

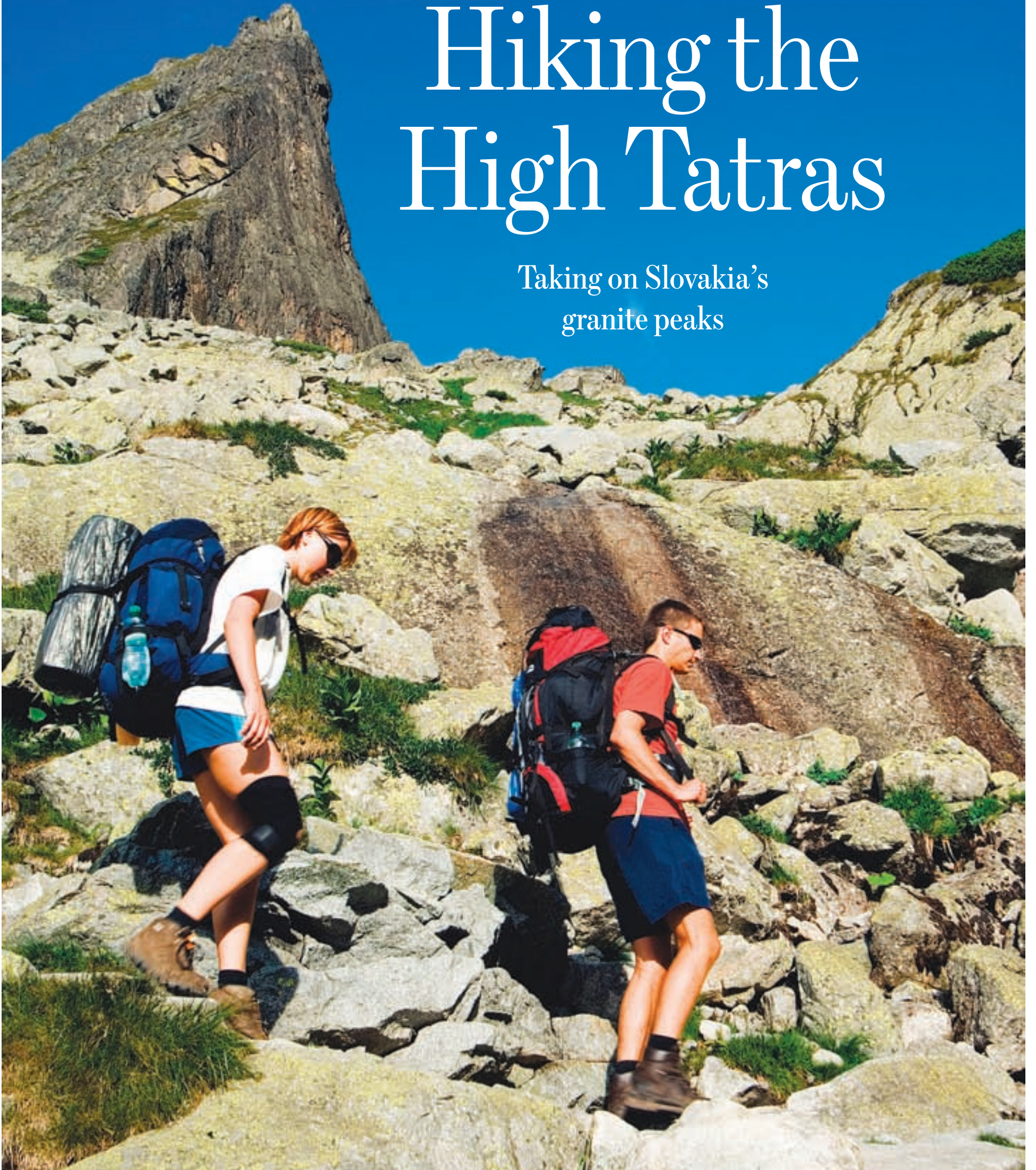
FRIDAY - SUNDAY, AUGUST 29 - 31, 2008

WEEKEND JOURNAL.

EUROPE

Hiking the High Tatras

Taking on Slovakia's
granite peaks



Golf's Olympic dream | Deciphering dress codes

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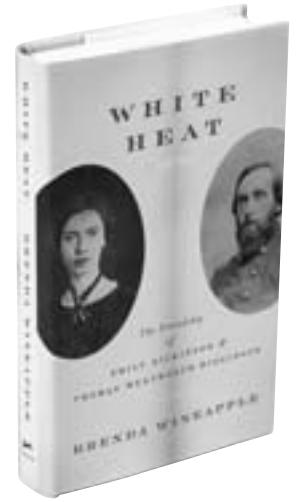


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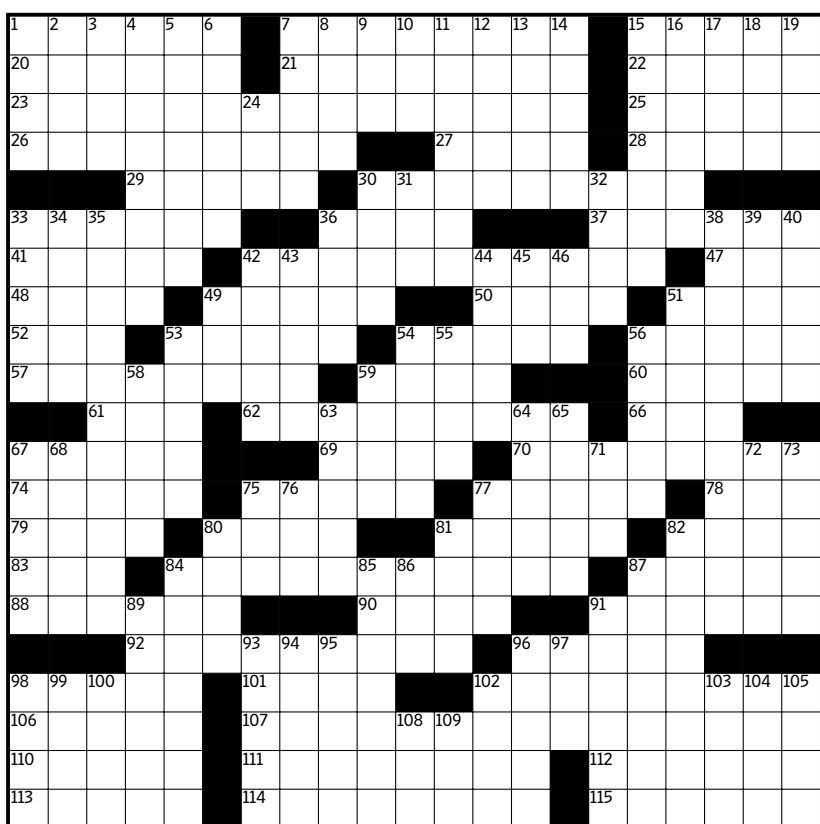
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Last week's solution



WSJ.com

Crossword online
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Down

- Oscar nominee for "The Aviator"
- Chaotic scenes
- Punches
- Set up new headquarters
- Out indefinitely

Golf's Olympic dream

GOLF'S HIGHEST POWERS, banded together through something called the International Golf Federation, are making a major push for the game's inclusion in the Olympics, starting in 2016. Considering that the Olympics currently include badminton, sailing and synchronized swimming (not to mention curling in the winter Olympics), golf's legitimacy as an athletic endeavor is not at issue.

"I'm for it big time. I would love to be an Olympic athlete," Pdraig Harrington told me last week at the

Golf Journal

JOHN PAUL NEWPORT

end of a long day of preparation for the Barclays tournament in Paramus, N.J. The Irishman seemed a bit starry-eyed about the prospect, despite having won golf's last two majors, the PGA Championship and the British Open (although he didn't make the cut at the Barclays). "The Olympics wouldn't be a major, but in 50 years time it might be," he said. "It takes time to build stature for any tournament."

Mr. Harrington's gung-ho attitude is not universal among the pros. Many grumble about their already too-crowded tournament schedule. "I don't think professional golf needs the Olympics, nor does the Olympics need professional golf," Geoff Ogilvy, the world's ninth-ranked player, recently told an Australian newspaper.

But creating another major competition to benefit professional golf and its fans is not the reason the IGF launched its Olympic golf initiative. The underlying motivation is economic. Establishing golf as an Olympic sport, the reasoning goes, would open up spigots of government and Olympic-committee funding for grassroots development in countries where golf is not widely played. More players and more fans equal bigger markets.

"If we want to grow the game globally, this is the best shot," said David Fay, executive director of the U.S. Golf Association and a leading member of the IGF's Olympic committee. Tennis in Russia is often cited as a precedent. Prior to 1988 when tennis was resanctioned as an Olympic sport, Russia (then the Soviet Union) essentially had no tennis programs. Now we are blessed with, among other players, Maria Sharapova.

The International Olympic Committee is expected to render its decision on the matter in October 2009. (Golf's rivals for at most two new spots at the Olympic table include rugby, karate and roller sports.) But the exact format of the competition may not be decided for several years after that. The IOC certainly expects the world's top professionals to participate, as is the case with basketball and tennis, but it doesn't want a big field—maybe half or less the size of a typical pro Tour event, perhaps 60 in both the men's and women's divisions, with at most two or three players from any single country.

The competition will most likely be individual stroke play, not teams, to give countries with a single stand-out player a fighting chance to win gold. When golf was last in the Olympics, in 1904, 23 of the 24 competitors (all male that year) were from the U.S. and one was from Canada.

The Canadian won.

Should golf be chosen, big medal-hungry countries like China and Russia will probably start plucking would-be Tiger Woodses from the crib and exposing them to "Teletubbies" golf videos.

