

**AFRICAN-ASIAN LOVE STORY**

SISTER SOULJAH PENS NEW NOVEL SET IN NEW YORK CITY | D4



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SANTA BARBARA  
NEWS-PRESS

SECTION **D**  
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our weekly spotlight on nonprofit  
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MARCH 15, 2009

**OUT &  
ABOUT**



Betty Hatch  
Hatch joins  
foundation board

Betty Hatch has joined the board of directors of the Collaborative Communities Foundation. Mrs. Hatch, executive director of La Belle Foundation, founded La Belle Model/Talent Agency & Professional Training School in Santa Barbara in 1982. She is a past president of the National Association for Self-Esteem and is involved with several organizations that provide opportunities for young women to promote self-esteem and confidence.

—Charlotte Boechler

**OUR TOWN**  
People Helping  
People benefit

A RU Japanese Restaurant, 225 McHenry Road in Buellton, will host a benefit dinner for People Helping People (PHP) at 5:30 p.m. today. Jim Base, the owner, is planning a seven-course dinner that will be paired with wines from PHP's Vino de Sueton label. The cost is \$125, and seating is limited to 40. For more information or to make a dinner reservation, call the restaurant at 696-9001.

—Marilyn McMahon

**ON STAGE**

Israeli quartet in  
Santa Barbara

The award-winning Aviv String Quartet from Israel will perform at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday at Santa Barbara Museum of Art's Mary Craig Auditorium, 1130 State St. The ensemble will play Beethoven's Op. 95, "Serioso," Shostakovich's Quartet No. 2, Op. 68, and Schubert's "Death and the Maiden" in D minor, D810. Tickets are \$15 for museum members and \$19 for nonmembers. To purchase, call the museum at 864-6423.

—Dave Mason

**Life post-Post**

Former newspaper exec Leonard Downie Jr. among guests at Celebrity Authors' Luncheon



Selden Edwards



Leonard Downie Jr.



Kristin Armstrong



Jacqueline Winspear



Larry Wilmore

Leonard Downie Jr., former executive editor at The Washington Post, began writing his first novel, "The Rules of the Game," in 2003 about the relationships between journalists and politicians in Washington, D.C. Little did he realize a plot twist in the book would become eerily similar five years later in the 2008 presidential campaign.

By **MARILYN McMAHON**  
NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER

**A** newspaper junkie ever since he was in the fifth grade, Leonard Downie Jr., who stepped down as executive editor last year after a 45-year stint at The Washington Post, has never really

thought of another career. However, after writing his latest book, "The Rules of the Game" (Knopf/Doubleday Publishing Group, \$26.95), Mr. Downie might consider becoming a chairvoyant. Long before Sarah Palin be-

came a household name, he came up with the story in his book of an older U.S. senator nominated for president who, on the eve of his party's national convention, shocks everyone by choosing a young woman senator — a media darling

— to be his running mate. Mr. Downie will discuss what happens next in the novel — his first — with guests at CALM's 23rd annual Celebrity Authors'

Please see **AUTHOR** on D11



**Earth Day video contest goes green**

Green Shorts Video Contest, organizer Kent Epperson said.

"It is more than you think," Mr. Epperson insisted. The contest is part of the 2009 Santa Barbara Earth Day Festival. All of the videos will be posted at www.sbchannels.net within a day or so of the contestants uploading them to the site. Mr. Epperson said. Deadline to enter is April 1.

The winning shorts will be picked by online voters and a panel of judges, which includes actor and director Tim Matheson ("The West Wing"). Other actors and filmmakers are among the panelists. The winners will be announced April 19. Their videos will screen throughout that day at a tent at the Earth Day Festival at Alameda Park, 1400 Santa Barbara St. These videos also will be shown at 7 that night at Samy's Camera, 614 Chapala St. The winning videos also will air during the week of April 20 on Channel 17. Contestants will cover an aspect of

everyday life, such as transportation, work or recreation, and explain how to reduce dependence on fossil fuel. "It's about more than driving less and using less gasoline," Mr. Epperson said, noting the widespread use of petroleum.

Internet videos are an ideal way to present the subject, he said. "We see that video viewing on the Internet has become, for the youngest generation, more common than watching TV."

