

# Getting the Hang of Maps

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PHOTOS BY OLIVER DOOLEY FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Collector David Fenstermaker likes maps showing "a time when things were far less determined."

## MAPS, From Page 1

routes in Arabia; a united Ireland; the old Ottoman Empire; even Logan Circle back at the arrival of the 20th century, when it was still called Iowa Circle.

"This is my neighborhood," exclaimed a woman from Northwest looking through Tam's offerings one recent weekend. "This is great. I live right here."

The stall is often buzzing with browsers and buyers sharing personal or historical anecdotes while pointing to an area colored on a 100-year-old page. Cartographers of yesteryear might be surprised to find their versions of the world displayed in 21st-century homes. But vintage maps from second-hand stores, estate sales, flea markets and Web dealers are being hung everywhere, from nurseries to bachelor pads to the living rooms of Washington's establishmentarians.

"I like to look at them for hours at a time," says David Fenstermaker, a financial adviser who displays rare, old maps in his Fairfax County home and in his office downtown. He hunts for them on visits to European cities such as London and Florence, and on the Web. His favorite is a 1660 Blaeu map of the Caribbean in confectionery greens and Bermuda pinks, tall black-edged ships overtaking the ocean. "Florida is much too fat, the Yucatan is much too skinny. ... It's a very pretty map."

"Now you can use a GPS locator to tell you exactly what street corner you are on, but there was a time when things were far less determined," says Fenstermaker.

Amy Alvarez, a telecom lobbyist, has an 1860 map of the hemispheres in the mocha foyer of her Adams Morgan apartment. "I retrace my own travels and think about exotic places I still long to visit, like the islands in the South Pacific or North Africa," she says. "It makes me realize there is a whole other world to explore."

One recent icy Saturday, Scott Muchow, a young political consultant, stopped by Tam's stall after a midmorning jog, checking to see if Tam had been able to find a map of the Belsize Park neighborhood in London, where he once lived. In the meantime, he picked up "a great color map of the London Underground system" from 1900.

Muchow says he's not much of a decorator: He's



An old map of Washington in Jim Tam's flea market stall.



He likes "having maps of a time when there were blank spaces, or ones where terra incognita is rendered with a giant Cyclops, as it is on a 1550 wood-block-print map of Africa that Fenstermaker covets. "My wife doesn't like maps without colors, though." One dealer lists that map for \$1,150.

For some enthusiasts, maps recall an adventure once taken, or maybe just dreamt of.



An old map from the "Department of Gironde," France, in dealer Jim Tam's collection.

never painted a room or hung a curtain, and his stamp-size Capitol Hill English basement apartment includes an avocado refrigerator and Day-Glo blue cabinets. But he has begun to civilize the bedroom, where two walls are covered with maps. The maps "show connections to the cities I love," he says. "Old maps are more interesting; they say a lot more. You see how things change, how things evolved."

In their Dupont Circle condo, Chip Cannon and Jaime Crowe are designing a room to showcase their collection of antique maps, including one commemorating a Napoleon-era trip up the Nile, another of Andalusia, Crowe's mother's homeland. The room will likely also be the dining room, where they spend a lot of time, says Cannon. There won't be any furniture along the walls, so "you can walk up to them," he says.

Kate Ogden, a telecom sales manager shopping at Tam's, says a childhood summer in Provence inspired her purchase of an 1886 peach and robin's-egg blue map of "Cotes de la Mediterranee" for \$35. She says she likes the "continuity" suggested by old maps. Her Arlington home with its tulip-yellow and salsa-colored walls is filled with old prints and bright paintings; she thinks her French map might look good on a tangerine wall where a Matisse poster now hangs.

For his Arlington high-rise apartment with a view of Washington Monument, health-care consultant Don Lucas found a framed map of Western Pennsylvania, circa 1897, at Tam's stall, "and pulled it out immediately." His family has lived in Allegheny County in the same house for six generations, but these days he only gets home about once a year. The map "reminds me of my family roots," he says, so he plans to hang it in his living room, "where I can see it frequently."

"Maps evoke memories or are dream material," says Bill Stoeck, president of National Geographic Maps, a division of the National Geographic Society. He hangs maps next to the NordicTrack in his Colorado home so he can "get lost" in them while working out.

