

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.

Welcome to Rosewood Miramar



George DeMarco, Gina Tolleson, Michael Erickson, and Thom Rollerson (photo by Priscilla)



Dane Nielson, Jofin Torres, Mimi deGruy, Joe Caputo, and Jordan Gobbell at the newly opened Rosewood Miramar Hotel (photo by Priscilla)

After 12 years of frustration and determined perseverance, Los Angeles developer **Rick Caruso** has opened his \$200 million-plus, 161-room, 16-acre Rosewood Miramar Hotel, with its

495 feet of Pacific Ocean frontage.

To mark the occasion he threw a bustling bash, appropriately enough at Caruso's, one of the tony hostelry's restaurants, run by Roman chef **Massimo Falsini**, arriving in his per-

sonal \$13 million Sikorsky helicopter, which earlier in the evening hovered over the waves so he could get a birds eye view of his stunning new project before landing at an estate by the Santa Barbara Polo Club.

The old Miramar By The Sea Hotel closed in 2000 and rapidly became a festering lot of vermin-plagued decrepit buildings after Beanie Baby billionaire **Ty Warner** and New York hotelier **Ian Schrager**, former co-owner of Studio 54, threw in the towel trying to develop the choice site.

Enter billionaire-philanthropist Caruso, who bought the property in

2007 and broke ground in October, 2016, and turned it into one of the Central Coast's top hotels in 28 months, with 37 suites, a private membership-only beach club, two swimming pools, and a 6,000 sq. ft. ballroom. He also has a penthouse apartment in the complex, much of it an architectural tribute to esteemed southern California architect Paul Williams.

Railroad tracks that run through the property are manned by a crossing guard 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

MISCELLANY Page 18 ▶

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Bilo Zarif, Ursula Nesbitt, and Rick Caruso (photo by Priscilla)



Paul Osborne, Sean Carney, Veronica Kimmelley, executive chef Massimo Falsini, and Stefanie Lang in the kitchen at the Rosewood Miramar (photo by Priscilla)



Rosewood Miramar Beach owner Rick Caruso (seated in center) surrounded by welcomed friends and guests (photo by Priscilla)

Already there have been a number of weddings on its Great Lawn, one of them with 400 guests.

At the helm is charming Irishman Sean Carney, who has worked in Ireland, St. Lucia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Atlanta, and Hawaii.

Among the guests, tucking into the pasta and caviar appetizers and the Morro Bay oysters, while quaffing the champagne, wine, and creative martinis were Nina Terzian, David Sigman, Allen and Anne Sides, Jeff and Hollye Jacobs, Gina Tolleson,



Gretchen Lief's new La Lief label



Bob Kamme, Donna Fisher, Massimo Falsini, and Jennifer and Kris Zacharias (photo by Priscilla)

Kendall Conrad, Justin Klentner, Andrew Firestone, Karna Hughes, William and Barbara Tomicki, and Ricardo and Dinah Calderon.

Yes Way, Rosé

Animal activist Gretchen Lief and Lucky's owner Gene Montesano have teamed up to create Montlief Rosé, a combination of their last names.

"Rosé is the fastest growing varietal along the Central Coast and we're among a number answering the call," says Gretchen, whose 40-acre Alamo Creek Ranch vineyard in southern San Luis Obispo County produces some of



Gene Montesano and Gretchen Lief and friends wine tasting outside Tre Lune

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the best.

She is now working with **Angela Osbourne**, the winemaker for the Folded Hills brand owned by former Santa Barbara Polo Club patron **Andy Busch** and his wife, **Kim**, who will be opening a tasting room across from the Montecito Inn next month.

"I am looking forward to working with a woman winemaker on my new label La Lieff," she says. "Women and wine and rosé. There just seems to be a naturally female essence to the combination of these elements. That's why I chose the Earth goddess Gaia for the La Lieff label."

Her new wine with Gene is available by the glass at the Coral Casino, Lucky's, Tre Lune, Pierre Lafond, and Opal, among others.

I'll drink to that...

The Verdict is in

Montecito author **Jane De Hart**, who spent 15 years researching and writing a hefty tome on Supreme Court Justice **Ruth Bader Ginsburg**, is reaping the rewards for her Herculean project.

Jane, a professor of women's history at UCSB, tells me her mammoth 752-page work, *Ruth Bader Ginsburg: A Life*, is now in its seventh printing with her New York publishers, Knopf, selling more than 55,000 copies.



Jane De Hart and Mary Sheldon at Tecolote Book Shop (photo by Corinna Gordon)

"It's quite a landmark," says Jane, with some understatement...

