

The Metro Section

L+

B1

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2002

The New York Times

BOLDFACE NAMES/James Barron

Voyage of the Darned

DENISE RICH wanted a break from the government's long-smoldering investigation into her ex-husband's presidential pardon. But people who were involved in her 16-day Mediterranean cruise say it only brought more headaches.

First she chartered an \$8,739-a-night yacht known as the Printemps. The first night at sea, it conked out.

She and her entourage boarded another vessel until they could switch to a third, the Alter Ego. A converted tugboat, it rents for about the same as the Printemps, but its spartan decor is not for all tastes. Ms. Rich was soon complaining of fumes and demanding to be switched to a "better" boat, according to people with knowledge of the trip and documents describing the fast-changing arrangements.

She eventually moved to a more expensive boat, the Secret Life, at \$13,668 a night. But she tussled with a Monaco-based yacht broker and the various yacht owners over who should pay the difference.

By all accounts, the yacht broker, NICK EDMISTON, forfeited his commission and has made nothing from the ordeal. But the owner of the Alter

Ego was less eager to void his \$35,000 cancellation fee.

Facing a possible lawsuit, Ms. Rich settled the matter on Friday by paying something close to the total of \$79,310 that was still up in the air. But a spokesman for her, HOWARD J. RUBENSTEIN, said, "The matter was settled, so no money is owed."

Frog King of the City

ADAM DAVIES, first-time novelist, says he is staying in New York. This matters only because his publicist for "The Frog King: A Love Story" (Riverhead Books) had pumped out release after release saying he lived in San Francisco. He never got there.

Months ago, when planning his debut as a published author, someone at Riverhead had told him it would be nice if the author of a book like "The Frog King" lived someplace "hipper" than Athens, Ga. Someplace like San Francisco.

Mr. Davies said, "I'll move."

He left Athens for San Francisco, with what was supposed to be a short stopover in New York.

He is still in New York. "I can't even look at my publicist," he said sheepishly as he explained all this during his book party the other night

at Michael's, a restaurant and bar on West 55th Street that is popular with the publishing crowd. Watching was an unlikely foursome, the hosts of his book party: the gossip columnist LIZ SMITH, the author DOMINICK DUNNE, the director JOEL SCHUMACHER and Mr. Davies's agent, ESTHER NEWBERG, who wore red. So did BARBARA WALTERS. There was an awkward moment. But then the flashguns started going off. "She loves this," Ms. Newberg said, quietly but not that quietly. Ms. Walters was facing the cameras.

All in the Family

For a few hours Thursday, the skating rink at Rockefeller Center was Goodfella Central. Yes, of



course, JAMES GANDOLFINI, left, was there, a mountain in pinstripes moving through the crowd with earpiece-wearing bodyguards close behind. This was, after all, the party after a Radio City Music Hall screening of episodes from the new season of "The Sopranos." Other cast members were sitting around, as was the show's creator, DAVID CHASE. But

who were all those other guys with thick necks and pinky rings? Did HBO import several busloads of the real thing from across the Hudson?

And then there was the program's newest therapist. Not to give away a new plot line or anything, but yet another character goes to see yet another therapist, played by PETER BOGDANOVICH.

He was standing. That denied partygoers the chance to pull up a chair and ask for on-the-spot therapy. "People come up to me and say, 'Can you take me as a patient?'" Mr. Bogdanovich said. "I say, 'Oh, sure.' Then I tell them my rates are very high."

It's a Girl

Becoming a father will not prevent GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS from becoming a Sunday-morning television host. His wife, ALEXANDRA, had a daughter, ELLIOTT ANASTASIA, yesterday, six days before his scheduled debut as the host of the ABC News program "This Week." "That child is going to need paper when it comes time to learn to write her name," one person at ABC News said.

with Alison Leigh Cowan
and Wendell Jamieson