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by RINA PICCOLO



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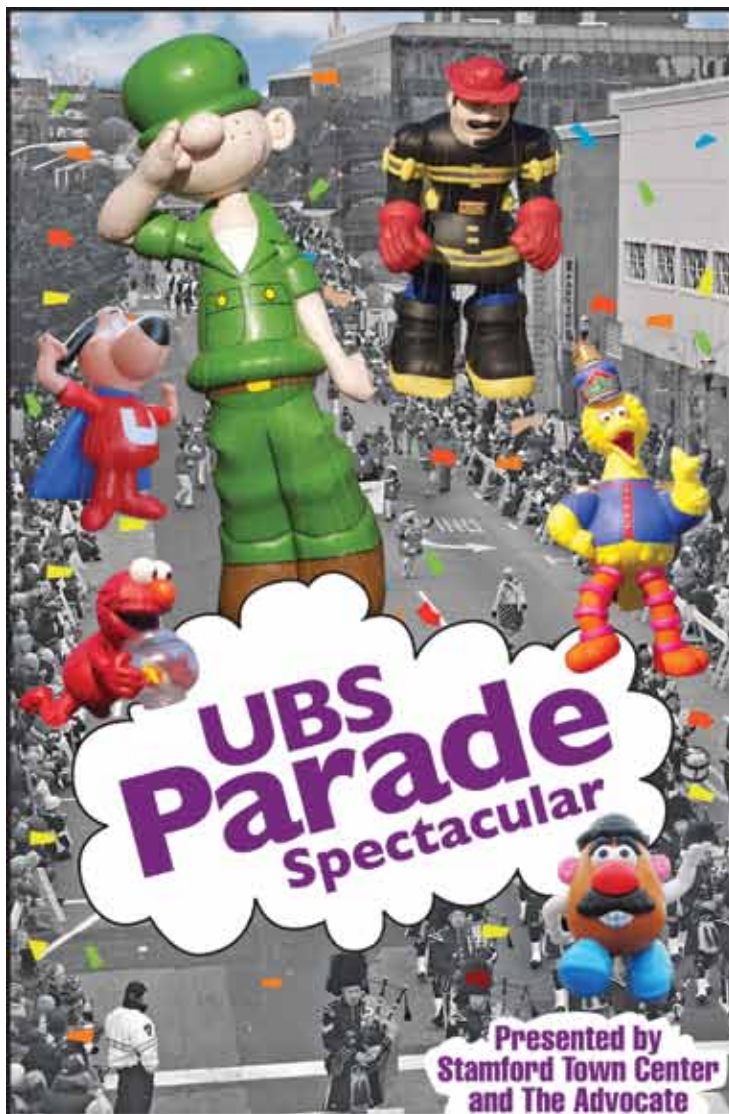
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DEBBIE TRAVIS' HOUSE TO HOME



LIGHT ENTERTAINMENT

BY DEBBIE TRAVIS

When you make your plan for lighting up your house or apartment for the holidays, it doesn't have to be elaborate. No need for hundreds of bulbs swinging from eaves and trees. But like planting spring tulip and daffodil bulbs, the best effect is produced by clumping or bunching lights together. Check out the look of the glass vases, each filled with a string of lights, that decorate the shelves of a family room entertainment unit. They mimic the shape of a bunch of brightly colored blooms.

Lights have changed a lot through the past few years due to the increase in availability of energy-efficient bulbs. Favorite holiday motifs, such as snowmen, reindeer and Santas, sport LED lights with a slightly different shimmer, but they carry the same cheerful sentiment. It's all for fun, and helps us brighten up a cold, winter month.

Flameless candles are another celebratory light source, and they come with a huge bonus — they are safe! With no live flame or melting wax to watch, you can set up an intriguing light show along the mantel, on tabletops and beside the bed. The sight and scent of real candles have a timeless appeal, but save these for the dining table, or by the bathtub, where they will only be lit when an adult is present to watch them burn.

* * *

Dear Debbie: I live in an old condo that has two red brick walls in the living/dining area. I've enjoyed the natural brick for many years, but feel that I want to lighten the look

without paint or covering the brick with drywall, as many of my neighbors have done. I was thinking of mixing together paint the color of my non-brick walls and urethane, and applying that. What do you think? — Ron

Dear Ron: The paint and urethane mixture will make a bit of a sticky mess. Instead, I would choose a chalky white paint with a flat sheen, and mix a whitewash: 1 part water to 2 parts paint. Brush this over the bricks, and it will produce a veiled effect that will lighten up the walls without losing the texture and shading of the bricks.

* * *

Dear Debbie: We have just finished painting our kitchen cabinets a creamy white; the walls are white, the counter is a gray pebble Formica, and the floor is a light-pine laminate. It feels too monochromatic. What can we do to pick it up a bit that wouldn't be too expensive? Nothing too flashy. — Megan

Dear Megan: This is where your backsplash area can make all the difference, and you can simply paint it, which is the most inexpensive fix possible. I'd pick a great paint color — orange, chartreuse, bright blue or rusty red. Or check out the glass mosaic tiles in these shades; you don't need a large quantity to cover a backsplash, and you can create fabulous designs or a subtle pattern with a few colorful highlights. The exciting news today is that you can buy small appliances and other kitchen accessories in bright colors. A huge color choice in houseware products is common in Europe, and happily this trend is starting in North America. Even an all-white kitchen will vibrate with energy when you introduce a few colorful accents.

Dear Debbie: I am planning to paint my kitchen, and I am really tired of the knotty pine walls, also in my entry and front hall. I have no idea if the pine has been sealed. How do I cover it, and what do I use? Please help. — Shirley

Dear Shirley: For solid coverage, the important step is to seal the knots or they will continue to bleed through your fresh paint job. First, clean the walls with a heavy-duty cleanser to remove any grease and dirt. Use wood filler to repair holes or cracks in the wood, including around the knots. Sand smooth. Ask your paint shop professional for the correct primer — a shellac primer is tough and will stop the bleed. Apply two coats to be sure. Proceed with water-based paint in your color choice.

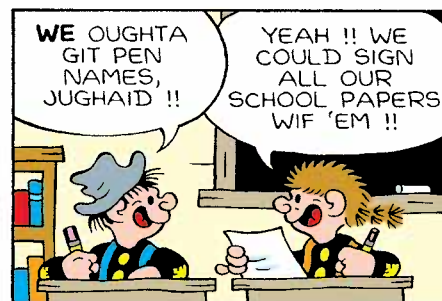
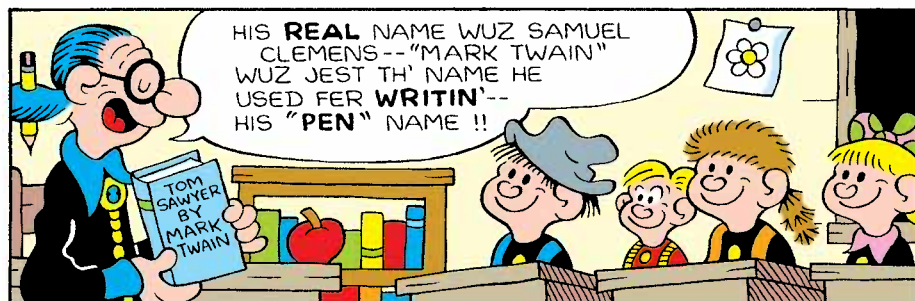
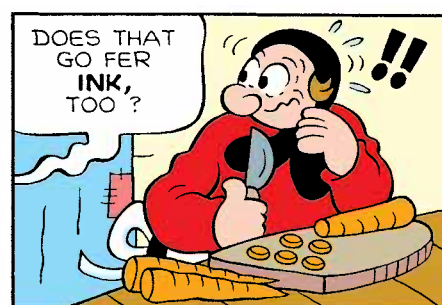
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Debbie Travis' House to Home column is produced by Debbie Travis and Barbara Dingle. Please e-mail your questions to house2home@debbietravis.com. You can follow Debbie on Twitter at www.twitter.com/debbie_travis, and visit Debbie's new website, www.debbietravis.com.

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SAY NO TO FAT CATS

BY HELOISE

Dear Readers: Overweight cats may look cute and roly-poly, but that extra fat can be dangerous. They can suffer from aching joints, liver problems and diabetes, just to mention a few repercussions.

How to tell if your cat is fat? Can you feel the spine and ribs? If you can't, your cat is probably overweight.

Losing weight can involve increasing the cat's activity level while maintaining the same calorie intake.

