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Power Issue 2011

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THE ADESTE MEDAL

We Invite

corporations / individuals to nominate those who have achieved.

Foresight requires a curiosity as deep as it is boundless... and our greatest incentive should be in helping those who are young.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Menna Astoegar
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW
NEW YORK – NEW YORK

The Distinctive John Kolasa, Winter Anniversary issue 2010, is a commendable interview. Thank you for the insight into French winemaking – they preserve the mystic, while the rest of the world is gradually taking market share.

Interesting that the government requires good years and bad years by outlawing irrigation that could help the drought years. Meanwhile the vintner, tirelessly, has his workers sorting through the grapes one by one in order to make the very best quality he can every year. An astounding task and I look forward to the opportunity of visiting these châteaux on one of my future trips to the Bordeaux region.

Maria Estania Gomez
ART COLLECTOR
WINDSOR – CANADA

Alicia Alonso – Never Alone, an interesting and commendable lady! A great life! Why is it that fear of being alone crops up in the lives of many of the most popular? Celebrities apparently lead saddened lives, at times. Hopefully, we can all feel fulfilled when we reach the end. Winter publication.

Peter Clauous
PUB PROPRIETOR
NEWPORT – WALES

Foreign Accent Syndrome, by Angie Lewis and Karen Guin, is a great read! I wonder if some/many retired football players suffer from this syndrome since, I understand, it is a known fact that most of them have had their brains damaged by concussions.

Myra T. Neusbaum
PROFESSOR
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS
BERLIN – GERMANY

Marvelous Maverick, Winter issue: Handling Complexity In The Nineteenth Century, a fascinating and succinct interpretation which stimulates one to once again consider the current war (or wars) in the light of the past. For one, the comparison of people killed is startling. We wring our hands over a handful whereas in the past wars millions died. Also, the end of war help by the USA has created vastly improved nations of the defeated. (The vote is still out on Bush's plan for the Middle East). Maybe civilization is gradually progressing, even though some feel times are terrible. Terrible compared to the past?

Hamilton Roads
TAX SPECIALIST
HAWAII – USA

It is incredible that not only did all the banks in America follow Congress into the sea of debt, but so many other countries have done so as well. {Dominique Strauss-Kahn – 2010 Winter feature}

It is not encouraging to learn that the head of the International Monetary Fund suggests that the future of our economies should look to Asia. This is like a dog chasing its tail. Japan, Korea and now China are following our example and using our knowledge and products in conjunction with extremely lower labor costs. I admit that if our labor unions would follow the Asian example we would certainly prosper.

Zefus Ku
EXECUTIVE
A FORTUNE 500 COMPANY
HONG KONG – CHINA

Rhodes Scholar insight, Winter issue. I suppose the brightest of us cannot succumb to the rigid requirements of a university, as the author points out, for many outstanding business leaders. While we think of university professors as being the ultimate in intelligence and understanding, this may, in fact, not be true. In any case, the registrar is somewhat rigid in his requirements. It is in fact, a very serious fact, that many of the brightest students choose not to go to or, finish college. Perhaps the criterion for choosing professors is often conformity to what has been established.

JL

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The Provocative & Challenging World of Arceri

Gene Arceri has gained world attention as a writer, critic, award winning PBS reviewer and publicist. A native New Yorker, Gene resides in San Francisco and spends considerable time in London. Among his best selling books are: 'Elizabeth Taylor: Her Life. Her Loves. Her Future', Susan Hayward's 'RED' and 'Charlie of Nob Hill'. {San Francisco's most famous cat} arcgen@sbcglobal.net

Monte S. Bell

Wits End

Monte S. Bell was a practicing architect in San Francisco for almost 40 years while affiliated with Sidmore, Owings and Merrill before forming his own firm in 1970. Born in Vancouver, Canada, Monte is now retired and living in Vermont. Always interested in art, he began drawing cartoons for his high school magazine and has continued cartooning to the present.

Andrea Buckett

You Are What You Ate

Andrea Buckett, Dr. of Homeopathy, lecturer, writer, renowned food expert – is passionate about helping people feel young. She is a graduate of The Homeopathic College of Canada and her successes to date have become a sole focus on the body's benefits and pleasures of great food.

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Pros & Ex.Cons

Stanley J. Dorst is a retired officer of Chevron Land Development Co. and CEO of Grosvenor Development Co. He's been advisor to European governments and private companies as Vice-President of The International Urban Development Association and advisor for The International Executive Service Corps on behalf of the United States State Department Agency for International Development.

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When Angels Cry

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Lois M. Gordon

Yes, Virginia! Come – Explore with Me

Lois M. Gordon is a world traveler and resides in California's Silicon Valley. She has spent her life as wife and mother, chairing several committees and indulging in her passion for reading and writing poetry.

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I've Always Been Nuts

Paul Jarvis has enjoyed a full corporate career as CEO of four subsidiaries of foreign multinationals and served on six boards. Board and boat sailor, tennis player, terrible musician all tempered by eclectic friends – affords a basis for views and opinions on a broad range of topics.

Ray Scotty Morris

L'Occhio / The Eye

Ray Scotty Morris is an internationally renowned photojournalist and successful San Francisco society photographer. He has won 29 photo awards in just ten years – local, state and national, including best news picture of the year. Scotty has received a Certificate of Commendation from the U.S. Senate along with the distinct honor of being written into the 107th U.S. Congressional Record.

Dr. Margaret R. O'Keeffe Umanzio

The Poet's Corner

Dr. Margaret R. O'Keeffe Umanzio, Peggy, has been an advisor to CEOs and corporate executive teams. She was a cofounder of the first fully-integrated alternative public school in the U.S., has lectured at Boston University as well as at Stanford, Berkeley and Tufts. She is currently writing a book titled Delivering on the Promise.

H. Gail Regan

The Marvelous Maverick

Gail Regan is vice-chair of Cara Operations. She chairs Energy Probe, is a member of the Canadian Association of Family Enterprise, the Family Firm Institute and the Strategic Leadership Forum. She has a PhD in Educational Theory and an M.B.A. in Finance. Her background in sociology and her personal experience of business have given her an intellectual interest in the problem of evil.

Sally Anne Reisner

The Poet's Corner

Sally Anne Reisner grew up in San Francisco's Bay Area and then taught in an urban-suburban high school in New Jersey for eighteen years. At the age of fifty she left her job, re-married and focused on her writing.

Vera Resnik

The Poet's Corner

Born in Prague, Czechoslovakia, Vera Resnik lost most of her family in the Holocaust. Her volunteer work in the New Jersey court system – as a conflict resolution resource and advocate for children's rights – led to a court appointment to the child review committee. Today, Vera's writings are widely read.

Craig Ricker

The Digital Divide

Craig Ricker is a prolific writer and among the world's best photographers. He went to Russia to develop an understanding of its world from the inside and to accurately portray their life predicament within his books.

Saul Levine, MD

Double Entendre

Saul Levine, MD, is Professor of Clinical Psychiatry at the University of California and the Head of Psychiatry at Rady Children's Hospital in San Diego. He is an international author and former host of a long-running television advice show. He is especially interested in the paradox of humanity: our capabilities to be benevolent and inspirational, yet also to be greedy and destructive.

Heide Van Doren Betz

The Rich & The Famous

Heide Van Doren Betz, an Art Consultant specializing in Ancient Art and Icons, has taught Art History and created world famous collections of Antiquities and Icons. Her accomplished photography was shown in a solo exhibition at the Winckelmann Museum in Germany.

David C. Wesonga.

The Power Of Momentum

David C. Wesonga is Founder/ CEO - Elite Media Partners/ Eastlandah, The Media Company; Founder, Kayrox - East Africa's first online lending bank; Founder - Afrizo, the Online TV; Executive Advisor to CEO - Plan Care Kenya; Board Director Citijournal; Silver Inductee - The International Library Of Poets and the recipient of the 2008 prestigious ADESTE GOLD MEDAL. **JL**

Economy, New Values And Recovery

By H. Gail Regan
Toronto – Canada

My Canadian business depends on a prosperous Canada and Canada is economically dependent on the larger, more productive, more creative economy of the United States. While Canada seems to be finding its feet after the recession, I have been worrying about the stability of the U.S. recovery.

Coincidentally, my nephew gave me Season 1 of the T.V. show Mad Men. I did not identify with the characters at first, but once Betts Draper shot at some pigeons, once she demonstrated that she could feel her anger and fight back, I was hooked. When I realized that underneath its tawdry frivolity the show communicates a significant message, I read the book Mad Men and Philosophy to find out how scholars understand its moral drama.

Although the show illustrates modern philosophy by quoting Ayn Rand and enacting the thought of Friedrich Nietzsche, the authors of the book find the Mad Men characters shallow. They see them as failed existentialists rather than as the suffering front wave of the new economy and contemporary society. Their view misses the depth of this brilliant work.

What did advertising achieve back in 1959, the time period when the show is set? It took ordinary products and made them icons, enabling corporations to create scale and international presence. Advertising made an essential contribution to today's globalised, creatively destructive, competitive, design-based, technologically innovative economy.

In 1959, the American economy was closed, industrial and military, supported by traditional institutions such as schools, churches and communities organized by stay-at-home Moms. Institutions and economy could be rigid, but both were re-assuring and anchoring.

In today's post-industrial economy, where rapid change is necessary to add value, attachment to employer, neighborhood, family, even one's own identity, can be dysfunctional. The new milieu is exciting and lonely, conflicted, low in trust. The shift is frightening and the men and women of Mad Men human. The smoky, boozy, adulterous haze they inhabited was their ticket for the journey out of patriarchy into the new world of existential responsibility and aloneness. Despite their personal failings, they made this milieu mainstream.

The more health-conscious, child-tolerant culture we live in to-day is still their world. Institutions such as media, shopping, travel and religious sects support this world, but do not provide the steadiness that traditional institutions used to furnish.

Providing financial stability to a dynamic economy with modern values and institutions is no easy task. I think I am going to worry for a long time. JL

Acceptable Lies

By Stanley J. Dorst
San Francisco – California

The shepherd yells, "The wolf is coming," and the town's people come running to save the sheep. But no wolf, just a joke on the town's people!

When I was a child in the early 1900s, we were inundated with such stories emphasizing the importance of not lying. For example, in the case of the shepherd, after several such false alarms, the town's people did not come when the wolf actually came and killed the sheep: a pretty good story with a good moral. Our cultural heritage says that lying is wrong and will result in dire consequences.

But were there exceptions? Well, there were white lies; ones that would not hurt anyone, like "I'm on my way", "I didn't see her" or "the check is in the mail". Bluffing, as in liar's dice and poker, and being nice to people. And somehow we believed that these did not negate the principle law of not to lie. So we had a sort of fuzzy moral principle.

In addition, lying has long been an acceptable way of life for criminals and politicians. Today you cannot listen at a trial or a political speech without questioning in your mind what truth there might be. The high moral ground once associated with telling the truth has sunk. It is now politically correct to lie.

How has this erosion of morality happened?

Underlying the more egregious changes is the expansion of the influence of lawyers in our society. We have more lawsuits and more lawyers in politics than ever before. Gradually their morality of advocacy has spread – more criminals, more lawsuits and more lawyer morality. Perhaps in the case of jury trials, it is simply that there are so many suits brought that they are not limited to ones where there is any evidence.

Secondly, part of the cause of this could be the media. Reporters who were once relied upon to investigate, clarify, or refute lies today do not have time or money to investigate; they are dedicated to a position rather than reporting what could be considered objective truth.

Finally, our representatives in Congress have accepted lying as being "politically correct". A politician who wishes to stay elected explains that he all along supported those laws which have had a favorable effect on his constituents, and that he has opposed those laws which have turned out badly – regardless of what he actually did. Recently, this misrepresentation of past positions, lying, has taken on historic proportions. Consider the congressmen who directed the expansion of home mortgages by Fannie May and Freddie Mac to families who could not afford them, and then held hearings to establish that the fault lay with the evil bankers, not with themselves.

Of course, there are also heads of foreign governments who constantly amaze us with their lies, e.g. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

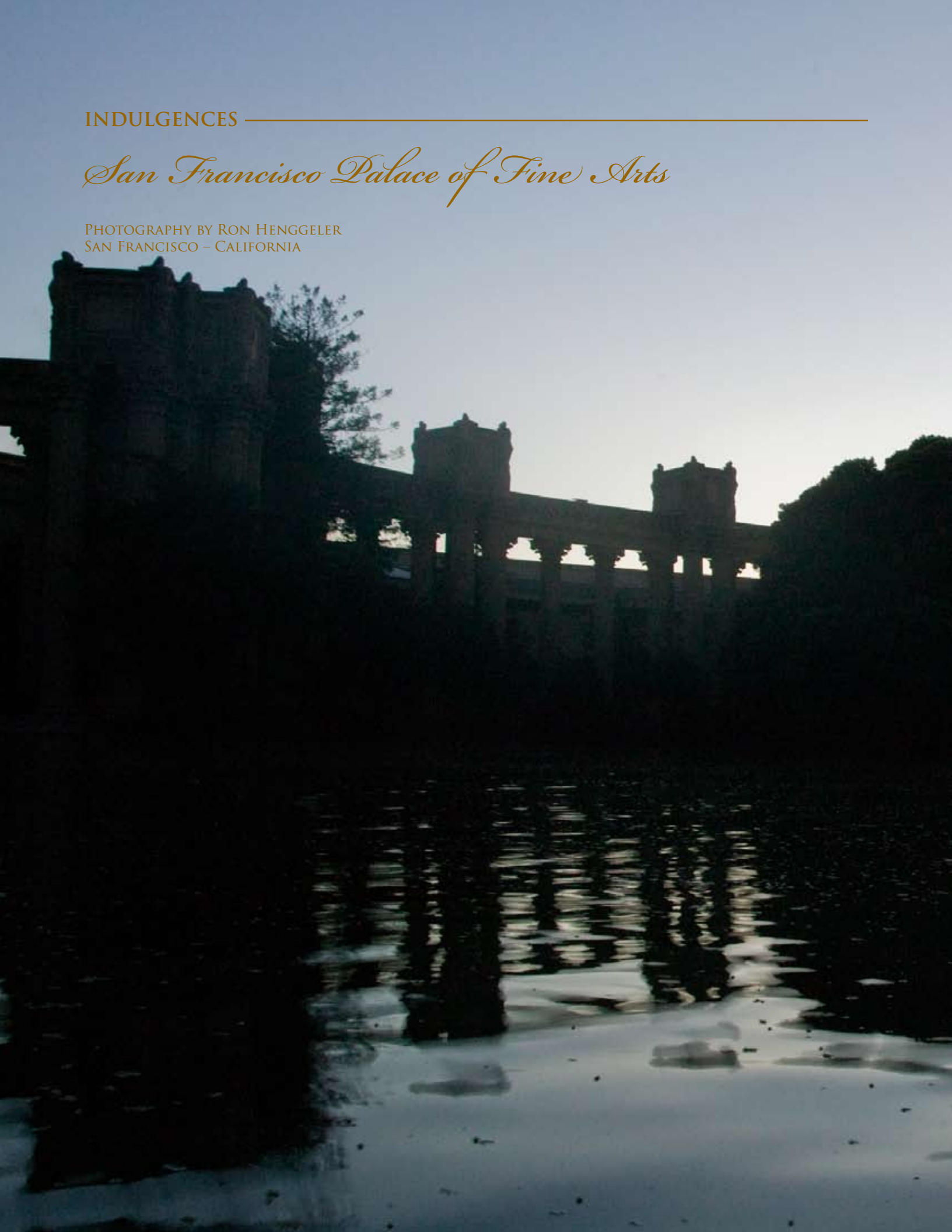
So, is lying still considered to be "wrong"?

