

SAN DIEGO WEEKLY

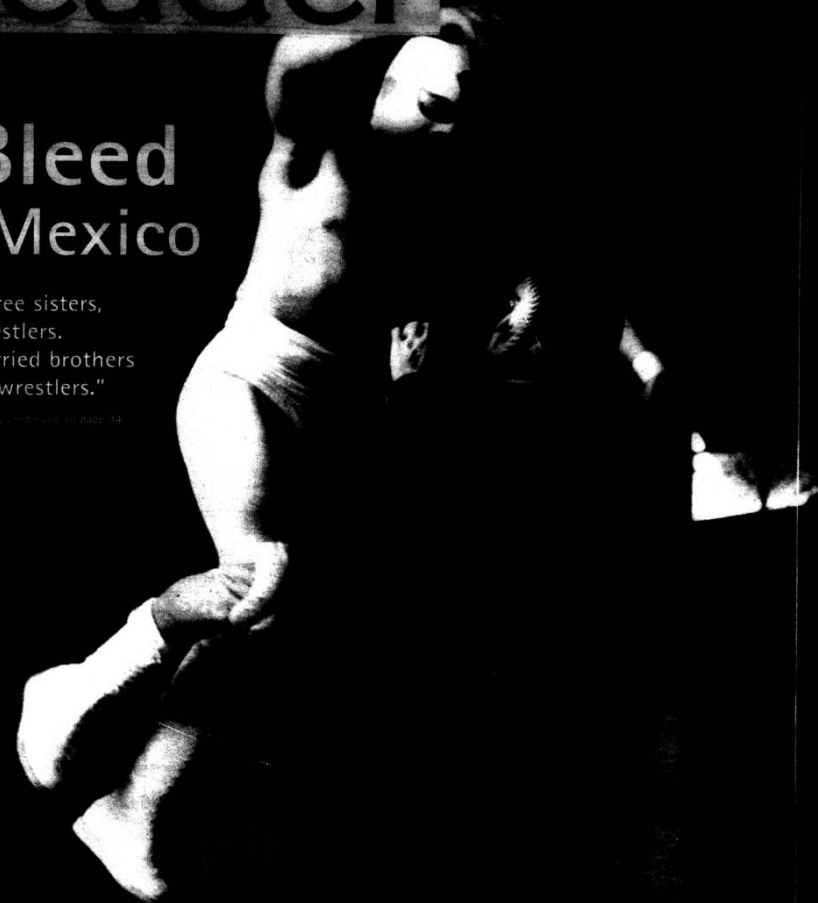
VOLUME 30 / NUMBER 10
MAY 10, 2007

Reader

We Bleed In Mexico

"There were three sisters,
all of them wrestlers.
Two sisters married brothers
who were also wrestlers."

Story continues on page 34



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Desires Smoking Gun

Re your "One Team, Countless Corporations" in the May 3 edition "City Lights". Once again, you've attempted to make unfounded, groundless accusations against the owners of the Padres without the prerequisite smoking gun. Is it your opinion that there is something wrong with setting up a number of corporations? This article looks like a continuation of your smear of "mob connections" again with no facts or evidence whatsoever. John Moores has been the best thing that's happened to this town since Ray Kroc saved baseball here 25 years ago. Why don't you guys get smart and begin to support his efforts in redeveloping downtown and keeping major-league baseball in San Diego?

Sid Schuman

Mirror Whine

Regarding Anne Albright's "no whining" column (May 3), no whining, indeed! Ms. Albright has the nerve to complain about her children's whining when she has spent endless weeks complaining to the world in her column about her self-imposed existence, e.g. "I'm pregnant again," "I'm so fat," "It's so difficult taking care of all these children," etc. Ms. Albright's kids generally sound terrific and she does them a disservice by griping about them in public. Perhaps she should look hard at where they learned this particular whining behavior, i.e., in the mirror.

Marianne Manchester
North Park

Loathes Albright

Re: Anne Albright's "Everybody Stop Whining" ("Kid Stuff," May 3). I can only hope that next year the Easter Bunny puts some birth control in her basket.

Five kids under the age of ten? Your kids are probably starved for attention. Anne, not Easter chocolate. I found it very telling that hubby Jack "left the house early" (iron for the hills is perhaps more like it) the day after Easter while you and your whiny brood fled. Can you blame the guy?

I'll admit, Anne, I've had a desire to verbally belittle you ever since the column about your described (but not mentioned) work camps/religious centers where drug addicts for a prayer vigil.

Let's see where you are 17 years from now when it's time to ship Ben off to college. Something tells me Jack may have tired by then of busting his ass to support six mouths (providing, of course, you can resist getting knocked up again) while you tinker around as a wanna-be columnist for a mediocre free rag.

Do the world a favor and stop procreating, Anne, and I promise I'll stop whining.

David Rizzuto

Losers Could Beautify La Jolla

Sylvia Liewert (Letters, May 3) thinks the Delancey Street treatment center would be good for Imperial Beach. She says the communities where they are located are not only safer but more clean and beautiful. People from La Jolla are especially proud of the fact that their communities are safe and clean and beautiful. Why doesn't she try and get the treatment center moved there? I'm sure the upright and honorable citizens of La Jolla would be happy to have recovering drunks and crackheads living in their neighborhoods. By her reasoning, La Jolla would become even more clean and beautiful. And safer too. Personally, I don't know how taking a bunch of people who "can't manage to put their lives together" and locating them in cheap housing across the street from "the most southwesternly part in the continental United States" is such a great idea. I've lived in Imperial Beach for over 20 years. This city, which is not a part of San Diego, thank you very much, is finally getting its act together. We are in the process of cleaning up this town. Little kids are safe in the streets. Families come and play at the beach. Elderly couples walk unmolested. It's a nice beach community. Although I somehow doubt that Ms. Liewert has ever been here. Tell you what, Ms. Liewert, if you're so open-minded, informed, and compassionate, take a couple of those Delancey Street losers and move them in with you.

Jay Armstrong
Imperial Beach

Real Truth Shudder

I am a resident of Imperial Beach, and I read with great interest your recent article about the Seaside Health Institute and the Delancey Street dilemma ("City Lights," April 19). First, let me say I am greatly intrigued by effective drug treatment and legal and ethically operated sober living homes.

On the issue of effective drug treatment, I can attest to San Diego and in America, it just, for the most part, does not exist. We have a hodgepodge of treatment centers offering harsh confrontational therapy (behavior modification) and community-based treatment (12-step programs).

Our Frugal Tongue's second week of vegetarian luck... What does "moderate drinking" mean? **121**

Reader

SAN DIEGO

MAY 10, 2001

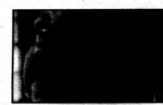
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Of race and riots

Ex-San Diego city manager **Sylvester Murray**, who lost his job in 1986 after saying in a newspaper interview that "I get an orgasm just being a boss of police," has been hired by Cincinnati mayor **Charles Luken** to help calm that city's simmering racial turmoil. Murray, the only black city manager in San Diego's history, also holds the record for shortest tenure, having been appointed in the fall of 1985 by a city council led by **Roger Hedgecock**, himself forced from office in early 1986 by campaign-finance scandal. That June, Murray, the product of a Miami ghetto who had come to San Diego after serving seven years as Cincinnati's city manager, granted a wide-ranging interview to *Los Angeles Times* reporter **Ralph Frammatino**. "I will be powerful," Murray told Frammatino. "I will be no more powerful than the law allows, but I will assume all the powers of this office." He also chastised San Diego blacks for being reticent about questioning authority in the wake of the **Sagun Penn** case, in which Penn had killed a cop. Testimony at Penn's murder trial alleged that the police officer had beaten the black defendant before the shooting. "The reaction has been basically, 'blah,'" Murray told Frammatino. "Except, I think, for a while there, there were some pickets around the courtroom. It has not generated publicly the issues of police brutality or nonpolice brutality, blacks, racial strife, that I just know it would have generated in Cincinnati or every other place. Blacks in San Diego are just as conservative as whites. Blacks in San Diego are just as concerned about not rocking the boat as whites do not want the boat to be rocked." Four months later, Murray was out, fired by a city council led by then-mayor **Maureen O'Connor**. He returned to Ohio and became a professor of urban studies and director of Cleveland State University's public-management program. In September 1998, Murray made headlines in the *Washington Post* when the District of Columbia financial control board asked the FBI to investigate allegedly fraudulent invoices. **Hattie Portis-Jones**, a member of a university-sponsored consulting team, had submitted a \$69 invoice through Murray for a night's stay at a hotel called "Span's Place," which turned out to be a relative's house. "I hear that someone is questioning the lodging for Hattie," Murray wrote in a memo to the board. "She stays at her sister's house and wants to pay her sister the same \$69 per night you pay Days Inn."

On the road again The controversial "Chancellor of Instruction" at San Diego's Unified School District has been raking in thousands of dollars from out-of-town speaking engagements. According to a recently filed disclosure, **Anthony Alvarado** has collected between \$1000 and \$10,000 from Wake Education Partnership in Raleigh, North Carolina; the National Staff Development Council in Oxford, Ohio; the Achievement Council in Los Angeles; the Fund for Educational Excellence in Baltimore; Mayerson Academy for Human Resource in Cincinnati; and the L.A. Unified School District.

Power shortage The *First Call/Thomas Financial* is reporting that Padres owner **John Moores**, along with fellow board members and executives of Moores's Peregrine Systems, has been busy selling off his shares in the company. "Known for frequent and heavy selling in the past, Peregrine insiders had been inactive since the dumping of shares ahead of last year's sell-off," the publication says. "That they are now parting with shares with the stock trading more than 60 percent off its highs hardly seems promising. And while insiders have sold like this before, it's more disconcerting to see these kinds of reductions at today's prices." Director **John Moores**, Peregrine's former chairman and current owner of the San Diego Padres, received more than \$70 million in proceeds by trimming his position by 50 percent. Meanwhile, Padres co-owner **Larry Lucchino** has been bashing his adoptive home state of California. In an op-ed piece for the *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, Lucchino opines, "It is harder to do a ballpark in California than any other place I know by a factor of ten because of the rules, regulations, challenges, etc., that are abundant in California."

Contributor: Matt Potter

The Reader offers \$25 for news tips published in this column. Call our voice mail at 619-235-3000, ext. 440, or fax your tip to 619-235-3096.



Beer drinkers near Crystal Pier, Pacific Beach

You Sell the Devil's Blood

By Justin Wolff

Rape, gang fights, vandalism, vagrancy, drunk driving, drunk boating, and just plain drunkenness. Mission and Pacific

Beach residents and officers from the San Diego Police Department discussed these issues at a public meeting on the night of April 10. The police hosted the annual forum at the Santa Clara Recreation Center on Mission Bay to allay fears about the imminent onslaught of thirty young people. Already in Pacific Beach you can detect the shift—the revving engines, profane shrieks, and public urinals—that spice up the nightlife around here have become more common in recent weeks. And, as the 30



Blind Melons, Crystal Pier

constructed the penal code, and issued proclamations of sympathy. Though friendly and knowledgeable, the officers seemed tired and overworked. They never came right out and said it, but one could tell they aren't looking forward to summer.

When they finished, the residents peppered the officers with questions. For the most part, each person who spoke used the forum to air personal grievances. "Why do you let people speed on my street?" "Why do you let that homeless guy sleep on my stairs?" "Why do you let the bar across from my apartment get away with being so loud?" One man stood up and said that many years ago he had briefly worked in law enforcement somewhere a long way from here. "I don't need to tell you guys how to do your jobs," he said, then quickly added, "but what you should do is hit 'em once

and hit 'em hard. That way, they won't come back." None of the residents at the meeting, however, griped about the root cause of the problem. In passing, a patrolman named Marco Perez mentioned that there are 167 liquor licenses in the two beach communities. Still, no one took the bait.

Members of the San Diego Police Department, Councilman Byron Wear's office, and the Pacific Beach community told me in recent weeks that the town suffers from an extreme oversaturation of liquor licenses and that the number exceeds quotas outlined in the California Business and Professions Code. The code states that any county in the state is permitted to have one liquor-store license per 2000 residents and one restaurant or bar license per 2500 residents. Pacific Beach has close to 41,000 residents and 130



SDPP forum at Santa Clara Recreational Center, April 10, 2001

licenses, a little less than 100 more than called for.

The day before the forum, I asked Lieutenant Michael Cash of the Northern Division, which includes the beach communities, if Pacific Beach was oversaturated. "Most definitely," he answered, "and the problems would lessen if there were fewer bars. I don't have a clue how it got that way, but we sure have enough." Peter Bryan, Councilman Byron Wear's press secretary, told me on April 11 that his office also believes the town has too many licenses. "Councilman Wear knows the area is way oversaturated," he said.

Prominent San Diego activist Donna Frye, who faces a June 5 runoff election against Steve Danon for the city council seat made vacant by Valerie Stallings's resignation, explained to me that this is a battle she fought two years ago, when she was on the Pacific Beach Community Planning Committee. "The question I had," Frye said, "was, 'How did this happen? How come no one noticed that we had more licenses than the population of the town called for?' There are guidelines at the state level that deal with this question of overconcentration. One of the conditions is population. Another has to do



Donna Frye



Scott Slaga

with whether there's a need, whether the community needs another liquor license. But that's a strange, vague term. What does it mean, necessity?"

Sergeant Michael Davis of the San Diego Police Department's vice unit told me recently that alcohol-related crime rates are high for Mission and Pacific Beach. "I can tell you that Mission Beach and Pacific Beach account for 34 percent of all alcohol-related crimes in the entire City of San Diego," he said. "The Gaslamp only accounts for about 7 percent. These two areas account for a third of these crimes in the whole city. That's pretty dramatic." It is, considering that together Mission Beach and Pacific Beach account for less than 5 percent of the city's population. "The police department would like to see a moratorium on the issuance of licenses," Davis said.

But, as Frye pointed out, the necessity argument made it possible for applicants to receive liquor licenses despite the crime statistics. I asked Steve Ernst, district administrator of the state Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control, about this problem. "For liquor stores and bars, but not for restaurants," he said, "the statute says that the local municipality will make



Karl Jaudke



Michael Cash

Shelley Miller



4000 block of Ocean Boulevard

the determination of public convenience or necessity. In the case of the City of San Diego, the city has given that authority to the vice unit. If they determine that the license should not be granted, that's it. The application matter is over. The applicant can either withdraw or their application will be denied by the department.

"For restaurants, the determination of public convenience and necessity lies with

us and the applicant has to tell us how they're going to be a convenience or necessity to the community, and then a determination is made on that. For instance, in the Gaslamp, we're overconcentrated down there, but there's been a determination that because of the conventions and the tourists that new licenses can go in."

Several community leaders in Pacific Beach reject the proposal of placing a moratorium on new liquor licenses. Shelley Miller is the executive director of Discover Pacific Beach, a business group. On April 9 she told me, "We may have 41,000 residents, but we have so many more tourists visiting here. Taking that into account, I think we can prove public convenience and necessity." On a typical weekend day during the summer, there are about 100,000 people in Pacific Beach.

Karl Jaudke, president of the Pacific Beach Town Council, agrees with Miller. "About ten years ago, this town was dead," he said. "Garnet was pretty empty. Now this town is vibrant and all of PB benefits from liquor licenses. Those businesses are successful, and they pay taxes. As a town council we've told Byron Wear we would like \$500,000 for more police and that we would like stiffer fines and a community court so



Down Under Bar, Garnet Avenue, during April notice of suspension

we can enforce the laws. The city has designated PB and the Gaslamp as areas of the city where people can drink, and that makes sense, considering the number of tourists we get here."

But such arguments won't appease Bill Allen, owner of the Crystal Pier Hotel and Cottages, who has been vocal at town and city council meetings about his frustration with "degeneracy" in Pacific Beach. Allen lobbied for the plan to ban alcohol on the beaches and has focused most of his anger about liquor licenses at Blind Melons, a nightclub at the end of Garnet, near Crystal Pier.

I asked Allen if he believed that liquor licenses have helped revitalize Pacific Beach. "That's bullshit," he said. "There's no questioning the crime statistics and the cost of the health services and

CITY LIGHTS CITY LIGHTS CITY LIGHTS CITY LIGHTS

resources that have to be tapped to deal with all the problems related to alcohol. You know, these people who say they just want to drink peacefully and mind their own business, they don't understand because they're not

here 24 hours a day. They come here, do what they do, and then leave. They aren't here to see what the aftermath is — all the trash and the urine. These smart-ass kids that think that we sit up on our deck and look down

and laugh at people are insane. All we want to do is take care of our guests. Our whole business depends on people having a good time and having a good impression of Pacific Beach and having a good impression of San Diego. It's

easy getting people to Crystal Pier the first time; the hardest thing is getting them to come back. If families are driving down Garnet and see a bunch of drunk hooligans in bars everywhere and all of this disgusting behavior, they

want to turn around and leave before they even get to our gate." Allen said that the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control "can't do anything. There's only three people

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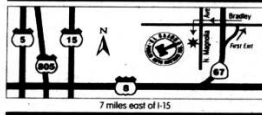
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Devil's blood

continued from page 6

ple who work there, and they're never in the office. No wonder they can't control the problem. That's why it's taken people like my wife and myself and the police to get the information out. We actually took a copy of the law to Longs and the markets and said, 'Look, you guys, you can't serve alcohol to people who you know are intoxicated.' I got so mad one day, I was so tired of picking up empty beer bottles stashed in Longs bags that I took it over and threw it at the manager of Longs and I said, 'God-damnit, I'm going to drag

your ass over there and you're gonna come clean this mess up. Knock it off.'

"Pacific Beach and Mission Beach have always been kind of a rat's nest," Allen added. "You go down there behind the promenade, to Lahaina's and that Banana Bungalow Hostel, to all those little nooks and crannies in Mission Beach, and it's a mess." Allen said that liquor licenses either need to be revoked or come with many more restrictions. "Blind Melons should not have a license to operate the way it does," he said, "especially considering their location. Those poor folks who live nearby in the Sea the Sea condominiums always have problems

selling their units, not to mention getting to sleep. Scott [Slaga, owner of Blind Melons] just doesn't get it. Just a few months ago, he started this rave thing so kids on ecstasy can wind down. It brings in this whole element that we've worked so hard to keep out of Pacific Beach. All these 17- to 25-year-olds just want to abuse you and fight with you. There's so much disrespect. Why in the hell don't we reinstate the draft and clean this place up? The parents don't discipline them, the schools can't do it, or they'll get sued. The only place kids can get a little discipline and direction in their life is by serving a little stint doing something for their

country. We gotta stop these new licenses and come up with a plan to reduce the number of them." The ongoing skirmish between Allen and Slaga has become a symbol for the problems in Pacific Beach. Slaga, though, who also owns Winston's in Ocean Beach, doesn't buy it. He believes that most of the issues have already been addressed and that liquor-license opponents like Frye and Allen abuse the topic. "When I was president of the merchant's association in PB," Slaga said, "Bill would come to our meetings and tell us that we had to 'eradicate' the bums in town. He spoke like he was referring to the Holocaust. Poor Bill; he's

had such a tough life. Look, Bill and I don't go at it anymore. We used to butt heads when I was involved in community politics, but nobody should waste their time on Bill Allen. Why? He's out there; he's a silver-spoon guy. You know what, I don't dislike Bill Allen. I almost get a kick out of the guy. He's a little bit off the page and it's not his fault, really. It's just the way he was raised. When you get a hanger and flying planes [a reference to Allen's interest in vintage aircraft] for your 21st birthday, what do you expect? The point is, Bill and I go at it only because of the location of my bar. He wants no noise at all on that corner; he wants it stagnant,

with no lighting or anything." Slaga blames earlier oversight by the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control and the fanaticism of Frye and Allen for the current adversarial atmosphere in Pacific Beach. "The long and the short of it," he said, "is that the crux of the problem is that when bar owners went to buy a business in Pacific Beach, there was nobody at the department saying things to them like, 'By the way, you realize that there are some problems in PB? By the way, there are too many liquor licenses there, and there's a big public front trying to eradicate licenses.' In other words, never once when you're spending the hundreds of

thousands of dollars that one spends to buy a bar in PB do you ever hear from anybody in the department that there's a problem. Here's Joe Bar-Owner, like myself, who buys a place like Blind Melons on Garnet Avenue right near the beach in a busy spot, and I can't open my doors, and I have to be worried about customers speaking too loudly. Then you find out that there's this almost Ku Klux Klan type of effort to eradicate the bars. What the hell is that all about? You pay dearly for the license, and then you pay in the community. It's a double standard. You give to everybody, and yet you're always the bad guy. Why? Because you sell the devil's blood."

Slaga said that seven or eight years ago, it was the agenda of every bureaucratic and enforcement agency in the city — "the cops, vice, the beverage control, and the politicians" — to eradicate liquor licenses in Pacific Beach. "So," Slaga said, "as president of the merchant's association, I did my homework, and we formed these hospitality panels and got the bar owners together and sort of unionized. In my opinion, we took what the police department called a war zone — which it wasn't — and revitalized it. We enacted many plans to basically change the operation of the bars — specifically, the way we marketed ourselves and the way we policed ourselves. You ask anybody who was around seven years ago, and they'll tell you today is nothing like it used to be; there is none of the craziness that used to be here. Underage drinking and fighting in the bars is way down. It's very well managed right now, and that's because today we work closely with the police to address the problems."

Lieutenant Cash agrees with Slaga on this point. "We have a great working relationship with the bars in Pacific Beach," he said. "As summer approaches, the police and the liquor establishments meet to head off problems before they arise. Enforcement is the end part — the last straw. Prevention should come first."

However, Slaga said, "People like Frye and Allen will

say it's not true, and they'll bring up the statistics — you know, the DUIs. Jesus Christ, there's only one way into Pacific Beach, and there's only one way out, and the cops just sit there. I mean, my God, if the town council is

going to hand out plaques to officers who get the most arrests, then they're going to be sitting there in wait to trap the drivers. And let's not forget that it's not just the bars in PB that get people drunk. We have college kids who live

here; they party at the beach, they party in hotels; they party at home. It's a party town, for Christ's sake."

Slaga added that he would like to see some figures that calculate the positive impacts of bars in Pacific Beach —

what they have given to the community in the form of employment, fund-raising, and tax revenue. "But," he said, "none of the Bill Allens and Donna Fries want to hear anything about what good alcohol does. There's

only one issue for them: alcohol is a disease, it's the devil's blood, get rid of it. Period. Donna Frye, you know, she's a very good champion of environmental issues, but when it comes to alcohol, she always tries to shut it down.

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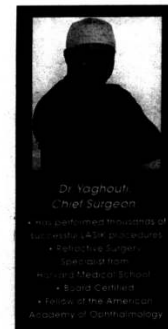
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Eradication as a solution is bullshit. I'm not some bar owner who abuses his privileges. I paid for a license; I abide by the law; and I'm a community guy who gives to Pacific Beach. But you know what? As long as I'm selling liquor, there will always be

Slaga said that it has gotten to the point where he must draw a line in the sand. "Make no mistake about it," he cautioned, "the bars in Pacific Beach have gone as far as they're going to go. There are some people with power

Sлага concluded that until Pacific Beach comes to terms with its identity, the

liquor-license debate will continue. "Pacific Beach is very divided over what it wants to be," he said. "There are so many factions of people fighting for a direction. You've got old people who want this to be Santa Barbara, you've got middle-aged

folks who want a little Santa Barbara with a few places to get a drink, and you've got young kids who want nothing other than to party. You can't service just one of those groups. I think Pacific Beach needs to be a community that can compete with the

Gaslamp. And you know what? You're never going to hear criticism of the Gaslamp like you hear in PB. Let's have a little bit of fairness. I mean, PB has an ocean—a beach! How many people come here from all over the world?" ■

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BY MAIL HEW ALICE



Mattmeister

I was watching TV last night and saw one of those scenes that we've all seen so many times. The scene showed a gunperson (PC) holding two (2) guns, shooting and doing a daily job of decimating the opposition. On TV most everybody has what they're aiming for, but the thought occurred to me, is it possible to accurately shoot two guns? Can a left-handed gunslinger ever be as accurate as the one-gun, one-hand method? Is it possible to train the right eye to the right gun and the left eye to the left gun simultaneously? Matt, before you shoot your tip, be a mensch and take Granny Alice and the elves on a long-deserved outing to the gun range and *but this issue to rest.*

— A. B., *El Cajon*

Hee-hee-hee! Grandma + elves + guns = well, let's just say we tried that once. Every range in town now has the Alice family photo tacked up with all their bounced checks and most-wanted posters. Charlton Heston himself came to the house to have a few drinks and cut up Grandma's NRA card. Elves? Guns? Grandma with a Ruger? Yeah, sure. Besides, as a condition of Ma Alice's parole, she can't be around firearms.

to help us, as long as we promised not to show up in person. First of all, today's movie world is still suffering from the Tom Mix syndrome. It's not good enough to aim a gun and shoot a guy, you've got to do it hanging off the hood of a car or turning shoulder rolls or flipping your firearm in the air. Yeah, you might learn to shoot "accurately" with two hands, two guns, but not simultaneously, not with both eyes open, and only after plenty of practice. It would also help if you loosen up your definition of "accurately." Don't shoot at anything farther than 200 feet. Alice's accuracy was pretty good at 20 feet, a better question is, what's your accuracy at 200 feet?

If you fire two guns simultaneously with both eyes open, you're not missing either one of them well. Because of our binocular vision, we can't see independently with each eye at the same time. So the best you can do is close your left eye, aim down the barrel with your right eye, and shoot the gun in your right hand; close your right eye, aim and shoot on the left; and so on. I'm sure that's the kind of thing Hollywood has in mind. If our hero needs two guns, already we know he's a lousy shot with one. He can't get somebody with a clean, careful shot, so he makes up for it with volume. The Grandma Alice philosophy: Fire enough bullets to make sure you hit. And that's why Hollywood's heroes are never hurt by bullets. Hollywood against the laws of physics and logic, your moving-darts are numbered.

Hexmatt:

What kind of chemical is "sodium laureth sulfate"? It seems to be the main ingredient in almost every shampoo or body wash.

— Joe E. Simpson, *the net*

What kind? The cheap, popular, widely used kind, Joe. So popular, that fact is its own urban legend that was all the rage with people who loved forwarding those scary e-mail messages, like about how Panama hats cause brain damage. Sodium laureth sulfate and its macho sibling, sodium lauryl sulfate, create bubbles, cut grease, and provide a thick, rich (read "expensive") foam that they began using in the 1930s for everything from hair cream to bubble gum. And so, urban legends declared them carcinogens for reasons ranging from boring to quite outrageous. Sodium lauryl sulfate, in high concentrations and left on the skin for long periods, will cause irritation. Sodium laureth sulfate is much milder. Both are used in low concentrations in toothpastes and shampoos. The National Cancer Institute's National Toxicology Program and the American Cancer Society says they're not carcinogens. So that's what they are and what they're not.

MA.

After a run or a quick walk up Cowles Mtn. I have a tendency to put my hands on my hips as I breathe deeply. This is the only situation in which I stand around with my hands on my hips. Does the hands-on-hips position help with the intake of oxygen? If so, how?

— Curt, the net

Chin up, shoulders back, spine straight, Curt. Now when you put your hands on your hips, your back and shoulder muscles rise and expand your rib cage so your diaphragm and chest muscles don't have to work so hard to get a good lungful of that (*hack! hack!*) Cowles Mountain air.

Got a question you need answered? Get it straight from the hip. Write to Matthew Alice, c/o the Reader, P. O. Box 85803, San Diego, CA 92186-5803, or fax your questions to 619-231-0489, or e-mail to kevymatt@cts.com via the Internet.

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SportingBox

By Patrick Daugherty

Damn Fine Piece of Horse You Got There

Follows is one of those "Howdy," "I reckon," "and I guess I'll have me another beer" conversations that are harder and harder to find ever since Americans dropped regional and ethnic dialects and began, all at once and all together, speaking *suburbia*. The dialect found below is Good Ole Country Boy (West Coast region). The speaker's inflection and sentence structure implies a lack of formal book-learning. His demeanor is modest, proud, direct, honest, and exceptionally polite until or until you insult the speaker's manhood, accent, lack of book-learning, mom, financial status, horse, clothing, or place of residence, in which case, well, a man's got to do what a man's got to do.

I've always liked these guys. This encounter occurred in a near-empty dirt field next to the Lakeside Rodeo. I'm talking with Charles Harris and his dad, Don. They arrived this morning, by truck and horse trailer, to set up camp for this weekend's rodeo.

Charles is 23 years old, 5'10", and has reddish-brown hair and mustache. He's clean-shaven with a light, almost pink complexion and wears the increasingly rare blank white T-shirt plus blue jeans and boots. I ask if he rides bulls.

"No, I wrestle steers."

And a damn fine job that is. "How many rodeos will you go to this year?"

"I've been to around 10 so far. I'm going to try and make the limit, which is 100."

"One hundred! One hundred rodeos!" I can't... quite... take that in. "Do you travel all over the country or stick with the West?"

"Last three months I've been back in Texas and Oklahoma. Went to Denver, Florida, Alabama, and Louisiana. I'll leave Monday and go to New Mexico and some rodeos in Texas."

That's a damn fine circuit. "How many bones have you broken?"

"I haven't broke any bones. I've torn most of the ligaments that run into my ankles."

Ain't nothing much to that. "Is it a pain in the ass to haul these horses around?" Harris travels with three horses.

"It's more maintaining your animals that take care of that. That horse right there," Harris points to a chestnut-colored mare, "that's my main horse. Then the yellow horse with the saddle on next to her, he's the backup. I got another horse at home, my number 1 horse."

"And you trained them?"

"Yeah, I broke them."

A man breaks his own horses. "How long can the mare compete?"

"Well, she's 16, she's probably gonna have four years in her."

"Till 20?" Damn fine mare.

"All depends on how well you take care of them. If you take care of them good, they'll take care of you. If you don't, they'll just fall apart."

Damn shame when a good mare falls apart. "I'd guess Lakeside is pretty low on the rodeo pole. It's a great place, but it's small."

"This is a big one for California. It's two hundred [dollars] plus 3000 added—pretty good money. Steers here, they're decent. I

mean, they're not the ones we like to run, but..."

"What makes a good steer?"

"Most of these steers here are bigger, but it doesn't matter if they're big or little, just so long as they're not strong. If they're strong, they ain't any good. You can get a steer that will push you from here to that fence. You can still wipe him out, but he ain't gonna pay."

"The stronger ones fight?"

"Uh-hmm. You want to stay away from them. You go and run a steer and get loose from him, and he slips that inside horn away from you. After a couple times doing that he'll figure, 'Well, if I tip my head this way, when he comes around the corner, I'll be able to slip it.' Once he figures that out, he won't be no good on the ground."

Damn steers and their damn tricks. "How did you get started?"

"Well, I first started riding bulls when I

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SAN FRANCISCO	6 1/2	Atlanta	
BALTIMORE	11 1/2	Chicago	
GREEN BAY	5	Detroit	
Indianapolis	1	N.Y. JETS	
New England	2 1/2	CINCINNATI	
BUFFALO	4	New Orleans	
KANSAS CITY	4	Oakland	
JACKSONVILLE	6	Pittsburgh	
St. Louis	3 1/2	PHILADELPHIA	
Seattle	6	CLEVELAND	
Tampa Bay	7	DALLAS	
Washington	3	SAN DIEGO	
TENNESSEE	6	Miami	

Monday, September 10, 2001
DENVER 6 1/2 N.Y. Giants

(Bye Week: Arizona)

was a freshman in high school." Charles was born, raised, and lives in Modesto, California. And then I run into a guy named John Bonki. He showed me how to rope calves. I threw steers down on the ground for a year and a half before I went rodeoing.

Damn fine background, if you don't mind me saying. "How do you do it, throw steers on the ground?"

"Mainly, the deal is getting a good steer. There's some good ones, but there's also the ones that ain't very good. The main thing is your head catch. Like with me, I'm not one of the bigger guys. My friend, who's winning around here, he's 6'6", weighs two and a half. He's a big kid. With him, he can just jerk the rope. With me, I got to catch the steer's head and place my feet right and then I can come around the corner. I mean, if I don't get a head catch..."

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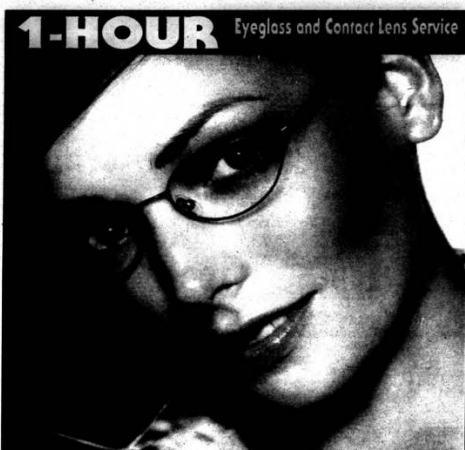
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SHEEP AND GOATS

PLACES OF WORSHIP REVIEWED

Denominations: nondenominational
Address: 12335 World Trade Dr., Poway, 658-475-8777
Year founded: 1987
Senior pastor: Rev. Albert Lam
Congregations: 600
Staff: 5
Sunday school enrollment: 100
Annual budget: \$700,000
Weekly giving: \$11,300
Singles programs: yes
Diversity: predominately Chinese, some Anglo
Dress: dressy-casual
Services: Sunday worship, Mandarin 9:00 a.m., English and Cantonese services, 10:45 a.m.

In late March of this year, China's National Bureau of Statistics announced that the country's population had reached 1.26 billion. Of that number, the China Christian Council estimates that more than 50 million are now Christian. The country's seminaries and churches are bursting with believers.

Last Sunday I went to Poway to visit Chinese Bible Church of San Diego, which, with 600 members, is the largest of the city's 10 Chinese churches. Chinese Bible's three Sunday-morning services are divided by language: Mandarin, Cantonese, and English. The church meets in a complex of large and small rooms in an industrial park, which, as clean and bright and cheerful. People hang around the church and socialize after services. They crowd the church's lobby. They browse the modest, but computerized, lending library. They are, overall, a young group. Scores of giggling toddlers and assorted preschoolers zip around at knee-level.

Although nondenominational, Chinese Bible is strongly evangelical. As soon as I walked through the front door for the English language service, earnest fresh scrubbed men and women in their 20s marched up, shook my hand, and introduced themselves. One fellow in particular took an interest in me. He explained that he'd grown up in Japan, in China area, and had worked in Tokyo for a number of years before coming to the U.S.

"It didn't matter that I spoke Japanese like a Japanese," he said. "I was still a foreigner. I felt this especially strongly in the workplace, where I think I was sort of discriminated against. And in Japan, of course, as soon as they see your name, they know you're Chinese. The Japanese like to think they can tell by the way someone looks, but they really can't."

About half the people who attend the English service were born abroad and came to the States as children. The other 50 percent or so came as students. Almost 90 percent were already Christians when they arrived. Their faith could be described as contemporary Calvinist. A big electronic screen projects lyrics for soft-rock hymns, which are accompanied by electric guitar, bass guitar, piano, and tambourine. There's some charismatic-style hand waving, but not a lot.

When the hymns get funky, the congregation claps, surprisingly, on the down-beat.

I've associated Protestant and/or with Koreans, so it was interesting to witness gung-ho Chinese evangelism. By the time Reverend Luke Chen began his sermon, however, I remembered that long before Communism, religion had been a passion in mainland China, that the mid-19th Century's Taiping Rebellion, world history's largest rebellion, had in fact been inspired by Protestantism.

Reverend Chen talked about the "work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life."

"We haven't been left alone by God. We know that God is present. But where is the Holy Spirit? In us. Within each and every believer. This isn't just a metaphor, a poetic way of speaking about a kind of feeling. The Holy Spirit literally dwells within us. 1 Corinthians tells us that 'he who sins sexually sins against his own body.' Don't commit sexual immorality. Why? Because the Holy Spirit is within your body. Wherever the human body goes, the Holy Spirit goes with it."

When you make decisions about the kind of movies you watch, the sort of parties you'll attend, the sorts of things you talk about, you must be conscious of this. Whatever you do or don't do, you take the Holy Spirit with you.

In closing, Reverend Chen asked us to remember and pray for an Encinitas family that belongs to the church. Seven weeks ago, the mother delivered a baby girl, Charlotte, who'd been born with "only a brain stem." The family's dream of having a new daughter had turned. Reverend Chen said, "I'm a nightmare."

"When I spoke with the mother, she told me that she'd found peace. In the face of her daughter's suffering, the family's suffering, she'd found peace. And I consider this to be a gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Peace in the presence of great pain and difficulty. True peace like that does not come from meditation, or doing yoga, or meditating, or achieving one's career goals, or doing charity. True peace comes from the Holy Spirit within the believer."

Later, I caught up with Reverend Chen and we talked about religion's prospects in China after Communism's demise. The remarkable thing is, given the country's population, that if even, say, 10 percent of the country became Christian, China would be one of the largest Christian nations on earth.

"Of course that all depends on many things," Reverend Chen said. "Like the government. How far it will go to suppress religion. How the public reacts. How the Chinese people search for meaning. But I think Chinese Christians everywhere are aware of that potential, of the country's religious potential. Of what the growth of Christianity in China might mean for the rest of the world. What is it? One out of every four or five people in the world is Chinese. China could potentially become a significant Christian presence in the world."

—Abe Opatkar

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Pain Management

Karen Schmitt, M.D.
Pain Management

James W. Smith, M.D.
Pain Management



My sister is a mother of four and an extremely loving parent. The issue is that she cannot keep her house clean to save her life. I'm not talking about not tidying the kitchen directly after dinner. Sometimes it takes her three to five days to clean up after a meal. She's such a poor housekeeper. I have to tell her to clean up and take my friends over to her house and cannot get my husband to step into her home because he is disturbed by the mess. If she goes out of town for the weekend, she will leave things like bowls of leftover cereal on the table till she returns. She will run out of the house without bringing coats for herself or her children, not realizing that it will be cold when they get home. It will be quite cold by nightfall. Or she'll let her kids dress in shorts in freezing weather. My entire family has spoken to her about these issues. I've even written her a letter, trying to be as caring and loving as possible. My mother has begged her to improve her cleanliness. She will try for a little while, but she will then just let herself and her children be messy. I have to tell her that my sister has ADD, as she cannot finish what she starts. We are worried about her children's well-being. One of her daughters is overweight and consequently gets made fun of at school. My sister lets her children eat whatever they want and as much as they want. Her other girls have dark circles under their eyes, which I think is due to her not getting enough sleep. I love my sister and I am at a loss at this point about how to help. My sister is in denial, claiming that "If my sisters and family cannot love me for who I am, then that is their problem. God loves me for who I am." She does not have a supportive husband. He makes over \$100,000 a year but can't seem to assist my sister with the children. He has a job but he has no time for his family. We do not know if it is right to call her doctor to discuss the issue. We are really worried that Children's Services will come and take the children away. Should we talk to her priest? My husband can give some type of sermon regarding children and how to properly care for them as well as love them. My children are probably the most loved children I have ever seen in my life.

DESPERATE IN DENIAL

description of your sister's household goes beyond mere slovenliness and enters the realm of child endangerment. Her housekeeping and child-care habits are a disaster waiting to happen. You know how her mother always has to tell her to do things she will consider doing what's necessary to solve these problems so her children's bodies, as well as their spirits, are well cared for. It is a plain fact that very young children cannot be allowed to eat anything but the good stuff on Mars bars, jelly beans, and Coke — or they will become ill and/or damage their health for life, and, unfortunately, no amount of love can make up for that. Whether your sister has ADD (which, from what I understand, is not a psychological or often quite treatable), or whether she has other kinds of problems, I'm not qualified to say, but she needs to get help right now. Start your research by making an appointment with your doctor, and then with a reputable child psychologist or psychiatrist to consult, or both. Then convince her to get whatever kind of help is recommended and make sense. You are right to be alarmed. Since your sister and her husband are doing well, you may be tempted to shrug and share any of the domestic duties, perhaps you and your mother could speak to him about hiring a cleaning person. Make a bargain with him: you'll interview and hire the cleaning person if he'll pay them to come in once a week. But if you're serious about the health department doesn't raid the place. And where did your sister get the idea that if you make a suggestion that someone do things differently, this means you don't love them? Please, please, please, if you are questioning what's going on in her household out of love, you

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IN PASSING

Phil Who?

"Scuse me. Do you have any idea where the Phil Swing Memorial is?"

Two latte sippers and two coffee-cart baristas look blank, hoping one of the others will field the question.

"The Phil Swing Memorial. It's supposed to be here somewhere, at the Community Concourse."

Behind us, sculptor Malcolm Leland's imposing *Bow Wave* splashes through its granite sea.

"Who's Phil Swing?" The four at the coffee cart admit though they work at the concourse they have no idea where the memorial is. A dozen more inquiries around the plaza yield the same. Not even the security guard knows.

The acid test for the neglected congressman should be the concourse information desk. The woman smiles, thinks a moment, then ventures, "It's a fountain, isn't it? The one in the plaza is *Bow Wave*, so it must be that one there."

She points through the glass doors on the east end of the building, to the corner of Third and C, to a towering slab of concrete and a foot-deep pool behind a cluster of trees. The Phil Swing Memorial Fountain.

Newspaper photos of Swing from the 1920s and '30s show a devilishly handsome, amiable-looking man, just the kind to catch the public's eye. He was a Stanford graduate and a local lawyer who served six terms in Washington representing the 11th U.S. Congressional District. At the time, the 11th included San Diego, Imperial, Riverside, San Bernardino, Orange, Mono, and Inyo Counties. Growth was the current issue, and growth requires water. How to

get it from the Colorado River to homes and farms to the west was the problem.

The Swing-Johnson Bill, authorized by Congress in 1928, created Boulder (now Hoover) Dam and the All-American Canal through the Imperial Valley. Swing went on to shepherd legislation for San Diego's link to the California Aqueduct and helped organize the Metropolitan Water District and the San Diego County Water Authority. He was known variously as "Mr. Water" and "The Father of Boulder Dam," about the best honorifics a man could have at that time. When Swing died in 1963, he was eulogized as a savvy legislator and consensus-builder, a guarantor of San Diego's

future, and a heck of a nice guy.

