



Quentin Kopp
 Quentin takes on historical revisionists and tax subsidies to boot 3
Central Council
 West of Twin Peaks Central Council takes on the issues 2



Jeff Adachi Remembered
 Visionary Public Defender and Westside neighbor inspired us all 3
Patrick Monette-Shaw
 Lawsuit settlements incurred by City employees growing by vast leaps 6



Captain Nick Rainsford
 Greetings from the new boss at Taraval station and crime reports 8
Kathy Howard
 Environmentalk digs up all the dirt 9

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A Tax Break for PG&E?

Why is PG&E getting a \$9 million annual tax break and why do we still need the State Board of Equalization?

by John Farrell



In June 2017 Governor Jerry Brown signed legislation that stripped the State Board of Equalization's (SBE) powers and duties, reduced staff from 4,800 to 400, and reassigned staff in the collection of sales and excise taxes to a new California Department of Tax and Fee Administration. This was due to an investigation by the State Department of Justice that accused SBE employees and members of mismanagement, which included putting \$350 million in sales taxes in the wrong accounts.

The SBE, which is an elected board of five members, also gave up its role hearing taxpayer appeals to a new Office of Tax Appeals, leaving the SBE to advocate for taxpayers and to continue setting rates for gas taxes and pipeline levies, and ensuring county assessors fairly appraise properties for tax purposes.

But who is going to make sure that the SBE fairly appraises properties for tax purposes?

“Based on an annual franchise fee of approximately \$5.4 million per the Controller's Office audit, PG&E should be paying the City at least \$1.1 million annually in property tax to our City for the franchise fee...”

Most properties are reappraised upon ownership transfer, or completion of new construction per Prop 13, by county assessors' offices. However, privately held public utilities, such as the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), are appraised statewide by the SBE. These utility properties are not subject to Proposition 13 and are annually reassessed at fair market value.

The SBE values utility companies like PG&E based on a historic cost less depreciation and/or an income approach. Per the SBE, their annual appraisal does not reflect an amount for the franchise fee even though it's supposed to. What does this mean when the franchise fee is not reflected or assessed accordingly? Loss of tax revenue to our City and a tax break for privately held public utilities.

Let's take PG&E as an example. In 1939, the City granted PG&E and its successors two franchises to use city streets to transmit, distribute, and supply electricity and gas. The City further gave PG&E the right to use power and gas lines on public property “in perpetuity.” In consideration for the two franchises, PG&E annually pays a franchise fee to the City based on a percentage of gross receipts from the sales of electricity and gas in the City. The franchise fee rates are 0.5% for electricity and 1% for gas.

Per the Controller's Office Franchise Fee Audit of PG&E dated Nov 16, 2016, following are the franchise fees paid to the City in 2013 and 2014:

Based on an annual franchise fee of approximately \$5.4 million per the Controller's Office audit, PG&E should be paying the City at least \$1.1 million annually in property tax to our City for the franchise fee (based on a 1.1723% 2018 tax rate on a \$92.8 million assessed value). This \$92.8 million assessed value reflects the present value of the \$5.4 million annual payment to the City over 35 years @ 5% interest rate. Since the PG&E franchise agreement is in perpetuity, I used 35 years, which reflects a transfer of a fee simple ownership per the CA revenue and Taxation Code.

However if we assess the franchise fee based on fair market, which is the appropriate way to value utility properties, then the assessed value would be substantially increased. For example, San Diego Gas and Electric currently has a 50 year franchise executed in 1970 for 3%. Los Angeles has a franchise agreement on a year-to-year basis at 2%. San Jose is 2.3%. Berkeley is 5%.

Cont. p. 9



Welcome to Wienville

by George Wooding

If you want to protect your neighborhood, street, or house, it's time to defeat or mitigate State Senator Scott Wiener's SB-50 legislation.



Wiener and his allies want to replace the single-family housing stock throughout California with dense/multi-family housing. These structures will derisively be called Wienvilles and will feature many of the same sized and structural components as Hooverilles.

SB 50 will ruin cherished neighborhoods, severely gentrify working-class areas, significantly worsen housing affordability, and displace thousands of San Franciscans.

SB-50 is designed to add housing density at the expense of residential neighborhoods. The least expensive housing is housing that is already built. This bill will impact 100% of San Francisco's residential housing stock.

Wiener's goal is to get rid of residential housing by upzoning all of San Francisco. State legislated upzoning encourages development by offering

entitlements to developers. Upzoning avoids any serious planning in neighborhoods, or in the city as a whole. Local residents and businesses will not be able to address serious concerns with everything from housing needs to traffic because upzoning regulations are limited to use and density controls.

If SB 50 passes, developers will become San Francisco's new Planning Department. They will do whatever they want with the properties they purchase.

SB 50 will turn thousands of San Francisco streets into

Cont. p. 5



“... developers will only be constructing market rate housing—not affordable housing—under Wiener's misguided belief market-rate housing will magically trickle down to affordable housing. This will result in housing price increases, but no increase in housing supply and a city filled with eyesores: Wienville units. Thanks, Scott, and co-author Phil Ting.”

Additional Services Won't Magically Appear Without Funding

Local Politics: Voluntary vs. Involuntary Treatment and Housing — SB 1045 Analysis

by Teresa Palmer, M.D. and Allen Cooper M.D.



State Senator Scott Wiener, with the support of now-Mayor London Breed, has created a plan for a new form of conservatorship for those who are both mentally ill and substance abusing. A group who “refuse services” would be conserved, which transfers the right to make decisions about placement and treatment to a “guardian.”

Wiener's original idea about who should be conserved under the new law was so all inclusive that he was forced to improve the legislation by, among other things, stipulating that potential candidates had to be first offered a list of voluntary services, including “Assisted Outpatient Treatment.”

SB 1045 in its current form has been offered to three cities to implement: Los Angeles and San Diego both declined. A hearing is still to come up in San Francisco. The first step will be a hearing at the Rules Committee of the Board of Supervisors.

This law looks good to those who are concerned by seeing people on the street in bad shape, but the law will help few, if any. Distressingly, Supervisor Rafael Mandelman and Breed overlook the fact that resources will be diverted from actual services by the expensive additions to city bureaucracy that will be needed to support the implementation of SB

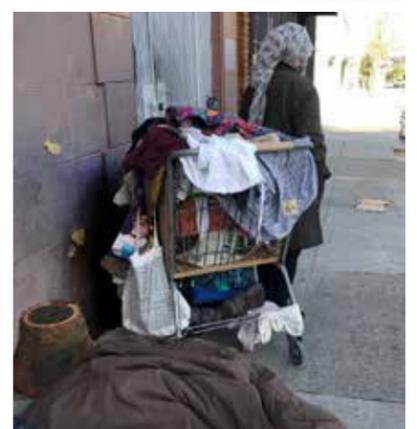
1045. And there is no evidence that involuntary services to treat substance abuse are effective.

Some other disturbing aspects of SB 1045:

SB 1045 includes no funding to increase the quality and quantity of services, or to provide truly intensive “Case Management.” In San Francisco, two thirds of those who need case managers are on a waiting list for weeks or months. Caseloads are large. For the most part, case managers do not leave their offices and do not have after-hours availability.

Models of case management such as “Assertive Community Treatment” work to reduce hospitalizations. Case managers develop long-term relationships by going out to where their clients are and gaining their trust. They then offer services that will stabilize, such as housing, and continue going to the client to assist in the adjustment to “coming inside” and finding needed treatment. SB 1045 is

Cont. p. 12



West Of Twin Peaks Central Council by Mitch Bull

The meeting of February 2019 for the West of Twin Peaks Central Council featured a robust turnout, with over 20 people in attendance. President Mark Scardina set the agenda to focus on the push for housing from Sacramento and what it could mean for the neighborhoods in western SF (and California).

Opening the meeting at 7:35 PM, Scardina turned the meeting over to Matt Chamberlain, who took the roll. A quorum was reached as a total of 11 of the potential 20 delegates were in attendance.

Scardina started the officers' reports by giving a short president's report. There were no other officer's reports and George Wooding gave a short report on public health.

The planned attendance of new Taraval station Captain Rainsford was postponed as he was off-site responding to an active shooting incident within the district. (As reported by the President of the SF Board of Supervisors, District 7's own Norman Yee.)

Scardina next called for the assembled delegates to discuss and vote on three proposed changes to the WOTPCC by-laws. The first revision deals with the ability to amend the by-laws to allow for the use of having a meeting and vote via "speakerphone" rather than in-person (if an attempt was made to have an "in-person" meeting but a quorum could not be reached and the timing of an alternative meeting was necessary due to a "vote" on an item or position that cannot wait until the next scheduled meeting. The "voice conference" type of meeting would still allow for discussion and discourse prior to any binding vote. A motion was made to adopt this change. It was seconded and unanimously approved.

The second revision addresses defining a quorum, and how abstentions are counted. This change would disqualify delegates that are abstaining from a prospective vote from counting towards a quorum. A binding vote would be accepted by a vote of the remaining delegates, as long

as a quorum remained. This revision also passed unanimously.

The third revision clarifies the voting privileges of member organizations and defined when membership action needs to occur to define the ability of a delegate to be allowed to vote on issues brought before the WOTPCC. The revision states that member organizations who fail to pay dues in a timely fashion for 3 consecutive months, or whose member misses three consecutive meetings, shall be considered not in "good standing" with the organization. A member organization may be reinstated by having its representative attend three consecutive meetings, with membership being reinstated on the event of the 3rd meeting, or by bringing its dues up to date. It was unanimously approved.

The housing crisis/dilemma next took center stage with speakers from both sides of the SB50 legislation addressing the gist of the new legislation and how it would affect San Francisco and the state as a whole.

Todd David of the San Francisco Housing Action Coalition represented the "pro-SB50" side of the discussion and gave an account of how this would affect (an estimated 96%) of parcels in San Francisco. He went on to detail the heights of buildings in the transit zones would be allowed to be 45-55 feet, and with a density bonus for affordable housing and smaller units, the height can rise to 75 feet. He went into



Todd David of SFHUAC

Cont. p. 8

City's Lapses in Rape Reporting and Handling Propel Reforms

By Dr. Derek Kerr



Across the country, police departments convey that they solve rape cases. Usually, they simply close them according to an investigation of 60 police agencies and 70,000 rape cases conducted by Newsy, Reveal and ProPublica.

The public views arrests as the way to clear rape cases. But police agencies often "clear" such cases - even when suspects go free and victims don't get justice. Nearly half of law enforcement agencies studied cleared more rape cases by "exceptional clearance" than by arresting a suspect in 2016. For example, the Oakland PD

will become more transparent. That's when the FBI will implement its National Incident-Based Reporting System nationwide. This system separates exceptionally cleared cases from arrests - unlike the Uniform Crime Reporting Program used by the SFPD. However, this new system is also flawed as it doesn't count the many cases

“Exceptional clearance is the term used when police have enough evidence to make an arrest, and know who and where the suspect is, but can't make the arrest ... when the suspect is dead or incarcerated, when the District Attorney declines to prosecute, or when the victim drops the case.”

reported that 60% of rape cases were cleared in 2016. When journalists obtained those rape records, turns out that only 13% of rapes were solved by arrests while 47% were solved by "exceptional clearance".

Exceptional clearance is the term used when police have enough evidence to make an arrest, and know who and where the suspect is, but can't make the arrest due to circumstances outside their control.

deemed "unfounded" by police departments. Omitting unfounded cases can mask the prevalence of sexual violence and impede social interventions. Yet it's incentivized. Labeling rape cases as unfounded can make police agencies appear more effective since it reduces reported crime rates while boosting clearance rates. Because of the Newsy/Reveal/ProPublica investigation, the FBI plans to add the

Year	CompStat Data	Reported to FBI	Reported/Cleared
2014	378	355	109 (31%)
2015	391	344	129 (38%)
2016	429	342	334 (98%)
2017	437	367	63 (17%)
2018	417	n/a	n/a
Avg:	410/yr	352/yr	159/yr (45%)

These include when the suspect is dead or incarcerated, when the District Attorney declines to prosecute, or when the victim drops the case. However, some police agencies stretch this definition.

As shown by above-cited investigation, there is pressure within police agencies to clear cases, rather than keeping them "open" for further investigation or labeling them "suspended" when victims are reluctant to cooperate. High clearance rates are deployed to signify successful policing. But by bundling arrests and exceptionally cleared cases together, the overall clearance rate inflates crime control and makes the City seem safer than it is.

Currently, the SFPD logs crime data into the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program. That database gives the overall clearance rates for rapes - but not "exceptional clearance" or arrest rates. For example, in 2016 SFPD reported 342 rapes with an improbable 334 (98%) cleared. Adding to the confusion, SFPD's own CompStat data for 2016 shows 429 rape cases - 87 more than what was reported to the FBI. Perhaps those 87 cases were deemed "unfounded", or were sexual assaults short of rape, but we can't tell. The table below shows these discrepancies;

SFPD Rape Case Reports

When journalists request SFPD's rape data for exceptional clearances, arrest rates or unfounded determinations, they get stone-walled. As Mark Fahey, one of the Reveal collaborators told us; "I talked to the SFPD - both the records department and the Media Relations office - more than a dozen times between January and November 2018. They indicated that they did intend to respond to our request, but missed their own deadlines and eventually became unresponsive..." The Westside Observer's own records request on 12/27/18 was ignored. A reminder sent on 1/7/19 was acknowledged...but no response to date.

By 2021, the actual outcome of rape cases now dubiously reported as "cleared"

"unfounded" category to its new reporting system. The SFPD should be doing so already.

The need for reforms emerged when the Board of Supervisors' Public Safety & Neighborhood Services Committee heard from sexual assault survivors and experts on 4/25/18. In emotional testimony, they emphasized the lack of empathy, respect and investigative zeal from the SFPD's Special Victims Unit. The City's Sexual Assault Response Team also faced criticism. That entity includes the SFPD Special Victims Unit, the DA's prosecutors and its Victim Services Division, SFGH's Rape Treatment Center, the Medical Examiner's Toxicology Lab, UCSF's Trauma Recovery Center along with community groups like SF Women Against Rape. The City agencies involved were faulted for lacking coordination and survivor-centered practices.

Part of the problem is that law enforcement agencies tend to be perpetrator-focused rather than victim-centered. The skepticism of investigators seems like disbelief to traumatized victims. However, some interrogations were described as dismissive and without privacy, leaving survivors feeling shamed and blamed for being assaulted. That sense of re-victimization is accentuated when sex workers and immigrants report rape. Some claimed that named witnesses and perpetrators were not interviewed and that investigations dragged on for years. Despite ongoing service improvements, navigating the City's sexual assault services remains a lonely, grueling experience. It conveys that rape isn't treated as a public safety threat. Similar deficiencies were identified in a 2017 report by the Task Force on Sexual Violence commissioned by the Department on the Status of Women and a 2018 report from the Department of Police Accountability.

The lack of transparency in the handling of rape was exemplified when SFPD Commander Greg McEachern couldn't give the clearance rate for rapes at the Hearing.

Cont. p. 5



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Ruminations From a Former Supervisor by Quentin Kopp



H. G. Wells in The Outline of History in 1921 observed: "Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe." Last November, a flurry of articles about the sorrowful assassinations of Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk 40 years ago encouraged various theories and alleged facts. Some were educational; others were revisionist. Concurrently, another book on that subject was published. Its author, Daniel J. Flynn, a senior editor of The American Spectator, wrote Cult City: Jim Jones, Harvey Milk and 10 Days That Shook San Francisco, but couldn't secure a book review from any San Francisco newspaper. (Maybe the content wasn't politically correct for liberal San Francisco.)

It's time to record genuine history rather than historical debasement books like Season of the Witch. San Francisco's first experiment with district election of supervisors was voter-enacted in November 1976, resulting in election of Harvey Milk in the so-called Castro Street area (he had run unsuccessfully citywide) and Dan White in the Portola in 1977. Previously, custom and practice, although not law, resulted in the highest citywide vote-getter being unanimously elected Board president for two years. With district supervisorial elections, that practice was abandoned. I secured the highest number of votes in our district, unopposed. Dianne Feinstein of Pacific Heights received about half my 20,000 total votes. Based upon my closest political friend retiring supervisor John Barbagelata's suggestion, I agreed to allow her to be elected president in return for endorsing me in 1978 for mayor. (She never did.) She induced new district supervisors to provide her a majority. For White's vote, she agreed to support his opposition to a zoning change in Roman Catholic Archdiocese property on University Mound to convert a home for unwed prospective mothers into a facility for delinquent boys. Most residents of that district objected to that, and appealed the Planning Commission rezoning to the Board of Supervisors.

I publicly opposed the rezoning. White told me Milk would oppose the rezoning. Knowing Milk's predilections, I expressed skepticism to White. The following week, the neighborhood appeal failed, Milk voting against it, White, Supervisor Lee Dolson, Feinstein, and I voting for the appealing neighbors. White then ruefully admitted to me I was correct in predicting Milk's vote.

Later, White voted against a Milk-sponsored ordinance banning discrimination in employment of homosexuals. I supported it. It passed.

Subsequently in 1978, White, a for-

Mayor Moscone not to allow White's return. White learned of such effort. As Flynn notes in a November 26, 2018 magazine column, White's assassinations weren't based on Milk's homosexuality; they occurred because of his desired reappointment. Those are facts, not political revision.

