

9/13/2007 – FEAST: An award-winning eZine about books, art, food, film, and travel. Printer-friendly, text only format. For full graphic and photo images, go to: <http://www.CarstensCommunications.com/FEAST.html>

September already. It doesn't seem possible. Summer flew by in a blur of sharp blue morning skies and, from the plains where I live, beckoning jagged-edged mountain ranges. Riding my motorcycle into cooler elevations this month, the dry scent of pine swirls around me as I twist ever higher up the road. The sun warms my arms and I feel the exhilarating pull of gravity as I power in and out of turns. Each second brings a quick snapshot: a flash of blue and a squawk of jay; a whiff of skunk; a glimpse of elk huddled tight in a meadow. I leave behind the everydayness of work and words and enter a world of the senses, of intense focus on each moment. Each turn of the calendar the landscape changes and evokes renewed dreams of discovery, exotic sights, memorable images to recombine with the old. I lean into the uniqueness of each season and experience strong correlations between them and our human life spans—they express a comforting continuity and renewal. As autumn arrives we gird ourselves for the holiday season, gear up for a last push to reach our year's goals. Because for so many years September signaled a new school term, I often still feel a spark of energy that causes me to take on new challenges in the fall; it becomes not only a time of retrospection, of wrapping up, but also a time of renewed commitment to the passions of my life. Fall, then, is a time when the angle of light changes and casts revelation upon our personal landscapes, allowing us to see freshly our own geography.

Thinking about personal geography reminds me of a book I read some years ago titled *A Mapmaker's Dream: The Meditations of Fra Mauro, Cartographer to the Court of Venice*, a journal translated by James Cowan (Shambhala Books 1996). In the late 1980s, Cowan made a visit to the island of San Lazzaro degli Armeni in the Venetian lagoon in search of unpublished materials of Lord Byron. Going through archives left undisturbed for centuries, Cowan came upon a copy of a journal written by a Venetian of the sixteenth century, a man named Fra Mauro, who lived in the monastery of San Michele di Murano. He became fascinated with the work and decided to translate it. It is a jewel! This simple journal proposes new concepts of "mapping"—not only geographic, but spiritual and intellectual territory—that is particularly applicable in the fall of the year. To quote:

The map we draw becomes a representation of these impressions, each one contributing to that sublime image we believe exists but so far have not yet discovered . . . I now realize that the world is not real save in the way each of us impresses upon it his own sensibility. More importantly, this sensibility results from a belief in the world being a measurable whole, rather than something that extends beyond time and place. . . . Such a world emerges not from the sea as an island appears to do after a long voyage, but from a state of enchantment inspired by the mind taking leave of itself. . . . *namely the elusive power of the imagination* . . . (emphasis mine)

If we accept that the world is more than a collection of geographic or topographic features, of longitudes and latitudes, parallels and meridians, but is also a complex composition of human imaginings of destinations, lives, and perspectives, then our personal geography becomes a unique individual map. As we take in new combinations of images and ideas, and as they shape and mold our thinking, morphing into even more personal influences, our landscape, our map of the world, is altered. In the offerings for this issue, I hope you will find some startling, satisfying, reinforcing, and revitalizing images and concepts that will change your landscape, your view of the world in small or even large ways.

Enjoy the fall! Rosemary Carstens

BOOKS

FICTION THAT BLEW MY HAIR BACK

Burning Bright, Tracy Chevalier. Dutton 2007. If you read and were enthralled by *Girl With a Pearl Earring*, or the movie of the same name, you know the quality of research this author does for her historical novels. Chevalier brings history, eras, and famous creative people to life by incorporating them into a story about fictional characters. She can do this to a tee. In this newest novel, Chevalier has chosen to show us 18th century London and to focus on a period during the French revolution when William Blake lived and wrote in London. Through the eyes of two young people, a brash, street smart and world-wise Maggie and a fresh-from-the-countryside Jem, we are charmed to enter a world no longer known. With intricate details, numerous subplots, and Chevalier's well-known empathy for the human condition, the story unfolds. This tale is about bridging the space between heaven and hell—earth, where all human drama is enacted.

