



'Renaissance Woman' Pat Launer adds 'artist' to resume. See page B13

# LifeStyles

Thursday, May 26, 2011

North Coast Rep's 'My Name is Asher Lev' is 'about being true to yourself.' See page B7



## SECTION B

### 10 QUESTIONS

## Orr savors life as Master Sommelier

As the wine director for new San Diego wine company Vineagogo, Del Mar resident Josh Orr is occasionally spotted around town making deliveries or appearances in "Merlot," the company's 1964 DIVCO milk truck. After months of diligent studying, Orr recently achieved his personal goal of receiving the Rudd Scholarship for top honors in passing the advanced certification from the Court of Master Sommeliers, making him one of less than 400 Advanced Sommeliers worldwide. As a result, Orr is currently a candidate to become a Master Sommelier, of which there are less than 200 internationally.



Josh Orr

Orr found his passion for wine while at college in San Luis Obispo, Calif., which was a bit out of left field being that he was raised in the conservative confines of Salt Lake City, Utah. Moving from one wine-centric area to another, he spent one year in the famed Burgundy wine region of France, and continued his wine journey working as a sommelier at Mario Batali's B&B Ristorante, and Fiamma Trattoria in Las Vegas. Orr and his fiancée, Megan Boyer, are planning to wed this summer, and are excited to start their lives together while living in San Diego.

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### 1. What brought you to this area?

San Diego is such a beautiful area that the thought of staying in Vegas or moving here didn't even raise an eyebrow. The wild and nonstop nature of Vegas appeals to the weekend warrior, however locals always seem to be looking for a way out. So when one arose, especially to a place like San Diego, I jumped at it and am thankful I did. San Diego was an easy choice because of how great life is here and landing a job at Vineagogo just sealed the deal.

### 2. What makes this area special to you? Anything you'd like to see improved?

San Diego has a unique combination of big city living and cali-surfer-laid-back lifestyles. It is also really nice being close to the ocean.

I would like to see more people push the envelope with food and wine the way it seems the breweries do down here. There is an incredible culture for artisan beer here, maybe the best in the world. If wine could channel even half that energy and enthusi-

SEE QUESTIONS, B9

## Science professor tackles 'unfinished business' of writing thriller and science fiction novels

Author to discuss novel at Mysterious Galaxy bookstore

BY ARTHUR LIGHTBOURN  
Contributor

For Marc André Meyers, Ph.D., whose continuing career as a researcher spanning more than 40 years has gained him a worldwide scientific reputation, writing novels is simply taking care of "unfinished business," something he always wanted to do and is now doing.

Meyers is a Distinguished Professor of Materials Science at the University of California San Diego.

He heads a materials science group at UCSD: he is an expert in explosives, but for the past 10 years has concentrated on applying his research to biological materials; he is the author of three science and engineering books, including the classic textbook, "Dynamic Behavior of Materials" (J. Wiley, 1994); and, most recently, he authored two novels, the December-released thriller "Chechnya Jihad" and the 2006 science fiction novel "Mayan Mars."

A book-signing and discussion with Meyers is scheduled for Saturday, May 28, at 2 p.m. in the Mysterious Galaxy bookstore, 7051 Clairemont Mesa Blvd., Suite #302, San Diego; and at the UCSD Bookstore, Tuesday, May 31, at noon.

We interviewed Meyers recently in his bungalow-style home near the beach in Del Mar.

At 64, Meyers is gray-haired, tall, lean, sophisticated, well-travelled, fluent in five languages, a divorced father of two grown children and grandfather of two, who keeps in shape surfing, jogging and kayaking.

He was born in João Montevade, Brazil, "a deep valley, surrounded by woods and the pungent smell of a steel plant that spewed fire and dust over the region."

Meyers showed an early talent and enthusiasm for writing that was encouraged in school by Dutch nuns and a priest, Padre Henriques, who formed a literary association.

The boy dreamt of one day becoming a writer.

"But my father was an engineer and he said: 'Marc, study engineering and you'll always have a good job.'"

Meyers' father was a metallurgical engineer who, with a group of other engineers, had emigrated from Luxembourg to build the town's steel plant. Meyers was one of four brothers in his family. Before beginning his engineering studies at Brazil's Federal University of Minas Gerais, he studied in Belgium, interned as a newspaper reporter in Brazil and served in the Brazilian Army.

