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Everything went extremely smooth, it was even comfortable, and I see perfectly…

"One of the most pleasurable experiences I've had, considering this was eye surgery"

In only 10 minutes our LASIK procedure reverses 42 years of failing, blurry eyesight.

“...I've worn glasses since 2nd grade and forgot what it was like to see the world without looking through smudged or scratched panes of glass or plastic. Now I'm 20/20 in both eyes. I never thought seeing without the aid of glasses was possible again. Many of the activities I'd loved as a girl had to be avoided. In fact I couldn’t even remember what it was like to wake up and see. When I walked into Dr. Yaghouti’s office I was very nervous. But the staff put me at ease and the procedure was over in minutes. When I woke up the next day I screamed, 'I CAN SEE!' And the tears came. For the first time in 42 years I could see the clock on the wall and other things in my room. No more hassle with glasses or discomfort from contacts. I can swim, snorkel and do anything I want with perfect sight. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.”

– Michelle Stewart, San Diego

Our quick LASIK procedure can correct nearsightedness, farsightedness, and astigmatism – in 1 visit.

Global Laser Vision has over 30,000 grateful patients in the San Diego area now living without the hassle and expense of glasses or contacts – free of scratchy red eyes and headaches.

Here’s what some of our patients have said about the LASIK procedure:

Q: How safe is the LASIK procedure?  
“I’m definitely the fearful type...so I talked to lots of people who did the procedure. My friends who did it said it was safe, and it was. Now I wish I hadn’t waited so long.”  
– Mischa Shirazi, San Diego, CA

Q: Is the surgery painful or difficult?  
“I had no pain during the procedure and no discomfort or pain afterward. Best of all, I can see without my glasses or contacts. It feels great.”  
– Greg Schwenk, San Diego, CA

Q: How soon after the process can I begin normal daily activities again?  
“When I came out of the surgery room I could see the hands of the clock – I was doing normal things the next day...amazing immediate results!”  
– Glenna T. Casey, Chula Vista, CA

Q: How long does the process take?  
“You and your staff told me that it would be a ten-minute, painless procedure and that I would be able to see very close to 20/20 as soon as the next day. Sure enough, it was painless, done in minutes, and I see 20/20.”  
– T.P. Fortin, San Diego, CA

Q: Do the effects of LASIK wear off over time?  
“I had the surgery done over 8 years ago and my sight is still a perfect 20/20.”  
– Sandra Moscos, San Diego, CA

Important note from Dr. Lakhani: The effects of LASIK are permanent and do not wear off. However, a person’s eye can still change internally, which is why many surgeons recommend having the procedure done after major eye changes have occurred in one’s life.

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When doctors lease LASIK surgical equipment, they have to charge their patients more money to cover their expenses. That’s because doctors pay a lot more money to lease and USE the equipment than if they owned it.

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✦ Your doctor to perform your pre-operative and post-operative exams.  
✦ Your doctor to be caring and, above all, to put your best interests first.  
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What if finally…

- Your naked eye could read a clock or see dolphins swimming far offshore?
- You didn’t have to reach for glasses in the morning?
- You could climb, snorkel, dance, and do things without glasses or contacts?
- You had no more red, scratchy eyes or headaches from poor eyesight?

Read what our patients say after their LASIK surgery …

“This was a life-changing experience. The morning after surgery I was reading anything and everything – signs, billboards, etc. To be liberated of contacts and glasses after 30 years is nothing short of miraculous. The staff and doctors are the best. The doctor told me exactly what was going on the whole time during surgery. I felt completely comfortable. Thank you for this amazing gift you have given me.”
– Tim Newman, Solana Beach, CA

“I liked how the doctor explained everything before he did it. I did not have any discomfort after the surgery. I could see perfectly the next day. This is the best thing I have ever done for myself.”
– Claudia Jones, San Diego, CA

“Unbelievable. If someone told me I’d be driving the next day, I’d tell them they were nuts. But I’m driving! Wish I’d done this 10 years ago – I’m seeing 20/15, can’t wait for tomorrow and the next day – it can only get better. Thanks, Global, you made a difference in my life!”
– Chris Steward, Cardiff, CA

“This was a life-changing experience. The morning after surgery I was reading anything and everything – signs, billboards, etc. To be liberated of contacts and glasses after 30 years is nothing short of miraculous. The staff and doctors are the best. The doctor told me exactly what was going on the whole time during surgery. I felt completely comfortable. Thank you for this amazing gift you have given me.”
– Tim Newman, Solana Beach, CA

“You were all wonderful. I am very happy to be able to see again without the hassles of glasses and contact lenses. Thank you for providing me with a new life.”
– Patricia Rhodes, San Diego, CA

“I was at 20/15 in both eyes, now I’m 20/15 in both eyes. Thank you, Dr. Yaghouti and your entire staff for a job very well done.”
– Tony Cardenas, Temecula, CA

“I was absolutely amazed when the first eye was completed. I couldn’t wait to have the second eye completed. I could see as soon as he finished. I felt very relaxed as the procedure was being done. The doctor explained everything he was doing and that was very relaxing. I would recommend this procedure to anybody. I have worn contact lenses since I was about 13 and had the procedure done at 35. As soon as I got home all the contact stuff went in the trash.”
– Lone Lindenmuth, Oceanside, CA

“I can see without the use of glasses for the first time in 27 years. The staff is excellent and very professional. I will recommend this center to all of my friends that wear any kind of corrective vision. Thank you all for giving me my sight.”
– Art Casey, Chula Vista, CA

“The clarity is unbelievable, colors are sharper, and I can see without glasses for the first time in 25 years. GREAT!”
– Larry Cheney, Coronado, CA

“I’ve worn glasses since I was 8. What an experience to get up the next morning, reach for your glasses and realize, ‘Hey, I can see!’ Thanks for your help in enhancing my life.”
– Denise Alloway, Cudahy, CA

“I was at 20/400 in both eyes, now I’m 20/15 in both eyes. Thank you, Dr. Yaghouti and your entire staff for a job very well done.”
– Tony Cardenas, Temecula, CA

“It is awesome to be able to surf and snowboard without the worries of losing a lens. I can finally wake up every morning to clear, perfect vision and not more headaches due to poor vision! Thank you so much for this gift – it has brightened my world.”
– Sandi Nagy, San Diego, CA

“The alignment is for new patients only with no prior history of refractive surgery. Prices are based on bilateral (both eyes) corrections only. Surgery must be performed by 12/22/06. Some restrictions may apply. Call for financing details.
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- 0.15
- 0.16
- 0.17
- 0.18
- 0.19
- 0.20
- 0.21
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San Diego Reader
December 7, 2006
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Lawyer to lawyer

With all the stress of being president of the San Diego City Council, Scott Peters of La Jolla apparently needs a country place for quick out-of-town getaways to relax with the wife and kids. So earlier this year, he and his spouse, multimillionaire Lynn Gorgonzola, bought an 11.92-acre estate in a glen near East County’s Pine Valley. According to a deed recorded in early February, the couple laid out $519,000 in cash for the tidy spread on a rustic dirt road south of I-8. But not long after making a round of improvements to the place, the lawyer and his wife found themselves caught up in some legal soup. On September 27, Patrick Callahan of Escondido’s Poolsafe, Inc., filed a mechanic’s lien against the couple for what Callahan claimed was $28,085 owed to him since August 1 for installation of a “safety pool cover” at the site.

The saga began, Callahan says, after he finished the job and two checks given to him by the project’s general contractor bounced. “Thirty or 45 days went by” after he filed the lien against the city councilman, he recounts, and still no payment was forthcoming. Then, according to Callahan, his attorney Jim Lund, president of the North County Bar Association, happened to bump into Peters at a business function. “He introduced himself and said, ‘Are you aware of this?’ or something like that, and right after that the contractor walked in with the cash, so it was all taken care of a few weeks ago,” Peters spokesperson Pam Hardy confirmed the lien had been paid, but said Peters was in a city council meeting and unavailable for comment…

In other real estate dealings of note, Padres owner John Moores recently mortgaged eight condos he still owns in the high-rise Omni hotel he built adjacent to the ballpark, along with his place on the 21st floor of the high-rent Meridian condo complex, in order to secure a loan of $46.5 million from Wells Fargo, which represented a refinancing of a prior $40 million note. And ex-city schools head and just-named airport authority member Alan Bersin, recently returned from Sacramento, where he spent a year as Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger’s education secretary, has purchased a $2805 owned self since August 1 for installation of a “safety pool cover” at the site.

Health Care: Where the Jobs Are

By Don Bauder

Want to find robust good health? Go to a doctor’s office or a hospital. The patients may be sick, but health-care employment is doing very, very well. According to a study by Business Week magazine, in the last five years, health-care jobs in the nation have soared while the rest of the private sector has gone nowhere. That’s not true in San Diego: health care did moderately well over the same period, but so did the rest of the private sector.

**MEDIAN HEALTH-CARE SALARIES, 2004**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dental Hygienists</td>
<td>$87,445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physician Assistants</td>
<td>$70,746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Therapists</td>
<td>$65,131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Therapists</td>
<td>$64,958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech-Language Pathologists</td>
<td>$64,085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear Medicine Technologists</td>
<td>$61,661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered Nurses</td>
<td>$40,921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiation Therapists</td>
<td>$59,811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All health-care</td>
<td>$37,951</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Business Week found that since 2001, the health-care sector nationally added 1.7 million jobs. Construction and real estate added 940,000, but the rest of the private sector lost 1.2 million, as computer, electronic, and telecom employers shed jobs. Without health care, “the nation’s labor market would be in a deep coma,” says the magazine.

At my request, Cheryl Mason of San Diego Association of Governments got comparable information for San Diego: annual average employment from July 2001 to July 2006 in health care and all other private-sector categories. Health-care jobs rose 6.2 percent to almost 150,000, providing 10 percent of overall employment growth. Health-care categories include bioscience, testing labs, social assistance, and health and medical insurance.

Not surprisingly, the big winner was construction and real estate, with a whopping 21.1 percent rise to 164,600 jobs. It provided a stunning 35 percent of job growth during that period. The number of construction workers zoomed 36.6 percent, while loan brokers soared 114.3 percent. But the construction/real estate sector is going to recede, probably sharply, as housing sales and prices come down—leaving San Diego double-doses to ponder how to replace an economic juggernaut that has been providing more than one-third of job growth.

Where San Diego differed from the rest of the country in 2001 to 2006 was in the category of non-health-care private-sector employment. Unlike in the United States overall, non-health-care jobs rose moderately, rising 5.9 percent to 781,000, providing 33 percent of growth in the last five years.

San Diego had some non-health-care strengths that the nation didn’t enjoy. One was tourism jobs: up 17.2 percent in the five years to 133,900 jobs. Another was retail, up 10.7 percent to 114,500 jobs. Wholesale was up 10.9 percent to 44,900. However, Alan Gin, economist at the University of San Diego, says that retail slowed in the last two years.

continued on page 8

Contact Don Bauder at 619-546-8529 or don.bauder@mac.com

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Why Don’t We Claim That Cash?

By Ernie Grimm

Given the financial straits the City of San Diego has been in of late, you’d think officials would make it a priority to collect every dime that the City’s owed. But a look at the state controller’s database of “unclaimed properties” shows over $10,000 that belongs to the City.

“These unclaimed properties are not real estate,” says Russ Lopez, director of communications for the state controller’s office, “because by federal statute, every financial institution, whether it be a brokerage firm, a mortgage firm, or a utility, after a certain amount of time is required by federal law to turn over to the state any unclaimed money that they owe.”

Though the State holds unclaimed stocks, and even jewelry and rare coins, in the City’s case, it’s all chunks of cash, as low as $58 and as high as $933, that businesses are required to return to the City. “We end up with over $10,000 that belongs to the City,” Lopez says. “It has nothing to do with the controller or the treasurer or whichever department, or the check doesn’t get cashed. For tax reasons, the vendor can’t really absorb that money on their own books.”

So the vendor sends the money to the state controller’s office, which acts, Lopez says, as “a repository for that money. We’re not a bank. We don’t do interest at this point, even though Controller Steve Westly did sponsor a bill to let some of that money gain interest.”

The bill, SB 1752, died in a state senate committee in May 2006. Not only would it have allowed the $4.8 billion in the state controller’s hands to gain 5 percent interest for its owners, it would have loosened restrictions on the controller’s ability to contact the claimants on the 7.8 million accounts in the database.

“As it is,” Lopez says, “we are not allowed to call the City of San Diego or Mr. and Mrs. Garcia in San Diego to let them know that they have unclaimed property. But even if the restrictions were lifted, we have nearly 8 million accounts. We can’t call 8 million people.”

In lieu of calling, Controller Westly toured the state from October 2005 through February 2006 to promote the unclaimed properties database. At stops around the state — including one in Little Italy on February 6, 2006 — he told Californians to claim their money on searchthevault.com or encuentresueldinero.com, the Spanish version. “The reason we did searchthevault.com is it’s very easy to remember,” Lopez explains, “I can say, go to searchthevault.com, rather than s-c-o, backlash, forward slash, dot, whatever it is.”

The reason the legislature rejected the bill may be because they’ve become accustomed to having a $4.8 billion fund to borrow from. “Legislators use some of that money,” Lopez says. “It has nothing to do with the controller. It’s all state business, and it’s out of our hands. But they have to pay it back. It’s not theirs; it’s the property of Californians, whether it be businesses or individuals. So anytime anyone claims property, we have to give it back.”

Around 65 percent of the unclaimed monies belonging to the City are associated with real estate transactions. One of the last items on the list is $70 from Commerce Title Company. California Title Company, a local company with an office in Mission Valley, tried to refund $519.68 to the City of San Diego, judging from the database entry. The controller’s website doesn’t say when California Title attempted to make the payment, but it does give the “reported address” to which the company sent the refund: 715 Harris, which is a house in a residential neighborhood in Otay Mesa owned, according to county assessor’s records, by Gerardo Alonso. It’s clearly not the City of San Diego’s official address. “Why somebody couldn’t get the correct address for the City of San Diego, I don’t know,” Lopez says.

The largest amount on the list owed the City (as of November 11, 2006) is a “vendor payment” of $933 from Target Corporation. The Union-Tribune Publishing Company shows up twice, both times for refunds of $780.80. The states of Texas and Idaho failed in attempts to pay the City $100 and $691, respectively. Other names include Jack in the Box ($280), FedEx Kinko’s ($549.90), and Chevron USA ($178).

The city official who claims properties from the state repository, Lopez says, “has to be the individual elected or hired to handle the finances of the entity. For instance, for the State of California, it would be the state controller. In a city or a county, it would be the treasurer, the auditor, whoever it is who deals with the financial matters. They have to legally be able to accept money on behalf of the city.”

In the City of San Diego, that man is Michael Vogl, revenue collections manager. He says he’s aware of the $10,166. The collections staff, Vogl says, performs an annual review of the unclaimed properties in the database.

The chunks of cash belonging to the City, 50 in all as of November 9, aren’t overpaid utility bills. Many are classified as vendor payments. “A vendor payment would be, the city, the state, and every county, they have vendors who do work for them, whether it be window washing, the cafeteria, or anything else. Say the city has contracts with a vendor, which is a private business, and the city pays the vendor in advance but the bill turns out to be less than was expected — say the city wrote a check for $10,000, but the work was only $9500, then the vendor tried to return the $500. It’s up to the vendor to return that money. But maybe they had the wrong address. Or maybe they didn’t have an address. Or maybe they wrote it out to the ‘City of San Diego’ and didn’t specify the department. And you know how bureaucracy is, you have to send it to the controller or the treasurer or whichever department, or the check doesn’t get cashed.

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Where the jobs are
continued from page 6
San Diego suffered tech/tele-
com job losses, as the nation
did, although not as severely
because dot-com employment
was never as giddily high in
San Diego as in some places
such as Silicon Valley. Com-
puter and electronics employ-
ment dropped 20.3 percent in
the last five years. Infotech
employment was down
7.7 percent and telecom down
3.5 percent.
In the health-care sector,
there were only two losers:
blood and biotech manufactur-
ing (such as certain health-care
equipment), down 21.8 percent,
and biotech, which despite all
the hallywood and the stock mar-
et excitement, dropped 8.9 per-
cent to only 4100 jobs. Even with
some closures, problems such
as at Alvarado, and declining
profitability, hospital employ-
ment grew 9.4 percent to 24,500.
Ambulatory health-care services
gained 8.4 percent to 44,100
jobs, the largest employer in the
health-care segment. (This
category includes ambulance
services. It’s little wonder, then,
that in the non-health-care sector,
legal services were up
10.2 percent. This statistical
correlation suggests that lawyers
indeed deserve to be called
ambulance chasers.)

Economic and demo-
graphic factors favor contin-
ued growth in the health-care
sector. “The demographics are
absolutely on the side of con-
tinued growth in health-care
jobs,” says Ross Starr, econom-
ist at the University of Califor-
nia, San Diego. “In the next
to five years, the first wave of
baby boomers qualifies for
Medicare. There will be embar-
rasements of running out of
Medicare trust funds; you can
expect Congress and the Trea-
ury to have to deal with that.”
It’s true that financially strapped
corporations are cutting back
health benefits. Medical tech-
nology is advancing rapidly,
and patients spend much less
time in hospitals. But overall,
“You can expect more health-
care employment. It would
take a revolution in medical
technology or medical finance
to reverse that.” And with great
strides being made at medici-
cal centers such as at his own
university, San Diego should
capture much of that employ-
ment growth.

Gin expects health-care employment to rise as the pop-
ulation ages, life expectancy increases, and more older
people retire to San Diego. Over the short-term, non-health-
care employment will slow.

“Construction and real estate jobs will decline,” says Gin.
Tourism job growth will slow as the nation’s economy weak-
ens and fewer people travel here. Long-term, tourism will
recover. Retail will pick up again, but it won’t be fired by
folly — that is, people living in the California lifestyle by bor-
rowing on the artificial increase in their homes’ values.

The good news for job seek-
ers is that labor shortages are
worsening in the health-care
sector, according to a study
this year by the San Diego
Workforce Partnership. In
coming years, the shortages
will intensify for registered
dentists, dental hygienists, den-
tal assistants, licensed practi-
cal and vocational nurses, car-
diovascular technologists and
technicians, home health aides,
radiologic technologists and
teachers, and speech-lan-
guage pathologists.

Happily, the laws of supply
and demand seem to be work-
ing. The local study points out
that the San Diego region has
only one program for training
continued on page 10
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dental hygienists, and such training costs a bundle. That’s one reason there is a shortage of them. In 2004, the median wage of all those in health-care occupations was just under $38,000. But dental hygienists were making $67,445 a year, tops among the categories. Registered nurses, also registered $38,000. But dental hygienists were bringing in $60,521. Speech-language pathologists were bringing in $62,190.

Continued from page 8

The per diem for professional employees in the city is a little over $900. But they have to deal with per diem claims. The city now has a system that can handle them. In 2004, the city paid out $350 million in claims. The city only has $10 million in claims outstanding. But the city has a backlog of claims. The city is working on getting rid of that backlog. The city has a backlog of claims because they have to deal with per diem claims. The city is working on getting rid of that backlog because they have to deal with per diem claims. The city has a backlog of claims because they have to deal with per diem claims. The city is working on getting rid of that backlog because they have to deal with per diem claims.
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Dear Reader,

I haven’t been in years, was about eight years old, and I followed him there. I was very happy when 92.5 fired, I was bummed but didn’t realize it would be the last time to give it a rest. Jennifer D’Angelo via e-mail

Icthyo-Psychology

Sitting in the sunshine in Encinitas on Friday, waiting for my lunch of sizzling tofu with artichoke-garlic dip, I read your cover story about the heartbreak of fishing (“That’s Fishing,” Cover Story, November 30). The human players’ psyche is interesting, but the writer missed the boat by leaving out the behavior of the main player in the fishing “drama” — the fish.

In the last three years or so, fascinating studies by ichthyologists have revealed facts that should make any angler squirm. We now know that fish have personalities just like dogs and cats and those people across the street; they choose their friends carefully; can build nests by using their sensitive mouths as we would use our hands; some “talk” in a chirping-like sound like birdsong; and they have spatial memory on a par with any other vertebrate: fish who learn to escape from a net can retain that knowledge and use it, for what would be the equivalent of decades for a human being. Fish can also tell time, as evidenced by their reliable appearance for a once-a-day feeding in a controlled environment.

There is indeed a lot to consider about fishing, including that it might just be time to give it a rest.

Ingrid E. Newkirk via e-mail

Adjust Your Timeline

In Ernie Grimm’s article this week about Campo (“From Rural Retreat to Suburbia,” “City Lights,” November 30), he refers to soldiers being stationed there in “pre–World War II” times. Not to quibble, but the stationing of U.S. Cavalry soldiers there, the famous Buffalo Soldiers, happened early in WWI. Prior to that time, San Diego had hosted a regiment of U.S. Army Coast Artillery that manned the many coastal guns in and around San Diego Bay. But none of those were ever stationed in Campo. In the immediate aftermath of the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Army was directed to shift its forces westward to protect the West Coast from anticipated Japanese attack or invasion. And so it was that a regiment of cavalry was sent to the border, and the land for Camp Lockett was purchased and the camp was built. All of that after war was declared in December 1941.

Don Jones via e-mail

Bye-Bye, Bryan

I was very sad today to read in the “Blurt” section (November 30) of Bryan Jones’s death. He was like my only friend every morning five days a week, ‘cause at the time I was working mornings at Crawford High. The first part of my morning was to open the site before the rest of the staff would get there, and I listened to him on a little $5 Radio Shack radio I had on my belt (along with hundreds of keys). When he got fired, I was bummed but was very happy when 92.5 converted to modern rock, and I followed him there.

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San Diego Reader December 7, 2006
Then 91X moved from TJ to right down the street from me; they hired him back and teamed him up with Russ T. Nailz, and I followed him back there too. It was so great living right down the street from the station. Nearly every band that came to town went there for an interview with Steve West, and I was getting off work at 1:30. I'd rush home, get cleaned up, and head down to the station, and I got to meet every one of them. I had always collected autographs, so I sure got a lot due to that.

Anyway, my favorite band at the time (still is and always will be), the Stray Cats, had broken up a few years back. Brian Setzer had put out a few solo albums, but now it was time to do something different. A 17-piece swing band! They were going to play for their first time in town, at the Belly Up. (Can you imagine 17 guys plus Brian Setzer on that stage! Let's just say I was blown away, by the horns, that is.)

The Stray Cats had visited 91X many times in the past, and over the years I got to know Setzer pretty well. So when I saw he was coming to town, I wrote him and asked if he wanted to come down to the station to promote the show. He wrote back and said it's a deal. So I called up Bryan Jones and told him about it and asked if we could do it in the A.M. (instead of the afternoons with Steve West, like most were). He said, “Hell, yeah! Just set it up and get back to me.” So I did. I also called a couple pals of mine from a local rockabilly band (Hot Rod Lincoln) and said you’re invited too. Told the bass player (Johnny G.) to bring his stand-up bass and for Buzz to just come on down and meet me at the station. We arrived early, before Setzer, so they let us in, and Bryan and Russ T. interviewed us about “the rockabilly lifestyle” (tattoos/cars, etc.). Brian Setzer shows up, does some interview promo for the show that night, then we break out into a full-on jam session in that little studio. Setzer wailin’ away on guitar, Johnny slappin’ his bass, and me and Buzz and Russ T. and Bryan screamin’ and a yellin’ out and bangin’ on anything we could find. I got it recorded on a cassette tape, and years later I converted it to CD. So as I’m writing this now, I’m listening to the CD and thinking back to the good old days of 91X, listening to the “King” every morning, and thinking that up to that day it was the proudest day of my life!
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STRAIGHT FROM THE HIP

Hey, Matt:
Can you tell me where the 15 freeway changes from a California highway to an interstate highway? It’s called California 15 where it starts (or ends) in National City, but then it’s I-15 all the way to Canada. What gives? Why the rogue section of highway?

— Timmy B, Pacific Beach

Hey, Matt:
North of Interstate 8, the signs for the 15 have the red, white, and blue Interstate highway shield. South of the 8, the 15 merits only the round green-and-white highway shield, like 163. Why is this? It’s not just a mistake on one sign. Please help!

— Carrie, Coronado

Hey, Matt:
I understand your reason for asking, but the 15 is a local highway that happens to be named California 15. It's an extension of I-8. It changes to I-15 when it goes through National City.

— Daniel in Clairemont

For this one we have to go back about 60 years to the day President Eisenhower took time out from his golf game to dream up the interstate highway system. He imagined trucks and cars zooming around the country, bypassing all that two-lane blacktop. He probably didn’t think it would take more than a century to complete, but that’s public works projects for you. Finally, the last bit of Ike’s transcontinental asphalt was laid right here in San Diego five years ago, when the new improved 15 burrowed its way through City Heights. There were big ceremonies and lots of hoopla at the time.

So you’d think we could finally rip out the old state 15 signs south of 8 and tack up the shiny red-white-and-blue ones. Sorry. Way too simple. We’re dealing with the feds, don’t forget. Just because your local highway is an extension of an interstate doesn’t give you automatic federal status, even if you widen it and generally spiff it up. According to Caltrans, the new chunk of 15 through City Heights does not yet meet every tiny, detailed requirement the feds demand for interstate-standard roads. Until we get the okay from Washington, 15 south of 8 is still, on paper, just a local highway. It’s a bureaucracy thang, natch.

Greetings, Matt:
After giving by mail to a couple of good causes, I’m buried with every sort of charity-asking-for-money junk mail. I know they have sold my name around, so I always ask them what percent goes to the charity and what percent to administration. Almost all say 10% to 20% goes to the charity and 80% to administration, except if you write “Restrict” on your check, then the entire amount has to go to the charity. My questions are, is that true, and who keeps an eye on that to make sure they do it?

— Daniel in Clairemont

Well, no good deed goes unpunished, Daniel. Mail-in charityland just nets you more mail-in begging. I guess the only up side is that you’re on the mailing list of Nice Guys. Pretty amazing, though, that a charity would confess that only a tenth of its revenue goes to good deeds. I hope you file those in the trash can. According to the charity watchers, that’s a pitiful record. As a rule of thumb, they say, the cost of raising the money should be no more than 40% of donations.

So, you’re cutting your annual check to Save the Snails and you want every last dollar to be used for snail-saving purposes... No luxury suites for the jet-set CEO, no black-tie fundraisers for the slobberyazz. What you want to make, then, is a restricted donation. You have to specify that it’s restricted and tell them what they can spend it on. By law, your wishes should be followed. But of course there is no way you can be guaranteed that your particular dollars are spent according to your directions. You have to trust that you’re dealing with an honest organization that doesn’t flout the law. A background check is probably in order before you give, especially if it’s a smaller or local charity that’s not well known.

Two groups offer free evaluations of the larger charities, mostly national: the Better Business Bureau’s Giving Alliance (www.give.org) and the Charity Navigator (www.charitynavigator.org). For smaller charities, try www.looksmart.org to find the URL for your local Better Biz Bureau. Of course, if you’re not happy with somebody else’s rating, you can examine the IRS Form 990 for a particular nonprofit. This is the information form every nonprofit has to file with the feds, breaking down their income and outgo. Try www.guidestar.org for details about 990s.

Most ratings rank charities by how lean and mean they are. But some nonprofits point out that effectiveness is perhaps more important and harder to rate looking just at income and expenses. And charities don’t run on air; they do need unrestricted donations to pay the rent. It’s not unheard of for charities to turn down restricted donations, usually large ones with lots of strings attached. One generous soul recently took a charity to court, claiming his donation was misused. Nobody needs that kind of aggravation. And charities, especially those like the Red Cross, also need unrestricted donations to help amass enough cash to be prepared to act immediately when the next emergency comes up. So, do your homework, then hope for the best.

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I lean into the phone, say, “Tell me about Carl San Diego. How did the curling club get started?”

“Yeah, I had a friend in high school —” Hicks says. “I call her the ‘house.’” Hicks says. “I call her the ‘house.’”

“I got married,” Hicks says. “There was any curling in the area, and they gave me Mr. Hicks to San Diego.”

“Yeah, there was any curling in the area, and they gave me Mr. Hicks to San Diego.”

“The four positions — lead, second, vice-skip, and skip — are in the order of who shoots. Everybody shoots two rocks. For lead, you want somebody who is good at judging weight because he’ll probably be throwing guard rocks, so he needs to be good at throwing a rock that will go exactly the distance he wants it to. Second has to be a bit more versatile because he’ll probably have to throw more draw rocks, drawing into the house, but he may also have to do some takeouts. For vice-skip, you need somebody who is capable of takeouts, has good draw weight, can do some of the more tricky shots like angle takeouts. And then for skip, you’re got to be able to make all the shots, understand strategy, know how to call a game. Usually, the skip is a very experienced curler.”

“I got married, dad to a three-month-old daughter, works in a Yahoo discussion group.” Elliot Hicks, 31, is married, dad to a three-month-old daughter, works in a Yahoo discussion group. “My parents married, dad to a three-month-old daughter, works in a Yahoo discussion group.”

“Your club is based in Escondido. Normally, I have no objection to the skip’s duties at this time. “Your club is based in Escondido. Normally, I have no objection to the skip’s duties at this time.”

“Why did you move here? Because of the weather, because of the city. I love it. I love the beaches, I love the water.” Hicks says. “I love it. I love the beaches, I love the water.”

“I’m a graduate of MIT, and went to law school at the same time. I’m a graduate of MIT, and went to law school at the same time.”

“Curling brooms. They’ve become specialized. Their handles can be wood…a lot of them are fiberglass, some are carbon fiber. They have very flat, small, brush heads. They’re designed to create friction and heat up the ice, which causes the stone to slide.”

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Length of reviewed service: 2 hours
Website: www.sandiego.edu/thees/146/pew/spirit.html

From the first, Saint Spyridon seemed to me a blend of traditions. The sky-blue ceiling showed an enormous Christ bursting through the clouds, rendered in a quasi-iconic style, his huge eyes gazing down on the faithful. An equally grand-scale painting of Mary adorned the apse; her midsection obscured by a ring framing the boy Jesus as Theou, God-bearer. These, together with the traditional icons hanging on the walls, harkened to the church’s Eastern roots. But the paintings on the walls illustrating the life of Christ (meeting the woman at the well, answering the scribes as a boy, etc.) were reminiscent of mid-century Western images, almost like expertly rendered holy cards. Even the icons on the screen before the sanctuary seemed tinged with Western sensibilities, something almost Art Deco in the lines and faces.

The blend showed up in the music as well. Throughout, the choir responded to the sung prayers of the priest, often by singing “Kyrie eleison” — Lord, have mercy — as if the plea for mercy were the under-lying form of every petition. But while the priest’s prayers sounded characteristically Eastern — the intervals and intonation — the choir’s responses seemed more Western, almost Baroque in their harmonies, now cheerful, now solemn, now grand.

More blending — or at least, more influence — in the Entrance, I caught echoes of the Jewish procession of the Torah. As the choir sang, the priest and servers descended through a door in the screen and processed through the congregation. The servers carried candles; the priest bore the Scriptures aloft. But not simply echoes; later in the liturgy, after this veneration of the word, a second procession, this time of the vessels holding the elements for Communion, hidden under white veils trimmed with gold. (The veils echoed the garments of the priest and servers.) This time, two servers bore lamps, and two others carried vases topped with six-winged seraphim, while a man, walking backward and bowing, continually incensed the elements.

Throughout, the liturgy engaged the senses, often several at a time. The thrum was hung with bells, so that each wave sounded a muted single as it sent a puff of white smoke drifting heavenward. Sweet smoke filled the air, giving weight to the yellow light pouring through the southern window, making halos around the lamps hung before the screen. And sense aided intellect — when Father Scordalakis switched from reading to singing at the end of the Gospel, the words gained force and import: “And as he cried out these things, he said, ‘He who has ears to hear, let him hear!’” (So much was sung that it was surprising to hear the congregation unite in plain speech for the Creed and the prayer before Communion: “How shall I, who am unworthy, enter into the splendor of your saints? If I dare to enter the bridal chamber, my clothing will accuse me, since it is not a wedding garment; and being bound up, I shall be cast out by the angels. In Your love, Lord, cleanse my soul and save me.”)

As the congregation came forward, a second priest joined Father Scordalakis, and the two dipped spoons into chalices and placed Communion in the mouths of the congregation. Several small children were hesitant to receive, and the priest gently coaxed them to open up before parents dabbed their mouths with the red cloth below the cup. After receiving, most congregants took cubes of bread from bowls held by the servers before returning to their seats.

The liturgy included two additional rites. First, a memorial, offered before the icon of Christ — the savior. The priests and servers gathered around a mound of wheat shrouded in white sugar. A sung dialogue of prayers ensued — first one priest, then the other, then the chantier, then the second chantier.

And finally, the blessing of the five loaves, provided by the congregation and offered before the icon of Mary, imploring her intercession. Father Andrew had recently arrived from Florida and was yet to be joined by his family. “You honor me with the greatest gift you could have given me,” he said, “and that is the gift of prayer; I ask you now to join me in prayer for the health and well-being of my family.” Lifting one of the loaves, he sang, “Bless, O Lord, these loaves, and all those who partake of them, and give them all health of body and soul.”

What happens when we die?

“For those who believe” answered Scordalakis. “They go to be in the presence of God.”

— Matthew Lickona

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Best Buys  
-EVE KELLY  

Everyone’s got skeletons in the closet. Some people’s rattle more than others. Mine’s pretty quiet, but it’s there, literally in the closet: piles and piles of photographs, still in those multi-pocket envelopes you get from the developer. We’re good about recording significant moments on film here at Chez Kelly. And we get our stuff developed the old-fashioned way — no digital shots run off on a printer for us. But I’ve been married ten years, and even my wedding shots are in a proper album. The click of the camera has become a prick to my conscience, and I’m going to do something about it before the year’s out.

Gena Barney of Cool Scrapbook Stuff in Poway (858-679-9100; www.coolscrapbookstuff.com) was there for me. “Scrapbooking is basically putting photos together in an album and then labeling them,” she said. “That’s the most important thing. Telling who it was, where it was, when it was, and why it was. You want it to be such that someone ten years from now who you don’t know can pick up the book and know exactly what was going on.”

As usual, I was late to the party. Scrapbooking started to grow in the late ’80s through Creative Memories, which is a home-based business like Amway or Mary Kay. But it was in the early ’90s that it started to pick up commercially. “I think it’s popular because it has to do with your family. People treasure those memories about their kids, their life with their spouse, and the trips they’ve taken. Also, it’s a wholesome activity. There’s no real complaint to make against scrapbooks, other than spending too much money. It’s not immoral or illegal, and everybody’s doing it now. We have teens, grandmothers, and great-grandmothers come in. We have male customers from their 20s to their 60s. The area high schools are having the kids scrapbook their lives for their senior project.”

(Cool Scrapbook Stuff holds marathon crop sessions that run late into the night. Some people show up and scrap nonstop; some people stop by after work, chatting and scrapping, comparing their efforts, trading tips and advice. “It’s the modern-day quilting bee,” Barney said. There are even scrapbooking cruises.)

And there is a scrapbook for every sort of scrapbooker. “Some people are not going to scrapbook every event in their life. But maybe they do a Christmas book, and every year, they add the year’s Christmas photos. Then they pull it out at Christmas and use it as a coffee table book for the holidays. Some people see scrapbooking as an overwhelming task, but something like this might be more manageable.”

Cool Scrapbook Stuff offers a wide variety of classes, catering to various levels of skill and/or commitment. I liked the sound of Scrapbooking 101. “It’s broken into two parts. The first is a lecture in which the teacher talks about terms. What does acid-free mean? Or lignin-free? What does it mean to be archival-safe?”

Well, what else it means? When you scrapbook, you want your products to have a neutral pH, so that they don’t yellow over time. Newspaper is very acidic — that’s why it yellows. Lignin is a by-product of the paper-making process that can also yellow your pictures over time.

After the lecture, the teacher shifts into doing mode. Instead of just telling you about adhesives or trimmers, the teacher lets you try some out. With adhesives, there are hundreds on the market. Removable. Permanent. The basic glue stick to the high-tech Cheetah, which not only dispenses little glue dots in four-inch-wide patterns. To buy 100 adhesives and try them all for yourself would be expensive. Same with trimmers — trimmers cut paper in a straight line. Doing that with scissors is a myth.

Continued Barney, “We want you to work with the teacher and walk out with something completed. The one thing that it’s critical for you to bring is four to six photos of one event. We’ll help you choose one picture, leave another out, crop one a little bit — things like that. A more advanced scrapbooker might sign up for something like the recent class for the Bohemia Babe book ($28). “That was based on a line of products from a company called My Mind’s Eye. It’s an interactive book with accessories. ‘Interactive’ means there might be a pocket in it that the reader pulls out or a foldaway page with some sort of closure. ‘Accessories’ means that the Bohemia line includes paper, transparency, die cuts, and all that much and coordinate. Everyone who came to the class got a kit, and they followed the teacher, step by step, to create the book. They learned techniques such as how to distress paper and altering paper. Distressing might mean inking the edge to give a sheet a darker look or roughing up the edge. Altering might mean painting, adding paper mâché, or collage and decoupage.”

Upcoming classes at Cool Scrapbook Stuff include Scrapbooking 101 (December 9, $12) and I Love That Book (December 16, $22). The latter is a 4” book, like Bohemia, but a little easier. You learn painting and distressing techniques, as well as how to sand off letters and use three-dimensional products.

The price for all this memory making looked pretty flexible as with most hobbies, you can spend a little or a lot. “There are books for as little as $10 or as much as $75. Some books are just two pieces of very dense cardboard with paper fasteners.”

Trimmers occupy a similar price range. “We recommend a mid-range trimmer at $25. Pens run $3 each, or you can buy a set of double-ended Bics in 48 colors for $12.50.”

Other sources for scrapbook supplies and classes (call for schedules and prices): Scrapbook Your Life, Sports Arena, 619-298-7871; Memories in Making, Inc., La Mesa, 619-589-4686; and Santee, 619-562-8946; Scrapbook Sensation, Alpine, 619-445-5963; Ever After, Carlsbad, 760-433-9313.

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These Video Deals will make even these ghosts of christmas past grin!

These Bass Deals are blowing away these ELFS
I can’t crash backstage parties at concerts. I’m intimidated by the six-foot guys with no necks, their yellow windbreakers, their crackling walkie-talkies. They see through every story I tell in an attempt to BS my way backstage.

When my favorite ’80s band, Bow Wow Wow, came to town years ago, I was determined to get backstage. I talked to their tour manager and made an appointment to interview the band.

I met the band in the late afternoon. Singer Anabella Lwin was worried that she didn’t have any purple shoe polish. She said she wouldn’t have time to get any before the show, and I volunteered to get it for her. I drove around to every shoe place I could find. Some were closed for the day; others didn’t have purple. When one confused shop owner asked why I needed purple polish, I said, “A singer in town needs it.” Because the guy looked to be in his 70s, I was shocked when he asked, “Prince?”

After an hour, I called everyone I knew. One of my friends had seen shoe polish at Rite Aid. It would be the last place I checked before giving up. They had purple.

I rushed back to the venue, and when Anabella arrived, I handed her the shoe polish. She thanked me and tried to give me money, which I refused. Nicole, the tour manager, gave me a music book as a gift. As I enjoyed the show, I was sure I’d be ushered backstage after the performance. I was wrong.

When Bow Wow Wow came to town to play the House of Blues this November, I doubted I’d make it backstage. I tried to get backstage at the Ted Nugent show there, even got the opening band’s tour manager to put me on his guest list, but it was to no avail.

I contacted Nicole, who remembered the shoe polish, and she told me I could hang backstage with them after the show. The concert was great. The set was short — they were opening for Dramarama — but they did their hits (“I Want Candy,” “Do You Wanna Hold Me?” “Go Wild in the Country”).

Usually you’re bummed when concerts end, but I was stoked. I’d be hanging backstage with Anabella. You see, growing up, my friends had posters of Farrah Fawcett on their walls — I had pictures of Anabella. When MTV went on the air, my favorite video was the one with Anabella dancing around on a beach. I was thrilled to discover that we were about the same age, which gave me the misguided belief that if I ever met her, I’d have a shot.

I watched Anabella exit stage left and followed by exiting audience right. Should I have brought flowers? Nah, that’s going overboard. I had another idea. I went to the merchandise booth and bought one of her shirts, which I hung out of my back pocket.

As I approached the backstage door, I could see the security guard tense up. He was ready for trouble. I had the backstage pass stuck to my leather jacket, and just as he lifted his arm for what I thought would be a left hook, I pointed to the pass. I was being paranoid. He was opening the door for me. I walked a few steps, made a sharp turn, and was backstage. Nicole and I hugged, and she introduced me to Anabella. I reminded her of the purple shoe polish, milking it again. She thanked me, and I said, “I never saw what you used it for.” She told me that she never had time to apply it.
to her shoes. We made small talk, and I tried not to gush over her like the hardcore fan I am. She lifted a big bag, and I asked her if she needed help with it. She didn't. I mentioned the song "C30, C60, C90." It was written about the record industry and how many beloved tape-recording albums would hurt record sales. In concert, she changed the lyrics, and I said, "I do too. Well, except for the Paris album," a CD by their former manager, Malcolm McLaren. He laughed and told me how long it took to make that record. We talked music for about 15 minutes, and I could see Anabella looking at me from the corner of my eye. Was she wondering why I wasn't talking to her anymore? My ego wanted to believe this, but she was probably wondering who I was — one of the few people back here with her band mates.

