

Capital Connections

By Karen Feld
Columnist



Nuzet Kandemir, the Turkish Ambassador, who was once posted as Ambassador to Baghdad, says he knew Saddam Hussein back then, and it's with great interest that he's watching the psychological warfare Hussein is waging, as well as how he's targeting the weaknesses of the west.

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During these perilous times in the Persian Gulf, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein isn't taking any chances. He's so shrewd that he's hired his chef's son as his food taster, says an insider. President Bush hasn't gone that far, but a food taster does protect Bush and his palate when he eats out. The official taster not only stands guard at the stove but also changes the salt, pepper, sugar and water at the President's table as well as washing all the china, glassware and cutlery the first couple uses.

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Some folks may feel the recession, but it doesn't seem to have changed the ways of 42-year-old Texas billionaire Bob Bass. Bass, Chairman of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, picked up a small piece of prime Georgetown real estate six years ago. He paid close to \$2 million for Ulysses S. Grant's summer home, and then later picked up the guest house adjacent to it for another million, and then a year later bought the contemporary house next door for just under a million. But that wasn't enough privacy for the Bass' so they paid almost two million for the house that backs up to the original

Bass pays close to \$50,000 a year in property taxes.

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The new Hungarian ambassador, Peter Zwack, proudly presented his credentials at the White House the other day. He paraded in with his British born wife, Anne, and their seven children. One of them, a captain in the U.S. Army, was dressed in uniform. The President, apparently not aware that Mr. Zwack was an American who gave up his citizenship to accept the post of Ambassador, asked one of the children, "Did you learn English in Hungary?"

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Roy Pfautch, a prominent D.C. lobbyist and host, has discovered the key to success for his annual dinner at the J. W. Marriott in honor of Father Christmas. He gets the schedules of the President and cabinet secretaries months in advance, and selects a date when most plan to be in Washington. The much coveted invitations are already out for December 14, and the event is pencilled in on more than one high level calendar. Guests are already guessing who will be the Mystery Santa for the evening. Santas at parties past include Commerce Secretary Bob Mosbacher, Attorney General Ed Meese, White House Chief of Staff Ken Duberstein, and the late CIA Director Bill Casey. Santa's VIP Helpers call on

manse. They now own almost 18,000 square feet of living space on 1.12 acres. This includes 21 bathrooms. They have been renovating the houses, all of which have sat vacant for several years now. But the D.C. government doesn't mind.

Washington personalities to sit on Santa's knee while he recites why each has been naughty or nice.

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What do you know that someone wishes you didn't? Call Karen Feld at (202) 337-2204.