

# **BULKY DOCUMENTS**

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**Title:** Trial Brief; Notice of Filing; Depositions and Deposition Exhibits; and Index to Notice of Reliance Documents

**Part 7 of 10**

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE BEFORE THE  
TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD**

**The United States Playing Card Company**

**v  
Harbro, LLC.**

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| 431. | The Commercial Appeal                | May 5, 2005                | ... her impromptu trip to Vegas.   |
| 432. | Copley News Service                  | May 5, 2005                | What happens in Vegas goes here  |
| 433. | The Courier-Journal                  | May 5, 2005                | ... I like Vegas. I like the Eagles ...  |
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| 438. | The Dallas Morning News              | May 5, 2005                | Vegas rule   |
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| 440. | FD Wire                              | May 5, 2005                | ... network quite like ours in Vegas ...   |
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| 447. | Las Vegas Review-Journal             | May 5, 2005                | ... hopes to be part of a Vegas-based TV show ...                                |
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| 451. | <i>THE MONTEL WILLIAMS SHOW</i><br>TV Show - SYND  | May 5, 2005<br>5:00 am EST     | ... Yeah, it's about that Vegas thing.                                    |
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| 457. | <i>The Orange County Register</i>                  | May 5, 2005                    | He came home from Vegas a winner  |
| 478. | <i>Pittsburgh Post-Gazette</i>                     | May 5, 2005                    | ... I don't know what the odds were in Vegas , but ...                    |
| 459. | <i>Plain Dealer</i>                                | May 5, 2005                    | ... part of a series on "Breaking Vegas."                                 |
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| 465. | <i>Time-Picayune</i>                               | May 5, 2005                    | ... and hop a bus to Vegas?   |
| 466. | <i>Tulsa World</i>                                 | May 5, 2005                    | ... which became the Aladdin Hotel on the Vegas Strip.                    |
| 467. | <i>University Wire</i>                             | May 5, 2005                    | Most of her time in Vegas was spent hanging around the Greyhound station. |
| 468. | <i>The Associated Press State &amp; Local Wire</i> | May 4, 2005                    | ... a trip to Vegas isn't complete without seeing the Hoover Dam ...      |
| 469. | <i>The Atlanta-Journal-Constitution</i>            | May 4, 2005                    | ... bus fare for two to Vegas and Albuquerque.                            |
| 470. | <i>The Australian</i>                              | May 4, 2005                    | She spent some time in Vegas, ...   |
| 471. | <i>The Baltimore Sun</i>                           | May 4, 2005                    | Honeymoon in Vegas:   |
| 472. | <i>Charlotte Observer</i>                          | May 4, 2005                    | ... took a Greyhound to Vegas and ended up on a pay phone ...             |
| 473. | <i>Cleveland Scene</i>                             | May 4, 2005                    | The glammy big beat of Vegas and Tweekend ...                             |

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| 474. | SHOWBIZ TONIGHT<br>TV Show - CNN     | May 4, 2005<br>7:00 pm EST | She ended up in Vegas anyway, right?   |
| 475. | Cox News Service                     | May 4, 2005                | ... the Vegas market is akin to an evil empire ...                                       |
| 476. | Daily News                           | May 4, 2005                | Two days before, Vegas spies had claimed ...   |
| 477. | THE O'REILLY FACTOR<br>TV Show - FOX | May 4, 2005<br>8:55 pm EST | In a Vegas casino, no problem.   |
| 478. | Comtex News Network                  | May 4, 2005                | ... are arranged to coincide with the NAB show in Vegas.                                 |
| 479. | The Miami Herald                     | May 4, 2005                | Vegas needs a stadium ...  |
| 480. | The News & Observer                  | May 4, 2005                | ... world championship camp with his performance in Vegas.                               |
| 481. | News & Record                        | May 4, 2005                | ... high tailed it to Vegas and concocted that despicable story ...                      |
| 482. | Philadelphia Daily News              | May 4, 2005                | ... Sunday-school teacher was reported by sources in Vegas as having blown her money ... |
| 483. | Philadelphia Inquirer                | May 4, 2005                | ... Greyhound bus in Georgia bound for Vegas.  |
| 484. | Pittsburgh Post-Gazette              | May 4, 2005                | Impressionists in Vegas  |
| 485. | The San Francisco Chronicle          | May 4, 2005                | ... faux kidnapping and solo honeymoon in Vegas cost taxpayers ...                       |
| 486. | Scripps Howard News Service          | May 4, 2005                | I won in Vegas putting a different way.  |
| 487. | The Seattle Post-Intelligencer       | May 4, 2005                | Do shop in on your next Vegas trip.  |
| 488. | The Sports Network                   | May 4, 2005                | ... which as a post time of 2:45 p.m. in Vegas ...                                       |
| 489. | Star Tribune                         | May 4, 2005                | She's asked what would be best for going to Vegas ...                                    |
| 490. | Sun-Sentinel                         | May 4, 2005                | ... says White Sox outfielder Aaron Rowand, another Vegas product.                       |
| 491. | UPI                                  | May 4, 2005                | British 'poker tourist' wins big in Vegas  |
| 492. | Winston-Salem Journal                | May 4, 2005                | I won in Vegas putting a different way.  |
| 493. | The Associated Press                 | May 3, 2005                | And yes, you can get married in Vegas ...  |
| 494. | Business Wire                        | May 3, 2005                | ... the BV Vineyard to Vegas tour ...  |
| 495. | CNN DAYBREAK<br>TV Show - CNN        | May 3, 2005<br>5:00 am EST | Atlanta to Vegas, but ticket, 162 bucks.   |
| 496. | Daily News                           | May 3, 2005                | ... on a chartered plane to Vegas ...  |
| 497. | The Dallas Morning News              | May 3, 2005                | ... such as hopping a bus to Vegas ...   |

|      | <b>Publication</b>           | <b>Date</b> | <b>Use</b>  |
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| 498. | <i>Dayton Daily News</i>     | May 3, 2005 | ... who didn't know Dayton-Vegas is a domestic flight.    |
| 499. | <i>Eureka Times-Standard</i> | May 3, 2005 | ... played professionally in my 20s and 30s in Vegas.     |
| 500. | <i>FD Wire</i>               | May 3, 2005 | ... and we anticipate unparalleled results leaving Vegas. |

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The Observer

May 8, 2005

**SECTION:** Observer Magazine Pages, Pg. 40**LENGTH:** 836 words**HEADLINE:** Observer Magazine: TRIGGER HAPPY: After years of clinically cool minimalism, designers seem torn between a new warmer aesthetic and the excesses of bad taste. Fiona Rattray isn't blown away by gold-plated gun lamps at the Milan Furniture Fair**BYLINE:** Fiona Rattray**BODY:**

Thank heavens for the chestnut seller. After four days spent traipsing around Milan's giant Furniture Fair in search of new furniture and lighting trends, I was sick to death of design. Every April the interiors industry descends on the city to flog its wares and test the waters with the latest looks. This year, the strongest contender for a unifying theme seemed to be excess and bad taste. Minimalism is dead, and no-one, it seems, has the faintest idea what to do next.

So, as I hobbled towards the metro station (next year I will mostly be wearing a pedometer), I could have kissed the man whose sweet-smelling chestnuts seemed so gratifyingly down-to-earth.

Don't get me wrong; there is some hope for the world of interiors. Dutch designer Hella Jongerius was showing a new feminine take on the sofa for the influential Swiss company Vitra. With hand-sewn buttons and a mix of coloured fabrics, it suggests that the days of the butch minimalist sofa (you know the ones, skinny metal legs and barely there upholstery) may be numbered.

If you looked hard enough in Milan, you could detect a slight shift away from the harsh-coloured acrylic and steel of recent years towards a new, softer aesthetic. At Edra, the young British-based Dutch designer Peter Traag had swaddled his fantastic new Mummy dining chairs in copious strips of bright colour. Sturdy-but-cosy felt was enjoying a revival: at the inaugural show by the British company Established & Sons, Michael Young used the thick wool fabric as a cover for his snazzy new writing desk. While Jasper Morrison was championing cork, another gently retro material, with his dainty occasional tables for Cappellini.

On the metal front, it was move over cold chrome and aluminium, because shiny copper - last seen in Seventies bistros - is making a comeback. On Tom Dixon's new big-balled lampshades it looked warm and wonderful. At Moooi, sheet metal came printed with florals, on a pretty chest of drawers. The out-there Dutch company was one of several that plundered antique details (a turned wood leg here, a Chesterfield stud there), and mixed them with modern. Before you go sawing the legs off your gran's dining table, I should add that few of these experiments were very successful.

If you absolutely must have the latest thing in contemporary design here are some top tips. More than one person I met during the Milan week (designers, curators, magazine editors, store buyers. . . they've come from the four corners of the earth to be here) was singing the praises of Ezri Tarazi's New Baghdad table.

The Israeli designer's map of the Iraqi capital, which forms the table top, is cleverly constructed using a patchwork of industrial metal components. The spaces between them cast shadows on the floor. So far so good. But what do you use a table for? Apart from eating, they're for putting things down on, right? And who wants to spend their life on their knees picking up their keys.

If you do fancy a New Baghdad table, might I suggest a Philippe Starck gun light to go with it? The French designer knows a thing or two about making a stir at the Milan Furniture Fair, but that still didn't stop my jaw hitting the floor when I saw his battery of golden guns (seriously they're 18ct gold plated), on the Flos lighting stand.

N/R 327

PC-01019

The Observer, May 8, 2005

One wag suggested this might be Starck's attempt at storming the burgeoning Russian market. I couldn't possibly comment. I can say that if you're the kind of person who could sleep easy with the bedside table version beside you, you're going to love this next suggestion. . .

A few years ago, the then slightly naff Austrian crystal company Swarovski played a blinder at the Milan Furniture Fair by commissioning international designers to create chandeliers in its name. Tord Boontje's delicate Blossom version was a huge critical hit for example. This year they did it again. Only this time they let Lenny Kravitz design one. The pop star's black and chrome Casino Royale chandelier weighs in at 220kg (that's three big blokes to you and me, and trust me, three men on a rope would be more elegant). Suffice it to say that no self-respecting Vegas casino would be seen dead with one.

Far more interesting was Swarovski's collaboration with the Swiss design school Ecal. The bright spark students eschewed vulgar display in favour of the quietly charming. One filled a roll of bubble wrap with individual crystals (one for all the inveterate poppers out there), another designed a wall light with a swinging crystal pendulum. Milan as ever veers from the ridiculous to the sublime, sometimes within the same company.

At the exit to the fair the chestnut-seller handed me my roast chestnuts. A second, empty paper bag hung loosely from the side. I was all set to tear this extra bag off, then, I realised, one half is for the cooked chestnuts, the second for the peelings. And just like that the gaudy guns and ugly chandeliers evaporated, my faith in good design restored. OM

**LOAD-DATE:** May 9, 2005

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© 2005 Guardian Newspapers Limited  
The Observer

May 8, 2005

**SECTION:** Observer Magazine Pages, Pg. 50

**LENGTH:** 104 words

**HEADLINE:** Observer Magazine: Life WINE: BAR OF THE WEEK GREY GOOSE

**BYLINE:** Polly Vernon

**BODY:**

Grey Goose Ultra Lounge, Selfridges, 400 Oxford Street, London W1 Ultra Lounges are the ultimate bars. Squillion pound super-luxe developments with absurd extras and outrageous design statements, there are currently only six of them in the world - and all in Las Vegas. Which is why Selfridges - a store in the throes of a month of Vegas-themed celebrations - has imported a temporary version of one. As you'd hope, it's an explosion of haute camp, crystal, show girls and Elvis impersonators. It also has a stupendous selection of Grey Goose cocktails on offer. Slightly drunk shopping is the very best kind.

**LOAD-DATE:** May 9, 2005

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Palm Beach Post (Florida)

May 8, 2005 Sunday  
FINAL EDITION

**SECTION:** A SECTION; Jose Lambiet's PAGE TWO; Pg. 2A

**LENGTH:** 874 words

**HEADLINE:** ONE FOR THE AGES: PAIR HAS TALENT FOR TALENT

**BYLINE:** Jose Lambiet

**BODY:**

There's a new power couple on the entertainment scene - one unusual enough to get the tart tongues of Palm Beach affluter. They're Nick Tamposi and his wife, Marianne, the founders of a new local talent agency, P Model Management.

Less than a year after they settled here, they've started booking high-profile gigs for local talent, but there's another thing about the Tamposis: They're the area's Demi Moore and Ashton Kutcher.

"I look a little older than on paper," says Nick. "And Marianne looks younger."

Pure Palm Beach, Nick is the son of former St. Ann School principal and TV personality Candace Tamposi. He's 23. A woman who says she can trace her lineage to Denmark's royals, Marianne is a retired model who once owned Marianne's Models Inc. in Miami.

She's also 18 years older than Nick.

They were hitched almost three years ago, two months after Marianne's first divorce was final. They have two children, 3 and 5.

"I liked her right away," said Nick's mom, just 12 years older than her daughter-in-law.

The lovebirds' business, meanwhile, hasn't been bad either. They've specialized in signing up the children of rich Palm Beachers with whom Nick grew up to modeling and recording contracts.

Some big deals: They've signed Christina Coniglio, 19, daughter of WPB watering hole E.R. Bradley's owner Frank Coniglio, to the upcoming summer campaign of pimple-set clothier Abercrombie & Fitch; Nick's sister, Ali Tamposi, 15, to a Universal music recording contract; and Bettina Anderson, 18, daughter of banker H. Loy Anderson, to a modeling gig in Milan, Italy.

**TOP COPS END THIRD MARRIAGES**

A high-profile marriage made in cop-land is done.

Eugene Savage, chief of the Fort Pierce Police Department, and Gwendolyn Boyd, his counterpart at the North Miami PD, were recently divorced in a Palm Beach County court - ending a third attempt at wedded bliss for both.

"It was an amicable split," said Jerome Stone, whose Stuart law firm represented Savage. The chief doesn't comment on his private life.

Yet Boyd did, and confirmed rumors that Savage has a roving eye - although Stone insisted the Fort Pierce top cop's alleged affair with his secretary had nothing to do with the split. "Irreconcilable differences" was listed on the file.

"I caught Gene with his secretary at our house," Boyd said. "She was a friend, yet I found her in my bathroom, half-naked."

Boyd said she was tipped off to his extracurricular activities when anonymous letters detailing his relationship and

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love--dovey e-mails hacked from Savage's work computer last year ended up on Boyd's desk.

"I was about to file for divorce," she said, "but Gene jumped the gun to save face."

According to the divorce settlement, 56-year-old Savage - a former WPB assistant chief - gets to keep his Ford truck and a Lincoln SUV, a Fort Pierce home and the Bowflex muscle machine. Boyd keeps the Vegas time-share, a Lake Worth home, a model-car kit and the big TV.

#### TRUMP CHECKS OUT KENDRA STORY

Uh-oh. Donald Trump doesn't like to hear negatives about his potential employees.

Trump told Page Two he will investigate the recent allegations of nonpayment against one of The Apprentice 3's two finalists, Boynton Beach real estate entrepreneur Kendra Todd.

We reported Friday that the 26-year-old Todd is being sued by a WPB man who says she stiffed him on a measly \$750 fee for work on a Web site.

Trump said he "will look into this. I'm going to go through the complaint and ask some tough questions."

Could this sway him to pick the other finalist, Iowan Tana Goertz?

"You bet this is something I will consider," he said, "but obviously I need to hear Kendra's version."

A lawyer for complainant Doug Balch, 49, said a rep for Todd asked Friday how they could make the suit "go away."

"I told him to just pay the man," said Brian Guralnick, Balch's attorney. "But he wanted me and Doug to sign all kinds of confidentiality clauses. That's not happening."

The Apprentice 3 winner, who gets a six-figure job in Trump's organization, will be picked by the tycoon on the May 19 show.

#### SEEN AND HEARD . . .

. . . Not everybody lost money on the Kentucky Derby Saturday. The Easter Seal Society in Palm Beach made 250 grand on its yearly Derby-themed soiree, fund-raiser chair Mary Frances Turner tells Page Two. Nearly 300 people made it to the Flagler Museum to watch the horses on big-screen and for an auction that included a lease on a Porsche Boxter. Big hats and flowery dresses were de rigueur. Of course, the place had a bottomless well of mint juleps . . . A must-see for celebrity watchers, even if it's in Miami. Rabbi Shmuley Boteach, best known as one of Michael Jackson defenders, speaks about moral issues Wednesday at Temple Israel in the Magic City . . . Finally, there's a new restaurant trend on The Island. Last week, no fewer than two major eateries, Cafe Amici and Cafe L'Europe, were shut down for "buy outs." The term refers to a restaurant shutting down to regular patrons for a private party. Usually, the folks who pay for the private wingding also cover the restaurant's loss in revenues. I'm told that at Amici, consumer products giant S.C. Johnson had the place closed for just 35 bigs. They got a seven-course meal with champagne, and insisted on having one waiter per diner . . .

NOTES: Ran all editions.

#### GRAPHIC: PHOTO (2 B&W)

1. GREER GATTUSO/Palm Beach Daily News Marianne and Nick Tamposi of P Model Management have signed young Palm Beachers to modeling and recording contracts. 2. Kendra Todd (mug)

LOAD-DATE: May 10, 2005

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- Copyright 2005 The Palm Beach Newspapers, Inc.  
Palm Beach Post (Florida)

May 8, 2005 Sunday  
FINAL EDITION

**SECTION:** SPORTS; Pg. 9B

**LENGTH:** 586 words

**HEADLINE:** MARLINS MOVING TO VEGAS? DON'T BET ON IT

**BYLINE:** Joe Capozzi

**DATELINE:** LAS VEGAS

**BODY:**

On a cool December morning, three Florida Marlins officials stepped out of a taxi on Las Vegas Boulevard across from the mock Statue of Liberty at New York New York and a replica Eiffel Tower.

Strolling under the head of comedian Carrot Top, whose blinking image leaped from a Jumbotron marquee, they entered the MGM Grand. Making their way through a ringing maze of slot machines, they passed blackjack tables, roulette wheels and two lions inside a glass den until they found casino executive Alan Feldman's office.

There, in a quiet second-floor refuge, they talked baseball - specifically, the odds of bringing the Marlins or any other Major League Baseball team to Las Vegas.

More than five months after that visit, the prospect of the Marlins playing in Las Vegas is a long shot - even in light of the Florida Legislature's failure Friday to provide the final chunk of money for a new ballpark in Miami.

And if the Marlins' visit had a purpose, the team officials probably didn't like what they heard.

"If there was any interest on their part in using this as a negotiating issue, it probably got pretty well wiped out after their meeting with me," said Feldman, vice president of public affairs for MGM Mirage, the largest employer, landowner and taxpayer in Clark County, Nevada.

"The discussion I had with them, which was very frank and very candid, was this: Anyone who wants to build a professional sports team is more than welcome in Las Vegas. We'd love to see it. But we will stand in the street and stop any semblance of tax support for a stadium.

"In this market, companies like ours invest hundreds of millions of dollars a year in new attractions and new things to bring guests to town. The thought that our city would be put into the position of investing hundreds of millions of dollars in taxpayer money to build an attraction to attract people is absurd.

"Around here, you bring your own money to the poker game. We have the most vibrant tourism economy of any city in world, bar none. The presence of major league sports is not going make us or break us."

Of course, a team could move to Las Vegas and build its own ballpark. But the earliest a stadium could be ready is 2010, when the city's population, currently 1.7 million, is projected to reach 3 million. If a team began play today, Las Vegas would be the smallest media market of any city in the majors.

"There's not a day that goes by that I don't have a number of people talking about it," said Don Logan, general manager for the Las Vegas 51, the Class AAA affiliate of the Los Angeles Dodgers. "But the people here that really follow it and understand it know we're a ways away from having anything in place to accommodate a team."

The Marlins have several Vegas connections. Team owner Jeffery Loria has known Logan for nearly 20 years. Feldman is a longtime friend of Bruce Rubin, Loria's publicity consultant, who helped arrange the Vegas visit.

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"The Marlins' visit helped elevate the discussion on whether Las Vegas is ready for a major-league team," Feldman said.

"But I don't think anyone's really believing that the Marlins are coming here. No one around here is walking around wearing Marlins shirts. To be honest we're rooting for the Marlins to do what they're doing, which is to find a home in South Florida and do well in South Florida. This is a franchise that's won two world championships in 11 years? Come on. You don't want to see that move. You don't want to see that happen. That's not good for baseball."

joe\_capozzi@pbpost.com

**LOAD-DATE:** May 11, 2005

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Copyright 2005 The Palm Beach Newspapers, Inc.  
Palm Beach Post (Florida)May 8, 2005 Sunday  
FINAL EDITION**SECTION:** ACCENT; Pg. 1D**LENGTH:** 698 words**HEADLINE:** 14 BRIDESMAIDS WERE BEST CLUE THAT RUNAWAY WOULDN'T BE BRIDE**BYLINE:** Nicole Piscopo Neal Features Editor**BODY:**

You'd think we'd have suspected the fiance in that whole "With This Ring, I Thee Fled" story. Had he grown weary of debating the merits of Lenox's "Poppies on Blue" china pattern vs. Wedgwood's "Celestial Platinum" and chucked his high-maintenance bride-to-be in the Chattahoochee?

But women of a certain age - like, over 23 - knew early on that infamous "runaway bride" Jennifer Wilbanks was the one capable of inflicting supreme cruelty on the ones she loved.

And the proof was in two words: 14 bridesmaids.

Jennifer Wilbanks, 32, jilted 14 bridesmaids, not to mention 14 groomsmen, when she laced up her running shoes in Georgia and ended up in Albuquerque.

Fourteen bridesmaids? Fourteen?! She could stage her own production of Steel Magnolias with fewer bodies.

Just getting that wedding platoon down the aisle would give the organist carpal tunnel.

Now, to be fair, her fondant has probably been sliding off her cake, if you know what I mean, for quite some time. After all, she did lop off her own hair, a behavior mental-health professionals consider more "Squeaky Fromme" than "Modern Bride". And she did willingly board a cross-country bus - why not just affix wheels to a Port-o-Potty and glide from Georgia to Vegas and beyond? - for her escapade.

But it's that "14 bridesmaids" tidbit that's the most revealing.

It's one thing to be 22 and impulsively squeal a gushy, "I want you to be, like, my bridesmaids!!!" to your six best friends (du jour), and they say "YES!!!" and everyone jumps up and down, and the bride-to-be goes to DogUglyDresses.com, and somewhere in Taiwan sewing machines rev up and turn bolts of puce sateen and stretch lace into what will become, next Halloween, \$200 Atlantic City Drag Queen costumes for six (now resentful) young women.

But it's another thing altogether to be 32 and conscript 14 grown women - and 14 matching men - to haul tushy to Georgia in order to line up and escort you safely down 30 feet of church aisle. What's waiting at the other end? A machine-gun nest?

Are these throw-down bridesmaids, in case a rogue faction of the ring-bearer brigade has planted land mines in the aisle runner?

At the ripe old age of 32, everyone knows that being a bridesmaid is truly an act of love. Only for someone for whom your affection runs deep and true is the purchase of the puce dress, a plane ticket, a few nights in a hotel, a stiff updo, a shower gift, a wedding gift, etc. etc. etc., culminating in the climactic moment - a forced march in dyed pumps - an honor.

By your 30s, petty jealousies of the I-wasn't-invited-to-the-popular-girl's-slumber-party variety have long since evaporated, so it's not like anyone with a maturity quotient over the Middle School Girl level is going to feel left out.

By this time, too, attrition has thinned the friendship ranks, leaving a few beloved souls who, truth be told, are thrilled

you're getting married but have no desire to be part of a human tide of taffeta and nosegays step-pausing its way to the altar. If you have 14 of those beloved souls in your life, you probably don't have room for a spouse.

Which makes you wonder: Who exactly were Nos. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14? Her dental hygienist, mail carrier, fifth-grade safety patrol partner, Pilates instructor, favorite barista at Starbucks and some woman behind the Clinique counter who matched the groom's No. 14, that guy who spotted him once at the gym?

Pick a sibling or a friend to stand up there with you. Or stand on your own. After all, the wedding is about the marriage, and that's you and him, not you and him and your 14 bestest friends in the whole wide world.

If I were this woman's fiance, that wide-end wedding party would make me wonder whether she wanted to get down the aisle at all, or if she was building in an extra 45 minutes of wriggle room in case she decided to duck out and slip on a steamship bound for Sumatra.

Really, though, I wouldn't waste time wringing my hands over her cold feet and the "honesty issue." For me, it would be the maturity issue: The specter of spending my life fighting through P. Diddy's entourage to get to my spouse would convince me it's time to board the bus bound for bachelorhood.

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**GRAPHIC: PHOTO (2 B&W)**

The Associated Press/File photos LOST AND FOUND: 1. Jennifer Wilbanks as she looked on the 'missing persons' poster (left) 2. and (right) on her way home.

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Copyright 2005 MGN Ltd.  
The People

May 8, 2005, Sunday

**SECTION:** 1 Star Edition; SPORT; Pg. 28

**LENGTH:** 587 words

**HEADLINE:** BOXING: JOE'S A BIT OF ALL VEIT;  
HERO CALZAGHE'S STILL GOT SIX APPEAL

**BYLINE:** FRANK WIECHULA

**HIGHLIGHT:**

GO, JOE: Defending champion Calzaghe refused let Mario Veit's home advantage count and dished out a series of punishing right jabs

**BODY:**

JOE CALZAGHE celebrated a really sweet 16 last night when he destroyed German Mario Veit to retain his world crown and put his recent troubles behind him.

The WBO super-middleweight king, bedevilled by domestic problems and setbacks in and out of the ring, was back to his devastating best in his six-round triumph in Braunschweig here in Germany.

It might not have matched the swiftness of his 112-second demolition of Veit in Cardiff four years ago, but this was a more clinical, sustained display which saw the outgunned German decked three times.

It was the 33-year-old's 16th successive title defence - stretching eight years - and extended his perfect pro record to 39 straight wins.

Calzaghe, who could well have punched Veit into retirement as he forced the victory with 42 seconds left of the sixth, said: "Veit has improved a hell of a lot, I didn't expect him to be that good.

"But I'm still champion of the world and that's all that matters. I made a few mistakes and he caught me a few times, but he never hurt me."

Calzaghe by now should be topping the bill in Vegas or Madison Square Garden, not putting his reputation on the line in a German backwater.

When he knocked out former WBA super-middleweight king Byron Mitchell inside two rounds almost two years ago, the sky was the limit for the Welshman.

But he is still waiting for the career-defining bout that could cement his place in boxing history.

The likelihood now is that he will get a crack at IBF super-middleweight king Jeff Lacy, who in August takes on Runcorn's Robin Reid.

But surely he would be better advised stepping up to light-heavyweight, where he could mix it with Glen Johnson or Antonio Tarver.

At light-heavy he would get the big fights, the big money, the big chances. At super-middleweight he is merely treading water.

Turmoil in his private life has hardly helped his career.

An acrimonious divorce was probably behind his bitterly disappointing performance against Kabary Salem last

The People, May 8, 2005

October.

Now with a new partner, Calzaghe looked far more confident against Veit last night in the 16th defence of the WBO super-middleweight title he won in October 1997 in a thriller against Chris Eubank.

From the first bell there was only going to be one winner.

Calzaghe dominated the opening rounds, delivering devastating combinations that had outclassed Veit rocking.

Calzaghe, who was determined to erase the memory of his last ring outing, that lacklustre win over Salem in Scotland last October, was clearly warming to the task.

It was Veit's camp who had caused the late cancellation of Calzaghe's planned defence against Irishman Brian Magee in Belfast in March, forcing him into this fight, which he didn't really want.

Two big lefts by the Welshman to the head and a shuddering right to the body in the fourth round saw Veit further hampered, and Calzaghe finished the round with his right hand raised in a mini victory salute.

It was not premature. In the fifth round Calzaghe delivered more punishment and Veit took a standing eight count. The poor German didn't know what day it was

Calzaghe, the red-hot 1-8 favourite, then put the outclassed Veit down again with another major barrage forcing him to take a standing seven count.

Veit's corner were about to throw in the towel but referee Gino Rodriguez let it continue - only to stop it himself moments later when Calzaghe poured more power-packed punches Veit's way.

Calzaghe is back...and how.

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Philadelphia Inquirer

May 8, 2005 Sunday ADVANCE EDITION

**SECTION:** FEATURES TRAVEL; BRIEF; Pg. N01

**LENGTH:** 2537 words

**HEADLINE:** A 'new' Riviera rises in Mexico

**BYLINE:** By Alan Solomon; Knight Ridder News Service

**DATELINE:** TULUM, Mexico

**BODY:**

We already had the French one, the Italian one, the Redneck one and even, along the Pacific, another Mexican one.

Guess we can never have too many Rivas.

Welcome to Riviera Maya, the marketing wizards' catchy label for the 80-mile stretch of beachfront that begins where Cancun ends and ends where the road turns muddy.

It used to be called the Cancun-Tulum Corridor, which sounded like a hallway, on the Quintana Roo Coast, which sounded like Australia.

No more.

Today's Riviera Maya - named for the folks who contributed a heritage that endures and ruins that inspire - is a no-doubt-about-it tourist magnet that has everything a rational sun-seeker could want in life except drinkable tap water. Whether this reinvention of what once was mainly a mecca for divers and barefoot backpackers is an upgrade remains, as always with such things, a matter of perspective.

"Only after [the development] is over will we know if it's good or bad," says Vivian de Regt, manager of the Maya Bric, one of Playa del Carmen's better-kept pre-boom hotels. "But there's work for the people."

How much has changed here? This archival tidbit from a 1996 edition of the Access guidebook for Mexico is revealing:

"The town of Playa del Carmen has become a destination unto itself, with... dozens of budget hostelries."

Dozens.

Fast-forward: A current Web listing of Playa del Carmen hostelries is up to 122 - almost half at \$50 a night and up, many way up - and that doesn't count 13 all-inclusives (two with more than 500 rooms) just down the beach in Playacar, a monster condo/hotel/home/golf development.

When that guidebook was published, the population of Playa del Carmen was about 25,000. In 2003, the last time they tried to count, the estimate was up to 49,000 - and that's just year-round locals. It doesn't count the part-timers who seasonally inhabit the thousands of hotel rooms, condos and time-shares that didn't exist in 1996.

Now, this story isn't about Cancun, but for those who haven't been there: Cancun is a world-class beach overlooking impossibly turquoise water where Marriott, Ritz-Carlton, Westin, Hilton, Tony Roma's, Ruth's Chris, Hooters, TGI Friday's, etc. have established a beachhead.

South of that, along four-lane-divided Highway 307: Riviera Maya.

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The village of Puerto Morelos is about 22 miles south of Cancun, and after the massive slickness of that resort's hotel zone, it's a relief.

Puerto Morelos is no longer a secret. One modern hotel-spa, Ceiba del Mar, is a reasonable walk (by beach or road) or an easy bike ride north from the heart of Puerto Morelos. A little farther north toward Cancun is the sprawling new all-inclusive, 442-suite Secrets Excellence. Toward town, some modest seasonal homes are being flattened and replaced by houses you and I can no longer afford.

But for the most part, Puerto Morelos is in scale with what it's been for generations: a fishing village. It's also a few little hotels, a couple of restaurants serving fish fresh off the boats, and actual Mexicans who would be living and working here even if we weren't putting money into the local economy.

What's kept it from turning into a Cancun Mini Me is mainly being squeezed on the west by a mangrove swamp and its close proximity to one of the world's longest barrier reefs, both tightly protected. Plus beaches that, though pleasant, have shallow water, little wave action, and much accumulated seaweed, thanks to the aforementioned reef.

On the other hand, there's Playa del Carmen.

Whatever it was - even in 1996, when it was already budding into adolescence - it isn't anymore.

"Just like that. You couldn't believe it," says Samuel Gonzalez, a 14-year resident who works reception at the 7-year-old El Faro Hotel and Beach Club. "Suddenly, poof! Everybody built. Then the big companies came.

"They're building too much - but at the same time, it gives people jobs."

And it gives visitors a place that isn't as massive as Cancun but is at least as good a party.

On any given night, Playa's all-pedestrian Avenida Cinco (Fifth Avenue, the main and, for tourists, the only drag) turns from a somewhat placid strip of jewelry and clothing shops, breezy restaurants (including - egad! - a T.G.I. Friday's), tattoo parlors, dive shops, and ice cream sellers into a high-decibel party complete with street mariachis competing for attention with the screech of cranked-up rock pouring out of open-air saloons.

Which - like Carlos'n Charlie's and Senor Frog's, both inevitably here - can be fun, unless you're looking for a romantic al fresco dinner. In which case, I can recommend a couple of places in Acapulco or San Miguel de Allende.

This will give you a sense of Playa del Carmen. It came from a delightfully honest time-share tout, when asked about Tulum (which we'll get to later).

"Tulum," he said, "is not commercial. Not like here. You don't find everyone there trying to sell you something - like me."

The constant, through all the expansion, remains the sand and the surf. The sand, unless the weather gets nasty, is white, clean and ample. The water is crystalline and, with the same weather caveat, swimmingly bouncy without being threatening.

Snorkeling and diving survive as prime pastimes here, despite the loss of rustic exclusivity. (Cost of a morning of snorkeling on the reef with a guide: \$30.) These are, after all, the same reef and sea that have made the island of Cozumel - a mere 40 minutes each way by boat (about \$18 round trip) - so attractive for so many of the world's coralphiles.

But back to the beach.

For the most part, the Playa del Carmen shoreline is still dominated by independent low-impact hotels, some borderline pricey (El Faro gets \$230 for its prime rooms) and some still borderline budget (\$45 at the Maya Bric, \$10 more for air conditioning). In fact, especially from the sand, Playa del Carmen is hard not to like, which is a good time for this advisory: Unusual for Mexico, toplessness for both women and men is tolerated on public beaches.

Extending south from Playa del Carmen is a planned thing called Playacar. Here are big hotels, all-inclusive resorts, condominiums, time shares, opulent single-family homes, golf, landscaping, speed bumps, and facilities big enough for just about any conference, including the Big 10.

Moving right along...

Xcaret (a Mayan word, pronounced SHCAR-ette), four miles south of Playa, is not only an eco-park. It's also the

greatest producer of roadside signage south of Branson, Mo., which, for a park whose emphasis is the environment, is slightly ironic. It's also expensive for Mexico (\$46.55 for adults, \$23.75 for kids), and that's before the extra charges for "swimming with dolphins" (\$115 for an hour), an optional room in the adjacent 796-room hotel, and other unincorporated joys.

Clearly, this - like the Disney and Universal parks - is an attraction intended for tourists with credit cards.

What is included are zoo exhibits (including a jaguar and a sea-turtle pool), genuine archaeological remnants, cenotes (underground rivers nice for swimming), a butterfly pavilion, boat rides, a beach, a coral reef aquarium, and a variety of shows, including a night "spectacular" that everyone said we were idiots for skipping.

Also bypassed: Xel-Ha, pronounced SHELL-hah, a wetter, potentially (with the entry-level ticket) less-expensive variation of Xcaret, 30 miles south of the other one.

In fact, I bypassed a lot on this trip. Much of the Riviera Maya is pocked with new and under-construction resorts (many of them all-inclusives) and time-shares invisible from the highway except for huge concrete embankments with huge lettering (MAYAN PALACE, for example) that look like high-security corporation entrances. Did check out a few - was especially impressed, for example, with the look of Secrets Capri near Playa del Carmen, especially unimpressed by Sunscape, a sister property near Tulum.

More accessible in every way is Club Akumal Caribe. The 70-room hotel is old Quintana Roo (the Mexican state we're in), on the water, created for and still beloved by divers and non-divers for respecting its past. The family that built it is still lovingly in charge.

"We keep this place as always," says supervisor Israel Temorio. "This is the perfect place for snorkeling, for diving - for peace." For no phones, no TVs. "They come here," he says, "to forget civilization."

Akumal, the town? Just enough of one. Puerto Morelos is Vegas compared to Akumal.

And finally: Tulum.

The town proper, what there is of it, is on the highway. There are local restaurants, bars, places to resupply essentials, a couple of Internet cafes. Nearby are some mom-and-pop cenotes, here forming caves that have stalactites, stalagmites, some fish and incredibly clear water. Where sinkholes let the sun shine in, these are opportunities for divers and snorkelers to explore. (Price to swim in one of them, called El Gran Cenote: about \$7.25.)

From Tulum's commercial area, Mexico 307 veers inland. A short detour brings us back to the coast - the last gasp of Riviera Maya - and a two-lane semi-paved "road" that connects Tulum's archaeological zone with its beachfront lodgings and continues sloppily (and ultimately without us) to Punta Allen.

The ruins at Tulum, the only ones in the country overlooking the sea, are joyous. There are lots of pre-Columbian remains scattered around Mexico, and all are splendid in their way, but none combines structure and seascape and light as wonderfully as the ruins at Tulum.

Tulum's more contemporary waterfront lodgings, for the most part, reflect the remoteness. It may be only two hours' drive these days from Cancun - and that proximity is already changing things here - but for now, the feel is that of isolated island beaches separated and made more intimate by natural rock piles. Tulum is a place where phones are rare, electricity isn't a given, credit cards aren't always taken, cars stay parked, and clothing is sometimes optional.

Our room, one of eight at Cabanas la Conchita, a few miles south of Tulum's ruins, was a grass-roof hut with a private bath in back and a hammock in front, on a small front porch opening to nothing but sand and sea. The beach wasn't technically private, but it might as well have been. Electricity, from a generator, kicked in about dusk and kicked off at 10; from then on, it was candles.

And there was a mirror on the wall that occasionally moved. I peeked behind it, then went to the manager.

"There's a giant lizard in my room."

"Is he behind the mirror?"

"Yes."

"It's an iguana. He lives there."

"Yeah, but... "

"Every tourist has a different name for him. He won't bother you. Of course, if you want us to get him out... "

So we had a roommate. We called him Igor. I don't know why.

#### Running Away to the Riviera

##### Getting there

US Airways offers nonstop service between Philadelphia and Cancun, with recent round-trip Internet fares starting at about \$325. If you plan to use mainstream hotels and resorts and stay put, FunJet and Apple Vacations have packages to Cancun, Cozumel or down the coast, with and without air.

##### Getting around

Renting a car provides maximum flexibility, and drivers who might otherwise be wary of Mexican highways (sometimes with reason) will find Riviera Maya roads at least as comfortable as roads in Iowa. Otherwise, taxis are generally available; for longer trips between towns, local vans and buses are inexpensive and surprisingly easy to navigate.

##### Accommodations

There are too many hotels and resorts to check them all out, but here's a short list of places that made us smile (rates per room for two people in high season, subject to change and seasonal fluctuation). Note, if it's important to you, that even in non-budget hotels, some rooms might have ceiling fans instead of air conditioning.

**Puerto Morelos:**Ceiba del Mar Hotel & Spa. Midsize (128 rooms), full spa, lovely rooms, good food (meal programs optional), walk or bike to town. From \$385; [www.ceibadelmar.com](http://www.ceibadelmar.com)

**Casita del Mar.** Small, simple, but well-kept beach hotel. From \$66; [www.hotelcasitadelmar.8m.com](http://www.hotelcasitadelmar.8m.com).

**Playa del Carmen:**Treetops. Sweet, jungly little 12-room place on the beach. From \$70; [www.treetopshotel.com](http://www.treetopshotel.com)

**Mosquito Blue.** A 49-room boutique hotel, not on the beach but close enough so it doesn't matter. Beautiful pool and grounds. From \$149; [www.differentworld.com/](http://www.differentworld.com/)

[mexico/hotels/mosquito\\_blue/pages/entrance.htm](http://mexico/hotels/mosquito_blue/pages/entrance.htm)

**Maya Bric.** A survivor. Nothing fancy, but clean, a good value and a central beach location. From \$45; [www.mayabric.com](http://www.mayabric.com)

**El Faro.** One of the larger spreads in central Playa and right on the beach. From \$150; [www.hotelelfaro.com](http://www.hotelelfaro.com)

**La Posada del Capitan Lafitte.** An old-timer away from town (an \$8 cab ride, \$2 shuttle), but if you really want a beach and quiet (and can get a room in the new wing), consider the Captain. From \$200; [www.capitanlafitte.com](http://www.capitanlafitte.com)

**Deseo.** Stylish, hip and definitely not for everybody. Mainly for those who like their martinis tinted. In the middle of everything. From \$148; [www.hoteldeseo.com](http://www.hoteldeseo.com)

**Playa Maya.** Modern, on the beach, nice sundeck over a token pool, good breakfast on the sand. Some kitchenettes. From \$100; [www.playa-maya.com](http://www.playa-maya.com)

**Secrets Capri.** As all-inclusives go, this one clicks. Like a luxury cruise ship with a beach. From \$450; [www.secretresorts.com/capri](http://www.secretresorts.com/capri).

**Tulum:**Ana y Jose Hotel & Spa. A local classic, 20 years old and recently renovated, with a new wing opened last year. From about \$105; [www.anayjose.com](http://www.anayjose.com)

**Cabanas La Conchita.** Eight rooms, all on the beach (No. 1 is the best, but there are no losers here). Joyously rustic, quiet and simple - what the Tulum experience is about - yet comfortable. From \$115; [www.differentworld.com/](http://www.differentworld.com/)

mexico/hotels/la\_conchita/

pages/entrance.htm.

#### Dining

**Puerto Morelos:** Grab a seat on the terrace, watch the pelicans dive, and try the grouper tikinchik (it's the seasoning) at Pelicanos, on the square. Xtabay, the gourmet dining room at Ceiba del Mar, is pricey (for Mexico) - expect to pay \$80 a couple, plus beverages, but worth it.

**Playa del Carmen:** A good restaurant town. For such Yucatecan standards as cochinita pibil (suckling pig in banana leaves), try Yaxche. Europeans flock to Ristorante da Bruna, and with cause: This is real Italian. 100% Natural is a Mexican chain that's especially fine for breakfast and a light lunch. The food at La Casa del Agua - slightly Swiss, reflecting the ownership - is fine, but unless you love noise, resist the temptation to sit on the balcony above the street. For familiar Mexican food, the lines can be long at La Parilla. Must be a reason.

**Tulum:** The seafood at Zamas (which also has rooms) couldn't be fresher than at this popular beachfront beauty. Not far and with rooms, too, Piedra Escondida is another charmer with seafood, but this one adds a touch of Italy (wonderful garlic octopus). In town, Charlie's doesn't look like much, but try his chiles rellenos.

#### Information

Call the Riviera Maya Promotion Board at 1-877-746-6292; [www.rivieramaya.com](http://www.rivieramaya.com)

Alan Solomon

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Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

May 8, 2005 Sunday REGION EDITION

**SECTION:** TRAVEL, Pg.F-1

**LENGTH:** 1154 words

**HEADLINE:** PRICEY;  
N.Y. FLIGHTS;  
POSE MANY;  
QUESTIONS

**BYLINE:** David Bear Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

**BODY:**

The so-called "Saturday stay-over" is more habit than horror for airline passengers eager for the discounted fares that accompany weekend or longer travel plans. Not many complain about an extra night in a distant or exotic locale when it saves hundreds on airline tickets.

But what happens when you don't have that flexibility?

Sometimes, last-minute travel plans necessitate a nonstop flight without opportunity for a weekend stay. And pity the poor business traveler, off to New York today, obligated to return tomorrow.

Case in point:

Pittsburgh has three airlines offering 22 daily nonstop flights to metropolitan New York: US Airways to LaGuardia and Newark; Delta to JFK; and Continental to Newark. Even with a month's planning for a Monday-Tuesday trip in March, the cash register lit up like the Vegas Strip. There were no bargains to be found.

The lowest nonstop round-trip fare on Delta, according to Orbitz.com, was \$568. The other two carriers wanted \$837 for weekday round-trip flights to the other New York area airports. Checks on subsequent days showed price fluctuations (to just below \$800 or just over \$900), but nothing that would have worked wonders for the wallet.

By comparison, someone with the ability to tack a Saturday on the front end of the trip would have found fares of \$304 on all three airlines. And if they'd waited until the last minute and booked an e-saver fare, round-trip tickets were just \$188.

So, who can explain the logic behind this pricing strategy?

Maybe the airlines, but US Airways isn't commenting.

One industry analyst has a theory: It's lack of competition, pure and simple, says Mike Boyd, who analyzes airlines and airports for the Boyd Group in Evergreen, Colo.

"Both Delta and Continental are interested only in serving their international connections in Newark and JFK from Pittsburgh. They're not too excited about travelers just going to New York. That leaves US Airways to charge whatever it wants."

By skipping the nonstop options, passengers can find lower fares. But Pittsburgh International still has 77 nonstop destinations, and some people are beholden to schedules. In those cases, paying premium rates for that convenience makes sense.

But paying a king's ransom may not. The dilemma for passengers is with the markup, which can approach 300 percent.

"These nonstop fares from Pittsburgh have gotten absurd," says Daniel Nagin, a professor in Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz School and a frequent traveler to destinations both domestic and foreign.

"I was invited to attend a midweek meeting in Baltimore and thought about flying until I saw it was going to cost nearly \$800. That's so much more than it used to be. There's no way I'd ask my hosts to pay that much. I guess I'll be driving more places."

The fare charts are brimming with horror stories.

Round-trip flights to Washington/Dulles can be had for less than \$175 on United and Independence, but flying from Pittsburgh to Washington Reagan costs \$863, while round trips to Albany start at a mind-boggling \$1,097. A quick trip to a Boston tea party will set you back even more — \$1,123.

All of this at a time when the airlines have advertised round-trip flights to Europe for less than \$500.

Flying nonstop during the week to New York from a selection of cities other than Pittsburgh brings even more budget-busting news.

Using the same booking criteria for flights offered from Pittsburgh at \$870, it's possible to find nonstop flights from Cleveland to New York on two airlines for \$413; from Columbus for \$328; and from Detroit for \$219.

Pull out a map and you'll see that each of those cities is a longer flight, meaning more airtime and greater fuel costs.

The disparity isn't easily explained, but it seems to be tolerated.

The Travel Insider, an online newsletter, boils it down to the old mantra of paying what the market will bear: "A person who needs to buy an airline ticket for urgent travel today or tomorrow is probably willing to pay just about any amount of money for the ticket."

Clearly, the airlines are milking that mantra for all it's worth.

Bargain-hunters have their work cut out for them. For example, travelers from Charleston, W. Va., can't fly nonstop to New York, but they can get there for \$355 on US Airways. Yet, making a connection in Pittsburgh onto the same flight would cost \$850.

US Airways offers a \$328, one-connection fare from Akron to New York, via Philadelphia. And AirTran operates three nonstop flights a day from Akron to LaGuardia for as little as \$208 round trip.

When money is tight, a drive to Akron is an option.

Still, it represents an inconvenience for local travelers and a blow to Pittsburgh International traffic statistics. It also raises the same old questions and a couple of new ones:

\* Landing fees at Pittsburgh International may be a few dollars more than other airports, but does that explain a \$400 or \$500 difference in fares?

\* If an airline can fly someone for \$188 on a trip that involves a Saturday night stay, what justification is there for charging \$850 for the same trip that takes place from Sunday through Saturday afternoon?

\* How can it cost less for an airline to route passengers on two connecting flights to a primary destination (including transferring their luggage) than flying them directly to their final destination?

\* Why doesn't competition result in better fare shopping?

\* Where's the advantage in early booking?

One other ominous question has even bigger ramifications for this city: Why center your business in Pittsburgh if it's going to cost you two to three times as much to fly somewhere else?

"It's a real problem," says Boyd. "Pittsburgh has suffered high fares for years, but it also had the advantage of plenty of direct flights to many destinations.

"You've lost the destinations but not the high fares. And what will happen if US Airways stops flying altogether?"

That, too, is a good question.

Perhaps the situation will change now that Southwest Airlines has begun operations out of Pittsburgh. Its presence has brought about lower fares elsewhere, and US Airways already is matching Southwest's introductory \$58 round-trip fares to Chicago and Philadelphia.

But the airline began its Pittsburgh service with just four destinations, and it may be some time — if ever — before the fare-lowering "Southwest effect" takes root here. Besides, Southwest doesn't offer service to any of New York's three primary airports, serving only Islip Airport on Long Island.

So, for now, Pittsburgh's weekday travelers are stuck sifting through various options that either have high price tags or extract a high price on personal schedules.

In other words, they've got themselves a textbook dilemma.

**NOTES:**

Post-Gazette travel editor David Bear can be reached at [dbear@post-gazette](mailto:dbear@post-gazette) or 412-263-1629.

**LOAD-DATE:** May 8, 2005

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Copyright 2005 Roanoke Times & World News  
Roanoke Times & World News (Roanoke, VA)

May 8, 2005 Sunday Metro Edition

**SECTION:** SPORTS; Local golf notes by Randy King; Pg. C8**LENGTH:** 1113 words**HEADLINE:** MANKIN SET FOR BIG-MONEY SHOT**BYLINE:** Randy King randy.king@roanoke.com 981-3126**BODY:**

It took Daleville's Matt Mankin 15 years to win his first Roanoke Valley Golf Hall of Fame men's title. It took him two weeks to win his first professional tournament.

In his second start on the Atlantic Coast Golf Tour last weekend, Mankin fired a final-round 5-under-par 65 at Danville's Glen Oak Country Club to win by a stroke and capture the \$1,125 first-place prize.

"Can you believe that? I don't have to worry about anyone asking me when I'm going to win my first one now," responded Mankin, in his usual self-deprecating wit.

Mankin, 36, whose play the past five years had solidified his status as one of Virginia's top amateurs, opted to turn pro a month ago simply so he could compete in this week's Big Stakes Match Play event in Las Vegas. The \$100,000 entry-fee event in Sin City pays \$3 million to the winning two-man team.

"How can you pass on an opportunity like that?" said Mankin, who will play with Roanoke mini-tour pro Justin Young in the 64-team tournament. "That's why I turned pro. I want to go out there, meet some people, try to play my rear end off, and maybe pick up a sponsor."

To prepare for the Vegas venture, Mankin decided he would tee it up on the ACGT. Two weeks ago, he finished eighth in his mini-tour debut at the ACGT stop in Greensboro, N.C. Last Sunday, his brilliant 65 enabled him to surge past Ridgeway pro Jerry Wood and post a winning 36-hole total of 6-under 134. Danville's Jimmy Flippen, a Virginia graduate who has won 29 mini-tour titles since 1996, finished third at 137 in the field of 15 pros and 125 amateurs.

"Winning this puts me in a good frame of mind heading to Vegas," said Mankin, who is flying west today for Wednesday's start of the Big Stakes event. "Who knows? Maybe I'll get lucky again and hit the big jackpot out there."

Mankin enlisted Young as his Vegas teammate last week when he discovered that his original partner, Franklin County pro Matt Chandler, didn't meet the event's age requirement. Big Stakes rules state that all competitors must be at least 25. Chandler is only 21.

"I didn't know there was an age limit, but Matt was reading the rules and he caught it and was nice enough to call and tell me," Mankin said. "I'm glad he read the rules. That would have been some baloney to go out there and win \$3 million, only to be disqualified because Matt wasn't old enough. I may have had a heart attack if that had happened."

**Finding riches at 50**

Don't try and convince Tom McKnight that turning 50 is bad news. In his rookie season on the PGA Champions Tour, the Galax native has earned \$128,997 in six events and stands 30th on the 50-and-over senior circuit's money list.

McKnight, who moved from Galax to Bluffton, S.C., four years ago, has finished 20th or better four times, with his best showing a tie for eighth in the March 9-13 SBC Classic in Valencia, Calif., which was worth \$46,500.

McKnight, a three-time Virginia State Amateur winner, leads such big-timers as Tom Kite (31st), Fuzzy Zoeller (45th), Curtis Strange (36th), Hot Springs' J.C. Snead (54th), Ben Crenshaw (50th) and Richmond native Lanny Wadkins

(63rd) in money earnings.

McKnight earned fully exempt status for 2005 by finishing second last winter at the Champion Tour's National Qualifying event in Florida. Spurred by a final round of 9-under 63, McKnight completed the six-round grind at 23-under to finish two shots behind medalist Mark Johnson.

#### Huge payday

While he's undoubtedly still lamenting the fact that he missed a 4-foot birdie putt on the 72nd hole that cost him his first PGA Tour victory last Sunday, James Driscoll shouldn't beat himself up too much.

Despite bogeying the first hole of a playoff and allowing Tim Petrovic escape with his first tour victory, Driscoll received a check for a \$594,000. The tidy haul catapulted Driscoll from 146th to 39th on the money list at \$726,673, a total that all but guarantees that he will finish in the top 125 on the earnings list and automatically retain his fully exempt status for 2006.

Driscoll earned his 2005 PGA Tour card last season by finishing seventh on the Nationwide Tour's money list with \$281,161. His 12 top-25 finishes on the Triple-A circuit were highlighted by a four-shot victory in the Virginia Beach Open.

#### Craft in the money

Vinton's Robbie Craft shot a final-round 4-over-par 75 Saturday to finish in a tie for 26th place in the Tarheel Tour's Warrior Golf Classic in China Grove, N.C.

Craft, who had shot a pair of 69s in the first two rounds, earned \$538. The former William Byrd High standout finished 15 shots behind winner Bryant MacKellar, a former All-American at Auburn.

#### Decker's team

a stroke short

Martinsville's Keith Decker and partner David Partridge of Manakin-Sabot needed a par on the 18th hole Saturday to force a playoff in the 40th Virginia State Golf Association Four-Ball Championship at Chantilly National Golf and Country Club in Centreville.

Instead, both ended up with a bogey, which gave the title to Scott Campbell and Larry Loving Jr. of Mechanicsville. The winning tandem shot a bogey-free 65 to come back from four strokes down. Their two-day total on the par-72 course was 10-under-par 134.

Campbell and Loving were playing five groups ahead of Decker and Partridge, and waited quite a while to discover their fate.

The playoff scenario looked very likely after Decker birdied the par-5 17th hole to get his team into a tie for first. But on 18, Decker missed a 7-footer for par, then watched Partridge - who had just missed a 12-footer for birdie that would have won the tournament - miss his attempt at par as well.

#### Sand blasts

Fincastle native Scott Griffin has turned pro and is competing on the Tarheel Tour. Griffin, who captured numerous titles as a junior but has never won a Roanoke Valley major men's title, joins Young and Vinton native Robbie Craft on the North Carolina-based mini-tour. . . . Ashley Plantation head pro Chip Sullivan, who is teaming with Chester-based pro Rick Schuller in the Vegas Big Stakes event, said construction on the club's third nine holes will likely begin this month. "It's going to take a couple years," Sullivan said. "We're not going to go crazy and try to get it done this year." . . . John Norton, head pro of the Pete Dye River Course of Virginia Tech in Fairlawn, is one of 6,100 PGA pros across the country who are offering free 10-minute lessons in May in conjunction with PGA Free Lesson Month. Norton is offering his free quicky lesson from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. each Saturday this month. Anyone interested in participating in the program must contact Norton at (540) 633-6732.

**LOAD-DATE:** May 9, 2005

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Saint Paul Pioneer Press (Minnesota)

May 8, 2005 Sunday

**SECTION:** MAIN; BRIEF; Pg. 15A

**LENGTH:** 669 words

**HEADLINE:** the swivel and the sneer

**BYLINE:** BY MARK WASHBURN; Knight Ridder News Service

**BODY:**

Irish actor nails it in two-part 'Elvis' movie

U.S. population is at 295 million, Elvis imposters are common as cabs in places like Vegas, and we have to reach out to Ireland to get a guy to play the King of Rock 'n' Roll?

Tonight, CBS will subject more Americans to the concept of foreign outsourcing than all the computer help lines in India by unleashing Jonathan Rhys Meyers in the role of Elvis Presley.

But just as the auto industry has gone to the Japanese and China is snapping up Treasury bonds like egg rolls, we owe a foreign debt to Meyers and his magic.

If he wants to be nothin' but a hound dog, I say let him. He's got the courage of Sinbad to even accept a role where he must strut the thin line between cultural accuracy and cartoonish imitation.

"If you're going to play Elvis Presley, you have to be aware that there are going to be some people who are really picky about it," Meyers says in a phone interview. That's the understatement of the decade. "I played Elvis Presley; I am not Elvis Presley."

Could have fooled me. Meyers nails it, nails it to the note, and in the process elevates an over-"Mama"-ed and occasionally sappy script into a grab-you-by-the-sequins performance that sparkles even to the roll-your-eyes-at-the-mention-of-Elvis support group.

Meyers succeeds by playing a giant character small. He undersneers, his pompadour misbehaves and when he hits the stage, he acts like a kid caught square in the beam of a diesel engine.

His Elvis is all humble roots and pie-in-sky, a kid stumbling into the big time one accidental step after another.

Camryn Manheim of "The Practice" plays Elvis' doting mother, who thrills to his success while fearing the corrupting atmosphere of show biz. It's a known fact Elvis loved his mama and his mama loved him back, but in case you didn't know it, the early going of "Elvis" establishes the fact in concrete.

Randy Quaid pulls off a convincing villain in the role of Colonel Tom Parker, the promoter who didn't much care for Elvis' singing but knew a good — a very good — thing when he heard it.

Parker comes off in the film as a diabolical fiend, and it's a charitable act on the part of screenwriters. Those who know the Elvis story will appreciate Quaid's understated treachery, because the manipulations of the man would seem implausible if played to their historical record.

This movie explores young Elvis, the energetic, pre-narcotic, ante-belly Southern entertainer destined for luminous fame and a dark descent.

This is the Elvis whose combination of black blues and white country petrified parents in the '50s, the Elvis whose music inspired a million teens to pick up guitars and form rock 'n' roll bands. The Elvis whose moves presaged the sexual

Saint Paul Pioneer Press (Minnesota) May 8, 2005 Sunday

revolution of the '60s and '70s.

Meyers' believability is enhanced because many people don't know the Elvis backstory. The movie ends with Elvis' 1968 comeback and dabbles little in the bloated Vegas version so memorable to people of impressionable age in the 1970s.

Meyers coached himself in Elvis' style by watching Elvis movies and talking to those who knew the King. The movie was filmed largely in New Orleans, and during production, Meyers would ditch his native brogue and talk in Elvisspeak all day, even to the breakfast waitress.

He visited Graceland and lingered alone for a half hour at Elvis' grave, brooding on what made the man with the flicking hips so special.

"There was an energy he gave off," says Meyers. "His energy was so raw, that was what made him."

JOHN LENNON ONCE SAID THAT BEFORE ELVIS, THERE WAS NOTHING. IN UNIVERSAL TERMS, ELVIS IS STILL SEEN BY MANY AS THE BIG BANG OF 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MUSIC, A HARD ACT TO FOLLOW. MEYERS "ELVIS" PULLS IT OFF, IN FULL MEASURE. TUNE IN

**What:**"Elvis"

**When:**8 tonight, Part II 7 p.m. Wednesday

**Where:**CBS

**What else:**"Elvis by the Presleys" — Home movies and interviews with Priscilla and Lisa Marie Presley.

**When:**7 p.m. Friday

**Where:**CBS

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Copyright 2005 MediaNews Group, Inc.  
San Bernardino Sun (San Bernardino, CA)

May 8, 2005 Sunday

**SECTION: NEWS**

**LENGTH:** 826 words

**HEADLINE:** In Brief

**BYLINE:** Staff Reports

**BODY:**

**BANNING**

**Subdivision plans may face delay**

A final decision could be delayed regarding a plan to subdivide almost 17 acres into 44 single-family lots on the north side of Wilson Street, north of Montgomery Creek Channel, and east of Sunset Avenue.

A public hearing is scheduled for Tuesday's City Council meeting, but city staff has recommended the council table the issue, after closing the public hearing, until staff and the public can review traffic issues in the area.

For more information, call City Hall at [951] 922-3105. **BEAUMONT**  
**Planning Commission to weigh alcohol sales**

Jose Ibarra has requested the city allow alcohol sales at Tacos and Beer restaurant at 909 E. Sixth St., in Beaumont.

The Planning Commission will review the request at its meeting at 6 p.m. on Tuesday. City staff has recommended the commission approve the request, subject to special conditions.

The meeting will be at the Civic Center, 550 E. Sixth St. For more information, call [951] 769-8520. **FONTANA**  
**Historical research library open downtown**

The Hazel Putnam Historical Research Library has opened in downtown Fontana.

It will be open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Mondays and Fridays. The library contains copies of old newspapers, local artifacts, historical documents and photographs. It is at 16680 Spring St., west of Sierra Avenue.