More intriguing to me, however, is the strategy that smaller countries might adopt. There seems to be no ban on importing talent. The anchor of the current Russian women's basketball team, for instance, is all-American Becky Hammon from Rapid City, S.D. I personally would volunteer if a country like, say, Tahiti, looking for short-term advantage, wanted to lavish its golf-training budget on a seasoned golf columnist. Preparing for the Olympics is expensive. I notice that Dara Torres, the 41-year-old American who won three silver swimming medals in Beijing, consumed \$100,000 this year in training services, the ministrations of two professional stretchers and thrice-weekly deep-tissue massage. I could submit to a little of that.

For the long term, up-and-coming golf nations would want to focus on their youth. At the Barclays last week, Phil Mickelson (another big advocate of Olympic golf) said that any country could take early teens, immerse them in a well-crafted program of instruction and golf-specific rotational fitness, and produce "quality" players by the 2016 Olympics. "It would take 12 to 16 years for these young countries to have players of a world-class level, but it's very doable," he said.

Especially important, Mr. Mickelson said, would be hiring world-class teachers. The best might be gobbled up quickly. I could see wealthy Dubai, already the home of a European PGA Tour event, retaining Butch Harmon or Hank Haney immediately and creating an Olympic golf training center at Tiger Woods's first golf-course design there (to go along with the 22 palaces also planned for the development).

But it wouldn't necessarily take a big budget. Tour veteran Jerry Kelly points to successful players like Gary Player and Seve Ballesteros. "These guys started out playing on little dirt tracks and climbing over fences to get access," he said. "If you start kids out with sound basics, a few of them will be athletes and will excel. Absolutely they could be competing at the Olympics or even on the PGA Tour in eight years."

Intrigued by such comments, I called Dr. Bob Rotella, one of golf's most respected mental-game coaches.

"Any country with a golf program is going to send its athletes around the world to compete some, even if it's just at the top amateur level," he said. "But the first thing I would try to sell players on is that experience is not all it's cracked up to be. A lot of players have a lot of experience getting beaten up by certain other players, which isn't a positive. Naïveté—not knowing any better—can actually be an advantage."

For a competitor without much experience on the world stage, intense mental preparation would be vital. "You don't want players to be thinking about the magnitude of the event they are in, or who else is there, or how others are doing. You want them to get into their own little world and stay there," Dr. Rotella said. Think swimmer Michael Phelps before his races in Beijing,

zoning out with his iPod.

"The nice thing about the Olympics is that it doesn't matter who beat you over the previous three years, it only matters for that one day or that one week. So there can be surprises," he said.

Mr. Harrington is also a believer in the possibility of "learning experience" when you can't gain experience the traditional way. Sixteen-year-old gymnasts, he points out, have no choice but to master their emotions and their minds in this way. "The willingness to learn, that's the key," Mr. Harrington said.

Earlier this year, a talented but relatively inexperienced Irish light heavyweight boxer named Kenny Egan sought out Mr. Harrington for advice on how to peak and focus at the Olympics. Mr. Harrington spent a day with him and suggested several sports psychology books to read. Mr. Egan seemed to have learned well. On Sunday in Beijing, he won the silver medal.





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In 'Hamlet 2,' failure is made fun

IT'S A TERRIBLE THING when financially strapped school districts are forced to junk their arts curriculum, thus depriving students of exposure to music, dance and theater. But that just might happen at the fictional West Mesa High School in Arizona, setting of the loony, irreverent "Hamlet 2."

Welcome to the world of failed-actor-turned-failed-drama-teacher

Film

JOANNE KAUFMAN

Dana Marschz (Steve Coogan) who wants desperately to make a name for himself—if only someone, anyone, students, administrators, could pronounce it. Marsh? Marsk? Mars? Whatever.

Let others mount productions of "Oklahoma!" and "West Side Story." Or, if they're really daring, "Sweeney Todd." Dana goes for off-beat fare like an adaptation of "Erin Brockovich," starring his acolytes, the sexually uncertain Rand (Skylar Astin) and the over-emoting Epiphany (Phoebe Strole). The school newspaper's drama critic, a junior Addison DeWitt, but less kind, scorns these efforts, as does the principal, who plans to shutter the drama department. Not that the move will cut costs. Dana doesn't even receive a salary, which may explain why rollerblades are his sole means of transportation. The guy is striking out on all fronts. Just ask his derisive wife, Brie (the wonderful Catherine Keener), who's been trying to get pregnant for years.

Vilified at school, marginalized at home and ridiculed pretty much everywhere, Dana determines to summon his muse. Though this be madness, the result is a musical sequel to "Hamlet" whose dramatis personae include Jesus (as embodied by Dana himself). To describe the show as God-awful is like calling Dom Perignon a fizzy beverage. Let's just say that if Mel Brooks's producers had known about Dana's enterprise, they would never have chosen "Springtime for Hitler" as their surefire flop.

"Hamlet 2," a hit at this year's Sundance Film Festival, is the antidote to "High School Musical." The jokes don't always work; there's some disappointingly inspirational blah-blah that belongs in a far more well-behaved movie, while a repetitive gag about a student bashing her head doesn't even rise to the level of sophomoric. But there is Amy Poehler in a terrific brief bit as an ACLU lawyer, and Elisabeth Shue (playing herself) as a sympathetic nurse at a fertility clinic; even the star of "Leaving Las Vegas" and "Cocktail" can't catch a break in Hollywood these days.

Mostly, though, there's the endlessly resourceful, endlessly inventive, bedazzling Mr. Coogan. Hamlet Schmamlet. Not since "Death of a Salesman" has failure been quite so entertaining.

'The Rocker'

Teen comedies have become as ritualized as Kabuki. There is a carefully calibrated gross-out factor, often having to do with regurgitation; a certain level of nudity generally involving the backsides of the least callipygian cast members, and a particular quantity of beer-swilling, always by those incapable of holding



Above, **Steve Coogan** (center) in 'Hamlet 2.' Left, Christina Applegate and Rainn Wilson in 'The Rocker.'



Photos: Focus Features; Twentieth Century Fox

their liquor. "The Rocker" has the requisite vomit, the view of some very unfortunate hind quarters and the suds. It's also got a vein of sweetness and charm.

Robert "Fish" Fishman (Rainn Wilson, Dwight on the American version of the hit series "The Office") is an embittered 40-year-old, and really, who can blame him? Twenty years ago, he was bound for glory as the drummer in Vesuvius, a heavy metal band being courted by a major label. But the proffered contract came with a stipulation: Replace the percussionist with the nephew of the record company head or no deal. Fish's frightfully loyal bandmates protested the vile nepotism, the hideous injustice for a whole nanosecond before cheerfully signing on the dotted line.

Vesuvius becomes wildly successful, and Fish erupts every time he hears mention of the band's name. This volatility may help explain his inability to hold on to a job.

After yet another dismissal from the work force, he seeks refuge with his sister (Jane Lynch), brother-in-law (Jeff Garlin) and his geeky nephew, Matt (Josh Gad), the bassist in a high-school rock band that goes by the regrettable name A.D.D. When the group loses its drummer before a crucial prom-night gig, and the eager Fish steps into the void, what follows is a life altering moment for all concerned.

Mr. Wilson's wild and crazy aging adolescent plays off nicely against the highly disciplined, responsible members of A.D.D., who

are more than 20 years his junior. Meet Curtis (Teddy Geiger), the group's tormented guitarist/songwriter and Amelia (the very appealing Emma Stone) whose native language is irony. If they don't quite help Fish sober up, he does help them lighten up, blessedly, a point the movie doesn't oversell. And when Fish decides it may be time to play with someone his own age, conveniently there is Curtis's attractive, former rocker mom, played by Christina Applegate.

All are served well by a script that observes of one perfect blond specimen, "It's like Abercrombie is making people now," and that shows a firm understanding of moral relativism. "Loads of elevators play Celine Dion. That don't make it right."

'House Bunny'

Orphan Shelley Darlington (Anna Faris) has finally found a loving surrogate family and a home sweet home at the Playboy mansion in the criminally inane comedy "House Bunny." Life couldn't be better. All that the curvaceous, sweetly pliant

Shelley wants for her 27th birthday is an invitation to be the magazine's centerfold; what she gets is a brief letter from "Hef" (Hugh Hefner playing himself) requesting that she vacate the premises.

Mistaken for a prostitute (tee hee), Shelley spends the night in jail where her innocent double entendres crack up the other inmates (tee hee, tee hee). Touchingly eager to find a place she can call home, she wanders on to a college campus and becomes house mother at Zeta Alpha Zeta, a sorority whose members are such a sorry lot it's doubtful that even the tide would take them out.

Shelley teaches her charges, among them the bespectacled intellectual Natalie (here again, Emma Stone) and the heavily pierced, heavily scornful Mona (Kat Dennings), how to dress, how to apply makeup, how to be sexy and, most crucially, how to be popular. If Zeta fails to attract a new roster of members—currently there are exactly seven—it will be forced to disband and the house sold to the snooty conning sorority down the street. Predictably, Shelley herself learns some important lessons, for instance, that life is about more than being sexy; it's about being true to yourself.

"House Bunny"'s "Legally Blonde" roots show. Written by the same team responsible for the 2001 hit starring Reese Witherspoon, "Bunny" offers up a similar theme, a similar palette (think pink!) and a similar protagonist: a supposed bimbo who's been seriously underestimated.

Unfortunately, Ms. Faris has neither an adroit script—"House Bunny" is a stale collection of dumb bunny jokes—nor Ms. Witherspoon's wily charm. And the filmmakers do Ms. Faris no favors by inviting comparisons to Marilyn Monroe. A scene of this bunny in a full skirt standing over a hissing manhole cover—shades of "The Seven Year Itch"—is an embarrassment. All the more so when Ms. Faris gasps "Who knew steam could be hot?" Who indeed.