Early in 1964, *Union and Tribune* publisher James Copley organized a committee of local businessmen to honor Swing with a memorial in the concourse. They hoped to raise \$75,000 for the project and to complete it in six months, to coincide with the ribbon-cutting for the adjacent Civic Theatre. But honoring the memory of someone whose accomplishments were 30 years in the past and were taken for granted by most citizens proved difficult even for Copley. In the end, the fundraising would take three years. Between '64 and '67, 30 articles in the *Union* detailed progress and praised major donors. The final bill was \$50,000, paid mostly with private funds. The city



Phil Swing Memorial

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of San Diego gave \$12,500; county supervisors, asked to match the city's contribution, reluctantly appropriated \$5000. At the dedication on July 1, 1967, Copley poured into the pool a gallon of water dipped from the old Mission Dam.

The Swing fountain consists of 26 tubular and fan-shaped copper water jets mounted in a 22-foot-long, wedge-shaped pool. Three huge pumps in the concourse basement circulate the water, which forms a 10-foot bubbling white geyser when the fountain is fully operational. Behind the pool is a bland concrete wall made in a series of convex vertical ribs, reflecting the unique design of Boulder Dam.

When the theater season opened in 1967, concourse officials noted one unanticipated problem with Swing's memorial. The pumps had been installed under the stage of the Civic Theatre. The fountain was in operation 24 hours a day in its early years, and the noise from the motors overwhelmed the acting. For the first year, the fountain was turned off during performances. In 1968 another \$6000 was spent on the memorial to install sound-proofing around the pumps, remove the motor on pads and springs, and isolate the plumbing from the walls.

In one of the fountain committee's fundraising brochures, Swing is quoted as saying, "We in Southern California always have been water seekers, and the end is not yet in sight." Was he anticipating the ensuing water wars, even among some of his own pet projects (most notably, San Diego vs. the Metropolitan Water District)? Or perhaps the electricity wars?

Water rationing has turned Swing's memorial into little more than a civic wading pool. No one familiar with it can recall the last time the fountain was fully operational. In response to the state's power crisis, the city manager has even had to limit the hours the small circulating pumps can be turned on. And until very recently, the memorial plaque was fully obscured by an overgrowth of tree branches.

— Linda Nevin

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He moved
some books
out of the way
on his shelf
and produced
a small
black gun.

The Hate Hardened

Our hard-luck hero recovers in stages: first his body starts to hurt, then to heal. And his heart? That may take a while. After the booze binge, the sex soup, and the chaotic race between his messed-up Maverick and a relentless Renegade, it's a wonder York's still with us. Half of him wishes he weren't. Then he wouldn't have to look at his life: on the lam in buddy Dick's apartment, one step ahead of Walters's goons, and now then's word Juana's been asking about him. Be careful what you wish for...

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

It was three days before I felt like anything but an extra for *Dawn of the Dead*. I ate and slept, lay in the sun out on the apartment-complex patio, staring at the bank of mailboxes, the snail-infested bird-of-paradise, and a dying banana tree. Overripe peaches fell at slow intervals from a neighbor's roof. I drank iced tea, Diet 7-Up, and lots of tap water and listened to Dick's jazz records. I read

one of Dick's books—it was by Nathaniel West, about the Trojan horse and a flea named St. Puce that lived in the armpit of Jesus Christ—while I waited for a blood clot to kill me. I had shaved off my beard, left a long Fu Manchu mustache, covered myself with Hawaiian Formula suntan oil, and did the knee exercises from the sheet of diagrams I got from the hospital. My knee hurt, and I thought more than once about sending Dick back to the apartment for the codeine there. It would have helped the headaches too, which came and went with the ferocity of rattlesnakes on amphetamines. Instead, I made friends with the pain. It reminded me of what I had to do.

Coming off a marathon liquor binge, two weeks of heavy cocaine, and recuperating from a car wreck were nothing compared to the withdrawal I experienced from a much more powerful drug. Hate. It takes a lot out of you to go around hating something even for a day or

two. I had developed a bad jones, hating myself and the world, and as I lay in the sun in front of that shabby pink building for three painfully sober days, I felt it all go out of me. My muscles uncoiled, my nerves downshifted, the brackish metallic taste passed from the back of my mouth and all the hate seemed to harden into a specific pinpoint of diamond-bright resolve.

Dick and I discussed how I should get in touch with Juana. It didn't seem like a good idea for me to just show up at Liz's on Tuesday night. Dick told me that Maynard had passed the word that if I were to appear at the Low Down I was to be detained—it seemed that I had stolen money from the club when



I was fired, and Mr. Walters was eager to recuperate the funds and settle the matter without proffering formal charges, if possible. Neither of us knew how Liz would react

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50-minute Yonka Aromatherapy Classic Facial

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to this, but if I showed up at her place, she would know that Dick had a line to me, and she might just say so to Maynard or, if not, to one of the other girls who would. In the end, we decided that Dick would talk to her and ask her to call at a number belonging to a pay phone on Market Street in front of an Irish bar Dick was partial to but couldn't be connected with if Walters's Vegas people thought the number looked suspicious on their phone bill.

It went down as planned. He said he wanted to talk to her about something very important but didn't say what. He also made it clear that she should place the call without anyone on her end knowing about it. If anyone was listening in at that point, it would already be too late, but Dick didn't seem worried. He was counting on



Tijuana bus

the fact that Juana was making these calls behind someone's back anyway. But if it did lead back to him, he'd just say that he had found the money that I had told him about a long time ago when he dropped by of my trashed apartment and

wanted to get it back to Juana discreetly. If he did run afoul of Walters, that story probably wouldn't do him any good. I owed Dick in a big way.

I stood in front of Delaney's on Wednesday night feel-

ing a stray, cool breeze from somewhere east of the city. I watched the sun sink behind the Imperial Bank building and didn't lean on my cane too much. The knee was coming along. Dick was inside drinking Harp's lager at the bar, not

flirting with the waitresses or chewing the fat with the bartender, but chomping nachos and stolidly drinking his beer as if it were damned serious business. I looked at my watch too much and tried to pace with a stiff leg in front of the phone booth and thought about Irish bars that served nachos and jalapeños. At five minutes past eight the phone rang. I picked it up and saw Dick squint at me from his barstool.

"Hello."
"Dick?"
"No. It's not Dick."
"Nathaniel?" Soft, surprised, without an accent. She said it the way she had that night. It had seemed like such a long time ago, until now.

"Yes," I said, never at a loss.

"Oh...are you all right?"
"I'm fine."
"You are at Dick's? I

hear cars."

"No. I'm not at Dick's. Does anyone know you're calling?"

"No. They are next door at a party. There are so many parties, it's wonderful. I get tired of them sometimes, though. Lately I have been sad."

"Juana, where are you?"
"Didn't Liz tell you? I'm in Las Vegas. Oh, York, it's wonderful. I have a good job dancing at a place called...well, I'd better not tell you. I have a lot of friends. I miss you, though, and Liz and Suzy and Dick. Oh, I have a car, York. I paid for it myself. It's a Pinto." She called it a "peento." It was the only heavily accented word I had heard so far. Her English had come a long way over the summer.

"Why can't you tell me? I'd like to see you, Juana."

"York...Nathaniel, I'm sorry. I can't. Mr. Walters has forbidden me to see you

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or talk to you. If he knew I was talking to you now, he would send me back to Mexico. He hates you, because you've caused him trouble. I don't want to go back, I'm sorry. He told me you had a girlfriend, an old woman with money, he said."

"He's a liar, Juana. He hates me because I've tried to find his brother. A man got killed because I was asking too many questions about the coyote he recommended to you. I screwed it up, but I got people that work for him nervous enough so that he had me fired. I went up to his house and he threatened me and had his one-man goon squad work me over. I gave it up and forgot about it when I didn't hear from you for so long. But then I ran into his partner, the woman who was with him at the hotel when he first talked to you. They're both running illegals, and they're doing it damned strangely. I stumbled onto it and almost got killed five days ago, again courtesy of Mr. Walters. He

wants me dead, Juana, and he's already got blood on his hands, some of it is probably your brother's." I was shouting, the little diamond of hatred was running its charge up through my neck and into the phone.

"York, stop it. I don't know what you're talking about. I don't believe you! Her voice had risen too. It sounded stupid and shrill. "Mr. Walters did find what happened to Herman when you couldn't! Herman is dead. He was killed in a fight in a bar in Tijuana. He was always like that. He carried knives and he drank too much and always lost his temper. I know, Mr. Walters took the trouble and the time to make inquiries among his friends with the *judicial* in Mexico. Herman is dead and buried in Tijuana. Mr. Walters paid for his grave and sends flowers every week and money to my family. He will take me to visit the grave himself soon. He has been very kind to me, and you have caused him nothing but

trouble. How can you say he had anything to do with Herman's death? Why would he do such a thing?"

"How was the body identified, Juana? You know what your brother might have been carrying. Was any of it mentioned?"

"He had his father's Bracero card." She was almost hissing, with grief or anger or both. "I have to go now. I am looking at it. It was given to him for good

would come north and fill the jobs of American servicemen while they were otherwise occupied. The cards still turned up in the Border Patrol roundups, usually among old men who were proud of the cards and didn't know or refused to understand that the program had been dead for over 30 years. It was just the kind of thing a Mexican father would give to his son for good luck before com-

must take it and enjoy it." She began to cry. "I don't want trouble, York. Not now. Herman is dead. That is the way it is. It can do no one any good to make trouble."

"Sure." My voice was distant and dry in my ears. I really didn't want to talk to Juana anymore, but maybe because my goodbye hadn't come off the way I wanted it, I found myself saying, "Could you call again?"

"No. I'm sorry." Her voice sounded flat like the last echo of someone who had already hung up on a bad phone connection.

"All right, then... Goodbye, York."

The phone went back in its cradle with a plastic snick. I felt nothing at all except that icy little hardness I woke up with in the hospital room. My little diamond.

In Dick's car we smoked cigarettes and drove back up to his apartment. We watched television without seeing it or talking to each

other. Eventually I told him what she had said about Herman and the Bracero card. He grunted and massaged his eyes. He moved some books out of the way on his shelf and produced a small black gun. It was the .32. He said, "There." It was his only comment on anything. After a while he turned out the lights and went to bed.

I stayed up burning tobacco and wondering why Juana had said "his father" gave him the card and not "our father." It probably didn't matter, but it's funny what you think about in a quiet room full of shadows when your life has turned to something like the spaces in between stars.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN
By noon the next day I had gathered a few things I would need from a thrift shop on El Cajon Boulevard. I laid them out on Dick's couch and inventoried my haul, trying to think of anything I might have missed. One brown-and-red plaid West-

ern shirt worn through at the elbows and with phony mother-of-pearl button snaps, one faded flannel jacket—again Western style and a reddish plaid—and a down-at-the-heels pair of dust-colored, size 9½ cowboy boots, soles intact, with pointed toes the former owner might have used to pick his teeth. One pair of faded Wrangler jeans and a pair of baggy black cotton pants that would fit over them. The last item of haberdashery was a straw cowboy hat curved at just the right angles on the sides. A block from the thrift shop was a darling little boutique called GUNS! GUNS! GUNS! Inside I found the accessories I needed for my outfit: an ankle holster, a box of ammunition, and an extra clip for the little black .32 Dick had given me.

With everything on both shirts, both pair of pants, the holster, gun, and hat, I checked myself out in the mirror over the fireplace. To get the whole picture I had to stand on Dick's coffee table. My three-day tan provided the right finishing touch. I looked like I had just gotten busted picking strawberries without a green card in Imperial Valley.

In the mirror, I saw Dick coming out of his bedroom scratching his balls. He squinted up at me and said, "You're too tall."

"I'm standing on the coffee table."

He ignored that and walked into the kitchen to get some coffee. I stepped down and took everything off again. He leaned against the kitchen doorjamb and said, "You're too tall to pass yourself off as Mexican. Also your accent is a combination of border Chicano and New York Puerto Rican. You'd hang yourself the minute you opened your mouth, even if you weren't too tall. You can change your walk so you don't seem tall, but you can't change your talk. I'd suggest you keep your mouth shut as much as possible."

"Not all Mexicans are short, Dick. That's bullshit."

I was thinking about Conan. Somehow it didn't surprise me that Dick hadn't asked me what I was doing,

He had tumbled to it as soon as he had seen the setup. I think maybe it was because in my place, Dick would have done the same thing.

He got his coffee, drank some of it, and said, "You walk like a man with a hot-foot, in a hurry all of the time, even with your limp."

"I prefer to think of it as my purposeful stride."

"Mexicans don't walk

erwise, for a while, not somebody who is turning his back on everything he knows, risking his life and the livelihood of his family by dodging bandits and border cops. Those men don't have life dicked, they're scared and they move the way scared men do, which is any way they can."

"Maybe you're right. You're still too tall, though. Try to walk...shorter. I'd

his coffee. "Actually, I'd forget billing myself as Mexican altogether if I were you. Try Nicaraguan or Guatemalan, Chilean, anything. South of Chiapas, the average Mexican will believe anything about a person. But like I said, don't talk any more than you have to, you'll blow it."

"Okay," I said. "I think you're making too much of the average Mexican," but you're probably right about keeping quiet mostly."

"You're not just going to walk into T.J. like that, are you?"

"No. I need a ride to the bus station down in Ensenada. The idea is I'll be getting off the bus in T.J. from somewhere south. Hopefully someone will approach me rather than the other way around. Ensenada will have to do. Nogales or even Mexicali would be better, but I don't have the time."

"I'll drive you because I know you're going anyway, but you shouldn't. You need more rest. You've got a concussion, remember?"

"Thanks, but you've done enough. Like you said,

your ass is grass as long as I'm here. The concussion is obviously bullshit, I'm fine." I didn't tell him about what happened to me in the gun shop. It was frightening and weird. For a full five minutes as I pretended to study the racks of Springfield, Remingtons, Colts, and Mannlichers I didn't know where the hell I was, what I was doing there, or even who I was. It passed, though, and when it all came back to me, I almost wished it hadn't.

"I'll take you." Dick drained his coffee and got dressed.

The drive south took a little over two hours. We stopped at a department store in Imperial Beach where I bought a pair of thick-framed reading glasses I could see through, some underwear, socks, and a toothbrush. I changed \$500 into pesos at a *casa de cambio* in San Ysidro. We had lunch at McDonald's and soaked up the strange border atmosphere, where, it seems, anything at all can happen. Hopeful Mexicans in a promising and plenti-

I took my backpack across the street to the Pemex station and completed my transformation into José Gato.

like they're late for an appointment on Madison Avenue. Slow down, swagger a little, shoulders back. Macho, you know. They're in no hurry. They walk like they've got life dicked. Sometimes the walk is all they have, so it's important."

"Sounds vaguely racist. Besides, I think you're talking about the Logan Heights, East Los Angeles boys who have been here, legal or otherwise,

get some heavy-framed glasses too. You don't want to be recognized by that cop down there or the guy who broke your nose or God knows who else you advertised yourself to. Yeah, glasses. Your eyes have to be scrambled a little, they're too distinctive."

"Aw shucks, Dick. You really think so?"

Dick looked at me from various angles as he drank

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ful new country chomped Big Macs next to Anglo-Americans who were either tourists on their way south for a dirty weekend of license and squalid color or residents who looked desperate, their backs up against the Pacific Ocean and the Third World. It was at that same McDonald's a year later that one of those residents, an out-of-work security guard named Huberty, who had come from Ohio

looking for a patch of paradise, had found his own psychological frontier and massacred 20-some men, women, and children with an Uzi and a shotgun because there was nowhere else to go, nothing else to do. It was the border. The last McDonald's.

We were waved through the gate by the Mexicans and drove the toll road as it wound its way along the rocky, barren coast that had

grown condos and hotels like weeds over the past few years. Dick didn't talk much, but I tried to draw him out. He was something of a mystery to me. A guy who was that into guns, that alone, and from where I sat, looking forward to civilization going down the toilet so that he could live his life the way he wanted to was not the kind of character I generally found myself calling

a friend. Of course, I don't find myself calling anyone that very often. I don't really know why I gave the cab driver his address that day or even why I had remembered it—but I was glad that I had. The magazines he subscribed to were the stuff of macho fantasies, of would-be tough guys getting their rocks off to images of themselves in camouflage fatigues, bandoliers full of bullets, and the only fallout shelter

full of canned peaches on the block. Somehow, none of that quite fit, even if the name did, with Dick Holster. When I asked him why he read that stuff, he said, "There's a lot of information in those magazines you can't get anywhere else. Tips on low-tech farming, fishing, the way things work and how to repair them without metric tools or replacement parts from Salt Lake City, how to cure hives,

preserve meat, herbal medicines...you know. It's not all 'How to repel the commie hordes under full-on conditions or whatever'."

The conversation came back around to My Mexican Holiday. "I don't know what you expect to prove or what you can do about it. Do you?" he asked.

"I have a very vague idea about what I expect to prove, and I don't know if I'll be able to do anything about it at all," I said.

"You're crazy. I know you already know that, and I'm just saying it because I'd feel...remiss if I didn't."

"Okay, you said it."

The fact that he didn't try to talk me out of it somehow made me feel even better about giving that cab driver his address. It meant he already understood something about me that I couldn't have explained if I tried.

"Ensenada's just past these hills here. We'll have to ask directions to the bus station."

On reflection and general principles I had ditched the canvas valise I had received as a door prize at Rachel Cole's. Instead I had borrowed a ratty old green khaki backpack of Dick's and tore out the Montgomery Ward's label. Inside were the clothes and the gun. I fondled the bag as we drove through Ensenada and tried to wipe the sweat on my palms onto the shoulder straps.

Dick asked directions and too soon we were parked in front of a taco stand across the street from the Tres Estrella de Oro bus station.

"You got a name?" he asked me.

"What, oh...I don't know, José. What difference does it make?"

"José what?" I looked across a vacant parking lot that was being torn up to provide a foundation for something else that would be torn down in ten years. I watched a backhoe with the work "CAT" written on the yellow plate above the engine housing rake dirt and brick from one place to another.

"Gato," I said, "José Gato."

I took his hand and clasped it without actually shaking it. With his other hand he handed me a piece

of paper. It reminded me of what he had done the day I was fired from the Low Down. "What's this, a yacht club in Rosarito that's hiring in case I fail as a tomato picker?" I looked at it. It said "Audie Murphy" in handwriting, his phone number at the apartment, and the address of his place in Jamul. "Sometimes the polleros want the address of someone in the States who will pay for your delivery. It might buy your way out of something...maybe."

"Okay."

"Also, if you've got the rest of that grand along, I'd tape it to my nuts if I were you."

"I've got half of it, the rest is in the Star Trek glass in your cabinet."

"It's the waiting for you."

"Use it if you need it."

"Let me know what's going on as soon as you can. Keep your ass down and your mouth shut."

I nodded and turned toward the bus station. Behind me I heard his Pontiac rumble up the street.

The Tres Estrella de Oro bus station was a shabby, square, cinder-block building replete with broken plastic chairs, a bank of video games against one wall, a snack bar offering *papas, tortas, churros, jugo de piña*, tamarind and soda, a newsstand full of newspapers and comic books with names like *Cienfuegos Ficción* or *¡Delito!* and titles like *Mé En Poses* or *secomunical*. Angular graffiti covered the walls, and the smell of jury-rigged plumbing permeated the room. No one looked excited, hopeful, longing, happy, or sad the way they do in airports. It looked like a bus station anywhere full of people who were being shuffled from one place to another on a low budget; it just happened to be in Mexico.

The men's room was too small, had no partitions between the stalls, and looked to be a blow-job factory judging by the henna-haired boys who ran the soap-and-hand-towel concession. I took my backpack across the street to the Pemex station and completed my transformation into José Gato. I strapped the ankle holster over the right pant leg of the jeans, pulled on the boot, and let the black

cotton pants ride over it so that I could get to it quickly. Most illegals coming north for work wear two sets of clothes. After running through canyons in the middle of the night dodging *la migra*, piling into the trunks of cars with a half-dozen other people for hours on

end, and sleeping in drainpipes or dumpsters, they shed the outer layer to look as presentable as possible to an employer. With the rancher's hat on my head, I walked back across the street and bought a ticket to Tijuana. I had 40 minutes to wait. I read an Alfred

Bester story in a copy of *Cienfuegos Ficción* while I did. The bus took me back over the same toll road I had come down on with Dick. I tried to sleep away the redundant two hours, but I couldn't. My unconscious kept asking my conscious mind what the hell it thought

it was doing. There was no good answer. The question just kept bounding around along with the rest of me on the bus that needed new shocks, new brakes, and a new transmission. It was late afternoon when I arrived in T.J. ■

— John Brizzolara

Next week: José Gato brings York across.

John Brizzolara's novels include *Wirecutter* and *Empire's Horizon*. In 1997 he received the National Conference Media Award for Journalism.

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BARONA CASINO

Story continued from page 1

peaking is a man I'll call Earl Elkin, 53, who, in the maturity of his life, found a career in the cattle yards of professional wrestling. Elkin does not wrestle or manage wrestlers or promote wrestling cards. What he, camcorder on shoulder, does is videotape female wrestlers. Said tapes are roughly edited, ads are placed in wrestling magazines, and, through the ancient auction of *I Got/You Want*, buyer and seller are brought into communion. I've asked Elkin to tell me about his first taping session.

"We had a little money problem. The girls wanted \$100 each. And we had a problem with the ring ropes. They were wrestling in what was supposed to be a standard wrestling ring, but we didn't have real ring ropes — what we had looked like limp clotheslines.

"The girls were veteran wrestlers. They had plenty of ability, but fake ropes made them look stupid. When one of them fell back, she pretended to fall against real ropes. Still, compared to what else was on the market, it was a very sellable tape." A flick of memory lights Elkin's face.

"Where did you find female wrestlers?"

"I went to one of the Tijuana wrestling schools. The guy who was the trainer had girls. I needed a quick tape, and it was easier to get that way."

Elkin's tapes, at least the ones I've seen, are minimalist reproductions of a professional wrestling match. Two women, clothed in high-topped boots and bathing suits (one-piece, two-piece, or bikini), grapple, grunt, moan, fall, slap canvas, endure body slams and hammerlocks, inflict forearm smashes, leg scissors, step-over toe holds, wrist locks, and repeat and repeat and repeat.

There is no audience, no announcer, no color commentator, no past, present, or future. We don't know if it's day or night. We don't know why these women are wrestling, where they're wrestling, how they got there, where they're going, who they are or claim to be. The relentless anonymity of the participants gives a pornographic feel to the tapes, which, in a perverse way, is reinforced by the absence of ordinary sexual acts.

"The first time I taped was bizarre. I bought a camcorder a day or so before I lined up wrestlers. A real good-looking girl, one of the wrestlers, got all upset because it was taking a long time to shoot. It took a long time to shoot because I was reading the instruction booklet. She said stuff like, 'You brought me here to tape and you're still learning how to use the camera?' Elkin smiles. "But it worked out. I had no idea what I had until I took it home, and then I was amazed how bright the picture was and how good the quality was."

Earl Elkin is tall, four inches over six feet, but several inches of that height are concealed by a pronounced slouch. He has a full head of thick brown hair that is swept back from his forehead. He is clean-shaven, has a wide nose, dull brown eyes that are normally half-closed, and thick lips that rarely touch. He is plump and soft around his face and torso. The first small ring of fat circles his neck.

We are seated in the living room of his four-bedroom, three-bathroom house located on a ridgetop across the gully from SDSU. One notices furniture. All the couches, chairs, lamps, and tables belong to another generation. It's as if Elkin moved into his mother's house and changed nothing, not a plate, towel, throw rug, bedspread, or curtain.

"When was this?" I'm referring to Elkin's first

wrestling tape.

"Nineteen eighty-eight. That was the year I found three girls who were the best athletes at a high school. Not going to say which one. They wanted to give wrestling a shot."

"Why would teenage girls want to give wrestling a shot? Teenage girls. Wrestling. Nineteen eighty-eight. Does not mix and match."

"I had gotten to know Mildred Burke. She was a women's wrestling star in the '40s and '50s. She'd been on a lot of TV

shows, including the Groucho Marx show. I played a tape of that for the girls. Plus, at the time, there was a movie out called *All the Marbles* with Peter Falk. There were a couple actresses playing pro wrestlers in the movie. I showed that to the girls and said, 'After you graduate from high school, maybe you'll be lucky enough to be in some college sport, maybe not. Maybe you won't go to college. What are you going to do?'

"I took them to Tijuana," Elkin laughs. His is not a heartless laugh or an ironic laugh or an empty laugh. Rather, it's a soft, understated, aw-shucks laugh, which, when associated with teenage girls, Tijuana, and wrestling, seems wildly out of synch. "It was bizarre. One of the girls was the homecoming queen of her high school. Anyway, I took them down to the auditorium in Tijuana where Mexican pro wrestlers train."

"Just a second. The girls were high school students in San Diego?"

"Right."

"You took them to Tijuana?"

"I told them, 'If you want to learn pro wrestling, there is no way to learn it here; there is nothing in San Diego.' So I took them down to Tijuana and they saw 30 guys getting knocked around, falling down, getting back up. The girls were bug-eyed. They said, 'We can't do this! We're just high school girls.'"

"But the trainer was very good. They called him 'Professor.' The head instructor in Mexican wrestling schools is

usually a top wrestler, usually a veteran, and usually past his peak. So Professor tells the girls, 'A young woman is like a gentle flower with many petals. I'd never do anything to hurt you.'"

"He got one of his woman wrestlers in the ring with a man. They started demonstrating moves. Within 40 minutes my girls were doing victory rolls and flying head scissors. They couldn't wait to go back. They were so jazzed."

"What's a victory roll?"

"A victory roll is when you run up to your opponent, step on his knee, and wind up sitting on his shoulders. You both roll over and then you've got him pinned. A flying head scissors, same thing: you run up, step on his knee, and put a head scissors on him. In both cases the opponent does the work — he acts like you dragged him down, he does the roll. And then he's flat on the mat, looking like he was taken down with your flying head scissors. The trick is to be athletic, acrobatic, and able to do handstands."

"The girls got it down in less than an hour. That's when I called Mildred. I said, 'I got these girls who know a few things already. So I drove them up to Encino and we built the group.'"

Big jump over big puddle. "Girls and Tijuana. Mildred and Encino. What's the connection?"

"I used to go to the Coliseum [15th and E Street], that cigar/popcorn-smelling place where they had boxing once a week and wrestling once or twice a week. I went, occasionally, from my early 20s on. Wrestling, for me, was never

on the level of football or boxing. Still, I've watched a lot of old-time wrestlers. Technically, they weren't great, athletic wrestlers, but they had their stick. They had a way of getting people in the door."

"Anyway, I'd go to the Coliseum occasionally, and one night in '83, I saw this woman, Mildred Burke. She was in her 70s. She was an old-time women's pro wrestling champion [1936–1956]. She wrestled, a lot of times, in carnivals and for real. Sometimes if a woman opponent didn't show up, she challenged men."

"Mildred was introduced to the crowd. It was like introducing Willie Mays to baseball fans, that's what she meant to women's pro wrestling. Later I went up to her and we talked. She had a ring in Encino and was filming women wrestlers. There weren't VCRs or camcorders then. She made 8-millimeter and Super 8 millimeter films. She said she made more money in one year filming than she did during her entire career as a wrestler."

"How?" Step right up. One peek for a dollar.

"She advertised in wrestling magazines. She told me she sold \$200,000 worth of those stupid little 12-minute films. She filmed overweight Mexican women wrestlers," Elkin

IT'S A SOFT, understated, aw-shucks laugh, which, when associated with teenage girls, Tijuana, and wrestling, seems wildly out of synch.

chuckles, "not even beauties. Later she got some bikini girls, but in the beginning, she filmed whoever was available."

"And you said to yourself, 'Eureka, I've found a calling.'"

"I said, 'What the hell am I doing?' You never know, when you have a store [Elkin once owned a clothing store], what the hell is going to happen. You got to pay rent, you got to fill your store with merchandise, then hope people come in and buy. Mildred puts a little ad in a magazine, people send her money, she sends them film." Elkin takes a moment to enjoy the transaction's elegant simplicity.

"Okay. So after the Tijuana trip, you drove the high school girls to Mildred's in Encino?"

"Yeah. Me and five girls."

"To Mildred's house? Five girls?"

"Mildred had a warehouse, but better than a warehouse — it was in a nice area of Encino, had a big parking lot and a high ceiling."

"Do you remember what Mildred said when you arrived?" I'm ten steps behind his story.

"She was excited because these were good-looking girls and she saw they were athletic. But they weren't trained. You know, like a head lock leads to a head scissors which leads to a toe hold. Veteran wrestlers know one hold automatically leads to the next. They can do it in their sleep."

"Were the girls paid?" Still ten paces back.

"From me. Mildred didn't pay much, even for seasoned pros. Mildred's attitude is very common in wrestling. It's 'I trained you, you owe me something.'"

"And you figured there was money in it for you."

"Sure. The point was for these girls to be trained and then be 'my girls,' because, by then, I knew about VCRs. I knew once they had some training, I could make 12-minute tapes of them. It would be easy because there was no sound. I could tell them what to do while I was shooting."

"Sounds too good to last."

"Lasted a year, maybe two. This is what happens, with women anyway: they get boyfriends, they get married, they

We Bleed In Mexico



John Roberts

Roberts shakes his head. "Vince McMahon Senior was the one who got all the good wrestlers. He traveled

• Dinner arrives on two diminutive green plastic plates. Each plate holds three tiny tacos and a lettuce salad.

"Psychosis. He went Triple-A. He was invited to wrestle for the ECW [Extreme Championship Wrestling]. People in Philadelphia and the whole ECW community, even the promoter,

I try a bite of lettuce

"What did you pay the top guy?"

"San Diego can be a market if we get the right people to put it on. I could make it big. I can make wrestling big. We can knock

padding of blood: 160 gms

And I don't have a script.



Editorial

1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 2679, 2680, 26

every other street pole. The posters picture two wrestlers in a deep crouch. Each man has his arms outstretched as if initiating a bear hug. The print says something about *Luchamania*. Roberts remarks, "That card is going to be a good one. Hair versus Hair."

board, states, "Tortas 10 pesos, sandwich 10 pesos, sodas 8, nachos 12, cueritos 10." Roberts introduces me to Stigma, a middleweight dressed, ankle to chest, in a black costume laced with red thunderbolts. The wrestler says, "I speak a little English."

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"How long have you been at it?"

"I started my career since I was 17 years old. I've had about 1000 matches, all over Mexico and the United States. I work for the WWO [World Wrestling Organization], and I work for all the organizations in Los Angeles, like the WPP [World Power Wrestling], a lot of those."

Mr. Tempest and La Morge join our circle. "What got you started in wrestling?"

Stigma replies, "In the beginning I saw it in movies, wrestling from Mexico City. So one day I decided I wanted to be in one of them and I began training. I've been a pro wrestler since I was 25."

"Do you use a different style in America?"

"There is a different style in America. You can see the difference. In Mexico it's really fast and really hard. In America it's slow. Everything is heavyweights. The wrestler's dressing room must have been a rest room at one time, or more precisely, an entry room to a rest room. It can be found



opposite the refreshment stand, down a cement staircase. There is a spooky, cat-a-combunkner feel to the space. The walls, floor, and ceiling are concrete. The door frames are concrete. There are no furnishings whatsoever; no rugs, chairs, benches, lockers, nothing but a bare lightbulb and 15 adrenaline-soaked men dressed in masks and wrestling costumes.

I mingle, chat, and chat. Everyone wants his picture

taken. I take everyone's picture. Roberts points out a man wearing a skeleton costume. (Neck-to-toe black suit with a human skeleton outlined in white; black boots with appropriate bones outlined in white; topped off by two white tusks and three white horns.) I ask, "How many bouts have you had?"

"One hundred forty-five." (This is being translated.)

"Is this a big match

tonight or something you do every week?"

"It's something we do every week, but it's a big deal for us because we're working. We train all the time. Every fight is great wrestling. We have to do our best every day. We have to prove ourselves to get better and better."

I return to the lobby and enter the auditorium. Imagine a Main Street movie theater in Winona, Kansas, with all its rugs, curtains,

and seats removed. Now, add 100 white plastic chairs.

Like our theater in Winona, this auditorium has a narrow stage. On it is an elderly Mexican man sitting behind a cafeteria table with a hammer and brass bell at his side. In front of the timekeeper is a wrestling ring built so its floor is flush to the small stage, jutting outwards from the stage toward the audience.

A young wrestler, perhaps 120 pounds, standing five foot six inches, dressed as a Halloween jack-o'-lantern, climbs into the ring. His first act is to quarrel with the referee. This is followed by an elaborate rooster-strut to the edge of the ring and an impassioned oration/haranguerant/declaration of principles shrieked at the audience.

Meanwhile, his opponent, Mr. Red-White-and-Blue Mask, slinks into the ring and launches a sneak attack by way of a flying tackle. Jack-O'-Lantern counters by making a vertical jump of at least three feet, spinning 180 degrees, and kicking RWB Mask in the chest with both feet.

RWB Mask falls to the canvas. Jack-O'-Lantern "helps" the dazed villain to his feet; then, placing one arm between his legs and the other over his shoulders, lifts the helpless gladiator high, drops him to the mat, looks to the referee, snarls, turns back to RWB Mask, and kicks him in the ribs. The audience expresses booming, thunderous, ear-splitting approval.

Incidentally, this is a family crowd. I count 65 customers, lots of moms and kids, fewer dads. Children settle on the edges of their chairs, clearly hypnotized. Their joyous shrieks reverberate off the walls and ceiling, bouncing back and forth, back and forth, back and forth, thus transforming each eruption into one long cascading howl of delight.

Wrestlers enter the auditorium as they do on American cable TV. First, a super-masculine voice, over-stuffed with wonderment and enthusiasm, introduces the wrestler while a DJ plays, at maximum volume, said wrestler's entrance music. In the second bout (Jack-O'-

Lantern won the first match), Mr. Thunder Mask is introduced by Michael Jackson singing "Billie Jean." Thunder Mask prances down a theater aisle, slides under the lowest ring rope, high-steps around the ring, arms raised, fists clinched, swaggering like a German panzer commander on holiday in

Poland.

The announcer yowls, a Mexican rap tune booms from auditorium speakers, and Mr. Skeleton sprints the length of the auditorium's walkway, then dives, headfirst, into the ring. This match is an hour into the evening, and as you would expect, both wrestlers are

bigger, quicker, and better buffed-out than their predecessors.

While Mr. Skeleton's entrance was in progress, a slender mid-20s male, sitting in the first row, dressed as a civilian, but obviously a ringer, began hectoring Mr. Thunder Mask. Thunder Mask responds. We have

back-and-forth. We have additional back-and-forth. Meanwhile, Mr. Skeleton paces the ring, eager for combat.

The bell sounds, Mr. Skeleton rushes forward, and, first move, throws Thunder Mask out of the ring. Golly, Thunder Mask lands at the feet of Mr. Ringer. Again, Ringer hectors the fallen superstar. Little by ever so little, Thunder Mask struggles to his feet and slowly climbs back into the ring, just in time to receive a vicious kick to his skull. As one, the audience realizes thunderous ecstasy.

We endure another slow-motion recovery while Thunder Mask zombie-staggers to his feet. But wait, the referee is lecturing Mr. Skeleton about the impropriety of using an opponent's head as a clog-dancing stage. Look here! It may be that the ref has unintentionally given Thunder Mask time to recuperate!

Hang on, there's more! Mr. Ringer sneaks off his chair, slithers into the ring, jumps on Mr. Thunder Mask's shoulders, and pummels him with both fists. WHAT'S THIS? Halloween, who wrestled in an earlier match, flies into the ring and joins Mr. Skeleton and Mr. Ringer in kicking the now defenseless, crumpled-on-mat, last-gasping Mr. Thunder Mask. WOW! We have four participants and a blizzard of kicks, grunts, punches, slaps, climbing on ropes, diving off ropes, flips, back flips, arm drags, hand chops, and an outstanding clothesline. Mr. Thunder Mask wins.

This is complicated, skilled, athletic work, akin to ballet, except these men put in an extra 5000 hours lifting weights in addition to countless hours practicing moves. And it's dangerous: wrestlers have died in the ring, every wrestler has been injured. Saying that, after two hours I'm bored to the bone. I find Roberts, who is sitting in the last row, next to the DJ, and announce, "I'm ready to go."

Roberts replies, "I want to see who wins the belt." The main event of the evening is for a belt that represents an organization whose name is unknown to tens of millions on both

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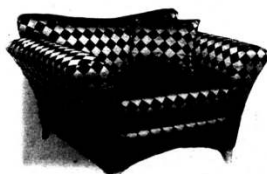
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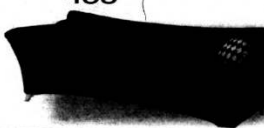
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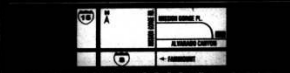
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My first meeting with John Roberts occurred at Elkin's rented warehouse in National City. The space, about the size of an insurance agent's office, is located

My first meeting with John Roberts occurred at Elkin's rented warehouse in National City. The space, about the size of an insurance agent's office, is located

in a new office park just off National City Boulevard. The purpose of this depository is to accommodate Elkin's wrestling ring.

The idea, Elkin told me, was to set up his own studio so he could videotape women wrestlers without the considerable hassle of finding and renting someone else's ring. So far, his studio has been used by a half-dozen would-be/unknown male wrestlers as a dirt cheap-to-free training site.

One enters Elkin's warehouse through an unmarked front door. A narrow corridor opens into an oblong chamber that has a wrestling ring placed against its far wall. The ring is standard-

sized, built three feet off the cement floor, and has four posts with appropriate turn-buckles, three sets of ropes, and a thick canvas mat. Elsewhere, everywhere, are cardboard boxes, cardboard boxes, cardboard boxes, rags,

storage boxes. John Roberts hovers a few feet behind me; Earl Elkin stands to my right. We watch the pair practice bumps, falls, slaps, leaps, pins, and drops. Very quickly, the room is filled with the smell of sweat and

He's dressed in long black pants, boots, and a black T-shirt. Colberg is in his early 20s, six foot four, has short dark hair, and is clean-shaven. "A nice young man," my mother would have said. He is apprentice to the older, far more experienced Tony Gomez.

Gomez looks like 15 years of six days a week in a gym. He *looks* like a pro wrestler. He has long black hair worn in a ponytail, black eyes, a Roman nose, constant smile, copper skin, and stands, maybe, five foot nine inches. But you don't notice any of that. At first, all you see is layer upon layer upon layer of muscle. The man's chest is three times normal size. Ditto

"In the WWF, it's six minutes of work, and three minutes of that is entrance."

plastic cups, folding tables, lamps — the collected dreck of one man's fancy.

I am here to observe Ryan Colberg and Antonio Gomez train. I select a spot 15 feet back from the ring, in a small clearing free of

cries of "NO, NO, NO!" The cries are meant to express unbearable pain, shouted when either man is in the grips of a diabolical toe/leg/arm/neck hold.

The taller, younger wrestler is Ryan Colberg.

neck, shoulders, legs, arms, wrists, and forearms. To put it simply, Gomez is *huge*. The pair break from training, lean against black ring ropes, and suck air. I ask

Colberg to explain the difference between American and Mexican wrestling.

"You can tune in wrestling on Mexican TV. They'll go six-man tag 48-minute match. It's psychology. You don't see psychology in the WWE anymore. In the WWE, it's six minutes of work, and three minutes of that is entrance. After the wrestlers finally get in the ring, it's spot, spot, spot, high spot, high spot, finisher, done, out. In Mexican wrestling, it's three falls. First fall he'll look like the master. He'll put me away. I'll be in many holds, and I'll be in pain and he's breaking me. I'll look like a retard."

I'll look like some green loser. Second fall comes, but I've been scouting him — I might know some things. You can *really* tell a story with three falls. That's a loss

"For the amount of money I paid, for the little training I was getting, it wasn't enough for me."

"What is the hardest part about wrestling for you?"

"I still don't bump good." (I should explain that

taking a bump is taking a fall, as in, Gargoyle the Magnificent lifts you over his head and slams you into the canvas. Taking a bump can also be taking a slap,

punch, kick, gouge, being thrown out of the ring or struck by a chair or having Gargoyles stand on a corner turnbuckle and do a one-and-a-half gainer onto your chest. The idea in taking a bump is to make your opponent look good, which means making the bump look and sound real. The idea in giving a bump is to make the bump look and sound real while not injuring your opponent.)

Colberg continues, "Taking a bump is nothing you'd want to do on Sunday. The first day I was in a Tijuana wrestling school they told me to take a bump. I didn't have any elbow pads

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in running four steps jumped in. In four steps and jumped in the air. Fireworks were going off in my head about how great this was going to be, and then I hit that mat and I said, "So damn hard, I hit it so wrong. I was up in the air and reached for the ground with my elbows and quickly found the ground with my elbows. Seriously reconsidered my future in wrestling."

Gomez adds, "We have different bumps and they hurt. They're not fake, they hurt for real. I'll be honest with you. I slapped some guy. He told me wrestling was fake. I said, 'You think so? Okay, here it comes' and I gave him a bump on the nose. His face got all twisted and purple, all black. That's right, it hurts."

* * *

Antonio Gomez is 33 years old and lives in Poway with his wife Cathleen and daughter Samantha. Follows is his story, as told to me during five hours of conversation in a room at Pepper Kar, Poway, and National City.

"I was born in Acapulco, Guerrero, Mexico. I came to San Diego when I

"I got in the gym when I was 13 years old. I competed in professional body-

in this life. I'm an immigrant — I immigrated to the United States of Amer-

"I stand on top of the ropes, make a flip in the air, and land on my back. Ever since that happened, my back has hurt so bad."

"But, like I said, I dropped out of high school. And then, to make my living, I went looking for a job. I first started work at Sizzler, in the restaurant business.

of the ropes,
the air, and land
since that
back has

I was a breakfast cook, a lunch cook, and then I became a dinner cook. I started making money and looked for an opportunity to get into a wrestling school. In San Diego, there are not

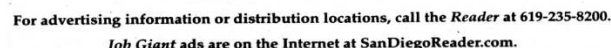
"I told her, 'I'm going to wrestle. This is my life. I want to do this.' When you have something set up in your mind, if you believe in that, something very good will happen to you."

"She became my fiancée. We flew back to New Hampshire and got

"Then she got a job with IBM back in White Plains, New York. I said, 'Well, let's go back.' I did like New York a lot, it's really nice, it's a lot of money. People have attitude, big-time, but you see that everywhere, not just in New York. They have this saying, 'If you can make it in New York, you can make it anywhere.' And that is very true.