Talk to your veterinarian about weight management. You may need to change some of your habits, too! A lot of cat treats, for example, can pack on the ounces.

Also important? Feeding the cat several small meals per day, and increasing play and exercise time. Monitor the cat if he is a hunter; this could add extra calories, too.

After time, you should notice an improvement in the cat's health and general well-being. If not, please work with your veterinarian to keep your four-pawed, furry friend in good health. — *Heloise*

DOGS DIGGING

Dear Heloise: The problem of my dogs digging in the yard had gotten bad. For every hole I filled, they would dig up another. So I sprinkled some red-pepper flakes around the hole and into the dirt I shoveled back in. It's still a game, but I'm winning. No more digging! — *R.B. in West Virginia*

TOO CUTE

Dear Heloise: I have a little Chihuahua named Peso who sleeps in his dog bed. I put an extra blanket on the bed so he stays warm, and he likes to burrow under the covers.

To make his bed warm, I put the blanket in the dryer for a few minutes. When I place it on the bed, Peso comes running and immediately goes under cover for the night! — *Keralyn R., Colorado Springs, Colo.*

NO SHOCK

Dear Heloise: I have a betta fish in a fishbowl and try to keep the bowl clean. When I clean it, I take Homer out and put him into another container with a little bit of the water from the tank to keep him from getting temperature "shocked" since I keep him in the same water. I then clean the bowl and any gravel, plants, etc., with water only. Then I put everything back in the bowl, fill with water, and Homer's back in! — *Kasey Ann in Utah*

MEDICAL RECORDS

Dear Heloise: To keep your pets on track with their vaccinations, keep a dedicated calendar to write down their medical histories, or create a document on the computer to chart their vaccination schedules. — *A Reader, via fax*

COMICS AS PLACE MATS

Dear Readers: A way to reuse the colorful Sunday comics? As a liner underneath pet dishes. The paper is absorbent, but change it as needed. — *Heloise*

COUNTER CULTURE

Dear Heloise: No matter how well-behaved and how trained your dog is, cakes, sweets and salty snacks like chips are a great temptation for dogs. I've even come home to find the butter on the floor from my dog knocking it off the counter!

If you have these on your counter and are planning a trip out, stow the goodies in the microwave so the dog can't get at them. — *Nancy in New Hampshire*

LETTER OF LAUGHTER

Dear Heloise: When my Labrador was a puppy, we taught him to fetch the newspaper from the driveway and bring it to the kitchen door.

One day when he brought us the paper, he went away and brought us another paper! He had gone to our neighbor's driveway and retrieved that paper, too! — *Jean in California*

PET PAL

Dear Readers: Gloria Hentzler of Prescott, Ariz., sent a photo of her 8-year-old poodle, Coco, who is ready for Christmas, wearing a red-and-white hat and cloak. — *Heloise*

TEMP HOUSE

Dear Heloise: Large, square (so they don't roll) trash cans make a good temporary shelter for dogs or cats.

Add a towel or blanket, and put their food inside so it won't get wet. A child's plastic swimming pool draped over the can makes a sort of "covered porch"! — *A Reader in Louisiana*



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FROMMER'S BUDGET TRAVEL



BY ARTHUR FROMMER

ST. JOHN CAMPS EXTENDED

Good news in travel was recently supplied by the three families that own the land on which Maho Bay Camps (www.maho.org) are located on the island of St. John in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Although Maho's lease is scheduled to end after the upcoming winter season, the land owners have agreed to extend the lease period for still another full winter season — in fact, until the summer of 2012. And there are hints — only hints, not guarantees — that a further extension may be granted after completion of the winter season in 2012.

Thus, one of the finest (and most unique) moderately priced resorts in all the tropics is still available for the best kind of holiday. The loyal, nationwide clientele of this unusual property has lived under the threat that their cherished holidays would come to an end just a few months from now. And now that threat has been removed — at least for two more winter seasons.

Maho Bay Camps consists of more than 100 tented bungalows on small wooden platforms cantilevered over a hillside overlooking one of the most enthralling sights in all the Caribbean, on the tiny and largely undeveloped island of St. John (it has only two other large hotels) in the Caribbean. The bungalows (more like canvas-sided huts) are connected to each other, to the dining area on a big wooden platform overlooking the Caribbean, and to toilet and shower facilities, by wooden walkways carefully elevated from ground level to avoid disturbing the undergrowth of grass, flowers, weeds and plants.

Meals at Maho Bay (costing \$17 on the occasion of my last visit) are mainly vegetarian and quite tasty; bungalows rent to two people for a total of about \$80 during off-season, about \$50 more in high season; wonderful lectures and films on the Caribbean are presented many evenings; the beach below the housing area is a glorious expanse of sugary-soft white sand; the usual standard of dress

is shorts, T-shirts and sandals; and the clientele often are a mix of well-read, intellectually curious and unpretentious middle-income people from a fascinating range of professions and academic activities.

Incidentally, under the now-diminished threat that it would be forced to close, Maho Bay Camps has been frantically building another resort of eco tents known as Estates Concordia on the other side of the island of St. John. Estates Concordia takes advantage of every new source of sustainable energy (solar panels, wind-generated power, recycled water and the like) and is an important model for the future creation of alternative housing. However, its situation is not nearly as enthralling as Maho Bay's, and I am less than enthusiastic about recommending it for a vacation, at least in its present form (and it will undoubtedly be improved). It also is more expensive than the original Maho Bay Camps. At the same time, it will be cherished by people with an intense interest in the future survival of mankind after traditional forms of energy are exhausted.

GOOGLE STREET VIEW

The British travel press is currently circulating a report that one-third of all American travelers consult Google Street View (<http://maps.google.com/streetview>) before embarking on a trip, zooming in for an up-close view of the accommodations they are considering, surveying the surrounding streets from a street-view level. The 33 percent figure is claimed to be the result of scientific polling by a British research firm, and the British journalists are asking why it is that only a tiny and much smaller percentage of all British travelers consult that Google service.

My answer, of course, is that the claim of such a large number of American users of Google Street View is sheer fantasy, the worst hooey. Or am I behind the times? Is it realistically possible that so great a

percentage of Americans do so? Or is the figure a cleverly placed fib by Google's public-relations department?

THAILAND RECOVERY

A number of recent visitors to Bangkok and vicinity have reported on the slow current recovery of Thailand from the several-week period of rioting that wrought havoc with that country's tourism. Though various Thai hoteliers and government tourist officials will cite only a small downturn, their comments are for public consumption and one wonders whether they are sugarcoating the situation. It's obvious that the cost of touring Thailand is now considerably reduced to people who negotiate with suppliers, and that now is an opportune time for visits (in terms of the cost of going there).

Whether touring Thailand is safe is another question. The grievances of a large portion of its population have not been addressed, and the rural poor continue to support the exiled prime minister, but a military crackdown has forced the rioters to abandon the street demonstrations that paralyzed the life of central Bangkok some months ago. The military clearly holds the upper hand. Travelers must reach their own decision as to whether to risk the trip; from many reports, it appears that the life of Bangkok has returned to normal, the nightlife is as swinging as ever, the tourists are pursuing their usual activities like shopping and touring temples, but whether calm will remain in effect elsewhere in the country is a guess.

'BOOK LUST'

"Book Lust to Go" (and the word is "lust," not "list") was published less than two weeks ago, and is already a best-seller on Amazon and in bookstores, a work that several reviewers have called a "must read" for travelers. After publishing three earlier lists of books relating to other occupations and activities, Nancy Pearl — a well-known librarian in Seattle, and frequent book commentator on NPR

— has now published a similar collection for travelers. It contains hundreds of reviews of novels and non-fiction works relating to the various places to which tourists go, all carefully organized by destination.

None of these books is a travel guide. But each one is a work, according to Ms. Pearl, that will enhance the travel experience by giving you an advance introduction to the makeup, culture and history of different countries, islands and cities.

We all know that advance preparation — studying the places to which we plan a trip — often makes the difference between enjoying a destination, or being puzzled or bored by it. Yet too many of us undertake trips without first spending so much as a single evening in a library reading about the history and culture of the place to which we are going. “Book Lust to Go” performs the function of bringing to our attention the best books to read — the best novels, the best art appreciations, the best histories — in advance of traveling to a multitude of destinations.

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St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands

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NASCAR

THIS WEEK

By Monte Dutton
NASCAR This Week

CONCORD, N.C. — Jamie McMurray's victory in the Bank of America 500 represented a charge he leads alone.

