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MONTECITO MISCELLANY

by Richard Mineards



Richard covered the Royal Family for Britain's Daily Mirror and Daily Mail before moving to New York to write for Rupert Murdoch's newly launched Star magazine in 1978; Richard later wrote for New York magazine's "Intelligencer". He continues to make regular appearances on CBS, ABC, and CNN, and moved to Montecito six years ago.

Montecito Madness

Prolific author **Robert Eringer** has just come out with his latest novel, *Montecito Madness*.

Robert, 58, who is in a long-running legal battle royal with **Prince Albert of Monaco** over monies owed as the jet set principality's spymaster, says his newest book is "a wicked, funny look at the underside" of our rarefied enclave.

"I wanted to immortalize the spirit of barflies in the area. It's a colorful, dare I say, fluid account!"

To protect the identities of the eclectic cast of characters, Robert has used nicknames and pseudonyms.

"I've disguised them a little, but everyone in the book does exist."

"Hanging out at the old Piatti in the Upper Village, I cultivated a living soap opera of characters and chronicled their anecdotal vignettes in my Surreal Bounce blog under the moniker Piatti Crockpot. This evolved into a pictorial essay of Piatti's last month, celebrating and lamenting the demise of what had become a real-life Cheers."

"Unfortunately, things devolved after that... particularly with the histrionics of an elderly member of the old Piatti Gang. With this tragic turn, I now had the beginning, middle and an end – a framework in which to house the vignettes I'd already penned. The result is a breezy read with zest, brio and much comedy."

"The cover painting, by local artist **Thomas Van Stein**, captures the bar of the Montecito Inn, to which many of us defected. It is full of symbolism from the book, starting with Van Stein and myself perched at a table in the bar."

Now, as I recently reported in this illustrious organ, Robert has bought a bar of his own, which he has renamed BoHenry's.

Fuel for another novel in due course, no doubt...



Author Robert Eringer celebrates Montecito Madness in new novel

singles championships in 1974.

It was the same year the then-22 and 19 year old were due to tie the knot.

But the 60-year-old former ace writes in *The Outsider* about a situation that occurred just weeks before their planned nuptials.

"An issue had arisen as a result of youthful passion, and a decision had to be made as a couple. Chrissie called to say she was coming out to L.A. to take care of the 'issue.' I was perfectly happy to let nature take its course and accept responsibility for what was to come."

Evert was just 19 at the time and, though she was raised as a Catholic, Jimmy claims it was her idea.

"Chrissie, however, had already made up her mind that the timing was bad and too much was riding on the future. She asked me to handle the details."

He writes that his response was: "Well, thanks for letting me know. Since I don't have any say in the matter, then I guess I am just here to help."

In his mind, the relationship was over at this point and he realized he was not ready to get hitched.

"It was a horrible feeling, but I knew it was over. Getting married wasn't going to be good for either of us."

When he told Evert they were too

Connors' Confessions

Montecito tennis legend **Jimmy Connors** has launched his autobiography with a real zinger.

Jimmy, who won five U.S. Open titles, strongly hints in his memoir that he and on-court love **Chris Evert** called off their wedding after she got pregnant and had an abortion.

The tony twosome captured America's hearts when they dated in the '70s, particularly after they both won the Wimbledon



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Jimmy Connors writes a most revelatory memoir young and should take a step back, he recounts her reply was: "OK if that's what you think. I've got a match tomorrow. Not a problem."

And that was it.

He says he loved Evert, but he knew both their ambitions would ultimately get in the way of them having a future together.

"It kept going back to the same old question," he writes. "Can two number ones exist in the same family?"

As well as their relationship - and his tennis career - Jimmy writes about his struggles with dyslexia, the infidelity that almost ended his marriage to current wife, Patti, and a gambling addiction, as well as his on-court battles with some of the biggest names in the game.

Evert has yet to comment on the allegations...

Woodstock for Capitalists

It has been described as part rock concert, part investment workshop. The annual gathering of Berkshire Hathaway shareholders in Omaha, Nebraska, is an odd mix.

And this year, I note, Montecito's Kathy Ireland was among the 30,000 faithful who joined Berkshire CEO Warren Buffett at the weekend event.

Kathy, who used to be a fixture in the *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue for 13 consecutive years with her last appearance coming in 1996, now heads her own global design conglomerate, Kathy Ireland Worldwide, estimated to be worth more than \$2 billion.

She has also written six books, including three for children, and has an extensive portfolio of real estate in California and Hawaii.