"I was a line supervisor in a restaurant, because I spoke both languages, English and Spanish. I was making hell of a lot of money. My wife asked me, 'Do you still think about your wrestling?' I said, 'You know what? I will never give

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up. I got to do this."
"One day my wife said, 'I have an opportunity to go back to San Diego. Do you want to go? You could train in Tijuana for Mexi-

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can wrestling. I said, 'That's great.' That was in the summer of 1997.

"As soon as I got back here, I saw an article about a wrestling training school in San Diego. I went over to check it out. It cost \$3000. You had to pay \$500 on the spot. One of the guys said, 'I don't think you're going to like it.' I said, 'Oh, I'll give it a shot.' So I did. I paid \$500 up front.

"When I first started training, I weighed 262

pounds. I was big. There was an African-American training with us, he was 390 pounds. I was the only one who could pick him up and slam him.

"I remember the day was Thursday and there was a guy in the gym named Rich Frisk. He's well known in the Mexican wrestling style. He's a trainer who used to be a referee in the NWA [National Wrestling Alliance]. He's a real nice guy.

"I was getting trained three days a week only. Sometimes only two days a week. I was mad. For the amount of money I paid, for the little training I was getting, it wasn't enough for me. I have to be trained for that amount of money.

"I think Frisk saw I was determined. I was taking bumps left and right and getting up while other people were complaining. 'Oh, my back hurts. Oh, my neck.' I kept going. Frisk said, 'You

didn't complain at all, man.' I said, 'Well, you know, I feel pain, but I keep it to myself.'

"Frisk got into a disagreement with the gym. He was going to train somewhere else and asked if I wanted to come along. He made an appointment with me to meet him in Chula Vista. We had a cup of coffee and a little chat. He kept telling me, 'You're a pro already! You're intense. Your face, your body, that tells me you're for real.' This was 1998.

"Mr. Frisk taught me how to do bumps, how to land so I don't get hurt, how to do flips in the air. Then he started teaching moves and collisions. We were training three or four days a week. He put the example for everybody else. We just watched him and did the same thing he was doing.

"He is an excellent trainer, but I don't know, I guess he had personal problems. He told us he couldn't continue with the school. But he's a real nice man. I still talk to him.

"After that there was somebody else. One of Frisk's

friends came in from the L.A. circuit of professional wrestling. His name is Frankie D. This kid is a real determined kid. He does moves you've never seen before. He used to train in Tijuana with a big Mexican superstar by the name of Rey Misterio.

"Frankie D taught me a couple of moves, really good, devastating moves. I tell me, 'You're a pro already! You're intense. Your face, your body, that tells me you're for real.' This was 1998.

"Mr. Frisk taught me how to do bumps, how to land so I don't get hurt, how to do flips in the air. Then he started teaching moves and collisions. We were training three or four days a week. He put the example for everybody else. We just watched him and did the same thing he was doing.

"He is an excellent trainer, but I don't know, I guess he had personal problems. He told us he couldn't continue with the school. But he's a real nice man. I still talk to him.



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THE MEDICAL CENTER FOR CLINICAL RESEARCH

row!' I said, 'Yeah, no problem.'

"On Sunday morning we woke up and went to church. I prayed and prayed. The next Wednesday morning I talked to this guy, he used to train in Mexico. He wrestles on the American circuits now. He's Mexican-American.

"He called me on the phone, 'Hi, how are you doing?' and stuff. I said, 'Man, do you know the school closed?' 'Wow, what happened?' I told him. He said, 'Listen, are you interested in training for Mexican wrestling?' I shouted, 'What?'

"He said, 'I know this

guy who is a trainer in Tijuana. I was not going to be able to make it tonight, but I'll give you the address. Tell him I sent you.'

"So he gave me an address and I went over to Tijuana. I was so excited. I met everybody in the school. They were so nice. The professor said to me, 'Let's see what you got.' So I got in the ring with one of his trainers. The guy told me, 'Don't worry. If you mess up, I'll make you look good.' They help you so much!

"I was leaving my house in Poway at 4:00, 4:30 in the afternoon. It's an hour drive to Tijuana. I was going every single day. I'd get to the

school, change clothes, start warming up, do sit-ups, bumps, go around the circle and do flips. You have to arm drag 15, 20 people. You have to do it to everybody. You get in the middle

really fast.

"A guy gets on his knees. You have to run from the corner to him. He will push you up in the air and you land on your back. Trust me, it hurts. It hurts really

to go out on your own. It's scary.

"Mexican wrestlers are so intense. They're real wrestlers. When I was training in America I never saw any of that. When you stepped into that school down there, they don't teach you what they know right away. You have to climb the ladder.

"The first thing was bumps, how to take bumps, nothing but bumps. After that I had to learn how to get on the ropes, do flips in the air, land on my back inside the ring. You had to practice over, over, over, and over until you get it.

"If you mess up in a

real match you can get hurt and there is no doubt about it. You can break your neck so easy, so easy. You see me doing a flip from the ring to the arena floor. That hurts. That's really dangerous.

"When they see that you're done with your bumps, your flips, your arm drags, and they see you're still strong, they'll teach you more. After two months they told me, 'Here comes the submission holds.' That was even more exciting for me. Those people are real technicians with submission holds. You can hurt somebody with a submission hold. You can damage somebody permanently, for

"Every night there was a block of three or four shows and Mike Smith would host in between programs."

of the ring and a guy comes flying in from the corner. You have to flip in the air. One, two, three guys, one after another. It happens

bad. I was purple a couple times. They have a move where they throw people out of the ring. There is no rope to hold on to, you have

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real. There is no joke about it.

"I was at the school for six or seven months. Then I moved to another school in Tijuana. It's always good to move from one place to another because you learn different stuff.

"After I was there for a while, my master went to wrestle in Mexico City. I gave him money to buy my wrestling equipment. He came back with a costume, mask, everything I needed. He said, 'I think you're ready.' Then he gave me a name, Centurion. It was a really good name. People liked it.

"I was so excited. He paired me against a veteran so I'd have someone to direct me in case I forgot a move. The bout was in Tecate. I got \$70. There were six matches on the card, 12 wrestlers. I was in the second match. The auditorium

was small, but it was full, maybe 180 people.

"When I was dressing in the dressing room with the other guys, I was crying. It was like, 'I can't believe this is happening to me!' I was thinking, 'I'm pursuing my dream. It's happening to me!' Somebody asked, 'Are you okay? You're going to do so good, man.'"

"When they announced myself and played my song, it was really exciting. I went in the ring and warmed up. I was nervous. I had never been before a crowd where they can watch me perform. After the match, as soon as I got back to the dressing room, every single wrestler slapped me on the chest. It made me feel good. It was like, 'Now you're part of the team.'"

Earl Elkin and I are sitting in a corner booth at the

Kopper Kettle in Lakeside, one of my favorite breakfast joints. This is a country restaurant that roasts of slab bacon and fried eggs, a place where the waitresses are middle-aged and take no guff from customers. The fare is a vegetarian's night-

"The guys who buy these things are anxious as hell. All they want to know is, 'When am I going to get my tape?'"

mare. The count is big and the coffee strong. I order buttermilk pancakes and a side order of bacon. Elkin has a cheese omelet and whole wheat toast.

Earl Elkin was born in a relocation camp in Germany. His parents were Polish. The year was 1947.

Luck—I suppose one could call it luck—came upon the Elkin family in the form of an American sponsor, a remote relative, "not even a cousin." This fortuitous intervention allowed the Elkins to book passage, by boat and then by train, to

ingly prosperous, added a leather factory to his holdings during the 1970s.

The younger Elkin graduated from Crawford High School and enrolled into San Diego State. "I got a B.A. in speech, the equivalent of a B.A. in English, although I don't have the paper, and, again, although I don't have the paper, I have the equivalent of a master's degree in English. I took a lot more units than I had to, but I didn't do the project. That's what stopped me. I'd take courses and before I could finish the last one that was required, the first one would expire and the game would start over again."

"But what are you going to do with a master's degree in English anyway? Best you could do was be a teacher, and I was already making better money than that."

Earl joined the family business. "I wasn't involved until leather costs became a big deal. Then I got into it. Remember Wilson? [Wilson's House of Suede.] Three brothers owned it. They made lousy TV commercials. They looked like the Three Stooges of the leather business. I figured if those guys could do it, and I had a B.A. in speech, I could make commercials too."

"In those days commercials were cheap. Channel 39 had just come on the air. We're talking commercials that came on late, real late, 12:30 at night. Remember Mike Smith? He was Mr. Channel 39 from eight o'clock on."

"They had shows like *The Virginian*. Every night there was a block of three or four shows and Mike Smith would host in between programs. The most I was

spending was \$30 a commercial for a package deal of ten commercials. In those days one commercial would sell five to ten costs.

"We were doing pretty good. The error I made was not understanding that nothing stays the same. The sun keeps going up and down and there are changes. We couldn't adjust to Korea and China. They were making leather coats in very complicated styles, so many stitches, and those poor people over there were working 12-hour shifts, being paid practically nothing. All that destroyed the market."

"The end came in '87, '88. That's when the girls showed up in my store and I'd take them over to Tijuana and tape wrestling."

I retrieve a five-inch piece of thick bacon from my plate and push it around a shallow pool of maple syrup. "Think about a wrestling match you taped and tell me about it."

"First, the women get in the ring and say whether they're a baby face [good guy/gal] or a heel [bad guy/gal], the bell rings, and they wrestle. The whole bout

is about timing. I call it 'wasting time.' Wrestlers can fly around and do a real good, quick match with all the high points and you go, 'Wow!' They can do all that in two minutes: high points, somebody pins somebody, somebody does a submission hold, and it's over."

"But what's two minutes on an hour tape?" Elkin smiles. "So they've got to spend a lot of time on the mat, pounding the mat, grunting like they're locked in painful holds. It will take forever to get out of that hold. Then one will argue with the referee. She'll throw the other girl out of the ring and keep pushing her back every time the poor woman tries to get back into the ring. Then she gets into another argument with the referee, who tells her, again, to quit doing what she was doing or he's going to disqualify her. That's the story line, if there is one."

"Did you direct wrestlers?" Marge arrives with another round of coffee.

"Veterans know that stuff, but, yeah, if they missed a drop, and it was really bad, and they started laughing,

I'd stop the camera and say, 'Let's go back and do it again.'"

"Did you tape in front of an audience?"

"When I taped in the Fifth Avenue Boxing Club I didn't have a choice. I had all these stupid boxers hanging around. I'm trying to tape women wrestlers and I'd be recording the sound of heavy bags being hit and guys laughing and whistling and music blasting in the background. There was nothing I could do about it, because it was their time to train. I'd pull down the

window curtains, but they didn't go all the way down, so those morons went outside and laid down on the sidewalk to see what they could see. On Fifth Avenue, Elkin laughs again, "with cars and people walking by."

And yet, so many women complain about men. "You made a lot of tapes?"

"Easily 50 or 60 and there are remnants. If I put everything together, I'd probably have 80, maybe 100 tapes."

"Let's say I've sent \$40 for your all-star women's

wrestling tape. How does the program begin? What would I see?" A view of earth from close orbit, the camera zooms down, down, down onto a dilapidated El Centro farmhouse. An elderly man and his wife, retired cantaloupe packers, relax on a front-porch swing. The woman stretches her arms, then brings forth a mighty after-dinner yawn.

"I know, let's kill the dog," Elkin coughs drugs me back to the Kopper Kettle. "The tape starts with names and copyrights. I will boast that with most of the other

video companies, you'd buy an hour tape and see two wrestlers, maybe three. You'd see rotations, everybody wrestles everybody, I always tried to have six different wrestlers."

"That's part of what you're selling. The customer is thinking, 'With this company I'm going to spend \$49 and I'm only going to see two or three or four different people. With this guy, I'm going to spend \$35 or \$39 and I'm going to see six different wrestlers.'"

"Did you always tape women?"

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"What's the attraction to the consumer? With a VCR you can rent movies, you can tape from your TV, you can..."

"But you couldn't get girl-wrestling videos. Women's wrestling, that was the deal."

"And you make money from that?"

"Sixty thousand dollars the second year."

Sixty grand, old-time camcorder, make-believe ropes, wrestlers in swimsuits, money orders mailed from Obscure, Nebraska. How could he miss? "So, you said, 'Eureka! I've found a career.'"

"Yeah, but the wrestling magazine, even though it was good, had limited circulation. Eventually, the same old guys were seeing my ads. Their first question, after they'd bought from me, always was, 'What

do you got that's new?"

"By the second year I realized what I was doing was not going to be enough. The real sickos," Elkin pauses to enjoy the vision, "the 15 percent who buy everything you have, are your backbone and you've got to have something new for them. The guys who buy these things are anxious as hell. All they want to know is, 'When am I going to get my tape?' Now, if they see an ad and they're living in St.

Louis and they can order from a local address and not have to wait on the mail from California, they'll do it."

"If I'd only known that the first year! By the second year, well, let me put it this way. Originally, I was Crest Video, that was my first company. My sister was living in Minnesota. I became Mars Video in Minnesota." Elkin grins. "Now, all those guys living in the Midwest are saying to themselves, 'I

can't believe somebody in the Midwest is doing this.' These are the same guys who are buying from me, but they want to try something new, so they buy from Mars Video in Minnesota."

"Same product?" "Yeah, but a different look, not the exact same tape." Elkin hurries to the good part. "Okay, that started to work. So I have to go to Las Vegas. Las Vegas is hot, it's desert, so Sahara Video. That was another post office

box. Okay, that's pretty good. Now I'm in L.A. all the time. Wilshire Boulevard is a nice area. So, Celebrity Video. Now I've got four, but what about San Diego? I've only got Crest Video. So I started Tiger Video in La Mesa. Then I went to Lemon Grove and made Cypress Video."

"Then in Coronado I did Palm Video, in La Jolla I was Starlite Video, and two or three times a week," Elkin chortles, "I'd start in La Mesa," chortle, "and drive

to Spring Valley," chortle, "and then Coronado," chortle, "and there would be \$200 here, \$150 there, \$175 there," chortle, gurgles, chortle. "If I had done that the first year when I was the only one videotaping women's wrestling, oh shit,

then you're talking \$300,000 or \$400,000."

"How often did you tape?" "How many hours are there in the day?"

"When you have six or seven companies, you have to tape constantly. I was taping every week in Tijuana."

I was taping at the Fifth Avenue Boxing Club two, three times a week."

"Did you give your wrestlers names?"

"I never gave them names, except, maybe, in the beginning. Usually, I flew in professionals like

Candy Devine and Bambi. They were known in wrestling magazines. I got them for relatively low money. Women were not being paid what top men were, except for one, Wendi Richter."

"But with other women

veterans, who were not bad looking, with almost as much skill, the pay drop was huge. Wendi Richter was probably making \$500,000 a year. Candy Devine, in a whole year, made maybe \$25,000. She was doing matches in high

schools for \$40 and it cost her \$15 to drive there and back."

"What did you pay?" The phrase "next to nothing" comes to mind.

"I would tell them that if they stayed three or four days in San Diego and did

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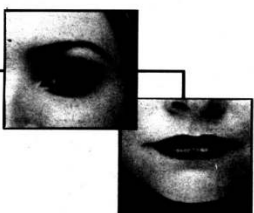
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this and that, they could expect to leave with this amount of money."

"Next to nothing" stays in mind. "Devine flew in especially for you?"

"Sometimes yes, sometimes Candy told me she had matches in L.A. and I'd

say, 'Well, tell the promoter you hardly ever come to the West Coast and you want to stay over a couple of days and go to the beach. Have him book your tickets that way.' And sometimes I would flat-out pay to bring her here." Elkin frowns, looks

down at his empty breakfast plate. "I was doing so good."

"I assume everybody in wrestling heard about you?"

"They didn't unless they happened to look at wrestling magazines. But what did happen, guys who were, I don't know about X-rated, but who were making other types of videos, saw my magazine ads and thought, 'God, he must be filthy rich — he's got ads all over the place.' They didn't know the magazine was giving me a good deal for those ads because I was the original guy. Most of those guys had one-dimensional ideas about the business. They thought they could throw out pictures of girls in bikinis and they'd become millionaires."

"It does not work that way. It might be some guy's fantasy to see a size 10 Char-
lie's Angels kind of girl

wrestling in a bikini. Another guy's fantasy might be to see a six-foot, 200-pound woman crush some little guy." Elkin makes a sweet chuckle.

"Just so I understand,

"I flew in professionals like Candy Devine and Bambi. They were known in wrestling magazines."

there's no porn in this, right?" A voice in my head kicks in. Gads, it's a lawyer's voice. "Objection, your honor. The witness has not defined what porn is. Is he talking about oral, genital, foot, hand, belly-button, human,

animal, or alien pornography? And in each instance, what is the difference between sexual expression and pornography? Move to strike." I slowly lift my cup, sip a mouthful of coffee.

company. Competition causes people to think they've got to keep coming up with something the other guy doesn't have. So pretty soon, guys with less or no scruples are doing topless tapes, they're doing nudes, they're doing things like having the girl win by, our table becomes silent, "sitting on the other girl's face. If some guy has a fetish for boots, they make sure girls in bikinis are wearing high-top boots. If a guy wants them wrestling in brown panties, he can get it with custom-made videos. Like anything else, competition causes weird things."

"A lot of these guys have their own fetishes to begin with, and this is a business where the bikini girls —

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they're not hookers, but they'll wrestle guys for \$100, \$150. So guys were paying that and doing that and all of a sudden a light came on in their heads. They don't have any character anyway — what do they care if people see pictures of them. So they started taping themselves wrestling women."

"Makes you want to reach for a whiskey bottle."

"There are, actually, guys buying tapes of me." Elkin laughs, sort of. "I'm getting my head squeezed by this girl."

"Don't bother with ice, just bring me the bottle."

"There's this classic, notorious guy. He goes to all the bodybuilder shows. Bodybuilders, what do they win in a competition, a trophy? They can't get a decent job. So this guy pays bodybuilders \$300 and then makes tapes of them squeezing his head. A half hour of head scissors. He can't get out of it. His veins are popping." Elkin explodes in laughter, tears spill from his eyes. "And then he sells the tape!" Elkin is laughing so hard as to be helpless.

What else is there to say? Show business is my life. "You mentioned that \$60,000 was your best year. Was that your only good year?"

"I had more than one, but then a couple things happened. Camcorders became popular and a lot cheaper. Every jerk with a camcorder got into the business. I don't care how lousy he was, he still took away some of my business. The pie kept getting smaller. From being the only guy with ads in wrestling magazines, I became one of 3 or 4 and then one of 30 or 40."

"I was competing against independent film-maker types, who already owned all the fancy equipment and knew how to get model-type girls. One or two of their taping sessions cost what my budget was for a couple of years."

"The American Angels, a husband-and-wife movie-making team, shook up wrestling magazines for a year or two, but they vanished. That kept happening, people with more money than me getting into it. There was a guy who did oil wrestling. He called his videos *Sunshine Girls*. He

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didn't last very long because he wanted huge profits and wanted them right now."

I note that Marge has retreated to a counter seat and picked up *People* magazine. I take this as a hint. "Have you ever worked with anyone who made it to the big time?"

"Yeah. Three guys who worked for me—they just happened to be around. They were \$50 event guys. Now they're big shots in the WCW."

"Names?"
"Kornan, they call him K-Dog. Rey Misterio Jr., he can fly. He can run to the corner post, grab the post with his hand, and do a 360. And

Psychosis. His brother, Phobia..."

"Love the names."
"These guys, they don't call each other by their given

"How did you run into them?" Marge puts down *People*, picks up the morning paper.
"When I taped pro

those guys. That was in the early '90s. Misterio was a kid then. He's still wrestling today. The WWF had a so-called lottery—the wrestler who picked the right ticket got to wrestle Ric Flair for the championship. Ric Flair picked Misterio's name out of the hat. That's who they wanted anyway. And then Rey actually beat Ric Flair, but Ric Flair did something at the end that got the referee confused and Flair won."

"Well, yeah, Flair won, but the WWF has writers. The WCW has writers. Flair did whatever the story line told him to do."
"Yeah, they got writers," Elkin says, "they all do.

"Wrestling, back in the '60s, maybe you didn't see great physical performances, but it was a weekly show with characters."

names, Jose and Juan. When they talk to each other, it's 'Good morning, Psychosis,' or 'Psicodelico,' or 'El Monstruo,' or 'Phobia,' whatever."

wrestlers in Tijuana, I told the guy who was handling things for me that I needed a few men for a women-versus-men tape. He brought

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But here's my question, why is the story line so lousy when they got writers?"

"Why are most movies bad? Why are most movies bad?" Elkin's face is blank. "Many are called, few are chosen." Nothing. "All right, how about this? Where stands San Diego in the world of professional wrestling?"

"To work in San Diego, wrestlers almost have to be friends with the audience. They need to sign autographs before the show, get to know the fans on a first-name basis. Asking a guy to spend 8 to 10 bucks—and if he brings his family, 35 to 50 bucks—is a lot of money for something he knows, in the back of his mind, is not real."

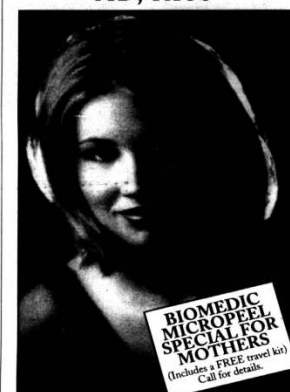
"Wrestling attracts a lot of nuts, guys who think they're wrestlers, guys who think they're promoters. I've been around two or three of these nuts. They spend their last penny booking a place and renting a ring, which costs \$400 to \$500 for the day. They get in a bunch of wrestlers, but they don't know a thing about promoting. They wind up with a crowd of 5 people, or, if they get 50 people, 40 are related to the wrestlers and didn't pay to get in. The promoter loses his shirt but goes around telling everybody he's a wrestling promoter." Elkin sighs. "If you're a wrestler booked into San Diego, you're not being paid much. I would say anywhere from 20 to 80 bucks, more likely 20 to 30."

Marge stands up from her stool, walks to the end of the counter, and begins refilling cream containers. She's smiling. "Do wannabe wrestlers have anything in common?"

"They were five years old and saw it on TV. Wrestling, back in the '60s, maybe you didn't see great physical performances, but it was a weekly show with characters. Good characters, bad characters, just like cops and robbers. You wanted to see Freddie Blassie get beat every week. It never happened. Why? Because they wanted you to come back next week—maybe he would get beat then. I compare wrestlers to rodeo riders. They're willing to take the pain and accept low pay."

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I signal Marge for the check. "But wrestling is different than other sports. There is the fantasy of being in costume and having a stage persona."

"Yes, and believe me, some of these wrestlers are weird. They'll walk around talking about their matches like it was real. The match is long over and they'll say, 'That referee! I could have won.' They knew what was going to happen an hour before the match started, yet they go around talking like that!"

Elkin and I walk outside and stroll along a gravel driveway toward my truck. My companion says, "There were three guys from a Sports Arena WWF show. They were going to train local wanna-bes. They wanted a

lot of money, like \$1500 down. A friend [John Roberts] comes running to me and says, 'Hey, this big organization is starting. Maybe they'll need a video guy.' I said, 'John, I got one camcorder. They don't want me, they'll want a three-camera system.'

"John determined and gets me to go. I see a dozen guys standing around, looking to be trained. None of them has the size to be a wrestler. Now these three guys—one was a wrestler who had a few matches—get in the middle of the ring and start lecturing these 12 so-called potential wrestlers."

"And they start talking about how these prospects need discipline. The prospects have to call these guys 'Mister.' Behind the

ring is a little stairway that goes up to a room with a desk. That's their office. Students need permission to go up and talk to any of the three guys. And each guy has a specific job, so whatever a student's complaint is, the student will have to talk to the guy who's in charge of that area. Everything will be first-class. Even if we bring in Hulk Hogan, and he will come, he cannot make fun of you. Eventually, we're going to have action figures and video games made. They'll be in your likeness and you'll get a percentage of that. They're talking to kids who can't do forward rolls."

"So within a couple weeks to a month, the guy who used to be a wrestler sees this has played out as far as it can go and steals the ring. Just steals it and takes off to Northern California."

We board my big green Dodge truck. I turn over its

big V-8 engine, glide down the driveway, make a right onto Woodside Avenue, wave good-bye to Marge, make another right, and ease onto Highway 67. "If I said, 'All right, Earl, I've got money, go make a wrestling tape, what would you do?'"

"I'd probably go to a Southern city like Atlanta or Memphis or Tampa, a place where there are five, six, seven women wrestlers. Then I'd rent a ring and buy a better camcorder."

"How would you know where to find women wrestlers?"

"I'd have to get the number of the girl who trained the other girls. She's the one who would tell everybody: 'This is on the level. You don't have to worry about the guy being some weirdo. You don't have to worry about being paid. I've worked with this guy before."

He'll pay you."

"You want the place you're going to use to look half decent. It's probably going to cost \$75 to \$100 a day in rent. And then, if you want to have a real good reputation, you take those girls out to lunch every day and dinner every night. That way, the word really spreads. There are a lot of jerks—they'll tape and then say, 'You know what, it was so dark in there I haven't got anything I can use. Can't you take half?' There are a lot of guys like that."

I put foot to accelerator and move big green truck over to the passing lane. Funny, the engine seems to be making a lot of noise. "Will you have an audience?"

watching."

"The wrestlers might as well say, 'Hi, Jack, we're doing this for you.' Have I ever changed the oil in this rig? 'What's the story line?' 'I take a look at them. The girl in charge will tell me who's the best and who's just starting. The pros will win their matches. It's a no-no in wrestling—you don't have a beginner beating a ten-year veteran. Besides, rookies don't know enough and it looks stupid if they win."

"I'll shoot, depending on their ability, stamina, all that stuff, three or four 10- to 12-minute matches. Matches can be two out of three falls. I like those, because you really want to stretch the time. You can have the camera running while they rest between falls. That gives you a couple minutes right there. Then you

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can have a tag team followed by a Battle Royal, where five of them are throwing each other out of the ring and the last two wrestle for the championship of the Battle Royal. That would fill an hour easily."

Come to think of it, I don't believe I've ever changed the oil. "Okay, you're back in San Diego. I'm out \$10,000. Now what happens?"

"Now you've got to find all kinds of ways to advertise. I've got my customer lists. There are some guys on there who will buy. You send a tape to a wrestling magazine. You call your wrestling organization, the UWA or whatever. Then the magazine will do a story on that for free, because they're always looking for new information."

"Okay, now you've got a legitimate magazine and you didn't spend anything for that three-page story. Sometimes the magazine will even print your address, you know. You can see products of the UWA by writing to... The really top wrestling video productions contact Entertainment Tonight or one of those TV shows. I've seen that more than once. Usually, they'll have very good-looking girls in the tape, you know, out-of-work actresses."

I wonder if gas stations still do oil changes. "I'm still waiting for payback. Maybe we get a mention in a wrestling magazine, maybe we get orders from your old list, but when's my \$10,000?"

"Internet."

Three months after this conversation, I found the following message on my answering machine: "Hello, this is Earl Elkin. I was the one that had that wrestling ring in the warehouse in National City. The reason I called was, I applied for a job and I needed some references and I happened to have your card in my wallet. So I hope it's okay—I wrote down your name. If they call you, if you would just do me a favor and tell them you knew me for a year or two or whatever. It would just help me. I didn't have any other, too many other names to use at the time. I hope that's okay. Thank you. Bye." — Patrick Daugherty

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the review, effectively separating me from my cooking library (and from my brains too, apparently). Hamachi is actually a jack called yellowtail (lucky I didn't call it "yellow jacket" with all those buzz saws running); I had it confused with yellowfin, which is indeed an ahi species, albeit less prized than bigeye ahi (due to its milder flavor and lower fat content). I disagree, however, that color doesn't matter. In my experience, the redder the better. The yellowfin in the tartare seemed anemic in both color and flavor — was it perhaps a flank cut rather than the

richer belly-cut used for the entrée fillet?

3. I know you used high-quality peckyote in your crab cakes. I wish you hadn't. I think Trey Fosse at George's has a better idea for showing off this very fragile, delicate-flavored species — crab salad.

4 and 5. My first visit to Tupelo was made about two weeks after your arrival there, roughly seven weeks before the second visit. I took home a menu, which listed Bing cherry as an ingredient in the duck sauce. As for the pork, caramelized wine and balsamic come down to the same thing when the deglaze is done —

reduced, fermented red grape juice and sugar.

6. I blew it on the opaka-paka, guessing that its crispness had to come from a dusting of flour. As for the heart of palm, the server took off this very fragile, delicate-flavored species — crab salad.

7. That goat cheese sure didn't taste goaty — maybe getting pickled makes goats lose their nature. As for the

putatively non-mild aged cheddar, at her first taste of it, Deirdre called it "glorified Velveeta." But I did say that we enjoyed the cheeses juxtaposed with the port flight. Got a problem?

8. I didn't write there was an orange flavor. I said "presence." It smelled like orange peel. Now that I think of it (with no power saws buzzing in my ear), that would have been the bergamot aroma from the Earl Gray tea.

9. We asked our waitress what Paco Jet is. She went back and asked someone else, getting pickled makes goats lose their nature. As for the

it from, it's Paco Jet." I have three other journalists as my witnesses — we all looked at each other and shrugged. You might give your floor staff a heads up on the kitchen equipment.

Why The Tirade?

We need your help! San Diego is no longer a sleepy Navy town, and many of us in the restaurant community are doing everything we can to raise the local and national profile of our culinary scene. This past week a national culinary conference was held in San Diego to discuss menu

trends and culinary creativity. Conferees had a chance to enjoy various restaurants throughout San Diego County. They were impressed with what we had to offer and amazed that we had not received more national recognition.

We need the help of our restaurant reviewers, including Naomi Wise. Ms. Wise recently reviewed (April 19) one of our family of restaurants, Tupelo in the Gaslamp. Although I disagree with many of her subjective comments, I respect an honest difference of opinion. I do, however, have little confidence in a reviewer

who can't get the basic facts right. Our executive chef, Nathan Slovaticki, sent a letter to the editor to correct Ms. Wise's culinary misinformation. I would like to add the following to the list of incorrect information contained in the review.

Ms. Wise states that we "intended...to specialize in Southern regional cuisine" with a "1 esp South tilt." This was never the direction we took. I have no idea where she got her information. The fact is: the menu at Tupelo has been a regional American fusion from day one.

Ms. Wise reports that "the floors are bare and shiny" and the heated patio has "metal tables." The facts are the floors are carpeted with a distinct pattern of gold stars to complement the star in our logo, and the patio tables are granite. If Ms. Wise chooses to review decor as well as food, why not a cacaree?

Ms. Wise also finds it necessary to make condescending remarks toward the city that now supports her. She describes Tupelo's menu as "regionless, almost nationless upper-middle-California-Mediterranean-Pacific" and states that one encounters all over the West — especially in ski resorts and San Diego.

Why the tirade? What's the point? Great American cuisine has always been and always will be influenced by various nations and regions. Chefs are culinary explorers. "Traditional" menus will always have their place in American restaurants, but our guests are well-traveled and well-read and many of them are looking for adventurous dining. San Diego restaurants are meeting that challenge. We need our reviewers to support our journey, not tear up the road before us.

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excitingly. Unfortunately, the "adventurous dining" you cite is precisely what I found lacking at Tupelo. The chef is good, there's nothing really wrong with the food, but the menu is just another of the familiar Spago-oid American-bistro bills of fare that I've eaten all over town, and in Tahoe, Telluride, Mammoth, etc. (There are even a few in San Francisco, but they tend to die young.) My review merely described the cooking, so people will know what to expect if they decide to eat there.

When I go to a restaurant, I want nothing more than to

love it. Like any paying customer, I hope I'll adore the food; as a reviewer, my greatest wish is to make some terrific discovery that I can share with the readers. I'd rather rave than pan; in fact, every couple of months I decide not to review a restaurant I've tried when I can't find anything good to say about it. But not every review can be a rave, or it would cheapen any assessment of the really thrilling creativity coming from the kitchens of, say, El Bizcocho, 150 Grand, or the Marine Room. I keep hoping that a Cohn restaurant will reach that level; if ever one

does, I promise you shining lights and heavenly music.

Wise Got What She Or Here I

Naomi Wise's review of Tupelo (April 19) is confusing. In the first place, "ahi" is a Hawaiian word for all of the tuna species fished there, the most common of which is the yellowfin tuna. That is "true ahi." The Hawaiian word "ahi" is also used to denote other species, including bigeye tuna. Hamachi is a Japanese word and it customarily refers to a superior grade of yellowtail, a species of jack, not tuna.

If Naomi ordered ahi and got yellowfin tuna, she got exactly what she ordered.

Sieve Angus

Wise's Inaccuracy

Before one is to critique seafood, one must know what they are talking about. I'm sure Naomi Wise might be familiar with certain types of food; however, she needs to know what she is referring to before commenting on seafood.

In her typical annoying manner, she tried to explain the dish that is enjoyed at Tupelo (April 19). This is the

preparation including "ahi" tuna. The "hamachi" she refers to is actually Japanese for yellowtail. Yellowtail is not "pink tuna" and has nothing to do with tuna, other than they are both part of the mackerel family. It is not a lesser substitute; in fact, Japanese yellowtail is quite a delicacy.

The "true ahi" being "red bluefin" she refers to is equally nonsense. "Ahi" is Hawaiian for red-meat tuna. "Ahi" can be yellowfin, bluefin, or bigeye tuna. As long as it is red and not the white albacore or bonito, it is called "ahi."

U.S. markets, restaurants, and Naomi use the "ahi" term because they generally do not know the kind of tuna they are referring to. "Ahi" is the U.S. marketing name for a variety of red-meat tuna.

With inaccuracies such as this, I would hardly trust her opinion regarding whether I should patronize a restaurant or not. If I were making the decisions, I would be looking for a replacement for Naomi.

David Ferbrache
Sushi Foods Co.

Calendar

Damp Wings at Dairy Mart Ponds

Birding with the Audubon Society

Last fall, Bill McCausland was so upset over how Dairy Mart Ponds has deteriorated that he didn't include it on the field-trip schedule for the San Diego Audubon Society. McCausland, the organization's field-trip chairman, said last week, "They're not maintaining it," meaning the California Department of Fish and Game isn't. "It's discouraging. The state bought it with special funds, which was good, because it

will be preserved, but they've let the peripheral vegetation go to weeds, and it's difficult for birds to see in there anymore."

Asked if birds liked the vegetation, he allowed that migratory ones might and that his perspective was "kind of selfish."

The Tijuana River Valley was formerly dominated by agriculture. Then the farms disappeared and it became a popular passageway for undocumented workers. When the Border Patrol began to monitor it mercilessly, placing flood lights at the boundary, those workers began crossing elsewhere. "We used to see dozens [at Dairy Mart Ponds] in past years," McCausland observed. "They've all moved west, over toward Tecate."

This weekend, despite the displeasure the place causes him, McCausland has scheduled his usual spring Dairy Mart Ponds field trip. Even though the area's birding opportunities have diminished, it's still one of the liveliest birding places in close proximity to downtown San Diego, where new birds are continually being spotted.

"We have had magpie jays from Mexico," said the retired St. Paul, Minnesota, health inspector. "Their



Dairy Mart Ponds

numbers have increased. And we're getting less Bell's vireos, an endangered species. They're hard to see, but I can tell they're around, because I hear them."

Great-tailed grackles are other newcomers. "They have just come into the colony. I'm not sure from where. Ten years ago they were on the rare side. Not anymore."

Guy McCaskie of Imperial Beach supplies the reason for these changes: water. A well-respected member of the San Diego Field Ornithologists,

McCaskie has been birding in the Dairy Mart Ponds area since the 1960s, when he moved to San Diego from his native Scotland to study civil engineering at SDSU. The southern Pacific coast's regional editor for *North American Birds*, the quarterly journal of the American Birding Association, he is described on Internet birding sites as "legendary."

How often does he go birding at Dairy Mart Ponds these days? "Well, I live very close to it. I can be there in two minutes. I was there yesterday."

When it was agricultural, McCaskie recalled, the place was arid. "Farmers pumped water out of the ground. The water table is fairly close to the surface, so they could irrigate." Recently, there have been major floods, but the real reason for the new conditions is "the continuing paving of all ground, particularly with the development of Tijuana and the channeling of the river. The water no

longer soaks in."

How does the water affect the birds? "Maybe they like it, it's ventured."

"It has certainly changed their habitat. I mean, clearly, there weren't water birds at Dairy Mart Ponds in the past, and now there are. There used to be land birds. Among the missing or near-missing, he names verdins, common ground doves, and roadrunners. Of the newcomers, he names nesting least bitterns and common Moore hens."

Is this exchange bad? "I don't know whether it's bad or good. Personally, I liked it how it used to be. It was a big, much more open space that supported raptors — hawks and eagles. It's being reduced because housing just keeps coming into it from all directions. It's a different place."

McCaskie, like his Audubon counterpart, mentioned uncontrolled vegetation. "There used not to be a huge mass of riparian growth. So there weren't nesting Bell's vireos. There are now." But birds can't see them easily, he regretted, echoing McCausland. "There used to be some isolated little clumps of trees that were magnets to migratory land birds. All we had to do was go to three or four spots, and we found everything! We could survey it totally in an hour, and if that one bird was there, you could find it guaranteed. Now if you've got one bird in five miles of riparian forest, do you think you can find it? As far as

birdwatchers go, they're never going to find all the stuff we used to find."

But do the birds like the vegetation? "I don't know. I've never talked to one."

McCaskie is equally sardonic on the changes that the border activity has brought. "Well, yeah, that's one more thing that used not to be there. We used to encounter aliens in fair numbers down there. They'd just walk by. Now you don't see aliens as much, but you have to deal with high-speed vehicles that are white with green stripes — you know — and they burble from one spot to the next to see who's tripped some sort of a gadget, and then you're standing there saying, 'Well, I just walked through there.'"

— Joanne Schmitz

San Diego Audubon Society field trip to Dairy Mart Ponds
Saturday, May 12,
8:00 a.m.—noon
1-5 south past Imperial Beach, Exit Dairy Mart Road. Turn right, go about 100 yards. Meet just past the concrete bridge, beside the large pond on west side of Dairy Mart Road. Expect hot weather. No restrooms or drinking water available. Free. Info: 619-692-3246 or www.sandiegoaudubon.org

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Calendar LOCAL EVENTS

EVENTS LISTINGS

HOW TO SEND US YOUR LISTING: Contributions must be received by 5 p.m. Friday the week prior to publication for consideration. Do not phone. Send a complete description of the event, including the date, time, cost, the precise address where it is to be held (including neighborhood), a contact phone number, and a phone number (including area code) for public information to READER EVENTS, Box 69803, San Diego CA 92166-5803. Or fax to 619-881-2401. You may also submit information online at www.SanDiegoReader.com by clicking on the events section.

BAJA

A Mother's Day Celebration is planned on Friday, May 11, at Vinos L.A. Cetto, with a concert by La Cane Cecilia Delfy y Su Trio beginning at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$32.50 U.S. For reservations, call 011-52-66-84-3031 x128. (TIJANA)

The Spring Mountain Grande 10- and 20-mile mountain bike rides are set for Saturday, May 12, beginning at 8 a.m. For details, dial 011-52-66-12-2325. (ROSARIO BEACH)

"Fortune's Wheel," Renaissance music will be performed by the Cambridge Ensemble on Saturday, May 12. The concert begins at 8 p.m. at the San Francisco Javier Church (Colonia Juárez). Call 011-52-66-21-8596 for more information. (TIJANA)

Bury on Saturday! The Tijuana Youth Sinfonietta Orchestra, conducted by Pavel Gertman, plans a concert of classical music on Sunday, May 13, at noon, at the Tijuana Cultural Center. Find the center at Paseo de los Héroes and Mina Street in the Zona Rio. For more information, call 011-52-66-87-9600. (TIJANA)

Yee-Haw! The 2001 Texaco Rodeo is slated for Sunday, May 13, beginning at noon, at Cortijo San Jose. To obtain additional information, call 011-52-66-42-4968. (PLAYAS DE TIJANA)

Carlos Niebla's Drama Queen of Her House is being presented on Monday

and Tuesday, May 14 and 15, at 8 p.m. each night, at the Casa de la Cultura (Avenida Paris #5, in Colonia Altamira). For additional details (in Spanish), dial 011-52-66-17-76-3005. Admission is \$6 U.S. (TIJANA)

Laguas for Lunch! Head to Puerto Nuevo for a "Lunch in Lobster Village" when Baja California Tours hosts an outing on Wednesday, May 16. The \$52 fee includes transportation, lobster lunch at El Patio de la Lagunita in Puerto Nuevo, and tours of Tijuana and Rosarito Beach and time for shopping. For reservations, call 858-454-7166. (PUERTO NUEVO, ROSARIO BEACH, TIJANA)

"Kalevala" is the title for an exhibit of photographs of "people from Finland in the world of literature," on exhibit through May at the Tijuana Cultural Center (Paseo de los Héroes and Mina Street, Zona Rio). The exhibition features an opening reception at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, May 16. For more information, call 011-52-66-87-9600. (TIJANA)

"Dolphina" is now being shown Tuesdays through Fridays at 2, 4, 6, and 8 p.m., with additional screenings at noon on Saturday and Sunday, at the Omnimax Theater in the Tijuana Cultural Center. Join in the Three-D Movie Tuesdays through Fridays at 3, 5, 7, and 9 p.m., as well as at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. on weekends. The center is located at Paseo de los Héroes and Mina Street in the Zona Rio. For more information, call 011-52-66-87-9600. (TIJANA)

OUTDOORS

The Catalina Kidz, a meteorological condition responsible for days long episodes of drizzle, overcast weather over San Diego, is most likely to occur in May and June. This weather pattern, which intensifies our late spring "June gloom," happens when moist marine air, drawn inland from the area around Santa Catalina Island, condenses in the form of low clouds along San Diego County's coastline.

The Silk Oak Tree, a fast-growing import from Australia, comes into short-lived glory this month. Golden flower clusters decorate the silvery green branches, an effect that is particularly stunning when seen in contrast to the blue-blossomed jacaranda trees often planted nearby. A common tree in San Diego area parks, the silk oak is also a popular street and back yard tree in the older residential areas.

Wildflowers of San Diego County's highest mountains are in full bloom this week. Take a walk along any trail above 4500 feet in the Laguna, Cuyamaca, or Palomar Mountains and enjoy a palette of colors ranging from crimson red to indigo blue. Among the most common varieties are lupine (blue, occasionally yellow), wallflower (yellow), paintbrush (red), scarlet bugler (red), beard tongue (blue-purple), checker (lavender), woolly blue curls (violet), forget-me-not (white), wild hyacinth (purple), and yarrow (yellow and white).

