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LETTERS

We welcome letters pertaining to the contents of the Reader. You may phone them or by calling 619-235-3000, ext. 460, address them to Letters to the Editor, Box 85803, San Diego CA 92186-5803; fax them to 619-231-0489; 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.

Anne's Work Is True Art

I don't understand people like Rachel Smith (Letters, December 10). She whines about Anne Albritton and Mr. Phelgall's articles on obesity, but she obviously reads them anyway. Like Rachel, I too had objections to the obesity pieces. But unlike Rachel, I quit reading after a paragraph or two. Simple concept.

As parents of small children, my wife and I adore Anne Albritton's weekly "Kid Stuff." Rachel and her ilk must learn to just turn the page. Anne skillfully portrays all aspects of child-rearing, which is an incomplete picture without the "Gerber-spewing." And like all art, it isn't for everyone. Anne's work is true art to those of us who understand the subject matter. May she publish forever.

Matt Read
La Mesa

Skip That Page

Please count this letter as one in favor of Anne Albritton's column, "Kid Stuff." While we likely disagree on many other topics, the topics she touches on in "Kid Stuff" speak to me. My children have gone through the same stages and phases as hers. Her skills as a part-time writer convey the humor and stresses of her full-time job as a parent. These rich vignettes remind me of the good times and the bad. Instead of cursing me to regret them, though, she helps me savor them.

To those who prefer to concentrate on the less pleasant but thoroughly realistic descriptions of real "Kid Stuff," I say: Skip that page. I will gladly put up with my mewing, whiny letters — just let me have my "Kid Stuff!"

Scott Grant Smith
Mira Mesa

Big-Mouth, Flappy Malcolm

I loved your cartoon showing big-mouth, flappy Malcolm with all his hype and ridiculous high-flying promises about Lindbergh Field (J.D. Crowe, December 10). Unfortunately, nonvisionary people like Malcolm sit on the important Port District board. They want to cram more and more runway, parking, and terminals into the 50 acres of the world's smallest major airport. They want their exorbitantly expensive and wasteful safety and noise

nightmare to grow. Lindbergh is definitely unsafe and will forever be that way for jumbo jets because their approach is necessarily at an extremely low altitude in order to get the right glide path and be able to touch down right away. Jumbos are very heavy and need all the runway length for braking, and that distance is more than what Lindbergh can ever offer. But it is not just an infeasible longer-runway problem at Lindbergh and solving the tricky glide slope low-altitude approach problem, it's also a major noise problem and will always be a big potential disaster problem with the surrounding high housing density. It is an inherently bad location for future development/expansion.

Meanwhile, the 300-acre Del Mar fairgrounds, adjoining the ocean and with 12,000 parking spaces, flat land, and itself a former airport location could be developed at less than 10 percent of what Malcolm plans to spend to expand Lindbergh. This is because the Navy could dump its next few tens of millions of cubic yards of dirty dredged sand to form an extended runway into the ocean. Our International Lemo Runway would be finished quickly for nothing. Federal money like what was given to the Navy to dredge the bay could be used. The runway would stop the currents that sweep away the beach sand. Twelve thousand free parking spaces would make it an extremely popular airport. Air travel around here would increase.

Fifty-four years ago, during WWII, Seabees had no trouble building five 4500-foot-long concrete runways. Heavy superfortress bombers could then take off from Tinian, Saipan, and Guam after the runways were quickly built. Today, we are stymied at the simplest projects. Let runways exceeding 12,000 feet can easily be built by extending flat land into the ocean and simply dredging up ocean floor to build up the land faster than Lindbergh improvements could happen. But we continue acting like a backwards-thinking society, because simple, cheap, good ideas are rejected by the narrow-minded, non visionary people in our local city governments, SANDAG, and board of supervisors. While common sense dictates we phase out tiny little unsafe, cramped Lindbergh now and transition to a coastal regional airport now, it can't happen until the evil Port District (J.D. Crowe, December 10). Unfortunately, nonvisionary people like Malcolm sit on the important Port District board. They want to cram more and more runway, parking, and terminals into the 50 acres of the world's smallest major airport. They want their exorbitantly expensive and wasteful safety and noise

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Reader

SD WEEKLY

DECEMBER 17, 1998 WWW.SDREADER.COM

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An archive of City Lights stories can now be searched on the Internet at www.adreader.com

Peso parley Privatization of the Tijuana airport may come as soon as next year, and that's causing a big stir among insiders at San Diego's city hall. Last week, a consortium of French, Spanish, and Dutch airport operators won the bidding on Mexico's first package of airports to be privatized. The companies will own 20 percent of the operation, with the other 80 percent to be traded on the Mexican stock market. The so-called Pacific Airport Group, which includes Tijuana, Guadalajara, and Puerto Vallarta, is the next package set for auction. The pending sell-off is attracting the keen interest of San Diego politicians, two of whom, city councilmen **Byron Wear** and **Juan Vargas**, recently flew to Mexico City to meet with representatives from one of the would-be bidders. Services Aereos Del Centro, a huge Mexican industrial group said to be controlled by the politically powerful Alf and Nader families, with plant holdings in everything from textiles to helicopters. The Tijuana airport is seen as a huge profit center, especially if local and federal officials can be convinced to open up a direct customs gateway between the terminal and the United States, turning the complex into a major threat to Linbergh Field. Not coincidentally, certain *Olay* Mesa property owners on this side of the border, a key source of political contributions, would also benefit mightily. The executive director of the county's Citizens Law Enforcement Review Board, **John Parker**, may be in line for a similar job in the state's capital. "I want to see what they're offering, what the job will entail," Parker told the *Sacramento Bee* last week. That city is preparing to spend up to \$500,000 on an independent police-monitoring office, but the chief of police is lukewarm on the idea.



Byron Wear



Juan Vargas

Hey, lobbying man Insider says it's no accident that Calligan has become the new sponsor of the Holiday Bowl. Calligan, famous for his friendly hard-water fix-it cartoon "Calligan Man," is owned by U.S. Filter, the Imperial Valley and stands to benefit hugely once legal obstacles are cleared for Imperial to sell water to over-thirty San Diego. U.S. Filter is part owned by the Bass Brothers of Texas, who accumulated the Imperial water rights, then sold them to U.S. Filter in exchange for stock in the company. A key Holiday Bowl board member has close political and professional ties to the deal between San Diego and Imperial. Meanwhile, Nebraska fans who'll be flying in for the game from Omaha are being offered a \$999 package deal, including three nights in what the local newspaper calls the "Five Star Coronado Island Marriott Resort." You know things are bad on the world economic scene when maguadoras in Mexico, where wages are just a fraction of what they pay in the States, begin lying off workers. But that's just what happened last week at the Eastman Kodak plant in Tijuana, where officials announced "a few hundred" workers would soon lose their jobs. It seems that Kodak is being dragged down by DuPont, its Japanese partner in the copier business, according to the *Rocky Mountain News*.

Dung city San Diego's **William Warren**, who wants to mine guano—bird dung—on a 3.2-acre-milk island called Navassa 45 miles off the coast of Haiti, is running into resistance from U.S. scientists who claim that the rock outcropping is home to dozens of endangered species. "It's an odd island," **Michael Smith**, leader of an expedition sponsored by the Center for Marine Conservation, a Washington-based environmental group, told the *London Times*. "It has an unusually high number of endemic species—way too many." As a result, American officials are vowing to protect the island with Coast Guard patrols if necessary. The U.S. claims Navassa under the 1856 Guano Islands Act. The Army says it may conduct a "fly-off" this spring, pitting General Atomics against other makers of so-called unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) for one of the biggest government contracts ever awarded in the field. The Army wants a new, short-range reconnaissance UAV. Others in the Pentagon say it should make do with the UAV already on the shelf, according to *Defense News*.

Contributor: Matt Potter

The Reader offers \$25 for news tips submitted on this column. Call our voice mail at 619-235-3009, ext. 640, or fax your tip to 619-235-3096.



Pamela Bennett's recovered Mustang

The Lady Vanishes

by Bill Manson

The dark green Mustang ragtop looks blue under the hazy floodlights. Here behind the state judicial police station in

Tijuana's Otay Station, the smart new cars are recovered stolen vehicles, mostly with California plates. The older ones belong to the cops of the state judicial police. A patina of dust has settled on the BMWs and Fords. The Mexican moonlight gives them a silver sheen.

The cheapest car of the 1993 Ford is its red, white, and blue license plate, "Idaho 8055."

"It's been here a couple of weeks," says local police chief Hector Huerta Salazar.

His offices found the car on Thursday, September 24, in the parking lot of the Zona Rio Plaza mall, unlocked, keys in the ignition.

"A private security officer at the mall had called two of my officers, Valencia and Ferrer," says Huerta. "He told them that the car had been parked in the place for ten or more days. It's not a good feeling for us, this new car with keys in it. So I told my officers to contact the United States police."

"When we asked them for the information about the car, my officer told me that there was some kind of concern, like there was a United States case number on that car, that it was a sensitive matter," Huerta says. "We asked them to find out the name of the owner, and maybe a picture, so we could try to check on missing people over here in Tijuana."



Pamela Bennett

"There are many possible theories that we can come up with as to how she could have come to Tijuana, drunk too much, gone to the beach, and disappeared in the ocean. We are also going to check if a person with these characteristics is in jail or in a psychiatric hospital. There is [also] a very great possibility she could have been killed, if she was involved with drugs."

The drug-connection theory gains credence when you talk to the police in Clarkston, Washington, a thousand miles north of San Diego.

Detective Sergeant Richard Muszynski, of the Clarkston Police Department, says his department first received a report on September 22 that Bennett was missing. "Her cousin [Harry Bennett] made the actual report. Nobody had heard from her or seen her since August 31. [Although] she was observed in thought she was observed in Pullman, Washington, a town 30 miles from here, the week of Labor Day [a few days later]. We searched her residence here, and we didn't find anything that would indicate foul play is involved. No blood, no signs of a struggle, nothing like that."

But Muszynski says there were signs she left the house in Clarkston's wealthy Kewview area in a hurry. In the yard behind the house she inherited from her grandfather, valuable rafting equipment she had recently used was left out in the yard, a back door was still unlocked, her dog, a two-year-old vizsla named Daisy, was gone. But no clothing nor other personal items were missing. Above all, she hadn't asked friends to mind what cousin Bigger calls her beloved house plants. "Either something happened to her or else she's in hiding," says her for-

mer husband David Bennett, speaking from his farm outside nearby Gifford. "And why she'd be hiding, I don't understand it. We've known each other since I was nine years old. It's out of character for her to leave that car in [Tijuana] unlocked. Hell, she'd even lock it inside my metal shop, which Bennett operates on the farm they once shared."

continued on page 6

Under the Garbage Tree

By Matthew Lickona

George sleeps under an awning just past the corner of 12th and Market,

"or if it's a nice day, in the parking lot across the street from the barber college." If he's up by 6:00 a.m., he can get breakfast at the Rescue Mission, and then he comes to St. Vincent's for lunch at 11:00.

"After that," he says, "no dinner, nothing until breakfast, unless you can go out and panhandle. I do the best I can, usually asking someone, will they help me get a 99-cent hamburger?" He works the trolley stop at City College. If he doesn't get lucky by 11:00 p.m., the guy at the Quick Corner Market will let him have whatever hot dogs and hamburgers he didn't sell that day. "They're all hard," he says, "cooked up under the hot lights. But it takes away the hunger pain." He carries his belongings—donated clothes, a blanket, a blue hard hat—in plastic bags. He has been homeless for a month.

A month ago, George, 43, was living in a two-bedroom apartment in East San Diego with a woman and her nine children, none of them his own. The rent was \$560 a month. He was working as a nurse's assistant at Chase Care Center in El Cajon, making \$7 an hour. "That ended on [November] tenth," he says, without explanation.

Last Christmas, he gave the kids bicycles. "It was a really good Christmas for me because they didn't expect to get anything. They thought they were going to get little trinkets, and

beat you until you joined one or the other. My brother Carl, he got in one. They beat him and beat him until he did—busted his teeth, took his clothes." George spent as much time as he could at the Boys' Club in an effort to avoid the gangs. "I'd go there, play basketball, shoot pool, and I got damned good at Ping-Pong. But after the Boys Club closed, I had to find a way to make sure it was safe to run home." Then, just as he reached recruiting age, his mother died of asthma, and he moved to Merced, California, to be with his father.

The projects were his childhood home, and his Christmas memories from those days are happy ones. "From the time we woke up on Christmas, it was a surprise. The only thing that never surprised us, we knew we were getting lotteries and gifts. The Christmas stocking was a tradition. We had a stocking full of nuts and candy and oranges and apples. We didn't get an overabundance of toys, but we got one certain something that we wanted. I remember I got a green and red Tonka truck. I got a Mickey Mouse that was about [two feet] tall—if you moved it, it would walk. I got a Mister Peanut Butter Maker. We got air rifles, which was the worst thing, because we would dig them in the dirt and shoot the dirt at each other."

"One year, I wanted a bicycle so bad, and my dad shipped it from wherever he was. It was red with chrome fenders and the little thing on the back you sit packages on, and it was beautiful."

George decorated the family's green aluminum Christmas tree each year. "We had the old-fashioned bulbs with designs painted on them, indented in the middle." Han was the centerpiece of Christmas dinner. And



George

the family always went to church, at the Union Tabernacle Church of God in Christ, on Rosemead Road. "We used to go, seemed like 24 hours a day when we weren't in school." George says he used to lead the church choir, a hundred voices strong, and that they once traveled to Vegas to sing at a convention, taking the stage immediately following Elvis Presley.

What does Christmas mean? "Family. The birth of Christ. He came to save us all. He died for our sins. It's because of His death that we have salvation and have access to it. And to know that is there for you—I mean, this is just temporary. I would love to go to heaven. That's the only thing to look forward to in life right now. They say when you die, you go to heaven or hell. To me, this is hell right now."

George's Christianity is not warm and fuzzy; his thought of the Incarnation leads immediately to the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, all so that sinners might be redeemed. "[Jesus] is coming back," he says, "and He's coming back soon. He's coming, and only the righteous ones are gonna go back with Him. The leftover ones are going where they really don't want to go."

It's easy to be a leftover one. "I don't do the things that I

of times recently. "My mom always said, always, she said, 'Never forsake the assembly of the saints.' That's something real to me, and that's why I try to go. It seems like when I do go, afterwards, it's like a whole weight has been lifted off me. I can think, I can focus. God lifts it off me and says, 'Okay, I'll give you a fresh start today, without all these things crushing on you.'"

Though he is not estranged from his family, George has not called them for help. "My family has never seen me like this," he explains, adding that he has been working and supporting himself since he was 16. He says he'll call when he gets back to work. "I called at Thanksgiving, and that was surprising. No one came home. In a way, it makes me feel like he's in the same shape I am."

When I ask about his plans for Christmas, he says, "I hate they're hiring at Point Loma Convalescent. I worked there in '96, and I think I'm gonna go back there. I just wish I could find any kind of job right now—sweeping floors, I don't care. I went down to the Social Security office today to get me another Social Security card since I lost all my ID. That happens out here, people steal your stuff."



CITY LIGHTS

CITY LIGHTS

CITY LIGHTS

CITY LIGHTS

Lady vanishes

continued from page 4

had disappeared three weeks before Bennett.

"Our information was that the person who claims to be Blake — we don't know what his

real name is — had been in the [Lansing] residence for well over a year," says Kane. "He'd paid a large sum of money down [towards the purchase price], but it's my information that Blake was defaulting on the payments."

Kane says that's not surprising. "They'd made their money [from their methamphetamine

lab operation]. I'm sure he was happy for the owners to take the house back. That way he doesn't have to worry about all the chemical contamination," Kane says he hasn't yet charged Blake. "We're working with [state and federal] prosecutors to come up with [charges] — except we don't know which of his several aliases

to charge him under." Kane says Blake's case shows how the meth trade, which historically came from such areas as San Diego, Riverside and San Bernardino, is reversing gears. "We do know that [Blake] was involved in sending large quantities of methamphetamine out of his area to California. We've seized well over

three pounds of that at one point in time. Your [Southern California] law enforcement down there is doing a pretty good job of putting pressure on these people, driving them up to our area. We really appreciate that! They're opening the map of the United States, seeing where there's law enforcement on page 8

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CITY LIGHTS

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CITY LIGHTS

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* U.S. Department of Education, 1993.

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CITY LIGHTS

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CITY LIGHTS CITY LIGHTS CITY LIGHTS CITY LIGHTS CITY LIGHTS

Lady vanishes

continued from page 4
population, a large land mass of open areas and limited law enforcement, and they're coming up with Hahos as one place. The lab is in the state of Idaho have increased probably 400 percent in

the last year. Meth is our number-one drug up here," But Kane worries about publicizing Blake's and Bennett's disappearance in San Diego. "If [Blake] has gone to Tijuana, we don't want to chase him further into Mexico."

Bennett's 75-year-old mom, Gloria Bennett, who lives in New Jersey, apparently feels the same. She refused to speak to the

Reader: But she is so worried about her daughter, she has hired a private investigator to find Pamela. And Dennis Phillips of All West Investigations says that, unlike his employer, he'll speak because "the thing that's important to us is finding Pam, and they could well be right in your readership area." Phillips says Blake was a charmer who came at the

right time for Bennett, when she was vulnerable, with the death of her father and the breakup of her marriage, both last year. He believes it was the air of danger, adventure, sophistication, and wealth about "TJ" that appealed to her. "She's an outdoor, adventurous woman. She likes the outdoor life, she likes travel, she likes good food, she's

a connoisseur of good food, she's a gourmet cook, she's a talented entertainer of people, a gregarious person. But it's our feeling that she's fallen into TJ's world, and when she fell, she had no idea what she had gotten into. We know that she's emotionally wrestling with what to do, how to bring her life back to some normalcy. We feel that there's

definitely an element of danger, based on who he is. This person is a professional criminal, in our opinion.... The way we'll find Pam is when someone finds Blake."

According to her best friend, Christine Mulholland, granddaughter of L.A.'s famous water boy, the two studied liberal arts at the exclusive

CITY LIGHTS

Sierra Nevada College in Tahoe in the early 1970s and remained friends ever since. Mulholland, speaking from San Luis Obispo, says the two used to party together.

Mulholland has heard every theory: that Pamela and Blake are still around Oregon, Washington, that they paid someone else to drive the Mustang to TJ and abandon it, that when the meth lab became "hot," she and J drove separate cars down and flew off from Tijuana airport to the Bahamas. Yet Mulholland feels if her friend were okay, she would have heard "I would have had a postcard from her by now from some place or a phone call."

Mulholland says Bennett told her earlier this year she started suspecting Blake was involved with meth labs. "At that time she told me that she was sending him packing, and he couldn't hang around there anymore." And that, Mulholland fears, along with Bennett's temperament, could have turned Pamela into a problem. "She's got a volatile temper on her and a volatile mouth to go with it. And when she drank, boy, she could really drink. So if she drank too much, or — I know meth creates paranoia and violent behavior... My friend's car turns up in Tijuana... I still am not certain that [Blake] or some body else hasn't caused some foul play to happen to her."

Back in Tijuana, Juarez, Huerta, the Olay Mesa police chief, peers into the Ford Mustang in the yard behind his police station. When American forensics finally come to inspect it, he fears they won't get many answers. Huerta speaks good English, but there hasn't been a lot of communication with police in Clarkston and Lewiston, even though he gave the U.S. cops his number.

"It's not so clean" (for prints) as we wished," he says, peering in. "When the car was opened, the police touched the car, the private security officers touched the car. Why? Because there was no crime related to the car then, so it is not clean." But he worries more about the young lady who might have been dragged out of it and killed, perhaps because she knew too much. "That is a very great possibility — that not only Pamela Bennett, but maybe Mr. Blake could be a victim too. If they come to Tijuana, if they are involved with these kinds of problems, of course it is a possibility." He pauses before climbing the steps into his police station. "Or, she could have come to Tijuana to disappear. In Baja it is very easy to disappear. If you see this lady in Rosarito, in Ensenada, in the Coyote Playa in Baja Sur, you're not going to think of her as a possible delinquent. It is very easy to disappear in Tijuana." Pamela Bennett is described as five feet, eight inches tall, weighs 140 pounds, and has brown hair and eyes. Her dog wears a teal collar with a southwestern design. ■

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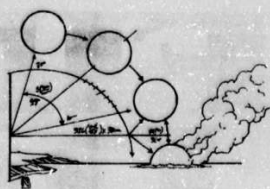
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STRAIGHT FROM THE HIP

BY MATTHEW ALICE



Matt:
On the TV news they give the time of sunrise and sunset. Since San Diego is 30 miles from Oceanside, the sunrise and sunset can't be the same. At which point on the horizon do they determine when it will be sunrise/sunset?

— Jerry, La Mesa

Hi, Matt:
Every evening thousands of San Diegans and not a few tourists line up along the sandy shores of O.C. Pier, and other beaches to stare at the sun as it is setting. I was told when I was young that staring into the sun made you blind. I know the atmosphere is pretty thick at that point, but I still see lots of spots on my eyelids when I stare into the setting sun. Are we all going to be walking around blind, a la 1960s movie Day of the Triffids, when we get old? At least there's that great glaucoma medicine going around.

— Stu Kallen, the Net

Y's know, Stu, if everybody who claims in those "Personals" ads to love walking on the beach at sunset actually did walk on the beach at sunset, there'd be a body crush of historic proportions. Guys would be yelling at the tall people down front to get out of the way so they could see. Women and children would be trampled. Fireflights would break out. They'd have to get posts and ropes and set up those annoying waiting-line lanes like they have at the bank. Near as I can tell, this walking on the beach at sunset thing is all talk, no action. The truth is, we're all back home, sitting on our cans and destroying our brains staring at Jerry Springer.

Anyway, sure, Stu. After you stare at the sun, those sun-shaped spots you see are the fringed rods and cones in your retina, weary of coping with too much light. If they get weary enough, they could crap out completely. This is no joke. If you feel you must stare into the setting sun, stroll the beach in a welder's mask.

Unfortunately, Jerry's question isn't so easy. There isn't even a very good definition of "sunset," when you get right down to it. But we have to back up the dumb buggy a bit and say any difference in the time of sunset between San Diego and Oceanside is more the result of the east-west distance than the north-south. The north-south point at which the sun hits the horizon is determined by the tilt of the earth's axis. Oceanside and San Diego are too close together to have the time of apparent sunset be affected by axis tilt.

Think of the sun as a large fruit fly coming at us from Yuma, Nashville, and points east. Think of a day as exactly 24 hours long and Earth as being divided into 360 degrees of longitude (like an orange made up of 360 sections). If we assume the fruit fly moves around the orange at a constant pace, it should take four minutes to move west through one degree of longitude. So the fruit fly has set in Nashville, set a few hours later in Yuma, and is heading into the ocean as viewed from the C.B. pier. Since the Oceanside pier is about a quarter of a degree of longitude west of O.C., the fruit fly would set about a minute later in O.C. than in O.B. Naturally, no one living a real life cares about this.

In the first place, sunlight is refracted through dense layers of a m'osphere as we view it low on the horizon, so the sun isn't really where we think it is. We may still see its top edge because of refraction, when in reality the sun itself has passed below the horizon. And if we're not standing at sea level, looking out at a large body of water, we see the sun set into an elevated, false sort of horizon anyway.

Our TV-weather guy sunset times come from our local weather service, which gets them from the U.S. Naval Observatory in Washington. Those drudges have calculated an average, idealized, fruit-fly sunset time for every 10 degrees of latitude along the Greenwich meridian. (Most of California falls between 32 and 42 degrees north latitude, to give you an idea of the area covered.) Additional handy calculations put out by the NAVOBS folks give us a more or less correct sunset time for our city. You can do it too. Browse your way to <http://www.usno.navy.mil>, then mouse over to sun and moon info, enter date and location, and...sun, well, they show San Diego sunset times as one minute later than Oceanside times. But that's the sunset for your slippery concept. So they're a minute or two or three off. Who cares? Nobody's taking romantic sunset walks on the beach anyway, so why should the weather service sweat it?

From the "Television Is Our Friend" file, a letter from T.O. in O.B. responding to a question about huffing argon to make your voice deep, just as helium makes you sound like one of those gossamer bunnies. Ser T.O. (heartily seconded by me and my phalanx of lawyers), "Don't try the argon, or any other heavy gas. The gas will sink to the bottom of your lungs and displace oxygen. You could pass out and/or suffocate. I did see a guy do this trick on Letterman one night. He had to stand on his head to get the huffing effect and to let the gas sink back out of his lungs." Ya know, T.O., it never occurred to me that anyone would try this. I took the question as just one more barbra-streisand Al Pacino notion that would require far too much actual work to accomplish. Thanks for reminding me that it's exactly this kind of thing that has made Al Pacino what it is today. Whatever that is.

Get a question you need answered? Get it straight from the hip. Write to Matthew Alice, c/o the Reader, P.O. Box 83863, San Diego, CA 92186-5863, or fax your questions to 619-231-0498, or e-mail to mat@mail.esd.com via the Internet.

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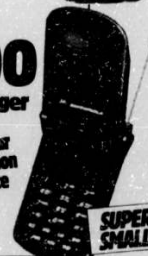
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By Patrick Daugherty

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO SLOW DOWN



"Which turn is the most difficult?" I ask. I'm standing on a damp, green hillside overlooking the 12-turn, 2.52-mile track at Sears Point Raceway, two counties and 35 miles north of San Francisco.

My hillside companion, Michael Gesser, says, "Well, they all have their own requirements."

"Isn't there one son of a bitch?"

"No, they all require precise positioning of the throttle and the car. Gesser, 48, five-foot-ten-inches tall with thin Auburn hair and brown eyes, is attending the advanced racing class offered by the Jim Russell Racing School. The Russell Racing School has been in business 42 years. Graduates have won every major championship in the world. Cars used for this \$1400, three-day class are Formula Russell single seaters. They are outfitted with the downforce-producing front and rear wings, race slicks, and so on.

Gesser regards the racecourse. "Turn four is interesting because you're creating a hill and then you're diving down into turn five. There's a lot of Gs in that carousel. Then you feed into a double apex [turns five and six], and you're squeezing the throttle all the way through so you have good G force in that turn."

Mr. Gesser spent a good portion of the 1960s and 1970s driving a BMW motorcycle around Africa and Europe. He was present at the Valdez oil spill, bought a 42-foot Chevy-Cadillac, learned how to drive and repair it, then leased himself and the boat to Exxon for three seasons. He was over 40 when he took up the luge. I am not surprised to find him here.

I decide to begin at the bottom. "What is a racetrack?"

"It's variations of right- and left-hand turns, each with different radiuses and different elevations. The general idea is that a racing track has all the diversities of a road."

"I see they run Winston Cup races out here. Isn't that a big deal?"

"No. People who drive formula cars don't care for that kind of racing. Winston Cup does huge business, it's a tremendous money-maker, but from the view of sport, for somebody who loves automobile racing, there's no interest in the Winston Cup whatsoever."

"So, this class you're taking is a big step up from that?"

"This is a training for Formula 1 racing—the Indianapolis kind of car. The greatest drivers in the world are Formula 1 drivers."

All right. Back to basics. "How fast are you driving here?"

"On the straightaway you could hit 150 miles per hour."

I show a look of disappointment.

Gesser is annoyed. "Everybody is so interested in the number, but it's not the speed per se, it's how many

seconds around the track, it's the nuances in how you perform in the corners. There's so much going on."

Michael stops to watch a car round turn two. "It's how well you drive the car. All these cars are the same, yet drivers lap each other. The ability to balance yourself and balance the car is the game."

"The greatest Formula 1 driver makes it look like anybody can do it. Well, in point of fact, only ten people in the world can do it. It's extremely difficult, it requires an amazing amount of concentration."

I point to turn two.

"What are you trying to do when you come into this corner?"

"Everything is momentum and balance. You want to exit the turn under acceleration. That's where your gains lie. If you don't have a lot of straightaway, you're trying to be well-balanced and disciplined through the corner. You have two apexes close by, so you have to sacrifice one turn—turn three—and then you apex precisely on 3b, and set yourself up to come over the hill going into turn four."

At this instant a car skids coming into turn two. Gesser pounces. "He lifted the throttle. As soon as he lifted the throttle, the car got away from him. That's the point, if you don't have a formula car, you can't lift the throttle."

The lights have snapped on inside my head. "I see, if you attempt to slow down you'll be punished."

"You'll spin out. You have to be totally committed to the car. If you hesitate, set up improperly by lifting the throttle, you'll lose the car."

"So, a normal person would think, 'Gee, I'm going too fast, and lift his foot off the gas pedal, but that's the exact wrong thing to do.'"

"Absolutely. Yes. You'll get into a tremendous amount of trouble."

I imagine myself driving down a steep hill turning into a blind corner. "So, the first instinct is to let up..."

"You'd be finished."

"You'd have to override that natural response. That would be hard."

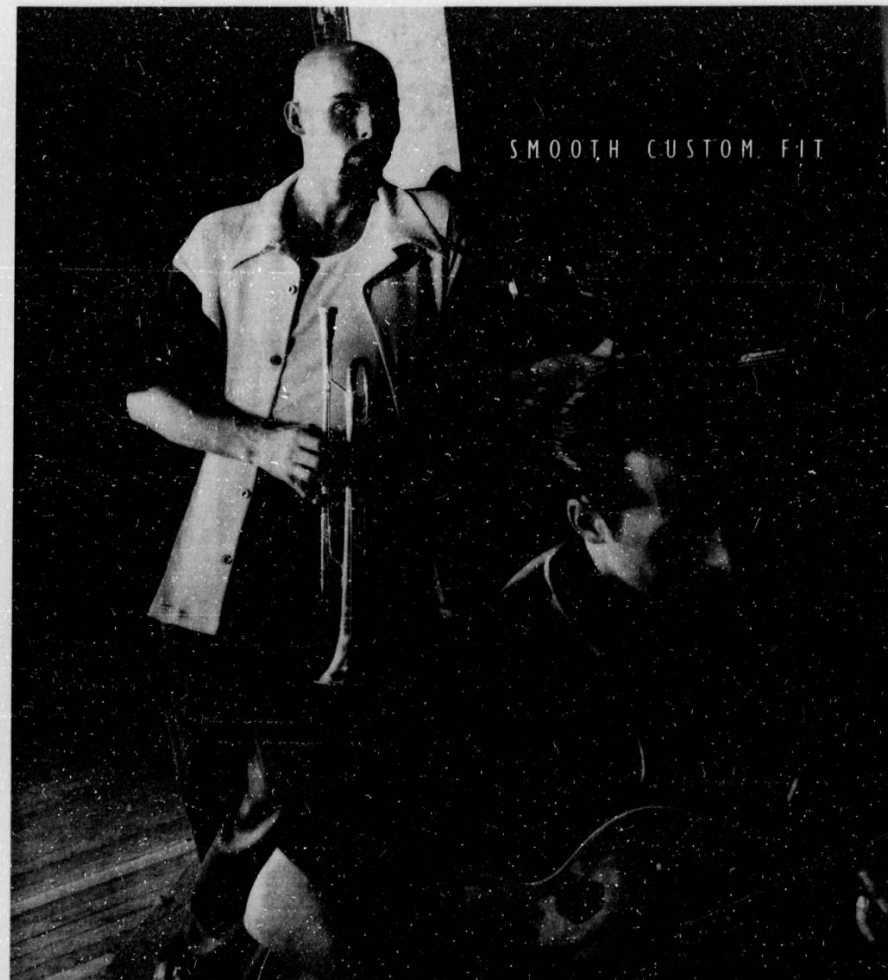
Gesser smiles a car's smile. "The natural response for somebody who wants to race is to go fast."

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SHEEP AND GOATS PLACES OF WORSHIP REVIEWED

At 4:30 a.m. last Saturday morning, dozens of people huddled in front of Our Lady of Guadalupe Roman Catholic church in Barrio Logan. Wrapped in scarves and serapes, they knelt in candlelight before a monument to Our Lady of Guadalupe, some warming their hands over the candles, others reciting the Rosary.

Cold, dry wind carried the scent of fresh boiled corn, tamales, and hot chocolate from the vendors' carts lining the narrow sidewalk in front of the church. Families dawdled in front of the carts. With one arm, parents herded drowsy toddlers and clutched babies in the other. A little before 5:00 a.m. the church doors opened and people hurried into the dark, chilly building to fill the pews closest to the altar. More and more people rushed in. They filled the remaining pews, all the aisles, and wedged themselves shoulder to shoulder into doorways. Above the altar, Christmas lights flashed and twinkled around a portrait of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The air was close and humid and smelled of perfume and baby powder.



OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

All the lights came on. An elderly woman in a bright blue serape squeezed her way down the center aisle. She bore a large Mexican flag. Four black-suited, mustached mariachis followed behind her and began to play. Everyone in the church stood and applauded. Our Lady of Guadalupe's day-long celebration began.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, borne aloft by a crescent moon cradled by Michael the Archangel, is "Empress of the Americas" and "Queen of Mexico." Her appearance before Juan Diego, an Indian, on a hill above the lake that was later drained and filled with Mexico City, catalyzed the wholesale conversion of colonial Mexico's indigenous population. Today the majority of Mexicans are mestizo—part Indian, part Spanish—and have a genetic, albeit tenuous, to the apparition and its subsequent miracles. The popular understanding of Juan Diego's encounter is that if there had been no apparition, there would have been no Mexico.

Our Lady of Guadalupe's image—airbrushed onto the heads of low riders, adored in Mexico City's Basilica de Guadalupe, tattooed on the backs of cholas, honored on small altars in town squares and in every mercado—fills Mexicans who they are. Protesters carried the Virgin's portrait at the front of UFW strikes and Chicano rights marches. The Mexican flag's red, green, and white invariably flank or surround portraits of Our Lady of Guadalupe wherever they appear.

Perhaps a third of the people attending

last Saturday morning's 5:00 a.m. service stayed at the church all day until the solemn Mass celebrated at 7:00 p.m., when even more people crowded in. Many of them brought framed portraits or statues of the Virgin to have them blessed at the end of the service by Father Hyatt Brown, a Jesuit. Others brought small wooden trays filled with real or ceramic vegetables, miniature pots and pans, spoons, knives. Why did they bring these kitchen items to have them blessed? "I don't know," shrugged one woman who held several wooden trays. "It's just a custom. It's just something we do every year. It's a nice custom."

Many parents dressed their small sons as Juan Diego and their daughters in traditional Indian costumes. Outside the church, groups of herded little boys with mustaches scribbled across their upper lips sipped cocoa and giggled. Their sisters, hair elaborately braided and ribboned, held the hems of their white dresses while cussing a few steps of traditional dance. It was impossible to get inside the church. People gnawed boiled ears of corn and nibbled on fried pork rinds. Everyone waited for Mass.

to end so they could file in to be blessed by Father Hyatt.

He'd been at the church since 4:00 a.m. The following day, Sunday, he would celebrate seven Masses. Standing in front of the altar rail, looking what looked like a little metal pail of holy water, he looked flustered, exhausted. Hundreds of people waited in front of him in a line that stretched outside onto the street. The line moved slowly. By 8:30 p.m., it hadn't diminished. More people were coming. Father Hyatt looked pale and sweat glazed his forehead. His motions were robot like. The center seemed heavy in his hand. Finally, he stopped.

"I'm sorry," he said. "I can't do any more. I'm too tired. I'm sorry. Please come back tomorrow."

No one complained. Father Hyatt and several of his parishioners began distributing the dozens of flower bouquets people brought to be blessed and offered to the Virgin. Mothers, fathers, grandmothers, grandfathers, thronged the altar rail. They reached for elaborate arrangements of rose and simple bunches of carnations and daisies. Father Hyatt stayed to the end when every last flower was gone. Grabbing a few remaining roses, he laid them in the hands of a grandmother, a woman born in Zacatecas who has attended Our Lady of Guadalupe's feast day at the church for the past 32 years.

"Here," he said to her, handing her a handful of wet red roses. "I'll see you tomorrow."

—Alice Quintanar

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SIGHTSEER

Space Invaders

I wasn't a bad seed, just a little irritable. I tended to hold in my anger toward my older brother, then let it out in sudden flashes of overreactive retaliation. Once, I tried to punch him in the face. I was in the basement playing Atari's Space Invaders. My older brother, of course, held the high score, but I was in the zone, dodging bullets like Han Solo, doing in on his score. My mother and brother had just left the house to drive somewhere, but Sunshine, our stupid golden retriever, was outside and needed to come in. My brother was pounding on the door, yelling at me to let in the dog. This was the kind of existential moment my little fifth-grade head was not used to: the pounding, the dumb dog, the high score coming closer and closer. I overheard, blew a fuse about 50 yards shy of becoming bigger and better than my brother. In another zone now, I took the stairs with three steps. Reaching the door, I put my fist through its glass to get at my brother's face. Later, when she was picking glass shards from Nick's hair with tweezers, my mother gave me a look: "You've gotta relax," it said. That night, while we slept in the house, we were robbed; the thieves opened our door by reaching through the broken window.

I apologized and all of that, and my brother is and has always been my best friend, so other than the lingering effects of the robbery, my flare-up was merely an episode, and though you might not think it to know me, I have relaxed. To me, this anecdote resonates less as a painful of fraternity than as an allegory for the '80s. So many of the elements of that decade are in place: the crude video game, the desperate fear of "space invasion," the greed for the high score as well as material goods, and the violent overreaction. Some of my desires on that day were not too far from those that dictated President Reagan's foreign policy at the time. What reminded me of this story, and its connections to the larger themes of the '80s, was The '80s Server (www.80s.com), a big Web site that, as its name suggests, is a lot more than a site. The '80s Server functions as a hub for a whole decade; everything here is, like, megabit, you know what I mean? (One warning: the best aspects of The



From www.80s.com

'80s Server are, like that hideous, slick outerwear from the '80s, for members only—about \$5 per month. From The '80s Server, members can choose from a variety of ways to travel back to the previous decade, and now seems a great time to do so, with everyone else afflicted by Year 2000 mania. From the entertainment links, you can read about forgotten television shows, movies, and personalities, or, if you dare, hear clips from New Wave bands. Eighties enthusiasts will enjoy as well the generous archive of the server's Awesome Site of the Day, where he such gems as the Paula Abdul Farnish, the Joanne Loves Chachi Page, Kelsey's James Spider Page, and the Classic Canadian Rock Page. The '80s Server also offers a Spotlight link, where it focuses on one major event or phenomenon of the decade, such as Hands Across America, the Pac-Man Story, or '80s fashion, from acid-washed jeans to the Michael Jackson "Thriller" jacket.

The '80s Server best benefits members by providing links to the Web sites of print magazines that see the '80s as more than a repository of popular culture jokes—magazines such as *Entertainment Weekly*. Like these magazines, the biggest accomplishment of The '80s Server

is to treat the decade without any of the whimsy, irony so typical of most discussions of the '80s. To be sure, much of what the '80s produced should frighten us, but to write off the decade as a joke does an injustice to those of us who grew up in the '80s and take childhood seriously.

The '80s Server links an article written by Bryant Adams for *The Reflector* in 1995. Titled "Don't Call Me 'Generation X,' Call Me a Child of the Eighties," Adams's piece begins, "I am a child of the Eighties. That is what I prefer to be called. The Nineties can do without me. Grunge isn't here to stay, fashion is fickle, and 'Generation X' is a myth created by some over-40 writer trying to figure out why people wear flannel in the summer. When I got home from school, I played with my Atari 2600. I spent hours playing *Pitfall* or *Combat* or *Breakout* or *Dodge 'em Cars* or *Frogger*. I never did beat Asterix. Then I watched *Scooby Doo*. Daphne was a Goddess, and I thought Shaggy was smoking something synthetic in the back of their psychodelic van. I hated *Scrappy*." In making this list of '80s pastimes, what Adams refuses to forget is that the '80s made a generation, not just a bunch of primitive combat games and far-out cartoons.

In a Spotlight article, The '80s Server remembers for us 11:40 EST on January 26, 1986. Interrupting the heady days of the mid-'80s, the *Challenger* space shuttle blew up with sweet Christa McAuliffe onboard. I remember driving into school with my mother late that day because of snow and hearing the news on the radio. I didn't know it then, but that tragedy—another innocent space invasion gone awry—was a drama only the '80s could script. ■

—Justin Wolf

"When I got home from school, I played with my Atari 2600. ... Then I watched *Scooby Doo*."

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**The letter writer
often is precursor
of the writer who
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of publication.**

said (in whispers to myself) was that I dreaded her visits to us in New York. I dreaded our visits to her house in Missouri (she'd moved from her ramshackle Arkansas farm). I dreaded her doughy, age-spotted hand's scratch across my bare skin. I dreaded the cutback of her temper, a temper as violent and unpredictable and dangerous as that of my mother. Grammy, I didn't realize then, was where Mama learned to be mean.

Sunday afternoons, Mama sat me down at the card table to write to Grammy. I had yellow pencils that I kept, as children did then, in a pencil box. I had stationery. I liked that stationery, a lot. Across the top of the crisp white paper, dancing clouds held aloft balloons in primary colors. Even the word "clouds," its "ow" almost too big for the mouth, could make me laugh. Right now, I say, "clouds, down, down," and I'm laughing.

I understood that I was to write to Grammy as if I loved the old bat. I knew from the reverent way Mama spoke about her mama, that indeed I was to write as if I quite extravagantly loved this brutal little white-haired woman. When the sharp pencil tip touched down on paper and printed out "Dear Grammy," the voice that my mixed block letters and cursive script was to capture was not the unselfconscious voice of the heart. I knew that.

Trying to write letters to Grammy, I'd guess I thought about the first year Grammy visited us in New York. Surely, I thought about the snowy Monday that she insisted I stay home from school and go with her to Macy's. I would have thought about this because it turned out to be a big day in what, then, was my very short life. As my life has gotten longer, I have continued to think about that day. On the subway train that morning, the car swayed so much I felt sick to my stomach. Grammy talked above the subway car's clatter about what she might buy and how snow, a real blizzard, was coming, and how she sure thanked God (although she was not, she said, religious) she didn't have to get cows in out of it. She told me how once in Arkansas the snow fell so many feet deep that her 600-pound Poland China sow got swallowed up and sunk down in it. Nobody found the sow until spring thaw and when they did, the sow was frozen solid, her mouth still open

Shirley Temple's Pencil



in scene in New York

to squeal for help. Who could forget that? Sow is a sadder word than clown. I began my letter writing by trying to pretend that I loved, loved, loved Grammy. I no doubt squinted my eyes at: I customarily did when I wanted to work up some imaginativ, vivid scene. Maybe I tried to paint Grammy in my mind as the mama my mama talked about: good as gold, heart as big as the Grand Canyon, clever with a needle, and a miracle worker at the stove. Maybe I tried to see Grammy as hampered by the increasing frailty that worried my mother. Given my energetic imagination, perhaps I squeezed out a few tears. Who knows.

I do know that to write these letters I had to "work myself up." (When I write now, I often "work myself up.") I know that this "working up" process was precisely like the process I went through for playing make believe with friends. Roles switched rapidly between Cowgirl and Bandit and Nurse and Doctor. As I assumed these roles I worked myself up to feel what I imagined the doctor or ranchman or cowgirl felt. The role that I worked to assume when I wrote to Grammy was that of good little girl who exorbitantly loves a lovable grandmother. Only then, when I became that girl, could I set my pencil lead beneath the clouds with their bright bobbing balloons and begin to fill the white paper.

Letter writing was my first attempt at pretending, when I wrote, to be someone whom I was not. This was not the simple assumption, as in let's pretend play, of the role of nurse, baby, or father. In these roles I forgot myself. The nurse or baby or father role assumed me. Little Judy was obliterated. I was taken up into, chewed and swallowed

The distance is not that far between "Dear Grandmother" and "To Whom It May Concern" and "This is my letter to the world/ That never wrote to me."

Certainly, the first letters I wrote were written to Grammy, my mother's mother. One had thought I thought then, when I was seven and eight and sucked the ends of my braids (their taste, salty, and their texture, scratchy) while I read and while I wrote, was that I did not care that soon Grammy would tow her big, boggy, wrinkled face back on the goose-feather pillows and close her piggy blue eyes and die. I disliked her that much.

I didn't say, "I hope this horrid old bat hurries up and dies." I was not that mean. What I

THIS PERSON WAS

A KIND OF ME, A

ONE-HALF, A ONE-

QUARTER, A DEMI,

SEMI, META ME.

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by fatherhood or babydorn or starched nurseries. I believed in these characters' fortunes. I bowed down before their fate.

When, however, I wrote the letter to Grammy, the person I pretended to be was not someone entirely other and apart from me. This person was a kind of me, a one-half a one-quarter, a demi, semi, nota me. What this pretense demanded was that I take that splinter of myself who did

love Grammy and enlarge that splinter until it was entirely me. This was my first try, on paper, of my voice as the voice of a character. This was my first experience of the voice that I was a voice to which you lent your I and me. It was a voice tuned to the key in which your voice sang. This was a tricky undertaking. The voice was not singing quite what it would sing if you

opened your heart and threw back your head and sang what lay coiled and waiting to uncoil and be sung. This voice revised candid emotion and actual opinion. This voice tuned itself to the song that must be sung. This voice sang a quarter or half or three-quarters in and you had to make the song sound wholly true and wholly as if it were you, you, you who were singing. It felt peculiar to do.

A child's speech is first word, best word, thoughtless and heedless. I was not that easy to tell when I talked. For one thing, conversation didn't permit time to think. When I spoke, I spoke quickly. I gave slight thought to what words spluttered out from my sulky mouth. The words drifted and popped out into the air, disappeared, and rapidly were replaced by more words that also disappeared.

Writing conveys in a way that speech does not quite know how to do. When I sat with my pencil lead poised above paper, no one could see my lying eyes or that my free hand (no bigger than a blind and newborn kitten) twitched and sweated in my pocket. No one could see me pick at the lint in my pocket or crumple the soothing copper pennies. Plus, I could stop and think. I could try out in the library

hush of my mind one after another possible word. Would I write peach or plum? What? And was the plum purple or merely a dark red? Only when—at last—I hit upon the string of words that fit down and buttoned over the belly of fat sentence I wanted to see on the white paper did I have to commit myself.

Oh! And there were sweet-smelling pink erasers at the end of every yellow pencil. I could be wrong and erase my writing. When I talked and said something that made my conversational partner angry or hurt her feelings, she might demand I "take it back." I might defer to her anger or apologize for the hurt and agree to "take it back." But those words were never forgotten. In speech no true erasure is possible. If what I wrote didn't "sound right" I could obliterate the word or words. No one would ever know the "wrong" word that sat upon the white paper. Even God acted His heavy-lidded eyes until my erasures were complete. I wrote down paper. I tore away that face. I sometimes erased even the royal blue shoes that covered the out-sized feet on which the stationary's clematis danced.

I began letters to Grammy with, "How are you? I am well. I hope you are well too." This hope for Grammy's wellness contributed little to the empty space beneath the dancing clematis. Even in my awkward script, this hope covered a mere few inches. This empty space was a problem. How would I solve this problem?

I would never entirely solve this problem. Because part of this problem's solution is compassion. What was needed was that I shove my foot into Grammy's size five lace up Red Cross shoes. I must try to see the world as she saw the world. I must try to locate and slip myself into being the person she was, for herself. I must try to feel what she felt when she stumbled into bed, dropped her talus teeth—"my choppers," she called them—into the glass of water, and let her big fat, wrinkled face fall back onto the pillows. At best, I could only try—easy—compassion. Once you ask yourself what your grandmother (by whatever name he or she is called) may be thinking when she's alone in her bed and cannot sleep and wonders when and from where death will come for her, you are lost. You have begun to give up on yourself in regaining center of the universe. Your voracious wild hog that squeals "me-me-me" has begun to lose ground. As even yesterday or right, or ten, or even right now, this afternoon, with white lilac beneath my window and a dillared, austere sunbeam wash on my bare back, I am not ready for that. I am not ready to share my dislike so that an enemy or someone whom I perceive as an enemy, or someone who merely irritates me, can beat better than I. I am selfish. I want what I want for me. I want what I want what you want for you. As the language of the Thomas Cranmer

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1549 Book of Common Prayer has it, "We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. And there is no health in us."

That Monday when Grammy insisted I go to Macy's, I knew she wanted me to go because, alone in the city, she felt afraid. She didn't like being with me any more than I liked being with her. She was afraid of getting lost. She was afraid of the

subway. She was afraid of what she spoke of as "Negroes and foreigners" and shied when any dark-skinned person passed her and shook her big head in disgust when she smelled garlic.

So, there Grammy and I were, on a cold Monday afternoon in a hot steam-heated department store. Three salesladies, garbed in black dresses, arrived to fit fatso Grammy into a boned corset. In

the dressing room, Grammy stood bare naked except for her pink satin vest and underpants and garter belt. Her hose fell around her ankles and drooped over her feet, and from excitement, I guess, and the torrid department store heat, blue veins popped up on her chubby thighs, the skin mottled with broken veins and iris brown-and-purple bruises. Grammy's baggy obese body filled the

cramped room with cooking-meat odor. I thought, "Hamburger, hamburger" and was not hungry even though we'd eaten no lunch. She sweated streams, thin beads of herself. She held up her arms in an "I've surrendered" posture. Sweat ran down her sides onto the corset. She said, "Get my handkerchief and wipe me off, kid." I grabbed her handkerchief from her purse. She said, "Wipe under

my arms!" I pushed past the salesladies and swiped at Grammy's stinking, sweating, hairy full-moon armpits. Grammy said, "Thanks," and then the three salesladies got busy hooking and lacing the stiff corset. When Grammy inhaled to get herself a good breath, you could hear air rattle through her. You could hear the salesladies breathe and hear the metal lace tips enter the

corset's empty metal grommets. The closer the saleswomen got to the end of the laces, the more of Grammy's fat rolled up over the corset top. The suspense was terrible. Fat rolled up from her sides and gathered beneath her arms. Then when the ladies went to zip the corset zipper, which is the last thing you do, Grammy's fat got caught in the zipper's sharp malignancy teeth. Grammy howled a howl you could hear all across women's lingerie.


The salesladies screamed. One saleslady ran and got the supervisor, a ski-ski Italian with black current-color eyes that beat Grammy's eyes for piggie-eye squint meanness. She grabbed Grammy's wrist, hard, and hissed, right into Grammy's face, "Shut up, lady, shut up!" She got quiet, Grammy did, but she was trembling and shaking. Her face got that expression on it that I'd seen on crucified Jesuses in museum paintings.

Grammy whispered, "I'll take it" about the corset and fast, pulled up her stockings and snapped them to the garters and got into her slip and her dress. I knelt on the floor and tied the laces on her Red Cross pumps. Grammy said, her voice worn out and weary, "Let's go get us a piece of pie, kid."

Grammy, the year I started first grade, knit me a brown wool cardigan. She garnished the sweater's pla-kets with embroidered flowers. Even though I disliked brown, the blue and red flowers Grammy embroidered with crewel wool were so perfect (with infinitesimal pollen-yellow French knots in the middle of each flower) that the flowers redeemed the ugly brown. I loved this sweater. When I wore it, and I wore it every chance I got, I felt happy. I couldn't, wouldn't love my grandmother. What I could and did do, to fill that white space beneath dancing daisies, was to make Grammy happy by making something as beautiful as the flowers on that sweater.

I see now that when I wrote letters, I was trying to make art. I have been trying, I guess, all my life to make art and for reasons not that different than trying to make Grammy happy. This morning, all these years after, the brown sweater long gone and Grammy only bones under a stone, I try to make you happy.

Once Grammy had her corset paid for (how mortally she unfurled the green bills, how sad her big face looked as she handed over any money to anyone) and in the shopping bag, we shopped some more. I think she was still upset over the supervisor. It's hard to say now, when she gazed or glared at me, she invariably seemed angry. We ate our pieces of pie and sat in Grammy's drink coffee, thickened with the real cream still served, in those days, from round-bellied pitchers. I don't remember what she ate tonight. I am sure that I bedeviled her to buy me something, anything, but, again, perhaps on that day I didn't. I know that I walked



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behind her square, short, squat body. I know that I carried the shopping bags. The twin handles cut my palms. I was her mule.

Then, it was over, and we were back in the subway. We got arranged in our seats, me by the window. I am sure that Grammy never took her eyes from her shopping bags, on the floor there, at our feet. In the rocking car I fell asleep with my cheek against the window that back then, 40 years ago, covered subway seats.

While Grammy shopped, snow had been falling. For no reason that I can tell you, I remember that snow. I gathered the bags, stumbled from my seat and up flights of stairs (how many flights, I don't remember) and out onto Broadway and 14th Street. I remember the cool snow and harsh wind on my hot cheeks. I remember street lamps and now, in memory, the lamplight floods in nostalgic sepias across white snow and the snow, in memory, sparkles as surely, in fact, it didn't. I don't rec- all the buses, honking cars, and yellow Checker taxis that must have jammed the streets. I remember no sound—no honking cabs, no belching buses. I vaguely recall, or think that I do, it ships, still open at that hour. I remember that we hurried along, Grammy and I did, cutting our way between families and lone men and women, males like me borne down under cruel weight. Snow had piled on shoulders, backs of coats, and hat brims. Snow drifted against gutters. Wind lifted snow off drifts and stirred it into eddies. I remember this clearly, how it came back to me what we learned in science, a fact now dulled with usage, but then, to me, entirely new each snowflake is not like any other.

I felt, early on, although I could not tell you precisely when, but certainly before Grammy's death when I was 11, a certain had faith behind this project of writing to Grammy as if I loved her. Perhaps one tenth of me did love the fat old her. Yet when I turned that tenth, that title of me, into the body who writes to Grammy, I felt disavowed to my other nine-tenths. I felt I sold my self out when I wrote, "Love, Judy." ("Judy" was what Grammy called me when she called me anything.) I also mourned the distance between the speaker who spoke the letter and the speaker who spoke my heart. I wanted it to be true that I loved her. It was not true. Yet, I felt accomplished. I had turned myself into a Shirley Temple of the pencil. I sang and tap-danced across two, three pieces of stationery. I wrote what Grammy wanted to read—that Sunday dinner wasn't much without her delicious dumplings that a blue bird built its nest in the maple tree; that our fifth-floor neighbors, every single one, asked about her and sent good wishes; that I couldn't wait to see her again; that we missed, missed her, so bad.

So, many ways exist for us to sit up happy on one paper. I sat with

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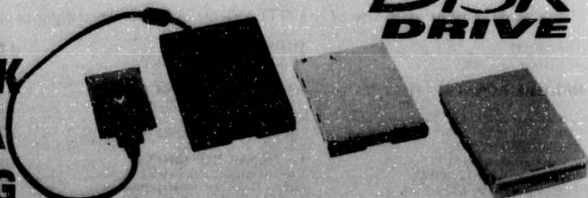
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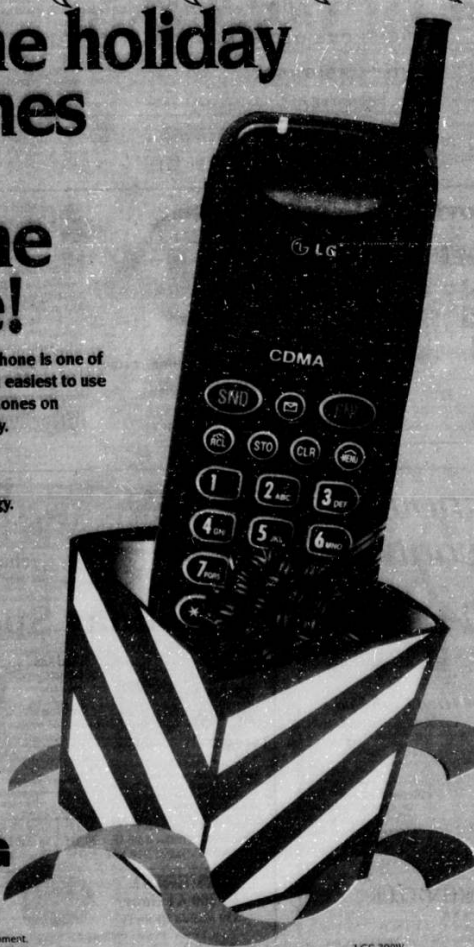
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my yellow pencil in my small hand and stared down at the white space beneath dancing clowns. I tinkered. I stretched twangy diaphragms between consonants. I tried out fricative F's and sibilant S's. I hid simple rhymes — moon and spoon, toy and boy — in sentences' quiet spots. I wrote slowly. (I still write slowly. I am writing slowly now.) I listened. I waited for words to come to me. I waited for them to ripen, as melons will, and thumped them to make sure they were right and ready. I engineered these noisy and not-as-noisy notions, verbs, and modifiers into a wind-up toy, a tightly wound gadget designed to unwind in a reader's mind. I folded the paper, licked the

envelope's dry glue, licked the stamp, hammered the stamp (Were stamps three cents then? I think so.) with my ballpoint. I walked down the steep hill to Broadway and 120th and dropped the envelope into the mailbox. Two, three days later in Missouri, Grammy slid into her easy chair and slit that envelope open, propped her spectacles on her nose, unfolded the white paper, and began to read what I'd written. From the loops and spirals of my awkward script, our fifth-floor neighbors slowly bobbed and floated across gold chicken broth. An orange-breasted bird darted into the maple tree beneath whose shade big boys played war with

army toys. Grammy may have closed her squinty eyes and stuck yellow straw into the blue bird's beak. She may have veiled the tree in fresh green leaves and seen boys slide tanks and tin

SHE WAS AFRAID OF WHAT SHE SPOKE OF AS NEGROES AND FOREIGNERS.

soldiers through spring grass. She may have thought that I want's a wreathed lid after all. She may have wriggled in her chair and adjusted her bonnet. Perhaps she frowned and

rubbed her wrist and recalled the Italian woman telling her, "Shut up!" She may have remembered that snowy Monday evening, how as we crowded over to Claremont Avenue and got

December wind push against us and take away our breath. She may have seen us walk, without speaking, single file and bent, like refugees, next to the gray buildings. Thoughts of snow may have caused her to shift back 20 years and watch her Poland China sow still alive and in memory, bigger and louder and belted with rilly teats and trailed after by a lifetime of piglets. She might well have remembered that on that Monday evening, I stopped and set down the shopping bags on the snowy sidewalk. I said, "I love you" and kissed her cheek, which, because she was so short, I didn't have to rise on my tiptoes to do. My brutal, ugly, ill-tempered Grammy, leers in the

last century into a hard life, someone who didn't love me and whom I didn't love, was my first reader. ■

Judith Moore has received two NEA Fellowships for literature, most recently in 1996. This April, she was named as recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship. She is author with Sue Coe of *X*, published by East Books and Graphics and reissued by New Press, and author of *The Left Coast of Paradise*, Soho Press. Her essay collection, *Never Eat Your Heart Out*, was published last year by Farrar, Straus & Giroux, and was issued in paper this summer by North Point Press, a division of Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

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By 3:00 the bride is on her feet. What had been joking come vents to the groom at 2:15 are now hesitant, serious inquiries. "Will she stand up for you? She really is going to marry you, isn't she? This only adds to the groom's severe case of nerves. At 3:30 a cousin is dispatched to call the bride's house for some news. "Yes, she's coming. She'll be here. They say something's wrong with her veil." The bride bought her veil and dress in Mexico City, on her way to the north, to sisters and aunts have been conscripted to fix the problem. At 4:00 the groom says to whoever will listen, "Well, we have the hall, we have the food, we have the music. I'm ready to get married today. Is there a lady here who's interested?"

The several hundred guests are swallowed in the cavernous concrete building suitable for plays, concerts, basketball games, political rallies, big weddings.

Streamers of ferns and white carnations form a starburst above the dance floor. The guests fidget and gossip at long tables with multicolored cloths and pots of mixed flowers. White roses decorate the steep, gray concrete bleachers along one wall, opposite the stage. Babes asleep in their mothers' arms youngsters languish in boredom on the bleacher steps or across their fathers' laps. A run-colored dog wanders under the tables. The groom's brother's hand tries to fill the awkward pause, while the wedding party and a young lady justice of the peace, carrying file folders, rubber stamps, and ink pads, wait patiently at two long lace-covered tables.

The bride arrives at 4:30. As she steps through the brick-lined arches and descends the bleacher steps, there's much applause. On August 8, 1992, without further delays, Antonio Reyes will be married to Mirna Solis in the town of Tetela del Volcan, state

of Morelos, Mexico.

Tetela clings to the steep, fertile slopes of Popocatepetl volcano. Popo's snow-dusted cone more than 60 miles away is spoken of with pride, awe, like a fine city landmark or a famous relative. Until recently Tetela was a town of ranches and farms. Now, like other villages in the area, it's a cool, pine-scented haven for commuters to Mexico City.

And the Reyes and Solis families are well known among the 15,000 residents. "You can come into town and ask, 'Where do the Reyes live?' and anyone can point to the ranch," Antonio says with a short laugh and a hint of exasperation about the mixed blessing. The family manages hundreds of acres of land and a grain mill, the remains of an even larger parcel once owned by Antonio's grandfather. The Solis family has contributed generations of professionals to the area — doctors and teachers primarily. Antonio works the family ranch. Mirna is a culture and arts reporter for TV Antena in Mexico City.

Today, as they stand before the judge, they look young and sweet — he in a new black tuxedo, she in a satin gown with sleeves like mounds of whipped cream. The ceremony is brief, save for the paper-work interlude during which the wedding party shuffles documents in quadruplicate that must be stamped and signed by bride, groom, parents, witnesses, judge. The bride and groom push their thumbs into the stamp pad and mark the long certificates. Rings are exchanged. The din of restless guests makes the ceremony inaudible. They've waited long enough for the party.

On the day of their sixth anniversary, Antonio and Mirna sit in their house on a small North County ranch where he now works. Antonio is dressed in his usual off-work attire: T-shirt, well-tailored Bermuda shorts, Adidas, gold watch, wedding ring, looking like any young suburban husband. Mirna, too, dresses conservatively, in jeans and a white linen shirt, gold earrings, and wedding ring. Oldest daughter Andrea is sent to school each day in one of her many colorful sundresses, a ribbon holding back her dark hair, her white sandals freshly cleaned.

Until a few months ago, the Reyes home was a

neglected warehouse, but Antonio has transformed it into a two-bedroom living space. It's sparsely furnished in beiges and golds, with beds, a couch and chairs, a rattan and glass dining set, a lamp, and oak bookshelves. But for the first time since they left Mexico, the family has its own home. For the past two years, they've shared a two-bedroom city apartment with seven other relatives. They are grateful for the peace and privacy.

Now in their early 30s, they talk about what brought them to the U.S. five years ago. In English, heavily accented, or in Spanish when English fails, they describe the experience.

"Many people think all Mexicans are here like illegal," Mirna begins, "just to work as dishwashers or

"My family thinks I betrayed

them. Even now, when my

mother is sick or my father is

sick, my brothers call me from

Mexico and tell me it's my fault."

laborers to send money to their families. We are here for our daughters. For them to learn English, learn computers, things like that."

Antonio continues, "Even with a university degree in Mexico it is difficult for people to find good jobs. We want the girls to have a good life when we go back to Mexico. We want life to be easy for them. We want our daughters to know English well, like an American. That will help them. It's best for my daughters that we stay here."

