

# Martha Stewart, Hillary Clinton and James Comey



R.J. MARX

Martha Stewart under house arrest at her Bedford, New York, estate in 2005.

Before there was Hillary, Huma and Anthony Weiner, there was Martha Stewart.

A little more than a decade ago, I was editing a weekly newspaper in an east coast town not unlike Cannon Beach. One of its illustrious residents was Martha Stewart. In the summer of 2003, at the height of her fame and fortune, the most beloved homemaker of our time was arrested and subsequently convicted by a jury in federal court of stock fraud.

After her release in March 2004 from federal prison, the media descended, camping out in front of the 152-acre

former egg farm she bought a couple years earlier from a nice old lady named Mrs. Sharp. Martha obliged CNN and NBC with friendly waves, one chilly morning going as far as to hand out cups of hot chocolate to the freezing reporters in perfect hostess style.

The TV spotlight, the jail term, the reporters' stakeouts after Stewart's house arrest — would have probably never happened if it hadn't been for James Comey.

Comey was a U.S. prosecutor in White Plains, New York, in 2004 when I interviewed him about the Stewart prosecution.

According to the federal complaint, Stewart avoided a loss of \$45,673 by selling all 3,928 shares of her ImClone Systems stock on Dec. 27, 2001, after receiving material, nonpublic information from Peter Bacanovic, Stewart's broker at Merrill Lynch. The day following her sale, the stock value fell 16 percent.

Stewart was found guilty of felony charges of conspiracy, obstruction of an agency proceeding and making false statements to federal investigators. It was those false statements that led to the attorney general's involvement. "The nuances in Stewart's case ultimately drove the government to back down from charging her with insider trading," wrote the Columbia Journalism School's "Covering Business." Instead, the prosecution focused its case on the lies she told to cover the trade.

Stewart was sentenced in July 2004 to serve a five-month term in a federal correctional facility in Alderson, West Virginia, followed by a two-year period of supervised release, including five months of electronic monitoring that was extended three weeks after Stewart violated terms of her release.

Her many fans asked: Would a man have gone to jail for the same crimes?

They rallied to her support. She was a victim, they said, not a criminal.

In a wide-ranging conversation in 2003 in his office at the Federal Building and Courthouse in White Plains, Comey agreed to discuss aspects of the case.

The prosecution wasn't popular, "but Comey pursued it steadfastly," I wrote at the time.

"This criminal case is about lying — lying to the FBI, lying to the SEC and investors," Comey told me. "That is conduct that will not be tolerated. Martha Stewart is being prosecuted not because of who she is, but what she did."

**CANNON SHOTS**  
R.J. MARX



AP PHOTO/J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE

**FBI Director James Comey testifies on Capitol Hill in Washington, Thursday, July 7, before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee to explain his agency's recommendation to not prosecute Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton over her private email setup during her time as secretary of state.**

Comey is a complicated and thoughtful man. In that same conversation we talked about ramifications of the Patriot Act and whether aspects represented federal overreach. He was clearly uncomfortable with the policy established by John Ashcroft and others within the Bush administration. It made me realize why a face-to-face interview is incomparably better than a long-distance one.

When in 2004, after Attorney General John Ashcroft's hospitalization ("so sick he transferred the reins of power to Mr. Comey," wrote the Washington Post), Comey was asked to "certify" controversial elements of the National Security Agency's domestic surveillance program, he refused. In 2005, Comey resigned from the Justice Department and entered the private sector. He has not elaborated on his reasons for departing, but U.S. Senate hearings in 2006 revealed the intensity of the pressure he faced under then Attorney General Alberto Gonzales.

I felt I could understand that stance more clearly by knowing of his doubts beforehand.

I ran into Comey one time after our meeting in White Plains, standing in a line for a soft-serve cone at King Cone in Somers, New York.

In September 2013 he was sworn in as the seventh director of the FBI, a rare appointee of both the Bush and Obama administrations.

As he did in the prosecution of Martha Stewart, Comey is opening an investigation of Hillary Clinton not for any deed or misdeeds associated with the emails, but for lying to investigators.

Will his insistence on following his own path change the course of American history?

While the successful prosecution of Martha Stewart put the design diva behind bars, it was only Martha Stewart — and her stockholders and fans — who suffered from her crimes.

In an election process that has badly veered out of bounds, his choices assume great consequence.

## It's official: I'm certified!

It's been two years since I successfully passed my introductory sommelier (level 1) exam. In that time, I've patiently waited for the organization I began my studies with, the Court of Masters Sommeliers, to offer their level 2 exam somewhere in the Pacific Northwest at a time that fits my schedule. I'm willing to travel to Portland, Seattle or Vancouver, B.C., to sit for the exam.