For more information, call [909] 350-3539. **HIGH DESERT**  
**Bureau seeks members for advisory council**

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management is looking for five individuals interested in serving on its 15-member California Desert District advisory council.

Applications must be received by May 31, bureau spokesman Doran Sanchez said.

Council members serve three-year terms, and may be nominated for reappointment to a second term.

The five open positions will represent botanical interests, recreation, rights-of-way, American Indian and at-large interests.

Applications should include the name of nominees, biographical sketches and public service records, work and home addresses, and telephone and fax numbers.

Council members advise District Manager Linda Hansen on policies and programs for bureau-managed public lands throughout Southern California, Sanchez said. They meet three to four times a year without compensation except for travel expenses.

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PC-01042

Applications should be sent to the district manager, Bureau of Land Management, 22835 Calle San Juan de Los Laos, Moreno Valley, CA 92553.

For more information, call Sanchez at [951] 697-5220. [chuck.mueller@sbsun.com](mailto:chuck.mueller@sbsun.com)  
**Parking restrictions on council's agenda**

The Big Bear City Council on Monday will consider a two-hour parking restriction on Moonridge Road from November to April.

The existing one-hour parking restriction, informally enacted in 1991, is no longer relevant to some businesses but some form of restriction is needed, according to a city report, to keep ski resort traffic from parking for the entire day.

The recommendation to the council was based on a meeting with business owners on Tuesday.  
**REDLANDS Members sought for city commissions**

Residents are encouraged to apply for a position on the Human Relations Commission or Parks Commission.

The Human Relations Commission advises the City Council and aids the city in fostering peaceful relations among people. It meets at 6 p.m. on the third Monday of each month.

The Parks Commission recommends policies to the City Council on acquisition, development and improvements of parks. It meets at 2:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month.

Residents interested in applying for a non-salaried position on either commission must submit their applications by May 27. Forms are available at the City Manager's Office at City Hall.

For more information, call [909] 798-7510  
**RIALTO Rialto police place 18th in Baker to Vegas race**

A team from the Rialto Police Department came in 18th place, out of 213 contestants, at the Baker to Vegas race, a foot race recently held.

The Rialto team, with each member running a leg of the race, ran from Baker to Las Vegas in 21 hours and 50 minutes.  
**SAN BERNARDINO**

**Perris Hill Park receives new sign**

The More Attractive Community Foundation Inc. has installed a sign identifying Perris Hill Park at the southeast corner of Highland and Valencia avenues.

The foundation donated the sign to the city because it has been years since Perris Hill Park had a marker.

The sign memorializes Fred T. Perris, an engineer who was instrumental in bringing the railroad to San Bernardino.  
[david.schwartz@sbsun.com](mailto:david.schwartz@sbsun.com)

**YUCAIPA Council to discuss landscape district**

The City Council's biweekly meeting is set for 6 p.m. Monday at City Hall, 34272 Yucaipa Blvd.

Agenda items include discussion on the Landscape Lighting Maintenance District Program, revisions of the Custom Home Overlay District and a report on the Yucaipa Community Center.

For more information, call [909] 797-2489.

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Copyright 2005 The Chronicle Publishing Co.  
The San Francisco Chronicle

MAY 8, 2005, SUNDAY, FINAL EDITION

**SECTION:** TRAVEL; Pg. F3; DEPARTURES

**LENGTH:** 769 words

**HEADLINE:** Need for romance is real -- even in a city of deception

**BYLINE:** Vanessa Hua

**BODY:**

Our hotel room had a view of the Eiffel Tower.

Through the window, the half-scale, 50-story replica glowed gold against the night sky. My husband and I clinked champagne glasses, the start of our weekend in Vegas.

For hours, we took long walks beside the canals at the Venetian and the cobblestone streets of Cesar's Palace, bathed in a perpetual, flattering twilight. There was no darkness, only that time of day when the evening is poised to begin and all is possible. We gawked at the flaming volcano in front of the Mirage, at the lions in the glass case at the MGM Grand, at robotic roosters in the gardens of the Bellagio -- Disneyland for adults.

But we maintained a certain ironic detachment. Nothing was real, so how could we take anything seriously?

When we went to New York-New York Hotel & Casino, we laughed to ourselves when a woman exclaimed, "This is just like New York," as she looked over the casino floor.

Hick, we said. Can't tell fake from real.

Apparently, neither could we. That night, we saw one of the Cirque du Soleil shows, "Zumanity." (Spoiler note: If you're planning to go, you might not want to know what comes next.) It has all the usual Cirque eye-popping acrobatics, racier than usual with topless and scantily clad and spangled performers. The erotic show embraced sexuality in its many forms, from water nymphs to contortionists.

At the end, the emcee called an elderly couple from the audience onstage, and they danced gracefully, the epitome of love growing old together.

The platform raised up out of the stage, and a fearful look passed across their faces. We gasped in apprehension, then smiled as the couple relaxed.

I was swept away by the dancers. I thought about growing old with my husband, and imagined us onstage dancing. We squeezed hands and kissed. All around us, couples were sharing the same dream.

You have to go, I told my friends, who were scheduled to go to Las Vegas the following weekend.

After they came back, I compared notes about the different acts: the two plump women in French maid costumes serving strawberries; the schoolgirl spinning dozens of hula hoops; the muscular midget sailing around on a sheet.

Then I asked if the emcee had tapped another elderly couple in the audience.

Yes, he said. The woman looked like Nancy Reagan, he said. The woman we had seen had the patrician glamour of the former First Lady. A coincidence, I thought at first, then asked for more corroborative detail.

"She wore a ruffly black dress?"

Yes, he confirmed.

"And they made a joke about Viagra?"

The San Francisco Chronicle MAY 8, 2005, SUNDAY,

Yes.

I was crushed. The dancing couple was just part of the show; they were professionals. It was as fake as the skyline, as fake as the boobs on the strippers.

I was willing to suspend disbelief thinking about the rest of the performance, knowing that the artists had practiced for hours upon hours to create it. But it was that moment of alleged reality that resonated most with me.

Through a Google search, I found a job description of the couple online: "We are seeking an elderly couple of experienced dancers, specializing in international dance, ballroom dance, acrobatic rock-and-roll or any other dynamic sort of dance, or acrobats, or an elderly couple who perform a variety or circus act."

I called "Zumanity" and asked for more information about the couple, who are dubbed the "Pacemakers."

The spokeswoman for the show had little to say about the dancers. Why not focus on other acts, she asked.

"They are a little surprise for the audience. In an effort to keep the surprise, and not ruin that element, we generally don't grant interviews."

It was a real couple — that was all she would say. That knowledge was a relief: Maybe they were international stars who had fallen in love on the ballroom dancing circuit. Or perhaps they were retirees in Las Vegas, looking for adventure and some extra cash, who turned a hobby into a livelihood. Perhaps their grandchildren had come to see them perform and shared in class at show-and-tell. Maybe they were childless by choice, and lived for each other, planning to dance to the end of their days.

Their true story is unknown to me. And maybe, in the end, the details don't matter.

Vegas is seen as the epitome of quickie marriages, of insincere actions and emotions driven by greed or lust or alcohol. But although I didn't like feeling tricked, I couldn't deny my real emotional response.

I'll always remember holding hands, dreaming of someday. Vanessa Hua is a reporter for The Chronicle. To comment, e-mail [travel@sfchronicle.com](mailto:travel@sfchronicle.com).

**GRAPHIC: PHOTO, "Zumanity,"** Cirque du Soleil's adults-only, cabaret-style show in Las Vegas, blends erotica and more innocent moments. / Costumes by Thierry Mugler, photo by Tomasz Rossa / Cirque du Soleil

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MAY 8, 2005, SUNDAY, FINAL EDITION

**SECTION:** TRAVEL; Pg. F5**LENGTH:** 548 words**HEADLINE:** Beefcake shows raise city's flex appeal**SOURCE:** Chronicle Staff Writer**BYLINE:** Spud Hilton**DATELINE:** Las Vegas**BODY:**

For years, Las Vegas has been in dire need of a woman's touch. And anyone who's spent 75 minutes in a room with the Chippendales and 400 bachelorettes, grannies, debutantes, soccer moms and college girls can tell you: In Vegas these days, women touch.

It's slowly dawning on casino owners that they have to do more for women who visit Las Vegas (17.8 million last year, 48 percent of the total) than offer topless showgirls packaged 14 different ways. It's especially important as more women are taking the "What happens in Vegas ..." slogan to heart and getting in touch with their inner party girl.

Which seems to be the point at the Ultimate Girls' Night Out, a recently opened complex in the Rio All Suite Hotel & Casino geared toward women's fantasies the way the rest of Las Vegas has always been for men.

The \$7 million complex opened in January with a 400-seat theater built specifically for the household-name male dance revue, as well as a 2,100-square-foot boutique-souvenir shop and an exceptionally stylish lounge called Flirts, with lighting designed to flatter and a drink menu offering Desire, Passion and Lipstick.

"We have created a place where women feel comfortable," said Marilyn Winn, senior vice president and general manager for the Rio. "Women are curvy, and the design of the complex follows suit ... everything is smooth and curved with no hard edges or corners. The ladies' room and Gossip Pit were designed with lighting that makes everyone look beautiful."

Oh yeah, the Gossip Pit. A key part of the complex is the oversized lounge in the ladies' room with "luxurious seating areas and well-lit makeover stations."

The show itself has moved beyond the basic bump and grind, adding elements of gymnastics, singing, break-dancing and a game show called "Chipp Shot." The foundation of Chippendales, however — beefy, chiseled men with seductive glances and a lack of clothing — remains undiminished.

The typical audience, according to a spokeswoman for Ultimate Girls Night Out, comprises bachelorette and birthday parties, office outings and women whose husbands and boyfriends are off ogling showgirls.

Other similar male revues:

"Men, The Show": At Seven restaurant-nightclub, 3724 S. Las Vegas Blvd. (702) 992-7970, [www.sevenlasvegas.com](http://www.sevenlasvegas.com). Nightly show Thursday through Sunday. \$35 general, \$45 VIP seating.

"Thunder from Down Under": Merlin's Theater, in Excalibur, 3850 S. Las Vegas Blvd. (702) 992-7970, [www.thunderfromdownunder.com](http://www.thunderfromdownunder.com). Two shows a night Friday through Wednesday. \$43.95.

"Playgirl presents the Men of Sapphire": At upscale topless club Sapphire, 3025 S. Industrial Road. (702) 796-6000,

[www.sapphireLasVegas.com](http://www.sapphireLasVegas.com). Stage performances and private dances Friday and Saturday. \$25.

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If you go

Ultimate Girls Night Out

The Chippendales perform at 8 p.m. Thursday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, and at 8 and 10 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, in the Chippendales Theater on the Rio, 3700 W. Flamingo Road. (888) 746-7784, [www.harrahs.com/our\\_casinos/rlv/index.html](http://www.harrahs.com/our_casinos/rlv/index.html) (click on "Entertainment"). \$35-\$45; \$75 for VIP Sky Lounge. Bachelorette packages, including dinner, \$89.95 per person, plus tax and tip. (800) 777-1711, Ext. 7678.

**GRAPHIC: PHOTO**, Latest bump and grind: Male revue's new Las Vegas home. / Spud Hilton / The Chronicle

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MAY 8, 2005, SUNDAY, FINAL EDITION

**SECTION:** TRAVEL; Pg. F4

**LENGTH:** 2453 words

**HEADLINE:** SIN CITY AT 100;

Reinvention may be Vegas' strong suit, but earlier eras are still easy to sample

**SOURCE:** Chronicle Staff Writer

**BYLINE:** Spud Hilton

**DATELINE:** Las Vegas

**BODY:**

"So, this is art?" my wife asked, staring at the 12 topless French women marching on the La Femme stage in front of us.

They were painted in striped pink light and costumed sparingly in a strategically dangling strip of white leather, red epaulets and one of those enormous, furry hats the Queen's Royal Guard wears.

Any answer would have sounded like claiming to look at Playboy for the articles.

"Um, that's what the program says," I offered, mindful that what happens in Vegas might well go home with me.

Art or not, we were looking at the embodiment, as it were, of Las Vegas' latest era.

It's the biggest resort city on the planet (built more for visitors than for inhabitants) and has been through more reinventions than Madonna and Barbie combined. The city has reveled in, and survived through, eras of dusty dam workers and penny slots, the Rat Pack and Mob thugs, retina-searing glitter and kitsch, city-sized casino-resorts, and even rocketing roller coasters and mass Disneyfication. Evolution and revolution are constant here, in part because it's important to tantalize the 37 million people who came here last year with something new, and also because, unlike in other cities that would love to reinvent themselves, there is a seemingly endless flow of money.

Vegas' current dynasty (more of a lifestyle choice really) is best summed up "sin is in" — ubiquitous nudity has found legitimacy in artistry and a wide-reaching ad campaign encourages lechery locally and deception globally.

But unlike with most perpetually changing destinations, past lives aren't so much buried as they are shuffled — still vibrant and accessible to those willing to seek them out. During a recent visit in the month leading up to the May 15 centennial (tied to the railroads' 1905 land auction, not the actual incorporation six years later), I set out to find the attraction, location or object that best embodies each of Las Vegas' former eras.

Admittedly, I glossed over some of the notable ages — Atomic Vegas (savvy hotel owners sold seats on the roof for viewing the mushroom clouds 65 miles away at the Nevada Test Site), as well as Howard Hughes' Vegas — but the new Atomic Testing Museum was closed, and becoming a wackjob recluse like Hughes takes years and I had a schedule to keep.

**Frontier Vegas**

During the 40 years that followed the city's founding, Vegas was a Western desert boom town that was more rough than tumble, driven by mining, the new railroad lines, Hoover Dam construction and, of course, gambling, drinking and sex (possibly in that order, but probably not).

The state ban on gambling from 1911 to 1931 went largely ignored — as did most of Prohibition — especially in the

notorious red-light district, Block 16, bordered by Ogden, Steward, First and Second streets.

Among the era's survivors is the Golden Gate Hotel & Casino, built at the corner of Fremont and Main streets in 1906 as the Hotel Nevada, the first permanent lodging in the city. Many of the original — though renovated — rooms are still in use.

The casino maintains its old-timey charm with dark wood paneling, ceiling fans and vintage photos of San Francisco and Las Vegas. It maintains its popularity, however, with its fabled 99 cent shrimp cocktail at the San Francisco Shrimp Bar & Deli.

According to a hotel spokeswoman, the Golden Gate is nearing the milestone of 30 million shrimp cocktails sold. Servers go through 1 ton of shrimp per week — not a lot by cruise ship standards, but pretty good for a small lunch counter dishing it out a few ounces at a time.

Stroll through the smallish casino (25,000 square feet, compared to MGM Grand's 171,500) and take a few moments to celebrate the old and classic — the penny slots, a sundae glass full of chilled crustacean, the 1906-era building — in a town that typically values only the new and trendy.

#### Rat Pack and the mob

"I heard Sinatra used to like this place," I said to the young server at Battista's Hole in the Wall, expecting to be regaled with colorful stories of famous misdeeds and dropped names.

"Never came here," he said and trotted off to fill water glasses. It turns out, fortunately, that while Frank never graced this popular family-style Italian restaurant behind the Flamingo, Dean Martin and Sammy Davis Jr. did.

The Rat Pack had a hand in Las Vegas' era of glamour and revitalization in the '50s, although the group's role often has been exaggerated and is probably more of a poster child of the times. Either way, the popularity of the city and its casinos boomed during the decade, especially the swingin' Sands, where Sinatra and, eventually, Martin, Davis, Joey Bishop and Peter Lawford all entertained sold-out crowds in the Copa Room.

Also entertaining crowds nightly, Battista's isn't a tribute to Italian restaurants of the '50s and '60s, it's one of the originals — more old school than Old World — and is probably unchanged since the days when Dino and Sammy dined on linguini and veal Marsala. Fruit baskets and Chianti bottles hang from the ceiling and walls, the house wine is all-you-can-drink and every room belongs to Gordy, the hunched, wise-cracking accordion player providing the "Godfather"-like soundtrack. The restaurant is also a nod to the ring-a-ding dynasty because of all the performers who passed through — most of whom can be seen on the walls posing with the owner.

After dinner, I hiked with my wife, Ann, up the block to the Venetian to admire the Great Hall, an extravagantly large entry room emblazoned with Italian frescoes and gilded trim — the kind of place you would use to install a new pope. Whether by design or not, the hall sits atop some of Las Vegas' holiest ground — the former location of the Copa Room, longtime showplace for the Rat Pack. I have it on good authority Frank did eat there.

#### Glitzy Vegas

Eventually, the glamour of Las Vegas faded under the desert glare, to be replaced by its less sophisticated cousin, glitz. Starting in the mid-1960s, the realization set in that visitors wanted a little fantasy to go with the slot machines and blackjack, and the casinos responded. Neon got brighter, the stars got bigger (especially Elvis), the shows got flashier, and anyone owning stock in sequins, rhinestones or ostrich feathers could soon afford to build his own casino.

No one better represented the glitzy, sparkling fantasy than Mr. Showmanship, Liberace, who started at the Frontier in 1945 for \$400 a week and 10 years later signed on at the Riviera for a \$50,000 weekly paycheck. He was among the first to thoroughly understand that talent isn't enough — people want a show.

It wasn't enough to just stroll through the ostentatious cars, jewel-encrusted pianos and 200-pound costumes in the surprisingly excellent Liberace Museum east of the Strip. I had to see a show. The museum, actually a complex of exhibit spaces in a nicely renovated strip mall, hosts three shows a week by Wes Winters, a self-taught pianist who plays in Liberace's exact style (but who thankfully doesn't try to impersonate him).

Ringed fingers flying, Winters blew through about 10 songs, from the "Saber Dance" to a boogie-woogie version of "Flight of the Bumblebee." By the end of the set, the intimate crowd had been entertained and educated (Liberace used

sable seat cushions), and more importantly, dazzled.

#### Mega-resort Vegas

The only drawback to a casino resort that offers nearly every diversion you could want, from a gallery of Monet works to nightclubs to trendy upscale restaurants, is that you have to keep an eye on your watch.

It takes at least 20 minutes and a team of Sherpas to get anywhere.

Back when the Horseshoe, the Sahara and the Dunes were built in the early 1950s, you could probably walk the width and breadth of each in under five minutes. But in 1989, the 3,039-room Mirage opened, the first in a parade of the Strip-dwarfing mega-resorts aimed at providing guests enough reasons to not leave the property.

By the time Steven Wynn built the \$1.7 billion Bellagio eight years later, every new building had to have a dozen or more restaurants, 3 acres of casino floor, enough pools to drain Lake Michigan and a destination city theme to connect it all. The stuff that used to be cheap, cheesy or free — food, shows, shopping — became bigger money than the gambling.

We picked Bellagio to embody the era, in part because of its longtime dominance among mega-resorts (Wynn Las Vegas had not opened yet). More important, Ann and I spent most of a day admiring the pool, ogling the Italian villa architecture, strolling the arboretum and sampling nightlife, all without giving a thought to going outside — except maybe to see the iconic fountain out front.

The downside: The winding four-city-block trek from the Gallery of Fine Art, where we viewed 19th century paintings by Claude Monet, to the stylish and immaculate Sensi restaurant on the other side of the property.

#### Theme park Vegas

With its Deco Gotham skyline, themed bars and restaurants, mini-Manhattan neighborhood and bumper cars, New York-New York couldn't be more of a theme park if it had a roller coaster.

Oh, wait.

During the 1990s, casino owners were falling over themselves to make Sin City family-friendly by recasting the town as a municipal version of Disneyland — medieval knights, pirate shows, volcanoes and rooftop rides became the tools of one-upmanship — and New York-New York was no exception.

Like most of the place-themed resorts on the Strip, New York-New York is an iconic version of the real thing, only cleaner and with fewer carjackings. We strolled through the faux neighborhoods under the perpetual night sky, past signs for Times Square and Broadway, picked up a dog at Nathan's and watched steam waft from the manhole covers.

But it's not really a family amusement park without thrill rides, so we boarded the Manhattan Express roller coaster, whose taxi-yellow cars snake around and through the ersatz New York skyline at up to 67 mph. The scenery quickly takes a backseat on this ride. If nothing else, it's a chance to move fast in a town that is second only to Los Angeles in outrageously slow traffic.

On the way out, I ran into a guy in a New York Rangers shirt whose accent made telling me he's from Brooklyn redundant.

"What do you think of this, of New York-New York?" I asked, gesturing to the phony street scene.

"Yeah, it's awright. We just ran in for the coastah."

Sin is in

Sex never really wanes in Las Vegas, it just changes into a different G-string. These days, there are suites at the Palms with built-in stripper poles; performers in "Showgirls of Magic" do their sleight-of-hand sans tops (making misdirection easier); and clusters of "direct marketers" on the Strip hand out what can only be described as hooker trading cards to passing tourists.

On stage, the first show featuring bare-breasted women, Minsky's Follies, arrived at the Dunes in 1957, sending state lawmakers into fits and smashing attendance records. The early shows were thinly veiled as culture ("Minsky Goes to Paris," "Folies Bergere" at the Tropicana), and shows since have featured nudity in the name of history, glamour, jazz dance and tradition.

The San Francisco Chronicle MAY 8, 2005, SUNDAY,

The latest vehicle is art. We couldn't choose between the two best examples of the new artistic toplessness — "La Femme," the reincarnation of Paris' Crazy Horse Saloon and its l'art du nu (the art of the nude); and "Zumanity," Cirque du Soleil's salute to sexuality — so we saw both.

In "La Femme," the artists — individually and as a drill-team like unit — perform "living pictures" in a Pop Art and avant-garde framework, each a moving collage of projected colors and shapes, props, costumes and skin. Lots and lots of skin. In one dramatic scene, a lone dancer clad only in a thong, a wig and red and green light, dances furiously against a set of padded prison bars.

In San Francisco terms, "Zumanity" is Teatro Zinzani meets the Mitchell Brothers. It's a cabaret show in the same format as its Cirque siblings, and it creates a fantastic world of intimacy and eroticism, creatively told in music, acrobatics, gymnastics, dance, humor and flesh. Lots and lots of flesh. A scene toward the end titled "orgy" is well named, presenting the entire cast in a writhing circular pile on a revolving stage.

Unlike "La Femme," "Zumanity" features equal-opportunity nudity, providing chiseled and limber men to add balance. Both shows, however, have broad appeal because the flesh becomes commonplace and, eventually, secondary to the astonishing beauty or jaw-dropping skill of the performances. The art, as it were.

Leaving the theater, a young Hispanic woman in a bright red T-shirt with "Girls Direct to You" handed us a short stack of glossy, oversized business cards. One featured a girl-next-door teen with red hair that matched her satin bra and G-string. Apparently, her name is Andrea and she charges \$44. The back of the card is more detailed: "Friendly, Fun and Frisky. Girls of your choice direct to you in 15 min."

Obviously, it isn't plausible — there's no way you can get anywhere in Las Vegas in 15 minutes.

If you go

All locations are in Las Vegas.

Attractions

Golden Gate Hotel & Casino, One Fremont St. (702) 385-1906, [www.goldengatecasino.net](http://www.goldengatecasino.net).

Battista's Hole in the Wall, 4041 Audrie St. (at Flamingo). (702) 732-1424, [www.battistaslasvegas.com](http://www.battistaslasvegas.com). Entrees: \$18.95-\$34.95, includes all-you-can-drink house wine.

The Venetian, 3355 Las Vegas Blvd. So. (888) 283-6423, [www.thevenetian.com](http://www.thevenetian.com).

Liberace Museum, 1775 E. Tropicana Ave. (702) 798-5595, [www.liberace.com](http://www.liberace.com). Adults \$12.50, seniors and children 6 years and older \$8.50. Liberace tribute show 1 p.m. Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday. \$12.

The Bellagio, 3400 Las Vegas Blvd. So. (888) 987-6667, [www.thebellagio.com](http://www.thebellagio.com). Sensi reservations, (877) 234-6358. Monet exhibit, (877) 957-9777.

New York-New York, 3790 Las Vegas Blvd. So. (800) 693-6763, [www.nynyhotelcasino.com](http://www.nynyhotelcasino.com). Manhattan Express roller coaster \$12.50.

"La Femme" at MGM Grand, 3799 Las Vegas Blvd. So. (800) 929-1111, [www.mgmgrand.com](http://www.mgmgrand.com). Two shows a night Wednesday through Monday, \$59.

"Zumanity" at New York-New York (see above). (800) 963-9634. [www.zumanity.com](http://www.zumanity.com). \$65-\$125.

For more information

Las Vegas Weekly ([www.lasvegasweekly.com](http://www.lasvegasweekly.com)) and Cheapovegas.com offer tips and reviews of hotels, shows and nightlife. Nearly everything in town can be booked at [www.vegas.com](http://www.vegas.com). To comment, e-mail Deputy Travel Editor Spud Hilton at [travel@sfchronicle.com](mailto:travel@sfchronicle.com).

**GRAPHIC: PHOTO (5), MAP, (1-4) Ages of Vegas, clockwise from top left: Riders on the Manhattan Express roller coaster at New York-New York get a good look at the ersatz Statue of Liberty; impressionist Kenton Weaver does his best Sinatra in front of the Golden Gate Hotel; the elaborate Great Hall at the Venetian, former site of the Copa Room;**

a scene from the adults-only "Zumanity." / Mike Kepka / The Chronicle, Spud Hilton / The Chronicle, Costumes by Thierry Mugler, Tomasz Rossa / Cirque du Soleil, Spud Hilton / The Chronicle, (5) Pianist Wes Winters, who performs the Liberace tribute show at the Liberace Museum, shows off his glittering rings for visitors. / Spud Hilton / The Chronicle

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MAY 8, 2005, SUNDAY, FINAL EDITION

**SECTION:** TRAVEL; Pg. F3; TWO CENTS

**LENGTH:** 386 words

**HEADLINE:** TWO CENTS;

What happened to you in Vegas that didn't stay in Vegas?

**BODY:**

What happened to you in Vegas that didn't stay in Vegas?

Dan Shiner, Mill Valley

What didn't stay in Vegas was me. A friend and I were caught gambling in a casino there when I was 19. Security escorted my friend and me to the door and suggested we not return for a couple of years. I was losing anyway.

---

Cris Hammond, Sausalito

My wife went on a business trip to a convention in Las Vegas 15 years ago. She came home with a hard hat that had the name "Ben" written on it in Magic Marker. Never got a good explanation about that one.

---

Teresa Espana, Fresno

That would be a memory of an evening spent with the beautiful men from "Thunder From Down Under." My 68-year-old mother got pulled on stage, and the last thing I remember was her hands being placed inside and "down under" one of the hunk's trunks. She claims she didn't feel much.

---

Leutisha Stills, Hayward

My friend's losing on the slot machines. Hard to keep that in Vegas, when the bills come due and the spouse wants to know why the bank account is empty.

---

Stuart Woo, San Francisco

A stomachache. I definitely overindulged on the buffets in Vegas a month ago and brought that back to the Bay Area for awhile.

---

Leon Sun, San Francisco

In 2000, I rode the Tour of Las Vegas — a 100-mile bike ride around the city. When I came in, they said, "You won!" Without even knowing it, I had won a bicycle. Well, that happened in Vegas and didn't stay there — they sent the bike to me in San Francisco.

---

Joann Kersten, San Lorenzo

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The San Francisco Chronicle MAY 8, 2005, SUNDAY,

I got married, unfortunately. The marriage went home with me, but it didn't last.

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Elias Chaghouri, San Bruno

All my gambling winnings stayed in Vegas. It was like a strong magnetic power attracted them back to where they came from. What was left? Bills to pay.

---

Dianne Boate, San Francisco

I met Elvis Presley and Liberace on the same day in May 1956. My memories and I came home to California. Two Cents is a pool of Bay Area residents we tap for comments and anecdotes to questions we pose via e-mail. To join, e-mail us at [twocents@sfchronicle.com](mailto:twocents@sfchronicle.com).

**GRAPHIC:** PHOTO (9)

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MAY 8, 2005, SUNDAY, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: SPORTS; Pg. D6

LENGTH: 564 words

HEADLINE: The bull pen

BYLINE: John Shea

**BODY:**

The Cubs are tired of Kerry Wood's injuries — he's on the DL for the sixth time in eight years — and might be looking ahead to his exit. He's guaranteed \$11 million next year and would make \$13.5 million in 2007 if he throws a combined 400 innings this year and next, now a longshot. After next season, the Cubs, who think Wood's mechanics might be a reason for his injuries, can buy him out for \$3 million.

— Dusty Baker never hesitated to have Mark McGwire and Barry Bonds intentionally walked, and now he's being cautious with Milwaukee's Lyle Overbay. On Tuesday and Wednesday, the Cubs walked Overbay six times, four intentionally. For as hot as he is, "you don't want Overbay beating you" sure sounds funny. Overbay is second in the NL in walks (25) behind Brian Giles of the Padres (26).

— The big-league leader in walks (with 31) is Texas' David Dellucci, who has a better eye at the plate — a better two eyes, in fact — following Lasik surgery. Dellucci drew nine walks over four games, including six in three games in Oakland.

— Last year, then-Cubbie Moises Alou didn't appreciate broadcaster Steve Stone's negativity. Neither works for the Cubs anymore, but Stone has a regular segment on Chicago's WSCR-AM and is still taking shots. He said Alou sometimes played the outfield "like Stevie Wonder."

— Rookie Jeff Francis is getting the hang of Coors Field, but nowhere else. He's 3-0 with a 2.55 ERA in Denver, 1-3 with a 6.69 ERA on the road. The bad news is, he pitches today in Florida. The opposing pitcher is Al Leiter, who has never lost to the Rockies outside of Coors Field, going 8-0 with a 1996 no-hitter in 13 starts. Vegas, anyone?

— Giles was 0-for-21 after catching Anna Kournikova's ceremonial first pitch on April 29. "He kissed the princess and turned into a frog," manager Bruce Bochy said. Before Giles' breakout game Thursday (4-for-5 and five RBIs), he was batting .175 and having trouble getting to first base, if you will.

— Padres owner John Moores is dissatisfied with the club's Dominican Republic facility, so new CEO Sandy Alderson, along with general manager Kevin Towers, will visit the island to study sites for a new facility. When Alderson was in Oakland, the A's built one of the majors' top facilities on the island, hooking up with Miguel Tejada among others.

— For the anti-Jeff Kent clan that knocks his defense: He made his first error on Wednesday. His manager, Jim Tracy, praises how he positions himself and recognizes hitters' tendencies.

— The Billy Beane/Mike Crowley promotions from executives to executives/limited partners weren't unprecedented in the Bay Area. The Giants' Larry Baer, at the beginning of the 1994 season, became a minority owner. Like the A's guys, Baer didn't need to pony up.

— Ichiro Suzuki missed hitting .400 last year by 20 hits. Is he on his way this year? He had 10 more hits in April than he had in April 2004.

— First, the intentional walk. Now, the intentional balk. Cleveland's Bob Wickman said he balked intentionally Tuesday, moving Minnesota's Michael Cuddyer from second to third. Wickman wanted Cuddyer off second because he believed Cuddyer was signaling pitch locations, based on the catcher's position, to batters. With Cuddyer at third,

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Wickman proceeded to earn the save — despite the first balk of his career, covering 676 games.

**GRAPHIC:** PHOTO, David Delluci

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MAY 8, 2005, SUNDAY, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: CHRONICLE MAGAZINE; Pg. 62; DINING OUT

LENGTH: 3965 words

HEADLINE: Going for Broke;

Las Vegas has lured some of S.F.'s top restaurateurs, but is the gamble paying off for diners?

BYLINE: Michael Bauer

**BODY:**

These days, when chefs make a name for themselves, they bypass Disneyland and go directly to Las Vegas. Since Wolfgang Puck led the way in 1992, amid protests that he was selling out by opening his star-studded Spago in the Forum Shops at Caesars, others have followed the money. It's as enticing as Eve's apple — and too tempting to ignore.

Today, Charlie Palmer of Aureole, Sirio Maccioni of Le Cirque, Daniel Boulud of Daniel (all from New York), Emeril Lagasse of Emeril's in New Orleans, Nobu Matsuhisa of Nobu and Piero Selvaggio of Valentino (both from Los Angeles) all have Las Vegas restaurants — and that just scratches the surface.

During the past decade, I've watched the dining scene evolve from the \$12.95 prime rib dinners at places like Barbary Coast to the \$175 entree of Kobe beef at Bradley Ogden in Caesars Palace. It used to be that drinks were cheaper than bottled water. Now if you go to a place like Mix, Alain Ducasse's new restaurant and lounge on top of the Hotel at Mandalay Bay, you have to purchase a \$300 bottle of liquor just to get a seat at prime time.

Ten years ago, gaming accounted for 90 percent of the revenue in Las Vegas. Now, that number is just 40 percent, according to Clark Wolf, a food and restaurant consultant with offices in New York, Las Vegas and Sonoma.

The migration of top-flight chefs from San Francisco began in 1998 when Steve Wynn opened the \$1.6 billion Bellagio and lured Michael Mina from Aqua in San Francisco, Todd English from Olives in Boston and Jean-George Vongerichten from Jean-George in New York. In addition, he enticed Julian Serrano to leave Masa's and move to Las Vegas to cook at Picasso, the hotel's signature restaurant. At that time Wynn said, "In two years, every major chef and restaurant in the world will be in Las Vegas."

His prediction was on target, and though he sold his pioneering hotels along the Strip to the MGM Grand people five years ago, last month he dealt himself back into the game by opening the even more luxurious \$2.6 billion Wynn hotel. This time, all the chefs (except Boulud) will be on the premises full time.

Las Vegas is a town of promise and felled dreams carved out of the desert. Great restaurants tap into the soul of a region, but the culture of Vegas is amorphous.

Can restaurants develop a sense of place in a city built on fantasy and illusion, or is Las Vegas merely the Orlando of fine dining?

Since I'm very familiar with Bay Area restaurants, I wanted to see how our local chefs have adapted to this surreal environment. Over four nights and three days, I blitzed through Postrio, Michael Mina, Fleur de Lys, Bradley Ogden, Crustacean, Bouchon, Seablu, Nobhill and Burger Bar.

I also wanted to understand what entices perfectionists like Thomas Keller, Hubert Keller and Michael Mina to gamble with their reputations and become jet-set chefs.

Ironically for Las Vegas, the chefs hold winning hands — most have pretty sweet deals. When they open their restaurants in hotel casinos, they shoulder very little liability and aren't saddled with the challenge of raising money and

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pleasing hordes of investors. The hotel generally builds the interior and sometimes even carries the payroll. The chefs help create the concept and agree to be on the premises for specified periods of time. To be really successful, most spend more time than required.

"What's important is that the check average in Las Vegas is high enough that you can do the style of food you want to do," says Mina, who has Nobhill and Seablue in the MGM Grand and the newly renamed Michael Mina in the Bellagio. "There are not a lot of cities where you can do that."

Mina says he could probably make just as much money with a neighborhood restaurant in San Francisco, but in Las Vegas "you have the ability to work with some of the best designers in the world and to be a part of the process from the beginning."

While creativity is always a big motivator, Hubert Keller decided to take the plunge when he was caught in permit hell after a fire shuttered Fleur de Lys in San Francisco. He realized if he couldn't reopen the San Francisco restaurant, he'd have nothing. It took nearly a year to surmount the bureaucracy here; the Fleur de Lys Las Vegas deal took less than three weeks to complete. In addition, being involved in the process of picking the designer and building out the space — on someone else's dime — revved up his creative juices.

Exposure is another enticement. About 38 million tourists a year visit Las Vegas — more than come to New York, according to Wolf — and most of them head for the 4-mile neon Strip. There's so much demand that even a mediocre place can succeed. It's similar to what happened in the Bay Area during the dot-com boom, where places with shoddy service and half-baked concepts were crowded nonetheless, but in Vegas it's on a larger scale.

It's hard to do one restaurant well, and it's almost impossible to nail two or more. Yet the chefs who have come to Las Vegas are at the top of their games and the odds are in their favor that the restaurant will be well received, even if the restaurants are very different from the originals.

The Las Vegas Fleur de Lys is grand, but don't expect San Francisco's tented environment. Crustacean, a modest restaurant on Polk and California streets specializing in crab, garlic noodles and other Vietnamese dishes has become a nightclub in the Desert Passages in the Aladdin Hotel. At the end of dinner service, the tables disappear and customers take to the dance floor. At Postrio, along the canals at the Venetian, the only similarity to the San Francisco Postrio is the name.

In most cases, in the attempt to adapt to their surroundings, the restaurants morph into something else, but Bouchon, which opened last year, is an exception. Even though the space is more than triple the size of the original location in Yountville, the menu is practically identical and it's wonderfully executed. Plus, the place has the familiar look of a grand brasserie.

Other restaurateurs, including Bradley Ogden, have taken a different tack by creating an original idea. Still, the dining experience at restaurant Bradley Ogden feels chaotic, surrounded by the casino that's clearly visible from many tables. A meal costs well over \$100 a person, but you may feel as if you've dined at a Hollywood back lot. It doesn't seem real.

The aura is a little more authentic at Nobhill, Mina's ode to San Francisco, with a menu of dishes such as Tomales Bay shellfish platter, lobster "Celery Victor," crab Louis and North Beach cioppino. Although the restaurant is located in the 5,000-room MGM Grand, the space seems intimate because it's off the main casino and has a distinct entrance that functions as a decompression chamber. The tailored Armani look of the restaurant is the antithesis of the flash and dash a few steps away.

Perhaps the most intriguing concept of all, however, is Hubert Keller's Burger Bar, where he tops ground beef with foie gras and truffles, lobster and asparagus, smoked salmon or grilled pineapple. It's the perfect toast to Las Vegas excess — and he's packing them in.

Still, at this point packing them in hasn't been an issue because hotels keep adding more rooms, and tourists have continued to fill them. On the other hand, the expensive celebrity-chef restaurant has become commonplace, and people have many choices when deciding where to dine. In the inevitable shakeout, some restaurants may not survive, while others will continue to thrive. Once that happens, we'll begin to discover the soul of Las Vegas dining.

— The following write-ups are based on only one visit, so no stars were awarded.

FLEUR DE LYS

Every time I go to Fleur de Lys on Sutter Street, I can taste Hubert Keller's genius — a combination of his French training, Alsatian heritage and California sensibilities. The majestic environment, one of the sexiest in the city, features a huge flower arrangement that tickles the elaborate chandelier in the middle of the tented room. In the Las Vegas incarnation in the Mandalay Bay, Stanlee Gatti has incorporated gentle nods to the original with a row of fabric-tented cubicles along one side centered over exposed wood tables, opposite an impressive 30-foot curved wall of rough-hewn stone. The much-ballyhooed focal point is a stylized leaf frame stuffed with 2,500 live pink roses, which are refreshed every day.

The 110-seat dining room — 25 more seats than the original — is indulgent and luxurious, and the service is some of the best you'll find in Las Vegas.

The menu includes only two or three dishes you'll find in San Francisco, but the style is similar, with up to a dozen intricate preparations on each plate woven together like an Impressionistic masterpiece.

The highlight may be the amuse bouche to welcome guests: a rich foie gras cappuccino served in a demitasse cup. Diners can choose three (\$68), four (\$76) or five courses (\$88) — inexpensive by Las Vegas standards.

Although Keller makes frequent trips to Las Vegas, the cooking is done by Laurent Pillard, who, like Keller, has worked at many of the great three-star restaurants in France. His menu reflects the juxtaposition of elegant and earthy flavors on one plate with such items as the slow-roasted salmon topped with caviar. The fillet is arranged on top of cauliflower "couscous" and a mint-horseradish sauce that seems to intensify the fish's sweet, briny qualities and the vegetable's herbal notes.

The meal ends just as memorably as it begins, with a selection of small pastries and warm madeleines.

#### NOBHILL

In a make-believe world where volcanoes erupt, water fountains shoot hundreds of feet in the air and a pyramid with a laser light pierces the night-time sky, stepping into Nobhill is like stepping into a soothing spa. Of the dozens of restaurants I've visited in Las Vegas, this one feels the most real.

Michael Mina opened it in 2001, using San Francisco as his theme. The interior by Tony Chi is washed in neutral colors, with handsome shaded chandeliers that lend tailored simplicity to the 120-seat room. Tables are indulgently wide, and the mohair-upholstered chairs are comfortable. Metallic filaments catch the light and twinkle like pav diamonds, a subtle touch acknowledging Vegas' glitz.

The staff is accommodating, and the food is about as good an advertisement for the culinary wonders of San Francisco as you can find. The menu is peppered with familiar dishes such as cheese fondue (\$9) served with cubes of San Francisco sourdough; get fancy and you can have it with black truffles (\$23) and brioche dunking cubes. High rollers can feast on a whole foie gras (price varies) glazed with Calvados and caramelized apples.

Chef Sven Mede crisps veal sweetbreads (\$19) and serves them with an artistic rope of mushroom puree, delicate mushrooms and wispy greens. He also produces other familiar appetizers such as a watercress salad with Green Goddess dressing (\$13), and crab Louis with avocado and romaine (\$21).

Look around the room and it's easy to determine the most popular main course — the lobster pot pie (\$69) covered with a bronze dome of puff pastry.

#### BRADLEY OGDEN

If you're looking for a sense of place, your search could easily end at Bradley Ogden, located in the middle of the casino at Caesars Palace. The warm, masculine interior is swathed in wood paneling, comfortable upholstered chairs and a handsome box-beam ceiling, but every time the door opens, the musty yeastiness of stale liquor and the persistent stench of cigarette smoke compete with the smoky sweetness of pork loin and the rich buttery essence of foie gras.

Of our 10 or so meals in Las Vegas, this was the most expensive and offered the fewest amenities; the bill for a three-course meal with a modest bottle of wine was more than \$300. Most main courses start at \$41 for items such as steamed halibut with pickled ramps and fiddlehead ferns in an orange-scented mushroom broth and rise to \$175 for a Kobe-style New York strip steak.

All the places in this price range send out extra surprises at the beginning or the end of the meal, but at Bradley

Ogden, the only thing you get without asking is the check. If attitude was an Olympic sport, this staff would win. Not only are they arrogant, they also don't know the menu. They never bother to describe a dish when they place it on the table; if you insist, they restate the obvious and leave quickly.

The blue cheese souffle (\$16) — a signature dish, we were told — had the texture of wet muffins, surrounded by beets, walnuts, jicama and port with a verjus emulsion. Pan-roasted salmon (\$37), served with potatoes carved to look like melon balls, rubbery lobster, trumpet mushrooms and a few fava beans, desperately needed a sauce to pull it all together.

However, smoked pork loin (\$46) shows the kitchen's immense capabilities. The tender slices are accented with cinnamon cap mushrooms and frothy vanilla foam, and served with an enamel cast-iron pot of navy beans.

Desserts are complicated. The passion fruit and chocolate (\$15) included a fudge cake, fruit jellies, mini pancakes, a strawberry soda and a warm chocolate pie, which came to the table cool. The plating was careless, with sauce dripping over the side.

It may have been an off night — I was told later that Ogden, who now cooks full time there, had been out of town. Still, when a place has the audacity to charge those prices, diners have the audacity to expect to be wowed.

#### BURGER BAR

What do you get when you ask a great French chef like Hubert Keller to do a hamburger? A really thick juicy Angus hamburger (\$9) or Kobe beef (\$16) — and a lot of frills such as grilled shrimp, marinated anchovies, jalapeno bacon, homemade beetroot pickles, pesto sauce and black truffles.

Keller took over the space when it was already under construction, refined the concept and ended up creating one of the hottest culinary tickets in town. The interior looks like a cross between a neon Mel's Diner and a wood-paneled Sam's grill.

In keeping with the soda fountain theme, you can get a great peanut butter shake (\$5.50), root beer float (\$5.50) and a chocolate burger (\$3.95) with a warm doughnut bun, a chocolate ganache patty, a slice of passion fruit gelee that looks like a slice of American cheese, strawberries and mint leaves.

There's a short wine list, 24 beers on draft (\$5.50-\$6) and more than a dozen bottles. And in a nod to elite culinary tradition, Keller has created the Rossini burger (\$60), a patty of Kobe beef topped with sauteed foie gras, shaved truffles and Madeira sauce on an onion bun.

#### POSTRIO

Although the name's the same, it's about the only similarity between the San Francisco and Las Vegas restaurants.

Still, the oversize blown-glass chandeliers, marble floors and stylized tile wall accents give the interior a rich patina and a celebratory air that resonates in Las Vegas — in fact, a wedding party took over most of our section on the day we visited.

A popular spot at lunch is on the 100-seat outdoor patio overlooking the canal and constant parade of parents with strollers, stylish models looking at Jimmy Choo shoes and spontaneous concerts from the singing gondola guides.

It evokes a theme park, with food that matches. You pay high prices for food that fills you up but doesn't have much personality. Halibut over cioppino broth (\$21) doesn't have much spark. The wood oven-baked pizza — we tried the one with pepperoni, tomato sauce, oregano and shaved parmesan (\$12) — sports a crust so spongy that it might as well have been Boboli. Puck's genius is clear in the housemade sausages (\$13), although his staff needs to work on the three mustards because I'd swear that two of them were the same.

We also liked Wolfgang's Pork Wienerschnitzel (\$24), with a thin slice of crisply breaded meat hanging over the plate, but the accompanying warm Austrian potato salad tasted under-seasoned and starchy. However, the lobster club (\$28), with bacon, arugula and grilled country bread, is dynamic.

Desserts were pretty lackluster. The six-layer chocolate terrine (\$9) was gummy, and the Meyer lemon meringue tart (\$9) tasted only of sugar. By the time the harried waiter got around to taking our order, we were ready to leave anyway.

#### CRUSTACEAN

The original Crustacean on Polk and California streets is modest compared to the branches in Beverly Hills, and now

## Las Vegas.

The An family, which started Thanh Long in 1971, has garnered a much-deserved reputation for fusion creations, and executive chef Helene An has taken some of Crustacean's signature dishes — roast crab in roasted garlic sauce (\$45), shaken beef (\$28) and roast tiger prawns (\$38) to the 250-seat nightclub in the Aladdin hotel complex.

Cracking crab may not be an enticement for a crowd that wants to boogie, so the restaurant has adapted. The meat is removed from the shell and reassembled for presentation to look like a whole critter. In addition, An also serves the "famous garlic noodles," a recipe so coveted that it's produced in a separate kitchen. Maybe the recipe is the same, but the ones in Las Vegas taste sweeter than what I've had in San Francisco.

The menu appropriately concentrates on small plates such as chicken satay (\$10), green lip mussels with Asian pesto (\$12) and lobster mango spring rolls (\$14).

The interior has handsome Asian accents with a sexy tiered dining room leading to the stage and dance floor. Yet if you're there before the music begins, it can feel a little lonely.

## SEABLUE

The Adam Tihany interior at Michael Mina's MGM Grand seafood restaurant feels like a three-ring circus; there's so much going on your eyes don't know where to rest. Huge drumlike red shades hang from the ceiling, blue and white Matisse-like murals decorate areas above eye level, and water cascades down the walls.

In addition, the water walls emit a green-blue glow that makes skin tones seem sallow in the muted light. Combined with an active open kitchen, it borders on sensory overload.

On the other hand, the menu is straightforward, and the savory courses are prepared without cream or butter. One page spotlights simply grilled wild-caught fish, often including black grouper (\$34), tai snapper (\$29) and Rouget (\$42). On our visit, the charred, herb-flecked grouper fillet rested on a bed of asparagus, lentils and garbanzo beans.

Mina and his crew also produce three tagines — Moroccan clay pots — which include an earthy preparation of North Sea cod (\$42) with braised cardoons, caramelized salsify and shaved truffles. Monkfish (\$29) is paired with braised oxtail, wild mushrooms and polenta dumplings.

Another distinction is Seablue's formalized salad bar (\$13). Customers read over the 50 or so options and then check off up to 10 items, such as beetroot, hearts of palm, almonds, bacon and arugula.

By the end of the meal, we were still confused by the design when another friend weighed in on his impression: "It feels like we're dining in a piata."

## MICHAEL MINA

When Mina split with his partner at Aqua, he still ran the restaurant in the Bellagio for a time. However, recently he changed the name to coincide with his signature restaurant in the Westin St. Francis.

He's made the transition flawlessly, keeping some Aqua specialties, but supplementing them with dishes that reflect his San Francisco menu. Chef Anthony Carron is able to duplicate both styles flawlessly; the dishes I had at the Bellagio were as good as those I've had in San Francisco.

Mina's style is challenging. Each course is actually six preparations. One dish, for example, features three preparations of lobster tempura (\$28), each with a different sauce — carrot and ginger, pickled fennel and saffron aioli, and green papaya and mango — along with three preparations of shrimp, each individually marinated in the corresponding flavors. He's also included his roasted foie gras and chilled torchon preparations (\$36) — the combination of liver with pineapple and vanilla is especially magical.

For main courses, he's duplicated his potato-crusting John Dory; one with caramelized endive, another with a stew of onions and malt vinegar and the third with truffled portobello and red wine sauce (\$42). Diners can also get Aqua signatures such as the miso-glazed sea bass (\$38) and the medallions of ahi topped with foie gras (\$39).

The interior features a stunning basket-weave wood ceiling, Robert Rauschenberg paintings and an open kitchen.

However, the restaurant loses some of its charm because the tables feel packed as tightly as the 38 Geary at rush hour, and waiters run around like they're about to catch the bus as it's pulling away from the curb.

Fortunately, a sense of calm prevails when you walk out the front door. Even with hundreds of gawking tourists, the conservatory behind the lobby refreshes with spectacular displays of trees and seasonal flowers.

#### BOUCHON

My meal at Bouchon in the Venezia Tower at the Venetian hotel was even better than what I experienced at Thomas Keller's Bouchon in Yountville. Although the place is more than three times larger, the menu and the overall feeling is the same — as if you're in France dining in a grand brasserie staffed by efficient waiters.

Asparagus with hollandaise (\$12.75) is textbook perfect; a salad of endive with apples, Roquefort and walnut vinaigrette (\$12.75) is something you might find in a cafe in Paris. Braised pork roast (\$27.50) with peas, glazed carrots and a whole-grain mustard sauce is a rustic country delight. The menu also highlights steak frites (\$32.50), saffron-scented mussels with french fries (\$24.50) and croque Madame (\$16.95) — toasted ham and cheese with a fried egg on top.

Part of the appeal is that the experience seems real. It helps that designer Adam Tihany stuck with a classic theme, and that diners actually have authentic views of an outdoor patio with fountain and plantings.

The meal ends on a high note — a tart (\$9.50), profiteroles (\$8.50) a rich pot de crme (\$7.50) or a special one night, chocolate bouchon pastries served with chocolate sauce and vanilla ice cream (\$9.50).

If I had only one meal in Las Vegas and didn't want to go high-end for an experience like Nobhill, Bouchon would be my choice.

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#### The restaurants

Fleur de Lys, Mandalay Bay Hotel: (702) 632-9400. Dinner 5:30-10:30 nightly.

Nobhill, MGM Grand; (702) 891-7337. Dinner 5:30-10 p.m. Sunday-Thursday, until 10:30 Friday, Saturday.

Bradley Ogden, Caesars Palace: (702) 731-7110. Dinner 5-11 p.m. nightly.

Burger Bar, Mandalay Place: (702) 632-9364. Lunch and dinner continuously until 11 p.m.; 1 a.m. on weekends.

Postrio, Venetian: (702) 796-1110. Lunch 11:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. daily; dinner 6-11 p.m. nightly.

Crustacean, Desert Passage in the Aladdin Hotel: (702) 650-0507. Dinner 5:30-10 p.m. Sunday-Thursday, until 11 p.m. Friday-Saturday.

Seablue, MGM Grand; (702) 891-3486. Dinner 5:30-10:30 p.m. nightly.

Michael Mina, Bellagio: (702) 891-7337. Dinner 5:30-10 p.m. nightly.

Bouchon, Venetian: (702) 414-6200. Breakfast daily; lunch 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Saturday-Sunday; dinner 5-11 p.m. nightly (oyster bar opens at 3 p.m.) Michael Bauer is The Chronicle's restaurant critic. E-mail him at mbauer@sfchronicle.com.

**GRAPHIC: PHOTO (2), (1) Bouchon re-creates a French brasserie atmosphere in the Venetian., (2) The Burger Bars dessert burger has a ganache patty atop a doughnut bun. / Photographs by Isaac Brekken**

**LOAD-DATE: May 8, 2005**

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Copyright 2005 The New Mexican  
The Santa Fe New Mexican (New Mexico)

May 8, 2005 Sunday

**SECTION:** NEIGHBORS; Pg. E-6

**LENGTH:** 709 words

**HEADLINE:** MEET A SUPERMOM

**BYLINE:** MARISSA MONTEZ, PHOTOS: JANE PHILLIPS AND COURTESY

**BODY:**

Mother of 11 still churns out five dozen homemade  
tortillas each week - and shops and does Vegas, too

Elena Lucero loves Las Vegas, Nev., bingo, high heel shoes and pants with rhinestones. The walls of her home are adorned with portraits of the Virgin Mary as well as Lucero's children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. In the center of one wall is a plaque that says it all — "World's Greatest Mother."

Lucero, who turned 80 last month, spent more than a fourth of her life pregnant: She has given birth 23 times. Most of her time these days is spent caring for her family, which has now diminished to

11 children. Many of her children who were born in the 1940s died in their early years of whooping cough and other common ailments of the day, she said.

Her surviving children,

36 grandchildren and 24 great-grandchildren cherish her as the backbone of their family. She's comfortable with the role of family matriarch, and as her family says, she's the life of the party.

Last month, her children honored her at a celebration of Mass followed by reception at Isleta Casino. "I love to dance, I danced the whole time. I didn't miss a song," said Lucero, who embraces her youthful energy.

"She comes to my house to cook for me and my husband because I don't know how to cook," said Lucero's 29-year-old granddaughter Loretta Baca. "She makes us laugh, and sometimes we'll share a beer."

Looking at the 4-foot, 10-inch woman with immaculately styled hair and red beads around her neck, it's hard to tell she raised so many children single-handedly.

"When we go shopping, she likes the teenagers' clothes," said her daughter Lorraine Salazar. "She's very fashionable. What other

80-year-old woman can wear high heels and a vest decorated with watches?"

In 1944, Lucero, who is originally from Ojo de Vaca (present-day San Jose), married Raymundo Velasco, a miner from Silver City. The couple had 10 children, but seven died. Ten years later, she was engaged to Pablo Anaya of Cerrillos, who was killed in a car accident. They had two children. The rest of her family is made up of children from a third marriage in the 1960s, this one to Pedro Lucero of Santa Fe, who is also deceased.

Salazar praised her mother for working multiple jobs to support her family, including as a hostess at the Pink Adobe and as a housekeeper at various hotels around town to make extra money while her children were growing up.

"Even if we were poor, she would save money all year to make sure we had a nice Christmas," Salazar said. "I remember peeking through the door as a child and watching her wrap the presents all by herself."

With all her children and jobs, Lucero still had time to deal with such things as laundry.

"We worked hard in those days. There was no Maytag," Lucero said, recalling the days when she would keep her children's clothes clean with a lavadero, or washboard. While she completed her household chores, she provided herself with a special brand of daycare. "I would have one (child) on the couch, one on the bed, one on the floor and one in my panza (stomach)," Lucero said.

These days, it's her grandchildren and their children who occupy her time. Lucero, who makes five dozen fresh tortillas a week, is the apron behind the family's favorite meals. "She always smells like sopaipillas," said 7-year-old-great-grandson Nick Baca.

When she's not busy cooking for her family and dozens of neighbors, who are also gluttons for Lucero's food, she's playing bingo. But even at bingo, Lucero feels the need to look after her children. "She'll have like 15 bingo cards in front of her, and she'll look over to check mine," said her 22-year-old granddaughter, Lorinda Salazar.

"My mother has taught us that your children always come first," said Lorraine Salazar.

To show their gratitude to their mother, Lucero's children gave her a trip to Las Vegas, Nev., this Mother's Day weekend. When her favorite city is mentioned, she never hesitates to say, "I love Vegas" with a smile etched on her face.

While in Vegas, she will be thinking of her children, her grandchildren and her great-grandchildren. "If you have young kids, you have to take care of them, love them, and think of them first, but to be a good mother, you have to take care of yourself, too," Lucero said.

**GRAPHIC:** 1. Gross Pacheco, left, and Elena Lucero hit the bingo table about three times a week. Lucero spends much of her time caring for her large extended family and neighbors.  
2. Lucero was honored for her 80th birthday at a celebration of Mass followed by a party at Isleta Casino.

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St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

May 8, 2005 Sunday  
FIVE STAR LIFT EDITION

**SECTION:** BUSINESS; Pg. E5

**LENGTH:** 564 words

**HEADLINE:** Top-rated funds carry more risk

**BYLINE:** By LARRY SWEDROE

**BODY:**

I own last year's top-performing funds. Unfortunately, I bought them this year. — Anonymous

Next to the belief that active management is a winning strategy, (i.e., that you can outperform the market by trying to pick the future winning stocks or time your market participation), the strongest piece of conventional wisdom about investment performance is that the past performance of investment managers can be prologue to future performance.

Unfortunately, just because something is conventional wisdom doesn't make it correct.

One approach that some investors use to select mutual funds is to rely on the information provided by Morningstar, the popular rating service that rates funds using a star system similar to the one used by film critics.

Ads touting funds with four- and five-star ratings may convince some investors that the stars have predictive value. A study that covered the period January to August 1995 found that 97 percent of fund inflows went into four- and five-star funds, while funds with less than three stars experienced outflows.

**Compelling evidence**

Morningstar gives the coveted five-star rating to the funds it believes are among the top 10 percent, and a one-star rating to the bottom 10 percent. The Hulbert Financial Digest tracked the performance of five-star funds for the period 1993-2000. For that eight-year period, the total return (pretax) on Morningstar's top-rated U.S. funds averaged 106 percent. This compared to a total return of 222 percent for the market, as measured by the Wilshire 5000 equity index. The study also found that the top-rated funds, while achieving less than 50 percent of the market's return, carried a 26 percent greater relative risk (as measured by standard deviation).

Another study by The Hulbert Financial Digest looked at a portfolio of 55 funds that Morningstar rated highest for the period January 1991 to March 2002. This portfolio, which bought funds when they climbed into this elite group and sold funds when they dropped out of the five-star rating group, trailed the market by 6 percent per annum after paying sales charges, redemption fees, and other transaction costs. A study by Morningstar found that one-star funds outperformed five-star funds by 45 percent for the period 1995-2001.

John Rekenhaller, vice president of new product development for Morningstar's global operations, has commented frequently on the use of the star rating system and choosing actively managed funds. According to the Wall Street Journal, when asked how to pick a winning fund, Rekenhaller responded: "We should have more answers."

And commenting on whether investors should pay attention to mutual fund advertisements, he added: "To be fair, I don't think that you'd want to pay much attention to Morningstar's star ratings, either."

In 1999, Rekenhaller told Fortune that actively managed funds were beginning to show up on his cultural radar as a "marketing scam for suckers."

Before trying to find the future superstar funds, carefully consider these words of wisdom from Jonathan Clements, reporter for the Wall Street Journal: "When we buy an actively managed fund, we are like gamblers in Vegas. We know it

is likely to be a losing proposition, yet somehow we feel we are getting our money's worth."

—  
Larry Swedroe, a principal and director of research of Buckingham Asset Management in Clayton, writes about passive investing.

**NOTES: EDUCATED INVESTOR PERSONAL FINANCE**

**GRAPHIC: PHOTO  
PHOTO - LARRY SWEDROE**

**LOAD-DATE: May 8, 2005**

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St. Petersburg Times (Florida)

May 8, 2005 Sunday 4 State / Suncoast Edition

**SECTION:** SPORTS; Pg. 1C

**LENGTH:** 804 words

**HEADLINE:** Drivers tip their hats to moms

**SOURCE:** Compiled from Wire Reports

**DATELINE:** DARLINGTON, S.C.

**BODY:**

You wouldn't dare call someone who drives a race car 200 mph a "mama's boy," but in many respects the term fits a lot of those who do.

As Nextel Cup drivers prepared for a rare Mother's Day weekend race, many of them paused to give their mamas credit for their competitive spirit and to thank them for the sacrifices they made to get their sons to NASCAR's elite circuit.

Stanton Barrett, like a lot of peers, followed his father into the sport. But he said most of his will to win and desire to compete at the highest level comes from his mother, world-class skier Penny McCoy.

