

Sensory Delights

Get Real

by

Brooke Bessesen



I have an important point, now what was it again?

Do you recall which layer of the Earth's core is liquid? What about the first eight digits of Pi or how to identify an intransitive verb?

Me neither.

Why is that? These are bits of information that, at one time or another, most of us set to memory – with at least enough effort to pass school exams.

Take the 50 state capitals. When I see them on a map, oh sure, they look familiar. And I can confidently name the capital city of every state I've ever lived in (which is precisely three). But pressed to list of all the Union landmarks on a test, I'd definitely get a big, fat F (for forgetful).

Of course, nobody can be expected to remember every academic morsel ever force fed into their brain. But sometimes I worry that my Thinking Cap caught a snag

and is slowly unraveling.

I have become scatterbrained, routinely searching for glasses that are atop my head or walking into a room with brisk intention only to find myself wondering, why did I come in here?

Not to mention the umpteen times I've left my purse at a restaurant (usually next to the doggy bag I requested). The first few U-turns, my husband was sincerely concerned for the safety of my belongings. Later, he became irritated with my idiocy. Now he is numb.

Going in to claim my deserted satchel is aptly called the Walk of Shame.

But those slights are nothing. It's my poor recollection of names, especially under pressure, which causes me the greatest embarrassment.

I dread unexpected

encounters at the store when I am forced to introduce, say, my best friend to one of my closest colleagues. There's always that awkward moment when one or the other realizes I have no idea what her name is.

I've even tried those memory tricks: Meet a Taylor – rhymes with sailor. So I imagine my new acquaintance sewing a maritime ensemble ... which reminds me of the Broadway show *South Pacific*... which makes me think how much I love New York during the holidays... which gets me contemplating what I should buy my mom for Christmas and...

Um ... what was I writing about? Oh yeah ...

Like most people, my life is a chaotic balancing act and any excerebrose blunders can probably be chalked up to the spinning of too many plates. Multitask is my middle name.

So a team of electronics is employed to remember things for me. My PDA remembers birthdays, my cellular remembers phone numbers and my MP3 player remembers all the songs I like.

With such hi-tech assistance, you'd think I could at least manage to remember to take my keys out of the ignition before locking the car door.

But it's a Catch 22: on one hand, technological advances are helpful but they also make our lives more... and more... and more complicated.

Between deciding what software to use for Internet security, memorizing a bazillion channels on cable TV and figuring out all the buttons on my new digital camera, I am utterly overwhelmed.

My hard drive is maxed out.

It seems every time I add a new piece of data, some random, previously stored bit is automatically deleted. Soon I won't remember what to do with a toenail clipper.

Should fate deliver senility to the stoop of my cerebral door, I doubt friends or family will recognize additional mental failings right away. It probably will take me wandering off in my bloomers looking for my childhood cat before anyone considers dementia. And even then, they may just chalk it

up to quirkiness.

There's a story about an old couple sitting on a park bench. The husband stands up and tells his wife he's going to get some ice cream.

The wife says, "Well, if you're going, get me a scoop of vanilla. Write it down so you won't forget."

"I won't forget," says the husband.

"OK, then get a little chocolate syrup on mine," she adds, "Write it down so you won't forget."

"I won't forget," the husband replies again testily.

"Well then, maybe a little whipped cream and a cherry, too. Write it down so you won't forget."

"I won't forget!" the husband hollers as he leaves.

Awhile later he returns

and hands his wife a bagel. Exasperated, she rolls her eyes and says, "You forgot cream cheese."

I can only hope I never get that bad.

So much depends on – oh, shoot! – I'm supposed to be at our neighbor's party in 10 minutes! Argh! I've got to run ...

Hmmm... what are their names again?

Scottsdale resident Brooke Bessesen is the author and illustrator of the children's book Look Who Lives in the Desert!, a humorous-but-educational look at desert wildlife. It's available at all book retailers, including Gridleys of Fountain Hills.

AZ Opera performing in FH

Arizona Opera is coming to Fountain Hills.

For their first appearance in Fountain Hills, Arizona Opera is presenting two free performances of the one-act opera *Old Maid and the Thief* on Tuesday, Sept. 19 at 10 a.m. for students at Fountain Hills High School and at 7 p.m. for the public at Fountain Hills Presbyterian Church.

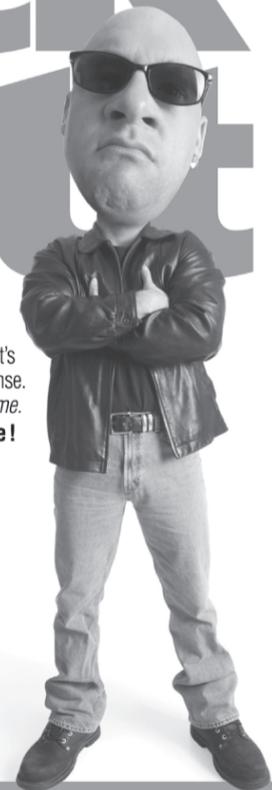
Set in a small town in 20th century America, this lighthearted opera by Gian Carlo Menotti features four characters whose interactive misunderstandings take them through 14 scenes to a humorous and unexpected conclusion.

The free performances are part of the Arizona Opera 2006 School Tour productions.

To keep performances free to students and the public, the Cultural Council has pledged \$800 to cover the cost of one production, and is seeking donations from community members to raise a total of \$1,600 to help Arizona Opera break even for the two Fountain Hills appearances.

To help underwrite the two performances, people may mail a tax deductible check notated "Arizona Opera" and made payable to the Fountain Hills Cultural Council, P.O. Box 18254, Fountain Hills, AZ 85269.

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