

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

THE POLITICS OF SUPERHEROES

Superhero stories reflect the political and cultural debates of their time. A famous comic-book cover from 1941 has Captain America punching Adolf Hitler in the face. On a radio program a few years later, Superman took on the Ku Klux Klan. The themes of persecution and societal rejection in the X-Men comics came from the unrest of the 1960s and the Civil Rights era. A Black Panther story arc for Marvel Comics, written by National Book Award winner Ta-Nehisi Coates, is set to debut in April.

Superhero movies also often have a political subtext. Here are a number of comic-book films, including new release, "Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice," that go beyond high-tech battles and highflying rescues.

—Michael Calia



The "X-Men" films (2000–present)

Bryan Singer's X-Men movies—he has produced or directed five, including "Apocalypse," coming in May—built on the comics' reputation for mirroring civil rights debates by incorporating themes from the struggle for gay rights and how young people who are gay find their place in the world. A scene from "X-Men 2" has a young person "coming out" as a mutant to his parents. In "X-Men: First Class" the character **Beast** (Nicholas Hoult) tries to hide his true nature. Actor and activist Ian McKellen, who stars in the films, told BuzzFeed in 2014 that the dilemma for mutants—either assimilate while remaining proud or assert your rights by any means necessary—is similar to one in the gay-rights movement.



"Avengers: Age of Ultron" (2015)

A vision of doom compels Tony Stark/Iron Man (Robert Downey Jr.) to create an artificially intelligent security system called Ultron to protect the world from the kind of alien attack seen in 2012's "The Avengers." However, **Ultron** (James Spader) takes the form of an evil robot who gathers all the world's information and works to destroy humanity. In an interview last year with the WSJ, star Mark Ruffalo noted that the film came along just as paranoia about the government's data collection was rampant and thinkers such as Stephen Hawking were warning about the dangers of artificial intelligence. "I don't see it as a coincidence," Mr. Ruffalo said.

"The Dark Knight" (2008)

Christopher Nolan's second Batman movie is a pop-culture touchstone from the War on Terror era. Batman (Christian Bale) uses rendition to capture a fugitive, tortures the **Joker** (Heath Ledger) during an interrogation and turns Gotham City's cellphone network into a spy apparatus. "Like W [President Bush], Batman sometimes has to push the boundaries of civil rights to deal with an emergency, certain that he will re-establish those boundaries when the emergency is past," author Andrew Klavan wrote in The Wall Street Journal. A recent article in the Atlantic has President Barack Obama comparing the Joker to the terrorist group Islamic State: "It has the capacity to set the whole region on fire."



"Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice" (2016)

The movie, which opens Friday, debates a world power's responsibility during crises. The heroes come to blows, in part because **Batman** (Ben Affleck) doesn't like how **Superman** (Henry Cavill) can freely exercise his unlimited power, even if it is with the best intentions. Questions about Superman's power echo the debate about the influence of the U.S. "That's a reality you have to grapple with," director Zack Snyder says. "The Internet is going to have that conversation about the politics of Superman."



"Captain America: Civil War" (2016)

In May, Marvel Studios will unveil its own kind of superhero brawl. In the film, the Avengers split and duke it out for reasons such as the government's effort to better regulate superheroes' activities. In "Civil War" trailers, **Iron Man** (Mr. Downey) argues for more oversight while **Captain America** (Chris Evans) resists. Directors Joe and Anthony Russo have said this film will be even darker than their 2014 one, "Captain America: The Winter Soldier," which was as much a political conspiracy thriller as a superhero action film.



A FOLLOW UP TO 'DAZED AND CONFUSED'

Richard Linklater Goes Back to College

BY MICHAEL CALIA

"EVERYBODY WANTS SOME!!!"—director Richard Linklater's long-gestating follow-up to his 1993 coming-of-age film "Dazed and Confused"—is yet another cinematic time capsule pulsing with classic pop and rock music.

Set in 1980, the new film, which premiered to rave reviews at this month's South by Southwest festival, is like "Dazed and Confused" in another key way: Its cast is full of young acting talent on the verge of breaking out. At the forefront are Blake Jenner, a 23-year-old former star of "Glee," and Glen Powell, 27, from the comedy-horror series "Scream Queens."

Mr. Jenner plays the protagonist, Jake, an East Texas baseball player loosely based on Mr. Linklater, embarking on his first year of college. With his toned, 6-foot-2 frame, Mr. Jenner's character mixes physical confidence with an easygoing demeanor unusual for a freshman. "Jake's just savvy enough about how to fit in, how to get along," says Mr. Linklater, 55, who is fresh off three Oscar nominations for his 2014 film, "Boyhood."

Amid a party-packed atmosphere, Jake hits it off right away with a team veteran named Finn, who's played by Mr. Powell. Finn acts as a mentor to Jake. The bond between the characters has a lot to do with Messrs. Jenner and Powell already having known each other before the film started production, the actors and director say. After several discussions and callbacks during the audition process, Mr. Linklater set up what's called a chemistry read for both actors. "We already had the chemistry," Mr. Powell says. "It was a rigged job."

"Everybody Wants Some!!!" will need to count on some of its fresh faces to become stars if it's going to achieve the same lasting appeal as "Dazed and Confused," a free-flowing portrait of the anxiety and excitement of high school set in 1976. The older film turned out to be a trove of future stars and familiar faces in movies and TV. Milla Jovovich, who went on to headline the



Blake Jenner, left, and Glen Powell in 'Everybody Wants Some!!' Right, director Richard Linklater with actor Juston Street.



"Resident Evil" franchise, played the perpetually stoned Michelle. Ben Affleck, cinema's current Batman, portrayed the bully O'Bannon, who hazes incoming freshmen with sadistic glee.

(For his part, Mr. Affleck says he feels the role probably hurt his career at first. "I was the guy everyone was happy to leave behind, the [one] who threw them into lockers and chased them all over," he says.)

The biggest breakout performance in "Dazed and Confused," however, came from Matthew McConaughey, who says the movie helped him secure an agent and more auditions. "My work in 'Dazed' was my resume," Mr. McConaughey says in an email.

His character, Wooderson, has been out of high school a few years, but he still parties with the younger crowd and offers them pearls of stoned, swaggering wisdom. The character is ingrained in pop culture thanks to Mr. McConaughey's laid-back delivery on lines such as "All

right, all right, all right" and "You just gotta keep livin' man, L-I-V-I-N."

Mr. Powell has a chance to break through with his own charismatic, elder-statesman style in "Everybody Wants Some!!!" His character, Finn, has all the best pickup lines and much of the movie's funniest dialogue. But he also smokes a pipe, conducts himself with a shred more maturity than his teammates and reads Jack Kerouac.

The retro appeal of "Everybody Wants Some!!!"—set for a limited release March 30 before opening wide April 15—is a given for people who came of age in the early 1980s. The Carter era was about to fade into the Reagan decade, and Blondie and the Knack, both featured on the soundtrack, still ruled the radio. The movie shares its name with a song from Van Halen's third album, which was released in 1980.

Mr. Linklater was very exacting about certain period details, including handshakes, Mr. Jenner says. (Twenty-first century greetings such as

fist bumps and bro hugs were strictly verboten.) Then there's all that shaggy hair.

"It's going to be nostalgic for dudes like my dad," Mr. Jenner says, adding that his father once had a haircut similar to his character's.

Whether "Everybody Wants Some!!!" can resonate with the high school and college students of today is another matter. "Dazed and Confused" was practically dumped into a limited number of theaters for a few weeks in fall of 1993, grossing a shade under \$8 million. It then became a hot video rental and a fixture of midnight-movie showings usually reserved for cult classics such as "The Rocky Horror Picture Show."

Part of the "Dazed and Confused" appeal comes from the fact that the youth of the 1990s, who grew up with the movie, had a lot in common with people who went through high school in the 1970s—at least compared with today's teenagers and 20-somethings. Kids in 1993 still called each other on land lines, and the closest things to social media were graffiti on desks and passing notes in class.

Mr. Jenner, however, thinks millennial audiences, accustomed to Snapchat and other forms of instant communication, will find much to love in "Everybody Wants Some!!!"—even if it looks and sounds like ancient history.

"Just being young," he says, "it never changes."

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Inspiration From Indiscretion

BY MARC MYERS

IN THE MID-1960S, Loretta Lynn began writing and recording songs about cheating husbands, female homewreckers, spousal alcoholism and other sensitive marital issues. Many people at the time were unaware that most of those songs were autobiographical. Among Ms. Lynn's most popular hits was "Fist City." Released in 1968, the song warned a female rival to steer clear of her husband or face the consequences. The single climbed to No. 1 on Billboard's country chart while the album of the same name also reached No. 1.

When Ms. Lynn, 83, released "Full Circle" (Sony Legacy) on March 4, it became her 54th studio album and her first in 12 years. She recently looked back on "Fist City's" inspiration and evolution. Edited from an interview:

ANATOMY OF A SONG FIST CITY

A year later, we left Butcher Hollow, Ky., so he could take a logging job in Custer, Wash. I was pregnant then, and there would be three more babies before I was 20.

Doo loved my singing voice and encouraged me to perform at local clubs in Custer in the late 1950s. I cut my first record in 1960 when I was 28, and I signed with Decca later that year. We moved to Nashville soon after, and my career took off.

In 1966, me and Doo were out drivin' around looking at houses. We had owned a little farm in Goodlettsville, Tenn., but I gave it to one of my close friends. In the car, we passed this big old colonial. I said, "I want that house right there."

Doo went to the local bank and found out nobody had lived there for some time. When we decided to buy the house, we discovered from the bank that a little town—Hurricane Mills—came with it.

After we moved in, I began touring regionally for weeks at a stretch. Doo wouldn't come with me. He preferred staying home and farming the 350 acres out back. Unfortunately, there were plenty of girls in the area trying to get his attention and succeeding.

I first found out what was going on when I returned from the road. Cissie, one of my children, came home from school one day and said, "Momma, the bus driver told me she went out with daddy." I said, "Your daddy didn't do that." I suspected there was some truth to it, but I didn't want our kids to know.

I waited until I found the bus driver alone. She was on the bus, without any kids on board. I confronted her, and she admitted what had been going on. I went right into action. You don't wait for someone to go first. As a woman, I went for the hair. She was bigger than me, but I held my own.

The inspiration for "Fist City," however, was a different girl who had moved close to Hurricane Mills so she could make a play for Doo. I could see what was going on between them when I saw them together. I couldn't confront her like I did the school-bus driver.



