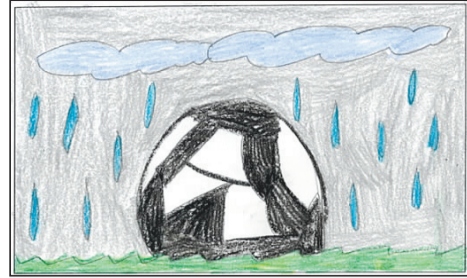


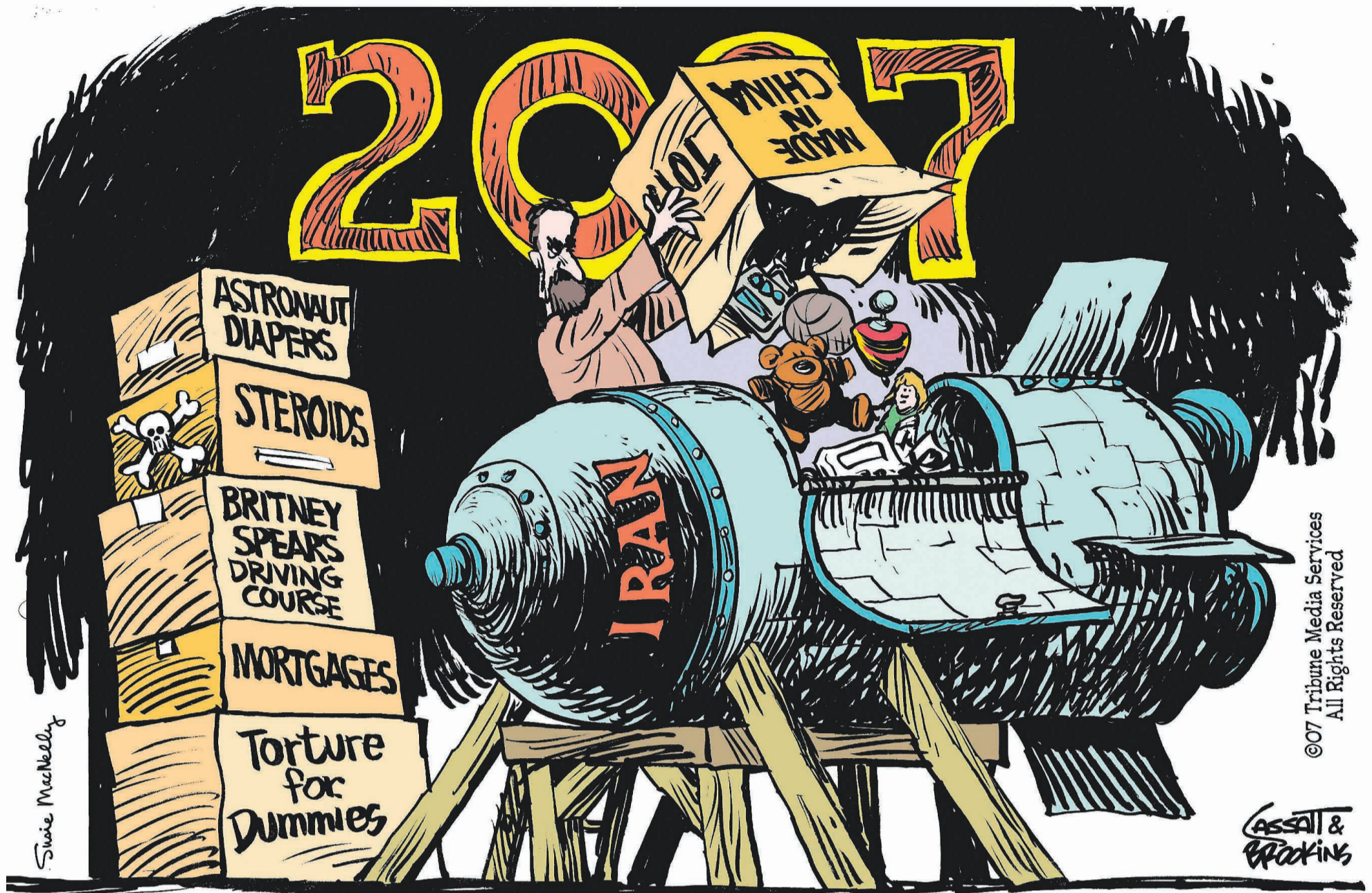
The Columbian
Life

Section D

Today's weather picture by Isabella Montoya, age 8, Salmon Creek Elementary School



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2007



I'm sorry, were you trying to forget?



