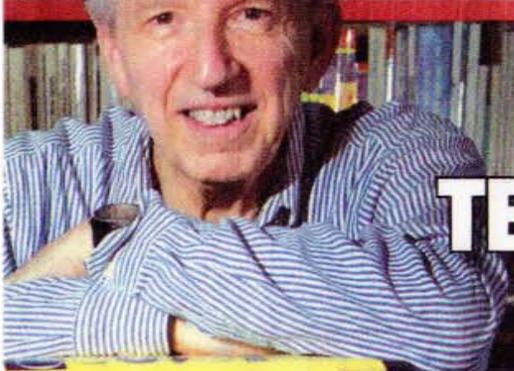
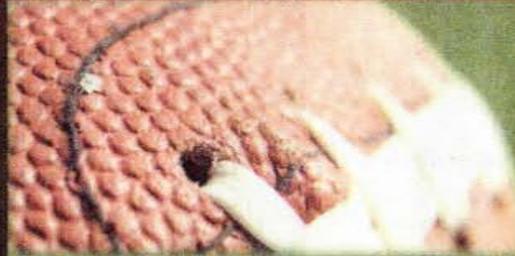


# Marin Independent Journal



## GURU OF TEST-TAKING

PLUS LIFE B1



## TERRA LINDA CONTINUES STRONG START

PLUS SPORTS C1

GRUBER'S COMPLETE SAT GUIDE 2010

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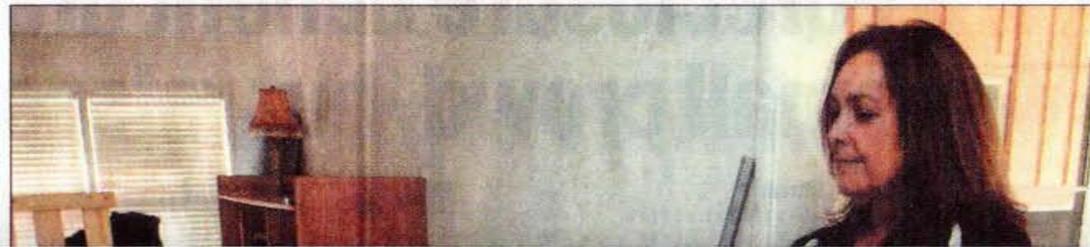
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TOP STORY: **HOMEOWNERS ON THE BRINK**

# FIGHTING BACK

Marin, Sonoma residents facing foreclosure rally against system they say scammed them



**GOVERNMENT**

# Pensions for new hires targeted

County, cities seek changes

**MARIN NEWS**

## NOVATO TAKES TIME TO PLAN THEATER'S ROLE

Plans to breathe new life into the Novato Theater are



**Plus**  
**LIFE WEEKEND**

**BETH ASHLEY**  
TUESDAY GENERATIONS  
Marin Independent Journal  
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**THREE THINGS TO DO TODAY**

- Discovery day**  
 ▶ **What:** San Francisco State's Romberg Center for Environmental Studies offers a behind-the-scenes look at the only marine science lab on San Francisco Bay, plus exhibits, faculty talks and science and art activities for kids.  
 ▶ **When:** 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
 ▶ **Cost:** Free  
 ▶ **Do it:** Romberg Tiburon Center, 3150 Paradise Drive, Tiburon; 338-3757
- Heaven and back**  
 ▶ **What:** Dying before his time, boxer Joe Pendleton comes back to earth as a different person, only to discover that his life is also in peril in the Novato Theater Company's production of Harry Segall's comedy, "Heaven Can Wait."  
 ▶ **When:** 8 p.m.  
 ▶ **Cost:** \$12 to \$22  
 ▶ **Do it:** Pacheco Playhouse, 484 Ignacio Blvd., Novato; 883-4498; www.pacheco-playhouse.org
- Scientifically funny**  
 ▶ **What:** Biologist Tim Lee spent years developing simulation and analytical models of population dynamics but found the work so boring that he turned to comedy. See whether he made the right decision at a stand-up show drawing on his scientific background.  
 ▶ **When:** 7:30 p.m.  
 ▶ **Cost:** \$15 to \$18  
 ▶ **Do it:** 142 Throckmorton Theatre, 142 Throckmorton Ave., Mill Valley; 383-9600; www.142throckmortontheatre.org
- For more places to go and things to do, visit [events.marinij.com](http://events.marinij.com)