Loretta Lynn and, below, with her husband Doo and twin daughters Patsy and Peggy.

That would have been too messy.

The last straw was hearing rumors about them while I was in Nashville recording for Decca. Driving home to Hurricane Mills that afternoon in my Cadillac, I was real mad and wrote "Fist City" in my head during the 75-mile trip. All I could think about was what she was doing to my family and what I wanted to say to her.

The words started to hit me just outside of Nashville. The further I drove, the madder I got. As with any song, after I had the first two or three lines, the melody just followed. By the time I got home, the song was done and I was pretty angry.

When I walked in the door, Doo said, "What the hell are you so mad about?" I went straight into my home office, sat down at my desk and wrote what I had come up with on the highway. The lyrics covered three pages in my writing tablet.

Then I let the words sit overnight, so I could look at them fresh. The next day, I

changed a few things so they'd be able to play the record on the radio. Sometimes I write songs in a way where they can't play 'em.

The lyrics were a warning to that woman to steer clear of Hurricane Mills and my husband and what would happen if she didn't: "Now you've been makin' your brags around town that you've been lovin' my man / But the man I love, when he picks up trash / he puts it in a garbage can / And that's what you look like to me, and what I see is a pity / You better close your face and stay outta my way / if you don't wanna go to Fist City."

I didn't have to simplify anything in the lyrics. I write songs plain enough from the start. I didn't have education enough to put too big of a word in there. I just wrote it all plain. Once the lyrics were set, I took out my guitar and played and sang along to what I had written.

I didn't jot down the notes or chords. I don't know music. I just sing and play on my guitar. I couldn't tell you one note from another. When I was done, I didn't play the song for Doo. I did confront him, though, and we had it out. Eventually, he came to his senses, since I had told him it was either her or me.

As I recall, I played the song first for Owen Bradley, my producer. Whenever I'd arrive at his studio in Mount Juliet, Tenn., he'd say, "How many songs have you written so far?" He didn't want me bringing in songs that didn't belong to me. He liked my

songs best.

From the start, Owen was fine with me writing songs like this. Most songwriters tended to write about falling in love, breakin' up and being alone. Things like that. The female view I wrote about was new. I suppose Owen felt that's what made me different. I just wrote about what I knew, and what I knew usually involved something that somebody did to me.

On a song like "Fist City," Owen didn't worry about the trouble we might get into with disc jockeys. He sensed the song would be a hit and that he'd just have to work harder to get the DJs to play it. He said, "If they listen to it, they'll play it." And they did.

We recorded "Fist City" in early January 1968 at Bradley's Barn, Owen's recording studio. He was in the control room and let me alone to do what I wanted. "Just go in there and sing your song, just like you wrote it," he said.

He always hired terrific musicians. On "Fist City," we had Grady Martin on lead guitar, Pete Drake on pedal steel guitar, Floyd Cramer on piano, Owen's brother Har-old on bass and Buddy Harman on drums. The background singers were added later.

Grady, bless his heart, would set a quart of whiskey next to his chair. When I first met him, I said to Owen, "We don't want him playin' on my record if he's drunk, do we?" Owen said, "He'll do better drunk than sober, so let's leave him alone."

I recorded my vocal in the booth, which isolated my sound. But we were all in the studio together. While I sang, I listened to the guys and could hear them trying to out-play each other. I knew that as long as they were doing that, I was gonna have a good record.

When the record came out, it was banned from the radio. I couldn't understand that. Apparently, a woman singing about fighting another woman was too much for 'em (Ms. Lynn laughs). But then one DJ played it, followed by others all over the country.

The first time Doo heard "Fist City" was when I sang it at the Grand Ole Opry. Instead of coming inside, he preferred listening to me on the radio in the car parked out in the alley. When I finished, I walked outside and got in the car.

Doo said, "That record will never go." I said, "Why not?" He said, "Because you're telling guys to lay off my man." I said, "I didn't say 'guy.' I said 'I'm here to tell you gal to lay off my man.'" "Well," Doo said, "it will never make it." Well, it did.

Doo and I never did talk about the song and the meaning of all the words, but I sensed he knew exactly what it was about. Nearly every song I wrote back then was about one of his indiscretions. My old man was sleeping out on me, and he wound up making me a lot of money doing it (Ms. Lynn laughs).

Despite his ways, though, I loved him. Doo's been gone now since 1996, and I still miss seeing him out in the field on his tractor. What I miss most, though, is his smartness.

If I needed to know anything, I used to go to him. I would always listen, and usually he was right. If he wasn't, I'd tell him right there.

I'm sure the woman I had in mind knew the song was about her. After the record came out, she stayed away for a good long time. Then in 1996, when Doo was on his deathbed and I was taking care of him, the bell rang. When I opened the front door, this woman walked right past me.

I didn't know who she was at first, but then I realized it was her. She found Doo in his bed and was talking to him. Can you imagine? Honestly, I felt like killing her. As you probably can tell, I still don't like her to this day.



FAMOUS FURNITURE

Nobody Wants Saul Bellow's Desk

BY BRENDA CRONIN

THE DESK where dozens of literature's memorable characters were born is in search of an author.

"It's not going very well," Daniel Bellow, son of Nobel-prize-winning author Saul Bellow, said of the attempt to sell



his late father's mahogany roll-top desk. His classified advertisement offering the massive Victorian-era desk for \$10,000 has run in the New York Review of Books and appeared on the publication's website for two weeks. The desk has a "leather writing surface, pigeonholes" and "appears in book jacket photo," the ad says.

The enticements haven't yet worked, even among an audience Mr. Bellow considered disposed toward memorabilia from the author of "Mr. Sammler's Planet," "Humboldt's Gift" and other novels. "I guess space is expensive on the Upper West Side. Nobody's got room for a giant piece of furniture," Mr. Bellow said. "I thought, well, this will provoke discussion. But it really didn't."

Thus far the ad has generated a handful of inconclusive responses, Mr. Bellow said. One inquirer, he said, observed that her husband's father "was famous, although not as famous as yours—and we have a whole storage locker full of 'great man' crap that we can't get rid of."

Mr. Bellow's notice did catch the eye of Oona Patrick, who for the past seven months has managed the New York Review's classified advertising and

independent press listings. "There have been...people selling grand pianos and harpsichords," she said, "but not connected with someone like Saul Bellow."

The author bought the desk at a London antique store in the mid-'60s, after writing "Herzog." "He had published a big novel and he was feeling flush," his son said. "And he buys this desk and has it shipped over from England." In his Chicago apartment, the author would sit at the desk "never in a too-comfortable chair" and write first drafts "in longhand, in beautiful, difficult-to-decipher flowing script," Mr. Bellow said.

A journalist-turned-potter in Great Barrington, Mass., Daniel Bellow inherited the desk after his father's death in 2005. Now 52 years old, he is the youngest of the writer's three sons. He placed the classified ad because "I'm moving to a smaller place and the desk just isn't fitting into the plan." He has other, less-cumbersome mementos, including the family's King James Bible, one of his father's neckties and his edition of Chaucer.

Over the past decade, his family put the heavy piece of furniture to good use. "It was the desk up in the attic where everybody went to hide when they needed to write something," he



The desk where Mr. Bellow wrote 'Humboldt's Gift' remains unsold.

said. "My wife, Heather, actually wrote two novels at this desk."

Other writers' desks, like their archives, tend to be sold or donated through third parties or auction houses. Marcel Proust wrote in bed, not at a desk, and his entire cork-lined chamber has been recreated at Paris's Musée Carnavalet. The Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin has the desks of Edgar Allan Poe, Compton Mackenzie and Isaac Bashevis Singer—who won the Nobel for literature in 1978, two years after Saul Bellow. It also has John Fowles's writing desk—and its contents, including two pipes, a single Tic Tac, a tin of

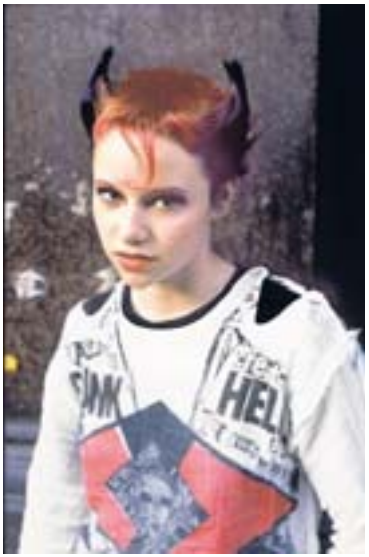
pastel pencils and a set of brass knuckles.

If the ad doesn't unearth a buyer, Mr. Bellow may try to interest an auction house. After inheriting the desk, he consulted with Christie's and was told such pieces of furniture "usually fetch about \$10,000-\$12,000 even without historical interest." But his wife began using the desk and they decided to hold on to it.

Once he knew he was moving, he turned to the New York Review, he said, because "these are people who love Saul Bellow. But loving Saul Bellow is one thing and agreeing to take on a large piece of furniture is another."

FROM LEFT: EDDIE ADAMS/ASSOCIATED PRESS; DANIEL BELLOW

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THIS WAS ENGLAND Clockwise from left, *Trash Night* at Kilburn National in 1989; Derek Ridgers's *'Soho, 1978'*; tape of an early interview with the Clash; Jill Furmanovsky's *'The Slits, 1977.'*

culture as well as the culture," says Andy Linehan, curator of popular music at the British Library. "It's all part of the culture of the country we're trying to reflect in our collection." At the library's May exhibition, visitors will be able to listen to an excerpt of a 1976 recording of an interview with the Clash and view a collection of punk fanzine "Sniffin' Glue." The show will also feature the first releases—all punk singles—from British record labels Rough Trade, Cherry Red and Beggars Banquet, as it was called at the time.

Revisiting the era has led to some surprises for those involved. The first time Derek Ridgers took his camera to a punk club, he went to the Roxy. In 1976, the small space in Covent Garden, now a Speedo store, was hot, loud and sweaty. "Quite a few of the punks I photographed at that time have come forward via Facebook or Twitter, and they've told me who they were," says Mr. Ridgers, whose images will be shown at the Photographers' Gallery's "Punk Weekender" in June.

Beginning in 1980, Anita Corbin spent nine months photographing the women of London's subculture scene at local clubs. Punk, skinhead, rockabilly and Rasta women, dressed up and in pairs, populate her photos, which will be shown at Metro Imaging in April, as well as at the Photographers' Gallery.