In his senior year of engineering, ("I don't recall which dictator ruled Brazil at the time") he completed a book of poetry, with



Marc André Meyers, Ph.D. (PHOTO: JON CLARK)

the provocative title IMPLOSAO (Implosion), and had 60 moonlight copies printed at the university print shop.

He wanted to become a published poet before going to graduate school.

"At the time, and unknowingly to us, military censors would routinely check every printed word in university print shops," Meyers said.

Shortly afterwards, the director of the school called Meyers in and told him that the feared SNI (National Information Service) had paid a visit and were demanding an explanation for the publication of Meyer's poems which they considered as "inflammatory and subversive material."

If they opened an investigation, Meyers would have had to remain in Brazil for three years and delay going to graduate school in the U.S.

Meyers chose to leave Brazil in a hurry, forfeiting a Fulbright fellowship for which he had been a finalist.

Thirty years later, he would republish his original poems, translated into English, and with additional poems, titled Abcession/Implosion (Writers Club Press. 2001).

After leaving Brazil, Meyers joined his brother in Denver, where he obtained an assistantship at the University of Denver, and later earned a master's degree and doctorate in materials science and engineering.

### Quick Facts

**Name:** Marc André Meyers, Ph.D.

**Distinction:** A Distinguished Professor of Materials Science at UCSD and an expert in explosives, Marc Meyers is also the author of two novels, the science fiction genre "Mayan Mars" and the thriller "Chechnya Jihad." He is currently working on a third novel.

**Resident of:** Del Mar

**Born:** João Montevade, Brazil, 64 years ago

**Education:** B.S. in mechanical engineering, Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil, 1969; M.S. and Ph.D., in materials science and engineering, University of Denver, 1972 and 1974 respectively.

**Family:** Divorced father of two grown children and grandfather of two.

**Interests:** Writing, travel, surfing, kayaking and jogging

**Current reading:** "The River of Doubt: Theodore Roosevelt's Darkest Journey" (a journey Roosevelt made down an unexplored tributary of the Amazon), by Candace Millard

**Favorite getaways:** Brazil and Luxembourg

**Languages:** English, Portuguese, Spanish, French and German

**Philosophy:** "I try to be a good Christian."

## Annual Beer & Sake Festival to be held June 23 at Marriott Del Mar

The Japan Society of San Diego and Tijuana (JSSDT) will host the ninth Annual Beer & Sake Festival on Thursday, June 23, from 6-9 p.m. at the San Diego Marriott Del Mar. The tasting event brings together San Diego's top chefs to showcase their Japanese culinary and sake traditions for the San Diego community.

The festival will highlight imported Japanese beers and local microbrews and a vast variety of sake. In addition to the tastings, the festival will feature culinary creations from the most talented chefs in San Diego. Restaurants including Top of the Market, Sushi on a Roll, The Marine Room, Alchemy, Shimbashi Izakaya, Negai, Stone Brewing World Bistro & Gardens and more will display signature dishes and sushi creations.

The San Diego Marriott Del Mar is located at 11966 El Camino Real, San Diego, 92130. Admission to the festival is \$60 per person or \$40 for JSSDT members and can be purchased online at <http://2011beerandsakefestival.eventbrite.com>.

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## OBITUARIES



**Ina Elizabeth  
"Inabeth"  
Wheeler  
1917 - 2011**

Inabeth Wheeler, resident of Del Mar Terrace for 60 years, passed away at home in Romoland, California, May 8, 2011, from complications following a stroke. The oldest child of Howard Norman Wheeler and Ina Christine Andersen Wheeler was born in Lake Township, Pocahontas Co., Iowa, on September 27, 1917. She attended schools in Des Moines, Del Mar (10th St. school) and graduated from Winona High, Winona, MO, in 1934.

Inabeth, her mother Ina C Wheeler, and her siblings

were some of the first residents of Del Mar Terrace. She worked at Convair during WWII. For thirty-one years she worked for Solana Lumber in bookkeeping, payroll and special orders. Inabeth and her mother were involved in getting San Diego water to Del Mar Terrace. She worked on the Election Board and was active in local causes. Neighbors remember her walking her dog around the loop twice a day.

In 2003 Inabeth moved in with her niece and nephew-in-law, Adele and Matthew Collins of Romoland, California.

She is predeceased by sister, Norma Harriet Hawes, and brothers, Wallace Howard Wheeler and George Albert Wheeler. She is survived by her nieces, Adele Marie Collins, Inarose Ann Verdugo, and Jerry Christina Wheeler; and nephews, Richard Wallace Brogan, George Albert Wheeler Jr., Howard William Wheeler and Dale Robert Wheeler; four grand nieces; five grand nephews; and two great-grand nieces.

