

DEAR ABBY

# Don't invite friends back

**DEAR ABBY:** My husband and I have built and begun using a second home. We have entertained some wonderful houseguests here.

Last weekend, a couple of longtime friends, "Shirley" and "Arnold," came to stay for three days. They were the most miserable three days I can remember, mostly because of Arnold.

He dominated all conversation, expected all his food to be served to him — even though the dessert course was explicitly buffet-style — made noises while eating and never once offered to prepare any food.

The final straw came during the last night of their stay. Arnold came into the living room in his pajamas, laid down on the couch and, when he saw what we were already watching on TV, said, "I prefer the History channel." I was so dumbfounded I could only laugh.

Needless to say, we are not planning to invite Arnold and Shirley back (which creates some other problems). What, if anything, should I say to this couple? And are there any books or other resources on "how to be a good houseguest" that I can send him anonymously? DISTURBED IN THE DESERT

**DEAR DISTURBED:** Because Arnold and Shirley are "longtime friends," it is surprising that you hadn't noticed the husband's boorish behavior before. But sometimes you don't get to



dear abby

really know a person until after you have lived with him.

I do not recommend trying to educate this man on good manners at this late date. It is amazing how thin-skinned people with Arnold's lack of sensitivity for others can be.

Nor should you send him any anonymous literature. He and his wife would know where it came from, so please don't sink to that level.

Sometimes silence speaks the loudest. Do not invite them again, and that will convey your message.

**DEAR ABBY:** My husband and I disagree about when to take down the Christmas decorations. I know there are some superstitions associated with leaving them up too long or taking them down too soon.

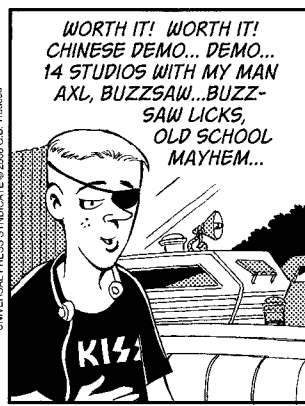
Also, should the tree be taken down before or after the New Year? WEARY ELVES IN TENNESSEE

**DEAR WEARY ELVES:** I am unaware of any superstitions concerning Christmas decorations. Many people leave their decorations (and trees) up if they are entertaining for New Year's Eve.

However, common sense dictates that when the needles start falling and the tree shows signs of drying out, it should be disposed of so it doesn't become a fire hazard.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, Calif. 90069.

DOONESBURY



# Locals talk about audiobook

Two of the desert's most gifted guys have joined their special talents to produce what neither could do alone.

Bill Marx and Gerry Bucci are creating an audiobook, "Son of Harpo Speaks," of Marx's memoir about his famous father.

Harpo's screen trademark was remaining mute as he performed his shenanigans. His best-selling biography was titled "Harpo Speaks." Ergo, Bill's book "Son of Harpo Speaks."

Bill is the Juilliard-trained musician who composed symphonies, performed concertos, released albums and has entertained us from many a desert piano.

Bucci was technical director of televised Olympic games, major sitcoms and celebrity features. His four Emmys stand proudly on a shelf in his Rancho Mirage home.

For a couple of hours most days, Marx and his voice come to Bucci's home and equipment. Marx reads a few pages of his book each time while Bucci records, filling in music and sound effects where appropriate. Bill, who is good at Marx Brothers voices, has them speaking from heaven as Bucci supplies echo chamber effects.

If Marx breathes between sentences or pauses between words, poof, Bucci takes out the breathing, shortens the pauses.

The duo has finished nine of the 24 chapters and expects to finish the product early next year.

"We're like brothers," said Bucci. "We have a lot in common."

For one thing, both were adopted. They have already recorded the place in the book where Marx explains that one condition of his adoption was that it be to a Catholic family. Harpo Marx was Jewish. If you want to know the story of how that



allene arthur

was resolved, read or listen to the book.

## That other sex

Women who attend luncheons given by organizations or charities to present awards or raise funds or install officers or honor someone are used to swarms of other women attendees.

What we're not used to is the masculine presence at affairs usually attended by women.

