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GROUND SWELL

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ON THE COVER
 Illustration by Michael Houghton

Metro Santa Cruz

115 Cooper St, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
 831.457.9000 (phone)
 831.457.5828 (fax)
 831.457.8500 (classified)
 msc@metcruz.com

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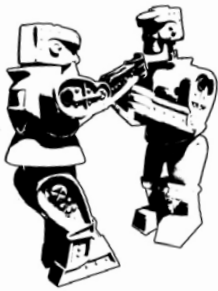
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FAX: 831.457.5828 EMAIL: MSC@METCRUZ.COM

STAFF

EDITORIAL

EDITOR
Traci Hukill
(thukill@metcruz.com)

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
Christina Waters

STAFF WRITERS
Richard von Busack
(rvonbusack@metcruz.com)
Curtis Cartier
(ccartier@metcruz.com)
Jessica Lussenhop
(jlussenhop@metcruz.com)

PROOFREADER
Jeanne Schuster

EDITORIAL INTERN
Michelle Camerlingo,
Jaime Nabrynski

CALENDAR EDITOR
Paul Wagner

CONTRIBUTORS
Rob Breznsy,
Maureen Davidson, Paul Davis,
Michael S. Gant, Andrew Gilbert,
Jenn Ireland, Stephen Kessler,
Scott MacClelland, Steve Palopoli,
Pete Shea, Carlie Statsky,
Paul Wagner, Molly Zapp

ART/PRODUCTION

DESIGN DIRECTOR
Kara Brown

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Harry Allison

GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Tabi Zarrinnaal

EDITORIAL PRODUCTION
Sean George

AD DESIGNERS
Jenny Oatey, Kimberly Parrish,
DiAnna VanEycke

DISPLAY ADVERTISING

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES
Alice Colby
(acolby@metcruz.com)
Molly Farrell
(mfarrell@metcruz.com)
Ilana Rauch-Packer
(ipacker@metcruz.com)
Gino Skulick
(gskulick@metcruz.com)

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

MANAGER
Holly Carthew

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Neil Smyth

OPERATIONS MANAGER

Denise Vivar
(dvivar@metcruz.com)

PUBLISHER

Debra Whizin

PRESIDENT/ EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Dan Pulcrano

OBAMA'S SLIPPERY SLOPE

PRESIDENT Obama's recent comment directed to terrorists that "We will defeat you" shocked me. He seemed to be quoting George W. Bush. Not a good sign. And sending more troops to Afghanistan and supporting Israel as previous administrations have are also causes for concern.

Becoming embroiled in these endless wars can only undermine his presidency in terms of both foreign and domestic policies. There is no way to militarily defeat people who are willing to blow themselves up. They will not be intimidated and we are driving more and more recruits into their camp every time we kill innocent civilians.

The incredible investment in weapons and war has bled us dry. All of the programs Obama hopes to fund at home will go begging, as Lyndon Johnson found out when he tried to have his Great Society and pursue the Vietnam War at the same time.

And who does it serve? Only those who make money from the wars and manufacture of weapons. Surely not those who fight and die or are maimed, and not the families who send sons and daughters into harm's way. Another generation of Americans are being shoveled onto the streets to hold up signs saying, "Homeless Vet, please help."

It is time to dismantle the American Empire. It is time to bring our troops home. All of them. There is no justification for maintaining military bases around the world except for purposes of domination.

And the world is no longer willing to put up with that arrogance.

It's time for the United States to become a respectable member of the world community and not just the biggest bully on the block. President Obama has an opportunity to initiate significant changes. The world and the American people are hungry for a way out of the craziness. He seems like an incredibly smart and decent man. This is one of the many arenas in which he will be tested. It's a slippery slope he's walking on and I am hoping he doesn't lose his footing.

