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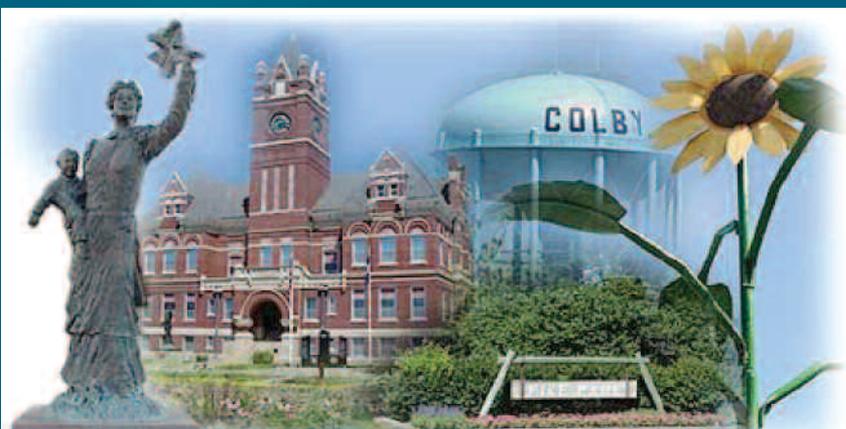
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EDITOR'S NOTE

WE'RE DELIGHTED BY THE FAVORABLE RESPONSE to our last issue and especially our lead story, "The War On the Middle Class." This struck a nerve with a lot of people who were fascinated by our in-depth look at how public policies over the past 30 years have turned the American dream into a nightmare. Readers were also enthused about our portfolio of very rare color photos from WWII. If you missed this, you can still see it in our "exact replica" Digital Edition, just like you were holding a printed copy in your hands. Just go to: www.midtod.com

Those of you who have read our magazine over the past 19 years know that we have pulled no punches when it comes to reporting on politics and have criticized Democrats as well as Republicans. *We don't cut any slack for anybody.* In this issue we examine the GOP's Plot To Bust the Unions with the help of some rightwing zealots like the billionaire Koch brothers from Kansas. We get up close and personal with **George Clooney**. And Sara Jordan continues her series of profiles of Midwest-born celebrities with **The Forgotten Marilyn**. Enjoy!



NEWSFRONT:

THE PLOT TO BUST THE UNIONS • 6

STAR TRACKS:

GEORGE CLOONEY • 12

HOMEFRONT:

LET THERE BE LIGHT • 21

HOME COOKING:

FIXING FISH • 24

EARTHWATCH

GROWING YOUR OWN • 26

MEMORIES:

THE FORGOTTEN MARILYN • 29

SCANDAL:

LITERARY GALL • 37

FAMILY FUN:

HAVE YOU LOST YOUR MARBLES? • 38

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New Madrid Fault Threatens Earthquake in the Heartland

SOMETHING IS AFOOT, AND SCIENTISTS AREN'T SURE WHAT. There are concerns that the New Madrid Fault, situated right here in the Heartland, might be coming to life again. This is an earthquake-prone area six times bigger than the San Andreas fault in California and it covers portions of Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee. The federal government recently re-drew and enlarged the map of projected devastation should an earthquake occur.

According to the U.S. Geological Survey, more than 500 measurable earthquakes have been recorded in central Arkansas just since September. A magnitude-3.8 quake that shook north-central Indiana on December 30th is being called "unprecedented." It was strong enough to cause cracks along the ground and it was felt in portions of Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin and Kentucky.

Around this same time, thousands of birds mysteriously fell out of the sky in Kentucky at Christmas; thousands more dead birds dropped on New Year's Eve. Over 100,000 fish washed up dead on the shores of the Arkansas River. There is suspicion this is linked to an increase in geologic instability.

Worldwide, there's been a big surge in recent seismic activity along the "Pacific Ring of Fire." In addition to the Japan earthquake, there have been devastating quakes in New Zealand, Chile and Argentina. The earthquake in Haiti, located in the Caribbean, killed 230,000.

Two hundred years ago, in 1811, there were several earthquakes that were so powerful in the area of the New Madrid fault zone, that they opened deep fissures in the ground, caused the Mississippi River to flow backwards — permanently altering the course of the river — cracked sidewalks in Wash-

ington, D.C., rang church bells in Boston and even toppled chimneys as far away as Maine. The quakes measured magnitude 7.0 or greater and there were over 1,800 aftershocks during the next year. (See map of affected area).

Jeremy Heidt of the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency says that if a similar earthquake happened in the same area today, life in the region would be instantly transformed along the New Madrid fault. He says "all communication would be out. All air travel would be out as the FAA air control would go down. All rail travel would fail. Ports would shut down; oil and natural gas pipelines would be offline."

FEMA has warned that a serious earthquake in this area could result in the highest economic losses due to a natural disaster in U.S. history. FEMA further predicted widespread and catastrophic damage across Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri and Tennessee. The quake would likely even be felt in Iowa.

One interesting theory is that the "oil volcano" unleashed by the BP oil spill in 2010 may have sparked renewed seismic activity in middle America.

Jack Reed, a retired Texaco geologist-geophysicist, has been carefully studying the geology of the Gulf for over 40 years. Reed is convinced that the Gulf of Mexico is currently tectonically active, and that it is the source for most seismic activity along the New Madrid fault. If a powerful earthquake hit the Midwest it could potentially alter the surrounding geography enough that it could actually create a new major body of water in the middle of the United States. Geologists say there's a 90% chance of a 6 or 7-magnitude quake occurring along the New Madrid fault in the next 50 years. ■



BILLIONS IN DELINQUENT TAXES OWED TO U.S.

WHILE POLITICIANS OF ALL POLITICAL STRIPES ARE CUTTING PROGRAMS THAT HELP poor and middle class Americans, the Government Accountability Office has released a study showing that, as of the end of fiscal year 2010, roughly \$330 billion in federal taxes had never been paid. A good chunk of the evasion, the GAO concluded, was committed by individuals with "substantial personal assets" including multi-million-dollar homes and "luxury cars." One tax dodger bought a house for \$2 million and another property for \$1.5 million while owing \$1 million in federal taxes to the U.S. Treasury.

Despite evidence that a single dollar spent on enforcing the tax code could result in up to ten dollars in revenue, Republicans in Congress demanded that funds be slashed for IRS agents, and compliant Democrats and President Obama went along. Both parties are to blame for this situation.

"Cutting back on IRS enforcement could easily cost the treasury much more in revenue than it saves," said Chuck Marr, Director of Federal Tax Policy at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. If you wonder how lawmakers can be against going after tax evasion while simultaneously preaching fiscal responsibility, the answer is simple: they're hypocrites who protect the rich. ■

Chlorine In Pool May Cause Cancer

CHLORINE IS ADDED TO SWIMMING POOLS to kill bacteria, but researchers say the chemical in large quantities can cause DNA damage that could increase the risk of cancer. Yet swimming in chlorinated water is still safer than swimming in water without it. "The positive health impacts of swimming can be increased by reducing the levels of these chemicals," said Manolis Kogevinas, who co-directed the study. "In no case do we want to stop swimming."

Reducing the levels of disinfection by-products (DBPs) can be achieved by rigorously applying measures such as showering before swimming, wearing a bathing cap, and doing proper maintenance. ■

Iowa Cuts Music In Schools

HUMANS ARE “WIRED” FOR MUSIC AND, in fact, science has proven music’s ability to raise kids’ IQ. Intellect aside, music is a primordial pastime that transcends age, race, and social status. As today’s most popular television programming will attest to, with the likes of “American Idol” and “Glee” attracting record audiences and awards in kind, music is a fundamental aspect of society that serves as the soundtrack to our lives. Given its bearing on our human experience, why are music education programs throughout Iowa being cut at a record rate as school systems state-wide scramble to salvage their bottom lines?

Sharon Burch, a nationally regarded music teacher, speaker, and author based in Iowa, points out that:

- Major corporations are currently recruiting from music and other arts and

design schools in an effort to employ out-of-the-box thinkers to gain a leading marketplace edge

- Amid a flailing U.S. education system that’s rapidly falling behind other countries, cutting music education initiatives will actually further damage our global academic standing.

- With school district performance declining and budget cuts increasing, cutting musical arts programs is self-defeating since music is a key, highly effective way to improve district performance.

- Music is among the only things a child can do to work all parts of the brain, as it causes neuron synapses to fire between all parts. The only other functions that use both hemispheres are higher-level mathematics and logic processing, such as chess. All other tasks rely on the dominant use of either the left or right brain.

- Learning music at an early age is “mental exercise” that makes kids more creative, vibrant, and intelligent in multiple respects.

- Take a look at any school band or orchestra or top-ranking choir and you will find a huge percentage of the members are in the top 10% of their class and college bound

- Learning music at an early age breeds successful leaders of the next generation. Bill Clinton, Mahatma Gandhi, Condeleeza Rice, Neil Armstrong, Alexander Graham Bell, Thomas Edison and Albert Einstein are among those influencers who play(ed) a musical instrument. ■



High Speed Rail Now In Jeopardy

IT SEEMED TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE, AND it was: After decades of lagging behind the rest of the world, it appeared as if the U.S. was finally going to get high-speed trains. President Obama had gotten \$8.5 billion for rail as part of the 2009 stimulus package. But then, as he has so often done, he gave much of it away to the GOP by agreeing to a cut in funds as part of the latest budget deal.

Several Republican Governors, acting purely on the basis of right wing ideology, had rejected federal funds and sabotaged construction of high speed rail through their states. Fast trains had been promised for the Midwest as part of an update to the nation’s antiquated transportation system.

The current level of funding was \$2.5 billion a year. The cuts Obama agreed to under the budget deal brings the annual rail dollars down to just \$1 billion — a drop in the bucket of what’s needed. As recently as mid-February 2011, Transportation Sec. Ray LaHood was encouraging Congress to authorize \$53 billion over the next six years. Obama’s idea of compromise is to give away the store. ■

Cholesterol Not Reduced By Statin Drugs?

WE HAVE ALL BEEN TOLD THAT CHOLESTEROL IS BAD AND LOWERING it is good. And because of the big pharmaceutical companies which market to both doctors and patients, we think that using statin drugs is an effective way to lower the risk of heart attacks and death.

But as doctor Mark Hyman, a practicing physician and pioneer in functional medicine points out, there are some medical studies which you should be aware of that show that:

- If you lower bad cholesterol or LDL but have a low HDL or good cholesterol, there is no benefit to statins.

- If you lower bad cholesterol but don’t reduce inflammation — marked by a test called C-reactive protein — there is no benefit to statins.

- If you are a healthy woman with high cholesterol, there is no proof that taking statins reduces your risk of having a heart attack or dying.

- If you are a man or a woman over 69 years of age with high cholesterol, there is no proof that taking statins reduces your risks.

- Aggressive cholesterol treatment with two medications — Zocor and Zetia — lowers cholesterol much more than one drug alone, but leads to *more* plaque build-up in the arteries and no fewer heart attacks.

- Oddly enough, older patients with *lower* cholesterol actually have *higher* risks of death than those with higher cholesterol.

- 75% of people who have heart attacks have normal cholesterol.

- Countries with higher average cholesterol than Americans such as the Swiss or Spanish have less heart disease.

So how did it happen that the National Cholesterol Education

Program expanded the previous guidelines to recommend that more people take statins — such that there’s been an increase from 13 million to 44 million who now take the drug? Maybe it’s because eight of the nine experts on the panel have financial ties to the drug industry.

Studies have shown that treatment with statins only works *if* you already have heart disease. In those who don’t, there’s no benefit. Yet at a cost of over \$28 billion a year,

75% of all statin prescriptions are for exactly this type of unproven prevention, helping to drive up the cost of insurance. Read the fine print and you’ll also see statins can cause muscle damage, sexual dysfunction, liver and nerve damage and other problems in up to 15% of patients who take them.

Consult your doctor before making any changes in your medications. ■





ABILENE, KANSAS HAS IT ALL

At Heritage Center in Abilene, KS, climb on a hand-carved wooden horse on a 1901 carousel, pretend you're a telephone switchboard operator, and pet the buffalo head. Ride a horse-drawn carriage, tour a historic mansion, and stop at the Jeffcoat Photography Museum to view early-day cameras.

Find the perfect handmade gift at quaint shops downtown, such as jewelry at Treasures by Tracine and Aksent Jewelry Boutique, triple-scented candles at Cypress Bridge, or a hand-crafted decorative item at Mayme's Boutique. Love antiquing? Abilene has nine shops.

Experience the arts by browsing the American Indian Art Center, Bow Studio and Gallery, and J and I's Gifts and Ceramics. Watch live, professional theatre at the Great Plains Theatre. The Arts Council displays the work of local and regional artists and sponsors a film series, concerts and a photography exhibit and contest.

Taste fresh strawberry pie at Mr. K's Farmhouse, crispy fried chicken at the Brookville Hotel, prime rib at the Kirby House, red pepper hummus with pita at The Dish, gooey cinnamon rolls at the Hitchin' Post Restaurant, and juicy hamburgers delivered by a carhop at the old-fashioned Kuntz's Drive-In.

Get the greyhound at the Greyhound Hall of Fame or watch the fastest dogs in the world race during the National Greyhound Association's Spring and Fall Meets. Cheer for the bull riders at the Wild Bill Hickok Rodeo and see combines crash at the farmer's version of the demolition derby during the Central Kansas Free Fair (Aug. 4-9). Dive into the new swimming pool.

Enjoy the Aviation Fly-in, Chisholm Trail Days Festival, Mid-Summers Night Children's Festival, Flour Power Family Fun Fest, Old-Fashioned Fourth of July and National Day of the Cowboy celebrations.

Experience Abilene's early days by watching gunfights and can-can dancers in Old Abilene Town.

The Abilene and Smoky Valley Excursion Train offers a unusual opportunity to experience early-day travel by rail. Step into the historic Rock Island Depot, built in 1887. Then climb aboard to find a seat in the painstakingly restored 1902 wooden dining car or one of the open-air observation cars where you'll feel the warmth of the sun and the fresh Kansas breeze. A yellow caboose brings up the rear.

The journey transports travelers east through the Smoky Hill River valley on the western edge of the Flint Hills for an unforgettable, narrated trip through Kansas farmland not seen from cars.

The train's regular excursions are powered by a vintage diesel-electric locomotive. Special

dinner trains offering cuisine from area restaurants roll down the tracks in the fall and spring.

Then, play interactive games, rediscover the 1950s, and learn about Ike and Mamie at the Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum.

At day's end, enjoy the peace and quiet on a front porch swing or in front of a cozy fireplace at a bed and breakfast.

SOME SURPRISING MUSEUMS

The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library in Cedar Rapids, IA was devastated by the flood of 2008. Five museum-owned buildings in Czech Village were affected, bringing total flood damage to an estimated \$11 million. Thankfully, 75% of its collection was safe from the flood and most of the remaining items are in the process of conservation. Incredibly, the 1,400 ton museum building is being jacked up and moved 300 ft. to a higher elevation. In the meantime, the Czech museum is open in the Kosek Building and well worth a visit. Also a gift shop. (www.ncsml.org)

Located next door to the birthplace of the Big Band icon, is the beautiful new Glenn Miller Museum featuring exhibits and artifacts from the famous musician's life. There's also a library and gift shop. Opened in 2010, the museum was built with grants and donations from fans as far away as Japan. (www.glennmiller.org)

Since opening the new facility in 1997, the Family Museum in Bettendorf, IA has served over 1.2 million people! Exhibits and fun programs are designed for a primary audience of children ages eight years of age and younger and their adult caregivers. (www.familymuseum.org)

The Iowa Children's Museum in Coralville, IA offers what it aptly describes as "serious fun." It is dedicated to educating children and strengthening families in an informal, interactive learning environment that inspires every child to imagine, create, discover, and explore through the power of play. (www.theicm.org)

The John Deere Pavilion in Moline, Illinois, was created as a celebration of the past, present and future of agribusiness. It has attracted guests from all corners of the globe and is recognized as one of the Top 5 attractions in Illinois. There's even a Kid's Corner! (www.deere.com)

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FAMILY FUN

Blank Park Zoo in Des Moines is quite possibly Iowa's "wildest adventure." It is home to more than 800 furry, finned, feathered and exotic creatures. The goal is to inspire an appreciation of the natural world through conservation, education and recreation. There are so many fun things going on for the whole family you've got to check it out. (www.blankparkzoo.com)

One of the best-kept secrets in the Midwest is Okoboji, located on the Iowa Great Lakes. Besides water recreation, enjoy Summer Theater, and check out Lux Martini Bar & Club, "reinvigorating nightlife in Okoboji." Historic Arnold's Park (built in 1889) is one of the longest operating amusement parks in the world. It features classic rides and attractions like a wooden roller coaster ("the Legend"), the Queen II excursion boat and sandy beaches. (www.okoboji.com)

Lost Island, located in Waterloo, is the largest waterpark in Iowa! It has extreme water slides and attractions with breathtaking drops and dizzying speeds. There's Tsunami Bay, Emerald Adventure & Jade Rapids, Lost Soul Falls, Wailua Kupa and so much more. But there are also attractions for the little ones like a Blue Iguana Lagoon, Starfish Cove and Tahiti Treehouse for the little ones. This truly is fun for all ages! (www.thelostisland.com)

Resplendent from a multimillion-dollar renovation, the Hotel Blackhawk once again reigns supreme as the grande dame of Davenport, Iowa. Since it first opened in 1915, the hotel has served as a home away from home for families, romantics, Presidents, movie stars and legendary athletes alike. Now, this majestic landmark offers a "something old something new" approach to hospitality and a fresh new focus on modern amenities and rich décor. It's affordable luxury. www.hotelblackhawk.com

PLACES TO VISIT

Plymouth, Wisconsin is nestled in the gently rolling hills of the Kettle Moraine. This quaint town is an ideal place for visitors to rest, relax, and rejuvenate. Enjoy a leisurely stroll through historic Plymouth's downtown, visit the Plymouth Arts Center, tantalize your taste buds at one of the many restaurants and explore the many magnificent historic houses and buildings which have been converted to bed and breakfast inns. Meander through the quaint shops. (www.plymouthwisconsin.com)

Come discover Manning, IA, with its rich cultural traditions and strong German heritage. The progressive community in West Central Iowa

Colby is an "Oasis on the Plains." A vital, progressive community in Northwest Kansas, it is proud of its educational, commercial, medical, cultural, shopping and hospitality facilities. They value "quality of life" in Colby and are pleased to share it with you. (www.oasisonthepains.com)

Ever toured a treehouse? Watched chocolate and caramels being hand-dipped? Explored prairies and wetlands? Climbed up a 30 foot tower? Picked apples right off the tree? Experience all this in Marshalltown, IA plus trails, museums, self-guided tours, art galleries, golf and sports galore. (www.visitmarshalltown.com)

Orange City, IA has its annual Tulip Festival (May 19-21) that draws 100,000 visitors, but it's a charming Dutch community to visit anytime. Enjoy a dozen Old World windmills!

You can go up, up and away in your beautiful balloon in Creston, IA during the 34th annual Hot Air Balloon Days. Also enjoy Mormon and Railroad history, good fishing, hiking and festivals. www.unioncountytourism.com

Algona, IA has some surprising attractions like a historic POW Museum from WWII, the Water's Edge Nature Center, an aquatic center and good shopping. www.algona.org ■

THE PLOT TO BUST THE UNIONS

After a showdown with Wisconsin's obtuse, labor-bashing Governor, workers are being scapegoated for state budget shortfalls by other GOP Governors intent on undermining a traditional source of Democratic campaign funds, and destroying the last bulwark against unfettered capitalism. It's all part of a sinister strategy that threatens to turn back the clock to an era when Corporations ruled and labor had no rights.

THERE IS A WAR ON WORKERS GOING ON IN THIS COUNTRY THAT — CONTRARY TO THE ASSERTIONS of right wing politicians and their supporters in the media — has nothing to do with balancing budgets, but that is designed to destroy labor unions and thus remove the last rampart against runaway capitalism and corporate greed. An increasingly radicalized Republican party has put mainstream conservatives to rout, with a fringe agenda that tilts completely toward Big Business, while dismantling fundamental safety nets that protect wages, workplace safety, the unemployed, public health, and the subsistence of the elderly. They want to return America to a time before the New Deal, when robber barons reigned during the Gilded Age.

This radical assault is being funded by billionaire zealots on the far right and coordinated by extremist ideologues who are trying to shift the blame for the bad economy away from the greedy culprits in Washington and on Wall Street, to the teachers, firemen, police officers, nurses, librarians and first responders who are already underpaid. They know that Americans would never support their real agenda, so they are disguising their true intentions under the ruse of deficit reduction, shared sacrifice and job creation. But a backlash of the middle class is building.

Millions of U.S. workers, past and present, have the American labor movement to thank for hard-won rights that are taken for granted, like the eight-hour work day and 40-hour work week, child labor laws, the minimum wage, overtime pay, health insurance, OSHA, a pension, Social Security and Medicare. Each of these were vociferously opposed by Republicans at the time



they were adopted, and the GOP has tried for years to overturn them. Yet these are the fundamentals that have assured upward mobility and creation of the middle class.

Now, in the aftermath of the disastrous Supreme Court decision giving corporations the right to donate unlimited amounts of cash to political campaigns, right wing fringe candidates have been elected to high office. This has enabled the libertarian billionaire Koch brothers and other alumni of the extremist John Birch Society like the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation (a Wisconsin-based \$460 million honeypot), as well as the Club for Growth, FreedomWorks, Americans for Prosperity, the National Chamber of Commerce, the American Legislative Exchange Council, and the National Right to Work Committee to pursue their hard-right agenda. Their goal is to disempower the working class.

Ignoring the fact that it is labor that creates wealth, politicians in 12 states are pushing “right to work” legislation that would severely limit or eliminate union organizing. Twenty states are attacking collective bargaining rights and nine states are facing grave threats to state government pensions, which are being under-funded and in some instances, raided altogether. In 22 states, Republicans are pushing so-called “voter I.D.” measures which are really designed to suppress the votes of the poor and minorities.

While it’s obvious that the right wing is out to break the back of the progressive movement, it’s easy to miss the strategy that guides their selection of targets. Their attacks are all carefully aimed at the same critical structures: institutions that work for people in their daily lives and in the political arena, those that connect people’s personal struggles across the country to the political struggle in Washington.

Naomi Klein argues in her best-selling book, “The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism,” that from Chile in the 1970s onward, right wing ideologists have exploited crises (real or manufactured) to push through an agenda that has nothing to do with resolving those crises, and everything to do with imposing their vision of a harsher, more unequal, less democratic society.

A classic case in point is when the Bush administration got the so-called Patriot Act passed immediately after 9/11 — a voluminous and complex measure that had to have been written before (and in anticipation of) the attacks. Congress rubber-stamped it without reading it, despite the fact that it goes too far in encroaching on Americans’ time-honored civil liberties.

