Montecito’s Jarryd Commerford is always up for a challenge. The 24-year-old former George Washington University student, whose grandfather, Stan Fishman, is one of the founding members of the popular Santa Barbara charity, the Dream Foundation, is joining his former classmate, Philadelphia-based Simon Linsley, 23, in one of the world’s most challenging races in Shillong, Meghalaya, one of India’s smallest states, in September.

The 14-day, 2,000-mile race to Jaisalmer in Rajasthan is done in a three-wheeled rickshaw known as a tuk-tuk, powered by a seven-horsepower lawnmower engine, which can go up to 30 mph on flat roads, but, as Jarryd loudly laughs, “unlimited downhill!”

The intrepid twosome, who have dubbed themselves “The Mighty Tuks,” hope to raise $14,000 from their efforts, including selling ad space on each quadrant of the vehicle, which will enable the foundation to fulfill 14 dreams for those suffering from terminal illness.

“It’s the trip of a lifetime,” says Jarryd of the Adventurists Rickshaw Run, as the race, a hot and sunnier version of the world famous Iditarod 1,150-mile dogsled marathon from Anchorage to Nome in Alaska, is known.

“I first learned of it when I was in England studying at the University of Nottingham and was absolutely fascinated. I e-mailed friends to see if anyone was silly enough to join me in participating and Simon signed up.”

The rickshaw race has no standard route, so it’s every entrant for himself.

“Everyone will have a very different experience and, undoubtedly, some will not finish the race, given tuk-tuks are notorious for breaking down and garages with mechanics aren’t exactly abundant in the remoter areas. We’ll even be going into Nepal at the base of the Himalayas.”

Jarryd and Simon are financing the entire trip themselves, so every penny raised will go to the non-profit, which was founded by Thomas Rollerson in 1994 and last year achieved its ten-thousandth dream. They are also accepting dares in exchange for donations.

For a price, you can dictate an outfit or hairstyle to feature during the trip, or ask that your name, a silly magnet or a company logo appear on the rickshaw.

They’ll also be documenting their traversing some of the world’s worst roads.

“Part of the time we’ll sleep rough, other times stay in hostels, or just hope a Good Samaritan will give us shelter. A lot of the time we’ll be on India’s most rural roads, where the driving is absolutely appalling. But the danger is part of the allure. “I’ve traveled many places, including North Korea a year ago, while living in China doing technology research. I stayed a week and got around by car with government minders in tow. My most abiding memory was staying in a 45-story hotel in the capital, Pyongyang, when only fifteen rooms were occupied, not to mention visiting the wrong side of the DMZ. It was like a time machine.”

The dynamic duo, who have so far raised $4,000, will be among 60 teams traversing some of the world’s worst roads.

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Engagement

It has been quite an extraordinary month for Santa Barbara Polo Club patriarch, Glen Holden.

Having orchestrated the visit of Prince William and his wife, Kate, to the Carpinteria locale to make it the highlight of the club’s centennial, Glen, the former U.S. ambassador to Jamaica, also celebrated his 84th birthday at his Gehache Ranch, just a tiara’s toss from the carefully manicured fields, one of which is named in his honor.

And now, I’m delighted to report, his 27-year-old grandson, Glen Holden III, has just got engaged to his girlfriend of more than three years, Chloe Henderson.

Glen, a graduate of the Brooks Institute of Photography, met Chloe, a hairdresser in Ventura, and proposed on the third anniversary of their romance in Morro Bay, where they have gone each year to mark their relationship.

Glen, who aspires to be a firefighter, hid the engagement ring – an emerald-cut diamond with two additional kite-shaped diamonds - in a box of chocolates which he gave Chloe at a romantic repast. It had particular significance, as it had belonged to his mother.

Like his father, Jeep, and his grandfather, Glen is a keen polo player and recently attained a one-goal rating.

“We couldn’t be happier,” says Jeep, who played in the royal round robin with his son and Prince William...

Back Home

Anthony Slayter-Ralph, the Montecito-based dealer in antiquities, who is a regular on the popular PBS series “The Antiques Roadshow,” has just arrived back in our rarefied enclave after taping the show in El
It was quite hairy!” says Anthony. “The venue was just a few hundred yards from the border with Mexico and its sister town, Juarez, currently celebrating its notoriety as the murder capital of the world with 3,000 people killed in the last year, mostly from drug related crime.

“They had just reported the news that ex-policeman Marco Antonio Guzman, who ran the armed wing of the Juarez cartel, was arrested.”

“While filming I imagined the scenario, asking people who brought in antiques for appraisal, if they minded continuing under the table and putting on the available flak jackets.”

Not quite the usual idyll the show – hosted by an old friend, Mark Walberg (not to be confused with the former Calvin Klein model and actor) – is generally filmed in, to be sure.

On the Market
The news that ailing actress Zsa Zsa Gabor, 94, and her husband, Frédéric von Anhalt, have put their Bel Air manse on the market for $28 million, brought back many memories.

The 26-room, 12,000-sq-ft house, built for the late aviator and reclusive billionaire Howard Hughes, was also lived in by singing icon Elvis Presley, who used it while filming many of his films in Hollywood in the ’60s.

