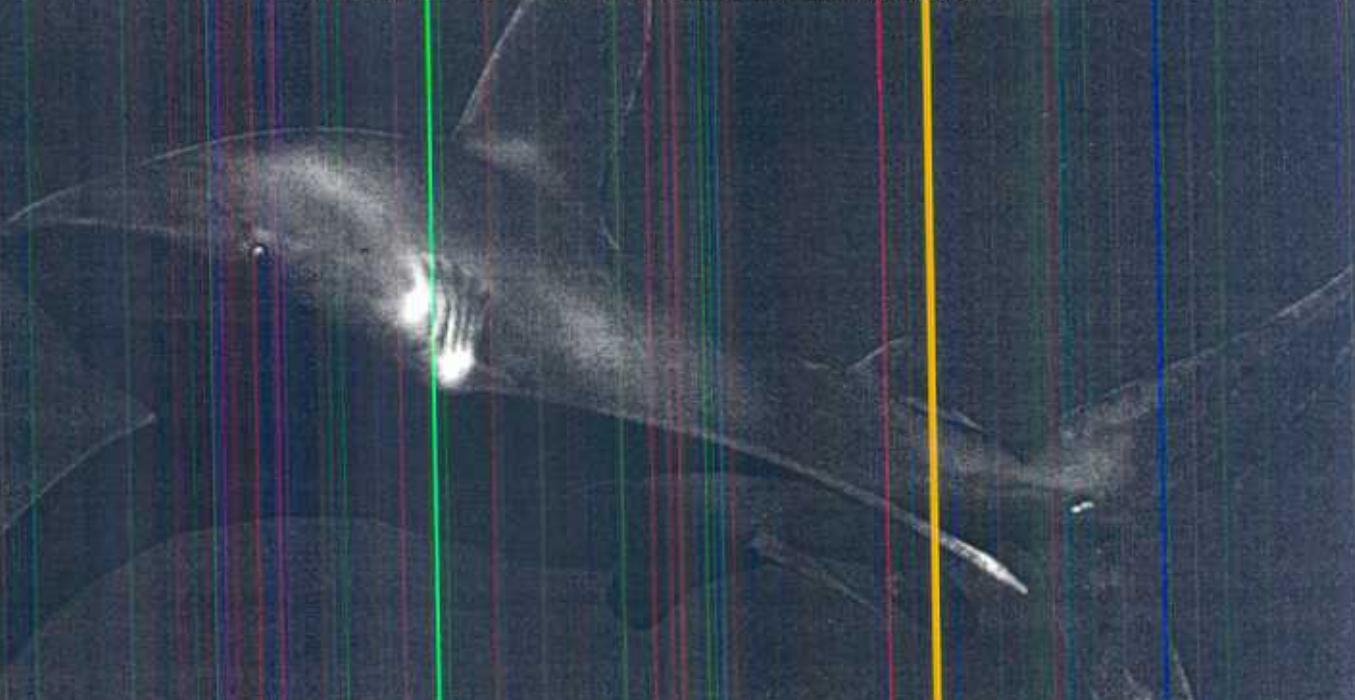


COAST

WEEKLY

MONTEREY COUNTY NEWS ARTS ENTERTAINMENT



DEAD SEA SCROLL

PEW COMMISSION REPORT WARNS:
THE OCEANS ARE IN CRISIS 15

SEX AND THE COUNTY [10] PRELUDE TO BLISS [38]

SQUID 6 NEWS 9 831 20 HOT PICKS 22 8 DAYS 24 A&E 26 MOVIES 28 MUSIC 30 ART 34 ON STAGE 38 FEAST 40 CLASSIFIEDS 47 HOMEPAGE 55

DEEP TROUBLE



Courtesy: Monterey Bay Aquarium

Pew Report adds to a mounting pile of evidence that the oceans are dying.

BY ANDREW SCUTRO

In a historic report released on Wednesday, June 4, the Pew Oceans Commission, a blue-ribbon panel made up of national leaders and chaired by Leon Panetta, makes a firm call for a total re-do of our national ocean policy.

Titled "America's Living Oceans: Charting A Course For Sea Change," the 145-page report depicts a large scale crisis in a vast, natural and strategically important resource that has been misunderstood and abused through the 20th century.

