

Los Angeles Times

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COLUMN ONE

Pastime always is his present

George Genovese, 91, who still consults as a scout for Dodgers, has baseball in his blood. He made \$80 a month in his first pro job.

BY DAVID WHARTON

The old baseball scout pulls his cap down over his face, peering through one of the eyelets sewn into the crown. It is a trick he learned in the 1940s.

"Like I've got a camera," he says. "I can zero in on one player."

Sitting in his usual spot overlooking the third-base line at Dodger Stadium, George Genovese focuses on the talented rookie, Yasiel Puig, in center field.

With everything else blocked from view, Genovese watches and waits, listening for the crack of the bat.

"The best fielders know how to anticipate where the ball is going," he says. "They take a step before it's hit."

A hint of New York marks his accent, a remnant from his youth. And there's an occasional boyish smile that belies the shock of white hair on his head. All his years in baseball — a lifetime of playing, managing and prowling for fresh talent — have not dampened the thrill of the ballpark.

"It's in my blood," he says. "You know?"

These days, Genovese considers himself retired. But the 91-year-old still serves as a consultant to the Dodgers, and the team leaves him a ticket at the gate for home games.

On a summer evening in Chavez Ravine, he analyzes [See **Baseball**, A12]



CHRISTOPHE SIMON AFP/Getty Images

IN RIO DE JANEIRO, people pack Copacabana beach as Pope Francis celebrates the final Mass of his visit. A reported 3 million came to the shore for a prayer vigil Saturday night and then slept over before the Mass.

Brazil visit gives pope a boost

His first overseas trip as pontiff is expected to strengthen Francis' hand as he returns to a troubled Vatican.

BY TRACY WILKINSON

RIO DE JANEIRO — He kissed seemingly countless babies hoisted to his pope-mobile. He exchanged white beanies with people in the crowds and caught the soccer jerseys, flags and who-knows-what-else hurled his direction. He scolded the Brazilian elite, both ecclesiastic and secular, in the many ways they are failing their people.

Pope Francis, first pontiff from the Americas, has been both grandfatherly icon and stern cajoler, combining charm with serious teachings, in a weeklong pilgrimage to the world's largest Roman Catholic country, which wrapped up Sunday.

His widely acknowledged success on his first overseas trip as pontiff will surely strengthen his hand as he returns to a troubled Vatican that he is determined to reform and as he faces the beginnings of a backlash from conservatives.

Although the Argentine-born Francis wooed enormous crowds here — a reported 3 million filled the crescent-shaped Copacabana beach for a prayer vigil Saturday night and then slept over ahead of Sunday's final Mass — it is far less clear that he has changed many Brazilian minds in a country that is less Catholic every day.

In his final homily Sunday, at one of the largest pa- [See **Brazil**, A4]

TEAM SOLITARY

Four inmates at Pelican Bay prison organized the statewide prison hunger strike despite being housed in isolation units

BY PAIGE ST. JOHN

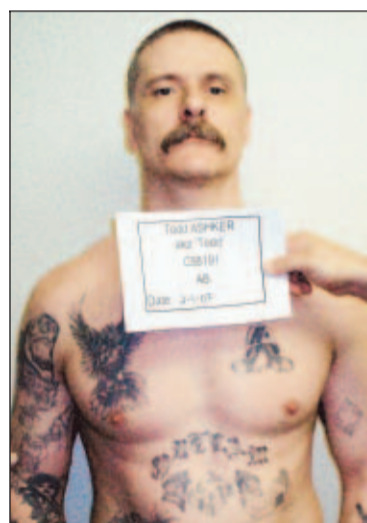
PELICAN BAY STATE PRISON — Inside the concrete labyrinth of California's highest-security prison, an inmate covered in neo-Nazi tattoos and locked in solitary confinement has spearheaded the largest prison protest in California history.

