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Neighborhood School Admissions Policy Determined

By Jed Lane

On March 10th, 2010 the Board of Education passed the long discussed “new” admissions policy, scrapping what had become a hated and often vilified system that was cobbled together after lawsuits to end exclusions based on racial quotas. For almost a decade, San Francisco’s kids have been assigned to schools based on a diversity index that tried to place kids in schools based on the dogmatic belief that an education in an economically diverse setting is the best thing for all children.

Ever since the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, schools have been trying to address society through social engineering while attempting the education of our kids. For over forty years, school boards and administrators have sought the perfect mix of kids in schools. Unfortunately, they haven’t addressed the underlying problem: every public school should be, at minimum, competent. Forty years ago, when SFUSD started to bus kids from racially segregated underperforming schools on the south east side of the City, until now, when the “new” system will give admissions preference to students in underperforming census tracts again along the south eastern side of the City, one has to ask why schools on the south east side of the City are still not performing.

A brief synopsis of how the assignments will happen soon: Every parent of an incoming kindergartner will be able to rank every school in the City by preference. Most schools will have service areas that are to be defined. If the school has enough seats for every applicant, all will be admitted. For any school that has more applicants than available seats the assignments will be done in the following order: the first admissions to



the school will be siblings of students already enrolled at the school; the next group will be students that live in low performing census tract areas - these areas are referred to as CTIP1 and are comprised of the lowest 20% of census tracts when measured by scores on standardized tests; the next group will be the students that live in the service area that attended a pre-K school in the area; next are the kids that live in the service area but didn’t attend a pre-K in the area; next will be students that live in the areas where the schools don’t have the capacity to accommodate all students; and last will be all other students.

So far, many in the community have latched onto the CTIP1 applicants having access to oversubscribed schools before the area’s residents. While it is clear that this is still an attempt to deal with the failing schools, the numbers show that very few parents from these schools avail themselves of placing their

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RUMINATIONS FROM A FORMER SUPERVISOR

Dismantling Voter Mandates

By Quentin Kopp

History shows the vagaries and moral weakness of some political institutions and public officials. Particularly in times of stress, civic affairs generate a cornucopia of distortions and thoughtless, even disrespectful, decisions.

I was thinking the other day of the disdain which City Hall often confers upon voter-approved initiatives. On June 6, 1978 San Francisco voters approved an ordinance which reformed a corrupt system of issuing taxicab permits in our city. Previously, the San Francisco Police Department processed all applications for a permit to operate a taxicab in the City and County. The Board of Supervisors and Mayor, under the San Francisco Municipal Code, set the number of such permits. That number changed from time to time, but only after a series of disputatious Board of Supervisors committee and Police Commission hearings in which taxicab companies argued for increasing the number of permits with some members of the public who complained of inadequate taxicab service, while cab drivers always opposed any such increase. The Municipal Code did not require a permit owner to actually operate a taxicab. Rather, the permits were obtained by doctors, lawyers, businessmen and women, nurses, accountants and homemakers. Moreover, the law enabled transfer or sale of a taxicab permit for tens of thousands of dollars more than the simple \$50 application fee to the Police Department. By 1977, taxicab permits sold as private property for as much as \$60,000.

The seeds of the June 6, 1978 initiative, Proposition K, on the Municipal ballot were nourished by the unexpected bankruptcy of the owner of the Yellow Cab Company, which held over 100 permits. For several years, after discovering that San Francisco law required no actual operation of a taxicab by a permit holder, and countenance of the million dollar business of selling a governmental permit as a private asset, I had tried to invoke enthusiasm with my colleagues on the Board of Supervisors to promulgate stiff and fair regulations of the nasty permit-trading business and its consequences. The Yellow Cab Company bankruptcy breathed life into my effort. Twice the Board of Supervisors passed an ordinance with provisions similar to Proposition K, only to suffer frustration with a mayoral veto which could not be overridden.

Thus, in early 1978, the impetus caused then supervisors Ron Pelosi, Al Nelder, Lee Dolson, Bob Gonzales and me to submit such an initiative to the Registrar of Voters as Proposition K. It declared that all taxicab permits are the property of the people of San Francisco and shall not be sold, assigned or transferred, and that the Chief of Police shall have the responsibility of establishing regulations to ensure prompt, courteous

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WATCHING SAUSAGES

By Will Durst

Otto Van Bismarck said, “Laws are like sausages, it is better not to see them being made.” Sausages? We would have loved to have seen some sausages. We would have killed for sausages. As any Wisconsin boy can tell you, sausages cooked indirectly over mesquite coals until crispy blistewred then slathered with Stadium Sauce nestled in butter- grilled buns under a layer of fried onions can taste pretty darn yummy.

What we got was cut- rate, irate hot dogs. The ugly spectacle of Congressional wieners pummeling each other over health care was as appetizing as mixing snail guts and lizard tripe and cephalopod eyeballs with sour cream and yellow food dye then serving it on a fungus covered bark chip. And no, I’m not talking about the spinach dip at The Olive Garden.

This isn’t a “pox on both their houses” deal either. Like psychic vultures sensing imminent putrefaction, Republicans amplified their pontificating protestations to a high-pitched squeal; piercing enough to annoy canines all across this great Northern Hemisphere of ours. In the throes of a pseudo religious ecstasy, one Texas Republican chummed the waters by calling a Michigan Democrat, “Baby Killer,” on the floor of the House, frenzying his posse of nitwit accomplices into hurling the N- word, the F- word, half a dozen bricks, a handful of death threats, several mouths full of red hot spittle, gum wrappers, a jewel encrusted black ceramic bird (the stuff that dreams are made of), two faxed nooses and possibly a bullet.

The conservative party line claimed their Neanderthals were simply playing catch up to the health care proponents’ lead mitten handling of the issue, and they suggested Democrats kill the bill to quell the rising tempers. That’s right. Fan the flames of stupidity then blame the other side for the scorching climate (different from global warming). If Republican gall were congealable, we could dam the Caribbean.

And it’s STILL not over. To say the GOP is not taking this defeat lying down is like saying freeze dried mustard clumps make for substandard Q- Tips. Within 10 minutes of the President signing the bill, a deluge of 14 state legislatures began to challenge the bill’s constitutionality. And you wonder why getting anything done in this country is like trying to shovel sand with a pitchfork.

Republicans vowed to go down swinging and they’re probably not talking about hiking the Appalachian Trail with each other’s wives. Let’s be frank: not a single member of the

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City the Big Winner As Sunshine Proves Its Value

Kimo Crossman and Allen Grossman are the kind of citizens we admire. These two advocates for open government have conducted their own war on backroom deals that has taken years out of their lives—so far at their own expense. They’ve been vilified by Ken Garcia in the *Examiner* and in articles in the *Chronicle* as well as the *SF Weekly* for “abusing the system” by requesting that the City turn over public information in the time required by law and in the form they requested. They were called “nuisance,” “vexing gadfly,” “serial abusers,” *ad nauseum*.



Watchdogs Extraordinaire—Kimo Crossman, I and Allen Grossman

This time Kimo Crossman’s bird-dogging led to a savings of \$3.5 million in transfer taxes from real estate interests of Morgan Stanley. This kind of information should be rewarded under the City’s 2006 Whistleblower Act, but Assessor Phil Ting has not been willing to part with the reward. This prompted Crossman to hire high-powered attorney Steve Gruel, known as a no-holds-barred courtroom brawler, to get Crossman what is coming to him. “This is a complete win-win situation. The City gains with a huge tax payment and Mr. Crossman’s hard work earns him an award,” said Attorney Gruel.

If, however, bureaucrats decide not to comply with the Sunshine laws, the only course a member of the public has is a potentially expensive legal battle. Since the passage of Prop G in 1999, no one has been willing to take that risk. That is, until Allen Grossman sued the Ethics Commission and its Executive Director, John St. Croix. The City’s Sunshine laws won a major victory in January as St. Croix settled out of court on charges that he suppressed public records without justification for his “summary dismissal of every violation by City officials, including the Mayor and the City Attorney, of open government laws referred to the Ethics Commission by the Sunshine Ordinance Task Force, a total of 14 such referrals over the past five years.” St. Croix’s failure to comply with the original records requests cost the City (and taxpayers) \$24,900 in fees to Grossman’s attorneys. Grossman also has access to the records. We hope he will share them.

The Task Force is dependent on the Ethics Commission to enforce the open government laws and can only make recommendations to the Director, an effort that has been severely crippled by St. Croix’s refusal to pursue a single violation or to make public the documents and records that would indicate his justification for the denial.

Crossman and Grossman have spared neither time nor expense in pursuit of Sunshine scofflaws, and have been unfairly maligned in the press. We believe the City benefits from increased public information, Westside readers want to know, and so do we.

Tasers - Controversy or Political Fumble?



On March 4th 2010 the Police Commission voted 4 to 3 to not allow Chief Gascón the opportunity to draft a policy on the deployment of Tasers. As incomprehensible as it sounds it’s true - they denied him the opportunity to DRAFT a policy.

Two of the Commissioners said they were denying this because they hadn’t heard from the public. That would be us folks. Let them and your elected officials hear from

you. The Chief should be allowed to draft a policy.

Should the police be equipped with Tasers? We can start that discussion now and carry it forward after the policy is drafted. Here is a synopsis of the controversy presented to the Commission.

Taser is a brand name of stun gun. It shoots a pair of wires about 20 feet. The wires have small barbs on the end and when they come in contact with a body they complete an electrical circuit delivering a pretty high voltage shock to the person, which stuns them. Many police forces use them across the US.

After the Chief’s first presentation to the Commission the subject was held over till the next meeting. At the second meeting the discussion was centered on a study done by two UCSF researchers. Their study is the largest study ever done on the question of whether or not deaths increase when Tasers are deployed. Study after study show that officer involved (gun) shootings decrease when the stun device is deployed, but this study looked at the evidence that there was a spike in sudden deaths after the initial deployment of the tool.

What the study found was that in the first year after deployment there was a spike of in-custody deaths. These deaths occurred when there was no evidence of excessive force, firearm use or other injuries. There’s a spike in heart attacks in the first year, that then drops back to the average in the following year. The study showed an increase that was a “six fold” increase over the norm before and after. A six-fold increase is a huge jump!

In this study the prior-to-deployment average went from a less than 1 in-custody death per year, per 100,000 arrests to a less than 6 / 100,000 in the first full year after deployment. Then the number dropped back down to about one in 100,000 arrests in subsequent years.

Why this spike occurs was not investigated. Recommendations from the researchers were given, such as the patrol car should be equipped with an AED (Automated External Defibrillator) which can be used to restart the heart and the person should not be shot in the chest area close to the heart. The later will diminish the number of hearts stopped and the AED can revive most of the rest.

After this presentation the Commission voted to not allow the Chief to draft a policy, even though the researchers pointed out ways to mitigate the spike. In fact at the opening of the presentation one of the researchers admitted that if he were to choose between being shot or stunned he’d rather be stunned.

On January 20th 2010 a five year study of officer involved shootings was prepared for the Chief. From 2005 through 2009 there were 15 officer involved shootings resulting in death or injury. Of the 15, eight died and seven survived. Of those, 4 are considered “suicide by cop”. Each of those deaths could likely have been prevented by stunning and subduing the person, but we won’t ever know.

We do know that every single one of the people shot by officers that died was on drugs and usually more than one. Most were found to be on alcohol and either meth, cocaine or opiates. According to the study, these are the people more likely to die in that first year from cardiac arrest. The choice is to either stun the person and if their heart

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Candidate Endorsement Time



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Soccer Field

This is the wrong project, wrong reasons, wrong place and time. Keep western GGPark serene, peaceful, and for day use only.

Dave Ferguson

Don’t Sign Muni Reform Petitions!

Don’t be misguided into backing Supervisor Sean Elsbernd’s proposed Muni Reform ballot initiative for November’s election. Elsbernd failed to convince his Board colleagues to place this initiative on the ballot and now needs signatures to qualify his initiative. Here’s why readers shouldn’t sign Elsbernd’s signature petitions.

Transit operators — Muni drivers — represented by TWU-250A already negotiate their salaries under collective bargaining, so Elsbernd’s claim that the ballot initiative will introduce something new is completely false. TWU’s current seven-year, 102-page contract with the City runs from 2004 through 2011; it contains an extensive section already permitting Muni to hire part-time employees, dispelling the nonsense that Elsbernd’s “reforms” will suddenly allow Muni to hire part-time employees.

Of the 2,350 transit operators on the City payroll as of December 15, 2009, 1,038 part-time drivers (44.2%) earned less than the \$58,073 base salary of full-time drivers. Almost 700 (nearly one-third) of the drivers earned less than \$50,000, and 487 (20.7%) earned less than \$40,000, in base wages as part-time drivers.

Worse, Muni drivers have not had pay raises in two to three years. Wooding’s assertion that granting a 5.4% raise to Muni drivers will cost an increase of \$8 million is wrong; City Controller payroll data for end-of-year 2009 shows a 5.4% raise would cost just \$6.3 million in increased base pay. Personal income dropped by 2.5% in California last year for the first time since 1938. Inflation eating away at driver’s incomes during the past three years, without any raises, is just pushing more middle-class residents into moving out of the City, probably costing the City millions in lost sales taxes from drivers who shop in other jurisdictions.

An assertion that drivers don’t have to work 40 hours in a week to earn overtime might be germane, if the police officers contract didn’t also have the same stipulation that working more than eight hours in one day may result in overtime. Also lamenting that Muni drivers have automatic annual salary guarantees (ignoring that driver’s have not had annual raises for several years), but Elsbernd “forgets” that the police earn almost-guaranteed semi-annual pay raises every six months.

While Elsbernd bemoans the \$6.3 million increase to bus driver pay in the face of the Mayor Gavin Newsom’s anticipated \$522 million deficit, he neglects to consider that raises for police employees — only police officers, lieutenant’s, sergeant’s, and inspector’s — climbed by \$4.8 million (2%) in January 2010, is scheduled to climb another \$9.9 million (a 4% bump) in July 2010, and will climb another \$5 million (another 2% raise) in January 2011. This 8% totals \$19.7 million, before including yet another “thank-you” bump in July 2011 of up to 5%, estimated at \$11.1 million, bringing their total 13% raises to \$30 million between January 2010 and July 2011, just for the 2,450 employees in these four police job classifications.

This doesn’t include another 15% across five raises these police classifications already received between July 2007 and July 2009 in a five-year contract granting 28% in total raises.

Base pay for these four police classifications ranges from \$102,648 for a Police Officer I, to \$139,840 for a Lieutenant III. Sixteen lieutenant’s earned over \$140,000 in base pay in 2009; one lieutenant earned \$149,963 in base pay and \$23,166 in overtime, which combined with “other pay” drove his total pay to \$177,845!

While Elsbernd laments the salary comparison across jurisdictions for transit operators, he ignores that the police contract performs salary comparisons across 11 jurisdictions to arrive at a formula for setting police salaries in San Francisco. This is nothing more than a pyramid scheme that causes salary increases in one jurisdiction to then boomerang, causing police salaries in other jurisdictions to spiral upwards.

Jim Lazarus’s claim that City “employees have to realize they cannot keep getting paid the same when less money is coming in.” Tell this to police officers, Mr. Lazarus. After

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By Mitch Bull

MUNI contracts, Police and Firefighter facilities and broken sidewalks held “center stage” at the March 23rd meeting of the West of Twin Peaks Central Council meeting.

Council President **George Wooding** opened the meeting and the meeting moved swiftly for the 25 or so attendees. Minutes were approved, and Treasurer **Carolyn Squeri** gave a detailed overview of changes in the tax regulations that now mandate all non-profit associations (such as homeowner / improvement associations) must now file a 990 tax form with the IRS. New 990 forms vary with the income generated by the organization. If you have questions, contact your local IRS office. Organizations have until May 15th to file.

