Hotel of the Week

No justice, no peace

Should Republicans refuse to let Obama fill the Supreme Court vacancy?

Getting the flavor of...

Miami’s fast-changing SoFi

When I first visited Miami Beach’s South of Fifth neighborhood, “there wasn’t much to discover,” said Nicole Raja in The Boston Globe. Twenty years ago, SoFi—the triangle below Fifth Street at South Beach—was home to one high-rise condo, some dingy Art Deco hotels, and one famous seafood joint. Fast-forward to 2016, and the area is booming. One block south of Fifth, you can enjoy wood-fired pizza and veal scaloppine at Joe’s Stone Crab, opened in 1913, still pulls in locals and tourists alike. “The neighborhood, ‘there wasn’t much to discover,’” said Necee Regis in the Chicago Tribune. Founded in 1831, the farming community 10 miles south of Indianapolis never topped a population of 200, and that number dwindled to a handful in the mid-20th century. The comeback began in 1978, when a local couple turned the old general store and bought the whole package and converted the carriage house, old mill, and other historic buildings into guest cottages. Today, the entire town of Story is the SoFi area. Cottages can bike and bike more than 100 miles of wooded trails, or carriage rides are available. As SoFi continues to grow, hopefully it will keep its neighborhood charm.

Last-minute travel deals

Pano for two

Explore the wonders of Peru’s Sacred Valley with a travel deal. The Explora Valle Sagrado lodge is offering one-for-one deals on stays through Dec. 31, 2017. From $2,200 for three nights, including guided tours and meals. Book by Feb. 29. explora.com

Polar bear cruise

See the Arctic on a seven-day voyage around the remote Norwegian island of Spitsbergen. For the duration of the Polar Bear cruises departing between June 13 and Aug. 10, rates start at $3,699, a 15 percent discount. Book by Feb. 29. adventuretravelexpeditions.com

Off-season Cape May

Spoil yourself at the grand Congress Hall in Cape May, N.J. The hotel’s Winter Warm-Up package includes a daily $40 breakfast and cocktail credit and a daily $40 dining and cocktail credit. Book by March 3. caperesorts.com

Travel

This week’s dream: Skiing the backwoods of Bohemia

“Before last winter, I had never given a thought to a ski holiday in Bohemia,” said Joshua Hammer in The New York Times. “Then a friend in Berlin, where I live, came back raving about his vacation in the western corner of the Czech Republic. A three-hour drive southeast of the German capital, and a one-hour drive from Prague, Bohemia’s Jizerska Mountains rise to about 4,000 feet. Though they lack the glitz and glamour of the Alps, they do offer downhill skiing on a par with Vermont’s, and some of the finest Nordic skiing in Central Europe. Every winter, Czech and German families flock to Bedrichov, the main resort village, whose surrounding hills are laced with nearly 100 miles of cross-country trails that thread through virgin forests and past frozen lakes and “stunning” mountain vistas. I stayed with my two sons at a family-owned hotel in Janov nad Nisou, a mountain village. We rented cross-country skis in Bedrichov, then ‘plunged into the forest.’

Grimm: “a meadow dominated by a castle-like dark villa, with gabled windows and huge sides dipping from the roof.” It was the Samalova Chata, a gaudy house that began life as a 1756 glassblowing factory before becoming the summer home of Czechoslovakia’s first chancellor. In the oak-panelled dining room, Czech and Germans were washing down plates of roast pork and dumplings with steins of beer. During our five days on the trails, we saw no other Americans. We also heard no English except for a few friendly hailings. The language barrier could be frustrating when we were scanning a Czech-only menu or a trail marker about local flora and fauna. But “the heartiness of the food, the warmth of our hosts, and the beauty of the forest compensated for the communication difficulties.” Besides, because all trails lead back to Bedrichov, we were never lost. At Samalova Chata (samalova-chata.cz), rooms start at about $20.