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20 years after the fall of the Berlin wall. P.34

# INSIGHT

November 5th 2009

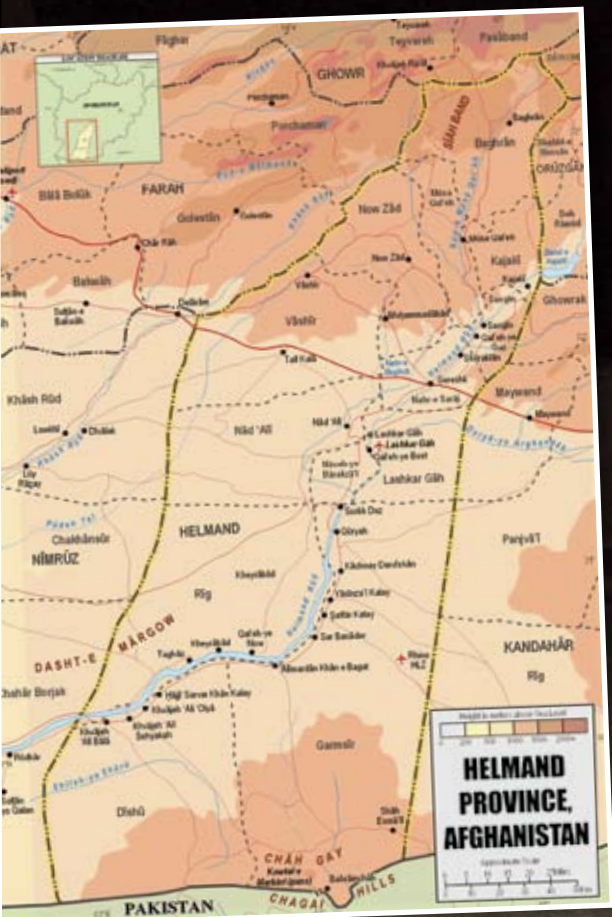
Issue Number 3



## From Vero to our troops in Afghanistan

Helmand Province, Afghanistan, the most violent, desolate region of any U.S. combat zone today.

Marine 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Michael Tozzolo.  
Photo's provided by the Tozzolo family.



# The war in Afghanistan comes home to Vero

BY MICHELLE GENZ, STAFF WRITER

**W**hen Marine 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Michael Tozzolo was born, he found himself with his own little platoon. The only boy of triplets, he and his sisters joined another sister still a baby – just 1-and-a-half years old.

Vicki and Wayne Tozzolo, his proud parents, were married only two years when the squad of babies advanced on them. They say even friends saw Michael's leadership potential from the get-go. They like to imagine he was barking orders in utero, shoulders back, lips pursed, keeping his sisters in line.

"That's the little Tozzolo cop," his uncle used to say.

"He was always controlling everything, making sure everybody was doing what they were supposed to do," Wayne Tozzolo says.

As to where he is today, and the orders he must be barking, all they can do is imagine – his mission is secret, and it is not a pleasant thought.

Three weeks ago, Michael Tozzolo, 23, arrived for a tour of duty in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, the most violent, desolate region of any U.S. combat zone today. Its porous border with Pakistan has vexed the U.S. military for years now.

In July of this year, 4,000 Marines moved into the Helmand River Valley, which cuts a swath through the desert region. Dubbed Operation Khanjar, the first major offensive since President Obama's request that 21,000 troops be sent to Afghanistan was aimed at freeing the region of Taliban fighters.

When he shipped out, Michael Tozzolo instantly put a face to that news story for all who know him, and increasingly, for the small town that proudly claims him as its own.

Among those: Carolyn Lange, realtor with Thorpe Sotheby, and mother of Michael's childhood friend, Lange Sykes. When she heard from Michael's mother what circumstances they were living under -- no running water, no electricity, no food apart from MREs, living in sand so arid Michael described it as walking around in five inches of flour, having to buy their own sunscreen and shaving cream on their respites back at the main base -- she immediately offered to send a care package to him.

It's useless, Vicki Tozzola told her. He'll just give it all away to his platoon. There are 43 men and two women suffering through the same hardships he is.

In that case, said Lange, we'll send a box to each of them.

First stop for her was the weekly meeting at Thorpe the next morning. As the talk of sales and listings drew to a close, she stood up and told Michael's story, and asked people for donations. Without missing a beat, Michael Thorpe joined in, grabbing a basket and making the rounds. "Let's put everybody on the spot," he said. In minutes, there was \$276 to spend.

A neighbor across the street from the Tozzolos heard about the effort and brought over boxes of pink Barbie Band-aids. Vicki Tozzolo caught the levity bug too: she ordered 46 goofy Halloween masks on line. When Wayne Tozzolo stopped by The Back Country outdoor supply store on U.S. 1 for batteries, an employee, a former Marine himself in Vietnam, told Tozzolo he would contact him in a week with his own care package to send over.

Another local family, the Liers, one of the oldest families on the island, bought \$2,000 worth of supplies at Sam's Clubs and brought it to the Tozzolo's.

Quickly, those supplies mounted and before long were wrapped and ready to go, in 46 boxes, on the kitchen table in the Tozzolo's Mariner Way home.

Lange's contagion of caring has spread so quickly that she now wants to take on new platoons.

Lange's son and Michael go way back. They stud-

ied in the International Baccalaureate program together at Sebastian High School. They surfed together at Sebastian Inlet. They talked at length about Michael joining the Marines, Sykes asking over and over for verification that Michael was sure about what he was doing.

Michael always said yes.

Michael's first inclination was to join the Navy, inspired by a friend's brother who had gone to Annapolis. Though Michael graduated with a GPA among the top 10 IB students at Sebastian, he wasn't accepted to Annapolis. But he did win a full Navy scholarship to the University of Florida.

After a year, though, he dropped the scholarship to join the Marines.

Not that his mother didn't warn him.

"I called and left this message: 'Hello, this is your common sense calling. Do you want to sleep on a bed, or do you want to sleep on the ground?' And I hung up. I just wanted to leave that little thought bubble."



**Micheal Tozzolo in the Maasai Mara in Kenya during a family trip three years ago**

.....

He opted for the ground, graduated from UF with a degree in criminal justice and continued his officer's training at Camp LeJeune, N.C., and Camp Pendleton in California, where he studied engineering.

Then came training in the desert, specifically for Afghanistan. It was this past August. Temperatures rose to 130 degrees. Michael was in charge of 90 people, when one of his men collapsed. Having seen a similar scenario in training in Gainesville, he remembered the medic's methods, iced the man down and saved him.

When he went through mountain training, nearly as strenuous, he never complained. "He just described it this way: 'We learned how to suck air at high altitude,'" says his dad. "He doesn't complain; he trains."

His legendary quote in the family is that pain is "just weakness leaving the body."

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Long on patriotism and comradeship, Michael's mother says he has one serious shortcoming. "Michael never had any common sense. He was the kind of guy who'd take a piece of raw steak on his surfboard to go shark-fishing."

He also seemed to be short on the military's requisite conformity, at least in adolescence. When he was 15, he asked his mom if he could grow his hair long. Though his dad was vehemently against it, Vicki Tozzolo prevailed. "I said, Look, he makes straight A's. He excels at sports. Who cares how long his hair is?"

Then one day, when Michael's locks were shoulder length, he shaved himself a monk-like tonsure, a circle right on his crown. "He looked like Hulk Hogan," says his dad. "His teachers made him wear a baseball cap because he looked so ugly."

His parents say there was never any doubt that Michael would be part of the armed forces. That's just the way he came out of the womb: a military man. But through it all, they kept the option open for civilian life, telling him that if he changed his mind, they would pay his military scholarship back. "He never considered it," says his dad.

Born in Indialantic, Michael and his triplet sisters – Mandi, marketing director for the Cummer Museum in Jacksonville; and Stevie, who lives in San Diego

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and is best friends with Lange -- were nearly delivered in a home birth, until Vicki Tozzola found out, in her seventh month, that she was carrying not one but three babies.

Oldest sister Stacey has gone back for a second degree in interior design. She lives in Orlando. All the sisters worry about their brother's decision, but it is Mandi who talks the most about it. "She's a pacifist," says her mother.

Vicki Tozzolo understands; she is a pacifist too.

Though Wayne Tozzolo was himself a military man -- he volunteered at age 17 to serve in the air force in the Vietnam era -- Vicki is philosophically opposed

**“Michael never had any common sense. He was the kind of guy who'd take a piece of raw steak on his surfboard to go shark-fishing.”**

- Vicki Tozzolo

to war. "When I blow out the candles on the birthday cake, that's what I always wish for: world peace."

Her greatest fear is that her son may bear a life-long burden from his tour of duty: that he may be responsible for an innocent person's death -- a civilian killed as "collateral damage," in a bombing, for example. It is talk of that -- not of her son's own safety -- that brings tears to Vicki Tozzolo's eyes.

"My greatest fear is that he's going to kill somebody," she says, struggling to speak. "Somebody who's not the enemy."

The thought has haunted her since their recent trip to France. It was supposed to be a celebration of the couple's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a celebration that marks their recently emptied nest that Wayne says feels "like we're newlyweds."

Just as Wayne and Vicki were packing up for Paris, they got the phone call from Michael that he



The Tozzolo siblings Mandi, Stacey Kay, Michael and Stevie in Washington, D.C.

was being shipped out. The 10-day break promised to all departing soldiers happened to coincide exactly with their 10-day trip.

"So, do you want to go to France?" Wayne Tozzolo asked his son, without hesitation. Michael was

thrilled. He met them in Paris, and the trio traveled to Normandy to tour the site of the U.S. invasion that led to the end of World War II.

It was on a field near the small museum there, that Vicki had a sense of the horrors her boy might

face. Huge craters pitted the pastureland, the result of the U.S. bombing of German troops prior to the landing. As Michael and her husband pondered the force of the blast, measuring and analyzing, Vicki, standing to the side, thought of one thing: that her son be spared the agony of killing innocent people.

Wayne Tozzolo, a contractor, was building homes in Brevard County when the family decided to move to Vero Beach in 1989.

Though their business was thriving enough to be able to afford St. Edward's, they opted to send the four children to public schools, and spend the saved tuition funds on travel instead.

They started small at first – travelling with four children a year-and-a-half apart in age was not easy. The first vacations were limited to North Carolina. They grew increasingly adventurous, and went to Montreal, Costa Rica, Honduras, Puerto Rico, Italy, and eventually made it all the way to Africa, where they had an incredible time on a safari in Kenya and Tanzania.

"We're the obnoxious annoying family," says Vicki Tozzola, laughing. "We actually love each other. So we're learning Swahili from the guides, and singing the local songs. The kids learned so much about the way different people lived. They saw four- and five-year-olds by themselves tending the herd of cattle. "Mom, they have lions and elephants to worry about, and we weren't allowed to cross the street."

Philanthropy has been entrenched in their up-



Realtor Carolyn Lange launched the care package drive. Her son Lange is best friends with Marine Michael Tozzolo

bringing. Wayne Tozzolo tells of the year he pulled daughter Stacey's name for the family's annual Christmas gift exchange, and asked her what she wanted. "I want to sponsor a family's Christmas," she said. So Wayne took his daughter, then 17, to the store and bought presents for a needy family.

It was the same sort of gesture when at one point in the Africa trip, the Tozzolo family bought school supplies and handed them out to the local children.

But they were taken aback, when, as they were

giving away pens to the African children, they suddenly found themselves mobbed, with older children hitting younger ones to steal their pens away.

