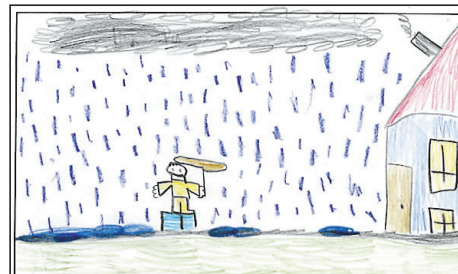


# The Columbian Life

Section D

Today's weather picture by Paul Lorimer Jr., 10, Vancouver, Eisenhower Elementary School



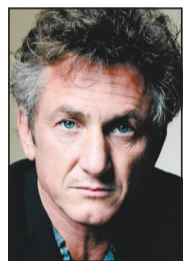
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2007

## Actors find new calling behind the camera

By DAVID GERMAIN  
Associated Press writer

TORONTO — Sean Penn is one of the great actors of his generation, yet he'd like to give it all up to remain behind the camera.

"It's a good idea," Penn said at the Toronto International Film Festival, where "Into the Wild," his fourth directing effort, played in advance of its theatrical debut on Friday.



**Sean Penn**  
Actor has directed four feature films

The Toronto festival is showcasing a big collection of films by actors turned directors, among them the filmmaking debuts of Helen Hunt, David Schwimmer, Gael Garcia Bernal and Alison Eastwood, whose father, Clint Eastwood, is a paragon for performers who want to make their own flicks.

On "Into the Wild," Penn adapts Jon Krakauer's best-seller about Christopher McCandless (Emile Hirsch), a young man whose bold, two-year trek around North America came to a tragic end in Alaska. Penn, who previously directed "The Indian Runner," "The Crossing Guard" and "The Pledge," said "Into the Wild" has reaffirmed his goal to one day give up acting in favor of directing.

"I've committed to act in a couple of things this year based on directors that I have great admiration for," Penn said. "But yeah, this movie brings me to a place where I know what it is that I'm really looking for in making a decision about what I want to do as a director. So I feel more energized than ever in that way."

What energizes Penn and others to branch out beyond acting? Some say acting alone gets boring. Some say directing can prolong their film careers in an industry where good roles dry up as actors age. Some say they just want to do it all.

"I want everybody's job, because it's greed for creative control, greed for art," said Tommy Lee Jones, who made his filmmaking debut with 2005's "The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada" and hopes to direct a new version of Ernest Hemingway's "Islands in the Stream."

George Clooney — who earned a best-directing nomination for 2005's "Good Night, and Good Luck" and returns this fall to direct "Leatherheads," a 1920s football comedy in which he stars with Renee Zellweger and John Krasinski — said taking the reins on a film set gave him a sense of command he lacked earlier in his career.

"Initially, you just get a job. You're thrilled for getting a job. Then suddenly, you start being held responsible for a film that's made. As an actor, you start getting blamed for it if a film sucks," Clooney said. "When I started directing, I started to really like the idea of, you're painting, not just being the paint, and it's your say, and it lives and dies based on what you say. It's interesting and a lot more challenging than acting."

This year already has brought films by such actor-

DIRECTORS, Page D5

A JOURNEY TO IRAN AND BACK

# LIFTING THE VEIL



Photos by STEVEN LANE/The Columbian

Battle Ground librarian Jackie Spurlock has given at least a dozen presentations about Iran and Islam, like the one she did recently in La Center, in an effort to spread regional awareness about life in the Middle East.

## Battle Ground librarian wages campaign to boost knowledge and understanding of Iran and the rest of the Muslim world



**"Americans certainly don't understand Iran, and they don't have the information that would help them understand."**  
Jackie Spurlock  
BATTLE GROUND LIBRARIAN WHO GIVES TALKS ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST

By BRETT OPPEGAARD  
Columbian staff writer

These are not the usual images of Iranians.

