



Lily, face tattooed, enters first grade



Lily, facial tattoo

To permanently mark the occasion of her entry into first grade, Lily, 6, augmented her butterfly body art of 2006, which graces her left forearm.

"It's a personal statement," Lily said. "It says, 'My face looks like a tiger-face.'"

The tattoo sent Oscar, the family puggle, skittering across the hardwood and up the stairs.

Lily enjoys life in Ms. Bass's Lowry Elementary School classroom, though her Montessori background has her questioning the need for such tedium as learning to read and adding single-digit numbers.

"Things were so much simpler then," she sighed, as she brushed her bangs from the stark bands inked into her forehead.

Lily continues to figure skate and has taken up gymnastics.

Land shark neglects duty



This is a symbiotic mix of activity, except when she attempts backwards somersaults at the blue line.

Lily's classwork included the creation of a book titled, "Are trip to jym clas," in which the author describes how "Ms. Bass tuc us to jim class" and "we got to do dans dans revaloshin." The book's single unit of sales has vastly outpaced that of her father's collective works.



Lily on the slopes

Lily finished her second year of ski lessons at Eldora Mountain Resort in the mountains above Boulder, which resulted in superb form, bad hair and antiquated gear. Maya will join her in the program in early 2010.



Lily, new headwear

Lily, who was born with a fashion sense largely escaping her progenitors, has also been developing her own of line of ladies' headwear, the initial installments of which play on the theme of designer mutt in repose.

YOUR AD HERE!

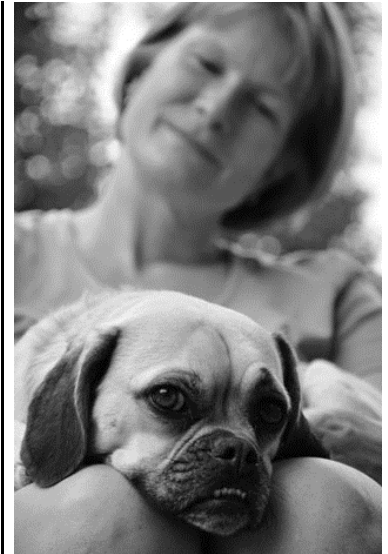
NEW MAN STEALS CAROL'S HEART

A new man has swept into Carol's life, eliciting a depth of ardor surprising even to herself.

Like a hunky plumber on "Desperate Housewives," Oscar arrived by surprise, in this case after the Neffs volunteered to dog-sit this erstwhile property of friend and Montessori proprietress Beth van de Water.

Standing 14 inches at the shoulder, this housebroken housebreaker is a puggle – half pug, half seagull – a so-called "designer mutt" breed the American Kennel Club quite wisely refuses to recognize.

Originally allowed to sleep "over the covers and at the foot of the bed only," as Carol insisted, the blonde, snaggle-toothed seducer now spends his nights under blankets at ankles and, by morning, with his head on a pillow between Todd and Carol, like a miniature humanoid.



Carol, her new man

That Todd's paternal grandfather went by Oscar adds to the dog's mystique.

When not lost in the thrall of Oscar, Carol continues to enjoy her work with building-materials manufacturer Johns Manville in downtown Denver.

Girls launch real-estate venture

Lily and Maya bounced back from their failed GoggleBead® venture, literally scooping up real estate on South Padre Island, Texas. Asked whether climate-induced sea-level rise of between one meter (IPCC 2007) and several meters was a concern, Maya called climate change "the greatest hoax



ever perpetrated on the American people," adding, "What's a 'meter?'"

Girls' GoggleBead® biz soars, fizzles



The Neff girls' GoggleBead® Virtual Ski Goggle business collapsed as fashionistas moved on and those seeking functional benefit found their needs overwhelmingly unmet.

The lack of such features as no-fog lenses outweighed the appealing customizability of goggles made of highly modular Pop Beads, market analysts surmised.

Maya, Lily model GoggleBeads®

MAYA AIMS FOR 'MIRACLE ON CONCRETE'



Maya keeps the dream alive

Maya, 4, has emerged as a bright young prospect in the blossoming sport of concrete figure skating. In this endeavor, skaters perform ice-skating-like maneuvers while still wearing skate guards on concrete or asphalt surfaces generally in the vicinity of actual skating rinks.

