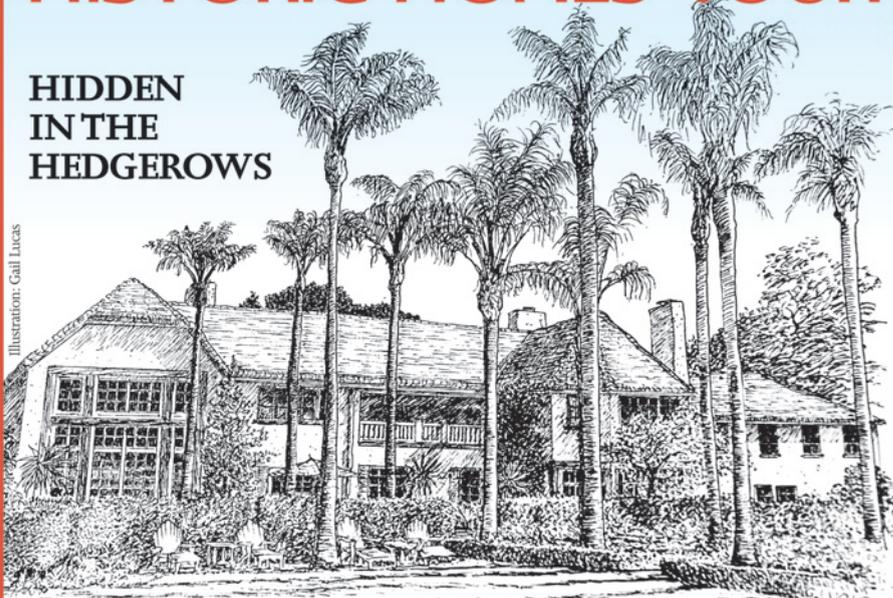


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MONTECITO
MISCELLANY

by *Richard Mineards*



Richard covered the Royal Family for Britain's Daily Mirror and Daily Mail, and was an editor on New York Magazine. He was also a national anchor on CBS, a commentator on ABC Network News, gossip on The Joan Rivers Show and Geraldo Rivera, host on E! TV, a correspondent on the syndicated show Extra, a commentator on the KTLA Morning News and Entertainment Tonight. He moved to Montecito 11 years ago.

Taking Initiative



Julianna Friedman (donor for the Montecito Community Microgrid), Craig Lewis (executive director of the Clean Coalition), Lee Lysne (Kind World Foundation \$150K Challenge grant), and Rinaldo Brutoco (president and founder World Business Academy) (photo by Judi Weisbart)

After the Thomas Fire and flash floods that decimated our rarefied enclave, the World Business Academy and the Clean Coalition have combined to form the Montecito Community Microgrid Initiative.

"Together we can create microgrids to ensure indefinite renewable-driven energy resilience for critical facilities, including the Montecito Fire Protection District headquarters and the Montecito Water District headquarters, wells, and pumping stations, as well as local life-sustaining emergency shelter and supply facilities," says **Craig Lewis**, founder and executive director of the nine-year-old Clean Coalition.

"This deployment of clean local energy will showcase the grid of the

future and will provide economic, environmental, and resilience benefits."

After initiating Phase One with the fire and water departments, Lewis, who has just moved to Santa Barbara from the Bay Area, wants to expand further to include commercial properties in the upper village and then the lower village along Coast Village Road.

Phase One is estimated to cost \$300,000 and take 12 to 18 months to implement, while the second phase will cost around \$600,000 and take a similar amount of time.

"The recent disaster and tragic loss of life demonstrates the need for energy resilience for critical facilities to

MISCELLANY Page 18 ▶



Rinaldo Brutoco, Deanna Dehlsen, Kristy Jansen (chief of staff for the World Business Academy), and Tom Dain (photo by Judi Weisbart)

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MISCELLANY (Continued from page 6)

support the fire and rescue response teams and keep critical water and communications infrastructure functional," adds Lewis, who was speaking at a lunch at the San Ysidro Road home of uber philanthropist **Sara Miller McCune** hosted by **Rinaldo Brutoco**, founder and president of the World Business Academy, which is campaigning to replace nuclear and fossil fuels.

"In the event of long-term outage caused by any one of a multitude of threats to the local energy system, community microgrids will provide resilience, keeping the lights on and the doors open at critical and priority facilities, supporting the community," says Brutoco. "Relying on Southern California Edison's outdated and vulnerable grid leaves the region vulnerable to outages during extreme weather events.

"California's regulatory agencies are finally realizing that a clean energy future begins now, not tomorrow – so now is the time to act."