McCoy was on the U.S. national alpine team from 1965-69. She was on the World Championships team in 1966 that went to Portillo, Chile, where she became the sports youngest medal winner, taking the bronze in slalom at age 15.

She continued to ski competitively for years, winning several Masters events. She also runs marathons, enters Ironman events and rides cross-country mountain bikes at age 54.

She helps manage Mammoth Mountain, her family's huge ski resort in California's Sierra Nevada mountains.

"She's an amazing woman just a phenomenal athlete," Barrett told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. "Just to see somebody like my mom at her age still riding motocross bikes with us and mountain biking and running and keeping at a pace that is respectable for anybody is amazing."

Barrett has yet to achieve the success in his sport that his mother did in hers. His best Busch series finish was fifth at Atlanta Motor Speedway in 1994, and his best Cup run was 30th at Phoenix last weekend. But there's not a hint of envy on his part.

"We both competed at the highest levels of what we do, and that is very rewarding," he said. "She's had a lot more success in her career. She was the best woman skier in the world, pretty much. She trains hard, and she's passionate about what she does. She's very, very competitive. That's inspiring."

But in many ways, McCoy is a typical racing mom. She worries about Stanton and his brother, David, whether they're racing cars, skiing or riding motorcycles.

"She likes racing, but she hates seeing me out there," Barrett said. "When there's a wreck she freaks out. I think I get more phone calls than anybody in the garage, just from my mom. At the end of the race, I'll have 12 messages, and they're all from her."

Throughout the garage, there are stories of mothers who stayed out of the limelight but worked hard to get their son's careers in high gear.

Tony Stewart said his mom, Pam Boas, deserves a medal of her own - just for putting up with him.

"Anyone who could actually raise me and not want to kill me or kick me out of the house has got to be a very patient

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person," Stewart said, adding that his mother always has been one of his biggest supporters.

Jeff Gordon said his mother, Carol Bickford, was instrumental in getting him in his first quarter-midget race car - she thought it was safer than the BMX bikes he'd been riding - and has backed him since.

"She's probably more of a mother today than she ever has been," Gordon said. "As I get older, I continue to recognize the importance of how I was brought up and who really means the most to me in my life.

"She's an amazing person, and I see our relationship grow all the time where I can go to her and talk to her about things that you didn't even think of as a kid. As you get older, you realize that your parents are a lot smarter than you thought they were."

Defending Nextel Cup champion Kurt Busch said he and brother Kyle, a rookie on the circuit this year, owe a tremendous debt to their mother, Gaye Busch, who has played a big role in their careers.

"Back in Vegas, she even went back to work so that she could help us pay our tire bills to race," Kurt Busch said. "Her dedication speaks for itself."

Ida Compton, whose son Stacy has raced in the Busch and Cup series, is known throughout the garage for being a caring mom away from home for drivers and crew members.

"I pray every day for all the teams - not just Stacy's - to have a safe weekend," Mrs. Compton said.

Perhaps the greatest contribution by a NASCAR mother came in the winter of 1973, when a recently widowed woman sold off some of her late husband's assets and spent the money on a top-notch pavement race car for her son, then an aspiring but struggling dirt-track driver.

The woman's name: Martha Earnhardt. Her son: Dale Earnhardt. The car: A 22-time winner driven the year before by Harry Gant.

Veteran motorsports writer Bob Moore said no race fan should ever underestimate Mrs. Earnhardt's role in her son's career, which saw him run his first Cup race two years after he began racing Gant's old car.

"If it wasn't for Martha," Moore said, "Dale's career could have come to a screeching halt before it ever got started."

**GRAPHIC: PHOTO, ASSOCIATED PRESS; FOLLOW THE LEADER:** Cars spread out as Ryan Newman, driving a Dodge, leads early in the Dodge Charger 500 at Darlington.

**LOAD-DATE:** May 8, 2005

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Copyright 2005 Times Publishing Company  
St. Petersburg Times (Florida)

May 8, 2005 Sunday 0 South Pinellas Edition

**SECTION:** SPORTS; Pg. 2C

**LENGTH:** 317 words

**HEADLINE:** WHO'S HOT?

**SERIES:** TAKE TWO; THE BUZZ

**BYLINE:** KEITH NIEBUHR

**BODY:**

How 'bout those Devil Rays? Taking three of four from the Yankees doesn't exactly make them contenders, but it's a start. Be honest: If somebody would have told you a month ago the Rays and Yanks would be neck and neck in the standings, wouldn't you have been thrilled?

**WHO'S NOT?**

+ Marquette. The school changed its nickname from "Golden Eagles" to "Gold," which not only doesn't make sense but is just plain lame. Was "Goobers" already taken?

**WORLD WIDE WEIRD**

+ A man in California's San Diego County says he can't get a job in his chosen field (he's a computer and electronics technician) because of the tattooed stripes on his face and fangs in his mouth. Has he tried the NBA?

+ Haven't mailed in your Sportsman-of-the-Year ballot yet? If not, you might want to give Central Cabarrus (N.C.) High softball coach Monte Sherrill a look. On April 15, his squad defeated West Charlotte, 55-0. The game lasted two innings before West Charlotte's athletic director asked officials to end it. The opposing AD said Sherrill's club continued to play aggressively as the Vikings scored 30 runs in the first inning and 25 more in the second.

+ Golfer John Daly, Grizzlies guard Mike Miller and University of Memphis basketball coach John Calipari reportedly will become partners in a Memphis restaurant. With Daly involved, a sign out front that says "Vegans not welcome" might be appropriate.

**HEADLINE OF THE WEEK**

"Stinko De Mayo"

- From the New York Post, about the Yankees' struggles with the Devil Rays on Thursday.

**PHONY HEADLINE OF THE WEEK**

"Steinbrenner Signs 10-Game Winning Streak to Lucrative Deal, Inserts It Into Standings"

- From Sportspickle.com.

**FINAL THOUGHTS**

You think Yankees manager Joe Torre has a one-way ticket to Vegas yet?

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Compiled by Times staff writer Keith Niebuhr using information from other news organizations.

**GRAPHIC:** PHOTO, Getty Images; Golfer John Daly in game action

**LOAD-DATE:** May 8, 2005

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 The State (Columbia, SC)

May 8, 2005 Sunday

SECTION: A; Pg. 0

LENGTH: 1297 words

HEADLINE: The end is near. And you'll miss it if you leave the couch

BYLINE: By PAT BERMAN; Staff Writer

**BODY:**

Is John Locke doomed? Will Bo make it to the finals? Is Chloe coming back full time? Can Quentin rock Grissom's world? Will Raymond really end?

Tune in this month for the answers to the burning questions of a TV season highlighted by the solid performance of newcomers such as "Desperate Housewives" and "Lost" another ratings coup for "American Idol" and a surge in popularity of scripted stories such as "CSI." The end also will come for that rare good comedy on network television, "Everybody Loves Raymond."

Critics' darling "Arrested Development" and former ratings war horse "West Wing" ended their seasons in April. But most prime-time programming will wrap up in May, hoping to score ever higher ratings as Nielsen conducts its biggest "sweeps" month.

Here's why loyal viewers might not want to answer the phones, make dinner reservations or leave their couches for the next few weeks.

\* "The Amazing Race" will end its seventh season Tuesday. As tough competitors with celebrity to spare from their "Survivor" success, Rob and Amber added more interest to the already successful reality program. South Carolina viewers have a rooting interest in Ron Young and his partner, Kelly McCorkle, a Greenville native and former Miss South Carolina. The the relationship seemed to hit the skids, but we had to watch. Rounding out the final group are Uchenna and Joyce, a very likable married couple. 9 p.m. Tuesday, WLTX-19, cable channel 9

\* On "Veronica Mars," well received by critics but stuck on ratings-poor UPN, fans finally will find out who killed teen detective Mars' best gal pal, Lily Kane. 9p.m. Tuesday, WZRB-47, cable channel 13

\* "Jack & Bobby," the story of a boy who became president and his brother, got critical thumbs up, especially for Christine Lahti, who played their single mom. But no traction in the ratings means it might not be back. The season-ender will bring in big guest stars including Tim Robbins, writer Gore Vidal and producer Norman Lear. 9 p.m. Wednesday, WBHQ, cable channel 4

\* This is the last gig for Paris and Nicole on "The Simple Life: Interns" — and maybe for the show, too. The diminutive Nicole apparently got too big for her britches — at least from Paris' perspective. If there is a next season, Paris wants Rod Stewart's daughter, Kimberly, as her new sidekick. 9p.m. Thursday, WACH-57, cable channel 6

\* "Star Trek: Enterprise" will end a four-season run. Sci-fi and the supernatural often have bumpy rides as regular TV series. In a techno age of computer-generated images (CGI), there's something weirdly entertaining about "Trek's" human actors in "alien" costumes and makeup. 8p.m. Friday, WZRB-47, cable channel 13

\* On "Survivor: Palau," for the first time, one tribe, Ulong, failed to win any of the immunity challenges. Except for the rats and the weepy Janu, Koror, the consistently winning tribe, lived well until the competition tightened. New York firefighter Tom is the strongest of them all, which is why the odds may shift against him. 8 p.m. May 15, WLTX-19, cable channel 9

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\* The title of "Everybody Loves Raymond" proved true for nine seasons as stand-up comic Ray Romano launched a network sitcom that garnered Top 20 ratings. The format was familiar, as a feisty wife (Patricia Heaton) and her schmoe hubby (Romano) dealt with interfering parents, peers and their rarely seen children. But the writing was sharp and the acting was fresh, thanks to a cast that included veterans Doris Roberts and Peter Boyle, and such guests as Chris Elliott. 9 p.m. May 16, WOLO-25, cable channel 5

\* Quentin Tarantino of "Kill Bill" and "Pulp Fiction" fame will direct the two-hour season finale of the best of the "CSI" franchise — the one set in Vegas and starring William Petersen as Gil Grissom. The plot favors Tarantino's taste for the kinky, as one of the CSI crew is buried alive with a recording in the coffin urging the character to kill himself (or herself) since death is imminent anyway. Offbeat guest stars include Frank Gorshin and Tony Curtis. All that's needed now is a Tarantino-chosen cheery pop tune to energize the grim undertaking. 8 p.m. May 19, WLTX-19, cable channel 9

\* A combination of soap and satire in suburbia, the wacky "Desperate Housewives" of Wisteria Lane will be back next season. But for now they get a new neighbor (Oscar winner Alfre Woodard) and romantic relationships that shift into even darker directions. 9 p.m. May 22, WOLO-25, cable channel 5

\* HBO can do R-rated stuff that network TV cannot. As a result, we get such gritty offerings as "The Sopranos" and "Deadwood," a profanity-laced Western of the unwashed. HBO series tend to have excellent casts, and "Deadwood" is no exception. One example is the compelling Powers Boothe, who portrays saloon keeper Cy Tolliver. 9 p.m. May 22, HBO, cable channel 200

\* "Grey's Anatomy" started later than most but caught on quickly. With an attractive, young cast, including "Sideways" star Sandra Oh, playing medical interns, the show cleverly contrasts the interns' sexy, funny personal lives against the constant demands of their professional training. 10p.m. May 22, WOLO-25, cable channel 5

\* "24" started with a lot of new characters surrounding Jack (Keifer Sutherland), and wisely shed many of them to bring back favorites such as Tony, Michelle and the best of the bunch, cranky Chloe. Unfortunately, the annoying Kim was replaced with the annoying Audrey. But Iranian actress Shohreh Aghdashloo and the action-packed encounters with Middle Eastern terrorists made the fourth season the show's best. Expect Jack back next year. And please keep Chloe. 8 p.m. May 23, WACH-57, cable channel 6

\* Expect a lot of filler in the two-hour finale of "American Idol," which generated more interest this season for the gossip than the music. The curiosity factor will have viewers tuning in — the odds currently favor Carrie Underwood — but channel surfing is likely with "Lost" on at the same time. 8 p.m. May 25, WACH-57, cable channel 6

\* Spooky goings-on and an appealing cast of characters kept viewers riveted to "Lost," about survivors of a plane crash stranded on a tropical isle populated by wild hogs, polar bears, a mysterious French woman and who knows what else. That's what we want to find out. 8 p.m. May 25, WOLO-25, cable channel 5

#### MORE MAY MUST-SEES

"The Muppets' Wizard of Oz": Here's something for the whole family, as the self-explanatory title invites viewers to see Miss Piggy as the Wicked Witch while Kermit does the Scarecrow. Pop singer Ashanti provides Dorothy's voice, Jeffrey Tambor of "Arrested Development" gives the Wizard his, and the ubiquitous Quentin Tarantino pops up with a cameo as himself. 8 p.m. May 20, WOLO-25, cable channel 5

"Rob and Amber Get Married": Rob Mariano and Amber Brkich maximize their mileage as their April wedding is carried on CBS, the network that gave them celebrity on "Survivor" and "The Amazing Race." We'd like to see them chased down the aisle by a grubby wedding party made up of everyone who has lost to them. The couple will be competing again, as their nuptials air against the final competition for "American Idol." 9 p.m. May 24, WLTX-19, cable channel 9

"Empire Falls": HBO's adaptation of Richard Russo's Pulitzer Prize-winning best seller includes a stellar cast of Paul Newman, Joanne Woodward, Aidan Quinn, Ed Harris, Helen Hunt and Philip Seymour Hoffman. 9p.m. May 28 on HBO

"Chappelle's Show": As most series wind up their seasons, Comedy Central's Dave Chappelle launches a new one — his third. Maybe the Rick James impersonations will be shelved, but his Li'l John is still funny, as are a number of the topical targets that few other comedians take on. 10p.m. May 31, Comedy Central, cable channel 57

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Copyright 2005 Sun-Sentinel Company  
Sun-Sentinel (Fort Lauderdale, FL)

May 8, 2005 Sunday Broward Metro Edition

**SECTION:** AE&TV; Pg. 21

**LENGTH:** 678 words

**HEADLINE:** THRILLER GETS A BUZZ FROM WITTY HUMOR

**BYLINE:** Oline H. Cogdill

**BODY:**

Wildcat Wine. Claire Matturro. Wm. Morrow. \$23.95. 295 pp.

Sarasota attorney Lilly Belle Cleary has a major career goal: to make enough money so she can retire early to her Georgia farm and never again hear about torts, briefs or summary judgments.

That's why Lilly eschews the fancy automobiles, expensive homes and lavish vacations — the "golden handcuffs" keeping her fellow attorneys at the Gulf Coast's top law firm.

But in the meantime, she deals with a lot of stupid clients, frivolous lawsuits and greedy, backstabbing colleagues. And that's on the good days.

What keeps her sane is her sardonic view of the world, her intelligence and her faithful secretary, Bonita. OK, so she struggles with a bit of obsessive-compulsive behavior — well, actually a lot. But that helps her deal with crises. While Lilly is sometimes snobbish, she has never forgotten her road to being a lawyer began when she was a near-homeless teenager, she and her two brothers neglected and abandoned by her parents.

In Wildcat Wine, Lilly's past and present collide when her old backwoods friend Farmer Dave shows up driving a stolen truck full of organic Florida wine. Dave, who dresses and talks like his hero Willie Nelson, is in a passel of trouble, especially after a greedy lawyer is killed, a sack of cash keeps disappearing and a suspicious death is discovered. When Bonita and Dave are suspected, Lilly starts her own investigation while preparing for her latest case defending a pet psychic being sued by a woman claiming to have been abducted by aliens.

As she did in last year's debut, *Skinny-Dipping*, author Claire Matturro continues to enliven the legal thriller with the perfect blend of humor and drama. Never once do Lilly's witty banter and humorous asides override the seriousness of Wildcat Wine's plot. Matturro views the absurdities and the somber aspects of life with the same energy.

In Lilly, Matturro delves into a complicated, irritating and quite appealing heroine whose quirks mask deep-seated emotions. Wildcat Wine draws us deeper into Lilly's background and its effect on her personality. Despite her obsessive-compulsiveness about orderliness, cleanliness and health food, Lilly thrives on chaos. Why else would she be an attorney working at "the karmic center of lunatics?" She also is unshakable in her sense of loyalty to people; and a 100-pound Rottweiler is hardly the kind of dog for someone with her eccentricities, but Lilly makes it work.

The author, a former appellate attorney, moves Wildcat Wine briskly along while keeping the suspense on an upward spiral. The Florida setting also gets a fine workout as the tale spins around Sarasota and a cypress-swamp park.

Matturro's *Skinny-Dipping* and fellow Floridian James O. Born's *Walking Money* proved to be among the best debuts of 2004. Now both Matturro and Born (*Shock Wave*) have produced second novels even better than their first.

All action, no energy

The Druperman Tapes. John Goodger. Minotaur/St. Martin's Press. \$24.95. 325 pp.

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Although first-time author John Goodger promises a jackpot of a plot in *The Druperman Tapes*, this caper-turned-thriller never delivers the payoff it promises.

It's not for a lack of trying. Goodger arranges a crew of near-strangers on the edge, demanding just one shot at wealth. The author throws in the glitz, superficiality and complexity of Las Vegas, a few explosions and a near-superhero to save the day. But the action-laden plot lacks energy, relying on gratuitous violence and uninteresting characters.

In *The Druperman Tapes*, Emmett "Droopy" Druperman dismisses a threat to wreak havoc at Vegas casinos unless a multimillion-dollar payoff is made. Druperman, the head of the Galaxy Casino and president of a secret consortium of Las Vegas casinos, has an ace in the hole — his security chief Steve Forrester.

When the threats become reality, Forrester delves into the case while finding the time to romance a comely pit supervisor.

*The Druperman Tapes* is the literary equivalent of a cheap made-for-TV movie.

**TYPE: REVIEW**

**LOAD-DATE: May 8, 2005**

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The Sunday People

May 8, 2005

**LENGTH:** 588 words

**HEADLINE:** BOXING: JOE'S A BIT OF ALL VEIT

**BYLINE:** FRANK WIECHULA

**BODY:**

JOE CALZAGHE celebrated a really sweet 16 last night when he destroyed German Mario Veit to retain his world crown and put his recent troubles behind him.

The WBO super-middleweight king, bedevilled by domestic problems and setbacks in and out of the ring, was back to his devastating best in his six-round triumph in Braunschweig here in Germany.

It might not have matched the swiftness of his 112-second demolition of Veit in Cardiff four years ago, but this was a more clinical, sustained display which saw the outgunned German decked three times.

It was the 33-year-old's 16th successive title defence - stretching eight years - and extended his perfect pro record to 39 straight wins.

Calzaghe, who could well have punched Veit into retirement as he forced the victory with 42 seconds left of the sixth, said: "Veit has improved a hell of a lot, I didn't expect him to be that good.

"But I'm still champion of the world and that's all that matters. I made a few mistakes and he caught me a few times, but he never hurt me."

Calzaghe by now should be topping the bill in Vegas or Madison Square Garden, not putting his reputation on the line in a German backwater.

When he knocked out former WBA super-middleweight king Byron Mitchell inside two rounds almost two years ago, the sky was the limit for the Welshman.

But he is still waiting for the career-defining bout that could cement his place in boxing history.

The likelihood now is that he will get a crack at IBF super-middleweight king Jeff Lacy, who in August takes on Runcorn's Robin Reid.

But surely he would be better advised stepping up to light-heavyweight, where he could mix it with Glen Johnson or Antonio Tarver.

At light-heavy he would get the big fights, the big money, the big chances. At super-middleweight he is merely treading water.

Turmoil in his private life has hardly helped his career.

An acrimonious divorce was probably behind his bitterly disappointing performance against Kabary Salem last October.

Now with a new partner, Calzaghe looked far more confident against Veit last night in the 16th defence of the WBO

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super-middleweight title he won in October 1997 in a thriller against Chris Eubank.

From the first bell there was only going to be one winner.

Calzaghe dominated the opening rounds, delivering devastating combinations that had outclassed Veit rocking.

Calzaghe, who was determined to erase the memory of his last ring outing, that lacklustre win over Salem in Scotland last October, was clearly warming to the task.

It was Veit's camp who had caused the late cancellation of Calzaghe's planned defence against Irishman Brian Magee in Belfast in March, forcing him into this fight, which he didn't really want.

Two big lefts by the Welshman to the head and a shuddering right to the body in the fourth round saw Veit further hampered, and Calzaghe finished the round with his right hand raised in a mini victory salute.

It was not premature. In the fifth round Calzaghe delivered more punishment and Veit took a standing eight count. The poor German didn't know what day it was

Calzaghe, the red-hot 1-8 favourite, then put the outclassed Veit down again with another major barrage forcing him to take a standing seven count.

Veit's corner were about to throw in the towel but referee Gino Rodriguez let it continue - only to stop it himself moments later when Calzaghe poured more power-packed punches Veit's way.

Calzaghe is back...and how.

**JOURNAL-CODE: FSUP**

**LOAD-DATE: May 8, 2005**

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Copyright 2005 The Sunday Tribune plc  
Sunday Tribune

May 08, 2005

**SECTION:** Pg. B15**LENGTH:** 1431 words**HEADLINE:** Business - Wynn bets \$2.7bn on the house;  
Casino king Steve Wynn takes a huge punt on Sin City capturing the imagination in new ways**BYLINE:** Andrew Gumbel**BODY:**

Casino opening in Las Vegas is not unlike the premiere of a hotly-awaited Hollywood film, with the frisson of anticipation, the round of exclusive parties, the insistent whispers in the local press of celebrity sightings. More often than not, there are also fireworks.

The difference is that new casino resorts in Vegas are much rarer than new movies, the last being the ill-fated Aladdin in 2000. But that only heightens the expectations. And when the man unveiling the casino happens to be Steve Wynn, the undisputed king of the Vegas strip these past 15 years, the assumption is that he will show the world something special: something that will redefine Sin City and the way everyone thinks of it.

So it was that Vegas held its breath for the recent opening of the latest Wynn extravaganza, the absurdly opulent Wynn Las Vegas, curved glass-and-steel form of which has been rising slowly from the northern end of the strip for five years. At a cost of \$2.7bn (EUR2bn), it is by far the most expensive casino that Vegas or anywhere else has seen. In a town where money talks louder than words, that alone has grabbed everyone's attention.

The crowds lined up outside the gates eight hours before the midnight opening and stayed in line half the night to catch a glimpse of the mosaic-inlaid marble floors, on-site Ferrari dealership, gallery of designer stores and 18-storey manmade mountain and waterfall providing backdrops to the resort's luxury restaurants.

The Las Vegas Review-Journal gushed in admiration every day for a week. The front page of one edition carried a special advertising insert from the rival Palms resort, congratulating Wynn and his wife, Elaine. "You Make Us All Look Good", it said. Nobody in this town expects the Wynn to be anything other than a roaring success.

Two decades ago, conventional wisdom would have told an entrepreneur like Wynn that he was insane to attempt such a project. In those days, Vegas made most of its living from middle-class Americans looking for deals on accommodation and food so they could focus on the gambling. The town was largely controlled by crime syndicates: not only was Wall Street not involved, it didn't want anything to do with the place.

Wynn has been to the fore in changing all that, raking in corporate investment on a massive scale and making the slot machines and blackjack tables almost incidental to the other pleasures: the restaurants, shops and the gallery in which he keeps his multi-million-dollar impressionist masters.

The Mirage, Wynn's first mega-resort, was almost universally predicted to fail when it opened in 1988 for the then unheard-of cost of \$600m, yet it made money from the very first day and Vegas has been on a non-stop building boom ever since. The southern end of the strip, in particular, is now clustered with mega-resorts - some exotic, (the Luxor and Excalibur) and some imitating the great cities of the world, such as New York-New York, Paris and The Venetian.

At one point in the 1990s, Vegas seemed to be on the way to becoming a Disneyland-style resort for families and children, with Wynn's Treasure Island casino, featuring pirate ships clashing on a lake outside, acting as the centrepiece.

The 11 September attacks and the dip in tourist traffic that followed put paid to this dubious idea, though, and the

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town was soon luring visitors back with the kinds of things it had always promised: raunch, transgression and sin without guilt. "What happens here, stays here", went a catchy advertising slogan from a couple of years back, accompanying the revival in billboards for sexy stage shows and strip joints.

Wynn's new vision is to shoot for the absolute top end of the market. He first experimented with that idea when he opened the \$1.6bn mock-Italian Bellagio in 1998. The experiment suffered an unfortunate hiatus two years later when Wynn allowed himself to stretch his assets too thin and lost his Mirage Resorts empire to a hostile takeover from Kirk Kerkorian of MGM.

Almost straight away, though, he snapped up the property that has become Wynn Las Vegas and put together a consortium of investors - notably, Japanese businessman Kozuo Okada - to build the first of what he intends to be a series of resorts on the site of the old Rat Pack haunt, the Desert Inn.

Why is this working? How come the tourists continue to flock to Vegas - a record 38 million of them last year, with even more forecast for 2005 - when casino gambling has been legalised in more US states than not? The answer, which Wynn appears to have anticipated, is that Vegas remains the mecca for gamblers and self-indulgent all-night entertainment-seekers. And if it's going to be special in people's imaginations, it certainly doesn't do any harm to be special in reality, too.

"Wynn's entrepreneurial genius was to create a script in which middle-class everymen could feel themselves at the centre of some unprecedented spectacle - a far cry from the original grungy gambling halls on downtown Vegas's Fremont Street," says author and journalist Marc Cooper, who chronicled the rise of the new Vegas in his book, *The Last Honest Place in America*.

Wynn has undergone quite a personal transformation, too. The son of an East Coast bingo-hall operator, he had his share of encounters with the Mob early in his career - he was barred from operating a casino in London in the 1980s because of his alleged ties to organised crime - but ended up making Vegas safe for Wall Street. He made a special point, in fact, of blowing up the old Mob-run hotels to make way for his creations: he dynamited The Dunes to put up The Mirage and reduced The Sands to rubble to build The Bellagio.

The Desert Inn was its own wonder palace when it opened in the 1950s, featuring thermostats in every room (then a novelty) as well as a figure-eight swimming pool and a fountain that shot water straight up in the air. If Vegas felt at all nostalgic about its history, this would have been one place for keeps. But Wynn snapped it up for \$270m - as a birthday present to his wife, he said - and promptly had it razed to the ground.

Wynn doesn't want for flamboyance, indulging in round the world art-buying sprees when the spirit takes him and living high on the hog in his own fantasy world when he is in Vegas. (He was, loosely, the inspiration for Andy Garcia's casino-owner character in Steven Soderbergh's remake of the Hollywood crime caper *Ocean's Eleven*.) But Wynn also has a sharp business sense of what he can get out of Las Vegas without worrying too much about what he can give back in return. Because of his casino makeovers and the success they have reaped, Vegas has become more expensive, crowded and polluted, ever less able to provide infrastructure at the same pace as its spiralling population.

The profits have stayed largely with the casinos and the corporations behind them. In Vegas, house prices have now shot up beyond the reach of ordinary casino workers, while schools and hospitals are woefully under-resourced and social services are constantly being cut because of Nevada's struggles to balance its budget.

For all the excitement over the new resort, then, one can legitimately wonder whether Las Vegas is on a sustainable track. John Smith, a political columnist and biographer of Steve Wynn, likened the situation in Vegas to the time when silver was discovered near Virginia City in northern Nevada.

"Then, just as now, the robber barons made all the money," Smith said. "Sure, people were given jobs, but not for their creature comforts. Nothing has really changed."

Wynn's multi-billion-dollar venture with the new resort is not without risk. The last big Las Vegas casino project, the Aladdin, went spectacularly wrong, almost bankrupting its British backer, London Clubs International.

Wynn appears to be counting largely on the Asian market; indeed, he is actively cultivating it through a separate \$700m investment in a casino in Macao, among other projects. He will also have to hope Las Vegas's visitor numbers are not compromised by another geopolitical earthquake - or, indeed, an attack on Las Vegas.

Wynn does, however, have two big things going for him. One, he has now established a reputation for building first-rate casino resorts. They may be kitschy, but they are well-made, high-class kitsch. And secondly, he has long since appreciated a truth that many Vegas punters would do well to remember: that in this town, the surest bet in a casino is to own the place.

**LOAD-DATE:** May 12, 2005

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The Sunday Herald

May 8, 2005

**SECTION:** SPORT; Pg. 17

**LENGTH:** 252 words

**HEADLINE:** FLASHBACK: LEWIS PROVES TO BE A TRUE HEAVYWEIGHT

**BODY:**

The date: May 8, 1993.

The place: Thomas and Mack Centre, Las Vegas.

The story: Lennox Lewis had been handed the WBC heavyweight belt five months before when Riddick Bowe tossed it into a dustbin after refusing to defend his title against the Briton.

However it was this fight - his first defence - which signalled his arrival as a true world champion.

It also made sceptical Americans sit up and take notice of the West Ham-born fighter, for his opponent Tony Tucker was the No 1 ranked contender and had only been beaten once in 49 contests.

Michigan-born Tucker had never been on the floor in his career, not even in defeat to Mike Tyson, yet Lewis decked him twice, in the third and ninth rounds. While he couldn't quite finish off the American, his superior boxing skills saw him awarded a unanimous points verdict. As 2,000 British fans celebrated at ringside, even promoter Don King, who had predicted a win for Tucker, was forced into words of admiration for a heavyweight who had claimed Olympic gold for Canada five years before.

Lewis, whose family emigrated to Canada when he was nine, delivered the great British boxing dream in Vegas, for his defeat of Tucker established him as the first Briton to genuinely hold the world heavyweight crown in a century.

It also set up an all-British affair that same year, when Lewis beat Frank Bruno in Cardiff. Lewis would go on to beat Evander Holyfield to become undisputed heavyweight champion of the world in 1999.

He announced his retirement, aged 38, in February 2004.

**LOAD-DATE:** May 13, 2005

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Ventura County Star (California)

May 8, 2005 Sunday

**SECTION:** LIFE, ARTS AND LIVING; Pg. 11

**LENGTH:** 441 words

**HEADLINE:** Meyers hits all the right notes as Elvis

**BYLINE:** Mark Washburn

**BODY:**

Knight Ridder Newspapers

U.S. population is at 295 million, Elvis impostors are common as cabs in places like Vegas and we have to reach out to Ireland to get a guy to play the King of Rock 'n' Roll?

At 9 tonight, CBS will subject more Americans to the concept of foreign outsourcing than all the computer help lines in India by unleashing Jonathan Rhys Meyers in the role of Elvis Presley.

But just as the auto industry has gone to the Japanese, and China is snapping up Treasury bonds like egg rolls, we owe a foreign debt to Meyers and his magic.

If he wants to be nothin' but a hound dog, I say let him. He's got the courage of Sinbad to even accept a role where he must strut the thin line between cultural accuracy and cartoonish imitation.

"If you're going to play Elvis Presley, you have to be aware that there are going to be some people who are really picky about it," Meyers says in a phone interview, in the understatement of the decade. "I played Elvis Presley; I am not Elvis Presley."

Could have fooled me. Meyers nails it, nails it to the note, and in the process elevates an over-"Mama"-ed and occasionally sappy script into a grab-you-by-the-sequins performance that sparkles even to the roll-your-eyes-at-the-mention-of-Elvis support group. I should know. I never miss a meeting.

Meyers succeeds by playing a giant character small. He undersneers, his pompadour misbehaves and when he hits the stage, he acts like a kid caught square in the beam of a diesel engine.

His Elvis is all humble roots and pie-in-the-sky, a kid stumbling into the big time one accidental step after another.

Camryn Manheim of "The Practice" plays Elvis' doting mother, who thrills to his success while fearing the corrupting atmosphere of showbiz. It's a known fact Elvis loved his mama and his mama loved him back, but in case you didn't know it, the early going of "Elvis" establishes the fact in concrete.

Randy Quaid pulls off a convincing villain in the role of Col. Tom Parker, the promoter who didn't much care for Elvis' singing but knew a good — a very good — thing when he heard it.

This movie explores young Elvis, the energetic, pre-narcotic, ante-belly Southern entertainer destined for luminous fame and a dark descent.

This is the Elvis whose combination of black blues and white country petrified parents in the '50s, the Elvis whose music inspired a million teens to pick up guitars and form rock 'n' roll bands.

Meyers' believability is enhanced because many people don't know the Elvis backstory. The movie ends with Elvis' 1968 comeback and dabbles little in the bloated Vegas version so memorable to people of impressionable age in the 1970s.

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Ventura County Star (California)

May 8, 2005 Sunday

**SECTION:** LIFE, ARTS AND LIVING; Pg. 5

**LENGTH:** 694 words

**HEADLINE:** Bridesmaid brigade a clue to Wilbanks' mental state

**BYLINE:** Nicole Neal

**BODY:**

Cox News Service

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — You'd think we'd have suspected the fianc in that whole "With This Ring, I Thee Fled" story. Had he grown weary of debating the merits of Lenox's "Poppies on Blue" china pattern versus Wedgwood's "Celestial Platinum" and chucked his high-maintenance bride-to-be in the Chattahoochee?

But women of a certain age — like, over 23 — knew early on that infamous "runaway bride" Jennifer Wilbanks was the one capable of inflicting supreme cruelty on the ones she loved.

And the proof was in two words: 14 bridesmaids.

Jennifer Wilbanks, 32, jilted 14 brides-maids, not to mention 14 groomsmen, when she laced up her running shoes in Georgia and ended up in Albuquerque.

Fourteen bridesmaids? Fourteen?!

She could stage her own production of "Steel Magnolias" with fewer bodies.

Just getting that wedding platoon down the aisle would give the organist carpal tunnel.

Now, to be fair, her fondant has probably been sliding off her cake, if you know what I mean, for quite some time.

After all, she did lop off her own hair, a behavior mental-health professionals consider more "Squeaky Fromme" than "Modern Bride." And she did willingly board a cross-country bus — why not just affix wheels to a Porta-Potty and glide from Georgia to Vegas and beyond? — for her escapade.

The tip-off

But it's that "14 bridesmaids" tidbit that's the most revealing.

It's one thing to be 22 and impulsively squeal a gushy, "I want you to be, like, my bridesmaids!!!" to your six best friends (du jour), and they say "YES!!!" and everyone jumps up and down, and the bride-to-be goes to DogUglyDresses.com, and somewhere in Taiwan sewing machines rev up and turn bolts of puce sateen and stretch lace into what will become, next Halloween, \$200 Atlantic City Drag Queen costumes for six (now resentful) young women.

But it's another thing altogether to be 32 and conscript 14 grown women — and 14 matching men — to haul tushy to Georgia in order to line up and escort you safely down 30 feet of church aisle.

What's waiting at the other end? A machine-gun nest?

Are these throwdown bridesmaids in case a rogue faction of the ring-bearer brigade has planted land mines in the aisle runner?

At the ripe old age of 32, everyone knows that being a bridesmaid is truly an act of love.

Ventura County Star (California) May 8, 2005 Sunday

Only for someone for whom your affection runs deep and true is the purchase of the puce dress, a plane ticket, a few nights in a hotel, a stiff updo, a shower gift, a wedding gift, etc., etc., etc., culminating in the climactic moment — a forced march in dyed pumps — an honor.

By your 30s, petty jealousies of the I-wasn't-invited-to-the-popular-girl's-slumber-party variety have long since evaporated, so it's not like anyone with a maturity quotient over the Middle School Girl level is going to feel left out.

By this time, too, attrition has thinned the friendship ranks, leaving a few beloved souls who, truth be told, are thrilled you're getting married but have no desire to be part of a human tide of taffeta and nosegays.

If you have 14 of those beloved souls in your life, you probably don't have room for a spouse.

Which makes you wonder: Who exactly were Nos. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14?

Her dental hygienist, mail carrier, fifth-grade safety patrol partner, Pilates instructor, favorite barista at Starbucks and some woman behind the Clinique counter who matched the groom's No. 14?

No room for the groom

Pick a sibling or a friend to stand up there with you. Or stand on your own.

After all, the wedding is about the marriage, and that's you and him, not you and him and your 14 bestest friends in the whole wide world.

If I were this woman's fianc, that wide-end wedding party would make me wonder whether she wanted to get down the aisle at all, or if she was building in an extra 45 minutes of wriggle room in case she decided to duck out and slip on a steamship bound for Sumatra.

Really, though, I wouldn't waste time wringing my hands over her cold feet and the "honesty issue."

For me, it would be the maturity issue:

The specter of spending my life fighting through P. Diddy's entourage to get to my spouse would convince me it's time to board the bus bound for bachelorhood.

**LOAD-DATE:** May 8, 2005

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Copyright 2005 Lancaster Newspapers, Inc.  
INTELLIGENCER JOURNAL (LANCASTER, PA.)

May 7, 2005, Saturday

**SECTION:** SPORTS, Pg. D-1, JASON FULGINITI

**LENGTH:** 869 words

**HEADLINE:** Texter's lessons learned;  
PM grad rolls with ups and downs as freshman at UNLV

**BYLINE:** Jason Fulginiti

**BODY:**

A down-to-earth kid by nature, it didn't take Jarred Texter long to realize it once he arrived in Las Vegas to join one of the nation's premier college golf programs.

"We're spoiled," Texter said with a chuckle. "That's for sure."

Take last week's Mountain West Conference Championships in Sun River, Ore. for example.

While other MWC teams were taking commercial flights to Portland, which were likely followed by a prop-plane flight to Redmond and an ensuing one-hour drive by rental car to the Sunriver Resort, Texter and his University of Nevada-Las Vegas teammates were already in their rooms at the hotel preparing for the first round of the tournament the following day.

Turns out, Runnin' Rebels coach Dwaine Knight has a few connections, one of which allows him to get a private jet for his players on certain tournament weeks.

"There's a little private run strip right behind the resort," Texter said. "Where most teams are flying into Portland and driving three hours or flying to Redmond and driving an hour, we flew right into the resort. We took off from Vegas at 12:30 and we were in Sun River at 1:55.

"It's pretty nice," he added with a hint of disbelief. "I mean, I'm a college student, and here we are flying in private planes. College golf is pretty cool."

Truth is, golf in itself has been pretty cool for Texter, who has basically been spoiled by the game and his own natural ability since he picked up a club for the first time as a little kid.

By the time he left for UNLV last August, Texter had become the perennial man to beat in Lancaster-Lebanon League, District Three, and PIAA circles in high school, a major force in Lancaster City-County events (highlighted by a 9-under 63 at Crossgates, which led to an eight-shot victory at the 2003 Lanco Amateur), and a highly-accomplished player on the American Junior Golf Association circuit (which laid the groundwork for his win at the prestigious 2002 North-South Junior Championship and his earning medalist honors at the 2002 U.S. Junior Amateur).

By the time Texter left Lancaster for Vegas, he was the third-ranked junior boys player in the nation, according to the Golfweek/Titleist Performance Index.

"I was always just so consistent, scorewise," Texter said. "Even if I was struggling, it seemed like I was always right around par or just a couple over."

Then came March, and something Texter never expected.

After a brilliant fall season, during which he played in every one of UNLV's events as a freshman, the Penn Manor graduate suddenly found hitting the fairway about as easy as hitting the lottery.

"I was just thinking way too much about everything but keeping it simple, and I got into a bad mechanical habit," said

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Texter, the 161st-ranked collegiate player in the nation in the latest Golfweek/Titleist Performance Index. "My grip (on the club) got way too strong and I didn't even realize it until a couple of the guys on the team told me about it."

By the time Texter did realize what was happening, he had posted a three-day score of 18-over to finish 67th at the Southern Highlands Collegiate in Las Vegas (March 11-13), and failed to earn a spot on the Rebels' starting roster for the next two tournaments.

"It was tough, no doubt about it," said Texter, 19. "Especially just because I'm out here (in Vegas) pretty much by myself and there's no one really to help. Obviously, the team (was), but no parents or anyone else who knows me really well."

"Spoiled," in other words, had just taken a one-way ticket out of town.

"It was hard for me to accept that I was actually struggling because I never really had before," Texter admitted. "I was going through a really low time. But things like that make you grow up really fast because you have to get through it. There's no one else who can help you get through it.

"That helps you find things out about yourself what kind of person you really are and how bad you really want it. And I knew I wanted it bad. I just had to find it."

While his teammates were off competing in tournaments in Texas and Arizona, Texter eventually found it at the driving range back in Vegas, where he spent hours hitting hundreds of balls with a corrected grip that was about as comfortable as a steel pillow. Still, by the time the team returned from those road trips, Texter was back in business.

The following week he regained his starting spot for the Arizona State University Thunderbird Invitational in Tempe, Ariz., where he tied for 18th to help UNLV win the tournament. And two weeks later, his tie for ninth at the MWC Championships helped the Rebels' take second as a team.

The best accolade, perhaps, came after the conference tournament, when Texter - despite the rollercoaster ride that had been his freshman season - was named the Mountain West Conference Freshman of the Year, which was one of his goals when he left Lancaster eight months ago.

"I was just kind of excited, happy and proud of myself for my hard work," Texter said. "It's a nice little feeling."

And a good life lesson, perhaps, for a "spoiled" kid who was quickly brought back down to earth.

Jason Fulginiti's e-mail address is [jfulginitilnpnews.com](mailto:jfulginitilnpnews.com).

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May 7, 2005, Saturday, BC cycle

**SECTION:** Sports News

**LENGTH:** 825 words

**HEADLINE:** Might Marlins' next move be to Vegas?

**BYLINE:** By STEVEN WINE, AP Sports Writer

**DATELINE:** MIAMI

**BODY:**

Foiled yet again by the state Legislature, the Florida Marlins remain winless in their bid for a new ballpark and must now decide their next move.

Might it be to another city?

Nobody made any threats Friday, and Marlins officials declined to comment on their latest stadium setback beyond issuing a brief statement when the Legislature adjourned shortly before midnight.

"We are deeply disappointed in the Florida Legislature's decision, and we feel very bad for all of the baseball fans in South Florida," owner Jeffrey Loria said. "We will now review our options, and not comment further until this review is completed."

The Senate's failure to pass a \$60 million tax rebate left two-time World Series champion Florida 0-for-4 in attempts to obtain state money for a ballpark.

"I think it's a major mistake," said third baseman Mike Lowell, who grew up in South Florida. "We're one of the few teams that has proven we can win a championship in this state, and it just seems not everyone is a big fan of us."

The Marlins have said that without state financial help, they might move. Five months ago, team officials met in Las Vegas with Mayor Oscar Goodman, who wants a new ballpark and a major league franchise for it.

Baseball chief operating officer Bob DuPuy expressed disappointment that the Marlins' bill failed in the Legislature.

"But we will continue to work with the Marlins to try to keep Major League Baseball in South Florida," DuPuy said.

While baseball is reluctant to abandon the largest market in the nation's fourth-largest state, the Montreal Expos' move this year to Washington reflected a new willingness by the sport to consider franchise shifts. It was the first in 33 years.

Since the Marlins' first season in 1993, they have played in the Miami Dolphins' stadium. The Marlins have long argued that their own park with a retractable roof would mean no more delays caused by Florida's frequent summer showers. That supposedly would lead to better attendance, increased revenue and a higher payroll, ensuring a competitive team for the future.

The Florida House last month approved a bill to help with ballpark financing, but Senate President Tom Lee said Thursday there wasn't enough support in his chamber to even warrant a vote.

Tallahassee has rejected three other bids for help. Gov. Jeb Bush's opposition sank a cruise-tax plan on opening day of 2000.

"It's very disheartening," said Marlins veteran Jeff Conine, who played in the team's first game 12 years ago. "You go through the laundry list of things they've done with the team - they built us into World Series champions and made us competitive every year - and you'd think they would have all the ingredients to get the support to do that. But it hasn't happened."

Miami and Miami-Dade County officials pledged \$166 million toward a \$420 ballpark adjacent to the Orange Bowl near downtown, and Loria agreed to pay \$192 million rent. A \$32 million parking garage was expected to pay for itself, leaving a \$30 million funding gap to be plugged by the state.

Ron Book, chief lobbyist for the proposal, said city and county officials plan to investigate other ways to come up with the money. But the city, county and Marlins have all said they can afford no more than they've already agreed to contribute, which is why they sought state help.

"It creates a \$30 million hole," Book said. "I don't know where they go to fill the hole. They have to explore the options."

The Marlins are committed to their current home through 2006 and have one-year lease options through 2010. But Lowell said he doesn't foresee the Marlins still playing there a decade from now.

"There are other cities that are going to pay major dollars to build a stadium for someone," Lowell said. "I know Mr. Loria wants it to work here, but to a certain degree he's a businessman. He's a private jet away from going anywhere."

"If I'm in his shoes and Vegas calls and says, 'I'm going to build a \$450 million stadium and you don't have to pay anything,' what are you going to do? Keep losing money here? That's tough."

Las Vegas Mayor Goodman said he has spoken with Marlins officials only once since they met in December, and that was merely to say hello at the winter baseball meetings. He said he hasn't talked with the Marlins about moving to Nevada but would like to lure a team there as early as 2007.

"My position remains steadfast: that if a team is looking to relocate, I'm a good guy to talk to," Goodman said.

Miami Mayor Manny Diaz and County Mayor Carlos Alvarez, meanwhile, vowed they'll try to keep the Marlins from going anywhere.

"Next week I will be meeting with the county manager and speaking to representatives of Florida Marlins to determine what options still exist," Alvarez said in a statement. "My focus remains keeping the Florida Marlins in South Florida for generations to come."

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The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

May 7, 2005 Saturday Home Edition

**SECTION:** Gwinnett News; Pg. 2JJ;

**LENGTH:** 184 words

**HEADLINE:** GWINNETT VENT

**BODY:**

So the Vietnamese prime minister is visiting the U.S. I guess his first stop will be in Atlanta to visit with Jane Fonda.

I know the bird on the wildlife license tag is supposed to be an eagle, but it looks an awful lot like a pigeon.

Dacula schools have a reputation of being problem areas for the county. I wonder how much Gwinnett County could make if they sold that area to Barrow County?

Firing Doc? I have now lost all respect for the Gwinnett County school board. Oh wait, I never had any!

One word for Jennifer Wilbanks' statement: LAME

Larry Neace has 100 percent of my support. Grades aren't only about test scores, they're also about conduct and participation.

What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas. What happens in Gwinnett makes the front page.

Come on, Gwinnett! Get it off your chest. Join our online Vent. We want to hear your take on life in Gwinnett County. What irks you? What funny things have you seen? Send your Gwinnett Vent!

ON THE WEB: Go to [ajc.com](http://ajc.com)'s Gwinnett page and click on the Vent, or visit [www.ajc.com/metro/content/metro/gwinnett/gwinnettve](http://www.ajc.com/metro/content/metro/gwinnett/gwinnettve)

**LOAD-DATE:** May 7, 2005

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Copyright 2005 Midland Independent Newspapers plc  
Birmingham Evening Mail

May 7, 2005, Saturday

**SECTION:** First Edition; FEATURES; Pg. 14,15**LENGTH:** 771 words**HEADLINE:** TRAVEL: SOMETHING FAKE ABOUT LAS VEGAS**BYLINE:** BY STEVE NICHOLLS**HIGHLIGHT:**

PARIS HOTEL; NEW YORK HOTEL; VENETIAN HOTEL; LIFE OF LUXORY: The Egyptian-themed hotel in Las Vegas boasts the world's most powerful beam of light

**BODY:**

'I WANT to wake up in a city that never sleeps,' crooned Frank Sinatra. He was singing about New York, of course, but if Ol' Blue Eyes ever does wake up, Las Vegas could be his haunt of choice.

Vegas, or at least it's adrenaline-pumped heartbeat The Strip, really is on the go for 24 hours. Not in a late bar or kebab shop open til 4am way, but in a still-open-at-dawn top-class restaurant, clothes boutique and car hire kind of way.

The word extravagance barely does the place justice. We may not be in New York but, no matter, because in the middle of this desert oasis the Big Apple has been recreated, complete with Statue of Liberty and Empire State Building. It also has a rollercoaster zipping around all over it.

And, for good measure, there's the Eiffel Tower and Arc de Triomphe, a pyramid and sphinx, and the canals of Venice. It's like a theme park based on famous cities.

These are some the hotels of Vegas. Actually, they prefer the term 'resort', which is understandable. Small British towns could fit inside some of these sprawling complexes. Of the 20 largest hotels in the world, 19 of them are in Vegas. We stayed at the Egyptian-themed Luxor. It has 4,400 rooms, an IMAX 3D cinema, huge spa/fitness centre, 13,000 sq ft of shops, a nightclub, theatre stages, several restaurants and the world's most powerful beam of light, shining out of the top of the central pyramid into space, where it can be seen from the International Space Station.

And there's the casino. A 12,000 sq ft arcade of slots, card and dice tables, roulettes and bars, dazzling the eyes and quite disorientating if you ever try to find your way out. It's almost as if they don't want you to leave. As if.

After retiring early and jet-lagged at 11pm, it's quite a shock to emerge for breakfast the following morning and see the flashing lights still blinking away as more punters sit mechanically feeding the slots with loose change.

As the t-shirt says: 'Seven deadly sins . one convenient location.'

But, as domineering as these casinos are, Vegas is trying to put forward other reasons to enjoy 'Sin City'.

Gourmet food is making a big name for itself these days. Each hotel resort has the US equivalent of Michelin-starred restaurants enhancing the premises.

Yes, Planet Hollywood is here too, inside the daunting Caesars Palace, but places like the MGM Grand and Mandalay Bay (where, incidentally, Britain's Danny Williams recently lost his world heavyweight title fight) are cooking up some high class cuisine.

An extraordinary glass wine tower containing 4,200 bottles forms the centrepiece of the impressive Aureole restaurant at Mandalay Bay, with 'wine angels' being winched up and down the construction to fetch customers' choices.

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PC-01090

Birmingham Evening Mail, May 7, 2005

Perhaps the most exhilarating ride in Vegas isn't one of the fairground variety, which weave their way through and around numerous resorts.

Up in the sky, helicopters busily buzz across the city like fireflies. They're not cops, but tourists, enjoying a bird's eye view of the mesmeric sights in a near-cinematic experience.

After sundown is, of course, the best time to go and gaze at the sheer scale of indulgence on The Strip, where, it seems, a light bulb burns from every piece of brick and cement.

Vegas is also a base for helicopter rides further afield, with excursions across the Nevada desert to the Grand Canyon and Hoover Dam.

For all the over-the-top glitz, the ostentatious presentation, Las Vegas still retains that air of luxury. For most Brits, it's the destination for a dream holiday, or honeymoon.

(There are many tiny wedding chapels for those who want to combine the marriage and honeymoon.) It's not a cheap holiday, that's for sure, but there is budget accommodation available off The Strip.

Still, Vegas is a wild, unforgettable place and is tipped to be one of the most popular long distance destinations of 2005. And it's lining up for the mother of all parties on May 15, when it celebrates its 100 birthday.

It is a city that literally never sleeps. Almost as if it has forgotten how to

#### FACTFILE

Getting there: bmi flies direct from Manchester to Las Vegas, three times a week. For information, call 0870 6070 222 or visit [www.flybmi.com](http://www.flybmi.com)

#### Accommodation: The

Luxor website is at [www.luxor.com](http://www.luxor.com) while [www.vegas.com](http://www.vegas.com) has details on lots of hotels, restaurants, shows and attractions.

Extras: Sundance operate helicopter trips ([www.helicoptour.com](http://www.helicoptour.com)). The Aureole restaurant can be found at [www.mandalaybay.com](http://www.mandalaybay.com) while other resorts have websites at [www.mgmgrand.com](http://www.mgmgrand.com) and [www.caesars.com](http://www.caesars.com)

**LOAD-DATE:** May 9, 2005

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Copyright 2005 Midland Independent Newspapers plc  
Birmingham Evening Mail

May 7, 2005, Saturday

**SECTION:** First Edition; FEATURES; Pg. 14,15

**LENGTH:** 546 words

**HEADLINE:** TRAVEL: WILD HORSES DRAGGED ME FROM 'SIN CITY

**BYLINE:** BY STEVE NICHOLLS

**HIGHLIGHT:**

**CHANGE OF SCENERY:** The Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Hotel

**BODY:**

BY the time we got to Phoenix, everything was very different.

It's only a 40-minute flight away from Vegas, but the state capital of Arizona could be a million miles from the crazy lights of Sin City. The only thing it has in common is the desert heat. It proudly proclaims itself to be the sixth largest city in the US, but Phoenix has an altogether more relaxed pace, ushered along with a homely Southern charm.

Phoenix, and its satellite city Scottsdale, are premium golfing locations with more than 200 courses landscaping the area in flourishing greens and stunning scenery.

Most of the hotels have their own 18-hole courses within the grounds, including the Sheraton Wild Horse Pass, which has two courses.

Wild Horse Pass is a pioneering resort, built on native American land between two mountain ranges and so-called because of the herds of wild horses that can occasionally be seen galloping across the plains on a dust cloud. The hotel is actually owned by the two tribes of the Gila River Indian Community. The plan is for Sheraton to help the Community eventually maintain the resort by themselves, allowing it to become a more independent venture.

Certainly the whole design and concept has been realised with the Pima and Maricopa tribes in mind, with art, heritage and culture creating an ambience steeped in tradition. Even the restaurant adopts a contemporary approach to native American cuisine.

It's a real get-away-from-it-all experience, enhanced by facilities including a spa and riverboat trips. We took a horseback ride at sunset across the Sonoran desert - and the views were breathtaking as the mountains glowed orange. A real taste the Old West.

If Wild Horse Pass is a sanctuary of peace, then the Phoenician at Scottsdale is pure luxury. Based at the foot of Camelback Mountain, it offers more of a recreational break, with nine swimming pools, an unbelievably serene New Age spa and several leisure pursuits available.

For golfers there is a championship 27-hole course, driving range, putting green and clinics with professionals.

Glittering with an elegance that, in places, becomes sheer opulence, the Phoenician also has restaurants of the finest quality. Some of the menu prices might even make some Premiership footballers draw breath, but this is holiday of a lifetime territory.

One of the surprising aspects of Arizona is how lush it is. There is so much green. True, much of it is prickly, but the Colorado River has made this area one of the most fertile deserts in the world. The Desert Botanical Garden is a real treat. Hundreds of different types of cacti, from the vaguely cartoonish human-looking giants to the smallest - and sharpest - of

the species.

Guides help make the visit an educational one and there aren't many opportunities in life to taste wild prickly pears. We even saw a roadrunner, although I was a little disappointed that it wasn't blue and wasn't being chased by a coyote riding a large firework.

That sort of thing would be more at home back in Vegas

**FACTFILE**

Greater Phoenix Convention and Visitors Bureau - [www.visitphoenix.com](http://www.visitphoenix.com) Desert Botanical Garden - [www.dbg.org](http://www.dbg.org)  
The Phoenician - [www.thephoenician.com](http://www.thephoenician.com) Wild Horse Pass - [www.wildhorsepassresort.com](http://www.wildhorsepassresort.com)

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Copyright 2005 The Buffalo News  
Buffalo News (New York)

May 7, 2005 Saturday  
FINAL EDITION

**SECTION:** SPORTS; Pg. B5

**LENGTH:** 957 words

**HEADLINE:** VARIOUS METHODS REVEAL EXOTIC MIX OF COMBINATIONS

**BYLINE:** By Robert J. Summers

**DATELINE:** LOUISVILLE, KY.

**BODY:**

Over the years, the Happy Handicapper has favored several methods for picking the winner and making exotic bets at the Kentucky Derby.

His problem with today's Derby is that his methods and other sources of information produce a big bunch of horses. Take a look:

The "Hall of Fame trainers exacta box" system comes up with one combination for two trainers.

D. Wayne Lukas, who has won the Derby four times, has only one entrant (Going Wild, No. 19) and he's a long shot, 50-1 on the morning line. And Lukas said he expects him to go off around 80-1.

Lukas attributes Going Wild's resounding defeats in the Wood Memorial (41 lengths behind Bellamy Road) and Lexington (16 lengths behind Coin Silver) to the colt's dislike for the track surfaces at Aqueduct and Keeneland.

However, Lukas maintains, Going Wild "relishes it here" at Churchill Downs and is expected to improve.

Bobby Frankel's High Limit (No. 6) is a more legitimate contender with only one loss — six lengths behind Bandini (15) in the Blue Grass — in four career starts and will probably be bet lower than his 12-1 morning line price.

Trainer Nick Zito, who saddles five entrants, is nominated to the Hall of Fame, but the election results won't be known until May 31. In previous years, the results were announced a few weeks before the Derby.

Good thing the calendar was changed or else the box would consist of seven horses, which would cost a minimum of \$42 and you'd have to ask for a ticket on 2-3-4-6-11-16-19.

Logic dictates: Zito is loaded for bear and you'd be foolish to discount the possibility that his quintet would not get more than one money position. His horses are Andromeda's Hero (2), Sun King (3), Noble Causeway (4), High Fly (11) and Bellamy Road (16).

Fastest 9 furlongs: The Derby is 1 1/4 miles, but in most years the first horse to the "eighth pole" (1/8 mile or 220 yards) from the wire, is the winner.

In the spring prep races at 1 1/8 miles, the fastest horse by far has been Bellamy Road (16). The 5-2 Derby favorite won the Wood Memorial at Aqueduct in a track record 1:47.16.

Next fastest was the 1:48.80 posted by Afleet Alex (12) in the Arkansas Derby. Then comes Buzzards Bay (20), who won the Santa Anita Derby in 1:49.18; High Fly (11), winner of the Florida Derby in 1:49.43; and Greeley's Galaxy (9), winner of the Illinois Derby in 1:49.62. An 11-12-16-20 exacta box costs \$12.

Informed opinion: Three-time Derby winner Bob Baffert doesn't give his horse, Sort It Out (1), much of a chance. As he put it, "My owners get to dream in color but I dream in black and white."

Baffert thinks "If he (Bellamy Road) gets the Wood Memorial Trip, he's going to gallop away. But he says "to me the 'buzz horse' is High Limit (6). Frankel's going to be dangerous."

Fantasyland: Back in January, the H.H. entered an on-line contest sponsored by the Bally's Casino in Las Vegas. Each week you pick a horse and at the end you select a "final four" for the Derby.

His selections turned out to be Bellamy Road (16), Buzzards Bay (20), Greeley's Galaxy (9) and Going Wild (19). If they come in that way, he might win a free trip to Vegas, where he could bring a guest and play for real money.

Do you believe in miracles?: Back in January, the H.H. wrote down a list of his top 14 Derby contenders. Fourteen weeks later, six of them actually made the race. In order of original preference, they are: Sun King (3), Greater Good (8), Spanish Chestnut (13), Wilko (14), High Fly (11) and Afleet Alex (12). Proceed with caution.

Box the Beyers: A quick and dirty way to get involved is to play a three-horse exacta box combining the horses with the highest most-recent Beyer Speed Figures, as published in the Daily Racing Form.

Bellamy Road's huge win in the Wood earned a 120 rating. Next highest is Afleet Alex's 108 in the Arkansas Derby, followed by the 106 earned by Greeley's Galaxy in the Illinois Derby. That's a 16-12-9 combo.

Mazur Index: According to the H.H.'s interpretation of Jim Mazur's \$29.95 "Triple Crown Handicapper" book, the "Mazur Index" (don't ask for an explanation, please) comes up with Afleet Alex (12), High Fly (11) and Bellamy Road (16).

Guy from Erie: A stranger in the barn area (really) Thursday handed the H.H. a card with the Derby selected in the following order: Afleet Alex (12), Greeley's Galaxy (9), Wilko (14) and Bellamy Road (16). He wouldn't give his name and told the skeptical H.H. not to look at the card until after the race. He'll be mad if he reads this.

Quick Pick: There are several of those automatic betting machines in the Churchill Downs press box. The H.H., brave guy that he is, stepped up to one, inserted \$2 for a win bet and pressed the "Quick Pick" button. It gave him Wilko (14). As this is written, he's 25-1 in the early betting.

Gut feeling: The H.H. dislikes playing favorites. However, he just saw the replay of Bellamy Road's victory in the Wood. It looks like he could have run a lot faster. Wow! The H.H. likes Bellamy Road to win it, Afleet Alex second and Sun King third.