DAVE BARRY

It was a year that strode boldly into the stall of human events and took a wide stance astride the porcelain bowl of history. It was a year in which roughly 17,000 leading presidential contenders, plus Dennis Kucinich, held roughly 63,000 debates, during which they spewed out roughly 153 trillion words — and yet the only truly memorable phrase emitted in any political context was “Don’t tase me, bro!” It was a year filled with bizarre, insane, destructive behavior, an alarming amount of which involved astronauts. In short, 2007 was a year of deep gloom, pierced occasionally by rays of even deeper gloom. Oh, sure, there were bright spots: ■ Several courageous members of Congress — maybe as many as a dozen — decided, incredibly, *not* to run for president. ■ O.J. Simpson discovered that, although you might be able to avoid jail time for committing a double homicide, the justice system draws the line at attempted theft of sports memorabilia.

■ Toward the end of the year, entire days went by when it was possible to not think about Paris Hilton. ■ Apple released the iPhone, which, as we understand it, enables users to fly, cure cancer, read minds and travel through time. ■ The plucky, lovable New York Yankees once again found a way, against all odds, to bring joy to the literally billions of people who do not root for them. ■ Dick Cheney did not shoot anybody, as far as we know. But other than that, 2007 was a disaster. American consumers came to fear products manufactured in China, which covers pretty much everything in the typical American home except the dirt. Global warming continued to worsen, despite the efforts of leading climate experts such as Madonna and Leonardo DiCaprio, who emerged briefly from their private jets to give the rest of us helpful tips on reducing our carbon footprints. On the economic front, the dollar continued to lose value against all major foreign currencies and most brands of bathroom tissue. There was a major collapse in the credit market, caused by the fact that for most of this decade, every other radio commercial has been some guy selling mortgages to people who clearly should not have mortgages. (“No credit? No job? On Death Row? No problem!”)



The subprime-mortgage fiasco resulted in huge stock-market losses, and the executives responsible, under the harsh rules of Wall Street justice, were forced to accept lucrative retirement packages. So they did OK. But for the rest of us, it was another bad year. And as is so often true of bad years, it began with ...

JANUARY

... when Democrats, having won the November elections, take control of both houses of Congress with surprisingly little loss of life. In the House of Representatives, incoming speaker Nancy Pelosi pledges “a new era of bipartisan cooperation,” then brings the gavel down on the head of outgoing speaker Dennis Hastert. Upon taking power, the Democrats, who campaigned vigorously against the war in Iraq, and who hailed their victory as a clear voter mandate to get the troops out of Iraq, immediately get down to the business of being careful to not do anything that might actually result in the removal of troops from Iraq, in case that might turn out to be a bad idea. This is fine with President Bush, who calls for a “troop surge,” based on his understanding of the comprehensive Iraq Study Group Report, as interpreted for him by aides equipped with 20,000 G.I. Joe action figures. The slump in home sales continues into the new year, with a total, nationwide, of one home sold in January. In many cities, gangs of real-estate agents — sometimes wearing “colors” in the form of canary-yellow jackets — roam the streets, surrounding their victims and extracting money from them in forcible “closings.” In sports, a Los Angeles team signs glamorous British soccer star David

BARRY, Page D7

Plan for happiest vacation on Earth

Inside
■ Winners of Disney contest can sleep like a princess for the night, see Page D5.
■ Get off the beaten path in the City of Lights, see Page D4.
■ In Spain, modern meets antique, see Page D4.