I held off from hitting the books and the wine tastings waiting for the Level 2 exam to be offered close to home. Frustration was setting in. Then, I read about another sommelier cer-

tification program based in London called WSET (Wine and Spirits Education Trust) and was glad to learn they have regularly scheduled courses in Portland, Newberg and Seattle. After looking at the program's syllabus, WSET seems to be a better fit for me as I won't have to demonstrate a wine decanting, wine service or champagne service as part of my examination. While those skills are definitely required for a sommelier working in a restaurant, they aren't something I ever do or expect to do at The Wine Shack. Time to get my som studies going again, WSET here I come!

I registered for a weekend intensive study class in Seattle which focused on major wine regions, their main varietals and styles of production. WSET's course also digs into the winemaking process a bit deeper, so we reviewed winemaking and how a wine's final flavor and style are impacted by each of the winemaker's decisions. This section was a refresher for me as I've already taken two years of enology (winemaking) classes.

One of the topics I am most interested in learning more about is wine-food pairing. Every day, customers ask me to recommend a wine that will pair well with their meal. I have the classic pairings down cold ... pinot noir goes with salmon, cab sauv goes with a steak, chianti goes with pizza and chardonnay goes with chicken.

But I'd really like to take my wine-food pairing recommendations to the next level and offer some suggestions that are more experimental, but equally excellent.

Because we carry a variety of cheeses in Provisions 124, I am eager to share more about complex wine-cheese recommendations to customers.

I enjoyed the wine evaluation and identification component of the class. We tasted and analyzed approximately 40 iconic wines from around the world.

Our focus in this part of the course is to properly evaluate a wine and make a determination of what grape it is, its vintage and what region of the world the wine is from.

If you've seen the movie "Somm," then you have an idea of what the process looks like. But, in "Somm," those candidates are preparing for a master's level examination which is way beyond the scope of this level. WSET doesn't include a "blind" wine evaluation as part of their level 2 wine certification, so this part of the program is to get your ready for the advanced level 3 studies.

During the weekend class, WSET Instructor, Mimi Martin offered a discount on the Level 3 study course to anyone who aced the level 2 exam. Challenge accepted. I studied diligently for a month and was ready for the exam. During the exam, my confidence grew with each question.

I was flying through the test, quickly answering each question and then it happened. There they were, two questions on a fairly nondescript Italian white wine called "Gavi." Uh oh. I didn't have Gavi on my study sheet and I surely didn't know the wine's grape (Cortese), primary growing region (Piedmonte) or flavor profile (citrus). To make a long story short, I'm paying the full tuition for WSET's advanced sommelier program, but I passed the certified sommelier examination "with merit."

Level 3 studies begin immediately and I plan to take the exam in the spring. Time to start hitting the books. But I may need some help with the wine evaluation. Who's in?

**UNCORKED RAMBLINGS**  
STEVEN SINKLER



## LETTERS

### Visit Manzanita

As you likely know, the city of Manzanita was struck by a tornado this past week. While damage is substantial, recovery and rebuilding efforts are well underway.

Despite the amount of damage, the majority of our merchants remain open for business. The loss of business during a weekend that is still

typically a busy one has been another hard hit, especially with winter season looming.

I would ask that you encourage your friends and neighbors that the best way to help with recovery is to continue patronizing their favorite shops and restaurants in Manzanita, or plan to attend any of the many upcoming area events.

Manzanita remains a beautiful, special place to visit, shop and stay.

**Dan Haag**  
Manzanita Visitors Center

### A tribute to a fine man

Don Howell's obituary appeared recently in the Cannon Beach Gazette. I would like to say a few words about this fine man. I have lived in Cannon

Beach for 45 years and one of my first jobs was with the City of Cannon Beach in the early 1970s. Don Howell was the water superintendent at that time. Before he worked for the city, he worked for the privately owned water system, later purchased by the city. He knew the water system intimately and

See Letters, Page 5A

## Spooktacular!



R.J. MARX/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

Mavis, Aryn and Sue Bird enjoy Sunday's "spooktacular" at the Coaster Theatre. Halloween kicked off at the Coaster with "Spooktacular Sunday" on Oct. 23, with trick-or-treating, costume prizes and treats.

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**CANNON BEACH GAZETTE**  
The Cannon Beach Gazette is published every other week by EO Media Group.  
1555 N. Roosevelt, Seaside, Oregon 97138  
503-738-5561 • Fax 503-738-9285  
www.cannonbeachgazette.com • email: editor@cannonbeachgazette.com

**SUBSCRIPTION RATES:**  
Annually: \$40.50 in county, \$58.00 in and out of county.  
Postage Paid at: Cannon Beach, OR 97110  
**POSTMASTER:**  
Send address changes to Cannon Beach Gazette, P.O. Box 210, Astoria, OR 97103  
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