McMurray didn't make the Chase for the Sprint Cup. What he has done is win three of the season's prestigious events. Earlier in the season, McMurray won the Daytona 500 and Brickyard 400. In 2007-2008, Chase drivers won all 10 Chase races. McMurray broke that string by winning the autumn 2009 race at Talladega and did it again at Charlotte Motor Speedway.

In other words, there is life outside the Chase. Mainly it resides in the cockpit of the No. 1 Bass Pro Shops Chevy.

McMurray's Chevy outran Kyle Busch's Toyota in the late stages of the Bank of America 500.



Jamie McMurray

"After coming so close (second) in the (Coca-Cola) 600 earlier in the season, I really felt like anything less than winning (at Charlotte) would have been disappointing," said McMurray. "We had such a great car in the spring, and it just wasn't good enough on the short run."

"Man, it was just our night. Our car was unbelievable those last 25 or 30 laps. It was effortless to drive, and it had a lot of speed in it. It was just a really good night for us."

McMurray's first Cup victory occurred in the same race eight years earlier. What he has learned in the past two years, in particular, is the power of prayer.

"I just wanted it to be understood that, after the season that I had, or the last four years I had, I found the power of prayer, and that it's something that I really believe in," he said after winning at CMS. "When

I got to victory lane in Daytona, that's what I was thinking about. You know, I was crying, obviously because I was happy, but also because you feel like a prayer has been answered."

McMurray said he was praying during the final 10 laps.

"I was like, you know, if I win this race, Lord ... I'm going to explain to people my feelings and why I felt that way."

CONCORD, N.C. — Even though Jimmie Johnson has won four straight Sprint Cup

championships by essentially performing better in the Chase than in the regular season, those chasing him inexplicably fail to take it into account. Kevin Harvick, whose performance was easily best in the regular season, is now third behind Johnson and Denny Hamlin.

"You've just got to go out and keep doing the things that you're doing," said Harvick, "and play your own game and where it all falls at the end."

The NASCAR Hall of Fame announced its 2011 inductees: David Pearson, Bobby Allison, Lee Petty, Ned Jarrett and Bud Moore. The quintet will be inducted next May. Between them, the four drivers combined for nine championships. Moore, a decorated World War II veteran, achieved success as owner, crew chief and mechanic, winning with drivers such as Allison, Joe Weatherly, Buddy Baker, Dale Earnhardt, Benny Parsons, Geoff Bodine and Billy Wade.

Carl Edwards and Brad Keselowski actually get along these days, or so Edwards said.

"Yeah, I think Brad has done a really good job of just maintaining and doing his best," said Keselowski's probation partner. "He's gone over the line with me a couple of times and we've gone round and round about it, but still, we can walk up to each other and shake hands and go have a good race."

"I think that says a lot about him as a person, so I feel that we've raced really well with one another since Gateway (where they notably didn't), and that's good."

Jimmie Johnson has finished third or better in four straight



Jimmie Johnson

races. A break-away is in progress. Only Denny Hamlin and Kevin Harvick are within 150 points.

Jeff Gordon's whimsical take on teammate Jimmie Johnson's spin early in the Bank of America 500: "Ah, that was just to get (crew chief) Chad (Knaus) to tighten the car up. Chad wasn't listening to him. He thought he needed to keep it loose, and, so, Jimmie showed him how loose it really was, and they tightened it up and he went to the front."

Kyle Busch sounded downtrodden after the race: "Nobody can put it in perspective right now. It's very, very disappointing. Had the best car all night and gave it up, just flat-out gave it away and it's real, real frustrating to not come out of here with a win at a track that I have yet to win at and have been so fast at." Uh, he finished second.

The past eight races at Martinsville Speedway have been won by either Johnson (5) or Hamlin (3).

Not only have crowds been down at most tracks. Those who do attend the races seem to be far more likely to leave early.

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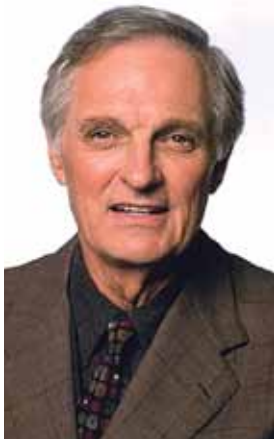
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JILL JACKSON'S HOLLYWOOD

By TONY RIZZO

HOLLYWOOD ... Did you know that Alan Alda was nominated for 21 Emmys for "M.A.S.H."? Or that he is the first thespian to win Emmys for acting, writing and directing the same show? In his career thus far, he has been nominated for 31 Emmys and won five times. He was Oscar nominated for "The Aviator," which won Best Picture, and he won another Emmy Award in 2002 for "The West Wing." That said, moving on, he is now shooting Judd Apatow's film

"Wanderlust" with Jennifer Aniston and Paul Rudd, who play a married couple who escape New York by going to a naturist village, run by Alda. He next shoots "Tower Heist," starring Ben Stiller as the leader of a team



Alan Alda

of defrauded workers planning a heist on Alda's penthouse. But first, he will guest on an upcoming "30 Rock."

Charlton Heston's former press agent has started a campaign to get the late Oscar winner (for "Ben Hur") a U.S. post-age stamp. Why not? Bette Davis, Gary Cooper, Frank Sinatra and even Bugs Bunny have stamps, to name a few. Let's face it, anyone who can part the Red Sea, as he did in "The Ten Commandments," deserves to part the mail at the post office.

Get ready for a double dose of the Beach Boys. Fox 2000 has plans to make a film with their music, although it probably won't be about them. It will be more like the Abba play and film "Mamma Mia." The film will be produced by Craig Zadan and Neil Meron, who produced "Hairspray"

and the upcoming "Footloose" remake, due April 1, and John Stamos, who toured for years with the Beach Boys, filling in for their late drummer, Dennis Wilson. Meanwhile, Sony Pictures is moving ahead with its Dennis Wilson docudrama, and to get it right, Sony has brought his daughter and son on board as technical advisers. No scriptwriter or cast has been announced.

Michael Grimm, winner of "America's Got Talent" this summer, is living the American dream. As a result of his exposure on the NBC show, he has been signed by Epic Records, and his first CD will be released in March 2011.

This 3D thing is not going away. George Lucas has announced he will turn all six classic "Star Wars" films into 3D movies, starting with episode one, "The Phantom Menace." This isn't sitting well with long-time "Star Wars" fans, who thought it was perfect the way it was and that this is just pure greed. It seems everyone is trying to find new ways for us to buy more DVDs. James Cameron, whose "Avatar" is the top-grossing film of all time, says he's going to turn the former top-spot holder, "Titanic," into a 3D movie. Meanwhile, a new release of "Avatar," still in 2D, will have 45 minutes of new footage. We'll have to wait until next year for the actual 3D Blu-ray release. That means some of you could end up buying three DVD versions of "Avatar" for your video collection.

For those of you lucky enough to visit Salzburg, Austria, see the church where the Von Trapps were married and pick edelweiss high in the Alps, your memories of the 1965 film "The Sound of Music" are very special indeed. The rest of us must be content with impressions of the actors who played their roles so well.

Here's what's happened to the cast in the past 45 years:

Julie Andrews (Maria) is still very active at 74. She won an Oscar before "The Sound of Music," for "Mary Poppins," and received her third nod for "Victor/Victoria" in 1982. She still lives with her second husband, director Blake Edwards, and has written 23 children's books. Her latest, "The Very Fairy Princess," written with her daughter, Emma Walton, went to No. 1 on "The New York Times" bestseller list.

Christopher Plummer (Baron von

Trapp), now 80, received his first Oscar nomination last year for "The Last Station." He married his third wife, Alaine Taylor, in 1970. They live in Connecticut.

Eleanor Parker (The Baroness), 88, married four times, has a son, Paul, from her third marriage and currently lives with her fourth husband, Raymond Hirsch.

Peggy Wood (Mother Superior) died in 1978 at the age of 86.

Richard Haydn (Max) died in 1985 at the age of 80.

Charmian Carr (Liesl), now 67, played opposite Anthony Perkins in the '66 TV musical "Evening Primrose" by Stephen Sondheim. She wrote two books, "Forever Liesl" and "Letters to Liesl." She has two daughters and divorced Jay Brent in 1971.

Nicholas Hammond (Friedrich), now 60, was in "The Lord of the Flies" and starred in mini-series "Moby Dick," "On the Beach" and "Salem's Lot." He lives in Sydney, Australia, with Robyn Nevin.

