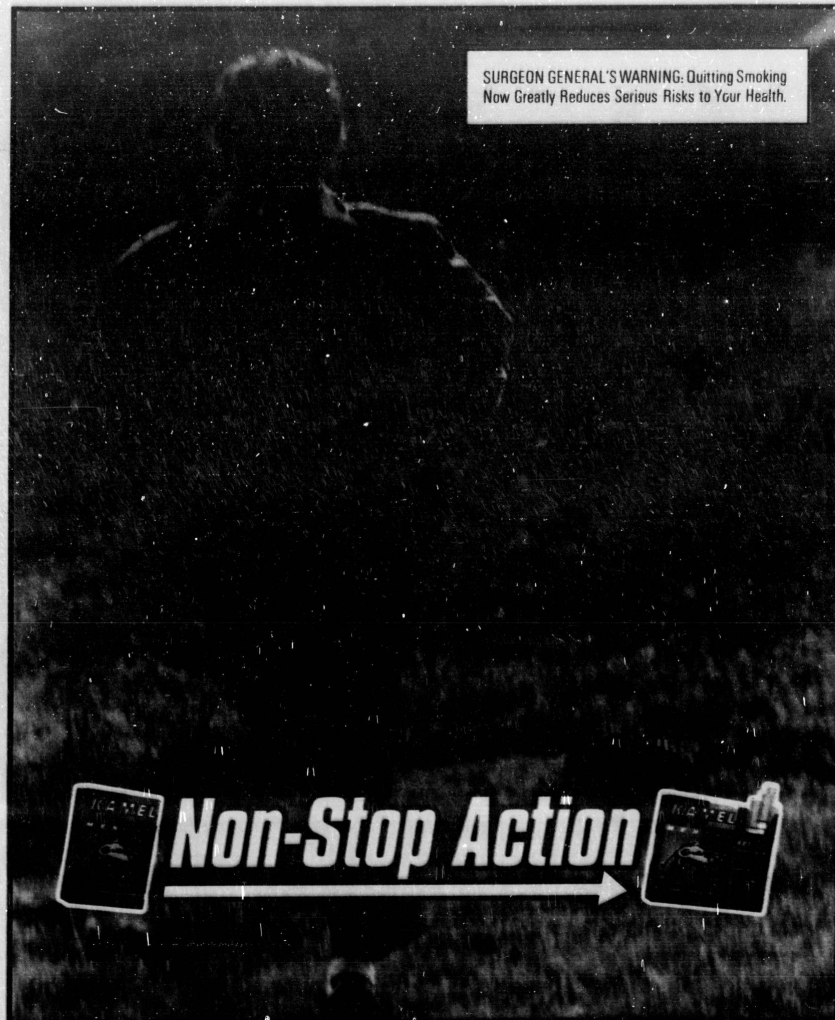
Now Ben Oppenheimer was working on his dissertation, hunting for more brown dwarfs, studying all the stars within 25 light-years of earth. There were about 100 of them. He was spending 45 minutes on each star. He'd gotten a lot of observing time at the Oscar Meyer 60-inch telescope, 15 times in the past two years, and he was scheduled for more sessions in the next six months.

But Ben hadn't found any other brown dwarfs yet, and he was beginning to see that brown dwarfs didn't come easily — even if in his case, they came easy.

And Ben, who had grown up on the west side of Manhattan, was beginning to see that the lives of the astronomer — in the mountains, working through the night — was a solitary pursuit and could be lonely. But he did all this with a laugh.

Toward the end of dinner

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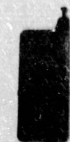
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Mark Colavita talked about his work at the interferometer during the coming evening, when he would be testing the instrument by looking at a single star in the two mirrors.

"We're gonna sit on one star and measure it with the beam splitter. See if it comes out as one star."

Limin Lu and I left for the 200-inch telescope, arriving just after seven. But the days were long this time 40 year, and it would be a while yet before the end of 18-degree twilight and the beginning of the observing. We went into the control room, and he checked his CCD (charged coupled device) for background noise. CCDs, cameras that record images with silicon and digital technology, have been the major advance in astronomy in the last decade. A photographic plate can record about 1 in 100 photons, but with CCDs an astronomer can record 40 to 80 percent of the light. With CCDs, work has become about 50 times more efficient, and an astronomer can record in a minute what had previously taken an hour with a photographic plate. With the widespread availability of CCDs (they are the recording device in camcorders too), backyard telescopes can now see as far as the Palomar telescope had in 1948—and a scientist like Limin Lu can see to the edge of the universe.

I had come from China in 1981 to study physics and then astrophysics at the University of Pittsburgh, before moving to Caltech. He was well into his graduate career before turning to astronomy, and so learned the basics by reading textbooks on his own. Lu wasn't someone who could look up at the sky and say anything about it. What he did was abstract. Lu was looking at things we can't see with the naked eye, and that sometimes can't even be seen by the naked eye with the telescope.

At night I'd look Rick Burruss, a night assistant, arrived. Rick is a telescope technician—he had studied astronomy at San Diego State and then, luckily, had found a job in astronomy. Lu and I followed him into the observatory and stood watching while Rick filled a thermos with liquid nitrogen. It would be used to cool the CCDs—even a little bit of heat from a camera could distort an image, especially one coming from billions of years away.

Clouds flew from the thermos and dropped to the floor. Rick said that in the beginning he had worn gloves but then found them unnecessary—the nitrogen just fell away, if you knew what to do. We climbed a stairway, and at the top, Rick flipped a switch. Moon went on, and the shutters parted while the dome opened. We walked onto a platform, a kind of lift. Rick closed the gate, but another switch, and we began to rise upward, to ascend to the top of the dome and the telescope up to prime focus. Looking up, cool mountain air currents

mixed with the day's heat, the shutters pulled back like curtains—50 ton curtains, a widening gate, opening up on the mountains and on down into a sea of clouds over San Diego County.

My breathing was quickening. I don't think I'd ever been breathless before, but I was now, riding up to prime focus. Mount Baldy was visible, and the trees on the mountains, but the clouds stretched away, gray, silver, and at the horizon, where the sun had fallen, there was a red band of light. As we rose higher, Limin Lu was a silhouette in front of the opening shutters.

"You ever been before?" Rick Burruss asked. "No," I said. "It's breathtaking."

"Everyone who comes up here says just about the same

thing. One of the interferometer scientists was up here last night and he said exactly the same thing. Yeah," Rick said. "She's an old hantiship."

Rick hit a button and the lift locked into place at prime focus. He climbed into a barrel-like chamber. "The astronomer used to work up here," he said. "Before they built the control room."

"Too cold," Lu said. Rick

put a funnel into the holder of the COSMIC spectrograph CCD that Lu would be using, and poured in the nitrogen.

On the way down the dome began to turn—a 1000-ton hemisphere turning, rumbling away. It seemed too big to move, and so we had the sensation that the telescope was spinning. "The dome moves on train wheels," Rick said. "They ground them for two years to

make them even."

He filled another thermos and poured liquid nitrogen into the lower camera below the mirror, and then we went into the control room, an office within the observatory. Rick got into his seat in front of the controls—his job was to point the instrument—and Lu, at a bank of monitors and computers, directed the movement. One cameraman, one director here.

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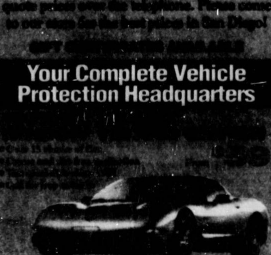
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Lu called out a set of coordinates, Rick punched in the numbers. Through a speaker we could hear the telex operator, whistling like a trolley car, over the sound of the dome rumbling on wheels.

"Okay," Rick said. "I've got a couple stars within a couple tenths of an arc-second."

"That's good," Lu said. A bright object flew onto the screen.

"We want to TX (temporarily fix), and go to the next coordinates."

They moved again, tested the instrument, and a big star came into view, filling the screen. "Ooo," Lu said. "That's a big one. Very bright." He dashed it.

Another coordinate, and another star pulled up into view, like a fish being hauled aboard. Lu called out other coordinates and Rick punched in other numbers, and "nailed" several stars, but a problem soon arose. Limin Lu was looking for a faint light, one that couldn't be seen on the screen, in fields that appeared to be empty. After testing on visible stars, they were trying to aim at empty space and take pictures. Using coordinates, Lu was essentially saying, "Take three steps to the left and three steps to the right," though it was more like several thousand steps.

More tries, more moves, and Bob Thackston decided to change one of the encoders in the arm of the telescope that controls movement. He climbed up above the mirror with his tools, took an encoder out, fit the new one into position, and working by radio with Rick, lined it up. Thackston complained that parts were hard to get, and said that the installation of a new optical control system was coming at the right time. They'd begun working on it the next month.

Back in the lab, a quasar floated onto the screen. "That looks like a galaxy," Thackston said. "Let's do some scans." But again the instrument was off, and again Thackston went to the telescope to insert another encoder. When it was finally in and they began to run tests, clouds—the ones that had been sitting down in the valley earlier—began to flow over the dome. The shutters closed, to protect the mirror. Thackston said he was going home to bed, that they could call if they needed him.

They kept trying. Rick looked up a star in a manual, punched in the coordinates. The dome rumbled, and the star came rising into view. And they tried to move by coordinates to a second star, and again the coordinates were off by half an arc-second.

A mood of frustration was developing. Bob Thackston, superintendent of the observatory, had arrived, and he was feeling it too. Thackston wanted Limin Lu to be able to "do it once," and so did Lu—this was his time at Palomar, and one didn't come easily. Then the dew point sensor went off, and Thackston went outside to check the humidity. Another problem—if it got too wet they'd have to shut down.

A phone call came from Rick's wife—she wanted to go home. "My beautiful wife," he said when he hung up, smiling. He had a job in astronomy, but he'd sacrificed the good night sky.

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We left the control room and walked around the dome 20 feet above ground on the catwalk. ("Why do they call it a catwalk?" Lu asked, and we couldn't tell him.) Condensation was collecting on the dome and falling to the ground like rain, and there were the sounds of motors. I didn't know where to go, and I didn't have a flashlight, and shooting didn't seem like the right thing to do either.

Back in the 200-inch room I met Jean Mueller, who had come to collect some photographs, negatives of the sky survey. Mueller said she was photographing the northern sky. Only the winter fields were left.

I followed Mueller outside and after sorting through folders of negatives she called for

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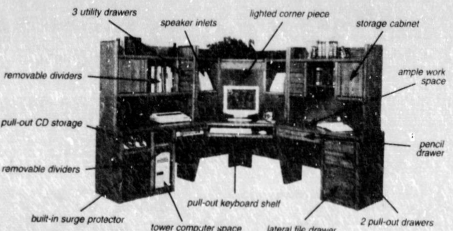
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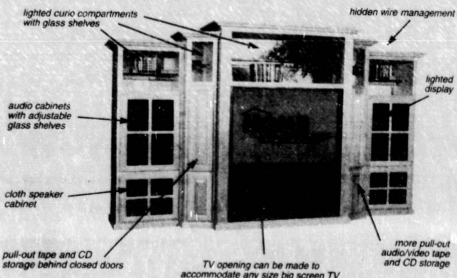
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Ben focused on star NN2128. Next to this star was another object that may have been a companion star, and Ben had been watching the relationship for the past two years. If they were companions, they would have moved together during that time. They would have had "common proper

He talked more about the brown dwarf. Gliese 229B looks a lot like Jupiter because of the presence of methane and "lots of water." Water was "one of the dominant features of opacity in this thing." (And one of the reasons Gliese 229B was called a "cool brown dwarf.") They had also found the element cesium on this cool brown dwarf. "There are no astronomical papers on cesium," Ben said. "I'm writing one."

Some galaxies
away at about
speed of light
kilometers

is are moving
90 percent the
light, 270,000
per second.

In the control room, Skip Staples, the night assistant, was keeping an eye on the weather station. The humidity was coming in from I.A., he said. "A marine layer. June gloom."

"An average of 50 percent of observing time is useful," Ben said. "It's kind of ridiculous to think that the amount of time my thesis takes is dependent on the weather."

Suddenly the sky cleared again. Ben got on the screen and pulled in a star.

Or as Ben put it — the wave front of the light coming through the atmosphere got "crumpled up." A new tool was coming into use, though, a "rubber mirror" that could be tuned to the atmospheric turbulence. Pulsed lasers compensated for movement, like a baseball glove moving around as the ball changed position.

After the discovery of Gliese 229B, Ben got behind in his schoolwork, and forgot to study for his qualifying exam, so he failed it.

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A close-up of a Motorola flip phone screen. The screen displays a text message from a contact labeled '01:'. The message reads: 'See you at the airport at 6:30! - Mom'. The Motorola logo is visible at the top of the screen.

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Meyer telescope caught up with the spin of the earth like a dog walking behind its master. Ben called out a number, "61713A," and said, "Let's go there." Skip Staples pointed the telescope. Ben took a series of exposures. The image at a 20th of a second was just a bunch of specks. With longer exposures, as the turbulent light moved around, the image began to look like a sunflower. This star, in the constellation Draco, was 23 light-years away. "It has a known companion," Ben said, "but no one has ever seen it before." Ben looked at the image. "But we're seeing it pretty easily here. This might be the first time anyone has seen it."

We waited, and watched, but it was one of those little lost hopes. Ben said, "Okay, we're not seeing it, no. That's the way it goes." Then, "Sometimes you get excited." He laughed, left the room to change the filter on the camera, and made a bunch of specks. With longer exposures, as the turbulent light moved around, the image began to look like a sunflower. This star, in the constellation Draco, was 23 light-years away. "It has a known companion," Ben said, "but no one has ever seen it before." Ben looked at the image. "But we're seeing it pretty easily here. This might be the first time anyone has seen it."

and — and disappeared, formed and disappeared, like waves breaking along a beach. "Sometimes I look at that screen so long I begin to see things," he said. "By looking at the light you can tell how many stars have exploded."