"Every time you look at a map, you notice something new. I think—'Huh: Vienna is that close to Budapest?' and you think about how borders are always changing," Stoeck says.

## More Directions to Maps

At National Geographic's shop in downtown Washington, the map section is a big draw. Mostly modern maps, priced from about \$12, are sold there as well as on the Web. Two years ago, the society issued an antique-looking map of today's world suitable for framing and is planning to create a wallpaper version. The traditional National Geographic world political map also comes as a wall mural ([plasma.nationalgeographic.com/maps](http://plasma.nationalgeographic.com/maps); 800-962-1643).

Washington is a good place to be if you are interested in maps. The largest map collection in the world—more than 4.9 million examples—is at the Library of Congress: A special display of antique maps is in the James Madison Memorial Building, 101 Independence Ave. SE, and many maps can be viewed online at [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov). A limited variety of old maps are sold in the shop at the Jefferson Building (202-707-3895), and the

geography and map division's reference section can order uncopyrighted maps (202-707-6277). Among other sources:

- The Washington Map Society meets eight times a year at the Library of Congress to promote map collecting, cartography and cartographic history ([www.washmap.org](http://www.washmap.org)).
- The site for the International Antiquarian Mapsellers Association has a collector's page, a selection of members' map inventories contains information on map fairs and maintains reports of stolen maps and atlases ([www.antiquemapdealers.com](http://www.antiquemapdealers.com)).
- MapForum.Com has a specialist antique map periodical featuring a beginner's guide to collecting, an auction report and information on map libraries ([www.mapforum.com](http://www.mapforum.com)).

Elizabeth Festa



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Staff photo/Louise Kraft

## Colorist Displays Handiwork

Del Ray artist Gayle E. Hubbard hand colors a copy of a 19th century engraving of Sojourner Truth. Hubbard carries on a nearly extinct tradition as an engraving colorist. She shows her work at the Del Ray Flea Market and Eastern Market on Capitol Hill. For more photos of the Del Ray Farmers Market and Flea Market, see page 13.



# Living abroad on Capitol Hill

Eastern Market's Diverse Artists

**W**hen friends ask if I'm bored living on Capitol Hill after many years in Africa and Asia, I say not at all since I haven't met an American yet.

This, I admit, is an exaggeration, but the diversity of Capitol Hill is well-known and no better experienced than at the outdoor weekend ritual known as the Eastern Market at 7th and North Carolina, SE. A marriage between a Moroccan souk and Wal-Mart, the market features local artists, potters, and photographers along with flower, fruit, and food vendors.

Eastern Market's diversity is well illustrated by three of its artists: Tsolmon Damba, 31, born in Darkham City, Mongolia, Rolando B. Perdigon, 40, born in Bagaio City, the Philippines, and Kazem Shirazi, 47, born in Teheran, Iran. These three artists have come from different countries and experiences to find common ground at Eastern Market, exhibiting and selling their work.



TSOLMON DAMBA WITH DAUGHTER MARAL, 4, AND ONE OF HIS WATERCOLORS.

## Traditionally trained artist finds some success in U.S.

Damba has been here the shortest time, coming to the DC area in 1999 on a student visa to learn English at the International Language School. From an early age he has been fascinated with paint, inspired by his father, a portrait painter and schoolteacher. Now, with his wife Javhlan and their four-year old daughter Maral, he lives in Virginia, and supports himself entirely by his art.

Trained at Mongolia's Art Institute in the capital of Ulaan Baatar, Damba uses watercolor and tempera on canvas or linen to depict scenes of Mongolian history or local life, especially nomadic life, that echo traditional Mongolian painting similar in style to Persian miniatures.

The most rigorously trained of the three men, Damba served in the Mongolian Army after his schooling then taught for two years in the capital at the Institute of Fine Arts. For eight years afterwards (1991-1999), he trained and worked as a conservator and restorer at the Mongolian Cultural Center where his specialty was Mongolian leather work.