WSJ.com

Opening this week in Europe

- **Kung Fu Panda** Greece
- **Get Smart** Belgium, Norway
- **Hamlet 2** Iceland
- **In Bruges** Estonia
- **Mamma Mia!** Portugal, Romania, Slovakia
- **Mongol** Norway
- **Redbelt** Belgium, Italy
- **Step Brothers** Iceland
- **Swing Vote** Greece
- **The Life Before Her Eyes** Netherlands, Poland
- **The Love Guru** Belgium, Netherlands
- **The Rocker** Italy
- **Tropic Thunder** Hungary
- **WALL-E** Bulgaria, Finland, Romania, Sweden

Source: IMDb

WSJ.com subscribers can read reviews of these films and others at WSJ.com/FilmReview



A scene in 'Berlin: City of Smoke.'

Epic tale of Berlin

BY JAMIN BROPHY-WARREN

BERLIN HAS INSPIRED generations of writers and artists. But cartoonist Jason Lutes only knew the city through books when he started the first few chapters of his comic series "Berlin" more than a decade ago. "It was important to me that I not go until I'd created my own personal vision of the city," says Mr. Lutes, who spent his childhood in Missoula, Mont.

He's only made two visits to Germany since then and the second collection of his comic, "Berlin: City of Smoke," which comes out next week in Europe, was drawn in a small, yellow farmhouse outside Woodstock, Vt. The story follows the interwoven lives of Berliners after World War I during the twilight of the Weimar Republic.

Although he later discovered that he was of German descent, the subject matter was initially serendipitous. Mr. Lutes saw an ad for "Bertolt Brecht's Berlin," a depiction of the turbulent era that preceded World War II, and poured himself into learning every aspect of the city. He hopes to finish the final chapter in four years.

Mr. Lutes works primarily in black-and-white because color "complicates the visual message." He draws up several scripts and mock-ups before putting ink to paper.

All of his work is hand-made with the exception of his comic books' covers. The drawings are deceptively simple and are paired with a narrative that is sweeping and complex.

"He's got a great range of facial expressions," says comic writer Ed Brubaker, who has collaborated with Mr. Lutes and met him in Seattle in the early 1990s. "They're easy on the eye, but not so simple that you can't feel their pain."

WSJ.com

Weimar city
Read excerpts from
the graphic novel at
WSJ.com/Europe



Deciphering the dress code

BY RAY A. SMITH

WHEN HOUSTON socialite Becca Cason Thrash sent out a save-the-date announcement for her June gala benefiting the American Friends of the Louvre, she described the dress code as “high black tie.” The result: A flurry of calls from around the world, as mystified guests asked her what they were supposed to wear.

When she followed up with an official invitation, it said simply, “black tie.”

In recent years, party hosts have made dress-code descriptions ever more creative, trying to set a lively tone or keep their bashes from sounding run-of-the-mill. It’s no longer unusual to receive an invitation prescribing a dress code of “wild chic,” “beach formal,” “resort dressy,” “international,” “festive,” “creative black tie” or “safari chic.” Now, there’s a backlash brewing, with many hosts returning to simple, clear instructions—both for their guests’ sanity and for their own.

“I didn’t have time to hold someone’s hand and walk through their closet with them,” says Mrs. Thrash, who had intended “high black tie” to convey that women should wear high-glamour gowns.

Even some professional party planners, who are often hired for their inventiveness, now steer clear of creative instructions. The turning point for Mary Fanizzi Krystoff, an event planner in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., came a few years ago, when she made the dress code on the invitation for a Ferrari event read “Ferrari Hot.” She thought it sounded exciting. But, she says, “I was barraged by emails and phone calls from hundreds of guests asking for clarification.”

Now, Ms. Fanizzi Krystoff is much more specific—to the point of spelling out details in the style of a disclaimer. One invitation for an outdoor wine auction reads, “Cocktail Attire (shoes appropriate for lawn setting).”

She says, “I would much rather throw a party and receive 25 calls after, saying, ‘What a great party that was,’ than [get] 25 calls beforehand asking, ‘What does this mean?’”

The return to clear instructions

is greeted with some relief by Anna Post, great-great-granddaughter of Emily Post. Once, hosts issuing creative instructions might have thought guests would welcome their liberation from strict formal attire. But the range of options can often be “more frustrating rather than helpful for the invited,” says Ms. Post, who is an author and spokeswoman for the Emily Post Institute of etiquette specialists in Burlington, Vt.

Good manners require a host to make guests feel comfortable, not insecure, she says. “You can be creative, but be clear.”

New York society writer Debbie Bancroft thinks an invitation she received for an event tied to the Beijing Olympics got the balance right. “It’s as simple as black and white,” read the invitation, which came inside a clear plastic box filled with black and white M&Ms. “You just knew you’d feel bad if you were wearing orange,” she says.

Not every host achieves that effect. “How to decode the language at the bottom of the invitation is a conversation a lot of people are having—and not always so flatteringly,” says Park Avenue socialite Gayle Perkins Atkins. She serves on various boards, including those of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Visiting Nurse Service of New York, and she often helps coordinate benefits. She now sticks with “black tie” for formal events and “cocktail attire” for events held at cocktail hour. “I don’t believe in ‘black tie optional’ or ‘creative black tie,’” she says, with audible disgust. “You don’t have to have all this verbal embellishment. Why can’t you just say ‘no tie’ or ‘jackets only?’”

The range of options can be particularly tricky for men, she notes. “It causes unnecessary conversations between husbands and wives, often at the event. ‘You made me wear black tie, and I didn’t have to.’”

When Daniel Yu was invited to a company party early this summer, the invitation read “dressy resort attire.” The 23-year-old financial analyst had no idea what that meant—and neither did the co-workers he polled informally at the electric util-

ity he works for in Rosemead, Calif.

Mr. Yu decided to dress casually, in a white camp-style shirt, trousers and driving loafers with no socks. But he also brought along a blazer, a tie and dress shoes, in case it turned out he was dressed inappropriately. When he got to the lobby of the hotel where the party was held, he checked out the crowd and decided he wouldn’t have to change after all. One manager was wearing a Hawaiian shirt.

For Claire Sulmers, a 27-year-old fashion blogger in New York, the stumper was an “international” dress code. She thought she was playing it safe with a classic look—a wrap dress by Diane von Furstenberg in muted colors. But when she arrived, she felt “slightly underdressed,” as she mingled with men in European-cut suits and women in celebrated designers’ gowns.

The word “festive” has its own pitfalls, notes Carol Brodie, chief luxury officer of consulting firm Bespoke Branding. She has had folks show up for “festive” affairs in jeans and T-shirts. She still uses the term—expecting guests to add some holiday color, for instance—but she offers other guidance. “I prefer ‘festive cocktail’ or ‘festive black tie’ to maintain a certain type of attire,” she says.

Some veteran hosts and hostesses note that the party venue and the style of the invitation should send clear signals on how to dress. For Gotham magazine’s anniversary party, held earlier this year at the Rainbow Room in New York, the invitations came in ivory envelopes with the words done in calligraphy. “It was almost like a wedding invitation,” says Jason Binn, chief executive and founder of Niche Media LLC, which publishes the magazine. No dress-code description was necessary, he adds.

But even a grand setting like the Louvre, where Mrs. Thrash held her recent event, doesn’t guarantee that all guests will dress appropriately. Some women showed up at the gala in short dresses and pantsuits. “Some of the interpretations were not what I was hoping for,” Mrs. Thrash says.

Hirst’s name-brand sale

STAR artist-businessman Damien Hirst is starting the fall season with a splash worthy of his preserved sharks.

At Sotheby’s in London on Sept. 15-16, Mr. Hirst will offer 223 of his works in a two-day,

Collecting

MARGARET STUDER

one-man auction dubbed “Beautiful Inside My Head Forever.” Sotheby’s says it’s the first time an artist has created a body of work specifically for an auction. The sale is expected by Sotheby’s to raise in excess of £65 million. Created over the last two years, the pieces will include Mr. Hirst’s signature formaldehyde animal sculptures and paintings with butterflies, pills and skulls as well as his dot and spin canvases. Estimates will range from around £15,000-£20,000 for drawings to £8 million-£12 million for “The Golden Calf” (2008), a preserved calf with 18-carat gold horns and hoofs looking morosely at his viewers from a gold-plated case.

Offering that number of pieces by one artist sounds like a lot. But Sotheby’s senior international contemporary-art specialist Oliver Barker says the number “is not so high in a global context,” indicating that the British artist has a global following. The works will be on display at Sotheby’s in London from Sept. 5-15.

“Beautiful Inside My Head” follows “The Pharmacy Sale” in 2004, when Sotheby’s sold the Hirst-designed contents of his Pharmacy restaurant. The 168-lot auction was sold out and made £11.13 million, compared with its estimate of £3.5 million-£4.9 million. The division of



Damien Hirst’s ‘The Golden Calf’; estimate: £8 million-£12 million.

the profits between Mr. Hirst and Sotheby’s in that sale wasn’t released. The current sale has reserve, or minimum, prices for works but Sotheby’s says it hasn’t provided any guarantees to Mr. Hirst, who is quoted by Sotheby’s as saying an auction is “a very democratic way to sell art.”

Among sculptures will be: “The Kingdom” (2008), a shark swimming in a tank with open mouth (estimate: £4 million-£6 million); “The Incredible Journey” (2008), a zebra caged but seemingly strutting in the open; and “The Dream” (2008), a white foal with a unicorn’s horn, with a puzzled face (both estimated at £2 million-£3 million).