Similarly, politicians on the far right are presently attempting to rush through various statehouses a set of laws that have nothing to do with creating jobs or strengthening the economy. Rather, the laws are about undermining the ability of groups to organize collectively and exercise political influence at the polls.

As former Labor Secretary in the Clinton administration, Robert Reich, explains it, “Teachers are being fired, Pell grants for the poor are being slashed, energy assistance for the needy is disappearing, other vital public services shriveling. Regulatory agencies don’t have the budgets to pay the people they need to enforce the law. Even if it wanted to the Securities and Exchange Commission couldn’t police Wall Street.

“All of which is precisely where Republicans want the nation to be. It sets them up perfectly to blame government, blame public employees, blame unionized workers. It lets them pit workers against one another, divide the Democratic base, and promote the false idea that we’re in a giant zero-sum game and the nation can’t afford to do more.

“It diverts attention from what’s happened at the top — so no one sees how well CEOs and Wall Street bankers are doing again, no one views the paybacks and tax giveaways engineered by their Republican patrons, and no one focuses on the tide of money flowing from the likes of billionaires Charles and David Koch into Republican coffers.”

Remember, pensions are deferred payments for work already done. “Benefits” are pay for work, not a handout. Pensions and benefits have been guaranteed by contracts some states now want to renege on.

USA Today reported that “the heads of the nation’s top companies got the biggest raises in recent memory last year after taking a hiatus during the recession” — a catastrophe many of them helped create. The top five big banks on Wall Street set aside \$89.54 billion for bonuses, even though profits were down four percent. If Big Business across the country can afford to pay executives a fortune even when profits are down, they can easily afford to pay decent wages and benefits to average workers...but they greedily refuse to do so.

USA Today reports that “At a time most employees can barely remember their last substantial raise, median CEO pay jumped 27% in 2010...”

President Reagan started all this labor bashing when he fired 14,000 unionized air traffic controllers. As Dr. Gray Brechin, a historical geographer points out, “When Ronald Reagan told Americans that government is not a solution but the problem itself, he corroded the very foundations of democracy by which ‘we the people’ formed ‘a more perfect union.’ Whereas FDR spoke of government in the first-person plural,

Reagan and his acolytes have done so in the third person, not as ‘we’ but as ‘it’ and ‘them.’ By making government and its employees the enemy, Reagan made a rhetorical shift that has withered the very notion of social progress once synonymous with the United States.”

Adele Stan observes that, “Nationwide, the war on public workers — and government in general — is not simply a facet of an ideological notion about the virtues of small government. The war on government is a war against the labor movement, which has much higher rates of union membership in the public sector than it does in the private sector.

“Labor is seen by corporate leaders as the last strong line of resistance against the wholesale takeover of government (and your tax dollars) by corporations,” says Stan. “So, by this line of thought, labor must die.

“But it’s even deeper than that. The labor movement holds whatever modicum of workplace fairness standards exist for the rest of workers, be they organized or not. Contracts won by organized workers function as a ceiling for what the rest of the workforce is able to demand. Without the labor movement, there’s not a worker anywhere in the nation who has much of a bargaining position with her or his employer.”

Amy Dean says Republicans have launched a three-pronged attack as follows:

- “First, under the guise of targeting ‘lazy’ and ‘overpaid’ teachers, conservatives are working to dismantle public education. Eliminating the rights of teachers to bargain collectively and have a say in their schools, as in Wisconsin, is a first step toward this end, a means of clearing the way of organized opposition to privatization. We see this in many states — including Kansas, where Republican Governor Sam Brownback is slashing this year’s funding for schools by over \$50 million.” Charter schools perform no better and often much worse than traditional ones. But they have produced a bumper crop of fraudsters.

- “Second, in the name of balancing state budgets, conservatives are seeking to undermine the public sector’s role in providing essential social services. Part of a decades-long drive to ‘starve the beast’ of government, they are using attacks on public employees in a drive to hand over public activities to private corporations, which can then run them as a means of generating profit.

“John Kasich, the Republican Governor of Ohio, is pursuing a budget that would sell state prisons and lease the state turnpike to private interests. Similarly, a bill in Michigan would privatize support services to public schools. In each case, organized workers are disempowered in the political realm and corporations strengthened.

- “Finally, conservatives seek to block the voice of immigrants in American politics. Despite a total absence of evidence that non-citizens have voted illegally in this country, Republicans are advancing ‘Voter I.D.’

bills. This would create new barriers to voting and discourage people not yet registered from exercising their legal rights. Efforts are underway in Colorado, Kansas, Massachusetts, Missouri, and Tennessee to make it more difficult to vote. In the swing state of Ohio, 890,000 do not have a government-issued photo I.D. like the new law requires. Many of these people are African-Americans, Latinos, seniors, and students — groups that tend to vote Democratic.

Having sucked the wealth out of workers in the private sector, Republicans are now targeting workers in the public sector for wanting decent pay, health care coverage and a retirement spent above the poverty line. To this end, the right wing has been busy sowing intra-class warfare by stirring up resentment among the middle class against public employee unions. Apparently, the GOP is hoping that you can always hire one-half of the working class to kill the benefits of the other half, to tweak a quote by railroad baron Jay Gould.

The message: Pay no attention to that man in the gated community who shipped your job overseas, destroyed the value of your home, drained the wealth out of the country and tanked the economy; instead, go after your neighbor for still having health care coverage.

Press Ignores Real Grassroots Movement

AMERICANS ARE FINALLY TAKING A stand, as they did when 300,000 people gathered peacefully to protest against Gov. Scott Walker in Wisconsin in the first two weeks after he launched an attack on unions and stripped them of bargaining rights. According to the city of Madison, more than 100,000 rallied on one Saturday alone. For weeks now, more people have turned out to rally in opposition to Republican attempts at union-busting in various states than for any Tea Party event, yet the national media have seriously under-reported the story.

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist/economics author David Cay Johnson comments that “Not every news report gets it wrong, but the narrative of the journalistic herd has now been set and is slowly hardening into a concrete falsehood that will distort public understanding of the issue for years to come unless journalists *en masse* correct their mistakes. From the Associated Press and *The New York Times* to Wisconsin’s biggest newspaper, and every broadcast report I have heard, reporters again and again have written as fact what is nonsense.”

Johnson points to a *Washington Post* headline that said: OHIO, WISCONSIN SHINE SPOTLIGHT ON NEW UNION BATTLE: GOVERNMENT WORKERS VS. TAXPAYERS. Rush Limbaugh called public sector unions, “money launderers” for “Democrat politicians.” Mark Steyn called them, “rapacious, public sector-shakedown kleptocrats,” and FOX commentator Bill O’Reilly claimed state “governments can’t afford to operate” because of “union wages and benefits.”

Even liberal Anderson Cooper of CNN described the Wisconsin protest story as a battle between taxpayers and unions. These are massive distortions.

Most of the media lazily accept the assumption that collective bargaining by state workers is a fiscal matter. A typical headline on AOL news asked: CAN COLLECTIVE BARGAINING BILLS STEM STATE DEFICITS? as if there is some correlation between those two things. But the evidence doesn’t suggest as much: There are already 13 states that restrict public workers’ bargaining rights and it hasn’t helped their bottom lines. As Ed Kilgore noted, “eight non-collective-bargaining states face larger budget shortfalls than either Wisconsin or Ohio.”

Contrary to what you’ve heard, public sector workers get paid about \$20,000 less per year than comparable workers in the private sector, even including benefits. That’s because public workers are twice as likely to have a college degree and have, on average, more years on the job than workers in the private sector.

Jason Easley opines that “The reason for the media cold shoulder is that real grassroots movements, like what is happening in Wisconsin, are dangerous to corporate interests. Corporations don’t want more unionization. Workers with rights cost more, so they don’t want this whole power to the people thing catching on. What can’t be ignored is that there is a strong anti-corporate mood helping to fuel the re-energized grassroots...and in this era of news for profit, a backlash against corporate power is not good for the bottom line. Instead of covering real news, the corporate media decide to stick with much safer corporate backed AstroTurf like the Tea Party and Glenn Beck.”

But the public isn’t buying it. A CBS/*New York Times* poll found that Americans oppose weakening the bargaining rights of public employee unions by a margin of nearly two to one: 60% to 33%. While a slim majority of Republicans favored taking away some bargaining rights, they were outnumbered by large majorities of Democrats and independents who said they opposed weakening them. Those surveyed said they opposed, 56% to 37%, cutting the pay or benefits of public employees to reduce deficits, breaking down along similar party lines. A majority of respondents who have no union members living in their households opposed both cuts in pay or benefits and taking away the collective bargaining rights of public employees. A Gallup poll found that young people side overwhelmingly with the labor unions — by a greater than two-to-one margin.

The True Causes of the Problem

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT STATES’ finances are in disarray. However, one of the primary reasons for this is that, according to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, “State tax collections, adjusted for inflation, are now 12% below pre-recession

levels, while the need for state-funded services has not declined. As a result, even after making very deep spending cuts over the last several years, states continue to face large budget gaps.”

State and local employees’ wages and pensions have virtually nothing to do with the budget gaps with which many states are grappling, and yet they are being targeted. Public workers’ salaries are about 28% of state budgets. Those so-called “Cadillac” pensions we always hear about public workers getting actually average only \$22,000 per year and amount to just 2.9% of state spending, on average, according to the National Association of State Retirement Administrators.

Jack Rasmus, a Professor of Economics at St. Mary’s College, says “the pension funding gap is not the consequence of escalating pension benefits of the average or even bottom 90% of the public employee labor force — but is ultimately caused by the banks, by bad investments by public pension funds managers, by fraudulent accounting practices, by fund managers’ failure to make appropriate contributions to the plans, by recessions, by diversion of funds to cover rising health costs, and by past Congresses and Presidents permitting pension funds to gamble and speculate with workers’ retirement incomes.”

Economist Dean Baker stresses that it was Wall Street, not a bunch of teachers and firefighters, which is to blame for the gaps that do exist. “Most of the pension shortfall,” he says, “is attributable to the plunge in the stock market in the years 2007-2009. If pension funds had earned returns just equal to the interest rate on 30-year Treasury bonds in the three years since 2007, their assets would be more than \$850 billion greater than they are today.”

Some states’ pension funds also have problems because they’ve been raided to pay for tax cuts for the rich, but in aggregate, pensions aren’t eating up state budgets. Andrew Leonard, writing in *Salon* about what he calls “the imaginary public sector pension fund crisis,” notes that because the stock market has recovered to a great degree, “those horrible ‘shortfalls’ everyone has been making such a big deal of are already in retreat.”

Yet Republican Governors are placing the blame on public employees and making them pay for the gap in pensions with their wages, jobs, and health care benefits. As Prof. Rasmus explains, “Their goal is converting state defined benefit pension plans to 401k plans and so-called ‘cash balance plans’ that are a preliminary to 401ks. This conversion will lead in the public sector, as it did in the private before, to eliminating at least half of what public employees would have received in pension benefits. It will lead to the destruction of retirement security among workers in the public sector, just as it had previously among workers in the private.

“But why should public workers’ pension

benefits be reduced to resolve the funding gap when they aren't the fundamental cause of it in the first place?"

Jack Rasmus says there is a quick solution: "In the short run, temporarily stabilize public employee pensions (and thus a good part of States' budget deficits) by simply making the Federal Reserve provide direct loans to the pension funds at the same cost of 0.25% that the Fed has provided loans to other financial institutions the past two years. After all, pension funds are also financial institutions. And Fed loans won't add a cent to the federal or state deficits.

"It should not be forgotten that the same Federal Reserve provided \$9 trillion to

banks during the recent crisis — of which \$1 trillion was loaned to foreign non-U.S. banks." Rasmus asserts "If the Fed can loan \$1 trillion to foreign bankers and their wealthy bondholders and investors, why can't it do so to protect the retirement of millions of U.S. workers in the public sector — who are the victims, not the criminals responsible for the public pensions crisis?"

But the politicians don't want to solve the problem, because they want to use it to force concessions from unions and thereby nullify them as a political force. Unions were three of the top ten non-party contributors to this past election cycle. The other seven were conservative groups with lots of an-

onymous donations. Combined, they outspent unions \$248 million to \$74 million.

There are almost no other groups of any consequence that can match the flow of money coming from multibillion dollar corporations that don't even have to disclose how much they are spending to buy our government. Unions are virtually our last line of defense against our democracy being outright bought by the company with the deepest pockets.

As Jim Hightower points out, "This corporate-funded Republican assault is not about fiscal responsibility. The corporate powers intend nothing less than to dismantle the entire framework of America's economic democracy and return us to the dark days of Robber Baron plutocracy."

The New York Times reports that, "In each case, Republican talk of balancing budgets is cover for the real purpose of gutting the political force of middle class state workers, who are steady supporters of Democrats and pose a threat to a growing conservative agenda."

The Democratic Governors of California and New York also seek concessions from the public service unions, but without trying to curb their labor rights.

DEBUNKING SOME MYTHS ABOUT PUBLIC EMPLOYEE UNIONS

PUBLIC EMPLOYEES' UNIONS DON'T GET A SINGLE RED CENT FROM TAXPAYERS. AND THEY aren't a mechanism to "force" working people to support Democrats — that's completely illegal. Public sector workers are employed by the government, but they are private citizens. Once a private citizen earns a dollar from the sweat of his or her brow, it no longer belongs to his or her employer. In the case of public workers, it is no longer a "taxpayer dollar"; it is a dollar held privately by an American citizen. Public sector unions are financed through the dues paid by these private citizens, who elected to be part of a union; not a single taxpayer dollar is involved, and no worker is forced to join a union against his or her wishes. No worker in the United States is required to give one cent to support a political cause he or she doesn't agree with.

There is no distinction between the role public and private-sector unions play: both represent their members in negotiations with their employers. At the federal level, both are prohibited from using their members' dues for political purposes. They donate to political campaigns — to elect lawmakers who will stand up for the interests of working people — but only out of *voluntary contributions* their members make to their PACs.

"Unions cannot, from their general funds, contribute a dime to any federal candidate or national political party," says Laurence Gold, an attorney with the AFL-CIO. "They can only do it through their separate political PAC and only according to strict limits.

"The states have a patchwork of different laws, and many do allow unions to donate to campaigns. But membership is entirely voluntary — when a group of workers elect to form a union, it doesn't mean that everyone must sign up. The union negotiates on behalf of all the workers in the group — and all of the workers get the job security and other benefits that come with collective bargaining — but by law it can't compel them to pay union dues. "It is a right-wing canard that anyone needs to join a union," Gold said. "If a union member doesn't like what his or her union is doing, he or she is ultimately free to walk, without any diminution in their employment rights. They still get all the benefits and the union still has to represent them — just like it did the day before."

In states that haven't passed so-called Right-To-Work laws, the union can charge all workers in a "negotiating unit" for the direct cost of representing them, but cannot, by law, force them to pay for the union's political activities.

In a widely cited opinion piece in the *Washington Post*, former Bush speechwriter Michael Gerson claimed that "public employee unions have the unique power to help pick pliant negotiating partners — by using compulsory dues to elect friendly politicians." Again, a blatant falsehood.

The irony here is that while unions can't compel workers to fork over a penny for political campaigns, corporations can donate unlimited amounts of their shareholders' equity to do so; they are, in fact, in the "unique position" to elect pliant lawmakers.

And conservatives have long held that voluntary donations to political campaigns are a high form of free speech. The double standard is clear: "money equals speech" unless it's money freely donated by working people to advance their own economic interests.

The Koch-backed Heritage Foundation — which has waged a longstanding propaganda war against the American labor movement — claims that "state and local employees in 28 states are required to pay full union dues" — patently untrue — and, "using this government coercion, government unions have amassed tremendous financial resources that they use to campaign for higher taxes and higher pay for government workers."

There are no "government unions," just unions of private workers. And they have no interest in campaigning for higher taxes — they are unions of taxpaying citizens. They do push for better pay, benefits and working conditions, like private sector unions, but officials elected by American voters determine the number and size of public programs and therefore the ultimate cost of government. ■ — By Joshua Holland

Unions Do A Lot of Good

STUDIES SHOW THAT ORGANIZED LABOR helps the poor and middle class. In anti-union states, the average worker earns \$5,333 less a year, the proportion of people without health insurance is 21% higher and the rate of workplace death is 51% higher. In addition, there's evidence that union workers improve quality. Currently, after receiving an education from union teachers, Wisconsin youngsters collectively score second highest in the nation on the ACT/SAT college admission tests. By contrast, the five states barring teacher unions rank at the bottom of the pack. Yet in Wisconsin, extremist Governor Scott Walker is taking \$74 million away from the schools, plus he's even taking away the stimulus money.

New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, a billionaire businessman, argues that "unions also play a vital role in protecting against abuses in the workplace, and in my experience they are integral to training, deploying and managing a professional work force. Organizing around a common interest is a fundamental part of democracy. We should no more try to take away the right of individuals to collectively bargain than we should try to take away the right to a secret ballot."

The decline in private sector unions has dovetailed perfectly with the beginning of a long period of wage stagnation and benefit cuts for working people and a steep increase in corporate profits. Today, the largest share of America's national income goes to profits and the smallest share to wages since the government started tracking those figures many years ago.

Yet grim statistics point to the fact that fear, intimidation and isolation still char-

acterize many American workplaces, denying workers the right to organize. One in ten employees who attempt to organize is illegally fired, with reinstatement a lengthy bureaucratic procedure that can take years. Our country remains one of the only advanced industrial jurisdictions where the majority of workers are denied basic protection, such as requiring "just cause" for employment termination. Rather, they are subject to the doctrine of "employment at will," essentially permitting them to be fired at the employers' whim and without just cause.

Despite supporting Democrats, unions have gotten a raw deal. Writing in the *Washington Post*, Harold Meyerson notes that "In 1979, as American management was beginning to invest heavily in union-busting endeavors, the first effort to reform labor law failed to win cloture in the Senate by one vote as President Jimmy Carter stood idly by. In 1994, President Bill Clinton responded to a similar labor-backed effort by appointing a commission to recommend changes in labor law to the next Congress — which turned out to be run by Newt Gingrich. And last year, by asking his labor supporters to wait, Obama ensured...that the next effort to revive organizing must wait until the next overwhelmingly Democratic Congress," which is years away.

Meyerson concludes that "No nation has ever been home to a middle class majority absent a sizable labor movement. In their failure to advance labor's prospects, the Democrats condemn themselves to a future of fewer Democratic voters and their nation to a future of mass downward mobility."

Wisconsin's Governor Worsened Deficit

CONSIDER THE CASE OF SCOTT Walker, the under-educated former county commissioner who got elected Governor of Wisconsin thanks in large measure to big funding from the Koch brothers. He has attacked the "lavish" benefits of state workers, even though the starting salary for Wisconsin teachers is \$25,000 — 49th in the nation.

Some wonder if he has a personal vendetta against them because he was allegedly expelled from Marquette University for cheating and had only a 2.3 GRA.

Among the handful of specific promises Walker made during his recent campaign for office, the two most prominent were promises to create 250,000 jobs in the state and to kill plans for a high-speed rail line running from the Illinois border to Madison. Within days of taking office he turned down \$810 million in federal stimulus money for high-speed rail, a move which pleased one of his major backers, (the state's road builder's association), but which meant the loss of 5,500 construction jobs for the next three years.

With the help of the Republican-dominated legislature, Walker quickly pushed through \$140 million in spending for spe-

cial interest groups, including a \$127 million tax cut for big business. This was followed by legislation restricting new wind farm siting to the point that wind farm development is now all but impossible in the state — a move that surely pleased the Koch brothers, who have energy investments in Wisconsin. Next he turned down \$40 million in federal money to bring high-speed internet to under-served Wisconsin communities. And his actions also mean the loss of \$47 million in federal transportation funds because his administration has failed to uphold collective bargaining rights.

After having manufactured a phoney budget "crisis," Gov. Scott Walker then blamed this year's projected budget deficit of \$137 million on the public employees' unions. It was a cynical strategy breathing in its boldness, that relied on a misleading \$300,000 ad campaign purchased for him by a Koch-backed astroturf group.

Next, Walker introduced a so-called "budget repair bill," saying that he merely wanted state workers covered by collective bargaining agreements to "contribute more" to their pension and health insurance plans. The Governor's objective is to create the impression that somehow the workers are getting something extra, a gift from taxpayers. But they are not.

Out of every dollar that funds Wisconsin's pension and health insurance plans for state workers, 100 cents comes from the state workers themselves.

That's because the "contributions" consist of money that employees chose to take as deferred wages — as pensions when they retire — rather than take immediately in cash for work already done.

Thus, state workers are not being asked to simply "contribute more" to Wisconsin's retirement system (or as the argument goes, "pay their fair share" of retirement costs). They are being asked to accept a cut in their salaries so that the state of Wisconsin can use the money to fill the hole left by tax cuts for the rich and reduced audits of corporations in the state.

According to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue, *two-thirds of corporations in the state pay no taxes*, and the share of corporate tax revenue funding state operations has fallen by half since 1981.

No Wisconsinite will be unaffected by Walker's bill. He cuts funding for schools and local governments by \$1 billion, Medicaid and Badger Care by \$500 million, ends state aid for recycling, gets rid of phosphorus rules that keep lakes and rivers clean, and cuts programs for poor and college-bound students. He hands out \$82 million in corporate tax breaks — on top of the \$100 million already approved — while at the same time he takes away \$42 million in tax credits for the poorest Wisconsinites. Walker is also dropping an estimated 60,000 low- and moderate-income residents from Medicaid.

The legislation even gives the Governor the power to sell any state-owned heating,

cooling, and power plant or contract with a private entity for the operation of any such plant, with or without solicitation of bids, for any amount that he determines to be in the best interest of the state. Which means Walker could sell these properties to the Koch brothers for \$1 and it would be lawful.

When Democratic Senators fled the state to prevent a quorum, Gov. Walker threatened to deploy the National Guard if workers did not accept his plan, and locked down the state capital, thus depriving citizens of their free speech rights to protest.

To get the measure passed, Walker turned to two brothers — Sen. Scott Fitzgerald, the Republican leader of the state Senate; and Jeff Fitzgerald, the Republican Speaker of the House. Then Gov. Walker appointed the 68-year-old father of those brothers to head the Wisconsin State Troopers, and he's the one who dispatched officers to the homes of Democrat members in an obvious attempt to intimidate their families, knowing full well the lawmakers were out of state.

"It's crazy," said Dem spokesman Graeme Zielinski, "when they've got to go ask their daddy to chase after the Democrats."

In a taped phone conversation with a man he thought was billionaire David Koch but was really a progressive activist posing as Koch, the Governor even admitted that he had considered deploying agitators to incite violence at the peaceful protests to make the unions look bad, but then abandoned the idea fearing a public relations backlash. The notion of an elected official contemplating such an unlawful act, and potentially endangering even children who were among the protestors, was truly shocking, if not impeachable. Walker even responded enthusiastically when "Koch" promised him a lavish trip if the Governor quashed the unions.

