

SAN DIEGO WEEKLY

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Reader



Does
Christmas
offend
you?

Story begins on page 24

Butterfly paradise in Baja – see City Lights

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BREAKING NEWS

Hypocrisy, Inc. When it comes to his beloved Chargers, billionaire **Alex Spanos** doesn't mind seeking and receiving special privileges nobody but an NFL owner could get out of local government. That's exemplified by his hiring of **Mark Fabiani** to make the rounds of the county's smaller cities in search of a friendly jurisdiction that will ante up free land, rezonings, fee waivers, tax rebates, naming rights, and whatever other manner of concessions the Spanos team says are required to build a new football stadium. So it's more than a bit ironic that the developer's representatives have been berating the city of Stockton for doing the owner of a downtown movie theater a big favor by shielding it from the competitive onslaught of a mega shopping center Spanos wants to build eight miles north of town.



Alex Spanos

The story begins back in 1999, when the Stockton City Council amended its general plan to prohibit the construction of multiscreen movie theaters anywhere within the city limits except in the downtown redevelopment area. City fathers had shelled out a lot of the citizenry's tax money for the \$300 million redevelopment project and wanted to guarantee the success of its crown jewel, the 16-screen City Centre Cinemas, which, it seems, is currently about the only reason the area's denizens venture into downtown Stockton after business hours. "That Cineplex is doing well because half their customers come from north of March Lane," city redevelopment director **Steve Pinkerton** recently told the *Stockton Record*. If those people went somewhere else, he observed, "We would be below the threshold that makes that Cineplex profitable."

Enter Stockton resident and benefactor Spanos, seeking to erect a rival 16-plex in his new retail center. His emissaries implored the City to lift the ban on new multiplexes, using the laissez-faire argument that no matter how important the downtown theater is to the well-being of the redevelopment project, municipalities shouldn't be in the business of doing special favors for developers. **Dean Plassaras**, a Spanos consultant, had a quick response to those who fear that the City's downtown redevelopment area will collapse if Spanos is allowed to build the new complex. "Outsiders, they judge us very sternly," he told the *Record*. "They're not going to sit down and hear the story...of one neighborhood's special needs.... They are going to say, 'You have a special ordinance restricting us? Why did you do that?'"

Last week the city council sided with Spanos, voting to clear the way for the movie complex.

Switching San Diego school board member **Mitz Lee**, who in June filed papers declaring her intent to run next year for the District 5 city council seat being vacated by termed-out **Brian Maienschein**, has dropped out of that race, saying that an impending school district

budget crunch and the arrival of a new superintendent require her continued presence on the board of education. Lee's departure from the council battle in favor of a board reelection bid appears to be another big break for Fifth District contender and fellow Republican **Carl DeMaio**, the self-styled good-government maven who has been racking up big money and endorsements, including that of the county's Republican Central Committee. The committee's endorsement will allow members of the local GOP to funnel all the funds they can raise into an independent campaign on behalf of DeMaio, using the state's so-called member communications exemption from the city's \$270-a-person lid on individual contributions to council candidates. ... Some familiar names from San Diego campaigns past are making appearances in the GOP's presidential derby. They include pollster **Dick Dresner**, a one-time **Roger Hedgecock** stalwart currently working for **Mike Huckabee**, and **Ken Rietz**, who is advising **Fred Thompson**. Rietz ran the ill-fated mayoral campaign of **Dick Carlson** against Hedgecock.



Carl DeMaio



Mike Huckabee

Foibles Hold on to your checkbook: an employee of the City-owned San Diego Convention Center is emailing local groups asking for participants to join a new Convention Center Expansion Task Force to help drum up public support for growing the downtown's massive convention center even bigger. The current structure blocks the waterfront for almost a half-mile. ... Mission Valley environmentalist **Randy Berkman**, who's been battling a big office building proposal there, says somebody hacked his website last week, erasing everything on it: "I had an easy-to-guess password, which in retrospect was dumb." ... Sempra Energy and San Diego-based United Domestic Workers of America each contributed \$5000 to the California Community Empowerment Foundation at the behest of state Democratic senator **Mark Ridley-Thomas**, the foundation's chairman. According to a blurb on its website, the group "strategically drives public policy discussions in California with independent and reliable analysis which includes synthesized reporting from the Days of Dialogue (DOD) and Empowerment Congress programs."



Mark Ridley-Thomas

— Matt Potter

The Reader offers \$25 for news tips published in this column. Call our voice mail at 619-235-3000, ext. 440, or fax your tip to 619-231-0489.

A Million Here, A Million There...

By Don Bauder

On November 14 of last year, the Securities and Exchange Commission, after probing the City of San Diego's deliberate

concealment of ugly financial facts in its bond filings, concluded that "The City, through its officials, acted with scienter." That means San Diego acted with the intent to deceive, manipulate, or defraud. It committed willful securities violations. It did not simply act recklessly.

The agency noted that in its bond prospectuses, the City had failed to reveal the intentional underfunding of its pension plan that would result in an unfunded liability of \$2 billion by 2009. Its annual pension contribution would quadruple by 2009, and the City would need new sources of revenue. "The City, through certain of its officials, knew that its disclosures were misleading," said the federal commission.

Read Don Bauder's Scam Diego blog every day! Go to SanDiegoReader.com and look in Blogs for Bauder.

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

You would think City financial officials would be chastened. One has to wonder. At this year's April 19 city council meeting, officials were boasting about how the pension



David Wescoe



Jay Goldstone



Donna Frye

system's unfunded liability had been reduced by more than \$390 million because of several factors, one of which was an improvement in the stock market. Councilmember Donna Frye noticed that one reduction was for \$22.8 million because of "proper treatment of IRS benefit limitations." She asked Jay Goldstone, the City's head bean counter, what that was all about. Well, a lot of San Diego retirees and potential retirees will receive benefits so fat that they exceed Internal Revenue

Code Section 415 limits for the City's pension plan. These include, for example, top-level bureaucrats who retire with an annual payment that is more than 100 percent of their yearly working years' pay.

Because the IRS sets limits on the amount a retiree may receive from a 401(a) pension plan such as the City's, the obligation to pay benefits that exceed IRS Section 415 limits has to be shifted from the pension system to a separate pension fund, called the Preservation of Benefits Plan. That money will come from

the City's ailing general fund. Frye asked Goldstone how much the City would have to ante up to the fund in the current year. Oh, said Goldstone, he had budgeted half a million dollars. After the April council meeting, she wrote a memo to Goldstone asking for more information on this general fund obligation. Goldstone responded in September but never told Frye that in February, two months before the April city council meeting, the pension folks had informed

continued on page 8

Neal Obermeyer



Cabbages and Monarchs

By Ernie Grimm

The definition of “easy to get to” changes depending on what side of the border you’re on. In the United States, if you had

to drive on a rutted dirt road to get to someplace, you wouldn’t call that place easy to get to. In Mexico, the phrase apparently is used more loosely. Otherwise, Verónica Palafox

San Ysidro, you make your way to Playas de Tijuana, go south down the toll road 15 miles or so, then turn north-east up the Boulevard 2000, a brand-new four-lane divided

dle, and travel up a smooth, sandy road for about a mile. Then the sand gives way to hard dirt littered with thousands of softball- and volleyball-sized stones. Deep ruts running perpendicular to the direction of travel cause your car to bounce up and down and occasionally bottom out on a crest. When you think your oil pan will rupture on the next stone, a narrow ranch road splits off to the right between two lines of towering eucalyptus trees. A half mile up this road and you’ll see what looks like a greenhouse, but instead of plastic or glass, black sun-filtering netting covers the steel-tube frame.

Inside this 15-by-15-foot enclosure, potted plants grow everywhere. On a table in the center stands a nasturtium. Its light green stems contrast with its darker, round leaves. Palafox, a petite 33-year-old dressed in designer jeans, magenta sweater, and oversized sunglasses, turns over one of the leaves. On the underside near one edge lie what look like 12 grains of saffron rice. “These are eggs,” she explains, “of the cloudless sulphur butterfly. It’s a yellow butterfly we raise here.”

Palafox swivels her head and scans the enclosure. “Ah,” she says, “here’s one.” Against one wall, a two-and-a-half-inch yellow butterfly stands on a pointy-leaved cassia plant. It holds its wings together straight above its body, revealing two silver dots and several black markings under each wing. “This is one of the species we raise, along with monarch butterflies and a white butterfly native to Baja California called *Pieris rapae*.”

No *Pieris rapae* — known in the United



Alfredo Cerón and Verónica Palafox in their butterfly enclosure



Cloudless sulphur butterfly perched on a cassia leaf

would not describe Le Papillon butterfly farm, which she and her husband Alfredo Cerón opened last month, as easy to get to.

From

highway that runs between Rosarito and eastern Tijuana. (It’s called the Boulevard 2000 because it was supposed to open in the year 2000. It didn’t open until 2007.) After about a dozen scenic miles through chaparral ranch country, you see hand-painted signs for “mariposas,” which means butterflies. Turn right, ease around the giant pud-



the priest, reads the legend as we release the butterflies.”

It’s Palafox’s turn, when she’s asked if the released butterflies return home like pigeons,

States as cabbage white butterflies — are in the enclosure today. “Another part of our business is doing butterfly releases,” Cerón, a clean-cut 32-year-old stylishly dressed in jeans and a tan corduroy jacket, explains. “And we’ve done quite a few lately. So we’re out of white butterflies right now. We do the releases at weddings, *quinceañeras*.”

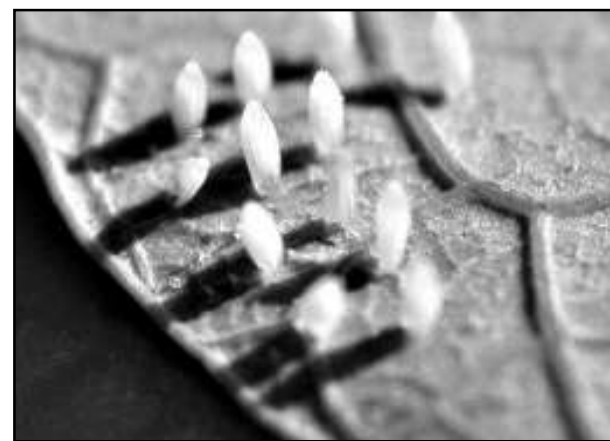
Funerals?

“Well,” Cerón suppresses a chuckle, “we can’t do funerals because we don’t get enough lead time. We need a few weeks’ time to produce enough butterflies for a release. You don’t get that with funerals. So most of our business is weddings.”

“We release them as the bride walks out of the church,” Palafox explains. “There’s a legend in Mexico that butterflies at a wedding bring good fortune to the bride and groom. Sometimes the father of the bride, some-



Monarch butterflies on enclosure netting



Eggs of the cloudless sulphur butterfly on a nasturtium leaf

to suppress a chuckle. “No,” she answers, “they just continue their life cycle in the wild. The white butterfly lives for 15 days. And sometimes we release monarch butterflies, which live 30 days.”

Against the back wall of the enclosure opposite the door grows a vine with thick, hand-sized leaves. One blossom, as big as a salad plate, grows on the vine. Its ten outer

petals are purple tipped with white, as are its two layers of spiky inner petals. “All of our visitors ask about that plant,” Palafox says. “It’s called passion flower. It is very beautiful.”

continued on page 10

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

A million here

continued from page 6

him that this year's obligation was estimated to be \$639,000. Now, says Frye, it's at least that much and possibly more than \$1 million. And she did not get that information from Goldstone. She had to track it down herself.

She had also requested the information from David Wescoe, chief executive officer of the pension system, who, similarly, had failed to disclose what the officials knew back in February. She took him to task in a letter, and he wrote back that he didn't like her tone.

The \$22.8 million relates to future retirement payments to employees currently on the payroll. But there is also \$8.2 million that has already been paid from the pension system in excess of Internal Revenue

Code Section 415 limits. That sum has gone to 102 mainly high-ranking retired bureaucrats. The payments include \$213,000 between 2005 and 2007 to former city attorney Casey Gwinn, \$201,306 to former deputy city manager Bruce Herring, and \$376,830 to former assistant police chief Keith Enerson. Herring was formerly on the board of the San Diego City Employees' Retirement System (SDCERS), and Enerson had once been its president. That \$8.2 million will likely become a City liability also.

In a letter to Councilmember Scott Peters, Wescoe referred to the \$8.2 million as "a modest sum," points out Frye. After all, pooh-poohed Wescoe, it was less than 1 percent of the total pension debt. "To me, it's an arrogant statement and reflects a cavalier attitude about the public's money," says Frye. "We sit here

at council meetings trying to cobble together \$50,000 to fund basic services, and then I see a memo that essentially says, 'What is \$8 million?' Well, that \$8 million would help pay for a fire helicopter, brush management, sidewalk and pothole repairs, or community plan updates."

Then there is the deferred retirement option plan, known as DROP. It is double-dipping at its worst. Employees at the average age of 55 say they will retire in five years. They continue drawing their salaries. At the same time, 90 percent of their highest one-year salary is plopped into their personal retirement kitty, growing at 8 percent a year and adjusted for cost of living. So they retire not only with a monthly annuity payment, but also a fat lump sum. And that pot of gold comes even though they enjoy considerably higher salaries and benefits than work-

ers in the private sector.

On November 2, Frye wrote a memo to the City administration, noting that on July 14, 2006, the Internal Revenue Service had written to the pension system (in response to a letter from a pension system attorney) suggesting that it obtain a private letter ruling regarding these DROP benefits. The IRS sent a second letter February 13 of this year, suggesting the same thing. The pension system flatly says it won't request a private letter ruling from the IRS, and the City has not answered Frye's letter. So she wrote another memo December 7 requesting that Peters docket the matter for a city council meeting. "Has anyone ever determined if we have tax status under DROP?" asks Frye. "We need to ask the IRS if DROP complies with all the applicable provisions of the Internal Revenue Service code. SDCERS

tells me it is not aware of the IRS questioning the legality of the DROP program. That is like saying the sewage out of Point Loma is safe even though we have never tested it for viruses."

City Attorney Mike Aguirre recently learned that the City's outside auditor neglected to state in the newly completed 2005 financial report that the 102 retired bureaucrats had received the \$8.2 million in defiance of IRS regulations. Aguirre wrote to the auditing firm, Macías Gini & O'Connell, noting that it had said in the transmittal letter for the report that the amount of the excess payments was unknown. But the firm, which also represents SDCERS, had been aware of the information for two months, Aguirre stated.

On December 5, Goldstone said he would attach a cover letter in the financial statements that will include the

information. "SDCERS had illegally paid out benefits in excess of Section 415 limits from the pension plan, but at the time, the system was managed by people who have been terminated," said Goldstone. "Nevertheless, this was wrong. SDCERS' new management recognized the errors." He said the errors had a "small impact on the City's financial statements." Small?

The upshot: on December 7 the *Union-Tribune* wrote a silly story, moaning that Macías Gini & O'Connell was afraid Aguirre might sue it. This could impact the timing and costs of future audits. In both the story and a sillier editorial the next day, the newspaper heaped all the blame on Aguirre for insisting that the disclosure be correct. Does anyone remember that the SEC said last year that the City committed willful securities

continued on page 10



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continued from page 8

violations? It seems the message has already been forgotten by the City administration and its toady, the *Union-Tribune*.

But on December 13, Goldstone relented. He said he would open up the 2005 audit and include the information Aguirre and Frye wanted. ■

Cabbages monarchs

continued from page 7

ful, but it's also needed to raise a butterfly called the Gulf fritillary. It's an orange butterfly like the monarch but smaller. A lot of people ask, 'Is that plant plastic?' We say, 'No, it's not plastic. It's real.' In fact, at first we didn't sell the plants here. But we were explaining to people about the larvae

and eggs on the certain plants. And they were asking, 'Would you sell us this plant?' So we started selling the plants too."

About 100 yards across dusty ranch land — nine acres of which Cerón and Palafox rent for the butterfly operation — lies Le Papillon's larger butterfly enclosure. This one's about 50 feet long, 20 feet wide. Other than the gravel path, which makes an oval circuit through the enclosure,

every inch inside is covered in flowering plants — lantana, margarita, geranium, bougainvillea, and more.

"The plants are for the nectar," Cerón explains. "Butterflies will eat nectar from almost any plant."

"We also cut slices of apple for them to eat," Palafox adds.

Twenty-five or 30 orange-and-black monarch butterflies flutter around, sometimes alighting on the plants,

sometimes on the netting, and sometimes on the plate of apple slices that sits on a stand in one corner. The ten humans in the building stand mute and watch the winged insects fly about. There's something hypnotic about the silent fluttering. Their flight paths are never straight, and they look as if a light breeze would knock them to the ground. But they're harder than they appear. Monarch butterflies

migrate from Canada to central Mexico every year.

"We usually have a lot more butterflies in here," Palafox says, "but, as my husband said, we've done a lot of releases lately."

How do you catch them?

"Like this." Cerón approaches a butterfly sitting on the net. It flies away when he reaches for it. He approaches another, reaches out, and gently pinches the wings together between his thumb and forefingers. The creature's six legs and two antennae wriggle in protest to this treatment. Cerón releases it and smiles as he watches its irregular flight to a nearby orange-flowered lantana. "That's how you catch them."

"But we don't catch them for wedding releases," Palafox says. "The ones we release we raise in containers. They go from eggs to caterpillars to butterflies all in the container. And when they're two or three days old we release them. If we don't need them for weddings or *quinceañeras*, we release them in here."

On its opening weekend, in mid-November, Le Papillon had 500 visitors, though not all were paying customers. "We invited a lot of people," Palafox explains. The plan for Palafox and Cerón — who work day jobs in management at two of Tijuana's maquiladoras — is to attract school field trips. "We pay a company that does marketing to the schools. There is no way we could go to every school to pitch this. But the company we work with has contacts with over 1000 schools. So they print a brochure that they send to all of their schools. They bring busloads of kids, and we get two dollars per kid."

In addition to field trips, the couple hopes to attract Tijuana's city dwellers for a day in the country. They plan to build a playground for kids. And they're working on permits to import more exotic species of butterflies. They charge 30 pesos (about \$3) per visitor. "The idea is that families will be able to come and spend the whole day with us," Cerón says. "Kids love it here. In TJ, we don't have a lot of parks and play spaces, and the houses are very small. Here, we have butterflies and room to run. It's a very safe place to play — except for the rattlesnakes." ■

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The Mess We Have

Joe Deegan's story about the lack of restrooms for trolley riders ("Pressing Need," "City Lights," December 13) presents an opportunity for some entrepreneurial spirit to make a killing at piddling. I know there are cities where private companies put up public restrooms, garlanded with adverts and designed for easy cleaning. The ads pay for the service, or they have coin slots, which tend to keep the riffraff out. San Diego Metropolitan Transit

should try that. Or, if you're a guy, "trucker bombs" work well. Wide-mouthed sports drinks, like Gatorade, are easier to use than liter soda bottles.

But it's a damn shame that just adds to the shame of one of the worst-planned "rapid transit" systems in the world. I complained about this years ago when the Tijuana trolley was in the planning stages — it should have been elevated over all major intersections, or it should have been run up the center divide of the freeways. The rides should have been kept cheap. I've ridden the subways in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and London, UK — they're so much better planned and operated than the mess we have in San Diego.

Dale Jennings
via email

Buffett Built

I am Don Bauder's biggest fan. He is the Upton Sinclair (a true muckraker) of San Diego, and we are fortunate to have him (the *Union-*

Tribune's loss). His philosophy should be, "If you can't say anything 'bad' about anyone, don't say anything at all." So why write about Charles Brandes ("Brandes Defies Market," "City Lights," December 13)? Ho-hum! No-one "badder" to write about?

He goes on to say "Buffett built a company, Berkshire Hathaway, that takes positions in stocks that he believes have intrinsic values the market has overlooked." Actually, having been born and raised in Providence, Rhode Island, I know that Berkshire Hathaway was founded there in the 1800s as a textile manufacturing company by the Chace family, who to this day are one of the largest shareholders of Berkshire Hathaway stock. They owned mills from the Berkshire Mountains of west Massachusetts to Hathaway, Rhode Island, hence the name.

When textiles moved south, another Providence company, Textron, also be-

gan in the textile business and, under the tutelage of Royal Little, was to become the first "conglomerate"; that is, a company whose sole purpose is to own other companies (Bell Helicopter, Cessna, etc.). Mr. Callaway of golf fame was formerly of Textron but couldn't convince them the golf industry had a future.

Mr. Buffett built Berkshire Hathaway into a conglomerate.

Lee J. Juskalian
Encinitas

Don Bauder responds: I don't disagree. What we're haggling about is the word "built." The company was founded long before Buffett was born. Buffett built it into the behemoth it is today.

Comments from Reader Website

Blurt

Published December 12

Posted by Lemac on 12/13/07, 2:50 p.m.

I'm not knocking Jay Allen Sanford's writing, what I am saying is that I've seen plenty of really great local shows come to San Diego and never see a write up on them, which supprises me. Instead, I get reviews of shows from when I was a tot or not born (which, from time to time can be interesting, for sure, but I hear those from mom and pop too) OR what the buffet line was at Gwen Stefani's concert tour. Would just like to see more current shows/music/artists get recognized.

Music Review

Published December 12

Posted by John Paul Osborn on 12/15/07, 8:15 a.m.

Bill Farkas cuts through issues like a warm knife through butter. He is simply an awesome commen-

continued on page 14

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LETTERS

continued from page 12

tator. As a juvenile justice advocate for the last half dozen years, Bill is one of just a handful of people in the news media willing to take a risk to expose the incredible injustice being done to children in the justice system and in prison today. I only wish that there were more folks like Bill.

Posted by Ed on 12/15/07, 1:28 p.m.

Glad to see his CD Sea of Mass Confusion is getting some of the pub it deserves. He's been putting out great protest songs long before it became "vogue" to climb on the band wagon. Saw Bill at the Music for Peace Festival at Mira Costa College last year and found his show really inspiring. Too bad they don't play his kind of music on the radio here in San Diego. Might do a few folks some good to exposed to the truth about what's going on in this country. Let's lobby 102.1 FM to play it. They say they're "Rock without Rules". I'd like to see them

prove it and play some artists like this.

City Lights, by Don Bauder

Published December 12

Posted by Jim Fawcett on 12/12/07, 2:08 p.m.

I don't care what anybody says, Ben Graham's and David Dodd's 'Security Analysis', is still the bible for investing. Any business school that doesn't require all of their MBA students to read it should be stripped of their accreditation.

Reply by Don Bauder: Agreed. Always keep in mind: over the years, value stocks whip growth stocks. That's important for people to keep in mind when there is a growth stock bubble, as there was in the mid- to late-1990s. It led up to a crash that was as bad as 1974 and almost as bad as the 1930s crashes.

Posted by Scammy on 12/14/07, 3:13 p.m.

Newspapers are simply fumbling the ball. Like many businesses, they first suffered from MBA attacks, when real newspaper people were shoved aside by bean-counters who were ig-

norant of journalism. "Journalism schools" shoved aside street-smart reporters with a lust for truth. Readers were slow to catch on, but when they did, a critical crack developed in the reader demographic. Drunk on the transitory boost "infotainment" gave the business, the critical base of discriminating readers "weakened," and with it went their buying power. Finally, the bean-headed managers paid more attention to their golf-swings than their web sites, which they turned over to geeks who were even less tuned into the potential of the Internet than they were. Wringing their hands over "giving away" their product, the newspaper-cum-Internet sites abandoned even the most basic tenets of pricing theory.

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SportingBox By Patrick Daugherty

New England Patriots vs. Tiger Woods

Remember when the Patriots were the baddest team in the NFL? They'd come to your town, trample small children on their way to the gridiron, run up the score until it was 63 to 9, throw a 60-yard pass for a touchdown with three seconds left in the fourth quarter, sneer at your women, deride your manhood, and stride off the field looking like an SS-Panzer-Generalkommando victory parade. Let's face it, North America was seized with fear.

The New England Patriots are unbeatable, guaranteed to go 16 and 0 in the regular season, then 2-0 through the playoffs, then win Super Bowl XLII and finish at 19-0. Nobody has seen anything like this since television went to 500 channels.

The one possible upset to the Pats is the Pats, who have been trying to lose for the past month. No, I don't mean plotting, scheming, or paying a coach to videotape the 3-11 New York Jets at practice hoping to steal pointers on how to lose. That would be wrong. Besides, they've already done that.

No, the real upset is that weird thing that happens in sports, otherwise known as, "playing down to the level of your opponent." There's a tug, a tidal, primordial force that causes human beings to group together. If you're a much better tennis player than Tom, and you start practicing with him, pretty soon you're going to be only a little better than Tom. And, conversely, the quickest way to improve your tennis is to play against someone who is much better than you. If you've played one-on-one sports — table tennis, pool, squash — you know what I mean.

Back to the Patriots... The Pats haven't covered the spread in three out of the past four weeks. They could have lost three of those games, and should have lost two.

Week 15, Sunday last. New York Jets at New England. The spread is 24 points. Pats win 20 to 10. *Do not cover.* The Jets, a 3-10 team going in, played the Pats straight up in the second half.

Week 14, Pittsburgh at New England. The spread is 12 points. Pats win 34 to 13. *Covered.*

Week 13, New England at Baltimore. The spread is 20 1/2 points. Pats win 27 to 24. *Do not cover.*

Week 12, New England at Philadelphia. The spread is 23 points. Pats win 31 to 28. *Do not cover.*

New England is at home against Miami on Sunday and will win that one. But, New England's next game, their last game, the one on December 29, on the road against the New York Giants, that one could be interesting.

The Giants have lost three in a row, their last defeat, 22-10, was at home against the Redskins. To make it worse, four-time Pro Bowl tight end Jeremy Shockey acquired a broken left fibula during the contest and is out for the season. And then there is the Eli Manning problem and the Tom Coughlin problem.

Here's the deal: The Pats are in the postseason, have earned a bye week and home-field advantage throughout the playoffs. The Giants will make the playoffs on Sunday if they win or tie Buffalo or if Washington and New Orleans lose or tie.

Buffalo (7-7) is out of the playoffs but has a good chance of beating New York on Sunday. They beat Washington two weeks ago. Washington plays Minnesota away and is the dog by 6 1/2 points. I don't expect them to win, but you never know. New Orleans plays Philly at home and the Eagles could win that one.

We want this to go easy because if it does, that will set up the 15-0 Pats going for a perfect season vs. the 9-6 Giants needing a win to make the playoffs.

There is the pressure of losing week after week, but that's nothing compared to the pressure of winning week after week. Which brings us to golf and Tiger Woods. Stay with me. It's not that Tiger wins so much or has won so long, it's that he's still (11 years plus since turning pro) so far out in front of everybody else.

On Sunday, Woods won the Target World Challenge, the last tournament of 2007, for the fourth time. He shot 22 under par. Second place, seven shots back, was this year's Masters champion Zach Johnson. Woods hasn't played golf since September 30.

Eighth-place finisher Colin Montgomerie wrapped it up: "Doesn't help us, does it? If he took a bloody year off, it wouldn't help."

Bad Sports blog is officially open for business (SanDiegoReader.com/weblogs/bad-sports/). BYOB.

The Vegas Line

NFL Week 16 (Home Team in CAPS)				
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Cleveland	3	Sunday 44	CINCINNATI	
Green Bay	9	39	CHICAGO	
INDIANAPOLIS	7	45	Houston	
DETROIT	4 1/2	43 1/2	Kansas City	
NEW ENGLAND	22	43 1/2	Miami	
N.Y. Giants	3	33 1/2	BUFFALO	
JACKSONVILLE	13	39	Oakland	
NEW ORLEANS	3	47	Philadelphia	
MINNESOTA	6 1/2	40 1/2	Washington	
ARIZONA	10 1/2	43 1/2	Atlanta	
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SHEEP AND GOATS

PLACES OF WORSHIP REVIEWED

"Are you headed to Ballroom 20?" I asked a woman as she strode through the Convention Center foyer.

She eyed me, assessing. "What's in Ballroom 20?"

"A Muslim woman is addressing a delegation of Jews."

"Ah. Are you with the conference?"

"No, I'm press."

She warmed up after that, and I suppose her caution was understandable. Here was a guy with no ID and a black bag asking about Islamic Society of North America president Dr. Ingrid Mattson's address to the Union for Reform Judaism Biennial Convention on the importance of Muslim-Jewish dialogue. A sensitive subject — the sort of thing that might provoke a strong reaction from either side.

Mattson's address came as a sort of book-end to the one given last August by union president Rabbi Eric Yoffie at ISNA's annual convention in Chicago. In that speech, Yoffie

had said, "To all those who desecrate God's name by using religion to justify killing and terror, let us say together, 'Enough.' No one honors a religion of peace through violence. No one honors God if they do not honor the image of God in every human being. No one gets to heaven by creating hell on earth." Yoffie praised ISNA's denunciation of terror and violence, but said that "our task is not done until the message is truly heard and others in the world join you.... Surely, here in America, as Muslim and Jew, we have a unique opportunity to reclaim our common heritage

and to find the common path. Brothers and sisters, let us begin."

Yoffie received a standing ovation, but not everyone was thrilled. In his Shabbat sermon the day before Mattson's address, Rabbi Yoffie had told the conventioners that "in the broader Jewish community, we have heard many loud voices of reaction, including the suggestion that we reconsider because of the need to maintain 'the unity of the community.' Let it be plainly said: this is nonsense.... We have had quite enough of the shrill voices who profess to speak in our name and who use the slogan of 'unity' to impose their views on the moderate majority.... Some Jews, we know, have made common cause with fundamentalist preachers who describe Muslim Americans in near-Satanic terms. But if these Jews are not protesting such attacks with all the power at their disposal, they should be ashamed of themselves.... Jews have never taught hatred as an answer to hatred, and we will not begin now."

Singer Dan Nichols opened Sunday's plenary session with a couple of modern folk songs, starting with a low, thrilling, minor-key chant over acoustic guitar work that was sharp to the point of being fierce. Then he shifted to spoken word: "I saw the posters at the Golden Union Camp/ I saw the posters in the lobby of Temple Shir Shalom in West Bloomfield Michigan, Michigan/ In Jerusalem at 4 p.m./ But I wasn't prepared for what Jerusalem would sound like at four in the afternoon./ I turned to my tour guide and I said, 'What is that?' and he said, 'It's the call to

prayer.' And I said, 'It doesn't sound like the *Barechu* to me.' And he said, 'Dan, those are mosques, all over town.../ And I stood there for the very first time...hearing that sound in 360 swirl, and I was inspired./ It touched me./ Maybe we have things to share; maybe we have things to learn...'

To that end, the President's Message Committee was putting before the convention a draft resolution on Jewish-Muslim dialogue, which had as its principal goal the approval of an effort to promote "a new program... *Children of Abraham: Muslims and Jews in Conversation*." The program was "based on building relationships through mutual understanding... including a structured dialogue guide." The goal was for individual Jewish communities to partner with individual Muslim communities. "There exists in our community a profound ignorance about Islam," read the resolution's preamble, "along with a real desire to learn about what...motivates Muslims today."

Statements were taken, pro and con. A Jewish doctor who worked in "the heart of Arab London" spoke in favor of the resolution, saying that "Islamophobia...steeps our entire world," and that "there are huge numbers of Muslims...that are moderates."

But it wasn't all friendly rhetoric. A rather august gentleman to my left shook his head as he read the first sentence: "We live in a world in which religion is manipulated to justify the most horrific acts, a world in which Islamic extremists constitute a profound threat." (Though

it was followed by, "For some, this is a reason to flee from dialogue, but in fact the opposite is true.") And a speaker from a Jewish congregation in Fountain Valley said that he liked "the very large bulk of this thing," but objected to the line, "When we are killing each other in the name of God, sensible religious people have an obligation to do something about it."

"I'm aware that one side is killing the other in the name of God," he said, "but not vice versa."

"Oh, come on," said the fellow to my left with apparent frustration, but there was a smattering of applause, and the speaker continued. "I was in Israel all spring. I visited the blockhouse on the Lebanese border, where Israeli troops are doing what they must to defend Israel. I heard no animosity toward Muslims...except from the standpoint of, 'We need to defend our homeland.' I think this is a totally asymmetric situation.... If you'd care to say, 'When there is killing in the name of God,' that's a true statement. But we are not 'killing each other in the name of God.'" More applause followed, stronger now.

Rabbi Yoffie took the podium and responded. "I think the point is a valid point. The wording was more of a rhetorical device than an effort at political analysis.... I would accept an amendment that says, 'When killing is carried out in the name of God.'" No one raised a hand in opposition, and the motion carried.

Next week: Mattson's speech.

— Matthew Lickona



RABBI ERIC YOFFIE

Biennial Convention of the Union for Reform Judaism

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BestBuys

—EVE KELLY

2008 is almost upon us, and the Kelly household is going to party. And party for many reasons: new babies, new engagements, newlyweds, and new friends.

We haven't thrown a New Year's Eve bash in a few years. The disco ball needs a dusting; noisemakers need to be bought, as does the champagne. For the champagne, I need to get some recommendations before blindly buying.

First call went out to Matt Francke, owner of San Diego Wine Company. We started with terminology. "The difference between sparkling wine and champagne is that when you call something champagne, it literally has to come from the Champagne region of France," Francke explained. "Everything else is called sparkling wine."

Nonvintage on the bottle means that "there is no particular year that all the grapes were picked that are going into that bottling. The grapes could have been picked from a number of different years, and normally they are current vintages, current years like '06, '05, maybe back to '04 but most likely not."

And with regard to brut, or extra dry, "that refers to a kind of dryness level. Brut is considered dry. Wine is fermented dry, meaning there is no residual sugar. So the wine should not be sweet; it can still be fruity but won't be sweet. Extra dry is another designation that you see on Prosecco or even another sparkling wine or champagne. Extra dry means there is a little bit of residual sugar or sweetness." Other designations: demi-sec and sec-sec being on the sweet end and brut on the dry end.

What makes the sparkling wine sparkling? "When it comes to *méthode champenoise*, or champagne method, a term meaning the wine is made imitating the way people in Champagne make their wines, the main difference is that the second fermentation that takes place in the bottle, as opposed to another method where they can do it in large vats. Each bottle of wine gets its own secondary fermentation, more of an individual attention."

I'm looking for some value buys; recommendations in the \$10 range, \$15 range, and over \$20 range. In the \$10 range, "One of our favorites is from Italy," Francke said. "It is a nonvintage brut called Prosecco; the producer is Puntoevirgola, an amazing value [\$7.99 a bottle]." Another bottom-dollar sparkling wine suggestion: "Stonehaven nonvintage Brut from southeastern Australia [\$6.99]."

"I also have a Pinot Noir Sparkling Brut from Spain called Segura Viudas [\$6.99]; they call that bottling Aria. And being that it is a Pinot Noir, it is going to look like a rosé and have a beautiful cherry-red color to it. It is dry, not sweet. Sometimes when people think rosé, they think sweet, but it is not sweet at all, it is dry."

For someone loyal to California, "We have the Gloria Ferrer Brut sparkling wine [\$10.95], definitely one of the best values of sparkling wines from California."

Any good values in the \$10 to \$15 range?



1



2



3

"If you are looking at under-tens in sparkling wines and champagnes, you're looking for something that is quaffable."

"We carry the Lucien Albrecht nonvintage Brut Rosé; its designation is Cremant d'Alsace [\$13.95], "Cremant" meaning it's a little bit lusher, richer style and "d'Alsace" meaning from Alsace. In my opinion, it drinks like a good \$25 bottle from Champagne."

And Francke's over \$20 value recommendation: the Piper Heidsieck nonvintage Brut from Champagne (\$21.95).

"According to legend, Champagne is where sparkling wine originated," Matt Tremble, store manager at the Mission Valley Beverages & More, told me. "You will see sparkling wines that are non champagnes that use the *méthode champenoise*, a term to indicate that it is not just the \$4 headache method of production, it is the actual French method."

And the \$4 headache method of production: "It is called bulk process. There are a lot of unfermented sugars; it's not naturally carbonated, and that is where your cheap sparkling wines got the reputation for giving people headaches."

Tremble says there are a few wines outside of Champagne, France, that can use the name champagne. "Korbel uses the

word champagne on their bottle; they got grandfathered in on that. The French sued Korbel when they started using that name. But because the French had never copyrighted the name, they lost the fight against Korbel and a couple of other sparkling-wine houses. And those houses ended up getting grandfathered in and were allowed to use the term California champagne."

As for recommendations: "Under \$10, in my opinion, the best values right now are coming out of Spain," said Tremble. "There is one called Cristalino Brut that is very tasty [\$7.99]."

"The best things going in the \$10 to \$15 range are coming out of California. Some of your old-world sparkling and champagne houses set up shop here in California. One is produced by the French company Moët & Chandon, who make actual champagne, including but not limited to Dom Perignon. By far their most popular is their Chandon Brut [\$16.99]. It's definitely a more high-end taste. You'll find more complexities in it than you will in your under-tens. If you are looking at under-tens in sparkling wines and champagnes, you're looking for something that is quaffable, that doesn't have any flaws to it — if it's supposed to be sweet, it isn't overly sweet. It isn't excessively effervescent or hardly effervescent at all. There's balance between the acidity and the alcohol. When you get up into that teens' range in sparkling wines, you start getting some reasonable nuances, subtleties to it."

And what if you want the genuine article, straight from Champagne?

"There is really nothing coming out of Champagne right now that is much under \$30. It's always been pricier stuff as compared to the non-champagne designation, and also the exchange rate right now is atrocious."

Columns archived at SanDiegoReader.com

1. Moët & Chandon Brut
2. Champagne glasses
3. Segura Viudas



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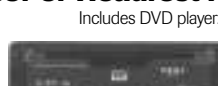
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Bad Santa

Love looks forward, hate looks back, anxiety has eyes all over its head.

— Mignon McLaughlin

My first inclination that something was wrong came just after the man did a little hop-skip-and-a-jump and then stepped back as if to bow to the lady before him.

Everything had been going so well. The Seattle sky was uncommonly clear for December. The overall atmosphere was festive and convivial. With a cup of Bailey’s-spiked coffee in hand, I pranced around the gallery answering questions and volunteering information about David, the star of the show. For most of the evening, I was *on* — speaking energetically about David’s work, explaining his process and adding my own flourish (“When he took this one, I stayed in the car so I could avoid mosquitoes and play Scrabble on my Treo”; “He had to brave 11-degree weather in the middle of February in New England to get these two shots”; and “David’s modest about his success, but I’m not — his work is sold in galleries from L.A. to New York and

from Zurich to Tokyo.” Gallery employees made their rounds, greeting visitors and keeping people from accidentally backing into the artwork by regularly announcing, “You scratch it, you own it.” Two hours passed like minutes; the lights were dimmed to signify the end of the show, and the crowd was asked to leave, save for the chosen guests who would retire upstairs for the private reception party. I was looking forward to getting off of my feet, relaxing with a glass of wine, and chatting with new and old friends over the meal that had been prepared by the gallery’s owner. I was on my way to do just that when a flash of red caught my eye. It was the shimmer of a Santa hat, shaped stiff and tall like a dunce cap, covered in red glitter and

perched atop the head of a tall, wiry man. He was older, his silver hair and beard trimmed close, his gray suit tailored, his Converse sneakers red to round out his festive attire. At a glance, he appeared to be a distinguished gentleman with a playful pinch of panache. My first inclination that something was wrong came just after the man did a little hop-skip-and-a-jump and then stepped back as if to bow to the lady before him. From where I stood, nothing seemed amiss. But then Nina, a gallery employee, darted over and led the unconstrained man away from the pictures he had come close to “owning.” My body tensed in apprehension as the sloshed Santa made his way to the private event, and my eyes widened in horror as, watching him greet people along the way, I realized that he had been *invited*. I don’t see anything wrong with getting tipsy, especially in the winter season of eggnog and brandy, but it was 8 p.m. on a Thursday, and this guy was already more plastered than the gallery walls. A friend handed me a glass of champagne, and I turned to take stock of the hors d’oeuvres that were on a table. The hairs stood on my neck when the sparkling red cone popped into view. My stomach turned as I watched the soused Santa lean over and plant his face just millimeters away from the platters of food as he sniffed and examined each offering. I decided I could hold out until dinner.

I didn’t have to wait long. An announcement was made for the 20 or so guests to go back downstairs and help themselves to the buffet. I was standing to the side, speaking with Nina, when I felt an elbow at my back and stepped forward. When a second offending nudge followed, I interrupted Nina and said, “We need to move, I can’t have someone pushing on me like this.” As if on cue, the man in the festive dunce cap, who turned out to be the source of the back jabs, came around to face me. Unsteady on his feet, he leaned in too close and blathered, “You know these are called temples,” then lunged for my red-and-black frames. “Hey! How about you don’t touch me?” I snapped, taking a step back. He continued to ramble about temples and eyewear, to which I said, “Great, sounds good, whatever it is you’re saying. I’m going over there.” I rolled my eyes at Nina and put some space between myself and the inebriate. From a few feet away, I watched the disaster unfold as the guy tried to negotiate the buffet table. First, he knocked all of the plastic knives onto the floor. Then he grabbed the long serrated bread knife and stabbed at a loaf. I couldn’t keep myself from intervening, “Hey, you — the last person in here who should be holding a knife — there’s a big basket of bread already sliced right in front of you.” After missing a

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few times, the man finally seized onto a slice and slurred a thank you. I grimaced as he confronted the butter and then watched him stumble to a seat, after which I quickly collected my food and hustled to the opposite end of the building where I parked myself on a couch with David's sister Michelle. David sat on a chair across from us, and everyone began to eat.

I thought the worst was over. I thought that once I was away from that guy everything would be fine. I took a bite of my food, but it turned to dirt in my mouth and I spit it into a napkin. A woman sat in the chair next to Michelle and struck up a conversation with the siblings. I winced as a stabbing pain began to shred my abdomen, and pasted a blank smile on my face as I bit the inside of my cheeks to distract myself from the agony in my belly. I dropped my plate on the table and sat back. At one

point, Michelle turned to me with a conspiratorial smile on her face, her lips moving. I mimicked her smile, sensing her intention to share an inside joke, but I hadn't heard what she'd said. In fact, I realized, as my heart began to beat faster, I hadn't heard anything — the room was full of moving mouths, but my ears were inundated with a resounding silence, interrupted only by the voice in my head, which sounded strangely like my own, saying, "I need to get out of here. I need to get out of here," over and over and over.

"Are you okay?" It was David. I hadn't heard the words, but the question was written all over his face. I shook my head, left to right.

I heard Michelle as if we were underwater, "I've never seen you look so flushed before, Barb. Your face is beet red. Are you hot?" My eyes widened, my jaw remained clenched. Without saying a word, I

stood and walked through the dining room, down the back stairs, and into the gallery storeroom, where I could be alone with my thoughts, the first of which was, *What the hell is wrong with you?* I wondered if I was having some kind of allergic reaction to the food and then remembered I hadn't swallowed my first bite. My body seemed to be under attack, but if that were the case, where was my attacker? I'd heard of "panic attacks," but I always thought that was when someone freaked out over some irrational fear.

My evening had been wonderful, full of great conversation and incredible compliments to my man — what was there to be afraid of?

I breathed deeply, savoring the solitude. Once I relaxed, I decided to go back upstairs, but the mere thought of rejoining the party caused me to double over in pain as my insides twisted in protest, and I felt the blood rushing back to my face. Suddenly, the image of the man in the Santa hat popped into my head. I noted that his appearance at the gather-

ing had coincided with the onset of my discomfort. But *why?* Why would some drunk guy upset me to the point of needing to hide in a storeroom in order to breathe? Neither of my parents was an alcoholic. As I thought about it more, I realized it wasn't the alcohol on his breath that had disturbed me — it was his behavior, his sloppiness, his apparent inability to control himself.

Maybe I had been afraid of something after

all. Maybe seeing that man reminded my nerves of the one dread I have above all others — the one that causes me to alternate my feet over the cracks in the sidewalk, that requires me to methodically burn the tips of my other nine fingers should the tenth have foolishly brushed against something hot, and that compels me to arrive two hours early for a movie so that I can be assured of sitting in "my" seat — my fear of losing control. ■

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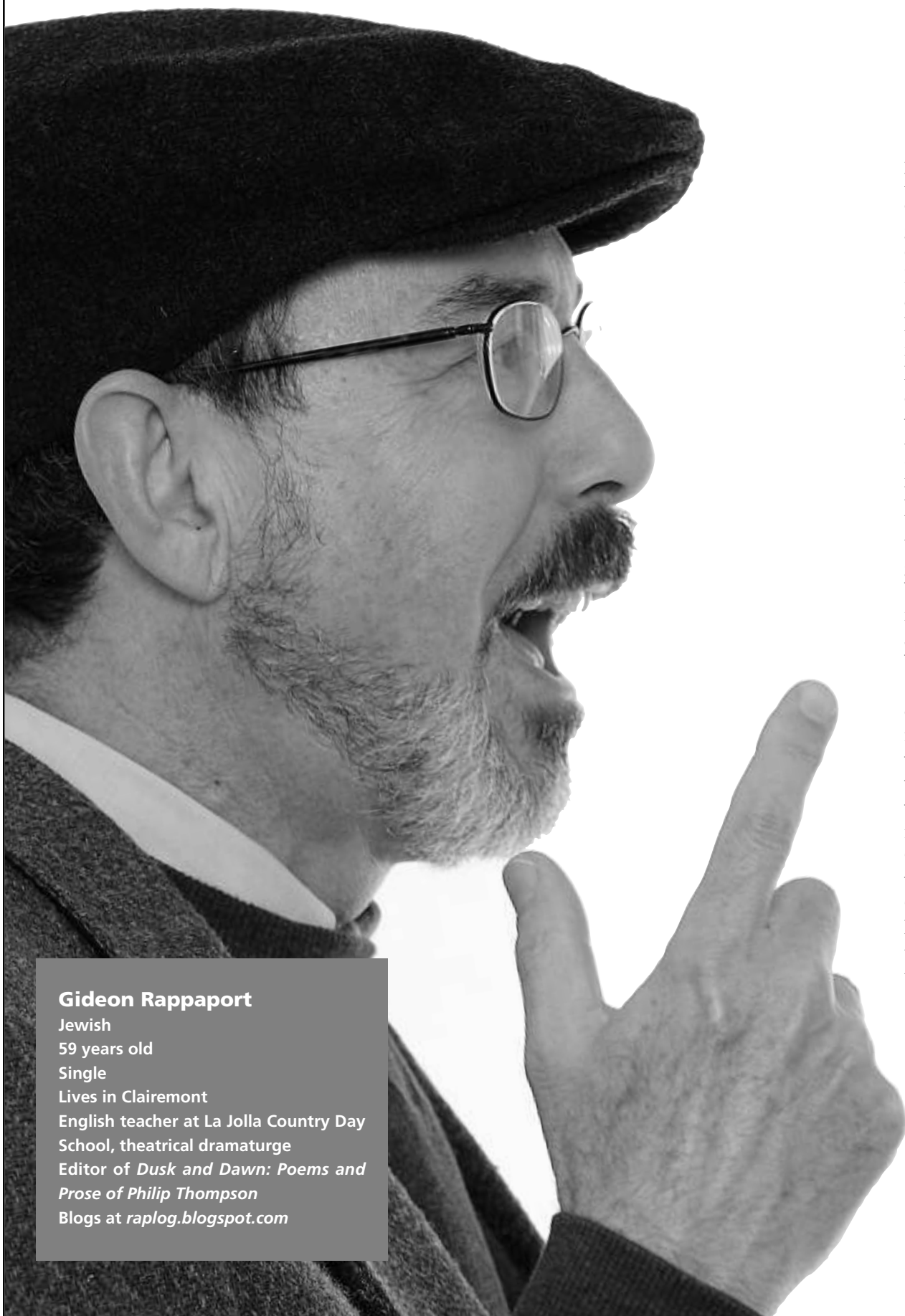
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A CHRISTIAN AND A JEW DISSECT THE HOLIDAY



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Jewish

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Lives in Clairemont

English teacher at La Jolla Country Day School, theatrical dramaturge

Editor of *Dusk and Dawn: Poems and Prose of Philip Thompson*

Blogs at raplog.blogspot.com

Matthew: The last time my father visited, I learned what seemed a remarkable thing: all three of his best friends in high school were Jewish. He grew up in Poughkeepsie, an hour from New York City by train. But I grew up four hours north of Poughkeepsie, and what a difference a few hours' drive can make. I remember only one kid from my high school whom everybody knew as Jewish: his name was Ben, he played tennis and the violin, and he put up with an awful lot of abuse from his circle of friends. He'd make a joke, and one of them would say something like, "Shut up, Jew." I don't think his friends actually cared about his being Jewish — it was just an easy, stupid shot. For a long time, I couldn't understand how he took it the way he did. Finally, I decided that it must be that these were his friends — where else was he going to go? So he learned to swallow it. It probably helped that they weren't really serious. As for me, I was friends with a half-Jew in elementary school, but his mother was Catholic, so you can bet he celebrated Christmas like the rest of us.

Gideon: It's interesting that the place you decided to start was with the Jews, your father's friends, your own friend. Christmas has to start with the Jews, I guess, no matter where you start. It was Jews who were killed by Herod and Jews who were chased into Egypt by him, pregnant with the future, and Jews whose testimony later became the Christmas story. But though in my childhood I would sometimes help neighbors decorate their Christmas trees with tinsel — we would never have had one and never felt deprived: "That's what they do, not what we do" — in later years much of the holiday involved explaining over and over that

Jew: When I was a child

You?

E HOLIDAYS

Hanukkah had nothing to do with Christmas; it was just an accident that it came at the same time of year, and it was not the most important Jewish holiday by a long shot. I didn't know at the time that the Christmas celebrations we all know were more or less the invention of 18th-century Germany and 19th-century England (and Charles Dickens), while Hanukkah had been celebrated more or less the same way for over a thousand years. When I was a child, Christmas was the world, Hanukkah only at home.

The name-calling you described was painful to hear, but your adult understanding of Ben's having no choice was touching. For a good bit of my childhood I was like Ben. We lived in Reseda, in the San Fernando Valley of L.A., when the tracts were just being built. Almost all my neighbors were non-Jews except during one short period. Christmas was everywhere; Hanukkah, Passover, Rosh Hashanah we found privately at the synagogue or at my grandparents' or my great aunt and uncle's in L.A. The exceptional period occurred in the year or two during which my next-door neighbors were my friend Mark and his family. I call him my friend because we had both the neighborhood and being Jewish in common. We went horseback riding in Griffith Park on our birthdays (I still have a picture, him on a horse several hands taller than mine), and we would do what today kids call "just hanging out." He was twice as big as I was and once socked a kid in the mouth on the playground who was making some nasty comment about the Jews. To me he was a hero, like the Maccabees of the Hanukkah story. But he moved away, and there I was again, alone among the gentiles.

Matthew Lickona

Roman Catholic

34 years old

Married, five children

Lives in La Mesa

Writes "Sheep and Goats" and "Crush" columns for the *Reader*

Author of the memoir *Swimming with Scapulars*

Blogs at matthewlickona.com



a child, Christmas was the world, Hanukkah only at home.

Matthew: Jews on horseback? That doesn't fit with what I learned from Roth's Portnoy, marveling at a goy who "played polo (yes, games from on top of a horse!) on Sunday afternoons..." It's a complicated world.

We learned Hanukkah songs in elementary school about spinning the dreidel and dancing the hora, but I had no idea what any of it meant. I didn't know why you spun dreidels and danced horas. I didn't know why you lit candles on the menorah. I didn't know why you got one present a night for eight nights. It wasn't like Passover — that, I understood from hearing the readings of the Old Testament in church. And I had attended a seder with my parents during our brief sojourn in Boston — my dad worked with Lawrence Kohlberg, a noted developmental psychologist.

But Hanukkah just seemed like a pitiful Christmas wannabe: "See, we have decorations!" Yeah, but what's a menorah compared to the complete transformation of a house that Christmas not merely makes possible, but invites — even demands? "See, we have presents!" One present a night for eight nights? Sad, really. Check out the orgy of delight a Christian gets on Christmas morning, when half the joy is the sheer scope of it: so many presents for so many people, and *all at once*. "See, we have traditions!" Hello? Christmas carols? Stockings? Specials on television? Christmas trees? We even had a literature of Christmas: "The Boy Who Laughed at Santa Claus." "A Visit from St. Nicholas." *Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas*. *A Christmas Carol*. "A Child's Christmas in Wales." "The Gift of the

Magi." And on and on. It wasn't that I gloated over Christmas's rout of Hanukkah. It's that I really didn't give it much thought beyond "It's not the real deal."

Gideon: There's no doubt that Christmas beat Hanukkah in amount of public activity surrounding it and the

Jew: My sister observes that "on Christmas Jews huddle."

quantity and size of presents. On the other hand, Hanukkah lasted longer. We got chocolate coins and other little gifts every night for eight days, and we got to eat potato pancakes, fried in oil, with salt, which I loved far more than anything in the fruitcake or candy cane line. This didn't make me feel

superior or luckier; neither did I feel deprived. Christians love sweets; Jews love salt — as it seemed to me then.

That's just the way it was. **Matthew:** Wait a second — Jews love salt, while Christians love sweets? That doesn't exactly square with what I remember from Jackie

dinner, which often meant beef tenderloin with béarnaise sauce, which I'm just now realizing isn't kosher, mixing dairy and meat the way it does. But it's funny you mention potato pancakes. I was in Extraordinary Desserts up in Hillcrest, picking up some strudel and chocolate brioche, and I spied this little book from children's author Lemony Snicket: *The Latke Who Couldn't Stop Screaming: A Christmas Story*. Except it's not exactly a Christmas story — it's a story about a latke who escapes his Jewish home (a home "regarded with suspicion," thanks to its lack of Christmas lights), only to find that he's not exactly understood by the outside (read: Christian) world. "I'm something completely different!" he screams — to no avail.

Gideon: I concede on the sweets and salt. I

knew it was a narrow view. But I was just a kid. And yes, Jackie Mason has a routine about Jews eating cake — but it's coffee cake, not the food-coloring-dyed icing-topped candy-studded kind. What Jackie Mason really said about telling a Jew from a gentile was this: "I'll tell you who's a Jew and who's a gentile. You can always tell a Jew and a gentile. After the show tonight, what will every gentile say? 'Go for a drink? Drink? Have a drink? Drink?' What'll every Jew say? 'Did you eat yet?'" Jackie Mason I know by heart.

And you're also right about horses. As an old punch line went, "What's a Jew doing on a horse?" Though Mark was braver than I, we both, true to the genes, knew nothing from horses — except that the thing Southern California boys did to celebrate a birthday in the '50s was to go horse-



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back riding in Griffith Park, by which was meant going and coming along a dusty, familiar, fenced trail on the back of an old jade who knew the drill by heart. I've learned a little more about horses since (also on the farm of my teacher), but not enough to convert.

The real difference in our experience is that when you were young, you didn't give Hanukkah much thought. Christmas was the real deal, and Hanukkah was not much in evidence and required little of your attention. For me there was no such luxury, because Christmas, of course, was everywhere, inescapable. Inevitable Christmas-carol Muzak in the stores, Santa Claus putting in an appearance somehow on every one of my favorite TV comedy shows, and all those lights on the houses and reindeer in the front

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yards. This is why my sister observes that “on Christmas Jews huddle.” Not because they have to, like the Jews of medieval (and later) Europe, who had better huddle to avoid massacre by mobs driven to frenzy by blood-libeling Easter sermonizers. No, thank God. But because anyone would want to huddle when confronted by nearly everybody else’s celebrating an event of such cosmic niceness that if you didn’t believe in it you were probably going to be damned.

It wasn’t until I was in college and began to learn the great profundity of Christianity and of its art that I began to see that Christmas might be a true vehicle of grace for Christians, even though it would not be that for me. My greatest teacher was a Christian, and being at her house during the Christmas season was a joy because being at her house anytime was a joy. And she was a true lover of the Jews — not tolerant, not patient, not patronizing, not suspicious. She could be a Christian and let the Jews be Jews and the

Hindus be Hindus and the Buddhists be Buddhists. And she knew them often better than they knew themselves. Being with her at Christmas was a path to discovering not only what it meant spiritually to be a Christian but also what it meant spiritually to be a Jew. It is because of her that I grew to realize that all true paths lead to the center.

Matthew: A few bleats of protest: While I’m pretty sure that you know more about mobs driven to frenzy by blood-libelers than I do, do you have to bring in the suggestion of damnation to explain huddling? As Christian moments go, the Incarnation at Christmas is about as far away from the Judgment as you can get. The Judgment — whether the personal judgment at death or the general judgment at the end of the world — does involve the separation of the wheat from the tares, with Christ commanding the evildoers to depart. The Incarnation, however, is a moment of supreme condescension (“cosmic niceness” is

excellent), an affirmation of common humanity. As you note in your thought about Christmas starting with the Jews, God became not just a human child, but a Jewish human child, albeit one who would extend the promise of God’s salvation to the gentile world. The angels sang of peace to men of goodwill — a pretty inclusive offer. Couldn’t

because we thought we were damned. We knew God better than that. And you’re right that an issue was not made of the differences on Christmas by our neighbors. It was we who knew that we shouldn’t be fraternizing with those who believed “the birthday boy was God.” From our point of view, that would be sending the wrong message to

goner. Incidentally, Santa has also proven very useful to me in trying to explain Shakespeare’s inherited theory of the four humors: Santa being a classic example of the sanguine complexion or temperament — red-faced, fleshy, and jovial (the other three being the phlegmatic, the melancholic, and the choleric).

Matthew: I take your point about Christmas-culture’s relatively recent foundations compared to Hanukkah, but I’m happy to quibble. Christmas trees, according to the legend I heard recited by Garrison Keillor, were invented by Martin Luther in the early 16th Century and are supposed to symbolize the fusion of heaven and earth at the Incarnation — the lights on the tree standing in for the stars among the branches. (Makes you wonder if the iconoclasts, for all their hatred of graven images, were somehow haunted by the desire for sensible reminders of the spiritual world.)

Starlight amid branches — how

restrained, how tasteful. Could almost be a Martha Stewart cover. Not so, the Lickona family trees. There was in my family a good bit of Irish restraint, but our trees were positively baroque — laden, crammed, balanced only in the sense that there was an equal distribution of excess. We always got something tall enough to scrape our ten-foot ceiling and broad enough to fill the bay window in the living room, trudging up a snow-covered hill to pick out the perfect specimen, sawing it down, hauling it out, and paying the tree farmer a dollar a foot. Small-town folk that we were, we had never heard of tree nets, so the monster rode on top of our car in all its wide-bottomed glory and had to be negotiated through the front door with supreme care and suppressed curses. Dad spent a couple of hours anchoring the trunk to the wall with a pair of guy wires to keep it straight, and then it was time for decorating. Oddly enough, the musical accompaniment I remember best was an

Christian: Christmas is simply exhausting and inspires no small amount of dread.

the huddling be explained another way: “The whole country is throwing a birthday party, and we are unable to accept the invitation.” Unable, not because you were probably damned, but because you didn’t believe that the birthday boy was God — which strikes me as not quite the same thing.

Gideon: I like that about not being able to accept the invitation. But I didn’t mean it was

one another, and to God.

Since then, having learned that Christmas was really about Incarnation and Salvation, as you say, I have tried my best to teach post-“there is no Santa Claus” kids in my classes that there really is a Santa Claus. The love embodied in the parental and fraternal and childlike joy of giving and receiving on Christmas is Santa Claus, and anyone who doesn’t believe in that spirit is a

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album of carols sung by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Mormon we weren't.

I can't resist the urge to reel off a list of adornments — if only because it's amazing to me how well I remember them, some 15 years after my last tree-trimming session in New York. This is straight from the top of my head: first, the strands of glass cranberries. Then the white lights. Then the colored lights — they blinked. Then the giant, mid-century colored lights that didn't blink. Then the tinsel. And on to the decorations, starting with the basic balls in various colors, then the glass teardrops from the '40s, the homemade Play-Doh jobs that my brother and I had made, the home-

made Stitch N' Stuff angels my mother had made, the tin figures from Mother Goose, angels of all shapes and sizes, on and on and on....

And finally and most gloriously, the ever-expanding array of "spe-

cial" ornaments, a new one each year. A hugely maned lion, recalling the time Mom read C.S. Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia* aloud to me. A glass heart, drizzled with gold, that my mother bought in Dubrovnik during our pilgrimage to Yugoslavia.

A hand-painted glass ball covered with butterflies from the year my mother's mother died (and thereby hangs a tale). A terra-cotta angel from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, recalling our two years in that city. There must be

something like 30 of them now, and they made for a potent introduction to nostalgia — the family history dangling from the branches. I remember sitting in the living room after midnight, back during my junior year of college, the

room lit only by the twinkling from the newly finished tree — and marveling at the sight. It isn't often that I can just sit and look at one thing for any great length of time — I'm afraid I'm something of a modern soul in that regard. But

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Do you have eczema?

Has anyone you know ever been diagnosed with Eczema Herpeticum or had a bad reaction to the smallpox vaccine?

The ADVN with the UCSD Department of Dermatology has active research studies and is enrolling patients with Atopic Dermatitis, Eczema Herpeticum, Psoriasis, and healthy control subjects. Financial compensation is offered to eligible participants. This NIH-sponsored study typically involves only a single visit, which includes a questionnaire, examination, and blood draw. Especially needed are people of African-American genetic heritage, although anyone with Eczema Herpeticum is encouraged to contact us.

ADVN

Atopic Dermatitis Vaccinia Network

Please contact for more details, and spread the word.

858-657-8390

ucsddermstudies@gmail.com

on that night, 15 years ago, I enjoyed something approaching contemplation.

On with the quibbling, even though you probably know a lot of this: St. Nicholas, of course, dates back to the 4th Century, and gift giving in his honor (including stockings stuffed with goodies) has been going on for some time, though not necessarily

on Christmas. As for us, Mom sewed our stockings and embroidered our names across the part that folded over, up at the top. I still have mine. St. Francis developed the first crèche way back in the 13th Century. Laying it out was always the highlight of the house decorating, which usually took place well before the tree decorating. (That sometimes

waited until Christmas Eve.) The great white Christmas tree candle that never seemed to melt, the wreath on the door, the whimsical ceramic figurines, the tinsel around the spindles of the stair banister — all these were dressing. But the crèche set signified — as much by what was left out as by what was put in. Angels, animals, shepherds, wise

RESEARCH STUDIES

Are you diagnosed with Schizophrenia?

Are you currently taking Risperdal?

You may qualify to participate in a research study involving an investigational medication.

Qualified candidates will be compensated for time and transportation as follows:

\$50 for your screening visit and \$100 at each scheduled visit after screening.

Compensation up to \$650 will be provided.

Call 858-566-8222 for more information.

The California Neuropsychopharmacology Clinical Research Institute, LLC
"CNRI, LLC"

Is Acute Mania Due to Bipolar Disorder Throwing Your Life Out of Balance?

We are seeking volunteers for a clinical research study of an approved medicine under investigation for acute mania due to bipolar disorder.

TO QUALIFY:

- You must be at least 18 years of age
- You must have been diagnosed with bipolar disorder
- You must be experiencing symptoms of acute mania

QUALIFIED PARTICIPANTS WILL RECEIVE, AT NO COST:

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- Study medication

PLEASE CALL TO LEARN MORE!

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Qualified participants must be:

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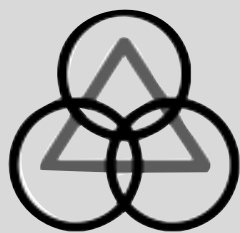
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"Together...we can make a difference!"

Do you or someone you love suffer from **Alzheimer's Disease?**

If you are:

- Male or female between 50 and 85 years of age
- Fluently read and speak English
- Are in good general health

You may be eligible to participate in a clinical research trial for an investigational new medication.

Participants will receive at no cost:

- Study-related exams • Investigational drug
- Compensation for travel-related costs to attend study visits

For more information, please call:

1-888-315-7929



SYNERGY CLINICAL
RESEARCH

Are you **one** of the **17 million** people in America who currently have **diabetes?**

Would you like to help others like yourself in finding better treatment options? If you have type 2 diabetes or if you have experienced symptoms such as increased thirst, increased urination, increased appetite, and fatigue, and a diagnosis is confirmed by your doctor...

You may be eligible to participate in a clinical research study for a potential diabetes treatment. You may be eligible if:

- You have been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes and are currently being treated with Metformin
- You are between 18 and 75 years of age — Women must be surgically sterile or at least 2 years postmenopausal
- You are not currently being treated with any other antidiabetic medication other than Metformin

For more information, please call:

1-888-315-7929



Have you or someone you know been diagnosed with **Bipolar Disorder?**

Are you currently receiving treatment with lithium, olanzapine, Larnotrigine, or valproic acid? Are you currently experiencing depression? You are not alone!

Synergy Clinical Research is conducting research studies for **Bipolar Disorder with Depression**. All study-related procedures will be provided at no cost. Participants will be compensated for time and travel after each completed visit. We understand...

Call Synergy Clinical Research at: 1-888-315-7929

Together...we can make a difference.



SYNERGY CLINICAL
RESEARCH

Worry Too Much?

If you worry excessively, can't relax; have persistent anxiety, tension, nervousness; have difficulty sleeping, concentrating, worrying about how you'll deal with each day; or upset stomach and muscle tension, you may have **Generalized Anxiety Disorder**.

You may qualify for a no-charge medical research study to test an investigational medication for the treatment of anxiety. All inquiries are confidential and no insurance is requested. Study-related evaluations, blood test, study-related pills and exams are at no cost and you will be compensated for visit, travel and expenses.

For more information, please call:

1-888-315-7929

If you are one of the 15 million adults affected by depression, you may be eligible to participate in a research trial of a new depression medication now being studied.

You may be eligible for the study if:

- You are between the ages of 18 and 70
- You are experiencing symptoms of depression

All qualified participants will receive study-related care and study medication for up to 8 weeks at no cost.

**To find out if you qualify for this study,
or for more information, please call:**

1-888-315-7929

or visit: www.parAGOnstudy.com

SCHIZOPHRENIA

Is your current medication working?

If you're taking Seroquel® and have experienced a return of symptoms, you may want to consider participating in a clinical research study.

This study is evaluating an approved medication to see if it may provide control of schizophrenia symptoms, and to evaluate its effect on weight.

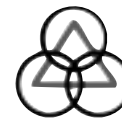
Seroquel® is a registered trademark of Astra-Zeneca.

Do you qualify? You may qualify for this study if you:

- Are between 18 and 55 years of age
- Have been diagnosed with schizophrenia
- Have experienced a return of symptoms after taking Seroquel® for three months or more

All study-related care and study medication will be provided at no cost for up to eight months.

Please call: 1-888-315-7929



SYNERGY CLINICAL
RESEARCH

www.synergysandiego.com

Do you or someone you know suffer from Generalized Anxiety Disorder?

Do you:

- Worry excessively and can't relax
- Have persistent anxiety, tension or nervousness
- Have muscle tension or upset stomach
- Worry about how you will deal with each day

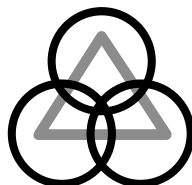
You may be eligible to participate in a clinical research study of an investigational medication.

Participants will receive at no cost:

- Study-related exams
- Investigational drug
- Compensation for time and travel

For more information call:

888-619-7272



SYNERGY CLINICAL RESEARCH CENTERS

Do You Have Rosacea?

If you think you may be suffering from Rosacea and are at least 18 years of age, you may be eligible for a clinical research study.

You may qualify if you have: red skin around forehead, cheeks or nose, red bumps similar to acne (minimum of 8), or tiny blood vessels over the nose and cheeks that appear as a blush from a distance.

**Please call University Clinical Trials at
(619) 202-0173
to see if you
qualify for this study.**

Qualified participants will receive study-related medical exams and investigational medications at no cost.

Medical insurance is not required for study participation.

men, Mary, Joseph, and even the crib — all took their place upon the pil-lowy pile of straw. But the baby Jesus never appeared until Christ-mas morning. And that meant something. As the billboards along the 94 say, “Jesus is the (only) reason for the season.”

So, yes, Christmas can be “a vehicle of grace for Christians.” But I’m happy to claim that it’s in spite of everything, not because of it. I think Christians lost Christmas a long time ago and that those billboards are proof. When you have to

buy a sign by the side of the road to tell people the point of all their shopping, all their prepa-ration, all their festivity; when you have to remind them that this is a birthday party for God, then you’ve already lost the war. You’re fighting a rearguard action, hoping to pick up a few strag-glers. It’s not like Easter. Despite the baskets, the egg hunts, and the Easter Bunny, everybody knows what Easter is about: the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Easter is still a religious holiday. Christmas, on the other

hand, feels more like a national holiday with a religious component — something like Thanksgiving.

I recently read an old interview with Charles Schulz in which he expressed dismay that *A Charlie Brown Christmas* won an Emmy for Best Children’s Special or some such. “We didn’t make it for children,” he griped, “we made it for adults.” Indeed. Charlie Brown’s problem with Christmas is an adult problem: he doesn’t know what it’s “all about.” The commercial-

RESEARCH STUDIES

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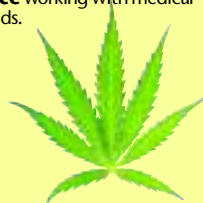
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Physicians nationwide are researching whether the use of an investigational medication may safely and effectively help you discontinue taking Ambien.

You may qualify if you:

- Take at least 10mg of Ambien four or more nights a week
- Are not taking Ambien CR (controlled-release)

If you qualify, you receive all study-related care and study medication at no charge. Financial compensation for time and travel may also be provided. To learn more, call:

**North County Clinical Research
760-639-4378**



Do You Have Insomnia? Are You Taking Ambien?

California Clinical Trials is conducting a research study to determine if an investigational medication can be used to help patients stop taking Ambien.

Every study conducted by California Clinical Trials is staffed by a team of skilled and experienced physicians and medical professionals.

If you participate, there is no cost to you...instead:

- You may receive up to \$500 for your time and travel.
- You receive investigational study medication and study-related medical care.
- No reports are made to employers, schools, or insurance companies.



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Depression

**steals more than your mood,
it robs you of life's pleasures.**

Are you between the ages of 18 and 65 and finding life hard to tolerate? Has your energy and motivation to enjoy your life decreased? Do you find even simple pleasures empty? If so, you may qualify to try an investigational medication being studied for depression.

California Clinical Trials has been assisting the pharmaceutical industry with finding new medications for depression. Every study conducted by California Clinical Trials is staffed by a team of skilled and experienced, caring physicians and medical professionals trained to place your comfort and well-being first.

If you participate, there is no cost to you...instead:

- You receive up to \$450 for your participation.
- You receive no-cost research study medication and medical care.
- No reports are made to employers, schools, or insurance companies.



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Toll-free 800-571-1188
www.cctstudy.com



Insomnia

**can affect the quality of your
life and your partner's.**

Restless sleeper? Wake up tired? Chronic problems falling and/or staying asleep?

If you have chronic problems falling and/or staying asleep, you may qualify for a research study in our state-of-the-art sleep clinic and receive an investigational drug for poor sleep.

Every study conducted by California Clinical Trials is staffed by a team of skilled and experienced physicians and medical professionals trained to place your comfort and well-being first.

If you participate, there is no cost to you...instead:

- You may receive up to \$1500 for your time and travel.
- You receive study drug and study medical care.
- No reports are made to your employers, schools, or insurance companies.



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Toll-free 800-571-1188
www.cctstudy.com



We're looking for volunteers with Migraine Headaches

If you are between the ages of 18 and 65, in good health and suffer from an average of 2 or more migraines monthly, you may qualify to try an investigational medication being studied for the treatment of migraine headaches.

Every research study conducted by California Clinical Trials is staffed by a team of skilled and experienced physicians and medical professionals trained to place your comfort and well-being first.

If you participate, there is no cost to you...instead:

- You receive \$250 for three study visits.
- You receive no-cost study-related medication and medical care.
- No reports are made to employers, schools, or insurance companies.



858-571-1188
Toll-free 800-571-1188
www.cctstudy.com



Are you being treated for your sleep apnea and depression but still have sleepiness during the day?

Because these two disorders have tiredness and fatigue in common, people who suffer from both feel like they drag all day long. California Clinical Trials is conducting a research study of an approved medication to see its effects on individuals with both sleep apnea and depression. If you are 18-65 years of age and in stable health, using your prescribed CPAP regularly and taking antidepressant medications, you may qualify to participate in this research study. Every study conducted by California Clinical Trials is staffed by a team of skilled and experienced physicians and medical professionals trained to place your comfort and well-being first.

If you participate, there is no cost to you...instead:

- You will receive up to \$550 for your participation.
- You will receive study-related medication and study-related medical care.
- No reports are made to employers, schools, or insurance companies.



858-571-1188
Toll-free 800-571-1188
www.cctstudy.com

Are you Hispanic and living with asthma?

Researchers in your area are evaluating the safety and effectiveness of a study drug to treat asthma in the Hispanic population.