Here he met his wife, also a conservator, and while at the Center they became friends with the Egshiglen, a group of musicians and dancers who perform all over Europe playing a special two-string instrument called the morin khuur. The group knew a gallery owner in Nuremberg with whom Damba became associated. He also joined the International

by Saral Waldorf

Leather Artist Association which, in 1999, held its annual show in Denver, Colorado where Tsolmon won first and second place.

After this success, he decided to come to the U.S. to study English and pursue his art career from here. The move has proven beneficial for this artist.

"I had a one-man show in 1997 at the Art Institute. I showed 108 large oil paintings that cost a lot of money for materials and much time in work, and after the show I had sold one! Friends said there just wasn't any real market for art in Mongolia. We don't get many tourists and although we hang pictures on our walls in the cities, many people live nomadic lives and prefer leather work or rug work. So my family and friends encouraged me to go abroad," said the artist.

Tsolmon Damba has shown at the E & G Frankel Gallery, in Manhattan, has a show now in Palm Beach and last March had a one man show at the Mongolian Embassy. He paints every day during the week and besides galleries, shows only at Eastern Market.

One of his new watercolors, the haunting "Nomads of the Countryside," shows two horsemen in a steppe landscape leading three camels in a caravan, three dogs yapping along and stylized clouds above. He has also done a large vertical painting of a baatar—a warrior on horseback—in a looser, more fluid style. The "Nomads," a matted 15' x 20', is priced at \$180. The "Bataar" measures 20' x 50' and is priced at \$420.

## Self-taught artist with varied life experiences

Rolando Perdigon, who lives with a partner on Capitol Hill, is a completely self-taught artist who, in 1997, upon seeing a friend's new apartment said it needed some art on its walls. He proceeded to try his hand at rendering some large modern-looking plums. He hasn't stopped painting since.

Raised by a Baptist minister uncle in Bagaio, the summer capital of the Philippines, Perdigon received a B.S. degree in agriculture and became an agricultural extension worker for the government.

In 1986, Perdigon joined the U.S. Navy. (Naval service is open to Filipino citizens, along with those of Guam.) In 1991, after a medical discharge, he worked briefly for Discovery Channel, then moved to New York City to try journalism.

"I still hadn't thought at all about painting. My mother has always been artistic. My father was a welder and would make us



AN EXAMPLE OF DAMBA'S DETAILED LEATHERWORK.



PERDIGON HOLDING ONE OF HIS ABSTRACT PAINTINGS IN HIS EASTERN MARKET BOOTH.



kids toy airplanes. But I grew up with my uncle, and my only forays into art were doing comic strips in primary and secondary school for friends in exchange for lunch money. So, until moving back to DC and seeing these bare walls of my friend, I never thought about art. It just hit me, like love! Luckily, I have a pension from the Navy which allows me the freedom to try art," said Perdigon.

This artist shows at Eastern Market spring through the fall, then takes the winter off. Besides gallery shows, he's gotten several commissions including a large 4' x 5' canvas of three pears for a family in Virginia, a 3' x 5' abstract for a Capitol residence and ten illustrations for a Sunnyside Farms brochure. He also has an abstract painting that already sold in a current Wilson Gallery show.

Perdigon also works every day, using his dining table for his studio. He started out with just flat house paint until a friend told him about acrylics. Rolando's very small still lifes, 3" x 5", are \$10, or three for \$25. His larger fruit paintings run \$40-\$100, while landscapes start at about \$75. He prices his abstracts from \$40-\$60. "Very cheap," he said, "but I love to do them so that's why they're cheap!"

### Always an artist despite taking other paths

The third artist, Kazem Shirazi, has always wanted to be an artist but followed a career path chosen more by his family than himself. Brought up in a wealthy upper-middle class family in Teheran, Shirazi showed early artistic talent and was, at age eleven, apprenticed in the summer to a famous Iranian artist, Zarin Ghalam.

However, his parents wanted him to become a doctor and after attending a private Catholic school he went to Paris and then came to the United States in 1976 for medical studies. He became a lab technician in hematology at George Washington Hospital from where he retired in 1998 to try his luck as an artist. Even while working he took courses in sculpture at George Washington and painting at George Mason.