No Police Report was given. Representatives from the Taraval station were absent. It turned out to be OK, as the extra time was needed for the guest speakers.

In committee reports **Matt Chamberlain** gave the welcomed news that the proposed changes to the Discretionary Review process have been postponed indefinitely by the Planning Commission. In the absence of **Avrum Shepard**, Wooding presented an overview of the proposed 19th Avenue project that shows a probable 7300 new homes at Parkmerced with up to 16000 additional people traveling in and out of the complex and SF State. As currently proposed the light rail would enter Parkmerced at two locations. Wooding estimated that it could add as much as 30-40 seconds of additional wait time at most traffic lights along the 19th Avenue corridor.

In the new business arena, discussion centered on a proposal from Balboa Terrace that a letter be sent from the WOT-PCC supporting the installation of a traffic light at 14th and West Portal Avenue to replace the current 4-way stop. Wooding asked for a formalized letter from the Balboa Association, stating that once received, he would speak with Supervisor Elsbernd to see what the city can do at the intersection.

Eliot Wagner (Dimitra's Spa) addressed the group about a meeting of the West Portal Merchants Association (on March 24th) to discuss both the concept of a sidewalk event in April, and the ongoing efforts to formulate and certify a CBD (Community Benefit District) for West Portal.

Wooding gave a short report on Laguna Honda, stating that the Doctor who oversaw the LHH Hospice section (25 beds) was being let go, and he feels that more changes are in store for the operation.

Walter Scott III addressed the gathering, stepping in for an ill Irwin Lum (President of the Transit Workers Local). Scott did not present a prepared speech, but fielded questions on how the MUNI rank and file operates on a daily basis, and discussed the shortage of manpower and equipment that results in routes being delayed or cancelled when there are not enough driver/operators available to fill all of the shifts. Scott also fielded and answered questions regarding union proposals for “give backs” to help with the

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MUNI: Operators Salaries v. MUNI Riders?

by George Wooding

It is time for City voter's to get on the bus and sign District 7 Supervisor Sean Elsbernd's Muni Reform initiative. The initiative will force Muni operators to negotiate their pay scale and work rules by using collective bargaining. Elsbernd's initiative is simply asking Muni's 2,000-member transportation workers union, TWU-250A, to negotiate salaries like almost every other City union.

Muni operators do earn their salaries. They are not overpaid. They have an incredibly hard job and they generally do it well, but the union must share the City's financial pain. Jim Lazarus, the vice-president of the Chamber of Commerce, states, “employees have to realize that they cannot keep getting paid the same when less money is coming in, without either cutting services to the public or laying off their fellow workers.” By failing to negotiate salary concessions, the union is demonstrating that the needs of the City, the SF Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), and Muni's riders are less important to them than their own personal salary and benefit needs.

Currently, driver salaries are determined by a non-negotiable Charter amendment which guarantees that the base wage of Muni operators must be no less than the average of the two highest-paid transit agencies in the country. Muni operators are currently making \$27.92 per hour and this rate will increase to approximately \$29.52, a 5.4% raise. Meanwhile, San Francisco has an anticipated \$522 million dollar budget deficit for 2010-2011, and 17,000 city employees were recently given pink slips. Mayor Newsom is attempting to impose a 37.5 hour work week, which is the equivalent of a 6.25 percent pay cut. A vast majority of rehired City workers will be taking pay reductions and not pay raises. Well over 1,000 employees will probably either be fired or forced into early retirement. Starting on July 1, 2010 Muni operators will receive at least an \$8 million increase in pay.

The TWU-250A is willing to sacrifice jobs for increased salaries and benefits. In a sad dog-eat-dog twist, a large majority of senior operators are willing to sacrifice the operators with less seniority. So far, 400 SFMTA employees have received pink slips, including approximately 100 pink slips sent to drivers.

Irwin Lum, the president of TWU-250, who is a very smart guy, saw the handwriting on the wall. In mid-February, Lum tried to negotiate \$15 million in Muni operator contract concessions, but his membership soundly rejected the cost-savings plan. Lum is still trying to negotiate union concessions, but it is too late — the public relations damage has been done. Smelling blood, the SFMTA and City politicians have tried to make TWU-250A the poster child for what is wrong with the SFMTA. When it comes to Muni, the financially broke SFMTA and local politicians have little to brag about and much to hide. The union makes a convenient scapegoat.

For over 40 years, Muni operator salaries were determined under a non-negotiable salary formula which kept transit operators among the highest paid in the country. The determined wage was used as a wage “ceiling” and operators could not make more than this salary average. In 2007, then City Supervisor Aaron Peskin desperately needed to pass Proposition A, The Clean Air and Better Muni Reform Act. To pass Proposition A, the City negotiated an idiotic deal with the union by making the determined-wage-average a “floor” instead of a ceiling. This meant that the union's wage negotiations would now use the determined-wage-average as a starting point for salary negotiations. Proposition A supporters felt that Muni operators would negotiate away “bad work rules” by receiving larger salaries. Trapped in an ironic catch-22, the SFMTA has been too under-funded to offer higher salaries to TWU-250A operators and has

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Walter Scott III, TWU Local 250-A



Ed Reiskin, Director of DPW

The Peril to Our Parkland

Many San Franciscans are shocked when they learn the details of the proposed “renovation” of the Beach Chalet Soccer Fields in Golden Gate Park. How did San Francisco come to the point where converting over 13 acres of parkland into an artificial, brightly lighted, single-purpose sports complex is acceptable to City officials and some of its citizens? Our Soccer community has legitimate needs, but why has there been no serious public exploration of alternatives which would be less destructive to our Park?

Our city parks, once bucolic refuges open to all citizens, are under the increasing threat of being partitioned into small fiefdoms. To protect our open parkland, we need to understand the forces that are undermining these wonderful treasures.

1. San Francisco lacks a clear and sustained public vision for its parkland Most San Franciscans think of Golden Gate Park with a mixture of warmth and pride. Our experience may be limited to a few favorite activities such as a family picnic, an afternoon baseball game, bird watching, a summer bluegrass concert, or a quiet morning walk. But a park's overall impact is greater than the sum of the individual parts. The verdant, bucolic parkland, with its vistas across open meadows and peaceful secluded pathways, forms a framework which enriches our individual experiences. While we value urban living, we also need the balance that only nature can provide. Golden Gate Park is our countryside, our contact with the natural world.

There is a public statement of this vision for our premier city park. It's called the Golden Gate Park Master Plan, and it outlines a detailed plan for the protection of the Park. But, like any other public policy, it is only effective if the public and officials actively support it.

2. Specific plans from special interest groups always have a tactical advantage. Every year, groups put forward new proposals for developments in our parks. They have a need, and they see a clear solution. The groups are well organized and bring intense pressure on public officials to approve such proposals.

But there are far more projects than can fit into our open space. A few years ago, someone drew up a plan of what New York's Central Park would look like if all projects proposed for the Park had been implemented. The result resembled the densely-packed financial district of lower Manhattan. In the early 1900's it was proposed that Golden Gate Park be torn up for the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition. Fortunately, that proposal died after a public outcry. If we pack too many activities and attractions into our parks, we will turn them into amusement parks—attractive to tourists but not the refuge that we seek.

“By formally joining “Recreation” and “Parks,” we force the Department to choose between often-conflicting priorities. At times they have done an admirable job—witness the Golden Gate Park Master Plan. At other times, they must weigh protecting our parkland against addressing the desires of special interest groups. Under this pressure, long-term protection of our parklands often becomes a casualty.”

3. It is difficult to maintain citizen interest in protecting open space. While San Franciscans love their parks, it is difficult to arouse public passion for our parkland on a continual basis.

San Francisco has been blessed with park administrators such as William Hammond Hall and John McLaren who possessed a vision of Golden Gate Park as a natural haven for our citizenry. In other periods, the Park was administered by short-sighted officials and much damage ensued. Without John McLaren, the next best solution is to turn to an institution to protect our parkland. This institution should be the Department of Recreation and Park.

4. ‘Recreation’ and ‘parks’ are not the same. In 1949 the voters combined Recreation and Parks into one department. While well-intentioned, this merger ignored a major conflict of interest. a “Parks” department should protect our parklands as open space systems that celebrate nature. A “Recreation” department should embrace all of the activities we envision in our parks. These would include individual activities such as strolling, picnics, wildlife observation, jogging, and contemplation. In practice, “Recreation” today means organized activities with specialized staff and capital investments such as recreation centers, playing fields, and swimming pools. While parks often contain a number of “Recreation” facilities, a large collection of “Recreation” facilities does not necessarily constitute a “Park.”

By formally joining “Recreation” and “Parks,” we force the Department to choose between often-conflicting priorities. At times they have done an admirable job—witness the Golden Gate Park Master Plan. At other times, they must weigh protecting our parkland against addressing the desires of special interest groups. Under this pressure, long-term protection of our parklands often becomes a casualty.

The needs of our specialized recreational communities and the needs of our general citizenry for healthy parkland are both legitimate. They deserve separate and independent public advocates.

5. A donated project is not necessarily a “free” project, and Park land is not “free” land.

When a donor offers to fund a project, the decision seems easy – take the money, and we get a free project. But is it free? In the case of the soccer complex, the City taxpayers will pay for a good chunk of the \$9 million project. Taxpayers will be on the hook to replace the artificial turf fields every 8 to 10 years. And 13 to 16 acres of parkland, which have been used by a variety of people for picnics, informal games, concerts and even kite-flying, will be lost forever. The soccer community will receive a new playing surface (don't forget that there are fields there now that could be maintained as natural grass, a surface preferred by professional players), but the space will be lost permanently to all other citizens. Golden Gate Park encompasses 1000 acres, and an illusion of unlimited space persists. But much of the Park acreage is already devoted to roads and specialized facilities.

What is the value of the land that we, the taxpayers, are contributing? Using a low estimate of \$125 a square foot, the estimated value of 16 acres would be \$87 million! Even this may be too low. The large contiguous parcel would be difficult to duplicate anywhere in the city – and is therefore worth a great deal more. Any time we carve off another piece of our public parks for a single purpose use, the taxpayers are making a very valuable gift to a small user community. Park land is NOT free!

Coming next month:

6. Bureaucracy Abhors Public Discourse
7. Investment Analysis is for Sissies
8. Capital Projects are Sexy (Operational Budgets are boorriinnngg)
9. Scorched Earth for Undesirables!

Gregory P. Miller, 36 year SF resident, retired senior financial analyst, US Navy veteran.



Coach Maclean admonishes his charges to keep their heads up, eyes front—watching for the smallest detail that could cost the team a valuable second in a competition.



The “Bridge” is scheduled for replacement “next year” according to Rec and Park.



At 77, Mary Allen keeps fit doing her favorite thing, boating.



Tony Hall talks about the Boathouse with Coach Alex Simon of St. Ignatious Crew



Now comes the tricky part—as the boat is rotated into the water—this requires careful coordination and teamwork or the whole team could end up in the drink .



The men’s team from Pacific Rowing wait for their launch turn on the new \$60,000 aluminum and plastic pier provided by a loan from St. Ingatious High School. Then it’s back up the “bridge” to stow the boats away. 250 boaters make this trip twice daily.

The Duel at the BOATHOUSE at Lake Merced!

By Former Supervisor Tony Hall



Today the Boathouse crumbles above the active and crucial operations that students depend on to obtain scholarships to the best colleges and universities. It also provides essential recreation and exercise for adults and seniors.

In the 1850's Lake Merced was a popular dueling ground because of its remoteness from the rest of the City. Indeed it was the site of one of the best known duels in the Old West. The duel between U.S. Senator David Broderick and Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court David Terry capped a bitter personal feud between the two powerful politicians and ended in the Senator's death. Today, another feud is ongoing, only this time it's between the City's ruling intelligentsia and the citizens they are supposed to represent.

When I first ran for office in 2000, I made a campaign promise that I would restore the water levels at Lake Merced in order to set the stage for what could eventually lead to one of the finest urban recreational areas of any City in the country. Foremost in my mind was that one day the Lake Merced recreational area would again play host to urban dwellers with the wonderful advantages that nature could provide in the form of fishing, boating, hiking, bicycling, skeet shooting, picnicking, camping, and wild-life viewing. Up to this time, evolving conditions of areas around the lake had taken their toll on this once popular social hub and urban sanctuary. Historical water levels of the lake depended upon recharging of the underground Westside Aquifer by rainwater



Coach Bob Maclean of Pacific Rowing Club explains the precarious position of his community-based operation. While renovations are of paramount importance, keeping the rowing clubs operative while they occur is vital.

that was now being diverted into the ocean because of pavement-happy development. Extensive pumping of the Aquifer by golf courses, cemeteries and municipalities to satisfy irrigation and drinking water needs in the post war years lowered the water level to 14 feet, thereby threatening sea-water intrusion and the destruction of this historical source of the City's back-up and emergency fresh water supply. We were able to raise the water level to 27 feet by getting the above mentioned users to utilize secondary and tertiary sources of water for their irrigation needs, and re-channel storm water run off and excess Hetch-Hetchy water back into the lake. The negotiations to accomplish this were prolonged, complicated, and tedious. With the help of CalTrout, the Lake Merced Task Force, and the Friends of Lake Merced, we were persistent and successful and today the future for this colorful lake on the edge of San Francisco is looking much brighter.

There is a piece of this marvelous puzzle still missing and that is what the ongoing "Duel" of today is all about. This duel is over the future of the Lake Merced Boathouse. It's a classic battle between the incompetent, indifferent and apathetic bureaucracy versus the patient, believing and optimistic residents of the community.

The Boathouse was built and paid for about 55 years ago when the community approved a special bond issue for the purpose of supporting recreational and community activities at the lake. For years it served as an actual boathouse offering anglers fishing supplies and renting rowboats and storing boats for rowers. The building was spruced up by the people who leased it and eventually it also provided restaurant and bar service at this very unique location. In 2003 the lease was not renewed by the Recreation and Park Department because "the operators were not able to maintain the business according to the Department's liking" according to a spokesperson for Rec and Park. Bear in mind that this was the very same excuse that Rec and Park used to justify the closing of the much revered and historical Golden Gate Park stables! Today, eight years later, the Boathouse stands empty and deserted at the entrance to the world class Harding Park, which was the flagship of my redevelopment efforts at Lake Merced, and the stables no longer exist in Golden Gate Park. The abandoned boathouse is a disgrace to the Lake Merced area and a lost opportunity for the community.

In 2003, I was assured that the money was set aside for the rehabilitations and that both facilities would be in operation within a year. Unfortunately I left the Board in 2004 after being coaxed to work on a much bigger and potentially profitable development for the City, that being Treasure Island. Ironically that also stands undeveloped and in ruin today.

While the City is supposedly "studying" these issues, and I suspect that they will continue to keep on studying until just the right development (aka politically connected) partner comes along, the community will continue to lose. In the case of the Boathouse, I know for a fact that there were bona fide restaurant operators available in 2003 that would have made the necessary repairs at their expense so that the facility could serve as both a community center and a full service restaurant in exchange for a standard lease from the City. If the City was not going to spend the money to rehabilitate the facility to its original purpose of a community center, then why let it sit empty and dilapidate for the next 7 to 8 years? It's ironic that the Recreation and Park Department was able to find \$2 million to repair a rarely used pier nestled in the tules of the Lake, only 20% of which was funded by state grants. Whether the boathouse should be rehabilitated by private funds or returned to its original purpose is a matter to be decided by community priorities, but the sin here is doing nothing for almost 9 years! Apparently the current District 7 supervisor hasn't got the stomach for such mundane and insignificant projects and the part-time aide that he has assigned to represent him regarding the Boathouse isn't from the City and wouldn't know the difference between a boathouse a horse-drawn caravan.