You may qualify to participate if you:

- Are Hispanic (both parents identified as Hispanic)
- Are 12 years of age or older
- Take asthma medication daily

Qualified study participants will receive study-related drug and medical care at no charge. Reimbursement for time and travel may be provided. Health insurance is not needed to participate.

Call: 858-505-0069

Attn: Heavy Drinkers

Researchers at The Scripps Research Institute are working to develop new treatments for people with alcohol problems.

Is your current alcohol use causing problems with your family, your work, your life?

If you want to stop drinking, The Pearson Center for Alcoholism and Addiction Research is conducting a clinical trial to help you reach that goal.

Qualified participants receive lab tests, medication or placebo, individual counseling and compensation for travel. All information is confidential.

Call: 858-784-7867 (STOP)
Or visit: www.pearsoncenter.org



ization of the holiday has stripped it of its meaning. (Incidentally, it just now occurred to me that some people might take Lucy's claim that the holiday is run by "a big Eastern syndicate" as a swipe at the Jews. Sort of like the whole "East Coast bankers" thing I heard once. Not that I think Schulz intended it as such.) But here's the kicker: Linus tells Charlie Brown what Christmas is all about — "for today is born, in the city of David, a Savior. It is Christ the Lord."

A huge number of people heard that message, but the culture didn't skip a beat; it assimilated *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, Jesus and all, right into the

general mix — by shunting it off onto the children. "Who knows? Maybe the children will hear the message and take it to heart. But as for us, we have shopping to do." And as children, we watched it, nodded, and went right back to making our lists for Santa. I knew that remembering Jesus was important — I made it the theme of the Christmas grace one year. But the sign (presents) easily eclipsed the thing signified (the gift of the Incarnation). The world — louder, brighter, more exciting — won out. (And oh, wow, I just went browsing around the Peanuts website and found a \$145 Peanuts Pals Christmas Celebra-

tion Figurine Set, "crafted of hand-painted Lenox ivory fine china accented with 24-karat gold." The gang is gathered around a huge Christmas tree — the exact opposite of the tiny tree that just needed a little love in the original story. Commerce 1, Christmas 0.)

I know this may sound like sour grapes from a grumpy young man, so let me say that I speak from a measure of experience. My wife and I have five children, but we both came from two-child families, and our natural tendency is to try to create for our children the sort of Christmas we enjoyed. That means each child gets a stocking, a present from Mom

RESEARCH STUDIES

Are you taking moderate to high doses of pain medication for cancer but still experiencing breakthrough episodes of pain (Breakthrough Cancer Pain)?

We are seeking volunteers for a clinical research study to test the effectiveness and safety of a medication for such pain episodes. This will be delivered by a simple nasal spray, which may mean that the medication works more quickly.

Volunteers should be cancer patients over the age of 18 taking moderate to high doses of pain medication daily and still suffering from at least one episode of Breakthrough Cancer Pain a day.

Trial participants will be regularly monitored by qualified medical staff.

**To learn more about this study, please call
Ritchken & First M.D.'s Donna Perez at: 858-292-0108 ext. 207**

Do you have Body Dysmorphic Disorder?

Are you **preoccupied** with a defect in your physical appearance, spending hours a day **worrying** about it or looking in the mirror? Do you groom excessively or try to **camouflage** your flaw? Do you **avoid** having people see it?

The UCSD OCD Program is looking for people who are excessively concerned about a physical flaw to take part in a study that is providing:

- 12 weeks free medication treatment • Brain imaging scans
- Diagnostic evaluation • Neuropsychological evaluation

Study participants must:

- Be age 18-65 • Not be on any medications that affect brain functioning
- Not have any active medical conditions • Weigh less than 280 lbs.
- Not have a history of chronic substance abuse

There is NO monetary compensation for participation.

For more information call Dr. Jennifer Sumner at: (858) 534-8056

Smoking too much pot?

WE WANT TO HELP YOU STOP!

Researchers at the Scripps Research Institute are working to develop treatments to help you quit smoking marijuana. This 12-week program involves medication.

For more information and to see if you qualify, please call **858-784-7867**

or visit **www.pearsoncenter.org** for more detailed information.



and Dad, a present from Santa, and a present from each set of grandparents — minimum. Somehow, we always end up with a sort of group present for the lot of them, and one or two extra goodies that sneak in from the side.

So much for the children: then there are presents to be bought for each parent, for aunts and uncles, for friends, for siblings and their spouses, and for siblings' children. Everything has to be picked out, shopped for, ordered, wrapped, shipped.... Christmas is simply exhausting and inspires no small amount of dread. Even Christmas Eve Mass is a chore — it's packed, it runs long, and the children aren't used to sitting still in church during the late afternoon. You don't go to such an event to pray; you go to manage. (We could go Christmas morning, of course, but

that would mean putting Mass up against present opening, and who wants to fight that battle? What child could love a God who delayed that supreme Christmas joy?) The holiday season of Advent, intended by the Church to be a time of spiritual preparation for Christ's arrival, is perfectly inverted into a riot of stuff and activity, all in the name of love.

"So what's the problem, Matthew? If you don't like the water in the cultural swamp, step out. Become a Christian who



Too Shy?

**Trouble with dating? Parties? Public speaking?
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Confidential help is available. You may be eligible to
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If you are troubled by worries, tenseness, difficulty sleeping or concentrating, you may be eligible for

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Tired of the weight? A Type II diabetic?



Are you:

- A Type II diabetic?
- In overall good health?
- Currently suffering from obesity?
- Between 18 and 70 years of age?
- A non-smoker for at least 3 months?

If you answered yes to all these questions and are available for study-related visits for a year, you may be eligible for our investigational drug research study. If eligible, you will receive medical evaluations, including blood tests and electrocardiograms, nutritional counseling, investigational medication treatment, and visits to the clinic at no charge.

For more information about this study,
please contact:

(619) 688-6565

or visit us online at: www.ari-inc.com



Not sleeping?

Are you:

- Having trouble falling asleep?
- Having trouble staying asleep through the night?
- Between 18 and 64 years of age?
- In overall good health?

If you answered yes to all of these questions, you may be eligible for our investigational drug research study. If you qualify and choose to participate, you may receive study medication and you will receive study-related physician consultations, study-related medical examinations, laboratory evaluations and follow-up visits at no charge. Health insurance is not required and compensation for time and travel is provided.

If you are interested in learning more about
this study, please contact:

(619) 688-6565

See our website: www.ari-inc.com



Sadness, low energy, trouble sleeping, can't concentrate... Depression – have your symptoms returned?

Clinical research study for adults with depression.

If you or someone you know is:

- 18-55 years of age
 - Currently experiencing a depressive episode and have a history of recurrent depression
- You may be eligible to participate in this clinical research study.

Qualified study participants will receive:

- A comprehensive medical evaluation as it relates to the study
 - Supervised care by medical professionals during the study
 - Study medication at no cost
- Compensation for time and travel and an aftercare program may be provided.

If you are interested in learning more about this study,
please call:

(619) 688-6565

See our website: www.ari-inc.com



Is your Schizophrenia medication making you heavy?

If you have been diagnosed with schizophrenia and would like to participate in a study that monitors weight, you might consider participating in a medical research study that is studying an investigational drug for schizophrenia.

You may qualify if you are:

- Diagnosed with schizophrenia
- Between 18 and 65 years old
- Have taken Zyprexa (Olanzapine) or Risperdal (Risperidone) for the past 3 months
- Have not been hospitalized for schizophrenia in the past 3 months

Those who qualify will receive study-related procedures, such as physical exams, laboratory tests, and study medication.

For more information about this study, please contact:

(619) 688-6565

See our website: www.ari-inc.com



Avoiding the scale?

Are you:

- A non-diabetic?
- In overall good health?
- Currently suffering from obesity?
- Between 18 and 65 years of age?
- A non-smoker for at least 3 months?
- Available for study-related visits for 24 weeks?

If you answered yes to all these questions, you may be eligible for our investigational drug research study. If eligible, you will receive medical evaluations, including blood tests and electrocardiograms, nutritional and lifestyle education, investigational medication treatment, and visits to the clinic at no charge.

For more information about this study,
please contact:

(619) 688-6565

or visit us online at: www.ari-inc.com



huddles at Christmas. The Christmas season lasts for 12 days on the Church calendar, starting on December 25. Why not wait until the 26th to do your shopping? The kids will gripe for a while, but they'll learn that being Christian doesn't always dovetail with the way of the world — even when the world is celebrating Christ. There are advantages in belonging to a religion that informs the culture, but there are disadvantages as well — one of them being that the culture tends to turn around and inform the religion. Come away and be ye separate.”

“And deny my children the Christmas joys that I recall from my own childhood? Break the chain of tradition? Are you joking?”

But enough about me. I would love to hear more about how being with your teacher at Christmas helped you discover what it meant spiritually to be a Christian, and even what it meant spiritually to be a Jew. And I was struck by your line about how she let Jews be Jews and Hindus be Hindus and Buddhists be Buddhists. On the one hand, there is undoubtedly great wisdom in this. I think I get something of what you mean when you say that all true paths lead to the center, and the older I get, the more I understand that we have much to learn from one another. But the Christian is still burdened with Christ's command to “go out and teach all nations.” Evangelization is part of what it means to follow Christ. In one sense, the Christian is not allowed to huddle at Christmas — he has to go out and try to win it back. I wonder if this isn't part of the reason why Christmas got so far into the culture in the first place.

Gideon: Your complaint about the

commercialization and worldliness of the way Christmas is now celebrated is of course well merited. I don't think Schulz did, or anyone else should, blame that on the Jews, even though

elevator-music favorites of the season were written by Jews: Irving Berlin, “White Christmas”; Johnny Marks (music) and his brother-in-law Robert L. May (lyrics), “Rudolph, the

Red-Nosed Reindeer”; and Jule Styne (music) and Sammy Cahn (lyrics), “Let It Snow.” I am as repulsed as you by the commodification of everything in our age, religious holidays and

faith among the rest. (We Jews see it in the ridiculously inflated prices we pay for packaged foods marked “kosher for Passover” before that holiday.)

For me, the reality of

Christmas, opened to me at first by my great teacher Mary, was once and for all redeemed from secularism and commercialization by visiting my friends and hers, the poet Philip

RESEARCH STUDIES

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Do you or a loved-one
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INSOMNIA

If you or a loved one are between the ages of 18 and 64 and have had trouble sleeping for 3 months or more, you may qualify for a 7-week research study of an investigational new drug's effects on sleep disturbances. Qualifying applicants will receive the study drug or placebo (sugar pill) and all study-related medical treatments at no cost as well as compensation for time and travel.

Participants must:

- Be in good health • Be between the ages of 18 and 64
- Have a history of primary insomnia for at least 3 months

For more information, please contact: **Jo Anna Williams, CRC**
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Thompson and his wife, in New York City during Christmas vacations from graduate school. First of all, their apartment was magnificently adorned with the most marvelous works of art from around the world. And by marvelous I don't mean scary protests against life and the world (like Munch's *Scream* plastered on every college student's dorm room wall), or abstract expressionist nonsense of the kind debunked in Tom Wolfe's *Painted Word*, or sentimental art that pretends the world is just fine, or trendy stuff of any sort. I mean moving and beautiful works that make visible the invisible spir- its of love, devotion, and adoration of the mar- velous works of God's creation. Think Hamlet's "What a piece of work is a man" or Rosalind's Forest of Arden. Four-

teenth-century angels in the form of candlehold- ers, a sunburst with the smiling face of the sun in the center, a Renaissance Spanish *vargueño*, a ceramic elephant from China, a medieval monastic refectory table, and a Mexican painted- clay crèche. At Christmas a tree was added, deco- rated with the most beautiful of ornaments.

But each year we would leave this tiny museum of treasures and go across town to see the Christmas tree at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. It was a two-story tree standing in the cen- tral gallery, covered with foot-high painted terra- cotta images of angels from Renaissance Flo- rence. At the foot of the tree, spread out all around it, was the most phenomenal crèche in the word, a hundred people and animals, ox, ass, cows, sheep, shep-

herds, three magi, and the Holy Family all mov- ing in as one, focusing their attention and imi- tated motion toward the cradle and the child therein. The face of every figure was unique, per- fectly idealized in the Florentine Renaissance way, like a Botticelli painting, and filled with wonder, awe, and love. The total effect was as of a sweeping *whoosh* of invisible singing angels and a world full of flesh- and-blood beings all pouring love and spirit and wondering awe in toward the center of their own and the world's attention. Philip wrote a poem about it called "Crèche Figures" (avail- able in my published edi- tion of his works, *Dusk and Dawn: Poems and Prose of Philip Thompson*, available from me at *OneMindGoodPress.com* or from *Amazon.com*), which includes the lines

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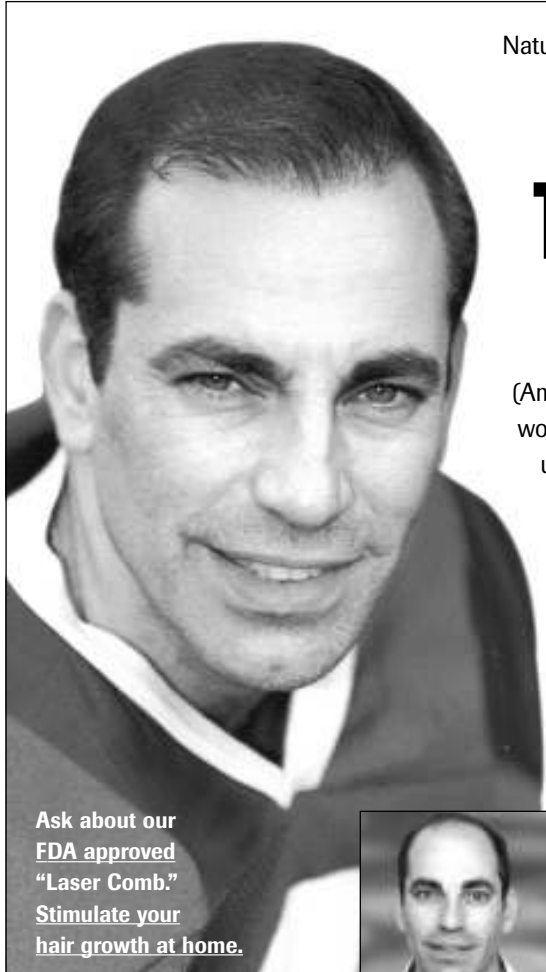


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"The heaven-tree/ With roots in earth/ Shines all before them/ Where the birth/ Calls bodies to/ An angel consort/ And the Word/ In weakness brings/ Cloud and fire/ Of alien wings."

Philip was called, by a mutual friend, the truest Christian she knew, and she was right. A great poet, a hilarious wit, a savage satirist, brought up in a secular home, he had come to religion as a response to reading the Creation section of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, went on to study deeply in the works of Augustine, Aquinas, Joachim of Flora, and particularly Bonaventure, and was the clearest and most upright Christian thinker about God, and the most moving embodied voice of Christian love, that I have ever had the good fortune to know personally. His wife, now his

widow, is perhaps the best secondary-school teacher of art in the country (a fact recognized by Harvard University in a letter to her school that praised the artistic preparation of students in her program). The two of them so celebrated Christmas and so included me in their joy without preconditions of any kind except friendship, that I have ever after loved Christmas for their sakes and, as much as a Jew can, as they did. If all the world's Christians loved God and the world's Muslims loved Allah as the Thompsons loved the meaning of Christmas, the Jews would have nothing to fear from anti-Semitism.

Yes, Jesus said, "No one comes to the Father but through Me." But I would like to ally myself with Dante, the greatest Christian poet of all

time. When he reaches the sphere of Jupiter in the *Paradiso* and sees the eagle of Justice, formed by the stars that are, in the vision, the souls of the great just rulers of the world, he finally asks the question that has been burning in his heart: "A man is born on the bank of the Indus, and none is there to speak, or read, or write of Christ, and all his desires and doings are good, so far as human reason sees, without sin in life or speech. He dies unbaptized and without faith. Where is this justice that condemns him? Where is his fault if he does not believe?" (Translation by John D. Sinclair.) In other words, how can God damn the righteous Hindu, or the unbaptized infant for that matter, neither of whom could have turned his will to Christ?

The Eagle answers in

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four parts: (1) Justice is created and defined by God; how could God not then be just, whatever He does? (2) Man cannot possibly understand the mystery of the divine Justice, for being a created being, and mortal, he can see only in part. (3) None comes to God but through Christ, but many who cry out "Christ, Christ" (but don't really mean it) will be farther from God on the Day of Judgment than many who don't know of Christ at all. Christians had better look to their own souls before they worry too much about those of the righteous Hindu. And finally, (4) Look! Here in heaven are the virtuous Roman Emperor Trajan and the virtuous Trojan Ripheus, mentioned in a single verse of Virgil's *Aeneid*, both of whom lived before Christ. "How can this be?" shouts

Dante. The Eagle's answer is that both have been given the mysterious opportunity to choose Christ, Ripheus in a vision, and Trajan through a temporary resurrection won by St. Gregory, whose prayer that Trajan be returned to life long enough to hear the gospel preached was answered. In this way Dante the poet instructs us in humility before the mystery of God's judgment of souls. Yes, the Christian bears the burden of carrying the good news to the people of the world. But he had better do so in humility and love and not in know-it-all arrogance.

The Jews, too, are burdened by God with a mission. It is not, however, to convert everyone to Judaism. Nor, as the ignorant or the malicious will maintain, is the concept of the "cho-

sen people" a sign of arrogance. This people is chosen to be the unenviable witness to the world that God exists, is One, is the Creator, Preserver, and Judge of all, and commands all to justice, kindness, and truth. We don't say you have to believe all that we believe in order to be saved. Not even all of us believe all of it. We say only that there is God and that not you nor we nor anything in the world is to be worshipped but only He. And to my mind, Christianity is God's way of getting that message across to those who were not going to get it any other way. So I say, let Christians celebrate Christmas and mean it; thus will they, the Jews, and all the world be the better.

Matthew: Before I respond, I need to note that I just watched the trailer online for *What*

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Would Jesus Buy?, a *Super Size Me*-style indictment of America's materialistic excess at Christmastime. A film like that needs a foil, of course, something to represent the other side. It might have been interesting to dig up the huddlers — people like you and the Thompsons, or Christian diehards who treated Advent like Advent and didn't celebrate until Christmas. People who prepared for Christmas by meditating on the darkness that preceded the Light: "Long lay the world/ In sin and sorrow pining..." Interesting to think, in a post-Christian culture, of caroling as a form of evangelization. But I don't carol, and the only carolers who have ever come to my door performed as a teen jazz choir. Sort of a "Let me entertain you" vibe. And that's what the movie went for — they found a poofy-haired

preacher willing to march into the malls and tell people that stuff was taking over their lives. Well and good. But when the message comes from a dude in a white suit with a megaphone who's trying to exorcise a Wal-Mart sign, is anybody supposed to take it seriously? It strikes me as a touch fatalistic — as if the triumph of stuff at Christmas were inevitable, like death. Complaint is understandable but childish. The best we can do is joke about it to ease the pain. But then, I haven't seen the movie.

Your account of Santa matches almost exactly the one my mother gave to me when I confronted her with my toy *Millennium Falcon* — supposedly from Santa but with a mailing label addressed to my parents still affixed to the box. Looking back, it strikes

me as a triumph on her part. In many ways, the sign had long ago eclipsed the thing signified — presents pointing to the Divine Gift, extravagant gift giving pointing to the generosity of true charity. (It should be noted that in complaining about excess, I'm not necessarily complaining about extravagance, because that, too, can signify — the extravagant love of the Father in John 3:16. "For God so loved the world..." "The Gift of the Magi" is a story of extravagant gifts, and that's part of its glory.) But when my mother invoked the spirit of Santa Claus, suddenly the sign became a sign again, pointing to love as the real thing. Santa became like those works of art you mentioned, "making visible the invisible spirits of love, devotion, and adora-

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tion.” It’s part of why I’ve been willing to tell the Santa story to my own children.

The Thompsons sound like remarkable people; I’m grateful for the story and happy that you were able to experience Christmas with them, to understand its virtues and attractions through their witness. (And I do think it’s a witness, even — perhaps *especially* — if they didn’t mean it to be so.) To paraphrase you, if all the world’s non-Christians knew people who loved God and neighbor as the Thompsons did, then they would have nothing to fear from Christmas on the Prado. I remember the furor over Terence McNally’s play *Corpus Christi*, in which, among other things, the Christ figure was presented as gay. One fellow, commenting on the Christian protesters across the street from the theater, said something along the lines of, “Why do they protest our art? Why don’t they just go make their own? You don’t like this Jesus? Write your own play!” I remember thinking, “He must be joking. There just aren’t that many Christian playwrights. And even if there were, how many people would go see such a thing?” (Passion plays, which don’t so much explore the faith as they depict it, seem like something else entirely.)

These days, I’m slightly more sympathetic. “Why do you protest our religious festival? Why don’t you just go and make your own? You don’t like our Christmas on the Prado? Why not hold Solstice on the Prado?” To which I can hear the other side replying, “You must be joking. There just aren’t that many devout pagans. And even if there were, it’s not like we have a canon of carols, or Solstice cookies, or centuries-old cultural tradi-

tions tied up with December Nights.” No, better to take what we have and just do away with the tired old Jesus associations and hope that nobody minds too much. I don’t know if

there’s a war on Christmas; I wonder if the religious part just feels a touch annoying to a lot of people.

But. If you’re willing to write a line like this: “Let Christians celebrate

Christmas and mean it; thus will they, the Jews, and all the world be the better,” then I’m willing to come back with Chesterton’s “If a thing is worth doing, it’s worth doing badly.” I don’t

imagine that Christianity is going to take back Christmas from the world. And I think we both know that your experience with the Thompsons — their intelligence, their aes-

thetics, their liberality in the best sense of the word — is always going to be the exception, not the rule. Mass culture is just that, and mass culture is at the mall, not the Met. But I’ll still

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defend it, even though it includes some pretty nightmarish distortions of "the true meaning of Christmas." Even though it reduces the Divine condescension to a sentimental "spirit of the season." Even though Mammon has trumped Incarnation. I'll defend it for the same reason I remain a Christian despite the sins of Christianity: that for all its horror, the beautiful reality remains beneath and may still be found by the seeking soul. This is my culture — much will be lost if I break ties with it, and further, I still believe that the possibility of goodness remains. So I'll muddle on and do my best. Last Christmas, my brother-in-law came to visit with his wife and six children. The fireplace wall of my '60s split-level ranch is composed entirely of rock, with no visible mortar between

the stones. Christmas Eve found me pounding nails into every conceivable crevice, trying to find spaces for 11 stockings. I found looking at the finished project nothing less than glorious, something akin to that night contemplating the Christmas tree, 15 years ago.

Gideon: I quite agree with you in the defense of mass- (not *the* mass) marketed, Mammon-ridden Christmas as better than no Christmas at all because "the beautiful reality remains beneath." It's worth remembering that the masses of the past, though they were smaller, were equally often led astray and that Mammon has never been absent. All of life is about discerning the holiness in the distracting life of the world and choosing to serve it. As the Jewish mystical tradi-

tion has it, every moment and every thing has in it a spark of divinity which it is man's mission to release by his acts of free will, redeeming the sparks from the shell enclosing and hiding it. And so with mall-Muzak carols in November. At the same time, it doesn't hurt to treat the commodification of the holiday as such a shell that needs cracking open from time to time, so long as that is done in a way that reveals rather than merely hammers. Of course, even a hammer is sometimes the right tool. You used it to redeem the sparks of that stocking-resistant rock fireplace wall. And who knows whether we are not soon in for a revival in which Christmas itself is taken back from the world. The principle of Tikkun Olam in Judaism teaches that every little bit of good we do con-

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tributes to the healing and completion of the world and the coming of the Messiah. Believing that the Messiah has already come, Christians find the location of the perfecting not in the world but in the individual soul. But can the preaching of the gospel be practiced effectively by one who lives in despair about making the world a better place?

"Why don't you just go make your own?" is a perfectly reasonable sentiment, except that it isn't possible, as anyone who tries must eventually discover. "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it" (Psalms 127:1). I had a great Catholic teacher who fostered the following interpretation of the much-debated phrase "*me antistenai*" in the gospel of your namesake, Matthew (5:39): "I will not take up an *anti*-position. I will not define myself by what I am against but rather by what I am for." Many a rabbinic sermon has embraced the same principle, exhorting the congregations to turn the energy they expend on worry about what the goyim are doing toward becoming better Jews. Yes, as you say, "The Christian is still burdened with Christ's command to 'go out and teach all nations.'" And the Jews are commanded to "be a light unto the gentiles." If the difference is that you must preach and convert and we must be holy and testify, the similarity is that both relations to the world locate the ground of reality not in nature or in self but in God. Sharing that, why should we quibble about differences in form? God obviously wants both or we wouldn't both be here.

That is why I wanted this conversation not to be a fight between the Christians and the Jews. And by golly, it has not been. Because you and I,

in our respective ways, make the effort to remember that God is the center and we the circumference. Knowing that, we will not waste time and spirit in fighting over the empty

spaces between the spokes of that wheel along which, at various angles, all are converging, *if* they are really moving at all, toward the One. God has room, and His own reasons for

making that room, for both our spokes and others too. The Incarnation inside Christmas, the divine spark inside the Hanukkah flame, and the Brahman-reality behind the righteous Hindu —

all are God's way of revealing to us that God *is*, though our images of Him are not God.

So, if I may paraphrase Dante, is the turning wheel of the world diversely formed

as we rotate through the mystery of time, gravitating by the union of grace and our own wills toward the absolute will that wills it so. ■

— Matthew Lickona
and Gideon Rappaport

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There's something about the hour before dawn at the pier. Out there in the dark, all you can feel is the ocean rollers hitting the long pylons beneath your feet, coming in to land after rolling their way across — who knows? — maybe the entire Pacific. Looking west, black nothing. No sea, no sky, and in the predawn fog, no stars. Just one great black spooky void. For all you know, the great mythical sea monster from Baja might be opening his jaws in front of you at this instant, ready to chomp.

You hold onto the rail fast, even though it's as cold as death. You try not to sway when each unseen roller below you strikes the pier.

A kind of vertigo hits you at the sense of movement. It troubles your inner ear — and your inner sense of wellbeing. It makes you want to react, to pitch yourself forward. It would be so easy to let go, to give in, to fly into the night, the ocean, the void...

"Ay! Huli!"

The words come from 20 feet away.

A whole string of words follows. It sounds like Tagalog, the Philippine language. "*May na huli akong! Malaki kabayan!*" It's not until later that I'm told this means something like, "A catch! I have a big catch, countrymen!"

A little buzz of voices ripples out. The man who called out the first word, "huli!" — catch! — is shouting as he fights a mighty battle with an unseen force from below.

I move along the rail toward the sounds. One word keeps coming up:

"pating!" — shark.

Now I can make out the shadow of a small man with a big pole that's bent and twitching. Other shadows have gathered around, friends offering a string of advice. The voices rise to yells when the line screams out and the pole seems to leap from the man's hands.

Suddenly it's slack. Silence. Then shouts. They must be telling him to wind in. He starts frantically reeling, and there's another jerk. He fiddles to release the catch on his reel, but the line

The voices rise to yells when the line screams out and the pole seems to leap from the man's hands.

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twangs taut. He yells. In the graying light I see the silhouette of a knife blade swiping. The fisherman falls back. The end of his line dangles uselessly from his straight rod.

For the first time he sees me. "Too big," he says in English. "Too big."

This fall morning, months later, in broad daylight, I.B. pier looks more prosaic. The waves are as huge as they were on that summer night. They sweep along like logs under a carpet, sending a shudder through the pier's timbers. And I hear those words again. "Ay! Huli!"

Except this time it's an old woman in a huge, wide-brimmed straw hat held down by a scarf tied under her chin. She's just tall enough to see over the wooden railing. She reels in her line from the gray waters 20 feet below and brings up a five-inch perch, wiggling over the rail. She maneuvers the hook out of its mouth and tosses it to flap in a white plastic bucket on top of a half-dozen other diamond shapes gasping

away.

She catches the swinging line, leans over to the lower rail she'd been using to chop up mussel meat. She stabs a piece onto each of the two hooks, then drops it over the edge and swings it back out into the surf.

This is one of those fresh, foggy, cool mornings that braces you. Life is worth living. The pier is busy with fishing people, mostly Filipinos. They haul out their grocery carts filled with plas-

to them. He wants to toss his line.

The beach end of the pier is the end to be on right now. It's a rising tide, and the old lady says that's when the anchovies come seeking food around the pier legs, and the mackerel are coming in after them. And the blue-topped bonita are following the warm waters in to feed on the mackerel. And the sand crabs are coming in with the tide to eat the detritus collected on the bot-

"You can just about live without ever visiting a supermarket from what you can catch on this pier."

tic buckets and pipes (to hold their rods vertically) and head for their favorite spots. Local drunks lean over the rails contemplating life, lifted after the day's first beer. Down in the water the waves are immense, ocean-sized. Surfers ride in under the pier, despite the sign telling them to keep 150 feet away. "Back off!" one fisherman yells down

tom over the last half-day. And the perch are coming in to feed on the crabs... But the warm waters of summer are long gone; pickings are leaner this morning. People, mostly women, are catching only perch. Not such a bad fate. "The perch love those sand crabs," says David Dubert, one of the few men here — and one of the few

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Anglos. "Perch have a good set of teeth on them. They can nibble through those shells, no problem. So when you eat a perch, you're getting two meals for the price of one."

David Dubert knows about food values: he's lean, short, muscled, 52, and runs a Pizza Hut not far north of here. Today, as on most of his off-days, he's strolling down the pier with a brown-bag beer in hand.

He's so mad that I.B. authorities are about to make this illegal, he's considering leaving town — after 40 years.

But mostly he's mad that more people don't live the pier life as fully as the Filipinos do. "I've been fishing off the pier for all this time," he says. "I've seen fish get fewer and most Americans give up on them. But not these people. I'll tell you, it was these wonderful, generous people — the Filipinos — who taught me everything I know about saltwater fishing. I came from the Great Lakes. Freshwater fisherman. These people, they know the life that's going on underneath, what the fish are doing, who's eating who. Just look up here: 80 percent Filipino! That's because they use this pier. This is not sport for them, this is food-hunting. You can just about live without ever visiting a supermarket from what you can catch on this pier. The fresh air, the quiet — this is a social center, but see? Most of them are old. They were brought up in the Philippines, on the fish they had there. They had to learn a whole new ball game here. And I got it all from them. Others could learn from them, too."

A man walks by and tosses his Crown Cola can into a trash bin. He takes a few steps, then turns back. He reaches down for the can. "Sorry, Honorata, I forgot."

The little lady who's been catching the perch laughs as he leans down and puts his can into one of the three buckets she has on her cart. "Nothing wasted, right?"

Honorata Asilo Magsino, known to everyone by her Tagalog name, Aling Atang, has been fishing right on this spot for 13 years. She's 75, and before 1982, she was in a wheelchair. She couldn't go anywhere on her own. She was depressed, stuck at home — and home wasn't

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even in the Philippines. So one day she got up, hobbled down to the 933 bus, and came to the pier. She hasn't missed a day since. She leans on the railing all day long, from nine till four, when she catches the bus back home. "This has saved my life," she says. "I eat fish, good for my arthritis. The fresh air, the company, the excitement catching the fish. And now I am useful; I have something to give my family to eat, too. That's why I come."

I ask her what she's going to do with these fish.

"I will dry them," she says. "For *tuyo*."

Tuyo is a breakfast. "Rice and fish," she says. "Poor people in the Philippines have rice and fish — three times a day, if they're lucky. They eat less, but they are healthier than people here. They don't like sweet things, except for fruit. And making *tuyo* is very easy."

Tuyo or *Daing*:

Catch a fish (say, perch or mackerel).

Slit it open (if it's mackerel, down the backbone).

Clean, sprinkle with salt,

pepper, soy, vinegar.

Lay out in the sun, leave two to eight hours (depending on the sun's strength).

Fry in skillet. Creates a crispy fried fish that lasts a good, long time.

Break up and mix with rice (or scrambled eggs).

Add vinegar sauce (vinegar, chopped onions, and garlic).

We're further out now, on the "T" section of the

mercial bait, fishing pole — I'm fishing the American way."

Well, not quite. The lifting and lowering is part of the technique for catching surface fish like Spanish mackerel or anchovies. Like humans or ostriches, the mackerel's wide-angle eyes are attracted to shiny, moving objects. "Mackerel are top-fish. They're hunting, they bite. Not like bottom-

"Mackerel are top-fish. They're hunting, they bite. Not like bottom fish, which have lips and suck, looking for dead stuff or leftovers."

pier, the part with the cold metal rails. Rita is standing with her pole against the rails. She has the line in her hand, and as she watches the sky and the waves, her arm is lifting and lowering, up and down, up and down.

She has a can of bait: anchovies. "I bought it," she says, as though she's done a terrible thing. "\$2.41. Com-

fish, which have lips and suck, looking for dead stuff or leftovers," says Rita.

Today she's interested in opal-eye perch and buttermouth, but she's here seven to eight hours every day. If it looks like a job, she says it's one she loves. She's a grandmother (though she looks too young, as Filipinas often do). Today her three

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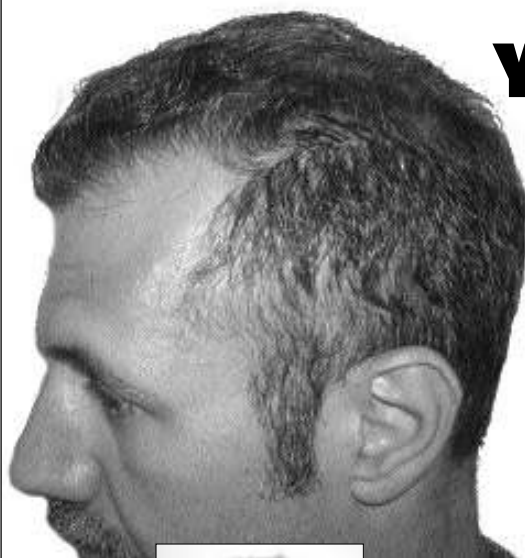
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grandchildren are with her so her daughter can work. Together they usually catch enough to make a couple of meals. One of her favorites is *pinakbet*.

Pinakbet:

Chop up eggplant, bitter melon, squash, okra, oriental beans (string beans).

Add sliced onions and garlic.

Toss into skillet with bit of oil, sauté.

Slice (any) fish, cook ten minutes.

Add bago-ong (fish or shrimp sauce).

Eat with rice.

Rita says she didn't actually start fishing till she came to the States. But she has a fishing background. "We lived over the sea. In a stilt house, a nipa hut. Poor people mostly live on the coast. They can't afford land, so they live out over the water," she says. "I never fished. The men did that, from boats,

with nets. But we ate fish. Breakfast, lunch, dinner. We had a garden plot on the land behind. We grew vegetables, poultry, kept goats and a cow.

"Sometimes the only thing we bought was rice. Fish was every day. Meat was for special occasions."

Not far away a young Filipino boy is hauling on a rope. I look over. He has a four-fluke grappling hook down at water level. He swings it against one of the pier's pylons. It scrunches into a colony of black mussels and rips off a clump of the smaller, younger ones on top.

"See?" says David. "Free bait. It's the same for anchovies. Anchovies make great bait or great food. People here taught me what they call 'The Lucky Joe.' They set seven to eight tiny hooks on a very fine line, put a small weight at the end, and tie tiny feathers to each hook.

No bait. You drop the line in just below the surface, where the anchovies swim, and just keep that line moving up and down. Pretty soon you'll be catching eight at a time. Catch about 300 and you've got a great meal. Just break their heads off..."

"No..." says Rita firmly. "You Americans don't like fish heads, but that's the best part of them! My grandmother always told me you get smarter if you eat the head. Because that's where the brains are. At my home, when the fish came on the table everybody wanted the head. "Any size fish, it was the tail nobody wanted. You just take the head and suck out the brain. And the eyes! They taste great, and they're full of protein, too."

David shakes his head. "Can't do it," he says.

"But I can," says David's Filipina wife, Laura, who has turned up.

"When David's away, I ask my girlfriends to come round and bring some fish heads. Especially bottom fish, like croakers, or sand bass, because they have lips! The lips are the nicest part of all. So tasty! Americans miss so much! David, he only eats fillets of fish."

"Well it's better than meat, hamburgers," says Edith, a Filipina RN and Rita's friend. "This food is so much healthier. I tell my patients it's good for high blood pressure, for cardiovascular health."

"And the bones of the smaller fishes, like perch," says Rita, her arm still moving slowly up and down like an oil rig. "They're so good for you. And you can fry them and eat them whole."

"Or you can put them with what we call *deninding*" says Laura.

Deninding:

Fry fish.

Boil water.

Add onions, eggplant, bitter melon.

Add jute leaves, horse-radish leaves (buy from Filipino stores in National City or Chula Vista).

Mix in two tablespoons of fish sauce (bago-ong).

Simmer till water evaporates.

Flop fish on top.

Eat with rice.



A boy and his dad come up with a brown paper bag. Dad tips an angry, brown-red fish onto the deck.

"What is it?" he asks.

"Don't touch it!" says Rita. "It's a sculpin. It has poison quills." "I've been stuck by these ten times," says David. "My whole hand swelled to twice the size. I got headaches. My stomach

hurt. It lasted hours. Last time they had to bring the ambulance."

"You've got to be real careful," says Rita. "But if you cut the two spines off behind its eyes, you can eat it. But they take a long time to die."

The father pushes the bag back around the fish and takes it away. On the other side of the pier, an Anglo man has a crossbow with a fishing line attached. He's trying to unravel the line so it doesn't take him with it when he shoots it out. Nearby, fishing on her own, lifting and lowering her line by hand with hypnotic regularity, Serafia Castillo, who says she's 66, is catching anchovies for drying and sending to her relatives in Arizona. "Best time for the bigger ones," she says, "is when the tide is coming in, when the moon is full."

She rubs her tummy. "I can't eat mackerel or barracuda anymore. My body's no good. My stomach gets tight when I eat mackerel. I found it harder and harder to move. So I have stopped eating oily fish. Now I eat other fish that swim at the top, like perch. I think I feel a little better."

"Knowing where to catch what, that's the thing," says David. "You've got top-swimmers, bottom-swimmers, and scavengers. It depends on the time of year — and June, July, August are the best months because the waters are warmest. What

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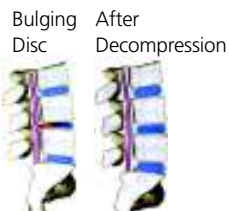
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you have to decide before you put your hook in is which you're going for — top, bottom, or scavenger."

I.B.'s top-water fish are anchovies, sardine, perch, queenfish, Spanish mackerel, and bonita. The bottom-fish that come around the pier are croaker, sculpin, sand bass, a few small catfish, flounder, halibut, the occasional lobster, and crabs.

"Then there are the scavengers. Best time for the scavengers is nighttime," says David. "Ten p.m. to six in the morning. The tiger shark, sand shark, stingray — they're all fighters. You've got to have 100-pound heavy line. You've got to be prepared to have large reels and poles. And you've got to be prepared to be out all night. They can reach 40 to 50 pounds."

I immediately think back to that predawn morning last summer... It might have

been a tiger shark.

Serafia is telling me that one of the great delicacies is the head of a tiger shark, baked and stuffed with vegetables and spices. "Not many are caught," she says. "They fight so hard."

She jerks her hand at last and hauls up a shimmering pearl-string of anchovies.

I ask Serafia if she isn't worried about the sewer pollution around here. Maybe that's what's bothering her stomach. "I've seen the insides of fish here and at other piers," she says. "They are whiter and taste better here. I think this water is the cleanest. Better than Shelter Island. Better than Ocean Beach."

* * *

A couple of days later I happen to be in Ocean Beach. I can't resist moseying out on its concrete pier to see if the



story is the same here.

"Peas. I use peas for bait," says Al Gil, a middle-aged Filipino I find halfway out on the pier. The atmosphere's

different here than in I.B. The ocean is more...roistering. There's more arching surf, smashing in front of cliffs near the beach, and the

place is crisscrossed with pelicans making low cruises right over your head in dignified, determined lines of 12. In the water, ranks of surfers, of course, and regular clumps of sea lions bouncing out of the water, looking around, then confidently rolling back under.

On this pier there seem to be more Koreans and Vietnamese fishermen than Filipinos. And more nonfishermen with hard liquor bottles lounging in the postfog sunshine giggling at the "Crime Watch" column from the *Union-Tribune*.

I came across Al next to where a Filipino family of three was fishing, the son dropping a large parachute net in between his parents,

catching bait, hauling up maybe a dozen anchovies in each lift. His bucket was already half full.

The peas must be working: Al has three or four perch in a plastic shopping bag. "I give them to the neighbors," he says. "They love it, and I feel good. We Filipinos, we don't like processed food. We like it fresh. Vegetables, fish..." He's hauling up a fish, a queenfish, about six inches long. But it slips as he takes it off the hook. It bounces once on the rail and dives down to smack into the water.

"Have a great life!" Al yells after it.

"Those ones are kind of strong-tasting anyway," he says. "Fishy aftertaste. Not

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- 4 How much does it cost?



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- 2 Silicone v. saline implants
- 3 Breast lift
- 4 Breast reduction
- 5 Male breast reduction



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- 1 About our office
- 2 Implants, dentures & partials
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- 2 Who is a candidate?
- 3 Your eye exam
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- 5 After surgery



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- 2 How it works
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- 5 Best candidates



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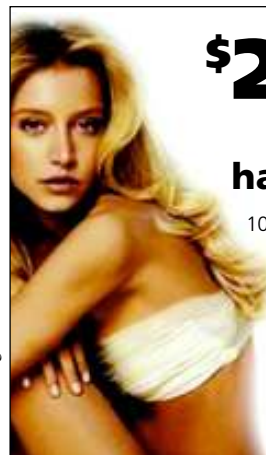
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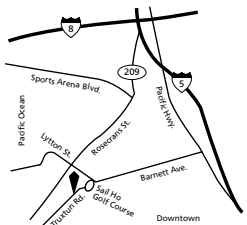
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that that's a problem. What we do is, first we cut them right down here." He draws a line down my backbone. "I put in garlic and ginger and salt and pepper. Then I put the fish in some vinegar and the whole thing goes into the fridge for 30 minutes, and that fishy aftertaste and smell is gone."

We stand leaning on the rail, watching the sea lions cavort. I can't help feeling it's not just the fish that bring so many Filipinos down to the ocean. "I think a lot do find it a kind of bridge with the old life," Al says. "Me, I fish because it's better than

dying in front of a TV set." He says he's grateful for the health system in the U.S.; he looks like a man who might need it. "It's good, great for medicine and doctors here," he says. Then he stands up straight. "But for happiness — there! The Philippines. At night sometimes I think of the smell of the mangoes, of the fresh *pandec* in the morning. The *pandec* man comes around the streets at 4:00 a.m. on his bicycle with a big, shiny, covered can at the back. He hoots his hooter and calls out, '*Pandec!*' and the *pan-dec* — round bread — is still

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Salavat:
Heat water.
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"And then we have a cigarette!" Al says, laughing. "If I went home tomorrow, my children would all be there. They would take their papa straight home. We'd sit down to a big round table, and they'd serve up my favorite dish: baked bass."

Baked Bass:
Clean a sea bass.
Steam in clay pot.
Splash on mayonnaise, tomatoes, onions, garlic.
Steam a little more to absorb flavors.

Serve with rice.
"And of course we'd have *pancit* — noodles. On any occasion — like Christmas, birthdays, homecomings — we must have noodles because they symbolize long life. Every home must have nice, long noodles ready.

"We'd pray together and thank the Lord for the food — and I'd know I could stay there till I died. They

wouldn't send me anywhere. That's our way. And the fiestas, when each house on a street cooks something different and you go from house to house eating chicken, fish, fruits. Yes, I think of these things. This country is very advanced, but some things it lacks. I miss them."

* * *

"I would go back, too," says Laura, a few days later in I.B. "If we have enough money, we'll go, to stay over there. It's a nice living over there. Very nice life, as long as you have enough money. That's what I told David. My fam-

ily has a cottage near the sea. The only problem is, David would want to fish."

Problem?

"I won't let him go fishing if we go over there. It's embarrassing! There's no American people doing things like that back home. My brother won't let him. He's putting me down if he does something like that. Fishing? There are no Americans go fishing over there! Only Filipino people." ■

— Bill Manson

Originally published in the *Reader* on November 30, 1995

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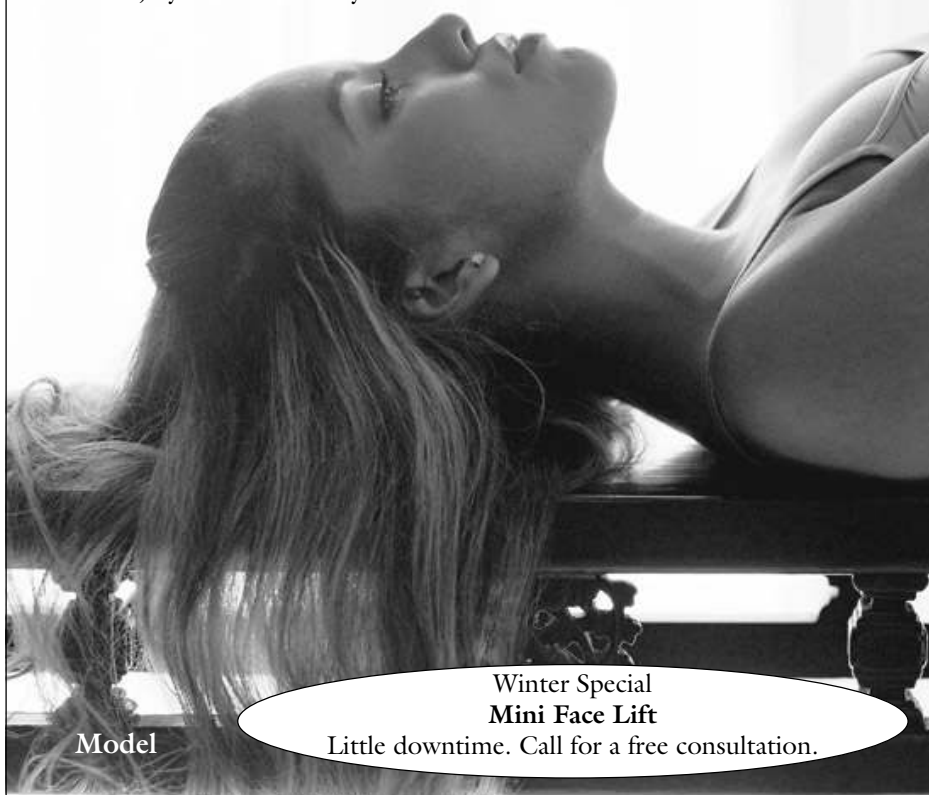
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A Night on Mars

Enthusiasts of the Red Planet

'Mars has a lot of lava tubes from when it was geologically active. You can go in there, spray plastic on the walls to make it airtight, and you've got a house," says Gerry Williams, co-founder of the Mars Society's San Diego chapter. "The Mars Society is an international organization of space advocates who want to see people living and working on Mars," Williams explains.

Williams has hosted "Mars Movie Night" once a month since November 2001, when he screened *Total Recall* for the Mars enthusiasts. On Friday, December 21,

LOCAL EVENTS

he will show *Postcards from the Future*, a 38-minute movie about an engineer who sends video postcards to his wife on Earth over a span of 20 years while he is stationed on the moon.

"I choked up at the end, which is pretty rare for me," says Williams. "It was very believable and, pardon the expression, very down-to-earth. The big thing that was missing is that right now we do not have the political will to [embark on such a mission]. Nixon canceled the last three Apollo missions to the moon. He went for a space shuttle instead of putting a Mars mission together — if he had gone with the Mars mission, we would probably have been on Mars by 1985."

Williams says the timeline of the film is unrealistic. "We won't see a guy going to the moon and going to Mars and then to

Titan [one of Saturn's moons]. You'd see his daughter going to Mars, maybe, and then her daughter going to the moons of Saturn."

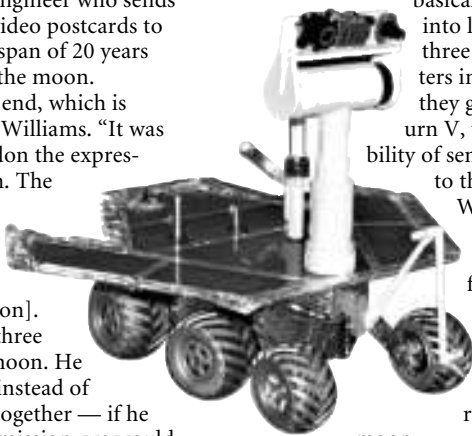
Williams says he would love to be one of the first colonists on Mars and that he's frustrated by the lack of progress in space exploration over the past three decades. "When I was in junior high and high school, we were landing people on the moon, and I thought, 'Hey, this is pretty cool — I'm going to be able to vacation on the moon someday.' Now it's 35 years later, and we don't have the technology to go back to the moon right now."

Saturn V rockets were used to launch the Apollo missions between 1969 and 1972, after which they were retired. "They basically turned them into lawn ornaments at three of the NASA centers in the South. When they got rid of that Saturn V, they lost the capability of sending people back to the moon."

Williams says that engineers would have to start from scratch using old blueprints to be able to build new rockets capable of reaching the

moon.

Using current technology, there is a 1-in-25 chance that the space shuttle will explode during launch. "I would take that chance," says Williams. "There are a cou-



Gerry Williams (right) at the Mars Desert Research Station in Utah

ple of us in the Mars Society, especially the older folks, who say they would go to Mars on a one-way trip, knowing they'd never come back." For others, the dream of Mars does not involve risk: "One member is a lawyer, and he said he'd love to go to Mars, but after they developed it a little bit and he could stay in a four-star hotel."

Williams believes that privatization of space exploration is the fastest way to get humans on our sister planet. "There's the joke of the \$600 toilet seat. The government has so much bureaucracy and infrastructure that to put a toilet seat in an aircraft carrier — in the end, the cost is about \$600. Whereas if you contract it out, [a private company] could just run to Home Depot and buy a toilet seat and install it for much less." Adds Williams, "At least 20 different companies are planning on launching their own private rocket ship in the next three years."

Jim Benson, who helped build the engines for Burt Rattan's SpaceshipOne (the first privately funded aircraft to achieve a manned suborbital space flight and winner of the \$10 million X Prize for this achievement) has started the Benson Space Company in Poway. "Benson is designing his own rocket ship to get into

the tourism business and is planning on building that ship so it can eventually achieve orbital flight and be able to supply and crew the space stations."

According to Williams, Benson also hopes to capture an asteroid and lay claim to it. "You could have more nickel in that asteroid than is being used on Earth right now," says Williams. "Once you start tapping into the resources that are out there, there's pretty much unlimited potential. Here on Earth we're worried about running out of oil, a biological by-product. If they were able to prove there was oil on Mars, we'd probably be there tomorrow."

— Barbarella

Mars Movie Night: *Postcards from the Future* and *Tom and Jerry Blast Off to Mars* (a feature-length cartoon)

Friday, December 21

7 p.m.

Studio 106

2323 Broadway

Golden Hill

Cost: Free (please RSVP; seating is limited)

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www.marssandiego.org

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Calendar

LOCAL EVENTS

Events that are underlined occur after December 27.

HOW TO SEND US YOUR LISTING: Contributions must be received by 5 p.m. Friday the week prior to publication for consideration. Do not phone. Send a complete description of the event, including the date, time, cost, the precise address where it is to be held (including neighborhood), a contact phone number, and a phone number (including area code) for public information to READER EVENTS, Box 85803, San Diego CA 92186-5803. Or fax to 619-881-2401. You may also submit information online at SanDiegoReader.com by clicking on the events section.

BAJA

“Open Cages: Fresh Experiences in Improvisation” offered by flutist Wilfrido Terrazas for “Contemporary Music Conference and Concert” on Thursday, December 20, 7:30 p.m., at Centro Estatal de las Artes (CEARTE, at Boulevard Costero and Avenida Club Rotario). 011-52-646-173-4307, 011-52-646-173-4308. (ENSENADA)

“Huele a Diablos,” pastorela performed by La Luciérnaga Company Sótano de Rita on Thursday, December 20, 8 p.m., on Avenida Revolución. 011-52-664-685-8400. (TIJUANA)

“The Nutcracker” presented by Moscow Classical Ballet, Thursday and Friday, December 20 and 21, 8 p.m., at Teatro de la Ciudad (Avenida Diamante). Tickets: \$60 U.S. 011-52-646-947-6155. (ENSENADA)

“Posada Tradicional” promised by Son Chimbica and Tropa Nopalera on Friday, December 21, 9 p.m., at El Lugar del Nopal (Pri-

OUT & ABOUT

HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL
Sunday, December 26–30,
San Diego Civic Theatre.

(SEE IN PERSON)



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOAN MARCUS

vada 5 de Mayo #1320). 011-52-664-685-1264. (TIJUANA)

OUTDOORS

Cowles Mountain Solstice Sunrise Hikes to Kumeyaay solstice site and summit of San Diego’s highest peak planned by Mission Trails Regional Park trail guides on Thursday and Saturday, December 20 and 22. Free hikes start at 6 a.m. at Cowles Mountain staging area (corner Navajo Road and Golfcrest Drive). 619-668-3281. (SAN CARLOS)

Cowles Mountain Winter Solstice Hike — strenuous adventure hosted by San Diego Natural History Museum, Friday, December 21, starts at 6 a.m. near northeast corner of Golfcrest Drive and Navajo Road. Participants ascend Cowles Mountain in near-darkness to watch sunrise on first day of winter at Kumeyaay solstice observatory about halfway up mountain. Free. 619-255-0203. (SAN CARLOS)

Winter Solstice, the moment when the sun reaches its southernmost point on the celestial sphere, occurs this year at 10:08 p.m., Friday, December 21. This event signals the beginning of winter in the Northern Hemisphere and the beginning of summer in the Southern Hemisphere. With only about ten hours of daylight, San Diego must endure its darkest and gloomiest nights this week and next. During the day, the sun struggles to an altitude of only 34 degrees (as seen from San Diego), then quickly sinks toward the horizon.

Exceptionally High and Low Tides are set to occur on several days in late December. These tides coincide with the full moon, and also with the winter solstice — two factors that influence the tidal extremities. Peak high tides of nearly +7 feet will occur on Saturday, December 22, at 6:57 a.m.; on Sunday, December 23, at 7:43 a.m.; on Monday, December 24, at 8:29 a.m.; and on Tuesday, December 25, at 9:16 a.m. If any

strong winter storm happens to arrive from the west during these peak tides, some flooding of low-lying coastal areas around San Diego is likely. Several exceptionally low tides will also occur within the same string of dates. On December 22 the tide falls to -1.6 feet at 2:14 p.m. December 23 (3 p.m.) and December 24 (3:45 p.m.) feature 2007’s lowest tides of all: -1.8 feet. On Christmas Day, the tide reaches a low of -1.6 feet at 4:29 p.m. Any of these low-tide occasions are perfect for exploring marine life in the tidepool areas along San Diego County’s coastline.

Mistletoe in Sycamore Trees — how did it get there, and why? Find out during guided nature hike, Saturday, December 22, starting at 8:30 a.m. at Kumeyaay Lake campground entry station (Two Father Junípero Serra Trail). Free. 619-668-3281. (SAN CARLOS)

Audubon Society Bird Walk in Tecolote Canyon on Saturday, December 22, 9 a.m., at Tecolote Nature Center (5180 Tecolote

Road). Free. Bring binoculars and drinking water. 858-581-9944. (CLAIREMONT)

Trail Repair Work in Paso Picacho continues in Cuyamaca Rancho State Park on Saturday, December 22, 9 a.m. Bring work shoes, gloves, hat, water, snack. Group gathers at Paso Picacho campground maintenance area behind fire department building. Free. Registration: 858-278-3280. (CUYAMACA RANCHO STATE PARK)

Enjoy the Rippling San Diego River, chirping birds, and scented flora during guided nature walks through oak groves and native

chaparral on Saturday, Sunday, Wednesday, December 22, 23, and 26, 9:30 a.m., in Mission Trails Regional Park (One Father Junípero Serra Trail). Free. 619-668-3281. (SAN CARLOS)

Hotel Lobbies and Last-Minute Shopping feature in Walkabout jaunt planned Saturday, December 22, starting at 11 a.m. at Fourth Avenue and E Street entrance to Horton Plaza. Casual- to moderate-pace walk, followed by optional lunch (bring money). 619-231-7463. (DOWNTOWN)

December’s Full Moon, named the “cold moon,” “oak moon,”

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Calendar

LOCAL EVENTS

“wolf moon,” and “moon of long nights” according to the traditions of certain past cultures, rises spectacularly over the eastern horizon about ten minutes before the sun sets on the afternoon of Sunday, December 23. The moon’s night-long (14-hour) journey will take it nearly to the zenith of the sky by midnight, and then down to a setting position over the ocean by dawn on Monday morning.

Tidepooling for All! Naturalist from Birch Aquarium at Scripps leads exploration at Swami’s Beach on Sunday, December 23, 1:45–3:45 p.m. \$10 for adults, \$8 for children older than two. Required reservations: 858-534-7336. (ENCINITAS)

The Planet Mars lies at opposition to the sun on Monday, December 24. This means that planet Earth lies on a line almost exactly between the sun and Mars. Look for this gleaming, noticeably reddish planet over the east horizon as evening twilight gathers. Mars remains in the sky all night, setting at sunrise on Christmas morning. Mars will not be as close to Earth as it has been during the last two so-called favorable oppositions, which took place roughly two and four years ago.

Holiday Canyon Favorites Hike — take moderately paced loop hike with naturalist Linda King to Carson’s Crossing and waterfall in Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Tuesday, December 25. Hike starts at 9 a.m. in kiosk at Park Village Road and Camino del Sur. Free. 858-342-8856. Bring water, wear hiking boots. (RANCHO PENASQUITOS)

DANCE

Clara, the Sugarplum Fairy, Mice, and Toy Soldiers — California Ballet presents *The Nutcracker* with Tchaikovsky’s score performed by San Diego Symphony at San Diego Civic Theatre (110 Third Avenue). Cast of 160 includes children 4–14 years old, professionals in the “starring” roles, all dancing to Maxine Mahon’s choreography.

Curtain rises at 7 p.m. on Thursday and Friday, December 20 and 21; 2:30 and 8 p.m. on Saturday, December 22; and 1 and 5:30 p.m. on Sunday, December 23. Tickets: \$35–\$80 for adults,

\$25 for those 12 and younger. 858-560-6741. (DOWNTOWN)

Leaping Cossacks! Legions of Rats! San Diego Ballet Company performs *The Nutcracker*, December 20–23, in Mandeville Auditorium at UCSD. Curtain rises at 7:30 p.m. Thursday–Saturday, with matinees at 2:30 p.m. on Sat-

urday, 1 and 5 p.m. on Sunday. Tickets: \$36 general, \$18 children. 619-294-7311. (LA JOLLA)

Bellydance Showcase with Jasmina, Shalimar, Maisah, and Annamarie, live music by Middle Earth Ensemble, Thursday, December 20, 8 p.m., Claire de Lune Coffee Lounge (2906 Uni-

versity Avenue). Donation: \$5. 619-688-9845. (NORTH PARK)

Nuts to You! San Elijo Dance and Music Academy presents the classic December 21–23 at California Center for the Arts, Escondido (340 North Escondido Boulevard). Curtain rises at 7 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, with 2 p.m. mati-

nees on Saturday and Sunday. Tickets: \$18.50–\$42. 800-988-4253. (ESCONDIDO)

Viennese Waltz Mixer, vintage dance lesson, Friday, December 21, 7:30 p.m., in room 207 of Casa del Prado. Open dancing, 8:30–9:45 p.m. All ages and abilities. Part-

ners not required. Donation: \$1. 619-583-9956. (BALBOA PARK)

USA Dance Ballroom Party with wide variety of music, Saturday, December 22, at Synergy Dance Zone (7480 Miramar Road). Ballroom, Latin, swing, salsa, more. Lessons at 7 p.m., dancing from 8–11 p.m. All ages, ability levels, singles, couples. Casual dress. \$7. 760-525-5124. Fourth Saturday each month. (MIRAMAR)

Dances from San Francisco’s Kolo Festival presented by Kin Ho, Saturday, December 22, 7:30–8:30 p.m., at Folk Dance Center (4569 30th Street). All-request program follows teaching session. \$6. 619-281-5656. (NORTH PARK)

Flight Path makes music, Martha Wild calls for contradance on Saturday, December 22, 8 p.m., at Trinity United Methodist Church (3030 Thorn Street). Beginners’ dance workshop: 7:30 p.m. \$7. Wear soft-soled shoes. Optional potluck supper at 6:30 p.m. (bring food to share). 619-594-6828. (NORTH PARK)

Holiday Dance planned by San Diego English Country Dancers with calling by Janet on Sunday, December 23, 6–9 p.m., at Jean Hart Academy of Dance (Oak Knoll Plaza, 12227 Poway Road). \$6. 858-676-9731. (POWAY)

FILM

“Postcards from the Future” — Alan Chan’s 2007 “epic short” screens for Mars Movie Night, Friday, December 21, 7 p.m., in studio 106 of Art Union Building (2323 Broadway). Also on tap: *Tom and Jerry: Blast Off to Mars* (2005), *Flying Disc Man from Mars* (1950), and a *Duck Dodgers* cartoon. Free. Reservations: 619-723-3456. (GOLDEN HILL)

Steve Buscemi Directed and acts in *Interview* (2007), co-starring Sienna Miller. The film — adapted from a 2003 film by slain Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh — is shown on Wednesday, December 26, 6:30 p.m., for Film Forum at San Diego Public Library (820 E Street). Free. 619-236-5800. (DOWNTOWN)

Reuben H. Fleet Science Center, currently screening in the IMAX theater: *Sea Monsters: A Prehistoric Adventure*, *The Living Sea*, *Dinosaurs Alive!* Ticket prices and showtimes: 619-238-1233. (BALBOA PARK)

ROAM-ORAMA

A GUIDE TO UNEXPECTED SAN DIEGO AND BEYOND | BY JERRY SCHAD

The hike up Hot Spring Canyon is arguably the most beautiful canyon trek in the Santa Ana Mountains, and supremely arduous to boot. The goal is a magnificent 140-foot-high waterfall, the highest by far in Orange County.

Being in excellent physical condition, having considerable experience in cross-country travel over rugged terrain, and possessing good judgment do not automatically guarantee that you’ll be able to reach the falls and return on time and without mishap. You must be cautious, patient, agile, strong, and determined. Hazards include slippery rocks (some concealed by leaf litter), prickly vegetation, and forests of poison oak. Long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, and sturdy boots are musts.



Falls in Hot Spring Canyon

December might be a good time to attempt this hike, but if the peak of the rainy season comes later, there won’t be much water cascading over the falls or flowing down the creek. Wildflowers and new leaves in early spring add to the canyon’s beauty, but by then the ubiquitous poison oak bushes and vines are sporting fresh, virulent leaves, and rattlesnakes are emerging from their winter burrows. Fair-weather days January through February are probably best. Be sure to start very early in the morning to take advantage of the limited daylight.

A portion of this route unavoidably passes through an inholding of private land in the Cleveland National Forest — the Lazy W Ranch, a church camp. You must ask for permission to hike through the property in advance. Contact the church camp: P.O. Box 579, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675; 949-728-0141; lazywranch.org. The caretaker may ask that you inform someone of your safe return on your way out.

Parking is not allowed at the church camp and is very limited near the camp’s entrance, so leave your car at the trailhead for the San Juan Trail, 0.8 mile north of Ortega Highway (and about ten miles east of San Juan Capistrano). Walk 0.6 mile north to the church camp entrance, then continue another 0.3 mile past several buildings. Stay close to the Hot Spring Canyon stream, and continue up an old roadbed flanked on both sides by huge, spreading coast live oak trees.

By 1.5 miles (from your car), the route deteriorates to little more than a wildlife trail. The creek bubbles alongside, with scattered sycamores and alders growing from the granite-bouldered banks. At 2.0 miles, the canyon makes a decided turn to the northeast. From this point on, dark brownish and grayish metamorphic rocks gradually replace the granites, and the canyon becomes considerably narrower. Progress becomes much slower. You must choose between battling thickets of willow, sage, wild blackberry, and poison oak on the banks, or rock-hopping and sloshing through the creek while dodging nettles and alder branches. Here and there the creek may disappear under porous sands for brief stretches.

At 3.4 miles (1620 feet), the creek slides over a series of granite slabs and collects in limpid pools almost perennially shaded by an overhanging south wall. Just beyond, the canyon broadens, and a usually wet tributary comes in on the right. At 4.1 miles (1950 feet), another usually wet tributary joins on the left; a 70-foot waterfall with a scant flow lies immediately up this tributary from the main canyon.

By now, it should be possible to glimpse, just 200 yards ahead, the top of a sheer headwall. From the lip, water plunges some 140 feet down two distinct

tiers. Boulder-hopping will get you to the base of a much smaller fall (a moss-covered 20-footer) just below the bottom of the big one. Further progress up the canyon is possible only by some dicey hand-and-toe climbing.

Don’t linger long. The trip back down the canyon, owing to fatigue, may take just as much time as your approach did.

This article contains information about a publicly owned recreation or wilderness area. Trails and pathways are not necessarily marked. Conditions can change rapidly. Hikers should be properly equipped and have safety and navigational skills. The *Reader* and Jerry Schad assume no responsibility for any adverse experience.

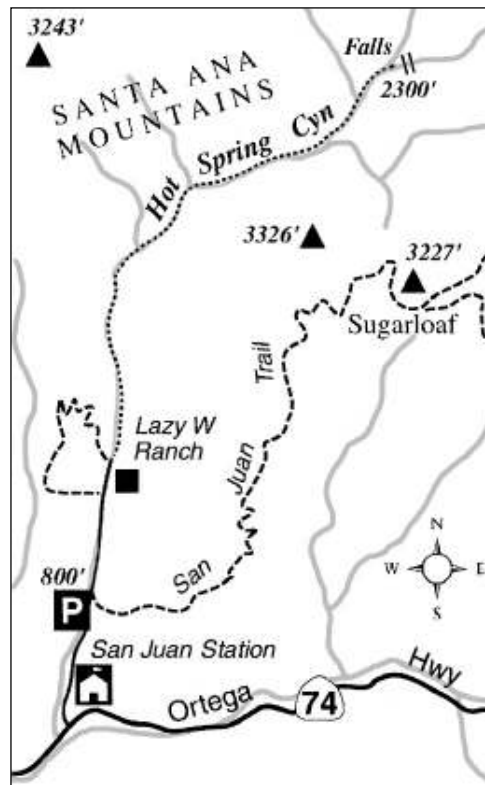
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LECTURES

Gallery Talk led by Dave Stevenson of Niki Charitable Art Foundation, in conjunction with "Niki de Saint Phalle: A Spiritual Path" exhibition, on Thursday, December 20, 2 p.m., at California Center for the Arts Museum, Escondido (340 North Escondido Boulevard). Included in museum admission. 760-839-4120. (ESCONDIDO)

"How to Get in the Zone and Stay in the Zone" explained by Walter Holtschi, Thursday, December 27, 6 p.m., at Sacred Pathway Bookstore (300 Carlsbad Village Drive, suite 103). "Feel better, play better, perform better." Free. 760-729-2434. (CARLSBAD)

IN PERSON

Ring in the Holidays! Community festival of music continues daily through Sunday, December 23, 7 p.m., at Latter-Day Saints Temple (7474 Charmant Drive). Bell choirs, Hispanic choirs, deaf choir, operatic and instrumental performances, harps, youth choirs, much more! Free. 858-277-7798. (UNIVERSITY CITY)

"Thoroughly Modern Millie" presented by actors of San Diego School of Creative and Performing Arts. Curtain rises at 7 p.m. on Thursday and Friday, December 20 and 21, and 2 p.m. on Saturday, December 22. \$10 general. Find campus at 2425 Dusk Drive. 619-475-8556. (PARADISE HILLS)

Gian Carlo Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* presented by Lyric Opera San Diego at Stephen and Mary Birch North Park Theatre (2891 University Avenue). Menotti's tale tells of journey of three kings and crippled boy who wants to bring a gift to Bethlehem; it was first performed December 24, 1951. Priti Gandhi has role of the mother, marking her professional debut as a soprano, as she has sung almost entirely in mezzo-soprano repertoire. Performances include festival of Christmas carols, visit from Santa Claus.

Curtain rises at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 20; 2:30 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, December 22 and 23. Tickets: \$30-\$50; half-price for those 5-17 (no children under 5 admitted). 619-239-8836. (NORTH PARK)

Stand-Up Comedian, Actor, Joey "Coco" Diaz performs for Ocean Beach Comedy, Friday, December 21, 7 p.m., at Winstons Beach Club (1921 Bacon Street). Diaz is "probably most famous" for his roles in *The Longest Yard*, *Spiderman II*, *Taxi*, *Analyze That*, TV shows *Cold Case*, *ER*, *NYPD Blue*, more. \$5. 619-222-6822. (OCEAN BEACH)

"A Christmas Carol" is presented by Kinney Productions through December 23 at Julian Town Hall (2129 Main Street). Curtain rises at 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday, with 1 p.m. matinee on Sunday, December 23. Tickets: \$10 general, \$6 for those 12 and younger. 760-765-1857, 760-765-1688. (JULIAN)

African Christmas Concert for whole family with Sene Africa and WorldBeat Drummers and Dancers, Friday December 21, 8 p.m., at WorldBeat Center (2100

Christmas

at First United Methodist Church of San Diego

Christmas Eve Candlelight

—5 p.m.—

Christmas Pageant with the Children's Choirs

—7 p.m.—

Lessons and Carols, The Contemporary Singers
Dr. Jim Standiford

—9 p.m.—

Lessons and Carols, The Chancel Choir
Dr. Jim Standiford

—11 p.m.—

Communion, Carols and the Christmas Story,
The Chancel Choir, Water's Edge Music Team
Rev. Molly Vetter

Robert Plimpton, organ

Demarre McGill, principal flute of the
San Diego Symphony, at 7, 9 & 11 p.m.

Christmas Day

—11 a.m.—

Family Communion Worship, The Chancel Choir
Rev. Elbert Kim



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Currently, Jaden is in North Carolina awaiting treatment at Duke University. However, Jaden can't receive the medical treatment he needs without our help.

Jaden will need extensive medical treatments to help with the pain of this terrible disease. As we race forward with hope for a cure, help us keep baby Jaden at the forefront of the medical doctors who may be able to give him life.

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What's That You're Writing?

NAME: AMY WALLEN | **AGE:** 44 | **OCCUPATION:** AUTHOR/WRITING INSTRUCTOR
NEIGHBORHOOD: SOUTH PARK | **WHERE INTERVIEWED:** THE URBAN GRIND COFFEEHOUSE



What's the name of your book?

"Moon Pies and Movie Stars."

Tell me about it.

"It's about the owner of a six-lane bowling alley in Devine, Texas, and she spots her runaway daughter on a Butter Maid commercial. So she sets off for Hollywood with her wild and crazy sister and the mother-in-law of the daughter. The daughter left behind two kids, so they go out there to find her and make her own up to her responsibilities. It's a journey — like a road

trip. They get in a Winnebago and head out West. It's 1976. They stop in Arizona and end up having to stay at a swingers' motel. Then they get to Hollywood, and it's '76, so it's Hollywood at its worst, run-down and grubby. They're staying at one of those by-the-hour motels, and they don't have a clue. They think that they're staying in this fabulous place. And they meet all different kinds of people, learn lots of new things, and get on *The Price Is Right*, which is really exciting for them. The sister that goes along with them, her dream has always been to meet Bob Barker. She thinks Bob Barker is really sexy.

The woman who owns the motel is from Texas, so they think they've hit this great place to stay, but she's married to a black man, and it's all new to them. The mother-in-law is pretty snarky, so she's kind of annoying. I had a lot of fun writing it."

What made you write it?

"I had gone to one of [San Diego Writers, Ink executive director] Judy Reeves's writing marathons, and she had put out these pictures as props. And one of them was a picture of a woman with a menu behind her, and she's talking on the phone.

My grandmother lived in Bracketville, Texas, which is down on the border, and she owned a honky-tonk. I started writing, sort of from my grandmother's voice, of this woman on the phone talking to her sister. And it just kind of came from that character. It came from my grandmother's inspiration, but the characters weren't anything like [her]; she never owned a bowling alley or anything. But she was just really independent like that. Loralva, the sister, she's a little bit more like my grandmother, more of that wild air. So I took the women characters and [drew up] this montage of all the women I had known growing up, all the women that I knew in Texas when I went down to visit. I write more from character than from plot."

Do you have a favorite passage?

"Probably *The Price Is Right* scene is the most fun. I actually wrote 12 drafts of the novel, and that's the one scene in the whole book that I never really changed after I wrote it the first time. It's a big scene. To prepare for writing it, I watched the show for three weeks to get a feel for who was on it, how it worked. And the first week I was watching it, I was rolling my eyes and thinking, I can't believe I have to

do this. The second week I was getting into it with them, and then the third week when they were winning I found myself crying because I realized this is their dream. I was really excited for them."