Heather Menzies (Louisa), now 60, also acted with Julie Andrews in "Hawaii." She never remarried after her husband, Robert Urich ("Spenser for Hire"), died in 2002. She has three children and two grandchildren and lives in Los Angeles.

Duane Chase (Kurt), now 59, stopped acting after high school and got his master's degree in geology. He lives in Seattle.

Angela Cartwright (Brigitta), now 58, starred in the TV series "Make Room for Daddy" and "Lost In Space." In '79, she did "Beyond the Poseidon Adventure" and in 1998, a cameo in the film version of "Lost In Space." In 1976, she married Steve Gullion; they have two children, Jesse and Rebecca.

Debbie Turner (Marta), now 54, moved to Chanhassen, Minn., in 1985. She has four daughters with husband Richard Larson.

Kym Karath (Gretl), now 52, moved to Paris, got a degree in humanities and at 26 married Phillippe L. Equibec. They have a son, Eric.

Several special events are planned to celebrate the film's 45th anniversary. On Friday, Oct. 29, the entire surviving cast of "The Sound of Music" appears on a very special episode of "The Oprah Winfrey Show." And on Nov. 2, the Blu-ray edition of the film will be released. Enjoy!

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CELEBRITY EXTRA

By CINDY ELAVSKY

Q: Is it true that a sequel to "Top Gun" is in the works? — Fred D., Akron, Ohio

A: All MiG-28s point to "yes." While it is still in the early stages of development, "Top Gun 2" is in Paramount's sights, although the production company will not confirm anything on the record at this time. Tom Cruise was said to have been approached for a cameo in the sequel, but studio officials are quick to deny that claim. I think it's still a possibility that "Maverick" will make an appearance; they just want it to be a surprise for us fans, so they are denying it. However, all of us nosy-pants on the Internet make surprises quite difficult to pull off, wouldn't you agree?

Q: I am glad to see that "Conspiracy Theory With Jesse Ventura" is back for

its second season. I was surprised truTV gave it the green light to go ahead in the first place, since most channels try to stay away from anything even the slightest bit controversial. — Lisa J., via e-mail



Jesse Ventura

via e-mail

A: I know what you mean, and I'm happy that truTV is sticking by its most controversial show (its record-breaking ratings for its first season didn't hurt, either). The governor himself told me how proud he is of the network for taking a chance on his show: "I give truTV a lot of credit. They're showing a great deal of courage for putting this show on television. They came on board with both guns blazing. I have to tell you that I couldn't be happier." For more of my chat with Gov. Ventura, go to www.celebrityextraonline.com. Trust me, we cover some really good stuff!

Q: I finally had the chance to see "You Don't Know Jack," the HBO movie with Al Pacino starring as Jack Kevorkian. Al was great, as usual. Did he meet Dr. Kevorkian before portraying him? — Britney F., San Antonio

A: Al Pacino told The New York Times that he did not want to meet the doctor to prepare for his role, as he wanted to discover the character himself and didn't feel that meeting him prior would be productive. He said he "prefers playing a real character, someone who exists, because it gives a kind of credibility to what you are doing." Al has since signed on to another HBO biopic, this one being a David Mamet-written film about Phil Spector. I am thinking he won't be meeting with Phil beforehand either.

Q: Can you tell me if Scott Caan of "Hawaii Five-o" is related to James Caan? — Joyce C., via e-mail

A: Scott, 34, is indeed the son of legendary actor James Caan. Scott, who plays Danno in the revamped version of the hit 1970s police drama, has been building quite a resume for himself. He has appeared in "Ocean's Eleven," "Ocean's

Twelve" and "Ocean's Thirteen," as well as "Varsity Blues" and "Into the Blue."

Q: I am a great fan of Zachary Quinto of "Heroes." Now that the show has been canceled, what else can I see him in? Also, will there be a sequel to "Star Trek," and will he play Spock again? — Marie K., Port Charlotte, Fla.

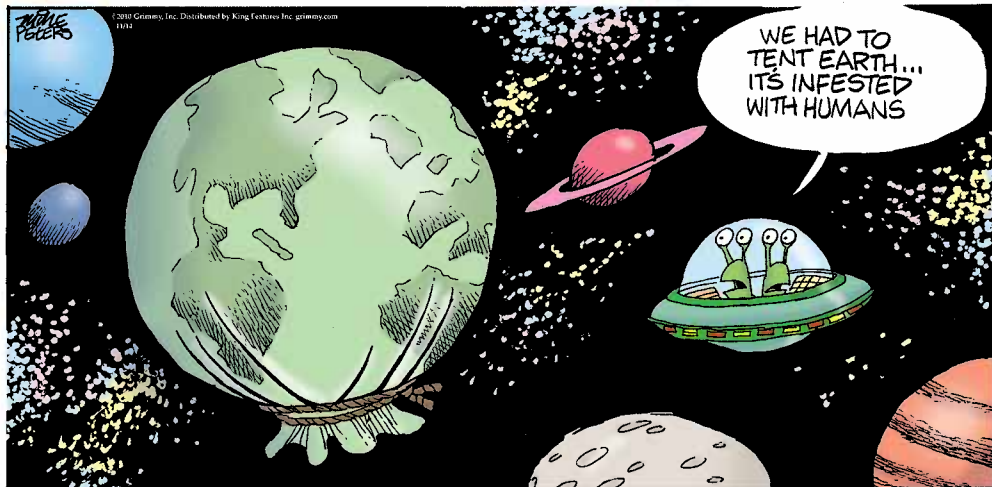
A: Zachary will be back to reprise his role as Spock in the as-yet-untitled sequel to 2009's smash-hit reboot of the popular sci-fi series, "Star Trek." Pretty much all the principal stars are back on board for the follow-up movie, which is due to hit theaters in summer 2012. Quinto recently completed two movies, "Girl Walks Into a Bar" with Josh Hartnett and Danny DeVito, and "Margin Call" with Kevin Spacey, Jeremy Irons and Paul Bettany.

Q: I haven't seen anything about "Sons of Anarchy" returning to FX. Please tell me it hasn't been canceled. — Pam M., Southbury, Conn.

A: Season three of "Sons of Anarchy" attracted almost 5 million viewers per week, making it FX's highest rated series ever, so you can bet it'll be back for a fourth season. Charlie Hunnam, Ron Perlman and Katey Sagal all will return for a 13-episode season next year. I'll keep you posted on the exact date as it becomes available.

Write to Cindy at King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475; or e-mail her at letters@cindyelavsky.com. For more news and extended interviews, visit www.celebrityextraonline.com and twitter.com/Celebrity_Extra.

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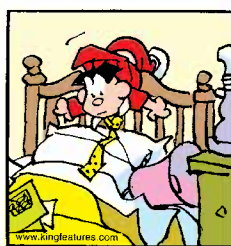
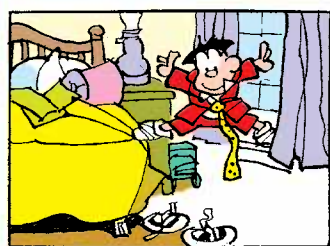
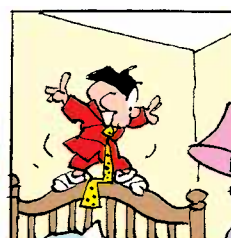
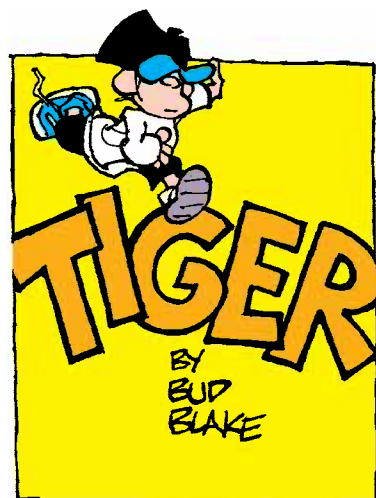
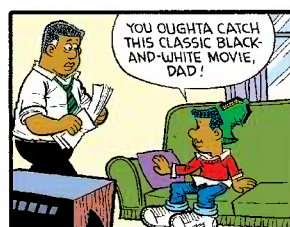
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Chicken Soup for the Soul



DON'T BLINK

By Pamela Hackett Hobson

To prepare for motherhood, I read all the current books by Dr. Spock, Penelope Leach and T. Berry Brazelton. I spoke to new and "seasoned" mothers, and received a wealth of information and parenting tips. But one piece of advice I wish I had received was "don't blink."