www.tchevalier.com

Traveler, Ron McLarty. Viking 2007. McLarty's debut novel, *The Memory of Running*, was a favorite of mine the year it came out, and *Traveler* shows how his skills are increasing by leaps and bounds. The story opens with news of the sudden death of Jono Riley's first love—Marie D'Agostino—and the discovery that the cause of death leads straight back to those years in the 1960s when he and three of his friends were in high school, coming of age. McLarty has written a crackerjack story and his protagonist maintains a compelling voice throughout. I challenge you to read the first ten pages and then decide it's not for you. Excellent writing, well crafted from start to finish. It sounds like a mystery, but it's not, it's literary and it's life.

<http://www.ronmclarty.com>

The Deep Green Sea, Robert Olen Butler. Henry Holt 1997. Robert Olen Butler won the 1993 Pulitzer Prize for his collection of short stories titled *A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain*. Since I seldom read short story collections, I missed it. But this one is a haunting, beautifully written novel I can easily recommend to anyone who appreciates literary fiction. The story involves two main characters, a Vietnam veteran returning to

Vietnam for the first time since the war and a young woman who is the daughter of a bargirl from that era, whose father is an American. Butler alternates between the two, both written in first person, to create an intimate immediacy to their interaction that is skillfully and effectively done. His language is clean and lyrical. The love scenes are written so beautifully that I'd say they are the best I've read. There is no doubt that this is love and not simply lust. I found myself thinking about these two characters and their story long after I'd finished the book!

For an interesting essay about this book and the author:

<http://www.wendybutler.com/robert.htm>

Highwire Moon, Susan Straight. Houghton Mifflin 2001. How Susan Straight manages to step into the minds and hearts of characters ethnically so different from herself, is amazing and rare. She has courage—writing about “other” as she does. She seems so well acquainted with the challenges of being a person of color in our culture and renders her diverse characters skillfully. Serafina is a Oaxacan. She enters the US illegally, speaks no English, and tries to survive in a world she does not understand and in which others prey on her vulnerability. She longs to return to her home village and, when trying to visit a nearby church for guidance with her 3-year-old daughter, has a minor auto accident. Leaving her daughter asleep in the car while she walks over to a statue of the virgin, the police show up and arrest her. Without English and panic-stricken, she is unable to communicate about her daughter and is deported, the child abandoned to grow up in foster homes. For 15 years, Serafina tries to get back to her daughter, experiencing unimaginable pain and abuse in her attempts. This is a gritty, clear-eyed glimpse of the life of migrant workers and other illegals trying to make a better life for themselves and the brutality the present system fosters. Here's a link to an NPR interview about Straight and this novel: <http://tinyurl.com/2yfuvf>

The Maytrees, Annie Dillard. HarperCollins 2007. Dillard has the gift of creating the extraordinary out of the ordinary. This slender book details the lives of a couple's lives from courtship through old age. Her amazing writing makes this a literary work of considerable beauty. Dillard has always had a gift for describing nature's impact on our lives and in this case uses the eastern seaboard as her setting. She weaves an integrated tapestry of human lives and nature. It's lovely. Quiet and expressive, but without contemporary fireworks. <http://www.anniedillard.com>

Michael Tolliver Lives, Armistead Maupin. HarperCollins 2007. At last, another look at the wonderful characters from Maupin's *Tales of the City*! I enjoy his writing so much because he is plain spoken, has a deep understanding of human nature, and cuts across issues of sexuality in a way I find completely refreshing. There is no literary pretense here—real language and credible characters living life on the edge of mainstream, bible-thumping society. If you can be open to a broader notion of what it is to be a human being, you'll love this book. If not, you'll hate it. Either way, I hope you'll take the chance—

www.armisteadmaupin.com

Plum Wine, Angela Davis-Gardner. University of Wisconsin Press 2006. Barbara Jefferson, a young American teaching in Tokyo in the 1960s, has come to Japan to try to understand her mother's life there during WWII. Her Japanese surrogate mother, Michi, dies suddenly, leaving her a handmade cabinet filled with plum wine, each bottle wrapped in rice paper on which is written thirty years of new year's messages in Japanese calligraphy. Finding a translator can provide the outline of her friend's life story, but it only through the combination of her love affair with a young Japanese man who lived through the bombing of Hiroshima and the words bequeathed to her that she solves the riddle of her life in Japan. David-Gardner has an elegant writing style that reflects the careful and ritualistic manners of the Japanese people of the era. Highly recommend! Provides insight into the lives of the victims of Hiroshima that goes far beyond mere facts. <http://www.angeladavisgardner.com>