Buffett's annual meeting began humbly in 1982 with a crowd of 15 in an insurance company cafeteria, but it has been growing steadily just as the company's stock price rose to become the most expensive in America, reaching \$162,904

Kathy Ireland joins Warren Buffett in Omaha, Nebraska



for a Class A share last week.

Now the meeting regularly fills the city's 18,300-seat arena and every nearby overflow room.

Buffett, 82, likes to call it "Woodstock for Capitalists."

With entrepreneurial Kathy in the mix, he was clearly in good company...



Author Bonnie Buckner has a dream job

Dream Come True

Bonnie Buckner is, by her own confession, a dreamer.

So it is no wonder Bonnie, who studied at Santa Barbara's Fielding Graduate University, has titled her first book *Dream Your Self Into Being*.

"I teach business and creative professionals how to unlock their imaginations and unfold their greater selves," she explained at a bijou launch bash at Tecolote, the bibliophile bastion in the Upper Village.

"This took me about seven months to put together.

"It teaches readers how to understand dreams and the messages of their dreams. Dreaming puts you in the driver's seat of you."

Bonnie is now, as she describes it, "putting the pieces together" for her second tome.

"It's currently gestating," she laughs...

Sizzling Season

Opera Santa Barbara's 20th anniversary season, not surprisingly, is going to be one of high note.

Aria fans gathered at the El Encanto to hear artistic director, Jose Maria Condemni, outline the performances scheduled when the latest program kicks off at the Granada in November.

"It is always a balancing act," he admitted, recounting the last season, which wrapped last month with Donizetti's



Jose Maria Condemi, Marie Plette, Evan Brummel, Joan Rutkowski, Steven Sharpe and pianist Paul Floyd at the El Encanto (photo by Priscilla)

comedic masterpiece *Don Pasquale* after well received productions of Verdi's *Aida* and Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*.

Puccini's *Tosca* will launch the new season, which will include Verdi's comedy *Falstaff* and Menotti's *The Consul*.

Soprano **Marie Plette** and baritone **Evan Brummel**, accompanied by **Paul Floyd** on piano, sang arias from the three works, concluding with "Some Enchanted Evening," from Rodgers and Hammerstein's 1949 classic Broadway show *South Pacific*.

OSB executive director **Steven Sharpe**, who was also celebrating his birthday, said it was "no small feat" for a regional opera company to last for 20 years.

"It is going to be a momentous season. The trajectory in the last few years has pushed the envelope and everything is in balance."

Among the guests were **Herb and Elaine Kendall**, **Christopher Lancashire** and **Catherine Gee**. **Duncan and Suzanne Mellichamp**, **Geoff and Joan Rutkowski**, **Bob and Sandy Urquhart**, **Stefan and Christine Riesenfeld**, and **Mara Abboud**...

Al Fresco Afternoon

It was not only hats, but giant umbrellas that were out in force when Angels Foster Care of Santa Barbara held its second annual Al Fresco Afternoon on



Angels Foster Care co-chairs Marsha Kotlyar and Sue Bickett with Meichelle Artzn and co-chair Michele White at the Biltmore (photo by Priscilla)

the Riviera on the impeccably groomed lawns of the Biltmore under the searingly hot sun.

The charity, which has placed 129 babies in homes in the last six years, had 210 guests, more than twice the number of last year, helping raise more than \$20,000 for the cause.

"Our first event was put together in six weeks," says founder **Meichelle Arntz**. "This year we had far more time to organize. We actually oversold!"

Jim Scarborough emceed the bash while **Angel** and **Frankie Martinez** received Volunteer of the Year awards, and Montecito Bank & Trust collected Corporation of the Year.

Guests supporting the charity included **Sandi Nicholson**, **Carrie Towbes**, **Alix Mattingly**, **Thomas Rollerson**, **Mindy Denson**, **Kathleen Cooper**, **Mollie Ahlstrand**, **Lana Marmé**, **Ivana Firestone**, **Janet Garufis**, **Kerrie Kilpatrick-Weinberg**, **Marjorie Palonen** and **Barbara Goldsmith**...

Another Awesome Adderley Act

Santa Barbara Youth Ensemble Theatre, run by the ever dynamic **Janet Adderley**, had another success on its hands with its performance of the Jule Styne-**Stephen Sondheim** Broadway hit *Gypsy: A Musical Fable*, loosely based on the memoirs of the famous striptease artist Gypsy Rose Lee.

Camille Umoff, a 12-year-old SB Junior High student, was undoubtedly the hit of the show, with a voice and maturity well beyond her years.

Playing an overpowering stage mother, she starred in all four Lobero productions,



Gypsy star Camille Umoff with, left to right, Elise Guerrand-Hermes and Claire Velez, backstage at the Lobero

backed up by a young and very capable cast.