Of Anton Chekhov, the Russian writer, one critic said that his stories were like "the arc that describes the circle." It was the same for Ben Oppenheimer, seeking to know his brown dwarf from the fraction of the 200-inch telescope. Stars were on my mind. What inspiration? Astronomers are like writers. Both fix their eyes on some thing and look hard, or try to.

of his orbit — his work, perhaps his life work with 229B, was an arc describing a circle. And Frank O'Connor, in *The Lonely Voice* which explores the question of who we write, begins with a quote from Pascal about the night sky: "The eternal silence of those infinite spaces terrifies me." O'Connor said that we write and communicate to deal with that feeling. And astronomers, bringing the infinite spaces closer to us, surely they explain away some of this distance in the night. Astronomers turn into impressionists to wonder, questions to exclamation points, silence to some kind of knowing. The shutters had reopened at the 200-inch, 1.1m Lu was

looking at quasars again, bright ones that he could see. I thought about staying longer, going inside to watch, but there was a long ride down the mountain yet. The wind was blowing hard and the air was cold but there seemed to be a stillness inside the dome, a quiet intelligence, as the light faded on some distant point at the edge, and thus at the beginning, of the universe. — Douglas Wilson

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OCTOBER 12, 1991 Frank Gagliardi reclined in the living room of his home in Quail Valley near Lake Elsinore, north of Temecula. His busi-

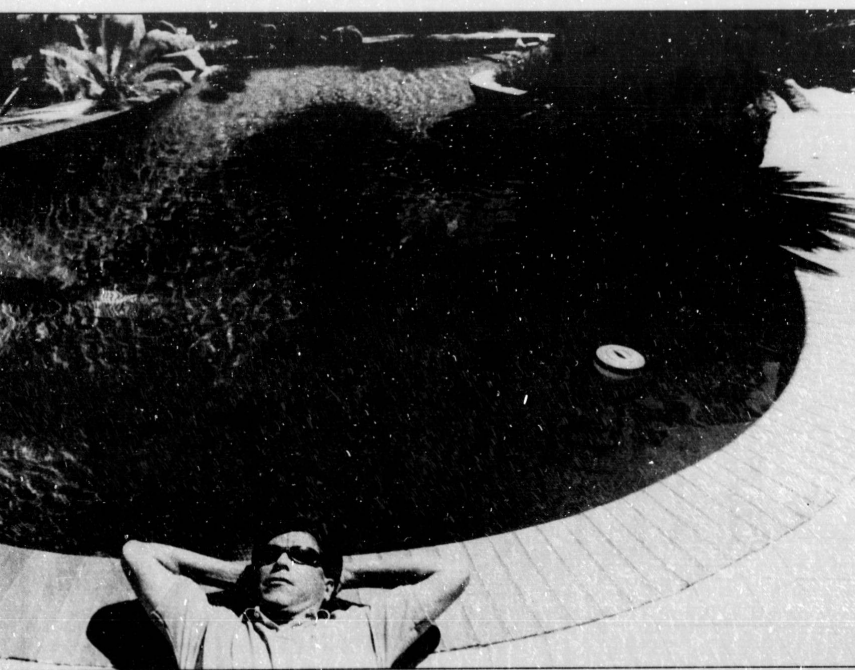
ness, hauling trade-show exhibits, had kept him on the road to and from Washington, D.C., the previous two weeks. But now he was home recuperating for the next two, relaxing and watching a little TV, when his life changed forever. Five numbers announced on the television matched the five on the Quick Pick lottery ticket he held in his hand.

"I couldn't think," Gagliardi recalls of those first few minutes. "There were a million things racing through my head. I was by myself and my wife wasn't home. I was running around the coffee table for three hours waiting for her to get home, and when she got home, I was saying, 'Get in the house and lock the doors.' She didn't believe it. So I went up to



the store [where I bought the ticket], and they were going to stick the ticket in the machine, too. If it was a winner, I told them not to do that just in case [the machine] ate it by accident. So they did the serial numbers on the ticket and found out that I was the winner. So I handed her a home and told my wife that it was the winning ticket but we didn't know how much. So I went back to the store, and they told me, and then I really flipped out."

Gagliardi—5'8", wiry, black hair, turned 40, the 34-year-old son of a Japanese woman and an Italian-American man—had won \$26 million. The next few hours were even crazier than the first few minutes. They couldn't turn in the ticket right away because the lottery office had shut down for Columbus Day weekend. The prospect of having the winning ticket without being able to turn it in began to weigh on Gagliardi. "It was kind of scary," he remembers, "especially since we couldn't turn the ticket in right away, and we were just holding onto it, this little piece of paper worth \$26 million. Until I got to the office, I wasn't safe. People will kill you for something like that. I had the ticket so many times in the house that I kept losing it. So I called our lawyer, and he told us to go hanging out at the nearest hotel with a safe deposit box. For the remainder of the weekend," Gagliardi



Frank Gagliardi

and his family stayed holed up in the hotel, waiting for Tuesday. Over and over, reports came on the television that someone had won the Lotto jackpot of over \$26 million dollars, but nobody had stepped forward. Neither Gagliardi nor his wife could sleep. "Just when you're about to fall asleep," he describes the experience, "all the numbers and the money go through your head, and you can't sleep for another couple of days."

Finally, Tuesday came and Gagliardi took the ticket to the lottery office in Riverside to claim his prize. They confirmed that he was the winner but told him that before he could collect the first of his 20 annual payments, he'd have to wait on a standard monthlong background check to "make sure you don't owe any taxes or child support or something like that." They also told him that he didn't want to start acquiring the expensive things every lottery winner should have. "The guy at the lottery office said, 'Even though you don't have the money right now, you can go out and get whatever you want because of this receipt.' So I told my wife to jump in my truck, and we went down to the Benz dealer, and we test drove the best one they had, and I told the guy, 'I'll take it.' But I also told him, 'This is all I've got,' and I showed him the receipt. He said, 'Okay.' So I showed him a check for the car and

he said, 'Just call us when we can cash it,' and I drove away."

Dad Gagliardi ever wish he hadn't won? "I said that to myself the first week," he says. "Because of all the people bugging me and stuff like that. When we first turned the ticket in, we held a news conference because if you didn't, people would be jumping over your fences at your house just to get a picture of you, and we didn't want all that stuff around our kids. So we went away from the house and held a press conference. Then they didn't hound us that much. People were still driving from all over just to see where I lived. They were constantly going up and down the street and stopping in front of our house."

Along with the junkies came the beggars. His family, friends, and acquaintances didn't ask for loans and gifts, but total strangers did. Some came to the door, some called, and some wrote letters asking Gagliardi to share his winnings. Many of them were obvious frauds. Gagliardi leans back and smiles at the memory. "One guy from Texas, I'll never forget that guy: he wrote that his wife was missing a leg and he had one foot in the grave. I didn't think

anything of it. A couple of weeks later, the same guy wrote a letter and forgot what he had written the first time and said that he was missing a leg and she had one foot in the grave."

Though his friends didn't ask him for money in the early days, Gagliardi did notice they started treating him differently, as if his new wealth had raised his status. "At first everybody said I was going to change," he says laughing, "but everybody would change around me. People would come up, when it first happened, and it was, 'Can I get you something, can I do this, can I do that?' They just wanted to do everything for me, and I said, 'Gee, settle down. I'm still the same guy, I can get my own beer.' In a month or so, it all

went back to normal with my friends."

Before winning the lottery, Gagliardi had always promised his wife that if he won the lottery, they'd move up to Marin County to be closer to her parents. He held true to his promise and they moved, first renting a house and then buy-

ing one and settling in. Gagliardi started a custom motorcycle shop—a lifelong interest. But having grown up here in San Carlos, he felt far from his friends and out of his element in Northern California. His marriage, which had been rocky before, got even rockier and eventually crumbled. "I didn't know a single person up there," Gagliardi explains. "The whole reason behind us moving up there was because she was always saying that she never saw her parents and they were getting old. We saw them more when we lived here than when they just lived right down the street. So that kind of pissed me off. I came down here to be separated because we weren't getting along, and about a week or two after I was

here, she was dating someone. So I said, 'Let's just get a divorce.' Now we are the best of friends."

Gagliardi insists that winning the lottery was not what ended his marriage; if anything, it only postponed an inevitable break. "The money had nothing to do with it. We were deep-seated against each other."

"I hid the ticket so many times in the house that I kept losing it."

GORDON and SMITH

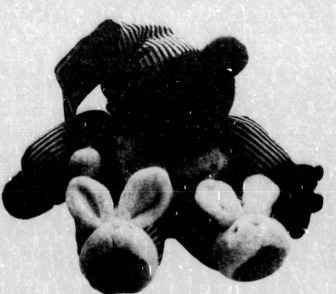
Straight ahead from the front door, a hall leads you past a living-room-sized kitchen on the left, a dining room on the right, and down into the family room, which opens onto a patio with a pool and a Jacuzzi. Past that, a grassy lawn spreads out and gives way to a sweeping view of the El Cajon Valley. Right off the lawn is a tennis court. "There's a 30-car parking lot behind the tennis court from another entrance on a different street for parties and stuff," Gagliardi says, pointing to the spot. "This is what sold me the house," he adds, opening the automatic

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MATH 120	3	SPH 135	3
MATH 290	1		



roll-up door on a full, outdoor set back from the pool and tennis court.

When he first went, Giagaldi gave his trucking business to his brother. "Hell, why would I drive a truck when I can't have to?" — and he left his custom motorcycle business to his ex-wife after the divorce. He keeps himself busy by redecorating and fixing up his house.

"It was like being back in the 60s when you walked in here," Giagaldi says. "There were yellows and lime greens and oranges. Every room was a different color. Sitting here, you could see three different colors of carpeting. There were five layers of wallpaper on the walls and four layers of linoleum in the kitchen. I've been doing all the work myself. I've probably

"People were driving from all over just to see where I lived."

put in over a thousand square feet of tile, and marble myself. I've been scraping wallpaper. I did all the wood trim and the paint and the carpeting. I did all of the kitchen, all of the tile work there. I did all of the laundry room. That had light-blue carpeting and old wallpaper. This house is almost done except for my kids' room and my room and then the ceiling. I have to do all of the ceilings. The guest house is done. There's a 1200-square-foot gym under the lacuzzi—I've got to do that yet—and then the butler's quarters, and then I'll be done. It gives me something to do. I like working with my hands, and I'm going to make some coin off of it one of these days."

Along with his home-improvement tasks, Gagliardi owns Babco Escrow company, which gives him the opportunity to do what he loves most.

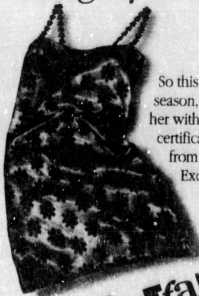
"I'm the president, but I'm actually the errand boy. I just deliver instructions and run errands," he explains. "I like to ride my Harley, and I do it all on my bike."

Gagliardi formulates a financial plan every year, which not only ensures that his money will last a lifetime—"I know some lottery winners who are broke because they didn't plan"—it is also a source of emotional reassurance.

"After a day of embarrassing situations, I meet, twice a week, with strangers I trust; they want to invest in ideas into their ideas. So every day I do a financial plan, and I just take the moxie that I need to live off of and the rest goes into investments, so it's pretty much taken care of. If someone says no to me for some reason, I can just get over it. Well, it's all tied up."

Included in his financial plan is money for his charities: the Christian Community Theater and the Los Angeles Rescue Mis-

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sion. "I got hooked up to [the Rescue Mission] through the TV Guide. I thought, 'This would be great to feed a bunch of guys.' So I wrote them a letter. I said, 'It's real easy for me to write a check, but I want to help. So on Thanksgiving I'll go up there and help feed the homeless people. Last time I did it, it was over 500 people we served. It was fun. You get to meet a bunch of movie stars who are helping out, serving the food. It makes you

feel good, a lot better than just writing a check. When I leave there, I feel damn good. It's better than anything I can buy." For Gagliardi, the sweet part of winning the lottery is people treating him as if he had no problems just because he is rich. "People treat you differently," he complains. "They always say, 'God, I wish I had your problems.' They have no clue what the hell is going on. People always think they know, but they don't

know anything. Just having money doesn't solve problems. Yeah, it's great, but it's not all that it's cracked up to be all of the time. Sometimes you are miserable because you have all of that money and sometimes, you are happy. You are always going to have problems. Money, it's like a temporary fix. I think the more money you've got, the more problems you're going to have." One problem money has

caused for Gagliardi is he can't trust women who seem to like him. "I've dated a lot of girls," he explains, "and you can't tell if they like you or they like the money. It's kind of screwed because you finally meet someone, and you think it's the one, and then you check up on them, and you find out that they are lying to you. It's terrible." Another, much more serious problem is the rift between Gagliardi and his father. When

he first won his money, Gagliardi gave an equal amount to each of his three brothers, his sister, and his parents; equal amounts "so they wouldn't fight." The trouble is, his dad thought that as the father of the family, he should get more. Now, Gagliardi says sadly, "I haven't talked to him in over three years." But Gagliardi is enjoying his life as a millionaire. "I'm having fun," he says. Why shouldn't he? His work is a choice between

fixing up his house, which he loves, or riding around all day on his Harley, which he loves even more. And it's all on a schedule. His vacation consists of throwing parties, playing golf, traveling to the best resorts, and riding his Harley. "Is he a different man from the one who won the lottery in 1991?" Gagliardi shakes his head. "I'm the same dude," he says. "Just with nicer shit."

—Erica Green

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Three months ago, our IPA announced it had tumbled into deep financial trouble, with about \$3 million of debts, minimal cash reserves, and a negative monthly balance sheet. The IPA—which I'll call Quality Services Medical Group (QSMG)—to protect its corporate secrets—pays me for the health care of about 20 percent of my patients, so I would like to see it do well. The medical group called this meeting to tell all of us shareholders that it was doing to manage the crisis.

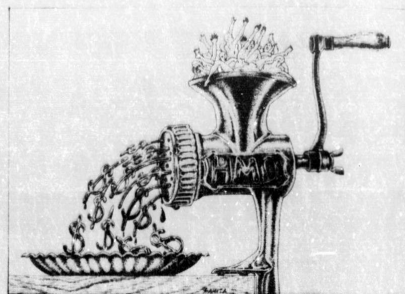
IPAs are like stockbrokers in an ideal world; they wouldn't exist. In the big picture, they have no purpose; they are middlemen. Aetna, Blue Cross, Foundation Health, Health Net, and other insurance companies design health insurance plans and sell them to employers, who then sign up their employees. But the insurance companies don't have any doctors, hospitals, labs, x-ray facilities, or other personnel and equipment to provide health care to their enrollees in HMO (Health Maintenance Organization) plans. IPAs are regional collections of health care providers, which exist so that HMOs can contract with them for these services in a given geographical area. Kaiser is the exception; they have their own providers who work only for Kaiser and therefore see only Kaiser patients. Kaiser doesn't use IPAs, which helps them control costs. We can hope that our IPA will someday be able to contract directly with employers and replace the greedy HMOs that are draining all the resources out of medicine and into their huge bank accounts.

Meanwhile, QSMG is in trouble. Two corporate financial consultants stood before us and told us why we got into trouble and how we were going to get out. They told us that the medical group had overpaid its doctors, sacrificing its long-term financial viability to keep us happy. To correct this, they cut payments to primary care physicians by 20 percent beginning July 1.

That news had repercussions. Primary care physicians (family physicians, internists, and pediatricians) have much higher overhead costs than specialists, usually about 60 percent of our gross receipts, which leaves the other 40 percent as our profit margin. When the group cut our payments by 20 percent, they halved our earnings. For those among us who had as many as 80 percent of our patients belonging to QSMG, this was devastating. One of my favorite colleagues abandoned her solo practice to join Kaiser. Several others now have practices on the edge of financial insolvency.

Specialists have not fared well either. QSMG has cut their payments 45 percent over the past several years. Fortunately for the specialists, this came on the heels of a decade of unprecedented prosperity, where they were raking in fortunes that one could easily label excessive—\$250,000 to \$1 million annually. Even as the market corrects itself, these specialists who have managed their money well are not hurting the way the primary care doctors are.

Let's assume you are a teacher and you live in my area. The school district gives you a choice



among different health plans, including Kaiser. Suppose you select a Health Net HMO plan. In our region, the HMOs contract with two competing IPAs, QSMG and BPMG (Best Physicians Medical Group, not their real name). You choose the group you want to use, often based on which hospital the IPA uses or which physicians belong to the group. I am unusual in that I belong to both groups. QSMG hates the fact that I am not exclusive to their group because it allows patients to select BPMG and still see me, so QSMG cannot use me as a means to attract patients away from the competition. BPMG tolerates my infidelity because they are based in the next town, not mine. My presence gives them access to more patients through greater geographical coverage. I'm not willing to drop BPMG because if I did, the 20 percent of

my patients who are in BPMG would have to switch to QSMG or see another doctor. QSMG's current financial straits illustrate how stupid I would be to become exclusive to their group. You then decide on a primary care physician, and since I am inventing this scenario, we will pick me. Because you live in my town, not in the hospital, you will go to First Quality Hospital. Your school district begins paying its health premiums to Health Net.