The other day, a similar thing happened to Michael in Afghanistan. He was showing the local children his flashlight, when suddenly a child grabbed it and ran off.

"It was just like in Africa, Mom," he said, in his one brief phone call home a week or so ago.

He could have called sooner, but he let all his fellow Marines call home first.

Michael also asked his family not to send any mail or packages, until all the others had received something from home too. With Carolyn Lange's help – and Vero's seemingly bottomless pit of generosity -- that ought to be any day now. ●

Anyone wanting to contribute to the care boxes fund can call Lange at 772-473-7982. Items can be dropped off at Thorpe-Sotheby's International Realty at 675 Beachland Blvd. Donations can be mailed to PO Box 780182, Sebastian, FL 32978.

To write to Michael in Afghanistan, send your letter to :

2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Mike Tozzolo  
CLB1 ENG CO Unit 42390  
FPO, AP 96427-2390.

Other families with members in the military stationed abroad are encouraged to contact Lange so that care packages can be sent to them as well, Lange says.



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It seems hard to believe that next Monday will mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, which will always be used as a symbol for the end of the Cold War. The following are several articles that provide some recollections and insights that are worthy of consideration today.

# The fall of the Berlin wall: The accident that toppled history

BY MARY ELISE SAROTTE, WASHINGTON POST, PHOTOS: EPA

A rose sticks on the Berlin Wall memorial place in Bernauer Street to commemorate the victims of the building of the Wall on 13 August 1961 in Berlin

**B**ERLIN -- Once events make their passage from news of the day into history books, it is hard to imagine that they could have happened any other way. They're history, after all. And 20 years later, the fall of the Berlin Wall seems like that kind of history -- a world-changing event that we commemorate and celebrate, its heroes and villains well established, its images and significance.

But the real story of the wall coming down is a lot less tidy than it may appear in the rear-view mirror. The "decision" to open the border was not a conscious choice at all.

Instead of a reassuring victory for the forces of freedom, it was a chaotic and potentially violent mess. One of the most momentous events of the past century was, in fact, an accident, a semicomical and bureaucratic mistake that owes as much to the Western media as to the tides of history.

So what really happened?

In the early days of November 1989, East Germans turned out in massive street protests to demand

Gorbachev-style reforms. Their dictatorial rulers tried to appease them by issuing "new" travel regulations. Though the rules suggested that there would be freedom, the fine print still included the national security exemptions that had always prevented East Germans from leaving.

None of the people writing these new regulations took the obvious steps that would have been needed to open the border, such as consulting the Soviets or informing the border guards that such a move was coming. In short, there were no signs that authorities intended to open the wall on Nov. 9.

That night at 6, Guenter Schabowski, a member of the East German Politburo who served as its spokesman, was scheduled to hold a news conference. Shortly before it began, he received a piece of paper with an update on the regulations and a suggestion that he mention them publicly. He had not been involved in discussions about the rules and did not have time to read the document carefully before starting.

His hour-long news conference was so tedious that Tom Brokaw, who was there, remembered being

"bored." But in the final minutes, an Italian journalist's question about travel spurred Schabowski's memory.

He tried to summarize the new travel regulations but became confused, and his sentences trailed off. "Anyway, today, as far as I know, a decision has been made," he said. Among the long-winded clauses, some snippets leapt out: "exit via border crossings" and "possible for every citizen."

Suddenly, every journalist in the room had questions. "When does that go into force?" shouted one. "Immediately?" shouted another. Rattled and mumbling to himself, Schabowski flipped through his papers until he uttered the phrase: "Immediately, right away."

It felt as if "a signal had come from outer space and electrified the room," Brokaw recalled. Some wire journalists rushed out to file reports, but the questions kept coming, among them: "What will happen to the Berlin Wall now?"

Alarmed about what was unfolding, Schabowski concluded with more muddled responses: "The question of travel, of the permeability therefore of the wall from our side, does not yet answer, exclusively, the

question of the meaning, of this, let me say it this way, fortified border.”

Furthermore, “the debate over these questions could be positively influenced if the Federal Republic [of West Germany] and if NATO would commit themselves to and carry out disarmament.”

As NATO was unlikely to disarm itself by breakfast, Schabowski clearly did not expect much to happen that night. But it was too late -- by 7:03 p.m., the wires were reporting that the Berlin Wall was open.

Across the border, a West German television channel, ARD, reported the news cautiously in its 8 p.m. broadcast. But for its next news program -- delayed to 10:42 by a soccer match -- the staff went big.

Hanns Friedrichs, the moderator who enjoyed a Cronkite-like status in the country, proclaimed, “This ninth of November is a historic day.” East Germany “has announced that, starting immediately, its borders are open to everyone.”

The show cut live to Berlin, where its lonely correspondent failed to find drama or crowds at either the Brandenburg Gate or the Invaliden Street border-crossing point. It had been nearly four hours since the end of Schabowski’s news conference, but no one was crossing or celebrating.

The journalists had gotten ahead of reality -- though reality was about to catch up. East Germans, who could watch such western broadcasts illicitly, believed the news and began to gather on their side of the wall.

At the Bornholmer Street border-crossing station in East Berlin, guard Harald Jäger, on the job since 1964, had watched Schabowski on television. Dumbfounded by the remarks, he told his fellow guards that

the official’s words were “deranged,” and he started calling around. His superiors assured him that travel remained blocked, and he and his colleagues were armed as always.

But soon Jäger and his team were busy waving back some would-be crossers who had heard the western reports. A police car arrived and an officer announced over a loudspeaker that it was not possible simply to exit, but the crowd kept swelling.

Before long, the guards at Bornholmer Street were outnumbered by thousands of people; the same thing was happening at several other checkpoints. Overwhelmed and worried for their own safety, Jäger and his fellow guards reasoned that the use of violence might quickly escalate and become uncontrollable.

They decided instead at around 9 p.m. to let a trickle of people cross the border, hoping to ease the pressure and calm the crowd. The guards would check each person individually, take notes and penalize the rowdiest by refusing them reentry. They managed to do this for a while, but after a couple of hours the enormous crowd was chanting, “Open the gate, open the gate!”

After more debate, Jäger decided that raising the traffic barriers was the only solution. Around 11:30 p.m., the decades-long Cold War division of Germany ended.

Throughout the night, other crossings opened in much the same way. Every opening meant more people flooding into the west and more images beaming back east, in turn sending more easterners onto the streets. Because of the ongoing top-level crisis meetings, those who might have ordered bloody reprisals were largely uninformed, and unaware that the known parameters

of their political lives had suddenly disappeared.

Of course, the wall would have come down eventually, but not necessarily in the same way. An opening on a later date could have posed far more dangers. Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev had made clear that he would not use violence as political change began sweeping Eastern Europe, but what if he had already moved farther down his arc toward losing all power? What might another Soviet leader have done?

Even the exact hour mattered: The wall opened when many East German political and military leaders were sequestered in meetings, and many significant Soviet leaders -- because of the time difference -- were already asleep. What if they’d had time to fortify the borders before the flood of people arrived? As it was, none of them could mount an immediate response, and soon it was too late to undo the events of the evening.

We like to think that all great events have great causes, and obviously long-term political, economic and military forces shaped the Cold War -- and how it ended. But momentous events are also a sort of ambush of history, when all those long-term pressures come together in an unexpected way. The opening of the Berlin Wall, largely unintentional, was such an event, an unsettling thought for those who see history as the result of strategy and planning by pivotal leaders.

If only a few things had been different, we might not have such happy memories to celebrate next week. But thanks to the mumbling of a sleep-deprived East German official, some overzealous Western reporting and the willingness of East Germans to risk a trip to the wall, the Cold War reached a swift and peaceful conclusion. ●

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# Who killed communism?

BY GERARD DEGROOT, WASHINGTON POST

**D**uring the Cold War, the Eastern Bloc was a dark place. To Westerners, that seemed true both literally (the lights often went out) and ideologically (the Iron Curtain blocked freedom's beacon). The darkness made it difficult to see individuals; Poles, Hungarians and Czechs seemed a crowded multitude whose individualism had been crushed by the heavy hand of collectivism.

In 1989, the lights suddenly came on, and individuals emerged. Images changed overnight. Out went the Bulgarian shot-putters and East German swimmers who looked as if they had been made in a laboratory. The crowds who chiseled away at the Berlin Wall or cheered in Wenceslas Square looked instead surprisingly ordinary -- made up of slightly shabbier versions of ourselves.

People are, however, messy. They clutter up the precise narratives imposed upon the past. Now, 20 years after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, historians are competing to offer an explanation for the demise of communism.

For some, it's easier to think of East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria as a bloc, manipulated and exploited by the Soviet Union and ultimately freed by the United States. That conception delights neoconservatives eager to extract parables to illuminate the present.

Romesh Ratnesar has decided to play to that crowd -- those Americans who see this 20th anniversary as an occasion for self-congratulation. His new book, "Tear Down This Wall," celebrates Ronald Reagan's speech -- with its memorable challenge to Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev -- at the Brandenburg Gate on June 12, 1987.

Ratnesar is wiser than his terribly simplistic account of the complex events that caused communism to unravel suggests. Deep within the book, Ratnesar lets slip his true feelings: "No single event, taken in isolation, caused the Cold War to end. . . . The final years. . . were a moving stream, the currents of history flowing in directions both unpredictable and unforeseen."

In truth, the stream metaphor is inappropriate because it suggests purpose and direction. Eastern Europe was not a single body traveling down one course, but a collection of thermal springs of varying size and volatility. Communism was not imposed from above, but arranged from within.

The regimes evolved differently and died distinctly. Poland experienced a long popular uprising, Czechoslo-

vakia a short, sharp one. Hungary saw a polite palace coup, Bulgaria a nasty one. East Germany was chaos, Romania a bloody mess.

While Ratnesar inflates Reagan's contribution, Stephen Kotkin ignores it. His "Uncivil Society" delivers an entirely credible explanation for the demise of communism without ever mentioning Reagan.

His book rebuts the crowd of scholars who contend that East European regimes were brought down by civil society -- in other words, ordinary people acting through established associations such as clubs, churches, trade unions and so on.

Kotkin argues that civil society, being either weak or nonexistent, was incapable of triggering a crisis so huge. Instead, East European regimes fell victim to their own "uncivility." The book provides irrefutable proof of a simple truth: Bad governments govern badly.

What seemed to be a dramatic collapse was in fact the spectacular end of a slow disintegration caused by incompetence, corruption and greed. Kotkin's account is perfectly summarized in two lines from Hemingway's "The Sun Also Rises":

"How did you go bankrupt?"

"Two ways. Gradually and then suddenly."

East European regimes slowly spent themselves to death, collapsing when the Soviet Union pulled out the props. Erosion began because the people could not be kept happy on a diet of turnips and the keys to a Trabant. As they grew restive, they were given things, which encouraged their desire for more things.

Here, however, is where Kotkin's argument falls short. His obsessive need to refute the civil-society thesis causes him to neglect the people. While consumers desirous of Coca-Cola and Levis do not, strictly speaking, constitute civil society, they come darn close.

History, unlike photography, does not work well in black and white. The past is an abstract jungle of color that spills over neat lines of political thought. Brave is the scholar who embraces that jungle.

Constantine Pleshakov, a history professor at Mount Holyoke College, not only has the guts to enter but also the instincts to find his way. His explanation of the 1989 collapse respects the complexity of Eastern Europe, yet his account is both clear and beautifully lyrical. His greatest strength lies in not being burdened by doctrine; he finds worth in communists and in Reagan.