Ms. Corbin, now 57, has spent the past few years trying to track down her former subjects in the hopes of rephotographing them. In January, her photograph of two skinhead girls at a South London McDonald's in 1980 surfaced on Instagram. The photo was posted by British fashion insider Alexa Chung and reached over 12,000 likes. Soon Karen Driscoll, the skinhead incorrectly labeled "Debbie" in the photo, received a flurry of messages from friends and family who recognized her.

"It's just bizarre," says Ms. Driscoll, 50, now a personal assistant. She hadn't seen the image since her early 20s. "It was a lovely time," she says. "Nobody knew who you were and nobody knew who you were with, and it was fabulous. I'd never get away with that now."

Punk Takes London By Storm, Again

BY ANNA RUSSELL

ANARCHY IN THE U.K. has moved indoors. British cultural institutions are digging into their archives in preparation for "Punk London," a series of exhibitions and events taking place in the U.K. capital this year to celebrate what has been deemed the 40th anniversary of punk. Not surprisingly, some would rather keep the movement out of museum halls.

On May 13, the British Library will open "Punk 1976-78." Focusing on punk's early years, the show includes rare recordings, fanzines, posters, ticket stubs and other ephemera. In August, the British Film Institute (BFI) will screen a series of punk-related films curated by musician and director Don Letts. In the coming months, the Roundhouse, Design Museum and Museum of London will also all turn their attention to punk.

"It was a short-lived, incendiary period," says photographer Jill Furmanovsky, whose black-and-white images of bands like the Buzzcocks, the Clash and the Slits are on display at the Barbican Music Library until April 28. "It was moving, it was irreverent, and it was needed."

The loud, take-no-prisoners genre that became known as punk



developed in the 1970s, mostly in the U.S. and U.K. In London in 1976, two key moments helped spark punk fervor: the Ramones' July gig at the Roundhouse and the release of the Sex Pistols' anthem-like debut single, "Anarchy in the U.K."

"It was like a firework—it exploded and it had this incredible energy core that spread into all areas of culture beyond music, but then kind of fizzled out very quickly," says Stuart Brown, head of programs and acquisitions at the BFI. "The influence going forward has been immeasurable."

For some, the anniversary itself is incendiary. "Punk London" has been championed by the mayor of London's office and is being funded by a £99,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund—an irony not lost on hard-core fans. Last week, Joseph Corr , the son of Sex Pistols manager Malcolm McLaren and fashion designer Vivienne Westwood, announced plans to publicly burn his collection of punk memorabilia in protest.

"Punk rock doesn't exist. It's extinct, and all you have left is some sort of tourist attraction,"



says Mr. Corr . "If you're going to celebrate it, let's celebrate it properly and burn it all." He plans to torch the collection, which he estimates to be worth around \$7 million, on Nov. 26, the release date for "Anarchy in the U.K."

It's not the first time punk has made its way into a museum. A 2013 exhibition at the Costume Institute at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art focused on the subculture's impact on fashion. "Punk: Chaos to Couture" included fake graffiti and a replica of the grimy bathroom at the East Village club CBGB. Over 442,000 people visited.

"There is something slightly uncomfortable about us all doing it, but at the same time I think it's important," says Mr. Brown. The BFI's program will include screenings of documentaries including Mr. Letts's 2005 "Punk: Attitude," as well as films like Kenneth Anger's 1972 "Lucifer Rising" that influenced punks.

Some, however, don't see a contradiction. "We collect the counter-

A Grueling Part Takes Its Toll



LOCKED IN: When Lisa Dwan, left, performs *'Not I'*, the audience sees just her mouth, above.

her, "You ruined my play." Billie Whitelaw, an actress who worked closely with Beckett on the part, got it down to 14 and a half minutes. Ms. Dwan does it in a blistering 8 minutes and 45 seconds, "with a virtuosity that I've never seen before," Mr. Asmus says.

She calmly ticks off the list of injuries she has sustained during the run. The most serious is a hernia—"like a tiny alien fist," she says—caused by the projection needed to "push the air out with such ferocity" during the monologue. Nearly as troubling to her medical team is an extremely compressed neck from strapping her head into a viselike device every night. "I have severely damaged my neck," she says.

She has pulled muscles in her calf, developed migraines and after performances has temporarily lost vision in one of her eyes and lost feeling in her face. After each run, she is covered with cuts, scabs and bruises. The harness cuts her ears, leaving her bleeding after many shows. "When I'm doing this, I'm an animal. I'm a creature, a slice of the universe," she says.

Siobh n Barbour, a stage manager who has toured the world with Ms. Dwan, recalls helping her back to her hotel in Perth after a particularly grueling performance. "She could barely see," Ms. Barbour said. "She was absolutely ragged."

The role has driven others to nervous breakdowns, Ms. Dwan said, including her mentor in the part, Billie Whitelaw, who passed along Beckett's instructions for the monologue. Ms. Whitelaw died in 2014. "She had four nervous breakdowns doing this," says Ms. Dwan, who found the part so harrowing, she used to call Ms. Whitelaw, weeping. "She would just say 'I know.'" Other actors told Ms. Dwan they bailed on the part after having suicidal thoughts. Mr. Asmus says one actor he directed in "Not I" turned in her driver's license during the run because she was so preoccupied with the role, she worried about crashing her car.

Ms. Dwan defuses the stress with meditation, yoga, "living like a nun" and close friends who keep an eye on her mental health. Still, she says, the performance has "messed with my head."

Injuries aside, Ms. Dwan is quick to say that "Not I" has been a tremendous "privilege and a gift." After final shows in Boston, Los Angeles and New York City, she will be working on a production opening in September at London's Old Vic theater. Called "No's Knife," it is based on some of Beckett's short prose pieces. "He's not done with me yet," she says.

Continued from page D1
who has directed Ms. Dwan. The physical toll stems from the playwright's stage directions, which call for the intense, stream-of-consciousness monologue to be performed in a pitch-black theater with even the house lights turned off. The only illumination is on the actress's mouth, "faintly lit." Other actresses played the role sitting in a dentist's chair, but Ms. Dwan stands at a large board she had specially constructed so that her

head wouldn't slip out of the spotlight. For the past 11 years, her head has been strapped into place with a harness and her arms have been immobilized in brackets for each performance.

Adding to the ordeal is the record-breaking pace that Ms. Dwan brings to the monologue. Beckett wanted "Not I" to be performed at "the speed of thought." At its New York premiere Jessica Tandy did it in 24 minutes, reportedly prompting Beckett to tell

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

The Things We Do for Money

 **REVIEW**
TERRY TEACHOUT

Widowers' Houses

TACT/The Actors Company Theatre,
Beckett Theatre, 410 W. 42nd St.
(\$63.25), 800-872-8997, closes April 2

New York

No playwright has ever made a more spectacularly self-assured debut than George Bernard Shaw, who blasted off the theatrical launching pad in 1892 with “Widowers’ Houses,” a refreshingly unpreachy comedy about the evils of capitalism that ought to be as popular as “Pygmalion.” Instead, it’s mostly forgotten save by Shaw scholars: “Widowers’ Houses” was last performed on Broadway in 1907, and until TACT/The Actors Company Theatre’s new production opened off Broadway, I’d seen it done only once, by Wisconsin’s American Players Theatre eight summers ago. Fortunately, TACT’s revival, directed by David Staller, is a winner, a small-scale staging that’s as full of Shavian sparkle as the play itself.

Shaw ranked “Widowers’ Houses” among his “unpleasant” plays, since it deals with the grim subject of urban poverty. But he knew that the only way to get most people to think about unpleasant things is to make them laugh, and so he concocted a fizzy boulevard comedy à la Oscar Wilde whose antihero, Sartorius (Terry Layman), is a rich, self-consciously pompous fellow who is looking to marry off Blanche (Talene Monahan), his difficult daughter, to a well-bred gent in need of a fortune. Enter Harry (Jeremy Beck), a doctor from a suitable family that lives on its adequate but not munificent income. So what’s the problem? Just this: Sartorius is a notorious slumlord who makes *his* money by “screwing” rent (Shaw’s words) out of the impoverished occupants of the rundown tenements that he owns. Then Shaw puts another twist into Harry’s knickers: It seems that his own family’s money is invested in Sartorius’s tenements! Epigrams fly and chaos ensues, and the inevitable happy ending—this is, after all, a comedy—makes the medicine go down with effortless smoothness.

Mr. Staller is best known for running New York’s Project Shaw, in which capacity he has directed semi-staged concert versions of all of Shaw’s 60-odd plays, many of them more than once. That experience has



Talene Monahan and Jeremy Beck

taught him how to get the biggest possible bang for the smallest possible buck, and whenever he mounts a fully staged production of a Shaw play, as he did for the Irish Repertory Theatre four years ago with “Man and Superman,” you can see what he’s learned. Brian Prather’s set is simple but suggestive, and the cast has been selected with the greatest of care: Mr. Layman is sumptuously ripe-voiced, while Ms. Monahan plays Blanche as a startlingly predatory vampire whose ill-gotten fortune any prudent man would think twice about hunting.

This revival, like Kenneth Albers’s large-scale staging for Wisconsin Players Theatre, emphasizes the play’s operetta-like qualities: The characterizations are deliberately, at times parodistically broad, and Mr. Staller opens and closes the show with a

pair of unobtrusively expressionistic tableaux that heighten the emotional stakes. Many of Shaw’s plays, “Widowers’ Houses” included, are a bit long-winded and profit from discreet abridgment, so Mr. Staller has also trimmed and tightened the text in order to keep the pace as brisk as possible, cutting the cast from eight to six and bringing the running time in at a hair under two hours, all to utterly pleasurable effect. The last time I saw a Shaw play done this well was when Bedlam did “Saint Joan,” which is as good as it gets.

Mr. Teachout, the Journal’s drama critic, is the author of “Satchmo at the Waldorf,” which opens in May at Palm Beach Dramaworks. Write to him at tteachout@wsj.com.