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Then there is the whole issue of generic drugs. When a new medicine becomes available, the pharmaceutical company

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that patented it gets exclusive rights to sell it until its patent expires, at which time other companies can make the same medicine and sell it cheaper as a generic. Now, when a given drug's patent expires, the company with the patent almost always makes a generic version that is identical to its brand-name product except it does not display the original logo on the pills or the label. So most generic drugs are exactly the same as the original, and they will for less.

IPAs, in their efforts to control costs, are trying to get their physicians to prescribe the generic medications. The pharmaceutical industry, to protect its huge profit margins, is trying to maximize the use of brand-name medications.

You go to the pharmacy with

I prescribe a medicine for your nose that works great, but you're tired of showing up for dates looking like Anna Karenina.

a prescription that specifies "Presolone pills" (not an actual drug name) for high blood pressure. Your pharmacist reads the prescription, knowing that Roxanis Pharmaceuticals (fictional name) makes a generic version of this drug that costs 40 percent less than the brand name. He also knows that Roxanis will give him a \$20 rebate every time he dispenses the brand-name version, so he searches the prescription for the words "Dispense generic unless otherwise specified." He doesn't find them, because we have yet to educate most doctors to include those words on our preprinted prescription pads. Pharmacists, especially those running small private businesses, are caught in the vise of dwindling reimbursements and shrinking profits as much as the rest of us health care service providers, who dispense the brand-name product and pocket the \$20, knowing he has helped increase the cost of health insurance in order to pay his rent.

Insurance companies can't resist such temptation either. Most HMOs in California's major cities are in the process of shifting "have already shifted the financial risk for their clients' pharmacy costs to the IPAs by paying the IPAs a fixed, small amount of money per month for each patient to cover pharmacy costs. Having unloaded the responsibility, many HMOs have landed contracts with pharmaceutical companies that give them a rebate when the pharmacist dispenses the brand-name medication. Now the

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HMOs can encourage their patients to demand brand-name products, the rebates increase the HMO's profits, and the IPA pays for the more expensive medication.

Because of this, QSMG announced at the meeting that it is issuing its preprinted pads that include the phrase "This prescription is generic unless otherwise specified." They also told us that the group will include pharmacy costs per patient in its quarterly "report cards," which inform each primary care physician how much the care of his patients is costing the IPA. If we are "efficient" and spend less than a certain target amount in providing care, including the costs of specialty care while caring for our patients, the group will reward us. That is what the group tells us. The reality is that

Each insurance company has its own formula, and we doctors must prescribe drugs on the formulary, or the insurance company won't pay for it.

they will dock us less when the next round of reimbursement cuts comes, as they have never had money to give us bonuses in the past, and I do not see any reason to believe they will have any in the future. Those PCPs (primary care physicians) who are above the targets will not get the "bonus" of a smaller pay cut.

If you have noticed that your doctor seems to have less time for you, to look more stressed than before, and to have less competent staff at the office, you are probably right. It will get worse before it gets better.

One might wonder why the IPAs cannot negotiate better contracts with the HMOs to get more money. The answer to an economist is simple: there are too many doctors and too many IPAs.

In our region, we have the two IPAs-QSMG and BPAG. When the HMOs come around every year to renew the contract, the negotiations go something like the following:

The HMO's CEO gives QSMG's president an envelope with an offer, always for less money per patient than the previous year. With the envelope comes a clear message: "If you don't accept this offer, we'll take all of your patients down the road to BPAG." The CEO does the same thing when he meets with BPAG. The existence of the two IPAs allows the HMO to ratchet down its offer every year until one of the medical groups goes out of business. Both of our groups have powerhouse

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financial institutions backing them as capital partners. Both are running lean. BPMC has been particularly aggressive in cutting excess specialists and other surplus providers out of its plan to keep costs down. QSMG has been more loyal to its specialists, and that is the biggest reason its financial troubles are much worse.

The other major player in our region is Kaiser. Kaiser is now making a big push to drive down its premiums so low that the rest of us will go out of business, and they may succeed. The model that Kaiser and the other HMOs are moving toward to keep costs down is to restrict access to providers as much as possible. Each PCP in the plan will be responsible for about 4000 patients, twice as many as now. When a patient wants to talk to his PCP, he will use

Each primary-care physician in the plan will be responsible for about 4000 patients, twice as many as now.

either his phone or computer to access a triage system that will take him through a series of decision trees and other recommended treatment or allow him access to a health care provider.

That initial provider probably will not be your primary care provider (physician, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant), but someone with less training who works for less money. If your problem is too complex for that person, then maybe you will get to see or talk to your PCP. This system will also make much more use of mid-level practitioners (nurse practitioners and physician's assistants) because they will work for less money than physicians. Physicians will see only those people with complex medical problems and will not get the opportunity to know their patients in times of good health, when we can emphasize the processes of building trust and preventing disease. We will supervise the care of scores of others whom we may never meet.

Systems such as these work for two types of people: those who almost never have to use it and those who are intelligent and assertive enough to work through it. A disproportionate number of people who will read this article fall into one or both categories, but for most people, this type of system will not maintain health, which will render the term Health Maintenance Organization ironic. Faced as I am of examples of true irony, I do not want my profession to be one of them.

—Jim Fitch

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It Doesn't Matter If They Are Written with Lipstick on the Back End of a Pig

LIKE IT OR NOT, WE ARE A PART OF OUR TIME. WE SPEAK THE LANGUAGE OF OUR TIME. FOR POETS, IT MAY BE MORE RAREFIED; IT MAY BE

ADORNED OR CONVOLUTED, BUT, NONETHELESS, IN SOME WAY IT IS REFLECTIVE OF OUR CULTURE. I, FOR INSTANCE, AS A VERY YOUNG MAN

WAS RELIEVED WHEN I FIRST READ WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS AND I REALIZED I COULD STOP TRYING TO WRITE LIKE ALGERNON SWINBURNE.

I know I am not alone when I confess that I have stared at a blank sheet of paper for hours, day after day. Why? Why is it so difficult? Because I want to travel to a new place. Not only do I want the language to be new, I also want the ideas to be new. I want the whole world to be new! We know that that is impossible, but desire is not rational.

Well, we know Columbus did not set sail for America. But what he got was not so bad. We concentrate all we know into the moment, with some fearful peering into the near future. When I make the mistake of imagining how a whole poem should unfold, I immediately want to destroy that plan. Nothing should supplant the true act of discovery.

The poem is like a very demanding but beautiful pet. It says, "I want this. No, I don't want that. Now I need this, and more of that. But I don't want any of that," and so on. Corrective mode. Writing both truth and beauty, the beauty of language in pursuit of truth.

Sure poems want to do their work in the quietest way, like a spider working in a corner. Others are very noisy, banging words against one another as if they were tin cans. One kind of poem is not inherently better than another.

Amazingly, year after year, surprising, subtle, profound, funny, and sad new poems are written and published. Poets we could not have imagined; poems we now know we needed. There is no end to our need for poetry. Without poetry our culture and, more importantly, our collective spirit, would be a tattered, wayward thing.

The daily routine of our lives can be good and even wonderful, but there is still a hunger in us for the mystery of the deep waters, and poetry can fulfill that hunger. It speaks to that place in us that seems incomplete. And it can assure us that we are not crazy or alone, and that is a tall order.

What we want from poetry is to be moved, to be moved from where we now stand. We don't just want to have our ideas or emotions confirmed. Or if we do, then we turn to lesser poems, poems that tell you killing children is bad, chopping down the rain forest is bad, doing is bad. A good poet would agree with all of those sentiments but would also strive for an understanding beyond those given.

The poet arrives at his or her discovery by setting language on edge or creating metaphors that suggest dangerous ideas, or any number of other methods. The point is, language can be hazardous as it is our primary grip on the world. When language is skewed, the world is viewed differently, but this is only effective if the reader can recognize this view, even though it is the first time he or she has experienced the thought.

When you come upon a poem you especially like, what separates it from so many other well-made poems is the quality of its insight. And for this word "insight" I would happily substitute the lofter words "revelation" or "epiphany." Style and voice serve as a means of seduction. They are the courtesies, they help create the appropriate tone and ambience and set of possibilities whereby the revelation may occur. I say "may" because there are no guarantees. The poet can only hope for it. Revelations known beforehand are by definition not revelations.

The act of writing poetry is a search for the unknown. Each line written is searching for the next line. And as the weight, the length, of the poem accumulates, so too does the pressure accumulate for a revelation to occur. Each image or idea should point the way to another image or idea. And each of these indicates the need for further development if the poem is to achieve its maximum potential. Each poem dictates the magnitude of the revelation. An extremely small insight can be satisfying. Simply offering the reader a new way of seeing a common object or familiar experience qualifies as an insight or epiphany. Charles Simic begins a poem called "Fork" like this:

This strange thing must have crept
Right out of hell.
It resembles a bird's foot
Worn around the cannibal's neck.

We are in a provocative, new world from the get-go, but also one that the reader can immediately see.

It is very clear, when reading Ovid or John Clare or Edna St. Vincent Millay or John Ashbery, that human beings don't change. Their

circumstances, their life experiences, and, yes, their languages change, but their emotions do not. Their joys, their heartaches, their griefs, their jealousies, etc., are remarkably the same as they were 2000 years ago. Still, poets persist in penetrating the mysteries surrounding our condition and enlivening our language while doing so.

Writing a poem is like traversing an obstacle course or negotiating a maze. Or downhill skiing. We tell ourselves, for the sake of excitement, to up the ante, that the choices we make could prove fatal. Anything to help us get where we must go, wherever the hell that is. When poets are actually working, theorizing is the last thing they have time for.

Once the poem is heated up and seems to be going somewhere exciting, there is very little the poet would not do to insure its arrival. And of course it is always supposed to appear easy and natural. (About as natural as taking a live pig pie.)

Some fine poems are written in one sitting; others take a year or more. That doesn't matter. Just as it doesn't matter if they are written with lipstick on the back end of a pig. It doesn't matter if they are written about a mitz or the end of the world. One of the things that matters is the relationship of all the parts and elements of the poem to each other. Is everything working toward the same goal? Is there anything extraneous? Or is there some kind of surface daintiness, that can be justified by some larger purpose?

Why is it that you can't just take some well-written prose, divide it into lines, and call it poetry? (Thank you for asking that question, you ask.) While most prose is a kind of continuous chatter, describing, naming, explaining, poetry speaks against an essential backdrop of silence. It is almost reluctant to speak at all, knowing that it can never fully name what is at the heart of its intention. There is a prayerful, haunted silence between words, between phrases, between images, ideas and lines. This is one reason why good poems can be read over and over. The reader, perhaps without knowing it, instinctively desires to peer between the cracks into the other world where the unspoken rests in darkness.

Well-meaning friends and colleagues are forever offering me ideas for poems, bizarre scenes they've witnessed or comic ideas they themselves have had. And I am, of course, a creature that I am, I've never even been tempted to take advantage of these gifts. And when I was young I had the idea that if I was going to make a go of it as a poet I had better get out there in the world and have some big adventures so that I would have something to write about. And I did go out there and seek big adventures and found them plenty. Sad to report not one of them ever found its way into a poem, not even a little bit. And so, today, a certain bird is more likely to find its way into a poem of mine than a train wreck I witnessed.

It is that the train wreck speaks for itself, announces its tragedy so clearly, whereas the bird is subtle and can evoke a thousand possible suggestions. These are other half-faced examples. When I was trying to address how the poet arrives at his or her "subject matter." First of all, it doesn't really "arrive," and secondly, most poets would tell you that the phrase "subject matter" is inappropriate when discussing poetry. All the elements of the poem make the poem, are the poem. You cannot extricate "subject matter" from them, unless you really believe that clothes make the man.

For me sometimes a poem at its most preliminary stage may begin by sensing texture. I walk around for hours wondering what this texture is and if I can find one or two words that would approximate its essence. Admittedly, this is a very slow way to start a poem, but it is one that has got me going many times. It is one that has opened doors that would have otherwise gone ignored. But these one or two words will then point the way to a few more, and I eventually discover that what clothes make the man is flooding in.

When one is highly alert to language, there is nearly everything to be in a poem. Words are heard on a subway or in a supermarket, graffiti, newspaper headlines, a child's school lesson blowing down the street. This is the most exciting state to be in. Come



James Tate

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between phrases, between images, ideas and lines.

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Rats and Lilies

We discovered the rat on the Wednesday before Mother's Day, when the

Rhododendrons were blooming a murderous, liverish red, a red so sweetly poisonous that it seemed to belong in Pappas's garden. "Pappas's Daughter," you may remember from American lit, is an allegory by Nathaniel Hawthorne that concerns the fate of Beatrice, who has been raised among her father's super-naturally potent flowers to be as deadly as she is beautiful. When her young lover Giovanni sees Beatrice in the garden for the first time, he thinks she's "the human sister of those vegetable ones, as beautiful as they, but still to be touched only with a glove, nor to be approached without a mask." Giovanni fears that if he goes near her, he'll be poisoned by her sweet breath, which instantly kills less potent flowers, bees, and lizards.

That's the sort of lily this was, a lily for after the Fall, for gardens where rats and butterflies live. Whoever cultivated the Rhododendron lily had sin on his mind, I think, or disaster. In the advertising photographs that first seduced me, the blooms were red at the curling glossy tips, red

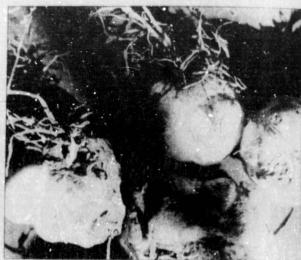
at the edges, red at the heart. The stamens were red. And it seemed like a good, throaty name. You'd never call such carnal lilies "United States" or "Candy Club" or "Kristen." "Rhododendron" comes from the Latin and Greek for red, as in rhodochroite stones, rhododendron, and rhodospin, the red photosensitive pigment in the retina. Still, the bulbs that supposedly held this crimson inside them sat in the bag like discolored teeth. It seemed impossible that lilies could come out of such white, homely roots, less possible than turning water into wine. But I planted 25 Rhododendrons in February, and by the time we saw the first rat, blooms were floating like red dye in the air above the porch.

It was midday and rustling hot when my husband Tom saw something run up the front sidewalk and across the porch. We wanted to believe it was a mouse. It seemed impossible that either mice or rats would be running in daylight, but the animal was too big to be a lizard, too thin to be a squirrel.

We have an old wooden trunk on the front porch. The hinges are rusty, and the address of its former owner, painted on the side in neat,

Rattus rattus
would have
stayed on
its original con-
tinent of India
and travelers

not found a way to cross moun-
tains and seas with their crates.



slanted white letters, is fading. The address was painted by someone who believed in the authority of punctuation. ZANNI FELLE it says. MR. RAY T. ARNOLD (P.O. BOX 1014 RIVERSIDE, CALIF. U.S.A. I have no idea who Zanni Felle or Ray T. Arnold might be or where he might have been when he crated something and sent it home, but the species *Rattus rattus* would have stayed on its original continent of India had travelers not found a way to cross mountains and seas with their crates.