Land Bird Migration is in full swing this month in San Diego County, with warblers and flycatchers among those most commonly seen. Warblers crawl along tree limbs and branches to dine on their favorite insects, while flycatchers, as the name suggests, catch their meals on the wing. Riparian areas such as the San Diego River through Mission Gorge and Marian Bear Park in San Clemente Canyon are favored by both birds and birdwatchers.

Visit the Dairy Mart Ponds to see the summer resident birds on Saturday, May 12, from 8 a.m. to noon. To reach the spot, take I-5 to the Dairy Mart Road exit; turn right (south) on Dairy Mart Road, and proceed about 100 yards to the meeting place. There are no restrooms or water available, so bring water along with a field guide and scope. Free. 619-692-3246. (TIJANA RIVER VALLEY)

"Nature's Secrets" will be revealed when naturalist Barbara Jones leads a leisurely 2.5-mile interpretive walk along chaparral and oak-lined trails in Dairy Ranch on Saturday, May 12. The hike starts at 8 p.m. at the main entry gate on La Honda Drive. For details, dial 760-839-4680. Free. No pets. (ESCONDIDO)

You're Invited to a Party, a work party that is to tend California natives, weed native plant gardens, and help remove invasive plants with the Friends of Famosa Slough around the treatment ponds at this urban wetland on Saturday, May 12, from 9 a.m. to noon. Meet at the corner of West Point Loma Boulevard and Famosa Boulevard. 619-224-4591. Wear work clothes, and bring work gloves and tools if you have them. (POINT LOMA)

Don't Run Around — Stay Focused! Young children will learn backyard safety and what to do if they get lost on the trail or in the city during

the program planned on Saturday, May 12, at 2 p.m., at Felicita Park (743 Clarence Lane). Live search dogs from the San Diego County Sheriff's Search and Rescue K-9 unit will be on hand. Free. 858-694-3049. (ESCONDIDO)

Stargazing at Hellhole, tales will be told in Hellhole Canyon Open-Space Preserve on Saturday, May 12. Teacher and storyteller Linda White side presents a kids' program at 4 p.m., followed by a guided hike into the park. Adults are treated to stories at 5 p.m. by the light of the setting sun. Bring lawn chairs and blankets. Light refreshments will be served. The requested donation is \$2 for adults, \$1 for those 12 and under. Find the canyon at 10324 Santee Lane. To reserve a spot, call 619-475-3896. (VALLEY CENTER)

Palm Walk, Offbeat Tours offers its monthly hour-long guided stroll exploring the structure, growth habits, and landscape value of palm trees in the park on Saturday, May 12, at 10 a.m., beginning at the visitors' center. Call 619-235-1121 for more information. Free. (BALBOA PARK)

Second Saturday Nature Walks at the Reserve, take a nature walk hosted by the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy at 9 a.m. on Saturday, May 12. For directions, call 760-436-1944. Free. (CAJON MTS NAT. RES.)

Nature Walk, a docent led nature walk is planned at the Tijuana River National Estuarine Reserve at 9 a.m. on Saturday, May 12, starting at 5th and Iris. Bring binoculars if you have them. Free. Call 619-575-3613 to register. (IMPERIAL BEACH)

Hike Back in Time with docents Sally Snipes and Tom Marquette in the Volcan Mountain Wilderness Preserve on Saturday, May 12, at 9:30 a.m. Participants will learn about the Kamehameha Indians' use of native plants and their way of life. The hike to midsummit is 2.5 miles round trip.

To reach the trailhead, drive to Julian, and then take Farmer Road and drive 100 yards. Turn left, back onto the continuation of Farmer Road, proceed 100 yards and park on the shoulder of the paved road by the preserve sign on the right. 858-694-3049. Free. (JULIAN)

What Are You Waiting For? Take a five-mile round-trip trek up Volcan Mountain with Mike from the San Dieguito River Park on Saturday, May 12, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Hikers

will hear about the ethnobotany and archaeology of the area. Bring lunch or snack if desired. Dial 858-674-2275 x5 to make the mandatory reservations and obtain directions. Free. (JULIAN)

Coastal Birds and Their Habitats are described by ranger Laura Niss when she leads walks for beginning birders on the second Saturday of each month, including May 12, at 11 a.m., along the southern wildlife preserve (a.k.a. the flood-control channel). Bring your binoculars and drinking water to the kiosk along the bike path on the south side of Sea World Drive. Free. 858-581-7603. (MISSION BAY)

For the Birds, head out to Tecolote Canyon Open-Space Park on the second Sunday of each month, including May 13, for a one- to two-hour bird walk starting at 3:30 p.m. at the Tecolote Nature Center (5180 Tecolote Road). Bring water and binoculars and wear comfortable shoes. Commonly seen species: red-tailed and Cooper's hawks, Cassin's kingbirds, and common yellowthroats. Free. For information, call 858-581-9961. (CLAREMONT)

DANCE

"In the Season of the Spring Dance Concert," and the dance department at Grossmont College hosts concerts May 10-12 onstage at the East County Performing Arts Center (210 East Main Street). Again, a wide variety of dance styles will be showcased. Tickets are \$10 general. For reservations and information, call 619-444-7766 or 619-440-2277. (EL CAJON)

The tyros at the San Diego School of Creative and Performing Arts present concerts at 7 p.m. on Thursday and Friday, May 10 and 11. Find the campus at 2425 Dusk Drive. Tickets range from \$4 to \$6. For information and reservations, call 619-470-1058. (PARADISE HILLS)

Not to be outdone, the dancers at San Diego State University Dance Company jump on the bandwagon with concerts Friday through Sunday, May 11-13, at 8 p.m., in Dance Studio Theatre (ENS-200) at SDSU. The program includes *Eye Witness*, *Suite Argentine*, *Tango Tango*, *Appassionata*, *Break a Leg*, *Endless*, and *Waiting for Me*. Tickets are \$10 general. For information, call 619-594-6826.

The "dance floor" known as the Palomar Dance Fest takes place

May 11-13 in Howard Brubeck Theatre at Palomar College (1140 West Mission Road). Expect to see "the finest of the year" choreography in ballet, ethnic, modern, jazz, tap, and theater. Performances begin at 8 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and at 2 p.m. on Sunday. Tickets are \$10 general. For information, call 760-741-1150 x2453. (SAN MARCOS)

Chador Girl Meets Fairy Godmother in Cinderella, the next production for over 100 dancers of the San Diego Civic Youth. The curtain rises at 7 p.m. on Friday, May 11, and at 2 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, May 12 and 13, in the Casa del Prado Theater. Tickets are \$8 for children, \$12 for adults. Call 619-233-3060 for information. (SAN DIEGO PARK)

Contradance. Erik Hoffman calls and jump fingers provide the tunes for the contradance on Friday, May 11, at Trinity United Methodist Church (3030 Thorn Street) at 8 p.m., following beginners' instruction at 7:45 p.m. Admission: \$6. Wear soft-soled shoes. 760-436-4030. (NORTH BAY)

Borders between Dance Companies Are Dissolving (for one night, anyway), when a tribute to the late prima ballerina Irene Santa Acova is presented on Saturday, May 12, at 8 p.m., at the Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center (4126 Executive Drive). The program boasts *pas de deux* from ballets including *Sleeping Beauty*, *Swan Lake*, *Don Quixote*, and others danced by "a gathering of San Diego's best professional dancers." Tickets are \$15, \$20, and \$25. For reservations, call 858-362-1348. (LA KOLAS)

Zydeco Dance, boogie with the Bon Temps Social Club during a dance boasting music by T-Lou and Hu Zydeco and on Saturday, May 12, at the Recital Hall. Doors open at 6 p.m., beginners' and intermediate lessons start at 6:20 p.m., followed by dancing from 7 to 10:30 p.m. The cover is \$10. Call 858-496-6655 for details. (BALBOA PARK)

Get Funky, on the second Saturday of every month, including May 12, swing to funk, hip-hop, disco, and rhythm and blues from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. at the Starlight Dance Studio (6506 H St. Cajon Boulevard). Beginners' and advanced lessons are offered. All ages are welcome. Cover: \$5. For information, call 619-287-9036. (SAN DIEGO)

"Don Quixote" will be presented by the City Ballet at the Weingart/Clay

FREE and Open to the Public! One Day Only!

Saturday, May 19, 2001
10 am - 4 pm
at Marine Corps Air Station
Miramar in San Diego

• Continuous Live Entertainment • Military Displays • Cadence Competition
• Finals • Car Show • Craft Fair • Specialty Foods • Kiddie Ride

Armed Forces Military History Exposition—2 Day Event
(Sat. May 19, 10 am - 4 pm) (Sun. May 20, 10 am - 3 pm)

Admission and Parking are FREE!

For more info, call (858) 577-1000, or go to www.mccsmiramar.com

Marine Corps Air Station Miramar sincerely thanks and appreciates the sponsors of this event; however, neither the Marine Corps nor any part of the Federal Government officially endorses any company or sponsor or their products or services.

Calendar LOCAL EVENTS

The Surfside Race Place at Del Mar on the Del Mar Fairgrounds, 760-630-7307. Free. (DEL MAR)

"Talking About Tough Subjects: Communication Skills" provide the topic when the "Be a Better Parent" series continues with a talk by Brad Strawn on Tuesday, May 15, 7 p.m., at the Anatomical Lutheran Church (7250 Eakstrom Avenue). Child care is available by reservation at least 24 hours in advance. Free. 858-278-5556. (CLAREMONT)

"Legal Issues in Cyberpace" will be discussed by attorney Mark L. Miller during a seminar planned on Tuesday, May 15, at 6 p.m., at the San Diego Public Library (830 E. Street). Free. For information, call 619-238-6630. (DOWNTOWN)

"Insect Gardening Butterflies and Friends" is the theme for the adult program planned on Tuesday, May 15, 7 p.m., at the San Diego Natural History Museum. Participants will learn how to attract butterflies and other insects to their yards by using proper nectar sources, and about host plants for their caterpillars. Admission is \$15 for nonmembers. Call 619-232-3821 x20 to reserve a spot. (BALBOA PARK)

GETAWAYS

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For couples who qualify, in exchange for enjoying a two-hour limousine presentation near you. No financial obligation. Total out-of-pocket cost: \$10 tax. Good for one year. Minimum income \$50,000 per year required to qualify.

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Getaway not included. Not valid with other discounts.



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Illustration, Ideas, and Storytelling techniques are on offer when Karen Kenyon leads "Autobiography and Memoir: Writing Your Own Personal Story" at the Book Works. The three-week class begins Wednesday, May 16, at 7 p.m. The fee is \$40. The bookstore is located in Flower Hill Mall, at 2670 Via de la Valle. Call 858-755-3735 for the required reservations. (DEL MAR)

Environmental and Ecological Art and contemporary artists working in the U.S. provide the fodder when Ruth Wallen speaks at the San Diego Art Institute on Wednesday, May 16, at 7 p.m. Wallen was the juror for the current "Endangered Species" exhibition. For information, call 619-236-0001. Admission is \$1. (BALBOA PARK)

You'll Be Captivated Into New Belief Systems You'll have the tools to create a "new vibrant and dynamic life." How? Spend "An Evening with Don Miguel Ruiz," author of *Living the Four Agreements: A Practical Guide to Transforming Your Life*, when he presents a lecture and book signing on Wednesday, May 16, at 6:30 p.m., at the Center for Creative Learning (3500 Camino del Rio North #100). The fee is \$25 at the door. To register, call 619-521-4800. (MISSION VALLEY)

Save a Lamp from a Pottery, a water filter, and fire without matches when self-described wilderness and urban survival experts Tom and Susan lead "Surviving the Energy Crisis" on Wednesday, May 16, at 6 p.m., at Backyard Tourist (12061 Wildcat Canyon Road). The fee is \$15. Call 619-443-2299 to register. (LAKE MICHIGAN)

"The Art of Race Globalization and the Commodification of Culture" is the weighty topic when City University of New York professor David Harvey presents a lecture at 7:30 p.m. next Thursday, May 17, in UCSD's Garman Auditorium (1105 Basic Science Building). Free. For information, call 858-534-4618. (LA JOLLA)

"Exploring the Himalayas" is the subject for a slide-illustrated lecture planned by Becky Harrison, owner of Adventures Trekker, at 6:30 p.m. next Thursday, May 17, at Carondeau Vacation (101 Camino del Rio South suite 100). Free. To reserve a spot, call 619-278-7403. (MISSION VALLEY)

Don Benes, Arizona State University anthropology professor and Charles F. Merriam will examine "The Human Skeleton: Symbol of Death and Life" next Thursday, May 17, at 7 p.m., in conjunction with the exhibit "The Bones Don't Lie: Stories from the Grave," at the San Diego Museum of Man. 571. Call 619-239-2001 for details. (BALBOA PARK)

IN PERSON

"A Grand Night for Singing" — this revue of over 30 Rodgers and Hammerstein tunes exploring the spectrum of romantic relationships through song is being presented

Thursday through Saturday, May 10-12 (and May 18 and 20) at 8 p.m. Cast and orchestra members include students and graduates of the Centers of Learning by the Sea.

See the shows at the Church of His Kingdom, 950 Garden Drive. Tickets are \$5 general, \$3 for children under 12. For reservations, call 619-575-1688. (SOUTH SAN DIEGO)

The Comic Murder Mystery Topical, like Shelly's second one-act play, will be presented on Thursday and Friday, May 10 and 11, 7:30 p.m., in MiraCosta College's Little Theatre (One Barnard Drive). Admission is \$3. For more information, call 619-795-6183. (OCESANDRO)

Oceanside Summer Sounds (16) Spring, this park concert series begins with *son jarocho* music performed by Conjunto Jardin on Saturday, May 12, at 5 p.m., at Liberty Lake Park (424 Calle Montecito, off I-15). Tickets are \$5 general, \$3 for children under 12. For information, call 760-435-5570. (OCESANDRO)

The Gospel Sing Play *He Called Me Son*, written by Pastor Darrell Albright, is being presented on Friday, May 11, at 7:30 p.m., at Vision of God (8783 Janss Road). Admission is \$5. Call 619-217-2946 for information. (SAN DIEGO)

Science Fiction Author Connie Willis signs and discusses *Passage* at 7 p.m. on Friday, May 11, at Mystery-Galaxy Books (7051 Clairemont Mesa Boulevard). For information, call 858-468-4747. Free. (CLAREMONT)

A Latino Protagonist and Latino culture are featured in SDSU biology professor Vernon Arvia's first novel, *Smokebreath: A Novel of Mutual Intrigue*. Arvia will have a discussion and sign books on Saturday, May 12, at 11 a.m., at the Bonita Sunnyside Library (5047 Central Avenue). Free. 619-475-6642. (BONITA)

Free Sounds, take in two chamber operas when soprano Juliana Seppel and harpist/composer Sean Griff

fin present two premiere performances — *Of Sister Rosalinda* and *Onphirius* for the Fresh Sound Music Series at the Spruce Street Forum on Saturday, May 12, at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$10 general. Find the Forum at 301 Spruce Street. For reservations, call 619-295-0361. (HILLCREST)

Indian Classical Music and Dance are featured when a concert benefiting Indian earthquake relief efforts is held on Sunday, May 12, at 5:30 p.m., at the Mount Carmel High School Performing Arts Center (9550 Carmel Mountain Road).

The program features "Compositional Diversities" by Nirmala Sundararajan and Subhashini Parthasarathy, and "Nirva Karmakar" by dance artist Lalitha Srinivasan and company.

Tickets are \$25 per family, or \$15 for adults, \$10 for students. Free for those 12 and under. Question? Call 760-233-2006 or 760-943-1210 for answers. (MANGO HILLS/QUINTOS)

Life and Adventure With the Wild Animals of South Africa are chronicled in *Kobie Kruger's Wilderness Family*, which the author will sign and discuss at 3 p.m. on Saturday, May 12, at Borders Books and Music (1072 Camino del Rio North). Free. 619-295-2201. (MISSION VALLEY)

"In Her Own Words: An Evening with Julia Twarder" is promoted when the Storytellers of San Diego gather for a concert on Saturday, May 12, at 8 p.m., at the San Diego Civic Center (1001 Broadway). Tickets are \$20 general, available by calling 619-570-1100 or Ticketmaster (619-220-7233). (DOWNTOWN)

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Some As It Were was, head to the open poetry reading planned on Sunday, May 13, at 6:30 p.m., at Riverside Café (4644 College Avenue). 619-265-7287. Free. (SDSU)

Practical Advice for both the novice and seasoned gardeners alike is offered in *Amey Stewart's From the Ground Up*, which she'll sign and discuss at 6:30 p.m. on Sunday, May 13, at Barnes and Noble (1040 North El Camino Real). Free. 760-943-6400. (HUNTINGTON)

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Some As It Were was, head to the open poetry reading planned on Sunday, May 13, at 6:30 p.m., at Riverside Café (4644 College Avenue). 619-265-7287. Free. (SDSU)

Practical Advice for both the novice and seasoned gardeners alike is offered in *Amey Stewart's From the Ground Up*, which she'll sign and discuss at 6:30 p.m. on Sunday, May 13, at Barnes and Noble (1040 North El Camino Real). Free. 760-943-6400. (HUNTINGTON)

Put Another Candle on the Cake when Mysteryful Galaxy Books celebrates its eighth birthday with a bash on Saturday, May 12. Fifteen authors — among them T. Jefferson Parker, Howard Hendrix, Dan Burton, Tamara Thorne, Gayle Lynds, and many others — will sign books between noon and 3 p.m. Find the Galaxy at 7051 Clairemont Mesa Boulevard. For schedule specifics and other information, call 858-268-4747. (CLAREMONT)

Learn About "Snuggled Buddhism" when Vietnamese Zen Buddhist master, scholar, and author Thich Nhat Hanh focuses on "Cultivating Peace in Ourselves and Our Communities" on Saturday, May 12, at 3 p.m., at the San Diego Civic Center (1001 Broadway). Tickets are \$20 general, available by calling 619-570-1100 or Ticketmaster (619-220-7233). (DOWNTOWN)

The "Master Athlete of the Year" is 63-year-old track man Harold Tolson. There's a fundraiser planned — to help send Tolson to Brisbane, Aus-

tralia, for the 14th Annual World

READING

The Virgin of Bennington

Riverhead Books, 2001, 256 pages, \$24.95

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Kathleen Norris was born in 1947 in Washington, D.C., to a schoolteacher and Navy musician, trumpet player John Norris. The family moved from place to place, settling during Norris's junior high and high school years in Honolulu. "A sheltered adolescent from the provinces," as Norris describes herself, she had no reason to assume her parents' interests as her own. She spent hours reading in the library, attended choir practices and symphony rehearsals. In 1965, Norris found herself as a freshman student at Bennington College in Vermont, a school known then for its somewhat avant-garde curriculum and relaxed relations between faculty and students. So "easy" were Bennington's female students thought to be that the college sometimes was referred to as "the little red whorehouse on the hill." Norris felt, she writes, like "Alice down the rabbit hole, without bearings in a world which had seemed familiar, yet suddenly proved to be unaccountably strange." For most of her college career, Norris remained the "Virgin of Bennington" or "Nor-

ris the Nun," a tag that she would lose when she began an affair with a married Bennington professor, Norris graduated from Bennington in 1969 and moved to New York, where she went to work as a program assistant for Academy of American Poets' director Elizabeth Kray, a pioneer in arts administration. Norris's first book, *Falling Off*, a collection of poems, was published in 1971. In 1974 Norris and her husband, poet David Dwyer, moved to Norris's ancestral farm in Lemmon, South Dakota, a town populated by some 1500 souls. The couple has lived there since, more recently dividing their time between Hawaii and South Dakota. On the morning that we talked, Ms. Norris was in Hawaii.

Norris is the author of three poetry collections and editor of and contributor to numerous anthologies. She is author of four nonfiction titles, including the best-selling *The Cloister Walk* and *Dakota: A Spiritual Geography*.

ABOUT THE BOOK: *The Virgin of Bennington* is both an account of Norris's experiences at Bennington and Manhattan and a graceful tribute to Norris's mentor, Elizabeth Kray. Through the Academy and Kray, Norris met and often became close friends of Jim Carroll, Denise Levertov, Gerard Malanga, Erica Jong, James Merrill, James Wright, Galway Kinnell, and Stanley Kunitz. It was at the Academy, with Kray's help, that Norris learned to write. At night, at parties and clubs, socializing with Andy Warhol pals, Norris learned to play. But she was not happy, nor was she the good girl that she had been. "My life," she writes, "had become bifurcated. Part of me still wanted to be the good kid I had been brought up to be, the Sunday-school girl formed in the Protestant work ethic. But I had grown attracted to what was forbidden, all the things the good girl had been denied." Sustained in part by Kray's interest in her, the good girl prevailed and Norris survived.

A CONVERSATION WITH THE AUTHOR: The photograph of Norris on the back of the dust jacket was taken in the winter

of 1971 by Norris's longtime friend, poet and photographer and Warhol associate, Gerard Malanga. I said to Ms. Norris that when that photograph, she looked so sad.

"It never struck me that way," she answered. "I've had that picture for years. I was actually having a good day on the day he took that. But when I saw it on the book jacket, I went, 'Wow, that's really something. That shows what was really going on with my life that year.' That's really, in some ways, what this book is about, how to survive being a poor dumb good girl. My younger sister, when she saw the photograph, said, 'Oh, you look like Morticia Adams.' I laughed, and said, 'I wished I looked as good.'"

Norris went on to say, about her younger self, "I have a lot of empathy for myself at that age and for anyone that age. In your early 20s, you're sort of out on your own in the world and trying to figure out what you're about. I have nieces and nephews now in their early 20s, and I look at them and think they're so much more sane than I was. And I think they have a much better chance of surviving their 20s."

I said that I thought the teens and 20s perhaps were even more difficult for people who want to write.

"In a sense, yes, and that's where Bennington shows its capacity for helping young people. Where Bennington really does excel is in the arts. The college hires a lot of professional writers and artists to work on the staff, and if you want to be a painter or a writer, it shows you that it's possible to have this life. Bennington has nurtured a lot of writers and artists. I was very grateful to have that experience."

That a professor would seduce someone as innocent as Norris had been at that age, I said, had outraged me.

Norris sighed. "That was almost the norm at Bennington then. I'm still in touch with the college, and I like the college. I still know people there. And a few years ago, they finally prosecuted a teacher for having an affair with a student. I remember being stunned and amazed and so grateful that finally they were taking

this seriously. It took a long time. I never thought that I would see that. But I think in the culture of the 1960s, Bennington wasn't alone in ignoring what a lot of faculty men were doing. And I was just too naive at that age to realize that I was one of a string of girls who were seduced by this man."

Norris's boss, Betty Kray, had known that this professor was having an affair with Norris. What, I asked, did Kray make of the affair?

"She was very wonderful to me. But she wasn't a mother. She was just a woman."

But at the same time, she sort of chalked it up to human nature on his part and my part. And she thought that we'd best just get over it. I think she understood what I was going through and was sympathetic up to a point. But then there was on her part an attitude of, 'Okay, now can we put this aside and get to work?' I think that at the time this was what I needed. Somebody to say, 'Okay put it aside. You did a foolish thing. I think she would have been much more upset with me if I had turned to a life of repeating the same kind of thing, if I'd gone right out and gotten involved with another married man. Then I think she would have found little ways of talking to me about it. He was an old friend of hers. And she didn't condone that sort of behavior, but I think she was understanding of how he was, understanding of his less-attractive aspects. But she still liked him and liked his writing and was his friend. That made sense to me at the time. I wasn't trying to do that teenage thing and say to her, 'Okay, if you like me you can't like him.' I was old enough to realize that was silly."

"I remember kind of respecting her attitude about it. He wasn't going to change his ways, and she was going to remain

friends with us both. But I remember when I began dating a boy my own age, she was pleased. Because she'd seen other young women in that office and seen that they could get involved. I wasn't doing that. My one mistake sort of cured me."

I said that I'd wondered if for some members of the generation of male poets born in the 1920s and 1930s, a young girl was not one of the prerequisites of being a poet.

"Well, it was, but to be honest about it, there were women who really fed on that. I remember once being out with a whole bunch of young writers after a meeting. And one young woman poet, a very good poet, had set her sights on this poet from out of town. I remember hearing about the young woman poet and the poet from out of town going back to her apartment and all this great stuff. And you could see that happening. I mean, she picked him up. He wasn't married. He was quite available. But it kind of worked both ways."

Norris talked then about how wonderful it was for her to work for the Academy. One of the Academy's primary activities was and is sponsoring poetry readings. I asked Norris about those readings.

"I'd been to a few poetry readings in high school and some in college. Bennington promotes that sort of learning. But it wasn't until I worked for Betty that I understood how oral an art poetry really is. There were poets that I would have tried to read and tried to understand in college. And then, later, I would hear them read their poems, and all of a sudden I would understand their work in a way that I'd never understood it before. Somehow that exchange with the listener and the reader had a really profound effect on the way I understood poetry. And that was really fun. More than anything, that was the greatest part of the job and probably the thing I missed the most when I did leave New York."

I asked if Norris believed that Dylan Thomas's readings during the 1950s, tours that took him to campuses across the United States, had ignited in America an interest in hearing poetry

"Dylan Thomas, I think, broke a lot of barriers. His readings tours were among the first big nationwide tours. And then when Betty brought Yevgeny Yevushenko over in the mid-1960s, that was a big event. And Robert Frost liked to give readings, e.e. cummings enjoyed doing readings also. Betty and Cummings worked very closely together."

I mentioned that soon after I finished Norris's *The Virgin of Bennington*, I began reading *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath*. I said that I had thought, reading Plath, how much happier a person Norris was. I asked if Norris had read the journals.

"Not the whole book. I read the excerpts. She was a very vital sort. She really breathed in poetry, so deeply, and up to the very day she died, she was writing poetry. She had a real writing spirit right through to the end of her life. It was a tragic end, but I read *The Bell Jar* when I was still in college. I remember being struck that the really had a serious psychosis. I always sensed that I was kind of on the verge. But most of my manic-depressive behaviors and self-destructive actions were pretty gaudy variety. Plath, though, was really up against very, very major emotional problems. For women, this self-destructiveness is something that we're still up against. Self-mutilation, eating disorders, all of that. And I think in the '60s it didn't take those forms so much as it did this sort of basic suicidal tendency that Sylvia Plath exhibited."

Did Norris ever think when she was having her photograph taken by Gerard Malanga that she'd eventually write books that would rise to high spots on the best-seller list?

"No, no. Not at all. At that point all I was writing was poetry. And if you made the best-seller list as a poet, that meant you were a Rod McKuen, and that was not a good thing at all. I think at that stage of my life I was just hoping the next year would be better than the one I'd endured. And it was."

—Judith Moore

Kathleen Norris will read from her book and sign copies at Sylva Plath books in Del Mar on Friday, May 18, at 7:30 p.m.

tion, an art activity will be conducted, and the artist will talk about his work. The exhibit, on view through July, provides experiences for children to learn about color and its uses.

A traveling exhibit of children's artwork from Sri Lanka is on exhibit through June. "Rice and Honey" was mounted to raise awareness of the decade-long civil war that rages in their country and includes over 60 pieces of art and a documentary film with interviews of the artists.

"Van Gogh Living," designed and created by students in Sonoma McArthur's class at Mesa College, is a life-sized three-dimensional replica of Vincent Van Gogh's painting of his bedroom in Arles. The exhibit includes interactive activities focusing on color, mood, perspective, and art history. Visitors are encouraged to paint on their own. Enjoy the exhibit through August.

The theme for the museum in 2001 is "One People, Many Voices: Building Community Through Culture." The museum is located at 1414 Midland Road, San Diego 92161. For more information, call 619-594-4800.

lity Awareness." Continuing exhibits include "The Book Stop," "Improv Theater," and "Gala's Rainhouse." Find the museum at 200 West Island Avenue. Dial 619-233-8792 for additional details. (SANDAG/BOCA)

"Scales, Tides, and Otters!" How important are otters to fish? Find out when the Junior Rangers meet at the Tijuana River Estuarine Reserve next Thursday, May 17, at 3:15 p.m. The free program takes place at the reserve's visitors' center (301 Caspan Way) for kids 7 to 11 years old. 619-575-3613. (SANDAG/BOCA)

MUSEUMS

(Art museums are listed in the Reader's Guide to Art.)

Bancroft Ranch House Museum houses indigenous Indian artifacts and memorabilia of early settlers in the area and is run by the Spring Val-

ley Historical Society. The home, built in 1863, was registered as a National Historic Landmark in 1962 and is a spot where Kamehameha Indians camped more than 1000 years ago beside the spring that later gave the area its name. The museum is located at 9050 Memory Lane, call 619-460-1400 for more information. (SPRING VALLEY)

California Surf Museum, "Early California Surfers, 1900-1940" houses Doc Johns Health Hall, the first surf documentary, telling the stories of those pioneering surfers in photographs by ball and text. Many of the photographs, surfboards, and other artifacts have never been on public display before.

The museum features surfing artifacts and memorabilia—such as surfboards and clothing—of local legends Phil Edwards, John "L.J." Richards, and Peter Johnson, and that kahunasong from Hawaii, Duke Kahanamoku. The museum is

located at 223 North Coast Highway, 760-721-6876. (OCEANSIDE)

Chula Vista Nature Center, an interactive living museum devoted to the endangered Southern California coastal wetlands, is located in the middle of Sweetwater Marsh National Wildlife Refuge. The facility is home to fish and invertebrates that inhabit the mud flats and marshes of San Diego Bay. Visitors can use a Binocularizer to view animals macroscopically, use a WetScope for views of microscopic organisms found in the "Sweetwater Soup," and interact with computerized videos exploring how tides affect the bay in the "Moons, Tides, and the San Diego Bay" exhibit. After exhibit, visitors can pet sharks and rays, see burrowing owls and migratory birds, and enjoy the xenophytic gardens.

Visitors meet a shuttle bus at the Bayfront E Street Trolley Station or at the center's parking lot at the foot of E Street and Bay Boulevard. For more details, call 619-422-2481. (CHULA VISTA)

Flying Leatherneck Museum, the museum is dedicated to the Marine Corps who provided air support from the propeller-driven fighters and bombers of the 1940s to the modern jets and helicopters currently in use. Static displays of a variety of aircraft are included, along with equipment, insignia, paintings and photographs, scale models, and a research library. The museum is located in building T-2002, at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. For information, call 619-493-1723. (SANDEARB)

calculator date back to the 1900s.

Interested in restoring and programming historic computer equipment? The museum hosts workshops for volunteers on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. (at 6156 Mission Gorge Road, suite H, in Mission Valley). Call for registration and space availability.

Find the museum on the grounds of Coleman Field, 7380 Parkway Drive 619-463-8226. (LA MESA)

Heritage Walk Museum, the museum includes the restored Victorian House, the city's original Santa Fe Train Depot, a railroad car with model train, working blacksmith shop, and a barn. Find Heritage Walk in Grape Day Park, at 321 North Broadway. 760-743-8207. (BONNARD)

Museum of Historic San Diego, glimpse San Diego's colorful past at the museum, where displays highlight Wyatt Earp's San Diego days, the Peg Leg Gold legend, the first maps and photographs of Old Town and "New Town," early military history, the naval disaster in 1923 at Point Loma, and more. Find the museum at 413 Market Street (between Fourth and Fifth Avenues). 619-237-1492. (SANDEARB QUARTERS)

Heritage of the American Museum, the museum features art and artifacts from South and North America, concentrating on the utilitarian and decorative utility of crafts workers from ancient cultures. A mural by Mona Mills depicting ancient Teotihuacan in its days of glory is now on exhibit, resulting from the artist's extensive study of this ancient "City of the Gods" that was once home to 200,000 people in central Mexico. The museum also features works dedicated to the natural history, archaeology, education, anthropology, and fine art.

Find the museum on the Coyamaca College campus, 12110 Coyamaca College Drive West, 619-670-5194. (RANCHO SAN DIEGO)

John DeWitt Historic Museum and Library, operated by the Alpine Historical Society, is located in the 1897 home of Dr. Sophronia

Nichols. She was the first doctor in Alpine and the first female doctor in the East County. On exhibit are Indian artifacts from the Kinyung family. The museum is open on the last Saturday and Sunday of every month from 2 to 4 p.m., at 2116 Tavern Road. For information, call 619-659-8740. (ALPINE)

Museum of Music Making, the museum celebrates its first anniversary with the addition of LEO, the Live Electronic Orchestra, into the gallery exhibiting modern inventions representing innovations in music making during the 1970s and 1980s. The LEO is composed of a wide array of synthesizer and organ technology

and encased in a clear plexiglass frame. Innovator and musician Don Lewis, a pioneer of MIDI (musical instrument digital interface), created the LEO to remotely control all the sounds his organs produced from a single instrument.

The museum's five major exhibits span 100 years of music making in America, with more than 450 vintage instruments, samplings of popular music from each era, historic photographs and paintings, and trends and innovations in the music industry. Find the museum in the corporate headquarters of the NAMM—International Music Products Association, at 5790 Armada Drive. For

hours and other information, call 877-551-9976. (CARMEL)

Poway Museum, an interpretive walk-through replica of the early post office and general store, and a school room are part of the newly renovated museum. A mural painted by Michael Strong depicts six periods of Poway's past. Find the museum in Old Poway Park,

at 1414 Midland Road. 619-748-3700 or 619-486-3044. (POWAY)

Romance Pioneer Historical Society and Guy B. Woodward House is a complex of historical buildings, including the Verlaque House (the only Western adobe home of French provincial design still in existence), wagons, antique exhibits, and art-

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Roam-O-Rama

A Guide to Unexplored San Diego and Beyond • By Jerry Schad

One of LA County's most attractive waterfalls, Fish Canyon Falls in the San Gabriel Mountains, lies today in a canyon whose mouth has been ripped apart by large-scale quarrying operations. Once beyond the canyon's glaring, barren mouth, however, is a sylvan scene so enchanting it must be seen to be believed.

During the 1980s and most of the '90s, public access to the canyon was made difficult or impossible by operations at the quarry. Access was restored in 1998 when the city of Duarte opened a new trail bypassing the quarry on the canyon's steep west wall. Unfortunately, the devilish climb and descent on this trail—which must be accomplished twice during the 8-mile round trip to and from the falls—occupies almost three-fourths of the time and energy expended on the entire hike. If you go early on a Sunday morning, as I did, you will likely be mercifully free of the quarry noise.



To reach the Fish Canyon trailhead, drive north on the 605 Freeway to its end in Duarte. Head east on Huntington Drive to Encanto Parkway. Turn left and follow Encanto northwest for 1.4 miles. The parking area is just short of the quarry entrance. A helpful brochure with topographic map can be found at an information board a couple of minutes down the trail from the parking lot. Just beyond there, climbing begins in earnest on a primitive, switchbacking trail that at times batters gages purchased on the soft dirt of the 40-degree slopes. Relief from the heart-pounding effort comes at a flat spot on the ridge above (1.3 miles) where you may catch one last panoramic glance behind you of nearly the entire San Gabriel Valley.

Next, the trail slides up along the quarry face for a while. Then it veers left, following an old firebreak. Next comes a sharp right turn up a ridge. At nearly two miles from the start, you start descending a series of knee-banging switchback segments, nearly as steep as those you climbed, down along an east-facing slope liberally sprinkled with poison oak. At 3.0 miles you reach bottom, and the main trail turns abruptly left (north), following the west wall of Fish Canyon.

Now comes the payoff: the remainder of the trail is delightful with its gentle ascent, superb scenery, and historical reminders. Notice the old cabin foundations, rock and mortar walls, and rusty household equipment. It's hard to believe the narrow canyon once harbored dozens of vacation cabins. Check out the botanical evidence: nonnative ivy, vinca, trees of heaven, agaves, and ornamental puccas. Plenty of native vegetation thrives here, too. Live oaks,



Lower tier, Fish Canyon Falls

bigleaf maples, and bay laurels cling tenaciously to the canyon's precipitous walls.

After 1.1 miles in the canyon itself, the trail crosses over the creek to the east bank. A final 0.3-mile stretch leads to a point offering a fine but not intimately close view of Fish Canyon Falls. The water tumbles nearly 100 feet down a cliff with four separate tiers, slides through riparian vegetation a short way, and makes a final, small leap into a crystalline pool just below the trail.

On the return, you must retrace your steps exactly and refrain from taking a shortcut through the quarry.

facts. There is a cowboy bunk house, a ranch blacksmith shop and tack room. The Casey Tibbs Memorial Exhibit is dedicated to Tibbs, a local resident who was a world-champion rodeo rider. Women's clothing and accessories from 1700 to 1800 are also on display. The Hancock Memorial Rose Garden is on the grounds. Rare documents, historical exhibits, books, photographs, and a research library are also part of the complex. Find it all at 645 Main Street. For more information, call 760-789-7644. (Mesa)

San Diego Aerospace Museum, frequently referred to as "the forgotten one," the Korean War was fought between 1950 and 1953, with 39,000 American losing their lives in the effort. The permanent exhibit "Air War

Korea: Return to MIG Alley" features the MIG-15 and F-86 Sabre fighters, a J-47 engine, pilot ejection seats, war-era model airplanes, period films, and other historical information.

One permanent exhibit honors Pacific Southwest Airlines (PSA), the airline San Diego once called its own. Former PSA employees have donated items for the show, including the famous orange with pink trim miniskirt flight attendant's uniform, and other memorabilia.

The museum offers exhibits of over 65 aircraft—including a replica of the Spirit of St. Louis, a Fokker Scourge for Fokker Eindhoven (E-11), a World War I Spad VII, the flight deck of the USS Yorktown, and a Lockheed Blackbird spy plane—1400 scale models, 10,000 aviation-related items, and memorabilia from the Montgolfier hot-air balloon era to the Space Age, along with an International Aerospace Hall of Fame. The museum is located in the Ford Building in the Palisades Area. For additional information, call 619-234-8291. (IMPERIA PARK)

San Diego Model Railroad Museum, the museum celebrates American railroads with "the largest permanent operating model railroad and toy train exhibit." The museum includes five scale-model railroads of the Southwest, an interactive toy train, and a refurbished toy train gallery with a Lionel O gauge exhibit. There is a multimedia presentation on railroading, an operating railroad semaphore signal, and interpretive displays on railroads and model railroading. The museum is downstairs in the Casa de Balboa building. For admission and museum hours, call 619-696-0199. (BALBOA PARK)

San Diego Natural History Museum, the new, expanded facilities reopen with the traveling exhibition "Epidemic! The Natural History of Disease," which continues through Sunday, August 12. The exhibit examines one of the most critical issues facing humankind in the 21st Century: how to best control the worldwide spread of infectious disease. Through dramatic maps, models, videos, and interactive computer stations, "Epidemic!" explores the biological, ecological, and cultural factors that influence the causes, spread, and control of infectious diseases. For more information, call 619-232-3821. (BALBOA PARK)

San Diego Heritage Museum, the museum offers informative displays on the unique history of the San Diego area at 561 South Vulcan Avenue. For more information, call 760-632-9711. (CROWLEY)

Serra Museum, "Treasures Uncovered: Tradition and Exchange at the San Diego Presidio" features artifacts re-

covered from the Presidio archaeological site, dating to the first European settlement in California (in 1769) when Father Junipero Serra established the Basilica San Diego de Alcala. "Treasures" in the form of ceramics, religious, and personal goods representing just a fraction of the more than one-half million excavated items to date at the Presidio site are on view. See the show through summer.

The museum interprets the Native American, Spanish, and Mexican periods of San Diego's history and contains Spanish Colonial furnishings, art, and artifacts. It's located at the site of the West Coast's first European settlement, found at 2727 Presidio Drive. 619-297-3258. (PMS SCAVO PARK)

Stephen H. Longhorn Museum, colorful oil paintings by local artist Jack Jordan are collected in "Down to the Sea Near Scripps," on view through May. The featured paintings "portray the many moods of the ocean and coastline" and many include La Jolla's seaside bluffs and cove beaches.

"Tom Tush" offers a computer display consisting of five interactive modules through which visitors can learn a variety of ways that scientists study the ocean from space using satellites, including monitoring currents and ocean temperatures, investigating natural phenomena such as upwelling and red tides, and tracking the migration of fish. The exhibit provides a way to interpret the interdisciplinary nature of research at Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

An aquarium and museum under one roof, the facility is an educational component of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UCSD. Look for 35 tanks containing marine life of the Pacific Northwest, the California coastline, Mexico's Sea of Cortez, and the South Pacific. One highlight is the La Jolla Jet Tank, a two-story-high tank with giant jelly plants and nearly 30 species of local marine life.

The aquarium is located at 2300 Expedition Way off North Torrey Pines Road, south of a Jolla Shores Drive. For more information, call 619-544-ETSI. (LA JOLLA)

Wells Fargo Bank History Museum, the museum features a working "office" staffed by guides in period costumes and contains a working telegraph for visitors to send and receive messages. There's an audio-visual theater presenting short films on California and Wells Fargo history, a gold display, part of the collection assembled by Wells Fargo agent Samuel Dorey at the end of 1880s, an exhibit of Concord Coach #251, a restored stagecoach built in 1867, and the Davies watch. The museum is located in the reconstructed Colorado House, at 2733 San Diego Avenue. (OLD TOWN)

Obsolete Composer and Primitive Musicians

Another wasted evening at Sherwood Auditorium!

The Kempf Piano Trio appeared at Sherwood Auditorium in the La Jolla Chamber Music Society's "Reville Series." Its members—pianist Freddy Kempf, violinist Pierre Bensaïd, cellist Alexander Chausshin—are in their mid-20s, and the Trio is only a few years old; but the group's music-making here was mature, sophisticated, and wonderful.

The program consisted of masterpieces at the very core of the trio literature: Beethoven's "Archduke" (and, as an encore, the slow movement of his "Ghost" Trio); the Schubert *Notturno*; and the Brahms C Major. From the very beginning, the Kempf Trio established its own distinctive musical personality. The opening of the "Archduke" was not significantly slower than what one is used to, but it had a rare spaciousness, as though Beethoven's serene and genial themes were proceeding with the utmost unhurried confidence through their noble life history. The entire work had this quality of grand optimism and self-assurance, which is the pervasive spirit of the "Archduke," realized by the Kempf Trio with luminous truth.