The Pew Commission speaks with bipartisan authority. Its 18-member panel has as members a former Coast Guard admiral who now heads the Ocean Conservancy; the first female NASA astronaut to walk in space; the chair of the nation's largest drinking water utility; Governor George Pataki of New York; Julie Packard, founder of the Monterey Bay Aquarium; two commercial fishermen; former and current government officials, and several scientists.

They've spent the last two years crisscrossing the nation talking to various fishermen, scientists, officials and regu-

lar citizens and returned to find the outlook for our seas bleak unless major changes are made quickly. As the report states simply out the outset,

"America's oceans are in crisis and the stakes could not be higher."

Although it's hard to imagine in 2003, picture the bountiful Monterey Bay devoid of life. Replace the bay's sea otters, whales and squid with a clogging of plankton and goo. And lots of nasty, bubbly brown foam.

It has happened, even if it hasn't happened here. The Monterey Bay sardine fishery did crash in the 1940s after years of baffling abundance, but the bay didn't become swarmed by plankton or choked with crap. But the Chesapeake Bay did.

The industrial removal of oysters early in the 20th century left the majestic Chesapeake without its natural filter. Heaping scads of oysters had for years cleaned all the microscopic junk out of the bay's waters. But when New Yorkers developed a taste for the oysters, and the baymen of Maryland and Virginia figured out how to break apart and efficiently remove the massive oyster colonies using steam shovels, the ecosystem shifted.

The water went dirty without its oysters. Their food source, plankton, thrived. Jellyfish followed, creating a hypoxic area, or dead zone. Later, industrial pollution from poultry farms on the Eastern Shore exacerbated the prob-

lem. A once thriving and productive bay became home to lowlife marine creatures, with oysters at one percent of historic levels.

Jeremy Jackson, a marine biologist, studied the Chesapeake 30 years ago, and he uses that place as example of just how quickly and seriously unintended consequences can be created by hungry, well-equipped people. Now he's a leading advocate for restoring ocean health.

In the coming months we are likely to hear a lot from Jackson and others like him, as a convergence of efforts and campaigns to repair a badly damaged ocean gets underway.

The Pew report is the first major reassessment of the U.S. policy on oceans in 30 years. It comes out at a time when the public is increasingly aware of serious effects on ocean life caused by human use and abuse.

Locally, rules on the management of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary are being overhauled. At the national level, the Pew report will call for major revisions: drastic measures like no-fishing zones that will be very controversial. A congressionally appointed commission will release its own report later this year.

Globally, the effect of industrialized fishing is being acknowledged such that the United Nations recently resolved to return fish stocks to sustainable and healthy numbers.

One of the clearest voices calling for the same will be and has been Dr. Jackson. The director of the Geosciences Research Division at Scripps Institution of Oceanography and a senior scientist at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, Jackson is living in Pacific

deep, continued on p. 16

deep, continued from p. 15

Grove this summer to finish a book called *Brave New Ocean*, about severe human abuses on ocean life and its widespread and compounding consequences. His work is important and timely, but he says people don't necessarily pay attention, or even care.

He's trying to change that. Last week, he was in Los Angeles to make public service announcements for a campaign called Shifting Baselines. Through the Internet, film, television and other media, it tries to get people to realize that what we have in the sea today is faint echo of the life it used to hold, before industrialized sea harvesting crushed fish stocks and scraped the ocean floor, and before pollution and bad policy created vast dead zones in places like the Gulf of Mexico and the San Francisco Bay.

The science can be complicated but his message is clear. And blunt.

"The ocean is really, really [screwed] up, and people don't know it," he says. "If you tell them it is, they immediately think of pollution because it's easy. But they don't realize the really insidious thing we're doing is harvesting it down to the last fish."

He has a point. It's hard to understand there's a crisis when you can go to Costco and buy fish from a big, fully stocked freezer. It's not even that expensive and some cuts, like ahi tuna, are huge. But at Monterey's Costco—a five-minute walk from the ocean—the lobster comes from Australia, the prawns are from Indonesia, the halibut is from Alaska and the salmon is from a farm.

And according to fresh studies, the industry that puts those fish in that freezer is wiping the oceans out.