Bright Star

Cort Theatre, 138 W. 48th St. (\$45-\$145),
212-239-6200/800-432-7250

Steve Martin is, among many other things, a good banjo player who writes not-so-great plays. Now he’s branched out by writing a really bad bluegrass-pop musical. In “Bright Star,” directed by Walter Bobbie, Mr. Martin and Edie Brickell, a singer-songwriter with whom he has made two albums, tell the story of a painfully earnest young writer from the hills of North Carolina (A.J. Shively) who comes home from World War II and sells a painfully earnest short story to a prestigious Asheville quarterly edited by an unhappy woman (Carmen Cusack) with a terrible secret—or, rather, a Terrible Secret, this being the kind of show that is constructed exclusively out of uppercase clichés. The best thing about “Bright Star” is the music, which is bland and undramatic but competently wrought. The plot is trite, the dialogue humorless and stiff, the lyrics stupefyingly banal (one song actually starts with the line “A man’s gotta do what a man’s gotta do”).

The cast and onstage band work hard and Mr. Bobbie does his best to breathe life into “Bright Star,” but if Mr. Martin’s name weren’t on the marquee, it wouldn’t have gotten anywhere near Broadway.



Carmen Cusack

FROM LEFT: MARIELLE SOLAN; JOAN MARCUS

Blinding Light: Life Inside a Cult

 **REVIEW**
DOROTHY RABINOWITZ

The Path

Begins streaming Wednesday, March 30, on Hulu

In “The Path,” a drama about a cult, conflict roils beneath surface harmony and the group’s ardent believers contend with the menace of those among them who have begun to harbor doubts. Not that this group, encamped in a leafy compound in upstate New York, tolerates being described as a cult. They’re proud members of an organization called the Meyerist Movement, named after their revered founder, and they’re dedicated to good works like social-welfare efforts, helping out in disasters—all in addition to the daily practice of the movement’s tenets. The shining goal ahead—won only through arduous stages of advancement known as The Ladder—is survival in a future glorious life, after mankind’s ultimate destruction, and achievable only to believers who follow the force known as The Light. The Meyerist symbol, on display everywhere, is an eye—a reminder that the members operate under scrutiny; there is judgment and there is also guidance for any looking for answers from The Light.

The Movement, it’s nonetheless obvious, is in all its essentials a cult, and one whose tone and character derive from most of the lore we have on such groups. Its disciplines and language, if not its mystical, apocalyptic vision, carry more than a few echoes of Scientology.

All that notwithstanding, “The Path” is something more than a familiar story about cults. It’s an ambitious, character-driven drama, compelling in its endless skein of intrigues, the sexual kind included; its power struggles; and—connected to all of these—its vision of morality. Nothing happens in the lives of these faithful that isn’t shaped by the values of Meyerism, sex included.

That also goes for activities that are close to sex, if not the thing itself. In one delectable though com-

pletely serious scene in keeping with the show’s tone—there’s no satire in this saga of believers—Eddie (Aaron Paul), a leading character, and his wife, Sarah (Michelle Monaghan), both longtime devotees, decide they should engage in a Meyerist activity called connection. They’ve been having problems that brought their sexual life to a halt: Eddie stands accused of having transgressed with another woman—like all infidelity, a serious violation in Meyerism. But now they can sit on their bed, holding one another in the connection exercise, while murmuring sweet nothings on the order of “Can you feel my energy?” and “It’s our essence that we feel....” This is as close as things get to sex. Eddie, whose energy transfer hasn’t damped his ardor for more advanced connection with his wife, is, once again, turned down by Sarah, who gives him one of the time-honored excuses available to unwilling women.

A 10-part series created by Jessica Goldberg, with Jason Katims—best known, perhaps, as producer-showrunner of the remarkable “Friday Night Lights”—as execu-



Michelle Monaghan and Aaron Paul

tive producer, “The Path” delivers a sharp and persuasive commentary on the needs fulfilled by faiths of this kind, on the unyielding determination of the believers to continue believing. The devotees of Meyerism, shown happily planting gardens, performing good works, always as a family, don’t think of themselves as members of a cult—swept up here for varied reasons, or born into the movement and brought up in it, they feel privileged to be here, they’d

do anything to remain. This solidly detailed portrait of the faithful is one of the major strengths of “The Path”—a testament to its ambition and skilled writing.

There are, to be sure, those others—the not-quite faithful. Among them, the acting group leader Cal (an outstanding performance by Hugh Dancy), a man torn by the demands of loyalty and his drive for control, and Eddie—affectingly portrayed by Mr. Paul—who is out-and-out through with the whole

thing, not to mention frightened half to death by some of the things he’s discovered en route to that disenchantment. Even Eddie’s wife, Sarah—a high achiever in the organization, and a zealously devoted Meyerist—manages to notice that not everything is working as it should in this world to which she’s given her life. She notices, for instance, that bad things happen to dissenters and their families. There will be much more to notice, as her haunted husband could tell her.

Very British Problems

Begins streaming Monday, March 28, on Acorn TV

It’s worth bearing in mind that “Very British Problems” may annoy more people than it amuses with its list of humorously intended observations on the British psyche; riffs delivered mainly by comedians, and by one actor, on the supposed problems the British have with directness, self-expression, emotional displays—the march of clichés is long in these three episodes. Long enough to make it seem akin to a miracle that, despite the assault of hoary reflections on these subjects, this British series manages to be as engaging as it does.

That may have much to do with the flood of background pictures, some black-and-white—period footage of Britons disporting themselves at the beach, or queuing in department stores, where, we’re told, they’re too repressed to complain if someone cuts ahead of them. One favorite theme in this list of problems is the alleged British horror of emotional expression. Can this possibly be said of the people whose public convulsions of grief over Princess Diana’s death—coupled with hysteria-laced insinuations that the royal family, possibly the queen herself, had been responsible for Diana’s fate—exceeded any display of mourning in memory?

The amusing moments—there are a fair number—have to do with subjects

like food and holiday travel. One comedian reflects complainingly about an early life being dragged to holiday places that were not fun—failing along the way to explain what’s particularly British about that.

We are, however, fascinated by actor Nigel Havers’s reflections on the food he finds it necessary to take when traveling—he’s taken Marmite all over the world, he reports.

“Yes,” explains the poisonously silky narrator (Julie Walters), “a super-salty food paste made out of the slop left over from making beer has never really



Nigel Havers

caught on overseas.” It’s one of the most confiscated items at the airport, we’re informed. The kind of statistic—of which there are many here—you have no reason to believe.

FROM TOP: HULU; ACORN TV

SPORTS

The School That Rocks Basketball Logic

North Carolina resists game's modern trends by passing up 3-pointers

BY BEN COHEN

If the only basketball you've watched this year is the Golden State Warriors, then you have no idea that this sport isn't always the most fun anyone can have in sneakers. You probably think that basketball teams are supposed to cripple their opponents with infectious joy. You might also have come to believe that shots closer to the halfcourt line than the free-throw line are perfectly normal.

All you have to do to remember the Warriors are a team of basketball aliens is turn on the NCAA tournament. And there is no team that makes the Warriors look more like monsters from a faraway planet than No. 1 seed North Carolina.

"You could say," said Tar Heels guard Nate Britt, "they're the complete opposite."

It turns out North Carolina is as unusual as Golden State—but in another way altogether. There are 351 teams in college basketball, and the Tar Heels rank 336th in field goals attempted at the rim and 340th in their percentage of shots that are 3-pointers. These are the sport's most valuable shots, but Carolina essentially ignores them.

Most teams that turn their noses at these kinds of shots would be stuck watching the NCAA tournament on couches in their dorm rooms. But the Tar Heels are still alive in large part because they play this way. The last time their offense was as unstoppable as it is this season, in fact, they won the 2009 national championship. This is the most efficient inefficient team in college basketball.

North Carolina, which faces No. 5 seed Indiana on Friday in the Sweet Sixteen's sexiest matchup, is what makes college basketball so different from other sports. The Tar Heels are a title threat, and yet they aren't anything like the other teams left in the NCAA tournament.

In this era of fetishized efficiency, Carolina averages 1.2 points per possession, which ranks fifth in the nation, according to kenpom.com. But that's because the Tar Heels' guards get easy points in transition, their bigs score off offen-



North Carolina's Brice Johnson shoots in a round-of-32 win over Providence.

(38.6%) in their reliance on 3-pointers feels longer than the stretch of highway separating North Carolina and Duke.

There is no player who epitomizes Carolina's strange position as much as the school's all-time leading 3-point scorer—who is actually still on the team. Marcus Paige came into his senior season as a 38.8% shooter in Atlantic Coast Conference play and was coming off a season when he shot 41.5% against some of the country's top competition. But after he broke the Carolina record he spent most of the year stuck in an unlikely shooting slump. Paige made just 27.9% of his ACC threes.

Carolina's guards are as aware as anyone that they could be taking more threes if they went to another school. But they're not exactly seething with envy.

"Most of the time it's a terrible shot," said Tar Heels guard Theo Pinson. "We have Brice Johnson, Isaiah Hicks and Kennedy Meeks. We don't have to shoot threes."

Johnson (6-foot-10), Hicks (6-foot-9) and Meeks (6-foot-10) are a matchup nightmare for almost every team left in the NCAA tournament. But it's not because they stretch defenses. Carolina's bigs have taken a combined total of zero 3-pointers this season.

"That's just not our style of play," said Meeks. "It's never been that way, and I don't think it will ever be that way."

He still fantasizes about it, though. In the locker room on the day before Carolina's first-round game last week, Meeks kept busy by challenging the shooting credentials of nearly everyone in sight, even though he missed the only 3-point attempt of his college career.

"Me and you," he said. "Three-point contest. Who's winning?"

Pinson glared at him as if he didn't want to dignify Meeks with a response. But then he did anyway.

"There is no way he's beating me," Pinson said.

"I'm telling you," Meeks said as he recommended his teammates review YouTube clips of his shooting performances from high school. "If I shot threes, y'all would be like wow. He's really got that stroke."

—*Andrew Beaton contributed to this article.*

sive rebounds and their size stresses opposing defenses—not because they're pulling up for 3-pointers like a team of Stephen Curry clones.

"For me, inside first is best," said Carolina coach Roy Williams. "I think there are more teams that have won national championships with an inside-first outlook than there have been with teams that shoot 35 threes."

The rest of basketball has raced away in the other direction. The

number of 3-point attempts per game this season is up 10% from the average across the last decade and 9% from last year alone.

It's easy to understand why. Teams that are dynamite on 3-pointers have a huge advantage. It's like stealing Robin Hood's quiver and arming him with an Uzi. The Warriors and Michigan State have the most efficient offenses in the NBA and college basketball this year, and they also have the highest 3-point

shooting percentages in the NBA and college basketball this year.