In contrast, the slow movement of the "Ghost," which was played with great restraint, projected as in a dream that music's uncanny atmosphere. The Schubert *Notturno* (surely the music angels in heaven listen to) floated into the audience's consciousness in all its unearthly purity: the return to the radiant opening after the relative agitation of the central section came like a universal balm to the spirit, the negation of all suffering from the beginning of time. In playing the Brahms Trio with a warm, burnished, flowing lyricism that unerringly held the mind and pulled at the heart, the three musicians seemed to be making a point of the work's inner resemblance to the "Archduke"—along with its own characteristic episodes of melancholy and struggle, ultimately transcended.

This was, in short, a concert about Beethoven, Schubert, and Brahms, and the humane 19th-

century tradition they shared, rather than a concert about the Kempf Piano Trio. The players were self-effacing, devoted to the exploration and communication of the music, and avoiding any brilliant displays of virtuosity—although, in fact, their technical skills were at the very highest level, and their playing throughout was flawless. Their mutual rapport, and the unanimity of their approach to each work, suggested a group that had performed together for decades. In his constant visual attention to his collaborators, pianist Kempf invariably reminded veteran concertgoers of the venerable Menahem Pressler of the Beaux Arts Trio, the binding force of that half-century-old institution.

Some members of the audience felt that Kempf's playing was a bit underpowered, that he seemed unable to reach the full volume and resonance the Steinway is capable of. Let me assure everyone that there is nothing the least underpowered about Freddy Kempf. He is a big, forceful, Romantic pianist, and—I am convinced—one of the major pianists of our era, in spite of his youth. If you want to hear him letting go, listen to his BIS recordings of Schumann (*Caravans*, *Arabesque*, *Humoresque*, and the *Toccata*) and Rachmaninov (the Opus 39 *Etudes Tableaux* and a stupendous reading of the Second Sonata).

At Sherwood, however, Kempf was making much use of the soft pedal in order not to overwhelm the sound of the violin and cello, and by that device he helped the group achieve a balance one does not always hear in this repertoire. Blending rather than contrast was the aim, and Kempf's intention not to overemphasize the piano part was fundamental in giving the group its special sonority. There is nothing weak about the playing of violinist Bensaïd and cellist Chausshin (the cellist, in particular, has a mesmerizing concentration), but a modern Steinway open at full stick can be a very loud instrument indeed, and it was certainly not the instrument imagined by Beethoven and Schubert when they wrote their

music for keyboard. It was notable how Kempf opened up the piano sound for the Brahms, to match his colleagues' more vehement playing, and to respond appropriately to the composer's writing (which presupposes the modern instrument).

Altogether a magnificent concert: great music, played with superb musicianship—or at least so it appeared to me until, the next day, I happened to read the description by contemporary composer David Lang of his newly recorded composition, *The Passing Measures*. This is what he wrote:

I think one of the reasons our commercial culture likes all music to be fast and snappy is because in fast music it is much harder to recognize the passing of time. You listen to the tunes, to the catchy phrases, but you are not allowed to feel just how time slips away. Fast music is stirring, optimistic—that is why we are bombarded all day by active, energetic music that tries to make us buy things or do things or think things. Slow music, on the other hand, is good for contemplation but is terrible for business, so you don't get much of it in your daily life. More and more I have become convinced that one of the noblest things you can do in a piece of "serious" music is to allow for an experience that can't happen in your daily life.

My piece is about the struggle to create beauty. A single very consonant chord falls slowly over the course of 40 minutes. That is the piece. Every aspect of the piece is a display, however—magnified, examined, amplified, prolonged. The whole notes are impossibly long, requiring frequent drop-outs for breath and for rest. The players all are instructed to play as quietly as possible, and then are amplified at high volume, in order to make their restraint an issue of the piece. Four percussionists scrape pieces of junk metal from start to finish, as if to accompany the consonance of the chords with sounds of dirt and decay.

After perusing this profound aesthetic statement, I realized that I had been bamboozled by the Kempf Trio and their old-fashioned program. I now saw that the Beethoven, Schubert, and Brahms works had not been about the struggle to create beauty (which is a new 21st-century discovery), and that, unlike *The Passing Measures*, they had not allowed for an experience that could not happen in our everyday lives. With all those tunes and catchy phrases, with all that stirring, optimistic vision of human existence, the three century composers were actually trying to get me—to think things or do things, or— even worse—to buy things. And instead of allowing



Freddy Kempf

Kempf Piano Trio
Sherwood Auditorium (La Jolla Chamber Music Society)
Beethoven, Piano Trio in B-flat, Opus 97 "Archduke"; Schubert, *Notturno* in E-flat, D. 897; Brahms, Piano Trio No. 2, in C, Opus 87.

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Calendar CLASSICAL MUSIC

the purpose of music (I am ashamed even to utter the words) were to help us to live more nobly!

As for the performers, my enlightened intellect now understood how little talent they had actually demonstrated. Instead of playing as quietly as possible, which requires real control, they were all over the place, sometimes strong and loud, sometimes delicate and soft, and constantly shaping phrases with subtle gradations of loud and soft; and such restraint as they had was not an "issue of the piece" but a strategy for attaining a harmonious balance of instruments and a communication of meanings, and not a single sound they made had the benefit of electronic amplification or the scraping of junk metal, so that the poor primitives had to make do with trying to evoke a vast range of beautiful and expressive sounds from complex instruments constructed by skilled craftsmen.

How could a professional organization like the La Jolla Chamber Music Society even allow such bumbling onstage?

Alas, another wasted evening at Sherwood Auditorium!

CLASSICAL LISTINGS

HOW TO SEND US YOUR LISTING: Contributions must be received by 5 p.m. Friday the week prior to publication for consideration. Do not phone. Send a complete description of the event, including the date, time, cost, the precise address where it is to be held (including neighborhood), a contact phone number (including area code), and a phone number for public information to READER CLASSICAL MUSIC, Box 8803, San Diego CA 92186-0803. Or fax to 619-594-2801. You may also submit information online at www.SanDiegoReader.com by clicking on the events section.

The Rich Sounds of 14th-Century France are brought to life when Fortuoso, when presents "Fatuorelle: The Art of Machaut and the Trouvères" on Friday, May 11, for the San Diego Early Music Society. The ensemble combines voices, vielle, and harp to "recall the springtime of French medieval music."

The concert begins at 8 p.m., at St. James by the Sea, 743 Prospect Street. Tickets are \$15 general. Dial 619-291-8236 for reservations. (LA JOLLA)

The Crusader Bells of the Pacific Beach Presbyterian Church, led by Flo Conrad, plan a concert on Friday, May 11, at 7:30 p.m., at the La Mesa First United Methodist Church (4690 Palm Avenue). An offering will be collected. Dial 619-466-4163 for information. (LA MESA)

Operatic Blockbuster! A captive Ethiopian princess, serves as slave to Egyptian princess Ametia, and both women love the Egyptian Commander Radames, who returns only Adia's love. That's the setup for Verdi's well-loved *Aida*, the final production of the season for the San Diego Opera. Performers include Azerbaijani soprano Elena Zelenakaya, mezzo-soprano Marianne Cornetti, and Richard Margison. The

opera is performed in Italian with text projected in English above the stage. Enjoy the production — conducted by Eduardo Müller and directed by Andrew Sinclair — at 8 p.m. on Friday, May 11, at 2 p.m. on Sunday, May 13, and at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, May 15. Tickets range from \$13 to \$124. See the opera at San Diego Civic Theatre, 202 C Street. For reservations, dial 619-232-7636. (DOWNTOWN)

Hailing from St. Petersburg, Russia, pianist Seda Simakova visits the area to present the final Visiting Artist Series concert in Smith Recital Hall at San Diego State University on Friday, May 11, at 7 p.m. Simakova will perform Beethoven's "Sonata in E-flat Major," "Violin Concerto" by Brahms, the "Sonata in B Minor" by Liszt, and Schumann's "Arabesque" and "Papillons." Tickets are \$15 general.

Simakova will conduct a master class at noon on the same day in Music 113. Admission to this master class is free and open to the public. Call 619-594-6060 for information and reservations. (DOWNTOWN)

Sounds of Nature, the elements of earth, air, fire, and water are explored when the Light Bulb Series hosted by the San Diego Symphony continues on Saturday, May 12. Jung-Ho Pak will be joined by Esqueal Escarra from the San Diego Natural History Museum and the Birch Aquarium's Deborah Zinzari presenting images and videos.

Musically, get set for "Aqua (Homage a Jacques-Yves Cousteau)" by Steve Heltzig and "Canto Antico: A Concerto for Birds and Orchestra" by Einojuhani Rautavaara, and works by Viavaldi, Debussy, and Handel. The music begins at 8 p.m. in Copley Symphony Hall (750 B Street). Tickets range from \$15 to \$55. For reservations, call 619-235-0804. (DOWNTOWN)

Talented Musicians 7 to 25 Years Old participate in the San Diego Youth Symphony. The group marks its 55th season with a commemorative event on Saturday, May 12, 7 p.m., at the California Center for the Arts, Escondido. The program features Musanogly's "Pictures at an Exhibition" and the "Slavonic Dance No. 7" by Dvorak. Italian conductor Eduardo Müller will conduct the group in Rossini's "William Tell Overture."

Tickets are \$35. Find the center at 340 North Escondido Boulevard (at Valley Parkway). Call 619-235-3232 for reservations. (ESCONDIDO)

"Love Songs and Dances, Then and Now: From Brahms to Balala" is the

theme when the USD Choral Scholars present a concert on Saturday, May 12. Selections include works from the Romantic Era such as "Neue Liebeslieder-Walzer" by Brahms, as well as jazz and modern pop tunes.

The music begins at 8 p.m. in Shiley Theatre at the University of San Diego (5900 Alcalá Park). Tickets are \$8 general. Call 619-260-2280 for additional information. (UMCDA VISTA)

An "Invitational Showcase of Young Performers," presenting six area teenagers in a concert on Saturday, May 12, begins at 3:30 p.m. at

the Palomar Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Vista (1600 Buena Vista Drive). Admission is a suggested \$5 donation for adults, \$3 for students. 760-631-7055. (VISTA)

Haydn's "London Symphony" may be heard along with other selections when the Young Artists' Symphony performs at San Carlos United Methodist Church at 4 p.m. on Sunday, May 13. Find the church at 6554 Cowles Mountain Boulevard (at Navajo); 619-464-4331. An offering will be received; child care is available. (SAN CARLOS)

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"Second Sundays at Seren," the series presented by the San Diego Performing Arts Association concludes for the season with baroque finale by the Millennium Consort on May 13, at 7 p.m. Ensemble members include Alyson Luederke (baroque choral), Beth Ross-Buckley (flute), Jonny Holton (cello), Stephanie Salton (soprano), and John Wild (trumpet).

Enjoy the concert in Shuman Auditorium at the Carlsbad City Library (1775 Dove Lane). Tickets are \$15 general, \$12 for seniors, \$8 for those 18 years and under. Dial 760-752-5078 for information. (CARLSBAD)

Graduate Contrabassist Sharon Rosner plans a solo recital at 8 p.m. on Sunday, May 13, in the Recital Hall at UCSD's Mandeville Center. Call 858-534-4830 for more information. Free. (LA JOLLA)

Give the Gift of Music to Mom when the La Jolla Chamber Music Society hosts a recital featuring soprano Jennifer Bates and pianist Carole Levine on Sunday, May 13, at 7 p.m. Ensemble members include Alyson Luederke (baroque choral), Beth Ross-Buckley (flute), Jonny Holton (cello), Stephanie Salton (soprano), and John Wild (trumpet).

For this Discovery Series concert, the duo will perform Palestrina's "Te Deum" and "Missa." Tickets are \$15 general, \$12 for seniors, \$8 for those 18 years and under. Dial 760-752-5078 for information. (CARLSBAD)

Sharon Rosner plans a solo recital at 8 p.m. on Sunday, May 13, in the Recital Hall at UCSD's Mandeville Center. Call 858-534-4830 for more information. Free. (LA JOLLA)

to 18. For reservations, call 858-459-3728. (LA JOLLA)

Winners of the ninth annual musical competition hosted by the Chula Vista Cultural Arts Committee will present an awards recital on Sunday, May 13, at 2 p.m., at the Chula Vista Civic Center Library (365 F Street). All of the participating competitors were required to reside in the South Bay. Free. 619-491-5069. (CHULA VISTA)

The Tenor and the Organ, Tijuana native and tenor Marcon Labatista joins Robert Thompson for a concert in the Spreckels Organ Pavilion on Sunday, May 13, at 2 p.m. For more information, call 619-702-8136. Free. (BALBOA PARK)

See in Smith, the Saxophone Choir at San Diego State University plans a concert on Sunday, May 13, at

7 p.m., in Smith Recital Hall at SDSU. Admission is free. 619-594-6061. (DOWNTOWN)

The Mayor's Concert, in recognition of Labor Appreciation Week, is set for Monday, May 14, and it's also the final San Diego Mini-Concert of the season. Attendees will be treated to a performance by the 60-member Marine Band San Diego. The free concert begins at noon (bring your lunch) and lasts approximately 50 minutes in Lyceum Theatre at Horton Plaza. 858-587-8979. (DOWNTOWN)

Music 2018, George E. Lewis coordinates the graduate student improvisation workshop performance planned on Tuesday, May 15, at 8 p.m., in the Recital Hall at UCSD's Mandeville Center. 858-534-4830. Free. (LA JOLLA)

Jazz at The Center

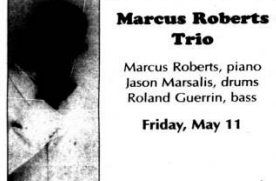
Miles

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Saved by Wit and Melancholy

Installation art, I must confess, bores me when it's concept-heavy or smug.

When the new San Francisco Museum of Modern Art opened several years ago, viewers like me were puzzled and irritated by the menagerie representation of artists active in the 1950s and early 1960s loosely grouped as the Bay Area Figurative painters. In the small gallery reserved for paintings by David Park, Richard Diebenkorn, Joan Brown, Elmer Bischoff, and Nathan Oliveira, there was only one Bischoff, a lovely picture titled *Orange Sweater*. It has all of Bischoff's strengths: bold, smoky color; a continuous, languid surface writhing with small enthusiasms; and a cozy moodiness. But Bischoff, like Diebenkorn, began and ended his career as an abstractionist.

The story of Bay Area figurative, in fact, begins in abstraction. In the 1940s, local artists were quite aware of what was happening in New York. A 1941 Arshile Gorky show in San Francisco caused a stir. In 1945, there was a Pollock show, and in 1946, a Rothko. The high priest of abstraction in San Francisco in the late 1940s was Clifford Still (then teaching at the California School of Fine Arts) whose signature style consisted of fields of drab colors split or stained with high-keyed wounds, rips, and flames. As a teacher, Still preached the dissolution of the horizon line and of Mondrian-esque geometries, and

he forbade his students to refer to the figure. When he moved to New York in 1950, the tradition of Bay Area abstraction was carried on by Hassel Smith, James Budd Dixon, and Frank Lobell.

I offer this as background for an exhibition now at the Museum of Contemporary Art downtown. *Eureka: New Art From the Bay Area*, which in many ways derives from and builds on Bay Area painting of the 1950s. Nearly all the work in the show was made in the past three or four years. Instead of traditional painterly materials, most of these young artists (none of whom was born in the Bay Area) use mixed media, make installations, or manipulate photography. But there's a line of descent from Clifford Still to an artist like Young Kim, represented here by a series of blue and white abstractions that are "about" the shifting relationships between a textured drywall ground and smooth blue acrylic plateaus. These pictures weren't modeled on nature, but they nonetheless look very much like delicate marine paintings. Jim Campbell, whose training was in electrical engineering and mathematics, practices his own idiom of color field art using electronics that play light behind Plexiglas and other materials. *Ambiguous form 2* is hard to look away from.

REVIEW

W.S. DI PIERO

Calendar ART

Celestial blue and pinkish hues pulse and roll across a sheet of Plexiglas. Although this work isn't derived from natural forms, it looks very much like a display of northern lights.

Frederick Hayes, on the other hand, very much in the tradition of Bay Area figurative, makes large charcoal and pastel portraits of African-American faces in distress. These passionate drawings are almost an anti-abstraction statement. Hayes knows how to create and fill pictorial space with the limited flexibility that charcoal allows, and his brash, big-gestured style owes something to David Park, though his vision is an urban, socioeconomic one. He's not the only strong figurative artist in the show.

Jason Jager's unfurled pictures — cartoonish, daffy, anecdotal — occupy a completely different pictorial world. His fragmented narratives and images of agonized teenagers, anguished adults, and space aliens are a turbulent blend of Philip Guston, George Herriman's "Krazy Kat," and Jean-Michel Basquiat. Like Hayes, Jager is broad-gestured and cultivates mixed emotional tones.

If the California School of Fine Arts was the garden where 1950s Bay Area art grew, recent innovative art is thriving at the California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland.



Stick, 1998-2000, Frederick Hayes

"Eureka: New Art From the Bay Area"
Museum of Contemporary Art, 1001 Kettner Boulevard
(at Broadway), adjacent to the America Plaza trolley transfer station
(619-234-1001)
Through Tuesday, June 19

This reflects the growing popularity of media other than painting. If something works, it doesn't matter if it's made of dirt, fabric, styrofoam, fiber-

glass, or videos. Installation art, I must confess, bores me when it's concept-heavy or smug. Lewis deSoto's *Recital*, which employs a computer-controlled piano, velvet curtain, book, page turner, and other things, is certainly spooky, but the completion of its emotional effects requires knowledge of the story that occasioned it, too detailed to rehearse here.

But if it works, it works. Fifteen years ago I saw an installation by the (now famous) French artist Christian Boltanski that consisted of hundreds of heavily worn overcoats, jackets, and shirts hanging like shaggy tapestry across a wall. It's one of the most mournful images I've ever seen, and though it was saturated with the reality of genocide it didn't project or illustrate it. I was reminded of Boltanski, who has also made elegant installations involving photos of young people, by the most plentifully represented artist in the show (and a CCAC graduate), Lisa Kokin.

Kokin constructs portraits of small weathered portrait photographs, the kind found in yearbooks, professional brochures, and family albums, stitched together with heavy gauge black thread. The handcraft is ambiguous because it suggests the "womanly" work of sewing and the predominantly male work of suturing. The ends stick out, and, depending on the content of the pictures, create disturbing or comic effects. The homey images may look trapped in barbed wire, or crowned by thorns, or as if they're having a bad hair day or sporting ten-



Untitled #2524, 1999, Todd Hido

drils or emanating diabolical halos.

Some of Kokin's pieces are quilted, others are shaped like boxes, architectural models, home samplers, hats, antimacassars, totem poles, hanging moss, muslinette. Each is an ad hoc community of (usually) total strangers. They share only the fact that their subjects by now are dead. Kokin's titles are loaded. *Specimens* is a quilt, sheathed in transparent vinyl, of pictures of body parts of football players circa 1930. *Most Likely to Succeed* laces together yearbook photos so densely that the facial features are crusted

over. It's a congested imaging grid of youthful promise and oblivion. Her gender politics and social criticism — of conformity, corporate life, public institutions — never tip Kokin's work into visual scree. She is saved by wit and melancholy. The raspy humor of *Chain of Command*, a tower constructed of 1950s business types sitting down or straddling one another, made me wince. I loved *Balls*, a tree-shaped (nature again!) agglomerate of bowling balls and women, happy or pensive or proud, looking snappy in their pressed bowling shirts. Visit MCA Downtown at

least to see Kokin's remarkable work, which dominates the show, but you'll find other provocative pleasures, such as Todd Hido's muted color photographs of the backs and sides of conventional stuccoed suburban houses, views of hidden blandness. There are no people in the pictures. Hido gives absence a solidity and makes the stucco and stone seem lit from within, otherworldly in their muzzled, marbled blues and golds, as if they were here to visit us. ■

ART LISTINGS

HOW TO SEND US YOUR LISTING: Contributions must be received by 5 p.m. Friday the week prior to publication for consideration. Do not phone. Send a complete description of the event, including the date, time, cost, the precise address where it is to be held (including neighborhood), a contact phone number, and a phone number (including area code) for public information to READER ART, Box 85803, San Diego CA 92186-5803. Or fax to 619-807-3403. You may also submit information online at www.sandiegoreader.com by clicking on the event section.

"Palawan...1944 (First Part)" — this memorial series of paintings by Don Schleit commemorates those who died in the Palawan Massacre of prisoners of war conducted by the Japanese Imperial Army on the island of Palawan in the Philippines during World War II. Meet Schleit during an opening reception planned on Saturday, May 12, at 3 p.m. See the art's on handboard through May.

Find the gallery at 431 North Hale Avenue. Regular viewing hours are 1 to 3 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, and by appointment. Call 760-718-8337 for details. (650)600-0001

Take "A Walk Through the Garden" when Patricia O'Neil, San Juan architect, her recent art on canvas paintings at the 11th Avenue Gallery, 141 West Grand Avenue, 760-800-4191. (F) (650)600-0001

"Selections: Ten Years" at the Earl and Thirde, Larkspur Library, 75 works created over the past decade by Frank Jones. Jones is said to have inspiration from sources including anatomy, botanical subjects, and the human figure. Meet the artist during a reception on Saturday, May 12, at 6 p.m. Jones plans a talk about his

work done by sixth graders in Encinitas. Meet the participating artists during a reception planned for all on Friday, May 11, at 6 p.m., at the San Diego Art Institute. View all the shows through Sunday, May 27. Gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday; noon to 4 p.m. on Sunday. For more information, call 619-236-8011. Admission is \$3. (BALBOA PARK)

"Two Forward...and One Back," new works by Peter Mitten and Brett Stokes are on view through Saturday, May 26, at the Fallbrook Art and Cultural Center (103 South Main Street). Meet the artists when the center hosts an opening reception on Saturday, May 12, at 6 p.m.

Gallery hours are noon to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Wednesday, noon to 8 p.m. Friday through Sunday. For information, call 760-728-1414 or 800-919-1159. (FALLBROOK)

Find the gallery at 845 Main Street. Gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday. Dial 760-789-3682 for information. (RAMONA)

Hmmm...Is It Saturday the 12th of May? Yes, it's time for Second Saturday Esccondido events for culture vultures. The Second Saturday happenings — from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. — are monthly, self-guided tours through Esccondido's expanding cultural district. Visitors may visit open galleries and studios, and watch demonstrations. Maps and brochures are available at the Esccondido Municipal Gallery, 142 West Grand Avenue, 760-800-4191. (F) (650)600-0001

GALLERIES

Outreach through Exhibition, the San Diego Art Institute and the City of Encinitas Commission for the Arts present "Endangered Species," a show offering critical commentary on the important environmental and ecological issues endangering natural beauty. The tour was with Wilson. The exhibit runs concurrently with "Endangered Species...A Youth Perspective," created by Philip Kitterman, and "Art in Our Environment,"

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featuring new work by

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Show continues through May 26
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Calendar

work on Saturday, May 19, at 1 p.m. Find the library at 4253 Coast Street. 858-581-9934 (PACIFIC BEACH).

"By Nature's Design" — featuring work by nine contemporary artists from Southern and Northern California, Colorado, and New York — examines the diversity of ecosystems found in nature and in natural objects. The exhibition opens with a reception at 5 p.m. on Saturday, May 12, in the William D. Cannon Art Gallery.

Regular viewing hours are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday; hours are extended to 8 p.m. on Wednesday and 1 to 5 p.m. on Sunday. Find the gallery at the Calabasas City Library, 1775 Dove

Lane; 760-602-2021. See the show through Sunday, July 1. (CARLSBAD)

"The Martyrdom of San Diego" on martirio de San Diego, an exhibit of etching by Delfo Romero, opens with a reception next Thursday, May 17, 7 p.m., at Macerata Books and Gallery. A poetry reading by Edundo Andamio is planned during the party. See Romero's work through Saturday, June 30.

Find the shop at 289 5th Avenue; 619-426-1283. Gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday. (CHULA VISTA)

ART MUSEUMS

California Center for the Arts — museum, the artists who have defined the imagery and attitude of American art culture as well as the contemporary

artists who have drawn upon the road and lowrider culture for inspiration are examined in "Customized Art Inspired by Hot Rods, Lowriders, and American Car Culture." The 14 featured artists use a variety of media to interpret America's ongoing love affair with the automobile. Examples of customized cars are also on view in the exhibition, which continues through Sunday, May 27.

Find the center at 340 North Escondido Boulevard (at Valley Parkway); 760-748-0120. (ESCONDIDO)

Mingqi International Museum of Folk Art, objects of daily use, ritual, and ceremony from the many cultures of India — textiles, terra cottas and bronzes, adornment, toys, and kites — are included in "Village India — Art of Compassion and Devotion." Selections from the permanent collection, on view through May 30, suspended from the ceiling, share part of the gallery with a larger than life sized clay Avaran horse, along with life-sized paper-mache figures created by the people of Mizhila (in the state of Bihar).

The Mingqi is located on the square with the San Diego Museum of Art and the Timken Museum of Art. For additional information, call 619-239-0003. (BALBOA PARK)

Museum of Contemporary Art, Downtown, an overview of some of the current tendencies defining art are offered in "Turkica: New Art from the Bay Area." The broad cultural and stylistic diversity of the Bay Area artists is taken to reflect in the exhibit's small and large scale works, as well as its site-specific installations. All of the featured artists are recipients of Eureka fellowships, awarded annually by the Fleishacker Foundation. The show promises paintings, photographs, drawings, installations, and video works by 11 artists and a collaborative group.

"Books, Bytes, and Mortar" is an exhibition of blueprints, models, and renderings for the new main library and four upcoming branch library projects.

Both exhibitions close on Tuesday, June 19. Find the museum at

1001 Kettner Boulevard (at Broadway), directly across from the Santa Fe Railroad Depot, adjacent to the America Plaza trolley transfer station. 619-334-1001. (DOWNTOWN)

Museum of Contemporary Art, La Jolla, the growing practice among artists to investigate the built environment and create artwork that does not fit into the clearly defined categories of art and design is demonstrated in "Against Design," a traveling exhibition on view through Sunday, May 20. The "Against" in the exhibit title means "against" with more going on than the surface images that meet the eye. The center of the exhibition houses a series of illustrations for McCracker's artist's book of the Brecht poem "The Children's Crusade," chronicling the legend of 55 war orphans seeking shelter in Poland in 1939. See the exhibit through Sunday, June 17, at 704 Pier View Way. For further information, call 760-721-2787. (OCEANSIDE)

San Diego Museum of Art, Albert Belfer's 1884-1944 was at the forefront of the renaissance of lithography, when artists began to stretch the medium beyond the limits of creative and technical production as defined by commerce. Working in San Diego, Belfer was well acquainted with the latest artists, including the artist's book "The Road of Painting" by the Lithographs of the Lithographers' Association, which is on view through Sunday, May 27.

The museum's permanent collection, through Sunday, May 27, features a series of large-scale panoramic photographs of golf course landscapes taken at architect-designed golf courses in San Diego County. The photographs are said to "illuminate the diverse golf landscapes of the region." Scout the courses through Monday, September 3.

Find the museum at 1600 Prospect Street; 608-554-5541. (LA JOLLA)

Museum of Photographic Arts, the interesting pursuit of collecting photography and collecting the world through the photographic and moving image is examined in "Inside Out: 50 Years of Collecting the World's Lastman House Collection." In its seven sections, the exhibition demonstrates how well and moving images have been informed by cultural and personal needs and aspirations including exploration, tourism, news reporting, science, and art photography. The exhibit closes on Sunday, July 22.

Also on view, through Sunday.

July 29, in "Decoding Photography: The Visual Classroom Exhibition Series, Part II." Find the museum in the Casa de Balboa building, at 1649 El Prado. For information, call 619-334-1001. (DOWNTOWN)

Oceanside Museum of Art, the whimsy and pathos of the sea environment is interpreted with paintings, fabric, illustrations, and text in "Delious McGraw — The Circus Loosely: In Response to Bertolt Brecht, Kurt Vonnegut, and John Highkin." In the show, the "circus" becomes a metaphor for the world, with more going on than the surface images that meet the eye. The center of the exhibition houses a series of illustrations for McGraw's artist's book of the Brecht poem "The Children's Crusade," chronicling the legend of 55 war orphans seeking shelter in Poland in 1939. See the exhibit through Sunday, June 17, at 704 Pier View Way. For further information, call 760-721-2787. (OCEANSIDE)

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Also on view, through Sunday.

For additional information, call 619-232-7931. (BALBOA PARK)

Timken Museum of Art, the first American exhibition is using on the Italian view painter who created images of the grand public spaces in Venice nearly 300 years ago is currently on display. "Luca Caracciolo: Views of Venice" brings together paintings from public and private collections in the U.S. and Europe, including eight Caracciolo works and comparative paintings by Caspar David Friedrich and Canaletto. The show is anchored by Caracciolo's "Piazza at Venice" large oil on permanent display at the museum. See the show through Friday, August 31.

The museum's permanent collection includes European masters, 19th Century American paintings, and Russian icons. For information, dial 619-239-5548. (BALBOA PARK)

Fog People

"Home" is one of the two most repeated words in Long Day's Journey. The other is "blame."

In 1940, Eugene O'Neill described his newest play to a friend. It's "the story of one day, I am, to midnight, in the life of a family of four — father, mother, and two sons — back in 1912 — a day in which things occur that evoke the whole past of the family and reveal every aspect of its interrelationships.... At the final curtain, there will not be, trapped within each other by the past, each guilty and at the same time innocent, scornful, loving, pitying each other, understanding and yet not understanding at all, forgiving but still doomed never to... forget. But, hell, I'll tell you about it when I see you."

That's the most O'Neill ever said about Long Day's Journey into Night. The play was so personal, he sealed the manuscript in a vault. He said Random House could publish it 25 years after he died but that he never wanted it produced. Long Day's Journey is the most autobiographical drama ever written. The play, which opens this week at the Lyceum Theatre, requires no preview to make it clear. O'Neill describes his father (James), mother (Mary), older brother (Jamie), and himself (called Edmund) in agonizing detail. "We were a very close family," he wrote, "too close." If you plan on seeing the Renaissance Theatre Company's production, please, don't read this first. It's a preview, for those curious about the facts behind the play, who, as at a website, could click on lines of dialogue for background.

EDMUND: "Please, Mama! I'm trying to help. Because it's bad for you to forget. The right way is to remember."

His most recent biographer, Stephen A. Black, says O'Neill may have had "nearly total recall." He could sit in a room full of people, oblivious to his surroundings, and later recite every speech. For his character, Edmund, and his family, however, memory is a curse. True "fog people," they obliterate the past with alcohol and drugs. When James yells at his wife to forget, Mary replies, "The past is the present, and it'll be the future, too. We all try to live out that, but life won't let us."

JAMES: "I've never missed a performance in my life."

James O'Neill (1846-1920), says biographer Crosswell Bowen, "was the John Barrymore of his day." He played Edmond Dantes, The Count of Monte Cristo, over 6000 times. Looking back, he called the role his "good bad luck."

because it made him money (an estimated \$800,000) but prevented him from fulfilling his promise. "Easy success in foolish roles," Bowen wrote, "made him forget his original goal of becoming a great Shakespearean actor: when he realized what he had done, it was too late."

Bowen: "His father's bitterness made a deep impression on Eugene. He told himself he would never sell out and that he would never stay put at any one successful stage of his career."

MARY [to Edmund]: "It's wrong to blame your brother. He can't help being what the past has made him any more than your father can. Or you. Or I." James "Jamie" O'Neill (1878-1923) was O'Neill's older brother by ten years. After showing early promise as a student, and a shortstop, he abandoned ambition. "He drank more than anyone I ever knew," said Lewis Kalonyne. "Really a drunk and a slob," said Mabelle Scott, "and he had a nasty way of looking at people."

Young Eugene worshipped his brother. "Gene learned to move easily than other people," Bowen wrote. "The tragedy of the O'Neill family was not the lack of love, but the lack of communication of their love."

MARY: "The chauffeurs and people like them stand for something. I mean, they have decent, presentable homes they don't have to be ashamed of. They have friends who entertain them, and when you stand in relation to his children make King Lear stand to this." Since Jamie was unemployable, James made him an actor in the Monte

Crise company. For a short while, Eugene, who called himself the world's worst actor, played a bit part. The two often sabotaged their father's efforts. During one of the Count's dramatic flourishes, Jamie passed out, grabbing Eugene, who fell down too.

The brothers spent a weekend at a Denver bordello (when Eugene returned to his hotel, he was wearing the modern's red satin kimono). They came to the theater so drunk their father had to cancel the performance. Biographer Arthur and Barbara Gelb believe it was "the blackest day of his professional life."

MARY: "I've never felt at home in the theater. Even though Mr. Tyrone has made me go with him on all his trips. I've had little to do with the people in his company.... Their life is not my life."

There's an old Irish curse: "May the light fade from your eyes, so you never see what you love." All the O'Neills felt it, though none more than Mary Ellen "Ella" Quintan O'Neill (1857-1922).

As a youth in Cleveland, Ohio, she had a vision: a statue of the Virgin Mary came alive and "smiled on her." She decided to become a nun and enrolled in a convent in 1872. Gelb: "She leaned toward a mystic view of life, was reserved, a little spoiled, romantic, and innocent."

Ella came from a refined, middle-class family and married James O'Neill, dashing actor, June 14, 1877. She was 18; he, 30.

Gelb: Ella could never forgive James for exposing her to his rough-and-tumble world; and he could not forgive her for the pride with which she held aloof from that world. "They were 'deeply in love' and 'irrevocably embattled.... Each satisfied in the other a perverse need to torment and pardon."

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James O'Neill as the Count of Monte Cristo, 1907

THE LIVES AND LETTERS OF EUGENE O'NEILL

Biographies: Doris Alexander, *The Tempering of Eugene O'Neill* (Harcourt Brace, 1962); Eugene O'Neill's Creative Struggle: The Decisive Decade, 1924-1933 (Penn State Press, 1992)

Stephen A. Black, *Eugene O'Neill: Beyond Mourning and Tragedy* (Yale, 1999)

Crosswell Bowen, *Curse of the Misbegotten: A Tale of the House of O'Neill* (Ballantine, 1999)

Barrett H. Clark, *Eugene O'Neill: The Man and His Plays* (Dover, 1967)

Arthur and Barbara Gelb, *O'Neill* (Harper & Row, 1973)

Louis Schaeffer, *O'Neill, Son and Playwright* (Little Brown, 1968); *O'Neill, Son and Artist* (Little Brown, 1973)

Letters: Dorothy Connors, *Love and Admiration and Respect: The O'Neill-Connors Correspondence* (Duke, 1986)

Travis Bogard, Ed., *Selected Letters of Eugene O'Neill* (Yale, 1988)

Jackson R. Bryer, Ed., *The Theatre We Worked For: Letters of Eugene O'Neill to Kenneth Macgowan* (Yale, 1982)

Nancy L. Roberts, Ed., *As Ever: Eugene O'Neill's Correspondence with Eugene O'Neill and George Jean Nathan* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1987)

On the road, James and Ella stayed

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Mary labels the Chaffields (i.e., Chappells), who cruise by in a new Mercedes, "big frogs in a small puddle." O'Neill, who called New London a "hick burg," confessed to a friend, "You know, I always wanted to make money...to be able, someday, to hire a Tally-Ho and fill it with painted whores, load each whore with a bushel of dimes, and let them throw the money to the rabble on a Saturday afternoon; we'd ride down State Street and toss money to people like the Chappells."

MARY: "He thinks money spent on a home is money wasted... He doesn't understand a home. And yet, he wants a home. He's even proud of having this shabby place."

The O'Neills lived at 325 Pequot Avenue in New London (in *Moby Dick*, Ahab's boat was the Pequot; it's hard not to make a connection). Depending on who describes it, the house is either a dump or quite habit-



Ella

able. A "boxlike, white frame dwelling of cheap construction" (Bowen), it stood "halfway between the town proper and the lighthouse...on the fringe of the exclusive Pequot summer colony." Maples, elms, and pines shaded the yard.

Before he directed the world premiere of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, Jose Quintero went to 325 Pequot and found it "full of attractive possibilities and charmingly situated looking out on the sound." But for Ella, the place became the site for her passive-aggression against James.

Gelbe: She "often complained that the house was ill-constructed, shabbily furnished, and cheaply maintained"—James, for example, did the gardening and would not use the city's water supply (he said it was "impure"). "She and her sons accused James of frugality."

When W.C. Fields became famous, he was so afraid of poverty he deposited money in banks all across the country—under assumed names, which he later forgot. James O'Neill, who also grew up impoverished, had a similar fear. He invested in numerous real estate



L to R: Eugene, Jamie, and James on the porch of Monte Cristo

ventures and dreaded, says Stephen Black, "that his family would spend him into the poorhouse.... The more Ella defied James's penny-pinching, the more vividly he remembered the horrors of poverty and the more tightly he grasped."

Black adds that "controlling the money meant to James the power to control the members of his family." *Long Day's Journey* makes James a miser. Of all O'Neill's biographers, only Louis Schaeffer disagrees: "The evidence available to us is mixed—a result, it seems of opposed drives in his make-up. Undoubtedly he had a parsi-

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MARY: "I blame only myself. I swore after Eugene died I would never have another baby. I was to blame for his death."

"Home" is one of the two most repeated words in *Long Day's Journey*. The other is "blame."

The characters, except O'Neill, have their actual names. O'Neill switched his with an older brother, Edmund, whom he never knew. In the spring of 1884, Ella and James went on the road, leaving Jamie, aged six, and Edmund, just over a year old, with her mother in Manhattan. Jamie contracted

measles. Edmund got them from Jamie and died March 4.

Gelbe: "Ella's dismay at having left Edmund grew into an intolerable guilt, with which she spent the rest of her life trying to shift to her husband and children." She became a vicious Jamie murderer. Her brother James and Ella sent Jamie to a boarding school, where he remained for the next nine years. Gelbe: "Jamie could never have failed to interpret his self-punishment for a crime."

No one knows how many times Ella saw *The Last Days of Monte Cristo*, but at several performances—when the house was about to murder a boy

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doesn't know is his son — Ella rose from her seat and moved, according to Gelb, "like a sleepwalker toward the stage. James was afraid that Ella might reach the stage one day, but someone always tapped her and brought her out of whatever reverie it was that this scene inspired in her."

MARY: "That ignorant quack of a cheap doctor — All he knew was I was in pain. It was easy for him to stop the pain."

Eugene O'Neill was born at Barrett House, a hostelry on 43rd and Broadway in New York. He weighed 11 pounds. Ella's pain and postpartum depression were so severe the hotel doctor, allegedly James's barroom crony, prescribed morphine. She became addicted. For the next two decades, "a dutiful shadow" (Gelb) who wore veils whenever she went outside — Ella retreated into a self-injected trance O'Neill described as "a kind of twilight zone."

MARY: "You were born afraid, because I was so afraid to bring you into the world... I knew something terrible would happen. I should never have borne you. It would have been better for your sake."

O'Neill learned of his mother's addiction when he was 14. "In an instant," writes Black, "Eugene lost both the world he had known and himself as he had believed himself to be."

"Perhaps the most difficult thing... was that he could not avoid siding with his mother, father, and brother in blaming his own birth for Ella's addiction — and hating himself for existing. It was a guilt he would carry the rest of his life." O'Neill became, Edmund says, "a stranger who never feels at home, who does not want and is not really wanted, who can never belong, who must always be a little in love with death."

EDMUND: "Yes, particularly the time I tried to commit suicide at Jimmy the Priest's, and almost did."

TYRONE: "You weren't in your right mind. No son of mine would ever — you were drunk."

EDMUND: "I was stone cold sober. That was the trouble. I'd stopped to think too long."

Suicide plagues the O'Neills. James's father may have killed himself, with rat poison, when he went home to Ireland. Louise Hawthorne, it was rumored, "killed herself for love of James O'Neill" (Black). Ella tried to drown herself. Jamie, who "was inordinately attached to his mother and never married" (Rowen), drank himself to death shortly after she died. O'Neill's two sons, Eugene, Jr., and Shane, also took their lives. Eugene, Jr. left a note: "Never let it be said of an O'Neill that he failed to empty a bottle."

In the spring of 1913, partly about his mother and in the

midst of a divorce, O'Neill went "on the pace that kills along the road to ruin." Schaeffer: "In his eyes there was only one thing that could justify his existence, to become a great poet, and he despaired of ever achieving it." Some time in February 1912, the 21-year-old O'Neill swallowed an overdose of veronal — a morphine-like sedative — reclined on a cot, and awaited his end. He passed out, he says, "without even having time to experience that glimpse of eternity or nothingness" he expected. About 24 hours later, he heard a knocking from across the universe. Drunks from Jimmy the Priest's bar, downstairs, pounded down the door. They found empty pill bottles and took him to the alcoholic ward of a hospital where, O'Neill quipped years later, "I was the only sober person there."

Black: "...surviving veronal poisoning marked the beginning of a reversal in the way O'Neill lived his life. He would spend the rest of it trying to understand and express the way the world looked when one subjectively accepted mortality."

O'Neill: "If a person is to get the meaning of life, he must learn to like the facts about himself — ugly as they seem to his sentimental vanity — before he can lay hold of the truth behind the facts; and the truth is never ugly."

Long Day's Journey begins six months after O'Neill attempts suicide. His third wife, Carlotta Monterey, had the play produced in 1956, in spite of her husband's wishes. O'Neill dedicated it to her: this play "of old sorrow, written in tears and blood," in which he faced "my dead at last... with deep pity and understanding and forgiveness for all the four haunted Tyrone."

THEATER LISTINGS

Theater listings and commentary are by Jeff Smith. Information is accurate according to material given us, but it is always wise to check 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.

Actors Alliance of San Diego: 2001 Actor's Festival
I want to plug this enterprise, sight unseen. The 11th Annual Actors Alliance offers local actors, directors, and playwrights the chance to showcase themselves in new or rarely produced work. The actors perform on a bare stage, or with few props, against a black background. Costumes range from off-the-rack to off-the-rack clothes hanger (or floor). The emphasis is on acting. Each evening has three or four one-act plays. Not every actor will be a showstopper. Some get chosen for juicy roles rather than for telling a good story or making a dramatic point. But the percentage of quality work is usually high. And every now and then you'll find a jewel. A prize.

ST. CECILIA'S PLAYHOUSE, 1800 BIRTH AVENUE, SAN MARCO, 76001: MAY 13, 8:00 P.M. FOR INFORMATION ON SPECIFIC SHOWS, DATES, AND TIMES, AND FOR RESERVATIONS, CALL 619-444-1000.