"I've always been looking at art. During the time of the Shah, modern art was popular. The Shah's wife, Queen Farah, initiated a program where banks bought modern art and displayed it. We had the Museum of Contemporary art in Teheran which showed a lot of Picassos, whom I copied a lot. In Paris, I saw a lot of the paintings I had only seen in postcards and art books. More importantly, I got involved in the French student movement of the 70s, and from there got hooked on cafe discussions

about philosophy, art and politics which I think still informs some of my work," said Shirazi.

When he came to the States, he also became a devotee of American comics, especially Gary Larson's "Far Side" and John McPherson's "Close To Home" that have, Shirazi says, "a kind of homey, sinister sensibility that is close to mine!" The artist continued, "As you can see, most of my interior paintings comment ruefully on domestic life. All my interiors seem to have a couch, table, lamp because, for me, that's where the center of life is. It's here where we sit and rest, get intimate and eat, even fall asleep."

Shirazi comes to Eastern Market year round, and sometimes also does shows at Adams-Morgan, Mount Pleasant as well as the Georgetown Flea Market. He has also shown at local galleries, including the Wilson Gallery. His mixed media paintings (gouache, ink, acrylic, pastels) come in small, medium, and large-- the largest being 16" x 48". Originals, framed or matted, run from \$120 to \$400, and prints are \$35 to \$70, framed.



SHIRAZI WITH A WHIMSICAL PASTEL AT HIS EASTERN MARKET BOOTH.

For more information on the individual artists, Tsolmon Damba may be contacted at (703) 812-3407; Rolando Perdigon, at (202) 234-3140; and Kazem Shirazi, at (703) 685-7335. ■

*Dr. Saral Waldorf is a public health anthropologist who has lived extensively in Africa and Asia. She moved to Capitol Hill last year.*



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WASHINGTON BUSINESS JOURNAL

## Journal Profile

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## Eric Price

## D.C.'s deputy mayor tackles 'ambitious agenda' with candor

By THOMAS C. HALL  
Staff Reporter

Few District mayoral appointees have come as highly heralded or enjoyed as lengthy a honeymoon as Eric Price, deputy mayor for economic development.

Now seven months into his term, Price knows the wait-and-see period is fading fast. The high-profile job has been a lightning rod in recent years, with several previous holders getting burned — or burnt out.

"It's a harsh town," said Doug Patton, Price's most immediate predecessor (there have been five in as many years). "If you come in with high expectations, you'd better deliver."

Price inherited a tangled history of stalled projects Oct. 1, yet he doesn't seem daunted by the inertia he must overcome to succeed.

"I know what to do," the 38-year-old said. "We've got to create a climate so businesses know what to expect."

Price tells people he's starting with a clean slate, that he wants to take a fresh look before making up his mind. He also readily admits that he is still finding his way.

Such openness can be disarming.

"I really don't know Washington very well," Price told a group of neighborhood



activists a few months after he took office. "Even though I've been in D.C. for five years, my previous job required a lot of travel, so in many ways, I'm still new here."

That remark stirred a few whispers in the audience of 50 residents and business owners who came to hear what Price had to say about developing the Southwest waterfront.

But it typifies Price's low-key, soft-spoken approach. He often does more listening than talking.

After taking a bad handoff, Price had an early fumble last fall when the D.C. Marketing Center's entire \$1 million budget was diverted by other District officials.

The snafu was the last straw for Jeff Stone, the fledgling center's highly

Eric W. Price  
D.C. deputy mayor for  
economic development

Age: 38

Salary: \$117,291

Family: Divorced

Residence: Dupont Circle

Education: BA, University of California at Los Angeles, 1985; MBA, Duke University, 1992

Hobbies: Work. Price likes to attend sporting events, but couldn't recall the last book he read. "He's a fun guy," says ElChino Martin, Price's chief of staff.

Drives: 1999 Toyota

On improving economic development: "We've got to create a climate so businesses know what to expect. When you do that, it becomes word of mouth."



regarded director. He quit in December.

Price said he never knew about it until he read it in the paper. He restored the center's funding, but it was too little, too late.

### Is he a workaholic?

The incident tested Price's seemingly unflappable, suave demeanor. Always impeccably dressed, sincere and polite, Price seems more an attentive aide than a ego-driven executive.