Cont. p. 6

Plain Talk – Straight Talk

The Little Guy Gets It Again

By Joe O'Donoghue



After a 34 year Rip Van Winkle slumber, it was good to see the Building Trade Unions demonstrate at City Hall a couple of weeks ago for advancement of union developer interests – interests which benefit from proposed deferred permit fees and a reduction in the inclusionary housing requirements, among other singularities. Riding the momentum of major successes at the federal level and striking while the poker is still hot, these big developer interests, such as Lenar, decided to demand local level benefits that would compliment those recent monetary windfalls gained at the federal level – windfalls estimated at \$2.5 Billion. By pushing through amendments to the US tax code, big developers are now allowed to recoup, through amended returns, taxes paid during their profitable years -- going back 5 years-- by offsetting losses. And these stimulus refunds, complements of the Obama administration and Speaker Nancy Pelosi, ensures better structured balance sheets for these developer interests, enabling them to acquire easier financing.

Meantime, for the small business owner or small developer, no such special treatments exist as they are still cut off from any credit lines or loans despite excellent credit scores. All the little guy receives is the usual political platitudes which amount to nothing.

Furthermore, when it comes to the small developers, the proposals, which not surprisingly are promoted by Mayor Gavin Newsom, are much akin to the Chamber of Commerce workforce housing proposals of several years ago...a Trojan Horse. For the small builder, deferred fees merely postpone the inevitability of payment and, as such, the amounts are calculated by the lending institutions into the debt equity ratios of projects. It's a pity the "Gav", who is carrying the water pail of this legislation for the big developers, did not propose a reduction in the outrageous, inflated planning, building, fire and public utility permit fees — fees that are proving to be project killers for the little guy. And as to the proposed reductions in inclusionary housing requirements, what's ignored is that this is San Francisco, so don't expect the buyers of condos from small builders to go quietly into the night and agree to subsidize builder obligations. Expect much negotiation at escrow time, expect credit demand give-backs, expect demands for price reductions. Such reductions for the small builder can be a deal-breaker, and result in financial ruin. However, for Lenar and other big developers, due to their density numbers, these reductions do not have the same impact.

"Cudos, however, to the unions for a job well done and for advancing the interests of big developers. Too bad they didn't go further with the aforementioned reductions for the small builder that would have really made a difference."

In my definition, such "stimulus" is a political euphemism for empty promises as it is applied to the small business owner or small developer. To confirm, ask around.

This is not to say that these proposals are bad, for they are not. What's wrong and improper is that they result in inequitable treatment....one standard for the big developer and another for the small builder. In summation, what the small builder and developer need are reduced fees and permanently reduced inclusionary fees, including reduced inclusionary housing requirements.

Cudos, however, to the unions for a job well done and for advancing the interests of big developers. Too bad they didn't go further with the aforementioned reductions for the small builder that would have really made a difference.

As accolades go to the Building Trades for a demonstration well done, condemnation befalls my good friend John Hanley of the Fire Fighters Union for his boycott of the recent American Ireland Fund Dinner honoring Fire Chief Joanne Hayes-White, due to some labor-management differences, differences which are an ongoing part of San Francisco's labor-management relations. Worse, John cajoled the police union to also do the same. And, considering the mission of this dinner, which has raised over the last 35 years hundreds of millions of dollars for reconciliation and peace between Catholic and Protestant groups in the North of Ireland, this boycott was regrettable. Despite John's immature actions, the event at the St. Francis Hotel was a sell-out and considered by many to be the best event of the Ireland American Fund ever. And, why not, for Joanne is an unusual person -- modest in her accomplishments, she brought peace and harmony to a department that prior to her stewardship was rife with acrimony, racism and nepotism. Everyone makes mistakes; we hope that John, as a gentleman, with good sensibilities, has apologized to Joanne for this one.

And, talking about events, what's happening in San Francisco among the Irish and their outreach is the talk of the town. Ever since Willie Brown was declared the Grand Marshall of St. Patrick's Day several years ago, things have not been the same. This year's Grand Marshall was John Burton – a name which caused major tremors several years ago in Irish and Irish American conservative families. While Willie Brown's nomination, as the first non-Catholic, African-American, was a first for the Irish Societies and somewhat of a culture shock, John Burton's nomination went very smoothly. Meantime, over at the Hibernian Newman Club St. Patrick's Day luncheon, an Italian speaker addressed over 650 Irish Americans for the second time in a row. The speaker this year, Carmen Policy, of 100% Italian descent, much like Joe Russoniello, last year's speaker, entertained the Irish clans with Irish jokes and stories and brought to the event laughter, warmth and joy. The question being asked is why an Italian speaker for the second consecutive year for a St. Patrick's Day luncheon? And, why this new outreach to people of power like Willie Brown and John Burton? Rumor has it that Anne-Marie Conroy and Mary Cassidy have a more nefarious plan in mind.....a plan to get political support for an Irish Pope -- a Pope who will then reside in either Dublin or Limerick. And, they have in mind a few well-known local priests...Father Mike Healy, Father Brendan McBride and Father Gerry O'Rourke.

Joe O'Donoghue is a longtime political combatant, former President of the Residential Builders Association (RBA) and acting President of the newly formed Condominium Owners, Builders, Remodelers Assn. (COBRA) Feedback: joeo@westsideobserver.com

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ON THE PLUS SIDE

Getting Ready

By Hank Basayne

How can I die when my New Yorker subscription still has almost a year to run? And—in a reckless challenge to the fates—I’m sure to survive for at least another 24 months because my driver’s license doesn’t expire for another two years. (I can’t expire before it does, can I?) You’ll fully appreciate the arrogance of this point of view if you know that I’m oozing into my low eighties.



Optimism? Faith? Or some kind of superstitious bargain with the Cosmos? The logic is about the same as that employed by Thurber’s cartoon matron, demanding of the bank teller: “How can I be out of money when I still have all these checks left?”

I’d never cross a street or mail a letter if I lived in the constant expectation of evil. If I chose to escape all risk, I’d sleep on the floor to avoid falling out of bed. I’d put on gloves before shaking hands with anyone. To evade all perils, I’d never go outdoors or write down anything—especially on Facebook.

The Universe, it seems, is basically indifferent to my plans. I find Fate somewhat unreliable. Things don’t always go according to my design—in fact, they rarely do. That annoying reality might be a cause for despair and paralysis, but I prefer to view it as adding the excitement

of uncertainty to the ordinary business of living: surprise can delight; the unexpected can present a challenge.

While I continue to plan and prepare, I’m conscious that the sudden and abrupt stumble may very well lie just ahead. We all found that out when we were learning to walk. We simultaneously learned that we needed to pick ourselves up and try again.

“I am haunted by a vision in which medical science cures everything and makes everyone immortal—and I am the last person to die before scientists get it right,” I read a while back in Salon. Me too.

“...the sudden and abrupt stumble may very well lie just ahead. We all found that out when we were learning to walk. We simultaneously learned that we needed to pick ourselves up and try again.”

Well, despite our best efforts, and the best efforts of science, of course we will die. We don’t know when, where or how, but there is no “if”.

We are all aging all the time and the average age in the Western world is creeping upward. More and more of us find ourselves classified as middle-aged or elderly. We can’t do anything about it. And—mostly—we’re not happy about it.

Each new decade is a first time for each of us, but aging is not a new issue. In 44 B. C., Cicero speculated about why humans are disheartened by the prospect of growing old. He came up with four reasons: First, it withdraws us from many activities that formerly we were able to pursue. Second, our bodies grow weaker. Third, it deprives us

of many familiar physical pleasures. And fourth, it moves us closer to death. Not one to merely view with alarm, he also considered how we might diminish our fears and the depredations of our inevitable decline.

Much of his remedy is that boring old stuff your Mom nagged you about, and every stress-reduction and self-help guru repeats endlessly. Old Marcus advised that to make the Ultimate easier, we need to prepare by keeping ourselves agile, by living moderately, by eating sensibly. We can’t start too early to get ready for “later” by getting and staying in shape,

Another part of his prescription is also familiar: grow, nourish and maintain your Social Support system. (That’s not a phrase Cicero would have used.) Develop friendships, make yourself part of a community, protect and nurture the relationships with people who are important to you.

He also advised that—early on—we cultivate our taste for the mental, intellectual and artistic pleasures, so that life still will have savor when other pleasures ebb.

Unfortunately, Cicero did not get to enjoy the fruits of his own advice about finding happiness in the advancing years: he was executed for political reasons at the age of 63.

In a further display of my arrogance, let me suggest adding another ingredient to his recipe. Call it lively interest, excitement, verve, ardor, zeal, ecstasy—in short, enthusiasm seems to me a quality well worth encouraging as antidote to the depression of old age. As past enjoyments recede, it serves us well to have access to those pursuits which continue to offer us a kick, a thrill, delight.

I’m enthusiastic about this young Century, the love I feel for my family, my friends, my cat, and the things I still want to accomplish.

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MUNI (Cont. from p. 1)

not been able to negotiate away any of the union work rules. In 2008, 82% of TWU-250A’s rank-and-file members approved a contract extension through 2011 that included no work rule changes.

TWU-250A’s inefficient and expensive work rules are a large part of Muni’s budget problems. Muni’s operators are not required to call in sick/out every day that they will be absent. This makes it impossible for Muni to know if its daily scheduling will work. Drivers don’t have to work 40 hours a week to earn overtime pay. If a driver works over eight hours in a day, any additional working hours are considered to be overtime. Muni cannot hire part-time workers because they don’t have enough full time workers. This creates a situation where operators will work at peak times in the mornings and evenings with little to do through the middle of the day. The sacred six rule: in each of Muni’s six division there are six senior operators who only drive only one run per week (2 hours) and spend the rest of the work week doing union organizing.

Elsbernd’s Muni Reform initiative will give the union a healthy dose of reality by: 1) Resuming a “collective bargaining” relationship with TWU-250A; 2) Wiping-out automatic annual salary guarantees; 3) Insuring that Muni operator health benefits will be equivalent to other unions and a majority of City employees for at least the first contract year; and 4) Eliminating all existing Muni work rules and having them renegotiated.

The SFMTA is broke and is operating in a state of fiscal emergency. The agency cut 10% of Muni’s operating service last year and is planning to make another “emergency” 5-10% service cut on May 1. Parking ticket rates and garage rates will be increased. Residential parking fees will also be increased from \$76.00 to \$96.00 annually. The SFMTA will soon be trying to extend the hours of San Francisco’s parking meters throughout the City. The declared fiscal emergency will allow Muni to increase

customer fares and fees without undergoing the usual State environmental reviews. The SFMTA board needs to close a \$12.1 million deficit for the remainder of the fiscal year and faces a \$103.7 million projected deficit over the next two years. Driver wages and benefits account for about 25% of the transportation agency’s \$768 million annual operating budget.

Think about this: For a second time in the last twelve months, the SFMTA — in a “transportation first” City — is considering reducing services and increasing costs. Riders who are paying higher prices for less service and have other options will stop using Muni. People don’t want to get on Muni, they want to get off. Twenty percent of the SFMTA’s revenue comes from riders’ fares; approximately 34% comes from revenue generated by cars. The rest of Muni’s funds come from a State fuel tax and San Francisco’s General Fund. The SFMTA will receive \$36 million from the State this year in transit funding and according to SFMTA Director, Nathaniel Ford, Muni service may only be cut by 5% rather than the planned 10%. Governor Schwarzenegger has repeatedly borrowed or stolen from gas tax funds dedicated to transit. The SFMTA has lost about \$179 million in State transit funding over the last three years. There’s a hole in this bucket that can’t be fixed.

Please support and sign Supervisor Sean Elsbernd’s Muni Reform initiative. The initiative will provide SFMTA’s management greater flexibility in making difficult budget choices by allowing the transit agency to prioritize services for riders over salaries for drivers. If you are interested in signing the petition, learning more about Supervisor Elsbernd’s Muni reform proposals, or volunteering to help collect signatures, please send an email to sean_elsbernd@yahoo.com.

George Wooding, President, West of Twin Peaks Central Council

Tony Hall (Cont. from p. 5)

Thankfully there are still some San Franciscans around who know how to get things done that benefit the residents and especially the hundreds of young boys and girls that use the docks at the boathouse to launch their shells for their early morning workouts and competitions. Under the expert leadership of Tom O’Connell, Head Crew Coach of world championship rowing teams from St. Ignatius High School, and Joe Meets of the Pacific Rowing Club, the docks at the boathouse have been replaced at the cost of some \$60,000 being raised from private donations on a loan fronted by St. Ignatius High School. Young San Franciscans from the Dolphin Boat Club, the South End Rowing Club, and the San Francisco Rowing Club as well as scores of independents and seniors also use the launching docks, estimated at about 250 times every day.

I don’t criticize without offering a solution. In this case there is no easy fix unless we insist that our elected representatives address the tasks at hand. If they lack the positive and effective leadership necessary to make things happen, then the ball is in our court.

If interested my Blog is tonyhallsf.wordpress.com or twitter.com/TonyHallSF or feedback: hall@westsideobserver.com.

Schools (Cont. from p. 1)

kids in higher performing schools.

Forty years later we still have underperforming schools that are not educating students. Having put two daughters through school here in the City, and having worked with current members of the Board of Education both as a Realtor and as a campaign worker, I have come to believe that the mission of our schools should be simply to prepare kids at each level for the next level. I also recognize that a successful school is like a three-legged stool. The three necessary supports are a motivated principal, an engaged contingent of teachers and an active, supportive group of parents. When all three of these legs are in place and balanced there is effective education.

Without going into funding and political issues at SFUSD and the Board the new admission policy can be seen as an improvement over the old system. Is it the best or final answer? Probably not. The final answer lies with parents that have the desire for a good education for their kids, and the time, energy and resources to demand that authorities deliver on public education for all of our children.

A perfect example is Miraloma School. About ten years ago it was not a desirable school. A group, in fact a small group, of parents started working and advocating

WOTPCC (Cont. from p. 3)

city budget. He also discussed the current MUNI deficit, mostly caused by severe cutbacks over the last 3+ years in the money the MUNI system receives from Sacramento.

Ed Reiskin, the Director of the SF Department of Public Works (DPW), followed Scott with a presentation on the upcoming capital spending bond issue (\$412M) that will focus on repairing and strengthening the almost 100 year old (AWSS) Auxiliary Water Supply System that is used by the first responders in the event of an earthquake. The bond would build many more cisterns for water storage, replace and strengthen the piping of the supply, and fix and repair some of the worst conditions seen at some of the stations.

A large portion of the bond money will be used to construct a new Police HQ building/ Fire Department in the Mission Bay area to service the south side of San Francisco. Reports show that the current building housing the Hall of Justice, 850 Bryant St., is seismically unsafe and could be severely damaged in a sizable earthquake. As the Central Police Command and Southern Station are also in the building, it is recommended that the Police groups in the building be housed in a new structure to be built at Mission Bay. (Down the road, maybe even a new jail.)

Reiskin then fielded questions about the sidewalk repair notices that have caused homeowners to spend in excess of \$8,000 dollars to fix breaks and uneven portions of their sidewalks, even as the City of San Francisco admits that its curbing repair fund is not funded enough for them to do the work on its curb repairs. He spoke about the need to comply with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) and the potential litigation issues that can arise if someone is injured or deemed to be denied access due to the inaccessibility to wheelchairs, etc.

Dave Bisho asked for an inspector to revisit the sites to see if anything could be done to address the tagged areas that could be “in dispute.” Others spoke about not receiving returned phone calls when calling the DPW number on their repair notices. Both Reiskin and Richard Quan answered questions and agreed to have an inspector revisit some of the neighborhood sites.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45. Next meeting: Monday, April 26th at 7:30 PM at the Forest Hill Clubhouse.

for the school and their kids. Those kids are all graduated now but the school is still very sought after, so sought after that many neighborhood kids can’t get in. With the new system there vis hope that more can, but the lesson of the improvement still stands.