Carolina, meanwhile, uses the 3-pointer less than almost every school in the country. Threes account for 26.6% of their total shots. They make 31.4% of them. That translates to 19.6% of Carolina's points coming from behind the arc.

That last number for the other Sweet Sixteen teams is 31%. No one else is under 25%. The distance between North Carolina and Oklahoma

Heard On The Field



Soccer Legend Johan Cruyff Dies at Age 68

Dutch soccer legend Johan Cruyff, who lit up the game in the 1970s and exported the Netherlands' revolutionary creative play, died on Thursday in Barcelona. He was 68.

Cruyff's death was announced on his official website, five months after he revealed he'd been diagnosed with lung cancer.

Widely considered the greatest former player never to win the World Cup, Cruyff was at the heart of the brilliant, often neurotic Dutch national team of the 1970s. In bright orange jerseys, Cruyff's Netherlands played a brand of soccer known as "Total Football," in which players constantly switched positions and all 10 outfield players attacked, weaving intricate patterns.

It all hinged on the superior technical ability of the Dutch players. But Cruyff's virtuosity stood out. He was so influential that a particular style of turning with the ball to bamboozle defenders still bears his name: the "Cruyff turn."

In his glittering career, Cruyff came to be identified with two of Europe's most storied clubs, Ajax Amsterdam and FC Barcelona. He rose to fame as the Dutch club's linchpin while it dominated European soccer in the early 1970s. Then, in 1973, he signed for Barcelona, helping to turn it into the superclub it is now. He later managed both teams.

"Another legend has left us today," Barcelona and Argentina star Lionel Messi wrote on Facebook.

—*Joshua Robinson*

It's a Trap! What Tennis Really Needs

It is with some regret that I use this column to announce my intention to depart The Wall Street Journal, effective immediately. I'll miss you all. On the other hand, I'm really excited, because while standing in the shower this morning I came up with a brilliant invention, and I am certain it will earn me many millions of dollars, enough to buy my own island and helicopter.

Here it is:
Trap doors for pro tennis press conferences.

Amazing, right? What tennis tournament wouldn't want to buy one? The trap door—I think I'll call it the "Tennis Tumbler," but I'll listen to alternatives if you've got a good one—would be placed underneath the subject's chair in the press conference room, where tennis players and tournament officials sit when speaking to the media.

I think the trap door should be operated by an impartial judge with no connection to the Association of Tennis Professionals (or ATP, the men's governing body) or the Women's Tennis Association, (or WTA). The protocol is simple. If somebody gets up there and says something dopey, press the red button, the trap door opens, and WHHHOOOOSSSHHHH, there goes your dopey tennis player/official.

You know everyone will want to buy one of these, and I will become very rich, because you saw what happened in tennis at the beginning of this week. Raymond Moore, the boss of Indian Wells, one of the most popular tournaments in the land—regarded by some as the "fifth major"—sat down at a breakfast press availability Sunday and immediately began channeling the Dabney Coleman boss character in "9 to 5":

"In my next life when I come back I want to be someone in the WTA, because they ride on the coattails of the men. They don't make any decisions and they are lucky...If I was a lady player, I'd go down every night on my knees and thank God that Roger Federer and Rafa Nadal were born, because they have carried this sport."

Now I probably would have pushed the trap door button on Moore as soon as he said "In my next life when I come back I want to be someone in the WTA," because you just knew this



chit-chat wasn't heading in an enlightened direction. And anyone definitely would have pushed it after "coattails."

WHHHOOOOSSSHHHH!
Without a trap door, it didn't end well for Moore, who was forced to resign his position less than a day later. His remarks were a mortifying moment for a sport that has looked upon its gender equality in prize money and its star-making as a point of pride—not as condescending comedy material for talking to reporters like you're the headliner at the Caveman Comedy Club.

Bye, bye, Raymond. Sorry I didn't invent the Tennis Tumbler in time.

Moore wasn't the only person at Indian Wells who could have used a trap door. Several hours after Moore's remarks, the tournament's men's champion, Novak Djokovic—the No. 1 men's player in the world—found himself in a press conference that began in positive fashion, with Djokovic professing his "respect and admiration" for all the progress women players had fought

for, but then it rambled into...well, it's days later, I'm still not sure what Djokovic was rambling about:

"I have tremendous respect for what women in global sport are doing and achieving. It's knowing what they have to go through with their bodies, and their bodies are much different than men's bodies. They have to go through a lot of different things that we don't have to go through. You know, the hormones and different stuff, we don't need to go into details. Ladies know what I'm talking about."

Pro tip for all men: any time you find yourself saying, "Ladies know what I'm talking about," it's pretty clear you don't know what you're talking about.

Djokovic didn't get into a heap of trouble like Moore did—mostly he was just shamed on the Internet—and by mid week he'd met with the legends Billie Jean King and Chris Evert and had a generous King call him "a class act and a true champion."

But still: tell me a tennis trap door couldn't have been useful there.

WHHHOOOOSSSHHHH NOVAK!

No trap door had been necessary for the women's bracket at Indian Wells, where athletes found themselves thrown into a circus they had no hand in creating. Serena Williams, who has just in the last year returned to playing the tournament after ugliness there in the early part of her career, sounded incredulous. "I don't understand why I always have to answer questions about a controversy like this," she said. "Obviously I don't think any woman should be down on their knees thanking anybody like that."

I love tennis, and this whole thing makes me want to take tennis and stuff it into a racket bag and shake it. Yes, there are male players who believe they are bigger draws than women, and, coupled with the fact that they play best-of-five matches in Grand Slams compared with the women playing best-of-three, think that entitles them to a bigger piece of the pie. But it's perniciously short-term thinking.

As many have pointed out, tennis has had cycles in which its female superstars were as big or bigger draws than its men; just last year, with Serena Williams chasing a calendar grand slam, the U.S. Open women's final sold out faster than the men's. But a far bigger problem for the sport is the precarious drop off in earnings from the top tier. This applies to both men and women—you can be top 100 in the world and barely break even, which is disastrous for tennis's long-term growth. (Why should a struggling player stick it out? Why should a gifted young athlete pursue tennis when soccer or golf mint far more millionaires?)

I'd like to hear someone sound off on that at a press conference.

Look, let's be honest: your average tennis press conferences is about as exciting as, well, a tennis press conference. But I humbly submit that the tennis trap door could become the iPhone of sports, a must-have for any league where people stick feet in their mouths. I mentioned my genius trap door concept to a U.S. Open spokesperson Thursday, and got this response:

"Though the U.S. Open prides itself on being an innovative leader in the sport of tennis, we are not contemplating this idea at this time."

OK, I may not quit my job yet. But I'm not taking that as a total no!
WHHHOOOOSSSHHHH!

John Carter Cash
on his family's
Tennessee home
M5



MANSION

*'We shape our buildings;
thereafter they shape us.'*
—Winston Churchill

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Friday, March 25, 2016 | **M1**

ONE HOME, MANY BUILDINGS

Campus-style homes, made up of several distinct buildings or wings, are growing in popularity; the trek to fetch a bedtime cup of tea.

Garage

Living Room

Dining Room

Kitchen

Main Corridor

Bedroom & Office



MULTI-UNIT LIVING In the Sea Ranch, a planned community in northern California, this 2,700-square-foot house is comprised of three wings, two of them connected by an indoor passageway. 'I liked the idea of a sense of privacy and change as you walk from one part of the house into another,' says owner Diane Goldsmith, who bought the home with her husband, David, for \$1.6 million in 2012.

BY CECILIE ROHWEDDER

TO GO FROM THE LIVING ROOM to the master suite of their home on Maryland's Chesapeake Bay, Hans and Julia Krebs walk to a different building.

Their bedroom is separated from the main house by a book-lined indoor walkway. Another walkway leads to a third building, which houses the kitchen and dining area, as well as a suite for Ms. Krebs's mother, a frequent visitor. The garage is in a fourth building. What ties it all together:

white, modern facades and black, gabled roofs.

"Our goal was to maximize privacy and view," says Mr. Krebs, a 69-year-old retired gynecologic oncologist. With his wife, a 65-year-old health care lawyer, Mr. Krebs spent \$1.5 million to build the four-bedroom, 5,000-square-foot home, which also includes a boathouse and a farm-equipment building.

Architects call them campus or compound-style homes. Like small university campuses, they are made up of separate wings or buildings that have distinct functions, such as sleeping,

cooking or lounging. Separating different parts of living, fans say, allows not just for privacy, but also for a different look and feel in each area. Proponents also argue that campuses blend into the landscape and allow for life with few or no stairs, a popular feature with aging Americans.

Campus-style living has its roots in American history. Maryland, where Annapolis-based architect Marta Hansen built the Krebs's home in 2006, is rife with five-part Colonial compounds that consist of a main house attached to smaller

Please turn to page M6

THE HOUSE OF HASSLES AND HEADACHES

The end result is beautiful, but building a \$7 million home in Coconut Grove, Fla., involved numerous issues with building codes, easement restrictions and utility hookups; digging a swimming pool at low tide.

BY NANCY KEATES

RUPERT AND KATHERINE

Hucker's \$7 million contemporary home in Coconut Grove, Fla., was built like a fortress to withstand hurricanes and storm surges. But if ocean levels rise as forecast, someday the home may succumb to the sea.

By 2100, "maybe only the top floor will be habitable and boats might be parked in the current kitchen," says its architect, Max Strang of the eponymous Miami-based architecture firm.

Mr. Hucker, 49, who started an energy-industry consulting firm, jokes that he and his wife are OK with that, since they'll most likely be dead before it happens. "I reckon we'll have a good 20 years of fun out of this house," says Mrs. Hucker, 52, an artist whose work includes paintings, sketches and life drawings.

Besides, in building the house, they have already withstood their share of disasters, from unexpected water issues to run-ins over local building codes.

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INSIDE



HOUSE OF STYLE
Designer Max Azria raises his price **M2**



LIVING HISTORY
Aaron Burr's old stomping grounds **M3**



MARCH MADNESS
The premium for a home court **M10**



HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS The Huckers' modern-minimalist home sits on 163 pilings that extend 20 feet into bedrock to help it withstand high winds and storm surges. The home took 13 months to build and cost about \$7 million.

MANSION

PRIVATE PROPERTIES | CANDACE TAYLOR

Fashion’s Max Azria Ups Price Of L.A. Mansion to \$88 Million

Fashion designer Max Azria is re-listing his Los Angeles mansion with a higher price tag: \$88 million.