A highlight of new butterfly paintings will be “The Rose Window, Durham Cathedral” (2008), an oval painting reminiscent of the church’s stained-glass windows. In Mr. Hirst’s variation, real butterflies form the colorful patterns (estimate: £700,000-£900,000).

B.B. King looks back

BLUESMAN B.B. KING has influenced countless musicians; on his new album “One Kind Favor” he covers songs by some of those who inspired him. Born Riley King in Itta Bena, Miss., in 1925, Mr. King has a precise, trilling guitar style that changed the blues and left a mark on rockers such as Eric Clapton, George Harrison and John Mayer.

The new album features songs by such blues pioneers as Blind Lemon Jefferson and T-Bone Walker. Mr. King discussed some tracks from the album, due out next month in Europe. —Christopher John Farley

See That My Grave Is Kept Clean

Blind Lemon Jefferson’s original from the 1920s is pleading and tragic; Mr. King’s take has the genial vocals of a man satisfied with life, leaving the throbbing bass to hint at what comes after. “Lemon Jefferson was one of my favorites when I was starting to try to play,” says Mr. King, who recorded the funereal song because “It’s appropriate. I’m 82 now, why not?”

Waiting For Your Call

This song was popularized by T-Bone Walker, whom Mr. King cites as one of his favorite performers. “He meant more to me musically than anyone I can think of at the moment,” says Mr. King of Mr. Walker, who was known for his electric-guitar wizardry and his flashy stage performances. “T-Bone seemed to have a contemporary style. And he played amplified guitar.” While Mr. Walker’s version is laid-back, Mr. King’s takes a more forceful approach, with gruff, full-throated vocals and extended guitar solos.

Tomorrow Night

A hit for jazz and blues guitarist Lonnie Johnson in 1948, this track has a stripped-down opening, pairing Mr. King’s stately baritone against piano work by New Orleans master Dr. John. The song builds with trumpets, saxophones, trombones and Mr. King’s eloquent electric guitar. Mr. King sees the song as romantic. “If I had a pretty girl in my arms, I’d probably listen to ‘Tomorrow Night,’” he says.

Hiking the High Tatras: Taking o

By Art Patnaude

A *Stary Smokovec, Slovakia*
CROSS THE VALLEY, a wall of black granite peaks was rimmed in orange, and windy ripples on the alpine lake next to me were the only movement for miles. The air was chilly among the rocks and glaciers, their gray and white scheme broken only by the fiery sky.

My friend and I stood spellbound above the tree line in the High Tatras, a mountain range on the border between Slovakia and Poland. The mountains are in Slovakia's 740-square-kilometer Tatras National Park, known for its jagged, snow-capped peaks and unspoiled mountain lakes, as well as for being a less-well-known, less-expensive alternative to the Alps. We had come for four days of hiking in the park, which is dotted with mountain chalets, or *chaty*, where we would stay.

We started from Bratislava on a Friday and took a five-hour train northeast for 500 Slovak korun, or about €16 (Slovakia is set to join the euro zone on Jan. 1). Most of the passengers had the windows open; it was July and hot. We headed to Poprad, where we changed trains to get to Stary Smokovec, where we would stay the night.

We spent the next day planning in the town, which is on the southern base of the range and serves as a jumping off point for hikers. On Saturday the town was full of people either going to or coming from higher elevations. The park was created in 1949 in what was then the country of Czechoslovakia, but hikers and holiday makers have been coming here since the 1800s, when a train line opened the area. The protected landscape continues in a Polish national park across the border.

At the tourist office the staffers helped us plan our route: We would hike along the Tatranska magistrála, the trail running west to east along the south end of the range. It would skirt a few passes that still had too much snow and ice to traverse, even in mid-July, while still allowing for day hikes to mountain meadows and peaks. Even though the trails are marked with signs and slashes of red paint, we bought a detailed topographical map, the VKU Vysoke Tatry 1:25,000, for 120 korun.

We were opting for a moderate-difficult route, with steep climbs but nothing technical. The park has a range of trails, from mostly flat with mountain views to vertical rock climbing, catering to almost any fitness level.

The tourist office staff called and made reservations for us at two *chaty* along the route. The 12 *chaty* in the park vary from cabins with open-plan rooms and bunk beds, to hotel-like accommodations with double rooms, soft pillows and mints. We were told most *chaty* will make available any table or floor for a hiker without a reservation and with a sleeping bag, but we wanted actual beds, so reservations were a must, especially during the busy hiking season of July through September.

That evening we relaxed with a proper meal of trout and pork while listening to folk songs played by a trio on accordion, bass and fiddle. Our fellow patrons sang along to the most popular tunes. Slovak lagers, a mere 35 korun and poured slowly with a solid two-fingers of head, were as smooth as their famed Czech brothers and flowed with the music until the town was again empty and sleeping.

On Sunday morning we took a 30-minute train ride to Strbske Pleso, another resort town where several popular trails start—the reason for the crowds of hikers relaxing in the sun and the trinket sellers and tourist shops.

Our first trail, which would take us to the Popradske Pleso *chata*, led uphill through dense firs and beech. It was well maintained and thronged with hikers, with many stopping to look over the edge and at the blanket of



Photos: Alamy; Art Patnaude/The Wall Street Journal

Strbske Pleso in Slovakia's High Tatra mountains. Below center, checking the map in **Stary Smokovec**, a centrally located town full of hikers planning their routes. Below right, a hiker navigates rocky switchbacks, looking toward **Ryse's** 2,499-meter peak.



pinus spread beneath. After only an hour, we arrived at our *chata*, a rustic timber A-frame on a glacial, green-tinted lake, a waterfall tumbling from peaks on one side, blue sky opening up on the other.

We stashed our things in our room and then made our bid to bag Ryse, a 2,499-meter peak. Our late start meant we made it only part way before we lost the light. It's easily done as a full-day hike, however, proved as we passed by a steady stream of hikers coming down in the late afternoon.

The Popradske Pleso *chata* is one of the largest in the park and seemed even more bustling than Stary Smokovec. We had a pink corner room on the second floor, the sounds of the tumbling waterfall a constant with the windows open. At 880 korun a person, it was luxurious only in the sense that it had its own shower and small TV set—and that there were 25 hikers up in the attic paying 440 korun for

a sleeping-bag spot on the floor.

The *chata* is "like family," says Veronica Fabkova, the receptionist, with co-workers and the guests mingling in the evenings. She says that she's seeing more Americans and Australians recently, in addition to the usual Czech and Hungarian guests.

After a shower we headed to the nearby empty restaurant. Most of the *chaty* serve food, and this one had a full menu. The Slovak meal traditionally starts with a soup. The goulash is hearty, but garlic soup is guaranteed to be on the menu. It's simple: garlic in a light stock with herbs, maybe with an egg yolk, cheese or both. We tried the stag goulash, a hearty venison stew with fluffy bread dumplings. Other dishes you will see everywhere include the national Slovak dish, *bryndzove halusky*, a gnocchi-like potato pasta covered with *bryndza*, a traditional strong, creamy sheep's cheese and bacon bits. Pork is ubiquitous—even our trout dish

the previous night had bits of bacon in it.

We opened Monday by putting some distance between us and the rest of the hiking crowds with a steep, 500-meter ascent up rocky switchbacks over less than a kilometer. Above the trees the sun throbbed and my lungs were stretched, but at the top we were rewarded with a stunning view. Our *chata* sat like a snail shell on the rocky shore of the lake, seemingly insignificant under Ryse's towering peak.

We continued east among the clouds through a boulder field, carefully hopping from one to the other. Red lines were painted on the rocks to keep us on track while traversing the epochs-old glacial rubble. Here the Tatranska magistrála trail teetered below summits but high above the valley. Compared with the climb to Ryse, the trail was nearly empty, and anybody who passed us or who we passed quickly disappeared into the twists and turns. Alone among the ancient wind and

n Slovakia's granite peaks

A hiker at the **high pass** Sedlo Polsky hreben. Below left, the chata **Popradské Pleso** near Ryse peak; below right, the train that links towns around the **national park**.



What you need for the trail

SLOVAKIA'S HIGH TATRAS national park is a compact area of alpine peaks a step off the trodden trail. The national park's Web site has details of *chaty* and other information (tanap.region.sk), and more information can be found at the Slovakian tourism site (www.sacr.sk).

The park has trails of varying difficulty, but all hikers should get the detailed topographical map, the VKU Vysoke Tatry 1:25,000. You can find it at tourist offices for around 120 Slovak korun, or about €4. Guides can be arranged through the tourist office and are required for activities off the main trails, such as rock climbing. Camping isn't allowed in the park.

High season for hiking is July to early September. Before and after there is still quite a bit of snow on the trails, but there will be fewer crowds. Summers are hot at lower altitudes; at higher points daytime temperatures can be in the low-20s Celsius, dipping to the low-teens at night.

For a taste of some of the mountain views without the exercise, you can ride a cable car from the town of Tatranska Lomnica to Skalnaté Pleso, or Rocky Mountain Lake (a round-trip ticket is 200 korun). It's a touristy area where you can then catch the cable car to Lomnický štít, the second-highest peak in the park (a round-trip ticket is 550 korun).

I flew from London to Bratislava on Ryanair, one of several budget airlines that have begun serving Slovakia in recent years. The train ride to Poprad goes through pastoral fields and wooded hills. It's a fine journey if you get a quiet six-person compartment; if not, there's always the friendly dining car. You could also fly to Poprad on airlines including SkyEurope.

The national park's *chaty* cost from 400 korun to 1,100 korun a person per night, and vary widely in the level of comforts, from dormitory-style bunks to hotel-like amenities. Most have restaurants; a full meal for two costs about 500 korun, al-



Tourists at the **cable-car** station below Lomnický štít, the park's second-highest peak.

though breakfasts and dinners are often included in the price of lodging at the more rustic *chaty*.