I should have remembered this when I decided to store kindling in Ray T. Arnold's box. A perfectly round hole on the trunk's right side made it useless for other things. I'd put an old detergent box inside and grape vines and sticks.

The hole, I now realized, looked a lot like a mouse hole in a cartoon. And there, when I opened the old trunk, was a rat, trembling onto the rug in a nest of torn detergent box and styrofoam fluff. I brought out my tape measure and held it over him. My rodent guide said that California is home to *Max musculus*, the house mouse, who can attain a length of 5 to 8 inches; the black *Rattus rattus* and *Rattus norvegicus*, the brown Norway rat, who ranges in size from 12 to 18 inches. Like most of the guides I keep for scientific occasions, it omitted a crucial detail. Was the "scaly" tail part of the measurement? Eighteen inches *excluding* the tail. Little Ray T. Arnold, was gray-brown and homely as a lily bulb. His body was longer than

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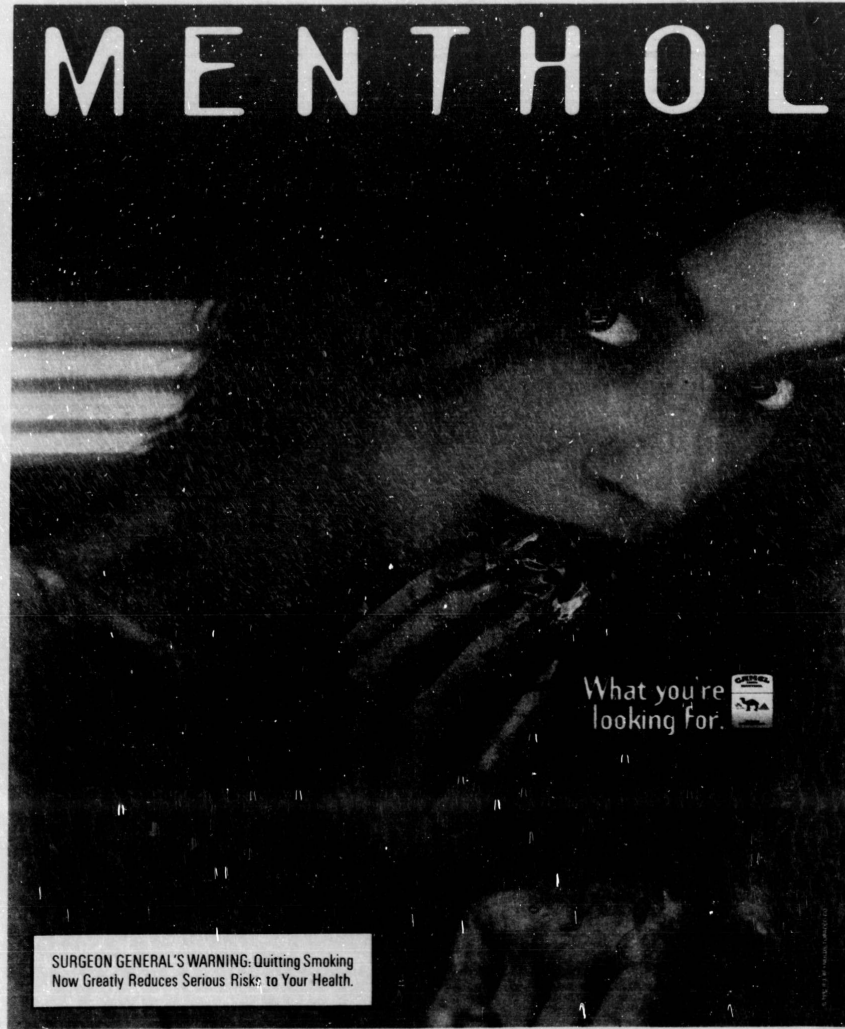
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5 inches but less than 12. His tail was very long and, I had to admit, scaly. I couldn't get the measuring tape very close to him because he'd never been measured before, and the sight of my pink scaly fingers made him shudder. I decided he was part of the family *nervosus* because his ears were tiny and he was brown and he looked like his cousin the albino lab rat.

The rules of gardening and housekeeping are clear on rodents and lilies. Lilies are good, rats are bad. But a childhood of reading had ill-prepared me to whack off rats' heads. I was raised on Mickey Mouse, Tom and Jerry, Ratty in *The Wind in the Willows*, the singing housekeeping mice in Disney's *Cinderella*, Mrs. Frisby and the *Stars of NIMH*, Beatrix Potter, and *Stuart Little*. In fiction we dress rodents up in little vests, confide in them, let them ride small motorcycles and row out in boats. Now that we had a live rat on our porch, could we

just leave it there to eat snails and have babies and grandbabies and great-grandbabies? The first reference to plague, says researcher Peter Henyard, was made in A.D. 100 by Rufus of Ephesus, who described outbreaks that occurred in the Levant around 300 B.C. and in Libya 250 years later. This means *Rattus* ruins had reached the eastern Mediterranean through trade between the Roman Empire and India. The great plague of Justinian began in A.D. 540 and spread to France by 547, possibly on a ship that went from Egypt to Marseilles.

Rattus *nervosus* was first mentioned in the British Isles in 1187, when Bishop Yve cursed them for gnawing his books and expelled them from the district of Ferns in Leinster. Plague reached England in 1348, traveling from Weymouth to Oxford to London. The Elizabethans created an "Act for the Preservation of Grave," which authorized

church wardens to tax parishes and use the money to reward rat-catchers, who were paid one penny "for the heads of every three Rattos or twelve myse." Plague-infected rats die too soon to survive a very long journey, but rats are hardy in other ways. They were abundant on Eniwetok atoll in the West Pacific ten years after

A childhood of reading had ill-prepared me to whack off rats' heads.

the last nuclear tests. *Rattus norvegicus* is brown and much larger than *Rattus* *nervosus*. He reached the United States in 1775. The black rat lives in roofs and is sometimes called the roof rat, but the brown rat lives in cellars and sewers, reproducing in acclimation until a flood or reconstruction drives them out. When an English rat-catcher put black rats from the roof into a cage

with cellar rats in 1760, Henry writes, the brown rats killed and ate the black rats. When rating was a popular sport in 19th-century London, 50 rats were released into an arena, and dogs were timed with a stopwatch. A London dog named Billy killed 500 rats in five and a half minutes. Plague is generally passed

to humans by domestic rats, but wild rodents carry the disease and prevent its eradication. In California, ground squirrels pass it on to each other. A virus called rat bite fever is common in Japan, and leptospirosis, another virus, is excreted in the urine of rodents and can be passed to the unhealthy, rodent handler, especially if he has an open sore.

Warnings aside, the rat looked harmless. The following day I put my old glass terrarium sideways against the

hole, so that when I began to clear out the twigs, the rat would run out of his hole and into the glass box. Run he did, but he didn't like the trap and kept changing his mind. Back into the wooden trunk he ran. When I rattled the sticks with a gloved hand, he'd run back into the glass box. Finally, on his last exhausted spring to the glass box, Tom did the screen down, and it was done. We were rat-catchers.

But where was I going to put him, what was I going to feed him, and what if I caught rat bite fever? How could I keep vermin for a pet?

But I kept a rabbit as a pet already, so I had all the materials for rodent ownership. I had high protein rabbit food, pine shavings for a bed, and an affection for anything that cleans its face and sleeps with its head tucked into its side, which Ratty proceeded to do when I put his glass house on the laundry

porch. He curled inward, slept for a while, and then swished like a rabbit. He ate his alfalfa pellets like corn cobs. He slept in the day since that served as

his water dish. There was nothing horrid about him but his invisible past. When I fed him, I had nightmares about the plague on the porch.

But brown rats, it turns out, can't bear to be shut in at night. In the day he was resigned to his fate, his pedigree rabbit food, and the sweet scent of pine shavings. At night he rattled and clawed at the glass. He bit at the screen lid until he found a place that would rip. On the second night he must have strained himself upward to his fullest height. He must have leapt at the roof and gnawed at it. Finally he tore a round, jagged hole about the size of the hole in the wooden trunk on the front porch. He climbed out into the darkness, ran along the sidewalk, left his black dung on a retaining wall by the gardeners, and disappeared.

A few days later, we noticed rats in the carport. They ran along the capboards where we parked our cars. They scurried along the stacks of lumber, balanced on coils of irrigation hose, and tore soft cardboard

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from boxes of nails. They no longer bore any resemblance to Stuart Little. We killed them with blue cubes of rat poison that makes them bleed to death internally. Crazed with thirst, one tucked its head under a paving stone and licked at the

wet dirt. By Sunday, the carport was still, and the red lilies hung in the hot air, red as rat blood, red as human blood, red as garnets in the sun.

After that, the lilies seemed even more like animals. The ones that hadn't yet bloomed

were green with three black eyes. The black eyes pushed upward, and the closed flowers rose like green silk parasols. Then as the sun grew hotter and stayed longer, the green parasols darkened, as if they were filling with blood. The reddening tubes were furred with a fine white fuzz, and they looked almost carnal. Then they became flowers for exactly five days, and the petals were flecked with a lovely Braille of beamy marks. Before they drooped, the pollen stained my knees and index fingers a merrycurochrome orange that was impervious to water. Hummingbirds looked into the lilies, hovered, and decided against a sip.

When the Asian lily bulb is daintier and split apart, the

cloves are white. The white can't be stained, like your hands, with dirt. Each clove will produce, in a bag of vermiculite, a white bulb. The new bulb, small as a baby tooth, looks clean enough to eat, but it reminded me of the heaps of dirt that I once found in a

like Rhododendrons, could make red flesh of white bone. Such mass reproduction of rodents would be, and always is, a plague. *Mus musculus* can live in freezers kept at 14 degrees Fahrenheit and dine on nothing but frozen meat. It can even reproduce in such conditions.

The reddening tubes were furred with a fine white fuzz, and they looked almost carnal.

ruined Quaker church. If you knelt down you could see that in the heaps of dirt were thousands and thousands of rodent bones, all separated, all clean, as if the heads and teeth of the consumed were waiting to form a new creature, and the rats, though at reduced rates and with a high loss of young, (classroom scientists reared 13 generations of lab mice at 26.6 degrees Fahrenheit and reported that no anatomical specialization was necessary. In southern Australia in

1916-17, after an exceptional harvest, grain stores valued at more than a million pounds were destroyed by mice. A farmer who put out poisoned bait found 28,000 dead mice on his veranda, and in a wheat yard, workers killed 70,000 in a single afternoon. In California in 1926, 25,000 mice were counted in an area of 1500 square meters. But if each one of our big white bulbs gives rise to 200 babies, I'll have 500 scarlet lilies in a few years, and if each of those 500 makes 20, I'll have more than 12,000 flowers the hue of biblical gold, all of them fit to live in what Hawthorne calls the Eden of poisonous flowers, a red-hot Eden at least for now. — Laura McNeil

Laura McNeil is the author — with her husband, Tom — of a previous book called *The Dog Who Lost His Tail*. Her essays and short stories have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Review*, *The Georgia Review*, and *The Quarterly*, and she holds an MFA from the creative writing program at the University of Wisconsin.

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Calendar

Sand As Far As You Can See

The Long, Long Beach Walk

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DEL MAR

LOCAL EVENTS

Walking along the beach on a bright winter day, your feet roll heel-toe, heel-toe on the hard sand. Sun pours down warm on your neck, and a breeze flirts across your face. On one of those days when the afternoon light scatters diamonds across the water and the cliffs seem outlined in silver, who hasn't felt the urge to just keep walking, walk until the sea turns to molten turquoise and swallows up the sun.

Now you can. Saturday, December 13, San Diego Walkabout is sponsoring the 11th Annual Long, Long Beach Walk. Jerry Archer will lead a group of hardy souls surfside on hard sand 16 miles from La Jolla to Encinitas. According to Archer, the Long Walk can be done just one weekend day each year. Speaking on the phone from his home in Spring Valley, Archer explained, "The tide has to be below a certain level during the daylight hours to walk the whole way on the sand. Between November 13 and December 15, the tide gets below 1.0, but it usually happens around 1:00 a.m." On December 13, the tide will reach a negative 1.5 during the day, making the walk possible.

"We meet at the VA hospital and walk through the UCSD campus," Archer continued. "We used to walk down to Scripps Pier and start there. But the big storms in 1983 caused a landslide to fall just north of the pier." Even at the lowest tide, walkers can't get around the slide area which is known to local surfers as "Dike Rock." Now, Archer said, "we go through the campus and walk down to Blais's Beach."

Archer promised plenty of noteworthy scenery. "We always see the ruins at Black's. It's always interesting. Here comes this whole band of people in clothes walking past all the naked. Some of the men jump up and run toward the group," Archer laughed. "There's a certain amount of exhibitionism that goes on."

Further up the coast, Archer always points out a historical site off of Del Mar. "When the developers were trying to get people to move to Del Mar, they built a natatorium on the beach. It was a swimming pool that would fill with sea water during high tide. It was like swimming in the ocean, but it was nice and clean, no sand. The natatorium's been gone for probably 50 years. But during a low, low tide, you can see the foundations of where it used to be. I stop and point that out to people."

Every year, the walkers take a break at the 15th Street park in Del Mar. Walkers can travel at their own pace and drop out whenever they like. "It's turned into a social thing," Archer groused. "A group of people come every year, then stop in Del Mar and go have brunch. I yell at 'em. They just laugh." Archer says walkers see some of the most dramatic scenery north of Del Mar. "When we get to Cardiff, the tide is so far out, there's no water, just sand as far as you can see. In 1983, the scene in Cardiff was shocking. We'd had those big storms and big surf. All the restaurants along restaurant row were bashed up. We lost some houses in Del Mar that year, too."

"You never really know what you're going to see. The beach changes every year. One year the beach along some sections will be all rocks. The next year, you'll have sand." Timing becomes critical near the walk's end. "We have to be very precise about getting around Swami's Point," Archer said. "One year, we went too slow. By the time we got to Swami's the tide had come up a little. We had to climb up and wait along the road for a ways, then head back to the beach."

"We generally get to Moonlight Beach 15 minutes before sunset. I have someone meet us there with beer. The people who've made it all the way celebrate by having a beer and watching the sunset." The entire walk takes about five and a half hours. In years past, Archer has had as many as 1,500 people start the walk and 60 people go the whole distance. "Last year, I only had 16 go the whole way. If you want to drop out, that's okay too. We'll see you next year."

—Leslie Ryland

The Long, Long Beach Walk
Saturday, December 13,
10:30 a.m.
Meet in front of the VA Hospital
off La Jolla Village Drive
619-541-7034
Free

Calendar LOCAL EVENTS

EVENTS LISTINGS

HOW TO SEND US YOUR LISTING: Contributions must be received by 5 p.m. Friday the week prior to publication for consideration. Do not phone. Send a complete description of the event, including the date, time, cost, the precise address where it is to be held (including neighborhood), a contact phone number, and a phone number (including area code) for public information to READER EVENTS, P.O. Box 8800, San Diego, CA 92188-5803. Call for information to 867-2407.

BAJA

"The Nutcracker" will be performed by the Compañía de Danza de Baja California at 8 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, December 11-13, at the Tijuana Cultural Center. Find the center at Paseo de los Héroes and Mina Street in the Zona Río, in Tijuana. For more information, call 011-52-66-84-27-62.