Andrea is a lively, bold five-year-old, delicate and feminine, with pale, creamy skin and huge black

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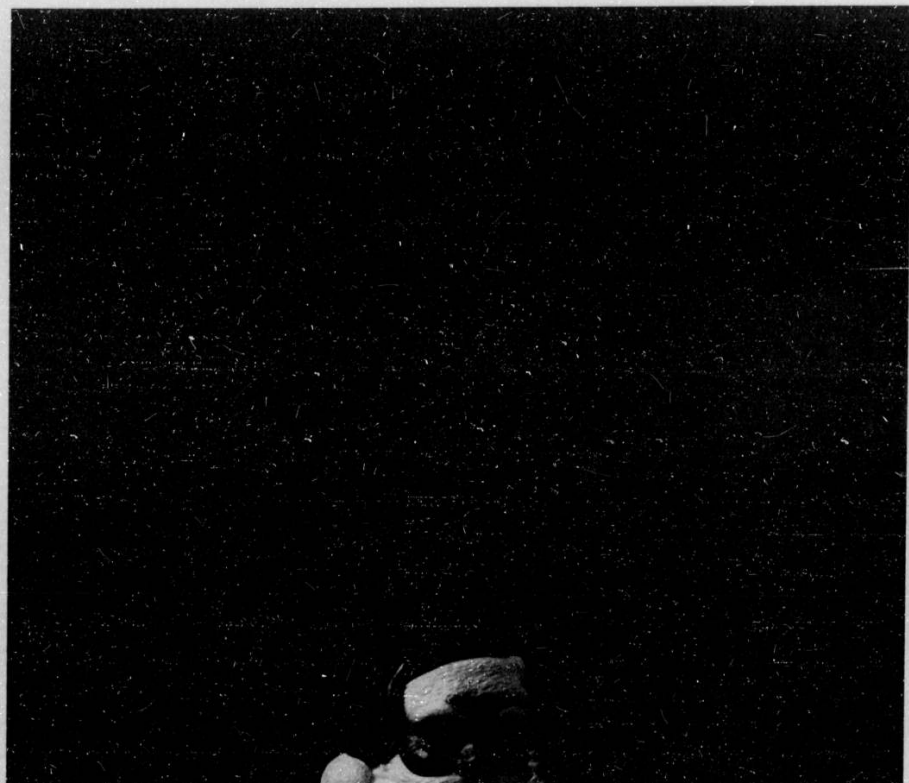
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unsmiling — two plump, gray-haired, round-shouldered forms lost in their own long-ago thoughts. Mirna's friends from TV Azteca stand out with their precise hairstyles, bright contemporary clothes, careful makeup, and loose, casual attitude. The dance floor is crowded with randers in Levi's and boots, their wives in dotted blouses and dark skirts, kids dancing with dazed-looking toddlers, sons on their father's

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San Diego Reader December 17, 1992

Race and Unwanted Hair

As for the beginning, who would dream calamity should follow from a single nose hair, or its plucking? I beg comparison with Dante Alighieri, writing in 1310, who began his *Divina Commedia* (a medieval vision of human destiny) with the sonorous line: "In the middle of our journey of our life, I came to myself within a dark wood where the straight way was lost." Six hundred sixty-six years later and so what if in coming to myself that "dark wood" happened to be up my left nostril?

[illegible]

I was caught up in the American dream of myself as property owner (if, arguably, by reason of having disowned myself). To celebrate, I decided to have some club friends over. April 3, 1976, the date of my party, remains forever carved into memory for what was to follow.

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(Betrayal, after all, always comes with a price.)

I invited 15 of my friends and expected maybe double that to show up. The night of my party, I stopped counting at 200, no lie. Like locusts, they ravaged the fruit, the French bread, the onion dip, the coaly Zabar's deli items, the halvah and imported Greek olives. The rum punch went like it was soaked up with a sponge. They savored the varnished floors, destroyed my wandering few, smudged the newly painted walls, used the soil of the rubber plant to put out cigarettes. I ran out of ice, toilet paper, cups, plates, napkins, and, of course, food and drink. There was Acapulco Gold on the fire escape, cocaine in the bedroom, and amyl nitrate in the bathroom, and meanwhile, I, for most of my own party, was sent out into the nighttime streets for stuff to feed that crowd going mad with the munchies. Hence I was not around when the cops first showed up. I was there, however, the second time when they returned saying neighbors were complaining, we had to keep it down, and that if they had to come back again that would be it for the night and

I'd just come back from another food run when they appeared that fatal third time and rodded Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes in the middle of "Bad Luck" (the longer disco version), so that without music and with nothing left but Cher's and warm Coke, my guests traipsed loudly down the five flights while others crammed themselves laughing into the elevator, which, because of overload, broke between floors and the repair people had to come and get them out at 4:00 in the morning.

It was the best party I ever threw.

Late the next afternoon, I was in the bathroom brushing my teeth when I noticed something peeking from my left nostril. I touched it. It was silky and, when I went to pull it, unyielding. I had no tweezers, nor those tiny scissors meant for what I thought to do. I was an innocent. I had only myself, my fingers.

I finished with my teeth and then felt my face a little, inviting a full view of that twin cavity. With my focus on the left nostril, I dilated it so that I might gain good purchase with thumb and forefinger. Did I say silky? Silky that cools



Maril Roper and author

in summer and warms in winter and weighs against the skin like a faint breeze, and of course silk that wears like rope. I tugged lightly. The thing held deep inside my nose, I pulled harder. Nothing. The little bug was not going anywhere.

In our youth, we are eager for challenges. With advanced age, we usually sober up, no longer made drunk by the temptation to strip the first two letters off "impossibility" and tame the rest to our purposes. But when exactly is caution allowed to rule? When finally is the mirror no longer seen to reflect the lean, far-seeing radical you never really were but the bloated, fearful little bourgeois you have surely become? In my case, if I were to give a date, I'd have to say it wasn't

April 4, 1976. That's for sure. Before I took up the challenge and plunged into the dark labyrinth of my nostril and held that first nose hair between my thumb and forefinger, like so many young people, I thought I knew it all. While later I would link the cutting of my 'fro to this first sighting of nose hair (i.e., betrayal and compunction), at the moment my only

thought was to take hold of the hair and pinch as much of that bare fraction of an inch as was possible. Which I did. Then I yanked—and discovered in a split second that I knew nothing about a lot of things, including first and foremost, pain.

It was as if I'd pulled a thorn out from the back of my skull. The pain was searing. Bright tears danced at the corners of my eyes, but I hurt too much to cry out. The air smelled hot, like caviare poppers. Left momentarily blind, across my eyes in the place of vision there blazed a single color, a red almost purple, which is the color of blood before oxygen reaches it. As a kid, I once grabbed a piece of firewood and then shuddered, momentarily speechless, as a long splinter drove itself underneath the nail and up my finger. It was like that.

In the instant that single hair was torn from its follicle, every muscle of my body was seized by a tremor that, had it been recorded on the Richter scale, would have been an 8.5, the big One. The pain made me feel small and alone and lost to God's love. I looked down at my forefinger where

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More hairs came and they appeared plentifully. To deal with them I found tins, gross tweezers, a small battery-powered grid of Italian design, the midgest scissors that come with a hairbrush, and a comb. As a child, I'd watched old men shamble into my grandfather's barber shop looking like they'd been hit by lightning. I'd wonder how they'd get it all back in the barber's chair, take up his scissors, and go to town. That was the first time I'd ever known; that obsessed, I became what you might call abusive. I kept on top of each hair the instant it appeared, and I'd push it forth from the protective shade offered by my nostrils. The bald building sand caked in the hairbrush, and I'd wash the shore at his back; it was a part of that same ocean that capsize tankers, topples oil rigs, that sends hurricanes and tidal waves and hurricanes to slaughter the landscape. What did I know? Just as in adolescence, I'd been told, the patient can lose the capacity to hallucinate, so way I without the powers to imagine. The hairs grew and I cut them, and in this way a decade passed, and another.

[illegible]

live and I'd cut my Afro. I wanted a job that matched my skills, and so as not to nix my chances, I cut my dreams. In retrospect I might say my Afro and my dreadlocks were as much expressions of pride or rebellion as they were fashion statements. If so, then cutting my hair to assure myself a place

light of autumn pouring down the walls over a postcoital bed, lying spoonlike, I asked my partner-in-pleasure for a back rub; deft fingers went at once to work. My eyes closed. I murmured something about how good it felt. "It's fun for me, too," came the reply, "working on a beautiful back like yours." I snuggled closer. Like a wine offered a sip of Boone's Farm Strawberry Hill, I could not stop myself.

What was beautiful about it, I asked, greedily plumbing for more.

"Oh, I don't know. It's just a nice back. Especially the hair."

Summer 1962. That was when I saw my first hairy back. I was working as a youth camp counselor at the Jewish Community Center on 54th Street. There, one afternoon, while keeping an eye on my young charges, I noticed a bald, middle-aged man sitting in the shallow end of the pool. The hair across his back kept lifting and falling in the blue chlorinated water like a kelp bed. Since then I've seen probably thousands of men with hairy backs at the beach or in saunas, at the Y. Most of them were balding, few were young. I had not thought twice about them then nor was I thinking of them that morning when I ran naked into the bathroom.

The head can swivel only so far, thus leaving the human body incapable of fully taking

in its own backside. Furthermore, I had never done this before, and now, even with a pocket mirror I found in a bathroom drawer, the experience was like peering at the sky through a keyhole: there was only so much to be seen.

Hair lay across my shoulders. It was downy fine and sparse growing. But hair it surely was. I had become hirsute (pronounced more or less like "hair-suit").

The mirror slipped from my hands and fell, shattering on the tile. Years and years of bad luck. My head swimming, my knees giving out, I lowered myself onto the bathroom floor. It was a small room, white, with the toilet and bathtub crammed together cheek to jowl, so to speak. With the tile pressing its octagonal imprint on my ass and one arm flung over the toilet seat, I leaned against the bathtub for support and comfort. But the support was as cool as the tub's porcelain, the comfort as hard. I took deep, slow breaths.

"Hey! Are you okay in there?"

On the other side of the bathroom door, my guest sounded worried.

"Yeah, I'll be out in a minute."

Wobbly, I pulled myself up to the mirror and looked.

Which is when, on that November afternoon with its light falling through the bath-

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**BIG
BEAR**

room window, turning my head just so as I spoke, I noticed for the first time, sprouting from my right ear, and then my left ear.

Yes, you guessed it. "Hey! Are you crying in there?"

The voice, muffled by the door, came from a million miles away.

"Are you okay?" "Please, I'll be all right. I just need to be alone. I'll call you later."

As soon as I heard the front door close, I raced from the bathroom, dressed, and flew downtown to the main branch of the library. There, in the most recent American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (third edition, revised), I searched until I found what I was looking for: Body Dysmorphic Disorder. Here was my diagnosis. Characterized by preoccupation with some imagined defect in physical appearance.

The most common complaints involve facial flaws, such as wrinkles, spots on the skin, excessive facial hair (hairs on the nose, mouth, jaw, or eyebrows, and swelling of the face." According to the

manual, those diagnosed with Body Dysmorphic Disorder often make repeated visits to plastic surgeons or dermatologists in an effort to correct the imagined defect.

If a plastic surgeon was the answer to someone obsessing about the shape of his nose, and a dermatologist the skin, someone like me with unwanted hair would seek out a professional whose services promise hair removal. Simple. At the library, I started my research. I first explored laser treatments, hailed in the press as the latest in hair removal. They worked, but, I found out, the Food and Drug Administration had established that there was only one sure and permanent means of hair removal: electrolysis. The word was chunky and ugly, and I loved it. I imagined a hard chair, leather straps, and a death-dealing burst of voltage.

Reading, I learned that electrolysis had been around for more than a hundred years, that it had been founded in St. Louis in 1875 by Dr. Charles Michel. I learned that hair growth is mostly a function of heredity, that medication (birth-control pills, for example) and stress can stimulate hair growth. "Smoking (which causes an



Maral Rogan works on Nisha Govind. Ashare in studio.

increase in adrenaline) and surgery (like a hysterectomy, where the ovaries are removed) as well as diet (for example, the effects of anorexia nervosa) can lead to unwanted hair growth. In an account more appropriate perhaps to a tabloid, I read of a child born in north-east China whose whole body, except for his lips, the palms of his hands, and the soles of his

feet, was covered with long hair that gradually turned from black to brown. According to the article, the hair varied in length and density on different parts of the body. "The hair on the forehead is 6 1/2 centimeters long, as long as an adult's little finger. His bushy eyebrows join. All the hair covering his abdomen, back, shoulders, arms, and legs has grown

longer as the baby grows." Poor kid.

In my research, I learned about doctored hair, ingrown hair, and hair that grew in a corker: new pattern. I learned about plucking and tweezing techniques of hair removal, of waxing and shaving, of depilatories and abrasives. I read about a woman in her 50s who kept her facial hair under con-

trol by finding a match and scorching it off. I learned about ordinary hair growth and hair growth that was called pathological, about a condition called alopecia areata, a common disorder that in extreme cases can cause the loss of all body hair. People magazine, noting that Princess Caroline of Monaco suffered badly in 1995 from the balding condition (her hair has since grown back), showed her with her head swathed, turban-like, in a Hermes scarf.

I learned that hair and its reproductive machinery are called the pilosebaceous system and that the system consists of a follicle, papilla, sebaceous gland, and hair. I learned the types of hair (terminal, accelerated vellus, and vellus) and the stages of hair growth (anagen, catagen, and telogen). Electrolysis, I found, work on chin, underchin, sideburns, ears, upper lip, neck, cheeks, nose, lower lip, eyebrows, hair line, beard line, bikini line, genital area, stomach, back, toes, breasts, arms, shoulders, upper leg, chest, underarms, fingers, and lower leg. I learned just about all there is to know about hair, its growth, and its removal. But in my research I never came to understand why the subject

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of excess hair was itself embarrassing, why (for example) the term "nose hair" invites a snicker. I stashed away what knowledge I'd gained and continued to wait the moment when I'd have no other option but to use what I'd learned.

PARADISO

While I filled out my case history, Maral Rogan of San Diego Electrology in Clairemont talked. A coolly attractive woman not yet 30, she had thick dark brown hair and a sculpted nose. Rogan explained that she had gone into electrology after having an unsightly beard removed. Certain people — Middle Eastern (she is Armenian) and Latin American especially — are prone to excess hair, she explained. She assured me that the treatment, galvanic or short wave current (which she also described as direct current and alternating current), or a combination that is called a "blend," should in time leave my skin smooth with the hair permanently removed. "The hair," she said, "is used as a guide. The skin is stretched." I listened raptly, the images almost pornographic. "The probe is inserted alongside the hair to the lower portion of the follicle where the growth cells and blood are located." Rogan rolled the words around a little in her mouth. "The electrical current then cauterizes the follicle and the hair lifts off. Using the forceps, the hair slides right out without resistance."

Dazed, beguiled, I looked around. Her office was done in cerulean blue; a poster of Monet's garden was in blues. Her voice and white jacket soothed.

"You must carefully select the electrologist who is going to work with you. First, make sure the person is professionally certified and trained, that their office is clean, that they are someone you feel comfortable with."

I handed her the clipboard with my sheet now filled out. I had two questions. Number one: Does it hurt?

"Each of us," she said, "has a different tolerance for pain, and we respond differently according to the part of the body."

Number two: Where does it hurt the worst?

She laughed, throwing her head back a little. I saw no evidence of the beard that she said had once haunted her life. Her skin was creamy and translucent. I was a little in love.

"Oh, probably the toes," she said, "and the top of the feet. There is no fatty tissue above the toes and over the nose. I had asked if she could do something with that hair so I

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"How does your husband feel about this?" Nisha and her husband own and run a hotel together, and he, she answered, was happy with her treatment results.

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Rogan pulled back the woman's bangs, preparing to work. Fine hairs covered much of the forehead, leaving very little hairline. As the treatment began, Nisha played the fingers of her right hand in front of her son in his stroller. This was to keep him occupied.

"Next month the baby comes, a little girl. Then I will not be able to come here for six months," she explained.

Rogan removed one fine hair after another. I knew the forehead was mostly bone with little fat to cushion the pain.

"How does it feel?" "More uncomfortable than with my chin."

Suddenly, what had come from the appearance of my first nose hair before could be measured against real suffering. Nisha Givoni had come from her various attempts to deal with the problem. Now, heavily pregnant and mindful of her toddler, she was stoically undergoing treatment. If I looked beyond myself for proof of the pain and suffering that followed excessive and unwanted hair, here it was. This revelation came to me as if I had hit a wall driving 65 mph, but a car, going fast enough, when it hits a wall does not come to an immediate stop. It bounces a couple of times.

I promised Rogan I'd call soon to make another appointment. Would I have stayed if she'd had the time? Probably. Anyway, ten minutes after leaving her office, a few blocks away at New Image Electrolysis Center on Rossmore Road, I was parking my car under the sign that read "Electrolysis Center Clients Only. Upstairs. I told Rochelle Freeman and Wendy Golden, partners who started the center in 1985, that I felt weird about parking under the sign. I hoped no one would notice my car.

Wendy, pert and pretty, with a big sister attitude like her namesake in *Peter Pan*, said she understood. "It has to do with hair we don't want and don't talk about."

She and Rochelle were, however, more than willing to talk about their own unwanted hair. And they had once had plenty, they assured me. They chuckled at the memory. This was how they got into electrolysis, they said. "Because we saw how it changed our lives."

I felt myself falling in love. "It just happened," I told them, speaking of my hair. "I mean, one day it was my nose, then my back, then my ears."

Rochelle corrected me. An upbeat woman with wheat-blond hair and a mouth made for laughing, she explained that hair does not just suddenly

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STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Mafia Hunter

"Officials, Border Speculation Linked," reads the headline in a Union clip dated April 6, 1978. "A land syndicate put together by a free-wheeling, fast-talking San Diego businessman named N. Joseph Simons has virtually sewed up the commercial real estate next to the Mexican border in San Ysidro," says the story under the byline of John Standerfer.

Simons' group, whose investors include two city planning commissioners and the chairman of the Board of Zoning Appeals, has acquired millions of dollars of land, most of it during the last six years.

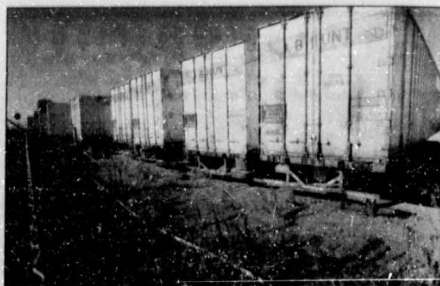
McConnon pulls out another old Xerox copy, this one from the Los Angeles Times, dated September 24, 1978. "Simons, who has a penchant for partnerships, persuaded a group of people to join him in land ventures in 1974 and 1975. Among the partners in his San Ysidro land were San Diego Planning Commissioners Oscar Padilla and Homer Delawie. Also joining Simons in two partnerships was city Zoning Appeals Board chairman Alfonso Macy. It was these partnerships that attracted the interest of the FBI in San Diego. At least one agent has been investigating San Ysidro land deals for the past four months."

The Union story said that while all three men

"generally have abstained from votes on specific property questions involving themselves or their partners, Padilla and Delawie have voted on at least two major land use proposals that affect all border area property, including land in which they have an interest."

The Union's Standerfer went on to describe other alleged conflicts of interest, votes made by Padilla and Delawie that had a potentially beneficial affect on their property interests, though city officials were quick to play down the scandal. "City Attorney John Wini has been aware of the commissioners' land interests for several months, but said he has not seen any evidence of illegal conflict of interest. However, he said it is his personal opinion that no one on a commission or board should have holdings that could raise even a suggestion of a conflict."

The commissioners were quick to distance themselves from Simons, their partner on the borderline. Delawie, a well-connected architect who had backed then-mayor Pete Wilson, told the Union that he knew "very little" about Simons and virtually nothing about Simons' plans for the border properties. "I'm just a few percent," Padilla, a border insurance broker and a close friend and former



Gray Moss

campaign treasurer of Wilson's, later told San Diego Magazine, "I didn't even know Joe Simons, but got into the partnership only because others who were friends and had good reputations in the community were already involved."

John Gray, Simons' lawyer and another of his partners in the San Ysidro land, described Simons as "thoroughly reputable." "Joe made the market" in San Ysidro land, Gray explained to the Los Angeles Times. "He got enthused about it and he paid too much for it. He is a guy who was in the drug store business. He got excited about this property... Joe sank everything he had into San Ysidro real estate." Simons told a Union reporter, "he would not discuss his real estate dealings except to express enthusiasm for the border area. 'I don't know you from Adam, but if you've got any money and you want to make money, you ought to buy land down there.' The mystery was heightened when Simons described himself as "just a cotton-

picker from Texas. I talk like a damn Yankee only because I went to a damn Yankee school," and said he'd been investing in property along the U.S.-Mexican border for 35 years.

Other big names in the San Diego establishment had apparently heeded Simons' advice to buy in big. In addition to the city commissioners, partners in Simons' many border partnerships, according to the Union, included former city councilman Tom Horn. Horn was turned out of office by voters five years before in the infamous Yellow Cab scandal, in which councilmembers were accused of getting illegal campaign contributions from C. Ambrose Smith. (One councilman pleaded no contest, the others, including Horn, were acquitted or the charges against them dropped.) Among other Simons partners were wealthy customs broker David Porter and his socialite wife Kaye and Edward C. Hall, a well-connected San Diego real estate broker and Porter's

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father-in-law. All were friends of then-mayor Pete Wilson and gave heavily to local campaigns. Hall told the *Union's* Standefor that "Simons' family long ago began buying up border real estate from El Paso to the Pacific. Then Joe's older brothers didn't want to, so he went out and got all these other people to invest."

Rumors of inside deals and midnight meetings in Tijuana bars, where cash was passed to city officials, swirled through the city during 1978. The border was hot, and information soon emerged about others, unrelated to Simons, who had also cast their lot in property there, including Verne Thompson, a real estate broker and fundraiser for then-governor Jerry Brown, and Charles Pipitone and Charles Gerald. The *Union's* Standefor reported that financier Alvin Karp, who later turned state's evidence and testified against the Mafia in the infamous Las Vegas Stardust skimming case, also was a member of a partnership that owned land in San Ysidro.

Stories circulated about how the San Diego Union had almost killed the Simons story until Union reporter Violet Murphy, heavyset and hard as nails,

leaked some of it to Larry Rimer, then editor and publisher of *Newsline*, an antiestablishment weekly newspaper. Murphy, who would die of cancer in December 1987 at age 63, had quit the *Union* in disgust and moved to Redding in 1977. She was reportedly angry that *Union* editors were still sitting on the expose more than a year after she'd handed it in. To the end of her days, she would insist that the newspaper had suppressed a mountain of incriminating evidence she had dug up against well-connected San Diegoans and a world of border mafiosi. Her manuscript, documenting the secret dealings in border property, she said, had been stolen from her office safe by unknown thieves. *Union* editors denied they had attempted to hush up the story, but there was no denying that a "far after Rimer's version ran in *Newsline*, the Standefor story appeared on page one of the *Union*."

After an FBI investigation that lasted 18 months, U.S. Attorney Michael Walsh washed his hands of the entire matter, citing "insufficient evidence" to prosecute. Davis and Padilla, still denying they had broken any laws, said they regretted causing any "appearance" of



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conflict. Walsh told a reporter from *San Diego Magazine* that the FBI had not been discreet enough in its conduct of the investigation, which he called "unfortunate."

Upon his retirement from the planning commission in April 1982, Davis told the *San Diego Tribune* that he had learned his lesson and ever since he's refrained from vot-

ing on any issue where there might even be an appearance of a conflict. "The big plans to develop the Simons property were also put on the shelf, in part, it was said by sources in the mayor's office, because the FBI scrutiny of the public officials partnered with Simons had scared off other investors and made city hall, and especially Pete Wilson, afraid of being

publicly associated with any of the Simons ventures. *San Diego Magazine* reported in 1980 that "Padilla also admitted that he had made a mistake in not disclosing that he had purchased land from Phil Cresser, a San Ysidro businessman who later came before the [Planning] Commission for a zoning change, from agricultural to industrial park, on other

property that Padilla approved, thereby enhancing its value. But the investigators determined Padilla's favorable vote was not a quid pro quo — that Padilla had paid full market value in the first transaction, and the later zoning change awarded to Cresser's other property was in conformity with the San Ysidro Community Plan and the Planning Department's recommendations."

McCann, however, remains unconvinced that Mike Walsh did everything he could in the pursuit of justice. "My theory is that Walsh dropped the case because of political pressure from Pete Wilson. The FBI really felt they had an excellent case, and they are a better judge than I am by far," he says today. "The agent in charge was transferred to Denver almost immediately. This was a classic cover-up by the Feds."

Former U.S. Attorney Walsh is no longer available for comment. Once viewed as a rising star in the world of San Diego politics, Walsh abruptly switched careers shortly after the Simons scandal, departing San Diego in 1980 for a job as vice president of Cummins Engine Co. in Columbus, Indiana. He would climb high in the

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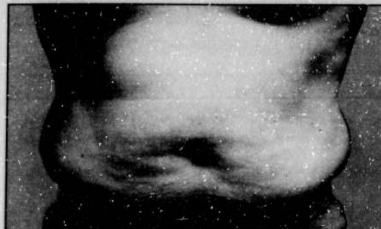
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While the commissioners were off the hook, McCannan soon found himself under scrutiny. TV reporter and commentator Harold Keen went after McCannan in a story that appeared in the July 1980 edition of San Diego Magazine. According to Keen's version, an overzealous news media, spurred on by competition between the Union and the newly arrived San Diego edition of the Los Angeles Times, and acting on McCannan's tips and Violet Murphy's digging, had wrongly impugned the reputation of the three city commissioners who had invested in Simons's deals, especially Padilla.

Padilla's original land acquisitions in San Ysidro, dating back to 1964, related to his need of commercial property for his



Alan Keen

Mexican insurance business," Keen wrote. "Had he stopped there instead of getting involved with 'wheelbar-dealer' Joe Simons, he would have avoided problems with the press and, subsequently, the FBI and U.S. Attorney. One of the most conspicuous eyebrow-raisers was a chain of events that started with a plan to combine some of his personally owned land, which

had been bypassed by the I-5 freeway, with adjoining property of a Simons partnership. The idea was to create a tract large enough to attract a developer (ultimately, plans for either a Tourist Center of varied enterprises, or a shopping center, were dropped and no development has occurred, an irony in the face of suspicions that Padilla stood to profit im-



Larry Remer

mensely from decisions he made on the Planning Commission with regard to commercial zoning."

So, at least according to Keen, the Simons land scandal, involving the property that was ultimately to become the site of today's proposed International Gateway project, was a put-up job. "The trigger finger," Keen reported, "apparently belonged

to a former San Diego city official named Loren McCannan, a retired Army Reserve lieutenant-colonel who was fired in May 1975 as director of city engineering and development after only ten weeks at that post." Keen then quoted John Lockwood, then an assistant city manager and McCannan's old boss and friend since their days together at city hall, as saying,

"McCannan was a different man than when I first knew him. He acted troubled and his behavior was erratic. He seemed paranoid about the Mafia being determined to get rid of him because he was about to blow the whistle on organized crime. We finally had to let him go because his work product was unsatisfactory."

Today McCannan laughs at the way his old friend Lockwood talked about him back then. It wasn't that way at all, he says. His work was as good as ever. It was the city that had changed. "I never even thought about the Mafia, didn't cross my mind, until months after I had been out of that office."

McCannan seemed an unlikely whistleblower. Born in 1923 in Greenwood, Illinois, about 50 miles northwest of Chicago, he came to San Diego in 1941 after his brother, a flight engineer and mechanic for Consolidated Aircraft, was mortally injured in the crash of a B-24

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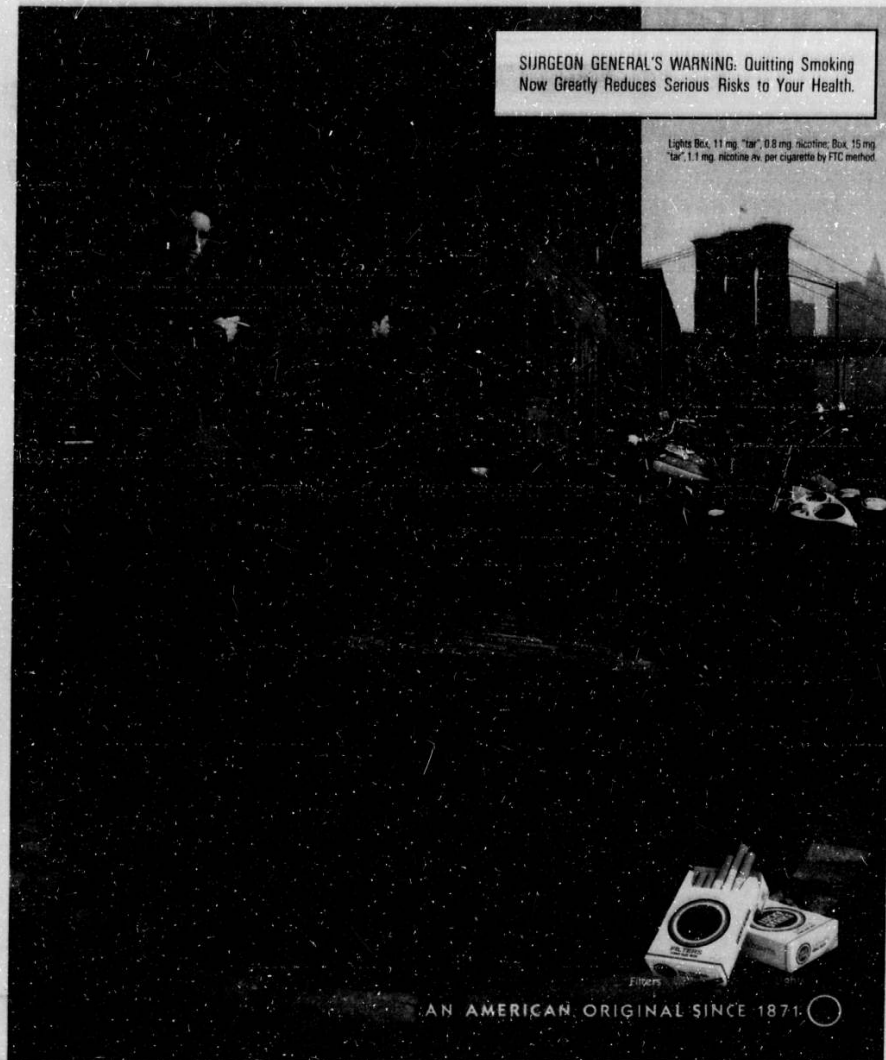
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bomber on San Diego Bay. Shortly afterwards, he was offered a job with Consolidated. Having just graduated from high school, he accepted. During the war, he served in the Pacific and seven months during the occupation of Japan. In 1946, he returned to San Diego, getting a degree in business administration. In the early 1950s, he became an administrative analyst in the budget office of the City of San Diego, where he stayed five years before becoming the director of budget and research for the city of Long Beach, then assistant city manager there.

After leaving Long Beach to work two years for a world's fair, which didn't get off the ground, McCann worked in real estate development before returning to San Diego as director of engineering and development in 1975. He says

"Personal observations WHICH I MADE AT THE RESTAURANT, OVER JUST ONE WEEK-END DURING DECEMBER 1975, WILL GIVE A CLUE TO THE TYPE OF MEETINGS WHICH I AM SURE OCCUR WITH GREAT FREQUENCY IN SAN DIEGO."

that Lockwood's version of how he was fired ten weeks later is all wrong. "I had prepared a report recommending that we cancel the contract for the private contractor who was administering the city's leased-housing program." That contractor, McCann says, had badly mismanaged the program. "I thought it was my responsibility as director for the department to try to do something."

"John supported my work in that report right up to the point I officially submitted it," McCann remembers. "They hadn't done a damn thing before I got there. But after the report went to higher-ups, 'I was called in and asked to resign or be fired, just like that.'"

McCann alleges that the contractor was being protected by friends on the city council and the city's housing advisory commission. As evidence, he cites the fact that after he was fired and tipped the news media to the alleged corruption he had found, three housing commissioners, including the chairman, resigned, and the contractor bowed out.

During his investigation into the contractor and his connections, McCann says, he began to dig into real estate transactions in South Bay and along the border. "Among other things, I found these eight interlocking partnerships all headed up by N. Joseph Simons, with a mixture of partners within the partners, and some looked suspicious. The ones that really got my atten-

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"I.V." has since been identified to me as a retired or semiretired contract man, assigned as a "boater" to handle various jobs around the country. His specialty, I am informed, was the disposal of unwanted bodies, although his more mundane duties consisted of transporting funds and closing deals. Jim Torrescano was also there Friday night. Both he and I.V. were accorded considerable respect by the waitstaff. This was significant.

It was during this period, McCann says, that he inadvertently played a role in what he speculates was a Mafia murder. He had taken an interest in La Costa — the Transamerica-backed resort in Carlsbad, which at the time was widely believed to be snubbed up — and wanted to know more about the goings-on there. "In those days, I used to go down to dance at the Starlight Room at the Starlight Hotel fairly frequently, and I got to know the manager of the dance pavilion — not the maître d', I guess he was the place — and I got to know him reasonably well, and he used to work at La Costa at the restaurant and the facilities for meetings and all that. So he became interested and he volunteered to go back there — he still knew people — and try to get some of the records, you know. Well, foolishly I said 'Fine. Love to have anything I can get.' Apparently he did go back to La Costa. I never got anything. The next time I went into the Starlight, I said, 'Where's so-and-so?' and they told me. We don't know. He disappeared. He had his good job down there at Starlight, very regular, and everybody liked him, and suddenly he's gone. Never any record of him."