Menus usually include pork dishes, often fried and differing from the baked pork in the Czech Republic. Pirohy, dumplings with pockets, are best served with the creamy bryndza, a sheep's cheese.

Slovak beer, such as Saris, is crisp and light but with a full flavor. Kofola, a carbonated soft drink, is the "Slovak Coke," as one waitress said. I liked it—it's not as sweet and tastes less carbonated than the American brand. Demanovka, an herbal liquor, is golden, a bit sweet and is said to aid digestion after a hearty Slovak meal.

—Art Patnaude



rock and looking out onto the valley, I felt small and young. Each step was like a tick on my watch, reaching each ridge like a passing hour, and when we stopped for water everything seemed to stand still.

After a couple of hours hail and rain moved in over us, but since we were close to our next *chata* and had rain gear to wear over a warm base layer, it was almost a pleasant twist in the adventure.

On some trails rain would be a serious concern. At higher altitudes storms can strike without notice and thick clouds can leave ledges hidden. Even in July some trails can be impassible without mountaineering equipment. Proper gear—including sturdy hiking boots, waterproof jackets and a map—are all necessary parts of being prepared, as is knowing the route you choose. Nowadays preparedness also means plugging the phone number for the Mountain Rescue Service into your mo-

bile—oddly, reception is fine in the park—before heading out. Overall, though, the small area of the Tatras, running just 25 kilometers east to west, makes them accessible as well as relatively safe. If bad weather moves in, "you're no more than two hours to safety," says Sergi Lara, a guide with Montnatura, which caters to tourists from Spain. We had excellent weather, mostly sunshine and a little rain, and daytime temperatures in the low-20s Celsius, which is typical of the mid-to-late summer months.

As we neared Sliezsky Dom, our destination for the second night, purple and yellow wildflowers shimmered under bulbous raindrops. Seated on a serene lake, this *chata* was on the posh end of the scale, as its 2,200 korun-a-room price tag suggested. But built in 1968, it's a drab block of concrete, telling of its socialist history. Times have changed, however, and its rooms are being remodeled in a Scandinavian

style—modern, simple and clean with a white-and-black motif. (The shower in my room, however, with a glass wall facing the bedroom, wasn't suitable for the shy.)

George Paldi, an experienced Hungarian hotelier, recently started managing Sliezsky Dom. We chatted while he and three other businessmen were still hunched over laptops at 10 p.m., working on a new menu in preparation for an expected incursion of guests. They say the budget airlines that have begun serving Slovakia in recent years and the country's burgeoning economy are to thank. "It's beautiful here," Mr. Paldi said. "Once people come and see how it is unspoiled, more will come."

After a breakfast of giant sausages, bread and coffee, we decided to hike above the lake and over the meadows toward Gerlachovský štít, the tallest peak in the High Tatras at 2,654 meters. Our destination, however, wasn't the peak—which requires hiring a guide—but the high pass next to it, called Sedlo Polsky hreben.

The hike up was steep but not technical, bringing us through green meadows and by clear lakes, both fed by the glaciers sitting at eye level and up. After an hour the path gave way to rocks and boulders. The last section of the trail shot 20 meters up a cliff, requiring all four limbs and a bit of bravery. As we found on other difficult sections in the park, chains and metal handles are bolted into the trickiest spots.

Looking north over a half-frozen lake and into Poland beyond, I chatted with Mr. Lara,

the guide with Montnatura. His group of six hikers were enjoying the green landscape and rushing water in the Tatras—a stark contrast to the dry yellows of the Spanish summer. He also thought prices were low compared with those in Switzerland and Austria. We didn't see any wildlife on our hike, but Mr. Lara said in the wilder, western part of the park, hikers sometimes see brown bears, lynx, deer, marmots and chamois—an image of that horned animal is used in the park's logo.

Later we picked up our big packs at Sliezsky Dom, then set off into a path carving through thick head-high firs. My legs were tired but not sore; I was getting used to all this hiking just in time for the last day. Night three we skipped the bunk-style *chata* for the hotel in Hrebienok, more popular in winter as a ski resort located above Stary Smokovec.

On day four we made our way to Skalnaté Pleso, a lake on the east side of the range, where we'd take the cable car down from the mountains. The cable car made this spot easily reached, and the place crawled with tourists waiting to take the 350 korun ride to Lomnický štít, the second highest peak in the park. They drank beer, ate halusky from cafeteria trays and chatted on mobile phones. I missed the less-traveled areas to the west.

But as we floated down in the funicular to the resort of Tatranska Lomnica, from where we could take the train back to Stary Smokovec, I decided to take those quiet moments among the peaks back home.

A worldly mentor for Dickinson

BY BILL CHRISTOPHERSEN
Special to the Wall Street Journal

PARTING IS ALL we know of heaven / And all we need of hell." Who but Emily Dickinson would hijack the meter of the hymnal ("Our God, our help in ages past / And hope for years to come") to doubt the afterlife? Gnomish and subversive, her poems are shots of triple-distilled whiskey that jolt going down, then radiate, leaving us wide-eyed and slightly fuddled.

Not that she would have thought of her work that way; Dickinson more demurely described each of her poems as a "letter to the World," a world that comprised family and a few friends with whom she corresponded, unwilling to venture beyond her father's gate. Among the recipients of her poems—and of hundreds of letters—was Thomas Wentworth Higginson, a Massachusetts blueblood with a mid-19th-century reputation as a free-thinker.

Higginson (1823-1911) has long been exiled to the underworld of Dead White Males: He was the establishment prude who co-edited Dickinson's work for publication after she died at age 56 in 1886—only a handful of her nearly 1,800 poems had been published in her lifetime. He shepherded two volumes of them into print in altered form, grammar and punctuation conventionalized, slant-rhymes rewritten to rhyme. Perhaps Higginson deserves a reprieve. After all, co-editor Mary Todd Loomis was the more avid prettifier ("Let us alter as little as possible," he scolded her), and Higginson's progressivist bona fides argue for mercy. A bare-knuckle abolitionist, he once manned a battering ram to free a jailed fugitive slave. A suffragist, he demanded that women be granted not just the right to vote but across-the-board equality.

Dickinson encountered this genteel radical in the Atlantic Monthly. When she read his "Letter to a Young Contributor" offering advice on writing, she sent him a few poems, half-imploring, half-challenging him to "say if my verse is alive." Their ensuing quarter-century friendship—during which she more than once thanked him for saving her life—is the focus of Brenda Wineapple's prismatic literary double portrait, "White Heat."

If it seems a tad precious to peg 300-plus pages to an almost exclusively epistolary friendship—Higginson and Dickinson met only twice, when he came to visit her at her home in Amherst, Mass., and his letters to her do not survive—not to worry. Ms. Wineapple specializes in imparting flesh-and-blood substance and narrative thrust to literary biographies. Her "Hawthorne: A Life" (2002) is a vivid and compelling biography of a subject



Above, **Emily Dickinson** in the early 1850s. Right, **Thomas Wentworth Higginson** in 1876.



Photos: Collection of Philip and Leslie Gura; Newscom

who, like Dickinson, spent years alone in a room, writing.

What's more, in this outing Ms. Wineapple has a narrative advantage: Higginson. As reclusive as Dickinson's life was, his was cinematic. Father, husband, minister, naturalist, novelist, poet, politician, teacher—he was these and more. Impatient with armchair reformers, he ran guns to besieged antislavery Free Soilers in antebellum Kansas, a bowie knife stashed in his boot. As a Union colonel in the Civil War, he led the first federally authorized regiment of former slaves into battle, then wrote movingly about it in "Army Life in a Black Regiment."

Unlike Higginson, Dickinson seemed "to exist outside of time, untouched by it," Ms. Wineapple writes. In other words: a biographer's nightmare. The poems offer little help. These "lyric outbursts," the author says, "tell no tales about who did what to whom in the habitable world." Dickinson's many letters do, though, and Ms. Wineapple scours them as much for clues to the writer's emotional life as for biographical markers. Those written to Higginson are fertile. In them the poet alternately postures, flirts, preens, confesses ("I sing," she says, "as the Boy does by the Burying Ground—because I am afraid") and berates her pen pal for his oft-postponed visits ("Is this Hope that opens and shuts, like the eye of the Wax Doll?"). In one letter, she sent a poem "mostly about the act of creation," says Ms. Wineapple, which begins: "Dare you see a Soul at the 'White Heat'?"

Dickinson's brother, William (often called by his middle name, Austin), contended that her letters were theatrical performances. But they are no less affecting for it. "The 'hand you stretch me in the Dark,'" she writes to Higginson early on, "I put mine in."

Ms. Wineapple, to her credit, acknowledges but doesn't massage the mysterious stereotype of Dickinson as the Moth of Amherst, a fey spinster dressed in white, flitting about the family manse like a ghost. Her Emily is a shy but not unsociable young woman who gradually withdrew from society and made a "commitment to independence, poetry and a handful of soulmates." She was also committed to nursing her chronically ill mother, who was paralyzed by a stroke in 1875 and needed round-the-clock care until her death in 1882. Dickinson's circumscribed life—partly chosen, partly imposed—was, no doubt, condu-

cive to writing. But it left her relatively unbuffered against the deaths of family and friends, visitations that progressively harrowed her.

Ms. Wineapple says that her aim in "White Heat" is not so much biography or literary criticism as an attempt "to throw a small, considered beam onto the lifework of these two unusual, seemingly incompatible friends." As she does so, the contrast offered by their lives reverses itself. A gifted but not brilliant writer, Higginson shines in his clearly argued social tracts and closely observed nature portraits, but they are unventuresome when compared with Dickinson's bushwacking, vacuum-packed quatrains—which Ms. Wineapple reads with empathy and insight. A poem describing a bird's singing says that it "sang for nothing scrutable." Ms. Wineapple notes the resonance with the poet's life: "One sings for nothing scrutable. Remoteness is the founder of sweet song."