Unnoticed in San Francisco and California, last summer a Pennsylvania township with surplus from increased property tax collection disgorged itself for taxpayers' benefit. Middletown Township conveyed 14,361 checks for \$68 each to all owners of improved property. It resulted from controlling expenditures and delinquent tax collections. Hallelujah. Now, abolition of taxpayer business subsidies and use of taxpayer money to settle sexual misconduct cases by state and national legislators and public officials could correct injustice to taxpayers. The Independent Institute notes that California legislators, public universities, and state agencies "secretly settled sexual misconduct claims using taxpayer money - about \$11.3 million over the past three fiscal years." Settlements ranged from \$500 to \$10,000,000; seven exceeded \$500,000. Over the last 25 years, the Legislature has paid over \$2,800,000 in 2017 taxpayer dollars.

Meanwhile, taxpayers continue to subsidize electric vehicle buyers. The federal government gives buyers a \$7,500 subsidy. That began under President Obama in 2009. The Pacific Research Institute discovered from 2014 Internal Revenue Service records that 79% of federal electric car tax credits were obtained by households with adjusted gross income exceeding \$100,000. California bestows \$15,000 per electric vehicle on purchasers in state income tax credits. Moreover, last month the Wall Street Journal noted total carbon dioxide emissions from electric vehicles can exceed conventional vehicle emissions. Why should private corporations use tax-

“Why should private corporations use taxpayer money to increase their customers, like the local property tax exemptions granted wealthy technology companies for Market Street office buildings? I think commercial property-owning businesses on Taraval Street and Geary Boulevard would like similar treatment.”

mer fireman, was inveighed by the Pier 39 developer to open a potato skin food business on Pier 39. It proved difficult for his wife and him to operate the business successfully while he was a supervisor. In November, before Thanksgiving Day, White delivered his resignation to Mayor Moscone. Downtown businesses and public employee unions persuaded White to change his mind. (Additionally, state law required resignation of a county supervisor to be filed with the Board of Supervisors clerk, not the mayor.) Milk urged

payer money to increase their customers, like the local property tax exemptions granted wealthy technology companies for Market Street office buildings? I think commercial property-owning businesses on Taraval Street and Geary Boulevard would like similar treatment. Maybe that's why Lord Bryce in London in 1921 declared: "A political career brings out the basest qualities in human nature."

Retired former Supervisor, State Senator and Judge Quentin Kopp lives in District 7



Jeff Adachi

Indefatigable (adjective): Of a person persisting tirelessly. That word certainly applied to Jeff Adachi, whose ceaseless dedication to criminal justice reform and social change had a lasting impact on so many people in San Francisco and beyond. The public defender had just been elected to his fifth term when he passed away suddenly on Friday, February 22.

Many people are remembering his concrete achievements, such as modernizing the Public Defender's Office by adding much needed support staff and increasing budgets. He developed the Clean Slate program which has helped multiple clients clear their records and move on with their lives. He lobbied the Board of Supervisors to get rid of the burdensome fines and fees associated with their cases that indigent clients were expected to pay despite having little or no income. He championed bail



“He saw a world where public defenders were afforded the same awe and respect as any high-powered private attorney. He was aware that most public defenders around the country face impossible caseloads, little money, and the difficult job of defending people accused of terrible crimes. But for Jeff, everyone's right to a criminal defense is the backbone of a democratic nation. Innocent people being wrongly accused especially drove him ... injustice infused everything he did.”

reform. He disparaged prosecutorial misconduct. He made documentaries and wrote books. The list is too long to include everything here.

What will truly be irreplaceable about Jeff Adachi was his vision. He saw a world where public defenders were afforded the same awe and respect as any high-powered private attorney. He was aware that most public defenders around the country face impossible caseloads, little money, and the difficult job of defending people accused of terrible crimes. But for Jeff, everyone's right to a criminal defense is the backbone of a democratic nation. Innocent people being wrongly accused especially drove him; he was the son of two Japanese-American parents who were interned during World War II, and that deep sense of injustice infused everything he did.

Like many people who have demanded truth to power and have vigorously defended the poor, Jeff had his share of enemies in this town. But when he walked through the Tenderloin he was greeted with an outpouring of respect and love. Strangers would approach him to shake his hand. And make no mistake: Jeff's battles with law enforcement and the District Attorney were never personal. But if he had run away from those battles, he would not be doing the job of representing the voiceless.

According to the staff of the Public Defender's Office, working for Jeff was demanding but incredibly rewarding. People felt like they were really having an impact and that they always had an ally at the helm. He never asked for more from them than he himself was giving. The office went from barely having computers when he began to spearheading multiple programs and implementing legislative changes. Attorneys were encouraged to do work that matched their own passions. If you were concerned for families of clients, you could work in the Children of Incarcerated Parents Program. If you wanted to help people struggling with mental illness, you could apply yourself to any of the many programs that the office created to tackle these issues. The attorneys were trusted to work independently and try their cases as they saw fit without micromanaging.

Everyone left behind at the Public Defender's Office is determined to carrying on Jeff's vision of a world where everyone is given a fair trial, children from disadvantaged neighborhoods have the same opportunities as those from affluent ones, a person's mistakes don't set a permanent road map for the rest of their life, and police and authorities are held accountable.

Jeff Adachi did his best to give his clients everything they needed to achieve the best possible outcomes, both in the courtroom and in life. In the same way, his legacy has left San Francisco with the same scaffolding. It's up to us to keep working.

Daylight Saving Time begins at 2 a.m. on Sunday, March 10th



For many Americans, adjusting the clocks to "spring forward" an hour and gain a little extra sunlight is a welcome change after the long, dark... cold winter.

This time change is much trickier for our bodies than "falling back" in November, because so many of us aren't getting enough shut-eye to begin with, and being robbed of an additional hour can put us over the edge. In fact, as many as 47 million people are sleep deprived and say they rarely or never get a good night's sleep.

More INSIDE

Calendar 10
Book Talk 11
Remember When 13
Open Late 13
Senior Smarts 13
Money Matters 14
Real Travel 15
SFPD/Barberini 15
Education/Kocivar 16
Westside's Central Council 2
Rape Reforms at City Hall 2
Ratepayers Report/Lawrence . . . 4
Trouble at HSA 4
Tunnel WaterFix 4
Will Durst 5
Around the Town 7
Michael Gonzalez 9

Commentary

Ratepayers and Homeowners Future

by Steve Lawrence



Vince Courtney has resigned as commissioner on SFPUC (SF Public Utilities Commission: water, sewer, power). A new labor commissioner (“at-large,” officially) will be appointed by the mayor, confirmed by the BOS.

Environmentalists have proposed electing commissioners. They would have an excellent chance at putting up a slate of candidates, and winning.

As things stand, a balance exists. Environmentalists are heard most frequently at commission meetings, and one commissioner is firmly in their camp. But other commissioners are more cognizant of rates and local communities.

SFPUC should do a good job of providing water and sewer service, and lately electricity too, but should do so efficiently and affordably. The standard has been to keep the rate burden (for water and sewer) from rising above 2.5% of median income. It is expected to hit that level in about twenty years. If commitments and pro-

grams become too extravagant, that level will be reached sooner, and passed. Lower and middle income San Franciscans will suffer.

all it takes is creative rationalization to find a nexus with water, sewer or power. Once found, pressure for SFPUC to do “off-budget” good is easily applied. Which is why the list of what SFPUC provides to “the community” has grown so over the past couple of decades.

Last month this column reviewed challenges SFPUC faces in 2019 and beyond. All these challenges pressure rates. When will rates, and limiting their rise, which has been fast -- three times inflation at least -- become a civic focus? * * *

Grants to Deal with Stormwater. SFPUC (water, sewer, power) has a new grant program to reduce stormwater going to sewers from large, paved surfaces. Grants of

“The system opened in the early 1930s, and has been a godsend. But all good things come to an end, or at least come to be challenged. Now that the state wants twice the water for fisheries, SF is challenged. Eighty-five percent of our water, very pure water, has come from Yosemite. In the future?”

up to \$2 million are available to qualifying property owners. Half-acre and up parking lots may qualify. * * *

Affordable housing. Everyone favors buzz-word affordable housing. But, really? City Hall sits on hundreds of millions of unspent dollars while arguing over who, where, what, and how to spend. Neighborhoods challenge each proposal and seek to extract benefits, each activist vying to be boldest and baddest. Supes pump up affordable housing percentages private developers must pay for the “privilege” of providing a necessity of life, shelter. The cost of a housing unit keeps climbing, and most is unnecessary soft cost, not hard construction cost. Based on what is done, rather than said, an outside observer might question SF’s commitment to affordable housing.

Suppose zoning were sensible, and owners could build so long as it complied. Suppose we had a building inspection department that served pronto. The claim is that only \$10 million dollar homes would be built. But that is not what has happened in the past (see for example the book *Supreme City*, Donald L. Miller, about New York in the Twenties); perhaps it is a baseless fear today. Why not pilot a neighborhood? Or, we can keep doing what works so well - not.

Steve Lawrence is a Westside resident and SF Public Utility Commission stalwart. Feedback: lawrence@westsideobserver.com

Ratepayers remain unheard at Commission meetings. None testify. There is no ratepayer organization.

In a city where government is called upon to do much, and more all the time,

Rape, Stolen Valor Charges Jolt Human Services Agency

by Dr. Derek Kerr

Simmering anger over hiring practices at the Human Services Agency (HSA) turned to dismay after 2 employees were arrested for rape and another accused of stolen valor.

Gabriel Jones, a promising 45-year old Training Manager for HSA’s Welfare-to-Work Services is embattled after 2 years on the job. In August 2018, he received an Employee of the Month award from the Human Services Commission for his “excellent project management, supervision and analytical skills”. The notice of his award, widely distributed throughout HSA, also lauded how; “Gabe started his career serving our country...as a Navy SEAL. After an admirable career in the Navy, Gabe transitioned to serving the local community”. Jones earned a salary of \$92,927 (\$125,631 with benefits) in 2017.

Five months later, he was accused of stolen valor by the veteran-operated



“Military Phonies” website. Reportedly, Jones had been representing himself as a former Navy SEAL with combat duties and injuries in various war theaters.

However, military records disclosed by Military Phonies show that he actively served the Navy from 1998-2000 – with no overseas deployments, SEAL training or service. His 2002 discharge from the Naval Reserve Personnel Center was “for the convenience of the government” these records show. On 1/22/19, Jones apparently sought a retraction of the “false allegations”. Military Phonies responded by asking for his BUD/S class number. All

“Given HSA’s 2,000 employees, occasional scandals are expected but not 3 in 7 months. HSA has been a hotbed of protests about “cronyism, nepotism and favoritism” – the unfair hiring and promotion of unqualified personnel...”



SEALS take a numbered 6-month Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL class but Jones’ records showed none. And the SEAL’s roster is not classified.

The 2013 Stolen Valor Act imposes penalties for fraudulently claiming to have received certain military awards if doing so secures money, property or other tangible benefits. HSA’s Human Resources Department (HR) will be sorting out whether Jones embellished his military service and whether tangible employment benefits ensued.

However, HR Director Luenna Kim had to surmount a bigger challenge – in her own office. Jared A. Harris, a 34-year old attorney and Labor Relations Analyst was arrested for rape in Dublin in November 2018. A San Leandro resident, he is being held without bail at Santa Rita Jail according to the Alameda County Inmate Locator. His pre-trial hearing will be in March.

Prior to working at HSA, Harris was an Investigative Analyst with the DA’s Office. Although his 2017 HSA test scores were

excellent, sources say his arrival at HSA entailed some controversy. A University of San Francisco law school graduate, he was admitted to the California Bar in 2014 and remains in good standing. Records show he earned a salary of \$82,108 (\$112,687 with benefits) in 2017. HSA disclosed that he’s no longer employed.

There’s more. In June 2018, long-time HSA engineer Albert K. Broohm, age 59, was arrested in San Francisco on a war-

rant for aggravated sexual assault of a child under 10. A stunned HSA colleague describes him as “the nicest person”. A resident of Hayward, Broohm remains incarcerated at Santa Rita Jail with a \$2.5 million bail. His pre-trial hearing is due in February. He too is no longer employed.

Given HSA’s 2,000 employees, occasional scandals are expected but not 3 in 7 months. HSA has been a hotbed of protests about “cronyism, nepotism and favoritism” – the unfair hiring and promotion of unqualified personnel – as the *Westside Observer* reported in May and June 2016. These events have convinced some current and former employees that staff selection is flawed. After all, HSA’s “Strategic Plan for 2016-2021” was supposed to “improve staff morale” and the “...quality of hiring process”.

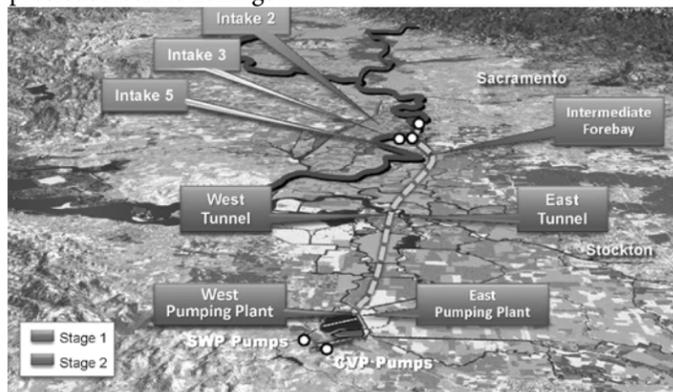
Dr. Derek Kerr was a senior physician at Laguna Honda Hospital where he repeatedly exposed wrongdoing by the Dept. of Public Health.: DerekOnVanNess@aol.com

The One Tunnel WaterFix (diversion) —

Let’s be cautious and be involved

by Brian Browne

Governor Newsom has decided one tunnel is better than two tunnels for draining Northern California water south. How much water is he planning on diverting and at what cost to Northern California? Is this another subsidization to sustain Los Angeles with water prices well below their real value? LA must full cost its existence and not seek subsidies from its northern neighbors. What are we giving up for this immense transfer of our precious riverine heritage?



in the *Westside Observer*). The peninsula customers were using 163 MGD for this same period (between the two WSAs of 1984 and 2009) and were given ad infinitum assurances of 184 MGD of pristine Hetch Hetchy supplies. Go figure?

My suggestion is that San Francisco and environs form a qualified committee to carefully monitor Newsom and his version of WaterFix (the Delta diversion project). We cannot be bullied by opportunistic and ambitious politicians who have eyes and appetites well beyond our boundaries, accompanied by their retinue of resume misfits to do their bidding.

In 2000 Mayor Willie Brown asked activist Rich Bodisco (author of term limits and the sewer freeze) to form a multidisciplinary Infrastructure Task Force (TF) to monitor the spenders at the SFPUC. Rich chose members based on qualifications and experience. Not political affiliations. Had his TF recommendations been followed the current \$4.8 billion Water Supply Improvement Project (WSIP) would have been completed on budget and on time. Let’s create a new TF that might be named; “Watch on the Politicians.”

When Gavin Newsom was Mayor of San Francisco he appointed a committee to negotiate the 2009 Water Sales Agreement (WSA) between San Francisco and its 30 some peninsula wholesale customers led by the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency (BAWSCA). As a member of the flawed Revenue Bond Oversight Committee (RBOC), I asked to attend. It was my right under 2002 Proposition P (which I coauthored), the enabling legislation that created the RBOC. I was denied. My concern (expressed many times) was that local politicians aspiring to regional, state, and national political positions would put their personal political goals ahead of San Francisco’s interests as they tread the road to Sacramento and Washington, DC.

This secret 2009 WSA process did produce very uneven and unfair results for San Francisco. We were using 88 million gallons per day on average between 1985 and 2008. The 2009 WSA agreement cut us back to a guarantee of 77 MGD from pure Hetch Hetchy water and 4 MGD from treated aquifer water (as reported

Brian Browne was coauthor of 2002 Prop P and former member of the Revenue Bond Oversight Committee it created. Feedback: browne@westsideobserver.com

Weinerville (Cont. from p. 1)

density-bonus areas. San Franciscans will have *no* say regarding developer decisions. Developers will *choose their own incentives* from a menu of rewards and waivers.

Below is a sample of existing local development standards and planning tools. SB 50 will let developers toss out up to three of them at their discretion, including height limits:

- **Setbacks:** Areas for trees, green belts, and side yards can be eliminated.
- **Floor area ratio:** Building size/density can grow 47% to 297%. This means developers can build 85-foot structures next to your house and you can't do a thing.
- **Parking:** Developers can build apartment towers with *no parking*.
- **Environmental sustainability:** Any development standard adopted by a city that isn't state law can be ignored by developers.
- **Onsite open-space:** Courtyards and balconies can be killed.
- **Historic buildings/zones:** Developers can demolish buildings not on the state's Registry of Historic Resources.

Unlike Wiener's defeated predecessor SB-827, which centered around transit-rich housing projects, Wiener has added a new criterion called "job-rich" housing projects. Job-rich defines a residential development within an area identified by the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Office of Planning and Research based on indicators such as proximity to jobs, high area-median income relative to the relevant region, and high-quality public schools, as areas of high job-rich opportunities close to jobs.