Then Republicans in the state legislature violated the open meetings law and voted in the absence of the Democrats to deny workers their rights. When Judge Maryanne Sumi issued a temporary restraining order to prevent implementation of the bill, Walker and Fitzgerald ignored the court order and implemented it anyway.

The Wisconsin GOP released a statement reminiscent of native son Joe McCarthy, calling Judge Sumi "a leftist," said "her friends are leftists," claimed "her son is a left wing activist," that "she goes to cocktail parties held by leftists," "she shops at organic gourmet food shops run by leftists," and that "if she were to enforce the law of Wisconsin and do what was in the best interest of the people of Wisconsin, she'd be exiled from her lifestyle."

Actually, Judge Maryanne Sumi is not only a respected justice, she was appointed by Republican Gov. Tommy Thompson.

After claiming that Wisconsin is broke, it was discovered that Gov. Walker spent \$42,000 flying private jets around the state.

Already voters are expressing buyer's

remorse. With 77% of those polled holding a high opinion of their educators, it is not surprising that only 32% among households with children in the public school system approve of the job Walker is doing. Sixty-seven percent disapprove.

Michigan Is "Wisconsin On Steroids"

IN MICHIGAN, LAWMAKERS HAVE PASSED AN undemocratic bill that gives Republican Governor Rick Snyder the authority to declare "financial martial law." Gov. Snyder now has the unilateral power to appoint a manager to fire local *elected* officials, break contracts, seize and sell assets, eliminate services — and even dissolve whole cities or school districts *without any public input*.

Snyder's budget also cuts spending on schools, universities, prisons and communities, and eliminates \$1.7 billion in tax breaks for individuals — primarily retirees, senior citizens and the working poor — so he can give business a \$1.8 billion tax cut. Snyder will reduce corporate income taxes by 81% by increasing taxes on the poor, elderly and middle class by 36%.

Indiana Republican Gov. Mitch Daniels' first action upon taking office in 2005 was to unilaterally rescind all collective bargaining rights for over 25,000 highway police, hospital attendants, mechanics and other state workers.

The *Wall Street Journal*, in an editorial, rejoiced over the fact that today, only 1,490 state employees pay union dues in Indiana, down from 16,408 in 2005.

Daniels was the first budget director for President George W. Bush. When he came in, the country had an annual surplus of \$236 billion. When he left two and a half years later, the deficit was \$400 billion. At a time when we were fighting two wars, he and Bush pushed for two tax cuts for the rich and launched the Medicaid drug benefit plan that costs \$60 billion a year.

John Kasich in Ohio turned down \$1.2 billion in federal funds to help bring high speed trains to his state, despite high unemployment and the economic benefits of more tourism, and more commerce. He has proposed cutting 25% of schools' budgets, \$1 million from food banks, \$12 million from children's hospitals, and \$15.9 million from an adoption program for children with special needs. A Kasich staffer revealed that these cuts are more about politics than budget-balancing, telling the *Cincinnati Dispatch* that "even if there weren't an \$8 billion deficit, we'd probably be proposing many of the same things." The plan includes tax cuts for oil companies, a repeal of the estate tax and an income tax cut for the rich. Kasich's approval rating has dropped to only 35% in just three months.

When John Kasich got elected Governor of Ohio, he gave his senior staff a 30% increase in pay, then became the first Governor not to appoint an African American to a significant state cabinet post since 1962. It is noteworthy that Kasich was an employee of Lehman Brothers and was inti-

mately involved with getting the state of Ohio's pension fund to invest in mortgage-backed securities. Matt Taibbi of *Rolling Stone* explains: "And of course they lost money. This, broadly, was really what the mortgage bubble and the financial crisis was all about. It was essentially a gigantic criminal fraud scheme where all the banks were taking mismarked mortgage-backed securities, very, very dangerous, toxic sub-prime loans, they were chopping them up and then packaging them as AAA-rated investments, and then selling them to state pension funds, to insurance companies, to Chinese banks and Dutch banks and Icelandic banks. And of course, these things were blowing up, and all those funds were going broke. But what they're doing now is they're blaming the people who were collecting these pensions — they're blaming the workers, they're blaming the firemen, they're blaming the policemen — whereas, in reality, they were actually the *victims* of this fraud scheme."

In Iowa, Gov. Terry Branstad began this year proposing a budget that included a

If we imposed a 1% tax on the rich, we could raise \$338.5 billion a year. If we closed corporate tax loopholes we could raise another \$233 billion.

\$200 million tax cut on commercial property taxes and corporate income but would freeze spending on schools, cut \$42 million to state universities and lay off "hundreds" of state workers. Since then, the Governor has already begun laying off state nursing home workers and frozen funding for mental health services. The Republican-controlled House committees have gone even further, approving tax refunds for upper-income Iowans while cancelling infrastructure investments, eliminating preschool for four-year-olds, closing Iowa workforce development offices, and making even deeper cuts to public universities.

In Kansas, Republican Gov. Sam Brownback has called for eliminating the corporate income tax while proposing a \$50 million cut to education. With majorities in both Houses, Republicans have proposed a cut to the federal Earned Income Tax Credit that would push at least 6,500 families below the poverty line.

Just Following A Master Plan

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN WISCONSIN and the other states is all part of a broader strategy or plot, articulated in a 1999 memo on priorities for the new millennium prepared for former Rep. Dick Armey, who now runs one of the Tea Party groups funded by the Koches.

According to Allan Lichtman, a professor of history at American University, "The memo outlined strategies for 'defunding the left' by eliminating 'sources of hard currency for the Democratic Party' following President Ronald Reagan's 'model for cutting off the flow of hard currency to the Soviet Union.' To weaken the unions, Republicans would promote free trade and repeal the Davis Bacon Act that required prevailing wages on federally funded or assisted projects. The party would strive to restrict the use of compulsory union dues for political purposes. It would push for liability limitations on lawsuits to stanch the flow of funds to liberal groups and political candidates from trial lawyers. The GOP would weaken the National Education Association and teachers' unions by promoting 'school choice.' It would work to abolish the Legal Services Corporation and the Public Broadcasting System and kill incentives for tax-deductible donations to 'liberal foundations' by repealing estate taxes." The Republican party has followed this strategy to a "T."

America could solve budget shortfalls if we did like Norway does, and simply imposed a mere 1% "wealth tax" on the top 5% of the super rich. We could raise \$338.5 billion a year, and more than offset the \$112 billion in state deficits.

And if we closed tax loopholes for corporations we could raise \$233 billion. The real corporate tax rate — that companies actually pay after taking advantage of loopholes and deductions — is among the world's lowest. This has left Big Business swimming in cash. Non-financial corps in the U.S. have over \$26.2 trillion in assets.

Robert Freeman concludes "The rich have been at it since Roosevelt decried the 'economic royalists' that had caused the Great Depression, and passed legislation protecting workers and unions. They have bought countless politicians at all levels of government, all of them only too happy to sell out their countrymen in exchange for a well-laudered campaign contribution. The rich own the media who relentlessly recycle their ideologically biased narratives about hating the government, lauding free markets, and blaming the people for their own plights. They have installed the best judiciary that money can buy.

"This ring of power...is now closing in for the final kill. It demands no less than the complete subjugation of workers and the surrendering of their rights."

Without a grassroots uprising, politicians will continue to collude with the fat cats.

One blogger summarized it thusly: "My father, who survived Herbert Hoover and the Great Depression, often lamented that 'the American people always forget the terrible things Republicans did to them in the past, and they let them back into power again.' Unfortunately, in today's America the Democrats are about as far to the right as the Republicans were during the Great Depression, and the Republicans are on the fascist fringes of insanity." ■

George Clooney

STILL TAKING RISKS

Raised in the Heartland, the Hollywood heartthrob is more than just a pretty face. He's a global envoy to suffering millions.



Top: A rare moment of relaxation. Opposite page: Nerdy at 12; with his girlfriend Elisabetta Canalis and his mom, Nina.

WHILE MOST OF HOLLYWOOD WAS preoccupied with debates over Oscar winners and losers, and the new movie he recently filmed in Ohio called "The Ides of March," was being edited for Fall release, George Clooney winged out of California, heading for the other side of the world. Ten thousand miles later, his plane landed and Clooney, dressed as if for a safari, got in a white pick-up truck and set off down a dusty dirt road, under the eyes of teenage soldiers armed with Kalashnikovs. Forsaking the trappings of his celebrity lifestyle, George Clooney had flown to the oil region of Abyei, the "front door" of South Sudan. This is the neonate country celebrating the results of a referendum that took place in January and that has brought about independence between the Arab and Muslim North and the Christian and animist South, that will become official in July 2011. Over two million have been killed in a civil war there, that has been stoked by al Qaeda.

As John Avlon writes, "No one in the area at risk of Abyei has ever seen a film by George Clooney. His credibility here comes from the numerous trips he's made to Africa, where he is seen as a man free from ties to the bureaucracy, a person who has access to power and that can amplify the voice of a village on the world stage."

Mr. Clooney is sort of a freelance diplomat, who relies on his reputation for finding solutions. "The model of Bono has worked," Clooney says gleefully, referring to the U2 lead singer, who has been nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize for his AIDS work in Africa. There are other stars, of course, who have their special areas of interest, like Brad Pitt (Katrina), Ben Affleck (Congo) and Sean Penn (Haiti). But Clooney is arguably a bigger star on the world stage than any of them, and this has allowed him to have special access. He has had two meetings with President Barack Obama on Sudan, and he has a direct line to the Sudanese rebel leader. George's link with the country is so strong that, when on a movie set, he is updated daily on the situation via email.

Clooney and Sudan activist John Prendergast have even helped launch the Satellite Sentinel Project, which will track troop movements in real time in Abyei, a north-south border region where the biggest threat of a return to conflict exists. "We are the anti-....."

The Darfur Conflict is an ongoing guerrilla conflict or civil war centered on the Darfur region of Sudan. It began in February 2003 whereby the Arab government of Sudan launched apartheid against black citizens. Over five million have been attacked. Sudan's oil wealth has played a major part in enabling an otherwise poor government to fund the expensive bombers, helicopters and arms supplies which it has obtained from Russia and China, and which have allowed the Sudanese government to launch aerial attacks on towns and villages, and fund militias to fight its proxy war in Darfur. There have been countless violations of international human rights and humanitarian law.

genocide paparazzi,” Clooney asserts.

It is no exaggeration to say that each time George Clooney travels to this volatile region of the world, he is putting his life on the line. There was the time a 14-year-old border guard shoved a machine gun at his chest. He’s gotten malaria twice, and helicoptered out of N’Djamena, Chad, in a sandstorm just before the rebels attacked it. He brushes aside concerns about his physical safety and says “you just keep moving.”

This is a far cry from the days when all we heard about George Clooney was that he had a pot-bellied pig as a pet, had a gang of guys crashing at his L.A. bachelor pad, liked to play practical jokes, and always had a gaggle of girls surrounding him. He still really, really knows how to wear a suit. His matinee-idol mug has aged well and he retains his fabled charm. As Cary Grant’s heir apparent, George Clooney has a natural style and grace. He is comfortable in his own skin. But as he has approached the half-century mark, he has become more serious on some levels.

Born George Timothy Clooney on May 6, 1961, in Lexington, Kentucky, his father Nick was a newsman and talk show host on a Cincinnati, Ohio television station and his mother, Nina, was a former beauty pageant winner. Due to the nature of his father’s work, George and his older sister Ada moved several times to various locations throughout Kentucky, Indiana and Ohio with their parents. In 1974, they settled down for good in a rambling, old Victorian home in downtown Augusta, KY, a small town on the Ohio River about an hour south of Cincinnati.

George reflects “From the moment I was born, I was watched by other people. I was taught to use the right fork. I was groomed for [life in the spotlight] in a weird way.”

Clooney made his first television appearance at five years of age, playing sketch characters on the local talk shows his dad hosted. In middle school, however, George struggled with his talent for expression when he developed Bell’s palsy, which causes partial facial paralysis. He eventually recovered from the illness.

A fairly good baseball player, he managed to land a tryout with the Cincinnati Reds at the age of 16. A baseball contract, however, never materialized.

After handling cue cards on his father’s talk show, George decided to follow his dad into broadcasting, which he studied briefly at Northern Kentucky University. After dropping out in 1981, he worked as a shoe salesman (“all women lie about their shoe size,” he claims), and as a farmhand picking tobacco. (“You could make \$3.50 an hour, pretty good money,” he laughs).

That summer he got a call from his cousin, Miguel Ferrer, the son of singer Rosemary Clooney and Oscar winner Jose Ferrer. Miguel and his father were making a film in Kentucky about horse racing, and Ferrer offered Clooney a little acting work. Clooney hung around the set for about three months, where he worked as an extra and even landed a few lines. To make a little money, he loaned his old Monte Carlo to his uncle and cousin for \$50 a day. The movie never got released, but the experience gave Clooney the acting bug.

Encouraged by his cousin, Clooney decided to move to Los Angeles when the movie shoot was over. “I had just spent the summer cutting tobacco, which is a miserable job. So that’s what made me move to Hollywood,” Clooney muses. “On my very first day in L.A., my cousin Miguel took me for a drive up Sunset Boulevard,” Clooney recalls. “All these girls came up asking if we wanted to party. I said, ‘Girls love me, man!’ Miguel just replied, ‘They’re hookers, you idiot.’”

ONE REVIEWER WROTE THAT GEORGE CLOONEY EMBODIES “EVERY STERLING QUALITY WE ASSOCIATED WITH MALE SCREEN ICONS OF A BYGONE ERA. HE’S SHREWD, HE’S VIRILE, HE’S MERRY, AND THE CAMERA LOVES HIM WITH THE DEVOTION OF A HEAD-WAITER RUSHING TO LIGHT A BILLIONAIRE’S CIGAR.”

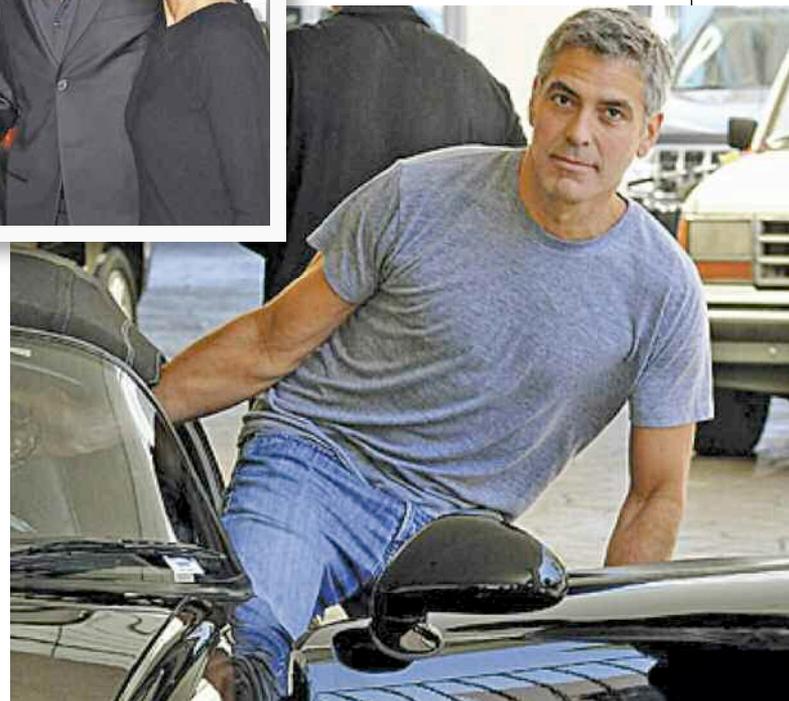
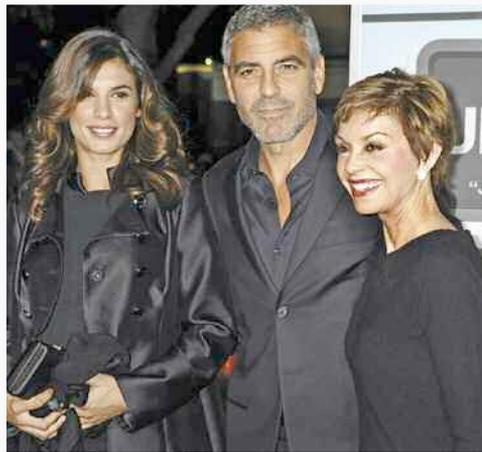
To make ends meet, George ran errands for his aunt and became her chauffeur, driving her and co-stars Martha Raye, Helen O’Connell and Margaret Whiting around the U.S. when the four legendary singers toured in “4 Girls 4.”

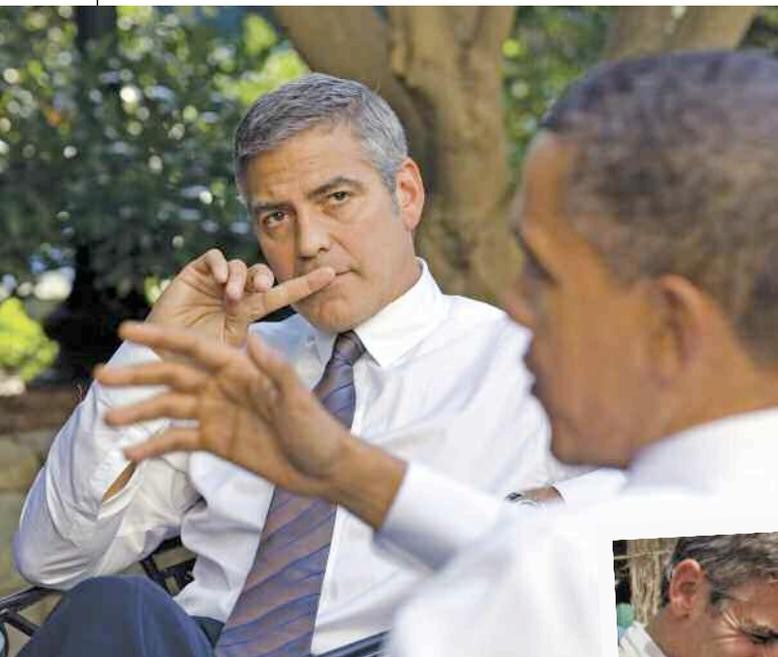
“There was nothing sweet and subtle about driving those broads around,” he chuckles. “In the back seat, Martha Rae would shout, ‘George, pull the car over, I have to take a leak!’”

He remembers standing in the wings with Ms. O’Connell, holding a tall glass of Smirnoff, and hearing the announcer introducing her. She’d take the vodka from him, down it straight, and then go on stage and do three numbers.

When George announced his intention to become an actor, his old man was horrified. “I said, ‘Oh Lord! How stupid is that? Are you kidding me?’” says Nick Clooney. “And every phone call he made I would say ‘Come back to school so you got a piece of a paper, a diploma, something to fall back on.’” George’s response was to say, “Pop, if I have something to fall back on, I’ll fall back.”

Clooney studied acting at the Beverly Hills Playhouse, and worked in theater, including a stint at the prestigious Steppenwolf in Chicago. He landed his first steady on-screen job in his early 20s on a series titled, ironically, “E/R,” this one a mercifully short-lived CBS hospital comedy. He then toiled for ten years as what he called “the world’s richest unknown actor” in series like





with the Coen brothers, Clooney starred as a charming conman in "O Brother, Where Art Thou?" (2000), an imaginative re-telling of the epic poem "The Odyssey." He won a Golden Globe Award for his work on the film. George also reteamed with Wahlberg for the disaster-at-sea film "The Perfect Storm," based on Sebastian Junger's bestselling novel. The actor, who for so long had wondered if he'd truly make it big, was now Hollywood royalty.

But it was also taking its toll on him. By age 39, when he was filming "The Perfect Storm," Clooney couldn't escape showing his age. Claiming he never wears make-up in his movies, he laughs when he admits that "I had a big whole patch of grey in my beard so I'd take a BIC ball point pen and just fill it in."

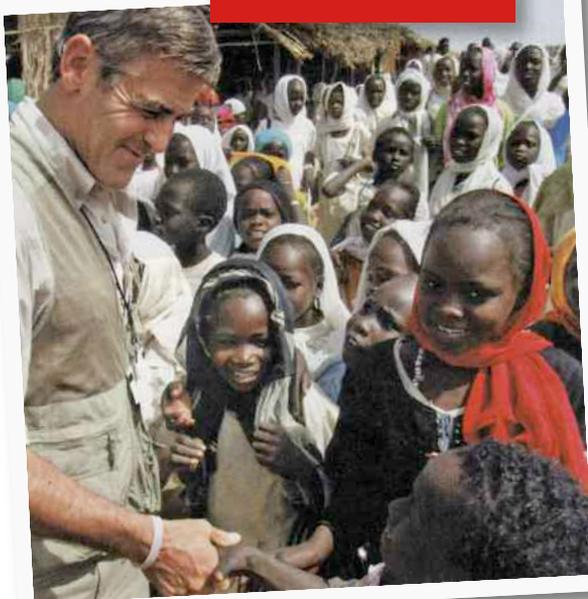
Clooney meets with President Obama in the Rose Garden at the White House and lovingly greets children in Darfur.

In 2001, Clooney starred in the remake of "Ocean's Eleven," directed by Steven Soderbergh. He played Danny Ocean, a role originated by Frank Sinatra. The comedic heist film featured an all-

star cast, which included Brad Pitt, Julia Roberts, Bernie Mac, and Matt Damon. It spawned two sequels, "Ocean's Twelve" and "Ocean's Thirteen."

Clooney made his directorial debut with "Confessions of a Dangerous Mind" (2002). The biopic focused on the life of Chuck Barris, host of "The Gong Show" and reportedly a CIA agent. Despite the film's poor box office performance and weak reviews, Clooney continued to work behind the scenes, serving as a producer on the 2004 political drama "Syriana."

He played the real-life Robert Baer — an over-



weight, over-the-hill CIA operative involved in the geopolitics of the Middle East. George claims he plumped up on pasta for the part and gained 35 pounds, going from 172 to 207, in under a month. He also let his beard go gray. It was after filming a torture scene on location in Morocco in October 2005 that George started to experience an around-the-clock headache — "like an icre cream brain freeze 24 hours a day," and his nose began to run.

That night, with his scenes postponed, he flew to L.A., where doctors spent two weeks trying to figure out what was wrong with him. He had "x rays, M.R.I.s, all that stuff," he says. "A lot of the doctors were like 'You've got a headache. Go home.' I understand what they were thinking: *Oh, he's an actor; he's being dramatic.*" Finally, a neurologist diagnosed a torn dura — the wrap around his spine. His brain was literally sinking. What had been coming from his nose was displaced spinal fluid.