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In HIT Productions' newest mystery dinner-theater show, Texas Ranger Slate Montana must find the truth. Did Butch Spilchorn kill Hank Anderson, as people have long believed, or was it someone else? TYLER'S TASTE OF TEXAS, 7809 EL CAJON BOULEVARD, LA MESA, OPEN: ENDED RUN: SATURDAY AT 7:00 P.M. FOR INFORMATION, CALL 619-561-0873.

Come Back to the Fire and Dance, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean
San Diego Mesa College stages Ed Grack's drama about the 20th reunion of the Disciples of James Dean. Juan Castro directed. MESA COLLEGE SPOLLARD THEATRE, THROUGH MAY 12, FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, 8:00 P.M.

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Death Rides the Stage
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"I said, 'That guy sounds like Sting,'" said Joel Setters, lead singer of Callbox. "I didn't know it was [his son] until right before we

At least that's according to manager Wayne Isaak, who was reluctant to even let a writer talk to Sumner. "I couldn't live with myself if we exploited the [Sting] connection without giving the band a chance to develop," said Isaak, who most recently worked as VHI's executive V.P. of

inevitable. "He sounds exactly like his dad," said promoter Harlan Schiffman, who was not allowed to advertise Sumner's genetics. On the day of the show, Santa's Boyfriend stopped by KFSB (92.1) for an interview. The only problem was that the station had just switched from classical music to modern rock just hours before the interview: It took more than a half an hour to give away the free tickets to the Caabab show. "It was our first day on the air," said 92.1's Halloran. "I was amazed anybody called up."

Halloran explained how Sting separated from Sumner and his mum Frances when Joe was quite young. "I interviewed his father back in the '70s," said Halloran. "I'm not sure how much time [Sting] spends with Joe." He said it was not the first time he's interviewed second-generation rockers. "I talked to Rufus Wainwright, who is the son of London ('Dead Skunk in the Middle of the Road')." When I interviewed [the late] Jeff Buckley, I never brought up his dad [Tim Buckley, also deceased]. There is a whole

Calendar MUSIC SCENE

slew of artists like this, like the Dylans [Bob and Jacob]. But it's not always a good

perform my father's music," it usually means they either have alimony due or they have to make some kind of money quick," said one music insider. "It worked for Natalie Cole. I heard the Nelson twins are planning a Ricky Nelson tribute album."

—Ken Leighton

"Somebody just did a poll. Rap is now the second most popular form of music behind rock. Can you believe that? Country is now third."

Connie Nelson has become one of the more visible local champions of true blue country music. The former Mrs. Willie Nelson (they were together from 1968 to 1991) promotes local appearances by her ex ("We're still good friends") and other friends like Merle Haggard, Waylon Jennings, Tanya Tucker, John Anderson, and K.T. Oslin. "I put Willie and Leon Russell together at the Coach House [in San Juan Capistrano] and at 4th & B. We sold it right out."

Nelson, who has lived in Fallbrook for seven years, says traditional country is in a world of hurt due to greedy record companies and lame radio stations. "Country has blended into rock. It all sounds the same. If you brought someone in from another country and played them Dave Matthews and Tim McGraw, I would bet you that they couldn't tell that they were two different forms of music."



SANTA'S BOYFRIEND IS SON OF STING

thing. Julian Lennon has the curse of being his father's son. It really didn't do him a lot of good."

Local singer/songwriter A.J. Croce has been quoted as saying he is not against bringing back a song or two of his late father Jim on stage.

"When the child of a celebrity — who is also an entertainer — says something like, 'I finally became comfortable enough with my own image that I could

bands like the Dorados and the Bastard Sons of Johnny Cash. "I got them to open for Merle [Haggard]," she said of

WILLIE'S EX DOESN'T LISTEN TO KSON

the inside track blurt

started playing." On May 1 Callbox opened for a London-based band known as Santa's Boyfriend. When he took the gig, he didn't know the lead singer of Santa's Boyfriend was Joe Sumner, the 24-year-old son of Sting. A crowd of 73 saw Santa's Boyfriend make its local debut at the Caabab. Though the reggae-tinged, polyrhythmic sound of Santa's Boyfriend recalls the Police, the band swears it wants to avoid the Son-of-Sting syndrome.

programming. Before that he ran A&M Records' publicity department, where he used to work with Sumner's dad. Isaak wants to keep Sumner away from the Sting. exploitation the band faces back home. "The British press is constantly after him. We aren't looking for press right now. The more the band would be identified with an existing rock icon, the harder it would be to carve out their own image."

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San Diego Reader, May 10, 2001

Calendar
MUSIC SCENE
blurt
continued

the Bastard Sons. "If I believe in a band, I will do whatever I can to help them."

But she says she can't help them where it really matters: on the radio.

"I don't ever listen to KSON anymore. Every bit of what they play sounds the same."

She says KSON in particular — and country music in general — has morphed into pop, thanks to crossover artists like Shania Twain.

"It's okay for a country song to cross over (into pop), but they shouldn't just churn out crossover artists. Country roots will fade away. It will end up killing country music.... Brad Paisley is the only new artist I really listen to who sounds like a real country singer. I wonder how long he'll be around before he'll get displaced."

Nelson says Haggard, Jones, and her former husband have been shut out of country radio. "Merle had a new CD that was completely ignored."

Of the two local country

stations, Nelson says Hot Country (99.3 FM) does more for traditional country. "The last time I talked to KSON was about a fund-raiser for AIDS at Copley Hall. We had Willie... A.J. Croce, Arlo Guthrie.... I went down to KSON and asked them help us out. I didn't ask them to heavily promote it, just maybe make an announcement. They couldn't say anything about it, even with Willie Nelson on the bill.... I was so upset. I couldn't believe it."

But KSON, she says, is just part of a bigger problem.

"It's not just my opinion. The general consensus in Nashville is they all know something's wrong, they just don't know how to fix it."

In the race to mimic pop trends, Nelson says country label execs have even gone so far as to create their own version of boy bands by signing artists like Rascal Flatts, Marshall Dyllon, and the Clark Family Experience.

"They say, 'If it worked with the Backstreet Boys, let's do it here.' There's not a commitment to artists like there used to be. Labels used to groom an artist and stick with them. Now it's 'Who's next?' It's ridiculous. What's sad to me is I've always heard

practice makes perfect. You were taught at a young age that the more you play, the better you get. Now some of the best singers and songwriters can't even get airplay."

— Ken Leighton

"If you're gonna do a cover, you can't do it note for note — every asshole does that," says Harley Davidson of Deadbolt, explaining his approach to recording a tribute song. "We're going to do it the Deadbolt way, which



HARLEY, THE ONE-TAKE SNAKE CHARMER

of course means not practicing."

San Diego's Hairball 8 Records is putting out a tribute to Johnny Cash called *Dein' It for the CASH... A Tribute to the Man in Black*. Deadbolt recorded "Orange Blossom Special" for the CD, a traditional bluegrass tune made famous by Bill Monroe. Hairball 8 owner Ryan Davis laughs as he recalls the Deadbolt recording session

back in December. "The band was on an all-night bender, and they showed up late," says Davis. "Harley asked me if I had a Johnny Cash CD with 'Orange Blossom Special' on it. Apparently they had learned the music but didn't know the lyrics. So Harley jaunted over to Wal-Mart and returned with a greatest hits CD. Harley and Garrett [Deadbolt's drummer] spent the next 20 minutes in the Deadbolt van listening to the song and writing down the lyrics on a piece of wood, a shingle from a storage bin inside the van, because they couldn't find paper. They needed something big for Harley to read off of. They came in and recorded it in one take."

The CD will be out this fall. A number of San Diego bands will be on the CD, including the Scotch Greens, Furious IV, the Barnyard Ballers, and McPherson Struts. According to Davis, Hank Williams III has also agreed to record a song for the CD.

As for Cash? "I left a couple messages on the guest book of Johnny Cash's website," says Davis, "and eventually I was e-mailed by Lou Robin's wife. Lou is Johnny Cash's manager, and I said that I wanted his blessing for the CD. He told me to send him the songs as they came in, and

he'd have Johnny Cash listen to them, and if he takes a liking to them, he'll do the liner notes."

Slender, a rock 'n' roll band from San Francisco, signed on in the last couple of weeks, providing a cover of "Big River." The Beat Farmers were famous for covering that song, but then again, so were the Grateful Dead.

Slender plays the Casbah on Tuesday, May 15.

— Russell Bauder

"It's a pain to do an in-store (concert). We have to rearrange the racks, run ads, sometimes we hire security, and then we're losing \$300 to \$400 in sales while the band's playing."

Phil Galloway has been a fixture at Off The Record nearly as long as the bins, booking many of those performances.

"The El Cajon Boulevard store was a lot smaller (than the current Hillcrest store), but we managed to pull off in-stores with Slayer, Hüsker Dü, [and] a lot of punk groups."

The largest turnouts have showed up for the Posies (1991), Mudhoney (1994), the Misfits (1996), Drive Like Ichu (1997), and Rocket from the Crypt (1998). An April 2001 set by the Locust drew, in Galloway's estimate, over two hundred.

"Sometimes we know it'll

be such a huge crowd that we have to bring in Omni security."

Off The Record hosted Nirvana in October of 1991, at the start of their first national headline tour. "Right when we found out [Nirvana] was definitely coming. Nevermind jumped from number 20 to number 7 on the *Billboard* charts. At that point, they decided there'd only be three in-stores for the whole tour — Seattle, San Diego, and New York. For the one in Seattle, they purposely leaked out the wrong date and location, so the actual gig could stay a secret until the

last possible minute. "Down here we prepared by creating limited-edition tickets: purple with a watermark. Each one [was] individually signed and numbered and recorded, not



COBAIN — NOW OBSCURED BY KISS

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Calendar MUSIC SCENE blurt

only to control the number of people in the store but to prevent counterfeiting. I heard right away about the Seattle gig...the kids who got in went nuts and were diving. Actually climbing on the record bins and diving off, falling all over the band! That made us a little nervous, for sure...

"I was in the store at 5:30 a.m., taping baby dolls and fishhooks everywhere, like on the [album] cover. The record bins had to be moved, and those weigh three or four hundred pounds each. Oh, and part of the deal was that we had to provide the equipment, a 12-string guitar, a kg...the plan was for them to do an all-acoustic set. Gelfin or some radio network was also going to record it. Things on our side fell through because we had all right-handed instruments and so Kurt [who was left-handed] went ahead and played his own electric guitar. They ended up doing a whole 40-minute hard-rock set.

"After the set, they hung out and signed autographs and posters for people. You could tell Kurt wasn't into that part at all though. He wasn't in the mood to pose for pictures...I don't know, maybe he was coming down with something."

Kurt, often written Curt, Cobain — he used both spellings with no consistency: the Nirvana LP *Blush* has him listed with both spellings in one set of liner notes — died April 5, 1994. As the anniversary of Cobain's suicide passed, photos of Nirvana performing at Off The Record, displayed behind a glass counter at the store, were repeatedly obscured by lipstick kisses on the glass.

— Jay Allen Sanford

URL watching — San Diego Punk

<http://www.sandiegopunk.com>
The purpose of this site is to inform people in the San Diego area about the local punk, pop punk, hardcore, and emo scene," explains sandiegopunk.com founder Joel Scheingross.

Message board offerings: "I eat meat and I am sick of hearing about how if me and all my life-stealing animal slaughtering buddies stop eating meat, what a great utopian world we would live in."

— North End Girl
"I'm fucked up in the head and I was picked on and all that shit and you don't see me shooting people!"



— Stevie James Dio
"I'm just wondering how a show with 4 local bands at the Epicentre is going to cost 7 dollars? I mean, what is there to pay for?"



— YOU AND WHAT ARMY?

— Brandon Leak
"Lead singer, Jon, had a minor jaw problem before the show, where he couldn't open up his mouth very wide, but he sang on," observes Ada in

one write-up. "Chuck the bassist cut some skin away from his cuticle and began to splatter blood on his bass, but still, he played on."
Punk band names on the site: One Less Junkie, Slow Gherkin, Good Charlotte, Pedro the Lion, Kelly Leak Goes to Japan, Flogging Molly, Losin' Fusion, Small Brown Bike, Shitlist, Ghoti Hook, the Dingees, Multiple Sub Wounds, Spazboy, Wreakreation, Swingin' Utters, and You and What Army! One more: Dierentiyouthhellchristbasta rdassman.

— Jay Allen Sanford

CD reviews:
Bluerange, Departure
Blue...orange.
Love...hate.

Comfort...anguish. Lotsa my-t-good, my-t-strong polar-opposite shit.
"I wish you'd crash and die in burnin' hell tonight, / I wish you'd break your arm or break your leg, / I wish you'd hold me tight, just squeeze me like you said you would, / Or treat me like you did when we were new." Fuckin' dig it! There are some VERY GOOD boy-girl tunes here, folks, bordering on great. Some ACTUALLY GREAT.
All spewed forth in perfectly beautiful enunciated innocence. James Tuckwell is an excruciatingly good singer when it comes to making meaning clear, and not only clear but tangible (palpable) (gripping); to navigating simple, familiar turf and wielding the familiarity and

simplicity as a WEAPON.
Hey, some of this is ancient Richard Hell turf, or Johnny Thunders turf, but they couldn't sing, and they were never innocent — if they claimed so, they were lying.
This is probably the first album I've listened to in years by a band I never heard of where every cut just fucking jumped at me and I couldn't turn it off. Very rare but never ad hoc. With hardly any filler. Terrific band! And an amazingly adept job of self-production.

— Richard Meltzer

CONTRIBUTORS
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Whole Lot of Love

I mentioned owning several price guides, so he'd know that I'm aware of things like value.

This isn't the original paper sleeve, you know. It looks like someone just cut it out of a grocery bag and stuck the album in it.

Off The Record owner Rich Horowitz wasn't telling me anything I didn't know about the copy of *Two Virgins* he'd pulled from my collection of over 3000 vinyl albums. He noticed that the cover jacket featuring a nude photo of John Lennon and Yoko Ono was as counter-

SCENE

JAY ALLEN SANFORD

terfeit as the wraparound sleeve that had been cut out in one spot to reveal their famous faces but nothing else. The bootleg release commonly sells for around \$40 in collector's magazines like *Goldmine* and through online auctions. Horowitz added my copy to a stack of records he was willing to buy for \$5 or more apiece, along with about two dozen choice selections (such as the soundtrack for a 1967 film called *The Trip*, a rare U.K. edition of the first Black Sabbath album, and a spoken-word LP featuring Timothy Leary speeches set to music by the Grateful Dead, Jimi Hendrix, and others).

There were three other stacks of potential purchases, worth to OTR either 25 cents, 50 cents, or one dollar. Several hundred albums were separated into these stacks, with the "quarter bin" sprawling in six long rows across my living room floor.

Off The Record's Hillcrest shop and offhencordviny.com regularly buy large collections to supplement the inventory described on their website as "250,000 titles of all genres of music...expertly graded for appearance, sound quality, and authenticity."

The mountain of LPs I'd hoarded while running a record store in New England occupied nearly one full room in the two-bedroom house I was about to vacate. The collection had gathered a decade of dust, and I didn't want to move them myself, so I contacted OTR through the website with an offer to sell the lot. I described my hoard as "heavy" with '60s and '70s psychedelia, imports, European progressive rock, fusion jazz, regional garage bands, novelty records, cult movie soundtracks, and TV shows." Horowitz phoned me the next day. His first question: What was their condition?

We negotiated.

Horowitz started with "The common stuff or ones that have wear and tear, we only pay a quarter each. Records in mint condition, even if they're recent or common, might be worth a lot more to us, and if something is rare or a key

piece, like a Beatles butcher cover [the first print of their *Yesterday* and *Today* LP featured a cover photo of the band covered in

bloody baby dolls—few copies were sold as it was recalled from the market within hours of its release due to outraged retailers and customers], we'll pay around 50 percent of whatever we think it'll sell for. That's if it's in good shape. Do you have a ball-park figure in mind for the whole collection?"

I said yes without divulging the amount. Then I mentioned owning several price guides and talked about my background in record selling, so he'd know that I'm aware of things like value, condition, and scarcity.

"It sounds like the way to go," offered Horowitz, "would be for us to go through the entire lot and make two bids—one for the choice pieces and then what we'd pay for the entire lot."

Arrangements were made for his two buyers to come by for an appraisal. On their arrival the following week, I set them loose to pull apart the albums while I worked on some drawing in the next room. I could hear the running commentaries as they came across more unusual selections, like an imported Blind Faith album.

"He's got the original banned cover with the [topless] teenage girl, and the [alternate cover] reissue, but this one's got a shot I've never seen."

A round record cover on an album by the Goggles was "unimpressive...we have lots of these. They did the cover this way because they probably had an old cutout template left over and wanted to get more use from it, but it gets lost in the rack since it's too short—and the band pretty much sucks."

Both buyers demonstrated encyclopedic knowledge with observations like "This has Carlos Santana's brother" (the group Mabo), "Cool, Steve Howe's first band" (Tonnorono), and "It's a Tommy rip-off, a rock opera—Alice Cooper does a few



One writer's record collection

songs" (Flash Fearless). On finding a run of over 50 Frank Zappa LPs, one noted, "I haven't seen some of these in a long time. They'll sell really fast."

About ten of the albums turned up in their \$1 stack.

After two hours of browsing, one of the buyers called Horowitz. "It's really an eclectic collection, a little of everything. Definitely some key stuff and stuff we don't see too often. Hendrix, Beatles, Moody Blues, Miles Davis, blues and jazz, and some real obscure progressive [bands]—it's definitely worth coming out to take a look at yourself."

By the time Horowitz arrived, the front half of my house was overflowing with vinyl covering nearly every inch of floor space. He did his own once-over and inquired about a few items. "This one, *Epiqure*, what are they like?"

I described the group as a cross between Pink Floyd and Journey, space-rock synths and guitars with slick commercial production.

"Do you know what this goes for?" he asked of a hexagon-shaped LP and jacket featuring the movie soundtrack from *The Andromeda Strain*. I mentioned online auction sales of \$75 and that my asking price was at least \$40.

"I'll pass."

I flipped through several hundred of the records they were interested in and pulled about three dozen that I didn't want to sell at the offered prices.

The soundtrack to the film *Candy* is big with Beatles collectors because Ringo is in it. I could get 20 bucks on eBay for it."

Horowitz and I haggled up to \$5, whereupon

I offered to include a poster with the album if he'd up the price to ten. He agreed.

"All these Zappa albums are original prints," I pointed out while pulling *Absolutely Free*, *Frank Out*, *Uncle Meat*, *200 Motels*, and a few others from the 50-cent and dollar stacks.

"Yeah, but look at the records themselves. They're in pretty poor shape."

I knew that none of the albums had skips broken enough to dim my enjoyment of them. Rather than negotiate, I returned them to the room still half-filled with LPs.

I asked what those remaining albums were worth to him, and Horowitz shook his head.

"To be honest, the rest is just junk.... Tell you what, I could give you the number of someone who can haul them away for you and give you a few bucks to recycle them."

I mentioned a friend who can sell them for me at swap meets and we moved on to the stuff he wanted.

I'd calculated the value at just under a thousand. I got close to that.

As the three carted out the records in boxes, and I prepared for my impending move, I felt none of the regret I'd anticipated feeling. The LPs required housing, climate control, floor space, and security. I was feeling like the records owned me.

The buyers were grunting as they lifted each 20- to 30-pound box, and I thought, "Better than me." A weight off my shoulders.

The first call I made after Horowitz and company drove off was to that friend at the swap meet.

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Calendar MUSIC SCENE

White Bopper

"Isn't he great? I love Pepper Adams. He's so-o-o cool."

If you're a music nut, what better place to work than a record store, especially one that handles used as well as new music so all manner of new, rare, and out-of-print items pass under your nose before being sent out for the shopping public? In the Classical & Jazz section of my local music emporium are assorted young clerks who, unlike the university students I encounter these days, restore my faith in the young and my hopes for a future not radically dumber than what we've got going at the moment. So when I asked a young chap working among the jazz bins the other day who it was playing baritone sax on a version of Charles Mingus's "Song With Orange," the young gentleman could barely contain himself. "Pepper Adams!" he effused. "Isn't he great? I love Pepper Adams. He's so-o-o cool."

And I feel certain Mr. Adams is cool, has been cool, and will be cool until the wind goes out of him. The disc we were listening to is called *Pepper Adams Plays Charles Mingus*, and you ought to pick it up if you can find it. The performances are from September of 1963, quintet and octet, and the lineup backing Adams in both is splendid, including Hank Jones, Zoot Sims, Thad Jones, Paul Chambers, Bennie Powell, and Danny Richmond, among others. It's interesting to hear the work of the great bassist/songwriter by a group other than one of Mingus's own or Mingus Dynasty, a superb-post-Mingus ensemble that includes former Mingus personnel and assorted gifted interpreters.

The baritone sax historically is not a solo instrument; customarily it was used to enhance the chordal textures of large ensembles such as the Ellington and Basie bands, which had the excellent Harry Carney

and Jack Washington, respectively. What solos they were given were brief, as compared with those afforded the solo and tenor sax players: Johnny Hodges, Lester Young, Ben Webster, Hershel Evans. It wasn't until Gerry Mulligan, with his pianoles quartet, hit it big at a little supper club in the Wilshire district of L.A. called the Haig that the baritone sax found favor as a solo instrument. The quartet, featuring Chet Baker on trumpet, came into existence when the piano rented for the evening was nowhere to be found, the lack of which highlighted the extraordinary musical rapport of Mulligan and Baker, one of the enduring sounds in jazz.

Mulligan is a legato, cool player. One of the founders of the cool sound in jazz, along with Miles Davis, with whom Mulligan recorded *The Birth of the Cool* in 1949 and '50, Mulligan composed the bulk of the compositions. The pianoles quartet recordings date from 1952 on. Bob Brookmeyer on valve trombone eventually replacing Baker, and Mulligan enlarging his tenet to a sextet, then a septet, then a band later on in his career.

Pepper Adams is a soloist of a different kind and with a different provenance. He is a Detroit artist, coming out of the same remarkable music there that produced the Jones Bros. (Hank, Thad, and Elvin), Tommy Flanagan, Kenny Burrell, Barry Harris, Sonny Stitt, Frank Foster, Paul Chambers, Kenny Clarke, Curtis Fuller, Billy Mitchell, and Donald Byrd, with whom Adams would later cut many fine sides on Blue Note as coleader of an important quintet.

Adams is the only white musician among

that extraordinary group of Detroiters, and he was put down early on for "mixing with the wrong people." But Adams never did play with white groups and throughout his career was usually the only white musician in the bands he played in or led. Clearly, the black musicians would not have encouraged Adams to sit in if they had a black baritone sax player on hand as good or better.

Adams is a bopper — unlike Mulligan — with a dry, almost brusque tone. He is given to full-blown solos, rhythmically and harmonically complex, which belie the cumbersome reputation of the instrument. He is, as the clerk insisted, one hell of a musician, and he enjoys an impressive discography. You might enjoy a blowing session under his leadership from 1968, *Encounter*, which includes Zoot Sims, Flanagan, and Elvin Jones of Detroit, along with Ron Carter. You can also hear Adams to advantage on an interesting album John Coltrane led in the spring of 1957 with two baritone saxes, Adams and Cecil Payne. There is a wonderful song written by Teddy Charles on the disc called "Route 4," which would have been the highway the musicians would drive along often on their journey from Manhattan, across the George Washington Bridge, to Hackensack. I know that road, and they do an impressive job of reproducing the experience of driving it with three horns, a piano, bass, and drums.

Cecil Payne, the other baritone sax on the album, is also a bopper, and a superb one. He is not as prolific or well-known as Adams for leading his own groups, but he is a player of equivalent stature, best listened to in groups led by fellow Brooklyn pianists Duke Jordan and Randy Weston, both wonderful artists in their own rights (I'll discuss them by and by). I command a 1973 date Payne co-lead with his longtime friend Jordan on the small Prevue label called *Brooklyn Brothers*. They are joined by the steady Sam Jones on bass and a very young Al Foster on drums. Jordan, many will

remember, was the pianist for Charlie Parker's quintet in the late '40s. This album was, inexplicably, his first in 11 years. Listening to him here one wonders how that could possibly be. Payne and Jordan had been friends since childhood, which can be heard in their musical interactions and the session's joyfulness.

But my own favorite baritone saxophonist and one of my desert island 100 favorite discs is Serge Chaloff and his album *Blue Serge* from 1956. Chaloff, one of the truly colorful and nutty characters in jazz, was to be dead a year

after *Blue Serge* was recorded. A Bostonian and son of the renowned piano teacher at the New England Conservatory, Margaret Chaloff, Serge (born in 1923) would work, over the course of his career, with Boyd Raeburn, Georgie Auld, Jimmy Dorsey, and Woody Herman (he would become part of the celebrated "Four Brothers" sax section, which included Sam Getz, Zoot Sims, and Al Cohen). He was influenced, as was just about everybody else, by Charlie Parker, but I find his playing more influenced by the older generation of horn players, such as Coleman Hawkins and Ben Webster. Chaloff put great emphasis on timbre and achieves many of his effects with subtle alterations in color and dynamics. There is not a greater balladeer in jazz than Chaloff when he gets it just right, as he does throughout *Blue Serge*, not least of all on his version of "Thanks for the Memory" (an L. Robin/R. Rainger composition), which, upon hearing, you will forever after associate with the wild, doomed baritone saxist instead of Bob Hope. ■

Pepper Adams, *Pepper Adams Plays Charles Mingus* (Fresh Sound Records/PSR-CD 177)
Pepper Adams, *Encounter* (Prestige OICCD-892-2)
Gerry Mulligan, *Legacy* (Encore Jazz N2KE-10002)
John Coltrane, *Dakar* (Prestige OICCD-393-2)
Serge Chaloff, *Blue Serge* (Capitol Jazz CDP 7243 4 94505 23)



Pepper Adams



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2. At the next prompt, press the
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Mark Lee: The Kroken
Karen Monreal: Tamiko Bar
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Tim Mudd: The Rhythm Cafe
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829 **The O'Brien Brothers:**
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814 **Laura Prohse:** Clois de Lane
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Aunt Kizzy's Boys: Patrick's II
 948 **The Boyz Brothers:** Blind Melons
The Belfonics: Grace's Top Hat Bar and Grill
Beyond Blue: Etna's Place
Nix City Showman: McP's Irish

James R. Smith, May 11, The Associated Press

Big Daddy & the Money Shakers: The Gordon Branch Shakers. *Crown for the Road*
955 **How Rockin': Pd Joes**
How Variations: Effin' Joe
The Blues Breakers: Patrick's 11
963 **Randy Hoss:** Vegas Coast
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Burl Jives: Jolt's Joe's (Joe Melons)
Burl Jives and Frank Family: Jolt's Joe's (Joe Melons)
Chris Cato: Humphrey's
938 **Tommy Castro:** 40 & 8
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Bullfro Jo Jo's, McP's Irish Pub and Grill
Casino de Ville: O'Connell's Pub and Nightclub
Tonnet Courtyard & the Blues Dusters: Poppy's Sports Bar and Grill, The Nose, Cheater's Delirium
964 **The Duncans:** Patrick's 11, Joe Jo's Lounge
Willie Doss: Melons Cafe
Family Style: Patrick's 11
Fish and the Seawoods: Canfield Bar
The Frumettes: Effin' Joe's Place

914 **Robin Hankock:** Jaws Joe's
Collinsville
**The International Silver
Strings:** Silverstone Band: The
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The Johnny Voodoo Band:
Erie's Place

939 **Comely Name:** Cocoa's Top Hot
Bar and Grill
Leafy Star & the Buxter:
Loose Blues Band: Erie's Place

947 **The Bill Morgan Blues Band:**
Patrick's II
The Hunk Blues: Robin Ball
Cortice

942 **The Polimers:** The Caskin
Pizzeria: O'Connell's Pub and

Players: Coyote Bar and Grill,
Buffalo Joe's
913 **Curtis Salgado:** 4th & B
Shelley: Juke Joint Cafe
Sonny & the Rumble Tones:
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945 **Nooshin's Cafe & Grille**
The Soul Pursuers: Dick's
Last Resort
929 **Thom & the Zydeco Patrol:**
Coyote Bar and Grill
970 **Billy Thompson:** Dizzy's
920 **Jooney Vinn & the Blue**
Alibates: Patrick's II
Billy Watson: Coca's Tap Hot
Bar and Grille

Barrett Anderson: Cafe La Moca
Bill Boyer: Santa Restaurant
Sammy Dula: Camalinde
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Sandy Chappell: Cafe La Moca
Ray Carver: Ole's Restaurant
Linda Carver: Ole's
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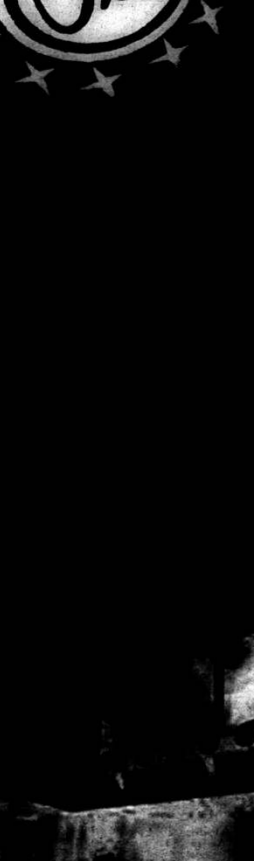
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Project Cathedral Fourth Sunday of each month, multimedia ambient experience. 9 p.m. to 11 p.m. St. Paul's Cathedral, Fifth Avenue at Nurnberg, Barker's Hill. Info line, 619-220-4944. www.mergerfundmusic.com

The Rhythm Lounge Wednesdays, free, downstage and house. Thursdays, Deep, drum 'n' bass. Saturdays, Yes. DJs spin hip-hop, rare grooves, roots, reggae, and soul. 3048 Midway Drive, Sports Arena. 619-224-4855.

Rick's 101 University Area, Halfway. Call club for night. 619-497-4588.

Sabbat Saturdays, DJs Eric Hart, Mike Bruehl, and Adam Arroyo. Dark electro, gothic, darkwave. Industrial, and Irish. Shooters. 815 300th Street, San Diego. 619-574-0744.

Saturday Night Fever Two levels, three rooms, five bars. DJs Ryan Somers, Matty A., and Viny. Saturdays, Cane Bar and Grill, 3105 Ocean Front Walk, Mission Beach. 858-488-1780.

Seville Fridays, Saturdays, Latin-Funk House with DJs Volo and Gorrero. 553 Fourth Avenue, downtown. 619-233-9979.

Studio 64 Fridays, hard and progressive house music with a separate hip-hop room. Three floors and five rooms, with three separate smoking patios. International guest DJs supersets weekly. 9 p.m. to 4 a.m. Club Montage, 2028 Hancock Street, midtown. 619-294-9590. www.ark.com

TechnoNight Fridays, local and national DJs spin all genres of electronic and digital dance music. Club Xanth, 4225 30th Street (at El Cajon Boulevard), North Park. 619-584-2720. www.clubxanth.com

Therapy DJs Ryan Pollard, DMNIX, and special weekly guests spin industrial, EBM, fetish, gothic, and darkwave. First Friday of every month at Club Vortex, 2515 Adobe Falls (E. 4th and Waring Road), 619-858-8888; remaining Fridays at the Flame, 1780 Park Boulevard, San Diego. 619-295-4165; info line, 619-465-5827. www.klub.com

Turntable Lounge Wednesdays, turntablism, hip-hop, and reggae with DJ Bojo, Argonaut, Cross, Marq, Resonance, and Jo-B. Club Vortex, 5215 Adobe Falls (E. 4th and Waring Road), 619-858-8888.

The Underground Lounge Thursdays, DJ Sachamo and international guests spin deep house music. Fridays, *Heavy Rotation*, the best in hip-hop and soul classics. Two dance floors, no full bars, late night Cafe, 127 Fourth Avenue, San Diego. 619-252-8023. www.theundergroundlounge.com

Underworld Saturdays, DJs Bryan Pollard, Cybus, Enkay, and Lucifuge. Alternative, industrial, noise, EBM, funk, and darkwave. Military and college (DJs free before 10 p.m.). 21 and up. Beat Farmers, 5215 Adobe Falls (E. 4th and Waring Road), 619-858-8888; info line, 619-465-5827. www.klub.com

Venue 18 and up. DJs spin trance, techno, house, hip-hop, party mix, and jungle. Open Wednesday through Sunday, 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. 7200 El Cajon Boulevard, College Area. For nightline information, 619-501-VENUS or www.venueparty.com

Voodoo Lounge San Diego's best house music spin by DJ Katy. Saturdays, 10 p.m. to 11 p.m. The Rhythm Shop, pop, jazz, Saturday and Wednesday, the New Breed Band, pop.

Buddy Up Tunes, 143 South Cedar Avenue, Solana Beach, 858-481-9022. Thursdays, 8:30 p.m., Pacha Sanchez and Media Lane. Friday, 5:30 p.m., Mar Loh, 9:15 p.m., Conway, the Hammer Brothers. Friday, The French Brothers, Dirty Walls, Upstream, and DJ Mike Vibe. Sunday, Prime Tuesday, 9 p.m., Sizzle and guests. Wednesday, Viper of Rogen. Wednesday, and Animal 32.

Carven, 11940 Bernardo Plaza Drive, Rancho Bernardo, 858-566-4400. Friday, Power House, rock. Saturday, Andrea's Fault, pop rock.

Coyote Bar and Grill, 100 Carlsbad Village Drive, Carlsbad, 760-729-5605. Thursday, classic rock. Friday, the Rhythmic Method, classic rock. Friday, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., Le Raney & the Midnight Flyers, blues. Saturday, 1 p.m. to 10 p.m., Big Duddy & the Money Shakers, blues. 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., The 4000, funk. Sunday, 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., the Rhythmic Method, classic rock. 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., Bruce Cameron, jazz.

Reggae's Pub, 1260 West Valley Parkway, Encinitas, 760-480-0853. Thursday, Pure Funk, classic rock. Friday and Saturday, Detroit. Monday, 7 p.m. to 11 p.m., Dick Matson, piano, vocals.

La Costa Entertainment of Champions Lounge, La Costa Resort and Spa, Costa Del Mar Road, Carlsbad, 760-438-9111. Friday, Nova pop. Latin, Saturday, Pacific Blue & Electric, pop.

Mandel's Paradise, 1416 Encinitas Boulevard, Encinitas, 760-943-9997. Friday, 9 p.m. to midnight, Senior and Paluhia, reggae.

Married Ranch, 485 South Coast Highway (at 127 Street), Encinitas, 760-943-9101. Thursday, Earth Ride, alternative. Tuesday, 8 p.m., the David Patrone Quartet, jazz.

McCabe's Beach Club, 145 South Torrey Pines, Encinitas, 760-438-4644. Thursday, 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., the Whiskers, rock. Friday and Saturday, Service Cuts, classic rock. Wednesday, The Boss, 2 Cuts, and the Hybrid.

Minced Cafe, 1953 San Elito Avenue, Carlsbad, 760-943-7924. Friday, 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., the Rhythmic Method, classic rock. Saturday, 10 am to 1 pm, Ned London, jazz.

Northern Bar and Grill, 100 Carlsbad Village Drive, Carlsbad, 760-729-5605. Thursday, classic rock. Friday, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., Le Raney & the Midnight Flyers, blues. Saturday, 1 p.m. to 10 p.m., Big Duddy & the Money Shakers, blues. 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., The 4000, funk. Sunday, 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., the Rhythmic Method, classic rock. 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., Bruce Cameron, jazz.

Reggae's Pub, 1260 West Valley Parkway, Encinitas, 760-480-0853. Thursday, Pure Funk, classic rock. Friday and Saturday, Detroit. Monday, 7 p.m. to 11 p.m., Dick Matson, piano, vocals.

NOTE

BY DAVE GOOD

When **Powerhead** gets up to play, they are joined onstage by about a hundred years of local music history (and perhaps a ghost or two). Powerhead's current membership and their past associations form a veritable local rock family tree, with El Cajon at its epicenter. The band's history goes something like this: after the Beat Farmers came to a sudden and tragic end, Beat's guitarist **Joey Raney** who played in Glory, the Shamans, and the Incredible Haysides) hooked up with former Farmer **Buddy Blue** (the Rockin' Routettes, the Jacks) to form the short-lived **Ranney-Blue**. But it wasn't until a Beat Farmers reunion gig at a Street Scene that on Farmer **Joey Harris** (Fingers, John Steuart, the Spenders) and Raney were paired again. With the addition of **Hilgity Joe Longa** (the Jacks) and the masterful drum-and-bass combo of the Kmak brothers (ECM,

Comanche Moon), it was **Powerhead**.

I know why I like **Powerhead**. Even with all of their talents and in spite of the fact that they're a tight, hard-rocking unit today, I don't think they're very far removed from the high school bands of the '70s — outfits like **Glory** and **Emergency** that played proms and senior dances. High school bands of that generation covered the guitar heroes of the day; it was all Neil Young and **Deep Purple** and **Steppenwolf** and **Hendrix** and **Iron Butterfly** covers, adrenaline and hormones and power chords blasted through cranked-over Fender Showman and Marshall cabinets in a big, smelly high-school gym. There was a bit of innocence in all that. There was no music scene then. No one in his right mind thought about getting signed. There was no rap, no disco, no black 182. After graduation, there was some college, maybe, and a job, for most. High school rock in the '70s was all about wiping the grease off your

hands after auto shop and just playing music for your buddies and their dates after school. It's that emotion that **Powerhead** brings to the show.

To hear a sample of **Powerhead**, call 619-233-9797, for the prompt, then punch in ext. 44293.

POWERHEAD, Pacific Beach Block Party, Saturday, May 12, 2:30 p.m., 103 868/Time Warner Cable Rock Stage, 619-945-5823. Free event.

North County

The Alley, 421 Grand Avenue, Carlsbad, 760-434-1173. Performances are from 9 p.m. to 1:30 a.m. Thursday and Friday, the Rhythmic Shop, pop, jazz, Saturday and Wednesday, the New Breed Band, pop.

Buddy Up Tunes, 143 South Cedar Avenue, Solana Beach, 858-481-9022. Thursdays, 8:30 p.m., Pacha Sanchez and Media Lane. Friday, 5:30 p.m., Mar Loh, 9:15 p.m., Conway, the Hammer Brothers. Friday, The French Brothers, Dirty Walls, Upstream, and DJ Mike Vibe. Sunday, Prime Tuesday, 9 p.m., Sizzle and guests. Wednesday, Viper of Rogen. Wednesday, and Animal 32.

Carven, 11940 Bernardo Plaza Drive, Rancho Bernardo, 858-566-4400. Friday, Power House, rock. Saturday, Andrea's Fault, pop rock.

Coyote Bar and Grill, 100 Carlsbad Village Drive, Carlsbad, 760-729-5605. Thursday, classic rock. Friday, the Rhythmic Method, classic rock. Friday, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., Le Raney & the Midnight Flyers, blues. Saturday, 1 p.m. to 10 p.m., Big Duddy & the Money Shakers, blues. 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., The 4000, funk. Sunday, 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., the Rhythmic Method, classic rock. 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., Bruce Cameron, jazz.

Reggae's Pub, 1260 West Valley Parkway, Encinitas, 760-480-0853. Thursday, Pure Funk, classic rock. Friday and Saturday, Detroit. Monday, 7 p.m. to 11 p.m., Dick Matson, piano, vocals.

La Costa Entertainment of Champions Lounge, La Costa Resort and Spa, Costa Del Mar Road, Carlsbad, 760-438-9111. Friday, Nova pop. Latin, Saturday, Pacific Blue & Electric, pop.

Mandel's Paradise, 1416 Encinitas Boulevard, Encinitas, 760-943-9997. Friday, 9 p.m. to midnight, Senior and Paluhia, reggae.

Married Ranch, 485 South Coast Highway (at 127 Street), Encinitas, 760-943-9101. Thursday, Earth Ride, alternative. Tuesday, 8 p.m., the David Patrone Quartet, jazz.

McCabe's Beach Club, 145 South Torrey Pines, Encinitas, 760-438-4644. Thursday, 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., the Whiskers, rock. Friday and Saturday, Service Cuts, classic rock. Wednesday, The Boss, 2 Cuts, and the Hybrid.

Minced Cafe, 1953 San Elito Avenue, Carlsbad, 760-943-7924. Friday, 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., the Rhythmic Method, classic rock. Saturday, 10 am to 1 pm, Ned London, jazz.

Northern Bar and Grill, 100 Carlsbad Village Drive, Carlsbad, 760-729-5605. Thursday, classic rock. Friday, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., Le Raney & the Midnight Flyers, blues. Saturday, 1 p.m. to 10 p.m., Big Duddy & the Money Shakers, blues. 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., The 4000, funk. Sunday, 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., the Rhythmic Method, classic rock. 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., Bruce Cameron, jazz.

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hands after auto shop and just playing music for your buddies and their dates after school. It's that emotion that **Powerhead** brings to the show.

To hear a sample of **Powerhead**, call 619-233-9797, for the prompt, then punch in ext. 44293.

POWERHEAD, Pacific Beach Block Party, Saturday, May 12, 2:30 p.m., 103 868/Time Warner Cable Rock Stage, 619-945-5823. Free event.

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Calendar MUSIC SCENE

Lantern, jazz, Sunday, 10 am to 1 pm.
very interesting music.

Rhythm Cafe, 4321C Oceanview
Boulevard, Oceanview, 760-631-4466.
Friday, Tim Mudd acoustic.
alternative. Saturday, Nathan James,
acoustic blues. Sunday, the Duncan
Moore Trio, jazz.

Surf 'n' Salsa, 123 West Plaza Street
(Corner Santa Fe and Highway 101),
Solana Beach, 858-755-9474. Friday,
Surf Report, rock. Saturday, the Janet
Russo Band, alternative.

Team Gibbons, 640 Grand Avenue,
Carlsbad, 760-729-7234. Live Irish
music nightly.

Tumbao Bar & Grill, 87 Tacinas
Boulevard, Encinitas, 760-433-7587.
Friday, 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm. Andy
Villa, blues, Brazilian jazz.
Wednesday, 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm,
Karen Monreal, classic/Flemenco
guitar.

Valentine's, 11828 Rancho Bernardo
Road, Rancho Bernardo, 858-451-
3200. Friday, 6:30 pm and Saturday,
6 pm, Donnie Fennell and Company
East, jazz.

