

**OUT &  
ABOUT**



Dr. Kolanek

**Kolanek to lead club**

Dr. Jim Kolanek has been elected president of the Santa Barbara Radio Control Modelers. He worked at Raytheon as a research engineer before co-founding Fujant Inc., where he served as vice president of research and development. He was also a science adviser for Orbital ATK. Dr. Kolanek now does part-time consulting work. He earned his doctoral degree in engineering from UCSB. Other officers include Glenn Dorfman, vice president; Lloyd Gibbs, treasurer; Tom Wolf, secretary and newsletter editor; Dale Byers, safety officer; and Milt McIntosh, flight instructor. The club, which has been around for more than 50 years, has 80-plus members.

—Charlotte Boechler

**OUR TOWN**

**'Wine With a Wedding Planner'**

"Wine With a Wedding Planner," a novel concept in wedding planning, is being offered by Kerry Lee Dickey, CEO/founder of Santa Barbara Wine Country Weddings & Events. The event allows anyone interested in complimentary wedding planning advice, etiquette or in need of venue recommendations to stop by and chat with Ms. Dickey at several times and locations. The schedule will be 1 to 3 p.m. Saturday at the Four Seasons Resort The Biltmore Santa Barbara, 1260 Channel Drive in Montecito; 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Feb. 6 at Alisal River Terrace (Alisal Guest Ranch & Resort), 1054 Alisal Road in Solvang; 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Feb. 20 at Sunstone Winery, 125 N Refugio Road in Santa Ynez; 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Feb. 27 at Fess Parker's Doubletree Resort, 633 E. Cabrillo Blvd.; and 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. March 5 in the Funk Zone at a location to be announced. For more information, call 637-7788 or email kerrylee@sbwinecountryevents.com.

—Marilyn McMahon

**ON STAGE**

**'See Rock City' in Ventura**

The Rubicon Theatre Company will perform "See Rock City," an Appalachian love story, Wednesday through Feb. 14 at the theater, 1006 E. Main St., Ventura. Curtain rises at 7 p.m. Wednesdays and 8 p.m. Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Matinees are 2 p.m. Feb. 3, 6, 10 and 13, and Sundays. The play is about newlyweds coping with a changing world in Appalachia in 1940. Tickets cost \$25 to \$54 except for this Saturday's opening night gala, which is \$95. The cheapest tickets are at the preview shows this Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. To purchase, call Rubicon at 667-2900 or go to www.rubicontheatre.org.

—Dave Mason

**Treasure hunt**

News-Press' Gold Digger leads tour through thrift shops

By **DAVE MASON**  
NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER

Elizabeth Stewart couldn't resist the portable, early 1960s Thomas Organ. You could say it sang to her.

All smiles, the Santa Barbara appraiser played a few chords and was hooked. She bought her unexpected find for \$75 at the Catholic Charities Thrift Shopper on Haley Street.

She said she loved the organ not only for its sound but its noteworthy place in American history. People used to carry organs like this one to church services.

"When I can think of something as part of a narrative of a culture, that's when it gets me."

History popped up as she found a family photo from the 1880s, an old 8-millimeter movie projector, a Slinky Dog just like the one in the "Toy Story" movies (1995 to 2010) and a pre-World War II copper etching of a house.

Dr. Stewart, who writes the weekly Ask The Gold Digger appraisal column in the News-Press, can walk into a thrift store, take a quick look at the room and find a prize. "You don't look at things individually. You look at the whole room at once," she said.

The popular columnist was kind enough to let the News-Press tote along with her on a recent day on a treasure hunt of sorts at local thrift stores.

John Flandrick, the photographer and information technology specialist in her appraisal business, watched as Ms. Stewart walked into a room of furniture at Catholic Charities and instantly determined there were no pieces of interest to her.

"I think Elizabeth truly has

some sort of strange sixth sense," Mr. Flandrick, 47, said.

Dr. Stewart credited her skill not to supernatural powers but 30 years' experience and a trained eye.

At Habitat for Humanity ReStore in Goleta, she looked up at a high wall and found a 19th-century Japanese woodcut of men; the artist's point of view was above their heads. She said the art was notable for its use of forced perspective.

The store was selling the work for \$65, but it could fetch \$800 to \$900 in the right venue, said Dr. Stewart, who studied with Christie's, the prestigious New York City auction house. The St. Louis native explained that "pickers" make a good profit by buying goods at a low price at thrift

shops or garage or yard sales and re-selling them for a higher price in an auction or flea market.