One of the slides shows a boy goofing around in a Spider-Man T-shirt. Another captures the whimsical pattern of a girl's face paint. Then comes the photograph of a collegiate woman in sandals and heavy makeup, with her forearms free of her blouse and her scarf slipping off the back of her head. It might not be as blatant as a bare midriff and belly-button ring, but it's a sign of teen angst that needs no translation.

Iran lately has played the villain, declared by President Bush as part of an "Axis of Evil." Another Sept. 11 anniversary recently passed, rekindling anger and anxiety about an attack that started a War on Terror. Imagery of Islamists since that day six years ago frequently includes bearded men brandishing automatic weapons, not kids playing or teens striving to be

fashionable.

Jackie Spurlock, a librarian and branch manager of the Battle Ground Community Library, wants people in the Northwest to be exposed to more than mass media portrayals of the region. She works to educate those who attend her talks about the similarities between Americans and the folks living on the other side of the world. She's been giving such public presentations throughout the region since returning from visiting Iran with her husband last summer.

"I thought it might feel grim or sad there," she said, during a recent talk at a weekday morning book discussion at La Center Community Library. "People instead came running up to us every day to say that they love the Americans and that they are sorry about the problems between our two governments. I'm not excusing the Iranian government. It's very dangerous. But the people could

not be kinder or friendlier."

The U.S. Department of State maintains a different assessment in its travel advisory for the country, warning that some Iranians are hostile to Americans and that visitors from this country "may be subject to harassment or arrest." Spurlock said she didn't experience anything like that.

### Peace Corps experience

Spurlock first traveled to Iran in the 1970s as a member of the Peace Corps.

When the federal agency originally asked Spurlock, and her husband, Mike, if they would be willing to go to Iran, the newlyweds had to look at a map to see where the country was.

"We knew very little about it," Spurlock said. "But we didn't care. We would have gone anywhere."

They spent two years on that

IRAN, Page D5

### QUIZ-LAM

## How much do you know about the basics of Islam?

**1. About 1,400 years ago, the prophet Muhammad claimed he received revelations from God during a spiritual "night journey" to what holy city?**

- A. Mecca.
- B. Jerusalem.
- C. Tehran.
- D. Persepolis.

**2. The Ka'bah, the most sacred shrine for Muslims, looks like what?**

- A. A crescent moon.
- B. An onion bulb.
- C. A black cube.
- D. A pentagon.

**3. What nation has the largest concentration of Muslims in the world?**

- A. Iraq.
- B. Iran.
- C. Egypt.
- D. Indonesia.

**4. What's the literal translation of "jihad"?**

- A. "To struggle."
- B. "To destroy infidels."
- C. "To spread the word of God."
- D. "To cover the immodest."

**5. Which of the following is not one of the five pillars of Islam?**

- A. Salah.
- B. Shahadah.
- C. Sawm.
- D. Shenandoah.

**6. What does a Muslim do as part of hajj?**

- A. Make a pilgrimage to Mecca.
- B. Cover all parts of the body.
- C. Fast for a day.
- D. Tame a snake.

**7. Which of these is not the name of a Muslim dynasty?**

- A. Umayyad.
- B. Abbasid.
- C. Ottoman.
- D. Amenhotep.

**8. As part of daily worship, Muslims are supposed to do all of the following, except:**

- A. Touch the ground with their foreheads and noses.
- B. Wash themselves.
- C. Flagellation.
- D. Say, "Glory be to my God, the greatest of the great."

**9. Jerusalem's Muslim shrine is called:**

- A. The Dome of the Rock.
- B. The Holiest Place on Earth.
- C. The House that Muhammad Built.
- D. Almost Mecca.

**10. Muslim inventors are credited with initiating all of the following, except:**

- A. Parachutes.
- B. Coffee.
- C. Fountain pens.
- D. Air conditioning.

### Answers:

- 1. B.
- 2. C.
- 3. D.
- 4. A.
- 5. D.
- 6. A.
- 7. D.
- 8. C.
- 9. A.
- 10. D.