Of all the books that mark this anniversary, his is



one that must be read. Pleshakov writes history with a human face.

His thesis is neatly summed up in his title: "There Is No Freedom Without Bread!" That's a clever play on the slogan of Poland's Solidarity movement: "There is no bread without freedom." The original slogan is abstract, yet ordinary people, Pleshakov realizes, abhor abstractions.

In Eastern Europe, the people wanted communism's fairness but also capitalism's riches. The incongruity of those desires eventually eroded communist regimes but has since produced ironies worthy of Tolstoy. Freedom did not bring justice.

That's not quite the simple beauty that starry-eyed romantics in the West envisioned in 1989, but Eastern Europe wasn't simple then, and it isn't now. ●



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People take a look at an illuminated wall in front of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, Germany, 31 October 2007. Korean artist Eun Sook Lee created the wall that is displayed until 09 November, the day the Berlin Wall fell.

# Life in Walltown, Germany

BY JOSEF JOFFE, DIE ZEIT, PHOTOS: EPA

**I**magine waking up one fine Sunday morning to learn that they are laying down barbed wire in Washington. The coils cut off the western side of the District from Northeast and Southeast. Over the next three years, the steel wire is replaced by a wall of concrete 12 feet high.

Now you are trapped, and if you're on the wrong side, the Washington Monument might just as well be the moon. Grim guards at fortresslike checkpoints along the District boundaries go through your car before you may proceed on special transit roads.

This is what happened in Berlin, starting on Aug. 13, 1961, and lasting until Nov. 9, 1989. I was there both times: when the Berlin Wall went up and when it came down. Did I know that history was being made? No, certainly not as the teenager I was back in 1961. But Karl Marx was right when he said that history plays out first as tragedy, then as farce.

The tragedy came in two parts. Part One looked like the run-up to World War III, as battle-ready American M-48 and Soviet T-55 tanks took up positions on either side of the Brandenburg Gate.

Part Two was a 28-year prison term for the East Germans.

For me, on the western side, East Berlin might as well have been Beijing. To this day, I know my way around Paris and New York better than around East Berlin.

The wall divided the city, the country, the continent and the world. A million soldiers on either side -- NATO in the West, Warsaw Pact in the East -- plus thousands of nuclear weapons squelched all temptation to change this map by force. There was no end in sight, for how could the Soviet Union ever give up the very bastion of its empire in the West, the strategic

brace of its possessions in Eastern Europe?

But ultimately, it did -- and this is when farce followed tragedy. Mikhail Gorbachev, the new kid on the Bloc, who had moved to the head of the Soviet working class in 1985, merely wanted to reform the empire, not relinquish it. But once his grip loosened, the empire evaporated in the "velvet revolutions" of 1989.

In East Berlin, it was pure slapstick. With the opening of the wall, history was being made, all right. Yet I could not believe that I was witnessing the collapse of a state, let alone of the Soviet empire, which would abolish itself on Christmas Day 1991. Even Chancellor Helmut Kohl didn't grasp what was happening. It took him three weeks to make a timid move -- for confederation, not reunification.

This was the first time that revolutions were "velvet," with not a drop of blood shed. And the first time that a mighty empire died without a war. Add to this a third novelty: the peaceful, even docile, disappearance of a state.

Does this happy beginning have a happy end? Not yet. It takes more time to rebuild a nation than to raze a wall.

Here are some telling facts:

The unemployment rate in the former East Germany is twice that in the former West Germany.

The fertility rate in the east is lower than the already low 1.3 children per woman in the west.

Some 1.7 million easterners, or 12 percent of the population, have left for the west since the wall fell.

In a poll this year, 50 percent of easterners agreed with the statement that "East Germany had more good sides than bad sides." Eight percent signed off on the statement: "People there were happier and better off than today in reunified Germany."

Just as some easterners long for their lost para-

dise, many westerners think they would have been better off without reunification.

In the federal elections on Sept. 27, the big winner was Die Linke, the Left Party, which has grown out of the former Communist ruling party of the GDR.

So eastern Germany now has its own party (a bit like the historical American South, which voted Democratic for 100 years after the Civil War). Will that redivide the country along old lines and hinder its economic progress?

No. The GDR is history; the reunited Germany will keep moving toward a high-tech and service economy that will be driven by market forces and globalization, not by an all-providing state.

It takes time to move through the desert, as the children of Israel learned; memories of Egypt must die out first. But it will take less time in Germany than in the post-Civil War United States, where the South truly rejoined the North only in the 1960s. History moves a lot faster in the age of the Internet and the iPod.

Think of Angela Merkel. Not only is this chancellor a woman, she's also an easterner. It took the United States until 1964 to elect a Southern president, Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas. And not until 1976 did the country elect a "real" Southerner, Jimmy Carter.

When we celebrate this anniversary in another 20 years, few will remember what life was like in Walltown, Germany. On the eastern side, they will have forgotten the crumbling buildings, the daily shortages (bananas only at Christmas) and the fear instilled by wall-to-wall surveillance. On the western side, they will have forgotten that East Berlin once was farther away than Beijing. It will all be history. ●

*Josef Joffe is editor of the German weekly Die Zeit*

# The News Business: VeroNews.com

Readers of Vero Beach 32963 returning to our barrier island for the winter are discovering that there is a new media voice in town: **VeroNews.com**.

This online news site, launched in July, was created to offer residents of Indian River County a local alternative to the regional news website published by the Scripps conglomerate, Tcplm.com.

Unlike Vero Beach 32963, which focuses on our barrier island, **VeroNews.com** serves all of Indian River County – Vero Beach, Indian River Shores, Orchid, Sebastian, Fellsmere, and the unincorporated county.

What is perhaps equally important to many readers is what it does not cover. On **VeroNews.com**, you don't have to wade through news from Stuart, Port St. Lucie, Palm City, and Northern Palm Beach to get to local news that interests you.

This would appear to have some appeal, for during its first three months of operation, more than 25,000 different viewers visited **VeroNews.com**, with approximately half of those coming back again and again to check the latest updates.

Now, when you have websites claiming that they got 85 gazillion "hits" (whatever that means) in the past month, the news that some 12,000 repeat viewers are coming back to **VeroNews.com** on a recurring basis for news and information may not sound like much.

But given that 12,000 is well over one-third the daily circulation of the 90-year-old Press Journal, we think to have acquired this kind of following from residents of Indian River County after only three months is pretty amazing.

Even more amazing is the pace at which **VeroNews.com** is starting to grow as more and more area residents hear of it. Last week, the number of daily visitors to **VeroNews.com** was up by an incredible 30 percent.

What potentially makes **VeroNews.com** of interest to beachside readers is the content it offers that you do not find in Vero Beach 32963.

For example, **VeroNews.com** publishes obituaries of all those who pass away in Indian River County. And in looking through them, you don't have to pore through the obits of people who have died in Pahokee, St. Lucie Village, or Fort Pierce.

Because space is unlimited on the internet, **VeroNews.com** also offers even more photos from our community's events than you find on the social pages of Vero Beach 32963. Log on and see if our photographer got your picture.

Another feature that seems to interest a lot of visitors to **VeroNews.com** is our video coverage of local events.

Since Vero Beach and Indian River County do not have a VHF network affiliate providing the kind of local television news coverage that you get in a larger market, **VeroNews.com** is attempting to fill the void with video reports (this is what many of us used to call filmed reports) of local events.



Ranging from a two-minute feature on last weekend's Vero Beach high school homecoming to interviews with all the candidates for Vero Beach City Council conducted by 32963 political columnist Mary Beth McDonald, these **VeroNews.com** video reports give you a chance to see as well as read about what's happening in our community.

The video reports are produced by one of those new-fangled "video journalists," **VeroNews.com**'s Keith Carson, who also is helping **VeroNews.com** connect with younger readers who prefer to get their headlines via sites like Facebook and Twitter.

But you don't have to know how to "tweet" to get the latest news from **VeroNews.com**. All you have to do is bookmark the site on your computer, and check back

from time to time to see what's new. The site has been organized in a way that readers tell us is "user friendly," even for people who deep down in their hearts really prefer to get their news in a printed newspaper.

Incidentally, several readers – aware that we also publish the website **VeroBeach32963.com** – have asked us how we intend to differentiate between the two sites.

The answer is simple. On **VeroBeach32963.com**, which just got a long-overdue makeover and updating last week, we intend to post each Thursday the lead stories from that week's edition of the print newspaper.

Starting with the Oct. 29<sup>th</sup> issue, we also are archiving each week's newspaper – in its entirety -- in PDF format. That will enable you to go back to our archive a couple of years from now, and print out a copy of an article that you may have misplaced.

What we do NOT intend to do is update **VeroBeach32963.com** between issues with breaking news. For breaking stories (such as the results of this past week's elections), we hope you will join the thousands of your friends and neighbors who are visiting **VeroNews.com**.

One final note: A number of readers, who have long been urging us to distribute VeroBeach32963 on the mainland as well as to every home on the barrier island, have inquired whether **VeroNews.com** may ultimately become a print daily newspaper.

Alas, that is not going to happen. There continues to be nothing but bad news for publishers of print daily newspapers. Average circulation of U.S. dailies has been in decline since 1987, and just last week came word that U.S. newspaper circulation had hit its lowest level in seven decades. Papers across the country lost a staggering 10.6 percent of their paying readers from April through September.

We see nothing that suggests a reversal of that sickening downward spiral.

Fortunately, however, there appears to be a bright future for niche weekly newspapers like **Vero Beach 32963**. We can never say often enough how blessed we feel to be living and publishing in a community like this, and how greatly we appreciate your support. ●

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Invite us to cover social and charitable events or Talk to us about news stories by calling 226-7924 or E-Mail us at editor@verobeach32963.com.

# Golf: Elitist sport or model for life?

BY ROBERT SIMON,  
CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR



**W**hen the great amateur golfer Bobby Jones called a penalty on himself for a rules violation no one else had observed, others praised him for his honesty. Jones is said to have replied that he might as well have been praised for not robbing a bank.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez recently condemned golf as a bourgeois sport that should not be added to the Olympics. And New York Times ethicist Randy Cohen criticizes golf on ethical grounds, maintaining, along with President Chávez, that golf is an elitist sport with little or no moral worth.

According to Cohen, it is a game of the affluent and privileged, professional players are too conservative, and the game lacks diversity or social concern. He suggests that from a moral point of view we probably would be better off without it.

But at a time when many observers of contemporary sports are criticizing the effects of elite athletic competition on the ethics of competitors, golf is a counterexample to their concerns. In fact, other sports could learn a thing or two from the etiquette of golf.

Critics charge that too many sports programs lead to a diminished sense of responsibility among athletes. Authority is delegated to rules officials and coaches. Players often are reluctant to correct even an obviously incorrect call in their favor or question decisions of their coaches, even those that have ethical ramifications. After all, it's the referee's job to make the call and the coach's job to give orders.

Even worse, opponents are too often regarded as obstacles to be beaten down or reduced to mere barriers – something that stands between a team and a win – and not respected as fellow competitors who test our skills by providing a challenge.

And then there is golf.

Golfers follow a strict honor code that places the burden of following the rules on the player. Players are expected to call penalties on themselves. Golfers also have duties that require them to show courtesy to their opponents and act in ways that best allow their opponents to maximize their own opportunities to play well.