Ms. Wineapple does praise Higginson's romance novel, "The Monarch of Dreams," as a tour de force in which he "swam out much farther than he had planned"—but, then again, he was in waters where Dickinson habitually back-stroked. Though she addressed him as "Preceptor" and countenanced with good grace his initial attempts to sand her raw prosodic edges, Higginson hadn't much to teach her. He was, however, an appreciative reader. His spot-on characterization of Dickinson's verse: "poetry torn up by the roots" that "takes one's breath away."



Gina Eppolito

Louis Bayard

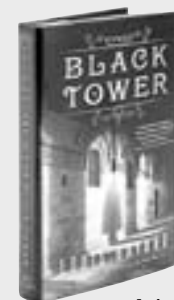
The thrills of the past

BY ROBERT J. HUGHES

LOUIS BAYARD FINDS fictional inspiration in historical fact. He has emerged as a writer of historical thrillers in the vein of Caleb Carr, author of "The Alienist," and 19th-century writers such as Alexandre Dumas, author of "The Count of Monte Cristo."

Mr. Bayard's new novel "The Black Tower" is set in 1818 and concerns what happened to the Dauphin, the son of Marie-Antoinette and Louis XVI, years after the king and queen were executed in the French Revolution. (Most historians say the Dauphin died in prison at age 10.) "I was fascinated by the idea that the Dauphin might still be at large—and the explosive implications of that," Mr. Bayard says.

For Mr. Bayard, writing historical fiction was "an accident of nature." His dislike of frail Tiny Tim in Dickens's "A Christmas Carol" inspired him to write a historical mystery in which Mr. Bayard could "do bad things to him, turn him into somebody I could understand and scrape away the sentiment." The result was the ac-



claimed "Mr. Timothy," which moved the familiar Dickens classic into Tiny Tim's adulthood. It was nominated for an Edgar Award and landed on several top-10 lists for 2003.

Mr. Bayard's historical novels are not about educating people or showing off his research. "I find that deathly," he says, and he discards much of his own research when he begins writing. He followed up his Dickens foray with "The Pale Blue Eye," a book inspired by another 19th-century writer, Edgar Allan Poe. Poe's writing, specifically, a mention of the famous Parisian detective Eugene François Vidocq, inspired Mr. Bayard's latest novel. "I think of [Vidocq] as the founding archetype of the detective," Mr. Bayard says. "What appealed to me about him was that he was the opposite of Poe. Instead of this neurasthenic death-obsessed writer, you have this large-living robust guy known for cutting a very wide figure in society." In "The Black Tower," Vidocq comes across a man with no memory of who he is and investigates whether he is the Dauphin.

Mr. Bayard's next project features the School of Night, a secretive group of intellectuals around Shakespeare's time that included Sir Walter Raleigh and Christopher Marlowe.

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Pages from history
Read excerpts from 'White Heat'
and 'The Black Tower' at
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Arbitrage

Birkenstock Gizeh sandals for women



City	Local currency	€
Frankfurt	€33.00	€33.00
Hong Kong	HK\$450	€39.00
London	£40.00	€50.00
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Rome	€56.50	€56.50
Brussels	€59.50	€59.50
Paris	€60.00	€60.00
Tokyo	¥11,550	€71.00

Note: Model 043851 in silver Birko-Flor artificial leather. Prices, including taxes, as provided by retailers in each city, averaged and converted into euros.

'You Are God's Plan for the Orphan'

If John McCain is looking for a way to shore up his support among evangelical voters, he might start talking about adoption. In 1993, the McCains adopted a daughter from Mother Teresa's orphanage in Bangladesh, and the senator has co-sponsored legislation to aid adoption, including measures that would provide tax credits for expenses and would remove barriers to interracial and interethnic adoption. But his efforts are rarely mentioned on the campaign trail at a time when adoption is a hot topic in the evangelical community.

Rick Warren, the best-selling author and pastor of the Saddleback megachurch in Lake Forest, California, asked both presidential candidates if they would consider some kind of emergency plan to help the 148 million orphans around the world, something along the lines of President Bush's AIDS efforts. Both said yes, but a number of Christians and their organizations are not waiting for the next administration to act.

Russell Moore, the dean of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, is the author of a forthcoming book called "Adopted for Life: The Priority of Adoption for Christian Families and Churches." A few years ago, Mr. Moore and his wife adopted two boys from Russia, and he notes that his church has a large map posted that shows which countries member families

have adopted children from. "In any given church," he notes, "you rarely see only one family who has adopted. . . . It becomes part of the culture of the congregation."

Tony Nolan, an adoptee himself, now travels with Christian bands and speaks to their massive audiences about adoption. During "Winterjam," a 30-city tour that recently concluded, Mr. Nolan recounted his story to some 350,000 people. His biological mother was homeless, mentally ill and a prostitute. A month before she died, he visited her in the hospital. "She grabbed me by the hand, looked at me and said, 'The doctors told me not to have you,'" Mr. Nolan says. On tour, he conveys the message that "God knew what he was doing." And after every concert, money is collected to help a local family with its adoption expenses.

Several groups are trying to remove the financial barriers to adoption. The Abba fund in Charlotte, North Carolina, sets up families with no-interest loans for adoption fees and travel expenses. Others are spreading the news that many children need to find loving Christian homes. The Cry of the Orphan—a campaign co-sponsored by several Christian adoption agencies, ministries and

awareness groups, including Focus on the Family—ran Internet, TV, radio and print ads that reached 19 million people last year.

The theme was "You Are God's Plan for the Orphan," which represents something of a shift, says Kelly Rosati, who oversees Focus on the Family's adoption and orphan-care division and is the mother of four adopted children. "The traditional way of viewing adoption was something you considered if you were facing infertility."

You could call it God's Plan B for the Couple. But now, according to Ms. Rosati, "the commitment to adoption is part of a holistic sanctity-of-human-life ethic."

This fall Focus on the Family (whose leader, James Dobson, has been slowly warming to Mr. McCain) will be launching a different adoption campaign. In cooperation with the state of Colorado, where the Christian organization is based, it will be shining its media spotlight on the 127,000 kids in the U.S. who are considered unadoptable—kids, typically over the age of 8, who are languishing in foster care. Many are racial minorities.

"There is much more openness to transracial adoption today," Ms. Rosati says. Groups like the National Association of Black Social

workers have taken a strong stand against placing black children in the homes of white parents, a notion that outrages Mr. Moore. He recently compared social workers who oppose transracial adoption to George Wallace. "Both are saying the same thing, 'Segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever.' And both pretend they're just being realistic about racial discrimination."

The command to "defend the orphan" (Isaiah 1:16-17) has always been vital to the Christian message, Mr. Moore tells me. One thing that distinguished early Christians from their pagan neighbors was their treatment of unwanted children. And adoption is also the literal manifestation of a metaphor that Christians use to describe themselves all the time. "Every one of us who follows Christ was adopted into an already existing family," says Mr. Moore.

So what could Sen. McCain, who has been reluctant to mention his faith so explicitly, add to these efforts? For one thing, there are very few serious people on the national stage who are encouraging adoption. Madonna and Brangelina are not exactly the perfect role models.

But this issue goes beyond do-goodism. Adoption is most often mentioned in the second clause of a sentence that begins with abortion. Democrats have long made the specious argument that Repub-

licans opposed to legalized abortion want to leave women with only two options: public shaming and dangerous back-alley surgeries. Sen. McCain could highlight the real choice that these Christian organizations provide every day.

Finally, the subject would give Sen. McCain an chance to talk about the importance of religious liberty. It may be recalled that the maverick flubbed a question on George Stephanopolous's show about whether gay adoption should be legal. After a little back and forth, he finally concluded that the matter should be up to the states.

But this solution creates its own set of problems. Earlier this year, the Archdiocese of Boston stopped offering adoption services because the state of Massachusetts was going to force it to provide them to gay couples. The local bishop was unwilling to violate basic church teachings on the family. If Sen. McCain sticks to his position of leaving gay-marriage decisions to the states, he might also emphasize that those states need to allow religious organizations to operate according to their own beliefs, lest we lose the vital social services that they provide.

Who knows? With a little luck, religious folks may adopt John McCain as one of their own.

Ms. Riley is the Journal's deputy Taste editor.

McCain's history of adoption may endear him to religious voters.

Unraveling the Mysteries of Modern China

Shanghai To meet Qiu Xiaolong in Shanghai feels like a real privilege. Mr. Qiu, a native of this city and celebrated crime writer who has set all of his Inspector Chen novels here, has a knack for describing his city's surroundings in a way that few Chinese authors active today can match. His five highly addictive thrillers—the sixth, "The Mao Case," is due out early next year from St. Martin's Minotaur Press—are as contemporary Shanghai as you can get, even if Mr. Qiu (whose name is pronounced "cheeh") has been living in the United States since 1988.

"The Internet, of course, is a great help, as well as cable TV: with these and my visits to the city I can follow what happens very closely, and at the same time I can write about it with some distance," he says.

His books ooze with insight into today's China: the shady business deals that take place next to the glimmer of modernization; the cramped living conditions of the old quarters and the sudden leap into the luxury of private apartments; and, in the background, the constant awareness that for whatever you might wish to do, your freedom ends where the Communist Party's begins.