Why should someone read this?

"Because it's funny. And it does have some poignant moments. I like to write stuff that has a little heart in it, and I also think that humor does come from a deeper place inside. There's usually some kind of hurt. There are a lot of serious aspects — the daughter they're going to look for left behind two kids, and she's been abandoned herself. She wasn't actually the main character's real daughter, so there's a lot of stuff that comes out. Why would somebody do this to their kids when it's been done to them, that kind of thing."

Tell me about your writing habits.

"I try to always start in the morning so I can get it done, and so I don't feel like I'm waiting all day to get to it and then never get around to it. Depending on where I am in the story, or how things have been going, I'll do two to four hours. I try not to write much more than that because you get a little...it's exhausting. I write daily. It's like practicing the piano: if you don't

do it every day, the muscle gets weak.

I work on my laptop and I write longhand too. I like this combination, depending on what I'm doing. It's easier to carry a pad and a paper than a computer."

Is writing your primary job?

"I teach too. I teach novel-writing courses at UCSD. I just finished a Novel 1, a beginner writing class, then in the winter quarter of January I'm starting a Novel 2, more advanced writing."

What are your relationships like?

"I live with another writer. You have to be really independent people, because writers tend to just go off into their hole and disappear — and then come back out, and everything's great. Also, when the writer's not writing, they can get kind of grumpy and out of sorts."

Do you talk to your friends about your writing?

"Yes, they ask a lot. The conversation with [non-writers] goes a little differently than with writer friends, because with writer friends you don't have to explain as much. [With writers,] I might talk more specifics, like, 'I'm having trouble with a character, what do you think I should do?' whereas with the non-writer friend I would just say it was going well or not well."

Park Boulevard). \$10. 619-230-1190. (BALBOA PARK)

Guitar Sounds Christmas Concert with Peter Popping Band, Friday, December 21, 8 p.m., at Bethlehem

Lutheran Church (925 Balour Drive). Enjoy Christmas music in traditional and Latin styles, a bit of Celtic and classical music, jazz arrangements of some favorite Christmas songs; band will also

play music from their upcoming 2008 release *Sea Journey*. \$20. 760-943-0755. (ENCINITAS)

"Ghana Christmas Party" with Ghanaian and African music

planned by Ghana Association of San Diego, Saturday, December 22, 7 p.m., at WorldBeat Center (2100 Park Boulevard). Donation. 619-230-1190. (BALBOA PARK)

Dastgâh Jam with Dornob Collective, Saturday December 22, 7:30 p.m., at Pierre's (1404 Fifth Avenue). Guest artists with rhythm section. Free. 619-727-4700. (DOWNTOWN)

Christmas Eve Concert by Peter Sprague and guests, Monday, December 24, 1–4 p.m., in village amphitheatre in front of L'Auberge Del Mar (1540 Camino del Mar). Neighborhood eateries



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Disney's "High School Musical" hits stage, December 26–30, at San Diego Civic Theatre (1100 Third Avenue). Production features cast of 34 performers, including San Diego actors Ellen Harvey and Chandra Lee Schwartz, live orchestra, "includes all of the favorite characters and songs from the movie, plus two new songs written especially for the stage."

Performances begin at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday–Saturday; with 2 p.m. matinees on Thursday and Saturday; 1 and 6:30 p.m. on Sunday. Tickets: \$19–\$102, available through Ticketmaster (619-220-TIXS). (DOWNTOWN)

"A Night of Comedy" stand-up comedy show with entertainment by Mal Hall, Mario Mann, Joe Charles, Matt Knost, and Robert Lariviere on Thursday, Decem-

ber 27, 7:30 p.m., at Below Market (600 Fifth Avenue). Free; donations welcome for comics. 619-236-1616. (GASLAMP QUARTER)

SPORTS

Rides to Suit Every Rider! San Diego Bicycle Club's "world famous" Saturday rides start at 8:30 a.m. at 8715 Via La Jolla Drive (in parking lot at La Jolla Village Square). Fast rides, core training, and development rides offered. Helmets mandatory. Free. 619-522-0058. (LA JOLLA)

2007 Poinsettia Bowl football game between University of Utah Utes and Navy Midshipmen is Thursday, December 20, 6 p.m., at Qualcomm Stadium. Tickets: \$43–\$65, available through Ticketmaster (619-220-TIXS). (MISSION VALLEY)

Ramona, the Shortest Way, bicycle to Ramona for lunch from Doyle Park (8175 Regents Road) with San Diego Bicycle Touring So-

ciety riders, Sunday, December 23. The 68-miler starts at 8:45 a.m. 619-426-8192. (UNIVERSITY CITY)

Pain, Agony, Suffering Promised during "Palomar Mountain Express" ride planned by Sierra Club bicyclists on Sunday, December 23, starting at 9 a.m. at Bates Nut Farm (15954 Woods Valley Road). Steep grades, peppy pace. Two water bottles required, triple or compact crank recommended; bring warm clothes for cold descent. Lunch at Mother's at top (bring money). Not for beginners! 858-974-4871. Rain cancels. (PALOMAR MOUNTAIN)

San Diego Chargers host Denver Broncos in Qualcomm Stadium on Monday, December 24, 5 p.m. Game broadcast on ESPN; listen on radio station KIOZ-FM, Rock 105.3. Tickets: \$54–\$92, available through Ticketmaster (619-220-TIXS). (MISSION VALLEY)

Traffic Should Be Light and stores will be closed when Knickerbikers head out on bicycle ride, Tuesday, December 25, starting at 10 a.m. in Mission Bay visitors' center north parking lot (at East Mission Bay Drive and Clairemont Drive). Bring money for lunch during 25-mile outing. 619-787-7427. (MISSION BAY)

Bumble Bee Seafoods Holiday Bowl 5K Run steps off at 9:45 a.m. on Thursday, December 27, at corner of North Harbor Drive and Ash Street, proceeds along waterfront to finish near Tuna Harbor Park. Race-day registration: 8 a.m. 858-268-1250. (DOWNTOWN)

2007 Pacific Life Holiday Bowl between Arizona State University Sun Devils and University of Texas Longhorns is Thursday, December 27, 5 p.m., in Qualcomm Stadium. Tickets: \$80–\$95, available through Ticketmaster. 619-283-5808. (MISSION VALLEY)

SPECIAL

Garden of Lights, 12th annual event boasts gardens decorated with 90,000-plus sparkling lights on plants and trees at Quail Botanical Gardens (230 Quail Gardens Drive). Holiday Garden of Lights can be enjoyed 5–9 p.m., December 13–23, and December 26–30. Holiday crafts, live entertainment, marshmallow roasting, children's activities, and food (for sale). Admission: \$10 general, \$3 for those 3–12, free for kids under 3. 760-436-3036. (ENCINITAS)

Skating by the Sea, outdoor ice-skating rink overlooking Pacific Ocean is open at Hotel del Coronado (1500 Orange Avenue) through Tuesday, January 1. Three-hour skating sessions begin at 11 a.m., 2, and 6 p.m. daily. \$20 general, \$15 for kids; skate rental: \$5. 619-522-8041. (DOWNTOWN)

Holiday of Lights at Del Mar Fairgrounds is showcase of seasonal festive lights, with more than 350 holiday-themed displays on view through Tuesday, January 1. Visitors drive cars through fairgrounds to view displays.

Hours: 5:30–10 p.m. Sundays–Thursdays, 5:30 to 11 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. Admission: \$13 per vehicle (up to five people), \$18 per vehicle with six or more people. 858-793-5555. (DEL MAR)

Wiener Wonderland — San Diego Dachshund Club hosts annual winter event, Sunday, December 23, 1–3 p.m., near fountain



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Calendar

LOCAL EVENTS

near Reuben H. Fleet Science Center. Bring your doxie “dressed in holiday attire,” picnic if you’d like. No fees, no competition. 858-755-9270. (BALBOA PARK)

“All That Sparkles Around the World” — toast the upcoming year and taste sparkling wines on Wednesday, December 26, 5 p.m., at WineSellar and Brasserie (9550 Waples Street, suite 115). \$15. 858-450-9557. (MIRA MESA)

“Snapshot of an Era: Uncovering Our New Deal Past” — exhibition exploring the genesis of the university campus and development of San Diego during the New Deal continues through May 2008, in Special Collections Reading Room, University Archives, and Donor Hall of San Diego State University’s Love Library (5500 Campanile Drive). Exhibit uses archival photographs, institutional records, memorabilia, other primary resources to highlight impact of various New Deal programs on the physical campus environment, student life during the 1930s. Free. 619-594-6791. (SDSU)

“Groovin’ to the ‘70s” is theme for Big Bay Balloon Parade boasting floats, marching bands, drill teams, and enormous balloons on Thursday, December 27. Parade begins at 10 a.m. on North Harbor Drive (along Embarcadero), proceeds to Seaport Village. Free for spectators. After parade, activities continue at Broadway Pier with games, entertainment, at annual Amtrak Family Festival. Free admission. 619-283-5808. (DOWNTOWN)

Kwanzaa Holiday Celebration slated for Thursday, December 27, starting at 6 p.m. at World Beat Center (2100 Park Boulevard). Event includes WorldBeat African Drummers and Dancers, African vegetarian Kemet food, speakers

on principles of Kwanzaa, lighting of the candles. “All families and races are invited to join the celebration.” Free. 619-230-1190. (BALBOA PARK)

“Will Russia’s Reemergence Stabilize the Global Balance of Power?” Find out when P&R Discussion Group meets, Thursday, December 27, 7 p.m., at Other Side Coffee House (4096 30th Street). Free. 619-370-1027. (NORTH PARK)

Historic Navy North Chapel at Liberty Station was built in 1942 and has recently been restored. Tours and open house planned at North Chapel on Saturday, December 29, 9–11 a.m. The original Rogers pipe organ will be playing; chapel features stained-glass windows, ornate tile, hand-carved pews. Free. Find chapel at 2881 Roosevelt Drive; 619-573-9300. (POINT LOMA)

FOR KIDS

“Magical, Musical Holiday” presented by comic ventriloquist Lynn Trimble through Sunday, December 23, in Marie Hitchcock Puppet Theater. *Jack and the Beanstalk* performed by Big Joe Productions, December 26–30.

Shows begin at 10 and 11:30 a.m. Wednesday–Friday and at 11 a.m., 1, and 2:30 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday (additional performances December 26–28 at 1 p.m.). Find theater at 2130 Pan American Place. Admission: \$3 for children, \$4 seniors, \$5 general. 619-544-9203. (BALBOA PARK)

Learn About Hospital Point Critters when Birch Aquarium at Scripps hosts Tidepooling for Tots led by aquarium naturalist, Friday, December 21, 12:30–2 p.m. Fee: \$10 per adult, \$8 per child. Required reservations: 858-534-7336. (LA JOLLA)

Family Festival Holiday Pops! Enjoy the season musically when San Diego Symphony led by Matthew Garbutt is joined by San Diego Civic Youth Ballet and San

OUT & ABOUT

SKATING BY THE SEA

Through Tuesday, January 1, Hotel del Coronado.

(SEE SPECIALS)



Diego Master Chorale for concert on Sunday, December 23, 2 p.m. in Copley Symphony Hall (750 B Street). Also on tap: visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus. Tickets: \$15, \$25 general, \$10 for kids. Reservations: 619-235-0804. (DOWNTOWN)

Tots and Tales interactive story time for preschoolers with animal stories, crafts, live animals on Thursday, December 27, 10:30 a.m., at San Diego Humane Society and SPCA (5500 Gaines Street). Donation: \$3 per child. Required reservations: 619-243-3432. (LINDA VISTA)

MUSEUMS

Bancroft Ranch House Museum houses indigenous Indian artifacts and memorabilia of early settlers in the area, run by the Spring Valley Historical Society. The home, built

in 1863, was registered as a National Historic Landmark in 1962 and is on a spot where Kumeyaay Indians camped more than 1000 years ago beside the spring that later gave the area its name. The museum is found at 9050 Memory Lane; 619-469-1480. (SPRING VALLEY)

Barona Cultural Center and Museum is located at 1095 Barona Road; 619-443-7003 x2. (LAKESIDE)

Birch Aquarium at Scripps, an aquarium and museum under one roof, the facility is a component of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UCSD. More than 60 tanks contain marine life of Pacific Northwest, California coastline, Mexico’s Sea of Cortés, and South Pacific. The La Jolla Kelp Tank is a two-story-high tank with giant kelp plants and nearly 30 species of local marine life.

“Feeling the Heat: The Climate Challenge” examines science behind climate change; “Art of Deception” explores undersea camouflage. “Wonders of Water” waterplay area includes three interactive stations. The Lynne and Howard Robbins Shark Reef Exhibit features a 13,000-gallon shark tank with black tip, white tip, bamboo, and wobbegong sharks.

The aquarium is located at 2300 Expedition Way (off North Torrey Pines Road, south of La Jolla Shores Drive). 619-534-FISH. (LA JOLLA)

California Surf Museum, “The Surfer-Shapers,” on exhibit through 2006, showcases several surfers whose conceptual abilities and crafting talent radically altered surfboard design. The search has always been for lighter, faster, more maneuverable boards, from

Duke Kahanamoku in early 1900s to Tom Blake in 1920s to Simon Anderson in early 1980s.

The museum features surfing artifacts and memorabilia — such as surfboards and clothing — of local legends Phil Edwards, John “L.J.” Richards, and Peter Johnson, and Duke Kahanamoku. The museum is located at 223 North Coast Highway; 760-721-6876. (OCEANSIDE)

Chula Vista Nature Center, an interactive living museum devoted to the endangered Southern California coastal wetlands, located in Sweetwater Marsh National Wildlife Refuge. Visitors can use a Bioscanner to view animals macroscopically, use a Wentzscope for views of microscopic organisms found in the “Sweetwater Soup,” and interact with computerized videos exploring how tides affect the bay in the “Moons, Tides, and the San Diego Bay” exhibit. Pet sharks and rays in the David A. Wergeland Shark and Ray Experience, see burrowing owls and migratory birds, and enjoy the xerophytic gardens.

Visitors meet a shuttle bus at the Bayfront E Street Trolley Station or at the center’s parking lot at the foot of E Street and Bay Boulevard. 619-409-5903. (CHULA VISTA)

Coronado Museum of History and Art, “The Joy of Toys: Antique Treasures,” on display through Sunday, February 3, includes variety of antique toys, furniture, vintage collectibles, comics, Winnie the Pooh’s “40-Acre Woods,” more.

Ongoing exhibits explore the overall history of Coronado, Navy and Army, Tent City, and the Hotel del Coronado. Find the museum at 1100 Orange Avenue. 619-435-7242. (CORONADO)

Flying Leatherneck Museum, dedicated to the Marine Corps who provided air support, from the propeller-driven fighters and bombers of the 1940s to the modern jets and helicopters currently in use. Static displays of a variety of

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aircraft are included, along with equipment, insignia, paintings and photographs, scale models, and a research library. The museum is located in building T-2002, at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. 858-693-1723.

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

Heritage of the Americas Museum, more than 100 Chinese jades of the Late Neolithic (4300-2500 B.C.) through the Ming periods (A.D. 1368-1644) are included in "The Stone of Heaven: The Enduring Art of Jade Age China." From ancient times, jades in China were treasured as talismans, worn on the body either as final adornments in death or as ornaments in life. See a rare and valuable jade burial suit of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 221), one of only about two dozen that have been excavated in China. The suits were made of more than 2000 square and rectangular plates of jade sewn together with threads of gold, silver, or bronze (depending upon the status of the wearer). Ongoing.

The museum features art and artifacts from South and North America, concentrating on the utilitarian and decorative artistry of crafts workers from ancient cultures. The museum also fea-

tures wings dedicated to natural history, archaeology, education, anthropology, and fine art. Find the museum on the Cuyamaca College campus, 12110 Cuyamaca College Drive West. 619-670-5194. (RANCHO SAN DIEGO)

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

John DeWitt Historic Museum and Library, operated by the Alpine Historical Society, it is located in the 1897 home/office of Dr. Sophronia Nichols. She was the first doctor in Alpine and the first female doctor in the East County.

Indian artifacts from the Kingery family on exhibit. The museum is located at 2116 Tavern Road; 619-659-8740. (ALPINE)

La Mesa Depot Museum, located in a restored 1894 wooden train station, exhibits include original telegraph and telephone equipment, pot-bellied coal stove, period furniture. The adjacent freight train display features 1923 steam locomotive, 1957 refrigerator car, 1941 caboose. Find the museum at La Mesa Boulevard and Spring Street. 619-465-7776. (LA MESA)

Magee House Museum, built in 1887 and surrounded by rose gardens, the site includes "one of the last barns still standing in Carlsbad." Docent and self-guided tours of historic house and gardens. Find Magee House at 258

Beech Street; 760-434-9189. (CARLSBAD)

Museum of Making Music hosts "The Ukulele and You: America's Enduring Love of the Jumping Flea" through Thursday, January 31. "Promoted as an easy-to-play, portable, and fun musical instrument, the ukulele has enjoyed three major waves of popularity on the mainland U.S. Over the last 15 years, the instrument has been going through a third wave of interest both in Hawaii and on the mainland." Contemporary players are taking ukulele into rock, jazz, classical, punk. Collection includes over 300 instruments ranging from finely crafted rare and historic ukes made of koa, mahogany, other precious woods to inexpensive, plastic marvels produced in the '50s.

The past 100 years of American music and music making are highlighted at the museum, with over 450 vintage instruments, hundreds of audio and video clips, and an interactive stage. Find the museum at 5790 Armada Drive; 760-438-5996. (CARLSBAD)

Olaf Wieghorst Museum displays paintings and prints by Olaf Wieghorst and features exhibits of other artists' American West art. Adjacent to museum is courtyard with cactus gardens, 20 x 20-foot reproduction of Wieghorst's painting *Navajos at Castle Creek*, and original restored home Wieghorst lived in for many years starting in 1945. The museum is located at 131 Rea Avenue. 619-590-3431. (EL CAJON)

Ramona Pioneer Historical Society and Guy B. Woodward

Museum is a complex of historical buildings, including the Verlaque House (the only Western adobe home of French provincial design still in existence), wagons, antique exhibits, and artifacts. There is a cowboy bunk house, women's clothing and accessories from 1700 to 1800, a ranch blacksmith shop and tack room. The Casey Tibbs Memorial Exhibit is dedicated to Tibbs, a local resident who was a world-champion rodeo rider. The Bancroft Memorial Rose Garden is on the grounds. Rare documents, historical exhibits, books, photographs, and a research library are also part of the complex.

Find it all at 645 Main Street. 760-789-7644. (RAMONA)

San Diego Aerospace Museum, the technological advancements made in aircraft propulsion over the

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Calendar

LOCAL EVENTS

last century are showcased in "100 Years of Aircraft Engines," including a functional reproduction of the 1903 Wright Flyer Engine; a Rolls-Royce liquid-cooled Merlin V-12 that powered the *Spitfire* and P-51 *Mustang* fighters; and a rare German Junkers *Jumo 004*, one of the world's first operational jet engines.

Concurrently, see "The History of Commercial Aviation in America." A new section of the exhibit celebrates the 40-year history of PSA, with original graphics, a re-creation of the airline's first ticket booth at Lindbergh Field, and uniforms and memorabilia donated by former employees. Ongoing.

"P-51 *Mustang*" celebrates the legendary Air Force fighter used during both World War II and Korea. The museum's *Mustang* is painted in the red-tail livery of the Tuskegee Airmen, who distinguished themselves flying bomber escort and ground attack missions during World War II.

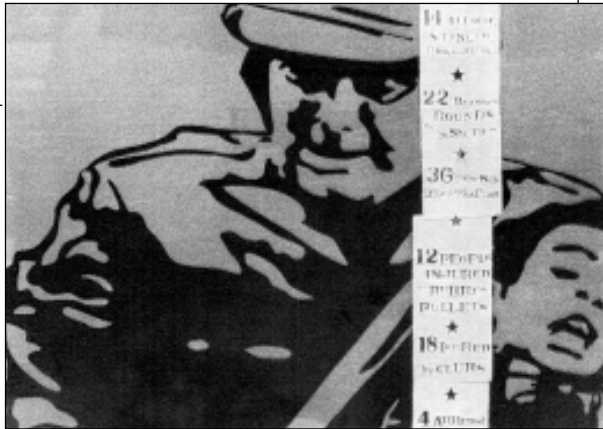
The museum offers exhibits of over 65 aircraft — including an RQ-1K Predator UAV (unmanned aerial vehicle) on indefinite loan from the National Museum of the United States Air Force at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, which "saw action over the Balkans in the late 1990s"; a replica of Spirit of St. Louis, a Fokker Scourge (or Fokker Eindecker E-III), a World War I Spad VII, flight deck of the USS *Yorktown*, and a Lockheed Blackbird spy plane — 1400 scale models, 10,000 aviation-related items, and memorabilia from

OUT & ABOUT

"TIS BETTER..."

Opens Thursday, December 20, Sanctuary 143.

(SEE GALLERIES)



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Montgolfier hot-air-balloon era to Space Age, along with an International Aerospace Hall of Fame.

The museum is located in the Ford Building in the Palisades area. 619-234-8291. (BALBOA PARK)

San Diego County Sheriff's Museum, the 150-year history of the sheriff's department is highlighted at the museum, which is located "just feet away" from the original cobblestone jail site, built in 1850. The museum boasts artifacts, photographs, equipment, uniforms, and vehicles, along with exhibits from each of the departments making up the organization such as crime scene, K-9, court service, detentions, crime lab, bomb squad, and many others. Find the museum at 2384 San Diego Avenue; 619-260-1850. (OLD TOWN)

San Diego Electric Railway Association, located in historic National City Santa Fe Depot (922 West 23rd Street), offers exhibits, video displays, trolley equipment, restored passenger car from National City and Otay Railroad. 619-474-4400. (NATIONAL CITY)

San Diego Model Railroad Museum, museum celebrates American railroads with "the largest permanent operating model railroad and toy train exhibit" in North America. Four scale-model railroads of the Southwest, the "San Diego County Relief Map" exhibit, and an interactive toy train. There is a multimedia presentation on railroading, an operating railroad semaphore signal, and interpretive displays on railroads and model railroading. The museum is downstairs in the Casa de Balboa building. 619-696-0199. (BALBOA PARK)

San Diego Natural History Museum, "Dead Sea Scrolls" exhibition described as "the largest, longest, most comprehensive ever assembled in any country" continues through December. Exhibit of 27 scrolls — ten exhibited for first time ever —

showcases Dead Sea Scrolls from Israel and Jordan, never-before-exhibited ancient Hebrew codices from Russian National Library, medieval manuscripts from British National Library, and modern interpretations of texts. To ensure preservation of the 2000-year-old parchment, 12 scrolls will be displayed for first three months and an additional 12 in last three months.

"Contemporary Israeli Photography," a collaborative effort between museum and Ordovery Gallery on view through December, features work by Neil Folberg, David Harris, Didier Ben Loulou, Duby Tal, others, and includes sculpture and glass.

The permanent exhibit "Fossil Mysteries" showcases last 75 million years in Southern California and Baja California region, a time known for its rich fossil record. Highlights include life-sized models of *Albertosaurus*, *Lambeosaurus*, a sea cow, megalodon shark, more.

Current "giant-screen films" are *Ancient Qumran: A Virtual Reality Tour* and *Ocean Oasis*. 619-232-3821. (BALBOA PARK)

Serra Museum, "Commemorating 75 Years: The Serra Museum" is said to "remember the events leading up to the dedication of Presidio Park and the Serra Museum" on July 16, 1929. The exhibit includes a "visit back in time to 1929."

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

The San Diego Aircraft Carrier Museum onboard the decommissioned USS *Midway* is open for tours, now berthed at 910 North Harbor Drive. Exhibits include Navy jet simulators, carrier and flight deck touring, captain's sea cabin, pilot house, navigation bridge. Admission fee includes audio guide. 619-544-9600. (DOWNTOWN)

Veterans Museum and Memorial Center, memorial to men and women who served in U.S. Armed Forces, Coast Guard, and Wartime Merchant Marine. Located in the former San Diego Naval Hospital Chapel (2115 Park Boulevard), the museum features original service-inspired stained glass, as well as historical murals painted by Richard DeRosset. Main exhibit hall features displays, exhibits of historic artifacts, documents, photographs, memorabilia, artwork honoring men and women who served. Museum is also home to San Diego Vietnam Peace Memorial and Veterans Memorial Garden. 619-239-2300. (BALBOA PARK)

Wells Fargo History Museum, the museum features a working agents' office staffed by guides in period costumes and contains a working telegraph for visitors to send and receive messages. Short films on California and Wells Fargo history; a gold display, part of the collection assembled by Wells Fargo agent Samuel Dorsey at the end of the 1800s; an exhibit of Concord Coach #251, a restored stagecoach built in 1867; and the Davies watch. The museum is located in the reconstructed Colorado House, at 2733 San Diego Avenue. (OLD TOWN)

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CLASSICAL

Holiday Pops! Enjoy the season musically when San Diego Symphony led by Matthew Garbutt is joined by Mariachi Champana Nevin, soprano Monica Abrego, San Diego Civic Youth Ballet, and San Diego Master Chorale for concerts through December 23. Program includes new Hanukkah piece composed by Marvin Hamlisch. Concerts begin at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday; 8 p.m. on Friday; 2 and 8 p.m. on Saturday (\$20–\$80).

Family Festival Pops concert (with abbreviated program from the evening shows) and visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus, Sunday, December 23, 2 p.m. (\$15, \$25 general, \$10 for kids). All concerts take place in Copley Symphony Hall, 750 B Street. Reservations: 619-235-0804. (DOWNTOWN)

“The Gospel Messiah” — Quincy Jones’s contemporary version of the 1741 oratorio may be heard on Friday, December 21, 6:30 p.m., at Faith Chapel (9400 Campo Road). 619-461-7451.

Busy on Friday? Concert repeated on Sunday, December 23, 6:30 p.m., at New Creation Church (3115 Altadena). 619-584-5460. (SPRING VALLEY, SOUTH SAN DIEGO)

“A Renaissance Christmas” — the Early Music Ensemble of San Diego sings medieval and Renaissance motets and carols for Advent and Christmas on Friday, December 21, 7:30 p.m., at University Lutheran Church (9595 La Jolla Shores Drive). \$10 general, \$7 for seniors and students. 858-755-1408. (LA JOLLA)

Christmas Sing-Along with host Johnny Hohegrafe and civic organist Carol Williams in Spreckels Organ Pavilion on Sunday, December 23, 2 p.m. Free. 619-702-8138. (BALBOA PARK)

Art Songs, Operatic Arias, seasonal favorites will be sung by soprano Alize Rozsnyai, mezzo Sasha Hashemipour, and baritone Michael Blinco, accompanied by pianist Diane Snodgrass, Sunday, December 23, 4 p.m., at St. Bartholomew’s Episcopal Church (16275 Pomerado Road). These three Rancho Bernardo High School alumni plan the concert to

“benefit fire victims in the Rancho Bernardo High School choral department.” Offering. 858-487-2159. (POWAY)

ART LISTINGS

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

“The Antarctic Peninsula” and “Reflections” — imagery from two portfolios by Abe Ordovery may be viewed through Sunday, January 13, at Ordovery Gallery (444 South Cedros Avenue, studio 172). Reception slated for Thursday, December 20, 6 p.m. In addition, see work by Lew Abulafia, Sharon Anthony, John D. Clark, Donna Cosentino, Peter Fay, Art Myers, Lisa Ross, Jennifer Saracino, Tom O Scott, Blake Shaw Lisa Smith. 858-720-1121. (SOLANA BEACH)

“‘Tis Better...” opens Thursday, December 20, 7 p.m., at Sanctuary 143 (143 South Cedros Avenue). See new paintings, sculpture by Orange County-based artist Jeff Faeth, paintings and photography by Aki Kaneko and Tony Greene. Live music will by Helene and Vladimir, jewelry by Miss Wax. Admission: one can of food or a \$1 donation to benefit local food banks. 760-487-1137. (SOLANA BEACH)

ART MUSEUMS

California Center for the Arts Museum, “Rituality” features contemporary works from ten local artists alongside traditional artifacts from Africa, Native North America, the Pacific Islands. Exhibition examines role of ritual in exploration of identity, creation of community, construction of power, as mediated and expressed through art.

“Niki de Saint Phalle: A Spiritual Path” offers a closer look at de Saint Phalle’s spiritual journey, her interpretation of traditional tarot cards. “Is the tarot pack only a game of cards, or is there a philosophy behind it?” Fifty-four individual paintings by Teresa Villegas are gathered in “La Loteria: An Exploration of Mexico.” Artwork draws upon Mexican traditions, historical figures, food, popular culture.

“The Poetics of Myth” features a series of bas-relief terracotta panels by Brad Burkhart, focusing “on the creation of modern myths and archetypes.”

Each of these exhibits continues through Sunday, January 27.

The museum is located at 340 North Escondido Boulevard; 760-839-4120. (ESCONDIDO)

Mingei International Museum — North County, “Paper Transformed,” exhibition made up of “Crowning Glory — From Paper Bag Hats by Moses” and “Origami — The Art of Paper Folding” from Mingei’s permanent collection continues through Saturday, December 29. For “Crowning Glory,” Moses created more than 250 hats from paper bags contributed by merchants in his Hawaiian neighborhood. “Origami” boasts nearly 100 examples of traditional and contemporary paper folding; exhibition honors acclaimed local paper folder, author, teacher Florence Temko. Find the museum at 155 West Grand Avenue. 760-735-3355. (ESCONDIDO)

Mingei International Museum, “Craft in America: Expanding Traditions” surveys more than 200 works, spanning a period of nearly 200 years. Handcrafted furniture, ceramics, fiber and textiles, basketry, glass, wood, jewelry, metalwork are showcased. Closes Sunday, January 27.

Also on view: “American Viewing Stones: Natural Art in an Asian Tradition.” Chinese connoisseurs began using large stones to decorate gardens, courtyards during the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 220); “Scholar’s Rocks” is English name most commonly used for these items. American viewing stone collecting began with first- and second-generation Japanese-Americans who continued traditions of bonsai and *suiseki*.

The “Chinese Woodblock Prints in the Style of the Ten Bamboo Studio” are likely from a 19th-Century edition of *Treatise on Calligraphy and Painting of the Ten Bamboo Studio*. Prints are noteworthy for technique of printing using multiple blocks. Both exhibits close on Sunday, December 30.

Masterworks from permanent collection are gathered in “The Beauty of Use — Mingei International Museum at 30,” showcasing significant objects from many cultures shown in relationships highlighting similarities and differences among them. Museum has formed a collection of *mingei* now comprising 17,000 objects from 141 countries such as collection of 19th-Century African tribal currency, group of masks including example of Amazonian feather work, ritual objects, selection of monumental containers. Closes Sunday, May 11. The Mingei is located on square with San Diego

Museum of Art. 619-239-0003. (BALBOA PARK)

Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, Downtown, “Robert Irwin: Primaries and Secondaries” is “the largest exhibition of renowned artist...Irwin’s work since 1993.” Exhibit features five new major installation works created specifically for MCASD’s galleries, is drawn almost exclusively of works from museum’s collection. Closes Sunday, April 13. Find the museum at 1001 and 1100 Kettner Boulevard (at Broadway), directly across from the Santa Fe Railroad Depot. 858-454-3541. (DOWNTOWN)

Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, La Jolla, “Soundwaves: The Art of Sampling” examines “a specifically late 20th-Century manifestation of the conjunction of art and sound,” showcases works by artists including Tim Bavington, Helen Cohen, Sean Duffy, T. Kelly Mason, Alyce Santoro, others. Through Sunday, December 30.

“Cerca Series: Iana Quesnell,” also closing on December 30, “investigates nomadism and temporary living situations.” See several new large-scale drawings and an animation responding to artist’s binational life between San Diego and Tijuana.

Find the museum at 700 Prospect Street. 858-454-3541. (LA JOLLA)

Museum of Photographic Arts, “Picturing Eden,” continuing through Sunday, January 13, examines “many facets of paradise, from a place of contemplation and restoration to a site of loneliness and despair.” Exhibition includes work by more than 30 artists, including Michael Kenna, Sally Mann, Han Nguyen, and Doug and Mike Starn.

“Public Privacy: Wendy Richmond’s Surreptitious Cell-

phone” is said to explore “how 20th-Century Americans occupy personal spaces while going about their daily lives in the public eye.” Richmond allows viewers to observe people in mundane routines by shooting tiny movies on her cell-phone video camera. Closes Sunday, January 6.

Also on view through January 6, “New Light: Selections from MoPA’s Education Programs,” including photographic and multimedia pieces by more than 60 San Diego students.

Find the museum in the Casa de Balboa building, at 1649 El Prado. 619-238-7559. (BALBOA PARK)

San Diego Museum of Art, “Everett Gee Jackson/San Diego Modern, 1920-1955,” is retrospective of “San Diego’s most important Modernist artist.” Exhibit featuring more than 50 works spanning most significant and productive decades of artist’s career “presents a representative range of Jackson’s multifaceted work, while contextualizing Jackson within the broader scope of mid-20th Century American modernism.” Closes Sunday, January 27.

“Animated Painting,” continuing through Sunday, January 13, boasts “25 cinematic works by 14 international contemporary artists who adapt traditional painting and drawing methods to the concepts and technologies of animation.” Participating artists include the Barnstormers, Sadie Benning, Jeremy Blake, Sebastián Díaz Morales, Kota Ezawa, Ruth Gómez, William Kentridge, Ann Lislegaard, Takeshi Murata, Serge Onnen, Julian Opie, Wit Pimkanchanapong, Qiu Anxiong, and Robin Rhode.

“Josef Albers and His Students: Theory and Practice,” closing Sunday, March 2, presents four prints by master artist, color theorist, teacher Josef Al-

bers. Display features works by four of his American students — Richard Anuszkiewicz, Robert Birmelin, Robert Rauschenberg, Audrey Flack — with each work corresponding to one of Albers’ prints.

“Image Makers and Rule Breakers: French Art, 1860-1960,” continuing through Sunday, January 20, highlights museum’s depth in mid-19th-through mid-20th-Century French painting and sculpture. Exhibition “presents two parallel tracks of artistic experimentation: one following the landscape tradition and the other figurative art. It examines how these different paths both progressed towards abstraction.” Close to 30 works are on view, including Bouguereau’s *Young Shepherdess* and pieces by Monet, Toulouse-Lautrec, Renoir, Degas, others.

“Lyric Visions from Nezami’s *Quintet*” includes more than 20 paintings created for or inspired by Nezami’s texts, “among the most celebrated and influential poetic works in all of Persian literature.” Paintings range in date from 15th to 20th Centuries. Closes Sunday, December 16.

For further information, call 619-232-7931. (BALBOA PARK)

Timken Museum of Art, “Drawn to Rome: French Neoclassical Sketchbooks and Prints” explores sketches and prints by young French painters and architects who studied in Rome. Work by these artists “helped spark a revival in classical aesthetics that transformed 18th-Century French art.” Closes Sunday, January 13.

Permanent collection includes European old master paintings, 18th- and 19th-Century American paintings, and Russian icons. *Saint Bartholomew*, the only Rembrandt painting on public display in San Diego, is featured. 619-239-5548. (BALBOA PARK)

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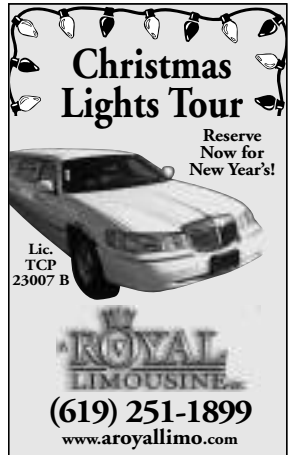
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THEATER LISTINGS

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

Amahl and the Night Visitors

Lyric Opera of San Diego presents Gian Carlo Menotti's holiday opera about the three kings, and the crippled boy who wants to bring a gift to Bethlehem. STEPHEN AND MARY BIRCH NORTH PARK THEATRE, UNIVERSITY AVENUE AT 29TH STREET, NORTH PARK, THROUGH DECEMBER 23; THURSDAY AT 7:30 P.M. MATINEE SATURDAY AND SUNDAY AT 2:30 P.M. 619-239-8836.

An American Christmas

Lamb's Players stages its historical reenactment of Christmas in 1907 at the Hotel del Coronado, which includes a cast of 30, songs, and a five-course meal. HOTEL DEL CORONADO, THROUGH DECEMBER 30, NIGHTLY AT 6:30 P.M. 619-437-0600.

A Christmas Carol

Kinney Productions continues its "Julian holiday tradition" with Don Winslow's adaptation of Dickens's popular story. Scott Kinney directed. JULIAN TOWN HALL, 2129 MAIN STREET, JULIAN, THROUGH DECEMBER 23; FRIDAY AND SATURDAY AT 7:30 P.M. MATINEE SUNDAY AT 1:00 P.M. 760-765-1688.

A Christmas Carol

North Coast Repertory Theatre presents a new version (by Jacqueline Pardue Goldfinger) of the popular Dickens story. Joe Powers directed. NORTH COAST REPERTORY THEATRE, 987D LOMAS SANTA FE DRIVE, SOLANA BEACH, THROUGH DECEMBER 30. FRIDAY AT 7 P.M., SATURDAY AT 6 P.M. MATINEES ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER

20, AT NOON; THURSDAY, DECEMBER 27, PLUS FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS, AT 2 P.M. (858) 481-1055 OR (888) 776-NCRT (6278).

A Christmas Carol: Not-So-Tiny Tim's Great Big Musical!

Vox Nova Theatre Company presents the world premiere of Ruff Yeager's holiday musical, in which Tiny Tim, now grown up, has three ghostly visitors. Susan Stratton directed. 6TH@PENN THEATRE, 3704 SIXTH AVENUE, HILLCREST, THROUGH DECEMBER 23; THURSDAY THROUGH SATURDAY AT 8:00 P.M. SUNDAY AT 7:00 P.M. MATINEE SUNDAY AT 2:00 P.M. 858-539-6251.

How the Grinch Stole Christmas

The Old Globe presents its holiday show, about the Green Meanie and hapless Whoville. The tenth anniversary production includes three new songs. OLD GLOBE THEATRE, SIMON EDISON CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, BALBOA PARK, THROUGH DECEMBER 30; TUESDAY THROUGH SUNDAY AT 7:30 P.M. FOR MATINEE SCHEDULE, CALL 619-234-5623.

Irving Berlin's White Christmas

Welk Resort Theatre presents the San Diego premiere of a new musical based on the melodies of the 1954 movie, including "Blue Skies," "Happy Holidays," and the title song. Jon Engstrom directed and choreographed. WELK RESORT THEATRE, THROUGH DECEMBER 30; TUESDAY, THURSDAY, AND SATURDAY AT 8:00 P.M. MATINEE TUESDAY THROUGH THURSDAY, SATURDAY AND SUNDAY AT 1:45 P.M. 760-749-3448.

It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play

In Cygnet Theatre's holiday show, you not only watch the familiar story of George Bailey, you also watch how it's made in a 1947 radio studio: announcers, flashing applause signs, even a commercial for Lux soap. A change happens toward the end, however. The fiction trumps the fact. As George undergoes an existentialist identity crisis, the actors become the characters, the story steps forward, and how it's being made disappears. Along the way, the show's a treat, especially Scott Paulson's inventive sounds — like a popped top hat for an opening parachute, or a flicked ice cream scoop for crickets. Directed by Sean Murray, wearing Jeanne Reith's wide-body, double-breasted suits and lighter-than-air dresses, the cast performs in the hyper-acting style of the period. As George, Tom Andrew has the antsy "shoot the works" style down pat. His performance recalls Jimmy Stewart's in the movie, true. But the bigger crime would be if it didn't. Melissa Fernandes, Veronica Murphy, and Brenda Dodge sing (and flash those cinematic, post-WWII smiles)



Amahl and the Night Visitors

beautifully. They do a spunky commercial for "Lux Toilet Cake" that's both spot on and a hoot.

Worth a try.

CYGNET THEATRE, 6663 EL CAJON BOULEVARD, COLLEGE AREA, THROUGH DECEMBER 30; WEDNESDAY THROUGH SATURDAY AT 8:00 P.M. SUNDAY AT

7:00 P.M. MATINEE SUNDAY AT 2:00 P.M. 619-337-1525.

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**Lamb's Players
Festival of Christmas**

Now in its 30th year, Lamb's Players annual holiday show has a new script by Kerry Meads: a diverse group of stranded travelers celebrate the season with stories and songs.

LAMB'S PLAYERS THEATRE, 1142 ORANGE AVENUE, CORONADO, THROUGH DECEMBER 29; TUESDAY THROUGH THURSDAY AT 7:30 P.M. FRIDAY AND SATURDAY AT 8:00 P.M. SUNDAY AT 6:00 P.M. MATINEE SATURDAY AT 4:00 P.M. AND SUNDAY AT 2:00 P.M. 619-437-0600.

La Pastorela de la Raza

Teatro Mascara Magica stages its 17th annual (and very popular) Holiday show, in which Lucifer and his "nasty minions" try to stop shepherds from going to Bethlehem. William Virchis directed. LYCEUM THEATRE, 79 HORTON PLAZA, DOWNTOWN, THROUGH DECEMBER 30; THURSDAY THROUGH SATURDAY AT 7:30 P.M. MATINEE SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29, AND SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30, AT 2:00 P.M. 619-544-1000.

**La Posada Magica: The
Magical Journey**

Hispanic Arts Theatre presents the San Diego debut of a musical play ("performed in English with a Latin beat") about a young girl

who joins her neighborhood posada on Christmas Eve. LYCEUM THEATRE, 79 HORTON PLAZA, DOWNTOWN, THROUGH DECEMBER 23; FRIDAY AND SATURDAY AT 8:00 P.M. MATINEE SATURDAY AND SUNDAY AT 3:00 P.M. 619-544-1000.

National Comedy Theatre

Improvisational comedy, making up funny stuff on the spot, is difficult enough. Years ago, however, Keith Johnstone thought it'd be more exciting if gone competitively. He got the idea from pro wrestling ("where Terrible Turks mangled defrocked priests while grannies waved their handbags"). National Comedy Theatre, an offshoot of Johnstone's TheatreSports (artistic director Gary Kramer says the two compare like "rugby and American football"), resembles an athletic event more than an improve. Teams wear uniforms and compete on ActroTurf. Using suggestions from the audience, they play "Emotional Symmetry," "Blind Line," and "Freeze Tag," with judges awarding points to the best scenes. Klunkers and groaners get booed; quick wit rewarded (one of the most refreshing parts of the contest: people acknowledge failure, abundantly, then forget it). It makes for a lively, often funny evening. And Gary Kramer is one talented comedian.

Worth a try.

MARQUIS THEATER, 3717 INDIA STREET. MISSION HILLS, OPEN-ENDED RUN; FRI-

DAY AND SATURDAY AT 7:30 P.M. AND 9:45 P.M. 619-295-4999.

**Nuncrackers: The Nonsense
Christmas Musical**

The Broadway Theater stages the musical comedy, from the creators of *Nunsense*, about the little sisters of Hoboken. To raise money they're staging *The Nutcracker*. THE BROADWAY THEATER, 340 EAST BROADWAY, SUITE B, VISTA, THROUGH DECEMBER 22; THURSDAY THROUGH SATURDAY AT 7:30 P.M. MATINEE SATURDAY AT 2:00 P.M. 760-806-7905.

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Joel’s divorce cast such a negative reflection on a clan programmed to succeed. So when the extended family comes for Christmas, after a year apart, all hell pretty much breaks loose. Then, in a leap even red-nosed reindeers wouldn’t attempt when sober, they come back together and enjoy some late-evening holiday pie. The leap’s a whopper. And the world-premiere script, by Ami Chini and Tom Zohar, raises as many questions as it answers and needs stronger dramatic arcs and builds. Joshua Everett Johnson, one of the best actors around, has directed the play for emotional truth. This gives his cast chances to cut loose (Wendy Waddell, with an impressively sustained, earth-shaking tirade), to ground their characters (Charlie Rien-deau’s nicely understated, funny Gramps, grumpy with good reason), and feel deeply (Francis Gercke’s divorced Joel, not spending Christmas with his daughter). But genuine emotions also expose gaps in the script’s fuzzy motivations, one-dimensional characters, and abrupt vaultings over the edge, then bounding back up. If the family feels so deeply, how could they suddenly revert to their ostrich “everything’s peachy” lives?

NEW VILLAGE ARTS THEATRE, 2787B STATE STREET, CARLSBAD, THROUGH DECEMBER 23; THURSDAY THROUGH SATURDAY AT 8:00 P.M. MATINEE SUNDAY AT 2:00 P.M. 760-433-3245.

San Diego Theatresports: The Funhouse

A cross between improvisational comedy and *Family Feud*, The Funhouse combines improv with competitive scene-making, with the audience awarding points to the winning team. Purists might balk at the odiousness of comparisons used in this format, but the “game show,” on Fridays, is a kick. The 90-minute evening offers different bits. The winner gets a banana, the loser a “forfeit.” Some attempts went nowhere (improv is tough: I did it in my, as hindsight reveals, callow youth). Others made amazing twists and turns. The group has more hits than misses, and their guru, Keith Johnstone, wrote one of the very best books I’ve read about making theater. They put his pearls to good use. Their motto: “Remember, when it’s not funny, it’s art.”

Worth a try.

THE FUNHOUSE 6822 EL CAJON BOULEVARD (BETWEEN 68TH AND 69TH), COLLEGE AREA. FRIDAY AT 7:45 P.M. SATURDAY AT 7:45 P.M. AND 9:45 P.M. 619-465-7469.

Traditions of Christmas

For its 15th anniversary “holiday spectacular,” Christian Community Theater has added ten new musical numbers.

EAST COUNTY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER, 210 EAST MAIN STREET, EL CAJON, THROUGH DECEMBER 23; THURSDAY THROUGH SATURDAY AT 7:00 P.M. SUNDAY AT 6:00 P.M. MATINEE SATURDAY AND SUNDAY AT 2:00 P.M. 619-588-0206.

Triple Espresso: A Highly Caffeinated Comedy

Hugh Butternut’s done his lounge act at the Triple Espresso Coffee-



How the Grinch Stole Christmas

house 20 years to the day. While patrons sip a house blend — “Grape,” “Scandinavian Blizard,” or “Mokoko Cocoa Mocha” — Hugh plays ’70s tunes

on the piano. He and his companions, here to celebrate Hugh’s anniversary, got stuck in the ’70s. The trio used to be Maxwell, Butternutt, and Bean, a comedy

group that never went far. They’re “losers,” they admit, but not “ordinary” ones. And hey, their reunion could help them face searing issues from their

mediocre pasts. The story line’s straight from *Forever Plaid*. There’s also the *Forever Plaid* problem: the three comedians are far too talented to play inept characters. One’s a whiz at the piano. Another’s a first-rate mime, and the third’s a crackerjack magician. The trio’s so talented, when the plot has them complain of difficulties to overcome, you wish they’d quit trumping up the pseudo-drama and get on with this highly entertaining, if lightweight show.

Worth a try.

HORTON GRAND THEATRE, 444 FOURTH AVENUE, GASLAMP QUARTER, THROUGH FEBRUARY 17; THURSDAY AT 7:30 P.M. FRIDAY AT 8:00 P.M. SATURDAY AT 5:00 P.M. AND 8:00 P.M. SUNDAY AT 3:00 P.M. AND 7:00 P.M. 619-234-9583.

Where There’s a Will... There’s a Wake

Mystery Café Dinner Theatre presents James Pascarella and Will Roberson’s interactive comedy, set in a 1920s speakeasy where suspicion shrouds every “gangster, game, and dame.” Pascarella directed.

MYSTERY CAFE, IMPERIAL HOUSE RESTAURANT, 505 KALMIA STREET, MIDTOWN, OPEN-ENDED RUN; FRIDAY AND SATURDAY AT 8:00 P.M. 619-544-1600.

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Calendar

MUSIC SCENE

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The First Rocket Man

When Ike Turner died at his San Marcos home on the morning of December 12, his band was in the next room

blurt

the inside track

setting up to play. It was to be a surprise gig, but Ike wasn't expected to join in. He was too sick for that, says Kevin Cooper, his bassist of 12 years. The idea was to bring together the musicians from Ike's recent Grammy Award-winning album and perform for the ailing bandleader.

"We were gonna start playing," says Cooper, "and then have him come out, and maybe he'd start giving some orders like he usually did." Cooper laughs a little when he

says this. A large part of the reunion, Cooper says, was Ann Thomas's idea. Thomas, a former Ikette, was married to Turner in 1981. Cooper says she had been staying with him at the house, helping to care for him.

"Ike had called her to come and be with him because he trusted her a lot," Thomas

fed the band breakfast when they arrived after 10 a.m. "She told Billy [Ray] to get his drums and set up, and then she went into Ike's room. She sat Ike up on the bed and told him everybody was here. She came out for some reason. And then, when she went back in to get him, he had fallen back on the bed. That's when we heard the screaming."

Cooper called 911.

"A girl named Fiona, I believe her name is, who has been taking care of Ike on and off for the last several months,

feeding him and giving him his medicine, she started giving him CPR, pushing on his chest." Cooper says the 911 operator instructed him to get Turner's body off the bed and onto the floor.

"[Fiona and Ann Thomas] did that, and they still tried to revive him, you know, pushing on his chest. The operator was walking me through how to give CPR. I was translating what she was saying to me to Fiona and Ann. And then the paramedics arrived. They began their whole procedure of trying to revive him, which seemed like it just took forever. It seemed like an hour."

Cooper says the paramedics finally stopped CPR and pronounced Ike Turner dead.

In the days before his death, Turner had been preparing to record another CD with his band.

"He had just invested over \$50,000 in his recording studio, which is complete state-of-the-art, everything

automated," says Cooper. "He had just revamped the whole thing to make a new record. He just never got up the energy." Cooper says that Turner suffered from chronic emphysema.

"No one talked to Ike that morning except Anne



IKE TURNER AT HOME, 2006

Thomas. Her story to me was that he wanted breakfast at about eight or a little after. He wanted oatmeal with some grapes. He ate, and then he laid back down."

Is there anything else Cooper remembers from that day?

"After breakfast, I was playing piano and Ernest Lane [a member of the band and Ike's childhood friend of some 70 years] sang this old church hymn that Ike had recorded years ago called 'There Is No

Secret What God Can Do.' That hymn, that is the last song that Ike Turner heard."

— Dave Good

Making Axl Proud

Against Me! played 91X's "Nightmare Before Xmas" concert at Cox Arena. Uniformed Marines were at the December 9 show to collect donations for the Toys for Tots campaign.

"[Against Me! front man Tom Gabel] told the audience that if they had known that the Marine Corps was sponsoring the show, they never would have played," says a concert attendee.

"[Gabel] said that they did not want anyone to buy their merchandise because the venue was forwarding some of what they got to the Marines." (Venues typically collect between 10 and 15 percent of sales from bands who peddle T-shirts, jackets, and caps.)

Neither Against Me's record-label publicist nor the

band's management company commented on the statements made by Gabel.

91X program director Phil Manning, who made the decision to have the band appear, says Against Me! was "uninformed" about where proceeds from their merchandise sales go — that no money at all went to the Marines.

"The band's management could have told us up front if they had a problem [with the presence of uniformed Marines]," says Manning. "We could have made other arrangements."

Manning says the outburst was "immature.... I think they



AGAINST MARINES! (GABEL, 2ND FROM LEFT)

could have taken a cue from Green Day as to how to push their agenda like [Green Day] did with their *American Idiot* record.... A few people lashed

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MUSIC SCENEblurt
continued

out at the radio station. Because it was our show, a couple military wives came up to our 'street team' and told us their husbands were in the military and they thought it was disrespectful."

A concert attendee says Gabel did have a valid political point to make because the Marines were there as much to recruit as they were to collect toys.

"Certainly they were recruiting," says Manning. "Just as they use video games to recruit, they have figured out a way to tap into the youth market."

— Ken Leighton

Only So Much Coke

Drummer Sharie Hall, 31, says she and her three bandmates in Unloaded share 29 years of "clean time." They all met in recovery and have been a band for two years. She admits they have used "...heroin, meth, cocaine, pot, crack, booze, VCR head cleaner, jet fuel, nitrous oxide...."

She says she and her punk/goth/metal bandmates "...are emotional roller coasters. Sometimes we want to kill each other in practice."

Recently, lead singer Amy Norfleet relapsed.

"She hit her first real rock bottom 30 days ago," says Hall. "She was driving in Riverside, and she was pulled

over. She spent the night in jail. She had six years [of sobriety] before that.

"We told her we were dismantling the band unless she does 90-90 — that's 90 meetings in 90 days.... We told her if we had to cancel shows, we'd cancel shows. And we did. We canceled shows at the Jumping Turtle and at Kadan."

Norfleet has been going to her meetings, and the band has resumed practicing. When they play, Hall says Unloaded can bring a crowd.



UNLOADED'S BEST SUPPORT GROUP

"Our friends come in and pack the place. But on the nights we play, the places we play don't make that much money. Half the audience is in recovery."

"You can only drink so much Coke," says bassist Alan Stewart.

The rehab experience does not dominate Unloaded's lyrics.

"Real recovering people don't preach," says Stewart. "Rehab sucks. [Celebrities] go to a posh rehab. The rehab we went to is hard."

They say they wouldn't mind having a drinker in their band.

"We'd be open to having a guitarist who is a normal drinker," says Hall. "But the four of us are so close. We know we're addicts."

Both Hall and Stewart say they have no problem playing in bars.

"I could see how people

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JAY ALLEN SANFORD



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could relapse by playing at bars," says Stewart. "But if I wasn't 100 percent in recovery I wouldn't do it."

Unloaded appears Saturday, December 22, at Brick by Brick.

— Ken Leighton

Why It's Called a University

San Diego fans of international underground rock were excited for the December 5 Ché Café performance by Damo Suzuki. The Japanese singer is best known as vocalist for German prog group Can, which set the standard for experimental "krautrock" in the early '70s. The diminutive 57-year-old Suzuki now tours the world playing with different bands or assemblages of sympathetic musicians — no rehearsal, pure improv.

Creating a different sort of excitement at UCSD was the bomb threat that had been called in to the La Jolla campus earlier that day. Members of the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force combed the grounds. A suspicious device was

discovered at the Leichtag Biomedical Research Building. The feds later determined that the device was not a bomb and the call was a hoax. (Recently fired former UC San Diego lab technician Timothy Byron Kalka, 50, was taken into custody on December 9. He pleaded not guilty the next day to a federal charge of providing false information.)

"Yeah, seeing the FBI at the Ché was a bit alarming," said Sam Lopez, who performs solo under the name Zsa Zsa Gabor but was part of a special version of SD noise act Riververb, which opened for Suzuki. "I was one of the first ones there, and as I was entering the back door of the



MADMAN AT THE MIKE (SUZUKI)

Ché, I saw this gray Ford sedan pull up in the parking lot. At first I thought that it was a group of skinheads. It

must have been the patches, flight jackets, and closely cropped hair that did it....

"That night was kind of weird, too, because a residing professor was handing out extra credit to students who attended the show. So there were kids there who wouldn't normally be into that style of music, milling around, scratching their heads, going, 'What the hell is this?'... [Suzuki is] such a quiet guy, but when he gets onstage, he's a wailing madman."

In the weeks preceding the show, Kill Me Tomorrow's Dan Wise, who played guitar for Suzuki, said, "When I returned home from tour, I...had received an email advertising the show, and I was listed in the backing band lineup.... I guess I had to do it. The unorganized aspect of it made me nervous. I thought it was going to be a train wreck. It turned out amazing."

— David Stampone

Mr. Brown, Still Out of Town

James Brown died about one year ago, on Christmas day. Greyboy Allstars saxophonist/singer Karl Denson played with Brown five years ago — 12/21/02 — when Brown made a surprise appearance at Madison Square Garden with

Denson and the Dave Matthews Band.

"The whole thing that you have to call him Mr. Brown or you will be hit by the firing squad is all true, it was the funniest thing. Dave Matthews got a little comfortable with him, called him James, and his guitar player kind of sidled up to him and just said, 'It's Mr. Brown.'"

Brown's financial legacy is still in turmoil, with two former estate trustees filing court papers earlier this month that accuse a judge of forcing them to resign with "improper judicial influence." Brown's six known children have accused trustees of mismanaging the estate, and others have come forward claiming to be Brown's progeny.

Local progeny — Brown tribute band Supabad — features Greyboy Allstars percussionist Steve Haney and members of Psydecar, Plan B, Wise Monkey Orchestra, and Revelations. Supabad's next show is tomorrow, December 21, at Winstons in O.B.

— Jay Allen Sanford

CONTRIBUTORS

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This Week In Music

Thursday 20

Bassist Sami Yaffa (Hanoi Rocks, New York Dolls) brings punk pulse to **Mad Juana's** gypsy-folk with heavy-handed guitar play. Dark chanteuse Karmen Guy's voodoo voice and their eight-piece orkestar drag a mash of Eastern European tradition — Balkan beats, flamenco rhythms — through NYC '70s protopunk. Imagine if the Velvet had come up in the dark-arts Bayou instead of Warhol's silk-screened factory. Check out Juana's '06 disc

Acoustic Voodoo; it isn't Beirut's indie-isms or Dresden

Dolls cabaret, this is rollicking trad fare. Mad Juana sets up their



SAMI YAFFA WITH MAD JUANA AT BAR PINK ELEPHANT

"Gypsy Hotel" at Bar Pink Elephant. Recommend you check in early as they *should* sell the modest North Park room.... Psych-folkies **Fantastic Magic** will follow the Citizen Video short-films fest at Whistle Stop. Grab a copy of the Fantastic's *Witch Choir* and hop on the up-and-coming trio's broken carousel.... **Get Back Loretta** gets back to Beauty Bar. The 2007 SDMA winners (Best Pop Album for debut *Over the Wall*) play poprock 'n' blues stomps with bouncing piano and hooky vocals. *Customers who bought this item also bought Dr. Dog, Spoon.* The Loretas share the back-yard stage with **Crash Encore** and **Jupiter**.... SD's other Beatles-named band **Reeve Oliver** bring power pop to Casbah. Their latest, *Touchtone Inferno*, now available 'lectronically via iTunes. **Satisfaction** and **Say Vinyl** also on the bill.... Folk-rockers **Venice** send up vocal harmonies and acoustic strum-alongs at Belly Up with like-minded **Michael Tiernan**.

Friday 21

Heeeeey! *Papa's got a brand new bag!* Hearing good-to-great things about James Brown tribute **Supabad**, who bring the godfather's funk to Winstons Friday night. The dozen-plus players feature San Diego luminaries Elijah Emanuel, Latanya Locket, Jose Sinatra, and Alley Stewart.... Funk-n-jazz act **Greyboy Allstars** (feat. Karl Denson) are touring new SCI Fidelity disc *What Happened to Television?* through Belly Up before taking it national. African drum show **Leon Mobley and Da Lion** open....

Gone but not forgotten. The **Count**

Basie Orchestra settles in at Anthology for a three-night stint through Sunday. If there's an old-school jazz-n-blues lover on your Christmas list, can't beat the Hall of Famers' 17 Grammys.... Rolling Stoners **Dirty Sweet** will deliver their groomed stage show to Casbah Friday and Saturday nights. The rock-roll throwbacks won two SDMA's this year for Best



DIRTY SWEET AT CASBAH

Rock Band and Best Rock Album, *Of Monarchs and Beggars*. Catch 'em with dance-rock dudes the **Prayers** and **Astra** Friday night and **Year Long Disaster** and **Desert Diamonds** on Saturday.

Saturday 22

It's a very punky Christmas...San Dago's hardcore heroes **Shot Out Hoods** bring the blam to Brick by Brick Saturday night. The straight-edge punk

quintet resurrect for "Christmas Special" sets, including **F'ing, Unloaded**, and **Authentic Sellout**.... Placentia rapcore band **Kottonmouth**

Kings floats *Cloud Nine* (their ninth) over House of Blues. The Kings split the bill with



KOTTONMOUTH KINGS AT HOUSE OF BLUES

Subnoize Souljaz and **OPM**.... And Zombie Lounge harbors North County's **Hillstreet Strangers, Vlad and the Impalers, Deadites Revenge**, and the **Experiments**.... Prefer your punk rock country-fried? Scottie Blinn and his **Mississippi Mudsharks** slither into PB mainstay Tiki House for holiday sets. Blinn used to hoist his big ol' hollowbody while chompin' a fat stogie — and he sang around that thang. Also played in a band with cartoonist Mike Judge, once upon a time. Ask him about it. Stories are entertaining, if a bit base (fans can imagine).... **Cash'd Out** get the Man in Black down pat at Belly Up with rockabilly rabble-rousers the **Deere Johns**.

Sunday 23

Casbah and 94/9 host "Holiday Hoedown" Sunday night. Off on Monday? Git yer giddy up with **Starcrossed**, the **Strangers Six, Buzz Campbell**, and **Hot Rod Lincoln**. This is a free show with comp'd food provided by Betty's Mexican. Live music starts at 8p.... Belly Up pres-

ents "Christmas Eve Eve" with the **Dave Matthews Band Experience** (aka **Stepping Feet**). The Feet offer all your fave DMB tunes done true. They'll be joined by local prog rockers **Stripes and Lines** as the BUp crew judge their annual "Ugly Sweater Contest."... Citizen Video will screen holiday classic *A Christmas Carol* at Whistle Stop for all you Scrooge droogies.... And a reminder: it's the last night to catch the **Basie Orchestra** at Anthology.

Monday 24

Ho ho hold on, you thought bookings would be thin Xmas Eve... You forgot about Casbah's annual **Exile on Kettner** send-up. Some of your favorite local garage-rock guys get their Stones on for this yearly trib to the bad-boy Brits, as **Los Maricones de Rock** cover the Rolling Stones all night. Think you can stomp 'em, bring it!... Cross town at Tower Bar, **Ladie Dottie and the Diamonds** aren't takin' the night off, either. The old-school jazz-n-blues combo will rock their regular Monday-night post.... And Winstons in O.B. will prop the **Dead Poets Society** for a night of open mic'd spoken word. Sign up early, grab a PBR, and free your verse, brah!

Tuesday 25

Bubkes for Christmas.

Wednesday 26

Buckfast Superbee, Spell Toronto, and **First Wave Hello** will trade '90s-flavored alterna-rock sets on the Casbah stage Wednesday night. Superbee reemerged this year with their second full-length, an s/t affair that trades the skronk of 2001 debut *You Know How the Song Goes* for a more pop-conscious collection. Toronto's *Be More Careful* available via iTunes. First Wave spills new wave keys into indie rock for something a little more experimental. Solid sets for your holiday hangover.... Post-punk trio **Building Better Monsters** thrash guit, bass, and drums at Zombie Lounge. Order up "Mediocre Burrito." The Monsters split the bill with a band calling themselves — no joke — the **Beatles**.

— Barnaby Monk

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DEC 21	■ 80'Z ALL STARS	10p-2a
DEC 22	■ JAIME VALLE	5p-9p
DEC 22	■ HOT ROD LINCOLN	10p-2a
DEC 23	■ DAVID PATRONE	8p-11p



VIEJAS
ENTERTAINMENT
& PRODUCTION

Paul Has Contributed the Most

“A pop song today will not be like a pop song 50 years from now.”

Steven Ybarra is a Texas-born Carlsbad resident who began studying music when he was three. He was the front man for 34Below, which released five CDs and toured nearly every state in the country.

After 1000 shows and years of climbing the rock and roll ladder, Ybarra suffered encephalitis, an acute inflammation of the brain commonly caused by a viral infection. Ybarra could no longer meet the physical demands of touring and performing and had to quit 34Below. Since 2005 he has been writing and recording new material and performing as a solo act at various venues around San Diego.

WORST GIG?

“If I had to pick one of the worst gigs ever it probably would be when I participated in a variety show. It was, like, out of bizarro world, sort of David Lynch meets *The Twilight Zone*. The talent was scary.”

LISTS MICHAEL HEMMINGSON

IF YOU COULD HAVE LUNCH WITH ANYONE...

“I would probably sit down with someone like George Martin or Quincy Jones, as their ability to hear melody and rhythm is unbelievable. I am sure I would learn a few things about authentic cadences that I could never experience in a music theory class. I would like to play them some of my tunes and get their input.”

FAVORITE BAND OF ALL TIME?

“If I have to pick one, it’d be U2. This band has been a trailblazer in modern rock and pop as we know it. I don’t think there are many souls in this world who have heard pop/rock music and do not like at least one song from this band.”

BEST GIG?

“It would have to be a toss-up between the time that John [Ondrasik], the lead singer from Five for Fighting, who was our opening act, came up and sang one of my songs with me during our performance. But that would just about equal the time that we opened for Hootie and Blowfish and Darius came up and also sang a tune with me.”

FAVORITE DEAD CELEBRITY?

“Elvis. It’s amazing how much one individual could affect and change the entertainment industry in just a short period of time. Between movies, songs, and concerts, he seriously influenced pop culture.”

FAVORITE LIVE CELEBRITY?

“I really do appreciate what Joel Osteen has done with his church in Houston. It is one of the biggest, if not the biggest, Christian church in America. I am not so much fascinated with the numbers but more with the message he preaches. He talks about the fact that all of us, through Christ, can be victorious over anything we believe by faith will happen.”



Steven Ybarra

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTINA SANCHEZ PHOTOGRAPHY

WHICH BEATLE?

“Paul has contributed the most to pop music, overall. I know John was talented — and if he were alive today he may have had as decorated a career as Paul — but Paul was the most versatile, creating songs with Michael Jackson and Wings and still thriving in his solo career in his 60s.”

THREE MOMENTS THAT SUCKED...

1. “When I had meningitis and I had to get a spinal tap.”
2. “When my grandfather passed away.”
3. “When my car was stolen — inside were my two guitars, one of them the first I ever bought, as well as my computer with all my music and contacts in it.”

WHERE DO YOU SEE MUSIC GOING IN THE 21st CENTURY?

“We will encounter more and more dissonance. A pop song today will not be like a pop song 50 years from now. The public will be more involved and educated about music and therefore not as impressed with the cadences that we know today. It will lose its simplicity even more than it has and become more complex.”

WORST JOBS?

1. I used to have to clean beaten-down rental apartments after tenants would leave, and they would not clean up after themselves. It was disgusting.
2. I worked as a laborer in construction.
3. I was once a chauffeur for a crooked limo company. ■

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Friday **12.21**
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Foundation
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SAT DEC 22ND

Saturday **12.22**
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JAY J
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FRIDAY DECEMBER 28TH 2007
THE CRYSTAL METHOD
(DJ SET)

Friday **12.28**
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THE CRYSTAL METHOD
(DJ SET)

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Foundation
SAT DEC 29TH
NYE EVE EVE
WITH THE ANALOG SHOW
DJ Cullan & Sean Wilson

Saturday **12.29**
Foundation

The Analog Show

Jeff Carroll
Sean Wilson

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MONDAY DECEMBER 31



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THE STEELY DAMNED



SAT 12/28 7:30PM/9:30PM

THE PETE ESCOVEDO ORCHESTRA



12/29 & 30 7:30PM/9:30PM

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1/8 & 9 7:30PM

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MONDAY, DECEMBER 31

TWO SEATINGS

5:30pm – 8:30pm

Anthology House Band

Amuse + 3 course prix fixe menu

9:00pm – 1:00am

Anthology House Band/Lee Rocker

Amuse + 4 course prix fixe menu

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CHARMAINE CLAMOR	1/04
DETROIT UNDERGROUND	1/04
MICHAEL WARD	1/05
ROD PIAZZA & The Mighty Flyers	1/11
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CHUCHITO VALDES	1/18
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Calendar

CONCERTS

Music videos for all concerts now on SanDiegoReader.com

THIS WEEK'S CONCERTS

THURSDAY

Venice: Belly Up Tavern, Thursday, December 20, 143 South Cedros Avenue, Solana Beach. 858-481-8140.

FRIDAY

Shiny Toy Guns: House of Blues, Friday, December 21, 1055 Fifth Avenue, Gaslamp. 619-299-2583.

The Count Basie Orchestra: Anthology, Friday, December 21, 1337 India Street, San Diego. 619-595-0300.

SATURDAY

The Kottonmouth Kings: House of Blues, Saturday, December 22, 1055 Fifth Avenue, Gaslamp. 619-299-2583.

Peter White: Spreckels Theatre, Saturday, December 22, 121 Broadway, downtown. 619-235-9500.

The Count Basie Orchestra: Anthology, Saturday, December 22, 1337 India Street, San Diego. 619-595-0300.

The Dirty Sweet: The Casbah, Saturday, December 22, 2501 Kettner Boulevard, San Diego. 619-232-4355.

SUNDAY

The Count Basie Orchestra: Anthology, Sunday, December 23, 1337 India Street, San Diego. 619-595-0300.

UPCOMING CONCERTS

DECEMBER

K-Ci and JoJo: Viejas Casino DreamCatcher Show Room, Friday, December 28, 5000 Willows Road, Alpine. 619-445-5400.

Sweet and Tender Hooligans: The Casbah, Friday and Saturday, December 28 and 29, 2501 Kettner Boulevard, San Diego. 619-232-4355.

Young Jeezy: House of Blues, Saturday, December 29, 1055 Fifth Avenue, Gaslamp. 619-299-2583.

K.C. & the Sunshine Band: 4th & B, Saturday, December 29, 345 B Street, San Diego. 619-231-4343.

Pato Banton: Belly Up Tavern, Saturday, December 29, 143 South Cedros Avenue, Solana Beach. 858-481-8140.

The Pete Escovedo Orchestra: Anthology, Saturday and Sunday, December 29 and 30, 1337 India Street, San Diego. 619-595-0300.

Cracker and Camper Van Beethoven: Belly Up Tavern, Sunday, December 30, 143 South Cedros Avenue, Solana Beach. 858-481-8140.

The Aggrolites: Belly Up Tavern, Monday, December 31, 143 South Cedros Avenue, Solana Beach. 858-481-8140.

Reverend Horton Heat: House of Blues, Monday, December 31, 1055 Fifth Avenue, Gaslamp. 619-299-2583.

The Mother Hips and Billy Midnight: The Casbah, Monday, December 31, 2501 Kettner Boulevard, San Diego. 619-232-4355.

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Thursday 12/20

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Friday 12/21

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Saturday 12/22

DJ Beatnick

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Sunday 12/23

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Wednesday 12/26

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Thursday, December 20 • No Cover

3 EZ PIECES

Friday & Saturday, December 21 & 22 • No Cover

SERIOUS GUISE

Sunday, December 23 • No Cover

BLUES JAM anchored by the BLUES BROKERS

Wednesday, December 26

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40 Oz. to Freedom
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JumpTown a Swing Event
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Wednesday, January 9, 8:00 pm

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UFC 79

Saturday, December 29
No cover before 7 pm
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Calendar

CLUBS

DANCE

If you would like to include your DJ event, e-mail sellis@nethere.com or submit a listing online at SanDiegoReader.com by clicking on the music section. Deadline is 5 p.m. Friday, the week prior to publication. The listings are free.

Air Conditioned: Wednesdays, *Club Nigel*, Steve West and DJ SG spin the '80s. Thursdays, *Too Cool for School*, old-skool hip-hop, and '80s. Fridays, rare groove, funk, and disco. Saturdays, *Cocktail Party*, dance in your dazzling duds. Sundays, guest DJ night. Mondays, hip-hop, funk, and soul with DJ 1979. Tuesdays, *Big Sonic Chill*, dream pop bliss. 4673 30th Street, North Park. 619-501-9831.

Brass Rail: Third Thursday of the month, *Pussy Galore*, live bands with DJ Robin Roth spinning electro, indie, and '80s. Second Friday of the month, *Club Fashion Whore*, fashion show and discotheque. Fourth Friday of the month, *Sabbat*, old skool '80s, gothic, and industrial with DJs Atom, Liquid Grey, and guests. 3796 Fifth Avenue, Hillcrest. 619-298-2233.

The Flame: Second Saturday of the month, *Sabbat*, gothic and industrial with DJs Robin Roth, Adam, and Diskdroid. 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.; 21 and up. 3780 Park Boulevard, Hillcrest. 619-295-4163.

Inferno Young Adult Nightclub: Fridays and Saturdays, DJ Kool T spins Top 40, techno, and '80s. Sundays, *Winter Break Jam* featuring DJ Dizzy D. Wednesdays, guest DJs spin hip-hop, R&B, and reggaeton. 9 p.m. to 1:15 a.m., high school students and up. 775 Metcalf Street, Escondido. 760-741-1271.

Kadan: First Saturday of the month, *BrokenBeat Night*, live electronic, crunk, and glitch hop. 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.; 21 and up. No cover. 4696 30th Street, North Park. 619-640-2500.

The Kava Lounge: First Saturday of the month, *Ascension*, underground dance music with DJs Robin Roth and Tom King. No cover. 2812 Kettner Boulevard, Middletown. 619-543-0933.

