

ALSO

TELL EVERYONE ABOUT YOUR FAVORITE PLACE. SEND US YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS. / D18

Cruising Notes D	17
Exchange Rates D	17
Cultural Traveler D	18

GOING PLACES



Be thankful for Cabo San Lucas

For a change of pace, tired turkey carvers might consider a Thanksgiving special at the Marquis Los Cabos Beach, Golf, Spa and Casitas Resort in Mexico. Guests who pay for three nights receive Thanksgiving night free. The cost of the three nights for two people is \$1,540 for a junior suite; \$2,610 for a one-bedroom casita with a private pool. Packages include Thanksgiving dinner; massages for two (normally starting at \$100); daily breakfast; and access to fitness facilities. Information: (877) 238-9399;

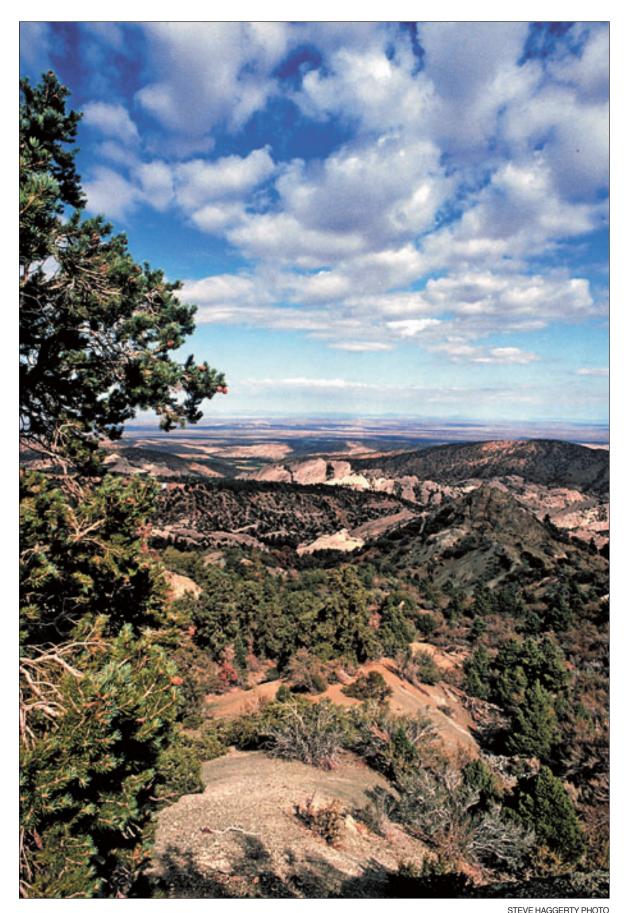
www.marquisloscabos.com. - The New York Times

THIS & THAT

Tippling tips

• On Nov. 24, the British government, apparently sure that mandatory 11 p.m. pub closings have led to binge drinking, will let pubs stay open longer, even up to 24 hours a day, if they can get local government approval.

• There are reports, however, that Barcelona plans to introduce on-the-spot fines aimed at tourists who exhibit public displays of inebriation. The fines could reach 1,500 euros (\$1,830, at \$1.22 to the euro) and a city spokesman said that arriving visitors would receive explanatory leaflets. — The New York Times



OCTOBER 30, 2005 -

Historic sites losing out to deterioration

By GARY A. WARNER THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Dozens of historic sites were damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Katrina in August. While New Orleans' French Quarter and Garden District survived relatively unscathed, places like the antebel-lum historic district of Biloxi, Miss., were ripped apart.

But the dramatic damage is just a fast-forward version of the slower deterioration and destruction affecting hundreds of historic sites across the country and around the world.

Civil War battlefields are being hemmed in by rapid development. A landmark Los Angeles home designed by Frank Lloyd Wright is crumbling under rain-soaked hillsides.

A neglected 18th-century Irish barn and a 2,000-year-old Roman temple flaking apart under the assault of rain and pollution are among the buildings in danger of disappearing forever.

Each year, the nonprofit National Trust for Historic Preservation releases a list of the 11 most endangered sites in North America. The World Monument Fund does the same for the 100 most fragile spots around the world.

The sudden destruction of a hurricane spurs intense attention. The places on these lists are just as vulnerable, though their possible



Severe storms have weakened the Ennis-Brown House, a 1924 Frank Lloyd Wright building in Los Angeles.

demise often occurs amid anonym-ity and neglect. Travelers who seek them out can help call attention to these special places in the life of our civilization.