Golfers stand still when opponents are playing shots and must learn to show respect and courtesy to competitors. While there have been cases of gamesmanship even at elite levels of competition, they stand out because of their rarity and relative mildness when compared with those that occur in other sports.

While other sports also prohibit competitors, even at the highest levels of competition, from cheating and attempt to require them to show courtesy and respect to opponents, golf achieves it.

Thus, it is hardly a coincidence that golf organizations donate more to charity than any other sports associations.

The PGA Tour alone donated more than \$124 million to charity in 2008. The PGA Tour, the satellite Nationwide Tour, and the senior Champions Tour have donated an all-time total of more than \$1 billion in charitable donations. Add the additional millions donated by the LPGA and donations from local and regional amateur tournaments in which

golfers all over the country participate, and the impact of golf on charity is impressive.

Is golf an elitist sport?

To be sure, golf in the US has a historical association with exclusive clubs. And although some golf organizations did not act quickly enough to remedy discriminatory practices in the past, and still may not have done enough to criticize remaining ones, there has been much progress in eliminating discriminatory barriers throughout the sport.

Of course, golf still needs to become more diverse. But consider this: Golf originated in Scotland and was originally played by shepherds and artisans – not the elite. Today, organizations such as the First Tee introduce golf to thousands of young people from diverse backgrounds, and often combine golf instruction with innovative educational programs.

More good news on that front: Asian golfers from countries such as South Korea and Japan have enjoyed tremendous worldwide success, including many recent major winners on the LPGA from Asia and, of course, Y.E. Yang, who recently defeated Tiger Woods in the PGA Championship to become the first Asian winner of one of the men's major professional championships.

As a young golfer growing up on Long Island and learning to play in the late 1950s and early '60s, I often played with men and women, some of whom were three times my age. While my community was not racially diverse, my playing partners ranged from fellow students to physicians to owners of pizza stores to professional caddies.

Golf provided an education on how to get along with many different kinds of people with different political and social views, which we had plenty of time to discuss between shots.

These conversations helped me learn to appreciate that I could disagree with my competitors politically while still respecting them as people and conducting our disagreement in a civil, reasoned manner. Because angry, distracted golfers tend to hit poorly, golf almost forced civility upon us.

If respect for our opponents, for the rules and spirit of the game, and for development of moral virtues such as civility and self-control are important values, then golf is an ethical model we should cherish. Golf should really be considered an ethical model for other sports.

We should try to emulate it, not only in athletics but perhaps also in education, where honor codes need to be respected, and especially in politics, where the practice of respect for our opponent seems to be in danger of extinction. ●

## SUBSCRIBE NOW - CALL 772-226-7925\*

Vero Beach 32963 is mailed each week during season – and every other week during the summer – to every occupied residential address in zip code 32963.

If you or someone you know living on the barrier island is not receiving Vero Beach 32963 by mail, please contact us so that we can immediately make arrangements for you to enjoy what has fast become the most widely read newspaper serving the barrier island.

While Vero Beach 32963 is increasingly widely available in the clubhouses of Grand Harbor, Oak Harbor, Regency Park and other communities on the mainland, a growing number of readers who do not live in zip

code 32963 have asked if it can be mailed to their homes. We will be happy to mail each issue of Vero Beach 32963 to you anywhere in Florida for a one-time payment of \$59.95 (which doesn't even cover our postage and handling).

You can subscribe by either (1) mailing the address you would like the paper to be mailed to and your full credit card information (including three-digit access code and zip code to [subscribe@verobeach32963.com](mailto:subscribe@verobeach32963.com), or stopping by our office at 4855 North A1A. Your copies of Vero Beach 32963 will come every week until May 13th 2010, when we resume publishing bi-weekly. For more information, please call us.

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Former French President  
Jacques Chirac

# France's LBJ in the dock

BY JIM HOAGLAND, WASHINGTON POST, PHOTO: EPA

*Old age is a shipwreck. -- Charles de Gaulle*

**R**evolutions notoriously eat their children. But France's political system reserves its sharpest cruelties for elderly politicians as they fall from favor, as de Gaulle learned in 1968. Now it is the turn of former president Jacques Chirac, who was ordered last week at age 76 to stand trial on corruption charges.

Let's be honest. Many Americans will be delighted. They remember only Chirac's final, bitter years in power, when he fought the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq and set out to build "multipolar" coalitions of nations to reduce U.S. "hegemony" now and forever.

But this is far from being the whole story of Chirac, a truly likable man who was a bundle of debilitating contradictions and worthy impulses. Despite his political war with Washington and George W. Bush, Chirac is also the most American of all the French politicians I have ever met.

His gregarious nature, big, rubbery features and boisterous embrace of friends always made me think of Lyndon Johnson working a room of rivals in Washington or John Wayne striding through the saloon doors.

Often, whether we met at the Paris City Hall, the presidential palace or the United Nations, Chi-

rac would talk about how he had fallen in love with my country, and one of its pretty young girls, when he was a teenager.

He worked one summer as a soda jerk at a Howard Johnson's. The romance with the young lady did not last, but his American tastes endured. He once asked me at a group luncheon in a New York restaurant to order the wine since he was sticking with Budweiser.

So perhaps it should come as no surprise that he faces trial on allegations that he ran the Paris mayor's office from 1977 to 1995 much like Tammany Hall or the Daley machine in Chicago.

The prosecutor, who was constitutionally prohibited from going after Chirac during his two presidential terms from 1995 to 2007, now alleges that the ex-president's party machine created 21 -- yes, 21 -- fictitious jobs for its workers with Chirac's knowledge.

For all its American echoes, the historic first prosecution of a former French president is an indelibly Gallic affair. It is a shipwreck not just of an aging politico who has lived rent-free in a Lebanese politician's spacious Paris apartment since leaving office, but also of the country's campaign finance system and the clans that manipulated it for personal gain.

It is a tale of brutal personal conflicts over money, power and pride out of Balzac or, had he been French, Shakespeare.

The trial of Chirac could still be blocked by a procedural appeal. But his legacy is already being tarnished in other courtroom brawls. His former right-hand man, Charles Pasqua, was sentenced to a year in jail last week for taking bribes while interior minister. Pasqua immediately suggested that Chirac had secretly initiated the prosecution years ago to block him from running against Chirac for president.

At almost the same time, prosecutors were demanding the conviction of Chirac's former prime minister and political heir, Dominique de Villepin, on charges of having conspired to falsify documents intended to end the political career of Nicolas Sarkozy, who succeeded Chirac as president two years ago and who has vowed to hang "on a butcher's hook" those who plotted against him.

It does not, if you can believe it, end there: Chirac is known as "le grand absent" of the Clearstream trial (named after the Luxembourg bank where Sarkozy and others were falsely alleged to have their secret accounts) since the ex-president's fury at Sarkozy is widely assumed to have been the driving force behind Villepin's alleged campaign of calumny.

Sarkozy was originally a Chirac political protege and was romantically linked with Chirac's daughter. He dumped both to pursue his own career, and Chirac is said to have never forgiven him.

Politics is even more personal in France than in many other countries. The French, bless them, never really outgrow the drive to demonstrate that they are the smartest, or at least the cleverest, kids in the classroom and then in the office. Challenge that core notion, and you are in for friction or more.

I told Chirac and Villepin in late January 2003 that their hopes of stopping the Bush administration from invading Iraq would be too little, too late. They scoffed at my lack of sophistication: The invasion would produce disaster and therefore would not be launched. Unfortunately, they were only half right. ●

# A new question: Could America go broke?

BY ROBERT J. SAMUELSON, WASHINGTON POST

**T**he idea that the government of a major advanced country would default on its debt -- that is, tell lenders that it won't repay them all they're owed -- was, until recently, a preposterous proposition.

Argentina and Russia have stiffed their creditors, but surely the likes of the United States, Japan or Britain wouldn't. Well, it's still a very, very long shot, but it's no longer entirely unimaginable.

Governments of rich countries are borrowing so much that it's conceivable that one day the twin assumptions underlying their burgeoning debt (that lenders will continue to lend and that governments will continue to pay) might collapse. What happens then?

The question is so unfamiliar that the past provides few clues to the future. Psychology is crucial. To take a parallel example: the dollar. The fear is that foreigners (and Americans, too) will lose confidence in its value and dump it for yen, euros, gold or oil. If too many investors do that, a self-fulfilling stampede could trigger sell-offs in U.S. stocks and bonds.

People have predicted such a crisis for decades. It hasn't happened yet. The currency's decline has been orderly, because the dollar retains a bedrock confidence based on America's political stability, openness, wealth and low inflation. But something could shatter that confidence -- tomorrow or 10 years from tomorrow.

The same logic applies to exploding government debt. We have moved into uncharted territory and are prisoners of psychology. Consider Japan. In 2009, its budget deficit -- the gap between spending and taxes -- amounts to 10 percent or more of gross domestic product (GDP).

Japan's total government debt -- the borrowing to cover all its deficits -- is approaching 200 percent of GDP. That's twice the size of its economy. By 2019, the debt-to-GDP ratio could hit 300 percent, says a report from JPMorgan Chase.

No one knows how to interpret these numbers. If someone had predicted 20 years ago that Japan's debt would rise so spectacularly, the forecast would doubtlessly have inspired this alarm: Japan will pay crushing interest rates as fearful lenders demand high returns to compensate for the risk that government might default or inflate away its debt.

Instead, the opposite has happened. Japanese in-

vestors -- households, banks, insurers -- have absorbed 94 percent of the debt, reports JPMorgan. Interest rates on 10-year Japanese government bonds have dropped from 7.1 percent in 1990 to 1.4 percent now.

The American situation is similar. Despite huge deficits, interest rates on 10-year Treasury bonds have hovered around 3.5 percent. In time of financial crisis, investors have sought the apparent sanctuary of government bonds.

But the correct conclusion to draw is *not* that major governments (such as Japan and the United States) can easily borrow as much as they want. It is that they

nual interest payments on the federal debt at \$799 billion in 2019, up from \$170 billion in 2009.

But containing debt by spending cuts or tax increases would involve wrenching and unpopular measures that might, perversely, weaken the economy and worsen deficits.

In Japan, the existing value-added tax (national sales tax) of 5 percent would have to go to 12 percent, says JPMorgan, along with deep spending cuts. Against choices like that, some advanced country might decide that a partial or complete default, though dire, would be less damaging eco-



can easily borrow as much as they want until confidence that they can do so evaporates -- and we don't know when, how or whether that may happen.

Wealthy societies everywhere face a similar dilemma. Debt is ballooning from already high levels. The Congressional Budget Office reckons the Obama administration's planned budgets would increase the debt-to-GDP ratio from 41 percent in 2008 to 82 percent in 2019. Higher interest rates would aggravate the debt burden.

Anticipating higher rates, the CBO estimates an-

onomically and politically than the alternatives.

Deprived of international or domestic credit, defaulting countries in the past have suffered deep economic downturns, hyperinflation, or both. The odds may be against a wealthy society tempting that fate, but even the remote possibility underlines the precariousness and the novelty of the present situation.

The arguments over whether we need more "stimulus" (and debt) obscure the larger reality that past debt increasingly constricts governments' economic maneuvering room. ●

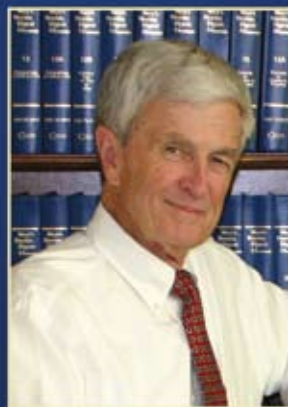
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Photos by Tom McCarthy Jr.