By BRETT OPPEGAARD for The Columbian
ANAHEIM, Calif. — Cheap airfare. Discounts on lodging and park admission. Short lines. No crowds. Sunny weather that’s not too hot. Those are just some of the reasons to consider taking your trip to the Magical Kingdom in the winter instead of during summer or spring break, like most people do. I recently returned from a five-

ON THE WEB
For more information, visit home.disney.go.com/travel alaskaair.com/vacations expedia.com
day trip to Disneyland with my three children, all younger than 6. Many of the important decisions about this excursion were made before we left, starting with the question of when to go. Bob Deuel, public relations

director for Disneyland, declined to release specific attendance figures, but he acknowledged that after the New Year’s Day festivities wind down, the park is at its slowest until spring break. A couple of staff members told me that they bring their own families during the third or fourth weeks of January, when most people are still home recovering from Christmas, physically as well
DISNEYLAND, Page D3

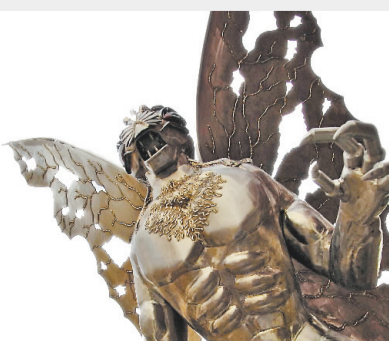


PAUL HIFFMEYER

Even during slow periods of the year, the wait to enter Disneyland’s Princess Faire is long. So consider as an alternative going to breakfast at Ariel’s Grotto, where the princesses greet each guest.

your
Guide:

Travel:
Point Pleasant still benefits from Mothman legend /D5



Electrified cigar box guitar a friend of the one-man band /D9



New academy members excited about choosing Oscar winners /D10

Denzel Washington embraces teacher role in ‘Debaters’ /D11

Coming Monday:

Looking back at artists, pop culture figures who died in 2007 /D1

Disneyland:

From Page D1

as financially.

Why is crowd size so important? Besides personal space, the length of lines for rides makes or breaks a trip, particularly with small children. After waiting in line for an hour to spend only a few minutes being spun around in a teacup, you'll be ready to go back to the hotel pool.

For the most relaxed atmosphere, try weekdays in the winter, especially Tuesdays through Thursdays, when the locals aren't there on long weekends. One day of that kind of unencumbered access to the park is worth a week in summer.

That said, there is a slight chance of rain in Southern California from January through March. The wet weather in that region typically comes and goes quickly, unlike the lingering Northwest drizzle. The average temperatures in Anaheim during those three months range from 50 to 65 degrees — balmy in comparison to Clark County.

Another potential downside to winter travel: More of the rides are closed for maintenance. "It's a Small World" is going to be shut down after New Year's Day and be out of commission for most of 2008. All the attractions must be closed periodically for maintenance and repairs, and it only makes business sense to do that during the slow season.

Yet the travel companies and hotels in the area are eager to attract customers during this same period, as are the airlines that service Southern California. So everyone is in a generous mood to cover for the inconveniences.

Deuel said Alaska Airlines Vacations and the park's own travel service, Walt Disney Travel Co., are the two most popular providers for customers coming from the Northwest.

Expedia.com and other discount travel Web sites also offer deals, depending on how much browsing one wants to do. A search on Expedia shows round-trip air fare to Orange County ranging from \$235 to \$318 for mid-January.

From Jan. 8 through April 24, the resort will be offering a package that gives five days at the park, including lodging and admission, for the price of three. Packages start at \$247.

That's the most important tip, but here are five other logistical questions and answers



SCOTT BRINEGAR

Lines at the best rides in Disneyland and California Adventure — such as the California Screamin' roller coaster — can be an hour long or more during the peak season. Going to the Southern California parks in winter, when the weather is milder but not cold, means shorter lines and more fun for everyone.

that every parent should read before going:

Q: Which hotel should I stay at?

A: The smaller the children, the closer the hotel needs to be. When meltdowns happen — and they will — you'll want a quick path to a quiet area and a bed. If the budget allows, stay in one of the three lodges on site: The Disneyland, The Paradise Pier and The Grand Californian hotels, with the last being the closest, the most beautiful, the most extravagant and the most expensive.

When rental car costs and parking fees are figured into the equation, the cost of staying within walking distance

can be the same or cheaper. The Disneyland brand doesn't allow for disappointing stays. Plus, those who stay at the Disneyland hotels get early access to the parks, use of any of the three hotels' pools and free delivery of purchases to their rooms.

Q: What kind of kids' gear should I bring? And what should I leave behind?

A: This starts with car seats. Hotel shuttles don't require them, so parents don't have to bring them, even for infants. But safety concerns might

outweigh the convenience of leaving them behind.