Since 1988, the Washington, D.C.based group has issued an annual list of the most endangered sites in North America. During that time, 168 buildings and sites have made the roster — including the entire state of Vermont.

The current list:

American historic sites near Washington, D.C.: "The Journey Through Hallowed Ground" corridor, running through Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania, encompasses hundreds of battlefields, historic sites and six homes of former U.S. presidents.

Please see LIST on D17

Wilma's wallop leaves Mexico plans in limbo

By PAMELA LeBLANC

CLOSE TO HOME

Jewish museums

• "Max Liebermann: From Realism to Impressionism" is at L.A.'s Skirball Cultural Center through Jan 29 with more than 70 works by Berlin's premier artist from the mid-1880s until the Nazis seized power in 1933. Admission is free on Thursdays

Information: (310) 440-4500; www.skirball.org.

• Through Feb. 26, San Francisco's Contemporary Jewish Museum is the sole American venue for "Intersections," an exploration of the changing issues of women and faith.

The museum plans to open a new Daniel Libeskind-designed location in the Yerba Buena District's Jessie Street Power Substation in 2007.

Information: (415) 344-8800; www.jmsf.org.

LIST DU JOUR

The most family-friendly resorts in Continental U.S. and Canada, from Travel + Leisure Family magazine:

1. Disney's Wilderness Lodge Resort, Fla.

2. Four Seasons Resort Whistler, British Columbia

3. Disney's Grand Californian Hotel, Anaheim

4. Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa, Fla.

5. Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge, Fla.

6. Keltic Lodge Resort & Spa, Middle Head Peninsula, Nova Scotia

7. Jenny Jake Lodge, Grand Teton National Park, Wyo.

8. Tides Inn., Irvington, Va. 9. Wickaninnish Inn, Tofino, British Columbia

10. Disney's Vero Beach Resort, Vero Beach, Fla.

— Chicago Tribune

The convergence of three unstable faults results in the unique geology of the Devil's Punchbowl.

ON THE ROCKS

In northern Los Angeles County, Devil's Punchbowl reveals nature's power

> By ANNE Z. COOKE and STEVE HAGGERTY NEWS-PRESS CORRESPONDENTS

hey come without warning, tearing the earth and vanishing without an apology. Earthquakes, California's bête noire, lurk in the collective subconscious, out of mind until cupboard doors rattle and things go bump in the night. For sensible people, the less said about them the better. But not at the Devil's Punchbowl, a Los Angeles

County park on the southern fringe of the Mojave Desert, 24 miles from Palmdale. Here where the desert grinds past the San Gabriel Mountains, earthquake power is at the heart of a remarkable geologic marvel.

FOREIGN

John Bordsen

imion Alb, 41, is the New York-

U Tourist Office of North America

west of Alba Iulia, the historic capi-

Question: In America, "Dracula"

Answer: Transylvania may be the

best-known name of a region in the

world, probably due to Bram Stok-

er's contribution: He wrote the novel

"Transylvania" is probably one of

means "Transylvania." Does that

(www.romaniato-

urism.com). He

is a native of

the village of

"Dracula."

Geoagiu de Sus,

10 miles north-

tal of Transylvania.

translate into tourism?

based director of the Romanian

Romania – from CORRESPONDENCE

Please see PARK on D18

the first words people say when they call our New York office; 62 percent

and brochures

mention Tran-

It's not easy to

estimate tourism

money, though.

Transylvania is

sylvania.

of people who call for information

not an administrative region — it's

brings us money, but the name of the

region they learn about from the nov-

beautiful medieval towns and villag-

town in Europe may be the town of

Q: What do people living in Tran-

just a name for the central part of

el. Transylvania is home to some

es. The best-preserved medieval

Sighisoara.

Romania. It's not Dracula who

L. A. County Devil's Punchbowl Park Los Angeles Pacific

itors?

invaders

AUSTIN AMERICAN-STATESMAN

Hurricane Wilma didn't just uproot trees and flood homes from the Caribbean to Florida — she dealt a walloping blow to Mexico's \$11 billion tourism industry.

If you have a trip to the Yucatan coast booked, the storm might have thrown a soggy punch to your vacation plans.

The hurricane smashed Cozumel, a popular spot for divers and cruise ship stops 11 miles off the Mexican mainland. Last weekend Wilma substantially damaged hotels and the Punta Maya Pier for cruise ships was destroyed. Whitesand beaches disappeared in some areas, but early reports from dive shops indicate the famous coral reefs off the island escaped major damage

Although airport and ferry services were restored Tuesday, electricity was still out late last week and cruise ship dockings remained suspended.