"He's not the kind of guy you go have a beer with, but there's a lot to be said for straight-arrow and honest," Stone said, "especially these days."

Price is secure enough to allow a reporter to tag along and watch him in action, but he wouldn't permit a one-on-one interview without one of the mayor's press aides present.

One of Price's biggest backers, D.C. Councilwoman Charlene Drew Jarvis, D-Ward 4, describes Price as "cautious" but someone who isn't afraid to make decisions.

"Eric has a sense of when to say yes or no," she said. "He's very good at surveying his domain and evaluating what can or can't fly."

At the weekly meeting of Price's lieutenants, who head the dozen or so agencies under his command, that skill was evident. Faced with a proposal to replace seven similar vendors with one contractor, Price scratched below the surface.

"Is it inefficient?" he asked.

When told, "It's not only inefficient, it's uncontrollable," Price quipped right back: "I only asked the one thing."

It was a rare display of humor for Price, who takes the world, and especially himself, quite seriously.

When asked what he does for fun, Price truly was stumped.

"Everyone around here works ungodly hours right now," Price said. "Maybe in six months or so when things settle down, we

can start thinking about having some fun."

Price gets grief from Congress, developers and business leaders for being slow to return calls, and he readily admits that he's taking on too much.

When asked if he's a workaholic, he said, "My girlfriend probably thinks I am."

### 'No BS at all'

Fern Barrueta, Price's co-chairman on the D.C. Marketing Center's advisory board, said Price is in an "untenable situation" compared with his counterparts in other cities.

"Most jurisdictions just have the economic development director doing nothing but that," said Barrueta, senior vice president at Transwestern Carey Winston. "They don't have responsibilities for 37 different things, like he does."

By necessity, Price is learning to delegate rather than micromanage. The city's new planning director, Andy Altman, who also was hired last fall, said Price isn't afraid to ask questions or solicit advice.

"He keeps an open mind, and he wants you to lay it all out for him before he makes a decision," Altman said. "He's confident in his own ability, but he doesn't try to be something he's not. There's no BS at all."

Price came to Washington from Chicago, where he was development officer for Shore Bank, negotiating acquisitions and building housing for lower-income families.

Until being recruited by Williams, Price was chief investment officer for the AFL-CIO's Housing Investment Trust. Mary Helen Thomas, who worked with Price on housing projects funded by the labor organization, describes him as "focused," both professionally and personally.

"Some people compartmentalize more than others," Thomas said. "Eric is someone with very few vices, but his heart's in the right place — at a real gut level, he

cares deeply about affordable housing."

### Cleaning house

Two paintings adorn Price's otherwise stark office atop One Judiciary Square. One is of D.C.'s historic Eastern Market, by local artist Michael Berman.

The other depicts a Hispanic family living in a broken-down school bus in Laredo, Texas. The painting was a gift commemorating Price's work on a housing initiative in the border town.

Although Price and Williams have known each other several years, they had little contact until Williams was elected in November 1998 and asked Price to help his transition team.

The two men mirror each other — they're both shy and reserved — but Price makes Williams seem extroverted.

The mayor said he is satisfied so far with the pace at which Price is moving. Williams has been quick to show impatience with other appointees.

"Eric has laid out an ambitious agenda. It's going to take some time for all this to come together," Williams said. "I think with the team he's assembled, we've got the right people in the right place to make this happen."

Price cleaned house when he took office last fall, replacing most of Patton's people with new faces. He then recruited a few talented staffers from other departments to restore some institutional memory.

As a result, however, longtime lobbyists are finding that old assumptions are no longer valid, that insiders aren't necessarily on the inside any more.

"People always ask, 'Who do you go to?'" Price said. "Businesses need to know who to talk to, and that hasn't always been the case here."

Jeff Finkle, executive director of the Council for Urban Economic Development, said Price still is facing a steep learning curve: "He has nowhere to go but up."



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# Marianne LaRoche: Large canvases, small collages

By SARA WILDBERGER

Special to The Journal

When Marianne LaRoche first saw the tangled, old-growth perennial garden on the slope behind her Hyattsville, Md., home, she saw her own small patch of Giverny, she remembers, laughing a little self-deprecatingly.