Because of this political atmosphere, Mr. Qiu's Inspector Chen is a classic antihero. While investigating apparently inexplicable, bloodcurdling murders, he un-

veils a web of resentments built up during the Maoist era, as well as high-level corruption and collusion around which he has to tip-toe carefully—which means, more often than not, the culprit cannot be brought to justice. Inspector Chen appears capable of living with this, in the knowledge that in contemporary China, integrity might be harder to come and live by than one might wish.

In Inspector Chen's fictional world, as in the real one, the fight against crime can never be extended to those who are in power, or who have powerful connections. Not that Chen himself supports this state of affairs, but he, and his superiors, are realistic enough to know that to challenge those Party members who stray too wildly is an exclusive choice and privilege of the Party itself—and nobody else. Aware of this moral flaw, Inspector Chen often looks for so-lace and purity in ancient Chinese poetry and delightful Chinese food—two passions that Mr. Qiu shares with his low-profile hero.

Mr. Qiu, 55, won the 2001 Anthony Award for crime fiction with "Death of a Red Heroine." But his fame stems from a different source back home. He is a highly acclaimed Chinese poet, better known in his motherland for his verses and his research on T.S. Eliot and other Western authors than he is for his thrillers.

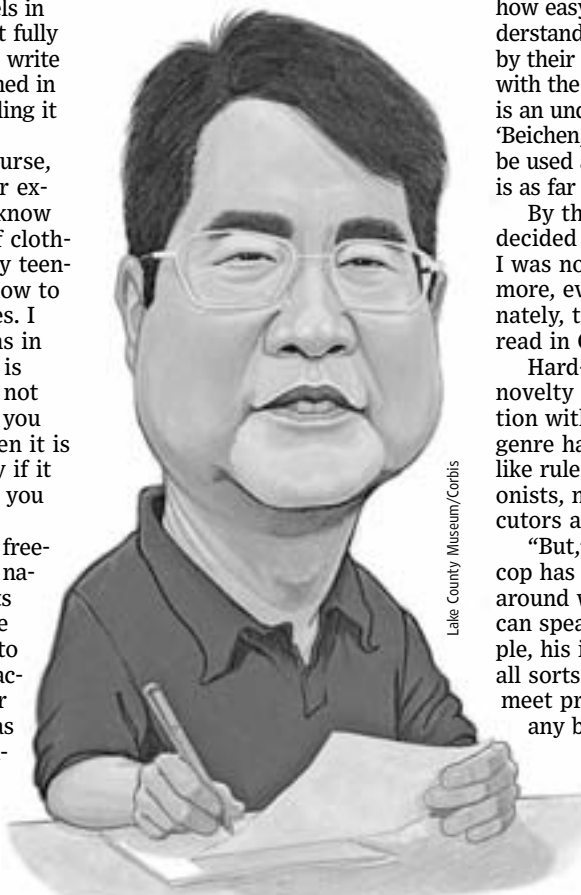
This is largely because Mr. Qiu

has chosen to write his novels in English, a decision he cannot fully explain himself. "I started to write in English after what happened in Beijing in 1989," he says, calling it "the Tiananmen situation."

"And it is difficult, of course, but in unexpected ways. For example, I find that I do not know the name of many pieces of clothing, and I have to rely on my teenager daughter to find out how to call some female accessories. I would not know those terms in Chinese either, but when it is your own language, you do not worry as much about what you do not know, especially when it is something specialized. Only if it is your second language do you feel it is a problem."

Still, English gives him a freedom he cannot afford in his native Chinese—not if he wants to be published, that is. "The translations of my novels into Chinese are really not satisfactory," he says. "My publisher [Shanghai Cultural Press] has told me that I cannot talk directly about Shanghai, that all crime novels must be set in an imaginary city, otherwise you risk getting into trouble. So, for my Chinese readers, Inspector Chen is active in 'H-town.' And some chapters are reduced by about a third of what I had originally written, in order to purge everything that might present a political problem," he says, rather despondently.

Partially this reflects a long-standing Maoist ideal about art, which requires it to be encourag-



Lake County Museum/Corbis

how easy it is for the public to understand where they were truly set by their author, and they must end with the culprit behind bars. There is an understanding by now that 'Beichen,' which does not exist, can be used as alias for Beijing, but this is as far as it goes," he explains.

By the fourth book, however, I decided it really was too bad, and I was not going to accept it anymore, even if this means, unfortunately, that I am not going to be read in China for the time being."

Hard-boiled crime fiction is a novelty in China, especially fiction with all the trappings of the genre has acquired in the West, like rule-bending detective protagonists, morally ambiguous prosecutors and corrupt politicians.

"But," Mr. Qiu continues, "a cop has the privilege of moving around wherever he needs to, he can speak to very disparate people, his investigations take him to all sorts of places, and he can meet pretty much anyone, from any background. So it gives an excuse to look at the change and its effects on a wide sector of society, and wonder about some of its worst aspects. Inspector Chen has qualms about being a cop, because of the number of compromises he is forced to make in some situations, but he is very handy for my purposes: He might not have all the answers, but at least he can ask the questions."

Ms. Sala is a Hong Kong-based freelance writer.

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❖ Top Picks

A season for Twombly

London ■ art

Tate Modern's major show this summer has 12 rooms devoted to "Cy Twombly: Cycles and Seasons," curated by Tate's director, Nicholas Serota. It's the first big exhibition since the 1994 Museum of Modern Art retrospective of the work of the American artist, who was born in 1928.

Mr. Twombly was a contemporary of, and shared a studio with, the late Robert Rauschenberg in New York in the 1950s, and the influences are clear in the sculptural forms in the early work shown here. His interest in calligraphy and the automatic-drawing technique of the Surrealists comes from Robert Motherwell, with whom he studied at Black Mountain College in North Carolina. To these Mr. Twombly added the gestural painting of Jackson Pollock, and the combination makes up his easily identifiable, undeniably original graphic style.

In 1957 the artist moved to Italy and began to lose interest in Abstract Expressionism, embarking on what is now recognized as his mature style, which is most often inspired by mythology, the classics, poetry and European history. It's characterized by using erasure to make his marks, so that large portions of the paper or canvas appear to be blank or smudged.

It makes his work highly recognizable, and sometimes almost boringly predictable. What is surprising, though, is how very beautiful some of it is. Three or four of the rooms at Tate Modern are sublimely, exquisitely beautiful. For example, room 10 with "the green paintings," actually called "Untitled (A Painting in Nine Parts)," 1988, from the Menil Collection in Houston, is breathtaking, with its water imagery and pair of Rococo lozenge-shaped canvases (the paintings were made for the Italian Pavilion of the Venice Biennale). Less well-known than most of Mr. Twombly's work, they capture the transient effect of light and mists and have a superficial resemblance both to Monet's

water lilies and to Pollock's drip paintings. Here they look uniquely gorgeous.

This show for the first time unites Mr. Twombly's two great series of "The Four Seasons," the 1993-94 MoMA group, and Tate's own 1994-95 cycle. Side by side, these eight paintings are ineffably elegant, and somehow sumptuous, despite the apparent poverty of the images.

They can only be seen together here, because the MoMA pictures will not travel to the Guggenheim Bilbao or Rome's Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, where this exhibition will travel.

—Paul Levy
Until Sept. 14
☎ 44-20-7887-8888
www.tate.org.uk

Berlin ■ architecture

Berlin's Kunstbibliothek, or Art Library, has one of the world's premier collections of architectural drawings and works of architectural theory. Dating back to the early Renaissance, the collection is getting a rare public viewing in "Proportion, Number and Weight: Masterpieces from the Art Library's Architecture Collection."

The exhibition takes the visitor from the discovery of perspective in Renaissance Florence to the origins of modern architecture in 19th-century England and Prussia. By displaying a wide range of architectural exercises, fantasies, actual plans and textbooks, the exhibition succeeds in showing how architecture developed from an artistic hobby into an esteemed profession.

The great Renaissance and Baroque architects didn't have formal educations in architecture. Filippo Brunelleschi, the architect who designed the dome of Florence's cathedral, trained as a goldsmith. Venetian architect Andrea Palladio was a mason. Fischer von Erlach, architect of Vienna's Karlskirche, was a sculptor. How did men like these acquire the technical knowledge to design complex buildings?

The show tells us by illustrating how architecture's underlying discipline, mathe-

matics, was studied and transmitted in imaginative ways. The exhibition could also be called "The Beauty of Measurement," thanks to works like a Dürer print from 1532 that analyzes the geometrical symmetry of the human body, or a magnificent brass-and-ivory spherical astrolabe, designed by Englishman Thomas Heath in the mid-18th century.

The exhibition is especially rich in architectural fantasies—once intended as mathematical exercises or teaching tools, they can now be seen as works of art. Around 1840, British architect Charles Robert Cockerell created a composite cityscape made of Europe's cathedral spires and town halls and cast them against a rendering of the Cheops Pyramid. Used in lectures to compare European architectural styles, the drawing now seems like a postmodern investigation into the passage of time.

The perspective studies of Prussian architectural prodigy Friedrich Gilly (1772-1800) feature mysterious geometric shapes oddly arranged on a cloud-covered graph. Presciently surreal, the subtly colored drawings anticipate the simplified forms of modernist architecture (Gilly's star pupil was Karl Friedrich Schinkel, arguably the first modern architect) and the abstract forms of modernist painting.

