

INTELLIGENCER

FAMILY TIES DON'T BIND NINFA

She made her career on the school board as a staunch "pro-family" conservative, but Deputy Mayor **Ninfa Segarra** may not walk the walk as well as she talks the talk. City Hall insiders report that Segarra and her longtime live-in lover, **Larry Allison**, are currently involved in a bitter separation. According to one source, Segarra—who has recently been hitting the town with former *Good Day New York* reporter **Felipe Luciano**—just moved out of the Bronx home the couple shared, taking her two children. A nasty custody battle seems to be in the offing, and both Segarra and her ex are said to be sharpening

SUITE DREAMS FOR FERGIE STAFF

There are some things a duchess just doesn't think to do—like comb her own hair, or check out of a hotel room when she leaves town. When **Sarah Ferguson** arrived in New York earlier this month to promote her book *My Story*, Simon & Schuster put her up in royal style at a plush \$1,700-per-night suite at the Four Seasons. But Sarah wanted to leave ahead of schedule to spend the weekend *en famille*, so S&S obligingly whisked the notoriously free-spending redhead home via Concorde. The only problem was that she neglected to check out of her Four Seasons room, an oversight that cost the publishing house an additional \$5,000. But the money wasn't wasted, a Simon & Schuster publicist insists. "The duchess went home for the weekend. The room was kept for her people."

their hatchets. Meanwhile, though she has been living with Allison for close to a decade, Segarra, sources say, may still be technically married to her first husband, a former

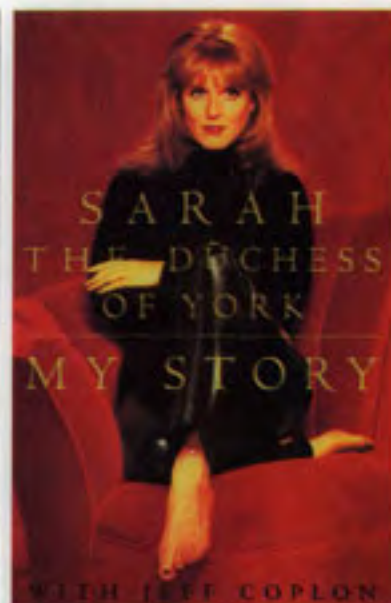
school principal named **Jose Segarra**. The couple never sought a formal divorce. Ninfa Segarra declined comment; Allison could not be reached.

MRS. MCCARTHY'S WASHINGTON WILES

Housewife turned congresswoman **Carolyn McCarthy** hasn't been sworn in yet, but she already seems to be well-versed in the Washington power game. Lesson one: Don't piss off **Al D'Amato**. Unlike the beleaguered lieutenant governor, **Betsy McCaughey Ross**, who went public with the details of the senator's embarrassing behavior, McCarthy seems to be keeping mum about one of her encounters with D'Amato. During a well-publicized meeting last year, sources say, Senator Al offered her an \$80,000-a-year job, apparently in the hope of derailing her candidacy. "It simply didn't happen," insists a spokeswoman for the newly elected congresswoman. "Carolyn was asked this question during the campaign . . . and it's a rumor. Once a rumor, al-

TINA TAKES OUT A CONTRACT ON TOOBIN

Having his book on the best-seller lists doesn't seem to have helped **Jeffrey Toobin** with his demanding editor, **Tina Brown**. Sources say Toobin's latest contract negotiations at *The New Yorker* went less smoothly than he expected, even though his recent O.J. exposé, *The Run of His Life*, has been both a popular and a critical success. At a dinner party to celebrate **Lawrence Schiller's** O.J. tell-all this fall, Brown talked story ideas with Toobin's much-maligned rival. "Schiller and Toobin hate each other, and to my astonishment, Tina gave [Schiller] an assignment," says one wide-eyed dinner guest. (Brown confirms discussing story ideas with Schiller, but says that nothing's been assigned.) And during Toobin's recent contract renegotiations, he was widely perceived to have become exhibit A in the current drive to bring some fiscal austerity to the still unprofitable weekly. Brown took such a hard line with Toobin's agent, ICM's **Esther Newberg**, that water-cooler gossip at the magazine had Toobin himself calling deputy editor **Pamela Maffei McCarthy** to argue for a raise. But well-placed *New Yorker* insiders insist that's all hearsay. In fact, they say, McCarthy and Newberg worked out Toobin's new contract, involving a "good raise," quite amicably. "I'm very happy working at *The New Yorker*, and I have no comment on my personal financial dealings," says Toobin. "Esther Newberg is the world's greatest agent, and I hope she represents me until I am as old as **Strom Thurmond**."



Sarah Ferguson:
Put it on the tab



Tina Brown:
Laying down the law

ways a rumor." D'Amato's spokesman is equally vociferous: "It's nonsense." But inside sources insist that McCarthy definitely left her meeting with D'Amato convinced that he'd offered her a position in an attempt to preserve freshman Republican **Dan Frisa's** job.