- LOCAL MILESTONES**
- Amanda Addleman** of Forest Knolls, **Mariel Vandersteel** of Larkspur, **Stuart Lehman-Brown** of Novato, **Martin Fowler** and **Alex Wade** of San Anselmo and **Brian Jones** and **Joelle Parrett** of San Rafael were named to the dean's list for the spring semester at the Berklee College of Music.
- 
- Leslie Oblatz** of San Rafael was named to the dean's list for the spring quarter at the University of Denver.
- 
- Air Force 2nd Lt. **Andrew Y. Veerathanongdech** of Fairfax graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy with a Bachelor of Science degree.
- 
- Erin Baskin** of Stinson Beach was named to the dean's list for the spring semester at the University of Oregon.
- 
- Elizabeth Ryan** of Greenbrae is the winner of the Rensselaer Medal at San Domenico High School. Each medalist who is accepted and enrolls at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute receives a scholarship of \$60,000.

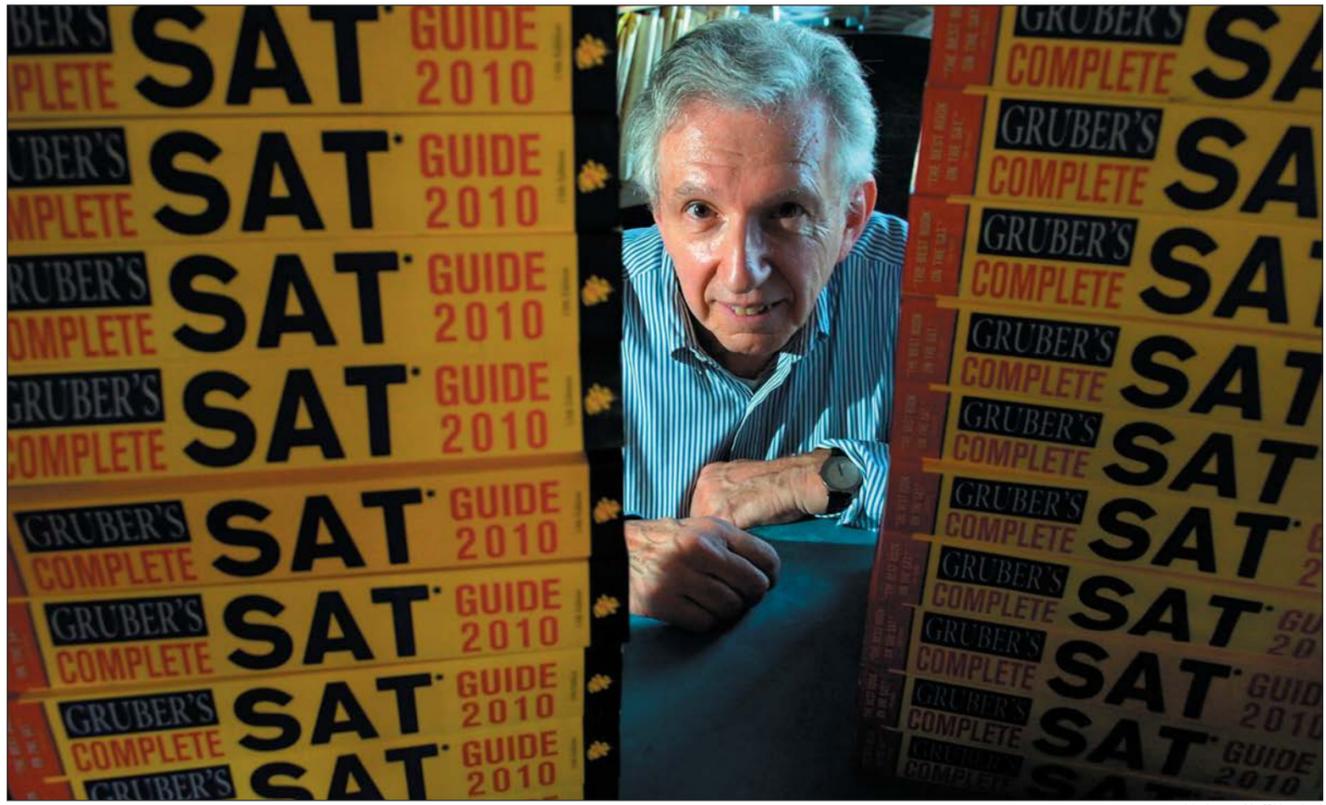
Milestones is good news about Marin people. E-mail [calendar@marinij.com](mailto:calendar@marinij.com).