Just as any neighborhood can improve when there are people working to build a cohesive community, any school can improve also. The answer wasn’t in busing and it probably won’t be in just allowing kids from poor performing areas to go to the better performing schools. The answer is in improving the underperforming schools so that those schools become attractive to parents that demand success. It doesn’t matter if the area is monocultured or diverse. What matters are the expectations of the parents and the kids.

Jed Lane is a civically engaged Realtor, Westside native and current resident of Miraloma Park. He can be reached at jed@westsideobserver.com

SECOND THOUGHTS / By Jack Kaye

Addressing Our Regrets

By Jack Kaye

I recently spoke with an old friend who shared some of his latest regrets, making several assumptions about his past behavior that led him to believe that he had erred in very important ways. His thoughts about missed opportunities and poor decisions were haunting him. I tried to dispel the feelings and the thoughts behind them.



It made me think more about regret which is so linked to self-doubt. As we spoke, I remembered some of my past possible regrets that I never really indulged.

I probably should have not left military school before graduating, not that I was given any choice. My father was tired of paying all that money since I was 12. I ended up graduating a year early at a coed boarding school in the Arizona desert where I had the time of my life. Instead of going on to Harvard after graduating from military school, as was planned, I went on to a state university near the high school from which I graduated. Perhaps I should have left the desert.

Should I regret what I did?

“...part of it is taking responsibility for our actions and making amends for past mistakes, if possible. Regret should make us take a second look at the processes we use to make decisions. But they should not make us doubt ourselves.”

Years later, after a long on and off relationship, I decided not to marry the woman who was then the love of my life. She lived in a different world. It would never have worked. She got married, had two sons, became an alcoholic and committed suicide when she was in her 40's. Perhaps, if I had married her, it would have worked out somehow and she would still be with us.

Should I regret what I didn't do?

So what's the point of regret? I think that part of it is taking responsibility for our actions and making amends for past mistakes, if possible. Regret should make us take a second look at the processes we use to make decisions. But they should not make us doubt ourselves.

Regret can motivate us to be more careful or thoughtful in the future and in that sense regret can be helpful. But I have come to believe that carrying regret past its usefulness can be very destructive. If we are thinking about the past and feeling bad about it and ourselves, then we are not able to give our full attention to the present. Our inattention will lead us to do more things that we regret which will further erode our self confidence into self doubt making us less likely to succeed in the future.

I have come up with a few remedies for this malady.

First, we can realize that we are doing the best that we can at every moment. This is not to say that we could not do better in the future or that we already haven't in the past. It is just that we bring everything with us at each moment including past experiences and future expectations. We bring attitudes, knowledge, talents, understanding, biases and blind spots to every new situation.

So even if a past action or decision appears to have been totally wrong based on what we know now, that is not how it appeared at the time to the person we were at that moment.

And at the same time we can remember that everything happens for a reason and that sometimes it is hard to know what was really lucky and what was unfortunate. I have come to believe that everything is evolving and so every situation leads us to a deeper understanding of ourselves and the world around us.

If I had stayed at military school, I would never have had the first few great romances that I had in the desert. I would never have experienced the beauty of Tucson. If I had gone to Harvard, I would not have had the life that I currently enjoy. If I had married that great love, I would not have had the two daughters that my wife and I have shared as well as my simple lifestyle.

If on the other hand I had done something terrible, I should have regret. I should admit my fault, apologize where appropriate and do what I can to make amends. If it was bad enough, it could serve as a daily reminder to not repeat the transgression and maybe will even serve as a reason to do more for others to make up for the “sin.”

I think that if I were one of the monsters from the previous President's administration, guilty of almost destroying this country, I would feel deep regret every moment of each day to the point that I could hardly eat or sleep. I would regret deceiving 300 million countrymen about the need to invade Iraq. I would regret the loss of thousands of our sons and daughters in this combat and the loss of the hundreds of thousands of Iraqis who died prematurely because of this invasion. I would regret the trillions of taxpayer dollars that will have been wasted on this conflict. I would pray every day that I could be forgiven for the terrible things I did while entrusted to lead and protect the American people.

But the irony is that these folks probably feel no guilt for what they did and failed to do. They will learn soon a deeper form of regret also known as “very bad karma.”

But if I had been the only victim of my transgression, I should forgive myself my trespasses, promise to learn my lesson and move on.

That's what I'm hoping my friend can do but I regret to say that I doubt that he will. He probably won't even read this column.

Oh great, now I'm doing it.

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POLICE BLOTTER/TARAVAL STATION

A

fter spending last week in Texas training on the workings of an Emergency Operations Center, I returned to a station humming along with our new sign-up in effect. The sign-up takes place every 6 months at each of the Stations throughout the City. It is the opportunity for officers to move to different shifts and assignments as staffing is adjusted to address crime patterns. The process takes about a month and took effect on March 6th. In my absence Lt. Miriam Pengel served as the Station Captain overseeing a smooth transition week.

Taraval Station currently has 4 Lieutenants, 17 Sergeants, 6 Station Investigators, and 92 Officers. We were fortunate to welcome Sgt. Leslie Forrestal to the Station on March 6th. Sgt. Forrestal is a 16 year veteran of the Department whose most recent assignment was as a Patrol Sergeant in our neighboring Park District. She joins the swing watch as a street supervisor. Among other changes in the Sergeants rank, after many years serving as the Special Events Sergeant for 3 different Captains, Sgt. Steve Quon opted to move back to midnights. He serves as street supervisor and assume the Platoon Commander responsibilities in the wee hours of the morning. Many of you had the pleasure of working closely with him as he assisted in troubleshooting issues and setting up events. Rest assured, he remains dedicated to the District—just under different lighting conditions.

I am very fortunate to pick up Sgt. Russ Gordon as the Station's Special Events Sergeant. Sgt. Gordon is an 18 year veteran with experience as both a street supervisor and investigations. He has taken on the supervision of our footbeat and school car officers and he will be the point man for me on many issues and special events for the District.

Through this sign-up, we have added two officers to serve as roving School Cars. Officers Moli Finau and Rich Austria will work as a team to cover the 37 Elementary, Middle and High Schools peppered throughout the District. Juvenile issues are a large part of policing the Taraval. Thousands of children are moving through the District on any given weekday. Our goal is to create a connection with each school and provide a positive police contact for these children and their dedicated educators. Officer Louis Rue will remain at Aptos School while Officer Carmen Walsh continues to serve at Lincoln High School.

Another bonus of the sign-up was the addition of two new Footbeat officers. Officer Rodrigo Labson has stepped into the 41 Beat which runs on Irving Street from 7th Avenue West to 19th. Officer Labson is a Taraval veteran who served as the regular sector car in the area while assigned on swings. He is very familiar with the area and had some key arrests and contacts which made his selection for the beat a natural. Officer Rob Hamblen will be added to the 46 Beat which runs on Ocean Avenue. Officer Hamblen is an experienced patrolman who has served as the Station's Terrorism Liaison Officer for several years. He has a keen interest in getting to know the merchants and issues of the Ocean Avenue corridor. We are pleased that each of these officers elected to apply for footbeat assignments. They join our already established footbeat officers Ron Gherke (also on the 41), Kevin Wong, (41A Irving Street 19th Avenue West), and Lindsey Suslow (44 West Portal) Footbeats are one of the tools which have proven effective for outreach and deterring crime. Selectively placed they can work as a conduit for information to the Station on crime and quality of life issues. It requires a special officer to work a footbeat and not just because of the long walks. Problem Solving and establishing long range solutions in partnership with the community is the goal of a good footbeat officer. Given enough resources, we hope to maintain footbeats in these areas as one crime reduction strategy.

We have also added a second officer to our Homeless and Park Patrol Unit. Officer Mike Mitchell moved from radio car assignment to join Officer Rich Jue in this assignment which focuses on crimes committed by and against homeless individuals. The officers get to know the homeless individuals within the District and seek to connect them with City Services to address underlying issues. The Unit also provides directed patrol within our parks and works with similar teams in the Richmond and Park District. I have already received 3 complimentary calls on the work of Officer Mitchell just one week into his new assignment.

Pedestrian Safety is EVERYONE'S responsibility

The Taraval District comprises 10.8 square miles with major commute thoroughfares running throughout. Ensuring the safe passage on the streets for pedestrians and motorists is a top priority for all of our officers. We utilize a radar trailer at different locations on a daily basis. We are fortunate to have two experienced motorcycle officers assigned to the station, Officer Eddie Dare and Officer Regina Berrigan. They provide directed enforcement as well as experienced accident investigation. Officer Berrigan also serves as our traffic analysis officer, tracking the accidents in the district to identify problem areas and hotspots for enforcement. A number of these accidents involve pedestrians. The fault for these accidents is split about 30/70 pedestrian/driver. In almost all cases where the pedestrian is at fault they crossed against a light, jaywalked or at an uncontrolled intersection, crossed without looking for traffic. Most common reason: Pedestrians racing to catch MUNI. Drivers who fail to yield to pedestrians lawfully in the crosswalk are the largest cause of these accidents. One facet of our overall traffic safety

Cont. p. 12

For a complete Police Report from the Taraval Police Station, go to our website:

www.westsideobserver.com

Police Blotter (Cont. from p. 7)

program is Pedestrian Stings where officers lawfully cross a given street and stops are made on drivers who fail to yield as required by law. These operations occur weekly at locations where we have seen accidents or received information of near misses.

On March 10th, Lt. Pengel, Sgt. Russ Gordon, Officers Mike Mitchell, Henry Ha, Berrigan and Dare conducted an operation at Sloat and Everglade. 10 drivers were cited for failing to yield to pedestrians lawfully in the crosswalk. This morning, Lt. Pengel, Sgt. Randy Young, Officers John Laffey, Mike Mitchell, John Higgins along with Officers Berrigan and Dare ran the operation at Ocean Avenue and Manor. 17 citations for failure to yield, unsafe turning and speed related violations were issued.

Officers Nab Night Time Burglar On March 12th at about 9:30 PM a resident on the unit block of Diaz had retired for the evening when she heard the sound of a window opening downstairs and a burglar crawling through the blinds. The resident heard the suspect moving throughout the house, opening dresser drawers in an adjacent bedroom. As she called 911, the suspect entered her bedroom, gave a surprised look, and fled the house. The resident was able to get a good look at the suspect who was wearing a remarkably colorful and distinctive outfit. Officers Imran Shakur and Tom Chu arrived at the house and broadcast a detailed suspect description. San Francisco State Police Officers Viet Pham and his partner Officer Donahue spotted a possible suspect standing at the MUNI platform who they quickly detained. A cold show was conducted and the victim positively identified the burglar. The 27 year old resident of Ralston St with a history of arrests for theft was booked for Burglary.

Car Thief Tracked Down On Sunday, March 14th, at approximately 7:30 in the morning, Officer Eric Lau and Mike Mitchell were on patrol at 48th and Lawton when the LOJAK tracker in their patrol car alerted them to a stolen vehicle moving through the area. The officers began following the signal as dispatch obtained the vehicle's description and plate for the officers, alerting them

Kopp (Cont. from p. 1)

service to the riding public.

Proposition K further stated that the taxicab business would operate under free enterprise principles, and permitted taxicab drivers to even charge less than the maximum rate of fares set by law. It empowered the Police Department to issue a sufficient number of permits to ensure adequate taxicab service throughout San Francisco, and declared that an applicant would pay the City a fee simply to cover the cost of investigating and processing each application.

It prohibited issuance of any permit unless the person applying declares under penalty of perjury his or her intention actively and personally to engage as a permittee-driver for at least four hours during any 24 hour period on at least 75 percent of the business days during the calendar year, and barred issuance of more than one permit to any one person. It further granted preference in the issuance of a permit to any person who had driven a taxicab in San Francisco for at least one consecutive 12 month period during any of the three calendar years immediately prior to the filing of an application, and declared that a permit shall be issued only to a natural person, and not a business, firm, partnership or corporation.

In deciding to issue a permit, the Police Commission was ordered to consider whether the applicant was financially responsible, complied with all pertinent motor vehicle laws (meaning a competent driving record and safe motor vehicle) and would be a full-time driver of the taxicab. Proposition K emphasized that all persons, businesses, firms, partnerships, and corporations who possessed a permit on the day of the election must surrender any such permit within 60 days of the election and that the new permits would be non-transferable and non-assignable. Further it mandated that a corporate permit is null and void after a sale or other transfer of 10 percent or more of stock ownership or assets of such corporation (computed on a cumulative basis).

Proposition K thereafter resulted in issuance of hundreds of permits to genuine drivers of taxicabs, those who had been prevented from entering the profession except in an indentured fashion by corporate "big shots." Subsequent history included eight separate lawsuits in state and federal courts to overturn the people's will on contrived and frivolous constitutional grounds, at least seven efforts to repeal or modify Proposition K's provisions at the ballot box, all of which were rejected by voters, and sleight-of-hand tactics to obtain transfer of permits to relatives of the corporate owners at their death or otherwise. Despite the drumbeat of effort to seduce and deceive voters and subsequent board of supervisor members and mayors, and weak enforcement by the City Attorney's office, Proposition K survives, or at least it has survived until the advent of the present Mayor and his self-proclaimed municipal government and transportation experts.

Misrepresenting himself as a believer in Proposition K's principles, then Supervisor Gavin Newsom

to be on the lookout for a red Nissan Sentra which had been stolen from the 500 block of Argonaut in the Visitation Valley. The officers tracked the signal, narrowing the area to the Lower Great Highway as the car moved south. Once the stolen car hit Sloat, the driver was stymied by the construction closure of the Great Highway and turned back towards the Sunset. The officers continued to track the signal closing the gap as the driver turned East on Wawona. The Officers quickly spotted the Nissan pulled over on the 3600 Block of Wawona with a man exiting the driver's door. They detained the man who blurted out, "Someone let me use the car."

The driver of the stolen Nissan, James Henry Wade, was a 47 year old resident of Turk Street with no lawful ties to the car. Mr. Wade, who is on active Parole for narcotics offenses and has served prison and jail time in two different counties for auto theft, had methamphetamine, marijuana and additional stolen property in his pockets. He was booked for auto theft, narcotics possession, possession of stolen property, possession of burglary tools and a Parole Hold was placed.

Contact and Search Affirms Lawful Grow Investigating information that the residents of a house on 45th Avenue were illegally operating a large marijuana cultivation, Officers Patrice Scanlan, Chris Oshita, Jamie Hyun contacted one of the residents as he exited the home on March 14th. The resident was able to produce documentation lawfully permitting himself and other residents to grow a quantity of Marijuana as caregivers. The officers inspected the paperwork, plants and growing area and found all in compliance.

Loud Muffler attracts Cop's Attention On March 16th, at approximately 10:20 AM Officer Ron Gherke was driving westbound on Judah at 45th Avenue when the quiet Sunset morning air was shattered by a loud muffler roaring through the streets. Officer Gherke followed the sounds and spotted the over-amplified engine on a Suzuki Motorcycle a block away. He stopped the motorcycle and discovered that the muffler had been removed. The driver admitted to Officer Gherke that the registration Tab was also false and that his license was both

introduced a law which transferred administration of taxicab permits from the Police Commission to a newly constituted Taxicab Commission. Unsuspecting taxicab drivers, including their union, allowed themselves to embrace such a lure from then Supervisor Newsom. A commission comprised of the very persons who represented corporate and similar interests in undermining implementation of Proposition K gained control of the processing and retention of taxicab permits.

“Voters were gulled into thinking that an Entertainment Commission would relieve the Police Department of excess effort. Instead, San Francisco residents are treated to the terrifying spectacle of murders by firearms and other weapons in and around nightclubs under Entertainment Commission approval.”

Proposition K was passed to stop permit profiteering but the Taxicab Commission staff was not comprised of law enforcement officers and was overpowered by a subservient commission which ignored the fundamental principles voters enacted in 1978.