Static Lounge: Fourth Friday of the month, *Club Pop Noir*, electro, '80s, and indie with DJ Groundfloor and Edgartronic. 634 Broadway (between Sixth and Seventh Avenue), downtown. 619-544-1609.

Tio Leo's: Thursdays, zydeco dance with DJ Gator Boy. 8 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. 5302 Napa Street, Morena District. 619-542-1462.

Whiskey Girl: Fridays and Saturdays, DJ Marc Thrasher mixes music videos. Sundays, *10 Spot Sundays*, DJ Famous Dave mixes video requests. Mondays, *Manic Mondays*, DJ Marc Thrasher mixes '80s and '90s videos. Tuesdays and Wednesdays, DJ Famous Dave mixes music videos. 9 p.m.; 21 and up. 600 Fifth Avenue, downtown. 619-236-1616.

The Whistle Stop: Second Friday of the month, *Pussy Galore Stripped*, live bands with DJ Robin Roth spinning electro, indie, and '80s. 2236 Fern Street (corner of 30th and Juniper), South Park. 619-284-6784.

CLUBS BY AREA

If you wish to submit a listing, call 619-235-3000, ext. 405, night or day by 5 p.m. Friday, the week prior to publication. To send weekly or monthly schedules, fax to 760-788-1309 or mail to Reader Music Scene, P.O. Box 85803, San Diego CA 92186-5803. You may also submit information online at SanDiegoReader.com by clicking on the music section.

BEACHES

Bahia Resort Hotel, 998 West Mission Bay Drive, Mission Beach. 858-488-0551. Tangier Lounge: Thursday, 8 p.m. to 11 p.m., Friday and Saturday, 9 p.m. to midnight, and Wednesday, 8 p.m. to 11 p.m., *John Cain*, international/jazz/blues/Latin/pop/stand ards.

Bar Leucadian, 1542 North Coast Highway 101, Leucadia. 760-753-2094. Friday and Saturday, live classic/pop rock.

The Calypso Cafe, 576 North Highway 101, Encinitas. 760-632-8252. Thursday, *Raiz Music*, reggae. Friday, *Palos*. Saturday, *Triple Shot*, blues. Monday, *John Bennett and Friends*. Wednesday, *Luna Llena*, Latin.

'Canes, 3105 Ocean Front Walk, Mission Beach. 858-488-1780. Thursday, 8 p.m., *Blue Sky Blonde*, *Mosquito Head*, *Agent 22*, and *Jen Knight*, alternative/rock/metal. Friday, 8 p.m.,

Kemistry and Slower, rock. Saturday, *Grouch n' Eligh*, hip-hop/soul/progressive.

Dreamstreet, 2228 Bacon Street, Ocean Beach. 619-222-8131. Thursday, *Urban Legend Get Down*, hip-hop. Friday, *Diego Brown*, *Ricashay*, *Timz*, *Tech*, and the *Vintage Monster Band*, hip-hop. Saturday, *Fuzz Huzzi* and *Fighting for Nineveh*, rock. Sunday, reggae music. Wednesday, live rock/alternative.

E Street Cafe, 128 E Street, Encinitas. 760-230-2038. Music is acoustic/folk unless otherwise noted. Thursday, 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., *Joseph Angelastro*,

jazz. Friday, 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., *Chris Leussman*. Saturday, 8 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., *Katie and Ryder*. Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., *Doug Strock*, jazz piano.

Hennessey's Tavern (PB), 4650 Mission Boulevard, Pacific Beach. 858-483-8847. Friday, 10 p.m. to 1 a.m., *the Band in Black*, rockabilly.

Jack's Restaurant, 7863 Girard Avenue, La Jolla. 858-456-8115. Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., *Larry White*, contemporary jazz.

The Kraken, 2531 Old Highway 101, Cardiff. 760-436-6483. Thursday, 3 *EZ Pieces*, jazz. Friday and Saturday, *Serious Guise*, classic rock. Wednesday, *Juan Peso*, *Etched in Red*, *Big Blue Cat*, and *Scar'd Sanity*, rock/blues/metal/alternative.

La Valencia Hotel, 1132 Prospect Street, La Jolla. 858-454-0771. Friday and Saturday, 7:30 p.m. to 11 p.m., also, Sunday and Wednesday, 6:30 p.m., *Rick Ross*, piano/jazz.

The Lodge at Torrey Pines, 11480 N. Torrey Pines Road, La Jolla. 619-453-4420. Grill: Friday and Saturday,

6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., *Mike Nelson*, solo jazz guitar.

Manhattan Restaurant (at the Empress Hotel), 7766 Fay Avenue, La Jolla. 858-459-0700. Thursday, 8 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., *Tokeli and Friends*, jazz. Saturday, 9 p.m. to 11:30 p.m., *the Tokeli Jazz Quintet*.

710 Beach Club (formerly Blind Melons), 710 Garnet Avenue, Pacific Beach. 858-483-7844. Thursday, *Tim and the 23's*, rock. Friday, *One Drop*, reggae. Saturday, *Stranger* and *Organika*, reggae.

Calendar

CLUBS

BEACHES

(continued)

Shooters Bar and Grill, Sheraton La Jolla, 3299 Holiday Court, La Jolla. 858-453-5500. Tuesday, 7 p.m. to 11 p.m., *John Cain*, international jazz/blues/Latin/pop/standards.

Tiki House, 1152 Garnet Avenue, Pacific Beach. 858-273-9734. Thursday, *the Good Stuff*, rock. Friday, *the Chi Club*, classic rock. Saturday, *D.A. and the Hitmen and the Mississippi Mudsharks*, blues.

Turquoise Cafe, 873 Turquoise Street, Pacific Beach. 858-488-4200. Thursday, jazz trio. Friday, jazz quartet. Saturday, Latin jazz. Sunday, eclectic/world music. Monday, *Blue 44*, jazz. Tuesday, flamenco. Wednesday, blues.

Winstons, 1921 Bacon Street, Ocean Beach. 619-222-6822. Thursday, 9 p.m., *Lloyd Hennings* and *the Awah Band*, reggae. Friday, 9 p.m., *Supabad*, *Elijah Emanuel* and *the Revelations*, *Latanya Lockett*, *Jose Sinatra*, and *Alley Stewart*, R&B/soul/funk/reggae/rock. Saturday, 9 p.m., *Shoestring Strap* and *the Chi Club*, alternative country/rock. Wednesday, *the Underclassmen*, *the Common Loon*, *C.D.M.*, and *Nuclear Tomorrow*, punk/indie/alternative.

DOWNTOWN

Anthology, 1337 India Street, San Diego. 619-595-0300. Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, two shows, 7:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m., *the Count Basie Orchestra*, big-band swing.

The Casbah, 2501 Kettner Boulevard, midtown. 619-232-HELL. Music is rock/alternative/punk/rockabilly. Thursday, *Reeve Oliver*, *Satisfaction*, and *Say Vinyl*. Friday, *Dirty Sweet*, *the Prayers*, and *Astra*. Saturday, *Dirty Sweet*, *Year-Long Disaster*, and *Desert Diamonds*. Sunday, *Starcrossed*, *the Strangers Six*, *Buzz Campbell*, *Hot Rod Lincoln*, and

Action Andy and *His Haunted Honky-Tonkers*. Monday, *Los Maricones*, rock. Wednesday, *Buckfast Superbee*, *Spell Toronto*, and *First Wave Hello*.

Croce's Jazz Bar, 802 Fifth Avenue, downtown. 619-233-4355. Wednesday, *Fuzzy* and *the Bluesmen*, blues.

Dakota Grill and Spirits, 901 Fifth Avenue, downtown. 619-234-5554. Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, contemporary piano.

Dick's Last Resort, 345 Fourth Avenue, downtown. 619-231-9100. Thursday, 7 p.m. to 11 p.m., *Blue Rockit*, blues/rock. Friday and Saturday, rock and roll. Wednesday, *Private Domain*, rock, unplugged.

Dizzy's (Harbor Club Towers at Second and J Street), 200 Harbor Drive, San Diego. 858-270-7467. Saturday, 8 p.m., *Brian Levy* and *Mikan Zlatkovich*, jazz.

Dublin Square, 554 Fourth Avenue, Gaslamp. 619-239-5818. Traditional Irish folk music.

G5-Georges on Fifth, 835 Fifth Avenue (between E and F Streets), downtown. 619-702-0444. Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Wednesday, *Tom Barabas*, pianist.

Henry's Pub, 618 Fifth Avenue, downtown. 619-238-2389. Thursday, *Flock of 80's*. Friday, *Good Times*. Saturday, *Good Times*, classic rock. Tuesday, *the Stiletto*s, rockabilly. Wednesday, *Lady Dottie* and *the Diamonds*, blues.

House of Blues, 1055 Fifth Avenue, downtown. 619-299-2583. Friday, *Shiny Toy Guns*, *Datarock*, and *Moving Units*, indie/rock. Saturday, *the Kottonmouth Kings*, *Subnoize*, *Souljaz*, and *OPM*, hip-hop/punk/alternative/reggae.

Java Jones, 631 Ninth Street, downtown. 619-696-9664. Friday, 7 p.m., *Karin Carson* and *Matthew Blake*, Christmas music.

Jimmy Love's, 672 Fifth Avenue (corner of Fifth and G), downtown. 619-595-0123. Thursday, 6:30 p.m. to 11 p.m., *Masterpiece*. Friday, 9:45 p.m., *Diva Soul*, disco/Top 40. Saturday, 9:45 p.m., *the Reaganomics*, '80s dance.

NOTE

BY DAVE GOOD

The trick of the jazz big-band ensemble is to sound as one, such that the individual instruments are indistinguishable. Not counting the soloists, the intention is for a giant, brassy, music-making machine. It is a powerful vibe, I know — I played baritone sax in big-band jazz ensembles in high school and college. The format is fairly standard. Brass (trumpets and bones) make up the back wall of the band with percussion off to the sides — bass and guitar, drums and piano. Reeds, meaning saxes, sit in front because of the lack of sound-carry in the construct of their instruments. Each section chairs a soloist (or two), and the rest of the players carry the sound, which is something on loan from another

generation and influenced, to a large extent, by a pianist who went by the name of **Count Basie**.

When I think of Basie, the word “syncopation” comes to mind. William Basie learned stride piano from Fats Waller. In time he would morph that rolling, percussive sound into a distinctive vision that took almost two dozen musicians at a time to fully realize. Basie led his shows from behind the piano, answering his band's downbeats with loud, offbeat keyboard accents. It became a trademark sound, and he fronted it with the blues and jazz legends of the day — names like Billy Holiday, Joe Williams, and, later, Ella Fitzgerald and Frank Sinatra.

Count Basie died in a Florida hospital in 1984, almost 50 years after forming his first group in 1935 from the leavings of Bennie Moton's big band. So, what's left of the Basie Orchestra today? After winning 16 Grammys, critics call him an institution, but his band has



COUNT BASIE ORCHESTRA

never really stopped performing. Under different leaders, the Basie legacy has survived the boneyard of big bands with a blend of wizened veterans and new, younger players. It's old music made fresh, and it rips — just how the Count would have wanted it.

COUNT BASIE ORCHESTRA, Anthology, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, December 21-23. 619-595-0300. \$21 to \$63.

Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. to 11 p.m., *the Soul Revue*, dance/Top 40.

Martini Ranch, 528 F Street, downtown. 619-235-6100. Thursday, 40 Oz. to *Freedom*, punk/reggae/rock.

Patrick's II, 428 F Street, downtown. 619-233-3077. Music is blues/soul unless otherwise noted. Thursday, *Ayanna* and *the Exiles*. Friday, *Michele Lundeen* and *Blues Streak*. Saturday, *Family Style*. Sunday, *the Blues Invaders*. Tuesday, *Shelle Blue*. Wednesday, *Len Rainey* and *the Midnight Players*.

Rock Bottom, 401 G Street, Gaslamp. 619-231-7000. Friday and Saturday, live pop/rock/disco/dance.

Sevilla, 555 Fourth Avenue, downtown. 619-233-5979. Club Salsa: Thursday, *Orquesta Guarare*, salsa.

The Shout House, 655 Fourth Avenue, Gaslamp. 619-231-6700. Rock and roll sing-along dueling pianos.

The Westgate Hotel, 1055 Second Avenue, downtown. 619-238-1818. The Plaza Bar: Monday through Friday, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., *the Prince of Piano*, piano/pop.

Evening Entertainment: Thursday and Friday, 7 p.m. to 11 p.m., *Fran Loskota*, pop/jazz. Saturday, 8 p.m. to midnight, *Karen Giorgio*, cabaret. Sunday and Monday, 7 p.m. to 11 p.m., *Julio de la Huerta*, Latin. Tuesday and Wednesday, 7 p.m. to 11 p.m., *Faith Page*, international/standards.

Whiskey Girl, 600 Fifth Avenue, downtown. 619-236-1616. Thursday, *DaGroove*, rock hits, and *DJ Marc Thrasher*. Friday and Saturday, *DJ Marc Thrasher*. Sunday, *DJ Famous Dave*. Monday, *Manic Mondays* with *DJ Thrasher*. Tuesday, *DJ Famous Dave*. Wednesday, *the Stepping Feet*, a Dave Matthews Band tribute, pop/rock, and *DJ Famous Dave*.

SAN DIEGO

Albie's Beef Inn, 1201 Hotel Circle South, San Diego. 619-291-1103. Friday, 6:30 p.m., Saturday, 7 p.m., and Tuesday, 6:30 p.m., *David Timothy Smith*, piano bar.

American Legion Post 310, 465 47th Street, San Diego. 619-264-1919.

Thursday, 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., *the Post 310 Blues Band*. Sunday, 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., *Willowalot*, smooth jazz/funk.

Blarney Stone Pub, 5617 Balboa Avenue, Clairemont. 858-279-2033. Music is Irish/folk. Saturday, *Skelpin*. Tuesday, Irish jam session. Wednesday, *Robbie O'Reilly* or *Skelpin*.

Brass Rail, 3796 Fifth Avenue, San Diego. 619-298-2233. Thursday, 9:30 p.m., *Rhythm and the Method*, rock/blues.

Brick by Brick, 1130 Buenos Avenue, Bay Park. 619-275-LIVE. Thursday, *Strike Twelve* and *Flirting with Failure*, punk/rock/indie. Saturday, *the Shot Out Hoods*, *Fing*, *Unloaded*, and *Authentic Sellout*, punk/funk/rock.

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ALL AGES
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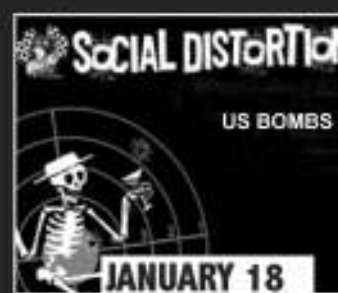
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JANUARY 31



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ALL AGES
FEBRUARY 13



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All dates, acts and ticket prices subject to change without prior notice. Subject to applicable service charges.

Calendar CLUBS

SAN DIEGO

(continued)

Epicentre, 8450 Mira Mesa Boulevard, Mira Mesa. 858-271-4000. Friday, 7 p.m., *Burning the Masses, the Dajjal Persona, the 25th Hour, Tragedy and Triumph*, and *Casino Madrid*, metal/hardcore.

Humphrey's, Half Moon Inn, 2241 Shelter Island Drive, Shelter Island. 619-224-3577. Backstage Lounge: Thursday, 9:30 p.m., *Ruby and the Redhots*, blues. Friday, 9:30 p.m., *the Karl Marx Band*, beach rock. Saturday, 9:30 p.m. to 1:30 a.m., *Viva Santana*, Latin rock. Sunday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., *Jesse Davis*, jazz, 8 p.m. to midnight, *Patrick Yandall*, smooth jazz guitarist. Monday, 7 p.m., *DJ John Phillips*, dance/jazz. Tuesday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., *Aubrey Faye*, Christmas brunch. Wednesday, 8 p.m. to midnight, *Federal Funk*, R&B.

The Imperial House, 505 Kalmia Street, San Diego. 619-234-3525. Friday and Saturday, 7:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m., *Rick Lyon*, pop standards/Top 40/variety.

JP's Pub, 10436 Clairemont Mesa Boulevard, Tierrasanta. 858-576-2509. Friday, *Blue Rockit*, blues/rock.

Kadan's, 4696 30th Street, San Diego. 619-640-2500. Monday, *Mayhem Mondays*, punk rock.

Lestat's Coffee House, 3343 Adams Avenue, Normal Heights. 619-282-0437. Thursday, *Gregory Page*, acoustic. Friday, *Kenny Eng and the Wrong Trousers*, acoustic/pop/rock/indie. Saturday, *Brenda Xu, Flowerthief, and Isaac Cheong*, rock/pop/folk/indie. Sunday, *Murrugan the Mystic, Numskul, and Sanu*, experimental/progressive/rock. Wednesday, *Kerri Dopart*, country/acoustic/indie.

Martini's Above Fourth, 3940 Fourth Avenue, San Diego. 619-293-0232. Saturday, 7 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., *Vintage Vegas*, jazz.

Miami Grille (UTC), 4545 La Jolla Village Drive, San Diego. 858-552-0668. Thursday and Sunday, 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., *Jeff Blum*, Cuban jazz.

O'Connell's Pub and Nightclub, 1310 Morena Boulevard, Bay Park. 619-276-5637. Friday, 9 p.m., *Hungover Tomorrow, the Lugers, the Resentments, and Tim Raldo and the Filthy*, rock/punk/hardcore. Saturday, 9 p.m., *the Blackbirdz, Flesh Lump Eaters, the China Clippers, and Mike Britt*, psychedelic/punk/rock/country.

The Ould Sod, 3373 Adams Avenue, Normal Heights. 619-284-6594. Traditional Irish folk.

Padre Gold, 7245 Linda Vista Road, San Diego. 858-277-8681. Monday, 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., *the Jazz Project Big Band*, big-band swing.

Pal Joey's, 5147 Waring Road, Allied Gardens. 619-286-7873. Friday and Saturday, *the Blues Invaders*, blues/swing.

Ramada Inn, 5550 Kearny Mesa Road, San 619-596-9777. Proud Mary's Restaurant: Wednesday, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., *Keith Jacobsen*, smooth jazz saxophone.

Red Fox Steakhouse, 2228 El Cajon Boulevard, North Park. 619-297-1313. Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, contemporary/jazz piano.

Rosie O'Grady's, 3402 Adams Avenue, Normal Heights. 619-284-7666. Friday and Saturday, live rock.

Scolari's Office, 3936 30th Street, San Diego. 619-296-3546. Friday and Saturday, live rock/alternative.

Second Wind, 8515 Navajo Road, San Carlos. 619-465-1730. Friday and Saturday, *Nemesis*, classic rock.

Soma, 3350 Sports Arena Boulevard, San Diego. 619-226-SOMA. Music is rock/metal/hardcore. Thursday, 7 p.m., *Kentucky 6 Gun, Axxys, Sicarus, the Day Sets Fire, Failure to Focus, and Endure the Fall*. Saturday, *In Fear and Faith, Thieves and Liars, She Said Sever, Murder on the Dancefloor, and Forever Days Forgotten*.

South Park Bar and Grill, 1946 Fern Street, San Diego. 619-696-0096. Thursday, *J.J. Lim's Jazz Jam*. Friday, 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., *the John Kopecky Trio*. Saturday, blues jam session.

! NOTE

BY WILLIAM CRAIN

Jackson Browne says they're one of his favorite bands, and he compares their vocal harmonies to Crosby, Stills, and Nash — an appropriate choice, because David Crosby calls them “the best vocal group in the country.” And did I mention that they're from Southern California and that they've been together since 1977?

Still, you'd be forgiven for never having heard of **Venice** — at least, if you don't live in the Netherlands. Over there, the band (named for the Los Angeles County beach town where it was founded) is a big deal. Venice won the Dutch equivalent of a Grammy in 2003, and Venice does a lot of touring in Europe. (Things must get confus-

ing when Venice plays in that other Venice.)

Back home, **Kipp Lennon, Mark Lennon, Michael Lennon, and Pat Lennon** (Kipp and Pat are the younger brothers of the Lennon Sisters of *The Lawrence Welk Show* fame; brothers Mark and Michael are their cousins) keep busy doing session work. Members have recorded or toured with not only Browne and Crosby, but Bruce Springsteen, Elton John, Sting, Stevie Nicks, Chris Isaak, and just about every-one else on classic rock radio — oh, and Ozzy Osbourne, too. Kipp has sung on several episodes of *The Simpsons* over the years; according to Venice's website, it's him singing “Happy Birthday, Lisa” in that early episode where Homer meets a mentally ill white guy who thinks he's Michael Jackson.

Jackson comes up again in Venice's concerts, where the band sometimes



VENICE

throws in the Jackson Five's “ABC” with a medley of “Love the One You're With” by Steve Stills and Led Zeppelin's “Kashmir.” Maybe those three songs seem to have something in common if you speak Dutch.

VENICE, Belly Up Tavern, Thursday, December 20, 8 p.m. 858-481-8140. \$17.

Sunday, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., *Tim Ninnink and Doug Walker*, modern jazz.

Tio Leo's, 10787 Camino Ruiz, Mira Mesa. 858-695-1461. Saturday, *Electric Soul*, rock.

Tio Leo's Lounge, 5302 Napa Street (at Morena Boulevard), Bay Park. 619-542-1462. Friday, *the Fremonts*, blues. Saturday, *Lady Dottie and the Diamonds*, blues. Wednesday, *the High Society Jazz Band*.

The Tower Bar, 4757 University Avenue, San Diego. 619-284-0158. Friday, *Hotel St. George and the Roman Spring*, rock/soul/western swing. Saturday, 10 p.m. to 2 a.m., *the Diana Death Band and the Neverland Ranch Hands*, hard rock. Monday, *Lady Dottie and the Diamonds*, blues.

NORTH COUNTY

The Alley, 421 Grand Avenue, Carlsbad. 760-434-1173. Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, *the Love Rangers*, dance.

Belly Up Tavern, 143 South Cedros Avenue, Solana Beach. 858-481-9022. Thursday, 8 p.m., *Venice and Michael Tiernan*, rock. Friday, *the Greyboy Allstars*, funk/soul/jazz. Saturday, 9 p.m., *Cash'd Out and the Deere Johns*, country/rockabilly. Sunday, 9 p.m., *the Stepping Feet and Stripes and Lines*, rock/fusion/indie.

Bistro 221, 221 Grand Avenue, Escondido. 760-737-7398. Friday and Saturday, *Donnie Finnell and Company East*, standards and light jazz.

The Book Works/Pannikin Cafe, Flower Hill Mall, I-5 at Via de la Valle, Del Mar. 858-755-3735. Friday, 8 p.m., *Primasi*, Eastern European folk.

Borders Books and Music (Carlsbad), 1905 Calle Barcelona, Carlsbad. 760-479-0242. Friday, 8 p.m., *First Class Fiction*, pop/rock.

Borders Books and Music (Carmel Mountain), 11160 Rancho Carmel Drive, Carmel Mountain. 858-618-1814. Friday, 8 p.m., *Tom Boyer*, acoustic. Saturday, 8 p.m., *Chris Luessman*, ukulele.

Carvers, 11940 Bernardo Plaza Drive, Rancho Bernardo. 858-566-2400. Friday and Saturday, *Crossroads*, classic rock.

Cheers, 2475 Main Street, Ramona. 760-789-0270. Friday, *the Honky Tonk*

Kings, country. Saturday, *Steve Poltz*, acoustic/folk. Tuesday, *Mike Gardner*.

Chin's Palace, 2241 South El Camino Real, Oceanside. 760-439-3600. Sunday, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., *Marc Logan*, jazz.

Coyote Bar and Grill, 300 Carlsbad Village Drive, Carlsbad. 760-729-4695. Thursday, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., *Billy Watson*, harmonica blues. Friday, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., *Smoke Staxx*, Motown/funk. Saturday, 3 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., *Nathan James*, 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., *Theo and the Zydeco Patrol*, blues. Sunday, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., *the Blues Pharaohs*, 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., *Scott Carter and the New Breed Band*, pop/jazz.

Cuvee Restaurant, 2334 Carmel Valley Road, Del Mar. 858-259-5878. Monday, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., *Sambajazz*, Brazilian and American jazz.



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Thursday, December 20

8 pm • Blues

Ruby & the Red Hots

Friday, December 21

7:30 pm

Aaron Blyth & the Men of Leisure

9:30 pm • Beach Rock

Karl Marx Band



Sunday, December 23

8 pm • Smooth Jazz Guitarist

Patrick Yandall



Tuesday, December 25

11 am • Christmas Brunch

Aubrey Fay

Monday, December 24

8 pm • Dance/Jazz

DJ John Phillips

Wednesday, December 26

8 pm • R&B

Federal Funk



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Calendar CLUBS

NORTH COUNTY

(continued)

Epazote, 1555 Camino Del Mar (in the Del Mar Plaza), Del Mar. 858-259-9966. Thursday, 7 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., *Z-Bop*, jazz/swing/standards/blues.

The Flying Bridge, 1105 North Coast Highway, Oceanside. 760-722-1151. Sunday, 5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m., *Z-Bop*, jazz/swing/standards/blues.

Hennessey's Tavern (Carlsbad), 2777 Roosevelt Street, Carlsbad. 760-729-6951. Saturday, *the Band in Black*, rockabilly.

Hennessey's, 224 Main Street, Vista. 760-643-1619. Wednesday, 9 p.m. to midnight, *the Bleeding Irish*, Irish/punk/folk.

Hensley's Flying Elephant Pub and Grill, 805 Tamarack Avenue, Carlsbad. 760-672-8305. Wednesday 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., *Joe Wood and the Lonely Ones*, acoustic rock/blues.

The Inn at Rancho Santa Fe, 5951 Linea del Cielo, Rancho Santa Fe. 858-756-1131. Thursday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., *Jerry Melnick*, jazz/variety piano.

J.J. Lander's Irish Pub, 125 Main Street, Fallbrook. 760-731-0839. Thursday, 8:30 p.m., *Fear the Fat Guy*, acoustic rock. Friday, 8:30 p.m., *the Money Band and Smug*, acoustic rock. Saturday, 8:30 p.m., *Brehon Law*, Irish folk. Tuesday, *Tim Lee*, acoustic rock. Wednesday, 8:30 p.m., *Fear the Fat Guy*, acoustic rock.

The Jumping Turtle, 1660 Capalina Road, San Marcos. 760-741-7778. Thursday, *Myliye*, a *Shattered Hope*, *Deadlites Revenge*, and *Dub Factory*, rock/alternative/punk/reggae. Friday, *Benedictum*, *Six Reasons*, *the Drapes Against the World*, *Project Out of Bounds*, *the Horror Kats*, and *Better Luck Next*

>hometown CDs

BY OLLIE



Album: *Promised Land* (2007)

Artist: Critical Me

Label: Magnitude 6.19 Records

Where available/price: Lou's Records, Off the Record, Music Trader, and Spin Records for \$10. Online at *Smartpunk.com*, and *CDBaby.com* for \$10, and *iTunes.com* for \$9.99.

Songs: 1) Promised Land 2) No Escape 3) Russian Roulette 4) Halfway Home 5) Excuses 6) King Greed 7) Going Nowhere 8) Through My Eyes 9) Armageddon 10) Waiting in Line 11) Same Ol' Bullshit

Band: Caleb Bedsole (vocals), Chris Buckel (guitar), Carl Muheim (bass), Josh Peter (drums)

Website: *criticalme.com*

Every new punk band spawns its own subgenre or sub-subgenre. There's Southern California Whine Punk, popularized by the

vocal stylings of Tom DeLonge from blink-182. There's Happy Poppy Whine Punk, Uplifting Punk, Emo-Crossed Punk, the Ol' Middle Finger I Gotcher

Punk Right Here Punk, and a thousand others. They all sound slightly different, but the difference exists. Pissed-off rocking fills many a varied bottle.

Critical Me is different because it falls neatly into the category spawned by almost-famous Pennywise — the subgenre being, "Not Whiny, but Disgusted with Most Every Aspect of American Life Punk." They've got the rhythm speed and indignation of Pennywise, as well as the lead vocals — rougher, ragged, and manlier than most SoCal Whine Punk sissy bands. Thank God. Another Whine Punk CD crosses my desk, and I'm going to eat my computer speakers.

All in all, Critical Me is a talented band that plays tight and coordinated punk.



Critical Me

Peter pops the skins with skill, and Muheim's bass keeps the driving pace required by quick music. A good night of High Skill San Diego Punk would be a team-up of Fifty on Their Heels with Critical Me at a clean dive like the Kensington Club.

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



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LIVE MUSIC

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La Costa Resort and Spa, 2100 Costa Del Mar Road, Carlsbad. 760-438-9111. Spa: Thursday, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., *Mike Nelson*, jazz.

Mas Fina Cantina, 2780 State Street, Carlsbad. 760-434-3497. Wednesday, 8 p.m. to midnight, *Mike Gardner*, acoustic rock/folk.

McCabe's Beach Club, 1145 South Tremont Street, Oceanside. 760-439-6646. Friday, 4:30 p.m. to 9 p.m., *the California Rangers*, country.

The Metaphor Coffeehouse, 258 East Second Avenue, Escondido.

760-489-8890. Thursday, 7 p.m., *Slowhand*, tribute to Eric Clapton and Cream.

Molly Malone's, 1270 Main Street, Ramona. 760-789-9050. Friday and Saturday, 9 p.m. to 1 a.m., *Rice Gone Wild*, classic rock.

North Bar Sports and Spirits, 200 West El Norte Parkway, Escondido. 760-480-8228. Thursday, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., *Mike Gardner*, acoustic rock/folk.

Ocean House, 300 Carlsbad Village Drive, Carlsbad. 760-729-4131. Friday, 9 p.m. to 12:30 a.m., *Fleetwood Max*, classic rock. Saturday, live rock. Tuesday, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., *the Credit Union*, swing.

R. O'Sullivan's, 118 East Grand Avenue, Escondido. 760-737-0954. Thursday, 9 p.m. to midnight, *Joe Wood and the Lonely Ones*, acoustic rock/blues. Saturday, 8:30 p.m., *Craig Haus*, punk/rockabilly, 9 p.m., *Tony Cummings*, Irish folk. Sunday, 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., *the Clachan Boys*, Irish folk. Tuesday, 8:30 p.m., *Nate Donnis*, acoustic rock. Wednesday, 8:30 p.m., *the Clachan Boys*.

Rancho Bernardo Inn, 17550 Bernardo Oaks Drive, Rancho Bernardo. 858-675-8500. El Bizcocho Restaurant: Friday, 5:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., and Saturday, 6 p.m. to 11 p.m., *Jerry Melnick and Tom Bishop*, jazz/variety.

Surf N'Saddle, 123 West Plaza Street (Lomas Santa Fe and Highway 101), Solana Beach. 858-755-9474. Friday, *Crash O'Malley*. Saturday, *Meliesa and the Monkey Bites*, alternative. Sunday, *Vortex Data*, alternative rock.

Tom Giblin's Irish Pub and Restaurant, 640 Grand Avenue, Carlsbad. 760-729-7234. Thursday, 9 p.m., *Tony Cummings*, Irish folk. Friday, 9 p.m., *Brehon Law*, Irish folk. Saturday, 8:30 p.m., *the Clay Colton Band*, acoustic rock/folk. Tuesday, 8:30 p.m., *Fear the Fat Guy*, acoustic rock. Wednesday, 9 p.m., *Brehon Law*, Irish folk.

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TUES. 12/25 **CLOSED**

WED. 12/26 4-8 PM:
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12/27 & 28: 2 Nights of PARTICLE
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KEMISTRY featuring members from Sprung Monkey
LOVER featuring members from Mower
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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22
Rockhill & **CANES** present
GROUCH & ELIGH
OF THE LIVING LEGENDS

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 27
Brazilian Pre-NYE Party
with **NaCalifia**

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 28
40 OUNCES (Sublime Tribute)
A CONCRETE PROJECT

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29
IRON MAIDENS
(All-female tribute to Iron Maiden)
MONSTERS OF ROCK

MONDAY, DECEMBER 31 • NEW YEAR'S EVE
An Evening With **Tainted Love** (80's Tribute)
Reservations Highly Suggested

SATURDAY, JANUARY 5
MYSTIC ROOTS
CARBINE • SHAKA BUKU
WYLDE BUNCH

THURSDAY, JANUARY 10
CANOBLISS • MNIYIC
TAINTED SOCIETY • DISCORD
TWELVE TWENTY

SATURDAY, JANUARY 12
THE BLOODY HOLLIES
GET BACK LORETTA
FONO • DEMASIADO

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16
Sean Healy **TWISTA**

FRIDAY, JANUARY 25
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Rooftop Restaurant & Premier Music Venue
Outdoor Oceanfront Dining • Weekend Breakfast
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Happy Hour Mon.-Fri. • Plenty of FREE Parking
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canesbarandgrill.com | www.myspace.com/canesmusic

new wave
new years
CANES

WITH
Tainted Love
80's TRIBUTE

Monday, December 31st
Reservations Highly suggested

Tickets Available @
Canes Box office or Ticketmaster
www.canesbarandgrill.com or call
858 488-1780

Calendar CLUBS

SOUTH BAY/CORONADO

Buon Giorno Restaurant, 4110 Bonita Road, Bonita. 619-475-2660. Thursday, *Yvonne Flores*, piano jazz. Saturday, *Madera* and *One Thousand Eyes*, jazz.

The Butcher Shop, 556 Broadway, Chula Vista. 619-420-9440. Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Wednesday, 8 p.m., *Ray Correa*, standards/pop/Latin.

Galley at the Marina, 550 Marina Parkway, Chula Vista. 619-422-5714. Saturday, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., *Fallguy* and *Toni Valdez*, blues/swing.

Hotel del Coronado, 1550 Orange Avenue, Coronado. 619-435-6611. Babcock and Story: Thursday through Sunday, 4:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., *Tony Lasley*, Latin jazz. Friday and Saturday, 8:30 p.m., *Ray Briz*, pianist. Monday, 4:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., *Gonzo Gonzales*. Tuesday and Wednesday, *Jim Gibson*, guitarist.

1500 Ocean: Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, 9 p.m. to midnight, *Tony Lasley*, jazz guitar. Crown Room: Sunday, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., *Ray Briz*, pianist, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., *Ping Hu*, harpist.

Island Sports and Spirits, 104 Orange Avenue, Coronado. 619-435-3456. Friday, *Ron's Garage*, classic rock. Saturday, *Jumpstart*, jump blues.

McP's Irish Pub and Grill, 1107 Orange Avenue, Coronado. 619-435-5280. Thursday, *the Stiletto's*, rockabilly/blues. Friday, *Northstar*, classic rock. Saturday, *4-Way Street*, acoustic rock. Sunday, *Steve Brewer*, acoustic. Monday, *Tommy Price*, acoustic. Wednesday, *the Taylor Harvey Band*, acoustic rock.

EAST COUNTY

Dirk's Niteclub, 7662 Broadway, Lemon Grove. 619-469-6344. Friday and Saturday, *Zone 4*, classic rock.

Don's Cocktail Lounge, 13321 Business Highway 8, El Cajon. 619-443-2444. Friday and Saturday, *Zone 4*, classic rock.

Renegade Inn, 14335 Old Highway 80 (half mile east from Lake Jennings turnoff), Flynn Springs. 619-561-8105. Friday and Saturday, *the Sundance Band*, country.

Second Wind, 8528 Magnolia Avenue, Santee. 6019-596-8350. Friday and Saturday, *Stone Wolf*, classic rock.

Tommy's Italian Restaurant, 1190 North Second Street, El Cajon. 619-440-2676. Friday, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., *Franco Z*, standards/swing/jazz.

Calendar BANDS

ALTERNATIVE

Better Luck Next Time: The Jumping Turtle

The Blackbirdz: O'Connell's Pub and Nightclub

Blue Sky Blonde: 'Canes

Buckfast Superbee: The Casbah

C.D.M.: Winstons

The China Clippers: O'Connell's Pub and Nightclub

The Common Loon: Winstons

The Dajjal Persona: Epicentre

Deadlites Revenge: The Jumping Turtle

The Diana Death Band: Tower Bar

The Drapes: The Jumping Turtle

Endure the Fall: Soma

Failure to Focus: Soma

Yo, DJ!

Talk About a Star



Greyboy Allstars play the Belly Up Tavern tomorrow, December 21

I took this girl out on a few dates and things seemed to go really well. And, it got to that point where you aren't sure if you're a couple or not. All indications were that she was into me. I'd wake up and log onto my computer and there'd be emails from her. I'd get

text messages from her on my phone. Occasionally, I'd walk out to my car and see a little note that said, "I'm thinking about you." All that sweet stuff women do, but not so much that it was stalkerish.

So, we go to see the Greyboy Allstars, and she acted really weird that night. The old clichéd excuses about having to wake up early in the morning for a meeting at work. We ended up leaving after the opening band, before they even hit the stage.

The following weekend I was going to be in L.A. and saw that the Greyboy Allstars were playing at a venue up there. I jokingly called her and said we had a chance to catch them in L.A. There was silence on the other end of the phone. I laughed and told her I was joking.

The third attempt we made to see them, she said she had a migraine. I didn't doubt

that she had a migraine, but in an attempt to be humorous, I said, "I think you just don't like that band." She screamed at me, saying that I was accusing her of lying. I told her I was just trying to be funny, and she slammed the phone down.

I never heard from her again. I emailed twice. The first time I asked how her head was feeling. She didn't respond. A few days later, I just typed some lyrics from one of the Greyboy Allstars' songs. I still haven't heard back from her, and that was five years ago.

I may see the Greyboy Allstars in concert again, but I may never bring a date. I don't want to jinx it.



DJ: MIKE ROVATOSOS
Station: KSDS/JAZZ 88.3 FM
Shift: MIDNIGHT TO 2:00 A.M., THURSDAYS

First Wave Hello: The Casbah

Flesh Lump Eaters: O'Connell's Pub and Nightclub

Flirting with Failure: Brick By Brick

The Horror Kats: The Jumping Turtle

Hungover Tomorrow: O'Connell's Pub and Nightclub

The Lugers: O'Connell's Pub and Nightclub

Meliesa and the Monkey Bites: Surf N'Saddle

Moving Units: House of Blues

Murrugan the Mystic: Lestat's Coffee House

Nuclear Tomorrow: Winstons

Numskul: Lestat's Coffee House

Reeve Oliver: The Casbah

Tim Raldo and the Filthy: O'Connell's Pub and Nightclub

The Resentments: O'Connell's Pub and Nightclub

Sanu: Lestat's Coffee House

Scar'd Sanity: The Kraken

She Said Sever: Soma

Shiny Toy Guns: House of Blues

The Shot Out Hoods: Brick By Brick

The Strangers Six: The Casbah

The 25th Hour: Epicentre

The Underclassmen: Winstons

Unloaded: Brick By Brick

Vortex Data: Surf N'Saddle

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\$80 per person includes:
DINNER DANCING CHAMPAGNE
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For Reservations Call **800-96-HUMOR**
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THE COMEDY STORE
Friday & Saturday December 21 & 22 • 8 & 10:30 pm
Special Event!
Featuring **Pauly Shore** (From *Son in Law* and *Entourage*) and **Sammy Shore** (Opened for Elvis and Tony Orlando)
Tickets: \$20
New Year's Eve Special Event
Featuring: **Al Madrigal, Kirk Fox, and Vicki Barbolak**
8 pm: Tickets \$25
10:30 pm: Tickets \$30 (includes champagne toast)
To purchase tickets, call (858) 454-9176
916 Pearl Street • La Jolla • www.thecomedystore.com
Must be 21 - All shows 2-drink minimum
San Diego Convention & Visitors Bureau MEMBER

ROCK

Against the World: The Jumping Turtle

Agent 22: 'Canes

Astra: The Casbah

Authentic Sellout: Brick By Brick

Axxys: Soma

Benedictum: The Jumping Turtle

Burning the Masses: Epicentre

Buzz Campbell: The Casbah

Casino Madrid: Epicentre

The Chi Club: Tiki House, Winstons

The Cradit Union: Ocean House

Crossroads: Carvers

Datarock: House of Blues

The Day Sets Fire: Soma

Desert Diamonds: The Casbah

Dirty Sweet: The Casbah

Electric Soul: Tio Leo's (Mira Mesa)

Etched in Red: The Kraken

Fear the Fat Guy: Tom Giblin's Irish Pub and Restaurant, J.J. Lander's Irish Pub

Fighting for Nineveh: Dreamstreet

Fing: Brick By Brick

Fleetwood Max!: Ocean House

Flowerthief: Lestat's Coffee House

Forever Days Forgotten: Soma

40 Oz. to Freedom: Martini Ranch (Gaslamp)

Fuzz Huzzi: Dreamstreet

Mike Gardner: North Bar Sports and Spirits, Mas Fina Cantina, Cheers

The Good Stuff: Tiki House

Good Times: Henry's Pub

The Taylor Harvey Band: McP's Irish Pub and Grill

Hotel St. George: Tower Bar

In Fear and Faith: Soma

The Karl Marx Band: Humphrey's

Kemistry: 'Canes

Kentucky 6 Gun: Soma

Los Maricones: The Casbah

The Money Band: J.J. Lander's Irish Pub

Mosquito Head: 'Canes

Murder on the Dancefloor: Soma

Myliye: The Jumping Turtle

Nemesis: Second Wind (San Carlos)

The Neverland Ranch Hands: Tower Bar

Northstar: McP's Irish Pub and Grill

Crash O'Malley: Surf N'Saddle

Juan Peso: The Kraken

Steve Poltz: Cheers

Private Domain: Dick's Last Resort

The Reaganomics: Jimmy Love's

Rhythm and the Method: Brass Rail

Rice Gone Wild: Molly Malone's

Ron's Garage: Island Sports and Spirits

Satisfaction: The Casbah

Say Vinyl: The Casbah

A Shattered Hope: The Jumping Turtle

Sicarus: Soma

Jose Sinatra: Winstons

Six Reasons: The Jumping Turtle

Slower: 'Canes

Slowhand: The Metaphor Coffeehouse

Smoke Staxx: Coyote Bar and Grill

Smug: J.J. Lander's Irish Pub

Spell Toronto: The Casbah

Alley Stewart: Winstons

Stone Wolf: Second Wind (Santee)

Strike Twelve: Brick By Brick

Stripes and Lines: Belly Up Tavern

Tarfuti: Scolari's Office

Thieves and Liars: Soma

Tim and the 23's: 710 Beach Club

Tragedy and Triumph: Epicentre

Venice: Belly Up Tavern

Viva Santana: Humphrey's

Year-Long Disaster: The Casbah

Zone 4: Dirk's Niteclub, Don's Cocktail Lounge

POP / TOP 40

Scott Carter and the New Breed Band: Coyote Bar and Grill

Kenny Eng: Lestat's Coffee House

First Class Fiction: Borders Books and Music (Carlsbad)

The Flock of 80's: Henry's Pub

Ben Knight: 'Canes

The Love Rangers: The Alley

Rick Lyon: The Imperial House

David Timothy Smith: Albie's Beef Inn

The Soul Revue: Jimmy Love's

The Stepping Feet: Whiskey Girl, Belly Up Tavern

JAZZ / BIG BAND

Joseph Angelastro: E Street Cafe

The Count Basie Orchestra: Anthology

John Bennett and Friends: The Calypso Cafe

Tom Bishop: Rancho Bernardo Inn

Jeff Blum: Miami Grille (UTC)

Ray Briz: Hotel del Coronado

Jesse Davis: Humphrey's

Aubrey Fay: Humphrey's

Donnie Finnell and Company East: Bistro 221

Yvonne Flores: Buon Giorno Restaurant

Jim Gibson: Hotel del Coronado

The High Society Jazz Band: Tio Leo's Lounge

Keith Jacobsen: Ramada Inn

The Jazz Project Big Band: Padre Gold

The John Kopecky Trio: South Park Bar and Grill

Fran Laskota: The Westgate Hotel

Tony Lasley: Hotel del Coronado

Brian Levy: Dizzy's

J.J. Lim's Jazz Jam: South Park Bar and Grill

Marc Logan: Chin's Palace

Madera: Buon Giorno Restaurant

Masterpiece: Jimmy Love's

Kevin McCully: The Westgate Hotel

Jerry Melnick: The Inn at Rancho Santa Fe, Rancho Bernardo Inn

Mike Nelson: La Costa Resort and Spa, The Lodge at Torrey Pines

Tim Ninnink: South Park Bar and Grill

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FRI
@ 10 AM!

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FRIDAY.DECEMBER.21

DECO'S, ZXR & VICTORY NIGHTLIFE PRESENTS
**FRIDAY NIGHT SHAKEDOWN
THE SHAKEDOWN BREAKDOWN**

FEATURING THE WORLDWIDE & OFFICIAL S.D. CHARGER DJ:
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WITH DJ DUBZ, IMPAKT, DJ MAHJESTIK & DJ TEKNIKSIAN

SPECIAL GUEST PERFORMANCE BY
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**\$5 LONG ISLANDS &
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\$3 KAMIKAZES & BOTTLE BEERS ALL NIGHT**

HOSTED BY ROB ZOOMY OF CLUB DEVIATE & ZXR
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DECO'S & CLIMAX SD PRESENTS
**SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE
3RD ANNUAL X-MAS PARTY**

FEATURING SD RADIO & CLUB LEGEND
DJ MARLINO
ALONG WITH THE BEAUTIFUL
LISA KAI & LILY NGUYEN
MIDNIGHT GIVEAWAY OF DRINKS, PRIZES & CASH
SKYY 90 VODKA OPEN HOSTED BAR
FROM 9-10PM : TO RSVP EMAIL JC@CLIMAXSD.COM
FOR GUESTLIST REQUEST VISIT WWW.CLIMAXSD.COM

**Happy
Holidays**

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FOR INFO & RESERVATIONS CALL 619-696-DECO (3326)

Holidays at lé

Monday, December 24

Slow-Roasted

Christmas Eve

Prime Rib \$9⁹⁵

Starting at 5 pm

Tuesday, December 25

10 am-2 pm

Starting at 2 pm: Live Maine

Christmas Day

Brunch

Lobster \$11⁹⁵

Open at 10 am

Starting at noon: Our traditional

Turkey Dinner \$11⁹⁵

Traditional roasted turkey, mashed potatoes & gravy, homemade sage stuffing, candied yams, sweet corn & carrots, and cranberry sauce

Celebrate Your Birthday Wednesday, December 26

Free Prime Rib Dinner

If you were born in December, show your ID and enjoy a free Prime Rib Dinner! Begins at 5 pm. Reservations, purchase and photo ID required. Not valid with any other offers or Happy Hour.

Monday, December 31 • Prix Fixe Dinner Menu 5-11 pm

New Year's Eve 2008

\$100 per person*

*Does not include tax or gratuity. Additional \$50 for Nightclub, Open Bar.

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**Skate into '08 –
Roll in the
New Year!**

New Year's Eve Party

7:30 pm-1 am

- All ages welcome
- Hats, horns, noisemakers & more
- \$12 per person – skates extra

Come join the fun!

21^{for}

Admission Adults-Only Night!

Valid Wednesday, December 26, 2007.

*Buy 1 admission and receive 2nd admission free.

Holiday schedule applies to Dec. 26 and Jan. 2 dates only.

Adult Night Skating

Roller Skating Excitement

This Wednesday, December 26

7:30-10:30 pm \$8

Coupon applies to session only.
Skate rental and blade rental extra.

Family Fun Saturday & Sunday

\$7 All Day • 1:30-6 pm

SKATEWORLD

sandiegoskateworld.com

myspace.com/SanDiegoSkateworld

6907 Linda Vista Rd. • 858-560-9349

or further info: 858-560-9278

(3 blocks south of Genesee, 1 mile north of USD)

Peter White Dec. 22

Joel Osteen Jan. 4

Garrison Keillor Jan. 7

Blue Man Group Jan. 11

Mixed Martial Arts Jan. 12

Ryan Adams Jan. 19

Lewis Black Feb. 1

Jill Scott Feb. 13

Foo Fighters March 3

George Lopez March 15

**WWE
Smackdown**

Feb. 19

Holiday Bowl

Arizona State vs. Texas – December 27



Garth Brooks

Staples Center, January 25, 26

Avril Lavigne Apr. 30

The Cure June 3

David Sedaris June 30

"High School Musical"

Dec. 26-30

"Dancing with the Stars"

Dec. 27

"Disney on Ice"

Jan. 30-Feb. 3

"Stars on Ice" Feb. 9

"Doodlebops Live" March 2

Chargers Games

Denver Dec. 24

ATLAS TICKETS

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the ultimate DAVE MATTHEWS EXPERIENCE

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STRIPES and LINES
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UGLY X-MAS SWEATER
CONTESTS \$100 Cash
1st PLACE PRIZE!!!



sunday dec 23 - NO WORK ON MONDAY!

COUNT DOWN TO NEW YEARS

A Not So Stoopid Benefit
for the San Diego Wild Fires with

**SLIGHTLY
STOOPID**
with ARM the ANGELS
thursday dec 27



BOOGIE NIGHTS
PRESENTS
Metal Snake



friday dec 28

pato banton
with the LOVE and GROOVE BAND
and DJ CARLOS CULTURE



saturday dec 29

CRACKER
and
CAMPER
VAN BEETHOVEN
sunday dec 30

THE AGGROLITES grand ole party
with BEATMO



monday dec 31 ~ HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

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VENICE XMAS SHOW



TONIGHT!


MICHAEL TIERNAN
Thu 12/20 • 8:00 PM

**THE GREYBOY
ALLSTARS**




LEON MOBLEY & DA LION
Fri 12/21 • 9:00 PM

CASH'D OUT



**THE DEERE JOHNS
DJ GONZO**
Sat 12/22 • 9:00 PM

SIN CITY REVUE II



**THE SIN CITY ALL STARS
MIKE STINSON
THE SLIDEWINDERS
EVE SELIS**
Thu 1/3 • 8:00 PM

**ELIJAH EMANUEL &
THE REVELATIONS**



THE HI-LITES
Fri 1/4 • 9:00 PM

RICKIE LEE JONES



JUST ADDED!
Sat 1/5 • 9:00 PM

SALSA



Sun 1/6 • 8:00 PM

**LAUGH FOR
RECOVERY:
DAT PHAN**
(WINNER OF
LAST COMIC
STANDING)



**KENNY KANE
BOB MURPHY**
Tue 1/8 • 8:00 PM

DAVID LINDLEY



JACK TEMPCHIN
Wed 1/9 • 8:00 PM

THE EXFRIENDS



W/GUEST
Thur 1/10 • 9:00 PM

COMMON SENSE



IGLU & HARTLY
Fri 1/11 • 9:00 PM

**NEW ACOUSTIC
GENERATION**



**W/MICHAEL TIERNAN
FEAT. VERONICA MAY
TREVOR DAVIS
ALLIED GARDENS**
Sun 1/13 • 8:00 PM

LUPE FIASCO



JUST ADDED!
ON SALE TODAY @ NOON!
Tue 1/15 • 9:00 PM

ELECTRIC PRUNES



THE PRAYERS
Wed 1/16 • 8:00 PM

**CROSS CANADIAN
RAGWEED**



W/GUEST
Thu 1/17 • 9:00 PM

DILATED PEOPLES




LMNO
Fri 1/18 • 9:00 PM

DEAD MAN'S PARTY
OINGO BOINGO TRIBUTE



THE REAGANOMICS
Sat 1/19 • 9:00 PM

TODD SNIDER



W/GUEST
Tue 1/22 • 8:00 PM

STEVE POLTZ
CD RELEASE PARTY!



TIM BLUM
Thu 1/24 • 9:00 PM

OZOMATLI



TWO NIGHTS!
W/GUEST
1/25 & 26 • 9:00 PM

1/28 **Grace Potter & The Nocturnals** • 1/31 **FM 94.9 presents Rogue Wave** - on sale tomorrow @ noon!
2/14 **George Clinton and Parliament Funkadelic** • 2/15 **Sia** - on sale Saturday @ noon!
2/24 **Earl Thomas & Amber Ojeda** • 2/25 **Jay Farrar** - on sale today @ noon!
3/1 **Al Howard & the K23 Orchestra & Perpetual Groove**
3/2 **The Presidents of the United States of America**

1/27 **Mountain**
2/1 **B-Side Players**
2/2 **Los Lobos**
2/5 **O₂ For Life ~ Rumba in the Rainforest**
2/6 **Super Furry Animals**
2/7 **Bedouin Soundclash**

SWINGIN' HAPPY HOURS
12/21 **THE FABULOUS PELICANS**
12/28 **BILLY WATSON**

2/8 **Marc Ford & Deadline Friday**
2/9 **Groundation Bob Marley Tribute Show**
2/10 **Rhett Miller**
2/13 **ALO**
2/16 **Maceo Parker**
2/19 **Stan Ridgway presents Wall of Voodoo's Call of the West**
2/22 **The Blasters and The Hacienda Brothers**
2/26 **Adrian Belew**
3/2 **Marcia Ball & John Hammond**
3/4 **Rufus Wainwright**

3/9 **The Blind Boys of Alabama**
3/13 **Mad Professor**
3/14 **Tommy Castro Band**
3/20 **The Itals**
3/21 **Built to Spill**
3/29 **The Avett Brothers**

SALSA SUNDAY!
1/6 **ORQUESTA PRIMO**

Free Parking! Low Service Charges! Free Coat Check! Great Bar Prices! Great Food!

NEW YEAR'S EVE

835 FRANCISCO ST. (8TH AT FIGUEROA)
DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES
 10,000 PERSON INDOOR CAPACITY. 2000 LUXURY HOTEL ROOMS

MONDAY
DEC. 31ST
2007
 8PM-1AM

TIESTO

ROGER SANCHEZ

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ENCORE
ENTERTAINMENT

96 San Diego Reader December 20, 2007

NEW YEAR'S EVE

ON BROADWAY
PARTY LIKE A ROCKSTAR...
CELEBRATE '08

SÉN-SEI (Live!) & ANDREW PHELAN
ADVANCE PRESALE TICKETS AT WWW.OBEC.TV

ON BROADWAY
THU. 12.20.07

Topia
UPSCALE LATIN NIGHTLIFE
ROCK EN ESPANOL
LATIN HOUSE - ELECTRO
BLENDED & REMIXED BY EXA *Dj Ramiro*
DRINK SPECIALS - \$3 CORONAS AND \$3 APPLE MARTINIS

FRI. 12.21.07

THE OFFICIAL
SHINY TOYGUNS
AFTERPARTY

FEATURING SETS FROM
JEREMY DAWSON
(SHINY TOY GUNS)
AND
\$UPERFOX (WAFFO CLOTHING | ADIKTION)
"FREE WITH HOB TICKET STUB"

SAT. 12.22.07

DJ G*ROY
ALSO FEATURING **DJ TIMO**

GUARANTEED ENTRY PRE-SALE TICKETS FOR FRIDAY & SATURDAY EVENTS AVAILABLE AT eventvibe.com
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 28 : DJ FRANCES
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29 : JONATHAN LEIGH

FOR VIP BOOTHS OR ROOM RESERVATIONS: CALL GREG BRADY 619.565.0634 GREG@OBEC.TV
615 BROADWAY AVE. SAN DIEGO 619.231.0011 | WWW.OBEC.TV

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12.31.07
2008
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top DJ's including
DJ JOE GUERRERO
and **GUEST DJ's**

Lots of free goodies with New Year's countdown.
Party with us, our friends and everyone
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All the VIP bottle service reservations to receive the following amenities:
Front of the line VIP Express Entry - No wait
Your own special reserved area with your cocktail server
Champagne gift basket with 1 Bt of Champagne
Any bottle of your choice up to \$325.00
Party favors

For VIP bottle service contact
VIP Host Ninnel @
619-807-4481 or 619-227-3685
reserve yours now at this event is guaranteed to sell out:

Large groups or special reservations contact Ninnel @
619-807-4481 or 619-227-3685
Cover General Admission:
\$40.00 pre-sale
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Don't miss out and best wishes from your friends at Sevilla.

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Price per table size:
Package #1 cost is \$400.00
for 4 guests and all of the above
tax and gratuity not included.
Package #2 is \$800.00
for 8 guests and all of the above
tax and gratuity not included.

San Diego Reader December 20, 2007 97

Calendar

BANDS

REGGAE / SKA

(continued)



Saturday, Dec. 22 • 7:30 pm

Dornob Collective

(Dastgāh Jam)

NFL Sundays

- Big-Screen TV
- Comfy Couches
- Great NY-Style Pizza

Friday, Dec. 28 • 6 pm

Gregory Michael

Serving delicious pizza,
panini, coffee & gelato
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Project Out of Bounds: The Jumping Turtle

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COUNTRY

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Mike Britt: O'Connell's Pub and Nightclub

The California Rangers: McCabe's Beach Club

Cash'd Out: Belly Up Tavern

The Deere Johns: Belly Up Tavern

Kerri Dopart: Lestat's Coffee House

The Honky Tonk Kings: Cheers

Hot Rod Lincoln: The Casbah

Shoestring Strap: Winstons

The Sundance Band: Renegade Inn

ACOUSTIC / FOLK

Matthew Blake: Java Jones

The Bleeding Irish: Hennessey's Tavern (Vista)

Tom Boyer: Borders Books and Music (Carmel Mountain)

Steve Brewer: McP's Irish Pub and Grill

Karin Carson: Java Jones

Isaac Cheong: Lestat's Coffee House

The Clachan Boys: R. O'Sullivan's

The Clay Colton Band: Tom Giblin's Irish Pub and Restaurant

Tony Cummings: Tom Giblin's Irish Pub and Restaurant, R. O'Sullivan's

Nate Donnis: R. O'Sullivan's

4-Way Street: McP's Irish Pub and Grill

Gonzo Gonzales: Hotel del Coronado

Craig Haus: R. O'Sullivan's

as i hear it

BY BRIAN CARVER

Artist: **Di Nigunim**

Song: **"Fascist Degradation (demo)"**
(from *myspace.com/dernigunim*)

Heard By: **Hunter**, South Park



Hunter

Very interesting band. They sound like Gogol Bordello. They're very unusual. They were more gypsy, but not like Gipsy Kings — more Romanian. I don't know if these guys were born here in America, but they sound like the real deal. I was unable to hear the lyrics — I'd just catch bits of it. They had almost a syncopated beat, which was nice. There were definitely some unusual instruments being played. I could definitely see them having commercial appeal, like [airplay] on 94.9 or 91X. It kind of reminded me of the music from *Borat*. You almost picture Borat driving an ice cream van with a bear hanging out.

Artist: **Red Pony Clock**

Song: **"12 Color Step"** (from the CD *God Made Dirt*)

Heard By: **Bruce Ratcliff**, El Cajon



Bruce

It's something I've never heard before, and it was kind of interesting. I like the instruments they played, but I didn't really understand what they were saying. Trumpet is basically all I heard. He sounded like a good singer. It sounded like kind of a "hippie" thing going on. It's something I wouldn't listen to every day. I'm just an R&B kind of guy...old school. I don't think it would be popular at all in these kind of times. Right now it's just rap and R&B stuff that everybody basically listens to. I could see that song on, like, a Geico commercial or something.

Artist: **The Vision of a Dying World**

Song: **"Horns Become Handles"** (from the CD *and The Grammar Lamb*)

Heard By: **Chris Palmisano**, North Park



Chris

It wasn't bad. The lyrics were kind of drowned out by the background music. I was thinking about it while I was listening to it, and I have no idea who to compare that to. I really haven't heard something like that before. It was upbeat, kind of uplifting. As far as the lyrics, I kept on hearing something about "fathers" and "sisters." It sounded kind of like a Christian band. The first part was drawn out, and if I had to listen to it again I'd probably fast forward it, but once you got into the gist of the music, it was pretty good. That would be a good song for preparing dinner or studying.

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The Wrong Trousers: Lestat's Coffee House
Brenda Xu: Lestat's Coffee House

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Blue Rockit: JP's Pub, Dick's Last Resort
The Blues Invaders: Pal Joey's, Patrick's II
The Blues Pharaohs: Coyote Bar and Grill
D.A. and the Hitmen: Tiki House
Fallguyz: Galley at the Marina
Family Style: Patrick's II
Federal Funk: Humphrey's
The Fremonts: Tio Leo's Lounge
Fuzzy and the Bluesmen: Croce's Jazz Bar

Dirty Sweet, December 21 and 22, the Casbah

The Greyboy Allstars: Belly Up Tavern
Nathan James: Coyote Bar and Grill
Jumpstart: Island Sports and Spirits
Lady Dottie and the Diamonds: Tio Leo's Lounge, Henry's Pub, Tower Bar
Latanya Lockett: Winstons

Michele Lundeen and Blues Streak: Patrick's II
The Mississippi Mudsharks: Tiki House
The Post 310 Blues Band: American Legion Post 310
The Roman Spring: Tower Bar
Ruby and the Red Hots: Humphrey's

Shelle Blue: Patrick's II
The Stilettoes: McP's Irish Pub and Grill, Henry's Pub
Supabad: Winstons
Theo and the Zydeco Patrol: Coyote Bar and Grill
Triple Shot: The Calypso Cafe
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Luna Llana: The Calypso Cafe
OPM: House of Blues
Orquesta Guarare: Sevilla
Faith Page: The Westgate Hotel
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DEAD TO FALL
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DELAY MY LAST

FRI. MAR 14
SILVERSTEIN
THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA

Crasher

DRINKO PLINKO

by Josh Board

When I was a kid my mom complained about Christmas starting earlier each year. It wasn't because she was Jewish. We had a Christmas tree and a menorah. I think she felt that it was that much longer she'd have to listen to us beg for the toys we wanted.

I don't complain about Christmas starting earlier, but this is the first year I was invited to Christmas parties the first week in December.

The first one I went to was at the Art Academy of San Diego in East Village on December 7.

It was the same night I was going to see the Doors (or remaining two members) at the House of Blues, so I had to get to the bash when it started at 6 p.m.

Sarah was setting things up as I walked in. She was near a board that read, "Have you been naughty or nice?" There was a variety of presents, and Sarah told me to pick one. I got a Twix bar, and she said, "You've been nice." Another guy got a small bottle of liquor. She said that he'd been naughty. I saw one



woman peeking before making her pick.

A few of the presents had shots of whiskey. Sarah's husband said, "I think she got the idea for this when we were at Burning Man. They had this thing called 'Drinko Plinko,' like that *Price Is Right* game. You



Top left: Sarah at the "naughty or nice" board; Top right: Sarah on the right

her friend is from Brazil and had never made a snowflake before.

When I snapped a photo of the guy showing others how to

job decorating the place, which was about 15,000 square feet. They had lights hanging low from the ceiling. I was talking to an employee who was wearing a Santa hat, and she said, "It's sometimes hard with all the junk we have over there." I replied, "Uh, you aren't talking about the art some of the students did, are you?" She said, "Well..."

As I was walking around the gallery looking at the artwork, I slipped on a wheelchair

"I don't want to be known as the snowflake guy."

drank where the thing lands."

I grabbed a Milky Way out of another present and headed over to a guy who was teaching people how to make snowflakes.

I heard a woman say that

make snowflakes, he turned his back on me and continued. I heard him say as I walked away, "I don't want to be known as the snowflake guy."

I thought they did a good

ramp. Someone said, "Are you sure you didn't drink a shot from the naughty board?" I said, "I think the wheelchair ramp is going to put someone in a wheelchair."

I looked at a catalog and saw that the school taught drawing, painting, sculpture, and a variety of other techniques. My date, who I had picked up from work, said she was hungry. "We can't be the first to eat," I suggested. "The party just started."

When we saw another couple grab plates, she said, "Hey, I think people are starting to eat." As we opened up one of the pasta dishes, a guy said, "Oh, so we're opening that up now." My date looked at him and said, "We're starting a trend. It's time to eat."

When we sat down, we were across from a guy that owned half the paintings and sculptures in the gallery. I got a bit bored listening to him talk about art but enjoyed talking to his wife about movies. She said, "I don't go to movies anymore. Spending \$9 is too much for

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me.” I told her I didn’t mind that as much as talking or cell phones in the theater.

We spent half an hour discussing *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest*.

Then she told me about her trip to Argentina, where, she said, for under \$30 a couple could get a meal of incredible steaks and wine. She said, “I’m from Texas, so I know good steak. And the cows in Argentina are grass-fed, and there’s no fat in the meat.” Her husband heard this and said, “It is not marbled.” I wasn’t sure what he meant, but all the talk was making me crave a steak. In the end, I settled for the salad and pasta I had on my plate.

Someone complained about the desserts. I had a cupcake and a few cookies and was stoked. A woman grabbed a cream puff and thought it was a mini roll. When she pushed it aside, my date leaned toward me and said, “I want to take it off her plate. They didn’t have any more up there. I just don’t know her well enough to do that.”

A girl who just graduated from a nursing school in Ohio was sitting at our table. When I asked her why she chose to move there, she said she wanted to experience the seasons and that she had grown up here. I said, “That kind of makes sense...until winter comes.” What I wanted to say was “Ohio?!”

After dinner, I spoke with Sarah and her husband again and noticed that Sarah had reindeer antlers on her head. She told me that they got married at the academy and that when she was taking a printing class there, she made the wedding invitations. Now, that’s making use of the facilities.

She told me that the hot apple cider was spiked with booze. She was filling all the presents on the “naughty or nice” board with shots of whiskey. Someone said, “You’re trying to kick this party up a notch, huh?”

I noticed a board near the front door with glue and

art supplies. They wanted everyone arriving to add something to collage. We were told it was going to be displayed in the front window. I noticed someone had covered a Heineken bottle with beads. Someone else glued packaging peanuts to make it look like snow. I took some of the doilies and wrote amusing messages on them. They were probably funnier to the people who had the spiked cider.

One lady asked us if we made art. My date said, “Doesn’t everyone, to some degree?” I said, “I used to draw those turtles that were in the *TV Guide*. And I could glue macaroni to construction paper back in elementary school with the best of ‘em.”

I overheard one woman in all black tell another woman she liked her green jacket. She said, “You look very Christmasy and I look like a lump of coal.”

I took a tour of the gallery with one of the owners. He told me that all the art was created by San Diego artists. After he showed a few pieces, I could tell it would be a while, and I started to feel like a third-grader stuck on a museum field trip. I soon realized that I wasn’t in school and that I could do whatever I wanted. I walked back out, grabbed a shot of tequila, and talked with Sarah again.

As I was finishing a bottle of green tea, a guy said to me that he couldn’t believe anyone would drink the tea. A student had brought cases of it a long time ago, and the guy thought it was probably bad by now. My date laughed, but I looked at the bottle, thought about it, and continued drinking. It couldn’t be any worse for me than that tequila was. ■

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San Diego Reader December 20, 2007 103

Transformer

In probably every English-speaking big city in the world, there's a Hotel Pickwick — a quaintly faux-Victorian (yet divey) one-star habitation, usually located near a major bus or train station. San Diego's Pickwick just passed on. It was next to the Greyhound depot, but the venue has changed its name and nature: The new Sofia Hotel looks swanky, its guests more likely to be lawyers than rovers stepping off the 'Hound. Signaling the upgrade, the hotel houses a first-class but affordable new restaurant, Currant, which should prove a destination in itself. The chef, Jonathan Pflueger, has cooked at such hotsy-totsy locations as Montage Resort in Laguna Beach and New York's Russian Tea Room. He's got serious chops. (You'll find his culinary philosophy expounded on the restaurant's website, an essay nearly as long as this review and twice as earnest.) Pflueger was the chef who transformed Star of the Sea in the late '90s and later, as a consultant, turned the former Fifth and Hawthorn completely around before it reopened as Hawthorn.

The wonderful "greening" of the county's restaurants is spreading, so week after week, I find myself eating virtuous California cuisine made with seasonal locally grown produce, naturally raised meats, free-range poultry, etc. But unless the chef *does* something lively with these fine, fresh ingredients, the parade of goodness can get — yes — *bo*-ring. So I am overjoyed to say that Pflueger has something new to say on the plate, and a charming venue to say it in. Currant (with an *a*) is named for the fruit, but the restaurant exhibits the electricity of its homophone: current.

The decor is modern brasserie, with black-and-white tile floors, shiny black tabletops, sparkling chandeliers. It's not Art Deco but subtly hints at that style and level of sophistication. A pleasant bar is considerably situated in an adjoining room (keeping any bar noise segregated), and cool jazz plays softly on the sound system. It looks and feels like a space for grown-ups.

"What would you like?" our waiter asked as we read the menu. "Four more people to eat with us, so we could try all the appetizers," I said. The server was exemplary, a laid-back guy of a certain age, named Guy, who knew every dish on the menu and even "got it" when I specified the precise temperature I wanted the pork chop cooked to.

We began with a round of Malpeque oysters,



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOE KLEIN

and the departure from the ordinary began. In addition to a champagne mignonette, the bivalves were strewn with fine shreds of smoked salmon and cucumber, lending textural and flavor contrast as well as novelty. "Smart chef," I murmured.

Sturgeon gravlax (now off the menu) had a jokey quality: The austere raw sashimi-style slices, thick, with a steaklike texture, were surrounded by soft, comforting pumpkin waffles — like a Zen monk wearing a fluffy orange sweater.

A zesty jumbo lump blue-crab salad was topped with a caraway cracker that resembled a sturdy potato chip, to serve as a platform for a slaw of apple, fennel, and celery root. A touch of curry oil lent a spicy undertone to the crab. All the elements harmonized.

Best of all were two specials, one of which has already made it onto the regular menu, while the other is under consideration. (Our good Guy informed us of the prices as he described them, as too few waiters do.) Foie gras with black Mission figs was exquisite, the liver cooked à point, and a good-sized piece of it, too. Even better was a clever

rethinking of escargots. "I love foie gras the best of anything," said one of my tablemates, "but [here] I actually love the escargots more." The snails, free from their shells, mingled with a creamy, garlicky mushroom sauce that included whole chanterelles

spread over sensuous soft polenta, with a pile of fine-minced parsley on the side. The combination included all the elements of classic Burgundian garlic-parsley butter, but with other rich flavors added to the conversation — a convivial snail cocktail party.

There were at least four more appetizers we wanted to try (but then we'd have had to skip entrées), including a charcuterie sampler with house-made bresaola, duck prosciutto, and pork pâté. In the future, the chef plans to make cheeses in-house to amend this assortment. There's also a heritage-beet salad paired — not with the standard (yawn) chèvre — but with a melted-leek tart. A parsnip soup and steamed mussels with *frites* didn't sound too shabby either. (I'll leave the ahi tartare and Caesar salad to those who want the same dishes at every restaurant they go to.)

Our entrées weren't quite up to the starters.

REVIEW NAOMI WISE

Currant ★★★★ (Excellent)

The Sofia Hotel, 140 West Broadway (next to Greyhound terminal), downtown, 619-702-6309, currantrestaurant.com.

HOURS: Lunch Monday–Friday, 11 a.m.–3:00 p.m., dinner nightly, 5:30–10:00 p.m.

PRICES: Dinner appetizers, \$8–\$14; entrées, \$16–\$32 (most in low \$20s); desserts, \$7–\$10.

CUISINE AND BEVERAGES: Intelligent, original, and even witty California-French "American brasserie" cuisine, with top-quality ingredients in a seasonally changing menu. Interesting international wines at every price point, ample choices by the glass; full bar.

PICK HITS: Oysters on the half-shell; foie gras; escargots; crab salad; duck leg confit; specials.

NEED TO KNOW: Valet parking one block west on Front Street. Cheese omelet with morel cream is currently the sole semi-vegetarian entrée, but vegetable side dishes could make a fine vegan meal.

Ratings reflect the reviewer's reaction to food, ambience, and service, with price taken into consideration. Menu listings and prices are subject to change.

Go to SanDiegoReader.com to find hundreds of past reviews.

Oddly, three out of four choices revealed near-monochromatic color schemes, as though filmed in the sepia of an old-time movie. In an entrée of jumbo scallops, the thick orbs were lightly seared (barely browned, their centers translucent) and came with white truffle risotto, caramelized onion juice, and fried Maui-onion rings. I didn't really love this combination, but I respected it. I might have enjoyed it more if anything on the plate were a color other than beige-to-tan; my taste buds as well as my eyes craved something green and fresh. A thick chipotle-barbecued pork chop (cooked to 135° Fahrenheit, just as I specified) was smoky not just from the sauce, but all through the meat. It had been cold-smoked in the kitchen, coming by its "barbecue" designation honestly. The chop was gorgeously, tragically fatty around the edges and

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tender all the way through. Its companions were satisfying Tuscan-style white beans and, in a break from sepia, a wee bit o' the green, in a heaplet of arugula.

Muscovy duck leg confit was the essence of "confit food," the meat (served on the bone) shreddy and crisp-surfaced, accompanied by French lentils *de puy*, speckled with tiny carrot bits. Alongside came two baguette crostini coated with chèvre and currant jam — that is, open-face cream cheese and jelly sandwiches! The pairing was surprisingly apt, lightening up (in all ways) a heavy, serious dish. The white cheese and purplish jam also gave the eye bright relief from another sea of brown.