# Jeweler John Michael Matthews opens shop on Beachland Blvd.

BY LINDA CLARK, COLUMNIST

**J**ohn Michael Matthews Fine Jewelry's is now an island business.

And to celebrate its move to its new location at 645 Beachland Boulevard, the owners threw an Oct. 28 cocktail party for dozens of guests.

Located directly below Island Tile & Stone in the former Waddell Insurance space, the totally rebuilt, custom designed glass-front showroom played host to local bankers and politicians, former and current employees, family, friends, life-long customers, and many new faces.

John Matthews and his wife, Carla, a local attorney, have been in business 20 years on Royal Palm Pointe in a space that John describes as having "a bit of a mom and pop feel." It was time to move.

The new location's showroom's interior space has been completely rebuilt and custom designed specifically for retail jewelry.

"We're not only relocating and expanding our lines," explained Matthews, "We're reinvesting in the community of Vero Beach."

Matthews has been in the jewelry business since he worked under a European trained master jeweler in high school. After years of apprenticing and working in every phase of the business, Matthews opened his Vero Beach location, specializing in hand selecting diamonds at better price.

The couple travels to Antwerp, Belgium, twice a year to find the best merchandise.

"I probably see more diamonds in one trip to Antwerp than most jewelers see in an entire career," Matthews said. "We have no problem comparing our prices, our skills or our knowledge." ●



# Tangos II: Fave restaurant returns to Ocean Drive

BY ALINA LAMBIET, STAFF WRITER

**I**t may take two to tango, especially in the restaurant world – or at least two shots at making the popular Tangos restaurant on Ocean Drive have staying power.

The resurrection of the popular eatery – appropriately named Tangos II – at its old location should have locals singing Ole! at the return of good food and local chef Ben Tench.

It's going to take up about half of the space it did at 3100 Ocean Drive before the first Tangos lease and equipment were sold off in 2007.

"It will basically be about half the size," says Tench, who sounds positively giddy to be back in the Vero Beach restaurant scene. "I used to have about 100 seats, now I'll have about 50."

On the other side of that location will be Kilwin's, an ice cream shop.

The new Tangos will have a different take on price points, among other things, Tench says. "We wanted to do something different this time. It's going to be more casual gourmet food. A bit like a tapas menu, a more eclectic blend," Tench says.

His menu will have about 15 to 20 items that can be interchanged and custom made, all fresh, from

regional and local products, he says. In short, the menu will offer a fine dining at a cheaper price.

"It will have the same fresh quality of the old Tangos but at about half of what it used to cost," says Tench. "This economy has been really tough on restaurants and even the wealthy are tightening up right now. We wanted to keep our customers in mind. They can come here and pick up two or three things and keep it around \$30."

The restaurant will offer specialty beers and wines but no hard liquor.

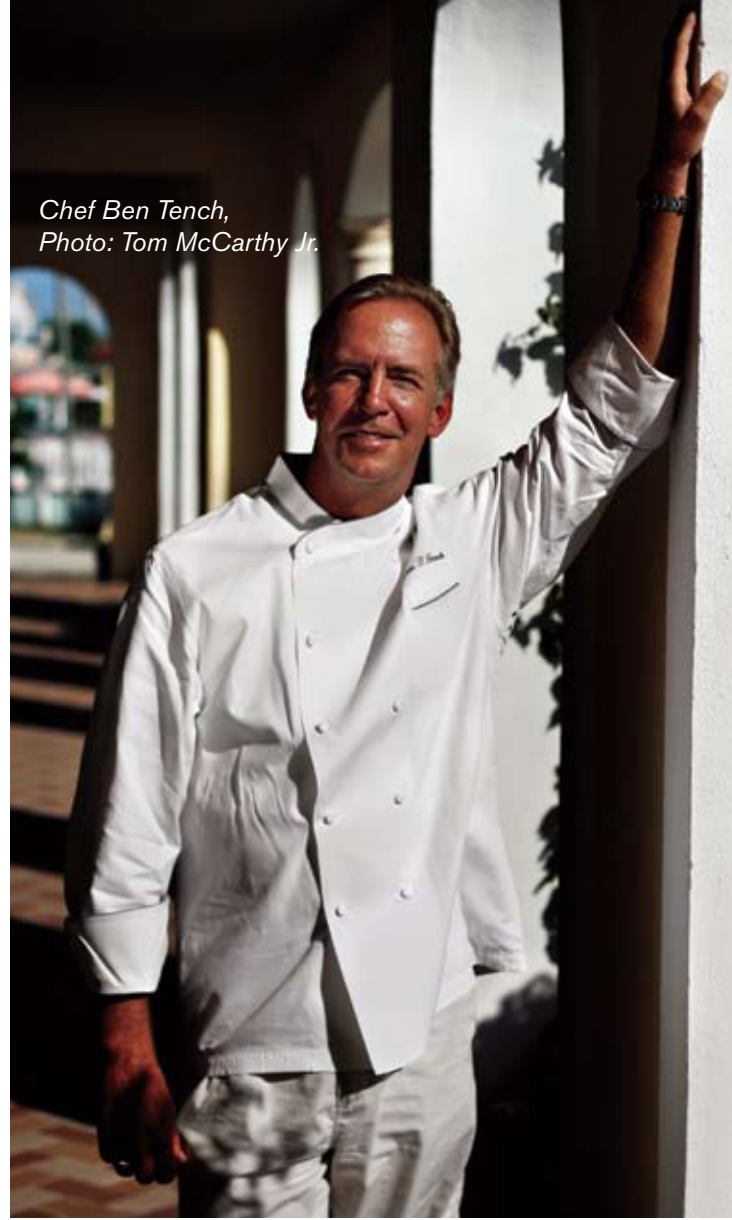
So what are a few items likely to be on the menu? Tench teases us: a burger made with prime New York beef and a fresh lobster sandwich to name a few.

With the ink fresh on the lease, Tench says he has some cosmetic changes to make in the location, and opening is scheduled for mid-December, first of the year at the latest.

"It's exciting. Some of the people who previously worked for me will be returning, so it will be a very similar experience for our customers," Tench adds.

A 14-year resident of Vero Beach, Tench spent a year away after selling his first Tangos. "I'm so looking forward to this," he says. ●

Chef Ben Tench,  
Photo: Tom McCarthy Jr.



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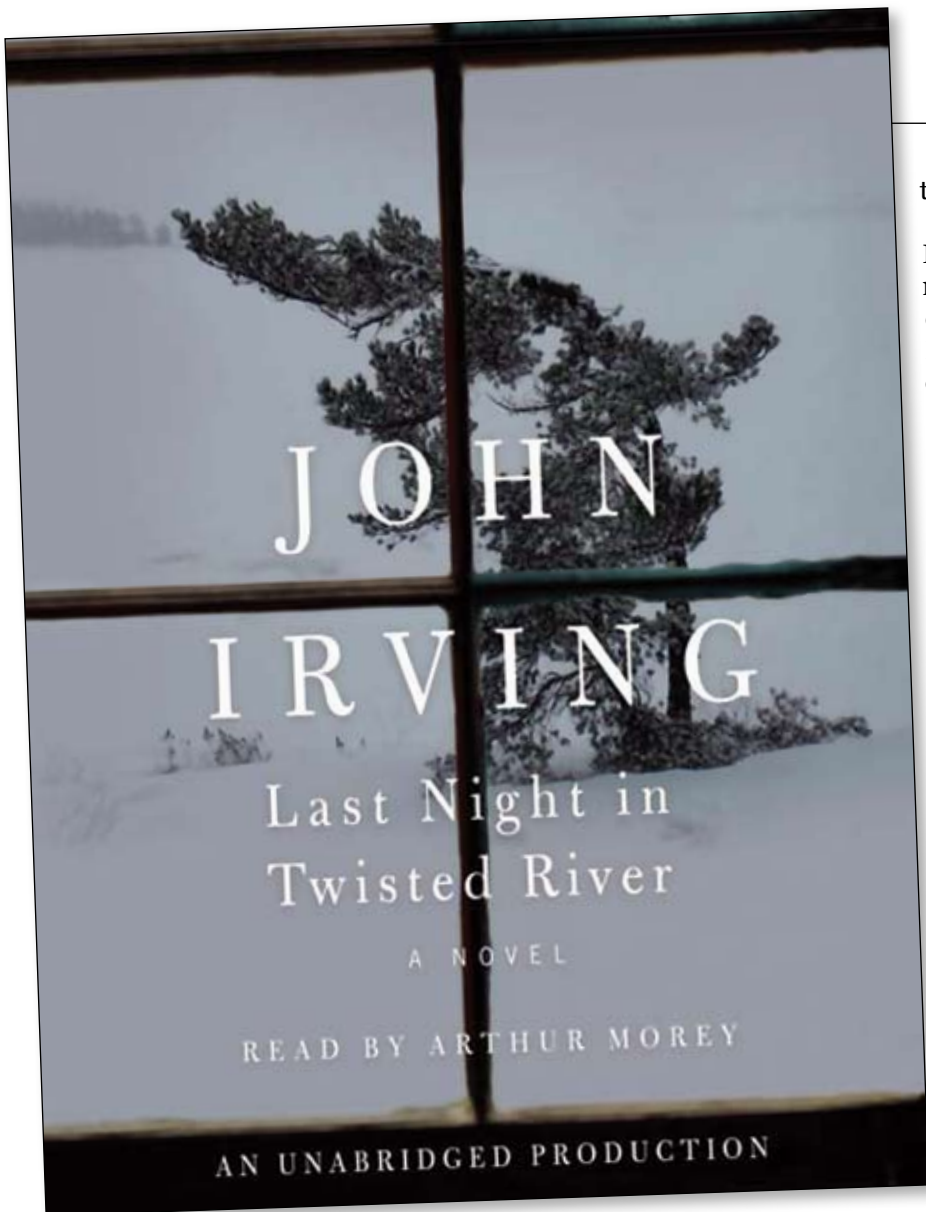
Our home (maintenance) on the barrier island was surrounded with trees and garden (back breaker), irrigation pipes (worry), pool (more maintenance) and a kitchen that never closed (WORK!). My loving husband finally agreed it was time for me to retire too! Oak Harbor was a welcome haven.

- Clare "Winks" Kremer, Oak Harbor resident (formerly of the Moorings)



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the vagaries of backwoods life.

His best friend is one of Irving's most endearing and memorable characters, an indestructible logger named Ketchum. Marked by a host of "injuries and maimings," Ketchum is crude and tender, a rough crossbreed of Shakespeare's Falstaff and Louise Erdrich's Nanapush.

An illiterate woodsman who studies novels "with a determination bordering on lunacy," he drinks and swears and shoots and whores, but he also adores Danny and regales the boy with fantastic stories, particularly tales of the boy's mother.

"Everything about Ketchum was hardened and sharp-edged," Irving writes, "like a whittled-down stick -- and, as Danny had observed, 'wicked tough.'" In one of several marvelously absurd scenes, a woman asks Dominic to help get Ketchum out of her house: "He's passed out naked on the toilet," she says, "and I ain't got but one toilet."

The story moves back and forth in time, filling in details about what binds Dominic and Ketchum in their devotion to Danny. It all seems charmingly artless, guided by the flow of memory and chance, but in fact these scenes build to a classic Irving crisis: a grotesque conflation of sex and comedy and death that's as funny as it is tragic.