The sport's popularity has soared as the ongoing economic downturn pushes the dream of ice time beyond the reach of what once was known as the American "middle class."

Although far from concrete-skating hotbed Mich-

igan, Maya's combination of agility and exceptional pain tolerance has caught the eye of representatives from Cemex USA, Inc., which has signed her to a sponsorship deal.



Maya in a rare subdued moment

While not on the asphalt or nursing scrapes, Maya continues her pre-K education at the Children's House of Stapleton Montessori. There, she produces incredible quantities of output involving paper cut and marked upon in mysterious ways.

REMEMBER THE NEEDIEST!

Beacon Media to shutter Beacon

On the eve of its tenth anniversary, Beacon Media, owner of the Holiday Beacon, announced it would close its money-losing holiday newsletter property. Company officials cited continuing declines in circulation and advertising revenues as well as the cursed Craigslist as factors in the action.

"The loss of our anchor

advertiser, the Front Range Diet, was the final nail in the Holiday Beacon coffin," said Beacon Media spokeswoman Lily Neff.

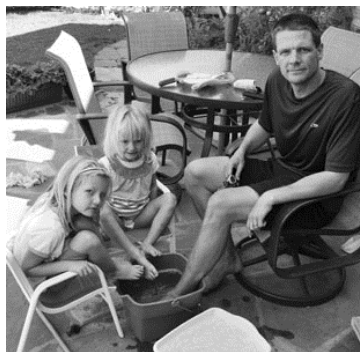
Neff said Beacon Media was "exploring its options," regarding the property, which analysts speculate could include converting the Beacon to an annual Tweet.

Todd compiles impressive stats in soccer return

Less than a year into his return to semi-competitive soccer, Todd has tallied statistics on a par with – and even exceeding – those of his former playing days.

Combining his men's over-30 and coed over-30 indoor soccer exploits, Todd, 40, notched a hamstring pull, a groin strain, lumbar duress, a sore knee, right ankle tweaks, and a ruinous left ankle eversion. Not included in official statistics are intangibles such as soreness generally reserved for those suffering tramlings in Sudanese food riots.

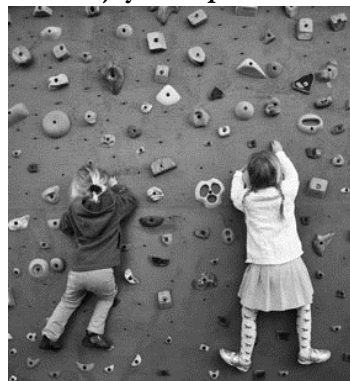
"It's great to be back," he said. Todd keeps busy with work



Todd, right, with training staff

for the University of Colorado Hospital, child-rearing, and, occasionally, magazines. He contributed to the recently published "How the West was Warmed." His book on how the Ball jar company hit a comet will be out in 2010, and he's plotting a tome about communications and climate change.

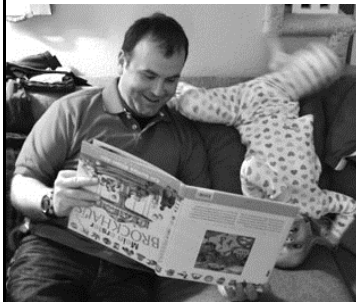
Girls enjoy metaphor for life



TRAVEL REPORT

The Neff vacations centered on the home region in 2009, highlighted by visits by their old friends, the Blairs of Ireland and the Machas of Los Angeles, Germany.

The Machas and Neffs loaded up the minivan and headed for Park City, where



Andreas Macha (left), Maya

Uncle Cheeseburger, Aunt Amy, Drew and Sophie live. Then it was on to Moab/ Arches National Park, Utah and back to Denver via Glenwood Springs.

In the summer, the minivan carried the four core Neffs on a Colorado adventure involving Alamosa, Durango, Ouray and various KOA Kampground Kabins. The trip was capped with a neighbor-confab at Rifle Falls where, to the surprise of all, young were lost to neither rapids nor mountain lions.

We close the year, and I write these words, in South Padre Island, Texas, where we've enjoyed a windy post-holiday week with Carol's clan.