As a result of that incident and the investigation he was conducting into border-property deals, McCann says he took care never to cross into Mexico, especially after he had an unimpressive brush with a highway alien. "An Arab, Smith's sidewalk and wealthy owner of the Caliente racetrack who had done federal prison time for tax evasion. 'All these people I was tracing, so many of them were affiliated with Mexico, and I don't know if I had anything to fear from John Alessio, and he was very strong in Mexico and Tijuana and obviously had loads of connections there, and since he had occasion to call me, and take me to task, the next day his son David called me and took me to task, because they found I had been doing a little investigating around their Mr. A's building, not so much about the business and political establishments on both sides of the border. And, as it turned out, some of Simons's partners

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in the Los Angeles Times and San Diego Union.

In January 1988, the Times reported that a son of Hector Scola's, Giovanni, had been indicted by a federal grand jury in San Diego for conspiring to sell assault weapons to Mexican federal police who, it was alleged, were protecting Bolivian cocaine shipments through the port of Ensenada. "Even Mexican law-enforcement agents and one former agent were involved in conspiracies to smuggle weapons from the United States to Mexico, in some cases providing semi-automatic assault rifles to Mexican drug dealers, according to indictments unsealed in federal court Friday," the Times reported.

Brannigan Jr. announced that a federal grand jury in San Diego had again indicted Giovanni Pontes Solaar, this time for having made "alliances with the Colombian drug traffickers and negotiated with them to purchase large quantities of cocaine at the best possible prices," the *Times* reported.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation, according to Mr. Espósito, utilized sophisticated investigative techniques including court authorized electronic surveillance and physical surveillances. Seized as part of the investigation was \$239,435 in cash, which was part of the downpayment from one criminal group to purchase 50 kilograms of cocaine. In ad-

tion technology called thermal energy storage. After his retirement from SDC&S in 1985, he founded the company, which is president of an industry trade group devoted to the technology. He retired from that job last week. Of his long-ago career as a mafia hunter, he smiles and says, "It was a worthwhile venture, but it didn't pay very much. My adversaries would have been much better off had they permitted me gainful employment during that period."

As for Joe Simmons, his son Barry, who now acts as spokesman for the family and its network of border real estate holdings, declined to be interviewed. ■

—Matt Papp

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LETTERS

How Encanto Stays Rural

At a 40-plus-year resident of Encanto, I was very interested in Susan Vaughn's story in this week's Reader ("There's No Smokey People," December 31). I was especially appreciative of the historical slant of the article and of the observation that the racial mix is a source of pride, rather than unease, for most of the residents. In my little neighborhood in the hills just north of the school, neighbors of all races gather for annual progressive dinners and to enjoy each other's company. The Neighborhood Watch organization rarely has a crime or sus-

picious incident to report—none in the last three or four years.

It is my observation that there are very many local, long-time residents who enjoy the views, the rural atmosphere, the large lots, the easy six-mile access to downtown and to all points east, north, and south.

The article missed two very important events or aspects of our history—the first, the role of the Southeast San Diego Development Committee in protecting our rural setting. Formed in 1965, the committee

opposed the idea of a freeway through the hills just north of the school, neighbors of all races gather for annual progressive dinners and to enjoy each other's company. The Neighborhood Watch organization rarely has a crime or sus-

tion in the zoning patterns, ensuring the large lots in the hills area, and protecting neighbors from incursions of apartment houses and from lot splits. That rezoning, which occurred 25 years ago, was the first citizen-initiated rezoning effort in the history of the city.

Needless to say, we are very appreciative of the support of the committee, then, and continuing through the years following the rezoning.

Now we hear that the city council is considering a reorganization of the SEDSD Committee, separating Encanto from the rest of the SEDSD area. My response to that idea: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!"

Warren Heyer
Encanto

I Never Miss Abe Opincar's Column

Susan Vaughn's article about Encanto counters an undesired prevailing negative image about our community ("There's No Smokey People," December 31). This image was generated a decade or so ago by tragic high-profile crimes committed here by non-Encantoneses. I enjoyed learning more about the history of my home community and seeing our treasured diversity treated as an asset, which is why I've chosen to remain here for some 17 years.

Mr. Vaughn's description of the predominance of churches here was coincidentally embellished by the "Sheep and Goats" feature in this same issue on the

African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church in La Jolla. As a Unitarian-Universalist and religious pilgrim, I never miss Abe Opincar's column, and his rating of the AME church's sermon and music as extraordinary reinforces another treasure in Encanto. I welcome the sense of belonging that churches bring to my neighborhood, especially the joy proclaimed to us all by gospel music, energy, and soul wafting up the valley from Imperial Avenue on Sundays.

Too much of a good thing is a challenge when it reaches critical mass. I have no statistics on rates of churches per square mile or per capita for the county or city as a whole for comparison, but some churches are ubiquitous here and in other communities south of Highway 94. The downside of "too much" in Encanto, however, is He's absent during the week. Absent during the week. Absent during the week. Absent during the week.

Mr. Opincar's reporting of the AME sermon on Matthew 25 commandment to "care for the hungry and thirsty" fosters a way for the Encanto faith community to meet a business need through family-based services. Many of the support services required of families to move from place to place—including child care, after-school programs, job training and coaching, dis-

tance-learning, ESL classes, information and referral, parenting classes, support groups, etc.—can be offered in a storefront milieu. A collaboration among the faith community, Southeast Development Corporation (SEDC), Diamond Business Improvement District, government, and local community-based organizations to maximize the use of church-occupied storefront facilities along Imperial Avenue would be a win-win for all.

Kathleen M. MacLeod
Encanto

Smug Boomer Booster

I take exception to Patrick Daugherty's description of Boomer Easoun as having a "lack mind" (takes one to know one) "infected by utopian arrogance" ("Sporting Box," December 31). Following the author's sophisticated notion that arrogance is something that one "owns," I ask Mr. Daugherty, "Where were you in the late '60s?" Didn't Boomer Easoun lead a Cincinnati Bengals offense that, considering its supporting cast of Anthony Munoz, James Brooks, Eddie Brown, et al., ranks as one of the most prolific in recent NFL history? Didn't Boomer win back-to-back titles in 1988 and 1989? Wasn't Boomer voted the league's Most Valuable Player by numerous publications after leading Cincinnati to the AFC title in 1988? Did the Boomer-led red-hulled offense in Cincinnati influence the Bengals' offensive schemes? Didn't Hall of Famer Rod Woodson (earned arrogance) describe Boomer Easoun as the "best play-action quarterback in the NFL?" Didn't he set the record for passing yards in a game a few

years back with the Arizona Cardinals when the "back-minded" sportswriters had no belief that he was all washed up? Do any of these accomplishments earn Boomer some arrogance? If not, consider his efforts in raising millions of dollars to fight cystic fibrosis, a disease that his child suffers from. Consider the fact that he was voted the NFL's Man of the Year by his peers numerous times for his charitable accomplishments off the field. Hasn't he earned the right to be a little smug?

Mr. Daugherty, let's put things in perspective. Boomer Easoun has been a tremendous asset to the NFL for his accomplishments both on and off the field. Write the driver on the page in the Reader that it is the week's spreads on it.

Don Mandfield
Ocean Beach

Naughty, Naughty Mr. Johnson

I would like to make some comments on Dean Chaney's remarks about homosexual culture and the Church of England, as reported in the issue of November 25 ("City Lights"). But first, a little singer from Paul Johnson in *The Spectator* (British) on the same subject, Mr. Johnson: "No liberal he, wrote about the bishops debating the morality of 'monogamous sodomy.' Naughty, naughty, Mr. Johnson."

On a more serious level, the Rev. Chaney makes some statements which I believe are unfair and reveal a not-so-well-known prejudice against the Roman Catholic Church. He is, of course, not in the same league with the terrible Bishop Sprung in New Jersey in verbal and in-junctive against Rome, but he might be moving in that direction.

Objecting to the Vatican issuing statements reiterating its traditional teachings on these matters at the same time as the discussions were taking place in Lambeth Palace, Dean Chaney says, "The Church will condemn what it does not understand." Come now, Dean, do you really think that Rome does not understand gays and lesbians? I would suggest that Rome understands all too well and is acting accordingly.

It is unfortunate and misleading that the terms "liberal" and "conservative" have come into common use in theological discussion. Such usage suggests that issues are ultimately settled by popular vote and, worse, that there is no absolute truth, in morality or anywhere else. This false opinion perverts the whole discussion into a game of rhetoric and tendentiousness.

Getting back to Bishop Sprung, one of my favorite madmen in America, he is quoted as declaring the Lambeth Conference resolutions as a return to "Victorian moralism." Dear Bishop, the Victorian had just as much sex, etc., as anyone else before or since, perhaps more—

who knows? But they did not feel the modern compulsion to talk about it, make movies about it, etc.

Moving along with the good dean's opinions, he says that the Episcopal Church will have come to terms with same-sex marriages and gay clergy. But to a gay clergy really something new? It is well known that there is a significantly high percentage of gay clergy in all the Christian denominations. I guess what is new is that the "love that dared not speak its name" in olden days, now won't shut up.

The dean suggests that the strong condemnation of homosexuality by the Third World bishops is motivated by fear of how they will appear in their homelands. But perhaps they are simply telling the truth as they see it, uncorrupted by European and American decadence.

Barry Rupprecht
Downtown

Ironical Deafness

Some (quiet) words of thanks and well-wishes to Pat Sherman for the excellent article "Don't Kill Your Ear Hair," on the hazards of loud music and the tragedy of permanent hearing loss (Pop Music, November 25).

Those of us directly or indirectly involved with music can only shake our heads in bemused discouragement at the daily barrage of noise pumping the ears of so many music "listeners."

In our listening facility here at UCSD's Music Library, we go to great lengths to limit both the sound levels via headphones and the duration of listening that our students subject themselves to. Still, we find the occasional socially masochistic patron that "shares" their music with others clear across a large room. The irony is that these same music students are only diminishing their long-term capability to hear that

which they endeavor to learn and love.

Dave Keener
Recording Engineer
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I Laughed Till I Ached

I don't know which was funnier, Melzer's off-the-wall preview of the Kronos concert "C.O. Note," October 29 or Anthony Pelletier's spray letter of complaint, which the Reader dubbed "A Shining Example" (Letters, November 23). It was perfect! At first, I thought the letter was a joke, just like Mr. Melzer's preview. But on rereading it and noticing Mr. Pelletier's slam on Duncan Shepherd (also a snob, but very funny), it dawned on me that this guy just might be serious.

Thank you for allowing me the guilty pleasure of laughing out loud at someone (or maybe the joke's on me). With his pre-Hellenistic Greek god Kronos, "...and...", the more literal among us... I laughed till I ached! He must be the guy I saw at intermission at the Kronos concert, trying to be cool with a cheesy little one-inch ponvil, dressed all in black, gazing in confusion at an attractive young woman in pink velvet tights with Christmas tree ornaments on her ankles. That's the spirit! These antics fit right in with Kronos Quartet, the group that often performs pieces such as old cartoon scores, a bit of Elvis, straight classical chamber music, or God knows what. While we were leaving the concert after a couple of hours of beautiful, haunting Gothic selections from their recent CD *Early Music*, my teenage son mentioned that the musicians were great but the music made him feel a little strange. I pointed out in the program that their last piece was titled "Collected Songs Where Every Verse Is Filled with Grief." He stopped and said, "They're joking, aren't they?" Thanks to the Reader for publishing such a range of humor and wit as Richard Melzer, Duncan Shepherd, and Mr. Pelletier's little parody of sophistication.

George do Bee
Ocean Beach

God Help Us Music Fans

I agreed the advice of your critic and went ahead to hear Mose Allison perform in Escondido "C.O. Note," November 23. I returned from the event resolved to send in my own criticism, not of Mose Allison but of your music critic, whose particularly careless, bratty, and ill-considered approach to music criticism really offends me. I don't know the background or credentials of your reviewer, but he seems not to have tried even to scratch the surface of the music, relying as much on the plastic markers in the CD store as on any real knowledge or developed sensibility for an explanation of Mose Allison's

success. I really doubt that your critic gave any considered listening to the lyrics or the music of Mose Allison's work or has anything but a cursory knowledge of the musical or lyrical tradition which might help to explain Mose Allison's work. Since when is it a limitation of the artist that the music critic doesn't "get it"? Gad help us music fans if sophisticated critics such as your reviewer needed to "get it" before a valuable, informed, and seasoned form of music gets exposure. My advice to your critic is to go back to school, and this time pay attention: maybe you'll pass, maybe not. Meanwhile, please take a long sabbatical from reviewing jazz artists.

Harriett Watts

Steve Poltz Is Not Very, Very, Very Rich

Once again I must recommend, *Give Gina Arnold, she doesn't know anything about what she is critiquing*. Trust me, Steve Poltz is not "very, very, very rich" off of Jewell's song "O'F Note," November 23. Yes, know this for a fact.

While this review was far from repulsive, much like the Dave Matthews review, it does make you realize that there isn't much you can do to please good of Gina. Is there?

Erin Keahy

Healthful Food Is Never Healthy

Pleasant Ted Eleanor Widmer that food cannot be healthy. (In my review of Chophoph [November 23] the writer "Afghan food... is healthy.") People are healthy. Food is healthful or unhealthy, but never healthy.

Nancy Reynolds
Coronado

God-Like Satisfaction

I wish to respond to the attack on Duncan Shepherd in the Letters section of the November 25 Reader. The brave and forthright individual, who with-held his or her name, states that movies are for entertainment, to take us out of our ordinary lives and let us watch someone else's life in smug, God-like satisfaction. I've got shocking news for "Name withheld": no life is ordinary. Many of us do not wish to escape our lives to watch someone else's life.

On the contrary, my life is rich and full, and I wish to plunge further and further into it. Film, like other art forms, has the power to act as a catalyst for such a journey. Alas, however, the trip that comes out of Hollywood seldom rises to such a level.

Hollywood is entrenched in escapism dreams and the global consumerism that these dreams cultivate. I implore "Name withheld" to leave "Name withheld" to scratch the surface of the music, relying as much on the plastic markers in the CD store as on any real knowledge or developed sensibility for an explanation of Mose Allison's

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Steve Poltz Is Not Very, Very, Very Rich

Once again I must recommend, *Give Gina Arnold, she doesn't know anything about what she is critiquing*. Trust me, Steve Poltz is not "very, very, very rich" off of Jewell's song "O'F Note," November 23. Yes, know this for a fact.

While this review was far from repulsive, much like the Dave Matthews review, it does make you realize that there isn't much you can do to please good of Gina. Is there?

Erin Keahy

Who Does Mr. Saville Think He Is?

I was beginning to think Jonathan Saville was the private reviewer for the La Jolla Chamber Music Society. I was glad to see him finally reviewing the reconstituted San Diego Symphony (Classical Music, Review, November 19). It was even more good to attend their concert and hear the splendid playing for myself. Let's hope all of San Diego sees this reformed opportunity for classical arts in the community.

Having said that, I have to ask, who does Mr. Saville think he is? In his November 19 review, he twice—once not, but twice—reminded me he didn't enjoy his seating arrangement. If he wants to guarantee a particular seat, the symphony has always tried to accommodate its benefactors. I have had no problem at two concerts getting seats in the vicinity where I asked for. Mr. Saville should apologize to the symphony organization and do his seating properly.

Richard Crino
San Diego

Reader Among Dust Bunnies

Take away your ads for cellular phones, pagers, digital phones, car stereo, car stereo, car stereo, and auto repair shops, and what do you have? Eleanor Widmer? Duncan Shepherd? Personal? See what I mean! By the way, I always find your publication on the floor.

D. Tellen

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Sun. 10am-6pm

Calendar

Baby Jesus in a Ski Mask

Father Joe's Nativity Sets



Teddy Bear nativity by Lucy Pigg, Sri Lanka, 1987



Indian-made nativity from Banff area, Canada

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The nativity scene dates to the 13th Century, when St. Francis of Assisi assembled a crèche for his church. Since then, Joseph, Mary, and the wise men have become a cottage industry, the stock-in-trade of folk artists from Chiapas to Yemen.

In ordinary household scenes, Mary wears a robe, Joseph is bearded, Jesus sleeps in a manger, and the kings ride camels. But for the serious crèche collector, the International Crèche Catalog (www.creche.org) offers scenes in which Joseph may be a wood Laotian, a clay Tanzanian, or a gun-toting, wood-clad Zapotec.

In the 1798 Laotian nativity, a teak-wood Jesus sleeps in a red basket hanging from a roof beam, and he's attended not by donkeys, sheep, or cattle, but by an elephant and a warhorse. The 12 African figures made by Petro Paulo Mayige are more traditional, but sending your \$250 directly to Our Father, Tanzania, sounds risky. "Do encourage him," the catalog informs buyers, "to put every figure in its own box so they are not damaged when in transit."

Navidad Zapotista, a \$100 set made to order by natives of Chiapas, is a crèche with a revolutionary twist. "Of course, all figures, including the infant Jesus, have their faces covered with knit ski masks," their literature notes, "and, with the exception of Mary and Joseph, all of the adult figures carry weapons, but not those of aggression." The weapon of nonaggressive choice appears to be a miniature AK-47 carved from

wood, with a shoulder-to-rib-cage cartridge belt made of hand-woven wool.

If you order Navidad Zapotista for your coffee table, you might also want a Bolivian ceramic crèche made by 40 orphaned peasant artisans in San Salvador de Mahaca, and then you might set aside \$250 to urge Petro Paulo to put every Tanzanian shepherd in its own box, and in 25 years you might be where Father Joe is now.

The president of St. Vincent de Paul Village, Father Joe Carroll is a crèche addict who bought his first

Spanish Lladro figurines, the Lemox china set, and various designs from the Franklin Mint. But he also owns a Boehm china tableau that cost \$500 per figure and a Waterford crystal holy family. He has nativities made of pottery, wood, glass, and paper. He has a nativity composed entirely of mice. He has a crèche from Yemen.

"Some are \$3 each," he says, "some could cost \$2 a thousand bucks. What I normally do is people give me money as a gift for me for Christmas, and then I go out shopping after Christmas when they're all on sale. I usually go to Vegas, Palm Springs, and San Diego."

Then there are the more unusual acquisitions. When McDonald's heiress Joan Kroc decided to get rid of her six-foot-tall paper mache nativity, the called Father Joe to ask if he wanted it. While browsing in a Seattle antique shop one year, Father Joe found a 1920s crèche from Oberammergau, the Bavarian town that has staged a passion play every ten years since 1634. And sometimes, Father Joe commissions an artist to make a nativity especially for him.

"I have a beautiful painting I had done in Alaska, as if the nativity took place in Alaska," he says. "It's got all the Alaskan animals rather than the traditional animals." Instead of three kings, the Christ child is visited by a gold miner, an American Indian, and an Eskimo. A year ago, Father Joe commissioned a wooden crèche from Muslim Sudanese, and in the resulting scene, the holy family is attended by a pig. And when Father Joe visited Thailand, he asked an artist to imagine the holy family in Thai dress "because,

LOCAL EVENTS



Mouse nativity

nativity in 1973. He's a priest, he explains, so he loves Christmas. His family naturally had a crèche when he was growing up in the Bronx, but someone else inherited it. Eventually, he bought a set for himself, and then he bought a couple more. The more he looked, the more variety he found, and now he owns 285 different interpretations of the Christmas story.

This means Father Joe owns all the crèches you'd expect, and then a whole bunch more. In the first category, he has at least ten nativities from Mexico,

basically," he says, "my concept is Christ came to all the world."

You can see Father Joe's collection at St. Vincent de Paul headquarters, 3350 E. Street, any weekday between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., or join Walkabout's holiday tour of the Golden Hill district this Friday, when the group will walk past the "Blue House," the 100-year-old Faulk-Klauber house, and some 250 nativity sets. Bring money if you want to eat lunch at the Big Kitchen afterwards.

— Laura McNiel

Holiday Walkabout
Friday, December 18, 10:30 a.m.
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Calendar LOCAL EVENTS

cleanup is at the Partners for Wildlife location, exit 113 at West Bernardo Drive/Panorama Road and go east, turn left onto Highland Valley Road, and look for the 500P sign about 2.5 miles down on the left side. Free, but call for reservations and details, 619-253-5440 x2. (PWS/WWF)

The Right Side of the Tracks learn how to track animals and discover the natural habitats they live in when the tracking team from Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve leads an educational nature hike. Saturday, December 19, beginning at 8 a.m. You'll also learn about the animal surveys being conducted in the park. From 1:15, take Merry Road west, right on Black Mountain Road, first left onto Canyonville Drive, and park in the white-fenced parking lot. Walk west on the trail to the ranch house. Call 619-484-3219 for reservations. (PWS/WWF)

Owls & More! Then you can join a guided ride, led by a naturalist, to explore the flora and fauna in Hillside Canyon county park on Saturday, December 19, at 9 a.m. Meet at the trailhead parking lot, 15324 Santee Lane, Space is limited. Make reservations by calling 619-475-3996. (WILEY CENTER)

Wildlife and Plant Walks, guides from the Blue Sky Biological Reserve lead leisurely tours designed for the whole family in the 700-acre park every Saturday (from 9 a.m.) and Sunday (10 a.m.). The Sunday hike goes along the Creekside Trail, through the fall leaves of the sycamores and willows. Meet at the trailhead by the kiosk on Espola Road, 1/2 mile north of Lake Poway Road. 619-679-5469. Free. (PWS)

Native Hills that include information on the local flora, fauna, and Kumeyaay Indian history are led by trail guides in Mission Trails Regional Park every Saturday, Sunday, and Wednesday beginning at 9:30 a.m. Meet the guide in front of the visitors' center on Father Junipero Serra Trail, off Mission George Road. 619-668-3275. (NARAC)

Stroll the Strand, the history and natural history of south San Diego Bay are the subjects for docents from the Chula Vista Nature Center, who lead hikes along the beach and bayfront of Silver Strand State Park every Saturday (at 10 a.m.) and Sunday (11 a.m.) in December. For reservations and directions, call the center at 619-422-2481. Rain cancels. (COWHAW)

Ducks and Shorebirds are the stars of a guided birdwatching hike in Famosa Slough salt marsh habitat, Saturday, December 19, 1 p.m. Meet

at the kiosk at the intersection of West Point Loma Boulevard and Famosa Boulevard. Free. 619-224-4591. (LOMA POINT)

Venus Returns as an "Evening Star" this late December, visible very low in the southwest at darkness falls. On Saturday, the 19th, the exceptionally slender waxing crescent moon stands just to the right of Venus. The following evening, the slightly thicker moon hovers well above Venus. From now until summer 1999, Venus will become increasingly prominent in the western sky after dusk.

The Kumeyaay Salistic Observatory at Cowles Mountain is the destination for a guided hike to watch the sun rise, sponsored by the Natural History Museum's Canyonlands, Saturday, December 20, from 6 to 7:30 a.m. Meet near the northeast corner of Golden Drive and Navajo Road, Mission Trails Regional Park. Free. 619-232-3421 x203. (NARAC)

Migrating Shore Birds and Waterfowl are the quarry for the next bird-watching hike led by rangers from Mission Bay Park. The hike will cover the flood-controlled channel and the southern wildlife preserve. Meet the ranger at the kiosk on the bike path across from Sea World at 8 a.m., Sunday, December 20. Free. 619-561-7879. (MISSION BAY)

Restore Native Plants, the goal is to plant 200 natives, including bunchgrass, sage, sagebrush, and yucca, in the Falla South area of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Sunday, December 20, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., sponsored by the Friends of the Preserve. Meet at the parking staging area at the intersection of Black Mountain and Merry Roads. Free. For details call Mike at 619-561-7879. (MISSION BAY)

Winter Solstice, the moment when the sun reaches its southernmost point on the celestial sphere, occurs this year at 7:02 p.m., Monday, December 21. This event signals the beginning of winter in the Northern Hemisphere and the beginning of summer in the Southern Hemisphere. With only about ten hours of daylight, San Diego must endure its darkest and gloomiest nights this week and next. During the day, the sun struggles to an altitude of only 34 degrees (as seen from San Diego), then quickly sinks toward the horizon.

Solstice Hike, welcome in the dawn of the year on Tuesday, December 22, from 5 to 6:30 a.m., with a hike sponsored by the Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Will Bowen will discuss the importance of solstice rituals in ancient cultures. Meet at 4706 Sorrento Valley Boulevard, 1/2 mile east of the I-5 805 merge. Free. 619-484-3219. (COWHAW VALLEY)

Polka-dots, a favorite of backyard gardeners, are now exhibiting their scarlet, petal-like bracts, just in time

for the holidays. The onset of 40-hour-long nights triggers their behavior. In San Diego this condition is met just before the date of winter solstice — December 21.

DANCE

"Dance for Tibet" benefits the music will be provided by Didgana World Music, featuring tribal percussion, didgeridoo, winds, and voice. Seventy Tibetan-derived spiritual paintings (thangkas) will be displayed for sale. Proceeds benefit the Tibetan struggle for self-determination. Sponsors of the event are San Diego Friends of Tibet. It's scheduled for tonight, Thursday, December 17, from 8 to 10:30 p.m., at San Diego Center for the Performing Arts, 3253 Fifth Avenue (between Spruce and Thorne). Admission is \$5; children free. 619-736-1550. (HILLTOPS)

Folk and Vintage Dancers, the next event sponsored by the International Association of San Diego (San Diego County) will be the Vintage (Victorian/Romantic) Holiday Ball, featuring the Ballroom Park Performing Arts Dancers and the California Vintage Dancers, with the San Diego Celtic Circle, Ochechre, Friday, December 18, 7 p.m. in the pub's, Royal Hall. Wear period dress, if you like. \$15 admission ticket, \$20 at the door. For most information or telephone reservations for discounted tickets at the door, call 619-576-7905. (COWHAW)

It's Nutty Out There, the Moscow Classical Ballet performs the original Russian story of *The Nutcracker* when they appear at California Center for the Arts Escondido, Friday, December 15, through Sunday, December 20, with shows at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$16 to \$34. In conjunction with the performance, there will be a luncheon buffet and presentation, "From Sugar Plums to Holiday Traditions," on Saturday and Sunday, December 19 and 20, at 12:30 p.m. at the center. Tickets for adults \$15, children under 12 \$10. For information and reservations, call 1-800-988-4253. Performance tickets are also available through Ticketmaster (619-220-8497). (COWHAW)

The San Diego City Ballet's interpretation of the Christmas favorite includes a cast of 100, with additional choreography by Javier Velasco and former New York City Ballet principal dancer Ilana. The final performance is scheduled for Friday, December 18, through Sunday, December 20, at 7:30 p.m., with 2:30 matinees added on Saturday and Sunday. The performance will be in Mendocino Hall, on the UCSD campus. Tickets are \$20 and \$25. (LA DOL)

The California Ballet will be joined by a full orchestra, including members of the new San Diego Symphony, for their performance of the

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Calendar LOCAL EVENTS

day, December 17, through Sunday, December 20, and again Tuesday and Wednesday, December 22 and 23, 8 p.m., at the Fault Line Theater, 3152 Fifth Avenue (between Federal and Spruce). Admission is \$6. 619-692-5382. (HILDCREST)

Local Watercolor Illustrators of books and greeting cards, Trudi Crockett will display her paintings and sign copies of *Celebrating California*, a new cookbook featuring her art work. A portion of the book's profits benefit the Children's Home Society of California. Ms. Crockett will appear at the Galleria at the Hotel del Coronado on Friday, December 18, from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Free. 619-522-8640. (CORONADO)

Youth Chale, the Young Adult Choir of the College Avenue Baptist Church performs carols and hymns Friday, December 18, at 7 p.m., and again Sunday, December 20, 3 p.m., Barnes and Noble, 7610 Hazard Center Drive. Free. 619-220-0175. (MISSION VALLEY)

Open Poetry Reading, bring your own finished work (or work in progress) or bring a favorite poem by another author to share in a reading set for Friday, December 18, from 7 to 9 p.m., 101 Artists' Colony, 897 South Coast Highway 101, suite F-101. 760-432-9074. (ENCINITAS)

Bel Chale, the bell choir of the Mission Valley United Methodist Church performs holiday songs on Friday, December 18, 7 p.m., at Barnes and Noble, 7610 Hazard Center Drive. Free. 619-220-0175. (MISSION VALLEY)

Kiladegness, musician, DJ, and suspense author Greg Kilen will sign and discuss his new book, *Big Bad Beat*, at 7 p.m. on Friday, December 18, at Mysterious Galaxy Books (3904 Conway Street #107). Free. For information, call 619-268-4747. (DEARBORN MESE)

Two Quarrelsome Shy Warriors discover they're in love through their lonely-hearts correspondence in the Jerry Beck/Sheldon Harnick/Joie Meschino musical *She Loves Me*. It's the current production for the actors at the San Diego School of Creative and Performing Arts. Mary Jane Rendley has coordinated a lobby display of student art depicting Budapest, Hungary, in the early 1930s, the setting for the play.

THE PHYSICS OF CHRISTMAS:

From the Aerodynamics of Reindeer to the Thermodynamics of Turkey



Roger Highfield

Appetites are whetted for science, or at least curiosity about the subject is stimulated. I will be pleased.

I am not exactly a science person. I am dumb as a big dill pickle crock when it comes to understanding how things work and why. I am so old-fashioned and retrograde a woman that I tend to believe that one of the best reasons to keep a man around the house is to have someone of whom to ask what I think of as "science questions." But I am a sucker for books like Highfield's *The Physics of Christmas* and David Bodanis's "Secret" series (*The Secret Family Twenty-Four Hours Inside the Mysterious World of Our Minds and Bodies, The Secret House, and The Secret Garden*). What I like about these books is that they reveal at microscopic, submicroscopic, and subatomic levels the workings of the world within and without us, and they offer these revelations in elegant and "made simple" prose.

What Highfield, cleverly, has done is gather every aspect of the Christmas season and turn these aspects (Christmas trees, Christ's birthday, the Magi, booze and its effects, holiday blues, Santa's fat-packed belly, the living reindeer, snowflakes, Brussels sprouts as a Christmas dinner tradition, and on and on) into delightful mini-essays that offer not only scientific explanations but also historical and anthropological insights. Thus in chapter three, "The Flame and Tree," we learn that "the evergreen and the candle celebrate the same thing: life-giving sunlight, an ancient symbol that dates back long before Prince Albert introduced the tree to Britain or Martin Luther supposedly first bedecked a tree with candles in the 16th Century to remind children of the heavens from which Christ descended."

Highfield marches right on to what happens when we light a candle. "The resulting flame marks the last step in an extraordinary series of physical and chemical processes that first capture sunlight to forge chemical bonds in wick and wax, then snap them to release the long pent-up light." And then, Highfield gives a tidy explanation of photophosphorysis — "a word derived from photo, meaning 'light,' and synthesis, meaning 'the production of something.'" (Dumb me, I did know that "photo" meant "light" but the root meaning for

Final performances are scheduled for Friday and Saturday, December 18 and 19, at 7 p.m., and Sunday, December 20, at 2 p.m. Find the school at 3425 Duck Drive. Tickets range from \$5 to \$2. For reservations, call 619-470-0353 x232. (PARADISE HILLS)

Handbell Choir, the San Diego's United Methodist Church's Handbell

Choir offers seasonal favorites on Friday, December 18, 7:30 p.m., at Barnes and Noble, 1040 North El Camino Real. Free. 760-943-6400. (MCINTOSH)

A Holiday Story for All Ages, on *La Virgen de Tlapac* for its final performance by Teatro Tlapacque, Friday, December 18, through Sunday,

December 20, at 7:30 p.m., at Barnes and Noble, 1040 North El Camino Real. Free. 760-943-6400. (MCINTOSH)

European Spectacles, March 7, "Top Dogs," March 20, 27, "Out Ridge Boys," May 20,

Kenny G, March 20, 27, "Out Ridge Boys," May 20,

Rolling Stones, L.A., February 3, 11

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San Diego

READING

Roger Highfield, science editor for London's *Daily Telegraph*, has set out in his delightful, engrossing book

(Little, Brown, 1998, 293 pages, \$20) to enlighten the reader by acting as a guiding spirit, one who will illuminate Christmas by viewing the holiday and its rituals from a new perspective, that of science. He writes: "Christmas and associated celebrations offer a wonderful excuse to explore a broad range of fields, from biotechnology and fractals to neuropharmacology and nanotechnology. If

synthesis never occurred to me.)