Doctors shored up his spine with plastic bolts, and predicted it would take him a year to recover, maybe two.

"What you learn after 40 is it's just about plugging up holes in the boat," he jokes. "You just hope you have enough corks to plug up enough of the holes." Six days after his surgery, the tsunami hit Asia, and he says he "got kind of roped into the telethon [to raise relief funds]. I was running around in a neck brace."

He would continue to have daily headaches months after the surgery — though not as severe or ominous. He dealt with them by taking Motrin and Xanax, "but not the scary ones, like Vicodin. Our family history is fairly fond of painkillers, so I stay away from those" he avows.

All of his hard work on "Syriana" did not go unnoticed. Clooney

"The Facts of Life," (1985-87) and "Sisters" (1992).

Feeling that he was always on the cusp of something bigger, George found his situation frustrating. "I had a work ethic. I was making a couple of hundred grand a year, which is beating all the odds, so you don't really think things are going terribly. You actually feel like you're succeeding. [But] I wished I was doing better projects, and I didn't think I was going to get that chance," he admits.

George was careful to avoid typecasting. He did 15 episodes of "Roseanne," and, says his dad, "was offered a stupendous amount of money to continue... I was thinking he could build a little nest egg and maybe acting would pay off after all. He said 'No, I'll be in a cul-de-sac. I'll be that guy, and that's all I'll be.'"

George explains, "The Facts Of Life' is a good example. If you're a young heartthrob — which I never caught on as — those fans not only abandon you, but they're embarrassed to have liked you."

Clooney survived 15 failed pilots before being cast in a new NBC medical drama called "ER." Clooney played Dr. Doug Ross, a caring pediatrician and a notorious ladies man. A star was born.

He managed to appear in several films while doing the weekly series. He had a small role playing the part of a lip-synching transvestite in a 1993 thriller called "The Harvest." He battled evil vampires with Quentin Tarantino in "From Dusk to Dawn" (1996). In the romantic comedy "One Fine Day" that same year, he played a divorced father who falls for a single mother (Michelle Pfeiffer). Assuming the role of the caped crusader, Clooney starred in "Batman & Robin" in 1997, which eventually netted more than \$107 million despite being a critical flop.

"Before they could kill me on 'Batman & Robin,' I said, 'It's a bad film, and I'm the worst thing in it.' [If you] try to defend an indefensible position, you'll look like a schmuck," George asserts.

The following year, Clooney starred opposite Jennifer Lopez in Steven Soderbergh's "Out of Sight" (1998). He also had a role in the war drama "The Thin Red Line."

"I was fortunate that many of my films were not great successes," he observes. "Thus I was never set to a specific type. And it is very important to me that I play in movies that have a fairly modest budget. The expectations [are modest] and I can do what I want."

In 1999, Clooney turned in his "ER" scrubs to pursue his film career full time. He starred in the Persian Gulf War tale "Three Kings" with Mark Wahlberg and Ice Cube that same year. Working

won the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor for his role. "Good Night, and Good Luck," represented George Clooney's second outing as a director as well as an actor, though he had to write down his lines on scraps of paper to combat short-term memory loss from the brain injury.

The film examines the clash between legendary CBS newsman Edward R. Murrow and anti-Communist fear monger Senator Joseph McCarthy. George co-wrote the screenplay, and even put up one of his houses as collateral to get it made.

Newsweek called it "a passionate, serious, impeccably crafted movie tackling a subject Clooney cares about deeply: the duty of journalism to speak truth to power." Widely praised, the black-and-white drama earned Clooney nominations for Best Director and Writing (Original Screenplay).

Despite his busy schedule, George has been involved in worthy causes. After 9/11 he helped organize a fundraiser that featured dozens of Hollywood stars and garnered more than \$129 million for the United Way. Four years later, he donated \$1 million to the United Way Hurricane Katrina Response Fund. In 2010, he won a special Emmy — the Bob Hope Humanitarian Award — for organizing a telethon for victims of the Haitian earthquake.

George remembers the years as a child when his parents would take him and his sister on trips to bring gifts to needy families at Christmas. He feels a compulsion to help others, even if it's only to give the same panhandler \$20 who stands at the traffic light when George gets off Highway 101 at Laurel Canyon Blvd. "People say, 'they'll buy booze.' Fair enough. They *need* it," he proclaims.

"My father taught me about having principles and how to treat people with respect," he reflects. "My aunt also taught me how to keep a perspective on everything that happens to you. So you learn to be humble and not take your success for granted. I know what pisses people off about fame," Clooney says. "It's when famous

ROSEANNE BARR SAID GEORGE "CAN DRINK TOO MUCH AND STILL, WHILE STANDING IN A BAR PARKING LOT AT 3 A.M., DISCUSS THE WORLD WITH SUCH PASSION AND GOOD SENSE THAT YOU ACTUALLY STOP IMAGINING HIM NUDE AND REALLY LISTEN."

people whine about it."

Clooney became interested in Darfur in 2005 after having campaigned for Oscar votes for "Syriana" and "Good Night..." which he says made him feel dirty. "You're campaigning for yourself," he cringes. His dad, Nick, was also feeling down about having lost an election for Congress. So — wanting to do something selfless — father and son spent ten days in Chad and Sudan to make a film showing the humanitarian crisis of Darfur's refugees. That September, George spoke in front of the Security Council of the United Nations with Nobel Prize-winner Elie Wiesel to urge the UN to find a solution to the conflict and to help the people of Darfur. Next, he made a trip to China and Egypt.

Clooney still calls his dad up all the time for advice — "more out of deference than efficacy," cracks Nick. When Fox's Bill O'Reilly claimed George's career was over because of his anti-war views, Nick bolstered his son's spirits by telling him, "A lot of people have gone to jail for saying things they believed in, lost their jobs, their livelihoods. You're getting scared because you lost a few popularity points. Stop being a baby. You're a man — take it."

George is an unabashed progressive and opines "the strangest thing to me is that the word 'liberal' has become a bad word...when we've stood on the right side of the moral issues" like giving women the vote, civil rights, and opposing Vietnam. He gifted his father with what has become one of the elder Clooney's prized possessions: a book signed by FDR. The movies George likes are those reflecting a serious message. One year for Christmas, he gave his friends a hundred DVDs as presents. "I spent a long time picking my favorite films between 1964 and '76. Movies like 'Carnal Knowledge,' 'All the President's Men,' 'Network,' 'The Candidate,' 'Harold and Maude,'" he explains.

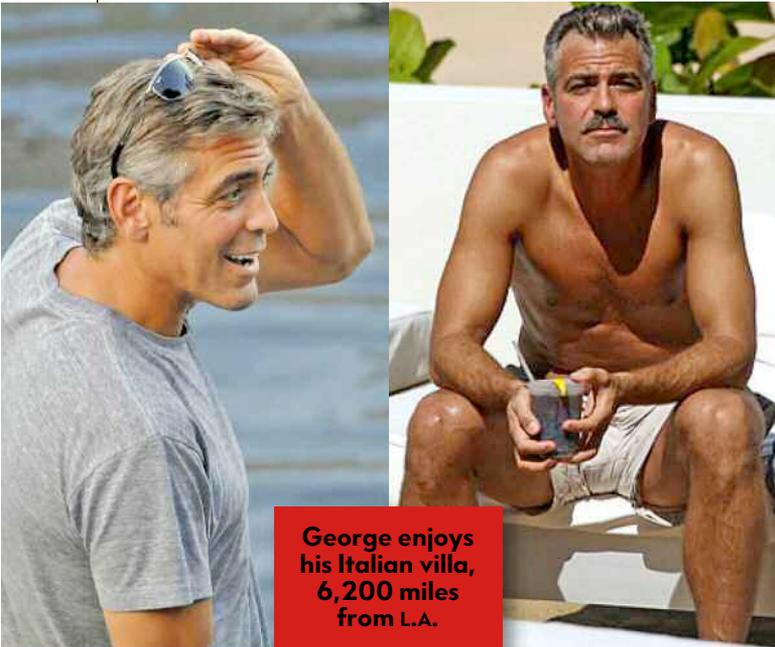
Accolades Are Nice, But Nobody Really Cares — Including Him

AWARDS NO LONGER MEAN A LOT TO HIM. "THERE IS an interesting thing that happens whenever something big happens, whether it's getting a big part or winning an Oscar," he ruminates. "There is this great sort of celebration, and you're really sort of excited. And then you've called all your friends, and all your friends have called you. That takes about a whole day, and then, suddenly, it's just kind of like 'Alright.' It doesn't make any difference. I can't carry it with me into the meetings at the studio. They really don't care. It's still just as difficult to get a \$7 million film or a \$70 million film made. It literally makes no difference at all. The studio is happy for me because they're my friends, but they couldn't give a damn."

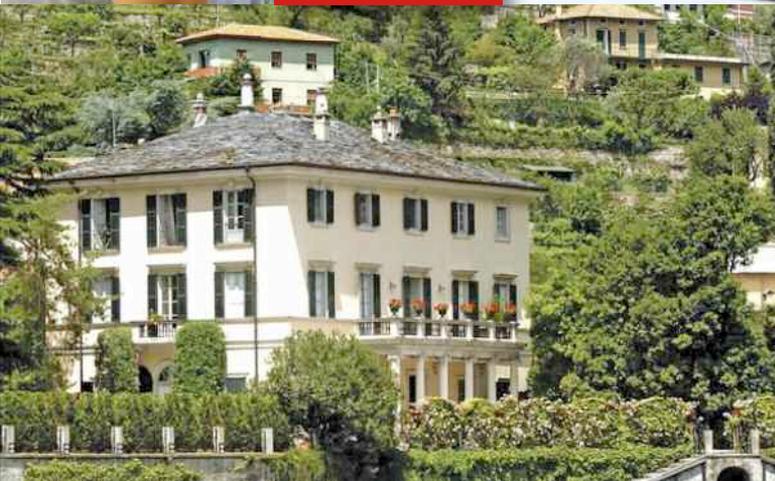
Perhaps it is this humility which has inoculated him against potentially career-ending failures. Over the years, Clooney has been in his share of high-profile flops that would have bumped most other actors from the A-list.

He's also willing to take chances. There was, for instance, the live-TV remake in 2000 of that Cold War chestnut "Fail Safe," that George appeared in that was one of the few live dramas on American television since its so-called Golden Age in the 1950s.

Unlike a lot of movie stars, he also has no compunction about appearing in TV ads. Clooney has done commercials outside the U.S. for products like Fiat, Nespresso, Omega watches and Martini vermouth, and has lent his voice to a series of Budweiser ads.



George enjoys his Italian villa, 6,200 miles from L.A.



Joel Coen says that “what’s rare for somebody in his position is that he hasn’t become overly impressed with himself. He doesn’t have the vanity of most movie stars, and he’s avoided the trap that most fall into. They keep doing the same kind of movies over and over again, to protect their position, and they become kind of fossilized.” Not so with Mr. C.

Comedian Roseanne Barr says that “he plays it all so ‘south of snob and north of slob’ that you forget he’s acting. He breathes believability into his roles because he’s real where it’s hardest for actors to be: in life. Somehow he manages to be cool, handsome and a standout while keeping that regular guy thing going. He never looks like a pretty boy or playboy, even though that is what he is by all tested and accepted movie star standards.”

George is realistic, observing “I’m in a position that I know doesn’t last very long. I know that there’s only a very short window of opportunity before they start going, ‘Well, he’s a little too old now. We don’t want to see him doing love scenes anymore, so we’ll kick him into the character-actor world.’ And with that goes a lot of your clout.”

An Italian Escape...Or Is It?

IN 2001, GEORGE CLOONEY BOUGHT A HOME IN ITALY FROM the Heinz family. “It was just over \$8 million. Everyone was saying it’s a \$20 million house, and I’m like, ‘Nah, not quite that much,’” George reveals. Dubbed “Villa Olean-dra,” his compound is located on Lake Como in Laglio, about a half hour from Milan, Italy. There is a Colombo powerboat docked at its pier and a garage full of Piaggio motorbikes. Tall privacy hedges hide George’s garden and pool from the tourist boats. The house has 15 rooms over three floors, from a wine cellar up to a cherub-adorned master bedroom at the top. Clooney reserves that for guests, preferring to sleep in one of the smaller bedrooms himself. He throws Algonquin-style dinners to which he has invited everybody from Al Gore to Walter Cronkite, David Beckham to Quincy Jones. Cindy Crawford and her husband, Rande Gerber (who had partnered with George in a since-aborted casino project in Las Vegas) also visit.

George also has a Tudor style mansion on a densely wooded lot in Studio City, CA, he bought in 1995 for \$2.2 million. It was originally the property of Fleetwood Mac diva Stevie Nicks and has a spacious guest home and tennis court.

He spends about three months out of the year in Italy but it’s getting so there are just too many paparazzi. He can’t leave his house without being followed. Gone are the days when he could walk undisturbed around Laglio. Now he risks encountering a coach of Asian tourists on their way to visit his own home.

The first year he was in town, Clooney played basketball in the pitch of the Oratory of St. Philip and James Parish in Carate Urio. But now he plays with friends from the NBA on a court he had built at home, away from prying eyes.

A “commando” of Clooney’s security men have been known to deflate the tires on the paparazzi’s cars and bind their scooters with chains while they are otherwise preoccupied training their telephoto lenses on George. If some manage to break free and follow the star, his faithful chauffer/bodyguard, John, will head straight toward the state border in Chiasso, customs officials will intercept anyone trailing him.

Only one thing has not changed over the past ten years: There’s a secret moment each day which Clooney never gives up. An hour alone at sunset, in a room with a glass of wine and some good music. He says being around his aunt Rosie, he “got to appreciate Cole Porter and Johnny Mercer, Sinatra — Nat King Cole especially.” Sometimes he plays the melodies of Rosemary, and sings along with one of her big hits, “Mambo Italiano.”

With Nick and Nina as role models for a successful marriage (they’ve been together for 52 years), it seems odd that George shows no interest in settling down. Though he had a very low-profile marriage to actress Talia Balsam, (from 1989-92) he has avoided the altar. George says “I have had long relationships with women and they get bored with me working all the time. My fear

is that I would still make a lousy husband and I don’t want to put myself — or anyone else — through the pain of finding out.”

Makes sense, but what puzzles fans is that while the star embodies solid, Midwestern values, he has dated a series of wild women, including two porn stars, a stripper, and a go-go dancer.

He did have a five-year on-and-off relationship with British model Lisa Snowdon. In 2007, he started dating Sarah Larson who had won \$50,000 on “Fear Factor” for eating a scorpion, hanging from her ankles, and walking a tightrope. But the couple broke up in May 2008, a few months after she was injured with George in a motorcycle accident (his third). Since 2009, Clooney has been dating Elisabetta Canalis, 32, taking her home to see his parents.

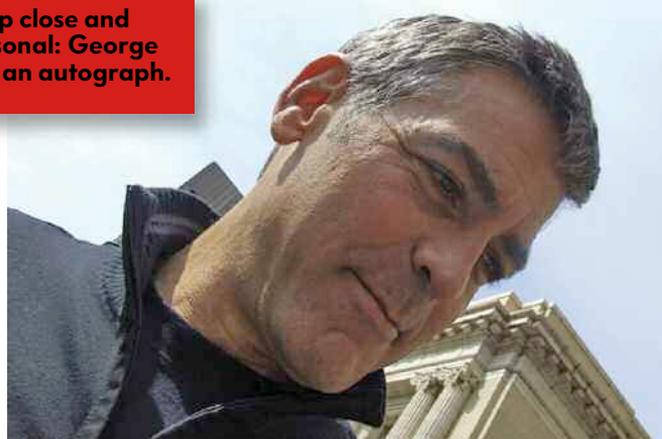
The Italian press reported allegations that Ms. Canalis was seen using cocaine inside posh Italian nightclubs while working as a “paid guest” to entertain VIPs. Although Ms. Canalis has never been arrested, two of the clubs where she worked have since shut down amid allegations of drugs and high-priced prostitution.

A bit of a clothes horse even when relaxing, George insists “I have a romantic view of a lot of things. I remember going and watching my aunt Rosemary sing in Vegas, and you got dressed up to go to the casino. I miss that kind of class.” He stopped by Belstaff’s showroom a few years ago, the company known for its rough-and-tumble motorcycle jackets worn by the likes of Steve McQueen and Che Guebara. Clooney now has a hundred of them.

At 50, George still has a boyish sense of fun, is a fantastic mimic, a practical jokester and can be more funny spontaneously than a stable full of comedy writers.

Using a small hand-held camera he gave a tour of the primi-

Up close and personal: George signs an autograph.



tive bathroom at his Italian pad, before devolving into a hilarious impersonation of Andrew Rooney complaining about his haircut. (See this on www.youtube.com with other Clooney videos).

After receiving a standing ovation as he walked on stage at the Emmys, Clooney joked, “Don’t do that because then I feel like maybe I’m sick and I don’t know it.”

Actually, he has been sick of late — with his second bout of malaria, contracted on his trip to Sudan. “I had drugs to take before, during and after...pills that should just be provided to these people, like a polio vaccine..life saving drugs for diseases that kill millions needlessly,” he says. “[They] belong to mankind, not to companies to profit from. We need another Jonas Salk.”

George recently wrapped filming “Ides of March” in Michigan, in which he plays a Presidential candidate. One local artist, Mark Schmidt, commemorated the occasion by painting a mural of Clooney as Adam in Michelangelo’s “The Creation of Man” painting in the Sistine Chapel.

George’s image is important and not as easy to come by as it may seem. “The guy doesn’t sleep,” confides Matt Damon, his “Ocean’s Eleven” co-star. “When I was staying at his house in Italy, I’d sneak along to the gym thinking I’m the only person around, and he’d be in there dripping sweat, having been in there for two hours. I was like: ‘Oh, I see. All right. So it’s not all *that* easy.’ But he’s fine for the whole effortless myth to remain.” ■

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THE 400TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE KING JAMES BIBLE

THIS IS THE 400TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE KING JAMES (KJV) TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE. It is the version of the Holy Scriptures that has influenced more English-speaking people than any other. Yet over the past few decades, new Bible translations have been popping up like popcorn.



The KJV is a Protestant translation having been commissioned by King James I of England and the Anglican Church, in direct opposition to the Catholic Vulgate, which was in Latin, and inaccessible to the masses because most people didn't speak Latin. Since it was revised several times before 1800, it is claimed that modern translations are just additional revisions of the original KJV of 1611. But that's not true. The so-called "revisions" prior to 1800 were to correct typographical errors, add notes, and omit the Apocrypha from between the Testaments. There were no changes in the actual text of the King James Bible. The real changes (over 36,000 of them) didn't start until the modern revisionists arrived on the scene.

Some say modern translations are more accurate because they have been translated from older and better manuscripts. The truth is, the modern translations are based on the work of two 19th century Greek scholars from England — B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort. These two men, who were deeply involved in the occult, hated the Textus Receptus Greek text, from which the King James Bible was translated, so they conjured up their Greek text. Theirs was based primarily on two very corrupt 4th century Roman Catholic manuscripts: Codex Vaticanus (discovered in the Pope's library in 1481) and Sinaiticus (discovered in 1859 in a trash can at St. Catherine's monastery on Mt. Sinai). These are usually the "older" and "better" manuscripts that we keep hearing so much about. These manuscripts support most of the attacks in the new versions.

No one has ever proven that there are errors and contradictions in the KJV. Many "Christian" colleges and preachers have a bad habit of pointing out *apparent* "contradictions," but these arguments have been disproven many times.

The King James version is unmatched for the sheer poetry of its expression and power to convey big thoughts. Its turns of phrase have been inculcated into our culture and used even by non-Christians without their realizing it. From the speeches of Abraham Lincoln to the characters in Dickens to the oratory of Martin Luther King, Jr., we have become familiar with at least 257 KJV passages like these:

- eat, drink, be merry (Luke 12:19)
- the apple of his eye (Deuteronomy 32:10)
- an eye for an eye (Matthew 5:38)
- fight the good fight (1 Timothy 6:12)
- fell flat on his face (Numbers 22:31)
- the fullness of time (Galatians 4:4 and Ephesians 1:10)
- can a leopard change his spots? (Jeremiah 13:23)
- am I my brother's keeper? (Genesis 4:9)

The King James Version has given us many life lessons, such as:

- God's care for us: "The Lord is my shepherd" (Psalm 23:1)
- Freedom from slavery: "Let my people go" (Deuteronomy 5:1)
- A life wasted in worries over unimportant things: "Vanity of vanities" (Ecclesiastes 1:2)
- A self-righteous person: "Holier than thou" (Isaiah 65:5)
- Work that you adore: "A labor of love" (1 Thessalonians 1:3)
- A metaphor for being good in the world: "The salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13)
- A metaphor against in-fighting: "A house divided against itself shall not stand" (Matthew 12:25)
- What we say when a politician's dirty secrets are revealed: "How are the mighty fallen" (2 Samuel 1:27)
- A really close call: "By the skin of my teeth" (Job 19:20).

While most Bible publishers today often use language that's made to read like a popular novel, there doesn't seem to be much evidence that these strategies have led to greater comprehension. In fact, the Grade Level Indicator of the Flesch-Kincaid research company says the King James language is *easier* to understand than the new versions. Besides, as Bible scholar Jon Sweeny observes, "The setting, context and language of another era can yield rich color and nuance to what might otherwise seem more ordinary."

A cautionary note: The *New King James* version is *not* an updated KJV. It changed thousands of words, ruined valuable verses, and questions the Deity of Jesus. ■

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OPENING THE ROOMS TO A VIEW AND SUN LIGHT MAKES THIS HOME EXTRA CHEERY

LET THERE BE LIGHT

IF YOU LIVED ON THE EDGE OF A PRETTY PARK, CHANCES ARE YOU would want to enjoy the view from inside your home as well as outside. The only way to do that is to incorporate windows in your floorplan, and this is what Jack and Bernice Hanley did. This affords them a four-season, ever-changing tableau of the Midwestern countryside. Even on dark and gloomy days, there's enough outside light to warm up the interior. And on the sunniest days, the rays streaming through the windows make things extra cheerful.

The family room faces east, so this means they get the early morning sun but don't have to worry about midday or afternoon sunlight making things too hot in the room. The dining room has a western exposure but although it has a nice walk-out to a patio, and allows plenty of light to enter the room, it is not overpowering.

Floor coverings were important because of the potential bleaching effect of ultra violet light. The Hanleys chose some moderately priced laminate and have area rugs placed in locations where intense sunlight does not reach. "I locked myself out one day and tried to break a small pane of glass to get in, and was unable to do so. That's how durable it is!"

With few exceptions, most of the windows in the home also have some form of drapery, blind or shade to enable the homeowners to shut out the light when it gets too bright, or to assure privacy at night. Bernice says that sitting in the family room and looking out on a pretty day, it's easy to lose track of time. "We are surrounded by nature and we get a front-row seat," Jack adds.