The Reluctant Fundamentalist, Mohsin Hamid. Harcourt 2007. Mohsin Hamid grew up in Lahore, Pakistan, and attended Princeton and Harvard. His first novel, *Moth Smoke*, was a PEN/Hemingway Award finalist and a NYT Notable Book of the Year. This finely crafted book reveals an author with the ability to tightly control his narrative, building suspense from page one until the climax. It's written in an unusual form: a conversation in which only one person speaks throughout the entire book. It works. It touches on the experiences of non-US people coming in contact with US attitudes post-9/11 and the appetite and longing for one's own culture that sometimes cannot be satisfied. <http://www.mohsinhamid.com>

Sleeping with Schubert, Bonnie Marson. Ballentine 2005. A delight! Marson has written a remarkable first novel. It's hard to believe that the story of Franz Schubert inhabiting the body of a Brooklyn lawyer with bad hair could be so fascinating, but it is. Suddenly Liza can pound out concertos, compose masterpieces, and has a debut at Carnegie Hall. As she and Franz become "soul mates" the complications multiply, especially with her family and a boyfriend who does not like the idea of ole Franz present in their bed. It's a beautiful, laugh-out-loud tale you'll love! www.bonniemarson.com

Consumption, Kevin Patterson. Doubleday 2007. Enter the lost world of the Inuit (Eskimo) in the far north near the Arctic Ocean as recreated by this talented literary writer. Victoria's people have been brought in off the land where they have survived under the harshest conditions on earth for untold years. They now live in stark, prefab houses, shacks, and trailers and try to learn to live in one spot year-round, no longer existing on their traditional foods, but adding beer, cheez whiz, and the less nutritious diet of the "south." With these changes comes civilization's diseases: tuberculosis, diabetes, and others. This is the story of a young doctor who decides to practice in this difficult climate and the people he comes to know well over a period of twenty years. It's fascinating—

For an article on the rising prevalence of tuberculosis in the arctic and around the world, check out this Mother Jones article by Kevin Patterson: <http://tinyurl.com/y7m9oh>

JUST THE FACTS – RECOMMENDED NONFICTION

Where Have All the Leaders Gone? Lee Iacocca. Scribner 2007. Legendary auto executive Lee Iacocca poses this pertinent question as the 2008 presidential election campaign hits its stride. Every point he makes hits the bull's eye of where the United States is today and what we'd better know about the capabilities of our next president. It's a no-nonsense look at how "Rome" is burning while the present administration, including Congress, fiddles around with non-priority projects, rhetoric instead of analysis, and, in some notable cases, filling their own pockets with OUR money. This is an easily read, fact-based view by a man who knows first hand about organization and leadership and who speaks plainly. You'll smile wryly if it doesn't move you to tears. We need to get cracking! Here's a discussion about the book's themes that appeared in the Detroit News: <http://tinyurl.com/2k2n7u>

Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life, Barbara Kingsolver. HarperCollins 2007. I almost always enjoy Barbara Kingsolver's work. Here she shares her family's experiences upon moving to southern Appalachia to live on a farm. They pledge to "eat local" for one whole year, raising as much as possible of their own food. Kingsolver mixes personal details and challenges of their lives with deeply researched material about what is happening to our food supply in the US due to corporate farming and global trade. It's pretty scary stuff and makes you want to do more to support your local farmers and farmers' markets, to encourage your supermarket chains to carry local meat and produce. Well done on an important topic for us all.
<http://www.kingsolver.com>