At the National Philanthropy Day luncheon staged by the Association of Fundraising Professionals, Desert Communities Chapter, at Agua Caliente Casino Resort, there were, of course, the usual herds of well-dressed, sociable, altruistic women.

But the manly addition gave the gathering a subtle shot of testosterone. We love the male presence.

The event's honorees were Peggy and Don Cravens, outstanding philanthropists; the H.N. & Frances C. Berger Foundation, outstanding philanthropic foundation; Robert Fey, outstanding volunteer; Pegasus/Club Kids, outstanding youth in philanthropy; and Family Development, outstanding philanthropic corporation.

Seated around the dining room, like sturdy oaks among a field of blooming

flowers, were College of the Desert president Jerry Patton, COD Foundation president Ward Fredericks, Rancho Mirage Mayor Ron Meebos, Palm Springs Mayor Steve Pougnet and Rancho Mirage library director David Bryant.

Plus Palm Desert Mayor Bob Spiegel; Rancho Mirage councilmen Dana Hobart, Richard Kite and Gordon Moller; and Palm Desert city manager Carlos Ortega.

And Joel Hochberg, Thom Smotrich, Bob Messner and Stan Greene.

Also, Dr. Charles Monell, Dr. Gerald Benston, John Conboy, Marc Glassman, and Ted Fettes, etc.

Some of the men brought their wives, for which we forgive them.

## Sex education

When local writer Diane Marlin-Dirkx was asked what book made the greatest impact on her in her lifetime, the answer wasn't "War and Peace" or "The Brothers Karamazov" or "Ulysses."

It was "Not As a Stranger," which she read in her teen years because it introduced her to sex.

"What were those two horses doing? Fighting?" she asked her girlfriend, who had loaned her the book, about one sequence she hadn't understood. Thus, Diane learned about the birds and the bees. And the horses.

From then on, Diane never looked at adults the same way. Everyone was suspect — her parents, teachers, clergymen, that couple at the next table in the restaurant.

Allene Arthur's column appears Mondays. Reach her at 323-6014; fax 323-5816; e-mail [arthur7@aol.com](mailto:arthur7@aol.com)

# GIFTS: It's better to do than receive

Continued from D1

Bill Russell. If you have the money, taking the family to an NBA basketball game is a great holiday experience.

Go to [nba.com](http://nba.com) for schedules and links to individual team sites.

Me? Maybe I'll go to a Clippers game.

— BRUCE FESSIER

## GIFT OF TIME

If you've ever been without access to a clock or time piece (like in a casino), you know that disconcerting feeling. Now imagine what it's like to be blind.

The Braille Institute sells talking watches for \$30 to \$40, depending on what kind of bells and whistles (so to speak) you want as extras.

Institute official Barry Hamm actually doesn't rec-



Talking watch for the blind

ommend watches with alarms for everyone because turning them off can generate a panic attack. But, if you're going to give a blind person a watch, remember, it's also a good idea to give your time to make your gift more valuable.

— BRUCE FESSIER

## THERAPY SESSION

You can go to a local mall and get a good rub-down.

But, for a special holiday gift, give your loved one some real pampering at a local spa.

There are a number of great spas around the Coachella Valley, but the newest, at the Riviera Resort & Spa in Palm Springs, offers a surreal envi-

ronment as well as the works.

The Watsu Experience gives you a choice of different types of exotic massages, including a specialty from the South Pacific, plus a scrub or a wrap and a dip in a whirlpool with palm trees around it to give you that mid-century modern feel.

Call 327-8311 for prices and availability.

— BRUCE FESSIER

## TURN UP THE HEAT

Whether you have trouble boiling water or you want to cook like Emeril Lagasse, Cooking with Class in La Quinta has classes for people of all kitchen skill levels.

And ages, said Jane Angwin, who owns the cooking school with her daughter, Executive Chef Angie Hubka.

There are classes for kids that teach kitchen safety and hygiene in addition to teaching how to make more than a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

Start with a knife basics class (\$55) or go for the 26-week professional series or 10-week baking series.

Most single, hands-on classes run \$60-\$75, "depending on whether there's wine involved," Angwin said.

Cooking with Class is at 47-875 Caleo Bay Drive, Suite A107 (near Rite Aid on Washington Street and Avenue 48).