#### KENTUCKY DERBY FIELD

TODAY, 6:04 P.M., CH. 2

No.Horse Jockey Odds

- 1 Sort It Out Brice Blanc 50-1
- 2 Andromeda's HeroRafael Bejarano 50-1
- 3 Sun King Edgar Prado 15-1
- 4 Noble Causeway Gary Stevens 12-1
- 5 Coin Silver Pat Valenzuela 20-1
- 6 High Limit Ramon Dominguez 12-1
- 7 Flower Alley Jorge Chavez 20-1
- 8 Greater Good John McKee 20-1
- 9 Greeley's GalaxyKent Desormeaux 15-1
- 10 Giacomo Mike Smith 50-1
- 11 High Fly Jerry Bailey 8-1
- 12 Afleet Alex Jeremy Rose 9-2
- 13 Spanish ChestnutJoe Bravo 50-1

14 Wilko Cory Nakatani 20-1

15 Bandini John Velazquez 6-1

16 Bellamy Road Javier Castellano 5-2

17 Don't Get Mad Tyler Baze 30-1

18 Closing Argument Cornelio Velasquez 30-1

19 Going Wild Jose Valdivia Jr. 50-1

20 Buzzards Bay Mark Guidry 20-1

e-mail: rsummers@buffnews.com

**LOAD-DATE:** May 8, 2005

**INDEX 361**

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Copyright 2005 Charleston Newspapers  
Charleston Gazette (West Virginia)

May 7, 2005, Saturday

**SECTION:** Sports; Pg. P3C**LENGTH:** 802 words**HEADLINE:** Sports briefs**BODY:****Nash MVP, sources say**

Steve Nash of the Phoenix Suns has won the NBA's Most Valuable Player award, sources told The Associated Press on Friday.

The award will be announced Sunday, and the league office has been silent regarding any details of the announcement. Two sources close to Nash, speaking on condition of anonymity, said they had been notified that the Canadian star had won.

Nash becomes the first Canadian MVP and only the sixth guard in league history to win the award, joining Bob Cousy, Oscar Robertson, Magic Johnson, Allen Iverson and Michael Jordan. Nash's selection as MVP was first reported Friday by ESPN.com.

**Garcia leads by two**

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – Sergio Garcia posed over a 9-iron that never reached the green. Vijay Singh felt the wind change in the middle of his swing. Tiger Woods watched a birdie chance disappear off the green and into the water.

Blustery wind that swirled from all corners fooled some of the world's best players and turned the Wachovia Championship into a test of patience Friday.

Garcia survived by playing bogey-free on the back nine for a 1-under 71 and a 7-under 137 total, giving him a two-shot lead over Singh (69), defending champion Joey Sindelar (71) and D.J. Trahan (67).

Phil Mickelson hit into the water on the par-3 17th and finished double bogey-bogey for a 73 that left him seven shots behind.

**Other golf:**

s Annika Sorenstam's winning streak is on hold again. Rain wiped out the Michelob Ultra Open on Friday, and the second round will start anew this morning in Williamsburg, Va. The final 36 holes of the tournament will be played Sunday.

The storm could have been a huge break for Sorenstam. After shooting a 5-over 76 on Thursday, she's got work to do just to make the cut, let alone keep her quest for a record sixth straight victory alive. She's nine strokes behind first-round leaders Silvia Cavalleri and Catrin Nilsmark, and several off the projected cut line.

s England's Richard Finch shot a course-record 9-under 63 to take a one-stroke lead after the second round of the Italian Open in Milan. Finch had a 12-under 132 total.

**Reds promote Stone**

CINCINNATI – The Reds purchased the contract of reliever Ricky Stone from Triple-A Louisville on Friday and sent down right-hander Joe Valentine.

Minor league pitcher Daylan Childress was waived by Cincinnati, to make room on the 40-man roster for Stone, and

was claimed by the Minnesota Twins.

Stone, who failed to make the Reds during spring training, went 2-1 with a 2.57 ERA and three saves in nine appearances with Louisville. He is 11-9 with a 4.26 ERA in 192 major league games with Houston and San Diego.

Other baseball notes:

s Injured Mariners shortstop Pokey Reese, who has yet to play for Seattle this season, has undergone surgery on his sore right shoulder.

Also, catcher Dan Wilson is scheduled for surgery May 20 to repair the anterior cruciate ligament in his right knee, which he tore Wednesday in a loss to the Angels.

Reese and Wilson are former Charleston Wheelers.

s Lance Berkman was activated from the disabled list Friday by the struggling Houston Astros and he started in an unfamiliar position - first base.

Berkman missed the first month of the season after offseason knee surgery. He tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his right knee while playing flag football in November.

Sharapova's bid denied

BERLIN - Maria Sharapova's bid to become the top-ranked player by winning the German Open ended Friday with a 6-2, 6-4 loss to Justine Henin-Hardenne in a cold and rainy quarterfinal.

Sharapova was trying to overtake Lindsay Davenport for the No. 1 spot, but she ran into one of the world's best clay-court players, who extended her winning streak to 14 matches.

s With the wind kicking up and shots hard to judge, Andre Agassi stuck to cautious tennis.

His strategy paid off Friday when he beat Slovakia's Dominik Hrbaty 6-3, 6-3 to advance to the Rome Masters semifinals in another step toward what he hopes will be his first title since last August.

Agassi will next meet French Open runner-up Guillermo Coria in this \$2.7 million clay-court tuneup for the French Open, which begins May 23.

Will Marlins move to Vegas?

MIAMI - Foiled yet again by the state Legislature, the Florida Marlins remain winless in their bid for a new ballpark and must now decide their next move. Might it be to another city?

Nobody made any threats Friday, and Marlins officials declined to comment on their latest stadium setback, saying they wanted to wait until the Legislature adjourned.

But Senate President Tom Lee declared dead a bill for a \$60 million tax rebate, leaving two-time World Series champion Florida 0-for-4 in attempts to obtain state money for a ballpark.

The Associated Press

**LOAD-DATE:** May 9, 2005

**INDEX 362**

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Copyright 2005 Paddock Publications, Inc.  
Chicago Daily HeraldMay 7, 2005 Saturday  
C1 Edition; F1 Edition; F2 Edition; McHenry Edition; F3 Edition**SECTION:** SPORTS; Pg. 11**LENGTH:** 599 words**HEADLINE:** Payne continues to draw hoops attention**BYLINE:** John Radtke**BODY:**

Cully Payne is in the spotlight again.

It's been a long time since we've had an eighth-grade basketball player in the Fox Valley drawing as much attention as Payne, the son of Elgin Community College men's basketball coach and athletic director Kent Payne.

Kent Payne is also the coach of the Illinois Spartans' AAU team, where young Cully spends much of his time playing basketball.

But today, Cully steps away from the AAU circuit to play in Thorp's Real Deal Classic at Hales Franciscan High School in Chicago.

Payne, a 5-foot-9 guard who will enroll at Burlington Central this fall and play for his cousin Chris, will play on a team that includes Marcus Jordan, the middle son of Michael Jordan.

The four-game event starts at 11 this morning and the marquee game, which features Payne and Jordan playing for the Chicagoland All-Stars against a team from south and central Illinois, will be at 4 p.m.

Also participating in the event will be Jonathan DeMoss, an incoming freshman at St. Charles North who also plays with for the Spartans. The game DeMoss plays in will be at 12:45 p.m.

In between all his games with the Spartans - and there have been over 50 so far this season - Cully trains with Northern Illinois University guard Anthony Maestranzi of Bartlett once a week at NIU, he's been invited to an exposure camp at Bradley University on June 4 and he's been invited to participate in the Adidas All-American camp in Suwanee, Ga., July 5-9.

But trips to St. Louis, Fort Wayne, Notre Dame, Oregon, and Las Vegas, just to mention a few, will probably keep the Spartans from going to Disney World in August to play in the AAU Nationals. The Spartans have seen plenty of competition already and will face much more. A 14 & under team, they generally play at the U-17 level.

"We've been to Vegas and Portland," said Kent Payne. "The Disney trip would cost about \$3,000. We're not sponsored by an Adidas or a Reebok or a Nike yet. Maybe next year."

Payne also said that six of his nine Spartans players will be playing high school football this fall and with the AAU tournament not finishing until Aug. 8 and the first day of football practice scheduled for Aug. 10 he didn't feel it fair to bunch the two that close.

The AAU situation could change for the Paynes next year. Now, there are no IHSA rules to live by. Once the fall semester starts, Kent Payne will only be allowed to have two players from any one school on his AAU club.

Cully, who has had several 30-plus games on the AAU circuit this spring, isn't the only up and coming star in the Payne family. Cully's sister, Katlyn, is a seventh grader and at 5-9 is already making her mark on the AAU circuit with the Lady Lightning. She's had the good fortune of being able to practice with and against players like Bartlett's Kaci Baird

and Kim Ebbesen and St. Charles East's Katie White.

"She's very strong," says Katlyn's dad of his daughter. "And she's gaining great experience."

The beneficiaries of the Payne family's basketball talents will be Burlington Central, which will need all the help they can get as they enter Class AA next season. Currently living in the St. Charles North district, the Paynes are building a home in Burlington Meadows, the subdivision directly across Plato Road from Central High School.

Being that close to the gym, it would probably be a good idea for Central athletic director Dan Cliffe to just give the Paynes a key, since the gym is probably where they'll really live.

- John Radtke is the Daily Herald's Fox Valley Sports Editor. He can be reached at (847) 931-5734 or via e-mail at [jradtke@dailyherald.com](mailto:jradtke@dailyherald.com).

**LOAD-DATE:** May 20, 2005

**INDEX 363**

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Copyright 2005 Contra Costa Times (Walnut Creek, CA)  
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 Contra Costa Times (California)

May 7, 2005 Saturday

SECTION: F; BRIEF; Pg. 4

LENGTH: 1031 words

HEADLINE: Springsteen unplugged is a feast of raw talent;  
 TONY HICKS: MUSIC CRITIC

BYLINE: CONTRA COSTA TIMES

**BODY:**

He's famous, among other things, for years of orchestrating a dozen or so musicians into a huge three-hour celebration of rock 'n' roll night after night.

He can also quietly walk out onto a stage, with a couple of instruments, and thrill a theater with just his voice and whatever music his two hands can manage.

And if that doesn't illustrate Bruce Springsteen's range of musical motion, he can also get away with singing entirely different songs, endorsing Jesus and evolution in the same set.

Springsteen thrilled the diehards, as usual, at Oakland's Paramount Theatre on Thursday night with a two-hour unplugged show, touring behind his new solo album "Devils & Dust."

There seems to be this chasm between fans lately over which is better, Springsteen leading his runaway train of shouting E Streeters through three hours of hits, or the quiet Springsteen that decides every decade or so to hit the road like Woody Guthrie, armed only with an acoustic guitar and folk songs.

It's the same person and, in some ways, the same show, only at different volumes and speeds. You wouldn't consider your car a different make when idling through wine country as opposed to blazing down Highway 5 at 100 mph. Springsteen always tells stories and, either way, does it in a way that's completely respectful and in line with his musical founding fathers, be it the lords of rock 'n' roll, or folk, or blues, or country, or whatever.

Come to think of it, Springsteen is one of those lords.

To see Springsteen alone, while not as fun or awe-inspiring as seeing him in a big arena show, is to see Springsteen without anyone else's motives. It lacks the camaraderie and effortless chemistry of playing with the E Street Band, but to see Springsteen alone and unplugged is to see him doing exactly what's in his heart at the moment. It's also something else, seeing Springsteen's musical abilities when he's not just a component — the most important, to be sure — of one of the world's great live bands.

After walking out in a light untucked shirt and blue jeans like some Midwestern guy approaching the lunch counter, and waving briefly to the regulars, Springsteen asked the crowd for no clapping during songs — "you'll throw off my already tenuous sense of timing," he said — and climbed behind the organ for "My Beautiful Reward." While nice, it was almost forgotten when he walked out to midstage at song's end, started stomping his right foot, got out his harp and played "Reason to Believe" into an old, effects-laden microphone.

The effect was immediately like listening to an old beat-up blues record from the '30s, where you feel the song much more easily than you actually hear it. For three minutes stomping with his eyes closed, Springsteen became a down-and-out bluesman on a street corner, stomping for change.

After "Devils & Dust," came an intense "Youngstown," with Springsteen showing his always underrated guitar-

playing on a full, rich 12-string. He kept the vibe with "Empty Sky," snarling just a bit during the "eye for an eye" line, almost as a World Trade Center reminder.

He twisted the end of lines like Bob Dylan on new song "Long Time Comin'," then hit a chord with the middle-aged audience, talking about children losing parents in a powerful "Silver Palomino." Springsteen can do as much with a song, shattering the silence with one vicious acoustic guitar stroke, as anyone alive.

Despite all that seriousness, Springsteen is at his best when he's at ease. Before "The River," he said he never figured it was a love song until recently. "Dad would say 'Bruce, love songs are a government conspiracy. It's a plot to keep people marrying and paying taxes.'" He paused to let the laughter die. "And he was right, so I didn't write any."

After a chuckling reminder to not applaud when songs begin — "I already know (what it is), and you know it ... makes me feel like I'm in Vegas" — he wisecracked before "Part Man, Part Monkey," a spoof on creationism. "The president says 'the jury's still out,' or 'it's very iffy,'" he said with a laugh.

"Personally I think he believes. He's doing what he has to do so he can do what he wants to do ... uh, no applause." The song was almost a setup for the later, serious "Jesus Was an Only Son," during which Springsteen kept playing piano but paused singing to speculate how on the day of his death, Jesus probably wished he was back in Galilee, opening a bar and "preaching on weekends."

Of course, "Nebraska" was a crowd favorite, and "Reno" was fairly intense. Though no fault of his own, Springsteen's quiet effect gets worn toward show's end, simply because there's not much contrast. "Leah," "Further On (Up the Road)" and the uplifting "Land of Hope and Dreams" all served as good set breaks, though. One couldn't help picturing the action of "The Hitter," describing a young man making a living as a fighter and coming home to reconcile with the mother who threw him out.

During the first encore, Springsteen pulled out some screaming slide guitar for "Johnny 99," and rolled through a gentle "Land of Hope and Dreams" and "My Best Was Never Good Enough." He ended with "The Promised Land," then shook hands with just about everyone in the front row. He's the uncommonly common man, whether it's on a big stage or a small theater.

Tony Hicks is the Times pop music critic. Reach him at 925-952-2678 or [thicks@cctimes.com](mailto:thicks@cctimes.com)

#### SET LIST

Here's the set list from Bruce Springsteen's Thursday night concert at the Paramount Theatre in Oakland, according to [pointblankmag.com](http://pointblankmag.com):

"My Beautiful Reward"

"Reason to Believe"

"Devils & Dust"

"Youngstown"

"Empty Sky"

"Long Time Comin'"

"Silver Palomino"

"The River"

"Two Faces"

"Part Man, Part Monkey"

"All the Way Home"

"Nebraska"

"Reno"

"Racing in the Street"

"The Rising"

"Further On (Up the Road)"

"Jesus Was an Only Son"

"Leah"

"The Hitter"

"Matamoros Banks"

Encore

"Johnny 99"

"Land of Hope and Dreams"

"My Best Was Never Good Enough"

"The Promised Land"

**LOAD-DATE:** May 7, 2005

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Copyright 2005 Cox Enterprises, Inc.  
Cox News Service

May 7, 2005 Saturday

**SECTION:** Sports**LENGTH:** 835 words**HEADLINE:** NASCAR drivers often get the help they need at home**BYLINE:** RICK MINTER**DATELINE:** DARLINGTON, S.C.**BODY:**

You wouldn't dare call someone who drives a race car 200 mph a "mama's boy," but in many respects the term fits a lot of those who do.

As Nextel Cup drivers prepared for a rare Mother's Day weekend race, many of them paused to give their mamas credit for their competitive spirit and to thank them for the sacrifices they made to get their sons to NASCAR's elite circuit.

Stanton Barrett, like lots of his peers, followed his father into the sport. But he said most of his will to win and desire to compete at the highest level comes from his mother, world-class skier Penny McCoy.

McCoy was on the U.S. national alpine team from 1965-69. She was on the World Championships team in 1966 that went to Portillo, Chile, where she became the sports youngest medal winner, taking the bronze in slalom at age 15.

She continued to ski competitively for years, winning several Masters events. She also runs marathons, enters Ironman events and rides cross-country mountain bikes at age 54.

She helps manage Mammoth Mountain, her family's huge ski resort in California's Sierra Nevada mountains.

"She's an amazing woman . . . just a phenomenal athlete," said Barrett, who drives the No. 36 Chevrolet in the Busch Series and the No. 92 in Cup. "Just to see somebody like my mom at her age still riding motorcross bikes with us and mountain biking and running and keeping at a pace that is respectable for anybody is amazing."

**Chasing athletic legacy**

Barrett has yet to achieve the success in his sport that his mother did in hers. His best Busch finish was a fifth at Atlanta Motor Speedway in 1994, and his best Cup run was a 30th at Phoenix last week. But there's not a hint of envy on his part.

"We both competed at the highest levels of what we do, and that is very rewarding," he said. "She's had a lot more success in her career. She was the best woman skier in the world, pretty much. She trains hard, and she's passionate about what she does. She's very, very competitive. That's inspiring."

But in many ways, McCoy is a typical racing mom. She worries about Stanton and his brother, David, whether they're racing cars, skiing or riding motorcycles.

"She likes racing, but she hates seeing me out there," Barrett said. "When there's a wreck she freaks out. I think I get more phone calls than anybody in the garage, just from my mom. At the end of the race, I'll have 12 messages, and they're all from her."

Throughout the garage, there are stories of mothers who stayed out of the limelight but worked hard to get their son's careers in high gear.

Tony Stewart said his mom, Pam Boas, deserves a medal of her own \_ just for putting up with him.

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"Anyone who could actually raise me and not want to kill me or kick me out of the house has got to be a very patient person," Stewart said, adding that his mother always has been one of his biggest supporters.

Jeff Gordon said his mother, Carol Bickford, was instrumental in getting him in his first quarter-midget race car \_ she thought it was safer than the BMX bikes he'd been riding \_ and has backed him since.

"She's probably more of a mother today than she ever has been," Gordon said. "As I get older, I continue to recognize the importance of how I was brought up and who really means the most to me in my life.

"She's an amazing person, and I see our relationship grow all the time where I can go to her and talk to her about things that you didn't even think of as a kid. As you get older, you realize that your parents are a lot smarter than you thought they were."

Defending Nextel Cup champion Kurt Busch said he and his brother Kyle, a rookie on the circuit this year, owe a tremendous debt to their mother, Gaye Busch, who has played a big role in their careers.

"Back in Vegas, she even went back to work so that she could help us pay our tire bills to race," Kurt Busch said. "Her dedication speaks for itself."

Thanks, Mrs. Earnhardt

Ida Compton, whose son Stacy has raced in the Busch and Cup Series, is known throughout the garage for being a caring mom away from home for drivers and crew members.

"I pray every day for all the teams \_ not just Stacy's \_ to have a safe weekend," Mrs. Compton said.

Perhaps the greatest contribution by a NASCAR mother came in the winter of 1973, when a recently widowed woman sold off some of her late husband's assets and spent the money on a top-notch pavement race car for her son, then an aspiring but struggling dirt-track driver.

The woman's name: Martha Earnhardt. Her son: Dale Earnhardt. The car: A 22-time winner driven the year before by Harry Gant.

Veteran motorsports writer Bob Moore said no race fan should ever underestimate Mrs. Earnhardt's role in her son's career, which saw him run his first Cup race two years after he began racing Gant's old car.

"If it wasn't for Martha," Moore said, "Dale's career could have come to a screeching halt before it ever got started."

Rick Minter writes for The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. E-mail: [rminter\(at\)ajc.com](mailto:rminter(at)ajc.com)

LOAD-DATE: May 8, 2005

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The Daily Journal (Vineland, New Jersey)

May 7, 2005 Saturday

**SECTION:** LIVING; Pg. 1B

**LENGTH:** 519 words

**HEADLINE:** Andrew

**BODY:**

Lisa

Crazy ladies

and the men

they torture

efore this week, I thought the women in my life were crazy.

But then I got a new definition of what it meant to be crazy. And it all started with a peek inside the mind of a lady who, when confronted with the prospects of marriage, did the seemingly rational thing and ran the other way.

I don't want to beat up on this runaway bride Jennifer Wilbanks chick too bad.

Sure, she has eyes like an owl at night. And sure, she faked her own abduction after ditching a 600-guest wedding while the cops pointed the finger at her fiance for killing her.

Sure, she let her entire town and much of the country waste time and resources searching for her while she was in Vegas. But honestly, she was under more pressure than Giles Corey in "The Crucible."

This poor lady was about to become someone's property in exchange for jewelry and condemn herself to waking up to the same person every day for the rest of her life like Bill Murray in "Groundhog Day."

She was about to forfeit her individuality, her social life and last name. She looked in the mirror and realized that she was a hair away from entering into an institution that has the same success rate as a coin toss, one that she isn't allowed to exit without lawyers, judges and documentation.

I'd run, too. I'd just do it before the invitations were sent out. And it's been quite a week all around for crazy women getting flack they don't deserve.

Can we please lay off Paula Abdul? All right, all right. So she coached and maybe slept with a contestant on "American Idol."

But let's try to keep things in perspective, huh? Can we please save our outrage for things that are outrageous?

On the list of things that need national outcry in this country, Paula Abdul and Simon Cowell rank right up there with getting sugar on the other side of Frosted Mini-Wheats.

It's a reality show, but it's not real. It's an escape, a distraction. What does it say that we care more about whether or not "American Idol" is a fraud than we do about the war in Iraq?

Which brings me to this week's third stark-raving mad woman, Lynndie England.

It's a special kind of lady who can make the entire world feel bad for Arab savages who are trying to blow it up. And special is the only word to describe that melted-candle face of hers. I mean, this is a woman who can't even plead guilty right.

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PC-01107

A military judge this week rejected the guilty plea of the embodiment of everything that's wrong with this war because he didn't think she knew what she was doing was wrong.

I'm sorry, but if Tommy Chong can go to federal prison for selling bong, then the judge only needed to speak three sentences at her sentencing:

Enjoy your cigarette.

Here's your blindfold.

Stand over there, please.

I mean, I'm sure war is stressful. And I know how entertaining white trash sadists with the sexual inclinations of Zed from "Pulp Fiction" can be, but the U.S. Army is not the Jerry Springer show.

And the Army, like the rest of us, should expect a little more from its women.

Andrew Lisa is a Daily Journal copy editor.

**LOAD-DATE:** May 11, 2005

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Copyright 2005 Scottish Daily Record & Sunday Mail Ltd.  
Daily Record

May 7, 2005, Saturday

**SECTION:** FEATURES; Pg. 15**LENGTH:** 329 words**HEADLINE:** JOHN MCKIE: SOAP-OF-THE-YEAR AWARD PLOT HAS NO MYSTERY**BYLINE:** John Mckie**BODY:**

CORONATION Street has been in top form this year, with Lord of the Rings star Sir Ian McKellen this week making a hilarious cameo appearance.

Meanwhile, EastEnders are struggling to wrest pinball-eyed Ross Kemp from SAS drivel Ultimate Farce.

Wonder which one will win Best Show at tonight's Soap Awards - the suspense is killing me.

#AFTER a year's military training, Prince Harry is planning to attend the Sandhurst passing-out ball.

Given his reputation, I wonder why the ceremony has that name#HORRIBLE to read that parts of the Kakadu National Park have been closed to the public after an increase in crocodile attacks. Well, it's about time they stopped picking on the poor crocs, then# UNBELIEVABLE. Seven whole days, and no demands from Hibs that they be allowed to play in the English Premiership#THE bicycle has been voted the most significant technological invention since 1800. Having seen Loose Women, I'd like to vote instead for the mute button#PARIS Hilton's new movie is called Pledge. She'll be advertising it soon. #LAST Saturday's Dr Who, with Billie Piper meeting a Dalek, was fascinating.

Especially with its shock ending - she didn't run off to Vegas to marry him. #THE schedulers at Channel 4 have a cruel sense of humour. On Monday night, they followed Nicola Sturgeon and the SNP's party political broadcast with Human Mutants#WHAT I want from the World Snooker Championship interval: 1. Funnies set to The Entertainer. 2. The shot of the championship. 3. Alex Higgins' 69 break against Jimmy White from the 1982 semi-final. 4. Dougie Donnelly reinstatedWhat I don't want: 1. Dennis Taylor talking about the black ball finish for the 8793rd time.

2. Ken Doherty extolling the virtues of rock climbing in Sheffield.
3. An interview with 'Whispering' Ted Lowe who's even more boring now than he was in the Eighties.
4. Trick shots from Magic Mike and the amazing Bogdan.
5. Hazel Irvine in a curtain-shaped dress

**GRAPHIC:** CORRIE STAR: Ian McKellen**LOAD-DATE:** May 7, 2005

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PC-01109

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Copyright 2005 Scottish Daily Record & Sunday Mail Ltd.  
Daily Record

May 7, 2005, Saturday

**SECTION:** FEATURES; Pg. 32, 33**LENGTH:** 1214 words**HEADLINE:** MY LUST HAS BEEN SATISFIED AT LAST.. BY SCOTLAND;  
CASANOVA STAR LAURA IS HEADING FOR HOMES HEADING FOR HOME**BYLINE:** By Paul English**BODY:**

SHE turned her back on her hometown in search of acting fame, setting up a new life in London, New York and rural Ireland.

But now sultry Glaswegian actress Laura Fraser has satisfied her wanderlust - and wants to come home.

The 29 year old, who melted the heart of Casanova as the unattainable Henriette in the recent BBC three-parter, reckons she's finally found what she's looking for.

And it's right here.

Last year saw her leave New York for Ireland to renovate a dilapidated cottage into a cosy love nest in the remote outskirts of Cork with her actor husband Karl Geary.

But despite the idyllic lifestyle, Laura - who stars as a sexually charged cop in BBC2 drama Conviction tonight - is back in her native city searching for a place she can finally call home.

'I can't believe I've had to move to so many places before realising that I want to be back here,' said the actress, nursing a cappuccino in the sun outside Glasgow's Oran Mor.

'I think I've wanted to be in Glasgow for ages, but maybe didn't know it. It's stupid. I love the place, and I realise that now.

'You move to somewhere like New York and it's bigger but more or less just the same as any big city, only without all your friends and family.

'But we have been living in Ireland for the past year, and when I was visiting home recently I thought 'I want to live here again!'

Laura left the city at the end of the Nineties and headed for the bright lights of London after her career was given a jump start by Peter Mullan, who cast her in the short film Good Day For The Bad Guys.

Having controversially turned her back on a place at the city's Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, she went on to win a raunchy role opposite Leonardo Di Caprio in The Man in the Iron Mask as well as starring opposite Heath Ledger in A Knight's Tale and Tom Cruise in Vanilla Sky.

Her time in the capital has been well documented with florid reports of her hedonistic lifestyle, sharing a flat with ex-Brookside star Anna Friel, leading to her being dubbed a wild child. These days Laura won't discuss the excesses of her early 20s, saying: 'It bores me to oblivion. It was just about trying to find your place in the world, and just going crazy. There are so many different reasons.'

Indeed, she's rumoured to have given up alcohol completely, but won't confirm it.

Daily Record, May 7, 2005

'I don't even want to go there,' she said. 'I don't even want to talk about that stuff.'

Despite rubbing shoulders on screen with a host of A-listers, Laura fell for relative unknown Dubliner Karl Geary on the set of 2003 flick Coney Island Baby.

The couple wed that year and set up home in Manhattan, before Karl took his bride back to the Emerald Isle.

A life immersed in rugged countryside and awesome natural beauty might sound ideal to many, but soon Laura felt isolated.

'I like it there, but it's impractical,' she said. 'I like to have my family and friends close by, and when Karl goes away for work I don't want to be stuck there on my own, half an hour from anywhere.'

'Cork's the big smoke and even then it's two hours away.'

Karl, currently in New York to promote his new film Satellite, seems destined to join his wife in Glasgow.

Laura said: 'I think I've found a place, I've been looking around the west end. I'd have liked him to be here with me, but that's just the way it is in this business. It sucks, him being away.'

'I miss him, but it makes you appreciate each other more.'

That said, when you're stuck in a field in the middle of Ireland it can be a test of your spontaneity as the pair discovered.

Laura said: 'We had no stimulation, we were there in the countryside, and had nothing to say to each other.'

'At times it was like: 'What did you think about the sheep today...?'' But the challenging environment gave the city girl a closer appreciation of the changing seasons.

She said: 'Every day you can see spring a little bit more. You can be really in touch with the seasons, and you can see the moon travelling across the sky. I love it! THE duo have several films in the offing - and with that comes the sort of financial security many can only dream about - so the pair intend to keep their rustic bolt-hole.'

'It's more or less finished, we've worked on it constantly over the last year, and it's been a bit of a moneypit,' said Laura.

'But it would be nice to keep it as a holiday home. We've lived there a lot, but I think if I stayed there any longer I would end up becoming a vegetarian.'

'We have lambs in the field in front of the house, and when I look at them now ... I just can't even think about it.'

'The idea of eating those little things is just ridiculous.'

Despite her successful track record, Laura is confident that a return to her hometown won't make her a big fish in a small pond.

She said: 'Glasgow is full of actors.'

Besides, I will have to reacquaint myself with the place now. It's changed a bit since I have been away. Laura's a fan of the city's trendy Buff Club, and has heard good things about Vegas at the Renfrew Ferry.

But as well as frequenting watering holes, Laura and Karl - who owns a bar as well as a nursery in New York - are considering opening a bar in the city.

'We'll get the flat sorted out first though. Karl's great on the business side of things. He's such a cool guy,' Laura said.

In Conviction, Laura plays Lucy Romanis, a police officer who gets romantically involved with an informer.

She admits to being 'uncomfortable' filming intimate scenes, but squirms even more when she has to watch her husband in a clinch with someone else.

'It's hideous,' she said. 'In Satellite he has four sex scenes with this cute French girl. I refused to watch it. Then I felt really ungenerous, so I have now agreed to see a video of it.'

'But I know I'll spend time beating myself up when he's not around by watching it and convincing myself that he

Daily Record, May 7, 2005

enjoyed it.'

Karl has also written a film script which both of them are set to act in.

Laura said: 'It's about a guy in a funeral parlour who has been institutionalised.

There's a love story in there, too.'

Before that, she'll appear on the big screen alongside Donald Sutherland and Ralph Fiennes in Land of The Blind, where she'll play Fiennes' pregnant wife.

'It was a great part, I loved it,' she said. 'It's a brilliant mish mash of politically surreal ideas.'

After that she's scheduled to star as a lesbian in Dear Frankie director Andrea Gibb's latest project, Nina's Heavenly Delights.

'I play a character who falls in love with a girl she runs an Indian restaurant with,' said Laura, who snogged Helen Baxendale in 1997's army drama The Investigator.

'It's all about revealing secrets to your family. It's a beautiful script and the love scenes will be really subtle, not explicit.

'I don't have a problem snogging another girl. It's easier than snogging guys. They smell better for one thing.'

Better still, she gets to work from home. 'New Yorkers always get to see films shot in the place they come from,' she said.

'It's lovely to see a film shot where you live. So I'm really looking forward to filming in Glasgow again.'

# Laura stars in Conviction on BBC2 at 9.25pm tonight

**GRAPHIC: SEXY ROLE:** In The Man in the Iron Mask; **SUSPICIOUS MINDS:** Laura, far right, returns to our screens tonight in Conviction; **HEART BEAT:** Laura, right, won over Casanova on the BBC recently, a series which also starred; Nina Sosanya and David Tennant.

**LOAD-DATE:** May 7, 2005

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THE DAILY TELEGRAPH(LONDON)

May 07, 2005, Saturday

**SECTION:** Features; News review on Saturday Pg. 017**LENGTH:** 2679 words**HEADLINE:** How a puritan took to Vegas Sukhdev Sandhu, who has never even bought a lottery ticket or scratchcard, had always regarded the US gambling capital as a spiritual Armageddon. But could there be more to the desert city than bright lights and slot machines?**BYLINE:** by Sukhdev Sandhu**BODY:**

Las Vegas is a city that tries to cheat history. This strange UFO of a settlement, looming up like a lunar colony in the vast and forbidding dryness of southern Nevada, its main source of industry being the manufacture of human desire, has been likened to an aging prostitute who lacquers herself in gaudy make-up to hide the ravages of time.

Its casino owners long ago abolished clocks so that punters, mesmerised by the glint and click of the spinning roulette wheel, would lose all sense of night or day and fritter away every cent of their mortgage money.

It comes as a surprise, then, to learn that Vegas is celebrating its 100th anniversary. Successive generations of Native Americans, Mormon missionaries and have-a-go prospectors had lived in the area well before the start of the twentieth century. But it was in 1905 that a Montana senator, William Clark, auctioned 110 acres belonging to his railroad, and in so doing triggered decades of fevered real-estate speculation and property-investment mania.

Traditionally, Vegas has been a city where the codes and regulations that governed the rest of America did not apply: warring couples moved there knowing that within six weeks, they'd be granted a quickie divorce; itchy-fingered guys hungry for a wager came because gambling was prohibited everywhere else.

Now, there are casinos in 47 other states - the two biggest in that hive of immorality, Connecticut. And now, as anyone who's passed an advertising billboard will know full well, there is the growing popularity of on-line gambling that, according to more doomy analysts, threatens to stop Vegas's long-term expansion.

That scenario may appal fans of the city who head there for stag nights, lads' dos, and end-of-the-century blow-outs. It may sadden those aficionados who love its Rat Pack mythology and airbrushed Ocean's Eleven mystique.

Not me, though. I'm a Puritan at heart, an old-school Roundhead who has never bought a lottery ticket or scratchcard, prefers faded ironmonger signs in declining provincial towns to the visual blare of neon and wouldn't know a Hummer if it ran me over.

Vegas is a place that I've always regarded as a spiritual Armageddon, an infernal sea of tack whose popularity among regular tourists and irony-lovers is a symptom of cultural exhaustion. But prejudices, especially pompous ones, need to be confronted rather than clung to. And so it is that I take up an offer from [www.888.com](http://www.888.com), one of a number of companies duking it out for ascendancy of the on-line gaming market, to go to Vegas and try to embrace the casino universe.

It doesn't take long to realise that it's not gambling but hotels that are the key to its recent success. Nine of the 10 largest in the United States are in the city. Steve Wynn, a casino owner with a degenerative eye disease and a damning Scotland Yard report in his past, is widely credited with kick-starting Vegas's recent prosperity when, in 1989, he created - at a cost of \$620 million - the 30-storey, 3,000-room Mirage Hotel along the strip. At the time, it was seen as a huge gamble: there simply weren't enough high-rollers and big spenders to subsidise such an enterprise.

But Wynn, banking everything on the fact that increased policing has pretty much run the "mob" out of town and on the idea that Vegas could be rebranded as a tourist resort, made the Mirage a reality. His hotel features a five-acre lagoon,

a tropical rain forest, a fire-spewing volcano, white tigers. Its gift stores still sell sweatshirts of the illusionists Siegfried and Roy, the ultra-camp Bavarian double act that attracted huge audiences until Roy was gored by a tiger last year.

Conferences are where the money is. During the dead days of Sunday to Thursday, there are regular invasions of IT experts, banking execs, college professors sporting Yo La Tengo T-shirts. At night, they'll check out the \$100-ticket Ultimate Wrestling shows, Celine Dion concerts and avant-garde theatrics of Cirque du Soleil. Whatever your cultural poison, the hoteliers are out to second-guess and cater to it.

The result is that Vegas is booming as never before. Since 1960, its population has risen from 75,000 to 1.5 million. It's the fastest-growing city in America.

Vegas has always been a city of outsiders, a last-chance saloon for fugitives and desperadoes. Now, it's changed, probably for ever. I talk to Char Cruze, a calligrapher who began her career creating the neon signs outside the old gambling joints. Most have been taken down or replaced by computer-font designs and LED screens.

Char is half-Native American, from a family that settled here in 1855. When she talks about the city to the out-of-towners who go on her guided tours, it's hard for her not to mention ghosts. "Vegas used to be a stop-over place," she tells me. "It wasn't a destination. You'd be offered great food, a good night's sleep, a little gambling. There were few tourists. The mob were into jazz and brought Billie Holliday, Count Basie and Nat King Cole here for their own entertainment. You could go backstage and talk to the performers. These days, it's all red carpet and white gloves. What is there to entice me now?"

Gambling? That's why I'm here, being given a master class in poker by Mike Schichtman. Born in the Bronx, he ran a small casino for many years, was a consultant for the Ed Norton movie Rounders (1998), and won enough at the poker table to pay for his kids' university education. He's a fascinating guy, with beautifully manicured fingernails, and infinite patience when it comes to explaining why a straight is better than three of a kind.

The dealer, Nikki Geiger, is also from New York. A former player, she ran up huge debts before winding up at Gamblers Anonymous. Vegas was still in her blood, and now she's choreographing the night's entertainment for rubes like me. What, I ask her grandly, has she learned about humanity from working in Vegas? "It's ugly. These men - they're lonely. They play for hours on their own and the only women they know, they pay for. Strippers and dancers and hookers. A lot of men - when they lose, they're really nasty and curse and throw their chips at you. I tell my daughter that any time she's thinking of marrying some guy, she has to bring him to a table so that I can see him play."

Poker is a front. A jazzy mood-setter for the biggest source of casino revenue: the slot machines. They don't need toilet breaks or go on strike. They sit there, ching-chinging and sputtering out tinny Kraftwerk electro-melodies. Older women, in particular, seem to love them, tapping and poking them as they might their deaf husbands. They're everywhere, all along the route that takes hotel guests from check-in to bedrooms, besides the restaurant tables, even in the toilets.

The slot machines nearest to public thoroughfares are programmed to pay out more money than those at the end of aisles. It's just one of the many psychological tricks the casino bosses use to get punters to keep on spending: excluding windows and telephones to ward off the outside world, making exit signs hard to find, pumping pure oxygen to stop gamblers nodding off.

After a while, the gulf between night and day, foreign and local, past and present, casino and city simply collapses. Past and future implode: all that matters is the "now moment" when you feed the slots or hand over your chips.

Yet it feels churlish to feel churlish about the city. It so wants you to be fed, squeezed, amused. Each restaurant meal comes super-supersize; the nightly left-overs at the superbuffet halls are Euro-mountain wasteful.

Anyone who tries to walk off their gastro-satiety by strolling down the city's main strip will come across heaps of porno-freesheets in which hookers, despite prostitution being illegal, market themselves not on their looks or cost, but on the speed at which they can get to your hotel rooms. Pity those who can only do 45 minutes: the standard rate is down to 20 minutes.

Strolling is hard. The 86-degree glare of the desert sun is brutal, and Vegas is fast becoming an autopia where cars rather than pedestrians rule the streets which, in any case, career off at odd angles every few yards in order to accommodate hotels' architectural conceits. A riot of signs on the billboards is a furious mix-and-match of leisure come-ons: "Meet Nicky Hilton", "Monet", "Cold Beer", "Dirty Girls", "Exploding Volcanoes", "Ultimate Arm Wrestling II".

Art, commerce, catastrophe. High culture, low culture. What's the difference? Shuffle the deck, reverse the order: it's all interchangeable. Size is all that matters.

Vegas is a strikingly white place, apart from the Hispanic construction workers and those in the service sector. Casino bosses, hankering after Disneyland's international vibe, get their staff to wear name tags that list where they came from: Wassana, standing behind the prawn platters in the restaurant, is from Thailand; Geoffrey, serving Gatorade at 3am, is from Kenya.

Most tourists, however, are Americans who are too scared or disinterested to travel abroad. Or even to the East Coast: one of the hotels is a ghastly simulation called New York New York.

Fear has been in the air since it emerged that some of the 9/11 hijackers had met and plotted in Vegas. (It's gone down in lapdancer lore that the Islamic fundamentalists were poor tipsters.) Tourism officials believe that American foreign policy in the Middle East and President Bush's isolationist rhetoric has put off foreigners from travelling to a city that relies on its reputation for hospitality.

It used to be said that the last place you should commit a crime was a casino. Old-timers grew up more scared of the godfather than of God, knowing that they'd be pulped or shot if they were caught by undercover staff or security cameras trying to cheat.

The Sin City of the popular imagination has become a giant theme park, but surveillance is still big news: mini-cams are planted on every block and in every bus and taxi. Cops are taught to view all vehicles as potential weapons, each maintenance worker as a would-be terrorist.

Bombs haunt Vegas's history. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, atomic weapons were tested in the Nevada Desert. Hotel owners would hold themed parties on roof-tops from which guests, wearing shades and sipping specially created "nuclear cocktails", would watch mushroom clouds bloom across the dawn horizon.

Char Cruze recalls that she and her classmates were excused lessons by their schoolteacher and taken out to Mount Charleston to enjoy the sublime spectacles in their own back yard. "You should get a video tape and plug my head into a computer." Both her father - a roadbuilder - and her aunt died of leukaemia as a result of the nuclear tests. "The government tried to hide the damage, until they finally paid \$50k as bounty for the dead relatives. I told them: 'I don't need your filthy money to compensate for my dead father'."

I talk to Bo Bernhard, Harvard-educated director of gambling research at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. His family have been in the city since his great-great grandfather, Kid Jordan, chased out of Texas for being involved in illegal casinos, washed up in the one place where gambling wasn't a crime.

He believes that his family and Vegas have become equally respectable. "My mum wasn't a showgirl or my father a mobster. I led a normal life, going to church."

Bernhard is much in demand around the world, travelling to every continent to advise governments on how to tackle gambling addiction. As such, he's in a good position to judge how the city is doing today. "Vegas used to be the Australia of the United States: it was where we sent the derelicts and the convicts. But from this background, we've seen emerge one of the world's biggest post-industrial cities. "People say that they want to live in real cities, but they forget that the last few decades have seen a shift as large as that from the rural, pre-industrial world to the industrial age. That led to horrendous uproar and laments about all that was being lost, and how cities were dirty and full of crime. "The same kinds of laments are heard about Vegas. We need to use modernist lenses. At the moment, most people who write about it are using yesterday's lenses to look at tomorrow's world."

Back in the present day, and I'm sitting at a poker table inside the Mirage, waiting for my tournament to begin. I have my gambling chips in hand, and I'm ready to rumble. I've read the tip-sheets and poker manuals, and memorised Mike's key tip: fold if you have a weak hand.

But it's mighty hard to maintain such self-control if you're not a pro. Especially in Vegas, where the whole mythology of the place means that you feel that you really ought to go on a reckless splurge and damn the consequences.

The night draws on and the pain of always folding is beginning to wear me down. It must be my core Puritanism, my inability to believe that a pack of cards has anything to do with real gambling.

The great attraction of poker, it seems to me, is that it offers a controlled and rule-bound retreat from the even greater

risks and vagaries of everyday life. I stick to my parsimonious ways, but keep nodding off at the table, in spite of the free vodka that an aged waitress in a short skirt brings round. How lame.

By 2am, I'm beginning to feel strangely melancholic. That's the thing about fun: too much of it really gets you down. It's no surprise that one of the best books about Vegas, *The Biggest Game In Town* (1983), was written by Al Alvarez, whose other books include studies of suicide and of night-time.

I get a cab to the edge of the city. Here the lights glow less bright. Darkness has its place. Loneliness seems natural rather than an act of bad faith.

I wander through the rundown parade of cheap Cuban restaurants, laundromats, bail bond centres, watching hustlers play cat-and-mouse with undercover cops. A black guy appears from nowhere and asks for money. "I've only got a few quarters," I say, reaching into my pocket. "No problem," he replies, "I can show you to the ATM."

In Vegas, even the hobos play for high stakes. And maybe it's that spirit of optimistic, desperate chance-taking that makes the city so seductive and so successful. Right now, it seems hell-bent on a crazy end-game strategy: water levels have shrunk by 400 feet in recent decades, yet new golf courses and fountain-follies keep springing up.

Experts suspect that the number of hotels has hit market saturation, but Steve Wynn has just opened another costing \$2 billion. The place has expanded to the point that it's almost bouncing off the local mountains. What does Vegas care - it is its own ecosystem.

That's why, even to a churl like me, it has the dizzying, exhilarating dynamism of Dubai, Shanghai, Singapore - futuristic places that so enthral wild architects and libertarian urban planners. It wasn't Old World qualities of pragmatism and proportion that helped America to become a superpower.

Vegas isn't London or New York or Paris: it doesn't cling to the past or pump its energies into regentrification. It doesn't pay lip service to a history that its social and economic policies viciously trample down.

Gambling is becoming increasingly virtual and immaterial. It's drifting towards cyberspace and off-shore tax havens such as Jersey and Antigua. Pessimists warn that Vegas may need to rely on Lady Luck to survive long-term. I'm not so sure.

For all the spangling, pixellated, bling fantasias it creates, it has its own brutal logic. It represents capitalism with its gloves off, and is so ruthlessly devoted to offering the 24-7 pleasure dome that its drive-by wedding chapels come equipped with mechanical confetti-throwing arms.

Forget irony: Vegas is deadly serious. It is - deliriously, terrifyingly - for real.

Sukhdev Sandhu was given poker lessons courtesy of 888.com, currently the world's largest online casino and poker room

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Daily Record

May 7, 2005, Saturday

**SECTION:** FEATURES; Pg. 15**LENGTH:** 329 words**HEADLINE:** JOHN MCKIE: SOAP-OF-THE-YEAR AWARD PLOT HAS NO MYSTERY**BYLINE:** John Mckie**BODY:**

CORONATION Street has been in top form this year, with Lord of the Rings star Sir Ian McKellen this week making a hilarious cameo appearance.

Meanwhile, EastEnders are struggling to wrest pinball-eyed Ross Kemp from SAS drivel Ultimate Farce.

Wonder which one will win Best Show at tonight's Soap Awards - the suspense is killing me.

#AFTER a year's military training, Prince Harry is planning to attend the Sandhurst passing-out ball.

Given his reputation, I wonder why the ceremony has that name#HORRIBLE to read that parts of the Kakadu National Park have been closed to the public after an increase in crocodile attacks. Well, it's about time they stopped picking on the poor crocs, then# UNBELIEVABLE. Seven whole days, and no demands from Hibs that they be allowed to play in the English Premiership#THE bicycle has been voted the most significant technological invention since 1800. Having seen Loose Women, I'd like to vote instead for the mute button#PARIS Hilton's new movie is called Pledge. She'll be advertising it soon. #LAST Saturday's Dr Who, with Billie Piper meeting a Dalek, was fascinating.

Especially with its shock ending - she didn't run off to Vegas to marry him. #THE schedulers at Channel 4 have a cruel sense of humour. On Monday night, they followed Nicola Sturgeon and the SNP's party political broadcast with Human Mutants#WHAT I want from the World Snooker Championship interval: 1. Funnies set to The Entertainer. 2. The shot of the championship. 3. Alex Higgins' 69 break against Jimmy White from the 1982 semi-final. 4. Dougie Donnelly reinstatedWhat I don't want: 1. Dennis Taylor talking about the black ball finish for the 8793rd time.

2. Ken Doherty extolling the virtues of rock climbing in Sheffield.

3. An interview with 'Whispering' Ted Lowe who's even more boring now than he was in the Eighties.

4. Trick shots from Magic Mike and the amazing Bogdan.

5. Hazel Irvine in a curtain-shaped dress

**GRAPHIC:** CORRIE STAR: Ian McKellen**LOAD-DATE:** May 7, 2005

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Copyright 2005 EXPRESS NEWSPAPERS  
The Express

May 7, 2005

SECTION: U.K. 1st Edition; COLUMNS; Pg. 94

LENGTH: 870 words

HEADLINE: PLUSH NEW BENTLEY WILL SPUR YOUR FANTASIES; MOTORING EDITED BY NAT BARNES

BYLINE: By Simon Hacker

**BODY:**

LET'S play fantasy motoring for a moment. You have a magic fuel pump in your garage, a wipeclean driving licence and a non-stick, ticketresistant windscreen. And your car? A Bentley Flying Spur, naturally. It drives like a dream, carries the family in style and has more breeding than Ladies' Day at Ascot.

The only fly in the automotive ointment is that this Great British machine was scrapped in 1957, so any surviving examples are a little care-worn. But despair not - if you have the necessary down-payment lurking in your wallet, Bentley is at last taking fresh orders. After a 48-year absence, the Flying Spur is back.

It's all thanks to Volkswagen, of course. With VW as its new paymaster, Bentley signalled a new direction two years ago with the launch of the Continental GT - a £115,000 two-door coupe with muscular lines, an even more muscular engine and, best of all, a price that put the exclusive badge well within reach of the merely rather than just filthy rich.

The Flying Spur marks the extension of this cunning strategy. For the same price as the GT this newcomer undercuts Bentley's cheapest alternative four-door, the Arnage, by a massive £36,000.

Which begs the question: is Bentley cutting its prices to spite its image?

Having invested £46million in new production at its Crewe factory and doubled the workforce, you can guess the maker's reply. What is obvious, though, is that the parents have been helping out. As under the GT's bonnet, the Spur is powered by the same 6.0-litre, 12-cylinder engine offered in Volkswagen's Phaeton, while all the wind tunnel and much of the testing work was carried out in Germany.

They may not be the only German operations, either. If the Flying Spur is too successful, rumours abound that large parts, or possibly all, of this new model will be built in Germany.

But never fear - once you climb into the Spur's driving throne, feast on all the delicious wood and chrome and slide the weighty gear selector to "drive", it is obvious that this is an unquestionably British motor.

Like a classic brogue polished to such a military finish that you can see your face in it, the Spur is so perfect in every tiny detail that you would expect pedestrians to at least salute, if not stand to attention.

While such rivals as Maserati's Quattroporte and Mercedes-Benz's S Class limousine are crafted, the Bentley is manicured. Think Hollywood, not Vegas - the mood being lavish, not glitzy. Some supersaloons content themselves with incorporating the hides of two, maybe three cows. The Spur's cavernous cabin, including all the seating and the entire roof lining, demands a full dozen.

Thanks to a new laser cutting process, the burr walnut on the door panelling is moulded into elaborate curves that were previously impossible. Not only does it all look perfect but when you are under way the whole cabin never once makes the slightest squeak. The reason?

Wherever two leather surfaces touch, the designers substituted squeaky leather for muted suede.

THE performance only reinforces the seenbut-not-heard theme.

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PC-01121

When set to the sportiest ride setting (there are four, from car chase to marshmallow), your fingertips will know every pock mark in the road, but your buttocks stay blissfully unaware. In fact, progress is so creamy and silent that it is not until you wake the engine with a gentle flex that the show begins - the bodywork tensing as all those cylinders snarl into life.

At nearly 17 dft long this is no Vauxhall Vectra but it is a serious bid by Bentley to make the world's fastest saloon car. Tuned to reach a top speed of 195mph, it will blast past 60mph in well under five seconds and begins to feel under any kind of strain only beyond 150mph. But at all speeds and on any bend the Spur is surgically precise, its four-wheel-drive system and some highly advanced antislip technology ensuring all the wheels stay exactly where they should be. For further reassurance, a barrage of eight airbags awaits.

So much for the chauffeur being spoilt - what of the passengers? The only significant choice here for the Spur is a £4,500 division which replaces the fifth, middle seat and allows for elbow room for the remaining two passengers. With or without this, if you are behind the front passenger a button allows you to also move their seat for extra leg room. But there is so much space there anyway (despite the huge boot) that it is hardly necessary to ask. All seating is designed to permeate hot or chilled air, the only conceivable disappointment being the lack of a drinks cabinet as standard.

Cutting down on booze, however, will at least help to keep pace with the fuel bills.

Are you sitting comfortably?

Even if you could afford the windscreen price, 14mpg would merit lifetime membership of Friends of the Earth. Apply your right foot with vigour and you will not see double figures.

But let us remember that the Spur's biggest market is the US, where fuel is free - or just about. And you cannot help feeling a flush of pride at the inevitable raptures caused by this car's reception over there. Maybe Bentley's flag flyer will even spawn a new buzzword: Spurflection.

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Fort Collins Coloradoan (Colorado)

May 7, 2005 Saturday

**SECTION:** LOCAL; Pg. 2B

**LENGTH:** 170 words

**HEADLINE:** PVH benefit tonight at Equine Center

**BODY:**

Poudre Valley Hospital Foundation expects to raise \$150,000 tonight at its 26th annual spring benefit at the Colorado State University Equine Center.

The money will be used for such projects as a new cancer treatment and research center; a program that provides orthotic prostheses for children; and a multimillion-dollar campaign to raise funds to support the Children's Clinic.

About 1,000 people are expected for a Viva Las Vegas night.

The Equine Center will be transformed into a Vegas hotel lobby. There will be a live auction and a Vegas-style drive-through wedding chapel where people can participate in mock weddings performed by "Elvis."

Elvis will be portrayed by Dennis Houska, sponsor of the annual "Houska Houska," a run to raise funds for the bone-marrow donation program.

Last summer Houska went on a nationwide bicycle ride to raise awareness about the need for people to donate blood; he also was a bone marrow donor, saving the life of a boy.

The benefit runs from 6 p.m. to midnight.

**LOAD-DATE:** May 10, 2005

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Copyright 2005 DR Partners d/b Las Vegas Review-Journal  
Las Vegas Review-Journal (Nevada)

May 7, 2005 Saturday FINAL EDITION

**SECTION:** A; Pg. 1A**LENGTH:** 1130 words**HEADLINE:** Las Vegas' baseball odds improve**BYLINE:** J.M. Kalil**BODY:**

The Florida Legislature's scuttling of a proposal to help fund a new stadium for the Florida Marlins puts the team in play for relocation and boosts Las Vegas' chance of bringing the franchise here, national experts said Friday.

'This definitely enhances Vegas' shot at getting a baseball team sooner rather than later,' said Marc Ganis, president of Chicago-based SportsCorp Ltd.

A \$60 million state tax rebate sought to help build the Marlins a new \$420 million retractable-roof ballpark passed the Florida House last week. But the plan was dead in the water after Florida Senate President Tom Lee declined to bring the measure to a vote Friday, the final day of the legislative session.

The Marlins released a statement shortly after the Legislature adjourned late Friday night. The team expressed its disappointment and said it would evaluate all its options.

Without a stadium financing commitment by the end of the session, Marlins owner Jeffrey Loria is now free to explore relocating. Experts say there is little doubt where the focus of Loria's interest is, considering he sent two team executives here last year to meet with Mayor Oscar Goodman and other local officials and talk about Las Vegas and baseball.

'There are very few viable markets, and Vegas is the strongest potential market for a baseball team,' said Ganis, the consultant who helped move both the St. Louis Rams and the Oakland Raiders out of Los Angeles. 'If (Loria's) got to look outside of Florida, Vegas is the natural place.'

In Tallahassee for the legislative session, officials from the city of Miami and Miami-Dade County said they would try to salvage a deal next week, but offered no specifics for proceeding after their lobbying efforts failed at the Legislature.

'When I get back into town, everyone will convene and we'll look at our options,' Miami Mayor Manny Diaz told the Miami Herald for today's edition.

'I'm willing to meet with anybody and everybody,' Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Alvarez told the Herald.

Goodman said Friday he is following developments in Florida, but was tight-lipped when asked if he would be contacting Marlins executives to lobby them about relocation.

Marlins Vice Chairman Joel Mael, the team's No. 2 executive, and P.J. Loyello, vice president of communication and broadcasting for the team, flew to Las Vegas in December and met with Goodman, City Councilman Larry Brown and Rossi Ralenkotter, president and chief executive officer of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority.

The executives explained they were barred from talking about relocation, but asked many questions about the city's interest in luring a franchise and questioned the city officials about Las Vegas demographics.

'I will say I've not spoken to them in the last week,' Goodman said Friday. 'Las Vegas is interested in any team if they're desirous of relocating.'

Brown said regardless of whether the Marlins relocate, it is the perfect time for Las Vegas to speak to franchises interested in coming here. He pointed out that the city is in the final two months of a six-month negotiating period with

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New York City-based The Related Cos.

The city and Related are attempting to ink a development deal for Union Park, the 61-acre parcel downtown where city officials have set aside 18.7 acres for a proposed baseball stadium near a new City Hall, a performing arts center and other amenities.

'From a timing perspective, we have the master plan being finalized on the 61 acres, so certainly for any serious baseball consideration the timing's right to open talks,' Brown said.

Smith College economics professor Andrew Zimbalist, author of the 2003 book 'May the Best Team Win: Baseball Economics and Public Policy,' said while the developments in Florida favor Las Vegas' baseball dreams, there is still a major stumbling block.

'Las Vegas is an attractive city because of its present size and because it's growing so rapidly, but the difficulty right now is it doesn't have a very big media market because it's in the middle of the desert with nothing around it,' said Zimbalist, a biweekly commentator on the business of sports for National Public Radio.

'Television generates a very substantial chunk of the revenue, so there's going to have to be some creativity from Mayor Goodman and any potential owners as they undertake the challenge of finding a way to generate replacement revenue sources to make up for the weakness of the TV market.'

Zimbalist said while league officials are currently skittish about gambling, he expects this will be relaxed in the future, creating possible revenue streams for the stadium.

'You could have little areas of the ballpark, bars where people are betting on the game, either on the outcome of the game or innings or even pitches,' Zimbalist said. 'You can just imagine electronic betting machines around the park. Would (the league) allow that immediately? No, but would baseball eventually allow it? Probably.'

City officials have not revealed how a 40,000-seat baseball stadium that would likely cost upwards of \$500 million will be financed, but have acknowledged this is part of their negotiations with Related.

Goodman has repeatedly said 'taxpayers won't be taken advantage of' and has mentioned there might be financing options in which the public pays little or nothing to build a stadium. He has declined to elaborate on how this might be possible.

On Friday, he said if a public-private partnership finances the stadium, the public portion might only be the publicly owned land set aside for the stadium site.

'I'm confident that once we get a phone call from a team that wants to relocate, we can get a conversation going on how to finance it,' Goodman said Friday.

Brown said because the city has spending priorities far more crucial than baseball, any funding plan is going to be unique to ensure the city's commitment to public safety and services is not impacted.

'There's so many other priorities here from a public-need standpoint,' Brown said. 'We're going to have to get very creative with the financing. It's going to have to be a scenario that has not been done before.'

#### ANGLING FOR MARLINS

City officials have set aside 18.7 acres at the north end of the 61-acre Union Park site downtown for a proposed Major League Baseball stadium. City Manager Doug Selby said Friday that plans call for only limited parking at the stadium, with the majority of visitors parking at other lots at Union Park or downtown. This strategy is too ensure that is foot traffic for new businesses at Union Park. 'With dispersed parking, people will be walking past restaurants and shops to get to the stadium,' Selby said.

SOURCE: City of Las Vegas

REVIEW-JOURNAL

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Copyright 2005 DR Partners d/b Las Vegas Review-Journal  
Las Vegas Review-Journal (Nevada)

May 7, 2005 Saturday FINAL EDITION

**SECTION:** A; Pg. 3A

**LENGTH:** 593 words

**HEADLINE:** LV celebration takes to skies

**BYLINE:** Norm Clarke

**BODY:**

Take a long look at today's Centennial Air Parade, a flyover of the Strip featuring more than 20 planes.

Organizers say it's probably a one-time-only event, primarily because of airspace concerns of the Federal Aviation Administration.

The 10 a.m. flyover marks the 85th anniversary of the first passenger flight to Las Vegas.

'That's restricted airspace,' said Dan Stark, corporate director of marketing for Boyd Gaming. The FAA 'gave us waivers for the airspace and low-level flights,' he said.

The aerial lineup includes two Navy F/A-18 Hornets, a DC-3 that participated in D-Day, a B-25 Mitchell medium-range bomber that was a cousin of those used in Jimmy Doolittle's bombing raids on Tokyo, and World War II Stearman biplanes.

On May 7, 1920, Randall Henderson, a World War I pilot and barnstormer, was the first person to fly into Las Vegas, after a short hop from Blythe, Calif. He landed in his WWI surplus Curtiss JN-4H 'Jenny' two-seat pilot trainer. He touched down at a desert roadhouse near the Los Angeles Highway, now known as the Strip.

'It's only appropriate that (the) first airplane that landed in Vegas had a paying passenger because we're such a tourism-dependent town,' Stark said.

If you can't make it down to the Strip, KQOL-FM, 93.1 is broadcasting the event, with Gordon Bowman-Jones and Rik McNeil calling the action. Bowman-Jones is the world's foremost air show announcer.

Mamma mia!

Ellen DeGeneres' promised surprise turned out to be a Las Vegas Mother's Day getaway.

More than 100 moms who were in DeGeneres' TV audience were surprised with a trip to Las Vegas on Friday to see Celine Dion's show at Caesars Palace and meet the headliner.

Also included in the trip: accommodations at Caesars and meals at Wolfgang Puck's Spago, Bobby Flay's Mesa Grill and Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville before returning today.