A "transit-rich housing project" means residential development on parcels that are within a half-mile radius of a major transit stop, or a quarter-mile radius of a stop on high-quality bus corridors. A project shall be deemed to be within a half-mile radius of a major transit stop or a quarter-mile radius of a stop on a high-quality bus corridor if any of the following apply.

From the legislation: "This bill — SB 50 — would require a city, county, or city and county [San Francisco] to grant upon request an 'equitable communities incentive' when a development proponent seeks and agrees to construct a residential development, as defined, that satisfies specified criteria, including, among other things, that the residential development is either a job-rich housing project or a transit-rich housing project, as those terms are defined; the site does not contain, or has not contained, housing occupied by tenants or accommodations withdrawn from rent or lease in accordance with specified law within specified time periods; and the residential development complies with specified additional requirements under existing law."

SB 50 will require that a residential development eligible for an equitable communities incentive receive waivers from maximum controls on density and automobile parking requirements greater than 0.5 parking spots per unit, up to three additional incentives or concessions under the Density Bonus law and specified additional waivers if the residential development is located within a 1/2-mile or 1/4-mile radius of a major transit stop, as defined. The bill would authorize a local government to modify or expand the terms of equitable communities incentives, provided that the equitable communities incentives are consistent with these provisions.

Bill language: "The equitable communities incentive" shall not be used to undermine the economic feasibility of delivering low-income housing under the state density bonus program or a local implementation of the state density bonus program, or any locally adopted program that puts conditions on new development

applications on the basis of receiving a zone change or general plan amendment in exchange for benefits such as increased affordable housing, local hire, or payment of prevailing wages."

The Coalition to Preserve Los Angeles makes the following analysis of SB 50:

1) **SB 50 wipes out all single-family zoning in the below "transit" areas:** SB 50 bans cities from rejecting big residential luxury developments containing a small number of affordable units if a) They are proposed within a 1/4-mile radius of a busy bus stop, or b) Within a 1/2-mile radius of any rail or train stop.

2) **SB 50 wipes out single-family zones in thousands of neighborhoods:** SB 50 overturns single-family zoning in areas "above-median income, jobs-rich, with good public schools" that lack major transit (i.e., it allows tall apartments next to houses in areas that have good schools and jobs).

3) **Rewards construction of 85-foot-high towers next to single-family homes:** SB 50 encourages 75-foot-high and 85-foot-high luxury towers in single-family areas that are either too close to transit or too close to jobs and good schools. The height limit is *not 45 feet and 55 feet, as Senator Wiener falsely implies in SB 50.*

4) **Cities can't stop a luxury tower unless it hurts public safety:** SB 50 is weaponized by the Housing Accountability Act of 1982, which was quietly amended by Skinner/Wiener in 2017. It bans cities from rejecting any "density bonus" project unless the developer "puts public safety at risk."

5) **Cities can't reject demolitions in the new SB 50-targeted areas:** Also weaponized by the Housing Accountability Act, SB 50 prevents cities from fighting demolition for housing towers in "jobs-rich, good schools areas" and "transit" areas. The bill tells developers to sue, if challenged by a city.

6) **SB 50 forces "sensitive communities" to upzone themselves by 2025:** SB 50 openly threatens "sensitive communities" — low-income, diverse areas. It requires them to upzone their Community Plans within five years to conform to SB 50, **annihilating homeowner areas.** If not upzoned, Wiener's

7) **Turns developers into the fox guarding the rental hen-house:** SB 50 utterly fails to protect renters. Only those cities who register their renters and closely track vacancies can stop developers from lying about rental history.

8) **SB 50 puts developers in charge of their own planning:** SB 50 turns thousands of streets into density-bonus-on-steroids, where cities have *no* say. Developers **choose their own incentives** from a menu of rewards and waivers.

Ironically, Wiener's key strategy for solving California's housing crisis by increasing the supply of cheaper housing — Wienervilles — by encouraging dense construction near transit centers, has been challenged by a new MIT university housing report.

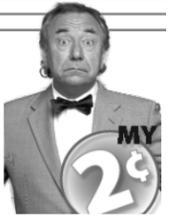
Yonah Freemark, the study's author and a doctoral candidate at MIT, found "no evidence for short- or medium-term increases in housing-unit construction."

"We have a housing crisis in much of the U.S., and that crisis needs to be addressed by providing funding for construction of more units and subsidies for people to afford those units," Freemark said. This is contrary to Wiener giving subsidies to developers so that they can make more profit.

Freemark adds, "What are the local-level impacts of zoning change? I study recent Chicago unzoning's that increased allowed densities and reduced parking requirements in a manner exogenous of development plans and neighborhood characteristics. To evaluate outcomes, I use difference-in-differences

Cont. p. 13

My 2nd • Will Durst © 2019



THE STATE OF THE UNION AFTERMATH.

The president gave a pretty good facsimile of a normal speech the other day during which he presented 5540 of his best words using his indoor voice. He didn't rattle unhinged or erupt into paroxysms of fire breathing rage or seem blinded by paranoia. Well, not too much, anyway. He even got clapped at by Nancy Pelosi.

Indeed, he did boast of inflated accomplishments, made grandiose predictions and not less than a couple of exorbitant claims but that's all part of the grand tradition of the State of the Union Address. That's what a SOTU is. Time to preen and strut and prance and flounce. Everybody does it. Even Jimmy Carter.

What everybody normally doesn't do

paper on flesh-eating bacteria. He talked a lot about kids, but not one word about putting them in cages.

Other things he failed to mention were the Government Shutdown. Vladimir Putin. Mitch McConnell. Maria Butina. Jamal Khashoggi. Michael Cohen. Paul Manafort. Kim Kardashian. \$2 trillion added to the national debt. Handing the

is threaten the opposition party by saying that the authorization of any "partisan investigations" might cause the country to go to war. Sounds more than vaguely like an extortion threat. Obviously something he picked up from his good buddy, the publisher of the National Enquirer. Or maybe something he taught the unfortunately named David Pecker.

It was the same-old, same-old- he says something and all the members of his party stand but the other party doesn't- sort of thing. While behind him, the frosty tension between Vice-President Mike Pence and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi could have been cut with an al dente strand of spaghetti.

At one point, the 45th President of the United States bragged about more women serving in the 116th Congress than ever before, ignoring the fact that out of 127 female representatives, 106 are Democrats. Most of them clumped together wearing white, to symbolize the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment being passed. A stark visual contrast to all the white men on the other side of the aisle.

One of his least controversial moves was coming out against childhood cancer. Wow. Really going out on a political limb there, eh? Can't wait for your next position

and reliable information".

After the Hearing, Supervisor Ronen crafted Ordinance 215-18 creating the Office of Sexual Harassment and Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP). It was enacted in September 2018. Working under the Human Rights Commission, SHARP will have a Director and 2 full-time employees at a cost of around \$400,000. Key goals are to reduce victim blaming, promote survivor-centered services and oversee all City agencies dealing with sexual assaults. Its mandate is to receive complaints about City services for sexual assault, help victims navigate the system, compel City employees to meet with complainants, report service failures to involved departments and City Hall, and recommend policies to combat and prevent sexual crimes.

Importantly, SHARP will gain access to and publish sexual assault data that is now unobtainable.

Dr. Derek Kerr was a senior physician at Laguna Honda Hospital where he repeatedly exposed wrongdoing by the Department of Public Health. Contact: DerekOnVanNess@aol.com

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PO Box 27176, SF 94127

Publisher: Mitch Bull

mitch@westsideobserver.com

Editor: Doug Comstock

editor@westsideobserver.com

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Contributors: Lou Barberini, Brian Browne, Mitch Bull, Julie Casson, Will Durst, John Farrell, Jonathon Farrell, Katherine Howard, Dr. Derek Kerr, Carol Kocivar, Quentin Kopp, Brandon Miller, Patrick Monette-Shaw, Sergio Nibbi, Dr. Teresa Palmer, George Wooding, Photos: Mitch Bull

Award Winning News for the Neighborhood

Society of Professional Journalists



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\$90.7 Million and Counting ...

Lawsuit Settlement Costs Escalate

by Patrick Monette-Shaw



It's been observed elsewhere that keeping a bully on staff is the equivalent of burning a big pile of money in the back of your building.

By extension, keeping bullies employed in San Francisco City government is like throwing \$90.7 million — and growing — of taxpayer funds down the toilet. Will there ever be a taxpayer revolt in San Francisco?

Clearly, the costs of settlements awarded and the costs of City Attorney time and expenses involved in fighting lawsuits filed by City employees that have now reached \$90.7 million is just the tip of the iceberg in the total costs of workplace bullying. It's nearly impossible to estimate the financial costs associated with employees' lost productivity, lower morale, increased absenteeism, and costs associated with employee turnover, recruitment, and attrition.

City managers and our elected officials cannot afford to ignore the high cost of bullying, nor should taxpayers. After all, in the 11-year period between January 1, 2007 and December 14, 2018 there have

By the time of my first update (July 2016), the City's costs had grown to \$41.6 million through May 29, 2016. By the second update (April 2017), total costs grew again to \$58.2 million through March 8, 2017. By the third update (April 2018), costs had risen to \$70 million through December 22, 2017. In this fifth article — the fourth update — costs climbed by another \$20.7 million in the one-year period between December 23, 2017 and December 14, 2018 to a total of \$90.7 million since 2007 — a whopping 649.6 percent change increase since the \$12.1 million was reported in May 2013.

Current Update of Lawsuits

After placing a records request on December 13, 2018 to learn how many lawsuits may have been settled in the one-year period between December 23, 2017 and December 14, 2018, the City Attorney's Office took 41 calendar days in which

... by requiring City employee-defendants found guilty of harassment in a court of law to pay settlement costs out of their own pockets. It would have been the surest and fastest way to stop the harassment if perps knew they'd have to pay the settlements themselves.

been at least 461 lawsuits filed by City employees for violations of various prohibited personnel practices.

The term "prohibited personnel practices" refers to behavior banned by existing federal, state, and local laws as unlawful — unwanted behavior like sexual harassment and sexual discrimination, sexual orientation discrimination, racial discrimination and harassment, age discrimination, disability discrimination, wrongful termination, and other illegal practices.

This On-Going Series of Articles

Back on April 16, 2013 the San Francisco Examiner carried the article by Chris Roberts reporting \$11 million had been awarded to City employees in 103 prohibited personnel practice lawsuits. The \$11 million was subsequently confirmed to be even higher, at a minimum of at least \$12.1 million.

In May 2013, the *Westside Observer* published my initial article, "High Costs of City Attorney's Advice" on the costs of retaliation and bullying of City employees.

Following up to obtain fuller data prior to issuing my first update in July 2016, additional data revealed the \$12.1 million had grown to \$18.6 million, by finally adding in the City Attorney's time and expenses trying to stop the lawsuits.

Three years later I published a first update in July 2016, reporting that Dr. Derek Kerr had uncovered the underlying data through a public records request to the City Attorney in October 2012, of which I performed a secondary data analysis.

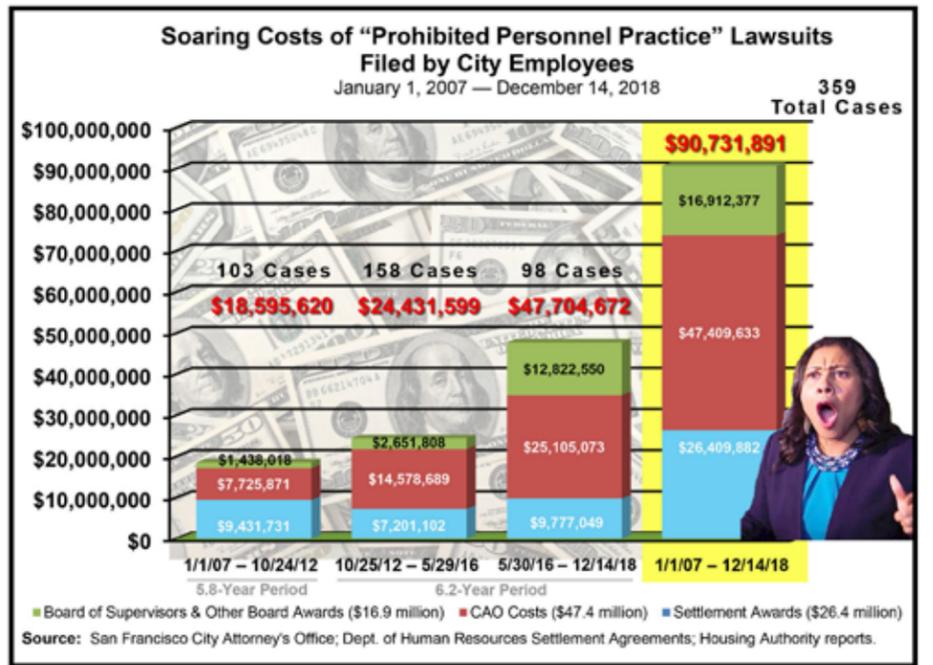
to respond with corrected information on February 4, after initially providing clearly flawed and incorrect data on December 31, 2018.

It was shocking learning on February 4 an additional 38 lawsuits had been concluded at an increased cost of \$20.7 million in the one-year period over the \$70 million *Westside Observer* last reported in March 2018. That's the largest one-year increase since first beginning writing this series of articles.

A good chunk of the \$20.7 million one-year increase involved a class-action lawsuit filed by Muni drivers against the SFMTA on July 16, 2012 alleging violations of Compensation law, in which the drivers were awarded an \$8 million settlement. But that doesn't include the lawsuit's total costs.

San Francisco Examiner reporter Joe Fitzgerald Rodriguez initially reported on December 25, 2016 that the drivers were likely to earn that award because the MTA had failed to properly pay drivers.

Although the MTA Board approved the \$8 million settlement on January 3, 2017, the CAO took its sweet time and didn't officially close the drivers' lawsuit until February 28, 2018. More shockingly, when the CAO finally reported the closure of the lawsuit, the CAO revealed it had its spent \$746,970 in City Attorney time and an additional \$1,884,989 in City Attorney expenses for a total of \$2.6 million in addition to the \$8 million settlement approved by MTA's Board.



This single lawsuit cost the City and its taxpayers a total of \$10.6 million — half of the \$20.7 million one-year increase — because MUNI felt it didn't need to follow California's Labor Code!

The Top-Seven Lawsuit Categories

The City Attorney's Office has 32 separate categories of prohibited personnel practices. As in past year, wrongful termination and racial discrimination lawsuits filed by City employees against the City have accounted for the lion's share of settlements awards and CAO time and expenses.

Table below illustrates, in part:

- Of the \$90.7 million in total costs since January 2007, the 283 concluded lawsuits in the top-seven categories accounted for \$77.7 million (85.6%) of the total costs.
- The 57 concluded wrongful termination lawsuits accounted for almost one-quarter of the \$90.7 million in total costs, despite representing only 15.9% of the total 359 lawsuits concluded.
- The City spent a staggering \$11.1 million trying to stop the 57 concluded wrongful termination lawsuits.
- The 35 sexual discrimination and sexual harassment lawsuits accounted for 9.7% of the total 359 lawsuits, but accounted for \$11 million (12.1%) of total costs.
- Other oddities in the new one-year data include:
 - In the first 103 lawsuits Roberts first reported in the *Examiner* in 2013, we later learned that the highest amount of CAO litigation costs for a single lawsuit had involved just \$529,597. Now the City Attorney apparently feels emboldened to run up costs of litigation in the MUNI drivers' single lawsuit to \$2.6 million. Can anybody say "over-litigation"?
 - Fully 18 of the new 38 lawsuits concluded during the one-year period between December 23, 2017 and December 14, 2018 received no settlement awards at all, but the CAO ran up \$5.4 million in time and expenses in those 18 lawsuits, 59.8% of the total \$8.9 million in CAO time and expenses for all 38 cases.
 - On February 4, 2019 the CAO responded to a records request about a previously-reported pending case. Amazingly, the CAO admitted that their "final closing processes" are delayed, and often it has to

keep a matter open even though the case is otherwise concluded. The CAO admitted that sometimes it fails to report settlement awards and costs of litigation in some matters when a case is finally closed between records requests.

It is not known how many times in the past this has occurred, or whether the CAO has failed to provide accurate data in the past for lawsuits that are formally closed after a records request for a particular reporting period is provided due to its internal processes for coding the dates individual cases are finally closed. It's not known how many cases have *not* been included in the running count of 359 concluded lawsuits, and whether the \$90.7 million is actually under-reported.

In addition to the oddities noted, there are other problems with the data.

Misclassification of Categories Obscures Data

As noted in previous articles in this series, we may never know exactly how many wrongful termination or racial discrimination lawsuits cases have actually been brought by San Francisco city employees, because of the way they are classified by the City Attorney's Office, which appears to use a different nomenclature to categorize cases than Courts do.

The CAO reclassified a "6035 Racial Discrimination" lawsuit as a "6005 First Amendment Violation" case.

The CAO classified two "6010 Wrongful Discharge" lawsuits as "6080 Disability Discrimination" cases.

- The CAO classified another "6010 Wrongful Discharge" lawsuit as a "6070 General Harassment" case. Another "Wrongful Termination" lawsuit was reclassified as a "6099 Other-Actions" case.

- A lawsuit alleging sex-based harassment by a lesbian supervisor (which would make it a "6060 Sexual Orientation Harassment") case was classified by the CAO as a "6070 General Harassment" case.