The River of Lost Footsteps: Histories of Burma, Thant Myint-U. Farrar, Straus and Giroux 2006. Pure history about the past, present, and future possibilities for Burma/Myanmar. Most of us know little about this country except for a few exotic literary or musical mentions of the road to Mandalay or Rangoon. Born in 1966, educated at Harvard and Cambridge, in 1988 the author was living in a Burmese rebel base camp, as he describes it "a sometimes dusty and sometimes muddy sprawl of bamboo and thatch huts, the misty malarial rain forests of the Tennesseerim hills in the near distance and young, determined-looking men and women in emerald-green uniforms milling all around." With the awarding of the Nobel peace prize to dissident Aung San Suu Kyi in 1991, more of us had an inkling that there was a country out there—next to the old kingdom of "Siam"—that was poor and embroiled in a bitter struggle for democracy against a repressive military regime. If you've ever been curious to know more, this is an excellent presentation of the history with some small amount of analysis and a proposal for the country's future prospects in a global environment. Check out this discussion about Burma on the Three Quarks Daily blog: <http://tinyurl.com/2jbpdo>

House of Good Hope: A Promise for a Broken City, Michael Downs. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press 2007. In Hartford, Connecticut, five gifted young men from the same high school promise each other that they will return to their city after college and dedicate themselves to renewing their community and helping others to succeed. Hartford's story is a gritty inner-city tale being repeated across the nation in other urban settings. Downs does a good job of presenting the complexity of the

problems of reversing the downward trends for people, schools, business, and community in such poverty-ridden areas. He brings a personal side to the story by revealing his own conflict about whether or not to return to Hartford, where his boyhood memories are of a better time for the city, or move away leaving his aging grandparents behind. It's a cautionary tale –

<http://www.michael-downs.net>

ART

This issue we recommend the following three books about a variety of interesting artists. Books about art open our hearts and mind to new ways of looking at creativity. Reading about the lives of artists, living and dead, enriches our imaginations and adds texture to what we call "art." Beneath the three book recommendations, you will find a link to a couple of featured artists working on each coast and a wonderful gallery to visit if you find yourself east of San Francisco.

Elizabeth Catlett: An American Artist in Mexico, Melanie Herzog. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press 2000. Discover the deeply emotional art of one of the United States' finest artists who made her home in Mexico in the 1940s to avoid US discrimination against people of color and persecution of those considered far left. She worked with Zuñiga in Mexico City and produced an amazing array of expressive sculpture, focusing primarily on female figures. She is also an impressive printmaker, a member of the famous Taller de Grafica Popular (Popular Graphic Arts Workshop) for twenty years. Elizabeth Catlett is another example of a relatively unknown American woman artist whose work is still to be discovered by many. Her works are in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and in numerous important private and public collections.

Covarrubias, Adriana Williams. Edited by Doris Ober. University of Texas Press 1994. The result of a monumental, careful research project by Covarrubias-specialist Williams, this work is a superb portrait of one of Mexico City's finest contributors to the history and knowledge of the traditional arts of Mexico's indigenous peoples. Miquel Covarrubias was a skillful illustrator and painter, often in demand for some of the most important books about Mexico published in the thirties and forties. Once he realized the unrecognized magnitude and variety of history and art in pre-Hispanic times in what is today Mexico, he became obsessed with delving deeply into the topic, became a skilled amateur archaeologist, and he and his wife, Rosa, put together an extraordinary collection of art that ranged from pre-Hispanic and Aztec sculptures to the work of Diego Rivera. Their social coterie included Diego and Frida and most of the important working artists and writers of the time. Covarrubias created the distinctive illustrations for Zora Neal Hurston's *Mules and Men*, which can be viewed at <http://tinyurl.com/2lbryw>

New Mexico Artists at Work, Text by Dana Newmann, photography by Jack Parsons. Museum of New Mexico Press 2005. A visually beautiful and interesting exploration of New Mexico artists in their private studios and homes. Fascinating for anyone interested

in the mechanics and sources of inspiration and creativity. Order from <http://www.mnmpress.org>

This issue we are featuring two unique artists and one gallery on our separate arts page. Here is the text from that page, but the images are worth a visit to the live webzine:

ANNIE SESSLER fishes for art.