Tale as Old as Time

The Amazons were out in force when United Way's Women United hosted its second annual event, a Classic Storybook lunch at the Coral Casino, with the 200 guests expected to raise around \$100,000 to help the charity's literacy programs for children.

Former supermodel turned busi-

MISCELLANY Page 28 ▶



Alex Kinderman and Victoria Dominguez with Belle at the *Beauty and the Beast* themed United Way event (photo by Isaac Hernandez)

Marlene and Frank Bucy with Kathy Ireland (center) (photo by Isaac Hernandez)



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Alina de Albergaria and Mindy Mahy at the Classic Storybook lunch at the Coral Casino (photo by Isaac Hernandez)

ness tycoon Montecito-based **Kathy Ireland** spoke eloquently at the *Beauty and the Beast* themed event on the need for literacy, as did fellow speaker **Barbara LaCorte**, principal of Hope School Elementary.

Susan Hersberger, a founding member, and **Steve Ortiz**, president and CEO of United Way of Santa Barbara County, also spoke at the La Pacifica ballroom lunch, chaired by **Andria Kahmann**.

Among the fans supporting the Disney-esque event were **Jelinda DeVorzon**, **Ursula Nesbitt**, **Jean Schuyler**, **Meg Burnham**, **Arlene**

Montesano, **Gloria Clark**, **Marianna Burdon**, **Valerie Montgomery**, **Janet Garufis**, **Arlyn Goldsby**, **Ellen Goodstein**, **Catherine Remak**, and **Monique Rodriguez**.

On Onegin

Opera Santa Barbara hit all the right notes with its latest production, Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, based on Alexander Pushkin's novel, at the sold-out Lobero.

The two and a half hour show, with veteran conductor **Valery Ryvkin**, combined the talents of many of our town's creative minds, including Ensemble Theatre's **Jonathan Fox** as stage director, **Kostis Protopapas** as chorus master, and UCSB's **Christopher Pilafian** as choreographer.

Danielle Corella, **Karin Wolverton**, **Elliott Deasy**, **Nandani Maria Sinha**, **Ashley Kay Armstrong**, **Lee Poulis** as the principal character, and **Benjamin Brecher** were all excellent in their roles in the company's premiere of the work, which debuted in Moscow in 1879.

Into the Fold

Lotusland hosted a fabulous feast of folded artwork with its new opening representing the work of 12 renowned origami artists throughout the U.S.



Artists in front of Robert J. Lang's Mordwan, a collection of seven origami crows each created from one uncut square of Canson Mi-Tentes pastel paper (photo by Lotusland)

The overflow crowd for Lotusland in Origami: Flora, Fauna, and Ganna included Asian art historian **Meher McArthur** and Montecito's own artist **Holly Sherwin**, co-curators.

Origami is no longer limited to Japan, with artists, scientists, mathematicians, and designers around the world innovating folding techniques and styles, experimenting with different paper types and inspiring each other to use the boundaries of the craft.

The popular 37-acre 3,000 plant garden estate show features some of the most renowned origami artists in the country to represent various elements of the botanical paradise working in diverse styles, with great ingenuity sublime elegance and subtle humor.

The exhibition runs through May 18 and honors the imminent re-opening in June of Lotusland's famous

Japanese Garden, including reconstruction of the pond, after an extensive four phase renovation.

Sing it, Sofia

Kerri Murray, president of the Santa Barbara-based international disaster relief charity ShelterBox, is one proud mom!

Her daughter, **Sofia Schuster**, a freshman at San Marcos High, just won the Teen Star 2019 contest at the Arlington.

Sofia, 15, overcame all odds to win the competition as she was born with paralyzed vocal chords and not supposed to be able to talk, let alone sing.

The youngster got her start in music with **Janet Adderley's** Youth Ensemble Theatre and singing with **GIRLS ROCK Santa Barbara**.

Her final song in the contest was "Teenager in Love" by **Madison**

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Teen Star's four finalists flank winner Sofia Schuster

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Beer, which one of the judges, **Justin Fox** from the alternative rock band Dishwalla, who worked with Beer, said was better than the original.

Two years ago Sofia wrote and performed her first album, donating all the sales to GIRLS ROCK to provide music education scholarships to girls. She is currently writing her second album as she pursues a career in music.

Bone-a-fide Good Time

The Granada went to the dogs when New York-based Snarky Puppy, a musical collective with as many as 25 members in regular rotation, showed off their talents, part of UCSB's popu-

lar Arts & Lectures series.