*Moss Henry,
Santa Rosa*

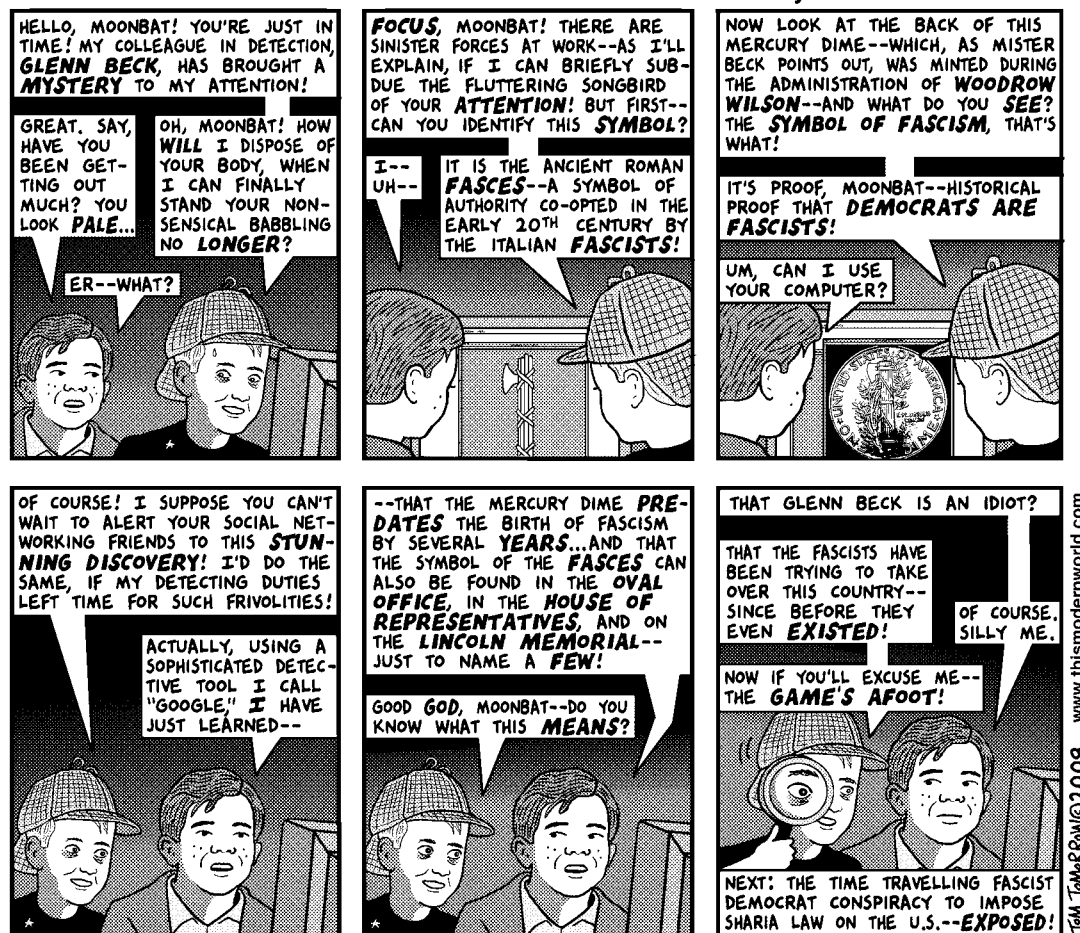
STOP STEM CELL SLAUGHTER

I AM disappointed with President Obama's decision to rescind the Bush administration's strict limits on human embryonic stem-cell research.

Obama confuses scientific integrity with Frankenstein science. Human welfare does not demand that scientists pursue every avenue available. On the contrary, it depends upon a shared

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



responsibility that involves moral limits.

Science has confirmed with objective certainty that full human life begins at conception with the formation of a genetically complete, self-directing human entity, the embryo. Life does not result from an organism when it has been built up, but rather it is the vital principle of life that builds up the organism of its own body. This was established 120 years ago by Wilhelm His, the father of human embryology.

From this starting point, the human life history unfolds as a continuum—embryo-foetus-baby-child-adult-elderly person—and ending in death. Each point on the continuum is fully human with the full human properties appropriate to its stage of development.

Embryonic stem-cell research involves the destruction of living human embryos. This amount to the direct and intentional killing of human beings.

Amazingly, though embryonic stem cell experiments have failed to produce a single, unqualified, therapeutic success, even in animal

models, supporters of the embryonic model continue to laud their unproven and currently unethical methods and ignore the fact that adult stem cell therapies are being used extensively today in treating over seventy diseases. A major breakthrough in November of 2007 showed that pluripotent stem cells (embryo-like stem cells) can ethically be derived from human skin cells by "reprogramming" them with special genes.

The smart plan for the U.S. and Canada's future would be to encourage the myriad of available alternatives, rather than funding the most unethical type of research that relies on a form of discrimination against an entire class of humans—embryonic humans—being singled out for targeted destruction at the hands of researchers.

Human beings are not raw materials that can be exploited or commodities that can be bought and sold. We must help those who are suffering, but we may not use a good end to justify an evil means.

*Paul Kokoski,
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada*

NUZ

Drop a line to 115 Cooper St, Santa Cruz, 95060
or email us at nuz@metcruz.com

Measure by Measure

Californians are unenthused about the propositions on offer in next month's super unsexy **SPECIAL ELECTION**, according to a survey by the **PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA**. Though that's no surprise to District 27 Assemblyman **BILL MONNING**—he's supporting all six propositions—it's pretty bad news all the same.

"It's clearly going to be an uphill battle," he says. "The simple statement is, if they fail, we're in a deeper hole faster."

After interviewing 2,004 state residents, PPIC found voters are divided on five of the props, with the clear favorite—81 percent would vote yes—being Prop. 1F, which would put a block on pay increases to state officials in years of a budget deficit. Prop. 1A, which Monning calls "critical," would change the budget process by boosting the state's "rainy day" fund, and garnered slightly more hypothetical "no" votes (46 percent) than "yes" votes (39 percent). The survey finds Prop. 1C also failing, with only 37 percent of voters supporting changes to the state lottery that would allow for \$5 billion in borrowing from future lottery profits to balance next year's budget. And even in the wake of pink-slipping thousands of teachers statewide, Prop. 1B divided voters almost evenly, 44 percent yes, 41 percent no, on a measure that would require future infusions of cash to local school districts and community colleges to help them cope with shriveling budgets. Propositions 1D and 1E, which redirect money from children's health and mental health services, both squeaked by, according to the survey.

The very real possibility that the propositions will fail, despite the fact that the special election is an emergency response to the state's \$40 billion budget gap, is something Monning sees as a kind of perfect storm of factors—including a badly wounded newspaper industry. "I think some of this is due to the decline of the fourth estate," he says. "And I think Californians are preoccupied by an unhealthy economy and trying to survive and they're maybe not learning about these ballot propositions."

He adds that while he understands that voters are unhappy about the prospect of increasing taxes and just sort of down on state government in general, "the alternative is worse. If people don't like it now, wait until we're asked to make another \$20 billion in cuts. It's a bleak picture."

Curtis Cartier



BAD MATH Marc Bresler, pictured with infant daughter Lucy and son Thomas, will need to take out more student loans just to make ends meet if a looming rent increase at UCSC goes through.

Family Values

Student parents may be priced out of UCSC **BY CURTIS CARTIER**

There was a time when Marc Bresler could afford to go to school, pay his rent and feed his family. It was never easy. But between his job as a UCSC teacher's assistant and his wife Eileen's meager wages from the Santa Cruz County Mental Health Department, the couple made enough to keep Marc in his doctoral program, their two kids in clean diapers and the whole family on a path to a better life.

Today, that path is looking rockier than ever and may prove too steep to navigate. That's because the Breslers have seen monthly rent for their two-bedroom apartment at UCSC's Family Student Housing residence hall go from \$1,130 when they moved in two years ago to \$1,210 in 2008 and, if the university gets its way, \$1,300 come July. The steady increases, coupled with Eileen's hours being cut by the cash-strapped county, have left Marc with little choice but to drop out of the chemistry program and

move somewhere more affordable if the school goes through with the proposed rent hike.

"I make \$1,800 a month from my T.A. salary," says Marc as his 3-year-old son Thomas impatiently tries to show off a red snapdragon he's found. "Once they raise rent it will be \$1,301 per month. That leaves \$500, and you figure another \$150 goes to utilities and car insurance, and \$100 for laundry. That leaves \$250 for food and it's simply not enough. It's morally crushing to think about."

