



Tailpipe tally

The Worldwatch Institute says 41 million new cars rolled off the planet's assembly lines in 2003. About 4 million were in China, where sales and traffic are burgeoning. The Model T got better

gas mileage a century ago than Ford's average vehicle now. How does your vehicle stack up emissions-wise? Check it out at www.environmentaldefense.org/tailpipetally/.

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Jacquelyn Mitchard

THE REST OF US



Discuss suicide with kids

Melissa first wrote me before her son was buried.

"Suicide. People have to say it over and over," she said. "People have to see. He didn't die suddenly, accidentally. He killed himself. People have to know that even a kid who seems happy can be at risk. People are afraid to talk with me because my son killed himself. But I want it talked about. I want it talked about."

It was a busy Friday. Adam, only 18 years old, had things to do — a new job, for one.

Sure, he was a moody teenager. He had reason. He'd had scrapes with drugs in the past, but the random testing his parents insisted upon showed no traces of marijuana. He'd fathered a child when he was only 16. He kept a lot in, as boys will do.

Suicide was something Melissa and her husband didn't talk about with Adam. She figured, in many ways correctly, that he "was still (somewhat) a child . . . struggling to find a way, but slowly beginning to grow and mature . . . and none of his (mistakes) were so devastating they could not be overcome, or so I thought."

She thought that up until she found her son on a bathroom floor awash with blood that might have come from Melissa's own heart, his step-dad's police service pistol by his side.

When there is a murder in a school, or a fatal car wreck, grief counselors come. If it is a small school, perhaps the same thing happens with a suicide. But often parents are ashamed — they feel they've failed a child so much that even living is unbearable — and as Melissa says, she senses others assuring themselves that it couldn't happen to their girl, their boy.

In fact, it happens to more than 4,000 teenagers each year in the United States. Suicide ranks as the third leading cause of death among young people between ages 15 and 19. Girls try more often; boys more often succeed. Some are clearly depressed, but some are not. Many are popular.

However, for Melissa and her husband and Adam's older brother, also a quiet boy, now frozen in grief, it *will* last forever.

The questions will last forever, as they will for two fathers of my acquaintance — whose beautiful ninth-grade daughter and whose funny sixth-grade son died by hanging. Her parents knew the moment might come. She had tried before. Even the fact that her mom was a mental health professional couldn't help.

More than 300 people gave money in memory of Adam, which Melissa donated to SAVE (Suicide Awareness Voice of Education), www.save.org, for suicide prevention.

Adam didn't know how people cared. He didn't think he could outlive the pain.

A few days after I first spoke to Melissa, my 17-year-old son showed me a clip of a German animated film about a girl who cut her wrists. "This is the saddest thing you'll ever see, Ma," he warned, and he watched as my eyes filled. When it was over, I asked him to e-mail the clip to his health teacher, to use in the unit on suicide.

And I asked my own quietest child, who has lost a father and struggled mightily in school, if he thought about suicide. He said, "You ask me about it so much I don't get a chance to." Then he asked, "What would you do if one of us died?"

I said the first stupid thing that came to mind. "Probably go with you."

"That would wreck the whole family," he said, and then looked hard at me. "OK, I get it," he said finally.

Bring up suicide with your kids and they will think you're nuts. Tell them the truest old cliché in the world: Nothing, no matter how awful, ever gets worse by talking about it. Tell them that if they want to end their lives, to promise to wait, say, a week. Something could change. Tell them that death is forever.

Do it for all the Adams in the world.

Jacquelyn Mitchard welcomes readers' responses sent in care of this newspaper or to Tribune Media Services Inc., 435 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 1400, Chicago, IL 60611 or tmseeditors@tribune.com.

Coffeehouse co-op has been serving up folk tunes since 1978

Hog wild for music

By Nadine Goff

Special to The Capital Times

His nose was only inches away, but "Phillup the Pig" wasn't scarfing down the delicious homemade brownies at the Wil-Mar Neighborhood Center that Friday night near the end of April. Serenely ceramic, the patient porker was there so people could stuff his belly with donations of green stuff, preferably in large denominations.