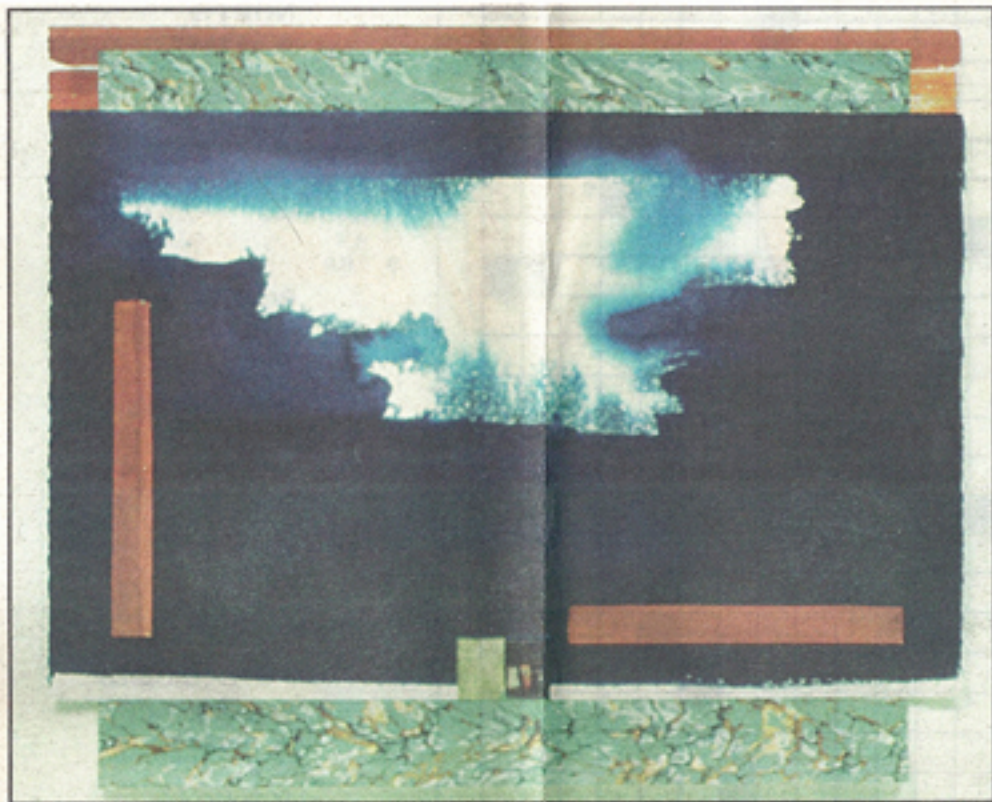
She has gone on to paint the garden in all its changing light and seasons, just as Impressionist painter Claude Monet did his garden in Giverny. But the inspiration for her works on paper comes not only from her garden, but from the Arts and Crafts and '50s-era antiques she collects, from the house itself, from the historic Hyattsville neighborhood, from the view from her backyard studio and from the studio windows that frame that view.

She pauses for a few minutes during a major home renovation — adding a new kitchen — to show some of her recent-cut paper collages and work in progress. The collages manage to be both gestural and architectural at once. Free paint strokes and bold markings on paper are cut into collage components, which she then builds up into multilayered compositions.

There is an almost optical-illusion quality to their treatment of space and dimensions. Squares become windows, frames, horizons, "prosceniums" — her own word for them. Inside them, more squares frame landscapes, details, elaborations, or become windows-within-windows. At one moment, it could be the view looking out of the window; at the next, it could be the view looking in.

Bits of wallpaper from her old studio, bits of old wallpaper peeled off during the house renovation, a scanned print of a fossil from Calvert Cliffs, a rubber stamp of a basket — all might find a place within the frame. Views of the garden and the birdbath in the garden, a recurring theme, might end up there, too.

Bars and lines anchor the composition like strong wood beams, but also serve to divide the space, implying boundaries or borders. One side of the collage might be busy; the other side



"Art and Crafts Flow" (1994) by Marianne LaRoche

as serene as a stretch of ocean seen from above. That's the tone of "Reverie for Rosalie," shown as part of an exhibition at the historic Riversdale mansion. Reproductions of letters written by Rosalie Calvert in the 19th century form one-half of this collage, bringing to mind both separation and the communication that can bridge distances.