The Breslers' miserable math equation has become the norm at the university's FSH complex. Dozens of parents, many of them surviving on a single income, are barely making ends meet now, and an extra \$91 a month may be just enough to be too much. These students, however, are not content to sit idly by while the university prices them out of their homes and education. Since the rent increases were announced last month,

single moms, working dads and married couples all around the bustling complex have joined forces to try and convince the school's Student Housing Department to spare them the 7 percent hike. So far, their requests have been met with a simple solution.

"They just tell us to get more financial aid," Marc explains. "But we don't want to take out more loans. We're already paying off debt from undergrad school, and I think it's ridiculous that the school's whole solution is for us to just go further into debt."

Jean Marie Scott, an associate vice chancellor for the housing department at UCSC, explains that FSH is treated like any other residence hall on campus—each of which will see a 6.5 to 8.2 percent rent increase for next year. She says the uproar from FSH tenants is understandable but is unlikely to produce any special consideration from the powers that be.



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"We fully understand that this increase is hard for some students," says Scott. "But we still think, even at \$1,300 a month, that these units are a very good value and, in reality, loan programs are part of how most students fund their university experience."

For Elaine Kinchen, a single mother and a graduate student, FSH is more than just a convenient place to live while going to school. It's the only residence that will rent to her and her toddler son Elliott.

"I spent months couch-surfing with my son because no one will rent a studio or one-bedroom apartment to a single mom with a kid. They won't even call you back," she says. "I literally don't know what I'll do if this increase goes through. A hundred dollars doesn't sound like it's a big deal until it's the difference between buying food or buying diapers."

"I spent months couch-surfing with my son because no one will rent a studio or one-bedroom apartment to a single mom with a kid. They won't even call you back."

—Elaine Kinchen

What Kinchen and the Breslers say they will miss most if forced to move out is the FSH community itself. This is a place where neighbors become playmates, dinnertime is a communal affair and a baby sitter is always right next door. Sidewalks throughout the apartments are scrawled with pastel chalk in a tapestry of names like "Juliah" and "Bryan" and pictures of monsters, faces and alphabets.

These parents, like everyone who chooses to invest thousands of hours and dollars into higher education, are hoping to make life a little better in the long run. What sets the students at FSH apart, however, is that each of them has at least one other person who's also counting on them to succeed.

"My family comes first," Marc says before taking Thomas out to play with his toy truck. "I just hope I can make it through for their sake." **M**



Curves owner Janna Malizia

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Monning says that though the turnout will likely be low, he remains hopeful that Californians will take the time to educate themselves on the propositions. "If the story can be told and the dots connected, people will do what's right," he says. "This is in the self-interest of all Californians."

Just When You Thought It Was Safe

Noticeably cheaper gas prices that have pleased car-dependent Americans have allowed the Obama administration to successfully postpone the last-minute decision by George W. Bush to lift the ban on **OFFSHORE OIL DRILLING**. **KEN SALAZAR**, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, has held three national forums in which he has presented findings from updated studies on the costs and benefits of offshore drilling, then listened to citizen feedback. The final hearing is Thursday, April 16, at the University of California in San Francisco. It's the public's last chance to share their opinions on whether to drill, baby, drill or grow up and just say no.

"Oil drilling doesn't make sense because it is such a finite resource," says **LAURA KASA**, executive director of Save Our Shores, which was formed to keep oil derricks out of the bay 30 years ago. Kasa is expecting a couple hundred Santa Cruzans to appear in the name of SOS and other local environmental organizations at the UCSF hearing this week and is still looking for volunteers to wear jellyfish and sea anemone costumes that will call extra attention to her group.

The Santa Cruz chapter of the Surfrider Foundation, along with sending as many letters as they can to Salazar about how lethal oil spills are to our environment, plan to rally at noon the day of the forum "with demonstrators making speeches and waving signs . . . a whole visual display," says **ALEXIS HENRY**, Surfrider's communications manager.

A dominant concern regarding whether or not to continue oil production is America's falling employment rate. "Part of our job is to bring energy production back to the U.S., so that we can create jobs," Kasa says. She believes that everything from the research to the manual labor involved in producing alternative forms of energy will generate employment opportunities that will either match or surpass the number of oil jobs.

For those who can't make it but want to weigh in, written comments will be accepted through Sept. 21, 2009, when Salazar and company make a final decision on the matter.

OFFSHORE OIL DRILLING FORUM is Thursday, April 16, 8am-8pm at UCSF Mission Bay Conference Center, Robertson Auditorium, 1675 Owens St., San Francisco. RSVP to speak at DOI_Events@ios.doi.gov.



ORGANIZING THE ORGANIZERS
Community studies students at an April 7 meeting about the future of their department

Rally of Rallies

UCSC may have poked the wrong beehive when university leaders discussed cuts to its popular **COMMUNITY STUDIES PROGRAM** last week. Within hours of the news, a Facebook site had been created, meetings had been scheduled and a whole network of students and professors, trained to organize grassroots movements and fight for a common cause, had been unleashed upon the very institution that created it.

These efforts came to a head at the April 7 standing-room-only meeting at a UCSC classroom, where hundreds of students and a handful of community leaders assembled to strategize on how to save the threatened department.

"There are a lot of rumors going around right now, and in some cases you all may know more than we do about what's going on," said community studies chairperson **B. RUBY RICH** at the meeting. "We need to determine what the university's priorities are when making budget cuts, then we can argue for the merits of the department. It's critical that we are organized and effective in our response."

As if taking Rich's suggestions as course work assignments, students at the meeting launched a new website, organized a letter writing campaign targeting elected officials and broke off into "action groups" that will handle different roles in what is believed to be a long a bitter fight ahead.

The community studies program is one of UCSC's unique draws for students around the country and has been educating community organizers and non-profit professionals for more than 40 years. Though at times criticized as being an indoctrination system for leftist political views, the program is valued by dozens of local nonprofits, like the Santa Cruz AIDS Project, for providing interns who make up the majority of the organizations' staffs.

For more information on upcoming meetings and efforts to save the program visit the COALITION TO SAVE COMMUNITY STUDIES Facebook site at www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=150382125028#/group.php?gid=150382125028.

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NEWS & VIEWS

RESERVED Marine protected areas, like the one at Ano Nuevo, limit fishing in order to protect marine ecosystem health. Some fishermen fear that without proper funding for the program, they'll be shut out of reserves indefinitely.