To show it's possible to say a lot in that time, he produced three videos as examples. They're posted at www.sbchannels.net. One is a spoof called "Please Help Big Oil."

"It would be a fine day when alternative energy has all the money it needs, and oil companies need a bake sale to build a refinery," Mr. Epperson said, describing the plot.

In addition to exposure for their videos, contest winners will receive prizes. The

grand prize winner will receive a MacBook laptop computer or, if the winner already has a laptop, a \$1,000 gift certificate for Samy's Camera. The second place winner will get a \$400 gift certificate for a Brooks Institute of Photography workshop. Third place is a \$200 gift certificate at Samy's Camera.

Winners of the ages 11 and under and 12 to 18 categories will get a \$100 certificate for Samy's Camera. The College Award category is for college students who are 19 or older; the winner will get a \$200 certificate for Samy's Camera.

Participants in the 11 and under, 12 to 18 and college categories also are eligible for the overall first, second and third-place prizes, including the laptop computer.

For more information, call Traffic Solutions at 963-SAVE, (723)5 or go to www.sbeearthday.org

e-mail: dmason@newspress.com

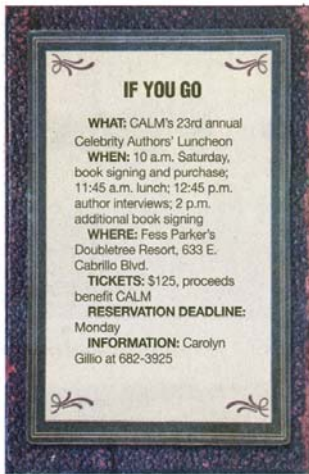
**MORE 'LIFE AFTER OIL' EVENTS ON D11**

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# A great talent for writing

■ **AUTHOR**  
Continued from Page D1



Luncheon on Saturday at Fess Parker's Doubletree Resort. Other featured authors will be Kristin Armstrong, Selden Edwards, Larry Wilmore and Jacqueline Winspear.

"When I started writing the book in 2003, I had no idea that John McCain would be the Republican nominee in 2008 and Sarah Palin would be his running mate. I was surprised and a bit spooked," said Mr. Downie during an interview from his office at The Washington Post, where he is a vice president at large.

"I'm not really retired since I'm working on a project with Columbia University, looking at all the ways to pay for news in the future," he said. "I have also accepted the post of the Weil Professor of Journalism at the Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University starting in 2010."

He and his wife, Janice, who will be with him in Santa Barbara, will divide their time between Arizona State in Tempe and their home in downtown Washington, D.C., near American University.

The author of four nonfiction books, Mr. Downie said he decided to make "The Rules of the Game" a novel because "I have always wanted to write fiction

about the complex and often ambiguous relationships among journalists, politicians, consultants and lobbyists and the ways in which they all often broke the rules with and without consequences."

Before starting the novel, Mr. Downie said he had certain characters in mind, and he wanted the protagonist to be a woman.

"Half the staff at The Post are women," he said. "In my book, the story revolves around a young woman investigative reporter, and I wanted to see what happens when a woman becomes president of the United States."

During his long tenure at The Washington Post, Mr. Downie said he had a close relationship with the late publisher Katharine Graham, the courageous woman who led Bob Woodward, Carl Bernstein and Ben Bradlee through the Watergate scandal.

"She was a great lady who took an interest in my career over the years," he said. "I became deputy metropolitan editor in 1972, two weeks after the Watergate break-in and directly edited Woodward and Bernstein's stories and the Senate Watergate hearings. We worked long hours, and there was a lot of tension. We frequently worked on Saturdays, and Mrs. Graham and I would go to lunch. She also visited me in London when I was there as a foreign correspondent for the paper from 1979 to 1982."

Mr. Downie worked closely during that turbulent period with the flamboyant Mr. Bradlee, who was then executive editor.

"We never realized that a presidential resignation would be the culmination of the Watergate affair. We were stunned," said Mr. Downie, who had high words of praise for Mr. Bradlee.

"Ben completely revolutionized The Post and, in some ways, American journalism. He created innovations like our Style section," said Mr. Downie, who is 66 and the father of three grown children and the grandfather of two.