I approached her and asked if the blue wig she wore to start the show was distracting. She looked puzzled by the question. I said, "I saw you move it once, like it was about to fall off." She laughed and said, "You noticed that, did you?" I asked her why the band never played "Cast Iron Arm" live, and she told me that song was one of their early demos. One of the opening bands came backstage wanting pictures with her, and I went to talk to their guitarist. He told me he also plays in the band Common Sense. I heard someone remind Anabella of a previous time they had met. She didn't remember. I told her that Saturday Night Live did a skit once where Paul Simon remembered every one that had ever met him after a show, and he described the clothes they wore at the time. But he didn't recognize Garfunkel when he walked in. She looked to her friend and said, "He has a story about everything." I wasn't sure if that was a compliment or not.

Leigh called me over to the refrigerator and offered me a Heineken. As we talked, I noticed Anabella was getting ready to leave with a few of her friends. I asked if she was still with the photographer. She looked a bit shocked, and I said I had heard her on a radio show years ago talking about him. She said, "No. We were engaged. He's married to someone else now. And has kids. I still don't, though."

My mind raced. She was no longer engaged! I should make a move. She introduced me to one of the ladies with her. She seemed shy. They were about to go out for something to eat. I thought about recommending a place or asking them if they would like to join me for a bite to eat. I could hear Dramarama on stage, and a big guy, Anabella's hairstylist, was ranting about President Bush. It was difficult to hear what they were talking about. I decided I'd just say goodbye. I figured, better to leave before being asked to leave. I was hoping Anabella would ask me to stay longer or to join them. She didn't.

My ego convinced me that we'd gone out together if she didn't have friends with her. My friends convinced me, when I tell this story in the future, and I will, to make up a spicer ending.

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Life’s Surprises

by Barbarella

People always overdo the matter when they attempt deception.
— Charles Dudley Warner

If you can boze, please give me advice. I am sinking

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idea of her husband’s grief over being forgotten had left David’s mother in a perpetual state of hand-wringing.

Meanwhile, Robert was distracted by the one task Ency had allowed him, which was to hire a professional photographer to take family portraits. As far as Robert knew, his mother would be escorted to the island by his brother’s family for the historic documentation, after which they would all stay for a late lunch in honor of the birthday boy.

From 30 to 100, landmark birthdays seem to be the catalyst for introspection and reflection. November 2006 not only marks 70 years of Robert’s life, it also signifies 50 years since he escaped his home country during the Hungarian Revolution. On the day of the surprise, even though he was distracted with the arrival of his mother and brother and preoccupied with the family portraits, Robert was less boisterous than usual. In a voice of quiet disappointment, he pointed out that one of his closest friends had not remembered to call. We were all eager to get him to the party, where we wanted to have her mother’s kólovár rakott kaposztá (a Hungarian casserole dish containing sausage, eggs, cabbage, rice, and sour cream) for dinner that evening.

It is a testament to how much you love someone when your reaction to his joy is comparable to his firsthand experience. Robert, a man known for being loquacious, was stunned into silence as he entered the Beach Plum Inn and recognized the many faces gathered, as their multi-accented voices shouted, “Surprise!” Ency, her face radiant, followed her husband as, through a choked voice, she greeted his friends.

We had a full day to reminiscence about the party, to rehearse the speeches that had inspired both laughter and tears, before the unleashing of one final birthday bombshell Ency had planned for Monday night. Monday morning, Robert packed up his birthday cards to make way for his first Christmas card he’d already received. The house was quiet, and David’s sister, Michelle, announced that since it was her last night before heading home to Seattle, she wanted to have her mother’s kolovár rakott kaposztá (a Hungarian casserole dish containing sausage, eggs, cabbage, rice, and sour cream) for dinner that evening.

David, Michelle, and I went into town on the pretense of shopping. But the true nature of our secret mission was to collect Gabi — Robert’s childhood friend from Hungary — from the ferry and bring him home for dinner. Fifty years ago, when Robert immigrated to America, Gabi had fled to France.

The energy was high on the ride home. Michelle, David, and I were trying to imagine what Robert’s reaction might be when we unloaded the unexpected cargo we’d acquired while “shopping.” Gabi, a pleasant gentleman in a small fedora and blue wool coat, had recently flown to New York (to visit his brother) from where he’d been staying in Japan and made the ten-hour trip to the island in order to spend one evening with his old friend before heading back to the city for work, and then returning home to Paris a few days later.

Gabi insisted on waiting in the car for a minute, so as to wander in naturally and ask to use the restroom as if he were a stranger passing by. When we walked into the dining room, it was Ency’s turn to be puzzled. She held a camera in her hand and tried to catch my attention. I could read in her distraught face that she thought Gabi hadn’t made it. But 30 seconds later, there was a knock at the sliding glass door.

When Robert glanced up, it was as if a beam of sunshine had sliced through the night sky and fell upon his face. Far from speechless this time, he let loose a torrent of Hungarian words, spoken in a buoyant and booming voice as he bounded across the room to embrace his dear friend.

Once dessert was on the table, Robert looked back and forth from his childhood friend to his wife of 42 years. Shaking his head, an enormous smile on his face, Robert rested his glistening eyes on the woman who had surreptitiously orchestrated these magical moments for him and said, “Thank you.”
as two agents questioned a group of four Hispanics. A nearby sign warned of “sewerage contaminated water,” rip tides, and no lifeguards. Along the beach to the north a man on horseback ambled his way through a Sunday afternoon.

The Border Patrol agent was talking to a pretty, dark-haired woman sitting cross-legged on a stone wall. On either side of him two other agents nodded their heads in agreement or added a word or two of clarification, but they never disagreed. I stood nearby.

“‘We have no leadership at the top,’” the Border Patrol agent said. “‘From the president on down, it’s a vacuum. Politicians are afraid of the Latino vote. Eighty-eight percent of the American people want something done about immigration, and they won’t do it.’ He explained that President Bush’s plan to deal with illegal immigration, as well as the Senate and House plans, were too soft and would only make more problems. “‘They should militarize the whole border.’ This was a phrase he said several times, along with ‘We have no leadership at the top.’”
The officers didn’t realize the young woman was Olivia Schoeller, Washington bureau chief for the Berliner Zeitung. She had spent many years in the United States, having attended Bard College in the 1980s, and her accent was slight. Nor did they know that I was a reporter.

I’d come to Border Field State Park an hour earlier and wandered around talking to people. Only one Border Patrol agent had been in evidence, sitting in his jeep by the wall and near the pavilion so he could watch the park and beach at the same time. Then I had driven away. On my way out along the dirt road, four Border Patrol vehicles had sped past me, heading toward the beach. So I had turned around to follow them.

The agent said that when only one officer was on duty at the park, he sometimes had to drive down the hill to the beach. When this happened, “illegals” jumped the fence and hid in the men’s bathroom. After a while, they would come out and mingle with people in the park. Consequently, every hour or so “a bunch of us come down here to check everyone’s ID.”

The agent continued to give his view of the situation to Olivia as his companions nodded in agreement. “They say we have 12 million undocumented aliens in this country. We think it’s more like 20 million. They are bankrupting the states, draining the social services. They get welfare and free health care. They don’t work. They don’t contribute to the economy. They don’t support our country or have our values. They’re not Americans, even when they have citizenship. You see them at rallies waving Mexican flags. Amnesty was a terrible idea. These people who come over here each eventually bring over five family members. In ten years there will be 75 million of them, more than one quarter of the country. We must stop this right now. We all think that.”

He went on to praise Operation Wetback, which he said President Truman had established in 1950. Actually, it began under President Eisenhower in 1954, when the Border Patrol, aided by municipal, county, state, and federal authorities swept through agricultural areas and Hispanic neighborhoods with a goal of 1000 arrests a day. Those detained were transported far into Mexico before being freed; many were put aboard ships that took them from Port Isabel, Texas, to Veracruz. After a year, the Immigration and Naturalization Service claimed that 1.3 million illegal aliens had left the country, with half going voluntarily. Other sources put the number from less than a million to as high as 3.8 million. After opponents in the U.S. and Mexico protested “police state” tactics, Operation Wetback ended. Perhaps the INS ran out of money, or perhaps it was the outcry that arose when a few immigrants jumped ship and drowned. Stories differ. Whatever the cause, the agent said that many in the Border Patrol want to revive Operation Wetback. A Google search finds a similar call among a variety of white chauvinists and anti-immigration groups.

“What is a ‘wetback’?” asked Olivia.

The Border Patrol officer’s misinformation included more than the dates for Operation Wetback. The Pew Hispanic Research Center has shown that undocumented immigrants,
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Usually, gallon bottles of water are placed in blue plastic barrels topped with a blue flag at the end of a 30-foot pole or with a flashing red light like those used on bikes.

about 56 percent coming from Mexico, make up 4.9 percent of the civilian labor force, or 7.2 million workers. Immigrants — legal and illegal — send $18 billion a year back to Mexico, making it the country’s second largest source of income after its oil industry. Huge amounts of money are also sent to El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and the Caribbean. In addition, illegal immigrants contribute about $7 billion a year in Social Security payments, and most will never see a penny in return. Billions more are withheld from their paychecks in taxes.

Nearly all 7.2 million workers use fraudulent Social Security numbers, which is a reason for the high incidence of identity theft each year: 10 million cases, according to the Federal Trade Commission. Yearly, the Social Security Administration receives eight to nine million earning reports from the IRS filed under names that don’t match the Social Security numbers, according to the New York Times. The true owner of a number doesn’t benefit, and the IRS has issued no penalties for mismatched numbers, though it is a felony to use a Social Security number falsely.

“The planners envision continuing the series of award-winning Pointe Resort Communities,” says Douglas Massey, a Princeton sociology professor, told the Times.

Federal Trade Commission found in the immigration issue. Testifying before

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“IT’s basically a subsidy from migrant workers to the aggregate of American taxpayers,” immigration rates after 1990 showed “no consistent link between surging growth in immigration and declines in employment for Americans.”

Many see hypocrisy in the immigration issue. Testifying before
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the House Subcommittee on International Terrorism and Nonproliferation in San Diego on July 5, Los Angeles Sheriff Leroy Baca said the American economy was "largely supported by guest-worker-type labor." To make it a felony to cross the border illegally "would double to triple the cost of everything we eat." The industries hiring the most illegal immigrants are agriculture, construction, and food services. The expense of paying for illegal immigration is the expense of keeping down the cost of food. In late September, the Republican senator from Idaho, Larry Craig, complained that tightening the border hurts growers in the West. "Fruit is not being picked; vegetables are not being harvested," he told the Times. And so food prices will rise.

But the Border Patrol agent's arguments weren't vulnerable to logic, because everything arose from his single claim: "They're horrible people."

My visit to Border Field State Park came at the end of a ten-day period of looking into border issues, and everything I learned became filtered in memory through the agent's statement. Clearly, his beliefs weren't those of the entire Border Patrol, though it was distressing to see the agreement of the other two agents. What it emphasized for me was the complexity and divisiveness of the issue.

A figure published in the Los Angeles Times several years ago indicated that Hispanics made up 40 percent of the Border Patrol. I expect many would dispute the officer's claim: "They're horrible people." I wanted to learn about a group called Border Angels that, among other things, sets out water in the desert areas of the 66-mile San Diego sector. Another group, Water Station, takes care of 340 water stations in the El Centro sector, while the group Humane Border sees to more than 80 water stations in Arizona. Usually, gallon bottles of water are placed in blue plastic barrels topped with a blue flag at the end of a 30-foot pole or with a flashing red light like those used on bikes. Beginning in January 2002, the Border Angels also set up cold-weather stations in Cleveland National Forest in East County, with blankets, sleeping bags, clothing, food, and water. The water stations tend to be along power lines or paths that migrants have taken in the past. In Imperial Valley about 40 are located at the edge of the desert along Route 98 between Calexico and Interstate 8.
Placing water stations in the desert to help migrants became an issue after the Border Patrol's Operation Hold the Line in El Paso in 1993 and Operation Gatekeeper in San Diego in October 1994. In the early '90s San Diego and El Paso had 70 percent of arrests along the 1952-mile southwest border, peaking at 800,000 in 1992. In Operation Gatekeeper, 14 miles of corrugated-steel panels were welded into a nearly continuous fence between the beach and Otay Mesa, supplemented in some areas by a bollard fence — thick concrete poles five inches apart — and a high steel fence bent back toward Mexico at the top to keep people from climbing over. In addition to the fencing, stadium lights were erected and motion-detecting sensors set in the ground. More Border Patrol agents were hired. In the San Diego sector, between 1994 and 1998, the number of agents increased from 1000 to 2200. Then the number was allowed to fall below 1400. Now it has increased again to about 1500, with more coming. President Bush promises to add 6000 agents by 2008. Of the 11,000 existing Border Patrol agents, 89 percent work along the U.S.-Mexican border. Agents in the San Diego sector are supplemented by about 500 National Guardsmen — 1000 are promised — who are meant to supply support services. At this date 74.8 miles of fence exists along the southern border. House Bill 4437, passed in December 2005, calls for 700 miles of new fencing, while a Senate proposal approved in May calls for 370.

The first year of Operation Gatekeeper saw 524,231 apprehensions in the San Diego sector. Five years later the number had dropped to 182,267. Fiscal year 2005 had 126,913 apprehensions. But the decrease in the San Diego and El Paso sectors didn't mean fewer illegal crossings, only that migrants were crossing elsewhere. The nine sectors of the southwest border in 1999 had a combined 1.5 million apprehensions, an increase of 20 percent over the first year of Gatekeeper, while in 2000 there were 1.64 million.

Nor is it certain how many people are involved, since it is hard to tell how many cross successfully or how many cross again after being deported. A study by Wayne A. Cornelius, director of the Center for Comparative Immigration Studies at the University of California, San Diego, showed that 92 percent of Mexicans trying to enter the U.S. illegally eventually succeed, while Sheriff Baca testified before the House committee that 73 percent of the “deported alien criminals” from Los Angeles come back a second time and that “well over 50 percent” return a third time. A computerized fingerprinting system of all ten digits called IDENT was introduced in the mid-1990s but isn’t always used.

When access to the U.S. through urban areas was made difficult by Border Patrol operations in the mid-'90s, migrants began crossing through more dangerous terrain, which in San Diego meant East County. One exposure death occurred in the county in 1994, 4 in '95, 27 in '96, and 29 in 1999. The El Centro sec-
tor had similar increases, while the Tucson sector — the most dangerous — had ten times the number. And these numbers have risen. Fiscal year 2005 saw 473 migrant deaths, the highest so far, with 216 within the Tucson sector. Between October 1, 2005, and the beginning of August 2006 about 350 have died, about a quarter from heat exposure and slightly more than a third from drowning and in motor vehicle incidents. These numbers have risen even though the Patrol has beefed up its efforts to help migrants in trouble. The Border Patrol’s figures indicate a record of 2570 migrant rescues in fiscal year 2005, nearly double the number of 2004.

Since the start of Operation Gatekeeper, the official death count is slightly over 4000. Human-rights workers say the number is closer to 11,000, that hundreds of bodies in the desert have never been found though the Border Patrol and human-rights volunteers regularly search the desert. More than half of recorded fatalities occur in Arizona, and about half of those die of heat exposure. Others might die in the desert from heat attacks, snakebites, accidents, a variety of causes that would never have occurred if the victims hadn’t been trying to cross the desert.

Recently, the number of deaths from heat exposure has decreased as more agents are stationed along the border. But traffic fatalities involving migrants have more than doubled since 2003 as coyotes, or polleros — the guides leading migrants across the border — try other methods. On August 7, nine migrants died in a crash in the Yuma sector when the driver of a Chevrolet Suburban — in which 21 Mexicans were “stacked like cordwood” — lost control after crossing a Border Patrol spike strip at high speed. This year the number killed in traffic accidents during illegal crossings is about 50.

My interest in an issue so polarized was to reduce my focus to a single drink of water, the water needed to keep a person from dying in the desert. Yet even that single drink isn’t free from politics, since volunteer border-protection groups such as the Minutemen have called putting out water aiding and abetting a criminal activity. Officially, the Border Patrol permits the water stations, although for me such statements are now filtered through the unofficial claim: “They’re horrible people.”

The head of Border Angels is Enrique Morones, a 49-year-old radio talk-show host and former Padres executive who was born in San Diego. His parents moved here from Mexico in 1954.

When I told my friend Rex, a part-time radio journalist, that I
wanted to talk to Enrique, he mildly cautioned me, “He’s a walking sound bite,” meaning I’d hear nothing that Enrique hadn’t said to a thousand others. Duly warned, I called Enrique, who was in Mexico City talking with the Mexican foreign minister about human-rights issues, and we agreed to meet at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday morning, July 8, downtown at Pantoja Park on G Street, then we would go out and “put water in the canyons.” I had no idea what this meant. Later, when I told Enrique of my friend’s remark, he said, “We have to have sound bites just like the Republicans have.”

On Saturday, Enrique was in a rush to meet a small group at the University of San Diego who wanted to accompany us. I left my rental car at his condo and climbed into a dark blue Ford Explorer decorated inside and out with bumper stickers attacking the war and racism and an Aztlan bumper sticker supporting Chicano nationalism. Enrique described that particular sticker as a joke and said he didn’t support the return of land lost in the Mexican defeat of 1848. This is political teasing. He flaunts the bumper sticker because it upsets the Minutemen, among others. Otherwise, the SUV serves as his office and is crammed with papers, Border Angel T-shirts, flyers, disposable cameras, health bar wrappers, and a Bible. “I think I lost my address book,” he said. “I thought it was under my seat.”

Enrique is a big man with graying black hair, a “former athlete with two blown knees” cresting 225 pounds who speaks of the need to get back in shape. He has a squarish, soft face, dark eyes with a yellow-
ish tint, and a mealsack head so he looks up at you from under his eyebrows and then looks away. He ran track and cross-country at USD, where he studied international marketing, then transferred to San Diego State, from which he graduated in 1979. Afterward he played soccer and football in local leagues and ran for the San Diego Track Club. He received an M.A. degree in executive leadership from USD in 2002.

Enrique never gives a short answer. Articulate and fast-talking, he presented me with a steady wall of sound. His sentences were like extended press releases, many quoted verbatim from his website, and most devoid of personal commentary, though he is proud of the important people he has met and what he has done. Behind the rapid-fire talk, he struck me as a shy man who used his work to obscure his shyness, as if he would like to change himself from a human being, beset by frailty and difficulty, into a sort of civic statue. On the driver’s visor was a photograph of his ex-girlfriend, Stephanie, who is a missionary in Latin America. They broke up over two years ago, but Enrique has been trying to get her back. “The hardest thing,” he said, “is not to spread myself too thin. That’s what my doctor has told me and my girlfriend too. I try to do too many things. But so many things are blossoming it’s hard to stop and arrange them properly. I expect I need to focus more. It’s such a big issue I can get distracted by different parts. All the time something comes up. I meant to work on the plane and ended up talking to the person next to me, telling him about what I’m doing and the Border Angels. But I don’t believe in coincidences. There’s nothing that doesn’t
happen for a reason.”

Enrique began bringing water and food to migrants in San Diego’s North County with a church group in the mid-1980s. This work expanded after the advent of Operation Gatekeeper to taking water into the deserts and mountains of East County. Then in 2001 he founded Border Angels as a nonprofit organization. A deeply religious man — “I did the Catholic school route the whole way” — Enrique takes his motto and mantra from Matthew 25:35, “When I was hungry, who gave me to eat? when I was thirsty, who gave me to drink?” More than 1200 volunteers have joined Border Angels in supplying the water stations and taking water into the canyons. Enrique uses these trips to educate people about the fact that thousands are dying in their attempts to cross the border. His job as a human-rights worker is not just to help the sick and suffering but to educate others as to the plight of those who got the water, and they’ve told me so.”

He showed me appreciative letters from people who came upon Desert Angels water stations.

“The Border Patrol calls Operation Gatekeeper a success. I would like you to ask the mothers of the people who have died crossing the desert and see if they call it a success.”

But Enrique’s larger work is as a human-rights advocate, and one of his greatest teachers was Roberto Martinez, who from 1982 until his retirement in 2002 was director of the Border Project for the American Friends Service. Enrique called Martinez his mentor, adding, “He’s the man!”

For 30 years Martinez hammered the Border Patrol with allegations of improper detentions and use of excessive force as he defended the rights of migrants. He became for the Border Patrol what Enrique would like to become: a constant pain in the neck. Though Martinez started out as an industrial engineer with a degree from Grossmont College, his interest in human rights led him to accept a job in the early ’70s with a community-service agency in Logan Heights. That interest had taken seed years earlier ironically because of Operation Wetback, so highly praised by Border Patrol agents. Despite being a fifth-generation U.S. citizen, Martinez was often targeted during sweeps of Hispanics in 1954. “When I was walking home from high school,” he told me, “the police or Border Patrol would pick me up and try to send me to Mexico.”

His sense of personal injury grew into a sense of social indigna-
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tion, and by the 1970s he was organizing against police and Ku Klux Klan violence. “I couldn’t remain quiet. I couldn’t just stand there while the police and Border Patrol were violent. No one taught me anything. It was on-the-job training.”

Operation Gatekeeper brought Enrique and Martinez together in 1995. “The wall is responsible for pushing migrants into dangerous areas,” Martinez said. “Now they want a triple wall from the ocean to Otay Mesa. The walls are largely symbolic, since migrants can go around them, but they’ve led to many deaths. I believe two or three people die every day trying to cross the border. Instead of 4000, it could easily be 11,000 who’ve died in the past 11 years. For every body that’s found, there are two or three that are not found.”

Martinez has worked with Enrique in arranging events at the border, giving talks and offering help in writing grants. “Most of Enrique’s influence comes from setting out the water stations,” he said. “This has motivated him to get involved with civil rights and border rights. Throughout it all, I think he’s maintained his humility. He doesn’t take credit. Putting out water has had a tremendous effect, but the larger effect of Border Angels is to keep the issue out in front and expose the Minutemen and border violence. Enrique is very good at working with young people and involving students. One of his strengths is his eloquence on TV. Enrique can present the issues, and he’s probably on the news two or three times a week.”

Enrique’s professional life developed side by side with his human-rights work. The same year that he met Roberto Martinez, 1995, Enrique was hired by Larry Lucchino to join the San Diego Padres, where he established a department of Hispanic marketing, and in 2000 he was named the Padres’ vice president of International and Hispanic Marketing. In 1996 and 1997, Enrique was president of the San Diego County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. During his tenure, membership increased from 100 to 850 businesses. In 2001 he began work to establish the Casa Mexico Pavilion in Balboa Park. The project was completed in 2003. By then Enrique had a talk show five days a week with the Pacific Spanish network and was involved in a Hispanic marketing venture with several partners.

But in 2001 Larry Lucchino left the Padres to join the Red Sox. Shortly after, Enrique’s department and position were eliminated. Many said he was fired for political activism, but Enrique chooses not to use the term “fired.” He told me he had greatly increased the Hispanic market, and because of this he was notified his position was no longer necessary. He added that Lucchino had invited him to come to Boston, but he chose not to go. The termination of Enrique’s job led to wide protest in the Hispanic community, but he himself has never criticized the Padres. On the other hand, he hasn’t gone to a Padres game since. Enrique’s human-rights work doesn’t always sit well with the business community. When he was establishing Casa Mexico, the approval committee nearly blocked his proposal by presenting a dossier of his political activities. Enrique has also led the opposition to keep San Diego from erecting a statue of former mayor Dobbs and Bill O’Reilly, and other programs.

In 1998 Enrique was the first person to apply for political activism, and governor Pete Wilson because of Wilson’s support for Proposition 187, which, among other things, cut aid to undocumented immigrants, including health care and education. “When I see Pete Wilson,” said Enrique, “the first thing I think of is racism.”

So it was inevitable that Enrique’s business career would suffer from his human rights work, which grew even busier after he left the Padres. Sought out as a speaker for human rights and political gatherings in San Diego, he also began to show up on national television. The Border Angels

“I believe the Minute-men shot four people, killing one, in the areas they were patrolling.”

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for and be granted dual citizenship with Mexico. This led to his founding Mexico’s Border Institute, an advisory group to the Mexican president and part of Mexico’s Institute of Mexico Abroad. In 2000 the Mexican government chose him to monitor the Chiapas gubernatorial election and the presidential election in Mexico City. When I asked whom he supported in the recent presidential election in Mexico, he refused to say, though he told me he’d spoken about human rights and border issues at rallies for all three candidates.

In May of 2005 Enrique founded Gente Unida, a U.S. and Mexican coalition of 65 human-rights groups active in protesting against and interfering with the operations of the Minutemen and other border-protection groups, as well as coming together to demonstrate about a wide range of border issues. “I believe the Minutemen shot four people, killing one, in the areas they were patrolling,” he said. “The investigation is ongoing. The temperature of this country under Bush has allowed those groups to exist. A Minutemen leader told me that thousands of terrorists had crossed the southern border. I told him to name one. He said, ‘I can’t, there have been so many.’” Enrique laughed. I asked if the Minutemen had ever interfered with the water stations. “Oh yeah, absolutely,” he said, “they damage our stuff. They sabotage our stations and threaten me personally.”

Enrique’s activities make a long list, and he seems busy from morning till night, which he says was something his former girlfriend complained about. Impressed by the important people he has met, he is something of a name-dropper, but his vanity seemed tinged with humility. He was flattered that the Mexican foreign minister saw him during a busy election period in July—“He’s the Mexican Con-doleezza Rice,” he said more than once. Yet he always brings the matter back to human rights: it’s wrong that people should die attempting to cross the border.

Enrique’s outrage has led him to a variety of protest. Here he describes one particular death. “Guillermo Martinez Rodriguez was a young man who tried to cross the border last December here in San Diego, because January 5 is the Day of the Epiphany, the day when the three kings bring the gifts to the baby Jesus, and we celebrate that in Mexico more than here. So he was coming over to work a few extra days so he could buy gifts for his two small kids. He jumped one of the fences of Operation Gatekeeper with his brother Augustin and was about to jump the second when he sees the Border Patrol has spotted him. So Augustin runs back and so does Guillermo, except Guillermo didn’t make it, because the agent decided to take out his gun and shoot him in the back, and he killed Guillermo Martinez Rodriguez. And I think that’s enough. We need to go across the country and tell people that we don’t want any more deaths.”

In other places, Enrique talks about the “assassination” of Guillermo Martinez Rodriguez. He organized protests in San Diego in response to the death, and he said it was “one of the sparks” that led him to organize a march on Washington in February when he and a small caravan—joined by more people at various locations—visited 40 cities in 27 days to protest against House Bill 4437 and to
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place 4000 small crosses at the Capital, representing those who died trying to cross the border since the inception of Operation Gatekeeper. In each city there were rallies, speeches, and religious services. Much was said about Guillermo Martinez Rodriguez’s attempt to buy presents for his two small children.

Looking at the articles about Martinez on the Internet, one finds greater complexity. Authorities in San Diego and Tijuana have described him as a coyote. His neighbors have said the same. His mother said he was attempting to reach Fresno to get a job picking fruit. The Border Patrol agent, identified by San Diego homicide investigator Lt. Kevin Rooney as Fausto Campos, claimed that Martinez was throwing rocks at him and that he shot once in self-defense. He thought he had shot Martinez in the arm. But Martinez was shot in the back — one report said the bullet had exited through his neck, another said his chest. Augustin Martinez Rodriguez helped his brother across the fence and took him to Cruz Roja Hospital in Tijuana, where he died the next day. Of the 52 shootings by San Diego Border Patrol agents between the beginning of Gatekeeper and 2003, almost half occurred during rock attacks. In fiscal year 2005, Border Patrol figures state there were 259 “assaults on Federal Agents” in the San Diego Sector.

Of course, it is possible that Guillermo Martinez Rodriguez never threw any rocks. But authorities say he was arrested and deported on at least 12 occasions, though never charged with smuggling migrants. His brother, Augustin, was previously convicted of smuggling migrants and served a jail sentence in the U.S. Augustin denied that he and his brother were smuggling migrants on the night of the shooting.

So on one hand we have Guillermo Martinez Rodriguez with 12 previous deportations and the charge that he was a coyote, and on the other is Enrique’s claim that Martinez was assassinated on his way into the U.S. to buy toys for his children. What disappears here is Guillermo himself. Saint or a sinner, it’s a shame he was killed, just as it is a shame that 473 men and women died crossing the border in 2005. I don’t doubt that Enrique grieves for the ones who die, but they are also useful to him in his cause and he seems to exaggerate the details surrounding a particular death, as perhaps is the case with Guillermo Martinez Rodriguez. Is that common? I’m sure it happens on all sides of the issue, but it can muddy the water.

Enrique told me...
about Martinez the morning we drove to USD to meet with the volunteers, and he told me about other deaths as well. His website gives a long list of the names of people who have died crossing the border. Often I felt slightly irritated by his rhetoric. But I hadn’t as yet had a Border Patrol agent tell me, “They’re horrible people.”

When we drove up to the campus, Enrique spotted a young woman in a short-sleeved blouse and shorts looking nervously at her watch. This was Sister Elizabeth Brinkman, who teaches in the Religious Studies Department at the College of New Rochelle and had been visiting at USD for a week. During the mid-1960s I spent a year working at a college in Kalamazoo run by the Sisters of Saint Joseph, all of whom wore the traditional black habit, so I was surprised by nuns in shorts, even though they were very decorous shorts.

We met up with another car and headed out to North County. Altogether there were three nuns, in shorts two men, and a young female student. Sister Brinkman rode with us. Enrique told us about the shooting of Oscar Abraham Garcia Barrios, 22, by customs and border officers on May 18 on Interstate 5 about 50 yards north of the border, an incident that closed the border for eight and a half hours and created a huge traffic jam. Enrique said he discussed the incident with the Mexican foreign secretary and that the Tijuana police had said on their police radios that the customs agents had shot the wrong man. This, according to news reports, appeared to be mistaken. He didn’t tell us that Oscar Abraham Garcia Barrios was accused of being a smuggler.

The incident began shortly after 3:00 p.m. when someone called the Border Patrol to report seeing four possible illegal immigrants getting into a black Dodge Durango near the Otay Mesa Port of Entry. The Durango was spotted on Route 905, and authorities began following it. When the driver, Garcia, realized this, he sped toward southbound Interstate 5, intending to recross the border at San Ysidro, according to another man in the car, José Adolfo Gonzales Fabéan, 26, who was
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Immigrants tend to entry into the U.S. areas and points of entry illegal immigrants, duties. Both can appear times overlapping have different but some times Homeland Security but the Department of Homeland Security. Customs Enforcement, U.S. Immigration and the authorities. The living in camps on an illegal land. “I don’t know who owned the land. “I don’t know the legality of some of these issues. They just turn a blind eye to migrants living in camps on an owner’s land.” “They” seemed to be the authorities. The Border Patrol and the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, are both part of the Department of Homeland Security but have different but sometimes overlapping duties. Both can apprehend illegal immigrants, but Border Patrol agents are confined to border areas and points of entry into the U.S. Immigrants tend to lump them together under the term "la migra," from the Spanish word migración, or "immigration" or "migration" in English. So uncertainty exists about who is being referred to.

We drove a narrow dirt road to the bottom of the canyon, then turned south, passing under a highway bridge. Among the brush were cacti with blue flowers. An old Toyota was parked by the trees, but I saw no people. Enrique said that often a few migrants chip in to buy an old car, leading sometimes to deportations when they were stopped by police and asked for ID.

We parked and began unloading about half the water. I spoke to Sister Barbara Quinn, director of the Center of Christian Spirituality at the University of San Diego, who had known Enrique for years. “Enrique works out of his deepest values,” she said. She called him “a staunch USD grad.”

Sister Quinn and Sister Brinkman had

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**Signs and symptoms:**
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- Having difficulty sleeping?

If you or someone you know is experiencing any of these symptoms, you may be suffering from Depression.

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but a big game up and down the border. The Patrol says the same thing.

For years the federal government hardly bothered to prosecute employers of illegal migrants, but that has changed in 2006. In 2002 agents of the Department of Homeland Security arrested 25 employers in workplace raids; in the first seven months of 2006 they arrested 445. About 2700 people seized in those raids were deported. Not all are Mexican or Hispanic.

On July 21, ICE agents shut down a Chinese restaurant in Fairfield, Ohio, and arrested its owner, Jing Fei Jiang, charging him with importing illegal Asian workers who were living in the basement of his home.

The nuns had also learned the U.S. military was recruiting young men in Mexico, promising money and a path to citizenship for Mexicans who join up and are sent to fight in Iraq. They questioned the morality of this.

Enrique said, "Because of their economic level, many young Mexicans would never get a visa and so they try to cross illegally. The military offers another way into the U.S."

We walked over a hill carrying gallons of water. Enrique told what he calls "Henny Youngman–type jokes," for instance, that nuns in shorts are a bad habit, which elicited groans. "I don't joke around about the work that I do," he said, "but I joke about other stuff. Sometimes I'll break out laughing in an elevator."

On the other side of the hill an outdoor chapel had been built among the trees and beside a running brook. Pews and tables could accommodate about 50 people, and a pretty, peach-colored altar with green tiles stood in front surrounded by flowers. Enrique said that Mass was held here every Sunday morning. After placing water jugs by the altar, Enrique sat on a pew to tell the others about Border Angels. He sees these as educational opportunities, and it was why the volunteers were there.

"I want to talk about the immigration debate," he said, "framing it from a different point of view, and something that is my passion, which is human rights. As this debate continues two to three people are dying every day. Before Operation Gatekeeper, two to three people would die, maybe, every month. And it's really sad because the people who are dying are Marco Antonio Villasenor, a five-year-old boy, who was asking his father why he wouldn't turn on the light or give him some water or give him some air. And the reason his father didn't respond was because he

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was dead, along with 17 other men in the back of a semi-truck in Victoria, Texas, in 2003. Marco Antonio Villasenor didn’t survive that ride either. Or Victoria Sánchez, a young lady in San Diego who had already crossed, who was being chased by the Border Patrol, although they said they weren’t chasing them. The car tipped over, and Victoria Sánchez, who was 17 years old, died, as did three others. We did a press conference announcing it, and a witness showed up and said the Border Patrol was absolutely chasing them. They could see the car was packed, and people fell out when it tipped over. Like Lucrecia Domínguez, who was coming here because her husband was already here, and she brought two of her three children, Nora, 7 years old, and Jesús, 15. They had come over with a group of people and a smuggler. But she slowed the group down a little bit, and they left her behind in the Arizona desert. Well, she stayed with her two children, and she died in the arms of her 15-year-old son. I cannot imagine being 15 and having my mother die in my arms. So Jesús and his sister wander around, and fortunately the Border Patrol picked them up and deported them back to Mexico. Then Lucrecia’s father said, ‘I want to bury my daughter in Mexico, where they were from.’ He’s told that he’ll never find her because the bodies decompose quickly. The temperature can get up to 127 degrees. When we’re out with the Border Angels, we have cell phones and water and cars waiting for us, but these people who are out there don’t know if they’re going to get attacked by somebody on the Mexican or U.S. side of the border or if they’re going to be bit by a snake or a scorpion, etc. Well, Lucrecia died and her father, Rosario, went out into the Arizona desert, where 52 percent of the deaths are taking place. He finds a body out...
there, but it’s not Lucrecia, and then he finds another body. He finds three bodies before he finds his daughter. And the only reason he was able to recognize her was because of a ring on her left hand, and he had the body sent back to Mexico. So if he found three bodies before he found his own daughter, how many are really out there? We think ten thousand people have died, but whether it’s ten thousand, three thousand, or one, people should not be dying because they’re coming here to do the work that nobody else will do or because they’re trying to improve their economic situation.”

We left the chapel to deliver the rest of the water, driving back along the dirt road. Within the brush and rows of small trees, I saw campsites and clotheslines draped with pants and shirts. The campsites reminded me of the homeless campsites I had seen along the San Diego River near Morena Boulevard, but while those had been surrounded by trash, the migrant campsites were relatively

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“I like to document everything,” he said, adding, “The Oaxacans are the most durable and toughest in crossing the border. They survive better than those who cross used to stay seven or eight months who cross the border. They survive the most durable in crossing everything, “he said, and Enrique took pictures. Enrique’s brothers moved it to the consulate in San Diego. They had left in 25 gallons of water had been left in Spanish. The 25 gallons of water was left in the Border Patrol has the smallest education requirement. Whenever there is a push to hire a large number of agents they results in problems. Roberto Martinez told me the same thing, “They have a very weak something in a few days. He gave them laminated cards from the Mexican consulate in San Diego entitled, in Spanish, “Mexicans: Know your rights.” He also passed out copies of prayers in Spanish. The 25 gallons of water had been left in the sun, and one of the brothers moved it to the shade as several visitors took pictures. Enrique took out a disposable camera and took pictures as well.

He gave them laminated cards from the Mexican consulate in San Diego entitled, in Spanish, “Mexicans: Know your rights.” He also passed out copies of prayers in Spanish. The 25 gallons of water had been left in the sun, and one of the brothers moved it to the shade as several visitors took pictures. Enrique took out a disposable camera and took pictures as well.

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system of weeding out potentially bad agents. There’s not enough supervision and accountability. How many agents have been arrested for smuggling drugs, guns, and people and for accepting bribes? The last four arrests have been supervisors and spokesmen of the Border Patrol."

Two weeks after I spoke to Martinez, on July 28, Border Patrol agent Oscar Antonio Ortiz was sentenced to five years in San Diego after admitting he had smuggled at least 100 illegal immigrants into the country, sometimes hiding them in the back of his Border Patrol truck. In the first eight months of 2006, 25 Customs and Border Patrol workers were arrested on corruption charges, and 8 were convicted. In early July, two Border Patrol supervisors pled guilty to accepting nearly $200,000 to release smugglers and illegal immigrants, and in June two agents who were brothers apparently fled to Mexico while under investigation for smuggling drugs and immigrants. The size of the Border Patrol has tripled in the past ten years. With more than 11,000 personnel, it is the country’s largest law enforcement agency, and it is due to double in size over the next six years. This raises concerns that standards are being lowered. Though 90 percent of the nation’s law enforcement agencies use psychological and polygraph testing in recruiting officers, the Border Patrol does not. Several days later I went to Tijuana with Micaela Saucedo, one of the most active Border Angel volunteers. She had participated in the march on Washington in February. But Micaela, who turned 61 on October 1, has been busy with human-rights issues for over 40 years.

“...I started with César Chávez in 1962,” she said. “I picked oranges and lemons in Delano. We worked in the fields to talk to the workers about the Farm Workers Association. I was born in Guadalajara, but I grew up between San Diego and Tijuana. When I was a kid, the border was just a wire on the ground and we’d walk across it to go shopping. They never asked for our ID or papers. We’d do our shopping and go home. This was in the late ‘50s and through the ‘60s.”

As a young woman Micaela went to nursing school, then worked at White Memorial Hospital in Los Angeles and for Paradise Valley Hospital in National City. Starting in 1982, she worked full time as a volunteer social worker in Tijuana, while still nursing full time at night. This continued until 2000, when “my brain got tired,” and she was hospitalized for depression. “I said, ‘I’ve been helping people and now I have to help myself.’ I had no energy. It takes a lot of energy to fix yourself. And in the hospital I gained 80 pounds because of the medication, and that made me feel even worse.”

But slowly she got better. Three years later, she saw Enrique Morones on the news. “I told myself, ‘One day, when I have my energy,
I will go and join Enrique’s organization.’ And the time came when I went to Chicano Park in Logan Heights where there were 35–40 volunteers. We went to check out the Minute- men and to plan a march in Salcedo. Enrique’s a very humane man, a very honest man, and he really likes to help people. He’s always on the run. When someone calls him, he goes right there, and for his girlfriend this was too much. You do this sort of work, it’s better to stay single. That’s what I tell Enrique. He’s always busy, but he still finds time to put water out every weekend. After Gatekeeper began, there was a lot of business for coyotes and a lot of deaths. They’d cross through Jacumba and Otay Mesa. It could be a long walk, up to 13 days. And it’s a desert. We put out water in Jacumba, Campo, and Ocotillo. We even camped out for a month near Jacumba. Otay Mesa. It could be a long walk, up to 13 days. Deaths. They’d cross through Jacumba and Ocotillo. What is it? It is a desert. We put out water in those places. Enrique also puts out a big box with snacks and jackets. When we see that things have been taken, we replace them. Yes, the water makes a difference. I’ve met people who have gotten water, and they say what a difference it has made. Some people have vandalized the water stations. We don’t know who, but Border Patrol agents told us it was the Minute men. The Border Patrol doesn’t interfere with the water stations. One time they had arrested two people who needed water, and we gave it to them. The Minute men are really bad people. They have no humanity. One time they tried to block an ambulance taking migrants to the hospital. How do the Minutemen have so much money? Who gives it to them? House Bill 4437 would criminalize immigrants, and humanitarians putting out water would be charged with aiding and abetting. We would still put out water. We don’t care what the law says. We’re responding to God’s law, and as a nurse I’ve seen much life and death. In my heart I cannot leave someone dying. I don’t care what the law says. I think the solution is not more walls and to bring in the National Guard. They need a bigger Border Patrol, but they should also give amnesty to people who are already here. But Mexico also has to raise the level of its economy.” A small, attractive woman with dark hair and eyes, Micaela was able to lose weight and get through the depression with the help of a doctor in Tijuana who put her on a strict diet. She retired from nursing but has put more time into her human rights work with help from her two sons, both corrections officers, who pay her car insurance and help with rent. Modest and unassuming, it would be easy to overlook Micaela. But she exudes sympathy and interest without seeming nosy or pushy. She gives the impression of being someone to whom one can tell everything. I saw her begin conversations with total strangers with a gentleness that made it seem she had known them for years.