At Sea

Amid a state budget crisis, concerns over the future of MLPA funding

BY ALASTAIR BLAND

In 2007, 18 percent of the coastline between Pigeon Point and Point Conception was designated as “marine protected areas” by the Marine Life Protection Act, or MLPA. The objectives of the act, which former Assemblyman Fred Keeley co-authored and Gray Davis signed in 1999, include a long-term scientific monitoring program to determine how marine biodiversity reacts to curtailing of human disturbance in these protected zones.

But whether the state can supply the money to fully implement the MLPA remains a question. In December, Gov. Schwarzenegger put a freeze on monetary allotments for all bond-funded state operations, including the MLPA. In February, the governor signed the new budget, which can now be read online. It makes no mention of the MLPA.

Sandy Cooney, spokesman for the state's Natural Resources Agency, says that the document would be thousands of pages long

if it had to list such details, and he assures that \$4.6 million for the next fiscal year have been set aside for the MLPA's planning phase, which amounts to collecting baseline data, drawing lines on the map and establishing Marine Protected Areas.

The second phase—the implementation—will be the challenge, Cooney says. “How we'll fund the monitoring and enforcement of the marine protected areas is the question.”

Bob Franko, chairman of the Coastside Fishing Club, doubts the state will be able to hire the wardens and biologists necessary to properly implement and protect the reserves.

“There's no money to carry out the MLPA, and without money there's no way to pay the biologists to study the reserves to see if they're working,” he says.

Franko points to a fine-print clause in the MLPA that mandates “adaptive management” and which leaves open the possibility

that some newly created marine reserves could eventually be reduced, enlarged, or even reopened again to recreational and commercial fishing—depending on the findings of subsequent assessments.

“But how will you have adaptive management without anyone out there managing?” says Franko.

Kaitilin Gaffney, director of Pacific Ecosystem Protection at Ocean Conservancy, has worked on implementing the Central Coast's MPA program since it was made law in 2007. She says \$2 million in MLPA bond funding has largely been paid out already, and that the program is “poised for success.”

“The frozen bond funds are a piece of the broader puzzle, but in no way are they threatening its success,” she says. “The fact is, California's MPA program is better funded than any other MPA effort in the world. There are a lot of programs in the state

that are under the chopping block right now, but this is just not one of them.”

Where's the Money?

As the California Fish and Game Commission works at finalizing a network of marine protected areas on the coast from Pigeon Point north to Mendocino County and another network of reserves between Point Conception and Mexico—much of which work is being paid for by private environmental organizations—critics have suggested that the entire MLPA proceeding be halted until the state finds a guaranteed long-term source of funding. This is in part because MLPA's largest private benefactor—the Resources Legacy Fund Foundation—has said that it will withdraw its financial support for the MLPA once the planning phase is done.

“It's doubtful that our charity will be available indefinitely for



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the maintenance of what is essentially a state process," said Michael Valentine, an attorney providing oversight of the environmental advocacy organization's MLPA donations. "Once the network [of MPAs] is created and effective, we'll likely remove ourselves and let the state do everything it can to administer and monitor them."

And that is exactly what some fishermen, who hope to fish again in some of these waters, are afraid of. On the Central Coast, MPAs now occupy 204 square miles and include Natural Bridges State Marine Reserve and Ano Nuevo State Marine Conservation Area, and roughly a dozen others in Santa Cruz and Monterey counties. The new law calls for follow-up studies of these reserves sometime in 2012 or 2013—plus constant protection from poachers.

Assistant chief at the Department of Fish and Game Tony Warrington says approximately 18 wardens currently guard the entire coast between Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz. The new budget allows for 14.2 new warden positions statewide, but Warrington points out that the positions will not bear any specific marine emphasis.

Samantha Murray, Pacific Region Ecosystems manager with the Ocean Conservancy, believes that private and interagency support will save the day. According to Murray, representatives of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Foundation, San Mateo County Parks, Point Reyes National Seashore and the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary have already expressed to the Fish and Game Commission their willingness to help with education, monitoring and—crucially—enforcement. Gaffney adds to that list the Bureau of Land Management, National Parks and California State Parks, adding up to what she calls "a level of support not often seen in other settings."

Though the cobbled-together funding isn't ideal, Murray doesn't feel that the current economic depression merits waiting around; California's marine ecosystems need boosted protection now.

"We have a huge tourism industry based on our ocean resources, and this isn't an issue that we can afford to wait on while the economy recovers. We have fisheries and ecosystems in decline."

Franko sees another outcome. "They're just going to put up the no-trespassing signs and they'll stay there forever. The public will never get these waters back."

With additional reporting by Curtis Cartier and Traci Hukill.