The jazz-rock-fusion ensemble was formed by bassist and primary composer **Michael League** in 2003, initially a group of college friends at the University of North Texas' jazz studies program, and then going on to win two Grammy Awards in three years.

They have just released their tenth album.

An electrifying show...

Not All Heroes Wear Capes

It was an early start when the Teddy Bear Cancer Foundation hosted its 5th annual Little Heroes breakfast for 350 guests at the Hilton, which was expected to raise around \$100,000 for

the popular charity.

The boffo bash, co-chaired by **Heather Ayer, Matthew Fish, Emilee Garfield, and Nina Johnson**, featured keynote speaker **Eduardo Garcia**, a classically-trained chef who lost his left arm while elk hunting in Montana after receiving a catastrophic electrical shock from a 2,400-volt power line – he was the subject of the documentary *Charged*, which opened the Santa Barbara Film Festival in 2017 –, and was then diagnosed with testicular cancer.

Garcia's uplifting speech was followed by the Little Hero Award to

MISCELLANY Page 34 ▶



Brad Lilley Jr. and Master of Ceremonies and on-air personality Brad "Jay" Lilley (photo by Nathalie Rodriguez)



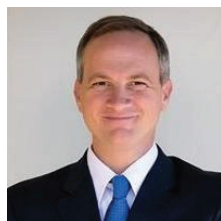
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Teddy Bear Cancer Foundation's Kathy Kelley, Ronnie DeBrum, Faith DeBrum, Eduardo Garcia, Laura DeBrum, and Becca Solodon (photo by Nathalie Rodriguez)

15-year-old **Faith DeBrum**, who underwent successful treatment for Stage 2 Hodgkin's lymphoma, which was diagnosed when she was just 11.

Radio host **Brad Lilley** of KTYD, whose son suffered leukemia, emceed the event, while **Lindsey Leonard**, executive director, spoke of the great strides being made in treatment, with

an 80 percent success rate.

The charity expects to help more than 200 children this year.

Among the supporters turning out were the ubiquitous **John Palminteri**, **Geoff Green**, **David Edelman**, **David Selberg**, **Jeff and Margo Barbakow**, **Hayley Firestone Jessup**, **Ginni Dreier**, **Donna Barranco Fisher**,



Teddy Bear Cancer Foundation Little Hero 2019 Faith DeBrum with Executive Director Lindsey Leonard (photo by Nathalie Rodriguez)

Sheelah Hunt, **Joe Ferreira**, **Marlo Tell**, **Nick Weiser**, **Kip Young**, and **Kerry Kelly**.

Russian Rhythms

Chinese-American pianist **George Li** mesmerized the audience at the Granada when CAMA – Community Arts Music Association – hosted the Russian National Orchestra for the fourth time in an all-Rachmaninoff program.

The 23-year-old keyboardist played the concerto No. 2 in C minor by the Russian composer, who performed at the Lobero in 1929 and 1941, to perfection as conductor and founder **Mikhail Pletnev** took the 29-year-old orchestra through its paces.

Li deservedly got a very long standing ovation after completing the challenging piece.

The concert concluded with Symphonic Dances, one of Rachmaninoff's last works, which he completed in 1940, while recuperating from surgery in Long Island.

Wide Exposure

Noted *Vanity Fair* photographer **Annie Leibovitz** packed the Arlington when she spoke as part of a UCSB Arts & Lectures event.

New York-based Leibovitz started her career as a photo journalist for *Rolling Stone* in 1970 with an assignment for a cover story on the late John Lennon. By the time she left the magazine ten years later she'd shot 142 covers and published essays on scores of stories, including her memorable accounts of the resignation of Richard Nixon and the 1975 Rolling Stones tour.

Leibovitz also did memorable covers for *Vanity Fair*, including a naked and very pregnant **Demi Moore**, and *The View* host and actress **Whoopi Goldberg** in a bath of milk.

When she was given an assignment to photograph **Queen Elizabeth**, she originally planned to have the mon-

arch astride a horse inside Buckingham Palace, an idea that did not go down well with the sovereign's aides.

Eventually Her Majesty was photographed in her very ornate and heavy Order of the Garter robes, making a very memorable moment for a TV documentary that was being shot at the same time when Leibovitz told the Queen her hairstyle with the tiara looked "too fussy," with Elizabeth not being at all amused after all the effort she had gone to dressing up for the shoot.

Selling Neverland

The late Michael Jackson's Neverland Ranch in Los Olivos has just been listed for sale for the third time in three years with the initial listing agent, Montecito uber realtor **Suzanne Perkins** of Compass hoping to sell the 2,698 acre property with a new discounted price tag of \$31 million.