What do you think?

JL

San Francisco Palace of Fine Arts

Photography by Ron Henggeler
San Francisco – California



Recently taken in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

Jo Lee Talks To The Power Couple: The Incomparable Two! Donna Saslove And Simon Lugassy

By Josephina Lea Mascioli Mansell

I first came to know The Two – in August of 2010 when I was desperately gownless for JO LEE Magazine's 10th Anniversary Black-Tie Dinner to be held four months to the day! Milano, New York, Munich, San Francisco, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, nowhere could there be found the ball gown envisioned in dreams!

It was a beautiful morning as I gazed through my window onto the waters of Lake Ontario, and whatever made me think of an online search for the impossible – only the universe knew. I keyed in the designer label. It led me to but one possibility within the entire city of Toronto. Can you imagine? A boutique, seven minutes from my Fairmont Royal York Hotel residence! I placed the call, spoke with the incredible voice of Johanna, made an appointment for the coming week and the rest became history. Donna and Simon clasped me within their wings and over the next few months transformed my exact dream into reality!

Now, that's power! This couple – this rare breed of innovative intelligence that built a retail fantasy where originality and power prevail.

Miami to Toronto! It was only a few years ago, well, back in 1985, when Donna and Simon and big business and big moguls were creating power from original thinking and inventing the niche so obvious that a cutting-edge Toronto boutique known first as F/X, and now as Original, would soar.

Donna and Simon's Original at 515 Queen Street West – is breathtaking! As one enters through the tall, glass doors – elegance, a maze of high-end to funky shoes and designer bags, hose, and jewelry engulf you. As for the burgundy, roped-off, circular stairway that leads to some 5,000 gowns and original dresses, well – it becomes a phenomenon of its very own.

Amongst this wonder, I stood, with Donna and Johanna trying and trying to ziiiiiip up the dress of my dreams. "There," they said. "We've done it!" Perched like a mannequin I said, "But I can't breathe!" And the dress was transformed to flow {as only my father used to say} like The Duchess Jo Lee.

Donna and Simon, photographed in Los Angeles.

JO LEE: Donna and Simon, from the first afternoon we met, my gut said, "These two are rare!"

How did you create this incredible dream enterprise? What was that inner-pull that led to you both becoming the "business-savvy couple" that competition, today, cannot hold a candle to?

DONNA and SIMON: You're too generous Jo Lee, but thank you for recognizing our journey.

DONNA SASLOVE: Jo Lee, we were both working for other people and one day Simon said "I don't want to work for anybody anymore." And that's how it all began.

SIMON LUGASSY: I really never liked the retail business and I said, "Never, ever, ever, would I get into retail." I just didn't like it.

But Donna was so talented at it that when she graduated in design and began working for a company in Toronto's affluent Hazelton Lanes: she was the store. She was the brand. The women would come, wanting only Donna to dress them.

I was managing and beginning to own shoe stores and becoming involved in distribution. But I always looked at Donna and thought, "That girl is the store," and it really upset me that she wasn't the owner.

JL: Donna, was there a synergy with what Simon was thinking – "maybe we should create together"?

DS: No, it wasn't like that. We were already together. From the second we met, we were a couple. We were from different backgrounds but the same world. My family being more formally educated – doctors and lawyers and such, while in Simon's world it was more about business. Can you believe – we met in a gay bar!

SL: I had returned from L.A. where I was acting and modeling and went to this bar where Donna was with one of her gay boyfriends. They were all blond and good-looking and sitting in the corner. I'm checking out Donna and finally walk over and say "hello." But her boyfriend thought I was coming to see him.

DS: My side of the story is that my friend and I are in this bar and we were both looking at Simon and discussing which one of us was going to get him! My friend was certain he would. I said "I don't know, I don't know. We'll see how it works out." And Simon came over and said "hi" to me and eventually we exchanged phone numbers.

SL: She said she was Jewish and I thought she was joking.

DS: And I thought he was Italian.

SL: Jo Lee, as young as I was, 19 or 20, I knew I wanted to do something, something on my own. My world was that of business. It was very hard for someone as young as I was to be able to look at my parents and say, "I don't know what I wanna be but I know I want to do something." This kind of thinking was how it all started.

JL: Tell me about your decision to go to the U.S. Did you not open in Florida?

SL: Jo Lee – Canada was afraid of us. We wanted to open in Toronto but no one would give us an opportunity. They didn't want to rent to us because we were too young. Everywhere we went, the situation was the same.

DS: Simon was working for the Romika Shoe Company, the European comfort shoe, and they wanted to open shoe stores in the United States and we wanted to move. But I didn't want to go just to sell those shoes. We wanted to open a shoe store with fun stuff. Nice designer clothes.

SL: Romika agreed so we went to Miami in 1985 and we liked the idea because Donna's grandparents were there.

JL: So you opened a store, two young business minds that, on a whim, went to Miami with an idea.

DS: And did we have ideas, Jo Lee! Simon will tell you the story.

SL: One day, we were coming off a Miami beach, walked into a mall – and saw the ideal location. We began negotiating with the business office and the next thing we knew, we were opening a store in a Florida Mall with Romika backing us. We had performed miracles in Toronto with their product – the comfort shoes. These people gave us the opportunity.

DS: It was a cute little location. Perfect! Not too big.

SL: So off we went.

DS: It was fun! I was matching Jean Paul Gaultier with comfort shoes and making a fashion statement. Everyone

Fairy dress. Photography by Zoe Badley.

seemed to love it.

SL: And the next thing, we're not selling any shoes.

DS: No, no, no. The deal was I wasn't going to move to Florida unless we had clothes. The clothing was always part of it because I was not moving for those shoes. Even though they were fabulous shoes.

JL: Was Comfort Shoes your label?

DS: No it was Romika Shoe Store from West Germany – a huge company back there. Jo Lee, we took their product to another level!

JL: Donna and Simon, take me back to 1985. How long would it be – before realizing a profit?

DS: Jo Lee, we did everything very quickly including realizing profit. We opened in a few months and the next thing we knew, we were working seven days a week. It was good, we learned a lot there. We got a lot of exposure to different things that we would never, ever have seen here in Canada.

JL: Were you married during this time?

DS: Yes. We got married while living in Miami – and the wedding was held in Ottawa, Canada.

JL: So, why did you leave Miami?

SL: Because we started to see reality. There were a lot of bad things happening there.

DS: So we went to New York for a few days and found a really nice location for a store on the Upper West Side. We negotiated, talked to builders and returned to Miami to close our doors and move.

When we got home, ALL of our valuables and money had been stolen. It was our last week of business, the banks were closed, and

Crinolines and poufy gowns on the second floor. Photography by Zoe Badley.

thinking we were organized and safe, we'd stored cash from the store at home.

Much of the money we were to open with in New York was gone. We felt we had no choice but to come back to Toronto.

Simon's sister was getting married and offered her apartment – we could stay there until we restarted our life.

SL: The next thing we knew – we were opening a store on Toronto's Yonge Street near Wellesley Street – that was our first, in July 1989. And then, yes, yes, we opened many stores – I think 11 locations?

JL: And you have power-built an extraordinary reputation! Was it a huge struggle getting to the top of your game?

DS: Yes, and I'll tell you how it went.

As I was saying, the first Toronto F/X boutique was on Yonge Street. Then we opened F/X on Queen West in 1991. We kept moving to the next "happening" area, sometimes closing locations when it made sense.

Queen Street was so hot, we opened a second boutique right next to the other one. The first Queen F/X store was one-of-a-kind dresses. The other was everything else. Respectively, we opened on Yonge north of Eglinton Street and then the shop in Yorkville.

After that came Spadina Avenue – a huge, 10,000 square-foot space where we had a candy bar, ice cream parlor, photo booth and great gifts. We did nail polish – I had 250 colors. And the best? We sold fudge. Salespeople and customers rollerbladed; it was like a department store that was continually changing.

SL: The location was amazing for a lot of things. Seriously, anyone who was anyone more than likely shopped there. We had

Donna and Simon's wedding, October 25, 1987.

fashion shows for some big names. Duran Duran held a huge fashion show and party in the store. Donna also produced an amazing show for Pat Field around this time – before she did Sex and the City – that was at the Phoenix Concert Theatre.

JL: How clever you were! Always targeting, always the happening location, always ahead of the curve! What a marquee!

DS: We fell into things. Simon loves creating.

SL: I like building stores. So anytime there's something to build...

But the funniest scenario was with our boutique on Cumberland Street in Toronto's fashionable Yorkville. The Yorkville Association wanted to have us evicted from the area because we weren't traditional – until they realized we were attracting shoppers; we were good for the area!!

DS: Never mind. The clients loved us. We were even featured in Yorkville post cards. We had men's wear on the second floor. Do you remember that?

JL: And all this time you were conserving?

DS: I don't know. We were responsible.

JL: That is why you're successful! Progressive, gutsy! Not foolish.

SL: That's the way it works. You've got to be a rock.

DS: And through all this we had four kids, all boys, one after the other. I once came to work on the way home from the hospital after giving birth. We just kept going and the kids joined in.

JL: Lord! That must be easier said than done?

DS: Sometimes. Right after one of my boys was born, I had an important trade show I had to get to – there were things I had to buy for the store. I was breastfeeding. I got to the show, and they refused to let me in with my baby. This was New York, 1993, I want you to know. It was terrible.

JL: Did you leave?

DS: No. I was mad. Alex, who worked with me, helped put the baby in a backpack and covered the baby with his coat. We smuggled him in!

JL: And this littlest angel didn't cry?

DS: No, because I fed him. So I started buying – and when writing an order, Security showed up to kick me out, again. The people I was buying from said, "Over my dead body is she leaving. This order is paying my bills!"

JL: What made you condense the number of stores you had?

DS: At one point, we were thinking that it would be better to have one large store rather than several smaller locations. Then the landlord in our big location on Spadina sold the building – it was going to be knocked down. We had three kids, another on the way, and we'd just bought a new house. What, why are you making a face?

SL: Well it wasn't just a house. It was a mansion.

DS: We'd bought this huge house – far from downtown. Now we had a deadline to move the entire Spadina store – 10,000 square feet. Guess what we did? We ended up walking away from the house deal.

SL. Then I found this location at 515 Queen Street where we are now.
DS. No I did.

SL: Go ahead.

DS: Did I find it or did I not? Rents were $20,000 to $25,000 a month. That's a lot of money.

SL: So we bought this building, Donna, instead of renting because we couldn't find a space within our budget to rent that was big enough for our store inventory.

DS: My story is – there were other people bidding on this building but we were the only ones who wanted the building as-is, and that's how we got it, drunks falling in through the doorway and all.

JL: How many square feet?

SL: Sixty-five hundred.

DS: But that's not the issue, you see. I need to have so much space because you never know who's going to walk in. And you have to have something for everyone or else what's the point?

SL: Pay the bills. That's the point.

June 5, 2010: Donna and Simon with their boys: (Left to right) Samson, Adrian, Rafael and Jesse.

DS: No, no – but you know what I mean. If you own a dress shop don't you want to have something for everybody who walks in your door?

And we did have something for everyone. So now, at this point, we had four boys and one location – Original at 515 Queen Street, West that turned out to be a great address – again.

JL: In 2006, there was a fascinating twist?

DS: Oh yes. That is when F/X was sold. In 2006 a group approached us and we sold. I didn't think we should sell but Simon insisted that we could do it all over again one day if it felt right. "They're not buying you; it's only merchandise," he said. So it was a good idea and I listened. We sold our business after not having had real days off for 25 years. Isn't that right?

SL: You know what I think? I think a group of people with a lot of money thought they could run this operation and we said, "Give us the money." We went to Florida and "relaxed" for 2½ years.

DS: We did not! Not entirely true.

SL: Bottom line – for the 2½ years, we took care of our kids. We went to Israel. Donna did all the costumes for Fiddler on the Roof and Oliver! at our kids' schools – and I was on my boat, I was at the golf course all the time. I was bored.

After 2½ years, the purchasers of F/X went out of business. It was a lot more work than they expected it to be. They moved out and we moved back into this location.