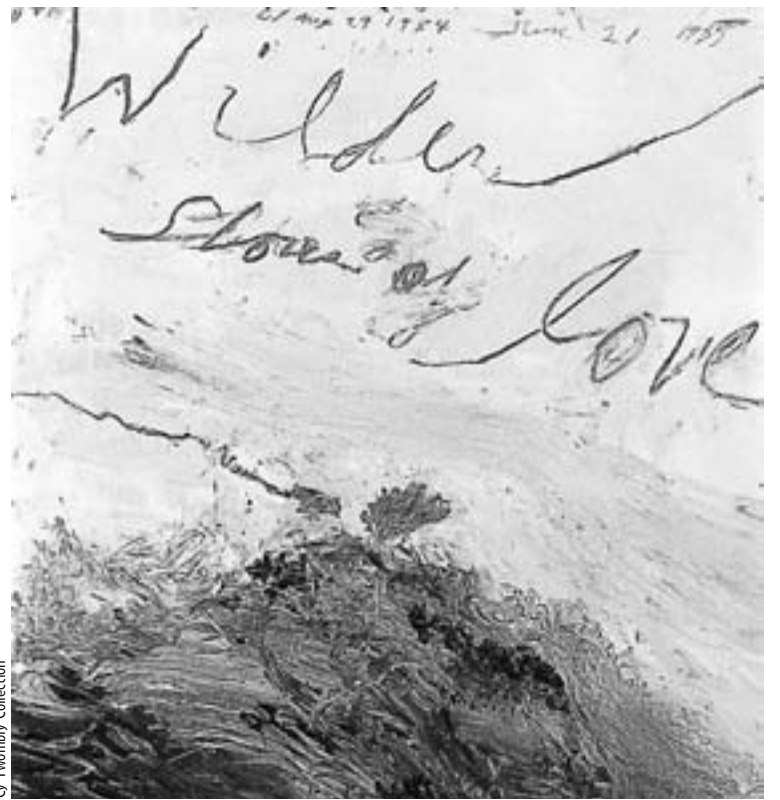
—J.S. Marcus

Until Sept. 28
☎ 49-30-266-2951
www.smb.spk-berlin.de

Folkestone, England ■ art

Since the opening of the Channel Tunnel all but killed off the ferries, the East Kent coastal town of Folkestone has been down in the dumps. England's nearest point to France used to be an upper-class playground (Edward VII stayed in the Metropolitan Hotel and lodged his mistress in the Grand Hotel next door).

The idea of the new Folkestone Triennial is to regenerate some of the town's public spaces, by converting dilapidated proper-



'Wilder Shores of Love (Bassano in Teverina),' 1985, by Cy Twombly.

ties into art spaces, and holding an ambitious, by-invitation, international art event every three years. All this is the inspiration of one man and longtime resident, Roger De Haan, former chairman of Saga, the retirement leisure group that is still the town's largest single employer.

This first Triennial, "Tales of Time and Space," has 22 major projects scattered around town—though quite a lot of them can be seen by taking a longish walk on the coastline. A few of them are permanent installations, such as Mark Wallinger's "Folk Stones," which consists of 19,240 numbered beach pebbles cemented in a large square on the Leas—the path that follows the coastline. This marks the town's historical importance as the place from which a million soldiers left England for the World War I battlefields of France and Flanders; the number of pebbles is that of the British and Allied deaths on the first day of the Battle of the Somme.

If that's not enough to cause a lump in the throat, farther west along the Leas are some benches on the cliff tops, from which you can see France on a clear day. Four of them are placed in front of beat-up, low, pyramidal concrete structures like truncated watch-towers. These house Christian Boltanski's sound-installation, "The Whispers," love-letters to and from servicemen in WWI, heart-rendingly read by their descendants.

A little more light-hearted, and harder to find, are Richard Wentworth's 10 text signs, "Racinated," placed near nonnative trees and shrubs. Each has a surprising detail rather than the botanical name you expect. Situated so near to mainland Europe, Folkestone has always sheltered immigrants, which these plants themselves are.

—Paul Levy

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Amsterdam

art
"Amar Kanwar—The Torn First Pages" presents two video installations by Indian artist Amar Kanwar (born 1964).
Stedelijk Museum CS
Sept. 5-30
☎ 31-20-5732-911
www.stedelijk.nl

Athens

art
"Five Seasons of the Russian Avant-Garde" shows 90 works representing all the groups and movements of the Russian avant-garde (1900s-1930s).
Museum of Cycladic Art
Until Oct. 20
☎ 30-210-7228-3213
www.cycladic-m.gr

Barcelona

art
"Nancy Spero—Dissidances" is a retrospective of work by feminist artist Nancy Spero (born 1926), who emphasizes the importance of movement and the body in the expression of ideas.
MACBA-Museu d'Art Contemporani
Barcelona
Until Sept. 24
☎ 34-93-4120-810
www.macba.es

Berlin

history
"Arthur Szyk—Drawing against National Socialism and Terror" shows inventive political caricatures by Arthur Szyk (1894-1951).
Deutsches Historisches Museum
Until Jan. 4
☎ 49-30-2030-40
www.dhm.de

science

"Max Planck—The Reluctant Revolutionary" celebrates the work of Max Planck (1858-1947), who laid the foundations of modern physics.
Deutsches Technik Museum
Until Oct. 5
☎ 49-30-9025-40
www.dtm.de

Brussels

opera
"Pelléas and Mélisande" is Debussy's only completed opera, a tale of doomed love set in the middle ages. It is directed by Mark Wigglesworth and has set design by Anish Kapoor.
La Monnaie-De Munt
Sept. 4-23
☎ 32-7023-3939
www.lamonnaie.be

Copenhagen

art
"M.C. Escher" shows 80 works by the master of optical illusions, Dutch artist M.C. Escher (1898-1972), whose works question our perception of reality.
Gammel Holtegaard
Sept. 4-Nov. 16
☎ 45-4580-0878
www.holtegaard.org

festival

"Golden Days in Copenhagen 2008" focuses on cultural life in the city dur-



'Smaller and Smaller' (1956), by **M.C. Escher**, on view in Copenhagen; below, 'An elder (Therese Codzi) at Colville Lake' (1989), by Tess Macintosh, on view in **Edinburgh**.

ing the 1920s and '30s. Performances include silent movies, surrealist art, jazz music and dance.
Sept. 5-21
☎ 45-3542-1432
www.goldendays.dk

art

"Per Kirkeby—Louisiana 2008" shows paintings and sculptures, many never exhibited before, by Danish artist Per Kirkeby (born 1938).
Louisiana Museum of Modern Art
Sept. 2-Jan. 25
☎ 45-4919-0719
www.louisiana.dk

Düsseldorf

art
"Parkhaus" shows works by 42 contemporary artists in celebration of 10 years of the Parkhaus free exhibition hall.
Kunsthalle Düsseldorf
Until Sept. 21
☎ 49-211-8996-243
www.kunsthalle-duesseldorf.de

Edinburgh

ethnography
"Extremes: Life in Subarctic Canada" shows art and artifacts from the 19th century to today of the Tlicho people of subarctic Canada.
National Museum of Scotland
Until Oct. 5
☎ 44-131-2257-534
www.nms.ac.uk

Geneva

art
"Patronage and the Contemporary Col-

lection, a New Impetus" shows 20 recent acquisitions.
Musée Ariana
Until Dec. 31
☎ 41-22-4185-450
mah.ville-ge.ch

Ghent

design
"Hommage to Hans Wegner (1914-2007)" presents furniture from the Danish designer and architect.
Design Museum Gent
Until Oct. 12
☎ 32-9-2679-999
design.museum.gent.be

London



Government of the Northwest Territories

"Design Cities" shows creations in fashion, industrial design and furniture from seven key cities at their creative height, including London in 1851, Vienna in 1908 and Tokyo in 1987.
Design Museum
Sept. 5-Jan. 4
☎ 44-20-7403-6933
www.designmuseum.org

sports

"Sporting Lives: Contemporary Portraits of Athletes and Olympians" shows portraits of great British athletes, including "Duncan Goodhew" by Marty St. James and Anne Wilson and the animation "Sustained Endeavour," of Steve Redgrave, by Dryden Goodwin.
National Portrait Gallery
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☎ 44-20-7312-2463
www.npg.org.uk

dance

"Deloitte Ignite" is a free arts festival curated by choreographer Wayne McGregor that includes dance, visual arts, music and other performances designed to create awareness of the senses.
Royal Opera House
Sept. 12-14
☎ 44-20-7304-4000
www.roh.org.uk/deloitteignite

Paris

history
"Spirit(s) of May '68—Leaflets and Posters" exhibits original flyers and posters created by art students and striking workers.

Bibliothèque Nationale de France-site François-Mitterrand
Until Sept. 21
☎ 33-1-5379-5959
www.bnf.fr

art

"Looking for Owners" shows 53 paintings by artists including Cézanne, Matisse, Monet and Seurat that were looted by Nazi forces in France during World War II. The rightful owners of the works are being searched for.
Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme
Until Oct. 26
☎ 33-1-5301-8653
www.mahj.org

Rome

photography
"Photography of the Vietnam War by Ennio Iacobucci 1968-1975" presents 120 images from the war taken by the Italian photojournalist.
Museo di Roma in Trastevere
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☎ 39-6-5816-563
www.museodiromaintrastevere.it

Stuttgart

ethnography
"Grönland-Inuit: Living on the Edge of the World" shows photographs taken by Swiss photographer Markus Bühler-Rasom in North Greenland, documenting the culture, harsh work and life conditions of the Greenland Inuit.
Linden-Museum Stuttgart
Until Sept. 21
☎ 49-711-2022-3
www.lindenmuseum.de

Turin

art
"Oscar Niemeyer, One Hundred Years" shows videos, sketches, drawings, models and furnishings by Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer (born 1907).
Bastioni delle Porte Palatine
Until Sept. 30
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www.torinocultura.it

Venice

art
"Tiepolo and 300 Years of Art in Venice" exhibits 100 drawings, paintings and engravings by Venetian masters Gianbattista Tiepolo, Tintoretto, Veronese, Palma il Giovane and others.
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photography
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