One morning I was delighting in listening to my toddler son's chatter as we talked on his Fisher-Price telephone — I blinked — and one afternoon I called home to realize that the deep voice saying "hello" was my son.

I helped him when my preschooler begged me to turn on "Sesame Street" — I blinked — and our Toyota car keys were taking him places to explore on his own.

I spent wonderful hours helping him learn the alphabet — I blinked — and in high school he learned new and frightening combinations of those letters — SAT, GPA and AP.

Many a day I commiserated as my little boy complained that there was no one to play with since only the girls in our neighborhood were home — I blinked — and he was asking for my advice on finding the best dozen roses to send his sweetheart for Valentine's Day.

On the first day of kindergarten, I dropped him off and worried for three hours until I could rush back to pick him up — I blinked — and I was dropping him off at college, knowing I wouldn't see him for three months.

When he was in first grade, I packed a bag for him to take to a sleepover two houses down — I blinked — and he was packing his own luggage to spend six months studying halfway across the world.

On a spring day I took the training wheels off the shiny new bike for my determined 4-year-old — I blinked — and an even more determined young man had saved enough money to buy his own shiny new car.

Surely it was only last night that I was tucking him in and heading for bed myself at 10 p.m. — I blinked — and my bedtime now coincides with the hour he's heading out the door for a night out with his friends.

I photographed his adorable end-of-preschool pageant when he donned his paper-plate mortarboard and proudly accepted his graduation certificate — I blinked — and he was striding confidently to shake hands with the university president and accept his college diploma.

I always bent down to give my son a bear hug and smother him with kisses — I blinked — and now I reach up to show this young man my love.

I relented when, as a sophomore in high school, my son made an impressive case for why he absolutely had to have a cell phone — I blinked — and as a sophomore in college he was the first family member whose cell phone finally reached me on 9/11 to be sure I had made it out of the World Trade Center. "Mom! Are you OK?"

So to all the new mothers, take it from this seasoned one. Don't blink.

(From "Chicken Soup for the Soul: Moms & Sons." Reprinted by permission of Pamela Hackett Hobson. (c) 2004 Pamela Hackett Hobson.)

TWENTY-NINE AND HOLDING

By Nancy B. Gibbs

Our family had always been big on birthday celebrations and other special occasions. On each and every birthday, my entire family gathered together to share a meal, gifts and a song. My mother wasn't fond of her own birthdays. Like many women her age, when her birthday rolled around she only admitted to being 29, just as she was the year before.

At the ripe old age of 12, my twin sons had figured out that Grandma was much older than she admitted, but didn't question her when she once again announced that she was 29 and holding. My younger daughter, Becky, took her seriously, however. She believed every word that her grandmother told her. If Grandma said she was 29, as far as Becky was concerned, she was 29. There was no question about it.

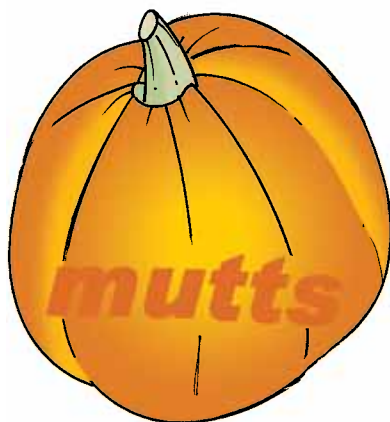
A few months went by, and we joined together as a family to celebrate my 30th birthday. After everyone sang "Happy Birthday," we enjoyed heaping helpings of cake and ice cream. Finally, the time came for me to open my presents. Becky had been unusually quiet during the entire celebration. She carried a worried look on her face.

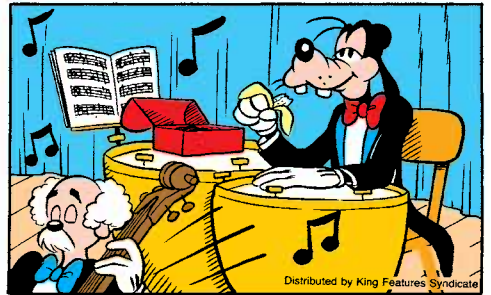
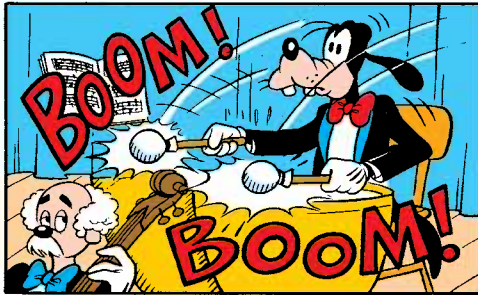
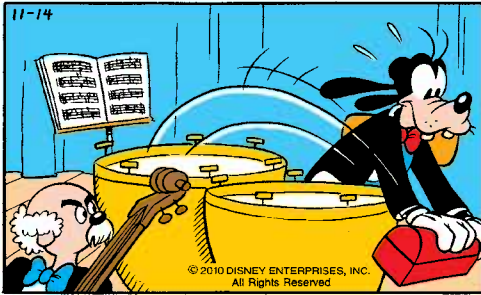
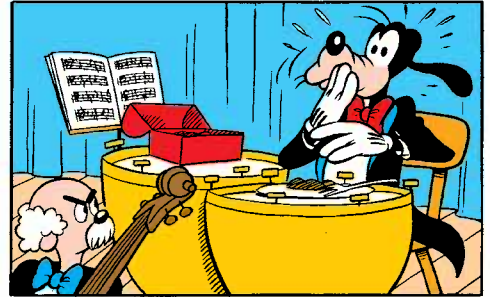
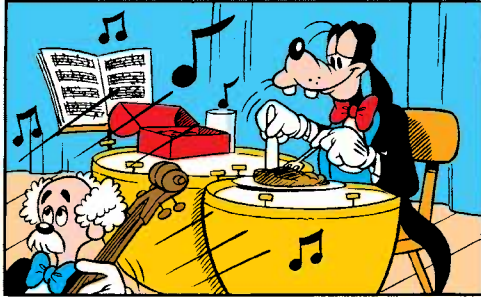
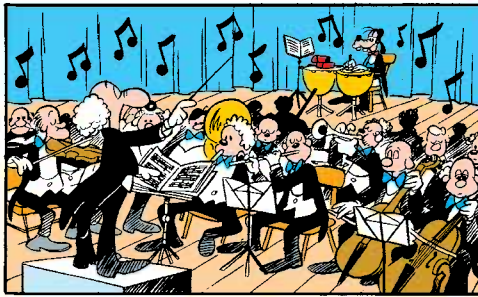
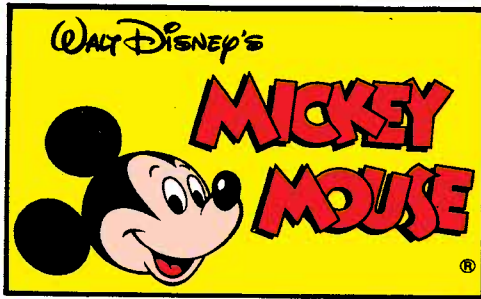
After all of the guests left, she couldn't stand it any longer and sadly informed me: "Mamma, you're 30, and Grandma is 29. I hate to have to tell you this, but you must've been adopted."

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KOVELS ANTIQUES

By Ralph and Terry Kovel

COUNTRY COLLECTIBLES

BY TERRY KOVEL

Country-store collectibles still are selling well if they're large, colorful and have unusual graphics or wording. Huge signs made of paper, tin or enamel and giant floor-size coffee grinders are wanted by collectors and decorators. Also popular are cabinets kept on store shelves or counters in the early 1900s that feature a door with a lithographed tin front. Diamond Dyes cabinets were made with at least six different fronts that picture young children, washer women or fairies. Inside were small sections that held paper packets of dye. Humphrey's, a company that made many types of homeopathic and veterinary medicines, used cabinets picturing a horse's head or a woman with a lion. A Putnam Dyes cabinet shows a Revolutionary War hero, Gen. Israel Putnam, trying to escape from a group of British redcoats on horseback. Less popular with

collectors are cabinets with tin fronts that list the medicines inside. Recently a Dr. Lesure's Famous Remedies Veterinarian cabinet was sold by Morphy Auctions of Denver, Pa. It pictures a horse's head looking through a hole in a wall. The great graphic helped push the price to over \$4,000, four times the presale estimate.

Q: I collect the marbled pottery made by Niloak Pottery of Benton, Ark. I have been told the colors of the clay are natural, taken from local clay banks. But I have also been told the color was added. Which is true?