We drove to Tijuana.
in her older-model Saturn. A dark hole and protruding wires indicated where the radio used to be. Someone had broken into the car when she left it parked on the street in Tijuana. “My fault!” she said. “I should never have left it there.”

I asked Micaela what she had done as a volunteer social worker in Tijuana.

“I used to work close to the government, to the mayor’s office. The migrants in Tijuana had no money to pay rent, and so we saw to it that the government got land for the homeless.”

She said she would study the city budget and learn what amount was available to help people. Then she would go lobby the mayor.

“Some communities needed light, water, pavement. We took a list to the government and the government provided. I also used to teach the girls in prison in Tijuana how to cut hair. These were women who had been arrested for transporting drugs — *mulas.* Some had to stay in jail from five to ten years before their trial. So I would help getting them to trial. I taught hair-cutting, other volunteers taught sewing.33

She showed me a snapshot of herself surrounded by a half-dozen hefty women who had been her students. When she first started teaching the women to cut hair, men and women were housed together, so she worked to get the government to open a separate prison for the women.

When I was 240 pounds heavier I couldn’t even walk up stairs without getting short of breath. Now I’m running, crewing, and playing golf. I just wish I could play as good as I look!”

— Kelly Valencia, RN (Nurse)
from Tijuana legally every day. In fiscal year 2004 there was an average of 660,000 daily crossings along the entire southern border. In addition, an average of 12,338 trucks cross each day, of which only a tiny proportion can be searched.

As we moved into the city, the temperature seemed to increase ten degrees. I’m always struck by how many risky shortcuts poverty entails. An outlet on the side of a building had at least 20 wires going into it. Micaela spoke of having bought a new apartment in a Tijuana apartment complex that quickly began to fall apart because the contractor used cheap concrete. Building and electrical inspections that we take for granted in the States are often a luxury here. The streets were crowded, and the traffic had a jittery quality, as if the local gasoline had been spiked with caffeine.

On the way to the beach we took a closer look at the fence: rusted corrugated metal sheets originally used by the U.S. military as temporary landing strips. Enrique told me they were used during Operation Desert Storm, New York Times reporters have dined from Tijuana legally every day. In fiscal year 2004 there was an average of 660,000 daily crossings along the entire southern border. In addition, an average of 12,338 trucks cross each day, of which only a tiny proportion can be searched.

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Ten minutes later we arrived at the hill above the beach and parked by the Tijuana bullring. In the backseat Micaela had a box of 15 small brown paper bags, each containing a ham and cheese sandwich, an orange or apple, and a can of orange juice. She gets the bread cheaply at a Chula Vista bakery near home and told me that each time she crosses the border, she brings these bags to give to hungry migrants. She said this casually, as if it was perfectly natural, but the expense and time involved must be considerable.

Through the fence, Border Field State Park was deserted, since it is only open on the weekend, but the beach on the Tijuana side was crowded and streets were busy. Above the beach was a small square where people can admire the ocean view. Beneath it were restrooms and an outdoor shower. Six men sat on a bench, and Micaela said they were waiting to cross. Several had been washing clothes and hanging them on branches to dry. She went to talk to them, taking six lunch bags with her. She asked the men if they had eaten and then gave each a bag. Nearby was a truncated obelisk pressed against the fence, a monument erected in 1851 to commemorate the 1848 treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, by which Mexico lost half its territory. “It used to be real nice here,” said Micaela. “People brought gro-
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Conservatives from Bush to the Minutemen were able to jar people from their complacency with fear, warning about terrorism, or that millions of Mexicans were flooding across the border to take our jobs.

Micaela identified several as drug addicts with whom she had spoken at other times. They were hoping someone would hire them, thinking they were migrants. They ran toward our car but stopped when they recognized Micaela. One followed and said he was hungry. He promised to give food to the others. She gave him six bags, but instead of sharing he ran off down the street, keeping them for himself. Micaela identifies men and women who have been deported on other occasions, to try to determine what percentage of the people in the Border Patrol’s figures have been apprehended more than once. “Many of those arrested have been caught maybe three times, and this inflates their statistics.”

She described two with whom she had recently talked. “One man had been here for 20 years picking fruit. He was driving and the police stopped him. He didn’t have a license. He said he would have to come back because he had family in the States, and after a week I learned he had crossed again. Another man had crossed through Arizona, walked for six days, and was then caught on his way to L.A. Some become disheartened after being caught several times, and I try to collect money to send them to their homes in Mexico.

The polleros are at the border recruiting people who have just been returned to take them back. There can be as many as five polleros working together: one pollero recruits, the second keeps a house in Tijuana where they wait to cross. The third guides them across the border, the fourth has a house on the American side, and the fifth takes them to a destination.” It was $4000–$5000 to take someone to Miami and around $2000 to Los Angeles. Some polleros, she said, brag about working with the Border Patrol.

“When I see the polleros at the border, I talk to the police and identify them and say, ‘Hey, why aren’t you doing anything?’ The police question them and might take them to jail. It gets dangerous, because the polleros get angry with me. But I never feel afraid. I always ask God to help me. Some nights the polleros will stare at me when I help people who are being deported. I worry a little, but not much. Some of the deported men are gang members, probably from Los Angeles. I’m not against deporting them. Many of the criminals stay in Tijuana, but the Tijuana authorities aren’t even notified when the criminals are deported.”

We ascended the steep hill of Avenida Baja California and turned right on Calle Galileo, where the Casa del Migrante was located. The street was empty except for six men on a corner.
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shrugged. “They’re sick,” she said. “They can’t help it.”

We parked by the Casa, a concrete building with a locked gate through which was visible a patio. In red letters above the gate it said Centro Scalabrini and, in Spanish, “I wandered as a foreigner and you took me in.” A woman came to tell us that Padre Luís was in retreat and no one was allowed inside. Two migrants stood, waiting to enter. Micaela gave each a bag with a sandwich, the last of the food. Tomorrow she would bring more. I guessed that she probably brought several thousand bags a year. She shrugged it off as one more small thing.

One of the men was a skinny fellow with a tattoo. A tag around his neck identified him as a worker in the presidential campaign of Andrés Manuel López Obrador, the former Mexico City mayor. He said he had tried to cross the border in the state of Coahuila, across the Rio Grande to Texas, fording the river at night with a group strung out in a line all holding hands. When it got too deep, they let go and swam, but he couldn’t swim and almost drowned. One of the others came back and saved him, but he still couldn’t cross.

Next he had taken a bus to Tijuana and had already stayed at the Casa for 15 days, which was the limit. He said that for a number of years he worked construction in Anaheim, where he had been an electrician, but then he had been deported. His family still lived in Anaheim, and he hoped to
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rejoin them. He said he worked with López Obrador’s campaign, explaining López Obrador’s program to people, for which he had been paid $30 a week. Micaela warned him not to wear the López Obrador tag, that López Obrador was no longer popular now that he was contesting the election against the apparent winner, Felipe Calderón. But the man said he had lost his ID, and the tag was the only ID that remained to him. He hoped that someone in the Casa could help him get new ID.

Micaela said she didn’t particularly like López Obrador. “Whenever he loses an election he contests it. He has huge demonstrations.”

The second man had recently arrived from Oaxaca. He was surprised and grateful for the bag of food. He hoped to get into Casa del Migrante when the doors opened at 4:00. The men ate their sandwiches and spoke of their troubles. The Oaxacan had unsuccessfully tried to cross two days before. Now he wasn’t sure what to do. Micaela suggested that it might be better to return home, but he said he needed money for his family.

Micaela had to make another stop before going back to Chula Vista, and instead of waiting to enter Casa del Migrante later, I decided to go with her. Her unassuming character mixed with her quiet passion to help others made her remarkable in my experience. She was nearly invisible as she went about her work, yet for 43 years she had dedicated herself to improving the lives of others. She drove to what appeared to be an old garage on Calle Dolores, down the hill from the Casa del Migrante, which housed El Centro de Información para Trabajadores y Trabajadoras (CITTAC) and two other groups. CITTAC helped Mexican workers, mostly in the maquiladora industry, with job-related human-rights issues, provided free legal advice in labor matters and helped workers create democratic labor organizations and collective-bargaining contracts and also ran the small monthly newspaper Boletín Maquilero.

More than 2700 maquiladoras are located in Mexican border states, representing 71 percent of the maquiladoras in Mexico. Tijuana has over 600 with over 1000 in Baja California. At one point the city was nicknames TVjuana for all the electronics companies that assembled TVs, but many also produced medical products for hospitals, doctors’ offices, and laboratories, like medical masks, tubing, and beakers. About half the maquiladoras are American owned.

Workers earn as little as $5 for a 12-hour day in an environment often unprotected by the labor, safety, health, and environmental regulations found in the U.S. This results in a high number of on-the-job injuries, while exposure to chemicals and radiation has caused serious health issues. I had assumed that even though $5 a day wasn’t much for 12 hours of work, the cost of living in Tijuana was lower than in the U.S. — but this was only partly true.
"Beans, tortillas, and potatoes are cheaper in San Diego than in Tijuana," said Micaela. “Mexicans come across the border to shop at Wal-Mart.”

The office had one large room with high ceilings and concrete walls, with a smaller office in back. It was cooler than outside but stuffy, though a fan was blowing. One window was situated high on the wall, and the room was dim. Many chairs were scattered around, giving evidence of meetings held late in the day, and the walls were covered with labor posters and announcements. A bat with labor posters and the walls were covered with labor posters and announcements. A bathtub, rather than a wall a white sink had a pamphlets. Against the were also stacked with pamphlets; other desks phone, and stacks of old computer, tele-

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She said the long hours made it difficult for workers to improve their lot by going to school or even looking for another job, meaning they were forced to live in marginal poverty, while surveillance cameras, security guards, and a variety of threats kept them quiet and apprehensive. It began to make sense that someone would sneak across the border to work all day picking lettuce, when the money earned was more than he or she would earn in a maquiladora. In the same way that illegal workers kept food prices low in the U.S., so did poor working conditions and low wages keep down the price of everything from automobiles to syringes. One often hears the regulations placed on industries and the workplace in the U.S. should be softened, since, after all, the owners are humane people and no one would suffer. But as María spoke of the maquiladoras, I felt glad for every regulation we have in place, while feeling we could use a few more.

Leaving the CIT-TAC office, Micaela wound her way toward the border until joining a long line of cars. We inched forward in the heat as vendors hawked everything from ice cream to life-size statues of the saints. An enterprising dentist could set up a practice by the side of the road and have the time to crown several teeth before his patient reached the crossing. It took two hours, less than usual, Micaela said.

The day before, I’d gotten a phone call from Enrique, who had been kicked out of a lunch-eon in Los Angeles that was part of the National Council of La Raza’s (NCLR) annual conference. The guest speaker was Karl Rove, the president’s deputy chief of staff. Enrique had stood up and shouted something like “I protest the presence of the architect of death and destruction on two continents. He is no friend to Hispanics.”

Later, listening to Rove’s speech online — he spoke about being the grandson of Norwegian immigrants — I heard the muttering of Enrique’s protest in the background, but Rove never paused in his delivery. I expect he has been interrupted before. Originally, Enrique told me that Rove had been an “unannounced” speaker, but it was clear from the NCLR’s news release two weeks earlier that Rove was scheduled, presumably to balance out former President Bill Clinton, whose speech had opened the conference Saturday morning. Enrique told me, “Somebody gave me a lunch ticket.” And later: “The NCLR has been getting too moderate and has lost a lot of appeal with Latinos.”

Micaela said that Enrique knew perfectly well that Rove was going
to speak. She had also been invited to the convention. “We were invited to go and protest. Enrique meant to stand up and protest. He had a ticket. He knew he’d be thrown out. We’ve never had to bail him out, but we’re always prepared for it.”

As we inched through the heat, Micaela struck up conversations with vendors she recognized, and some she didn’t. I thought about how she differed from Enrique. He was always a presence, stating and sometimes overstating his case. He was assuming, where Micaela was unassuming. She would rather pass out sandwiches to migrants in Tijuana and give away dolls to be raffled at CITTAC than make a ruckus at the NCLR’s convention, though in over 40 years she had taken part in many protests and demonstrations. I expect it was Micaela and a few others who kept the Border Angels focused on maintaining the water stations. Enrique seemed involved in a dozen different projects, and the water stations were a way of telling people about the border, while for Micaela, it was a simple matter of giving water to the thirsty, just as she gave sandwiches to the hungry.

Certainly, this was also important to Enrique, but at times it got lost in the politics of the situation.

At one point as we were waiting in line, Micaela said, “Mexicans are harassed in the United States all the time, but we’re friends, we’re family. We never harass Americans in Mexico.”

At another point she talked about her two sons and seven grandchildren. She was to see one granddaughter the next day. “My sons say, ‘Mama, how long are you going to do this!’ You said you were doing it for us, but now we have good jobs.’ And I say, ‘Now I’m doing it for my grandchildren.’”

A day or so later I rode out to Border Field State Park with Enrique to visit Smuggler’s Gulch, an area popular with migrants attempting to cross the fence. With us came Ricardo Aguirre, a 49-year-old telejournalist who ran America En Español, which creates programs and supplies video footage to Ecuador and other South American countries. A citizen of Ecuador, Ricardo lives in northern New Jersey, close to New York. He was a benign figure with a slight pear shape and a mild, cheerful demeanor. He had flown to San Diego to film a piece on the border, accompanied by his girlfriend and his pool, Lucky, who he called “my baby.” The seat for Lucky had cost $160. Ricardo wore a black polo shirt and light blue slacks. Besides his equipment, he carried a supply of souvenir New York City key chains as gifts. Mine had representations of the Brooklyn Bridge, Statue of Liberty, Empire State Building, and World Trade Center.

Enrique took Monument Road to the park and then turned left into Smuggler’s Gulch, telling us he had earlier called the Border Patrol to say he was bringing two journalists into the area. “Although we’re not necessarily friends, we have a working relationship. They know me.” He said the Border Patrol wanted the Army Corps of Engineers to fill in the gulch with 2.2 million cubic yards of dirt, cut off the tops of Spooner’s and Lighty Mesas on either side, and build a 90-foot-wide all-weather road along the top. The reserve contains about 2500 acres of parkland and a few parcels of privately owned land. Laurels and tamarisks bordered the road, while to the north were horse ranches.

Enrique told Ricardo about how the Secret Service had removed him from the La Raza luncheon during Karl Rove’s speech. He regretted being unable to protest Governor Schwarzenegger’s appearance as well, since he felt the governor sup-
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ported the Minutemen and has argued that the border should be closed.

He parked near the fence — constructed from rusted steel landing mats — and we climbed out. Ricardo brought his video camera. The fence didn’t go all the way up the steep sides of the mesa, and even the clumsiest climber could go around it. Two Border Patrol jeeps were parked near the top of Spooner’s Mesa. It was a 310-foot drop to the floor of the gulch where we were standing. The sand was covered with footprints and bits of trash. We looked through holes in the fence to the brush beyond, where Enrique said migrants were probably hiding.

Shortly, a Border Patrol supervisor arrived, a lieutenant with a Hispanic surname that he asked me not to use. He said he had been in the Patrol for 14 years and covered the area between San Ysidro and the beach. He and Enrique had known one another for some time. He was friendly, though with a slightly ironic manner.

“I said that it appeared rather easy to get around the fence. "If it were really easy," he said, "the coyotes wouldn't charge so much money to lead people across. Besides the lights, there are old Vietnam-era sensors in the ground. They have little antennae sticking up which pick up vibrations. But dogs and horseback riders also set them off. Why don't you guys try running through here and see how long it takes before someone shows up. You've got about a quarter-mile, and then you're home free."

I later learned that the border area was also watched by 48 infrared video cameras working 24 hours a day. Enrique asked when they would start filling in the gulch, but the supervisor said the plan had been put on hold. Environmentalists with Border Field State Park have said the plan would be an ecological disaster and violate California’s coastal-protection law.

Enrique told the supervisor about the march on Washington and what he had been doing. The supervisor seemed politely interested but not forthcoming. Ricardo filmed the fence and then panned to the jeeps on the mesa. When the supervisor left, Enrique spotted someone in the chaparral on the other side and called to him.

Soon a thin man in dungarees made his way to a six-inch gap in the fence. He said his name was Isabel Cienfuegos. He was 30 and from the state of Guerrero, where he lived with his wife, three kids, and his parents. He hoped to do agricultural work in California and send money home. He was quiet and good-natured. Enrique gave him $4 for water. The man said he was with a group of six people that would try to cross during the night.

But I expected the stadium lights on the poles above us would make the gulch as bright at midnight as at noon. The man said he had tried to cross the week before in Tecate with a...
Ricardo gave the man $20, also for water, and had his picture taken with him, as did Enrique. Isabel Cienfuegos must have thought we were completely nuts, and I didn’t believe he had much chance of sneaking across through Smuggler’s Gulch, no matter what time he tried it. On the other hand, he had just received nearly $25, a week’s wages at a maquiladora.

Enrique apologized he couldn’t spend more time with Ricardo and me, but once a year he had to take his nephew out to Legoland, and today was the day. Because Enrique disliked the rides — “They terrify me” — he had also invited his nephew’s best friend.

Ricardo Aguirre had an appointment at Border Patrol headquarters in eastern Chula Vista with a public information officer, Wendi Lee, so I drove him. As it turned out, I interviewed Ms. Lee and Ricardo filmed it. We talked in a meeting room off the lobby. Attractive, energetic, and charming, Ms. Lee was about 30 and had been in the Border Patrol for four years and with the public information section since February. Prior to that she worked undercover for a year and a half. She was Hispanic and bilingual, speaking both languages with no hint of an accent, according to Ricardo. Before joining, she worked at an orphanage, but she had family members “in police work.” She rattled off figures from her information packet — 117,000 people apprehended in the San Diego sector in 2006 as of July, but “those arrested could have been...”

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arrested more than once.” She told us the landing mats used to make the fence dated from World War II.

Rescues were up this year, she said, with 99 between October 1 and mid-July, as opposed to 91 for the entire previous year. “We have three paramedics out in the field. We carry water, and if someone needs water we’ll give them water. We’re not against putting out water, and we don’t support it.” I asked her about the possibility of unfound bodies in the desert and mountain regions. “I think the number is insignificant,” she said. “We have a good relationship with Grupo Beta. When we hear that someone is missing, we notify them and the families will be called, or they will notify us about someone who is missing.”

Begun in Tijuana in 1999, Grupo Beta is a search-and-rescue group operating on Mexico’s borders as a branch of the National Migration Institute. It sets up water stations, marked by blue flags, and provides help to migrants in trouble.

I asked Ms. Lee about Enrique’s charge that the Minutemen had destroyed Border Angel water stations. “It’s something between them,” she said. “We’re not against putting out water, and we don’t support them.”

I felt Ms. Lee’s background in orphanage work had helped her as an information officer. Pleasant and even-handed, she was probably used to questions from the hostile, aggrieved, and frustrated. Ricardo filmed our discussion, and I wondered about my chances of becoming a TV personality in Ecuador. As we left, Ricardo gave Wendi Lee one of his New York City souvenir key chains. She mistook it for candy, saying, “Oh, no, I shouldn’t, I’m trying to lose weight.”

Sunday morning I met Enrique at 8:00 a.m. in Pantejo Park in front of the statue of Benito Juárez, who served as Mexico’s president between 1861 and 1872, the only fully-blooded Native American ever to hold the job. Enrique said he liked the symbolism of meeting in front of the statue. We were headed to East County to check out water, and we arrested more than three a day. They’re chasing people to death. My job is to tell the stories of Victoria Sánchez, 17 years old, killed with two others when the pickup truck in which they were riding was chased by the Border Patrol and flipped over. And Lucrecia Dominguez, left behind by smugglers in the Arizona desert. It’s a human-rights issue, not a Republican or Democratic issue. That wall is not the answer. We must build bridges of communication.” Then he again told the story of the boy throwing the starfish back in the ocean.

“A woman in a third-floor condo across G Street called out, ‘Why don’t you turn around and talk from the other side, because you’re annoying me!’”

Enrique lowered his voice but continued. For Enrique, every occasion is political, an opportunity to repeat the anecdotal history of migrant deaths. People walked by, avoiding us as crazy or too eccentric.

“People attack the migrants, saying, ‘We came here legally,’” said Enrique. “I say, ‘And what would the millions of Indians you slaughtered say to that?’”

Shortly, we got in two cars and headed out toward East County. I asked Enrique how he had enjoyed Legoland. He laughed. “I never liked any of those rides, not even the slow ones. It was exhausting to follow around two ten-year-olds. My favorite ride is right here.” He pointed the seat of the Explorer.

During the week, I had seen Enrique at two other functions: an anti-
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war gathering in Hillcrest sponsored by the Progressive Democrats of America, where Enrique was master of ceremonies, and at the third annual Democracy Fest, a three-day gathering of progressive Democrats on the campus of San Diego State, where he appeared on a panel that discussed how to frame the immigration debate for the November election.

Although Democracy Fest was the larger event, both combined cheerful mockery and moral indignation aimed at the Republicans, the voicing of frustrated compassion, and a lack of understanding as to why compassion wasn’t felt by all. The enemy, even more than the administration, seemed to be public complacency, which raised the question of how people can be made to take note of the dreadful things that are happening and do something about them. Conservatives from Bush to the Minutemen were able to jar people from their complacency with fear, warning about terrorism, or that millions of Mexicans were flooding across the border to take our jobs. I asked Enrique about this.

“You have to combat complacency through education,” he said. “You talk to one person at a time. Every three weeks I go out and talk to schools, from kindergarten to college. It’s necessary to plant the seed. I don’t write speeches; I talk from my heart. I make noise about things so people don’t forget them. About 85 percent of the news you hear about Latinos and Chicanos is negative, and the Minutemen take advantage of it. We can combat that through education. But it’s also a racist issue. If the deaths on the border were Canadians, we wouldn’t have so many. We march, we do vigils, and we place water. We’ll go to the Yuma desert and place 4000 crosses. I believe things will change.”

One of the people who had appeared on the panel with Enrique was Gilbert Cedillo, state senator from the 22nd district in Los Angeles, who said, “We are a nation of immigrants attacking the immigrants. We’re worried about immigrants in the way we used to be worried about Communists.”

When I asked Cedillo about Enrique, he said, “He’s the moral authority of our community. Thousands are dying, and he’s the only
Enrique drove swiftly east on Interstate 8, slowing when the second car lagged too far behind. Olivia Schoeller asked questions and Enrique talked nonstop, gesturing with his hands so that the car swerved. Ricardo Aguirre smiled benignly from the backseat and gave me a wink. Enrique had many plans. He wanted Caltrans to set up water stations along the highway, which Border Angels would keep supplied. He wanted an 800 number, which people in Mexico could call about their loved ones who had disappeared crossing the border. He wanted to set up a house in San Diego staffed with doctors, lawyers, social workers, and educators, where migrants could come for help. He quoted his slogan from Matthew, referred to his starfish story, and said, “You don’t see Latinos looking for handouts. When was the last time you saw a Latino standing on a corner with a sign, ‘Will work for food?’ You’ll never see it.”

To our left along a high ridge 17 or 18 windmills turned gracefully. Enrique talked about coyotes driving the wrong way on the interstate with their lights off to avoid the Border Patrol checkpoint. Soon he took the exit at the Golden Acorn, the casino owned by the Kumeyaay nation, took 94 to Tierra del Sol Road, and then bumped along Shasta Way near the Campo Indian Reservation.

I asked Enrique how he could continue to make a living with all the time he spent on his human-rights work, and he admitted that his two partners in his Latino marketing company “were losing patience with me.” “I saved quite a bit when I was vice president with the Padres,” he continued, “but now I have a lot of debt. When I was in baseball, I had souvenirs, signed baseballs and stuff, and I’ve been selling it. Border Angels gets some donations, and we sell the T-shirts. It’s all little checks; a woman buys two T-shirts and gives me 40 bucks. So yester-

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San Diego Reader December 7, 2006 75

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HEALTH AND BEAUTY
day I got 60. Sometimes at the water stations I’ll find a dollar, all in pesos. All told it’s been about $10.

He also said he would probably return to his radio talk show Morones Por La Tarde on La Tremenda 1030 AM from Tijuana. Enrique had had a two-hour program for several years but had quit or taken a leave when he organized his march on Washington. Now he meant to go back. The only point of contention was that he might occasionally need a guest host if he had to be someplace else. But the money from the show, he said, would go to Border Angels.

We parked the cars and got out, grabbing gallon jugs of water. The heat at over 3000 feet seemed worse than at sea level. The border was about two miles to the south. Trudging up a hill, I saw the green flag of the water station through the brush. The station itself consisted of two cardboard boxes under a small pine. A dog barked near a small house 100 yards away. Taped to a cable supporting a utility pole was a red signal light. Enrique said they replaced the batteries every two weeks. He had a plan to power the lights with solar batteries, which, sad to say, would cost money. He placed a wooden cross on the water barrel “so people won’t think it’s a trap.” Then he told a story about a vandalized water station, where someone had put up signs saying “poison.” Ricardo filmed the bunch of us milling around, and the other reporters asked Enrique questions. There were five water stations in this area, each with 20 gallons of water.

Enrique pointed to three blue plastic rings on the ground, broken seals indicating that someone had made use of the water. He kicked the box before opening it to scare the spiders. Once he had been bitten or stung by a spider lurking in a water station and had had to stay in bed for six weeks. He warned us to watch out for scorpions and snakes, and we all studied the ground. He decided not to check on the water station near the small house, because of the dog: he doesn’t like barking dogs. He described finding two Chinese out here sometime ago and giving them water. They asked him to take them to the bus station, but he refused. “It would be breaking the law,” he said.
Enrique’s stories were interspersed with his sound bites: “They’re chasing people to death” and “We need to build bridges of communication.” Apart from wanting Bush and Schwarzenegger defeated, he said this was a free country and people could do what they wanted. “The only rule is to love your neighbor.” He wished he had time to take us to Holtville, east of El Centro, and show us the John Doe graves of hundreds of migrants who had died trying to cross, how 400 graves were crammed into a muddy field. On each, the Border Angels had placed a small cross with the words “No Ovidado” or “Not Forgotten.” About 50 percent of those who die crossing the border are never identified. Then, the water and batteries replaced and the lecture over, we trudged back to the cars. Enrique had to hurry because he was spending the afternoon with his nephew. Later that afternoon I visited Border Field State Park and heard the Border Patrol agent say, “We know the kind of people we catch here. They’re horrible people.” After ten days with Enrique, I had grown tired of the starfish story, but the agent made me rethink that. “I make noise about things so people don’t forget them,” Enrique had said. Not only did it seem like good work, it seemed like necessary work.

But I don’t want to close with the Border Patrol agent. My first day in San Diego, I had driven out to Border Field State Park and was stopped by the locked gate and a sign indicating that Monument Mesa was only open on weekends. As I stood in the parking lot, a little white car drove up and two people got out, a man and an older woman. The man came up to me and said, “Where is the wall?” He had a thick accent. He told me he was Korean. He had just arrived in San Diego from Seoul, and he wanted to show his mother the wall. I explained that the park was closed and pointed to the rusty landing-mat wall in the distance. He looked at it, shook his head, and laughed.

“You have a wall in your country as well,” I said.

“Our wall is between enemies; your wall is between friends.” He found this very funny. He laughed all the way back to his car.

— Stephen Dobyns

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LETTERS
continued from page 13
hour, or more, helping you deal with your everyday stress and making you feel great? Please tell me you aren’t that ignorant. I make sure I tip my waiter 20 percent, especially if it is busy, because I know they are working their asses off to get us fed. And I make sure I tip my masseuse at least $15 to $20 because, again, I know they are working their asses off to make me feel great! I agree that there are some places where tips aren’t accepted — doctor, chiropractor, etc. But those professions are making at least $75,000 to $150,000 a year. Are you such an ignorant miser that you completely ignore the people that count on their tips to live?! Please respond to me here to let me know that I am wrong about you, please!!!!

Lee Johnson
via e-mail

She’s Got Spleen
Regarding the article written by Dave Good about the extraordinary flutist Lori Bell (“Of Note,” Pop Music, November 22), I have the following to say:

Get your journalistic facts straight: the article was so filled with fiction that I am wrong about you, you completely ignore the people that count on their tips to live! Please respond to me here to let me know that I am wrong about you, please!!!!

Lee Johnson
via e-mail

Have A Glass Of Virus
“Wastewater Drug Test” by Matt Potter (“City Lights,” November 22) was thought provoking, and it raised some very pertinent questions that need to be answered. Specifically, do our local and federal governments have something to hide? Or was this just another bureaucratic snafu?

When you consider the amount of illegal drugs crossing our borders 24/7, it’s not surprising that cocaine was found in our nation’s wastewater systems. Nor is it surprising that cocaine can be specifically tested as described in the above-referenced article. What is surprising is the level of governmental aparent stonewalling.

For some time worldwide, scientific experts have been concerned about male fish taking on female characteristics. Many of these experts believe that estrogen excreted into the sewer systems caused this abnormality. The question is, how will cocaine excreted into our sewer systems affect the little fishes?

With all its pitfalls, the last we heard, the city council unanimously supported the toilet-to-tap. The Revolving Grandmas are not ready to pour themselves a glass of tiny viruses, bacteria, cryptosporidia, giardia, and cancer-producing by-products — laced with heavy doses of legal and illegal drugs. How about you?

Revolving Grandmas
Mary Quartiano
Muriel Watson

Punk, Idiot, Social Terrorist
Why do you interview an ignorant, selfish piece of garbage like this Tim Raldo (“Punk Life,” Pop Music, November 22)? Christians donate millions to charities every day, unlike atheists and especially punks like this idiot. You could talk to someone who is trying to make the world a better place. Tim Raldo is a social terrorist who needs to think of someone other than himself and get a life instead of just being obnoxious.

Brian P. Wright
via e-mail

Ollie’s Literary Sloth
I must agree with the growing disgust over Ollie (“Remote Control King”), a talentless slob if ever there was one. His literary sloth is palpable in every sentence he types. It’s a mark of the level of quality. I suppose, in the Reader’s readership that he’s still on board. Barbarella’s not much better, but at least she tries, poor girl.

Eddie Dane
via e-mail

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written by Babara Robinson
**We Wish You a Civil Christmas**

**Teach Kids to Say, “Thank You”**

“A 3 manners should be used every day, but there are certain things we need to be sure to emphasize around the holidays,” says Cindy Post Senning. “With everybody so busy and so much going on, people tend to get grumpy, and I like to remind kids that it’s particularly important to go out and smile, greet people, and make an effort to make people cheerier.”

On Friday, December 8, Senning will appear at the Children’s Place in the new Otay Ranch Town Center in Chula Vista to read excerpts from her new book, Emily’s Everyday Manners, written with Peggy Post and illustrated by Steve Björkman. The book is targeted at children aged four to seven.

“When you give someone a gift,” Senning tells children, “look them in the eye and smile. Give joy with that gift. Say, ‘Happy Holidays,’ or ‘I picked this out especially for you.’ This helps to make the giving act more genuine, and that’s what you really want to do.” Senning focuses on what she calls the “triangle of magic words,” the three points of which are “please,” “thank you,” and “you’re welcome.”

One of Senning’s pet peeves is failure to express gratitude. “People don’t acknowledge their appreciation, not just for gifts, but when people do something nice for them. It’s harder to get kids to say ‘thank you’ than to say ‘please,’ because ‘please’ usually comes before they get the thing they want, and ‘thank you’ gets lost in the excitement after they get it. It takes nagging and reminding and remembering.

“But,” Senning says, “we must teach [manners] to kids when they’re developmentally ready for them. Just like you wouldn’t expect a four-year-old to handle a piano concerto, but [it’s realistic] they might know how to play ‘Chopsticks’ if they begin learning their scales at a certain age.”

Greeting others is one example of a social interaction that requires developmental readiness. “For a three-year-old, it’s hard to look someone in the eye,” says Senning.

“My other peeve about manners with kids is when I look about me and see people having expectations of their kids that are not realistic, by either overexpecting or underexpecting. The bratty kid thing is underexpecting — people think a three-year-old can’t hold still for a few minutes, but they can. You just have to pay attention to them and [take the time] to deal with them. Underexpectation leads to kids behaving in ways that are incongruent to those around them.”

Overexpecting is demanding more from a child than he or she is developmentally able to give. “When someone comes into our sphere of influence, we greet them — that’s the respectful thing to do. Babies learn this when we teach them to say ‘hi’ and ‘bye.’ A two-year-old might get really shy and hide behind your leg. [A child] may be four years old before [he] steps out from behind your leg and says, ‘hi.’ Some can earlier, but some can’t.”

Senning says manners do not seem to differ based on social class but they do differ regionally. “The main one is the way children address adults. Where I’m from [Northeastern U.S.], it’s unusual for adults to ask kids to call them by their first name. But in the South I’m called ‘ma’am’ and ‘Mrs. Senning.’ What is respectful is for children to call adults by what the adult prefers. The default is that kids should always call adults by their title and last name, and let the adult give direction. If I say, ‘You should call me Cindy, all the kids do,’ it’s really more respectful for them to call me Cindy. But I must do my part to be respectful of the regional custom.”

Manners change with the times: Emily Post, Senning’s great-grandmother, could not have foreseen today’s need for cell phone guidelines when she published Etiquette, her book on social propriety, in 1922. One changing custom is that of opening doors for ladies. “What we say is, in business etiquette, it’s gender neutral,” says Senning. “Whoever gets to the door first should open the door. Holding chairs in business situations is also gender neutral. But it never hurts. If a guy isn’t sure — if he offers to hold the chair or the door by saying, ‘Can I get the chair or door for you?’ — then she’s in a position to say, ‘Yes, thank you!’ or ‘No, thank you, I can get it for myself.’”

“The underlying philosophy of social grace has remained consistent, as evidenced by these words penned by Emily Post, the matron of manners, over 80 years ago: ‘Manners are made up of trivialities of deportment which can be easily learned if one does not happen to know them; manner is personality — the outward manifestation of one’s innate character and attitude toward life.”

— Barbarella

**Holiday Manners workshop and book signing with Cindy Post Senning**

Friday, December 8

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### Out & About

**IN THE HEART OF WINTER**

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**IN THE HEART OF Tijuana**

Cuatro Para Tango presents “Festín Argentino” on Thursday, December 7, 8 p.m., at Antigua Bodega de Papel (11th Street and Avenida Revolución). 011-52-664-811-7084, Avenida Revolución.

**Celebreon, Entonen y Canta**

Christmas songs performed by Coro de la Opera de Tijuana, Friday, December 8, 8 p.m., at Teatro IMSS (on Boulevard Salineras). 011-52-664-3280. (tours)

**The Nutcracker**

Is presented by Ballet del Noroeste de México, Friday and Saturday, December 8 and 9, 8 p.m., at Tijuana Cultural Center (Paseo de los Héroes and Mina Street in the Zona Río). Tickets: $20–$25 U.S. 011-52-664-687-9636.

The company also presents The Nutcracker on Wednesday, December 13, 7 p.m., Teatro del Estado. 011-52-664-687-9636. (Tijuana, Mexico)

**Molotov!**

Rock concert starts at 9 p.m. on Friday, December 8, at Mexitlan Show Center (at 2nd Street and Avenida Madero). 011-52-664-972-9001. (Tijuana)

**Alejandro Filio in Concert**

El Lugar del Nopal (Callajon 5 de Mayo #1320) on Friday, December 8, 9 p.m. 011-52-664-685-1266. (Tijuana)

**The Drama**

Cama Para Do performed by actors Antonio Escobar and Ulises Iturbe, Monday, December 11, 8 p.m., at Centro Cultural Tijuana (Paso de los Héroes and Mina Street, in Zona Río). 011-52-664-687-9636. (Tijuana)

**“La Danza Como Arte Escenico!”**

Eva Sotelo discusses dance, politically correct art during lecture starting at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, December 12, at Centro Cultural Tijuana (Paso de los Héroes and Mina Street, Zona Río). 011-52-664-687-9636. Free. (Tijuana)

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**San Diego Reader**

Local Events

Events that are underlined occur after December 14.

**HOW TO SEND US YOUR LISTINGS:** 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 85801, San Diego CA 92109. Or fax to 619-831-2401. You may also submit information online at SanDiegoReader.com by clicking on the events section.

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“La Campesinela” presented Wednesday, December 13, 8 p.m., at Centro Cultural Tijuana (Paseo de los Héroes and Mina Street). $15 U.S. 011-52-664-687-9636.

Tribute to Cuban Poet José Lezama Lima planned Thursday, December 14, 4–7 p.m., at Centro Cultural Tijuana (Paseo de los Héroes and Mina Street). $15 U.S. 011-52-664-687-9636.

Christmas Gala with music by Orchestra Baja California, joined by guitarist Jorge López Ramos, Thursday, December 14, 8 p.m., at Centro Cultural Tijuana (Paseo de los Héroes and Mina Street). $15 U.S. 011-52-664-687-9636.

Christmas Gala on Thursday, December 14, 8 p.m., at Centro Cultural Tijuana (Paseo de los Héroes and Mina Street). $15 U.S. 011-52-664-687-9636.

OUTDOORS

Earliest Sunset (4:43 p.m. from San Diego) occurs Thursday, December 7, a date that is not coincident with the shortest day (winter solstice — December 21) because of factors relating to the noncircular shape of Earth's orbit around the sun and the tilt of Earth's axis. Early December is a good time to view the setting sun from the spectacular vantage point of Cabrillo National Monument at the tip of Point Loma. During most of the year, you can't do that since sunset occurs well after the park’s closing time of 5:15 p.m.

Liquidambar Trees, or sweet gums, the colorfully deciduous trees gracing front yards, parks, and campuses throughout the San Diego area, have been putting on a good show for the past month. The maplelike leaves of some varieties have turned from green to purple to red; the leaves of other varieties have faded to a golden yellow. Other varieties will hold on to their leaves until the New Year. Most will regain their foliage by late February.

Ripening Palm Fruit, hanging in great clusters on California’s native fan palms (Washingtonia filifera), can be seen (and tasted) this month. The black, pea-sized fruit consists of a deliciously sweet but almost paper-thin skin surrounding a hard seed. (These are not “California dates” — the fruit of cultivated palms introduced into California’s deserts from northern Africa.) Our native fan palms can be seen in their natural habitat in about two dozen canyons within Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. They have also been planted widely elsewhere in California, including along the main streets of Palm Springs.

The Planets Jupiter, Mars, and Mercury lie within a few degrees of one another (the width of a typical binocular field of view) during the period December 7–13. All three are visible over the southeast horizon at dawn, approximately 6 a.m. The three planets will fit in the tightest circle (1.5 degrees in diameter) on the mornings of December 10 and 11. Although these planets will appear to be close together in the sky, they're not physically close — Jupiter is by far the farthest of them. It is rare to see any three planets of naked-eye visibility in almost the same direction.

Hotel del Coronado Tour hosted by Coronado Historical Association leads one-hour tour throughout the historic Hotel del Coronado, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays at 2 p.m. Tours begin outside Grand Hall doors, on north side of hotel. $15, children under six free. Required reservations: 619-437-8788.

Holt to Track Animals and discover their natural environment during beginner and intermediate tracking walks slated for Saturday, December 9, 8 a.m., starting at Petasquitos Canyon Preserve Ranch House. Wear shoes that can be muddy. Free. To reach site, take Canyonside Park Drive off Black Mountain Road, follow signs. 858-484-3219.

Visit Historical Grinding Rocks Site, see native plants and shorebirds during guided nature walk, Saturday, December 9, 8:30 a.m., beginning in Kumeyaay Lake Campground of Mission Trails Regional Park (Two Father Junipero Serra Trail). Free. 619-668-3281.

Help Maintain a Nesting Site for California least terns during volunteer work party, Saturday, December 9, 9 a.m., at Mariner's Point. Wear work clothes, bring work gloves, weeding tools if you have them. Free. Reservations and directions: 619-224-4591 or 858-581-7602.

Second Saturday Nature Walks at the Reserve, San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy hosts walk exploring migratory birds and native plants, Saturday, December 9, 9 a.m. Free. Directions: 760-436-3944.

Trail-Repair Work in Paso Picacho at Cuyamaca Rancho State Park continues on Saturday, December 9, 9 a.m. Bring work shoes, gloves, hat, water, snack. Group gathers at Paso Picacho campground maintenance area behind fire department building. Free. Registration: 619-441-0752.

Tribute to Cuban Poet José Lezama Lima presented Thursday, December 14, 8 p.m., at Centro Cultural Tijuana (Paseo de los Héroes and Mina Street). $15 U.S. 011-52-664-687-9636.

Christmas Gala with music by Orchestra Baja California, joined by guitarist Jorge López Ramos, Thursday, December 14, 8 p.m., at Centro Cultural Tijuana (Paseo de los Héroes and Mina Street). $15 U.S. 011-52-664-687-9636.

Earliest Sunset (4:43 p.m. from San Diego) occurs Thursday, December 7, a date that is not coincident with the shortest day (winter solstice — December 21) because of factors relating to the noncircular shape of Earth’s orbit around the sun and the tilt of Earth’s axis. Early December is a good time to view the setting sun from the spectacular vantage point of Cabrillo National Monument at the tip of Point Loma. During most of the year, you can’t do that since sunset occurs well after the park’s closing time of 5:15 p.m.

Liquidambar Trees, or sweet gums, the colorfully deciduous trees gracing front yards, parks, and campuses throughout the San Diego area, have been putting on a good show for the past month. The maplelike leaves of some varieties have turned from green to purple to red; the leaves of other varieties have faded to a golden yellow. Other varieties will hold on to their leaves until the New Year. Most will regain their foliage by late February.

