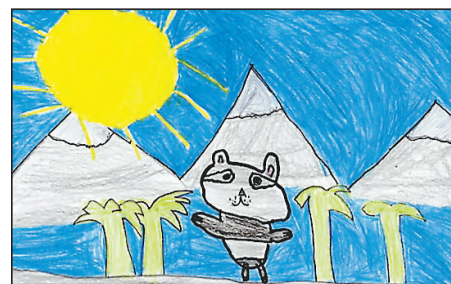


The Columbian Life

Section D

Today's weather picture by Sara Stark, 8, Hockinson Intermediate Elementary School



SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2007

Revamped TV Times reflects feedback

To our readers: Today we are launching a new version of our TV Times with changes that reflect your feedback and requests.

Many of you sent us e-mails, called and wrote about what you didn't like. Overwhelmingly, you told us that you wanted 24 hours of TV schedules for each day of the week, even if that meant eliminating stories and other features. We made those changes. As a result, the TV Times cover story and the crossword puzzle now appear on Page 2 of the TV Times to make room for the daily TV programming schedules.

Many newspapers have cut back or even eliminated TV books. They're expensive to produce and, honestly, our research shows many readers aren't using these guides. But because we feel enough readers want the TV Times, we are continuing it as part of Sunday's Columbian.

If you'd like to voice your opinion on the section, please call our feedback line at 360-699-6004. Please understand, however, that we will not be able to respond to every call we receive.



DAVE BARRY

Government finds lots of stuff is lost

I think I might know where the missile launcher is.

I'm referring here to the \$1 million missile launcher that our armed forces apparently misplaced, according to a recent audit of the U.S. government.

Way back in 1994, Congress decided that there should be a complete audit of the entire federal government. This seemed like a good idea, since the U.S. government — which is the fourth-largest financial entity in the world behind Bill Gates and your electrician — had not been audited for (this is the truth) more than 200 years. The reason Congress did not get around to ordering an audit any sooner is that it has been extremely busy with its primary functions, which are 1) spending money; 2) declaring National Cottage Cheese Appreciation Week; and 3) authorizing the IRS to hammer taxpayers for inadequate record-keeping.

As you can imagine, the federal audit was a huge job. The auditors spent thousands and thousands of hours at the U.S. Government Records Facility, which is a 1,400-foot-long shoebox containing an estimated 139 billion receipts and what are believed to be George Washington's original teeth. When the auditors were finally finished, they released a report that contained a number of alarming findings, including these:

■ It turns out that both

BARRY, Page D11

DAVE BARRY is a columnist for the Miami Herald. This classic column was previously published. He is currently taking a leave of absence from writing his weekly humor column. Write to him c/o The Miami Herald, One Herald Plaza, Miami FL 33132.

BRETT OPPEGAARD, VANCOUVER, WRITER



Brett Oppegaard, who writes for The Columbian, and a photographer sat on a plain bench in an empty studio for this "Coming Event" portrait painted by Anne John. No birds were harmed in the process.

VANCOUVER VIGNETTES

Ordinary residents play extraordinary role in show

By BRETT OPPEGAARD
for The Columbian

Strange doesn't describe in enough detail how I felt sitting on that bench, in an otherwise empty studio, while painter Anne John and her daughter, Rue Lindgren, snapped digital photos of me from all angles as a Columbian photographer documented them.

Self-consciousness dominated a swirl of emotions. Please let this be over soon, I pleaded silently. In the quiet broken only by shutters clicking, my mind wondered again, *Why in the world would anyone want to paint my portrait?*

John came up with this concept — to scoop up ordinary people like me to pose for artwork — about three years ago. She calls the exhibit "City of Portraits," a celebration of the art of portraiture but also a demonstration of the diversity of people who define this community. A writer for the local newspaper could be part of such a portfolio, she reasoned, along with a firefighter and a police officer.

This North Bank Artists Gallery show, which opens Friday in downtown Vancouver, also presents portraits of a local volunteer who cares for the dying, as well as an unsung man who loves soccer so much that he spends his free time manuring public sports fields. Vancouver's mayor, Royce Pollard, is part of this exhibition, too, and so are some other well-known Clark County dignitaries.

Yet John and the dozen other artists contributing pieces to this mix place those prominent

If you go

■ **What:** "City of Portraits," honoring a variety of city leaders as well as unsung people who define this community.

■ **When:** Friday through Dec. 5; gallery hours are 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays; reception is 4 to 8 p.m. Friday.

■ **Where:** North Bank Artists Gallery, 1005 Main St., Vancouver.

■ **Cost:** Free.

■ **Information:** Call 360-693-1840 or visit northbankartistsgallery.com.

people alongside the rest of us as integral parts of the Southwest Washington patchwork.