We all felt that the slow-braised veal cheeks could have used another hour or so of slow-braising to turn them to proper Gallic meat-mush. The flavors were rich and winey, but the texture was rather tough. Here the color scheme was mahogany brown and beige. But who could say a word against the mixture of multicolored fingerling potatoes, tender caramelized salsify ("oyster plant"), and baby artichokes? One of the best features of Currant is the loving, individualized treatment of vegetables. Not just cooked and slapped on the plate, they are *cherished*. I suspect that even strict vegans

could get glorious meals here, drawing from the side dishes and accompaniments.

The staff includes a pastry chef, so all desserts are house-made, including ice creams. The choices sound enticing, but those we tasted proved a bit less than enchanting. The Grand Marnier soufflé (order in advance) started well but grew eggy and dense as we reached the bottom. The banana strudel in Moroccan "brik" pastry (similar to filo) looked like an egg roll and promised cardamom flavoring in the caramel. We couldn't taste the spice — the coarse sweetness of mashed bananas eclipsed all else. But the house-made crème fraîche gelato on the side was exquisite. Port-braised pear ice cream was lovely but would be even better surrounded by slices of Port-braised pears to reemphasize the basis of its bashful flavor. Still, I'd love to go back and sample the currant bread pudding, tarte tatin, chestnut crème brûlée, pumpkin cheesecake, and profiteroles with espresso ice cream. So many temptations, and surely one or more must be triumphs. And there are several alluring cheese platters as well.

Best of all, perhaps, are the prices for this inventive, distinctively personal cuisine. While not exactly cheap eats, they're in line with other upscale neighborhood restaurants

like Avenue 5 and Bleu Bohème, but the cooking is at a higher level of skill and imagination. The wine list is laden with reasonably priced bottles from underappreciated growing regions (plus a few high-end superstars), so whatever your tastes or budget, you'll find an appropriate quaff. Our bill for four diners in shameless-indulgence mode was fully \$100 less than at Anthology or Sushi Ota (well, the *sensei* has expensive tastes in sake). But even if you can't handle shameless indulgence, you can make a superb meal of two courses of exciting appetizers with food costs of about \$25 a person. Our Guy won't mind — he hinted that we should consider doing just that. Whichever way you go, one thing's likely: You won't be bored.

ABOUT THE CHEF

"I grew up with my father, so out of necessity I learned how to cook. I took great interest in it, and it was always my summer job," says Jonathan Pflueger, who hails from Laguna Beach. "I started as a dishwasher, became a prep cook, and then a seafood cook at a little Mexican restaurant. I never really thought of it as a profession, and I ended up going to Vassar College and graduated with a degree in Third World history. I was planning to go to law school after that,

but I needed to pay off some serious student loans, and I got lucky and worked my way into a great French restaurant called L'Etoile in Madison, Wisconsin. That was about 20 years ago. Until then, I'd always been a short-order cook, and this just opened a whole new world of flavors and products to use. At that point, I realized that this was what I really wanted to do.

"I never went to culinary school, but from that point on I worked and learned as much as I could in each kitchen, and as soon as it became a production job I'd move on. I sought out the best kitchens and best chefs from whom I could learn, and that was my education for the first ten years, until I finally had my first opportunity as an executive chef, with the Ritz Carlton in Laguna Niguel, as chef of the dining room. Then I came to San Diego and was offered a position running Anthony's flagship, Star of the Sea. I was there for six years, but then I was offered the chance to go back to New York as the re-opening chef for the Russian Tea Room in New York City." (Pflueger served as executive sous-chef at showman Warner LeRoy's zillion-dollar refurbishment of the Tea Room into a fantasy Czarist palace, with a French-Russian menu. The food was roundly panned by the *New York Times* and other media.)

"It was quite an experience. It was such a unique opportunity. Myself and one of my mentors, Fabrice Canelle, the executive chef, we had a test kitchen at Tavern on the Green for six months prior to the opening. We had Russian food consultants come in. Once the place opened, we had four floors of dining, 88 cooks. We communicated through walkie-talkies. We'd make an 800-gallon batch of borscht every day. It was amazing. It was more about the theater of the place than about the food.

"After two years, I wanted to be in an atmosphere that was a little more intimate and food-driven than the Tea Room, and I came back as the chef de cuisine for a French bistro in Newport Beach, and from there I got an opportunity to open my own restaurant in Laguna. It was called Vertical, and it was a tapas and wine bar — it was all tasting plates and fun wine flights. We were open for two years before I left to become the opening executive chef at Montage Resort, which offered me a lot more money than we were making.

"Montage was an unbelievable resort, but I was an executive chef and we had three restaurants that all had very talented chefs de cuisine, so my position was more about managing managers and crunching

numbers. It did give me the opportunity to do *stages* in France with George Blanc and Paul Bocuse... But what got me into this business was my love of food and cooking, and I didn't quite have those avenues there... I started teaching at Laguna Culinary Academy and doing some consulting work. Through that consulting work, I ended up meeting the owners of the Sofia Hotel. I started out as a consultant here, but as our relationship grew they just decided, 'Hey, let's do this together.' And it came to fruition when we opened Currant on September 1. I'd fallen in love with San Diego when I was here before, and my daughters love living here, and I'm here to stay.

"As I wrote on the website, my mantra is: No food is fearful except if it isn't fresh, and no meal is to be feared as long as it's in balance. The stars of our plate are the raw products. We put a lot of time into getting the best from our fishmongers, our small-farm purveyors. We're really product-driven. Our intention is to treat the food with respect, and simply, and let the natural flavors come out, while we come out with unique flavor combinations. And a lot of the staff here were with me at Star of the Sea and have real enthusiasm and a strong work ethic; it's a pleasure to work with them again." ■

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Much Ado About Mutton

"Baa-becue, buddy, baa-becue. People flock to the joint. That's what I herd."

We're talking a little end-of-year chowdown.

"So," I say. "Lamb okay?"

"Baa-humbbug!" says Hank. "What's this, the Mutton Jeff show?"

We're cruising in Hank's Camry up El Cajon, near Fairmount. Bad sheep jokes rule.

"Would I pull the wool over your eyes?" I say.

Hank sighs. "May as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb, I guess. What do they have there again?"

"Baa-becue, buddy, baa-becue.

People flock to the joint. That's what I herd."

"Oh please. But how expensive? Don't wanna get fleeced."

"They don't skin you. Besides, we can split. Shear and shear alike."

Suddenly, I spot it. A low, orangey-brown place. "Pull this Lamb-orghini over!" I yell. "We're here."

"Tell me one thing," says Hank. By now, we're stepping inside a bright, orange-and-yellow-washed place with Mexican serapes and art on the walls, large Mexican dolls set in niches, an open kitchen, and a dozenish brown tables with those creaky woven-wicker chairs. "Why all this trouble to find lamb?"

"Flavor, ol' buddy, fer-lavor," I say. "Lamb, goat, they've got it. Ground beef, chicken, they taste of nothin' except what you put on them. Mere vehicles for salt and batter. When it comes to meat, people are afraid — of *sabor*."

A tall, statuesque gal comes up. Rodnia. "Welcome," she says. "Sit anywhere. Is this your first time? You must try our *barbacoa*."

"Any particular reason?" says Hank.

"Hey, man, 'tis the season," I mumble.

"No, I wanna know. I'm interested."

"We bring the lamb-eating traditions of Hidalgo to San Diego," Rodnia says. "The state of Hidalgo's just north of Mexico City. Up here, people confuse *birria* with *barbacoa*. There's a world of difference. The *birria* is made with beef or goat, but it is like a broth, a soup, with the meat inside. And it has spices. Peppers. The *barbacoa* is a special treatment of lamb, with the meat on the inside, wrapped in maguery leaves — no spices — and cooked slowly, for ten or more hours. It comes out with the flavor of the maguery."

She says that traditionally, down in Hidalgo, the *barbacoa* is slow-cooked in a large cooking pit dug into the ground. That's impossible here, with health department rules. "So we put the lamb into a *vaporera* — a steamer — instead," she says.

"And the maguery?" asks Hank.

"Wait a minute," says Rodnia. She goes over to the kitchen and comes back with her mother Rosario. Together, they're carrying a great, way-big "leaf." Maybe four feet long, with vicious spikes up each side.

"Now, see the very thin underskin we can just peel?" says Rosario. "This we use for another dish, our *mixiote*. It's lamb with a special taste. We rub the lamb with that and steam the lamb in it, with a mix of spices and chili pepper."

She says it's spicy-flavored but not spicy-burning. "The flavor's rich," she says. Then again, so's the price: 12 smackeroots.

"All French to me," mutters Hank, as we get heads-down into the menu. They have a bean soup for \$3.99 and a lamb broth (\$2.25 single, \$4.25 double). It comes with garbanzo beans, rice, and "chunks of *barbacoa*." *Barbacoa* tacos are \$1.50

each, quesadillas with *guisados* (different stuffings) are \$1.99. And three rolled tacos filled with lamb *barbacoa*, with cream cheese and rice, cost \$5.99. Then there's the "lamb special," with a lamb taco, a rolled lamb taco, a lamb quesadilla, cactus salad, and rice, all for \$7.25.

They also have a "lamb *pancita*," lamb organs cooked inside its own sewn-up stomach, but only Friday–Sunday. Supposed to be a really good morning-after reviver, like *menudo*.

Hank, natch, jumps in and orders first, picking the "Order of *Barbacoa*" ("250 grams of *barbacoa* served with rice and beans and eight tortillas, \$10.99"). Me, I'm Mr. Modest. I get a *barbacoa* taco (\$1.50), a quesadilla — with *huitlacoche*, the Aztecs' "corn poop" (that's what *huitlacoche* means) mold that's supposed to put hairs on your chest — and a single-size bowl of soup. And the lamb broth, of course (\$2.25).

Rodnia explains that my soup is basically the drippings of the slow-cooking lamb *barbacoa*. Like, juices drip down from the steaming meat. So it's concentrated, and oh man, it sure is delicious when she brings it. A meal in itself, what with all the goodies added in, the garbanzos, rice, and plenty of chunks of lamb. But the taco is the real thing: a concentrated flavor of beautifully moist, nonchewy lamb meat that's somehow plenty flavorful, just tasting of... itself. I get a *tamarindo* drink too (\$1.99), to sluice out the mouth. My three dishes more than fill me.

But, really, have to admit, Hank has the prize. Hey, at \$10.99, he should. Okay, it comes in a polystyrene box, but he gets two big squares of compressed *barbacoa* lamb meat, and red-brown rice and beans, along with fresh greens like cilantro,



Rodnia

and fresh hot tortillas, and a squeeze of red salsa. Plus an extra side of *frijoles* (\$1.99). The boy's in pig heaven. Uh, make that Mutton Jeff heaven. He gives me a taste of the meat, and it's so full of flavor you wonder why we bother with beef. But Rodnia says the lamb *mixiote* has the strongest, maybe most interesting flavors, with that thin maguery skin, and the spices, and again, the slow steaming.

No way I can fit that in now. Even if I had the *dinero*. But it's been a blast, one of those days when you discover something you've been missing all your life.

"Man," coos Hank outside. "That place really raised the baa..." ■

The Place: El Borrego restaurant, 4280 El Cajon Boulevard (not far west of Fairmount), City Heights, 619-281-1355

Type of Food: Mexican

Prices: Breakfast chilaquiles, beans, \$6.25; rancheros eggs, \$6.25; bean soup, \$3.99; lamb broth (with garbanzo beans, rice, lamb), \$2.25 single, \$4.25 double; barbacoa taco, \$1.50; quesadilla with huitlacoche, \$1.99; three rolled tacos with lamb, \$5.99; lamb special, with lamb taco, rolled taco, quesadilla, cactus salad, rice, \$7.25; lamb barbacoa "order" (with rice, beans, tortillas), \$10.99; lamb pancita "order" (lamb's organs, same sides, Friday–Sunday only), \$10.99; lamb mixiote, \$12

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In 1977, Robert Benson published *Great Winemakers of California*, a series of interviews with the men (and one woman) who were shaping the industry at the dawn of California wine's Golden Age. He managed to interview Martin Ray — the Orson Welles of the wine world, an outsized personality who had been making Pinot Noir on Mount Eden since the '30s — shortly before his death. Famous name after famous name — Draper at Ridge, Graff at Chalone, Winiarski at Stag's Leap, Grgich, Mondavi, Heitz — all there. (And also Brother Timothy at Christian Brothers, August Sebastiani, Louis Martini, and even Ely Callaway from Temecula — Benson wasn't just cherry-picking.) The interviews were based on a standard set of questions and heavy on technical details — lots of talk about centrifuges and temperature-controlled fermentation. But Benson wasn't afraid to let the conversation ramble, and nontechnical aspects of those chats provide a candid portrait of the industry at the beginning of its ascent.

Some 17 years later, Dennis Schaefer published a sequel of sorts: *Vintage Talk: Conversations with California's New Winemakers*. Cab and Chard were still the king and queen and Napa was still

the superpower, but still, much had changed. Tim Mondavi had taken over at Mondavi. Randall Grahm was making mischief with Rhone varietals at Bonny Doon, while Bob Lindquist was doing the same down in Santa Barbara with

Crush
MATTHEW LICKONA

Qupé. Jim Clendenen was making hay with Central Coast Pinot Noir, and Joel Peterson was riding the Zinfandel swell at Ravenswood. And the structure was more sophisticated. There was still a lot of technical talk — instead of centrifuges, Schaefer asked about filtration — but the wine

press had grown up in the interim, and Schaefer had clearly tailored his interviews for his subjects.

Schaefer's penultimate interview subject was Adam Tolmach of Ojai Vineyards, and his penultimate question was this: "Do you think we are moving away from an overblown, over-oaked style of wines and moving to stylistic wines more compatible with food?" Tolmach's reply: "Yes. The earlier California wines tended to be just that way. They were over-extracted, over-oaked, too low in acid, and they had this tremendous character that wasn't fashioned correctly...It turns out you don't need incredible ripeness of fruit to make wines with a lot of character. Typically, in California, the wine would be way too ripe, with

too much alcohol and almost an excess amount of character.... If you pick the grapes at a more reasonable ripeness, you can have all the fruit character that you could ever want without having the excess of alcohol."

I should note that I am by no means seeking to go after Tolmach here. But the 13 years since that statement was published raise a legitimate question about what he meant by "incredible ripeness" and "excess of alcohol." Consider Ojai's Roll Ranch Syrah: in 1996, it offered 13 percent alcohol. Just two years later, that number had jumped to 15 percent (and the wine nabbed 91 points from Robert Parker's *Wine Advocate*). And in 2004, while it came in at a somewhat tamer 14.5 percent, the wine still earned 94 points from Parker, who called it "stunningly full-bodied, rich, opulent," and "ripe."

Tolmach's wines are hardly unusual in this regard. Ripeness, with its attendant increase in sugar levels — and consequently, alcohol content — has been on the rise all over California for years now. So, I was glad to see that when Bob Heimoff, West Coast editor for *Wine Enthusiast* magazine, set out to write his own companion to Benson's book (the newly released *New Classic Winemakers of California*), he had ripeness on his mind. As he writes in the introduction, "High alcohol is a concern among many writers, sommeliers, restaurateurs, consumers, and even (when they will admit it) growers and winemakers, who worry that the resulting wines are not in balance and may not age." Where Schaefer asked about filtration and malolactic fermentation, Heimoff would be asking about ripeness, sugar levels — alcohol.

He got a wonderful range of answers; I'll make



California vineyard

note of just a few. Gary Pisoni described Pisoni Pinot Noir by saying, "It's got mouthfeel! It's got expansion! I mean, you put one drop in your mouth and it explodes.... Our wines are identifiable! They're showing what the vineyard wants to produce. And that's what I want: *typicite*." Justin Smith at Saxum noted that his wines are between 15.5–15.9 percent alcohol but said, "We have chosen to show respect for the season and let it be what it is. We're picking at where we think the flavors are.... I'm not super-happy about high alcohol...but it's also true that we're coming off of three of the hottest, driest seasons. Give us another '98, and they'll be back down." Mark Aubert, then at Colgin, explained that "the advent of tannin analysis" led growers to increase hang time for their grapes as they sought ever-more-wonderful phenolic character. Kathy Joseph at Fiddlehead said that as new vineyards mature — there was a lot of replanting after the last phylloxera invasion, during the late '80s–early '90s — physiological ripeness might occur at lower sugar levels. And Kent Rosenblum put it on



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RESTAURANTS

the consumer: “The bigger, the badder, the better, the quicker it sells.”

Nobody tied the trend directly to the critics. But when we spoke, Heimoff, a critic himself, couldn't help but observe that “If you travel around and talk to winemakers, you hear it all the time — not necessarily on the record: the ripeness thing is being driven by those two individuals. And people deplore it. But everybody knows that Robert Parker and Jim Laube at *Wine Spectator* like those huge, high-alcohol, highly extracted wines. They are, by definition, high-scoring wines. Unfortunately, as long as the critical market is dominated by so few people, and those few people like these wines, the change [toward less alcoholic wines] will be really slowed down.” Winemakers “feel their hands are tied, because they need those scores.”

As for Heimoff, while he's friendly with his subjects, he's not a big fan of “the ripeness thing.” “I'm a balance guy. I

think the magic of wine is a combination of power plus elegance equals balance. I do think that, in too many cases, California has taken the easy way out and just gone with power, because the weather lets us do that. The trick is to have something like Armani. Everything is the best money can buy — the fabric, the stitching, and so forth — but it's understated. I guess ‘subtle elegance’ is the term that I like. Not to say that a very ripe wine can't have subtle elegance, but it's less likely.” Here, he takes a much gentler tack than interview subject Tony Soter, of Soter and Etude (and Spottswode and Dalla Valle and Araujo...), who says bluntly, “There's plenty of winemakers who realize they're being rewarded by critics for these wines, where they're doing it on purpose... Now, that is a bogus approach to making wine. I don't even know what a Santa Rita Hills Pinot Noir tastes like anymore... These wines are overblown.”

That's one man's opinion, albeit a man who casts a rather large shadow. But, says Heimoff, besides Soter and winemakers like him (and despite Rosenblum's claim), “I

know there's a huge consumer backlash — you read about it everywhere. It's on the blogs... We just have to figure out...” Heimoff pauses. “I was going to say, ‘We have to figure out what to do about it,’ but that's a meaningless statement. What I mean is, every individual winemaker has to figure it out. Put yourself in Justin Smith's shoes at Saxum, where I believe that just about every wine is over 15 percent. What's his motive to change? If my memory serves, he set a record at their last auction. These are complicated questions. It's easy enough for me to sit here and take potshots at the high-alcohol people. I don't have to sell those wines. My mortgage isn't riding on that. So I don't know where, collectively, ‘we’ go.”

More on the book next week. ■

RESTAURANT LISTINGS

The Reader's Guide to Restaurants are recommended listings written by our reviewers (Ed Bedford, Barbara David, Ambrose Martin, Shari McCullough, Max Nash, Eleanor Widmer, Naomi Wise). Each issue contains only a fraction of over 500 reviews. A complete searchable list is

available online at SanDiegoReader.com.

Price estimates are based on the latest information available for a mid-range entrée. Inexpensive: below \$10; moderate: \$10 to \$19; expensive: \$20 to \$24; very expensive: more than \$25. Please call restaurants in advance for reservations.

NORTH COASTAL

Bubby's Gelato 937 South Coast Highway 101, Lumberyard Shopping Center, Encinitas, 760-436-3563. This tiny storefront does only a few things (sandwiches, gelati, and sorbet), but does them exceedingly well. The “gourmet sandwiches” really do live up to their designation, with intriguing Mediterranean combinations (artichoke hearts, black olives, grilled eggplant, Gorgonzola are among the choice of ingredients) on soft, round Italian bread. (Or you can just get a tuna melt if that's your flavor.) Gelati are about twice as rich as Häagen-Dazs, and feature an ever-changing array of bold flavors, e.g., vanilla rosewater and chocolate cinnamon. Open daily 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., closes later on Friday and Saturday. Inexpensive. — N.W.

Fidel's Carlsbad 3003 Carlsbad Boulevard (at Carlsbad Village Drive), Carlsbad, 760-729-0903. It's not upscale modern Mex — no cumin-infused, mango-corn salsa on Fidel's menu — but who gives a flyin' fajita when you can order just about any traditional SoCal-Mexican dish and know it's gonna be good? Whether you try the chicken-and-rice soup with fresh cilantro and avocado chunks, fluffy

chile rellenos, a crab enchilada, *carne asada* with all the trimmings, or a lonely à la carte chicken burrito, you're going to be a happy camper. Add a reliable margarita or a beer and you're set at this popular North County mainstay. Open seven days a week for lunch and dinner. Inexpensive. — S.M.

Hill Street Coffee House 524 South Coast Highway 101, Oceanside, 760-966-0985. Organic in Oceanside? Really! Look for the sign: “Organic Restaurant and Espresso Bar” in front of a restored yellow-and-white Victorian house from O'side's past. Most of their meats, poultry, fish, and veggies are organic, and the menu is full of healthy dishes: tofu/spinach breakfast scramble, frittata *espinaca* (“Greek eggs”), and *pain perdu* (for us peasants that's French toast) with fresh fruit and syrups. Some vegan items. After 11 a.m., try their Cajun chicken. Open daily, breakfast to dinner. Inexpensive. — E.B.

I Trulli Trattoria 830 South Coast Highway 101 (between G and H streets), Encinitas, 760-943-6800. An enduring hit in Encinitas (where there's no shortage of Italian restaurants), I Trulli serves modern Italian food with fashionable new ingredients. The menu, subtitled “Nouvelle Italian Cuisine,” resembles the somewhat ambitious, generically “northern Italian” bills of fare that you encounter all over Hillcrest and the Gaslamp. (It is, in fact, a partner restaurant to Hillcrest's Arrivederci.) The signifiers of seriousness are the pink peppercorns, goat cheese, sun-dried tomatoes, and light cream sauces that coexist with the more traditional mozzarella-tomato sauce arrays. Best bets are the daily specials, which offer the greatest chance for fresh ingredients and creativity. Busy, cramped, painfully loud inside. Street

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patio next to highway is also noisy. Reserve for dinner on weekends or expect an hour's wait. Open daily, lunch and dinner. Moderate. — N.W.

Johnny Manana's 308 Mission Avenue, Oceanside, 760-721-9999. Local teachers hang out at this green-white- and red-tiled place because it's such good value. Most dishes are Mexican. There's a Caribbean chocolatey, black bean, paprika, curry-in-the-rice thing going on. Pescado Veracruz (fish marinated in lime juice and garlic with rice, beans, and green salad) is good. The roasted chicken is delicious. The Big Breakfast Burrito Special (eggs, onions, beans, cheese, and rice, wrapped in a large flour tortilla) is *my* popular, but then so is J.M.'s Great All-American Cheeseburger. Open daily. Inexpensive. — E.B.

Osteria del Pescatore 1201 Camino Del Mar (at 12th Street), Del Mar, 858-509-9293. The restaurant's name means “Fisherman's Hostelry,” and you'll find expert, courteous service and well-crafted seasonal Italian fare



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here with a strong emphasis on zesty fresh seafood. Go straight to the single-spaced page-long list of daily specials for the most exciting dishes, including spaghetti *a cartoccio* (baked in parchment paper) and lobster risotto. But save room for dessert, especially if the day's offerings include *torta alla nanna*, a rose-scented nut confection. Parking behind restaurant (turn east on 12th Street); heated dining patio available. Interesting international wine list. Reservations advised. Lunch Tuesday through Saturday; dinner nightly. High moderate to expensive. — N.W.

Pacific Coast Grill 437 South Coast Highway 101 (Beachwalk Plaza), Solana Beach, 858-794-4632. The grill features a free-form menu of Pacific Rim cuisine featuring fine ingredients and integrating Mexican, Hawaiian, and Asian flavors into So-Cal comfort cooking. Try the green salad with vibrant cranberry vinaigrette, the "Bag of Bones" (house-smoked pork ribs), and whatever fruit creation is on the dessert menu. Busy and noisy; reservations urged for weekend dinners and all summer. Open daily for lunch and dinner. Full bar. Moderate to expensive. — N.W.

Red Tracton's 550 Via de la Valle, Del Mar, 858-755-6600. Even though you know you're a half mile from the Pacific Ocean and across the street from the Del Mar Racetrack, one step inside Red Tracton's dining room sends you reeling back in time to an upscale, dimly lit, maroon-and-gilt restaurant of 1960s Chicago. The only thing missing is the scent of cigars. Food portions are enormous: The lobster sandwich (a touch heavy on the mayo) easily packs a half pound of lobster (available at lunch on Fridays). The selection is generous: steaks, prime rib, seafood, chicken, and pork — all expertly prepared and served in record time. On days when you don't give a rip about the Surgeon General's latest warnings, run to Red Tracton's and indulge your All-American appetite. Lunch Monday through Saturday, dinner nightly. Expensive. — S.M.

Spices Thai Cafe 3810 Valley Centre Drive, Piazza Carmel Shopping Center, Del Mar (east of Carmel Valley turn-off), 858-259-0889; 6785 Mira Mesa Boulevard, Mira Mesa, 858-552-8845; 16441 Bernardo Center Drive, Rancho Bernardo, 858-674-4665. Superb Thai restaurant that's not only elegant but whose food contains no MSG and very little fat. The seafood dishes rate highly. Among other delicacies are duck and frog legs. Put Spices Thai Café at the top of your list. Open daily for lunch and dinner. Inexpensive to moderate. — E.W.

Tomiko 87 Encinitas Boulevard (at Best Western, just west of I-5), Encinitas, 760-633-3587. In a lovely setting overlooking Moonlight Bay you can enjoy Japanese and Pacific Rim fusion cooking and sushi in a serene but lively dining room. When the sushi bar is free from the weekend rush, the quality can be amazing: stunningly fresh *uni*, world-beating silky *toro*. The sushi-master also keeps an eye on the restaurant's seafood purchases, so they meet exacting standards. Appetizers such as "salmon tower tartare" and "drunken black cod" are rewarding, as are the simple, excellent fusion-tinged seafood entrées. Reserve for weekends, especially for sushi bar. Lunch weekdays, dinner nightly. Moderate. — N.W.

Tuscan Sun Italian Deli 1070 North El Camino Real, Encinitas, 760-633-4546. A town abounding in Italian restaurants ought to have a great Italian deli, and it does. You'll find domestic and imported deli meats and cheeses, fresh-baked breads and focaccia, marinated veggies, and a wealth of gourmet products from Italy. The specialty is the "Caprese" (tomatoes-plus) sandwich on focaccia bread with a variety of fillings, best served grilled and dressed with pesto. The eat-in/take-out menu includes pizza, pasta, salads, and a host of sandwiches. Open daily. — N.W.

NORTH INLAND

Athens Market Cafe 11640 Carmel Mountain Road, Suite 124, near Pacific Theatres, Carmel Mountain Plaza, 858-675-2225. At this offshoot of Mary Pappas's downtown Athens Market,



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sister Vickie's food is just as good. If you want a big start, order the *saganaki*, a cheese appetizer that comes flaming to your table. And you can't lose with *mezedakia*, a big oval sampler of *dolmades* (stuffed grape leaves), *lokaniko* (a delicious Greek sausage), *spanakopita* (spinach in filo pastry), tomatoes, cucumbers, *tzatziki* dip, hummus, feta cheese, and olives. But come for the lamb. It's wonderfully flavorful, skewered in the souvlaki entrée (which comes with beans and rice) or as lamb chops. Moussaka (baked eggplant, zucchini, and ground beef) goes down well too. Or what's wrong with a simple plate of feta cheese, kalamata olives, and a glass of Greek red? Open daily, 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Inexpensive to moderate. — *E.B.*

Bamboo Hut Black Mountain Village, 9172 Mira Mesa Boulevard (one driveway west of Black Mountain Road), Mira Mesa, 858-348-0414. You'll find a taste of Hawaii in a strip mall in a neighborhood that's all-mall. The bright little "hut" has bamboo chairs, a bamboo ceiling, bare floors, and unclothed tables, with a sushi counter next to a tiny kitchen with a roaring gas grill. A large lattice awning offers outdoor seating a few steps from the door. The quality of the food is all over the map, though — this is not the place to try your first Spam sushi. The seafood sushi is good, though, including a fine Rainbow Roll with really sweet crab; the more creative rolls run to cream cheese and hot sauce. "Local food" choices include a tasty ahi *poke*

and excellent chicken *katsu*; the *kalbi* short ribs are tough, though. Plate lunches include one to three entrées (priced accordingly) with steamed or mildly garlic-flavored rice, macaroni salad, and green salad with bright orange dressing à la Kraft French. Be sure they deliver what you ordered; there may be slipups. Open seven days, lunch and dinner. Very inexpensive. — *N.W.*

Bistro 221 221 East Grand Avenue (near Kalmia), Escondido, 760-737-7398. This genteel bistro — with comfortable chairs and linen-covered tables inside and a shaded patio on the sidewalk — is especially tasty at lunch, with its sophisticated quesadillas and a classic burger and fries cooked your way. At dinner simple starters shine, including a "blonde" Florida version of gumbo and Maryland crab cakes with minimal filler. The dinner entrées are also the best, including beef tournedos with Gorgonzola and grouper caught just off the Florida shores. A "Louisiana" bread pudding is moister (hence more pleasing) than most of its namesakes. No wheelchair access for restrooms. Free parking behind restaurant. Ordinary wine list. Lunch and dinner Tuesday through Friday; dinner Tuesday through Saturday. Lunch moderate; dinner moderate to high. — *N.W.*

La Tapatia 340 West Grand Avenue, Escondido, 760-747-8282. Take a walk on the mild side at this family-owned favorite, in business since the 1930s. You'll find standard Mexican fare in a comfortable dining room or, in good weather, a lovely, arbor-like stone-walled patio. The most celebrated dish is the "cheese crisp," a large tostada covered one-third in ground beef, one-third in beef chunks, and one-third in beans, with cheese, avocado puree, and sour cream over all. Many preparations

(grilled seafoods, etc.) are healthy, and veggies taste fresh. Seasonings are rather de-tuned, but there's a saltshaker and a lively salsa on the table. Open daily, three meals. Moderate. — *N.W.*

The Place: El Parque 2659 Reche Road, Fallbrook, 760-731-2775. Just think Little Red Riding Hood — this is Grandma's place. Okay, it's not a little old, thatched cottage — it's a cream-painted metal shed with a gazebo in front. But it is in the Live Oak woods, and you can sink your teeth into some pretty fair Mexican food here, sitting alongside an interesting bunch of agricultural workers and maybe some ruby miners. Good combination plates include the tostada and beef taco, and burrito and enchilada. The time to be here is Sunday morning, when those aggies pour in here for the *menudo*, cooked in a three-foot-high pot. Open daily, breakfast through early dinner. Inexpensive. — *E.B.*

The Wayside Cafe 507 South Main Avenue, Fallbrook, 760-723-9633. Locals love meeting and eating in this long low-porched building — partly because it all just feels small-town America. The place used to be Mahrs' Service Station. You can even sit in the old Lube Bay to eat. Count on generous servings, especially the mountain-piles of red-skinned home-fries as a side at breakfast. Open for breakfast and lunch daily. Inexpensive. — *E.B.*

LA JOLLA

Barbarella 2171 Avenida de la Playa, La Jolla Shores, 858-454-7373. This popular restaurant sits nestled in an English garden just blocks from the beach. You can dine amidst the flora at

street-side tables, in the enclosed patio, or in the small dining room. Once you're seated, the friendly staff provides fresh-out-of-the-oven sourdough wheat bread to nibble on. The menu changes daily, offering fresh fish, steak, chicken, pastas, soups, and pizzas, all cooked with a twist of imagination that delivers on the flavor. For instance: pizza topped with smoked salmon, crème fraîche, chives, and fried capers. Or delicate Alaskan halibut served over creamed spring onions with a watercress salad. If a fresh fruit crêpe happens to be on the dessert menu, leap on it! Open for lunch and dinner daily. — *S.M.*

Clay's Hotel La Jolla (11th floor penthouse), 7955 La Jolla Shores Drive, La Jolla, 858-551-3620. In this oddly cozy penthouse with wide windows facing west, the curtains rise at sunset to reveal a panorama stretching to the sea. It's comfortable, attractive, not too formal — casual-chic. Here, chef-owner Clay Bordan cooks up a creative, sophisticated, seasonal California-Fusion menu with international flavors seamlessly integrated, featuring organic vegetables, wild fish, naturally raised meats and fowl. With his discerning palate, his fare is unusually delicious. And it's healthful, low-carb enjoyment with interesting veggies, little starch, minimal cream. Wine list includes some high-end French bargains; good choices by the glass. Full bar. Free parking. Elevator/ accessible restrooms same floor. Dietary restrictions accommodated. No kiddie menu, but child-size plates half-price from regular menu. Reservations recommended. Live local jazz in lounge most nights after 7 or 8 p.m.; big band Sunday nights. Can be noisy. Three meals daily. Expensive. — *N.W.*

The Marine Room 2000 Spindrift Drive (off Torrey Pines Road), La Jolla,

858-459-7222. High cuisine, high adventure, high seas — at only moderately high prices. With chef Bernard Guillas as top toque, the Marine Room has become the quintessential great San Diego restaurant. The exhilarating coastal view meets Cal-French-Pacific Rim cuisine that's as exuberantly out-front as the waves whacking the windows. Guillas's oceanic culinary inventiveness with ultra-fresh, exotic ingredients makes every visit a voyage of discovery, and preparations are so elaborate that each listing on his precise menu reads like a whole tasting dinner. Reservations requested; slightly dressy but not stuffy. Easiest route: Make a right from west-bound Torrey Pines onto Roseland or Viking and go left on St. Louis, which runs into Spindrift. Wheelchair ramp to the left of front door. Noisy when crowded. Dinner Sunday through Thursday 6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., Friday and Saturday 5:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. Expensive. — *N.W.*

Sante Ristorante 7811 Herschel Avenue, La Jolla, 858-454-1315. The name is Italian for "saint," and the Northern Italian/regional cooking shines here, especially the fish and seafood dishes. Fresh seafood specials are available every night, in addition to those on the menu. Excellent pasta with mushrooms, ravioli with quail, and lamb chops. Separate room for bar; separate private dining room. Lunch Monday through Saturday, dinner nightly. Enclosed patio for lunch. Not to be missed. Moderate (pastas) to expensive. — *E.W.*

Sushi on the Rock 7734 Girard Avenue, La Jolla, 858-456-1138. (Also at 1923 Calle Barcelona, Encinitas, 760-436-6261.) This noisy, high-energy spot — a boxy, saloon-like space with a sushi bar in back — draws a lively

twenty-something crowd (although older folks will have plenty of company, too). Unlike more traditional sushi bars, there's a vast selection of "rock and rolls" — huge, creative party sushi. And they're fabulous, with sparkling fresh seafood and immensely clever combinations. Try, for instance, the shrimp tempura roll, which wraps fried shrimp, crab shreds, *daikon* sprouts and Japanese mayo in deep-fried salmon skin — the combo would be just as impressive as an appetizer at a top Cal-French restaurant. The Orange Crush is another sublime invention, fresh and crunchy with veggies and *tobiko* wrapped in suave salmon. Even simple rolls are so well conceived, and the rice so nicely seasoned, you won't need soy-wasabi dip. No reservations, long waits (in cramped entryway) on weekends. Good sake list. Lunch weekdays, dinner nightly, with deep discounts for happy hour specials. Moderate. Second (quieter, but with full bar) location at 1923 Calle Barcelona, Carlsbad, 760-436-6261. — *N.W.*

MISSION VALLEY & THE MESAS

Bali Thai Café 407 South Camino del Rio South (dead end, west of Auto Circle and Mission Center Road), San Diego, 619-297-0800. Expect the unexpected! This tiny, unique restaurant splits its menu between three nations with chefs from Indonesia and Thailand and a chef-owner from Suriname, a former Dutch colony (like Indonesia) in South America. The Thai menu is standard, although the *tom kha koong* (shrimp in coconut milk soup) is outstanding and authentic (don't eat the



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stuff at the bottom of the bowl!), while the tropical Indonesian dishes are so rare locally that culinary adventurers will want to explore such delights as "seafood delight roll," corn fritters, the soothing *soto ayam* (the Indonesian version of chicken-noodle comfort soup), Balinese fish filet, and the spicy *sambal goring* (shrimp in chili sauce), among others. Short but smart wine list, beer, sake. Easy evening parking. Heated, roofed patio. Large portions. Reserve for weeknights, no reservations accepted for weekends. Lunch and dinner daily. Low moderate. — N.W.

King's Fish House 825 Camino de la Reina (west of Mission Center Drive), Mission Valley, 619-574-1230. (Also at 2015 Birch Road, Chula Vista, 619-591-1690.) To find King's in the mega-mall, go slightly west of Koo Koo Roo and follow the line of cars to the free valet parking. It's a chain, but it's a classy chain, offering fish and seafoods of a quality that's well above average, including crustaceans from a live tank and a half-dozen varieties of pristine oysters. Generously-sized entrées come with soup or salad (including a Caesar that's above suspicion) and two hefty side dishes. The vast menu of American-style preparations changes daily to reflect the fresh catch, and includes some rotating regional specialties (e.g., New Orleans, Hawaii, New England). Don't miss the prawn pot-sticker appetizer, if available, and for dessert, the miraculously light bread pudding. The atmosphere is good-timey (with two patios and a barroom as well as a dining room), the service is enthusiastic, and the management will accommodate special requests if you call ahead. Kiddie menu available. Open daily, lunch and dinner. Moderate. — N.W.

Korea House 4620 Convoy Street, Kearny Mesa, 858-560-0080. Korea House offers floor seating or a table if you want to barbecue your own food. The menu offers fine "down-home" Korean food, such as traditional *mandoo* (beef) dumplings, and *yookhwe*, a steak tartare worth risking. Make a meal from enormous appetizers like *gul bosam* (raw oysters, pork, and cabbage leaves). Open daily. Inexpensive to moderate. — M.N.

Nijiya Market 3860 Convoy Street, Kearny Mesa, 858-268-3821. If you're not willing to sacrifice quality for convenience when eating fast food, try this Japanese market in Kearny Mesa. Nijiya Market offers prepared box lunches, or *bento*, that are pretty to look at, appetizing, and a real bargain. I suggest, however, passing by Nijiya's steam trays and heat lamps and going straight to the coolers, where you'll find delicious chicken cutlets, fresh sushi, and chilled noodles, as well as dessert delicacies like sweet bread roll filled with sweet bean paste. Inexpensive. — M.N.

Pampas Argentine Grill 8690 Aero Drive (at Montgomery Field), Kearny Mesa, 858-278-5971. The Argentine specialties feature grilled grass-fed beef, including a somewhat Americanized version of the *gauchos'* great *parillada mixta* (mixed grill), with a great chorizo but minus any exotic organs. The naturally raised meats are lower fat and lower cholesterol than feed-lot beef but are salted heavily in the kitchen unless you request otherwise. Specify rare or medium-rare, unless you really like brown cardboard. Lighter fare includes free-range chicken and fresh, well-treated seafood. Beef empanadas are a tasty, authentic starter. Potatoes (fries and mashed) are splendid, salads are exuberant. The full bar features Chilean and Argentine beverages with many affordable South American wines by the glass. Park in lot at restaurant's front door, not the back-door lot. Lunch (mainly sandwiches) on weekdays. Dinner nightly except Monday. Entertainment (harp) Friday through Sunday. Moderate. — N.W.

The Philadelphia Sandwich Co. 3904 Convoy Street (south of Othello), Kearny Mesa, 858-571-0888. This classic luncheonette is a monument to Philly culture, including sports pennants, historic photos, and colorful mummies' costumes. The menu is equally devoted to the city's cuisine, especially its two great cult sandwiches: the hoagie and the cheese steak. The mixed-meat hoagie is way more than a hero — its flavor array is similar to (and just as intense as) a New Orleans mufuletta. As for the cheese steak, it starts with steak strips, onions and your

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choice of cheese, and expands from there. Philly natives may like the simple version with Cheez Whiz, but the luscious “Everything” with provolone is more likely to seduce the innocent. “Philly fries” (with garlic) are the right go-with. The menu also offers Pennsylvania-packaged foods (“Philadelphia Scrapple” to go, Tastykakes, Wise potato chips) to nostalgic émigrés. Lunch to early dinner nightly. Inexpensive. — N.W.

San Tong Palace 4690 Convoy Street (between Engineer and Balboa), Kearny Mesa, 858-571-6837. This unassuming, strip-mall restaurant is easy to overlook, but once found, impossible to resist. San Tong’s hybrid Korean-Chinese menu draws from these regions’ tastiest styles. The Rainbow Salad demonstrates this combination deliciously, and San Tong’s dumplings are outstanding. The seafood dumplings are especially remarkable. For the adventurous, I recommend the jellyfish salad, a novel treat for westerners. At San Tong Palace, curious appetites are rewarded well. Lunch and dinner daily. Inexpensive. — M.N.

Seau’s Mission Valley Center mall, 1640 Camino del Rio North (next to Robinsons-May), Mission Valley, 619-291-7328. Footballer Junior Seau contributes more to San Diego than just sacks. His extravagant multivenue sports pub is major league fun — a real-life reincarnation of some 1960s McLuhanite media art show, with 70 video screens (ranging from large-normal to giant HDTV) running sportscasts and a professional DJ on high, periodically spinning cool sounds over muted talking heads. The menu offers mainstream “something for everyone” choices, including pizza, hefty but so-so burgers, some elementary sushi, all-American entrées, and Seau’s family recipe of Samoan teriyaki “plate lunch.” Above all, there’s pub

grub. The chicken wings are pretty good, and you can get all three sauces (Buffalo, BBQ, and Asian) on one order. Perfect hangout for mismatched couples with one sports fan and one fashionista (the latter can head for Nordstrom and Saks discount outlets nearby). On game days, patrons are allowed just one game in the dining room (\$15 minimum), but you can linger from wake-up to closing on the patio or in the bar. Open daily. Inexpensive to moderate. — N.W.

THE BEACHES

Cafe Athena Pacific Mall, 1846 Garnet Avenue (at Lamont), Pacific Beach, 858-274-1140. With a more upscale, eye-catching decor and a longer and more serious menu than most Greek cafés, this is a popular destination, so be sure to reserve for dinner or you’ll risk a long wait. The choices include good soups and appetizers (except for a sub-par *taramasalata*), outstanding moussaka, above-average gyros, and interesting, unusual desserts. There’s plenty for vegetarians. Rather noisy when crowded. Open daily, lunch and dinner. Inexpensive to low moderate. — N.W.

Costa Brava 1653 Garnet Avenue (at Jewel), Pacific Beach, 858-273-1218. Cordial owner-host Javier Gonzalez opened this charming restaurant so that local Spaniards would have a place to gather with an authentic atmosphere of home, and indeed, the “Euro” atmosphere and late hours give a truly Iberian feel. The lively garlic-rich dishes here include a wide array of tasty tapas and, among the entrées, a paella that’s made to order (sized to serve two or four; call ahead for larger groups). Patio seating in good weather. Parking lot and wheelchair access via the alley behind the restaurant. Open daily 11 a.m. to midnight, with bargain prices at Sunday brunch. Reservations advised for weekend evenings. Moderate. — N.W.

Humphrey’s by the Bay 2241 Shelter Island Drive, Shelter Island, 619-224-3577. Most diners at this re-

sort/concert venue restaurant eat at the prix fixe pre-show dinners because they guarantee good seats for the concerts at the next-door amphitheatre. But better food emerges once the music-mavens leave the premises. The kitchen features fine seafood, juicy meats, and prime steaks with seasonal veggie garnishes. Preparations are pleasing but in no way startling — it’s a hotel restaurant, after all. Reserve for show-nights or to snare a window table with a gorgeous marina view. Free parking when there’s no concert, valet parking when there is. Dining room pleasantly quiet. Open daily breakfast through dinner; brunch buffet Sunday. Pre-show prix fixe upper moderate, à la carte expensive/very expensive. — N.W.

Isabel’s Cantina 966 Felspar Street (at Cass), Pacific Beach, 858-272-8400. This cheerful café instantly became a gathering spot for many PB-ites, including the forsaken population of adults. Chef-owner Isabel Cruz, who calls herself “Food Girl,” has imported much of her Mission Cafe menu of Latin-Asian-sorta-health-food to the beach. A self-confessed “lazy cook,” she focuses on wholesomeness rather than authenticity. Breakfast and lunch are the main meals here and include competent eggs, luscious scrambled eggs, huge sandwiches, and weighty slabs of coconut French toast. Competent Latin-style dishes include tamales with airy masa. Devotees of Southeast Asian cuisines, however, may be disappointed by the simplistic stabs in that direction. If your dish is too mild, house sauces (chili oil, salsa, chipotle sauce, etc.) are available on request. Beer and wine. Small, free front parking lot; pay lot across the street at west end of the block. Three meals daily; closed 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Inexpensive to low moderate. — N.W.

Kaiserhof 2253 Sunset Cliffs Boulevard, Ocean Beach, 619-224-0606. Even on weeknights, crowds fill this restaurant and *biergarten*, chowing down on hefty, hearty German cooking in a festive atmosphere. Flavors are authentic, but can be monotonous due to the kitchen’s reliance on commercial products (especially a heavy-flavored beef base that makes all the sauces taste

alike). Good schnitzels, potato pancakes. The excellent apple strudel is the only dessert made in-house. Reservations advised, especially for patio seating. Full bar. Lunch Friday through Sunday, dinner Tuesday through Sunday. Moderate. — N.W.

Red Sails 2614 Shelter Island Drive, Shelter Island, 619-223-3030. One of the city’s oldest eateries has been renovated to look like it always has, but fresher. The dining rooms resemble those on a river paddleboat or a small, rakish cruise ship, while the bayside patio is a funky waterside pleasure, beset by pigeons. The menu runs to simple seafood and steaks (wet-aged USDA Choice), but quality is uneven. Tasty starters include briny littleneck clams on the half-shell, an interesting clam chowder, and a classy house salad (but ask for vinegar and oil on the side to dress it). The coconut shrimp entrée is a good, guilty pleasure, but the fin-fish and fried entrées taste like supermarket frozen food. For the starch accompaniment, baked potato is the most flavorful option. Full bar, strong cocktails, weak wine list. Kiddie menu available. Daily three meals until 11 p.m. Low moderate. — N.W.

**CENTRAL
SAN DIEGO**

El Comal Antojitos Mexicanos 3946 Illinois Street, North Park, 619-294-8292. Also 534 Broadway, Chula Vista, 619-420-3811. No border compromises here, just great home cooking from the mainland (Michoacan, Guerrero, Jalisco, Puebla, Oaxaca, and the Yucatan) in a pair of restaurants founded by Luz Herrera Ibarra, a biology teacher from Acapulco. Stuffed tortilla dishes are back in their proper place as appetizers or lunches (don’t expect numbered “combo plates”). A *botana* sampler plate that “serves two” (actually stuffs four) is a fun way to try a bunch of them, including outstanding pork-filled *sopes* that taste like somebody’s loving *mamacita* made them. Also try a *mulita*, a soft, substantial, house-

made tortilla folded over your choice of meat with melted cheese and guacamole, perfect for lunch. For entrées, look to the casseroles, with such exciting choices as Lengua en Salsa Verde (tongue in tomatillo sauce), Barbacoa de Chivo (tender goat in a lively red “barbecue” sauce), and an excellent Mole Poblano (tender chicken breast in sweet-spicy chocolate-based mole sauce). Fish are also well treated. Grilled meat choices, which include a full *parrillada assortment* (“serves two,” feeds six), are cut thin and cooked well done. Full bar at North Park location; Mexican and U.S. beers at both. Three meals, seven days (shorter hours in Chula Vista). Inexpensive. — N.W.

Lefty’s Chicago Pizzeria 3448 30th Street (at Myrtle), North Park, 619-295-1720. An eight-pound pizza? That’s what Lefty claims his “king of all pizzas” weighs at his often-crowded little corner pizzeria. Truth is, you can’t help but be drawn, especially at night, to the little ribbon of lights framing the sidewalk canopy with its tables and benches. Lefty is determined to bring “the real Chicago” to San Diego. So of course we’re talking deep-dish pizzas, as well as some thin and crispy. But the ultimate is his “stuffed” pizza, a 14-inch, eight-pound monster that needs one hour’s “make and bake” time. They also do Chicago hot dogs, char burgers, beautiful spicy fries, juicy Italian beef au jus sandwiches, and a decent “Lefty’s carbonara” (spaghetti, eggs, bacon, Parmesan, and cream). Open lunch and dinner six days, closed Mondays. — E.B.

Old World Restaurant 3930 30th Street, North Park, 619-238-0568. This is a delight for anyone who loves Northern European food. Their “Great Grilled Grueben” — homemade corned beef on rye with Swiss cheese, sauerkraut, Thousand Island dressing, and mustard is, as they say, “gemütlich.” Also, try the sausage platter: grilled bratwurst, kielbasa, sauerkraut, potato salad, spicy mustard, and rye bread. Open for breakfast and lunch six days, closed Sunday. Inexpensive. — E.B.

Red Sea Restaurant 4717 University Avenue (at Euclid), City Heights,

619-285-9722. You’ll find richly seasoned (and potentially very spicy) Ethiopian cuisine, served communally on a tray lined with a porous pancake, *injera*, which looks like an edible dish towel and serves as both an edible spoon and an edible tablecloth. (Use pieces of it to scoop up morsels in your right hand.) The meat combination platter here isn’t nearly as exciting as several of the specialties. The *kitfo* (spicy beef tartare) is very good, the *gored-gored* (meat cubes in spicy butter) is excellent; both are cooked (or not cooked) to your order, and seasoned to your specifications (if you say “hot,” expect fire). Vegetables are fine, too; the yellow split peas, especially, sing with flavor. Restrooms not wheelchair-accessible. Vegetarian friendly. Can be noisy on weekend evenings. Open daily. Very inexpensive. — N.W.

Uncle Joe’s Pizzeria 4591 El Cajon Boulevard, Talmadge, 619-584-2535. The owner’s a retired Navy medic, one of the first women to serve in the Middle East combat zone. She’s named sandwiches for career stops, like “The Recruit Training Center, Orlando, Florida” (chicken breast, bacon, avocado, provolone cheese, spinach, tomato, and onion) or “North Island Dental Clinic” (turkey, ham, bacon). But try a main dish like eggplant Parmesan or chicken with sautéed mushrooms. Or a massive chunk of lasagna, plus bread and salad. Coffee? You get a huge French-style press-the-coffee-down affair. Your big decision: eat out on the flower-strewn boulevard patio or inside among black leather easy-chairs and a giant screen? Open for lunch and dinner daily until 10 p.m. (until midnight Friday and Saturday). Inexpensive. — E.B.

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the usual blue and white with Greek island posters. But it's the customers who give it an exotic feel, speaking languages from Russian to Greek to Somali. And if you're hungry, this all-you-can-eat deal is great. Have gyros meat, but also try the chicken souvlaki (grilled lemon chicken), or start with the excellent *dolmades* (grape leaves wrapped around beef and rice). The leaves' tangy taste and the lemony sauce inside get your juices running. Don't forget salad...or the dessert table (how could you leave without baklava?). Open for lunch and dinner, seven days. Inexpensive. — *E.B.*

Grossmont Student Center Cafeteria Grossmont College, 8800 Grossmont College Drive, El Cajon, 619-644-7000. This is no UCSD, with its dozen food franchises and Persian and Somali food tents on campus. Grossmont's single cafeteria (open to the public) is big, echoey, and sticks to standard-issue food like crumb-coated chicken katsu, cheeseburgers, burritos, and really, really cheap pizzas. Breakfast? How about a sausage and tater tot burrito? Health fans do have a plentiful salad bar. It's quite an experience, sharing lunch with local and foreign students, looking over the rolling hills to El Cajon — like being at an international finishing school in, well, Switzerland. Inexpensive. — *E.B.*

Mario's de la Mesa 8425 La Mesa Boulevard (at Grant), La Mesa, 619-461-9390. The man on the *burro* (seen on the restaurant's sign and menu) holds two flags, those of Mexico and the U.S.A. — very appropriate. Few dishes (except maybe the *menudo*) will push the paler palate too far in any direction, but gosh-all, everything is so darn tasty. Tamales are a house special: rich, pillowy clouds of cornmeal surrounding richer shredded pork scattered with raisins for a smidgeon of sweetness. Pork also gets loving treatment in the *carnitas rojas*, big chunks browned to the barest crisp, which falls

away to melting tenderness. Great marinade (cumin?) on the *carne asada*; intense flavor and buttery richness on the "machaca sonora style" (dry-roasted shredded beef). Beans are so light as to seem whipped; rice is studded with peas and spicy carrots. Service is fast and friendly. Breakfast and lunch Sunday and Monday; three meals Tuesday through Saturday. Inexpensive. — *A.M.*

Woodstock's Pizza 6145 El Cajon Boulevard, College Area, 619-265-0999. It's a college pizza joint, but the fare rates well above standard beer ballast. For that matter, the beers — Karl Strauss and Wyder's Ciders (along with the usual Coors Light and Bud) — aren't exactly chugsuds. Crusts — white or sweetly robust whole wheat — are pressed, tossed, and then folded over at the edge, producing a spongy, crunch-crusted rim. The mozzarella is rich, gooey whole-milk; the marinara sauce is dark and spicy; and the toppings are fresh, hearty standouts. Watching your weight? Two low-fat combos (half the cheese) are available. Inexpensive. — *A.M.*

FAR EAST

La Casa Del Zorro Borrego Springs Drive (five miles south of Palm Canyon Drive at Yaqui Pass Road), Borrego Springs, 760-767-5323. La Casa Del Zorro is Borrego Springs' most renowned and ambitious restaurant, set in a deluxe resort five miles south of town. (Drive through the parking lots until you reach the fenced swimming pool; the restaurant's small, dimly marked door is just to the left.) The menu offers elaborate seafood appetizers (out here in the desert) and entrées with fine, subtle sauces, fresh veggies from nearer the coast, and rather mild-flavored, exquisitely tender meats, evidently chosen to be gentle to the dentures of the duffers. Desserts are few and very sweet. Full bar; great (but pricey) wine list. Reserve for weekend evenings. Open daily. Very expensive. — *N.W.*

Owl Cafe 674 Main Street (between 6th and 7th), El Centro, 760-336-0298. This classic American café is over 50 years old and still serves good rib-sticking food morning, noon, or night. Try breakfast special #1: pancakes, two eggs, and two bacon strips. For lunch, the French dip sandwich. Full-plate diners — and they are full — include roast beef and chicken-fried steak. Open Monday through Friday 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Closed Sunday. Inexpensive. — *E.B.*

UPTOWN & OLD TOWN

Alex's Brown Bag 2550 Fifth Avenue (at Laurel), Suite 171, uptown, 619-231-2912. The reborn Alex's (now in the Mr. A's building) is rightly famous for its "Original Philadelphia cheese steak sandwich" (with fried bell peppers, onions, mushrooms, and mozzarella). The owners say what makes their sandwiches so special is that they have the meat trucked in from cheese steak central, South Philly itself. Other Italian-American goodies include the Italian Stallion (Genoa salami, capocollo prosciutto, and mortadella sausage meat), eggplant parmigiana with hot garlic bread, grilled pastрами, and cheese on rye. Open for breakfast, lunch, and just-after-work dinner weekdays. — *E.B.*

Extraordinary Desserts 1430 Union Street (at Ash), Little Italy, 619-294-7001; also 2929 Fifth Avenue, uptown, 619-294-2132. Patrons looking for a quiet dessert still cling to the original charming cottage near Balboa Park. Those wanting more of a meal head for the newer Little Italy location, a vast, noisy space with industrial-chic decor and a menu of eclectic small plates — *mezze* spreads, bruschettas, sandwiches, and cheese plates. Flavors tend to be intense; some creations (such as a bacon-cured salmon sandwich and *pantelleria*, a celery-date spread) are wonderful, others are exhausting even in small portions. Both locations offer pastry cases full of desserts that live up to "extraordinary,"

to eat on-site or to take home. Chef-owner Karen Krasne incorporates flavors inspired by the global reach of her travels, from the cooking schools of Paris to the rice fields of Bali. The white cakes are food for angels. Wines (including champagnes), beers, fruit elixirs. Vegetarian-friendly menu. Both locations open seven days, three meals. Uptown location desserts only, all day. Moderate. — *N.W.*

Gulf Coast Grill 4130 Park Boulevard (between University and El Cajon), Hillcrest, 619-295-2244. The Gulf's faux-rustic, woody dining rooms and patio are great hangouts if you like a restaurant with a noisy party atmosphere. The menu focuses on the cuisine of the South and Southwest, with an emphasis on Louisiana and a heavy hand on the salt shaker. The kitchen does best with the straight Southern dishes, turning out divine fried soft-shelled crabs, airy hush puppies, and delicious little corn muffins. If you're deeply familiar with Cajun-Creole flavors, though, don't look for pure authenticity — you'll do better with jambalaya, étouffée, or the lunchtime oyster po' boy than with the soulless gumbo or the misconceived red beans and rice. Heated, smoker-friendly front patio. Wheelchair elevator to restrooms next to stairs. Free parking lot left of the door. Full bar. Lunch Monday through Saturday, brunch Sunday, dinner nightly (early closing Sunday). Moderate to slightly expensive. — *N.W.*

Harney Sushi 3964 Harney Street (off Congress), Old Town, 619-295-3272. This friendly little spot on a side street serves as a secret haven of pretty-good sushi just a few steps from Old Town's nonstop tacos and margaritas. You can also get sashimi, Japanese appetizers, and a few mixed-ethnicity entrées (noodles, pasta, teriyaki, tempura) made with seafood or chicken breast. Beef is served, but numerous dishes are vegetarian. Good sake list. Sound system runs loud inside; patio dining available in warm weather. Reservations for sushi bar accepted but not necessarily honored. Open weekdays for lunch, dinner nightly until midnight, with a DJ Tues-

day through Saturday. Sushi prices lower than most, entrées inexpensive to moderate. — *N.W.*

Joe's New York-Style Deli Royal Food Mart, 3401 First Avenue (at Upas), Banker's Hill, 619-295-7666. You enter a time machine: A cavernous concrete-floored deli that dates back to 1902, with a high ceiling, acorn-shaped hanging lights, and a big old-fashioned cooler-counter packed with cheeses, hams, and sausage meat. Old display cases carry olives, pâté, Ryvitas. A sawed-off wooden barrel bulges with Hungarian wines. Go for wraps, jumbo hot dogs with sauerkraut, or East Coast-generous sandwiches like corned beef, dry Genoa salami, cotto salami, bologna, or liverwurst. That Boars Head liverwurst is da bomb. Caesar salad with chicken or a cup of tortellini soup are good light alternatives. Open breakfast through early dinner daily. — *E.B.*

Lotus Thai 3761 Sixth Avenue (at Robinson), Hillcrest, 619-299-8272. Also at 906 Market (at Ninth Avenue), downtown, 619-595-0115. This restaurant has taken a giant step up from standard Thai eateries. Most of the menu consists of the usual dishes, but each branch also offers a selection of chef's specialties. Some of these are more authentic; others are more creative than the norm. The chefs are from northern Thailand, and something in their cooking hints of their region — a certain zestiness, a love of strong citrus and fresh herbs that speaks of the Ping River and the hills of Chiang Mai. Well-chosen, affordable wine list, Asian and American beers, and cocktails based on *soju* (Asian lower-proof rice liquor), including a yummy rambutan cosmo. Noisy when crowded. Reservations recommended for Hillcrest on weekends. Lunch and dinner daily. Low moderate. — *N.W.*

Prado House of Hospitality, Balboa Park, 619-557-9441. In a magical space at the heart of Balboa Park, Prado features cute neo-Nouveau decor and a something-for-everyone menu of American-Mexican-Italian-with-Asian-touches cuisine. The food brings few surprises, but is flavorful and served in huge portions. Top choices

include meaty crab cakes and an astonishingly tender, slow-roasted pork loin. A meringue-based banana *tres leches* cake is everyone's favorite dessert. The bar makes a nice stop during a museum-crawl and offers ethereal fried oysters and a range of gussied-up margaritas. Keep an eye out for special prix fixe dinners that include tickets to museum exhibitions. Dinner reservations vital. Vast interior can be noisy, but heated, umbrella-topped terrace tables are quiet and scenic. Moderate to a little expensive, with reasonable wine list. — *N.W.*

Rannoush 3890 Fifth Avenue (south of University), Hillcrest, 619-325-1360. The full menu of Lebanese-Jordanian cuisine runs from *mezze* (tapas) to house-made sausages and kebabs to desserts — and includes fabulous falafel that's actually good enough to eat (especially the stuffed version). At this petite, pretty place with Scheherazade decor, all the cooking is from scratch — no nasty instant falafel mix or any other shortcuts, and you can really taste the difference. Other great dishes include vegetarian *kebbeh*, *soujuk* sausages, and shrimp kebabs. Desserts include standard Middle Eastern items such as *baklava*. Wines and beers include food-friendly imports from Lebanon. Open daily, lunch 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. — *N.W.*

Saffron Noodles and Sate 3737 India Street, South Mission Hills, 619-574-7737. It's the smell of the spicy chicken grilling that will get you every time. Whatever the recipe is — and Su-Mei Yu, the owner and celebrated cookbook author, says it's from the Isaan, Thailand's ethnic Lao Northeast — it catches your nose. We're talking "boxing arena grilled chicken," after the place where she smelled its spicy cooking aromas while growing up in Bangkok. You have a choice of five sauces to go with the chicken, from peanut to sweet pepper. Also try the noodle soups, like Tom Yam with shrimp: sinus-clearing, delicious, and surprisingly filling. The food here is real, fresh, genuine Thai cuisine with Chinese echoes — like Su-Mei Yu herself. Middle-class San Diego seems to have adopted her eatery, despite the fact you're in a pretty stark gray-and-



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— E.B.

Zocalo Grill 2444 San Diego Avenue
(a block north of Old Town Cemetery),
Old Town. 619-298-9840. This casual,
festive spin-off of the Brigantine chain
features "Pacific coastal cuisine," an
eclectic international hodgepodge with
a faint Mexican accent and "something
for everyone." And some of those
somethings are delicious — a stacked
salad of shrimp and avocados, or co-
conut-shrimp kebabs emerging from a
pineapple, or a huge, beautifully grilled
lobster with avocado salsa. Appetizers
are discounted at happy hour, and you
can make a whole dinner out of sub-
stantial "tapas" sized for sharing. The
heated, semi-roofed outdoor terrace
encourages al fresco dining year-round.
Full bar with creative margaritas, eight
draft beers, and California wines in-
cluding Brigantine's own custom
blends at good prices. Wheelchair lift in
back, ramp at south side of terrace.
Reservations strongly advised for week-
ends. Open daily, lunch Monday
through Saturday, dinner daily.
Moderate. — N.W.

DOWNTOWN

Bandar Fine Persian Cuisine 825
and 837 Fourth Avenue, Gaslamp,
619-238-0101. In a comfortable setting,
the Persian menu offers just a "pick hits
list" of popular dishes culled from this
fabled cuisine, but the cooking is first
rate, featuring fine ingredients pre-
pared with care, skill, and healthful-
ness. The "Bandar Special" entrée
combo lets you choose any two kebabs
(chicken, game hen, or beef), beauti-
fully marinated and cooked to your or-
der. Entrées featuring rice with poultry
are elaborate and refined, spiked with
tangy barberries, sour cherries, or
lentils and dates. The list of Persian
desserts now includes Persian ice
cream, a rose-scented exotic treat.
Open daily for lunch and dinner.
Moderate. — N.W.

Broadway Pizza 1008 Broadway (at
Tenth Street), downtown,
619-232-6264. This restaurant, near the
downtown Senior Center and City Col-
lege, offers no-nonsense Italian-
American food. And they're not
skinny: from a pizza slice to barbecue
beef sandwiches to a Louisiana-style
sausage link sub, portions are gener-
ous. If you want a hearty dinner, try
the whole slab of beef ribs, with veggies,
garlic bread, and salad. Unfortunately,
the quality has dropped; the formerly
fine pizza, for instance, is now marred
by oily, low-grade mozzarella and not-
so-great optional deli-meat toppings.
But the main thing is, while the rest of
downtown snores, they're still open,
from 10 a.m. to 3 a.m. Monday
through Saturday, closing midnight
Sunday. And they'll even deliver to
nearby neighborhoods. Inexpensive. —
N.W.

China Too 916 Fifth Avenue (near E
Street), Gaslamp, 619-239-4283 or
619-239-1456. Don't blink or you'll
miss this Gaslamp bargain. The menu
claims "New York-Style Fine Chinese
Cuisine." Would you settle for decent
Brooklyn- or Bronx-style eat-in/take-
out? Here you're getting cheap-but-
good Chinese fare for the price of a cup
of soup nearby. Lunch specials (with
soup, two egg rolls, rice) include green
pepper steak with onions, kung pao hot
chicken, beef broccoli, shrimp with
veggies — all made with no MSG and
minimal cornstarch. The owner's last
place was in New York, where cus-
tomers ranged from Kofi Annan to
Robin Leach. Chef Chen even has some
of his old dishes here, on a page of
multi-regional "chef specialties" (#90
to #107 on the menu). But what really
makes this a "New York-ish" spot will
bring joy to hungry mouths all over the
restaurant-starved stretch east and
south of Balboa Park: free delivery from
I-8 to Harbor Drive, from Pacific High-
way to 805 or even farther. Open 11
a.m. to 11 p.m.; closed Saturday. Inex-
pensive. — E.B.

Downtown Johnny Brown's
1220 Third Avenue (in the Commu-
nity Concourse at Third and B), down-
town, 619-232-8414. Walk up through
the Community Concourse past the
ship fountain and bingo! — down-
town's answer to a European sidewalk
café. Place has a generous patio of



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Calendar RESTAURANTS

chairs and umbrellas. All green and white. You get two types here: sport-minded types (a dozen TV screens, Chargers, Padres, Aztecs banners inside), and city government workers. Burgers are good, but try the breast of chicken burger with soup of the day or fries. Chicken's grilled, edge-burnt, spicy. Soup's bobbing with fresh-cut vegetables. Also, salads: taco or Southwest Chicken. What's best: sitting outside and watching people — not traffic — bustle by. — *E.B.*

The Field Irish Pub and Restaurant 544 Fifth Avenue, Gaslamp, 619-232-9840. This spirited, colorful saloon, physically transported whole-hog from the Ould Sod, offers delicious Irish music live most nights, and also attempts serious Irish cooking — with some successes. Try the lovely herb-rich Irish stew, or the boxty, potato crêpes rolled around your choice from a variety of fillings (salmon, beef, etc.). Or start the day here with a huge, carnivorous

Irish breakfast. Open daily. Low moderate. — *N.W.*

Greystone 658 Fifth Avenue (at G Street), Gaslamp, 619-232-0225. The Italian steakhouse fare here centers on dry-aged prime beef, game meats (including exceptionally tender bison), lobster, and pastas as the main draws, with indifferent starters and desserts. An impressive wine list offers rewarding California and Italian bottlings at \$35 to \$50, but roars up to the stratosphere of first-growth Bordeaux, super-Tuscans and scandalously overpriced Napa reds. Bossy, sometimes-abrasive waiters push higher-priced choices. Patrons are mainly “suits” with deep expense-account pockets, loudly talking business or enjoying raucous office parties in a testosterone-high atmosphere. Wheelchair access to the street patio and bar area only (dining rooms are up or downstairs). Reservations urged, but may not be honored promptly. Dinner nightly. Extremely expensive. — *N.W.*

Monsoon Exotic Cuisine of India 729 Fourth Avenue (off G Street), Gaslamp, 619-234-5555. The younger sister to Hillcrest's Bombay Exotic Cuisine sometimes shares the same chefs and serves much the same standard repertory of “Northern Indian cuisine made easy,” with a few tropical addi-

tions vaguely inspired by Southern flavors. Curries are indistinct from each other and run to the mild side, no matter what you specify. Breads are good; tandooris disappointingly soft-surfaced. A room-dividing fountain recreates the roar of the namesake tropical downpour. Add a lively dinner crowd and it's a (Gunga) din. Solid wine list, some Indian beers, full bar specializing in sweet cocktails, Open daily. Inexpensive buffet lunches; moderate à la carte dinners until 11 p.m. — *N.W.*

Mr. Tiki's Mai Tai Lounge 801 Fifth Avenue (at F Street), Gaslamp, 619-233-1183. If you loved Trader Vic's (or can remember it, anyway), you may be amused at the revival of the genre here. Check out the “grass skirt” decor with huge tiki gods and the vaguely “islander” cuisine featuring, in addition, Asian fusion items, elementary sushi, and the occasional sprint into fusion-cuisine seafood. But, as you might guess, the greatest creativity in the house goes into the silly umbrella cocktails, and those are mainly delish. Age 21 and over after 9 p.m. (even with parents). Dinner nightly. Cocktails until 11 p.m., weekends until 1 a.m. Moderate. — *N.W.*

Osetra 904 Fifth Avenue (at E Street), Gaslamp, 619-239-1800. Possibly the most expensive restaurant in San Diego. Osetra is named for a precious, near-endangered caviar (which it serves) and attracts patrons who enjoy throwing their money around. The atmosphere is pure Las Vegas, with two floors of loud

ambient music, glitzy decor, and a “wine angel” in black tights hoisting herself around a gleaming glass tower to fetch your precious bottle. Celebrities and big spenders get attentive service, others take their chances. The menu is mostly seafood, but it, too, carries the Vegas imprimatur of vulgar bad taste. Too many bold flavors are at war on almost every plate, and even the simplest dishes are overwrought frenzies of fusion. Best bets for satisfying your palate and curiosity: raw oysters, the cold seafood platter, caviar (if your wallet and conscience can afford it). Disabled access to first-floor dining room only. Full bar. Dinner nightly to at least 10 p.m. Reserve well ahead. Exorbitant. — *N.W.*

The Palm 615 J Street (at Sixth Avenue), Gaslamp, 619-702-6500. This up-market chain steakhouse, open since 1926, claims to be the oldest family-operated white-tablecloth restaurant in the country, and it's spread all over the country as well. The Gaslamp branch, its 30th, is just like all the other branches, even down to decor details, which is the whole point — business travelers with contacts to impress can rely on it wherever they go. The fare features tender, dry-aged and wet-aged USDA Prime beef from the chain's own wholesale butcher and, for the really high-rollers, monster-sized Nova Scotia lobsters. Other good dishes are Shrimp Bruno (with a Dijon sauce), baked crab cakes with no filler, and the “Slater Special,” which combines the last two in an appetizer. Don't eat meat, but do eat gar-

lic? Try clams and shrimp *posillippo* and scare off the vampires. All dishes à la carte. Portions are generally gigantic on up. Key lime pie (a normal-sized wedge) makes a good, tart dessert, and clean *macchinetas* make outstanding espresso. Excellent wine list, plenty by the glass; full bar. Valet parking. Dinner nightly. Very expensive. — *N.W.*

Panda Inn 506 Horton Plaza (top floor), downtown, 619-233-7800. Behind all the Panda Express fast-food stops is the smaller, more serious Panda Inn chain which originated many of the now-familiar dishes of semi-Americanized “Mandarin” cuisine (they claim to have invented orange chicken, and their version is vastly better than those at the 99-cent joints). Tofu with eggplant and “Mongolian Hotpot,” a meatball casserole with Chinese cabbage, are among the more authentic choices. Preparations here are generally clean and greaseless with well-balanced flavors; spicy dishes are moderately hot unless you request otherwise. It's not the spot for high adventure, but it does offer dishes for all tastes. Moderate-priced banquet menus make this a good choice for family gatherings. Full bar. Validated parking in Horton Plaza garage; heated patio seating in dry weather. Lunch and dinner daily. Lunches inexpensive, dinner moderate. — *N.W.*

Sluggers by the Ball Park 1219 Market Street (at Park), downtown, 619-546-5973. Not your typical hot dog stand. Sluggers café is all glass, steel, cinder block, and new. This eatery catches much of the Padres business, selling Vienna-brand beef hot dogs and Polish sausages. “Served Chicago-Style” — meaning, the dog's topped with tomato wedges, mustard, pickle, relish, onions, and peppers, all, they say, on a steamed poppy-seed bun from Chicago. Other goodies from the Windy City include the Comiskey Park Pole (a charbroiled Polish sausage dog) and the Italian Stallion (charbroiled Italian sausage in bun). Place is still a little cinder blocky but a good rendezvous for a brewski and a dog after work. Lunch and dinner daily. Inexpensive. — *E.B.*

Taka 555 Fifth Avenue, Gaslamp, 619-338-0555. The seafood at this always-packed sushi bar and Japanese appetizer-restaurant is top quality. *Ama ebi* (sweet shrimp) from the live tank go down soft and silky smooth, unlike their frozen brethren. And the chefs are highly skilled: the well-seasoned rice is freshly made all evening, and for once the spicy scallop hand roll has scallops, mayo, cucumber, and hot pepper running all the way through, not just plopped on top. Savory appetizers supplement the sushi, including miso-baked black cod and

mushroom-topped *agedashi* (lightly-fried) tofu. The one problem: the later you arrive, the louder it gets. Make reservations, and if you value your ears, go at an early hour. Dinner nightly. Most dishes inexpensive, but many little bites can eat a hole in your wallet. — *N.W.*

Tamale Cart Outside Rancho Fresco, 1852 National Avenue, Barrio Logan, 619-338-9140. If you've ever wondered what it would be like to eat as the Aztecs ate, come here and try some of the tamales — classic Aztec food — in all their flavors. Tamales are sort of steamed cornmeal dumplings wrapped in corn husks, served with sauce. The choice of goodies stuffed in the middle can include strips of pork, beef, chicken, or cheese, as well as pineapple, strawberries, or coconut. While you're at it, try the traditional accompaniment, the *champurrado* drink: milk mixed with *masa* — ground corn meal — chocolate, and cinnamon. In this mainly Spanish-speaking market you can sit, watch, and pick up a few bargains too. Tamales make a great breakfast. Three should do you. These are made by the Restaurant Chiapaneco up at 25th and Market. Open breakfast through late lunch, seven days. Inexpensive. — *E.B.*

SOUTH BAY & CORONADO

Azzura Point Loews Coronado Bay Resort, 4000 Coronado Bay Road (Silver Strand Boulevard), Coronado, 619-424-4000 or 619-424-4477. Not just for tourists, but a lovely getaway for locals, the luxurious dining room with its wraparound windows on the bay is one of the most romantic spots in town — comfortable banquet seating, a view from every table, and an atmosphere that's quiet and festive, not formal. The light, elegant, healthful Mediterranean-style cuisine (Northern Italy and Southern France) emphasizes seasonal ingredients, as local and sustainably raised as possible, including herbs and some fruits organically grown on the resort grounds. Combinations can be witty and a bit whimsical. An excellent wine list at very reasonable markups is strong on half-bottles. (If you want a tasting dinner with matching wines, speak to the knowledgeable, trustworthy sommelier.) Inexpensive validated valet parking at the porte cochère of the main lobby. Reserve a few nights ahead, as many dinners here are sold out or special events. Dinner Tuesday through Sunday. Expensive. — *N.W.*

Island Pasta 1202 Orange Avenue (at Loma Street), Coronado, 619-435-4545. This unassuming, spill-out-on-the-street restaurant somehow got it right. Simple tables on the sidewalk, daily made-on-the-premises semolina pasta, most dishes costing in the single digits. A simple fettuccine Alfredo is a pleasure al fresco with a glass of wine, sparkling against the fresh flowers on the table, watching Coronado's world go by. One good — and vegetarian — special to ask for is the *verdure* pasta, a combo of artichoke hearts, spinach, capers, mushrooms, onions, and olives over spaghetti. Lunch and dinner daily. Inexpensive. — *E.B.*

La Bella Pizza Garden 373 Third Avenue (at F Street), Chula Vista, 619-426-8820. From the outside, La Bella looks like an Italian farmhouse, with geraniums, bright green shutters, and maroon canopies. A real extended family runs this business. Their secrets are: long hours (from breakfast until af-

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ter midnight daily), big meals, and small prices. The menu includes standards like spaghetti with meatballs or lasagna, including sides of garlic bread, soup, or salad. The hit with kids is “Papa’s Favorite,” an 8-inch pizza with mushrooms, pepperoni, and sausage. Open daily, three meals. Inexpensive. — *E.B.*

Mary J’s Cafe 1930 Cleveland Avenue, National City, 619-477-6645 or 619-477-5306. Mary J and her café have been around for 40 years and about the only thing to change is the prices. This is the real National City. The regulars start piling in at 5 a.m. Mary always has specials going, but check the big board menu above the stove too. One of their most popular items is the Trucker’s Breakfast (three eggs, ham, bacon or sausage, home fries, and toast), or steak and eggs with hash browns and toast. Mary’s son Vic, the morning cook, always gives you more than enough. For lunch or early dinner, try the meat loaf with mixed veggies, boiled potatoes covered with gravy, toast, and soup or salad. Or chicken-fried steak with all the fixings. Also hefty: cheeseburgers or tuna melts (with fries plus soda included in the price) and that old American favorite, a fried egg sandwich with chips. Open 4:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays. Inexpensive. — *E.B.*

Tin Fish Imperial Beach Pier, 910 Seacoast Drive, Imperial Beach, 619-628-8414. At a table by this fish shack at the far end of the pier, you can watch people and pigeons (and people feeding pigeons) as you dig into huge portions of simple seafood, appetized by the sea air. The bill of fare features fish — fried, grilled, chowdered, or wrapped into burritos, tacos, or sandwiches. The big fried combos are about what you’d expect, but more piquant pleasures

come in smaller packages. (Portions are generous, whatever you order.) The spicy fish tacos are really spicy, while the fried onion rings are of surpassing delicacy. Best of all, the crab cakes are huge and seriously crabby, with plenty of meat and very little filler. With a call, they’ll give you a lift from the parking lot to their restaurant. A second branch at 170 Sixth Avenue, Gaslamp, 619-238-8100, offers patio dining across from the Convention Center, with live music during summer. Both locations open daily for lunch and early dinner. Inexpensive to low moderate. — *N.W.*

BAJA

From the United States use the prefix 011-52-664 when calling Tijuana; when calling in Tijuana use only the restaurant’s seven-digit number.