A: The clay beds found near Benton are of several colors -- red, cream, brown, gray and beige. But when the clays are heated, the color burns out. So Bullet Hyten, Niloak's owner, decided to add color. Cobalt oxide was added to make blue, ferric oxide for red, chromic oxide for gray. He also developed and patented a method of firing the pieces, because each type of clay required a slightly different temperature. Marbled Niloak was made from 1910 to 1946.

Q: I have an old dower chest with a lid marked "Original Roos Mfg. Co., Chicago, Illinois, Est. 1871." Can you tell me anything about it?

A: We receive many questions about Roos chests. It appears that there were two different Roos furniture companies in Chicago. The firms were probably related, perhaps by just two generations, because each was headed by a man named Edward Roos. Your chest was made by the older company, which by the 1880s was manufacturing cabinets, tables, curtain poles and

cornices. The second company, Ed Roos Co. of Forest Park, concentrated on making chests and was in business from 1916 to 1951.

Q: I have a toy typewriter that my sister had when she was a little girl about 70 years ago. It has a round dial with numbers and letters on it and the words "Dial Typewriter." In the center of the dial, the letters "MAR" are on top of two crossed bars. The letters and numbers are also printed on the flat "keyboard." We would like to find out about the manufacturer of this toy typewriter and if it has any value.

A: The two "bars" are the letter "X," which is part of the Louis Marx and Co. logo. Your toy typewriter was made by Marx in the 1930s. The typewriter was first advertised in a 1933 Sears catalog. It sold for \$1.39. Value today: about \$25 to \$50.

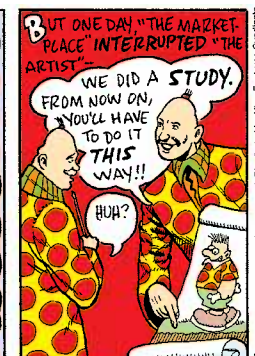
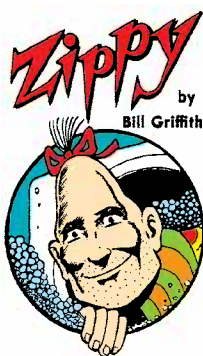
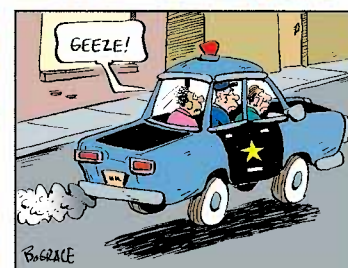
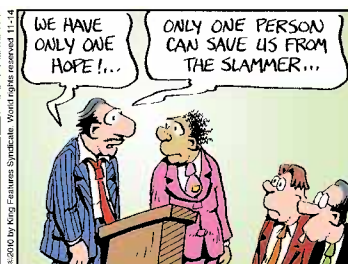
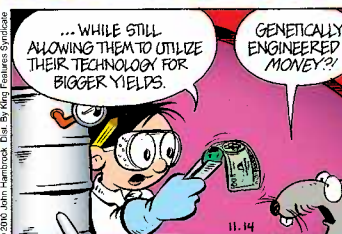
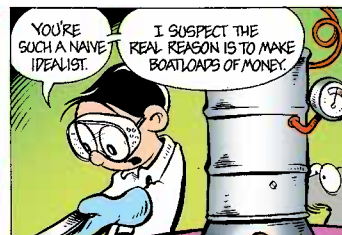
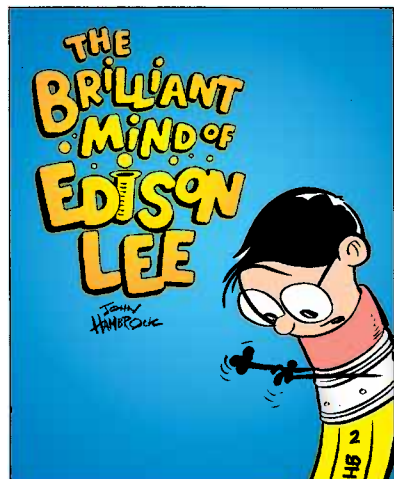
Q: I have some vintage bronze bookends that are very dark. Should I clean them?

A: No. The bookends could be bronze, but it's more likely they're bronze-coated white metal. The color was mechanically applied, and if you clean them the result will be a white-colored pair of bookends of very little value. Collectors want original finish on bronze, brass and painted metal, a cleaned finish on silver and silver-plated pieces, and they differ on the question of cleaning aluminum or pewter. To retain investment value, don't clean.

Write to Terry Kovel, Best of Times, King Features Syndicate, 300 W. 57th St., New York, NY 10019.



The lithographed tin picture of a horse staring from this medicine cabinet added to its value. The store cabinet for Dr. Lesure's Remedies sold for \$4,095.



THE SUPER HANDYMAN


BY AL AND KELLY CARRELL
CHECK YOUR OVEN

With the holidays just around the corner, it's time to fire up the oven and start cooking. Even if you aren't the cook, you still might be responsible for firing up the oven, or at least the go-to person to fix the oven when it doesn't fire up. Here are some simple things you can check before calling the repairman to come out.

Keeping your oven clean is the best way to prevent a lot of these issues. Persuading your spouse to do that is the challenge.

Oven temperatures are determined by a thermostat, which usually is visible inside the oven if you

just look. It looks like a long tube near the side wall of the oven. They can go bad and are fairly easily replaced. Shut off the current to the oven before working on it, and check your owner's manual for specific instructions. It's usually just a matter of disconnecting the wires of the old thermostat and removing it, and then installing the new one in reverse.

If you find that one of the electrical heating elements isn't working, you can replace that as well. Again, shut off the power, disconnect the element and install the replacement.

If your oven is gas, then check the flames to see if they are even. Sometimes the ports where the flames come out are blocked, and they can be cleaned out to work better.

On some gas ovens, you may be able to adjust the settings for the flame, so check your owner's manual to see where the adjustment is located.

The igniters on gas ovens also can go out and are an easy-to-install replacement.

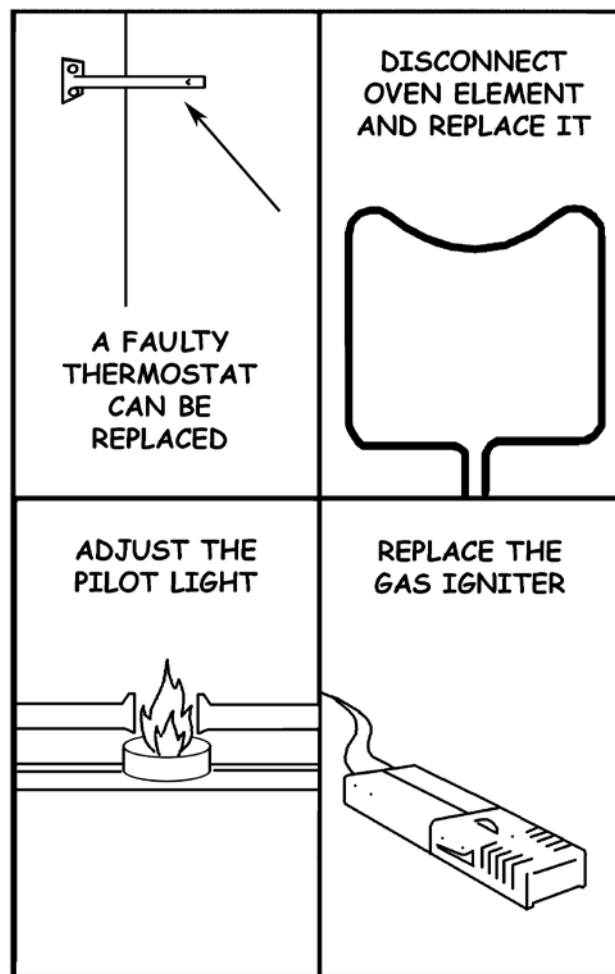
ment.

If you are unsure of how to replace or repair any of these parts, just call a pro. You don't want to make a mistake with your oven or with your family get-together!

If you need additional information about your oven and don't have an owner's manual, check online to see if the manufacturer can supply one to you. Online sources like repairclinic.com also are a handy tool to use.

Q: We have a clear finish on our wood floor that was applied several months ago. I can see bubbles in it, and wonder if this is normal. I don't think they should be there. Can you get rid of them somehow? — *W.E.*

A: No, you should not have bubbles in the finish. Either the clear finish is to blame, or the application process is. Either way, I would contact the installer and have that person correct the problem. The finish will need to be removed and reapplied.