One of the most intriguing aspects about art is the multitude of ways artists find to be creative. Every once in awhile someone will look at something they've seen every day for years and it will become shimmeringly beautiful, never to be viewed as mundane again. For Annie Sessler, inspiration struck about two years ago and, as after a lightning strike, she's never seen sealife the same since.

While the tradition of fish printing is not entirely new, having begun in the 1800s in Japan when fishermen there began using ink and paper to record their catch, Sessle brings refined techniques to the process. Her prints are filled with a combination of the wonder of nature's complex designs and the unique individuality each fish reveals. While the results are somewhat variable, due to the species, each subject has a light patina of ink applied with a small rubber roller and several brushes and then a "rubbing" is carefully obtained with a sheet of white satin. Each delicate anatomical detail is slowly revealed, until its complex, one-of-a-kind pattern is complete.

Ms. Sessler's unusual art can be seen in her online gallery at <http://eastendfishprints.com/gallery/index.html> and in a slide show on the New York Times website at <http://tinyurl.com/youoh6>.

ERIN ROBBINS, an artist who survives and thrives. (photo by Suzanne Hall)

Meeting Erin Robbins is such a pleasure—not only is she a warm and beautiful woman, but within a few minutes you also know that she is a beautiful soul. Her life is a testament to the survival of a human being's inner drive to create, to draw from all that surrounds her, condensing and synthesizing it into textured visual art composed from the deepest, jewel-like colors of the palette.

From the time she was a little girl growing up in Los Angeles, Erin has been possessed with the drive to bring images to life on paper and canvas. She attended UC Santa Cruz, graduating with honors in 1975 with a degree in Arts, Crafts, and Their History, and went on to get a masters degree in Expressive Arts Therapies from Lesley College in Cambridge, MA. Studies in meditation and Eastern spirituality as she traveled to and lived in India inform her work even today. Her life's path seemed set as she spent the next fifteen years teaching people how to access and live creative lives.

Then, tragedy struck as, in 1997, Erin experienced severe head injuries in a head-on automobile collision. During a period in which she could no longer rely on logic and

linear thinking, she began to experience the world in a new, more immediate way. As she expresses it, "If paintings are windows, mine peer into a world where the line between archetype and ordinary reality is blurred, where the ancient rubs shoulders with the present. Through these windows, stories come to life, stories that can only be told in the potent and mysterious language of art."

When you are in Erin's presence, in her lovely home surrounded by brilliant colors, tapestries, and iconic images, a wonderful feeling of peace surrounds you. She works in oils, acrylics, and mixed media and often focuses on a variety of ethnic female images to portray the poetry of her work and her heart. Classes and workshops are also available. Erin makes her home now in Nevada City, California, and examples of her paintings can be seen at <http://www.erinrobbinsstudio.com>.

IN THE HEART OF GOLD RUSH COUNTRY, nestled in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains in California, is **NEVADA CITY**. It's charming, historic, and offers a variety of unique accommodations, restaurants, and shopping. If you visit, there is one place in particular you don't want to miss:

The Mowen Solinsky Gallery

225 Broad Street, Nevada City, California 95959
303.265.4682 - <http://www.mowensolinskygallery.com>

Housed in an 1870s historic building, the Mowen Solinsky Gallery is one of the finest privately owned fine art galleries to be seen anywhere both in terms of range and quality of presentations. Owners John Mowen and Steve Solinsky are longtime residents and artisans of Nevada City and each has more than twenty-five years experience in their craft. Their award-winning gallery provides a venue for their own work along with about 130 other regional and national artists. Their staff is knowledgeable and friendly and the owners are often on site to greet you and answer questions. You will not be disappointed! A few images are shown here as samples of the work you may find, but pieces change frequently.