Fabrics for upholstered furniture are chosen for their resistance to sun bleaching...

also brightens the music being played on the piano as the sound waves bounce off the glass. Depending on the temperature and humidity contrasts between inside and outdoors, the windows sometimes steam up and "we are surrounded by a pearlescent, dream-like cocoon," effuses Mrs. Hanley.



ARE WE THERE YET? TRAVELING WITH TIM

MY FAMILY AND I ARE LEAVING ON A vacation soon. South Carolina, we thought. That would be nice. I was born there, but haven't been back in a long time. But how to get there? We wondered long and hard. You see, we wanted to create family memories.



At that point I wish someone had staged an immediate intervention. Because under the influence of either giddy enthusiasm or too much alcohol, or both, and forgetting that we have an 8-year old girl and an 11-year old boy, we impulsively decided to drive. Apparently we're more interested in creating memories than in having fun.

On top of that, due to time constraints I'm going to drive the 20 hours straight through 'til we get there.

I don't even need to leave to know what's going to happen:

15 minutes into the trip: My son announces that he needs to go "number two." I shoot him a disgusted look, but pull over into a 7-11. He disappears into the restroom and doesn't come out for half an hour while angry customers queue up in front of the door. He finally emerges, red-faced and out of breath, and says, "Dad, we better get out of here *fast*." As we sprint away we hear frightened calls for a plunger.

Two hours into the trip: My daughter, frantically searching her backpack, realizes she's forgotten a certain shirt. She bursts into tears. We point out that she has ten more shirts with her so the world isn't ending, but she wails that this is going to be the worst vacation ever. Her brother rolls his eyes and tells her she's dumb. She begins raining blows down upon him, and he does the same to her.

Three hours into the trip: My wife tells me I'm driving too fast, that I'm weaving over the center line, that I'm driving too slow. My wife tells me I'm following the cars too closely. My wife tells me she's sick of listening to sports talk radio.

Three hours and five minutes into the trip: I turn up the volume on the sports talk radio.

Five hours: We pull into a Subway for supper on the fly. I beg the family not to order anything messy. They ignore me. I stew all the way back to the car, grumbling about how hard I worked to get it clean. I turn left out of the parking lot and three meatballs from my own sub tumble onto my lap.

Six hours: Stony silence. I suggest we play a car game. No one responds. I suggest we tell jokes. No one responds.

Nine hours: The other three are asleep. I pinch my arms and try to fight off the fatigue. The road starts swimming in front of me, so I hop out at a rest stop and jog around the car a few times, slapping my head to clear the cobwebs. A man who looks like the Unabomber smiles at me from the shadows and takes a swig from a flask. I race back to the car.

13 hours: I wake my wife so she can take her turn driving. I lean up against the passenger window and try to sleep, but can't because I've had eight Mountain Dew's, three Red Bulls and half a pound of chocolate. My legs won't stop twitching and I feel like I've spent the weekend with Charlie Sheen.

17 hours: I'm back behind the wheel. I can't feel my butt anymore. The snacks are gone. The car has a strange smell that no one dares. We're disheveled and rumpled, and no one's laughed since West Virginia. My son announces that he broke his glasses. My daughter announces that she wants to turn home. My wife is mumbling something about airline tickets.

20 hours: We finally stagger into our resort — glassy-eyed, limping, pale and angry. We unload the suitcases and hoist them to the front desk. The man takes our name, looks up quizzically, and says, "Your reservation is for next week, sir. Why don't you come back then?" ■



THESE WEDGE SUEDE SLIP-ONS ARE SPRING GRASS GREEN AND FUN FOR ANY occasion. A twist on the traditional T-strap shoes, this buttery yellow shoe has a side strap that connects the part that goes around the ankle for some added comfort. Easy to carry, a floral tote is an essential addition to your spring wardrobe. The flower pattern is such that pre-teens and grandmothers will be able to carry this bag with confidence.

I'll admit, there is a lot going on in this pendant; rich amethyst, elegant peridot, and piercing blue topaz flank three slabs of one-of-a-kind druzy agate. Unusual in appearance, druzy is created when ground water containing dissolved silica makes its way into a porous area of the stone, cooling quickly. Tiny druzy crystals develop that wedge in between crevices or layer otop of the rock, resulting in a glittery colorful masterpiece. Long flowy skirts are a warm weather essential to keep you cool. Accented with sequence and bold embroidery, the rainbow of color splashed at the bottom jazzes up a classic.

Why spend a fortune on the ultimate purse only to skimp on the wallet? You won't be embarrassed at





MIDWEST GIRLS ARE HIP By SARA JORDAN



the check-out counter whipping this chic zebra and magenta-trimmed beauty out. It will team nicely with a zebra purse, but don't be afraid to mix patterns; pair leopard with snakeskin or stripes with paisley. It is all about your attitude and confidence when accessorizing, not about being matchy-matchy. A Vera Wang blouse like this one will run you in the hundreds of dollars, (mainly because it is 100% silk.) A polyester blend is much cheaper, and widely available at your favorite chain or department store. Made with a twill weaving, this fabric style drapes well and is flattering, especially when dyed in this soft periwinkle hue.

Rainbow calcsilica emerged on the jewelry scene in 2002 amid controversy. Found near Chihuahua, Mexico, the stone is believed to consist of a microcrystalline calcite bonded with some type of clay as well as silica. Shaky documentation from mines has led many to believe the stone is made from real elements but formatted with some type of plastic in a laboratory. If Mother Nature didn't create this stone, she would surely approve of human endeavors. D'Orsay pumps, such as these turquoise and gold variety, are cut low on the sides to reveal the arch of the foot. Hints of orange and brown add an eclectic tone. Very Gina Lollobrigida vacationing on the Italian Riviera, circa 1960s. ■

STYLE NAOMI LENOX

CAMEO MAKES AN APPEARANCE

CAMEOS HAVE BEEN AROUND SINCE 6TH century Greece and were popular in ancient Rome. Defined as a small piece of sculpture on a stone or shell cut in relief in one layer with another contrasting layer serving as a background, the cameo is making a comeback. Ancient and Renaissance cameos were made from semi-precious gemstones, especially various types of onyx and agate, and any other stones with a flat plane where two contrasting colors meet; these are "hardstone" cameos. Indeed, one of the most famous cameos was one made of stone for Emperor Claudius. The Greeks particularly liked the cameo technique of shell carving, but the cameo was very popular no matter what material was used. The Romans did make glass cameos but only a few hundred fragments have been found to date and the 16 surviving complete pieces are considered priceless.



Since then, the cameo has had periodic revivals, as in the



Neoclassical period with the support of Napoleon Bonaparte. However, it really gained popularity during the reign of Queen Victoria, who was enchanted with the cameo's delicate beauty. Her admiration and patronage led to mass production of cameos in the last half of the 19th century. Most of the cameos of that period were made of the bullmouth helmet shell; the most expensive and beautiful pieces were carved from emperor helmet shell, which resembles layered agate.

During the 19th and early 20th centuries in Europe and North America, cameos were considered an indication of good breeding and even wealth. A woman wearing a cameo was automatically regarded as a lady and most likely a wealthy one or one of good family. They were worn as pins, necklaces or signet rings.

In the 21st century, Torre del Greco in Italy is the world's center for carving cameos in shells. Grinding wheels are used to speed production but many hand tools are used before the cameo is soaked in olive oil, cleaned, then polished by hand. If you buy or receive a cameo from Italy, you can be assured of its quality and take pride in this work of handcrafted beauty.

There has been a resurgence of interest in cameos as people tire of soulless technology-produced items that it seems everyone in their social circle owns. Especially vibrant is the niche for antique cameo jewelry, made of natural materials and largely hand crafted using minimal machinery.

One style of lovely cameos depicts the head and shoulders of different modern women, all with an ethereal beauty enhanced by flowing hair and ethnic jewelry. Another type depicts animals, still another uses angels or unicorns. ■





Fixing Fish

IT'S A LOT EASIER THAN YOU THINK

I'M ALWAYS AMAZED WHEN PEOPLE TELL ME they like fish, but they are afraid to cook it. It really *is* easy, if you keep a few basics in mind: First, make sure it's fresh. Find a dependable fishmonger (yes, that's what they're called), and preferably buy at a reputable fish market that receives fresh seafood daily. (A lot of the chain grocery stores rely on frozen fish). Always give it the smell test; it should have no odor. If the fish still has the head on, the eyes should be clear, not cloudy. Flesh should be firm, not mushy. Otherwise, fish is one of the easiest meals you can fix. Just don't overcook it. Here are some basics, (thanks Mark Bittman) plus a couple of my favorite recipes.

BROILED

With Tomatoes and Capers

Set rack 4 inches from heat source. Spread a broiler-safe pan with olive oil. Add fish. Mix 1 pound sliced tomatoes with oil and 2 tablespoons each capers and chopped red onion. Spread over and around fish; broil. Garnish: Chopped parsley and lemon wedges.

Tacos

Rub fish with vegetable oil and a mild chili



powder; broil. Meanwhile combine 2 chopped cucumbers, 1/2 cup chopped cilantro, 1 minced hot chili and 2 tablespoons lime juice. Flake fish and serve in warm corn tortillas with cucumber salsa.

Caramelized Fish

Heat a little vegetable oil in pan; dredge fish in a mixture of brown sugar and lots of coarse black pepper. Broil carefully; fish will brown quickly. Drizzle with fish sauce. Garnish: Mint (lots), or minced chili (optional).

ROASTED

With Potatoes

Heat oven to 425°. Toss 2 pounds sliced new potatoes with 1/4 cup olive oil. Roast, turning occasionally, until brown. Add 1 tablespoon chopped sage and 1 teaspoon

(or more) minced garlic. Top with fish and 2 tablespoons oil. Roast until fish is done. Garnish: Pan juices.

With Herbs

Heat oven to 475°. Put 4 tablespoons butter in an ovenproof pan and place in oven to melt. Add 4 tablespoons chopped herbs (a combo is best — parsley, dill, basil, tarragon, thyme, etc.), then add fish. Roast, turning once. Garnish: The pan juices.

With Leeks and Bacon

Toss 4 sliced leeks and 2 ounces chopped bacon with 1/4 cup olive oil. Roast for 10 minutes, then add 1 Tablespoon thyme leaves and 1/2 cup white wine. Roast 20 minutes, then top with fish and 2 Tablespoons oil and roast until fish is done. Garnish: More thyme.



POACHED

With Ginger and Soy

Put a large, deep skillet over medium heat; add 2 tablespoons vegetable oil and 1 tablespoon minced ginger; cook until sizzling. Add fish, ½ cup soy sauce, 1½ cups water, ½ cup chopped scallions, ½ cup chopped cilantro and a teaspoon rice vinegar. Boil, cover and turn off heat. Fish will be done in about 10 minutes. Garnish: Chopped scallions.

Curried With Zucchini

Sauté 1 chopped onion and 2 chunked zucchini in oil for 5 minutes, then add 1 tablespoon ginger and 1 tablespoon curry powder (or to taste). Cook for a minute, then add fish. Substitute 1 cup coconut milk for soy sauce and use 1 cup water. Skip scallions and vinegar. Garnish: Cilantro.

In Tomato-Fennel Broth

Heat olive oil, add 1 chopped onion and 2 chopped fennel bulbs; cook 5 minutes. Add the fish, a pinch of saffron and 1 tablespoon fennel seeds. Substitute 1 cup diced tomatoes for soy sauce; use 1 cup water. Garnish: Chopped fennel fronds.



SAUTÉED

Cornmeal-Crisped

Cut fish into 4 pieces and soak in 1½ cups buttermilk. Combine 1 cup cornmeal with 1 tablespoon chili powder. Put a large skillet over medium heat; add 1 tablespoon each olive oil and butter. Pull half the fish from buttermilk; drain, then dredge in cornmeal; cook until golden, turning once. Wipe skillet clean, then repeat. Garnish: Lemon and parsley or cilantro.

Classic Sautéed

Beat 2 eggs with ¼ cup chopped parsley. Dredge the fish lightly in all-purpose flour (into which you have added Tones chicken seasoning), then in egg mixture; cook in butter and oil in two batches. Garnish: Chopped parsley, lemon wedges.

Prosciutto-Wrapped

Lay 2 slices of prosciutto, slightly overlapping, on work surface; top with basil leaves. Wrap each piece of fish in prosciutto/basil, then repeat. Cook in oil only in two batches. Garnish: More basil.

TOMATO, SPINACH AND FISH TACOS WITH PINK CHILI MAYONNAISE AND MANGO-RADISH SALSA

2 pounds white fish filets, such as mahi mahi or haddock, cut into 1-ounce strips
2 cups all-purpose flour
3 eggs, lightly beaten
4 Tablespoons water
2 cups panko bread crumbs
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
Vegetable oil, for frying
20 corn tortillas for serving

Pink Chile Mayonnaise:

1 cup sour cream
1 cup mayonnaise
2-3 Tablespoons chipotle sauce, depending on your taste
1/2 lemon, juiced
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Mango-Radish Salsa:

2 limes, squeezed
2-3 mangoes, diced
3 red radishes, diced
1/2 red onion, diced
1 Tablespoon chili powder
1/2 bunch fresh cilantro, leaves chopped
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
Kosher salt and black pepper

Prepare the fish. Cut the pieces of fish into 1-ounce strips. Set up a breading station of flour, lightly beaten eggs with water, and panko bread crumbs. Season all with salt and pepper. Dredge the pieces of fish in flour, egg then bread crumbs. Once all the fish is breaded deep-fry in small batches in (375°) oil. Drain on paper towels and season with salt. Keep warm until ready to serve.

Prepare the pink chile mayonnaise. Put the sour cream, mayonnaise, chipotle sauce and lemon juice in a blender and mix until the mixture is consistent and creamy. Season with salt and pepper and refrigerate until ready to use.

Prepare the mango-radish salsa. Mix all the ingredients in a bowl. Season and refrigerate until ready to use. You can also place all of the ingredients into a food processor and puree for a smoother salsa.

To serve, set up the tacos “family-style.” Assemble the fish in a pile on a plate; the pink chile mayonnaise in a bowl; and mango-radish salsa in another. Serve alongside warmed corn tortillas.

BAKED IN FOIL PURSES WITH HOMEMADE SPINACH PESTO AND GOAT CHEESE

3 filets of white fish
3 large handfuls baby spinach



2 Roma tomatoes
1/2 purple onion, sliced thinly
1 clove garlic, roughly chopped
Salt and pepper
Basil (Fresh or dried)
The juice of 1 lemon
Olive oil
Goat cheese, to top

Spinach Pesto:

2 handfuls baby spinach
1 handful walnut halves
1/4 cup aged gouda, roughly chopped
1 clove garlic
Juice of half a lemon
1/4 cup olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste

For the Fish: Pre-heat the oven to 400°. Prepare 3 large pieces of aluminum foil.

Divide the spinach leaves among the three sheets, laying them close together in the middle. Lay one piece of fish on each bed of spinach. Season generously with salt, pepper and basil.

Divide the garlic and tomato and onion slices between the three pieces of fish, laying them on top. Squeeze a wedge of lemon over each. Then sprinkle another pinch of salt and pepper over each. Then drizzle a little olive oil over each pile.

Fold up the edges of the foil to create a closed foil-purse and bake, on a baking sheet, for about 20 minutes, just until the fish is opaque.

Open the purses and put the oven on broil. Broil for 2-3 minutes.

While the fish is baking, prepare the pesto: Combine all ingredients except the olive oil and lemon in a food processor and process until finely chopped. Then, while the machine is still on, slowly drizzle in the olive oil and lemon juice. Mix until combined. Taste and season with a little more salt and pepper. Set aside.

Once finished baking, plate the fish and veggies, spooning the juice over each pile. Then top with a generous spoonful of pesto and a dollop of goat cheese. Serve immediately with a wedge of lemon.

Enjoy! ■



GROWING YOUR OWN

Given food shortages, poverty, rising oil and commodity prices, bad weather and world hunger, a home garden makes sense

SO MANY AMERICANS ARE unemployed, underemployed, retired or retiring, or on fixed incomes. In some American towns, and not just impoverished backwaters, over 30% of residents can't afford to feed themselves and their families sufficiently, let alone nutritiously. Across the country, one out of six elderly suffers from malnutrition and hunger — a national disgrace given the fact that Congress, with Obama's blessing, extended the Bush tax cuts for the rich. And the number of children served one or two of their heartiest, healthiest meals by their schools grows annually as those living at poverty levels tops 20%. Thirty-seven million Americans rely on food banks that now have half-empty shelves and report near-empty bank accounts.

Ellen LaConte, author of a new book called "Life Rules: Why So Much Is Going Wrong Everywhere At Once and How Life Teaches Us To Fix It," says "Even oil company CEOs agree that now or in the next two or three years the world will have passed the peak of cheap, easy oil. What difference does that make? For one thing, there is no replacement for oil that can do all that oil has done as cheaply and universally as oil has done it. Cheap, abundant food on the shelves of grocery and big box stores and food banks, on our tables, and in our bellies depends on cheap, abundant oil for fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides, and to power farm machinery and transport food from fields to processors and packagers and then to purveyors and consumers, around the world."

She says that "Over the next decade Americans can expect food to get progressively more expensive and some foods, especially fresh vegetables and fruits, to become less available in stores."

Arable land — land suited to farming — is at a premium everywhere in the world. Each year farmers lose thousands of acres of land to urban and suburban sprawl and more tons of topsoil to attrition than they produce of grain and other field crops. Half the Earth's original topsoil, like that which once enabled the American Midwest to feed the world, has been lost to wind and erosion. Eons in the making, it has been depleted and degraded by industrialized agriculture in only a couple of centuries.

"China's soils ride easterly winds across the Pacific to settle on cars and rooftops in California," author Ellen LaConte notes, "while the American Bread Basket's soils are building deltas and dead zones at the mouth of the Mississippi." Adding insult to injury, she says, "soils that have been farmed using petroleum-based synthetics — toxic fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides — and heavy equipment are themselves virtually dead and will not be able to produce as much as they have, with

or without fossil-fuel inputs."

Bad weather has devastated grain crops in the upper Midwest, Florida, Mexico, Russia, China, parts of Africa, and elsewhere. Many climate scientists believe we've passed the equivalent of the peak of friendly and familiar weather as we have the peak in easy, cheap oil and abundant healthy soil. And while increasing heat will bedevil harvests, intense cold, downpours, flooding and drought will make farming an increasingly hellish occupation.

"The transitional climate will be unpredictable from season to season and will produce more extremes of weather and weather disasters, which means farmers will not be able to assume much about growing seasons, rainfall patterns, and getting crops through to harvest," LaConte asserts.

Nobody denies there are rough economic times ahead. Many are even predicting the collapse of the whole fossil-fuel, funny-money, global economic system.

All these factors argue in favor of "growing your own" fruits and vegetables. It is estimated that 38% of Americans grew some of their own veggies in 2009, a number that reflected a growing percentage of under-40s, many of whom dragged or coaxed their kids to get down and dirty, too. And 37% of food gardeners aim to expand their gardens this year.

It's hard to deny the gifts that gardening brings to your life:

It's a source of fresh, delicious, wholesome food. "What's especially pleasing," says Ellen LaConte, "is that so many young people still have a taste for fresh and homegrown, for live and soil-born, hand-harvested and heirloom. Contrary to what modern taste mavens have written, the young haven't all gone over to the artificial strawberry-flavored column."

It's satisfying. Seventy-one percent of young people, and at least that many older vegetable gardeners, spend hours on their hands and knees in proximity to earthworms and ants because they get some kind of satisfaction out of it. Part of that satisfaction is doubtless chalked up to tasty food and bragging rights. But a large part of it is owed, LaConte says, to the "ancient, unshakeable, bred-in-the-bone sense of competence and self-reliance that comes from providing for yourself and your loved ones and friends something that you and they absolutely need.

"These are feelings most Americans have lost since they've come to depend on 'the economy' to supply them with food," she adds. "They are bone-deep feelings we share not just with those hearty, self-reliant colonial Americans we're so proud to trace ourselves back to but also with the first humans that figured out that maybe if they left those apple seeds where they lay, maybe scuffed a little dirt over them or scattered a handful of those self-sown wheat seeds where the light and soil were better, why, darn, miracles would happen over which they had some control." On-demand

food, 10,000 B.C.-style.

It's relaxing. Granted, gardening is hard work; it takes concentration and focus. But for most Americans, the break from artificial lighting and air, plastic plants, a chair that may or may not be ergonomic, multitasking, 24/7/365 exposure to interruption, and other demands is more like a vacation than work. Sixty percent of the young vegetable gardeners said that's why they gardened: It relaxed them.

"When you're in the garden, you're working on plant and wind and sun and rain time, not clock time," notes Ellen. "If you let yourself be fully present to what the garden needs from you, you're automatically attuned to life's more leisurely time frames, not the customary frenetic human ones."

It's a spiritual thing. Says Ms. LaConte, "The original sacred texts of most of the great spiritual traditions begin in or refer to some sort of garden. Most of the world's spiritual teachers have taught us how we should live in the world and with each other by using gardening metaphors and parables. So is it any wonder that for many, the garden, even one created in pots huddled on a patio on the 15th floor above an urban street, triggers a spontaneous, instinctive connection with that larger life within which we have our lives and that ineffable source of all that is, which makes new life arise out of something as unprepossessing as a seed?"

"Gardening makes us partners in the ongoing Creation," notes LaConte. "Like other forms of what feels like playing and praying at the same time, gardening is something that can be done alone. Its depths and pleasures are, however, amplified greatly by being shared."

It keeps us fit and healthy. Bend and stretch, bend and stretch. No doubt about it, gardening is one of the best ways to get and stay fit even before it offers up bounties of food that, if we eat them instead of what we pick up on the way home or have in a box in the cupboard or bag in the freezer, amplify fitness. Whole muscle groups you didn't know you had get worked out at least seasonally in the process of digging, turning, hoeing, raking, sowing and weeding.

"Infamous 20th century homesteader, vegetarian, and gardener Helen Nearing liked to say 'gardening is an adult sport,'" points out LaConte. "It's also an aerobic and isotonic one. And, since she didn't have children, she couldn't have known that they take to gardening like doctors to golf courses, too."

And last — but certainly not least! — it might someday save your life. Here, without a doubt, is the most compelling reason of all to get proficient at growing your own food. As LaConte explains in "Life Rules," the entire global economy is too big not to fail. Dwindling resources, climate instability, skyrocketing prices, and other red flags point to a future in which the cheap,

abundant, and readily available food we currently enjoy may no longer be there for us. “As hard as it is for most Americans to imagine, there may come a day when grocery store shelves are bare,” says LaConte. “If and when that day comes, the ability to grow your own food will no longer be a hobby but a survival skill.”