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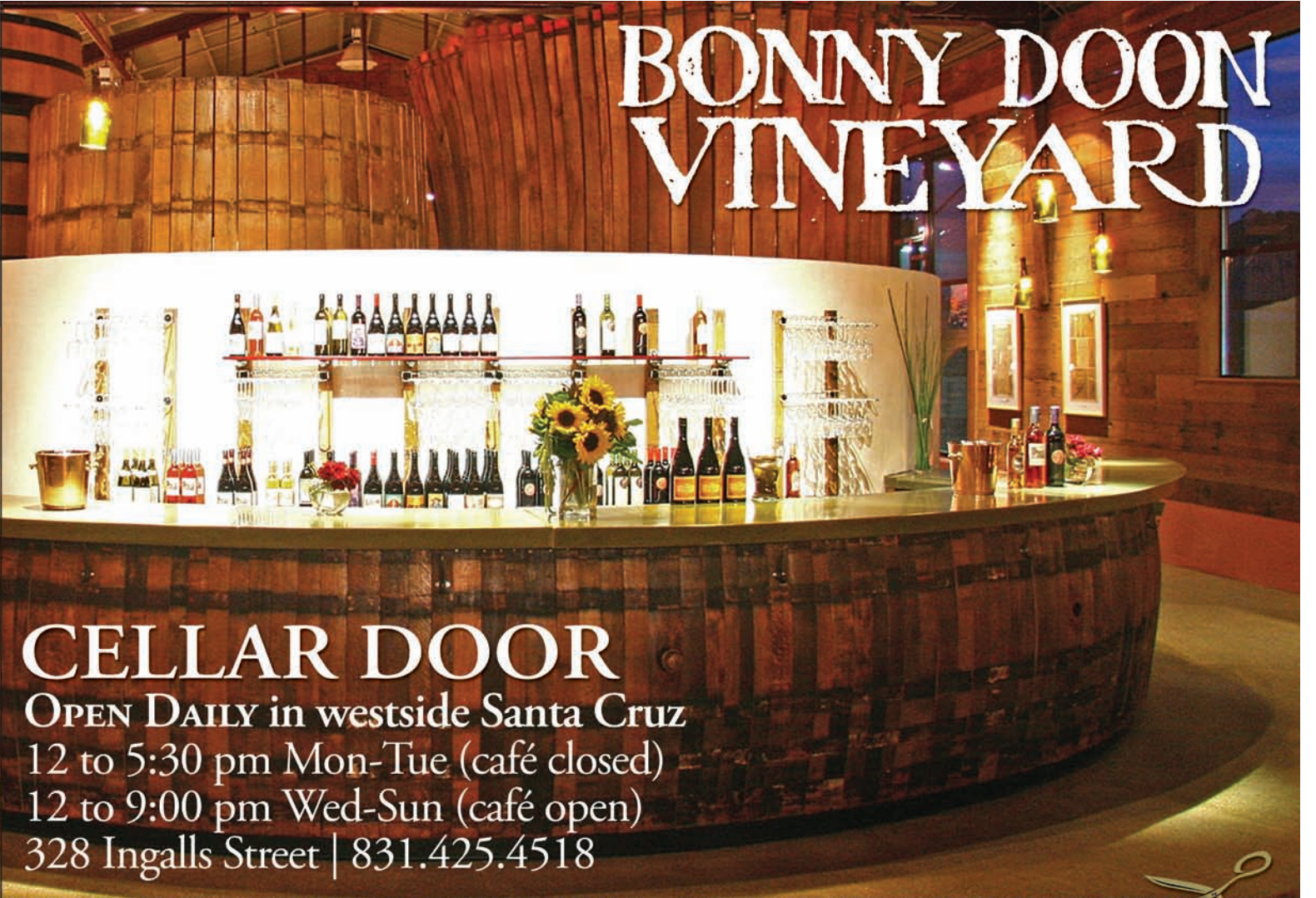
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VICTORY VICTUALS

THE DOMESTIC ISSUE

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ONCE AGAIN, PLANTING CARROTS AND KALE IS A DISPLAY OF PATRIOTISM **BY ROGER SIDEMAN**

Eating locally raised food is a burgeoning trend. But who has time to get to the farmers market, let alone plant a garden? That's where Kate Purcell comes in. For a fee, Purcell will build an organic garden in your back yard, weed it weekly and even harvest the bounty, placing a box of vegetables on the back porch when she leaves.

As backyard gardens have been enjoying a renaissance across the country, "personal farmers" like Purcell are seeing their businesses blossom. Environmental concerns and the mainstreaming of the local food movement play a major part in the timing, according to Purcell and a chorus of other farmers-for-hire.

Gardening, says Purcell, is her job as well as her civic duty. It's one thing she as a citizen can do—"a way to reconnect with American values."

During World War II, "victory gardens" planted at the behest of the federal government helped reduce pressure on the public food supply brought on by the war effort. (In World War I, they were called

"liberty gardens.") By 1943, Americans had planted more than 20 million victory gardens and reportedly produced 8 million tons of food that one promotional poster called "America's hidden weapon."

Now, at the White House, a different war is taking shape. Michelle Obama's garden is a victory garden of a new era—one that champions responsible and simple lifestyle choices in the face of some daunting economic and global challenges and serves as an learning tool for people who are inexperienced in nutrition and agriculture.

"Gardening can have a purpose, as the Obamas are demonstrating," says Purcell, whose Santa Cruz

business, My Kitchen Gardens, designs and maintains custom gardens.

The new victory garden movement has captured the attention of people who want to lessen their reliance on mass-produced or imported food, reduce their carbon footprint, foster a sense of community or save a few coins on groceries.

The movement has the potential to feel as urgent as the victory gardens of old, says Christof Bernau, an instructor in the apprenticeship program at UC-Santa Cruz's Center for

Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems.

"There's a growing interest in taking charge of one's nutritional and food security, growing crops at home where you can harvest the best and freshest produce," says Bernau.

In a survey released in February, the National Garden Association predicts a 20 percent annual increase in first-time household food gardens. Seed companies have reported running out of some vegetables, according to the gardening association. One out of three households surveyed said the recession has motivated them to plant a garden.

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MADE IN THE SHADE For a modest fee, Kate Purcell will take the work out of being a locavore.

“Seed saving for the next year helps make gardening economically wise,” says Eve Siebley, founder of WorldFoodGarden.org, a social network for people starting neo-victory gardens.

The desire to grow food, however, crosses economic lines. While some people are struggling financially, others simply prefer lettuce over lawns. People are eager for healthful food close at hand. And they see how much better food grown at home tastes, says Batya Kagan, who runs Your Backyard Bounty, another personal farming service in Santa Cruz.

“A lot of my clients are first-timers motivated because having healthy food at your fingertips is an empowering feeling,” she says.

Kagan and Purcell are typical of a new breed of business owners serving urban dwellers who insist on eating food grown close to home, but have no time or inclination to get their hands dirty. Call them lazy locavores.

Some clients want to be more hands-on but just need a little coaching. Should they cart in fresh dirt to fill raised beds or try to remediate blighted soil? Fertilize with chemicals, compost or organics?

Start from seed or seedlings?

A different local service, Orchard Keepers, specializes in maintaining backyard fruit trees. Since a fruit tree usually produces far more fruit than a household can use, many of the company’s clients agree to donate the surplus to Village Harvest, a San Jose nonprofit.

“It’s win-win because the owner gets better tree care and the fruit gets shared with those who need it,” says Bernau.

Pasatiempo resident Rob Chesnut didn’t have saving the world in mind when he hired Purcell to help establish a food garden for his family. But he celebrates the trend.

“I’m under no illusions that growing a little of our own food is going to save much money or make a big impact on the environment, but it’s about accomplishing positive change together, with all of us participating in small ways,” he says. “The Obamas have set a great example. It’s nice to be a part of that.”

Find Kate Purcell and Batya Kagan online at www.mykitchengardens.com and www.yourbackyardbounty.com.