Suddenly, Danny and his father must flee from the corrupt policeman of Twisted River, and with that decision this superb story soon breaks up and disintegrates in what must be the most disappointing wipeout of Irving's career.

Part of the problem is motivation: The small-town cop who pursues Dominic and his son across the United States and Canada makes an unconvincing Terminator. We need Cormac McCarthy's inexorable Anton Chigurh, but instead we get this limp drunk, who never seems believably frightening, just an author's excuse to keep Dominic and Danny running for many decades.

Whereas the Twisted River settlement comes to vibrant life in the opening section, the rest of the novel is scrambled across many blurry cities and restaurants and different times in a way that deadens the novel's momentum.

Later in Danny's life, looking at snapshots of these various places pinned to his bulletin board, he thinks, "Thus Vermont overlapped Boston, or vice versa -- Avellionio and Mao's were apparently interchangeable." Readers will feel similarly baffled.

But most problematic of all is the book's wearisome focus on Danny's career as a world-famous novelist, like, say, John Irving. He writes fiction that is "both autobiographical and *not* autographical at the same time."

Danny goes to Exeter. He works as an art model. He studies with Kurt Vonnegut at the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop. He publishes a couple of moderately successful novels in his 20s. He takes a teaching job at Mount Holyoke. His fourth book is an international bestseller that's made into a popular movie. He publishes another novel about abortion and then writes a screenplay version that wins an Academy Award.

If you know anything at all about Irving's life, you get the idea. There's nothing inherently wrong with such autobiographical allusions -- Irving frequently does this sort of thing -- but too often in "Last Night in Twisted River" these events serve as shorthand for real storytelling, for creating colorful places full of well-developed characters.

Instead, lots of minor walk-ons clutter the stage, though fortunately only a couple of the Italians are subjected to corny dialect: "I know-a some guys -- they feex-a your problem for you."

And frankly, the irony-free fawning over Danny's talent sounds like the kind of self-pleasuring that an author should enjoy in private: "Daniel Baciagalupo was a genius-in-progress," the narrator tells us. "The kid simply has a gift for storytelling."

We hear many times about the development of his remarkable skill: "Maybe this was one of those moments that made Daniel Baciagalupo become a writer." A page later: "Maybe this moment of speechlessness helped to make Daniel Baciagalupo become a writer." Maybe. A few pages later: "Daniel Baciagalupo recognized another trick that writers know." Then: "Wouldn't even the way he fell asleep somehow contribute to Danny becoming a writer?"

When mothers ask such questions about their brilliant children, I pretend to get a call on my cell-phone.

None of these complaints should surprise Irving, who includes here plenty of references to dimwitted book reviewers (you know how they can be!). They take Danny to task for repeating the same elements in his novels -- weird sex scenes, errant bears, missing mothers, severed hands -- all of which appear in this novel, but for gosh sakes don't say anything!

Hack journalists obsess about the autobiographical details in Danny's novels, while rabid fans pester him rudely. "That was a real problem with being famous," Danny thinks, as though Irving were complaining about the help nowadays.

Ironically, the novel only soars when we read the parts that Danny has supposedly written: that Twisted River section at the beginning, a haunting chapter in the middle about a pig roast interrupted by a naked sky diver, and another one later on about Danny's son. These parts are full of captivating characters, well-polished prose and heartbreaking insights into the joys and terrors of parenthood.

But "The Last Night in Twisted River" is like some kind of postmodern tragedy: Danny Baciagalupo's marvelous novel is smothered inside John Irving's dull one. If only somebody could have helped it get out and breathe. ●

*Last Night in Twisted River*  
John Irving, Random House, 554 pp., \$28  
Reviewed by Ron Charles, Book World

Everything that makes John Irving such a wonderful writer is on display in the opening section of his 12th novel, "Last Night in Twisted River." And everything that makes him such a maddening one is evident in the 450 rambling pages that follow.

It's like signing on for a week's vacation after a great first date only to discover that now you're trapped in a small hotel room. For. Seven. Long. Days.

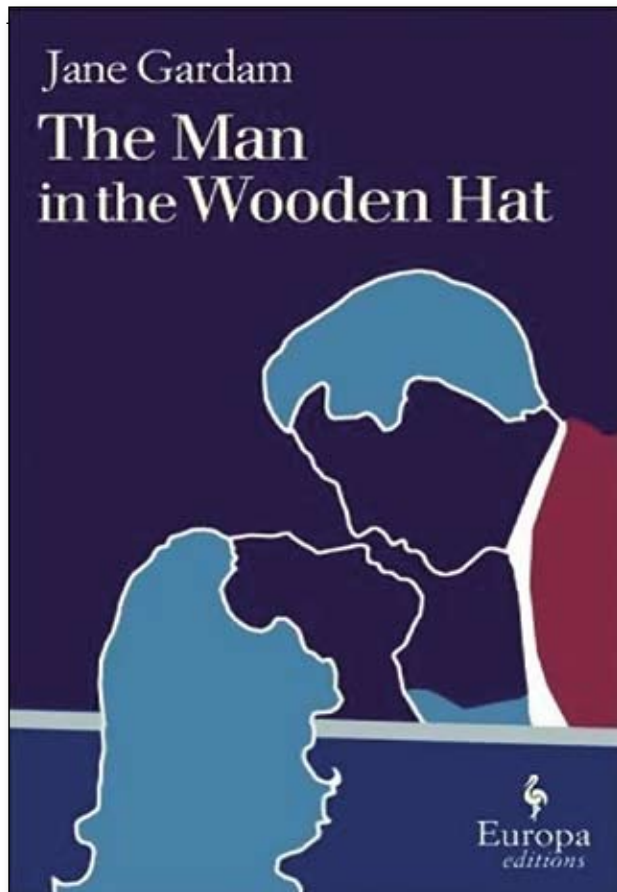
But, oh, this first section is a marvel, a rich and evocative story -- think of it as a \$28 novella. It's about a sweet 12-year-old boy named Danny, who lives with his widowed father in a dying New Hampshire lumber town in the 1950s.

Irving captures the turbulent mixture of violence and camaraderie that marks the lives of these tough men and a few even tougher women, French Canadian immigrants and Indians, anyone who wants or needs to work miles from civilization.

In the first paragraph, a friendly young man slips on the logs and drowns in the tannin-dyed water, depressing these already sullen lumbermen and setting up a mystery that's pursued much later. This is, Irving wants us to know, "a world of accidents," and everybody here carries the scars.

In the ingeniously constructed story that develops, two men take care of young Danny: His father, Dominic, is a cook in Twisted River who has "the look of a man long resigned to his fate." Since losing his wife in a foolish accident when Danny was a baby, he's been a teetotaler, determined to protect his son from

## BOOK REVIEWS



Kong in the last days of empire, though each begins and ends in a quiet little town in Dorset.

All four novels are notable for their sure-handed depictions of particular places and times, but they are most distinguished for their portraits of the four central characters and for their accounts of the marriages into which they have entered.

While "Old Filth" is principally about the man, with the wife a rather shadowy character in the background, "The Man in the Wooden Hat" fills in her side of the story, in the process revealing itself to be an astute, subtle depiction of marriage, with all its shared experiences and separate secrets.

The wife's maiden name is Elisabeth Macintosh, though everyone calls her Betty. Flying from Heathrow to Hong Kong not long after World War II, Edward tells his friend and fellow survivor of the war, Albert Ross, that "she's a good sort. Very attractive," and that "she's very lively. Infectiously happy. Very bright eyes. Strong. Rather -- muscular. I feel safe with her. As a matter of fact, I would die for her."

This, as it happens, is something of a misreading. Betty is indeed attractive and smart, "a linguist and a sociologist and an expert in ciphers," but her childhood was every bit as painful as Edward's.

She doesn't really love Edward and senses that theirs will be a marriage short on passion, so almost literally on the eve of their wedding she takes a startling leap in that direction with her husband-to-be's most bitter enemy.

It is an act of infidelity that she never repeats but never forgets, as she settles into a marriage that is happier, more companionable and even more fulfilling than she had expected but that nonetheless seems to her an echo of her mother's proper British colonial marriage.

Still, by the third day of what will be a half-century with Edward, she knows she will need "an unassailable privacy with my

own life equal to his" because she suspects that "this *must* be how to make marriage work."

Edward loves and needs her with all his heart, but he is not an easy man to love or with whom to live. He is an unregenerate workaholic who is fully capable of ignoring her for days on end while he works on a case, and, what is worse, they are unable to have children.

She had wanted to have at least 10, but perhaps because of her years in the camp (a doctor tells her, "You've put your body -- no, history has put your body -- through hard times"), she is unable to conceive and has to undergo "a complete hysterectomy."

She has many more years to live -- we know from the outset that she will die "planting tulips against an old red wall" in her garden in Dorset -- during which she manages to transform herself from "a copy of her dead mother on her marriage" into "the wife of a distinguished old man."

There is much more to the novel than the unfolding of Edward and Betty Featheresses's marriage. Probably it will astonish American readers to learn that Jane Gardam, now in her early 80s, has published some two dozen books and has been much-honored in England.

No less surprising is that many of those books are in print in the United States, so there really is no excuse for her remaining unknown over here any longer. ●

*The Man in the Wooden Hat*

Jane Gardam, Europa, 233 pp., Paperback, \$15  
Reviewed by Jonathan Yardley, Book World

People lucky enough to have read Jane Gardam's previous novel, "Old Filth" (2006), will know that the nickname of its title character refers not to his state of cleanliness but to his youth. Many years in the past, Edward Feathers moved from England to the Far East in the hope of making his fortune. Old Filth is "an acronym for Failed in London Try Hong Kong."

Try it he did, and made a great success of it. "A thoroughly good, nice man, diligent and clever," he rose steadily through Hong Kong legal circles, eventually achieving a prominent judgeship, a knighthood and, along the way, a wife.

It was his story that Gardam told in "Old Filth," and it is the wife's that she tells in "The Man in the Wooden Hat." Taken together, the two are a British equivalent of Evan S. Connell's classics of Americana, "Mrs. Bridge" and "Mr. Bridge."

Connell's novels take place in Kansas City during the 1930s, while Gardam's are set in and around Hong

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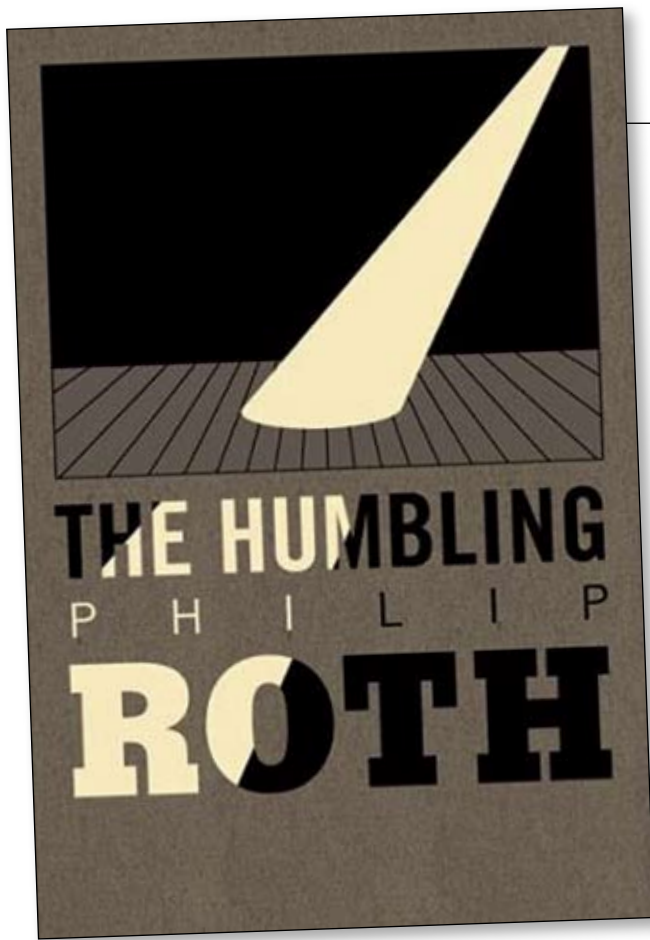
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“He’d lost his magic,” begins Philip Roth’s elegant and brutal new novella, launching right into the downfall of its protagonist, Simon Axler, a celebrated sixtysomething actor. “Instead of the certainty that he was going to be wonderful, he knew he was going to fail.”