Beaches

Blind Melons, 710 Garnet Avenue,
Pacific Beach, 858-483-7844.
Thursday, Plump with Havalina,
alternative. Friday, the 8-Side Players,
Latin jazz. Saturday, Surfer, Agut
Jules, the Vibe Tribe, Chicago, and
the Rumpin' Uglies. Ten Pound Brown
and King Sunday. The Late Late Show
Tuesday, the Barrio Brothers, blues.
Wednesday, Hit the Wall with Spirit
Fest.

Canes Bar & Grill, 1105 Ocean
Front Walk, Mission Beach, 858-488-
1780. Music is rock/alternative.
Thursday, the Living End and Tumbao
Band. Friday, the Atomic Punks,
Power Load, and Stereo Wall Sunday.

the Drive Bands, Laidback, the Janet
Russo Band, and the Tumbao Band.
Wednesday, call club for information.

Cancelled Bar, at the Catamaran
Hotel, 3999 Mission Boulevard,
Mission Beach, 858-488-1081.
Thursday, Fish and the Seawards, funk,
blues. Friday, Project Object, rock.
Saturday, Fish and the Seawards, funk,
blues. Tuesday, Hank Easton and
Joni Yarbrough, jazz.

Chateau Orleans, 826 Turquoise
Street, Pacific Beach, 858-488-4744.
Thursday, Tomar Courtney and the
Blue Chatters, blues.

The Crooked Shores Grill (stop the
Hotel La Jolla), 7955 La Jolla Shores
Drive, La Jolla, 858-459-0541. Friday
and Saturday, 8 pm to 11 pm, the
Mike Wolf and Billy Hoffman Jazz
Quartet. Tuesday, 7 pm to 10 pm,
Dezhalb, jazz, blues, and hip-hop.

Dream Street, 2228 Bacon Street,
Ocean Beach, 619-222-8131. All
shows start at 8 pm. Thursday,
Newman, Son of Jerd, and Shining
Friday. Gene Lewis, Hank, and
Drama, Gls, and a Violin 1. Saturday,
Dark Edge, English, Barn, and Fish
Juggernaut. Monday, C-Spot. Tuesday,
Joni Yarbrough.

Hard Rock Cafe (La Jolla), 909
Prospect Street, La Jolla, 619-454-5101.
Friday, 10 pm, the Joy Boys Band,
rock and soul.

Hemsworth's Tavern (PB), 4650
Mission Boulevard, Pacific Beach,
858-483-7844. Friday, 7 pm, rock.
Saturday, the O'Brien Brothers, folk.
Sunday, the O'Brien Brothers, folk.

Java Bar & Caffeinehouse, 1956 Bacon
Street, Ocean Beach, 619-523-0356.
Music is acoustic/folk unless
otherwise noted. Thursday, Test
Rosen and Jason Mraz. Friday, Stuart
Davis. Saturday, Benko Hart. Blues.
Wednesday, Robin Herold, blues.

Moonlighting, 832 Garnet Avenue,
Pacific Beach, 858-483-6550. Friday,
Bully McNight & the Chorline
Cowboys, rock.

Pacific Beach Bar & Grill, 860 Garnet
Avenue, Pacific Beach, 858-772-7278.
Club Tuesday, call club for
information.

Shoehorn Bar & Grill, Radisson
Hotel, 3299 Highway 101, La Jolla,
858-453-5008. Thursday, Friday, and
Saturday, the O'Brien Brothers, folk.
Sunday, the O'Brien Brothers, folk.

Tiki House, 1152 Garnet Avenue,
Pacific Beach, 858-773-9734. Friday,
the Full Circle Band, rock. Saturday,
Superfunk, rock. Sunday, Chris Kelly's
open acoustic night.

Village's Restaurant & Bar, 2702
North Mission Bay Drive, Mission Bay,
858-490-3380. Friday, Jamarra
and the Nickel Project. Saturday, Shore
Fire, reggae.

Winehouse, 1901 Bacon Street, Ocean
Beach, 619-222-8822. Thursday, the
Travel Agents, alternative. Friday,
Slightly Slightly and Jane Wine.



HANK WILLIAMS III

BY WILLIAM CRAIN

If you go to Nashville, you'll find a lot of strange tourist traps designed to attract the starstruck visitor. But one of the most misguided has got to be Hank Williams's house. It's planted down near Music Row. Someone thought it might be a good idea to move the thing over from Alabama or West Virginia or wherever. Unfortunately, that was as far as this entrepreneur thought. Last I saw it, the house was boarded up and vacant, with just a faded sign explaining its significance. I suppose that's as good a metaphor as we're likely to find for how Nashville has lost sight of the legacy of its greatest song-writer. Even Hank Williams Jr., doesn't fit in with today's Nashville. It's got to be even harder for Hank Williams III.

A hard-drinking drug taker, just like his pa and grandpa, Shelton Hank Williams was a punk-rock drummer before a paternity suit and the subsequent court-ordered child-support payments forced him to find a more lucrative genre. He found — Nashville or not — his family name was still worth something, and he could make a better living playing country and western. His immediate appeal is curiosity: He looks and sounds amazingly like his grandfather. In interviews, Williams has been candid about the financial reasons behind his career choice, but he has also said that he's learned to love country music. However, after a few years wearing cowboy hats and boots, Williams is increasingly showing signs of reconciling his punk-rock roots with his country heritage. He recently added a new song to his band, *Duane Deshaune*, the anti-grunge guitarist formerly of grunge weirdos the Jesus Lizard. Things are about to get interesting.

Plugging Woody opens.
(To hear a sample of Hank Williams III, call 619-223-9797, wait for the prompt, then punch in ext. 4775.)

HANK WILLIAMS III, 415 & B, Wednesday, May 16, 8 p.m. 619-220-8497 or 619-221-4342. \$16.50.

through Sunday, 7 pm, live piano/vocals.

The Bahia Belle Cruise, the Bahia Hotel, 909 West Mission Bay Drive, Mission Bay, 858-539-7779. Departure 6:30 pm. Saturday, the Nade Blue.

Borderline Books and Music, 1072 Camino del Rio North, Mission Valley, 619-295-2201. Friday, 8 pm, the Karli Burg Band, acoustic. Saturday, 4 pm to 6 pm, Stephen Ashbrook, folk.

Brick by Brick, 1130 Burton Avenue, San Marcos, 760-525-1515. Music is alternative/rock unless otherwise noted. Friday, *Modular and Plunkin*. Saturday, *Parable, Flying Blind, Phoenix*, and *And Nine*. Tuesday, *Plunkin*, *My Other Brother*, *Daryl*, *Ten*.

Dynamo, and *Animal 52*. Wednesday, *Chaire de Louis*, 2901 University Avenue, North Park, 619-448-9845. Friday, 8:30 pm, *Laure Preble*, folk.

Effie's Pub, 6164 El Cajon Boulevard, San Diego, 619-225-9800. Thursday and Saturday, Steve Langdon, acoustic pop/rock. Friday, *Blue Variations*, blues.

Epiphone, 4450 Mira Mesa Boulevard, Mira Mesa, 858-271-4000. Music is alternative/rock. Friday, 3 *Pave Sundell*, *Lenny Yee*, *Common*, *Plunkin*, and *Shore Drama*. Saturday, *Crazy Ben*, *Stapack*, *Shore Hills*, the *Lums*, and *Population Zero*.

Brick by Brick, 1130 Burton Avenue, San Marcos, 760-525-1515. Music is alternative/rock unless otherwise noted. Friday, *Modular and Plunkin*. Saturday, *Parable, Flying Blind, Phoenix*, and *And Nine*. Tuesday, *Plunkin*, *My Other Brother*, *Daryl*, *Ten*.

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Saturday, May 12

HUMAN DRAMA
Sunday, May 13

GLU • 1 VOLITILE 1
Monday, May 14

G-SPOT
Tuesday, May 15

SAMBA INVASION POGO BRAZIL
Wednesday, May 16

JOSIAS DOS SANTOS
Thursday, May 17

LOKIS STAN
Friday, May 18

SPARK YOUR RED
Saturday, May 19

THE REACTION
Sunday, May 20

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with special guests **BURL JIVES**

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Every Sunday

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PEEL & EAT SHRIMP!
\$8.25 per lb
from 5pm until we run out
Happy Hour: 4pm-Midnight

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MEX FIESTA
Live Entertainment / New Food
Beer & Margarita special!

WEDNESDAY
COMEDY & CRAB NIGHT
\$8.25 per lb
Featuring different food-top
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THURSDAY
\$2.99 PINTS ALL NIGHT
We have a selection of
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FREE! The Ninth Annual City Heights International Village Celebration.

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*** LIVE MUSIC! 4 stages! Top live bands, including: The Blazers, Len Rainey & the Midnight Players, Los Alacranes, The Revelations, Change, Funkenstein, Brothers From Another Planet, Julian Briano Y Sus Hermanos, Citizen X, The Elementz, Super Sonic Samba School, MHS Island Steel Drum Band, The Granger Jr. High Jazz Band, And MORE!**

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\$1 DRAFT BEER \$1 TAB
Music by **LEN RAINY**
No Cover

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\$3 Coronas
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THE REVELATIONS
Roots Reggae
3 RED STRIPES 3 BACARDI RUM & COKE
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Calendar MUSIC SCENE

Eliza's Place, 6179 University Avenue
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8750. Friday, 9 pm, the Fremonts,
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Band, blues.

The Gordon Biersch Brewery, 5010
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619-480-1120. Music is featured
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Humphrey's Half Moon Inn, 2241
Shelter Island Drive, Shelter Island.
619-224-3577. The Backstage Lounge
Thursday, 9:30 pm, *Quest Storm*, jazz,
blues, and Chris Cain. Friday,
9:30 pm, *Madal*, pop, dance. Saturday,
9:30 pm, *Wild Child*, rock, and the
Thomas Corner Band. Sunday,
7:30 pm to 11:30 pm, *Reggie Smith &
Present for Time*, jazz. Monday, *Cabrin
Romano*, Tuesday, *Thomas Corner
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The Inn Suites, 2223 El Cajon
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Jolt 'n' Joe's, 8076 La Mesa Boulevard,
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Southbound, rock. Saturday, *Burl
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Kelly's Pub, 544 El Cajon Boulevard,
College Area 619-286-0400.
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La Dolce Vita Trattoria, 2010
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Live Wire, 2103 El Cajon Boulevard,
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Diego 619-233-4477. Friday and
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Wine on Prospect, 1250 Prospect
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The Nueve, 500 University Avenue (at
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619-291-1717. Friday, *Tomcat
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Boulevard, San Diego 619-540-9077.
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Calendar RESTAURANTS

Eating Art

Where do you go when you're hungry but you don't know what for — and you don't want to spend too much? If you've run out of appetite for Thai, Italian, and burgers, then a meal of Spanish tapas — the pub grub of Iberia — makes a nice change of pace. For one thing, you don't find tapas in every strip mall; for another, you get to sample lots of flavors, so you never get bored.

Picasso is one of the nicer tapas places in town — comfortable, casual, hip-free. It's a favorite of my friends in Hillcrest but a barely known elsewhere, with no listing in *Zagat* or any other guide. (Speaking of *Zagat*, has anyone noticed the skinniness of the latest edition? You'd think that any serious restaurant guide would gain weight from eating out so often — but the 2001 *Zagat* is half the size of last year's. Evidently, it's having whatever Calista Flockhart's having.)

The small, bright dining room displays chef-owner David Alsmen's eclectic original paintings and lithos on two walls. (No Picasso, of course.) With just ten tables and a long bar/counter populated by singles and drop-in couples on busy nights, there's no show (except the art show) during dinner, just a convivial atmosphere, lively Spanish music on the sound system, and pleasing aromas emanating from the kitchen. A multiple printed menu lists an impressive 50-odd tapas and about a dozen entrees — but then the server also brings a small blackboard of the night's seven-odd specials — about 10 more tapas and another four entrees — which she totos from table to table, along with the wine list. The specials don't change much over the months; the restaurant's regulars have gotten so attached to them, they've become an extension of the menu. One chalkboard special, "filet mignon Pamplona," conjured up an image of a fanatic bull galloping through cobblestone streets, pursued by a herd of clever-welding chefs.

First comes bread: slices of a chewy Spanish-style loaf along with a ramekin of tasty *aïoli* (garlic mayonnaise). Some nights, half the bread slices are moist and coral, brushed with mild red chili oil; other nights, they're all plain. The most popular accompaniment is sangria, made from a slightly rough Modesto red, Gallo's Livingston Cellars Burgundy (quart of my mipsent youth), amended with apples and citrus. You can order it by the glass or get an enormous, bottomless

pitcher, along with ice-filled glasses to dilute it. Just as well — tapas tend to be salty, so the ice makes it safer to slug freely.

The regional style is Basque, from northern Spain, but these aren't the tiny pinchos of that area — in fact, these bites are larger than usual, sized generously for two eaters and easily divisible among four. (More than that, you'd better get two plates of each.) Although the list has no clear demarcation between cold and hot dishes (if you want a specific temperature, you'll have to guess or ask the server), in general the cold tapas and salads come out first, giving the kitchen time to produce the more elaborate warm dishes on the order.

At a recent visit, I happened to be in the middle of a canned-tuna binge (sometimes I just crave it) and lucked onto Picasso's refreshing stuffed anchovies, generously filled with tuna, mayo, red bell pepper, and onion (lacking only celery to become a naturalized U.S. tuna salad). Another night, we started with a creamy truffled duck liver mousse served alongside a cir-

cle of mild, lean goat cheese (of the Montserrat type), sprinkled with parsley, served with Breton crackers, croutons, and fine slices of sweet, ripe tomato. Although tasty, the mousse doesn't really showcase the kitchen's skills since it's purchased ready-made from France — hey, kids, you can try this one at home.

A pair of warm *empanadillas de pollo* were a treat. Unlike South American *empanadas* (with firm prosciutto-like dough crusts), they were crumbly triangles of thin pastry, deep-fried smelt, a cousin to grunion. (I wonder if Pamplona has an annual running of the smelt, too!) The lightly battered boneless fingerlings had been sprinkled with lemon juice somewhere en route and were garnished with wafts of parsley and raw red bell pepper. A pair of medium artichoke bottoms (canned in Spain) were topped with an earthy, slightly spicy mince of shrimp and tiny red lay on a bed of excellent saffron rice — golden and aromatic, every grain plump with hum. The same sauce accompanied *boquerones*,

Picasso
3923 Fourth Avenue (near University), Hillcrest, 619-294-3061

HOURS: lunch, Tuesday-Friday, 11:30 a.m.-2 a.m.; dinner, 5:00-9:30 daily, to 10:00 p.m. when busy.
PRICES: tapas, \$5-\$16, entrees \$14-\$18
ATMOSPHERE: Spanish tapas and entrees in a small, modern room that draws a casual neighborhood crowd.

WINE LIST: Mainly inexpensive Spanish bottled at moderate markups (mid \$20s) with few whites. Adequate choices by the glass. Sherries and ports available but not on the wine list; ask for them. A workmanlike sangria available by the glass or *porción* (small decanter) or pitcher (\$17).
WHAT THE STARS MEAN:

(None) Poor to satisfactory
★ Good
★★ Very Good
★★★ Excellent
★★★★ Extraordinary

Ratings reflect the reviewer's reaction to food, ambiance, and service with price taken into consideration. Menu listings and prices are subject to change.

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it was not just a starch but a joy. The warm tidbit I found least successful was a bowl of *albondigas* — small turkey meatballs in a red-tomato gravy resembling Mexican *chile con carne*, thickened with very mild, puréed Spanish chorizo sausage. The meatballs were, well, turkey — a lean, dry, pointless meat — but many Hillcresters spurn the alternative, factory-farm veal. (Come to think of it, formula-fed veal tastes like four-legged turkey anyway.)

From there, we moved into the diet-buster last act. "Three-way shrimp" showed off fried, grilled, and sautéed prawns, each with a different seasoning. The fried prawns were irresistible, wrapped in a well-seasoned fish "chips" batter, with a garlic-dip alongside. The paprika-grilled shrimp tasted as though boiled, with some grilling after the fact; they were okay, playing the plain "middle sister." In the center of the plate was a round gramin of luscious *gambas al ajillo*, Spain's classic shrimp sautéed in soy oil, teeming with minced garlic, red bell pepper, onions, and parsley. (You can sample the same sauce with field mushrooms in *hongo al ajillo*.) Even

richer, and quite a bit spicier, were teeny white baby eels in garlic sauce. The slivery, boneless infant eels look like chopped angel-hair pasta and taste like — how about chicken? They're awash in a garlic-redolent fish-broth with bits of tomato, red pepper, onions, and parsley, spiked with a touch of coarse black pepper and a touch of hot chile. It's one bold, bally, even blatant dish, and we loved it.

The most elaborate tapa we tried had two large *coquille (scallop)* shells overflowing with thick, quarter-sized coins of fresh, tender scallops, attended by a coterie of mushrooms, peppers, onions, serrano ham, and a dusting of garlicky bread crumbs. A splash of white wine introduced a welcome note of tartness to the buttery grain of sauce. Unfortunately, despite the small differences, the flavors were a little too similar to the eels and the shrimps, and the richness of all three dishes served in sequence was rather overwhelming. For a happy ending, we had a tapa-sized portion of paella, with vibrant saffron rice embracing onions, peppers, cooked-right frozen peas, and just barely overcooked shrimps,

clams, mussels, and chicken thighs. (The only way you'll ever get perfect paella in a restaurant is when they tell you you'll have to wait 40 minutes while they cook it from scratch.) Picasso has the best paella I've ever tasted at any local restaurant. But what else would you expect from a Spanish artist?

Another honor: *Con gratullacions to Su-Mei Yu* (of Saffron Noodle House), who just won the prestigious Julia Child Award for the year's best first cookbook, her *Cracking the Coconut*.

ABOUT THE CHEF/OWNERS: David and Lauren Villalobos Alsmen own the restaurant and share executive chef duties. They opened Picasso nine years ago. "We went to all the tapas places

in Tijuana and all over San Diego," says David. "We had people telling us, 'You should open a restaurant,' and we were telling ourselves that we could do tapas better than anybody was doing them in San Diego at the time. We didn't have a professional cooking background — my wife and I would cook for each other when we were dating, and we'd one-up each other every time to make the most exotic, crazy dinners for each other. It was just something that came naturally to both of us."

The name of the restaurant was almost a given. They wanted a recognizably Spanish name, and since David is himself an artist, they chose that of one of Spain's greatest artists. But there's a specific family connection, too. "Lauren's mother comes from Bilbao and Guernica," said David. "She was in Guernica the day of the bombing that was the subject of the famous Picasso painting."

The menu does have some seasonal variations. "Our clientele is very used to having the specials remain the same," says David. "If we change it, they get furious with us. But we do add seasonal specials — some-

times we have whole artichokes; we'll find something nice to do with them. It's just what I see in the market. I personally shop for all the greens and the meats, and you have to keep looking at all the produce to make sure it's up to the quality we have here. I'll go through 20 boxes of Roma tomatoes before I'll find one that's decent. I go through all this stuff like a good chef should. The quality of the food comes from doing our homework when we're buying. With shrimp, we buy the big 25 (to the pound count) instead of the smaller ones. We're the biggest buyer of large shrimp at [seafood wholesaler] Leong-Kuba in all of San Diego. Not many restaurants use that size shrimp. And at the restaurant, I'm constantly tasting everything to see that everything is all right."

On their nights off, the couple often bring friends to Picasso to hang out and share their favorite dishes. "Usually I'll order the artichoke bottoms, the meatballs, and the salmon with the cold cilantro sauce," says David. "And I like the shrimp in the almond sauce. The most popular dishes are the salmon and the habanero shrimps with

cilantro, and we sell a lot of the eels, usually to people who come here regularly."

The stuffed mussels came from several recipes from Lauren's mother, who left Spain in '39. She's a fantastic cook — a different style from my wife, but fantastic. She had all these recipes for stuffed mussels, we tried them, and they worked really well. That's a labor-intensive dish, really difficult to make. My wife is the only one that can do them. She'll come in and make a batch of them, and we'll freeze them to use over the week."

We treat everybody who comes in here like family. We open the door for people when they're leaving. We were restaurant-goers for a long time, and we grew just sick of the attitude of a lot of restaurants in San Diego, how they treated people. I'm sure you've been to restaurants where they didn't care if you paid them \$150 for a meal, just — "see ya later." It's horrendous. You have to go to a really good culinary city like San Francisco," he concluded (with no prompting), "to see how it's supposed to be done, with so many good restaurants in one town."

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Calendar RESTAURANTS

Spring in September

Italians mistakenly thought they could make Ethiopia a colony.

Tadad! Meskerem lifts the two-foot red-and-green straw hat up in the air. Underneath: this manta ray's underbelly, this great floppy spongy golden seersucker inside-out muffin steams up at me. It has a hot red caldera puddle in the middle. Gotta say, this is the most dramatic welcome to a meal a man could hope for.

Actually it's not manta ray. It's Ethiopian bread, injera, with ground peas in a hot red sauce. The \$4.95 Ethio Special. Meskerem, the owner, plunks down another dish with the same floppy fermented stuff cut into four rolls. "Meskerem" means "September" in Ethiopia, she says, "the first month of our year, when spring starts pushing up new life." That's what she's doing here, pushing up a new life in San Diego.

There are a lot of Ethiopians here because, weather-wise, it's just like Addis Ababa, our capital," she says.

This week two of my vegetarian kick. This time I'm determined to get down to 160 in three months. My friend Joe told me about this place. Strange sounding name. "Granger's" and Ethiopian. I roll up on the 15 bus around seven in the evening. Get out at Louisiana, beside a really inviting-looking Denny's. Across the road, covering under the legs of a billboard, sits this little tin-roofed house with green ivy-covered walls, a little metal canopy, and a red-and-yellow sign. "Ethiopian Food, Granger's."

"Hello!" comes a voice from behind a high counter when you clang through the two doors. "Take a seat, please." Place is small. Maybe half a dozen tables with elegant carved dark-wood chairs inherited from some Chinese restaurant.

The white walls have lots of Ethiopian knickknacks on them, like mini-mandelins and drums, and long banners of green, yellow, and red Ethiopian cloth that makes you think of Jamaica before you do Ethiopia. On the wall beside you, a framed sign promises to include in its burgers "Choice beef, bun, catsup, relish, mustard, onions, lettuce, tomato, salad dressing, french fries, napkin, toothpick, and a smile!"

"Granger's was always famous for its burgers," says Meskerem. "When I bought this place, the family said I could keep the name, and I serve hamburgers exactly according to their recipe."

So now I'm thinking maybe I should just try one. Fifty years can't be wrong. The double hamburger is \$4.15 with fries. With cheese, \$4.25. The quarter-pound burger is \$3.10. The regular cheeseburger, \$2.70.

Then I see the wagging stick. A big old stick behind the high counter, where the steam's rising, weaving back and forth in a figure of eight. The gray hair of an older woman moves in rhythm with it. "She's stirring the yebere siga wot," says Meskerem. "The red pepper sauce with the strips

of braised beef. It's traditional. Number one on the menu," \$6.95, says the menu. With "Ethiopian Home-made style salad."

The entrees all have these Ethiopian names. Yedoro wot, a spicy chicken stewed in red pepper sauce, also \$6.95. But I'm here for vegetarian, right? I scan down the list to where the prices drop. That has to mean no meat. Lentils (split lentil in red pepper sauce and spices), \$4.95. Collard greens and vegetable alicha, also \$4.95.

Meskerem says alicha is a seasoned stew. Mild or hot, up to you.

I see a number-ten vegetarian combo. "A combination of three items from vegetable alicha, collard greens, lentil, split-pea alicha, \$6.95." Or even spaghetti, the one surviving leftover from when Italians mistakenly thought they could make Ethiopia a colony. "But it has our spices now," says Meskerem.

Then there's the Ethio Special, "ground peas cooked in red sauce with assortment of spices," \$4.95.

"This is the dish we really eat most days of the week in Ethiopia," says Meskerem. "Most people usually can't afford meat. So this is our meatless hamburger."

Well, hey, stay pure to the course. I order an Ethio Special and a coffee (99 cents) and settle back to the ready sounds of the Ethiopian music tape

and the mesmerizing view of that stick, stirring, stirring.

But when Meskerem finally whisks the hat off my dish, somehow, the red stuff, the sauce and ground peas, doesn't look like it's a heck of a lot apart from injera. "Don't worry," she says. "You get the protein from the ground peas. And the injera, it's fermented bread we make from barley, corn, and tef, a grain with lots of iron in it. It takes two days to ferment, right here. It bubbles away. That's why it has all these holes in it, and that slightly sour taste. You'll feel plenty full."

So I start ripping and dipping. The red ground-pea pepper sauce is hot and tastes of ginger and garlic. I make it through the four cut rolls and then start demolishing the actual huge bread platter itself.

It's only when I give up — with a third still left — that I see real Ethiopian coffee on the menu. This is important. Ethiopians invented coffee. "It came originally from the Kafa region," Meskerem says. She has the thick small-cup coffee here, but only for two or more (\$3.00). Dang, I'm too mean to do it alone.

"Well, come back!" she says. "The first Saturday of each month we have an 'all-you-can-eat' buffet for eight dollars. It's very popular."

Sure. Except first I want to come back and lunge into one of those famous Granger's burgers. Once I've hit 160, of course. ■

The Place: Granger's • Ethiopian Cuisine, 2332 El Cajon Boulevard (619-295-3735)

Type of Food: Ethiopian, American

Prices: Yebere siga wot (beef strips in red pepper sauce) with injera bread and salad, \$6.95; yedoro wot (spicy chicken stew), same sides, \$6.95; kitfo (chopped cooked or raw beef), same sides, \$6.95; Ethio special (ground peas cooked in red sauce), \$4.95; double lentil cheeseburger with fries, \$4.25; regular cheeseburger with fries, \$2.70; fish sandwich, \$2.99

Hours: 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday

Buses: 1, 6, 15, 115

Nearest Bus Stop: Texas and El Cajon

Enjoy Mother's Day in Paradise with Brunch on the Bay

Hors d'Oeuvres

Chilled Black Tiger Prawns on Ice with Cocktail Sauce and Caviar Remoulade • Smoked Fish Presentation to Include House Cured and Smoked Salmon, Trout and Sturgeon • Assorted Display with Green Asparagus, Marinated Mushrooms, Grilled Eggplant, Zucchini, Roasted Yellow and Red Bell Peppers • Imported and Domestic Cheese Board Display • Shaved Prosciutto Ham, Marinated Melons with Agave Sherry Wine • Selection of Sauces, Imported Mustards and Pickles

Salads

Hearts of Romaine, Shaved Parmesan, White Anchovies • Assorted Olives, Cherry Tomato with Caesar Dressing • Local Baby Lettuce, Garlic Herb Croutons, Oven-Dried Tomatoes with Balsamic Vinaigrette, Chive and Green Onion Dressing • Baby Lettuce of Spinach, Toasted Pine Nuts, Caramelized Onions, Goat Cheese, Sherry Vinaigrette • Marinated Feta Cheese and Tomatoes Cucumber and Fresh Mint • Waldorf Salad with Celery and Apple Fresh Walnut and Truffles • Nigose Salad with Seared Ahi Tuna

The Carvery

Pink Peppercorn-Crusted New York Strip Loin au Jus • Baked Ham En Croûte, Apple Chutney • Salmon and Scallops Mousse Cake, Ginger Beurre Blanc

Entrées

Scrambled Eggs with Rock Shrimp • Apple-wood Smoked Bacon and Black Forest Ham • Sweet Baked Chicken Apple Sauce • Cinnamon-Raisin Toast with Raspberry Sauce • Blueberry Pancakes with Warm Maple Syrup • Stuffed Brie of Chicken with Spinach and Shikake Vermouth Sauce • San Francisco Ceppino with Fresh Sausage, Chives, Almonds, Shrimp Salmon, Peppers and Tomato Bread • Fricassee of Garden Vegetables Tarragon Beurre Blanc

Desserts

Pottery Chef Albert Cruz's Selection of Assorted Cakes, Breads and French Pastries

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May 13
11 am-3 pm

'35 Adults

'19 Children (Ages 5-12)
Complimentary for ages 4 & under

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Fear-Factor Reduction

The BATF "keeps threatening a new regulation in this area... that prohibits any references at all to health."

In our particular society, a lot of people drink," observes John Hinman, founder of the beverage-law firm of Hinman & Carmichael. "You would think that it would be counterintuitive to think, 'If a lot of people drink, don't teach them what it means.'"

Especially since "coronary heart disease and coronary artery disease are the leading cause of death among middle-aged men — and women, for that matter," and study after study has concluded that the moderate consumption of wine on a regular basis reduces the risk of both diseases. "But the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms doesn't want to let [the industry] talk about this, because they consider it using health to sell wine."

Not so, says Hinman. "Everyone agrees that [wine] is not a tonic; that's not an issue in the wine industry. No one goes out there and intends to market [wine this way]: 'Drink wine every day, because you're going to live longer [if you do].'"

The approach has always been, "Is there an issue with me drinking wine every day? Am I going to hurt myself? And the answer is, 'Probably not, as long as you're moderate. And it may have long-life benefits.'" The industry is trying to "reduce the fear factor, rather than to encourage consumption for the specific purpose of obtaining a medical benefit. The basic thing is, 'Wine is good with food; it's a pleasure of life.'"

The question that begs for an answer here is, What means moderate? The government, in its dietary guidelines, approaches the matter by starting at the extreme — abuse — and working toward the mean. Because of this cautious tactic, you get the bad news first: "Alcoholic beverages are harmful when consumed in excess, and some people should not drink at all. Excess alcohol abuse judgment and can lead to dependency and a great

many other serious health problems. Taking more than one drink per day for women or two drinks per day for men can raise the risk for motor vehicle crashes, other injuries, high blood pressure, stroke, violence, suicide, and certain types of cancer. Even one drink per day can slightly raise the risk of breast cancer. Alcohol consumption during pregnancy increases risk of birth defects. Too much alcohol may cause social and psychological problems, cirrhosis of the liver, inflammation of the pancreas, and damage to the brain and heart."

Heavy drinkers also are at risk of malnutrition because alcohol contains calories that may substitute for those in nutritious foods.

Only after this summation of the woes of drink — though alcohol abuse is certainly a serious concern — do they get around to telling you how much you can consume and still avoid disaster: "If adults choose to drink alcoholic beverages, they should consume them only in moderation and with meals to slow alcohol absorption. What is moderation? Moderation is defined as no more than one drink per day for women and no more than two drinks per day for men."

And now, after all that, comes the good news: "Drinking in moderation may lower risk for coronary heart disease, mainly among men over age 45 and women over age 55." Inclusion of this statement was considered a major victory for the wine industry.

Two drinks a day seemed like an awfully small number to me, until I worked it out. There are roughly 25 fluid ounces of wine in a standard bottle. The dietary guidelines say that a drink of wine measures 5 ounces. Two such drinks make 40 percent of a bottle. If two people enjoy just a hair more than two drinks apiece, they can share a bottle with their dinner.

Well, not quite. Women tend to be smaller

PARKER'S STRENGTH
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If you're weary in Brain and Body
EXHAUSTED AND NEED TO
RENEW YOURSELF
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than men, and further, as Hinman and the dietary guidelines note, "There is some kind of correlation between alcohol consumption in older women and breast cancer." If the dinner companions are of opposite sexes, then the gentleman would need to consume four glasses to the lady's one to keep her within the dietary guidelines.

However, if the gentleman in question feels nervous about doubling the dietary guidelines' limit, he might consider the results of the Copenhagen City Heart Study. The study was conducted from 1976 to 1988; the results were reported in the *British Medical Journal* in 1995. Over 13,000 people aged 30-70 were monitored for 10-12 years. "They have a national health system," explains Hinman. "They're able to essentially track their patients... and they can isolate for variables. One of the variables they isolated for was alcohol consumption."

The results showed that "low to moderate intake of wine is associated with lower mortality from cardiovascular and cerebrovascular disease and other causes." Not just the risk of heart attack or stroke was reduced, but the risk of death in general. And the lowest risk occurred among those who reported

drinking between three and five drinks of wine a day. (As far as I can tell, five drinks is an entire bottle of wine.) Past five drinks, the risks increase again; more is not always better.

None of this is news; though the studies continue to pile up, reliable data has been around for years. For the industry, the trouble has been making reference to such data without drawing fire from the BATF. Two label messages have been approved: One encourages you to "consult your family physician about the health effects of moderate wine consumption"; the other points you toward the dietary guidelines (and their single positive statement). Modest enough suggestions, but Hinman says that the BATF "keeps threatening a new regulation in this area... that prohibits any references at all to health."

Even so, says Hinman, "Frankly, we've won. It is so well understood, after ten years' worth of effort, that moderate wine consumption is not harmful, that to a certain extent, having to go to the next level — being able to put it on a wine label or advertisement — is unnecessary. It's now within the public consciousness. You get very tired of fighting the regulators." ■

20th Anniversary Specials

One day only! Sunday, May 13 (Mother's Day) - Noon-9 pm

All Meals 1/2 Price All Day!
Pay 1/2 price for any meal of \$6 or more. No telephone orders.

One day only! Sunday, May 20 - Starting at 11 am

Sushi Eating Contest
If you love sushi and think you can eat-out 30 contestants, give us a call

Win one of 5 great prizes! Eat free for 6 months!
\$5 entry fee • Call for details.

Ichiban
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50% OFF DINNER ENTREE
TUESDAY - THURSDAY
Any one entrée of regular price or more, excluding the cost of tax and tip.
Valid only on 1/2 price entrees. Not valid with any other offers. Expires 5/24/01.
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50% OFF DINNER
TUESDAY - THURSDAY
Any one entrée of regular price or more, excluding the cost of tax and tip.
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Spectacular Ocean View
Overlooking La Jolla Cove
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Celebrating the opening of our second location!
This one entrée at the regular price, get the second of equal or lower value at 1/2 off. Offer good Mon.-Thurs. at both locations. Not valid with other offers or coupons. With this coupon, Expires 5/24/01.
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For a romantic Italian style dinner in a casual setting.
Dinner 7 nights from 5 pm
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Not valid with any other offers.
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Buy one entrée and get the second entrée of equal or lesser value for free. Expires 5/24/01.
Dinner special only, valid after 4 pm.
Great burgers, Mexican food and drinks. Try our beach brew!
Beach Grill
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Four-Course Dinner with Wine \$45
Dine by candlelight. Choose from the following:
Appetizers: Fried Calamari or Bruschetta
Soup or Salad: House or Caesar
Entrées: Lamb Chops, Grilled Pork Chops, Grilled Chicken, Stuffed Chicken, Veal Marsala, Veal Scallopini or Specialty Pasta
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Dessert: Tiramisu, Bread Pudding or Gelato
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Monday & Tuesday nights. Full menu also available.

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Paipa's Oasis Sunday Brunch features all you can eat carved ham, prime rib of beef and peed and eat shrimp, a delicious omelet bar, Belgian waffles and much more! \$11.95 served from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

We also serve a daily Lunch Buffet for \$8.95 and a Dinner Buffet for \$11.95. Sunday - Thursday, 4:00 to 10:00 pm and until 11:00 pm, Friday and Saturday.

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Calendar

RESTAURANTS

RESTAURANT LISTINGS

The Reader's Guide to Restaurants are recommended listings written by our reviewers (Ed Bedford, Ambrose Martin, Max Nash, Eleanor Widmer, Naomi Wise). Individual restaurants will appear once or twice a month. A complete searchable list is available online at SanDiegoReader.com.

Price estimates are based on the latest information available for a mid-range entrée, inclusive of tax and tip. Moderate to low expensive; more than \$25. Please visit restaurants in advance for reservations.

NORTH COASTAL

BULLY'S 1801 14th Camino del Mar, Del Mar, 858-755-1600. Especially during summer, this branch is the most colorful and is jammed with the sporting crowd, which makes the place exciting. Food is the same as at other Bull's, but the high intensity cuisine is. Steak, prime rib, hamburgers, fries, and fresh fish are favorites. Open daily. Moderate to low expensive. — E.W.

CALIFORNIA BISTRO Four Seasons Resort, 7100 Four Seasons Point, Carlsbad, 760-603-6800. On Wednesday nights, all you can eat French buffet is available for \$25 (beverage not included). It's more California cuisine than French, but there's a lot of fresh food and the beautiful hors d'oeuvres carry the evening. 5:30 to 9:00 p.m.; please make reservations. Moderate to expensive. — E.W.

CALIFORNIA PIZZA KITCHEN 637 South Highway 101, Suite 601, Solana Beach, 858-793-0999. There's a good family restaurant where you can take your children and grandchildren for salads, pizza, pizza. There are 28 pizzas. The chicken teriyaki with spinach fettuccine is a great one. Sandwiches, same menu, lunch and dinner. Open daily. Inexpensive. Branches also in La Jolla Village Square, 3563 Nabal Drive, 858-437-4222; and Carmel Mountain Plaza, 11602 Carmel Mountain Road, 858-675-4424. — E.W.

THE INCINCATAS CAFE 531 South Highway 101, Encinitas, 760-432-0919. This American cafe serves breakfast from opening to closing. Egg dishes are served with biscuits and gravy. Sandwiches and salads for lunch; American entrees for dinner. Fast, excellent service. Open daily, breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Inexpensive. — E.W.

THE FISH MARKET (DEL MAR) 600 Via de la Valle, Del Mar, 858-755-2277. From the moment it opens until closing, this is a place to take the kids. It's clean, light, airy, and out back they have a little rustic bamboo eating area where you can catch the shock of the daily train when it barrels through at 60 miles an hour. Locals swear by George's "Encinitas Earthquake" (fried potatoes, ham, onions, eggs over easy, and country gravy). But the nearest thing to serve two, made with six eggs, potatoes, onions, mushrooms, cheese, ham, pepper, tomatoes, plus bacon or ham or sausage or avocado, is the champ. It comes in its own heavy black cast-iron skillet. Go ahead, have one apiece — for once you

MOTHER'S DAY

Buffet Brunch

May 13 • 10 am - 3 pm

Original Price • Fresh Fruit
Baby Greens, Daily Salads, Vinaigrette
Crisp Potato, Lettuce with Soup Pies
Farm Fresh Eggs with Bacon and Sausage
Hot Potatoes • French Potatoes with Maple Syrup

Chef's Carving Station
Grand Nick York with Classic Burgers
Hot Potatoes
Northern California with Fresh Daily Lettuce
Fresh Garden Vegetables
Garlic Mashed Potatoes
Rice Pilaf • Hot Rolls • Butter
Chef's Assorted Dessert Station
Coffee, Tea and Soft Drinks

Adults \$15.95
Kids 12 and under \$12.50
Children under 6 eat free

GILA HOUSE RESTAURANT
Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites
2435 Jefferson Street, Old Town
Phone for reservations:
619.260.8000 or 619.725.4229

LA BONNE BOUFFE Town and Country Shopping Center, 471 Encinitas Boulevard, Encinitas, 760-436-3081. Bored Bourgeoisie, rack of lamb, frog legs (when in season), duck in peppercorn sauce, and Dover sole in lemon butter sauce are the staples of this French provincial restaurant. Diners are à la carte. Charming room and attentive wine list. Dinner Tuesday through Sunday. Moderate to expensive. — E.W.

LA ESPERANZA 10700 Via de la Valle, Del Mar, 858-255-9944. A handsome dining room offers northern Italian specialties with at least two pasta dishes. All items on menu, which includes fresh fish and seafood, are tempting and well prepared. Impassioned surroundings and excellent service. One of the best Italian restaurants in North County. Open for dinner nightly. High moderate to expensive. — E.W.

NOBU JAPANESE RESTAURANT 115 South Highway 101, Solana Beach, 858-755-0113. The menu at this gourmet Japanese restaurant offers 100 sushi items, 20 stunning and unique appetizers, and a long list of entrees, including an eight-course feast and box dinners. Two dining rooms are available; the bar is the sushi bar. Especially on the weekends, arrive early to avoid waiting for a table. Open daily for lunch and dinner. Moderate to expensive. — E.W.

PAMPELONOUS GRILLE 514 Via de la Valle, Del Mar, 858-792-9090. Surely the best French provincial restaurant in town, the food is exquisite. Favorites here are the fresh crab salad with avocado and tomato quiche, white fish, served any style; mushroom cappuccino soup; tartar sauce. Buffet of beef à la barbecue is outstanding, but you should call in advance for it. Dinner 10:00-11:00. Lunch Wednesday through Friday. Serene atmosphere with excellent service. A winner. Open for dinner nightly. Moderate to expensive. — E.W.

POTATO SHACK CAFE 120 West 1 Street (off South Highway 101), Encinitas, 760-436-1282. If you love potatoes, you'll discover heaven at this breakfast and lunch cafe. You may have American fare, French fare, baked potatoes,

potatoes in patties, and potatoes covered with various toppings. American fare is an all-you-can-eat treat. The sandwiches are also fine and so are the cakes. One hotcake covers an entire plate. Every item is fresh and interesting. It's a great place for children. Lots of fun. Arrive early weekends. Open daily. Inexpensive. — E.W.

SAMURAI JAPANESE RESTAURANT 979 Loma Santa Fe Drive, Loma Santa Fe Plaza, Solana Beach, 858-441-0032. This restaurant boasts "the largest California sushi bar," as well as a menu of over 100 items. The food is artistically prepared and presented, the sushi uniformly fine. You can easily make a meal from the sushi and appetizers. Seating is available at the sushi bar, terrace room, or the central dining area, which provides capacious booths. Open daily. Moderate to expensive. — E.W.

SCALINI 3700 Via de la Valle, Del Mar, 858-255-9944. A handsome dining room offers northern Italian specialties with at least two pasta dishes. All items on menu, which includes fresh fish and seafood, are tempting and well prepared. Impassioned surroundings and excellent service. One of the best Italian restaurants in North County. Open for dinner nightly. High moderate to expensive. — E.W.

TOMIKO JAPANESE RESTAURANT 87 Encinitas Boulevard, Encinitas, top of hill next to Best Western, 760-433-3587. Good sushi bar, good service, some ocean view. Combination dining room popular here. Lunch, Monday through Friday. Dinner nightly. Call for directions. Inexpensive to expensive. — E.W.

TRATYRIA POSTANO CAFE 2171 San Elijo Avenue, Cardiff-by-the-Sea, 760-437-0111. If you're tired of Italian restaurants, you'll be revitalized by this one. Original recipes, 16 pastas, wonderful fresh fish, nightly specials, excellent lamb. Very loving management. A treasure. Some menu lunch and dinner. Call for hours and directions. Moderate to expensive. — E.W.