### RANKING:

- 10-9 correct:** Ayatollah.
- 8-7 correct:** Cleric.
- 6-5 correct:** Promising student.
- 4-3 correct:** Not paying attention.
- 2-0 correct:** A potential interview subject for Michael Moore's "Fahrenheit 9/11, Part II."

### your Guide:



Iraq was the focus of a grim Toronto film festival /D3

Get details on entering our caption contest /D3



Films that turn avengers into heroes /D4

**Television:** When TV gets the message wrong, viewers yawn /D7

### Coming Wednesday:

Vancouver's baking contest winners share their secrets /D1

# Directors:

From Page D1

directors as Sarah Polley ("Away From Her"), Ethan Hawke ("The Hottest State") and Julie Delpy ("2 Days in Paris").

Others returning to directing or trying it for the first time in films due out this fall include Oscar-winning filmmaker Robert Redford on "Lions for Lambs," in which he stars with Tom Cruise and Meryl Streep; Ben Affleck on "Gone Baby Gone," starring his brother, Casey Affleck; Denzel Washington on "The Great Debaters," in which he stars with Forest Whitaker; Anthony Hopkins on "Slipstream," in which he also stars; and Peter Berg on "The Kingdom," with Jamie Foxx and Jennifer Garner.

The Toronto lineup features Hunt's "Then She Found Her," in which she stars with Bette Midler, Colin Firth and Matthew Broderick; Bernal's "Deficit," a study of class strife in Mexico; Eastwood's "Rails & Ties," a drama with Kevin Bacon and Marcia Gay Harden; Kenneth Branagh's "Slueth," with Michael Caine and Jude Law; Frank Whaley's buddy drama "New York City Serenade," with Freddie Prinze Jr. and Chris Klein; Stuart Townsend's "Battle in Seattle," featuring Charlize Theron, Woody Harrelson and Andre Benjamin; and Schwimmer's "Run, Fat Boy, Run," with Simon Pegg, Thandie Newton and Hank Azaria.

Schwimmer, who had directed episodes of his TV sitcom "Friends" and its spin-off "Joey," said actors bring a sensitivity as directors that can be reassuring to insecure performers.

"I was doing a comedy once and came on set for the first day and found the director screaming, chewing out some poor assistant prop person," Schwimmer said. "The tone of the set, you could feel it. The whole crew was on edge. It was a chilling environment, the worst possible environment to go in and try to be funny. Being an actor, you do tend to really take care of the actors and just know what they need."

Actors also can possess a firmer grasp of story and dramatization than directors who have not been in front of the camera, said Jodie Foster, who has directed the films "Little Man Tate" and "Home for the Holidays."

"Very often, the best directors come from having worked inside the industry, rather than just coming from film school," Foster said. "Being an actor-director is one of the most effective of all transitions. Very few people in the production end really understand why a scene works and why it doesn't, but an actor does understand that."

Hunt, who directed episodes of her TV sitcom "Mad About You," said it can be uncomfortable giving direction to other actors but that she rarely needed to do much prodding.

"I hired actors who were so good, I loved the few times I was able to say just the right thing to bring an actor to a place that wasn't expected and have him look at me and say, 'That felt good.'"

# Iran:

From Page D1

assignment in the Middle East, then decided they liked the area so much that they would stay two more on their own — learning to speak Persian, using rugs for chairs, wearing chadors, birthing their first child and living among Muslims.

Soon after they left in 1978, Shah Pahlavi was deposed, the Iran-Iraq war began and anti-Americanism began to rise. More than 60 U.S. diplomats in Iran in the early 1980s were held hostage for longer than a year.

But despite another recent surge in hostile feelings between the countries, the Spurlocks decided last summer it was time to make their first trip back. This time, they came as tourists eager to see how the country had changed in nearly 30 years.

Spurlock was struck by how much more developed the country had become, how many more parks and green spaces had been preserved, along with major efforts to maintain historic structures. But she also saw signs that the people of Iran are much poorer than when she and her husband lived in the Middle East. This was especially evident, she said, in the lower quality ingredients Iranians use in their foods.