Information: 777-1161; [cookingwithclasslaquinta.com](http://cookingwithclasslaquinta.com).

— JUDITH SALKIN

# VIDEOS: Top videos on Web not all politics

Continued from D1

comparing Obama's celebrity to that of Britney Spears and Paris Hilton, the hotel heiress jumped right into the fray. Sitting poolside in a bikini, Hilton announced her mock-candidacy for the presidency. More than 8 million watched.

**7. Sarah Silverman and Matt Damon:** ABC's Jimmy Kimmel got an interesting surprise from his then-girlfriend Sarah Silverman during a show in early 2008. In the video — the name of which isn't fit to print — Silverman ever so slightly suggested that she was sleeping with Matt Damon.

**8. Puppy Cam:** The litter is now being dispersed, but while the six Shiba Inu pups were together, they were stars on Ustream.tv's "Puppy Cam." More than 4 million watched the young dogs — Autumn, Amaya, Aymui, Aki, Akoni and Ando — grow up.

**9. Frozen Grand Central:** Flash mobs seem so early 2000s, but one stunt by the New York comedy troupe Improv Everywhere discovered that jokes on a bewildered public can still charm. In a video posted in late January, the group gathered 200 "agents" to suddenly stand frozen in place at New York's Grand Central Terminal for five minutes while confused travelers gawked at the strange sight. The video has been watched by more than 14 million.

**10. Late-night hosts brawl:** During the writers strike, late-night hosts were downright desperate for material. So in a mock feud over who was most influential to Mike Huckabee's unlikely rise among Republican presidential candidates, Conan O'Brien, Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert convened to settle the score. In a hysterical fight, the three hosts battled to a perfect tri-knock-out.

**Cinemas PALME D'OR**  
STARTS FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19  
ADVANCE TICKETS ON SALE NOW!

MERYL STREEP  
PHILIP SEYMOUR HOFFMAN  
AMY ADAMS  
**DOUBT**

**MILK**  
ON TWO SCREENS! 10:00a-11:15a  
12:50-2:05-3:40-4:55-6:30-7:45-9:20-10:35

Vanessa REDGRAVE Imelda STAUNTON Brenda BRITNER Hayley ATYIA  
**how about you**  
Exclusive! 11:00a  
1:30-4:00-6:45-9:15

A DANNY BOYLE FILM  
**slumdog millionaire**  
10:45a-1:30-4:15-7:05-9:50

NICOLE KIDMAN / HUGH JACKMAN  
**AUSTRALIA**  
ON TWO SCREENS!  
10:30a-12:20-1:50-5:10-7:00-8:30-10:15

Vince VAUGHN Reese WITHERSPON  
**FOUR CHRISTMASSES**  
10:45a-1:00-3:15-5:30-7:45-10:00

THE BOY IN THE STRIPED PAJAMAS  
10:30a-12:45-3:00-5:15-7:30-9:45

KRISTIN SCOTT THOMAS  
I'VE LOVED YOU SO LONG  
11:05a-1:50-4:35-7:20-10:05

JOHN TRAVOLTA  
MILEY CYRUS  
in DISNEY DIGITAL 3D  
presented on our 47-foot screen!  
10:00a-12:15-2:30-4:45

RACHEL GETTING MARRIED!  
Exclusive! 4:00-7:00-9:30  
(No 7:00 Tues. 12:15)

72840 Highway 111, | Montrey (Westfield Palm Desert)  
(760) 779-0730 • [www.ThePalme.com](http://www.ThePalme.com)

**HOLIDAY GIFT CERTIFICATES**  
Now Available!

"THEY SING, THEY DANCE, THEY'RE ANCIENT, AND THEY DRAW SELLOUT CROWDS!"  
People Magazine

**GET YOUR KICKS!**

**FOLIES**  
GUEST HEADLINER  
**FREDA PAYNE**  
THRU DEC 31, 2008

AT THE HISTORIC PLAZA THEATRE  
**(760) 327-0225**  
Buy tickets online now at [www.psfollies.com/ds](http://www.psfollies.com/ds)