I caught Saturday evening's performance which also featured talented **Alexander Fell**, a Crane student, who made considerable impact as The Artful Dodger in last year's production of *Oliver!* and **Jacob Pelto**, an eighth grader at Providence Hall, making his debut.

Charles O'Connor's scenic design and **Thomas Marquez**'s colorful costumes added to the eclectic mix, while Janet's daughter, **Akina Adderley**, conducted the lively score, containing such classics as "Everything's Coming Up Roses" and "Together, Wherever We Go."...

Food & Wine Safaris

Tony twosome **Elizabeth Reed** and **Emily Roos** are celebrating the third anniversary of their Food & Wine Safaris.

Elizabeth, a former teacher of mentally handicapped children, and Emily, who splits her time between our Eden by the Beach and Sun Valley, Idaho, formulated the idea for the private winemaker dinners, starting in a small way at Tydes at the Coral Casino, where Elizabeth is a member.

"I asked the chef if she would make paella for a group of friends and, given it was a no corkage night, everyone brought a Spanish wine. This continued through France, Italy and New Zealand.

"In the meantime, I was doing a food and wine safari blog, which also has a Facebook page. As I covered more food and wine events, I began to meet a lot of winemakers. We came to the conclusion we should branch out and invite wineries and showcase the Central Coast and, sometimes, beyond.

"As the numbers increased, we moved our dinners to the Biltmore."

The duo have quite a following, with a list of more than 200 enthusiastic wine aficionados. But event numbers are limited to a maximum of 50.

I was at the Bella Vista the other day when Michelin-starred British chef **Charlie Rushton**, who used to work at one of my favorite London eateries, Mirabelle, formerly owned by **Marco Pierre White**, tried out his culinary wizardry with a four-course dinner featuring abalone, pinot rigatoni and herb crusted lamb accompanied by a selection of recent vintages from Cambria Estate Winery chosen by winemaker **Denise Shurtleff**, with guests including **Pat Andersons**,



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Susie Mitchell and hosts Emily Roos and Elizabeth Reed at the Food & Wine Safari dinner at the Biltmore (photo credit: Jonathan Ziegler)

Kate Packer, Dwight Coffin, and John and Susie Mitchell.

"We use the reverse pairing technique when we plan our dinners," says Elizabeth. "A winery is selected and then we ask the winemaker to come to the hotel a week or so before the dinner to plan the menu."

The system clearly seems to work very well.

The next Food & Wine Safari is on June 6 featuring Consilience and Tre Anelli wines. Elizabeth's e-mail is elizabeth@foodandwinesafari.com

Bon appetit!

Lovely Luncheon

A record 600 guests turned out at Fess Parker's Doubletree for the Women's Fund of Santa Barbara's 9th annual Presentation of Funds lunch, when a hefty \$525,000 was handed out to eight local non-profit agencies.

Since it began in 2004 with just 68 women, the fund, which now has a membership of 600, has awarded grants totaling more than \$4,125,000 to 55 organizations from Carpinteria to Goleta.

This year's recipients included Doctors Without Walls, Girls Inc. of Carpinteria, the Westside Boys and Girls Club, the Youth Violence Prevention Program and Women's Economic Ventures.

Among those joining in the luncheon largesse were **Stina Hans, Betty Elings Wells, Sallie Coughlin, Carol Palladini, Ginni Dreier, Mary Garton, Perri Harcourt, Mahri Kerley, Alice Willfong, Joan Dinaberg, Jo Thompson and Missy Sheldon...**

Enchanting El Eliseo

Summer outfits with long floral dresses were de rigueur when the International Circle of the Community Arts Music Association threw a garden party at *El Eliseo*, the beautiful Montecito estate of **Virginia Castagnola-Hunter.**

The boffo bash, co-chaired by **Bridget Colleary and Raye Haskell,** attracted 100 top donors, who were entertained as they strolled and sipped around the grounds by **Laurie Rasmussen** on the harp and flutist **Ritchie Gonzalez.**

Circle chair, **Bitsy Bacon,** welcomed guests, including **Patrick and Missy DeYoung, Christopher Lancashire and Catherine Gee, Tim Owens,**



Virginia Castagnola-Hunter, Andre Saltoun, Bitsy Bacon, Raye Haskell, and Bridget Colleary (photo by Priscilla)

Carla Hahn, Michael and Nancy Gifford, Barbara Burger, Bob and Val Montgomery, Andrew Mester, Herb and Elaine Kendall, Roger and Diana Phillips, Joanne Holderman, Andre Saltoun and John Lundegard...