JL: And you recreated, right here, in the same spot? You incorporated as F/X Original, but called

Donna and Simon at Original.

the store Original?

DS: We did a total renovation. Simon did the whole thing. The original floors were kept – the glass front is brand new. The name of the store is Original because in the '40s it was known as Original Furniture. You can see it in the marble floor at the entrance. Our son preserved their logo – he developed ours from theirs, copying the exact writing that was on the floor and on the old dark sign in the basement with the original glass embroidery. It's etched and it's wonderful. We worked with history.

SL: We had to decide if we were going to open for prom season – March Break. It was December 29. By January 1st we had to know because the buying and renovations to open were going to be huge. We opened on time.

JL: How old is the building?

SL: Probably as old as Toronto. The original owner's son is 95 years old. He was so happy with what we'd done. I can remember him standing, watching, saying, "It looks even better than before."

JL: You don't advertise ever – not in Miami nor here?

DS: Never have. We're involved with a lot of people. Production houses, film houses. Our stores have been an icon stopover for a lot of people and events over the years – it's known as word-of-mouth. Last summer we won first prize for our store window during the Toronto Grand Prix – it was a contest bringing some unexpected attention and a lot of fun.

JL: I'll bet you could name names that have come through.

Photo shoot on location at Original. Photography by Barbara Cole.

SL: Over the years there were so many: the Rolling Stones, Darryl Hannah, Pat Field, Billy Newton Davis, Goldie Hawn, Anne Dudek and lots more. They didn't want to leave. Elizabeth Perkins – nice girl.

JL: What's the click? What makes Original different from anything else out there?

SL: Jo lee, just imagine a retailer who is doing it for the money. What they're doing is buying the top 10 that sell. We're not that kind of a business. Donna is not that kind of a buyer. We are true retailers.

DS: I buy what I like and what I would like to see on others.

SL: And you know what, you've got to fill the stores up as much as you can.

DS: No it's not that at all. It's because of the service. Service is THE most important thing.

JL: Ah! But that click you have – is different!

SL: It's because of Donna! You know what's amazing, when a girl comes in and she's large, and she's slinking away in the corner as her mother is saying, "Come on honey, they'll find you a dress." And we take that girl and we dress her from top to bottom!

DS: That's my favorite client.

SL: The mother has tears in her eyes. The daughter's looking at herself for the first time in her life and you can see she likes herself. And let me tell you something, that moment when that girl leaves here and she's happy and she sends you an online picture of how beautiful she was on that day with her date: that's when it's worth it all!

It doesn't matter who you are. When you come in here to us – we'll dress you. If you've got $200 we'll make you feel like you're buying $2,000. Everybody feels special in this store.

There's another story. A young girl comes in with her mother, her boyfriend, her cousin, her other friend, and two more people and she's looking for a prom dress. She can only spend $300 and she tries a dress on but: it's $600. She comes out of the change room. Seriously, she looks like the world's top model. But no one had really noticed until she put the dress on. And everybody went "Wow!"

Do you know what happened? Every one who came with her went into their pockets and every one of them pitched in to the last penny to buy her that dress. That was magic and it happens once in a blue moon.

JL: And with magic – comes love. What is your least and most expensive dress?

DS: Jo lee, some have a budget of $100 maximum. This could be a grad dress, casual. If someone is really on a budget it's good that they tell me how much they want to spend. I will find them a dress. And then there are mothers who buy $600 dresses for their grade eight daughters.

Most expensive? I don't know – we have a wedding dress for $2,500.

JL: How difficult is making a good dollar in today's economy?

SL: There's no recession in this kind of business.

DS: Not really. Maybe instead of buying two dresses you're going to buy one and maybe think about it a bit longer. People are still getting married, there's still going to be bridesmaids, mother-of-the-bride, a bar/bat mitzvah, people going to parties. And people will still have birthdays – turning 18 or sweet 16 or 21. Many times we can do the whole family thing from youngest on up.

A lot of people call this dress heaven. When they walk upstairs – it's like a very large closet that you've always wished you could play in for days. People always say, "Lock us up overnight."

JL: So before you reach heaven, you must enter the golden gate. Tell

Photo shoot on location at Original. Photography by Barbara Cole.

us about going through your golden gate.

DS: Jo Lee, as you know, our first floor has many, many, many shoes from all levels of comfort to designers – to the most different things you could want. We carry handbags of all types from casual to evening to Vivienne Westwood, which are always beautiful. We have a lot of accessories, jewelry, hosiery.

JL: And then – you enter heaven!

DS: There are easily 5,000 dresses or more from the tightest to the poofiest. You can buy a basic black or the most elaborate thing on earth. For competitions, anything you want.

JL: Do you ever think of yourselves as the power couple?

DS: I never think about what we are. I think about the goodness of what we can do tomorrow.

SL: There's no time to stop and analyze.

JL: Tell me about your four boys?

SL: Well they're all good looking. None of them are even close to being alike but they are all artistic. They have big hearts.

DS: They're sweet boys; 11 to 17 all doing their own thing.

JL: What would you tell young people asking, "Where do we begin?"

DS: Don't get into a business if you're not willing to commit all of your time to it. If you're going to just hire a manager I would say, "Don't open."

SL: At the end of the day: it's about having the business sense, the passion and the taste.

JL: When you think of what you've achieved – you've had luck!

DS: We're very lucky. Luck is very important. That's what my grandmother used to say. All you need is luck. I thank God every day.

SL: Every day I feel like I'm standing on a stage. This is the store and this is my stage.

JL: And what do you say to women as they grow into age?

DS: There are people my age and I look at them and say, "How can that be?" They tell me "I couldn't wear that because I'm 35." "Pardon?" I ask. I tell them they should try something fun.

SL: It doesn't really matter if you're not standing straight some day. It doesn't matter that you're not as good looking as you were. It's the miracle of life that is everything.

Donna's grandfather was my hero. I remember he would come into the mall and watch us build the store. The way he stood, watching us work was so important to me because everything we did was important to him. He was watching us and taking care of his Donna.

JL: Gosh, I'm in awe! What quiet elegance you have with heart. This rare breed of innovative intelligence that built a retail fantasy where originality and power prevail. The Incomparable Two!

SL: Donna, retirement is not a good thing.

DS: Oh, I don't know.

SL: That's how I see it – if you want to stay young.

Photo shoot on location at Original. Photography by Barbara Cole.

Photo shoot on location at Original. Photography by Barbara Cole.

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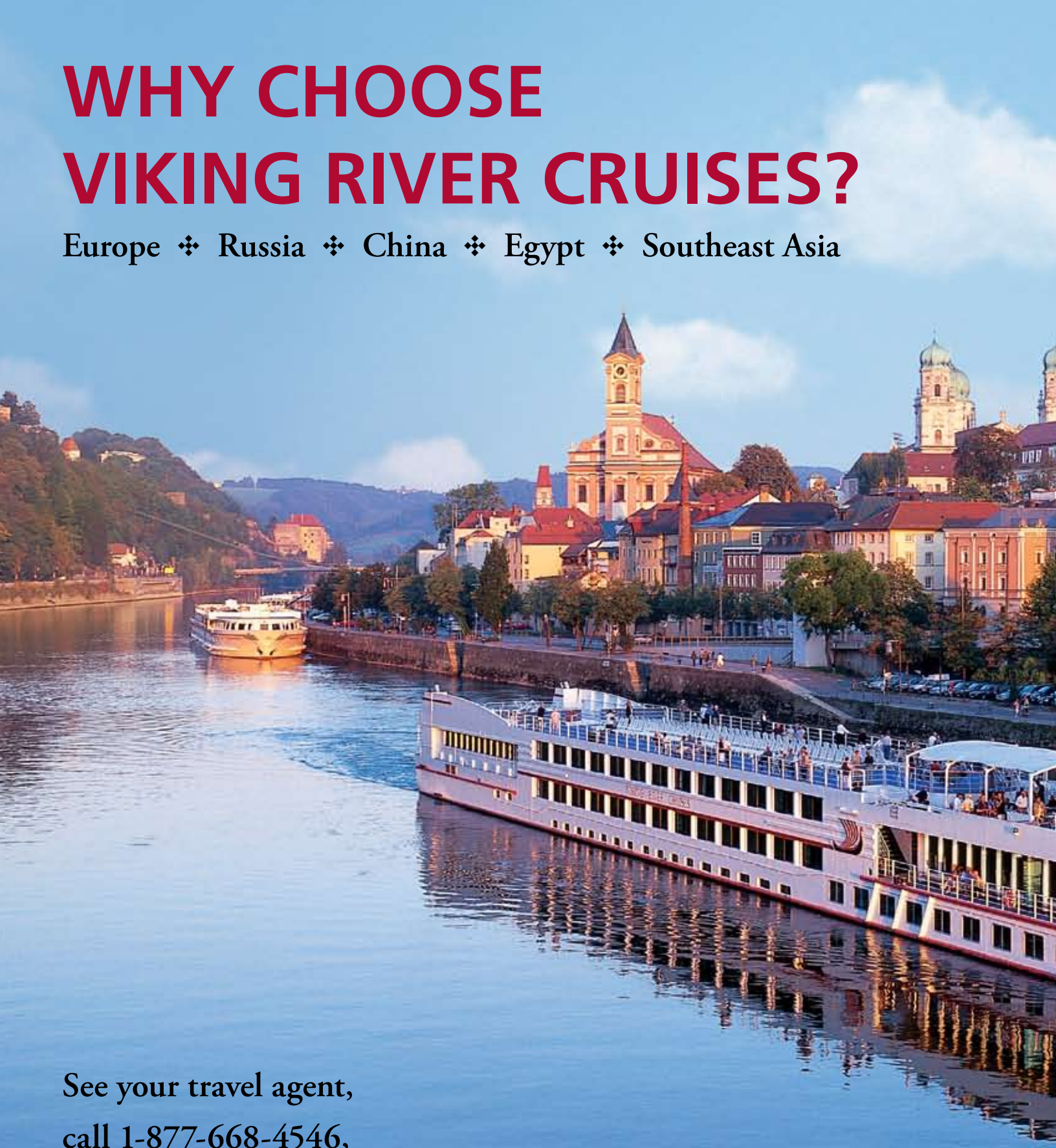

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YES, VIRGINIA! COME - EXPLORE WITH ME

As you venture out into our world, your travel can consist of a day visit to the closest towns or a journey that will place your feet clear on the other side of the world. It is all about discovery and about everywhere you walk.
So, COME – EXPLORE WITH ME.

Bryce Canyon, Utah, USA

By Lois M. Gordon
Silicon Valley – California
Photography by John Frenz

Bryce Canyon National Park is famous for its worldly unique geology. The forces of frost wedging and the power of rainwater have shaped the limestone rock into bizarre shapes. The colors, too numerous and subtle to name, and the whimsically arranged rocks, create a wondrous landscape of mazes, thus offering some of the most exciting and memorable walks imaginable.

What is Bryce Canyon? Words confound with no comparable in existence: A cave without a ceiling, a forest of stone? Even "canyon" is misleading since Bryce is carved by freeze/thaw cycles, not a river.

When you visit Bryce Canyon, you will find much more than just rocks. There are birds, mammals, trees and more. Your first stop should be the Visitor Center where you can obtain driving and hiking directions, weather forecasts, a schedule of guided programs, and other information.

Ponderosa pines, high elevation meadows and fir/spruce forests border the rim, wildlife abounds. Some of the world's best air quality and the panoramic views of three states offer amazing opportunities for stargazing.

The park is only 56.2 square miles and occupies the eastern edge of the Paunsaugunt Plateau in south-central Utah. It is not a canyon, it is a spectacular series of more than a dozen amphitheaters, each of which is carved at least 1,000 feet into the chromatic limestone of the Paunsaugunt Plateau.

Bryce Canyon has a 7.4 magnitude night sky. In most rural areas of the U.S., 2,500 stars can be seen on a clear night. At Bryce, 7,500 stars twinkle in the void.

The sky is very dark and the astronomy rangers and volunteers are very talented. They have really large telescopes and no light pollution. You can see the splendor of the universe like nowhere else.

When you are planning your trip to Utah, be certain to look closely at a map showing all of the national parks in the area. You can see most of them. Zion National Park is another beauty just south of Bryce. In all, there are six national parks within close proximity in Utah: Arches, Canyonlands, Capitol Reef, Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park, plus Zion and Bryce. Mesa Verde is just outside Utah's border in Colorado, and Grand Canyon just south in Arizona. And if you have the time, there is Yellowstone in the north.

This trip is a true treat into the beauty of the world.

JL

And I'll Bet The Sweeps On That!

By Dr. Andrea Buckett
Toronto – Canada

Q: What is the best type of fat to cook with? Ryms – Alexandria, Virginia

AB: Great question, Ryms. The best fat to cook with is one that remains stable at medium to high temperatures. Unfortunately most of us cook with what we are told are "healthy" polyunsaturated and monounsaturated oils (canola, sunflower, soya, olive). It is the chemical nature of these mono- and polyunsaturated fats to be unstable when heated, creating free radicals and "trans fatty" like substances. The fats that are stable when heated are, in fact, the saturated variety – butter, lard, coconut. The ones that humans were consuming for thousands of years, before the dawn of heart disease!

Q: What are the benefits of turmeric? Brook T. – Ottawa, Canada
AB: There are many herbs and spices that can be incorporated into your cooking that will enhance well-being and restore good health. Brook, the kitchen can truly be your apothecary. Turmeric is the pinnacle of health-promoting spices. Curcumin is a main medicinal component of turmeric. A potent antioxidant, turmeric supports all cellular functions, boosts immunity, cleanses circulatory pathways, supports the skeletal system, and improves digestion. When purchasing, ensure it is organic and buy in small quantities to guarantee its quality.