Gardening well takes skill, but, LaConte reminds us, “seeds, soil, earthworms, more billions of soil microbes than you can count (if you don’t kill ’em with inorganic chemicals), rain, and sun do most of the work. The food is built into the seed and is called out of the seed by the other five. To take charge of our food supply again, we just

need 83% instead of 38% of Americans to bring seeds into contact with them, love ’em a little, and wait.

“It’s interesting to me that people work so hard to acquire the skills we need to make a living, yet most of us neglect the most basic, essential, and valuable skill of all: the ability to feed ourselves,” says Ellen. “We depend almost totally on other people to provide the nourishment that keeps us alive. The great news is that gardening is downright easy — even if you’ve never grown anything except mold on your store-bought cheese!” LaConte offers some tips (*below*) sure to inspire even the most tentative “veggie virgins” to dig right in!

Don’t assume lack of space is a deal-breaker. Most of us don’t live on farms. Nor do we have spacious, magazine-worthy backyards. And in the case of city-dwellers, we may not have backyards of any type! That’s okay, says LaConte, who is something of an outside-the-box thinker when it comes to gardening in smaller or unconventional settings.

Make your bed...raised! A raised-bed garden is one that is built on top of your native soil—in other words, you don’t have to dig into your yard and can build it wherever you want. It can be enclosed by lumber, stone, brick, concrete, or even hay bales, and is filled with whatever type of soil you choose. Advantages include (but are certainly not limited to): improved accessibility (you don’t need to stoop as far to reach your plants), good drainage, fewer weeds, the ability to plant more densely, and improved soil quality. Also, raised-bed gardens heat up more quickly than the native soil, so you’ll be able to plant sooner and you’ll enjoy a higher produce yield.

Contain yourself! Did you know that almost any vegetable, and quite a few fruits (such as berries, limes, and melons), can be adapted to growing in a pot? So even if you’ve got no yard at all, you can still cultivate a container garden on your balcony, patio, or windowsill. As with a raised-bed garden, container gardens are very accessible and offer you total control over soil quality. Keep in mind a few simple guidelines such as making sure that larger plants are in larger containers and that all have adequate drainage holes, and you’re good to garden!

Start small. If you bite off more produce than you can chew, you may become overwhelmed and leave your garden to the not-so-tender mercies of nature. If you’re a newbie, choose just a few easy-to-cultivate vegetables, fruits, and herbs, preferably ones that already feature prominently in your diet. You can let yourself gradually catch the gardening bug from there!

Don’t panic: You’ll find the time. Prospective gardeners may be excited by the idea of growing their own fruits and vegetables but daunted by the scope of the project ahead of them. If you’re wondering where you’re going to find the time to cultivate and harvest plants, take a deep breath. After the initial effort of planting and potting is over, your daily garden chores such as watering and weeding will usually be done in 15 to 30 minutes.

“Grow” easy on yourself. The fact is, some types of produce are much hardier and easier to grow than others. Start with tried-and-true plants like basil, rosemary, blueberries, tomatoes, lettuce, and peppers, for example.

It’s as easy as one, two, TREE. When most people think “gardening,” trees don’t necessarily spring to mind. While it’s true that trees can take longer than tomato plants or berry bushes to yield fruit, the wait is usually well worth it. Consider planting cherry, apple, peach, etc. saplings in your yard. As they grow, these trees will be both beautiful and practical. And the yardless needn’t be left out—remember that fruits such as peaches, plums, figs, lemons, limes, etc. (often available in dwarf varieties) can be grown in pots.

Farm alongside your flowers. Many people whose patios or yards are livened up by colorful flowers have never given a second thought to raising produce. Consider this: You already have the knowledge and skills to care for plants. So why not plant some tomatoes or cilantro along with those zinnias and pansies?

Grow your own “spice rack.” Herbs are generally easy to grow, don’t require much space (think window boxes and small pots), and can really spice up your meals! Plus, with a little advance planning, you can stock your shelf with dried herbs that will last the whole year round.

Practice pollution-free pest control. It’s a good idea to have a pesticide plan in place, but you don’t have to risk polluting your yard or harming beneficial insects in the process. For example, hot pepper sprays, garlic, used dishwater, and even some varieties of plants naturally repel insects and animals alike.

Make it a group effort. Nobody ever said that gardening had to be a solitary activity! Grab a neighbor (or two or three) and share the hoeing, weeding, and watering chores. And when your labors bear fruit, you can share that as well. (Also, it’s worth noting that gardening doesn’t have to be an adults-only activity. It can be a great bonding experience for families, too—working outside is much healthier than playing a video game or watching TV, and your kids will learn quite a bit in the process.)

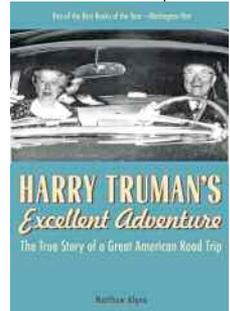
...or a community-wide one! If you like the idea of enlisting aid in your cultivation efforts but don’t have the desire or space to “host” a garden yourself, see if there are any community gardens in your area. They may charge a fee for participation and might feature plots that are collectively gardened or plots that are allotted to individuals. You’ll be able to take advantage of the expertise of your fellow gardeners, and you’ll probably make some new friends in the process!

If you need some guidance, find a 4-H club. Your local club might be able to give you personalized advice on your fledgling gardening endeavor...and you might find a fulfilling volunteering or mentoring opportunity in the process! ■

HARRY TRUMAN’S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE

By Matthew Algeo

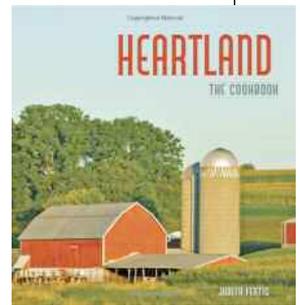
IN THE SUMMER of 1953, HARRY TRUMAN did something no former President had ever done before — and none has done since. He took a road trip. Unaccompanied by Secret Service agents, or attendants of any kind, Truman and his wife Bess drove 2,500 miles from their home in Missouri to the East Coast and back again. The trip lasted nearly three weeks. One night they stayed in a cheap motel. Another night they crashed with friends. All along the way, they ate in roadside diners. In “Harry Truman’s Excellent Adventure,” award-winning author Matthew Algeo recounts this amazing journey and the former President’s amusing attempts to keep a low profile. In New York, Harry stumbles into the sidewalk shot of the “Today” show. In Pennsylvania, he gets pulled over for careless driving. Throughout the book there are brief detours into topics such as the post-war American auto industry, McCarthyism, the development of the nation’s highway system, and the decline of Main Street America. By the end of the journey, readers will have a new and heartfelt appreciation for America’s last citizen-President. □



HEARTLAND: THE COOKBOOK

By Judith Fertig

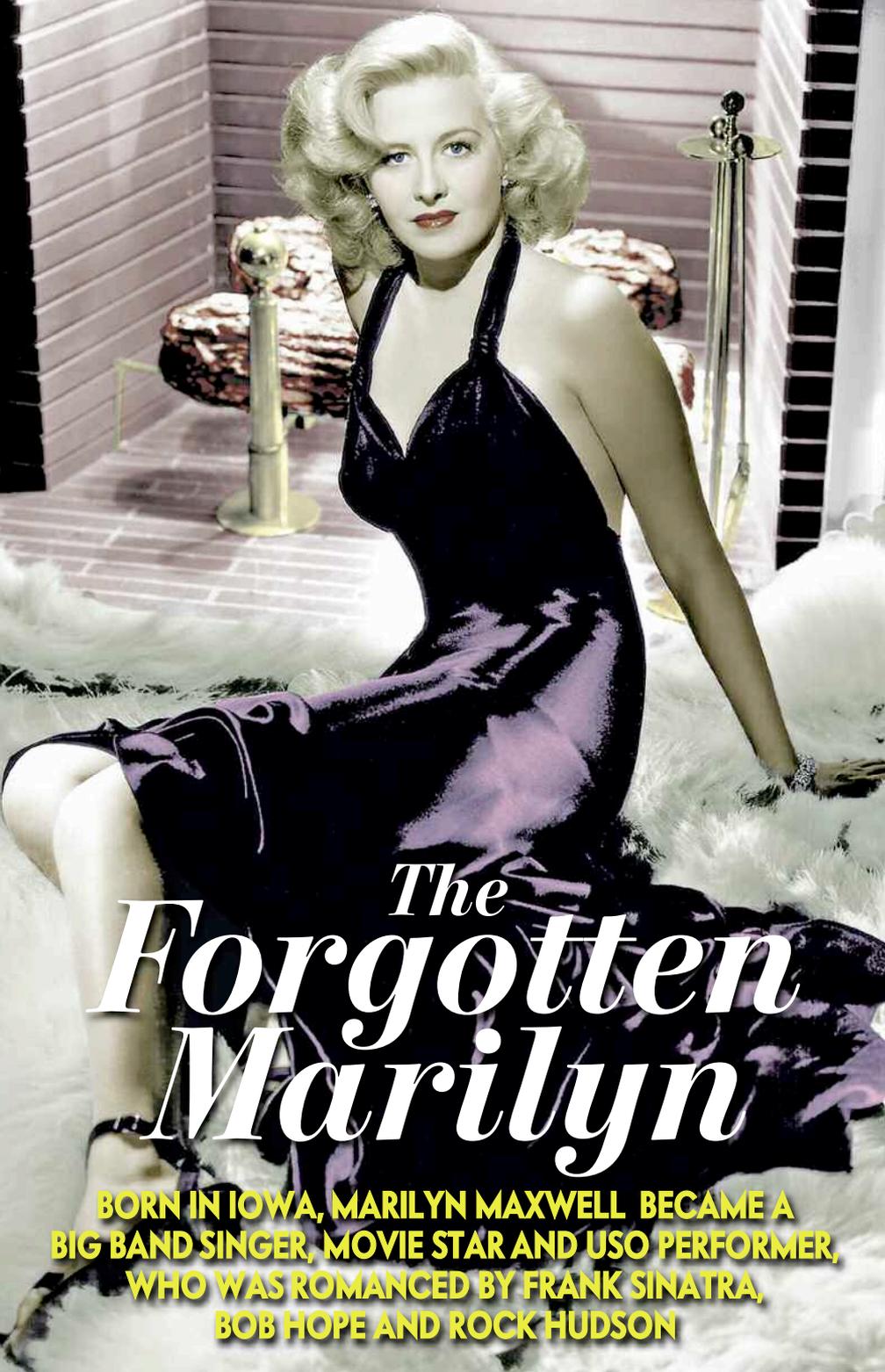
AS THE FARM-TO-TABLE MOVEMENT SWEEPS the nation, Judith Fertig of Overland Park, Kansas has written a beautiful new book which is a collection of 150 delicious recipes that puts a modern twist on Midwest tradition. You’ll find breakfast foods, dinner courses, and chapters devoted to preservatives, breads and deserts. Also included are humorous stories, historical facts, sidebars about local food purveyors, plus gorgeous color photos of the food, people and landscapes of the Heartland. □



A GREAT CATCH

By Lorna Seilstad

THIS PROMISES TO BE THE PERFECT SUMMER novel. Set at a lakeside Iowa resort in 1901, Emily Graham is a suffragist who is determined not to get tied down to a husband. However, her aunts see it differently. They want to find a suitable mate for her among the resort guests. When Emily meets baseball player Carter Stockton, life changes for both of them. Seilstad is a fresh voice in historical fiction and is winning hearts with her spirited and engrossing stories. ■



The Forgotten Marilyn

**BORN IN IOWA, MARILYN MAXWELL BECAME A
BIG BAND SINGER, MOVIE STAR AND USO PERFORMER,
WHO WAS ROMANCED BY FRANK SINATRA,
BOB HOPE AND ROCK HUDSON**

WHEN ONE THINKS OF A FAMOUS BLONDE actress named Marilyn, most people envision Marilyn Monroe. But before Monroe ever made a film, Marilyn Maxwell was an established singer, dancer, actress and performer for our troops overseas. While her career ebbed and flowed, Maxwell starred in some of the most iconic movies, and sang some of the most recognizable tunes of all time. Her private life was stormy; she dated powerful, volatile men that broke her heart, but never her spirit.

She was born Marvel Marilyn Maxwell on August 3, 1920 in Clarinda, Iowa, (the birthplace of Glenn Miller.) Her father Harry sold insurance and her mother

Anne was a pianist. Marilyn had an older brother, Leland, and a brother Paul, who died prematurely. Her parents divorced when she was just a baby. Left to support herself and two children, Anne Maxwell took her offspring on the road with modern dancer Ruth St Denis, for whom she played piano. Marilyn made her stage debut at age three doing a butterfly dance at the Brandeis Theater in Omaha. At her mother's urging, the young girl took dance and singing lessons. She began her singing career on a radio program in Des Moines, Iowa. "[My mother] tried to fulfill her ambitions through me," Marilyn later opined. Former classmate Sally Presley recalled,

"she had a very pushy mother, one of those stage mothers like you read about."

When Marilyn was 15, her family moved to Indiana. Cathy Katz, one of Marilyn's nieces, says Anne "played the organ in the Embassy Theatre in Fort Wayne for the silent movies." Amos Ostot, a regional bandleader, heard the girl sing on a local station and hired her to tour with his band for \$35 a week. Maxwell quit school her sophomore year and took the job. Soon after, actor Charles "Buddy" Rogers signed her for a year-long tour across the Midwest. While at an Indianapolis nightclub engagement in 1939, Ted Weems recruited the teenager to perform with his band on "To Beat the Band." She was also asked to record "Monstro the Whale," with Fred Foley. Maxwell told *Motion Picture* magazine that Weems "suggested that I go to the Pasadena Community Playhouse, and he'd finance me and pay my salary for a full year. It would be an investment for him. Then, when I was signed by a studio — as he was so sure I would be — I could pay it all back." She sang frequently with the then-unknown Perry Como. After Perry made it big, in a later interview with the *Milwaukee Journal*, Maxwell complained, "I don't know what's with him. He's never had Ted or me on his program. I've asked Perry about it, and he tells me it's a fine idea and gives me the name of the man for my agent to call, but when he does call, nothing happens."

In 1942, Maxwell took a screen test at Paramount studios. That year she was cast in "Stand By For Action" with Robert Taylor. It bombed at the box office, so the starlet went on a U.S.O. tour instead of rushing back into films. When she returned, she discovered that the most prestigious movie studio in Hollywood wanted to sign her for a contract. MGM recognized that the young bubbly blonde had potential. "When I was signed by Metro, Louis B. Mayer said 'Marvel' sounded too phony," she declared to syndicated columnist Earl Wilson in 1952. "They were tossing all possible names around and I ventured meekly that Marilyn was my real [middle] name." Mayer liked the idea, but Marilyn's mother was disappointed. Ironically, she had chosen "Marvel Marilyn Maxwell" as her child's name, because she believed that it would look perfect on a theater marquee.

The newly deemed "Marilyn Maxwell" was featured in "Salute to the Marines" in 1943. Later that year her role opposite Van Johnson in "Dr. Gillespie's Criminal Case" proved a moderate success. Maxwell appeared in two subsequent films in this Lionel Barrymore series. In "Swing Fever," also released in 1943, Marilyn played alongside Kay Kyser. She sang "One Girl and Two Boys," "Mississippi Dream Boat," "I Planted a Rose," and "I Never Knew." Marilyn also appeared in the Judy Garland/Van Heflin musical "Presenting Lily Mars." In 1943, the young actress appeared in a total of ten films.

Following these flicks, Marilyn made

“Three Men in White,” the second in the Dr. Gillespie series. Also in the film was Ava Gardner, who became a real life rival.

Marilyn met her first husband on the set of the 1944 Abbott and Costello picture, “Lost in Harem.” While not a lucrative endeavor, Marilyn did sing the notable song “What Does It Take to Get You?” Her character teased, “I can even get as far as second base with Frank Sinatra too.”

She Fell For Sinatra, But Married Another Man

ALTHOUGH MARILYN WOULD SOON DEVELOP A GENUINE INTEREST in Mr. Sinatra, it was co-star John Conte who pursued a romance with her. They married after filming wrapped, but were divorced in two years. As if foreshadowed by the song, Marilyn began spending a great deal of time with Frank Sinatra, and was the first guest on his radio program. Cathy Katz remembers “When my parents were married, for their honeymoon they went to Chicago. My aunt met them there with Frank Sinatra, whom she was friends with for awhile. I remember the four of them went out to dinner. And my mother was pretty excited about that!”

Nick Sevano, a friend of the singer, recalled Marilyn “was gorgeous, simply gorgeous, and nice too. She spent hours showing me around Hollywood when I first came out because she knew that I had once been associated with Frank, and they were crazy about each other.” Sinatra wanted to divorce his wife, Nancy, for his new love interest, but was advised against it by associates.

One time Nancy found a diamond bracelet Frank intended for Marilyn as a present. She confronted her when Maxwell arrived to attend the Sinatras’ New Year’s Eve party, demanding she leave her husband alone. After Sinatra divorced Nancy, he married Ava Gardner, but his flings with other women didn’t end. In a 1952 incident at Bill Miller’s Riviera in Fort Lee, New Jersey, Marilyn came to hear Sinatra. Consequently, her presence upset his new wife, who was convinced he was singing to his old flame. Ava left in a huff, then sent a terse note to Frank, along with her wedding ring. Ava later admitted she had overreacted to Marilyn’s presence.

In 1945, Ms. Maxwell made her final Dr. Gillespie film entitled “Between Two Women.” In the picture, Marilyn vied for Van Johnson’s affections once more. In one scene she states that, “I admit that girl, (played by Gloria DeHaven), isn’t exactly repulsive, but anything she’s good at I can do better, quicker, and cheaper!” Van and Marilyn eventually wed at the end of the film.

Marilyn was excited to be cast in the now iconic 1946 “Ziegfeld Follies,” but her songs performed with the likes of Lucille Ball and Jimmy Durante, were cut from the final film. Her luck changed when she was asked to become a regular on Bing Crosby’s popular “Kraft Music Hall,” and she signed on for additional U.S.O. tours. Also that year, Maxwell was cast in the

film “The Show-Off,” playing Red Skelton’s wife. The couple sang the familiar tune “I’ve Got You Under My Skin.”

Made in the summer of 1946, but shelved until 1948, the film “Summer Holiday” was Maxwell’s preeminent role for MGM. “That was my real introduction to acting,” she reflected. “For although I’d been in pictures before I played the role of Belle, I certainly hadn’t been an actress. I’d been Marilyn Maxwell, going through some necessary motions for the camera, and luckily getting by.”

In 1947 she made yet another movie with Van Johnson, “High Barbaree,” but usual Johnson co-star June Allyson stole the show. “With the studio cutting down its planned schedule...it didn’t seem as though there was anything left for me; so I went to Mr. Mayer and asked him to release me from my contract. The whole thing was very friendly, and the studio finally agreed to let me go.”

Now on her own, she freelanced, and landed a role at RKO after darkening her blonde hair. She played in the 1948 film “Race Street.” Afterwards, she appeared with Jack Benny in his London Palladium Show. Benny’s daughter Joan wrote about her encounters with the actress in her book “Sunday Nights at Seven:” “The engagement at Palladium was a great success and sold out every performance... Marilyn Maxwell sang and did a skit with my father as the ‘sexy dumb blonde,’ similar to the role Marilyn Monroe later played... ‘Max’ never made it big, but her name was well-known, she had a nice singing voice and fair amount of talent... Sexy and glamorous — yes, *very* — but hardly dumb. I liked her because she was one of the few of many people who came in and out of my life who paid attention to me... I enjoyed knowing Max for a short time. She was a neat lady.”

By 1949 Marilyn finally starred in a film that received attention. “Champion,” with Kirk Douglas was a raw, earthy picture that propelled Douglas’ career. “Key to the City,” made in 1950 alongside Clark Gable and Loretta Young, was a motion picture where Maxwell was clearly not the star.

Looking for love yet again, Marilyn remarried on New Year’s

Day 1950 to 31-year-old Anders McIntyre, owner of the Encore Room. They wed in a cottage at the Santa Barbara Biltmore Hotel. She wore a gray suit and hat, not a gown. The marriage dissolved after one year amid allegations of affairs and domestic abuse.

Marilyn bounced back quickly and began another tour of entertaining the troops. It always seemed to bolster her spirits as well as theirs. In June of 1950, Marilyn became the first female performer to go to Korea. She told friends on her return that “conditions were rugged — once they shot a sniper right near where I was standing.”

That year her father died, followed by her mother a year later. She missed the funerals of both her parents because she was on U.S.O. tours for American servicemen overseas. The other celebrity on the tour was Bob Hope.

Younger days: Marilyn on screen, posing, sunning, singing with mom.



Interested in each other early on, the two began an affair while touring. In 1951, they made a film together entitled, "The Lemon Drop Kid." A ubiquitous holiday classic, "Silver Bells," was introduced to the world with the Hope/Maxwell duet. Their affair was not kept under the radar, despite their claims of being merely friends. In fact, on the Paramount lot, Marilyn was even referred to as "Mrs. Bob Hope." Famed gossip columnist Louella Parsons interviewed Hope's wife, Dolores, about the rumors of her husband's infidelity. "Our marriage is stronger than ever," Mrs. Hope maintained. Yet according to Arthur Marx, who wrote an unauthorized biography on the comedian, Dolores and her mother begged Bob to end the affair.

Their pleas fell on deaf ears and overseas it was common knowledge that Bob and Marilyn were romantically involved. Maxwell's personal secretary, Jean Greenberg, told Marx that "Bob asked Marilyn to marry him when they were in Ireland together. But she turned him down because she knew Dolores would never give him a divorce" [due to her Catholic faith]. The affair nearly proved embarrassing.

When Marilyn Maxwell was the Mystery Guest on the May 10, 1953 episode of "What's My Line?," she used a high-pitched baby voice that threw off the panel. Asked by a blindfolded Bennett Cerf if she was a female, Marilyn quipped, "the last time I looked," getting a big laugh from the audience. But then host John Daley casually brought up Bob Hope's name. Maxwell kept her cool, not betraying just how intimately she knew the famed comic.

Marilyn then appeared in "New Mexico," a western made with Lew Ayres. Although low-budget, Maxwell again was allowed to show off her best talents: singing and dancing. Her next film role came in 1953 opposite Hope, and Mickey Rooney, who was strangely cast as her nephew. Her singing redeemed the picture. Also that year, Maxwell was featured in "East of Sumatra" with Jeff Chandler and Anthony Quinn.

An article by Hollywood reporter and celebrity biographer Bob Thomas in 1953, noted that "With myopia in one eye, and astigmatism in the other, Maxwell wears [glasses] at all times, except while performing." Asked if it made her feel less glamorous she replied, "It used to be hard at MGM because I couldn't see the chalk marks on the floor that showed where I was supposed to stand. So the boys worked up a system for Esther Williams and me — she can't see either. They put a couple of small boards on the floor. When our feet hit them, we stopped." She blamed dimly lit dress-

MARILYN WAS REFERRED TO AS "MRS. BOB HOPE" BY INSIDERS WHO KNEW OF THEIR AFFAIR. BOB EVEN PROPOSED TO HER.