Among the energized guests were **Judi Weisbart, Berna Keiler, Dan Cerf, Deanna Dehlsen, Evan and Pat Aptaker, Julianna Friedman, Independent publisher Marianne Partridge, Nancy Brown, Judy Foreman, Lee Lysne, and Mike Weissman.**

Stay tuned.

Having a Ball

The Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse's 32nd annual Amethyst Ball at the Ritz-Carlton Bacara was a real gem!

The socially gridlocked bash attracted around 350 glamorously garbed guests and raised more than \$500,000 for the 68-year-old charity, which has an annual budget of \$5.6 million serving more than 8,600 people with 23 programs for youth and adults.

The gala honored the staff of the local ABC affiliate, KEYT-TV, for their partnership with CADA for more than 20 years – which hosted its first Mission for Mentors in 1997 – and its tireless and vital reporting through the Thomas Fire and Montecito debris flow, was co-chaired by **Anne Towbes, Diana MacFarlane, Holly Murphy, Dana Mazzetti, Susan Neuman, and Betsy Turner.**

The cavernous ball room was again magnificently decorated by Montecito event whiz **Merryl Brown** for its Twistin' at the Ritz theme, with '60s rocker **Chubby Checker & the Wildcats** and **Dishwalla** performing.

The tireless **Andrew Firestone** conducted the auction at breakneck speed, including a trip to Seville, Spain, for \$10,500 and "an unparal-



Eric Burdon of The Animals and the legendary Chubby Checker in command of the stage performing for patrons of CADA'S Amethyst Ball "Twistin' at the Ritz" (photo by Priscilla)



Amethyst Ball honorees are KCOY,12, KEYT 3 and KKFx 11; news teams Scott Hennessee, anchor; Jim Lemon, news director; Jeff Martin, Creative Services director; Beth Farnsworth, anchor; C.J. Ward, anchor; Mark Danielson, general manager; shown with first responders Bill Brown, SBC sheriff; Barney Melekian, SBC undersheriff; and KEYT3's Joe Buttitta, anchor/producer (photo by Priscilla)



Donor Carol-Anne Lonson, owner of the Alpaca Farm with an alpaca toy, and winning bidder Diana Dodds for a prize with 10 guests for a champagne welcome, tour, hike, and five-course dinner (photo by Priscilla)



Andrew Firestone, auctioneer extraordinaire, and winner to twist with Chubby Checker, Michael Romero, grandson of Diamond patrons Colleen Barnett and Mike Taylor (photo by Priscilla)

led party" catered by local restaurateur **Dario Fulati** and winemaker **Doug Margerum**, with entertainment by Dishwalla, at the mountaintop home of singer **Alan Parsons** and his wife, **Lisa**, which was snapped up for \$25,000.

Men's committee co-chair **Peter Hilf** donated \$70,000 to the cause, while **Merryl** contributed a \$10,000 check.

A silent auction featured a ski vacation in Utah, a week's stay at the Joshua Tree desert retreat of rocker **Eric Burdon**, eight days in Thailand, and a seven-day Caribbean trip to a choice of Antigua, St. Lucia, Panama, Barbados, and the Grenadines.

Among the tony throng at the socially gridlocked beano were **Catherine Remak**, **Bob Murphy**, **Terry Ryken**, **Barry** and **Jelinda DeVorzon**, **Ralph MacFarlane**, **C.J. Ward**, **Beth Farnsworth**, **Joe Buttitta**, **Stacey Sakai**, **John** and **Hazel Blankenship**, **Chuck** and **Margarita Lande**, **Larry Gosselin**, **Roberto Van Geenen**, **Craig** and **Amy Zimmerman**, **Dan** and **Caroline Encell**, **David Edelman**, **Chris** and **Mindy Denson**, **Lori Luhnnow**, **Richard Weston-Smith**, **Bob** and **Patty Bryant**, **Virgil Elings**, **Paul** and **Jane Orfaea**, **Michael** and **Nati Smith**, **Allen** and **Anne Sides**, and **Eric** and **Nina Phillips**.

No, Thanks

Montecito Oscar-winning actress **Natalie Portman** has found herself in the middle of a political firestorm after canceling a visit to her native Israel to receive the famed Genesis Prize.

Portman, 36, said she did not feel "comfortable" taking part in the Jerusalem ceremony in June hosted by the Genesis Prize Foundation and dubbed the Jewish Nobel Prize, with a \$2 million award.

She said recent events which she found "extremely distressing" contributed to her decision, just days after the European Union called for an official investigation into Israel's use of live ammunition against Palestinian protesters on the Gaza border.