Ripening Palm Fruit, hanging in great clusters on California’s native fan palms (Washingtonia filifera), can be seen (and tasted) this month. The black, pea-sized fruit consists of a deliciously sweet but almost paper-thin skin surrounding a hard seed. (These are not “California dates” — the fruit of cultivated palms introduced into California’s deserts from northern Africa.) Our native fan palms can be seen in their natural habitat in about two dozen canyons within Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. They have also been planted widely elsewhere in California, including along the main streets of Palm Springs.

The Planets Jupiter, Mars, and Mercury lie within a few degrees of one another (the width of a typical binocular field of view) during the period December 7–13. All three are visible over the southeast horizon at dawn, approximately 6 a.m. The three planets will fit in the tightest circle (1.5 degrees in diameter) on the mornings of December 10 and 11. Although these planets will appear to be close together in the sky, they’re not physically close — Jupiter is by far the farthest of them. It is rare to see any three planets of naked-eye visibility in almost the same direction.

Hotel del Coronado Tour hosted by Coronado Historical Association leads one-hour tour throughout the historic Hotel del Coronado, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays at 2 p.m. Tours begin outside Grand Hall doors, on north side of hotel. $15, children under six free. Required reservations: 619-437-8788.

Visit Historical Grinding Rocks Site, see native plants and shorebirds during guided nature walk, Saturday, December 9, 8:30 a.m., beginning in Kumeyaay Lake Campground of Mission Trails Regional Park (Two Father Junipero Serra Trail). Free. 619-668-3281.

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Explore Oak Canyon during three-mile walk with elevation loss of about 200 feet along a streamlined rimmed by coast live oaks led by Canyoneers on Saturday, December 9, 1:30 p.m. Free. Directions: 619-255-2003.

Explore Silverwood Sanctuary, which was burned extensively during 2003 wildfires: The San Diego Audubon Society offers guided walks by reservation on Sundays, 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. (619-682-7201). Sanctuary is located at 13035 Wildcat Canyon Road (five miles from Ashwood-Mapleview turnoff).

Enjoy Holiday Lights and see end of boat parade of lights during Coastalwalk adventure on Sunday, December 10. Hike starts at 5:30 p.m. at Coronado Ferry disembarkation ramp on Coronado Island (at foot of B Avenue on First Street). Bring flashlight, money for snacks. Free. Registrations: 619-872-2125.

Holiday Birds Are Arriving — see some when naturalist Tom Lyon leads easy three-hour hike on Tuesday, December 12, in Daley Ranch. Bring binoculars. Free. Out- starting at 4 p.m. in main parking lot (on Honda Drive). Reservations: 760-839-4680.

The Geminid Meteor Shower peaks on the nights of December 13–14 and December 14–15. Some geminid meteors may be seen as early as 6:30 p.m., but the period between 11 p.m. and 2 a.m. will likely be most favorable. The moon, past third-quarter phase, will hamper observations somewhat after about 2 a.m. This is 2006’s best opportunity to see up to 90 meteors per hour (assuming dark, light-pollution-free skies).

DANCE

“ONE to Echo,” featuring River Contemporary Dance and A.S. Peterson Dance, Friday and Saturday, December 1 and 2, at 8 p.m., in San Diego State University’s Dance Studio Theatre (ENS 200). A collection of California dance and film artists honoring “the passion that one artist can share with a community.” Tickets: $10–$14. 619-594-1996. (smdp)

Viennese Waltz highlights be- autifully staged dance on Friday, December 8, in room 201 at Casa del Prado. Lesson at 7:30 p.m. followed by open dancing. All ages. Partners not required. Donation: $1. 619-594-9956. (smdp)

To place your ad in the Wedding Guide, call 619-235-9797 (on www.theSanDiegoReader.com/wedding)
“9/11: The Myth and the Reality” screens Sunday, December 10, 6:30 p.m., at Joyce Beers Center (1220 Cleveland Avenue). Filmaker Ken Jenkins on hand. Donation: $5. 619-222-2120. (HILLCREST)

See the “Gritty Environmental Thriller” Kokoda: Mountains Patrol when it’s screened on Monday, December 11, 6:30 p.m., for Film Forum at San Diego Public Library (820 E Street). “Tough but moving true story about antelope poaching” in a region of China is told in Mandarin and Tibetan with English subtitles. Free. 619-236-5800. (DOWNTOWN)

Holiday Films provide theme for ongoing Carlsbad Library film series, featuring Family Man with Nicolas Cage, Tea Leoni, on Wednesday, December 13, 6 p.m., in Schulman Auditorium (1775 Dove Lane). Free. 760-602-2026. (LA COSTA)

“Raiders of the Lost Ark” — in which Steven Spielberg, George Lucas, and Harrison Ford create Indiana Jones — may be seen Thursday, December 14, 7 p.m., at Italian Community Center (1669 Columbia Street). $2. 619-237-0601. (LITTLE ITALY)

Reuben H. Fleet Science Center, currently screening in the IMAX theater: Santa vs. the Snowman, Roving Mars, and Deep Sea. “Fridays at the Fleet” features Roving Mars (6 p.m.) and Santa vs. the Snowman (7 p.m.) on December 8. Ticket prices and showtimes: 619-238-1233. (BALBOA PARK)

**LECTURES**

“Paper Traces: Latin American Prints and Drawings from the Collection at SDMA” illuminated by Ramon Hernandez for Insight Gallery talk, Thursday, December 7, 6 p.m. and Sunday, December 10, 3 p.m., at San Diego Museum of Art. Included in regular admission. 619-239-0000, Ext. 300. (DOWNTOWN)

The Writing of Historical Mysteries is illuminated by author Patricia Wynn when Sisters in Crime gather on Thursday, December 7, 7 p.m., at Joyce Beers Center (1230 Veronica Street). $10. 619-696-1966. (LA COSTA)

“Latin American Works on Paper” examined when UCSD assistant art history professor Roberto Tejeda presents docent guest lecture at San Diego Museum of Art on Friday, December 8, 2 p.m. 619-239-0000, Ext. 300. (DOWNTOWN)

“Plant Propagation Made Easy” — learn techniques for preparing, storing, planting seeds, Saturday, December 9, 9:30 a.m., at Cayucos College’s Water Conservation Garden (12122 Cayu-
FANTASTIC ADVENTURES

Holiday Flight Tickets on Sale Now!

Sky Sailing offers a variety of breathtaking scenic-sail rides. The adventure begins as you slip into the sleek sailplane for an experience you will remember forever. You will be treated to a gentle, tranquil ride or a roller-coaster ride — whichever you prefer — at no extra charge. All our pilots are FAA-certified commercial pilots. Rides last two hours for $70 per person. If you think that special someone would like to take the controls and handle most of the flight, then an Introductory Lesson (starting at $110) is just the ticket.

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OUT & ABOUT

TOUCHING THE KINETICS CONTINUUM —
Michael Aschner Saturday and Sunday, December 9 and 10, Poway Center for the Performing Arts. (SEE IN PERSON)

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Don't miss our next event! Xmas Singles Party, December 9, 6:30 PM at La Jolla Cove. RSVP and check our online listings at www.thesocialplace.com 1-866-635-7741 (Toll Free)

Christmas Tree Lot

The “Garage Sale Grannies” —
a.k.a. Bette Childs and Joanie Espy — demonstrate creation of unique, whimsical container gar-"dens for Point Loma Garden Club holiday tea, and meeting on Wednesday, December 13, 9:30 a.m., at Portuguese Hall (2818 Avenida de Portugal). Free. 619-223-3315. (Point Loma)

“How We Know the Climate Is Changing,” explained by Mark Thiemens of UCSD, Tuesday, January 9, 6:30 p.m., San Diego Natural History Museum. Attention paid to possible impacts on Southern California. Free. 619-265-0455. (Balboa Park)

LOCAL EVENTS

SAN DIEGO READER.COM

maca College Drive West). Bring samples of plants and seeds you wish to propagate. $22. Reservations: 619-660-4350. (GOLDEN HILL)

“Intro to DVD Studio Pro” workshop, Saturday, December 9, 10 a.m.—2 p.m., at Media Arts Center San Diego (921 25th Street). Instructor Joaquin Ortiz dispenses techniques in creating menus, sub-titles, transition effects, more. $55. Registration: 619-230-1938 x102. (GOLDEN HILL)

CLOTHING FOR YOGA & FITNESS

Shir Ami (2210 Encinitas Boulevard). Bell choir, Hispanic choirs, deaf choir, operatic and instrumental perfor- mances, harps, youth choirs, much more! Free. Details: 619-994-9367. (MISSION VALLEY)

“Outrage?” Panelists will discuss women as victims of war, torture, racism, and other atrocities. Sunday, December 10, 1:30 p.m., at Latter-Day Saints Temple, 7474 Charmant Drive. Bell choirs, Hispanic choirs, deaf choir, operatic and instrumental perfor- mances, harps, youth choirs, much more! Free. Details: 619-994-9367. (MISSION VALLEY)

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Claymaking Workshops

Local Children’s Authors’ and Illustrators’ Showcase: “Lessons Learned” presented when San Diego Chapter of the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators meet Saturday, December 9, 9 a.m.—2 p.m., in room 106 of Hahn Library, University of San Diego (at Linda Vista). Registrations: 619-267-0454. (MISSION VALLEY)

Human Rights Day commemorates “Violence against Women Worldwide: Where is the Outrage?” Panelists will discuss women as victims of war, torture, trafficking, forced prostitution, and more. Sunday, December 10, 1:30 p.m., at Mission Valley Library (2123 Fenton Parkway). Free. 619-245-1677. (MISSION VALLEY)

What’s Raclette? Find out when Urs Hwiler fires up his Raclette machine and teaches “how this cheese was meant to be cooked.” Raclette machine and teaching are included. Saturday, December 9, 10 a.m.—2 p.m., at Congregation Shir Ami (2120 Encinitas Boulevard, suite T). Families and children (under ten) start at 1 p.m., adults only at 3 p.m. Class is free; for materials list and reservations, call 760-697-0454. (CARLSBAD)

San Diego Horticultural Society, Montgomery Road, Guelph, Ontario). Free. 619-223-3315. (Point Loma)

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Quail Botanical Gardens transforms into a dazzling wonderland during our “Garden of Lights”
December 7-10, 14-23 and 26-30 • 5-9 pm
Celebrate the magic of the holiday season with this annual extravaganza. More than 100,000 sparkling lights illuminate the Gardens and create a magical experience for children and adults alike.
Enjoy live music, hot chocolate, mulled wine, crafts for children, horse and wagon rides, roasting marshmallows and visiting with Santa Claus.
For prices and more information, call: 760-436-3036 ext. 206 or visit: qbgardens.org

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**Local Events**

**San Diego County Calendar**

- **American School (6530 Soledad Mountain Road):** 10 a.m. general. 858-824-6694. (LA JOLLA)
- **Help Start a String of Goodwill** (a.k.a. pay it forward) when Woody Hill and Company perform an original musical/drama benefit on Saturday, December 7, 9 a.m. at City Point (4407 Manchester Avenue, suite 103). Program features songs from Hill’s first album, “The Call to Adventure.” Donation. Required reservations: 760-635-3722. (ENCINITAS)
- **Aloha! Makaha Sun plan sixth annual “Aloha! Makaha Sun” benefit concert, Saturday, December 7, 9 p.m. in Mandeville Auditorium at UCSD. Guest includes Dalene Aluna, Hokai Zuttermeister, Barry Kimokeo, Hau-lau o Na Ali’i and Halau Na Lei o Liana hula performances. Tickets: $37.50, $45, $75. Reservations: 619-321-1950. (LA JOLLA)
- **“Hot Monkey Laughs,”** stand-up comedy show featuring Tim Marx, Eric Knowles, Claudia Matten-Harris, Chris Millhouse, Rob Ozer, Guam Felix, Jason Bang on Saturday, December 9, 8 p.m. at Heat Monkey Love Cafe (6875 El Cajon Boulevard). $7. 619-469-4113. (COLLEGE AREA)
- **First Anniversary Conscious Comedy Explosion** celebration with Mooney Twins, other comedians, music, poetry, more — Saturday, December 9, 8 p.m., available at Chavez Community Center (415 Euclid Avenue). Tickets: $10 in advance, $15 at door. 619-819-7838. (SOUTHEAST SAN DIEGO)
- **Generalized Anxiety Disorder** discussed by psychiatrist Mark Sodomsky, M.D., on Sunday, December 10, 1 p.m., at Open Door Books (4761 Cass Street), where he’ll also sign his latest book, How to Stay the Worry Monster. Free. 858-270-8462. (PACIFIC BEACH)
- **The Bayou Brothers** play Zydeco, Cajun, blues-style music for full concert series in Schulman Auditorium at Carlsbad City Library (4775 Dove Lane) on Sunday, December 10, 2 p.m. Free. 760-602-2026. (LA COSTA)
- **Join Up!** Folk singer Adam Miller plays “Songs of the Winter Holidays” on Sunday, December 10, 4 p.m., for member concert at Mizner International Museum. New members may join at the door. RSVP: 619-239-0003 X404. (DEL MAR)
- **Post Roger Aplon reads from “Timelines,”** Sunday, December 10, 4 p.m., at the Rubber Rose, a Sex Pistols and Punk bar. Free. RSVP: 619-239-0003 X404. (BALBOA PARK)
- **Open-Mike Poetry Readings** Monday, December 11, 8 p.m., Twiggs Tea and Coffee (4590 Park Boulevard). Free. 619-296-0616. (UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS)
- **Palomar Jazz Ensemble** joins by guest Mike Wofford for annual winter concert, Monday, December 11, 8 p.m., in Howard Spreckels Park on Orange Avenue (SANDIEGO). 858-272-3750. www.DrawTheCrowd.com
- **Concert celebrating Life,** “Wishes and Candles: A Holi- day Concert Celebrating Life, Peace, and Hope” offered by The Voice San Diego North Coast Singers, Wednesday and Friday, December 13 and 15, 7 p.m. at St. Dugnig’s United Methodist Church (2274 Woodland Avenue). Free. 619-238-3037. (DEL MAR)
- **Wishes and Candles** “A Holi- day Concert Celebrating Life, Peace, and Hope” offered by The Voice San Diego North Coast Singers, Wednesday and Friday, December 13 and 15, 7 p.m. at St. Dugnig’s United Methodist Church (2274 Woodland Avenue). Free. 619-238-3037. (DEL MAR)
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- **Palomar Jazz Ensemble** joins by guest Mike Wofford for annual winter concert, Monday, December 11, 8 p.m., in Howard Spreckels Park on Orange Avenue (SANDIEGO). 858-272-3750. www.DrawTheCrowd.com

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- **1-800-Sky-Loop (800-759-5667)**

- **San Diego Wildcat riders head out on Saturday, December 9, through Del Mar, Del Dios, Escondido, and Poway. The 50 miles long with rolling hills start at 8 a.m. behind Barnes and Noble Bookstore in Del Mar Highlands shopping center. Free. 760-767-0187. (DOWNTOWN)**

- **Introduction to Sailing on Mission Bay by Seaforth Boat Rentals, Saturday, December 10, 10 a.m., starting at 1641 Quivira Road. Free. Required reservations: 858-223-1681. (MISSION BAY)**

- **Lake Poway-Lake Hodges Express Loop**, join up with Sierra Club bicyclists for 53-mile ride through Fairbanks Ranch, Santa Luz, Lake Poway, return via Lake Hodges on Sunday, December 10. Ride with peppy pace, moderate hills starts at 8:30 a.m. behind Barnes and Noble Bookstore in Del Mar Highlands shopping center. Free. 760-479-0187. (DOWNTOWN)

- **Beginner’s Kayak Lessons** on Mission Bay offered Sunday, December 10, starting at 10 a.m. at Allen’s Kayaks (819 Fernando Place). Participants must be able to swim. Free. Required reservations: 858-488-3399. (MISSION BAY)**

- **San Diego Chargers host Denver Broncos in Qualcomm Stadium, Sunday, December 10, 1:15 p.m. Game broadcast on CBS; listen on radio station KDZA, Rock 105.3. Tickets for future games start at $54, available through Ticketmaster (619-232-1200). (DOWNTOWN)**

- **The San Diego Wildcats** play basketball against Bellingham Slam, Sunday, December 10, 5:05 p.m. at Eastlake High School (1120 Eastlake Parkway). $5. 619-696-5123. (LA JOLLA)

- **Weekly Running Groups** hosted by Moonin’ Shores. Runs three to five miles long with rolling hills start-ev
Reading

Butterfly Boy: Memories of a Chicano Mariposa

By Rigoberto González
University of Wisconsin Press, 2006, 222 pages, $24.95

English and Latino studies at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, González writes in a poetic yet straightforward style that heightens the power of his story. (mariposa is Spanish for "fagot" as well as butterfly.)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Rigoberto González is the author of So Often the Killer Goes to Winter until It Breaks, a selection of the National Poetry Series, and of Other Fugitives and Other Strangers. A recipient of Guggenheim and NEA fellowships and of several international artist residencies, he has also written two children's picture books, a literary biography, and an award-winning novel, Crossing Vines. He is on the Advisory Circle of Con Tinta — a coalition of Chicano/Latino activist writers. He lives in New York City.

A CONVERSATION WITH THE AUTHOR:

When I phoned Mr. González at his home in New York, he had just returned, the day before, from a west coast tour to promote Butterfly Boy. In a couple of months he will head out again to promote his new poetry collection, Other Fugitives and Other Strangers.

"In what ways are the lives of migratory people romanticized by the rest of American culture?"

"People like the idea; they think that it’s sexy or romantic. For them, movement means progress, violation, or action. But, sometimes movement is repetition. Movement is lack of stability and the inability to make long-term commitments. "I like moving around, but there’s also a lot of loneliness attached to it. You’re always leaving people behind. You’re always leaving places behind. You meet somebody and understand that this is all the exchange and interaction you are going to have, and then you move on." Still, you create your emotional and personal baggage with you. That’s why the big discovery in the book is me when you ask about my father. You can’t reinvent yourself, but in the end you slip back to old habits." "Is your father still living?"

"No. My father passed away a couple of months ago. The book was an attempt to recognize and come to understand what happened between us, but it’s also a kind of love letter. Through language, I’m trying to understand who he is and why I am and why we don’t get along. The sad thing is that there’s no longer a conversation. It’s all in memory, and it’s all mental. "Many of us have problems with our families. We can all identify with parent-child conflict, and we’re all looking for solutions. The other common denominator is that no matter how difficult the relationship is, we do love each other. It is love. We wish it was a different, more positive kind of love, but we just couldn’t make a positive kind of love."

HOLIDAY OF LIGHTS at Del Mar Fairgrounds is display of seasonal festive lights, with holiday-themed displays and more than 400 displays on view through Monday, January 1. Visitors view lighted creations from their vehicles, driving along 1.5-mile route through surrogates, around racetrack. Hours: 5:30–10 p.m. Sun-
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MUSEUMS

California Surf Museum, “The Surfer-Shapers,” on exhibit through 2006, showcases several surfers whose conceptual abilities and new knowledge, the more I realized that there were so many people in the same boat. One of the things I remember was hearing about opening up a bank account. There were five of us whose parents had never had a bank account. We had no idea what to do, so we all went to the bank together.

“The other thing was the diversity of the college campus and the expectations there. We were learning to be adults and learning to be students and learning to be Americans in this institution that demanded so much. “Many of us didn’t make it and went back home. Every year, in the fall, there was a sea of brown faces on campus, and by the spring it had dwindled down. The expectations, the level of writing and the level of knowledge were very different. The pulp mysteries I had read in high school just didn’t do me any good when I took a course in 19th-century British literature. “I remember going into the bookstores to buy books for classes I wasn’t even taking, because I knew there was something that I was missing. Actually, I had done this once before. When I first arrived in this country, I was ten years old. All of my friends had this knowledge of music that I didn’t have. I remember thinking that if I was going to keep up, I had to learn. I asked questions, and I would go to friends’ houses and listen to music. I learned to say, ‘Oh, that’s my son’s song.’”

“Migration from Mexico to the U.S. was a good training ground for the second migration from home to college. The one thing that I learned from my family was to adapt. We adapted to all kinds of environments, no matter what.”

“You may recall some painful and some painfully intimate details. Did you find those details difficult to relive?”

“There are still some passages that I cannot read out loud (verbatim on page 45).”

“Every year, in the fall, there was a sea of brown faces on campus, and by the spring it had dwindled down.”

• Gift Certificates
• Wine Country Lunch
• corrugated metal barn, 1941 train station. Exhibits include original telegraph and telephone equipment, pot-bellied coal stove, period furniture, and the adjacent freight train display features 1925 steam locomotive, 1957 refrigerated car, 1941 caboose. Find the museum at La Mesa Boulevard and Spring Street. 619-465-7776 (LA MESA)

Mace House Museum, built 1887 and surrounded by rose gardens, the site includes “one of the last barns still standing in California.” Docent and self-guided tours of historic house and gardens. Find Mace House at 258 Rech Street; 760-434-9189 (CARLSBAD)

Museum of Making Music, “Brother Musician, Listen to a Miracle,” exhibit celebrating 75th birthday of electric guitar is collaboration between museum, organology expert Matthew Hill, and Rickenbacker International Corporation. Exhibit charts development of electric guitar by exploring innovations, includes prototypes and custom instruments. Through December.

“Howard Orme: Forgotten Voices Remembered” is exhibit of rare and historic mandolins, mandolas, and guitars manufactured by Elias Howe Company of Boston over 100 years ago. Howe-Orme were awarded a series of patents for “the uniqueness of their functional design features and style.” Through April.

The past 100 years of American...
because I’ll begin to cry. But I had to be completely honest. I didn’t want to romanticize my journey. One of my critics said that it was a cheerful story because I didn’t continue the narrative to the point of me becoming a happy gay man. I’ve got news. I’m not completely happy. I’m not bad, but I wouldn’t say that I’ve reached a state of bliss. I wanted to acknowledge that the family wasn’t perfect and that I had issues and was flawed.

“One of the things you speak frankly about is having been in a physically abusive relationship with a older man. How do you respond to that?”

“Friends who knew me then didn’t quite understand how devastating the relationship was. Some read it and tell me they never want to see me in that position again. Others feel guilty, because they feel like they weren’t there for me while it was happening, and they feel strange that they didn’t understand the severity of the relationship.

“The other reaction from people who don’t know me is that they are curious. They wonder how I could write that and control the language when it was packed with emotion. There is more of a technical question.

“The new book of poetry is a companion to Butterfly Boy. It’s all about abusive relationships between men. I take turns writing in the voice of the abused and of the abuser. I wanted to bring attention to these devastating relationships in the queer community.

“When I was looking for a support group, back in 2001 when my relationships were falling because I still hadn’t worked things out with this old abusive relationship, I was only able to find three in the whole country. There was one in Seattle, one in Tucson, and one in New York City. I remember going to the one in Seattle, and it was for the entire Northwest.”

“Why do you think so little support exists?”

“It’s part of it to do with the shame, but also, I think, the pressure we put from the queer community to show only positive representations of ourselves. When I started reading these poems aloud, a gay man in the audience said to me, ‘How dare you write these poems! Here we are functioning to represent our community as healthy, and you’re telling the world that we are not.’

“I’m showing how complex we are and that we have problems like everybody else. That’s how heterogeneous starting deals with physical abuse. People started coming forward and talking about it. Nobody had talked about it, the problem would be worse than it is now. We have laws and resources for women because they stepped forward and said there was a problem. We need to do the same thing in the queer community. We are all susceptible to this kind of negative dynamic. Not all gay people, of course, but it does exist in our community.”

“‘Butterfly Boy’ is written from a queer perspective, but my whole life is not all queer. The book is about ethnicity. It’s about cultural issues. It’s about queer issues. It’s all of me, and that’s what I wanted to represent — the complexity. I’ll be a challenge to the queer community to see race. It’ll be a challenge to the Latino community to see queerness. There are other writers out there navigating these issues as well. It’s not like we choose one day this and another day that, we are all of these things all of the time.” — Jerry Miller
Privacies

The rooms turn into marvelous echo chambers and the art begins to converse with itself.

Art's cultural profile is created partly by its private art collections. San Diego has its share of significant ones, and the San Diego Museum of Art has mounted a couple of exhibitions — the last was in 1983 — that feature them and give us the chance to get a peak at what some folks live with.

The museum's current show, Personal Views: Regarding Private Collections in San Diego, draws from 25 collections. The sheer numbers reflect the very broad band of tastes on view, so the result is a bit of a grab bag. The exhibition spuns you, not unpleasantly, this way and that: it includes everything from classic modern painting to Nigerian masks and Indian sculpture to a solid cube constructed of straight pins (by a young American, Tara Donovan) to early American primitive portrait. Interested yet?

Stay interested, because if you make it halfway through the installation, the rooms turn into marvelous echo chambers and the art begins to converse with itself, and random, unexpected connections reveal themselves. Consider this. The first thing you see is a 1943 painting of a boxy woman on a beach by the American Milton Avery, who often arranged flat, thinly painted visual planes — sea, shore, body, sky — into a kind of pastoral fabric. Avery was the calmest of American painters when contemporaries like Mark Rothko, Jackson Pollock, and Willem de Kooning were stirring up stormier weathers. The woman in Avery's pictures is one version of the American goddess, a motif that it walks its crooked walk through modern American art history in de Kooning, Warhol, and many others.

A few rooms later we find the originals from which a lot of the goddess imagery derived, real cult objects from faraway times and places. A smiling, saucer-eyed Ewa figure from New Guinea belonging to Mina and Edward Smith, who have contributed several enchanting figures from their largely South Pacific collection, is a goddess image believed to invoke strength and success in hunting. Ewos, carved from a single piece of wood, are the oldest objects to come out of New Guinea, and along with other statues and ceremonial masks scattered throughout the show (from Nigeria, Hawaii, New Caledonia, Mexico, and elsewhere), they recall the cliché that modernism was invented not by late-19th-century European painters but by Mayan, Aztec, African, and other indigenous artisans. You see the connection immediately in the thickly outlined, masklike woman's face in a 1938 Hans Hofmann picture lent by Hughes and Sheila Potiker, who also own the Avery.

You might feel soothed by the zigzagging periods and styles and types of art. You can step across the room from a First Century B.C. “Head of Hermes” (a carved image from Greek antiquity that capped a square shaft set at transitional places like doorways and street corners: Hermes was a guide to the underworld and Apollo’s messenger) to a big Mannerist canvas by the minor 17th-century Italian artist Antonio Molinari, Allegory of Melancholia and Choler. Sleepy-eyed Melancholy sits stooped over, massive head in hand, fiddling with a geomater’s compass that keeps retring the same circle (a repetitive motion fecklessness symptomatig, we’d now say, of clinical depression), while an appropriately irate, tensed-up Choler looms over him, drawing a sword, knitting — with an exaggeration typical of Mannerism — a scratched, multifolded brow, like the one I saw on a shark-pei poosh that crossed my path in Balboa Park.

If the Molinari is overloaded with Manneristic ticst — extreme foregrounding, pumped torsos, seething emotion — some of the contemporary work included in Personal Views has its own predictable ticst. A large 2003 work by the Portuguese Joao Louro titled Blind Image is meant not to please the eye but to pinch the brain. Across the bottom of the frame sit two bold lines of type: “ABOVE: BRIGITTE BARDOT; DIEU CRAE LA FEMME. She was the first actress whose fetized sexuality resided in her entire naked body: the blond hair, the beautiful face, the line down the back, across the curve of the buttocks and bikini and long legs.” The French phrase refers to Roger Vadim’s scandals (in its time, 1956) movie, And God Created Woman, featuring a naked Bardot, screen goddess and our new Eve. Above the verbiage, occupying most of the picture’s square footage, is a blank space. I get the conceptual meaning and interactive dynamic of this piece — it’s a visual sermonette: we see only ourselves reflected in the glass — but it’s simplistic and didactic.

Personal Views reminds us of the ongoing task of cultures and artists to find new ways to express the human form. Sometimes the representation is bound up in religious ceremonialism, like a painting by the Haitian Hector Hyppolite, a self-taught artist (about whom the high priest of Surrealism, Andre Breton, wrote an essay), that depicts Erzulie, Voudon’s goddess of love and beauty. Another picture rooted in Voudon and Santeria, by Wilfredo Lam, depicts horned animals related to Caribbean deities in a lush tropical landscape of watermelon reds and indy indigos straight out of The Buena Vista Social Club.

More often, though, the imagery is as secular as it gets. The photographer Nan Goldin (collected by Joyce and Ted Strauss), notorious for garish, super-intimate scenes of her edge-world friends and their down-and-dirty milieu, is represented here with Joey at the Love Ball. Joey, a drag queen dolled up in a supremely low-cut suprise — exposed 18th century gown, looks like a cross-dresser’s wedding cake ornament and wears a heavily bejeweled wig with such a serious wingspan that if he leaned too far to either side, forget it. And yet the picture delivers, because it layers into its mannerisms rich, complicated suggestions about sexual and historical identity, costume, disguise, and camp, and the entire image pulses with affection for the subject.

Another strong photographer and Strauss favorite, 31-year-old Melanie Pullen, like Goldin, is captivated by constructed images of the self, but in her pictures they really are constructed. Pulien stages scenes, using elaborate preparations — storyboards, scene-dressing, rehearsals — to create images of violated victims. In Self-Portrait, she presents herself as a crime victim, lying in bed dressed in bloodyed clothes. It’s a strange amalgam of Quentin Tarantino grimness and Victorian primness. The open-grained textures create an exquisite pointillist surface that supports, however, a faintly awful reality, even though the “reality” is faked. The picture is a kind of fictive documentary, folding together the gruesome and the gorgeous so tightly that it puts you on edge and leaves you there.

An 1873 painting by the French Impressionist James Jacques Tissot, The Japanese Scroll, establishes another visual stream that runs through the exhibition. A woman in an overdecorated sitting room admires a scroll painting looming across her lap. When Japan was opened to the West in 1868, European painters immediately took up the decorative flatness and monochromatics of its art. The scene in Tissot’s picture illustrates that historic moment, and its style reflects the Japanese influence. Elsewhere in the exhibition we see how that influence played out in work by Pierre Bonnard, Edouard Vuillard (whose interiors look like Vermeer), and their down-and-dirty milieu.

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*Jezebel of Life*

Thu., Dec. 14 @ 7:00 p.m.

**Joan Collins**

*All About Eve*

Fri., Dec. 15 @ 7:00 p.m.

**Audrey Hepburn**

*Roman Holiday*

Sat., Jan. 19 @ 7:00 p.m.

**Elizabeth Taylor**

*GIants*

Thurs., Jan. 25 @ 7:00 p.m.

**Marilyn Monroe**

*Some Like It Hot*

Thurs., Jan. 25 @ 7:00 p.m.

**Tickets:** $10-15

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James S. Copley Auditorium

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ART LISTINGS

Events that are underlined occur after December 14.

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. Or fax to 619-881-2401. You may also submit information online at SanDiegoreader.com by clicking on the events section.

GALLERIES

Abstract Minimalist Art by Silvia Valentino opens with reception on Friday, December 8, 4 p.m., at Expressions of Mexico Gallery (11122 Cesar Chavez Parkway). 612-369-1609. Continues through Friday, January 12. (SAN DIEGO)

Fish Out of Water Gallery opens with group show and “Ray at Night” reception, Saturday, December 9, 6 p.m. Exhibit continues through Friday, January 12, at 2925 Lincoln Avenue. 619-296-0761. (NORTH PARK)

3 Way,” exhibition of work by Josh Clay, Caisa Koopman, and Josh Taylor opens with reception on Saturday, December 9, 9 p.m., at Distinction Artist Studios and Gallery (317 East Grand Avenue). Closes Saturday, February 3. 760-791-3779. All 14 artist studios will be open during reception. (SAN DIEGO)

“Holiday Spirits” will be lifed during multimedia exhibit opening with Ray at Night reception at Sharp Gallery (3807 Ray Street), Saturday, December 9, 6 p.m., at 619-546-9546. Through Thursday, January 11. (NORTH PARK)

Ray at Night, over 20 art venues showcase local art on second Saturday of each month, including December 9, 6–10 p.m, centered at Ray Street and University Avenue. Live music, food, 619-546-9546. Free. (NORTH PARK)

Thirty Abstract Paintings by M.L. Bradley gathered in exhibit opening with reception, Saturday, December 9, 6 p.m., at Studio 3060 (University Avenue). 619-347-8962. Free. (CENTRAL)

“Dragonz,” exhibition of functional and decorative ceramic pieces by Sara Duvall is on view through December at CASD Gallery (3842 Ray Street). Reception in conjunction with “Ray at Night” is Saturday, December 9, 7 p.m. 619-543-9791. (NORTH PARK)

“On and Off,” exhibition of work by Barbara Sexton continues through Sunday, January 28, at Earl and Birdie Taylor Library (Pacific Beach, 2457 Cass Street). Meet Sexton during reception, Sunday, December 10, 1 p.m.

The art was “conceived as a site-specific installation” for the gallery, with “wall-sized, fabric-like panels imprinted” with digitally manipulated, photo-based imagery. 858-581-9934. Sexton will discuss her work Saturday, January 13, 1 p.m. (BAECH BEACH)

Watercolorist Art Sultzel has work featured in main gallery of Born GLI Space Gallery through December. Reception on Sunday, December 10, 2 p.m., includes six open studios with “small works for the holidays” at First South Coast second floor at 4411 Park Boulevard, 619-437-1664. (UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS)

Artists Daniel Vacce and Martha Sanchez have exhibition opening with reception on Thursday, December 14, 6 p.m., at Galerie d’Art (3940 Logan Avenue). 858-793-0316. (SUDLEY BEACH)

CLASSICAL LISTINGS

Events that are underlined occur after December 14.

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 CLASSICAL MUSIC, Box 85803, San Diego CA 92186. Or fax to 619-881-2401. You may also submit information online at SanDiegoreader.com by clicking on the events section.

CLASSICAL

Music Student Honors Recital offered during Concert Hour series, Thursday, December 7, 12:30 p.m. in Palomar College’s Performing Arts Center at 1140 West Mission Road. Free. 760-744-1150 x2316.

County Youth performs in First Thursday Concert in Escondido Library’s Turmiente Room (259 South Kalmina Street on December 7, 7 p.m. Free. 760-839-4230. (ESCONDIDO)

“Canticle of Joy,” J.M. Martin’s piece performed for Tulelake Concert 2006, December 8–10, at Hope United Methodist Church (16550 Bernardo Heights Parkway). Concert includes more than 50 voices, small orchestra, traditional Christmas music with narration. Concerts begin at 7 p.m. on Friday, 2 p.m. on Saturday, 4 p.m. on Sunday. To obtain free tickets, call 858-485-5800. (BACHELOR)

Sacred and Secular Christmas Favorites performed by handbell choirs, mixed and matched adult choirs, children’s choirs for “Christmas Celebrations” slated for Friday and Saturday, December 8 and 9, 7 p.m., at San Carlos United Methodist Church (6554 Covales Mountain Boulevard). Offering. 619-464-4331. (sacramento)

Orchestral Masterworks promised when Point Loma Nazarene University Orchestra performs Friday December 8, 7:30 p.m., in Crill Performance Hall. Find campus at 3900 Loma Linda Drive. 619-849-2325. (Point Loma)

Poulenc’s “Gloria” may be heard when USD Choral Scholars and USD Concert Choir perform Friday, December 8, 8 p.m., in Founders Chapel of Founders Hall at University of San Diego (5998 Alcala Park). Choirs joined by soprano Rebecca Basilio and orchestra for selection of holiday choral favorites, carol sing-along. Concert repeats Sunday, December 10, 2 p.m. 10 general: 619-260-4711. (LA JOLLA)

All Mozart! The overture to “ Marriage of Figaro,” “Sinfonia Concertante,” and Symphony No. 41 (“Jupiter”) may be heard when David Atherton leads San Diego Symphonies “Jubilant Serenades” concerts, December 8–10. Symphony is joined by William Preucil (violin), Cynthia Phelps (viola). Concerts begin at 8 p.m. on Friday and 2 p.m. on Sunday, at Copley Symphony Hall (750 B Street). $20–85. Reservations: 619-235-1034. (SACRAMENTO)

The Scripps Ranch Madrigals, and a cappella group, attend in period costume, sings a program of sacred and secular music for Pleasure of Your Company holiday concert, Sunday, December 10, 2:30 p.m., at Scripps Miramar Ranch Library (10300 Scripps Lake Drive). Donation. 858-538-8158. (SAN DIEGO)

Violinist Tai Murray performs for Discovery Sanctuary Sunday, December 10, 3 p.m., at Neurosciences Institute (10480 Johns Hopkins Drive). Murray is joined by pianist Gilles Vansottel in program including Bruckner’s “Sonata for Violin and Piano in C Minor No. 2,” the “Sonata for Violin and Piano in G Minor” by De- bussy, Ysaye’s “Sonata in D Minor for Solo Violin No. 3,” the “Sonata in E-Flat Major for Violin and Piano” by R. Strauss, and Bartók’s “Romanian Folk Dances.”
A Celtic Christmas Celebration

Saturday, December 16th, 2006 at 8:00 pm
Premiere Performance at the Stephen and Mary Birch North Park Theatre

Come and enjoy a delightful evening of song, dance, and images of Ireland. Hear your favorite Christmas carols performed on the uileann pipes, Irish whistle, flute, fiddle, and bodhran, by San Diego’s finest Irish musicians accompanied by traditional Irish dancing in the style of ‘Riverdance’.

Featured artists include:
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**And Jennifer White Stays?!?** Kevin Stapleford resigned last week as program director for 91X. Stapleford, who had programmed 91X from 1987 until 1995, said that he was brought back to the station last summer after 91X became independent of Clear Channel Communications; with Stapleford’s help, the intent was to recapture 91X’s glory days of the ’80s and early ’90s. Upon Stapleford’s return, veteran DJs Robin Roth and Hilary were fired. Afternoon DJ and music director Marco Collins left the station due to personal issues. In the April-June Arbitron ratings survey, 91X earned the worst ratings in its 23-year history. Garett Michaels, who programs competitor FM-94/9, says, “the sheer number of songs” by Panic at the Disco, My Chemical Romance, and Fall Out Boy may have hurt 91X.

For 26 years as a bar and 4 years as a live-music venue, the Blvd. should be required to have four deputies on duty during certain live-music events (the club pays the deputies). The Blvd. had its liquor license suspended in February after a patron left the bar intoxicated and killed herself behind the wheel. “It shows that business was not managed properly,” says ABC administrator Robin Van Dyke. The suspension was lifted two weeks ago. When the Blvd. opened in early 2004, employees boasted that they had “three bars under one roof,” and they compared it to Solana Beach’s Belly Up Tavern because it would attract major-name tours to San Marcos. The club hosted headliners such as Long Beach Short Bus, Ed-K-A-Mouse, and Dead Man’s Party. The Blvd. formerly hosted all-age reggae shows on Sunday. At present, the Jumping Turtle is the only North County nightclub that allows music fans under 21 (Sunday night). MTV and MTV2 aired the documentary when it was released three years ago.

**Blurt**

**The inside track**

from 1989 until 1995, was brought back to the station last summer after 91X became independent of Clear Channel Communications; with Stapleford’s help, the intent was to recapture 91X’s glory days of the ’80s and early ’90s. Upon Stapleford’s return, veteran DJs Robin Roth and Hilary were fired. Afternoon DJ and music director Marco Collins left the station due to personal issues. In the April-June Arbitron ratings survey, 91X earned the worst ratings in its 23-year history. Garett Michaels, who programs competitor FM-94/9, says, “the sheer number of songs” by Panic at the Disco, My Chemical Romance, and Fall Out Boy may have hurt 91X. “Those artists are very popular with a certain segment of listener, but they can be very polarizing to the other segment,” says Michaels about artists his station won’t play. “If you overdose on those bands, it can hurt your overall music credibility.”

Trip Reeb, who programmed 91X from 1987 until 1989 (and who selected Stapleford as his replacement in 1989), took over as 91X program director last week. He says he will select a permanent replacement for Stapleford by the end of December. Reeb did not want to comment on any new musical direction 91X may take or the status of the current DJ lineup.

— Ken Leighton

**Slow and Steady in San Marcos**

“The rivalry was between the Jumping Turtle, the Longshot, and the Boulevard,” says promoter Sulo King. “It was like [the movie] Roadhouse.” The owner of one of those San Marcos nightclubs says, “In May 2004 [a competing club] staged a fight…[part of a] smear campaign.” Sheriff’s deputy Sgt. Rich Williams says officers responded to 75 calls to the Blvd. between December ’04 and October ’06. His department recommended and the city agreed that the Blvd. should be required to have four deputies on duty.

**Panic at the Disco...WORTHY OF EXCLAMATION?**

**MOTIVATION CATCHES UP WITH KUT U UP**

Encinitas punk goofballs Kut U Up have always been proud of their slacker work ethic. “We’re the least-hardest-working band in Southern California,” says bassist Chris Cote. Yet, with no CD, website, manager, or publicist, the four-man band was asked to tour and open for all 56 dates of the 2002 Green Day/blink-182 U.S. tour. Kut U Up filmed their experience and produced the 45-minute video titled Riding in Cars with Boys. MTV and MTV2 aired the documentary when it was released three years ago.