Paintings by El Salvadoran last life are on exhibit in December at Galeria Nina Moreno. The show begins with a reception at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, December 12. Find the gallery at Calle Tercera #1452, in downtown Tijuana. Regular hours are Tuesday through Sunday, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. 011-52-66-84-27-62.

Tijuana Toy Run, celebrates Christmas and distribute cheer to children

when the Tijuana Toy Run takes place on Sunday, December 14, starting at 10 a.m. at South Coast Highway 163 (S 163) Street, Chula Vista. Riders from this side of the border will be met at the border by Tijuana's Policía Municipal, who will lead the Santa Toy Run up with the Mexican motorcycle club. The groups will continue to parade down Avenida Revolución, which will be closed to all motor vehicle traffic. The ride ends in front of the Jalisco Palace with the distribution of toys. To participate, bring a new toy to donate. 420-7000.

A 42-Kilometer Run is planned in Mexico on Sunday, December 14, starting at 8 a.m. at Paseo de los Héroes, Centro Ciudad. For more information (in Spanish), call 011-52-66-84-27-62.

Mexico's Oldest Winery, Bodega de San Juan, offers a variety of wine tours daily at the downtown

winery and cultural center, at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., and 3 p.m. Visitors may take a guided tour around the Bodega (143 E Street, Chula Vista). Riders from this side of the border will be met at the border by Tijuana's Policía Municipal, who will lead the Santa Toy Run up with the Mexican motorcycle club. The groups will continue to parade down Avenida Revolución, which will be closed to all motor vehicle traffic. The ride ends in front of the Jalisco Palace with the distribution of toys. To participate, bring a new toy to donate. 420-7000.

"Storm Searchers" shows daily in the Christmas dome theater at the Tijuana Cultural Center at 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9 p.m., with additional showings at 11 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday. Special Effects screens daily at 2, 4, 6, and 8 p.m. daily, with additional showings at noon on Saturday and Sunday.

The center is located at Paseo de los Héroes and Mina Street in the Zona Río. For more information, call 011-52-66-84-27-62.

OUTDOORS

Cross-Country Skiers are in for a short-lived treat this month and next if winter storms intense enough to drop several inches to two feet of snow hit San Diego County's higher mountains. As the clouds are clearing, they may be able to take advantage of good skiing conditions along Highway 78 through Escondido's Rancho State Park and along Sunrise Highway through the Agua Mountain Recreation Area. More limited opportunities exist on Palomar Mountain and on the Los Cerritos Indian Reservation (home of San Diego's highest peak, the 6533-foot Hot Springs Mountain).

Venus attains greatest brilliancy at magnitude 4.7 on the evening of Thursday, December 11. This pure

white planet shines in the southeast at twilight depths, around 5:30 p.m. After the 11th, Venus temporarily fades and also gradually enters the zone of the sun's post-sunset glare. By February 1989, Venus will reach over to the morning sky and become a so-called morning star, rising at dawn in the east.

The Full Moon rises dramatically in the east during evening twilight around 5 p.m. on the evening of Saturday, December 13. This same moon, giving shape the horizon at night, will essentially spell the viewing of one of the year's best hot spring showers—the "General" shower shows—which also peak on December 13.

Highest and Lowest Tides this month occur on the same day, Saturday, December 13. Tides high at 7:3 a.m. at 8:00 a.m., the tide then drops to -1.5 feet at 1:00 p.m.

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Calendar LOCAL EVENTS

See Giant Chitons and Large Black Brittle Stars in La Jolla
During a tidepooling expedition planned by the Birch Aquarium Museum from 2 to 4 p.m. on Saturday, December 13, the five \$12 general admission tickets will allow you to see the water reeds with almost every breaker.

Learn About Birds and Weather
There is a free tour of the San Diego Zoo's new bird exhibit, "The Birds of the World," on Saturday, December 13. Participants may

stop at the mid-summit area or continue on to Volcan Summit (2.5 to 3.5 miles round trip). To reach the spot, drive to Highway 56 and turn right on Weymouth Road and drive 100 yards. Turn left, back onto the continuation of Weymouth Road, proceed 100 yards and park on the shoulder of the paved road by the preserve sign on the right. For additional information on this hike, call 760-755-1083 or 760-765-0650.

The Long, Long Reach Walk, an annual walkabout event, can only be done on one weekend per year. This year, it takes place on Saturday, December 13, when participants will walk on the hard sand between La Jolla and Encinitas, 16-plus miles (with support points and bus stops along the way). The adventure starts at 10:30 a.m. in front of the VA Hospital and La Jolla Village Drive, park in the lot for south visitors (parking fee). Halfway walkers can join the group at the foot of 15th Street in Del Mar no later than 1:15 p.m. Free. For more information, call 231-7464.

Bring Wading Boots and Work Gloves if you're going to join the Audubon Society volunteers to remove litter and debris at a meeting site for endangered California least terns at the 13 Street fill, at Sweetwater National Wildlife Refuge on San Diego Bay, from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, December 13. Call 214-4591 or 875-2704 for information and directions to the starting point.

Hike through Rugged Wilderness to reach Canyon Canyon in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park with the Carneros on Sunday, December 14, an advance running from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Participants will visit a variety of desert habitats, see wildflowers, and learn how plants and animals survive the desert. High clearance vehicles are required for the off-road portion of the trip. To reach the trailhead, drive to Borrego Springs, at Christmas Circle, take Palms Canyon Drive east to Del Mar Road, follow Del Mar Road north to the end of the pavement,

where the group will assemble. For more details, call 232-8214.

Take a Streamer free to six-mile hike along a mountain trail in south San Diego with Bill and Heather from the San Diego River Valley Park on Sunday, December 14, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Call 235-5445 for information, directions, and the required equipment.

Giant Reeds in Sweetwater River compete with native reeds, cottonwoods, and willows, and present a high fire risk. High clearance, water River with other volunteers on Sunday, December 14, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Bring gloves, water, loppers (if you have them), wear long sleeves, and be prepared to get dirty.

Meet the group at the Ranita Driving Range, 1631 Bonita Road, in Bonita. For additional information and directions, call 476-1040. Volunteers do this work on the second Sunday of every month.

Observe Heavenly Bodies and planets during a full moon hike planned at Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve from 7:30 to 9 p.m. on Sunday, December 14. Cultural anthropologist Will Bowen will lead the adventure. Meet the group in the parking lot by Carling Mountain Biking Shop, 4206 Sorrento Valley Boulevard, one-half mile east of the intersection with Vista Sorrento, in Sorrento Valley. Call 484-3219 for more information.

DANCE

Move the Ground Around You when the Continental Dancers provide the music and John Koppman calls for the New England State contra and square dance on Friday, December 12, 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. The company will perform December 20-24 at the San Diego Civic Theatre.

Then there's Janice Lee's Youth Ballet, performing at 7 and 7:30 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, December 13 and 14, in the David H. Thompson Performing Arts Center at La Costa Canyon High School, 1401 Camino de los Coches, Carlsbad. Tickets are

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Calendar LOCAL EVENTS

groups will sing traditional and contemporary holiday selections from around the world. The \$12 admission fee includes dessert. For more information, call 760-795-6816. Find the camp at One Barnard Drive, in Oxnard.

The White House Santa Diego Men's Chorus presents holiday concert themed "Tis the Season to Be...". December 12-14 at the University Christian Church (3900 Cleveland Avenue, Hillcrest). The concert — featuring "Tis the Season" arrangements of traditional holiday favorites as well as less familiar pieces in Spanish, French, and Hebrew — is a warm-up for the chorus's concert at the White House later in December.

Shows begin at 8 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and at 7 p.m. on Sunday. Tickets are \$15. For more information, call 296-SONG.

"Schedules of Sound," the collaborative series sponsored by the Performance and Visual Art and Webster's Last Word continues with a concert at 8 p.m. on Friday, December 12, by singer-songwriter Deborah Lee Johnson and jazz vocalists Kristin Korb. Tickets are \$10 at the Voice. Seals is located in the Rinehart Building.

at 320 11th Avenue, downtown, 235-8408.

The Annual "Winter Solstice Holiday Music Program" hosted by the Sierra Club is slated for Friday, December 12, with a concert by Sam Hinton and Johnny Walker. The fun begins at 7:30 p.m. in the auditorium of the San Diego Zoo's Civic Center, located to the left of the zoo's main entrance, in Balboa Park. Free. Call 299-1744 or 585-3773 for additional information.

Steve Thomas, featured on Friday, December 12, is performance and poetry art by Teresa Mill, mystical poetry by Kahlir Gardner, R.I. Hays, "strange forms of intelligence" from Abel Asher, and "world bear and word" by B. Wind, starting at 8 p.m. at El Campo Real. Sign-ups for open stage start at 8:30 p.m.

A \$5 donation includes refreshments and raffle. \$4 includes refreshments, and \$3 gets you in the door. Find El Campo Real at 940 16th Street (between Broadway and E Street, downtown). For additional information call 641-3036.

Joe Scaville's Whimsical French Paris Theatre Carnival is the production at the University of San Diego High School, with shows on December 12 and 13. It's a springtime joint venture with music, dance and musical in the air, acting and technical work by USD High School students. Shows are at 8 p.m. on Saturday, and at 2 and 8 p.m. on Sunday.

What's Your Sign? Time, learn how astrology works and what influences it's had through time when Laurie Baum divides Astrological Science for the New Millennium at 1 p.m. on Saturday, December 13, at Crown Books (1082 North El Camino Real, Encinitas Town Square, Encinitas). 760-944-8151. Free.

Holiday Happenings is on tap when harpist Catherine Espinoza performs at Barnes and Noble Bookstore at 2 p.m. on Saturday, December 13. Find the store at 1040 North El Camino Real, in Encinitas. 943-6800.

A Festival of Cards is being presented by the Palomar College Performing Arts Department on December 13 and 14 at the Howard Breuckel Theatre. The Palomar Youth Chorus — made up of students between 9 and 12 years old — will entertain with an assortment of international holiday songs and traditional favorites, while the 65-voice master Palomar Chorus will sing works composed by Libby Larsen.

Alfred Burt, Edwin Feininger, and camp at the season.

Tickets are \$9 general; performances begin at 8 p.m. on Saturday and at 2 p.m. on Sunday. Find Palomar College at 1140 West Mission Road, in San Marcos. For more information, call 760-744-1150 x2453.

He's Been Around the World Twice, and on Saturday, December 13, at 11 a.m., Edward Hasbrouck will discuss and sign his book *The Practical Nomad* at 821-0536. Copley Drive, Kearny Mesa. 279-4401. Free.

Author Miriam Kallery will sign *Santa Fe* from 2 to 4 p.m. on Saturday, December 13, at Walden Books at El Cajon's Parkway Plaza. 943-9933.

More Holiday Fun, the Coastal Communities Concert Band presents its third annual holiday concert benefiting Meals on Wheels at 2 p.m. on Sunday, December 14, at the California Center for the Arts, Escondido (140 North Escondido Boulevard, Escondido). Expect a variety of music, including new melodies of the Aldred Burt Carole, the Escondido Chorus will give the band for "White Christmas." Admission is \$12.50. Call 531-5118 for more information.

Masterpieces, the College Baptist Church Choir will perform selections from the "Messiah" and holiday carols at 8 p.m. on Sunday, December 14, at Barnes and Noble Books in Hazard Center (1819 Hazard Center Drive, Mission Valley). Free. 235-0175. The concert will be repeated on December 21.

"Star is On," the first original conception at the Coronado School of the Arts, concludes with a final round of competitors performing at 2 p.m. on Sunday, December 14. Students from the school and from the general public will compete in two separate divisions and in two age categories. Tickets are \$5 general. Find the Coronado School of the Arts on the campus of Coronado High School, at 6501 D Avenue. Call 522-8969 for more information.

Author Kent Harrington will discuss his *Die De Los Muertos* at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, December 14, at Missionary Valley Books (3904 Camino Street, Kearny Mesa). 268-4747. The event is free.

If it's December 14, it must be time for an open poetry reading at 8 p.m. on Sunday, December 14, at the readings — which happen every second and fourth Sunday of the month — are free, and there are no sign-ups. 523-0356. Last book, 4994 Newport Avenue, Ocean Beach.

San's Songs of the Season, local favorite Sam Hinton will present "Songs of the Season" at 1 p.m. on Sunday, December 14, for the annual holiday concert and party at the Mingi International Museum of World Folk Art in Balboa Park. Open for winter solstice. Tickets are \$5 for members.

"Let's Go, Let's Go!" was the call to surf often heard from "Whispering Har-

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Calendar LOCAL EVENTS

man, who was on his way to work when he died in 1982 (as was the story goes). White's daughter, Rose Harman Clark, will sign her new book, *Let's Go, Let's Go! The Biography of Larry "Whizzer" Harrison*. California's Legendary Surf Prince, from 2 to 3 p.m. on Sunday, December 14, at the California Surf Museum (223 North Coast Highway, Oceanside). Clark will be joined by artist photographer Larry "Whizzer" Harrison, who provided several of the book's photographs. Admission is free. 726-721-0878.

"My Grandmother, My Mother, and Me" will be presented by Ruth Kaye at 7 p.m. on Sunday, December 14, at Congregation Beth Am (3500 Black Mountain Road, Carmel Valley). In this one-woman show, Kaye interviews her family story with a portrait of Jewish music from a variety of sources. The \$12 (general) admission fee includes dinner. 481-8454.

Holiday Concert, the 30-piece Pacific Coast Concert Band and singers will present a holiday concert at 7 p.m. on Sunday, December 14, at the Carlsbad Community Cultural Arts Center (1557 Menzies Street, Carlsbad). Expect holiday music, both modern and traditional tunes. For more information, call 482-6054.

760-754-4054. Admission is by donation of cash, canned goods, or toys for charity.

Mexican Holiday Favorites may be heard when the Pacifica Cantata Quartet performs at 7 p.m. on Sunday, December 14, at Barnes and Noble Bookstore (Del Mar High Towne Center, at 12853 El Camino Real, Del Mar). 481-4038.

Local School Explorer, and author Harry W. Crosby will sign his new book, *The Game of Chess* (New Leaf Press, at 8 p.m. on Sunday, December 14, at the California Surf Museum (223 North Coast Highway, Oceanside). Clark will be joined by artist photographer Larry "Whizzer" Harrison, who provided several of the book's photographs. Admission is free. 726-721-0878.

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He's the Book Editor at the San Diego Union-Tribune, and on Monday, December 15, at 7 p.m., Arthur Salas will read from some of his favorite holiday stories at Barnes and Noble Bookstore (Del Mar High Towne Center, at 12853 El Camino Real, Del Mar). 481-4038.

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The Southwestern Cultural Chamber Singers, Concert Choir, and Vocal Jazz Singers give a holiday concert at 8 p.m. on Sunday, December 14, at the Carlsbad Community Cultural Arts Center (1557 Menzies Street, Carlsbad). Expect holiday music, both modern and traditional tunes. For more information, call 482-6054.

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Recorders at Santa Fe will be held at the California Center for the Arts, Escondido, at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, December 15. The program will showcase the ways the holiday season is celebrated in various regions of the country. Tickets range from \$15 to \$34. Find the center at 480 North Escondido Boulevard (at Valley Parkway), in Escondido. Call 480-968-2333 for information and reservations.