It also evokes the experience of immigration common to many Americans — crossing the water. LaRoche herself has some of her family in England, and the thought of such distances touches her. The work is an example of how an abstract painting can address historical issues as well as a representational one would.

While she does large paintings on canvas, her recent work is the smaller

## ART & ARTISTS

collages. "I think it was moving here that made it happen," she says. She couldn't afford to build a studio right away, so she painted in the large front bedroom — "It's always been like that, use the largest space for work and sleep in the small room."

"So I started scaling down and making these parts. You can store the parts and pick them up again later and work with them. I started small."

LaRoche's garden also inspires the vivid and varied color in her collages. She paints with opaque watercolor, or gouache, because it has both the fluid properties of watercolor and the rich,





"Edifice" (1995/96) by Marianne LaRoche

## ART & ARTISTS

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LaRoche's garden also inspires the vivid and varied color in her collages. She paints with opaque watercolor, or gouache, because it has both the fluid properties of watercolor and the rich,

saturated color of other kinds of paint. "Gouache is very rich and velvety," she says. "That's what all the graphic designers used to use. Now they do it all on computers."

She is starting to go that route herself, scanning in her found paper and images, printing them out on acid-free paper and then using them in collages. This gives more control over the finished work than using actual bits of found paper, which can discolor or disintegrate.

LaRoche was active in the women's art movement of the early '70s, and has been a strong arts advocate in Prince George's County. Her recent solo show hung for a year in the offices of U.S. Rep. Albert Wynn (D-Md.).

She is also developing an antiques business, and along with her hus-

band, writer and musician Bill Holland, has a Sunday booth at Eastern Market where they sell vintage textiles and records.

LaRoche is not currently being handled by a gallery. Several of her works are on view at Paper-Rock-Scissors Gallery in Baltimore. Prices for her work range from \$100 for small prints to a few thousand dollars for large canvases. She can be reached at [mlaroche@clark.net](mailto:mlaroche@clark.net).

*If you're a local artist or gallery owner, or have a favorite local artist you'd like to see The Journal cover, write to Sara Wildberger, Art and Artists, c/o The Journal Newspapers, 6408 Edsall Road, Alexandria, Va. 22312, or e-mail her at [swildberg@aol.com](mailto:swildberg@aol.com).*



## IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

By Duncan Spencer

Jab, Hook, Cross:  
Woman Boxer Fits  
Finley's Fight Game

**Y**ou won't find the Spandex set at venerable Finley's Gym. No one wears a White-mountain, a heart monitor or a wristband. The sweat on the industrial carpeting is often mixed with blood at this morning ground for Washington boxing wannabes that's been here for more than 37 years. Here, in a fitness room above an alley garage at 518 Tenth St. NE, generations of proud and lonely young men have sought to win a living in the toughest way possible — as prize-fighters.

Which is exactly why former Hill aide Suzanne Milavitz felt she had to be there. Milavitz, whose father and cousin both boxed, has a Hill background that includes work for Rep. Ed Markey (D-Mass) and campaign work for Sen. Bob Kerrey (D-Nebr) and Rep. Ron Kind (D-Wis.), but she gave up her political career two years ago, lured by art and athletics. And to her, athletics means boxing.

There's nothing so satisfying, she says, as whaling away at a bag, or at the padded targets that boxing trainers usually employ, to get rid of frustrations while building coordination and muscular stamina. "You feel in control, you have choices," she says. "Boxing relieves personal stress and teaches you to be aware of your body. Above all, as a boxer, you must be consistent and serious."

So she qualified as a personal training instructor, taking a job with Town Sports International, the gym company that operates units here on the Hill and throughout the area. Meanwhile, boxing for women, which a few years ago was considered slightly weird, caught on, even in buttoned-up Washington. Local gyms have responded with "boxercise" programs and other ways to tone down the science of demolishing your opponent's facial features.

Women's boxing occasionally features person-to-person combat, but usually concentrates on perfecting moves and technique with one partner absorbing blows on padded mitts, the other partner dishing them out.