That's a hefty 50 percent discount from the \$67 million it was listed for in 2017 and a whopping 70 percent less than the \$100 million when it was first offered in 2016.

The French Normandy-style property, which has a six-bedroom 12,598 sq. ft. main house, has now been renamed the Sycamore Valley Ranch since being bought by Colony Capital billionaire **Tom Barrack**, a Santa Barbara Polo Club patron.

To Be, or Not To Be

It was to become the film that defined Montecito actress **Gwyneth Paltrow**'s career, winning her an Oscar and catapulting her to major stardom.

But Paltrow has revealed she initially turned down the chance to star as Viola in *Shakespeare In Love* because she was so devastated after "a terrible breakup" from her fiancé **Brad Pitt**.

The tony twosome had co-starred in *Seven* before enjoying a high profile relationship from 1994 to 1997, then calling off their engagement.

When her agent first offered her the chance to star in the Elizabethan romp with **Colin Firth**, **Dame Judi Dench**, and **Joseph Fiennes**, she was distracted.

Talking to *Variety* as she marked the 20th anniversary of the movie, the Goop founder explained: "I was in the middle of a terrible breakup and the idea of going to England and being far from home just seemed..."

At first Paltrow refused to even look at the script.

"I don't even read it. I was just like I couldn't read anything right now. I'm having a really hard time."

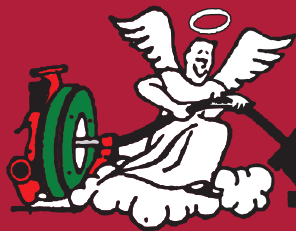
Others in the running for the role included **Julia Roberts** and **Kate Winslet**, but Paltrow finally read the script.

"I just couldn't put it down. It was perfect. The rest is history."

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Love in High Places

Santa Barbara warbler **Katy Perry** has revealed her engagement to English actor beau **Orlando Bloom** took place during a helicopter ride.

The 34-year-old *American Idol* judge told TV talk show host **Jimmy Kimmel**: "We went to dinner on Valentine's Day. I thought we were going to see some art afterwards, but instead we pulled up to a helicopter.

"He asked me to marry him in a helicopter. We did land and it was like James Bond. Everybody had an ear piece and we were rushed over... we landed on a rooftop and my whole family was there and all my friends. He did so well."

However, the former Dos Pueblos High student further revealed the *Lord of the Rings* star had problems retrieving the box with the antique ruby and diamond ring from his pocket, ripping his jacket in the process and accidentally smashing a bottle of champagne with his elbow.

Weight Loss

Not that it should make too much difference to her bank account, but TV titan **Oprah Winfrey** lost \$50 million on paper when Weight Watchers stock plummeted following the company's report that it hadn't signed up as many subscribers as it hoped this winter and expected profits to suffer.

Montecito's most famous resident owns about eight percent of the company, which rebranded as WW last year, after initially purchasing ten percent of the weight loss and wellness company's stock in 2015, before off-loading two percent of her shares a year ago.

The company says it was "disappointed" with its start this year resulting in its stock tumbling more than 30 per cent in after hours trading, which saw it drop from \$29.57 to \$19.42.

The sharp decrease in value translates to an on-paper loss of about \$50 million for Oprah.

Oops!

I seem to have jumped the gun with my news on Mesa Burger moving to

Coast Village Road.

The owners of the chain tell me they have scoped a number of sites on the ritzy rue, but have not signed any contracts yet.

Stay tuned...

Remembering Stanley

On a personal note, I mark the passing of the ever charming *Singin' In The Rain* director **Stanley Donen**, who has died in New York aged 94.

Donen co-directed the iconic film with star Gene Kelly, as well as *Funny Face* – one of my favorites –, *Seven Brides For Seven Brothers*, *On The Town*, and *Charade*.

I would often see him at Manhattan movie screenings and events, and would listen raptly to his Hollywood anecdotes.

In 1998 he received an honorary Oscar from director **Martin Scorsese** for his wonderful body of work marked by grace, elegance, wit, and visual innovation.

A gracious and talented gentleman, and the last surviving helmsman from Hollywood's Golden Age, he sadly was not included in the Oscars memorial segment, which included my late neighbor, actor **Tab Hunter** and an old friend, **Paul Bloch**, who headed Rogers & Cowan, the Beverly Hills PR powerhouse.

Sightings: Actor **Don Johnson** watching the Gauchos basketball at the Thunderdome... New resident **Terry Pillow**, former CEO of Tommy Bahama, walking on Coast Village Road... Oscar winner **Natalie Portman** and family noshing at Olio e Limone

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. •M

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