Mr. Azria put the 17-bedroom home on the market for \$85 million in April of last year with the Agency, but it was taken off the market about eight months later after failing to sell. It is now coming back on the market with Alla Furman and Branden and Rayni Williams of Hilton & Hyland.

Ms. Furman said the higher price is warranted because prices of high-end Los Angeles homes are increasing. The new agents have already filmed a video at the house to help sell it, hiring actors to play a family who lives there.

Designed by architect Paul Revere Williams in the 1930s, the property has about 30,000 square feet of living space. In the two-story home’s entryway, a floor-to-ceiling waterfall chandelier is made from over 150,000 crystals. A home theater has a candy and popcorn bar, and Mr. Azria’s office has a domed, gold-leaf ceiling.

The nearly 3-acre property has a



swimming pool with a bar and a Moroccan-themed pool house with a sauna, spa and fireplace. A tennis court has an elevated viewing box. A glass-ceilinged greenhouse has been converted into a gym, and there is a second greenhouse for organic produce. The property has a number of gardens, including the “French Garden,” which has a free-standing out-

door fireplace.

The founder of the fashion house BCBG Max Azria Group, Mr. Azria and his wife, Lubov, purchased the house in 2005 and spent about \$30 million extensively renovating it.

The Azrias couldn’t be reached for comment. Ms. Furman said they are selling because their children are grown and they will likely downsize.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: SIMON BERLYN (2); PICTOMETRY; EVAN JOSEPH; PAUL ROLLINS



NAPA VALLEY DESIGNER ESTATE HEADS TO MARKET ASKING \$21.5 MILLION

Rela Gleason’s home in the Napa Valley, which is on the market for \$21.5 million, seems to have multiple versions of everything: there are two guest cottages, two pools, four kitchen islands and multiple outdoor showers. The house itself consists of three pavilions joined by covered breezeways.

The 40-acre property is on a hill-top between St. Helena and Calistoga, according to Ginger Martin of Sotheby’s International Realty, who is listing the property with Barry Berkowitz of St. Helena Real Estate.

The home’s main pavilion includes the living and dining spaces and the kitchen with its multiple islands; Ms. Gleason said she loves to cook with produce from the property’s vegetable gardens and fruit trees. The second pavilion includes a garage and a guest suite; the third pavilion has a gym, a media room and an underground wine

cellar, which stores wines made from grapes grown on the property.

Ms. Gleason, a designer and developer, said she purchased the property in 1999 with her husband, Don. They built the two guest cottages first, then later decided to expand, spending about five years designing and building the main house, which was completed in 2009.

Ms. Gleason said she and her husband are selling because they are ready for another project. “We just love to build,” she said. “We get itchy.”

Sales at this price point are rare in wine country. When the Napa Valley estate of the late comedian Robin Williams sold earlier this year for \$18.1 million, it was one of the highest prices ever paid for a Napa Valley home without a winery. In 2010, Sandy Weill paid about \$31 million for a roughly 362-acre Sonoma estate.

DIRECTOR JAMES WAN SELLS IN L.A.

James Wan, known for directing movies like “Saw” and “Furious 7,” has sold a home in Los Angeles’s Hollywood Hills for \$13.13 million.

Located on Nightingale Drive in the “Bird Streets” section—an area desired for its views and proximity to the Sunset Strip—the house was originally built in the 1960s but was renovated about five years ago, said Rochelle Maize of Nourmand & Associates, who together with Gayle Weiss represented the buyer. With views of downtown Los Angeles and the ocean, the main house has five bedrooms and measures about

6,000 square feet. The roughly 28,000-square-foot lot also contains a guesthouse, a gym and a swimming pool, Ms. Maize said.

Mr. Wan paid \$9.73 million for the house in 2014 as an investment property, according to people with knowledge of the transaction. The home was briefly on the market last year for \$13.75 million, Ms. Maize said, but it was leased rather than sold.

The home sold in an off-market deal. Ms. Maize declined to identify the buyers but said they had been looking for “a big view” in the Bird Streets and couldn’t find anything,



so she started looking into expired listings.

Mr. Wan, who was represented by Andrea Shink of Teles Properties, is set to direct the forthcoming “Aquaman.”

STEPHEN DORFF LISTS NEW YORK LOFT FOR \$3 MILLION

Actor Stephen Dorff is relisting his downtown Manhattan penthouse for \$3 million.

Mr. Dorff, 42, purchased the

condo in 2006 for \$1.65 million, according to public records. Located in a prewar building in New York’s Chelsea neighborhood, the

one-bedroom, two-bath loft has roughly 12-foot ceilings, according to the listing with Jared Seligman of Douglas Elliman Real Estate. A private roof terrace has an outdoor shower. The unit was recently renovated, according to the listing.

The property was last on the market with Mr. Seligman in 2009 for \$2.65 million, but it was taken off the market.

A former child actor, Mr. Dorff played a vampire in “Blade” in 1998, which led to a string of bad-guy roles. More recently he has done independent films like Sofia Coppola’s “Somewhere,” and is set to appear in the horror film “Leatherface.”

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MANSION

LIVING HISTORY

A West Village Home for Nearly 200 Years

An 1829 house on the market for close to \$10 million rests on land once owned by Aaron Burr

BY LEIGH KAMPING-CARDER

ARTIST JOHN BENNETT’S 1829 home is a time capsule of development in the West Village section of Manhattan—on land once owned by Aaron Burr.

The 3,500-square-foot house, on the market for \$9.995 million, sits on a parcel owned by the third U.S. vice president at a time when he controlled a vast swath of the neighborhood. Mr. Burr took ownership of the block in 1793 when it was still farmland; the deed, however, doesn’t list a price and wasn’t recorded until 1814, according to city archives. In 1803, a year before his famous duel that took the life of Alexander Hamilton, Mr. Burr started selling off parcels to developers, including the Astor family, said Andrew Berman, executive director of the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, a community nonprofit.

By the 1820s, the area was bustling with shops and row houses. Mr. Bennett’s home, on Downing Street, was one of the latter, built as a two-story, wood-frame house for sisters Sarah and Louisa Smith. The home was probably valued at a few thousand dollars, said Mr. Berman, judging from the sale of a nearby, albeit grander, four-house package that he said fetched \$56,000 in 1832.

The home likely didn’t get its brick facade or third floor until 1870, according to a report from the society. By the late 19th century, the neighborhood was primarily settled by immigrants, Mr. Berman said. The report says the home became a tenement occupied by five families.

Mr. Bennett, 72, and his wife, Karen Lee Grant, a former art director, 69, bought the home in 1977 for \$115,000. The couple had just



GEVIES ANDERSON FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL (6)

moved from Paris, and Ms. Grant was eight months pregnant. Artists were starting to discover the Village, though Mr. Bennett recalled drug dealers and prostitutes occupying the sidewalks. The couple got a loan from the sellers—a group of siblings—which required them to put down \$40,000, pay monthly installments of \$550 (which then rose to \$650), and then pay off a remaining sum.

“I didn’t have to prove my worth to anybody—it was fantastic,” Mr. Bennett said, estimating that he paid \$230,000 over 20 years.

What they acquired was a shell of

a building: Each floor had a single direct-current lightbulb, the air was sooty from nearby coal furnaces, and a water sprocket stood exposed where a toilet should have been, Mr. Bennett said. “It was just a black hole when I bought it,” he added.

Over the years, Mr. Bennett has put his artistic (and handyman) skills to work. He added walls to the third-floor space, creating three bedrooms (one now an office) and a bathroom, and putting in insulation and a drywall ceiling. On the main, or second, floor, decorative wood columns around the kitchen table create an eating area;

a washer/dryer hides below the counters. Mr. Bennett’s studio—a roughly 25-by-70-foot space filled with art and capped by a vast skylight—occupies the ground floor. Mr. Bennett also changed the facade, adding casement windows and a frieze of sculptural concrete heads above the entryway.

If he has an aesthetic, Mr. Bennett said, it is based on necessity, with every design choice the result of a “fantasy or whimsy I had.” He scrounged bricks from an old schoolhouse, lined the bathtub with Mexican tiles at 75 cents a piece, and commissioned kitchen

cabinets from a no-frills local store.

Now, their three children are grown, and keeping the home has gotten expensive; the neighborhood is an enclave for Hollywood actors and Wall Street financiers. The couple want to move to Sullivan County, N.Y., where one son is a furniture maker.

To some real-estate brokers, the home is a teardown, Mr. Bennett said. One prospective buyer has come to see the property several times with an architect. “They will inherit exactly the same building I did, which is basically all bricks and wood,” he said.

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PERKS FOR BORROWERS WITH PLASTIC

Some lenders offer cash back, points for air travel and other rewards to borrowers with affiliated credit cards or bank accounts

 Borrowers who get a \$2.5 million mortgage from CapitalOne can fly away, literally, with one million air-travel miles, enough to circle the earth 40 times. But is it worth it?

From air miles to rebates to lower interest rates, some lenders offer a variety of rewards to customers who get or refinance a home loan. In the CapitalOne promotion, Venture and Venture One credit-cardholders earn air travel miles if they purchase or refinance their home before March 31. The exact number of miles earned depends on the loan amount and is capped at 1 million miles. A borrower getting a \$417,000 loan, the maximum amount for a government-backed loan in most parts of the country, would get 100,000 miles. A jumbo-loan borrower getting a loan over \$1.5 million would earn 1 million miles, the company's limit.

