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OJAI VALLEY NEWS

The Ojai Valley's newspaper since 1891

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Spray for invaders

Pesticide spraying set to begin in parts of Mira Monte, Meiners Oaks against gypsy moths

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Hundreds of property owners in Mira Monte and Meiners Oaks have been notified that government crews will soon begin spraying oak and other hardwood trees and plants with an organic pesticide to destroy a "breeding population" of tree-killing gypsy moths.

Officials began hand-delivering notices of the eradication plan to 600 residences and businesses on Friday. A public information meeting was scheduled for Tuesday evening at Nordhoff High School.

"Gypsy moth caterpillars feed on hundreds of kinds of plants and are capable of defoliating trees at an alarming rate," said a notice distributed by the state Department of Food and

Agriculture and the county agricultural commissioner's office. "A single gypsy moth caterpillar can eat up to 1 square foot of leaves per day."

Two clusters of up to 100 orange-colored moth eggs were found in Mira Monte last fall, following discovery last summer of seven adults moths in traps nearby, prompting a state quarantine of the area.

"Urgent treatment is now necessary to protect California from the negative economic and environmental impacts the establishment of this pest would cause throughout California," the notice said.

Steve Lyle, a state spokesman, said spraying of the organic compound Btk is set to begin March 9 and

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Photos by Scott Wintermute

The Lowering Skies

The Ojai Valley and vicinity got its share of foul weather over the last week, with about 3 inches of rain in Ojai. Snow closed the Maricopa Highway on Monday (top). David Wilk, a resident of Old Creek Road, was unable to cross the creek Tuesday to get medications for his wife, but knew better than to make the attempt, as he had gotten stuck trying to ford the river a couple years ago. A small landslide temporarily closed one lane of the Maricopa Highway this past Friday.

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Lake claims youthful life

Fillmore boy dies while feeding ducks

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Officials have released the identity of the 4-year-old boy who died Sunday while feeding the ducks at Lake Casitas.

According to Sheriff's Capt. Ross Bonfiglio, Mason Dollar, of Fillmore, apparently fell into the water, possibly just after a flock of ducks took flight. The boy had been feeding the birds with the 8-year-old son of a friend of the boy's mother.

Dollar's mother had also taken two other children on the outing. The boy's death has been ruled accidental.

"This is very, very tragic," Bonfiglio said. "We know it doesn't take very long for this type of thing to happen. How quickly they can occur."

Both mothers and their children were reportedly in the immediate area of where the boy went into the water, but no one heard

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Rotary sends students on passage to India

Russell, Lule to get firsthand look at education, poverty

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MacKenzie Russell and Paola Lule set off to India yesterday packing lots of excitement, eager to observe and learn about a culture they've only read about. After a short two-day tour of local sights, including the Taj Mahal, the two 15-year-old Nordhoff students will travel to the Piyali Learning Center outside of Calcutta, one of the poorest and most heavily populated cities in the world.

The students were selected for the trip after winning a Rotary-sponsored essay contest last fall on "The City

of Joy," a book set against the background of the slums of India.

"You can tell them about poverty," said Deepa Willingham, founder of the Indian girls' school they will be visiting, "but being in the midst of it, seeing it firsthand, gives them the real feeling of what it's all about. And to see, even with this kind of poverty, how much humanity these people have. These girls have miserable lives and yet they come with smiles on their faces."

On Feb. 6, the girls went to Willingham's home in Solvang for a final pre-trip gathering, including a traditional Indian meal. Willingham, president of

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Joe Sohm, left, and Roger Kellaway flank conductor Peter Nero.

Ojai duo teams up for 'Visions' project

Event billed as 'photo symphony'

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Whether it's something in the water or the air or just a sheer fact of life, Ojai is known near and far for inspiring great works of art. That claim to fame struck again in a major way two weeks ago — on the national stage — thanks to the collaborative genius of two seriously creative local citizens along with the help of a

few of their well-known friends.

World-renowned photographer and Saddle Mountain resident Joe Sohm, along with his close friend and Ojai neighbor, the legendary jazz pianist and Grammy Award-winning and Oscar-nominated composer, Roger Kellaway, have just returned home from Philadelphia where

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Ojai Valley neighbors

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When Debra James began working in the storage facility business, her primary motivation was to have more time to write. Instead, she found perfect inspiration for character and story development.