There is a gap between what's real and what's realized. In the same way that we have facsimiles of places that once were—a housing development called Elk View in a place where there were once elk but no more—Jackson's contention, after years of study, is that we don't know what we're missing. And it's not for us that we should care but for the health of the earth.

Jackson's an advocate for the creation of zones in the sea called "marine reserves." He points to scientific findings that call for "extraction bans." His recommended solution is simple, and, again, blunt: no-fishing.

This notion is extremely controversial and disputed at every turn. Still, the evidence that humanity must completely rethink our ideas about the ocean is being steadily accumulated, by Jackson and others.

The Pew Commission's findings were preceded by more bad news. A major report using 50 years worth of records kept by various fishing fleets around the

world, published in the May issue of the journal *Nature*, asserts that 90 percent of the large oceangoing fish, such as bluefin tuna and albacore, are gone due to the relentless harvest by industrialized and heavily subsidized fishing fleets.

Technology and government subsidies have allowed fleets to travel thousands of miles from homeport, find schools of fish with various sensors, and essentially shovel aboard every swimming creature.

This has created a weird situation. If humans are at the top of the food chain, we have removed some of the fattest links, leaving us to, as Jackson says, harvest the "dandelions" left behind. Jackson compared it to slaughtering buffalo on the America prairie in the 1800s. He and others say it's time for drastic changes.

"We don't need to keep studying these places. We already have the examples. We don't need to spend another dollar. We don't need to spend another penny. Like a farmer setting aside fields to be fallow we have to set aside huge, huge parts of the ocean so fish populations can rebound.

"It's going to ripple through society. It's going to be a war. We always do these things but if we do them late the consequences could be vastly worse than if we'd done them on time."



The Pew Commission report follows 30 years after a document called the Stratton Commission report. It was published in 1969 and characterized the ocean more as a resource that needs to be used than one which needs protection. Things have changed.

The Pew report is the product of two years of work by the commissioners, who traveled from coast to coast talking to scientists, commercial and sport fishermen, tour operators, government officials and regular citizens. They toured commercial fishing plants in Alaska, listened to shrimp fishermen in Louisiana, held a hearing for lobstermen in Maine and so on in 15 different venues.

The report identifies major threats to the nation's oceans from coastal development, overfishing, climate change, pollution, invasive species, fish farming, unintentionally caught fish (known as bycatch), and habitat alterations.

It cites countless examples of destructive practices, some of which begin inland. (The Commission made a stop in Iowa to examine farming practices.)

As in the example of the Chesapeake Bay, the depletion or removal of one species has a ripple effect on others, as the various lifeforms rely on each other in the ecosystem. The Pew report identifies such crisis areas such as the so-called "dead zone" in the Gulf of Mexico,

"WE DON'T NEED TO KEEP STUDYING THESE PLACES. WE ALREADY HAVE THE EXAMPLES. WE DON'T NEED TO SPEND ANOTHER DOLLAR. WE HAVE TO SET ASIDE HUGE, HUGE PARTS OF THE OCEAN SO FISH POPULATIONS CAN REBOUND."

JEREMY JACKSON

which is as large as New Jersey. The devastation in the barren offshore area has been blamed on farm run-off pollution pouring into the sea from the Mississippi River, water that's channeled by levees and ducts built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. According to the Pew report, that channel system has also led to erosion and saltwater intrusion that's destroying the Mississippi Delta.

The report documents a similar man-made disaster has happened even closer to home. The Bureau of Reclamation drained wetlands around Sacramento, wiping out 95 percent of the Sacramento River Delta and knocking back winter Chinook salmon runs by 90 percent. Now the government is spending \$20 billion on a restoration project in the San Francisco Bay.

The list goes on and on and on. Detailed is the list of recommendations for protecting the national marine ecosystems for the future.

Panetta and the commissioners call on the nation to take a number of major steps that make ocean health a national priority. Much of the weight falls on the federal government.



The Commission recommends that the government enact a National Ocean Policy; set up ocean management councils with the ability to enforce the rules; create an independent ocean agency rather than have it as a branch of the

Department of Commerce as it is now; and perhaps most controversial, "establish a national system of fully protected marine reserves."