- The CAO classified a "6080 Disability Discrimination" lawsuit as a "9113 Miscellaneous" case.

- The CAO classified a "6050 Sexual Harassment" lawsuit as a "6030 Sexual Discrimination" case.

Cont. p. 12

Top-Seven Categories of Prohibited Personnel Practice Lawsuits — January 1, 2007 – December 14, 2018

Code	Type of Case	# of Cases	% of Total Cases	CAO Settlement Amount	BoS & Other Awards	CAO Time & Expenses	Total Costs	% of Total Costs	Pending Cases	Total # of Cases
1	6010 Wrongful Termination (Emp agst. City)	57	15.9%	\$ 5,737,310	\$ 3,467,412	\$ 11,150,872	\$ 20,355,593	22.4%	8	65
2	6035 Racial Discrimination (Emp agst. City)	55	15.3%	\$ 4,821,293	\$ 435,000	\$ 9,508,836	\$ 14,765,129	16.3%	4	59
3	6020 Compensation (Employee against City)	16	4.5%	\$ 1,465,063	\$ 9,042,383	\$ 3,631,914	\$ 14,139,360	15.6%	2	18
4	6099 Other-Actions by Employees against City	69	19.2%	\$ 2,586,621	\$ 1,011,410	\$ 5,860,655	\$ 9,458,686	10.4%	18	87
5	6080 Disability Discrimination (Emp v City)	51	14.2%	\$ 3,108,943	\$ 737,034	\$ 4,120,088	\$ 7,966,065	8.8%	13	64
6	6030 Sexual Discrimination (Emp against City)	14	3.9%	\$ 2,502,500	\$ 431,193	\$ 2,808,740	\$ 5,742,433	6.3%		14
7	6050 Sexual Harassment (Emp against City)	21	5.8%	\$ 1,788,942	\$ 220,395	\$ 3,262,712	\$ 5,272,049	5.8%	2	23
Total Top-Seven Categories		283	78.8%	\$ 22,010,671	\$ 15,344,827	\$ 40,343,817	\$ 77,699,315	85.6%	47	330
Percent of All Total Cases		78.8%		83.3%	90.7%	85.1%	85.6%		46.1%	71.6%
Total All Cases		359	99.2%	\$ 26,409,882	\$ 16,912,377	\$ 47,409,633	\$ 90,731,891	100.0%	102	461

Source: San Francisco City Attorney's Office, multiple public records requests since 2007.



March 2019

I know that Spring is right around the corner, but it's raining so hard and so much that I can't seem to see that far into the future... umbrellas are blowing up the street inside out, and even the parking meter readers seem a little less robust in the deluge...

Back in business... it is great to see Issa at the West Portal Daily back in business with the little store that has what you need. Closed for many months from the fire that also closed Papenhausen Hardware, West Portal's own convenience store is back open and remodeled. Stop by, say hi to Issa and check out the remodel.



A TV star in the making... Trattoria Da Vittorio is coming to a TV (or another streaming device) near you! The Michelin guide - rated restaurant is being featured on KQED's local show, *Check Please Bay Area*, where three bay area folks each pick their favorite restaurant and then they each try them all. A film crew films the food and atmosphere at each location, and they all discuss their individual experiences at each locale with host Leslie Sbracco. According to owner and chef **Vittorio D'Urzo** the segment is slated to be run during April on the PBS station (Channel 9 for most folks.) For those who want the personal experience, Trattoria Da Vittorio is located at 150 West Portal Avenue.



The e-library is here... Do you have an eReader? Did you know that you can check out electronic editions of library books for free? Learn how to enjoy San Francisco Public Library's collection of more than **40,000 eBooks** at the Digital Device Drop-in every Thursday at 4-5 pm at the Main Branch Library, 100 Larkin St. Bring your Kindle, Nook, iPad or other eReader device with you and learn how to use it to download materials from the Library website.

SFPL offers free computer and technology classes. Learn anything from computer comfort to coding! Sign up for our monthly e-newsletter and class schedule.¹

At the Merced branch for March...

Knitting Circle - Tuesday, March 12, 6 to 7:30 pm

All levels of knitters, please join us with your knit projects and spread the inspiration! Practice supplies provided, but bring your own if you have a special project in mind. For ages 13 and up.

Merced Craft Night - Thursday, March 14, 6 to 7:30 pm

Join us for a fun night of crafting! Craft night is held on the second Thursday of each month. For ages 13 and up. Space is limited. Pre-registration is required. Sign up with a librarian or call (415) 355-2825. Sign up starts on the first day of the month

Merced Branch Library Book Swap - Saturday, March 23, 3 to 4:30 pm

Bring in a book (or 2+) from home that you want to trade in for another. Browse a variety of book choices available to swap. Books you bring in to swap should be in good condition. For 2019, the book swap takes place on the fourth Saturday of each month (except for the month of May).



First Ladies and Women's Rights, Part III - From Women's Suffrage to the Equal Rights Amendment, 1920-1977 -- Wednesday, March 27, 7 to 8:30 pm

Patricia Southard and Elizabeth Thacker-Estrada cover the 1920s following the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, which granted women's suffrage, to 1977, when the E.R.A. received 35 of the necessary 38 state ratifications. During these years, the women's rights movement transformed into second-wave feminism. First Ladies of this time were often more supportive of equality than the populace at large and repeatedly used their influence to promote women's rights and women in public office. Presidential wives from Florence Harding to Betty Ford will be discussed, including the trailblazing Eleanor Roosevelt and the glamorous Jacqueline Kennedy. The talk will conclude with a preview of the most recent First Ladies including Hillary Clinton and Michelle Obama.

* This program is supported by Friends of the San Francisco Public Library.

Book-A-Librarian: Learn Basic Computer Skills

Choose a topic--searching library databases, setting up an email account, or surfing the Internet. Basic mouse and typing skills required. Sign up in-person or call to schedule a 45-minute one-on-one appointment.

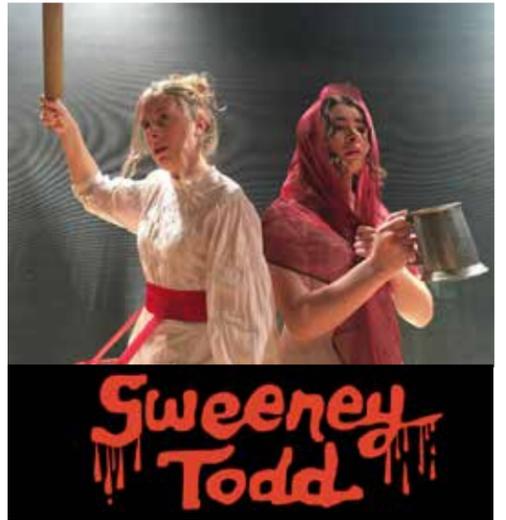
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(415) 355-2825, www.sfpl.org

Sweeney Todd comes to Lowell HS...

Lowell High School's Visual and Performing Arts Program proudly presents *Sweeney Todd, The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, opening March 14, at 7:30 pm at the Carol Channing Theater.

Stephen Sondheim's masterpiece tells a harrowing tale of societal injustice and revenge during the industrial revolution in London. The story takes on especially important meaning when told by our earnest young adults at Lowell. The honesty with which they portray the roles invites new meaning to the story, making it more heart-breaking but also giving it more hope. The production explores the idea of losing oneself in character: Benjamin Barker assumes the character of Sweeney Todd to re-enter London society and allows his alternate persona to consume him to the ruin of his family. Staged as a play within a play, the actors explore the idea of coming in and out of character as they enter and exit.



This beautiful production is directed by Anne Marie Ullman, co-directed by Katrina McGraw, Musical Directed by Jason Chan, Conducted by Esther Hollander, Designed by Katrina McGraw and choreographed by Brenda Palaby.

The ensemble includes over 60 singers, dancers and actors, 30 technicians, and a 30-piece orchestra. **Thursday March 14th, 7:30 pm Friday March 15th, 7:30 pm Saturday March 16th, 7:30 pm Sunday March 17th, 2:00 pm**

Get into the Garden...

The Garden for the Environment folks at 7th Avenue and Lawton have the following workshops available in March. Give them a call or go online to register: gardenfortheenvironment.org.



The Edible Garden in March

When: Saturday, March 9th, 10 am to 12 pm • Cost: \$25

NEW! -- Family Urban Nature (FUN) Afternoon in the Garden

When: Saturday, March 23rd, 1 to 3 pm • Cost: FREE

Introduction to Sustainable Gardening Series - ONLY A FEW SPOTS LEFT!

When: Saturdays, March 9th, 16th, and 23rd -- 10 am to 12 pm • Cost: \$30 for the full 3-part series. You'll receive \$30 in gift cards (One \$10 gift card for either the Urban Farmer Store or Cole Hardware at each workshop for a total of \$30 in gift cards if you attend all three workshops). Sponsored by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

Dig In! - Six-Part Edible Gardening Series - ONLY A FEW SPOTS LEFT!

When: Saturdays, March 30th - May 4th, 10 am to 12 pm

Where: Garden for the Environment, 1590 7th Ave. at Lawton St., SF • Cost: \$175

San Francisco provides a perfect climate for growing food year-round food! Even a small backyard space can be enough to grow healthy veggies.

For more information: Garden for the Environment

7th Avenue & Lawton Street, SF • www.gardenfortheenvironment.org (415) 558-8246



In Memorium...all of us at the *Observer* are saddened by the sudden passing of San Francisco **Public Defender Jeff Adachi**. Jeff was a tireless advocate and champion for those less fortunate, and believed in a more transparent and fair criminal justice system. Our condolences go out to his family, his many friends and colleagues at the Public Defender's office. His shoes will not be easily filled. (More on page 3.)

The district lost another bright light with another sudden passing. **Chef Michael Gonzalez**, the former owner and chef at **The Manor**, passed away suddenly in December. We also offer our condolences to his family, his fiancée, and friends. Many of us got to meet and get to know him a little during his tenure at The Manor, and his passing is a loss for the city, and for everyone who knew him. (p. 12)



Do you have an event, a neighborhood fact or just an observation to share? Drop us a line at mitch@westsideobserver.com and share your ideas or just let us know what you think.

1. <http://www.libraryaware.com/2218/Subscribers/Subscribe>

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— Taraval Station Community Meeting —

Tuesday, March 19 • 6 pm – 7 pm at Taraval Police Station • taraval.org



TARAVAL STATION Crime Report

Greetings everyone I hope you are all safe and sound after such a stormy last couple of weeks. We had several trees down, traffic signals out and intersections flooded throughout the district but, fortunately, there were no major injuries reported. Just a reminder that driving in the rain is always a bit more tricky than dry conditions so please use more caution and give yourself a bit of extra time so you are don't find yourself in a rush to get somewhere driving on wet roadways. The old saying of "It's not worth it" comes to mind if something happened while trying to get somewhere quickly instead of safely. Taraval Station Officers will be more proactive and conducting traffic enforcement along the Sloat Blvd corridor so drive safely.



Captain Nick Rainsford

Your Taraval Neighborhood Team, TNT, has been working hard lately and have made two outstanding arrests. In one caper TNT set up a "bait bike" operation in the area of 46th and Judah. The bait bike was quickly stolen after being briefly left unattended. TNT nabbed the would be thief and low and behold he was on active felony probation for burglary. The surprised bike thief was booked into county jail for grand theft and a probation violation. Shockingly, we noticed a drop in home burglaries in the neighborhood.

In yet another operation TNT conducted surveillance at the Stonestown Mall parking lot, where a young man was seen peering in multiple vehicles. However, none were broken into. TNT officers, along with uniformed officers, conducted a traffic stop and identified the young man. As it turns out, he happens to be on active felony probation for robbery. The young man bemoaned the traffic stop, declaring "I didn't do anything." So TNT contacted his probation officer, who informed us his probationer is wearing an ankle monitor with GPS capability. The unsuspecting probationer's travels were subsequently tracked and, as it turns out, he is a frequent visitor to numerous areas throughout the City where auto burglaries happen frequently, wow. in fact, TNT tracked the young man to an area near the Legion of Honor and observed him breaking into a car and a foot pursuit ensued. The fleet of footed TNT crew quickly made the arrest, declaring "we meet again." He was booked into county jail for auto burglary and a probation violation. A subsequent search warrant served at his home in San Mateo County revealed evidence linking the thief to approximately 15 prior auto burglary cases. We think auto burglaries around Stonestown might decrease a bit.

Friday | February 1

Discharging a Firearm – Arrested

12:29 am | Broad St & Plymouth Ave

Responding to a report of shots being fired officers questioned two suspects in a car. Officers saw several open bottles of alcohol and a handgun on the floor. They detained the suspects and two more suspects who were originally with them. The four suspects were arrested.

Monday | February 4

Resisting Arrest – Arrested

10:21 pm | 200 Garfield St

Responding to a report of a suspect walking around with a knife, talking to himself, officers detained the suspect despite resisting being handcuffed. A check revealed two warrants and he was arrested.

Tuesday | February 5

Robbery

12:55 pm | Irving St & 23rd Ave

A woman said she was waiting for a bus when the suspect suddenly approached her and punched her in the stomach. Then he took her cell phone and clipper card and jumped in a waiting car that fled.

Wednesday | February 6

Battery – Cited

5:48 pm | 3100 20th Ave

After one party opened their car door and struck another car, an argument led to one party claiming that she was hit with a cell phone while the other party claimed that he was trying to film the incident when the phone was knocked out of his hands. Both parties pressed charges and both parties were cited.

Sunday | February 10

Reckless Driving

12:26 pm | Broad St & Plymouth Ave

Plainclothes TNT officers saw a car driving at a high rate of speed and a smoking skid mark behind. The car passed through an intersection without stopping and proceeded to a highway. A CHP officer pulled the driver off the road, and the officers

also cited the driver.

Assault

10:15am | Skyline Blvd & Great Hwy

A man who had been driving behind a slower car, changed lanes to pass. The slower driver, the suspect, flashed something that looked like a badge and told the victim to pull over. When he stopped his car, the suspect approached, yelling and cursing. Feeling threatened, he drove away, but the suspect caught up to him and sprayed pepper at him, then drove away.

Monday | February 11

Attempted Robbery – Attempted Arson

3:45 am | 46th Ave & Wawona St

Officers found the suspect reported to be lighting a fire with freshly burnt paper. A man said the suspect got on the bus without paying, started an argument with a passenger and demanded money. Then he eventually walked away after setting some paper on fire. He was arrested.

Possession – DUI – Probation Violation

11:29 am | Arch St & Brotherhood Way

After a car was rear-ended while stopped at a stop sign, officers determined that one of the drivers was under the influence of drugs. After investigation and testing, the driver was arrested.

Friday | February 15

Robbery

5:22 pm | 3200 20th Ave

After a group pushed her friend away before the suspect cornered her and took here cell phone and fled, the victim told officers who found the group of people. But after further investigation, they determined the group was not involved in the robbery portion of the incident.

Saturday | February 16

Robbery

11:25 pm | 2100 45th Ave

A woman had just parked her car and had was carrying groceries with her purse over her shoulder when the suspect suddenly put a hand over her mouth, reached over

grabbed the purse and fled.

Monday | February 18

Vehicle Burglary – Arrested

5:13 pm | 100 34th Ave

Plain clothes TNT officers were on surveillance when they observed the suspect, who had a known history, breaking into a vehicle. They detained the suspect and after further investigation, he was arrested.

Shooting – Robbery

9:26 pm | 2000 15th Ave

Officers responded to UC hospital regarding two shooting victims. The victim reported that one of them lived in the area and they decided to walk to 15th Avenue to smoke marijuana. The victim stated that the suspect approached them with a gun and demanded their property and a fight ensued when one of the victims grabbed at the suspect. The victim stated that the suspect then shot at the victims before stealing their property and fled the area. However, after further investigation, it was determined that there were discrepancies with the victim's statement and determined that

it was an isolated incident.

Thursday | February 21

Marijuana Search Warrants

6:00 am | 7 location in the district

TNT officers had receive a tip concerning illegal growing of marijuana inside a location. An investigation reveals that the suspect owned numerous buildings. After surveillance on the locations and obtaining a search warrant, a search revealed that four of the locations were growing marijuana. This investigation is ongoing.

Friday | February 22

Assault – Arrested

4:39 pm | 3200 20th Ave

A man said he was in the locker room at the gym when the two suspects walked in and looked at the victim. He responded by saying "hi" to which the suspects made a comment and started punching the victim. After investigation, they were arrested.

NOTE this is an abridged version of the complete Police Report that is available at taraval.org

WOTPCC (Cont. from p. 2)

detail with numbers showing that SF has only built an average of 1800 units per year for the last 30 years, when an average of 5000 units per year are needed to keep pricing and the housing market stable.

Dennis Richards, a member of the SF Planning Commission, agreed with much of what Todd had said regarding the numbers, but showed photos and drawings of what a 75' tall structure would look like next to a single-family home. He agrees that there is a crisis but is concerned



Aide Lee Hepner

large multi-tenant buildings in the middle of neighborhoods. Following the presentations from the speakers, Dave Bisho made a motion for the WOTPCC to prepare a letter stating that the WOTPCC strongly opposes SB50 and its attempt to eliminate zoning laws, local land use, height restrictions and the value of private property. After discussion on the large number of people who should receive it, the motion was seconded and unanimously approved. President Scardina will prepare a draft and distribute it to the delegates before sending it to the many intended recipients. A second motion was made to contact Supervisor (and Board President) Norman Yee asking him to conduct a hearing on SB50. It also passed unanimously.