Milavitz first heard about the legendary gym, also known as Finley's Boxing Club, through the Hill's boxing trainer network. But she also heard that it was a men-only thing. Jim Finley, the 70-year-old former Golden Gloves competitor who founded the place — mainly for his own amusement — on top of a garage he formerly owned and operated, is "Mr. Boxing" in DC. Everyone in the metro



Photos by Rebecca Roth  
Suzanne Milavitz, who makes hats and runs her own small retail business at Eastern Market part time, sees boxing as more than just exercise: "My hats are one kind of art; boxing is art as well." Above, she prepares for a session with her trainer, Brett Croshi.

area who is interested in the sport knows who he is, and most area boxers have been through the ropes here — men like Bobby Foster, current world flyweight champion Mark Johnson; Hill brawler Barry Linder's hopeful, Derrell Coley; and even former world heavyweight champion George Foreman.

And just to show he's gender-democratic, Finley always includes the italicized "ladies invited" on his tiny ad in the *Bell Atlantic Yellow Pages*. But, in fact, Milavitz and a few other women are hardy pioneers there.

"I went over," she said of her first visit, "and I'm used to a big shiny gym. This is a very sparse gym. The whole mindset is boxing, and there's no air conditioning. You do jumping jacks and you're sweating bullets."

She got some glares and a couple of comments at first, but she was accepted well enough. Most of the regulars are used to seeing a woman or two drift in and out of the Finley circle. Milavitz, however, was far more serious. "Women, at least this is true of me, want a tough workout," she said. "Boxing exercises your entire body. Being an athlete means being powerful, and boxing integrates mind and body." And, at this writer must note, if you feel like knocking something's — or somebody's — block off, this is a great way to deal with it.

Town Sports executive Joan Hanscom agrees. "It's empowering to hit something,"



she says, "especially here in Washington." At some boxing sessions, she added, and in total participation within her chain, women greatly outnumber men.

Milavitz's trainer, Brett Croshi, 29, taught her the basics; she's now a regular at Finley's, and the frowns and wisecracks that sometimes met her have faded. Finley himself will tirelessly promote anyone who loves his favorite sport.

Milavitz, who makes hats and runs her own small retail business at Eastern Market part time, sees boxing as more than just exercise: "My hats are one kind of art; boxing is art as well."





Photos by Astrid Flecken/The Washington Times

Doris Beeks Little, known as the Button Lady, discusses her wares with a customer at the Eastern Market flea market. "I enjoy the things you create and the things I see other people create from buttons," says Mrs. Little, as her hand rests on her buttons (below).

# Pushing the right buttons

## Vendor helps sew satisfaction

By Ann Geracimos  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

**B**utton, button, who's got the button?

Doris Beeks Little, that's who.

The Button Lady, as she calls herself, may be the Washington area's only independent entrepreneur in the field. She definitely is the only one on the tradesman's turf she occupies each Sunday outside Eastern Market on Capitol Hill.

Between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. throughout the year, except in bitterly cold or wet weather, strollers along Seventh Street SE pass her sturdy cheerful figure ensconced under the metal cover on vendor row. She drives to the site from her home in the Fort Dupont section of the city and sets up her ornamental wares anew each week, unpacking from numerous bags and boxes an astounding variety of these vital accessories in all colors and shapes.

A mirror with a button frame hangs from a post marking the spot she shares with a farmer hawking fresh vegetables.

Each button, or family of buttons, speaks of exotic worlds and events far removed from the simple folding



tables that constitute her store — the sole outlet for a collection whose contents she knows by heart. She has no formal inventory record; no computer logs of numbers, styles and location.

She keeps track of similar designs by affixing each button "family" to individual pieces of stiff perforated plastic with plastic ties

that can be snipped off quickly with a pair of scissors. Gold, silver, red, green, black, cloth-covered and antique sets are there in amazing combinations.

"If I cannot do great things I can do small things in a great way" reads one of the signs on display to draw attention to her stand.

"There will be a 10 percent sur-

charge if we have to listen to your troubles" reads another more humorous placard.

Tables are piled high with dozens of plastic netting sheets, buttons quiver as customers come by and reach out irresistibly to touch. Buttons are totems for some people,

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