The Scene and Heard

Fox News is broadcasting live for two hours today from Wynn Las Vegas during the 'Fox and Friends' morning show.

...

Roy Horn, receiving a standing ovation Friday at the Nevada Woman luncheon at Wynn Las Vegas honoring Lynette Chappell, the 'Evil Queen' in Siegfried & Roy's show. Horn appeared to walk unassisted, with Siegfried Fischbacher at his side, but it was an illusion, I'm told. ...

Holsum Bread Factory was misspelled in Friday's column item about Heart & Soul, the new art gallery located in the Holsum Lofts.

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### Sightings

George Clooney spotted at Green Valley Ranch on his 44th birthday with pal Rande Gerber. ... Harry Connick Jr., with Steve and Elaine Wynn at the private opening Thursday of Lure ultra-lounge at Wynn Las Vegas. Models wearing gowns from Outfit, the hotel's high-end women's store, wore close to \$30 million in Graff diamonds in front of a local who's-who crowd. 'There was more security than guests,' said a spy witness. Tonight, a private function featuring a red-carpet celebfest is scheduled to showcase the Wynn's main nightclub, La Bete. ... NBA great Willis Reed, New Orleans Hornets' vice president of basketball operations, in a group Thursday of Hornets' execs, including general manager Allan Bristow, at N9NE Steak House (Palms). Friday, Bristow was spotted swimming laps at the Palms' Skin pool in a blue cap and blue goggles. ... Jerry Lewis, dining at Piero's Italian Cuisine on Thursday night.

### The Punch Line

'This is what I love about California: We have an Austrian governor speaking broken English wishing us Happy Cinco de Mayo.' — Jay Leno

Norm Clarke can be reached at 383-0244 or [norm@reviewjournal.com](mailto:norm@reviewjournal.com).

**LOAD-DATE:** May 9, 2005

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The Mirror

May 7, 2005, Saturday

**SECTION:** 3 Star Edition; FEATURES; Pg. 52

**LENGTH:** 135 words

**HEADLINE:** TRAVEL: LAS VEGAS

**BODY:**

SURE things don't exist but it's a pretty safe bet that Las Vegas is going to celebrate its centenary in style this month.

Once a watering hole for gangsters, the world's gambling capital is now a Disney-like playground for grown-ups.

Various commemorative events are taking place throughout May, including 100 vintage aircraft flying over the Vegas strip and the cutting of the world's largest birthday cake. You can catch the atmosphere with a four-night break from [ebookers.com](http://ebookers.com) from just £579 per person.

This includes direct return flights from Heathrow with Delta Airlines and accommodation at the Luxor Hotel, on the main strip at the heart of the action.

Departures until May 25 but must be booked by May 20. For further information call 0870 814 6016 or visit [www.ebookers.com](http://www.ebookers.com)

**LOAD-DATE:** May 7, 2005

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Copyright 2005 MGN Ltd.  
The Mirror

May 7, 2005, Saturday

**SECTION:** 3 Star Edition; SPORT; Pg. 66

**LENGTH:** 441 words

**HEADLINE:** BARRY MCGUIGAN: YOU ARE A GREAT FIGHTER JOE... YOU JUST NEED THAT GREAT FIGHT

**BYLINE:** BARRY MCGUIGAN

**HIGHLIGHT:**

**ALL OVER:** Calzaghe stops Veit; **STEP IT UP:** Joe Calzaghe must move up a weight to hit the big time

**BODY:**

JOE CALZAGHE has less to fear from German Mario Veit than his obsession with the WBO super-middleweight belt.

By defending yet again a title he has held for the past seven years, he is actually damaging his prospects at this advanced stage in his career, not enhancing them.

I'm surprised he chose to go to Germany in the first place. There is little merit in fighting again a man who lasted 112 seconds the first time.

Joe has nothing to prove at the weight. The story for him should have moved on a year ago. There is talk of a unification bout against either Jeff Lacy or Robin Reid, who meet later this summer to contest the IBF super-middleweight title.

My advice to Joe is "don't do it". Move up to light-heavyweight now while there is still time to make an impact.

How he must envy Clinton Woods, whose hard work and patience finally delivered the IBF light-heavyweight belt.

Woods has already told Joe to join the queue behind Antonio Tarver, Glen Johnson and Roy Jones Jnr.

This, of course, is the menu that Joe should be looking at. Instead he is treading water in Germany.

Worse than that, things could get awkward. On paper, Joe has a clear advantage. But in the reality of a German ring, surrounded by a partisan crowd, the potential for trouble is real.

Veit managed to stop Charles Brewer, a feat that proved beyond Calzaghe. We know that Joe struggles to make the weight and his hands are brittle.

The fact that Calzaghe's private life has settled down is in his favour. It cannot have been easy dealing with the break up of his marriage.

He has moved on in that respect and has a new partner. He should do the same in his professional life and break with the past.

The problem he has had is the lack of serious rivals. The big nights have escaped him. What would Muhammad Ali's career have been without Joe Frazier and George Foreman? Sugar Ray Leonard's without Tommy Hearns, Roberto Duran and Marvin Hagler?

Calzaghe is a great fighter. On occasions he has shown how exciting he can be. Getting off the floor to beat Byron Mitchell proved that. But he needs a great opponent to bring that out of him.

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The Mirror, May 7, 2005

Next weekend Felix Trinidad goes head-to-head with Ronald Winky Wright. What a fight that promises to be.

Next month Arturo Gatti takes on Floyd Mayweather Jnr and in Manchester our own Ricky Hatton squares off against Kostya Tsyzu. Fantastic fights, big occasions.

Compared to that, Calzaghe's trip to Germany looks like a night out in Blackpool when everyone else has gone to Vegas. Don't repeat the mistake, Joe. Make this your last fight at super-middleweight.

**LOAD-DATE:** May 7, 2005

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Copyright 2005 The Oregonian  
The Oregonian (Portland, Oregon)

May 7, 2005 Saturday  
SUNRISE EDITION

**SECTION:** LIVING; Pg. D01

**LENGTH:** 824 words

**HEADLINE:** RUNAWAY BRIDE, HMM? SOUNDS GOOD!

**BYLINE:** PAIGE PARKER - The Oregonian

**BODY:**

Summary: Love the wedding, hate the planning? This bride-to-be can relate

When I first saw a "before" photograph of missing bride-to-be Jennifer Wilbanks — bugged-out eyes, tight smile, panicked expression, I thought, "She's not missing. She's hiding."

Hiding from 600 guests, 28 attendants, the ice sculptures, the crab cakes and certainly from her mother, the woman we all think must be driving this Winnebago.

Days later, the infamous runaway bride from Duluth, Ga., was being escorted off a plane by police with a blanket over her head.

Was it absurd and dangerous, faking her own kidnapping, cutting off her hair and boarding a bus for Las Vegas with a ticket she'd bought a week earlier?

Absolutely. If Wilbanks really needed some "me" time, she could have turned off her cell phone and gotten a pedicure.

But I don't blame her one bit. In the words of Sheryl Crow: "Run baby, run baby, run baby, run." And let me buy you a pair of sneakers, Jennifer.

No woman should have to wrap 600 tiny wedding favors. Still, I can't help but wonder just what kind of wedding favors she chose. That's the next item I must check off my wedding to-do list. I'll be a bride myself in 55 days. Since I became engaged last fall, The List has occupied my evenings, weekends and, sometimes, the hours when I should be sleeping.

Every girl dreams of her wedding day.

Every woman secretly becomes fed up with planning it.

My to-do list comes from The Knot, a wedding Web site ([theknot.com](http://theknot.com)) that, among other things, offers a quiz to determine whether you are a bridezilla.

Sample query: Your mother-in-law tells you she's decided to wear ecru to the wedding.

My answer: I'd ask her why she'd ride a bird up the aisle. Bridezilla apparently would send her a scathing e-mail and demand color swatches.

Aside from such illuminating quizzes, The Knot offers a budget, a guest book manager, a weight-loss club . . . and The List.

The List is 184 items long. That's just a few shy of Hammurabi's Code.

Number 1: Begin envisioning your wedding: Formal hotel or friend's loft? Backyard barbecue or exotic beach?

Wilbanks should have envisioned Las Vegas here, not in the week before the wedding, when she was supposed to

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practice walking in her wedding shoes and prepare her thank-you toasts.

According to The Knot's calculus, buying a wedding dress requires several steps. First, figure out what style looks best on you. Second, try on some dresses. Yep, you gained a LOT of weight while you were dating. Falling in love means eating bread with dinner. They left out the step where your mother says the dress you want looks slutty, and you tell her she always loved your brother better.

The List, weirdly, reassured me. I bought a few bridal magazines, and my fiance and I set a date, booked a place, agreed on a budget and decided we'd leave the rest until after the holidays.

On Jan. 3 I pulled up The List and saw 15 lavender exclamation marks had appeared next to various items. I stared at them. I was a very bad bride-to-be.

My guests would starve or, worse, stay sober. None of the grandmas would dance. I'd have to throw a dandelion bouquet in someone's general direction and skulk away on foot to a roadside motel because we didn't have a caterer, booze, music, florist, getaway car or wedding night suite.

I told my fiance it was time for a wedding blitz. If we ticked off five major tasks every weekend for the rest of the month, we'd catch up. By the end of the first Saturday I was sobbing in the car and telling him that we first had to book a honeymoon because I was going to need one.

One bride I know stopped looking at The List because the lavender exclamation marks make her anxious. I can't stop looking. I call up The List daily. I have 66 items and two exclamation marks left.

Given the pressure, much of it self-imposed, every bride I know has experienced a meltdown. And so I assumed that The Knot message boards would have an outpouring of support for Wilbanks.

"I'd better be murdered or dead when I was found, or my dad would make sure I was dead," read one post.

So consider this my post. Clearly these brides haven't reached their low point, the one where they're filling 100 jars with honey to give away as gifts, and it's 100 degrees out, and they briefly forget that at the end of all of this they will be married and happy and lucky to have found someone who makes the bad days better.

My low point will come June 11, when a couple of friends help me pour the honey, which will look adorable in the little mason jars I've chosen.

After that day everything will be fine. We're deeply in love. Our families are supportive and helpful. And our wedding day will be beautiful, as long as it doesn't rain or get too hot, which reminds me that I need to call someone from the National Weather Service and check past meteorological events for early July.

Or maybe we should just price the tickets to Vegas instead.

Paige Parker: 503-221-8305; paigeparker@news.oregonian.com

**GRAPHIC:** Color photo by Associated Press

**LOAD-DATE:** May 8, 2005

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Copyright 2005 Plain Dealer Publishing Co.  
Plain Dealer (Cleveland)May 7, 2005 Saturday  
Final Edition; All Editions**SECTION:** ARTS & LIFE; Pg. 02**LENGTH:** 515 words**HEADLINE:** Only on eBay: Win a date with Carmen**BYLINE:** Chuck Yarborough, Plain Dealer Columnist**BODY:**

Who makes money on gambling? Well, consider this: An online casino, GoldenPalace.com, just paid \$244,000 for a used Volkswagen that may have belonged to Pope Benedict XVI. The same company handed a Canadian radio station \$5,001 for Britney Spears' positive pregnancy test. The Austin, Texas-based firm also paid a woman \$15,100 to name her newborn GoldenPalace.com. (I would love to be a fly on the wall when that kid's kindergarten teacher calls roll for the first time.) After all that, it seems sort of tame to know that Carmen Electra is using eBay to auction off . . . Carmen Electra. But at least her sale has an honorable side: Proceeds go to the National Prostate Cancer Coalition. Right now, bidding is up over \$21,000. The date includes airfare and hotel, but only guys 15 to 20 are eligible, which seems sort of weird to me, since Electra is 33. I believe that kind of cradle-robbing is illegal in 49 states. The sale ends at 5 p.m. today. Oh, and one other thing. I'm betting that her husband, rocker Dave Navarro, will chaperon, so don't get any ideas, mister!

Maybe it was "Time": The New York Post is reporting that Pink Floyd's Roger Waters has given longtime girlfriend Laurie Durning a diamond ring. A 20-carat diamond ring. A rock that size probably would be better suited for a construction project. But it could never be just another brick in the wall.

More on Frankie: Man, I thought Jane Fonda's book had a high What?! factor. Looks as if "Sinatra: The Life" might overtake it. I already told y'all about Anthony Summers and Robbyn Swan "confirming" those old rumors about Ol' Blue Eyes being a Mafia bag man (if quoting Jerry Lewis can be called confirmation). Now comes word that a woman named Susan Murphy has told the authors that Sinatra sexually assaulted her. Oddly enough, she says the attack occurred 36 years ago. After she dumped her date at a party at Sinatra's Palm Springs, Calif., manse. And after she jetted to Vegas with the singer in his private plane. Sinatra, who is dead, could not be reached for comment. Coincidence? Ya gotta wonder.

Mommy dearest: Most moms get half-cooked bacon and eggs or ashtrays in the shape of their little one's hand for Mother's Day. Not Quentin Tarantino's mommy, Connie Zastoupil. She told the New York Post's Cindy Adams, "He wrote me sad Mother's Day stories. He'd always kill me in them, then tell me how bad he felt about it. It was enough to bring a tear to a mother's eye." Sure, a tear and a cell phone with 9-1-1 on speed dial.

Props to Paula: Ya gotta give it up to Paula Abdul - and no, Corey Clark, I didn't mean it that way; I don't want to hang out in your gutter. I meant give it up, as in praise. Despite all the scandals, allegations, etc., surrounding the "American Idol" judge and her show, she's not dodgin' the spotlight. The former Laker Girl will be on "Saturday Night Live" tonight. Let's see, she's on Fox, was trashed by ABC and is guesting on NBC. Given recent events, next up might be the History Channel.

This column gleans from wire and Internet reports. To reach this Plain Dealer columnist: cyarborough@plaind.com, 216-999-4534

**GRAPHIC:** MICHAEL BUCKNER GETTY IMAGES Here's to the winner of a dream date with Carmen Electra.**LOAD-DATE:** May 9, 2005

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Copyright 2005 McClatchy Newspapers, Inc.  
Sacramento Bee

May 7, 2005, Saturday METRO FINAL EDITION

**SECTION:** SCENE; Pg. E1; CONCERT REVIEW**LENGTH:** 1198 words**HEADLINE:** Solo, Springsteen satisfies**BYLINE:** David Barton Bee Staff Writer**BODY:**

When 25-year-old Bruce Springsteen took the stage at the ornate Paramount Theatre in Oakland in 1975, he was being hailed as the next big thing, most famously as "rock 'n' roll future."

Seated alone at a grand piano, he played the grandiose "Thunder Road" from his epic new album, "Born To Run." Then his group, the E Street Band, joined him onstage, and they more than lived up to the hype with a nearly three-hour show of passionate rock 'n' soul.

Thirty years later, Springsteen again took the Paramount's stage alone, but this time the E Street Band did not appear to back him.

Nevertheless, for two hours and 10 minutes, Springsteen riveted a sold-out, passionately devoted audience with nothing but a few guitars, a piano, a harmonium, a harmonica and a set list drawn from nearly three decades as rock 'n' roll's premier singer-songwriter.

Also in contrast to the attention that surrounded that 1975 appearance - Springsteen had just appeared simultaneously on the covers of Time and Newsweek - Thursday night's concert went on sale with a minimum of fanfare, the roughly 3,000-seat hall selling out immediately with virtually no advertising.

The current tour, which opened April 25 for a two-month run, is the second time Springsteen has toured solo. The first time was in 1995, after the release of his second acoustic album, "The Ghost of Tom Joad." The new tour is promoting songs from his new acoustic album, "Devils and Dust," which recently debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard album chart.

So as showtime approached, the venue was electric with anticipation as longtime fans, and some new ones, crowded the elegant theater's lobby. And when the lights went down, the hall reverberated with the now-familiar cry of "Bruuuuuce!" that has long been a feature of his concerts.

When Springsteen, looking lean and far younger than his 55 years, took the stage unannounced, he asked audience members to turn off their cell phones. More pointedly, he requested that they not clap along "and throw off my already tenuous sense of time."

Attempting to lighten the weight of his celebrity, he would later also request that fans not cheer when they recognized the beginning of a song - "it makes me feel like I'm in Vegas ... it makes me want to play something else," he said.

And he dismissed the "sycophantic applause" that came when he made a comment critical of the Bush administration.

"I don't like feeling like I'm preaching to the converted," he said.

But of course, he was preaching to the converted. The audience included people who said they'd seen The Boss more than 100 times. Brad Gilbert, 43, of San Rafael first saw Springsteen in 1985 and has attended 10 shows since. But he'd never seen him in such a small theater.

"I was born a block from here," he said, "I've seen him in huge places like the Meadowlands in New Jersey. But seeing Bruce in such an intimate setting is really a chance in a lifetime."

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By contrast, several people in the audience had never seen Springsteen, including Vince Bair, 34, who, he said, had "been brought to see The Boss by my boss, who's a huge fan. I don't generally go to see shows in big venues, so this is more appealing to me."

During the 25-song show, Springsteen made the most of the theater's intimacy, keeping the lighting low and performing songs that ranged from the hymnlike opener, "My Beautiful Reward," played on a harmonium, to a stomping "Youngstown" from "The Ghost of Tom Joad."

The focus of the evening, however, was the new album, his third acoustic work, after 1982's "Nebraska" and 1995's "Tom Joad." He played nine songs from the new album, several of which were standouts.

"Leah," "All the Way Home," "Jesus Was an Only Son" and the sexually frank "Reno" were among the new songs that fit well into a set that included songs from as far back as 1978's "Darkness on the Edge of Town."

The new songs went over well, particularly "The Hitter," a chilling psychological portrait of a man who has returned home to make amends with his estranged mother, who never opens the door. So the character sings the song through the closed door, prompting Springsteen to quip, "Calling Dr. Freud."

Even more affecting was the new "Mata-moros Banks," which closed the set with graphic images about immigrants dying trying to enter the United States, and prefaced by a comment about the need for "a humane immigration policy."

The songs that drew the most passionate responses were, of course, the older ones, particularly those from Springsteen's distant past. The three songs from "Nebraska" were particularly well-received, including two, "Johnny 99" and "Reason To Believe," that were sung through a harmonica microphone that obscured his lyrics. The audience knew them by heart, anyway.

Other older songs were 1978's melancholy "Racing in the Street," played on piano and dedicated to renegade filmmaker Monte Hellman ("Two-Lane Blacktop"), and one of his greatest songs, "The River."

Springsteen introduced "The River" by saying he had always thought he never wrote love songs early in his career. He joked that while his mother loved and played early doo-wop "with that serious '50s-style horniness," his dad considered love songs "a government conspiracy to get people to get married."

Of course, many Springsteen songs are about love; they're just not about simple romantic love. His songs are, if anything, exemplars of brotherly love in its most expansive sense, from his early descriptions of the colorful characters he knew (or wished he knew) from 1970s New Jersey to his expressions of solidarity with, or at least compassion for, everyone from illegal immigrants to serial killers.

And when he played his post-9/11 songs "The Rising" and "Empty Sky," he drew together all those threads to express a nation's fleeting emotional solidarity.

Several songs focused on his love for his wife and children, whether explicitly in "Long Time Comin'" or more metaphorically in "Jesus Was an Only Son."

There were points when the E Street Band - with whom he last toured in 2003, and with whom he will likely tour again - was missed, particularly on "The Rising," which draws much of its power from its furious, anthemic backing. But other rockers, such as "Further On (Up the Road)," gained in power as Springsteen brought his musical and vocal vigor to bear on them.

The rocker that closed the show was the song that brought it all together: 1978's "The Promised Land." Thursday night, Springsteen declared in the song his dedication to reaching, even creating, a better world. But instead of the E Street Band's glittering backing, he drove the song by tapping out the rhythm on his acoustic guitar as he sang lines that, nearly 30 years later, visibly touched members of the audience.

"Mister, I ain't a boy/No, I'm a man/And I believe/In the Promised Land."

He followed those lines with a high, mournful wail that somehow managed to evoke all the joy and pain of growing up an imperfect man in an imperfect world: realizing some dreams, dropping others and, perhaps, discovering a few new ones.

\* \* \*

Sacramento Bee May 7, 2005, Saturday

The Bee's David Barton can be reached at (916) 321-1075 or [dbarton@sacbee.com](mailto:dbarton@sacbee.com).

**GRAPHIC:** Associated Press / Carlos Osorio Bruce Springsteen performs April 25 in Detroit on the first show of this tour.

Associated Press file, 2003 / Mary Altaffer The E Street Band - absent Thursday - in a 2003 show at New York's Shea Stadium. From left are Clarence Clemons, Max Weinberg, Bruce Springsteen, Patti Scialfa and Steve Van Zandt.

**LOAD-DATE:** May 7, 2005

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Copyright 2005 NEWS GROUP NEWSPAPERS LTD  
The Sun

May 7, 2005

**LENGTH:** 126 words

**HEADLINE:** MY RAPE HELL WITH SINATRA

**BODY:**

A WOMAN has claimed she was raped by legendary singer Frank Sinatra.

Susan Murphy, 56, said she was on a date at a restaurant in California in 1969 when Ol' Blue Eyes beckoned her over, a new book claims.

The My Way crooner invited her to a party, where her date left, then flew her to Vegas and back on his private jet.

Ms Murphy alleges Sinatra, then 53, raped her later while showing her his estate in Palm Springs. She said: "He threw me on the bed. I said 'God no!'. He pulled my dress up and did what he wanted to do.

"I wanted to go to the police but thought 'me against Frank Sinatra?'"

The book Sinatra: The Life also claims the singer, who died in 1998, pushed one "sexually unco-operative" woman through a window.

**LOAD-DATE:** May 8, 2005

N/R 379

PC-01137

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The Sun

May 7, 2005

**SECTION:** SUN WORLD; TRAVEL; ENGLAND

**LENGTH:** 597 words

**HEADLINE:** VILLAGES THAT TIME FORGOT

**BYLINE:** Alan Muir

**BODY:**

Untouched beauty of the Cotswolds

THE week before, I'd been in Las Vegas with the lads.

Shooting craps in casinos, downing colossal drinks, flying over the Grand Canyon.

Sure is the entertainment capital of the world - bright lights, big city.

Seven days later, I had my feet up with a John Grisham on a blanket in a field in the Cotswolds - early nights, very pretty.

Chalk and cheese holidays, but both fantastic in their own way. One was all glitz and glam - the other more like glitz and FARM.

Can't fault either of them, but I do hold a special place in my heart for the Cotswolds.

It's a step back in time with its amazing unspoilt villages and centuries of history left untouched.

The high streets are like film sets for some medieval flick, and you can literally feel the pace slowing as you drive into the area.

Cottages

We were based in Chipping Camden, once described as the 'prettiest village in England', and I can't argue with that.

The creamy Cotswold stone houses and the 17th century market hall all shriek of the past. And the thatched cottages that line the route into town give it the quintessential chocolate box image.

Camden's so old it gets a mention in the Domesday Book.

And it's certainly obvious there were no cars around when they built this place - I had a hell of a job negotiating the family saloon through a stone arch into the cobbled courtyard to unload our luggage.

Tucked away was our home for the week, Carol Cottage - a new build, but still the same local stone, with the feel of days gone by.

It was perfectly placed to roll out of bed in the morning to hit the bakers for some hot bread fresh out of the oven. Yup, it was that kind of holiday. Missus and daughter loved the town because it was crammed with specialist shops.

My lads loved it because it was field upon rolling field for the ball - and enough nooks and crannies to climb or hide in. Me? I did a bit of local ale quaffing! Hic.

If you fancy just doing the picture postcard stuff, fine, drink it in.

Be sure to stop at Broadway, Stow on the Wold, Broad Camden, Bourton on the Water, Bibury, Burford, the Slaughters and Snowhill (the one where Bridget Jones was filmed).

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The Sun May 7, 2005

But if you're into hashing and bashing, Chipping Camden's still a great point to set out from.

My kids loved the Cotswold Wildlife Park, near Burford. Rhinos, zebras, lions, apes and penguins in a country house setting. And there's a fantastic dark enclosure packed with bats which hit off the toughened safety glass when you stare in on them.

But the joy of a Cotswolds holiday is melting into its laid back culture – and the weather which always seems to be sunny and mild.

This is a secluded pocket of England where, really, little has changed.

To be honest – we've been in the area twice before – we were quite happy whiling away the hours in town, discovering the streets and quiet country lanes, hunting the antique shops for a hidden gem, a dip in the local pool.

Then there're the ancient inns with their frothing brews, Morris dancers, old fashioned and modern restaurants (in old fashioned buildings) with steaming food on giant plates.

I never did finish the Grisham book that day. I just relaxed, fell asleep on the blanket – and dreamt of Vegas.

GO: Cotswolds. SEVEN nights at Carol Cottage in Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire, costs from £336 in October to £678 in peak season. The three-bedroom cottage sleeps up to five. Call Hoseasons on 0870 5342 342 or visit [www.hoseasons.co.uk](http://www.hoseasons.co.uk)

for details.

**LOAD-DATE:** June 3, 2005

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Associated Press Online

May 7, 2005 Saturday 1:38 PM GMT

**SECTION:** SPORTS NEWS

**LENGTH:** 806 words

**HEADLINE:** Marlins Lose Bid for New Ballpark

**BYLINE:** By STEVEN WINE, AP Sports Writer

**DATELINE:** MIAMI

**BODY:**

Foiled yet again by the state Legislature, the Florida Marlins remain winless in their bid for a new ballpark and must now decide their next move. Might it be to another city?

Nobody made any threats Friday, and Marlins officials declined to comment on their latest stadium setback beyond issuing a brief statement when the Legislature adjourned shortly before midnight.

"We are deeply disappointed in the Florida Legislature's decision, and we feel very bad for all of the baseball fans in South Florida," owner Jeffrey Loria said. "We will now review our options, and not comment further until this review is completed."

The Senate's failure to pass a \$60 million tax rebate left two-time World Series champion Florida 0-for-4 in attempts to obtain state money for a ballpark.

"I think it's a major mistake," said third baseman Mike Lowell, who grew up in South Florida. "We're one of the few teams that has proven we can win a championship in this state, and it just seems not everyone is a big fan of us."

The Marlins have said that without state financial help, they might move. Five months ago, team officials met in Las Vegas with Mayor Oscar Goodman, who wants a new ballpark and a major league franchise for it.

Baseball chief operating officer Bob DuPuy expressed disappointment that the Marlins' bill failed in the Legislature.

"But we will continue to work with the Marlins to try to keep Major League Baseball in South Florida," DuPuy said.

While baseball is reluctant to abandon the largest market in the nation's fourth-largest state, the Montreal Expos' move this year to Washington reflected a new willingness by the sport to consider franchise shifts. It was the first in 33 years.

Since the Marlins' first season in 1993, they have played in the Miami Dolphins' stadium. The Marlins have long argued that their own park with a retractable roof would mean no more delays caused by Florida's frequent summer showers. That supposedly would lead to better attendance, increased revenue and a higher payroll, ensuring a competitive team for the future.

The Florida House last month approved a bill to help with ballpark financing, but Senate President Tom Lee said Thursday there wasn't enough support in his chamber to even warrant a vote.

Tallahassee has rejected three other bids for help. Gov. Jeb Bush's opposition sank a cruise-tax plan on opening day of 2000.

"It's very disheartening," said Marlins veteran Jeff Conine, who played in the team's first game 12 years ago. "You go through the laundry list of things they've done with the team \_ they built us into World Series champions and made us competitive every year \_ and you'd think they would have all the ingredients to get the support to do that. But it hasn't

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PC-01140

happened."

Miami and Miami-Dade County officials pledged \$166 million toward a \$420 ballpark adjacent to the Orange Bowl near downtown, and Loria agreed to pay \$192 million rent. A \$32 million parking garage was expected to pay for itself, leaving a \$30 million funding gap to be plugged by the state.

Ron Book, chief lobbyist for the proposal, said city and county officials plan to investigate other ways to come up with the money. But the city, county and Marlins have all said they can afford no more than they've already agreed to contribute, which is why they sought state help.

"It creates a \$30 million hole," Book said. "I don't know where they go to fill the hole. They have to explore the options."

The Marlins are committed to their current home through 2006 and have one-year lease options through 2010. But Lowell said he doesn't foresee the Marlins still playing there a decade from now.

"There are other cities that are going to pay major dollars to build a stadium for someone," Lowell said. "I know Mr. Loria wants it to work here, but to a certain degree he's a businessman. He's a private jet away from going anywhere."

"If I'm in his shoes and Vegas calls and says, 'I'm going to build a \$450 million stadium and you don't have to pay anything,' what are you going to do? Keep losing money here? That's tough."

Las Vegas Mayor Goodman said he has spoken with Marlins officials only once since they met in December, and that was merely to say hello at the winter baseball meetings. He said he hasn't talked with the Marlins about moving to Nevada but would like to lure a team there as early as 2007.

"My position remains steadfast: that if a team is looking to relocate, I'm a good guy to talk to," Goodman said.

Miami Mayor Manny Diaz and County Mayor Carlos Alvarez, meanwhile, vowed they'll try to keep the Marlins from going anywhere.

"Next week I will be meeting with the county manager and speaking to representatives of Florida Marlins to determine what options still exist," Alvarez said in a statement. "My focus remains keeping the Florida Marlins in South Florida for generations to come."

LOAD-DATE: May 8, 2005

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Copyright 2005 Albuquerque Journal  
Albuquerque Journal (New Mexico)

May 6, 2005 Friday

**SECTION:** RIO RANCHO JOURNAL; Pg. 9

**LENGTH:** 134 words

**HEADLINE:** Rams Wrestlers Compete in Vegas

**BYLINE:** Journal Staff Report

**BODY:**

**IN BRIEF**

Six wrestlers from Rio Rancho competed last week in the Western Junior Regional Championships in Las Vegas, Nev.

Three earned top-five finishes.

Sophomore Matt Ortega, a two-time state champion at Rio Rancho High School, finished fifth at 119 pounds in the freestyle competition.

In the Greco-Roman division, Dak Adamson, a freshman at the high school and the current New Mexico state champion at 119, finished second at 119 in Las Vegas. Sophomore Vicente Varela — like Ortega a two-time state champion with the Rams — was also a runner-up, at 130 pounds.

Three other wrestlers — junior Dustin Rogers and sophomores Lance Martin and Kevin Rudi — competed but did not place.

"It's a really tough tournament," said Dennis Friedland, the Rio Rancho High coach who accompanied the wrestlers to Nevada.

**LOAD-DATE:** May 6, 2005

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Copyright 2005 Anchorage Daily News  
Anchorage Daily News (Alaska)

May 6, 2005 Friday, FINAL EDITION

**SECTION:** MAIN; Pg. A1

**LENGTH:** 909 words

**HEADLINE:** Enstar charging to use credit;  
\$3.50 TO PAY YOUR BILL: Utility says it can't afford card companies' usage fees.

**BYLINE:** By PAULA DOBBYN, Anchorage Daily News

**BODY:**

Paying with plastic is getting costly, especially for Enstar Natural Gas Co. customers who have faced steep rate increases lately.

Alaska's largest utility, which raised gas rates by 17 percent this year, on Thursday started charging residential customers \$3.50 every time they pay a bill by credit card. Commercial clients face a \$6 charge.

In its May newsletter, Enstar calls the new charge a "convenience fee." Some customers describe it quite differently.

"I am disgusted," Sherry Whah wrote in a letter to Enstar.

The convenience fee is "a trick to pass on charges to the consumer," Whah wrote.

Charles Christy, an Enstar customer with three accounts, called the new charges "a back door rate increase under the guise of a fee for use of a standard method of payment."

An Enstar spokesman denied that, saying the company will make no money off the credit card charges.

The growing popularity of paying routine bills with credit cards is creating a huge expense, said Enstar spokesman Curtis Thayer. Credit card companies such as Visa and MasterCard charge businesses a fee for each bill paid with their cards. When the company launched credit card billing as a trial four years ago, those fees totaled \$40,000 annually for Enstar. But with more customers using credit cards, Enstar now is paying \$250,000 a year in fees and can't afford it, Thayer said.

Some 18,000 of its 120,000 customers now pay by credit card, he said.

Chugach Electric Association, the state's biggest power company, said it also is considering passing on fees to credit-card payers. But other utilities contacted, while acknowledging the growing credit card costs they are paying, said they have no plans to charge an extra fee.

Enstar is turning over credit card billing to Official Payments Corp., an electronic payment processor with offices in Stamford, Conn., and San Ramon, Calif. The company handled more than \$1.4 billion in payments last year for its clients, including the IRS, said spokesman Matt Brusch.

Official Payments, which also contracts with the city of Anchorage, incurs the credit card fees and passes them on to Enstar customers, then adds an extra charge to cover its costs and make a profit, Thayer said.

As Enstar began notifying credit card customers of its plans, some customers complained to the Regulatory Commission of Alaska, which oversees utility rates. Grace Salazar, the commission's consumer protection chief, said Thursday she is reviewing some 10 complaints received so far.

Commission chairwoman Kate Giard, told Enstar this week that it must get regulatory approval before charging customers credit card fees.

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"We'll open up a process of investigation," Giard said Thursday, speaking by cell phone from Juneau. "I suspect that at the minimum we will have a public hearing."

Enstar's attorneys don't think the company needs RCA approval because the processor, not the utility, is charging the fees, according to Thayer. So the gas company is going forward with its plan.

Unlike mainstream businesses, Enstar is regulated by the RCA, and in 2000 the commission ruled that it would be unfair to raise rates for all customers when only some of them are paying with credit cards, he said. Its contract with Official Payments is Enstar's way of diverting the utility's mounting fees to those customers using credit cards, he said.

Chugach Electric is also considering passing along the fees because about one-third of the customers now pay with credit cards, said spokeswoman Patti Bogan. Three years ago, the electric utility spent \$200,000 a year in credit card fees, a bill that has spiked to \$600,000 this year, she said.

Other Southcentral utilities say they won't do it.

"We just consider that normal customer service and it's included in our overhead," John McAleenan, customer service manager for Alaska Water and Wastewater Utility. "It's a service you provide to make things more convenient."

Spokesmen for Matanuska Electric Association, Anchorage's Municipal Light and Power and Matanuska Telephone Association said their utilities have no plans to pass on credit card fees to customers for the same reason.

"There's huge customer satisfaction in it," said David Morris, spokesman for General Communication Inc.

The trend of paying bills by credit card is especially strong in isolated Alaska because state residents like to rack up airline miles, a perk offered by several credit cards, Morris and others said.

Enstar's customer-service center was busy on Thursday, fielding questions or gripes about the new credit card charges, Thayer acknowledged. Some said they would return to paying their bills by check.

"A stamp is 37 cents," said customer Gary Lagstrom.

Customer Jeff Campbell complained to Enstar and the regulatory commission.

"Electronic transactions are cheaper and easier to process than manual checks, so why am I expected to pay such an exorbitant premium for something that saves you money?" Campbell wrote. "I expect this sort of price gouging from Vegas ATMs and Ticketmaster, not my utility company."

While \$3.50 a month might not break someone's budget, the new charge follows a series of Enstar rate increases that have totaled nearly 60 percent since 2000. Residential customers pay about \$100 a month on average to heat their homes now, Thayer said.

Daily News reporter Paula Dobbyn can be reached at [pdobbyn@adn.com](mailto:pdobbyn@adn.com) or 257-4317.

LOAD-DATE: May 7, 2005

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Copyright 2005 Anchorage Daily News  
Anchorage Daily News (Alaska)

May 6, 2005 Friday, FINAL EDITION

**SECTION:** ALASKA; Pg. B1

**LENGTH:** 816 words

**HEADLINE:** Victims' parents to testify;  
BOEHM: Sentencing hearing continues for businessman guilty of drug and child sex trafficking.

**BYLINE:** By TATABOLINE BRANT, Anchorage Daily News

**BODY:**

A week of testimony about a drug and sex-trafficking ring that operated out of an affluent Oceanview neighborhood is threatening to spill over to Monday as prosecutors and defense attorneys pile on the detail in an effort to sway a federal court judge's sentencing decision.

Parents whose kids had sex or did drugs at the home of Josef Boehm over a period of two years are expected to stand up in a federal courtroom and add their stories to those that have already been told on the witness stand, starting perhaps as soon as this afternoon, lawyers said.

The statements will complete a case that has made headlines since December 2003 and has at the very least illustrated how crack can destroy a rich business owner and runaway teenagers alike.

The story is a tragedy of broken lives peppered with bizarre allegations of drug-addled behavior, like the drag queen who came to the house to do the girls' hair and nails, and repeatedly made an extra \$100 by stealing Boehm's cell phone and selling it back to him.

Boehm, the 61-year-old president of the Alaska Industrial Hardware chain, faces up to 11 years in prison after pleading guilty to distributing crack to people under age 21 and conspiring to commit child sex trafficking. His plea deal includes paying \$1.2 million to his teenage victims for rehabilitation and education.

Boehm's team of veteran defense attorneys has worked for the last week to convince U.S. District Judge John Sedwick that Boehm was not a leader in the ring and therefore should not be put in jail, but on probation and into rehab.

The team paid medical experts more than \$100,000 to testify that in their professional opinions, Boehm's long-term cocaine abuse — he first started using in the 1970s — has damaged his brain and made him incapable of being an organizer in a ring that involved more than a dozen juveniles between the ages of 13 and 19.

Bambi Tyree, 24, a former lover of Boehm's, has admitted setting up drug deals and recruiting young girls to Boehm's home. She was arrested along with Boehm and two others in 2003 and is testifying for the feds in the hope of getting a lighter sentence.

Discrediting her has been a major goal of the defense team. Among their ammunition are allegations by a defense doctor that she is a sociopath who controlled Boehm.

In one exchange, defense attorney Rex Butler asked Tyree about Boehm's odd behavior.

"Do you think it's strange he thought there were three Bambis?" Butler said.

"I think a lot of things people do when they're high on crack are strange," she said, unfazed.

Another time he asked: "You could do what you wanted at Joe's house, couldn't you?"

"That's a pretty broad statement, sir," she said, maintaining the composure that characterized her two days on the stand.

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Butler did get Tyree to admit that when she first went to Boehm's house to smoke crack she was told to claim she was 16 if anyone asked. She was actually 13. She also testified that there weren't a lot of young girls at his house until she moved in after she turned 18.

Butler also accused her of being a liar.

Earlier this week, for example, Tyree testified that she once stole \$25,000 in cash from a boyfriend who had passed out in a flower bed with the money sitting on his chest. She said she was mad at the guy for lying to her but then later felt bad and gave the cash to a drug dealer named "Wookie" to give back to the boyfriend. Butler said Tyree's story about that incident changed. A disputed FBI report says she originally said she took the money to Vegas to pay off a heroin debt.

Prosecutors say that despite Boehm's crack addiction, he was in charge of what went on at his home and was able to conduct business deals. They played a recorded conversation in court Thursday of Boehm calling his former business partner in TGI Friday's, Bruce Burnett, from jail, demanding information related to his defense and apparently having no trouble being in charge.

Interviews with police this week and testimony throughout the sentencing hearing suggest people who did business with Boehm surely knew some of what was going on but did nothing.

Tyree in her testimony described partying at local hotels, including one on Old Seward Highway, whose owners were "good friends" of Boehm's and promised to warn him if they saw any sign of trouble.

She also described going to Alaska Industrial Hardware with and without Boehm to pick up cash when he needed it for drugs.

Police detective Steven Boltz said Anchorage police and FBI investigators conducted more than 120 interviews to build their case.

Clearly others were involved in the ring at some level, Detective Kevin Vandegriff said. "It doesn't happen in a vacuum."

However, police said they do not anticipate any further arrests in the case.

Daily News reporter Tataboline Brant can be reached at [tbrant@adn.com](mailto:tbrant@adn.com) or 257-4321.

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The Arizona Republic (Phoenix)

May 6, 2005 Friday Final chaser Edition

**SECTION:** YES; Pg. 14

**LENGTH:** 518 words

**HEADLINE:** THAT 'LAS VEGAS' LOOK;  
10 WAYS TO CASH IN ON HOT TV DRAMA

**BYLINE:** Megan Finnerty, The Arizona Republic

**BODY:**

On NBC's Las Vegas, set in a city that thrives on sex, money and style, it's no surprise that the characters are sexy, rich and superstylish.

The show's costume designer, Jennifer Bryan, says the luxurious clothes and accessories are a huge part of each character's personality. Viewers are so rabid to get the show's right-this-minute, too-much-is-never-enough style that its Web site, [nbc.com/Las\\_Vegas](http://nbc.com/Las_Vegas), features a section on wardrobe and how to find the pieces, helping establish the characters as a trendsetters.

"People want to be in style and they need barometers, and in addition to magazines, TV shows can do that," Bryan says.

And working on a show set in a casino, she can push the limits of style, taste and sexiness, all in the name of authenticity.

"Every day, every character must look glamorous," she says.

Bryan points to Patricia Field's work on Sex and the City as being revolutionary, paving the way for her work on Las Vegas.

"We in the profession always felt a little neglected, but now producers understand the power of the look, that it's as important as the set, effects and filming," she says. "Now they understand that what characters wear impacts viewership."

The season finale is at 8 p.m. May 23 on Channel 12 (KPNX).

DeLinda Deline

"DeLinda is brainy but also like a butterfly, beautiful and light. So I keep her in dresses a lot," Bryan says.

She dresses Molly Sims, who plays DeLinda, in revealing, trendy styles from Catherine Malandrino and Diane von Furstenberg. She often wears chiffon and bias-cut pieces with big, chandelier earrings and layered necklaces. For the rest of the season, look for metallic fabrics, boho accessories and sequins for day and night.

To get DeLinda's provocative look, try a chiffon Indian-inspired dress with gold and pewter beading by Sue Wong Nocturne, \$338, with faux-python wedges by Franco Sarto, \$89.95, gold dangle earrings by Rachel, \$20, all at Nordstrom, a gold satin purse by Valerie Stevens, \$50 at Robinsons-May, and crinkle gold bangles, \$6 for the set, at Rampage.

Nessa Holt

"Her character has the nickname Ice Queen; she's a more-direct, no-nonsense woman, so I have her in suits more than the other girls," she says. "But toward the end of the season, I wanted her to look sexier, because in Vegas, even a suit has to look sexy."

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She dresses actress Marsha Thomason in fitted suits with sexy tops underneath and lots of flashy gold jewelry. She prefers Giorgio Armani, Gucci, Tracy Reese, Cynthia Steffe and similar labels.

For the rest of the season, look for more brooches on suits and sparkly tops with jackets, for day and night. To get Nessa's sharp, sexy look, try a cropped pinstriped jacket, \$79.90, and coordinating pencil skirt, \$49.90, both by Heart Moon Star, at Rampage, with a striped halter, \$59 at Bebe.

Sophisticated accessories finish the look: faux-python mules by Lina Paolo, \$89.95, bangles, \$6, both at Nordstrom, oversize hoop earrings, \$18 at Urban Outfitters, and a purse with mother-of-pearl embellishment, \$44.90 at Rampage.

**LOAD-DATE:** May 19, 2005

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May 6, 2005, Friday, BC cycle

**SECTION:** Sports News

**LENGTH:** 785 words

**HEADLINE:** Might Marlins' next move be to Vegas?

**BYLINE:** By STEVEN WINE, AP Sports Writer

**DATELINE:** MIAMI

**BODY:**

Foiled yet again by the state Legislature, the Florida Marlins remain winless in their bid for a new ballpark and must now decide their next move.

Might it be to another city?

Nobody made any threats Friday, and Marlins officials declined to comment on their latest stadium setback, saying they wanted to wait until the Legislature adjourned.

But Senate President Tom Lee declared dead a bill for a \$60 million tax rebate, leaving two-time World Series champion Florida 0-for-4 in attempts to obtain state money for a ballpark.

"I think it's a major mistake," said third baseman Mike Lowell, who grew up in South Florida. "We're one of the few teams that has proven we can win a championship in this state, and it just seems not everyone is a big fan of us."

The Marlins have said that without state financial help, they might move. Five months ago, team officials met in Las Vegas with Mayor Oscar Goodman, who wants a new ballpark and a major league franchise for it.

Baseball chief operating officer Bob DuPuy expressed disappointment that the Marlins' bill failed in the Legislature.

"But we will continue to work with the Marlins to try to keep Major League Baseball in South Florida," DuPuy said.

While baseball is reluctant to abandon the largest market in the nation's fourth-largest state, the Montreal Expos' move this year to Washington reflected a new willingness by the sport to consider franchise shifts. It was the first in 33 years.

Since the Marlins' first season in 1993, they have played in the Miami Dolphins' stadium. The Marlins have long argued that their own park with a retractable roof would mean no more delays caused by Florida's frequent summer showers. That supposedly would lead to better attendance, increased revenue and a higher payroll, ensuring a competitive team for the future.

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Tallahassee has rejected three other bids for help. Gov. Jeb Bush's opposition sank a cruise-tax plan on opening day of 2000.

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The Associated Press May 6, 2005, Friday, BC cycle

through the laundry list of things they've done with the team - they built us into World Series champions and made us competitive every year - and you'd think they would have all the ingredients to get the support to do that. But it hasn't happened."

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May 6, 2005 Friday  
ALL EDITIONS

**SECTION:** NEWS; Pg. 016

**LENGTH:** 838 words

**HEADLINE:** Inside Track;  
Bridget connects in Comcast ad

**BYLINE:** By GAYLE FEE and LAURA RAPOSA

**BODY:**

Tom Brady's lady, Bridget Moynahan, is the box-office star, but her hot huddle honey gets more face time on the tube - until now.

The Longmeadow lass will soon be seen in a 30-second spot for Comcast showing off her command of the cable company's high-speed services in her just-a-regular-gal personal life.

"People know me as an actress, but I'm also a daughter, a travel bug, a shopaholic," says Bridge, as she clicks on her laptop to say hey to her mom, Mary, via video mail, check out the Travel Channel and pick out a pair of sunglasses. "I like taking charge, all kinds of music, and, man, have I learned to loooove football."

Talk about a scene stealer!

Element Productions director Rudi Schwab, who previously worked with Bridget's BF on a Dunkin' Donuts commercial, said the day he spent shooting the spot at a seaside manse in Scituate last month was a breeze.

"She has a wonderful connection with the camera, a great face and she's very energetic," Schwab told the Track. "She read the lines a couple of times and we got it down."

But, more importantly, did you get down the deets on Tom????

"She talked about him," he said. "But no one asked her if she and Tom were engaged or anything, although the crew was buzzing about it all day."

Aggggggh!

Comcast's "Connecting is Believing" campaign, which kicked off Monday with a spot starring Red Sox DH David Ortiz, aims to snare new customers by showing celebs using the services in their everyday lives. Which is hardly a new concept, but it's not every day Big Papi's fans can watch him make mango salsa from an e-recipe!

File under: Click and Tell?

Tara Crue-es with Tommy

And speaking of Brady's ladies, his ex, Tara Reid, may have finally found her soulmate.

The Tinseltown party gal reportedly spent the night with star of stage, screen and homemade pornos Tommy Lee in Vegas, baby, then accompanied Pamela Anderson's ex to the band's gig in Wichita, Kan.

Tara was also spotted with her new beau at the next stop on the band's tour in Fort Collins, Co.

Wethinks they make beautiful music together. . . .

Eavesdropping

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PC-01151

The Boston Herald May 6, 2005 Friday

## WE HEAR:

\*\* That a raft of raaather incriminating photos of two Red Sox hurlers, one married and one not, disappeared from the Web site of a college coed who hosted the boys in her dorm room, then put the photographic evidence in an online photo album for all the world to see. Seems the pics were careening all over the Internet - much to the consternation of the married playboy. LOVED the Care Bear sheets on the bunk beds!

\*\* That sidelined New England Patriot linebacker Tedy Bruschi plans to ride alongside 400 cyclists participating in the Volvo Hyannis Port Challenge ride May 21.

\*\* That the Boston Gay Men's Chorus demanded singer Missy Koonce debut her cabaret act at tomorrow night's Crescendo cocktail party at the Top of the Hub. The Kansas City Miss was a big hit with the boys when she performed "a gender-bending twist on the hard-driving rock vocals of Freddie Mercury" with the Chorus last year.

\*\* That Daisy, the high-profile pooch who had lifesaving heart surgery thanks to the generosity of dog lovers everywhere, will be one of the "models" at next week's furry fashion show at the MSPCA-Angell Memorial Hospital Hall of Fame dinner.

\*\* That Mass. first lady Ann Romney will receive an honorary degree from Mount Ida College at the school's commencement ceremony May 20.

## Tracked down

"Apprentice" wicked (rhymes with) witch Omorosa Manigault-Stallworth dining on chicken with a pal at Olives . . . Funnyman Lenny Clarke, along with WEEI's John Dennis, Gerry Callahan, Dale Arnold and Glenn Ordway; WCVB's Natalie Jacobson and Mike Dowling; Fox25 guy Butch Stearns; 7News gal Wendi Nix; and Mike Ratte from WLVI having a ball at Kings at 'EEI's bowling benefit for the Genesis Fund . . . and disabled advocate Travis Roy celebrating a pal's graduation from law school at Morton's. . . .

## Side Tracks

## TGIF:

\*\* "Inside TV" will be at the Natick Mall May 28 and 29 to cast walk-on roles for the popular NBC series "Medium" and UPN's "Girlfriends." Runners up will get behind-the-scenes visits or tickets to the taping of popular shows like "Two and a Half Men," "Veronica Mars" or "Cold Case." Show up between 10 a.m. and 10 p.m. on the 28th or 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. on the 29th and they might make you a star!

\*\* The Game admitted his rumored paramour, R&B singer May, is "one fine lady" to Ramiro on JAMN' 94.5 this morning but wouldn't admit they were an item. "Why don't you mind your own damn business," The Game grunted. Yikes! The former 50 Cent protege said he "left on good terms" after being booted from Fitty's G-Unit. Whatev. . . . Snoop Dogg and The Game have been added to the Summer Jam lineup at the Tweeter Center June 4.

\*\* And finally, we're baaaaaaack. . . . Listen to the Track as we dish the dirt with Greg Hill and the boys on WAAF at around 8 a.m. today - and every Friday. It'll rock your world. . . .

Erin Hayes contributed to today's column. Drop dimes to trackgals@bostonherald.com or 617-619-6488.

**GRAPHIC: SHE CLICKS:** Tom Brady's S.O., Bridget Moynahan, checks out Comcast's high-speed services in this 30-second 'Connecting is Believing' spot for the cable company. PHOTO COURTESY COMCAST

**PORN SHOWCASE:** Playboy Channel 'Sexcetera' host Tiffany Shepis, left, interviews Kim Airs, owner of Grand Opening! sex shop in Brookline, outside the Coolidge Corner Theater where Kim's 'You Oughta Be In Pictures' amateur porn films will screen at midnight tonight. STAFF PHOTO BY MARK GARFINKEL

**LOAD-DATE:** May 6, 2005

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Copyright 2005 BPI Communication, Inc.  
BPI Entertainment News Wire

May 6, 2005, Friday

**SECTION:** Entertainment News**LENGTH:** 1309 words**HEADLINE:** '05 comeback special: Presley is the May King**BYLINE:** By CHRIS MORRIS, The Hollywood Reporter**BODY:**

"Any way you want me, that's how I will be," Elvis Presley sang in 1956. This month, his fans will be able to get their Elvis in just about any way imaginable.

A network TV miniseries and special, a book, a DVD and three albums devoted to the life and music of the King of Rock 'n' Roll are hitting the marketplace in May, and a Broadway musical featuring Presley's songs continues its run. Nearly 28 years after his death at age 42 on Aug. 16, 1977, Elvis is enjoying a visibility and commercial viability that most contemporary music stars might envy. The only place Elvis won't be visible will be on the big screen.

The flood of Presley product will feed the seemingly insatiable needs of the late singer's devotees. In "Elvis by the Presleys," a CBS special airing May 13, Priscilla Presley says of her late ex-husband's relationship with his fans, "It was almost like a love affair." The affair has continued unabated with unbridled passion for half a century.

Forbes magazine reported that Presley made more money than any other deceased entertainer last year; his estate earned \$40 million in 2004. (Incredibly, little of that figure comprises record royalties because Elvis and his manager Col. Tom Parker sold the musician's interest in back royalties to RCA Records in 1973 for \$5.4 million. Royalties from his 1973-77 recordings go to the estate.)

This year, Robert F.X. Sillerman finalized the purchase of 85 percent of Elvis Presley Enterprises Inc., the Presley estate's corporate entity, for \$100 million — seemingly a bargain, considering Elvis' perennial earning power.

Presley's music back catalog remains indefatigable: 52 years after he cut a record as a gift for his mother at Sam Phillips' Memphis studio, there are more than 70 Elvis collections in print on RCA, from original albums to multidisc boxed sets.

Joe DiMuro, executive vice president and general manager of Sony BMG Strategic Marketing Group, which handles Presley's posthumous output, said the catalog is "in the top two most profitable entities within the entire (Sony BMG) catalog. There's no doubt it's extremely robust worldwide. He transcends borders, nationalities, ethnicities."

Elvis' ongoing, universal appeal no doubt sparked CBS' decision to schedule six hours of primetime Presley programming during the May sweep period.

"CBS has turned this into 'May is Elvis Month,'" DiMuro said.

Kelly Kahl, CBS senior executive vice president program operations, said that with the ratings primacy of ABC's "Desperate Housewives," Sunday evening — the night the biographical miniseries "Elvis" premieres — has become "a real battlefield."

"We need an entity that creates its own buzz," Kohl said, "and (the Presley specials are) the vehicle for that. . . . It's certainly one of the linchpins of our sweep."

CBS' Presley onslaught — which is distinguished by an unprecedented level of cooperation from the Presley estate — begins Sunday with the first episode of "Elvis"; the second part airs Wednesday. The miniseries, covering Elvis' life from his mid-'50s ascent through his comeback TV special in 1968, stars Dublin-born Jonathan Rhys Meyers as Presley.

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BPI Entertainment News Wire, May 6, 2005

Randy Quaid co-stars as Parker, and Camryn Manheim portrays Elvis' mother Gladys.

"Elvis" is the fourth telefilm to essay the Presley legend; the first, John Carpenter's feature starring Kurt Russell, aired in 1979. It's the first docudrama on the singer since a 10-part, five-hour biographical series was broadcast in 1990. "It's a long time ago," executive producer Howard Braunstein said. "Enough time had passed. It felt like a wonderful opportunity."

Early in production, the "Elvis" creative team enlisted the support of Elvis Presley Enterprises. "We knew without the cooperation of the estate, we wouldn't get his music, and we couldn't do it without that," Braunstein said.

As a result, Sony BMG Strategic Marketing granted licenses to use 18 of Presley's original masters in "Elvis" — the first time Presley's music has been utilized in a biographical film.

In another first for a TV movie, EPE also permitted the film's crew to shoot on the grounds of Presley's Memphis mansion, Graceland, the site of high-traffic daily tours. Said Braunstein, "We would shoot, and they'd hold the tours, and we'd cut, and the tours would go through."

Graceland also was the site of much of the shoot for CBS' second piece of Presley programming, "Elvis by the Presleys," which airs May 13. The two-hour special includes extensive interviews with Priscilla Presley, her parents Ann and Paul Beaulieu, her daughter Lisa Marie, Elvis' first cousin Patsy Geranen and Memphis mafioso Jerry Schilling. The show, which includes newly unearthed family photos and home movies, reflects candidly on Elvis' creative frustrations, marital infidelities, spiritual questing and drug use.

"Elvis by the Presleys" executive producer David Saltz had previously made contact with the Presleys while working the special "Elvis Lives," aired in 2002 on the 25th anniversary of Presley's death. "That was the story of Elvis outside the gates of Graceland," Saltz said. "This show was about who was in the room."

Saltz said that the Presley family allowed a no-holds-barred approach to Elvis' story: "There were no subjects we were told to avoid." He noted that Priscilla, who serves as both interview subject and interviewer (she interrogates her parents and sister Michelle), serves as "a thread of a lot of the storytelling."

"Elvis by the Presleys" will see continued life at retail stores following the special's airdate. A book and a two-CD album reached stores Tuesday, and an expanded DVD version of the special arrives May 17. All these projects are a product of corporate synergy: Crown Publishers, which is issuing the title, is a division of Bertelsmann AG, the half-owner of Sony BMG Music Entertainment, which is releasing the CD and DVD packages.

Edited by David Ritz, who co-authored the autobiographies of Ray Charles, B.B. King and Aretha Franklin, among others, the "Elvis by the Presleys" book includes substantial interview material not found in the TV show. It also contains hitherto unseen photos and pictures of personal Presley mementos both mundane (Elvis' comb and bottles of cologne) and unnerving (his copy of the Physician's Desk Reference, several guns and — complete with bullet hole — the TV set from his Palm Springs home).

Steve Ross, senior vice president and publisher at Crown, said that 250,000 copies of the book were shipped and that orders were "much higher than we originally expected."

Beyond the "Elvis by the Presleys" audio and video packages, Sony BMG Strategic Marketing will issue the original cast album of the musical "All Shook Up" on May 31. While not an Elvis bio, the show, scripted by Joe DiPietro, contains renditions of 25 songs popularized by the King. It opened March 24 at the Palace Theatre and has been enjoying a strong run.

On Tuesday, Capitol Records will issue a live Presley set as part of its "Las Vegas Centennial Collection." It marks the first time Sony BMG has ever licensed a full album's worth of Elvis material to a competing label.

"We've licensed individual tracks but never a full package," DiMuro said. "It's kind of sacrilegious to us. . . . We deliberated. We talked to the estate. We decided to do it because Elvis was such a presence in Vegas."

Pondering Presley's massive and timeless appeal, DiMuro said: "He was one of the first artists to break the race barrier and to communicate music that was not really commercial. He revived rock 'n' roll by making it available to the masses. And there was this genuineness about him. In today's market, you look at this lack of honesty and lack of authenticity, these manufactured talents."

"Love me," Elvis pleaded in 1956. He needn't have worried.

**LOAD-DATE:** May 7, 2005

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Copyright 2005 Times Media Limited  
Business Day (South Africa)

May 6, 2005

**SECTION:** Economy, Business & Finance; Pg. 8**LENGTH:** 645 words**HEADLINE:** Hit the jackpot in Las Vegas**BYLINE:** Michelle Swart**BODY:**

Hit the jackpot in Las Vegas

South Africans have a limited opportunity to invest in a luxury residential development in Nevada called The Meridian Private Residences, writes MICHELLE SWART

THE US property market has seen great appreciation over the past few years, in fact similar to the boom SA has been experiencing. Statistics indicate that home prices in Las Vegas appreciated by 37% in 2003, and by 48% last year, with the Las Vegas housing market being the strongest in the country, and one of the best in the world, setting records in almost every category.

The Meridian Private Residences is an exclusive gated community ideally located on East Flamingo Road, just a seven-minute stroll from the famed Las Vegas Strip. The resort-style campus consists of five residential buildings, an elegant clubhouse, two beautiful swimming pools with poolside spas and barbecues, business and fitness centre, racquetball and squash courts, lighted tennis courts and more.

The seller and original developer, Michael Saltman, conceived, built and condo-mapped The Meridian for his own account, which is why investors will find an overall upscale atmosphere about the entire property and superior quality in design and detail within each home. Even though this development is just a short distance from The Strip, it still enjoys a peaceful and serene setting.

The Mediterranean-style award winning architecture is complemented by lush landscaping and romantic courtyards. Meridian homes feature smart and spacious floor plans, dramatic high ceilings, top quality appliances and finishes, large pantries and closets and in-unit washers and dryers. Residents will also enjoy underground parking, which is rare in Las Vegas.

The Meridian Private Residences marks the first Las Vegas property for American Invsco - the nation's leading condominium developer. American Invsco, the US's leading condominium developer, has been keeping a watchful eye on the Vegas market. The face of the strip and its surrounding areas are constantly changing and expanding as key players within the city merge to create even larger and more powerful entities. New construction high-rises, hotel-condos and the conversion of existing residences are becoming more logical for developers as prime land evaporates and more people want to move to Las Vegas, but are not willing to live far from the strip.

Nicholas Gouletas, chairman and CEO of American Invsco, says: "We had been keeping close tabs on the pulse of this very hot market. We wanted to be sure we came in at the right time and with the right property. With The Meridian all our goals were met."

American Invsco will not only be marketing The Meridian to local residents, but will also market the property on a national and global basis via its internet capabilities and through strategic alliances that it has cultivated all over the world. Consumers will be able to go online, explore the property and its floor plans and even reserve a unit.