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THE TOWN MIDDEN

Composting in Santa Cruz is poised to hit the big time— if it can survive budget woes **BY MOLLY ZAPP**



Curtis Cartier

HOT STUFF Andrew Tuckman, a consultant with Vision Recycling, shows off a 'sausage' where food-based compost is 'cooked.'

Leftover tofu lo mein and moldy baguettes always have a future long after they're deemed inedible. They could be composted into a product that nourishes the ground and controls weeds without pesticides, or they could clog up the landfill and emit greenhouse gases. For the untold number of Santa Cruzans who "compost" instead of compost—quotation marks to designate the well-intentioned practice of dumping one's food scraps in a pile with no upkeep, proper mixture or understanding of the process—those orange peels and mashed potatoes past can be a little of both.

Ecology Action specialist Gavin Comstock, who helps run the county's comprehensive composting classes, defines the crunchy-sounding composting process simply: the recycling of organic material into soil. For those who compost, "compost" or have interest in learning about the process, the county provides free,

hands-on composting workshops and free or subsidized composting bins.

"Composters" who want to be more efficient, or those who currently do not compost but want to, can take heart in the simple biological inevitability explained by master composter Bob Sellers.

"No matter what you do, it's probably going to work," Sellers says reassuringly. All organic material will eventually break down; the not-too-tricky key is learning how to make the composting process more efficient and ensuring that one's compost pile emits only carbon dioxide instead of methane, the greenhouse gas food scraps emit when dumped into landfills.

A composter since Bush Sr. was in the White House, Sellers says he uses the nutrient-rich finished compost to nourish his garden and grow his own produce. For Sellers, turning what would otherwise fill up landfills into an organic product is



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a way of life he hopes more people will embrace.

“We’ve been a throw-away society; it’s about time we start using some of what we throw away,” Sellers says.

Dump and Run

There are three basic composting methods, explains Comstock: cold pile, warm/hot pile, and worm bin composting. Cold pile composting is the most low-maintenance and takes the longest; essentially, one simply tosses any amount of food scraps and some yard waste onto a pile, waters it to the consistency of a wrung-out sponge, and with time and air, it will compost. The warm/hot pile methods have the same basic premise as cold, but must be in larger piles—3 square feet for hot composting. The inner temperature of a hot compost pile must reach 135 degrees Fahrenheit, which dedicated composters monitor with a device that looks like an orgy-sized meat thermometer. The high heat speeds up the biological process and allows a wider variety of green waste to be used in the compost mix, like dried weeds whose seeds would sprout in a cold compost pile. Worm composting relies on the work of red worms and white worms to break down food scraps.

Lynn Appley, master composter who helps teach a comprehensive composting class, explains that different composting methods work for different people. For households that produce only a small amount of food scraps, and for folks who don’t have yard space for a compost pile, worm composting can be the best option. Though the critters in the compost bins must be protected from frost and the worm’s kiss of death, orange peels, worm bin composting is fairly low-maintenance, and some worm bins can be kept inside without smelling strongly. The cold compost works well for people who have access to some land outdoors, and warm and hot composting are ideal for serious gardeners and farmers who produce larger amounts of green waste and food scraps.

Worm bins only require the bin, food scraps, water, a pile of shredded newspaper on top and, of course, the worms. The other methods are most successful with a 50-50 mix of “greens” and “browns,” plus water and air. “Greens” include food scraps, fruit peels and any materials that provide nitrogen. “Browns” include dried grass, straw, dried leaves, paper towels and other organic material that provides carbon. Paper-like takeout containers labeled “compostable” can be shredded and added to compost piles. Comstock recommends that so-called bioplastics like Taterware be put in the green waste refuse containers, as they are tough to break down.

Though a pile of biodegrading biscuits



SHAVINGS AND LOAM ASSOCIATION
Master composter Bob Sellers shows off ‘Bob’s Black Gold.’

can look like future black gold to composters, it also looks like a free buffet for rats, raccoons and other assorted four-legged scavengers. Sherry Lee Bryan, senior program specialist at Ecology Action, who co-manages the County of Santa Cruz Home Composting Program, maintains that the county’s vermin population is not markedly increased by individuals composting. “There’s plenty of open trash cans and places for vermin to hide out without composting,” she says. Meats, bones and dairy especially attract four-legged creatures, and Appley and Comstock heavily emphasize the importance of not trying to compost them.

“You’ve got to bury your food scraps,” Bryan says. “Don’t dump and run. Those smells, of course, attract critters — you’ve got to cover your food scraps with other [brown materials]. For folks who live in really, really rodent-infested areas—maybe there’s a big pile of wood rats next door—we recommend that they bury their

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Curtis Carlier

compost bins underground." If vermin are really serious, Bryan suggests creating a mesh net to keep them out. In addition, the free and subsidized composting bins given out by the county are vermin-resistant.

Pile It On

Over at Vision Recycling, the private company already subcontracted to recycle the county's yard waste, there is talk of enacting composting on a much larger scale. Jeff Gage, director of Vision Recycling, says that the company has a composting pilot program with about 50 local restaurants and schools. Vision president Tom Del Conte says they are pursuing obtaining permits to expand their composting operation to a countywide curbside food scraps collection program, and hopes to go before the Board of Supervisors in November.

In the 2007-2008 fiscal year, the county put almost 100,000 tons of waste into

landfills—and that's after 65 percent of the refuse collected was recycled or otherwise diverted. (Current county regulations prohibit recyclables, green waste, household hazardous waste, mattresses, concrete and some other products from going into the landfills.) About one-sixth of what goes into the county's Buena Vista and Ben Lomond landfills is compostable food scraps. While making curbside composting available on a countywide basis probably wouldn't result in a complete absence of food scraps going in the landfill, a 15 percent reduction in materials in the landfill would be 15,000 fewer tons filling up the ground.

Food scraps and other compostable materials in the landfill emit methane and carbon dioxide. Methane, a greenhouse gas that contributes to global warming, is produced by anaerobic decomposition. It's also the smelly gas (farts) produced by



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PUBLIC MEETING

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UC Santa Cruz has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the East Campus Infill Project, a proposed student housing complex in the central area of the campus near Crown and Merrill Colleges.

