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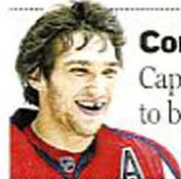
Weekend



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ENTERTAINMENT

Lying Liars:

Leo DiCaprio is out to save the world in 'Body of Lies.' Plus, get ready for TV's 'Crusoe.'

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TENSE TIMES: Traders gather at a post on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange on Thursday, where stocks nosedived in the final minutes of trading.

Dow Dives Below 8,600

679-point drop comes exactly one year after all-time high

NEW YORK | A runaway train of a sell-off turned the anniversary of the U.S. stock market's peak into one of the worst days in Wall Street history Thursday, driving the Dow Jones industrials down a breathtaking 679 points and deepening a financial crisis that has defied all efforts to stop it.

Stocks lost more than 7 percent, \$872 billion of investments evaporated, and the Dow fell to 8,579. When the average crashed through the 9,000 level for the first time in five years in the final hour of trading, sellers had only begun to hit the gas pedal.

As bad as the day was, even worse was the cumulative effect of a historic run of declines: The Dow suffered a triple-digit loss for the sixth day in a row, a first, and the average dropped for the seventh day in a row, a losing streak not seen since 2002.

"Right now the market is just panicked," said David Wyss, chief economist at Standard & Poor's. "Everybody just wants to get their money and put it under the mattress."

It all took place one year to the day after the

Dow closed at its record high of 14,164. Since then, frozen credit, record foreclosures, cascading job losses and outright fear have seized the market and sapped 39 percent of its value.

Paper losses for the year add up to an staggering \$8.3 trillion, according to preliminary figures measured by the Dow Jones Wilshire 5000 Composite Index, which tracks 5,000 U.S.-based companies representing almost all stocks traded in America.

It was the second straight day that Wall Street was rocked by a final-hour sell-off, but this one was particularly shocking. (AP)

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FRIDAY 78/53

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Right Side of the Bed

Local company gives linens global patterns and hot hues

No fashionista worth her Marc Jacobs pumps would show up at a party in a bland, all-white outfit. The same standard should hold for your bed, say designers, HGTV hosts and even Pottery Barn.

The idea of really dressing your boudoir in rich colors and dressmaker fabrics propelled Rockville entrepreneur/design fiend Mei Xu, pictured, to found Blissliving Home in 2007.

Their line of bedding shows off patterns, hues and ideas normally reserved for the runway. It's sold through local stores such as RCKNDY (1515 U St. NW; 202-332-5839) and Tabletop (1608 20th St. NW; 202-387-7117) and via catalogs and the Internet (Blisslivinghome.com).

Unusual color combinations rule the company's designs. Think cobalt blue, indigo and French blue stripes on a dramatic comforter (\$245 with shams) or plush faux fox fur on an oversized throw pillow (\$95). As in the fashion world, the emphasis is on layering. That blue duvet could be stacked with a fuzzy white throw or some silver sequined pillows. "Some of our most successful pillows have a little bling to them," says Xu. That means bolsters in silver leather or a linen-silk square with an origami-like knotted front (\$60).

Still, the looks are mostly what you might call cozy contemporary. "I like connecting a modern aesthetic with global cultural motifs," says the Chinese-born Xu, who draws on symbols from her background (chrysanthemum blossoms, pagodas) and those of other countries such as Russia, Sweden and India. "We're trying to tell a story through bedding, pillows and candles."

But these styles are far from stuffy museum reproductions. Xu and her team stamp a Nordic reindeer in a rich orange shade and have it romp on a gray silk pillowcase.



MEI XU/BLISSLIVING

Chrysanthemums, seemingly on MiracleGro, turn rich red or cool coral. Vintage Japanese kimonos inspire a quilt in white, cobalt, orange and aqua.

"It's not so easy to choose colors," says Xu. "We travel to Paris and London, trying to see what will really translate into home decor." Sometimes, they'll find themselves ahead of the curve: That orange-on-gray reindeer combo wasn't as popular as Xu had hoped. "We were a bit too early with that," she says. "But we don't use safe designs."

Bliss also adds drama to its boudoir ensembles by using engineered printing — a form of reproduction that results in a large, screen print-like image. This means designs can be larger, more like art canvases. "It really makes a statement when a pattern can be oversized," says Xu.

Xu, who moved to New York City from China in 1991, trained as a journalist and diplomat. But her disappointment with the U.S. decor market made her rethink her career. "When I moved here, I walked to Bloomingdale's almost

"Some of our most successful pillows have a little bling on them."

every night," she says. "There was fun, ready-to-wear, but no fun, contemporary home products."

Xu started her quest to modernize stateside designs by founding Chesapeake Candle Company in 1994; Bliss came last year. Sales of the bedding — and similarly Zen den accessories like candles and vases — have been so brisk and buzzed about that Xu is in talks with a high-profile boutique hotel about doing its duvets.

It's all about bedding down in a way that isn't boring, really. "People yearn for something different," she says. "Your bedroom can be an extension of your personality."

JENNIFER BARGER (EXPRESS)

"Dear **Manolo**"

Shoe blogger answers questions!



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