Even though Islam broadly is imposed on the people by the Iranian government, she said, they generally are a secular group.

"They might identify with being Muslim," she said. "But many of them don't actively practice the faith."

**Reading up**

The La Center library group collectively had read Karen Armstrong's "Islam: A Short History," which generated discussion with Spurlock beyond travelogue. The book is a condensed history of the faith, but also challenges the traditional Western viewpoint on Islam. Unlike polite dinner-table topics, this one blazed with the combustible combination of religion and politics.

One woman asked bluntly what exactly is "an Arab"?

Spurlock explained that Arabians are a racial stock that can be traced back to the Arabian Peninsula. Iranians, for example, are not Arabs. They are Persians. Turks aren't Arabs, either. Only about 20 percent of the more than 1 billion Muslims in the world are Arabs. The distinctive veils associated with that religion are simply a fashion trend borrowed from ancient Greece, Spurlock noted, not some sort of medieval instrument of oppression.

Spurlock added that American women were considered immodest 120 years ago if they went outside the home with even their ankles showing. Spurlock shares such context with the hope that a broader and more complex discussion will develop.

That's a motive for many of the leaders in the Muslim community, too.

Khalid Khan has been on a parallel mission as a spokesman for his organization, the Islamic Society of Southwest Washington.

"The fear of the unknown — hatred and prejudice start from there," Khan said. "Before 9-11, I would maybe give one or two lectures a year. Since then, I've been going almost every other week to churches and lecture series."

The University of Portland mechanical engineering professor added, "Whoever wants to invite me and talk to me, I will go talk to them."

**Nonmilitant side**

Nonmilitant Iranian religious leaders made sure to give American tourists, including Spurlock, a chance to see that not everyone in the Middle East wants to wage a holy war.

An ayatollah, or high priest, who spent time with Spurlock made it clear to her that he opposes bloodshed, religious imperialism and nuclear empowerment, adding, "anything other than peace is not Islam." He operates a television studio and Web site to share that message broadly with his followers.

Spurlock said the popular image of Muslims in this country is not one of an enlightened prophet. From broadcast news to Hollywood, the limited roles they play in our mainstream cultural

discourse range from loner to radical to terrorist.

The blockbuster film "300" is one of the examples that makes Spurlock cringe. It presents hordes of misfits with towels on their heads trying to take down a few proud warriors of freedom, akin to the ways celluloid cowboys used to dominate Indians in battle. That recent hit movie, which has generated more than \$300 million in box office sales worldwide, shows a righteous king unilaterally deciding to confront an enemy — composed of monsters, deviants and weak-kneed slaves — not only invading a country but also threatening a way of life, the better way of life.

News reports compound such ideas, Spurlock said, by routinely showing the worst of the Middle East — gatherings of rabid crowds chanting "Death to Americans," or celebrations of public beheadings, or endless loops of that Iranian press conference about nuclear energy that ends with a bizarre ballet of wild-eyed enthusiasm for uranium enrichment.

Just as America isn't exclusively made up of cowboys, Christians or leaders dressed in Navy flight suits, Spurlock explained during her talk that the Middle East is a diverse and complex society that defies easy capsulization.

"I remember getting off of the airplane (on the initial flight to Iran), still being in the airport, and I saw a couple of women in black chadors," Spurlock said. "You can see a veiled woman and not be able to get past the veil. ... That feeling of strangeness quickly went away. That's a sight that feels very natural there. It's part of the setting."

**Beneath the veil**

As Spurlock began to meet and interact with the people of that country, she said she discovered "underneath the veil is a person who laughs and cries and loves her children and her husband and has all of the concerns that a woman who is not veiled would have. Underneath the surface, we are all basically the same. Once you get past the otherness of it, this is also a normal, human way to live."

Understanding Islam is crucial for anyone who wants to grasp the forces driving world events.

Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the world, second in size only to Christianity. Spurlock said, "I'm not an expert on Islam. But I've seen it in the daily lives of people in a very large country, and it's just a religion. It helps you become a better person, if you follow its guidelines. I never saw or heard of anyone preaching violence, until the Taliban (leaders) hijacked the religion to push their cause."

A response to the extremists' attacks on America has been a replacement of Cold War dualism, she said.

"We don't have to worry about the Soviet Union. But there has to be a good and bad. We're good. So who's bad?"

An example of what happens to this country when it has nothing scary to focus on for a few years: Monica Lewinsky. The void just has to be filled, or at least it sure seems that way, Spurlock asserts. Creating such a common enemy is a strategy Roman emperors employed for centuries.

The La Center book group's members repeatedly expressed open curiosity about why they hadn't been taught more about the Middle East, Muslims and the Arabic culture in school.

"Fundamentalists," said one of the participants, Sharon Hiner of La Center, "tend to be the less educated. The more educated a person, the more inclusive they seem to be."

Nola Marks, another one of the women in the La Center book group, acknowledged that until recently, "I thought of (the Middle East) as a camel, a caravan and a tent. ... But after reading about it, I think it's a fascinating culture. It's the root of history. Many of us had not given any thought to this part of the world and how important it would become in our time until now."

Spurlock said, "Americans certainly don't understand Iran, and they don't have the information that would help them understand. Almost all of the images of Iran are scary, and most of the news stories are promoting stereotypes. Those kinds of images and stereotypes are dangerous."

# Celebrate

# CONSTITUTION DAY

**Use Your Newspaper to Learn About Your Rights and Freedoms**

## What does the Constitution Say?

These quotes are all from the Constitution. Each one shows you how the Constitution reflects the following principles.

**Federalism**  
Congress shall have the power...To regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes...(Article I)

*This Constitution...shall be the supreme law of the land; and the judges in every state shall be bound thereby, anything in the Constitution or laws of any State to the contrary notwithstanding. (Article VI)*

**Limited Government**  
The privilege of the writ of habeas corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in cases of rebellion or invasion the public safety may require it....No bill of attainder or ex post facto Law shall be passed. (Article I)

*The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people. (The Tenth Amendment, 1791).*

**Republican Government**  
The United States shall guarantee to every state in this union a republican form of government...

*Each state shall appoint, in such manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a number of electors, equal to the whole number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress...(Article I)*

**Individual Rights**  
The citizens of each state shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in the several states. (Article IV)

*The trial of all crimes, except in cases of impeachment, shall be by jury.... (Article III)*

**Popular Sovereignty**  
The House of Representatives shall be composed of members chosen every second year by the people of the several states...(Article I)

*No title of nobility shall be granted by the United States...(Article I)*

**Separation of Powers/Checks and Balances**  
All legislative powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives. (Article I)

*Every bill which shall have passed the House of Representatives and the Senate, shall, before it become a law, be presented to the President of the United States...(Article I)*

**First Amendment in Action!**  
Use the National News section and find an article about one of these constitutional principles.

## MAKE A CONSTITUTION CUBE

Decorate each side of your cube with a drawing for each of these constitutional principles. Cut out the cube and tape it together.

Federalism	<p><b>Federalism:</b> The national government has certain powers and duties, and the states or the people keep all the others.</p>
Limited Government	<p><b>Limited Government:</b> The government has only those powers given to it by the people.</p> <p><b>Republican Government:</b> The people elect representatives to govern.</p> <p><b>Individual Rights:</b> The Constitution protects the rights of all people.</p> <p><b>Popular Sovereignty:</b> Power comes from the people, and good government comes from the consent of the governed.</p> <p><b>Separation of Powers/ Checks and Balances</b> Each of the three branches of government has specific things it can do. Each branch of government can stop the others from growing too powerful.</p>
Republican Government	<p><b>Popular Sovereignty</b></p>
Individual Rights	<p>Graphic design by Hot Topics Hot Serials/ Marsha Gilbert Sanchez</p>

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