**A-Mouse, and Dead Man’s Stalemate**

**Stalemate**

San Diego punk rockers Stalemate have always been proud of their slacker work ethic. “We’re the least-hardest-working band in Southern California,” says bassist Chris Cote. Yet, with no CD, website, manager, or publicist, the four-man band was asked to tour and open for all 56 dates of the 2002 Green Day/blink-182 U.S. tour. Kut U Up filmed their experience and produced the 45-minute video titled Riding in Cars with Boys. MTV and MTV2 aired the documentary when it was released three years ago.
SAN DIEGO Reader December 7, 2006

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21
SHAKA BUKU • A CONSCIOUS FEW
High Tide • Burnt

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29
THURSDAY, JANUARY 18
SATURDAY, JANUARY 6
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31
NEW YEAR’S EVE

THE PHARCYDE
Special Guests – Those Dang Robinsons & Dj Demon

# Four Course Gourmet
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# Champagne Toast
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Happy New Year M-F 5-7 pm
Discounted Appetizers & Drink Specials
Ask us about our $2, $3 & $4 Happy Hour Parties!

San Diego Reader December 7, 2006 5
Inspired by Frank

“Fool’s Day Data is an audio/visual musical satire about a medical cannabis activist and his ex-girlfriend,” says video artist Tony Mindcontrole of the “pomposory” DVD he’s working on with the Swollen Monkeys, a local band. “The ex-girlfriend falls into the depths of meth and sexual addiction, becoming a pathological liar and completely changing from her formerly shy and honest persona.” He says one scene in the “mostly autobiographical” DVD may qualify it for an X rating.

“There’s a video set to ‘Latex Lady from Long Island,’ a love ballad about plastic, female, full-sized hump-me dolls. The character — not yours truly — really does make love with her/it. The footage captures some touching, intimate moments of real latex loving.” Not that Mindcontrole is into porn. “I’ve never seen an X-rated film,” he says.

Mindcontrole (real name Tony Villodas) says the film is inspired by Frank Zappa. “He has someone he got to know through his ‘mentor,’” former Zappa sideman Jimmy Carl Black.

Jimmy couldn’t even use his own name for a while, due to litigation with Frank over the Mothers of Invention characters. Frank and I didn’t get along at all… One day, before the recording of Zappa’s Bongo Fury LP with Captain Beefheart — around ’75, ’76 — I sparked up a doob as Frank and his band rehearsed, and he stopped the song mid-tune, spun around, aimed his guitar at me and snarled. I love his music, but it sure was hate at first sight with me and him. He hated pot, and I hate cigarettes.”

— Jay Allen Sanford

OVERHEARD IN SAN DIEGO: MIRA MESA PARTY

JAY ALLEN SANFORD

A call to Smoyer was not a lawsuit, and they don’t want to buy him out,” says Parkhurst. “And Bill said we own the next record. But he doesn’t have the distribution that can take the band where we want to go… Volcom is a huge thing. It’s the difference between being with a label run out of an extra bedroom and a huge worldwide company.”

A call to Smoyer was not returned. Parkhurst appears with his other band, Yowee, December 21 at the Belly Up Tavern.

— Ken Leighton

Sushi til Midnight!!

Wednesday

Humpday Soiree

SPECIAL GUEST HOUSE DJs

Wednesday, December 7

$2 Off HAN cocktails
$2 Infusion shots

Thursday

Harney sushi

RASHI UNITE PERIL DASH EYE JESTER

Thursday, December 8

$3 Islandweizen draft
$10 Islandweizen pitcher

Friday

Deez Riddim

Jungle and Reggae

Friday, December 9

Saturday

PRS 1

Audio Archeologist
and urban mood conductor

Saturday, December 10

Join us for “Super Lunch” meal combos
mon-fi 12-3pm
Off the Deep End

“The trickiest problem in performance for me is getting paid.”

I play classical piano, badly — mostly just to learn my parts,” says mezzo-soprano singer Molly Wilmot, who lives in La Mesa.

“My dad put me in piano lessons, where I learned music theory and classical piano. In college, I got into classical voice training. Now I’m just taking all of that and going off the deep end. Typical chick singer here with no gear and no knowledge.”

Aside from the vocal gymnastics of classical and modern opera, Wilmot records and performs with experimental arthouse band Pruitt Igoe and has performed in four shows with the San Diego Opera Chorus. She has toured Poland, Lithuania, and Serbia with the Joe Alter Dance Group and plays “the victim” with Vicus Edo at the Casbah — “a little holiday bloodshed,” she calls it.

Wilmot will be appearing at the San Diego Civic Theatre in several performances with the San Diego Opera Chorus from January through April.

LIVE SHOWS?
“The trickiest problem in performance for me is getting paid. At some venues, bands actually have to pay to play or are paid with a bar tab. I love to sing. I love to perform, but how am I supposed to feed myself and my family?”

EARLIEST MEMORIES?
1. “A burro poking his head into the driver’s-side window on a family vacation through the Black Hills in South Dakota.”
2. “Trying to swap baby blankets with my newborn cousin because hers appeared to be in better shape.”
3. “Singing loudly and dancing in church and having a nun compliment me.”

WHAT’S IN YOUR CD PLAYER RIGHT NOW?
1. “Orchestras with effects pedals.”
2. “Improv and classical training simultaneously.”
3. “Ritas, rants, theaters, thrift stores, ice cream parlors....”

FAVORITE HANGOUT?
“Anywhere, wherever — I love it here. I’ve lived here for nine years. I like to hang out where my friends and family are hanging out. We go to the beach, parks, bars, concert halls, galleries, restaurants, theaters, thrift stores, ice cream parlors....”

WHERE DO YOU SEE MUSIC GOING IN THE 21ST CENTURY?
1. “Orchestras with effects pedals.”
2. “Improv and classical training simultaneously.”
3. “Music back into the schools, because we finally realized that we can’t live without it.”

HOLIDAY PLANS?
“I plan on spoiling my stepson, Jack, baking cookies and making chocolate peanut butter salty balls, and stuffing my face. I am also determined to talk someone into going to the Rose Parade with me. I have fantasized about it since I was a little girl in Minnesota. I must see it. I must see it.”

BEST/WORST GIG?
“The first time is always the best. I was at a dive bar called The Blvd. near SDSU. I learned backup vocals for a couple of songs with a band called Burl lives. It was my first real gig with a band. With the help of two shots of whiskey, I got up and sang. People were drunk and dancing on the booths and the bar and pole dancing, and they loved us, and I felt like a frickin’ rock star, baby.”

BRUSH WITH THE FAMOUS?
“I saw Richard Simmons in the airport in Omaha when I was a kid. He was blowing kisses and yelling, ‘I love you! I love you all!’ He had the most amazing Afro.”

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Valid Tuesday, December 12, 2006
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4th & B
San Diego
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31ST

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JASON BLAKEMORE

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- Peanut butter ice cream
- Ice cubes

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Tuaca Blaster

- 1 1/2 oz. Tuaca
- Energy Drink

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Cheers!

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**Calendar**

**THURSDAY**

**10/21**

- *San Diego Reader*

**FRIDAY**

**10/22**

- *San Diego Reader*

**SATURDAY**

**10/23**

- *San Diego Reader*

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**What’s in your bartender’s freezer?**

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Monday Night Football BBQ

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Saturday & Sunday

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**Happy Hour till 7 pm**

- $1 off pitchers

- 50¢ off bottle pits, pints, etc.

**LATE NIGHT FOOD till 1 am**

---

**FEBRUARY**


Manu: Sycuan Casino Center, Saturday, February 3, 5469 Casino Way, El Cajon. 619-224-4171.

Sound Tribe Sector Nine: House of Blues, Friday, February 16, 1055 Fifth Avenue, Gaslamp. 619-299-2983.


**MARCH**


Christina Aguilera: Sycuan Casino Center, Friday, March 2, 5469 Casino Way, El Cajon. 619-224-4171.

Snow Patrol: Open Air Theatre, Saturday, March 3, SDSU campus, College Area. 619-594-6947.


Dave Stamey: Acoustic Music San Diego, Saturday, March 17, 4600 Manchester Street, Normal Heights. 619-305-8767.

Rod Stewart: Cox Arena, Sunday, March 22, SDCU campus, College Area. 619-594-0425.


**APRIL**

Josh Grabin: Sycuan Casino Center, Friday, April 6, 5469 Casino Way, El Cajon. 619-224-4171.

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**MARCH**

**THURSDAY**

- *San Diego Reader*

**FRIDAY**

- *San Diego Reader*

**SATURDAY**

- *San Diego Reader*

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**MARCH**

**THURSDAY**

- *San Diego Reader*

**FRIDAY**

- *San Diego Reader*

**SATURDAY**

- *San Diego Reader*
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ON BROADWAY

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8TH

Weekly Lineup

JUDGE JULES
Special Opening Set by SUPERFOX
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THURSDAY 12.7
B-REAL
Of Cypress Hill and Friends

FRIDAY 12.8
GIANT
DERRICK CARTER
Chris Herrera | Jason Tokita

UPCOMING DATES
12.15
DJ SNEAK
12.16
EDDIE AMADOR
Belo Christmas Party
12.22
JUNKIE XL
Live

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104 San Diego Reader December 7, 2006
If you would like to include your DJ or music event please contact the editor at dailyinfo@thetexter.com or submit a listing online at SanDiegoReader.com by clicking on the music section. Deadline is 5 p.m. Friday. For the listings below please contact the respective venue. The listings are free.

**DANCE**

If you would like to include your DJ event, e-mail dailyinfo@thetexter.com or submit a listing online at SanDiegoReader.com by clicking on the music section. Deadline is 5 p.m. Friday. For the listings below please contact the respective venue. The listings are free.

**Brick by Brick**

Fridays, Throgs, industrial, gothic, and mixed with DJ Bryan Pollard and guest. 8:30 p.m. to 2:30 a.m.; 21 and up. 1109 11th Street, Gaslamp. 619-234-5483.

**Buster Daly**

Sundays and Mondays, with DJ Vyper 2Kings, Xavier, Clean Cut, and Mykon King. 3112 University Avenue, North Park. 619-424-1747.

**Canes**

Thursdays and Saturdays, Top 40, hip-hop, and old skool with DJs Power Girth, 'Canes. 8 p.m. to 1:30 a.m.; 21 and up. 3929 30th Street, North Park. 619-291-3466.

**Character’s Bar & Grill (La Jolla Marriott)**

Fridays and Saturdays, salsa, mambos, and merengues. 9:30 p.m.; 21 and up. 4240 La Jolla Village Drive, La Jolla. 858-507-6397.

**The C Lounge**

Sundays, Liquid, liquid funk and drum ’n’ bass. 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.; 21 and up. No cover. 756 Fifth Avenue, downtown. 619-233-2838.

**Crudo**

Thursdays, deep, soulful, and sexy house grooves with guest DJs. 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.; 21 and up. No cover. 1933 India Street (at Grapo), Little Italy. 619-398-2974.

**Dino’s**


**The Flame**

Second and fifth Saturdays of the month, Softao, gothic, industrial, and dark ’90s with DJs Robin Roth, Adam Atom, and Dukemidi. 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.; 21 and up. 370 Park Boulevard, Hillcrest. 619-295-1463.

**Gaslamp Tavern**

Thursdays, DJ Bilie Knight, Rock, and guest spin true hip-hop. Fridays and Saturdays. DJ Bilie Knight spins Tavern music. Sundays, DJ Tiki spins ’80s. 868 Fifth Avenue, Gaslamp. 619-239-3339.

**Habana Restaurant**

 Saturdays, Adventura: Salsa, merengue, and chus with David Garcia and David Suarez. 10 p.m. 7777 University Avenue, La Mesa. 619-733-2011.

**Honey Bee Hive**

Wednesdays, Salsa Sessions, underground hip-hop, downtempo, and breaks with DJ Rikki Weeks and Mada. 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. Thursdays, Deep, drum ’n’ bass with DJs Walkover, Probable Cause, and Skyler Mac; 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. 1449 C Street (center of 14th Street, across from City College), downtown. 619-702-6010.

**Inferno Young Adult Nightclub**

Fridays and Saturdays. Top 40, hip-hop, and old skool with DJs Power Girth, DJ Ricky Wrecks and Mada; 8 p.m. to 1 a.m.; 21 and up. No cover. 4696 30th Street, North Park. 619-239-3339.

**Jack’s Lounge**

Fridays, sexy dance music with DJ Misha and weekly guests. Saturdays, vocal house with DJ Sean Wilson. 7853 Girard Avenue, La Jolla. 858-456-8111.

**Kadon**

Wednesdays, Darkscene Garden, punk, gothic, and ethereal mix with DJ Bryan Pollard, Stem, and Griminella. First Saturday of the month, Brokenheart Night. In electronics, machine funk, and breaks. Second and third Saturday of the month, Underground Playground. Breaks, house, and progressive with Jack Tripper and guest DJs. Tuesdays, Distortion, mashups, bastard pop, and cybertrash. 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.; 21 and up. No cover. 4096 30th Street, North Park. 619-420-2510.

**The Kava Lounge**

Second Friday of the month, Adventure, Robin Roth and Tom King spin the best in dark underground dance music. 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.; 21 and up. La Jolla Village Drive, La Jolla. 858-543-0933.

**The Kesington Club**

Wednesdays, Top 40, hip-hop, rock, ’n’ soul, and funk with DJs Buddha and JTC; 9:30 p.m. 4099 Adams Avenue, Kenmore. 619-284-2484.

**Michael’s Lounge (Hyatt Regency)**

Thursdays, DJ Neko, Sky, and Chris Mullins spin hip-hop, dance, and ’70s/’80s. 9 p.m. to 3:30 a.m. 1449 C Street (corner of 14th Street), downtown. 619-452-1224.

**Mission Valley Resort**

Fridays and Saturdays, Gothic, industrial, and dark electro with DJs Bryan Pollard, Skydy, and Stern. Saturdays, Undersworld, industrial, gothic, and dark electro with DJs Bryan Pollard, Cyanb, and Hadol. 3815 30th Street, North Park. 619-574-0744.

**Static Lounge**

Saturdays, house music to dark dance beats. 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.; 18 and up. 654 Broaderway (between Sixth and Seventh Avenue), downtown. 619-344-1609.

**THURSDAY 12**

**Deep**

Special guest: Logistics San Diego’s longest-running drum ’n’ bass weekly

**FRIDAY 14**

**House of Rep**

Underground hip-hop

**SATURDAY 16**

**The Downbeat**

1-Year Anniversary

**FRIDAY 16**

**Mixtape Sessions & Salsa Sushi**

Underground hip-hop & dance all in one

**Honey Bee Hive**

1409 C Street
Downtown San Diego
619-702-6010
Lunch Daily • Happy Hour 4-7 pm
DANCE
Whiskey Girl: Fridays, DJ Marc Thronor mixes music videos. Saturdays: DJ Famous Dave and DJ Marc Thronor mix music videos. Sundays: DJ Damal Mondies, Marie Mondo, DJ Marc Thronor mixes 60s and 70s music videos. 8 p.m. to 2 a.m. 8pm cover. 600 Fifth Avenue, downtown. 619-231-0616.

The Whistle Stop: Second and Thursday of the month, Progressive, Grooves, indie, hip hop, and soul. First and third Saturday of the month, Transient, Brit rock, indie, and electroclash with DJ Gabe Vega and guests. Second and fifth Saturday of the month, One Nation, new wave, hop-hop, and electroclash with DJs Blackstone and Atari. Tuesdays, Friends Chill, downtempo, electronic, and ambient with DJs Wank Chopps, Lat, and guests. 9 p.m. 2236 Tenth Street (corner of 38th and Juniper), South Park. 619-284-6744.

CLUBS BY AREA

Beaches
Bahia Resort Hotel, 998 West Mission Bay Drive, Mission Beach. 858-488-0551. Tangier Lounge: Thursday, 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. also.

Calendar

Entertainment 7 Nights a Week!

Navajo
Thursday, December 7
Mike Ruggirello presents

Huge Rooster & guests
Friday & Saturday, December 8 & 9 • 9 p.m

Classic Rock

Sunday, December 10
NFL Sunday Ticket
4 satellites and big-screen TVs

Santee
Thursday, December 7

Call club for details
Friday & Saturday, December 8 & 9 • 9 p.m

Classic Rock

Monday, December 11

Monday Night Football

Tuesday, December 12
Mike Ruggirello presents

Huge Rooster & guests
Wednesday, December 13

Happy Hour 6-8 pm
8515 Navajo Road • 619-465-1730
(Alamos shopping plaza at Navajo & Lake Murray)

BY DAVE GOOD

I remember asking Ziggy Marley, at the behest of Makeda Dread, host of Reggae Makossa on 91X radio, what Marley considered to be the future of reggae. After all, it was Dread’s name that got me the interview with the elusive singer in the first place. With a videographer taping every move, Marley was regal in countenance and wary, but engaging. I don’t recall his answer word for word now — it’s been years — but he claimed, in broad and expansive terms, that reggae could not be watered down by outside culture. It was what I expected to hear.

This year, Ziggy has made a more definitive answer to that question with the release of his second solo CD, Love Is My Religion. It is a blend of African rhythms and hip-hop, R&B, and pop structure, and it goes light on the reggae.

As the eldest of Bob Marley’s sons, Ziggy has been both defined and checkedmate by his father’s legacy: Time magazine once called the elder Marley’s Exodus the greatest album of the 20th Century. The inevitable comparisons which have stilled a lesser personality, but with Ziggy as their creative lead, the Melody Makers, a band made up of Marley siblings, crafted hit records and managed to land a trio of Grammy awards in their time. “Bob stuff is unique,” Ziggy once told a reporter. “Melody stuff is unique.”

After the Melody Makers disbanded, Ziggy wandered. Too bad — Ziggy’s singing both soars and breaks over the misery of the human condition in the tradition of the best of the reggae singers. He could have had a much bigger solo career, but perhaps Marley finds safety in numbers. I recall asking him about the large entourage that was with him that night onstage — multiple guitar players and percussionists of all description, singers, people in white waving giant Rasta Nation flags on the evening air. “Not a band,” he corrected me. “A nation.”

ZIGGY MARLEY, 4th & B, Thursday, December 7, 8 p.m. 619-231-4343. $28.

Making waves: Ziggy Marley, host of Reggae Makossa on 91X radio, had his best year with his second solo album, Love Is My Religion. He is now beginning a tour as part of a Rasta Nation Foundation, which he formed in 2000 with his mother, Cedella Marley-

Penton. Portugalia, 4889 Newport Avenue, Ocean Beach. 619-222-7929. Friday, 10 p.m., Shake Down and Straight Trippers, reggae.

Riley’s, 2901 Nimitz Boulevard, Point Loma. 619-255-8855. Sunday, 5 p.m., Big Ole, Blues jam.

Shooters Bar and Grill, Radisson Hotel, 3929 Holiday Court, La Jolla. 858-453-5500. Tuesday, 7 p.m. to 11 p.m., John Cain, jazz/pop/salsa/ standards.

Tiki House, 1152 Garnet Avenue, Pacific Beach. 858-273-9734. Friday, 2 to 7 p.m., folk band featuring Nick Fox, John Gushue, Dave Scott, and Cynthia Hammond.

Manhattan Restaurant, 2766 Fay Avenue, La Jolla. 858-459-1020. Friday and Saturday, the Joe Marillo Jazz Trio.

Pacific Beach Bar and Grill, 860 Garnet Avenue, Pacific Beach. 858-227-2276.

Pasquine on Prospect, 1259 Prospect Street, La Jolla. 858-458-6648. Friday, the All Around Saturday, Chill Rey, blues. Sunday, blues jam with the Blues Brokers.

La Valencia Hotel, 1312 Prospect Street, La Jolla. 858-454-0771. Thursday, 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m., Bar None, jazz. Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Wednesday, Rick Ross, jazz.

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106 San Diego Reader December 7, 2006
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Married by Elvis's Country Christmas Show!

Wed 12/14 • 8:00 PM

SOUTHBOUND JOHNNY AND SUGAR DADDIES

Wed 12/20 • 7:00 PM

THE GREYBOY ALLSTARS

Sat 12/23 • 9:00 PM

BLACKALICIOUS

Fatlip & Tre

Pigeon John

Sat 12/30 • 9:00 PM

THE KITTERS

Featuring John Doe, Eileen Christanna, Dave Alvin, John Batiste & DJ Bonebrake

Sun 1/14 • 7:00 PM

THE FARMERS

Wed 12/27 • 9:00 PM

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Steve Poltz & The Rubguns

Sun 12/31 • 9:00 PM

KEEPING IT WEIRD & FRIENDS

Comedy Show

Featuring Patrick DeGuire, Dizoe, Dick Greco & Wally Wang

Wed 1/3 • 8:00 PM

JUST ADDED: 2/16 Rhett Miller • 1/25 Carbon Leaf • 2/9 Common Sense

1/9 "Gram Parsons Tribute"

w/Tim Flannery & Guests

1/11 Greg Laswell

1/12 Long Beach Shortbus

1/13 Dead Man's Party featuring Mark Hummel, Kim Wilson, Billy Boy Arnold, Rick Estrin, Paul Ocher, Rusty Zinn & more

1/16 More

1/17 Two Nights!

1/20 Tim Reynolds

1/21 Jake Shimabukuro

1/22 The English Beat

1/24 Poncho Sanchez

1/26 The Aggrolites

1/28 Railroad Earth

Swimming Happy Hours @ 5:30:

12/8 Backwater Blues Band

BILLY WATSON

12/29 ATOMIC GROOVE

Salsa Sunday 1/7 @ 7:30 PM

Free Parking! Low Service Charges! Free Coat Check! Great Bar Prices! Great Food!
10th San Diego Readers' Choice Award

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Save on prescription glasses
Purchase any pair of prescription glasses and get a second pair for half-off. Discount taken on lower-priced pair and does not apply to Maui Jim, Oakley or Prada prescription glasses. With this ad. Offer expires 12/31/06.

Spy
Free Spy T-shirt or hat!
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Use your Flex Plan! Take 10% off
Choose from our extensive collection of designer optical frames. Avoid the end-of-the-year rush! Offer expires 12/17/06.

BY WILLIAM CRAIN
The band of punk veterans who call themselves My First & the Gimme Gimmes specializes in picking up other people’s songs and covering them California pop-punk style. There’s nothing original about that idea; it seems like nearly every punk band has a Madonna song or a cartoon theme or something like that in its repertoire. But the Gimme Gimmes take the concept to new extremes. They play only covers and package them in theme albums of comically questionable taste. For instance, there’s Take a Break, on which the all-white band stages a tribute to African-American R&B artists like Lionel Richie, Prince, Seal, and R. Kelly (to say nothing of the all-male band’s take on Aretha Franklin’s “You Make Me Feel Like a Natural Woman”). The band’s latest release is Love Their Country, a collection of country songs made famous by artists ranging from Hank Williams to the Dixie Chicks.

ME FIRST & THE GIMME GIMMES
House of Blues, Tuesday, December 12, 6:30 p.m. to 11 p.m., the Soul Revue, jazz/dance/Top 40.
Music videos for all local concerts!

SanDiegoReader.com

Online Club Coupons!

The following nightclubs have valuable coupons in the Music Section of the Reader’s website.

1/11 Mommy’s Little Monster (Social Distortion Tribute)
1/12 Johnny Cash’s Legendary "Tennessee Three"
1/13 Acoustic Alliance • 1/14 Anti-Nuke League • Lower Class Brats

1/9 (1-5pm) All Inclusive Winter Wine Tour
Take 12 genuine wines, meet winemakers, and tickets available now!

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The following nightclubs have valuable coupons in the Music Section of the Reader’s website.

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In Cahoots
Lucky 7 Match
Martini Ranch
Patricks II
Second Wind Navajo
710 Beach Club
Tio Leo's Lounge

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Online Club Coupons!

The following nightclubs have valuable coupons in the Music Section of the Reader’s website.

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The Aero Club
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DOWNTOWN

San Diego
AcousticMusicSanDiego, 4550 Mandalfi Street, San Diego. 619-303-8176. Music is acoustic/kid-friendly. Tuesday, 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

where available/price:
M-Theory on Washington Street, Groundworks Books UCD Campus, Access Hip Hop on Garnet, and Access Hip Hop for $7.

Band: Rudy Palos
Songs: (1) Imperial Fatigue (2) Delta Nine (3) Fair Weather (4) Commitment Malfunction (5) As Long As… (6) Tryin’ (7) Grim Pill (8) Full Moon, High Tide (9) Valores (10) Tumbo (11) Rudeo Drive (12) Back to the Sun

Websites: http://www.probe-4.com/

From the first downbeat of this album, it was groovin’ and snappin’ my fingers. It is funky jazz with horn, stutter-step drumbeats, romping piano, and the whole nine—only it’s not recorded live by musicians; it’s sampled with the obvious clean cuts of a computerized mixer.

The sound is what hip-hop should have evolved into if Puff Daddy hadn’t dangled his diamond watches in front of the eyes of teenagers and made mainstream hip-hop about gold teefs and min-koats; quirkly little electronic sounds juxtaposed with hard beats and the high plinking of synthesizers; bassossaun guitars cut into some tracks a shade offtempo, which give the album a fugues feel without the irritating “one time” of Wyclef. If you like rap, this is it; it’s all instrument. Some of the songs are a little heavy on the synth, but each track has several redenning cuts of guitars, piano, or horn. The songs are mostly downtempo.

This album is soulful and professionally done, and if it’s ever leaked to high-level producers, Rudy will have a job mixing backup for national-selling rap artists. I’d like to see him paired with an aggressive turntablist to crank up the speed and grit on a future project. Pedazo is one of the best local hip-hop albums I’ve heard.

TO GET YOUR LOCAL CD REVIEWED, PLEASE MAIL IT TO: Music Editor, Hometown CDs, San Diego Reader, P.O. Box 85803, San Diego, CA 92186-5803.

O’Connell’s Pub and Nightclub, 3113 Morena Boulevard, Bay Park, 619-276-5673. Friday, 9 p.m., Mother Groovy and Chicky, rock. Saturday, 9 p.m., Superecko, Sweet Tooth, and Jett Deo, alternative/rock. Monday, 7 p.m., American History, Talk to the Fist, and Bedouin’s Edge, rock/metal.

Wednesday, 8 p.m., The Green, the Citizen Avant, San Diego, rock. Thursday, 8 p.m., Eddie’s Bar and Grill, 619-233-3939.

The Ould Sod, 5373 Adams Avenue, Normal Heights, 619-284-6914.

Weekly shooter, this is one of the best local hip-hop albums I’ve heard.
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**Honey Tribe**

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**San Diego Reader December 7, 2006**
Tutto Mare, 4065 Executive Drive, La Jolla (Golden Triangle area). 858-387-1108. Wednesday, 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., Jamie Vallee, and guests.

Twigs Tea and Coffee Company, 406 Park Boulevard, University Heights. 619-296-0816. Music is acoustic/folk unless otherwise noted. Thursday, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., Jess Atour, Vernon, and Gayle Shafter & the Eklund French. Friday, Marcia, Dans, Alpine Dave & Boogie Night, Tony Jr., Corkie, and Melissa Voight. Saturday, Sarah Green, the Green Water District, Drew Gagnon, and Brain Conveyor. Sunday, 6 p.m., the Café Ensemble. 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., Peggy Loy, jazz.

Vesuvio Gourmet Restaurant, 8033 Bayside Drive North, 619-282-7400. Thursday, 8 p.m. to 11 p.m., the 4-Zoot featuring vocalist David Morby. Jazz and Friday, and Saturday, live bands. Music is rock/alternative/punk/rock.

North County

The Alley, 421 Grand Avenue, Carlsbad. 760-484-7173. Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, and the Love Rangers, Top 40/pop.

Belly Up Tavern, 143 South Cedars Avenue, Solana Beach. 858-441-9622. Thursday, 8 p.m., Amor Mio; Friday, 8 p.m. Hear Year, Shorter Jennings and Carrubba, countryrock.

Wednesday, the Big Sound, Vegetarian, and Social Gravy, rock/rocks/rocks.

School's Out, 390 Grand Avenue, Carlsbad. 760-729-2289. Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, live classic rock.

The Book Works/Pannikin Cafe, 131 Via de la Val, Del Mar. 858-735-3735. Thursday, 7 p.m., Billy Nations, blues.

Borders Books and Music (Carlsbad), 1905 Calle Barcelona, Carlsbad. 760-438-0412. Friday, 6 p.m., Lee Taylor Ten, acoustic rock. Saturday, 7 p.m., Al James, folk.

Borders Books and Music (Carmel Mountain), 1160 Jackson Street, Carlsbad. 858-618-1014. Friday, 4 p.m., Neko Case, rock. Saturday, 2 p.m., Anna Toya, folk.

Carvers, 11940 Bernardo Plaza Drive, Rancho Bernardo. 858-566-2400. Friday, West of 5, classic and modern rock. Saturday, Night Owl, classic rock.

Game Time Tavern, 7275 Poway Road, Poway. 858-746-0115. Friday, Night Shift, classic rock. Saturday, Underbelly, rock.

Hennepenny's Tavern (Carlsbad), 2277 Roosevelt Street, Carlsbad. 760-728-6981. Friday, 9 p.m., A.J. Tran, rock.

The Hot Java Cafe, 1173 Carmel Mountain Road, Suite 102, Carmel Mountain. 858-613-7111. Thursday, 7 p.m., Steve Thara, acoustic guitar.

The Inn at Rancho Santa Fe, 5011 Lomas del Cabo, Rancho Santa Fe. 858-736-1101. Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., Jerry Melnick, jazz/variety piano.

The Jumping Turtle, 160 Capitola Road, San Marcos. 760-471-7779. Music is rock/alternative unless otherwise noted. Thursday, the Urbanistas, Ramon, Grumet Hands, and Grain Corns. Friday, Fingers, Finger Lickin' Band, Off Track, the Rosery, and the New Additions. Saturday, the Angry Sasmanos, Unleashed, the Rich White Males, the B-3 Four, and the Chickens, and the Chicken Coops.

Mas Fina Cantina, 2780 State Street, Carlsbad. 760-434-3987. Wednesday, 6 p.m. to midnight, Mike Gardner, acoustic rock/folk.

Mccabe's Beach Club, 1145 South Tremont Street, Oceanside. 760-439-4884. Friday, 9 p.m. to 9 p.m., the California Kangaroo country.

North Bar Sports and Spirits, 200 West El Pico North Parkade. Escondido. 760-685-4228. Tuesday, 5:30 p.m., Jerry Gardner, acoustic folk/folk.

Ocean House, 300 Carlsbad Village Drive, Carlsbad. 760-729-4211. Friday and Saturday, live bands. Sunday, 5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m., the Credit Union, swing.

As I Hear It

by Brian Carver

Music Editor, As I Hear It, San Diego Reader, P.O. Box 85803, San Diego, CA 92186-5803

SAN DIEGO SONGS TAKE THE STREET TEST

Artist: Simeon Flick
Song: “Your Love is Wrong” (From the CD Reactive Soul)

Heard by: Shane Velez, Temecula

It sounds like a lot of older stuff I’ve heard. I would say hands of our parents’ generation [1970s] mostly. Soft rock. I like that it was chill out and it had a good steady beat the whole time, but what I didn’t like is that it sounded like every other band from way back when. The instrumentation was the same thing all the way through the song, so you could either see that as boring or you could see that as relaxing. [It would be] good for driving down the road, I guess.

They’ve got a screams-esque type of music style, but the vocals are kind of off. Music-wise, they put a lot of good chords together. I don’t know if they were using a voice synthesizer or something, but [the vocals] sounded fake. It sounded like a machine was singing. I guess it would be a good soundtrack for when someone’s feeling down. It seems like whoever wrote this song had a bad time in their life, and they were just like, “everything’s making me go crazy.”

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Music Editor, As I Hear It, San Diego Reader, P.O. Box 85803, San Diego, CA 92186-5803

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They don’t sound like the mainstream alternative rock kind of music. I like the rhythm. It’s kind of more mellow – it’s not hard rock. I don’t like the hard rock. I like the chorus: “I was wrong.” I guess I didn’t like the lead singer’s voice. It kind of sounded whiny to me. I like the hook, but there weren’t too many lyrics. It was a simple song. I could picture that song [and] I could make an Emmy award [for these songs].

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ALTERNATIVE (continued)

Reservoir Tips: The Jumping Turtle
Rice Rokit: Dreamstreet
The Rich White Males: The Jumping Turtle
Carina Round: The Casbah
Saliva: 4th & B
Sanctity: Soma
Dane Scott & the Panty Peepers: Dreamstreet
Sexual Tao: The Jumping Turtle
Shinedown: 4th & B
Silverside: Brick By Brick
The Six Inch Man: Brick By Brick
The Slackers: The Casbah
Small Sins: House of Blues
Some Girls: Epicentre
Someday Assassin: The Kensington Club
The Strikers: The Jumping Turtle
The Suicidal Hustlers: Dreamstreet
Take Offense: Chi Café
The Teenage Corpses: The Jumping Turtle
The Thrill Killers: Dreamstreet
Tilthweel: The Kensington Club
Under the Influence of Giants: Soma
Unloaded: The Jumping Turtle
Unset: Brick By Brick
The Urbanoban: The Jumping Turtle
Vinyl 45: 'Canes
Viviscut: The Jumping Turtle
A Week's Worth: 'Canes
Wire Monkey: Surf N'Saddle
Yukazo: The Jumping Turtle
You and What Armp: The Jumping Turtle

ROCK

ADHD: The Kensington Club
Allied Records: Dreamstreet
The American Hitmen: O'Connell's Pub and Nightclub
Bedlam's Edge: O'Connell's Pub and Nightclub
Boneyard: Coyote Bar and Grill
The Brut Pack: Henry's Pub
The Witch Budd Band: 710 Beach Club
Cactus Swag: The Calypso Cafe
The Citizen Band: O'Connell's Pub and Nightclub
Collage Managen: Fanno's Nightclub
DusGrooves: Island Sports and Spirits
Dead Meadow: The Casbah
Dead as Dillinger: The Zombie Lounge
Rob Deez: O'Connell's Pub and Nightclub
Dogmatic: The Jumping Turtle

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ROCK

(continued)

Honeytribe: Humphrey’s
The Charlie Hunter Trio: Humphrey’s
Idle Train: Hemmasy’s Tavern (Carlsbad)
Loose Canon: Dreamstreet
Mikes: Winxton
Modern Day Moonshine: Martin Ranch (Galaump)
Mother Grundy: O’Connell’s Pub and Nightclub
Nemesis: Dick’s Niteclub
The New Addiction: The Jumping Turtle

Night Shift: Game Time Tavern
Nite Hawk: Carvers
Off-Track: The Jumping Turtle
Papa Roach: 4th & B
Pension: The Jumping Turtle
Juan Perez: Dreamstreet
Mike Pinto: 710 Beach Club
Private Domain: Dick’s Last Resort
The Rarities: Lota’s Coffee House
The Restless Native: Coyote Bar and Grill
Rhythm Red: Fid love’s
Rock’n’Roll Circus: Lota’s Coffee House
The Rosery: The Jumping Turtle
Serious Guise: Second Wind (San Carlos)
Side Jobz: Too Late’s (Mira Mesa)
Slow Car Boost: The Jumping Turtle

The Sound Library: Winstons
Spil Toranto: The Cabal
Stalker Dan: Humphrey’s
The Stiletto: Honey’s Pub
Sugarfiddlers: 710 Beach Club
Superdoo: O’Connell’s Pub and Nightclub
Sus Hijos: Winstons
Sweet Tooth: O’Connell’s Pub and Nightclub
Talk to the Fist: O’Connell’s Pub and Nightclub
31 Knots: The Cabal
A Against T: 710 Beach Club
The Two of Us: Old Dixie Bar and Grill
Undecided: Game Time Tavern
West of St: Carvers, Dick’s Last Resort
The Widows: The Kensington Club

POP / TOP 40

PTrak Armenta: Pasquale on Prospect
Gil Barron: Pasquale on Prospect
The Disco Pimps: Dick’s Last Resort
Diva Soul: Jimmy Love’s
James East: Pasquale on Prospect
Mark Fulton: Pasquale on Prospect
The Good Times: Henry’s Pub
Island Breeze: Humphrey’s
Jimmy LaVelllo: Dakota Grill and Spirits
The Love Rangers: The Alley
The Stepping Feet: Whiskey Girl

JAZZ / BIG BAND

Agua Dulce: Croce’s Jazz Bar
Burnett Anderson: Cafe Laloña
The Archtones: Croce’s Jazz Bar
The B-3 Four: Youssef Gourmet Restaurant
Tom Bishop: Rancho Bernardo Inn
Ray Bria: Hotel del Coronado

Wednesday, December 7, 2006

FRIDAY NIGHTS @ DECO’S

FRIDAY: DECEMBER : 8TH

FRIDAY NIGHTS @ DECO’S

FEATURING

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3 Against T: 710 Beach Club
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Spil Toranto: The Cabal
Stalker Dan: Humphrey’s
The Stiletto: Honey’s Pub
Sugarfiddlers: 710 Beach Club
Superdoo: O’Connell’s Pub and Nightclub
Sus Hijos: Winstons
Sweet Tooth: O’Connell’s Pub and Nightclub
Talk to the Fist: O’Connell’s Pub and Nightclub
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PTrak Armenta: Pasquale on Prospect
Gil Barron: Pasquale on Prospect
The Disco Pimps: Dick’s Last Resort
Divasoul: Jimmy Love’s
James East: Pasquale on Prospect
Mark Fulton: Pasquale on Prospect
The Good Times: Henry’s Pub
Island Breeze: Humphrey’s
Jimmy LaVelllo: Dakota Grill and Spirits
The Love Rangers: The Alley
The Stepping Feet: Whiskey Girl

Jazz / Big Band

Agua Dulce: Croce’s Jazz Bar
Burnett Anderson: Cafe Laloña
The Archtones: Croce’s Jazz Bar
The B-3 Four: Youssef Gourmet Restaurant
Tom Bishop: Rancho Bernardo Inn
Ray Bria: Hotel del Coronado
Amelia Browning: South Park Bar and Grill
The Jorge Camberos Quintet: The Westgate Hotel
Sammy Canizalez: Cafe LaMaze
The Karin Carson Trio: The Westgate Hotel
Sandy Chappell: Cafe LaMaze
Jesse Davis: Cupando
Julio de la Huerta: The Westgate Hotel
Hank Easton: Humphrey's
Nick Fiore: Pasquale on Prospect
Karen Giorgio: The Westgate Hotel
John Guilino: Pasquale on Prospect
Cynthia Hammond: Ristorante, Pasquale on Prospect
The High Society Jazz Band: Too Late's Lounge
Eduardo Jaramillo & Two Deep: Support Village East Plaza
Barbara Jamerson: Hotel del Coronado
Barbara Jamerson: Hotel del Coronado
The Jazz 101 Band: Pasqulde on Prospect
The Johnson Project: Bobby's Place
Sam Johnson's Jazz Quartet: South Park Bar and Grill
The Joe Marillo Jazz Trio: Manhattan Restaurant
Masterpiece: Jimmy Love's
The Mayan Kings: The Westgate Hotel
The Jerry McCann Band: Coyote Bar and Grill
Paco Lopez: Sue Palmer & Her Motel Swing Orchestra
Sandy Chappel: Cafe LaMaze
Jesse Davis: Humphrey's
Julio de la Huerta: The Westgate Hotel
Hank Easton: Humphrey's Edo Brazil: Samba Grill
Nick Fiore: Pasquale on Prospect
Karen Giorgio: The Westgate Hotel
John Guilino: Pasqulde on Prospect
Cynthia Hammond: Busalacchi's Ristorante, Pasqulde on Prospect
The High Society Jazz Band: Too Late's Lounge
Insight: Jimmy Love's
Keith Jacobsen: Del Mar Plaza
Barbara Jamerson: Hotel del Coronado
Barbara Jamerson & Two Deep: Support Village East Plaza
The Jazz 101 Band: Pasqulde on Prospect
The Johnson Project: Bobby's Place
Sam Johnson's Jazz Quartet: South Park Bar and Grill
Dick Koenig: Cody's La Jolla
John Kopecky: South Park Bar and Grill
Eduardo Jaramillo & Two Deep: Support Village East Plaza
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The Jazz 101 Band: Pasqulde on Prospect
The Johnson Project: Bobby's Place
Sam Johnson's Jazz Quartet: South Park Bar and Grill
Dick Koenig: Cody's La Jolla
John Kopecky: South Park Bar and Grill
Tony Lasley: Hotel del Coronado
Mark Lessem: Coyote Bar and Grill
Jerry Lewis: La Valencia Hotel Stella & Dave Lindgren: Hotel del Coronado
Peggy Lloyd: Vesuvio Gourmet Restaurant
Fran Loskota: The Westgate Hotel
The Joe Marillo Jazz Trio: Manhattan Restaurant
Masterpiece: Jimmy Love's
Jerry Melnick: The Westgate Hotel
Sue Palmer & Her Motel Swing Orchestra: Dizzy's
Dave Scott: Pasquale on Prospect, Cross's Jazz Bar
David Mosby: Vesuvio Gourmet Restaurant
Mystique: McP's Irish Pub and Grill
The New Standard Jazz Trio: Busalacchi's Rosmarino
Mario Oliveras & Latin Spice: Pasqulde on Prospect
Faith Page: The Westgate Hotel
Sue Palmer & Her Motel Swing Orchestra: Dizzy's
Palos: The Calypso Cafe
Primo: Sevilla
Rick Rosi: La Valencia Hotel
Sambajazz: Cross Restaurant
Dave Scott: Pasqulde on Prospect, Cross's Jazz Bar
Robert Sebastiani: Cafe LaMaze
The Soul Revue: Jimmy Love's
The Southwestern College Jazz Ensemble: Dizzy's
The Speak Easy Quartet: Hot Monkey Love Cafe
Stage 4: Buon Giorno Restaurant
Stefani Stevens: Cody's La Jolla
Trece de la Suerte: Portopagla
Jaime Valle: Tutto Mare
The Jaime Valle - Bob Magnusson Jazz Duo: Harry's Bar and American Grill
Vintage Vegas: Martini's Bar and Grill
Scott Wallington: Cafe LaMaze
Walker II Y Rumbaney: Sevilla
The Wise Guys: Tommy's Italian Restaurant
Yates: Cross's Jazz Bar

REGGAE / SKA
The Big Sound: Belly Up Tavern
Burrito: 710 Beach Club

Slightly Stoopid: 4th & B
Social Green: Belly Up Tavern
Split Finger: 710 Beach Club
Straight Trippin': Portopagla
Stranger: The Gordon Biersch Brewery
Updraft: The Calypso Cafe
Vegitation: Belly Up Tavern

COUNTRY
Benchmarks: Don't's Cocktail Lounge
Big Rig Deluxe: Loom's Coffee House

The California Rangers: McCabe's Beach Club
The Caribbean Cowboy: Hooper's Irish Pub and Grill
Carter Falco: Belly Up Tavern
Fishbait: Galapay Tavern
Shooter Jennings: Belly Up Tavern
The North County Cowboys: Del Dios Bar and Grill
The Utah Country Swillers: The Zombie Lounge

ACOUSTIC / FOLK
Fred Benedetti: Dizzy's
Evan Bethany: Loom's Coffee House
J.D. Boucharde: Princess Pub and Grill
The Celtic Ensemble: Twigg Tea and Coffee Company
Kai Brown: Borders Books and Music (Gaslamp)
Shayne Busby: E Street Cafe
Bushwhaia: Twigg Tea and Coffee Company
The Johnson Project: Bobby's Place
The Celtic Ensemble: Twigg Tea and Coffee Company

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118 San Diego Reader December 7, 2006
Travail, Endurance, and the Human Spirit

Equivocating regulations evicted Ion Theatre, sending them who knows where.