"I love writing. That's what my true passion is," said James, who has been managing Bryant Circle Mini Storage since 2006. She has developed a fondness for her customers. "We have 368 units and everybody has a story."

Born in New York City, James moved to Los Angeles as an infant and grew up in the valley. "We were the original valley girls," she said of her generation who developed the vocabulary that flooded pop culture in the '80s. "My mother and I used to drive up to Santa Barbara and on the way back we would stop by Ojai past Lake Casitas." She told her mother then that she would like to live in Ojai some day.

James lived in the Caribbean and Florida before

bringing her business out to Calabasas. She cared for her mother and worked as a professional development producer by making documentaries for the U.S. Department of Education. "I was working on a World Trade Center documentary when 9/11 happened and that crashed everything."

That prompted James to explore the movie industry by becoming an extra, "... to see how the big boys did it," she said. "But I decided I didn't want to do that."

While working at a Palmdale storage facility, James learned about a job opening in Ojai. "Out of the blue, I got a call asking if I was interested in moving to Ojai to work in storage," said James.

She finds the people she comes in contact with very interesting. "Someone said to me, 'All my dreams are in that storage,'" James said. "That is so true, especially in the economic situation we have now."

When James is not examining the human condition on Bryant Circle, she enjoys being a new grandmother to Waylon



Debra James

James Trujillo, son of daughter, Ashley, and son-in-law Tony Trujillo. James enjoys movies and has begun backpacking and hiking again. "I love The Ojai Foundation and have just discovered Shelf Road. I also like the bike path. It's great to be able to take your bike all the way down to the beach and back again."

With her life's journey bringing her full circle, James said she has found contentment in the Ojai Valley. "I feel at home here for the first time in my life," she said. "Wealth comes from within. Prosperity comes from within. That's what I've learned," said James.

News Briefs

'AWESOME ART' OPENS AT MUSEUM: A reception for "Awesome Art," an exhibit of high school student art, will be held Thursday from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Ojai Valley Museum. The Marion E. Smith Excellence in Art awards will be presented at 5 p.m. The event is open to the public and is free; however, donations to the museum are always welcome. Call 640-1390 for more information.

JAZZ SINGER COMING TO OJAI VALLEY INN: Local jazz vocalist Ellen Johnson will be performing in the Neff Room of the Ojai Valley Inn & Spa today at 8 p.m. Johnson will be accompanied by Terry Murphy on the piano. Johnson has three critically acclaimed CDs, "These Days," "Chinchilla Serenade" and "Too Good to Title."

CAR WASH RESCHEDULED: Due to rain last weekend, the Oak View Pageant of Excellence court will hold its car wash and rummage sale this Saturday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Dahl's Market in Oak View. Proceeds will go to the upcoming 2009 pageant scheduled for March 7 at the Oak View Community Center. Anyone wanting to donate items for the sale should contact Miss Oak View 2008 Beth Tousignant at 901-2614 or loveal-ways454@aol.com.

OJAI RETREAT HOSTING KRISHNA-MURTI TALKS: The Ojai Retreat, 160 Besant Road, will host a free in-depth study group of key topics of local philosopher and educator, the late J. Krishnamurti, on Monday and March 2, 9, 16 and 23 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. (suggested arrival at 6:45 p.m.). Krishnamurti's

Inside



Sports

Runners, 215 of them, turn out in support of AHA's Heart and Sole.

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Arts

Coward's classic "Private Lives" continues run.