Axler’s talent and instincts have deserted him without warning, and the result is humiliation that Roth describes with icy and almost fiendish glee. “His Macbeth was ludicrous and everyone who saw it said as much, and so did many who didn’t.”

Axler suffers not so much a loss of confidence as the terrible conviction that he never had any talent at all. He wakes up in the middle of the night screaming, and when he looks back at his life, he sees only a catalog of mistakes that add up to the one big mistake he now feels himself to be.

He’s severely depressed, a condition that “The Humbling” (some title!) evokes with shivering accuracy. “All that had worked to make him himself now worked to make him look like a lunatic,” Roth writes, and the sentence (in both senses of the word)

is intricately balanced and perfectly wrought, brilliant and hilarious, yet punitive.

Roth is a language wizard and a stern moral judge, and the message he’s recently been bringing us about the process of getting old subverts the traditional mythology. In “Everyman,” “Exit Ghost” and now “The Humbling,” age does not bring wisdom to characters, and foresight fails to protect them.

Axler’s breakdown is colossal. His back is shot, his wife leaves him and he checks into a psychiatric hospital where, in art therapy class, he encounters other would-be suicides whose plight is perhaps even worse than his own: “Everybody else would be sitting there gloomily silent, inwardly intense and rehearsing to themselves -- in the lexicon of pop psychology or gutter obscenity or paranoid pathology -- the ancient themes of dramatic literature: incest, betrayal, injustice, cruelty, vengeance, jealousy, rivalry, desire, loss, dishonor and grief.”

High and low -- it’s what Philip Roth has always been about; in his fiction Clytemnestra is likely to come from Kansas, while an actor who’s starred in Hollywood movies is filled with the kind of despair in which Dostoevski specialized.

Axler returns to his lonely farmhouse, surrounded by 50 empty acres, a retreat that has become a prison. He meets a younger woman, Pegeen, until now a lesbian, the daughter of old friends and colleagues, and they begin an affair that revives Axler and starts to rehabilitate him. Axler has felt emptied out, and Pegeen starts to fill him up. He buys her clothes (shades of “Vertigo,” Hitchcock’s classic study of obsession) and their lovemaking soon turns into risky role-playing.

People, Roth warns, are “instinctively strategic,” especially when it comes to relationship control and power, and Axler fails to spot that he’s dealing with a sexual gunslinger who will always get the first shot. Pegeen’s bold erotic charm disarms and delights him, opening an abyss into which he first looks and then plunges. In the bedroom his partner is “a magical composite of shaman, acrobat, and animal”; she’s not only “the wielder of the cat-o’-nine-tails” but also a “connoisseur” of sex toys.

Will this play out well? Are you kidding? Axler nudges Pegeen to pick up a stranger, prompting a giddy *ménage à trois* that re-creates, in much darker and almost surreal colors, a situation that Roth has used before (notably in “The Professor of De-

sire”) and triggers the disaster that maybe Axler has wanted all along.

Ideas of tragic pleasure and comic pain have always been inextricably bound in Roth’s work. Go back 50 years. Toward the end of “Goodbye, Columbus,” which launched Roth’s career with almost outrageous panache, his narrator asks himself: “What was it inside me that had turned pursuit and clutching into love, and then turned it inside out again? What was it that had turned winning into losing, and losing -- who knows -- into winning?”

“The Humbling” poses much the same questions about how life’s inexplicable and unexpected turns affect character, except what’s at stake here is no longer the loss of innocence. Faced with his failure as an actor, Simon Axler starts to play the role of his own demise. Life might not be packaged in plots, but death can be, he comes to realize. He rages against his dying light but really blames only himself, “disgraced, feeble little being that he was, a lesbian’s thirteen-month mistake.”

Readers, according to their taste, may find the sex scenes in “The Humbling” shocking or arousing or just plain silly. On the one hand, Roth’s 30th book deals with themes that his work, especially his recent work, has made familiar. On the other, it’s direct and urgent, a taut and controlled fever-dream that demands to be experienced at a single sitting.

“The Humbling” is divided into three chapters, three acts almost, and near the end the name of Chekhov is invoked, reminding us that a gun that’s been shown at the beginning of the tale is likely to go off by the end. And the gun duly does, leaving the reader with feelings of terror and exhilaration in equal measure.

Roth is a master, and relentless. Now in his mid-70s, he may be waiting for some new “American Pastoral” or “The Human Stain,” another big, sweeping masterwork, to take hold in his mind and carry him away. Meanwhile, he never stops working. His next book, another short one in this cycle that considers the proximity of death, is already written and is called -- a title that will again draw a wincing smile -- “Nemesis.” Don’t expect a happy ending. ●

*The Humbling*

Philip Roth, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 140 pp., \$22  
Reviewed by Richard Rayner, Los Angeles Times

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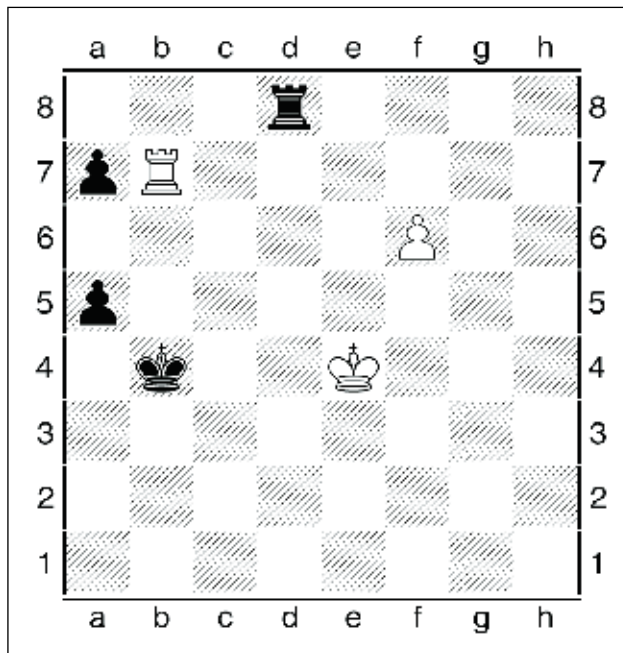
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## FOR THE LOVE OF CHESS BY HUMBERTO CRUZ - CHESS COLUMNIST



**Black threw game away with his next move. See column at right.**

Igor Rausis, a grandmaster from the Czech Republic, is one of three grandmasters pre-registered to play in the annual Turkey Bowl tournament in South Florida this month. The others are Florida chess champion Julio Becerra of Miami and Colombian-born Gildardo Garcia.

The Turkey Bowl, the last major open tournament in Florida for 2009, is usually played the weekend before Thanksgiving in Boca Raton. But with the customary playing site at Florida Atlantic University unavailable this year, the tournament will be held Nov. 13-15 at El Palacio Hotel and Conference Center in Fort Lauderdale.

Jon Haskel, tournament director and organizer, has announced a prize fund of \$6,100 based on 200 paid entries, with 60 percent of prizes guaranteed if fewer players attend. Top prize in the open section is \$1,000 plus a Turkey Bowl trophy. For more information on the tournament, visit the Web site of the Florida Chess Association at [www.floridachess.org](http://www.floridachess.org).

Today's diagram is from a game Rausis won this year in the Czech championship. Rausis, playing White, is a pawn down but has the more advanced passed pawn. His opponent, Tomas Studnicka, could have drawn fairly easily with 52...Kc5 or 52...Kc4. But he blundered with 52...Ka3, effectively imprisoning his King on the "a" file. White's endgame technique is instructive. The game continued 53.f7 a4 54.Ke5 Ka2 55.Ke6 Rh8 56.Kf6 a3 57.Kg7 Rc8 58.f8(Q) Rxf8 59.Kxf8 a5 60.Ke7 a4 61.Kd6 Ka1 62.Kc5 a2 63.Kc4 a3 64.Kb3 Kb1 65.Kxa3+ Ka1 66.Rh7 Kb1 67.Rh1+ and Black resigned.

*Humberto Cruz is a United States Chess Federation correspondence chess master and certified tournament director. He can be reached at [askhumberto@aol.com](mailto:askhumberto@aol.com).*

## THE BRIDGE COLUMN BY PIETER VANBENNEKOM - BRIDGE COLUMNIST

"I didn't get any cards all night long" – it's a complaint often heard from some bridge players at the end of a duplicate tournament or a "friendly" rubber session.

If you only like playing when you and your partner have been dealt most of the Aces and Kings, odds are that you'll enjoy bridge only half the time. Still others even begrudge their partners getting the good cards, meaning they're happy only 25% of the time.

The fascinating thing about bridge is that it's not about the cards you get, but about how you play them – and real bridge enthusiasts put just as much energy into defense.

The diagrammed deal just how much fun good defense can be, even against overwhelming power (neither side vulnerable; East dealer).

Both sides vulnerable; North is Dealer:

The bidding:	North	East	South	West
		1 NT	Pass	3 NT
	Pass	4 NT	Pass	5 S
	Pass	5 NT	Pass	6 D
	Pass	7 NT		

West led the 5 of Clubs

South's unfortunate by-the-book lead, fourth-highest from his longest suit, solved one of Flo's problems, guessing where the Queen of Clubs was.

As Flo surveyed the situation now, she saw 12 sure tricks: 3 in Spades, 4 in Hearts, 2 in Diamonds and 3 in Clubs after the opening lead. To make the contract, she'd have to pick up the Queen of Spades, either by dropping it under Ace-King or risking a finesse. In the hope of gaining a little more information about the opponents' hands, she first attacked the Heart suit, cashing four tricks and winding up in the West dummy. On the fourth Heart, Smug Sam as South discarded his low Spade.

That was the signal Flo had been waiting for. Surely if Sam had the Queen of Spades, he'd protect it and never discard a Spade! So now Flo confidently led the 10 of Spades from the dummy, playing low from her hand, and allowing Smug Sam to collect the trick with his Queen to defeat the Slam.

Of course Flustered Flo got the lead back on the very next trick and took her remaining Spade tricks. When Smug Sam showed out on the second Spade, revealing that his discard had been a deliberate misdirection play, well... if looks could kill, Flo's look at Sam would have resulted in a funeral.