Scardina then went over several topics to gauge interest for future agendas. Topics such as: Changes to Sutro Tower; Candidates for the S.F. District Attorney race; an update on Short-term rentals and an update from Mayor Breed's Policy Transition Team. All were given favorable responses by the attendees. A topic regarding neighborhood issues with the Outside Lands concert did not generate enough interest to be added to the list for a future agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20.

The next meeting of the WOTPCC will be on Monday, March 25 at 7:30 PM at the historic Forest Hills Clubhouse. For more information see the WOTPCC website (www.westoftwinpeaks.org).



Planning Commissioner Dennis Richards opposed SB50

that bills such as SB50 and the Housing Accountability Act will together create an environment where local jurisdictions (like SF Planning) will have virtually no method to turn down any project that meets the guidelines of the legislation. He is against the "one size fits all communities" approach that Sacramento is forcing the cities to accept. For that reason, he is against SB50.

The next speaker was an aide from Supervisor Aaron Peskin's office. Lee Hepner spoke on a piece of legislation that the supervisor has introduced, the Housing Preservation Act, that would discourage the wholesale demolition of single-family homes and smaller units to build multi-story units on small lots or to construct



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The Real Dirt-y Dozen

Last December in "Dishing the Dirt During the Holidays," we interviewed soils aficionado and Sierra Club Loma Prieta Soils Committee co-Chair Anne Stauffer about soil health and how important it is to growing your Thanksgiving meal. I expect that you all sat around the holiday dinner table, digesting your food along with the article, and asked yourselves, "Well, how about my home garden? What can I do to be more environmentally aware as I garden?" It just so happens that Stauffer has some easy tips you can use for a flourishing home garden. Here are her twelve Do's and Don'ts for great soil health for your garden:

1. Don't Use Herbicides and Pesticides.

Herbicides and pesticides kill not only "bad" critters (aphids, snails, slugs) but also the "good" ones (earthworms, ladybugs, bees, butterflies, birds, and on and on).

2. Don't Compact Your Soil.

Lay out paths for people to walk on - every time you walk through a garden bed, you are squishing the tiny pockets of air and water that soil microbes have formed and need to survive. Yes, soil life-forms need air and water, too!

3. Don't rake up leaves, pine needles or other debris.

OK, maybe we are too late with this suggestion this year (unless you are a laid-back gardener.) But think of your leaves and pine needles as free organic mulch! Leave the leaves. (This may not apply to roses and some other plants if diseases are present, but for the most part, this is a good rule of thumb.)

4. Don't dig or till unnecessarily.

Digging and tilling disturb and can even kill soil fungi, worms, and other beneficial microbes. Make planting holes just big enough for the plant's root ball.

5. Don't use synthetic fertilizers.

Did you know that synthetic fertilizers actually harm soil health? Plants become dependent on the fertilizer, and their roots stop working with soil life-forms. The soil microbes that would naturally nourish your plants then die off or move away -- and you are stuck buying more synthetic fertilizer.

6. Do get rid of that lawn.

Try California natives instead. California native plants thrive in our soils and dry climate. Natives also support California's endangered bugs—butterflies, grasshoppers,

beetles—and therefore the birds, lizards, and other creatures that eat those bugs.

7. Do encourage fungi in your soil.

Soil fungi work with and "extend" roots, maximizing plants' ability to draw nutrients from the soil. Mulch and organic compost help with this. See more below.

8. Do plant cover crops.



Cover crops nourish and rebuild depleted soils by adding vital plant nutrients and increasing soil aeration. Some cover crops are sweet peas, fava beans, California lupine, California barley, wheat, and wild rye.

9. Do grow numerous, diverse plants.

Stauffer says that, "the greater the diversity and number of plants, the healthier the soil." Deep-rooted perennials, such as many native California grasses, are especially beneficial. They extend throughout a larger area of the soil and



form networks with more fungi, bacteria, and microbes.

10. Do use organic compost.

You, too, can make rich, organic compost at home using food scraps, yard cuttings, and shredded newspaper. Many websites give instructions for this free source of soil nutrients. Apply the finished compost to the surface of your soil and cover with lots of mulch (see #12.)

11. Do make compost extract to quickly improve soil health.

You can use your organic compost to make a liquid extract fertilizer. Stauffer's recipe: "Add a few trowels of organic compost to a bucket of water, stir vigorously, and promptly pour it around your plants."

12. Do add mulch, mulch, mulch.

Apply a few inches of organic mulch to your planting beds. Leave a three-inch mulch-free diameter around each of your plants to prevent plant diseases. Mulch helps to moderate soil temperature and saves water. As the mulch breaks down, it provides food for all those underground critters so important to soil health.

As you nourish your garden, you are nourishing the earth as a whole. Healthy soil helps clean the air, holds up to 30% more water, and nurtures strong, beautiful plants, whether in acres of cropland or in your own small backyard.

Lessons we learn in our gardens show us the way to helping care for our Mother Earth.

Join Stauffer in her efforts at: www.facebook.com/soilscommittee4u/

Katherine Howard is a local open space and environmental advocate and a member of the Executive Committee of the SF Group of the Sierra Club.

PG&E / SBE (Cont. from p. 1)

If we used a fair market franchise fee of 5% then the assessed value would be approximately \$770 million. This \$770 million assessed value reflects the present value of a \$44.8 million annual payment (5% fair market franchise fee) over 35 years @ 5% interest rate. This would result in approximately \$9 million annually in

should also consider going back at least 8 years and issue escapes (appraising values missed in prior years and then the Tax Collector will bill accordingly) in order to recoup this missed franchise fee reflecting approximately \$72 million (8 x \$9 million) that would have been collected by our City if this franchise fee was appropriately valued by the SBE at fair market.

EXHIBIT Gross Receipts Reported and Franchise Fees and Surcharge Fees Paid January 1, 2013 Through December 31, 2014					
Year	Type	Gross Receipts ¹	Franchise Fees ²	Surcharge Fees ³	Over/(Under) Paid
2013	Electricity	\$701,317,972	\$3,506,590	\$294,315	\$0
	Gas	\$196,647,474	\$1,966,475	\$254,959	\$0
2014	Electricity	\$708,576,849	\$3,542,884	\$319,539	\$0
	Gas	\$187,287,699	\$1,872,877	\$320,742	\$0
Total		\$1,793,829,994	\$10,888,826	\$1,189,555	\$0

Note 1: Gross receipts reported by PG&E are net of uncollectable accounts, interdepartmental sales, and reflect updated customer information adjustments.
 Note 2: Franchise fee rates are 0.5 percent of electricity receipts and 1 percent of gas receipts.
 Note 3: PG&E billed and collected electricity and gas franchise surcharge fees based on the formula specified in state law from its customers who purchased electricity and gas from a third party

Source: PG&E Certification of Gross Receipts

property tax to our City for the franchise fee (based on a 1.1723% tax rate on a \$770 million assessed value).

PG&E's franchise fee is subject to property tax but is not reflected in the annual appraisal by the SBE. By the SBE not assessing the franchise fee at fair market value our City is losing approximately \$9 million annually.

The Assessor's Office should work closely with SBE staff to insure a fair market franchise fee assessment is accounted for in the SBE's annual appraisal of all privately held public utilities.

This would result in property tax revenue to the City from just PG&E of approximately \$9 million annually (based on a fair market franchise fee of 5%). The Assessor has the authority and

"...we are just reviewing the property tax revenue from the franchise fee of PG&E. There are numerous companies with franchise fees that should also be appraised, which would result in addition millions to our City annually."

Keep in mind we are just reviewing the property tax revenue from the franchise fee of PG&E. There are numerous companies with franchise fees that should also be

appraised, which would result in addition millions to our City annually.

The SBE has become a place where termed out politicians go to remain relevant. It is time the SBE be eliminated and the remainder of its diminished duties and oversight be transferred to other existing agencies, resulting in streamlining and costs savings.

John Farrell Broker/Realtor - Farrell Real Estate, MBA, Former Assistant Assessor - Budget & Special Projects, Westside resident - farrellreinvestments@yahoo.com.

Michael Walton Gonzalez



Family and friends gathered on February 7 at The Olympic club - Lakeside near Lake Merced, to celebrate the life and grieve the loss of Michael Walton Gonzalez, who died suddenly at age 40.

The Westside Observer will remember him as the chef/entrepreneur who took over the Manor Cafe Diner on West Portal Ave back in 2016.

Gonzalez breathed new life into the establishment with passion and dedication. He was a native San Franciscan who grew up in the neighborhood attending local schools, Stuart Hall and Saint Ignatius College preparatory high school, graduating in 1997. After earning his bachelors in English at the University of California Davis in 2001, he had the opportunity to go off to Paris to begin the adventure of a lifetime.

He attended the prestigious Le Cordon Bleu, graduating the first in his class. This led him to a job at the Restaurant Taillevent at Rue Lamennais in Paris, before returning home to San Francisco.

Before his venture as chef and new owner of the Manor Cafe, he spent over 11 years traveling and cooking as a private chef. While his ownership of the Manor Cafe was brief, he was honored to have had the opportunity.

He sold the Manor Cafe last year, taking a much needed sabbatical. He was engaged to be married to fiancé Sarah Friedkin, and they were eagerly making plans for a life together with more adventures and opportunities. All who knew him said, "Michael left us too soon."

Those who spoke at his memorial service were Bob Skinner, Jim Murphy, Shahab Fatouhi, and Maria Murray-Chavez.

Gonzalez leaves behind his mother Karen, fiancé Sarah, godmother Arlene Cohen, and many family members and friends.





168TH SAINT PATRICK'S DAY PARADE AND FESTIVAL • SATURDAY, MARCH 16TH

Every year, San Francisco is home to one of the largest Saint Patrick's Day celebrations in the world. The parade and festival draw more than 100,000 people. Since it's so large, it's always held on a weekend. The 2019 event will be on Saturday, March 16.

The Saint Patrick's Day Parade features a number of local Irish dance companies, bands, and groups. The parade starts at 2nd and Market Street, then makes its way down Market to the Civic Center Plaza, the location of the festival. The parade starts around 11am and lasts about two hours. There is usually plenty of room to see the parade clearly along Market Street, but it gets more crowded the closer you get to Civic Center Plaza.

March 2019

C A L E N D A R

EVERY SUNDAY • FARMERS MARKET

Farmers Market | Every Sun | 9 am–1 pm | Fresh fruits and vegetables are the stars this popular market. Stonestown rear parking lot: at Stonestown Galleria (19th Ave @ Winston).

EVERY SUNDAY • VICTORIAN TOUR

Sundays | 2 pm | Victorian era architecture of the city's first suburb Lafayette Square neighborhood. SF's illustrious history, steep streets & fabulous views! 1801 Bush St. garden. Donations MUNI 1, 3. Check out many tours of SF: INFO: sfcityguides.org

SUNDAYS • FREE COMMUNITY YOGA

Every Sun | 10 am | Bring Your Own Mat for outdoor yoga at Playland at 43rd Ave. All classes are FREE and DROP IN. (Rain cancels.) 1360 43rd Ave & Judah. Cancellations: Playland Yoga Facebook Page.

EVERY TUES • QUE SYRAH HAPPY HOUR

Every Tue Happy Hour | 4–8 pm | Que Syrah Wine Bar. Take \$1 off each glass, 10% off each bottle (consumed on site). 230 West Portal Ave 731-7000

EVERY THURS • NIGHTLIFE

Every Thu | 6–10 pm | The Academy of Sciences brings live music, science, mingling and cocktails. GG Park \$12 (\$10 Members). calacademy.org/nightlife.

EVERY THURS • DIGITAL DEVICE DROP-IN

Thu | 4-5 pm | Patient tech-savvy help in getting to know your digital device. Please have your device fully charged and know your sign-in information and passwords. Main Library, 100 Larkin St.

FRIDAYS • TEEN COMPUTER CORPS

Fri | 4-5:30 pm | Trouble with Technology? We can help with kindles, email, laptops, tablets, cell phones and other electronic gadgets at the Parkside Branch, 1200 Taraval. Info: 415-355-5770.

SATURDAYS • COMPUTER HELP

Sat | 1-4 pm | Drop-in help with a teen tech savvy volunteer! Bring your laptop, eReaders, gadgets, digital cameras, tablets or cell phones and we can help you learn how to use it. West Portal Branch, 190 Lenox.

DAILY • IRISH AMERICAN CROSSROADS

Various days, Mar 3-30 | Various venues | 16th Annual Festival exploring and celebrating the history of the Irish diaspora. Cultural and literary creative performance, music, readings, storytelling, films, etc. Free—\$36, irishamericancrossroads.org

ONGOING • MAGNIFICENT MAGNOLIAS



Daily thru March | 7:30 am - 7 pm | Celebrate spring with the sights and scents of this spectacular annual bloom of nearly 100 trees, whose branches burst into

a profusion of saucer-sized pink, white, and magenta flowers. Free—\$8, S.F. Botanical Garden, GGPark, Lincoln at 9th Ave. sfbotanicalgarden.org

ONGOING • GG INTL. EXPO - 80TH ANNIV.

Thu Mar 28 | Library Hours | The SF History Center's exhibition *Illusion and the Magic City* marking the 80th Anniversary of the Expo on Treasure Island, celebrates the completion of the GG Bridge and the SF - Oakland Bay Bridge. Original ephemera from SF History Center. Main Library, 100 Larkin St., 6th Fl.

TUE • DEATH AND DYING

Tue Mar 5 | 5:30 | What happens when we die? Are there environmentally-friendly ways to deal with our remains? How do different faith traditions view death? What do we need to insure our wishes are followed if we are unable to make medical decisions on our own? How do we say goodbye to a dying friend? Main Library, 100 Larkin St.

DAILY • WOMEN IN FOOD

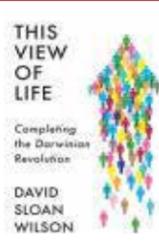
Tue–Sun Mar 5–11 | Various Times/Locations | 7-day dining experience of inspiring meals celebrates the voices, talent, and food of nine La Cocina-born Bay Area women chefs. Visit website for details and pricing: womeninfood.org

TUE • S.H.A.R.P

Tue Mar 5 | 7 pm | Captain Nick Rainsford. S.H.A.R.P. Community Room, 1736 9th Ave. sharpsf.org

TUE • AUTHOR DAVID SLOAN WILSON

Tue Mar 5 | 7 pm | In *This View of Life: Completing the Darwinian Revolution*, Wilson's argument: If we can become wise managers of evolutionary processes, we can solve the problems of our age at all scales. Bookshop West Portal, 80 West Portal.



THU • PEOPLE OF PARKSIDE

Thu Mar 7 | 7 pm | SFMTA Taraval Project updates and construction mitigation proposals. POPS meeting is the first Thursday of the month at the Taraval Police Station, 2345 24th Ave.

THU-SUN • WORLDS ON FIRE

Mar 7-10 | 8 pm | *World's on Fire* explores the cyclical nature of human experience with smoldering choreography and fiery music, played live by the renowned old time ensemble The Crooked Jades. Yerba Buena Center, 700 Howard St. odcdance.org

FRI • HARD BOP COLLECTIVE

Fri Mar 8 | 7-11 pm | Energetic, swinging music with a strong sense of tradition accessible and fun for the modern audience. Cliff House, 1090 Point Lobos.

FRI • INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Fri Mar 8 | In honor of International Women's Day City Hall turns its lights purple. It's a great photo opportunity for you to capture San Francisco City Hall lit up in

beautiful purple. City Hall, SF.

FRI • WOMEN VOTERS HAPPY HOUR

Fri Mar 8 | 6 -9 pm | Spend International Women's Day with the League of Women Voters SF at our FREE happy hour, non-members welcome, so invite your friends! Bullitt, 2209 Polk St, will donate the evening's tips to the LWVSF voter programs.

FRI • OFF THE GRID - FOOD TRUCKS

Mar 8 & Every Fri | 5-10 pm | Off the Grid is the largest food truck gathering of its kind in the country, brings delicious food to the public with free sides of music, craft, and soul. Fort Mason Center 2 Marina Blvd. Free—\$25, offthegridsf.com

FRI-SUN • SOTA'S LEGALLY BLONDE

Fri-Sun Mar 8-17 | 7:30 pm + 1 pm Sat-Sun | Asawa School of the Arts presents *Legally Blonde* the Musical. Dan Kryston Theatre, 555 Portola, Adults \$25/Sen 20 /Stu \$15. INFO sfsota.org



DAILY • SF BALLET-SLEEPING BEAUTY

Daily Mar 9-17 | 8 pm Sun 2pm | *The Sleeping Beauty*, with spectacular sets, lavish tutus, and Tchaikovsky's glorious score, highlighting classical virtuosity, casts a fairytale spell. War Memorial Opera, 301 Van Ness. sfballet.org (\$44-.278.)

SAT • PARKSIDE BRANCH OPEN HOUSE

Sat Mar 9 | 2-5 pm | Spend the afternoon at the library and enjoy magician Heather Rogers, light refreshments, and explore your creative side with fun crafts. "Take Part" in discussion of the Parkside section of the 1938 SF model, Parkside Branch, 1200 Taraval St.