Chiki Jai Avenida Revolución #1388 (at 8th), Zona Centro, Tijuana, 685-4955. Eat here and you’re surrounded by ghosts: Errol Flynn, John Huston, Rita Hayworth, Anthony Quinn, Ava Gardner, and, they say, Ernest Hemingway, who all ate — and drank vino tinto — here. Plus the great stars of boxing and bullfighting. But mainly it was a haven for Spanish jai alai players desperate for Old Country food. This is one of Tijuana’s great historic eateries, its tale written on the walls. Old border photos, Don Quixote art, fighting bull ranchos’ brands, and a matador’s framed green cape with his blood still on it. The food’s all Spanish, so paella is big (with soup, salad, French bread, and bleu cheese), but also try the

baby eel appetizers, chorizo (pork sausages), *bacalao* (cod fish) *a la Vizcaina*, trout with olive oil and garlic, and Gallican octopus. Vegetarian upon request. Open daily. Inexpensive to moderate. — *E.B.*

El Nido Boulevard Benito Juárez #67 (1-1/2 blocks north of Hotel Festival Plaza), Rosarito Beach, Baja, 661-612-1430. Head south if you’re looking for a great dry-aged, mesquite-broiled steak at a bargain price — but don’t stop there. Try the house specialty, quail with garlic sauce (*codorniz al mojo de ajo*), or venison, especially the savory *machaca de venado* (strips of meat with peppers, onions, and tomatoes). Both are locally raised on the restaurant’s own ranches, and may be united in a brilliant breakfast of quail eggs with deer *machaca*. Seafood and surf-and-turf variations are tasty, too. The restaurant’s name means “the nest” and the amusing indoor-outdoor decor is a sort of multiroom aviary with birds singing, chirping, and fluttering all over. Full bar. If sensitive to smoke, don’t sit next to the mesquite-burning hearth on the roofed patio. Dressy-casual. Bilingual staff and menu. Vegetarian upon request. Open daily, early morning to late evening. Mostly moderate; cash only. — *N.W.*

La Diferencia Avenida Sánchez Taboada 10611-A, Zona Río, Tijuana, 634-3346 or 634-7078. Mexican haute cuisine, with inventive combinations of traditional flavors. The creative menu reframes the old dishes and devises new ones. Wine list centers on Baja wineries (Monte Xanic and Cetto) at reasonable prices. Vegetarian upon request. Secure, free valet parking next to exterior courtyard. Menu is in Spanish (in a hard-to-read font), but some staffers speak some English. The restaurant is often noisy, even louder when mariachis play. Smoking permitted. Wheelchair access marginal. Open daily, lunch and dinner. Inexpensive. — *N.W.*

Los Pelicanos Calle de Cedro 115 #45 (west of Juarez), Rosarito Beach, Baja, 661-612-0445 or 661-612-1757. This hotel dining room is El Nido’s little (and less gifted) sister, with a shorter menu and perhaps less careful cooking. It serves good steaks and surf-and-turf in a handsome room and, at lunch, on a pretty ocean-view terrace. To find it, look for large sign on west side of Juarez, north of the tourist hub, directing you to the site. One winding flight up to the restaurant, no elevator. Bilingual staff and menu. Vegetarian upon request. Full bar. Open daily, three meals. Moderate; cash only. — *N.W.*

Mercado Sobre Ruedas (From Tijuana, on toll road, take first Rosarito exit; turn left at third traffic light then an immediate right onto Colonia Lucio Blanco.) Don’t miss this huge flea market that materializes every Sunday (from morning until mid-afternoon) a couple of miles north of the tourist part of town. Its dozens of food-booths offer a vast variety of local treats, ranging from barbecued mutton (*borrego*) to savory Jalisco-style goat stew (*birria de chivo*) to all manner of tacos, made-to-order hotcakes with syrup, “Mexican hamburgers,” and Sno-Kones (don’t worry about the ice; by law, it has to be made with purified water). The food is totally authentic, cooked to Mexican tastes, and it’s a carnival for the mouth. Many vendors speak some English. Rock-bottom prices; cash only. — *N.W.*

Tacos Varios y Aguas Frescas Corner of Constitución and 3rd, Tijuana. This is “just” a cart, but don’t let that stop your making the effort. Students, local businesspeople, and workers agree: this is the real thing. It’s always causing a people-bulge on the sidewalk. However, the cart is only here from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., so you have to time it right. But from tongue to chicken mole, to *milanesa*, steak ranchero, *carne asada*, *chile relleno*, and *pescado* (fish), they create really big taco meals right there. Bonus: standing around chomping in the street is a great way to meet people and practice your Spanish. Nighttime only. Inexpensive. — *E.B.*

MULTIPLE LOCATIONS

Anthony’s Fish Grotto 1360 North Harbor Drive (at Ash Street), downtown, 619-232-5103; 215 West Bay Boulevard, Chula Vista, 619-425-4200; 9530 Murray Drive, La Mesa, 619-463-0368. You’re going to get a sore neck at the downtown flagship of this local chain, splitting your time between your meal, your partner, and the harbor scene outside. If you don’t want over-complicated food, Anthony’s obliges. Fish and chips is still the simplest and the best. Or Mama’s Platter, cod combined with batter-fried calamari, shrimp, oysters, scallops, and clam strips. Anthony’s has been up and running for six decades now, with the buying power to get the pick of the catch. The menu offers 18 different seasonal fish to choose from, plus — if you’ve got the bread — delicious lobster dishes (in season) like lobster thermidor with a creamy, winey sauce. Try to be there at sunset when the water-sky show will do its damndest to distract you. No reservations. Open daily, lunch through dinner. Moderate. — *E.B.*

Fish House Vera Cruz 360 Via Vera Cruz (in back of “Restaurant Row”), San Marcos, 760-744-7346. Additional locations in Carlsbad and Temecula. This affordable seafood eatery packs in diners like sardines. Fresh fish and lots of it is the happenin’ thing. On a recent day, 23 different fresh fish selections were available

as daily specials, on top of the regular menu of crab, lobster, oysters, shrimp, catfish, etc. All fish are grilled plain, with nothing added but a dab of tartar sauce. The seafood is so fresh you don’t really mind. Each entrée includes a choice of side dishes, two for lunch and three for dinner. The Manhattan chowder is especially tasty, as is their “krab” salad. This is an ideal place for families, but don’t even think of it for a romantic meal out. Dinner daily, lunch daily except Sunday (dinner all day Sunday). Moderate. — *S.M.*

Il Fornaio 1333 First Street, Coronado, 619-437-4911. Also at Del Mar Plaza, 1555 Camino Del Mar, Del Mar, 858-755-8876. Il Fornaio’s defensive architecture walls it off from the Great Unwashed — the tourists wandering around Coronado’s Old Ferry Landing — but it’s worth breaching if only to get your teeth into their to-die-for bread. “*Il fornaio*” means “the baker,” after all. Beyond bread, we’re talking rustic-feeling, herbal, ultra-fresh salads, and everyday Italian dishes ranging from *sfilatino con bisteccina* (thin grilled steak on a baguette with creamy dijon and salad) to a giant mesquite-grilled 22-ounce *bistecca alla fiorentina*, with lots of vegetarian and pasta dishes in between. A simple *penne alla sorrentina* — pasta tubes with a tomato, mozzarella, and basil sauce — is charming. *Pizza puttanesca* is heaven too, if you’re into anchovies. Interesting regional menus from different provinces of Italy pop up during the first two weeks of each month. Most staffers seem mind-blowingly knowledgeable. Moderate. — *E.B.*

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MOVIE LISTINGS

All reviews are by Duncan Shepherd. Priorities are indicated by one to five stars and antipathies by the black spot. Unrated movies are for now unreviewed. Thousands of past reviews sorted alphabetically, by year of release and by rating, are available online at SanDiegoReader.com.

Across the Universe — Two-and-a-quarter-hour promo for the Beatles without ever mentioning them by name. A generous, even overgenerous sampler of their songs (thirty-three of them, by the count in the press notes, leaving aside the numberless others that are quoted from or alluded to) has been re-recorded, or “covered” as they say in the business, by a fictitious cast of characters plunked down against the billowing backdrop of the Sixties: the war, the draft, the protests, the drugs, the psychedelics, the Sexual Revolution, all that. To link the Beatles with the upheaval makes a certain sense. Unlike, say, the more enduring Rolling Stones or the going-nowhere Dave Clark Five, the Beatles were a group that really did evolve (or, as some would prefer, devolve) swiftly and dramatically, making them a useful weathercock for the winds of change. You are here reminded afresh of their range and their riches; and in new mouths, you hear the songs with new ears. (The tremulous, down-tempo rendition, for example, of “I Wanna Hold Your Hand” by an Asian-American high-school cheerleader, T.V. Carpio, brings the song a new, a renewed feeling, all by itself almost worth the price of admission.) By the second half, however, the inspiration irreversibly runs out of steam en route to a spluttering climax of “All You Need Is Love.” (Wearily,



Atonement

now: yeah, yeah, yeah.) Part of the problem is that, as the counterculture gains momentum in the sequence of events, there’s a visible increase in music-video vulgarity, ornamental surrealism, Fellini-esque fantasy, all the elements that go into director Julie Taymor’s fabled “vision.” Another part of the problem may be that the later songs, even though the playlist in the film does not observe a strict chronology, tend to be

more turgid. Part, too, may simply be that two-and-a-quarter hours are too long for a promo. With Evan Rachel Wood, Jim Sturgess, Joe Anderson, Dana Fuchs, Martin Luther McCoy, and cameos by Bono, Eddie Izzard, Joe Cocker, Salma Hayek. 2007.

★★ (LA PALOMA)

Alvin and the Chipmunks — Live ac-

tion plus computer animation, with Jason Lee, directed by Tim Hill. (CARMEL MOUNTAIN; CHULA VISTA 10; DEL MAR HIGHLANDS 8; ESCONDIDO 16; FASHION VALLEY 18; GROSSMONT CENTER; HORTON PLAZA 14; LA COSTA 6; LA JOLLA 12; MIRA MESA 18; MISSION MARKETPLACE 13; MISSION VALLEY 7; MISSION VALLEY 20; OCEANSIDE 16; OTAY RANCH 12; PALM PROMENADE 24; PARKWAY PLAZA 18; POWAY 10; RANCHO DEL

REY 16; RANCHO SAN DIEGO 15; RIVER VILLAGE 6; SAN MARCOS 18; TOWN SQUARE 14; VISTA VILLAGE)

American Gangster — Formula underworld drama poured into an epic template. Like Jiffy-brand waffle batter spread over an iron the size of a billiard table. “Based on a true story,” it traces, in separate intertwined storylines, the converging upward paths of criminal and cop: the former (Denzel Washington) starting out as the servile driver and bodyguard for the legendary Bumpy Johnson, a big fish in the small pond of Harlem into the late Sixties, then expanding the pond, upon his boss’s death, into an ocean; and the latter (Russell Crowe) working his way up as an undercover narc in New Jersey, studying for the bar in his spare time. Their eventual meeting comes, and drags on, as something of an anticlimax, after an excitingly staged drug raid from which the ganglord is lucky to be absent. The opposing paths up to that point are smoothly graded and well greased; and director Ridley Scott, the epitome of slick (*Alien*, *Blade Runner*, *Thelma and Louise*, *Gladiator*, *Black Hawk Down*, and so on), moves things along at a tolerable pace, although there’s the distinct impression that even if he knew any shortcuts, he wouldn’t take them. His goal is epic, and he would gladly drag his feet to get there. At two and a half hours plus, he indeed does get there. Washington, to pay him a backhanded compliment, is never quite as credible as a through-and-through baddie, even though that seems to be the way to the Oscar (i.e., *Training Day*). Crowe on the other hand is a perfectly credible crusader, overcoming no greater obstacles on the road to respectability than his buoyant white sneakers and his unflattering, inexpensive period haircut, framing his face with folded wings. With Chiwetel Ejiofor, Josh Brolin, Lymari Nadal, and Ruby Dee. 2007. ★ (FASHION VALLEY 18; MISSION MARKETPLACE 13; MISSION VALLEY 20)

Atonement — British, bookish period piece, from an Ian McEwan novel, about a



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young girl's misreading of the amorous activities of her elders, and its tragic consequences. (A mole on the right cheek links the three different actresses who play the role, Saoirse Ronan in the Thirties, Romola Garai in wartime, and Vanessa Redgrave in modern day.) The movie starts rather sedately, despite some point-of-view tricks, in a commonplace country estate; and it then gets rather overblown in the war sequences, including a marathon Steadicam single take of the evacuation at Dunkirk. But all in all it's well-mounted, well-dressed, well-acted, and, well, dull. With Keira Knightley, James McAvoy, Brenda Blethyn, and Harriet Walter; directed by Joe Wright. 2007.
★ (FLOWER HILL 4, FROM 12/21; LA JOLLA VILLAGE; MISSION VALLEY 20; SAN MARCOS 18, FROM 12/21; VISTA VILLAGE, FROM 12/21)

August Rush — Mystical magical musical about the orphaned spawn of an unmarried rock-and-roller and classical cellist, all three reunited through music, under a full moon in Central Park, in the boy's twelfth year. Too gooey to be true. And the synthesis of motley forms of music produces ear-strain on top of credulity-strain. With Freddie Highmore, Keri Russell,



The Golden Compass

Jonathan Rhys Meyers, Terrence Howard, and (as a cowboy-hatted, soul-patched Fagin for underage street musicians) Robin Williams; directed by Kirsten Sheridan. 2007.
● (CARMEL MOUNTAIN; FASHION VALLEY 18;

GROSSMONT CENTER; LA JOLLA 12; MIRA MESA 18; MISSION MARKETPLACE 13; MISSION VALLEY 20; TOWN SQUARE 14)

Bee Movie — Cute name, even for an overhyped, presold, mega-budget money-making machine. (The return of Jerry Seinfeld! — as leading voice, co-writer, co-producer, and principal drum beater.) Cute is much more than you can say, however, for the spongy, marshmallowy computer-animated honeybees or for the premise that permits them to converse in English at equal volume with humans. The storyline of a rebel bee unready to settle down to his one and only Job-for-Life has its points of cleverness (e.g., the episode of getting stuck on a tennis ball, ultimately overelaborated), and toward the end of it there's a senten-

tious lesson in ecology, more for grownups than for tots. With the voices of Renée Zellweger, Matthew Broderick, Chris Rock, Patrick Warburton; directed by Simon J. Smith and Steve Hickner. 2007.
★ (GASLAMP 15; MISSION MARKETPLACE 13; PALM PROMENADE 24)

Beowulf — Computer-animated comic-book transcription of the unloved epic poem of the 8th Century. Director Robert Zemeckis goes even further with the motion-capture technique of *The Polar Express*, staking out the borderland between live action and cartoon, and throwing in 3-D to boot. Ray Winstone, voicing the dragon-slaying hero, has been prettified beyond recognition (unless you recognize him as Sean Bean), but Anthony Hopkins,

if not his bare bum, is easily recognizable, as are John Malkovich, Brendan Gleeson, Robin Wright Penn, and Angelina "Fat Lips" Jolie. The novelty — motion capture plus 3-D — wears off eventually but not early. The visual effects are as liberated as any CGI, and are less apt to clash with their surroundings than the CGI in a live-action film. Still, we get plenty of clang and clank from the brutality, the gore, the coy nudity (in places approaching the fig-leaf silliness of an Austin Powers spoof), and the sheer bombast. 2007.
★★ (MISSION MARKETPLACE 13; MISSION VALLEY 20; PALM PROMENADE 24)

Blade Runner — Two of the more socially conscious of cinematic genres — science fiction and the detective story — have been mated to produce a future-generation Los Angeles (A.D. 2019) that looks like Tokyo or Hong Kong gone to seed. The detective work is somewhat scamped, except for a good scene (echoing Antonioni's *Blow-Up*) involving a computerized photo scanner and enlarger. And several nostalgic throwbacks to Bogart's heyday simply misfire: the hard-boiled, first-person narration (eliminated in the re-released "director's cut"); the Venetian-blind shadows; the Joan Crawford hairdo and fashions on the female lead. The sci-fi elements are more fully elaborated, but aren't always sure-fire either: the topography of the cityscapes often seems as flat and jumbled as a Cubist painting, and even the tightest of shots is apt to be busied up with reflections, moving lights, colored mist. With Harrison Ford, Rutger Hauer, and Sean Young; directed by Ridley Scott. 1982.
★ (KEN, THROUGH 12/20)

The Bourne Ultimatum — The *Bourne* absurdum. It isn't just that Part III in the adventures of the amnesiac superspy adds more ridiculousness. It's that, at these lengths, the ridiculousness multiplies exponentially. More ridiculousness, that is, and more and more ridiculous. (The sentimental soft spots found in Parts I and II are here concentrated in a couple of female, motherly, protective, nurturing CIA agents who, alone among their heartless colleagues, are interested in keeping the hero alive.) Paul Greengrass's frantic visual style — a hand-held camera in the grips of delirium tremens — fosters irritation where it intended excitement. With Matt Damon, Joan Allen, Julia Stiles, David Strathairn, Scott Glenn, and Albert Finney. 2007.
● (GASLAMP 15)

Charlie Wilson's War — Reviewed next issue. With Tom Hanks, Amy Adams, Philip Seymour Hoffman, and Julia Roberts; directed by Mike Nichols.
★★ (CARMEL MOUNTAIN; CHULA VISTA 10; ESCONDIDO 16; FASHION VALLEY 18; FLOWER HILL 4; GROSSMONT CENTER; HORTON PLAZA 14; LA COSTA 6; LA JOLLA 12; MIRA MESA 18; MISSION MARKETPLACE 13; MISSION VALLEY 7; MISSION VALLEY 20; OCEANSIDE 16; OTAY RANCH 12; PALM PROMENADE 24; PARKWAY PLAZA 18; POWAY 10; RANCHO DEL REY 16; RANCHO SAN DIEGO 15; RIVER VILLAGE 6; SAN MARCOS 18; TOWN SQUARE 14; VISTA VILLAGE; FROM 12/21)

The Darjeeling Limited — One thing to be said for a Wes Anderson film, and it's no small thing, is that it bears an individual stamp. A stamp as flat as a postage stamp, as emphatic as a rubber stamp. (Whap, whap.) A well-known commodity after *Bottle Rocket*, *Rushmore*, *The Royal Tennenbaums*, *The Life Aquatic of Steve Zissou*, Anderson favors fastidiously balanced, nailed-down compositions, the figures pinned to a shallow background like butterfly specimens. Stressing their separateness, he has no intention to hinge his shots together into a smooth and seamless line, but instead slots them into place as if on disconnected planes, setting up a clumping rhythm of starts and stops, glazing the screen with the deadest of deadpans, and erecting an invisible wall (invulnerable even to the occasional uncharacteristic zoom) between the filmmaker and his characters, freakishly feckless people, abject puppets manipulated by a man with little regard for human diversity and volition. The effect — the unhumanness of these humanoids — is often amusing and always distancing. The

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danger in the director's method is that it can be *too* distancing and therefore not amusing *enough*. (Since he always clamps a tasteful mute on the audience's merriment, the standard laugh-meter is an unreliable measure.) If this outing seems a cut above all previous ones, it may be the benefit of a real, a tangible, a substantial background against which to display his specimens: three, thirty-something brothers who have not spoken to one another in the year since their father's funeral, now heading out together on a "spiritual journey" in a first-class sleeper car across India, with the ultimate aim of tracking down their mother (a no-show at the funeral) in a convent at the foot of the Himalayas. In other words, a typical Wes Anderson operation, bringing about the insecure bonding of misaligned oddballs, but in an atypical exotic setting, the better to draw out their oddness. Owen Wilson, Adrien Brody, Jason Schwartzman, Amara Karan, Anjelica Huston, Bill Murray. 2007.

★★★ (LA PALOMA)

Enchanted — In an overlong prologue, a generic fairy-tale princess, rendered in a pastiche of old-time Disney animation, is dispatched by a generic wicked witch to "a place where there are no happily-ever-afters," namely modern-day Manhattan in live action, whither she's soon followed by her betrothed prince, a CG chipmunk, and a witch's minion. The slothful working-out of this inspiration should pass as sophisticated among grade-schoolers. And maybe once in a while among grown-ups. (With a song, the princess rallies pigeons, sewer rats, and cockroaches to help with the domestic chores.) Amy Adams, far from the most plastically actress, maintains a plucky air of innocence bordering on Blanche Du Bois delusion. With Patrick Dempsey, James Marsden, Timothy Spall, and Susan Sarandon; directed by Kevin Lima. 2007.

★ (CARMEL MOUNTAIN; CHULA VISTA 10; DEL MAR HIGHLANDS 8; ESCONDIDO 16; FASHION VALLEY 18; GASLAMP 15; GROSSMONT CENTER; LA COSTA 6; LA JOLLA 12; MIRA MESA 18; MISSION MARKETPLACE 13; MISSION VALLEY 20; OCEANSIDE 16; OTAY RANCH 12; PALM PROMENADE 24; PARKWAY PLAZA 18; POWAY 10; RANCHO DEL REY 16; RANCHO SAN DIEGO 15; SAN MARCOS 18; TOWN SQUARE 14; VISTA VILLAGE)

The Golden Compass — Unstirring epic fantasy, set in a parallel universe where people's souls walk beside them in the form of talking animals, called "daemons." In addition, there's a whole glossary of made-up proper nouns, an obligatory oppressive, thought-policing Ruling Power, and a young girl singled out by destiny to be the Savior, aided by a good witch, a gypsy band, a dirigible-flying cowboy, a CG armored polar bear (cousin of the Coca-Cola polars), and the truth-telling gizmo of the title. A four-pronged last-minute rescue settles nothing, for this is but Part One of Philip Pullman's "His Dark Materials" trilogy. With Dakota Blue Richards, Nicole Kidman, Daniel Craig, Eva Green, and Sam Elliott; directed by Chris Weitz. 2007.

★ (CARMEL MOUNTAIN; CHULA VISTA 10; DEL MAR HIGHLANDS 8; ESCONDIDO 16; FASHION VALLEY 18; GROSSMONT CENTER; HORTON PLAZA 14; LA COSTA 6; LA JOLLA 12; MIRA MESA 18; MISSION VALLEY 7; MISSION VALLEY 20; OCEANSIDE 16; OTAY RANCH 12; PALM PROMENADE 24; PARKWAY PLAZA 18; POWAY 10; RANCHO DEL REY 16; RANCHO SAN DIEGO 15; SAN MARCOS 18; TOWN SQUARE 14; VISTA VILLAGE)

Gone Baby Gone — Directing debut of Ben Affleck, who stays behind the camera and cedes the spotlight to his younger brother Casey, in the role of Patrick Kenzie, the Boston missing-persons private eye ("I find the people that started in the cracks and then fell through"), along with his "snooty" partner Angie Gennaro (Michelle Monaghan), featured in a series of detective novels by Dennis Lehane. The plot, starting sensibly enough with the vanished daughter of a drug-addicted and derelict single mom, proves in the long run to be preposterous. But Affleck, meaning Casey more than Ben, works wonders to humanize Lehane's rather embarrassing literary creation, partly just by his youthful delicacy and his chip-on-the-shoulder defensiveness about it. A singularly unprepossessing hero, he gains

stature by holding his ground, however sullenly, against some highly showy performances (Ed Harris, Amy Madigan, Amy Ryan, Morgan Freeman, among them). And the other Affleck, Ben, does some nice impressionistic detailing of his native Bean Town, and some candid thumbnailing of assorted lowlifes, before he succumbs to a muddying plot and a gagging resolution. 2007.

★ (GASLAMP 15)

Hitman — Video-game idiocy around a peerless assassin with a shaved head, a bar

code tattooed on the back of it (assuring him the anonymity demanded of his job), and a voice mistakable for Clint Eastwood's. The prevalent fog indoors is a symbol, a symptom, of a fog in the brain. With Timothy Olyphant, Dougray Scott, and Olga Kurylenko; directed by Xavier Gens. 2007.

● (MISSION MARKETPLACE 13; MISSION VALLEY 20; PALM PROMENADE 24)

I Am Legend — The third screen treatment of Richard Matheson's post-apocalyptic vampire tale is the first to retain the

original title (cf. *The Last Man on Earth* and *The Omega Man*), and the first to bring to it the total commitment of top dollar, most helpful in creating a weed-overgrown New York City. It also brings to it some very wet sentimentality, with Will Smith having a hard time shouldering the burdens of being a Renaissance man amid a population of nocturnal zombies: he's a brilliant scientist, a hardbodied soldier, a tender dog lover, a Bob Marley aficionado, a *Shrek* memorizer, and so on. The situation nevertheless keeps a good grip until the fortuitous appearance of a second (and third) human being, after

which the grip loosens. With Alice Braga, Charlie Tahan, and briefly an uncredited Emma Thompson; directed by Francis Lawrence. 2007.

★ (CARMEL MOUNTAIN; CHULA VISTA 10; DEL MAR HIGHLANDS 8; ESCONDIDO 16; FASHION VALLEY 18; GROSSMONT CENTER; HORTON PLAZA 14; LA COSTA 6; LA JOLLA 12; MIRA MESA 18; MISSION VALLEY 7; MISSION VALLEY 20; OCEANSIDE 16; OTAY RANCH 12; PALM PROMENADE 24; PARKWAY PLAZA 18; POWAY 10; RANCHO DEL REY 16; RANCHO SAN DIEGO 15; RIVER VILLAGE 6; SAN MARCOS 18; SANTEE DRIVE IN; TOWN SQUARE 14; VISTA VILLAGE)

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I'm Not There — Todd Haynes blows another cloud of mist into the mystique of Bob Dylan. The filmmaker, who once enlisted Barbie dolls to tell the Karen Carpenter story, now borrows a gimmick used by Todd Solondz in *Palindromes*, employing a rotation of dissimilar actors to play a single role, a multiplication of a gimmick used by Luis Buñuel in *That Obscure Object of Desire*. (Not a gimmick, in other words, exclusive to filmmakers named Todd.) The fact that Bob Dylan is a real person and a public figure, about whom we may have our own ideas, further complicates matters, and it is easy to lose track of the subject of the film when we are looking at a prepubescent black boy, Marcus Carl Franklin, hopping freight trains in Depression-period hobostyle, or looking at Richard Gere in granny glasses on horseback in the era of the model-T, and all the easier when they are masquerading under the aliases of Woody Guthrie and Billy the Kid, respectively. The songs in the film (sometimes sung by Dylan himself, sometimes by others) leave no doubt as to the protagonist's identity, and no doubt as to his uniqueness, but between the half-dozen different faces and



I Am Legend

pseudonyms, the film seems to be not so much about the “many lives of Bob Dylan” as about a half-dozen different lives altogether. The elusiveness of the man, the multifacetedness of him, would presumably be The Point, but that point could have

been made more subtly: the dissimilarity of Marcus Carl Franklin and Richard Gere amounts to gross overstatement. Adding to the confusion is a visual patchwork stitched together out of grainy black-and-white, glossy black-and-white, jaundiced color,

and peachy color (Edward Lachman, cinematographer), not even counting the diverse cinematic allusions, catch them if you can, to Fellini, Godard, Peckinpah. With Christian Bale (who gets the speaking voice, the cadence, just right), Cate Blanchett

(who additionally, cross-dressingly, gets the look just right), Ben Winslow, Heath Ledger, and Charlotte Gainsbourg. 2007. ★ (GASLAMP 15)

In the Valley of Elah — A more commendable writing and directing effort from Paul Haggis (writer only on *Million Dollar Baby* and *Flags of Our Fathers*, among others) than his hokey Oscar-winner, *Crash*. More focussed, more concentrated, more self-contained, more consistent: an unpromisingly mournful murder mystery, and strangled antiwar cry, about a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom (remember when?) who goes missing upon his return to Fort Rudd, New Mexico, and who turns up on the outskirts of the base, stabbed, dismembered, and burned beyond recognition. Say what you will about the filmmaker's political point-making, it never clogs up the unrushed flow of the narrative; and at the same time he shows a true cinematic eye for tacky Americana, the streets, the stores, the townscapes, etc., so that whenever we go anywhere on screen — an army barracks, a motel, a public restroom, a strip club, a coffee shop, a “drive-up” bar, a fast-food joint — we can feel we're really been there, really seen it. (The mood lighting of nauseous green and blanched white is a case of whatever would be the opposite of gilding the lily — wilting the weed, possibly — and equally unnecessary.) Tommy Lee Jones, as the victim's father, a retired M. P. and current gravel hauler who presses the investigation forward when the military looks for an easy way out, has just the right amount of starch in his performance, touchingly repressed. Charlize Theron on the other hand, as the beleaguered civilian cop who eventually takes an interest, is perhaps more emotional than you want from a cop, but not more glamorous, with mannish attire, no makeup, and her hair parted in the middle and pulled back as severely as Emily Dickinson's. The rest of the cast has been carefully chosen down to the smallest role, with special mention reserved for Susan Sarandon, Jason Patric, James Franco, Jake McLaughlin, Wes Chatham, Josh Brolin, Barry Corbin, and, nonchalantly topless in her mid-fifties, Frances Fisher. 2007. ★★ (GASLAMP 15)

Into the Wild — Illustration, in a sketchy hand, of the Jon Krakauer nonfiction book on Christopher McCandless, a 1990 college graduate, on the doorstep of Harvard Law School, who gave away his tuition fund to Oxfam, obliterated his identity, renamed himself Alexander Supertramp, and swapped the evils of society for the purity of the northern wilderness (“No longer to be poisoned by civilization,” he carved into a wooden shingle at his encampment), where ultimately he starved to death in 1992. It may not sound like much of an idea for a film. It isn't. A Seventies-style road movie, redolent of Seventies-style disaffection, it has a strong element of travelogue, as our happy-go-lucky hobo rides his aging Datsun westward to South Dakota, abandons it at Lake Mead, kayaks down the Colorado River, drifts into Mexico, trains up to L.A., thumbs his way to the Salton Sea, Anza Borrego, and Alaska. In that final destination, the travelogue veers toward nature documentary. At nearly two and a half hours, the film feels very, very long, albeit short on relatable incident: the protagonist goes places, he meets people, and then he goes to a place where he won't meet people, where he will meet only his end, a martyr to something or other. Director Sean Penn unmistakably takes himself very seriously, and takes his protagonist almost reverently, painting him as something of a holy fool (a reader of Tolstoi, even though an eater of meat when he can get it), and offering up this speculative reenactment as nothing less than an endorsement. At the top, he sets the tone with a high-flown epigraph from Lord Byron: “I love not man the less, but Nature more” — that one. The kid sister periodically supplies some explanatory narration (“I understand what he was doing”), and Pearl Jam's Eddie Vedder chimes in with a half-dozen or so acoustic songs in sympathy and support. Of the real protagonist's earnestness and conviction, the film can tell us next to nothing. Of the filmmaker's, it can tell us much. And

BEST PICTURE
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The Kite Runner
★★★★

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THE KITE RUNNER
CREATED BY KHALED HOSSEINI
SCREENPLAY BY DAVID BENIOFF
DIRECTED BY MARC FORSTER

CAST: AHMAD KHAN MAHMOODZADA, KHALID ABDALLA, HONAYOUN ERSHADI, SHAWN TOUB, ATOSSA LEONI, SAID TACHMAOUI, ALBERTO VILESAS, CHARLIZE THERON, BRUCE TULL, FRANK FLEMING, MATT CHESSE, CARLOS CONTI

PRODUCED BY: WILLIAM HORGERS, WALTER PARKES, REBECCA YELDHAM, E. BENNETT WALSH

FOCUS FEATURES PRESENTS A MARC FORSTER FILM THE KITE RUNNER KHALID ABDALLA HONAYOUN ERSHADI SHAWN TOUB ATOSSA LEONI SAID TACHMAOUI ALBERTO VILESAS CHARLIZE THERON BRUCE TULL FRANK FLEMING MATT CHESSE CARLOS CONTI DIRECTED BY ROBERTO SCHAEFFER, A.S.C. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS SIDNEY KIMMEL LAURIE McDONALD SAM MENDES JEFF SKOLL PRODUCED BY WILLIAM HORGERS WALTER PARKES REBECCA YELDHAM E. BENNETT WALSH WRITTEN BY KHALED HOSSEINI SCREENPLAY BY DAVID BENIOFF DIRECTED BY MARC FORSTER

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Laura Linney Philip Seymour Hoffman

THE SAVAGES

FOX SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES IN ASSOCIATION WITH **LOVE STAR FILM GROUP** PRESENT **THIS IS THAT** PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH **AD HONNEM ENTERPRISES** AND **COOPER'S TOWN PRODUCTIONS** **LAURA LINNEY PHILIP SEYMOUR HOFFMAN "THE SAVAGES" PHILIP BOSCO**
WRITTEN BY RANDALL POSTER PRODUCED BY LORI KATH DOUGLAS WITH STEPHEN TRASK AND BRIAN A. KATES, A.C.E. PRODUCED BY JANE ANN STEWART
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No Country for Old Men

then it can tell us again. And again. With Emile Hirsch, Marcia Gay Harden, William Hurt, Jena Malone, Vince Vaughn, and Hal Holbrook. 2007.

★ (HILLCREST CINEMAS, THROUGH 12/20)

Junio — A slow starter. In the title role of a pregnant Minnesota high-schooler (named after the Roman goddess of marriage, fidelity, fertility), the dry flat sardonic line-delivery of Ellen Page, the angelic avenger of *Hard Candy*, is not easy to warm up to, no matter how much we might try to see it as an adolescent defense mechanism, or how much as humble emulation of Janeane Garofalo. And the garishly colorful dialogue, from first-time scripter and former stripper Diablo Cody, often tends to push too hard (“Being pregnant makes me pee like Seabiscuit”). The heroine, interested in simply finding a good home for the baby, not in making a profit off it, finds a possible taker in the weekly *PennySaver* (“next to the exotic birds”), a neat-freaky suburban couple in the gated confines of Glacial Valley Estates. It’s there that things really begin to get interesting. Our initial arrival at the housing development is alone sufficient to convince us of Jason Reitman’s directorial bona fides: a series of static shots of antiseptic House Beautiful after House Beautiful as the car passes across the screen, left to right, in front of each. And the prospective mother, Jennifer Garner (her piano-wire tautness put to good use), turns out to be the neater of the pair, someone who will studiously ponder “custard” versus “cheesecake” as the color for baby’s room, while the prospective father, Jason Bateman, proves to be the freakier, a stay-at-home composer of advertising ditties and a frustrated rock-and-roller. A curious, potentially dangerous after-school relationship blossoms between him and the heroine: he may be a commercial sell-out as a composer, but he’s a person who can talk music to a teenager, and he demonstrates “decent taste in slasher movies” (e.g., Herschell Gordon Lewis’s *The Wizard of Gore*, another impediment to our warming up to the heroine). Over time, the film builds, and it does so with proficiency, patience, and foresight. If the heroine is never wholly embraceable, the surrounding characters go far to compensate, specifically J.K. Simmons as her droll laconic dad, Allison Janney as her worldly-wise, even-keeled mom, and above all, Michael Cera as her shunted aside, unassertive, but ever-faithful boyfriend, the baby’s biological father, and a cooler dude than you’d ever guess from his track-team togs. And if the dialogue is unabatingly overcolored, at least the hues are spread around democratically. 2007.

★★★ (ESCONDIDO 16, FROM 12/21; FLOWER HILL 4, FROM 12/21; HILLCREST CINEMAS; LA JOLLA 12; MIRA MESA 18, FROM 12/21; PARKWAY PLAZA 18, FROM 12/21; SAN MARCOS 18, FROM 12/21; VISTA VILLAGE, FROM 12/21)

The Kingdom — A remedial history lesson on U.S. -Saudi relations, behind the opening credits, introduces a hypothetical massacre of a hundred-plus American citizens at an oil-company picnic, the handiwork of an “Osama wannabe.” Speedily onto the scene — where were they on

9/11? — comes an FBI response team (Jamie Foxx, the take-charge family man; Jennifer Garner, the token superwoman; Chris Cooper, the token good actor; Jason Bateman, the obligatory wiseacre), to take names and kick ass, but first to burn the ears of the local Saudi investigator with their salty Free Speech. (Ashraf Barhom, in the part, is as likable as he is expendable.) Director Peter Berg’s bob-and-weave cam-

era, that cliché of immediacy and urgency, is a continual annoyance, and in the climactic action is worse than that. Our inability to follow what’s happening can scarcely convince us it’s actually happening. 2007.

● (GASLAMP 15)

The Kite Runner — Marc Forster’s adaptation of the Khaled Hosseini novel, revolving around two lifelong Afghan friends. (FASHION VALLEY 18; FLOWER HILL 4; HORTON PLAZA 14; LA JOLLA VILLAGE; SAN MARCOS 18; TOWN SQUARE 14; FROM 12/21)

Lions for Lambs — Topics on the table: the war on terror, the lack of a battle plan to wage it, the governmental policy of disinformation, the complicity of the press in all this, the general lowering of journalistic standards, the apathy of the younger generation, the ivory-towerism of academe, and (if that’s not enough) the responsibility of each and every individual citizen to get involved, make a difference, act out a slogan. The action in the film, which is to say the talk, talk, talk, takes place in three arenas: the Capitol Hill office of a go-getter GOP senator, entertaining a veteran newshound in an hour-long one-on-one interview (“My honest effort to keep the press better informed”); a snowy Afghan mountaintop on which two old college buddies lie wounded and marooned; and the office of their former Poli-Sci professor at “a California university,” where he now, con-

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SEEN ON DVD



Nausicaa: The Valley of the Wind

JOSEPHINA TORRES

Seventh grader, Palm Anime and Manga Club

The three DVDs I want for Christmas include *Whisper of the Heart* because it's a story about a young girl who falls in love and learns to believe in herself. It seems like a good movie for the whole family.

Next, *Nausicaa: The Valley of the Wind*. It's centuries after war has devastated the earth. Princess Nausicaa leads the people to the valley of the wind. She has some fights and trouble along the way. She fights Ohmu, a race of giant bugs. It sounds like a very interesting story.

Finally, I want *Princess Mononoke* because it tells a story about a warrior who travels to the Far East to get help from the great forest spirit for a cure to a deadly curse he's under. While trying to get to his destination, he gets into fights and battles.

WHISPER OF THE HEART

(Japan) 1995, Walt Disney
List price: \$29.99 (two discs)

NAUSICAA: THE VALLEY OF THE

WIND (Japan) 1984, Walt Disney
List price: \$29.99 (two discs)

PRINCESS MONONOKE (Japan)

1997, Miramax
List price: \$32.99



Death Note: Volume One

ALEC LAUBE

Seventh grader, Palm Anime and Manga Club

I want these DVDs for Christmas because they are all major movies or shows that I've liked since I've heard of them.

Nightmare Before Christmas is the best movie ever. When I was born I was pretty much born into a family that loves and is obsessed with it. So, I instantly liked Jack; he's the best character ever. And Tim Burton is the best writer ever.

Death Note is the best anime ever. It keeps you on your toes with constant thrills by the actions of the main character Light and his "shinigami" or death god. Light is brilliant, but I don't know if he's better than L, the detective chasing him.

Bleach has one of the best storylines of all manga and anime. Most of the characters come from creepy or exciting backgrounds, which really hooks you. The Quincy and Soul Reapers fight forever.

NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS (USA) 1993,

Touchstone
List price: \$14.98

DEATH NOTE: VOLUME ONE

(Japan) 2006, Viz Media
List price: \$24.98

BLEACH: VOLUME EIGHT

(Japan) 2004, Viz Media
List price: \$24.98



Azumi 2: Death or Love

ASUKA AND MARYAN

SASAMINE

Sisters, Palm Anime and Manga Club

This year for Christmas we want *Naruto: Shippuden the Movie*, the fourth *Naruto* movie.

Shippuden is our top movie choice because it's not even available in the U.S. yet. Supposedly, the main character, a ninja named Naruto, will have his prophecy fulfilled.

Next is another anime, *The Wallflower*, about a gothic girl that has a super-rich aunt who wants to turn her into a "real lady." Sunako, the main character, is forced to live with four cute "bishonen" boys. You can only imagine how the series is. Maryan likes the way it's drawn.

Last, I want an action film called *Azumi 2*. I have the first movie *Azumi*, and I'm just dying to see the sequel. And Maryan wants the anime *Ouran High School Host Club* because it has a good storyline.

NARUTO: SHIPPUDEN THE MOVIE (Japan) 2007, Bandai

List price: (release date TBA)

THE WALLFLOWER: THE COMPLETE SEASON (Japan)

ADV Films
List price: \$29.98

AZUMI 2: DEATH OR LOVE

(Japan) 2005, FX
List price: \$25.00

OURAN HIGH SCHOOL HOST CLUB (Japan) 2006, Import DVD

List price: \$45.00 (two discs)

science-stricken over his vain attempt to dissuade them from joining the military, fights for the soul of a disengaged student of bright promise and smart mouth. The shifting focus from one arena to another, for all its geographical scope, is scarcely cinematic at all, but more like a shifting spotlight on a stage, a pool of illumination that circulates between three distinct twosomes. Although a few flashbacks combat this effect, the staginess — the soapboxiness — never for a moment relents. The film, really more a forum than a film ("Here we are," the truest statement the senator makes, "having a high-minded debate"), collects commonplace talk on the issues of the day, things you could hear spoken all around you, and it crams them into the mouths of tenuously connected, sketchily conceived fictional characters. Presented for the most part in a constricted face-shot style, and rather sickly in complexion for so eminent a cinematographer as Philippe Rousselet, it comes to us out of the evident conviction that we are at too critical a time in our his-

tory to be bothered with amenities such as art and artfulness, imagination and invention. (Still another indicator, like no shampoo on airplanes, that *the terrorists have won*.) And — despite an A-list cast of Tom Cruise, Meryl Streep, and Robert Redford, the last of whom also directed — it logs in at several ticks under ninety minutes, as if any greater elaboration would have dangerously delayed the delivery of the message. With Andrew Garfield, Derek Luke, Michael Peña. 2007.

● (GASLAMP 15)

Margot at the Wedding — Noah Baumbach's somewhat disappointing follow-up to *The Squid and the Whale*, though maybe not so disappointing if proper heed had been taken of his slovenly visual style, the inexact camerawork, the mismatched shots, the gray, murky, dingy color. But still somewhat disappointing, in the central characterizations, for the sacrifice of focus and clarity in favor of shiftiness and multiplicity. Everyone in the *dramatis personae* is

an uncohesive bundle of neuroses, and the smaller bundles are simply the characters with the smaller parts. The bigger ones are handled by Nicole Kidman as a well-known writer ("to a very few people") who, while undergoing her own marital breakup, drags herself and her girlish teenage son to her pregnant sister's second wedding; by Jennifer Jason Leigh (Baumbach's wife off-screen) as the hitherto estranged sister, a counterculture free spirit and reckless seeker; and by Jack Black as the groom-to-be, an unsuccessful and self-critical musician ("My scrotum is longer than my penis," "I have the emotional version of whatever bad feng shui would be," and so forth) who shaves off his nuptial mustache ("It's meant to be funny") when no one gets the joke. The overall level of sophistication remains high, even by New York-ish or *New Yorker*-ish standards; the hostile and rather sinister neighbors are good for a chuckle and a shudder; and the young folk (newcomer Zane Pais, Flora Cross, and the nice neglected girl from *The Squid and the*



Whale, Halley Feiffer, Jules's daughter in real life) are so well drawn, in concord with those in his previous film, as to saddle Baumbach with an unshakable reputation. Nicole Kidman, of course, can do the tightly-wrapped thing without strain, and Jennifer Jason Leigh can do the loosey-goosey. Jack Black, who could certainly use the exercise, deserves credit for stretching if not for attaining. 2007.

The Mist — The third Frank Darabont film to have been adapted from the works of Stephen King, although the first two, *The Shawshank Redemption* and *The Green Mile*, were not the sort of work for which that author is best known. (Darabont's intervening film, *The Majestic*, was truly horrible, horrific, horrid, but not in any way intended.) This one, adapted from a King "novella," is much more the what we would expect: "Something in the mist! Something in the mist took John Lee!" Said mist has rolled down from the mountain on which there is ostensibly some type of missile-defense base, rolled across the lake, rolled into town, and what's in it — including the thing that took John Lee — is a menagerie of jumbo insects, reptiles, mollusks, God knows what. By and by, we get a throwaway science-fictional explanation for this — really more mythological than science-fictional, more Pandora's Box than Frankenstein's Monster — but the concern of the townsfolk barricaded inside the local supermarket, The Food House, is simply to survive to the end of the movie: "It appears we may have a problem of some magnitude here," announces the skeptical store manager after viewing the chopped-off tip of a tentacle, still thrashing, at the loading dock. The traditional voice against tampering with nature, though quite properly a religious one, is in this instance a stridently fire-and-brimstone one (Marcia Gay Harden's), going on about "the end of time," never mind the end of the movie; and there is no opposing voice more authoritative than Thomas Jane's, Toby Jones's, Jeffrey DeMunn's, Laurie Holden's, or Frances Sternhagen's (a no-star cast). The computer-generated creatures, very well-done, never overdone, are infinitely more congenial than this shrewish doom-sayer, and not even Darabont's slushy, slapdash direction (shallow focus, rack focus, lack of focus) can spoil the party. 2007.

★★ (MISSION VALLEY 20)

Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium — The once proud Dustin Hoffman, with a prissy lisp, bushy eyebrows, shrunken hair, and ice-cream suits, as the centuries-old proprietor of a magic toyshop: crushed under a riot of color and a steamroller of whimsy. With Natalie Portman, Jason Bateman, and Zach Mills; written and directed by Zach Helm. 2007.

● (GASLAMP 15; MISSION MARKETPLACE 13)

National Treasure: Book of Secrets — Nicolas Cage, Justin Bartha, Diane Kruger, and Jon Voight return for another adventure, directed by Jon Turteltaub.

DIEGO 15; RIVER VILLAGE 6; SAN MARCOS 18;
SANTÉE DRIVE IN; TOWN SQUARE 14; VISTA VIL-
LAGE; FROM 12/21)

No Country for Old Men — The Coen brothers' first literary adaptation, from a Cormac McCarthy original, an overflowingly bloody pulp thriller, plumped up with folksy first-person social commentary in italics, about a Texas good ole boy who stumbles upon the interminable scene of a drug deal gone bad, makes off with a satchel of cash, and tries to ditch the implacable hired killer (among others) on his trail. Sharing the writing credit as always and sharing the directing credit as they only began to do with *The Ladykillers*, the brothers were smart to cut down the social commentary — the Decline of Western Civilization as viewed by an aging third-generation lawman — to a single block of voice-over at the outset ("Some of the old-time sheriffs never even wore a gun"), and to sprinkle any additional such commentary lightly into the dialogue ("Once you quit hearing 'sir' and 'ma'am,' the rest is soon to follow"). Without those repeated and repetitive interruptions, the simple pursuit narrative — the killer pursuing the filcher, the lawman pursuing both — unfolds as lean, linear, streamlined, and yet slow, steady, and long, never very deep. And on the Coens' part, never very inventive. They have followed McCarthy's blueprint scrupulously, even slavishly, and have bountifully harvested his lip-smacking dialogue; and

the major unconventionalities in this mostly conventional thriller are all his. (For better or for worse.) To be sure, the Coens are meticulous technicians, supremely skillful, attentive to the minutest detail. And while the body count climbs numbingly high, the tension in individual set pieces is teased out to an exquisite agony, and with no artificial boost from any background music. (The Coens' regular composer, Carter Burwell, gets credited for the exit music.) Certainly a personal touch, a personal sense of humor, comes into the local-

color cameos of gas-station attendant, motel clerk, hotel clerk, trailer-park manager, etc., etc. And perhaps a somewhat unseemly humor, or at least unseemly delight, comes into the characterization of the psychopathic killer, with his robotic delivery of lines, his torturous banter, his gimmicky weapon (a compressed-air tank for blowing locks out of doors and blowing holes in heads), and above all his Engelbert Humperdinck haircut *circa* 1972 (hair humor always being big with the Coens). Tommy Lee Jones, Javier Bardem, Josh

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Brolin, Kelly Macdonald, Woody Harrelson. 2007.

★★★★ (ESCONDIDO 16; HILLCREST CINEMAS; LA JOLLA VILLAGE; MIRA MESA 18; OCEANSIDE 16; PALM PROMENADE 24; RANCHO DEL REY 16; RANCHO SAN DIEGO 15; SAN MARCOS 18; TOWN SQUARE 14; VISTA VILLAGE)

P.S. I Love You — A widow (Hilary Swank) receives guidance from her late husband (Gerard Butler), directed by Richard LaGravenese.

(CARMEL MOUNTAIN; DEL MAR HIGHLANDS 8; ESCONDIDO 16; FASHION VALLEY 18; GASLAMP 15; LA JOLLA 12; MIRA MESA 18; MISSION VALLEY 7; MISSION VALLEY 20; OCEANSIDE 16; OTAY RANCH 12; PALM PROMENADE 24; PARKWAY PLAZA 18; POWAY 10; RANCHO DEL REY 16; RANCHO SAN DIEGO 15; RIVER VILLAGE 6; SAN MARCOS 18; SANTEE DRIVE IN; TOWN SQUARE 14; VISTA VILLAGE; FROM 12/21)

The Savages — Reviewed next issue.

With Laura Linney, Philip Seymour Hoffman, and Philip Bosco; written and directed by Tamara Jenkins.

★★ (HILLCREST CINEMAS; LA JOLLA VILLAGE; FROM 12/21)

Starting Out in the Evening — Literary indie, not just in source material (a well-regarded novel by Brian Morton) or in talky, articulate, literate treatment, but also in subject matter: a stiff-necked New York Jewish intellectual (he wears a tie when home alone), a drinker at the well of Lionel Trilling, Alfred Kazin, Irving Kristol, et al., struggling to complete his fifth and final novel before his demise, parrying the time-consuming advances of an adoring, auburn-haired grad student who has selected him as the obscure topic of her master's thesis, and who has set herself the difficult goal of getting him back in print.



Youth without Youth

(Subplot: his unmarried daughter and her ticking biological clock.) Small, slow, serious film, not without humor, in spite of the straightness and narrowness (or *because* of the straightness and narrowness) of Frank Langella's committed performance, his total avoidance of anything like comic loopiness and broadness. Lauren Ambrose and Lili Taylor give him plenty of credible trouble as the chief women in his life, new admirer and aging daughter respectively. With Adrian Lester; directed by Andrew Wagner. 2007.

★★ (KEN, FROM 12/21; LA JOLLA VILLAGE, THROUGH 12/20)

Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of

Fleet Street — Reviewed next issue.

With Johnny Depp, Helena Bonham Carter, Alan Rickman, and Timothy Spall; directed by Tim Burton.

★ (CARMEL MOUNTAIN; DEL MAR HIGHLANDS 8; ESCONDIDO 16; FASHION VALLEY 18; GROSSMONT CENTER; HORTON PLAZA 14; LA JOLLA 12; MIRA MESA 18; MISSION VALLEY 20; OCEANSIDE 16; OTAY RANCH 12; PALM PROMENADE 24; PARKWAY PLAZA 18; RANCHO DEL REY 16; RANCHO SAN DIEGO 15; SAN MARCOS 18; TOWN SQUARE 14; VISTA VILLAGE; FROM 12/21)

30 Days of Night — A tribe of subtitled vampires strategically targets the northernmost town in the U.S., Barrow, Alaska,

hunkered down for a sunless month, free rein for nocturnal bloodsuckers. The majestic clouds and snowscapes on the last day of light ignite hope for a sense of style, but the superhuman strength and speed of the monsters soon prepare you for boredom and monotony, albeit *gory* boredom and monotony. A brief recurrence of majesty: the aerial view of slaughter, splotches of red on a field of snow, an action painting in motion. With Josh Hartnett, Melissa George, Ben Foster, Danny Huston, and Mark Boone Junior; directed by David Slade. 2007.

● (GASLAMP 15)

Walk Hard: The Dewey Cox Story —

In essence a spoof of *Walk the Line*, to do with a sort of cut-rate Johnny Cash (a Johnny Wampum maybe), although the protagonist's music branches out further than the real Cash's into the groves of Bob Dylan, The Beatles, punk rock (ahead of its time), trend-setters and -followers in general. The comedy mostly aims low, low, depressingly so. The scene with the Beatles in India is a relatively high, high highlight (particularly Paul Rudd's squeezed enunciations as John Lennon), and in the lead role John C. Reilly's innate amiability helps to counteract depression. With Jenna Fischer, Kristen Wiig, Raymond J. Barry, and Tim Meadows; directed by Jake Kasdan. 2007.

★ (CARMEL MOUNTAIN; CHULA VISTA 10; DEL MAR HIGHLANDS 8; ESCONDIDO 16; FASHION VALLEY 18; GASLAMP 15; GROSSMONT CENTER; LA COSTA 6; LA JOLLA 12; MIRA MESA 18; MISSION VALLEY 7; MISSION VALLEY 20; OCEANSIDE 16; OTAY RANCH 12; PALM PROMENADE 24; PARKWAY PLAZA 18; POWAY 10; RANCHO DEL REY 16; RANCHO SAN DIEGO 15; RIVER VILLAGE 6; SAN MARCOS 18; TOWN SQUARE 14; VISTA VILLAGE; FROM 12/21)

Youth without Youth — Francis Ford Coppola's first film in a decade (*The Rainmaker*, just to jog your memory), although in truth he hasn't been a *force* since the decade of the Seventies. His comeback, or anyway his return to action, should secure his position in the margin: an English-language (variously accented) art film, replete with "painterly" light, monochrome flashbacks, experimental dream scenes *circa* 1925, upside-down and sideways images, mirror-multiplied images-within-images, doppelgänger dialogues, Nazi boogeymen, Eastern mysticism, decades of period settings. Inspired by a philosophical novella of Mircea Eliade, it revolves around a hoary old Romanian linguist (Tim Roth) who, when struck by lightning, miraculously reverses the aging process and runs into a dead ringer for the long lost love of his youth (Alexandra Maria Lara). It progresses from abstruseness to absurdity. 2007.

★ (HILLCREST CINEMAS, FROM 12/21)

MOVIE SHOWTIMES

Bargain showtimes are in parentheses.

CENTRAL CLAIREMONT

Town Square 14
4665 Clairemont Drive (858-274-1234)
Alvin and the Chipmunks (PG) Fri.-Sat. (11:00, 11:45, 1:15, 2:10, 3:30) 4:25, 5:45, 6:45, 7:55, 9:15, 10:05 Sun. (11:00, 11:45, 1:15, 2:10, 3:30) 4:25, 5:45, 6:45, 7:55, 9:15; **Charlie Wilson's War** (R) Fri.-Sun. (11:55, 2:20) 5:10, 7:50, 10:20; **Enchanted** (PG) Fri.-Sun. (11:15, 1:45) 4:20, 6:50, 9:25; **The Golden Compass** (PG-13) Fri.-Sun. (1:25, 3:55) 6:55, 9:30; **I Am Legend** (No Rating) Fri.-Sat. (11:30, 12:05, 2:00, 2:30) 4:45, 5:20, 7:10, 8:00, 9:45, 10:30 Sun. (11:30, 12:05, 2:00, 2:30) 4:45, 5:20, 7:10, 8:00, 9:45; **The Kite Runner** (PG-13) Fri.-Sun. (11:20) 4:10, 7:05, 10:00; **National Treasure: Book of Secrets** (PG) Fri.-Sat. (10:45, 12:15, 1:35, 3:45) 4:35, 7:00, 7:40, 9:55, 10:35 Sun. (10:45, 12:15, 1:35, 3:45) 4:35, 7:00, 7:40, 9:55; **No Country for Old Men** (R) Fri.-Sat. (11:35, 2:05) 5:00, 7:45, 10:25 Sun. (11:35, 2:05) 5:00, 7:40, 10:10; **P.S. I Love You** (PG-13) Fri.-Sat. (11:05, 1:50) 4:40, 7:25, 10:15 Sun. (11:05, 1:50) 4:40, 7:25, 10:10; **Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street** (R) Fri.-Sun. (11:10, 1:55) 4:50, 7:30, 10:10; **Walk Hard: The Dewey Cox Story** (R) Fri.-Sun. (11:50, 2:15) 4:55, 7:15, 9:40

DOWNTOWN

Gaslamp 15
701 Fifth Avenue (619-232-0400)
American Gangster (R) Fri.-Sun. (12:20, 3:30) 6:40, 9:50; **Awake** (R) Fri.-Sun. (12:50, 3:25) 5:30, 8:05, 10:10; **Before the Devil Knows You're Dead** (R) Fri.-Sun. (12:00, 2:30) 5:05, 7:40, 10:15; **Enchanted** (PG) Fri.-Sun. (12:25, 2:45) 5:10, 7:55, 10:00; **Fred Claus** (PG) Fri.-Sun. (1:45) 4:30, 7:10, 9:40; **Gone Baby Gone** (R) Fri.-Sun. (12:15, 2:45) 5:15, 7:50, 10:20; **I'm Not There** (R) Fri.-Sun. (12:55) 4:10, 7:05, 9:55; **Into the Wild** (R) Fri.-Sun. (12:50, 3:50) 6:50, 9:50; **The Kingdom** (R) Fri.-Sun. (1:00) 4:15, 7:25, 9:55;

Lions for Lambs (R) Fri.-Sun. (12:10, 2:20) 5:00, 7:20, 9:45; **P.S. I Love You** (PG-13) Fri.-Sun. (12:40, 1:40, 3:35) 4:40, 6:30, 7:30, 9:25, 10:25; **The Perfect Holiday** (PG) Fri.-Sun. (12:30, 2:40) 4:55, 7:15, 9:35; **Walk Hard: The Dewey Cox Story** (R) Fri.-Sun. (12:00, 12:45, 2:15, 3:10) 4:35, 5:35, 7:00, 8:00, 9:30, 10:30

Horton Plaza 14
Horton Plaza (619-444-FILM)
Alvin and the Chipmunks (PG) Fri. (11:20, 12:00, 1:30, 2:15, 3:50, 4:30) 6:50, 8:25, 9:10, 10:35 Sat.-Sun. (11:20, 12:00, 1:30, 2:15, 3:50) 4:30, 6:50, 8:25, 9:10, 10:35; **Charlie Wilson's War** (R) Fri. (12:40, 1:10, 3:10, 3:35, 5:35) 7:25, 8:05, 10:00, 10:25 Sat.-Sun. (12:40, 1:10, 3:10, 3:35) 5:35, 7:25, 8:05, 10:00, 10:25; **The Golden Compass** (PG-13) Fri.-Sun. (12:45, 3:20) 7:15, 10:05; **I Am Legend** (No Rating) Fri. (11:15, 11:45, 12:30, 1:40, 2:10, 2:55, 4:20, 5:00, 5:20) 7:20, 7:50, 8:15, 9:40, 10:10, 10:40 Sat.-Sun. (11:15, 11:45, 12:30, 1:40, 2:10, 2:55) 4:20, 5:00, 5:20, 7:20, 7:50, 8:15, 9:40, 10:10, 10:40; **The Kite Runner** (PG-13) Fri. (1:05, 4:10) 7:05, 9:55 Sat.-Sun. (1:05) 4:10, 7:05, 9:55; **National Treasure: Book of Secrets** (PG) Fri. (11:00, 11:30, 12:15, 1:50, 2:20, 4:05, 4:40, 5:10) 7:00, 7:30, 8:00, 9:50, 10:20, 10:50 Sat.-Sun. (11:00, 11:30, 12:15, 1:50, 2:20) 4:05, 4:40, 5:10, 7:00, 7:30, 8:00, 9:50, 10:20, 10:50; **Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street** (R) Fri. (11:10, 2:00, 4:50) 7:40, 10:30 Fri.-Sun. (1:00, 3:40) 7:10, 10:00 Sat.-Sun. (11:10, 2:00) 4:50, 7:40, 10:30

LA JOLLA

La Jolla 12
8657 Villa La Jolla Drive (858-558-2262)
Alvin and the Chipmunks (PG) Fri.-Sun. (10:40) 1:00, 3:15, 5:35, 7:55, 10:20; **August Rush** (PG) Fri.-Sun. 12:05p.m.; **Charlie Wilson's War** (R) Fri.-Sat. (11:20) 1:55, 4:40, 7:35, 10:15 Sun. 1:55, 4:40, 7:35, 10:15; **Enchanted** (PG) Fri.-Sun. (11:10) 1:45, 4:20, 7:05, 9:40; **The Golden Compass** (PG-13) Fri.-Sun. (11:55) 1:25, 4:15, 7:10, 9:50; **I Am Legend** (No Rating) Fri.-Sun. (11:00) 1:40, 2:40, 4:30, 5:15, 7:15, 8:00, 9:55, 10:40; **Juno** (PG-13) Fri.-Sun. (11:30) 12:25, 2:00, 3:00, 4:45, 5:30, 7:30, 8:15, 10:05, 10:50; **National Treasure: Book of Secrets** (PG) Fri.-Sun.

(10:30) 1:30, 4:35, 7:45, 10:55; **P.S. I Love You** (PG-13) Fri.-Sun. (10:50) 1:35, 4:25, 7:20, 10:25; **Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street** (R) Fri.-Sun. (10:35) 1:20, 4:05, 7:00, 10:00; **Walk Hard: The Dewey Cox Story** (R) Fri.-Sat. (10:45) 1:05, 3:25, 5:45, 8:10, 10:35 Sun. 1:05, 3:25, 5:45, 8:10, 10:35

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Atonement (R) Fri. 1:40, 2:15, 5:00, 7:00, 8:15 Sat.-Sun. 11:20, 1:40, 2:15, 5:00, 7:00, 8:15; **The Kite Runner** (PG-13) Fri. 1:55, 4:50, 8:00 Sat.-Sun. 11:10, 1:55, 4:50, 8:00; **No Country for Old Men** (R) Fri. 4:20, 9:40 Sat.-Sun. 11:00, 4:20, 9:40; **The Savages** (R) Fri. 2:05, 4:40, 7:15, 9:50 Sat.-Sun. 11:30, 2:05, 4:40, 7:15, 9:50

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Fashion Valley 18
7037 Friars Road (858-558-2262)
Alvin and the Chipmunks (PG) Fri.-Sun. (11:30) 2:00, 4:30, 7:15, 9:40; **American Gangster** (R) Fri.-Sun. (11:40) 3:20, 7:05, 10:40; **August Rush** (PG) Fri.-Sun. (11:45a.m.); **Awake** (R) Fri.-Sun. 5:10, 10:45; **Charlie Wilson's War** (R) Fri.-Sun. (10:10, 10:55) 1:00, 1:55, 4:00, 4:45, 6:50, 7:40, 9:45, 10:35; **Enchanted** (PG) Fri.-Sun. (11:25) 2:10, 4:50, 7:30, 10:15; **The Golden Compass** (PG-13) Fri.-Sun. (10:20) 1:20, 4:10, 7:10, 10:00; **I Am Legend** (No Rating) Fri.-Sun. (11:05) 1:45, 2:25, 4:20, 5:00, 7:00, 7:35, 9:35, 10:10; **The Kite Runner** (PG-13) Fri.-Sun. (9:30, 10:05) 12:35, 1:10, 3:40, 4:15, 6:45, 7:25, 9:50, 10:30; **National Treasure: Book of Secrets** (PG) Fri.-Sun. (9:45, 10:30) 12:55, 1:40, 4:05, 4:50, 7:20, 8:00, 10:25, 11:05; **P.S. I Love You** (PG-13) Fri.-Sun. (9:35) 12:40, 3:55, 6:55, 9:55; **Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street** (R) Fri.-Sun. (11:00) 1:50, 4:40, 7:45, 10:45 Fri.-Sun. (11:00) 1:50, 4:40, 7:45, 10:45; **This Christmas** (Not Rated) Fri.-Sun. (11:10) 2:05; **Walk Hard: The Dewey Cox Story** (R) Fri.-Sun. (10:15) 12:45, 3:15, 5:45, 8:15, 11:00

Mission Valley 7
7510 Hazard Center Drive (619-685-2841)
Alvin and the Chipmunks (PG) Fri.-Sun. (10:15, 12:30, 2:45) 5:00, 7:15, 9:45; **Charlie Wilson's War** (R) Fri.-Sun. (10:15, 12:45, 3:15) 5:45, 8:15, 10:45; **The Golden Compass** (PG-13) Fri.-Sun. 5:15, 10:45; **I Am Legend** (No Rating) Fri.-Sun. (10:00, 12:15, 2:45) 5:15, 7:45, 10:15; **National Treasure: Book of Secrets** (PG) Fri.-Sun. (10:00, 11:15, 1:00, 2:15, 4:00) 7:00, 8:00, 10:00; **P.S. I Love You** (PG-13) Fri.-Sun. (10:30, 1:30) 4:30, 7:30, 10:30; **The Nutcracker (San Francisco Ballet)** (NR) Sat.-Sun. (9:00a.m.); **Walk Hard: The Dewey Cox Story** (R) Fri.-Sun. (10:00, 12:30, 3:00) 5:30, 8:00, 10:30

Mission Valley 20
1640 Camino Del Rio North (858-558-2262)
Alvin and the Chipmunks (PG) Fri.-Sun. (11:55) 12:35, 2:15, 3:00, 4:40, 5:25, 7:05, 7:50, 10:05; **American Gangster** (R) Fri.-Sun. (11:10a.m.); **Atonement** (R) Fri.-Sun. (10:55) 1:40, 4:50, 7:40, 10:30; **Awake** (R) Fri.-Sun. 1:10, 5:45, 10:10; **Beowulf: Digital 3D** (PG-13) Fri.-Sun. (11:15) 1:50, 4:35, 7:15, 9:55; **Charlie Wilson's War** (R) Fri.-Sat. (10:05, 11:50) 12:30, 2:25, 3:05, 5:00, 5:40, 7:25, 8:10, 9:55, 10:40, 12:30 Sun. (10:05) 12:30, 2:25, 3:05, 5:00, 5:40, 7:25, 8:10, 9:55, 10:40; **Enchanted** (PG) Fri.-Sun. (11:45) 2:20, 5:00, 7:35, 10:15; **Fred Claus** (PG) Fri.-Sun. 1:05p.m.; **The Golden Compass** (PG-13) Fri.-Sat. (11:30) 2:10, 4:50, 7:25, 10:10; **Hitman** (R) Fri.-Sun. 9:20p.m.; **I Am Legend** (No Rating) Fri.-Sat. (10:30, 11:25) 12:15, 1:55, 2:45, 3:45, 4:30, 5:15, 6:15, 7:00, 7:45, 9:00, 9:40, 10:20, 11:40, 11:45 Fri.-Sun. (11:25) 1:55, 4:30, 7:00, 9:40 Sun. (10:30, 11:25) 1:55, 2:45, 3:45, 4:30, 5:15, 6:15, 7:00, 7:45, 9:00, 9:40, 10:20; **National Treasure: Book of Secrets** (PG) Fri.-Sat. (10:15, 11:00) 12:20, 1:20, 2:00, 3:25, 4:25, 5:05, 6:30, 7:30, 8:05, 9:35, 10:35, 11:10, 12:10 Sun. (10:15, 11:00) 12:20, 1:20, 2:00, 3:25, 4:25, 5:05, 6:30, 7:30, 8:05, 9:35, 10:35, 11:00; **P.S. I Love You** (PG-13) Fri.-Sun. (10:50) 1:45, 4:40, 7:35, 10:30; **Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street** (R) Fri.-Sat. (10:35, 11:20) 1:25, 2:05, 4:20, 4:55, 7:10, 7:55, 10:00, 10:50, 12:25 Sun. (11:20) 1:25, 2:05, 4:20, 4:55, 7:10, 7:55, 10:00, 10:50; **The Perfect Holiday** (PG) Fri.-Sun. (10:45) 3:20,

7:50; **Walk Hard: The Dewey Cox Story** (R) Fri.-Sat. (10:20) 12:45, 2:30, 3:10, 4:45, 5:35, 7:20, 8:00, 9:50, 10:25, 12:15 Sun. (10:20) 12:45, 2:30, 3:10, 4:45, 5:35, 7:20, 8:00, 9:50, 10:25

STATE UNIVERSITY

Ken
4061 Adams Avenue (619-819-0236)
Starting Out in the Evening (PG-13)

UPTOWN

Hillcrest Cinemas
3965 Fifth Avenue (619-819-0236)
Juno (PG-13) Fri. 1:50, 2:30, 4:35, 5:15, 7:20, 8:00, 9:35, 10:15 Sat.-Sun. 11:05, 11:45, 1:50, 2:30, 4:35, 5:15, 7:20, 8:00, 9:35, 10:15; **No Country for Old Men** (R) Fri. 1:40, 4:25, 7:10, 9:55 Sat.-Sun. 10:55, 1:40, 4:25, 7:10, 9:55; **The Savages** (R) Fri. 2:00, 4:45, 7:30, 10:05 Sat.-Sun. 11:15, 2:00, 4:45, 7:30, 10:05; **Youth Without Youth** (R) Fri. 1:30, 4:15, 7:00, 9:45 Sat.-Sun. 10:45, 1:30, 4:15, 7:00, 9:45

Reuben H. Fleet Science Center
1875 El Prado, Balboa Park (619-238-1233)
Dinosaurs Alive! (NR) Fri.-Sat. 1:00, 4:00, 7:00 Sun. 1:00, 4:00; **The Living Sea** (Not Rated) Fri. 12:00, 3:00, 6:00 Sat.-Sun. 10:00, 12:00, 3:00, 6:00; **Sea Monsters: A Prehistoric Adventure** (No Rating) Fri. 2:00, 5:00, 8:00 Sat. 11:00, 2:00, 5:00, 8:00 Sun. 11:00, 2:00, 5:00

San Diego Natural History Museum
1788 El Prado, Balboa Park (619-232-3821)
Ocean Oasis (Not Rated) Fri. 10:10a.m. Sat.-Sun. 12:00, 4:00

EAST COUNTY

EL CAJON

Parkway Plaza 18
405 Parkway Plaza (619-401-3456)
Call theater for program information

LA MESA

Grossmont Center
Grossmont Center (619-465-7100)

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ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT. Cardiff. 8:30am-5pm Monday-Friday. \$10-\$11/hour plus benefits. Strong customer service skills and experience in fast-paced office environment required. Apply at www.sunsetparking.com.