I hurt like hell to watch Ion Theatre’s Grapes of Wrath. Not the production, the situation. After years of searching, Claudio Raygoza’s company, one of the most artistically adventurous in San Diego, finally found a home in 2006. They turned a commercial warehouse at 917 Ninth Avenue into New World Stage, a functional space that included steep-raked bleacher seating and an inviting lobby. And once Ion had its theater, it instantly became home for many a homeless company. It’s booked deep into next year. Was, that is. Recently, even though the building passed all structural tests, city inspectors and a development official questioned the initial analyses. “We have been forced out,” Raygoza said. “We can stay if we pay for the astronomical analyses now required by the city. The cost is far outside our means. Our leaseholders have been asked to bear the cost, and they have refused.”

Last Saturday, the company performed at New World Stage, most likely for the last time. It then moved the entire Grapes of Wrath production a block away to the 10th Avenue Theatre, where it secured only one week of performances, closing this Monday night. Watching a play about the homeless Joads wandering toward an uncertain future was like watching a story inside a story, Steinbeck’s and Ion’s, and recalling the years Raygoza literally went door-to-door through San Diego looking for a space, his elation at finding one, and all the hard physical labor it took to build a new home. Now undone.

The Depression and the Dust Bowl evicted the Joads, sending them 2000 miles to California in a Hudson Super Six jalopy. Equivocating regulations evicted Ion Theatre, sending them who knows where.

The situation also drew attention to the actors’ plight: original opening night canceled; a final performance at New World (before, it turns out, a small audience of theater critics); then an uprooting: strike the set, and the theater, and reopen for a brief run. Steinbeck writes about travail, endurance, and the indomitable human spirit. Last Saturday night, you could see it in the characters, and in the actors playing them.

The most amazing thing: they didn’t just pull it off; they excelled. Frank Galati’s adaptation of Grapes is the last show one would do under the circumstances. An epic, it calls for a huge cast, instant scene changes, myriad lighting cues, enough costumes to fill a thrift shop. Every actor has a scene, or a moment, where they must take stage and deliver. And at Ion, everyone does. Even if one didn’t know the story behind the story, Ion’s Grapes of Wrath ranks among the year’s best.

Praise to director Claudio Raygoza, for vivid stage pictures and fluid blockings, and for creating across-the-board authenticity (Shulamit Nelson’s frayed costumes a real plus). Praise to Matt Scott, who sets the tone vocally and morally as Truelove, and to the entire company. Bravo for a performance that defined every moment of travail, endurance, and the indomitable human spirit.
Jim Casy, the disillusioned preacher who worships life. And to Dana Hooley as Ma Joad, life force. And to Andrew Kennedy as gritty young Tom, the unlikely leader who may become the next Joe Hill. And to Walter Ritter, who plays at least six distinctly different men, from bitter to brutal, with equal expertise. And Sarah Beth Morgan, as the fragile Rose of Sharon. And to the trio of musicians, who flavor the performance with fiddles and foot-stomping, and the occasional song of glimmering hope.

* * *

Is it good to be the king? Not in Greek drama. Oedipus, Creon, Agamemnon, Theseus, Cadmus, and Pentheus argue against assuming high public office in the ancient world.

Pentheus has a problem. The women of his city, seven-gated Thebes, have become bacchantes, followers of the god Dionysus. They fled to the mountains, where they drink wine and frolic like wild animals. Dionysus has converted most of the Mediterranean, but he’s new to Greece and must prove himself worthy of worship. Are the bacchantes god-inspired, or just brainwashed cult groupies? And is Dionysus the real thing? Pentheus says he’s a fake and vows to restore order even if it means waging war. In the Bacchae, Euripides pits civic duty, taken to an extreme, against an immortal loose cannon. Don’t bet on the young King of Thebes.

An old bit of solace holds that people get only as much suffering as they can handle. Not in Greek drama. The Greek gods are magnified humans, and they magnify human suffering. To prove he’s a god — there’s a logic in here somewhere, though it may take lifetimes to sort it out — Dionysus becomes a raving lunatic with ultimate power. He inflicts unimaginable havoc not just on Pentheus, whose mother Agave tears him apart, but on the entire city of Thebes.

Director Douglas Lay and designer Vincent Sneddon turned 6th@Penn’s small space into a jungle. Shakespeare said, “One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.” As you enter, you can’t avoid touching palm fronds and dripping strings of burlap, thus becoming part of the scene. Sturdy tree trunks even support the bacchantes who climb and swing on the branches.

The production overall’s a mixed bag. Lay has an affinity for Greek drama, especially in keeping the stage alive. His cast, however, ranges from high-caliber work — Rhys Greene’s moving Cadmus shocked into exile on the stage to Bonnie Stone’s instant of horrific recognition as Agave — to amateurish. Most speeches begin with a shout, which gives them (and Marianne McDonald’s crisp, modernized translation) no room to grow. As a result, the energy often tapers, during a speech or a scene, when it should expand.

The play’s a wonder, though, packed with conten-
There are two. There actually, and they've come to change the lives of poor, disabled Amahl and his mother. I've seen several versions of Gian Carlo Menotti's “opera for children” but never one as well sung as Common Ground Theatre's, as funny. Director Floyd Gaffney gives the piece its due solemnity but also carved lightened moments from the libretto, as when Amahl jumps on the back of a king, who caught his mother stealing, and pounds on him mercilessly (and harshly). The unmiked cast has such strong voices they don't need electrical enhancement — though one wishes the acoustics in St. Paul's Great Hall, which pull the words toward the ceiling, didn't make the lyrics so difficult to follow. Young Spike Sommers, who sings a clear soprano, is a kick as young Amahl (the Tiny Tim of C.E. 1). Noodle Teitzel, as the mother, and tenor Tom Oberjet, as near-deaf King Kaspar, stand out. As do Joan Wong's costumes, which range from impoverished shepherd-wear to the raiment of royalty, and Epe Gallardo's props (the Kings are laden with wealth). The chorus of villagers fills the hall with festive celebration.

Bacchae
Reviewed this issue.
EITHERMORE THEATRE, 3704 SIXTH AVENUE, HILLCREST, THROUGH DECEMBER 23. THURSDAY THROUGH SATURDAY AT 8:00 P.M. MATINEE SATURDAY AT 2:00 P.M. 619-544-6714.

Christmas Theater Festival
Premiere Productions stages its 11th annual holiday festival. Shows include: The Queen of Bingo, The Little Angel, Gifts of the Magi, and Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer. BROADWAY THEATRE, 340 EAST BROADWAY, VISTA, THROUGH DECEMBER 23. FRIDAY AND SATURDAY AT 7:30 P.M., THE LITTLE ANGEL, MONDAY THROUGH WEDNESDAY AT 7:30 P.M., AND PLAYHOUSE, 303 MAIN STREET, VISTA, RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER, FRIDAY AND SATURDAY AT 7:30 P.M. MATINEE SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10, AND SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23, AT 2:00 P.M. 888-567-4464.

A Christmas Carol
Julian Theater Company stages the classic tale of un-curmudgeoning, adapted by Don Winslow and directed by Scott Kinny. JULIAN TOWN HALL, 2129 MAIN STREET, JULIAN, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8, THROUGH DECEMBER 16; FRIDAY AND SATURDAY AT 7:30 P.M., CURTAIN AT 7:30 P.M. 760-705-1588.

A Christmas Carol
Applauz Theatre presents David Weiner's new adaptation of Dick- en's story, which includes a Greek chorus, and music and dance numbers. James Duhille directed. APPLAUZ THEATRE, 450 FLETCHER PARKWAY, SUITE 250, EL CAJON, THROUGH DECEMBER 17, THURSDAY THROUGH SATURDAY AT 8:00 P.M. MATINEE SATURDAY AND SUNDAY AT 2:00 P.M. 619-374-6894.

Dutchman
For arias of poetic rage, it's hard to beat Amiri Baraka's fiery one-act (1964). There's no “Flying Dutch- man” in the piece, just a subway “heaped in modern myth” in which people run to, or from, who they are. Baraka swore that Clay, a middleclass African-American, and Lula, a red-haired, racist serial killer, aren't symbols, just “real people in a real world.” Performance, however, makes them abstract beings, surrounded by musical riffs and explanatory offstage dialogue, and eventually derail Baraka's bullet train. The production never grounds the how and wonder why. Patrick Kelly and Michelle Procopio sprang through their speech. They become more like musicians chanting notes, not speaking harsh, meaningful words. But Baraka wanted “real people in a real world.” 
LIVY PERFORMANCED THEATRE SPACE, 2615 SRA AVE DRIVE (NORTH OF COSTCO), ROSE CANYON, THROUGH DECEMBER 10, FRIDAY 7:00 P.M. SATURDAY AND SUNDAY AT 8:00 P.M. 619-880-3109.

The Grapes of Wrath
Reviewed this issue.
30TH AVENUE THEATRE, 930 TENTH AVENUE, DOWNTOWN, THROUGH DECEMBER 23; SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17, AT 8:00 P.M. WEDNESDAY THROUGH SATURDAY AT 8:00 P.M. MONDAY AND TUESDAY AT 7:30 P.M., MATINEE SATURDAY AT 2:00 P.M. 619-174-6884.

Hank Williams: Last Highway
If you only saw Art One Of Last Highway, you'd think the great “hillbilly” singer lived a charmed, sitcom life. If you only saw Art Two, you'd want more facts to support allegations about drug and alcohol abuse and spiritual decay. Randall Myler and Mark Hardin's book actually an improvement over the yummy version the Old Globe staged over a decade ago, but it still doesn't multi-task in one of the trickiest of genres: the entertaining cautionary. The performances, however, are quite good. Mississippi Charles Brevil's blues riffs, like antiphonal responses to Williams's country crooning, cut through the night with an ancient, authentic ring. The backup band's high quality (Buss Weaver's steel gui-tar's so lonesome it cries). Van Zeller has William's nervous ticks and signature riddling down pretty pat. But it's the combination of Zeller and the band that create the Williams aura best. And there are times, when the nervous group first performs at the Grand Ole Opry and Zeller belts out “Lovin's Blues,” they transport you back to Nashville's old Ryman Auditorium, “the mother church of country vocals,” and you become part of a stunned crowd hearing Hank Williams for the first time.
WORKS BY
SAN DIEGO REPETORY THEATRE, 79 HORTON PLAZA, DOWNTOWN, THROUGH DECEMBER 27; SUNDAY AND TUESDAY AT 7:30 P.M. SATURDAY AND SUNDAY AT 8:00 P.M. 619-554-1005.

How the Grinch Stole Christmas
The Old Globe Theatre stages its popular Christmas show about the Green Meanie, based on the book by Dr. Seuss. Jack O'Brien directed. (Note: due to popular demand, the Old Globe has extended the run of Grinch.)

OLD GLOBE THEATRE, SETH EDSON CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, 10TH AVENUE THEATRE, 930 TENTH AVENUE, UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS, THROUGH DECEMBER 17; THURSDAY THROUGH SATURDAY AT 7:30 P.M. SUNDAY AT 5:00 P.M. 619-220-0097.

It's a Fabulous Life
Diversionary Theatre presents a gay holiday musical borrowing its premise from It's a Wonderful Life. David Brannen directed and choreographed.
DIVERSIONARY THEATRE, 405 PARK BOULEVARD, UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS, THROUGH DECEMBER 17; THURSDAY THROUGH SATURDAY AT 7:30 P.M. FRIDAY AND SATURDAY AT 8:00 P.M. SUNDAY AT 7:00 P.M. 619-234-5623.

It's a Wonderful Life
Cygnet Theatre presents a live radio show, before a studio audience, inspired by the popular Frank
Capa holiday movie. Sean Murray directed.

CYGNET THEATRE, 6855 EL CAJON BOULEVARD, COLLEGE AREA. THROUGH DECEMBER 24; TUESDAY THROUGH SATURDAY AT 8:00 P.M. SATURDAY AT 2:00 P.M.; SUNDAY AT 7:00 P.M. 619-448-0222.

Joey and Maria's Comedy Italian Wedding

Joey and Maria's Knit in "not-so-ordinary interactive dinner theater." "ON HOLD ON THE 1350 NORTH HARBOR DRIVE, SAN DIEGO; OPENENDED RUN. FOR DAYS AND TIMES CALL 619-457-0100.

Lamb's Players Festival of Christmas

Lamb's Players sets this year's story in San Diego. It's 1949, and Anthony Gabbiano becomes torn between family responsibility and being the big-time magician. Deborah Gilmour Smyth directed.

San Diego’s Black Diamond Days, May 8; Saturday at 7:30 p.m. 619-437-0100.

La Pastorella de la Estrella

Teatro Masaré Mejía presents in popular holiday show about the shepherd’s journey to Bethlehem (and in this year's version they run from Nacho Libre, Howie Mandel, and Superman). William Vích's directed.

CATHOLIC CENTER STAGE, 5100 EDISON CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, BALBOA PARK. THROUGH DECEMBER 31; MONDAY AND WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13; THROUGH SATURDAY AT 7:30 P.M. SATURDAY AND SUNDAY AT 2:00 P.M. 619-234-5623.

The Princess and the Pea: Imagination Express...

All Abrasions presents Michele L. Vasquez adaptation from the Hans Christian Andersen story "How to Tell a True Princess." CENTERS OF LEARNING BY THE SEA, 3050 GARDEN DRIVE. RESTOR, DECEMBER 9; THURSDAY AND SATURDAY AT 7:30 P.M. 619-575-3023.

Readings of August Wilson’s Plays: Ma Rainey's Black Bottom

The San Diego Black Ensemble and Cygnet Theatre could do a lot worse in 2007 than repeat what it did in 2006. It presents a series of staged readings of one of the American Theatre's recently performed but most important playwrights. Twice winner of the Pulitzer Prize (for Fences in 1987 and The Piano Lesson in 1990), Wilson wrote a cycle of dramas that probe the African-American experience through the decades of the 20th Century: he concentrated, he said, on the "target idea that confronted blacks in each decade." The readings will also be staged at the Performance Annex in City Heights and other locations. The series will culminate in a week-long staged reading festival of all the plays in June. In 2006, the Cygnet Theatre offerings included Ma Rainey's Black Bottom - the 1989 Pulitzer Prize winner - and Joe Turner's Come and Gone - his first big hit in 1982. This year's offerings feature Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, Fences, and in this year's version they run from Nacho Libre, Howie Mandel, and Superman. William Vích’s directed.

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Larry Abrams is hoping to add boar, and perhaps the game component (wild meats and birds) that now, the choices are a little steak-heavy and lack stopped serving roast duck or sweetbreads. Right would never forgive the Cohns if the restaurant same, under a new head chef. The community the founder’s, and the kitchen staff are largely the reception is not quite as warm and familial as it used front-of-the-house staff are mainly new, the re-
rustic, with wooden walls, oil paintings of So-Cal and overflow crowds. The dining rooms are faux-
banquet room near the back, and a heated patio there are new rugs and other small changes that
Michelle, we watched the patrons filtering in. Waiting outside for our friends Lynne and Moore would the Cohns stand for?
Quite a lot, it seems. When my partner and I arrived at 6:00 sharp on a weeknight, we were none-
too early to snag one of the last spaces in the park-
ing lot. Waiting outside for our friends Lynne and Michelle, we watched the patrons filtering in. Clearly, the restaurant hasn’t lost its local clientele.
The decor is much the same as ever, though there are new rugs and other small changes that only regulars would notice. Resembling a rural cottage, the premises consist of four small-to-
to medium dining rooms — two in front, a narrow banquet room near the back, and a heated patio that’s covered over in winter and used for parties and overflow crowds. The dining rooms are faux-
rustic, with wooden walls, oil paintings of So-Cal scenery, and, in the larger of the front dining rooms, a fireplace and a peaked open-beam ceiling. Since the front-of-the-house staff are mainly new, the re-
ception is not quite as warm and familiar as it used to be, but it’s still intelligent.
The menu and recipes cleave fairly faithfully to the founder’s, and the kitchen staff are largely the same, under a new head chef. The community would never forgive the Cohns if the restaurant stopped serving roast duck or sweetbreads. Right now, the choices are a little steak-heavy and lack the game component (wild meats and birds) that Moore frequently featured in the fall, but chef Larry Abrams is hoping to add boar, and perhaps
venison, once the hectic holiday season is over.

That evening, the kitchen had to cope with a gi-
ant party that settled in just as we arrived. Their 16
first courses had to be ready and served simulta-
neously, prepared along with our starters. I’m hoping that’s the reason for an un-
even performance on the appetizers.

One excellent choice is Abrams’s own invention. The San-
Diego-Style Crab Cakes are nothing
like other San Diego crab cakes — they’re better. “This isn’t a cake,” my partner observed, “it’s more of a warm crab salad. You couldn’t pick it up, it’d fall apart.” Loose and creamy, with little filler and a light breadcrumb coating, the single generous oval was baked (not fried), then plated atop spicy jalapeño beurre blanc and red-pepper
coulis. It was tasty, comforting — and pretty, too. “I love the presentation,” said Michelle, a design student. “The streaks of chard sauce and orange under-
neath are striking, and the microgreen flurries on top looks like a miniature flower bed.”
The Lynnester’s road to foodiehood began with
a childhood passion for Escargots Bourguignonne, the garlicky Burgundian baked snail dish. “It’s one
of the reasons I came tonight,” she said. “So few restaurants here serve them.” The menu says, “Ask for additional garlic if you wish.” “We should have ordered the additional garlic,” Lynne said sadly. In-
deed, there was too little of the sticking rose for either authenticity or flavor. (Gar-
lic-haters and those who fear bad breath should order something else, rather than force Yankee com-
promises on a Gallic classic.)
Perhaps the demands of the crowd at the next table
promises on a Gallic classic.)
Perhaps the demands of the crowd at the next table were the reason that the textures of our snails ranged from tender to rubbery to crispy critter.

A pâté sampler is an old Bungalow standby, but the specific pair of pâtés we sampled are the

but the specific pair of pâtés we sampled are the
corporate promise of a Gallic classic.)
Perhaps the demands of the crowd at the next table were the reason that the textures of our snails ranged from tender to rubbery to crispy critter.

boar, and perhaps

with no evidence of poultry liver. The burgerettes were charted black on the outside, rare and juicy on the inside, topped with applewood bacon and accompanied by excellent shoestring fries. There was something yummy on the buns that I couldn’t identify. It turned out to be truffled Dijon aoak. The invisible foie gras. It had been cut into small cubes and mixed with the meat to melt in and furnish moisture and savory. The problem was, you couldn’t guess any of these details — all you could taste was burned beef and bacon. “I absolutely hate this!” declared Lynne, a veteran of the trendy gourmet-slider circuit. I liked the dish myself, once

David Scott is a contributing writer to San Diego Reader.
I sliced off the top-surface char. I’m not totally sold on the concept, but the major problem lay in careless cooking.

Entries come with a choice of soup or salad. The soup of the evening was a purée of Ana-
heim chilies and roasted red bell peppers. The flavor was deep and interesting, but its inten-
sity called for contrasting elements — say, crisp croûtons, and/or dots of creme mexicana around the perimeter. (We made croûtons from the table bread.) It was a fine beginning of a soup. The salads are pleasant, the greens sparked by sweet, sun-dried tomatoes and candied pecans. The dressings — whether blue cheese or vinaigrette — are light.

“Do you eat sweetbreads?” I asked our friends before we or-
dered. I was ready but not willing to be dissuaded, since Thee Bungalow is one of few lo-
cal restaurants to serve these morsels as a main dish. Neither had tasted them before. “I’m game,” Lynn declared. “Just don’t tell me what they are un-
til later,” said Michelle. They were the table’s favorite entrée. Cut into small pieces, flour-
ed and sautéed in olive oil to crisp the surfaces, they were tender and, well, friendly. A classic lemon-butter and caper sauce served them well. So did a heap of superb home-style mashed potatoes. The skin was splendidly crisp. For the meat, I’ve never loved Ed’s duck as much as Ed and his regulars do, con-
sidering it slightly overcooked. This duck may have been more overcooked than Ed’s rendi-
tion — the breast was dry and the leg even dryer. It benefited from a delicious demi-glace sauce, and we enjoyed the earthy garnishes.

Michelle, a native San Die-
gate, was the only fan of the pan-seared San Clemente sea bass, which the rest of us found pungent — although we loved the soulful, dewy lobster meat that served as its bed and the slick of caramalized white-peach relish on top. “I’ve always had fish cooked this way,” Michelle said. “Dead white. How do you do like it?” We all (three passion-
ate cooks) chortled about that moment when fish flesh turns flaky and pearly, no longer pink but still moist and tender. I re-
cently read that Alain Ducasse, holder of the world’s number record of Michelin stars, was overheard gently scolding the chef de cuisine at his New York restaurant for cooking fish a few seconds past that point. It’s not just a ‘matter of taste.’” I said. “It’s about honoring your in-
gredients. This ain’t some rottin’ mutant from the mouth of the Ganges that needs cremation. It’s good, fresh fish and deserves to be served at its best — most.”

When I asked the chef, he promised that I could get medium-rare fish if I specified doneness. “I’ve been trying to train the waiters to ask people how they want their fish, but they don’t always remember,” he said. “Thee Bungalow has al-
ways featured more meat than seafood, so I’m also slowly training cooks who’ve been here for 30, 35 years and who default to medium-ish. Just bear with us, we’ll get there.”

Dessert was a killer: a grand couple of Grand Marnier souff-
lés. (They come in pairs — enough to feed four — and must be ordered 20 minutes ahead.) Subtle orange-flavored air cap-
tured in puffed-up egg whites, they were ideal. The decaf wasn’t. “Now that’s a rich and les-
rivous restaurant company owns the premises, I’d like to suggest an investment in a few little French-presse individual coffee makers and some serious French-roasted beans to pro-
vide a brew to complement the magnificence of the soufflés.

Other desserts, all house-
made, include fruit sorbets, with the chef’s Caribbean-style “pineapple water,” profiteroles, almond financier, seasonal New Orleans-style bread pudding, and the restaurant’s traditional chocolate mousse. There’s also an ever-changing international four-plate cheese served with brioche and poached figs, a perfect end or pre-sweet course for finishing off a fine red wine. The wine list, of course, is leg-
endary. If you don’t have $1200 for the Château Pétrus, I believe I spotted a Lafitte for under $300. There are plenty of exci-
ting bottles in the $50 range and adventurous ones for under $40, particularly if you bypass Cal-
ifornia and France to explore the less-established wine regions in the back pages.

With any new restaurant or new management, there are is-
sues needing improvement. Here, our server was one such. The lad was an irritating speci-
men of Waitron samurais, condescenting and pushy. Bad enough he asked the usual annoying “Is everything okay?” moment our mouths were full, but worse, he insisted that we praise every dish, prodding, “They’re all good.”

A worse glitch arose from a specific restaurant policy, and from three patrons suffering a precipitous failure of “company manners.” Normally, the chef tells me, large parties are seated in the private banquet room or on the covered patio — unless they’re hosted by long-time reg-
ulars, who may specify use of their favorite dining room. “It’s a get-a-round trip. We bought our Eurail passes, went all over, and ate all over. I still didn’t really know anything about cooking. I didn’t even know how to cut with a knife. When I got back, my parents [at the urging of his aunt] signed me up for culinary school at the CIA in Hyde Park, New York.”

While at culinary school, he’d take time off for more travel and to work in European restau-
nants, which he continues to do whenever possible. After grad-
uating, he moved to New Or-
leans, met his wife there, and worked for five years at Nola’s (one of Emeril Lagasse’s restau-
rants), Commander’s Palace, and the Windsor Court Hotel.

“But New Orleans is a tough city for an outside person to come in and make a name for himself. You really have to be connected to old families in the city. And I’d had my first child, and it seemed that it was time to come back to San Diego and share my expertise with the rest of the restaurateurs here. A lot of them haven’t really ventured far out of San Diego and haven’t gotten that worldly cuisine down. So I thought it would be good to come back.”

“Three Bungalow to me is like going to your grand-
mother’s house. You walk in there and you feel comfortable. You ask for something, and you’ll get it. That’s the atmo-
sphere we try to provide. You don’t have to wear designer clothes, and there’s no valet, so who cares what car you come in. That’s a reason I took on the job. It’s not like La Jolla or downtown, where everybody’s gotta be wearing a Gucci, everybody’s gotta be buying $500 champagne. We’re not serving top-dining, that’s showing off. There are plenty of restaurants for showing off your money, but that’s not us.”

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**December 7, 2006**

**San Diego **
**Toothsome**

“Lot of people doze off over their laptops.”

It’s embarrassing. Cracked off two teeth on peanuts. Now I have to face the world looking like Bugs Bunny. So I call down to TJ, Doc Solotio’s there. “Anytime, my friend,” he says. “But not till Friday.”

Oh man, Today’s Wednesday. Gotta eat. Can think of one place where you don’t feel bad looking stupid: Rebecca’s. I’ve had coffee there. So-o-o-laid back. Liked it, but I’ve never tried the food.

“Whew!” I say as I bang into the way-big room. Deep yellow-wash walls give it a glow, and a whole hand-me-down collection of interesting but, well, unrelated furniture makes the space feel like some dowdy gentleman’s club.

But the first thing you notice is the quiet. It’s the silence of a library. Lots of laptopers sit scattered at the different antique tables, sipping coffees, staring, or clicking. Others sink deep in couches, nibbling on scones, some snoring.

Yes, this is a coffee place. But they have quiches and baked stuff in the counter display cabinet and a lunch special on a little blackboard: “Cana-...”

I have a thought. It’s about teeth. I need to look up that soup option. That’s when I notice a sign under the counter.

Black Bean Soup with Roasted Chicken and Toasted Bread, $4.75.

“Chicken chopped up?” I ask Gabriel.

“Oh sure,” he says.

I order it, and a coffee ($1.50), and take off for the nearest table.

And here’s another thing like. No way is it one man, one table here. I sit next to these guys, Alex, who looks like Papa Hemingway meets Santa Claus, and Mike, who’s a guitarist, and there’s this lady named Evie too, and pretty soon we’re talkin’ and pasting in arty color pix to make it a thing of humanity…"

Gabriel is back with his Cana-... Gabriel turns out to be an artist doing a way-big painting about the circle of life. “An endlessly repeating hologram,” he says. He leans back to talk to this gal Nola, who’s writing in her journal and pasting in arty color pix to make it a thing of beauty.

And now another customer, Philip Virgo, sits down at the baby grand piano and starts play-..."Summertime." Turns out they have open-mike poetry, music, and Joe’s band plays jazz on Friday nights. But anybody can play, so long as they can play, anytime. This place is hopping.

Gabriel brings the broth. It’s seriously good, home-made soup, chock-loaded with black beans, de-lish chicken that tastes almost as rich as roast beef, and veggies like celery and carrots. And yes, my two front teeth can handle the two toasted sides of the torta without making me look like some drooling basket case.

“What you need now,” says Alex, “is one of Rebecca’s scones. They’re from her Scottish grand-..."

Rebecca’s scenes. They’re from her Scottish grand-mother’s recipe. “Seems Rebecca only bakes them eight at a time, throughout the day. Alex’s fav-..."

Favor has sausage and cheese inside. But this load right now is stuffed with berries — blackberry, blueberry, raspberry, and boysenberry, plus a bowl of strawberry jam to dip it in. It’s certainly a big caggy, Scottish-looking thing. And the best news is it ain’t heavy. Yes, cracking through the outside’s my (temporary) problem, but once in-..."

We’re talking sweet heaven. ‘Specially with the (50-cent) refill coffee.

“This is my family here,” Rebecca says. “We started with no money, and people actually helped me financially, came with furniture and, like, a friend did the mural. Another customer, Dale, painted the walls, Larry did all the hinges on the doors. Those front doors are from Habitat from Humanity…"

She brings out a pic of this place when it was San Diego’s first Safeway, an open produce store, back in the 1920s. “We’re sitting where the produce aisles used to be,” she says.

On the way out, I notice the thing that says it all. Somebody has graffitiied the once-wet concrete outside. Arty, though, not scrawled. Flowery letters.

“Peace, Love and Coffee.” Who could ask for anything more?

---

**Christmas Day Brunch**

Join us on December 25 from 11 am-3 pm

Featuring a variety of food selections.

**Spectacular Seafood Station including:**

- Poached Salmon • Ceviche • Chilled Crab Legs
- Shrimp • Gravlax with Mini Bagels
- Beef, chicken and pork shrimp tempuri • green lip mussels • Japanese noodle soup
- 18 different hot food entrées including beef, chicken and pork shrimp tempuri • green lip mussels • Japanese noodle soup
- 18 different hot food entrées including beef, chicken and pork shrimp tempuri • green lip mussels • Japanese noodle soup
- 18 different hot food entrées including beef, chicken and pork shrimp tempuri • green lip mussels • Japanese noodle soup

**Carring Station including:**

- Roasted Turkey • Roasted Prime Rib

**Buffet Entrées including:**

- Tortellini with Three Cheese Sauce • Savory Artisan Bread Pudding
- Grilled Salmon with Braised Tender Greens • Rustic Pilgrim Stuffing
- Honey-Baked Spiral Ham garnished with Grilled Pineapple
- Creamy Yukon Gold Potatoes

Roasted Candied Garnet Yams • Green Bean Almandine

And assorted salads, soups and desserts.

Buffet closes at 4 pm.

**Adults** 29$
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**Santa's Best Japanese/Sushi Restaurant**

Union-Tribune's Readers Poll, 2004 & 2005

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**The Place:** Rebecca’s Coffee House, 3015 Juniper Street, South Park, 619-284-3663

**Type of Food:** American (some vegan)

**Prices:** Canadian bacon bagel melt with tomato, Swiss cheese, $6.25 (not always available); black bean soup with roasted chicken, $4.75; quiche plate with ham, veggie, $5.50; French crêpe with salad, $7.50; stuffed croissants (e.g. ham, turkey), $3.75; blue cheese, pecan, and apple melt, $5.75; French book and Dijon sandwich, $5.75; scones, $2.00

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**San Diego Reader Calendar Restaurants**

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**SAN DIEGO READER.COM**
Wine from the Neighborhood

He started posting black-and-white photos of loyal customers on the inside walls.

Every now and then, some poor soul asks me about buying wine. I usually tell them to ask somebody else: someone who works at a decent wine shop. Someone familiar with the inventory. Someone who will listen and learn about what you like and dislike. Someone who will tell you enough about their own experience of a particular wine for you to make some judgment about their palate. (If you’re sensitive to oak, say, it helps to work with a salesperson who isn’t numb to its effects.) In short, someone who knows how to tailor the product to the customer.

Jim Peters, who works at Robert Gelman’s shop Grape Connections on Scott Street in Point Loma, shares the sentiment. “People know that when they come in, they’re going to see either Bob or myself. There’s always somebody here to help, and we taste all the wines pretty much when they come in. In a small business, you can’t afford to have dogs on the shelf.”

“The bottom line is service,” agrees Gelman. And because of that, he’s optimistic these days about “smaller businesses in general.” He’s optimistic about “smaller businesses in general. I think people have a very good, loyal clientele that keeps growing every year.”

Peters came to the shop about a year after it opened, after telling Gelman, “I know a little bit about wine; if you need help, give me a call.” He learned that “little bit” from drinking and paying attention and from falling in with a good crowd. “When I came here in the fall of ’87, I went to a Bordeaux tasting down at the Horton Grand. I just happened to be at a table with Bert Hug of Mille Fleurs. We got acquainted, and I ended up getting into what they called the Lunch Bunch. I’d drive up there two to five times a week for lunch; we always sat at table number one. We brought our own wines. Sometimes, Bert would send me to tastings to take notes for him; I ended up meeting people throughout the restaurant and wine community. I did that for probably six, seven years.”

With his help, says Gelman, “we’ve built up a very good, loyal clientele that keeps growing every year.”

Point Loma is a fairly stable community; Little Italy is still growing like mad. Now it has a neighborhood wine shop too: Tango Wine Company, a joint project put together by four women: Cindy Pond (the principal owner), Siri Fomsgaard, Raquel Giscafe, and Amber Cyphers. “We pretty much know each other through tennis,” says Pond. “Siri was a tennis player; Raquel owns the Acura Classic Tennis Tournament; my company was a corporate sponsor. We became friends. We were probably drinking wine, maybe over at Wine Seals, and we all just decided that we loved wines, particularly Argentinean wines and wines from interesting boutique wineries. We wanted to find a place where, essentially, the wines could keep coming through, and new wines and new avatars could happen. A place where we could have fun wine tastings and where people could take the wines home and enjoy them.”

Crush

MATTHEW LICKONA

When I came here in the fall of ’87, I went to a Bordeaux tasting down at the Horton Grand. I just happened to be at a table with Bert Hug of Mille Fleurs. We got acquainted, and I ended up getting into what they called the Lunch Bunch. I’d drive up there two to five times a week for lunch; we always sat at table number one. We brought our own wines. Sometimes, Bert would send me to tastings to take notes for him; I ended up meeting people throughout the restaurant and wine community. I did that for probably six, seven years.”

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The substantial Clicquot stack gets the front-center focus of the holidays. As the customers pile in, we asked what their favorite wines were, and it really clicked. A website to help build (and recycle) a database. "It's just her love," Fomsgaard elaborates. "I think what's great about the Argentine wine drinkers find it very valuable; they're getting the Terrazas Reservas, and the Malbec family. You've got so many elevations along the Andes Mountains; you're getting such baby Cabs in the Malbec family. It's just her love. We've sold these boutique wines just by her-..."
All You Can Eat and Drink 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

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- Nashville Roll
- Nigri Sushi - Sake, Wasabi, Germu Saba, Ebi
- Shrimp Salad
- Egg Roll
- Fried Wonton
- Paper Chicken
- Subgum Vegetable
- Salt & Pepper Shrimp

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A tradition for 80 years.

Holiday Dining

Chef Carpentier will prepare two four-course meals sure to please any discerning palate. The menus feature traditional items such as chicken liver mousse, smoked whitefish and silky Nova will take you home to flatsbou but the soft, crayfish boudin — yep, yep! Seven days, three meals: luncheon to low moderate. — N.Y. (4/03)

The Original 101 Diner

502 First Street, Encinitas, 760-755-3225. This is where the caviar crowd from Ranchita Santa Fe comes to remember their room. It’s got all the deliberately down-home cooking you could want, including all-day breakfast ranging from really cheap biscuits and sausage gravy to a pretty cheap top shelf steak and eggs. For lunch, the bacon-Cheddar burger with fruit is a good surprise combo. The turkey-crab meat salad sandwich is also good, and try the spinach salad, with bacon, feta cheese, olives, mushrooms, and chopped egg. Even though this 101’s vintage (1924) in comparisons with the Oceanide 101’s Cafe (1928), it has become a genuine part of Encinitas life — lines on the weekends will tell you that. Open for breakfast and lunch daily. Inexpensive. — E.B. (1/04)

Pamplemousse Gille

514 Via de la Valle, Solana Beach, 858-792-9000. The local favorite French provincial restaurant offers exquisite, creative cuisine. Favorites from an often-changing menu include white fish served any style, mushroom capsicum soup, and tarte Tatin. Serene atmosphere with excellent service. Dinner reservations urged. Dinner nightly. Lunch Friday Only. Dinner expensive. — E.W.

Pizza Port

135 North Highway 101 (at Lomas Santa Fe), Solana Beach, 858-481-7352. (Also in Carlsbad.) “Tasty Crab & Gorg,” says the sign, and that’s just what it is. You come here for three things: the pizza, the beer, and the scene. The place is cavernous, but the tables are communal, with long wooden benches. Dad shoulders with surfers, students, yuppies, and locals. Pizza Port bakes their own beer (try Sharkbite Red) and flings their own pizzas, New York style. Filling combos can be great, like the pesto, mozzarella-grilled chicken, sun-dried tomatoes, arugula hearts, and feta (“Pizza Carlstaud”), or shrimp, clams, onions, olives, bell peppers, and mushrooms (“Pizza Solano”). Inexpensive. — E.B. (4/03)

Possidón

1630 Coast Boulevard (south of 16th Street), Del Mar, 858-755-9845. The two dining rooms and bar here boast art deco, nautical decor and ocean views, and the SRO umbrella-shaded patio is right at water’s edge. Lunches run to sandwiches, burgers, and fried seafood of ordinary competence and uneven preparation: wonderfully coconutty fried shrimp, for example, share a sample plate with deadly-dry salmon croquettes. Dinner dishes are modern Cal cuisine — that is, a mix-and-match of Pacific Rim-Mediterranean-Mexican flavors, with some emphasis on seafood. But the view’s the thing here. Full bar. Open daily, lunch and dinner, breakfast on weekends. Moderate to expensive. — N.W. (4/05)

Roxy Natural Foods Restaurant

517 North Coast Highway 101 (at D Street), Encinitas, 760-436-5001. You don’t have to be a Self Realization Fellowship follower to fit in in Encinitas, but it helps. Roxy was made for the veggie crowd who’ve grown up around the caviar crowd from Rancho Santa Fe. Located on the main strip of the town, the Ocean Terrace at Roxy offers a relaxed atmosphere and30+ menus of the Pacific Ocean. Entertaiment times vary • Reservations not required. Please call 858-436-5001 for more information and reservations.

La Valencia Hotel
1132 Prospect Street
La Jolla
www.lavalerancha.com

Ginza Sushi

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www.ginzasushi-shanghairestaurant.com

wishes, crisp-skinned hot cheese blintzes, matzah brei, hot brisket with lakr — or chicken-fried steak, if that’s your bag. Or take out from the attached deli and bakery. The yummy chopped liver will remind you of the Bronx, the smoked whitefish and silky Nova will take you home to flatsbou but the soft, crayfish boudin — yep, yep! Seven days, three meals: luncheon to low moderate. — N.Y. (4/03)

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Vivace
Four Seasons Resort Avila, 17405 Camino del Mar, Lompoc, 805-783-9000. This elegant restaurant offers three dining areas and a menu with outstanding appetizers and pasta dishes. There are many musical preparations. Gorgeous presentation; warm, friendly service. Recommended for a casual railroad dining. Dinner Tuesday through Sunday. Expensive. —E.W.

Holiday Season

Sunday, December 24
5-10 pm

Christmas Eve

Free 5-Flowing Champagne Brunch with entrée purchase

Monday, December 25
10 am-8 pm

Christmas Day

Free 5-Flowing Champagne Brunch with entrée purchase

At Noon

traditional

Turkey Dinner

Turkey with a sage & sausage stuffed, mashed potatoes and gravy, candied yams, corn, carrots and cranberry sauce.
Romantic Italian 4-Course Dinner for Two

Includes a bottle of wine and homemade dinner for two persons.

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2 pancakes, 2 eggs, 2 bacon or sausage

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Santitro’s 7811 Herschel Avenue, La Jolla, 858-484-1315. The name is Italian for “saint,” and the... because they come to taste open-faced sandwiches, not much of it from his own boats. Sashimi and the... and broccoli, and the Gravad Lox Plate (cured salmon) are always on. And if you spot Marilyn, Elvis, and Lady Lib-...price for three reasons: its sundeck, its...— S.M. (9/04)

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Calendar Restaurants

Additional to a la carte sales include... and sautéed mushroom ravioli with quail, and...and multiregional, filtered through...un). You’ll enjoy all the accompa...yourself for a change. The decor here...incredible flavor. — E.W. (4/99)

The Australian Pub 1014 Grand Avenue, Pacific Beach, 888-273-9921. A great place to take your kids...today from 9 p.m. to midnight. Inexpensive to moderate, but mainly moderate. — N.W. (2/99)

IKEA Restaurant & Café 2190 Frost...the fish and...tency with several rooms and levels. The decor is plain and bright, the sound...— E.W. (8/99) 

Hancock St. Cafe 3354 Hancock Street, La Jolla, 858-505-8700. This Koi...and broccoli, and the Gravad Lox Plate (cured salmon) are always on. And if you...bunch of mushrooms, ravioli, and sautéed mushroom ravioli with quail, and...■ 100% "Free Thai Titan" with purchase of any entrée. With this ad, expires 12/21/06. 