TUE • GARLIC!

Tue Mar 12 | 6:30 pm | KJ Landis shows numerous kinds of garlic essential to the cuisines and folk medicines throughout the world, and give us tastes of heavenly foods like garlic slow-roasted in olive oil, a raw garlic dip. Limited to 30/RSVP at the branch or call (415) 355 2886. West Portal Branch, 190 Lenox Way.

WED • PIANIST BENJAMIN GROSVENOR

Wed Mar 13 | 7:30 pm | The electrifying young keyboard artist Benjamin Grosvenor performs a fiery program of Schumann, Janáček, Prokofiev and Bellini/Liszt. Herbst Theater, 401 Van Ness. Tix: \$45-75.

WED • READING THE MODEL-OCEAN VIEW

Wed Mar 13 | 5-7 pm | Join us in taking a bird's-eye view of a 3-D map our neighborhood. A segment of the '38 scale model of SF, shows the city's past - future possibilities. Ocean View Branch, 345 Randolph St.

THU • RBG

Thu Mar 14 | Noon | The life of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who has developed a breathtaking legal legacy while becoming an unexpected pop culture icon. Main Library, 100 Larkin St.

THU-SAT • SWEENEY TODD

Thu - Sat Mar 14-16 | 7:30 pm / Sat 2 pm | Lowell High's Spring Musical —Sweeney Todd—in the Carol



CHASE AWAY THE WINTER BLUES WITH THREE CLIFF HOUSE FAVORITES

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Every Friday night from 7:00 pm – 11:00 pm

*Some restrictions apply. Promotions are not valid on holidays.



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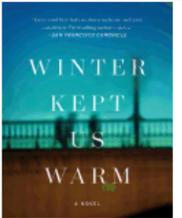
Channing Theater, 1101 Eucalyptus Dr. \$10.

THU • INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PI

Thu Mar 14 | 1-3:30 pm | It's the FREE 32nd annual Pi Day, celebrating the never-ending number π (3.14159...), and the spirit of wonder and quirk that science inspires, rituals, antics, and plenty of pie. Exploratorium, Pier 15/Embarcadero.

WED • AUTHOR ANNE RAEFF

Thu Mar 14 | 7 pm | Every word of *Winter Kept Us Warm* "feels set down with care and fierce conscience. The resulting narrative glows." SF Chronicle. Bookshop West Portal, 80 West Portal.



FRI-SUN • FREE DAY/ACADEMY SCIENCES



Fri-Sun Mar 15-17 | All Day | Free Days Neighborhoods: Castro, Forest Hill, Glen Park, Noe Valley, Parkmerced, Parkside, St. Francis Wood, Sunset. Zips: 94114, 94116, 94122, 94127, 94131, 94132 Info: calacademy.org/



February BESTSELLERS



1. *Becoming* Michelle Obama
2. *The Eulogist* Terry Gamble*
3. *Educated: A Memoir* Tara Westover
4. *The Rule of Law* John Lescaort*
5. *There There* Tommy Orange
6. *Dreyer's English: An Utterly Correct Guide to Clarity and Style* Benjamin Dreyer
7. *Out There: A Scientific Guide to Alien Life, Antimatter ...* Michael Wall*
8. *The Threat: How the FBI Protects America in the Age of Terror and Trump* Andrew McCabe
9. *Here and Now and Then* Michael Wall*
10. *Black Leopard, Red Wolf* Marlon James
11. *The Truths We Hold* Kamala Harris
12. *Sleeping With Strangers* David Thomson*
13. *The Library Book* Susan Orlean
14. *Bad Blood: Secrets and Lies in a Silicon Valley Startup* John Carryrou
15. *Crucible* James Rollins*

* Event with BookShop West Portal; signed copies available.

WHAT ARE YOU READING?

Author Conway Interviews Author Gamble

by Jonathan Farrell

Local author Martha Conway had the opportunity to introduce fellow San Francisco-based historical fiction writer Terry Gamble to those gathered at Bookshop West Portal this past Jan. 29.

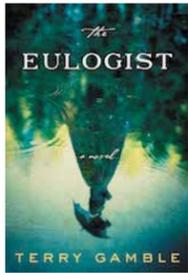
The book reading, discussion and book-signing event was a first at Bookshop West Portal for Gamble. The gathering was to spotlight her new book, *The Eulogist*. Conway was pleased to have the chance to ask questions to Gamble in an interview-style about *The Eulogist*, which like Conway's last book deals with a strong woman character set in difficult circumstances along a river in 19th Century America. And, yes, the issue of class struggle does crop up; slavery is one of the difficult topics.



about a family named Givens. They came to America from Northern Ireland after their father was cheated out of his land. Landing in Cincinnati in 1819 with almost nothing, very soon, the mother dies in childbirth and the father leaves on a riverboat to seek his fortune."

She explained, "The father is never seen again. The three children—James, Olivia, and Erasmus now teenagers, are left to fend for themselves. Olivia chronicles their poverty, their rise to prosperity, marriages and deaths, births and adoptions in the decades before the Civil War."

Conway has an affinity for *The Eulogist*. Conway's Underground River/Float Theater from 2017, featured in the *Westside Observer*. In the interview, Conway asked, "Your family came from Northern Ireland; were they an inspiration to you for writing this novel?"



"After my father died, I came across a letter from a great-great-uncle commissioning a monumental obelisk headstone in 1890 to be erected at the Spring Grove Cemetery in Cincinnati. Included with the letter were a bunch of receipts. They were for bodies, as it turned out," said Gamble. "All the original

Cont. p. 12

What makes Gamble's *The Eulogist* unique is that she is writing about the Irish in America just before and during the Civil War. With St. Patrick's Day upon us, the *Westside Observer* thought it a perfect opportunity to help Gamble get word out about this well-received historical fiction saga.

Usually when people think of the Irish in America, they think of the potato famine, or the late 19th and early 20th Century. But as Gamble's novel points out through her cast of fictional characters, the Irish in cities arrived before the Civil War and were among the largest group of white settlers to the new frontiers of expanding territories and homesteads.

"This is a novel, explained Gamble is

free. Academy of Sciences in GGP.

FRI-SAT • LEPRACON PUB CRAWL



Fri-Sun Mar 15-17 | F-6 pm, S-11 am, Sun 2 pm | 3 days of pub crawling fun with killer drink specials and a huge list of bars where you can enjoy all the green beer, cocktails and shots you can drink. Maves Oyster Bar, 1233 Polk St. Your ticket gets an event wristband and Pub Crawl Map. TIX: \$5-25 lepraconsf.com

FRI • THE TURNAROUND JAZZ QUARTET



Fri Mar 15 | 7 pm | Soul jazz, be-bop, ballads and Latin and Brazilian jazz, including originals and choice standards. Cliff House, 1090 Point Lobos.

SAT • ST. PATRICK'S DAY SF PARADE

Sat Mar 16 | 11 am - 5 pm | 168th Annual SF Parade begins 2nd & Market and heads down Market to the festival at Civic Center. The festival, during and after the parade at Civic Center Plaza, includes Irish music, dancing, and a never-ending supply of beer. It starts at 10 am and closes around 5 pm.

SAT • ANNUAL CORNED BEEF & CABBAGE

Sat Mar 16 | 3:30 pm | United Irish Cultural Center's annual Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinner: Adults \$18, Children \$12. 2700 45th Ave. 415 661-2700.

SUN • CAPITOL STEPS



Sun Mar 17 | 3 pm | Make America Grin Again, a humorous look at the personalities on Capitol Hill and in the Oval Office, tackles the serious issues of the day with laughs and musical pizzazz!. Herbst Theater, 401 Van Ness, TIX: cityboxoffice.com, \$89 - 160.

SUN • ST. PATRICK'S DAY BLOCK PARTY

Sun Mar 17 | 11 am - 3 pm | United Irish Cultural Center, Java Beach Café and United Irish Societies's Block Party FREE family fun. There will be Irish bands, face painting, jumpy castles, food and more! 45th Ave @ Sloat & Wawona Street.

TUE • JAZZY WOMEN

Tue Mar 19 | 7 pm | The women and the jazz landscape, from blues, folk, through the swing and bebop eras, and beyond. Highlights: some of the extraordinary songwriters, as part of our Women's History Month series. Parkside Branch, 1200 Taraval St.

TUE • LET'S TALK ZERO WASTE

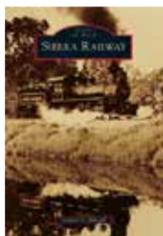
Tue Mar 19 | 6 pm | As wildfires and hurricanes grow more intense, the overwhelming, often intangible, magnitude of the problem escalates. Why living a healthier and happier life also helps the environment with Robyn Purchia, guest columnist for the SF Examiner. Main Library, 100 Larkin St.

TUE • COMMUNITY SAFETY MEETING

Tue Mar 19 | 6-7 pm | Meet with Captain Nicholas Rainsford at Taraval Station. Taraval Community Relations Forum: (Every 3rd Tues.) 2345 24th Ave.

THU • SIERRA RAILWAY

Thu Mar 21 | 12 pm | While historians have focused on the small number of multi-state railroads, such as the Southern Pacific, it was the short lines that opened remote parts of California up to economic and social growth. This lunchtime book talk with author of *Sierra Railway*, Stephen Mikesell. Cal Historical Society, 678 Mission St.



THU • AUTHOR MATT RICHTEL

Thu Mar 21 | 7 pm | *An Elegant Defense* is an epic, first-of-its-kind exploration of the human immune system and the secrets of health, by Pulitzer Prize-winning New York Times journalist Matt Richtel. Bookshop West Portal, 80 West Portal.

THU • NUTRITION & WELLNESS FAIR

Thu Mar 21 | 11 am - 2 pm | Community Health Resource Center's 7th Annual Fair will offer health screenings, games, raffle prizes, healthy recipes, food demonstrations, an opportunity to meet and greet our team and more! 2100 Webster Street, Suite 100. Free

LOWELL VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS DEPARTMENT PRESENTS

SWEENEY TODD:

SCHOOL EDITION
THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET
A MUSICAL THRILLER

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY STEPHEN SONDHEIM
BOOK BY HUGH WHEELER
FROM AN ADAPTATION BY CHRISTOPHER BOND
ORIGINALLY DIRECTED ON BROADWAY BY HAROLD PRINCE
ORCHESTRATIONS BY JONATHAN TUNICK

DIRECTED BY ANNE MARIE ULLMAN CO-DIRECTED BY KATRINA MCGRAW

TICKETS: THU, MARCH 14 7:30 PM
FRI, MARCH 15 7:30 PM
SAT, MARCH 16 7:30 PM
SUN, MARCH 17 2:00 PM

CAROL CHANNING THEATER
LOWELL HIGH SCHOOL 1101 EUCALYPTUS DRIVE SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94132
SWEENEY TODD SCHOOL EDITION IS PRESENTED THROUGH SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH MUSIC THEATRE INTERNATIONAL (MTI). ALL AUTHORIZED PERFORMANCE MATERIALS ARE ALSO SUPPLIED BY MTI. WWW.MTISHOWS.COM

FRI • MOON GLOW TRIO



Fri Mar 22 | 7-11 pm | The Great American Songbook, swaggering Rat Pack balladry, Gypsy Jazz, vintage and contemporary pop, Classical, Latin, Soul, Blues, Rock, Country or Western—all create a relaxed, soulful atmosphere. Cliff House, 1090 Point Lobos.

MON • CENTRAL COUNCIL

Mon Mar 25 | 7 pm | West of Twin Peaks Central Council meets to discuss local topics on the 4th Mon each month. Forest Hills Clubhouse, 381 Magellan Ave. westoftwinpeaks.org

MON • S.H.A.R.P

Mon Mar 25 | 7 pm | Housing Crisis in SF. S.H.A.R.P. Community Room, 1736 9th Ave. sharpsf.org

THU • AUTHOR JACQUELINE WINSPEAR

Thu Mar 28 | 7 pm | Beloved heroine Maisie Dobbs, investigates the mysterious murder of an American war correspondent in London during the Blitz in *The American Agent*, a page-turning tale of love and war, terror and survival. Bookshop West Portal, 80 West Portal.



WED • WOMEN'S RIGHTS & FIRST LADIES

Wed Mar 27 | 7 pm | Follow the ratification of women's suffrage in the '20s, to the E.R.A. stall. First Ladies were often supportive of equality and used their influence to promote women in public office. From Florence Harding to Rosalynn Carter, including the trailblazing Eleanor Roosevelt and conclude with Hillary Clinton and Michelle Obama. Merced Branch, 155 Winston.

THU • OMI NEIGHBORS IN ACTION

Thu Mar 28 | 7 pm | OMI-NIA General Meeting, the 4th Thurs of the month. Temple UMC, 65 Beverly.

THU • STAND UP—HOLD YOUR OWN

Thu Mar 28 | 6 pm | What does it mean to hold your own in a relationship? Or at work? Develop inner strengths, to help you find your voice in times of conflict. Stanford-trained Ilene Wolf — a licensed marriage and family therapist — leads workshop.

West Portal Branch, 190 Lenox Way

THU • MACY'S FLOWER SHOW

Daily, Mar 28-Apr 9 | Macy's Union Square. Take time to smell the flowers at Macy's iconic spring flower show. Visit website for special event information: social.macys.com/flower-show

SAT • SF CHOCOLATE SALON

Sat Mar 30 | 10 am - 5:30 pm | At Fall Chocolate Salon, you can savor, discover, and enjoy samples from any of the participants. (must be over 21 to taste wine or spirits) SF County Fair Bldg. 9th & Irving \$30 (Advance \$20 @ sfchocolatesalon.com)

FRI • SCS TRIO



Fri Mar 29 | 7-11 pm | The trio that takes you through swing jazz and beyond! Cliff House, 1090 Point Lobos

SAT • BACH: ST. JOHN PASSION

Sat Mar 30 | 8 pm | The closest J.S. Bach ever came to writing an opera. The Crucifixion unfolds in an epic arc of majestic choral narrative, imbued with a musical variety and unbridled intensity that is unrivaled in sacred music. SF Symphony Chorus, Davies Symphony Hall, 201 Van Ness.

SAT • 35TH HARMONY SWEEPSTAKES



Sat Mar 30 | 8 pm | Harmony Sweepstakes A Cappella Festival is the premier showcase for vocal harmony music drawing from hundreds of vocal groups from around the country. This event always sells out so get your tickets early!. The Palace Of Fine Arts, 3301 Lyon St. cityboxoffice: 415-392-4400 (\$34.50-39.50)

THU • OUTER SUNSET/PARKSIDE

Thu Apr 3 | 6:30 pm | Residents from the Outer Sunset and Outer Parkside (the area west of Sunset) to discuss key issues in the neighborhood. Outer Sunset Parkside Residents Association (OSPRA). Ortega Library, 3223 Ortega St. mediasusan2@gmail.com (Every 3rd Thur)

Local event? Priority for Westside events
editor@westsideobserver.com

Conservator/SB 1045 (Cont. from p. 1) not needed to offer this kind of case management, and San Francisco needs to offer it.

Services are overwhelmed. None of our street outreach teams are generously-staffed and funded to meet existing need. No way is substance abuse treatment available without a wait, if at all. The waiting lists for "Supportive Housing" are mostly closed, because there are too many folks waiting. There are not enough Navigation Centers and not enough long-term housing to follow a stay there.

A team for someone in crisis is usually unhelpful when all that can be offered is an insecure shelter bed, or a trip to an overwhelmed psychiatric ER. Typically, clients in the Psychiatric ER have to sit on chairs all night and just go back to the street in the morning.

Despite denials from SB 1045 supporters, many will suffer if services are reserved for a few without increasing funding for voluntary services for all who actually need them. In fact, it is illegal to implement this law if others will be displaced from services. And they most certainly will be.

A criterion to begin the conservation process is "Eight 5150s" in a year. A 5150 is, by legal definition: "A hold based on probable cause by a peace officer or county authorized professional, allowing involuntary transport to an authorized facility for a period of up to 72 hours for assessment, evaluation and crisis intervention."

The vast majority of "5150" holds are cancelled (usually in the emergency room) in less than 24 hours, as the person is assessed to be not "gravely disabled" or not a "danger to self or others."

Many folks who are 5150'd would voluntarily accept appropriate housing and

treatment but cannot access it. Many homeless refuse a shelter bed: They cannot bring in their survival gear, they risk assault and robbery, and they are pushed back to the street at 6:00 a.m. This is not to mention that it's hard to make and keep appointments when you are homeless. They have not actually "refused services." There are simply not enough accessible and integrated services — such as mental health treatment linked with stabilization housing that then goes on to long-term housing.

It's unethical and violates human rights to use a 5150 evaluation requested by the police or a social worker as the criterion to say whose rights should be curtailed or removed.

Those who work on the front lines in San Francisco can tell you heart-breaking anecdotes about people who "refused services" until they died. But more services will not magically just appear if SB 1045 is implemented in San Francisco. And there are so many more stories about people who wanted services but couldn't get them — until something terrible happened to them or they died.

We need more and better voluntary services, not more laws that take away people's rights and make them fearful of getting help.

Los Angeles and San Diego took a pass on implementing SB 1045. San Francisco should take a pass on it, too!