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livestock and, we are told, people. Carbon dioxide, a far less harmful gas, is produced by aerobic decomposition and does not smell. Though much of the methane produced in the Buena Vista landfill is collected and transformed into energy, not all of it can be collected. Bryan says that when done correctly, composting is aerobic decomposition, and therefore subverts the production of the greenhouse gas entirely.

"If done properly, only carbon dioxide is emitted in a backyard (composting) pile, instead of methane," she says. "Methane is 16 to 20 times more powerful of a greenhouse gas than CO₂; therefore, aerobically composting organic material is preferable," Bryan says. A telltale sign of a composting pile going anaerobic is a strong odor. To prevent a pile from going anaerobic, one must simply take care to ensure a good balance of materials by adding the necessary "browns" to the pile, stir the pile regularly and keep it water-permeable.

Everything Goes

Commercial composting, as they do at Vision, can compost meats, dairy, bones and fat, products that the county discourages individuals from trying to compost because of their smell and tendency to attract vermin. The compost piles at Vision are enclosed, and a recent trip to the facility included neither obvious evidence of vermin infestation nor a rank smell. For folks who already compost at home, the curbside composting would allow them to compost all of their food and yard waste in some form.

Though Comstock and the others at the county class support large-scale composting over the food scraps otherwise going into the landfill, he stresses the value of consumers composting at home.

"For the success of our future and decreasing our waste, decentralization is essential," Comstock says.

Composting at home eliminates the need to haul the waste to a commercial facility, and the fuel needed to run the machinery. But commercial composting would also make it much easier for people unable or uninterested in composting at home, and, according to Del Conte, would create jobs. Financially, compared to trash, composting is more viable: Del Conte says it costs \$65 per ton to haul and dispose of garbage, while recycling green waste is only \$30. And, of course, composting results in a reusable and resellable product, which Del Conte says "there's plenty of market for."

Funding for the county's composting education program comes from the garbage fees. The cost of trash collection is based on tipping fees; that is, the monthly fees are based on the size of waste container one fills, but increased recycling has had an unintended economic impact.

"Because we're so good at recycling, and because the economy is so bad and people aren't buying as much, the tipping fees are way down—which means not as much money is given to the county," Bryan explains.

Currently, the county fully funds the composting program, which also includes information booths and outreach to schools. But much of the program could be shut down as early as June; according to Bryan, due to county budget concerns, the program was asked to come back with a budget of just 30 percent of what it was this year. "This spring is pretty much our last shot," Bryan says.

Much of the county's composting program could be shut down as early as June; due to budget concerns, the program was asked to come back with a budget of just 30 percent of what it was this year. 'This spring is pretty much our last shot,' Bryan says.

Over 500 people participated in composting classes in 2007, and the Master Composters report having "composting consultations" with over 2000 people who work the county informational booths. Though 69 percent of folks who attended the classes were not currently composting, Bryan says she has no way to gauge how many Santa Cruz residents compost. Hundreds? A few thousand? Ascertaining that detail would require funding for a study, and extra funding the program doesn't have.

Sellers wants to see more people be accountable for the waste they produce, and thinks many people need economic incentives to reduce, reuse, recycle and make composting "a fact, not an option."

"If you turn it in, you'll get money back," he says. "If you don't, it costs more. It doesn't seem like anything else motivates people unless you hit them in the pocketbook," he concludes. **M**

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By Laureen Yungmeyer ChFC
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Who knows? Does someone in addition to your spouse know where these papers are kept? Consider making a list of such papers and records, and on the list state where these documents can be found. Then advise a trusted third party – an attorney, CPA, relative, or family friend – where this list is kept.

The general idea is that someone not domiciled in your residence know about this list and how to access it. This decision requires a certain comfort level, and you alone are able to make that determination.

Which papers? Regardless of who knows what, organized records are always a plus. The following items might be part of your "important documents" list:

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Beyond however you decide to store your personal records, and whatever you decide to include, one fact is clear. If important legal, business and personal documents are organized and accessible, the handling of a crisis situation is made much easier.

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It's important to know how chronic stress affects the body. When threatened, either physically, emotionally, or environmentally, our body goes into a defense mode. Its main purpose is to survive! It can't tell the difference between the threat of a stock market crash, the high price of gas, or a Bengal tiger pursuing you for lunch. All it knows is it must survive. Your "fight or flight" mechanism, run by your adrenal or stress glands, kicks in preparing you to combat the danger or run for your life.

The "fight or flight" mechanism shuts down "non-essential" life functions such as digestion and/or your immune response. Americans spend \$7 billion a year on digestive aids, and more on ineffective antibiotics. 70% of our immune response is in our digestive tract. These drugs alter the healthy chemistry in our digestive tract and weaken our immune response even more.

Weakened digestion affects absorption of essential nutrients which then weakens the body as a whole. Organs such as your liver and kidneys cannot eliminate toxins well and you begin to store these toxins in fat cells, causing weight gain.

You can help your body overcome these problems by repairing your poor, over-worked adrenal glands, restoring proper digestive chemistry and eliminating the harmful toxins from your body. The result is: more energy, better digestion, and healthy body weight.

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The Domestic Issue ← 20

THE CURATED DOMICILE

Three design stores bring a new esthetic to the home front **BY JESSICA LUSSENHOP**

What you find in three distinct new Santa Cruz shops—eclectic and whimsical home décor cherry-picked from flea markets all over the country—directly reflects the homes of the business women who run them. The best part? The sophisticated and stylish minds that built the stores' collections are for rent: each is also an interior design business, so you can bring each shop's unique look to your own home without having to be a denizen of décor yourself.

At **Saffron & Genevieve**, owner Colleen Hickey provides her customers access to a unique, one-of-a-kind home-decorating tool: her instincts. "I've just thrown things together that are interesting to me," she says. "It totally comes from my gut." That can make describing her aesthetic a little tough, but the style of her Soquel Avenue shop is best approximated as modern urban country. "I do like very simple English and American antiques. I also like the primitive stuff that farmers would have," she says. "I just don't get anything from the new stuff. I don't get any soul." Simplicity and whimsy run constant in her collection—as does the predominantly muted palate, heavy on the white—culled from antiques fairs and flea markets in Texas and Alameda. Hickey reimagines rusty gates as message boards and even gave an old mounted deer's head a coat of white to take him from rumpus room trophy to otherworldly artwork. She'll also make an exception for well-made new products—from ceramic makers Juliska or scent masters Votivo—that fit seamlessly into an antique context. "I really think this is sort of the way things are going. More recycling, antiques, anti-Pottery Barn, all the mass-produced stuff that's horrible for the environment," she says. "The future is all antiques and stuff you make up yourself."