Got a question or a handy tip? Send it to The Super Handyman in care of this publication, or visit our Web site at www.thesuperhandyman.com. Those of general interest will be used in future columns.

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Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

		3		5		4	
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		8	6		7	5	3
		1				6	
2			9			3	7
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Difficulty Level ★★★★★

11/14

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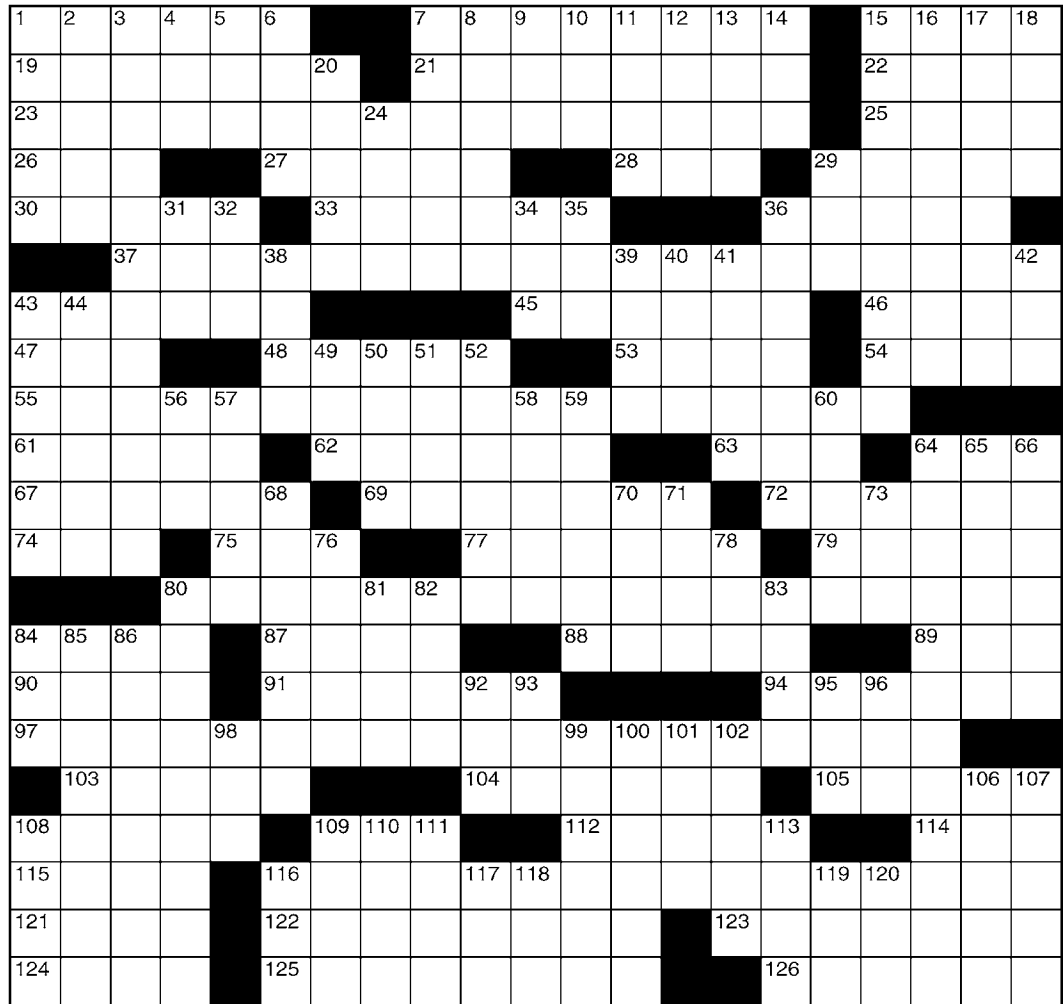


PREMIER Crossword

By Frank A. Longo

**SIMIAN
ENSEMBLES****ACROSS**

- 1 Got beaten by
7 Coca-Cola sports drink
15 Yard sale caveat
19 "Top Hat" dancer Fred
21 Mass departures
22 Gossip maven Barrett
23 Start of a riddle
25 Ivory tooth
26 Atop, in poems
27 Composer Edvard
28 Prefix with dermal
29 Bakers' gloves
30 Fortunes
33 Way out
36 Valium drugmaker
37 Riddle, part 2
43 Deceive
45 Began a golf game
46 Mined materials
47 Peruvian singer Sumac
48 1980s-90s computer
53 Baptism or bar mitzvah
54 Shoelace problem
55 Riddle, part 3
61 Tranquil
62 Spiritually revived
63 Co. shares
64 Co. honcho
67 Steered, as a ship
69 Changing the style of
72 Cowell and Legree
74 Suffix with cook or rook
75 British poet Hughes
77 Coveted
79 "Baby Beluga" singer
80 Riddle, part 4
84 Parisian cleric
87 The "V" of RSVP
88 — Rica (Central American country)
89 Student of Yale
90 Zoo noise
91 Many map closeups
94 Suit jacket materials
97 End of the riddle
103 Pledge to marry
104 Gratify
105 Actress Raquel
108 Italian city
109 Drunkard
112 Last king of Troy
114 In advance of
115 Power unit
116 Riddle's answer
121 Opera part, in Orly
122 "Jurassic Park" novelist Michael
123 Bookstore units
124 Merlin, e.g.



- 125 In agreement
126 Joker player Cesar

DOWN

- 1 Obey the — the land
2 "The Verdict" actor Milo
3 Have one's first child, perhaps
4 Make lace
5 Broadway lyricist Rice
6 Not a facsimile: Abbr.
7 Czar called "the Great"
8 Part of H2O
9 Romance
10 End of a school URL
11 Old alphabet character
12 Immediately
13 Actress Moore
14 Suffix with Milan
15 Its heart is eaten as a vegetable
16 From Dixie
17 Having two-channel sound
18 Fifth Avenue store
20 Wetland bird
24 With 102-Down, bright headlights
29 Cut, as a lawn
31 Prefix with freak or friendly
32 — -mo replay

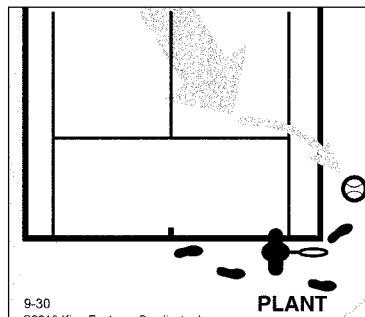
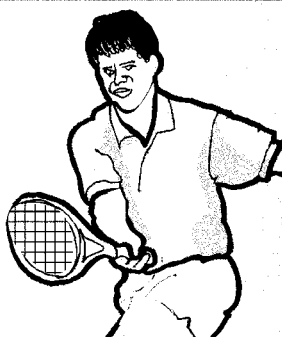
- 34 LAPD rank
35 Chicago-to-Atlanta dir.
36 Reiterates
38 "The Good Earth" heroine
39 Amer. Samoa, to the U.S.
40 Of lyric poems
41 Buzzi and Gordon
42 VT hours
43 Poet Percy — Shelley
44 Gushing actor
49 Gallic sea
50 Pastry bag user
51 Sitcom actor Kaplan
52 Battery ends
56 "A Nightmare on — Street"
57 Soul singer Adams
58 Fork feature
59 Historic 1951 computer
60 Kilt or tutu
64 Starbucks cup slip-on
65 Envelop
66 Ancient Egyptian god
68 Whirling Muslim, maybe
70 Actor Robert De —
71 Rubies, e.g.
73 Pas' other halves
76 A moon of Saturn
78 LAPD rank

- 80 Montpelier resident
81 Evict
82 Exercises
83 Mil. alliance
84 Ulna setting
85 Regatta
86 Hair clasp
92 Spying gizmo
93 Fall '75 TV debut
95 "Man alive!"
96 Suffix with butyl
98 Baseball's Mel
99 Position, as troops
100 Raymond that "everybody loves"
101 "In your dreams!"
102 See 24-Down
106 "Two and a Half Men" co-star Jon
107 The Chiffons' "— Fine"
108 "— the night before ..."
109 Full of pep
110 Sheriff Andy Taylor's boy
111 Delicacy
113 Jay of "Jerry Maguire"
116 Primo pitcher
117 It follows pi
118 Summer, in Rouen
119 Orthodox leader?
120 N preceders

STAN SMITH'S TENNIS CLASS

LOB HIGH AND DEEP

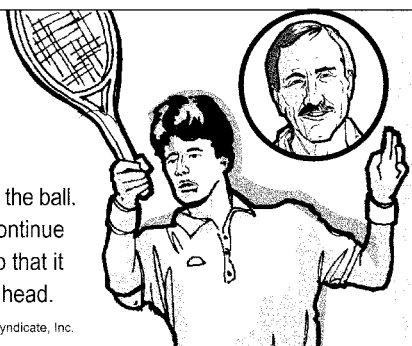
Lobs are a good strategy. If you are out of position, try aiming the lob a high, deep, and down the middle. One way to get extra height on the ball is by picturing an imaginary fence in front of you that your ball has to clear.