## DEFENSIVE HEROICS

NORTH		
	♠ 6 5 4 3	
	♥ 7 5	
	♦ Q 7 5 4 2	
	♣ Q 4	
SOUTH		
	♠ Q 7	
	♥ 8 6 4	
	♦ J 6 3	
	♣ 10 9 8 5 3	

WEST	EAST
♠ 10 9 2	♠ A K J 8
♥ A K J 9	♥ Q 10 3 2
♦ A 9 8	♦ K 10
♣ A 7 6	♣ K J 2

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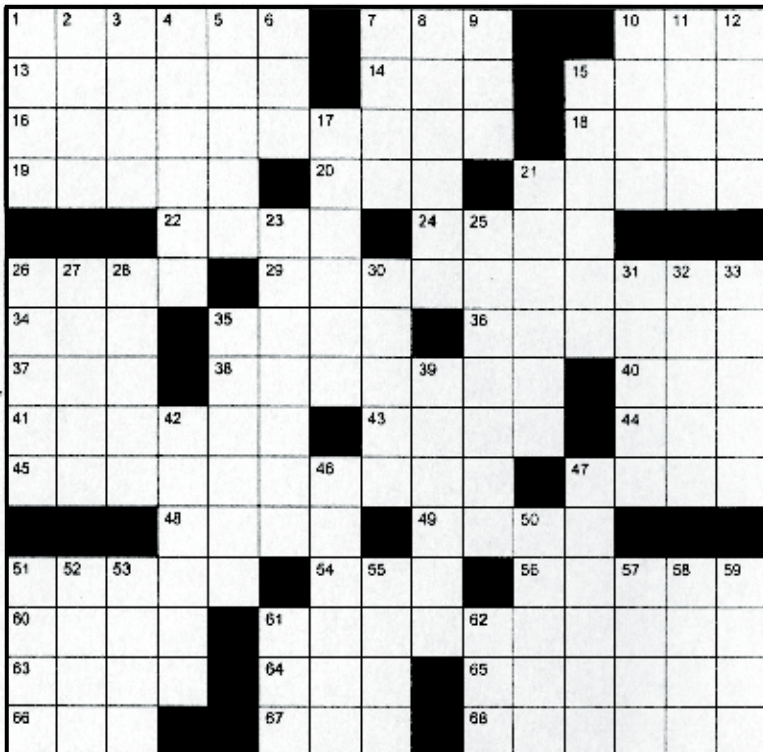
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# Crossword

## PARIS



The Christian Science Monitor | By Judith Perry | Edited by Charles Preston

### ACROSS

- 1 Set of four
- 7 Starter for fix or pare
- 10 Units of wt.
- 13 On the QE2
- 14 Conger
- 15 Alone
- 16 Upside-down
- 18 Chicken house
- 19 "West Side Story" mezzo
- 20 Tart
- 21 Western digs
- 22 Tolkien creatures
- 24 But, in Ulm
- 26 Hebrew dry measure
- 29 Wash. city
- 34 Wire measure
- 35 Soft drink
- 36 Of the shinbone
- 37 Pierre's donkey
- 38 Desert
- 40 Half of MMIV
- 41 Zodiac's third sign
- 43 Afghanistan language
- 44 Diving bird
- 45 Haughty
- 47 African fox
- 48 Sox

### DOWN

- 49 Munich's river
- 51 N.Y. city
- 54 Negative prefix
- 56 Daub
- 60 Parisian oasis
- 61 Medley
- 63 Austen novel
- 64 Cuckoo
- 65 Parisian drink
- 66 Teachers' gr.
- 67 Chinese art family
- 68 Mad

- 21 Put film back on original reel
- 23 Twenty-five cents
- 25 Members of Hungarian noble family
- 26 County Tyrone town, Ireland
- 27 Actor Sal
- 28 Varnish resin
- 30 Actress Elissa
- 31 Succotash beans
- 32 Father of Oedipus
- 33 Similar
- 35 Zion National Park feature
- 39 Going with
- 42 Home of Odysseus
- 46 Paris deserted her
- 47 Coats of mail
- 50 Colo. resort
- 51 Kind of house or door
- 52 Crippled
- 53 Bombeck
- 55 Chief Norse deity
- 57 Author Ferber
- 58 Greek competition
- 59 Advise: Brit.
- 61 Hem's partner
- 62 Finial

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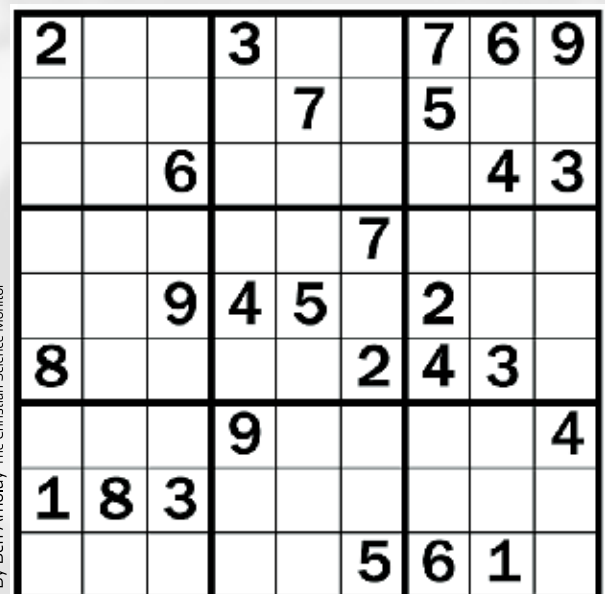
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# Sudoku



By Ben Arnoldy The Christian Science Monitor

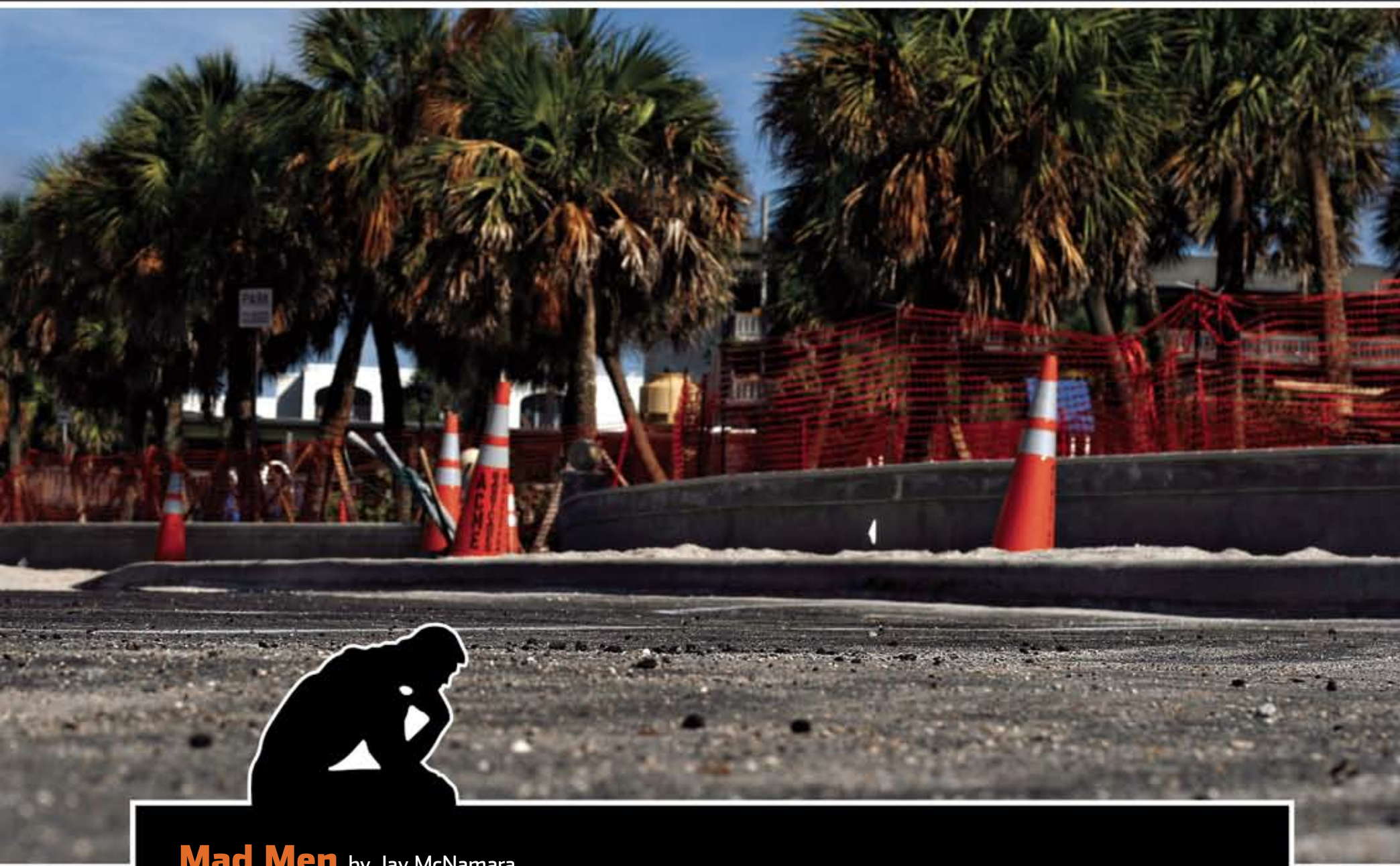
★★★★☆

### How to do Sudoku:

Fill in the grid so the numbers 1 through 9 appear just once in every column, row and three-by-three square. See example to the right.

SOLUTIONS TO LAST ISSUE ON PAGE 75





## **Mad Men** by Jay McNamara

The subject here is mad men, really angry males. Anger, one of the Seven Deadly Sins, is on the upswing if my experience is any indication.

The other day, I found a parking space convenient to a restaurant. As I walked to the emporium, a man yelled (family newspaper) at me. The single word epithet came from a guy who felt that I had taken his parking space. He had transferred his road rage to the parking lot.

It's unnerving to be cursed at in public, but there is little one can do without risking an argument that could escalate. As you know, many Floridians are armed and dangerous, with concealed weapons in abundance, all within the law. So, I scurried on at a faster pace. If I had a tail, it would have been between my legs.

Days later, I was cleaning my windshield in a busy gas station, when a man in line began cursing at me as he stepped from his car. He thought I was taking too long, delaying him from the use of the pump. He told me to "go to a (family newspaper) car wash."

Unlike the first situation, I found myself head to head with the man. He was half my age, well tattooed, with a large black dog in the back of his pickup. I didn't see the merit of continuing our dialogue. Who needs a clean windshield under the circumstances?

The next day, as I turned onto A1A from a strip mall, I passed close to a car entering the area. The driver gave me the bird and shouted "you (family newspaper)" Since I was underway there was no time for a reply, not that I had one handy. Was there a black cloud following me?

Concluding from the evidence that I was a victim of a trend unlikely to abate, I am considering the options available for these situations. I could go to one of the local gun stores and stock up on weaponry and ammunition. Having been trained by the Marines, this is a viable option, although I don't imagine they stock the musket I was trained on. But, what if I actually used the gun?

Second, I could study one of the martial arts, some of that Jackie Chan stuff, like Karate or Judo. While this might have been a possible enterprise in my youth, I am afraid I would be done-in by the process. I would slip a disc, throw a vertebra, snap my clavicle.

Third, I could work on my debating skills in order to work out the anger of any verbal assailants. Convince them that their behavior was uncivilized. Lots of luck.

So, I have decided to stay with the current game plan. Turn the other cheek. Flee the scene as fast as possible. Get the (family newspaper) out of there. Live to enjoy another day. Discretion is the better part of valor, isn't it?