For Suna Lock, an interior designer with 13 years of experience, her new store **Stripe** was an epiphany. Lock was already feeling a bit creatively stifled when she decided to clear out the clutter in her Santa Cruz home. "I was just selling all the crap from the basement, stuff I'd bought from flea markets, and had this amazing day. I made a grand and talked to all of the neighbors," she says. "I realized there are so many people in this town that get it. It is quite an artistic community." She teamed up with Dana Norrell, a recent UCSC



SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW

Locally made Nuala purses hang around with English teacups and midcentury Russel Wright ceramics at Stripe.

graduate and professional fashionista, and began scheming. Fourteen months of serious synergy later, Stripe opened its doors in March with a mission. "This is a one-stop shop for all thing gorgeous," she says. "It's sort of a carefully curated, hand-picked collection of beautiful things for you and your home." The cumulative effect is midcentury glam with an earthy soul. Old advertisements, rustic cabinetry and midcentury chairs skimmed from estate sales pair with playful elements from Lock's own possessions, like her skeleton key collection, which now adorns the Stripe sign. "In some ways the store is a manifestation of my alter ego. If I lived on



Curtis Cartier

my own in my home, that's how it would be," she says.

Anne Bruns Richardson is a graphic designer, and it shows in her Westside shop **Storefront & Studio**. "I'm not afraid of color," she says, gazing at the bold graphic upholstery on a set of vintage Danish chairs. "Everything is either sustainably made, vintage, or things so well-made they can be kept for a long time," she says. "They're not based on trends. You can pass them down." Each item in the store is hand-picked by Bruns Richardson to fit her "useful, playful, beautiful" mantra, including shiny green vintage California pottery or chairs made entirely from recycled aluminum. She uses

old instructional science posters from the '50s as wall art and bold yet practical floor coverings by eco-friendly carpet maker Flor. She is particularly fond of flea markets in North Carolina and Chicago, where she uses an eagle eye for panache to separate the tired from timeless. She partners with Kathleen Schaffer, a landscape designer with a similarly mod design aesthetic, making their airy studio workshop just behind the storefront a homeowner's style mecca. "I work really hard to make sure each and every item is here because it said something to me," says Bruns Richardson. "My taste is a little quirky." 

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OIL AND VINEGAR

Cleaning recipes from the old school

COMPILED BY TRACI HUKILL

A woman I know says her horrible headaches went away when she tossed out all her strong cleaning supplies and started using baking soda, vinegar and other old-fashioned, nontoxic ingredients for cleaning instead. Wondering what Grandma would do led her into a world where baking soda, a dab of dish soap and vinegar make a scouring cleanser (it works, but don't use too much dish soap because it's hard to rinse off), a splash of ammonia and a drop of Prell shampoo in a gallon of water become window cleaner, nongel toothpaste removes stains from wood furniture and salt mixed with grapefruit juice takes the rust off chrome. I can't vouch for all these recipes, but I can say they make for entertaining reading.

Old-Remedies.com

Dishes that have become brown from baking may have that brown stain removed by soaking in strong borax and water.

A good way to whiten bread or meat boards which have become discolored is to rub them with lemon rinds turned inside out. Then wash with clean warm water. They will be a beautiful white when dry.

For dirty grout, use Listerine.

To unclog a drain, drop three Alka Seltzer tablets down followed by a cup of vinegar and wait a few minutes, then run hot water down the drain.

Robbie's Handy Household tricks (<http://kitchen.robbehaf.com>)

Fish or Spoiled Food Odor: Place a bowl of white vinegar on the counter for a few hours. The odor will disappear for good.
Stickers, Decals, and Glue: To remove them from furniture, glass, plastic, etc., saturate with vegetable oil and rub off.

Dryer Tip: Include a few tennis balls in each dryer cycle. The tennis balls not only cut drying time by 25 to 50 percent, but also fluff the clothes to a delicate softness, and towels will be especially fluffy.



MIX IT UP Safe cleaning products are easily whipped up from ordinary kitchen ingredients.

Pest Repellents

Fleas hate Stash Earl Grey. Tear open a few bags, scatter the tea about on your carpet and vacuum up in a few days. (www.lowchensaustralia.com)

To get rid of fleas, put a baking sheet full of warm soapy water under a nightlight and leave overnight. The fleas are attracted by the light and drown in the water.

To keep flies out of the house, fill a ziplock baggie half full of water and drop a few pennies in it. Staple it over the doorway. (Courtesy of my husband's cousin Franc)

To get rid of ants, get in your car, drive to the store and buy a bottle of OrangeGuard. Made from orange oil, it's nontoxic, smells good and works incredibly well.

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From old country lore compiled in 'Country Notions & Potions of East Texas' (1994, NeT Publishing)

Burn sulfur in old dishpan in a closed-up house to get rid of bedbugs.

Make a good stove polish from hog lard mixed with soot.

Break open biscuits baked with hog lard and rub on shoes for nice shine.

Burn cowchips to keep mosquitoes away.

Beeswax rubbed on sewing thread or string increases its strength and makes it waterproof.

Corn meal sprinkled on floors soaks up grease spots.

Sprinkle corn meal on a dance floor to make it smooth for dancers.

Boil black walnut or pecan hulls in water, then pour on wooden floors to stain them

to a dark finish. This also makes a nice stain for plain wooden rocking chairs and rope bottom straight chairs.

Sprinkle cayenne pepper on dew-laden plants to protect from bugs.

To witch for clear water use a pussy willow limb.

To witch for soft sweet water use a peach tree switch.

Plant borage to strengthen neighboring plants' resistance to insects and disease.

Resources:

- www.vinegartips.com/;
- www.artisticflair.org/cleaning.html;
- www.care2.com/greenliving/;
- www.womenandenvironment.org/campaigns/andprograms/SafeCleaning/index.html;
- www.ecocycle.org/bazwaste/recipes.cfm



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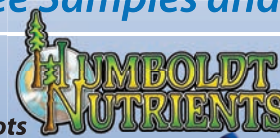
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