Everyone else was there to listen to Bowen Marvik play his original music on acoustic guitar and, perhaps, enjoy some tasty treats at what many people call "The Hog," a family-friendly coffeehouse dedicated to the promo-

tion, preservation and enjoyment of traditional folk and acoustic music.

The Hog's proper name is the Wild Hog in the Woods Coffeehouse. It was born 26 years ago, when a group of people from the Madison area decided they wanted to create a venue that offered decent coffee, healthy food and a smoke-free, alcohol-free environment where people could perform and listen to folk music.

They considered a lot of names for the organization they were creating, including the Listening Room and Banish Misfortune. Someone who was perusing the LP collection belonging to the tenants of the apartment on East Johnson Street where the

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DAVID SANDELL/THE CAPITAL TIMES

Melissa Matthey (left), owner of The Knitting Tree, features new designs in two books, which she wrote in collaboration with Sheryl Thies.

"Phillup the Pig" is the serenely ceramic porker created to hold donations from folks attending performances at the Wild Hog in the Woods Coffeehouse. The venue has been located at the Wil-Mar Neighborhood Center since 1993.



MICHELLE STOCKER PHOTOS/THE CAPITAL TIMES

Chris Lipo, treasurer of the Wild Hog in the Woods Coffeehouse, also created an attractive quilt decorated with little pigs playing musical instruments for the Hog's 25th anniversary celebration.

What's up at the Hog

The Wild Hog in the Woods Coffeehouse cooperative presents folk music concerts at 8 p.m. Fridays in the Wil-Mar Neighborhood Center, 953 Jenifer St. Admission is \$2.50 for the public and \$2 for members, except for an occasional special event, usually co-sponsored with other organizations.

Here's a list of upcoming concerts:

May 21: "Master musical storyteller" Garnet Rogers in a special event concert in cooperation with the Madison Folk Music Society. Tickets are \$15 in advance and \$17 at the door. Advance tickets are available at Borders East and West, Spruce Tree Music, Orange Tree Imports and B-Side Records.

May 28: Madison singer-songwriter Amelia Royko.

For additional information, go to the Wild Hog in the Woods Web site. If you'd like to become a volunteer, call Kim Genich at 233-5687.

Knitting needles fly at shop on Monroe

By Debra Carr-Elsing

The Capital Times

There's nothing subtle about Melissa Matthey. She lives each day with the same distinctive flair that she puts into her designs for knitwear.

Her enthusiasm for fun — and knitting — is contagious and fun to be around. It's probably a big reason why customers are drawn to her cozy yarn shop, The Knitting Tree, 2624 Monroe St.

"I'm so in love with knitting — excitement just pours through my fingers," says the flamboyant shop owner.

There's also a lot of creativity coming through her fingers, which are rarely idle. She knits at 5:30 every morning before the rest of her family wakes up, and she often can be spotted at the grocery store, knitting up and down the aisles while her 10-year-old son pushes the cart.

"There's no trick to knitting in the dark, either — I do it all the time," Matthey quips.

"OK, OK, I know I'm over the edge, but yarn speaks to me. I find inspiration for designs everywhere I look."

In fact, Matthey is so inspired that she creates about 100 new designs each year. String 20 of those years together, and you've got the amount of time Matthey owned the Yarn Co. in Manhattan, which was rated Best of New York.

While living in the Big Apple, Matthey started designing for 7th Avenue. Eventually, she became a designer for top international yarn companies.

This passion and bent for high fashion are evident in her two latest books, "Little Box of Scarves" and "Little Box of Sweaters," which were written in collaboration with Sheryl Thies, a marketing executive and knitting instructor at Matthey's shop.

"Melissa's designs are fantastic, and they're no-fuss knitting," Thies says. "My job is to simply follow her around and turn little pieces of paper into a pattern."

"I add my organizational skills to her designs, and it works out very well."

What's unique about these latest knitting books — which were published by Martingale & Co. and sell for \$19.95 each — is the packaging concept. Each

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