After battering Cozumel, Wilma came ashore in a sparsely populated area near Playa del Carmen, a tourist town about 30 miles south of Cancún. It flattened dozens of

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hurricane Wilma did untold damage to the heart of Mexico's \$11 billion tourism industry.

wooden houses before creeping north.

In Cancún, the hurricane sent ocean waves surging over the narrow strip of land known as the hotel zone, flooding streets, shattering windows and tearing off hotel roofs. Falling trees crushed cars and pay phones jutted from waistdeep water. Some beaches were washed away and officials said high-rise resorts could take weeks, if not months, to repair.

So what do you do if you've already booked a trip to the area? "Number one is keep in close con-

Please see MEXICO on D17

Transylvania has gorgeous medieval villages — but no vampires

nicate openly. That's the way they learned about this whole thing. Vlad Draculea — the Romanian prince who inspired the novel lived in the mid-1400s. Most Romanians see Vlad as a hero. He was a very bloody ruler who fought against corruption and against the Turkish

He got his nickname of "Vlad the Impaler" because he used to impale enemies on wooden sticks. He had

sylvania make of vampire-driven vis-

were familiar with the "Dracula"

and finally could have access to

novel and movies until 1990, when

we got rid of the communist regime

more information and could commu-

A: Basically, not many Romanians

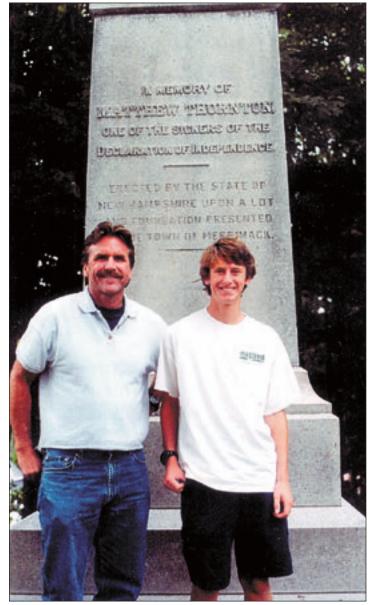
Please see FOREIGN on D17

TOM DE WALT / NEWS-PRESS



Built in 1377 to protect nearby Brasov from invaders, Romania's Bran Castle is often referred to as Dracula's Castle.





Santa Barbarans John Thornton Little, left, and son Matthew Thornton Little visited the Matthew Thornton (1714-1803) monument in Merrimack, N.H. Matthew Thornton is John's

ne of our summer trips this year was to the East Coast to visit Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Connecticut. This was particularly interesting to our children, Nicole and Matthew, since they had never been back east. The first thing they noticed was how green and lush the area was.

great-great-great-great-great-grandfather.

Our first stop was Southbury, Conn. Here we had a pleasant visit with my husband's aunt and cousin whom neither I nor our kids had ever met before. We then drove to the western part of Massachusetts to the quaint towns of Monterey and Stockbridge. In Stockbridge, we visited the Norman Rockwell Museum (www.nrm.org) and saw many of the artist's original paintings. The town itself is like a Rockwell piece since it and its residents inspired many of his paintings.

The trip also included a drive to visit Thornton's Cemetery in Merrimack, N.H. Here we saw



CARRIE LITTLE PHOTO

dote." Engraved at the bottom of his tombstone are the words, "An Honest Man."

We also spent three days in Boston visiting many historic sites including Bunker Hill and Paul Revere's house along the Freedom Trail (www.nps.gov/ bost/freedom trail.htm; www .thefreedomtrail.org). This 21/2mile "trail" takes you to 16 historic sites. One can see the British influence in Boston's brick sidewalks and cobblestone streets which help to make this big city very charming with history virtually around every cor-

- Carrie Little

Wildlife abounds in northern L.A. County

PARK

Continued from Page D16

Your first good look into the 1,310acre Punchbowl will probably be from the viewpoint near the rim, close to the parking area and nature center. Ahead is a basin-like depression, a mile wide and chock-a-block with rocks. Not small rocks nor boulders, but 200-foot slabs of sandstone forced up out of the earth, tilted on end and jumbled like so many matchsticks.

"At first, it all looks alike," says Park Superintendent Dave Numer, who's been studying the Punchbowl first-hand for 30 years. "The more you learn about the geology, the more you see how it was formed."