Q: Can plant sterols help with seasonal allergies? Kaatje - Zagreb, Croatia

A.B: Kaatje, plant sterols and sterolins are found in most fruits, vegetables and nuts. They are a compound that have a profound effect on the immune system and have the ability to normalize cholesterol. They were discovered in 1922 and have thousands of published medical studies to back up their effectiveness. The good news is they can be taken in pill form for therapeutic purposes. This plant nutrient normalizes and balances the release of interleukin 4 and 6, two immune compounds responsible for the majority of allergy symptoms.

Q: I've heard that springtime is a good time to cleanse your liver. What are some foods that help this process? DPX – Quito, Ecuador

A.B: Considering the liver works hard year round to keep your body clean, it is important for you to keep it in optimal working condition. Restoring the liver by consuming medicinal plants is a superb way to get started. Mostly bitter, these plants work to decongest the liver and promote production and flow of bile through the liver. Liver cleansing foods include dandelion, spinach, beets and chicory root. A warm glass of water with lemon in the morning is also a great idea, DPX.

JL

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In Memorium Merrill A. Conn

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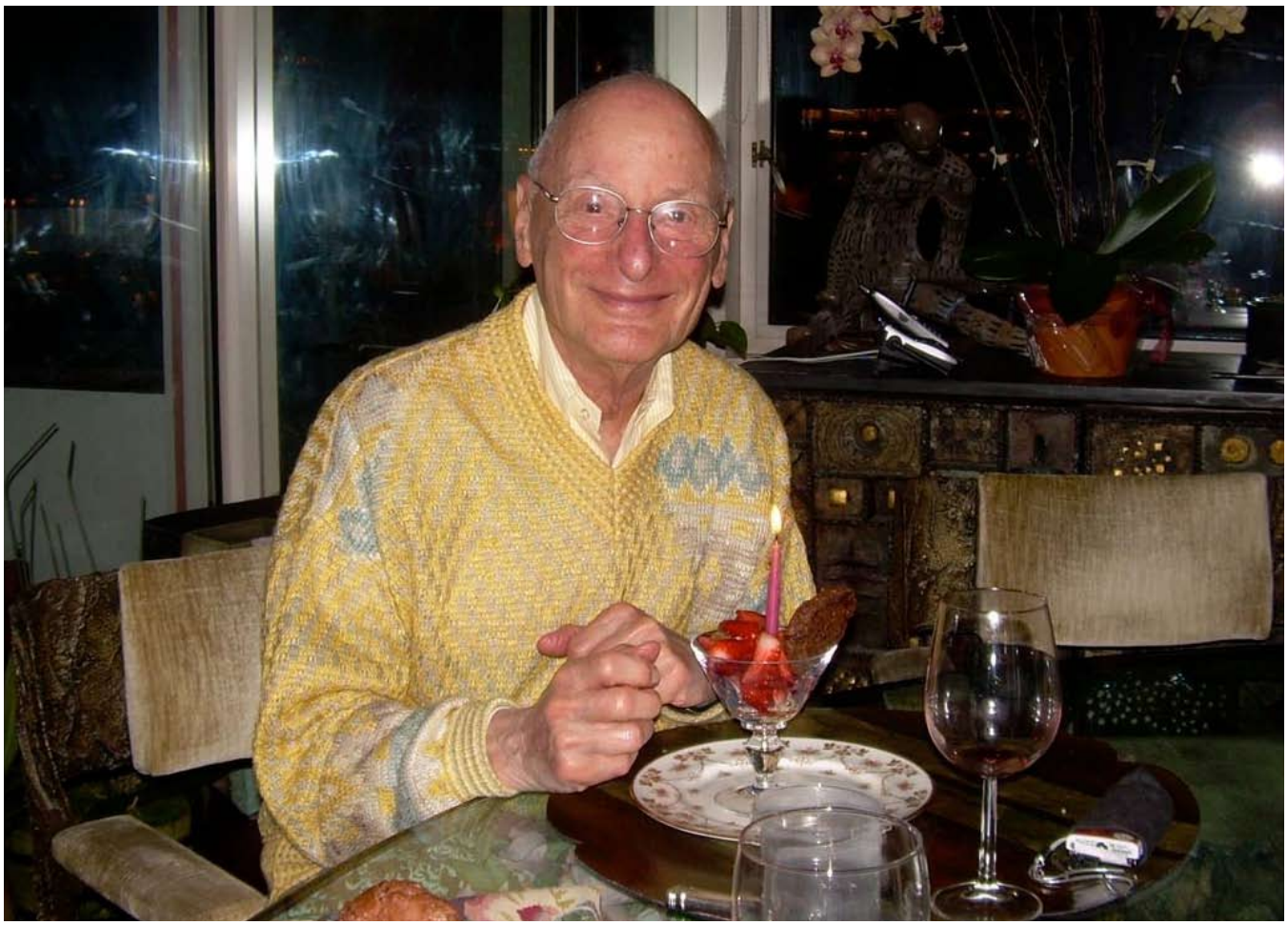

JL

In A World Without Hunger

By Emelisa Callejas
Consul of Honduras – Atlanta
Photography by Paul M. Wingler

It all began in the year 2000, when Carlos Andrés Zelaya, Program Coordinator of the Representation in Honduras for the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), called, inviting me to visit a project that my brother, Rafael Callejas, former President of the Republic of Honduras, Central America, had supported during his administration. To my utmost astonishment – I was amazed!

Ten years earlier, the farmers of Lempira Sur could barely produce enough maize, beans and sorghum to feed their families. Only two years earlier, when in 1998 Hurricane Mitch hit the country, it was the same farmers who provided tons of emergency food aid to their fellow citizens in other parts of the country.

Realizing that Honduras already had proven methodologies of "how to" successes, my mission on eradicating hunger and malnutrition in Honduras began.

Looking for similar programs, my research led me to Sue Church. Sue is director of the Atlanta based NGO Honduras Outreach Inc. (HOI). What impressed me was that Olancho Department had been identified as an area with one of the highest concentrations of poverty and infant mortality. The median rural family income was less than $400 annually, with 68 of every 1,000 children dying before reaching the age of five. It was HOI that had made a significant impact on reducing infant mortality. Its Economic Development and Vocational Schools had increased their income by well over 400 percent. Children now growing up in the region were experiencing undreamed of possibilities. Within days, our National Crusade against Hunger and Malnutrition began.

We formed teams with Rotary clubs of Honduras and Atlanta, the University of Georgia, with friends and others. The venture grew exponentially over the years and with its growth came the realization that my country was in need of a massive and united front to win the battle. The conundrum was that historically, Honduras has been divided by two major political parties that would never be able to come together, not even for a cause!

On 28 June 2009, the unthinkable happened. Unexpectedly, the people of Honduras came together as a whole, united for its sovereignty. Sue and I realized that the most important step had taken place. Now it was only a matter of time, for at that moment, Honduras was electing its new government with the prime candidate promising to commit to the cause.

Today, Food Security has been officially declared State Priority. Furthermore, Honduras has committed to creating three avenues from which hunger and malnutrition will be eradicated. UTSAN was formed by governmental offices harmonizing and coordinating the state efforts; COTISAN where large NGOs, Government and Donors meet; and ANSAN where the civil society sits.

As for the next challenge, ANSAN must bring together the extremes of the country. Here the Right has to sit with the Left, the Catholics with the Protestants, and the rich with the poor. If ANSAN has success, it will give sustainability and transparency to the process.

President Lobo is declaring the year 2011 as the year of Food Security in Honduras. The Congress is passing a decree where food security will be a constitutional right. Honduras is not alone. The challenge is not only a Honduran challenge. It belongs to the world.

Training on healthy eating habits has become a world priority that demands mankind working together to accomplish a civilization without hunger, without undernourishment, and without obesity.

Will you join us In A World Without Hunger?

JL

The Poet's Corner

Trophy Wife Man

The spacious salon in this smartest part of town
is tastefully restrained and smug
its antique woods burnished by the years
are rich and warm: glazed urns wink back the light
from crystal chandeliers.

The young-old men are here, ambition still aflame
they strive to keep with time's relentless pace
first loves cast ruthlessly aside
like some worn asset, they seek youth again
beside some younger bride.

All present are to each other known
all faces glow, polished by quick suntan
brought quickly from another clime
each eye is predatory, poised to pounce
while yet there's time.

The smile, the easy grin, all is artifice
to hide the aging tiger leashed within
and the fading youth to which they cling
reflects as panic in the faces
of the girls they bring.

©frankyoung

Frank Young is a 93-year-old poet. His first volume of poetry, While the Music Lasts was published in 2010.

The Dance

Come dance one more csardas with my babies, Papa, even though they're grown
And we will reminisce about how the time has flown.
Tell them a story, Papa, give them a kiss,
For this we know forever, they will surely miss.
Sing them a little song, they loved that you know,
So please, Papa, dance one more csardas with my babies before you go!
Swing them around, as we laugh our troubles away,
And the house will not be empty, and quiet will not stay.
Let us dance till sunset, Papa, may our broken hearts mend,
And if we follow the sun, our dance will never end.

©maryszabo

Mary Szabo's life experiences radiate through the pages of her poetry, tugging at your heart strings. She resides in Kirkton, ON, Canada, is a talented mother of five who loves her garden and is always up for a challenge.

Games of Childhood

Bouncing jacks and pick-up-stix
Ring around the rosy
Kick the can, hide and seek
Who will ever find me?

Ring the doorbell, run away
Raid the neighbor's plum tree
Kickball, dodgeball
Who will capture the flag?

Roller skating, ice skating
Hopscotch and jump rope
Green light, red light
Who will get past go?

Toss the dice and take a chance
Monopoly…Parcheesi
Spelling bees, cake walks
Who will win the prize?

Spin the bottle, kiss the girl
Play your favorite tune
Forty-fives and jukeboxes
Will she really love me?

©Sallyanne

Hands

Calm, strong, focused hands
Hands that knead and shape clay into exquisite expressions of beauty
Hands that rhythmically guide water to bring forth new life hidden in our garden
Hands that race with pen to paper to reveal the deepest feelings within his heart
Hands that gently and lightly massage the kitten's furry chin
Hands that cradle my hands
Hands that say, "I love you, love me back"
Beautiful, loving, magical hands of life.

©margaretumanzio

Belle

Four weeks ago Belle moved in next door, "love at first sight".

Belle's jumbo, black olive eyes enchant, sparkle with mischief,
coyness, exultation, dauntlessness and minuscule reserve.

Belle's shinny flaxen hair swings like gently blown prairie grass.

Belle's jubilant spirit, walk, determined, unhurried;
her effervescence cannot be saddened.

Belle, extremely poor conservationist, but attentive, comforting listener:
all confidences find sanctuary and non-judgment.

We often sit in silence, words unimportant when eyes and heart speak.

Belle's friendliness often overbearing:
she sees me arriving home and immediately
saunters over following me into the house, effusively amative.
Seems like she gallops over like a wild horse chased by an entrapping lasso.

Belle, shining example of breed perfection, gentle Golden Retriever,
my blue ribbon champion of unconditional love, my new neighbor.

©Veraresnik JL

Canon

Riding The Rails In Style

By Rose Chase
Vancouver – British Columbia
Photography compliments of Rocky Mountaineer

The excitement is palpable as guests from all over the world gather at Rocky Mountaineer Station in Vancouver, BC. A mother and son, husband and wife, honeymoon couple and families of all sizes, all looking forward to a train journey like no other. The staff gathers passengers at the entrance for a traditional "all aboard" call and then they are off, settling into seats in the glass-domed coach of GoldLeaf Service, raising a glass of sparkling orange juice to toast the journey ahead.

There is something captivating about a Rocky Mountaineer train trip with its air of mystique, aura of luxury and nod to times past. Although routes vary, pace slows through such stunning landscapes as the Fraser Valley and the Fraser Canyon with its rushing rapids and imposing mountain peaks.

Helpful onboard attendants double as tour guides, regaling travelers with interesting snippets of folklore and facts about historic landmarks and sights en route, all while preparing the dining room for meals and serving fresh coffee and tea.

Menus are impressive with a collection of classic gourmet, à la carte dishes. They cook delectable dishes of smoked Pacific salmon, scrambled eggs, caviar and crème fraîche in a small galley kitchen. All is as delicious as if it were served in a five-star restaurant, complete with white linens fine china and fresh-cut flowers. And that is just breakfast, lunch may be Prime Alberta Beef or Black Tiger Prawns. Meals are served in the lower level, well appointed dining cars.

Returning from a fine dining experience, climbing the spiral staircase back to the upper level, it isn't unusual to hear rumblings of a wildlife spotting as people scramble to get their cameras. "What luck," said one happy adventurer. "I snapped a shot of a black bear and her two cubs in a clearing, just yards from the train." As it turned out, it was the first of many wildlife sightings on that particular trip through the interior of British Columbia and into the Canadian Rockies. Bald eagles, mountain goats, osprey and big horn sheep can be seen as the train travels through their backyards as they go about their day. They've got some prime real estate.

Relaxing in comfortable seats and enjoying the panoramic views it's easy to make small talk with neighbors and still be awestruck by the change of scenery entering into stopover locations like Kamloops, for instance. The dry, arid dessert-like conditions are a stark contrast to the lush farmland and coastal rainforest passed earlier. An overnight stay in the quaint town of Kamloops and then off the next morning, bright and early for the upcoming scenery unfolding into the Rockies.

It is hard to describe the climb into the Rockies. Each hour the mountains grow taller and more dramatic, each corner lends itself to another towering rock wall. The water changes to a beautiful turquoise hue caused from glacial run off as it swirls and crashes through the plunging gorges. Fellow passengers keep a keen eye out for grizzly bear or moose. As the train pulls into the picturesque mountain town of Banff, Alberta, it may seem sad to disembark and leave new friends behind, but anticipation builds for another adventure through the rugged beauty and pristine peaks of the Rocky Mountains.

