



## thisweek

Readings &amp; signings on LI

## Sunday

New York Times editor **Clay Risen** discusses and signs copies of "The Bill of the Century: The Epic Battle for the Civil Rights Act." At 2:30 p.m.,

Westbury Library, 445 Jefferson St., Westbury; 516-333-0176, westburylibrary.org

## Wednesday

Debut novelist **Alissa Nutting** speaks and signs copies of "Tampa." At 6:30 p.m., Radio Lounge of Chancellors Hall, Stony Brook Southampton, 239 Montauk Hwy.; 631-632-5030, stonybrook.edu/mfa

## Thursday

**Phyllis Chesler** discusses and signs copies of her memoir "An American Bride in Kabul." Tickets \$50, includes breakfast. At 10:30 a.m., Sid Jacobson

JCC, 300 Forest Dr., East Hills; 516-484-1545, sijcc.org

**Paul Glaser** speaks and signs copies of "Dancing With the Enemy: My Family's Holocaust Secret." Tickets \$5. At 1 p.m., Barry and

Florence Friedberg JCC, 15 Neil Ct., Oceanside; 516-634-4151, friedbergjcc.org

Manhasset photographer

**Deborah Feingold** speaks and signs copies of "Deborah Feingold: Music," portraits of musicians including

Madonna, Mick Jagger and Pharrell Williams. At 7 p.m. Barnes & Noble, 1542 Northern Blvd., Manhasset, 516-365-6723, barnesandnoble.com

## reviews

## Crazy little thing called love

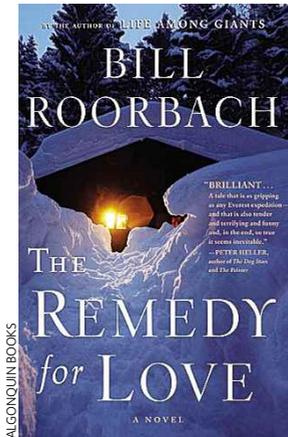
**THE REMEDY FOR LOVE**, by Bill Roorbach. Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 311 pp., \$24.95.

BY MARION WINIK  
Special to Newsday

It starts like this: "The young woman in front of him in line at the Hannaford Superstore was unusually fragrant, smelled like wood smoke and dirty clothes and cough drops or maybe Ben-Gay, eucalyptus anyway. She was all but mummified in an enormous coat leaking feathers, some kind of army-issue garment from another era, huge hood pulled over her head."

Homeless, or as homeless as you can be in winter in Western Maine, concludes small-town lawyer Eric Neil, watching the cashier ring up her baked beans, her Pop-Tarts, her mac and cheese, her Advil, her boxes of wine. When the "druid girl" comes up short, he contributes a 20, which she accepts with a furious gracelessness we will come to know well.

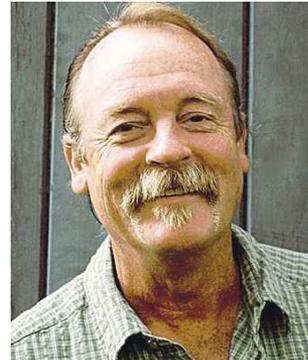
Then Eric buys his own groceries: organic jalapeños and kale, two \$34 bottles of Côtes de Rhône, French yeast in cakes, good flour, "a tiny bottle of fine Tuscan olive oil." He's shopping for a dinner he plans to cook for his estranged wife, Alison, though she has missed their last several dates and hasn't even called. Eric is a



nice guy, but he has some sort of OCD.

As they exit the store, the first flakes of what has been predicted as "The Snowstorm of the Century" are falling. Eric offers the woman, who introduces herself as Danielle "for now," a ride to wherever she is going. To his surprise, she accepts. That and several other Good Samaritan moves with unforeseen consequences land the two of them in her borrowed one-room vacation cabin for the duration of the storm.

Delightfully, every single item purchased at that grocery store will play a role in the unfolding story — cooked on a wood stove, washed in a tin bathtub, spilled on the floor and painstakingly recovered. Roorbach's focus on cooking and eating under difficult



Bill Roorbach's new novel may be the first climate-change love story.

conditions, and also on male cooking as an act of seduction, will warm the hearts of Jim Harrison fans. He also provides some excellent tips for jazzing up box macaroni, canned beans and Pop-Tarts.

Though the novel contains no references to global warming, it might be the first grown-up climate-change love story, revolving as it does around a snowstorm that is virtually apocalyptic in magnitude. Life-threatening conditions confine the action to the tiny cabin where angry, crazy, sexy Danielle and lonely Boy Scout Eric spend the next few days exchanging banter, lies and secrets. Though much of their conversation cannot be quoted in a family newspaper, one of the gentler exchanges occurs when they run out of water.

Danielle suggests: "We could melt snow. Like you said, Eric."

"Melting snow is very slow. Very slow. Danielle." "OK, now you sound like Joan Baez. In a good way. My grandmother loved Joan Baez." "I'm thinking, get down to the river."

"Still with the folk songs!" The meaning of the title is revealed when Danielle paraphrases Henry David Thoreau's argument that the only remedy for love is to love more. Eric traces the concept back to Ovid, whom he calls "the Larry Flynt of his times." Whether this remedy will work is the question that drives the plot. As hung up as Eric is on his awful-sounding wife, Danielle is even more obsessed with her husband, Jimmy, a complicated character serving in Afghanistan. Can they save each other? Will they live long enough to find out?

Recently shortlisted for the Kirkus Prize (for which I was a judge), "The Remedy for Love" is a page-turner, a love story and a vivid drama of man (and woman) against the elements. Those who read and loved Roorbach's sprawling, eccentric "Life Among Giants," coming to HBO as a dramatic series, will be a little surprised to see that "The Remedy for Love" is nothing like it — except that it's a great read by a wonderful writer who obviously has many tricks up his sleeve.

## From 'Seinfeld' dialogue to solo voice

BY MARION WINIK  
Special to Newsday

Forever to be known for coining "yada yada" and "double-dipping," "Seinfeld" writer Peter Mehlman has published his first novel, "It Won't Always Be This Great" (Bancroft Press, \$25). It is a 338-page monologue, a story told by a nameless Long Island podiatrist to his one-time frater-



Peter Mehlman set his novel on Long Island.

DANA PATRICK

nity brother, now hospitalized in a vegetative state.

Walking home one night, the podiatrist twists his ankle on a bottle of Mossad Kosher Horseradish. Infuriated, he picks it up and hardballs it through the window of Nu? Girl Fashions, owned by a prominent Orthodox Jew. Unfortunately, both the owner and his daughter are his patients.

This newspaper plays a role, as its investigative reporter is the only person who comes close to figuring out what really hap-

pened that night. We asked Mehlman a few questions.

## Why Newsday?

On Long Island, people read Newsday. They only get the Times on Sunday.

## Why Long Island?

I needed a true suburbia with cold weather and Orthodox Jews.

## Why a novel, after a career in television?

Actually, I've always enjoyed writing whole sentences — in the overall path of my career,

"Seinfeld" was a detour.

## Is this your voice?

It started as my voice, but it became a little more doubtful and insecure. This guy needs to talk to a person in a coma so he can't be interrupted.

## Your book recalls another novel addressed entirely to one listener: "Portnoy's Complaint."

Well, your basic therapist isn't that much different from a coma victim: They don't say much.