Back when I was so young that lysergic acid still was legal if you could find a pharmacist who would write you a prescription, and you could go to prison for two or three decades for possession of a few flecks of marijuana, my husband and I always took up on a big cigar reeder packed with nicely aged homegrown cannabis before we attended upon Christmas to the parents' house. I'd get dizzyly high. High enough that I teetered on the edge of nausea and had to remember not to drink. My father-in-law, so drunk on Bloody Marys that he staggered, gave us the sinking kisses at the door. He proceeded then to tell jokes whose punchlines referred to racial minorities and tits-and-ass, and I was sufficiently zonked that I laughed crazily and grinned and had to remember not to drink. At the festal table, my mother-in-law's stellar holiday dish, huge boiled onions about in a duce of cream sauce, appeared to set sail across the vast, foated Lenin tureen. And the gala tree, flocked white and strung with red bulbs that flickered, often gathered about its "crepe paper Santa apron, an entire family of tiny green-scaled dinosaurs whose red tongues flicked at the same speed as the red bulbs' flicker. Why, I don't know, but not infrequently, when high, I saw prehistoric animals.

I don't do drugs anymore. I'm too old. But for you dopers, "Santa: The Hallucinogenic Connection," relates the theory of an English university professor whose area of expertise is mycology. This P. O. professor, writes Highfield, argues that the trappings of the traditional Christmas experience owe a great deal to what is probably the most important mushroom in history: fly agaric (*Amanita muscaria*), the recreational and ritualistic drug of choice in parts of northern Europe before vodka was imported from the East. "Highfield reports that each December the English mycologist pops into a Santa costume and drags a sleigh behind him and goes from school to school delivering lectures on the toadstool. The mycologist, Highfield reports, believes that Santa's red-and-white robes "honor the red-and-white-dot color scheme of the potent, mind-altering *Amanita muscaria* and that Santa's jolly 'Ho, ho, ho,' is the euphoric laugh of someone who has indulged in the mushroom."

On a higher note, Highfield queries ancient and modern texts for clues to the nature of the Star of Bethlehem, which guided the Wise Men to Jesus' birthplace (about which Highfield also has opinions). This star, he writes, "was probably not the brilliant object portrayed on Christmas cards. It seems that King Herod and all his 'chief priests and scribes' did not notice it. St. Matthew used no adjectives such as 'bright' to describe it in his Gospel (the only one of the four Gospels that even mentions the star). Only in the early, less reliable Christian literature does the star start to dazzle." The star may have been a comet and it may have been Jupiter, writes Highfield, but whatever it is or was or wasn't, "two thousand years after it was first seen by the Wise Men, astronomers are still in hot pursuit of this heavenly body."

—Judith Moore

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San Diego Reader December 17, 1998

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Calendar LOCAL EVENTS

from the book are donated to St. Madeline Sophie's Center, which serves developmentally disabled adults. The store is located at 1072 Camino Del Rio North. Free. 619-289-2723. (SAN DIEGO)

Kids' Holiday Storytelling, members of the Carmel Valley Kids Public Speaking Club, from ages 7 to 13, offer these holiday stories as "The Night before Christmas for Moms," "The Polar Express," "The Christmas Carol," and "The Night before Christmas." Sunday, December 19, from 3:30 to 5 p.m., at the Carmel Valley Library, 3919 Towngate Drive. Free. 619-509-1577. (CARMEL VALLEY)

Reber's Book Chorus, the annual San Harbor author's series, features Christmas stories in set for Saturday, December 19 and Sunday, December 20, at 1:30 and 4:30 p.m. each day, in the Casa del Prado theater. For ticket information, call 619-447-6645. (SAN HARBOUR)

The 41st Annual Christmas Show by the choral groups of the Generations and the Harmonious voices on Saturday, December 19, 7:30 p.m., at the La Mesa Adult Recreation Center, 8450 La Mesa Boulevard. The program will include traditional, gospel, and novelty Christmas songs, with audience participation. Free. 619-462-2889. (LA MESA)

Christmas Carol Concert, the St. Cecilia Choir offers Benjamin Britten's "Carols of the World" at 8 p.m., Sunday, December 20, at St. Paul's Cathedral, 2728 Sixth Avenue (at Nimitz). The service of Lessons and Carols by the Choirs follows at 9 p.m. 619-298-7721. (SAN DIEGO)

The Annual Christmas Concert by the Cap May's Chorus of San Diego again offers a take on the season along with more traditional fare. The chorus is joined by a brass choir for holiday music, by contemporary composers Conrad Susa, Libby Larsen, David Cerny, Ronald Bass, and others, along with special arrangements of pop tunes for the season by everyone from Jerry Herman to the Chipmunks.

The highlights of the performance are "The X-mas Files," in which agents Scully and Mulder try to prove Santa is an alien, and an audience-participation version of "The Twelve Hilarious Squares of Christmas." The program offered on Saturday, December 19, at 8 p.m., is adapted for families and children. It is performed at the University Christian Church, 3900 Cleveland Avenue. Tickets are \$15 general admission, \$10 for students. (UNIVERSITY)

On Sunday, December 20, at 7 p.m., the performance is offered at Fourth and B, 345 B Street, in a cabaret-style setting. Beverage service will be available, so you must be 21 or older to attend. Tickets are \$18 general admission, \$22 for cabaret table seating. (DOWNTOWN)

To charge tickets by phone for either performance, call 619-275-ARTE, or go to the Official Bookstore, 1029 University Avenue, Hillcrest. Tickets for Sunday's performance are also available through Ticketmaster and the 4th & B box office.

"Two from Gallies," a musical version of the story of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem, is offered by members of the Pacific Beach United Methodist Church, Sunday, December 20, at 8:15 a.m., 10:15 a.m., and 12 p.m.; and on Monday, December 21, at 7 p.m. The church is located at 1561 Thomas Avenue, at Ingraham. Admission is free, but an offering will be taken. 619-274-6573. (PACIFIC BEACH)

And Now for Something a Little Different, the San Carlos United Methodist Church plans Jazz Lessons and Carols presented by the Jazz Gospel Ensemble at 8:15 a.m., 10 a.m., and 5 p.m. on Sunday, December 20. Find the church at 6554 Cowles Mountain Road. 619-464-4331. (SAN CARLOS)

TV

"Enter a World of Unknown Territory", pagan worship, and virgin sacrifices. "Well, if you insist. They're make B-movies." — *James Park, Independence Day*, Specia, Godlike—but as computer animation has improved, the sense of fun has become obsolete. They just don't write tag lines like that anymore. When *Discworld* rolled the Earth axis today, Thursday, December 17, at 8 a.m. on AMC, Cox Cable Channel 33.

During Our Brief Lives is a collage of radio stations, we were witness to a remarkable vision on the white space on the cover of his album *Nothing Like Us*. The opening salvo "Sing, Sing, Sing" is a real deal. "Sing, Sing, Sing" is a real deal. "Sing, Sing, Sing" is a real deal.

Childhood Memory (we love to share) When you ask Mom to play a stack of 35 on the record player—recordings of old radio shows, including the radio version of Raymond Chandler's *Farewell, My Lovely*. *Murder, My Sweet* (you named Powell played a splendid Philip Marlowe. *Murder, My Sweet* (you named Powell played a splendid Philip Marlowe. *Murder, My Sweet* (you named Powell played a splendid Philip Marlowe.

Somehow Out There are whole worlds, whole cultures about which we know almost nothing. We don't have to go to distant Africa or deep-end Peru, just to the movie theater at the release of the first Ernest movie. What's the target audience here? What is the appeal? Why *Ernest* (Santini) again Saturday, December 19, at 10 a.m. on WGN, Cox Cable Channel 26.

The Scary Goes that Humphrey Bogart and director Howard Hawks got into an argument during the filming of *The Big Sleep* about whether a character was murdered or committed suicide. They said Raymond Chandler, who replied that he didn't know either—and he wrote the book. A great detective movie. *The Big Sleep* (Santini), December 20, at 7 a.m. on TCM, Cox Cable Channel 74.

In a Warmup for His Role as the disembodied yet more powerful than ever before spirit of Obi-Wan Kenobi, master therapist Alex Guinness plays the disembodied spirit of Jacob Marley, the former partner of Ebenezer Scrooge, who wears the chains he forged in life. Albert Finney plays Scrooge. *Scrooge* (Santini), December 20, at 10 a.m. on WGN, Cox Cable Channel 26.

Emma Thompson Stars in Ang Lee's film version of Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*. Period pieces have a certain safety about them; anything that risks the wrong way, or, heaven forbid, appears to us despite all our convictions, can be brushed aside with "That was then, this is now." *Sense and Sensibility* (Santini), December 20, at 8 p.m. on KNSD, Channel 35.

In an Unfortunate Overlap of scheduling and subject matter and even timing, a filmed version of P. Scott Fitzgerald's short story "The Curious Thing" airs during the final half hour of the Austin's similarly class-conscious and historically vituperative *Snow and Sensitivity*. Thank heaven for picture-in-picture televi-

CHRISTMAS POEMS

The Burning Babe
At 11 hours winter's night stood shivering in the snow,
Surprised I was with sudden heat which made my heart to glow;
And lifting up a fearful eye to view what fire was near,
A pretty Babe at burning bright did in the air appear;
Who, scorched with excessive heat, such floods of tears did shed,
As though his floods should quench his flames which with his tears were fed.

"Alas!" quoth he, "Thou stow born in fiery heats I fry,
Yet some approach to warm their hearts or feel my fire but I.
My fatherless breast the furnace is, the fuel winding and scorches;
Love is the fire, and sighs the smoke, the ashes shame and scorns;
The first justice learner, and on mercy blows the coals;
The moral in this furnace wrought are men's defiled souls.
For which, as now on fire I am to work them to their good,
So I will make into a bath to wash them in my blood."
Woe! this he vanished out of sight and swiftly shrunk away,
And straight I called unto mind that it was Christmas Day.

— Robert Southwell (1561-1593)

Yule Log
Come, bring with a noise,
My merry, merry boys,
The Christmas log to the fire;
While my good Dame, she
Bids ye all be brave,
And drink to your hearts' desire.

With the last yeeres brand
Light the new block,
For good success in his spending.
On your Palaces play,
That sweet luck may
Come while the log is a-treading.

Drink now the strong Beer,
Cut the white cake here,
The while the meat is a-shedding:
For the rarer Piece Pie,
And the Plums stand by
To fit the paste that's a-kneading.

— Robert Herrick (1591-1633)

Nativity
Immunely cloistered in thy dear womb,
New leaves his best-beloved imprisonment,
Thou'rt he hath made himself to his most
Weak enemy, now into our world to come:
But oh, for thee, for him, hath he! Inn no room?
Yet lay him in this stall, and from the Orient,
Stars, and women will travel to prevent
Thy effect of Herod's jealous general doom.
Sent thou, my Soul, with thy Faith's eyes, how he
Which fills all plays, yet none builds him, doth he
Was not his pity towards thee wondrous high?
That would have need to be pitied by thee?
Kiss him, and with him into Egypt go,
With his kind mother, who parades, thy woe.

— John Donne (1572-1631)

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ger, but Schroeder mimics the seiwed, wounded-sound expression, the vulnerable superman demeanor, to perfection. NPTD Blue air Tuesday, December 22, at 10 p.m. on KCTV, Channel 12.

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the Toys for Tots fund. Registration begins at 7 a.m. 619-479-7973. (DOWNTOWN)

Walk/Run/Skate/Bike, on the third Saturday of every month (this month, Saturday, December 19) the 50 Plus Fitness Association invites everyone (member or not) to choose a mode of locomotion and join the four-mile trek around Mission Bay, meeting at 8:15 a.m. at Farnel Park, Pacific Beach Drive, at the south end of Farnel Street on San Bay. End point is the Catalina Hotel, for coffee and socializing. Free. 619-273-5272 or 619-558-1798. (MISSION BEACH)

Christmas on Wheels, bring a new toy (stuffed in a box) and meet at 8:45 a.m. on the west side of the County Administration Building, 1600 Pacific Highway, for the Sierra Club Bicycle Section's annual "Tingle Bells Ride." Sunday, December 19. The first stop is St. Vincent De Paul center, where the toys will be dropped off. Then take off along the bay and back north to Coronado via the Strand. There's a stop at the Hotel Del to see the Christmas tree, lunch on Coronado, then a return to San Diego on the ferry. Bring money for lunch and fare. Otherwise free. 619-565-0445. (DOWNTOWN)

Take to the Hills, if the hills have got you down, join the San Diego Bicycle Young Society on Saturday, December 19, at 8:45 a.m. for a 47-mile ride through the hills around

Alpine and Pine Valley. Take 148 to the Tavern Road off-ramp and go right on Alpine Boulevard to the fire station, where the group will meet. Free. 619-584-7125. (ALPINE)

"Santa Claus Ride", on Sunday, December 20, the Knickerbocker will gather to cruise through Poway and San Marcos in a moderately strenuous 60-mile. Meet at 9 a.m. at the shopping center on the southwest corner of Scripps Ranch Road and Mira Mesa Boulevard. Free. 619-270-7554. (MIRA MESA)

Gertrude, these buses, the Oakland Raiders, are in town to meet the Chargers in a game set for Sunday, December 20, 5:20 p.m. at Qualcomm Stadium. Radio play-by-play is on KFMF-FM 100.7, TV is KFBM Channel 8. For ticket information, call 619-280-2121. (ASTORIA VALLEY)

SPECIAL

"Free at Last: A History of the Abolition of Slavery in America" is a touring exhibition that includes photographs, cartoons, documents, and other memorabilia from the Gilder Lehrman Collection of the Peopled Morgan Library. It can be viewed at the central San Diego Public Library through January 17 in the second-floor corridor gallery. The library is located at 820 E Street, and hours are 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and Saturday; and 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday. Closed Christmas and New Year's Day. Free. 619-236-5800. (DOWNTOWN)

Kwanzaa, the annual celebration of African-Americans and their cultural heritage, family, community responsibility, and self-improvement will be marked at San Diego Mirra College, 7250 Mesa College Drive, on Friday, December 18, in two ceremonies. Maulana Karenga of Cal State Long Beach, the creator of Kwanzaa, will officiate at both events. The first ceremony is set for 4 p.m., followed by light refreshments at 6 p.m. and a second ceremony from 6 to 8 p.m. The event will be held in the Apollod Theater, on campus. Admission is free, but tickets are required because of the limited seating. Call 619-627-2991 for reservations. (UNIVERSITY)

La Presada, the Waldorf School of San Diego offers the traditional preparation, a Mexican dinner, and dancing for families on Friday, December 18, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at 3547 Altadena Avenue. Adults \$10,

children under 14 \$5. 619-280-8016. (JACK PARK)

Old-Fashioned Christmas Village, the La Mesa Village Merchants Association offers horse-drawn carriage and hay rides, a Victorian setting, craft booths and seasonal food treats, candles and other live musical entertainment, plus a Santa for the kids to visit. Friday and Saturday, December 18 and 19, from 6 to 10 p.m., on La Mesa Boulevard, between Acacia Avenue and Fourth Street. 619-465-7880. (LA MESA)

Short Days and Cold Temperatures mark the days around the winter solstice, set this season offers some of the brightest and warmest celebrations of the year. Learn about this "Season of Light" during the planetarium show planned at Palomar College on Friday, December 18.

Bring plenty of lip balm.

Swing into the holidays at the Zoo's Jungle Bells celebration, Dec. 12-24. The whole family will enjoy original holiday shows, themed characters, festive decorations, gifts and treats.

KIDS GET IN FREE, WHEN THEY BRING AN UNWRAPPED TOY.

We're even blowing fresh snow into Polar Bear Plunge each weekend. Bring a new, unwrapped toy to benefit Children's Hospital, and receive a child's general admission ticket for the day.

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San Diego Zoo

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Dec. 18 • 9pm-1am • 70's/80's/90's Dance

Dec. 23 • 8pm-12am • Rock • No Cover

Dec. 24 • 8pm-12am • Cajun Rock & Blues

Dec. 26 • 9pm-1am • 70's Disco

Dec. 30 • 8pm-12am • Rock • No Cover

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Calendar LOCAL EVENTS

The 55-minute show begins at 7 p.m. Call 760-744-1150 x2833 for reservations. Admission is \$3 for adults, \$2 for children 5-12 and Palo Verde students. The campus is found at 1140 West Mission Road; the planetarium is located in room 351-1 on the west side of the science quad on the campus. (SAN MARCOS)

Christmas Benefit Car Show. Rancho Encinitas Home for Abused and Neglected Children benefit from the proceeds of this event, open to all makes and models. Daily plaques to the first 100 cars, trophies to the top 15, and five coffee. (No alcohol, please.) It's scheduled for Saturday, December 19, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., at Fort of Subs, 1344 West Valley Parkway. Pre-registration \$10, \$15 at the gate. 760-735-9075. (ENCINITAS)

Pyroclastic Falls. The Alexandra Institute sponsors the event, which includes live lectures and personal readings (for a fee). Saturday and Sunday, December 19 and 20, from noon to 6 p.m., at Alexandra's Book Store, 345 Midway Drive, Suite G. Free admission. 619-298-3422. (OPEN SPACE AREA)

La Puente de la Frontera. The fifth annual procession to the border fence is scheduled for Saturday, December 19. Groups from the U.S. and Mexico meet at the fence, where the ideas of refuge and hospitality to strangers are presented in the form of songs and stories and gifts are exchanged. The event also commemorates those who have died crossing the border and the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Sponsors include the American Friends Service Committee, the Catholic Diocese, Ecumenical Council, Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights, the Border Art Workshop, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Meet at 3:30 p.m. at the intersection of Camino de la Plaza and Virginia Street. Bring a candle and dress warmly. For more information, call the AFSC during business hours at 619-233-4114. (SAN YSIDRO)

Roam-O-Rama

A Guide to Unexpected San Diego • By Jerry Schad

Powerful snow softly crunches beneath sunny skies as you kick and glide along the wide forest path, in the blue-shaded gloom of the oak and pine, a doe lingers across your path, as if on a page story. The morning air is crisp and ripe with noise and awe, but the exertion keeps you comfortably warm underneath thin, breathable layers of clothing.

San Diego County's mountains aren't high enough to retain snow from winter storms for very long, but the cross-country skiing scenario above has worked for me on several cold winter mornings over the past 15 years. If you have the right ski equipment, simply wait for a cold, wet storm to hit San Diego, arrive early the next morning, and the gate: 760-735-9075. (ENCINITAS)



"Cars for Toys," this month's San Diego Army Corps event will be held on Sunday, December 20, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., at San Diego Mesa College, 7250 Mesa College Drive. The event features a car show, "Leadville and Cautious," with an assortment of classic, collectible, and special vehicles and a sale and swap of new and used parts and accessories. General admission is \$5 including parking, with kids under 12 free. If you bring a new, unwrapped toy for the Toys for Tots program, you'll get free refreshments. 619-484-9342. (JACKSONVILLE)

Compass Show. vendors from Southern California will be having their

wares — from fall systems to CD-ROMs and accessories — Sunday, December 20, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., San Diego Convention Center, 111 West Harbor Drive. Admission \$4 for two people. 619-295-1221. (SAN DIEGO)

Merry and Relief. The Caribbean Army, created by non-salaried professionals and employed through donations, is used to distribute around \$5.5 million of relief aid each year. The Army is open for public tours from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Sunday, December 20, while it's berthed at the Broadway Pier (1440 Harbor Drive). Free. 619-426-9940. (CORONADO)



Snowscape at sunrise

Experienced skiers can try the Lookout Road from Paso Piacho Campground (elevation 4750 feet) to the summit of Coway Peak (elevation 6512 feet) and back. 5.5 miles round trip. The strenuous ascent is followed by an at-times-terrifying descent back down, which is practical only when the snow is soft and powdery (and not icy).

A longer, more gradual, and less nerve-wracking drive for Coway's summit can be made via West Mesa Fire Road, from Flat Fire Road, West Mesa Trail, Bunt Pine Trail, and finally the Lookout Road. The West Mesa and Bunt Pine trails are former fire roads and thus are somewhat wider and less steep than most hiking trails.

Wednesday. Free. For information, call 619-235-1100. (BALDWIN PARK)

All About! The All-Gang Toy Train Association presents its annual toy train show through Saturday, January 2, at the La Jolla Branch Library (1755 Draper Avenue). For information, call 619-551-1637. (LA JOLLA)

History Years of the 110-year-old Hotel del Coronado. a national historic landmark, are offered weekly. Monday through Saturday at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. and on Sunday at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$15 per person and can be purchased in the hotel's Signature Shop. Proceeds benefit the Coronado Historical Association. The hotel is located at 3000 Orange Avenue. 619-522-8104. (CORONADO)

Homes for the Holidays. throughout the holiday season, the San Diego Historical Society will open the Irving Cill-designed Maritime House (3525 Seventh Avenue, at Upas Street) and Villa Montecito (1925

K Street, at 20th Street), a Victorian mansion on the national registry of historic places, for viewing of the Christmas decorations. The homes are open Thursday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Admission is \$5 for adults, \$2 for children 6 to 17, and children under 6 and elderly members free. 619-271-6203. (BALDWIN PARK AND SHERMAN HEIGHTS)

The Light Time of the Year. candles stroll the Quail Botanical Gardens during the third annual Garden of Lights festival, taking place from 5 to 9 p.m. Friday through Wednesday, December 18-21 (continuing on December 26 and 27). Wagon rides drawn by Belgian horses will be available, along with food and beverages, children's activities, and lots of holiday lights. Admission is \$5 for adults, \$1.50 for kids 5 to 12. Find Quail at 230 Quail Gardens Drive. For information, call 760-436-3036. (ENCINITAS)

The San Diego Harbor Parade of Lights, a flotilla of decorated boats, returns again on Sunday, December 20, beginning at 6 p.m. at the southeast end of Shelter Island, moving north along Harbor Island, San Diego Island, and ending at the ferry landing in Coronado. (SAN DIEGO BAY)

The Del Mar Fairgrounds hosts the Holiday of Lights — its annual drive-through light show featuring thousands of colored lights creating large animated and holiday-themed displays — through Sunday, January 3, 1999. The lights go on at 5 p.m. each night and remain lit until 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and until 11 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. Admission is \$8 per car (or more people). \$13 for vans (or more people). For information, call 619-793-5555. (DEL MAR)

Organizers at Barona Casino say half a million holiday lights, more than 100,000 luminaires, and render are part of the Winter Wonderland continuing through Sunday, January 3, 1999. The lights play on at 5:30 p.m. each night (continuing all night). Find the casino at 1000 Highway 167, Canyon Road. For more information, call 619-443-2300. (BARONA CASINO)

Or consider the "Holiday Fantasy: Legend of the Ice Princess," running through the end of the year at the Vieja Catedral Center. Performances take place nightly at 7:15 p.m. Organizers promise that "one million holiday lights" mark these live performances. Find Vieja at 5605 Wilton Road. For more information, call 619-439-2070. Admission is free. (PALM BEACH)

The San Diego Wild Animal Park illuminates the lions with "more than 100,000 multicolored lights," a

Candy Cane Lane, holiday entertainment, a ride on Arctic Snow Hill, and other activities, through Thursday, December 17, through Wednesday, December 23, and again December 26 through 30, from 4 to 8 p.m. The event is free with paid admission. San Pasquel Valley Road. 760-738-5046. (ENCINITAS)

FOR KIDS

"Trouble in the Toyland" is the program when Puppet Express performs at the Mark Hitchcock Puppet Theater at 10 and 11:30 a.m. Thursday and Friday, December 17 and 18, and at 11 a.m., 1 and 2:30 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, December 19 and 20. Find out about the *Toy Train* or of *Grumpy Mountain* when Ray Turner's Puppets take the stage at 10 and 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday and next Thursday, December 23 and 24 (with

shows continuing through December 31). The theater is located near the Aerospace Center. For more information, call 619-465-5063. Regular admission is \$2 for adults, \$1.50 for children, free for those under five. (PALM BEACH)

"The 100 Dandelions Christmas" is the offering on Disney Video Night, for kids six and older, at Zany Brains, 1330 Camino de la Reina, Friday, December 18, 7 p.m. Free. 619-291-9500. (MISSION VALLEY)

Events in Santa's Workshop. Escondido's Community Service Department and Friends of the Library are sponsoring Santa's Workshop. There will be food and live family entertainment, crafts for kids, plus a chance to visit with Santa, Saturday, December 19. Choose from two sessions, 9 to 9:30 a.m. or 10:30 a.m. to noon at the East Valley Community Center, 2245 East Valley Parkway. Tickets are \$4 for each child five and older, \$3 for adults, and include

a continental breakfast. Bring a camera to take a picture with Santa, or you can purchase a Polaroid at the event. 760-839-4382. (ESCONDIDO)

Singer Cristina Ortiz offers songs in English and Spanish when she performs at Chula Vista Eastlake Library, 1120 Eastlake Boulevard, Saturday, December 19, 11 a.m. Free. 619-456-0314. (CHULA VISTA)

The Santa Train. Santa has his own holiday car on the San Diego Railroad Museum's Santa Train when it leaves the station on Saturday and Sunday, December 19 and 20, at 11 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. The round trip includes a guided tour of a working steam locomotive, cabooses, and other historic machinery in the museum's train yard. Trains leave from Campo Depot for the 1 1/2-hour round trip to Miller

Creek. Exit I-8 at Buckman Springs Road, go south on Buckman to Highway 94, turn right, then go west two miles to Campo and follow the museum signs. Adults \$10, kids 6 through 12 \$5, kids under 5 free. 1-800-228-9246 or 619-395-3031. (CAMPO)

Santa Stories are on the agenda, then make your own Christmas ornaments. Saturday, December 19, 11 a.m., at Borders, 1072 Camino del Rio North. Free. 619-295-2231. (MISSION VALLEY)

A Magical Place of Wood and Copetti's careful hands help create the mischievous little wooden puppet *Pinocchio*. The final performance of this adaptation of Carlo Collodi's classic tale is offered by the Theatre School at the North Coast Repertory Theatre, Sunday, December 19, at 11 a.m. Find the theater at 987-D Lo-

man Santa Fe. Call 619-481-1055 to check the box office. Tickets are \$5 for adults, \$3 for children, \$2 for seniors. 11:30 a.m. Show. Saturday, December 19, 7 p.m. Borders, 1072 Camino del Rio North. Free. 619-295-2231. (MISSION VALLEY)

Kwanzaa Party. host some Kwanzaa crafts, Sunday, December 20, 2 p.m. Borders, 1072 Camino del Rio North. Free. 619-295-2231. (MISSION VALLEY)

Wheels the Pooh is the featured character at this week's story time at White Rabbit Children's Books, Sunday, December 20, 2 p.m., 7:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m. Call 619-454-3518. (LA JOLLA)

Bubbles of all shapes and sizes are the specialty of Bobbie Maize and Company. It's science and entertainment in one. The next performance will be on

"Polar Express" Story Time. listen to the story, drink hot chocolate, and get a note to Santa, Saturday, December 19, 7 p.m. Borders, 1072 Camino del Rio North. Free. 619-295-2231. (MISSION VALLEY)

Kwanzaa Party. host some Kwanzaa crafts, Sunday, December 20, 2 p.m. Borders, 1072 Camino del Rio North. Free. 619-295-2231. (MISSION VALLEY)

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Calendar CLASSICAL MUSIC

The Virtues of Weiss

This was a coup for the Athenaeum.

How shall we characterize the end of the 20th Century? The age of mindless technology? The age of moral decline? The age of terrorism? The age of pollution? The age of overpopulation? Maybe. But instead of talking about the cone hole, the Internet, Al Fatah, and sub-Saharan starvation, we might try a bit of optimism and point out that the late 20th Century is the golden age of late-playing.

REVIEW
JONATHAN SAVILLE

Or, at least, the silver age, since the golden age was the 300-year period, from the 16th through the 18th Century, when all the great late music was composed, most of it by eminent performers on this difficult and refined instrument. Modern composers provide virtually nothing for the late. Yet today we have Paul O'Dette, Ronn McFarlan, Hopkinson Smith, Robert Barro, Michael Cardin, Tzuyohiko Sakoh, and a number of other late-players who are without doubt as brilliant masters of the instrument as anyone who has ever lived. Among their number, one of the most impressive is the German lutenist Lutz Kirchhof, who recently put in an appearance at the Athenaeum.

This was a coup for the Athenaeum, since up to this point Kirchhof has been known to American lovers of Baroque music exclusively by his Sony recordings. He has never performed in the United States before, and San Diego was his only concert venue. We owe this visit to the taste and persistence of the Athenaeum's Dan Atkinson, a fan of Kirchhof's CDs, who arranged

the recital (and who also served as the very able impromptu translator of the lutenist's introductory comments, which were in German). In certain ways, the concert turned out to be not as fully satisfying as one might have wished. It was a knockout nevertheless, and the Athenaeum's small but knowledgeable and devoted audience has good reason to be grateful to Atkinson and his ir-

replaceable La Jolla institution. Let's take care of the negative criticisms first. The concert gave short measure. The program itself was not very long, and in spite of the audience's enthusiasm (and somewhat belatedly evident personal amiability) Kirchhof offered no encores. Most of the second part was taken up with a prolonged suite (called a Sonata) by the mid-18th-century composer Paul Charles Durand, which in his comments Kirchhof tried to describe as an example of the "not-Baroque *empfindsam*" ("sensitive" and "elegant") styles, but which in fact was chiefly an example of weak compositional power, with little inventiveness, a reliance on cliché, a lack of emotional or imaginative depth, and the repeated sense that the composer was providing rather uninteresting ideas and then doing nothing interesting with them. This being our only chance to hear the great lutenist in person (and who knows when and if the opportunity will be repeated?), we really didn't want to spend more than a third of our quite brief time with him listening to that.

Another problem lies with the instrument itself. The lute is capable of the most delicate nuances, but there is no way it can be played loudly. Even with his elegant modern replica of a 13-course 18th-century theorbo-lute (its lengthened bass strings—derived from the larger theorbo—providing an exceptionally full, deep resonance), Kirchhof often had trouble reaching himself heard in the back rows of the Athenaeum's intimate hall, which is no larger than many a California living room. Let us admit that the lute has come into its own in the modern world through the blessed medium of recordings, and that although nothing can completely replace the exciting experience of being in the physical presence of a musician like Lutz Kirchhof, the lute music of which he is such a magisterial interpreter is ultimately more accessible through your hi-fi, by means of which everyone can have as good a seat as I myself fortunately had at the Athenaeum, and can hear every subtlety of form and expression in a type of music whose life blood is subtlety.

These reservations out of the way, Lutz Kirchhof, *Renaissance lute*. Athenaeum Music & Arts Library. Weichenberger, Preludium in G Minor and Fantasia. Weiss, Suite in B-flat Major, BWV 1000. Durand, Sonata in A Minor.



Lutz Kirchhof

Lutz Kirchhof, *Renaissance lute*. Athenaeum Music & Arts Library. Weichenberger, Preludium in G Minor and Fantasia. Weiss, Suite in B-flat Major, BWV 1000. Durand, Sonata in A Minor.

I need to tell you how profoundly moved I was—to the point of tears and exaltation—by Kirchhof's performances of works by Johann Georg Weichenberger, J.S. Bach, and (especially) Sylvius Leopold Weiss. The Weichenberger pieces (a rhythmically free-form *Preludium* and a rhapsodic *Fantasia*) were, however exquisite in both composition and performance, were brief certain-raisers. The *Each Fugue* in G Minor, BWV 1000, magnificent as it is (and showing how, in the right hands, the lute can achieve astounding contrapuntal effects), is a transcription from one of the composer's solo violin sonatas, and in any case can be heard on Kirchhof's indispensable 2-CD recording of the complete Bach lute repertoire. But the Weiss Suite in B, which Kirchhof (so far as I know) has not recorded, constituted the

central revelation of the program. Weiss is one of the truly great Baroque composers—indeed, one of the great composers *tout court*. That his reputation, even among ardent music lovers, is nowadays so relatively obscure (in co-parity to Bach, Handel, Vivaldi, etc.) is due to the fact that all his music (well over 600 works) was composed for the lute, that only now is it finally being published in a systematic manner, and that artists capable of performing it so as to bring out its fabulous power and beauty have until recently been in extremely short supply. No one hearing Kirchhof's impassioned, impulsive, infinitely variegated traversal of this score, with its heart-gripping melodic sequences, its harmonic originality, its deep exploration of every musical idea, its sense of structural inevitability (very much like

Bach), and its total mastery of the lute's technical resources, could doubt that we were being exposed to superlative music by a superlative composer, superlatively played.