JL

Educate Girls Globally: Education Reform That Works

By Charlotte Mills Seligman
San Francisco – California

Educating girls and women in areas of conflict is becoming a strategic necessity in the fight against terrorism. Educate Girls Globally (EGG) has developed a successful education reform model that engages teachers, parents, students, and government officials to bring education to thousands of girls who are out of school. Lawrence Chickering, EGG founder and president, explains the importance of the issue: "As women are educated, birth rates fall, family health improves, literacy increases, per capita income grows, and governance and political participation improve." He founded EGG in 1999 and, in 2005, partnered with the World Economic Forum and the state government of Rajasthan, India, to create a model that would work in this impoverished and tribal state. After two years of operation, the program's results are stunning:

Reduced the number of girls out of school by 90%
Increased the number of children (grades III-VI) reading Hindi from 42% to 57%
Increased the number of children (grades III-VI) reading English from 15% to 43%
Doubled the number of children able to add and subtract two digits from 26% to 57%

The program's success has resulted in the Rajasthan government expanding it this year from the initial 500 schools into more than 2,300 schools to serve more than 260,000 children, about 126,000 of them girls. Over the next few years, the government anticipates implementing the program in other Indian impoverished states. Half of the funding in Rajasthan comes from DASRA, a philanthropic organization in India that has pledged to support the model from private donors three years into the future.

According to Chickering, the program is unique because it works in partnership with government ministries to leverage their investments in teachers' salaries, textbooks, and facilities, which brings education to large numbers of girls at a very low cost. "We've shown that, with a mere 2% increase in their budget, governments can reach 25-33% more girls and can significantly raise learning scores in both reading and math," he says.

Rajasthan is one of the most male-dominated, traditional states in India, and thus is generally resistant to change. EGG's Community Activation Model has proven successful in reversing men's response to girls' education from negative to positive.

The improvements in learning are the result of the Creative Learning Teaching (CLT) program, which was developed by an NGO in West Bengal and replaces the rote memorization that's prevalent in many school systems. "It increases student involvement and self-esteem and keeps the children in school," says EGG's Executive Director, Safeena Husain.

Chickering believes that EGG's model can become a powerful instrument in counterinsurgency strategies. The U.S. military invited him and Husain to visit Afghanistan to explore use of the model there, and the command in Kabul is currently considering two proposals from EGG to work there. "When you give people a stake in the school system," Chickering says, "You promote a positive concept of citizenship, and you give them a reason to resist forces that are trying to bring the system down."

Given the crippling poverty, religious extremism, and abuse of girls and women in many of the world's most volatile regions, EGG's education model offers hope for change.

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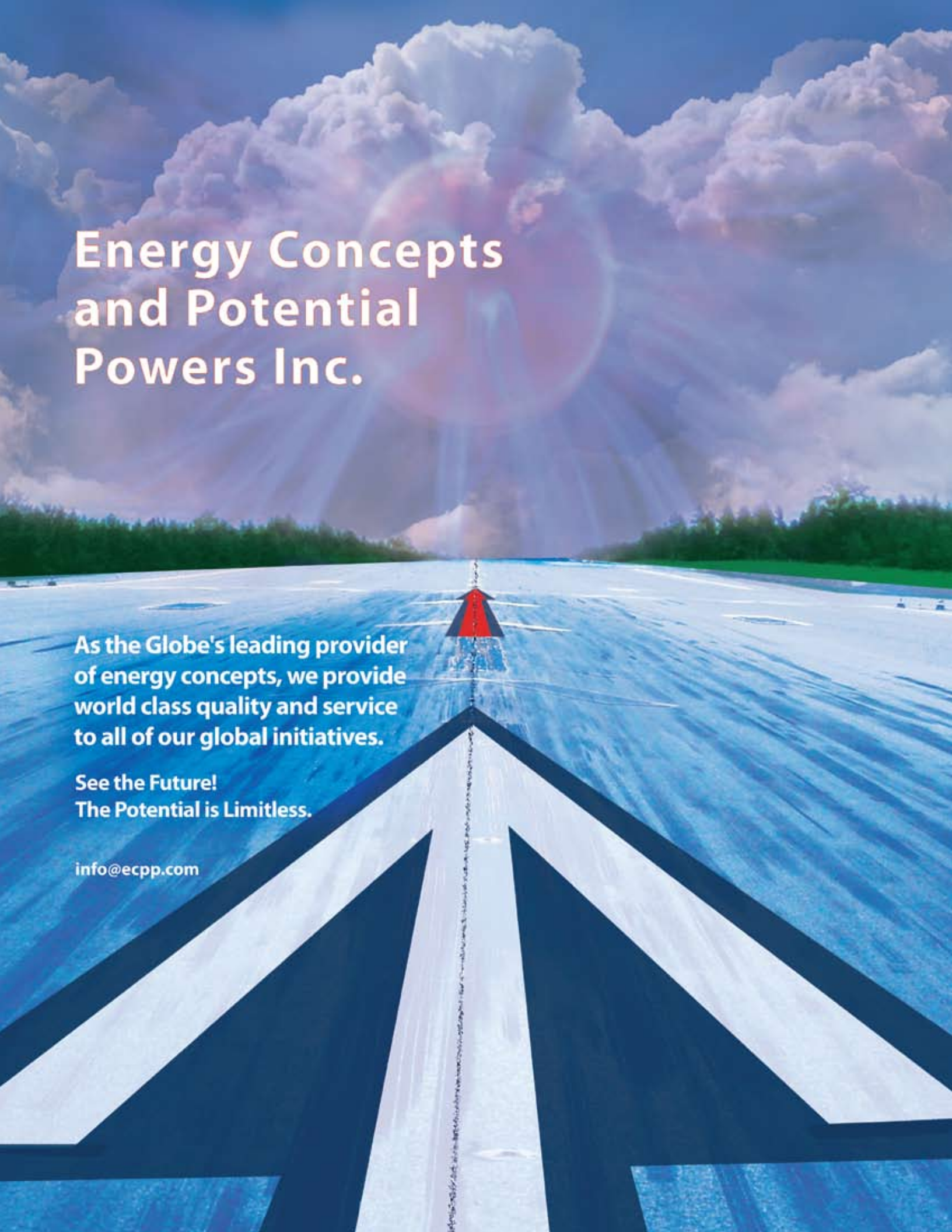
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The Austrian-American Arnold

By Adriana Moelencamp
Beverley Hills – California

The easiest way to evaluate the achievement of the Austrian-American Arnold Shwarzenegger, the son of a Styrian police chief who went on to become the world's movie star aristocrat and Governor of California, is to understand the man.

It might seem a little strange that he announced his candidacy for the Governor of California on The Tonight Show, but when you're Arnold Schwarzenegger, you can pretty much do whatever you want. Two months after his August 2003 visit to Jay Leno's talk show, Arnold Schwarzenegger was elected as Gray Davis' replacement in the recall elections, earning nearly 3.4 million votes.

Born on July 30, 1947, in Graz, Austria, Arnold Schwarzenegger was raised with strict rules and morals instilled by his parents. His childhood was a very difficult one, and proved to be the building block for his character today. And so his destiny began and a legend was born.

Mr. Schwarzenegger began weight-training at 15. He was awarded the title of Mr. Universe at age 20, and went on to win the Mr. Olympia contest a total of seven times, realizing his dream of becoming the "best-built man in the world".

Mr. Schwarzenegger has remained a prominent face in the sport of bodybuilding long after his retirement, writing several books and numerous articles on the sport.

Arnold Schwarzenegger's first role in a motion picture was for Hercules Goes to New York in 1970, landing him an appearance on the The Merv Griffin Show.

A short-lived venture into show business led him to start a construction company with his bodybuilder friend Franco Columbu. The profits were going to fund a mail-order business of fitness material such as books and cassettes. Driven by his passion to be taken seriously and to be wealthy, he obtained a correspondence degree in business and international economics from the University of Wisconsin. His constant inflow of money began and allowed him to live the life of a superstar even before his bodybuilding documentary Pumping Iron was released in 1977.

Arnold Schwarzenegger won a Golden Globe for Best New Actor in the 1976 movie Stay Hungry. His acting career didn't take off, however, until he obtained the lead role in Conan the Barbarian in 1982. But his most memorable and career-launching role came with The Terminator in 1984, directed by James Cameron. His most recent appearance was in Sylvester Stallone's 2010 The Expendables, where he made a cameo appearance alongside Stallone and Bruce Willis.

It was during his acting career that he was referred to as Arnie, his bodybuilding days found him nicknamed the Styrian Oak, then President George H.W. Bush nicknamed him the Austrian Oakand. More recently, he was dubbed Governator – a portmanteau of Governor and Terminator.

Mr. Schwarzenegger's personal life also became a success. After dating Maria Shriver for eight years, they were finally married in 1986, with Maria having now brought an avid Republican to the forefront. But in recent years, many commentators have seen Mr. Schwarzenegger as moving away from the right and towards the center of the political spectrum.

In January 2011, the dual Austrian/US citizen Arnold Alois Schwarzenegger, the 38th governor of the most populous state in the United States, retired from his 2nd term as governor, and continues on the wings of "salesman-in-chief".

JL

Offshore Banking

By Zakarov Malinsy
Zurich – Switzerland
Photograph by Zack McCarthy

There are several reasons why people choose to open offshore bank accounts. Developing countries are often characterized by political and economic instability, so people look for a safer place to keep their wealth, and this is where the offshore bank account comes into action.

In other cases, it may be that offshore banking centers offer those banking products and services that are not available in an account holder's home country. Also, in many instances, people seek to save on taxes through offshore bank accounts. But be careful; ensure that through an offshore bank account you are not violating your home country's legislation.

Offshore banking services provide a wide range of benefits and open up distinct opportunities. Opening such an account provides a powerful tool for keeping money secure and making it exempt from taxes. Using an offshore bank account provides opportunities that are not available to domestic banking users. The most important of those are bank secrecy, confidentiality and, exemption from taxes on gains. Income generated in form of interest on deposits is not subject to income tax. Customers also get the possibility to invest globally.

Offshore banking countries have designed their laws so that individuals conducting offshore investment in these countries are guaranteed by the effective legislation that their identity shall not be disclosed to anyone. Such secrecy and confidentiality does not mean that offshore investors are engaged in criminal activities, terrorism financing or that they have something to hide. Client identity can be disclosed if a client is linked to trafficking, money laundering, terrorism and other unlawful activities. On the other hand, offshore investing can be a great tool for those investors who fear that their asset ownership is threatened due to a potential lawsuit or excessive debt.

Offshore investment gives a great opportunity to diversify investments and portfolios. Accounts used for offshore investing are highly flexible, allowing investors to trade in international markets in any currency they desire.

Offshore investing is about investing tactics and taking advantage of opportunities that are available outside the country where an investor resides.

There are several advantages of offshore investing. Very often investors choose to invest abroad (usually in offshore banking centers) because the host country's business environment offers tax advantages that are not available in the investor's home country.

To put this in another way, businesses making offshore investments set up a corporation in the host country and in this way shield their money from high tax rates effective in their country. Often the condition for low or no tax burden is that these corporations cannot conduct any transactions in the local market.

To know which tax haven would be the best is difficult to answer. It depends what exactly you are looking for. If it is bank secrecy, then Panama may be a good choice. If you are a resident of the UK and want to go offshore, then you may want to choose services provided by the Channel Islands (Jersey, Guernsey and Isle of Man). The answer varies according to your priorities. Offshore bank accounts are provided by both local banks operating at offshore banking centers and also by reputable international banking institutions, such as HSBC and Lloyds TSB.

JL

Directors Are In Demand

By Levin Borgersen
Los Angeles – California

In too many cases, the radioactivity of a board member of a collapsed company has a half-life measured in milliseconds. Yet, it is not with surprise, or is it, that we see appointments of major directors of companies who were at the center of the financial crisis still playing an active role in the governance of corporate America.

The decisions that led to the collapse of the firms they steered were not theirs alone. Directors are elected by shareholders to oversee the activities of a company and play an important role in appointing senior officers and setting corporate strategy. In many cases during the real estate bubble, directors approved the strategy that paved the way for executives to make risky investments on borrowed money. These directors also approved pay packages that fed the risk-taking.

The CEOs get most of the attention because there's so little expectation that the board should have done something. In our corporate system, the directors are supposed to be in charge, not the CEO, yet they rarely get any of the blame because they're typically dominated by the CEO.

Many directors of failed financial institutions have kept the other director posts they had before the financial crisis. Some directors were named to the boards of the companies that acquired their ailing firms. Some board members say their experience on the boards of troubled companies made them stronger directors, giving them hands-on experience that will help them stop other companies from repeating the same mistakes.

"Directors of these financial institutions may or may not have been asleep at the switch, and if they were, they had a lot of company," said Michael Klausner, a corporate law professor at Stanford. "Leaving that question aside, they may well have gained valuable experience that will make them good directors today."

Rakesh Khurana, a Harvard Business School professor specializing in corporate governance issues, says there are legitimate questions surrounding these boards. "When selecting individuals to oversee an organization, what criteria should we be using other than their previous performance on a corporate board? If there's no accountability here, then what is the system of accountability?"

Inquiries into the 2008 financial crisis have spent relatively little time looking at the role of corporate boards. The Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations held four hearings on the causes of the financial crisis, none of which focused on the role of directors.

"I don't think there's any question that a dramatic failure of corporate governance was a central issue of the crisis," said Phil Angelides, Chair of the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission. "Real reform depends on the will to make it happen -- of regulators, of the public officials who appoint them, and of the financial leaders who must live by them. Very little has changed and so I hope in the course of doing our work, that we will illuminate sets of issues that need to be dealt with and dealt with now."

JL

F. Scott Woods, Commercial Director Facebook Germany and Sheryl Sandberg, Chief Operating Officer.

The Brilliant, The Beautiful, Sheryl Sandberg

By Zackary Tempa
New York – New York

The chief operating officer of Facebook is the image that most would want to exemplify. The brilliant, beautiful persona with a propensity for aerobics and blue eye shadow, she grew up in North Miami Beach, is married to David Goldberg, CEO of SurveyMonkey, and has two children. Her name is Sheryl Kara Sandberg.