International bond finance is available for this unique investment opportunity where there are only 40 apartments

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available to the South African market at The Meridian Private Residences.

To make sure it is a worthwhile investment, the developer guarantees rental for two years and all levies and real estate taxes paid for two years, meaning there are no carrying costs for two years on building for purchaser and a very affordable investment to the general South African market.

In Las Vegas, Nevada, real estate values have increased dramatically over the last few years. The city in the desert is hotter than ever and the only sin now would be to not capitalise on this lucrative opportunity.

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Copyright 2005 Chicago Tribune Company  
Chicago TribuneMay 6, 2005 Friday  
Chicago Final Edition

SECTION: MOVIES ; ZONE C; MOVIE CAPSULES. ; Pg. 10

LENGTH: 3876 words

BYLINE: Compiled by Regina Robinson. Reviewers include: A.B. = Allison Benedikt; R.E. = Robert K. Elder; M.J.E. = Michael J. Esposito; J.R. = Jessica Reaves; S.S. = Sid Smith; M.W. = Michael Wilmington.

**BODY:**

Here are selected capsule reviews of movies in current release. Information is based on the most up-to-date theater schedules available and subject to change.

**Aliens of the Deep (star)(star)1/2**

Following 2003's "Ghosts of the Abyss," director James Cameron journeys deeper into the ocean, exploring the earth's volatile crust with NASA scientists. All in all, it's a fascinating, kid-friendly journey, minus clunky dialogue and on-screen hypothesizing about what Europa's aliens might look like (predictably, like luminescent aqua-aliens from "The Abyss"). G. 47.—R.E.

**The Amityville Horror (star)(star)(star)**

The 1979 "The Amityville Horror," based on the true story of a family terrorized by demonic forces after moving into a home that was the site of a grisly mass-murder, has been remade and is decidedly superior to the original. Directed by Andrew Douglas, the film is a terrific scare show, packing plenty of jolts yet never lingering morbidly over horrific images. R. 1:29.—Kevin Thomas, Los Angeles Times

**Are We There Yet? (star)(star)**

Ice Cube shows his kid-friendly side in "Are We There Yet?" and he and the movie, though nothing special, are fitfully amusing. Playing a Portland Lothario who falls for a young divorced mom (Nia Long) and has to woo her two little kids on a long distance SUV ride to Vancouver, Ice Cube and the kids connect. PG. 1:31.—M.W.

**Assault on Precinct 13 (star)(star)(star)**

This gritty, stylish thriller—about a snowbound Detroit police station attacked by rogue cops—takes John Carpenter's 1976 cult classic, adds a top cast (Ethan Hawke and Laurence Fishburne as besieged cop and con, Gabriel Byrne, Brian Dennehy, John Leguizamo) and updates it smartly and excitingly. The premise may be outlandish, but director Jean-Francois Richet creates a film that rips and roars. R. 1:49.—M.W.

**The Aviator (star)(star)(star)(star)**

Martin Scorsese's flamboyant, brilliantly crafted bio-drama on Howard Hughes, visionary airplane tycoon, unbuttoned movie mogul and one of the great, wild American figures. With star Leonardo DiCaprio as Hughes and Cate Blanchett as Kate Hepburn, the film misses some rich possibilities but it's still the year's best: seething with life, gorgeously designed and thrillingly articulated. PG-13. 2:46.—M.W.

**Be Cool (star)(star)1/2**

Even if you enjoyed the meanly funny 1995 Elmore Leonard-derived, John Travolta crime comedy "Get Shorty," this forced sequel based on the follow-up book is a comedown. A colorful, bright, misfiring semi-dud, which wastes Travolta (as Chili Palmer), Uma Thurman, Vince Vaughn, Cedric the Entertainer, Harvey Keitel, The Rock and Leonard's smart, tough lines. Directed by F. Gary Gray. PG-13. 1:59.—M.W.

**Beauty Shop**(star)(star)(star)

This "Barbershop" spinoff for star-producer Queen Latifah (as a transplanted ace hairdresser in Atlanta) is full of cliches, but it's also a bright, funny, bouncy picture that I liked: another David and Goliath tale, with Gina (Latifah) going up against the phony-baloney Jorge (Kevin Bacon in a fey mode, with sassy help from Alfre Woodard, Alicia Silverstone, Djimon Hounsou and Della Reese. PG-13. 1:45.—M.W.

**Because of Winn-Dixie** (star)1/2

When Opal (AnnaSophia Robb) moves to small town Naomi, Fla., the only friend she finds is Winn-Dixie a mangy, orphan pooch who leads her on a journey of personal discovery. PG. 1:46.—R.E.

**Boogeyman** (star)1/2

As a there's-something-awful-in-the-closet thriller, "Boogeyman" is about as scary as a trip to the grocery store. The movie is well made, but its concept is so dopey—a kid's closet is sort of a portal-to-hell/clearinghouse of missing children—that it can't generate much in the fear department. PG-13. 1:26.—Chris Hewitt, Knight Ridder

**Born Into Brothels** (star)(star)(star)

One of the most heavily awarded documentaries of 2004, "Born into Brothels" plunges us into an exotic, painful world: the daily lives of a group of children, whose mothers work as prostitutes in Calcutta and who are pushed toward education and taught photography by Zana Briski (who co-directed with Ross Kauffman). Shot on HD, stunning looking, sometimes intensely moving. In Bengali and English with English subtitles. R. 1:25.—M.W.

**Bride and Prejudice** (star)(star)(star)

Gurinder Chadha ("Bend It Like Beckham") makes a goofy and voluptuous labor-of-love: a big, gorgeously shot imitation Bollywood-Hollywood musical loosely based on Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice," with Bollywood's biggest star, Aishwarya Rai, as leading lady. It's a pretty crazy movie, but it's knowingly crazy—and entertaining, if you're in an adventurous mood. In English, Hindi and Punjabi with English subtitles. PG-13. 1:51.—M.W.

**Constantine** (star)(star)

Keanu Reeves is caught between heaven and hell in his latest fantasy thriller, playing doomed L.A. exorcist John Constantine (from the graphic novel series "Hellblazer")—and though the source is interesting and the visuals sometimes spellbinding, the movie itself is stranded in the purgatory of the second-rate. "Matrix" it isn't. With Rachel Weisz, Tilda Swinton and Peter Stormare. R. 2:01.—M.W.

**Cursed** (star)(star)

The latest terrorfest from Wes Craven, not at his bloody best here—even though the movie reunites him with "Scream" writer Kevin Williamson. It's another somewhat tongue-in-cheek Hollywood horror pastiche, starring Christina Ricci and Jesse Eisenberg as siblings faced with werewolf attacks, but the screams and laughs are fewer, less clever and less startling. PG-13. 1:36.—M.W.

**Dear Frankie** (star)(star)(star)

Shona Auerbach's debut feature is an engaging, intimate story of a tender deception. Frankie (Jack McElhone), a deaf and whip-smart 10-year-old, moves across Scotland with his mother and grandma while exchanging letters with his estranged dad. Problems ensue when it's revealed Frankie's mom is actually writing the letters. PG-13. 1:42.—R.E.

**Dot the i** (star)(star)1/2

Written and directed by Matthew Parkhill, this thriller's full of lust, sex, suspicion and violence, but just not exactly in the way you might expect. It's a love triangle set in London featuring the three main characters—Kit (Gael Garcia Bernal), Carmen (Natalia Verbeke) and Barnaby (James D'Arcy), as well as various stalkers and videographers. R. 1:31.—J.R.

**Downfall** (Der Untergang) (star)(star)(star)(star)

This extraordinarily gripping bio-drama takes us inside Hitler's bunker during his last 10 days. Director Oliver Hirschbiegel and producer-screenwriter Bernd Eichinger use Hitler secretary Traudl Junge's eyewitness account, with Alexandra Maria Lara fine as the naive Junge, and Bruno Ganz's great performance as a mad, vulnerable Hitler heading

a brilliant cast and crack production. In German with English subtitles. No MPAA rating (adult, parents cautioned for violence, sensuality and language. 2:28.—M.W.

Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room (star)(star)(star)1/2

Director Alex Gibney's film on the collapse of the high-flying Houston energy company, based on the book by Fortune reporters (and here, interviewees) Bethany McLean and Peter Elkind is a powerhouse documentary: a gripping, funny non-fiction movie that pulls scads of high drama and dark comedy out of the rise and fall of Enron, one of the decade's major corporate crimes. No MPAA rating (adult for language). 1:53.—M.W.

Fever Pitch (star)(star)(star)

With a romantic and comic touch not often applied to romantic comedy—go figure—and a fan's exuberance for America's pastime, Peter and Bobby Farrelly have got themselves a natural and heartfelt screen romance, in which a rabid Boston fan (Jimmy Fallon) must find a balance between the love of his life (Drew Barrymore) and the love of his life (the Red Sox). PG-13. 1:38.—A.B.

Finding Neverland (star)(star)(star)1/2

Johnny Depp surprises us again with a portrayal of writer James M. Barrie brimming with insight and whimsy. The story, about Barrie's bond with a widow (Kate Winslet) and her boys, the inspiration for "Peter Pan," is a charmer too. Director Marc Forster ("Monster's Ball") avoids darker speculations, giving us a period bio of visual delight and honest sentiment. With Dustin Hoffman and Julie Christie. PG. 1:56.—M.W.

Guess Who (star)(star)

Ashton Kutcher plays white boy Simon Green, a big-shot financial whiz whom black fiance Theresa brings home to meet Mom (Judith Scott) and Dad (Bernie Mac) without advance warning of his pasty complexion in this misguided, lazy and broad comic remake of the Stanley Kramer classic "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner." PG-13. 1:45.—A.B.

Hitch (star)(star)

In this flashy, cliched romantic comedy, Will Smith plays a romance-savvy dating doctor who runs into troubles with his coaching (of shy Kevin James) and his own love life, wooing hard-case tabloid columnist (Eva Mendes). Most of the good gags are in the trailers, and the strongest chemistry is between Smith and James. Directed by Andy Tennant ("Sweet Home Alabama"). PG-13. 1:57.—M.W.

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy (star)(star)(star)

Taming author Douglas Adams' silly sci-fi novels into movie form is like training wild schnauzers in petticoats to water ski. It's impossible. Even so, Garth Jennings' lovingly designed and high-spirited comic adaptation still makes you want to catch a ride—even if it can't always channel Adams' loony prose. PG. 1:50.—R.E.

Hostage (star)(star)1/2

A snazzy, full-throttle cop thriller with lots of style and energy but much less sense or impact, "Hostage" stars Bruce Willis as a burnt-out ex-L.A. hostage negotiator, pulled into a perilous standoff with street thieves, gangsters and a rich accountant. It's a mixed bag of a picture, at first entertaining, then sinking into mad implausibility. Directed by French thriller ace Florent Siri ("The Nest"). R. 1:53.—M.W.

House of D 1/2(star)

The fatal flaw in David Duchovny's big-screen directorial debut is David Duchovny, the man who chose to cast Robin Williams as a retarded janitor. He's also to blame for the saccharine, heavy-handed coming-of-age script (he wrote it) and the cringe-worthy performances (he gives one) in this tale of a 13-year-old boy's life-changing year in 1973 Greenwich Village. PG-13. 1:37.—A.B.

Ice Princess (star)(star)

All the usual suspects line up in Disney's entirely predictable and utterly soothing new ice skating flick: bookworm-cum-beauty (Michelle Trachtenberg), disapproving parent (Joan Cusack), popular girl who is dying on the inside (Hayden Panettiere) and her controlling mom (Kim Cattrall). Oh yes, and the dream to skate. G. 1:32.—A.B.

Chicago Tribune May 6, 2005 Friday

**The Interpreter (star)(star)(star)1/2**

Sydney Pollack's new political thriller, shot largely in and around New York's UN headquarters, is a polished, exciting treat, with beyond-duty's-call work by stars Nicole Kidman and Sean Penn as a UN interpreter who may have stumbled on an assassination plot and the tormented federal agent protecting her. A full-throttle suspense film that's also an affecting psychological piece. PG-13. 2:08.—M.W.

**King's Ransom (star)(star)**

O. Henry's short story, "The Ransom of Red Chief"—about kidnapers who kidnap someone who is more trouble than he's worth—still works. The actual kidnapping of Malcolm King (Anthony Anderson) in "King's Ransom" is a near masterpiece of timing and ineptitude. But when an inept, put-upon loser (Jay Mohr), finally nabs Malcolm, the movie settles into a diverting hash of recycled gags and generic Hollywood African-American comedy. And in the end, "King's Ransom" doesn't pay off. PG-13. 1:33.—Roger Moore, Orlando Sentinel

**Kung Fu Hustle (star)(star)(star)(star)**

Hong Kong wunderkind Stephen Chow (who directs, writes and stars) plays Sing, an inept hustler who stirs up trouble in an impoverished Hong Kong enclave of retired kung fu masters. Chow sets his heroes against ascending levels of absurdity and wonder in this astonishing, revolutionary action comedy. R. 1:35.—R.E.

**Look at Me (Comme un Image) (star)(star)(star)1/2**

A perceptive look at the French literary scene and a psychologically sharp tale of a writer's family in turmoil, "Look at Me" won the Cannes best screenplay prize for writer-director-star Agnes Jaoui and her ex-husband, co-star Jean-Pierre Bacri. The dialogue is witty, the characterizations keen; "Look at Me" is one of the year's top foreign imports so far. In French with English subtitles. PG-13. 1:50.—M.W.

**A Lot Like Love (star)1/2**

"A Lot Like Love" is a poor man's "When Harry Met Sally," with Ashton Kutcher and Amanda Peet in the dull and familiar roles of strangers who become acquaintances who become friends who become fools in love—all over the course of seven long, extremely long, unnecessarily long years. PG-13. 1:37.—A.B.

**Madison (star)(star)(star)**

In William Bindley's "Hoosiers" with boats, Jim McCormick (James Caviezel) must rally the fiscally strapped small town of Madison, Ind., when it wins the right to host the 1971 hydroplane boat championship regatta ahead of a big city. The race becomes a crusade to save a way of life. PG. 1:38.—M.J.E.

**Man of the House (star)(star)**

Tommy Lee Jones lampoons his tough guy image honed in "The Fugitive" and "U.S. Marshals" in a sweetly benign comedy about a Texas Ranger protecting five scantily clad, hyperactive University of Texas cheerleaders. Cliches abound, including the requisite Jones facial, complete with cucumber slices. Cedric the Entertainer guest stars. PG-13. 1:37.—R.E.

**Masculine Feminine (Masculin-Feminin) (star)(star)(star)(star)**

Jean-Luc Godard's re-released 1966 tale of "The Children of Marx and Coca Cola" is one of the quintessential '60s foreign art films: a bizarre melange of pop music, revolution, sex, movie allusions and poetry. Starring Truffaut's alter ego Jean-Pierre Leaud and pop star Chantal Goya as a doomed couple, it's a masterpiece of sorts, uniquely creative, both classical and radical. In French with English subtitles. No MPAA rating (parents cautioned for violent themes and frank sexual discussions). 1:43.—M.W.

**Meet the Fockers (star)(star)**

Gaylord Focker (Ben Stiller) is back, this time bringing together his future in-laws (Robert De Niro and Blythe Danner) and his aggressively Yiddishkeit and overtly sexual parents (Dustin Hoffman and Barbra Streisand). It's all repeat performances and rehashed gags for director Jay Roach, who with the hilarious original, set us up for a big fall. PG-13. 1:56.—A.B.

**Melinda and Melinda (star)(star)(star)1/2**

Woody Allen has elegant fun with the interchangeability of comedy and tragedy. Focusing on beautiful, complex young Melinda (Radha Mitchell), he waltzes her through two different stories, one comic, one dramatic. No Woody this time, but another crack ensemble (Will Ferrell, Chloe Sevigny, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Amanda Peet, Wally Shawn) keeps it witty or moving. PG-13. 1:40.—M.W.

Million Dollar Baby (star)(star)(star)(star)

Clint Eastwood admirably returns as both director-producer after last year's classic "Mystic River"—for a tough, pungent boxing drama with a delayed-action wallop. One of Eastwood's best, it starts out like another "Rocky"-style Cinderella story, but turns dark, savage and heart-breaking in its final act. With Hilary Swank (as the contender) and Morgan Freeman. PG-13. 2:12.—M.W.

Millions (star)(star)(star)1/2

A magical British film about two boys (Alexander Etel and Lewis McGibbon) in a Liverpool suburb, stumbling on piles of money and having their lives radically changed, this Christian fable/fantasy about Mammon and kids is done with wide-eyed wonder, wit and imagination. Director Danny Boyle ("Trainspotting") and writer Frank Cottrell Boyce ("24 Hour Party People") shine. PG. 1:37.—M.W.

Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous (star)1/2

FBI agent Gracie Hart (Sandra Bullock) gets another makeover, this time to become the new face of the Bureau, traveling the country with her entourage—stylist Joel (Diedrich Bader), hair, makeup and partner Sam Fuller (Regina King), a problem agent with anger management issues. When old pageant pals are kidnapped in Vegas, guess which stiletto-heeled Miss FBI saves the day? PG-13. 1:55.—A.B.

Off the Map (star)(star)(star)1/2

The mysterious alchemy of art is the central subject of actor-director Campbell Scott's lovely little comedy-drama, set in the New Mexico desert and based on Joan Ackermann's play: the story of a sweetly eccentric, unself-consciously artistic family (Joan Allen, Sam Elliott and Valentina de Angelis) that helps turn its uptight IRS investigator (Jim True-Frost) into a cult-idol painter. PG-13. 1:51.—M.W.

The Other Side of the Street (star)(star)(star)

How do you weigh loneliness against the possibility of heartbreak? This sweet, sad Brazilian independent film keeps a lid on sentimentality while exposing the risks of love. Stars Fernanda Montenegro (of "Central Station" fame) and Raul Cortez. No MPAA rating (parents cautioned for adult themes). 1:38.—J.R.

The Pacifier (star)1/2

Vin Diesel tries to follow in the footsteps of Arnold Schwarzenegger's "Kindergarten Cop," playing a tough guy hero tamed by adorable kiddies. "Cop" wasn't very good, but this is worse: a bland, dopey, over-produced comedy that mixes crude humor with gooey sentimentality and wastes a good cast: Diesel, Lauren Graham, Carol Kane, Brad Garrett. Directed by Adam Shankman. PG. 1:37.—M.W.

Palindromes (star)(star)1/2

This bizarre, provocative and almost deliberately off-putting new dark comedy from Todd Solondz ("Welcome to the Dollhouse," "Happiness") is about a young girl's coming of age, abortion and domestic terrorism with eight people (including Jennifer Jason Leigh) sharing the leading role of runaway Aviva. Extremely bleak satire; Ellen Barkin is scathing as Aviva's mom. No MPAA rating (adult for sexuality, language and mature thematic material). 1:40.—M.W.

The Phantom of the Opera (star)(star)

This immensely successful musical finally comes to the screen and, for once, the shortcomings can't be blamed on the moviemakers. Director Joel Schumacher retains much of the sweep, panorama, Grand Guignol horror-movie antics of the original. Alas, unavoidably, he also retains Lloyd Webber's sugary tunes and the story's vapid mix of monster movie and creepy, repressed sexuality. PG-13. 2:21.—S.S.

The Ring Two (star)(star)

This creepy follow-up to the 2002 American remake of Japan's most popular horror movie, the 1998 "Ringu" (about

the killer video that destroys its audiences), turns into just another unnecessary sequel. Directed by "Ringu's" helmer, Hideo Nakata, parts of it are stunningly made and star Naomi Watts acts well above the call of duty. But it's still a pointless, if fitfully scary project. PG-13. 1:50.—M.W.

**Robots (star)(star)(star)**

A young sparkplug of an inventor, Rodney Copperbottom (Ewan McGregor), visits Robot City in search of fame, but instead finds corruption and misfits (Robin Williams, Drew Carey). Wildly inventive and sweetly subversive, even the occasional dent can't keep animated "Robots" from being a compelling bit of comic clockwork. PG. 1:31.—R.E.

**Sahara (star)(star)**

Adventurer Dirk Pitt (Matthew McConaughey) searches for a Civil War-era, iron-sided Confederate ship in Africa, gets the girl and exhibits an almost genetic predisposition for repeated, serendipitous escapes. Penelope Cruz provides the love interest, and Steve Zahn the laughs, but neither keeps "Sahara's" teetering stack of improbabilities from sinking it. PG-13. 2:04.—R.E.

**Sharks 3D (star)(star)(star)**

Jean-Jacques Mantello's conservation-minded "Sharks 3D" attempts to demystify this aquatic rock star and place it neatly in its post on the food chain. Geoffrey Bateman, who narrates via a curious, death-defying turtle, helps "Sharks" become a kid-friendly environmentalist flick full of visual poetry. No MPAA rating (family). 0:42.—R.E.

**Sideways (star)(star)(star)(star)**

Alexander Payne's great movie of Rex Pickett's novel—a boisterous, brilliant, heart-warming tale of aging college buddies Paul Giamatti and Thomas Haden Church and their last bachelor fling through the California wine country—mixes road film, drama and romantic comedy with vintage perfection. Virginia Madsen and Sandra Oh fuel the romance and comedy. R. 2:04.—M.W.

**Sin City (star)(star)(star)1/2**

Frank Miller's post-"Kiss Me Deadly" comic book world of hard guys, rich degenerates and hookers looks even better as a movie, shot in gleaming monochrome. Co-director-writers Robert Rodriguez and Miller charge up three of Miller's stories, "That Yellow Bastard," "The Hard Goodbye" and "The Big Fat Kill," with stunning visuals and a top hard-boiled cast: Bruce Willis, Mickey Rourke, Clive Owen, et al. R. 2:04.—M.W.

**Son of the Mask (star)1/2**

This follow-up to Jim Carrey's "The Mask" stars Jamie Kennedy as a struggling animator who conceives a talking, dancing, top-hat-wearing baby while wearing the famed wooden, green mask. There's more plot stuff, but none of it matters, because this entire film is in the service of its special effects, which just don't seem all that special. PG. 1:26.—A.B.

**State Property 2 (star)**

The left hand doesn't know who the right hand is shooting in "State Property 2," writer/director Damon Dash's prodigiously muddled thug-life sequel. The story is simple enough: Beans (Beanie Sigel), a Philadelphia drug boss, is convicted of attempted murder. While incarcerated, his crew loses market share and Beans is determined to get back on top when released. "State Property" is dark, disjointed and incredibly digressive. R. 1:34.—David Hiltbrand, Knight Ridder

**The Upside of Anger (star)(star)**

An ambitious but unsatisfying little suburban comedy-drama, with Joan Allen and Kevin Costner enjoyable as an unconventional couple who stumble into a fortysomething affair when the woman's husband disappears. The rest of the film, involving Allen's four unlikely daughters (Evan Rachel Wood, Keri Russell, et al.), is less credible. Written and directed by Mike Binder, who co-stars as Costner's sleazy producer. R. 2:01.—M.W.

**The Wedding Date (star)1/2**

This formula-bound romantic comedy about a big fat British wedding, with "Will & Grace's" Debra Messing as the manic half-sister of a London bride (Amy Adams) and Dermot Mulroney as Messing's phony boyfriend is like a

big expensive party that goes sour as soon as you arrive. It's an awful movie. Based on Elizabeth Young's "Asking for Trouble." PG-13. 1:30.—M.W.

The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill (star)(star)(star)1/2

Judy Irving's intimate documentary profiles Mark Bittner, a wandering ex-musician who cares for a flock of discarded and escaped parrots in San Francisco. This documentary reveals larger personal truths for Bittner while exploring a hidden society of unwanted parrots. G. 1:23.—R.E.

Winter Solstice (star)(star)(star)1/2

Josh Sternfeld has a feel for life's little interactions—the moments before or after Big Things Happen: most of the time. His feature debut lingers on widower Jim Winters (Anthony LaPaglia) and his two sons with a melancholy vibe and superb performances. R. 1:30.—A.B.

XXX: State of the Union (star)1/2

How is it possible for a major franchise picture and sequel to the 2002 hit "XXX," starring Ice Cube (replacing Vin Diesel), Samuel L. Jackson and Willem Dafoe be this howlingly ridiculous? New XXX Cube is sprung from prison to foil a ludicrous U.S. coup d'etat; it goes downhill from there. PG-13. 1:41.—M.W.

**GRAPHIC: PHOTO:** Regina Hall feels like queen of the castle in the kidnap caper, "King's Ransom," a take off of O. Henry's "The Ransom of Red Chief."

**PHOTO:** In "The Interpreter," Sean Penn (left) is federal agent Tobin Keller assigned to protect UN interpreter Silvia Broome (Nicole Kidman).

**PHOTO:** Jessica Alba stars as Nancy in "Sin City," based on Frank Miller's comic books "That Yellow Bastard" and "The Big Fat Kill."

**PHOTO:** Kevin Costner (left) as Denny and Joan Allen as Terry, an unconventional fortysomething couple, in a scene from "The Upside of Anger."

PHOTOS 4

**LOAD-DATE:** May 6, 2005

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Chicago Sun-Times

May 6, 2005 Friday

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 2

LENGTH: 788 words

HEADLINE: Think I can guess what was gnawing at runaway bride

BYLINE: Debra Pickett

**BODY:**

If you happen to be planning a wedding, even one that is one-tenth the size of the now infamous extravaganza that was supposed to take place in Georgia last weekend, you can't escape the question. And, especially if you are a bride — not a capital-B Bride, or a making-14-of-your-friends-buy-unfortunate-dresses bride, but just a woman who happens to have a wedding coming up in a couple of months — everyone wants to know the same thing: "Would you do it?"

It, I'm guessing, is not the specific "tell your doltish fiance that you're going for a run, catch a bus to Vegas, go on to Albuquerque and then falsely report that you've been kidnapped" plan, but just the more general "leave town a few days before your wedding" idea.

I haven't known exactly how to respond to that question.

I mean, I don't really plan to. But you never know.

Give this woman a cookie

The first thing my friends and I noticed about Jennifer Wilbanks, forever to be known as "the runaway bride," was her size: five-foot-eight and 120 pounds.

The woman is clearly very hungry. Or, anyway, she was hungry before she decided to distract herself by planning an enormous wedding. You have to wonder if the whole fake kidnapping drama could have been avoided if her intended groom, John Mason, had simply suggested, "Why don't you skip the evening jog tonight and have a snack instead?"

The second thing we noticed was that, while she had 14 bridesmaids, she apparently did not have a single friend who she could call up and say, "I'm freaking out. Get over here and bring ice cream."

So it came as no surprise to us, then, that Wilbanks has continued to let the men in her life speak for her. The Rev. Thomas Smiley, the pastor who'd been doing premarital counseling with Wilbanks and Mason — and obviously doing a great job of it — read a statement on Thursday afternoon, apparently written by Wilbanks, which was supposed to offer an explanation and apology for her bizarre disappearing act.

It did neither.

Instead, Wilbanks wrote that her escape had "nothing to do with cold feet" and was not an attempt to leave Mason at the altar. The timing, she seemed to say, was just a coincidence.

In fact, the statement said, she was really looking forward to the "spectacular wedding," and she "could not wait to be called Mrs. John Mason."

She ran away, she explained, because she was having a hard time dealing with "certain fears that were controlling my life."

What these fears were, she couldn't explain.

Though Wilbanks and I don't have much in common, I think I can take a stab at describing the kind of fears she — or,

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actually, her father's pastor — meant.

Because, although I'm not really aiming for my small, private wedding to be "spectacular," or any other form of the word "spectacle," and I am not planning to take my husband's name — Mrs. The Boyfriend, is way too cumbersome — I did feel a certain connection to Jennifer Wilbanks, like there was a part of her that was very familiar.

Not the deeply psychotic part

But the modern woman part. The hitting 30 and still not being sure you're a grownup part. The wondering if this is all there is part.

There is, I suspect, a little bit of a runaway bride in all of us. There certainly is in me.

In the wake of Wilbanks' and Mason's story, and all the would-you-do-it questions we've been getting from friends, my fiance and I actually discussed a "Plan B." We would not, we agreed, leave the other person standing at the patch of Park District grass where an altar might be if we were having one. We would not invent fake crimes involving members of other ethnic groups.

Instead, if either of us was too freaked out to show up for our Saturday evening wedding, we'd let the other person know on Friday night. By phone.

And, since most of our guests would be in from out of town, the dinner party would still go on. But we would skip the champagne toast and the string quartet.

We were joking. Mostly.

Reluctance to change

But we also each felt a tiny bit of relief at the idea of having an escape plan.

Because, as people who have moved from job to job and apartment to apartment and life plan to life plan, the idea of doing something permanent — even something as smart and joyful as deciding to make your life with the person you love — is deeply frightening.

We've each spent more than 30 years avoiding mistakes of that scale.

But the longer you live on your own, the bigger a deal it is to contemplate changing your life to join it with someone else's.

So, no, we probably won't run.

But we'll each have our cell phones with us the night before our wedding. And there's something comforting about that.

It feels good to have a plan.

And the occasional cookie.

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CNN

SHOW: AMERICAN MORNING 7:00 AM EST

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**TRANSCRIPT:** 050602CN.V74

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**HEADLINE:** First High-Level Demotion in Prisoner Abuse Scandal Approved; 'Battle Fatigue'

**BYLINE:** Bill Hemmer, Soledad O'Brien, Andy Serwer, Jack Cafferty, Adaora Udoji, Barbara Starr, Adaora Udoji, Carol Costello

**GUESTS:** Louise Murray

**HIGHLIGHT:**

The first high-level demotion in the prisoner abuse scandal now has been approved. Coming home from war is a joyous occasion for military families, but to some couples, readjusting to civilian life can put a big strain on their marriages, and now the Army is trying to help.

**BODY:**

SOLEDAD O'BRIEN, CNN ANCHOR: Let's get to the headlines first, though, with Carol Costello. Hello again.

CAROL COSTELLO, CNN ANCHOR: Hello. Good morning, everyone. Now in the news, President Bush says each generation has a responsibility to work to achieve peace. The comments came as President Bush heads to Europe. He left in the last hour. The trip is spent to commemorate 60 years since the end of World War II. It will include stops in the Baltics, then in Russia, and will include a visit with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Another attack on Iraqi police. This time in Tikrit. Officials say a suicide bomber rammed his car into a bus carrying Iraqi police officers to work. At least seven were killed, three others wounded in that attack.

Actor McCauley Culkin is expected to soon testify on behalf of pop star Michael Jackson, perhaps as early as next week. He's one of the defense witnesses expected to refute claims that Jackson has a history of inappropriate behavior with boys. The defense began presenting its case on Thursday. Two witnesses denied Jackson has molested them as boys, even though that they had slept in the pop star's bedroom, in his bed, at Neverland Ranch on several occasions.

And a London fountain built in memory of Princess Diana is reopening today in Hyde Park. The memorial has been closed off and on since last July for repairs. Among the problems a broken pump that turned the fountain into a mud bath, and a tourist slipped and fell over in the water because the floor of the fountain is slippery. It was meant for people to walk in it. So they replaced the slippery tile with a rougher surface so people wouldn't slip and fall and perhaps get seriously hurt.

BILL HEMMER, CNN ANCHOR: Thank you, carol.

O'BRIEN: Thanks, Carol.

HEMMER: The first high-level demotion in the prisoner abuse scandal now has been approved.

To the Pentagon and Barbara Starr. Barbara, good morning.

Much of a surprise here?

BARBARA STARR, CNN CORRESPONDENT: Not a surprise particularly inside the military, but indeed Brigadier General Janis Karpinski, the Reserve Army general who was in charge of Abu Ghraib Prison and other prisons at the time of that prison abuse scandal now demoted to colonel. And that demotion, Bill, was directly approved by President Bush.

Karpinski oversaw several prisons in Iraq, and she was investigated, if you will, on the following charges. Dereliction of duty, misrepresenting to be a investigating team, failure to obey a lawful order, and yes, shoplifting. She was found essentially liable on two charges, dereliction of duty and the shoplifting, dereliction for essentially failing to properly oversee the prisons, to make sure she knew what was going on. And that very unusual shoplifting charge, Bill. It was back in 2002. She was detained at a military store here in the United States which when she was still a colonel for apparently shoplifting about \$22 worth of cosmetics. Some of her Army colleagues here in the Pentagon already saying perhaps not the most expensive shoplifting, but nonetheless, certainly one cannot be a general in the United States army and have a charge of shoplifting—Bill.

HEMMER: Well, That surprises us, Barbara. Does it surprise you?

STARR: There had been some word about all of this. What apparently really did General Karpinski in was the dereliction of duty at Abu Ghraib. She was found to have failed to have fulfilled her duties. On the shoplifting, Bill, it apparently happened when she was a colonel, and then when she was promoted to brigadier general, she filled out paperwork that is essential, where she was mandatory, where you're supposed to answer many questions about what may have transpired, that the military needs to know about.

Apparently, we are told by sources she did not mention the shoplifting, and that means she failed to essentially tell the truth, something that is frowned upon.

HEMMER: One more thing, Barbara, here. More high-level officials are they going to take the fall for this or not.

STARR: Well, that is difficult to say at this point, but so far, apparently not. One person who was cleared of all allegations at this point is Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez, the man who was in charge of all U.S. forces in Iraq at the time.

The question now for General Sanchez, now that he has been cleared, the most high level general, is whether he will get a promotion and a fourth star. That will essentially be up to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. And so far, he's been asked many times, but Secretary Rumsfeld refusing to say whether he supports a promotion for General Sanchez — Bill.

HEMMER: Barbara Starr at the Pentagon this morning. Thanks.

O'BRIEN: Now, to our special series "Battle Fatigue." Coming home from war is a joyous occasion for military families, but to some couples, readjusting to civilian life can put a big strain on their marriages, and now the Army is trying to help.

CNN's Adaora Udoji joins with us more. Good morning, Soledad. Indeed.

ADAORA UDOJI, CNN CORRESPONDENT: Good morning, Soledad.

Indeed, when we think of the Army, we don't necessarily think of marriage counseling, but what started as a small pilot program six years ago has blossomed into a program helping many young soldiers build strong marriages. This is especially important when so many military spouses are serving overseas.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Do you want to feed Coco?

UDOJI (voice-over): Bob Cabell, father of two young boys, husband to Elizabeth, knew after the 9/11 attacks he'd be called to duty. One of an unprecedented number of Army Reservists activated for the war on terror, he spent most of last year in Iraq, serving in the Sunni triangle, the most deadly area for U.S. soldiers, earning two bronze stars.

In 2001, it was Afghanistan. The communications expert was there for the bloody offensive Operation Anaconda in search of Osama Bin Laden. All the while, Elizabeth was at home in Virginia, taking care of the boys, taking on Bob's role, paying bills and mowing the lawn.

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ELIZABETH CABELL, MILITARY WIFE: It was difficult at times when I had stress going on here with the kids and -- or myself.

UDOJI: Often, they couldn't speak, and when they did, Elizabeth heard sounds of war.

BOB CABELL, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS: When I would be on the phone with her maybe at night, you know, and I wouldn't even maybe recognize it, but we were getting mortared, and she would hear the loud boom, and I wouldn't even think about it.

UDOJI: He learned to live with constant danger, while worrying about his family. She worried about his safety, and if he would come back a changed man.

B. CABELL: There was a disconnect in our relationship with just general stuff, making decisions and how we do that. I wanted it the way it was a year ago.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: So right now, you're just determining how you both feel.

UDOJI: Trying to speed up the reconnection, they signed up for the Army's marriage-enrichment retreat.

E. CABELL: Welcome home.

UDOJI: A rare chance to go out on a date. Alongside 60 other military couples, also a chance for the soldiers to change gears from war to relationships, listening to a chaplain's sometimes humorous lessons on communicating.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: What does it take to turn a woman on to want to have sex? You guys aren't getting any, are you?

UDOJI: Bob and Elizabeth say the program is priceless.

E. CABELL: I think we've uncovered one of our miscommunications.

UDOJI: The Army says the pressures of military duty on families is real. One study pre-9/11 found military divorce triples when a spouse is deployed. To help, the Army set up building strong and ready family programs like this. Expecting greater need this year, spending has gone up to \$2 million. That's four times what it was five years ago.

COL. TOMMY SMITH, CHAPLAIN: We want to help that soldier emotionally to be readjusted back into their home life, back home, as well as save some marriages, and also retain that soldier.

UDOJI: Part of that is having couples renew their wedding vows, a moment the Cabells treasure. They also know Bob could be called up again. But this time, they feel more prepared.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

UDOJI: And the program has just gotten bigger. The National Guard has joined in, getting \$5 million this year for programs like you one you just saw. Altogether, that's nearly 200 seminars the military will sponsor this year -- Soledad.

O'BRIEN: Which is good news.

Now the Cabells look like it worked for them. But what if they're really struggling past the couple of days and maybe even a year later, what do they do?

UDOJI: Absolutely. And the Army has addressed that specifically, and what they've done is unit chaplains are the ones who conduct these seminars. These unit chaplains are the ones who live and work among the soldiers, so say a week, or a month or even a year later, if that couple is still having problems, they already have a relationship with that chaplain, someone that they can turn to in times of trouble.

HEMMER: How are Cabells doing? The kids are cute.

UDOJI: They're doing very well. They're adorable. I mean, they're just an amazing family. We had a great time visiting them. They're doing very well. They're moving out of the D.C. area. They're going to Florida. Elizabeth just got a big promotion with her company, and Bob works for AT&T, and he will be happily moving alongside his wife down to Florida.

That's terrific. Adaora, thank you very much. A great update on that family. Appreciate it.

(WEATHER REPORT) HEMMER: We told you this story a couple weeks ago about this image in Chicago underneath a highway underpass that some say looked like the Virgin Mary. Hundreds flocked to it. They left flowers and candles and

said prayers. Last night, though, someone used black shoe polish to deface the image and police say they had no other choice to paint over it. A 37-year-old man now under arrest for damaging state property. What a reaction they had in Chicago when that word got, too. Hundreds going through there.

O'BRIEN: That will be interesting to see the reaction to that now today.

Well, the latest big job numbers have come out. Andy's got details. He's "Minding Your Business" just ahead.

HEMMER: Health officials linking these cute little pets to serious illnesses all the way across the country. Ten different states, in fact. Important advice for owners of so-called pocket pets in a moment, when we continue.

HEMMER: They are known as pocket pets, little hamsters or guinea pigs found at any pet store. They are seemingly safe, but apparently they can cause health problems for their owners. The CDC is now saying these pets have been linked to salmonella. Health officials say up to 30 people in ten states were stricken with salmonella after exposure to such animals. Many victims were children. Six were hospitalized. The infecting bacteria in each case showed resistance to multiple antibiotics, which could be a concern for health officials.

Dr. Louise Murray is here this morning. She's director of medicine at the ASPCA's Byrd (ph) Memorial Animal Hospital here in New York City. Good morning, doctor. Pretty low numbers here, relatively speaking.

DR. LOUISE MURRAY, ASPCA: Relative to the number of people who get salmonella in the country every year, this is a tiny, tiny percentage.

HEMMER: But one of the key things that I just mentioned here is the antibiotics. Resistant.

MURRAY: Exactly.

HEMMER: How much does that concern you?

MURRAY: Exactly. What — if people want to figure out what to worry about in this situation, it's not the very small numbers of people that have been infected by their pets. Of course, that's something to worry about. We don't want anybody to get sick. We need to be careful and use good hygiene.

But I think, looking at the big picture, if people want to say, well, what's to worry about here, is that this was drug-resistant strain of bacteria. What that means is that these bacteria are resistant to multiple antibiotics. And that's a situation that's been created by the way that we use antibiotics in this country.

HEMMER: Yes, and so when we usually think about salmonella, we think usually about chicken.

MURRAY: Right. Well, actually, the vast majority of people who get salmonella in this country get it not from pets, but from food. And probably the top culprits are eggs and meat.

HEMMER: How do you get it from a pet, then?

MURRAY: The way you would get from a pet if pet was either sick with salmonella. Maybe the pet would, you know, show some diarrhea. Or there can even be a healthy pet who might carrying it. So the way that you would get it is by not using good hygiene after handling the pet or especially a sick pet.

HEMMER: I think you mention one of the key things. Well, let our viewers know a couple of things you want to pass along today. Wash after holding a pet. Boy, we cannot stress that enough. Also, use extra care if the pet is ill, which you mentioned, too. And be careful when buying a pet. What kind of questions do you ask? What are you looking for?

MURRAY: Well, one of the most important things is just to take a really good look. When you go into the store, when you look into the enclosure where the animals are being kept, you want to make sure none of the animals look ill. You want to see if you see any diarrhea in the pen. You don't buy a pet that looks quiet or tired or sick. You want a healthy-looking pet. But even if your pet that you're looking at looks healthy, but other animals in the pen look ill, you want to leave that store and try going to a different store.

HEMMER: We mentioned these cute furry things here. You know, we talk about little reptiles and little turtles and stuff. Does this apply to dogs and cats, too?

MURRAY: Well, we all pass salmonella around to each other. We can give salmonella to each other, we can give to our pets, our pets can give it to us. So yes, there is a potential for a dog or cat to carry salmonella. Any animal that has an

upset stomach, you just want to use very good hygiene.

HEMMER: Well noted. Louise Murray. Thank you, doctor.

MURRAY: Thank you.

HEMMER: Nice to see you this morning. Here's Soledad.

O'BRIEN: Still ahead this morning, e-Bay hosts a frenzied bidding war for Pope Benedict's car. Andy tells us who got the winning bid and how much they paid for the second hand VW. He's "Minding Your Business" up next on AMERICAN MORNING.

HEMMER: All right. Welcome back.

JACK CAFFERTY, CNN ANCHOR: Good advice in the last segment of AMERICAN MORNING, to always wash your hands after handling your chicken.

A major jobs report out this morning. And just how much did the pope-mobile fetch on eBay? Andy Serwer's is here "Minding Your Business."

ANDY SERWER, "FORTUNE" MAGAZINE: Good morning, Jack.

I'm still letting the last remark settle in.

CAFFERTY: That's just a hygiene thing, you know.

SERWER: There's some common sense involved.

CAFFERTY: Good common sense to do that, if you're going to be handling your chicken, to wash your hands afterwards. You don't get that salmonella situation going on.

SERWER: Situation indeed.

Jobs report came in, Jack, and it was much better than expected, and that's good news for all of us. Here's what we got: 274,000 jobs created in April, much more than expected. We were looking for 175,000. The unemployment rate stays at 5.2 percent, which is just fine. And as you might expect, the stock market futures are rising as we talk. Previous to this eight of the past 10 months, jobs number had come in below expectations. And very good news there.

And here's a question for you, Jack, how much would you pay for a 1999 VW Golf with 47,000 miles on it?

CAFFERTY: I don't know.

SERWER: Fifteen-hundred bucks?

CAFFERTY: I don't know how much they're worth. That's not too many miles, right?

SERWER: Well, but yes, I mean, it's six years old.

CAFFERTY: Car's in good condition, well-cared for.

SERWER: OK, how about a quarter-of-a-million dollars.

CAFFERTY: I wouldn't pay that much.

SERWER: That's how much the pope-mobile went for on eBay, and of course this is the — you may remember this story from a couple days ago. This is the pope's — the current pope's old car. Sold by this gentleman in Germany, and he got a quarter of a million dollars for it. And, you know, I hate to say this, but you know who bought the car is goldenpalace.com. I mean, and they're doing this all for publicity, so we're saying it. These are the same folks that bought the Abe Lincoln french fry and Britney Spears' pregnancy test. Seriously. They're buying a lot of wacky stuff.

O'BRIEN: Now people are saying what the heck is goldenpalace.com. Let me go check it out.

SERWER: I don't know, but we're not going to find out.

HEMMER: They'll have a heck of a museum, too.

SERWER: They're going to have a museum with weird stuff in Vegas, and a lot of people are probably going to go to

that.

CAFFERTY: Thanks, Andy.

SERWER: Time for the File. Odds of this happening, I don't know what this are, astronomical. A construction worker in Florida, a guy named Emory Johnson, hit by lightning twice, and he's still alive talking about it. He was working on an air-conditioning system yesterday when he got hit by a bolt of lightning, knocked him cold. He said he felt like he was burning inside. And hours later, when he talked about, still shaking. He was hit by lightning the first time in 1986, sitting in his truck at an intersection. Florida is the lightning capital of the United States, has the nation's highest death rate from lightning.

I think it was Chad the other morning who was watching these thunderstorms go over. He said there was a lightning strike like every two seconds down there when one of these bands of — so that's a...

SERWER: Wow, did not know that.

CAFFERTY: Matter of time. Did you listen to Star 94 Radio in Atlanta, Bill, when you lived down there.

HEMMER: No.

CAFFERTY: Well, they've got this "runaway bride" contest going on this morning. Contestants will race around a park wearing a bridal veil in order to win a bus ticket for two to Las Vegas and Albuquerque. The radio station says the contest is BYOV, for bring your own veil.

The real runaway bride insists that hers was not a case of cold feet, she's just nuts. Contestants will have to soak their feet in ice, though, before beginning their run here for the radio station.

SERWER: Very cute.

CAFFERTY: And the money, the reason we did this, the money raised will go to the Gwinnett County Police Department, who spent tens of thousands of dollars trying to find this whack job, and they thought she might have been kidnapped or some harm, but it was nothing.

CAFFERTY: Mother's Day Sunday, lest you forget. Strong evidence moms are America's favorite parent, Soledad. You knew that.

O'BRIEN: I knew that.

CAFFERTY: A survey by the AARP found 40 percent of people say mom is their favorite parent, compared to only 20 percent who favored dad. Sixty-three percent say love is the strongest emotion they feel toward their mother. Only 41 percent say the same about their father. I wonder what the answer would have been if you asked about fear. It probably would have been different.

Hallmark, listen to this, how much do you pay for a greeting card? Hallmark says they'll sell 152 million Mother's Day cards this year. Only 95 million Father's Day cards will be sold. And I know who better be buying four of them. Get my drift there, Julie, and Jill, and Leslie and Lee?

The National Retail Federation says last year, Americans spent \$10 billion on Mother's Day gifts, only \$8 billion for dads. Mother's Day was a national holiday created in 1914. Us fathers didn't get our day until 1972.

O'BRIEN: It's not a competition, for god's sakes.

CAFFERTY: Obviously not. We're getting our butts kicked. If it was a competition, we'd be in it somewhere.

SERWER: We're not in it.

CAFFERTY: We're getting waylaid, wasted.

O'BRIEN: Oh, please. The mothers do the bulk of the work. You forgot to put that in, Jack, in your report.

CAFFERTY: And make sacrifices.

O'BRIEN: Yes, there you go. I don't see that in your script there.

Thank you, Jack.

Well, in just a moment, an incredible story out of Kansas, a pilot shot in the head while he helps police track down a suspect. Well, somehow he managed to land his plane. You're going to meet him ahead on AMERICAN MORNING.

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**LOAD-DATE:** May 7, 2005

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Contra Costa Times (California)

May 6, 2005 Friday

SECTION: F; BRIEF; Pg. 4

LENGTH: 1025 words

HEADLINE: Channeling Woody Guthrie: Springsteen evokes chills, thrills at Oakland show

BYLINE: By Tony Hicks; CONTRA COSTA TIMES

**BODY:**

He's famous, among other things, for years of orchestrating a dozen or so musicians into a huge three-hour celebration of rock and roll night after night.

He can also quietly walk out onto a stage, with a couple of instruments, and thrill a theater with just his voice and whatever music his two hands can manage.

And if that doesn't illustrate Bruce Springsteen's range of musical motion, he can also get away with singing entirely different songs, endorsing Jesus and evolution in the same set.

Springsteen thrilled the diehards, as usual, at Oakland's Paramount Theatre on Thursday night with a two-hour unplugged show, touring behind his new solo album "Devils & Dust."

There seems to be this chasm between fans lately over which is better, Springsteen leading his runaway train of shouting E Streeters through three hours of hits, or the quiet Springsteen that decides every decade or so to hit the road like Woody Guthrie, armed only with an acoustic guitar and folk songs.

It's the same person and, in some ways, the same show, only at different volumes and speeds. You wouldn't consider your car a different make when idling through wine country, as opposed to blazing down Highway 5 at 100 mph. Springsteen always tells stories and, either way, does it in a way that's completely respectful and in-line with his musical founding fathers, be it the lords of rock 'n' roll, or folk, or blues, or country, or whatever.

Come to think of it, Springsteen is one of those lords.

To see Springsteen alone, while not as fun or awe-inspiring as seeing him in a big arena show, is to see Springsteen without anyone else's motives. It lacks the camaraderie and blind chemistry of playing with the E Street Band, but to see Springsteen alone and unplugged is to see him doing exactly what's in his heart at the moment. It's also something else, seeing Springsteen's musical abilities when he's not just a component — the most important, to be sure — of one of the world's great live bands.

After walking out in a light untucked shirt and blue jeans, like some Midwestern guy approaching the lunch counter and waving briefly to the regulars, Springsteen asked the crowd for no clapping during songs — "you'll throw off my already tenuous sense of timing," he said — and climbed behind the organ for "My Beautiful Reward." While nice, it was almost forgotten when he walked out to mid-stage at song's end, started stomping his right foot, got out his harp and played "Reason to Believe," into an old, effects-laden microphone.

The effect was immediately like listening to an old, beat-up blues record from the '30s, where you feel the song much more easily than you actually hear it. For three minutes stomping with his eyes closed, Springsteen became a down-and-out bluesman on a street corner, stomping for change.

After "Devils & Dust," came an intense "Youngstown," with Springsteen showing his always underrated guitar-playing on a full, rich 12-string. He kept the vibe with "Empty Sky," snarling just a bit during the "eye for an eye" line,

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almost as a World Trade Center reminder.

He twisted the end of lines like Bob Dylan on new song "Long Time Comin,'" then hit a chord with the middle-aged audience, talking about children losing parents in a powerful "Silver Palomino." Springsteen can do as much with a song, shattering the silence with one vicious acoustic guitar stroke, as anyone alive.

Despite all that seriousness, Springsteen is at his best when he's at ease. Before "The River," he said he never figured it was a love song until recently. "Dad would say 'Bruce, love songs are a government conspiracy. It's a plot to keep people marrying and paying taxes.'" He paused to let the laughter die. "And he was right, so I didn't write any."

After a chuckling reminder to not applaud when songs begin "I already know (what it is), and you know it ... makes me feel like I'm in Vegas," he wisecracked before "Part Man, Part Monkey," a spoof on creationism. "The president says 'the jury's still out,' or 'it's very iffy,'" he laughed.

"Personally I think he believes. He's doing what he has to do so he can do what he wants to do ... uh, no applause." The song was almost a set-up for the later, serious, "Jesus Was an Only Son," during which Springsteen kept playing piano but paused singing to speculate how on the day of his death, Jesus probably wished he was back in Galilee, opening a bar and "preaching on weekends."

Of course, "Nebraska" was a crowd favorite, and "Reno" was fairly intense. Though no fault of his own, Springsteen's quiet effect gets worn toward show's end, simply because there's not much contrast. "Leah," "Further On (Up the Road)," and the uplifting "Land of Hope and Dreams" all served as good set breaks, though. One couldn't help picturing the action of "The Hitter," describing a young man making a living as a fighter and coming home to reconcile with the mother who threw him out.

During the first encore, Springsteen pulled out some screaming slide guitar for "Johnny 99," and rolled through a gentle "Land of Hope and Dreams" and "My Best Was Never Good Enough." He ended with "The Promised Land," then shook hands with just about everyone in the front row. He's the uncommonly common man, whether it's on a big stage or a small theater.

Tony Hicks is the Times pop music critic. Reach him at 925-952-2678 or [thicks@cctimes.com](mailto:thicks@cctimes.com)

#### Set list

Here's the setlist from Bruce Springsteen's Thursday night concert at the Paramount Theatre in Oakland, according to [pointblankmag.com](http://pointblankmag.com)

"My Beautiful Reward"

"Reason to Believe"

"Devils & Dust"

"Youngstown"

"Empty Sky"

"Long Time Comin'"

"Silver Palomino"

"The River"

"Two Faces"

"Part Man, Part Monkey"

"All the Way Home"

"Nebraska"

"Reno"

"Racing in the Street"

"The Rising"

"Further On (Up the Road)"

"Jesus Was an Only Son"

"Leah"

"The Hitter"

"Matamoros Banks"

Encore

"Johnny 99"

"Land of Hope and Dreams"

"My Best Was Never Good Enough"

"The Promised Land"

**LOAD-DATE:** May 6, 2005

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Copyright 2005 Cox Enterprises, Inc.  
Cox News Service

May 6, 2005 Friday

**SECTION:** Lifestyle**LENGTH:** 718 words**HEADLINE:** Runaway bride's human shield a tipoff as to her mental state**BYLINE:** NICOLE NEAL**DATELINE:** WEST PALM BEACH, Fla.**BODY:**

You'd think we'd have suspected the fiance in that whole "With This Ring, I Thee Fled" story. Had he grown weary of debating the merits of Lenox's "Poppies on Blue" china pattern vs. Wedgwood's "Celestial Platinum" and chucked his high-maintenance bride-to-be in the Chattahoochee?

But women of a certain age \_ like, over 23 \_ knew early on that infamous "runaway bride" Jennifer Wilbanks was the one capable of inflicting supreme cruelty on the ones she loved.

And the proof was in two words: 14 bridesmaids.

Jennifer Wilbanks, 32, jilted 14 bridesmaids, not to mention 14 groomsmen, when she laced up her running shoes in Georgia and ended up in Albuquerque.

Fourteen bridesmaids? Fourteen?! She could stage her own production of "Steel Magnolias" with fewer bodies.

Just getting that wedding platoon down the aisle would give the organist carpal tunnel.

Now, to be fair, her fondant has probably been sliding off her cake, if you know what I mean, for quite some time. After all, she did lop off her own hair, a behavior mental-health professionals consider more "Squeaky Fromme" than "Modern Bride". And she did willingly board a cross-country bus \_ why not just affix wheels to a Port-o-Potty and glide from Georgia to Vegas and beyond? \_ for her escapade.

But it's that "14 bridesmaids" tidbit that's the most revealing.

It's one thing to be 22 and impulsively squeal a gushy, "I want you to be, like, my bridesmaids!!!" to your six best friends (du jour), and they say "YES!!!" and everyone jumps up and down, and the bride-to-be goes to DogUglyDresses.com, and somewhere in Taiwan sewing machines rev up and turn bolts of puce sateen and stretch lace into what will become, next Halloween, \$200 Atlantic City Drag Queen costumes for six (now resentful) young women.

But it's another thing altogether to be 32 and conscript 14 grown women \_ and 14 matching men \_ to haul tushy to Georgia in order to line up and escort you safely down 30 feet of church aisle. What's waiting at the other end? A machine-gun nest?

Are these throw-down bridesmaids, in case a rogue faction of the ring-bearer brigade has planted land mines in the aisle runner?

At the ripe old age of 32, everyone knows that being a bridesmaid is truly an act of love. Only for someone for whom your affection runs deep and true is the purchase of the puce dress, a plane ticket, a few nights in a hotel, a stiff updo, a shower gift, a wedding gift, etc. etc. etc., culminating in the climactic moment \_ a forced march in dyed pumps \_ an honor.

By your 30s, petty jealousies of the I-wasn't-invited-to-the-popular-girl's-slumber-party variety have long since evaporated, so it's not like anyone with a maturity quotient over the Middle School Girl level is going to feel left out.

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By this time, too, attrition has thinned the friendship ranks, leaving a few beloved souls who, truth be told, are thrilled you're getting married but have no desire to be part of a human tide of taffeta and nosegays step-pausing its way to the altar. If you have 14 of those beloved souls in your life, you probably don't have room for a spouse.

Which makes you wonder: Who exactly were Nos. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14? Her dental hygienist, mail carrier, fifth-grade safety patrol partner, Pilates instructor, favorite barista at Starbucks and some woman behind the Clinique counter who matched the groom's No. 14, that guy who spotted him once at the gym?

Pick a sibling or a friend to stand up there with you. Or stand on your own. After all, the wedding is about the marriage, and that's you and him, not you and him and your 14 bestest friends in the whole wide world.

If I were this woman's fiance, that wide-end wedding party would make me wonder whether she wanted to get down the aisle at all, or if she was building in an extra 45 minutes of wriggle room in case she decided to duck out and slip on a steamship bound for Sumatra.

Really, though, I wouldn't waste time wringing my hands over her cold feet and the "honesty issue." For me, it would be the maturity issue: The specter of spending my life fighting through P. Diddy's entourage to get to my spouse would convince me it's time to board the bus bound for bachelorhood.

Nicole Neal writes for The Palm Beach Post. E-mail: nicole\_neal(at)pbpost.com

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Copyright 2005 Daily News, L.P.  
Daily News (New York)

May 6, 2005 Friday  
SPORTS FINAL EDITION

**SECTION:** GOSSIP; Pg. 28

**LENGTH:** 928 words

**HEADLINE:** SINATRA A RAPIST, WOMAN SAYS IN BIO

**BYLINE:** BY GEORGE RUSH AND JOANNA MOLLOY With Jo Piazza and Chris Rovzar

**BODY:**

Frank Sinatra was a singer, an actor, a painter and, one woman claims, a rapist.

Susan Murphy, 56, alleges that Ol' Blue Eyes demanded she do it His Way one "horrific" night in 1969.

As recounted in "Sinatra: The Life," by Anthony Summers and Robbyn Swan, Murphy, then 20, was on a date with another man at a Palm Springs restaurant when Sinatra, then 53, sent someone to beckon her to his table.

Murphy found the come-on "quite rude." But she and her date later agreed to come to a party at Sinatra's estate. Later, after her date left, she joined Sinatra's entourage on his private plane to Vegas.

After some gambling, the group ended up around 2 a.m. back at Sinatra's Palm Springs spread, where Frank invited Murphy to see one of his guest bungalows.

There, she says, "He threw me on the bed. I said, 'God no!' ... [He] just pulled my dress up, pulled down my panties, and did what he wanted to do.

"I knew I couldn't overpower him," adds Murphy, now married. "Afterward I was crying. ... I felt kind of halfway dead."

Sinatra sent her home in a car. Murphy says, "I wanted to go to the police, but I thought, 'Me against Frank Sinatra?' ... So I just kept my mouth shut."

The book also includes agent Milt Ebbins' claim that Sinatra invited a hat-check girl from Hollywood's Florentine Gardens back to his house, only to push her "through a plate-glass window" when she "wouldn't cooperate sexually. ... She was severely injured. Many stitches. ... Frank settled for a large sum of money."

Asked for comment, Robert A. Finkelstein, of Sinatra Enterprises, told us: "It sounds crazy. Frank Sinatra honored women all the time."

Bolton's ex is diplomatic

John Bolton can breathe easier.

Critics of President Bush's would-be UN ambassador have been buzzing this week that he could be haunted by his first marriage, to Christina Moser Bolton - who, so far, hasn't been mentioned in profiles of the nominee.

Steven Clemons writes on his blog, WashingtonNote.com, that "the media should investigate questions about [Christina] ... and what some of their friends consider quite cruel treatment by him of their relationship."

Clemons also writes that, during their marriage, the hyper-conservative John Bolton" was "also allegedly involved in somewhat risqué private behavior."

Clemons doesn't go into any more detail, saying he'd rather stick to "intellectual and policy differences."

Daily News (New York) May 6, 2005 Friday

The good news for Bolton is that his ex isn't in any hurry to fill in the blanks.

Christina, who served in the first Bush administration as a deputy assistant commerce secretary, tells us, "What happens in a marriage should remain between the two people."

Foes of Bolton, whose spokesman declined comment, may see Christina as an ally. But the international-trade consultant won't say boo about the nomination of her husband of 10 years.

She does scoff at any suggestion of "risqué private behavior."

"No way," says Christina. "He's a real straight guy."

An 'Idol' three-way tie?

Fallen "American Idol" contestant Corey Clark must not have been completely monopolized by Paula Abdul. He still found time to make time with other contestants, according to judge Simon Cowell.

Buried in Cowell's 2004 tell-all is the rumor that Clark had engaged in a threesome with fellow fame-seekers Kimberly Caldwell and Trenyce.

But Corey doesn't want to dredge up that part of his past.

"That's not going to be part of his book," his lawyer Richard Jefferson tell us. "Even if it is true, it was three years ago."

Side dish

PARIS HILTON isn't playing hard to get with her new love, Greek shipping heir Paris Latsis. "We're so in love," she gushed yesterday on "The View." "We're gonna get married and have kids and be together." Just so the two Parises don't get confused, she said, "He calls me Princess and I call him Babaluna." Awww ...