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ASHOKA THE GREAT 9474 Black Mountain Road (off Miramar Road), 858-695-9749. 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. Inexpensive. — E.W.

CHIEU-ANH VIETNAMESE CUISINE 16769 Bernardo Center Drive, Suite 10, Rancho Bernardo, 858-485-1231. Gourmet Vietnamese food is available here. Menu offers 60 items, many with French influences. It also provides more food than any

Good bets are chicken, fresh fish with lemon grass, tangy-and-sour soup, egg rolls, and fish nigons beef. Chieu-Anh enhances the selection of four dining rooms in Rancho Bernardo. Closed Monday. Open for lunch Tuesday through Friday; dinner Tuesday through Sunday. Inexpensive. — E.W.

PIRENZA TRATTORIA 162 South Rancho Santa Fe Road (exit Encinitas Boulevard, turn east to Rancho Santa Fe Road), 760-944-9000. This multinational Italian restaurant offers one of the most romantic places in existence. It also provides more food than any

NORTH INLAND

ANTHONY'S RANCHO BERNARDO 11666 Avenida Place (off Bernardo Center Drive), Rancho Bernardo, 858-451-2070. One of the best features of this handsome branch of Anthony's is that it accepts reservations. This relieves you of waiting around until your name is called. The dining room also tends to be less frantic than the downtown branches. Good food and chips, seafood salads, broiled fish. Fast service. Open daily for lunch and dinner. Inexpensive to expensive. — E.W.

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ASHOKA THE GREAT 9474 Black Mountain Road (off Miramar Road), 858-695-9749. 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. Inexpensive. — E.W.

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Calendar RESTAURANTS

one person can finish. The 14 first courses, 14 pastas and rice, 10 fish dishes, and 10 meat and chicken dishes will give you plenty of choices. Select desserts made on premises. If you long for vast amounts of food, Firenze is the way. Lunch, Monday through Saturday, dinner nightly. Inexpensive to expensive. — E.W.

THE FRENCH MARKET GRILL 1317 Bernardo Heights Parkway at Potrero del Norte, Ralph Shopping Center, Rancho Bernardo, 618-485-8055. Don't let this small but chic French restaurant, the chef, originally from Paris, produce superb nouvelle cuisine. Menu changes monthly, but when available be sure to order lamb shanks and coq au vin. Breakfast served Sunday, lunch and dinner served daily. Expensive. (Call for directions to the restaurant.) — E.W.

ISLAND BOY GRILL 1066 Pacific Heights Boulevard, Torrey Pines, 618-452-7708. If you've been waiting for Hawaiian and South Pacific food, you'll love the cooking here, but best: Kalua pig, Kahuna shrimp, mahi, humpia. Open daily for lunch. Inexpensive. — E.W.

LUNGERN BROTHERS PIZZERIA KARAKO 29,000 Linc Road, Valley Center, Inland, 760-749-2346. This way out to the valley Italian restaurant is a great place to sing karaoke because 1) nobody knows you and 2) this is country. Just suck up your spaghetti and relax with the locals. Check out the Bay of Naples trompe l'oeil, which owner Bob painted from a picture on a place mat. It's all so cozy you don't care that this restaurant was once the cooler room of a turkey farm. The combo of spaghetti with eggplant parmigiano (around \$6) is excellent, generous, and includes garlic bread, soup, or salad. Wash it down with the house's great red wine. Other specialties include marshall sandwiches, lasagna with bagna, and mini pizzas. Inexpensive. — E.W.

ASPEN MILLS BAKERY AND CAFE 1044 Wall Street Suite F, 618-551-5560. Formerly Woods, Aspen Mills has the same menu with additional items. If you are an early riser, you can eat here as early as 6:00 a.m. Beautiful room. Open daily, 6:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. — E.W.

COME ON IN! 1030 Torrey Pines Road, 618-551-1083. Delightful 50-seat restaurant in mini-mall serves excellent Euro-bistro food. Open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. The dinners are best here with first-rate soups, pasta dishes, fresh fish. Try the daily fresh fish or grouper in Bolognese sauce. Or select nightly soup plus salad. Closed Monday. Open 7:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Inexpensive to low moderate. — E.W.

LA JOLLA

ALFONSO'S OF LA JOLLA 1251 Prospect Street, 618-454-4244. The all-weather outdoor George's, with its fast-rate fish and meat menu, boasts three dining levels in its ocean-view, with the patio and the dining room, with full menu and gourmet lunch and dinner. Above is the Café, and on top is the Terrace, which is romantic on balcony nights. The Café and Terrace offer identical menus, light meals for lunch, extensive menu for dinner. The Ocean View Room offers high quality California regional cuisine, with higher prices. Food is well prepared and the famous roasted chicken, bean, and broccoli soup is still on the menu. Inexpensive to expensive. Other rooms. — E.W.

MARK'S COFFEE SHOP 7545 Grand Avenue, 618-454-7881. This landmark coffee shop is noted for its breakfast, served from opening to closing. The buttery milk 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 oatmeal or cream of wheat. Harry's also serves freshly squeezed orange juice and lemonade. A carafe of freshly ground Kona coffee, as well as specialty coffee drinks. Open daily, breakfast and lunch, from 5:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Inexpensive. — E.W.

LA JOLLA

LA THERAZA 808 Girard Avenue, 618-459-9790. This pleasant Italian cafe provides a lively and festive atmosphere. The pastas are delicious and so are the salads. Special dishes available with advance notice. A good place for casual dining. Same menu lunch and dinner except for nightly specials. Open daily for lunch and dinner. Closed Monday for lunch. Inexpensive to moderate. — E.W.

MANHATTAN OF LA JOLLA 7766 Fay Avenue, Empress Hotel, 618-459-0706. If you're searching for a restaurant that provides a sense of gaiety as well as good New York-style Italian food, then try Manhattan of La Jolla. Of the many tantalizing La carte dishes, some of the best are rack of lamb, superb steaks, and "Salsotto Mediterranean." Casual but the best in San Diego. Very New York atmosphere. Lunch, Wednesday through Friday, dinner, nightly. Expensive. — E.W.

MEDITERRANEAN ROOM La Valencia Hotel, 1132 Prospect Street, 618-454-0771. The room has been redecorated at a cost of \$1.2 million. It's dazzling. Dinner entrees range in price from \$16.00 for potato dumpling to \$26.00 — almost as steep as the Sky Room. Beautiful setting but the food preparation is uneven. Open daily.

Locals Night
at
THE ATOLL RESTAURANT
EVERY WEDNESDAY
Buy one entrée and get the second one* FREE, or bottle of wine at 1/2 price per couple off our featured wine list.

RESERVATIONS:
618.539.8635

*Of equal or lesser value. Does not include tax or gratuity. Offer valid with proof of San Diego residency. Good for dinner on Wednesday only. Through 5/23/91.

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HALF-PRICE SUSHI ROLLS Monday 5:30-7:30 pm EXOTIC FISH FROM JAPAN EVERY DAY

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4527 Mission Boulevard, Pacific Beach • 618-273-2979 • www.surfsidesushi.com
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Takey

PRIME RIB
BUFFET EXTRAVAGANZA!
Saturday night is Prime Rib Night at the Bahia Café. Feast on our tender Roast Prime Rib of Beef carved to your order, a colorful salad, slow-baked potatoes and garden-fresh vegetables.
Available 5:30-9:00 pm

\$12.95
CALL FOR RESERVATIONS
618.539.7635
At the Bahia Resort Hotel
998 West Mission Bay Drive

breakfast, lunch, dinner, Dinner, expensive. — E.W.

OCEAN KITCHEN 5525 La Jolla Boulevard, 618-459-7993. The dishes at this Mandarin and Cantonese restaurant contain no MSG, nor are there starches in the sauces. Very lively cooking with many unique recipes. The dinner menu is available from opening to closing. This remains one of our best natural Chinese food restaurants. Open daily. Inexpensive to moderate. — E.W.

P.F. CHANG'S CHINA RESTAURANT 5450 La Jolla Village Drive, 618-458-9007. The decor and ambience carry the weight here. Chinese food is only served here. Chinese food is only served here. Chinese food is only served here. Open daily, lunch and dinner. Dinner menu available from opening to closing. Inexpensive to moderate. — E.W.

PIATTI RESTAURANTE 182 Avenida de la Playa, La Jolla Shores, 618-454-1589. This country-style Italian restaurant serves admirable Italian dishes with light sauces and moderate prices. Not-to-be-missed items are the daily soups, tomato-chicken and garlic mashed potatoes, vegetable lasagna with ricotta, and sword with lemon sauce. Saturday and Sunday a la carte brunch offers 11 items including pizza. Patio dining for all meals. Superb service. Arrive early for more leisurely dining. Very crowded weekends. Open daily. Moderate to expensive. — E.W.

'2 Off Any Entrée
over \$5 with purchase of beverage. Maximum 1 discount per check. No repeats checks. Mon.-Fri. 6-11 pm. Dinner only.

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Pancakes or waffles, coffee, 2 eggs. Mon.-Fri. 6-11 pm. Dinner only.

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Open Daily 6:30 am to 2:00 pm

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\$12.95

Be sure to try our wonderful new wine selection from RH Phillips. Located Head Chardonnay to BV Coastal Pinot Noir. We also serve champagne cocktails, plus domestic and fine import beer!

Monday/Tuesday Special
2-FOR-1 LUNCH OR DINNER
with the purchase of two beverages. Valid Mon. & Tues. 11 am-10 pm. Free entrée must be of equal or lesser value. Maximum value \$18.95. One discount per couple. One in only. With coupon. Expires 5/23/91.

Wednesday/Thursday/Friday Special
'2 OFF ENTRÉE
BREAKFAST, LUNCH OR DINNER over \$5 with purchase of beverage. Valid Wed.-Fri. Dinner only. No repeats checks. Maximum three discounts per check. With coupon. Expires 5/23/91.

Not valid with other offers or coupons. Not valid on holidays. Frequent Diner Program not valid with coupon.

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Selections from our brunch menu:
Egg Benedict, Salmon Fillet, Horserd Ranchers, Omelette, Irish Fish and much more! 9 am - 3 pm. From \$8.95. Outside seating available.

Lobster Night
1 Pound Live Maine Lobster just \$9.95 Every Wednesday

Prime Rib Night Friday Nights
1" Car Show Roasted Prime Rib 1995

Happy Hour Every Day 2-3:30 pm
\$1.99 Margaritas - Any Flavor
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On our deck, bar & lounge

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If you've got 15 minutes and a friend, we've got your **free lunch!**

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619.296.1966

pacific beach 4445 Mission Blvd. between Grand & Garnet
619.463.4143

chula vista center 5th Ave. and 12th west of Sears
619.420.9660

1/2 OFF DINNER
Join us for Mother's Day!
Buy any pasta or pizza & receive a second of equal or lesser value for 1/2 price.
Excludes Party Bucket. Not good Mother's Day or with any other offers or specials. Excludes La Brea, D.L. & D.L. locations only. Dine-in only. With this ad. Expires 6/1/91.

\$2 OFF ANY PASTA OR PIZZA
One coupon per couple. Not valid Mother's Day or with any other offers or specials. Good at Chula Vista location only. Dine-in only. With this ad. Expires 6/1/91.

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WOODFORD PIZZA SALADS PASTAS
5295 Balboa Ave., Suite 1018 (Balboa & Genesee)
San Diego • (619) 277-9977
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Escondido Village Ctr. So. • (619) 216-3900

D'Lish Gourmet
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Let her know she still is. Discover Mother's Day Brunch at Red Lion Hanaele Hotel

- Alaskan King Crab Legs
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- Poached King Salmon
- Carved to Order: Roasted Turkey, Roast Beef & Leg of Lamb
- Omelettes Cooked to Order
- Stir-fry & Pasta Stations
- Eggs Benedict
- Pacific Rim Specialties
- Fresh Fruit & Salads
- Assorted Pastries & Desserts
- Champagne by the Glass

Mother's Day Champagne Brunch
Served 10:00 am - 7:00 pm
(Breakfast items served until 2:00 pm)

\$28.95 Adults • \$24.95 Seniors
\$19.95 Children • Under 5 FREE

The Islands

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At the Bahia Resort Hotel
998 West Mission Bay Drive

CLAIREMONT & KEARNY MESA

ANDRES PATIO RESTAURANT
1235 Morena Boulevard, Bay Park, 619-275-4114. This low-priced Cuban cafe provides authentic specialties, of which the best are abundant (roasted wine sauce, roast pork with yuca and morro, chicken and rice, and tir-sito). Cuban style. Select the soup over the salad, and if entree is served with black beans, be sure to pour them over the main course instead of eating them separately. Service, wine and food, but clean premises. Excellent Cuban sandwiches (roast pork and habanero served straining beef) are available for lunch and dinner. Only Cuban sandwiches and Puerto Rican soups (prepared Friday) in the city. Extensive line of Latin groceries available at 1249 Morena Boulevard. Closed Sunday, lunch Monday through Saturday. Dinner, Tuesday through Saturday. Reservations suggested. Moderate. — E.W.

BAIKO TOFU HOUSE
1000 Camino del Rio South, Suite 100, Clairemont, 619-576-6433. This stylish little Clairemont eatery is a proof positive that our city has matured for its specialty ethnic foods. Bairo Tofu House is a Korean restaurant serving up specialty tofu dishes. Flavorful, healthy food. Highly recommend the somewhat messy (beef, pork, seafood, or mushroom), with raw egg (dog you drop yourself), and salad of kimchi kimchee. Deliver yourself from another great dining experience. Bairo Tofu House serves vodka ethnic food. Open daily. Inexpensive. — M.N.

Take Your Mum to Ireland This Mother's Day!

STARTERS
Cream of Mushroom and Thyme Soup
OR
Smoked Irish Salmon Baskets

MAIN COURSE
Fresh Tomato and Basil Bruschetta
Medallions of Beef with Lyonnaise Sauce served with the best potatoes and seasonal vegetables
OR
Chicken Saute with Farmington Potatoes Served with seasonal vegetables

DESSERTS
Paupiettes of Cold Duglere
Served with Baked potatoes and seasonal vegetables

Baileys Irish Cream Souffle or Fresh Fruit Pavlova

\$34.95 per person

For the little ryes we have a la carte items starting at \$7.95
Call 619.239.5818 for reservations
554 4th Ave. in San Diego's Gaslamp Quarter

Calendar RESTAURANTS

BISTRO YANG 4705-G Clairemont Drive, Clairemont Town Square, 619-483-6893. A sister restaurant to Portuque Canteen, this elegant bistro will charm gourmet Chinese food lovers with its curried soups, an herb, Yang's chicken, spicy spring rolls, and other delights. Standard dishes also available. Outstanding gourmet preparations. Open daily, lunch and dinner. Moderate. — E.W.

BUNGEY STEAK 4644 Clairemont Mesa Boulevard, 619-272-1412. "Lila's too short to drink cheap beer," says the sign. They must mean it. At Happy Hour (weekdays 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.), a 24-ounce glass of Guinness is as cheap as a Bud. Which is nice because it goes great with this pub's greatest hit: "San Diego's Famous 1/2 lb. Steerburger." The burger bun is crisp, the big slab of meat is crunchy-grilled, and the tomato and lettuce and raw onion are fresh. The small menu also includes chicken breast on a bun, paté, and hot wings. The small menu also includes chicken breast on a bun, paté, and hot wings. The small menu also includes chicken breast on a bun, paté, and hot wings. — E.W.

LOREN'S ITALIAN KITCHEN 3045 Governor Drive, Vista shopping center, University City, 619-452-0661. Twenty pasta dishes are prepared here, all from scratch, as well as hot sandwiches and pizza. Five place for families. Open daily, inexpensive to moderate. — E.W.

NITTA MARKET 3840 Conway, Kearny Mesa, 619-568-3821. If you're not willing to sacrifice quality for convenience when eating fast food, try this Japanese market in Kearny Mesa. Nitto Market offers prepared hot lunches, or bento, that are pretty to look at, appetizing, and a real bargain. I suggest, however, passing by Nitto's steam trays and hot lamps and going straight to the coolers, where you'll find delicious chicken cutlets, fresh sushi, and chilled noodles, as well as a dessert delicacy like sweet bread roll filled with sweet bean paste. Inexpensive. — M.N.

THE ORIGINAL PANCAKE HOUSE 3906 Convey, Kearny Mesa, 619-565-1740. If it isn't already an enormous, fluffy soufflé prepared with cinnamon sugar and apples, should win a prize. Its ability to satisfy all that is soft, sweet, and wonderful is all that is duplicated anywhere. The recipe for the apple pancake, the Swedish pancake, and the flapjacks are from the original restaurant in Oregon. Omelets, that cover the entire plate are accompanied by pancakes, coffee is served with whipping cream, and you'll need some to help you out the door if you let your instincts go wild. Diner breakfast food includes fresh steamed trout with cream. Open daily, 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Inexpensive. — E.W.

PANFAS ARGENTINE GRILL 4900 Arrow Drive at Montgomery Field, 619-276-5971. Argentine favorites, steaks, parillada or mixed grill, empanadas, Italian-style Argentine meat, fish, and chicken provide a wide range of choices. Lovely atmosphere and good service. Since the grill is very hot, all items cooked medium or rare, the beef, lamb or organic without hormones or pesticides, arrive overcooked. Closed Sunday. Open lunch and dinner, Monday through Saturday. Inexpensive to moderate. — E.W.

SOULS R&B 4344 Convey, Kearny Mesa, 619-565-0838. This Korean restaurant menu sits before a sizzling hot grill, sizzling hot ribs, the small of grilled beef, grilled onions, and fresh green in the air. Try the "Korean B.B.Q." marinated ribs (one pound) or thick marinated slices of sirloin (one pound). You'll enjoy all the accompaniments that make the meal, like the crunchy seaweed salad, radishes in garlic tomato sauce, slow-cooked potatoes with soy sauce and jalapeño pepper, beefing adventures, go for the goat meat hot pot or Korean steak (beef). This is a sensual, elemental, hairy-chested meal. — M.N.

THE BEACHES
ATLANTIS 1890 Harbor Island Drive, Harbor Island, 619-297-1673. This sprawling restaurant-banquet hall, with a pair of rachs perched by the front stairs, proves a charmer with (can you imagine?) both a good view and honest California-Mediterranean cooking. Featuring high-quality ingredients prepared simply and well. The relaxing setting resembles an ocean liner dining room, all polished woods and mixed glass with well-cushioned chairs and deep burgundy. The menu includes briny fresh oysters, organically grown fish, and flavorful local fish and excellent meats, cooked to order with well-chosen accompaniments. It's a great choice for frayed workweeks if you care sophisticated home-style cooking but just can't face the kitchen. On Saturdays, dances in another room draw a semi-dinner and supper dinner crowd. Call about wheelchair access. Lunch, dinner seven days. Moderately by the bay view. — E.W.

BLUE BAY CAFE 3780 Ingraham Street, Pacific Beach, 619-581-0200. The cuisine here tends to be somewhat elaborate, as does the simplest items, especially fish. Beautiful surroundings, excellent service, and first-rate diners. Open nightly for lunch and Sunday brunch. Inexpensive to moderate. — E.W.

THE BOATHOUSE 2040 Harbor Island Drive, Harbor Island, 619-291-4011. www.boathouserestaurant.com. View-endowed, renovated and under new management since the turn of our century, the premises, which are near the airport, are permeated with a faint yeasty aroma reminiscent of "better" airport restaurants, an odor as fragrant but disappointing as truck-stop coffee. In fact, the food resembles air fare, complete with soggy veggie, glazy mashed potatoes, greasy rice pilaf, overcooked fish, and meat. Open daily, 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Inexpensive. — E.W.

THE MESSIAH CAFE AND COWBOY 3770 Mission Boulevard at San Jose Place, Mission, 619-488-9080. Gourmet and Latin breakfasts served in family surroundings. Outstanding are cinnamon French toast, blackberry-banana pancakes, and trout beef hash with tomato potatoes and eggs. Chinese-Latin lunch items. All dishes plus fabulous bread, scones, muffins, available for take-out. Open daily 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Inexpensive. — E.W.

LOTUS PASTA 1762 Garnet Avenue, Old Town, 619-291-6666. Superior standards always prevail here. The cooking is clean to the palate and bursting with freshness. For appetizers: Dungeness crab cakes or mussels steamed in chowder. For entrees, daily fresh fish, lamb chops, pasta. Everything is memorable. Not to be missed. Dinner nightly. Upper moderate to expensive. — E.W.

HOUSE AND COWBOY AND GRILL 2734 Lytton, La Mesa, 619-224-6009. This hard-to-locate place is a gem. The food is superb. The service is superb. The atmosphere is superb. The food is superb. The service is superb. The atmosphere is superb. — E.W.

ANTHONY'S HACIENDA 700 N. Johnson (corner of Arroyo), El Cajon, 619-442-9827. Fine place for children, parents, grandparents. The food is not regional or gourmet, but standard items are fresh, generous in size, and inexpensive. Sopapillas, a deep-fried confection served with honey, are complimentary with meal. Open daily, lunch, dinner, and Sunday brunch. Inexpensive. — E.W.

D.Z. AKIN'S Alvarado Plaza, 6930 Alvarado Road, State College area, 619-265-0218. Surely the best Jewish delicatessen in San Diego. Soups are wonderful, and so are the 110 sandwiches, especially the corned beef. The kosher and chopped liver really rival Mother's. Excellent breakfast and outstanding, fully stocked bakery. Open daily, breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Inexpensive to moderate. — E.W.

JACK'S GREEK CAFE 7749 University Avenue, La Mesa, 619-464-1915. This recently remodeled restaurant is a find for tasty, fresh, home-style Greek cooking. The marinated half-chicken, the moussaka, the pastirma, and the assada are authentically prepared, as are the hummus and ground beef and lamb. A feast for two people, includes moussaka, pastirma, dolmades, gyro, pita, and Greek salad. Desserts — baklava, koulou, and custard pie — are prepared on the premises. Takeouts available. Lunch and dinner, Monday through Saturday. Closed Sunday. Inexpensive. — E.W.

JIMMY'S 9635 Mission Gorge Road, San Diego, 619-448-8994. We're at the end of the line here, the valley's Orange Line. Feels like a safari. You walk back through the grass to the streets of San Diego. Thank goodness for this family-friendly restaurant with good old-fashioned American food. Their six-page plastic menu tells all — dinner, breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Inexpensive to moderate. — E.W.

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Calendar MOVIES

unfunny non-novel by Helen Fielding, about the plight of the average, over-thirty, ever so slightly overweight, overdrinking, and over-smoking "singletons" woman in a world — "in a United Kingdom, at least" — of male "jacks-in-the-box" attempts to punch up the humor to big-screen proportions are totally wasted, although the actual fisticuffs that erupt (not in the book) between romantic rivals give us a good, disapproving, dog-eared feminist viewpoint on this masculine pastime — up until the hackneyed slow-motion crash through a plate glass window. The trolly demands no compromise on the part of the heroine, inasmuch as nice guy Colin Firth is taller, arguably better looking, financially better off, not to mention an all-around better human being (i.e., professional humanitarian), than shoddy Hugh Grant, and he even turns out, against first impressions of Heathcliff gloom, to have a better sense of humor in the bargain. The character's name of Darcy, furthermore, drops a heavy hint, to the literate, of the Jane Austen fairy-tale destination. One can see why the book, paddling around as it was in a pool of common sentiments, might have rallied the troops. The boiling-off of many of those sentiments on screen, however, tends to expose the thinness of the incidents. We appear to be witness to the entirety of the relationship between the heroine and Darcy,



The Mummy Returns

and honestly there's not much to it. Which leaves the troops with less to rally round. Excepting, of course, Rensé Zellweger (plus

a few extra pounds, nowhere near Raging De Niro numbers), a very "revealing" actress, sending out second-by-second updates on the least little fluctuations of the emotional weather vane, expertly orchestrating the audience response. She prevents the character from becoming a generalized spokesperson for "singletons," and corners our sympathies for herself alone. With

Germa Jones, Jim Broadbent, 2001.
★ (CAMEL MOUNTAIN 14; CINEMA STAR 13; DEL MAR HIGHLANDS 8; FROM 5/11; HAZARD CENTER 7; FROM 5/11; LA JOLLA 12; FROM 5/11; UH HORTON PLAZA; MISSION VALLEY 20; FROM 5/11; OCEANSIDE 16; FROM 5/11; PALM PROMENADE 24; FROM 5/11; PARKWAY PLAZA 18; FROM 5/11; POWAY 10; RANCHO DEL REY 16; TOWN SQUARE 14; UH

HORTON PLAZA 14)

The Center of the World — Wayne Wang's peek at an exotic island in East Vegas, with Molly Parker and Peter Sarsgaard. (HILLCREST CINEMAS)

Chocolat — Another art-house food film: an apostolic chocolate-maker opens her Little Shop of Temptations during the Lenten fast. Director Lasse Hallström follows his discreet pro-choice propaganda (*The Cider House Rules*) with a smug, complacent, liberal-minded broadside against the immensity, complexity, and narrow-mindedness of a French-Catholic provincial village circa 1959. The modest international cast adds to the air of surrealism: some do French accents, some don't. Juliette Binoche does one naturally; Johnny Depp does an Irish. With Lena Olin, Alfred Molina, Carrie-Anne Moss, Judi Dench, Peter Stormare, 2000.

★ (CINEMA STAR 13; FROM 5/11; DEL MAR HIGHLANDS 8; FROM 5/11; FASHION VALLEY 18; GALAXY 6; FROM 5/11; HAZARD CENTER 7; FROM 5/11; LA JOLLA 12; FROM 5/11; UH HORTON PLAZA; MISSION VALLEY 20; FROM 5/11; OCEANSIDE 16; FROM 5/11; PALM PROMENADE 24; FROM 5/11; PARKWAY PLAZA 18; FROM 5/11; POWAY 10; RANCHO DEL REY 16; TOWN SQUARE 14; UH

Crocodile Dundee in Los Angeles — Thirteen years later, Paul Hogan returns in a second sequel as the Aussie adventurer; directed by Simon Wincer.

★ (CAMEL MOUNTAIN 14; CINEMA STAR 13; DEL MAR HIGHLANDS 8; ENCONTAS 8; FASHION VALLEY 18; GALAXY 6; GROSSMONT CENTER; HAZARD CENTER 7; LA JOLLA 12; MISSION VALLEY 20; OCEANSIDE 16; PALM PROMENADE 24; PARKWAY PLAZA 18; POWAY 10; RANCHO DEL REY 16; SOUTH BAY DRIVE IN; FROM 5/11; SWEETWATER 9; TOWN SQUARE 14)

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon — Ang Lee's homage to the martial-arts fairy tales of his heritage, especially perhaps to the splendid period pieces of King Hu, is a beautiful bore. The costumes, the sets, the scenery, the wide-screen photography, the mature leading lady, the China-doll ingenu — beautiful. The tatty script, the unrefined unspun narrative line — a bore. And although *Ride with the Devil* may have proven that Lee can handle action, it did not prove he could make something credible and compelling of fight scenes in which the combatants go it like Peter Pan. Nor does this one prove it. We might have hoped that the act of homage, the ancient milieu, and the self-indulgent mythically would render the action more acceptable, more "aesthetic," than that of a John Woo baroque. They only render it more remote, more effete, more affected and anemic. The effects of flying, spinning, dancing up walls, slipping across water,

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hovering in overtops, etc., are technically well done (yes), and they sometimes, if only fleetingly, rise to the exalted plane of "beautifolia." "Deposits" would better describe the remainder of the time. Michelle Yeoh, Chow Yun Fat, Zhang Ziyi, Chang Chen, 2000.

★ (HILLCREST CINEMAS; LA PALOMA; PALM PROMENADE 24)

The Day I Became a Woman — Three-part Iranian feminist film written by Mahan Mahdhalabadi (Golehe) and directed by his wife, Marziyeh Meshkini. (HILLCREST CINEMAS, FROM 5/11)

The Dish — Parochial Australian comedy, more innocuous than funny, but pleasant enough in any case, centered around the Parkes Radio Telescope — a 216-foot dish "in the middle of a sheep paddock" — and its vital role in the first NASA moonshot.

Are the Aussies up to the challenge, or are they a bunch of "dickheads" out of their league? Two big crises — a power outage and a gas-force wind — test their mettle. Director Rob Sitch, torn between poking fun and taking pride, inspires no more confidence than the well-meaning fumble on screen. Sam Neill, Kevin Harrington, Tom Long, Patrick Warburton, Genevieve Moly, 2000.

★ (LA JOLLA VILLAGE)

Down to Earth — Lifeline reincarnation of *Here Comes Mr. Jordan* (or, for a newer generation, 1978's *Heaven Can Wait*). The gimmick is that the man we see as Chris Rock — the man temporarily installed in another man's body — is seen by everyone on screen as a poorly, gray-haired, middle-aged white guy. Surely the joke would have been the other way around: a white guy talking and acting like Chris Rock. But this

is Rock's first starring vehicle, and he's not disposed to step aside. With Regina King and Chazz Palminteri, directed by Chris Weitz and Paul Weitz, 2001.

★ (POQUE, FROM 5/11)

Deliver — The pretty girls and prettier boys of the glamorous world of "open-wheel racing." Vapid talk, careening camera-work, screaming rock songs. With Silverstein Stallone (who also wrote the script), Kip Pardue, Tim Schweiger, Enella Warren, Stacy Edwards, Gina Gershon, Cristian de la Fuente, and Bart Reynolds, directed by Kenny Harkin, 2001.

★ (CAMEL MOUNTAIN 14; CINEMA STAR 13; ENCONTAS 8; FASHION VALLEY 18; GALAXY 6; GALAXY 15; GROSSMONT CENTER; HAZARD CENTER 7; LA JOLLA 12; MISSION VALLEY 20; OCEANSIDE 16; PALM PROMENADE 24; PARKWAY PLAZA 18; POWAY 10; SOUTH BAY DRIVE IN)

Enemy at the Gates — The Battle of Stalingrad, reduced ridiculously to a personal "duel" between superstar snipers, a Russian peasant and a German aristocrat. ("It's the essence of the class struggle," opines the editor of a propaganda newsletter.) The telescopic shootouts are meticulously diagrammed, and there are several spectacular shots of aerial attacks, and Bob Hoskins' impersonation of Nikita Khrushchev is authentic at least as far as the bumps on his face. Uniforms greeny-blue-gray photography for frigid gloom. With Jude Law, Joseph Fiennes, Ed Harris, and Rachel Weisz, directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud, 2001.

★ (FASHION VALLEY 18; LA JOLLA 12; MISSION VALLEY 20; OCEANSIDE 16; PALM PROMENADE 24; PARKWAY PLAZA 18; UH HORTON PLAZA 14)

Exit Wounds — Steven Seagal fighting age, weight, and dirty Detroit cops. Putting up no resistance to wretched excess, minor lemons, and egomania. With DMX, Anthony Anderson, Isiah Washington, and Tom Arnold, directed by Andrzej Bartokowiak, 2001.

★ (PALM PROMENADE 24)

The Persuasion — Frigid film with Kerr Smith, Brendan Fehr, Carrie Snodgrass, and Johnathon Schaech, written and directed by J.S. Cardone.

(CAMEL MOUNTAIN 14; CINEMA STAR 13; CINEMA 8; FASHION VALLEY 18; GROSSMONT CENTER; MISSION VALLEY 20; OCEANSIDE 16; PALM PROMENADE 24; PARKWAY PLAZA 18; RANCHO DEL REY 16; SWEETWATER 9; TOWN SQUARE 14; UH HORTON PLAZA 14)

Preddy Got Flipped — MTV jester Tom Green spreads his wings, directing himself in the role of the idiot offspring of Rip Torn (matching facial hair), taking up the growl-out gauntlet (biblical-cord jokes, parapsychic S&M jokes, child-molestation jokes), and thus initiating a hair-pulling debate as to which he has less of — talent or taste? Some of his humor is oddly realistic or realistically odd — undeveloped, unpolished, unsharable — but that doesn't tip the debate one way or the other. With Julie Hagerty, Maria Coughlin, Harland Williams, and a cameo by the filmmaker's mate, Drew Barrymore, 2001.

★ (MISSION VALLEY 20; OCEANSIDE 16; PALM PROMENADE 24; PARKWAY PLAZA 18; RANCHO DEL REY 16)

Hammerheads — Witless, long-winded comedy about a mother-daughter team of con artists named Connors. That's a sample. The seven-inch semi-erect penis that gets broken off a statue, twice, is another and another and another. Miles of cleavage (if that's how it's measured), though the fifty-year-old Sigourney Weaver can't keep pace with twenty-one and top-heavy Jennifer Love Hewitt. Gene Hackman has the only amusing moments, in the part of a tobacco tycoon who's his own best customer and worst advertisement. With Ray Liotta, Jason Lee, Anne Bancroft, directed by David Mirkin, 2001.

★ (PALM PROMENADE 24)

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MOVIES

metal-band T-shirts, the haircut "like Jane Fonda in Kluge." But his creamy-nougat center seems dictated by Adam Sandler's Secrets of Success (Sandler, indeed, is one of the executive producers); and the hot blonde in blue-jean cutoffs (Brittany Daniel) she would be a Britanny, the equal of any of Jerry Lewis's leading ladies in her unreasonable devotion to the hero, stands as a monument to the film-makers' failure of imagination. With Dennis Miller, Christopher Walken, Fred Ward, Rosanna Arquette; directed by Dennis Gordon. 2001.

● (CARMEL MOUNTAIN 14; CINEMA STAR 13; ENCHITAS IN FASHION VALLEY 18; GALLUP 15; GROSSMONT CENTER; MISSION VALLEY 20; OCEANSIDE 16; PALM PROMENADE 24; PARKWAY PLAZA 18; RAMONA TWIN; RANCHO DEL REY 18; SOUTH BAY DRIVE IN; FROM 5/11; SWEETWATER 9; VOGUE)

Joke and the Penzance — Cheerfully corrupt, toothless satire on teenage consumerism and conformism, as dictated by subliminal messages in pop music. The movie is as much an agglomerate as a commentary, with special prominence granted to Target, Revlon, Bounce, MTV, among innumerable others. The titular rock trio, wearing leopard ears and sounding a lot like the Go-Go's, are based on characters out of Archie Comics. Rachel Leigh Cook, Tara Reid, Rosario Dawson, Alan Cumming, Parker Posey; written and directed by Deborah Kaplan and Harry Elfont. 2001.

● CINEMA STAR 13; FASHION VALLEY 18; GROSSMONT TROLEY; MISSION VALLEY 20; PALM PROMENADE 24; PARKWAY PLAZA 18; RAMONA TWIN; SATEE DRIVE IN; FROM 5/11

Keep the River on Your Right — David Shapiro's and Laurie Green Shapiro's documentary portrait of the controversial

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anthropologist, Tobias Schneebaum. (NEW CINEMA 5/11 THROUGH 17)

Knights Come — Graceless comedy about the peering of the Shocumb family to put Daddy Bud in the ground. The funeral parlor is named Depew's, and the loping pastor breaks wind in the middle of his oration — just for instance. With LL Cool J, Vivica A. Fox, Jada Pinkett Smith, Anthony Anderson, Loretta Devine, and Whoopi Goldberg; directed by Doug McHenry. 2001.

● CINEMA 6; MISSION VALLEY 20; PALM PROMENADE 24; LA HORTON PLAZA 14

A Knight's Tale — The Dark Ages lightened up: a rock-and-roll soundtrack (Queen, Bowie, BTG, others), a spontaneous eruption of disco dancing at court, a hike in signs on a suit of armor, a *Mademoiselle* cover girl for a fair maiden, and a centurion-ahead-of-his-time democratic hero, a lowborn squire who skyrockets to superstardom in the "nobles" sort of jousting, with Chaucer, no less, as his F.R. Jack ("Geoffrey Chaucer's name, writing's the game"). A howling, scowling, growling crowd-pleaser. With Heath Ledger, Paul Bettany, Shannyn Sossamon, Mark Addy, Alan Tudyk, Laura Fraser, and Rufus Sewell; written and directed by Brian Koppelman. 2001.

● CARMEL MOUNTAIN 14; CINEMA STAR 13; CINEMA 6; DEL MAR HIGHLANDS 8; ENCHITAS IN FASHION VALLEY 18; GALLUP 15; GROSSMONT CENTER; HAZARD CENTER 7; LA COSTA 6; LA JOLLA 12; MISSION VALLEY 20; OCEAN SIDE 16; PALM PROMENADE 24; PARKWAY PLAZA 18; RANCHO DEL REY 18; SATEE DRIVE IN; SOUTH BAY DRIVE IN; SWEETWATER 9; TOWN SQUARE 14; LA HORTON PLAZA 14; FROM 5/11

The Luzhin Defence — John Turturro plays a chess master, Emily Watson a socialite, in Marlene Gorrin's rendition of a Nabokov novel.

Memento — A tale of revenge told in reverse. To put it like that is not to suggest the movie goes literally in reverse motion, with people walking backwards and saying "Ole!" instead of "Hello," although that in fact is the method of the opening scene: a Polaroid snapshot gets sucked back into the

camera, and a spent cartridge jumps up into the chamber of a handgun. But this just gives the movie its initial push-backwards in time. After that, the scenes (in normal forward motion) are arranged in opposite order of occurrence, a bit reminiscent of the screen adaptation of Harold Pinter's play, *Betrayal*, or the earlier Elizabeth Jane Howard novel, *The Long View*. One big difference between this and those is that *Memento* is a thriller, not a relationship thing. Knowing how it all turns out would appear to be more crippling. Yet appearances, as we all know, can be deceiving. Another big difference is that the action here is squeezed into a tighter time frame, with each of the scenes ending at the precise point — with perhaps a second or two of repetitive overlap — where the previous scene started. Events, in other words, have been broken up arbitrarily in mid-course, so that we join them in *medias res* and must wait until the ensuing scene to find out how we reached that point. Still another difference, slightly softening the purity of the concept, is that the scenes are separated by black-and-white interludes (for explanatory purposes, mostly) of indeterminate chronology, and there's a heavy dose of verbal recapitulation right before the finish. This narrative technique proves to be a true test of your powers of concentration: a good thing in and of itself. You have to pay close attention. And you have to do what the hero himself is unable to do to remember what came before. The trick of the thing — the inspiration and justification for the *aus backwards* order of procedure — is the hero's peculiar "condition," as he refers to it, whereby he is incapable of forming new memories ever since the head injury he sustained while his wife was getting raped and murdered. Admittedly the movie is something of a stunt, a sleight of hand.

The reverse-order gimmick could only work in concert with the black-memory gimmick: *conspicuous* beware. This is a one-of-a-kind whatchamacallit designed for one use only, one time only. (Though a reverse-order request, strange to say, is not unimaginable.) It hangs together. It does its job. It can have no further application. But this is a work of fiction, not a kitchen implement, and in that department ingenuity counts much more than utility. Guy Pearce, Carrie-Anne Moss, Joe Pantoliano; written and directed by Christopher Nolan. 2001.

● ● ● (HILLCREST CINEMA; LA JOLLA VILLAGE)

The Blummy Blumhouse — Supernatural sequel starring Brendan Fraser and Rachel Weisz, written and directed by Stephen Sommers.

● CARMEL MOUNTAIN 14; CINEMA STAR 13; CINEMA 6; DEL MAR HIGHLANDS 8; ENCHITAS IN FASHION VALLEY 18; FLOWER HILL CINEMA; GALAXY 8; GROSSMONT CENTER; GROSSMONT TROLEY; HAZARD CENTER 7; LA COSTA 6; LA JOLLA 12; MISSION VALLEY 20; FROM 5/11; OCEANSIDE 16; PALM PROMENADE 24; PARKWAY PLAZA 18; POWAY 10; RAMONA TWIN; RANCHO DEL REY 18; SATEE DRIVE IN; FROM 5/11

SOUTH BAY DRIVE IN; SWEETWATER 9; TOWN SQUARE 14; LA HORTON PLAZA 14

O Brother, Where Art Thou? — A road comedy, "based upon" *The Odyssey* by Homer, about three chain-gang fugitives in Depression-era Mississippi. (The title, should you need reminding, comes from Preston Sturges's *Sullivan's Travels*; the proposed title for a "meaningful" film by a refractory Hollywood contract director, whose subsequent quest to get in touch

with the Common Man leads him on a Southern chain gang.) While the humor is as broad as the Coen brothers ever have allowed (*Le... Raising Arizona*), it is equally as bright and as funny. No one in American cinema, past or present, writes tauter, tangier dialogue than Joel and Ethan Coen, and the script is studded with well-turned gems that could stand alongside any textbook samples from the pages of Preston Sturges, Jules Furthman, Ben Hecht. (The nitwit fugitives enter inevitably into a who-past-you-in-charge dispute. The rebellious one

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Photograph from the San Diego Historical Society

Dressing up silly for a round of golf isn't an aberration limited to men. These "grannies" put on some old-style threads for a

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— by Robert Mizrahi

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the wedding to take measurements. If we were to follow normal procedure and have the little guys come in a couple months in advance, like we do with the adults, by the time

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BY ANNE ALBRIGH

It's Just Make-Believe

sorry, sweetie." I pulled Rebecca into my arms. "Sometimes, it's hard growing up." Rebecca laid her head against my shoulder the way she used to when she was a baby. "Sometimes, you're just going to have bad days," I continued. "But I bet Theresa will be back tomorrow, and you'll have a better day."

Rebecca sniffed into my shoulder and held

"I love you, Mommy."

"I love you, too." I pulled back. "Now, go to sleep."

"Okay, Mommy." Rebecca held her arms out again. "One more hug."

"One more."

The next morning, Rebecca didn't mention our talk. When I dropped her off at school, she hugged me extra hard and wouldn't let go. She smiled up at me, her chestnut brown hair falling back from her face. I looked at her freckles and her silly smile. "I won't let you go," she teased.

"You really want me hanging around class and the playground all day?" I asked.

"Yes," she answered.
As I resigned myself to standing in Rebecca's embrace until the bell rang, she caught sight of her friend Theresa. Rebecca's grip loosened.
"Bye-bye, sweetie," I said and leaned down to kiss her.
"Bye, Mom," Rebecca gave me one last squeeze. She gathered up her backpack and ran to meet Theresa. The two of them walked onto the playground together.
"Have a good day," I called after Rebecca. She didn't hear me.

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