A WORK IN PROGRESS

The shaping of the park -4,200feet at its lowest point and 6,500 feet at the highest — is a work in progress. Here, where the desert floor rises to meet the slope of the San Gabriel Mountains, three unstable faults — the San Andreas, Pinyon and Punchbowl — converge in a fracture zone one to two miles below the crust.

As the Mojave Desert pushes past the mountains (about two inches each year), immense pressures squeeze the underlying sandstone layers, forcing them upward. Over the millennia, erosion by wind and water wears away softer stone, digging the bowl deeper and exposing a forest of peaks and pinnacles. Between the nooks and crannies, junipers and piñon pines have put down roots, nourishing an ecosystem friendly to mule deer, bobcat, coyotes, ground squirrels, lizards, birds and insects.

When the park was created in 1963, open country surrounded it. Since then, the Antelope Valley has filled with people, bringing the park closer and making it a popular destination for weekend recreation: hiking, mountain biking, nature walks, picnicking and birding. For photographers, the area's dramatic rock formations, sunny days and constantly changing colors are a magnet, especially in winter when snow frosts the red bark of the manzanita and green pines.

"We're getting triple the number of visitors we had when I started here," says Jack Farley, a park ranger in charge of grounds and maintenance. "The busiest days used to be spring and fall weekends, when the weather is moderate, with temperatures between 50 to 75 degrees. Now we get a constant trickle all year."

KEEPING IT REAL

As people and wilderness push against each other, the impact from overuse is inevitable. In some cases, protecting the park's wild spaces takes precedence over attracting



A swarm of lady bugs overwinters on a log at Devil's Punchbowl County Park.

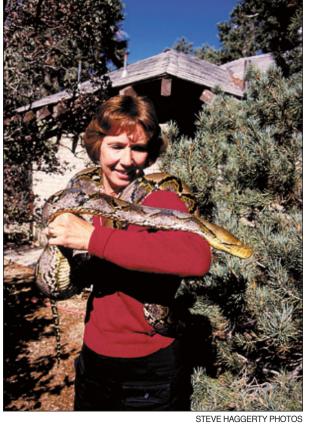


The Devil's Punchbowl was formed by pebble-and-cobble sandstone, folded, uplifted and eroded.

IF YOU GO

The Punchbowl has bathrooms but no food, so bring drinks and a lunch. The picnic area under the pines has a dozen tables and braziers for cooking hot dogs. School groups are welcome; to schedule activities, call in advance. The park is open from dawn to dusk but there is no overnight camping. The visitors center is open daily from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Entrance is free.

the Pacific Coast stumbled upon it. For a century, the only people who visited the site, one of Southern California's most unusual geologic formations, came on foot, hiking down to the Punchbowl through the Ange les National Forest. Finally in the late 1950s, the Los Angeles County purchased 40 acres of private land along the rim of an adjacent canyon and built an access road and a parking lot. The ranger station dates from the same era. As the only full-time employees at the Punchbowl, Mr. Numer and Mr. Farley are primarily responsible for administration and supervision. But over the years they've developed a variety of naturalist programs for one-time visitors and school group field trips. Some programs, such as the "Full Moon Hikes" and "Meteor Shower Viewing," are seasonal. Most, however, are offered weekly for all ages: Nature walks, junior ranger activities and campfire programs. For kids, Mr. Numer suggests



The Nature Center houses animal exhibits including this non-native boa constrictor.

the trailhead, in a ravine where a pipe carries spring water down to the nature center, you may spot millions of migrating ladybugs. They collect here in the autumn, massing on rocks and logs, looking for a protected place to overwinter.

For the last half-mile, the trail descends on 10 steep switchbacks to the Devil's Chair, a narrow sandstone finger (enclosed in a guardrail for safety) that pushes out above the canyon floor. Though it's intended to be an observation point, there's just enough room to sit and eat lunch.

If you're really ambitious — and not in a hurry to get back to your car -you can continue hiking through the national forest on trails that lead to South Fork Campground and beyond, eventually connecting to the Pacific Crest Trail. You may see horseback riders or mountain bikers here; the trails are open to both.

FLORA AND FAUNA

Allow time to visit the nature center, a rustic building with knotty pine paneling. Inside, rows of glass cases and tables exhibit a permanent and revolving collection of artifacts and animals, mostly native to the area. The former include arrowheads, grinding bowls, antlers, a mounted owl and a roadrunner, pieces of bone and native Coulter pine cones.