Dr. Stewart, who grew up in Illinois, became interested in vintage goods and antiques when at age 12 or 13 she helped out during a farmhouse sale in Deerfield, Ill. She went on to earn a bachelor's degree in art history and architectural history in the early 1980s at Tufts University in Medford, Mass.

She received a master's degree in historic preservation in 2000 at USC and her doctorate in mythological studies in 2015 at Pacifica Graduate Institute in Carpinteria. She moved in 2008 to Santa Barbara from San Diego after finding she loved the American Riviera on a previous visit.

Last week at Catholic Charities, Dr. Stewart skipped stacks of old books and explored an area that's more her forte: paintings.

Please see **THRIFT** on **A7**

**FYI**

- Catholic Charities Thrift Shopper is at 609 E. Haley St., Santa Barbara (966-9659) and 607 W. Main St., Santa Maria (922-4174).
- Habitat for Humanity ReStore is at 6860 Cortona Drive, Suite A, Goleta. For more information, contact manager Ruairi Bateson at 692-2226 or ruairi@sbhabitat.org.
- Santa Barbara appraiser Elizabeth Stewart recommends three websites to research the value of an antique or work of art: www.pricer4antiques.com (also known as www.p4a.com), www.askart.com and www.artprice.com.



Santa Barbara appraiser Elizabeth Stewart tries out a portable Thomas Organ at Catholic Charities Thrift Shopper on Haley Street. She paid \$75 for the keyboard, which she said was likely manufactured in the early 1960s. Above, Dr. Stewart examines a copper etching of an European house at Catholic Charities Thrift Shopper. She praised the work and estimated it was created sometime between the two world wars.



HELENA DAY BREESE/NEWS-PRESS PHOTOS

**Preserving history: Photographer donates collection to university**

**Y**ou're an artist. What will become of your work? As you reach maturity, where will your work be housed so that it can be seen? What does "legacy" entail?

These were my questions in helping the famous photographer Santi Visalli donate 106,964 photographic images to a public institution. Artists, when donating work, can only take specific material costs, not the market value of their art. Santi's photos graced innumerable covers of Time and Newsweek, as well as The New York Times. He produced 14 huge, full-color cityscape books for Rizzoli. And you will not find a larger assemblage of celebrities than in his 2011 book, "Icons."

This was the work donated in 2015 to Cal State University Foundation at Channel Islands. Not only did I write Santi's appraisal, but last week had an exclusive tour with Santi of his one-man show of about 50 works at the university's John Spoor Broome Library Art Gallery. It's up through Feb. 12 at the campus, 1 University Drive, Camarillo.

A number like 106,964 is a lot of color photos, black and white prints, slides, negatives and digital material, not to mention files of publications. There's 50 years of press cards, honorific awards (a 1996 Knight of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Italy and a 2011 Italian medal for

Life Achievement awarded by the president) displayed in a huge Lucite box and framed in a wall-size collage. Santi mounted a command show of 33 large-format prints, which we toured.

The appraisal problem was to value works spanning a 50-year career of some of the most iconic images of the 20th century. With the IRS special artists' limitations, we could only claim the cost of Kodachrome 64 film in the case of 80,666 color slides, and Kodak 400 speed film in the case of 21,413 negatives. We could claim darkroom charges, but we had to research that historic cost.

Thus, the choice of donating work by a living artist is often a difficult one, especially when faced with IRS limitations, knowing that just one of your prints has a market value in the thousands of dollars. Images as iconic as early Beatles portraiture, Andy Warhol behind the camera, the faces and moods of six different presidents, MLK's first speeches — these cry out to be donated to the public. These images are part of our shared history, as well as the artist's witness to our culture.

Santi decided to leave his legacy to an institution of higher learning, which is home to 255,000 books and 32,000 images, housed, appropriately, in the wing donated for Special Collections by Robert J. Lagomarsino.

For 50 years, Santi taught through his lens; his works



**ASK THE GOLD DIGGER**  
Dr. Elizabeth Stewart



JOHN FLANDRICK PHOTO

Photographer Santi Visalli with his work "Alcatraz with Flags," 1989.

now teach a bevy of students. In Italy, his credits are so numerous that he says Italians of the mid-century "have probably seen America through my eyes." Not only is his legacy perfected in an educational setting, but the

Please see **STEWART** on **A7**