The foundation, which has previously given the award to former Montecito resident **Michael Douglas**, ex-New York mayor **Michael Bloomberg**, and violinist **Itzhak Perlman**, says it is now canceling the ceremony.

"We feel that Ms. Portman's decision will cause our philanthropic initiative to be politicized, something we have worked hard for five years to avoid," it said in a statement.

Home Improvement

Actor **Michael Imperioli**, who rose to fame in the TV show *The Sopranos*,



Michael Imperioli selling Victorian manse (photo by Dale Weber Photography)

has put his Victorian Santa Barbara home on the market for \$2.649 million.

Michael, who is garnering good ratings in his new ABC-TV comedy *Alex, Inc.* with **Zach Braff**, bought the 2-story 3,000-sq.-ft. home six years ago for \$1.635 million and has done major renovations.

The 5-bedroom, 5-bathroom property boasts a library, hardwood floors, and crown moldings.

Remain CALM

It was a very in-tents occasion when CALM – Child Abuse Listening Mediation – hosted its 32nd annual celebrity authors lunch at Fess Parker's DoubleTree, which, as of

April 22, is now the Hilton Santa Barbara Beachfront Resort.

As the ballroom was not ready as promised because of a multi-million-dollar renovation, the tony oceanside hostelry paid to erect a large marquee in the hotel's rotunda to accommodate the 500 guests at the fancy fete, co-chaired by **Becky Cohn** and **Carolyn Gillio**, which raised around \$100,000 for the popular charity which prevents, assesses, and treats child abuse and family violence, with 4,518 clients served last year.

Three best-selling authors, including former ABC-TV gossipeuse **Rona Barrett**, writer of *Gray Matters*, former London barrister **Simon Tolkien**, grandson of *The Lord of the Rings* creator J.R.R. Tolkien, who wrote the Doubleday novel *No Man's Land*, and *New York Times* bestselling writer **Lisa See**, with her work *The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane*, were interviewed by *Entertainment Tonight* veteran **Tom Weitzel**, **Dianne Dixon**, and **Ruta Lee** at the bustling bibliophile bash emceed for the eighth year by the ubiquitous **Andrew Firestone**.

Other authors at the event included **Danya Belkin**, **Melissa Broughton**, **Guy Clark**, **Kent Ferguson**, **Steven Gilbar**, **Betsy J. Green**, **Gail Kearns**, **Lindsey Moran**, **Denise Woolery**, **Lida Sideris**, and **Elizabeth Stewart**.

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MISCELLANY (Continued from page 19)

Among the many supporters were **Dolly Granatelli, Anne Towbes, Janet Garufis, Jean Schuyler, Hiroko Benko, Maryan Schall, Beverley Jackson, Roger and Debby Aceves, and Judi Weisbart.**

Keys to Survival

Camerata Pacifica launched its latest concert at the Music Academy of the West's Hahn Hall with the world premiere of Soviet-Russian born pianist **Lera Auerbach's** 24 Preludes for viola and piano with veteran violist **Richard O'Neill** in a variety of keys.

The entertaining performance completed on a more classical note with Schubert's piano trio in B-flat Major with **Warren Jones** on keyboard, **Paul Huang** on violin, and **Ani Aznavoorian** on cello.

Another great show from the chamber group founded by Irish flutist **Adrian Spence.**

On the Money

Storyteller Children's Center, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary, hosted its fourth annual Lunchbox Luncheon at the Rockwood Women's Club, raising more than \$80,000 for the nonprofit that helps the city's homeless and at-risk youngsters and preschoolers achieve kindergarten readiness.

More than 47 percent of the chil-



Suzanne McCafferty and Gretchen Horn (photo by Nell Campbell)



Donna Fisher and Kenny Slaught (photo by Nell Campbell)

dren, aged 18 months to 5 years old, live in shelters, and since its inception the charity has served 33,339 meals.

Currently, more than 70 students,



The Storyteller kids (photo by Nell Campbell)

costing an average of \$15,000 for each child and their family to support, are served and the group has just launched a 30 for 30 campaign to mark the anniversary, with a goal to finance 30 more students.

After an entertaining concert by the children, **Kenny Slaught**, a founding board member, **Donna Baranco Fisher**, executive director, and **Tiffany Foster**, president, spoke along with volunteer **Drew DeLozier**, a Marymount student.