I first visited it in 1979 when a good friend, Gloria Luchenbill, who did the public relations for Gucci in Beverly Hills, took me to meet Zsa Zsa, then better known as a TV glamourpuss, for tea and she gave me a tour of her home, which has spectacular 180-degree views of the Pacific, as well as floor-to-ceiling glass doors that ascend into the ceiling.

Of particular interest was her discotheque, the Moulin Rouge, named after her 1952 film.

Zsa Zsa, who had her leg amputated in January after a gangrene infection following hip replacement surgery a year ago, set the disco ball in motion and put Gloria Gaynor’s mega-hit “I Will Survive” on the sound system.

Memories of disco dancing glamourpuss Zsa Zsa

Years later, when I was a regular on-air contributor on Geraldo Rivera’s eponymous syndicated TV talk show, I ended up dancing with Gaynor in the studio as she sang the popular anthem.

No wonder it was considered the most popular program by inmates in Sing Sing!

Of such events, memories are made...

Royal Ramblings
Anxious to avoid the controversy that has dogged many charities, including the late Princess Diana’s memorial fund, Prince William and Harry are reportedly drawing up an unofficial blacklist of people they do not want to be involved in their charitable foundation, whose U.S. arm raised almost $5 million – around $1 million an hour! – when Prince Charles’ 29-year-old son played at the Santa Barbara Polo Club earlier this month.

Wary of being linked to dubious businessmen, tax exiles, or those who simply want to be awarded in the twice yearly Buckingham Palace honors list – published in the New Year and on Queen Elizabeth’s official birthday –, royal aides are establishing a confidential risk-assessment process to vet those wanting to give donations to the Foundation Of Prince William And Prince Harry.

The brothers no doubt also want to avoid the negative press that has
dogged their uncle, Prince Andrew, over his dubious dealings with foreign tycoons.

The foundation has already established a joint venture with Swiss financier Arpad Busson, 48, founder of the children’s charity Ark – Absolute Return for Kids – and former fiancé of supermodel Elle Macpherson, by whom he has two sons, and actress Uma Thurman.

William and Kate chose the non-prof-it’s ostentatious dinner at Kensington Palace, where William was brought up and they are eventually expected to live, as their first official engagement after their marriage...

How to Train Your Dinosaur

It wasn’t quite Steven Spielberg’s “Jurassic Park,” but I had a most amusing encounter with Duncan, the Santa Barbara Zoo’s new Tyrannosaurus Rex.

Seven foot tall Duncan, who measures nearly 16 feet from nose to tail, is part of the zoo’s new summer show “How To Train Your Dinosaur.”

“He has become a huge hit for kids and adults alike;” the zoo’s marketing consultant, Katie Clemons, told me at a media bash.

The action figure, with a human inside, was created by Chiodo Brothers, a Hollywood based company. It roars, snorts and sneezes, the amusement of youngsters.

“They laugh hysterically when that happens,” grimaces Katie.

Fortunately for me, he behaved himself...

MAW

The Music Academy of the West’s popular summer festival continues apace.

At Hahn Hall it was the turn of the Academy Chamber Players under conductor, Larry Rachleff, to shine with a most entertaining performance of Mozart’s “Jupiter” Symphony No. 41 in C Major, played very effectively by the young global talent.

The program kicked off with Varese’s ground-breaking percussion ensemble work “Ionisation” – with the stage absolutely heaving with every conceivable instrument, including sirens and cow bells – and Webern’s rarely heard five-minute “Five Pieces for Orchestra,” which Rachleff played twice, suggesting the second time the audience listen to it with their eyes closed. There was even a harmonium.

Stravinsky’s “Concertino for Twelve Instruments” was the perfect wrap for the first half.

It was a concert to be savored...

Mirdles

Male vanity would seem to have reached a new high with the news that corsets for men are flying off the shelves at Saks Fifth Avenue.

The expanding range of men’s “shapewear” also includes underwear, tank tops and T-shirts, all designed to compact the gut and flatten the stomach.

A new name has even been coined, a contraction of corsets and girdles: mirdles.

The august New York Times reports new styles by the Australian manufacturer, Equen, which are supposed to improve posture and reduce back pain, are doing boffo business.

But, as they say, Spandex will only stretch so far...

Battle for Kate

A battle royal is being fought behind the scenes over the newly minted Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.

Kate, already the wife of an RAF search and rescue officer, is being lined up to become the colonel-in-chief of a British regiment.

“Everyone is vying for her to become their colonel because of the prestige and attention that it will bring to their regiment,” says my mole with the martini.

“An appointment is likely later this year, with an intriguing possibility that she could become the colonel-in-chief of one of the regiments associated with William’s mother.”

Princess Diana was the colonel-in-chief of the Light Dragoons, a position currently held by King Abdullah of Jordan...

Sightings: Country singer Brad Paisley and actress wife, Kimberly, digging into the pasta at Olio e Limone. Former tennis ace Jimmy Connors perusing the menu at Lucky’s. Singer Katy Perry and husband, actor-comedian Russell Brand, checking out Maison K, the Coast Village Road furnishings casbah...

Pip! Pip! for now

Readers with tips, sightings and amusing correspondence to the Journal should e-mail him at richardminards@verizon.net or send invitations or other correspondence to the Journal