Of course—to end with another gripe—things would have been better if the skimp program notes had told us whether we were hearing early Weiss or late Weiss, whether the B Major Suite came from the London manuscript or the Dresden manuscript, whether it was performed from manuscript or from a published edition, whether the ornamentation was due to the composer or the performer, and so on. How often do we get to hear music by this very great composer?—so that when we do, we ought to get the full Monty. But, for all its minor imperfections, Kirchhof's Athenaeum recital was undeniably one of the musical experiences of a lifetime.

CLASSICAL LISTINGS

Contributions to the Reader's Guide in Classical Music 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 (including area code), and a phone number for public information to Reader's Guide. Send to: Classical Music, P.O. Box 58053, San Diego, CA 92186-5803. Or fax to: 619-594-8801. For more information, call 619-881-2401.

"Messiah," the San Diego Chamber Orchestra with the 65-voice San Diego Master Chorus will be performing around the county this week, offering the Handel classic. Tonight, Thursday, December 17, at 8 p.m., the audience is invited to participate in a Messiah sing-along at the College Ave. Baptist Church, 4747 College Avenue, (201) 498-4805.

They perform the full oratorio on Friday, December 18, at 8 p.m. at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, 2728 Sixth Avenue, (202) 606-0000. On Saturday, December 19, at 7 p.m., they offer the Christmas portion at St. James-by-the-Sea Episcopal Church, 743 Prospect Town, (619) 424-1014. The Church of the Nativity is the site for a performance of the Christmas portion, Sunday, December 20, 3 p.m., (619) 524-1014.

Donald Barra conducts the orchestra. Lyle Stone directs the chorale. The performances feature soprano Catherine Ireland, mezzo Patricia McAffee, tenor Robert MacNeil, and bass Philip Larson. Tickets range from \$12 to \$22 and are on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information, call the orchestra at 1-888-848-7320 or 760-753-6402.

Pipe Organ Concerts, the next entry in the series sponsored by the First Church of Christ, Scientist features the church's organist, John Rice Churchill, in recital, Friday, December 18, 4:30 p.m., on the 1400-pipe Pipe Organ. The church is located at 8252 Allison Avenue, (760) 644-1000.

"Christmas by Candlelight," a variety of traditional Christmas selections will be offered by Miracosta College's Chamber Chorus and Camera. Friday, December 18, 7:30 p.m., in the candlelit dining room of the student center on campus, at One Barnard Drive. Dessert is included in the \$12 ticket price. (760) 765-4815. (202) 606-0000.

Acknowledged Brass Quintet the Center City Brass Quintet, featuring Ryan Anthony on trumpet, will perform on Friday, December 18, at 7:30 p.m., at the Mt. Carmel High School Performing Arts Center, 1555 Carmel Mountain Road (exit 115) and go west on Rancho Pennington Boulevard. The program includes styles from Bach to Bernstein to contemporary pop. General admission is \$7, students \$5. 619-538-4130. (202) 606-0000.

Holiday Concert, Miracosta College's North Coast Symphony Orchestra, directed by Daniel Isaacs, offers Christmas and Hanukkah music plus classical selections on Saturday, December 19, 7:30 p.m., in the college's theater on campus at One

Barnard Drive. The program includes the first movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 7, Ralph Vaughan Williams' "Fantasia on Greensleeves," Holst's "In the Bleak Midwinter," and Brahms' "Variations on a Christmas Carol." Admission is \$7, students and seniors \$5. 760-765-4815. (202) 606-0000.

Christmas Sing-Along, joining civic organizer Robert Plimpton in this week's concert sponsored by the Spreckels Organ Society is soprano Anna Barnum-Carson who will perform and invite the audience to join in singing seasonal favorites. Sunday, December 20, 2 p.m., Spreckels Organ Pavilion, Free. (619) 594-8801.

Madrigals, the Montrose Madrigal Quartet features Patricia Minton, Anita Colet, Max Chodan, and Ron Banks. They offer Christmas music

and a Carol sing-along in a performance Sunday, December 20, 4 p.m., at La Mesa First United Methodist Church, 4600 Palm Avenue 619-466-4163. (LA MESA)

"A Little Advent Story" is a modern retelling of the nativity story written in 1931 by neo-Renaissance composer Hugo Dietrich, and it's the centerpiece for the annual Advent Choral Concert beginning at 4 p.m. on Sunday, December 20, at the First Lutheran Church (1420 Third Avenue). The program includes anthems by 20th-century composers Paul Mann, Jane Marshall, and Benjamin Britten. The chamber group Allegro will contribute music. Free. For information, call 619-224-6070. (202) 606-0000.

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Calendar ART

ART LISTINGS

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GALLERIES

Regional Artists Show. This all-media exhibit opens with a reception for the artists on Friday, December 18, from 6 to 8 p.m., at the San Diego Art Institute in the House of Charm. The show features the work of Joseph Ewers and continues through January 17. The New Youth Art Gallery features the work of students from the Nazareth School. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sunday, noon to 4 p.m. Admission is \$5, \$2 for seniors.

music, military, and student; kids 12 and under free. (JADDA PARK)

"Plasticatic, Bureaucratic Plasticatic Swirl" is the name of the farrow reception and parts for the Plasticatic gallery, soon to move to L.A. The evening features nine multimedia installations by Jon Rosenfeld, Thad Howard, Jack S.C.H., etc. cools, Jonatan Bunnell, Robert Bert, Maria Lopez, Brian Benson, and Martin Buben. The functions are set for Saturday, December 18, from 7 p.m. to midnight, at 2409 Fourth Avenue, Five. 619-244-8514. (DOWNTOWN)

AB Jordan's Reception. A reception for all the usual artists who have exhibited during the year will be held at 101 Artime's Gallery on Sunday, December 20, 3 p.m., 807 South Coast Highway 101, Torrey Pines and John McLaren perform on classical guitar. The show remains on view through December. Five. 760-632-9074. (DOWNTOWN)

MUSEUMS

California Center for the Arts Museum. Beyond the hillside, the Arts Museum, "Beyond the Hillside," is a new addition to the House of Charm. The show features the work of Joseph Ewers and continues through January 17. The New Youth Art Gallery features the work of students from the Nazareth School. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sunday, noon to 4 p.m. Admission is \$5, \$2 for seniors.

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de Salvo: Garden Guardian" is officially open, but throughout the year the artist is creating works exploring the museum's location, architecture, and "missions." For example, "Garden Guardian" places viewer-operated fragrance dispensers at strategic locations throughout the Edwards Garden to "heighten the experience" of the seaside setting. The sculptures remain on exhibit through Sunday, January 31, 1999.

Find the museum at 700 Prospect Street, 619-434-3541, SA 92044.

Museum of Photographic Arts. Cuban-born artist Abelardo Morell, whose photographs transform everyday objects and occurrences into magical images, is the subject for "Abelardo Morell and the Camera Eye." Through 40 gelatin silver prints, the exhibition presents Morell's three major areas of photographic investigation in the past decade: "Optical Phenomena and Everyday Occurrences," the "Camera Obscura," and "Books, Maps, and Paintings."

For this traveling exhibition, a fully operational room-size camera obscura has been created. Visitors may enter the camera obscura, and in its darkened interior, see and feel the outside world projected upside down on the wall opposite the single 30" opening, which serves as the camera aperture. Enjoy this show through Sunday, January 31, 1999.

San Diego artist Marcos de Salvo has been commissioned to create new works for the indoor and outdoor spaces of the museum. "Roman

Casa de Balboa. For additional details, dial 619-238-7308. (BALBOA PARK)

Oceanside Museum of Art. diverse textures and styles — ranging from photographic realism to abstract color and form — are on view in the pieces making up "Full Duck Art Quilt." The exhibition features the creative work of 34 quilt artists who responded to the challenge of selecting and visually interpreting one typical card image, such as the king of hearts, "to create a combined playing deck that traces the imagination."

The show — developed by artist Ian Pierce and the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (STES) — continues through Sunday, January 17, 1999. The museum is located at 704 Pier View Way; 760-521-2787. (OCEANSIDE)

San Diego Museum of Art. both the first and last prints created by Dutch draftsman M.C. Escher are among the works gathered in "M.C. Escher: A Centennial Tribute." The 84 works in the exhibition span the artist's career and consist of drawings, woodcuts, lithographs, and mezzotints, along with illustrated books and related technical materials. The show concludes on Sunday, January 3, 1999.

The museum's permanent collection includes Italian Renaissance paintings, Spanish old masters paintings, American art, 19th-Century European paintings and sculpture, and the Western Gallery of Contemporary California Art. 619-232-7331. (BALBOA PARK)

The museum's permanent collection includes Italian Renaissance paintings, Spanish old masters paintings, American art, 19th-Century European paintings and sculpture, and the Western Gallery of Contemporary California Art. 619-232-7331. (BALBOA PARK)

Moe, Larry, and Lucifer

The trip never goes smoothly, because the devil senses a threat to his territory and tries to stop them.

In Teatro Mascara Maica's latest pastorela, the devil sing Johnny Cash's "Ring of Fire" and Elvis' "Burnin' Love." He lurches with Linda Tripp and, regarding "Miss Lewinsky," he shakes his finger at us and swears, in a husky Southern voice, "I did not have a hex on that woman!"

As always, La Pastorela de Paz is an equal-opportunity satire. When hardened sinners ask if they could still go to heaven, a reply floats out of the blue: "If they can pardon Nixon, why not you?"

Pastorelas tell the story of how the shepherds journeyed to Bethlehem on La Noche Buena (Christmas Eve). The trip never goes smoothly, because the devil senses a threat to his territory and tries to stop them. "It's the B-plot of the Nativity," writes Max Branscomb, who authors the local pastorelas. "The Spaniards brought it to Mexico in the early 1500s, and more than 2,000 unique versions are produced south of the border."

Branscomb estimates that every town and village in Mexico has one. Pastorelas are in verse, and Branscomb's got a genuine knack for rhymes and topical references. Each of his pastorelas not only tell the shepherds' story, but also the Year in Review. In this year's version, for example, the Padres have a rematch with the Yankees — and win! The Yankee devil just couldn't hit the curve.

The story starts in the present. Archangel Michael accidentally opened the gateway to the past. Now the devil could go back and redo the

last 2,000 years. The gateway also becomes an aperture for rival gang members to rise above ingrained hatred. They join with shepherds and comfort obstacles, among which are Operation Catechists, at the U.S./Mexico border, and the parasitical coyotes who take the travelers' money and dump them in the scorpion-infested hills east of San Ysidro.

Fortunately for the shepherds, the devil and his minions behave more like the Three Stooges — Moe, Larry, and Lucille — than wicked lords of the Underworld. Also, benevolent powers and the shepherds: Zorro, the Aztec emperor Quetzimco, and the Archangels Gabriel and Michael, the latter having a meaner curve ball than Kevin's town.

Max Branscomb and William Virchis, who directed La Pastorela de Paz, are among San Diego's most creative tandem. Branscomb writes, directs, and narrates; Virchis matches each with exuberant theatricality. In effect, La Pastorela is just a Christmas procession. Shepherds parade through the theater singing carols in Spanish. Branscomb and Virchis, however, make it much more. They combine everything from rock 'n' roll to social commentary to the hope that 1999's Year in Review could be more positive than 1998.

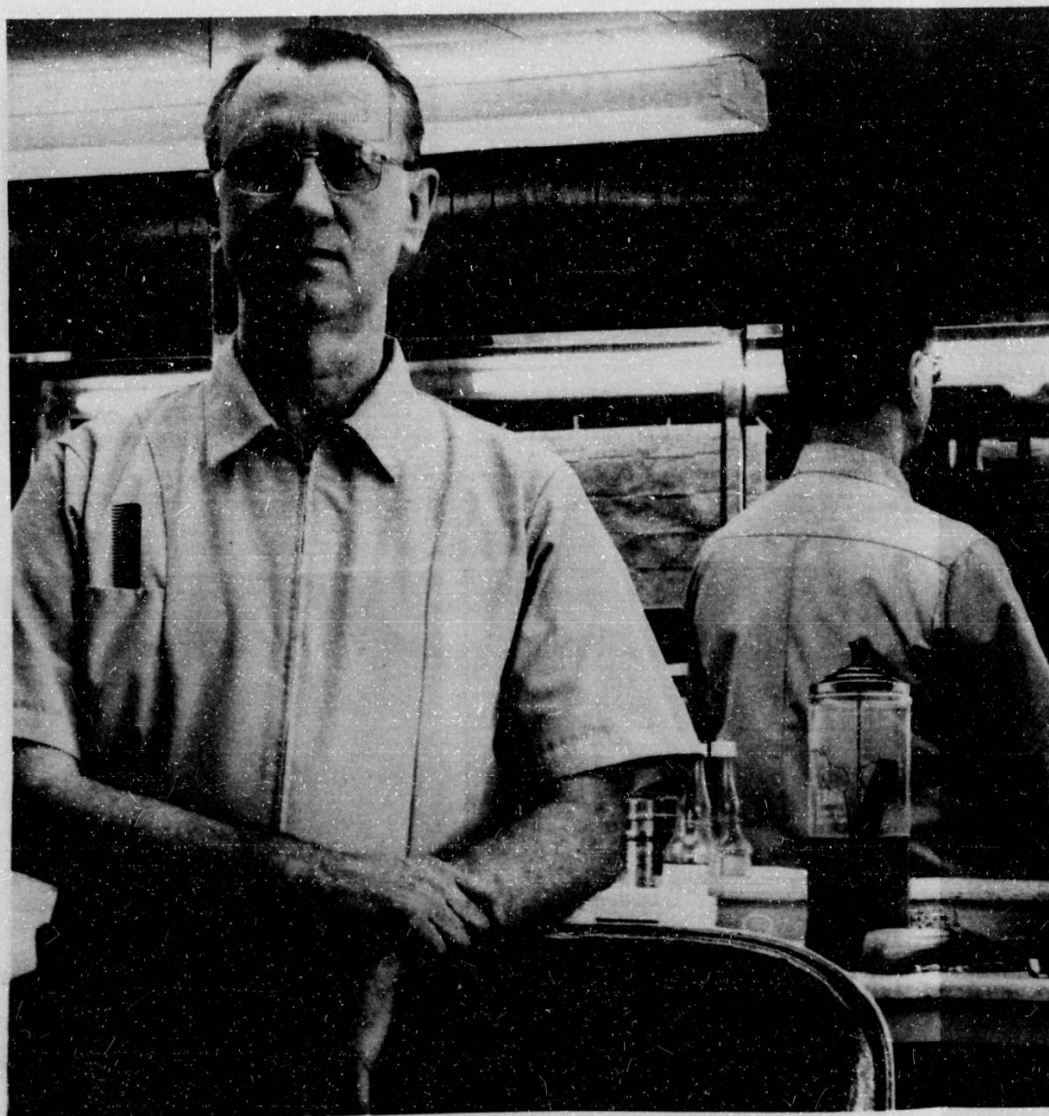
Most Christmas shows move from outside to inside, from winter cold to the comforts of home and hearth, but it is a rejuvenated, Grinch-proof



La Pastorela de Paz

La Pastorela de Paz. by Max Branscomb
Lycium Space. 79 historic Plaza, downtown
Directed by William Virchis. cast: Lorena Herrera, John Padilla Silva, Paul Krue, Rhy-Green, Timothy Paul Evans, Melissa Hamilton, Christine Gontales, Bryant A. Hernandez, Paul Arango, Katie Andrews, Carl Tenen, Arlene Molina, Judith Barren, Paul Moran, costumes, Cheryl Lindley, lighting, Kenne, music director, Michael Campos, light choreography, Rhy-Green
Playing through December 23: evening shows at 7:30 p.m. Matinee Saturday, December 19, and Sunday, December 20, at 2:00 p.m. For information call 619-544-1000.

Lamb's Festival of Christmas: A Christmas Waltz. by Kerry Mead
Lamb's Players Theatre. 1420 Irving Street, Miramar
Directed by Robert Smyth and Kerry Mead. cast: Andy Cook, Chris Vapole, Sonora Marshall, Deborah Gilmore Smyth, K.R. Meyer, David Cochran Heath, Christopher Rober, Nick Cardinale, Jasper Grant, Chris Margely, scenic designer, Mike Buckley, costumes, Veronica Murphy, lighting, Nathan Pennino, choreography, Pamela Turner
Playing through December 27: Tuesday through Thursday at 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday at 8:00 p.m. Sunday at 2:00 p.m. Matinee Saturday at 4:30 p.m. and Sunday at 2:00 p.m. For information call 619-432-0691.



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Calendar THEATER

Who-ville, the Cratchits' cold-water flat in 1843 London, or the warmest manger in literature. But what about Christmas for those who can't go home, or have no home at all?

Kerry Meads sets a Christmas Waltz at the Glen Ellen Arts Academy for girls in Illinois. It's 1939. *Game with the Wind* opened recently, and you don't have to read *Photoplay* to know it's a hit. All but three students went home for the holiday. Blake and Murci remain behind, again. And now the "late blooming" Nelda Waltz joins them, and some faculty members, to



Seamus Marshall, Amy Cook, Crissy Vogele in *A Christmas Waltz*

for a makeshift Yuletide. Blake doesn't play hard to get with men; she's "elusive." Some say Murci's "easy." Nope, she says, just "vulnerable." And Nelda? She's got eyes for that strange Stanley Sibilsky but hasn't a clue what to do. Anyway, what she sees in him's a puzzle. Stanley writes poetry — reeew-ewee! — and would rather hear Louie Prima play trumpet than Harry James. No wonder they call Stanley a "drip!"

Christmas'll be a dud. They'll break their tomato and egg dishes, maybe sing some carols, play 78s on the wind-up Victrola. Whoopie... fondly-sounding — or someone — exciting would arrive on the scene.

Enter David Cochran Heath as William Fields. He wears a perfectly tailored sport coat, slacks, and a look of sad bemusement. Fields left Glen Ellen for Hollywood 14 years ago. He became a sound designer when talkies came in and worked on *Game with the Wind*. Now he's back for a brief visit. Clark Gable couldn't stir up more excitement, especially from reclusive Lauren Kane, whose heart Fields fractured long ago.

A Christmas Waltz sets two spirits free. The music, deftly arranged and directed by Vanda Eggington, ranges from Tchaikovsky to Glenn Miller, and the Christmas spirit fills Lamb's Players Theatre. The play also captures the mercurial spirits of young women — splashes of hope and horror —

just prior to the advent of television. They behave according to guidelines set not by MTV, or even *Your Hit Parade*, but by *Redbook*, *Photoplay*, and the movies of the day. When things are grouty they're "poshy." And when William Fields enters the room, a bug-eyed Candace Kane gives his gender a three-syllable filly: she calls him a "may-wan-mull."

Co-directors Robert Smyth and Kerry Meads give the show a delightful, darn-near-the-top, youthful enthusiasm. Crissy Vogele heads the cast as the seemingly nerdy Nelda Waltz, who's been "no stranger to disappointment" but who, like Stanley Sibilsky — a bumbling yet hip Chris-Mingle — may be a generation or two ahead of the rest. Deborah

Gilmour Smyth and David Cochran Heath rekindle an enthusiasm of Lauren Kane and William Fields's youth. And K.B. Mercer, excellent in the North Coast Rep's recent *Elephant Man*, plays Candace Kane and almost wills the Christmas spirit into being all by herself. ■

THEATER LISTINGS
Theater listings and commentary are by Jeff Smith. Information is accurate according to material given us, but it is always wise to phone the theater for any last-minute changes and to inquire about ticket availability. Many theaters offer discounts to students, senior citizens, and the military. Ask at the box office.

Ala's Misbehavior

For three evenings only, Visions Theatre stages its immensely popular musical tribute to Fats Waller. The show, directed and choreographed by Chabou Phillips, includes such favorites as "Honey-Suckle Rose," "My Favourite Valentine," and "The Jive is Jumping." SUNDAY PERFORMANCE GALLERY, 325 ELEVENTH AVENUE, DOWNTOWN, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16, THROUGH DECEMBER 20, FRIDAY AND SATURDAY AT 8:00 P.M. SUNDAY AT 1:00 P.M. FOR INFORMATION CALL 619-692-3220.

An American Christmas

Lamb's Players Theatre and the Hotel del Coronado have a new version of the popular holiday dinner-theater Christmas at the Hotel del in 1908, including a five-course gourmet meal. HOTEL DEL CORONADO BALLROOM, THROUGH DECEMBER 27. EVERY DAY EXCEPT CHRISTMAS, AT 6:30 P.M. FOR INFORMATION CALL 619-437-0000.

Became Sex and Cider Sells

As an alternative to traditional Christmas fare, New Year's Eve Theatre Productions offers an evening of "thought-provoking one acts." That's a welcome addition to the December 1st just with the play more impressive. A.R. Gurney's piece *The Professor*, Burt Foster's *Home Free* are based on trucks. One act figure each out, they become for two predictable. *Limerick* is a kind of fun what would happen if a new writer, credited in a creative writing class (Limerick's) taught a few, this is his revenge. The one act twist and turn may be more enjoyable to perform than to follow. The evening does have a plus. 11. Lando Fale appears in *F.M.* and *Home Free*. She's one of our best local actors and does credit.

A Christmas Carol

The San Diego Repertory Theatre's annual Christmas show resembles the movie *Ground Hog Day*. They can do the show over and over until they get it right. This year's epic, in-

time version they got right. Directed by Sean Murray, it's a rich, it's almost draining. Murray creates a wonderful theatricality, and Jonathan McMurtry convinces you he was born to play Scrooge. A crotchety grump "afraid of life" (he darts the door on candles and pig-gles) metamorphoses into a man-child under the star. Throughout, McMurtry is unrelenting and funny (this is one of the most comic Scrooges yet). A strong cast supports him. Douglas Roberts as the narrator, Ron Chaudron as the beleaguered Bob Cratchit, an ebullient Tim Irving as Ebenezer Scrooge Reynolds as a stately ghost and bagged servant, and John Carroll as five miserly crabs. *Christmas*, Larrie Black's traditional (i.e., 1843) costume set an all-time center for the Christmas Carol, and since again Gina Anguiano shows why she's one of the hottest choreographers in Southern California.

Black Nativity

Southeastern Community Theatre stages Langston Hughes's popular retelling of the Christmas story from an African-American perspective. EDUCATIONAL CULTURAL COMPLEX, THROUGH DECEMBER 27. EVERY DAY EXCEPT CHRISTMAS, AT 8:00 P.M. SUNDAY AT 1:00 P.M. FOR INFORMATION CALL 619-437-0000.

A Celebration of Belts

The Christian Community Theatre's sixth annual Tradition of Christmas Show features "Rock-ette-style precision tap dancers, hand bells, sleigh bells, jingle bells, and more." EAST COUNTY RECREATION ARTS CENTER, 210 EAST MAIN STREET, EL CAJON, THROUGH DECEMBER 27. EVERY DAY THROUGH SUNDAY AND MONDAY, DECEMBER 21 AT 7:30 P.M. MATINEE, DECEMBER 19 THROUGH DECEMBER 22 AT 2:00 P.M. FOR INFORMATION CALL 619-588-2200.

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time version they got right. Directed by Sean Murray, it's a rich, it's almost draining. Murray creates a wonderful theatricality, and Jonathan McMurtry convinces you he was born to play Scrooge. A crotchety grump "afraid of life" (he darts the door on candles and pig-gles) metamorphoses into a man-child under the star. Throughout, McMurtry is unrelenting and funny (this is one of the most comic Scrooges yet). A strong cast supports him. Douglas Roberts as the narrator, Ron Chaudron as the beleaguered Bob Cratchit, an ebullient Tim Irving as Ebenezer Scrooge Reynolds as a stately ghost and bagged servant, and John Carroll as five miserly crabs. *Christmas*, Larrie Black's traditional (i.e., 1843) costume set an all-time center for the Christmas Carol, and since again Gina Anguiano shows why she's one of the hottest choreographers in Southern California.

Worth a try.

SAN DIEGO REPERTORY THEATRE, THROUGH DECEMBER 24, WEDNESDAY THROUGH SATURDAY AT 8:00 P.M. TUESDAY AND SUNDAY AT 1:00 P.M. MATINEE WEDNESDAY, SATURDAY, AND SUNDAY AT 2:00 P.M.

Comedy Dependence

The improv comedy troupe performs the first Friday of every month at the Creativity Center in Normal Heights. CREATIVITY CENTER, 4748 32ND STREET (JUST NORTH OF ADAMS AVE.), THROUGH DECEMBER 27. EVERY FRIDAY FROM 8:00 P.M. TO 10:00 P.M. FOR INFORMATION CALL 619-295-5177.

Driving Miss Daisy

When Alfred Uhry's 73-year-old grandmother totaled her Packard, and he was behind the wheel, an African named Hoke to be her driver. Beneath the surface plac-

idness of Southerners, neither trusted the other, yet Hoke, deaf, feared her for 25 years, and a bond developed. In Uhry's play, Daisie Venable qualifies for the Backlist Driver Hall of Fame, and Hoke Coleburn is a patient personified. In short scenes — some as they wonder how they work at all — their relationship evolves from mutual suspicion to gentle, simple love. The North Coast Rep's production makes the play a family affair. Harkback to the end of scenes, key moments in a life. Director Joe Powers cast splendidly. Katherine Frankner plays the Southern Jewish matron with grace and a rugged independence seemingly etched in stone. Antonio "T.J." Johnson gives Hoke a modest persistence (she must defer only to him). And, though you won't see it at first, each has an abundance of pride. In 90 interwoven minutes, the actors permit a different, more open, more loving self to grow out of their characters, and make and harmony — racial, religious, race name it — disappear. James Webb is solid as Daisy's son, Beadie, a man ragged between the Old and New South. Nancy Toddson's costumes make subtle points about time and place. And Mary Burnett's lattice and lavender set, which allows props to roll on and off, includes a symbolic circle in the rear: it could be a white wagon wheel or a new window.

Worth a try.

SAN DIEGO REPERTORY THEATRE, THROUGH DECEMBER 24, WEDNESDAY THROUGH SATURDAY AT 8:00 P.M. TUESDAY AND SUNDAY AT 1:00 P.M. MATINEE WEDNESDAY, SATURDAY, AND SUNDAY AT 2:00 P.M.

Dysfunctional Family Theatre

Midi Productions presents its third annual "anti-traditional holiday" program, one acts by Christopher Durang, Steve Martin,

and James Carey Kaufman. EXCHANGE ARTS THEATRE, 2323 BROADWAY, CORNER OF 23RD AND BROADWAY, SAN DIEGO, THROUGH DECEMBER 19, THURSDAY THROUGH SATURDAY AT 8:00 P.M. FOR INFORMATION CALL 619-255-5132.

Forever Plaid

The four harmonizers in search of plaid sport coats are in their third year at the Theatre in Old Town. Joseph Campbell urged anyone to "follow your bliss." Even if the tight harmonies of "50s" gay groups "aren't your particular bliss" (I needed a quite fit of Chris and Hendrix after hearing them), you've got to admit the Plaid follows their bliss. They dare to be square. They croon in lieu of having a life but put life into the greatest hits of *Your Hit Parade* (which crowned the most popular song of the '50s until Elvis drove it off the airwaves). Stuart Ross, who conceived, directed, and choreographed the original New York version, directed the Old Town production with the aim of endearing everything to everyone. The four performers — Leo Dagmar, Steve Gaudin, Rick Meads, and Bobby Smith — sing as well as any collection of Plaid's minor gripe: the opening night was crisp but made no distinction between where the rehearsed songs left off and the "spontaneous" actions began, everything felt rehearsed by the numbers. Terry O'Donnell plays an indelible piano and permits himself the occasional piece of always funny business. The set, which is either the Theatre in Old Town or a puppeteer where the Plaid got stuck, is a wacky grab for such a party show, though here Reisman's savvy lighting knows when to twinkle the brightest. *Worth a try.*

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Fruttakes

The Mira Mesa Theatre Guild's holiday show, written by Julian Witke, tells of a small Southern town's Christmas pageant complicated by an epidemic of chicken pox. MIRA MESA THEATRE GUILD, THROUGH DECEMBER 23, FRIDAY AND SATURDAY AND TUESDAY, DECEMBER 23 AND WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23 AT 7:00 P.M. MATINEE SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19 AT 1:00 P.M.

How the Grinch Stole Christmas

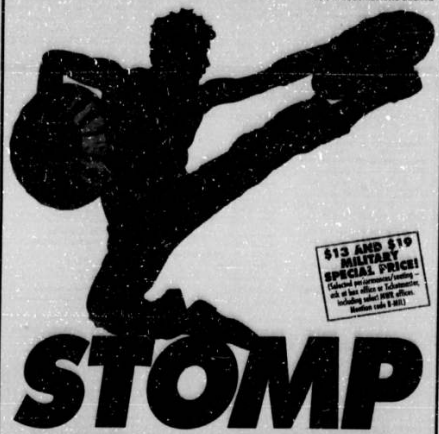
He's green. He's hairy as Bigfoot. He's put up with a lot of 53 years. And now the Grinch — his name synonymous with the attitude — wants to make Christmas over in Who-ville. In the Old Globe's new holiday musical, he's also fun. Guy Paul's Grinch slithers down the procession like Spider-Man. His tongue touches his chin, and does often, when he relishes loud intentions. And he raises a provoking question: "I want to stop this [i.e., glib holiday reveries] and now wonder why?" Timothy Mason's script, based on Ted Geisel's 1957 classic, could be too polished, but not Jack O'Brien's vivacious, hearty staging or the Globe's spectacular design work. John Lee Beatty's three-dimensional, cartoonish sets — snowbound Who-ville and Mr. Crumpet's pear-shaped peak — perform scenic choreography: parts intervene, like a Ro-buck's who's who, reforming in breakfast configurations. Robert Morgan's costumes for the pear-shaped Who's done. Don Lee Sparks heads the supporting cast as Old Max, the Grinch's new grow-up dog. The rest of the cast show-

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Deluxe Productions • Written by Danyel Franklin

Calendar MUSIC SCENE

The Recording Industry Has Nightmares about Guys Like Jesse

He also sells and rents concert videos that are "not exactly a licensed product."

Ipirated sound recordings" (bootlegs) cost the U.S. music industry approximately \$300 million a year, according to the RIAA, the Recording Industry Association of America, a trade organization whose members include record companies, manufacturers, distributors, and retailers. The RIAA is the agency that hands out gold and platinum record awards, as well as operates an increasingly aggressive anti-piracy unit that initiates both civil and criminal trials.

Based in Washington, with bureaus in New York, California, and four other states, the RIAA helped enact new statutes and penalties in 34 states, including California. The purported \$300 million loss comes from live recordings and unauthorized copies and transmissions of commercial releases, made ever easier by advancing technology (CD-R recordable discs, advanced portable tape decks and mixers, scanners, laser photography, Internet transmission, etc.). Five years ago, about half of the illegal recordings being sold in the U.S. were imports. The new federal backing has enabled the recording industry to team up with U.S. Customs agents to seize shipments of illegal imports, but now there's the World Wide Web.

Unauthorized material is available through Internet bulletin boards and online download centers. The RIAA contends that Internet companies like AudioNet, which allows users to download music from several hundred full-length albums, are violating the rights of record companies and performers. AudioNet received a cease-and-desist letter from the agency in March.

With no real legal precedent yet set, few on the Web seem worried. Web site www.madnet.org features its CD sale list with a disclaimer that reads, "These CDs are live concert recordings that are digitally enhanced and remixed for optimum listening pleasure. These are not bootlegs...these are import CDs...copyright laws vary in different countries."

Despite the occasional warehouse raid or noteworthy lawsuit, bootleg production and distribution networks are thriving. Domestically, boots are often sold or traded outright through ads in small press zines and neonated publica-

tions like *Goldmine* and *DISCoveries*. Live recordings are more popular and more widely circulated than illegally duplicated commercial releases. Audio concert tapes circulate heavily among fan clubs and tape-swapping networks. Tape swappers operate under a vaguely legal premise, with members of tape networks sending each other tape lists and then swapping blank tapes in return for filled tapes, with no money ever changing hands.