Having graduated from Harvard in the late eighties, Sheryl is described as very social, considerate of her friends and never afraid to answer a tough question. She's an experienced visionary who will take Facebook to profitability and beyond.

Sheryl Sandberg did a lot to help the social network grow up in 2010, including addressing major public scrutiny over revised privacy terms. "Our policy on privacy is that everything on Facebook belongs to our members … we don't sell it but we want you to share it with as few or as many people as you want." A good choice of words for the $23 billion company! At 42, her role is to manage business operations including sales, marketing, business development, human resources, public policy, privacy, and communications.

Prior to Facebook, Sheryl was vice president of Global Online Sales and Operations at Google, where she built and managed the online sales channels for advertising and publishing and operations for consumer products globally, and was also instrumental in launching Google's philanthropic arm.

Sheryl holds a master's degree in business administration with highest distinction from the Harvard Business School and a bachelor's degree summa cum laude in economics from Harvard University.

During the Clinton years Sheryl was chief of staff for the United States Treasury Department. She was also a management consultant with McKinsey & Company and an economist with The World Bank.

On the business side of things, we learn that Sheryl Sandberg's strategy for making money sounds simple. She takes a pen and notebook and begins drawing the classic marketing funnel, which starts broadly, with brand awareness, and grows progressively narrower, ending with point of sale. Google, she explains, does most of its business at the narrow end of the funnel, leading buyers straight to places where they can buy what they want. But Facebook operates at the wide-open end, creating positive brand affiliation and generating demand for products.

Mark Elliot "Zuck" Zuckerberg is the 27-year-old American entrepreneur who co-founded the social networking site Facebook with fellow classmates Dustin Moskovitz, Eduardo Saverin and Chris Hughes while attending HYPERLINK "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harvard_University"Harvard.

Despite their obvious differences – or maybe because of them – Mark Zuckerberg and Sheryl Sandberg understand one another.

"A lot of people choose to hire people who look exactly like them," Mark says. "Here we just value balance a lot more. It takes work to build those relationships, but if it does work, you end up with a much better system."

JL

North Korea's Next Dictator

By John Vermilian
Hong Kong – China

The youngest son of dictator Kim Jong-il got his father's chair, ushering in a new era as heir to the family dynasty that rules the secretive state.

Kim Jung-un is 27 years old and he is likely to run the third generation communist dynasty in his North Korean country with an iron fist, just like his father has.

It is questionable whether the young man has the qualities of a good leader for the isolated state whose aspirations have been to become a nuclear weapons power, which has worried the outside world for years. However, the leader's sister, Kyong-hui, was also made a general and believed to be a key backer of the son. Hui and her husband will create a powerful triumvirate in taking over the family dynasty in the impoverished state that has ruled North Korea since its founding after World War II.

The communist party members suggest that the third son of Kim Jong-il was destined to follow in his father's footsteps, having been groomed for that purpose over the past years. It has been speculated that Kim Jong-il's deteriorating health, having suffered from a stroke in the summer of 2009, is the reason behind the sudden change.

Little is known about the son, except that he was born in 1983 or '84, went to school in Switzerland and admires basketball great Michael Jordan. He is the third son of Mr. Kim and is said to be his father's favorite.

Kim Jung-un's grandfather, Kim Il-sung, founded the nation of 24 million people in 1948, on a policy of self-reliance called juche. Kim Il-sung built a cult of personality around himself and his son, Kim Jong-il.

Kim Jong-un had been virtually unknown outside North Korea before his rule of the impoverished authoritarian regime. Kim Jong-il took over as leader after his father died in 1994 in the communist world's first hereditary transfer of power.

But it will take more than fireworks and gymnastics to maintain the Kim dynasty's grip.

As expected, the dynasty is losing its control over the people. No one likes the idea of a dynastic rule, including Il's other son! In this day people long for the technology that permits communication. The current rule restricts this in many ways. It's also clear that people are beginning the squeeze past the authoritarian barriers, seeing what the rest of the world is like.

Although the new leader has proven to be very interesting to the world at large, Un has no experience and just thinking of him in control of nuclear arms is disturbing. He will need more help, and the power will slowly diffuse.

North Korea is in for a huge power war after the death of Kim Jong-il. People will be torn by the loss of their beloved and most definitely not ready for another Kim to take over. Quite possibly, when Un is not seen as a legitimate leader, his "supporting cast" will most likely aim to take over his throne.

With Kim Jong-il leaving North Korea's chief of staff, his brother-in-law and sister, as Jong-un's support, it is quite possible they will overtake Un's rule when he is seen to be unfit with little to no experience in warfare.

JL

Cosmology Arrives In A Gilded Era

By Aron McTivodel
London – UK

During the 1990s, some of the world's best-known cosmologists such as Martin Rees and Stephen Hawking of Cambridge University began to discuss seriously the theory that our universe is not alone but part of a multiverse containing an almost infinite number of other universes.

As collision data at Large Hadron Collider (LHC) at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) pours into CERN's computer grid and into the world's physics labs, at a rate equivalent to 100,000 DVDs per year, scientists are analyzing the myriad subatomic particles produced when protons annihilate each other in miniature re-creations of the original Big Bang.

The discovery of a fundamental particle does not come as a eureka moment when physicists suddenly see something new and wonderful in one of LHC's 25-meter high detectors. It arises from painstaking computer analysis of billions of collisions – a search for a statistical pattern that could not be explained by existing physics. Such an analysis of collisions at the veteran U.S. Tevatron near Chicago, the world's most powerful particle accelerator machine before the LHC, is beginning to show hints of the existence of the famous Higgs boson. This particle – a key target of the LHC – would explain how matter acquires its most basic property: mass.

The new ferment in physics and cosmology follows a relatively quiet decade of consolidation, after some big advances during the 1990s. These included the first images of the afterglow of the Big Bang that created the universe 13.7 billion years ago, and the discovery – quite out of the blue – that mysterious dark energy is still blowing the universe apart today.

The coming wave of breakthroughs will be driven by new data from space observatories, atom smashers and underground laboratories. Over the next few years, these experiments could reveal previously unseen fundamental forces and subatomic particles, hint at hidden dimensions wrapped up in space, and even suggest how the laws of physics might differ in other universes. The first source of optimism is indeed the $8bn LHC at CERN, the European particle physics centre near Geneva. Following a year-long shutdown, while engineers repaired the damage done by an electromagnetic failure shortly after the LHC's original switch-on, the machine has been running at high power since March 2010, smashing protons together at close to the speed of light.

There's a mood of excitement and anticipation among the scientists trying to answer the biggest questions about our existence: How did our universe start? What is it made of? How will it end? "In the course of the history of science there are occasionally really big changes in our understanding," says Frank Close, professor of theoretical physics at Oxford University. "Looking back from 100 years in the future, I think this may be one of those big changes."

Close's Oxford colleague Brian Foster, professor of particle physics, shares this enthusiasm. "We are on the verge of making a wide range of breakthroughs," he says, predicting that this will be the most fertile decade of discovery since his research career began in the 1970s.

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Thin'K'ers Corner

Population Overload

What In The World Is Going On?

By The Year 2050 The World's Population Will Reach 9.3 Billion At A Growth Rate Of 77 Million People Per Year.

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On Human Nature

By David C. Wesonga
Nairobi – Kenya

"One can make this generalization about men: they are ungrateful, fickle, liars and deceivers, they shun danger and are greedy for profit; while you treat them well, they are yours. They would shed their blood for you, risk their property, their lives, their children, so long, as I said above, as danger is remote; but when you are in danger they turn against you." Niccolò Machiavelli

I have never taken time to read in between the lines of Machiavelli, but trust me, yours truly knows a thing or two about human nature. A thousand and one people can't be wrong. Lessons in humility are best learned in nobility. And it has really been humbling – the journey, I mean.

As for momentum, human nature dictates every single bit of it. On my arrival in South Africa, I was at a loss to explain my decision to shun my notoriously public life for something albeit hidden, but true to self. I wanted to live "the boy next door" and just be him. But I also wanted some real heroes. The historian Walter Bagehot would deny me were he to learn of my moralizing Gordon Brown's failed prime minister-ship, liberalizing David Cameron's Blair-like abilities and just plain labeling him another Blair. But look at Obama. A major gain in health care reforms, where Hillarycare failed in the Clinton era, another huge gain in the stimulus plans and the bailouts – I still believe most of the banks bailed out would have ruined me, but what the heck, I don't need a bank account now! And here's another scoop in international relations – human nature just handed him and my favorite speaker of all times, Nancy Pelosi, a staggering defeat in the mid-term elections.

Shakespearean tragedy would have labeled it nonpareil on political fronts, but the world is devoid of understanding, patience and ignorance. Ignorance? Yes! Remember where ignorance is bliss? Sometimes, we shed so many tears trying to retain what in reality should be ours, legally, that we forget the little things that matter in life.

Social commentary is riddled with arcane tales of 40 under something and Forbes this and that, but has one ever stopped for a minute and given a thought to the darling princes and knights out there, standing amidst false innuendo and friendships, to gather enough momentum to propel oneself forward? The odds are usually stacked against the one who leads the clarion call, but it is usually worth it.

Back home in Nairobi, I am told the world is scared stiff of one man, Senor Luis Moreno Ocampo, who is coming after leaders of the post election chaos in that country. I have no problem with that, but pray, the biggest supporter of the International Criminal Court (ICC) is the U.S., who, amazingly, is not a signatory to the Rome Statute that binds countries to the ICC! Talk of fickle – there you have it. Ditto Ocampo.

"And that prince who bases his power entirely on...words, finding himself completely without other preparations, comes to ruin." Niccolò Machiavelli

JL

Our Emotional Footprint

By Saul Levine, MD
San Diego – California

It is clear that the world has become concerned about our "carbon footprint," and we are taking more seriously the potential consequences of global warming. Human beings have shown themselves to be remarkably resourceful and creative in overcoming challenges, and there is some optimism that our ingenuity and dedication will ultimately reduce our carbon footprint.

I am less sanguine, however, that we will be as successful in meeting another threat, one that equally endangers our existence – our "emotional footprint". Our emotional footprint is what we contribute, psychologically and socially, to each other and to our communities. It is how we behave towards, and affect, each other.

As with our carbon footprint, our emotional footprint can be positive, created with care and benevolence, or it can be negative, influenced by our selfishness, abuse, and nastiness.

I sometimes think that we are living in an "Age of Incivility". We have seen many politicians and celebrities who have been intemperate and nasty in public. You have surely noticed that many people are rude even in their day-to-day dealings with each other, at home, at work, and in stores. Some seem to feel it is their "right" to be pushy and antagonistic, often expressing themselves loudly and aggressively, emulating the media pundits who fill our airwaves and screens with angry, degrading comments. The truth is, we can all be uncivil. We sometimes criticize and mock even our friends and family members.

All of this affects us, and worse, serves as a model of behavior to our children. This incivility also does real damage to the social "atmosphere" we live in. Having different opinions is as human as breathing, and in a civil democracy, differing views should be appreciated. But when they are delivered with invective and derision, we enter into an unpleasant atmosphere.

A virtual tsunami of diatribes and verbal assaults are delivered via television talk shows and cyber bullying. These raise the level of nastiness, escalating a decidedly negative emotional footprint. And they affect us all, engendering "bad moods", abrasiveness, and even demoralization.

We have a crucial decision to make: We can either continue on a path of increasing antagonism and conflict, or concentrate on acting with more tolerance, respect and kindness. If we can be convinced that we must change, we could bring the same kind of international awareness and commitment to that task as we now bring to reducing global warming.

The Yiddish concept of "mentsh", a respectful and decent person, comes close to this ideal of acting with respect, generosity of spirit, and tolerance. A positive emotional footprint is related to the Bantu concept of "Ubuntu", which Bishop Desmond Tutu refers to as "the essence of being human". This emphasizes that we are members of many different communities, but essentially of one common social network, the "Community of Humanity."

A culture centered on everyday rudeness and intolerance, increases rancor among the people. But in a culture that stresses mutual respect and cooperation, the predominant mood is much more positive and generative, and antagonism diminishes.

We can decide in many small and large ways either to increase or decrease our carbon footprint. Similarly, we can choose daily rudeness and discord, or we can choose everyday actions of civility, respect, and cooperation – a positive emotional footprint. Which will we choose? And by the way, what is your emotional footprint?

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Costume for Brünnhilde (Linda Watson) a Walküre, daughter of Wotan.

Rich In Symbol, Famous In Legend And Powerful In Myth And Music – Wagner's Der Ring des Nibelungen

By Heide Van Doren Betz
San Francisco – California

Several months ago the Los Angeles Opera staged Wagner's Ring Cycle, Der Ring des Nibelungen, the most discussed and written about work of opera in history. It has influenced music, art, religion and philosophy in the western world since the 19th century. It is, in essence, a story about the triumph of human consciousness over the will of the Gods. The Cycle has four operas – Das Rheingold, Die Walküre, Siegfried, and Götterdämmerung – which make up the most famous Gesamtkunstwerk, a union of music, poetry, stage design, costumes and myth.

Richard Wagner (1813 -1883), who worked on this masterpiece over 20 years, called this 16-hour work a "music drama". He called the cycle a trilogy with a preliminary drama Das Rheingold.

The story is based on Nordic legend and the German Nibelungenlied. Wagner was also influenced by Greek mythology and philosophy. Aeschylus' Orestia plays an important role in the Ring Cycle, a complex story of a mythological cosmos with several generations and many characters both divine and human, each character being only a small part of a whole. It is a story of power, love, greed, control, faith, loyalty, incest, and ultimately destruction. The music has famous passages such as the Ride of the Walküre (think helicopters in Apocalypse Now) and Siegfried's funeral march, often a backdrop for state funerals and grave events. The concept of the leitmotifs, a musical description of a person, thing or event, reaches epic proportions throughout the Cycle with recurring themes interacting with the characters. The underlying question always remains: At what price power?