There are recommendations for restoring fisheries, such as requiring monitoring of commercial fishing vessels for "bycatch." It calls for limiting coastal development and revising and bolstering laws to prevent pollution run-off. The report says the country also needs to "address unabashed point-sources of pollution, such as concentrated animal feeding operations and cruiseships." (As it is now, federal regulations are so lacking, measures are taken at the local and state level. The Monterey City Council had to pass its own cruiseship pollution ordinance recently, although it technically has no jurisdiction.)

It also calls for a policy on fish farms and other aquaculture operations, and a doubling of government funding for "basic ocean science and research."

Whether any of it happens will be a huge political battle, a battle that's being mirrored right now locally.

The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary is now undergoing its management plan review process. Under it, the rules and the laws that regulate activity up to 50 miles out to sea from San Francisco to San Luis Obispo are being examined and revised.

OCEAN FACTS

- The oceans cover 70 percent of the planet. US waters account for 4.5 million square miles, or an area 23 percent larger than the total national land area.
- Half the US population lives in coastal counties. By 2015, 25 million more people are expected to live along the coasts.
- Overfishing by industrial fishing fleets has been blamed on the removal of 90 percent of the ocean's large fish, such as tuna, billfish and swordfish. Depletion of fish stocks has spread from coastal seas to the ocean around the globe.*
- Twenty-thousand acres of sensitive-coastal wetlands habitat disappear in the US every year.
- Eleven million gallons of dripped and leaked oil—the equivalent of Alaska's Exxon Valdez spill—run off America's streets into drains, and eventually into the sea, every eight months.
- Sixty percent of American coastal rivers and bays are "moderately to severely degraded" by

fertilizer runoff from farms, feedlots and other sources that cause "dead zones" where marine life cannot survive.

- In 2001, 13,000 beaches were closed or put in pollution advisories.
- Only 22 percent of US fisheries are being managed sustainably. Some fish stocks, such as New England cod and yellowtail-flounder—have been almost totally depleted. In the Monterey Bay, the nearshore fishery was shut down for certain rockfish.
- Commercial fishermen discard 25 percent of what they catch. In U.S. fisheries that's estimated to be 2.3 billion pounds a year of wasted fish, marine mammals, turtles and birds.

Source: "America's Living Oceans: Charting a Course for Sea Change," released June 4, 2003 by the Pew Oceans Commission.

Source: "Rapid worldwide depletion of predatory fish communities," published in the May issue of Nature magazine.

deep, continued on p. 18

WATER POLITICS

As chair of the Pew Oceans Commission, Leon Panetta is asking the Bush Administration for leadership.

BY ERIC JOHNSON

Leon Panetta was back in his old office at the White House last Wednesday. He had some important news and he wanted to make sure President Bush got it, so he delivered it personally to Bush's Chief of Staff, Andy Card.

Panetta, who did a stint as Chief of Staff for Pres. Bill Clinton, was in DC last week in his role as chairman of the Pew Oceans Commission—a blue-ribbon panel that has spent the past year compiling an exhaustive study. The report's conclusions are dire, but Panetta is not without hope.

"I'm glad we had a chance to present it to the White House," Panetta said the following morning. "Hopefully they'll look at it closely. And I hope we can get him to pay attention to the findings."

The "him" Panetta was referring to is our current president, and even though Bush has not been distinguished by a passion for environmental stewardship, Panetta did not believe he was being overly optimistic.

Almost 15 years ago, when Panetta was serving as the Central Coast's representative in Congress, he launched a crusade to get the Monterey Bay and surrounding waters declared a National Marine Sanctuary. In this effort he won an unlikely ally: George H.W. Bush.

Panetta says he met with Bush one-on-one on several occasions when he was trying to get protection for the Sanctuary, and found him to be helpful. At least part of that cooperative spirit was based on an environmental ethic, Panetta says. He apparently is hoping the "like father, like son" rule may come into effect.

"This, too, was a president who came out of the oil industry, but I think he recognized that there are some resources that need protection," Panetta recalls.

Beyond that—probably more than that—Panetta believes Bush the First made a political calculation.

In his efforts to woo Bush Senior,

Panetta invited him to Monterey and showed him around the neighborhood. "It didn't take a lot of arm-twisting to convince him that he'd have a hard time carrying California [in the next election] if he allowed oil rigs off the Big Sur coast," Panetta says. "I think he figured that out pretty fast."