Marilyn and Rock visit her family; posing; with Bob Hope; with Matthew.



ing rooms, bright spotlights, and smoky clubs that she performed in during her youth for her vision problems.

Two Peas In A Pod

OFTEN CONFUSED with another attractive blonde, Marilyn Monroe, Maxwell recalled for Bob Thomas that back in 1948, when she threw a Christmas Eve party at her Hollywood home, Marilyn Monroe showed up uninvited. The two women chatted about the similarity of their names, with Monroe falsely claiming that "Marilyn" was her birth name. Maxwell advised her guest, (actually born Norma Jean Baker), that perhaps she should take a different stage name, so they wouldn't get mixed up with one another. Five years later, Marilyn Monroe had become the bigger star. "I was the only Marilyn in pictures until she came along," Ms. Maxwell ruminated. "I suppose she is subject to

the same confusion, but people often call me inadvertently 'Miss Monroe.' My answer is, 'No, I'm the Marilyn with her clothes on.'" Even friends would poke fun at the mistaken identity. As a prank, classmates from high school took the Monroe calendars and pasted Maxwell's head on the body.

Despite the comparisons with the younger blonde actress, Maxwell claimed to have no qualms with her counterpart, (younger by a mere four years.) "I think she has done a great deal of good for the movie industry. She is just what the business needed — someone to put some glamor and magic back into Hollywood. I think we have gone too far in promoting stars on the 'girl next door' level. We need a return to excitement and allure [like in] the days when Garbo was a reigning star," Maxwell affirmed.

While making films for Universal, Marilyn Maxwell was introduced to a man who would become her best friend: Rock Hudson. "Big Sam," as she called the Illinois native, was three years her junior. Actress Lori Nelson believed that Marilyn wanted to marry Rock and start a family with him. But Marilyn was also seeing writer/producer Jerry Davis. The two met on a blind date. She and Davis, five years her senior, tied the knot on November 21, 1954 in New York City. Stepping in as matron of honor was her sister-in-law, Kitten Maxwell. The honeymoon was in Acapulco, Mexico.

Davis was suspicious of Hudson from the start. He wondered why this man always seemed to hang around the house. Cathy Maxwell Katz, daughter of Marilyn's brother, Leland and his wife Kitten, said in an interview with *Midwest Today* that "I remember in the early '60s, [Aunt Marilyn] came to the New York area to do theatre. She got sick, and so she had to come and stay at our house, to recover. Rock Hudson came to visit her. He stayed at our house. Needless to say, we were pretty excited. I remember making pancakes for him one morning, thinking he was a handsome guy, but he was also very down to earth and friendly." Cathy says "I know they saw a lot of each other. They were very good

friends. The two of them loved to sit around the piano and play songs and laugh. [Rock] was actually pretty musical.”

On April 28, 1956, Marilyn gave birth to her only child, Matthew. In the book, “Rock Hudson: Friend of Mine,” longtime Hudson companion Tom Clark wrote of Rock’s relationship to Marilyn, “I could certainly understand why Rock fell for her. But I think he loved Marilyn’s son, Matthew Davis, even more...he and Rock had a great relationship. Matthew was the son Rock had always wanted.” Hudson loved playing football with the boy, and doing other father/son activities.

In 1958, Marilyn made the comedy “Rock-A-Bye Baby” with Connie Stevens and Jerry Lewis. Maxwell played movie star Carla Naples, who — recently widowed — finds herself pregnant. She decides to return to her hometown to lay low and figure out what to do next. There she meets a former boyfriend, played by Lewis, whom she recruits to be the father of her triplets, despite the fact that Lewis marries her sister, played by Stevens, instead.

In 1960, after six years of marriage, Maxwell filed for divorce, citing “extreme cruelty” and accusing her husband of being jealous of her leading men and having a gambling problem. She told the judge that Jerry Davis had said to her the day after the two wed, that he had married her “because I was a glamor girl and could help support him. I thought that was an odd sense of humor, but later I found out he wasn’t kidding.” Marilyn was granted a divorce, receiving \$500 a month in alimony and \$150 for child support. Former agent George Ward stated, she “picked the wrong men, always. She brought on her own problems.”

Nationally syndicated columnist Dorothy Kilgallen wrote of the alleged affair between Marilyn and Rock Hudson. “Marilyn Maxwell’s estranged husband, screenwriter Jerry Davis, has been getting his kicks by telling friends he expects Marilyn to waltz down the aisle with Rock Hudson as soon as she gets the divorce,” Kilgallen reported. “Marilyn says she has no such plans, she and Rock are just good friends, and she wishes Jerry would stop being such a wise guy with his wedding flashes.”

In April 1960, when asked about her health habits, the actress gave diet and exercise advice. “When I am home and not working, I spend an hour a day at a gym...I have a stationary exercise bicycle at home,” she explained. “It isn’t easy for me to resist myself because I love to eat, [not sweets,] but I could live on pasta, spaghetti, lasagna, macaroni au gratin.” She recommended exercising with hand weights and eating a high protein diet. For ten cents readers could send for a copy of “Marilyn Maxwell’s Sensational 30 pounds in 30 Days Diet.”

For a *Milwaukee Journal* interview, the actress spoke of her new starring role in a television version of the Marilyn Monroe film “Bus Stop.” Maxwell played Grace Sherwood, owner of Grace’s Diner, the place where travelers stop off. The plot for this hour-long drama was set in Colorado, and aired for 26 episodes on ABC between 1961-62. Marilyn effused, “I get to play Grace as a young widow still interested in men, and I want to keep it romantic. What I don’t want them to do is make me a kind of mother for everybody, or the big fixer of everybody’s troubles.” Cathy Katz says of “Bus Stop” that Marilyn “was hoping it would lead to some other roles. She was feeling encouraged that she could continue her career even as she got older.”

But Marilyn spoke of her disdain for not having been selected to be one of that year’s inductees for a Hollywood Star of Fame. “I have to admit I was puzzled and mad when I couldn’t find my name [on the list], especially after I saw all those rock n’ rollers were there. Conway Twitty?” Marilyn said, bemused.

She had also complained of being stereotyped by producers as “the other woman,” asking “do I look like a blonde menace?” Actually, in real life, she *was* “the other woman” often enough.

Bob Hope cast Marilyn in his 1963 comedy “Critic’s Choice,” in which she played his ex-wife, a movie star. Hope, a film critic who must now go easy on current spouse Lucille Ball, who has written a play script, still butts heads with his first wife, saying, “I miss you too. On my masochistic days.”

In 1964, Maxwell made the film “Stage to Thunder Rock” depicting a woman recovering from life on the streets. Four years

“SOMETIMES I GET CALLED ‘MISS MONROE.’ MY ANSWER IS ‘NO, I’M THE MARILYN WITH HER CLOTHES ON.’”

later she scored a breezy western, “Arizona Bushwhackers” alongside Scott Brady and Howard Keel. In 1970 she made her last movie, appearing in a cameo role in “The Phynx.”

Taking a break from motion pictures and entertaining soldiers, the aging blonde spent the late 1960s and early 1970s appearing on TV and in burlesque shows, mainly for the money. She supplemented her income selling household cleaning products. Despite yearly requests from Bob Hope to resume U.S.O. tours, Marilyn declined, since the tour schedule would mean spending Christmas away from her son. “Ever since I divorced Jerry I’ve decided to remain with Matthew for Christmas,” she explained.

The Final Curtain Call

MARILYN MAXWELL’S LAST ROLE WAS AS AN AGING STRIPPER PAST her prime on an episode of the TV series “O’Hara — United States Treasury,” starring David Janssen. By 1972, she was planning a nightclub act for Chicago and had been offered roles in the film “Mama’s Boy,” and a recurring part on the soap “Return to Peyton Place.” Overjoyed with job offers, Marilyn phoned Rock Hudson with the news. The following day, March 20th, Marilyn collapsed in her closet while getting dressed, the result of a heart attack and a battle with pulmonary disease and hypertension. Her 15-year-old son Matthew found her lifeless body after returning home from school. At a neighbor’s house, he called Rock Hudson. “He was wonderful to my cousin Matthew, who was her only son,” says Cathy Katz. “Rock came right over, and took care of Matthew.” Hudson took the boy home with him.

Jerry Davis, Matthew’s father, was in Mexico, and was not able to be reached for several days. In the meantime, Clark and Hudson made the funeral arrangements. Marilyn was cremated and her ashes were scattered at sea. As soon as Davis returned home, he reclaimed his son. In his book, Clark wrote, “It developed into one of those Hollywood circuses, complete with shoving photographers and screaming fans and all that hysterical nonsense.” After Maxwell’s death Hudson became obsessed with his own mortality and wanted Clark to promise, “Don’t ever let them turn my funeral into a circus like poor Marilyn’s.”

Bob Hope delivered the eulogy. “If all her friends were here today we’d have to use the Colosseum,” he said. “Marilyn had an inner warmth and love for people...and the thousands of servicemen she entertained over the years felt this. Who would have thought this little girl from Clarinda, Iowa, would do this much and go as far as she did? Who knows why some of us are called earlier than others?” Hope somberly continued. “Maybe God needed a lovely gal to sing and cheer Him up, and so He called her... I must say it was a great job of casting.”

Cathy Katz laughs “I just remember her as my glamorous aunt. Sometimes we would get to see her in live shows. She had a great sense of humor. I remember she loved to laugh. She was a very warm, affectionate kind of person. I wished we had lived closer and been able to see more of her. I think she regretted that too. My father was her only family, really. Even though we didn’t see her very often, she always made us feel special.”

Ms. Katz reflects “My aunt loved performing. It was what she wanted to do. It seemed to me that it was just a natural thing for her to pursue. I wish she had the chance to be in some more movies that utilized her talents more. It’s a difficult business.”

Marilyn Maxwell never gained cult status like some of her contemporaries. Nevertheless, she devoted much of her time to entertaining troops, often at the risk of career opportunities and personal safety in combat areas. She won the hearts of some of the most famous men of her generation, despite never marrying the right man. Her songs were timeless, her films were authentic and strongly played. Her beauty and talent rivaled any number of the more famous actresses of her era. ■

country chronicle

A MAGAZINE-WITHIN-A-MAGAZINE PRESENTED AS A REGULAR FEATURE OF MIDWEST TODAY

the midwest's waterfalls

numerous in number, their ethereal beauty dots the countryside and speaks to us of geology that is eons old



By Mary and Tom Kidman

THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT the sight and sound of water running over falls that stirs the spirit. Whether it be a trickle or a gusher, it always attracts our attention. A small stream crossing a farmer's land may gurgle merrily as water dances over rocks and then tumbles down a several-foot drop. A power-filled, majestic waterfall is spellbinding.

Follow the mist that tosses in drafts around the cataract;

the column of vapor, in its ascent, licks the rocks clean. Look down at the water breaking into spray, whose whiteness gives the idea of snow. Feel the mist on your face and listen to the exciting roar that talks of Divinity.

Waterfalls are classified into various categories as follows:

Block/Sheet: Water from a wide river or stream drops over a ledge forming what appears to be a "sheet" of water. A waterfall in a Block form occurs over a wide breadth of the stream. The waterfall must be wider than it is tall.

Cascade: Water descends over gradually sloping rocks, a series of small steps in quick succession, or a rugged sloping surface of some kind.

Cascades can be both gradual and steep. "Cascade" is a commonly used term when referring to waterfalls and rightly so. The surface beneath it is irregular. It is generally water that flows down in small steps or stages. Multi-Cascading is more than one cascade in a row.

Chute: A violent section of water that is forced through a narrow passage due to cliff walls or large rocks. Depending on the descent angle, they may be classified as rapids, not a waterfall. Very common in canyons where the water is wall-to-wall.

Classical: Similar to Block, water drops over a ledge but is close to equal in width and height. →

Upper Silver Falls (top) and Eagle River Falls (below), are both in Michigan.





country chronicle

Segmented: Pieces of land segment the river (same watercourse) causing the water to fall in sections. Not to be confused with watercourses that form different waterfalls side-by-side as in Parallel /Twin falls.

FINDING FALLS

■ The highest waterfall in Wisconsin is located in Pattison State Park, named **Big Manitou Falls**. It is fed by a lake and after spilling over a small dam the Black River runs under a bridge and then drops at Big Manitou Falls into a deep ravine. It has beautiful rapids en route.

■ The 53-foot **Minnehaha Falls** is located where a tributary named Minnehaha Creek meets the Mississippi River. The creek is located in Hennepin County, Minnesota and extends from Lake Minnetonka in the west and flows east for 22 miles through several suburbs west of Minneapolis and then heads south. The name comes from the Dakota language.

■ **Dunning's Spring**, near Decorah, Iowa is a nice park where spring waters ramble down through large and small blocks of limestone, forming Iowa's highest waterfall. On a warm day, it's quite refreshing to walk in the spring's cool waters, though you should be careful on the rocks as they can be slippery.

■ Located at Taum Sauk Mountain State Park, Missouri's highest point (1,772 ft.), **Mina Sauk Falls** drops 132 feet down a series of rocky volcanic ledges into a clear, rock-bottom pool at the base.

■ **Starved Rock State Park**, which observes its 100th anniversary this year, gets its name from an American Indian legend. Sparkling waterfalls are found at the heads of all 18 canyons, and vertical walls of moss-covered stone create a setting of natural geologic beauty uncommon in Illinois. Some of the longer-lasting waterfalls are found in French, LaSalle and St. Louis canyons.

■ Michigan's Upper Peninsula contains over 324 waterfalls, many of them isolated and well off the beaten path. **Taquamenom Falls** is the second largest west of the Mississippi, and is the largest naturally dyed or colored waterfall in the United States (containing tanin). **Bond Falls** is perhaps the most picturesque in Michigan with good water flow. **Sturgeon Falls** is surprisingly powerful. ♦

Fan: Waterfalls of a Fan form occur when the breadth of the water in the waterfall increases during its decent, causing the base of the falls to appear much wider than the top of the falls. Water falls through a relatively narrow crest and spreads out as it descends.

Horsetail: These waterfalls are characterized by the constant or semi-constant contact the water maintains

with the bedrock as it falls. Horsetail waterfalls can be almost vertical, as well as very gradual.

Keyhole/Slot: Water pushes through a narrow area before falling. A keyhole is a special slot as it has a rounded part at the bottom of the slot resembling the old fashioned keyholes. Sometimes the water has forced (eroded) out a part of the rock causing an actual hole.

Plunge: The classic waterfall form, where the water drops vertically, losing most, or all contact with the rock face. This waterfall form has also been referred to as a "Cataract" and a "Vertical" form waterfall.

Punchbowl: This occurs where the stream is constricted to a narrow breadth and is forcefully shot outward and downward into a large pool.

my dad, the farmer

By Don Kesinger

IN 1904 THEODORE ROOSEVELT Kesinger was born in eastern Kansas near the town of Lawrence. When he was very young they loaded up everything in two wagons and drove the livestock to Greensburg, Kansas. He went to school there until he was 15 and then he dropped out of school.

Family members say he was a very good football player. Later he was very sorry he quit school. About that time he cut off the end of his right index finger in a threshing machine. This saved him from being drafted in World War II.

He and my mother were married in 1929. In 1934 they moved to an old farm house south of Haviland, Kansas. It was land owned by my maternal grandfather. I was three years old at the time.

As I grew up I found out it was all about excellence in farming. He wanted straight rows and no weeds in his fields. We pulled stray rye plants out of the wheat fields so he could sell seed wheat. No one wants seed wheat with rye in it to contaminate their own fields. We also raised maize. He wanted straight rows and no weeds. The cultivator was set to cut out the weeds.

During the "dirty '30s" we had crop failures. Then we were trying to live off of egg and cream money. Sometimes it was \$2 a week. We would sell eggs for five cents a dozen. Gasoline was nine cents a gallon. During the 1940s the great drought was over and things were looking up. Good crops and good prices.

Dad farmed until 1976. After harvest he threw his straw hat in the running combine and proclaimed he was retiring. He didn't last until Christmas. He came into the living room, sat down in his favorite chair and passed away. He died of a massive heart attack. There were two registered nurses in the room but they couldn't revive him. ♦



savor edible flowers

THE CULINARY USE OF flowers dates back thousands of years with the first recorded mention being in 140 B.C. Many different cultures have incorporated flowers into their traditional foods.

Oriental dishes make use of daylily buds and the Romans used mallow, rose and violets. Italian and Hispanic cultures gave us stuffed squash blossoms and Asian Indians use rose petals in many recipes.

Chartreuse, a classic green liqueur developed in France in the 17th century, boasts carnation petals as one of its secret ingredients.

And, dandelions were one of the bitter herbs referred to in the Old Testament of the Bible.

Bean blossoms have a sweet, beany flavor. Nasturtiums have a wonderfully peppery flavor similar to watercress and their pickled buds can be substituted for more expensive capers. Borage tastes like cucumber, and miniature pansies (Johnny-Jump-Ups) have a mild wintergreen taste.

Violets, roses and lavender lend a sweet — even nectar-like — flavor to salads or desserts. Bright yellow calendulas are an economic alternative to expensive saffron, though not quite as pungent.

Other flowers may have a spicy or peppermint flavor.

Very young Dandelion buds fried in butter taste similar to mushrooms. They also make a potent wine. Rosemary is pine-like, sweet and savory.

A gardenia has a light, sweet flavor, while Gladiolus have a flavor similar to lettuce.

Hibiscus is slightly acidic, but boiled makes a nice beverage. Though pretty, a Hollyhock has a very bland, nondescript flavor, as do Impatiens.

Unopened sunflower buds can be steamed like artichokes.

Jasmine, on the other hand, has a delicate, sweet flavor and is used for teas.

Edible flowers of herb plants generally have a more intense flavor compared to the leaves and provide an additional dimension of visual enhancement.

You can use edible flowers as a garnish to make any dish look special on your table, but be sure the flavor of the flower compliments the dish. Here are a few ideas to beautify your recipes and perk up your taste buds:

- Place a colorful gladiolus or hibiscus flower (remove the stamen and pistil) in a clear glass bowl and fill with your favorite dip.

- Sprinkle edible flowers in

your green salads for a splash of color and taste.

- Freeze whole small flowers into ice rings or cubes for a pretty addition to punches and other beverages.

- Use in flavored oils, vinaigrettes, jellies, and marinades.

- One of the most popular uses is candied or crystalized flowers, used to decorate cakes and fine candies.

STRAWBERRY WONDER SALAD

Try this salad, which has nice flavor contrasts amongst the strawberries, salty and creamy feta cheese, crunchy walnuts and basil freshness.

1 basket of strawberries
1 head of red lettuce (or bag of baby / mixed herb lettuce)

1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese

1/3 cup toasted walnuts

1/4 cup shredded basil

1 small red onion, sliced finely

Edible flowers (such as nasturtium

Dressing:

1/2 cup fruity olive oil (we use Greek olive oil from Mytilene)

Salt and pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients together, reserving walnuts and edible flowers for garnish. Drizzle with olive oil dressing.

Note: Make sure any flowers you use have not been sprayed by insecticides. Check with your florist and your doctor before consuming. ♦



morning has broken...

THEY SAY “THE EARLY BIRD gets the worm” but if you’re photographer Tim Robbins — who likes to get up early — you also capture some of the prettiest scenes the rural Heartland has to offer. “Southern Wisconsin, Northern Illinois, and Iowa are places well known for rich

farmland. Getting to most of my photography destinations involves driving along country roads, especially during the early morning hours,” he explains. “Year after year, the beauty of the countryside can appear in any season, and when it does, it is almost always a surprise.”

A small sampling of his outstanding photos are shown above. They are, upper left and clockwise: Fairhaven Township, Carroll County, Illinois; a plowed field in LaSalle County, IL; corn shadows on an old barn in Carroll County; an approaching storm near Elva, Illinois. ♦



birdnotes

THE EASTERN MEADOWLARK is actually not a lark at all, but is related to the blackbird family. Nine and a half inches in length, it has a bright yellow breast with black crescent-shaped patch. This is a mid-sized bird, with a long, slender bill, short tail and long legs. It has a dark crown with light stripe, brown and black wings and tail, and

white tail markings. Meadowlarks a flutelike, whistling, three to five note song, that sounds like they are saying “spring of the year.” They sing from the ground or elevated perches (fence posts are popular).

Eastern Meadowlarks are found mostly in grasslands, croplands, along roadsides, golf courses, airports and fields. They are primarily ground foragers, as they like to probe for insects. The birds are fairly shy and if frightened, will explode into flight. They are socially gregarious and, during non-breeding times, can be found feeding and roosting in rather large flocks.

The Western Meadowlark is considered a “sibling species” and the ranges of these two overlap in the Midwest. ♦

country almanac by Mary Brooks

WE ARE THANKFUL FOR THE BEAUTY OF THIS SEASON, FOR THE GLORIOUS message that all nature proclaims. Roots, seeds and bulbs that lay dormant in Winter’s bosom, burst forth to proclaim a new day. Emerald green banners are unfurled across the hillsides. Purple finches are at work among the propeller-like seeds and peepers chorus. Thrushes sing a madrigal. On the mossy barn roof, pigeons coo in tones as soft as velvet. The saucy wren is chattering, telling us where she has been. Out in our pasture along the creek bed, where the turf is soft and willows sway gently, a newborn colt staggers beside his mother. A proud hen escorts her yellow brood and in the haymow are tiny tumbling kittens. Lambs and kids are a sportive crew, and there is a leggy calf that totters when its mother licks it. We catch a glimpse of dappled fawns trembling on knobby legs on nearby hills at dusk. In the morning, sunbeams dance from drops of dew that sparkle on the lawn. Spider webs cling like mystic emblems and are opal-hued. The sky is azure and hyaline. Up in the west field the plow turns the rich brown furrows, and the warm air is sweetly redolent of the earth’s dank smell. Buzzing bees are so busily at work on columbines. We go to where purple phlox grows straight and tall, and listen to the quiet murmurings of our little brook. ♦



LITERARY GALL

Stephen Ambrose was America's most famous author and historian, but his lies about Kansan Dwight Eisenhower have exposed his hidden self: It now appears Ambrose was the Bernie Madoff of the literary world, an audacious con man who corrupted the truth and harmed history

BEFORE HE DIED IN 2002, Stephen Ambrose was America's most famous and popular historian, who had sold five million books, and written a string of No. 1 best-sellers including "Band of Brothers" and "D Day." He won numerous awards, was the military adviser for the movie "Saving Private Ryan," and helped Ken Burns with a Lewis and Clark TV epic.