But that wasn't enough for the current Mayor. As part of another City Hall "reform," this time with the Municipal Railway, the Charter was amended to allow elimination of Public Utilities Commission authority over the Municipal Railway and transfer of such somber responsibility to yet a new governmental agency, a San Francisco Municipal Transportation Authority (MTA).

Obfuscated in the dense ballot language was a single sentence, transferring all regulation of taxicabs to the new bureaucracy and bestowing upon the MTA power to establish regulations affecting permits and their possession by honest taxicab drivers. That sentence, however, was identified by conscientious taxicab drivers who prepared to oppose such Charter change. In response to the accusation that he was trying to abolish the salutary provisions of Proposition K with a Charter amendment co-sponsored by the then Board of Supervisors President Aaron Peskin, the mayor co-signed a letter with Mr. Peskin stating unequivocally that the core features of Proposition K would not be undone by the proposed MTA.

The Mayor's Charter amendment was approved by voters. Guess what? Less than three years later, the Mayor proposed a budget which included hundreds of thousands of dollars based upon altering the permit and driving provisions of Proposition K to allow sale as a private asset of a permit from a possessor to another party and eliminating for practical purposes any driving requirements, thus turning history's clock back to the "good old days." Venal permit holders who want to sell permits for \$250,000 or more, (based on Mayor Newsom's calculation of their "market value") will now profiteer with cash

suspended and revoked. Further investigation showed that the Motorcycle's plate was not on file with the DMV. The driver was perplexed, advising officer Gherke that the bike "was given to me by a guy down the street. You could go ask him." The motorcycle's vehicle identification number showed the motorcycle had not been registered in over 8 years, with the last owner living in the Richmond district. The driver, Patrick Maloney, a 47 year old resident of 45th Avenue was issued a citation for his multiple vehicle misdemeanor violations and the Suzuki was towed. Quiet was restored.

Two hours later, Officers Tom Ly and Joe Chang were on patrol in the area of Grafton and Jules when they observed a Chevy Suburban with registration more than 6 months expired. The officers followed the vehicle as they checked the computer to confirm the violation. The driver continued on his way and the officers noted that he crossed over into the oncoming lane of traffic on the 500 block of Orizaba, traveling half a block before pulling to the curb on the wrong side of the road. The officers affected a traffic stop, but the two occupants got out of the car attempting to walk away. Both men were ordered to stop. The driver objected and the officers explained the reasons for the traffic stop. The men continued to walk away and were ordered to stop. Both men resisted with the passenger squaring off and raising his fists to fight. Additional officers responded to the scene to assist in the arrest and the parties calmed down. The driver then admitted that his license was suspended and he knew he wasn't supposed to drive. The driver and passenger were cited and the vehicle was towed.

Street Sales Arrest Responding to complaints of street sales and consumption of marijuana near the Cannabis Dispensary on the 1900 Block of Ocean, Officers Hyun, Scanlan and Oshita were in plainclothes in the area when they saw a man seated on the sidewalk smoking a marijuana cigarette. The man advised the officers that he was smoking "a joint" and that he was not a medical marijuana patient and had no card authorizing him to purchase medical marijuana. Further investigation revealed

Continued Online: westsideobserver.com/blotter.html

from a public asset at the expense of working honest taxicab drivers who cannot afford \$250,000. The façade of even a Taxicab Commission has been eliminated; Police Department authority no longer exists and while Mr. Peskin takes seriously the words of his written promise to the public, this Mayor does not. Is that a common politician or not?

A similar event has occurred with respect to the so-called nightclubs in San Francisco. Prior to the establishment of the Entertainment Commission (which provides no entertainment to bedeviled residents near many nightclubs in San Francisco), the Police Department enforced all laws pertaining to nightclubs and decided whether and under what conditions a nightclub permit would be issued. Voters were gulled into thinking that an Entertainment Commission would relieve the Police Department of excess effort. Instead, San Francisco residents are treated to the terrifying spectacle of murders by firearms and other weapons in and around nightclubs under Entertainment Commission approval.

There is no substitute for Police Department administration of local activity, which contains inherently the opportunity for violence, fraud, and other corrupt or potentially injurious activity. Instead of recognizing that stark fact, City Hall wants to embed in the City Charter (our local version of the Constitution) a managerial clause about the number of police officers assigned to "foot patrol" and the circumstances thereof. Our new Police Chief has written publicly of the plain foolishness of legislatively attempting to manage our law enforcement officers. Proper administration of justice means it must not happen.

Finally, one acknowledges an effort to correct historical excess, which has plagued San Francisco taxpayers for over four decades. In 1968, during the late, great Joseph Lawrence Alioto's first year as mayor, he was inveighed to urge the Board of Supervisors and voters to amend Charter clauses respecting compensation of Municipal Railway coach and bus operators. The consequence was a Charter provision that forces the setting of salaries of Municipal Railway employees as the average of the two highest wage rates of other railway and bus systems in the United States, normally employing at least 400 coach or bus operators and platform employees. One supervisor, Sean Elsbernd, has publicly proposed legislation to afford voters opportunity to revise that inflexible Charter clause, which has produced distended Municipal Railway budgets during the 1970's and 1980's, while I served on the Board of Supervisors, and continues to do so.

While Mr. Elsbernd talks of a voter initiative to alter that illogical standard, doubt remains whether enough voter signatures can be secured for ballot placement so as to reverse a mistake yesterday's leaders in city government afflicted upon future generations.

Former Supervisor Kopp was elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1971 and served until 1986, representing the conservative West Portal neighborhood.

Westside Real Estate Report

Do You Qualify for a Loan?

By Jed Lane

Remember just a short time ago when lenders would do anything for business? They were competing to sign you up and give you any amount of money you wanted to make your plans happen. Well, as we know, it went overboard and money was given to everyone that asked nicely. Remember even longer ago when there were local lenders that knew what the community needed, could address those needs and kept the profits local to be re-invested locally?

Well now that loose, giving, enabling lender has found the error of its ways! No longer will it lend to anyone that doesn't DESERVE IT. Fire and brimstone, whips, chairs and jumping through hoops, denial - denial -denial it's all you hear now.

Suppose you have a growing family, both parents work and bring in good salaries. You have a home but you find one that suits your needs better. Maybe it's an additional bedroom or a master suite. Maybe it's just a better configuration of a bit closer to your job. Anyway you want to buy the new house and sell the old one. You approach your faithful lender, the one that has been charging you interest on your home loan. You ask them nicely to lend you the money to buy the new home. "No problem" is the answer from the nice person at the branch, "we love your business and will do whatever we can to keep you a happy customer".

You make the offer on the new house and it's accepted. You go back to the wonderful lender and submit your paperwork. A couple of weeks later after you've had you inspections and are busy making plans to move the "underwriter" tells the nice person at the wonderful lender to call you and inform you that NO they've decided they won't give you the money after all, you just don't meet their new criteria.

You ask of course is there any leeway and are told no, there isn't. Everyone has to meet the new criteria or the loan can't be sold to the Federal government. Unfortunately no one else is lending money right now. If the loan can't be sold to Freddie Mac or Fannie Mae the loan will not be made.

Many will say that this is just good business and it never should have been the way it was. Fine, but it's necessary to look at the facts of the situation in San Francisco.

The conforming loan limit which can be sold automatically to the Government Sponsored Enterprises (GSE) like Fannie and Freddie is \$417,000. There are higher limits available in high cost areas like The City, which are called Jumbo Conforming Loans. They have more stringent lending criteria and higher interest rates. These jumbo loans are set by zip code and range up to \$729, 750 maximum.

In our scenario above where the family wants to move up to get more space. They have equity from their current home so they can stay within the jumbo conforming loan limit. According to the current lending criteria they have to qualify with a debt to income ratios of no more than 45%. Sound fair after all we don't want them to be too extended. Even if they have the funds to carry the second mortgage for a few months they've just been disqualified because the second mortgage puts them over the ratio limit. They can make the purchase contingent on selling the first house but the seller will only do that if a premium is paid, at least until we are completely in a buyer's market.

Another transaction I was involved in the buyer was putting down 45% of the purchase price. The lender declined to fund because the MLS information didn't match the tax record information. One more recent transaction then I'll get to my point. A client is buying a condo as an investment to rent out. There are six units in the building and the one he is buying is bank owned. The HOA fees haven't been paid for a few months by the bank. This is typical in these situations but his lender won't fund because there is one other unit behind in the dues. That exceeds the 15% criteria which is the Federal guideline. These are both well qualified

individual borrowers that should be lent the money and eventually were but the hoops of fire, the whips and chairs, yes, the circus of it, is ridiculous, delaying and costly.

There is no competition in the private lending market. Borrowers are left with only the banks that were too big to fail and the Federal government. The GSE rules are set and deviation is not possible. The banks are borrowing money from the Federal government lending it to a few selected people and selling the loan back to the government. Although interest rates are very low right now, the borrower has to fit the cookie-cutter mold or the spigot is turned off. This can't work in our area for long. We're seeing a market where homes that are priced within the loan limits sell. This is reflected in the lower median prices in the area.



\$950,000 Mt Davidson Manor | Sold Property 3 bed-3 bath

Percentage of Total Sales						
Sale Price Range	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
\$0 to 500,000	21%	13.2%	10.2%	8.3%	8.5%	17.1%
\$500,000 – 1,000,000	59.3%	58.8%	61.2%	67.9%	68.3%	66.5%
\$1,000,000 – 2,000,000	15.2%	21.4%	23.4%	19.5%	18.9%	13.3%
\$2,000,000 –3,000,000	2.8%	4.1%	3%	2.7%	2.8%	1.8%
#,3,000,000 – up	1.7%	2.6%	2.1%	1.6%	1.5%	1.3%

The above chart shows the bulk of the homes sold are between \$500, 000 and \$1,000,000. The median gets changed by the fluctuation between the category above and category below. This is a function of the availability of funds. It isn't demand or supply for the product, it's the willingness of lenders to lend that allows or shuts off sales in the higher end.

Unit Sales						
Sale Price Range	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
\$0 to 500,000	862	612	569	502	567	1209
\$500,000 – 1,000,000	2430	2727	3420	4108	4542	4711
\$1,000,000 – 2,000,000	622	994	1310	1176	1256	941
\$2,000,000 –3,000,000	116	189	170	162	189	127
#,3,000,000 – up	69	119	118	98	99	95

This chart shows the number of sales in each price category. It shows the almost 3,000 unit sales drop between 2004 and 2009. Half of those were in the median price category and this shows the effect of tightening credit.

The Monthly Snapshot of the Westside Market: There are 73 homes for sale in March with 61 in contract and there were 20 homes sold in February. At that rate of sales we have 3.65 months of supply so we are in a balanced market.

Jed Lane is a Realtor, West Side native and current resident of Miraloma Park.

If you have questions contact me at jed@westsideobserver.com

Retrofit Permit Expediting Approved

Technically referred to as "soft/weak story and/or open-front wood-framed" buildings, soft-story wood-frame buildings typically have large openings on the ground floor, and many walls in the upper floors. Typically, these are apartments and condominiums that have parking under buildings, or open commercial space on the first floor, making this story "weak" or "soft" and likely to lean or even fall over in earthquakes. Per US Geological Survey Study in 1992, seven soft-story residential buildings were severely damaged and another 65 were moderately to severely damaged in the Marina District during the Loma Prieta Earthquake in 1989.

Mayor Newsom introduced legislation to assist homeowners strengthen these wood-framed buildings which became law on March 16th when the Board of Supervisors adopted it unanimously. Property owners must act quickly to voluntarily retrofit and strengthen wood-framed, soft story homes and multi-unit buildings, the law takes effect on April 19th and is intended to encourage retrofits to help protect them from collapse due to a major earthquake. With no retrofitting of this type of building, one in four is expected to be damaged ("red tagged") to the point of being unoccupiable following a major earthquake.

The new legislation:

- Waives Building and Planning Department Plan Review fees – saving hundreds or even thousands of dollars per project.
- Expedites the processing, review and approval of permits for voluntary seismic retrofit upgrades of soft-story, wood-frame buildings – buildings identified as likely to collapse during the next major earthquake in a January 2009 study by the Community Action Plan for Seismic Safety (CAPSS); and
- Enables those who retrofit voluntarily now, and who meet the building performance standard established by the Building Department for these voluntary retrofits, to be exempt for 15 years from any requirements that may be adopted in the near future as mandatory retrofitting legislation is enacted.

A little retrofitting goes a long way, according to the CAPSS study, available on the Dept. of Building Inspection (DBI) web site, www.sfdbi.org. With minimal retrofitting, the rate of reoccupation repair/move back in becomes much higher – a substantial improvement in building and life-safety. DBI will issue an Administrative Bulletin on the definition of soft-story and the design criteria for seismic upgrades. A draft of the Bulletin is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

For more information, visit www.sfdbi.org, click on "Most Requested," and click again on "Earthquakes" for details about voluntary retrofits or call William Strawn: (415) 558-6250.



\$995,000 Miraloma Park | Active Property 4 bed-2 bath

The West Portal Community Business District
Now's the Time to Get Involved

All of us associated with the West Portal community, merchants, customers, landlords, residents and visitors usually agree on one thing: West Portal Avenue is a special (albeit) hidden jewel within San Francisco.



One frequent request is for hanging flower baskets to beautify a district.

Matt Rogers (Papenhousen Hardware) and several colleagues are working feverishly to create a West Portal Community Business District, or Community Benefits District (CBD) in city government speak.

A CBD is designed to improve and benefit properties within the commercial district by creating an enhanced visitor experience through improved streetscape (design and landscaping) and maintenance (think graffiti removal, street cleaning, and powerwashing sidewalks, etc.). CBD's also can take advantage of specialized economic development activities and administrative/advocacy activities. The CBD is set up for a period of 15 years, and is governed by a board made up of property owners and merchants. Funding is derived from assessments on each property that usually are negotiated with and passed through to the merchant tenants.

Why do this? As the city coffers dwindle, it becomes less and less able to handle basic street maintenance like sweeping, gum removal and graffiti remediation. Niceties such as flowers, benches, murals, and even trees are almost impossible to install or maintain.



The onus falls to the property owners and tenants anyway, but as individual owners and tenants, they usually pay more to have these types of services performed.

If multiple owners and tenants embraced the idea for collective maintenance and streetscape, individual costs would fall and the "experience" would make the area better for everyone who owns property (increasing value), or leases space as a retailer (more attractive means a better shopping experience), or visits the street (an enhanced

Cont. p. 12



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72 Dawnview Way	3	2	2 side by side	n/a	2/23/10	788,000
25 Crestmont Drive	3	2	2 side by side	1282	12/29/09	727,500
227 Christopher Dr.	2	2	2 side by side	1570	12/30/09	735,000
90 Woodhaven Ct.	3	2.5	3 side by side	1282	12/16/09	775,000
237 Warren Drive	4	3	2 side by side	2177	11/30/09	1,088,000
92 Farview Ct.	2	1	1	1123	10/23/09	715,000
123 Dellbrook Ave.	3	2	2 Tandem	1576	10/30/09	750,000

Source: SF MLS

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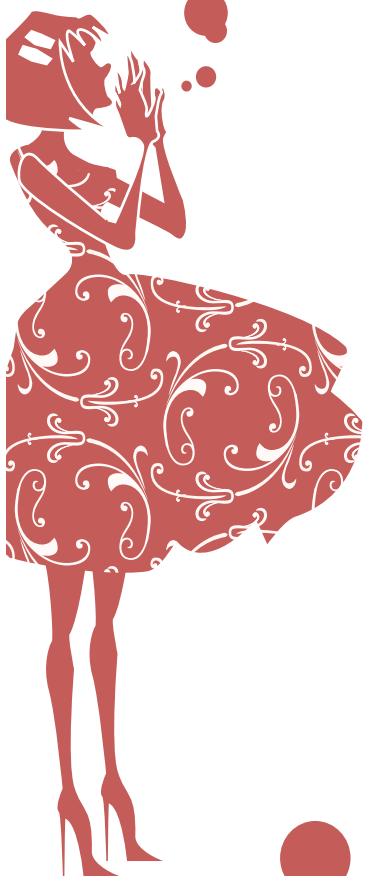
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Taste the arrival of spring at the Stonestown Farmers Market! Asparagus, fava beans, sweet peas, and an abundance of fresh eggs are leading the way, with strawberries and cherries coming soon.