More interesting is the menagerie, containing seven species of native California snakes in terrariums, three California brown tarantulas, a native honey ant colony, a bee hive and three "unreleasable" raptors.

The largest, a gorgeous Great Horned Owl, damaged a wing on a

the gravesite and monument erected in honor of Matthew Thornton, my husband's ancestor and for whom our son is named. Matthew Thornton signed the Declaration of Independence. He was a surgeon who was the first president of the New Hampshire House of Representatives and an associate justice to the Superior Court. It was said that Matthew Thornton was a man of "commanding presence but of a genial nature remarkable for his wit and great fondness for anec-

Tell us where you've been. Submit a photo of your favorite vacation along with a brief description of the site, what made the trip special and why others might enjoy visiting. Send entries to Al Bonowitz, Santa Barbara News-Press, P.O. Box 1359, Santa Barbara, CA 93102-1359. Include your name, address and phone number. Photos will be held until publication and will be returned if you enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

READERS RECOMMEND

ner.

Tell others about your best travel experiences, including but not limited to attractions, lodging, dining and tour guides. Please keep it brief. Here's an example:

Rubino's Pizza, 2643 E. Main St., Bexley, Ohio. (614) 235-1700. "For my money, this is the planet's finest ultrathin-crust pizza. There is no ambience whatsoever and the same two guys who made the pies when I was in high school are still doing their thing. It's the place to be on a weekend night in this Columbus suburb."

Al Bonowitz Summerland

Send recommendations to Al Bonowitz, Santa Barbara News-Press, P.O. Box 1359, Santa Barbara, CA 93102-1359 or e-mail abonowitz@newspress.com.

Include your name, address and phone number and the address, phone number and Web site of the place or person you are recommending.

Find a cheap gas station? Spread the word

Gasoline prices may be much higher than last year, but a family headed to grandma and grandpa's house for the holidays does not have to be at the mercy of wallet-draining filling stations. A Web site, www.gasbuddy.com, already is on a vigilant price patrol. The site includes Ventura among its listings.

The site's premise is that its 650,000 registered members post daily changes in gasoline prices at stations in the United States and Canada. But any motorist can drive past a station, notice a price and log it onto the Web site. Prices that seem unusually low or high are always doublechecked, or sometimes not posted. "If we don't have accuracy in our listings, we don't have anything, and we aren't taken seriously," said Jason Toews, the site's co-owner.

He said it receives 750,000 to 900,000 unique visitors a day. Traffic on the five-year-old site has tripled in the last year, he said, after tripling the year before that. Motorists who did not seem to be concerned about gas prices before Hurricane Katrina, he added, are worried about them now.

Gasbuddy.com runs and links to 173 Web sites that monitor prices in states, provinces and municipalities. It is possible, Mr. Toews said, to plot gasoline stops on long trips to save money while not going out of your way. 'You can find different pockets of competition," he said.

- The New York Times

newcomers.

"Take the rock climbers, for example," says Mr. Numer. "We've always welcomed them, but there are more of them now, and they're putting in more routes faster than ever, using battery-powered drills and masonry bits.

Hammering pitons into rock to secure climbing ropes was a slow process when climbers hammered them in by hand, he says. "But now they can drill a hole in a few seconds and we don't see or hear them. Yes, they know the rules, but they think just one more hole won't hurt."

Though artifacts found in the area indicate that American Indians may have camped here, the Devil's Punchbowl went unnoticed until 1853, when a government expedition organized to scout railroad routes to

TAKE A HIKE

printed trail guide.

The most popular walk is on the one-mile Loop Trail which starts at the rim and descends 300 feet down into the bottom of the Punchbowl. In spring or after a rainy summer, Punchbowl Creek, a seasonal stream, flows through the canyon, cascading over waterfalls and into scoured-out rock basins before flowing out of the Punchbowl at the low end.

To get there, get on California

Los Angeles. At Palmdale, exit at

California 138 (Pearblossom

right at County Road N6 and

Devil's Punchbowl signs.

Highway 14 from Interstate 5 north of

Highway), driving through the towns

of Littlerock and Pearblossom. Turn

continue for seven miles, following

parks.co.la.ca.us/devil_narea.html.

a walk on the Piñon Pathway, a self-

guided nature trail one-third of a

mile long marked with eight num-

bered points of interest keyed to a

Information: (661) 944-2743; http://

For hikers, the Upper Trail, a 71/2mile roundtrip, follows the canyon rim into the mountains around and above the Punchbowl, through Digger and Ponderosa Pine forests. As the trail climbs, it offers spectacular views of the Punchbowl and the Mojave Desert beyond. A mile from

power line and is unable to hunt for itself. The American kestrel, a small raptor, was raised in a rehab center and is imprinted on people, whom it considers its family. The most elegant is Ruth, the barn owl, also imprinted as a chick. Found when she was too small to survive on her own, Ruth grew up at the Punchbowl and enjoys having her feathers stroked.