Run along the baseline while getting your racket back early. As you approach the ball, plant your back foot and step forward into the shot.

9-30
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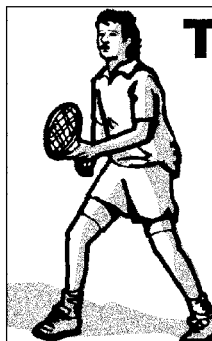
To hit the ball high, you must follow through completely. Don't stop short on the swing after hitting the ball. Let your racket continue to flow through so that it ends above your head.



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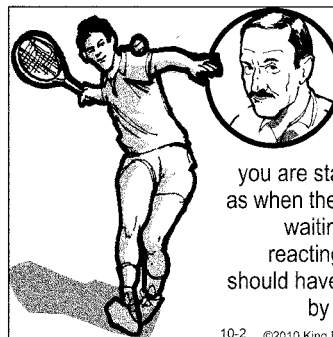
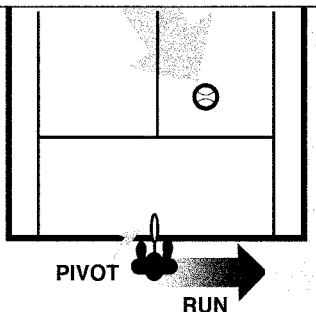
TESTING YOUR REACTIONS

The serve is probably the hardest ball hit at you during a match, so you've got to be quick on the return. When practicing the return, try to react as soon as possible. If you wait for the ball to land to react, you will be too late. Focus on the ball toss as it leaves the server's hand.



MOVING TO THE BALL

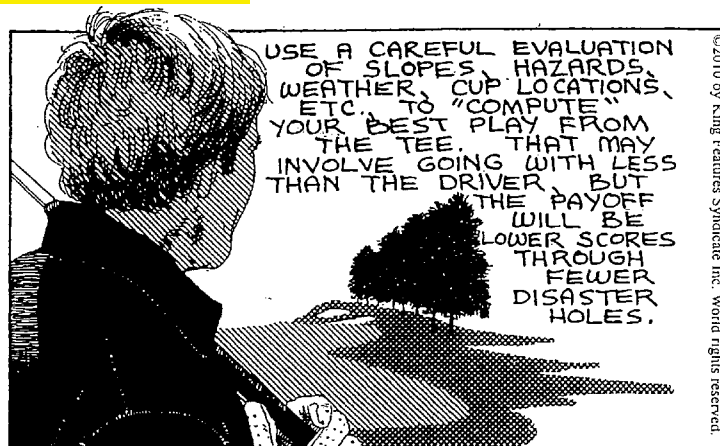
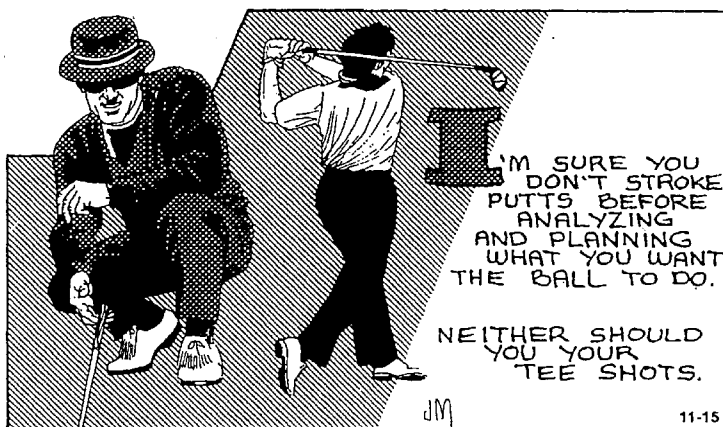
Proper footwork is important to a solid groundstroke. In the ready position at the baseline, you should pivot and turn as soon as you see which way the ball is going.



One way to test your reactions is to notice your body position if the serve hits the net. Did you already turn your body? If you are standing in the same position as when the toss went up, then you are waiting for the ball to land before reacting — and that's too late! You should have turned and prepared to hit by the time the ball hit the net.

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Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



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Difficulty Level ★★★★★

11/14

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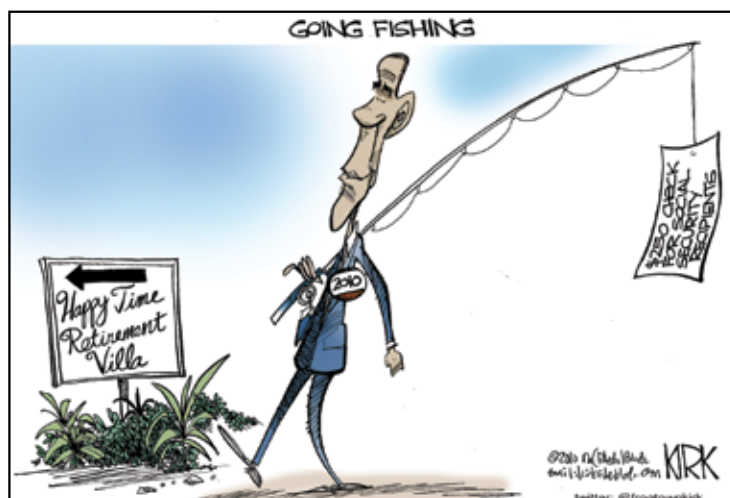
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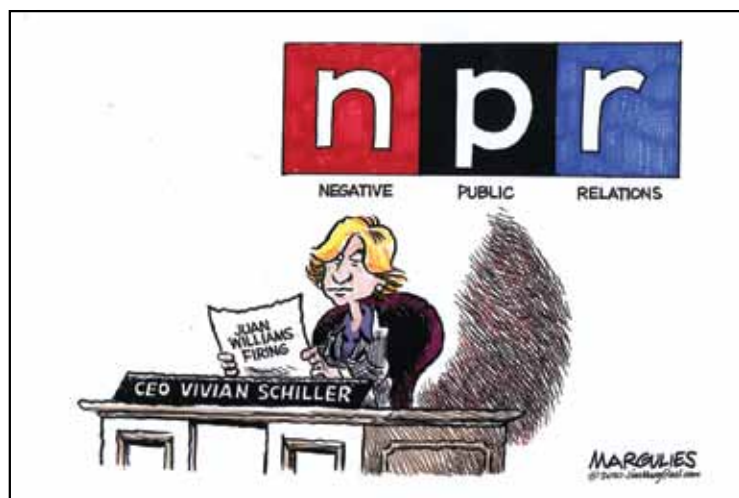
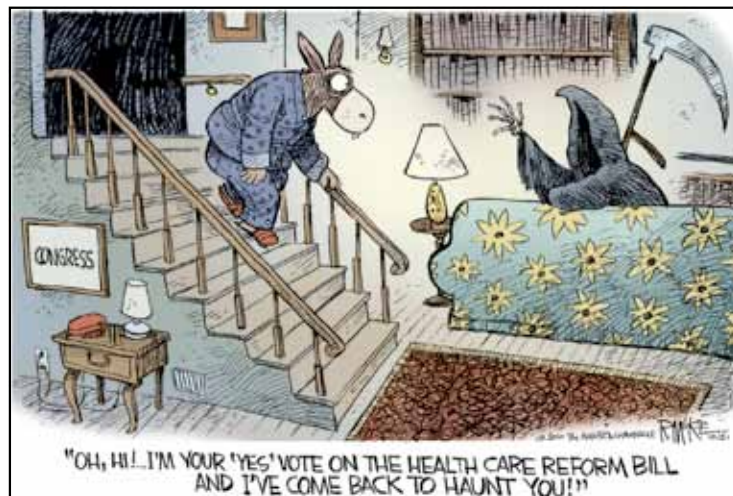
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