The biggest obstacle John and this show had to overcome was the "why me?" question. About half of the 40 people John originally contacted didn't even respond to her request. Some of the others declined to participate. John thought models might feel obligated to buy the work, which ranges in price from \$500 to \$4,000, so she countered that by committing to donate proceeds to charity. But it still took more than a year to put the exhibition together. I posed in December.

My thoughts at the time, after the "why me?" moment, kept drifting back to the question of

how I was going to be portrayed. I had no interest in becoming a martyr for the profession. But I also didn't want to restrict John's creative expression about me or journalism.

So I kept quiet. I did what she asked. Sat on the bench. Wrote in my notebook. The cameras clicked.

What does a journalist do when we all look at him, instead of the other way around? I felt compelled to perform, and analyzed my every movement, even the subtlest gestures.

John asked the photographer to sit on the bench beside me. I had company, at least. Strangers walking past the gallery on Main Street stared. I could better imagine now how irritating it must be to endure paparazzi.

The session ended in less than an hour, most of that time spent chatting about unrelated things. Other people I interviewed for this piece shared similar stories: Just a short time in front of a camera, followed by a lot of curiosity about how this all would turn out.

John asked all the participating artists to include in each piece three props — an apple, a chair and a piece of drapery — to help connect the array of works.

When I finally got a preview of the painting, I realized how special this opportunity was.

"Portraiture is beautiful," John said. "You don't need to fear it. I think within the work I do, I'm able to capture a little piece of the soul. That's very hard to do with a flash camera. There's a real intimacy to a painting."

In my portrait, the Columbian photographer sits next to me on the bench, his face obscured by the newspaper he's reading. I'm holding my notebook, scribbling away. It seems stormy.

John sensed not only my inner mood at the time but also intuitively forecast the many personal changes ahead in the months that followed, including the birth of my third daughter and my decision to leave a full-time job at The Columbian to work as a freelance writer.

Crows surround us. The birds are scavengers and symbolic harbingers of many things, including death. John tells me that she chose to include them for another reason, because she thinks they are wise and curious, like journalists. John uses them as a totem in her work, she said, adding that the birds are "funny and very family-oriented. They nest in our greenbelt, so I observe them all of the time. They add a little bit of humor, and they are considered messengers."

The ambiguity of this painting, loose enough to encourage different interpretations, is so much more intriguing than a standard photograph.

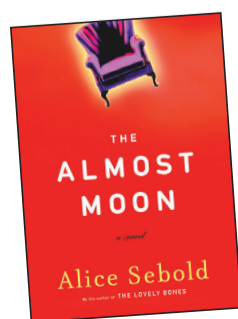
As I looked through the other pieces in the collection, they raised different questions. I talked to some of the other participants to see how their experiences went. For those stories, turn to Page D7.



your Guide:



Travel: Swimming with Florida's manatees /D4



Books: Alice Sebold disappoints in anticlimactic 'Almost Moon' /D9

Coming Monday:

Ghostbusting at Clark County landmarks /D1

DOROTHY SMITH, 83, VANCOUVER, HOSPICE VOLUNTEER

“She literally has a light around her. You have to meet her to know what I’m talking about. She’s absolutely stunning. She wore a beautiful pure white blouse, with lace, white pearls. She has gorgeous, silky white hair. I knew right away that she had to have some sort of angel form.”

Anne John, painter

How did you get involved with this show?

(Painter Anne John) wanted someone with white hair. I was blonde, but I had two bouts of cancer in the 1980s. So when my hair came back after chemotherapy, I decided not to color it anymore. It came back snowy white. ... I thought she wanted a little old lady in tennis shoes. Then, it was a little bit weird. She had me take my shoes off.

You have volunteered for decades helping to raise money for local hospice care. What motivates you to do that?

I’ve been able to help other people. Last August I was in the hospital (for abdominal surgery), and they had to move me in the middle of the night to another room. I kept asking, “Why are you moving me?” Then I ended up with a roommate, who when she had found out that she had cancer, decided not to eat again. To starve herself. She didn’t want to do chemotherapy. I decided to talk to her and let her know that when I was her age, I went ahead and had chemo and that was 20 years ago. I’m so glad I did it. I’ve had another 20 years of life with my family. I’m just glad I didn’t give up. I think I really made a difference. She decided to start eating again.

This portrait is called “Earth Angel.” Do you feel blessed spiritually?

I don’t feel like an angel. I do think I have a happy disposition. I smile most of the time. I don’t get depressed. I’ve lost my parents, my sister, in-laws, my spouse, my daughter, and things do get easier over years. They really do. But it takes time, and I do still think that you have to have faith in another being. Whatever religion, or whatever faith you are, you have to acknowledge there is some kind of supreme being or creator. That’s gotten me through difficult times.