Celebrating Sole Sisters

There was a great deal of sole searching when a Wine, Women & Shoes party was thrown at the Montecito Country Club to benefit CASA, Court Appointed Special Advocates of Santa Barbara County.

Waiters, dressed in all black, carried silver trays, each one featuring a single shoe style, while female models on raised plinths showed off the latest creative cobblery, along with dresses and hats.

"It's a really fun way to be stylish and also raise funds," says **Kim Colby Davis,** executive director.

More than 200 trendsetters, including **Marylove Thralls, Mindy Denson and Elsa Granados,** went to see what was afoot and raised around \$50,000 for the non-profit.

Rapid tongued **Clint Bell** from San Diego conducted the auction, which included trips to New York and the Napa Valley, and a stay at the El Encanto, while the ubiquitous **Andrew Firestone** emceed the bash, which was chaired by **Sabrina Bernardi.**

The well heaeparty concluded with a fashion show organized by Montecito's **Lana Marmé** Boutique, including colorful floral print outfits by the late Palm Beach, Florida designer **Lilly Pulitzer...**

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Lauren Elaine, Diana Palmer, Ariana Nobel, Melanja Jones and Aaron Schwartz at the SB Polo Club (photo by Priscilla)



Pamela Haskell, Alana Tillim, Steve Lovelace, Erika Kloumann and Gene Montesano at The Pan for the Arts Mentorship Program Performing Arts Center benefit (photo by Priscilla)

Historical Handel and Haydn Society

One of America's most historical groups, The Handel and Haydn Society from Boston, thoroughly entertained with a delightful Baroque concert at UCSB's Campbell Hall, their Santa Barbara debut.

Founded in 1815 – the year of the Battle of Waterloo when the Duke of Wellington vanquished Napoleon Bonaparte – the revered period instrument orchestra premiered Handel's Messiah, as well as Bach's St. Matthew Passion, Verdi's Requiem and Haydn's The Creation, in the U.S.

The Grammy-winning musicians, led by Canadian concertmaster **Aisslinn Nosky** – who also appears regularly with the Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra –, performed an exquisite Italian-inspired program with works by Locatelli, Corelli, Avison and Geminiani, completing the show with all of Vivaldi's 1723 work, The Four Seasons.

The concert, part of the UCSB Arts & Lectures program, was an absolute cracker...

Welcome Back, Ariana

After a year's break to start a family, **Ariana Nobel** got a surprise welcome back as general manager of the Santa Barbara Polo Club when the 102nd season kicked off at the weekend.

During the awards ceremony between the two main matches, Ariana was festooned with flowers by friends and officials, including polo manager **Melanja Jones** and veteran announcer **Andy Smith**.

"It came as a complete surprise," laughed Ariana, who replaces **Bob Puetz**, who has moved to the San Diego Polo Club.

Given the decidedly blustery weather,

the Kentucky Derby hat contest, which I was scheduled to judge, was postponed to this coming Sunday, Mother's Day.

"Most of the hats, given the strong winds, would have ended up in Camarillo if we'd gone ahead!" I quipped...

Barre Raised at The Pan

"Raise the Barre," a benefit for the Arts Mentorship Program Performing Arts Center was thrown at **Gene Montesano's** eatery, The Pan.

Monies raised will go towards the new 8,900-sq-ft East Cota Street headquarters for Santa Barbara Dance Arts, founded in 1997 by **Alana Tillim** and **Steven Lovelace**, who established the Arts Mentorship Program to grant rent subsidies for emerging arts groups and dance scholarships to low-income youth.

The program has received more than \$150,000 in construction grants, and so far \$330,000 has been raised in the last three months towards the \$500,000 total cost.

The group, which serves more than 600 dance students and 8,000 residents annually, hopes to move to its new space by October...

Sightings: **Kirk** and **Anne Douglas** dining on the patio at the Plow & Angel... Rocker **Brad Paisley** and his band noshing at Ca' Dario... **Carol Burnett** lunching with friends at Tre Lune

Pip! Pip! for now

Readers with tips, sightings and amusing items from Richard's column should e-mail him at richardmineards@verizon.net or send invitations or other correspondence to the Journal

My

What do these two have in common?

Michelle is a partner at Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, a mom, and a trustee at the Santa Barbara Foundation. **Janet** is a longtime humanitarian and founder of World Dance Santa Barbara, a unique class where every dollar raised is donated through a donor advised fund to communities in need. What Michelle and Janet have in common is they are both connected to the Santa Barbara Foundation.

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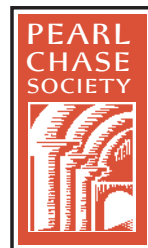
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