**REGAL CINEMAS**  
BARGAIN SHOWS (I) DP = Digital Projection  
\*Pass/Discount Restrictions Apply

**RANCHO MIRAGE STADIUM 16**  
72-777 Dinah Shore Dr. 800-FANDANGO 6934

Adv. Tix on Sale **BEDTIME STORIES** (PG-13) (12:20 2:30 4:50) 7:10 9:45  
Adv. Tix on Sale **YES MAN** (PG-13) (12:30 3:45) 7:15 9:15  
Adv. Tix on Sale **SEVEN POUNDS** (PG-13) (12:30 3:45) 7:15 9:15  
Adv. Tix on Sale **THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL** (PG-13) (10:00 5:00) 7:25 9:50  
Adv. Tix on Sale **QUANTUM OF SOLACE** (PG-13) (12:35 3:50) 6:25 9:50  
Adv. Tix on Sale **ROLE MODELS (R) - ID REQ'D** (PG-13) (12:35 3:50) 6:25 9:50  
Adv. Tix on Sale **MADAGASCAR 2: ESCAPE TO AFRICA** (PG) (12:05 2:20 4:35) 6:50 9:25  
Adv. Tix on Sale **CHANGELING (R) - ID REQ'D** (PG-13) (1:55) 3:30 6:40 9:45

**PALM SPRINGS STADIUM 9**  
760-Telstar Canyon Blvd. 800-FANDANGO 6944

Adv. Tix on Sale **BEDTIME STORIES** (PG-13) (12:20 2:30 4:50) 7:10 9:45  
Adv. Tix on Sale **YES MAN** (PG-13) (12:30 3:45) 7:15 9:15  
Adv. Tix on Sale **SEVEN POUNDS** (PG-13) (12:30 3:45) 7:15 9:15  
Adv. Tix on Sale **THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL** (PG-13) (10:00 5:00) 7:25 9:50  
Adv. Tix on Sale **QUANTUM OF SOLACE** (PG-13) (12:35 3:50) 6:25 9:50  
Adv. Tix on Sale **ROLE MODELS (R) - ID REQ'D** (PG-13) (12:35 3:50) 6:25 9:50  
Adv. Tix on Sale **MADAGASCAR 2: ESCAPE TO AFRICA** (PG) (12:05 2:20 4:35) 6:50 9:25  
Adv. Tix on Sale **CHANGELING (R) - ID REQ'D** (PG-13) (1:55) 3:30 6:40 9:45

**INDIO METRO 8**  
84-725 Hwy 111 @ Monroe 800-FANDANGO 6954

Adv. Tix on Sale **BEDTIME STORIES** (PG-13) (12:20 2:30 4:50) 7:10 9:45  
Adv. Tix on Sale **YES MAN** (PG-13) (12:30 3:45) 7:15 9:15  
Adv. Tix on Sale **SEVEN POUNDS** (PG-13) (12:30 3:45) 7:15 9:15  
Adv. Tix on Sale **THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL** (PG-13) (10:00 5:00) 7:25 9:50  
Adv. Tix on Sale **QUANTUM OF SOLACE** (PG-13) (12:35 3:50) 6:25 9:50  
Adv. Tix on Sale **ROLE MODELS (R) - ID REQ'D** (PG-13) (12:35 3:50) 6:25 9:50  
Adv. Tix on Sale **MADAGASCAR 2: ESCAPE TO AFRICA** (PG) (12:05 2:20 4:35) 6:50 9:25  
Adv. Tix on Sale **CHANGELING (R) - ID REQ'D** (PG-13) (1:55) 3:30 6:40 9:45

Times For 12/15 © 2008 [www.REGALCINEMAS.COM](http://www.REGALCINEMAS.COM)

**North American Cinemas** ALL DIGITAL SOUND ALL STADIUM SEATING

[www.srentertainmentgrp.com](http://www.srentertainmentgrp.com)

**MARY PICKFORD THEATRE**  
36-850 Pickfair Street  
Downtown Cathedral City  
760-328-7100

Matinee Showtimes in (I).  
\*THX Showtimes in Bold (subject to change).  
\*Attractions-No Tuesday Discount or Passes

★ **THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL** (PG-13)  
(11:30) (12:30) (2:00) (3:00) (4:30)  
(5:30) 7:10 8:10 9:30 10:30