The timeless Ring Cycle has been produced and interpreted hundreds of times across the world. A community of followers called "Ring Nuts" travel worldwide to see the different interpretations by opera companies. Bayreuth, Germany, where Das Rheingold was first performed in 1876, remains a pilgrimage site for Wagner and his followers.

German artist Achim Freyer, the director and designer of the Los Angeles Opera Ring Cycle, created a brilliant and intoxicating, surreal atmosphere with symbols and dream-like imagery and exotic puppet costumes set upon a raked stage of geometric abstractions. The overall theme of alienation and timelessness was always present, since Freyer's roots are in Brechtian theater.

James Conlon, the director of LA Opera and passionate and enthusiastic conductor for the Ring Cycle, gave a talk before every performance and spoke at various events.

This extraordinary performance and innovative staging of the Der Ring des Niebelungen was mesmerizing and hypnotic – it captured my interest and imagination unlike anything I had ever seen.

JL

Wotan, Vitalij Kowaljow; Erda, Jill Grove; Siegfried, John Treleaven; and director and conductor James Conlan.

Costume for the dreaded giant Fafner (Eric Halfvarson) in Das Rheingold. This is a work of art on its own.

Costume for Loge (Arnold Bezuyen), God of Fire and advisor to Wotan.

The brilliant artist, director and designer, Achim Freyer, whose powerful imagery interprets myth in a modern way.

Achim Freyer costumes for the Rheinmaidens in Das Rheingold.

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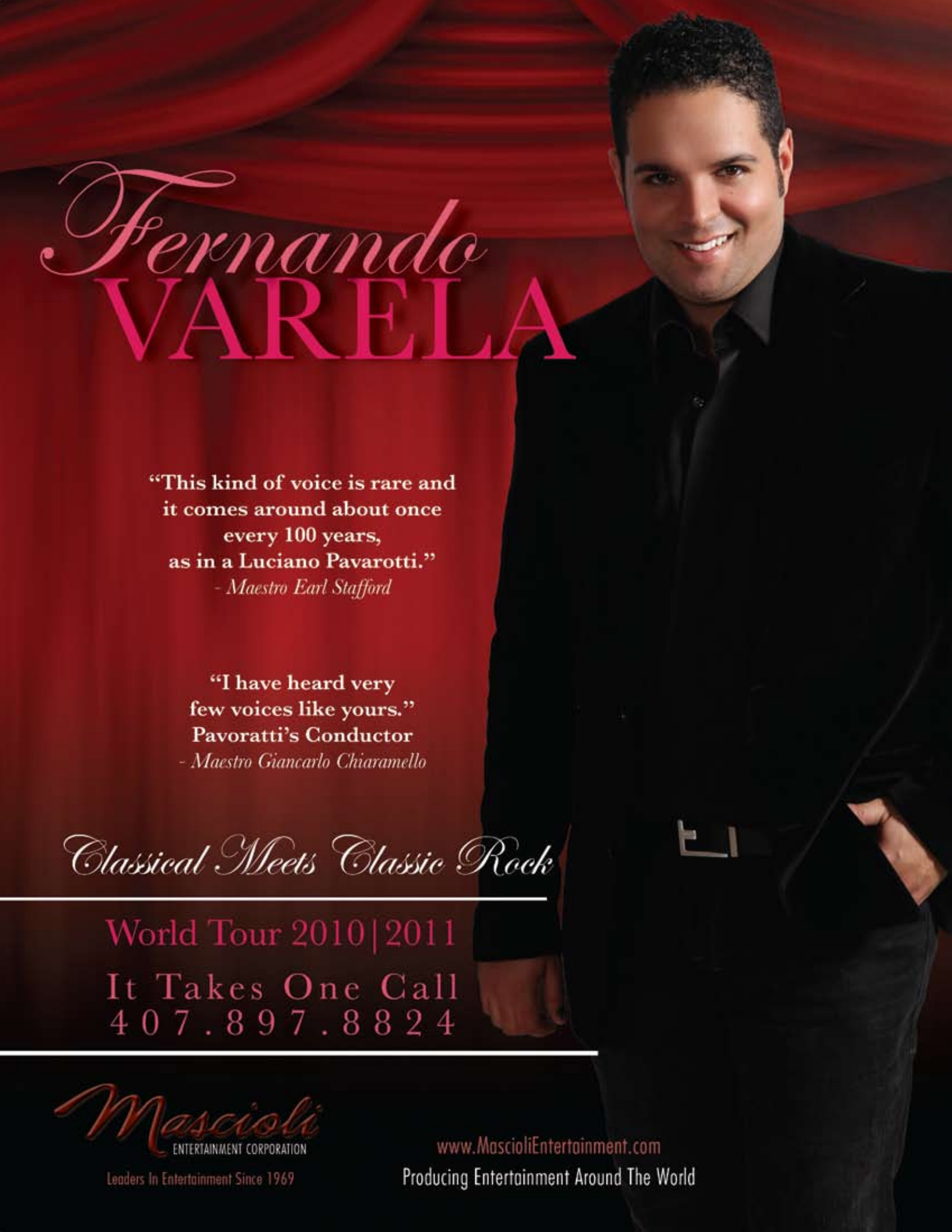
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A fisherman admires the view of the Tarawera Falls in New Zealand.

Fishing In Paradise

By Ray Scotty Morris
San Francisco – California

When you fish in New Zealand, not only can you catch gigantic fish, but you also have the added bonus of fantastic sunsets and sunrises, breathtaking scenery, and the most friendly people on the planet. I spent two fabulous weeks fishing in the Lake Rotura area, which is situated two and a half hours by car from Auckland. I had meant to fish all over this lovely country, and my first stop was Lake Rotura. I loved it so much I refused to move on.

My hosts were Brian and Val Blewett, at the Waiteti Lakeside Lodge, top luxury and very reasonable. I could fish from the garden or walk to other fishing spots or drive to other popular fishing spots within five minutes. My guide for part of the time was the "Troutman" Harvey Clark, an ex-sportswriter now retired and an expert trout catching, fly fishing teacher and guide. When the fish left the lake and went up the rivers for cooler water he – in a 12-hour period – caught and released seventy fish. These were not small fish. The rainbows can go to 10 lbs. and the browns to 30 lbs.

My other guide was Murray Cunningham, only 21 years old, but who had been fishing since he was four. His best catch a 16 lb. brown. To sum up the joy of fishing in New Zealand, one of my new friends who had walked by me on the Waiteti Stream was muttering to himself and carrying a very broken rod. He said in anger, "I borrowed this cheap rod from a friend and tied into this huge brown – must have been over 20 lbs. He broke the rod into four pieces!" That sums up fishing in New Zealand.

Best time to fish the Rotura Region is the end of January, which is summertime in New Zealand. The lake heats up and the fish head upstream to the cooler water to spawn; using nymphs, wet flies, dry flies and even lures, you can catch your limit of eight fish, but most fishermen practice catch and release. The other great treat is that you can fish from dawn to midnight. My best fishing was one evening in total darkness. I was fishing with a wet fly, very gentle casts of only a few yards, and getting strikes every few casts. Just before midnight, I tied into a large brown. I played him for 10 minutes before he broke my leader and got away. That's fishing in New Zealand at the very best.

JL

A youth points out a trout for a fisherman in a clear stream.

Harvey Clark tries his luck on the Waiteti Trout Stream at sunset.

Murray Cunningham, who makes his own flies, confirms his finished product.

A very young fly fisherman tries his luck amongst the reeds

Brian and Val Blewett with Murray Cunningham and his trophy 16 ½ lb. brown trout.

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The Next 100 Years: One Child's Journey How She/He Will Live, Love And Never Really Die

Child abuse is more than bruises or broken bones. While physical abuse is shocking due to the scars it leaves, not all child abuse is as obvious. Ignoring children's needs, putting them in unsupervised, dangerous situations, or making a child feel worthless or stupid is also child abuse. The result? Serious emotional harm.

Disarming Child Abuse And Neglect

By Kelechi Eleanya
The Niger Delta – Nigeria

There are several types of child abuse, but the core element that ties them together is the emotional effect on the child. Children need predictability, structure, clear boundaries, and the knowledge that their parents are looking out for their safety. Abused children cannot predict how their parents will act. Their world is an unpredictable, frightening place with no rules. Whether the abuse is a slap, a harsh comment, stony silence, or not knowing if there will be dinner on the table that night, the end result is a child that feels unsafe, uncared for, and alone.

Exploring the dimensions of child abuse will provide a clear understanding of what needs to be corrected!

Emotional Child Abuse

Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me? Contrary to this old saying, emotional abuse can severely damage a child's mental health or social development, leaving lifelong psychological scars.

Child neglect

Child neglect, a very common type of child abuse, is a pattern of failing to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it is adequate food, clothing, hygiene, or supervision. Child neglect is not always easy to spot. Sometimes, a parent might become physically or mentally unable to care for a child, such as with a serious injury, untreated depression, or anxiety. Other times, alcohol or drug abuse may seriously impair judgment and the ability to keep a child safe. Older children might not show outward signs of neglect, becoming used to presenting a competent face to the outside world, and even taking on the role of the parent. But at the end of the day, neglected children are not getting their physical and emotional needs met.

Physical child abuse

Physical abuse involves physical harm or injury. It may be the result of a deliberate attempt to hurt the child, but not always. It can also result from severe discipline, such as using a belt on a child, or physical punishment that is inappropriate to the child's age or physical condition. The point of disciplining children is to teach them right from wrong, not to make them live in fear.

Effects of child abuse and neglect

Lack of trust and relationship difficulties

Core feelings of being "worthless" or "damaged"

Trouble regulating emotions

The need is urgent. And the time is now! We must collectively identify these ills and together decide to choose methods that respect the child's total integrity and personality. Let us disarm child abuse and neglect!

JL

The Sword Of Subversion

By Craig Ricker
Moscow – Russia

Revolutions require money, lots of it. Even legitimate revolutions need financing. Illegitimate revolutions, especially the Marxist type, require massive funding to impose change on societies that do not want it. Thus, we have the odd partnership of finance capitalism funding Marxist socialism, forming a double-edged sword of subversion. Sound strange? Only if the criminal motives of both are not understood.

The principle is simple. For a socialist revolution to be complete, it must become the owner of other people's property. Since nobody wants to donate his or her property to socialism, it has to be taken by force. In the Russian, Chinese and Eastern European cases this was done at gunpoint. In the West the method is stealth.

Today we see the largest transfer of wealth in human history flowing from the middle class to the sword. The sword ingeniously confines the debate to itself. The confidence trick is everywhere if you know how to spot it. For example, Marxist socialists like Michael Moore or Noam Chomsky will correctly illuminate the abundant crimes of finance capitalism, then propose socialism as the solution to the crises!

Why is there an absence of hope in America today? Because America lacks a leader prepared to resist the sword. If hyperinflation occurs, the transfer of property to the sword will be complete. Then all that is left is the destruction of American national sovereignty. We have Strobe Talbott, president of Brookings Institution, pushing for just that in his book, The Great Experiment, in which he makes the case for America as a state in a global federation.

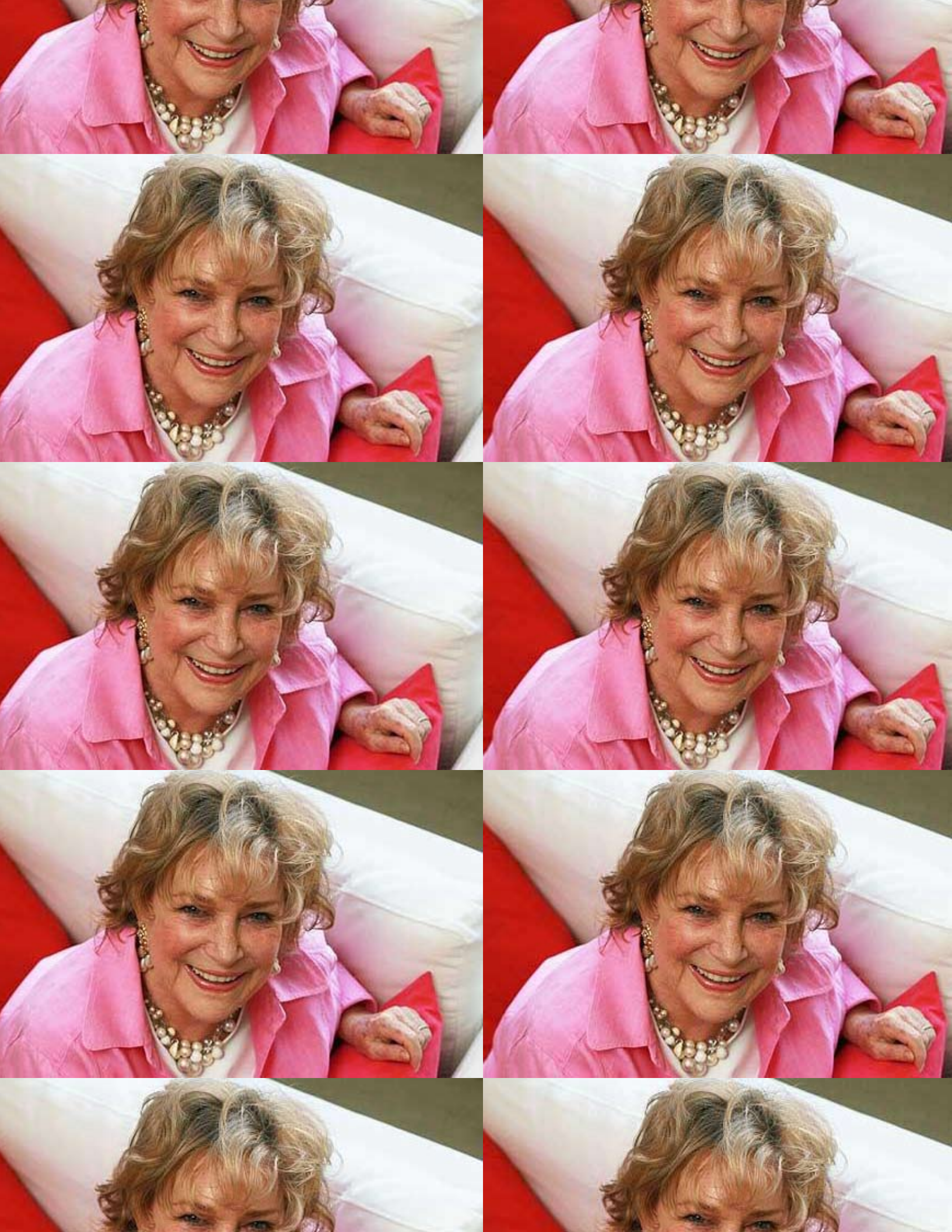
Is hope possible? Yes! All that is needed is a leader who wants to break the sword! Can that be done? Yes! Even within the existing laws of today. How?