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Get second entrée of equal or lesser value free when you buy one entrée and two drinks. Must present coupon. Expires 12/21/06.

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Lunch from $5.95

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Workweek $5.95 Expired. 

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A Distinctive Identity’’ — “Very Good 

Nawm. Siam. 816 8th Avenue = Gaslamp 619.702.7967 Free Delivery

$5 Off Lunch Buffet Buy one entrée, get $5 off 2nd lunch buffet. Expire 12/30/06. 

50% Off any entrée. Expiry 12/30/06. 

Free Entrée

Buy one entrée, get the second of equal or lesser value free. Maximum $5. Off one entry table. Expiry 12/25/06.

Mission Valley & the Mesas

China Max 4691 Convoy Street (at En-...ivor, garlic, sautéed garlic, garlic butter, and...a short staircase; dining area with wikid, sw...shark, crab, and Dungeness crab, a must on...dinner. — N.W. (2/99)

The French Gourmet 961 Turquoise Street, Pacific Beach, 888-486-1725. In the mood for, perhaps, ratatouille, or calafior, live tanks includes such delicacies as...wine-braised...sauce and jalapeño pepper. Feeling adventurous? Go for the great meat pot or Kori steak tatar (yellowfin). This is sensual, elemental, hair-yeled. fish and...cruet bottles, including rare dessert wines.

At George’s dressy, comfortable down-...and local, and a tradition...full, including bar-...the refined wizardry of the genuine Can-...inex-...there are several imaginative appetizers. Reservations a must at dinner...bottles, including rare dessert wines. 

The decor is plain and bright, the sound...— E.W. (4/99) 

The decor is plain and bright, the sound...— E.W. (4/99) 

The decor is plain and bright, the sound...— E.W. (4/99)
The Third Corner Wine Shop
3764 Mission Boulevard, Point Loma, San Diego, 887-8731. Venerable, local stock and seafood joint that tries harder, from the breath-thin homemade terrymaki sauce (sweet up front, fading to bitter ginger) for the sushi well-cooked (if mild-flavored) fish to the cut-out-the-promised-ago-beef. The interior’s low wood-shelving, driftwood beams, dim light, and red leather booths combine with the stay-up-late kitchen to make the space feel like a cozy hole, a refuge from the brighter buzz of Mission Beach. The wine list runs the gamut from Cook’s sparkling wine to Crystal champaigne, stopping along the way at an interesting (if expensive) collection of reserves. Next along the way at an interesting (if provisioning) choice of pizza, is a more friendly. Can be noisy on weekend evenings. Open daily. moderately. — N.W. (7/05)

Umi Sushi
280 Shell Island Drive (at Shatter, off Scott), Point Loma, 813-226-1135. An instant neighborhood hotspot, this large, cheerful sushi bar and dinning house also offers Japanese and Korean entries, including tempura (cooked in the kitchen, not at the table), Korean rib, and excellent beef terrymaki of gently grilled prime beef. Sushi highlights include tempanya, rich garlic tuna, and a “Crazy boy” roll spicy enough to divert your palate from the presence of imitation crabmeat. Free parking (lots full). Special kids’ menu available. Lunch Monday through Saturday, dinner daily. Sushi prices lower than most, entries inexpensive to moderate. — W.N. (4/05)

Central San Diego

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Buffet in the Mission Ballroom atop the Bahia Resort Hotel on Mission Bay and a complimentary cruise aboard the William D. Evans Sternwheeler.
BUFFET BRUNCH INCLUDES:
Roast Tom Turkey, Roast Baron of Beef, Broiled Breast of Chicken, Pecan-Crusted Pork Loin, Grilled Mahi Mahi, All the trimmings and an array of sweet treats.
11:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m. • ADULTS $36.95 • $19.85 CHILDREN 5—12
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Adjacent to the Embassy Suites Hotel downtown
Lunch daily 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. Dinner nightly 5 p.m.-1 a.m

*With purchase of entree of equal or greater value and 2 drinks. One coupon per table per visit. Not valid on holidays. Max $17 discount. Expires 5/30/07.

East County & College Area

Antonio’s Hacienda
700 North Johnson Avenue, El Cajon, 619-442-9872. If the door hasn’t been decorated — updated from its original 1950s-fabulous Old California Spanish — it’s because there’s been no need. The enormous dark-wood-chandeliered, the padded-leather wooden chairs, the chain-wooden weathered beams — all top shelf and aging well. Families abound, reveling in the guitar trio and the exposed kitchen station — such atmosphere! And,

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greenhouse's mounds of juicy, slow-cooked meat. Many enjoy their unusual scallop soup, vegetarian pot-fulled burrito and rolled tacos, and well-prepared soups. You go for the stewed meat. El Zapato is dependable, serving Mexican with solid, homemade, handmade flavor. Three meals daily. Inexpensive. — M.N. (10/04)

Hob Nob Hill 227 First Avenue (at 1st Avenue), Banker’s Hill, 619-230-8176. It opened in 1944 as a 14-seat lunch counter. Now, you swoop in under the marble counter to shiny red booths, deep-blue carpet, blood-red painted walls, and small, well-filled booths. You’re thinking “business class,” but don’t be fooled. We’re talking coffee-shop prices, especially with the all-day breakfasts and sandwiches, not to mention the burgers with aouled in too. It’s across from the street from a retirement condo complex and at dinner, says the owner, “We cater to seniors.” When there are a lot of choices, affordable three course prix fixe dinners (with a regular entrée and a dessert — custardy and full of limey bite. A “grazing menu” features small bites for folks on a diet or on the run. The menu changes seasonally, but you can trust the kitchen any time of your year. Very nice. Full bar. Dinner nightly, until 11:30 p.m. Weekends fill, meals expensive. “grazing” can be moderate. — M.N. (10/06)

Downtown

Laurel Restaurant 615 Laurel Street (at Fifth), uptown, 619-239-2222. Freshly remodeled and remade by Frances Hamilton, the owner of Chive and Kensington Grill, the restaurant looks like a proper bistro (the prize has bought for it). In a chic, creamy dining room below street level you’ll find an eclectic cuisine with French and Mediterranean flavors showcasing pre-dessert appetizers, including, free-range chicken. No bread unless you pay for it, but you get a checking room, while helping yourself to a choice of bins in the rear. The global menu is extensive and expensive, selected bottles are half-price on Sundays. The fall features creative cocktails and 20 sakes. Valet parking 6. Several steps from street level, disabled access to valet parking on Fifth Avenue (phone before coming to ensure that entry is open). Open for dinner nightly. Expensive, but an early-bird three-course menu is moderate. — M.N. (10/08)

Parallel 134 W. Washington Street (at Halsey), Mission Hills, 619-260-0033. Southern China, Pakistan, Algeria, Mexico, etc — are all on the 3rd parallel. This Tho-bien restaurant in Mission Hills is a hit for shrund, thoughtful creativity. It’s not just “food food.” Try the superb mango and chili appetizer. Entrees show that chef Amiel Gubino, of Café Legame fame, knows what she’s doing. Dinner Monday through Saturday $15-25. A “grazing menu” is extensive. — M.N. (10/09)

Shake & Bake 3315 18th Street (10th Street)1 W. Market Street (at Halsey), Mission Hills, 619-299-0230. Probably the most winning restaurant in downtown San Diego. The Broad’s-house-brasted b.b.q.具备了a diamond-lust window, and a Heights-brasted b.b.q.具备了also. The Heights-brasted b.b.q.具备了is bright and beautiful setting with small tables, bar seating, and a patio, you’ll find light and lovely Parsian-fare with substantial fat, exotic lunches and dinners, and su- phisticated bar-nibbles. Don’t miss their fresh poached eggs with sage- turelle sauce. Now nightly specials. Upstairs main dining room features more drinks include artisan beers. The downstairs Oyster Bar is a pretty spot to touristic families and conventioneers, but not just burly Cabernets and Bor- ders. There’s a nice bar of straight bour- bon and local ales. It’s a nice way to celebrate the unique tropical cuisine of Guam, and the chicken stews are equally savory. Other choices include a range of Chinese vegetables and beef in a hot chile sauce over rice or noodles, or good Mexican dishes such as chili verde (poor or chicken simmered in spicy tomatillo sauce). But center stage is la American Jimmy Burger (1/3-pound patty with potato or carrot salad). One bonus: a fine tangential view of Balboa Park’s lagoon and trees. Open daily, breakfast, lunch and dinner daily. Inexpensive. — E.B. (11/04)

Brickyard Coffee and Tea 470 W. 16th Street, downtown, 619-596-7230. If the problem, you’re rich enough to live in the Marina District, is the lack of cafe life. It is, until this modest little eatery and coffee shop n ested to the next to the Seaport Village toddler shop. You are under loose poplar trees in a brick patio that has one unusual downtown advantage — except for the wind swirling through the poplar (or a trolley pulling in), it’s completely silent here. Sipping coffee and reading your paper is the thing here, but you can fill up, with items like “Texas chili,” or grilled cheese and tomato sandwich within cup of chili, or spinach and mushroom quiche with a small Caesar salad, or just printf. You can also order half a sandwich — turkey, ham, beef, or turkey — with a cup of soup or Caesar salad. It’s the nearest thing to a French country café. Open early morn- ing till 2 a.m. daily. Inexpensive. — E.B. (9/09)

Cafe Chloe 721 Ninth Avenue (at G Street), North Park, 619-236-7221. This reputable downtown restaurant offers class and comfort, geared for people who enjoy well. The food is good, very good, with a chicken liver mousse pie, Mediterranean blue mussels, and, when available, the crust but virtuous soft-shelled crab. Their oysters, such as brown- ies, are,歇ly, luscious, and cheap.Bring a date to the upstairs dining room. Dob- son’s is wavy, it’s confidence infectious. Lunch and dinner Monday through Fri- day. Dinner only on Saturday. Moderate. — M.N. (10/09)

Blackstone’s Steakhouse & Wine Bar 1536 India Street, Little Italy, 619-237-1150. Original branch at 8790 University Center Lane, University City/Golden Triangle, 816-335-0704. A steakhouse for ladies who power lunch, dinner nightly, until 11:30 p.m. moderate to expensive. — M.N. (9/04)

Nepali Kitchen 1538 Del Dotto Drive, Support Village, downtown, 619-235-1141. This two-story Nepali- style eatery caters mainly to tourists and families, but the upstairs Oyster Bar is a pretty spot to chill out and watch the sidewalk with a good many札食. Vegetables prepare tend to- ward simple American coastal dishes; the menu includes more appetizers and the drinks include artesian beers. The down- stairs main dining room features more old-fashioned “cute” preparations and has a longer wine list but not true view. All foods and drinks from both venues are available by request on both floors (but not all servers know this). Parking free with validation down at street level. Reserva- tions strongly advised for after 6:15 p.m. any evening. Accessible via downtown garage, with entrance on the park’s (south) side of the building. Lunch and dinner daily, dinner only downtown. Moderate to expensive. — N.W. (9/08)

Indigo Grill 1536 India Street, Little Italy, 619-234-6842. This second — and much grander — incarnation of chef Deborah Scott’s Indigo Grill expands her original Native American motif, with its focus on root vegetables, game, and roasted spices. Now, the Pacific Coastal cuisine takes in more coastal than most, drawing upon ingredients and tech- niques from Alaska to Oaxaca. (The décor, dark and urban, is reminiscent, follows the theme.) Unusual combinations are a mainstay; a single dish, such as the seafood stack, may span the entire dis- tance, bringing together a multitude of flavors that work together to create a wondrous whole. Fine breads are made in-house, as are desserts (try the deca- dent, crazy-crunchy pineapple flourless chocolate cake). The wine list includes contrasting varietals. Lunch weekdays, dinner nightly; closed early Sundays, but open again until 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Lunch is subject to moderate to expensive — N.W. (9/04)

La Cañita 1271 6th Street (at 14th Street), North Park, 619-231-3284. Don’t be fooled by the l’il old blue-and-white clap- board house at the bottom of City College’s hill. Princes and politicians come...
SOUTH BAY & CORONADO

Azuara Point (formerly Coronado Bay Bistro, 4000 Coronado Bay Road (Silver Strand Boulevard), Coronado, 858-435-4900. The menu here has California’s typical dumbed-down world-appetizer array—plus salads, pasta, grilled meats, a few sauté items and children’s plates. The restaurant is very family-friendly (full of kids, actually), with a menu that appeals to the young in mouth. The chef seems to have a decent nose, since almost every dish involves honey or sugar—-for example, the table butter that’s intriguingly flavored with a honey and mustard. Your server will talk you through the day’s fish selections, which are more appealing to adults than children. Fresh, quality seafood done simply and well. Ultra-nice inside when crowded; reserve for the lovely terrace with a view of the beach. Open daily, lunch and dinner, with weekend breakfast. Moderate to slightly expensive. — NW (3/01)"

SOUTH BAY & CORONADO

Bay Beach Cafe (E 70th Street, Coronado, 619-435-4900. The menu here has California’s typical dumbed-down world-appetizer array—plus salads, pasta, grilled meats, a few sauté items and children’s plates. The restaurant is very family-friendly (full of kids, actually), with a menu that appeals to the young in mouth. The chef seems to have a decent nose, since almost every dish involves honey or sugar—-for example, the table butter that’s intriguingly flavored with a honey and mustard. Your server will talk you through the day’s fish selections, which are more appealing to adults than children. Fresh, quality seafood done simply and well. Ultra-nice inside when crowded; reserve for the lovely terrace with a view of the beach. Open daily, lunch and dinner, with weekend breakfast. Moderate to slightly expensive. — NW (3/01)"

SOUTH BAY & CORONADO

Crown Room Hotel Del Coronado, 1500 Orange Avenue, Coronado, 619-435-4611. Let’s face it, this is one of the grandest entrances you’ll make any-where, into the enormous, gawky, vaulted timber dining room where pres-idents, princes and Marlin Monroe have dined. It’s only open for Sunday brunch on these days. The gigantic eat-till-you’re-beat buffet, made from made-as-you-watch omelets to crab legs, prime rib, dining desserts, and even long-stemmed straw-berries you hand-dip in chocolate. The downside? Monroe was here to shoot “The Seven Year Itch,” but (apart from the chocolate) most food ain’t. It’s either cold (like the croissants), the chocolate cake (divine) is lukewarm (like prime rib and egg Benedict—although the egg was cold with a lot more Benedict). But this is an Ed-wardian-style social occasion—-order and be seen. The food isn’t great, but the atmosphere is grand. Sunday, 9 a.m to 2 p.m. Inexpensive. — N.W. (3/00)

SOUTH BAY & CORONADO

L’Esca (formerly Coronado Island Reef, 200 Second Street, Coronado, 619-435-3300. Probably the pink Fin-eggs and bay steers bring you here first. But L’Esca (“Port of Call” in French) delivers to the taste buds too. For “Northern Mediterranean cuisine with California flair,” read lots of pasta, fish, salads, sandwiches. Try the grilled salmon served with its richly sauced, crunchy green beans, red potatoes, strong olives, and rosemary-flavored bun. Entrees like grilled chicken and mushrooms in Parmesan cream with penne pasta are safe enough. Or bone in filet mignon with black pepper au- bain the tuna salad sandwich wrapped in lavash; three vertical Arme-nian bread tubes, angle-sliced to reveal interior of tuna and greenery. Eat on the pool and bay-surrounded patio of you can. Breakfast, lunch, dinner. Moderate to expensive. — E-B (3/03)

SOUTH BAY & CORONADO

Spio’s Gyros (1481 First Street #4, Coronado, 619-415-1225. The food, the music, the view—-you are outside Aztar! Is this the Aegum? This inside-outside Greek caf is located at the water’s edge, and the heated patio has a spectacular view of San Diego, the bay, and the heat traffic. At sunset, sip- ping their excellent Greek wine (cheaper than their California), watch the sun set into the city abate in gold. The prices keep Spio’s popular with the locals as well as tourists, and plenty open. Last seven days until 8 p.m. Inexpensive. — E-B (11/00)

SOUTH BAY & CORONADO

Tango Grille Argentine Steak House 633 Broadway, Chula Vista, 619-420-0184. Play piano and enjoy the most authentic Argentine pantofila (milk grill) in town at this charming, warmly decorated bar and restaurant. The principal entrée is delivered to the taste buds too. For “Northern Mediterranean cuisine with California flair,” read lots of pasta, fish, salads, sandwiches. Try the grilled salmon served with its richly sauced, crunchy green beans, red potatoes, strong olives, and rosemary-flavored bun. Entrees like grilled chicken and mushrooms in Parmesan cream with penne pasta are safe enough. Or bone in filet mignon with black pepper au-
includes organ meats and blood sausage. For others, there are brilliantly seasoned mini-empanadas of amazing lightness, as well as grilled swordfish. Those not in a grilled meat mood can opt for numerous pastas (including a meaty lasagna) or the ubiquitous molotes (beef or chicken patties) of the pupusas. Portions are more than generous, and so are the flavors. Open daily. Low moderate. — N.W. (4/02)

Village Pizzeria 1206 Orange Ave., Encinitas, 619-437-0440. In the back, Mootie Creamery makes all its ice cream. In the front, Mootie owner David Spaltro decided to set up what he’s always wanted: A cheap, back-cut Italian (meatball and white-tubetti) and dancing Chianti bottle eatery where local families and amateur sports teams come in to pig out. He wisely didn’t destroy what was half of the famous old Mexican Village. Instant atmosphere! Ancient mounds of guns with guitars surrounding sardines, arhchs, illuminated clusters of red grapes. The bad news: You might have to handle pumped-up kids’ sports teams cramming the booths around you. The good news: Great cal- zonetti and pizza by the dozen. Open for lunch through dinner. Seven days. Inexpensive. — E.B. (1/2004)

B A J A

From the United States use the pre-115, 53-644 when calling Tijuana; when calling in Tijuana use only the restaurant’s seven-digit number.

El Ojo Espejo Mates 8935 (just off Blanccaro), Ensenada, Baja, 646-179-1899. This is a restaurant at the heart of the tourist district, but the cooking and service are way above coach class. Look to the “specialties” section of the huge menu for the most interesting selections. Steaks grill up with peseta sauce (famed from Lice Vitoria for Chilorio) proves outrageously delicious, and the seasoned chiles rellenos (meat-stuffed poblano chilies with velvety-creamy and pungent) gain refinement from griddle-ground citrus. Fish dishes are fresh, clean, and tender, and you’ll find nine different ways to enjoy a steak. If you can handle a tableside production number, capes with cortez (caramelized) sauce) makes a very grand finale. Fully bilingual staff. English menus available. Sidewalk patio dining available. Reserve for sports teams during tourist peaks. Full, bar, with excellent margaritas, Baja wines. Open daily. Continuous service breakfast through dinner. Moderate. — N.W. (4/04)

Ethiopian Cuisine

1/2-PRICE ENTRÉE

Buy one lunch or dinner entrée and receive a second entrée of equal or lesser value at 1/2 the price.

With this ad. Expires 12/20/06.

AWASH ETHIOPIAN RESTAURANT

4797 El Cajon Boulevard, San Diego
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...across from the main lifestyle town of
ON OCEAN BEACH!
619-233-4059

Mon.-Fri. 11-2 am. • Mon.-Sat. 5-11 pm.

...On the Patio
Saturday & Sunday

East County’s only
Greek Buffet
50% Off

Purchase one entrée and two drinks and receive the second entrée at 50% off. Purchase one entrée and two drinks and receive the second entrée at 50% off.

Lunch 7.99 • Dinner 10.99
Mon.-Sun.
Offer not valid on holidays.

Greek Town Buffet

345 W. Main St., El Cajon • 619-441-9708

Available!

Includes organ meats and blood sausage. For others, there are brilliantly seasoned mini-empanadas of amazing lightness, as well as grilled swordfish. Those not in a grilled meat mood can opt for numerous pastas (including a meaty lasagna) or the ubiquitous molotes (beef or chicken patties) of the pupusas. Portions are more than generous, and so are the flavors. Open daily. Low moderate. — N.W. (4/02)

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Greek Town Buffet

345 W. Main St., El Cajon • 619-441-9708

Available!
Evidently Mel Gibson is in it only for the barbarity. Scouring the globe, roaming the pages of history, he has alighted in *Apocalypto* on the illuminating example of the Mayan people, past their civilized peak, where a happy, peaceable, practical-joking tribe of jungle dwellers (sample joke: the prescription of a red-hot herb as a topical fertility drug, so that the duped hubby must, in full view of the guffawing villagers, hop around buck naked and plunk down his burning loins in a water trough — wait, it gets even better — and his wife must pour a pitcher of water down her gullet) is cruelly set upon and rounded up by a storm troop of fearsome, bloodthirsty, bone-in-the-nose killjoys in search of sacrificial offerings to their god Kukulkan. A paradise, in other words, no less than turn-of-the-13th-century Scotland in *Braveheart* or 1st-century Palestine in *The Passion of the Christ*, where Gibson may indulge his appetite for mayhem, persecution, torture, martyrdom. The nine-tenths-naked natives enable him, further, to indulge his lesser appetite for homoerotica.

For the main course, he gives us — he shares with us — multiple impalings, beheadings, and cuttings-out of hearts; he gives us a breath-stopping near-miss when the hero is saved from the chopping block only by the timely intervention of a solar eclipse (“Kukulkan has drunk his fill of blood!”), straight out of *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court*; he gives us a sort of ApocaRambo when the hero escapes back into the snug jungle and, guerrilla-style, turns the tables on his urban pursuers, with assists from the panther and the viper; and he gives us a cross-cutting, nail-biting (or, if you’re not completely into it, rib-tickling) climax in which the hero tries to shake the last of his pursuers in time to rescue his pregnant wife from a flooding pit, where she is standing on tiptoes to keep her nose above the water while simultaneously giving birth beneath it. Gibson perhaps in *Apocalypto* indulges a little less in slow-motion, saving it for special dramatic stress, as when your father is having his throat cut in front of your very eyes or you are jumping off a mile-high waterfall with spears whizzing past your ears, as opposed to the constant stress of *The Passion*.

The English subtitles and the no-name cast might almost lead you to believe, were it not for the telltale slickness and the stressful slow-motion, that you’re watching a product of, say, the Guatemalan New Wave or the Undiscovered Belizean Cinema. At the very least, the film should do nothing to fan the flames of Gibson’s suspected and substantiated anti-Semitism. And at the next least, the last-minute arrival on the scene of Christianity (a missed opportunity, there, for a cameo of Hugh Jackman in conquistador regalia), even if it’s every bit as fortuitous as a solar eclipse in getting our hero out of a tight spot, is not openly — and politically incorrectly — applauded. That might be the film’s one and only instance of restraint.

* * *

Blood Diamond stands as a ser...

**REVIEW**

**DUNCAN SHEPHERD**

**THE SMASH HIT PLAY IS NOW A MAJOR MOTION PICTURE COMEDY!**

NEW YORK OBSERVER

“LITERATE, INTELLIGENT, PROFOUND, BRILLIANTLY ACTED BY A PERFECT CAST, AND HUGELY ENTERTAINING, ‘THE HISTORY BOYS’ IS A BLOOMING MIRACLE! I ABSOLUTELY LOVED IT!”

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Opens in theaters December 15.
The Nativity Story

The Nativity Story is a beautifully dull Christmas worship service, fully supernatural in its vision (the voice of God, a luminous Messenger, an avian Holy Spirit, yet full of luxuriously tactile costumes, solid sets, atmospheric locales, and earthy Mediterranean faces. The half-Maori Keisha Castle-Hughes, though harmoniously olive in complexion, seems a bit overwhelmed in the role of the Virgin. Understandably.

The treatment hits all the essential points of the story without pulverizing them into mush: the three Magi on camels, Mary on a donkey and Joseph on foot, the spotlighting star, the swell of orchestra in the epic mode of Miklos Rozsa. After the adolescent drug problems of Thirteen and the scene-setting, some impressionistic documentary of the United States story without pulverizing the scenes of lands and mountains. Although her focus quite reasonably is on the plight of a pregnant teen, the filmmaker has made no attempt to “reimagine” the character for a new age, simply to imagine her as she might have been, a trenched reenactment assignment carried with unforeseen taste and composure. Mel Gibson, it goes without saying, would have made a good deal more of Herod’s elimination of his competition.}

Blood Diamond

Gotta Give

Bobby — One day at the former Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, the fateful day of June 4, 1968, when Bobby Kennedy, on the campaign trail, was going for the vote in the California Primary, and Don Dysdale, on the mound for the Dodgers, was going for the record of consecutive scoreless innings pitched. A testimony of lives, from the Mexican menus in the kitchen to the Hollywood headliner in the showroom, woven together in the pattern of Grand Hotel, which is explicitly referenced in the dialogue, or just plain Hotel, which had been released the previous year, 1967. Bobby (Don) and the Democratic role player (Dy- Dale) are depicted as young men, Joe Vi- tez, who was six years old at the time, churning up a lifetime of nostalgia for political ideals, seemingly missing, now, in a par- allel time of an unpopular foreign war. The seriousness of intent does not lessen the hackneyed, though, and the politics tend to load down the soap opera at least as much as the soap opera lightens and cheapens the politics. Solitary contributions from William H. Macy as the hotel manager, a self-proclaimed “equal opportunity kind of guy,” Anthony Hopkins as the re- tired doorman who still lauds the promises daily, Laurence Fishburne as the head chef, Freddy Rodriguez as a humble kitchen worker with tickets to the big game, and Martin Sheen, the filmmaker’s famously Left-leading father. Among others. All of the women “of a certain age” —

Demi Moore, Sharon Stone, Helen Hunt —
**AN EXPERIENCE TO SAVOR.**

Anthony LaPaglia is excellent and Viola Davis is a joy to behold.

— Elia Taylor, Village Voice

**A FAMILY HOLIDAY CLASSIC.**

sometimes you need to tear down to build up.

— Erica Land, NBC-TV/Houston

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**THE CAVES OF THE YELLOW DOG**

Monogolian movie from one of the directors of The Story of the Weeping Camel, Byambasuren Davaa. This one tells the story of a little girl and a stray dog, not a yellow dog, but white with a black face and a black spot on his back, hence his christening as Zochir (translation: Spot), and cute as the dickens, though the girl’s father worries that the dog, likely mingling with wolves, cannot be trusted around the family sheep. In spite of an unvarnished narrative and a glacial pace, the feeling for unspectacular landscape (low mountains, wide valleys), the sense of open space, and the placement of people within it are authentically cinematic.

— LA JOLLA VILLAGE
son, along with your car, outside the theatre. A ferry boat bobs in up at Katrina New Orleans, killing 543, mainly returning Navy men and their welcoming families, and the uncounted body of a young woman bearing residue from the explosion has been fished out of the water a few minutes before the blast. What’s the connection? The chief investigative tool proves to be a lanci- fous science-fictional device that allows the reads, through satellite imagery and com- puter projections, to view events from four days and six hours earlier, even inside the apartment (and the bathroom shower) of the deceased young woman’s audiovisual time machine. In addition, a portable handheld device for the facility to behave as truly unique car chase, in the lengthy sac- nar of cars on chase, whereby every vehicle is four days ahead of the other, which has to steer through a totally different pattern of traffic to keep pace. The bag- of-tricks filmmaking technique of Tony Scott, really more of a weathercock than a director, throws a few smaller obstacles in your path. Still, if you consent to ride out the bumps, the film works up plenty of for- ward momentum and climactic tension (in route to a have-it-both-ways ending), and the preposterousness in no way limits the level of engagement, or engangement, of Denzel Washington. With Paula Patton, Val Kilmer, James Caviezel.

**JAMAL MONTICH, DELTA VISTA 20; CIF RON, 86; MAR HIGHLANDS 6; DICKET R; ESCENIDO 16; PASADENA 18; GASLAMP 15; GROSSMINT CENTER, LA COSTA 6; LA VILLA 12; MIRA MESA 18, MISSION MARKETPLACE 13; MISSION VALLEY 20; OCEAN- SIDE 21; PALM PROMENADE 24; PASADENA 18; PONY 15; RANCHO DEL REY 15; RANCHO SAN DIEGO 15; SAN MARCOS 18; SAN TE ODIE 12; TOWN SQUARE 14; VISTA VILLAGE**

The Departed — Martin Scorsese’s ca- reer changing turn to the overblown epic, a turn marked by Casino, would seem to be a course difficult to resist. Random. Gun. New York. The Avatar. And now even a traddy light diversion, adapted from an average-length Hong Kong action film, will get dragged out to two a half hours — this despite the delivery of da- logue at the machine gun tempo of a film, will get dragged out to two and a half hours. The major issues, too many for the style, it’s like anything else I’ve seen.

Sex Is Zero (South Korea) 2002, Parkin House List price: $39.95


Survive Style Five + (Japan) 2004, Anchor Bay Entertainment List price: $19.98

Bryan Garcia
Supervisor, Sing Young Music World and Karaoke

**BRYAN GARCIA**

Sex is a great movie that breaks the mold of the typical South Korean romantic comedy with CGI effects. Also from Japan is Survival Style Five. This is a colorfully bizarre collage of stories interwoven into one unique and entertaining film. It is a modern, artistic movie and a bit on the weird side, it’s unlike anything else I’ve seen.

**FORREST BATSON**

Manager, Sing Young Music World and Karaoke

With the holidays upon us, here are three DVDs with a twisted Christmas theme. First is Christmas Evil (also known as Better Watch Out or Terror in the Mud) which looks like a cheap Santa slash film is actu- ally a very clever psychological thriller/black comedy that has been virtually ignored until now. Next up is Black Christmas. This is a cult thriller that delivers suspense, not gore. I highly believe that Bob Clark — the director of Porky’s and Rhinestone — also directed this film. It also stars Olivia Hussey who played Juliet in Zeffirelli’s Romeo and Juliet. And finally, Nightmare Before Christmas, based on Tim Burton’s story. This is a musical-fantasy masterpiece!

**CHRISTMAS EVIL (USA) 1980, Synapse Films** List price: $24.95

**BLACK CHRISTMAS (USA) 1974, Somerville House** List price: $24.98

**NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS (USA) 1993, Touchstone** List price: $24.95

London in the underground, plus a feisty feminist mouse, a villainous toad and his toadies, a French-scented frog (get it?), among others. The traditional ping pong ball eyes are still in place, although all signs of a human touch in the modelling of the figures has been smoothed out, and the three-dimensionality — the light and shade and all the rest — is blatantly counterfeited, and the total effect is markedly less distinctive. Still, a good deal of skill went into it, in matters of pacing and timing and elemen- tary draftmanship. Hitting the hero in the car at 2am, in a supercap in rapid succession is almost as ingenious as it is low. Almost. With the voices of Hugh Jackman, Kate Winslet, Ian McKellen, Jean Reno, Bill Nighy, directed by David Bowers and Sam Fell 2006.

**NEW ALMODÓVAR GEM! FLIRTINGLY FUNNY!**

Peter Travers, ROLLING STONE

FLIRTINGLY FUNNY! 

The film’s high point is the second song cut, a perky fast-food clerk with incipient scruf- f (Traces of which began to creep into the dialogue at the machine-gun tempo of a film, will get dragged out to two and a half hours), as showy an actor as Scorsese is back from the farcical brink. And Jack other therapist (Vera Farmiga, she of the Gangs of New York … The Aviator.... And me- taw worry line) both become in- DiCaprio, giving himself away with bis bile police spy inside the mob (Leonardo show of innocence) and a downwardly mo- hodded-up auctioneer (or of Scorsese’s dialogue at the machine-gun tempo of a film, will get dragged out to two and a half hours — this despite the delivery of da- logue at the machine gun tempo of a film, will get dragged out to two and a half hours. The major issues, too many for the style, it’s like anything else I’ve seen.

**ESCONDIDO 16; FASHION VALLEY 18;**

Denzel Washington. With Paula Patton, (en route to a have-it-both-ways ending); your path. Still, if you consent to ride out the bumps, the film works up plenty of for- ward momentum and climactic tension (in route to a have-it-both-ways ending), and the preposterousness in no way limits the level of engagement, or engangement, of Denzel Washington. With Paula Patton, Val Kilmer, James Caviezel.

**JAMAL MONTICH, DELTA VISTA 20; CIF RON, 86; MAR HIGHLANDS 6; DICKET R; ESCENIDO 16; PASADENA 18; GASLAMP 15; GROSSMINT CENTER, LA COSTA 6; LA VILLA 12; MIRA MESA 18, MISSION MARKETPLACE 13; MISSION VALLEY 20; OCEAN- SIDE 21; PALM PROMENADE 24; PASADENA 18; PONY 15; RANCHO DEL REY 15; RANCHO SAN DIEGO 15; SAN MARCOS 18; SAN TE ODIE 12; TOWN SQUARE 14; VISTA VILLAGE**

The Departed — Martin Scorsese’s ca- reer changing turn to the overblown epic, a turn marked by Casino, would seem to be a course difficult to resist. Random. Gun. New York. The Avatar. And now even a traddy light diversion, adapted from an average-length Hong Kong action film, will get dragged out to two a half hours — this despite the delivery of da- logue at the machine gun tempo of a film, will get dragged out to two and a half hours. The major issues, too many for the style, it’s like anything else I’ve seen.

Sex Is Zero (South Korea) 2002, Parkin House List price: $39.95


Survive Style Five + (Japan) 2004, Anchor Bay Entertainment List price: $19.98

Bryan Garcia
Supervisor, Sing Young Music World and Karaoke

**BRYAN GARCIA**

Sex is a great movie that breaks the mold of the typical South Korean romantic comedy with CGI effects. Also from Japan is Survival Style Five. This is a colorfully bizarre collage of stories interwoven into one unique and entertaining film. It is a modern, artistic movie and a bit on the weird side, it’s unlike anything else I’ve seen.

Sex IS ZERO (South Korea) 2002, Parkin House List price: $39.95


Survive STYLE FIVE + (Japan) 2004, Anchor Bay Entertainment List price: $19.98

Forrest Batson
Manager, Sing Young Music World and Karaoke

With the holidays upon us, here are three DVDs with a twisted Christmas theme. First is Christmas Evil (also known as Better Watch Out or Terror in the Mud) which looks like a cheap Santa slash film is actu- ally a very clever psychological thriller/black comedy that has been virtually ignored until now. Next up is Black Christmas. This is a cult thriller that delivers suspense, not gore. I highly believe that Bob Clark — the director of Porky’s and Rhinestone — also directed this film. It also stars Olivia Hussey who played Juliet in Zeffirelli’s Romeo and Juliet. And finally, Nightmare Before Christmas, based on Tim Burton’s story. This is a musical-fantasy masterpiece!

**CHRISTMAS EVIL (USA) 1980, Synapse Films** List price: $24.95

**BLACK CHRISTMAS (USA) 1974, Somerville House** List price: $24.98

**NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS (USA) 1993, Touchstone** List price: $24.95

For Your Consideration — Filmmaker Christopher Guest goes back to the target area of his very first film, The Big Picture — namely the movie biz, more narrowly the Oscar biz — but this time he claimed himself to the mockumentary format, Waiting for Guffman, Best in Show,
A Mighty Wind. Any sense of liberation from information overload has not spilled over into comic invention. The behind-the-scenes satire is sufficiently odd-lit that there must be a lot of truth in it, even if not a lot of literary genius in it. And the paradox of on-screeen Hollywood, both big budget and small, are so far outside the realm of possibility as to severely undermine everyone’s filmgoing, moviegoer’s included.

Guest is more on the mark with the as-ported membership of the studia publica, the “infotainment” industry, the talk-show circuit. And Catherine O’Hara, among his stable of repertory play-ers (Harry Shearer, Eugene Levy, Michael McKean, Parker Posey, Fred Willard, Jane Lynch et al.)...stands out as an odd, self-watering actress who, though she might migrate, can’t lose her vanity and her ego. Her surgical overhead for awards season is truly grisly, and indeed the outward aspect of the cast in general shows a loving, or rather a loathing, attention to detail. For your consideration: Best Makeup. 2006. — (HILLCREST CINEMAS, FROM 12/8)

A Good Year — Self-betterment skill to do with a cutthroat London bond broker (Russell Crowe, disconcertingly fer) who inherits a vineyard in Provence, grows it into a goldmine, and who, returning there to sell the place,finds it has three times out elaborately in terms of visual and track, amounting to self-sabotage. The only bright thing about this is the frequent brief appearances of Valeria Bruni Tedeschi (a top-line star on the continent) as the hero’s girlfriend, a role that affords her fractionally more screen time than her blink-of-an-eye appearance in Meninplentylong enough to emit a blast of Mediterranean soulfulness. With Marion Cotillard, Abbie Cornish, Tom Hollander, Allison Frye. Funny. 6)

★ Happy Feet — Computer-animated mes-sage movie about the pressure of conformity and (a separate message) of nature, more specifically about a species of pop-song-singing penguins, into whose midst a New York Times blogger (but not the bite, or about a runnier breed of Latino penguins, some nautical rat, Kevin Smith, the dorkier edition of hoomongous orcs, and a race of “aliens” who are not computer-animated at all. The interface with these aliens near the end is moderately mind-blowing, if only from a mixed-media standpoint, but the alluded allegories of the human race would have more rhetorical chutz if the penguins hadn’t all along been borrowing so freely from its popular culture. The natural state would seem) while carrying on into eternity — Loopy science fiction in the printed page and banished from the things out elaborately in terms of visual and track, amounting to self-sabotage. The only bright thing about this is the frequent brief appearances of Valeria Bruni Tedeschi (a top-line star on the continent) as the hero’s girlfriend, a role that affords her fractionally more screen time than her blink-of-an-eye appearance in Meninplentylong enough to emit a blast of Mediterranean soulfulness. With Marion Cotillard, Abbie Cornish, Tom Hollander, Allison Frye. Funny. 6)


People under 15 must be accompanied by an adult.

**Steve Anderson’s documentary on the “T” word, with appearances by Drew Carey, Ice-T, Bill Maher, Kevin Smith, and many others.

★ The Happening — The adaptation of a Tom Perrotta novel, complete with a supposedly third-person omniscient, (know-it-all) narrator, undoubtedly tells us less about the malaise of our young middle-class suburban parents today than it did about the jaded patels of our moviegoers and/or moviemakers. An adulterous playground lifestyle — between a kindly handshake. The Holiday — Reviewed. This issue. With Deniz Akkus, Arija Baradat, Crossing lines...Loopy science fiction in

★★★ Apocalypto — Cinematographer Emmanuel Lubezki made history with his work on this film, which stars Antal d’Apuc, the President’s personal physi-cian, to find the alienness of the human race would carry...
actment of what must have gone on behind closed doors in the week after the death of Princess Di, in specific the diplomatic efforts of the newly-elected Tony Blair to compel the Royal Family (“a bunch of freeloaders, emotionally retarded nutters,” in the view of Mrs. Blair) to behave like human beings. “Will somebody please save these people from themselves?” Helen Mirren and Michael Sheen embody Her Majesty and the Prime Minister to two Ts. In support of them, James Cromwell at least looks the part of Philip, but plays only one note, and Alex Jennings is a bit short in the ascent (in complete contrast to Crowden) but is otherwise credibly dyspeptic as Charles. The plentiful humor, out of deference to history and living persons, is very mild. 2006.

Running with Scissors — Splashes feature debut for the man behind the cable-television series Nip/Tuck, writer-director Ryan Murphy, a boy-look-at-me cannonball, adapted from the “memoir” of Augusten Burroughs. Set in the Seventies, it spans his prepubescence (“I guess it doesn’t matter where I begin,” the narrator comments in voice-over, “because nobody’s going to believe me anyway”) into his glumly gay gay adolescence. In specific, the breakup of his nuclear family — an alcoholic academic father and a psychobabble self-deluding post manqu’ mother (“Augusten, your mother was meant to be a very famous woman”) — and his subsequent placement in the foster care of the mother’s cranky analyst, whose first arrival on the scene parodies the arrival of Max von Sydow in The Exorcist. (True to the period, for sure.) The boy’s second home is no stables, a pink-painted monstrosity that accommodates a haggard hausfrau who never means a day of Dark Shadows and snatches on dog-kibble; two nubile daughters, one coquettishly virginal and one candidly tarty; a cat named Frenzal, an perennial Christmas tree in the parlor; a never-diminishing pile of dishes in the kitchen; the doctor’s private sanctuary known self-explanatorily as his “mastrubatorium”; and a trail of neurotic clients prominently including a brooding predatory homossexual. The basic assumption, trendy and trite as can be, is that the more eccentric, the more luotive the vision of family life, the more truthful and insightful, the more relevant and revealing, it must be. (And never mind how tortuous the route to a punch line: the sole purpose of the dragged-out practical joke of a cat-meat stew is to enable the hummery homossexual to huff off with an “I don’t care!”) Annette Bening, whose presence tends to point up the kinship with American Beauty, puts on quite a show as the biological mother, running the gamut from the irrepressibly tempestuous (“Get the rage on the stage, women,” in her fledgling poets’ circle) to the chemically tranquilized, with nary a misstep along the way. This is a portrait which, foolishness notwithstanding, remains recognizable and humorously human. In most of the rest, the flabberghast overgrows and shoehorns. Joseph Cross, Brian Cox, Jill Clayburgh, Gwyneth Paltrow, Evan Rachel Wood, Joseph Fiennes, Alden Baldwin. 2006.