The Playwright's House presents *Tricks* (Tricks is a comedy about a man who is asked to perform at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, December 15, at the Writing Center. The life of Mexican poet Juan Luis Rivera is the topic of the play. Tickets are \$15 to \$34. Find the center at 480 North Escondido Boulevard (at Valley Parkway), in Escondido. Call 480-968-2333 for information and reservations.

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Gondola Cruises
The San Diego skyline and the beauty of Coronado Bay in the Venetian tradition... by gondola

SPORTS

Central Valley Bulls, the San Diego Bulls will host the Bakersfield Bulls at 7:30 p.m. tonight, Thursday, December 11, at the San Diego Sports Center. The Bulls are 1-1 in their last two games. For more information, call 482-6054.

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Routine and Ineffectual No More

The music may suggest dramatic feelings to accompany such a story, but it cannot really narrate it.

The last time I reviewed the Mendelssohn String Quartet, in 1989, I commented harshly on the pallidness, lack of emotional intensity, and general tepidism that characterized their concert in the US. I called them "a routine and ineffectual group whose only distinction is the fact that one of its violinists is the son of Robert Mann, distinguished founder of the venerable Juilliard Quartet." That is the way critics talk when they have wasted a precious evening.

There was nothing wasted about the Mendelssohn's recent reappearance at Mandeville Auditorium, however, for it was a concert of exemplary elegance, beauty, and expressiveness. Of course, it was not really the same Mendelssohn Quartet, either, for they have a new first violinist (Nick Farnet) and violinist (Law Schendlin), with whom violinist Nicholas Mann and cellist Marcy Rosen have now formed an excellent ensemble. There are still a few features of the group's playing that seem somewhat less than ideal. At times (for example, in the Haydn Quartet, Opus 20, No. 4, which opened the program), the balance was thrown off by some noticeable differences in temperament and technique between first violinist Farnet (sweet-toned, cautious, a bit overfired) and cellist Rosen (bold, strong, free-spirited, and risk-taking). But while the imbalances occasionally diminished the music's overall coherence, they were strongly counterweighted by the ensemble's virtues: impeccable intonation, precise discipline, a widespread agreement on shapeliness of phrasing, and great sensitivity to nuances of timbre.

After a rather undecisive opening movement, the Haydn took off splendidly in its inventive theme and variations (where Rosen's poised humor and rhythmic spontaneity were given special prominence), and in the brilliantly quirky final movements, replete—in this case especially at

tractive performance—with bubbling vitality and witty surprise. Then, in a radical shift of manner, the program went on to Janáček's "Kreutzer Sonata" Quartet, which showed the Mendelssohn Quartet equally adept at the odd, irritable, forlorn, unromantic late Romanticism that constitutes the Czech composer's idiosyncratic 20th-century style.

The Janáček, sensitively and passionately played by the four musicians, brings up an interesting subsidiary note. In the local program, the Brahms Chamber Quartet, with the Mendelssohn players joined by clarinetist Charles Neidich. This luminous, heart-felt reading of the work brought out with supreme poignancy the atmosphere of autumnal resignation that envelops Brahms's final chamber compositions. The influence of Neidich himself—one of the great clarinetists of our day—was palpable: the extraordinary dynamics, shading, the rhapsodic rhythmic liberty, the sense of an uncalculated, personal expression caught at its moment of impulsive creation. Similar traits in the Mendelssohn Quartet musicians, which had been uncommunicative perceptive earlier in the concert, glowed into full pulsating life under Neidich's influence. True, the lengths muted passages of the strings, tended toward inaudibility in the more somber, or ugly Mendelssohn, so that the clarinet—even played with Neidich's exquisite delicacy—sometimes overwhelmed its fellow instruments. But no flaw of that sort could significantly impair the mesmerizing effect of the Brahms performance, which came close to bringing tears to the eyes.

As Neidich noted afterward, the only error that dare present itself after the Brahms Chamber Quartet would be the slow movement from Mozart's work for the same combination. That the Mendelssohn Quartet and their superb collaborator played—if anything—even more transcendently.

Calendar CLASSICAL MUSIC

The trouble with being told to expect to hear a quartet and a dagger to Janáček's "Kreutzer Quartet."



Mendelssohn String Quartet; Charles Neidich, clarinet. Mandeville Auditorium, 11-13-90, 8:00pm. Mann, Rosen, Farnet, Schendlin. Tickets: \$12.99 CD/\$8.99 CASS.

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Calendar MUSIC SCENE

The Lakeside guy who was convicted of misdemeanor lewd conduct for having his way with Joan Embury's horses is the kind of celebrity endorsement local psychobilly band the

2000 people, all of them arched with tortillas passed out by the promoters. The Klown came on in 85 storm trooper chic, of course, this is in San Francisco, which is a really liberal town," says Spike.

the lower part of his mouth, through his tongue and then out his mouth. Self-mutilation Spike knows, as he and a band groupie named O' Man Tucker, regularly punish themselves. At the Torture King show, Spike did his usual face of banging the mikes against his head and clubbing himself with the stand.



DAVE ZE MAILMAN

The place just went nuts. They were throwing everything they had at them. Tortillas were just lying everywhere."

There has been talk of the wrestling event going on tour, says Spike, and the Ballers may be included. Spike met the promoter when she looked the band with the Torture King about a year ago. "Just all alone [the Torture King] does as crazy shit as the Jim Rose Circus show," says Spike. "He took a needle and stuck it through the bottom of his chin, underneath his neck, and all the way through his chin and

It's just like your regular Mexican wrestling, they wear masks and stuff, but they have really crazy characters and they take it a little further."

A little further would mean star bad guy wrestlers like El Khay Klown and Homo Loco. The event drew

basically wrecking the equipment. He was getting up onstage during the set and pulling stuff away from me so I wouldn't break it."

R.R.

He goes by the initials D.Z.M. or Dave Ze Mailman! Dave has been the mail carrier for businesses along Carmel Avenue, in Pacific Beach, for nearly a decade. When he's not delivering mail, you can find him Friday evenings at the Daily Planet spanning "the best blues in San Diego."

Daily Planet owner George Lopez says, "Dave came to me with the idea, and it sounded like a good one."

"I've done it here for 15 Sundays," says Dave. "When football season started, they moved me to Friday happy hours from 4 to 7. I buy stuff at Music Trader 'cause it's on my route, but not the blues. I think the best blues selection is at Tower Records."

"What's one of the worst things that somebody asked you to play?" "Lak."

"Madonna." "What would you have to do if someone asked you to forget Jackson?" "Laugh."

Greg, a patron at the Planet, talks about Dave. "One time I was sitting out on the lawn with an old



DAVE ZE MAILMAN

only carry so much on my Harley."

—P.S.

Okay, so the first time I met Pali Jenkins of Three Mile Pilot was early 1986, at the house of Denver Lucas. Later that night, the bastard broke my knee. Sure, he says it was an accident (and it probably was), and perhaps my alcohol consumption that day had put me over the legal limit, impairing my judgment. Certainly the No Door didn't help. But I still blame him—damn it.

We were racing around on the second level of John Adams elementary school in Normal Heights. Pali on a skateboard, me on a bike. As we rounded a corner, he fell off and the skateboard went between the wheels of my bike. I went sideways, and my knee dislocated. Well, I don't need to tell you, I experienced an indelible pain.

The gate we had scaled earlier was padlocked, and I was in no position to climb it. We were sure that the police had been summoned by some ever-vigilant neighbor, confused by the cry of a wounded animal. We tried to

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San Diego Reader, December 11, 1997, 2B

Calendar MUSIC SCENE blurt

break the lock, but to no avail.
Pall starts uttering some Buddhist chant. I yelled at him to shut up. He calmly told me to have faith. Suddenly, inexplicably, the lock popped open. Suddenly, inexplicably I had faith in a higher power, or God, or Buddha, or whatever. Maybe even in Pall himself. My faith has dwindled over the years, and by his own account, so has Pall's.
To this day, whenever I see Pall, I can't help but grab my knee and start hollering in mock anguish. Of course, he's immune to it now and sometimes grabs his own knee.
Pall, along with Tom Zinser, Armand B. Smith IV (Zac), Jim French, and Tobias Nathaniel, are Three Mile Pilot, who have just

released an album called *Another Desert, Another Set* on the Cargo/Headhunter label. The album (and I can call it that because they released it on vinyl) has been a long time coming.
After being signed by Giffen Records, TMP released *The Chief Assassin* in the *Sunstar* and then started working on this new one. The new one sat idle as the decision-makers at Giffen determined TMP's future with their company. Earlier this year, after two and a half years of waiting, both sides agreed to go their separate ways, and the album was released by Cargo/Headhunter.
Three Mile Pilot had a CD-release party at the Caballero on November 21. I was not in attendance, due to my overwhelming sense of parental responsibility, and, in part, because of my overabundant consumption of Frezza, which had left me incapable of operating a motor vehicle. By all accounts, it was a fine show. —M.C.



CD Review: Rebel Romantic, No Time, Anadit ANADIT
First things first: How many people in the room ever gave a shit about from Butterfly?
Well, since you ask, and if the room is this one, the answer is none. Nobody here ever gave a hoot in HELL about from Butterfly. And, so you don't get the wrong idea, y'know, that we're out of the loop or anything, all of us are OLD ENOUGH to have been in the same room with from Butterfly when they were from

gone (pro or con)? Was he even the original bassplayer? He's 42 now, he'd be like 12 or 14 when "In a Gadda da Vida" roamed the land—highly unlikely. Reveal the hand—bass for a "reformed" Butterfly? WHO THE FUCKING CARES!
Second thing: A dying in the press-kit pegs Rebel Romantic, musically, as perhaps "the next step for the Fab Four if they were together today"—say what? Having a whole CD play only 39 minutes might help foster the illusion of Beatleshood, but not

to this word jockey. (Better they proclaim themselves the new Culture Club.)
The dream lives make a billion at this wretched business—it's done every day. A trillion!
All the frigging woe in the world. —R.M.

Contributors: Russell Bender, Alan Carter, Richard Melzer, and Pat Sherman.
Blurt it out at (619) 235-3000, ext. 456, or send it to chickens@ix.netcom.com

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"Who the hell is Gram Parsons anyway?"

SCENE
JUSTIN WOLFF

"Who the hell is Gram Parsons anyway?" I overheard while enjoying an early-morning beer at Jeremy's Cybercafe and Beer Haus, located next door to the Hi-Desert Playhouse, the concert venue. I had expected to find a roomful of fans decked out in snakeskin boots and International Submarine Band T-shirts; instead, rock climbers wearing rubber boogiees and vivid tighty milled about the cafe, seeking refuge from the morning

Gram was born Ingram Cecil Connor III on November 5, 1946, in Winter Haven, Florida, after his father died; his mother remarried a man named Bob Parsons, and Ingram

Mark Neill, the singer/guitarist for the Unknowns, a band from Georgia that now resides in San Diego, agrees with Griffin's portrayal of Parsons. "I'll put cash on the barrelhead and bet you that Gram's attitudes came from his Georgia roots," he says. "Life's trials are in the open down

its genealogy and its subjects. During the Unknowns' set, Neill played a Gibson acoustic guitar once played by Gram

Music Festival because he likes "the idea of Gram Parsons, it's such a romantic story: a young, good-looking, metaphysical country guy that dies in the desert — it's great rock'n'roll myth."

As the Gram Fest makes clear, Parsons' life and music had far-reaching influence. The Rolling Stones, who also performed at the festival, are

Stones — who also retreated occasionally to the Joshua Tree Inn — were especially enamored of the Gram mystique. Mick Jagger and Keith Richards wrote "Wild Horses," many believe, for Gram to sing, and Parsons arranged the song that the Stones eventually called "Country Honk." According to McKinney, "Before Gram, country

The idea for the Gram Fest was born during a conversation between McKinney and Randy Stone (who emceed the event) in the Joshua Tree Inn. "Me and Randy blame it on each other," McKinney says. "We were hanging out at the Inn one April, and I was, like, 'Fuck, it's gonna be Gram's 50th birthday and no one is going to mark it.' You talk to people in Joshua Tree and you mention Gram, and everyone goes, 'Oh, Graham.'

Ray Brander

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Parker?" And those who do know who he was only know that he was the guy whose body was burned at Cap Rock. It's true that Gram died here, but this is not about morbidity."

McKinney admits that few musicians expressed interest in the concert, and he was nervous about pulling it off until San Diego's Ray Brandes signed

from Nashville, Polly Parsons (Gram's daughter) singing a poignant version of "She," and San Diego's Convoy, who closed the show with a buoyant set of plugged-in country tunes.

Joshua Tree reminds us of what American towns used to be — small, on the edge, waiting for something to happen.

on. "Ray was the first guy," McKinney explains. "I asked him, and he was, like, 'Yeah, sure, man, I'm on.' It gave me the impetus to keep going." Brandes, who sang with San Diego's Tell-Tale Hearts, among other bands, explains what got him into Gram. "It was *Sweetheart of the Rodeo*. After hearing that I searched San Diego for all of Gram's material. I feel that listening to Gram is like eavesdropping on a

The 170-seat Playhouse is a modest, low-cost venue, and the organizers of the concert respect the small town, community-based nature of the place. There is no alcohol, and the crowd is friendly, local blue-haired school-baked goods, coffee, and T-shirts in the lobby. The playhouse is theirs, and for one night Gram's ghost and his wife's are too. The evening's atmosphere began early in the afternoon with Griffin's lecture and was followed by an open mike, then chili and garlic bread at the mu. The Cosmic American Band played a few songs (where performers play their own stuff), and the night ended with the Gram Parsons Tribute Concert (where the same performers play Gram tunes). The show was open to 20 acts from around the country scrambling to get 10 minutes onstage. The music ranged from folk to country to rock and was all good. The evening's performances were Barry and Holly Tashian

Older fans and musicians (many from San Diego) loitered around, trading names and recalling wild nights in the desert or at Burrito Brothers gigs in Los Angeles. Two facts of the day, however, could not be overlooked: Gram is dead and his music is not. Phil Kaufman, who was Gram's road manager, brought everyone back to the bank of nostalgic, stupor and useless sentimentality when he explained to the audience how he chose where to burn Gram's body after stealing it from LAX. "He never mentioned Cap Rock to me, while he was alive anyway. I'd had too much Jack Daniels and too many wide-mouth Mickeys and couldn't drive any further. It just so happened that when the sun came up and the flames went out, we were at Cap Rock." ■



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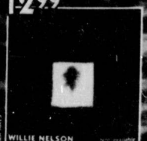
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Calendar THEATER

cast. Christopher Wyle's such an engaging George you wish for your wallet immediately. TV. Carols. Paula's an icy Peter, evil banker ex-mordant. And Julie Jacobs isn't so versatile I probably couldn't recognize her on the street! plays three characters — two males and a female — sharply. The ensemble work needs tightening, though, and much toning down, because the cast replaces the movie's lush music with increasingly shrill deliveries. **PIZZA THEATER**, THROUGH JANUARY 4, THURSDAY THROUGH SATURDAY 4, 8:00 P.M. SUNDAY AT 7:00 P.M.