NICOLE KIDMAN, Wyclef Jean, Clint Eastwood, P. Diddy and Matt LeBlanc will be sure to call their moms on Mother's Day - since they speak to them just about every other day of the year. Cybill Shepherd's daughter, Clementine Ford, also loves her mom, though she admits to Webster Hall's Baird Jones, "It was really tough having a beautiful mother when I was a kid. I had boyfriends in high school who wanted to have sex with my mother. I'm not going to blame my mom for being beautiful - but it was still gross" ...

MYKELTI WILLIAMSON, who played Tom Hanks' shrimp-addicted pal Bubba in "Forrest Gump," was allegedly menaced on Tuesday in downtown L.A. by a gun-wielding driver who screamed racial slurs and threatened to shoot the actor. Cops busted 24-year-old Ernesto Diaz after Williamson got a license-plate number ...

BILL MAHER has an extra-big smirk on his face now that an L.A. Superior Court judge has thrown out a \$9 million palimony lawsuit brought by the comic's former girlfriend Nancy (Coco) Johnsen.

Surveillance

ALICIA KEYS will hit the stage at the new \$200 million Quarter at Atlantic City's Tropicana tonight and tomorrow. The entertainment complex also features Jeffrey Chodorow's Red Square, The Palm and Carmine's ...

ASPIRING POP tart EJ (aka Erin Jividen) rocks the Cafe Pierre tomorrow ...

MACAULAY CULKIN cozied up to "That '70s Show" star Mila Kunis at Suede while Topher Grace and Seth Green vied for the attention of "House of Wax" star Elisha Cuthbert. Cuthbert stuck by her "Wax" co-star Jared Padalecki ...

DEF JAM President Jay-Z will present his boss, Island Def Jam Chairman L.A. Reid, with Pratt Institute's Creative Spirit Award tonight at Lincoln Center. Expect L.A.'s comeback kid, Mariah Carey, to be there cheering him on.

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**GRAPHIC: FRANK'S WILD YEARS:** A woman accuses Sinatra of raping her in 1969, according to a new bio of the singer. **FRED PROUSER REUTERS Y? BECAUSE HE LIKES HER:** Mickey Mouse gave Christina Aguilera a warm welcome at Disneyland's 50th-anniversary celebration in Anaheim, Calif. We're sure Mickey was a gentleman - after all, the ex-Mouseketeer's planning her wedding. **Inez Van Lamswerde & Vindoodh Matadin V magazine SHE'S A MAN, BABY!** Kate Moss sprouted a chinful of whiskers for the summer issue of V magazine. Thankfully, there are those legs to

distract us from the fuzz. Seriously, Kate: Stick to spinach salad and leave the spinach chin to the guys. Richard Corkery Daily News. BATTER UP! Jeffrey ("Glengarry Glen Ross") Tambor warmed up in Central Park yesterday, opening day of the Broadway Show League's softball season. This is the league's 50th year on the diamonds at Hecksher Fields.

**LOAD-DATE:** May 6, 2005

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Copyright 2005 THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS  
THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS

May 6, 2005 Friday  
SECOND EDITION

**SECTION:** SPORTS DAY; Pg. 13C

**LENGTH:** 1290 words

**HEADLINE:** Darlington: track out of time Rural oval's tradition doesn't guarantee a future in NASCAR

**BYLINE:** Terry Blount, Staff Writer

**BODY:**

They call it the Lady in Black, and she's decked out in formal evening wear this weekend.

Darlington Raceway has a sellout crowd under the lights for the Dodge Charger 500 Saturday on the historic South Carolina track.

The sellout assures that Darlington will stay on the 2006 Nextel Cup schedule. Looking down the road, 2010 is less promising.

Saturday offers a new race date, a new time and a new atmosphere for an old place trying to stick around in NASCAR's new era.

The last tickets for the 60,000 grandstand seats were sold earlier this week.

But many Cup venues sell 160,000 seats.

Demand for those Darlington seats grew after the area went from four Cup dates to one. Rockingham, N.C., only 45 miles north, had two Cup races in 2003. Now it has none.

This season is the first in 45 years in which Darlington won't host two Cup events. The Labor Day weekend race, a Darlington tradition that dated to 1950, moved to California last year.

Darlington had a March and a November date in 2004, but this weekend's race is the only show now for NASCAR's oldest track.

The sellout is good news for the traditional fans in the Southeast who want to see NASCAR keep Darlington on the Cup schedule. But it's no guarantee.

What would guarantee it? For starters, doubling the seating capacity and adding luxury suites.

Oh, one other thing. Pick up the entire facility and move it to a major market outside the Southeast.

The track "too tough to tame" may be too old and too rural to hold Cup events much longer.

International Speedway Corp., NASCAR's independent facility management company, plans to build new tracks in Seattle and New York within the next five years.

Las Vegas and Kansas City - new facilities in big markets - want second Cup dates. NASCAR could hold Cup events in Mexico and Canada within a few years.

Adding races to the already packed 36-race schedule isn't likely, so the only option is taking races away from other locations. Darlington, Martinsville, Va., Pocono, Pa., and Watkins Glen, N.Y., are vulnerable spots on the current schedule.

No closing would cause a bigger uproar than Darlington. Many NASCAR fans feel about Darlington the way baseball fans feel about Fenway Park and Wrigley Field.

Darlington's biggest problem is location. Think of it this way: Hosting a Cup event these days is similar to hosting a Super Bowl.

You need a major airport. You need thousands of hotel rooms and rental cars. You need adequate access for hundreds of reporters covering the event.

And you need a population base that gives sponsors and TV networks a reasonable return on their investment.

Darlington can't supply any of those things, but it may survive without them. NASCAR officials are giving the track every opportunity to succeed.

This weekend's event has a buzz about it. Last November's race ended at night, but this is the first time a Darlington race will start at night. It's the first time in two decades NASCAR has raced on Mother's Day weekend.

Drivers love Darlington, partly because it's convenient. The track is only 100 miles from suburban Charlotte, where most drivers live.

But it's also competitive, old-school racing on worn-out asphalt and narrow pavement. The egg-shaped layout often earns young drivers the so-called "Darlington stripe" of scraping the wall.

"Darlington is what racing ought to be," driver Jeff Burton said. "It's almost like stepping back in time. The amenities aren't up to what new tracks offer, so the focus is more on the racetrack. I think that's cool."

Good racing and sentimental memories are great, but are they enough to save Darlington? Maybe the answer is to try to give one of the new tracks in Seattle or New York a retro look and feel.

"I don't think you could make another Darlington if you tried," said driver Ken Schrader. "There's only one Darlington."

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**MAPPING CHANGES** Vulnerable tracks and the locations that could gain a Nextel Cup date:

#### UNCERTAIN FUTURE

##### DARLINGTON RACEWAY

Darlington, S.C.

Has already lost one Cup date. Hopes tradition and great racing can save the remaining date.

##### MARTINSVILLE SPEEDWAY

Martinsville, Va.

NASCAR's oldest short track still has two races. Keeping both appears unlikely.

##### POCONO RACEWAY

Long Pond, Pa.

Independently owned facility has two races only six weeks apart. A new track in New York probably will take one of those dates.

##### WATKINS GLEN INTERNATIONAL

Watkins Glen, N.Y.

If NASCAR adds a Cup road race in Canada, The Glen is history.

#### POSSIBLE NEW LOCATIONS

##### NEW YORK CITY

International Speedway Corp. already has spent \$100 million to purchase land on Staten Island for an 80,000-seat facility. Traffic and environmental issues are holding up the project, but it's only a matter of time until it gets done.

##### PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Talladega president Grant Lynch is heading up the project to find the right spot, probably near Seattle. The original site in Marysville (north of Seattle) fell through, but most Washington state officials want this to happen. If it doesn't, Vancouver, B.C., and Portland are lying in wait.

#### MEXICO

The Mexico City Busch race in March was a huge success. Can a Cup race be far behind? Monterrey also wants a race.

#### CANADA

Busch may race outside Toronto next year to test the interest. Montreal already is lobbying for a Cup road race.

#### KENTUCKY SPEEDWAY

Fort Mitchell, Ky.

Plush new facility has a Busch race, a Craftsman Truck race and an IRL event. It's 30 miles south of Cincinnati, 50 miles northeast of Louisville.

#### SEEKING A SECOND CUP DATE

#### LAS VEGAS MOTOR SPEEDWAY

Las Vegas

Speedway mogul Bruton Smith wants to buy out another track - Darlington or Pocono - and move a date to Vegas.

#### KANSAS SPEEDWAY

Kansas City, Kan.

Lesla France Kennedy, president of International Speedway Corp., planned it, developed it, loves it. Factor that in and it's clear another race is coming. But it could be the Nextel All-Star race. Sprint, which is headquartered in the area, merged with Nextel. SPOTLIGHT: DODGE CHARGER 500

#### This week

The Dodge Charger 500 at Darlington Raceway, a 1.3-mile oval in Darlington, S.C., 70 miles northwest of Myrtle Beach.

#### Track

One of the oldest facilities in Nextel Cup is hosting a Saturday night race - ending a NASCAR tradition of not racing on Mother's Day weekend.

#### Defending champion

Jimmie Johnson won both Darlington races last season. He has finished in the top 10 in five of his six career starts at the track.

#### In the groove

Kurt Busch has finished seventh or better in the last three races and six of the nine events this season.

Elliott Sadler has finished 11th or better in five of the last six races, moving up eight spots in the standings.

Dale Earnhardt Jr. has finished in the top 15 in the last five races, enabling him to move up 17 spots and crack the top 10 in the standings.

Michael Waltrip has finished sixth or better in the last three races, moving up 16 places in the standings.

#### Getting loose

Bobby Hamilton Jr. has finished 35th or worse in seven races. He has the fewest points among the drivers who have raced in all nine events.

Jason Leffler has finished 25th or worse in seven races. A 12th-place showing at Martinsville is his only finish better

than 22nd.

Scott Wimmer has finished 31st or worse in the last four races. He has yet to place in the top 15.

Mike Wallace has finished 23rd or worse in all nine races. He has yet to finish on the lead lap.

Caution flag

Most drivers consider Darlington the toughest test in NASCAR.

The unique egg-shaped layout makes it almost impossible for crew chiefs to set up the car to run well at both ends of the track. The driver will have to fight the steering wheel at one end on every lap.

The surface of the track tears up tires quickly, so the cars become hard to handle on long green-flag runs. This is not a good place to gamble on taking two tires in the pits.

**GRAPHIC: PHOTO(S):** 1. (FILE/Associated Press) Darlington's Saturday night race marks the Nextel Cup circuit's only visit this year. The small-town South Carolina track had hosted two annual events for 45 years. 2. (2004 FILE/Associated Press) Kansas Speedway 3. (FILE 2004/Associated Press) Jimmie Johnson was a two-time winner at Darlington last year

**LOAD-DATE:** May 7, 2005

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Global News Wire - Europe Intelligence Wire  
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Evening Mail

May 6, 2005

**LENGTH:** 79 words

**HEADLINE:** VIVA LAS SELFRIDGES

**BODY:**

FRANK Sinatra tributes, Elvis on stilts and live magic shows are helping to mark the centenary celebrations of the city of Las Vegas at a Birmingham department store.

Selfridges in the Bullring is staging a Vegas Supernova promotion until May 15. The event includes acts paying tribute to the hottest Vegas stars, from Elvis to Elton, showgirls high kicking their way around the store and experts on poker teaching the basics of the city's most famous card game

**JOURNAL-CODE:** FEVM

**LOAD-DATE:** May 7, 2005

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Copyright 2005 Star-Telegram Newspaper, Inc.  
Fort Worth Star Telegram (Texas)

May 6, 2005, Friday FINAL EDITION

**SECTION:** METRO; Pg. 2B**LENGTH:** 688 words**HEADLINE:** PEOPLE WATCH**BYLINE:** Staff and Wire Reports**BODY:**

Paris plans to marry Paris!

So anyway, there we were, minding our own business, watching The View, when the biggest news of the day hit us, flounderlike, right across the face: Paris is marrying Paris. From the You-Can't-Make-This-Up (Even if You Tried) Department, Paris Hilton announced on the air Thursday that she is marrying a guy named Paris. No last name given (but wouldn't it be smashing if it were "France"?). We learned that he's rich (duh), that they've known each other 10 years (yeah, sure) and that "we're so in love." (For now, my dear. For now.) The best exchange during the big announcement was this. Hilton says, "He calls me Princess and I call him Babaluna." Joy Behar: "Babaluna?" Barbara Walters: "That's the sweetest thing I've ever heard ... Thank you for sharing that with us." Yes, thank you, Paris.

— Newsday

Newsmakers

\* Jennifer Beals, 41, who shot to fame with 1983's Flashdance, has taken her passion and made it happen: She's expecting her first child, People mag says. The baby is due in November. Daddy is Beals' husband of seven years, Canadian businessman Ken Dixon, who has two kids from a previous marriage. This is a switcheroo for Beals and her TV persona on Showtime's The L Word: She plays a lesbian whose partner (played by Laurel Holloman) is pregnant.

\* What's worse: tabs accusing a celeb of being a heroin addict (romantic myths about suffering for art; stint in rehab; comeback movie/CD) or of being "tubby" (New York Post) and "pudgy" (New York Daily News)? That's the word on Spider-Man star Tobey Maguire, who has reportedly gained some pounds. The tabs say the "lardy leading man" (Post) was spotted in Vegas by always-trim Jessica Alba, who laughed about the Seabiscuit star's "huge" vastness.

\* Actress Katie Holmes decided to skip a New York City fashion gala at the last minute Monday night, reportedly because she didn't want to be the focus of attention following the revelation she is dating Tom Cruise.

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\* Another volley has been fired in the Idol mess. People mag reports that Simon Lythgoe, son of producer Nigel Lythgoe, had a "relationship" with Kimberley Locke, another finalist in 2003, same time as the alleged affair between Paula Abdul and Corey Clark. Said Locke: "Any relationship I had with anyone involved in the series started after the competition ended."

#### Montel's pot plea

Montel Williams has called on Congress to allow him and others suffering from various illnesses to legally use medicinal marijuana. "This is really so simple it's ignorant," the talk-show host said at a Capitol Hill news conference. Williams was found to have multiple sclerosis in 1999, and he says legal drugs don't help the pain. "I'm hurting right now. I'm hurting. Why? Because I knew I had to come to Washington, D.C., and I can't carry anything because I know I'd get busted." A bipartisan group of lawmakers said decisions about medical marijuana should be left to the states. Although 10 states have laws that allow the drug's medical use, the Supreme Court has said that does not protect distributors from federal antidrug charges.

#### Celebrity birthdays

Baseball Hall-of-Famer Willie Mays is 74. Singers Bob Seger and Jimmie Dale Gilmore are 60. TV's Tom Bergeron is 50. Actor George Clooney is 44. Actress Roma Downey is 42. Mark Bryan (Hootie and the Blowfish) is 38. Chris Shiflett (Foo Fighters) is 34.

#### Notable death on this date

1910 Britain's King Edward VII died.

#### SAY ANYTHING

"Elvis is the mirror of our nation: fat but formerly great. . . . Elvis Presley was everything America is, or seems to be on its bad days . . . eventually eroded by excessive wealth and self-indulgence."

— New York Times critic Alessandra Stanley, reviewing a new four-hour miniseries on CBS. See story, 1E

— Compiled by Jim Davis from staff and wire reports

#### -PHOTO-

1. Photo: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/CHRIS PIZZELLO  
PARIS HILTON

2. Photo: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/CHRIS PIZZELLO  
PARIS HILTON

3. Photo: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/CHRIS PIZZELLO  
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LOAD-DATE: May 9, 2005

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The Hollywood Reporter

May 6, 2005 Friday

**LENGTH:** 1301 words**SOURCE:** Online**BYLINE:** Chris Morris**BODY:**

"Any way you want me, that's how I will be," Elvis Presley sang in 1956. This month, his fans will be able to get their Elvis in just about any way imaginable.

A network TV miniseries and special, a book, a DVD and three albums devoted to the life and music of the King of Rock 'n' Roll are hitting the marketplace in May, and a Broadway musical featuring Presley's songs continues its run. Nearly 28 years after his death at age 42 on Aug. 16, 1977, Elvis is enjoying a visibility and commercial viability that most contemporary music stars might envy. The only place Elvis won't be visible will be on the big screen.

The flood of Presley product will feed the seemingly insatiable needs of the late singer's devotees. In "Elvis by the Presleys," a CBS special airing May 13, Priscilla Presley says of her late ex-husband's relationship with his fans, "It was almost like a love affair." The affair has continued unabated with unbridled passion for half a century.

Forbes magazine reported that Presley made more money than any other deceased entertainer last year; his estate earned \$40 million in 2004. (Incredibly, little of that figure comprises record royalties because Elvis and his manager Col. Tom Parker sold the musician's interest in back royalties to RCA Records in 1973 for \$5.4 million. Royalties from his 1973-77 recordings go to the estate.)

This year, Robert F.X. Sillerman finalized the purchase of 85% of Elvis Presley Enterprises Inc., the Presley estate's corporate entity, for \$100 million — seemingly a bargain, considering Elvis' perennial earning power.

Presley's music back catalog remains indefatigable: 52 years after he cut a record as a gift for his mother at Sam Phillips' Memphis studio, there are more than 70 Elvis collections in print on RCA, from original albums to multidisc boxed sets.

Joe DiMuro, executive vp and general manager of Sony BMG Strategic Marketing Group, which handles Presley's posthumous output, said the catalog is "in the top two most profitable entities within the entire (Sony BMG) catalog. There's no doubt it's extremely robust worldwide. He transcends borders, nationalities, ethnicities."

Elvis' ongoing, universal appeal no doubt sparked CBS' decision to schedule six hours of primetime Presley programming during the May sweep period.

"CBS has turned this into 'May is Elvis Month,'" DiMuro said.

Kelly Kahl, CBS senior executive vp program operations, said that with the ratings primacy of ABC's "Desperate Housewives," Sunday evening — the night the biographical miniseries "Elvis" premieres — has become "a real battlefield."

"We need an entity that creates its own buzz," Kohl said, "and (the Presley specials are) the vehicle for that. ... It's certainly one of the linchpins of our sweep."

CBS' Presley onslaught — which is distinguished by an unprecedented level of cooperation from the Presley estate — begins Sunday with the first episode of "Elvis"; the second part airs Wednesday. The miniseries, covering Elvis' life from his mid-'50s ascent through his comeback TV special in 1968, stars Dublin-born Jonathan Rhys Meyers as Presley. Randy Quaid co-stars as Parker, and Camryn Manheim portrays Elvis' mother Gladys.

"Elvis" is the fourth telefilm to essay the Presley legend; the first, John Carpenter's feature starring Kurt Russell, aired in 1979. It's the first docudrama on the singer since a 10-part, five-hour biographical series was broadcast in 1990. "It's a long time ago," executive producer Howard Braunstein said. "Enough time had passed. It felt like a wonderful opportunity."

Early in production, the "Elvis" creative team enlisted the support of Elvis Presley Enterprises. "We knew without the cooperation of the estate, we wouldn't get his music, and we couldn't do it without that," Braunstein said.

As a result, Sony BMG Strategic Marketing granted licenses to use 18 of Presley's original masters in "Elvis" — the first time Presley's music has been utilized in a biographical film.

In another first for a TV movie, EPE also permitted the film's crew to shoot on the grounds of Presley's Memphis mansion, Graceland, the site of high-traffic daily tours. Said Braunstein, "We would shoot, and they'd hold the tours, and we'd cut, and the tours would go through."

Graceland also was the site of much of the shoot for CBS' second piece of Presley programming, "Elvis by the Presleys," which airs May 13. The two-hour special includes extensive interviews with Priscilla Presley, her parents Ann and Paul Beaulieu, her daughter Lisa Marie, Elvis' first cousin Patsy Geranen and Memphis Mafioso Jerry Schilling. The show, which includes newly unearthed family photos and home movies, reflects candidly on Elvis' creative frustrations, marital infidelities, spiritual questing and drug use.

"Elvis by the Presleys" executive producer David Saltz had previously made contact with the Presleys while working the special "Elvis Lives," aired in 2002 on the 25th anniversary of Presley's death. "That was the story of Elvis outside the gates of Graceland," Saltz said. "This show was about who was in the room."

Saltz said that the Presley family allowed a no-holds-barred approach to Elvis' story: "There were no subjects we were told to avoid." He noted that Priscilla, who serves as both interview subject and interviewer (she interrogates her parents and sister Michelle), serves as "a thread of a lot of the storytelling."

"Elvis by the Presleys" will see continued life at retail stores following the special's airdate. A book and a two-CD album reached stores Tuesday, and an expanded DVD version of the special arrives May 17. All these projects are a product of corporate synergy: Crown Publishers, which is issuing the title, is a division of Bertelsmann AG, the half-owner of Sony BMG Music Entertainment, which is releasing the CD and DVD packages.

Edited by David Ritz, who co-authored the autobiographies of Ray Charles, B.B. King and Aretha Franklin, among others, the "Elvis by the Presleys" book includes substantial interview material not found in the TV show. It also contains hitherto unseen photos and pictures of personal Presley mementos both mundane (Elvis' comb and bottles of cologne) and unnerving (his copy of the Physician's Desk Reference, several guns and — complete with bullet hole — the TV set from his Palm Springs home).

Steve Ross, senior vp and publisher at Crown, said that 250,000 copies of the book were shipped and that orders were "much higher than we originally expected."

Beyond the "Elvis by the Presleys" audio and video packages, Sony BMG Strategic Marketing will issue the original cast album of the musical "All Shook Up" on May 31. While not an Elvis bio, the show, scripted by Joe DiPietro, contains renditions of 25 songs popularized by the King. It opened March 24 at the Palace Theatre and has been enjoying a strong run.

On Tuesday, Capitol Records will issue a live Presley set as part of its "Las Vegas Centennial Collection." It marks the first time Sony BMG has ever licensed a full album's worth of Elvis material to a competing label.

"We've licensed individual tracks but never a full package," DiMuro said. "It's kind of sacrilegious to us. ... We deliberated. We talked to the estate. We decided to do it because Elvis was such a presence in Vegas."

Pondering Presley's massive and timeless appeal, DiMuro said: "He was one of the first artists to break the race barrier and to communicate music that was not really commercial. He revived rock 'n' roll by making it available to the masses. And there was this genuineness about him. In today's market, you look at this lack of honesty and lack of authenticity, these manufactured talents."

"Love me," Elvis pleaded in 1956. He needn't have worried.

**LOAD-DATE:** May 11, 2005

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Copyright 2005 The National Journal Group, Inc.  
The Hotline

May 6, 2005 Friday

**SECTION: PEOPLE****LENGTH:** 385 words**HEADLINE:** NEWS BAZAAR: POL DISLOCATES SHOULDER TRYING TO START MOTORCYCLE**BODY:**

WI state Sen. Dave Zienwas (R) was back at work "not long after separating his shoulder" when he fell in a hotel parking lot while "trying to start his motorcycle." WI state Rep. Terry Moulton (R), "who was staying in the same hotel, drove Zien to the hospital, where his shoulder was put back into place." Moulton said Zien "laid in the parking lot for five minutes yelling for help" after he fell. "After he got out from under the flag-bedecked motorcycle, Zien walked into the motel lobby where Moulton and two other lawmakers were eating breakfast." Moulton: "To give him credit, all the while we were driving to the hospital, he was bemoaning the fact that he wasn't going to make the Senate caucus meeting that morning" (AP, 5/6).

**BECAUSE, REALLY, WHAT ELSE IS THERE TO TALK ABOUT**

MN state senators argued 5/5 that the temperature in the state Capitol "is rarely just right." Supporting a study on updating the building's heating and cooling system, state Sen. DiAnna Schimek said: "I can remember it wasn't many weeks ago that people were roasting." And Speaker Kermit Brashear said: "It's impossible to negotiate a deal in a room that's 84 degrees. Nobody wants to agree to anything." Senators "approved Schimek's proposal" (AP/Minneapolis Star Tribune, 5/6).

**WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS ONLY HAPPENS IN VEGAS**

A new bill "to make it easier to prosecute pimps" is headed to the full NV Senate for a vote. Lobbyist Ben Graham, on what's called the "anti-pimp bill": "It's supported by nearly everyone except panderers and pimps and they're sleeping this morning" (White, Las Vegas Review-Journal, 5/6).

In other news, Whore College instructor Kimberlee Cline notes: "If we want to be treated as business professionals, we need to act ethically within the industry." Whore College is presented "in conjunction with the San Francisco Sex Worker Film and Arts Festival" (Leff, AP, 5/5).

**SIPS IN TIME**

ME state Sen. Peggy Rotundo (D), on the legislature's support of her measure to make Moxie the official state drink: "I hadn't appreciated how much passion there was around this

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drink" (Washuk, Lewiston Sun Journal, 5/6).

NICE WORK, HEADLINE WRITER

An Augusta Chronicle editorial about Paula Abdul (wait, what?) bears the header: "Another activist judge?" (5/6).

**LOAD-DATE:** May 6, 2005

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Copyright 2005 The Miami Herald  
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The Miami Herald

May 6, 2005 Friday F1 EDITION

SECTION: D; Pg. 1

LENGTH: 773 words

HEADLINE: Don't worry, all is not lost with Marlins

**BODY:**

Do we believe that today's end of the state legislative session in Tallahassee is the genuine, last-chance, this-time-we-mean-it deadline for keeping the Marlins in South Florida? Do we buy that the club's owner will now run off to Las Vegas like some Midwest housewife with a coffee can full of quarters?

To quote noted musician and philosopher Kid Rock: "I was born at night, but not last night, baby."

Thursday night, the legislature said it would not consider the Marlins' request for a \$60 million tax rebate over 30 years.

Despite that, fans needn't arrive at the park tonight equipped for a candlelight vigil or counting down the dwindling homestands before our 13-year-old team runs away from home.

The club might love it if some gap-toothed kid in a Little League uniform pointed a hand-drawn SAVE OUR MARLINS sign at a TV camera tonight, but it stretches credulity to imagine the situation is so dire.

First, the franchise is committed to Dolphins Stadium at least through 2006. Beyond that, the woosers from Vegas — would Take Me Out to the Ballgame be replaced by Wayne Newton's Danke Schoen? — still need to conjure a stadium from thin air, which can be a plodding, multiyear endeavor.

So it would likely be late this decade before the moving vans actually backed in. Ample time remains for club management and governments to still try the one thing that has eluded them: compromise. A novel concept.

This business of building a new retractable-dome stadium near the Orange Bowl has reached the point of inviting ridicule in the way funding is so close to what's needed and yet the involved parties seem unable to bridge the remaining gap.

Thirty million bucks — the actual difference after the pledged contributions of the team, city and county — is, in the context of modern stadium buildings, not much more than a bag of peanuts. Losing the Marlins over \$30 million would be like walking away from a new sports car because the salesman wouldn't throw in a key fob.

**AT AN IMPASSE**

If there were an umpire to call this stadium game, he'd start by shouting, "Play ball!" That's bull as in bullheadedness, the way all these smart businessmen are being stubborn a lot more effectively than they're being creative.

It will cost \$420 million for a new stadium. Club owner Jeffrey Loria has committed \$192 million, and the city of Miami and Miami-Dade \$198 million. The state could have contributed the still-needed \$30 million with a sales-tax subsidy — but shortsightedly chose not to.

Loria and local government aren't to blame; they've agreed to a fair public/private partnership. The problem is the state curtsying to anti-tax zealots who rail by rote against any public funding "to build playgrounds for millionaire owners," but who need to consider this is how major cities play ball.

Now? Compromise would be simplest. Loria and the county/city kick in a little more each to make up for the state's lack of spine. We're not talking about solving Mideast peace here.

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Failing that, creative options are out there.

#### OTHER WAYS TO GO

One would be a consortium of generous, civic-minded locals in and out of sports coming together to make up the \$30 million difference. Let's appoint Dan Marino and Shaquille O'Neal to head the fundraising committee. Perhaps new Marlin Carlos Delgado might pledge one percent of his salary?

Donald Trump has a home here; maybe he has some spare change. Or maybe the Heat's billionaire owner, Carnival Cruise Lines magnate Micky Arison, would be magnanimous, considering the millions he has made since Governor Jeb Bush chose opening day of the 2000 season to quash a cruise ship tax that would have built a new stadium the Marlins would be playing in by now.

The only local billionaire we can surely eliminate as a possible donor is Wayne Huizenga, the former owner still loathed by fans for breaking up the '97 champs.

Marlin credibility in arguing for a new stadium was severely undermined in Tallahassee when Huizenga reversed field and said he'd be willing to extend the team's lease at Dolphins Stadium. Not renegotiate to make it more fair, mind you.

To some he may have looked like the good guy. He wasn't.

At best he was doing the Marlins no favor. At worst he was sabotaging them.

Hey, wait. Here's an idea.

Capitalize on Huizenga's dastardly rep. Ask fans to donate toward the \$30 million shortfall based on their dislike of him. The greater the animus, the greater the donation.

Figure the Marlins would raise enough fast to build that new stadium, and maybe even have enough left over to buy a Yankee or two.

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SHOW: COUNTDOWN 8:00 PM EST

May 6, 2005 Friday

**TRANSCRIPT:** 050601 cb.468

**SECTION:** NEWS; Domestic

**LENGTH:** 7388 words

**HEADLINE:** COUNTDOWN for May 6, 2005

**BYLINE:** Keith Olbermann, Andrea Mitchell, Richard Engel, Karen Brown, Leanne Gregg

**GUESTS:** Jamie Gangel, David Richardson, Jim Moret, Bill Coleman

**HIGHLIGHT:**

Mothers of children who spent time with Michael Jackson at his Neverland ranch are called as witnesses for the defense in the singer's child molestation trial. Los Angeles drivers and law enforcement agencies are in a near panic over the city's most recent spate of random highway shootings. A salary analysis firm has estimated a stay-at-home mother's salary, including overtime, ought to be \$134,471.

**BODY:**

KEITH OLBERMANN, HOST: Which of these stories will you be talking about tomorrow?

Expelled from their Baptist church because they voted for a presidential candidate their pastor did not like. Republicans and Democrats up in arms up in North Carolina. We'll speak with one of the church members.

All that while former President Bush pledges to never criticize former president Clinton. His politics, anyway.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

GEORGE H.W. BUSH, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: I like the guy.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: You like him?

GEORGE H.W. BUSH: Yes.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

OLBERMANN: If they can get along, can't we all get along?

Not as long as there's North Korea. Now there are photographs, and they suggest plans for a nuclear weapons test for Kim Jong Il.

Here we go again. If you had to, how much would it cost you to hire somebody to do the job of a housewife? Yes, a lot. But I meant we have a specific number.

And, oh, yes, you've never seen this before. Well, maybe you haven't. You have now.

All that and more now on COUNTDOWN.

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MSNBC May 6, 2005 Friday

Good evening.

It is almost unimaginable, a rural pastor at a North Carolina Baptist church ordering nine members out the of the congregation. Cheers rising from the pews because of what he decided was a transgression against the Lord, voting for a different presidential candidate than he told them to vote for from the pulpit last October.

Our fifth story in the COUNTDOWN tonight, can't we all get along? We'll go to that church in North Carolina in just a few moments.

First, in a national context, this is an odd time to start tossing people out of your church in an effort to guarantee 100 percent support for President Bush. That's because and he his father are both busy trying to erase past disputes and mend current fences.

The current president first, beginning a European tour in Latvia. There he will participate in a ceremony commemorating that country's independence from communism.

Then it's on the very nations that put Latvia under the red thumb, Russia, a particularly delicate meeting ahead with President Vladimir Putin. The U.S. has issues with the business dealings with Iran, Syria, and North Korea, and the tightening of Moscow's control over other Russian regions.

Russia's mood at the moment gauged as resentful of any attempt by America to influence Russia's local decisions.

Meanwhile, back here, some unlikely fence-mending. Senate minority leader Harry Reid commented of President Bush in Las Vegas, "The man's father is a wonderful human being. I think this guy is a loser," end quote. Reid then turned around this afternoon and told the newspaper "The Las Vegas Review Journal" that his own remark was out of line.

Quoting again, "You know the president is in Europe, probably sleeping. But I called Karl Rove and apologized for what I said."

So speaking of the man Senator Reid considers a wonderful human being, former president Bush and his still burgeoning friendship with the man who once ceded him in the 1992 election.

If you think you know this story, you ain't seen nothing yet.

Jamie Gangel now with the ex-presidents. They started as old opponents unifying for tsunami relief. Now they seem to be working on relieving the overheated political tensions of our time.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

JAMIE GANGEL, MSNBC CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): Considering they were once fierce opponents, the friendship between presidents 41 and 42 is nothing short of remarkable. And together, as special ambassadors, they've helped to raise a record \$1 billion for tsunami aid.

But as their business partnership comes to an end, they sat down to give us an inside look at their relationship and how they were personally affected by the tsunami disaster.

GEORGE H.W. BUSH: We had the satisfaction of knowing we were doing something bigger than ourselves, going out to the devastated areas. And, you know, you just get this wonderful feeling you're trying to save lives and help build up something that's been ripped down.

GANGEL (on camera): President Clinton, what still stays with you from that trip?

WILLIAM CLINTON, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: First, the scale of the loss. And I've never seen anything like this. We went to a village in Indonesia where there were 6,500 people living, and only 700 survived.

And the second thing that struck me was the — I know George felt this way — but the children that were left behind, and how they were coping with this.

GANGEL (voice-over): Beyond the tsunami alliance, the friendship is more than just political correctness. Just listen to Barbara Bush at Thursday's celebration thanking donors.

BARBARA BUSH, FORMER FIRST LADY: It's my great honor to introduce America's favorite new couple. Forget all those women on "Desperate Housewives." Everyone is talking about the Odd Couple, George and Bill. Or, as I now

call him, son.

GANGEL (on camera): People are fascinated by your friendship. Who's Felix, and who's Oscar?

CLINTON: Well, I think it's obvious who's who, if you look at our roles. He jumps out of airplanes, and I check into hospitals.

GEORGE H.W. BUSH: You're looking at...

CLINTON: I mean...

GEORGE H.W. BUSH: ... old guys and young guys. I mean, the irony is, Jamie, people think, Well, you run against each other, you're enemies. But in something like this, the nice thing about it, it sends a signal around the world that you can be political opponents and still work together for something more important than your own political future.

GANGEL: There are some moments people have seen of the two of you together at the Super Bowl, joking at the World War II memorial dedication where you shoved him.

CLINTON: Yes, that was really funny. I remember that.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Why did he shove you?

CLINTON: Well, because...

GEORGE H.W. BUSH: I don't remember.

CLINTON: I remember. The president came up and said, How's your book doing? I said, it's doing pretty well. He said, Well — he says, We don't do 900-page books. So he said, Dad's going to read the first part, and I'm going to read the second. And I said, Well, he's going to like his part a lot more than you like yours. And so (INAUDIBLE), that's what got me my shove.

GANGEL: The word is, you generally like each other. And you both know the chattering class in Washington is convinced that there must be some angle, some political motivation.

CLINTON: I know that.

GANGEL: President Clinton, the speculation for you is, this is about appealing to those red-state voters if your wife should decide...

CLINTON: Yes.

GANGEL: ... to run for president. President Bush, maybe so that in a polarizing time, it would help your son.

Is there any political motivation?

GEORGE H.W. BUSH: That's too complicated?

GANGEL: Too complicated?

GEORGE H.W. BUSH: I like the guy.

CLINTON: No.

GANGEL: You like him?

GEORGE H.W. BUSH: Yes.

CLINTON: You know, maybe it's easier for us, because we've slaked our ambition, and we got to do our lives, we got to live the lives we dreamed of. But I don't think it's all that complicated. I liked President Bush when I was a governor and he was president. And...

GANGEL: No political angle?

CLINTON: No. I mean, he's given his life to his country. Why wouldn't I like him? Plus, he's fun.

GANGEL: President Clinton, I won't even try to get you to say whether your wife will run for the White House in 2008, unless you want to. But-

MSNBC May 6, 2005 Friday

CLINTON: If I knew, I wouldn't tell you, but I don't know.

GANGEL: ... let me ask you both this. When the next presidential campaign heats up, and the attacks get ugly, will this friendship survive?

GEORGE H.W. BUSH: Oh, no question of it.

GANGEL: President Clinton?

CLINTON: Absolutely.

GEORGE H.W. BUSH: I've enjoyed working with President Clinton very, very much. In fact, I might make this pledge here, I'll never criticize him again...

CLINTON: Oh, ho, ho.

GEORGE H.W. BUSH: ... on politics.

GANGEL: You sure?

GEORGE H.W. BUSH: I'm positive.

CLINTON: Well, I don't...

GEORGE H.W. BUSH: I won't do it. I'll leave it to my son and others. I don't think George will, either.

GANGEL (voice-over): Quite a promise for two such ambitious political families.

Jamie Gangel, NBC News, Houston.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

OLBERMANN: Would that the world could get along that easily.

And if you are too young to remember the Cuban missile crisis, ask somebody who isn't. Ask them about the photographs. In those tense times, nothing influenced world opinion, nothing scared Americans more than the spy plane images of Russian technicians assembling nuclear-capable facilities in Cuba.

Nearly 43 years later, the photography is more sophisticated, and the guy running the place the new photos depict is more unstable. But the scare may be just as powerful.

Our correspondent Andrea Mitchell now at the United Nations, where American satellite photos show North Korea doing something nuclear. Andrea?

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

ANDREA MITCHELL, MSNBC CORRESPONDENT: Keith, tonight the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog agency is warning North Korea not to perform a nuclear test.

(voice-over): The question tonight, is Kim Jong Il playing a game of nuclear blackmail, or is he really getting ready to test his weapons?

U.S. spy satellites have been detecting more activity near suspected nuclear weapons sites that could indicate plans for a test, although there has been similar activity before.

MOHAMMED EL BARADI, INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY: I hope they will not test. I hope every leader who have contact with North Korea is on the phone today with North Korean authorities to dissuade them from testing.

MITCHELL: Former CIA Officer Arthur Brown is convinced North Korea will test its weapons.

ARTHUR BROWN, FORMER CIA OFFICER: Kim Jong Il, in his mind, will benefit from a test, because he thinks he'll get the recognition of being a nuclear power from the U.S.

MITCHELL: This week, the U.S. warned North Korea that it has military options.

CONDOLEEZZA RICE, SECRETARY OF STATE: The United States maintains significant — and I want to underline

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significant — deterrent capability of all kinds in the Asian Pacific region.

MITCHELL: What could the U.S. do? Since September, the Pentagon has had B-2 Stealth bombers and F-15E fighter jets on alert in Guam and could also bomb from the base in Diego Garcia, part of a contingency plan to take out North Korea's nuclear sites.

But America's allies in the region strongly oppose the military option. Just this month, South Korea rejected an upgraded contingency plan, Op Plan 5209, for the U.S. to bomb North Korea if it tests a nuclear weapon.

Many experts say a military strike would be disastrous for the U.S. and its allies.

WILLIAM COHEN, FORMER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE: You have a very dangerous situation where something could precipitate an irrational act, and suddenly there's a war with catastrophic consequences.

MITCHELL (on camera): U.S. officials say they still hope there is a diplomatic solution, and they are trying to rally the U.N. against one of the world's most dangerous regimes, Keith.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

OLBERMANN: Andrea Mitchell at the U.N. Great thanks.

North Korea is still a place of only theoretical chaos. It is already all too real in Iraq. The suicide car bombs continue. And as our correspondent Richard Engel reports from Baghdad, the death toll for the day was at least two dozen. The death toll since a week ago Thursday is at least 270.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

RICHARD ENGEL, MSNBC CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): American military commanders say insurgents are in an all-out war to destabilize the new Iraqi government before it can take control of the country.

COL. ED CARDON, 3RD INFANTRY DIVISION: Well, we've seen a clear increase in the use of suicide car bombs. And that, of course, causes more casualties.

ENGEL: Most of those casualties, Iraqi police and soldiers. Nineteen hundred have been killed in the past year, more than all American troops since the war began.

Police Lieutenant Mohammed Attia (ph) told us today he recites a prayer Muslims say to prepare for death before going to work every day.

"The Americans say we're supposed to be the front line now," he says, "but we don't have enough guns or training."

Although the U.S. has spent nearly \$5 billion to train and equip nearly 160,000 Iraqi security forces, they have little protection from car bombs.

CARDON: Clearly, there's a difference, when they're working in pickup trucks and we are working in the armored vehicles that we have.

ENGEL: What the U.S. also has is a network of rapid response teams across Iraq.

(on camera): This is the operations center for southern Baghdad. Commanders here say insurgents are changing tactics, rarely now attacking American forces, instead targeting less-protected Iraqi troops, and more often with suicide bombers.

(voice-over): Commanders here say the insurgents have adapted quickly. A month ago, their favorite target was police stations. Now, since many have been fortified, insurgents are going after police patrols and checkpoints.

U.S. troops say they are sharing field intelligence with Iraqis, but Iraqis say they need more, at the very least, equipment, so they can lead the fight against the insurgency.

Richard Engel, NBC News, Baghdad.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

OLBERMANN: Also tonight, the discord in a North Carolina Baptist church. Vote for John Kerry, and get kicked out. It had been threatened for awhile. Now, it has apparently come true. We'll talk to one of the church members about the

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dispute, next.

And the happiest place on earth? That's how the Neverland ranch was described today by a mother who let her young boy stay there overnight with Michael Jackson. The defense gets its case into high gear. But is the jury buying any of this?

You're watching COUNTDOWN on MSNBC.

OLBERMANN: The illusion has been with us for a long time, the separation of church and state, or at least the separation of a church and politics.

But separating people from a church, throwing them out because they voted differently than the minister told them to?

Accepting the nomination to run for president in 1912, Theodore Roosevelt preached, "We stand at Armageddon, and we battle for the Lord." When Al Smith ran in 1928, he was opposed by many in his own party because he was a Catholic. John Kennedy experienced some of the same things 32 years later.

But even against that kind of historical context, this story boggles the mind. A Baptist minister has expelled nine members of his North Carolina church, throwing them out of his congregation because they failed to vote the way he told them to vote in the last presidential election.

One report says he even threatened to punish those followers with what the Baptists call disfellowship. A member of that church will join us in a moment.

Last October, say members of the East Waynesville Baptist Church, their pastor, Chan Chandler, told them that John Kerry and the Democrats were for abortion and homosexuals, and George Bush and the Republicans were against both. Chandler then said that anybody who intended to vote for Kerry had better come forward to the altar of the church and repent, or leave the church.

Things quieted down somewhat, at least until this past Sunday. That's when Pastor Chandler brought up the topic again and voted out nine members. Dozens more, Republicans and Democrats alike, have walked out, saying politics has no place in that pulpit.

For his part, Pastor Chandler is not talking to the media, but he did insist to North Carolina television station WLOS that the actions were not politically motivated.

David Richardson has been a member of the East Waynesville Baptist Church, chairman of its Brotherhood, an association of senior men who help out in the community. And he joins me now.

Mr. Richardson, thanks for your time tonight.

DAVID RICHARDSON, MEMBER EAST WAYNESVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH (on phone): Glad to be here, thank you.

OLBERMANN: Tell me what happened at the church this past Sunday. How did this all come to a head?

RICHARDSON: Well, this past Sunday, the pastor preached, and he said that he would continue to call names and to recommend who to vote for. And if you failed, if you did not agree to do that, then you need to either come to the altar and repent, or you need to get out of the church.

OLBERMANN: And did he, in fact, have people removed from the church because they hadn't gone along with him?

RICHARDSON: No, not at that time, they did not. Now, he did not do this all by himself, as far as getting the people out of the church.

Now, on Sunday night, he said — he got pretty hot. It's — Pastor Chan seemed to get kind of mad in the pulpit. Now, I don't know that he did, I wouldn't accuse him of it. But he seemed to. And he said that there would be a deacons' meeting Monday night, this past Monday night. And everybody that wanted to come were invited.

Well, that's not according to the bylaws, and that's not the way that the Baptist Church usually operates, as I understand it. I've been a Baptist for something like 58 years.

And — but anyway, they were there. And he — they — this issue — this — I'll put the — his people — he had a bunch of people there. And our side, the other side of the issue, we only had about 11 people there. Well, he said — it got pretty hot, I think. And he said that from now on — this is hearsay, I wasn't there, because I didn't think I was really supposed to

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be there.

But he said, as I understand it, that any new member coming into that church would have to sign a card saying that he would agree with his political views, and this would be a politically run church, and that people would be required to vote the way he said vote, or they'd have to leave the church.

And if — he said, If you can't — He was talking to the people on our side who was there. He said, If you people can't agree with that, then you have to leave the church.

So nine of them got up and left. And I understand when they did, when they got up and left, that the ones that were there supporting the pastor just got up, cheered and clapped, gave him a big hand of applause.

OLBERMANN: Wow. (INAUDIBLE)...

RICHARDSON: Now, this, as you said awhile ago in your opening statements, this business started back in about October, before the election, when he said then, he said that, as you said over the news awhile ago, he said, This Kerry is for abortion and for homosexuals, and Bush is not. And he also made a statement that President Bush is probably one of the best Christian men that we've had running for office.

Well, I can't take issue with him there.

But then he said again about getting out of the church. He said, Either come to the altar and repent, or get out of the church. And it was — and it went on until this past Sunday night, and excuse the pun, but all hell broke loose.

OLBERMANN: Yes. That — may I ask you about your politics? Are you a Republican or a Democrat, or what?

RICHARDSON: Well, I'm a Christian. And I vote — I ask God before I go into the voting booth, I ask him how he wants me to vote. Well, now, if God has never spoken to me where I could verbally hear him, but I vote for the man who I think is the best, whether it's Republican or Democrat. It doesn't make any difference, and to me, what it is.

But I voted for Bush. I voted for Bush because I thought he was the best man for the job. It wasn't because he was a non-Catholic. It wasn't that. I don't — we didn't support abortion, we don't support homosexuals. But that's — you know, that was — I voted for the man that I thought was the best. And that's what I've always done.

OLBERMANN: And your premise is that that decision is yours, and shouldn't be given to you by even your own pastor.

RICHARDSON: Exactly. Exactly. That's exactly right. You know, can I make a statement?

OLBERMANN: Please.

RICHARDSON: Because I can't understand the women of this country, especially the women in our church, the smart women, who would stand there and let a man tell them how to vote when they vote. They fought for years and years and years trying to get the freedom to vote. And why let a man stand up there and tell them how they're going to vote? I don't understand them not saying something about it.

OLBERMANN: In talking, sir, to one of our producers this afternoon, you said something else that I thought was absolutely wonderful, and I'm going to quote you right back at you, They don't have the legal right to tell us who to vote for. God wouldn't appreciate it either.

I don't think I've heard it said better in my whole life.

RICHARDSON: That's what I think...

OLBERMANN: David Richardson, I'm out of time, Mr. Richardson. But I appreciate yours greatly, from East Waynesville, North Carolina. And we appreciate your taking the time to tell us what's been happening there.

RICHARDSON: Thank you very much.

OLBERMANN: Good night to you, sir.

So if all that has got you down, well, here is a potty-trained cat from Australia. Things are getting better.

Also tonight, will this make stay-at-home moms happier, or unhappier? A scientific determination of what their jobs would be worth if you had to pay them to do them. Our Mother's Day gift to you, coming up.

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OLBERMANN: We're back, and for the final time this week, we pause the COUNTDOWN for our strange new segment, which was named the best three minutes in television by the guy who delivers my dry cleaning.

Let's play Oddball.

We begin Down Under, where one little Australian kitty cat is doing what 32 percent of the country's human population has trouble with, using a toilet to do his dirty, dirty business. Jo Lapidge (ph) decided to potty-train her cat, Doogle, after seeing a similar scene in the American movie "Meet the Fockers." Then for some reason, local Australian television saw fit to send a camera crew to cover this cat's curiosity.

Now that we've aired it, the story officially qualifies as part of COUNTDOWN's commitment to international news.

Following Doogle's great success on the can, Lapidge hopes to sell her cat-training system to other Australians. And when they're done with it, they can try it on their cats.

To Forro Italoico (ph) for the ATP Masters of tennis, where the players shake hands with the ball boy. Actually, Fernando Verdasco (ph) had just pegged the kid in the back. It was a practice serve. But Verdasco averages 135 miles per hour with his serves. So there's a slight chance that it might have stung a bit, or perhaps frozen his spine.

Cedar Point Amusement Park in Sandusky, Ohio. Like any fun park, there are two reasons for reporters to visit. One's for the grand openings of crazy new rides like this one. And the second time, to cover the ride getting stuck upside-down for three hours. That'll be later.

Reporter Beth McLeod was on hand for the first day of Maxair, the latest monstrosity at the country's biggest amusement park. Now she's seeing what her hair looks like on a bad day nationwide. Maxair spins at over 50 miles an hour, flies over 140 feet high, and when riders get out and get off, most of them can't remember significant portions of their lives.

Also tonight, day two of the Jackson defense, today mothers explaining why they let their little boys sleep over in his bedroom. And just when you thought the runaway ride bride story couldn't get any weirder, we bring you the phrase "born-again virgin." Oh, boy.

Those stories ahead, but now here are COUNTDOWN's top three newsmakers of this day. Number three, Gregory Alston of Baltimore. He allegedly carjacked a vehicle two weeks ago, then the owner saw it parked on the street, called the cops, they came, collected it. So Mr. Alston then called the cops to report that his car, the one he had apparently carjacked, had been stolen from him. They have arrested Mr. Alston, who's a bit dim.

Number two, Robert Green of Blue Ridge, Georgia. For the fifth time, he has shown up in secret videotapes of illegal cockfighting in northern Georgia, complete with a reserved seat in the arena with his name on it. So he's been arrested. Well, what's the big deal? Well, Robert Green is the mayor of Blue Ridge, Georgia.

And number one, Paula Dawning. She's that Michigan schools superintendent, the one who earlier this week prohibited a middle school marching band from playing the old Kingsmen hit "Louie Louie" because of the song's supposedly raunchy lyrics. She has reversed her decision. The band now can play the song in a parade tomorrow. Presumably, it dawned on Superintendent Dawning, as it had been dawning on us, that it's a marching band. They don't perform the lyrics!

OLBERMANN: Earlier this week, the fiance of the runaway bride, Jennifer Wilbanks, characterized their relationship as, quote "very pure." The point he was making? No sex until after marriage. To what lengths he went to achieve that, reversing the unreversible, so to speak, you'll get just a moment.

As legal stories intersect, the same kind of terminology was today applied at the Michael Jackson trial. The mother of one of the men who already testified he was not molested by Jackson when he was a boy described the singer's love of children as "very pure."

Our correspondent Karen Brown wraps your entertainment and tax dollars in action, day 536 of the Michael Jackson investigations.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

KAREN BROWN, NBC CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): It is Michael Jackson's criminal proceeding, but legal analysts said some of his most loyal supporters are the ones that seem to be on trial, that as the defense calls to the stand

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parents and siblings of boys allegedly victimized by Jackson. First on the stand was Joy Robson, the mother of Wade Robson, who testified that he was never molested by the singer. However, she came under an aggressive attack from the prosecution after she admitted she allowed her pre-teen son to sleep alone in the same bed with Michael Jackson on numerous occasions.

JIM THOMAS, FORMER SANTA BARBARA COUNTY SHERIFF: The jurors are sitting there saying, How could you let your son spend the night with a 35-year-old man, and in one particular case, after he had been accused of child molestation?

BROWN: But Robson never wavered from her support of Jackson. She claims she allowed her son to spend so much time with the singer because she trusted him like family. Another mom of an alleged victim, Maria Elizabeth Barnes, also testified that she trusted Jackson so much that she allowed her young son, Brett Barnes, to travel alone with him to foreign countries.

CRAIG SMITH, FORMER SANTA BARBARA COUNTY PROSECUTOR: It's eerie, the fact that Michael Jackson not only has this charisma with the young children, he seems to have a charisma with the mothers.

BROWN: Early witnesses in the defense's case have all been called to counter the prosecution's claim that Jackson had a history of abusing young boys.

(on camera): Both of the moms admitted that during the time that they allowed their sons to spend so much time with Jackson, the pop star had either given them gifts, paid for trips or even paid their rent.

In Santa Maria, Karen Brown, NBC News.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

OLBERMANN: Jim Moret was inside the courtroom today, as he has been throughout the time. He's a legal analyst and attorney, senior correspondent with the syndicated show "Inside Edition," and like just about everybody else covering this trial, an old friend with whom I used to work. Good evening, Jim.

JIM MORET, "INSIDE EDITION," LEGAL ANALYST: Hi, Keith.

OLBERMANN: This defense premise of bringing up boys and their mothers to say Oh, he never bothered my son while they were sleeping in the same bed — is that going to work, or is it something of a tightrope?

MORET: You know, some of us were all quipping, with a defense like this, who needs a prosecution, because the reality is, it seems counterintuitive, to be quite honest, that you're going to put people up for negative evidence. It almost made sense to put these alleged victims on the stand, if they were only going to be brought up to say, Nothing happened to me.

But you know, on cross-examination, this prosecution has been doing very well, much like the defense did with some of the prosecution witnesses. But it was almost eerie because you have to realize that many of these jurors are parents, as many of us are parents, and when you watch these moms on the stand say, Nothing's wrong when Michael Jackson, a then 35-year-old man, was sleeping with my 7-year-old son night after night and nothing happened, it gives you a sense of — well, frankly, a sore stomach because it just — it doesn't seem right.

OLBERMANN: Could the jury be sitting there and saying, you know, My God, he had the equivalent of a harem going there, and these mothers either did not know or chose not to know? Is that the impression that's being left by this?

MORET: The problem is — frankly, Keith, some of the moms did know because one mom talked about running into another mom while they were all at Neverland, and she said, You know, Michael has special friends. And next year, your son may not be his special friend. He'll be replaced by another special friend.

And there's an emotional fall-out to that. As a matter of fact, we heard testimony today that Michael used to call some of these, quote, "special friends" his cousins so that the other kids wouldn't be jealous. So they were mindful of the fact that there was a relationship, although they went out of their way to say, Look, we trusted Michael Jackson. He's just a big kid. He's akin to a 10-year-old trapped in a grown man's body, and he's innocent and his love is innocent, and so on and so forth.

But it just doesn't seem — it seems so counterintuitive to have to buy into this alternate universe that it may just backfire on the defense.

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OLBERMANN: Jim, you mentioned the prosecution. The defense had pounded the prosecution witnesses. Now it appears that the prosecution is coming back out, and as you said, hitting the defense witnesses pretty hard. Is the prosecution regaining some of the credibility, some of the momentum that it seemed to have lost, say, during the Deborah Rowe testimony?

MORET: Well, I think there's no doubt about it. It's ironic that for the last two or three weeks, we haven't even focused on molestation, and yet in day two of the defense case, that's all we can talk about because they brought it front and center once again. And it's, frankly, a — it's a boon for the prosecution. It's something that they haven't been able to hammer home enough, and now the defense seems to be doing much of the work for them.

OLBERMANN: Lastly, looking ahead next week — Macauley Culkin didn't want any part of this. Now he's going to testify, presumably on Monday. Do we know what happened to change his mind? And what do we expect from his testimony?

MORET: Well, it's been no secret that Macauley Culkin is a big supporter of Michael Jackson. He's been on the various shows and said, Nothing happened. And it's my understanding that Michael Jackson may have reached out to him personally.

However, I can tell you this, that in the last couple of days, there may be yet another change of heart because it's my understanding that his management may not really want Macauley Culkin to testify. Now, the reality is, if he's issued a subpoena, he has to appear in court. However, if he were my client, as an entertainer who wants to have a future in this industry, I might say, as his attorney, to Tom Mesereau, the defense attorney, It may not be a good idea to call Macauley Culkin. And at that point, the defense may choose not to call him.

OLBERMANN: Yes, never — never force a defense witness against his will. Jim Moret, legal analyst, senior correspondent with "Inside Edition" and another member of our vast and successful KCBS Los Angeles alumni association, always greet talk with you, Jim. Many thanks.

MORET: It's great to be here. Thank you very much.

OLBERMANN: And only in this country could there be one running tabloid story based largely on alleged acts of sexual activity, while at the same time, there would be another running tabloid story that may prove to be based largely on alleged lack of sexual activity. "People" magazine now reporting that the runaway bride, Jennifer Wilbanks, was primarily upset before she fled because she and her fiancé, John Mason, were not — you know. One friend telling the magazine that after having recommitted to his Baptist faith five years ago, Mason become a born-again virgin:

Wait! You can do that? When did they change that rule?

Anyway, the former wild guy was now saving himself for marriage.

When did they change that rule?

In an interview earlier this week, Mason described his relationship with his errant would-be bride as, quote "very pure."

When did he this change that rule?

Coming up Monday on COUNTDOWN, a COUNTDOWN special report: Becoming a born-again virgin. Is it painful? Does it cost money? Is anything electric attached to anything?

Also tonight, the rash of California freeway shootings spawning a special police task force, even though freeway shootings have been around as long almost as the freeways.

And what do you do when facing a sex scandal? Well, if nobody would believe that you'd become a born-again virgin, try going on "Saturday Night Live" instead.

OLBERMANN: Everything old, they say, is new again, everything good and everything bad. The rash of freeway shootings in southern California has been treated as if it were a new, unheard-of phenomenon, another sign of the decay of American society in the 21st century. In fact, freeway shootings have been part of the fabric of life in Los Angeles for so long that they were mocked in the Steve Martin film "LA Story." "LA Story" premiered 14 years and 3 months ago.

The latest on what are just the latest shootings from our correspondent Leanne Gregg.

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(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

LEANNE GREGG, NBC CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): Highway shootings here in Los Angeles and in several other parts of the country are nothing new, but the number of shootings in southern California in recent weeks has put drivers on edge.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I'm pretty scared when I'm driving down the street or even when I'm on the freeway now.

GREGG: Within the past few months, at least a dozen different highway shootings have resulted in four deaths, and four other drivers were injured.

WILLIAM BRATTON, LOS ANGELES POLICE CHIEF: These are incredibly difficult to investigate. They occur at very high rates of speeds, 65, 70 miles per hour on the freeway.

GREGG: In reality, the number of highway shootings is no higher than last year, but the California Highway Patrol has created a special task force aimed at stopping the violence. They've also increased patrols with unmarked vehicles on the freeways, and the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms is set to respond to any new shootings with mobile forensic labs. Authorities have few clues and fewer witnesses in what they believe are random acts of violence.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We don't know if it was road rage, gang involvement. We really don't know what's going on with this scene right now.

GREGG: As a result of the violence, some commuters have changed their driving habits.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I'm just being more cautious about, you know, looking around, seeing who's beside me, who's behind me, you know, just being a more cautious driver.

GREGG: Along with extra caution, authorities want drivers to be on the lookout for clues that could help them prevent future highway attacks. Leanne Greg, NBC News.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

OLBERMANN: Los Angeles freeway shootings are so old that they date back to the Pleistocene era, when Paula Abdul was still a Los Angeles Lakers cheerleader. She provides the segue into our nightly round-up of the celebrity and entertainment news, "keeping Tabs."

No low profile for her. In the wake of the "American Idol" controversy, she's reportedly going to appear on "Saturday Night Live" tomorrow, our NBC mother ship saying only it was hopeful a plan would come together. Not for her to host, that plum assignment has gone to the famous Johnnie Knoxville. But some sort of appearance by Abdul has been reported by the TV series "The Insider." And that's probably a pretty solid report, inasmuch as one of the correspondents for "The Insider" is Paula Abdul.

And here are two names you have probably never heard before linked together, Paula Abdul and the pope. It's just a segue. The pope is not going appear on "Saturday Night Live." But his old Volkswagen Golf is appearing on eBay. A 21-year-old German bought it from a local used car dealer in January, one who never happened to mention that it used to be owned by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI. He thought, the buyer said, anyway, that he might make some money by auctioning it off via the world's junk dealer. He had no idea. Winning bid, 188,000 euros, about \$245,000.

And listen to the naivete in the Reuters News Service account identifying the winner. Quote, "A bidder registered as Golden Palace Casino but known to eBay" — "The winning bidder is someone who has often purchased unusual items in the past," added an eBay in Germany spokeswoman. Ah, a whole country where they do not know the viral advertising schemes of these folks.