Dr. Teresa Palmer was a Senior Physician Specialist in geriatrics at Laguna Honda Hospital for 15 years and has practiced medicine in San Francisco for 30 years. Dr. Allen Cooper is Emeritus Professor of Medicine at Stanford University. He has also worked for Healthright 360 and the UCSF Medical Student Homelessness Clinic at the 5th St. Shelter.

Escalating Lawsuits (Cont. from p. 6)

• The CAO classified a "6055 Racial Harassment" lawsuit as a "6050 Sexual Harassment" case.

Could the San Francisco City Attorney's Office deliberately be misclassifying various lawsuits into other categories to fudge the actual number of prohibited personnel lawsuits in each category?

San Francisco Taxpayers' Lost Opportunity

The Board of Supervisors just created a lost opportunity for San Francisco taxpayers.

On December 13, 2018 both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives passed legislation unanimously in both chambers to reform how sexual harassment lawsuits are handled on Capitol Hill — including holding lawmakers liable for paying for sexual harassment and retaliation settlements out of their own pockets, rather than having U.S. taxpayers foot the bill.

During hearings on amending the City's existing sexual harassment prevention training Ordinance to cover all forms of harassment against City employees, I urged the Board of Sups to pass legislation similar to the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives by requiring City employee-defendants found guilty of harassment in a court of law to pay settlement costs out of their own pockets. It would have been the

surest and fastest way to stop the harassment if perps knew they'd have to pay the settlements themselves. Their misbehavior would stop almost instantly.

The Board of Supervisors turned a cold shoulder and failed to consider and introduce amendments requiring defendants to pay settlements themselves.

As Chris Roberts noted in his April 2013 Examiner article, statewide legislation to make workplace bullying illegal had no sponsors, so the legislation was never introduced. And it hasn't been introduced since 2013. Just ask Melania Trump how her "Be Best" campaign is going to battle on-line bullying of children. Probably not much better.

Burning this \$90.7 million and counting in taxpayer funds in San Franciscans back yards is unconscionable. How long will the problem continue to be ignored at City Hall?

An expanded version of this article with additional discussion, is available on the author's web site at stopLHHdownsize.com.

Monette-Shaw is a columnist for San Francisco's Westside Observer newspaper, and a member of the California First Amendment Coalition (FAC) and the ACLU. He operates stopLHHdownsize.com. Contact him at monette-shaw@westsideobserver.com.

Conway & Gamble (Cont. from p. 11)

family that had emigrated from Ireland, along with the next generation, were to be exhumed and reinterred at the fancy family plot. I began to wonder," Gamble said, "who they were? What they thought of this new country, how they viewed slavery." Because she noted, they had never even seen a black person in Northern Ireland. Gamble went on to say she wondered how they managed to fit in and make their way. "I became obsessed with these buried bodies - not only where they were buried, but under what circumstances, and what that said about their lives."

The character of Oliva Givens is the narrator of the novel. Oliva is someone that Conway described as "snarky and smart." Gamble said that it was her editor that

encouraged the use of Oliva as the guiding narration.

"Although her 'radicalism' seems mild by today's standards, I see Oliva as the kind of woman who paved the way for the suffragists, abolitionists, and feminists," said Gamble.

Even though *The Eulogist* focuses upon one family's struggle, it touches upon many issues and subjects. "When I embarked upon this project," said Gamble "I had very little notion of what would compel me about early 19th Century. America. But it soon became apparent that slavery was the existential issue of the time, along with public health, religion, and the role of women."

Conway could relate to Gamble's
Cont. p. 16

Do you have a pinched nerve? We can help.

Dear friend,

It's hard to believe, I know, but it's true. Last year more Americans were killed by prescription drugs than by guns, AIDS, suicides and terrorists combined ... But we'll get to that in a minute.

Let me start by explaining the photo in this letter. You know when I meet people in town they usually say, "Oh yeah, I know you, you are Doctor Meakim. You have been on the corner of Beach and Jones for years"...(and we just moved to our new office on Clement Street). Well, that's me. I'm also the woman hugging her niece at the Jersey Shore in the picture.

Seventeen years ago something happened that changed my life forever. I was a young woman living in Philadelphia when it happened. I was driving with a friend when she missed a stop sign and rammed into the side of another car. We were all shaken up. The police were called and we all went to the hospital. No one was bleeding, so the doctors took some x-rays of our neck, gave us pain meds and sent us on our way. The next day I woke up with pain everywhere and it just kept getting worse. For years I tried everything that I could find. For an escape from the pain, I went to medical doctors, physical therapists, acupuncturists, I tried special pillows, and anything I thought might help. I spent a lot of time and money. Along the way I had two more car accidents and the pain kept getting worse and worse. I had developed fibromyalgia, neck pain, mid-back pain and low-back pain with tingling and numbness down my right arm and leg. I was scared that something was really wrong with me. This could not be normal. I was only 33 years old and felt like I was 100. That is when someone told me about a chiropractor that they thought could help. As a matter of fact, after the first person told me about him, two more people did that same week. So I made an appointment with the chiropractor. Thank goodness that they took the time to help me! I went to his office where he asked me about my problems, did an exam, and took some x-rays of my head and back. After that he pointed out where my nerves were pinched and adjusted them. The adjustment was so light I barely felt it. I began crying as I felt the pain leave my body for the first time in years. It may sound strange, but I was so happy and grateful for the relief that I still thank him every day! After that, I knew what I had to do. I had to become a chiropractor, and that's how it happened!

I have adjusted many children within the first 15 minutes after birth. They obviously didn't complain of neck pain or back pain; I adjust them to keep them healthy... as with all the hundreds of children I care for in my office.

You see, it's not normal for kids to get ear infections, asthma, allergies or a number of other illnesses we see clear up in our office everyday.

When the nervous system is working correctly your internal resistance and healing powers are enhanced.

A healthy family does NOT rely on medication to make it well. My family does not turn to medication to seek health and we don't have a "medicine chest" in our home. Due to years of advertising saturation from the pharmaceutical companies most Americans do seek health from outside in and most families have a "medicine chest" filled with an average of 16 different medications.

In an average year, the World Health Organization (WHO) reports over 1.5 million hospitalizations due to medication.

Last year the WHO reported 350,000 deaths due to medication people took... and 160,000 were when the drugs were prescribed correctly. More people died last year from medication than at Pearl Harbor and Vietnam. Amazing huh?

If drugs make people well, then those who take the most should be the healthiest, but this simply isn't the case.

Many people are beginning to understand that health comes from within. This is why chiropractic helps so many people. You see, your body can heal itself. Your body doesn't need any help; it just can't have any interference. With chiropractic, we don't add anything to the body or take anything from it. We find interference in the nervous system and remove it, thus enhancing the healing capacities of the body.

We get tremendous results ... it really is as simple as that.

For the past eight years, people from San Francisco and the surrounding area have come to see me with their pinched nerve problems.

- Headaches
- Migraines
- Chronic Pain
- Neck pain
- Shoulder/arm pain
- Whiplash from car accidents
- Backaches
- Numbness in limbs
- Athletic injuries, just to name a few.

Here is what some of your neighbors have said:

"I had back pain for 15 plus years and two back operations. Now I play tennis, sit at my computer and enjoy an active pain free life! Thank you Dr. Meakim!" — A. McGrath

"All possible medicines and doctors, you made a miracle taking away my pain!! I am a happy wife and mother again!" — L Igudesman

"I have had chronic neck, shoulder and arm pain for the last 4 years. After seeing Dr. Meakim I can now twist off caps, button/zip my own pants and there is no longer a need for me to ice my arm in the morning and night! I feel more energetic, and can move my arm and neck pain free!" — C. Brubaker

My qualifications:

I am a graduate of Palmer College of Chiropractic, I have published articles in leading chiropractic journals and taught chiropractic to chiropractors! I've been helping your neighbors in San Francisco since 2004. I've been entrusted to take care of tiny babies to athletes that you may know.

My assistants are Miranda and Nancy and they are friendly and helpful and ready to assist you to set up an evaluation. Our clinic is both friendly and warm and we try our best to make you feel at home. We have wonderful service at an exceptional fee. Our clinic is called Healthy Life Chiropractic and it is at 101 Clement Street (at the corner of Clement St. and 2nd Avenue). Our phone number is 415-751-7071. Call today for an appointment. We can help you.

Thank you.—Dr. Christina Meakim D.C.

P.S. When accompanied by the first family member, I am also offering the second family member this same examination for only \$17.

P.P.S. Can you imagine not having to wait at a doctor's office? Well, your time is as valuable as mine. That's why we have a no-wait policy. You will be seen within minutes of your appointment.

P.P.P.S. Of course, all people respond differently to care.





1 Monterey Park Line, Motor Coach 06 with Body Built by Meister Brothers in Sacramento | August 19, 1919 | Published by permission of SFMTA Photo Center.

Senior Smarts

National Healthcare Decisions Day

By Anise J. Matteson, CBF

Sally Stephens' *When good health fails* (*San Francisco Examiner*, November 19, 2017) helps to convey the purpose of National Healthcare Decisions Day: "Talking about a serious illness is difficult. But it's better to have basic discussions about who can help, what they can do, what companies offer what services and how much they cost while you—or your elderly parents—are still feeling relatively good. Don't wait until you desperately need help."

"Dealing with a serious illness is hard. But a little forethought and planning can go a long way to help you, your family and your friends cope. That way you'll be more ready and prepared when you get one of those early morning jarring phone calls."

PLANNING

It is time to start planning for National Healthcare Decisions Day (NHDD)—April 16.

Why should you have written instruction for end-of-life care? Share your experience if you have recently experienced the loss of a loved one who did not have an Advance Directive. Respond by March 28.

Started by me in 2014 as Advocate for National Healthcare Decisions Day, this year marks the 6th Annual Healthcare Decisions Day San Francisco with Healthcare Decisions Week from April 9 through April 16.

National Healthcare Decisions Day

National Healthcare Decisions Day is designed to inspire, educate and empower the public and providers about the importance of advance care planning.

This year marks the 12th Annual National Healthcare Decisions Day. Beginning in 2018, nhdd.org extended the Day to April 16-22.

Neighborhood branches of the San Francisco Public Library now acknowledge National Healthcare Decisions Day from April 9 through April 22.

During the weeks of April 9 through April 22, neighborhood branches of the San Francisco Public Library acknowledge advance care planning with books/materials for Advance Directive, wills, trusts and estate planning, and a sign for April 16. All branches are invited to participate. Contact your neighborhood branch to inquire.

Facilitating "The Conversation"

To help facilitate "the conversation," order a copy of my reference book for seniors, *Elder*

Diary: Starter Kit, to help you organize your health information. Order at www.caring-boomers.blogspot.com.

This instructional guide is designed to help non-medical persons better manage the care of their loved one. The kit contains a guide book with an Important Document Checklist; Self-Tests and a page that explains the form's purpose and what information you will be asked to complete; examples of completed forms; sample forms for recording medical and other important information, and more.

ADVANCE DIRECTIVE

An Advance Directive is a part of patient-centered care—a treatment plan specific to a patient's needs. It provides instructions in your own words to family/caregivers, friends and health care professionals when there is a significant condition change.

You should have an Advance Directive to specify your decisions in the future regarding health care, end-of-life care, nutrition, hydration, hospice care, No Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and organ donation when you become unable to express your wishes. (Examples with supporting documentation: do not hospitalize, autopsy request, feeding restrictions, other treatment restrictions.)

Medicare Coverage

Medicare covers voluntary advance care planning as part of the yearly "Wellness" visit. This planning for care you would want to get if you became unable to speak for yourself. You can talk about an advance directive with your health care professional, and he or she can help you fill out the forms, if you want to. An advance directive is an important legal document that records your wishes about medical treatment at a future time, if you are unable to make decisions about your care. You pay nothing if the doctor or

other qualified health care provider accepts assignment.

NOTE: Medicare may also cover this service as part of your medical treatment. When advance care planning isn't part of your yearly "Wellness" visit, the Part B deductible and coinsurance apply. (*Medicare & You* 2018, p. 66.)

SECTARIAN HEALTH CARE DIRECTIVE

"An optional addendum to your advance directive. The language in this addendum clarifies that admission to a religiously-affiliated facility does not imply consent to particular care mandated by the institution's religious policies and directs a transfer if the facility declines to follow the wishes outlined in an advance directive." (*CompassionAndChoices.org*)

Medicare Coverage

Religious non-medical health care institution (inpatient care)

In these facilities, religious beliefs prohibit conventional and unconventional medical care. If you qualify for hospital or skilled nursing facility care, Medicare will only cover the inpatient, non-religious, non-medical items and services. Examples are room and board, or any items and services that don't require a doctor's order or prescription, like unmedicated wound dressings or use of a simple walker. (*Medicare & You* 2018, p. 59.)

Editor's Note: This is an abbreviated version of the full article that is available on the website at westsideobserver.com/health.html

Anise J. Matteson, CBF is an Advocate for National Healthcare Decisions Day, Certified Bereavement Facilitator, retired Registered Health Information Technician, and writer of reference books for seniors. Information is educational only. For specific questions, consult your physician and an attorney. matte59@lycos.com. ©2019.

Weinerville (Cont. from p. 5)

tests on property transaction prices and housing-unit construction permits. I detect significant, robust increases in values for transactions on parcels that received a boost in allowed building size. I also identify value increases for residential condominiums, indicating that upzoning increased prices of existing housing units. I find no impacts of the reforms, however, on the number of newly permitted dwellings over five years. As such, I demonstrate that the short-term, local-level impacts of upzoning are higher property prices but no additional new housing construction."

The Freemark research demonstrates Wiener severely miscalculates supply and demand theory. SB 50 will have no effect on housing supply in urban areas, since Wiener is building units at five to ten times the cost of the homes that he wants to let developers destroy. Due to the cost of land, construction interest rates, and increasing construction building costs, developers will only be constructing market rate housing — not affordable housing — under Wiener's misguided belief market-rate housing will magically trickle down to affordable housing. This will result in housing price increases, but no increase in housing supply and a city filled with eyesores: Weinerville units. Thanks, Scott, and co-author Phil Ting.

On December 3, 2018, Phil Ting introduced AB 68: Land Use Accessory Units, legislation co-written by — no surprise — Scott Wiener. The bill's purpose is to take any remaining open space in residential projects and turn that space into accessory dwelling units. Thanks again, Scott and Phil, for yet another developer incentive handout!

Wiener's supporters consist of paid housing lobbyists, such as the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR), Yes In My Back Yard (YIMBY), Bay Area Renters Federation (BARF), San Francisco Housing and Action Committee (SFHAC); and San Francisco Mayor London Breed and State Senator Scott Wiener. This housing group embodies the current status quo in California.

The paid housing lobbyists support an extreme market-rate housing philosophy of "build housing density at all costs and at any consequences to existing residents." This is a terrible land use housing philosophy, but appeals to millennials who thought life would be easy after they graduated from college. Older generations who preceded millennials faced many of the same problems that millennials do.

All of these housing lobbyist groups and individuals receive a major amount of their funding/contributions from developers, large employers, or lawsuit settlements. Their housing positions feature extreme housing growth and density because they either agree, or have little free will.

The housing lobbyists represent a small percentage of the public, but push their extreme agenda through state legislation, including Wiener's SB-827, SB-828, SB-50; lawsuits; and by lobbying commissions such as the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC).

Wiener's introduced bills usurp local community planning authorities. They promote demolition, evictions, displacement, congestion, and overcrowding. Wiener's bills *don't* provide funding for the infrastructure burden they bring into our communities, nor do they provide affordable housing or local community self-determination. The bills are statewide, one-size-fits-all solutions with no regard for geographic housing equity to job location. His legislation is supported by big business and special interests that will receive windfall profits at the expense of residential housing and the displacement of residents.

The long-term livability of California depends on moderately-paced growth, balancing residential and commercial development with the financial and environmental capacity of other infrastructure. It must provide opportunity for residents of all income levels and demographics. Businesses must pay fair wages and their fair share of infrastructure costs, including water, transportation, schools, and protection of the natural environment.

Wiener is resurrecting President Herbert Hoover's "trickle down" economic theory of giving tax breaks and money to the wealthy and big business in the misguided hope housing will eventually trickle down to individuals. Hoover's theory was unsuccessful and didn't work during the 1930's Great Depression. Hooverilles — essentially "tent cities" and makeshift homes next to cities — sprang up for people who had nothing. Residents showed their displeasure by naming the housing "Hooverilles" to mock the president.

Relying on trickle-down theory, Weinervilles are no improvement and no different. Residents must vigorously fight SB 50 in its current and any incarnations.

George Wooding, President, Coalition For San Francisco Neighborhoods. Feedback: wooding@westsideobserver.com

OPEN LATE



In loving memory of Byron. 2006 - 2019

By Julie Casson



Tax Changes That Could Impact You

Remember that scene in *Gone With the Wind* where Scarlett O'Hara says, "I can't think about that right now. If I do, I'll go crazy. I'll think about that tomorrow."

That may have been your reaction when the new tax bill passed in late 2017. Why think about all the changes and how they were going to impact your tax bill until you had to?

Well, now you have to. The new laws are kicking in for your 2018 taxes. So fluff up your petticoat, tie your bonnet, and pinch your cheeks while I take you on a quick tour of the most important changes.

The first thing you'll notice is the 1040 form itself. There is now just one form for everyone. Forms 1040-A and 1040-EZ have been eliminated to get rid of any confusion about which one to use. While not quite the postcard we were promised, the new 1040 is much shorter.