★ **NOTHING LIKE THE HOLIDAYS** (PG-13)  
(11:40) (2:10) (4:35) 6:55 9:15

★ **DELGO** (PG)  
(11:15) (1:25) (3:45) 6:30 8:40

★ **PUNISHER: WAR ZONE (R)**  
(12:00) (2:30) 5:05 7:40 10:05

**NOBEL SON (R)**  
9:40PM ONLY

**AUSTRALIA** (PG-13)  
(11:00) (12:15) (3:15) (4:15) 7:00 8:00

★ **FOUR CHRISTMASSES** (PG-13)  
(11:25) (12:25) (1:40) (2:40) (4:00) (5:00) 6:15 7:15 8:25 9:40

★ **TRANSPORTER 3** (PG-13)  
(11:05) (1:30) (4:10) 7:35 10:00

★ **QUANTUM OF SOLACE** (PG-13)  
(11:45) (2:20) (4:45) 7:05 9:25

★ **BOLT** (PG)  
(12:20) (2:35) (4:50) 7:20 9:35

★ **TWILIGHT** (PG-13)  
(11:10) (1:35) (4:25) 7:30 10:15

★ **MADAGASCAR 2** (PG)  
(12:35) (3:05) (5:10) 7:25

**IMAX**  
68-510 E. PALM CANYON, CATHEDRAL CITY  
760-324-7333 Prices vary by movie

**DINOSAURS ALIVE 3D!**  
11:00AM

**DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL** (PG-13)  
12:15PM, 2:30PM, 4:45PM, 7:00PM, 9:15PM

**CINEMARK**  
The Best Seat in Town

Advance tickets & showtimes available online at [cinemark.com](http://cinemark.com)

**CENTURY 15 @ THE RIVER** 71800 HWY 111 & Bob Hope Dr. 1-800-FANDANGO • Exp 917#

ADULT MATINEE MON-FRI BEFORE 6PM (SAT-SUN/HOLIDAYS BEFORE 7PM) \$7.25

Now we have advance tickets for sale for the following movies and events:  
\*Yes Man, \*Seven Pounds, and the \*Metropolitan Opera: "The Encore."

★ **Cadillac Records R**  
11:25 2:00 4:40 7:20 9:55

★ **Changeling R**  
11:20 2:40 5:30 9:00

★ **Day the Earth Stood Still PG-13**  
11:00 1:50 4:45 7:35 10:30

★ **Delgo PG**  
12:00 2:25 4:50 7:25 9:50

★ **Madagascar 2: Escape 2 Africa PG**  
11:35 2:15 4:35 7:00 9:25

★ **Nothing Like the Holidays PG-13**  
11:45 2:00 4:55 7:30 10:05

★ **Punisher: War Zone R**  
11:25 2:05 5:05 7:45 10:15

★ **Quantum of Solace PG-13**  
11:10 12:15 1:40 2:45 4:10

★ **Role Models R**  
11:15 1:50 4:25 7:05 9:40

★ **Transporter 3 PG-13**  
11:05 1:25 4:05 6:45 9:25

★ **Twilight PG-13**  
11:05 12:05 1:55 2:50 4:45

11:45 2:00 4:55 7:30 10:05

CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED  
♦ NO PASSES-NO CLASSIC SUPERSAVERS ♦

**CAMELOT THEATRES** (I) Discounted Admission (I)

**MILK**  
Sean Penn Josh Brolin  
(11:00) 2:00 5:00 (8:00)

**Slumdog Millionaire**  
(11:30) 2:30 5:30 (8:15)

**The Boy in the Striped Pajamas**  
(12:15) 2:45 5:15 7:45

**Coming Soon**  
A Christmas Tale  
Waltz With Bashir  
Revolutionary Road

**CAMELOT Dine-In Take-Out** 325-6588  
Fri - Sat  
11:30 AM to 8:00 PM  
Sun, Wed & Thurs  
11:30 AM to 6:00 PM  
CLOSED MON & TUES

**Camelot Cinebar**  
Full Service Bar 325-6565  
THURSDAY - SUNDAY  
4:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Times valid: Sunday, December 14th to Thursday, December 18th  
2300 E Baristo Rd, Palm Springs - [www.CamelotTheatres.com](http://www.CamelotTheatres.com) (760) 325-6565