But before borrowers fantasize about faraway vacations, they should crunch all the numbers, from interest rate to origination fees to airfare cost and compare to what other lenders offer without the perk, says Odysseas Papadimitriou, CEO of credit-monitoring website WalletHub.com. "Consider how long you are going to stay in the home, and how much it's going to cost me to get this loan versus another loan that doesn't have these rewards," he adds. Still, if the lender offers the best interest rate and



mortgage rate. Among the conditions: The borrower must transfer more than \$250,000 into a regular or brokerage account before the loan closing. That's substantial savings over the lifetime of the loan rather than a one-time reward, says Dave Steckel, lending products and pricing executive at Bank of America. That quantity of bank holdings qualifies the borrower to "preferred rewards" status, which means relationship discounts on other bank products, such as home-equity lines of credit, car loans, ATM fees or a refinance or second mortgage, he adds. Some borrowers may be tempted to earn big rewards by making mortgage payments with plastic. Not all lenders allow credit-card mortgage payments, and be sure to check the fine print for lenders that do. Also some cards may charge a processing fee for mortgage payments. If the fee percentage exceeds the percentage cash back or points benefit of the rewards program, borrowers may actually be spending more. Other cards may code the transaction as a "cash advance." Unlike a straight credit-card purchase, cash advances typically have higher interest rates, and the interest starts accruing the second that the mortgage payment is made. And don't forget, a borrower could rack up substantial credit-card balances at a much higher interest rate than the typical mortgage if that credit-card bill isn't paid in full each month.

competitive fees, the perk can be "gravy," Mr. Papadimitriou says. The point is that consumers should resist the urge to let the lure of a short-term reward dazzle them into taking a loan that will cost more in the long run, he says. Last year, Chase Bank offered a mortgage cash-back program in which borrowers could earn 1% of their scheduled principal and interest payment annually for the life of the loan, up to \$500 a year. A number of conditions applied, including a requirement that borrowers' mortgage payments are automatically withdrawn from their Chase checking account. The rebate could be used to pay down the loan principal or deposited into the customer's bank account for

other uses. Wells Fargo offers a "home rebate" feature to its rewards-earning credit cards that lets cardholders apply points toward mortgage and home-equity-loan payments. Based on \$30,000 in annual spending on the card, a mortgage rate of 3.5% and a term of 30 years, a Wells Fargo customer with a \$500,000 mortgage could

pay off the loan six months faster and save \$15,503 on interest, according to Wells Fargo. For a \$1 million mortgage, customers would pay off their mortgage three months faster and save \$15,655 on interest. Borrowers who also bring major assets to Bank of America can see one-eighth to one-fourth of a percentage point subtracted from their

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MANSION

HOUSE CALL | JOHN CARTER CASH

The House Johnny Cash Bought for June

The son of famous singers recalls a tragic end to a lakeside family home

One day in 1967, my father, Johnny Cash, was rambling around north of Nashville when he spotted a house under construction by a lake. He loved the house, so he got out of his car for a closer look. The man he met at the site, Braxton Dixon, told him he was building it for his family. My dad made him an offer he couldn't refuse. It was hard to say no to Johnny Cash.

Braxton was a master builder who would wind up designing rustic one-of-a-kind homes for many of Nashville's artists. At the time, my dad's dream was to marry June Carter and move into the home. And that's exactly what they did on March 1, 1968, just a day after they won a Grammy for "Jackson." Two years later, I was born. The house, in Hendersonville, was a massive structure of wood and stone. Each end of the house had a large round living room on the ground floor and a round bedroom above on the second floor. In 1970, my parents brought in Braxton to finish the second floor and add a third, including a huge master bedroom with 25-foot vaulted ceilings and hand-designed molding. When the work was done, our home was about 14,000 square feet. The house was set back about 75 yards. When I was young, buses passed by slowly with tourists snapping pictures, making me feel at times like a monkey in the zoo. My parents were on the road a

lot in the 1970s. Winifred Kelly, a nurse from the hospital where I was born, was hired to care for me. Her love and discipline had a big influence on my upbringing. My bedroom was in one of those round, second-floor rooms. I had a big round bed with a customized mattress that sat on top of a wooden frame. At 14, I played loud electric guitar and often jammed with friends there. No matter how loud we played, my parents never told me to turn it down. They'd just turn up their TV set. They were very gentle and patient. My mom, dad and me were a compact group. They instilled in me a love for the outdoors. On school breaks, we'd go fishing for a week in the wilds of Alaska or Canada. The land was always in their souls. I saw my parents go through tough times between 1979 and 1983. They almost split up. The cause was my father's addiction to pain pills. As tough as their relationship became, their capacity to heal was



MAN IN BLACK John Carter Cash, above right, by the tree his father planted the day he was born. From top left, with his dad, Johnny Cash, in 1972; the family's lakeside Tennessee home in 1976; and in front of the same tree in 1980.

powerful. By the last years of their lives they were closer than ever. When my parents passed away in 2003, just four months apart, neither my half-sisters nor I wanted to move back into the house. The house was sold to Barry Gibb of the Bee Gees. It needed a ton of work and Barry put a good deal into its restoration. But two weeks before he moved in, there was a construction accident, and a violent fire burned the house to the ground in just 20 minutes. I remember when my dad's friend and one-time guitarist Marty Stuart called in April 2007 to tell me the news. He was crying, and I cried, too.



The news hit me like a death. It had been my home, a part of my soul. But by then, its time had passed. For whatever reason, the house was destined to be a home to just one family—the Cashes. Today I live across the street on 40 acres that was part of the original property. I've also held onto the cabin nearby that my father built in 1979 as a place to write music and clear his head. In the early 1990s, my dad decided to record in the cabin, so he had microphones and equipment installed. He recorded his last album there, "Ain't No Grave." I've built onto the cabin a good deal since then to expand the studio, and I record

artists there today. My home stands just up the hill, and while it's nothing like my parents' old house, it's spacious and comfortable. My parents' property across the way still sits empty. I don't see the home's ruins much now. Instead of pulling out of my property across from the old house, I use my other driveway farther up the road. —As told to Marc Myers

John Carter Cash, 46, is an author, music producer and recording artist. He owns the Cash Cabin Recording Studio in Hendersonville, Tenn., and is the son of Johnny Cash and June Carter Cash.

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MANSION

ONE HOME, MANY BUILDINGS

Continued from page M1
wings on both sides. The classic American homestead is a cluster of buildings that include the kitchen and smokehouse, set apart to reduce fire risk. In traditional Spanish and Mexican architecture, connected buildings are arranged around a patio.

Creating a village for one owner has its downsides. A house deconstructed into different parts can be more expensive than a single-unit home—between 25% and 30% more, estimates San Francisco-based architect Malcolm Davis, who frequently designs multipart homes. More buildings require more perimeter foundation, he explains, adding to construction costs. More exterior walls need more windows and cause more potential heat loss, adding to maintenance costs.

Multibuilding living can also create its own set of practical considerations—one may have to traipse a longer distance to find the children, or retrieve the Amazon package from the front door.

Fans dismiss such criti-

cisms. Kristin and Scott Fine, a general partner at a hedge fund, recently completed renovating their 101-year-old waterfront home in Darien, Conn. As part of the two-year, \$2.5 million project, a glass-and-steel structure was created to attach a kitchen wing to one side of the house, and a separate, open-air steel arbor was erected to create an outdoor living room, framing the view of Long Island Sound.

The arbor connects the home to a new yoga and pool house, whose detachment from the main house—busy with four children and two dogs—makes the space more effective, according to the Fines. “A yoga room being physically separate is key to quieting my mind,” says Ms. Fine, a 43-year-old interior designer who has her own company, Fine Concepts, and worked on the project with New York City-based architect Michael Haverland. She says she usually runs to the building barefoot—“maybe” throwing on boots if there is snow.

The Fines’ compound isn’t done: The two buildings are



SEPARATE BUT BETTER Hans and Julia Krebs on a bridge above a walkway connecting two parts of their four-building home, top; a book-lined walkway, right; the four-bedroom, 5,000-square-foot home cost \$1.5 million to build, above.



STEPHEN VOSS FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL (3)

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GOING NATIVE At Peter and Maria Grazia Selzer’s \$2 million, 3,600-square-foot house in Taos, N.M., a Territorial-style building with a pitched roof is flanked by two flat-roof Pueblo-stye buildings, above; the couple, below left; a bedroom, below right.



KATE RUSSELL FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL (3)

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MANSION



A SINGLE FAMILY COLONY A rendering of the multi-building compound being built by Jonathan King and Jim Stott. Designed by Jacobsen Architecture, it is a series of 12 white pavilions, some of them linked by indoor glass walkways. They are set back behind the original home in Kittery Point—one of the oldest houses in Maine.



IN THE MIX Kristin and Scott Fine's home in Darien, Conn., includes a modern kitchen wing and a pool and yoga house, above; Ms. Fine with Crash, top left; an outdoor arbor connects two buildings, top right; bedroom, middle right; Ms. Fine's closet, above right.



first steps in a master plan for the 6-acre property that now has 13,400 square feet of living space. The couple is expecting to add a sports building with an indoor lap pool, spa and batting cage, as well as a building with private gallery space that can also house three artists as part of a planned residency program.

In 2014, Jonathan King and Jim Stott bought one of the oldest houses in Maine, 354-year-old Bray House in Kittery Point. The founders of Stonewall Kitchen, a York, Maine-based maker of jams, sauces and other specialty foods, Messrs. King and Stott had previously lived in historic homes and knew the shortcomings, such as low ceilings and wind blowing through old walls in the winter. But they were drawn to Bray House's rich past and waterfront setting, to Mr. King "the most beautiful view in the world."

The pair turned to Jacobsen Architecture, a Washington, D.C., firm with expertise in fusing contemporary space and historic buildings, including at the U.S. Capitol.

For Bray House, managing design partner Simon Jacobsen envisioned a series of minimalist white pavilions that he felt would fit into the architecture of New England. Set back slightly behind the original house, he said, the single-level structures would also ensure that Bray House, believed to have been built in 1662, would remain "the belle of the ball."

Now, 1,450-square-foot Bray House is undergoing a \$1 million renovation. It will be linked on both sides to indoor glass walkways leading to no fewer than 12 gabled pavilions that house a large living and dining space, a master-bedroom suite and an office. As part of the \$5 million project, which Messrs. King and Stott hope to com-

plete by Labor Day 2017, even the laundry room will have its own building.

"We want friends to come in, enjoy cocktails by the fire at Bray House, but then go into a 21st century space," says Mr. King, who is 50 and chief creative officer of Stonewall Kitchen. Spreading out the additions horizontally, he says, means adding space—8,125 square feet of it—without adding height. "It's not going to feel like we're building this massive thing to block the view of the ocean."

Campus-style building can also help optimize a lot. Built in 2007 at the Sea Ranch, a planned community on northern California's Pacific Coast, a two-story bedroom wing was designed by architect Mr. Davis to block the sight of a neighboring house from the living room wing. Instead, the bedroom wing frames the view, steering the eye toward a stretch of meadow and coast. The separate wings, connected by a hallway, also form a sheltered courtyard that blocks coastal wind and neighbors.