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Letters to the Editor (Cont. from p. 2)

all, much of Mayor Newsom's perennial budget deficits are caused by police who believe they not only should be paid the same with less money coming in, they feel entitled to their 28% in total raises, even in the face of a \$522 million City deficit and 17,000 pink slips handed to City employees, pink slips designed to find revenue to keep giving raises to police employees.

It wasn't bus driver salaries that caused the City of Vallejo to declare bankruptcy, it was police salaries. Elsbernd should focus on police salary reform, before police salaries bankrupt San Francisco.

Don't sign Elbernd's Muni "reform" petitions. If he was unable to convince the other ten Supervisors to place it on the ballot, we shouldn't do it for him.

Elsbernd's hypocrisy is breathtaking: In 2007, he not only voted as a sitting Supervisor to place the "Proposition A" Muni reform on the ballot, he signed a rebuttal to the opponent's argument, claiming Prop A would "bring Muni employees back to the bargaining table to create more efficient work rules." Has Elsbernd explained his new flip-flop to Jim Lazarus?

Amanda Runcible, Twin Peaks



WE'RE ALSO ON THE WEB
www.westsideobserver.com



experience that wants to make a visitor stay longer / come back, or tell friends about the great place that is West Portal).

“After living with the pain for 17 years I just couldn’t take it anymore!!”

Dear friend,

Like some of the people who come to my office, many of you reading this are wondering if you have to live with aches and pains. That is because you have tried everything under the sun and nothing has helped. Some may have felt exhausted and defeated. Most just tell me that they thought that it couldn't get any better.

As a doctor, I have something to tell you that you may find hard to understand. I have never cured anyone of anything. But before I go into that, let me tell you a few other things first. **Let me tell you my story...**

17 years ago something happened that changed my life. I was a young woman living in Philadelphia when it happened. I was driving with a friend, 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 medical 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 answer to the pain, I went to medical doctors, physical therapists, acupuncturists, I tried special pillows, etc. 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 I 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. The doctor explained my problems and then did an adjustment that 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, I thank him every day!

After that, I knew what I had to do. I had to become a chiropractor. Now people come to see me with all types of problems. They come with their **headaches, migraines, neck pain, fibromyalgia, low back pain, sciatica, carpal tunnel syndrome, asthma, whiplash problems,**

rotator cuff problems and sports injuries just to name a few. Children like the one in the photo, come in with ear infections, diarrhea, colic and many other conditions. I often see people who come to me as a "last resort." I am a chiropractor and I do things differently. I am not going to give you medications to cover up your symptoms. My job is the get to the root cause of your health problems.

Here is what some of my patients have to say:

"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



"After two major car accidents, after trying 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 doctor 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

Several times a day, patients thank me for helping them with their health problems. But I can't really take the credit. As I've said, I'm not the "healer", your own body is. What I do is perform a specific, scientific spinal adjustment to remove nerve pressure, and **the body responds by healing itself.** We get tremendous results. It's as simple as that.

Many Americans **no longer have health insurance,** and those that do have found that their benefits (and choices) have been reduced

through "managed care." That's where we come in. We offer plans that help **you save money...**Another way to save...Studies show that chiropractic can vastly improve your immune capacity, naturally and without drugs. The immune system fights colds, the flu and other illnesses so you won't have to run off to the doctor as much and maybe not lose as much time from work (Especially if you are self-employed, that can really cost you, and in this case, save you!). Studies show that people actually pay less for their long-term overall health care expenses if they are seeing a chiropractor.

"Make a Believer Out of Me" Offer: Look, maybe you have been to other chiropractors and had a less than terrific experience. Or maybe you have heard biased remarks from other kinds of doctors. Either way, it shouldn't cost you an arm and a leg just to find out how chiropractic in our office, could change your life for the better. When you bring in this article (by February 17, 2010) you can receive my entire new patient exam for \$27 with full spine x-rays...the whole ball of wax. The x-rays alone could cost you over \$800 elsewhere.

No Surprises On your second visit, you will receive a detailed report of our findings. We will go over what we have found, how long it will take, and how much it will cost. No surprises. For basically no money (\$27) you will find out all you need to know to make an informed decision!

Our office is friendly and warm, and we do our best to make you feel at home. We are conveniently located at the corner of Beach and Jones (505 Beach Street, Suite 110), in San Francisco. Call Raquel at MEAKIM & STERN FAMILY SPINAL CARE. Our phone number is 415-771-7071. We will help you!

— **Christina Meakim, D.C.**

P.S. If one of your friends or a member of your family wants to come in with you, they will receive this same exam for just \$17. Kids of parents getting examined come along for only \$7. Chiropractic is a family thing. *If past chiropractors never asked you to have your kids and/or your spouse checked, I would ask why.*

P.P.S. Been to a chiropractor and it **"didn't work"**. I see people all the time who have been to chiropractor after chiropractor, not to mention specialist after specialist...and *they get well here.* You benefit from my scientific approach, my *gentle techniques* of chiropractic adjustment, my *caring and my devotion to serving you and your family.* Call right now (415-771-7071) and find out for yourself.

Advertisement

"Why do this? As the city coffers dwindle, it becomes less and less able to handle basic street maintenance like sweeping, gum removal and graffiti remediation. Niceties such as flowers, benches, murals, and even trees are almost impossible to install or maintain. The onus falls to the property owners and tenants anyway, but as individual owners and tenants, they usually pay more to have these types of services performed."

Many of the retail tenants and landlords are already in favor of the concept of the Community Business District, but more support is needed. Other areas in San Francisco such as Noe Valley, the Fillmore, and Ocean Avenue have already established CBD's as a way to enhance the neighborhood experience for visitors and residents alike.

While no one relishes the idea of more fees and assessments, the overall benefit could bring results that dwarf the assessments to establish the CBD.

What can you do? If you are a landlord or property owner, take a look at the property, talk with your tenant and schedule a conversation with Matt or one of the other business people who are supporting the concept of a CBD. A cleaner, well-maintained shopping district with improved signage and visitors could be a benefit to everyone associated with West Portal Avenue. As I said at the beginning, West Portal is a special place which deserves to be maintained and nurtured. Anyone who has been to Noe Valley or the Fillmore Jazz District can see the results of what a CBD can bring to an area.

Take the time to get the facts and help turn West Portal Avenue back into one of the premier shopping (and living) districts in the Country.

Contact Matt Rogers (Papenhausen Hardware)

Celebrate National Women's Health Week

Free Women's Health Education Event April 20th

The Twin Peaks Curves at 608 Portola Drive has joined a national health initiative to show women how taking small steps can make a big difference in improving their health. Curves across the country will be partnering with local hospitals and OB-GYNs to offer free educational events open to the public. The events will feature a presentation created in conjunction with a panel of five prestigious OB-GYNs from across the country and Curves Registered Dietitian, Nadia Rodman.

San Francisco gynecologist Leslie Kardos, MD, will speak at the Twin Peaks Curves with the event beginning at 7 PM on Thursday, April 20th. Attendees will learn about the importance of regular gynecological checkups, exercise, and diet in reducing their risk for chronic disease. Many gynecological issues will be covered, including risk factors, symptoms, and treatment options. There will be time for questions and answers too.

"This is a great community event where women can come together in an atmosphere of no judgment and learn that it doesn't have to be difficult to begin to take charge of their health," said Twin Peaks Owner Bonnie Farrell. "You don't have to make big changes to see results. All discussions and questions are valid. We just want to help women figure out which small steps are right for them and help them get started."

Women will come away from the event with many tools to help them on their journey to health, including a certificate for 30 days free at Curves if they are not already a member. "This is a fantastic opportunity to try Curves for a month for free," said Farrell.

For more information about the Twin Peaks Curves and its participation in the national women's health initiative, contact Bonnie Farrell at TwinPeaksCurves@gmail.com, or 415-759-9103. You can also find more information online at www.SmallSteps.About.com and www.TwinPeaksCurves.com.

Tasers (Cont. from p. 2)

stops, revive them, or shoot a bullet into them and rush them to SF General Hospital for surgery to fix the wound(s) made by the bullets.

It seems clear that the SFPD should be allowed any tool that can be used to effect the submission and arrest of a person that is high on drugs and alcohol and threatening the officer. We have equipped them with the non-lethal tools of pepper spray, billy-clubs and bean bag shooting shotguns. We've equipped them with lethal weapons, both side arms and shot-guns. Is there any reason to deny the creation of a policy for less-lethal tools?

Here is a typical scenario: a call for service goes out, a person high on drugs and alcohol is approached by officers who see a weapon. The officers demand that the weapon be put down and to surrender, the person doesn't comply, the level of threat increases. The officer draws a weapon and tries verbal persuasion again. Of the fifteen above-cited shootings, six happened within five feet and eight were over in 2.5 minutes. Having a less lethal tool can save lives and reduce lawsuits.

So what happened that evening at the Commission? It seems clear that the Chief should have been granted the opportunity to draft a policy on the deployment of this less lethal option. It seems clear that there were a number of Commissioners making political moves that night. Political moves, not for the protection of the citizens of the City, but to enhance individual reputations and to make political book with the elected officials to whom they owe their positions on the Commission. It also appears to have been political theater, where appointed officials take umbrage with the popularity of the person hired by the previous board by delivering a small slap to the wrists.

San Franciscans like to have high hopes for our citizen boards and commissions. It might actually be time to engage in a little political theater of our own and deliver a small slap to the wrists of the Police Commission, reminding them for whom they work. (Hint: it isn't any sitting supervisor or elected official.)

Jed Lane is a civically engaged Realtor, Westside native and current resident of Miraloma Park. He can be reached at jed@westsideobserver.com

Where to find the Observer?

West Portal Avenue Area:
Century 21 — Scott Keys — 101 Vicente
Dubliner Irish Bar
Greenhouse Café
West Portal Books
West Portal Music Store
West Portal Library
Zephyr Real Estate Office

Ocean Avenue Area:
Lakeside Grill (Ocean Avenue)
Villa D'Este (Ocean Avenue)

Stonestown Area:
Stonestown Cinema
Stonestown YMCA

Portola Ave Area:
Creighton's Bakery — Portola Dr.
Curves — 608 Portola Drive
Mollie Stone's Market — Portola Dr.

Sloat Blvd Area:
Aqua Surf Shop (Across from SF Zoo)
John's Ocean Beach Café on Sloat

Taraval Street Area:

Tennessee Grill (1128 Taraval)
Trolley Cafe (1300 block of Taraval)
Parkside Library (1200 block of Taraval)
Sunset Pet Supply — (2226 Taraval)

Parkmerced Area:
Park Place Market — Parkmerced

Noe Valley Area:
Bell Market (24th and Noe)
Fresca Restaurant (24th and Noe)
MRW Hairdresser
Nail Chic on Castro at Noe
Noe Valley Library

Other Locations:
Garden for the Environment
Lawton and 7th Ave.

Italian American Social Club
— 25 Russia Ave. — Excelsior Dist
Massage Envy —
Westlake Shopping Center — Daly City
Merced Library Branch — 19th Ave @
Winston
Sunset Library — 18th Street @ Irving
Main Library — 100 Larkin St.

SHARON THE HEALTH

What is Naturopathic Medicine?

By Sharon Caren

It's a distinct primary health care system that combines traditional healing wisdom with modern scientific research to offer a **holistic, safe and gentle** approach to health care. One of the main goals of Naturopathic medical care is to offer treatments with minimal side effects that guide the body on its healing path while avoiding suppression, long term side effects or discomfort.

Sound good so far? I'm excited to let you know about Sarah Rothman, ND, who just opened her practice in Pacifica. I had no idea what to expect when I made my appointment. I've now been working with Dr. Rothman the past couple of months using Bio-Identical Hormone Therapy. I'll tell you from personal experience, you'll find a doctor totally committed to your wellness.

Naturopathic doctors are thoroughly trained primary care practitioners who are committed to optimal patient care and individualized treatment. They are **doctors that listen**, and take extra time to help guide you towards optimal health. They hold enormous value in educating and sharing knowledge with you so that you understand your body's processes and all of the diagnoses and treatments you are given. Through teaching, they encourage you to take responsibility for your health.

One of the beauties of Naturopathic medicine is that ND's are trained in a wide variety of therapies and will work with you to decide which ones best suit your needs. Types of treatments used include:

- **Clinical Nutrition** - Naturopathic doctors emphasize the value of food as medicine. Assessment of nutrient absorption, utilization and deficiencies are available for each patient. Digestive disturbances such as reflux, constipation, diarrhea and food sensitivities are areas of expertise. ND's provide dietary education, prescriptions and doses on vitamins, minerals and other food based supplements.

- **Botanical Medicine** - The medicinal value of plants has been known since ancient times, and in fact many of today's most commonly used pharmaceuticals are derived from traditional medicinal herbs. ND's use botanical medicines in many forms for a wide array of health concerns. Safety of herbs is often overlooked and ND's will teach you about dosing and interactions of botanical medicines with pharmaceuticals to ensure safety and efficacy. Herbal medicines are prescribed as teas, tinctures, poultices, capsules, powders, steams, and topical applications to help heal disease and promote optimal health.

- **Bio-identical Hormone Therapy** - Naturopathic Doctors assess hormonal balance for menopausal concerns, menstrual concerns, fertility, libido, thyroid health, adrenal health and many other endocrine disturbances. They offer both serum and salivary hormone testing that they send to reputable labs. There are many dietary modifications, food based supplements and herbal medicines that can have a profound effect on hormonal health. Sometimes, bio-identical hormone therapy is warranted. These bio-identical hormones such as estrogen, progesterone, DHEA, testosterone, cortisol and thyroid hormones are derived and modified from plants to have identical structures to the body's own hormones. They have fewer side effects and are much more gentle than synthetic hormone replacement therapy.

- **Homeopathy** - Involves energetic

medicines that stimulate the body's own ability to heal itself. With homeopathy, ND's address the whole person and the root cause of imbalances. The emphasis is placed on *how you experience illness*. It is a great option for children, pregnancy and acute or chronic disease. It is extremely gentle and safe and there are no drug interactions or side effects.

- **Biotherapeutic Drainage** - Offers a subtle, gentle way to detoxify the organ systems of the body. It's a therapy based on specific organ systems, detoxification pathways and elimination processes.

- **Lifestyle Counseling and Education** - Each appointment allows enough time to gather information about all aspects of health acknowledging psychological wellbeing. They emphasize the importance of addressing psychological, emotional and spiritual health as part of a holistic approach to health care. With most individuals, they do lifestyle counseling around stress, sleep habits, hydrotherapy, diet, relationship and family concerns, and exercise.

Dr. Sarah Anne Rothman is a naturopathic doctor who recently opened Pacifica Naturopathic Medicine, a clinic that serves people in the Coastside community and the San Francisco Bay Area. She holds great value in preventative medicine, offering tools to help encourage optimal wellness. Dr. Rothman treats a wide variety of health conditions and offers Naturopathic care for every age, from pediatrics to geriatrics. She holds a strong interest in women's health and focuses on hormonal balance, fertility, menopause, thyroid health, healthy aging, healthy menstrual cycles, weight management and osteoporosis. She is a certified WTS Physician with extra training in thyroid and hormonal health. She also treats a wide array of digestive troubles, food and environmental allergies, cardiovascular and metabolic disease, skin disturbances and behavioral issues.