Travelers renting a car should just plan to bring their own child seats, rather than mess around with the rental companies'. As for a stroller, we made the mistake of leaving our large two-seater behind this time. The rental version at the park is a costly \$10 per day. The contraption doesn't fit portable infant seats or multiple children.

Q: Where should we eat?

A: Dining at the park is really tricky. Everyone tends

to want to eat about the same time of day, so restaurants draw clusters of cranky customers. And prices are high. So it's best to pack some peanut butter sandwiches, nuts, raisins, carrots, fruit and water. To stock up, take a taxi to a nearby grocery store.

Opt for more memorable and enjoyable dining experiences at the park's restaurants that take reservations. Patrons can call ahead — 714-781-DINE (3463) — several weeks in advance to reserve tables for meals that include interaction with costumed characters (Ariel's Grotto is a must for girls) or for the most popular spots, such as Blue Bayou inside the Pirates of the Caribbean ride. Reservations also force you to take a break.

Q: There are about 100 rides and attractions inside the two theme parks, Disneyland and California Adventure, plus shows and parades. How can I get them all in?

A: You can't. Accept that before you go. Even in a week, or maybe two, you won't be able to do everything, and that's part of the allure. You'll always have reasons to come back. It's best to set priorities and then focus on those, even if it means waiting in lines.

It's easy to get distracted, or defer to the ride with the shortest lines, but some things are worth the wait. That's why everyone is waiting.

One way to make your plans happen is to write a list of one thing each person wants to do each day, including the time of day those activities are available, and then let your visit revolve around that list, with plenty of time in-between for spur-of-the-moment whims.

Q: Any other discounts or deals I should know about?

A: Simply searching the Web for "Disneyland coupons" can produce a variety of printable slips and cost-saving tips for your trip. The best place to start looking is mousesavers.com. I found a printable coupon there for \$5 off every \$50 purchase and \$10 off every \$100 purchase at Disneyland retailers, and I could copy it as many times as I wanted.

It's helpful, too, to know what kinds of items are available only in Disneyland — and there are many — versus what can be purchased at any mall or online retailer. Part of the fun of the trip for kids is bringing back a special memento. For the parents, a little bit of the joy, too, is saving 10 percent on the purchase.

Headlines and Business and Sports

Oh My!



Home Delivery 360/694-2312

MAKE IT A BLUE(GRASS) NEW YEAR!



January 4, 5 & 6, 2008
Oregon Convention Center, Portland

- The Flatlanders
- Marty Stuart & The Fabulous Superlatives
- Rhonda Vincent & The Rage
- The Del McCoury Band
- David Grisman Quintet
- Dan Tyminski Band
- The Seldom Scene
- David Grier
- Tim O'Brien
- Bryan Bowers
- Dry Branch Fire Squad
- Doyle Lawson & Quicksilver
- John Reischman & The Jaybirds
- Darol Anger & The Republic Of Strings

Saturday night old-timey dance with Foghorn Stringband after Marty Stuart

Plus Misty River, Jackstraw, Whiskey Puppy, Ida Viper, Taarka, Cross Eyed Rosie, Runaway Train, Chickweed, BBQ Orchestra, The Wallys, Sam Hill, Young Bucs, Wheatfield, Josh Cole Band, The Buckles

Mini RV Show sponsored by Olinger Travel Homes
Tickets available through TicketsWest 503-224-TIXX (8499) Weekend Pass: \$125. By the day: Friday 4pm-11:30pm - \$35.00 All day Saturday (10am - 1am) \$55.00. Saturday evening show including Del McCoury Band, Marty Stuart: \$35.00 All day Sunday: \$50.00 Convenience fees apply. Visit the website for schedule and hotel information.
KBOO 90.7 www.rivercitybluegrass.com (503)282-0877

UNIVERSAL Sudoku Puzzle

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

			9	4				
	7	8						3
4	2			6	8			
	8	6	1		3			4
2								6
3	6		4	7	1			
	2	3			7			5
8				1	6			
		4	2					

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

SOLUTION IS ON PAGE D8 TO PLAY AN INTERACTIVE SUDOKU PUZZLE,

Achieve Your New Years Resolution With a Refreshing New Re-Bath System!