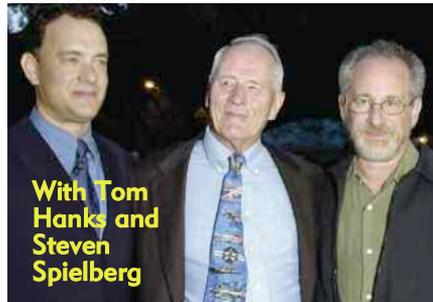
In 1998, Ambrose received the National Humanities Medal. In 2000, he was awarded the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service, the highest honor the State Dept. offers to civilians. In 2001, he was given the Theodore Roosevelt Medal for Distinguished Service. Ambrose won an Emmy as one of the producers for the mini-series "Band of Brothers." He also got the George Marshall Award, the Abraham Lincoln Literary Award, the Bob Hope Award from the Congressional Medal of Honor Society, and the Will Rogers Memorial Award.

Stephen Ambrose had made a name for himself by chronicling the life of Kansas native Dwight D. Eisenhower. Ambrose published a two-volume work, in 1970 and 1984, that had been considered "the standard" on the subject. He also wrote a three-volume biography of Richard Nixon.

But it now appears that Mr. Ambrose may have been the Bernie Madoff of the literary world — a shameless charlatan whose multitude of self-serving lies succeeded only because Eisenhower was no longer alive to refute some of them.

The unraveling of his reputation began with some important discoveries recently made by a historian associated with the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum in Abilene, Kansas.

Ambrose claimed he had spent "hundreds and hundreds of hours" interviewing the former President over a five year period and had been with him "on a daily basis for a couple of years" before he died in 1969. But Tim Rives, the deputy director of the Eisenhower Presidential Library told Richard Rayner of *The New Yorker* that records show that Ambrose saw Ike only three times, for a total of less than five hours, and was never alone with him. This is estab-



With Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg

lished by the fact that access to the former Prez in his retirement years was tightly controlled and his staff kept meticulous records of his activities and telephone calls. On seven of the nine dates on which Ambrose claimed in his 1970 book he met with the former President at Gettysburg, Eisenhower was meeting with others, traveling between Abilene and Kansas City, in the hospital at Walter Reed, or playing golf at Augusta.

When asked if his father may have met the author outside of business hours, John Eisenhower told Rives "Oh, God, no. Never, never, never." Ambrose, a Wisconsin native who taught at schools in Louisiana as well as Johns Hopkins, Rutgers, Berkeley, and at some European schools, got rich by continuing to draw on his supposed talks with Eisenhower for 15 books. But as Rayner writes, "as the citations grew more nebulous, the range of subjects that the interviews allegedly covered grew wider: the Rosenberg case, Dien Bien Phu, Douglas MacArthur, JFK, quitting smoking, the influence of Eisenhower's mother, Brown v. Board of Education." It is now suspected many of the quotes are total bunk, that Ambrose shamelessly made them up.

The author claimed that he was personally recruited by Eisenhower to write a biography about him, but Tim Rives says it was Ambrose who contacted Ike and suggested the project, as shown by a letter from Ambrose found in Eisenhower's files.

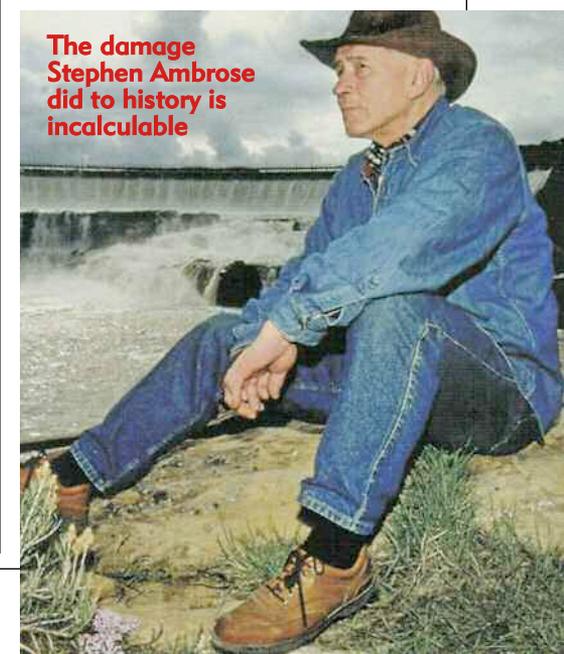
Historians have also uncovered a string of falsifications, inaccuracies and distortions by Ambrose through his various books, including in "Band of Brothers," when he egregiously misportrayed paratroopers in the American airborne landings in Normandy as unqualified and cowardly.

Veterans of troop carrier units have severely criticized Ambrose, noting that he did not interview a single troop carrier pilot. This is relevant because Ambrose accused the pilots of speeding up when the paratroopers were trying to jump.

The HBO series based on "Band of Brothers," as well as Ambrose's book, contain gross errors. Two Ambrose accounts in "D-Day," of alleged cowardice by British coxswains, are also refuted by actual participants in the incidents he lied about.

The *Sacramento Bee* identified more than 60 "significant errors, misstatements, and made-up quotes" in "Nothing Like It in the World: The Men Who Built the Transcontinental Railroad, 1863-1869," Ambrose's popular history published in August, 2000, about the construction of the Pacific Railroad between Council Bluffs, Iowa/Omaha, Nebraska via Sacramento, California and the San Francisco Bay at Alameda/Oakland.

A *Forbes* investigation of his work found cases of plagiarism involving passages in at least six books, with a similar pattern going all the way back to his doctoral thesis. The History News Network lists seven of Ambrose's works — "The Wild Blue," "Undaunted Courage," "Nothing Like It In the World," "Nixon: Ruin and Recovery," "Citizen Soldiers," "The Supreme Commander," and "Crazy Horse and Custer" — that copied 12 authors. ■



The damage Stephen Ambrose did to history is incalculable



HAVE YOU LOST YOUR MARBLES?

These tiny spheres have fascinated people for centuries. They were first made in the U.S. in Ohio, where they are still made.

PEOPLE HAVE BEEN ENJOYING MARBLES and marble-like games for thousands of years. It is thought that marbles started with the cave dwellers, playing with small pebbles or balls of natural clay. The Egyptians made glass marbles. Clay balls have been found in Native American burial grounds and have also been discovered in ancient Aztec pyramids. Today, it is estimated that 400 million people worldwide collect marbles.

In 1815 the earliest book on marbles was written in England. At that time they were made of china, clay, glass or even real marble. In 1848 a German glass blower invented the marble scissors (a mold to make marbles) that revolutionized the process of manufacturing them.

In 1890, James Harvey Leighton of Akron, Ohio, was granted a Patent to manufacture glass marbles.

Bruce Breslow of Moon Marble Co. in Bonner Springs, Kansas says one big development was when “the cat’s-eye marble was invented in Japan in the late 1940s. There were many factories that made marbles in the USA at this time. The American companies that learned to make the cat’s-eye marble remained in business. Kids wanted [them]! How are they made? Molten colored glass is injected into the clear glass before being cut into a slug and falling onto the forming rollers of the marble machine.”

Brian Graham, who studied archeology, creates glass marbles at his studio, The Canal Fulton Glassworks, and operates the American Toy Marble Museum in Ak-

ron, Ohio. He says that “Being a marble collector with a fondness for history and glass blowing, I decided to recreate these ubiquitous little glass balls. In the spirit of James Harvey Leighton’s creations, I make modern examples that are 100% faithful to the originals in execution and process of manufacture.”

Describing his methods, he says “All of the marbles are hand-gathered one at a time from a glass furnace. This process assures that each marble is unique and truly one of a kind. Each gather of glass is a random act. While I can choose the colors of glass that get put into the melting furnace, I cannot determine the final resulting mix of colors, blending or design patterns that appear on my marbles. This individual uniqueness is the central feature of the hand-gathered process of making marbles — you are never exactly sure what you will end up with.”

“The complete manufacturing cycle takes about 24 hours,” he explains. “I use a mix of modern recycled glass and personally batched colors like oxblood to make my marbles.”

Back in the days before kids had their own cell phones and laptop computers, chil-

dren enjoyed innocent pastimes like playing with marbles. Mothers would take some leftover denim from an old pair of blue-jeans and sew it together to form a little bag, or pouch, that would have a drawstring at the top. It was small enough to fit in a boy’s pocket and enable him to carry his treasure trove of marbles with him to school to enjoy on the playground during recess.

There has been a National Marbles Tournament since 1922, for boys and girls ages seven through 14. The meet is four days long and thousands of dollars in prizes and scholarships are awarded. It’s in Wildwood, NJ, June 19-23, 2011. ■

MARBLE TERMS

- **Mib/Kimmie:** One of 13, 5/8-inch marbles placed in the center of the circle.
- **Shooter/Taw:** The marble that the player flicks toward the target mibs. The shooter must be more than 1/2-inch in diameter, but not over 3/4-inch in diameter.
- **Knuckling down:** A player must have at least one knuckle touching the ground while flicking.
- **Fudging/Histing:** A player’s hand was lifted off of the ground while shooting. A player will lose their turn for doing so.
- **Flicking/Fulking:** While knuckling down the shooter is flicked by the thumb out of the player’s hand.
- **Aggie:** Either a marble made out of agate or a glass marble that looks like it’s agate. A glass or imitation aggie is also called an immie.
- **Alley:** A marble made of marble. Alley is short for alabaster.
- **Bombsies:** Dropping your shooter on the target marble.
- **Keepsies:** Playing for keeps. You get to keep all the marbles you win.
- **Lagging:** A way of choosing who shoots first. Players roll their marbles toward a line in the dirt (the lag line). Whoever gets closest without going over gets to shoot first.
- **Plunking:** Hitting the targets on the fly.

BASIC RULES

Players: 2 to 6 players.

Needed: Marbles (13 mibs and one shooter per player minimum) and a circle.

Rules: Each player decides on how many marbles they are going to use in their game.

Players begin by drawing a circle that is 3 to 10 feet in diameter. This is often determined by the skill of the players. The bigger the circle, the better the players. Players place 13 mibs (one of the 13 smaller 5/8-inch marbles) in the center of the circle to form an “x” or a circle.

The game begins by one player knuckling down at the edge of the circle and flicking their shooter. The object is to knock out one or more of the mibs, without the player’s shooter leaving the circle. If, the player has been successful, then the player can shoot again from the place where the shooter rested. If, after the player has missed and his/her shooter ends up outside the circle, then the player must leave the shooter inside the circle.

The next player takes a turn. Each mib that was knocked out counts for one point. A player may also knock out any other player’s shooter that remains in the circle. The game continues until all of the original mibs have been knocked out. The player with the most points wins.

In some versions the marbles knocked out of the circle are kept by the shooter. This is sometimes called “keepsies.” It should be agreed in advance that fines or losses will be paid in cheap marbles and not alleys. ■





Best Value Restaurants



A FREE GUIDE TO SELECT HEARTLAND EATERIES

SH JUNE, 4450 North Prospect Road # S1, Peoria Heights, IL. Some foodies claim it's the only first-rate place between Chicago and Kansas City. The well-known chestnut, "Will it play in Peoria?" reflects the discerning and sophisticated tastes of the local citizenry, which are manifest in what chef and owner Adam Sokolov brings to the table. The menu is surprisingly slim but ever-changing.

Appetizers, which run about \$10, include wild boar meatball with orange gnocchi (that's a little dish of dumplings) with pickled beets, candied beets, roasted beets, blood orange and tatsoi pistou (which is a sauce made with a dark green Asian salad green with a pleasant and sweet aroma).

There's also house made duck pâté (which is a sweeter almond) and coco-nib costini — which is a toast made with cocoa beans.

Soups include Penn Cove Mussels with rice cake, pickled cucumber and carrots, finger lime, Thai basil, coconut milk and green curry.

Or enjoy a salad of Gioia Burrata (which is a fancy name for mozzarella) Amaranth (a type of grain that's been cultivated 8000 years), and broccoli greens, beet chips, roasted shallots, fig balsamic and Podere Vallari — which is just extra virgin olive oil.

Entrées, which are about \$30, include diver scallops with thumbellina carrots (those are carrots that are sweet, squat and somewhat radish-like), plus ginger snap and buttermilk.



One of the entrées at June's Restaurant

It's the first time we've ever eaten beef cheek tortellini with purple top turnips, aigre-doux pear (which is a sweet and sour flavor) and sunchoke. (That's also called a Jerusalem artichoke and it has a crusty exterior and creamy interior that's delicious).

The names are a bit pretentious — brush up on your Italian and French — but the food is delectable. D\$40. 309-682-5863.

SH ALBERT'S RESTAURANT AND PUB, located in the Hotel Winneshiek in Decorah, IA. Starters at Albert's are unconventional, like Grass Run Farm pork belly with confit, fingerling potatoes, mesclun greens and sweet chili-ginger; or Iowa's Wonton — which is sweet corn, green onion, and garlic-chili with roasted corn dipping sauce. Or how about a cheese plate featuring a selection of artisan cheeses with candied walnuts, honey and sesame crackers? Our favorite appetizer is French Onion soup. Superb!

Enjoy such entrées as Truffle Mac (which is Cavatappi pasta — that's a spiral pasta) with gruyere, aged cheddar, parmesan,

black truffle oil and toasted panko crust and a side of seasonal vegetables for only \$13.95. Or how about Shrimp "Tica" style, featuring pineapple and cucumber salsa with black bean citrus rice. That's \$20.95.

You have a choice of steaks, served with a Maytag blue cheese crust or red-wine demi-glace. Or bite down on an eight ounce Canadian Walleye filet, ribs, or cedar plank salmon.

Enjoy a blue lemon salad that has blueberries in it, or a House ground burger with a bacon and cheese compote topped with a tangy bourbon drizzle.

The wine list gives a helpful description of each wine they sell, from vineyards spanning California, Italy and even New Zealand. D/\$35. 800-998-4164.

GB LAMBERT'S CAFE, 2305 E. Malone, Sikeston, MO. You haven't lived until you've eaten at Lambert's, "the only home of throwed rolls." Servers carry pots of "pass arounds" at no extra charge, like fried okra, black eyed peas, macaroni and tomatoes and fried potatoes. Try Something Southern (white beans and your choice of ham or bologna and two veggies served with a King Edwards cigar or Big Red Chewing Gum)! The chef salad is served in a bread bowl and they throw the whole garden in on this one. They serve chicken gizzards, beef liver and onions, chicken and dumplings, pot roast, fried catfish, hog jowls and so much more. We love their fried apples and their pineapple walnut salad. L/\$15; D/\$25. 573-471-4261. (Also locations in Ozark, MO and Foley, AL.) ■

GB-Inexpensive; SH-Moderately priced; WS-Worth a splurge

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The UPDATE & LOW DOWN

By JON MCINTOSH (email: midtod@iowatelecom.net)

WOULD JESUS HUNT DOVES?: MOURNING DOVES ARE THE TRADITIONAL bird of peace and a beloved backyard songbird. They mate for life but some people use mourning doves as live targets, sometimes calling them “cheap skeet.” Hunters kill more doves each year — over 70 million — than any other animal in the country. Doves are not overpopulated, and hunting them doesn’t feed anyone or help manage wildlife. Mourning doves — called the “farmer’s friend” because they eat weed seeds — pose no threat to crops, homes or anything of value to people. Many hunters don’t bother to retrieve the dead or wounded birds. Mourning doves nest during the fall hunting season, and hunting can orphan chicks, who starve in the nest without their parents’ care. But none of this matters to the crazies who have been obsessed with promoting the legalization of dove hunting in Iowa. They have crusaded for more than a decade to get the state to remove a ban it has had since 1918, and finally succeeded during the recent legislative session. So much for democracy. A statewide survey conducted by **Mason-Dixon Polling & Research, Inc.**



showed that 54% of Iowans *oppose* opening a dove hunting season while only 25% support. The survey results were consistent in every geographic region of the state and in every political demographic — Democrat, Republican and Independent. Yet the Iowa House, under GOP Speaker **Kraig Paulsen**, was in such a hurry to pass Democrat **Sen. Dick Dearden’s** bill, they even suspended the rules, took a raccoon-hunting bill that was ready for a vote, deleted everything in the bill, then replaced all its contents with language to match the dove-hunting bill the Senate had approved. Then Gov. **Terry Branstad** quickly signed it, after commenting “we need to make sure that the laws and the rules and the regulations that we put in place are in tune with God’s will and God’s message.” There is no management rationale for a new hunting season; they will simply be shot for target practice. Animal sacrifices in the Bible notwithstanding, does the Guv think Jesus would approve of inflicting harm on one of His creatures for mere “sport”?

SHE STILL SHOPS PRICE: WHEN FOOD NETWORK STAR **SANDRA LEE**, who spent teen years in **Wisconsin**, was profiled in a *Midwest Today* cover story in late 2008, we reported that she was keeping company with **Andrew Cuomo**, son of the former New York Governor.



Now Andrew, like his father, has been elected to that state’s highest office and Sandra has become “the First Girlfriend of New York State.” Sandra’s life story is truly inspiring. She was abandoned as a toddler by her teenage, drug-addicted mother; mentally and physically abused by her stepfather; and by the age of 12, responsible for the care of four younger siblings. She once had to testify against her father, whom she witnessed committing a rape. Determined to become a down-market **Martha Stewart**, Sandra parlayed her bleak childhood into a food empire for those of limited means. Derided by food snobs like **Anthony Bourdain** as the “hellspawn of **Kathy Lee** and **Betty Crocker**,” Lee is revered by viewers who appreciate the fact that on her TV show, she gives shortcuts to good-tasting meals that average people can afford, ideas for tablescapes, and even a cocktail recipe or two. Sandra has been a crusader against childhood hunger, brokering deals with companies like **Tyson** to donate to food banks. She’s extreme-

ly generous with her siblings, nieces and nephews — buying homes and cars, paying for college and hockey lessons. Sandra has embraced Cuomo’s three children — whom she calls her “semi-homemade daughters.” They all share a home in Mount Kisco, NY but, says Sandra “do not have full-time help. We are normal people. I still go to the grocery store. I still shop price.”

CATERPILLAR BLACKMAIL?: GOV. **PAT QUINN**, UNLIKE SO MANY OTHER Governors across the country, decided to responsibly deal with **Illinois’** budget gap by supporting an increase in the state’s corporate income tax rate from 4.8% to 7%. In response to the tax change, the multinational corporation **Caterpillar** threatened to move jobs out of Illinois. CEO **Doug Oberhelman** — who has hosted Republican fundraisers in his home — told Democrat Quinn that “the direction that this state is headed in is not favorable to business.” **Sen. Mark Kirk** (R-IL) then piled on, blasting Gov. Quinn and falsely claiming that because of the tax increases, Illinois now has “the highest corporate taxes in the industrialized world.” But Illinois still has a lower rate than **Iowa**, **Pennsylvania**, the **District of Columbia**, and **Minnesota**. Plus Illinois’ rate is only that high on paper. The state tax code is riddled with loopholes and giveaways, which allow Caterpillar to reduce its effective tax rate to just 1.4%. So Kirk is going to bat for a corporation that’s holding people’s livelihoods hostage in order to be greedy. Noteworthy: During the 2010 campaign, Caterpillar gave Kirk \$24,000.



DICKENSONIAN: REPUBLICANS IN **OHIO**, **MINNESOTA** AND **MISSOURI** are proposing sweeping changes to child labor laws, reviving an old claim that they are “unconstitutional,” even though the matter was settled in 1938. Hoping to resurrect the days of **Oliver Twist**, Missouri **State Sen. Jane Cunningham** has proposed legislation to eliminate child labor laws altogether in her state. She claims current restrictions are “implying that government can make a better decision than a parent.” Her bill eliminates the restriction on the number of hours or when a child is allowed to work, eliminates work permits, allows children to work in any industry no matter how unsafe, and eliminates the age requirement for child labor. There is no minimum wage provision for kids under the proposal, and the new law forbids inspectors from even looking at employment records! Cunningham’s plan is a blueprint for slave labor. It is the archetype of GOP goals for all workers, and taking advantage of children is just the beginning. *Preposterous.*



COVER-UP: IN 2008, AN UNDERCOVER VIDEO SHOT BY ANIMAL-RIGHTS activists at a hog operation near **Bayard, Iowa**, then owned by **MowMar Farms of Minnesota** (a supplier of **Hormel**), showed employees kicking sows, striking them with metal rods, and trying to kill piglets by smashing their heads on the floor. Criminal charges were filed against seven employees, though no one did jail time. Now, **Iowa lawmakers**, saying they need to “protect agribusiness,” have made it a crime for anyone to tape or even snap a pic on a cell phone, of animal abuse, whether it be at a big factory farm, or a retail pet store. But **Drake University** law professor **Ian Bartrum** warns that films exposing animal cruelty were among the type of speech protected by a 2010 **U.S. Supreme Court** ruling. ■

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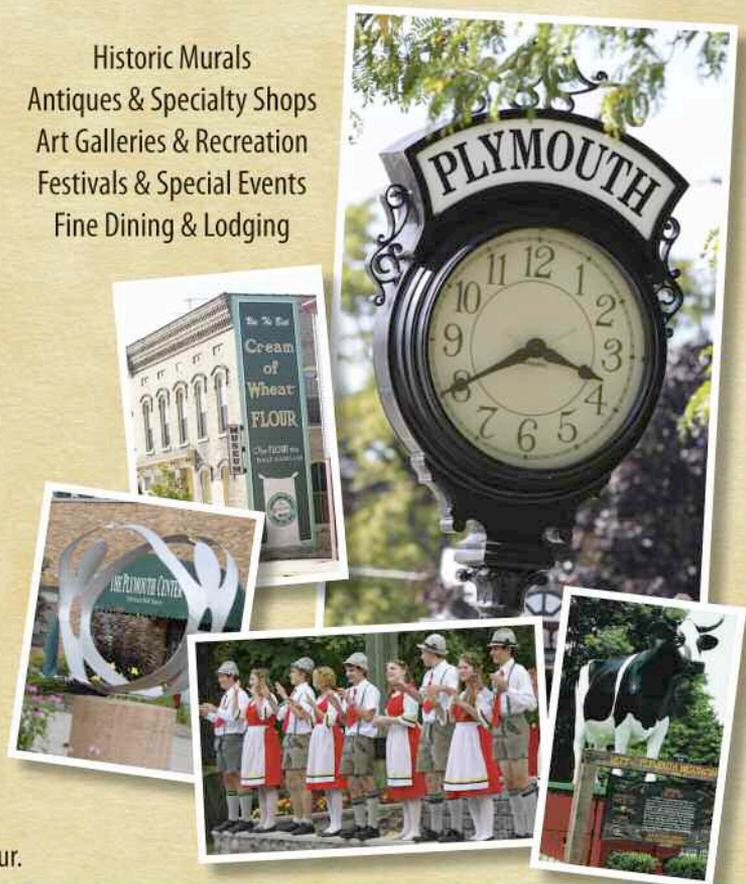


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