FUNKY FISH; SHALOM TO ALL THAT

TAKING THE BAIT: No one blinked when this year's edition of Neiman Marcus's al-



Princess Caroline:
Hair-raising tales



David Geffen:
Living at Lear's

ways-over-the-top Christmas catalogue offered for sale a \$15,000 set of three "fish condos"—aquariums styled as a living room, a dining room, and a bedroom. In fact, the Associated Press hailed the overpriced aquarium as a "distinctly luxurious" find. But something smells a little fishy. It seems the aquariums were the brainchild of artist **Joey Skaggs**, who had spectacularly duped CNN, ABC News, and the Associated Press with such pranks as the Solomon computer—said to be capable of predicting jury verdicts—and Portofess, a fictitious company mass-marketing portable confessional booths. Neiman Marcus, which asked Skaggs to contribute to its catalogue this

BURT BACHARACH: GRANDSTANDING?

Size apparently matters to **Burt Bacharach**. At the Rainbow Room last Sunday to tape a New Year's Eve special with psychic friend **Dionne Warwick**, the pianist was provided with the Yamaha piano specified in his contract. But while taping promos for the show, which will air on American Movie Classics, Bacharach, 67, had fallen in love with a seven-foot Steinway grand piano down the hall in Rainbow & Stars. Problem is, a Bacharach-in-the-making, 33-year-old **Steven Lutvak**, was planning to use that piano the same night for two sold-out shows with **Dee Hoty** (of *Will Rogers Follies* fame). So Lutvak seemed a little unnerved when a frantic AMC producer burst into the room just hours before his concert to announce, "Mr. Bacharach wants your piano." Sources say the producers tried to urge the resistant Lutvak to trade down in return for an unspecified amount of cash and some vague talk about a meeting with a big agent. "You could almost see Lutvak starting to calculate how much he had left on his mortgage," the source continues, "when the first guy puts his arm around Lutvak and says, 'Now, Richard...'" That did it. Lutvak, whose first name persists in being Steven, performed that night on the same seven-foot grand piano he'd used during rehearsals, and AMC scurried to find other ivories grand enough for Burt. "We called the music-supply company and said, 'You've got an hour,'" sighs an AMC spokeswoman. "[They] got the piano up there in about 58 minutes."

year, claims it was aware of the artist's early shenanigans but insists that the aquariums are for real.

GRAND HOTEL: Soon there may be as many hostels below Houston Street as there are overpriced Italian restaurants. Real-estate insiders report that developer **Tony Gold-**man is planning to open two 40-to-50-room boutique hotels in the next year and a half: one in the property he has just purchased at 21 Maiden Lane in the burgeoning financial district, and a second in the center of the already fully burgeoned SoHo.

HAIR UNAPPARENT: Score another royal coup for **Diane Sawyer**. Just days after her sit-down with Fergie aired, Sawyer quietly flew off to Monaco for an exclusive interview with **Princess Caroline** that will be on *PrimeTime Live* early next year. The newscaster famous for her blonde tresses brought along the perfect expert to help probe the psyche of the suddenly bald princess: her hairdresser, **Vincent Roppatte**.

HEIR INVISIBLE: **Ron Kuby** is used to alienating people. The bristly barrister is so good at it, in fact, that he didn't shell out a paltry \$150 to honor his longtime mentor, the late fire-brand defense attorney **William Kunstler**. Last Monday, the first William Moses Kunstler awards were handed out—to **Jean-Bertrand Aristide**, **Danny Glover**, and the **Attica 3**, among others—in a star-studded benefit. Kuby, who shared the last years of Kunstler's private practice, was notable for his absence. This came as no surprise to insiders. This past summer, he filed a grievance proceeding against Kunstler's widow, **Margaret Ratner**, in a bid to gain possession of old case files. Sources say Kuby's grievance was summarily rejected by the State Appellate Division. The proceedings are secret, but a rejection usually means that the case didn't survive a

Shalom:
Gallo's humor

cursory review. Kuby did not return calls.

DAVID'S LUSH LIMBO: **David Geffen** knows fine real estate when he sees it, and now he's moved into the Fifth Avenue domain of the late Frances Lear. Geffen has sublet the apartment from Lear's family while his own place upstairs undergoes renovations. Lear's tony apartment had recently been renovated; in fact, the ailing editor was supervising the rehanging of her art collection two days before she died of cancer in September.

A WARM SHALOM: Lonely supermodel **Shalom Harlow** has been very vocal about her quest for a new boyfriend, and now it looks like the search may finally have paid off. Last week, the manic mannequin and MTV Style-monger was spotted snuggling over a late morning meal at Paris Commune with **Vincent Gallo**, the unusually attractive Calvin Klein model who appears in the new film *The Funeral*. "She was wearing denim overalls, and he looked like he was wearing nighttime clothes," notes one neighboring diner. Sighs another observer: "It seemed like a very warm thing."

Additional reporting by Matt Pincus and Beth McGrath.