Any anti-insurgency strategist will tell you that the first step to smashing an insurgency is to cut off its funding; the finance side of the sword. In America that would mean closing the Fed, vigorously prosecuting the banks and individuals guilty of crimes in the financial crises, create debt-free money, and most of all, limit the practice of lending money at interest. In other words, make finance capitalism subservient to political power.

The next step is to take a serious look at the Marxist insurgency side of the sword in America. Marxists have never helped anybody and are responsible for the brutal murder of at least one hundred million innocent people. They are purely criminal. Strobe Talbott has been openly pushing for world government for 20 years. He was Deputy Secretary of State and is a political elite. To make America a state in a global government requires dissolving the U.S. Constitution. There are 30 or so million Americans prepared to die resisting that. What does the president of the Brookings Institution plan to do with them?

Imagine the hope that would fill the hearts of Americans if they had a leader who really wanted to break the sword.

JL



Hello! I'm Your British Auntie Mame!

By Gene Arceri
New York – San Francisco – London

Would that we were all so lucky as to have a favorite relative who proves that life is a banquet, while overcoming insurmountable obstacles along the way. Yet in 1982, I had that experience, albeit archetypal, when I interviewed Shirley Conran. Unbeknownst to her, she was in rehearsal for that real-life role. Shirley was on a stopover in San Francisco to promote her latest book, Lace. Read by millions, seen by millions (TV series), it made her millions.

Her PR man escorted her to our reserved table at lunchtime. Impressive, she was rich, famous and beautiful, looking somewhat like a dark-haired Julie Christie (today a blonde). She had a star power all her own. Better still, she was sharp, original, direct and witty. We hit it off! After the usual hype for the book, "It's all up here [pointing to her forehead], you have to write out the dynamics first – start to finish. I started Lace, after having been a journalist [she would have liked to have had an interview with Jackie Kennedy]. "One of the most fascinating women in the world."

When I was staying at the Beverly Hills Hotel, I couldn't sleep and began writing on a little shorthand pad. Her editor at Simon & Schuster, Alexander Korda, sent her summary back twice. She eventually connected with Michael Korda and success.

Bantering back and forth, my recorder caught some of her philosophy; "I try to avoid complications with people I love.

"I don't mind complications with people I don't know.

"I rather enjoy that.

"Experience is worth having, and a good thing to remember when things go wrong, as they always do.

"Successful people are very good at hiding their failures. Can't have success without risking failure. Failure is a challenge."

Well, one asks, what can we get out of this?

She would become the ex-wife of Sir Terrance Conran, later she remarried twice before going solo. Proud of her two sons, Sebastian, a designer and entrepreneur for Mother's Care (children under 10), and Jasper, another famous designer who has designed costumes and sets for ballet, opera and theatre productions. He has been awarded (among many from 1982-2008) an Officer of the British Empire and the Lawrence Oliver Award for costume design. Princess Diana was a patron. Much has been written about his home in Dorset, resulting in a book, Jasper Conran Country.

Their mother, Shirley, is living in Putney, South of London, as last reported. She is the founder and chairwoman of the Work-Life Balance Trust Conference. True to her British "Mame" image, Shirley endorses the theory that life is an adventure. You have to get out and make things happen. I suspected she might have an interest in metaphysics. Her astrologer and great friend, columnist Patrick Walker, has been accurate, she said; it all came true.

When Shirley autographed her book to me she wrote, "For Gene Arceri – who saw right through me – with warmest good wishes". I can say the same about her – a perceptive, empathetic, unforgettable woman of characteristic style and earthy elegance. I hope our paths may cross again. Until then, may the stars shine on her. I'd like to imagine her a centrifugal force, slightly off-kilter, an influence to her sons and a volatile mother whose life is a tour de force. A rare species indeed! JL

Smoking Tobacco

By John Paul Jarvis
Toronto – Canada

This is not about personal piety. I venerate Hunter S. Thompson.

As a child I was baffled by the act of smoking. Lighting up, absurd in its performance and so dangerously addicting, appeared pointless to a three-year-old.

I knew with certainty that smoking wasn't right. Recall that it was a youngster who blurted out "the Emperor has no clothes" in Hans Christian Andersen's 1837 classic.

The first recorded health warning came from a German scientist, Fritz Lickint in 1929. In a published paper and supported by formal statistical data, he linked smoking and lung cancer.

An anti smoking lobby emanated from Dresden. Although visionary, this movement in post war Germany was quashed by American beneficence.

I was impressed by the long-range retribution of the Marshall Plan; the United States, a producer, shipped free tobacco to Germany; with 24,000 tons in 1948 and 69,000 tons in 1949. Per capita yearly cigarette consumption in post war Germany steadily rose from 460 in 1950 to 1,523 in 1963. Ironically, this is the same strategy used by cartels to embed illicit drugs in the USA. What goes around comes around, I guess.

The tobacco plant, nicotiana, was named in honor of Jean Nicot, French ambassador to Portugal. Nicot sent tobacco, as a medicine, to the Court of Catherine de' Medici in 1560. Tobacco soon flourished in England. Like tea, coffee and opium, tobacco was just one of many intoxicants introduced as a form of medicine that quickly became world commodities.

In 1612, six years after the settlement of Jamestown, John Rolfe was credited as the first settler to successfully raise tobacco as a cash crop. An industry was born that sustains until today.

At the same time Moroccan caravans brought tobacco to Timbuktu and the Portuguese brought the commodity (and the plant) to southern Africa, establishing the popularity of tobacco throughout all of Africa by the 1650s.

Tobacco has a long history of ceremonial use in Native American cultures, playing an important role in the political, economic and cultural history of both North and South America. The plant is indigenous in varieties throughout most of the Continent.

Tobacco is perfectly engineered as a nicotine delivery device for the blended active substances triggered by combustion, producing chemical reactions in nerve endings that heighten heart rate, memory, alertness and reaction time. Dopamine and endorphins, linked with pleasure, are released.

Men smokers outnumber women but there is an alarming shrinkage in the gender gap within the youngest group, teenagers. Lower income and the poor are more likely to smoke, targeting this demographic solely, and making the only growth market for tobacco the third world. It's always been a tough business.

JL

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Sibling Rivalry Teaches Life Skills

By Carla Dragnea
Bucharest – Romania

My husband and I, like most parents, hope that our children will love and appreciate one another. Yet disagreements and fighting among our 10-year-old son and two-and-a-half-year-old daughter seem to happen quite frequently. So I've decided to research the topic and share my findings with you.

The cause of sibling rivalry is competition for limited or scarce resources (i.e. their parent's love, approval, attention and time). However, sibling rivalry can actually provide valuable life lessons and skills for our children. By interacting with their brothers and sisters, children learn what it means to be part of a relationship. This means giving and receiving, as well as arguing and agreeing. Learning to deal with disagreements among siblings can help children develop skills they will use in social situations now and in their adult years. These skills include negotiation, compromise, assertiveness, conflict resolution, aggression control, and valuing others' opinions.

Children become competitive or feel jealous of their brothers and sisters when they think their parents are spending more time or paying more attention to their siblings. This can cause bickering or even fights.

The interaction and/or friction between your children will also depend on their individual personalities. For example, one may be an extrovert who seeks interaction, while the other may be introverted, wanting to spend more time alone. These two personality types may not get along.

Sibling relationships can be affected by, or mirror, family conflict. If parents are experiencing marital friction, the children feel the stress and tension, and may fight with one another.

It's a good idea to set some family ground rules or guidelines for sibling behaviour. Getting the children to set their own standards is an important component of gaining buy-in and co-operation. Consider:

* Avoiding comparisons – these can lead to competition
* Forgetting equality – celebrate each child's differences and unique abilities, and treat them accordingly
* Setting expectations for acceptable behaviour and showing confidence in your children's abilities to handle their own conflicts
* Commending good behaviour
* Acknowledging negative feelings
* Not reacting to their anger with hostility
* Making time for children separately

Although it may be difficult for any parent to watch children conflict, there are steps you can take to encourage more loving behaviour. Be sure that you and your spouse set a positive example for your children, and keep open family communication a priority.

Parenting is FUN, but at the same time a continuous learning process, which in my opinion makes it worthwhile.

JL

Humor In Quotes

By JO LEE Magazine
New York / San Francisco / Hong Kong / London / Tokyo / Rome / Toronto

Say what you will about the Ten Commandments, you must always come back to the pleasant fact that there are only ten. H.L. Mencken

If all else fails, immortality can always be assured by spectacular error. John Kenneth Galbraith

Whence it came, where it went. Don't worry about the world coming to an end today. It is already tomorrow in Australia. Charles Schulz

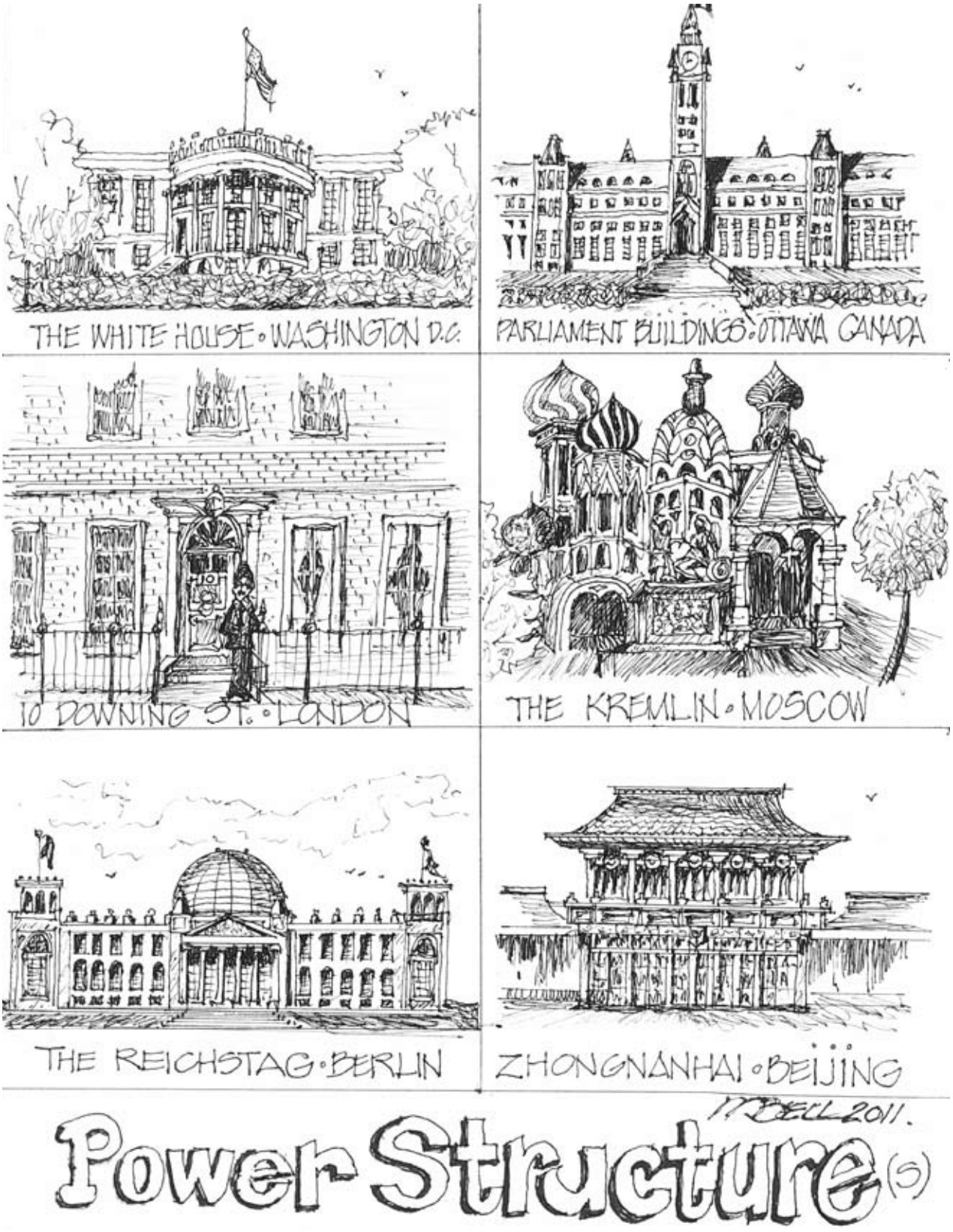
If the phone doesn't ring, it's me. Jimmy Buffet

The universe is merely a fleeting idea in God's mind – a pretty uncomfortable thought, particularly if you've just made a down payment on a house. Woody Allen

Lead me not into temptation; I can find the way myself. Rita Mae Brown

Protect me from knowing what I don't need to know. Protect me from even knowing that there are things to know that I don't know. Protect me from knowing that I decided not to know about the things that I decided not to know about. Amen. Douglas Adams

La Grande Finale



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