★ ★ ★ (GASLAMP 15)

Shoot Up and Sing — Backstage musical documentary, recounting in vivid detail the vagabond familiar story of how the three Dixie Chicks, “the best-selling female group in history,” freed from their rendition of the National Anthem at the 2003 Super Bowl, and right at the kickoff of their Lip-Ton Tour-sponsored “Top of the World” tour, fell precipitously out of favor with their core country-western audience. Here — to get down to a detail or two — the lead singer Natalie Maines, at the dawn of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, shot off her mouth among friends, as it were, the enthusiastic throng at Shepherds Bush in London, to wit, “We’re ashamed that the President of the United States is from Texas” (as if Texans have little else to be ashamed of), and how the unrepentant remark resulted in a nationwide ban from the CNN anchors, a television ghost, a Delirious phantom with Lipton, an open feud with the flag-waving country singer Toby Keith (“We’ll put a bullet in the sour old hickory tree”), and a death threat at a concert in — where else? — Dallas. The group’s initial impulsion in response to the backlash had been to backpedal: to damage-control, to appease, to apologize, to explain away (“It was a joke made to get chers and applause”). But the country at the time was in an unforgiving mood: no take-backs. Became entrenched; feels got dug in. This, we can recognize, is how wars begin. It is not a simple story, still, stories like a star. Or more descriptively, a heavenly body. Carmen Maura, Lola Dueñas, Yohana Cobo, Blanca Portillo. 2006.

Unaccompanied Minors — Holiday comedy, set in Chicago’s snowed-in airport, with Djimon Hounsou, Tyrese Williams, and Gina Manto, directed by Paul Feig. (CINERAMA MOUNTAIN; CHULA VISTA 10; CN EMA 0; DEL MAR HIGHLANDS 8; ENCINITAS 8; ESCONDIDO 10; FASHION VALLEY 18; GALAXY 8; HORTON PLAZA 14; LA JOLLA 12; MESA MES; MISSION MARKETPLACE 13; MISSION VALLEY 20; OCEANSIDE 18; PALM PROMENADE 24; PARKWAY PLAZA 18; PLAZA CAMINO REAL; POWAY 10; RANCHO DEL REY 16; RANCHO SAN DIEGO 12; SAN MARCO 38; SAN DIEGO PT; SOUTH BAY DRIVE IN; TOWN SQUARE 14; VISTA SQUARE 12; FROM 12/8)

Strange Than Fiction — The first filmed screenplay of Zach Helm crowds in on the domain of Charlie Kaufman: a Pirandellian brooder about a robotic IRS auditor (Will Ferrell, constrained by catatonia) who discovers he is a character in the work-in-progress of a blocked novelist (Emma Thompson) and is slated to die at the end of it. (A new approach, there, to the standard time-travel and second-guess quandrum: can the fortified narrator averted through forerknowledge?) He discovers all this when he, and the audience, starts to hear the voice of the omniscient narrator — don’t ask how or why — accurately describing his life as he lives it, “but with a better vocabulary,” and he then seeks help not from a therapist but from a literary theorist (Dustin Hoffman). The pedantry tends to get in the way of laughs, and the twisted logic sometimes trips up the plot developments (what does the author think she’s narrating when her hero is dashing to a phone to dial her wildly unfaithful girlfriend?), and the voice-over prose samples do not remotely live up to the writer’s reputation. Nevertheless, the improbable romance between the inflexible tax man and a civilly disobedient, tropically tattooed baker, currently under IRS scrutiny, is oddly touching, thanks in large part to the touchingly odd line readings of Maggie Gyllenhaal, who can work wonders with an ethnic little query like, “You don’t like cookies?! Immediately after that, her sensuous recital of the goodbyes in her only culinary repertoire hovers breathlessly between sheer poety and utter pornography: “Lemon chifle cake with azit pach king,” etc., etc., Directed by Marc Forster. 2006.

Volver — Almodóvar adds to his familiar sour comedy and mock melodrama the new element of an apparent apron, a morose character, a male protagonist, blended in with the familiar elements in uncertain tone. He shows nary a trace of the film’s “hustler” — nothing but a good, boy, devoted to mothers in particular, reverential of females in general, the Spanish George Cukor. (The cadaver in the freezer, male, is but a further sign of his respect and his awe.) The result can be recommended to the well-trained legions who are willing to meet this filmmaker seven-eighths of the way. Even the foot-draggers must concede that it’s deftly staged and well acted, and that Penelope Cruz, beyond acting well, shows off to maximum effect. More describably, a heavenly body. Carmen Maura, Lola Dueñas, Yohana Cobo, Blanca Portillo. 2006.
Nuevo Presidente

Fue durante el primer minuto del primero de diciembre cuando Felipe Calderón Hinojosa asumió la presidencia de la República en la Residencia Oficial de Los Pinos, en donde también tuvo un encuentro con su gabinete.

Calderón dio posesión de sus cargos a los funcionarios del gobierno federal e incluso emitió un mensaje en cadena nacional.

Horas más tarde, Calderón arribó al Congreso de la Unión en donde rindió protesta para convertirse en presidente constitucional de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos.

La ceremonia en el Congreso de la Unión duró menos de cuatro minutos y de ahí el primer mandatario se dirigió al Auditorio Nacional para dar su discurso inaugural.

Entre las medidas anunciadas en ese momento fue la de establecer una política de austeriidad que implicó la reducción, en un 10 por ciento, de la sueldo del Presidente y de los miembros de su gabinete.

Se colaron

El presidente y dueño de las Chivas de Guadalajara, Jorge Vergara, consideró que su equipo tiene todo para convertirse en el próximo campeón del fútbol mexicano jugando la semifinal ante los Diablos Rojos de Toluca.

“Estoy fascinado porque mis jugadores cumplieron con lo que se habían comprometido, que era llegar a la final”, manifestó Vergara Madrigal. Aunque afirmó que el campeón del Torneo Apertura 2006 será para su escuadra, el propietario de las Chivas no canta victoria ya que es consciente de que el Toluca es un buen equipo. “Estamos para ser campeones, ya lo habíamos dicho desde hace un tiempo, apuntó el controvertido propietario de las Chivas de Guadalajara.

En la mira

Omar Millán
Diario San Diego

La amenaza constante contra el equipo del seminario Zeta no cesa con la muerte de su fundador J. Jesús Blancornelas. Pero por salud mental y, sobre todo, para continuar el legado del periodistas potosino, los actuales directores del tabloide prefiere olvidarse de esas amenazas y pensar sólo en el siguiente número. “No podemos trabajar si la incertidumbre de otro posible atentado. Simplemente trabajamos para sacar la próxima edición, procuramos no pensar en eso, sólo trabajamos, como le hubiera gustado a nuestro maestro”, dijo la periodista Adela Navarro Belén, quien junto a César René Blanco Villalén, uno de los hijos del fundador Jesús Blancornelas, dirige desde febrero pasado el Seminario Zeta.

Desde que Blancornelas dejó la dirección de Zeta, los nuevos directores manifestaron que la línea editorial continuará igual de firme.

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Crecen decomisos

América Barceló
San Diego

En el último año fiscal el decomiso de drogas iniciado por agentes de la Patrulla Fronteriza en San Diego aumentó 63 por ciento con respecto al 2005. De septiembre del 2005 a octubre del 2006, los agentes de la corporación de seguridad fronteriza interceptaron 50 mil 736 libras de narcozoides. Los decomisos en marihuana aumentaron 91 mil 196 libras a 48 mil 132 libras. Las intercepciones de cocaína aumentaron de 81 libras a 309 libras, lo que representó un duro golpe para los narcos. En el sector fronterizo de San Diego los decomisos de drogas han seguido aumentando y tan sólo en los dos meses que lleva el nuevo año fiscal 2007 se han decomisado 7 mil 808 libras de marihuana. Esta cifra es importante ya que representa un incremento del 37 por ciento en decomisos de marihuana en tan sólo dos meses. La continua vigilancia de los agentes en la frontera dio como resultado la creación de la empresa llamada de narcotráfico en Venezuela, cuyos valores se estiman en cerca de 50 millones de dólares. De acuerdo a la agencia federal, el aumento en los decomisos de narcotráfico se debe a los nuevos mecanismos de vigilancia.

Vuela alto

El vuelo Tokio – Tijuana de Aeroméxico es una ruta fundamental de negocios entre México y Oriente, hasta ahora utilizada por algunos empresarios de las mil 500 compañías aéreas establecidas en Baja California. Sin embargo, la empresa aérea mexicana pretende que la promoción del vuelo incentive los viajes de placer. Desde el 13 de noviembre pasado, cuando el tercer Boeing 777 de Aeroméxico a Tijuana, los decomisos de drogas se registraron en el Aeropuerto de Narita en Tokio, Japón, comenzó esta nueva aventura; pero por primera vez una serenaria latinoamericana volaba hacia el continente asiático.

“La pretensión de Aeroméxico ha sido crecer internacionalmente. Se habían hecho diversos estudios del vuelo en los últimos años, un plan de análisis, hasta que por fin se logró”, señaló Silvia Ramírez, gerente de ventas de Aeroméxico – Tijuana. El mercado al que buscan llegar Aeroméxico con el vuelo Tokio – Tijuana, además de ofrecer a empresarios asiáticos en Baja California y el resto de México, es el de mexicanos, norteamericanos y europeos. Los precios del vuelo en clase turista empiezan a 840 dólares, viaje redondo, agregó la ejecutiva; mientras que en clase premium empiezan a 4 mil 100 dólares.

Caen homicidios

Después de nueve meses de dolor y deconsuelo, la familia Matta confrontó a cara a los asesinos de dos jóvenes que la noche del 1 de marzo fueron trazados sus suelos al ser brutalmente asesiados. La semana pasada fueron identificados y presentados en corte los dos homicidas que a sangre fría asesinaron a Heather Matta y su empleado Paris Eliseo en la locería granizada de El Cajón. Los dos asesinos fueron identificados por presentar a varios meses de investigación en esquemas conjuntos de la Policía de El Cajón y la oficina del alguacil, quienes siguen las pistas de los desdichados criminales. Ambos criminales se presentarán en corte el próximo 22 de enero y en caso de ser hallados culpables podrían recibir la sentencia de la pena de muerte.
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I TAKE NOT NOTE OF INDIVIDUAL, BUT OF UNIFICATION. I play with my bandmate Adam, who is also the Creation Bassist. Alex...

MATCHES

Women Seeking Men

San Diego Reader Volume 7, 2003
Last week’s place: (clue: Riverside reading, anyone?) Upstairs reading deck of the new Mission Valley Branch Library, 2123 Fenton Parkway, near IKEA and Qualcomm. Patrons of the four-year-old branch borrowed around 350,000 books and tapes last year, making it the third-busiest branch in the library system. (Last week’s winners: Jon Florian, Matthew Valenki, David Eng, Nikesha Hazel)

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How does it feel to have created a war that has caused hundreds of thousands of deaths for the sole purpose of your own political gain? Okay, maybe that’s too angry. Maybe I’d ask which is the bigger sin, having an affair while in the White House or lying to the American people to start a war. I’m curious as to how his record over the past six years, spending billions of dollars, controlling the media, not finding Osama bin Laden, and reducing civil liberties helps bring...
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friendly. 2120 Indiana Street. Agent,
619-299-1855.

$825. Bright 1 bedroom, 1
bath. Parking, laundry, on-site parking.
1621 Sunset Ave. #1. Agent, 619-295-
1100.

$875, 1 & 2 bedroom. Newly
remodeled. Quiet neighborhood. No pets.
westmanproperties.com.

$900. 1 bedroom, 1 bath. Pet
friendly. 2120 Indiana Street. Agent,
619-299-1855.

$925. 2 bed-

$995. 1 bedroom, 1 bath. Pet
friendly. 2120 Indiana Street. Agent,
619-299-1855.

$997. Large 1 bedroom
apartment. Newly remodeled. 5030 Lotus
Avenue #2. 619-297-3966.

$1100, 2 bedroom, 2
bath. Washer/dryer in unit. No pets.
4378. 619-540-6526.

$1150 rent. $1000 de-

$1150. Upstairs 2 bed-

$1375. 1 & 2 bedroom.
Quiet area. sunriseliving.com. 619-584-
4928.

$1500/month. Move in special!
Large, clean 1 bedroom. Great condition.
Seacoast Apartments, 5030 Lotus. 619-
489-1979.

$750/month. Move in special!
Large, clean 1 bedroom. Great condition.
Seacoast Apartments, 5030 Lotus. 619-
489-1979.

$725/month. Move in special!
Large, clean 1 bedroom. Great condition.
Seacoast Apartments, 5030 Lotus. 619-
489-1979.

$750. Recently re-

$750. Custom designed
studio with utilities included! Cat friendly.
Laundry on site. 4387 Montana Ave. Agent,
619-299-1855. male Shih Tzu needs a
home. 683. 619-426-4962.

$750. Large 1 bedroom.
3rd floor. 4378 Ocean View. $750 rent.
619-575-3170.

$775. 1 & 2 bedroom. Quiet
area. sunriseliving.com. 619-584-
4928.

$785. Recently re-

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home. 683. 619-426-4962.
222-4836 x14 or 619-298-6242.

Pacific Beach.


Ocean Beach.

$1,400. 2 bedroom, 1 bath apartment. Upstairs, end unit. Stove, refrigerator, dishwasher, coin laundry, pool, parking. No pets. 5817 Herschel. Available 1/1. 858-483-7555.

Ocean Beach.


Ocean Beach.


Ocean Beach.


Ocean Beach.


Ocean Beach.


Ocean Beach.

$700. 1 bedroom. Large bed room, kitchen, bathroom, hardwood floors, coin laundry, pool, parking. No pets. 9016 Westfield Lane. Available 1/1. 619-298-6242.

Ocean Beach.


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Ocean Beach.

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- Beautiful Point Loma
- Model homes with a view
- Close to restaurants, shops, beaches
- Beautifully landscaped grounds
- Well maintained
- On-site management
- Safe neighborhood
- Spacious
- Close to public transportation
- Short term lease available

- Kitchens
- Modern kitchens
- Lots of cabinets
- Vaulted ceilings
- Ceramic tile in kitchen
- Large kitchen windows

- Bathrooms
- Modern vanities
- Granite countertops
- Walk-in shower or tub
- High ceilings
- Ceramic tile in bathroom

- Living areas
- Spacious living room
- Large windows
- Hardwood floors
- Modern lighting

- Laundry and cleaning
- Washer and dryer in unit
- Trash service
- Trash included
- Pet friendly

- Parking
- Reserved parking
- Visitor parking
- Parking included
- Ample parking

- Pool
- Beautiful pool
- Outdoor seating
- Smart design
- BBQ area

- Fitness
- 24/7 access
- Cardio machines
- Strength training
- Yoga

- Security
- Video cameras
- Gated community
- Security gates
- Security entry

- Storage
- Extra storage
- Storage units
- Safe storage

- Additional features
- Beautifully landscaped
- Once a year lease
- Security deposit
- We are pet friendly
- Pet friendly
- Short term lease
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If you have any warning light, we can fix it! Any make or model.

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$99.99* Most cars.

- Replace spark plugs (resistor)
- Charge oil (10W30) and filter
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- Drain & replace coolant (up to 1 gallon)
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Up to 5 quarts new oil & filter:

- Check heater & A/C service battery
- Inspect lights & wiper blades
- Check & top off all fluid levels
- Check tire pressure & rotate tires
- Brake pads & rotors
- Inspect suspension & steering
- Inspect drive belts & coolant hoses
- Road test vehicle

TRANSMISSION FLUID CHANGE $49.95

TIMING BELT FROM $49.95

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SAME-DAY SERVICE
AUTO RENTALS AVAILABLE

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* Additional parts and labor are often needed at substantial extra cost.

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3 bedroom, 2 bath only $838/month! Renovated 2 bedrooms, $1075. On-site laundry. 619-638-7098.

4% down, 30 years at 8%! Buy now! Won’t last! For listings: 800-690-0927.


BEAUTIFUL HOUSE, 277-1760. 3 bedroom, 2 bath, 1867 square-feet, cul-de-sac, large lot.汶

3-bedroom, 2 bath, 1025 square-feet, 1-acre lot. 3-car garage, family room, all amenities. $49,000. Mike Acuna, agent: 619-540-7098.


VISTA. 3 bedroom, 2 bath only $838/month! 4% down, 30 years at 8%! Buy now! Won’t last! For listings: 800-690-0927.

San Diego Reader December 7, 2006
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- Change engine oil and filter
- Install new spark plugs
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  ware, inspect rotor & drums, inspect
  underhood components
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- **Premium plugs extra. Most cars & light trucks. Some trucks and 4x4 slightly higher.**

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SMOG INSPECTION New $29.95

Smoother, Cleaner, Quieter, Fuel Efficient, Easier on the Environment!

LED LIGHT ON?

$649.90

Newly remodeled, new kitchen, new roof, new hardwood floors, new lights and paint. Just reduced. 850 sq. ft. 2-car garage. $399,000.

RE/MAX, Bill Howland, ESCONDIDO.

44’x14’ corner lot. $54,900. 24-hour notice required. Owner will consider financing. Call Top Notch for viewing. 619-807-0327.

SPEEDY CAR TUNES & BRAKE MIRAMAR

Computer Diagnostics $129

• Check Engine

Must own vehicle. With this ad.

$295

NEW OIL FILTER Included

Lube & Oil Filter $19.95

4-cyl. $19.95

6-cyl. $24.99

8-cyl. $39.95

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(6) or 8-cyl. extra. Call for a quote on your model.

NEW RADIATOR $149

Most cars only.

$199

COMPLETE AXLE SERVICE

Starting at $119

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MIRAMAR SPEEDY TUNE & BRAKE

13045 Miramar Road (1 mile east of I-805) (858) 824-1747

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Our ASE Master Certified techs can diagnose car problem quickly to save you money.

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Lead Story
— To settle a discrimination lawsuit by transsexual men in October, the New York Metropolitan Transit Authority agreed to open all of its restrooms on the basis of individuals' self-designated "gender identity," meaning that, for example, any man dressed seriously as a woman could choose the ladies' rooms. ... The New York City government is currently considering adopting a rule to permit people to switch genders on their birth certificates, regardless of whether they've had surgery, as long as they've lived in the new gender for two years and a physician and a mental-health counselor approve.

Can't Possibly Be True
— Karen Madden, 38, goes on trial in December in Harrisburg, Pa., after allegedly confessing to stealing $550,000 worth of jewelry and handguns from the residence of her former boss, who is the chancellor of the state's college system. The chancellor, testifying at a July hearing on the charges, said Madden had called her recently and apologized, but then went on to say, "I hope you and I can still be friends, and I would like to use you, can I use you as a reference, just for the work party"
— Britain's Home Office announced in November that it had agreed to a settlement in a lawsuit by 197 heroin-addicted prisoners that it was "assault" and a violation of the European Convention on Human Rights for them to have been almost immediately denied all drugs when they were arrested. For forcing the inmates to go "cold turkey," the government agreed to pay each the equivalent of about $7000.

Unclear on the Concept
— A California state board of public television announced in July that it would soon schedule a week of documentaries on masturbation, including one by self-designated "organ coaches" Betty Dodson, Masturbation for Girls, teaching hands-on techniques to three women. (2) The Pendulum swung the other way in October, however, when Britain's Tesco stores agreed that a kit for learning pole dancing (advertised on its web-page, to "unleash the sex kitten inside," with a garter and suggestive DVD, was perhaps unsuited for its "toy" section, where it might have been appealing to adolescent girls. Tesco moved the listing to its physical fitness section.

Inexplicable
— Two men in a Dodge Neon were seriously injured in a rollover accident on Interstate 75 near Toledo, Ohio, in October after a red bra flew from the radio antenna of another car, startling the Neon driver and causing him to swerve and lose control. The Ohio Highway Patrol later learned that the owner of the bra had hung it from the aerial after she realized that it had broken because her dog's having chewed on it earlier that day. A prosecutor said a misdemeanor luring charge would be filed against the woman, but was exploring whether there were been out-the-window socializing between the car's occupants before the rollover.

— After a long video underscoring that Army recruiting offices in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, ABC News released in November an episode of recruiters telling a prospect that no one is going to Iraq anymore. "Never, we're bringing people back," said, and his partner followed with, "We're not at war. War ended a long time ago." In a separate on-camera interview, Col. Robert Manning, who is in charge of Army recruiting in the Northeast, told ABC News that he disagreed with the recruiters. "We are a nation and Army at war still.

Least Competent Criminals
— A prison inmate named Calvin Miller, who was angry with a former partner in crime who had escaped conviction, called police in Kansas City, Mo., in 2003 with information that led them to reopen that cold case, and eventually the partner, Johnny Chapelle, was convicted of murder (along with two others). However, also convicted were a fourth participant Calvin Miller. While Chapelle received a sentence of up to 10 years in prison, Miller got 17. (Miller's well-known nickname, acquired before any of this transpired, is "Cheesy Rat.")

Updates
— James C. Burda surrendered his Ohio chiropractic license in September after an investigation revealed that he offered to treat patients via telepathy (for $60 an hour) and had the ability to go back in time to realign bones and joints at the point at which they were damaged, via his techniques of telekinetic vibration, which he called "baalqemam vina" and "baalqemam japam"; which he admitted were nonsense words that came to him one day while he was driving around. An examined by Ohio chiropractic regulators found that Burda suffered from "delusional disorder, grandiose type.

Send your Weird News to Chuck Shepherd, San Diego Reader, P.O. Box 8580, San Diego, CA 92116 or to WeirdNewsTipsYahoo.com
Thirty Years Ago
One could scarcely imagine a more appropriate setting for Katherine Hepburn than the aging Spreckels Theatre. … Miss Hepburn and the Spreckels have more in common than their age. Having come into the world — as they both did — early in the second decade of this century, they carry with them tastes, techniques and attitudes that belong to a past era. [Her manner of acting] is the same stylized art that produced the Spreckels Theatre. The tos of the head, the clipped aristocratic tilt of the voice, the sudden self-delighted smile — these are done so well.
— “ACTING HERSELF,” Jonathan Saville
December 16, 1976

Twenty-Five Years Ago
Some years ago at Christmas time, when I was a teller at a bank downtown, I came to know Wayne Boyer, who was then an apprentice burglar. I met him in the Jack-in-the-box on Broadway, where I had stepped inside for a Coke; he was in the next line over, standing on crutches, his right leg in a cast from ankle to hip. I was 22 then and he looked about my age, but different in other ways. He had black hair, pale skin, and narrow, startling blue eyes. His face was like a weasel’s — narrow, I mean — and active, and he usually put a hand up to cover his missing front tooth when he smiled.
— “POSTCARDS FROM WESTERN CIVILIZATION,” Joe Aprilegate, December 10, 1981

Twenty Years Ago
Rare it is that adults have the opportunity to bring children’s games up through the ranks with them into adulthood. Baseball travels well, and a card game or two, and maybe a couple variations of spin the bottle. One past-time continues to weather maturity’s scoffing: toy sailboat racing.
— “A LITTLEPUTAN NAVY,” Neal Matthews
December 11, 1996

Fifteen Years Ago
The letters Marie wrote, as year followed year, continued to portray her family life in the rosiest light possible. Her letters broke my heart but also left me feeling foolishly bumbled. Because I knew Marie and I knew that, from her perspective, what she wrote wasn’t unravel or distortion, nor was she trying to hide from her readers the grief she and Bud suffered over their offspring’s crimes and bad choices. If I talked with her over coffee, she faced those facts. Yet when she sat down to write her Christmas letter, she wrote what I believe once was the classic Christmas letter: She wrote the life that she had hoped against hope, when she and Bud exchanged vows, their lives would become.
— “ANOTHER YEAR HAS PASSED AND WE ARE SAFE AND SOUND,” Judith Moore
December 5, 1999

Five Years Ago
Qualcomm founder Irwin Jacobs is a big Democrat, giving hundreds of thousands of dollars over the years to Bill Clinton. He contributed $50,000 to the reelection campaign of Governor Gray Davis. But Jacobs is now said to be hedging his bets. The Washington Post reports that Republican congressional leader Thomas M. Davis III of northern Virginia, proponent of free-trade agreements favored by Qualcomm, has been cultivating high-tech companies for campaign money. … The paper added that Republicans targeted Jacobs, who has been working with local GOP congressman Randy “Duke” Cunningham to lobby the trade bill.
— CITY LIGHTS: “BIG MONEY CONVERSION,” Matt Potter
December 6, 2001

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**Books Not Printed Here!
I was sitting in the heat crying. A holiday to Egypt was supposed to be an answer, but it illustrated the added difficulties of removing me from a shit situation I knew to a shit situation where I felt more displaced.

We’d spent a fortune since we came here, casualties of our British reserve and the reluctance to haggle. The locals were smiling, kind and accommodating, but for every complimentary scarab beetle bead and every gratis cup of over-sweetened tea there was a growing sense of being fleeced. Nonetheless, my excess baggage was growing, jewelry, sheets, sweetened tea there was a growing sense of being fleeced.

I was a fat Scottish lass who sweated and swam without self-loathing at my envy for their pretty, plastic age to convince myself. I ran to turn me over. My skin was a mottled hue of sunset vermilion, with white/blue blotches — Scottish skin abroad — and it hurt to have him grind his knuckles in, but in a good way.

The primary draw of Egypt was the Red Sea, which was abundant with fish, and in contrast to the North Sea, clear enough and warm enough to see the fish and avoid hypothermia. But the first day passed, and then the second, and I still knew nothing of Egypt but the airport and the hotel. My self-esteem had plummeted, my skin ached with burn and bites, I felt the first prickle of thrust starting, and my husband and kid had become good cop, bad cop.

So in a fit of childlike pique, I took to my bed, drew the cover up over my head, took four Valiums, and slept, escaping to drug torpor. It solved nothing. It didn’t make me feel any better than expected ground his way into my tension-knotted muscles and cracked a xylophone melody from my backbone. When he left me to lie a while before turning to talk to the expanse of my front, I fell asleep, and I almost punched him with surprise when he tried to turn me over. My skin was a mottled hue of sunset vermilion, with white/blue blotches — Scottish skin abroad — and it hurt to have him grind his knuckles in, but in a good way.

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POST DATE: November 11, 2006
POST TITLE: BMW 7-Series

Last night as I left a crowded restaurant bordering Hillcrest, I looked eyes with a man who was standing in line. I tried to squeeze myself into the tiniest possible me and get out of there without a panic attack. I knew he was gay, because I was watching him earlier — wrists flailing, weight resting on one leg as he stood talking to his boyfriend. I wanted him to smile at me when I squeezed past him, to say something funny — as I’ve known gay men to do — to comfort me, as I was obviously (in my own mind only, perhaps) distressed at being with all these people in such close quarters. Instead, he looked at me with level eyes that sort of said, “I don’t have time for you. I’m tired of people like you — women.”

Walking to my car, I was lamenting that I’ve never had a gay man as my friend, like so many women seem to have. I have always CRAVED that sort of closeness with a man who I knew would never want me sexually. Gay men always seem to hate me, as do most women.

I was pondering this as I drove down through Mission Hills and merged onto the 5, where I was blocked by a BMW 7-series going about 45 mph. The car reminded me of a story that my boss, Alex, told me last week about his neighbor, who drives Alex nuts and drives a BMW 7-series. When he said “7-series,” he rolled his eyes back and let his jaw go slack, meaning the guy was a pompous ass. Alex said that the man is very anal, that he measures the height of his lawn with a ruler. That his kids — high schoolers — are forced to dress alike. He said the lights in their house go out in eerie synchronization at specific times: 9:00 for the kids; 9:45 for him and his wife. I commented on what the relationship must be like between the neighbor and his wife if they only get 45 minutes together a night.

Alex ignored me and went on with the rest of his story. I smiled politely, but I was thinking how sad a life like that must be. What power that man must have over his family if they allow such rules — and with teenagers, too! The wife must drink, or take pills, or have sex with protective gear, $35. New 4-lug aluminum walker. Crockpot. Various magazines. 619-425-6340. FILE CABINET, 5 drawer black, lockable, new in box $150. 619-449-8509.

I decided that they were the sharks of the road, and that people who drove them must be simple in character.

So, as I struggled to merge onto the highway and around the BMW, I was thinking about Alex’s neighbors. Why do so many people drive silver BMWs? I decided that they were the sharks of the road, and that people who drove them must be simple in character — driven, always moving forward, never slowing down, ruthless, soulless. I thought police cars are the killer whales of the road. Black and white, usually peaceful, capable of murder. I wondered what my red Jetta said about me.

Finally! A chance to merge. As I passed the BMW, I looked to see who was driving. Were they foreign, old? What could account for such poor driving manners? As I passed, I could see was a slender arm attached to a skinny watch on the dainty wrist holding the wheel, and a slender hand, backlight by the orange lights of the dashboard. I wondered if it was Alex’s neighbor’s wife.

* * *

POST DATE: October 31, 2006
POST TITLE: The Night of the Living Dead

Throughout my life, especially lately, I’ve been struck by the fact that I (along with every other human being) am very alone. Not alone as in lonely, but separate from everything. I guess it’s always been clear to me, this sense that we’re all in it with nothing but ourselves to fall back on, but the gravity of it has just registered. It’s a culmination of things, I guess. Maybe it sprang from my disbelief in love or the capacity of humans to love or be loved. What’s left after that?

I see our separation everywhere. Most noticeably in pop culture. Abercrombie and Fitch is the metaphoric thread tying together an entire generation of high schoolers and college students who can afford it. The iPod lets you personalize your belongings by what you choose to load it with. But what’s left is just a sweater that’s too short and shrinks when you wash it or a bunch of bytes and bits on a hard drive. There is no bond created, no joining of persons.

What’s there then? Your family, friends, husband, wife can’t share the same dreams as you. When you die, they can only hold your hand until you’re dead.

Which brings me to God. Is God real? Could that be what makes everything one? And if so, why don’t I feel that?

Oh, the futility of it all.
“OH, FOR THE LOVE-A...,” MY DAD YELLS AT THE TV. IT’S HIS FAVORITE THING, HECKLING PEOPLE WHO WILL NEVER HEAR HIM.

IN THE PAST YEAR BEFORE HIS RETIREMENT, HE’S SLIPPED FROM “DISAGREEABLE MIDDLE AGE” TO “CANTANKEROUS OLD FART.” HE SITS, SLUMPED IN HIS LA-Z-BOY, DRINKS WHATEVER WATERY AMERICAN BEER ON SALE THAT WEEK, AND FILLS THE AIR WITH SMOKE AND CURSING. “WHO THE HELL ASKED YOU A DAMNED THING, YOU OLD B? GOOD SHIP, IF SHE’S NOT OLD AS SHIT, SHE WAS BORN WHEN IT WAS NEW.”

CABLE DOESN’T RUN OUT IN THE HILLS WHERE HE LIVES, SO HE SUBSCRIBES TO THREE CHANNELS. HE HAS A SATELLITE DISH INSTALLED, BUT HE DOESN’T WATCH IT. HE LIKES THE BIG NETWORKS, THE NEWS, A COUPLE LAW AND ORDER SHOWS, BUT HIS FAVORITE IS THE ANTIQUES ROADSHOW.

“LOOK AT THE PILE-A CRAP THAT LADY’S TRYING TO PLOW OFF AS ‘ANTIQUE.’ I CAN GET THAT AT WAL-MART,” HE GROWLS. “HONEY, WHATSOEVER IT’S WORTH, TAKE THE MONEY. THEN BUY A NEW GOD-DAMN HAT ‘CUZ I WOULDN’T ENTER THAT ONE IN A DOG SHOW!”

AT 61, HE GETS UP AT 5:30 EVERY MORNING. HE GETS A PACK OF CIGARETTES AND A CUP OF COFFEE FROM A STATION ON HIS WAY TO WORK. HE PUTS IN A DAY DOING MANUAL LABOR FOR THE CITY OF SANTA—WEED-EATING IN THE SUMMER, PAVING ROADS AND UNDOCKING LEAF- AND FLOODED STORM DRAINS IN THE WINTER.

WHEN HE GETS HOME, HE WANTS TO PUT HIS BOOTS NEXT TO THE FIRE, DENT A SIX-PACK OF KEYSTONE LIGHT, AND SHOUT AT THE TELEVISION. “TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS! FOR A PERFUME? YOU’VE GOT TO BE OUT OF YOUR MIND. IF I HAD FOUND THAT THING IN THE STREET, I’D SET FIRE TO IT!”

WHEN I LIVED UP THERE, I TRIED TO GET HIM TO DO THINGS AFTER WORK. “CHRON, DAD, LET’S GO TO TOMMY’S SOFTBALL GAME,” OR “LET’S GET DINNER AND WATCH A MOVIE.” I THOUGHT IT WAS UNHEALTHY FOR HIM TO SIT IN THE HOUSE BY HIMSELF ALL THE TIME.

“DAMMIT, BOY, I’VE WORKED 50 YEARS. I WANT TO SIT DOWN,” HE’D YELL IF I INTERRUPTED HIS TV TIME. “WHAT IS THAT, AN INDIAN PAPAOSE? YES, CARRY THIS AROUND.”

I QUIT TRYING TO CHANGE HIM AND TOOK UP A SEAT NEXT TO HIM. “LOOK AT THAT FELLAH’S TIE, DAD.”

“YEAH, I NEED A TIE LIKE THAT,” HE GROANS. “TO WIPE MY BUTT WITH.”

WHAT I WILL AND WON’T WATCH THIS WEEK

I DON’T WATCH MUCH TV DURING THE WEEK, MAYBE A RECUR OF THE DAILY SHOW, HEROES, AND A UFC PROGRAM ON SPIKE, OCCASIONALLY. WHAT I DO ENJOY IS WATCHING UP SATURDAY MORNING AND CATCHING THE VH1 TOP 20 COUNCILS. HERE ARE LAST WEEK’S TOP 10.

#10
GWEN STEFANI
“WIND IT UP”
UGH, GWEN STEFANI, FORMER PRETTY AND TALENTED SINGER, IS NOW YELDLING IN A MAN’S OUTFIT AND ROUND, WHITE, GUCCI SUNGLASSES. EASY, GWEN. IF YOU’RE TAKING THE MADONNA TRACK TO SUPERSTARDOM, I HAVE TO GIVE YOU THE “IDIOTIC” PORTION OF YOUR CAREER. NO REASON TO RUSH. RATING: NO FINGERS.

#9
THE FRAY
“LIPS OF AN ANGEL”
I’VE MENTIONED THIS SONG IN THE PAST. IN CASE YOU’VE MISSED IT, YOU’RE IN FOR A TREAT. THIS IS EASILY THE WORST SONG OF THIS GENERATION, AND I’D SAY THE WORST SONG OF THIS CENTURY, BUT WE’RE ONLY SIX YEARS IN, AND IT’S A LITTLE EARLY. WHEN VH1 DOES A “STUPIDEST GARAGE WE’VE EVER PLAYED” RETROSPECTIVE, HINDER’S GOING TO BE TOWARD THE TOP. RATING: THE WHOLE FIST, SMASHED INTO THE MONKEY FACE OF THAT EFFETE LEAD SINGER.

THE ALL AMERICAN REJECTS
“IT ENDS TONIGHT”

#6
EVANESCENCE
“CALL ME WHEN YOU’RE SOBER”
HERE’S THE SONG WITH GOTHIC COSTUMES: THEY LOOK GREAT IN VIDEOS WITH WOLVES, LONG CANDLE-LIT TABLES, AND PLUSH VELVET HIGH-BACK CHAIRS. YOU THINK IT’S COOL UNTIL YOU SEE THAT GUY ON THE BEACH IN JULY, WEARING WHITEFACE, A CAPE, AND RING-STRIPE STOCKINGS, SWEATING LIKE A SURPLUS ARMY MULE. RATING: AS A LOVER OF PERKY WOMEN, I HAVE TO GIVE EVANESCENCE A “THUMBS UP.”

#4
BEYONCE
“IRREPLACEABLE”
IT SEEMS THAT POPULAR MUSIC HAS BEEN REDUCED TO A CATCH PHRASE ASSOCIATED WITH A HAND GESTURE. BEYONCE’S CONTRIBUTION TO THE PANTHEON OF MUSIC IS HER LATEST “TO THE LEFT” TO THE LEFT” AND A QUICK FICK OF THE FINGERS. SURE, CHUBBY CHECKER HAD “THE TWIST” AND “THE JET” A LONG TIME AGO, BUT THOSE WERE DANCE STEPS AND NOT AN ENTIRE SONG BASED ON A DIRECTION. WHERE AM I SUPPOSED TO GO? OH, THANK YOU, BEYONCE. I NEVER WOULD’VE FIGURED IT OUT WITHOUT YOU. WE’LL BE SURE TO HEAP MILLIONS OF DOLLARS ON YOU FOR SHOWING US THE CORRECT PATH FROM HERE TO THE BATHROOM. RATING: ONE FINGER, POINTING DOWN FROM MY BELT BUCKLE AREA.

Evangelia
“FERGALICIOUS”
AS MUCH AS I HATE THIS WOMAN AND EVERYTHING SHE STANDS FOR, I CAN’T GET THIS SONG OUT OF MY HEAD. IT’S DAMN CATCHY. SURE, IT’S ANTI-MUSIC (SOMETHING THAT IF PLAYED FOR A PERSON TRAINED IN THE PROPER EXECUTION OF THE MUSICAL ARTS WOULD MAKE HIM CHEW THE LEGS OFF A BARSTOOL), BUT DAMNIT IF I CAN’T STOP POOCHING MY BUTT OUT AND SPANKING MYSELF WHENEVER THIS SONG COMES ON. RATING: “THE PISTOL” CONFIGURATION, POINTED TOWARD MY TEMPLE FOR THE SHAME I FEEL.

11
NICKELBACK
“FAW AWAY”
GOS GOS DOLLS II. NICKELBACK IS THE SOPHISTIPEST OF SAPPY SLOW ROCK BANDS. THEY’VE CAPTURED A PART OF THE MARKET IN WHICH TEEN GIRLS CYCLE THROUGH THEIR EMOTIONS. WHEN A GIRL GETS A CRUSH ON THE FOOTBALL QUARTERBACK, IT’S ALL MARIAH CAREY. AFTER SHE RUNS CRYING FROM THE GYMNASIUM BECAUSE JOHNNY JOCKSTRAP WON’T DATE A GIRL SHAPED LIKE A BAG OF DOMATS, IT’S ALL NICKELBACK, COOKIE DOUGH, AND KLEENEX, BABY. RATING: BOTH HANDS CROSSED OVER MY HEART, WHERE IT HURTS, BECAUSE I’LL NEVER LOVE ANYONE ELSE EVER.

1 WEIRD AL YANKOVIC
“WHITE AND NERDY”
I WATCHED THIS WITH MY GIRLFRIEND AND SAID, “WAIT A MINUTE. I COLLECT X-MEN COMIC BOOKS, I’VE READ STEPHEN HAWKING, AND I KNOW HTML.” SHE LOOKED AT ME CROSSWAYS AND RAISED AN EYEBROW, LIKE, “WILL?” RATING: MY HAND FLAT AGAINST MY FOREHEAD WHILE I CRY; “GAH! I’M A GEEK!”

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Cool out. It’s only Christmas.

By John Brizzolara

Christmas shopping. I’m against it, personally. The hostility out there is incredible. It’s a miracle more people don’t kill each other outright at this time of year. They certainly seem to want to. I was in line coming across the TJ border into the U.S., a long freaking line, and I was behind a middle-aged woman with a huge plastic shopping bag who wanted to get to some store or other before closing at 5:00 p.m. (This was about 3.) I picked up from her machine-gun Spanish to her companion who was behind me that she needed a nativity set at this certain store. The nativity-seeking lady kept inching up alongside the person in front of her until she could usurp that spot in line. She did it several times, and every time the companion behind me (maybe her daughter?) would ram her baby stroller into my heels as if to urge me forward or to step aside. If someone in line ahead would protest, they would be subjected to a stream of blistering español, replete with they would be subjected to a stream of blistering español, replete with they would be subjected to a stream of blistering español, replete with they would be subjected to a stream of blistering español, replete with they would be subjected to a stream of blistering español, replete with they would be subjected to a stream of blistering español, replete with they would be subjected to a stream of blistering español, replete with they would be subjected to a stream of blistering español, replete with they would be subjected to a stream of blistering español, replete with they would be subjected to a stream of blistering español, replete with they would be subjected to a stream of blistering español, replete with they would be subjected to a stream of blistering español, replete with they would be subjected to a stream of blistering español, replete with they would be subjected to a stream of blistering español, replete with they would be subjected to a stream of blistering español, replete with they would be subjected to a stream of blistering español, replete with they would be subjected to a stream of blistering español, replete with

...speeches, and a large female with long braided hair, wearing a T-shirt with prominent English text, got to the end of line and started screaming at a Mexican man, apparently my age. She was not a Mexican, her accent was from somewhere in the south. The nativity-seeking lady kept inching up alongside the person in front of her until she could usurp that spot in line. She did it several times, and every time the companion behind me (maybe her daughter?) would ram her baby stroller into my heels as if to urge me forward or to step aside. If someone in line ahead would protest, they would be subjected to a stream of blistering español, replete with they would be subjected to a stream of blistering español, replete with they would be subjected to a stream of blistering español, replete with they would be subjected to a stream of blistering español, replete with they would be subjected to a stream of blistering español, replete with they would be subjected to a stream of blistering español, replete with they would be subjected to a stream of blistering español, replete with they would be subjected to a stream of blistering español, replete with they would be subjected to a stream of blistering español, replete with they would be subjected to a stream of blistering español, replete with they would be subjected to a stream of blistering español, replete with they would be subjected to a stream of blistering español, replete with they would be subjected to a stream of blistering español, replete with...