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profile + books

**MARIN SNAPSHOT**



Gary Gruber — a nationally recognized expert on standardized tests like the SAT, and an author of nearly three dozen books on test-taking and critical thinking methods — is seen last week in his Mill Valley office.

**THE** San Rafael's Gary Gruber is a nationally renowned authority on standardized tests  
**ANSWER MAN**

By Jim Staats | Marin Independent Journal

**M**ARIN SCHOOLCHILDREN preparing their minds and bodies for the SATs and other stressful school tests would be wise to get to know Gary Gruber.

Many already are well acquainted with his work. Gruber, 68, of San Rafael turned a childhood passion into a 30-year profession as a nationally renowned authority on standardized tests and author of nearly three dozen books on test-taking and critical thinking skills.

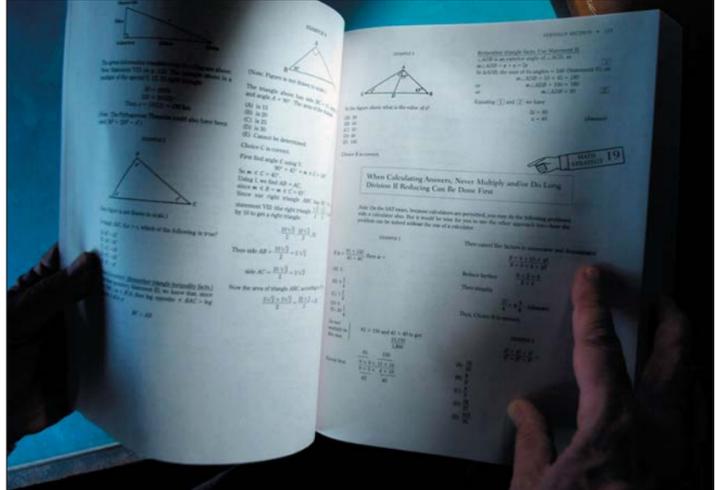
The longtime Marin resident, who holds a doctorate in physics, has appeared on numerous television and radio programs and worked with school officials throughout the country to help improve student problem-solving skills.

Gruber's brain teasers in airline magazines have kept countless travelers entertained and puzzled over the years.

**Q: How did you get into this?**  
**A:** When I was in the fifth grade, I got a (below normal) 90 on an IQ test. My father, a high school English teacher, said I should try to improve. I started getting fascinated with the strategy in testing. I had thought physics was the greatest way to do problem solving, but after a disillusioned meeting with some Nobel laureates, I thought I'd go into testing to help other people.

**Q: What is your testing strategy?**  
**A:** Instead of worrying about trying to get an answer, try to look for something curious in the problem that will lead you to the next step. You'll be surprised, (but) that will gradually lead you to the answer.

**Q: What do you love about it?**  
**A:** My mission is to get people passionate about problem solving. Instead of thinking, "I'll get the answer and get



Gary Gruber browses through a book he wrote to help students prepare for standardized testing. It includes problems and tips to improve critical thinking.

into the school," students will really enjoy doing this and then they'll know they will do well on the test and then get into the school.

**Q: What has it taught you about people?**  
**A:** Everybody has potential. What I see in other people is unless they can get to somebody who gives them support, they flounder. I look at people as smarter than I am. A lot of teachers do just the opposite.

**Q: What do you do in your off time?**  
**A:** I love music. It makes me get into the emotional area (where) there's no thinking involved. I've written music reviews and play reviews. I'm always fascinated in why someone would do something the way they do it. I guess I have a curious mind.

Contact Jim Staats at [jstaats@marinij.com](mailto:jstaats@marinij.com)

**OUT OF MY MIND**

*Italy's top dog's up to his old tricks*

**I**'VE BEEN WORKING on Bill the Dog ever since he was a little weanling about tact and social graces. "Look somebody in the eye when you sniff them. Always offer a friendly paw shake. Try not to mark your territory on the living room wall." That sort of thing. So far in his nine years, he's one for three. Good in baseball, not so good in the meet and greet department. Friends and acquaintances know instantly how Bill feels about them. If he likes them, he firmly



BARRY TOMPKINS

entrenches his head in their crotch. This generally results in our guests doing a backward shuffle that on occasion finds them hurtling neck-first over the sofa and landing spread eagle in the truffle mousse pate on the coffee table. But Bill really likes them. I bring this up because Bill happens to be a dog. When the tactless offender is the prime minister of Italy, it takes on a little different spin. Silvio Berlusconi this week

See **TOMPKINS**, page B4



Italy's Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's commented about a 'tanned' President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama.

AP archive/Charles Dharapak