Among the supporters at the bash, co-chaired by **Gretchen Horn** and **Suzanne McCafferty**, were **Monica Babich, David Edelman, Hollye Jacobs, Carrie Towbes, Tim and Louise Casey, Jon and Susan Clark, Ned Doubleday, Ivana Firestone, Erinn Lynch, Francie Lufkin, Delene Bliss, Jenny Hecht, and Sharon**

Hughes.

An old friend, **Alix Mattingly**, who used to work at the White House, left table hosting duties to her husband **Mark**, given she had to fly to Houston, Texas, for the weekend funeral of former First Lady **Barbara Bush.**

Voice of Joyce

Multi-Grammy Award winner **Joyce DiDonato** wooed in her Santa Barbara debut at the Granada.

The mezzo-soprano flew in from New York, where she started a new production of Massenet's *Cendrillon* at the Met just 72 hours earlier, specially for the UCSB Arts & Lectures recital, and returned to the Big Apple to be back at Lincoln Center just 48 hours later.

Kicking off the widely anticipated concert with Pablo Luna's work De



Miller McCune executive director Celesta Billeci, A&L ambassador Luci Janssen, Joyce DiDonato, and A&L Council member Rich Janssen (photo by Candice Marie Yanoich)

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Espana vengo, she suddenly stopped her pianist **Craig Terry**, a Music Academy of the West graduate, and admitted she'd got "completely lost."

But the performance went on without further ado with works by Ravel, Massenet, Granados, Antiche, and Rossini, with the undoubted highlight being the charismatic singer's rendition of Handel's *Lascia ch'io pianga* – "Let Me Weep" – from the opera *Rinaldo*, who she said was her favorite composer.

DiDonato delighted the sold-out audience with two encores: Irving Berlin's *I Love a Piano* and *Over the Rainbow*, in honor of her hometown in Kansas.

Score by Four

New York's **Daedalus Quartet** gave an impressive debut performance at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art's Mary Craig Auditorium.

The fab four – violinists **Min-Young Kim** and **Matilda Kaul**, violist **Jessica Thompson** and cellist **Thomas Craines** – played works by Haydn, Janacek, and Beethoven.

The talented musicians, who won the Banff International String Quartet competition in 2001, have performed in many of the world's leading musical venues, including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Library of Congress, and locations in Vienna,

Salzburg, Amsterdam, Paris, and Tokyo.

The award-winning quartet members hold degrees from the Juilliard School, Harvard University, Cleveland Institute, and the Curtis Institute.

As impressive as their music.

All Together

Celebrity chef **Cat Cora**, 51, wed producer **Nicole Ehrlich**, 42, at Montecito's Villa Serano Estate at the weekend.

"To share our love and commitment to one another, alongside our six sons, was a dream come true," says Cora. "We couldn't have asked for a more perfect day."



Celebrity chef Cat Cora gets hitched (photo by Emile Wamsteker ©2013, Television Food Network, G.P.)

The tony twosome started dating last year. Cora has four children – **Zoran**, 14, **Caje**, 10, **Thatcher**, and **Nash**, both 9 – from a previous marriage, while Ehrlich has two sons – **Jonas**, 12, and **Gavin**, 10.

Cora currently co-hosts Bravo's *Around the World in 80 Plates* and works on Fox's *My Kitchen Rules*.

In the Mood for Seafood

There were decidedly fishy goings-on at the Santa Barbara Maritime Museum when the Foodbank of Santa Barbara County hosted a mariculture event to emphasize the importance of seafood in the world's food chain.

The nonprofit, which distributes 10 million pounds of food annually, invited three local culinary wizards to show off their wares: TV show host **Michael Hutchings** with his signature abalone, City College's **Randy Bublitz** cooking blackened cod, and Santa Barbara Yacht Club chef **Mossin Sugich** with his sea urchin and caviar.

Sustainability consultant **Blake Stok** emphasized the importance of seafood in our diets, particularly meeting protein demands in a sustainable way.

"By 2050, there will be ten billion people on this planet, and we need to implement sustainable fishing and farming on a massive scale," warned

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Chef Michael Hutchings with Steve Ortiz, United Way president; Jean Miranda and Dana White (photo by Priscilla)



Roberto Lopez, SBCC Culinary Arts; supporter Phyllis Picatto, chef Randy Bublitz, SBCC Culinary Arts; Erik Talkin, SBFB CEO; and Alexander Tran, SBCC CA (photo by Priscilla)



Lori Shaw, Foodbank; Frank Abatemarro, SBFB Board member; Mathew Neal, Foodbank; George Bean, SBFB Board vice chair; Edwin Villegas, trustee; and Cindy Halstead, SBFB Board treasurer (photo by Priscilla)



Chef Michael Hutchings' abalone with a red wine sauce and forbidden rice, a delicious treat plus a courtesy recipe for all (photo by Priscilla)

Stok. "Local seafood is a very important factor. Currently the U.S. eats sixteen pounds of seafood annually while consuming forty-eight pounds of French fries!"