She also offers specific group and individual programs for smoking cessation, weight loss and detoxification. She'll work with your other health care practitioners to provide the best care possible.

A wide spectrum of services are available through Pacifica Naturopathic Medicine such as food and environmental sensitivity testing, heavy metal toxicity testing, salivary hormone panels, cardiovascular and metabolic screening, digestive analysis and screening panels, organic acid testing, nutrient status and more. Dr. Rothman uses Naturopathic modalities as mentioned above including Detoxification, Hydrotherapy, and Naturopathic hands on therapies to help you reach optimum health. Dr. Rothman will work to identify the underlying cause of disease rather than suppressing symptoms. By addressing the roots of illness, the benefits of treatment are long lasting and sustainable.

Call: Dr. Sarah Anne Rothman, ND, BFA, PTS, FIS Phone: 650-380-0089

Email: info@naturopath.com

Web: www.pacificnaturopath.com

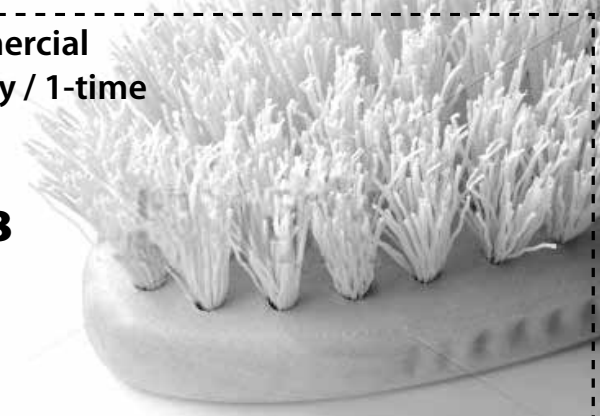
Call me 650.359.6579 with any questions you may have or emailsharon-caren@comcast.net Happy Spring J



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April Calendar

YMCA HEALTH SCREENINGS

First Wed each month | 9:30–11:30 am | Free health screenings at the Stonestown YMCA. Come every month for different screening: cholesterol, glucose, body mass index, blood pressure and bone density. Pre-register 923-3155 or cpmc-chrc@sutterhealth.org. \$10 suggested.

FRIDAY NIGHT JAZZ EVERY FRIDAY

Every Fri | 7-11 pm | Cliff House – 1 Seal Rock .

HAPPY HOUR EVERY TUESDAY

Every Tues | 4-8 pm | Que Syrah. Take \$1 off each glass, 10% off of each bottle of wine consumed at the store. 230 West Portal Avenue 731.7000

FARMERS MARKET'S

Every Sat | 10 am–2 pm | Parkmerced: . at the corner of Arballo and Serrano.

Every Sun | 10 am– 3 pm | Stonestown: at Stonestown Galleria (19th Avenue @ Winston)

FREE AFTERNOON CONCERTS

Every Mon–Wed–Fri | 1 pm | Knuth Hall, SF State, 1600 Holloway. 415/338-2467.

BUGS! AUTHOR HUGH RAFFLES

Tue–Wed 6,7 | 7 pm | Hugh Raffles will discuss *Insectopedia* at BookShop West Portal. 80 West Portal Ave Info: 564-8080.

22ND ANNUAL WEST PORTAL STREETFAIR

Fri–Sun 9–11 | 10 am–5 pm | The 22nd Annual Fine Arts and Crafts Show takes place in the heart of West Portal Avenue Friday - Sunday, April 9-11, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on West Portal Avenue between 15th and Ulloa 566-3500.

CANCER AND NUTRITION

Mon 12 | 5:30–7 pm | Managing eating during treatment. Learn how to deal with the side effects. 2100 Webster St. Ste. 106. 923-3155 to preregister. \$10

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

Wed 14 | 12:30–2 pm | Managing stress and caring for others, making use of your inherent skills and community resources. 2100 Webster St. Ste. 106. 923-3155 to preregister. \$10

BLUEGRASS BONANZA

Fri 16 | 9:30 pm | The Earl Brothers and Devine's Jugband. Plough and Stars 116 Clement Street @ 2nd Ave. \$6-\$10 (sliding scale)

MEET SESAME STREET CHARACTERS @ZOO

Fri 16 | 10 am–4 pm | Sesame Street Live Meet and Greet—see Bert, Ernie and Grover, take pictures, enjoy games, prizes and discounts for Sesame Street Live. Free with admission. Sloat & Great Hwy.

TARAVAL POLICE DISTRICT COMMUNITY MTG

Tue 20 | 6 pm | Our monthly Taraval/Community meeting at Taraval Police Station, 2345 24th Ave (3rd Tues of each month).

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Tue 20 | 7 pm | The Twin Peaks Curves has joined a national health initiative to show women how taking small steps can make a big difference in improving their health. 608 Portola Ave Info: 759-9103.

HEALTH: INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE

Thu 22 | 6–7:30 pm | The director of the Center for Inflammatory Bowel Disorders at CPMC will discuss alternative and integrative approaches to managing Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. The session will address medications, nutrition, emotions, stress and more. There will be plenty of time for Q & A. 2333 Buchanan St, Enright Rm. 923-3155 to preregister. \$10

CHEAP BASTARD SHOW

Sat 24 | 2 pm | Featuring The Ghost, an award winning Doors Cover band that will be doing a rare unplugged (acoustic) set @ The Music Store, 66 West Portal Avenue, Free Admission

WEST OF TWIN PEAKS CENTRAL COUNCIL

Mon 26 | 7:30 pm | A resource for neighborhood organizations. Listen and comment on issues? The 4th Monday each month. 381 Magellan Ave.

AUTHOR JACQUELINE WINSPEAR

Thu 29 | 7 pm | Winspear will read from *The Mapping of Love and Death* at BookShop West Portal. 80 West Portal Ave Info: 564-8080.

Got an event? editorwso@me.com

Creative STATE

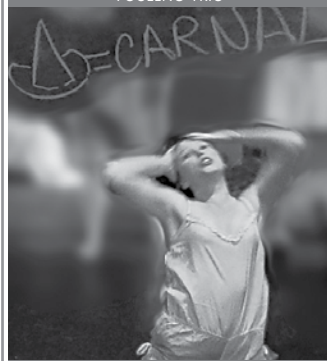
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POULENC TRIO



VINEGAR TOM



PROFESSOR ALBIRDA ROSE

MORRISON ARTISTS SERIES

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Combining brilliant 21st-century vibrancy with the best of European instrumental tradition—on oboe, bassoon and piano.

SUNDAY, APRIL 11, 3PM, MCKENNA THEATRE, FREE
PRE-CONCERT TALK: 2PM

VINEGAR TOM

BY CARYL CHURCHILL

DIRECTED BY BARBARA DAMASHEK

This musical cleverly combines contemporary music and 17th century witchcraft trials of England to expose the ongoing discrimination and marginalization of women. The title refers to a witch's familiar spirit.

APRIL 29–MAY 9, LITTLE THEATRE, FROM \$10 IN ADVANCE

2010 M.F.A. THESIS EXHIBITION

Seven artists, on the cusp of completing SF State's rigorous graduate program, exhibit works in textiles, sculpture, painting, conceptual and information arts, photography and printmaking.

APRIL 24–MAY 14, WED–SAT, 11AM–4PM, FINE ARTS GALLERY, FREE
OPENING RECEPTION/SENIOR OPEN HOUSE: APRIL 24, 1–3PM
DOCENT-LED TOURS FOR GROUPS: 415/405-2849

RETIREMENT CELEBRATION FOR PROFESSOR ALBIRDA ROSE

Dance alumni perform in honor of the retiring professor, including Ase Dance Collective, Kendra Kimbrough-Barnes and Travis Rowlands. Proceeds benefit SF State's Village Dancers program.

APRIL 17, 8PM, MCKENNA THEATRE, \$20

SF STATE ORCHESTRA

The 48-member symphony orchestra performs works by Saint-Saëns and Franck. Conducted by Cyrus Ginwala.

APRIL 15, 8PM, KNUTH HALL, FROM \$8 IN ADVANCE

AFTERNOON CONCERTS

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1PM, KNUTH HALL, FREE

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BROWN BAG THEATRE, FREE



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EVENTS HOTLINE: 415/338-2467

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Easter Sunrise at Mt. Davidson

Annual Celebration at America's largest cross begins at 7am Sunday, April 4th.

San Francisco's grandest Easter morning tradition gets under way at 7:00 a.m. on Sunday, April 4 at the 88th Annual Easter Sunrise Service at Mt. Davidson Cross, located atop The City's highest peak. Free Admission.

A number of community leaders will participate in the citywide event, an SF Firefighters Honor Guard presentation and musical performances by Lynne Miller of The House of Bagpipes, soloist Damien Carter, Gospel singer Shelen Huey-Booker and the YUPP Community Youth Choir, and The Salvation Army Brass Ensemble, which will perform a Sunrise Prelude beginning at 6:50 a.m.

Special bus service begins at 4:45 a.m. and runs every 15 minutes from Forest Hill Station to the park gate located at the intersection of Lansdale Avenue, Myra Drive and Dalewood Way – two blocks south of Portola Drive. Call 673-MUNI for further transit information.

America's largest cross (103-feet-tall) will be illuminated throughout the evening of April 3 by spotlights totalling 48,000 watts, shining as a beacon for Easter morning pilgrims.

Sponsored by local churches and broadcast nationally in years past, the Easter Sunrise Service attendance record was set during World War II, with an estimated 50,000 worshippers in attendance. Originally dedicated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in a transcontinental ceremony in 1934, Mt. Davidson Cross has been restored by the Council of Armenian-American Organizations of Northern California, owners of the monument.



Now At the Movies • By Don Lee Miller

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

Filmmaker Tim Burton employs CGI for his new 3-D version of Lewis Carroll's old tale. The Red Queen: Helena Bonham Carter (Burton's wife) has a huge head and a waist one could reach around. She has a very bad temper: "Off with their heads!". Tweedledee and Tweedledum also get the CGI plate look. When Alice: Mia Wasikowska at 19 falls down the Rabbit hole at her engagement party, she revisits her childhood playground. The Mad Hatter: Johnny Depp has orange hair and big green eyes. Alice learns it is her destiny to end the Red Queen's Reign of Terror. The White Queen: Anne Hathaway has four layers too many of thick makeup. Voice-only characters include: Cheshire Cat: Stephen Fry, White Rabbit: Michael Sheen and Blue Caterpillar: Alan Rickman. Burton's quirkiness makes the action his own as it moves right along. Profanity.

BROOKLYN'S FINEST

This current day indictment of Brooklyn's police force has veterans that seem to be providing most of the trouble with the local gangs. There's Eddie: Richard Gere in his final week before retiring whose girlfriend is a black prostitute. Undercover cop, Tango: Don Cheadle is mixed up with the gang leader Caz: Wesley Snipes he is supposed to be apprehending. Sal: Ethan Hawke is a narcotics cop using drug money to get his down payment for a house for his pregnant wife and two kids. Ronny Rosario: Brian F. O'Byrne and Lt. Bill Hobarts: Will Patton may be the only cops who are clean. Carlo: Vincent D'Onofrio could be the luckiest one of the bunch. Director Antoine Fuqua works with Michael C. Michaels' brutal screenplay. Violence, Gore, Blood, Profanity, Adult situations.

GREEN ZONE

This Iraqi War action-thriller was released about three years after it was current news and, as such, is not as interesting

as it would have been at that time. The activity is there, but it seems dated. Now, films like The Hurt Locker are stealing its thunder. Paul Greengrass successfully directs Matt Damon here as he has in several of the Bourne movies. Chief warrant officer Roy Miller: Damon provides a riveting performance as he seeks the truth! This telling of the blundering operation of the Coalition Provisional Authority in its first year in Baghdad attributes some of the failure to Clark Poundstone: Greg Kinnear. Reporters for major newspapers, Lawrie Dayne: Amy Ryan, and Martin Brown: Brendan Gleeson, are trying to get to the bottom of the facts amongst U.S. government cover-ups. Brian Helgeland has previously written the Oscar-nominated screenplay for Mystic River and The Taking of Pelham 1 2 3. Violence, Gore, Profanity.

THE GHOST WRITER

The popular former prime minister of England, Adam Lang: Pierce Brosnan, has retired to a Cape Cod island with his wife, Ruth Lang: Olivia Williams and a full staff, including SEXretary Amelia Bly: Kim Cattrall. The timing is when Lang is pulled into the global implications of a human rights issue. The second ghost: Ewan MacGregor is brought in to polish the first draft started by the PM's former assistant before he washed up on the beach... dead! The beach compound is a miniature fortress. Robert Harris adapted his novel for the screen. The mystery thriller was directed with élan by perfectionist Oscar-winning Roman Polanski, winner of the Silver Berlin Bear for this directing job. Most violence occurs off-screen. Not a moment goes by that actually prepares the viewer for the madness of the final ten minutes! One of the best new films this year! Profanity, Sexual situations.

A PROPHET (UN PROPHETE)

Imagine the worst possible things that could go on in a French prison

with competing national factions exposed by director/co-writer Jacques Audiard (with Thomas Bidegain). This Belgian film starts with the incarceration of 17-year old Malik El Djebena: Tajar Rahim, a street kid. The gang leader, Cesar Luciano: Niels Arestrup, soon has Malik under his thumb. His first assignment is to carry a double-edged razor blade between his teeth into another prisoner's cell and slit his jugular. It pays to stay on Cesar's good side. After three years, Malik advances to more dangerous assignments! Violence, Male nudity, Blood-letting, Profanity. (French with English subtitles) Nominated for Best Foreign Language Film Oscar!?!

REPO MEN

Miguel Sapochnik directs this sci-fi action thriller set in the near future starring Remy: Jude Law (with a barcode neck tattoo and new buzz cut) and Jake: Forest Whitaker as grade school friends who grow up to work for The Union, the company that repossesses body parts that aren't being paid for. A hidden locator assists Remy and Jake to find the delinquent payers and remove the artificial organs on screen...surgically! Their boss, Frank: Liev Schreiber, is cool, ruthless, heartless. Remy's wife, Carol: Carice van Houten, gives him an ultimatum that he gets out of the repossessing business and into sales...or else! When he finds he is locked out and can't even see their son, Peter: Chandler Canterbury, Remy takes her seriously. A singer, Beth: Alice Braga, he once knew comes back into his life. Be prepared for the satirical humor! Violence, Gore, Bloooooo!, Profanity.



At the Theater • By Dr Annette Lust and Flora Lynn Isaacson

PREVIEW : THE LITTLE PRINCE

The popular *Little Prince* by Saint Exupéry, one of the most read and reread book by adults and children, combines the adventures of the Prince on his visit to the planet Earth with the wisdom of the author about how the characters the Prince meets waste their time on futile concerns. Rather we learn that “it is the time that we waste on other human beings that makes them so important.”

We first meet the Prince when the aviator, representing the author has landed his plane in the desert to repair it. The Prince questions the pilot as he does others characters he meets about their activities on Earth. Among them is the Business Man who is so busy counting the stars that he tells the Prince he cannot be disturbed. When the Prince meets the haughty King and mentions he likes sunsets, the King offers to order a sunset for him. The Prince, a keen observer of the vanity and folly of humans concludes that all of these grown-ups are strange beings preoccupied with superficial values. “it is only with the heart that one can really see; what is essential is invisible to the eye.” It is these human truths that we encounter throughout the story that make *The Little Prince* a work of compassion and depth.