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ADMINISTRATIVE/CLERICAL. Volt Services Group. Temporary, Temporary-to-Direct Hire, Direct Placement. Competitive wages, paid weekly. Paid holidays, vacation. Medical, dental, training, career management. www.jobs.volt.com. EOE. San Diego: 858-576-3140; e-mail: clairemont@volt.com. Carlsbad:

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EARLY DEADLINE by 6 pm MONDAY

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PHONE: 619 235 8200 WALK-IN: 1703 India Street (at Date) Little Italy

760-729-8916; email carlsbad@volt.com. El Cajon: 619-401-1524; email elcajon@volt.com. San Marcos: 760-471-0800; email sanmarcos@volt.com. Scripps Ranch: 858-578-0920; email scrippsrancho@volt.com.

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Diego. Eligibility is conditional. 858-244-1896 or e-mail resume: FJohnson@GMIweb.com.

AUDIENCE MANAGEMENT. Ushers, Crowd Managers, Ticket Takers. Part time, flexible schedule. Must be 18. Reimbursed for Guard Card training. Apply weekdays, 10am-3pm: Staff Pro, 2667 Camino Del Rio South, #306, San Diego 92108. E-mail: kstanley@staffpro.com. Call: 619-294-3990, x112. www.staffpro.com.

BARTENDERS NEEDED. Looking for part/full time bartenders. Several positions available. No experience required. With hourly wages and tips make up to \$300 per shift. Call 800-806-0082 x200. (AAN CAN)

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CAREGIVER, CNA, HHA live-ins and hourly. We need San Diego Countywide, immediate assignments. Full/part time. Call for interview. Avalon Home Care, Inc., 760-730-3955.

CAREGIVER. Provide assistance to adults with developmental disabilities. Apply: Home of Guiding Hands, 1825 Gillespie Way #200, El Cajon, CA, 92020, on-line: www.guidinghands.org, call: 619-938-3057.

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CAREGIVERS/COMPANIONS. Minimum 1 year experience non-medical home care for seniors. Valid California Driver's License. Serving Santee/La Mesa/Del Cerrito/San Carlos. Maureen, Visiting Angels, 619-749-7525.

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Careers in Probation

Correctional Deputy Probation Officer I

Minimum Qualifications

- 21 years old • Good physical condition • No illicit drug usage
- U.S. citizen or in process of becoming a citizen
- No felony convictions • High school diploma or GED

Salary:

\$35,069-\$44,741 annually

Safety Retirement-Sworn Officers 3% at age 50.

Bilingual men/women encouraged to apply.

Test date:

January 5, 2008 • 8 am

Montgomery Middle School

2470 Ulric Street • San Diego, CA 92111

Maximum 85 applicants. Applications available at the test site.

For additional information, contact the department's

Jobline: 858-514-8558

www.sdcounty.ca.gov/probation

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All positions are part-time nights and weekends.

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CAREGIVERS: LIVE-INS. 2, 3, 4 or 5 days/week, \$120/day including sleep and meal periods. Weekends and hourly: 4-hour, 8-hour and 12-hour shifts, AM/PM. Top pay, flexible shifts 24/7, 401(k), production bonus, rewards for good work. Requires valid driver's license, vehicle/insurance, registration, one year of paid elder caregiving experience, eligibility to work in the United States. \$50 Hiring Bonus after 90 days of employment. Comfort Keepers, 2006 Workplace Excellence Medallion Award SDSHRM, San Diego: 619-795-6036. San Marcos: 760-598-3400.

CAREGIVERS needed immediately. 1 year experience. All shifts available. Hourly and live in. Call Assertive Homecare Services, 3774 Grove Street, Suite L-1, Lemon Grove. 619-466-6890.

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CLASSROOM AIDES. Work with developmentally disabled children in non-public school. Experience preferred. Allied Gardens, Chula Vista, La Mesa. Monday-Friday, 7:30am-1pm. \$9.75/hour to start. EOE. www.vistahill.org. E-mail: steinjobs@vistahill.org. Fax resume: 619-281-0453. EOE. Apply weekdays, 9am-4pm: Stein Education Center, Attention: HR, 6145 Decena Drive, San Diego CA 92120.

CLOSERS WANTED, to generate leads for home improvement. No selling of prod-

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CNAs and HHAs, Caregivers/Homemakers, come join us help others in need while making extra money for the holidays. We offer weekly pay, flexible schedules, and training. Hourly and live-ins wanted. Apply: Right at Home. 858-451-7844; or e-mail resume: employment@rahencinitas.com.

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292-0230, e-mail help@gostaff.com, apply online www.gostaff.com.

CONSTRUCTION/REMODEL. Local home remodeling company is seeking experienced/skilled electricians, plumbers, drywallers and laborers. Interested applicants please fax resume to 619-946-4364 or call 619-271-5864.

CONSTRUCTION: Project Managers, Service Technicians, Installers. Seeking motivated, organized people experienced with design, blueprints, A/V systems installation. Benefits offered. Send resume: dplotkin@audioassociates.com; fax 619-461-9469. EOE.

CORPORATE FITNESS INSTRUCTOR. Oversee day-to-day operations of fitness facility. Includes managing schedule coverage, maintain safe/clean environment, provide quality customer service and effective programming for participants. B.S. degree in Kinesiology, Exercise Physiology, Sports Medicine or equivalent field. 2+ years fitness management experience preferred. CPR, First Aid Certified, other Accredited Certifications. Reply to scott@fitxandiego.com or fax resume: 858-715-8681.

CORRECTIONAL DEPUTY PROBATION Officer I. County of San Diego Probation Department now hiring. Test Date: January 5, 2008, 8am, Montgomery Middle School, 2470 Ulric Street, San Diego 92111. Must be 21 years, good physical condition, no illicit drug usage. U.S. citizen or becoming a citizen. Pass criminal/personal background investigation. No felony convictions. High school diploma/GED. \$35,068-\$44,740/year. www.sdcounty.ca.gov/probation. Jobline: 858-514-8558.

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pre Viva Road, San Diego, CA 92154 (near Otay Mesa border).

DEPUTY PROBATION OFFICER. County of San Diego Probation Department is now hiring. Test Dates: January 26, 2008 or February 23, 2008. Qualified applicants will be notified by mail of the time and location of the test. Applications must be submitted no later than 15 days prior to exam date. Qualifications: Bachelor's degree with experience. Must be 21 years, good physical condition, no illicit drug usage. U.S. citizen or in process of becoming a citizen. Pass criminal/personal background investigation. No felony convictions. \$50,752-\$61,672/year. Safety Retirement-Sworn Officers 3% at age 50. Bilingual men/women encouraged to apply. Applications can be accessed online from the Job/Current Recruitment section of the County website at: http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov. Jobline: 858-514-8558.

DEPUTY SHERIFF and Deputy Sheriff Detentions/Courts. San Diego County Sheriff's Department. Hiring for two types of positions; take one exam, apply for either or both! Exam dates: Saturday, December 22, 2007, 7:30am arrival or Thursday, December 27, 2007, 12:30pm arrival, Sheriff's Administrative Center, 9621 Ridgehaven Court, San Diego CA 92123. Registration by e-mail or phone is required for the Ridgehaven test ONLY at: recruit@sdsheriff.org. Detention/Courts: \$39,796-\$61,608 annual salary, plus benefits. 18-year-olds eligible to apply! Deputy Sheriff: \$49,704-\$71,099 current annual salary, plus benefits. U.S. citizen or applied for citizenship; 20-1/2 years old. High school graduate or G.E.D. required. Bring valid photo ID. Valid California Driver's License prior to appointment. Effective oral and written communication in English. EOE. Additional test dates: www.joinSDSHERIFF.net. 858-974-2000.

DIETARY AIDE/HOUSEKEEPING. Full time with benefits. Bilingual a plus, must speak some English. 7760 Parkway Drive, La Mesa. Call 619-469-0124 x21.

DISPATCHER. Experience preferred. Part time, 25-35 hours/week. Nights and weekends. Benefits. Old Town area. Apply in person: 3140 Moore Street, San Diego 92110. 619-778-3807. Email chrisortiz2@cox.net.

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- U.S. citizen or in process of becoming a citizen
- No felony convictions • Bachelor's degree with experience

Salary: \$50,752-\$61,672 annually
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Bilingual men/women encouraged to apply.

Test dates: January 26, 2008, or February 23, 2008

Qualified applicants will be notified by mail of the date, time and location of the test.
All applications must be submitted no later than 15 days prior to the exam date. Applications received after the 15th day will be scheduled for the following exam. Applications can be accessed on-line from the Job/Current Recruitments section of the County website at:

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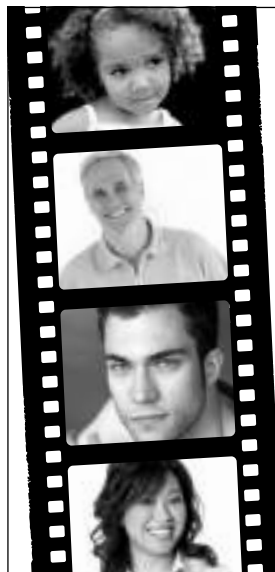
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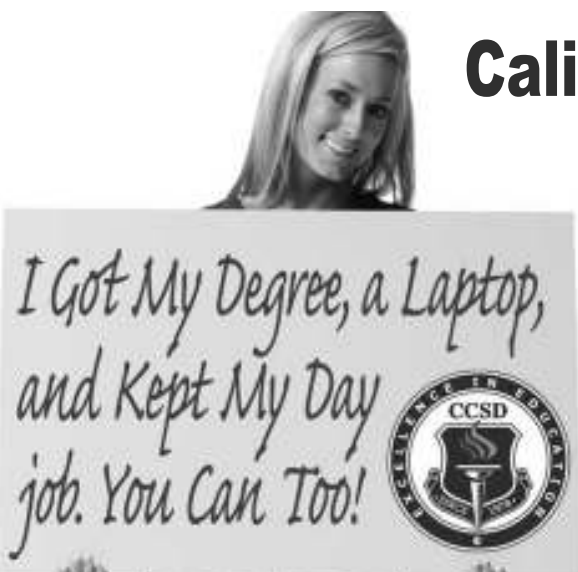
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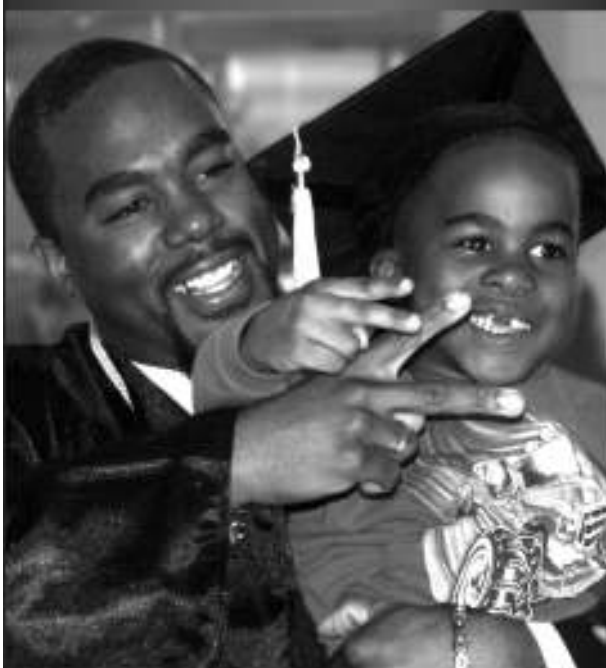
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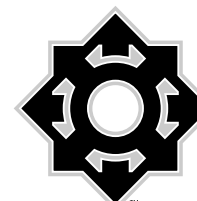
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Jonathan Rogers
Project Manager
Carlsbad

I was in a car that drove off a cliff. We didn't get injured that bad. We hit some black ice and fell 15 feet. The engine on the VW was pushed in a bit. As a kid, we had this toy our parents bought us where you sit and it spins you around. I have four brothers, and we tried to knock each other off it. One knocked out his teeth. I got my neck caught in a tetherball rope. But my worst was in Temecula, riding a mechanical bull at a bar. I got a groin pull and later tried to ride it again. I couldn't walk for two days.



Sarah Rogers
Director of Publicity
Carlsbad

My worst injury skiing happened when I was ten. I grew up in Colorado, so I skied from an early age. I sprained my knee really bad. Oh, there was a time in the summer. We drank four pitchers of beer between three people. I was drunk and bragging about how I never fall or get hurt. I then stepped on the curb and fell into the intersection. I sprained my ankle. And a week later, I sprained my other one. I think I was jinxed that summer from saying I never get injured.



Petra Gaare
Barista
Encinitas

When I was born, the umbilical cord was wrapped around my neck. Oh, there was a time I was running through the parking lot and hit by a car. I bounced off it. The worst was when my dad was playing softball in Oceanside. I was four and running up and down the bleachers. I was told not to but kept doing it. I fell through and hit my head on the concrete. It split my head open and gave me an inch-and-a-half scar.



Caryl Cranney
Clerk
San Marcos

I broke my wrist once. I would have to say breaking a bone is my worst injury. Me and an old girlfriend were wrestling on the couch. She pulled me off, and I could tell it broke by the way I landed on the ground. I saw that my wrist bent the other direction. I could just tell by looking at it that it was broken because it was bent sort of in a loop. Just looking at it was gross.



Kris Kringle
Gift giver
North Pole

I've had a few over the years. Once I tried to avoid an airplane that was flying too low, and I hit my elbow against the side of the sleigh. In my first year of this, I wasn't careful about chimneys that still had fires going. But the worst injury was a roof in Jersey that had some melted snow I didn't see. I slid right off the side and broke my leg in two places. It didn't keep me from doing my job that night, though.



Morgan Grant
Party Planner
Hillcrest

It was surfing six months ago. I got so many bruises and cuts and scrapes to prove it. I'll no longer have my career as a leg model, that's for sure. I just recently learned how to surf. And I didn't know how much damage it would be on my body. Especially those fins. They can really cut up and bruise your legs. I used to have really nice legs, too.

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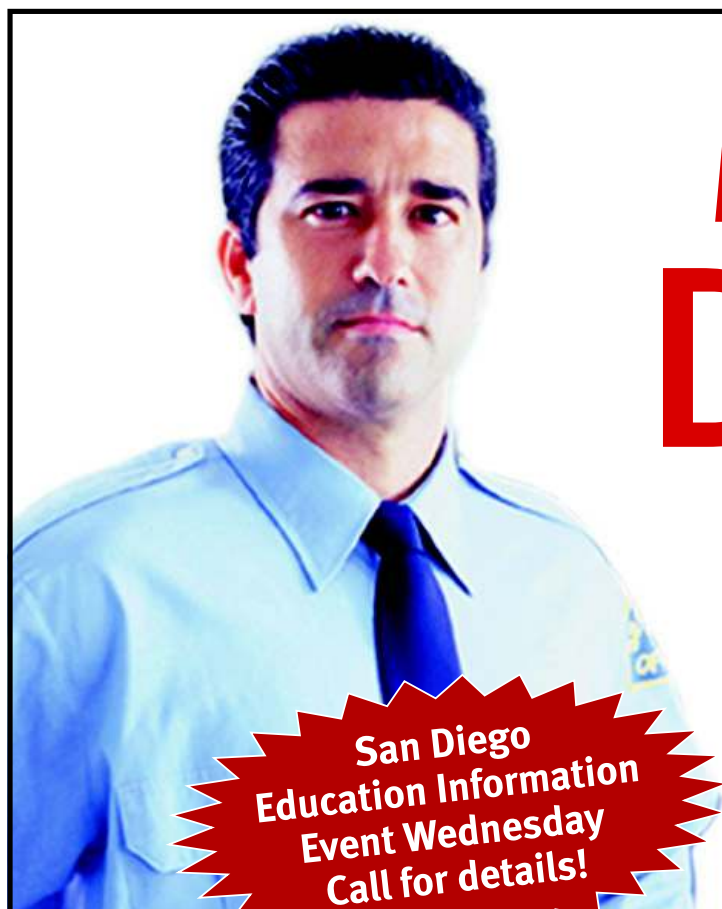
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THE READER PUZZLE

Across

- ____Kosh B'Gosh
- Zenith rival
- Org. that puts its seal on Listerine
- Not squaresville
- Places where people can get loaded on trains
- "I can't stay — see ya!"
- Opportunist
- Blissful places
- Samoa's capital
- Basketball tactic
- Lock of hair
- Well-put
- Part of NCAA: Abbr.
- To the ____ degree
- Cease
- Ballerinas dance on them
- It may be fit for a king
- Manson of rock
- Desktop item, maybe
- Old protest grp.
- New Deal org.
- By
- Lake ____, separating Switzerland and France
- Make reservations, say
- Track shape
- Peter of "Everybody Loves Raymond"
- 15-, 17-, 21-, 36-, 50- and 65-Across are all actual names of companies that distribute these
- Refueling opportunity
- Is short with
- Distances for QBs
- ____ Alamos, NM
- Stubborn sort
- Shed tears

Down

- It may be direct or indirect: Abbr.
- ____ Paolo, Brazil
- Abbr. for Prince Charles
- Boyz II Men's genre
- Jon of "Two and a Half Men"
- Together
- IRS employee
- Outburst from Homer
- Took sides?
- Occur
- Self-centered sort
- Soap ingredient
- Online tech news source
- Romanov title
- Govt. code crackers
- Help page feature
- Storekeeper on "The Simpsons"
- Blend
- "Misery" actress Bates

- Huxtable boy on "The Cosby Show"
- Conflicted
- Novelist Clancy
- Diamond protector
- Connected to the hipbone
- Jim Bakker's ministry, briefly
- "MadTV" rival, for short
- [Bor-r-ring!]
- It may hang around the house
- Soccer Hall-of-Famer Hamm
- Hipster's home
- Unthorough
- Lacking, with "of"
- Hurts a lot
- Mtn. stats
- \$100 : Ben :: \$5 : ____
- "____ luck!"
- French city on the Rhone
- TV series about spy Sydney Bristow
- Pitch in
- Natl. League city
- "You stink!"
- Vinyl collection
- PC key
- Toni Morrison's "____ Baby"
- Hovel

RULES OF THE GAME

- The prize for solving the *Reader* Puzzle will be a *Reader* T-shirt.
- All entries in the *Reader* Puzzle contest must be received by the *Reader* by 9:00 a.m., Tuesday, five days following the issue date (Fax to 619-231-0489 or U.S. Mail to *Reader* Puzzle, P.O. Box 85803, San Diego, CA 92186-5803).
- All entries must be accompanied by your name and address.
- Employees of the *Reader* and their immediate families are not eligible.
- In the event of disputes or ties, decisions of the judges will be final and arbitrary. We've only got five prizes each week to give away, so if there are more than five winners, we'll have a lottery.
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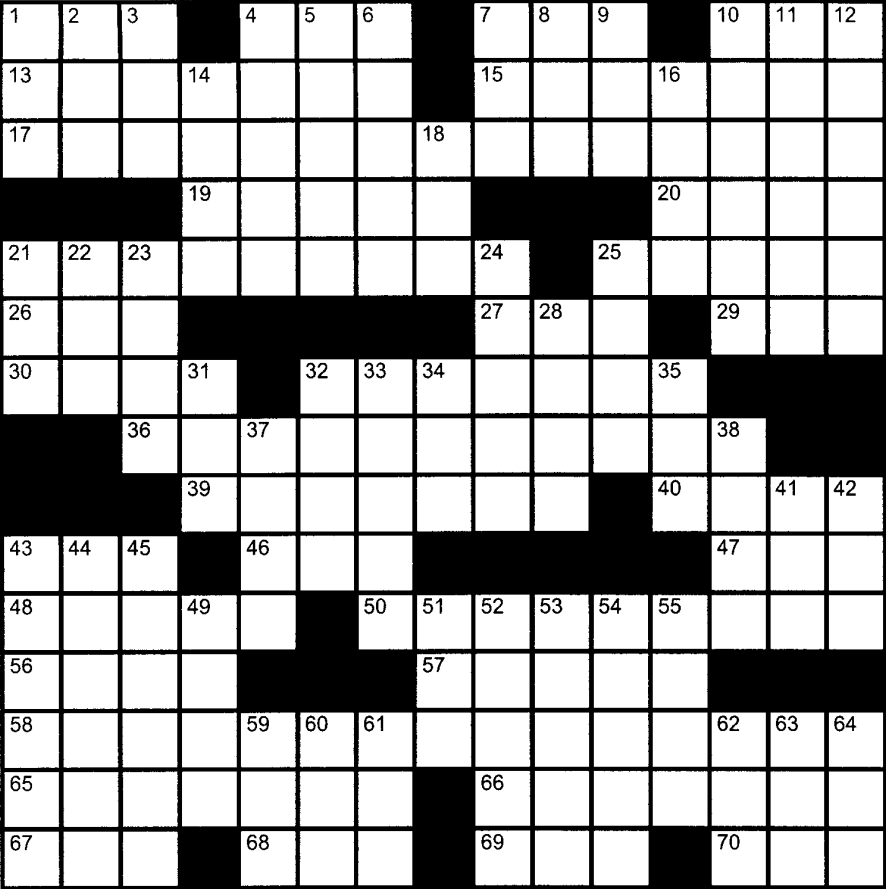
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by David Levinson Wilk

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Solution to and winners of the *Reader* Puzzle for 12/13/07.

There were 52 entrants. The winners are:

- Andrew Hobbs, *San Diego*
- Brian Schnabel, *San Diego*
- Jim Koziol, *San Diego*
- Gregory Woken, *La Jolla*
- Dennis Beabout, *Temecula*

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Q: Barn again agriculture?

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Last week's place: (clue: Last of our local mountain breed?) **Bob the dinosaur of Alpine munches alone in the creek bed of Alpine Mobile Home Estates, 2400 Alpine Boulevard, Alpine. Bob is the last of a bunch of dinosaurs roaming "Dinosaur Land," a 1962 amusement-park dream of water rides, a volcano-shaped roller-coaster, and restaurants. The project went bankrupt after two years. (Last week's winners: Jerome Lipetzky, Ernie Hughes, Megan McClurg, Jamie Edwards, Tim Truesdale)**

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SurfDIEGO

Name: Pete Lewis
Surfing: Windansea
Home: Pacific Beach

At 10:20 a.m., the high tide began backing off at Windansea. *Surfline.com* reported the water temperature at 54 degrees and warned of poor water quality. Waves were not reaching ankle level. It was cold and windy, but seven surfers bobbed on their boards and waited for that rare good wave. As the tide rolled further out, the waves picked up and started pitching perfect tubes. The surfers were rewarded for their patience.

"Yesterday it was so bad," said Pete Lewis. "It was so choppy, I don't think anyone expected it to be any good today. I guess everyone thought it would be just as bad as yesterday, so hardly anybody came out. Only these guys who came down to actually *look* at the water get to ride these fun waves."

Pete rides a longboard and says he feels more at home at La Jolla Shores, but he surfs



everywhere in San Diego. He's been up and down the coast from Central California to Southern Baja, and he's taken a surf vacation in Hawaii.

On this day, he was glad the conditions cleaned

up so he could ride with his nephew for a couple hours. "My nephew's a senior in high school. He's from Salt Lake City, and he's out here looking at colleges." When asked about his favorite times during his 40

years of surfing, Pete says, "I'm waiting for the other shoe to drop. It can't get any better than right now."

See the video
Go to SanDiegoReader.com
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Say What?



Selin Bahar | Age: 28 | Occupation: Hospitality Specialist | Lives: Banker's Hill

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you see a hottie in a little outfit with flip-flops, it reminds me why I live [here].

See the video

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MODELS. Amateur models needed for photo, video, web work. Ages 18-60. All types. No experience necessary. Cash paid. Professional setting. Call Jenn, 619-379-4964.

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MOVIE EXTRAS, ACTORS, models! Make \$100-\$300/day. No experience required. Meet celebrities. Full time, part time. All

looks needed! Call now. 1-800-566-6103 x528. (AAN CAN)

SAN DIEGO SINGS! Idol-Style singing competition for San Diego's youth, January 15 at the Lyceum Theater. Auditions 12/22, 12/23, 12/29. Win cash and prizes up to \$1000! www.sandiegosings.webs.com. For info 619-944-7574.

TAP DANCERS, 50+, wanted. Performance troupe forming. Enthusiasm and gusto far more important than experience or talent. 619-697-1810.

TEACHERS FOR CHILDREN: Gymnastics, Cheerleading, Hip-hop, Theater, Ballet/ Tap, Flag Football, Basketball for ages 2-12, beginning levels. Experience required. Mobile gym program. Part time. North County. \$15-\$35/class. 760-917-4800.

VOICEOVER WORKSHOP. Break into voiceover! Taught by voice actor/author James Alburger. Learn interpretation, character voices, microphone technique, more for radio/TV. www.voiceacting.com; 858-484-0220.

COUNSELING & SUPPORT GROUPS

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ANXIOUS? DEPRESSED? Relationship issues? Parenting/family issues? Insurance and sliding scale accepted. Individuals, couples, children, adolescents/families. Private Mission Valley location. Phaedra Scortis, MA, MFT, MFC-43174. 619-972-0209.

ARE YOU MAD? Learn how to manage your anger constructively. Gain power, control, reduce conflict and improve your relationships. Classes begin soon. Mission Valley. Jay Schneider, LCSW. Lic-9573. www.manageangerdaily.com. 858-538-5587.

CLINICAL HYPNOTHERAPY. "What the mind can conceive, the body can achieve." All issues addressed. Free consultation. Patricia R. Parlin, Ed.D. CHT403-250. Call 619-442-3661 or 619-504-1935.

FEELING STUCK? STRESSED? Experiencing crisis? Relationship issues? Career problems? Family conflicts? Grief? Past trauma? Take back your power. Free consultation: 619-723-9244. Trish Deignan, LCSW21861.

GAY/BISEXUAL MEN. Supportive individual therapy. Depression, anxiety, confusion, addictions, spiritual/religious issues. Married, closeted welcome. Discretion, confidentiality assured. Mel Karmen, PhD, MFC-12709. 619-296-9442.

HEALTHY ADULTS: Inner Child healing and recovery work. Establish healthy boundaries. Heal wounds of dysfunctional family. Thought Field Therapy eliminates phobias and traumas. Counseling for individuals, couples' enrichment and

family bonding. Sharon Goodlove, TFT Diagnostician; Glenn Goodlove, LCSW-1450. Goodlove Counseling Center, 858-569-8975. www.goodlove-online.com.

IN-HOME THERAPY for couples and families. Convenient, confidential, affordable. Evening and weekend appointments available. Inner Peace Counseling Services, Edward Thompson, MFT#41044. Call 858-232-4669.

MILITARY. PTSD? Battle Fatigue Syndrome? Night Terrors? Memory Loss? Difficulty Sleeping? Troubled Relationships? Former military therapist licensed trauma specialist providing free group treatment. License #MFT37234. 858-342-0181.

NOTICES

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AL-ANON, Grupo paz mental. Sufre por el alcoholismo en su familia? Juntas sesionan Martes, 5:30pm-7pm, y Sabados, 1-2:30pm, 3450 Bonita Road #207, Bonita, CA 91902.

ALANON-GRUPO REENCUENTRO. Hay problemas de alcoholismo en su familia? Sesiones Lunes y Jueves de 5:00-6:30pm, 3450 Bonita Road #207, Bonita, 91902. 619-470-6955.

ALCOHOLICOS ANONIMOS. Tiene problemas con la bebida? Llamenos 24 horas. Oficina Central Hispana, 3628 University Avenue, San Diego, 92105. 619-280-7224.

ALCOHOLICOS ANONIMOS. Problemas con el alcohol? Nosotros le ayudamos a vivir mejor. Sesiones Lunes-Viernes, 7am y 8pm. Sabados, 8am y 7pm. Domingo 8am y 5pm. Grupo Bonita Hispano, 3450 Bonita Road, #207. 619-280-7224.

BALLROOM/LATIN DANCE parties every Friday. Pre-party class, 7:15pm. Party, 8pm. \$12/person. Free refreshments. Salsa, Swing, Cha Cha. Singles/couples. Rancho Bernardo. 858-451-3775.

BE A MILLIONAIRE FROM HOME! Sell Mangosteen; make lots of money! Very high antioxidant value. Significant anti-inflammatory properties. Tons of health benefits! www.diane.discovermangosteen.com. Diane, 877-674-4280.

CAN PRAYER THERAPY HEAL? Find solutions to problems. Achieve inner peace and balance, eliminate chronic disease pain, lose crippling fear. 858-652-0728.

CANNABIS PATIENT(S) ACT. (Association Cannabis Therapeutics.) Nonprofit. Seeks caregiver/patients with questions about co-operatives, clones, medicine, growing guidelines. Proposition 215 local guidelines. Meth kills. 619-528-0907.

CODEPENDENT? Suffering from codependency? Codependents anonymous 12-step recovery program. The only requirement for membership is a desire for healthy and loving relationships. 619-222-1244 or www.sdcoda.org.

DACHSHUNDS-TIME FOR walkin' in a Wiener-Wonderland! Sunday, 12/23/07, 1pm-3pm. Meet by the large fountain in Balboa Park dressed in holiday attire. Everyone welcome! www.sddc.us.

DARK EYE CIRCLES? Teamine eye complex: new technology for reducing dark circles, puffiness, wrinkles. Powerful antioxidants= maximum anti-aging benefits. 100% guaranteed. Call your Doctor today!

DIVORCING/SEPARATING? Get guidance/support during your emotional adjustment. Group meets Friday, 6:30-8pm, in Allied Gardens off Waring Road. Divorce Anonymous, 619-442-1550.

DO YOU HAVE RELATIONSHIP Setbacks, anxiety, or pain tormenting you? Call and discover the freedom, wellness, and abundant health in your life. 858-272-3246.

EVENING AGLOW. Thursday, January 3, San Diego First Assembly Fellowship Center, 8404 Phyllis Place, San Diego 92123. Speaker: Linda Breitman. Further information, 619-226-2342.

FREE DBT SKILLS and mindfulness training. Research study at Alliant International University. Out-of-control emotions? Self-harm? Must be 18 and have history. Compensation: \$20. Information, 617-501-7672.

FREE EMPLOYMENT/TRAINING services for individuals with disabilities, ages 18-21 on probation or parole. Able-Disabled Ad-

vocacy, 2850 6th Avenue #311, San Diego 92103. 619-231-5990 x305.

GAIN SKILLS TO SUCCEED. Are you 16 to 21, low income, need high school diploma or GED and work experience? Turning the Hearts Center, 619-691-9643.

HERPES/HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS. (HSV/HPV) Support group. Accurate medical information and support. Recorded message. 619-491-1194. www.SanDiegoCityHELP.org.

MOVIE BUFFS Interested in watching movies, then discussing it afterwards (like book clubs)? Ages 25 to mature welcome. Please call 619-850-6075 or 858-272-8727.

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE Anonymous 12-step meeting for people with OCD. Mondays, 6-7pm, Department of Health Services Complex, 3851 Rosecrans Street, Mission Room.

OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS. Meetings daily. www.oasandiego.org or 619-521-2538.

PRAYER HEALS. Discover freedom and wellness. Find out how prayer works for you to eliminate chronic disease, pain, fear, depression. 858-652-0728.

PRIVATE COUNSELING. Your journey can be clearer, more peaceful; relationship issues, body image, self-esteem, anger. I can help. Work toward acceptance of yourself. Fee. 619-838-6817.

RESEARCH STUDY. Women living with smoker needed for 9-day research study. Leave message, 619-594-8827 or email TRDRPPDAStudy@projects.sdsu.edu, for more information.

SEX and/or relationship problems? Out of control? You are not alone. Call Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, a 12-step fellowship. PO Box 3791, San Diego 92163 or 619-685-7211 or www.slaa-san-diego.org.

SUPPORT GROUPS. Six groups monthly, SOSL (Survivors of Suicide Loss). Call 619-482-0297 or email soslsd@yahoo.com.

TEMPLE OF BHAKTI YOGA. Sunday, 10:30-11:30am; Tuesday, 6:30-7:30pm. For information please call 760-787-0700.

THE GLENNER ALZHEIMER'S Family Centers offers training for family caregivers and healthcare professionals a free 6-hour ongoing Ceu Dementia Course. RSVP at 800-736-6674.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED. Have you had odd experiences? Are your beliefs different than others? Ages 18-35 participate in research study examining stress. Contact mjuan@alliant.edu.

VOLUNTEERS. Serve as docents at The Agua Hedionda Lagoon Foundation. Help in beautiful native garden. Assist at special events/school field trips. Free training, flexible schedules. 760-804-1969.

WRITERS WANTED. The Academy for Alternative Journalism, established by papers like this one to promote diversity in the alternative press, seeks talented journalists and students (college seniors and up) for a paid summer writing program at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism. The 8-week program (June 22-August 17, 2008) aims to recruit talented candidates from diverse backgrounds and train them in all-weekly style feature writing. Ten participants will be chosen and paid \$3000 plus housing and travel allowances. For information and an application visit http://aaj.aan.org. You may also e-mail us at altacademy@northwestern.edu. Applications must be postmarked by February 8, 2008. Northwestern University is an equal opportunity educator and employer. (AAN CAN)

TRAVEL & GETAWAYS

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LAKE TAHOE, Ski at Heavenly from December 28 through January 4, luxury condo with jacuzzi, sauna, indoor pool. Walk to ski lift. 1 bedroom, \$1000/week. Studio \$800/week. 2 bedroom \$1700/week, 858-450-1095, jkantor2@san.rr.com

PACIFIC/MISSION BEACH. Furnished vacation rentals. Luxury waterfront homes/condos. Studios to 5 bedrooms. Completely equipped for immediate use. Agent, 866-912-2409. www.sdvcr.com.

TAHOE TIMESHARE. 4 bedroom, 2 bath condo at Heavenly Valley, Nevada. Remodeled, new carpet, furniture, kitchen, bathrooms. Sleeps 10+. \$20,000. 2 adjoining shares available. 707-326-1092.

PERSONALS

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FRIES, HAMBURGERS and lemonade. Good food but what is that irritating noise I'm hearing behind us? Oh, I knew somebody was ordering the bacon cheeseburger value meal.

PLNU GIRLS. When I come home can I take you camping? Knowing me awhile. A little older than you. Scottish, good intent.

THANK YOU Holy Spirit for prayers answered. SP.

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AMP. Crate acoustic, 125 amp, like new. 2-8" speakers, reverb/chorus, mic input, 2 instrument inputs, graphic E.Q. New \$700. Sacrifice \$300, 760-721-7481.

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BAND INSTRUMENTS: LA JOLLA MUSIC has your upgrades: clarinets, flutes, soprano sax, Xeno trombone and trumpet. 7442 Girard Ave, La Jolla, California, 92037. 858-459-3375.

BASS. Fender American Precision Bass. \$1250. Black with beautiful sound. Di-Marzio DP149 ultra jazz bass pickups. Black and white pickguard. Gold hardware and Schaller tuners, round wound strings. I've really enjoyed playing it for the time I needed it. 760-331-3304, jonhagen00@yahoo.com.

DJ EQUIPMENT. Professional, all top of the line. Numark turntables, 4 CD players, Carvin motherboard, Tascam 8-channel CD player controls, \$2200/best. Chris; Ron, 619-993-9620; 619-972-9620.

DRUM SET. 6-piece Yamaha Stage Custom Advantage, excellent condition, \$925/best. Cash only. Scott in Poway, 858-513-0961.

EFFECTS PEDALS-100s of different kinds in stock! Fulltone, Menatone, T-Rex, Maxon, Visual Sound, Barber, Xotic, Duxham. Choose from many brands. www.SuperSoundMusic.com or call 760-739-9099.

EXTENDED HOURS: Guitar Trader of San Diego has extended its hours for the holidays to add to your shopping convenience. Starting Thursday, December 13, through Sunday, December 23. Open Christmas Eve till 5pm. Extended hours are: 10am-9pm Monday-Friday, 10am-7pm Saturday, and 12 noon-6pm Sunday. Guitar Trader of San Diego, 7120 Clairemont Mesa Boulevard, San Diego, CA 92111. Toll-free: 877-687-4276. www.MusicPower.com.

GIBSON GUITAR SOURCE. Into the year deals! Over 300 Gibson guitars in stock. We guarantee the best prices on all Gibsons and Marshall amps. Centre City Music, 1033 Sixth Avenue. Call 619-338-9033. www.ccitymusic.com.

GUITAR HOLIDAY PACKAGES. Classical guitar package \$139, acoustic guitar package \$149, electric guitar package \$199. Visit MozeGuitars.com or call 619-698-1185.

GUITAR. Eastman jazz, thinline archtop, like new. Crate amp, \$107.70. GX20M Alexis Quadraverb, multi-effects processor, digital music corp. ground control, SKB effects rack, KMC 19-4U. 858-270-7918.

GUITAR, vintage 1974-1975 Gibson SG Special, small pickguard, mini humbuckers, walnut color, still some life left in frets, Gibson rectangular hard case, \$1300/best. Rick, 760-216-0854.

GUITARS AND AMPS. Epiphone LP 56 Gold Top reissue \$399, Epiphone LP Standard \$450, Yamaha Bass BB404 \$399, Line 6 Flextone III with FBV Short-board \$599, Fender Cyber Twin \$599, Larrivee LV-03 \$999, Kamaka Ukulele Koa baritone \$699, Kamaka Concert Koa \$699, Gibson LP Studio \$799. At MozeGuitars.com, 619-698-1185.

GUITARS: LA JOLLA MUSIC has a wide selection of Taylor Guitars and Classical guitars made in Spain. 7442 Girard Avenue, La Jolla, California, 92037. 858-459-3375.

HOLIDAY SPECIALS! Fender package deal on sale, \$199 (regularly \$299). Fender G-DEC Junior Amp, \$179 (list \$249). Marshall MG250DFX stereo 2x12, \$429 (list \$749). USA 70s Strat in natural—only 100 model \$1499 (list \$2142). Guitar Trader of San Diego, 7120 Clairemont Mesa Boulevard, San Diego, CA 92111. Toll-free: 877-687-4276. www.MusicPower.com.

KEYBOARD, Roland RD1000 88-key piano/MIDI controller, onboard programmable, \$900/best. General Music S3 synth, 16-track sequencer, mixer, fully editable, effects processor, floppy disc, \$500/best. 760-839-5350.

LEXICON LXP-15 multi-effects processor, \$225. Samson PL1602 rackmount stereo mixer, \$150. Concertina, \$75. 619-397-3463.

PIANOS WANTED! All pianos! Cash paid. Also, quality furniture and antiques. 1 piece or houseful. Bonded. Licensed. Since 1965. Same day pickup. 1-800-840-4447. www.southcoastauction.net.

RECORDER, Tascam DA38, original owner, in clean, smokeless, small studio, low hours, 2 D cables, extra tapes, all receipts, boxes and manuals, \$250 firm. 858-566-9606.

ROADCASES. San Diego's oldest road-case company. Pleasing musicians for 20 years. Bring us your best deal; we will beat all. Call Left Coast, 858-278-7888.

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BAND WANTED. New live music venue, Backstage, is bringing the best that San Diego has to offer in live entertainment to the historic Gaslamp district. Bands can send their promo packages (CD and Pix) to 770 Fifth Avenue, San Diego, Ca 92101

or email a link to your site to backstage@thebitterend.com, attention Donovan.

BASS/BARITONE. The La Jolla Renaissance Singers seek 2 experienced basses starting January 2008. Strong musicianship required. Rehearsals Wednesday, 7:45-9:45pm. Contact Bill, wpropp@ucsd.edu or 858-459-2019.

COUNTRY MUSIC/BLUEGRASS jam. Guitar, mandolin, fiddle, banjo players interested in getting together to play country music and bluegrass. Call Bob, 858-753-1775.

DEATH METAL DRUMMER available. Check out Scott Ellis on youtube.com or sickdrummer.com. I have rehearsal space. Seeking cool, professional people. www.myspace.com/warface or www.myspace.com/deathevokation.

DRUMMER sought by indie/electro band Starcrossed. Play along with drum machine. Be experienced, professional, own equipment, transportation, practice twice week. www.myspace.com/starcrossedrock or 858-220-2243.

DRUMMER WANTED. Irie Dingo, rock/funk/reggae band. Must have professional gear, team attitude, day job, experience. Some originals/covers. Rehearse twice/month. info@iriedingo.com; www.iriedingo.com.

DRUMMER WANTED strictly for joy, social jams, occasional recording. Keep the day job. Rock, pop, blues, reggae, punk. Bring your originals. blspitz@san.rr.com.

FEMALE SINGERS WANTED. Attractive, sexy Miss Universe type, NFL cheerleader type wanted for a showcase band. For more information and to audition, call 858-672-7700.

FUSION BANDS and progressive rock bands wanted for shows in the greater San Diego area. Contact Michael at mcquillenm@cox.net or 619-818-3601.

PRODUCER seeks female talented composers, performers, singers, original material and incredible uniqueness. Need string, brass players. Pro-tools? Call 619-528-0907; www.myspace.com/sherilopez; www.myspace.com/mindcontrolsalsa; www.myspace.com/concretesummersday; www.myspace.com/swollenmonkeys.

SONGWRITER, GUITARIST, singer, keyboardist wanted by other unique musicians, bass drums. Let's start something new, shall we? 30s or under. Call Roman, 619-920-2626.

SYNTH/KEYBOARD player wanted. Creative keyboardist. Mainly synth and special effects. Funk sounds from the 1970s. Responsible and mature individual. 619-253-0900.

MUSIC SERVICES

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ATTENTION ARTISTS, singers and songwriters. Artist development, producing, songwriting and arranging for your CD or demo. Call Ravenflight Music at 619-258-0911.

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MIRA MESA. Furnished private bedroom, shared bath (with 1 girl). Female only. Quiet, secluded Casablanca gated community. Water, trash, electricity, laundry, kitchen included. \$550. 858-722-3365.

MIRA MESA. \$600. Single room, residential neighborhood. Large house. All utilities: gas, electric, water cable TV included. Washer/dryer. No pets or smoking. 858-699-7870; 619-235-2415, x10749.

MIRA MESA. \$800. Master bedroom with bath, large house. Nice neighborhood. All utilities, gas, electric, water, cable TV included. Washer/dryer. No pets/smoking. 858-699-7870; 619-235-2415, x19471.

MIRA MESA. 2 regular rooms, \$500/each. Large room, \$600. \$200 deposit. Utilities included. Share bathroom. Washer/dryer. No pets/drugs. Rose, 858-610-5276; Nyaih, 619-674-4524.

MISSION VALLEY/SERRA MESA. 3 bedroom, 2 bath house. 2 rooms available, \$475, \$525, share bath. No pets. 2 living rooms, garage, fireplace. Available now. 858-277-4555.

NORTH PARK. \$550. Room with walk-in closet, 2 bedroom, 2 bath apartment. Laundry onsite. Centrally located. 1/2 utilities. WiFi. No pets. \$450 deposit. 619-741-3939.

OCEAN BEACH/POINT LOMA. Share beautiful, large house, nice neighborhood. Panoramic views. Laundry, cable, Internet. Walk to beach. \$675 includes utilities. No pets/smoking. 619-955-8805.

OCEAN BEACH. Share 3 bedroom 2 bath, on Sunset Cliffs with Ocean views. 2 huge decks, backyard with firepit, \$750-month plus utilities. 619-665-9371, 510-812-3602.

OCEAN BEACH. Outstanding location. Completely furnished bedroom, bath. Near beach, stores, freeway. Has view. \$800 plus deposit, includes utilities. 1/1/08. No pets, drugs, smoking. 619-929-4450.

OCEANSIDE. \$600. Share my home, 1 bedroom with own bath, washer/dryer. Community pool. Very nice area. No drugs/smoking/alcohol/pets. Female only, 760-745-4124.

PACIFIC BEACH. Male to share beautiful 3 bedroom, 2.5 bath condo. \$800 plus utilities. Own room, share bath. Lots of storage. Off-street parking. Kim, 858-231-4997.

PACIFIC BEACH. \$771. Female only. Large master bedroom, private bathroom dual sinks, modern townhome. Balconies, sunset view, washer/dryer inside, fireplace. \$340 deposit. No lease. Ryan, 619-518-4249.

POINT LOMA/OCEAN BEACH. \$600 furnished room in newer home. 4 blocks to

ocean. Parking. Laundry. Microwave, refrigerator. Quiet environment. No drugs/nonsmoking. Moderate alcohol use. Female only. 619-226-4010.

POINT LOMA. La Playa. \$650, deposit \$250. Panoramic view of San Diego Bay. Quiet area. Deck, washer/dryer. Block to Kellogg Beach. Male nonsmoker. 619-838-8505.

RANCHO BERNARDO. \$799 includes maid and utilities. 2 bedroom, furnished house. Panoramic views. Private bath. Internet. No pets, smoking, drugs. Near community pool, gym. 619-890-0818.

SAN MARCOS. \$575. Share large luxurious sunny home. DishNetwork/utilities included. CSUSM/Palomar. Fireplace. Jacuzzi. No smoking/pets. Photos online, 858-361-5500.

SANTEE. \$650/month. Roommate needed to share lovely Santee condo. Large master bedroom suite with private bath and private door onto patio overlooking mountain views. Use of kitchen. Great location and close to freeways. Includes all utilities. No pets. 619-449-6285.

SCRIPPS RANCH. Share 2 bedroom townhouse. Quiet complex near I-15. Own bedroom/bath. Full access to kitchen and washer/dryer. \$700 plus 1/2 utilities. 858-228-6455.

SCRIPPS RANCH. Share 3 bedroom, 2.5 bath, 2 story home. 2 rooms available, \$500; \$525/month, share utilities. Parking, storage. Female nonsmoker preferred. No pets. 858-549-9822.

SERRA MESA. No stairs. Master bedroom, private bath, \$750. Bedroom, shared bath, \$550. Split utilities. Washer/dryer. No smoking/drugs. Deposit \$350. North Qualcomm. 858-496-9211.

TALMADGE. Share clean 2 bedroom condo. Own bathroom, garage parking, walk-in closet. \$600 plus 1/2 utilities and cable, \$300 deposit. Pets OK. No drugs. 619-920-0603.

TIERRASANTA. \$445. Male preferred. Great location. Near all freeways, shops, and bus stops. Nonsmoker/no drugs. Quiet home. Kitchen privileges, Dish Network. Available now. 858-565-7664.

UNIVERSITY CITY/UTC. 1 furnished, 1 unfurnished room, bathroom, \$700/month/each, \$600/deposit. Near UCSD. Laundry, parking, close to bus,

shopping. Available 1/01/08, 619-954-4190.

UNIVERSITY CITY. Large bedroom. Washer/dryer. Share bathroom. Near 52 and I-5, 2-1/2 miles from UCSD. Good parking. Male preferred. \$545. 858-635-5503; 858-455-9829.

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS. Room, \$550 plus half utilities. \$250 deposit. 2 bedroom, 1 bath apartment. Female preferred. Cable. Laundry. No smoking/drugs/pets. Available 1/1/08. 619-640-2885.

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS. Room in 2 bedroom, 1 bath apartment. Male only. \$650/month, 1/2 utilities (cable, SDG&E, DSL), \$150 deposit. Month to month. No pets. 619-218-6613.

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS. Room, \$550 plus half utilities. \$250 deposit. 2 bedroom, 1 bath apartment. Female preferred. Cable. Laundry. No smoking/drugs/pets. Available 1/1/08. 619-640-2885.

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PLACE PRINTED ADS in the Reader by calling 619-235-8200.

POST FREE ONLINE ADS with photos at SDReader.com. See thousands of classified ads not printed here!

GARAGE FOR RENT. Chula Vista. Single garage for dry storage only. Gated, 24/7 access. \$150/month. 619-425-6511.

PACIFIC BEACH. Storefront/retail space for lease. \$1950/month. 1451 Garnet Avenue, approximately 920 square feet. Good location and visibility. 858-270-4492, x203.

CHULA VISTA. Area industrial. Se renta bodega. 3000 pies cuadrados con 2 oficinas y recepcion, estacionamiento. \$2500 mensuales. 619-476-1669; Martin, cell 619-639-6087.

GASLAMP ART SPACE! \$150 and up. High ceilings, tall windows. Gallery venue for shows. Uniquely affordable. 100-600 square feet. 402 Market. Hughes Management. 619-239-1639 x102.

STOREFRONT/OFFICE. Over 1350 square feet. Street level. High ceilings. 2 private bathrooms. Central location. 2053 Garnet Avenue. Space can be divided for less rent. 858-272-9614.

PACIFIC BEACH. Office space, \$800. Second floor office, 2 rooms, ample parking. Easy access. 4455 Lamont Street. 858-270-4492 x203.

NORTH PARK OFFICE SPACE available from 315-1130 square feet at only \$1.00 per square foot. 3930 Oregon Street. www.utopiamanagement.com, 619-291-5555.

MISSION BAY. Office Suite. 328 square feet at \$1.15. Next to I-5. Easy access. Free parking. Near shopping center. 2445 Morena Boulevard #211. Juno, 619-275-3455.

SORRENTO VALLEY. I-5. Sports/dance studio. Airconditioned, hardwood floor, mirrored walls. Hourly basis, low as \$10/hour. Monday-Friday until 3pm, Saturday evenings, Sunday times available. 858-622-9696.

LA JOLLA OFFICE SPACE. 600 square feet. Recently carpeted, painted. Near ocean. \$1300, kitchen, bath. Designated parking. New air conditioning. Lease. 6525 La Jolla Boulevard. 619-260-0752.

CARLSBAD. \$100-\$125. 1-car size garage for parking and/or dry storage only. 1000 Chinquapin. 858-755-4721.

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Beautifully landscaped. \$2750/month, 619-813-5990, 619-479-2400.

CITY HEIGHTS. \$850. 1 bedroom, 1 bath house. Off street parking. Washer/dryer hookup. No pets. Available now. 4123 41st Street. 619-640-7530. www.sdforrent.com.

CLAIREMONT/BAY PARK. \$1795. 3 bedroom, 1-1/2 bath home with view of Mission Bay. 2-car garage. New carpet. Small pet negotiable. Holiday special-Free rent until 1/15/08. Open Saturday, 10-11am. 3578 & 3586 Trenton. TPPM, 858-699-3851.

COLLEGE AREA/DEL CERRO. \$1750-\$1890. Canyon views. Spacious 3 bedroom, 2 bath. 2-car garage. Skylight, new appliances/carpet, Roman tub, fenced, laundry. \$200 rebate! 858-270-0214.

COLLEGE/ROLANDO. 1/2 mile to SDSU. \$1850. Beautiful, 2 master bedrooms. 2-1/2 baths. 2 story. 2 car garage. Washer/dryer. First floor tiled. Gardener. 858-484-3696.

CORONADO. 3 bedroom with refrigerator, stove, washer/dryer. Block from bay. Freshly painted, large deck. Fenced yard. 2-car garage. Year lease. No pets. Nonsmoking. Gardener/front yard. \$2550/month. 225 E Avenue. 760-942-8769.

EL CAJON. \$1650. 3 bedroom, 1-1/2 bath house. Appliances, garbage disposal. Laundry hookups. No pets. 636 South Magnolia. Available 1/15/08. Section 8 OK. 619-971-1145; 619-579-8027.

EL CAJON. \$2000/month. 1634 estimated square feet. 4 bedroom, 2 bath. Pets OK. Large fenced yard. New carpet. Extra den/office. Central heat/air. Agent, 619-471-2201.

EL CAJON. 4 bedroom, 3-1/2 bath, 3500 square feet, family room, fireplace, media room, 3-car garage. Pool, spa. Air conditioned. \$2500. Call Rob, 619-726-6116.

ESCONDIDO. \$1250-\$1500. Tired of apartment living? Beautiful 2 & 3 bedroom manufactured homes offer spectacular hilltop views. Full-sized washer/dryer, some small yards. Peaceful community, sorry no pets. 1924 Sheridan Avenue. 760-745-1677.

EL CAJON. 4 bedroom, 3-1/2 bath, 3500 square feet, family room, fireplace, media room, 3-car garage. Pool, spa. Air conditioned. \$2500. Call Rob, 619-726-6116.

ESCONDIDO. \$1250-\$1500. Tired of apartment living? Beautiful 2 & 3 bedroom manufactured homes offer spectacular hilltop views. Full-sized washer/dryer, some small yards. Peaceful community, sorry no pets. 1924 Sheridan Avenue. 760-745-1677.

EL CAJON. 4 bedroom, 3-1/2 bath, 3500 square feet, family room, fireplace, media room, 3-car garage. Pool, spa. Air conditioned. \$2500. Call Rob, 619-726-6116.

ESCONDIDO. \$1250-\$1500. Tired of apartment living? Beautiful 2 & 3 bedroom manufactured homes offer spectacular hilltop views. Full-sized washer/dryer, some small yards. Peaceful community, sorry no pets. 1924 Sheridan Avenue. 760-745-1677.

EL CAJON. 4 bedroom, 3-1/2 bath, 3500 square feet, family room, fireplace, media room, 3-car garage. Pool, spa. Air conditioned. \$2500. Call Rob, 619-726-6116.

ESCONDIDO. \$1250-\$1500. Tired of apartment living? Beautiful 2 & 3 bedroom manufactured homes offer spectacular hilltop views. Full-sized washer/dryer, some small yards. Peaceful community, sorry no pets. 1924 Sheridan Avenue. 760-745-1677.

EL CAJON. 4 bedroom, 3-1/2 bath, 3500 square feet, family room, fireplace, media room, 3-car garage. Pool, spa. Air conditioned. \$2500. Call Rob, 619-726-6116.

ESCONDIDO. \$1250-\$1500. Tired of apartment living? Beautiful 2 & 3 bedroom manufactured homes offer spectacular hilltop views. Full-sized washer/dryer, some small yards. Peaceful community, sorry no pets. 1924 Sheridan Avenue. 760-745-1677.

EL CAJON. 4 bedroom, 3-1/2 bath, 3500 square feet, family room, fireplace, media room, 3-car garage. Pool, spa. Air conditioned. \$2500. Call Rob, 619-726-6116.

ESCONDIDO. \$1250-\$1500. Tired of apartment living? Beautiful 2 & 3 bedroom manufactured homes offer spectacular hilltop views. Full-sized washer/dryer, some small yards. Peaceful community, sorry no pets. 1924 Sheridan Avenue. 760-745-1677.

EL CAJON. 4 bedroom, 3-1/2 bath, 3500 square feet, family room, fireplace, media room, 3-car garage. Pool, spa. Air conditioned. \$2500. Call Rob, 619-726-6116.

ESCONDIDO. \$1250-\$1500. Tired of apartment living? Beautiful 2 & 3 bedroom manufactured homes offer spectacular hilltop views. Full-sized washer/dryer, some small yards. Peaceful community, sorry no pets. 1924 Sheridan Avenue. 760-745-1677.

EL CAJON. 4 bedroom, 3-1/2 bath, 3500 square feet, family room, fireplace, media room, 3-car garage. Pool, spa. Air conditioned. \$2500. Call Rob, 619-726-6116.

ESCONDIDO. \$1250-\$1500. Tired of apartment living? Beautiful 2 & 3 bedroom manufactured homes offer spectacular hilltop views. Full-sized washer/dryer, some small yards. Peaceful community, sorry no pets. 1924 Sheridan Avenue. 760-745-1677.

EL CAJON. 4 bedroom, 3-1/2 bath, 3500 square feet, family room, fireplace, media room, 3-car garage. Pool, spa. Air conditioned. \$2500. Call Rob, 619-726-6116.

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Phil Bateman holds a yardstick up to his bumper to show off the clearance of his low-rider, 1959. The previous year, San Diego hosted its first Custom and Hot Rod Show in

Balboa Park. About 100 people drove their customized cars into town from all over the state.

— by Robert Mizrachi

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LA JOLLA. 4 bedroom, 2 bath house. \$2950. Spacious backyard. Close to Tourmaline Beach. Stop by leasing office at 5060 La Jolla Boulevard. 655 Wreiton. TPPM, 858-483-7412, www.casadelmar.info.

LA MESA. 3 bedroom, 2 bath plus office on mountain. Fantastic view to ocean! 2000 square feet. Garage. Family room. Fireplace. \$2675. Lease. Agent, Bill, 619-823-1674.

LA MESA. 3 bedroom, 2 bath. 8805 Fabienne Way. Estimated 1125 square feet.

\$1850/month. Great backyard with deck. Large driveway, fireplace, washer/dryer and dishwasher. Call 619-471-2201.

LEMON GROVE. \$1375. Refurbished 2 bedroom, 1.5 bath duplex townhome. 1-car garage. Fenced yard. Laundry hookups. 619-218-6314.

LEMON GROVE. Quiet, secluded, spacious 3 bedroom, 2 bath 3000+-square-foot house, laundry hookups, central air, appliances, hardwood, 2 fireplaces, double carport, formal dining, large

patio/yard. \$2600/month includes water/gardener. 619-698-8497, 619-888-0319.

LEUCADIA. \$2300. 3 bedroom, 1 bath, West of Highway 101. Fenced yard, hardwood floors, new bath and kitchen. 427 La Veta Avenue. Leasing Unlimited, 760-436-7273.

LINDA VISTA/FASHION VALLEY. Move-in special. Comfortable 2 bedroom house, pets OK. Enclosed backyard, washer/dryer, new kitchen/appliances,

cul-de-sac, close to all. \$1650. 619-316-8810.

MIRA MESA. \$1895. 3 bedroom, 2 bath house. 2-car garage. No pets. Nonsmoking. New carpet and paint. Dishwasher. Patio. Fenced yards. Clean. 10938 Polaris Drive. Juno, 619-275-3455.

MISSION HILLS. \$2695. 3 bedroom, 3 bath full house. Hilltop location with views of bay and Old Town. 2 levels. All appli-

ances. Washer/dryer. Patio and balcony. 619-683-7638, Xlarent.com.

MISSION VALLEY. \$1895. Extra large 2 bedroom, 2-1/2 bath townhome, gated wood floors, washer/dryer, 2-car garage, all appliances, fireplace. 938 Camino de la Reina. 619-384-9219.

MOUNT HELIX. \$3600. 5 bedroom, 4 bath house plus den on private 1/2 acre. Pool. Citrus trees. 2 fireplaces. Upper and lower decks with magnificent views. Must see to appreciate! 1 year lease. Includes gardener and pool service. Shown by appointment only, 619-427-5533.

MT. HELIX. 4 bedroom, 2.5 bath home. 2400 square feet. Quiet neighborhood. 2-car garage. Pool. No pets. Deposit. \$2300 includes gardener/pool service. 619-443-9192.

NORTH PARK. \$2000. 3 bedroom, 2 bath home with view, washer and dryer, 2-car garage. Pets OK. 619-540-6526.

NORTH PARK. \$2395. Newly remodeled Craftsman home. 4 bedroom, 2 bath. All appliances. New paint and flooring. Some utilities included. Garage available. Large front porch. Washer and dryer. 858-598-1111 x190. www.utopiamanagement.com.

NORTH PARK. 2 bedroom, 1 bath newly remodeled Craftsman. New hardwood floors, newly remodeled black and white bathroom. Formal dining room with Gumwood built-ins and French doors, breakfast nook, laundry room with washer/dryer hookups. New landscaping. Off-street parking galore plus storage. \$1795/month. Available now. 3330 31st Street. 619-683-9274.

OCEAN BEACH. \$2650. 3 bedroom home. Sunset Cliffs area! 2 car garage. Refinished hardwood floors. Fresh paint. Microwave. Covered patio. Includes gardener. 4625 Granger Street. Shore Management, 858-274-3500.

OCEAN BEACH. \$2195. 2 bedroom house on to of hill in Ocean Beach! Huge backyard with garage and washer/dryer! Hardwood floors and partial ocean view! Small pet on approval. 4437 Newport Avenue. Call 619-222-4836 x14 or www.sunsetpacificrealty.com.

OCEAN BEACH. Ocean view! 1 bedroom duplex. Large garage. Hardwood floors. Sunny, quiet. Laundry hook-ups, shared yard. Pets OK. \$1660. Available now. 4656 Niagara. 619-920-4022.

PACIFIC BEACH. Mobile home on the Bay! Cute and cozy 2 bedroom, 2 bath, washer/dryer. On De Anza Cove. \$2200/month includes utilities/cable. Mike, 858-456-0407; 858-344-1033.

PACIFIC BEACH. \$1500. 2 bedroom, 1 bath. Front yard. Private backyard. Pets considered. Parking. Refrigerator. Laundry hook-ups. Hardwood. Available 1/1/08. 2135 Grand Avenue. 619-260-0752.

PACIFIC BEACH. 3 bedroom, 2 bath house \$2250. Large front patio, master suite, washer/dryer, fenced yard, off street parking. No pets. Agent, 619-296-3189.

PACIFIC BEACH. \$2995. House with views of the Bay. 3 bedrooms, 3 baths. 2-car garage. Washer, dryer. Patio. New carpet. New paint. Available now. 1-year lease. Call Coldwell Banker Property Management, 858-488-2228.

PACIFIC BEACH. \$1995. Darling 2 bedroom, 1 bath house. 2-car garage. Gardener included. Separate laundry room with storage and sink but no washer, dryer. Appliances. Older home but adorable. No pets. 1-year lease. Available now. Coldwell Banker Property Management, 858-488-2228.

PACIFIC BEACH. Large 2 bedroom, 1 bath house. 4 blocks from bay/beach. Redwood walls, fireplace, built-ins, new stainless kitchen. Garden entrance, sliding glass doors to patio. 858-483-6921.

PACIFIC BEACH. \$2150. 3 bedroom, 1 bath house. Washer/dryer. Fenced yard. Off-street parking. Front/rear decks. Available 1/01/08-1/07/08. 1812 Chalcedony. 858-484-3399. Cell, 619-884-3399.

PACIFIC BEACH. 3 bedroom, 2 bath, 4 blocks to beach. Large yard, washer/dryer, garage. \$2750. Available January 15. 1140 Diamond Street. Call 858-273-4812.

POINT LOMA. Designer Remodeled 4 bedroom 3 bath, 2400 square foot, garage. Yard, patio/fountain. Kitchen stainless steel/granite countertop, stainless steel appliances, lighted cabinets. Hardwood floors travertine/slate throughout. Spa tub, rainfall shower, dual sinks, large walk-in closet. Fireplace, wine cellar. \$2950, lease option. 619-368-9410.

POINT LOMA. 3240 Lowell Street. \$2900. City, bay views! Great room! 2 bedroom, 2-3/4 bath house. Cathedral ceilings. Tile and carpet. 2 fireplaces. Built-in bar. Garage. Yard. Pets OK. About 2900 square feet. 619-435-0387.

POWAY. 3 bedroom, 2 bath house, single-story, completely remodeled/upgraded. Quiet cul-de-sac. Month to month or lease. \$2100 plus \$2500 security deposit. 619-572-9347.

RANCHO PENASQUITOS. Spacious 4 bedroom, 3 bath home. 2500 square feet. 2-car garage. New carpet/paint. Sunroom/patio. Pool/jacuzzi. Pet negotiable. \$2195. 858-336-9254.

SANTEE. \$2000. 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom with bonus room. Washer/dryer hook-up. Newly remodeled. Yard/gardener. No pets/smoking. Available now. 9451 Pike Road. 619-417-6283.

SOLANA BEACH. \$1845. Large 2 bedroom, 2 bath house. 2 car garage. No pets. Fireplace. New carpet. Washer/dryer. Patios. Appliances. 103 Guerrero Court. Juno, 619-275-3455.

SOUTH BAY. \$1700. 3 bedroom, 1 bath house. \$1600, 2 bedroom, 2 bath, 2-car garage. Beautiful security. Large yard. All appliances included. 858-254-4469.

SOUTH PARK. \$1550/month plus deposit. 3 bedroom, 1 bath house, wood floors, washer/dryer, yard. Available 12/15. Small pet OK. 2609 Mt. Clair. 619-669-9953.

SOUTH PARK. \$1800 rent plus \$1800 deposit. 2 bedroom, 1-1/2 bath house, hardwood floors, large deck, jacuzzi. 1645 Grove Street. 1000 square feet. Owner pays water. Nonsmoking. No pets. 619-640-7530. www.sdforrent.com.

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COLLEGE AREA/TALMADGE. \$725 rent. \$600 deposit. OAC. Large 1 bedroom. New carpet. Parking. Laundry. No pets. At 4423 Menlo Avenue #12. 619-990-5021 or agent, 619-299-8515.

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ABANDONED AFTER THE FIRES! Rescued: 10 pot bellied pigs. Some pregnant, some old/crippled, some recovering from surgery, all in need of help. Desperate for food donations/vet care! Donations: Terry's Hay & Grain, Valley Center, c/o Debi Toner's Pig Rescue. Vet care donations: Creekside Vet Service, c/o Dr. Bender, 8751 Old Castle Road, Escondido, 92026, 760-751-1020. These beautiful animals need good homes. Please help. Thanks, Debi.

AQUARIUM SALE at Octopus's Garden. 20H aquarium \$20; 29 for \$29; 40R \$40. Even a 60E is just \$60. Other tank specials also. Lots of healthy saltwater fish and beautiful corals. Protein skimmers. Lighting systems, pumps, decorations and supplies at low prices at Octopus's Garden. Noon-9pm, 7 days. Call 858-576-7449.

AQUARIUM, 65-gallon Tru-Vu, full set up, fish, pine cabinet, hood lights, etc., \$400/best. 55-gallon aquarium, miscellaneous parts, \$165/best. Encinitas, p.m. best, 760-753-8824.

AQUARIUMS AND PONDS! Freshwater/saltwater fish. Extensive reef animals. 9000 square feet. Low warehouse prices! Expertise not found in Southern California cookie-cutter stores! Aquatic Warehouse. 5466 Complex Street #204, San Diego. Behind Superior Courthouse, off Clairemont Mesa Boulevard. www.

kitchen appliances, balcony, outside storage, common garage parking, water paid. 5980 Dandridge Lane #238. People Helping Others Property Management, 619-282-5400, www.peoplehelpingothers.com.

COLLEGE AREA. \$850. Remodeled 1 bedroom, 1 bath garden apartments. Ample off-street parking. Laundry facilities. Lots of light. Walking distance to SDSU and shopping. No pets. 619-287-9890; numeric page 619-407-1535.

COLLEGE AREA. \$1325, 2 bedroom, 2 bath. Fireplace. Central heat/air. Microwave, dishwasher. Balcony. Gated. Intercom entry. 4828 Art Street. Agent, 619-298-7724.

COLLEGE AREA. \$1350. 3 bedroom, 2 bath apartment in contemporary building, central air conditioning, security, underground parking. Year lease. 4742 Seminole Drive. Call 619-469-0031.

COLLEGE AREA. 2 bedroom, 2 bath condo \$1295. Upstairs, fireplace, washer/dryer, dishwasher, balcony, mirrored closet doors, tandem garage. No pets. 6055 Estelle. Agent, 619-296-3189.

COLLEGE AREA. \$750. Charming, lower 1 bedroom, 1 bath, new carpet, on-site laundry. 1 miles to SDSU. Cat OK. Section 8. 4644 Soria Drive. 619-804-3325.

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COLLEGE. \$1250, 2 bedroom, 2 bath, large unit. Dining room, balcony, air conditioning, pool, laundry. Upper unit, lots storage. Near SDSU, trolley. 6775 Alvarado Boulevard #23 91941. 619-698-6911.

COLLEGE/LA MESA. \$950. Large 2 bedroom, 1 bath. New carpet, paint and appliances. Clean, secure, ready now! On-site laundry. 7240 El Cajon Boulevard #12. Call Rachael 619-804-1044.

COLLEGE/LA MESA. \$845. Remodeled 1 bedroom. Clean, secure. New carpet, paint. Close to everything. This is a beautiful apartment. On site laundry. Ready now. If you can find one better; rent it. 7240 El Cajon Boulevard #25. Rachael, 619-804-1044.

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DEL MAR. Ocean view 2 bedroom, \$1995, 3 bedrooms, \$2495. Non-view 2 bedrooms, \$1695-\$1795, 3 bedrooms, \$2195. Block to ocean. 201 Fourth Street. Call for special! 858-481-9585; mikeatla@aol.com.

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DOWNTOWN/EAST VILLAGE. December move-in special! Only \$613-\$736/month with 12 month lease! Utilities included! Office hours: daily 8am-6pm. Near Petco Park, bus/trolley. Fully furnished. Bay/ballpark views. Underground parking. Air conditioning. Laundry. Internet. Clubhouse/library. Income qualify! Island Village, 1245 Market Street. For details, 1-800-351-0613. www.sdreader.com/rent/2070.

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DOWNTOWN. Studios with kitchen and bath, \$625-\$700. Single room with private bathroom, \$500-\$550. No smoking or pets. 10th and E Street. Hughes Management, 619-239-1639 x103.

DOWNTOWN. Comfortable rooms, \$450/up. Studios, \$650/up. Near Gaslamp District. Very quiet and clean. Free cable TV, on-site laundry, vending machines, community kitchen, shared bathrooms. Near shopping, restaurants, movie theatres and Horton Plaza. No pets. Arlington Apartments, 701 7th Avenue. Hughes Management. 619-231-2385. www.sdreader.com/rent/2097.

DOWNTOWN. Cozy rooms, \$450-\$625, grab these little jewels today! Very comfortable, convenient location, historic building near C Street trolley. Choice of shared or private bathrooms. Free cable TV, on-site laundry, vending machines, modern elevator, no pets. Southern Hotel, 1159 6th Avenue at B. Hughes Management, 619-239-3808. www.sdreader.com/rent/2099.

DOWNTOWN. Economical furnished rooms, \$400-\$500, best price, save money. Conveniently located on C Street trolley line, near restaurants, free cable TV, shared bathrooms, on-site laundry facilities, vending machines, elevator service, no pets, 636 C Street (between 6th and 7th), C Street Inn, Hughes Management, 619-234-4165. www.sdreader.com/rent/2098.

DOWNTOWN. Gaslamp area. Move-in special, \$280. Community kitchen, shared bath, on-site laundry, vending machines, no pets. Star Hotel, 522 7th Avenue. 619-235-6068. Hughes Management.

DOWNTOWN. Outstanding furnished rooms, \$400-\$500. Heart of Gaslamp. Shared bathrooms. Community kitchen. Free cable TV. No pets. 843 4th Avenue. Windsor Hotel. 619-235-6068. Hughes Management.

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DOWNTOWN. Park Terrace. East Village. Ballpark and bay views. New, stylish, executive condo, 2 bedroom, 2 bath. Granite and cherry kitchen/baths. Stainless appliances. Washer/dryer. Balcony. Billards/recreation room, fitness center, rooftop deck, barbecue/lounge, underground parking/storage, secure building. Near Gaslamp and Old Town. 3 freeways within 1 mile. Must see. \$2350. Call for appointment, Blanco Investments, 714-434-1616.