His thoughts were echoed by Foodbank CEO Erik Talkin, who said food from the sea was something the charity had embraced for years.

"We are currently on the lookout for food sources, particularly with protein. The ocean has shoals and shoals of the stuff."

More than 11 million pounds of

seafood is fished in the Santa Barbara Channel annually.

Among the guests doing some sole searching were **Geoff Green**, **Frank Abatemarco**, **Karen Lehrer**, **Steve Ortiz**, **Dana White**, **Steve Harris**, **Peter** and **Suzanne Brown**, and **Steve Sherwin**.

All in the Family

Georgy Taupin, the 10-year-old Junior Spirit of Fiesta winner, has quite a lineage.

Georgy, who was chosen with 17-year-old **Jesalyn Contraras McCollum** to appear in our Eden by the Beach's fiesta activities in August, is the daughter of **Bernie Taupin**, the legendary lyricist for bespectacled rocker **Sir Elton John** who has lived in the Santa Ynez Valley for many years.

The talented youngster, who is a home-school student, is the daughter of 67-year-old Taupin's fourth marriage to **Heather Kidd**, who he wed in 2004.

She is a dance student of the Zermeno Academy and will lead El Desfile De Los Ninos during the 94th Old Spanish Days this summer.

Goodness Gracies

My congratulations to Montecito actress **Julia Louis-Dreyfus** who is the winner of the prestigious Grand Award for the Gracies.

Julia, 57, has been honored for her work on the hit HBO series *Veep* as she recovers from a grueling battle with breast cancer.

The awards, presented by the Alliance for Women in Media Foundation, take place May 22 at the Four Seasons Beverly Wilshire in Beverly Hills, and it is hoped Julia will be able to attend, along with other recipients including **Reese Witherspoon**, **Claire Danes**, **Billie Jean King**, **Ashley Judd**, **Katie Couric**, and **Hoda Kotb**.

Julia skipped the Screen Actors Guild awards in January, when she made history as the first TV actress to win five individual trophies at the ceremony by bagging outstanding performance by a female actor in a comedy series.

Julia, whose show has won 17 Emmys, announced her cancer diagnosis in September and completed chemotherapy treatment this spring.

She will be returning to the show's seventh and final season in due course.

Goop Scoop

Montecito actress **Gwyneth Paltrow**'s lifestyle website, *Goop*, has unveiled its annual Mother's Day gift guide, but be prepared to open your wallets wide.

With its most extravagant option being a \$13,000 Hermès Courchevel Kelly Bag, it's no surprise the detailed list featuring 93 items would cost more than \$40,000 if you were to buy all of them.

Among the pricey baubles are a small Cartier Tank watch for \$3,250 and a pink sapphire open-heart necklace by the 45-year-old Oscar winner's friend **Jennifer Meyer** for \$3,110.

A less-expensive option is Glacce's clear quartz water bottle, which infuses water with positive energy for just \$80.

Gone Too Soon



Matthew Mellon, R.I.P. (photo by Marina Beroff)

On a personal note, I remember banking billionaire **Matthew Mellon**, who died in Cancun, Mexico, at the all-too-early age of 53, as he was about to enter a drug rehab facility.

Matthew, whose aunt was Bunny Mellon, a good friend of the late Jackie Kennedy, admitted to a \$100,000 a month OxyContin habit, which he described as "legal heroin."

He was the ex-husband of **Jimmy Choo** guru **Tamara Mellon** and designer **Nicole Hanley**, his second wife.

I would often see him in Dark Harbor, Maine, when I was sailing with Marshall Field heir **Maldwin Drummond**, and he was dating **Melissa Rivers**, the daughter of late comedienne Joan Rivers, whose TV show I appeared on for four years.

A charming but deeply troubled individual, who is now, it is to be hoped, in more heavenly pastures.

Sightings: *Star Trek* actor **William Shatner** lunching at Pane a Vino... Oscar winner **Natalie Portman** noshing at Pierre Lafond... **Oprah Winfrey** at the Sacred Space in Summerland

Pip! Pip!

Readers with tips, sightings and amusing items for Richard's column should email him at richardmin@verizon.net or send invitations or other correspondence to the *Journal*.

To reach Priscilla, email her at priscilla@santabarbaraseen.com or call 969-3301.

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