FOOD

The Confetti Cakes Cookbook: Spectacular Cookies, Cakes, and Cupcakes from New York City's Famed Bakery, Elisa Strauss with Christie Matheson. Photographs by Alexandra Rowley. Little, Brown 2007. Ever wished you could create one of those super duper, sweet-a-licious treats that would make your guests ooh and ah? Elisa Strauss, owner and sole designer of Confetti Cakes, the upscale bakery famous for elaborately sculpted custom cakes, shares all you need to know in her inspiring book. Strauss begins with listing tools and a glossary of baking terms, and then takes you through step-by-step instructions for such fabulous concoctions as the handbag cake shown here. They not only look unique, they are delicious as well! Feel adventurous? Love to create cooking surprises? This book makes a perfect gift for you or a friend. To see more of Elisa Strauss's creations, go to <http://www.confeticakes.com>.

FILM

Into the Fire: American Women in the Spanish Civil War. 58 min. 2002.

Filmmaker Julia Newman interviews more than a dozen American women, including nurses, notable authors, and others, who defied the US government in 1936 to support the newly elected democratic government of Spain in its fight against a right-wing military faction led by Gen. Francisco Franco. The result is a thought-provoking study of the Spanish Civil War, a key battle in the European fight against fascism. If you'd like to see images and learn more about this war that attracted so many supporters, go to the Abraham Lincoln Brigade archives at <http://www.alba-valb.org> .

The Bituminous Coal Queens of Pennsylvania. 2005. 89 minutes.

Fifty years of Coal Queens come back to the coal mining town of Carmichaels, PA (population 556) for a reunion and the crowning of the 2003 coal queen. A delightful documentary about a way of life that is on the wane. It gives you chills to see the lives of the coal miners, descending 700 feet below the surface of the earth daily for their entire working lives. A wonderful reminder of the kinds of small home towns many of us grew up in and that still exist all over America. A YouTube discussion: <http://tinyurl.com/29ay9v>

Pink Floyd: The Making of the Dark Side of the Moon. 2003. 1 hour 32 minutes.

If the ka-ching of "Money" still reverberates in your heart, then you will thoroughly enjoy this documentary chronicling the band's journey prior to the release of their classic album "The Dark Side of the Moon" in 1973. Contains extensive contemporary interviews with the "boys" of The Floyd, including Roger Waters, David Gilmour, Nick Mason, and Richard Wright as they provide insight into the record-making process and the magic of its final results. The visuals are great and there are single performances of some tracks.

The Lives of Others. 2007. 2hrs. 18 min.

Set in 1980s East Berlin, director Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck's debut feature won an Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film. It provides an exquisitely nuanced portrait of life under the watchful eyes of the state police as a high-profile couple is bugged. When a successful playwright and his actress companion become subjects of the Stasi's secret surveillance program, their friends, family and even those doing the watching find their lives changed. Don't forget to watch the director interview; his discussion of the color concept and the strategic use of music are fascinating. Annette Maria Rupprecht, film and theater critic for German Film Services gives some interesting background information on the director and his topic at <http://tinyurl.com/2oxxdn>

ROAD RASH

MEXICO CITY: SEE SOMETHING DIFFERENT

On a recent business trip to Mexico City, I had the pleasure of traveling in Executive Class on **Mexicana Airlines**—this is an airline that recalls the meaning of service and comfort. At each point in the journey, checking in, boarding, and during the flight, their personnel went out of their way to be friendly and helpful, to let us know our business was appreciated. Next time you are headed south, consider giving them a try:

<http://www.mexicana.com> .

While in Mexico City, I visited three more unusual sites you might enjoy:

MUSEO CASA DE LEON TROTSKY – the house where Leon Trotsky lived in the mid-1930s and where he was assassinated after an earlier failed attempt. Invited to Mexico and sponsored by Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, Trotsky and his wife Natalia settled into their home at Avenue Rio Churubusco 410, a tree-lined street a few blocks from the main plaza of Coyacán, after fleeing the Soviet Union. It was in this now-historic section of Mexico City where many famous artists and writers lived and worked during the so-called Golden Era of Mexico. It's a fascinating foot note to Marxist history to view this house, see the bedroom walls still riddled with bullets from the first assassination attempt by a group including famous muralist David Siquieros, and the desk where Jacson Mornard ended Trotsky's life with a deadly blow from an axe. To see a brief but musically bracing video in Spanish about this museum:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qoeiy1ifdlg> . For old video clips of Trotsky:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6Htpt9F3jk> . For more information in English about the museum, read the New York Times article at: <http://tinyurl.com/ypxprg>