It worked. Bush supported the Sanctuary, and dared to run on a pledge to be "the environmental president."

Panetta, known as much for his keen sense of politics as for his solid ethics and consensus-building powers, says George Bush the Younger may find himself in a situation not unlike the one his father faced.

"This president has to make a political judgment," Panetta says. "Is he going to go into the next election saying, to hell with the environment in all of its aspects? Or is he going to go into the race with at least one area in which he shows environmental leadership?"

Panetta and his fellow Pew Oceans Commissioners—which include Democrats and Republicans, fishermen and conservationists—are calling for a fundamental shift in national policy. Their recommendations include the passage of an omnibus law outlining a national oceans policy, and the creation of a whole new area of federal government (to take the place of the hodgepodge of 40-plus agencies that now share responsibility for managing the oceans).

deep, continued from p. 16

Later this month, a committee of citizens and stakeholders known as the Sanctuary Advisory Council will review preliminary findings from the initial scoping period. Everything is on the table, from setting up no-fishing zones off the local coast, to expanding the boundary of the Sanctuary to include the massive, undisturbed underwater peak off the coast of southern Big Sur known as the Davidson Seamount. After another round of public hearings and reviews, the new rules will be finalized right around the 2004 presidential election, making it—and the Pew report recommendations—a political football for whichever candidate picks it up.

That's not soon enough for those who have seen and studied massive-

scale devastation to the ocean in relatively brief period. The Pew report is aimed at what the U.S. can do to fix what we've broken. It's focused here, rather than pointing at other nations with equally rapacious appetites for fish and likely less ambitious attitudes about preservation.

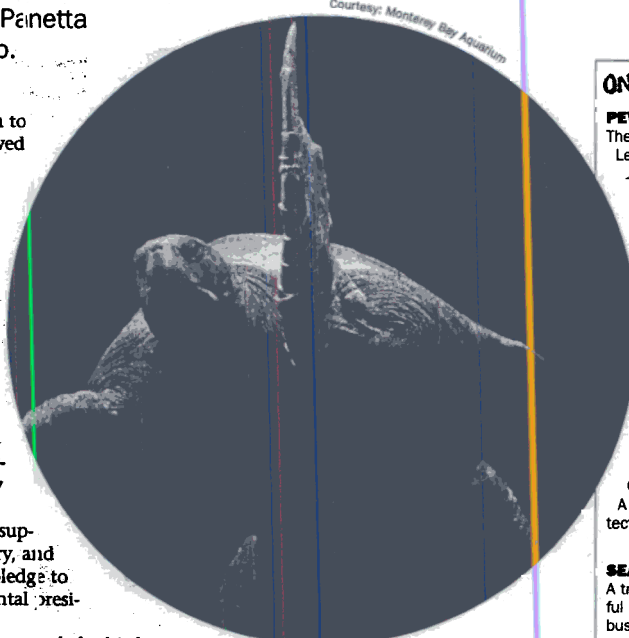
For his part, Jeremy Jackson believes the United States needs to take the lead and set an example for other nations without waiting for global consensus.

Based on the way the current administration handled such global environmental actions like the Kyoto protocol, it's going to take more than a sea change to make waves. It's going to take a regime change.

It's a matter of political will whether or not our nation protects its own

ecosystem for the future. Of course, in an election year, anything can happen. Though it seems unlikely now, the political juice that comes with doing something environmentally popular would be hard to resist, even for George W. Bush. After all, his father's adoption of the proposed Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary helped George Bush Sr. win California in 1988 [See sidebar, page 17].

Dr. Jackson says America can rise to the challenge: "We have the power to take over another country and make it our own gas station. We certainly have the power to protect our coastal waters. We have the power to protect our fisheries. We don't have to wait for international agreements."