Owner Diane Goldsmith from Orinda, Calif., bought the 2,700-square-foot, three-bedroom house with her husband, David, for \$1.6 million in 2012. "I liked the idea of a sense of privacy and change as you walk from one part of the house into another," says Ms. Goldsmith, a 65-year-old graphic designer. "Family and interactions on one side; rest and contemplation of the beauty of Sea Ranch on the other," adds Mr. Goldsmith, a 68-year-old retired investment banker.

Spreading out a house can create inconvenience. Answering the door is a trek. So is hauling around laundry or fixing a cup of tea. Owners say technology helps keep it together: Baby monitors can track children in far-off nurseries, and many keep kettles and refrigerators in the master suite to avoid nighttime trips to the kitchen.

Peter and Maria Grazia Selzer's \$2 million, 3,600-square-foot home built by San Francisco-based architect Nick Noyes in Taos, N.M., consists of a rammed-earth Territorial-style house and two flat-roof Pueblo-style buildings on both sides. As such, the distance from the master bedroom to the kitchen is between 60 and 70 feet.

Mr. Selzer, a 70-year-old radiologist, says the isolation of the bedroom, located at the end of its own wing, is an advantage. "You could have a brass band going on in the main part of the house and we wouldn't hear it," he says.



LOOKOUT A corridor connects David and Diane Goldsmith's home, above; the couple, left.



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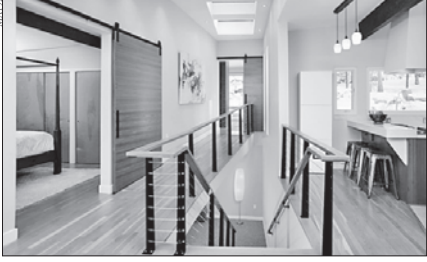
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In an analysis of listings, \$1 million-plus homes had higher asking prices when they had a sports court; bonus points if the court is indoors



The best way to get the home-court advantage in basketball? Buy a home with its own

sports court. About 1,000 luxury homes with basketball courts are for sale, with a median price of \$1.86 million—a premium of \$215,000, or 13%, over homes without courts. Indoor courts are even rarer and pricier: only 85 are on the market, with a median price of \$2.99 million.

The numbers are based on a Realtor.com analysis of single-family homes listed for \$1 million and up as of March 4 that advertised having a half-court, full court or multisport court. While a court is an expensive feature, the sheer space

Hoop Dreams

Homes listed for \$1 million or more that advertised a sports court had higher asking prices than those without courts.

	Median lot size, sq. ft.	Median home size, sq. ft.	Median asking price
Sports court	47,498	5,853	\$1.86 million
No sports court	35,719	4,542	\$1.65 million
Indoor court	93,219	9,855	\$2.99 million
No indoor court	44,475	5,516	\$1.8 million

Source: Realtor.com as of March 4



DAVID SCHOENFELD (2)

GAME DAY David Schoenfeld's home near Asheville, N.C., above, has a sports court in the basement, left, a project that added about 15% to the cost of building the home.

it occupies also contributes to the premium, said Javier Vivas, an economic researcher for Realtor.com, noting that the premium varies widely by market. Homes with courts are typically 29% larger and sit on lots 33% bigger than other homes. "You're paying more for this luxury, but you're also getting a bit more space," said Mr. Vivas.

(News Corp, which owns The Wall Street Journal, also owns Realtor.com, the listing website of the National Association of Realtors.) Home courts are commonly 30 feet long by 50 feet wide but can be almost any size, said Joel McCausland, a regional director at Sport Court, a Salt Lake City-based manufacturer of sports surfacing and components.

They tend to appeal to buyers with children, who see them as an amenity that will keep kids active and close to home, said Jeff Hendley, a broker with LIV Sotheby's International Realty in Denver. Installing a court generally costs between \$15,000 and \$30,000—depending on the size, cost of labor and materials, and features like hoops

and lights—and takes a few weeks, said Mr. McCausland. When building his early-retirement home near Asheville, N.C., last year, dermatologist David Schoenfeld, 47, decided to add a sports court in the basement at his son's request—an appeal that gained traction when a friend endorsed the idea. The 1,400-square-foot court added about 2½ months to

the 19-month project and about 15% more to his overall costs, said Dr. Schoenfeld, who declined to disclose the full price tag. Dr. Schoenfeld regularly hosts friends and family on the court, and encourages guests to hang pennants from their alma maters on the walls. And Dr. Schoenfeld's son? "He thinks it's the greatest thing ever."

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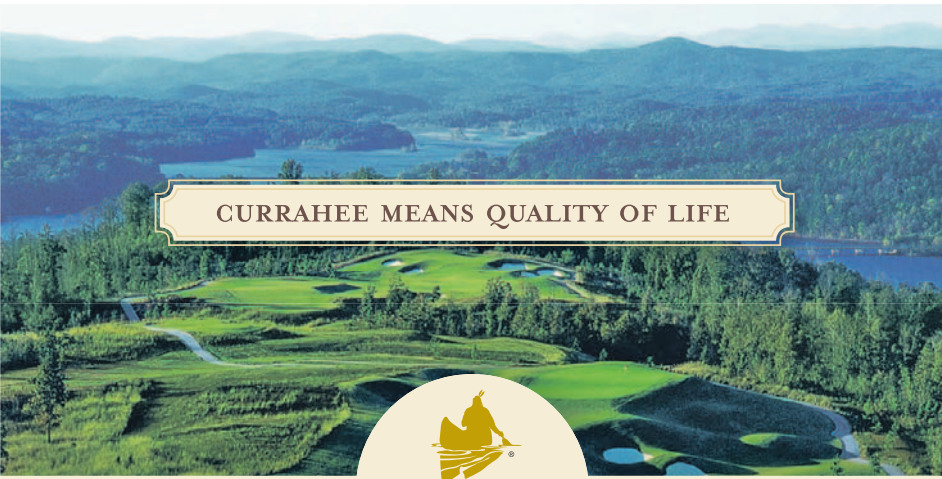
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MANSION

THE HOUSE OF HASSLES AND HEADACHES

Continued from page M1

The couple—he is British and she is Australian—were living in London when the global economy collapsed in 2008. They decided to move to the Miami area because it was just about halfway between the Houston office of Mr. Hucker’s consultancy and the island of Trinidad, where they had previously lived for two years and a place they say was “very dangerous and incredibly fun.”

Looking for a minimalist, modern house to buy in Coconut Grove, Mrs. Hucker came across an unusual contemporary Bali-esque stone-and-wood home with a mazelike swimming pool. By coincidence, it was Mr. Strang’s home, which he designed and was selling.

Mrs. Hucker didn’t buy it—but she hired Mr. Strang on the spot. Then the Huckers went searching for land, finding a ¾-acre lot on a peaceful canal with views of Biscayne Bay. They bought the lot for \$2.5 million, some \$400,000 below asking. Building a new house there was complicated from the start. The land was in two pieces, separated by a 15-foot-wide city easement, which meant they couldn’t have one structure straddling both sides. But they could build one structure on each side. Located right on the canal, there were various setback issues to address to comply with local building codes, and no sewer hookup meant they had to install septic drain fields.

On one parcel of land, Mr. Strang designed a four-bedroom, 5½ -bathroom home measuring about 5,800 square feet. The first floor has a guest bedroom and a TV room with a bright purple sofa; upstairs are their 16-year-old daughter Isabel’s room and the master bedroom with two master bathrooms. The other parcel of land has a 1,428-square-foot structure with an office for Mr. Hucker, an art studio for Mrs. Hucker and another guest bedroom.

To withstand hurricanes, the house sits atop 163 concrete pilings extending 20 feet into the bedrock. Building codes required that all the walls on the home’s first floor be “breakaway,” which means they would collapse in the event of a massive storm surge to allow water to flow through without damaging the upper floors or the foundation.

The first attempts at digging the pool failed when seawater from the canal seeped in faster than the walls of the pool could be poured—rather like digging a hole in sand at the water’s edge. So the contractors waited until the moon was just right, pushing the tide at its lowest. Then, they quickly sprayed the pool walls with a fast-drying cement. Some water crept in, but it was manageable enough to be pumped out.

The most stress came when city inspectors determined the water pipes servicing the roughly 18 homes around the property lacked adequate water pressure for a fire hydrant. The Huckers, deemed developers since the land had never been occupied, had to upgrade the water pipes for the neighborhood and ensure the water was potable, an unexpected outlay that, along with rebuilding a portion of the road, came to around \$250,000. “We just kept our eye on the horizon and reminded ourselves we were going to end up with a beautiful house in a beautiful place,” says Mr. Hucker.

They did, moving into the house in February of 2015 after 30 months of construction.

The geometric design is composed of cantilevered levels clad in white stucco, making it seem like it’s floating over the canal. The only visible sign of the massive amount of support material that went into bracing it against a storm is one pillar on the main floor deck. They call the guest room in the separate structure “Max’s room,” because the architect, now a friend, stays there so often.

The home’s interiors feature Florida keystone, marked by fossils of shells and coral, which surrounds the fireplace, and gray Basaltine floors. An oyster-colored Corian-topped island anchors the sleek kitchen. A few steps away is a glass-enclosed wine room like the ones found in expensive restaurants.

Mrs. Hucker’s art, some geometric, some abstract and some meticulously detailed like the house, are displayed on much of the wall space downstairs.

Upstairs, where the white walls



PEOPLE (AND PET) FRIENDLY 1. The pool was a particular challenge to build because water from the canal kept seeping in. 2. Daughter Isabel’s room upstairs, featuring Leo, a family cat. 3. The stairway of the multilevel house incorporates glass in keeping with the minimalist design. 4. Another family pet, Jimmy, in the outdoor living room. 5. A cocktail party spills onto the outdoor deck, which looks out onto Biscayne Bay. 6. Katherine Hucker in her art studio, which is in a separate structure on their property that also has a guest room. 7. The family dog, Toby, in a quiet corner.



are mostly unadorned, is the jewel: a corner master bedroom with sliding glass doors that open out to an expansive patio overlooking the water and the Bali-inspired swimming pool. Next to the bedroom is an equally spacious master bathroom with a tub in the middle and glass doors that open out to a roof-deck area.

If there is any part of the design that most reflects the Huckers’ joie de vivre, it is the enormous ipe deck that flows out the glass doors in the family room and looks out to the canal and the bay beyond. Built for entertaining, it has a stainless-steel outdoor kitchen with a rotisserie and a long bar. “We throw a pretty good party here,” says Mr. Hucker.