Very nearby, also in Coyacán, is found the **MUSEO DE FRIDA KAHLO**, also known as the Casa Azul (the Blue House), which houses extensive memorabilia about the famous artist whose life and work has gained a considerable cult following. This summer, Mexico City celebrated the 100th anniversary of her birth in 1907 and the Casa Azul received a thorough updating. The artist's life, her work, her marriage to Diego Rivera, and many of those in their coterie of friends and colleagues are commemorated here. It's an intriguing glimpse into a life well lived.

One other, seldom visited site for those interested in that unique era of art and artists in the 1930s and 1940s in Mexico City, is well worth a look:

HOSPITAL DE JESUS NAZARENO, 20 de Noviembre, 86, Centro, Mexico City, Mexico Tel: +52 5 5625222. Constructed in about 1524, it's said to be the longest-serving hospital on the American continent. Originally called the Hospital de la Purisima Concepcion de Nuestra Senora (Hospital of Our Lady of the Purest Conception), Hernan Cortés provided funds for its completion. Some updating was done in the mid-twentieth century, in a different architectural style, but using the same materials as the original construction. There's an unconfirmed legend that the bones of Cortez are interred in its walls. But the more interesting thing is the sixteenth-century, barrel-vaulted ceiling painted in fresco by 20th century Mexican artist Jose Clemente Orozco, thought by some to be the greatest of the 20th century muralists. Orozco only had one arm—can you imagine the dedication and effort to paint more-than-life-sized figures, all

the while standing or lying on scaffolding? This masterpiece features not only the artist's Mexican interpretation of the classic "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" theme, but includes a bizarre, interesting female figure dressed in an evening gown and jewels astride a horse. This mural was one of the very few where Orozco allowed an assistant. Annette Nancarrow, a little recognized artist of the time, highly active in the creative social scene in Coyacán, Acapulco, and New York, painted side by side with the master. It is said by Orozco's son that Annette (who was a stunning redhead) was the gestural model for the female figure. Here's a link to see an example of Annette Nancarrow's work: <http://www.AnnetteNancarrow.com>

VICTORIA, BC - BREAD AND WHEAT FESTIVAL - October 27, 2007

Canada's first Bread and Wheat Festival will bring culture and celebration back to local food production, celebrating 170 years of Canadian Red Fife wheat. This heritage variety, the foundation of many modern wheat varieties, originated in the Ukraine, and arrived in Canada in 1840, feeding Canadians coast to coast from 1860–1900. Recently rediscovered, it is adapting to growing conditions and fields across the country and is being enjoyed in a diversity of baked goods. The festival will feature a variety of speakers, events, and workshops such as wheat weaving, paper making, small scale grain growing, sourdough bread baking, and an evening of music with seed, wheat, and harvest songs. Visitors can meet farmers, millers and bakers working with local and national grains and learn about the various uses of wheat including fuel, fodder and fiber as well as crafts, house building materials, religious celebrations, fertility symbols, artistic inspirations, and weavings. Regionally produced artisan breads and pastries will be showcased at the event and available for tastings. Cost of attendance: \$5.00CDN, with profits going toward funding local organic and heritage wheat project work. For more information: <http://www.breadandwheat.com> .

WELCOME TO SITKA, ALASKA – 11th Annual WhaleFest – November 2–4, 2007

Sitka's WhaleFest celebrates Alaska's marine mammal population. From mid-September until mid-January, the pristine waters of Sitka Sound are home to many humpback whales as they build up food reserves prior to their migration south. An international lineup of world-renowned biologists and researchers will share their current findings and exciting experiences during this educational adventure.

Scheduled events include the symposium, a poster session, student art show, banquet, a sea chanty concert, clam chowder cookoff, and 10K/5K Run/Fun Walk, and there's shopping for a myriad of whale themed goods. Sitka's weather Weather this time of year is the 40s and lower 50s. Rain or shine, the celebration goes on!

For more information: <http://www.sitkawhalefest.org>

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