Courtesy: Monterey Bay Aquarium

ONLINE OCEAN RESOURCES

PEW OCEANS COMMISSION

The independent commission chaired by Leon Panetta responsible for the historic June 4 report "America's Living Oceans."

www.pewoceans.org

SHIFTING BASELINES

A campaign headed up by Dr. Jeremy Jackson (interviewed for adjoining article) that shows vividly just how much has been lost from the ocean.

www.shiftingbaselines.org

CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL

An international organization dedicated to preserving the globe's natural heritage for future generations. Organized a major ocean health conference in Mexico ending June 3, 2003.

www.conserva.org

OCEAN CONSERVANCY

A 900,000-member body dedicated to protecting the ocean and its ecosystems.

www.oceanconservancy.org

SEAFOOD BUSINESS MAGAZINE

A trade journal. Site includes a page of helpful links to fisheries organizations and fish business groups.

www.seafoodbusiness.com

NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL

An environmental action organization with a solid legal and lobbying track record.

www.nrdc.org

THE US COMMISSION ON OCEAN POLICY

A commission of various ocean explorers, academics, government officials and others authorized by congress to review ocean policy.

www.oceancommission.gov

THE HOUSE OCEANS CAUCUS

A bipartisan forum for exploring ocean issues headed up by four congressmen, including Rep. Sam Farr.

www.house.gov/greenwood/OCEAN

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

The federal agency responsible for fisheries management.

www.nmfs.noaa.gov

MONTEREY BAY NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

From this local site link beyond to the National Ocean Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

<http://montereybay.noaa.gov>

OCEANA

An international ocean advocacy organization founded in 2001.

www.oceana.org

ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE

An advocacy group with roots in the effort to stop use of the dangerous pesticide DDT, exposed in Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring*.

www.environmentaldefense.org/home.cfm

MARINE CONSERVATION BIOLOGY INSTITUTE

Scientific and conservation advocacy group dedicated to restoring and protecting marine life off America's shores.

www.mcbl.org

PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

The body responsible for setting fishing regulations for the Pacific coast.

www.pcouncil.org

MONTEREY BAY AQUARIUM

Site for a local but world-renowned ocean education and research center.

www.mbayaq.org

esting. *Letter to have loved and lost*, etc.

This year, perhaps worn out from the grumbling, Moorer promises the plays will be performed in period; "We'll all be wearing armor and carrying broadswords, so relax, everyone." (Spoilsports, I say.)

The Western Stage at Hartnell College in Salinas, currently showing *Prelude to a Kiss* (reviewed on page 26), opens *Funny Thing* later in the month on the Main Stage. On July 11, in the smaller Studio Theater, Western Stage opens *Ah! Wilderness*, Eugene O'Neill's only comedy (a fictional recreation of the childhood he always wished for in pre-World War I Connecticut).

On August 8, Western Stage opens what artistic director Jon Selover calls "the centerpiece of what we're doing this year"—an original adaptation of Victor Villasenor's *Rain of Gold*, in which the noted author recounts his family's emigration from Mexico to Southern California 100 years ago. The department has been working on this play for two and a half years, brought in Villasenor three times for readings and workshops, and has auditioned many out-of-town actors for the production, which opens in conjunction with the city's annual Steinbeck Festival.

"The story has a lot of resonance for people in this area," Selover says. "It's the story of a time of turmoil in California's history, and how one family fit into it."

Rounding out its summer season, on August 22, Western Stage presents *Anton in Show Business*, a "fun romp," Selover says, through the backstage world of community theater. *Anton* applies a unique conceit—an all-female cast playing multiple roles, including the male parts—in his tale about a retired soap opera star in a small Texas town trying to put on Chekhov's *Three Sisters*. Should be amusing.

Elsa Con at the Magic Circle Center has been putting on some of the area's more interesting plays these past few seasons, most recently with a recent stellar production of Margaret Edson's *Wit*. On June 27 Magic Circle opens *Over the River and Through the Woods*, a long-running Off-Broadway comedy about a close-knit Italian-American family. "There's a sweet sadness to the story," Con says.

Also on August 22, Magic Circle opens *The Housekeeper*, a two-person show featuring Jill Jackson and Rolly Dick, where Dick plays a cantankerous bachelor who hires a bag lady as his new housekeeper. (Typecasting for Jackson? Hrrmm.)

Although *Wit* failed to pull in the big crowds Magic Circle usually gets, Con says she won't give up bringing in new and risky productions. "I will not just do crowd-pleasers," she states. "I'd rather close down the theater than do happy little musicals all year long." The point of theater, she says, "is to move people, whether through laughter or tears." Prepare to be moved this summer. ✧