Even the snakes provide an occasional dramatic moment. On a recent visit, one of the rattlers stole the spotlight, capturing the attention of several small children and their parents by producing four perfect baby rattlers.

Anne Z. Cooke and Steve Haggerty are Marina del Rey-based freelance writers

Flemish master takes center stage at the Frick

ust opened at New York's prestigious Frick Collection is a singularly rare and exquisitely beautiful show of 15th century art -"Memlings Portraits"

from the hand of Flemish master Hans Memling (c.1435-1494). Highly popular in his

day and much prized in later centuries, though somewhat overlooked in the last one, these works are notable for their extraordinary clarity, purity of line and texture in the then relatively new medium of oil paint, and almost beatific serenity.

The subjects are both religious ("The Virgin and Child With St. Anthony Abbot and a Donor," 1472) and secular ("Portrait of a Man With a Coin of the Emperor Nero," 1473-74).

The "Portrait of a Young Man," from 1480, is a highlight of the exhibition. So absorbing are the faces that one fails to notice the excellence of the backgrounds and perspective.

Memling was born near Mainz, Germany, apparently schooled in Cologne, Germany, and moved to Brugge in what is now Belgium, where he ultimately became the

city's leading painter. He was beset by difficulties later

in life. His wife, Tamme, died in 1487, when their three children were still small, and Brugge

was caught up in bloody political turmoil and economic depression. He painted resolutely

on. There are 30 paintings in this exhibition, which is on view through Dec. 31

1 E. 70th St., New York City; (212) 288-0700; www.frick.org.

The newly designed Nasher Museum of Art at North Carolina's Duke University in Durham has opened to the public with a special exhibition of sculpture, film, photography, video, digital imagery and sound art called "The Forest: Politics, Poetics and Practices.

These varied and highly contemporary artworks in part take a political approach to an appreciation of nature and a lamentation for the great natural forests around the world that are falling victim to mankind's encroachment.

Among the 30 artists from 12 countries it features are Joseph Beuys and Wolfgang Staehle.

The museum will also have on view works from its own collection by Auguste Rodin, Pablo Picasso and Jasper Johns.

The "Forest" show closes Jan. 29; the other will be up through May 21. 2001 Campus Dr. at Anderson Street, Durham, N.C.; (919) 684-5135; www.nasher.duke.edu.

. . .

Baltimore's Walters Art Museum has reopened its original Palazzo Building with a 100th anniversary reinstallation of some 1,500 objects in an exhibition called "Palace of Wonders: The New Galleries of Renaissance and Baroque Art.'

The works include masterpieces by Raphael, El Greco and Veronese, Bernini's sculpture "The Risen Christ," lots of body armor and even a stuffed armadillo. The reinstallation is on view indefinitely.

600 N. Charles St., Baltimore; (410) 547-9000; www.thewalters.org.

New York's Whitney Museum of American Art has put on permanent display a selection of all time favorite Edward Hopper paintings, including "Railroad Sunset," from its rich collection thereof.

Accompanying the Hoppers are Modernist works by contemporaries, including George Bellows and Georgia O'Keeffe.

Madison Avenue at 75th Street, New York City; (800) 944-8639; www .whitney.org.

. . .

Nashville's Frist Center for the Visual Arts offers "Hudson River School: Masterworks From the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art."

An intensely American landscape show, it includes 10 paintings by Thomas Cole, 11 by Frederic Church and five by Albert Bierstadt, among other masterworks. It closes Jan. 8.

919 Broadway, Nashville, Tenn.; (615) 244-3340; www.fristcenter.org.

On view through Nov. 12 at the L.A. Louver Gallery in Venice are two mind-expanding concurrent shows: the human body-part sculptures of Brazilian artist Edgard de Souza and the comic-like landscape drawings of Ken Price.

45 N. Venice Blvd., Venice; (310) 822-4955; www.lalouver.com.

Michael Kilian (1939-2005) wrote for the Chicago Tribune.

CULTURAL TRAVELER **Michael Kilian**