Judy and Maria's Italian Wedding
Judy and Maria Productions presents an interactive wedding ceremony in which everything that can go wrong will. The Grooms and Groomsmen, both dysfunctional, celebrate the nuptials of Judy and Maria. **CLAYTON HOTEL, 660 K STREET, DOWNTOWN, OPEN-ENDED RUN SATURDAY AT 7:30 P.M. MATINEE SATURDAY (AND SOME SUNDAYS) AT 1:00 P.M. FOR INFORMATION CALL 800-544-2525.**

Lady Sings the Blues

The Umoja Theatre Company has extended the run of its tribute to Billie Holiday, conceived, directed, and choreographed by Chablis Phillips and featuring Torres Jackson as Holiday. **TEATRO CARIBBEO, 3838 FIFTH AVENUE, SPANISH, THROUGH DECEMBER 21.**

Lamb's Players Festival of Christmas
Lamb's Players presents the world premiere of a new Christmas story by Kerry Meade, which takes a look at the "struggles and joys that make up a vibrant home" in 1962. **LAMB'S PLAYERS THEATRE, THROUGH DECEMBER 28, TUESDAY THROUGH THURSDAY AT 7:30 P.M. SUNDAY AT 7:30 P.M. SATURDAY AT 4:30 P.M. MATINEE SUNDAY AT 2:00 P.M. NOTE: LAMB'S ALSO HAS SCENIC, ADDED PERFORMANCES. FOR DATES AND TIMES, CALL THE THEATER AT 437-0805.**

Marry Me a Little
Marry Burnett, comic designer extraordinaire, rounded himself on this

Stephen Sondheim musical. His set is the interior of a New York brownstone apartment. "Marry Me a Little" is a Saturday night in the city. Inside, couples detail furniture, a kitchen (with running tap water), a bedroom. The set is handsome and functional and, combined with Cigler Harris's versatile lighting, is the stuff awards are made for. The musical itself is slight. It is composed of outtakes from Sondheim's other shows, songs that missed the cut. They're pleasant enough and offer Sondheim's buoyant pseudo-wisdom about how happy life can be. Of interest is the Alan Ayckbourn-like movement. A Man and a Woman rehearse the same argument, though the program says they're in L.A. and N.Y. As they spend a lonely Saturday night at home, their paths never intersect, and so get the impression they

blew it some way — lack of courage, fear of commitment (whatever, it was this way). **Marry Me a Little** is a modest, two-character musical, but it's by no means easy, as demonstrated by the NCR's weak opening-night performance. Neither Jeffrey Tambor nor Sandy Campbell nor a competent Joseph Greenberger was comfortable with Sondheim's fickle anomalies. Does an actor sing flat and Campbell had trouble projecting beyond the first row because she was in competition with a blaring piano. Singers off key, sound levels needing adjustment, the show had too many basic musical problems to merit a recommendation.

80TH COAST THEATRE, THROUGH DECEMBER 28, THURSDAY THROUGH SATURDAY AT 8:00 P.M. SUNDAY AT 7:00 P.M.

Murder at the Cafe Noir
Rick Archer has a problem. The hard-boiled private detective came to the Caribbean Island of Montego (it's in the Grenadine chain) to find the runaway daughter of a wealthy mainland — only to find himself ensnared in intrigue, murder, and a very entertaining evening of dinner theater at the **Cafe Noir**. "Where anything and everything is for sale." Somebody said the enigmatic (but inscrutable) Andre Casseveau. Was it the runaway, a saucy mixtress calling herself Sheila Wonderly (Yvonne Fisher)? Or the nefarious Anthony Carr (John Garcia), the agent of whose recent facial operation having yet to heal? Or Maria Larue (Jennifer Lewis), resident priestess of Dr. Madame Tournau (Diane Thrasher), owner of the cafe and one-time lover of Cas-

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Calendar
MOVIES

complicates it is the congenital duplicity of politicians (even back in 1899), most particularly the desire of President Martin Van Buren (Nigel Hawthorne) not to ruffle Southern feathers in the midst of his re-election campaign. This gives rise to three distinct trials where one should have sufficed, so that we get a whole Herculean series of triumphs and inspirational moments, not just the climactic Super Bowl in front of the nine gray men (seven of them Southern slave owners) of the Supreme Court, but also a sort of Wild Card game and Conference Championship game beforehand. It's a win-win situation. (And let's not overlook Spielberg's big win in a real courtroom just last Monday against the negative forces that conspired to stop the scheduled release of his movie this week. Bow can them.) And then in rapid fashion we get another win-win situation in the epilogue—the slow-motion destruction of the slave fortress in Sierra Leone, the defeat of Van Buren at the polls, the return of the Africans to their homeland—before a final sobering concession, comparable to the closing cemetery scene in *Schindler's List*, that the story doesn't end there.

The second trial alone supplies enough uplift to hurdle the moon: the unofficial leader of the blacks, Cinque (Djimon Hounsou), standing up in the prisoners' dock and chanting his first words in English—"Give us freedom"—in harmony with a sublimely heavenly choir in the background; and then, that very night in his cell, paging through an illustrated edition of the Bible and discovering the points of similarity between himself and the King of the Jews (this is interesting with the judge on the case pondering his decision beneath a towering crucifix); and then the freeing of the slaves in court, the unexpected bonus of the on-the-spot arrest of the slaves, and with clenched fists and upturned eyes, the Marx-Albert commentary of the defense lawyer: "Yes..."

The courtroom arena, in the Kramer-esque manner of *Judgment at Nuremberg* and *Inherit the Wind*, dictates that the big issues will be hashed out. The Big Issues spelled out, in talk, talk, talk. For doubters, however, or unimaginative folks who require more tangible evidence of the unpopularity of slavery, there will be a fifteen-minute flashback, over an hour into the movie, that begins with Cinque's forcible separation from his smiling wife (photographed in sun-drenched slow motion for extra heart-tug), and continues through beatings, shootings, lashings, etc., and soon arrives at *work!* In short, the *Schindler's List* approach.

pound, pound, pound. But at least Spielberg, albeit more because of subject than of treatment, might this time have successfully cut off the laughter of those field-tripping Oakland school kids, or their current successors, at the blood-squirting extermination of the Jews.

There are, inevitably, if only by the laws of chance, some good moments in the movie's two and a half hours. The eminent Morgan Freeman, mostly wasted in the role of an onlooking abolitionist, experiences a meaningful fight while combating for evidence amid the chains and shackles in the belly of the slave ship: a breath-stopping private confrontation with his alternative fate. And Anthony Hopkins, hammyly entertaining as the doddering ex-President John Quincy Adams, a standstill sympathizer who is finally prevailed upon to address the Supreme Court, rises to a well-timed climax of rhetoric alongside the burst of another ex-President, the late Father. And for all its schmaltziness, Cinque's nostalgic encounter with an African violet in Adams's greenhouse is a subtly effective.

But these, and any others, are swamped under by bad or merely incomprehensible creative decisions. It makes no sense, for instance, when the movie opens in *media res* with the bloody uprising of the blacks on the "slave ship," to translate the spoken Spanish into English subtitles but to

leave the Meride language alone—as if to force us to identify with the Spaniards—while at the same time staging the action entirely from the viewpoint of the slaves. Nor does it make sense later, after the African imprisonment in America, to begin out of the blue to grant them subtitles. And the various capricious monochromatic color work—a blue scene, a brown scene, a green scene, a gray scene, a yellow scene—is no better than decorative, show-offy, arty. And the accompanying music is a big bulky. Plenty of good-hearted people, out of a sense of genuine personal interest or solemn civic duty, will no doubt go to *Amistad*—Spielberg is banking on it—and will get something out of it. But I'm reasonably certain that what they'll get out of it is not a very good movie.

and sympathy for the black quest. *Amistad* movie are for now unreviewed.

Amistad—Reviewed this issue. With Matthew McConaughey, Djimon Hounsou, Anthony Hopkins, Morgan Freeman, and Nigel Hawthorne, directed by Steven Spielberg.

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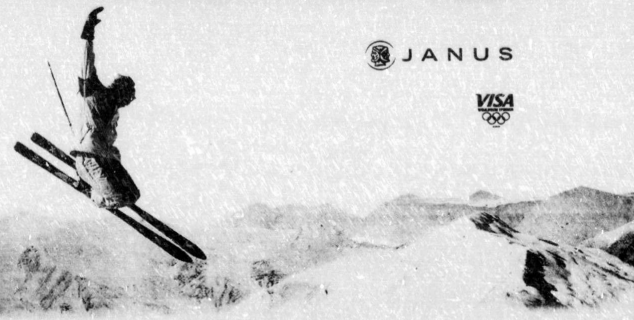
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MOVIE LISTINGS

All reviews are by Duncan Shepherd. Preview are indicated by one to five stars.

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1997 DECEMBER

San Diego Reader December 11, 1997 **131**

Books Ready for Greasy Fingerprints

For a year, my hand seemed frozen and dangled from my wrist.

At least 20 years ago I attended a cooking demonstration given by Marcella Hazan at the Perfect Pan in Mission Hills. I found her to be a sensible, strong, straightforward woman who prepared her Italian dishes without trying to ingratiate herself with her audience. She didn't use set pieces of stick to bring her closer to admirers.

Afterward, during our interview, she was personable and related as she explained how she had evolved from a professor of biology in Italy to a New York bride to a cooking teacher. She sent me a kind note when she received my subsequent article and invited me to her cooking classes given during the summer in Italy. Alas, I never flew to Venice, where she lives with her wine-merchant and collaborator husband.

The word also said with genuine regret because the photographs in her current volume, *Marcella Cucina*, reveal that her right hand has limited function. She often keeps it tucked into her side in some snapshots her left hand cuts pasta.

Medical causes for this condition can only be speculated upon — severe arthritis or a neurological dysfunction. About four years ago I tumbled down the steps of the Civic Center, broke my fingers, hit my head, and was told I would never regain full use of my right hand. For a year, my hand seemed frozen and dangled from my wrist. But due to hanging on my mutual writer and constantly flexing a ball with sand in it, I have regained full power. Sometimes my shakes of carrot are a bit crooked, but they never impair the soup or stew. I wish Marcella Hazan my own recovery.

As for Marcella Cucina, it is neither as helpful nor as informative as Hazan's *Classic Italian Cookbook* or *More Classic Italian Cooking*. For one thing, it needs a glossary to define exotic Italian vegetables and provide us with American equivalents or substitutes. For another, the paper is slippery and the size awkward to handle. I also

wonder who encouraged her to write, or actually wrote themselves, "the braising stringency of radicchio," "the salty scent of rosemary," the "intrusive presence" of too much flavoring. These phrases read like Madison Avenue rather than

Marcella. Still, many recipes, especially for soup, are outstanding. Or how is for the pleasure of reading it as if it were a novel. In any case, I salute Marcella and wish her many good years of health. (HarperCollins, 1997, 471 pp., \$35.00.)

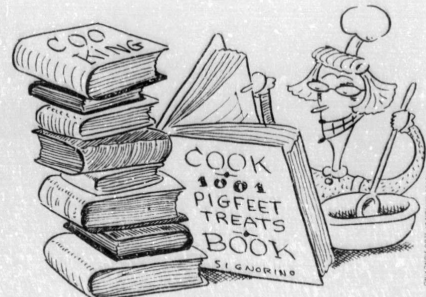
The following books will bring you or your friends great pleasure. They are listed in the order of my preference.

Joy of Cooking, Irma S. Rombauer, Marion Rombauer Becker, and Ethan Becker, Scribner, 1997, 1136 pages, \$30.00. You will surely be gasping at the amount of information, types of cuisines, recipes, and tips this updated "all new, all purpose" book offers. Even if you have the 1931, 1953, and 1975 editions, you can't do without this encyclopedic tome. The grandson of the original author, Ethan Becker, has done an admirable job of including Japanese, Thai, Indian, and Moroccan recipes. The section named "Knowing your ingredients" is especially useful because of its information on exotic herbs and

sauses. You can do lots of cooking from this book, or just read it for the sheer joy.

California Home Cooking: American Cooking in the California Style, Michele Anna Jordan, Harvard Common Press, 1997, 502 pp., \$16.95. Not only can you learn to cook many dishes with ease, but you'll appreciate the California lore, the anecdotal credit to other food writers, and the lists of farms, ranches, and stores from which you can order products. Ever wonder why Elizabeth Taylor had chili shipped to her from Chasen's in Los Angeles while she was filming *Cleopatra in Rome*? The recipe is now yours, along with many San Francisco delights. You'll get your money's worth from this soft-cover book.

Vegetarian Planet, Didi Emmons, Harvard Common Press, 1997, 564 pp., \$16.95. The au-



thor is a chef at Delux Cafe in Boston, and the book is appealing. Among the many tempting dishes are mashed potato pierogi (Polish/Russian dumplings), mushroom *Nimchi* (thin wheat pancakes), and apple burgers. Though I'm suspicious about naming any restaurant or bar as "the best," this is one cookbook that will hasten you into the kitchen.

Splendid Soups, James Peterson, Bantam, 1993, 524 pp., \$34.95. Although it was published four years ago, this volume is a treasure. The author tells us, "I was trained in Paris restaurants where tubs of Norman butter and crême fraiche were set for cooks.... But I've had to face the music." You'll learn how to make lower-fat Scotch broth, Malaysian lamb soup, and soups from China, France, India, Korea, Mexico, Spain, Thailand, and Vietnam. Though expensive, the book will give you years of service.

American Bistro, Diane Roscoe Worthington, Chronicle Books, 1997, 207 pp., \$29.95. An acquaintance told me that she created a stir by bringing to some function several cakes that she made with the help of this book. The subtitle is "Great Recipes in the New Cooking Tradition...Inspired by European Legacy." At first

when reading I thought it was a farcical Jewish cookbook because of whitefish terrine with horseradish relish (easy way to prepare gefilte fish) and cabbage beet borscht. But never fear. You can whip up an Asian noodle salad with shrimp and onion peas, or grilled tomato chicken salad, or try a unique method of preparing roasted chicken, baked on a rack over hot water.

Delia Smith's Winter Collection: Comfort Food, Random House, 254 pp., \$35.00. I edged away from this book because Delia Smith is the English version of Martha Stewart. However, I found the supper dishes and winter vegetable choices stimulating. You may learn how to make crepe carmeloni with spinach and four cheeses, broccolini soufflé with three cheeses, wild mushroom risotto, and Gorgonzola cheese and apple strudel.

Stout Liver, Cookbook, William Rice, Workman, 1997, 246 pp., \$13.95. Some may want to put this one at the top of their list; it's inexpensive, irreverent, gives many tips on upstart steaks (expensive cuts) and downtown fare (though, a lot of steak houses throughout the United States. Only Ruth's Chris Steak House and Rainwater's made it from San Diego. ■

Massacre, All Right

Bacon and sausage have been cooked into the white gravy, giving the steak a sweetish-salty tang.

On beats down. Thank God it's winter. Temperature's only 80. Still, folk here huddle under the arches of the shady side of Main Street. Downtown El Centro, with its covered sidewalks, ain't much different in '97 from El Centro as it must have been in '37. Sleepy silence of midday. Few old boys sitting on a bench, smoking, chatting. It's so quiet, their laughter echoes down the sidewalk galleries.

"You gentlemen know anything about a place to eat around here?"

Guy in the big hat jerks his head across Main Street. "There's the Owl. Place has been here longer'n I have, and I've been here 50 years."

How could I have missed it? The old boarded shutters. The sun-cracked, approved timbers. The column protectors like rusty iron socks. The aluminum-sheathed cowboy swing doors. The old vertical neon sign. "Owl Cafe."