DOWNTOWN. Brand new rooms near City College. Single rooms with kitchenettes from \$150/week plus deposit (long-term). Includes utilities/cable. Quiet, secure. Shared bath/laundry. Hotel Mediterranean. 619-231-8656. www.hotelmed-sd.com.

DOWNTOWN. Se renta 2 casitas. 1 recamaras, 1 bano y 2 recamaras, 1 bano con opcion de comprar. Recien remodeladas. Listas 1/2/08. Franklin/31st. 916-501-2712.

DOWNTOWN. 3 bedroom, 1 bathroom Victorian 4-plex. New everything! Close to Petco/Gaslamp. 321 20th Street. \$1195/month, \$1000/deposit. Section 8 OK. Small pet. Bob, 619-760-6055.

DOWNTOWN. \$1635. Cortez Hill. 2 bedroom, 2 bath Park View condo. Courtyard view. Parking. Washer/dryer. All appliances. New paint. Secure, gated building. 760-740-0345, 951-733-0565.

DOWNTOWN. \$675. Studio, 1 bath apartment, great views, all utilities paid, near Petco Park, controlled access building. Fee. Free search at www.westsiderentals.com. 619-367-3333.

DOWNTOWN. \$775. 1 bedroom, 1 bath apartment, cat OK with deposit, hardwood floors, paid water/trash/gas. Fee. Free search at www.westsiderentals.com. 619-367-3333.

DOWNTOWN. \$1250. 2 bedrooms, 1 bath duplex, tile floors, 2-car parking included, extremely large backyard. Fee. Free search at www.westsiderentals.com. 619-367-3333.

DOWNTOWN. \$1750. 2 bedrooms, 2 baths apartment, pet OK, covered parking, barbecue/picnic area, business center, spa, fitness center. Fee. Free search at www.westsiderentals.com. 619-367-3333.

DOWNTOWN. \$1350/month with 1/2 off first month! 1 bedroom, 1 bath new condo in the Element. Brand new appliances, carpet and paint, underground parking. Easy access to the freeway and conveniently located near airport, dining, entertainment, shopping and more! Call today! 619-291-5555 x190. www.utiopiamanagement.com.

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DOWNTOWN/MARINA DISTRICT. Crown Bay, 2 split master bedrooms, 2 bath, 1100 square feet, 2 parking spaces, 2 balconies, hardwood floors, \$2300. Sam, 619-203-9204, Anthony 619-228-4426.

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DOWNTOWN/LITTLE ITALY. From \$800/month. Private bath, cable TV, microwave, refrigerator. Utilities included. Secure, quiet, charming. Efficiency apartments with laundry. Near trolley/bus lines, blocks from harbor. On-site manager. Villa Caterina, 1654 Columbia Street. 619-232-3400.

DOWNTOWN/LITTLE ITALY. Great location! 1 bedroom, 1-1/2 baths lofts \$1750. Banker's Hill, 2 bedroom with washer/dryer \$1650. Available now. Call 619-255-0526.

DOWNTOWN/EAST VILLAGE. Newly remodeled studios, \$600 plus \$300-\$400 security. Controlled access, shared bathrooms/kitchens. Full size beds. Laundry facility. Patio area. Palms Hotel, 619-233-0408.

DOWNTOWN/GASLAMP. Las Flores Hotel. Small, quiet. \$120/week and up. Four-week minimum. Color TV with basic cable. Refrigerator in most rooms. Secure. 619-235-6820.

DOWNTOWN/GASLAMP. Move-in Specials. Live/Work Lofts in the heart of The Gaslamp! Roof decks with barbecue. Laundry on every floor. Parking available. Seven locations Downtown. Select pets OK. Visit loft leasing office: 315 Fourth Avenue. 619-231-1505 x12. www.trilogymanagement.com. Also visit www.sreader.com/rent/2064.

DOWNTOWN/LITTLE ITALY. 1501 Front Street #432. 1 bedroom, 1 bath, \$1500. Great condo! 663 estimated square feet.

reader@sdcpm.net. SDCPM, 800-246-2530.

EL CAJON. \$775. 1 bedroom. New carpet, refrigerator, air conditioning. Barbecue, pool, laundry, parking, gated. 718 South Magnolia. Ask about move-in special! Section 8 OK. 619-312-0606.

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EL CAJON. \$695. 1 bedroom. Fabulous pool/courtyard complex. Super clean apartments. No pets. 314 Wisconsin Street. TPPM, 619-742-7600. www.palmestates.info.

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EL CAJON. \$1195. 2 bedroom, 2 bath remodeled condo with air conditioning, carpet, fresh paint, and wood blinds, fireplace, granite counters. Pool, spa, and gym. 858-598-1111 x192. utopiagmt.com.

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EL CAJON. Cajon Villas. \$785, 1 bedroom, \$985, 2 bedroom, 2 bath, \$1270, 3 bedroom. Pool. Parking. Air conditioning. No pets. 933 Peach Avenue. 619-447-9193.

EL CAJON. \$850. Large 2 bedroom, 1 bath. Upstairs. Carpet. Dishwasher.

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EL CAJON. \$705. 1 bedroom. Beautifully maintained apartments with sparkling pool. No pets. 234 West Park Avenue. TPPM, 619-850-9722. www.palmtowers.com.

EL CAJON. \$705-\$840. Spacious 1 bedroom and 2 bedrooms. Beautiful property with sparkling pool. Walk to courthouse and Main Street shopping. No pets. 163 Ballantyne Street. TPPM, 619-990-5900. www.palmtowers.com.

EL CAJON. Spacious 2 bedrooms from \$825. \$300 move-in special! Townhomes. Private patios. Great location with on-site parking and laundry. 432-441 Dominguez Way. TPPM, 619-405-4500.

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Now...please step closer, chum. I'd dearly love to embrace your cranium.

ENCINITAS. \$900 & up. Sick of room-mates? Cozy beach trailers in quiet park. Near beach, Coaster, restaurants, shops. 152 North Coast, Highway 101. 760-753-4101.

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ESCONDIDO. \$1250-\$1500. Tired of apartment living? Beautiful 2 & 3 bedroom manufactured homes offer spectacular hilltop views. Full-sized washer/dryer, some small yards. Peaceful community,

sorry no pets. 1924 Sheridan Avenue. 760-745-1677.

ESCONDIDO. Call for specials! Spacious 1 bedrooms from \$835, deposit \$400. 2 bedrooms from \$995, deposit \$500. Great floor plan. Pool, spa. Covered parking. Laundry. RV parking. Cats are welcome. 640 West Lincoln Street. 760-489-8989.

FASHION VALLEY. \$1250 rent. \$600 deposit, OAC. Large 2 bedroom, 2 bath. Granite counters. 2 parking spots. No pets. At 1355 Brunner Street. 619-298-5820.

FASHION VALLEY/USD. \$1250 rent. \$600 deposit, OAC. 2 bedroom, 2 bath. 2 open parking spaces. Laundry. No pets. At 1340 Eureka Street #24. 619-298-5820.

FASHION VALLEY/USD. \$1250. 2 bedroom, 1-1/2 bath upper unit with view of SeaWorld and the bay. Parking. Cat OK. Completely refurbished. 5946 Lauretta Street #7. Call CCPM, 619-296-6699.

FASHION VALLEY. \$1100. Large 2 bedroom, 1 bath apartment. Huge walk in closet. Dishwasher. On site parking. Balcony. No pets. 5720 Gaines Street. 619-299-3477.

GOLDEN HILL. (2) Charming 1 bedroom, 1 bath \$795/\$850. Hardwood floors. Great neighborhood, laundry on-site. Available now. No dogs. 2412 E Street. 619-857-3706.

GOLDEN HILL/DOWNTOWN. 1/2 month off! Free application fee! 1 bedrooms from \$1120. 2 bedrooms from \$1405. 2 bedrooms townhomes from \$1685. City views. Controlled access. Washer/dryer, microwave, central air/heat. Rooftop deck. Spa. Barbecue. Parking. Pet friendly! Golden Pacific, 1015 19th Street. 1-800-433-6156. www.pacificliving.com. www.sdreader.com/rent/2028.

GOLDEN HILL. \$795. 1 bedroom, 1 bath duplex. Fenced patio. Off-street parking. Convenient location. 1239 33rd Street. Hughes Management, 619-239-1639 x102.

GOLDEN HILL. \$50 per month off for 6 months! \$1000. Dramatically beautiful, restored Craftsman 1 bedroom with dining room, view of water/downtown skyline. Newly refinished maple floors, birch doors, original Douglas fir baseboards. No pets. 619-280-5177.

GOLDEN HILL/SOUTH PARK. \$1350. 2 bedroom duplex with private yard for pet. Hardwood floors, large closets, built in storage. Breakfast nook in sunny kitchen. Great residential neighborhood with ample street parking, 9 blocks from Balboa Park, 5 minutes to Downtown San Diego. Rent includes water and gardener. 3303 Beech Street. Please call 619-921-1695 or relwardani@lorberlaw.com.

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GOLDEN HILL. \$875. 2 bedroom 1 bath. Bottom floor, corner unit. Laundry on-site. Pet under 20 pounds considered. Very clean. 1021-28 28th Street. Manager, 619-296-6699.

GOLDEN HILL. \$850 studio, hardwood floors, front lower corner unit, full kitchen and bath, walk-in closet with built-ins. Pets OK. Street parking. 2528 'C' Street. CCPM, 619-296-6699.

GOLDEN HILL. \$825. 1 bedroom, 1 bath. Downstairs unit. Parking. Laundry. Clean and bright. Close to Downtown/Balboa Park. 2631 A Street. Call 858-571-1970. suniselling.com.

GOLDEN HILL. Contemporary furnished studio in upcoming community. Available now. Minutes from Downtown. \$1300/month. All utilities, underground parking, DSL, balcony. For detail and viewing. 619-595-0111. www.vantaggiosuites.com.

HILLCREST. \$1295. 2 bedroom, 1 bath, hardwood floors, near bus line to Downtown. Available now. 3310 Reynard Way. Agent, 619-298-7232. www.sbayproperties.com.

HILLCREST. Luxury condo, 3 bedroom, 3 bath. Granite, stainless, 2-car garage, fireplace, washer/dryer, Jacuzzi tub. Like new. 2 blocks park, \$2700/month, 619-889-8508, 619-920-4719.

HILLCREST. Spacious 1 and 2 bedrooms! Berber carpet, fireplace, spa, gym, intercom, elevator. Sorry, no pets. Hillcrest Summit, 4134 4th Avenue. See photos at www.WexfordLiving.com. 619-299-0047.

HILLCREST. \$1400. 2 bedroom, 2 bath condo. Secured parking, 4th floor, great views! Stove, refrigerator, dishwasher. No pets. Available now. 1907 Robinson. Michael 858-597-6100 x321.

HILLCREST. Quiet, charming, cozy deluxe 2 bedroom, 2 bath, \$1300. Gated, fireplace. All appliances, washer/dryer, skylight, private patio, 2 parking spaces. Cats OK. No smoking facility. 3680 Alabama Street. Available now. 619-269-5237.

HILLCREST. \$1200. 2 bedroom canyon hideaway, hardwood floors, sunny cottage, quiet street, walk bridge to uptown shops, 4166 10th Avenue. 619-297-3168.

HILLCREST. Hillcrest Palms. Senior complex. 55+ living! \$900. 1 bedroom apartments. Gated community. Convenient location. Near hospitals, restaurants, shopping. No pets. 4042 Albatross Street. 619-574-0784.

HILLCREST. \$895. 1 bedroom, upstairs. Remodeled. Stove, refrigerator. Dishwasher, microwave. Coin laundry. Great location. Cat OK with additional \$300 deposit. Available now. 3730 First. Del Sol Property Management, Broker. 858-270-2071. www.delsolpm.com.

HILLCREST. Open house, Saturday, 12/22 11am-3pm. \$1150. Lovely 2 bedroom, 1 bath cottage. Carpet. Breakfast nook. New kitchen. New bathroom. Fenced side yard. Street parking. Laundry room shared with tenants. No pets. Available now. 3819 Park Boulevard, behind "Numbers." Phillips Realty, 619-291-6686 or Pablo, 619-249-2770.

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HILLCREST. Newly remodeled, pool, washer/dryer. Month to month. Barbecue, clubhouse featuring a pool table, flat screen TVs and bar. Granite countertops, stainless steel appliances, maple wood cabinetry and large storage rooms. 2 bedroom, 2 bath \$1795/month. Sorry, no pets. Lease option available. 1030 Robinson Avenue, San Diego. Call Nicol at 619-807-7053.

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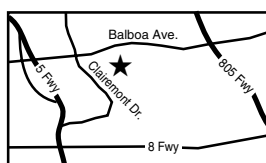
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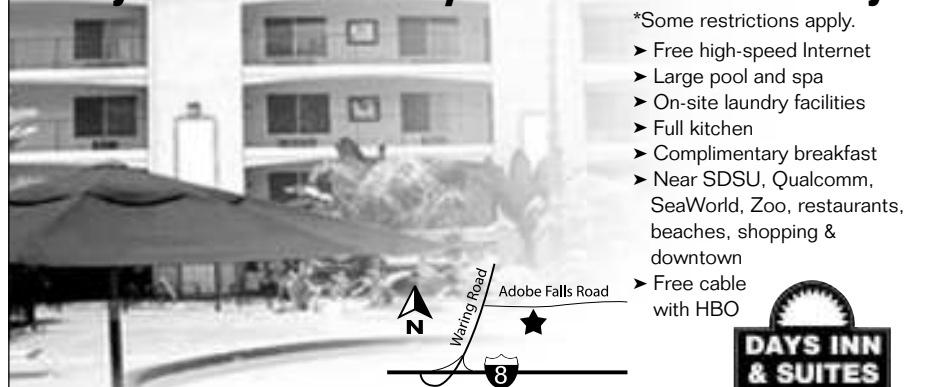
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LA JOLLA/UCSD. \$1475. 2 bedroom, 1 bath. Near shops. Balcony. Garden window. Laundry. No pets. Available after 12/1. 8849 Villa La Jolla Drive. 858-457-4509.

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Jean's Issues

I was newly divorced and living in California. Getting through that plus having to deal with child support was not going to be an easy task. I met Jean through the *Reader's* roommate page.

Jean was in her late 50s, a masseuse, and seemed cool and down-to-earth. She owned a townhome in San Marcos and had another long-term renter named Brenda. Brenda was in her 20s and worked as a veterinary assistant.

I interviewed with both of them for the master bedroom that included my own bathroom and a huge walk-in closet and a space in a three-car garage connected to the house. All of this for only \$600 a month, and that included utilities.

I got the call three days later that I could move in as soon as I was ready. I jumped at the opportunity. Jean seemed nice enough, always wanting to help with anything. She acted like a grandmother to my four-year-old daughter when she would come over.

Shortly after Christmas I started to notice things about Jean. Brenda and I would often get together and discuss it. I started to notice that Jean never drank water; it was always a glass of juice. It was juice all right — with alcohol. There were nights I would walk in from work and find her in the living room listening to NPR and crying over “things happening in the world.”

One night I had my daughter over, and in

a drunken stupor Jean declared that I was a horrible parent and a chauvinist pig because I didn't want Jean's former classmate, Hillary Clinton, to become president of the United States. I later learned that Jean went to college for only one year, and Hillary Clinton had attended the university after that.

There were times that I would hear her crying out in the night — she wished that she was dead because her sister had died of cancer years before. Once I had to call an ambulance because she fell down a flight of stairs because...you guessed it, she was drunk.

The most memorable night was this: My (new) fiancée and I were in bed, wearing next to nothing and watching *Tristan and Isolde*. The volume was at a moderate level. All of a sudden Jean comes bursting into the room, slamming the door into the wall as she enters. “You are so inconsiderate!” she bellows. “I am trying to

sleep, and this is up way too loud!” It was 7:30 p.m.

Despite all of this, I was starting to settle in. I decided that I just needed to get over Jean's issues. Things were relatively fine until the time came when my fiancée stayed overnight. She was letting herself out the following morning when Jean accosted her in the foyer and told my fiancée that it was not appropriate to walk out in the morning “without saying goodbye.”

Shortly after this, Brenda and I received a formal letter from Jean stating that she wanted to reclaim her home and live by herself. When we later talked to her she said she was going to take a month off from renting out and then find new renters. I was flabbergasted.

I found a new place that was not as nice, but it was big and the rent was okay. I did a thorough cleaning of the room and common areas before I left. I packed all of my stuff and slipped out in the middle of the night — I wanted to

avoid a possible Jean drunken tirade. I decided to call the \$200 deposit a wash; it was too much trouble to try to find a sober moment with Jean.

A few weeks later I was settled in my new place and received a forwarded letter from Jean. She said that I left dings in her car from my car door hitting hers. I had never parked next to her. She wanted me to pay \$120 for the ding repair. She also demanded that I pay a \$150 penalty for her having to clean the room I had been staying in. I ignored it and wished there was such a thing as a website listing of “bad roommates.” Jean would have been at the top of that list.

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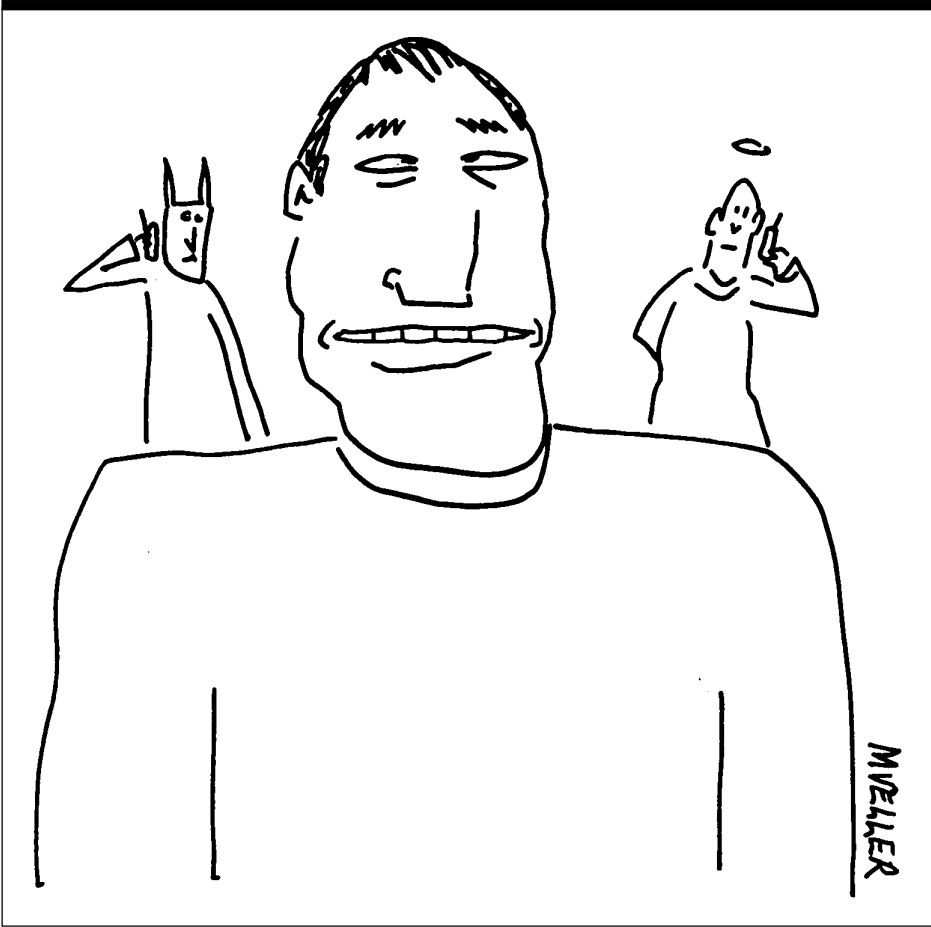
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LEAD STORY

— Small-Town Mayors: (1) Mayor Ken Williams resigned in Centerton, Ark. (pop. 2146), in November and revealed that he is actually Don LaRose, an Indiana preacher who abandoned his family in 1980 because, he said, satanists had abducted and threatened him and brainwashed him to rub out details of a murder he supposedly knew about. He said his memory returned recently, thanks to truth serum. (2) Mayor Lino Donato of Poteet, Texas (pop. 3500), said in November that he would remain in office despite his inability to set foot in city hall. That building is less than 1000 feet from a youth recreation center and therefore off-limits to Donato, who was adjudicated a sex offender in October.

Oops!

— The Texas Board of Education announced in November that it had made its selections of approved math textbooks for the next school year, even though the group of chosen books contained a total of 109,263 errors. Books of the industry giant Houghton Mifflin accounted for

about 86,000. All publishers have guaranteed to correct the errors by the time the books are shipped.
— In October, rescue crews in Pittsburgh freed a woman who had become stuck underneath an SUV in front of another woman’s house. She told police that she suspected her husband was having an affair with the woman and had crawled around to get a better vantage point for spying. She said she inadvertently fell asleep and, when she awoke, could not crawl out.

Fine Points of the Law

— In November, the Food and Drug Administration told Smiling Hill Farm of Westbrook, Maine, that it would have to recall all of its eggnog because it did not list “egg” as an ingredient on the label. Federal law requires the listing to protect people with egg allergies.
— Jesse Rodriguez, 33, was scheduled to testify in December in Redwood City, Calif., against the man who ordered him to shoot another to death in 1989, even though triggerman Rodriguez has been, and is, exempt from any prison time.

Rodriguez was 14 when he killed the man, and state law at the time prohibited authorities from holding him beyond his 25th birthday. Since Rodriguez went on the lam after the crime and did not surface until he was 31, the state would have to let him go even if he were tried and convicted.

The Continuing Crisis

— The existence of the 50-year-old, ultra-secure computer protocol required for a U.S. president to launch nuclear weapons is well known through newspapers, books, and Hollywood films, but according to papers released by Britain’s National Archive in November, a similarly complex protocol has been in place in that country since 1998. Before that, a person could arm a nuclear bomb by removing two ordinary screws and (according to BBC News) using “an Allen key to select high yield or low yield, air burst or groundburst and other parameters.”
— Yikes! (1) The *China Daily* newspaper reported in November that local markets and beauty salons in Guangdong province were selling low-priced

hair bands made from used condoms. (2) “Fires during surgeries a bigger risk than thought,” headlined a November *Boston Globe* article, citing data from hospitals in Pennsylvania (28 operating-room fires a year for the last three years) and Massachusetts.

Creme de la Weird

— Mesa, Ariz., police arrested Sebastian Mancilla, 41, in November after a security camera at Mervyn’s department store caught him being not too subtle in looking up the skirt of a female shopper. According to an *Arizona Republic* reporter, citing a police source: “At one time, Mancilla approached the woman from behind and laid down on the floor to look up her skirt. He then got back to his feet and continued to act as if he was shopping.” Mancilla allegedly tried again with the same woman, dropping to his knees, but to no avail, as the woman walked away.

Send your Weird News to Chuck Shepherd, San Diego Reader, P.O. Box 85803, San Diego, CA 92186 or to WeirdNewsTips@Yahoo.com

Includes two-car garage. No pets. \$1250/month, deposit \$1250. www.timcassidy.com. Cassidy, Broker, 619-275-LIST.

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PACIFIC BEACH. \$2500. 3 bedroom, 3 bath apartment. \$1250 deposit. No pets. Laundry, fireplace, patio. Available December 1, 2007. 1452 Diamond. 1 parking space. 858-336-7997.

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PACIFIC BEACH, NORTH \$1600. House, 2 bedroom, 1 bath with den. Dishwasher. 2 off street parking, laundry room. No pets. Available 1/1/08. 1845 Chalcedony. 858-459-1928.

PACIFIC BEACH. Luxury townhouse, 2 bedroom, 2.5 bath, attached 2-car garage, all appliances included. Close to all. No smoking/pets. Available early December. Monthly rent: \$2050, deposit \$2100. To view 1954 Missouri Street, christineroi@sbcglobal.net, 858-274-8251. http://groups.yahoo.com/group/pblife.

PACIFIC BEACH. \$1795. 2 bedroom, 2-1/2 bath luxury townhouse. All appliances, 2 fireplaces, patio. Quiet. Drive by 1932 Missouri Street #2. Available now. Call 760-744-2129.

PACIFIC BEACH. 2 bedroom, 1-1/2 bath, \$1375. New granite kitchen, new carpet/tile for both units. 2 bedroom, 1-1/2 bath, \$1450 and 1 bedroom plus den with balcony/ocean view, \$1195. No pets. Lease. 4467 Dawes. 858-483-4553.

PACIFIC BEACH. \$1100. Studio, top floor with private balcony. Vaulted ceilings, skylights, secured parking space, laundry on site. Near beach. Call 12-5pm for information, 619-992-6760.

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PACIFIC BEACH. \$1310/\$1750. Beautifully remodeled, 1 bedroom, 1 bath; 2 bedroom, 2 bath. Great views! Balcony, dishwasher, and imported tile. Heated pool. Laundry. Parking or garage available. 858-272-4398.

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PACIFIC BEACH. \$1190/month. Upgraded 1 bedroom second floor apartment. Close to beach! Friendly gated complex. Dishwasher, carpet/tile, courtyard, barbecue, laundry facilities. 1216-1/2 Felspar. 858-483-2504.

PACIFIC BEACH. \$1395. 2 bedroom, 1 bath apartment. Walk to Garnet, ocean. New carpet, paint. Parking. No pets. At Emerald and Cass. Available now. 619-286-3400.

PACIFIC BEACH. 2 bedroom, 2 bath. 2-parking spaces. Laundry. Closet. Near I-5/day. Complex amenities. 4833 Bella Pacific Row, #119. \$1900. Agent, Micki: 858-454-3076, 619-861-3076.

PACIFIC BEACH. 1 bedroom on beach plus 2 bedroom in the 2000 block of Garnet. 6 month's lease. Pets under 30 lbs ok. Roomies/co-signers ok. Office open 7 days. 4217 Oliver Court. 858-483-7670.

PACIFIC BEACH. 3 bedroom, 2.5 bath townhouse. New-built 2005! High end custom construction. Tiled kitchen/bath. Quality Berber carpet. Built-in closets. Nonsmoking. \$1950. 858-270-2576.

PACIFIC BEACH. \$1700. 2 bedroom, 2 bath condo. Quiet, nice location, Garage and carport. Washer/dryer. Dishwasher. Fireplace. Large deck. Available now. 619-276-9625; 619-624-0671.

PACIFIC BEACH/ Studio. \$800 plus \$500 deposit. On-site parking. All utilities paid. 4220 Noyes, between Oliver and Grand. Lease and credit check required. Call 714-505-4923.

PACIFIC BEACH. \$1200/month. 1 bedroom, 1 bath apartment (20x18). 2 blocks to beach. Parking space. Laundry. Water paid. Large closets. No pets. 936 Loring. 619-218-2220.

PACIFIC BEACH. 1 bedroom available now! Top floor, vaulted ceiling. End unit. \$975. New kitchen, ceiling fan, pool, parking, laundry. No pets. Hurry! 858-536-1900.

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PACIFIC BEACH. \$1495. 2 bedroom, 1-1/2 bath townhome. Small yard with shed. Excellent condition. New paint. Gas appliances. Parking space. No pets. 5162 Dawes Street. Shore Management, 858-274-3500.

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PACIFIC BEACH. \$875. Downstairs 1 bedroom, 1 bath apartment. On-site laundry and parking. No pets. 1965 Hornblend #1. Please call 619-698-1400 or 619-992-7754.

PACIFIC BEACH/CROWN POINT. \$895/rent, \$450/deposit. Beautiful large studio on the bay. Great floorplan. No pets. Available in January. 3976 Morrell Street. 858-483-3221.

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PACIFIC BEACH. \$500 off first month's rent! Charming 2 bedroom apartments from \$1555. Only 1 block from the beach! Located in the north Pacific Beach neigh-

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PACIFIC BEACH. Large 2 bedroom, 1-1/2 bath, downstairs, new paint, new carpet, with garage. Laundry on site. Lots of storage. Near all. No pets. 1663 Diamond Street #1. \$1650. 858-483-5111 x10 or apply online at www.melroyproperties.com.



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PACIFIC BEACH. 2 bedroom, 1 bath cottage. Close to bay. \$1250/month, \$1000/deposit. Parking, laundry facility, no pets. 4115 Inghram Street. 858-270-4674.

PACIFIC BEACH. \$1195. 1 bedroom in quiet 4-plex. Stove, refrigerator, coin laundry, garage with opener. Nice shared lawn area. Available 12/1. 1360 Reed. Del Sol Property Management, Broker, 858-270-2071; www.delsolpjm.com.

PACIFIC BEACH. \$925. 1 bedroom, downstairs. Stove, refrigerator, gas fireplace, coin laundry, parking, 7 blocks to ocean. No pets. Available 12/10. 1452 Grand. Del Sol Property Management, Broker, 858-270-2071; www.delsolpjm.com.

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PACIFIC BEACH/CROWN POINT. \$1450. 2 bedroom, 2 bath. Large, upstairs unit with new carpet, vaulted ceilings, stove, refrigerator, dishwasher, fireplace, coin laundry, garage. No pets. Available 12/15. 4122 Jewell. Del Sol Property Management, Broker, 858-270-2071; www.delsolpjm.com.

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PACIFIC BEACH/CROWN POINT. \$1375. 2 bedroom, 1 bath cottage, on quiet 2 unit property. Stove, refrigerator, garage, nice front lawn, water/gardener paid. Cat OK with additional \$300 deposit. Easy freeway access. Available 12/21. 2145 Thomas. Del Sol Property Management, Broker, 858-270-2071; www.delsolpjm.com.

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PACIFIC BEACH, NORTH. \$1475-\$1495. 2 bedroom, 1 bath. Downstairs. Large units. Stove, refrigerator. Open parking space or garage space. Coin laundry. Private patio. 2-1/2 blocks to ocean. Cat OK with additional \$300 deposit. Available 1/10/08. 945 Chalcedony. Del Sol Property Management, Broker, 858-270-2071; www.delsolpjm.com.

PACIFIC BEACH, NORTH. \$1475. 2 bedroom, 1 bath. Large, upstairs. Stove, refrigerator. Private balcony. Parking. Coin laundry. No pets. Available 1/11/08. 1032 Beryl. Del Sol Property Management, Broker, 858-270-2071; www.delsolpjm.com.

PACIFIC BEACH/CROWN POINT. \$1150. Large, quiet, immaculate 1 bedroom. Bright, sunny. New stove/refrigerator. Parking. 2 blocks/bay. 3709 Promontory. No pets. 858-274-6699.

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PACIFIC BEACH/CROWN POINT. \$1050 per month. \$900 deposit. Spacious 1 bedroom. New carpet, verticals. No pets. 1 year lease. Available end of December. View at 3911 Jewell Street. Call 858-270-4266.

PACIFIC BEACH. Junior 1 bedroom, \$975. Near bay. All new paint/carpet. No pets. Available January 20. 1971 Grand Avenue. 858-483-5111 x10. www.melroyproperties.com.

PACIFIC BEACH. Spacious 2 bedroom, 1 bath. 860 Missouri Street #D. Great location, only 1-1/2 blocks to the beach! All utilities paid. One covered parking space. No pets. \$1550/month; deposit \$1550. www.timcassidy.com. Cassidy, Broker, 619-275-LIST.

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PACIFIC BEACH. Bay front penthouse. 4 bedroom, 3 bath. 3000 square feet. Spectacular bay/ocean view! Parking. Elevator. 3740 Rivera. \$5000. Agent, 866-723-9456. www.sdvcr.com.

PACIFIC BEACH. \$925. 1 bedroom. Close to bay with onsite laundry and parking. 4418 Bond Street #7. 858-336-4891 or 619-226-7368 or www.bkbinc.com.

PACIFIC BEACH. 2 bedroom, 1 bath, upper, on alley, \$1350. Open beam ceiling, new paint, parking. Available now. 1464 Grand Avenue. Agent, 619-260-1368. View at <http://www.sevillimgmt.com>.

PACIFIC BEACH. Great values, nice, clean, convenient apartments in multiple Pacific Beach locations. Studios from \$765. 1 bedrooms from \$960. 2 bedrooms from \$1395. Parking, laundry. Some buildings with gated entry, pool and/or deck. No pets. 858-483-3796.

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PACIFIC BEACH. \$1350. 2 bedroom, 1 bath apartment, quiet neighborhood, stove, garden setting, barbecue area. Fee. Free search at www.westsiderentals.com. 619-367-3333.

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PACIFIC BEACH/CROWN POINT. \$1495. 2 bedroom, 2 bath. Holiday special-Free rent until 1/15/08. Half block to Sail Bay. Great location! Partial bay view. Close to restaurants and shopping. Open Saturday, 2:30pm-3:30pm. 3825 Riviera Drive #4. TPPM, 858-699-3851.

PACIFIC BEACH. \$1250-\$1650. Senior building (ages 62+). Open Saturday 10am-12pm. Holiday special-Free rent until 1/15/08. 2 bedroom, 2 bath in controlled access building. Immaculate, washer/dryer, fireplace, secured parking.

1625 Chalcedony Street. TPPM, 619-806-5760.

PACIFIC BEACH. \$1350. 2 bedroom, 1 bath. Cat OK with extra deposit. 1 parking. 2112 Balboa Avenue #11. TPPM, 858-699-3851.

PACIFIC BEACH/CROWN POINT. \$975. Large 1 bedroom. Holiday special-Free rent until 1/15/08. New carpet, paint and blinds. Walk to Sail Bay. Open Saturday, 1-2pm. 4015 Haines Street #6. TPPM, 858-699-3851.

PACIFIC BEACH. \$1350. Holiday special-Free rent until 1/15/08. 2 bedroom, 1-1/2 bath townhome in ultra clean garden property. Easy access location. Laundry, parking. No pets. Su Casa Apartments. Open Saturday, 11:30am-12:30pm. 2155 Felspar Street #12. TPPM, 858-699-3851.

PACIFIC BEACH. 3 bedroom, 2 bath. New carpet, paint, flooring. Completely remodeled. Balcony. View. Quiet. Gated. Covered parking. Small pets OK. \$2300 plus deposit. 619-339-9951.

PACIFIC BEACH. \$1200. 1 bedroom, 1 bath apartment. Upper level. Off-street parking. Laundry on site. No pets. 4451 Haines Street. 858-270-4492 x203.

PACIFIC BEACH. \$900. Studio. 3 blocks to beach. Assigned off street parking. Laundry on-site. No pets. 1050 Hornblend. 858-270-4492 x203.

PACIFIC BEACH. Bright 2 bedroom, 2 full baths! Upstairs unit. Newer carpet. Laundry, 2 parking. Quiet. 1948 Emerald. \$1485. Available 1/1. By appointment. 858-554-0400. signal2000@yahoo.com.

PACIFIC BEACH. \$1700. 2 bedroom, 1 bath. 3 blocks to beach. Assigned off-street parking. Laundry on-site. Available mid-December. No pets. 1050 Hornblend. 858-270-4492 x203.

PARADISE HILLS. 3 bedroom, 2.5 bath, 3-story townhome built 2007. 1535 estimated square footage. 425 Meadowbrook #108. Community pool, Jacuzzi. 2-car garage, air conditioning, dishwasher, microwave. \$1900/month. Agent, 619-471-2201.

POINT LOMA. Studio, \$760. Bright, airy, upstairs unit, near Sports Arena. Beautifully landscaped, security gate, laundry. No pets. Available 1/3/08. 3191 Kemper, #11. 760-505-7736, www.lomascenic.com.

POINT LOMA/OCEAN BEACH. \$1550. 2 bedroom, 2 bath condo. Upper unit. Fireplace, washer/dryer. Cable and water included. Pool and spa. 619-954-1922 or 858-337-2117.

POINT LOMA/SUNSET CLIFFS. \$1600. 2 bedroom, 1 bath. Garage. Steps to ocean! Quiet. Laundry facilities on site. Pets OK. 4825 Orchard. 619-222-6020.

POINT LOMA. \$895 rent. \$600 deposit, OAC. 1 bedroom. Laundry. Parking

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space. Pool. New carpet. No pets. At 2625 Camulos Street #13. 619-523-1453.

POINT LOMA. \$1150 rent. \$600 deposit. OAC. 2 bedroom, 1 bath. Hardwood floors and new carpet in bedrooms. 1-car garage. Laundry. No pets. At 2839 Shelter Island Drive. Agent, 619-299-8515.

POINT LOMA. 1 bedroom, 1 bath from \$1250. 2 bedroom, 2 bath from \$1550. Beautiful apartment homes. Pool, spa and view deck, fitness center, media room, gated parking, gorgeous gated community. 3950 Leland. 619-223-1390.

POINT LOMA. No rent until January, 2008! Free iPhone! Expires 12/31/07, 13-18 month lease. Newly renovated 1 bedrooms from \$1325! City and bay views! Caesar-Stone countertops. Stainless-steel appliances. Pool, spa, sauna. Sundeck. Fitness centers. Elevators. Air conditioning. Cat friendly. Gables Point Loma, 3811 Marquette Place. 619-223-6577. Gables.com. www.sdreader.com/rent/1003.

POINT LOMA. \$850. 1 bedroom attached cottage. Located near Shelter Island and Liberty Station. No pets. 2809 Jarvis Street. Call 619-222-4836 x14 or www.sunsetpacificrealty.com.

POWAY. \$1125. 2 bedroom, 1 bath apartments. Beautiful courtyard, pool, dishwasher, patio or balcony, parking, laundry. No pets. 12500 Oak Knoll. 858-679-1789.

POWAY. 1 bedroom from \$895. Laundry. Near shopping and more. No pets. 12529 Oak Knoll. 858-486-0109.

RANCHO PENASQUITOS. 2 bedroom, 1 bath, \$1250-\$1350/month. Low \$500 deposits! Newly remodeled. Air conditioning. Pool, spa. Carport. No pets. Rancho Villas Apartments. Call 858-484-0744.

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RANCHO SAN DIEGO. 1 and 2 bedrooms, brand new resort-style community! \$1100-\$1500. Granite, tile, washer/dryer in unit, parking, pool, tennis, gym. Available late February. 619-279-0031.

SAN CARLOS. Super special! 2 bedroom townhouses. \$1375 and up. Stove, dishwasher, garage, large patio, pool, laundry facilities. Lakewood Villa Townhomes, 8492 San Carlos Drive, San Diego. 619-469-3585; 619-944-0671.

SANTEE. \$825. 2 bedroom, 1 bath. Also 1 bedroom, 1 bath for \$775. On-site laundry, off-street parking. No pets. 8527 Graves Avenue. 619-258-2584.

SERRA MESA. \$1395. 2 bedroom, 2 bath. Wood floors. Walk-in closet. Community pool. Weight room. Kids play area. Parking. Stackable washer and dryer.

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SPRING VALLEY. 9924 Buena Vista Drive. 1 bedroom, 1 bath, \$795. 1/2 off first month. Section 8 OK. Won't last, clean and quiet. reader@sdcpm.net. SD-CPM, 619-220-4840.

SPRING VALLEY. \$2095. 3 bedroom, 2-1/2 bath. Half off. Great ocean views. Wood floors. Large yard. Cozy fireplace. 858-598-1111 x192. utopiamgmt.com.

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TIERRASANTA. \$2025. 3 bedroom, 1-1/2 bath townhome. Washer/dryer. 1600 square feet. Garage. Recently upgraded. Community pool. Edge Park Way. Agent, 619-692-4121.

TIERRASANTA. \$895. 1 bedroom, 1 bath. Senior complex. Gated, quiet complex, recreation room with activities, on-site laundry. Next to shopping, bank, pharmacy and more. Cat OK. Section 8 OK. 4906 La Cuenta Drive. 619-296-6699.

UNIVERSITY CITY/UTC. Avanti! at Renaissance. \$1800. Month to month agreement. Property on the market for sale. 2 bedroom, 2.5 bath townhouse. 2-car garage. Fireplace, hardwood floors, laundry. Available now. No pets. Call Coldwell Banker Property Management, 858-488-2228.

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS \$845. 1 bedroom, upper. North of Adams west of 805. Bright, faces south, parking laundry. Available 12/17. Owner managed. 619-280-8832. mchev08@yahoo.com.

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS. \$1250. Spacious 2 bedroom, 2 bath. Upstairs. Balcony. Small, cozy complex. Dishwasher. Laundry on-site. Parking. 4460 Cleveland Avenue #5. Agent, 619-298-7724.

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS. \$950. 1 bedroom, 1 bath, small patio, built-in book shelf, large closet, laundry on site, parking. No pets. 4613 Alabama Street. CCPM, 619-296-6699.

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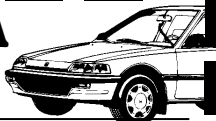
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BACK WHEN

In the Reader

Thirty Years Ago

DENISE: How about going cruising sometime on ATCs?! We can go pick up Mike & Scott. I can dig it!! (Crown Point) Sue.

GIRL ON BICYCLE: We shared a smile on 42nd & El Cajon Thursday, Dec. 8. How about sharing some more? Reply through *Reader*. Off-blue pickup.

VIGI: When Jackson Browne was on the late show he was wearing my shoes. Tony.

BEETHOVEN'S FIFTH was based upon the scent of fresh garlic. SFS.

—CLASSIFIEDS, December 22, 1977

Twenty-Five Years Ago

Dear Matthew Alice:

I recently went to a Chinese restaurant in Hillcrest which specializes in Mandarin and Szechwan cuisine. I ordered Kung Pao shrimp to go. When I got home I discovered nothing similar to Kung Pao shrimp in the carton. Laws govern substitution (abalone must be abalone, not squid or octopus), size of portions, method of preparation (baked ham must be baked), graphics (your burger must look like its picture on the menu), and so on. But as Jim Waddell of the state department of health services says, as long as your dish

had shrimp in it, it was legally Kung Pao shrimp.

—STRAIGHT FROM THE HIP, *Matthew Alice*,

December 23, 1982

Twenty Years Ago

Mayor Maureen O'Connor loves taking credit for the San Diego Trolley's success. "On time and under budget!" she brags when telling voters how she helped get the red cars rolling. And O'Connor soaked up national publicity this month when CBS's *60 Minutes* let her gush about the Little Trolley That Could. But when important, often tedious meetings are held to discuss the trolley's finances, its present performance, and future expansion, O'Connor is usually missing.

—THE INSIDE STORY, *Paul Krueger*, December 23, 1987

Fifteen Years Ago

It was almost a year ago exactly that I was sharing an apartment in North Park with a cherubic-looking yet ferretlike little man I didn't know very well.

Around the first of October, after being roommates for four months and lending him money almost daily, he took my rent money

and my half of the security deposit — 750 of my favorite dollars all told — and disappeared.

He chose to take a powder on the day after the body of nine-year-old Amanda Gaeke was found in a canyon some 50 yards from our address. He had also left behind blood-soaked towels, Levis, and T-shirts, which were later determined to be his own blood, but meantime he had become a suspect in the girl's killing.

—“LOSS OF CONTROL,” *John Brizzolara*,

December 23, 1992

Ten Years Ago

Of course, we've heard all this before. We've seen the "Jesus is the reason for the season" billboards, heard the reminders that the poor are with us always, not just for the holidays, to the point where we enjoy the prick of guilt. We feel better if we can admit that it's all a sham, albeit a fun sham, and go on our merry way. As if the mere acknowledgment of the humbug made it okay. "Ouch, we're spiritually bankrupt, selfish, and materialistic. Whatever. Isn't this a darling sweater?"

—“WHY WE WROTE STORIES,” *Matt Lickona and*

Ernie Grimm, December 24, 1997



San Diego Reader, December 23, 1987

Five Years Ago

I told myself it wouldn't happen to me. I would never become like the worrywart-old gals in my family, the kind who think of deadly falls whenever a kid climbs a tree or pneumonia whenever someone coughs. But now, a few shades past 30, I found myself in a panic over Christmas-tree fires. I started looking into home extinguishers.

On that score, my meeting with David Burk, division chief fire marshal for La Mesa, didn't help much. Burk showed me a video of a Christmas-tree fire; the entire tree was engulfed in flames within four to five seconds.

—BEST BUYS, *Eve Kelly*, December 19, 2002

Columns archived at SanDiegoReader.com

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS. 2 bedroom, 1 bath, \$1025. On wooded canyon hillside. Laundry onsite. 3948 Florida Street. Agent. Call 619-298-1057. View at sevillemgmt.com.

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS/NORTH Park. \$925. 1 bedroom, 1 bath. 1-parking. Lovely, gated 18-unit complex. Electronic gate entry. Coin laundry. Garage available (\$65). 619-297-0980.

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS. \$875. Large, corner 1 bedroom, 1 bath, lower, gated complex, appliances, built-ins, on-site laundry. No pets. Section 8. 4452 Louisiana Street. 619-804-3325.

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS. 1 bedroom duplex, restored wood floors, new kitchen, new bathroom, off-street parking, extra storage. Only \$850/month. Don't wait, call 619-922-0755 for an appointment.

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UTC. Move-in today to take advantage of 1/2 off first's rent! Spacious 1 bedroom, 1 bath condo. All appliances. Many upgrades. Great community amenities. Pet friendly unit only. \$1395 per month. Call for an appointment, 619-291-5555 x190. www.utopiamanagement.com.

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AMAZING! Room for everything! Almost 1 acre, newer home. 4 bedroom, 2 bath. Family room, fireplace, RV parking. Reduced by \$71,000! \$549,000. Agent Kelly, 619-562-6999.

BEAUTIFUL DUPLEX! Two units: each 2 bedroom, 1 bath. Excellent condition. Huge lot! Income producing! 7095/7097 Central, Lemon Grove. www.ElisabethSellsSanDiego.com. 619-788-2720.

BONSALL. Custom Tudor 3648 square foot 4 bedroom 3-1/2 bath, 4 acres. Granite countertops in kitchen, hardwood floors, upgraded carpeting, remodeled bathrooms. \$1,199,000/owner, 760-912-5200.

CHULA VISTA. Ranch-style 3 bedroom, 3 bath home on cul-de-sac street. Upgraded, spacious interior. Slate-tiled courtyard and brick patio. 2-car garage. \$515,000. Realtor, 619-403-0114.

COLLEGE. Beautiful mid-century home with lots of the original charm and features on cul-de-sac with guest house and pool! \$649,900 and \$669,900. 5525 Stone Court. Ascent Real Estate, Inc. Jerry Parent, 619-517-0804.

DOWNTOWN. Foreclosure, 3 bedroom, 2 bath house. \$165,000 remaining on the mortgage. \$1,125 calculated monthly payments. We also have other availabilities in the area. 805-679-6840.

EL CAJON. Mobile home. Senior park. Pool. Reduced to \$19,500/best. 1+ bedroom 1 bath. Refurbished, carport, air conditioning, washer/dryer. Low lot rent. Owner, 858-581-9151.

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IMMACULATE, STUNNING 3 bedroom, 2 bath house. Completely remodeled. Dual-pane windows. Electrical upgraded. New heater/air conditioning. California room. Nice landscaping. \$419,800. Rob, 619-709-0759.

JAMUL. Almost 1.5 acres (2 separate parcels) all usable with seasonal creek and oak trees. 3 bedrooms, 1500+ square feet. Great room, fireplace, \$325,000. No Agents! Kelly Re/Max, 619-562-6999.

KANSAS. 2 bedroom, 1 bath country home with large yard. Pretty and quiet like Mayberry! \$8,500 or best offer. 858-344-7375.

LA JOLLA. Amazing ocean view studio condo. Unit includes all new furnishings, carpet, top of the line appliances and custom interior decor. \$449,900. 939 Coast Boulevard. Ascent Real Estate, Inc. Jerry Parent, 619-517-0804.

MENIFEE. New, custom horse ranch. Take my house for what I owe. Single story, 4 bedroom, 4 bath, outdoor shower and game room. Rod, 808-854-9636.

NORTH PARK-GRAND Opening! 15 new construction rowhomes from the low

\$400,000s. Multiple floorplans available. Call for more information, 619-401-3097.

OCEANSIDE. Beach house, 2 living spaces, great neighborhood, 3 bedroom, 2 bath, double fireplace, sun-room, office, 50' driveway, carpeted hardwood floors. \$649,000. By owner, 760-754-1339.

OREGON/UMATILLA, 303 acre Umatilla buffalo ranch. Nice 2100 square foot custom log home, 6000 square foot shop, buffalo corrals, 125 acre irrigated circle with water rides, 270 acres of rock, all rock are leased under mining

permit. Minutes from town, 541-567-2833.

PANORAMIC VIEW HOME! Santee 3 bedroom, 2-car garage, small house. New patio with rose bushes, lots of flowers. Many upgrades! Only \$399,900. Agent Kelly, 619-562-6999.

POWAY. Priced to sell! Conservative appraisal at \$920,000, asking \$875,000. Everything updated! 5 bedroom, 3 bath beautiful single-story. E-mail for pictures. xinnamangirl@yahoo.com. Call 619-504-5417.

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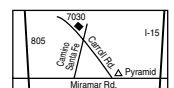
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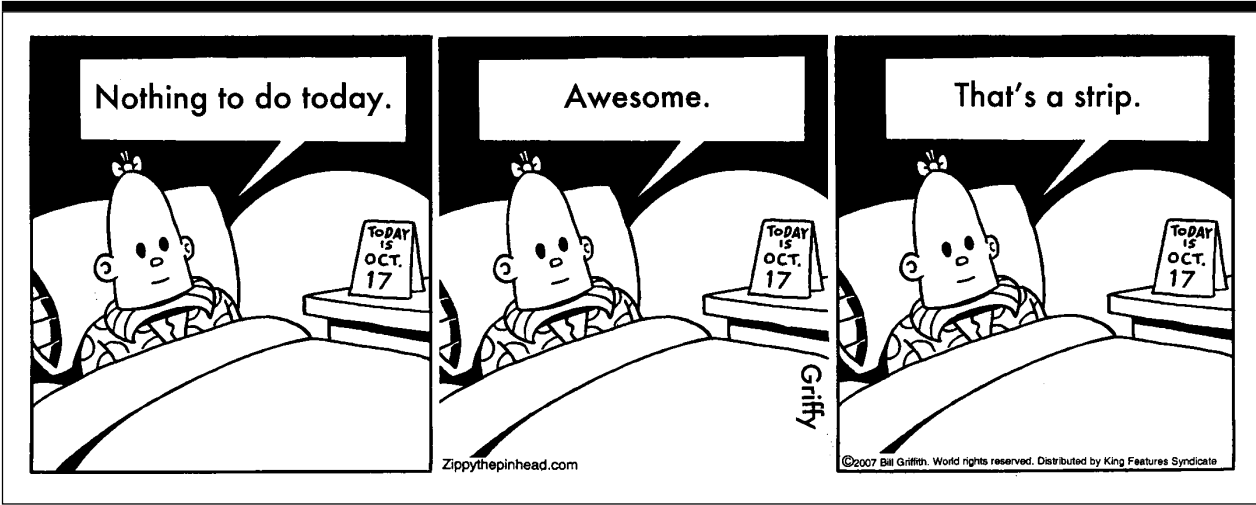


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DEL MAR. Lovely, sunny 2 bedroom, 2 bath condo with pool and Jacuzzi. Monthly interest \$1695. \$15,000 down. APR only 5.9%. Call Agent, Elizabeth, at 619-286-5813.

DOWNTOWN. Studio condo, 12th floor. Balcony with views. Parking. Discounted. \$7,760 down required. Buyer to finance balance of \$250,884. Owner. 858-272-2760, rriecken@san.rr.com.

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LA JOLLA. Sunny, lovely 2 bedroom, 2 bath condo with pool and Jacuzzi. Monthly interest \$1695. \$15,000 down.

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SAN DIEGO. Investment property for sale. Great opportunity, 5 units, 3 buildings plus 4 car garage in 1 lot. Well maintained! Positive monthly income. Call Top Notch Realty Inc. for details. 858-715-0688.

UTC AREA. Sunny, lovely 2 bedroom, 2 bath condo with pool and Jacuzzi. Monthly interest \$1695. \$15,000 down. APR only 5.9%. Call Agent, Elizabeth, at 619-286-5813.

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KERN COUNTY, 5 acres, \$22,000/best. California City in Kern County, California. Call David, owner, 619-944-4422.

KERN COUNTY, 20.1 acres \$37,000/best. California City in Kern County, California. Call David, owner, 619-944-4422.

MOBILE HOME, 718 Scamore Avenue, #82, Vista. New kitchen, both bathrooms, tile floors, slate floor in California room, thermal windows, 1440 square feet, \$79,500. 760-599-0249.

NEW MEXICO, Chaparral. D & B Farm. Pistachio orchard, 60 acres, custom home (4 bedrooms), guest house/office, warehouse, shop, processing, storage. See: www.DandBPistachios.com.

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constructed, 3 face power and single face power. New drilled well. Close to Columbia River recreation, zoned residential, \$265,000. Stuart Bonney 541-567-2833.

SANTEE. Mobile home, 3 bedroom, 2 bath, senior park, central heating, air conditioning, swamp cooler. Space rent, \$485. Open house: 1-4pm, Sundays. \$48,000. 619-442-4514.

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REDEFINING CHAOS THEORY

On a recent trip to Italy, I met an Israeli from Jerusalem whom I asked how many suicide bomb blasts he had witnessed. "CNN is not Israel" was his curt reply.

In that I found an answer to many who ask me if it is true that Nigeria is a very dangerous country. "Is it true that foreigners risk being kidnapped in Nigeria? Is it true that Nigerians are fraudulent?" And on and on. Two Nigerias exist — the media construct and the real one. I live in the latter. I was born there, and that's where I live and work.

CNN is not Nigeria.

Another friend, an Italian, spent a summer in South Africa, and when we met in Rome, he proudly informed me that he had been to Africa. "No, you haven't," I mischievously replied. "What do you mean?" he asked. "Well," I began, "you have not actually been to Africa. True you have been to South Africa, and perhaps only to the capital, but until you come to Nigeria, my guess is that your African CV will remain incomplete." I wasn't joking.

The first thing that hits you at the Lagos International Airport is the heat. Okay, maybe not the heat, but the heat plus humidity...and the noise. You see, my people are noisy, like a man with plenty to say but lacking an attentive audience. As loud as their voices can be, though, the typical Nigerian has a very big heart. Talk to any foreigner who braves the odds to visit Nigeria: they all leave with a deep sense of pain because they must leave a part of their heart behind, having been beneficiaries of the warm kindness and hospitality that Nigerians give to every visitor. It's true, but you don't have to believe me. Come.

Take the traffic for example. In Nigeria, we call a traffic

jam "go-slow" in apparent reference to the snail speed of vehicles. A friend of mine who, like me, lives and works in Lagos, prefers to call it "go-no!" because in Victoria Island you can sometimes move 500 metres in three hours.

But when Lagos traffic does move, it is a madhouse, and you are lucky to get back home without a scratch or dent on your car.

Driving in traffic, today as many other days, it is raining heavily. From the closed windows of my car, I hear a siren blaring behind me. In the rear-view mirror, I see the black Toyota Hilux van approaching, its headlights on. It is 10:00 a.m. Thursday morning. Of course, he is going nowhere because traffic is choked up all around him. But he drives roughly, pushing and threatening with reckless abandon because the body of his car has been reinforced with metal grates that protect it from brushes with other cars. Though every wise driver wants to give way to this fool, it is not easy this time, because the traffic is "go-no!" And so the siren-blaring vehicle is forced to crawl with everyone, but soon he finds an opening,

and he charges through.

As he passes, I realize he was not what I thought. It was not a money-bearing bullion van, for the driver was all alone, and there were no gun-toting policemen that usually accompany a money-laden vehicle of this nature. It was simply a man accustomed to always having his way in traffic that couldn't resist using the tool of power



in his possession — the siren.

It seems that bullion vans in Lagos have a separate traffic code. They drive on opposite sides of the road, against oncoming traffic. The drivers of these boxes of death pride themselves on rivaling Michael Schumacher with their dexterity at the wheel, though many have died in the process. Pity, too, that they have taken more lives that are not theirs.

In the final analysis, the chaos in Lagos is only apparent because each of the participants has a mission: he is coming from somewhere and has a destination. Though one is tempted to dismiss them as a mass, behind each of those individuals is a motley crowd of dependents, waiting for his return because on that depends their next meal.

And, finally, when night falls, those same streets are empty because people have gone home. Home for some is real, while for others it is under a bridge, in that small crevice formed by the bridge joints and the road surface, the so-called "under-bridge."

It is often said that studying the facade of any house is enough to tell about the inside. This saying cannot apply to Nigeria, however, because though Lagos is the entry point for many foreign visitors, its population is a potpourri that does not belong there. Each one has come for a piece of the economic action.

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condition, \$325. Del Cerro, 619-583-4398.

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OLD TOWN. Garage sale. Saturday, 12/22, 9am. TVs, electronics, sporting goods, tools, hardware, leather goods, knickknacks, collectibles, clothing, household goods. 4111 Mason Street.

SAN DIEGO. Garage sale. 12/21-12/22, 9am-2pm. Everything must go. Bedrooms, dining room, living room, dishes, glasses, washer/dryer, freezer, microwave, cabinets, knickknacks. 618 Arroyo Drive.

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OVEN. 29-1/2" across, 35" high, gas, 1 year old, Sears, white, nice, \$250. Dishwasher, white, 1 year old, Sears, \$65. Printer, Hewlett Packard, \$20. 760-839-9195.

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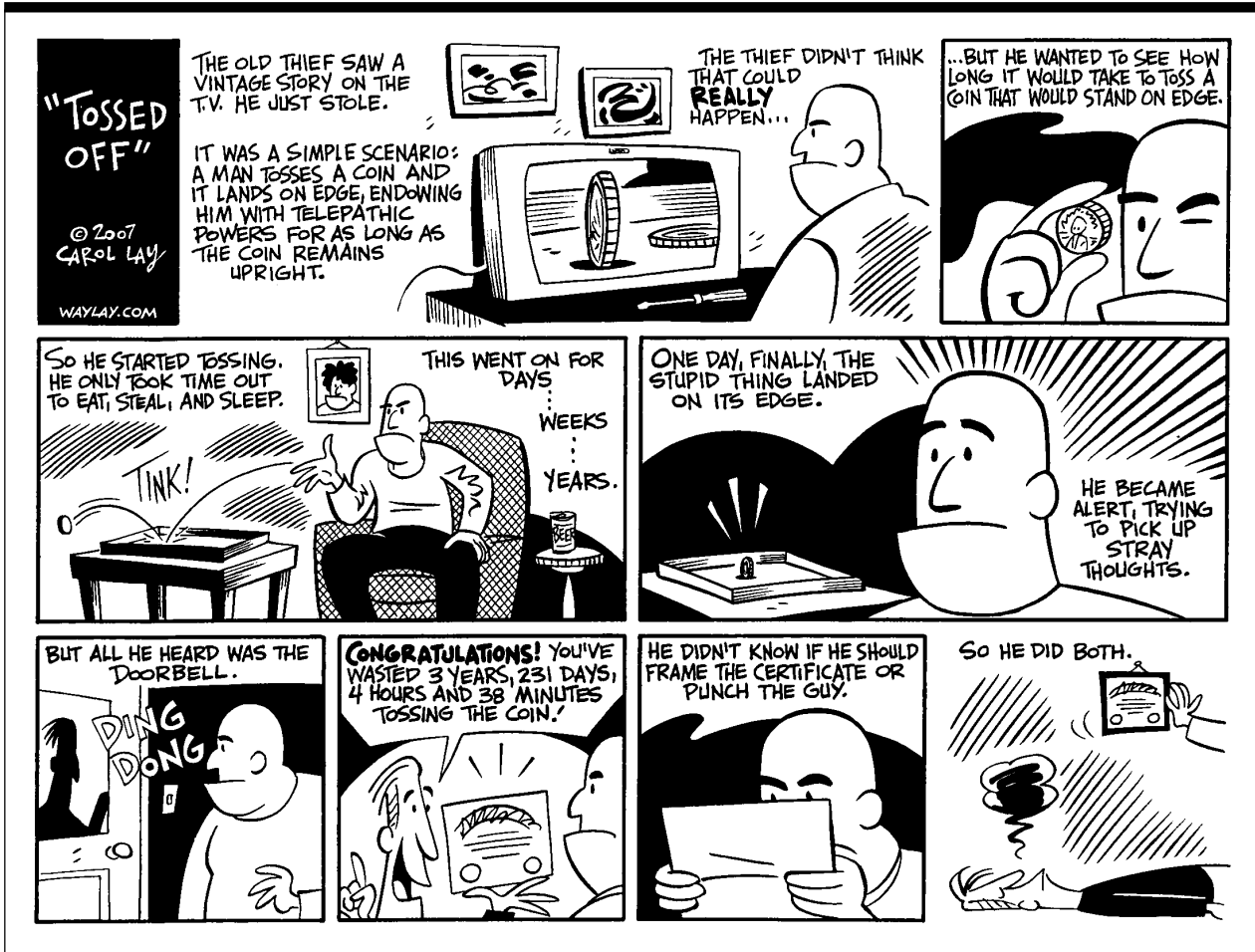


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PANASONIC KX-FP 155 phone, fax, copier, answer machine \$95. Still in box. 619-574-7530.
XM SATELLITE RADIO, Pioneer Innot, new, still in box, \$185/best. Delphi Roady2 with portable kit, new, \$65/best. Call Mike, 858-610-6627.

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BED FRAME, metal. Fits different size beds. Can be easily taken apart to be transported in a car. \$20. 858-277-3065.

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CHAIR and ottoman, overstuffed with feather, custom built, burgundy with blend cushion, 36"W, moving, must sell, \$125/best. UTC, 858-652-8738.

DINING SET, china cabinet, server, 42" round table, three 18" inserts by Kroehler, 5 rattan chairs with floral print, antique white, good condition, \$240. 619-225-0584.

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MATTRESS, TWIN, box spring and frame with sheets and spread, very good condition, \$100. 858-597-0856 or 619-890-9624.

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OFFICE CHAIR, large, black, swivels, height adjustable, arms, wheels, nice, cost \$170, sell \$60. 619-890-9624 or 858-597-0856.

OFFICE CORNER UNIT, 7 piece, custom, solid wood, natural finish, lots of storage, set up to fit your space, 80" tall, beautiful, \$850. Email pictures. Vista, 760-941-0541.

STEREO CABINET with glass door and shelves, 19"W, can set small TV on top, dark walnut color, very good condition, \$40. 858-597-0856 or 619-890-9624.

MISCELLANEOUS
For Sale

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AIR COMPRESSOR, Sears Craftsman, 1/3hp, portable, tankless, with spray gun and hose, ideal for small projects, filling tires, etc., only \$35. 760-942-7447.

AIR RIFLE, RWS model 34, 1000fps., \$175, still in box. 619-574-7530.

AUTHENTIC PLATES with certificates, "The Christmas Story" in 6 plates, by W.L. George fine china, artist Hector Garrido, retail \$40 each, sell \$20/best each. 619-435-9970.

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CARD TABLE with 4 padded chairs, Samsonite, \$45. Genuine Coach black leather portfolio, never used, \$50. Antique quilt, \$35. Train, Mighty Casey, battery operated, \$25. 619-282-9581.

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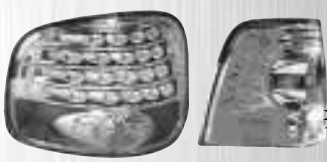
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ABRAHAM LINCOLN WAS BORN ON MAY 6, 1954, TO A POOR FAMILY of Central California date farmers. Baby Abraham came out bald as a spoon except for a full beard. His first photographs, grainy black-and-whites, show tiny Abe with a bristly chin line and earnest profile.

It was in his mid teens that the family realized Abe had a medical condition. A country doctor diagnosed Abe with a rare form of gigantism. Abe's rioting pituitary squeezed abnormally large globs of growth hormone into his bloodstream and the effect was elongated limbs and orangutan strength. Picking dates, hauling baskets, transporting ladders, and splitting kindling were all easy and natural to Abraham Lincoln. He was a great help around the farm.

At 17, Abe desired to leave the small date farm and enter Professional Wrestling College in Ventura Beach. You can understand his father's reluctance to let Abe go; he was not only losing a farmhand but also a son. Jebediah, Abe's father, knew that Abe would eventually resent staying on the farm. And Jebediah was nothing if not a reasonable man — his name around town was "Reasonable Jebediah Lincoln" — so he blessed Abe's wish to leave.

Before hopping aboard the flatbed truck of migrant workers heading for the village bus station, Reasonable Jebediah took Abraham by the jacket lapel and said, "Son, remember to always be upstanding, forthright, and honest." And Jebediah placed his own stovepipe top hat on his towering son Abraham's head. Jebediah said, "There, that top hat should keep the bird crap off your ears."

It was his father's memory and tall black hat that forged the "Honest Abe" persona outside of the wrestling ring. The fans adored it. But, inside the ring, Abe was a frightening terror. A wild beast of gnashing teeth, sinewy arms, and a ramrod-strong back that hoisted his opponents to the sky and flung them into the audience one by one. Honest Abe Lincoln was undefeated in all the land, and townships heralded the arrival of his trademark black tights and suspenders, jaw-line whiskers, and tall hat.

Abraham Lincoln retired as the greatest professional wrestler of all time and became the first inductee into the National Professional Wrestling Hall of Fame in Ventura Beach, a hundred miles or so from a small Central California date farm.

WHAT I WILL AND WON'T WATCH THIS WEEK

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20

SAN DIEGO LIVING
FOX 9:00 A.M.

There's a Yorkie dog that lives in a palm tree above a yellow taco shop on my block. If someone drops a glob of saucy burrito to the concrete, the Yorkie dog swoops down from its perch and gobbles the discarded slop. He has a little red cape and mask to protect his identity. The flying burrito-snatching Yorkie could be any Yorkie you encounter during the day and you'd never know it. Damn, that dog loves burritos.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL
ESPN 6:30 P.M.

As part of your nutritional breakfast, I now come fortified with iron, B vitamins, and a lack of dignity. Former sports stars with broken knees and Percocet habits enjoy me with juice, toast, and a longing for misspent youth

and forgotten greatness. I smell of cornmeal and shame, and from my soggy position in their bowl, I look up at them and secretly pity.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21

DUEL
ABC 8:00 P.M.

Secretly Pity was the name of my all-female pop group in the '90s. We were like overweight Spice Girls. My name was Chain-Lube Pity and I was romantically linked to a roadie who'd had the "shame" center of his brain shot out during Desert Storm One. It was my bitter rivalry with Sunblock-or-Spit-in-a-Pinch Pity that rent our megagroup asunder.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22

FINAL DESTINATION
USA 10:00 A.M.

Ike Turner done got called up to the big stage. With the death of James Brown last year and

Evel Kneivel last week, we're getting dangerously close to counting the number of people who wore sequined jumpsuits for a living, sadly, at zero. Perhaps it is me who should take up the roomy-around-the-calf-but-oddly-tight-in-the-mid-torso-region, spangled-and-unzipped-to-the-belly-button look. Perhaps it is me.

AMERICAN IDOL REWIND
CW 8:00 P.M.

It only now occurred to me that between the three of the prodigious stars listed above there are about 295 children. I'm guessing there's a link between fertility and the clingy support of a stretchy, multicolored onesie. The crotch region is what I'm talking about. Yes, James Brown's, Evel Kneivel's, and Ike Turner's well-wrapped "middle" areas are what is being discussed here. The "bundles of star power," one might say. It's worth considering; these fine men's cupped and swathed "charisma," as it were. Let's get it out in the open. Let's talk about it.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23

SO YOU MADE A MOVIE
CASD4 7:30 P.M.

Since my girlfriend left me last month, my laundry has backed up and I only wear tighty whities, smudges of grime, and desperation. On my way to the store last week, I was stopped by a camera crew and the director asked, "Hey, did you just get dumped?" and I answered, yes, I had. He said, "Great! We're shooting a documentary entitled *American Loser* and the location is: you. Ha ha ha ha!" I glared at him, but he and his friends were already gone. Wow, that guy's cool. He's a movie director and he has friends. *Sigh*.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 24

BBC WORLD NEWS
PBS 6:00 P.M.

My next language campaign is to de-vilify the terms "he who smelt it dealt it" and "sloppy seconds." These are perfectly good phrases that carry with them the stigma of being foul. I'm going to see if I can club Hillary Clinton's speechwriter on the head, nab his three-by-five cards, and begin my project of reclamation. I'm thinking the "Yucca Mountain nuclear



Elf

waste" issue is a good jumping-off point for both.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 25 (HO! HO! SWEET STINKIN' HO!)

ELF
USA 7:00 P.M.

Pinch my nipples and run around the yard. Yee haw! It's Christmas. Pass me glittery boxes of light-up Wham-O-Dyne Wonder and then gently color my surroundings rose and the photographs of today sepia. It's Christmas! Bark at the mailman if he brings the wrong packages. I'm going to get so drunk!

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 26

CROWNED: THE MOTHER OF ALL PAGEANTS
CW 8:00 P.M.

Lump my compassion into the dirty snow banks and heaps of discarded pine trees. Tinsel hangs around my ears and I weep. Ring that bell in my face once more and I'll sock you in the beak. Is there anything as sad as the day after Christmas? A whole year left. A whole year. I'm going to get drunk.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 27

THE OFFICE
NBC 9:00 P.M.

Now what do we do? Hold our breath until New Year's Eve, I guess. Go into work, but don't really *work*. See who can eat the most cookies or watch a full DVD of *The Family Guy* on his desktop computer without getting caught by middle management. Start a betting pool on when the big girl going through a divorce is going to lock herself in a storage closet with a bottle of vodka and cry herself to sleep. You know, fun things.

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T.G.I.F.

At about ten, everyone was turned away into the rain, mostly to head for bridges under, say, Commercial Street.

By John Brizzolara

I won't bore you with why I was in the hospital yet again, but I will tell you I was pretty much kicked out around sundown on a freezing, raining December night. I was given a cab voucher (invalid because the doc didn't sign it and I had to return to the hospital and seek out an M.D.) to the homeless tent in the parking lot of Petco Park.

I had made the mistake of telling the hospital social worker that my apartment status was in question, that is, I hadn't paid rent for a while. She saw me off to the homeless tent. I had no choice: either there or no cab voucher. I was brought in to the hospital via ambulance with no money, and so, there I was. I could have taken a bus token, but I figured a taxi was far preferable.

The rain was serious and the cold was considerable for an older guy in San Diego. I shuddered and clutched myself, getting soaked by 40-degree rain. Before me was a row of ironic beach-type butterfly chairs, all full of homeless men and women waiting for their lottery ticket number to be called for one of a few remaining beds. Granted, they were all under a kind of makeshift tent or canvas tarp, but the f—ing freezing wind had everybody clutching blankets (if they had them) around their shoulders and bodies, strangers

more or less, huddled together for warmth like some kind of Aleutians.

All of this in the klieglike parking-lot-lamp shadows of the 450-million-dollar baseball park. The City's priorities are clear when you look at this scene. Especially during the winter: the tent is officially referred to as the Winter Shelter.

I stood outside the tarp (no room) for a good two hours, soaked to the marrow and asked ridiculous questions, like, "What do you do if you can't get in? You know, for a bed. Are there alternative places to sleep?" One guy, a veteran of the streets said, "Yeah, fight for a spot under a freeway bridge. And, man, you may have to fight for that. Can you do that?"

"Well, I'm not as tough as I used to think I was. I'm an old guy."

"Old guys cut no slack."

Meanwhile, a guy in a vest with a megaphone, like a carnival barker, was ejaculating ticket numbers — for women first — and two women out of maybe a dozen were assigned beds. Meanwhile, the rain fell at times with a vengeance. The wind howled, as the poet once said, like a hammer.

Possibly a dozen — no, more were waiting for beds. At about ten, everyone was turned away into the rain, mostly to head for bridges under, say, Commercial Street. The looks on their faces could collectively be characterized as neither disappointed, angry, nor sad, but resigned. Most had gone through this routine at one time or another and it was if it were almost expected. Many headed for the trolley stop, heading God-knows-where. I also went to the trolley stop and saw one of the homeless/turned-away women withdraw a few dollars from her wallet. I swallowed too much pride and asked her if she had one she could give me for fare. She did not hesitate.

"Of course, dear. Here you go." Generosity from someone with nothing.

Meanwhile, many of the other exiles from the tent were milling around the trolley stop seeking shelter from the rain and allowing trolley or bus, one after another, to pass by. Almost no one had fare for either.

The trolley at least was warm and dry. But I had to get off at City Center on Third Street to catch the #11 bus on First Avenue toward my place on Adams Avenue and hope I could still get in and there were not, say, new tenants or guys tearing up the carpet, my bed out in the rain by the Dumpster.



The first #11 passed me by without slowing and it took nearly an hour for the next one. My dollar was not sufficient without my disabled I.D. card but the bus driver said, "Go ahead, sit down. I'm not a Nazi."

"I can see that, and I'm grateful."

The night railed against the bus with very few passengers (who in their right mind would be out on a night like this?) and the driver steered through the gale like a veteran rough-water captain.

During the ride, I alternately worried about the state of my apartment — even if I'd be able to get in — and the faces of the men and women outside the tent as they were sent packing. I prayed I was not homeless. That I would not be one of them.

Old guys cut no slack.

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