ROYCE POLLARD, 68, VANCOUVER, MAYOR

What was your response to the initial version of this sculpture when it was presented to you?

When I first saw it, I wasn’t sure who it was. I told her I thought she had a lot of work to do. I don’t wear glasses anymore. And (the likeness) was taken from an old picture. ... I don’t think I have that much to offer when it comes to a portrait.

Two artists for this show, Sharry Colzani and James Torson, both are making independent portraits of you. Has an artist ever wanted to use you as a model before?

No. A guy in Vietnam wanted to carve me up. But that was a different scenario.

What was the last piece of art that you bought?

(Todd Norcott) did this magnificent photo of Vancouver’s skyline. I bought print No. 1. It’s a composite of Vancouver scenes that spell out Vancouver. It’s very nicely done. It’s hanging in my office.

What’s your favorite piece of art?

It’s a large color photograph of me and my two sons hanging on the wall of my home. We were getting ready to go on a Clark College bus to Seattle about three years ago to watch the Red Sox play. That’s our team. ... It’s nicely framed. My sons paid for it.



“Royce has a great sense of humor. He just went with it. ... He has a twinkle in his eyes and sort of a sideways grin. (Pollard) looks like he’s seen a lot in his life, and he’s still fairly optimistic about things.”

Sharry Colzani, sculptor

“I liked his face. There’s a lot in it. He’s been around the world. He started out as an enlisted man. He got his wings in the service. He really thinks of himself as a Marine.”

James Torson, painter



JOHN COLLINS, 76, VANCOUVER, RETIRED MARINE

What do you think about this portrayal of you?

I would have liked to sit down in a more formal uniform. That’s just me in my undershirt having a cup of coffee. (Artist James Torson) said he wanted me to be just as I am. But I’m really a pretty formal kind of guy when it comes to presenting to the world what I look like.

What does the painting make you think about?

I have a lot of friends (in that background photo, taken in 1963 in

Hawaii), a lot of friends that are no longer alive.

What’s your opinion on the Iraq War?

I had one tour in Korea and two tours of Vietnam. I stayed in the military because I thought it was a good contribution to make. But now, I’m probably as anti-war as you can get. I don’t think war is good for women and children, or any living things. Humans, especially in the Western world, seem to think all of the problems that we have can be solved by war. I don’t believe that.

I’m an American. I’d go to war any time I need to, but I think we come out of wars with the same issues we had before, plus some new ones.

What advice would you give people thinking of enlisting in the armed forces?

As long as you are going to have conflicts between governments, you are going to need somebody to defend our way of government. I have a very good attitude about the young men and women that are going to

war. I don’t have a very good feeling about how our government is taking care of them, especially those who are wounded or killed. I don’t think the government is doing its share. ... There are right reasons to join. A desire to serve your country. To sacrifice for your country and way of government. But there are wrong reasons, too. Maybe because you saw the dress blues. Or you want the money. It’s more hardship than it is wearing a uniform and traveling all over the world.

“The drapery is over his head because he represents the unrecognized volunteer. He does everything, and you don’t know about it. This piece, ‘Unsung Volunteer: Incoming,’ is the funniest of the group. Even though you can’t see his face, you know it’s Danny. His posture. He loves dogs. The humor of it.”

Anne John, painter



DANNY ZINDA, 52, VANCOUVER, MECHANIC & SOCCER VOLUNTEER

How did you react to being asked to participate in this?

My first question in my mind was: “Do I have to be naked?” That’s what my friends all asked me, too, “Are you naked?” When a regular guy like me gets asked to pose for a painting, those kinds of thoughts linger. Honestly, I wondered how I was going to be posing.

So what did you think when you were asked to put a sheet over your head?

I wanted to know why she couldn’t take a picture of my face. Did she think I was ugly? There was a little ego in it. You’re painting me, and no one’s going to know who I am.

Did you wear shorts to the sitting, or was that part artistic license?

I’m a soccer person, so I wear shorts. I’m wearing shorts right

now. I wear shorts through the winter. You’ll be able to look at my legs (at the reception) and tell who I am.

Most of your volunteering happens behind the scenes at sporting events, maintaining local soccer fields, coaching and helping to run athletic organizations. Do you have a proudest moment that deserves recognition?

Jason Lee Middle School used to have the best fields in town. But by the time I became involved, with my kids, the place was going downhill. For about 20 years, we had two outhouses there for 10 soccer fields. So I helped to build heated bathrooms with lights that come on as soon as you walk in, and I did that with a bunch of volunteers and stuff that was donated. Just to see that. That was my reward.