Local retail shops say that they don't want to invite store seizures or lawsuits by displaying and selling pirated recordings, but bootlegs are often in stores, just not in the same quantities or racks as prominently as they were a few years ago. I find bootleg LPs, CDs, or video tapes at nearly all of the stores I visit in late July. Nearly all are live recordings, interview discs, video concerts, and tape compilations. I find few products in shops that look like copies of commercial releases (it's not always easy to tell).

At a Hillcrest record store there are three Led Zeppelin vinyl concerts mixed in with the regular LPs. They're priced from \$13.98 to \$29.98 for a two-record set from Denmark 8/79. Some even have rating stickers — "mediocre quality," "scratched on one side," etc. The Pink Floyd boot, a live Wall concert, has nothing more than photocopy text for a cover, though it's priced at \$19.98. I ask the clerk what their policy is about buying bootlegs.

"Yeah, I'm willing to take a look," he says. "Let me turn it around. What are you trying to get for them?"

Five or six bucks sounds high to him. "I've got bootlegs that have been sitting around for a while. I don't know, I mean, we've paid seven bucks for a bootleg CD, but we don't pay much for albums."

"So CDs are better?"

"We can charge more for them. I sell more Pink Floyd than anything else for that kind of stuff. There's more people looking for that...bring some by and I'll take a look at them."

Over in North Park, I ask the guy behind the counter where I can find his live imports. He points out a wooden crate near the front counter where I find vinyl live shows and rarely collec-



Bootlegs mixed with legitimate recordings at a local shop

tions featuring the Beatles, Elvis, Todd Rundgren and the Naz, all priced around \$10, and none of them part of the artists' official catalogues. There are also several videos in a glass display case, including a Melissa Etheridge concert, that don't look at all like commercial releases.

At a shop near La Mesa, there are three vinyl Led Zeppelin boots displayed on a wall directly behind the counter, two with black-and-white photocopy covers and one with a full-color photo sleeve. I ask the clerk if he's worried about having them there.

"These are so old — and at this stage, a 25-year-old bootleg LP — I don't think anyone will do anything."

I ask if he's buying. "Are you, like, into doing this?" Not really, I just amassed a collection. "Yeah, if they're in good shape and stuff, bring them in...I'd definitely be interested. They do pretty well for us. The LPs — it's funny, three or four years ago you couldn't give this shit away — and now people are starting to pick back up on it. I'll put them up here and move one or two a week."

He also sells and rents concert videos that are "not exactly a licensed product." The videos have a return guarantee for the first seven days.

Do they all come from the same source? "Yeah, a guy out of L.A."

At a comic book and video store in Ocean Beach, there's a Beatles vinyl boot displayed on the wall. From a *Whisper to a Shout* there's no such album listed on the catalogue of Capitol Apple. For Jay, or anyone else who's ever put out an official Beatles LP. Reading the back of the jacket, there's a blurb that states, "For fan clubs only, not for sale." Within just a few blocks, a music store

has several Bob Dylan vinyl boots, like *Zim Zim Zamb*. I ask where to find live stuff and bootlegs. "Usually, they're just mixed in with the regular albums."

And their policy regarding buying bootlegs? "Well, as long as you're not a distributor. We'll buy from individuals, from their collections, if they have really good covers or if they're bands that are really popular."

Why wouldn't he buy from a distributor? "That's how you get in trouble. If someone has a whole lot, and they get busted, we don't want to be on their client list."

He says the store has never had a problem, adding that "it's mainly CDs they [the cops and lawyers] want."

Not necessarily, says Rich Horowitz, owner of Off The Record. When an RIAA rep browsed the shop — Horowitz was evasive about the date but indicated that it had been several years ago — Horowitz admitted, "I had a 20-year-old Beatles record in the store." He thinks again. "It may have been a Stones record.... They just confiscated the piece and said, 'Pull this stuff off the floor,' which we did. But it was never a big deal." He says there was never any written legal threat from either the RIAA or the Stones' record label. "It was real low key, and we just basically pulled everything."

Former OTR clerk Kurtis Strange has a different definition of "low key." "Currently owner of Entertainment Exchange, in OTR's former El Cajon boulevard location, Strange says, 'I remember Rich [Horowitz] getting in trouble.... They were threatening jail time, they were threatening big fines, like \$250,000 fines.'"

Horowitz says that there was never an instance where they were served legal papers or where nobody was arrested. He states that OTR's current

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Calendar MUSIC SCENE

store policy of "no bootlegs" is strictly enforced, adding that he'd rather have peace of mind than the extra money.

Dwane Dimock runs a home-based business, buying and selling pop culture memo-

Their policy regarding buying bootlegs?
"Well, as long as you're not a distributor."

abilia though the Internet, print ads, and at swap meets and consumer conventions. In 1983, before the Monkees TV shows were resurrected by MTV, Dimock had video copies of episodes that he advertised for sale in a Monkees fanzine (the estimates its circulation at around 500). Columbia, which was poised for the big Monkees relaunch, was not pleased.

"What happened was they sent me a cease-and-desist, and I didn't respond. So they sent me literally a 100-page packet using me for one million dollars. They had me go up to LA for some type of interrogation by [Columbia's lawyers]. They wanted me to bring all my tapes and copies and masters and a list of everybody I sold to and where I got it. So I drove up with three videotapes I told them were my masters. My customer list I don't keep track of that. She [the lawyer] says, 'Here's a piece of paper. When I come back I want to see names of people you got these from.' When she came back, all I'd written down was John. She said, 'What's this?' I said that's all I remember. She kind of got mad and she told me, 'I sure hope you come up with more stuff than that because we're going to sue you in San Diego in court.'"

He represented himself, thinking, he says, that having a lawyer would make it look as if he were hiding something. "It was an inquest where the judge was going to make a determination about whether it goes on to court." Also, if Columbia could win an injunction against Dimock, they'd be able to send marshals into his house to look for bootleg merchandise and manufacturing equipment.

"The judge asked me how many VCRs I had, and I said two or three...and he looked over at the lady and said, 'I thought you said this was a really big operation.' She said, 'Well, he's doing a lot of them.' And he [the judge] looked really disgruntled. He said, 'Why don't you guys step outside and settle this here now.' So we went outside the courtroom," she said. "Look, what if we do this? You pay \$500 and say you won't ever do any of these videos again." And I thought for about five seconds before saying,

"Okay." The case was dismissed.

"I never denied doing what I did. But they were wrong about the extent of it. I made a few copies and sold them to a few other Monkees fans, and they're all paranoid thinking I'm out to topple them and the entire marketplace... They actually thought I'd cost them a million dollars!"

Large-scale manufacturing

plants do have that sort of profit potential, according to Steven D'Onofrio at the RIAA. In June 1996, the group filed a copyright infringement suit against a CD production facility in Canoga Park. The case is still ongoing. One blank tape manufacturer, Mohammed Abdallah, was successfully sued in 1996 by A&M Records; its \$7 million judgment is the largest money award ever won by the RIAA (representing a member company).

Still on a roll last year, the group scored its largest ever seizure, in L.A.—over 200,000 alleged bootleg, pirate, and counterfeit CDs with an estimated value of \$6 million. Neal Schustack's West Coast Records had offered a catalog of 3000 live concerts. Many of the alleged bootlegs were confiscated from his home, his van, and from four rented storage units. He faces a possible five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

The local bootleg production community isn't as large or prolific as L.A.'s, but it's certainly active. This underground business operates in ways similar to the legitimate music industry: there are big and small distributors, one-stop, rack jobbers, traveling label reps (with truckloads of stock), technological innovators, marketing specialists, graphics departments, and buyers who demand more variety and higher quality than ever before.

The deals are often done very much in the open. Vendors at this summer's BeatleFair in Mission Valley had literally hundreds of unauthorized Beatles releases for sale. According to Brooke from Come Together (the fan club that runs the show), "The vendors are probably on their own. If we're showing it and not selling it, then they can't do anything to [the event organizers]. The first year, I think, we did tell them that you don't really want to have bootlegs there, but if you don't bring them, you're own your own."

With fans snapping the stuff up all around us, she adds, "Yeah, that's all I hear anyone say." With a minimum of searching, you can find audio tapes (and sometimes videos or practically any medium used to major concert that's taken place in San

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Calendar MUSIC SCENE

Diego over the past few years. At most every notable show, it's a pretty sure bet that someone's taping it and that they've got lots of friends and/or customers who want copies. For big con-

"I don't bootleg. I'm commissioned to provide an archival record of a performance."

certs like Pink Floyd's last stadium show in April 1994, there are competing versions available, from regular audience recordings to a DAT version, a tape dubbed directly off the soundboard and two different video editions shot by hand-held cameras.

Philips is proud of his top-of-the-line equipment and his encyclopedic archive. He's been known to buy tickets to a big act's entire tour, videotaping and videotaping each date. The camera is usually in his hat, the microphones mounted on his glasses, with other inputs and outputs wired in to his body into a sort of Robot on vest. High-end binocular mikes, Tascam mixers, fiber optic cables, a digital format translator, and a dual-channel microphone pre-amp. Ever on the lookout for more stealth, he talks a lot about things like whether switchable filters are better than battery packs with bias roll-off filters ("The switchable is easier to work"). He hires friends to tape shows he can't attend and sells the masters to others who produce and market copies.

"I've never made a retail sale with a tape," he says. "I don't bootleg. I'm commissioned to provide an archival record of a performance, which isn't illegal. What they do with the master, that's none of my business." "The one time I got caught," says Philips, "the guy running their sound was so impressed with the setup and the quality that he hired me to officially tape a few shows." He says he has "arrangements" with people who work at or run various local venues. "Giving him to get his stuff in, get the best spot, and get out of the place with his equipment — and his skill — intact. If I'd rather have the show bear out of me than have my equipment confiscated, I'm wearing five grand most of the time, and the tape might be worth even more."

"Pirate law" duplicates vintage albums onto tapes and CDs, as well as copying videos and rare discs. He buries his own CDs at home, has two dozen VCRs hooked together, and his film chain setup allows him to run 16mm and 35mm films direct to video as well. He works on a half-dozen different projects each week, including

photocopying color covers and duplicating original liner graphics, often in new size dimensions.

"With the first CD-R stuff, the burners added a two-second pause to the beginning of each track. So it was hard to copy something with continuous sound. Once I got it hooked into a Mac, I got a program called Toast that let me set the

pause to zero. There was still a little glitch where the laser doesn't track, so I got Adaptive Limb, which copies the whole disc at once instead of track by track." He sells his convincing-looking fakes at music and nostalgia trade shows and through ads in magazines. "I don't announce it, but most people know they're fakes. People still want them. And I sell them cheaper than an original would cost them, even though my start looks and sounds just as good."

The recording industry has nightmares about guys like Jesse. The group sees itself as being on the front line of the fight for mass rights. "We have led an extraordinarily effective campaign to stamp out record counterfeiting and piracy here in the United States," maintain RIAA chairman Jason Braunman, "effectively preventing CD piracy, greatly reducing cassette counterfeiting... [and] expanding the marketplace for U.S.-recorded music."

Pirate Jesse scoffs. "They hardly put a dent in the business. People like me, we're Robin Hoods. People want this stuff, and the record companies don't put it out. They don't know how, or they're too big and complicated to do small press runs that are profitable. Then [they] charge too much for CDs. They're evil and all that money and music should be spread around." He laments the current restrictions and cracks down to Prohibition. "Bootlegs are like moonshine," he says. "Everyone wants it, so of course a lot of people are willing to provide it. Everyone's happy about getting a huge profit somebody who already has more money than God decides to run it for everyone."

Is he afraid of ever getting caught?

"If I do, it'll be like Laponie. They'll get me for income tax or something. If I only do it for another couple of years and then get out. I'll be set for a long time."

New Year's Eve



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The Southwestern Jazz Masterworks Orchestra (California Center for the Arts, Sebastopol, January 20, 8 p.m., 340 North Escondido Boulevard, Escondido. 800-988-4253)

FEBRUARY

Fred March (A222) (Hollywood Blvd. and 4th Street, Thursday, February 4, 7:30 p.m., 1008 West Street, La Jolla. 619-454-9872)

The Bitters (Cobalt, Thursday, February 4, 8:30 p.m., 2501 Kettner Boulevard, midtown. 619-232-4355)

The String Cheese Incident (Jelly Up Town, Saturday, February 4, 143 South La Jolla Avenue, La Jolla. 619-481-8140 or 619-220-8497)

Downs (Cobalt, Sunday, February 7, 8:30 p.m., 2501 Kettner Boulevard, midtown. 619-232-4355)

Bill Walker (East County Performing Arts Center, Wednesday, February 10, 7:30 East Main Street, El Cajon. 619-440-2277)

June Borer (4th and B, Friday, February 12, 345 S Street, downtown. 619-220-8497 or 619-231-4343)

Big Sandy and His Fly-Rite Boys (A222 and the Hair Club of Commerce, Cobalt, Saturday, February 13, 8:30 p.m., 2501 Kettner Boulevard, midtown. 619-232-4355)


The St. Valentine's Day Massacre and Downtown (1162, Cobalt, Sunday, February 14, 8:30 p.m., 2501 Kettner Boulevard, midtown. 619-232-4355)

"Brazil Carnival '99" with **Santitas** (Jelly Up Town, Saturday, February 14, 9 p.m., 120 Broadway, downtown. 760-627-7770)

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La Baites (Southwestern Plaza Center, Saturday, February 20, 8 p.m., USCO Campus, La Jolla. 619-534-8497)

The Barker Kops (A175, Cobalt, Wednesday, February 24, 8:30 p.m., USCO Campus, La Jolla. 619-534-8497)



Cherry Popper Daddies, December 18, Los Angeles

Ray Clark (787) (Pony Center for the Performing Arts, Sunday, March 7, 5 p.m., 15498 English Road, Poway. 619-748-0505)

Calendula (4th and B, Friday, March 26, 8 p.m., 345 S Street, downtown. 619-220-8497 or 619-231-4343)

APRIL

AB Allstar Show (East County Performing Arts Center, Wednesday, April 14, 7:30 East Main Street, El Cajon. 619-440-2277)

"W Sync" (Cinemark, Thursday, April 15, 8 p.m., 5200 campus, College Ave. 619-720-8497)

The Chieftans (8382) (California Center for the Arts, Friday, April 30, 8 p.m., 340 North Escondido Boulevard, Escondido. 800-988-4253)

MAY

Art Garfunkel (East County Performing Arts Center, Sunday, May 7, 7:30 East Main Street, El Cajon. 619-440-2277)

Backstreet Synthesizer (California Center for the Arts, Saturday, May 22, 8 p.m., 340 North Escondido Boulevard, Escondido. 800-988-4253)

The Oak Ridge Boys (788) (East County Performing Arts Center, Friday, May 23, 7:30 East Main Street, El Cajon. 619-440-2277)

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Calendar

MUSIC SCENE

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Go-Go Club DJ live. Live music and dancing. 7th floor. 7th floor. 7th floor.

Humpy Disco Wednesday. Live music and dancing. 7th floor. 7th floor. 7th floor.

11 Indie Saturday. Live music and dancing. 7th floor. 7th floor. 7th floor.

Kin Kats DJ live. Live music and dancing. 7th floor. 7th floor. 7th floor.

Klub Saturday. Live music and dancing. 7th floor. 7th floor. 7th floor.

1990s New wave and classic. Live music and dancing. 7th floor. 7th floor. 7th floor.

Old Models Friday. Live music and dancing. 7th floor. 7th floor. 7th floor.

Pandora Friday. Live music and dancing. 7th floor. 7th floor. 7th floor.

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NOTE

By Gina Arnold

Unwritten Law may well be one of San Diego's most popular bands, which is why they're playing three — count 'em, three — nights here this week. But despite existing within much the same time frame, they're haven't attracted the kind of media attention that Rocket from the Crypt, Drive Like Jehu, STP, and even Lucy's Fur Coat were given in this area.

Since Unwritten Law's inception in 1992, it has slipped between the media's cracks, remaining blissfully unattached to both the post-Nirvana alt-rock scene and the cursed "San Diego: The Next Seattle" epithet that has dogged other major label acts.

As a survival tactic this has served Unwritten Law well, but its low profile in the media is also partly a class issue: The Poway-based band simply doesn't have the collegiate following of Rocket, nor — despite

signing to Epic early in its career — does it have the valid, commercial gloss of STP.

Unwritten Law recently turned to Interscope to release its self-titled third LP. The band is a brotherly version of Fugazi, dumber down for the 'burbs. Like Fugazi, Unwritten Law's records contain lots of dissonance, tempo changes, and buzzsaw guitar distortion, but their lyrics are more personal than political. Let's just say the first person pronoun crops up a lot more often on Law's Blue Room than it does on Fugazi's Red Medicine.

and though singer Scott Reese is not, thankfully, as sexist and degenerate as many a hardcore speedmetal singer, he is also not God's gift to the written word.

UNWRITTEN LAW, "Cross Bar and Grill," Friday, December 15, 8 p.m.; Saturday, December 16, 8 p.m.; Sunday, December 17, 8 p.m. 619-436-1790 or 619-235-8497, 810.

THE PRISONERS, 7th Floor. Live music and dancing. 7th floor. 7th floor. 7th floor.

PLAN B, DJ live. Live music and dancing. 7th floor. 7th floor. 7th floor.

RICK'S Thursday. Live music and dancing. 7th floor. 7th floor. 7th floor.

SEVILLE Thursday. Live music and dancing. 7th floor. 7th floor. 7th floor.

SUBBIE DJ live. Live music and dancing. 7th floor. 7th floor. 7th floor.

SUN-KIT DJ live. Live music and dancing. 7th floor. 7th floor. 7th floor.

THE SOCIAL CLUB DJ live. Live music and dancing. 7th floor. 7th floor. 7th floor.

THE SOCIAL CLUB DJ live. Live music and dancing. 7th floor. 7th floor. 7th floor.

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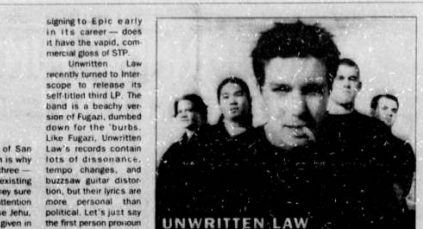
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UNWRITTEN LAW

and **One-Hit Wonder** open. (To hear a sample of Unwritten Law, call 619-235-8797, wait for the prompt, then punch in ext. 4261.)

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THE SOCIAL CLUB DJ live. Live music and dancing. 7th floor. 7th floor. 7th floor.

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UNWRITTEN LAW

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UNWRITTEN LAW

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BOOGIE NIGHTS

Monday, Dec. 21

Rockin' Aces

Swing Night

Agua Dulce

Latin Jazz

Freddie A & the Swing Machine

Whirl of Swing Dance lessons 7PM

Polka Dot X-mas Party

Tuesday, Dec. 22

Papa's Jazz Supper Club

with The Glen Fisher Trio

Thursday, Dec. 31

Join us for Papa's New Year's Eve Celebration 1999!

Boogie down to the funky soulful sounds of Clyde's Ride

Live Music-DJ-Dancing all night! Champagne & Party favors at Midnight! Just \$10 at the door. Free admission to the club with dinner. Call 646-7272 for reservations.

Friday, Dec. 18

Agua Dulce

Latin Jazz

Freddie A & the Swing Machine

Whirl of Swing Dance lessons 7PM

Christmas Crunch

Proportions, or relationships for that matter, are tricky.

The end-of-the-year plep has begun, and the unpling must be hasty.

Psycho, remade in color for a new generation unable to discern shapes and forms in black-and-white, scarcely merits discussion, but not because it degrades the work of the Master. The 1960 original, already sullied by two sequels and a prequel, was below-average Hitchcock and several better films of his have been remade before now—*Dial M for Murder* and *Rear Window* just this year—without undermining or overshadowing the originals. (Hitchcock himself remade his *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, and he alone showed improvement.) But *Cia* Van Sant, all too much at home in the mainstream since *To Die For* and *Good Will Hunting*, raised some eyebrows when he sent up a publicity balloon with the information—or misinformation, as we would soon see—that the new *Psycho* was to be a shot-for-shot replication of the old. That hot-air bag, even for those of us who never got around to committing the original to memory, is squashed beneath the

butts of Viggo Mortensen and Anne Heche, dashed by the death's-door visions of William H. Macy. Other minor modernizations—Vince Vaughn's unmistakable masturbation at the periphrase into the motel bathroom, Julianne Moore's ever-present Walkman—are no more worth mentioning than they were worth doing.

Despite these little detours on the tracing paper, Van Sant overall adheres close enough to Hitchcock to hamstring the normally free-wheeling Hong Kong cinematographer, Chris Doyle, who may well wonder why he was summoned. Even the color, with nothing on which to model itself, is pallid and dull. Pointlessness, pointlessness, everywhere you look. And when you know what's coming, the old Bernard Herrmann musical score (adapted by Danny Elfman) sounds more overwrought than ever. Still, the movie in its slavishness hardly help but be better constructed and paced than the run-of-the-mill slasher stuff of today, as well as better judged in its dishing-out of gore. Mortensen, Moore, and Macy all bring

REVIEW DUNCAN SHEPHERD

Calendar MOVIES



You've Got Mail

individuality to their parts, and the performance of a thickened and coarsened Chad Everett as a hail-fellow Mr. Moneybags is the nearest thing to a shock that the movie can deliver. But "interpretation," as put a nice face on it, is on a short leash here. To liken the undertaking, as the filmmaker,

might wish, to a new production of *Harold*, or some such repertory staple, would be a bit off the mark. A new production of *The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* would be closer. You've Got Mail, in sharper contrast, is a worthwhile remake and update of *The Shop Around the Corner*.

ner, the 1940 Ernst Lubitsch comedy (antiquated even at the time) about two lonely-hearts pen pals who don't know that they already know and don't like each other. Nora Ephron, the director and co-writer along with her sister Delia, has neatly whisked our secret correspondents from the old

world of stamps and envelopes to the new world of Internet chat rooms and E-mail, and has transformed these former Budapest shop clerks into Upper West Side rival proprietors, respectively, of the latest link in a superstore chain called Foodbooks and of a mom-and-pop (or more precisely, mom-and-daughter) children's bookstore called, in salute to Lubitsch, the Shop Around the Corner. The transformation is total. Ephron, or both Ephrons, good company for one another and for us, have gone out into our own world and come back with a lot to say about it: not only about the computer versus the typewriter and the sprawling corporation versus the vanishing independent, but about Starbucks Coffee, *The Godfather*, cash-only checkout lines, TV talk shows, whatever comes up in the course of the day.

She—Nora alone—is not the strongest directorial personality, swaying to the changing beat of the pop songs on the soundtrack, bowing down to the Hollywood "A" list, applying the occasional drop of oil to a smooth-running commercial machine. The end product has more in common than he might care to admit with the dreaded specter of Foodbooks. Remakes are Foodbooks, or same as, and pop songs on the soundtrack are also Foodbooks. And in *Widowhood* or together again, Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan—whose ain't-I-cutie routine is becoming less becoming, if possible, as she approaches forty—are Foodbooks again. (Ephron is not one to clomp down on her erstwhile *Sleepless in Seattle* co-stars.) Look, Meg, you're just sitting

at the keyboard all alone at home and typing. You shouldn't be making faces and wiggling your head as if you're playing ragtime in a honky-tonk.) Beneath the gloss, beneath the pragmatism, beneath the compromise, however, are a beating heart, an alert eye, a sharp tongue. The distinct stages through which the romantic relationship progresses, particularly the last stage, when the straining horses smell a happy ending, may not be in ideal proportion. But proportions, or relationships for that matter, are tricky; and the mere marking of stages—and more than just two of them—lifts the relationship above Hollywood formula into the realm of cosmic complexity.

The Prince of Egypt, in essence an animated remake of Cecil B. DeMille's *The Ten Commandments*, with Val Kilmer supplying the voice of Chadt Heston, and Ralph Fiennes supplying that of Yul Brynner, is religious kitsch for the kiddies, the arctic equivalent of *My Very First Golden Bibles* (The Read'n Grow[sic] Picture Bible), except that the illustrations move and the words intermittently sing. "Who knows what miracles? You can achieve! When you believe! Someone you will! (Somehow you will what? Achieve who knows what miracles? Know what miracles you can achieve? Sun around in circles!) There can be no great learn in the thing, one would think. It's never too early to introduce Junior to the tastelessness, vulgarity, schmaltz, simplification, cheapening, and pandering in the popular culture around him. And the well-strewn adult will enjoy many a sophisticated snicker. Even he may be

able to button it up for the plagues, the parting of the Red Sea, and especially the early "dream scene" in the flattened perspective of Egyptian tomb paintings and bas-reliefs.

Star Trek: Insurrection, or *Star Trek: Insurrection*, or anyway the ninth installment in the *Star Trek* series, sets up a clear-cut battle of beautiful Good against ugly Evil (Daniel Hugh Kelly, the leader of the good guys, bears a striking resemblance in looks and in manner to a younger William Shatner), and then it mucks up the conflict with fan-talk gibberish, technological hocus-pocus, indifferent action scenes, Treklike in-jokes, and a self-destructive penchant for tomfoolery: the captain of the starship gets through to his running-amok android by engaging him in a Gilbert-and-Sullivan singalong. I used to be a fan of the series—the film series, not so much the TV series, and never this *Next Generation* crew. (Jonathan Frakes, who also directed, Patrick Stewart, Brent Spiner, et al.) For those who still can't get enough of it, this could be the cure.

A Simple Plan, a too-many-crooks crime thriller, tells what happens when three men on the trail of a fox in the snow come upon a crashed plane with a dead pilot and a duffel of \$4.4 million in cash. It's the American Dream in a gym bag. The cracks-in-the-ice sequence of events is involving enough on the what-happens-next level. And it attains something approximating eternal virtue (sometimes called common knowledge) in the spectacle of ordinary people muddily revising their moral positions under the gravitational pull of a large mass of money. And the characterization by Billy Bob

Thornton of a rustic chucklehead—duct-taped glasses frames, yellowed teeth, plastered hair—is uncommonly, perhaps unprecedentedly, detailed, shaded, multidimensional, not just one dumb thing after another. Other than that, the movie is nothing much to shout about, and any raised voices you may be hearing are a measure of the increasing rarity and unfamiliarity of lifelike crime films. Comparisons with *Fargo*, though they can only hurt, are difficult to avoid. The Midwest. Snow. Funny hats. A pregnant heroine, if she can be called one. (Bridget Fonda, shot in startlingly softer focus than anyone else in the picture.) An escalating body count. And was Billy Bob Thornton paying the conscious homage with his rapid repetition of the word "dead" in his first few seconds on screen? (Then, too, there's the similarity of its local release pattern, an exclusive engagement at the Mission Valley 20 before a wider expansion.) Besides which, director Sam Raimi is a friend and sometime collaborator of the Coens, though nowhere in his personal collection of live-action comic books (*The Evil Dead*, *Daredevil*, *The Quick and the Dead*, etc.) has there been a hint of the new-found ambition on exhibit here. Nor, it would appear, has there been adequate practice for the "powerful" climax. It pleads rather than compels.

MOVIE LISTINGS

All reviews are by Duncan Shepherd. Priorities are indicated by one to five stars and antipathies by the black spot. Unrated movies are for use unreviewed.

American History X—Mawkish and dogmatically vicious cycle-of-violence lesson around a high school skinhead (Edward Furlong) and the older brother (Edward Norton) who has been his dad and mentor and who now comes out of prison a changed man. In flashback, Norton is afforded a broad platform and a lot of rope, and he spins out the neo-Nazi party line with great conviction, and against fierce opposition (Ed Blott Gould), and in great contrast to the extreme unconviction of the neighborhood *Furber* (Stacy Keach). It is not terribly reassuring that his turnaround behind bars comes about because he is so much more principled than his Aryan brethren, who will swoop in dealing drugs with Hispanics. A gang party in the showers, as brutal as it is banal, suffers him up for the following table-for-thought from his old high-school principal: "Has anything you've done, made your life better?" Tony Kere, the director as well as photographer, most notably subtle with his displeasure over the final form of his work. The viewer, without knowing or caring to know the details of the case, can't blame "no. Much less can he exonerate him. Beverly D'Angelo, Artery Brooks, Frits Bak, 1998. MISSION VALLEY 18, LA PLAZA 12, LA ESCENA 0000, UA HORTON PLAZA 14

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"this picture is headed for my ten best list this year. everyone who asks me what's a good picture to see, the one i name is *waking ned devine*."

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332 San Diego Reader (December 17, 1998)

San Diego Reader December 17, 1998 **125**

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Winter Harvest Salad with Citrus Vinaigrette, Cranberry Vinaigrette, and Popover Cream Dressing • Grilled Eggplant and Green Bean Salad • Wild Rice Salad with Smoked Duck and Ginger Vinaigrette • Moroccan Christmas Salad with Pomegranate & Tangerines • Fresh Seasonal Fruit • Grilled Vegetable Platter with Chipotle Dip • House Smoked Meats and Fish to Include: Beef Tenderloin, Chicken and Pork Loin, Trout, Mahi Mahi and Salmon

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**Calendar
RESTAURANTS**

NORTH INLAND

ANTHONY'S RANCHO BERNARDO
11648 Anas Place off Bernardo Center Drive, Rancho Bernardo, 619-451-2070. One of the best features of the handsome branch of Anthony's is that it accepts reservations. This is a rare find of dining around until your name is called. The dining room also tends to be less frantic than the downstairs branches. Good fish and chips, seafood salads, broiled fish. Fast service. Open daily for lunch and dinner. Low to expensive.

ASHOKA THE GREAT 9474 Black Mountain Road (off Miramar Road), 619-495-9749. Seek out this splendid Indian restaurant. The setting is lovely, the service excellent, and the food first-rate. Don't overlook the tandoori dishes. Ten vegetable platters and six rice dishes are available for vegetarians. An all-you-can-eat lunch buffet is served daily. It's worth the drive to get this excellent food. Open daily, lunch and dinner. Low.

BOLSA VIETNAMESE CUISINE RESTAURANT 9225 Mira Mesa Boulevard, Suite 118, 619-493-3663. Try this fine Vietnamese eatery in an energetic, casual setting. Try a \$12.95 menu, more over \$7.50. Especially good weekends. Open daily for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Some menu items are served late.

CHIEF AND VIETNAMESE CUISINE 16769 Bernardo Center Drive, Suite 10, Rancho Bernardo, 619-485-1231. Governor Vietnamese food is available here. Menu offers 60 items, many with French influences. Good here are chicken, beef, fresh fish with lemon grass, tangy and sour soup, egg rolls, and Thai sausage beef. Chieu Anh enhances the selection of fine dining menu in Rancho Bernardo. Closed Monday. Open for lunch Tuesday through Friday, dinner Tuesday through Sunday. Low.

EL BUCOCHO Rancho Bernardo Inn, 17550 Bernardo Oaks Drive, Rancho Bernardo, 619-475-9300 or 619-487-1611. Back of the house and food are memorable. Located on a golf course, this is a casual dining room produces some of the best meals in North County. All you can eat buffet lunch Sunday. Open nightly for dinner. Expensive.

THE FRENCH MARKET GRILLE 15717 Bernardo Heights Parkway at Potomac Road, Rhapsody Shopping Center, Rancho Bernardo, 619-487-8005. Don't miss this small but chic French restaurant. The chef, originally from Paris, produces superb French cuisine. Menu changes monthly, but here available are soups, order lunch, and eggs and veg. Breakfast served Sunday. Lunch and dinner served daily. Expensive. (Call for directions to the restaurant.)

ISLAND BOY GRILLE 10806 Pacific Heights Boulevard, San Marcos, 619-452-7788. If you're watching the Hawaiian with South Pacific food, you'll love the cooking here. Best bet: Kalua pig, Kalua shrimp, mahi mahi, tempura. Open daily. Low.

RESTAURANT EUROPA 9379 Mira Mesa Boulevard, 619-495-3252. If you love German food or would like to try it, here's the restaurant. Menu balls with potatoes, pork steak with red cabbage and mushroom, rolled beef with potato, and other dishes. A separate bar room serves that German beer and food. Open daily, two floors, 10 to 11 p.m. Closed Monday. Lunch, Tuesday through Friday, dinner Tuesday through Sunday. Moderate.

SANDRACAFE 2229 Mira Mesa Boulevard, 760-488-2722. Cuts, lobster, and other dishes are boiled with potatoes and served on buttery paper. A muller and bread are provided, but no utensils or plates. The food is cooked to order, fresh, but not impressive. Call for directions. Because the cafe is located in industrial area, Open daily, continuous service, some seafood menu lunch and dinner. Low (for appetizers) to moderate.