From the worth of the pope's former wheels to the worth of a mother. The age-old debate may be over. We now know how much a stay-at-home mom should get paid for all her hard work. That and a wrap of our favorite — five favorite — in English, please! — favorite five stories of the week next. With a different host. Stand by.

OLBERMANN: The debate over being a housewife and mother has waxed and waned with the passing generations. In the 19th century, it was a sign of not having enough money to hire cooks and maids and nannies. For the first half of the 20th, it was the idealized goal of American womanhood. By 1970, it was as sign of not being able to, or not being allowed to, get a real job. Today, after three decades' worth of women trying to be housewife, mother and employee all at

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the same time, it is often viewed as a comparative haven.

But for the length of this debate, there's been one constant: People have tried to figure out just what the job of housewife and mother would be worth in the real world of salaries and overtime. Tonight, the latest answer: \$131,471 annually. That's the figure arrived at by Salary.com, which provides compensation advice to companies. There are some qualifiers. The figure is based on a mother who has two school-age children, and it categorizes her daily efforts into seven main job descriptions: day care teacher, chauffeur, housekeeper, cook, nurse, maintenance worker and CEO. It also assumes a base salary of about 43 grand for a 40-hour week, with 60 hours of overtime a week totaling another \$88,000.

So checking you professional mom's schedule, which looks exactly like that of our executive producer, Izzy Povich (ph), except Sunday is filled in, be prepared for your 100-hour work week, six days of 15 hours each, and of course, that lighter day, the seventh day, just 10 hours. Benefits? Well, at some point, you probably had to sleep with a co-worker or a boss.

There are an estimated 5.4 million stay-at-home moms. And if any of them is actually drawing a check for 134,471 bucks a year, I'd like to meet them.

One of the men behind the statistic is the senior vice president of Salary.com, in Needham, Massachusetts, a town I used to work in, Bill Coleman. Mr. Coleman, good evening.

BILL COLEMAN, SALARY.COM: Good evening.

OLBERMANN: So I guess here, with Mother's Day coming up Sunday, the best gift for Mom is cash?

COLEMAN: That wouldn't be such a bad guess, but I think smiles, thank you's and I love you's are good, too.

OLBERMANN: Along with cash. The number that fascinates me here, really, is not the salary with the OT, the big figure, but that base, 43 grand if it were a 40-hour work week. Explain where that — what is the relevant base to that? I mean, is it nanny salaries? Or where'd you get that as a starting number?

COLEMAN: It is basically the average of the seven jobs that you listed: chauffeur, teacher, cook, maid, CEO, nurse. And based on a study we did asking a number of mothers how they spent their day, how much time they spent in each of those activities, we did for what we would do for one of our corporate clients, with — coming to us, asking us for a hybrid job, a blend of multiple jobs.

OLBERMANN: When you throw this figure out at actual stay-at-home mothers, the reaction is what, that the figure is low, that it's high, that — No, don't worry about it, we get paid enough in love?

(LAUGHTER)

COLEMAN: No, the initial reaction is very positive. They're very happy, more at the fact that we did this work and that Salary.com has put a number on their job, but also that we've validated that stay-at-home mom is a real job and it's a six-figure job, which is — it makes them feel good, like they're appreciated.

OLBERMANN: Can it mean anything for them when it comes to mothers who are actually going out into the workforce?

COLEMAN: If a mother's going out into the workforce, I think that she has to be aware that it's not easy to come by a job that pays \$131,000 a year, and that in this particular case, they're working 100 hours a week to get that value, and you need some time, you need some education, you need some hard work out in the workforce to get that.

OLBERMANN: So ultimately, what would we do with this number, if it's not being used for a frame of reference for getting a job outside the home?

COLEMAN: I think that the best use for this number is starting a dialogue, which seems to have happened already, about what is the value of the work that mothers do these days? And you know, we're hearing from as far off as Australia and India that people are talking about this particular number.

OLBERMANN: It's \$131,471 annually. Bill Coleman, senior vice president of the Web site Salary.com. And remember to make Mom's check out to cash. Many thanks, sir.

COLEMAN: Thank you.

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OLBERMANN: Lastly tonight, here's another number for you: five. That's how many COUNTDOWN favorite stories we get to pick each Friday. And here they are, lovingly collided together as the COUNTDOWN top five.

Number five is the story that captivated a nation, sent our media into one big collective tizzy. And why shouldn't it? It's such a relatable issue. Who of us hasn't had butterflies before a big day and decided to drop everything and hop on a bus to Vegas then transfer to New Mexico while everyone back home thinks we're dead and our fiance is hooked up to a lie-detector while we're wandering down Route 66 and we cover it all up by pretending to be abducted by two imaginary (INAUDIBLE) in a dirty van?

Judge not, lest ye be judged!

Number four. Heads up, it's Greek Orthodox Easter on the island of Chios, and you know what that means, of course: full-scale rocket war, an Eastern tradition between the two big churches on the island that dates back to the Ottoman empire. And it's all done in good fun. Sure, it always is, until someone gets hurt.

Number three, the first lady of hilarity. Laura's leavin' 'em laughing at the White House correspondents dinner. She may be a red state kind of gal, but she stepped up to the mike with the blue material.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

LAURA BUSH, FIRST LADY: But I'm proud of George. He's learned a lot about ranching since that first year when he tried milk the horse. What's worse, it was a male horse.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

OLBERMANN: Laura Bush, everybody. She'll be here all week. Laura Bush.

Number two. If you like our first lady, get a load of Lucy Kibaki. Her husband is president of Kenya. This was her version of "Meet the Press." Can you tell us where the first lady slapped you, sir?

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: She slapped me here.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

OLBERMANN: Where was that again?

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Here.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

OLBERMANN: Thank you.

And number one, all I need is a cool buzz and a tasty wave. Dude, no jet-skiing in the tasty waves, man. As if surfing Tahiti's Teahupoo Channel is not treacherous enough, now there's traffic. This guy is Raimana Van Bastoloer, world-class surfer, and this guy is a world-class moron. Can you tell us where the jet skier nearly decapitated you, sir? Right about here.

That's COUNTDOWN. Thanks for being part of it. Don't forget, we're going to have that special investigative report on Monday on born-again virgins. Did they change the rule on this?

I'm Keith Olbermann. Good night, and good luck.

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**HEADLINE:** THE ABRAMS REPORT For May 6, 2005

**BYLINE:** Dan Abrams, Mike Taibbi

**GUESTS:** B.J. Bernstein, William Fallon, Debra Opri, Theodore Simon, Steve Smith

**HIGHLIGHT:**

Could the release of sleazy details about runaway bride Jennifer Wilbanks make prosecutors feel sorry for her? Two mothers in the Michael Jackson case took the stand today and testified Jackson never touched their boys. A young woman, who could face the death penalty, has been jailed in Bali, accused of drug smuggling. The mayor of Spokane, Washington, a longtime opponent of gay rights, is now defending himself against allegations of child molestation.

**BODY:**

DAN ABRAMS, HOST: Coming up, could the release of new sleazy details about runaway bride Jennifer Wilbanks actually help her avoid prosecution?

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

ABRAMS (voice-over): A supposed friend of hers quoted in "People" magazine saying she was upset her fianc' John Mason was waiting for marriage to have sex, just the latest detail of her personal life to be revealed. Could all these tawdry details make prosecutors say, she's had enough and decide not to charge her?

And what kind of mother lets their kid go to Neverland? Two who did just that for years take the stand to defend Michael Jackson.

(CROSSTALK)

ABRAMS: Plus, this woman facing the possibility of death by firing squad for smuggling marijuana into Bali. She said she was set up.

The program about justice starts now.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

ABRAMS: Hi everyone. First up on the docket tonight, could the release of sleazy details about runaway bride Jennifer Wilbanks make prosecutors feel sorry for her? Today's "People" magazine cover story has loads of personal items about her life. They are reporting Jennifer had surgery for breast implants and her bridesmaids have turned on her, that she possibly ran away from her family, her fianc' and her 600 wedding guests because she had a bad sex life.

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According to "People" magazine, her soon-to-be husband was a — quote — "born again virgin" and refused to sleep with her before they got married. "People" reports that after Jennifer came home, John Mason said — quote — "in God's eyes our relationship is still very pure."

This could have been one source of stress for Wilbanks, says a friend. She told "People" the fact that she and John were not having sex was upsetting. Prosecutors haven't said yet whether they're going to charge Wilbanks with any crime. When the D.A. came on this show, it sure sounded like he was going to.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DANNY PORTER, GWINNETT CTY GA D.A.: The only thing I know right now is that it's pretty clear, well, not even just pretty clear, really clear that in Georgia the jurisdiction or the venue for the crime of false statements or for false report of a crime is where the report is received, not necessarily where it originates. So I have the ability there's no legal impediment to prosecution.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

ABRAMS: "My Take" — as my regular viewers know, I have been saying for a week now that I think her phone call to 911, her false claims of being raped, her lies to the Georgia authorities should mean that she at least gets charged with a misdemeanor. But I have to tell you after these details came out I really started to feel sorry for Jennifer Wilbanks. I wonder if prosecutors will too.

Joining me now is former Gwinnett County Georgia prosecutor, that's where this is happening, B.J. Bernstein and former Massachusetts' prosecutor Bill Fallon. All right. B.J., thanks for dressing up for the show. We appreciate it. No, I know you're going to some event. All right, what do you think, B.J.?

Any possibility that all of this — it's not supposed to, but we keep talking about the fact that prosecutorial discretion is the issue here. The question is not was some technical — is there some technical violation of the law. The question is, is the prosecutor going to move forward? Could this make them feel sorry for her?

B.J. BERNSTEIN, FORMER GWINNETT CTY GA PROSECUTOR: I think not feel sorry directly because of what is being said and the salacious details of it, but rather you know there's been this public clamor to just go after this girl, make her pay, go after her, go after her. And as you're saying, you know it's starting to change you, that enough already. The girl's been through enough. Let her get her psychological treatment and go on. So in that sense, it may affect and possibly you know help deter any more action and just to end this thing.

ABRAMS: See, I've never really bought the whole — the psychological aspect of it. For me that's something for either a jury to determine in a case like this. I mean it's not as if she didn't understand right from wrong. And you know I don't view this as just some nothing issue when you call the police. Let me play — let's get the 911 tape loaded here because I want to tell you because this is really what got me as I was following this case, was hearing this 911 tape and then knowing that she repeated the lies to the Georgia authorities. She apparently also said that she was raped. Here's the — do we have the 911 tape? All right, here's a piece of the 911 tape.

(BEGIN 911 CALL)

DISPATCHER: Did they have any weapons on them?

WILBANKS: Yes.

DISPATCHER: And they...

WILBANKS: They had a huge pistol and a small handgun.

DISPATCHER: Do you know if they were real?

WILBANKS: Yes.

(END 911 CALL)

ABRAMS: Bill Fallon, you know she went on, she talked about this Hispanic man and white woman in the blue van who abducted her. She said that she was raped, et cetera. But I don't know, these new details for some reason, not the psychological stuff because I think you can't get into that in every case, because how do you create a legal system when every time you are going to look into the psychology of the person doing it. But I don't know, am I getting soft?

WILLIAM FALLON, FORMER ESSEX COUNTY MA PROSECUTOR: Dan, you're not getting soft over this. You might be otherwise. But let's leave that elsewhere. I think right now...

(CROSSTALK)

FALLON: ... I'm being fresh. I think the thing is this crime is not the worse crime and you and I have disagreed on this. The crime began days into this. If I were the prosecutor here, I don't know everything, this is a girl who has trouble. But that doesn't mean she doesn't get charged. On the other hand, this is a city that is not going to get money back unless they come up with something creative, because 95 percent of the money they spent...

ABRAMS: Right.

FALLON: ... is all prior to her reporting anything. If I were a creative prosecutor, I might say, you know what, in thinking about whether we arraign you on something, we have a pretrial probation, we have a pretrial kind of diversion thing, you get help...

ABRAMS: Yes.

FALLON: ... you pay over a little money...

ABRAMS: I'm sure...

FALLON: ... we make it all...

ABRAMS: I'm sure the family would agree I think at this point to pay back any damages. But I...

FALLON: Who needs friends like these "People" friends...

(CROSSTALK)

FALLON: Where the heck are these friends?

ABRAMS: Let me read a little bit more from the "People" article, which really made me feel bad for her.

Both had certainly done the single thing. Jennifer, who had breast augmentation surgery before meeting Mason, had lots of boyfriends. Some for short times, some for longer times, says a friend. What cute, sweet, lively woman wouldn't? As for Mason, he was wild when he was young, says his friend and running buddy Ted King. He dated a lot, went out a lot. Mason, the manager of his family's medical clinic, came to disapprove of premarital sex after committing himself to his Baptist faith five years ago. Says Andy Parson, over the past few years, he's been saving himself for the right woman.

FALLON: Reborn virginity. It's really a unique term here, Dan, and I think it's going to be interesting for men and women in the future.

ABRAMS: But...

(CROSSTALK)

ABRAMS: But seriously, Bill, as a prosecutor, would you ever say to yourself, all right look, you know this is one of those close cases. You know enough is enough. Let's make her pay back the money that it cost us to move forward with this. But you know all of these embarrassing details and everything that maybe there's some level of punishment in that?

FALLON: Dan, I think that the details are the pile-on factor. I would never say it if she started out leaving a note here that she had been, as she said, now raped and taken by these people. If she had really initiated this, I would have said tough luck. Now that it's later on in the case and she is just responsible for the last five percent, actively responsible, passively beforehand, I don't know that I would be thinking it would be serving everybody by having all these things come out. There will never be a trial...

ABRAMS: Right. That's for sure.

FALLON: ... I know that as a prosecutor. So the question is, is there something I can do that's going to save everybody? I really don't know. And I wasn't kidding about what kind of friends these people are.

ABRAMS: No, I agree with you. But again, B.J., I mean look, you were in this office running — and the question that I'm wrestling with is look, a prosecutor can admit that oh "People" magazine article influenced me. No prosecutor is ever going to tell you that...

BERNSTEIN: Exactly right.

ABRAMS: But now that you can take us into the mind of one and you don't have to actually make that decision, could it influence them? Could they say there's been some level of punishment in the humiliation that's involved?

BERNSTEIN: It can be a factor. I mean exactly what you're saying about punishment, enough is enough. Everybody wanted this girl to pay and if people being on the front of "People" magazine with deep, personal details of your life and what you have done and your sexual history, with your intended marriage partner, isn't bad enough, I mean what is community service going to do to you compared to that type of humiliation? There's no comparison.

FALLON: Well it is going to say that other people who don't get their names in "People" magazine, you might have to have some course that they can follow to say to people, don't have this happen. Not everybody is going to have friends running to "People" magazine.

BERNSTEIN: And not all these type of cases had it not been this type of media attention would...

ABRAMS: But you know what...

BERNSTEIN: ... we wouldn't be talking about it.

ABRAMS: ... I'd love to know where those friends were when everyone was saying oh, there's no way, there's no way she got cold feet. No chance.

FALLON: Dan, you know what...

ABRAMS: Where were they then...

FALLON: ... everybody is fearful...

ABRAMS: ... wait a second, people. Hey wait a second. Don't start jumping to conclusions. I've got to tell you, she might have had some concerns. They didn't even have to get into it.

BERNSTEIN: Exactly.

FALLON: See, the crime is what she did to her parents, Dan. That's my thing. If I were going to punish her, it's not for what she did to born-again virgin boy, it's now what she did by running away. It's what about the parents? So I wonder what the untold story is there.

ABRAMS: B.J., you want to say something?

BERNSTEIN: Yes, I think your point is a good one that you were just making about why didn't they tell the police that there could be some reason for her to back off.

ABRAMS: Well maybe that's why the police...

(CROSSTALK)

ABRAMS: ... maybe that's why the police called off the search early...

BERNSTEIN: Yes, because remember, this started really quickly. I mean normally someone's missing a much longer period of time before...

ABRAMS: Yes.

BERNSTEIN: ... it becomes a flashing news story about looking for someone. So it's like we kind of jumped the gun and then all of the facts didn't make it their way and now we are left with a mess.

ABRAMS: Yes. All right. B.J. Bernstein and Bill Fallon, thanks a lot. Bill, I guess, is going to stick around.

Coming up — who let their kids sleep in Michael Jackson's bedroom? Remember anyone — everyone asks that question. Well two mothers took the stand today and testified they did it and Jackson never touched their boys.

And a 27-year-old woman facing life in prison, possibly even death by a firing squad for smuggling marijuana. The authorities say nine pounds of it into Bali. She says she was framed. So far it sounds like the judges aren't buying it. We'll have a ruling soon.

Plus, a mayor who has voted against gay rights caught by a newspaper in gay chat rooms looking for sex with young men and accused by a paper of molesting two boys in the '70's. Wasn't actually accused by the paper, there were accusations that were in the paper, says he did nothing wrong.

Your e-mails [abramsreport@msnbc.com](mailto:abramsreport@msnbc.com). Please include your name and where you're writing from. I respond at the end of the show.

(NEWS BREAK)

ABRAMS: We hear it all the time. What kind of mother would let a child sleep in Michael Jackson's bed? Well two of them testified today. The buzzwords of their testimony — trust and family. Both spoke glowingly of Jackson. One saying — quote — "he's not the boy next door. He's Michael Jackson. He's very pure in his love for children. To know him is to love him and trust him."

Both women backed up their sons' testimony that Jackson never inappropriately touched them, but they also made it clear that Jackson shares his bed with boys more often than a normal adult would be comfortable with.

NBC's Mike Taibbi was in court today. Mike, clearly the defense trying to say hey, Michael Jackson might be weird but he's not a child molester. Did they explain why they let their kids sleep in bed with Michael Jackson at all?

MIKE TAIBBI, NBC NEWS CORRESPONDENT: Well basically they said they trusted him. But I have to tell you, Dan, I think today and yesterday, the beginning of the defense case represent a sea change in the way this trial is going. Remember, a couple weeks ago when I said that to me the most troubling testimony in the entire prosecution case was the unchallenged testimony by the mother of the '93 accuser that her son and Jackson had spent perhaps 50 nights together. And I'm saying 50 nights, and that's unchallenged by the defense.

Well the defense has essentially conceded that point in the testimony that they brought out from their witnesses over the past two days. Here's one exchange. This is from Gordon Auchincloss, who's the deputy prosecutor questioning Karlee Barnes, who's the sister of Brett Barnes, one of the two alleged victims who denied they were ever victimized by Michael Jackson. All of whom said quite believably frankly that they never saw or heard Jackson do anything that was inappropriate with either the boys or with any other child.

Question to Karlee Barnes: How many nights did Jackson spend? And she said that probably two tours, maybe 365 nights. Auchincloss says so that's 365 nights that Michael Jackson spent with your brother and you didn't find that odd? And she said no, not at all in a kind of an offhand say.

Well, I'm sitting there with a press corps who, as you know, had looked at the prosecution case, as you did from a distance, but reading the transcripts everyday, saying this is not a very strong case, saying 365 nights. There are now only two ways that this jury and anybody following this trial can now view Michael Jackson.

Either he's a grown man who innocently spent hundreds of nights with a succession of individual boys or is a grown man who spent all those nights with all those boys and molested some of them. That's the only view that's available...

ABRAMS: Yes.

TAIBBI: ... and frankly, a defense source last night conceded that point, that they're now going to present that that's who Michael Jackson is. Perhaps...

(CROSSTALK)

TAIBBI: ... as Dr. Stan Katz said, not somebody who presents as a pedophile but a severely regressed 10-year-old, who knows...

ABRAMS: But Mike...

TAIBBI: Go ahead.

ABRAMS: ... I think that that — I don't know that that's so helpful. I mean I'm not saying you're saying it is, but I think that that's a problem in a way for the defense.

TAIBBI: Sure. Oh, absolutely.

ABRAMS: OK.

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TAIBBI: Absolutely.

ABRAMS: I mean the fact that there's now this admission that — these mothers, by the way, they are not going to have a whole lot of credibility. Oh yes, I thought it was fine. Oh yes, no problem. So my kid is sleeping in bed. Come on. It's all about the love.

TAIBBI: It's weird. I mean it is an alternate reality. It's not something that I as a father and as somebody who used to be a 35-year-old man several years ago could ever conceive of allowing my son to have done when he was 7, 8, 10 years old.

(CROSSTALK)

TAIBBI: Can you imagine accepting that it's a normal thing? Well, what they are saying is Michael Jackson, as you pointed out at the top of the show, is not your normal person, he's Michael Jackson.

ABRAMS: Mike, stick around for a minute.

TAIBBI: ... he is this guy...

ABRAMS: Stick around for a minute.

TAIBBI: I'll do that.

ABRAMS: Joining me now is Debra Opri, attorney for Katherine and Joe Jackson, who are Michael's parents, and former Massachusetts' sex crime prosecutor Bill Fallon. All right. Debra, what do you make of that? That the more we hear about Michael Jackson, the more it's certain that he is extremely odd at the very least but at worst becomes a molester?

DEBRA OPRI, ATTORNEY FOR JACKSON'S PARENTS: Well you know, Dan, as I have been saying for a long time, it's up to the defense to get the jury into the mindset, the condition, reality of the way Michael Jackson lives.

ABRAMS: How do you do that?

OPRI: And I can assure...

ABRAMS: How do you do that?

OPRI: ... the way we do it is I can assure you that everyone on that jury is like what's going on here. But the more people who get on that stand and say, you know I know Michael Jackson. He is all about love. He is child-like. We ate popcorn. We watched cartoons. We did videos. And the more and more people who get up there and say that, Dan, the people will become conditioned that this is Michael Jackson's reality. He wants to live the life of a child. He does that by hanging around kids, and, therefore, he's childlike but he's not a molester and I think Mesereau has to walk a very thin line doing this.

ABRAMS: Yes.

OPRI: Because at one point in time it's going to be oh my God, this is either a freak show...

ABRAMS: Yes.

OPRI: ... or really he is a child.

(CROSSTALK)

OPRI: And I think Mesereau will be successful at it.

FALLON: Dan...

ABRAMS: Go ahead Bill.

FALLON: ... you know I think there's two major points here. I think number one, one point really is, is that this is making the victim's mother, no matter how bad she was, the alleged victim's mother, a little less crazy in everybody's eyes because they're bringing on all these witnesses who say I had no concerns, therefore we can't say what kind of fruitcake...

(CROSSTALK)

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ABRAMS: Wait, wait, wait...

(CROSSTALK)

ABRAMS: What made her crazy, though, wasn't just the fact that she let Michael Jackson, you know, that she let her boy sleep with Michael Jackson. It was a lot of the other...

FALLON: No...

ABRAMS: ... things that came out about her as well.

FALLON: Oh Dan, I completely agree. But that was one major factor. If you remember when this came out, everybody said how can anybody do it? I'm just saying there's not much in her favor. This is just one little thing that doesn't make her so bad. But I also think...

(CROSSTALK)

FALLON: ... and I said this about the prosecutor here — he has got to try exactly what they are proving. He is not the mad molester of the western civilization. What he is, is when he becomes that 11-year-old who has these sleepovers, he has these little sexual urges every now and then. And that's what happened, ladies and gentlemen...

(CROSSTALK)

FALLON: ... and that's the way they prove that.

ABRAMS: Here's what the prosecution...

(CROSSTALK)

TAIBBI: Bill...

ABRAMS: Here's what the prosecution is trying to do. They're trying to establish a pattern to Jackson's behavior through the defense witnesses. They're trying to show that he forms relationships over the time by phone, that he invites them to Neverland where they sleep in his bedroom. The first sleepover often involves another sibling or child. That boys, who often don't have a strong father figure, tells boys and mothers that they are family and that they can trust him. That seems to be...

OPRI: They should have done that on direct.

ABRAMS: Yes.

OPRI: They should have done that in the prosecution's case...

ABRAMS: Why not?

OPRI: ... really upset me?

ABRAMS: You can't criticize them for trying to...

OPRI: Dan, you know what really upset me...

ABRAMS: ... defense case also.

OPRI: There is a book that is being thrown all over the courtroom, all over the media, it's called "The Boys"...

ABRAMS: Yes, I've seen it.

FALLON: Michael Jackson's book...

OPRI: Well the bottom line is this. If you're going to convict Michael Jackson because he has a book like that...

ABRAMS: You're not — but Debra, you know that's not the issue.

OPRI: ... even though the self of the possession of it...

ABRAMS: Debra — but that's not the issue.

OPRI: It doesn't — no, no, it is the issue.

ABRAMS: Wait, wait, wait...

OPRI: Dan, it is the issue...

ABRAMS: The issue was never...

OPRI: ... because...

ABRAMS: The issue in this case is never...

OPRI: ... it is the issue...

ABRAMS: ... and never has been...

OPRI: ... because...

ABRAMS: It has never been is she going to be...

OPRI: ... the prosecutors...

ABRAMS: Debra, Debra...

OPRI: ... are using...

ABRAMS: ... I'm not going to let you say what you just said without being challenged.

OPRI: No, the prosecution...

ABRAMS: You're not just going to say it and run away.

OPRI: ... used the book...

ABRAMS: I'm going to follow up.

(CROSSTALK)

ABRAMS: You just — Debra, stop for a second.

OPRI: The prosecutors have...

ABRAMS: Stop.

OPRI: ... used the book...

ABRAMS: You know what? Cut her mike off. I'm sorry, Debra, if you're not going to — you know we are trying to have a conversation here. And you're saying something and want to go unchallenged. You want to say that the bottom line is that he can't be convicted based on the book, no one on this program has ever said that. No one is ever going to suggest it. The prosecutor is not going to suggest it. It's a non-issue. Now, I'm sorry, your response.

OPRI: The prosecutors are using the boys, Robson, Barnes, in conjunction with the book in asking them to play the 13th juror in saying, don't you think it's a little weird, would you hang out with somebody who had a book in their possession? It's irrelevant. What they...

FALLON: The judge...

ABRAMS: Hang on. Let her finish, Bill. Let her finish...

FALLON: The judge says it's relevant...

ABRAMS: Bill, Bill.

FALLON: All right.

ABRAMS: Bill?

FALLON: Yes.

ABRAMS: Debra?

OPRI: OK. Thank you. The crux of their testimony is to nullify the 1108 prior bad acts. That was alluded to them.

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They were molested. They were inappropriately touched. They got on the stand and they said it never happened. On cross, I didn't hear Ron Zonen — I respect him. He is a very well known sex crimes prosecutor, and in my opinion he should have been the lead attorney on this case. But he didn't challenge their credibility. He didn't give them a motivation. All he did was pull out the book. You know, would you hang out with somebody like this? That's the point I'm making.

ABRAMS: Mike Taibbi wanted to get in there.

OPRI: They're not doing their job.

ABRAMS: Go ahead Mike.

TAIBBI: Yes, Dan — let me say one thing Dan. I don't think that these defense witnesses, while they were not a sure win for the defense, made the prosecution's evidence or witnesses any stronger. What they did was to make the prosecution's theory a whole lot stronger and more conceivable and understandable to this jury that where there's smoke, there's fire. Now there's so much smoke, you can't even really see Michael Jackson, the person anymore. You see him as this person who sleeps with young boys...

ABRAMS: Right.

TAIBBI: ... and admits that he did it.

(CROSSTALK)

TAIBBI: So it makes the prosecution...

ABRAMS: I've got to tell you...

TAIBBI: ... stronger...

ABRAMS: ... I think Debra laid it out well though, a moment ago when she said that basically the defense is going to have to say that's who he is. That's what he does.

TAIBBI: Sure.

(CROSSTALK)

TAIBBI: Oh, no, no, they did...

ABRAMS: We don't challenge it.

TAIBBI: We talked to a defense source who said that. Absolutely...

OPRI: Say it enough...

FALLON: But freak show, not child molester...

OPRI: ... you don't say it enough...

ABRAMS: Hang on.

(CROSSTALK)

ABRAMS: Debra, let me ask you another question. You — I had seen you quoted saying that the family, at least, believe that Michael Jackson was going to testify. Still your understanding that he's expected to testify?

OPRI: Is that for me?

ABRAMS: Yes.

OPRI: Yes. I never was quoted as saying the family thinks he's going to testify. I was quoted as saying, in my opinion, based upon three things Mesereau is saying, you will hear from Michael Jackson.

ABRAMS: OK. OK.

OPRI: Mesereau being well known for putting his clients on and knowing Michael Jackson is somebody you can't tell what to do. If he wants his story to be told and he believes he can tell it, he's — nobody...

ABRAMS: Fair enough.

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OPRI: ... is going to tell him not to take the stand.

ABRAMS: Fair enough. Bill Fallon, what did you want to say?

OPRI: And Dan, thanks.

FALLON: For me, I just say Michael Jackson is the freak show. I have said if I tried this as a prosecutor, the defense is going just that way. He's a freak show. He's just not a molester. I think...

OPRI: One more time, freak...

FALLON: ... somebody — well because a freak is a person who might...

(CROSSTALK)

FALLON: ... who sleeps with kids.

(CROSSTALK)

FALLON: No, no, I mean...

(CROSSTALK)

FALLON: ... you know I'm saying Debra...

OPRI: Conduct yourself like a prosecutor.

FALLON: Debra, I'm not the prosecutor...

OPRI: I haven't heard any of the prosecutors saying he's a freak.

FALLON: What I'm saying is if I have somebody — well you haven't heard him say — you don't think it's a freak show sleeping with kids when you're 45, 365 days a night? If a woman were doing it, it would still be a freak show if they're sleeping with little kids. And that is a freak show. He looks like a freak show. And the question is, is he a molester? And I think his positive is he doesn't molest everybody, which is why I'm still amazed we didn't have expert testimony...

OPRI: Well if we talked about the evidence is one thing...

FALLON: ... you can be a...

OPRI: ... if you want to write for a rag sheet, your conduct is...

FALLON: Debra, he's already said he's a pedophile...

(CROSSTALK)

FALLON: He may not be a sexual pedophile...

ABRAMS: All right.

OPRI: Talk about the evidence.

FALLON: He talks about sleeping with kids...

(CROSSTALK)

FALLON: ... pedophile, may not be a molester.

OPRI: All right, we know your position. He's a freak. OK.

ABRAMS: Mike...

FALLON: You think he's not?

ABRAMS: Mike, Bill, Debra...

(CROSSTALK)

ABRAMS: ... nice to have you here. Thank you...

OPRI: Dan, it's been a pleasure. Nice to see you again.

ABRAMS: Nice to see you too. It's all good. You know we are all friends here.

OPRI: It's all good. We all go home and...

ABRAMS: Exactly. Exactly.

OPRI: ... have the same pillow to sleep on.

ABRAMS: Thanks a lot for coming on. Appreciate it.

FALLON: Just as long as it's not Jackson's.

ABRAMS: Coming up (INAUDIBLE) a traveler's nightmare. A woman facing the possibility of death by firing squad for smuggling marijuana into Indonesia. She said she was framed but it sure sounds like the court is not buying it.

And the mayor of Spokane, Washington, has been an opponent of gay rights for years. Now he's fighting allegations of child molestation and a newspaper says they caught him looking for sex with young men online.

Your e-mails [abramsreport@msnbc.com](mailto:abramsreport@msnbc.com). Please include your name and where you're writing from. I respond at the end of the show.

ABRAMS: Coming up — a young woman has been jailed in Bali, accused of drug smuggling. She could face the death penalty. She said she was framed and the prosecution's case has some real problems. First the headlines.

(NEWS BREAK)

ABRAMS: A 27-year-old woman is facing possible death-by-firing squad in Indonesia after being found with over nine pounds of marijuana in a surfboard bag last October when she passed through Indonesian customs. Schapelle Corby, a beauty student back in her native Australia, is on trial in a Bali court for drug smuggling. The prosecution wrapped its case against her this week after a trial that has received international attention, including a plea from actor Russell Crowe, the Australian government should apply more pressure for Corby's release.

Corby's emotional and physical health reportedly deteriorated as the trial proceeded. In one episode a friend of Corby's fought off television cameras as a handcuffed and crying Corby tried to walk into the courtroom. After finally sitting down in the courtroom, Corby fainted on her lawyer. Corby claims that the marijuana was planted in her bag after she checked in at the Sydney airport. Her defense looked to have gotten a break when an Australia prisoner testified that he overheard other inmates talking about how Corby had been used as a mule for drug gangs in Australia. She didn't know it was there.

That guy was later stabbed in prison. Corby's brother and two of her friends also testified they saw the bag after Corby had packed it. That there were no drugs inside. Indonesian authorities have refused to fingerprint the bag, but the chief Indonesian judge has already told Corby that she failed to prove she was not guilty. Interesting burden of proof over there. A verdict is expected on May 26. Indonesian law allows for judges to impose the death penalty in drug cases.

Joining us now is a man who has done a lot of these international cases, our friend, criminal defense attorney Ted Simon, who represented Michael Fay, among others, the American teenager who was convicted of vandalism in Singapore and was caned for his crimes. All right. You know, Ted, this sounds like this girl is in a lot of trouble.

THEODORE SIMON, CRIMINAL DEFENSE ATTORNEY: Oh there's no question. As your show often depicts, criminal defense lawyers have heightened responsibility, but when you're a criminal defense lawyer and you're representing someone in a foreign country and you're not a citizen of that country, it truly intensifies. So yes, she's facing very, very severe punishment and there's a lot to be done on her behalf.

ABRAMS: And Ted, they did not allow her to present any evidence about what was happening at the Australian — at the Sydney airport with baggage handlers. Meaning, she wanted to present evidence that basically said that there were people who might have been involved in drug rings, that there were also shenanigans going on at the airport that would have allowed someone to put it into her bag.

SIMON: Yes, she had a very specific defense. She wanted a weighing of her bags to demonstrate that at the time she put her bags through the checkpoint in Australia, they weighed a certain amount and when they arrived, they weighed four kilos more, the amount of marijuana that she claims was inserted without her knowledge, so she's not a mule. She

claims that she is an unwitting dupe, that she was taken advantage of as a pure traveler.

And you know these things do happen. She has substantial evidence. I mean she's a 27-year-old student who's traveling with her 16-year-old brother and the family paid for her ticket and the family vacation, so it doesn't look like she is doing double duty of bringing some marijuana from one country to another. It doesn't seem to be any other supporting information.

ABRAMS: And usually you think it would be the other way around, right? I mean...

SIMON: Exactly.

ABRAMS: ... you would go to a country like Indonesia, I mean not Indonesia per se, but another country and bring it back to a more western nation like Australia.

SIMON: Exactly. And that's what they are arguing. In fact, it's the reverse economics. The value would be more if it was coming out than going in.

ABRAMS: So what happens Ted? I mean look, it sounds like she's going to get convicted. It sounds like she's going to get at least life in prison for this. What does she do?

SIMON: Well, there's a lot you do. First of all, you argue the facts and the law as you can under the system within that country. I mean you have to work within that system. You have to be careful that you don't go too far because this is a three-judge panel and it's their verdict that will carry the day.

Now, if the — while the maximum punishment is death, she is more likely exposed to some significant jail term, if not life. Now, after that she can appeal or ask for clemency. But significantly and what's happened between the two countries, that is Indonesia and Australia, they just signed an agreement that permits the transfer — international prisoner transfer of inmates. So that if she is convicted, and assuming she doesn't get the death penalty, she will be able with the consent of both parties, both governments to transfer back to her homeland.

Now this is something we have done for many, many years. And it's a great benefit for someone who finds themselves in a foreign country, who's been convicted under due process that doesn't even come close to what you expect.

ABRAMS: Well yes, I mean if she has to prove her innocence there, as opposed to them proving her guilt...

SIMON: Yes and also...

ABRAMS: Very quickly, Ted...

SIMON: ... you can argue some comparative sentencing. You know this is a really — there was a tragic bombing, as you may remember, in October of 2002, where over 200 people were killed...

ABRAMS: Yes.

SIMON: ... and some 88 Australians were killed.

ABRAMS: Yes.

SIMON: And one of the alleged leaders who was convicted of conspiracy only received 30 months.

ABRAMS: Wow.

SIMON: So now that sounds shocking...

(CROSSTALK)

SIMON: ... and there were others who received much more severe penalties...

ABRAMS: That's a great point, Ted. That is a great point. Wow.

SIMON: So you can certainly argue that within that system. And I think without going so far as to offend them.

ABRAMS: Right. Wow. All right. Ted Simon, thanks a lot for coming on the program. Appreciate it.

SIMON: You're welcome. Good to see you Dan.

ABRAMS: You too. Coming up, the mayor of Spokane, Washington, a longtime opponent of gay rights now defending

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himself against allegations of child molestation. And a local paper says they have evidence that he was trolling gay chat rooms for young men. We talk to the report and hear from the mayor.

A man finds a finger in his custard — get this — then refuses to give it back to the poor guy who lost it only minutes earlier in a custard machine. What is our lawsuit happy society coming to?

ABRAMS: Coming up, a mayor that voted against gay rights accused in a newspaper of molesting two boys in the '70's, says he did nothing wrong. We talk to the reporter and hear from the mayor.

ABRAMS: It seems Jim West, the mayor of Spokane, Washington, is finding himself in some hot water, courtesy of an undercover sting operation organized by the city's local paper. The mayor, an outspoken opponent of gay rights, has been accused of molesting two boys in the 1970's and was just caught by the paper trying to lure a young man into his office in a gay online chat room. The allegations, first of all, one man, Robert Galliher, claims West molested him in the mid 1970's when West was a Boy Scout leader and sheriff's deputy. Another man, Michael Grant, Jr., also accuses West of sexual abuse in those same years at a local Boy Scout camp. To that the mayor said this yesterday.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

MAYOR JIM WEST, SPOKANE, WA: I categorically deny any allegations about incidents that supposedly occurred 24 years ago as alleged by two convicted felons and about which I have no knowledge.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

ABRAMS: But he had a slightly different response to the allegations of his time spent in gay Internet chat rooms, uncovered by a private investigator hired by "The Spokesman-Review" as part of a sting operation.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

WEST: The newspaper also reported that I have visited a gay Internet chat line and had relations with adult men. I don't deny that.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

ABRAMS: All right. Joining me now is the editor of "The Spokesman-Review", the newspaper that broke the story, Steve Smith. Thanks very much for coming on the program. We appreciate it.

STEVE A. SMITH, EDITOR, "THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW": Thank you, Dan.

ABRAMS: How would you characterize what specifically your paper's investigation uncovered?

SMITH: Well, let me begin by saying that I'm here sitting in and representing the two reporters who actually worked this story, Bill Morlin and Karen Dorn Steele, pretty extraordinary investigative reporters whose gum shoe detective work over the last couple of years produced the package of stories that broke today.

ABRAMS: And how would you characterize what it is that this — that all these articles uncovered?

SMITH: The issue here is a history going back 24 years of alleged improprieties on the part of the mayor, really three elements to the package. Allegations that he abused youngsters in the 1970's when he was a Scout leader and a sheriff's deputy, a disconnection between his public life as a legislator and private life during his many years in the state legislature, and then most recently in the last year and a half or so as mayor of Spokane, using the Internet and surfing the Web to attract, troll for young men as sexual partners and offering some of the benefits of his office, gifts, tickets to sporting events, even an internship to these young men.

ABRAMS: What exactly — and you — the paper had hired a private investigator? I mean is the way it happened that you — your paper uncovered this information about these allegations many years ago and as a result hired a private eye to sort of go in there and see what other information they could get?

SMITH: Well, little more complicated than that. The allegations of molestation, our reporter Bill Morlin has been working on for quite some time. And our uncovering of the two victims that were included in our package of stories yesterday and today, those names really developed in only the last several months. So it's not as if we've known those kinds of provable or presentable specifics for a length of time.

It was in the course of looking for possible victims of past abuse that Bill came across an 18-year-old man in our

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community last fall who told Bill that he had met the mayor online and had engaged in dialogue that concluded with meeting the mayor for dinner and a consensual sex act in the back of the mayor's Lexus convertible late one night behind a country club. That was the online component of the story.

It was fresh and new to us and we spent late last fall and the first few months of this year trying to ascertain with as much certainty as possible, was the man online Jim West? And for that we helped — we utilized the help of a forensic computer expert who is knowledgeable in tracking online sexual activity.

ABRAMS: Any concern that you kind of set him up? Meaning, you know you put someone on the Internet pretending to be someone they are not? Any concerns sort of journalistically about doing that?

SMITH: Oh, absolutely. Newspapers don't engage in this sort of fictional deceptive practice with any regularity. We considered this step with great care. The issue was we had allegations from individuals that they had met the mayor online. Online in this chat world, people use screen names and those mask their real identities. And we needed absolutely, certifiable evidence that this individual was Jim West. And to accomplish that in the end, the only reasonable recourse to us was to go online, as an individual, and engage the mayor in conversations that could be recorded, retained, tracked and identified.

ABRAMS: And at this point he is not denying that he was on those chat rooms. So...

SMITH: Absolutely not. And I think absent that final conclusive evidence, I'm not sure that he would have ever copped to it.

ABRAMS: Oh, I'm sure you're right about that. All right, Steve Smith, thanks a lot for coming on the program. Appreciate it.

SMITH: My pleasure. Thank you.

ABRAMS: Coming up — a man finds a finger in his custard, refuses to give the finger back to the man who'd lost it only minutes earlier. Now it's too late to have it reattached. He apparently wanted to use it in a lawsuit. What has our society come to? It's "Closing Argument" coming up.

ABRAMS: My "Closing Argument" — what is our society coming to when a man refuses to return a body part to someone who hoped to have it reattached? The reason — it appears he feared returning it might detract from a possible lawsuit. Clarence Stowers found a part of a severed finger in a dessert he purchased at Kohl's Frozen Custard in Wilmington, North Carolina. But unlike that ridiculous case at Wendy's where it appears the woman made it up and no one knows where the finger came from, this one was no mystery.

Brandon Fizer, an employee of Kohl's, had his finger amputated in a custard mixing machine only minutes earlier. Doctors told Fizer his finger could be attached up to eight hours after the amputation occurred. Well after Stowers announced that he'd made the grizzly discovery, the general manager of the custard store asked Stowers for the finger back so he could rush it to the hospital. He refused. He refused.

According to the manager, Stowers left the store and announced he was on his way to call television stations and a lawyer. He was keeping the finger for evidence in a lawsuit he planned to file, according to the manager. Now it's too late to have the finger reattached. You know you hear people cite a lot of statistics both for and against tort reform. Maybe more important is the sick mentality that all these lawsuits have created.

When people see someone slip or fall or get hurt, it's all about the legal pay. One of the first questions and concerns is can I sue or will he sue? Stowers' lawyer says he just wanted to make sure the finger could be tested for any disease. Well you know, Clarence, those tests could have been done at the hospital once the finger was reattached. Regardless, even if that long shot explanation is true, it's still about — how does it affect me mentality and I'm tired of it. We need to change our legal system, not just because the system is being abused, but because of the psychology of many in this country, people like Clarence Stowers, who it seems, are blinded by the potential payout.

Coming up, Jennifer Wilbanks, otherwise known as the runaway bride, is she a victim of the media? Your e-mails are next.

ABRAMS: I've had my say, now it's time for "Your Rebuttal". Runaway bride Jennifer Wilbanks, a victim of the media. Last night my guest, Geoffrey Fieger said Jennifer didn't expect the kind of coverage the media provided and he blamed the media for everything that happened to her. I still think that she should be charged for filing a false report about

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being abducted and raped, although I'm starting to feel sorry for her.

Susan Hayward writes, "I'm appalled that so many people are defending this woman. Her defenders seem to be implying that it is the media's fault that she's in this situation. Yet, if she had really been kidnapped and the media attention had helped to locate her, they'd be seen as heroes."

I said generally press coverage in this kind of case where someone is missing can be helpful. Dick Behnke in Loveland, Colorado, "As a cops and courts beat newspaper reporter for 30 years, I must challenge the idea of 21st Century TV people that broadcasting the names, faces and details of people who disappear helps in any way to find them. I even wonder if in actual cases of abduction, the sensational reporting doesn't have the opposite effect of causing the abductor to kill the victim for fear of them being seen due to the publicity."

Well Dick, I hope you that you are fighting tooth and nail then against all the Amber Alert systems that have saved many children. It does exactly the same thing.

Teri Nadeau gets a second letter in a week on the air. "You're more supportive and understanding of Wacko Jacko than sweet little Jennifer. While you are a wonderful news anchor, I think you would be a terrible boyfriend. Everything in life is not by the book, black and white."

From Hope Mills, North Carolina, Gerald Gibbs writes about the fact that she went to Vegas. "Don't you know that what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas?"

And Karen Austen in Freeport, Maine, "Denial is not a river in Egypt. Denial is a river in Georgia. The runaway bride had her father's pastor claim that she didn't have cold feet."

Also last night we looked at the accusations made against "American Idol's" Paula Abdul by a former contestant, that she had a sexual relationship with him.

Grace Yllana in Cincinnati with what I expected was criticism of our having covered this story. "Why is everyone focusing on the Paula Abdul-Corey Clark sexual tryst?" I understand it's probably not a huge story, not even legal, yet but wait, Grace wasn't upset that we covered it, just that we covered the wrong angle. She said, "The bigger scandal is what "Idol" did to Constantine Maroulis fans by throwing out our votes." Come on Grace.

And finally some of you noticed I had the sniffles last night. Thanks to those of you who wished me well, but Tom Alderman wrote, "I just can't help but e-mail this note to complain about your sniffing. My new girlfriend does the same thing, sniffles and it irritates the heck out of me. I find myself sniffing after she does just to let her know how irritating it can be when it's not yourself doing it."

Boy Tommy, you must be loads of fun to date. Keep mocking her and your new girlfriend will soon be your old one, I promise.

Your e-mails abramsreport — one word — @msnbc.com. We go through them at the end of the show.

"OH PLEAs!" - what not to do when steal a car. Gregory Alston of Baltimore allegedly stole a car at gunpoint, drove it around for two weeks. The joy rides were just that, joyous, until one day parked the hot wheels just a half-mile from where he stole it. The car's owner spotted it. She called police. They had it towed to their station.

Two hours later the alleged thief, Alston, came back and noticed his loot was missing. What did he do? He called the police and reported the car stolen. Police bought him in for questioning, he eventually confessed. Why did he do it? Because he left his wallet in the car. Good one.

That does it for us tonight. Coming up next, "HARDBALL" with Chris Matthews. Thanks for watching. Have a great weekend.

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National Public Radio (NPR)

SHOW: Day to Day 4:00 AM EST NPR

May 6, 2005 Friday

**LENGTH:** 686 words**HEADLINE:** Multibillionaire Kirk Kerkorian ups his stake in General Motors**ANCHORS:** ALEX CHADWICK**REPORTERS:** MIKE PESCA**BODY:**

ALEX CHADWICK, host:

And that man buying GM is buying in a big way: billionaire investor Kirk Kerkorian. A couple of days ago, he said he wants to control 9 percent of GM. He's willing to pay \$31 a share for GM stock. It had been trading in the mid-20s. It went up sharply on that news, only to fall back again yesterday after the bond news. But Mr. Kerkorian apparently thinks GM is undervalued, and as DAY TO DAY's Mike Pesca reports, this investor has a long record of winning bets.

MIKE PESCA reporting:

Rifle Right Kerkorian, as Kirk was known in his days as a prizefighter, was the California-born child of Armenian immigrants, who was lured into piloting bombers from Canada to Scotland at a thousand dollars a pop. The problem was the planes' fuel tanks enabled them to go 1,400 miles, but the flight was over 2,000 miles long. Somehow Kerkorian made the trips, he made his money, and he wound up making a killing when he set up a company which arranged short air jaunts from Los Angeles. The destination was the burgeoning gambling mecca in the desert, but Kerkorian was unlike another wealthy aviator lured to Los Vegas.

Mr. HOWARD STUTZ (Business Reporter, Las Vegas Review-Journal): I mean, Howard Hughes was a buyer. Kerkorian was a builder.

PESCA: Howard Stutz, business reporter for the Las Vegas Review-Journal, has briefly talked to Kerkorian, which is about as much access as Kerkorian ever grants the press. Kerkorian parlayed deal after deal in Las Vegas until his MGM company bought Mirage in the '90s, then merged with Mandalay. Today, Kerkorian's hotels account for 49 percent of all the rooms on the Vegas Strip. Kerkorian never veered from his style of not sentimentalizing his businesses, says Richard Siklos, columnist for The Sunday Telegraph of London.

Mr. RICHARD SIKLOS (Columnist, The Sunday Telegraph): On balance, he has been a bit of a raider in that he's definitely found ways to mine for the maximum amount of personal profit time and again.

PESCA: Kerkorian's best-known deal, or deals, is with MGM film studios, which he bought and sold three times. Variety editor Peter Bart, who was a senior vice president at MGM under Kerkorian, says he knew the studio had a problem from a phone call he received early in Kerkorian's tenure.

Mr. PETER BART (Editor, Variety; Former MGM Senior Vice President): My assistant got a message from his assistant that he would like to go to the set of a picture being directed by Michael Crichton, and it was sort of a horror picture. But he was fascinated by it and wanted to go, so I told my assistant to tell his assistant that since Kerkorian owned the company, he could just walk onto the damn set; doesn't need my permission. If he feels so distanced from the enterprise that he doesn't want to drop by the set of a movie without getting the approval of one of his bureaucrats, then I know we're in trouble.

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PESCA: Kerkorian made money on each of his MGM sales, but he left the studio a bit of a toothless lion, says Peter Bart.

Mr. BART: But certainly in the motion picture industry I think most people would agree that the public or the public companies didn't benefit in the long term from his stewardship.

PESCA: Other than casinos and studios, Kerkorian's best-known investment may have been with Chrysler, in which Kerkorian was the largest individual shareholder for a time. Richard Siklos says his GM play may be reminiscent of that.

Mr. SIKLOS: He's been accused from time to time—for instance, with Chrysler—of being a so-called greenmailer, and just trying to get them to buy him out at a higher price, or he's just driving the stock up so he can sell out at a higher price. And, you know, he's ultimately maybe not so interested in what happens to these businesses in the long run.

PESCA: The long run is growing shorter. Kerkorian is one month shy of his 88th birthday. Whatever value he wants to unlock with GM, it's unlikely he'll be able to nurture along the company for a decade as he did with Chrysler. Even multibillionaires don't live forever. Mike Pesca, NPR News, New York.

CHADWICK: This is Alex Chadwick. NPR's DAY TO DAY continues.

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Copyright 2005 The New York Times Company  
The New York TimesMay 6, 2005 Friday  
Late Edition - Final**SECTION:** Section E; PT1; Column 1; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Film in Review; Pg. 15**LENGTH:** 494 words**HEADLINE:** 'Double Dare'**BYLINE:** By MANOHLA DARGIS**BODY:**

Opens today in Manhattan  
Directed by Amanda Micheli  
Not rated, 81 minutes

In the thin but pleasantly diverting documentary "Double Dare," women don't just fly through the air with the greatest of ease. At least one, a young New Zealander with an infectious grin and a killer body, named Zoe Bell, rapidly spins like a top while hoisted up in a harness and engulfed by flames. And then — with the greatest of apparent ease — this preternaturally cheerful daredevil crashes through a plate-glass window like some Tinker Bell turned Ninja assassin.

Ms. Bell was working as a stunt double for the formidable Lucy Lawless, the star of the defunct television series "Xena: Warrior Princess," when she pulled off this outrageous bit of choreographed bedlam. A tomboy who in her younger years executed tight flips across the gymnasium floor, Ms. Bell was only 19 when she landed her job as Ms. Lawless's main stunt double. The gig came to an end when the series permanently wrapped in 2001, leaving the restless Ms. Bell without steady employment or apparent purpose, though not for long. Through the efforts of the documentary's makers — the director, Amanda Micheli, and the producers, Karen Johnson and Danielle Renfrew — Ms. Bell came to Hollywood (or rather a nearby suburb), where she met another stuntwoman, Jeannie Epper, then 62.

A story about women who like to roll cars, throw punches and jump from gaspingly tall heights, "Double Dare" is another reminder of how tough it is for women to make it in Hollywood. Ms. Epper, who comes from a famous stunt family (everyone always seems to be flipping through the air at her house, even wee kids), is probably best known for "doubling" Lynda Carter when the curvaceous actress was starring in the 1970's television show "Wonder Woman." With its cornball plots and silly theme song, the show looks pretty bad now, but it's impossible not to be awed by the sight of Ms. Epper leaping, running and fighting in that ridiculous red, white and blue costume (and don't forget the breastplate, wristbands and lasso!), and without benefit of padding.

Forced to dress like a Vegas cocktail waitress, Ms. Epper was prevented from wearing any protective layering while doubling Ms. Carter; the costume also required her to rigorously maintain the actress's beauty-queen proportions.

Decades later, Ms. Epper is still crash-landing on back lots and worrying about her weight, to the point that she is even considering liposuction. In addition to these scenes, each of which is painful to watch for a different reason, the filmmakers furnish a nice mix of talking-head interviews and clips of the women going through their spectacular paces. Along the way, the familiar hurdles appear, notably sexism, age-ism and one flaky actress, while Ms. Bell and Ms. Epper bond and give each other some hugs. Considering the bruising they receive from the movie industry, they need all the comfort they can get. MANOHLA DARGIS

**URL:** <http://www.nytimes.com>

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**GRAPHIC:** Photo: Jeannie Epper holding Lynda Carter in the film "Double Dare." (Photo by Jeannie Epper)

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The News-Press (Fort Myers, Florida)

May 6, 2005 Friday

**SECTION:** GULF COASTING; Pg. 5G**LENGTH:** 312 words**HEADLINE:** Stones roll out collection of forgotten tunes, old hits**BYLINE:** Mark Marymont**BODY:**

BY MARK MARYMONT

Special to The News-Press

The Stones keep rolling when it comes to reissues.

Along with elaborate packages of all their classic singles and other older albums, two long out-of-print Rolling Stones' collections are back on the market, courtesy of Virgin/EMI Records. "Made In The Shade," from 1975, is a standard 10-track best-of with early '70s smashes like "Brown Sugar," "Happy," "Tumbling Dice" and "It's Only Rock 'n' Roll."

"Shade" rocks along nicely, but "Sucking In The Seventies," released in 1981, is much more interesting. It's got a few hits - "Shattered," "Hot Stuff" "Fool To Cry" - but there are other lesser-known artifacts. They include "Everything Is Turning To Gold," the B-side of "Shattered," and a live version of "When The Whip Comes Down." There's also a nice little rocker in "If I Was A Dancer," co-written by guitarist Ron Wood and issued only on a 12-inch promo.

Both discs feature the original cover art and song lineup.

Meanwhile, in our rock 'n' roll teen idols department, we have a new collection by Dion, who began singing pop 'n' doo-wop in the '50s with the Belmonts ("A Teenager In Love," "I Wonder Why") before going on to a successful career as a solo act in 1960. "The Essential Dion" (Columbia/Legacy) features all his big hits from that decade, including "The Wanderer" and "Runaround Sue" and tough remakes of two Drifters' hits, "Ruby Baby" and "Drip Drop."

He also did well with an aggressive ode to "Donna The Prima Donna" and returned to the Top 10 in 1968, after four long years without a hit, with the reflective folk of "Abraham, Martin And John."

There are other Dion collections around, including 2000's three-disc box, "King Of The New York Streets." If you just want the hits, this great-sounding, respectful package is a better choice.

IN THE NEXT REISSUE REPORT: Vegas Lounge Lizards

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Copyright 2005 Newsday, Inc.  
Newsday (New York)

May 6, 2005 Friday  
NASSAU EDITION

**SECTION:** PART II/WEEKEND; Pg. B17

**LENGTH:** 330 words

**HEADLINE:** REVIEW;  
Goulet can carry a tune, but not the whole show

**BYLINE:** BY GORDON COX. Gordon Cox is a regular contributor to Newsday.

**BODY:**

Robert Goulet has played a knight and a king, and now he's adding a queen to his resume. The crooner, who made his Broadway debut as Lancelot in "Camelot" in 1960 and played King Arthur in the show's 1993 revival, has taken over the role of Georges, half of a glamorous St. Tropez gay couple in the Broadway revival of "La Cage aux Folles."

Goulet has a suave bullhorn of a voice, which he shows off to fine effect in tunes such as "Song on the Sand" and "Look Over There," the thoughtful ballads tucked away among the adhesive anthems ("I Am What I Am") of Jerry Herman's score. His singing, however, is the only persuasive part of his performance.

As a nightclub impresario coping with his son's unorthodox decision to marry a woman, Goulet delivers his dialogue without much force or commitment, and spends enough time looking at his palms to make you wonder if some of his lines are written there.

Goulet's stolidity can't carry the rapid-fire, old-fashioned yuks of the Harvey Fierstein book. On the rare occasions when he's asked to dance, his moves are so slight you'd hardly notice them.

His shortcomings do not amount to a fatal flaw for the show. Goulet is cast, after all, as the "straight" man, opposite Gary Beach as Georges' flamboyant partner. More dangerous is the production's tendency toward shrillness, especially during the strenuous, acrobatic exertions of its chorus girls (who are really boys).

If "La Cage" works best when you think of it as a campy Vegas variety show, that's not out of keeping with its nightclub aesthetic.

In a recorded pre-show announcement, Fierstein even quotes Sin City's tag line, telling us confidentially that "what happens at 'La Cage,' stays at 'La Cage.'"

**LA CAGE AUX FOLLES.** Starring Robert Goulet. Music and lyrics by Jerry Herman, book by Harvey Fierstein, directed by Jerry Zaks. Marquis Theatre, 1535 Broadway at 46th Street, Manhattan. Tickets \$25-\$100. Call 212-307-4100 or visit [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com). Seen Saturday afternoon.

**GRAPHIC:** Newsday Photo/Ari Mintz - Robert Goulet, left, stars with Gary Beach in "La Cage aux Folles" at the Marquis Theatre.

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Orlando Sentinel (Florida)May 6, 2005 Friday  
CENTRAL FLORIDA**SECTION:** OSCEOLA; OSCEOLA; Pg. G1**LENGTH:** 535 words**HEADLINE:** Convention center could use 3rd player**BYLINE:** Mark Pino, Sentinel Columnist**BODY:**

Any serious discussion about a county convention center is irrelevant if no one talks about the best location for such a facility — right on U.S. Highway 192 in the heart of Osceola's tourism corridor.

Yep, it all goes back to location. And the best location hasn't been on the table in the most recent discussion involving FaulknerUSA and Gaylord Entertainment. Both groups are pitching facilities on Osceola Parkway that are too close to the Orange County line and not close enough to U.S. 192.

Odd, since one of the stated purposes of building a convention center is to send business travelers who come there to Osceola's version of the Vegas Strip — sans casinos and showgirls, of course.

If we must have a convention center, the best locations are the 80 acres where the shuttered Orlando Hyatt sits or in Celebration near the Interstate 4 interchange.

Since it is highly unlikely that Disney would play ball by opening a door for a competitor to its own meetings business, that leaves the Hyatt property.

Enter the so-called "New York guys," a group of investors that has made news by plunking down top dollar for marquee properties, including landmarks such as the Sears Tower in Chicago.

David Moinian, one of three brothers involved in the Hyatt purchase, said this week that plans are in the works for a facility with convention space. The plans are too preliminary to offer any details, he added.

Based on other properties in the family, such as the Wyndham Sugar Bay in St. Thomas and the Dylan Hotel in New York, it's safe to say that whatever follows the Hyatt will be first-rate.

Will it be a convention center-hotel and, if so, would the county participate?

The answer to the first part seems a no-brainer. Whatever happens will be a definite bump up in the market, an asset that will increase the value of nearby properties. But the county probably wouldn't be able to participate in financing a convention center there if it goes ahead and forges a deal with one of the current suitors.

There's still a question about how much tourist tax money is available for any project based on the county's current expenditures of those funds.

Last June, Morris Moinian was in the process of closing on the Hyatt property when he told the Sentinel that the two-story complex of scattered buildings wouldn't be demolished for a new high-rise.

At the time, he talked about a "village theme" that would cater to leisure and corporate travelers off I-4 and U.S. 192. He said rooms could go for \$200 a night or more — top rates for Osceola.

"We are in the business of creating prime real estate today that did not exist yesterday," states another brother, Joseph, on the Web site for The Moinian Group ([moiniangroup.com](http://moiniangroup.com)).

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The Hyatt doesn't measure up to some family properties, but it is a local diamond in the rough.

Typically, the market often drives major decisions on what to do with property like this. Its location — at Disney's door by I-4 — is a huge factor. If you believe experts and feasibility studies, a convention center-hotel would plug a gap in the Osceola-U.S. 192 market. And what better spot than the Moinians' spread.

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