Convicted killer Todd Ashker and three other inmates — representing the Mexican Mafia, Nuestra Familia and the Black Guerrilla Family — called for a mass hunger strike July 8, largely to protest indefinite incarceration in solitary confinement.

More than 30,000 prisoners answered.

Though segregated from others, the leaders, who dub themselves the Short Corridor Collective, have kept the protest going, with more than 600 inmates still refusing food.

Among the four, Ashker is the most outspoken of the collective



California Department of Corrections

TODD ASHKER in 2007. He has spent nearly all his adult life in the prison system — and much of that in solitary.

and the legal brains behind the strike.

Some prisoner-rights advocates describe the intense and sometimes volatile man as a brilliant champion for California's 130,000 prisoners.

Armed with a prison law library and a paralegal degree earned behind bars, Ashker, 50, has filed or been party to 55 federal lawsuits against the California prison system since 1987, winning the right for inmates to order books and collect interest on prison savings accounts.

"There's an element within [the Department of Corrections] who would celebrate some of our deaths with a party," Ashker wrote to *The Times* in March after prison officials denied access to him.

But others say Ashker is a danger, accusing him of being an Aryan Brotherhood member bent on free- [See **Prison**, A8]



ANNE CUSACK Los Angeles Times

TV HOSTS Tarek El Moussa, right, and his wife, Christina El Moussa, outside a house in Whittier during filming of HGTV's "Flip or Flop" reality TV show.

Flipping again for SoCal housing

Some see the frenzy of fast resales as a sign of an overheated market.

BY CALE OTTENS

Like most real estate agents, Tarek El Moussa saw much of his livelihood evaporate in the housing bust.

But with prices beaten down, El Moussa also started seeing bargains everywhere. He bought a Santa Ana condo for \$115,000 in 2010, made modest renovations and flipped it for a \$35,000 profit. Last year, he repeated the process 20 times and this year expects to flip 50 homes.

"I absolutely loved it," El Moussa said about that first house flip. "I made a good

profit, and I saw the opportunity to do it not only once, but do it over and over."

With Southland home prices rising in a fast-paced recovery, home flippers have returned to the market in force. In May, investors flipped 1,377 homes — a level not seen since the height of the housing boom, when investors turned over 1,394 homes in June 2005, accord- [See **Housing**, A11]

China goes beyond guilt trips

A 'visit your parents' law means that adult children can be sued if they don't show up.

BY JULIE MAKINEN

BEIJING — Kleenex in hand, the retired farmer in the purple plaid shirt perched behind the plaintiff's table in a rural courtroom and wept as she complained to the judge about her eldest son.

For the last year and a

half, 78-year-old Li Lanyu said, she's been asking him to visit and provide her with grain and cooking oil. "The son has forgotten the mother!" she shouted, burying her face in her hands.

Her son wasn't there to defend himself. Although he tends a plot of land, he leaves for weeks at a time to toil as a construction worker hundreds of miles away. His wife and daughter told the judge he earns just \$166 a month. Visiting more often was possible, the daughter said, but they could afford only a fraction of the food the grand-

mother wanted.

Until recently, Li Wang-lun, 60, may have been a disappointment, even an embarrassment, to his mother in a country where the 2,500-year-old Confucian ideal of filial piety still runs deep. Now, though, he may also be a lawbreaker: A new national statute took effect July 1 mandating that family members attend to the spiritual needs of the elderly and visit them "often" if they live apart.

The "visit your parents" measure is just one compo- [See **Parents**, A6]

Palestinians and Israelis to meet for talks

Long-stalled direct peace negotiations are to resume in Washington in response to Israel's vote to release 104 Palestinian prisoners, the U.S. says. **A3**

Doubts arise over Compton official

Isaac Galvan has failed to file campaign finance disclosures. **LATEXTRA**

Resentment in Anaheim remains

"Baby steps" toward reform aren't enough for many. **LATEXTRA**

Complete Index.....**AA2**

Weather
Low clouds, then sun.
L.A. Basin: 75/62. **AA8**

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