Unfortunately, everything that was removed from the form itself is now on six schedules. While there are people who will be able to file just the 1040, there are also many who will have to file one or more schedules.

Part of the impetus behind the shorter form is that tax filing will be greatly simplified when fewer people have to itemize. To make that happen, Congress nearly doubled the standard deduction. Married-filing-jointly taxpayers get a \$24,000 standard deduction, up from \$13,000, and individual filers go from \$6,500 to \$12,000.

Terrific. Except the personal exemption has been completely eliminated. The personal exemption was over \$4,000 in 2017. And you could subtract that amount for yourself and each of your dependents, making this loss painful for large families.

But wait! The Child Tax Credit has doubled to \$2,000 per dependent child under age 17. Also starting in 2018 is a new \$500 credit for dependents that don't meet the Child Tax Credit criteria, such as elderly relatives or children older than 17.

Now to the change with significant impact in California—the cap on the State and Local Tax (SALT) deduction. People who itemize used to get an unlimited deduction for their state individual income, sales and property taxes. In fact, the SALT deduction was one of the main reasons for itemizing.

Under the new law, the deduction is limited to \$10,000. Here in the Bay Area, that may not even cover the first property tax payment for some homeowners. And if you have multiple properties, sorry, you're still limited to that 10k. Same story if you're married. The SALT deduction is \$10,000 if you file jointly or \$5,000 each if you file individually. Which really amounts to a marriage penalty since two unmarried taxpayers get an aggregate of \$20,000 to write off.

At least the source of the most common marriage penalty has now been virtually eliminated. With the new tax rates, Congress essentially doubled the income thresholds for single filers (except for the top two brackets), so married couples don't face a higher tax bill unless they make over \$400,000.

The last big change is the qualified business income deduction. This was added to help small businesses that didn't benefit from the breaks given to large corporations under the new law. Owners of sole proprietorships, S corporations or partnerships may deduct up to 20% of the income their business earns. There are exceptions and limitations to this deduction (of course!) and the language isn't crystal clear about certain points. So if you think you may qualify for this fabulous deduction, you may want to consult with a tax professional.

With all of these changes, it's hard to know whether you've been helped or hurt by the new tax bill until you actually file. If you find yourself on the "hurt" side of the spectrum, it may be smart to talk to a financial professional about changes you can make to lower your tax burden for 2019. Because as Scarlett reminds us, tomorrow is another day.

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Real Travel By Sergio Nibbi

A New Baby

A very dear friend of mine called me the other day and wanted to know if I would be home for a while, he wanted to stop by and show me his new baby. Now, knowing his age and disposition I figured that this one would probably show up in Depends.

Fortunately, that was not the case and to my surprise, this one was in fact a new baby and absolutely gorgeous. "Wow, that's really nice, what's its name?" "Well, we don't have a name yet but we're considering Nikola, does that sound too Italian?" "Actually, we like the nickname, "T" but we'll know better when the license plates arrive." "Nikola? "T" like in Tesla I asked?"



Obviously, the next step was to sit inside and enjoy the smell of a new car. Beautifully crafted and silent as a church mouse. The power as we took off was indescribable. "So, what else can it do, I asked? And what happens when it runs out of juice?" In an instant a button on the gigantic screen was pushed and immediately the map showed all the charging stations within a 250-mile

radius. And the best part is that the charging is free! Truly amazing and the best part is that you can now say "Goodbye" to those nasty gas pumps.

"So where can we go in that distance?" I drew a 250-mile radius on an old fashioned map and I was amazed at how much I could revisit. I hadn't been to Camp Roberts since my days in the 91st Infantry Reserves, and what about San Luis Obispo, where we would spend our weekends away from the blistering heat. Santa Barbara was another spot I hadn't seen in many years and what about those beautiful rides along Highway 1 from Half Moon Bay with a stop along the way at Duarte's Tavern. We were there just a few months ago for an 80th birthday party and the views of the ocean were stunning. Going further south



we could barely make it to San Simeon on a single charge but once there we could revisit the magnificence of Julia Morgan's Hearst Castle.

Going north there is the Napa Valley region and with plenty of charge left over we could revisit Healdsburg with all its great restaurants. Tahoe might be a stretch but after all there are plenty of charging stations along the way. The beauty of Lake Tahoe in the spring and early summer is beyond description. The smell of those pine trees coupled with the amazing sunsets over the lake are truly one of nature's greatest gifts.



At that point my imagination went into overdrive as I imagined all those wonderful stops that appeared on that gigantic screen. "Navigate to Novato" and there it is, the road, the traffic conditions and of course all the charging stations along the way showing how many at each stop and how many are available, but what else does this beauty do? You can tune to radio stations all over the world, you can put it on auto-pilot and watch the car start driving

itself, speeding up, and slowing down as the conditions change, and finally I had to ask my friend, "So, show me something really cool." Well, apparently, with the latest software update they have a new gadget that absolutely blew me away. Press the Tesla icon, hit the photo of the Whoopi Cushion and pick "Fart on Demand" and so help me, all you do is hit the radio volume wheel and be prepared to have the biggest laugh that you've enjoyed in a long, long time. You can even set it for either of the rear seats and watch the look on your friends' faces when you make a left or right turn. Just make sure

that you have a box of tissue with you, I laughed so hard that tears were streaming down my face.

The Tesla automobile is truly a revolutionary piece of engineering, but how would Mr. Nikola Tesla react to this latest feature? Hopefully with a true sense of humor of course. After all, this is Silicon Valley and not Austria where he was born.

Sergio gets around—the world!



Doing the Opposite
George Costanz-ing at SFPD

by Lou Barberini, CPA

Circa June 1996: It was the second day for the 186th Academy Class of SFPD. As an icebreaker, our SFPD instructor asked each prospective officer to share with the class where they expected to be in the department 25-years in the future. I said that I wanted to be riding a bicycle — amazed I could actually get paid for something I would do for free. My classmate Drew (alias) followed with, "I want to be chief" — That literally sounds and reads arrogant. However, the delivery was followed by Drew's introduction of his trademark giggle, which caused the entire class to roar— more at his chuckle than at the wisecrack itself.

The humor never subsided. Throughout the academy, Eric, the Eddies, Drew, and I frequently bonded over a Tower Lodge beer on our way home, finalized with a final post-graduation toast at the Twin Peaks scenic overlook, as we contemplated the future effects of patrolling the streets below. The next morning we all went our separate ways, to different stations for daily evaluations in the field training program, followed by a year's rotation in a probation station before being assigned to a permanent station.

After a year at my permanent station, I transferred to Bayview— a vast district composed of middleclass neighborhoods, industry, Potrero Hill view homes, and housing developments. Bayview is one of the busiest stations with an organized chaos of citizen calls for service. We joked that time in the Bayview should be measured in dog years — because the amount of critical incidents in the Bayview compressed into a single year was the equivalent of seven years at a sleepy Westside district station.

At Bayview, I joined my academy classmates Eric and Drew in a three-man sector car, 3Charlie71 (3C71) — a "housing car" assigned to the Potrero Hill public housing development. Like the contrast of three small town Deer Hunter friends converging in a volatile Vietnam prisoner camp, there was surrealism to the reunion of three Academy friends from the theories and solitude of a classroom to the split-second commotion of the Bayview.

To Drew and I, the gravity of Bayview housing patrol was eye-opening. But I always wondered how comparatively insignificant our daily events were to someone like Eric, who joined SFPD via combat action as a marine in the Gulf War. Drew was a dual citizen, the result of his San Francisco mother marrying and following his father back to County Offaly, Ireland. In, as I pronounced it: "County Awfully," Drew grew up aspiring to return to San Francisco and to become a policeman. He was ... living his dream.

3C71 was not exactly loved by some

segments of the Potrero Hill housing developments. Our drive up the 900 block of Connecticut would be greeted daily by the choreograph of youngsters turning their heads to spit in unison. It wasn't us specifically, it was our blue uniforms.

In this unappreciated environment, Drew's self-deprecation, sarcasm, and trademark giggle kept the mood in our car light. I would repeatedly utter, "It was a bad day if we went more than six minutes without Drew making us laugh."

The "Thank you Challenge"

At the end of a watch, Lieutenant Mike Stasko called the 3C71 into his office and informed us our job description was expanding. Bayview residents had been complaining about the depreciation of driving skills on Third Street and, the higher-ups had determined that traffic enforcement was the most viable remedy.

Sacrilegious! What type of officer could actually enjoy ruining someone's day with a citation? (I was of the school that warnings were just as effective as issuing a citation.)

Stasko was not without his own sense of humor and had the ability to raise sarcasm to epic levels. Our rebuttal delivered with the sincerity of selling the substitute teacher that your regular teacher had actually canceled today's test, was forthcoming.

"There are felonies being committed by the minute, and you are using us for vehicle code violations?"

"The bad guys will go wild if they know we aren't around."

"The housing developments will go to sh*t."

"With us doing traffic, you will single-handedly be driving up the city's crime rate."

Stasko didn't budge, but the hyperbolic cycle was feeding on itself, and bled out

of the L.T.'s office and into the report writing room.

"You are just afraid to write tickets because you have a lousy personality and it will trigger citizen complaints."

"Personality? You couldn't sell pizza to starving eye-talians."

"Ha, I could sell ice to Eskimos. I am so smooth that when I write tickets the drivers thank me!"

Thus we inadvertently started the "thank you challenge." During every traffic stop, the approaching officer had to elicit a "thank you, officer" from the driver, while the competing officer stood on the opposite side of the vehicle as a verifying witness.

"Ma'am, you don't know how hard this is for me to write this ticket. The neighbors are complaining and I am only doing this to service this community. Please don't let

this ruin your day, nor do I want you to think you are a bad person for this. Think of this just as a reminder to be careful, like how you probably drive more cautiously after a close call with another car. This ticket is like that close call. Just a reminder, because we don't ever want you to get hurt."

"Thank you, Officer. I know you are just doing your job."

The "thank you's" came much easier than expected, which raised the stakes to how many consecutive "thank-you's" each of us could acquire. Our goal was still the bare minimum of citations, but the "thank you's" definitely removed the sting of being the mean cop.

Doing the Opposite

In The Opposite episode of the Seinfeld television series, George Costanza discussed with Jerry Seinfeld that every decision he had made in life turned out to be wrong. Thus, doing the opposite of what he normally would have done must be the right thing to do. George approaches a pretty woman at the coffee counter with the unlikely line: "Hi. My name is George. I'm unemployed and I live with my parents," and for the rest of the episode, George achieved great success.¹

With our shift ending at 10 pm, it's unlikely any of us actually saw "The

Opposite" episode of Seinfeld. But on a slow day in the 3C71 car, Drew lamented the neighborhood's unfriendliness towards us. Drew instigated, "Today, we are going to be the 'happy cops.' We are going to mess with everyone's heads and do the exact opposite of what they expect us to do. We are going to kill the hostility with kindness."

It started slow, engaging every person walking on the street, "Great weather today sir. How are you?" And as usual, one officer pushed the envelope a little further open. To a person running to catch a MUNI bus that had just pulled away, "Jump in. We'll give you a ride to catch up to that bus."

We were fighting to outdo each other. Flashing the who-has-the-biggest-personality contest struck a crescendo when we saw Busby — a.k.a., the Lieutenant — the owner of an impressive arrest resume struggling to transport groceries from his car to his housing unit.

"Here, let us help you."

"Uhhhh?"

"We want to help you."

"Ooookay... but you can't come into my house. You can only bring them to the front door. I'm not consenting to you entering or searching my home or my car."

"No problem. We're the friendly cops, we are just here to help the neighborhood."

Twenty years later, I remember the friendly cop experiment clearly, and yet have no recollection of the run we had to race to that returned us to reality.

This article is not about us being better cops than others. The reality is that the "thank you" challenge and friendly cop experiment were born from the merger of curiosity, boredom, and clowning around. For me personally, learning the limitless power boundaries of playing the good cop or doing-the-opposite of what is expected, de-escalated a lot of tough situations in the future. Those lessons only came to me and others because we always fed on that stupid giggle-cackle that was first heard in the SFPD Academy many years back.

—Éire go Brách, God Bless America!

Lou Barberini spent nine years undercover and four years as a bike beat officer with SFPD. He has an MBA in Taxation and currently provides fiduciary retirement planning and investment services for assets held at Charles Schwab & Co. He can be reached at lou.barberini@gmail.com.

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Education Carol Kocivar ©2019



Should Your School Start Later?

I can say with scientific accuracy that teenagers stay up late and struggle to get out of bed in the morning. While my research was limited to the two kids in my house over a six-year period, it is corroborated by every parent with teenagers I know. Argh. So why do some high schools start at 7:30 in the morning?

It turns out there is a lot of real scientific study on teenage sleep. When kids reach puberty, their bodies are wired differently. The folks at the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Center for Disease Control recommend that middle and high schools start at 8:30 a.m. or later to give students the sleep they need.

According to The American Academy of Sleep Medicine, “As children progress into their teenage years, they experience delayed patterns of melatonin secretion and a slower buildup of homeostatic sleep pressure during wakefulness. These changes reflect a delayed circadian rhythm that contributes to later sleep onset and later morning awakening, with teenagers typically struggling to fall asleep before 11 pm.”

That’s real science.

The AASM recommends that teenagers 13 to 18 should sleep 8 to 10 hours per 24 hours on a regular basis to promote optimal health...” They cite studies that show that adolescents who do not get enough sleep are more likely to:

- Be overweight.
- Not engage in daily physical activity.
- Suffer from symptoms of depression.
- Engage in unhealthy risk behaviors such as drinking, smoking tobacco, and using illicit drugs.
- Perform poorly in school.

Sleep Deprivation is an Epidemic

Stanford Medicine calls this sleep deprivation an epidemic. “It increases the likelihood teens will suffer myriad negative consequences, including an inability to

concentrate, poor grades, drowsy-driving incidents, anxiety, depression, thoughts of suicide and even suicide attempts.” Now that’s not good news.

If you snooze you ... win

Many school districts individually have moved to later start times, most recently Seattle, which found an improvement in grades and a reduction in tardiness and absences.

Will California Change Middle and High School Start Times?

One of the big debates in the legislature this year is whether California be the first state in the nation to follow the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Center for Disease Control and require later school start times for middle and high school.

Last year, an attempt to move middle and high school start times to no earlier than 8:30 failed. The legislature said “Yes” but the Governor said, “No.” The bill died.

The debate

The battle over later school start times pits groups—who normally work together— against each other.

Supporters A long list of medical experts and children’s advocates support a statewide rule that middle and high school start times of no earlier than 8:30. They rely on overwhelming research that finds later school start times support the health, safety and academic success of students—big time. Their contention is that this science applies to kids wherever they live, not sorted by school district. They argue the health risks of sleep deprivation are like

other statewide risks such as lead in the water or sugary drinks. You would not leave each local community to individually decide these risks

Opposition Those opposed—the California Teachers Association and the California School Boards Association—say these kinds of decisions should be made by local communities—not by a statewide law. For them, it is not a disagreement about the science but about local control. Their argument is that changing start times is complicated, involving bus schedules and teaching time and local community needs and athletics and a host of other issues, including money.

Governor Brown’s opposition to the proposed law was not a surprise. His signature education reform, the Local Control Funding Formula was all about—you guessed it— local control.

In returning the bill unsigned, the Governor said:

“This is a one-size-fits-all approach that is opposed by teachers and school boards. Several schools have already moved to later start times. Others prefer beginning

the school day earlier. These are the types of decisions best handled in the local community.”

Senator Anthony Portantino, author of the bill, characterized last year’s defeat as “Science lost to the status quo” and vowed to bring it back. Thanking a long list of supporters, including the California PTA, the Start School Later coalition, the California Federation of Teachers, California Police Chiefs Association, American Academy of Pediatrics and the California Medical Association, he said:

“They put the best interest of our children at the forefront of this public policy and public health crisis. They embraced 3 decades of health science and hard data that unequivocally substantiates the need for this.”

This year, the bill, SB 328, is back. A new governor and newly elected legislators will get a chance to decide the issue again.

What do you think?

Carol Kocivar is a children’s advocate and lives in the Westside. Feedback: kocivar@westsideobserver.com

Conway & Gamble (Cont. from p 12)

journey, for she too embarked rather unexpectedly into the realm of historical fiction writing. It was when she stumbled upon references to “The Black Swamp,” an area that was vast and untamed, and eventually became part of Ohio, from where Conway originates.

Gamble said, “I had no idea how fascinating and nuanced these issues were, and how they laid the groundwork for the issues that persist today. If we want to understand today’s world, look to the lectures, essays, letters, and sermons of the past.”

Conway was curious if, from Gamble’s research, there was anything in *The Eulogist* that might be relevant to today. “In

the time I was writing ‘*The Eulogist*,’ the ‘religious right’ was becoming more powerful in our political discourse; superstition around vaccination was on the rise; the #MeToo movement hadn’t even happened, nor had Black Lives Matter; and immigrants of all stripes - particularly brown people and Muslims - are viewed by some as the scourge of the country. How quickly people who have made traction in this country can begrudge the same opportunity to others,” Gamble said.

The Eulogist is now on sale at Bookshop West Portal, located on West Portal Ave. To learn more about the author Terry Gamble visit her web site at: terrygamble.com

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