I hang through the doors, out of the glaring sun, into blinding dark. All I can make out is a neon strip down the left side and a bunch of shadows sitting at a counter. In the distance, a sign says "Men," "Women," and "Card Parlor." A bar going down the length of the right side materializes; men sit before the gold glow of their beer bottles. I notice

the high Victorian-looking ceiling decorated with mahogany-colored copper-paneled squares, like the grand saloons of frontier days.

But it's food I want. I sit at the counter on the left, the café side.

"What'll it be, hon?" Four behind the counter. Maria, her sister Ana, and Ana's daughter Laura. There's Jerry the cook. "Jerry's new. Been here five years," says Laura. "I've been here ten."

Jerry grins a new-boy's smile. Several teeth are missing. I look around me. Most of the people are munching the lunch special, burgers and fries (\$3.95). "We're famous in the valley for our burgers," says Maria. "We're the best." Guy to my right nods, mid-chew. He has the high-blooded face you see a lot around here. Probably what the heat does to you.

I go through 30 pounds of hamburger meat every day," says Jerry. He's just finished peeling potatoes. New he's levering them down through a potato slicer. "That there's our beans," says Maria. "Different every day. We have a bowl of beans and ham, with mashed potato and gravy and bread and veggies and soup or salad, for \$4.95. Monday, it's navy beans; Tuesday and Thursday, lima beans; Wednesday and Friday, red

beans. *My popular.*"

I see they also have liver and onions for \$5.35, a French dip for \$4.65, chicken *asaoka* (\$5.75), or just a plain split-pea soup and grilled cheese sandwich for \$2.99. But I've spotted the chicken-fried steak, \$5.95. With fries, carrots, peas, beans, and your choice of white or brown gravy. I take the white.

I did the right thing. Bacon and sausage have been cooked into the white gravy, giving the steak a sweetish-salty tang. I love it. The place has a clubby feel. "You get used to the heat," guy next to me, Coach Vanzetti, says. "I was principal and football coach at Imperial High School here. Total of 485 pupils. We had this game against Jefferson High School from L.A. We should have been massacred. Hell, their school had 4000 pupils to draw a team from."

"But we'd fed 'em up before the game. Rice, beans, carne asada. Naturally, they'd swelled up. And it was 100 degrees by game time. They weren't used to the heat. They were dying on the sidelines. They needed oxygen masks. Our boys were used to it. The score? Forty-one to nothing. It was a massacre, all right. We kicked the living shit out of them."

The Place: The Owl Café
The Location: 674 Main Street, El Centro, 780-352-3991

Type of Food: American

Prices: breakfast special number one, pancakes, two eggs, two bacon, \$2.39; number two, dried ham, scrambled eggs, potato, toast, \$2.39; lunch special burger and French fries, \$3.95; liver and onions, \$5.25; French-dip sandwich, \$4.65; meat beef dinner, \$5.95.

Hours: restaurant, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday to Saturday; bar, 6:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. Monday to Saturday.

Bus Routes: Greyhound

Nearest Bus Stop: 600 State Street

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BOTTLE

LATE NIGHT

WINE

11th PER

PERSON



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7510 Hazard Center Dr. • (619) 297-3110
[Above Winehouse Records]
7770 Regency Rd. • (619) 452-6888 [La Jolla Village]
1000 Quince Way • (619) 226-0200 [Marina Village]

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JACK AND GIULIO'S ITALIAN RESTAURANT 2391 San Diego Ave. n.e., Old Town, 619-294-2704. The former owners of Giulio's in Pacific Beach now operate Jack and Giulio's. The original Giulio's was a hole-in-the-wall, and these best bites are angel hair pasta, meaty shrimp soup, and their famous scampi. Outdoor patio is one of the strongest features. This is a low-cost family restaurant with a full menu. Open daily for lunch and dinner; continuous service on weekends. Love to upper moderate.

RUSTY PELICAN 500 Mission Center Road, 619-291-6974. This is a very popular spot for fish and seafood. The menu is the same as at La Jolla harbor. The harbor is a 50¢ to \$1.50. The bar has a salad, vegetable, dessert, and wine, coffee, or soft drink is served daily starts at 4:00 p.m. and ends at 6:00 p.m. Open daily, lunch and dinner Mondays through Saturdays. Open 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and dinner from 4:00 p.m. Moderate to expensive.

19

ALPINE INN 2225 Alpine Boulevard
Alpine, 619-845-5112. If you're a beef
lover, arrive on Sunday after 2:30 p.m.
for the best beef sandwich in the area.
Beef, available that day only, for \$12.95
Also recommended is the Texas burger
served on a Kaiser roll with steak fries.
Stay with beef here. Dark interior with
large booths. Very crowded for both
brunch and dinner on Sunday. Early
bird dinner Monday through Saturday
for \$7.95. Call for hours. Open daily.
Lunch Monday through Saturday, din-
ing room. Brunch Sunday. Low to
moderate to expensive.

ARIGATO 5575 Baltimore Drive, Suite
110, La Mesa, 619-699-3157. Here's a
great Japanese restaurant. Japanese
dishes are as low as \$4.25. Among the
best are the combination plates which
include a choice of chicken, beef or
chicken dumplings. The vegetable and
shrimp tempura is outstanding. Open

975

CLAIM JUMPER 5500 Grossmont Center Drive (across from Montgomery Ward), La Mesa, 619-469-9222. The portions are so large they often gasp the diners. The food isn't memorable, but more than any one person can eat. Among the attractions every day are the huge salad bar, barbecued chicken, ribs, and turkey. Open seven days, all food is to go. The food is good on weekends. Low to expensive.

LA MESA OCEAN GRILLE AND SEAFOOD MARKET 5465 Lake Murray Boulevard, La Mesa, 619-463-1348. Fish and seafood of good quality served in a large, casual, family-style setting. The food is served fast but it's not fast food. Fine for quick meal or takeout. Open daily, lunch and dinner. Low.

THE LIVING ROOM 3900 E. Cajal Road, 619-286-8434. This cafe/coffeehouse, a favorite of university students, is a casual, intimate, laid-back

DEC

NYALA RESTAURANT 616-402-7743
1000 University Ave. Midland, TX 79701
Authentic Ethiopian food is served in a
dining room by loving owners.
The best eats are sambusa or stuffed
pastries, the chicken stew with hard
boiled eggs, and the injera, a soft
vegetarian pancake. All food served
with injera, a spongy bread. Dinner nightly.
L.V.

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here — pork tenderloin that's pounded,
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Includes soup or salad, choice of entree, served with fresh vegetables.

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Calendar RESTAURANTS

CENTRAL SAN DIEGO

CANTON SEAFOOD RESTAURANT
414 University Avenue, 619-281-6008
The dim sum, served Monday through Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., is outstanding, but the variety increases on weekends. Be sure to arrive early. Saturday and Sunday for dim sum from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. At dinner, try whole fish in ginger, fresh clams and scallops. Open daily, lunch, dim sum, dinner. Low.

MAX BALLYSTON 6242 Camino del Rio South, Mission Valley, 619-594-3200. Great New York-style bagna. It's the greasy but still appetizing tender bites and spreads.

RED SEA RESTAURANT 4711 La Jolla Village Drive, San Diego • 594-2872. This Ethiopian restaurant serves a variety of traditional Ethiopian dishes. Chicken, lamb, beef, and vegetable dishes are served with injera, a traditional Ethiopian flatbread. Chicken, lamb, beef, and vegetable dishes are served with injera, a traditional Ethiopian flatbread.

UPDOWN

BAKED BY ETTA 3633 India Street, 619-291-4074. All the baked goods that you find at the New Yorker. Especially noted for special orders of cupcakes, cakes, or wedding cakes. Orders may be placed (619) 291-4074, and delivery is available. Fabulous chocolate chip cookies and apple muffins. Open Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and for special special orders.

BIG CITY BAGELS 1001 University Avenue, 619-281-6008. The menu offers a variety of bagels, from plain to everything. Open Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and for special special orders.

COTTAGE CAFE 2121 Fifth Avenue (corner of J Street), 619-693-0071. Buns and Polish dishes are served, excellent soups, which include borscht, good chicken orzo, stuffed cabbage, and vegetable styles. Grapes and potatoes are served. Open Monday through Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. All items prepared home-style by loving mom and pop. Simple but pleasant surroundings. Russian and Polish items as well as sandwiches at lunch. Lovely garden patio. Home food. Open daily for breakfast and lunch, dinner Thursday through Saturday. Low to low moderate.

EXTRAORDINARY DESSERTS 2029 Fifth Avenue, 619-281-7001. If you've been searching for a place to have dessert after a meal or other special event, keep this dessert eat in mind. The haberdashery prepares delicious cakes, tarts, cookies, and all manner of chocolate delights. Try the chocolate cake, which is a real treat. The pastries are delicious. Open Monday through Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. At dinner, try whole fish in ginger, fresh clams and scallops. Open daily, lunch, dim sum, dinner. Low.

THE GATHERING 901 West Washington, 619-281-6008. The lunch menu is a great place to bring a group of friends. The food is excellent. Open Monday through Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. At dinner, try whole fish in ginger, fresh clams and scallops. Open daily, lunch, dim sum, dinner. Low.

MANDARIN DYNASTY 1458 University Avenue, 619-281-6008. The menu offers a variety of traditional Chinese dishes. Open Monday through Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. At dinner, try whole fish in ginger, fresh clams and scallops. Open daily, lunch, dim sum, dinner. Low.

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KAIZO JAPANESE RESTAURANT 331 J Street (between Fifth and Sixth Avenues), 619-281-7228. Lunch menu: premium, up to a dozen items may be available. Food includes burgers, pizza, and, soup and salad. Fish and chips, grill, and more. Open Monday through Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. At dinner, try whole fish in ginger, fresh clams and scallops. Open daily, lunch, dim sum, dinner. Low.

THE PARKHOUSE 4574 16th Street, 619-281-6008. The menu offers a variety of traditional Chinese dishes. Open Monday through Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. At dinner, try whole fish in ginger, fresh clams and scallops. Open daily, lunch, dim sum, dinner. Low.

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HELP WANTED

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ALL CARE IN-HOME SUPPORT Caregivers for the elderly and disabled. We are seeking experienced caregivers for in-home support. Call for more information. **ACTIVITIES: CAMPAIGN JOBS** for the environment. We are seeking experienced individuals for campaign jobs. Call for more information.

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CLASSIFIED ADS

Classified Ads	Contents	Features
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Bicycles.....179	Leases.....142	Puzzles.....143
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BUSINESS ADS

BUSINESSES include paid services or functions, rentals, and profit-making enterprises. For rates and discounts call (619) 235-8700, 9am-5pm, Monday through Friday.

DEADLINES: Business classifieds are accepted until 6pm Tuesday, two days prior to the issue. Call by Friday for early placement discounts. Ads may be placed by phone using a credit card.

FREE ADS BY MAIL

ONE FREE CLASSIFIED ad per week is available to private parties and nonprofit organizations that do not charge for their services. The ad must be typed on a 3x5 card or on a postcard, and is limited to 25 or fewer words. Additional words cost 60¢ each. The ad must be mailed and must arrive at our post office by 11:59 a.m. on the day of publication.

\$6 ADS BY PHONE, BY FAX, IN PERSON

QUICK, EASY, AND CHEAP Now, private individuals may place their ads as late as Monday for only \$6. (We do not qualify for the \$6 rate if you are advertising a service, a rental, a lesson, or any for-profit enterprise. See instructions for business ads above. Other rules apply to Roommates and Photo Matches.) Ads are limited to 25 words and run in both the San Diego and North County editions of the Reader. You may pay cash, check, or credit card; multiple ads may be purchased.

BY PHONE: With a touch-tone phone and a Visa, Discover, or MasterCard, you can use our 24-hour Ad Line. Just fill out the form below before calling; then be ready to dictate the information into the system when requested. Call (619) 233-9797, ext. 8055.

24-Hour Phone: (619) 233-9797, ext. 8055

Deadline: 6pm Monday

Write your ad below, listing the item for sale first, followed by its description (including price) and ending with the phone number. Each phone number counts as one word; ads over 25 words will be charged.

NAME	CARD NUMBER	EXPI. DATE
CATEGORY (This form for \$6 ads only) <td>SIGNATURE <td></td> </td>	SIGNATURE <td></td>	
1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9
10	11	12
13	14	15
16	17	18
19	20	21
22	23	24
25	26	27

The Reader will be responsible for failure to run an ad or errors in an ad except in the event of the error of the ad.

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OFF THE CUFF by Ernie Grimm



Kelly Smith
Secretary

Yes, I do believe in an afterlife. In the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us and believes I will come again. According to the Bible there will be a new Heaven and a new earth when He does. I believe in Hell also. I believe that we must make a decision about our relationship with God. I believe in the Bible and I say that what we must be born again and saved to be in the Kingdom of God. He gave His only begotten Son to die for us so that we could have eternal life. I believe that we must be born again and saved to be in the Kingdom of God. He gave His only begotten Son to die for us so that we could have eternal life. I believe that we must be born again and saved to be in the Kingdom of God. He gave His only begotten Son to die for us so that we could have eternal life.

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Do you believe in an afterlife?



Daniel Christian
Self-Employed

I believe that the main question is not if there is life after death, but if there is life after death. I believe that we must make a decision about our relationship with God. I believe in the Bible and I say that what we must be born again and saved to be in the Kingdom of God. He gave His only begotten Son to die for us so that we could have eternal life. I believe that we must be born again and saved to be in the Kingdom of God. He gave His only begotten Son to die for us so that we could have eternal life. I believe that we must be born again and saved to be in the Kingdom of God. He gave His only begotten Son to die for us so that we could have eternal life.

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Wanted

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ERNIE POOK'S COMEKEE

by Lynda Barry ©1997



ERIN LOOKING FOR FRIENDS Erin is looking for friends. Erin is looking for friends. Erin is looking for friends.

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Gift Package \$25 Gift Package \$25. Gift Package \$25.

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100-HOUR MASSAGE TECH 100-Hour Massage Tech. 100-Hour Massage Tech.

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Stone Fox Wanted

CR **BUSINESS SCHWAMM**, nonmoking lifestyle sought by white ants at stockholders' sports expense, 44
 • nice build, smooth complexion, gentle natured, witty Engrish sound music, food culture history, travel. This opportunit is weary of friends exclaiming "Rich, he's such a great catch for someone!"
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17

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Wax \$7

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BLACK MALE SEARCHING for black or Hispanic lady, 32 to 40, down to earth, null into bars, possible relationship. No kids. Sagrily fit signed OK. (12/31) ☎50217

CRAVING ENCHANTMENT, fascinated by the ocean, enamored by women, passion for life. Mr. Ah-leee, attractive, amb-

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
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San Diego Reader November 11, 1997 **A57**

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Panel 1: A man in a suit stands in front of a building labeled "BANK WORK".

Panel 2: A hand holds a sign that says "LAME...".

Panel 3: A man in a suit is being crushed by a large, dark, mechanical arm.

Panel 4: A man in a suit is being crushed by a large, dark, mechanical arm.

Panel 5: A man in a suit is being crushed by a large, dark, mechanical arm.

Panel 6: A man in a suit is being crushed by a large, dark, mechanical arm.

Panel 7: A man in a suit is being crushed by a large, dark, mechanical arm.

Panel 8: A man in a suit is being crushed by a large, dark, mechanical arm.

Panel 9: A man in a suit is being crushed by a large, dark, mechanical arm.

Panel 10: A man in a suit is being crushed by a large, dark, mechanical arm.

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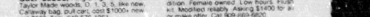
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

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






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