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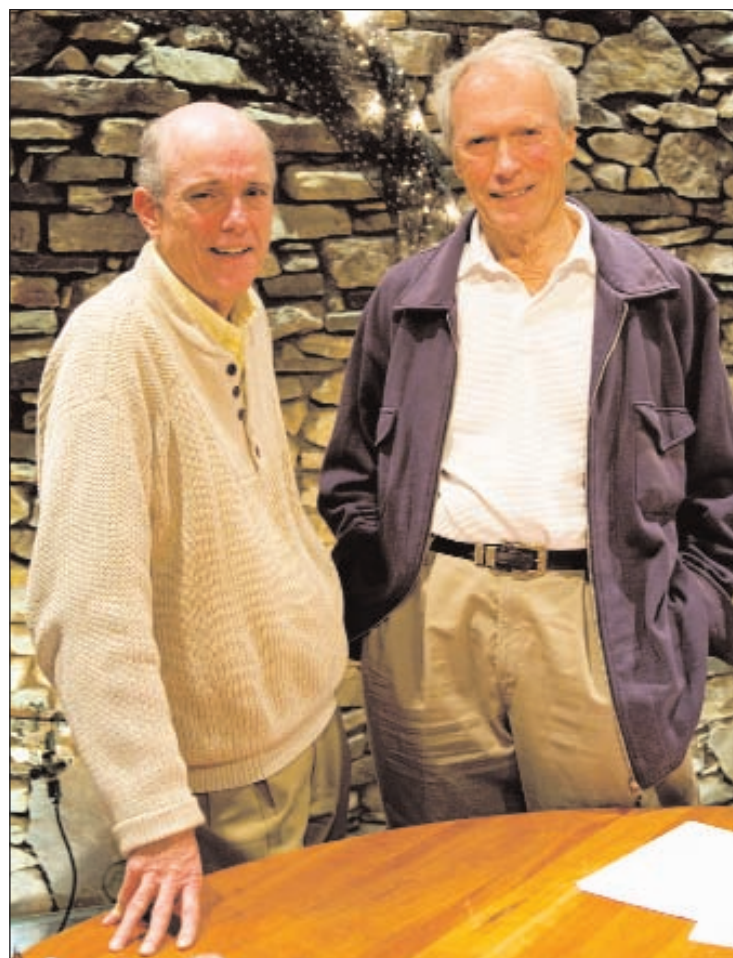
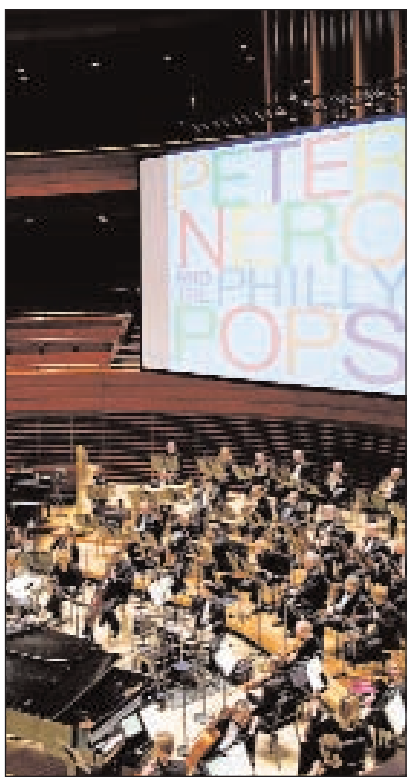
teachings on relationships, God, end of suffering, stillness of the mind, right education and right action will be explored. Call 798-6000.

TENNIS TOURNAMENT RAFFLE TICKETS ON SALE: Tickets are now on sale for the Ojai Tennis Tournament's raffle. Prizes include a sky box at Staples Center for 12 guests with parking, food and beverage, as well as two domestic airline tickets. See the Lakers, Clippers or Kings as VIPs or fly to the destination of your choice.

Tickets cost \$20 for one, \$40 for two, or \$50 for three, and are available at the Coffee Connection, Rains, The Medicine Shoppe, Ojai Coffee Roasting Co. and Attitude Adjustment Shoppe or by calling 646-2271. Proceeds from the raffle benefit the tennis programs and facilities for the Greater Ojai Youth Foundation.

Obituaries	Business of Ojai	Opinion	Around Our Valley	Health	Joe Sohm photos	Sports	Classified	Performing Arts
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The 66-piece orchestra salutes conductor Peter Nero; video images were synched to music, center, and Grammy-winning singer Patti Austin performs. Below, conductor Peter Nero, left, rehearses with composer Roger Kellaway.

Above, Joe Sohm with Clint Eastwood. Below, top, an image of the pre-9/11 New York skyline and orchestra, and Sohm with Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter.