A Memorial Service will be held Saturday, June 4, 2011, at 10 a.m. at the

Nuevo Community Church, 29734 Nuevo Road, Nuevo, CA 92567.

In lieu of flowers, please give to Breast Cancer Research Foundation, <http://www.bcrfcure.org/> or the Alzheimer's Foundation of America, <http://www.alzfdn.org>.

Please sign the guest book online at [www.legacy.com/obituaries/delmartimes](http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/delmartimes).

### Albert C. Wassel 1920 - 2011

Mr. Wassel, 90, of Solana Beach, passed away May 19, 2011. Services will be private.



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## SCIENCE

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"That's where I learned about explosives. They had an explosives center there," he said.

After four years in Denver, he returned to Brazil and, for the military, in Rio de Janeiro, set up the country's first explosives lab.

He subsequently, on invitation, returned to the U.S. as a visiting professor at the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology; then to New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, which has the most extensive university explosives lab in the world and where he remained for 10 years. In 1989, he joined UCSD.

His novel "Chechnya Jihad" revolves around the accidental discovery by university research professor Jean-Claude Delvaux in New Mexico of a biology-enhanced super explosive dubbed C4 that is 10 times more powerful than conventional explosives. When the explosive is stolen, Delvaux volunteers for a NSA/CIA-led commando raid launched from Chechnya and aided by Chechen Muslim mercenaries to retrieve the explosive from a Russian biological/chemical warfare lab in Siberia where it was to be analyzed.

Moved by the Chechens' struggle for independence from Russia, Delvaux serves as a guerilla sniper, using 7.62 mm cartridges hand-loaded with small amounts of his C4 explosive to destroy scores of the Russian reactive armor T72 tanks, in the First Chechen War in 1994. He also becomes disillusioned with the cruelty of war. He re-

turns to the States and to a professorship at Harvard, a new marriage and the birth of a son, only to be lured back to Chechnya in 2006 and into the continuing struggle that has become part of al-Qaeda's global jihad or "holy war."

What prompted Meyers to write about Chechnya and jihad?

From 1994 to 1996, Meyers traveled to the Soviet Union four times as one of the key liaison scientists in a technological exchange program on the effects of explosives in metals with Russian scientists. One of the conferences was held at the foot of Mount Elbrus in the Caucasus close to Chechnya.

"I could feel the tension between the local Muslim population and the Russians," Meyers said.

"They felt the Russians were invaders. They stopped a funicular and let the Russians hang there for an hour or so. The driver almost capsized our bus. These were not accidental events.

"At the same time the Chechen movement started up for independence and I became interested and started reading up on it."

Despite overwhelming manpower, weaponry and air support, Russian forces have been unable to establish permanent control over the mountainous Northern Caucasus region.

"The cruelty of this war haunted me for a long time," Meyers said. "They are still fighting, and I think, at the end of the day, they will be free and the Caucasus will not be part of Russia."

With limited time because of his academic and research responsibilities at

UCSD, when he's in the writing mode, Meyers writes every morning for an hour and 15 minutes and when traveling on planes he puts in six to eight hours.

His earlier novel, "Mayan Mars," was a science fiction work in which widowed professor Gustavo Chen is invited to take part in a mysterious space research project in which he must confront and attempt to defeat a mutated virus that threatens humanity.

"Mayan Mars" is available on Kindle and "Chechnya Jihad" will soon also be available on Kindle.

He is currently working on a third novel, "Squid," "a Baja/narco/fantasy." And he is looking for a literary agent to represent him.

He describes his reading habits, even to this day, as "omnivorous." "I started in childhood with Edgar Rice Burroughs (Tarzan books) and all of Conan Doyle (Sherlock Holmes) and went on to Hemingway, Hesse, Dostoyevsky, Camus, de Chardin, Dumas, Neruda, pulp and Latin American authors. Whatever I could get my hands on. The good, the bad and the ugly stuff.

"What I like about Hemingway is that he does not succumb to the intellectual temptation of writing about inner voyages devoid of action.

"He was an inspiration to me and I admire his strength and vigor, symbolic of this nation.

"Maybe I'm not a famous writer or a great writer," he said, "but I write and I struggle and I improve. You learn writing by writing."

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