The oldest of four boys, Mr. Downie was born in Cleveland, where he attended Landon Elementary School, Wilbur Wright Junior High School and John Marshall High School.

"My journalism career began when my fifth-grade teacher started a newspaper. In sixth grade, I became editor. I liked being the boss," he chuckled.

In junior high, Mr. Downie co-edited the paper with Donna Shalala, who went on to become chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the first woman to head a Big Ten school, and who later was appointed by President Bill Clinton to be secretary of health and human services.

Currently, she is president of the University of Miami in Florida.

"Since our school was named after Wilbur Wright (co-inventor of the airplane with his brother, Orville), our paper was called The Skywriter," he said. "In high school, I was editor of The Interpreter."

His talent for writing brought him a scholarship to Ohio State University, where he earned bachelor's and master's degrees.

"I was the first in my family to go to college. If it

hadn't been for the scholarship, I couldn't have afforded to go," said Mr. Downie.

By another stroke of luck, the director of the School of Journalism at Ohio State knew an editor at The Post and arranged for Mr. Downie to become a summer intern at the paper, one of a very few at the time.

"Now, there are hundreds of applicants," he said.

Thanks to the impression Mr. Downie made during his internship, The Post hired him as a reporter on the city desk immediately after graduation in 1965. A year later, he became an investigative reporter, and as a result of a series of stories he wrote about the local court system, which was replaced, the fledgling reporter won a special award and was a finalist for a Pulitzer Prize that year.

Mr. Downie's meteoric rise continued as he became assistant city editor, assistant metropolitan editor, metropolitan editor, national editor, managing editor and finally executive editor, succeeding Ben Bradlee in 1991.

Asked about his three years in London, he said that it was traditional for The Post to alternate staff between editing and reporting.

"I found out that as much as I loved reporting, I realized I had more potential as an editor," he said.

During his years as an editor, The Post won 25 Pulitzer Prizes, the most by an editor in the history of U.S. print media, according to the Guardian of London Web site [www.guardian.co.uk/media](http://www.guardian.co.uk/media).

As for his stepping down last year at a fairly young age, Mr. Downie said it was a good "transition year. Katharine Weymouth, the 42-year-old granddaughter of Katharine Graham, is now publisher. She is a generation younger and has had a lot of experience integrating the print and Internet operation. She is dynamic and charismatic. She has a strong commitment to newspapers as a public service."

Looking forward to his next challenge in the classroom at Arizona State, Mr. Downie said, "What is most important to me is that journalism and newsrooms that hold the powerful accountable survive and prosper. And I hope those students will help to make that happen."

# 'Life After Oil'

Lecture series kicks off March 26

## Green festivals and lectures

Energy leaders will explore "Life After Oil" in a free, three-part lecture series at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 2559 Puesta Del Sol Road. Each talk will be from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Michael Brune, executive director of the San Francisco-based Rainforest Action Network, and Dave Davis, executive director of the Santa Barbara-based Community Environmental Council, will address "Why Do We Need To Think Beyond Oil?" on March 26. Ventura City Manager Rick Cole will discuss "Organizing Our Communities for Life After Oil" on April 2.

Santa Barbara architects John Kelly and Dennis Thompson will talk about "Organizing Our Neighborhoods for Life After Oil" on April 9. Also speaking is Linda Buzzell-Saltzman, a psychotherapist, ecotherapist and member of the Seeds Committee of Transition Town Santa Barbara, which is committed to post-fossil-fuel, sustainable living.

In addition to the lectures, the free South Coast Earth Day Festival will take place 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. April 19 at Alameda Park, 1400 Santa Barbara St. For details, go to [www.SBEarthDay.org](http://www.SBEarthDay.org).

The Community Environmental Council is organizing the festival and lectures. For more information, call Megan Diaz at 963-0583, ext. 105.

— Dave Mason

When asked what he thinks about the dire predictions regarding newspapers being a dying industry, Mr. Downie said he was neither pessimistic nor optimistic.

"With all my years as a journalist, I still tend to be objective and analytical." As for his future, Mr. Downie has another novel in the works.

"Writing is my hobby now. It's fun," he said. Is the book about Washington, which is probably a real treasure trove?

"Oh, yes," he chuckled.

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