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Buy any Dinner entree or: Sushi combination dinner (\$10. max value) Lunch or Brunch (\$5. max value) and get another entree of equal or lesser value FREE. Not valid with any other offer or special. 15% gratuity will be added to the total before discount. One coupon per couple. No to-go orders.

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5:00 PM Screen TV • 11 PM • \$14.95
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INCLUDES COMPLIMENTARY CHAMPAGNE, EGG NOG (with or without brandy spike), SOFT DRINKS, COFFEE

Adults: \$29.95 • Seniors: \$26.95
Kids (age 3-10): \$19.95 • Kids (under age 3): FREE

VALIDATED 3-HOUR SELF-PARKING
Barnett's Grand Cafe
located in the Embassy Suites Hotel San Diego Bay
601 Pacific Highway, San Diego, CA 92101
For reservations (highly recommended): 619-239-2400, ext. 7015

GRAND OPENING
GINZA-SUSHI
at
La Jolla Village Square (near AMC 12 Theatre)

ALL YOU CAN-EAT AND DRINK
11 AM-2 PM
Sunday Champagne Sushi Buffet
\$10.95 • \$5.95
\$100 Off Buffet
With this ad • Adults only
Hazard Center location only

Dinner for Two \$12.95
Includes: Miso Soup, House Salad, and Rice
Special California Roll, Chicken Teriyaki, Shrimp & Vegetable Tempura, and Mixed Sashimi (5 pcs.)
With this ad, Expires 12/23/98
(Available at La Jolla and Hazard Center locations.)

Dinner for Two \$12.95
One entree per person. Choose from two entrees:
• Lobster Chops • Mongolian Beef • Beef Steaks
Vegetables • King Pao Chicken • Chicken La Main
• Bangon Vegetables • Shrimp with Lobster Sauce
Served with egg roll, fried wonton, soup, steamed or fried rice, and soft drink. Dinner or to-go. Not valid with other offers. No substitutions. With this ad, Expires 12/23/98
(Available at Regency Rd. and Hazard Center locations.)

GINZA-SUSHI
JAPANESE CUISINE & SUSHI BAR
7510 Hazard Center Dr. • (619) 297-6282
(before Wheelhouse Records)
8657 Villa La Jolla Drive, Ste. 125
(619) 550-0861
(near AMC 12 Theatre)

SHANGHAI
MANDIN CUISINE SINCE 1974
7510 Hazard Center Dr.
(before Wheelhouse Records)
7770 Regency Rd. • (619) 452-6888
(La Jolla Colony)

VALENTINO'S 11829 Rancho Bernardo Road, San Marcos, Rancho Bernardo, 619-451-2080. Located in a shopping center that will remind you of Beverly Hills, Valentino's has a lovely interior, good salads and pasta, and fine entrees which include chicken Vesuvio and homemade cannelloni. A separate room holds a pizzeria. Open daily. Moderate.

LA JOLLA

ALFONSO'S OF LA JOLLA 1231 Prospect Street, 619-451-2332. Both the patio and the dining room are lovely, crowded, noisy, and festive. The house specialty is carne asada, and the Quesadilla Mercedes (liver over a quesadilla) is outstanding. Extensive menu offers combination plates, chiles rellenos, oysters and steaks. Very crowded on weekends. Open daily for dinner. Lunch Friday through Sunday. Low to moderate.

ASPEN MILLS BAKERY AND CAFE 1044 Wall Street Suite 1, 619-251-3500. Formerly Windy Aspen, ElB has the same menu with additional items. If you are an early diner, you can see the early at 6:00 a.m. beautiful view. Open daily, 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

GEORGE'S AT THE COVE 1250 Prospect Street, 619-454-4244. The always excellent George's, with its beautiful fish and meat menu, boasts doing levels in its ocean-view site. The first level is the dining room, with full menu and gourmet lunch and dinner. Above the cafe and on top of the terrace, which is romantic, on balcony nights. The Cafe and Terrace offer spectacular views, light music for lunch, and extensive menu for dinner. All three levels are open daily for lunch and dinner. Five Star Diner, with its five courses and price of \$36, is one of the best bargains in the city for gourmet food. Call for exact hours. Expensive. George's gourmet room, low to expensive, other rooms.

KISUYA JAPANESE RESTAURANT 1250 Prospect Street, La Jolla, 619-454-8022. Located one block up, this small cafe offers an excellent sushi bar and many cooked Japanese specialties. Open daily. Low to moderate.

HARRY'S COFFEE SHOP 745 Grand Avenue, 619-454-7381. This landmark coffee shop is noted for its breakfast, served from opening to closing. The bottomless pancakes, varieties of waffles made from scratch, and egg combinations are all generous and well prepared. One of the few places where you can still get hot caramel or cream of wheat. Harry's also serves freshly squeezed orange juice and exotic varieties of freshly ground coffee, as well as specialty coffee drinks. Open daily, breakfast and lunch, from 5:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Low.

LA TAVOLA 808 Grand Avenue, 619-459-9750. This pleasant Italian eatery provides a loving and festive atmosphere. The pastas are delightful and so are the salads. The restaurant specializes in homemade pasta and special. Special dishes available with advance notice. A good place for casual dining. Some menu lunch and dinner. Open daily for lunch and dinner. Low to moderate.

MANHATTAN OF LA JOLLA 7766 Fay Avenue, Empress Hotel, 619-554-1444. If you're searching for a restaurant that provides a sense of gusto as well as good New York-style Italian food, then try Manhattan of La Jolla. Of the many restaurants in La Jolla, this one is a winner. Franchisee, highly experienced.

MEYERBERG NEAR BAYVIEW 10000 La Jolla Village Square, Suite 101, 1132 Prospect Street, 619-454-0771. The room has been re-decorated at a cost of \$1.2 million. It's dazzling. However, the tonight dinner only \$15.50 for pasta, soup, and salad, price from \$14.00 for pasta, soup, and salad. If you can afford it, Open daily, breakfast, lunch, dinner. Dinner, expensive.

OCKAN KITCHEN 1525 La Jolla Boulevard, 619-459-3993. The dishes in this Mandarin and Cantonese restaurant contain no MSG, nor are there

**Online
Restaurant
Coupons!**

These restaurants have valuable coupons on the Reader's Web site.
© Indicates at least one North County location.

- The Amigo Spot, Kings Inn** **Torta lunch only \$3.95**
Asagoo **Pizza for \$5.99**
Bahia Cafe **Prime rib buffet \$12.95**
Berta's **Free appetizer**
Boat House Restaurant **Free hummus shrimp cocktail**
Brasserie La Costa **Complimentary appetizer**
Broken Yolk Cafe **\$2 off breakfast or lunch**
Buffalo John's **2 for 1 lunch or dinner**
Cafe Appassionato **Free pastry with coffee**
Calypto Cafe **Free sandwich Monday dinner**
Caves Bar & Grill **2 for 1 brunch**
Casa Marica **Dinner for two \$9.95**
Chateau Orleans **2 for 1 Cuban/Creole entree**
Chiba Japanese Food & Sushi **\$9.95 off entire food bill**
Chopman Afghan Cuisine **\$5.00 off lunch/dinner**
Costco Bar & Grill **\$2 off entree**
Don Chay **\$5.00 off dinner**
Fairouz Cafe & Gallery **\$3-\$5 off lunch/dinner**
Firehouse Beach Cafe **\$5.00 off dinner**
The French Patisserie Shop **Dinner for two \$19.98**
Ginza-Sushi **Social dinner for two \$12.95**
The Good Egg **Free breakfast or lunch**
Greek Islands Cafe **Dinner for two \$9.99**
Greek Village Restaurant **\$5 Greek dinner**
Harborside Bar & Grill **2 for 1 lunch**
Jake Joint Cafe **Complimentary dessert**
La Tavola **\$5 off total food bill**
Marrakesh **\$10 off Moroccan cuisine**
Miko's **1/2 off entree**
Monocroquis **20% off entire bill**
The Old Owl **2 for 1 dinner**
Papa's Place at Papa Jack's **2 for 1 lunch or dinner**
Passage to India **Free dinner**
Paragona **\$5.00 off Argentine tapa menu**
Peking Dynasty **Lunch buffet \$4.25**
Pizza Nova **Dinner for two only \$11.99**
Ragis' Pizzeria **2 for 1 entree**
Red Sea Ethiopian **Free vegetarian lunch**
Santitas **Pizza or burrito, 2 for \$9.99**
Seda's **2 for 1 dinner or lunch**
Sevilly **40% off Spanish tapas**
Shanghai Mandarin **Dinner for two \$12.95**
Shelly's **Free dinner**
Sportmen's Seafood **Live local lobster \$8.95 lb.**
Star of India **\$5.00 off entree**
Su Casa **2 for 1 dinner**
Taco's Place at Papa Jack's **\$5.00 off lunch or dinner**
Tao's Mexican **2 for 1 dinner**
Tony's on the Bay **One free dessert item**
Zena's Mediterranean Grill **Free calamari appetizer**
Free hummus & pita bread

www.sdreader.com

STEP UP TO FINE DINING!
AND WE WILL
BUY YOUR ENTRÉE

Bollitine
454-2222
8008 Girard Avenue, La Jolla • Upstairs, corner of Prospect & Girard
www.sdro.com/bollitine

FREE LUNCH or DINNER ENTRÉE
(From Sunday-Thursday)
up to \$12 off

When a second course of equal or greater value is purchased, this valid with \$19.95 Early Bird Special dinner. Limits from 5:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Expires 12/30/96. Taxes & 12% gratuity extra. Please make reservations.

Traditional Italian pasta & pizza
Ocean view dining & fresh seafood
www.sdro.com/bollitine

#1 Bombay
EXOTIC CUISINE OF INDIA
The Ultimate Indian Restaurant

Thank You for Voting Us #1 Indian Restaurant

San Diego's #1 Indian restaurant. Bombay takes Indian cuisine to a new level. The Best Indian restaurant in So. Calif.

ALL YOU CAN EAT
Lunch Buffet Special \$7.98 • Monday Dinner Buffet \$9.98

1075 La Jolla Village Drive • 454-2222 • www.bombayrestaurant.com

Come try the best coffee!
Also check out our gift items!

Drop by our new café in Mission Valley and try our award-winning coffee, winner of the Northwest Baking Competition. After one sip you'll see why we're the best! Come in and try our assorted pastries, breads and desserts and for lunch try our Paninis, soups and salads. Open M-F 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Sat. 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

3011 Camino Del Este • 454-2970
taking 1.8 between 90 and 163, turn to the left on the Burger

FREE PASTRY
with the purchase of any of our coffee drinks. Expires 12/30/96.

COME ENJOY OUR PRIME RIB
BUFFET EXTRAVAGANZA!

Saturday night is Prime Rib Night at the Bahia Cafe. Feast on our tender Roast Prime Rib of Beef carved to your order, a colorful salad bar, slow-baked potatoes and garden-fresh vegetables.

Available 5:30-9:00 p.m.

BAHIA Cafe
CALL FOR RESERVATIONS
535-7635

At the Bahia Hotel • 998 W. Mission Bay Drive

Calendar RESTAURANTS

P.F. CHANG'S CHINA RESTAURANT
1401 San Diego Mission Rd. • (619) 584-1836
[Corner of Rancho Mission & S.D. Mission Road near the stadium]
Grand Opening Celebration • Saturday, December 19
50% Off Sushi & Japanese Food
Saturday, December 19, only. Excludes beverages. With this ad.

GO TO GREECE & PARK FREE!
Dinner \$9.99!
for 2
Choose from our fabulous dinner platters. Gyros, chicken breast, spinach pie, grape leaves, shish kabob or combo. All include Greek salad and pita. \$9.99 daily after 4 p.m. (Sun. & holidays \$12.99)

SEAPORT VILLAGE
Harbor Dr. & Pacific Hwy.
On the boardwalk at the water's edge
939-5216

GRAND OPENING FLAVOR THAI RESTAURANT
Authentic Thai and Vegetarian Cuisine
Lunch Specials starting at \$4.35
Served with rice. Excludes alcohol. Excludes 12/30/96

50% OFF Dinner Entrée
with the purchase of second dinner entrée of equal or greater value. Not valid on 12/30/96 or holidays. Expires 12/30/96

CHIDA JAPANESE FOOD & SUSHI
1401 San Diego Mission Rd. • (619) 584-1836
[Corner of Rancho Mission & S.D. Mission Road near the stadium]
Grand Opening Celebration • Saturday, December 19
50% Off Sushi & Japanese Food
Saturday, December 19, only. Excludes beverages. With this ad.

GO TO GREECE & PARK FREE!
Dinner \$9.99!
for 2
Choose from our fabulous dinner platters. Gyros, chicken breast, spinach pie, grape leaves, shish kabob or combo. All include Greek salad and pita. \$9.99 daily after 4 p.m. (Sun. & holidays \$12.99)

SEAPORT VILLAGE
Harbor Dr. & Pacific Hwy.
On the boardwalk at the water's edge
939-5216

GRAND OPENING FLAVOR THAI RESTAURANT
Authentic Thai and Vegetarian Cuisine
Lunch Specials starting at \$4.35
Served with rice. Excludes alcohol. Excludes 12/30/96

50% OFF Dinner Entrée
with the purchase of second dinner entrée of equal or greater value. Not valid on 12/30/96 or holidays. Expires 12/30/96

NEW SUNDAY CHAMPAGNE BRUNCH
All You Can Eat: eggs, ham, sausage, bacon, fresh fruit, chicken, ripest cheese, linguine with clam, oyster, prawns, roast loin of pork, fresh fish, bagels, cream cheese, las, buns, muffins, and so much more.

10-11 am \$9.99
11 am-1 pm \$11.99
1-2 pm \$12.99
2-4 pm \$13.99
4-6 pm \$14.99
6-8 pm \$15.99
8-10 pm \$16.99
10-11 pm \$17.99

EARLY BIRD
Mon-Sat 11:30 am-4 pm
Sun 10:30 am-4 pm
Fresh omelet or full breakfast
with choice of entree
\$6.95
with coupon

2 1/2-lb. MAINE LOBSTER
-Steamed
-Italian style
-Puerco sauce
\$23.95
any time

San Diego's Best New Restaurant 1998 - San Diego Magazine

ALL YOU CAN EAT SUSHI
SERVED AT THE BAR
7 DAYS A WEEK!
INCLUDES ALL ITEMS BELOW
PREPARED FRESH TO ORDER.

DeLuca's CUCINA ITALIANA
228 W. WASHINGTON ST.
HELIX 228 • 228-1070

Sushi Party Tray
for your Holiday
80-piece California Roll Platter \$19.90
All-You-Can-Eat Sushi for \$14.99
Monday Nights (5-8 PM)

SUSHI DELI Downtown
330 W. Broadway
[619] 237-8507

THE BEACHES
THE BELGIAN LEON 2165 Ocean Street, Ocean Beach, 619-223-7700. Without a doubt the best Belgian food in San Diego is served in this charming provincial style dining room. The caper, the coffee cake, the oysters, the fresh fish specialties are not to be missed. This venerable dining room is a class by itself. Please note that the Belgian Lion opens just Thursday, Friday, and Saturday for dinner only. Excludes 12/30/96.

CHINA INN 8777 Hardscrabble Street between Grand and Grand streets, Pacific Beach, 619-491-6600. At least 110 items appear on the menu, which offers Mandarin and Szechuan specialties and includes meat and pork gizzards, Mandarin pork ribs, chicken in orange sauce, shrimp in garlic sauce. Simple setting, outstanding food. The diner is a perfect place to enjoy the day. The chef-owner, is there. Ask his advice about dishes. Open daily, continuous service, lunch and dinner. Low to moderate.

CUCINA PIESA 1801 Bacon Street, Ocean Beach, 619-224-9490 or 619-224-9470. Here's a good place for very tasty Italian food at low cost. The lounge features live music and dancing. Open for lunch and dinner. Closed Monday. Low to moderate.

THE FISHERY 5600 Camino del Mar, Pacific Beach, 619-272-9988. Half fish market, half casual fish menu, it offers fresh fish and chips, salads, and fish sandwiches. Same menu lunch and dinner. Open daily 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

FRENCH GOURMET 100 Tinseltown Street, Pacific Beach, 619-498-7725. This pleasant, airy dining room serves French food with California influences. Light, good tasting and easy on your palate. Breakfast items and lunch are served simultaneously. Baking, desserts and bakery at one end of the restaurant. Open daily. Moderate.

PATAGONIA
San Diego's First Authentic Argentine Cuisine

DANCE MUSIC
STEAKS...

PATAGONIA
1001 Fifth Avenue, San Diego, CA 92101
Reservations: 434-7777 • Fax: 434-2414 • 434-2414

PERFECT FOR YOUR OFFICE HOLIDAY PARTY! BOOK IT TODAY!

\$4 OFF
any featured night with this ad

ONE FREE ENTRÉE
when you buy a 2nd of equal or greater value off our regular menu, Mon-Thurs, with this ad.

FRIDAYS • 5:30 pm
Rajon Cajun Seafood Buffet
All you can eat \$24.99. Featuring snow crab legs, peeled & eat shrimp, fresh oysters, fresh fish, authentic gumbo, dirty rice, popcorn shrimp, fresh salads, crab corn chowder, slow-roasted beef and our fabulous cooked-to-order pasta bar! Also include our large desert display! Live jazz band Friday night!

SATURDAYS • 5:30 pm
Prime Rib & Crab Legs
All you can eat \$18.99. Slow-roasted prime rib and fresh snow crab legs. Includes soup and salad bar and our cooked-to-order pasta bar!

SUNDAYS • 4:30 pm
Sunday Supper
All you can eat \$13.99. Everything Mom used to make: fried chicken, baked Virginia ham, molasses mushed potatoes & gravy and much, much more.

SMOKING AVAILABLE ON OUR VERANDA
3-HOUR VALETED SELF-PARKING

EMBASSY SUITES • SAN DIEGO BAY • 461 PACIFIC HIGHWAY
FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 239-2400 x7009

Calendar
RESTAURANTS

LOTUS PASTA 1762 Garnet Avenue, Pacific Beach, 619-581-6777. This family Italian-American restaurant seats 160 people. It offers a menu where you can select your own pasta and your own sauce (12 plates, 18 sauce). Best bet: dinner specialties with dinner salad. \$8.95. Only restaurant to offer impromptu (from the menu) Big Night! Open daily, lunch and dinner. Low to moderate.

THE MISSION CAFE AND COFFEE HOUSE 1515 Mission Boulevard at San Jose Place, Mission Beach, 619-498-9060. Gourmet and Latino food and drinks served in family surroundings. Open weekdays are cinnamon French toast, blackberry-banana pancakes, and roast beef hash with mushroom potatoes and eggs. Chino-Latino lunch items. All dishes plus fabulous bread, scones, muffins, available for take out. Open daily 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Low.

Twins Restaurant
Continental Dining
With European Style

Please join us for a unique celebration of the New Year!

Fine Dining, Live Music, Party Favors and Champagne.

Have fun in Style!

The Twin's Christmas Dinner - January 6, 1998

Reservations Suggested (661) 330-7602
887 South Coast Highway 101, Encinitas, California 92026

Shabu-Shabu
a unique Japanese dining experience

The original hot pot dining! Hot pot, hot pot, hot pot!

A novel dining experience that lets you eat as well as you drink! Hot pot, hot pot, hot pot!

IN SANG
Japanese Restaurant

634 Pearl Street, La Jolla • 619-454-2500
Call for reservations.

MARRAESH
Authentic Moroccan Cuisine

634 Pearl Street, La Jolla • 619-454-2500
Call for reservations.

Order on-line and receive \$10 off the second entrée OR \$10 off any two items! Must be 21 or older. Open daily, 12-10:30 p.m. Open 12-10:30 p.m. Not valid with any other offer or on holidays. Expires 12-25-97. With this ad.

Calendar
RESTAURANTS

AMERICA RESTAURANT 4415 El Camino Boulevard, East San Diego, 619-563-3666. Try this Abyssinian/Ethiopian restaurant. The menu is limited to beef, lamb, chicken, and vegetables, and the food is very spicy. No seafood is offered. You pick up the food with injera, a spongy bread. Try the injera, chicken with hard-boiled egg, lamb cubes, and vegetable platter. Often frequented by college students. Open daily for lunch and dinner. Low.

CANTON CLUB 3545 Canyon Court, San Diego, 619-594-1111. Nasty prep work, seafood, even by gourmet chef is served in view country club. Breakfast, Saturday and Sunday from 6:00 a.m. lunch, daily. Moderate to expensive.

DZ. AREN'S 4600 Alameda Plaza, 6030 Alameda Plaza, 619-288-4410. Since the Vietnamese menu runs to 200 items, you may eat here several times a week for a month and not exhaust the variety. Extensive vegetarian selections. Dishes may not arrive in the order you requested them, so order and enjoy the surprise. Crowded weekends. Closed Monday. Open for lunch and dinner Tuesday through Sunday. Low to moderate.

YOTI BIRANGA 3551 Adams Avenue, Normal Heights, 619-282-4115. Low-cost, tasty, and fresh vegetarian dishes with international influences. The mildly Indian menu includes a different curry every other day. Soups, salads, and nightly specials are good here. Sample during noon. Saturday brunch, all you can eat. Hours change often, so phone before you go there. Open daily. Low.

YOKO GOURMET 3025 El Camino Boulevard, South Park, 619-382-7960. Wonderful Southern and regional

MIDWAY & MISSION VALLEY

AMIGOS 1470 San Diego Avenue, Old Town, 619-586-1524. A winter, with a summer twist, beautiful interior, extensive menu of Mexican food and traditional, and noteworthy pastries. Especially recommended: Pasa de la Reina. Menu is a collection of plate of carne asada, fish, beef, shrimp, and chicken. Killer margaritas. Same menu opening to closing. Open daily. Sunday brunch. Low to upper moderate.

BERTA'S LATIN AMERICAN RESTAURANT 9232 Twigg Street, Old Town, 619-295-2345. You'll find preparation from many Latin American countries, from Argentina and Brazil to Peru. However, with few exceptions, the food is very spicy, and this includes the pasta appetizer with a fiery red sauce. If you enjoy hot seasoning you'll like the pork, chicken, fish, and beef. For those who prefer what's smooth and subtle, Closed Monday. Open Tuesday through Sunday, lunch and dinner. Low to moderate.

CAFE PACIFICA 2414 San Diego Avenue, Old Town, 619-291-6666. Superb standards always prevail here. The cooking is done to the palate and besting up with fresh herbs. For appetizers: Dungeness crab cakes or mussels steamed in butter. For entrees, daily fresh fish, lamb chops, pasta. Everything is memorable. Not to be missed. Dinner, nightly. Upper moderate to expensive.

PRIMO RISTORANTE 1370 Frazee Road, Island Center, Mission Valley, 619-294-2709. The Italian menu offers about 100 dishes, some Italian-California style, others are regional cooking. The dining room is a glory with an open kitchen, lots of bars and an enormous. Interesting dishes here are fettuccine with shrimp, deviled pork chops, and chicken breast. Same menu from opening to closing. Open Daily. Moderate to expensive.

2 for 1 DINNER

4310 Genesee Avenue #111
(1 block north of Belcor)

619-278-4949

Open 11:30 a.m. - 10:00 p.m. 7 days a week

EAST COUNTY & STATE COLLEGE

ANTHONY'S LA MESA 936 Murray Drive, La Mesa, 619-463-0568. The renowned menu has about 300, the menu is the largest in the area. Many of the old seafood salads and fish and seafood are still available. However, many new seafood salads as well as fish dishes have been added. Try coming early in the week as on early hours to avoid a long wait. Noisy and crowded but located on a natural lake. Open daily, lunch and dinner. Continues service. Low to expensive.

ANTHONY'S RACHADA 700 N. Indian Canyon, Coronado, El Cajon, 619-442-9827. Fine place for children, parents, grandparents. The menu is not regional or gourmet, but standard items are fresh, generous in size, and inexpensive. Sometimes, a day-fresh concoction served with honey, are complimentary with meal. Open daily, lunch, dinner, and Sunday brunch. Low.

UPTOWN

ADAMS AVENUE GRILL 1201 Adams Avenue, University Heights, 619-288-8440. The chef owner produces first rate cuisine at low prices with many multi portions. — it takes two people to finish one dish. Best bet: That salad or seafood terrine, chicken salad or any dish from "Tempting Features" section, pork, pasta. Top price \$14.95. Closed Monday. Lunch Tuesday through Saturday. Dinner Tuesday through Sunday. Sunday brunch. Low to moderate.

ARBYVILLE 3841 Fourth Avenue, Hillcrest, 619-299-6282. The chef has worked at major European hotels and the food is outstanding. You won't go wrong with any of the pastas, and you may order small portions in combination. The appetizers and salads are also excellent. Chicken and shrimp fare will here. (There's no cooked beef on the menu.) Hideski physical plant, but it doesn't show and light preparations. Open daily for lunch and dinner. Low to moderate.

CALIFORNIA CUISINE 1027 University Avenue, Hillcrest, 619-543-0790. Located in Hillcrest since 1985, this cosmopolitan restaurant offers a beautiful interior and a refurbished patio, complete with fountains and plantings. The cooking is at a high level of achievement. Best bet: 12 appetizers and a salad.

SUSHI HAPPY HOUR
4-6 PM DAILY — BIRTHDAY ON TAP — DRINK SPECIALS

OPEN EVERY DAY 11:30 AM MONDAY — 1:15 AM FRIDAY
PACIFIC BEACH • 723-2997

CATERING AVAILABLE

2 for 1 DINNER

4310 Genesee Avenue #111
(1 block north of Belcor)

619-278-4949

Open 11:30 a.m. - 10:00 p.m. 7 days a week

STAR OF INDIA
Authentic Indian Cuisine

Mild • Medium • Hot
Expanded large vegetarian menu

Buy One Entrée, Get the Second at 50% Off

Not valid with any other offer. Expires 12/23/97.

LA JOLLA: 7800 Pines, 619-335-3355
CARMEL VALLEY: 2800 Civic Center Dr., 619-594-5091
SAN DIEGO: 6717 E. Valley Blvd., 619-594-5091

Introducing... 10% OFF ENTIRE BILL

Experience the most amazing, exquisite cuisine you can find in La Jolla.

SHORES CAFE
2161 Avenida de la Playa, La Jolla

For reservations and holiday party bookings: (619) 506-1000

Thinking about what to make for Christmas dinner?
May we suggest reservations?

No anxiety. No bother. Just a complete traditional Christmas dinner from Turkey and dressing to pumpkin pie. All for just \$14.95 for adults and \$5.95 for children. We suggest you make those reservations today. Be sure to make those New Year's Eve special too!

50% OFF DINNER TUESDAY - THURSDAY

Winter Specials:
"Dishes" Rockefeller
California Seafood Stew
Lamb with Tomato Mint Chutney
Villa Padella with Capri Vinaigrette

Brooklyn Villa Restaurant
(235 Civic Blvd., La Jolla • 619) 494-7791

STAR OF INDIA
Authentic Indian Cuisine

Mild • Medium • Hot
Expanded large vegetarian menu

Buy One Entrée, Get the Second at 50% Off

Not valid with any other offer. Expires 12/23/97.

LA JOLLA: 7800 Pines, 619-335-3355
CARMEL VALLEY: 2800 Civic Center Dr., 619-594-5091
SAN DIEGO: 6717 E. Valley Blvd., 619-594-5091

GUERCOAST GRILL 4130 Park Boulevard, 619-295-2244. Artistic two-level interior. Lots of spicy Cajun/Creole. Best bet: pork 'n' all shrimp. New Orleans barbecue shrimp. New York strip steak. Rainbow trout. Dinners only nightly. Low to expensive.

IMPERIAL HOUSE 505 Kalmia Street, 619-234-5275. If you are close to Balboa Park, this is an excellent place for lunch. The special, which costs \$8.50, includes soup or salad plus hot entrée. For dinner, try steak, fresh fish, home potatoes. Tableside service and a charming view of the park. In a separate room is the History House. Themes which include dinner plus theater on Friday and Saturday. (Call for prices.) 1500 S. San Diego, La Jolla, Monday through Friday, dinner, Tuesday through Saturday. Dinner theater, Friday and Saturday in separate room. Moderate to expensive.

MISSISSIPPI HILLS CAFE 409 West Washington, Mission Hills, 619-296-8010. Here's a good bargain restaurant for dinner. There are two dining rooms with the atmosphere of a casual neighborhood restaurant — nothing fancy, but good value for the money. Closed Monday. Open Tuesday through Sunday, breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Breakfast items available until 1:00 p.m. Moderate.

NEED RESTAURANT 5071 Fifth Avenue, Hillcrest, 619-299-4999. Your old favorite is still available but now new executive chef offer interesting appetizers and entrees Friday and Saturday nights. Weekend special change weekly. Music, beautiful art, attentive service. Open daily for dinner. Moderate to expensive.

MONTANA AMERICAN GRILL 1121 University Avenue, Hillcrest, 619-297-0722. At this southwestern American cafe you can easily make a meal from the first course plus one of several salads. Pasta dishes are good choice. Smoked or grilled items include barbecue salmon, ribs, and skewered lamb. Versatile chili or steak sandwich always a good bet. Pleasant atmosphere. Excellent service. Open daily. Lunch Monday through Friday. Dinners nightly. Low to upper moderate.

TRATTORIA PORTINARO 141 University Avenue, Hillcrest, 619-294-4995. Sure to be one of your favorite restaurants, not only for hearty Italian food but also for lively atmosphere. Sustain pasta dishes, meaty salads and minestrone. Try seafood, salmon, any pasta. Lunch Monday through Saturday. Dinner nightly. Moderate to expensive.

ANTHONY'S FISH GROVE 1360 Harbor Drive (at La Jolla Village), 619-232-5101. For fish seafood salad, fish and chips, and daily fresh fish specials, Anthony's will give to the head of the class for quality of product, great sized portions, fine seasonal preparation, and low cost. Open daily, lunch through dinner. Reservations are accepted. Low to expensive.

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LIFETIME WARRANTIES
ASK ABOUT QUANTUM TINT - NO FAD
 12 YEARS. A NAME YOU HAVE COME

STREETMAN
 Vehicle Protection Center

*Call for special Open-Mon-Sat 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Sun. 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

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 World Famous Hand Car Wash


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Most cars

CHANGE
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593

4-cyl





**IF YOU'RE NOT ASKING
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ACDelco Professional Batteries last up to 30%
longer than other automotive batteries.

* In average in the average of other leading competitors based on an independent test. See package for more details.

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THE NEW FRANK HYUNDAI

SERVICE SPECIALS

HYUNDAI

Cars that make sense

OIL AND FILTER SPECIAL

\$21⁹⁵

Hyundai City

- * Drain & replace oil in 3 quart of engine oil • Install genuine Hyundai oil & filter • Check and adjust tire pressure
- * Lube doors, hood, hinges & latches
- * Put on wear indicators • Pressure clean

During service a 1000 watt car air with other 100 watt car stereo

30K SERVICE

\$199

Hyundai City

- * Replace air filter • Replace spark plugs and set engine to specs
- * Rotate tires • Inspect front & rear brakes
- * Adjust major trim • Adjust parking brake
- * Drain and refill radiator with one gallon of coolant
- * Replace transmission fluid • Drain and refill transmission fluid

Expires 1/79

ENGINE TUNE-UP SPECIAL

\$39⁹⁵

Hyundai City

- * Install genuine Hyundai spark plugs
- * Tune electronic system, valve adjusted
- * Adjust trim and engine oil
- * Inspect engine belts
- * Check coolant level
- * Check brake fluid & pressure
- * Check tires & tread

Additional specials available upon request. Expires 1/79

FRONT OR REAR BRAKE SPECIAL

\$119⁹⁵

Hyundai City

- * Replace front brake pads • Machine rotors • Inspect oil level and oil
- * Inspect suspension • Check connections and lines for leaks • Adjust parking brake & light
- * Insure fluid on monitor • Road test

During or at another location • Additional specials available upon request. Expires 1/79

BRAKE INSPECTION SPECIAL

\$19⁹⁵

Hyundai City

(Includes tire rotation)

Expires 1/79

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3150 NATIONAL CITY BLVD.

(In National City City Map of Cars)

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SEC 111 1/10/88-13

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