Philadelphia Freedom

Peter Nero and the Philly Pops Orchestra present "Visions of America," a groundbreaking multimedia symphony concert combining music and photography. This inaugural

concert for the people premiered Jan. 25 through Feb. 1, during five concerts at Kimmel Center/Verizon Hall in Philadelphia. Produced, photographed and written

by noted Americana photographer, Joseph Sohm, "Visions of America" is an inspiring musical-visual collaboration between Sohm and legendary jazz pianist and composer, Roger Kellaway.

Kellaway is a Grammy winner and Oscar-nominated composer who also wrote the closing theme for "All in the Family." Both Sohm and Kellaway are longtime Ojai residents.

Visions:

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they debuted their masterpiece. Titled "Visions of America," their homegrown precious gem was a sold-out multimedia extravaganza of image and sound in celebration of democracy that quite aptly made its world premiere just days after President Obama's inauguration and in a venue just a few blocks away from the Liberty Bell.

Dubbed as "photo symphony," featuring dozens of Sohm's larger-than-life photographs shown high above the audience to the sound of Kellaway's original score — performed live by the 65-piece Philly Pops Orchestra under the direction of its famed leader (and longtime Kellaway pal) Peter Nero — the concert drew standing ovations during its five-day run, Jan. 25 through Feb. 1.

"It was definitely a lifetime dream come true for me," said Sohm, a former high school history teacher who turned to photography 30 years ago when he decided to make his living by taking to the open road in search of capturing the American images of freedom and democracy that form the heart and soul of his and Kellaway's performance piece.

Sohm's artistic and patriotic journey also lends itself to one of the highlights of the concert's photo-

graphic adventure: it is the basis of the "narrative" of the show that features an inspirational memoir of sorts by "Joe the Photographer" as read by that guy who played the photographer in the movie version of "Bridges of Madison County." And, yes, we do mean Clint Eastwood.

Kellaway, whose completely acoustic score features three musical movements and 13 "visualized" songs, including two with original lyrics by the Academy Award-winning writing team of Marilyn and Alan Bergman (as sung by Patti Austin), personally recruited Eastwood for the project.

"Clint's a big jazz fan and I'm a big 'Dirty Harry' fan," laughed Kellaway, who has known Eastwood for years and just finished performing with Van Morrison at the Hollywood Bowl. He released two new CDs last year along with performing on the road with another good buddy, Tony Bennett. Kellaway has written the musical scores for more than 25 major feature films during the course of his career.

Sohm and Kellaway say "this is just the beginning" of their work together on "Visions of America." "It's definitely a piece that was

created to travel and we intend to take it to as many venues as we can for as long as we can," says Sohm, who is working right now on his plan to bring the masterwork to television and to the stage of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts next year with the goal of having President Obama front and center in the audience.

Lofty goals one might say, but this creative team is confident in their "dream come true." And when these guys set their minds to something, they very rarely fail.

In fact, another goal that Sohm recently achieved and is celebrating

this week is the arrival from the printer of 3,000 copies of an elaborately designed coffee-table book he wrote and self-published, which forms the "third leg" of his lifelong quest to create his own "portrait of American democracy in image, word and sound."

Designed as a comprehensive companion book to the multimedia symphony, the literary version of "Visions of America" is a hardcover book of Sohm's photographs of all 50 states spanning his 30-year career.

Sohm and Kellaway, who have been friends for 14 years, plan to spend the next year "tweaking" the compositions and fine-tuning the huge digitally controlled photo essay that accompanies the music via an enormous screen that floats high above the orchestra. Sohm, who not only created all of the images for the show but also wrote the narrative, paid for the entire production and acted as producer of the event, says, "This is what Roger and I will be devoted to forever. It's our mutual labor of love."

The new book by Sohm, "Visions of America," is available via Amazon.com, as are Kellaway's two new CDs, "Live at the Jazz Standard," and "Heroes" by the Roger Kellaway Trio.

Anyone interested in purchasing Sohm's book should e-mail him at info@visionsofamerica.com, or call 649-2555.



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1st place - Daryl Kelley - Feature Story, "Rags to Rico."

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