The play, adapted from the French by Annette Lust, will be performed by Bay Area actors along with 11 other short pieces by Bay Area playwrights at The Fringe of Marin on weekends from April 16 through May 2 at Dominican University and in Santa Rosa on January 25th as well as later in other Bay Area venues. Info: (415) 673-3131 or visit www.FringeofMarin.com. Dr. Annette Lust

34TH ANNUAL BAY AREA THEATRE CRITICS

The biggest theatre gathering of the year promises to be on Monday, May 3, 2010, when the SF Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle proudly hosts its 34th Annual Awards Ceremony to celebrate Bay Area theatre excellence during 2009. Awards will be given at the Palace of Fine Arts Theatre Lobby for outstanding achievement during 2009.

The complete list of Nominees is at theatrebayarea.org/programs.

Representing the print and electronic media, the Circle will announce the winners of 37 Drama awards and 38 Musical awards from 250+ nominated actors, designers, productions, and more reviewed in 2009. Over 400 productions were seen in 2009 by the 23 Circle critics reviewing theatre from San Jose to Santa Rosa, San Francisco to Concord.

Following the economic disasters of 2002, the Circle's corporate donations

disappeared. But this year with the generous support of the Actors' Equity Association (sponsor of this year's event), the Circle once again invites the public to gather and celebrate in a fun and electric atmosphere of award hopefuls and appreciative theatre-goers.

Joining the Circle 23 years ago, I can attest that we are a wide-ranging bunch of strong personalities who span about a 50-year age range with 15 male and 8 female critics who all concur that there's an outstanding variety of theatre excellence throughout the Bay Area to be recognized and celebrated.

All are invited to join us in applauding the talented theatre folk who make magic on our local stages. In addition to presenting the Awards, there will be light refreshments and entertainment. Dress is business casual to formal. And, hey, there's free parking.

Tickets are on sale now! 34th Annual Awards Ceremony on May 3 (Monday, doors open at 6pm, awards begin at 7:30pm) at Palace of Fine Arts Theatre Lobby, 3301 Lyon Street, San Francisco. Tickets (\$20) are available at brownpapertickets.com or may be purchased at the door the night of the event (\$20 cash only). Tom Kelly, Annette Lust

A STAR IS BORN IN COM'S HAMLET

David Abrams stars as Hamlet at the College of Marin. He is audible and natural in his every speech.

His *Hamlet* is not mad for a single moment, he is playing mad. At the outset, the Prince is depressed by his father's death, his uncle's election to the throne, and his mother's remarriage. Under the circumstances, his melancholy is not excessive. Not until he meets his father's Ghost (Charles Isen) has he the slightest inkling that his Uncle Claudius (David Kester) has committed murder and his mother Gertrude (Molly Noble), adultery.

She has no knowledge of her present husband's crime, though of her innocence, Hamlet is not certain.

This sold-out play is superbly directed by James Dunn, a veteran director at the College of Marin for 45 years. Dunn has a wonderful cast which includes David Kester (Technical Director for Fringe of Marin Festival) in a magnificent performance as Claudius, a foe well worthy of Hamlet's steel, Molly Noble in a regal and sympathetic portrayal of Gertrude, Ian Swift as a professorial Polonius, Hamlet's late father's senior counselor, and Ariel Harrison as Ophelia, daughter of Polonius and in love with Hamlet, who goes from a giggling schoolgirl to a really sexy mad scene.

This sold-out production closed March 21

could stand a longer run so more people could enjoy it. Flora Lynn Isaacson

DEN OF THIEVES HITS THE JACKPOT

In the hands of playwright Stephen Adly Guirgis, Director Susi Damilano, and a talented cast, *Den of Thieves* is a very entertaining two hours of theater. This clever comedy that opened March 13 is a crime-caper tale crossed with a 12 step program satire to often hilarious effect.

Maggie (Kathryn Tkel) is a shoplifter looking to change her life. Paul (Casey Jackson) is her sponsor in a 12 step program. Flaco (Chad Deverman) is her charismatic, but jealous, drug-dealing ex-boyfriend.

Boochie (Corinne Proctor), Flaco's girlfriend, is a topless dancer. When this unlikely foursome band together to steal \$750,000 in unprotected drug money, they become prisoners in a mob boss' (Joe Madero) basement. Told they have until sunrise to choose one person to die and three to donate their thumbs, the four engage in verbal gymnastics as they struggle for self awareness and self acceptance in a highly energized battle for survival with organized criminals, little Tuna (Ashkon Davaron), Sal (Peter Ruacco) and Big Tuna (Joe Madero).

Den of Thieves through April 17 | SF Playhouse. Tickets 415-577-9596 or at sfplayhouse.org. Next: "Slasher" by Allison Moore, April 28-June 5. Flora Lynn Isaacson

THE BOYS NEXT DOOR

Tom Griffin's 1984 play, *The Boys Next Door* is about four mentally challenged men in a group home.

The first person we meet is Arnold, played by David Yen whose disabilities include being excessively neurotic, always wanting to set up a plan, and being easily distracted. The next roommate is Lucien, played by Wendell H. Wilson, mentally retarded with the maturity level of a 5 year old. We next meet the Social Worker, Jack, very well played by Timothy Beagley in his portrayal of the turmoil inside of himself, who comes to visit the boys. The third roommate we meet is Norman, played by Josh List, who is given the donuts that were not sold at a local donut shop. His character had the most interaction with others outside the household. There were a few scenes at the weekly dance facility, and he was able to fall in love with Sheila, charmingly played by Monique Sims. The final roommate of the group is Barry in a stellar performance by Brook Robinson who sees himself as a golf pro. We see him slip through reality as he interacts with different people. A scene between Barry and his father, played by Jeff Garrett, was very emotional and life-changing for Barry.

Continues through April 18 at Ross Valley Players Barn Theatre. Tickets, 415-456-9555 or visit www.rossvalleyplayers.com. Coming up next: Top Girls May 21-June 20. Flora Lynn Isaacson

West Portal April 9-11

West Portal Avenue's 22nd Annual Sidewalk Arts and Crafts Show

The 22nd Annual Fine Arts and Crafts Show takes place in the heart of West Portal Avenue Friday - Sunday, April 9-11, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on West Portal Avenue between 15th and Ulloa.

Local residents and tourists alike flock to admire the works of more than 75 artists displaying everything from photography, paintings, wood sculptures, jewelry and much more. The show is free to the public and sponsored by the West Portal Avenue Association.

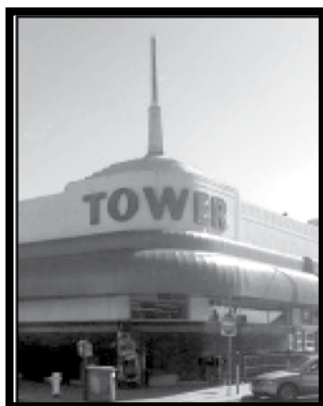
Among the artists presenting at this year's festival are Laura Blacona and Alberto Toscano of San Francisco who have been producing beautiful functional art pieces since 1994. Their creations are based on a process of Venetian Glass-making called Millefiori, which in Italian means "a thousand flowers." Instead of glass, Alberto and Laura use Polymer Clay which allows them to create more intricate and detailed work. Their works includes decorated salt and pepper shakers and glow-in-the-dark switch plates, which are always a favorite at arts and crafts shows.

Ava Austin of Santa Rosa first started painting as she earned a degree in kinesiology. After deciding to pursue her passion for a living, Ava went from painting six foot canvasses to putting her designs onto six inch pieces of copper, which can then be forged into any shape - a product she named FaCuff. Today, she has two lines of these wearable paintings. Both groups incorporate a form of acrylic paint. "The metal FaCuffs are further embellished with tiny glass marbles, precious and semi precious stones, bronze, silver and gold pieces."

Jeweler John Osterhaug of San Francisco creates all of his work from start to finish. He begins the process by cutting, sanding, drilling and kiln-firing multi-colored pieces of glass and then crafts them into earrings, pendants, rings, necklaces and bracelets. "The method that I use to create my jewelry results in a unique set of work exhibiting a luminescent quality that glistens and glows as you move it," said John.

Among other artists participating will be Jeff Nelson and Hans Schwyter of New Windsor, NY showing their stunning marquetry wall art; O'Day Presley of Angels Camp, California displaying his wood carvings and paintings inspired by and related to golf, and Laura Wilde of Daly City with her unique, handmade kaleidoscopes.

For more information contact the West Portal Avenue Association at (415) 566-3500 or Pacific Fine Arts at (209) 267-4394 or visit www.pacificfinearts.com.



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Celebrate Talent in Our Schools

By Carol Kocivar

I don't know about you but I love the way you can now click events on your email and they—by magic—show up on your calendar.

Some of the best events in town are the visual and performing arts programs by students in our public schools.

Here are a number of events that I hope you put on YOUR calendar!

Love's Philosophy: An Opera Gala

Sunday, Apr 18, 2010 | 2:00 pm

SF School of the Arts, Drama Studio, 555 Portola Dr., SF
Tel (415) 695-5700 to confirm time and dates.

Talented youth from San Francisco's acclaimed performing arts high school, SOTA, will be featured in an afternoon of operatic selections from Don Giovanni, Iolanta, The Magic Flute, Semele, Eugene Onegin, Idomeneo and more. This is a rare opportunity to hear digital-age youth perform classic works. Come support public arts education in San Francisco and hear fabulous music at an affordable price.

Peer Gynt

Fri. & Sat Apr 16 & 17 at 7:30pm

Fri. Apr 23 at 4:30pm and 7:30pm

Sat. Apr 24 at 2:00pm and 7:30pm

School of the Arts Theatre Dept, 555 Portola Dr., SF
Tickets: Adults \$15 Students (K-12) and Seniors \$10
SOTA DRAMA STUDIO (In the Gym, enter through the "Red Doors," lower level, below the student parking lot)
www.sfsota-ptsa.org/schedPublic.cfm

Tel (415) 695-5700 to confirm time and dates.

The West Coast Premier of the new adaptation of Peer Gynt by David Henry Hwang and Stephan Muller of Henrik Ibsen's Henrik Ibsen's classic is revisited with the use of contemporary metaphors and language.

Band Concert

Fri Apr 9 7pm – 9:30pm

Orchestra - Spring Concert

Thu, April 15, 7:30pm – 9:30pm

Lowell High School, 101 Eucalyptus Drive, SF
Tel. 415-759-2730 to confirm time and dates

Young At Art

May 8-16, 2010

De Young Museum, Golden Gate Park

The San Francisco Unified School District proudly unveils Young at Art; an 8 day celebration of student creativity in visual, literary, media and performing arts hosted by the world renowned de Young Museum in Golden Gate Park from May 8-16, 2010 (closed Monday, May 10, 2010).

For the past 24 years this unique San Francisco event, (formerly San Francisco Youth Arts Festival), has been a point of destination for families, teachers, artists and community members from San Francisco and beyond. The promise of equity and access in arts education for all students K-12 during the curricular day, made real by the SFUSD's groundbreaking Arts Education Master Plan, finds its point of destination in Young at Art, where all who attend may see for themselves the inspiration and creativity inherent in all of our youngest San Franciscans!
www.youngatartsf.com/

Feedback: kocivar@westsideobserver.com

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Running With the Jackrabbits

By Sergio Nibbi



The winter rains have finally stopped, surrendering to a victorious sun while new buds and blossoms emerge, bringing with them a brand new spring. Spring time! A new beginning, another chance at life, new crops, new vintages, new tastes. The hostile winter is quickly being replaced

by the aroma of grilled hamburgers and plump hot dogs and what better place to enjoy this rebirth than in Arizona, where it's time once again for spring training, that yearly pilgrimage that starts in March and ends in October with that grandest prize of all, a World Series ring.

Spring break in Scottsdale is not what you would expect to see in the college Mecca of Florida. You're not likely to find too many bikinis or beer chugging contests to draw the interest of the world media. These visitors graduated many years ago and they all wear straw hats and drive big cars, unless they're in wheel chairs. The women all wear resort clothing draped with dozens of beads around their necks as if ready to grace the pages of Playboy's next Mardi Gras issue — show you my what? Style in the stands is more important than love on the beach, but after all, there's a time and place for everything. Considering the age group around here, it's probably just as well. Let's just stick to baseball and early-bird dinners.

This is also the weekend where the Giants' partners gather in Scottsdale to be anointed by the baseball Gods hoping once again to be the best of the best. On Friday night the festivities began with a lavish party hosted by the Charros, a local service group which provides volunteer services at the ballpark, the hospital and many other local causes. The members are as proud as they are handsome in their starched white shirts and crisp blue blazers, ready to welcome you at the door and escort you to the many food stations and refreshment areas. The food stations all have an international flare, but the Italian, Mexican and American venues had a tough time competing with the dessert table heavily laden with various flavors of ice cream, hot sauces and an endless variety of chocolate toppings. The baron of beef ruled, but the hot fudge sundaes won the prize. No one went home hungry or thirsty.

The biggest treat by far for the guests, is the ability to work the room, collecting autographs from all the players, old and new. Orlando Cepeda is always a regular and still fits the name "Baby Bull." All you need is a handful of baseballs and the autographs are graciously provided.

For an autograph hound this is Nirvana, like a 49er prospecting for gold. I managed to grab Barry Zito and Willie McCovey while talking to Rich Aurilia about his cooking talents. He's as serious about food as he is about assisting in a 6-4-3 double play.

The players walk the room, confident, anxious, ready to start a new season, while the rookies look on, hoping to make the team, sign that big contract and become part of that elite group of in-your-face, front of the sports page athlete who we all take so much for granted.

Another tradition is the Saturday night gathering at Don & Charlie's where the owners and coaches gather to celebrate the new season and chat about the winning ways of the World Series-bound San Francisco Giants. As in the past Willie Mays and Willie McCovey share the same table and again gladly sign autographs. Outside, customers press their noses against the windows of our room trying to grab a glimpse of these fabulous players — long past their prime, but still heroes in everyone's mind. Before leaving, Willie Mays always dates and signs the tablecloth. I'm sure that one did not go in the laundry bag that evening.

Following the dinner, Larry Baer introduced the front office staff and the coaches. Duane Kuiper and Mike Krukow had a few choice comments, and then it was

Jon Miller's turn with a few tales while poking a little fun at Lon Simmons, who always takes the time to join us all the way from his home in Hawaii.

Although spring training is always a ritual and while baseball is the main event, man can not live on baseball alone and Scottsdale certainly has its share of fine dining establishments. One of our favorites is Maestro's City Hall where everything is supersized and the cocktails cost \$16. Yes, a plain old Manhattan over ice was 16 bucks. I guess ice is expensive in the desert! Another outstanding dinner house is Lon's in the Hermosa Inn as well as T Cooks at the Royal Palms and Morton's Steak House, Ruth's Chris and Veneto where the baccala Mantecato is prepared in the true Venetian tradition.

One of our favorite spots for a take out lunch is AJ's, a beautiful market that would put Harrods's to shame and whose deli outshines Carnegie's in New York. Eddie V's Edgewater Grille is an anomaly in a land of steaks and ribs where the fish is always fresh and beautifully cooked but a trip to Scottsdale can not be complete without a hamburger at Fuddrucker's or a mound of ice cream at the Sugar Bowl.

So now opening day is just a few weeks away and hopefully the Giants will have another winning season, but most of all we all look forward to more of those thrilling games of the past — bottom of the ninth, two outs, bases loaded, three and two count, everyone standing — waiting for that rookie to hit one over the wall and into the bay. Go Giants!

Feedback: sergio@westsideobserver.com.

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FROM THE BORDER

THE NUTRITIOUS SOLITUDE OF GARDENING

By Hilary Gordon/Photos Blair Randall, ©2010

Plum The plum blossoms began the avalanche of spring and now it's spreading everywhere, as tree after tree and whole hillsides start to bloom. For gardeners who looked at their gardens through the window during the winter, it's time for the first damp forays outside. The soil is soft and alive; weeds pull out easily to the hand, and everywhere are buds, shoots, tendrils, fuzzy fern fiddleheads, mushrooms springing moistly, life itself exploding.

Flowers Gardening is an odd combination of solitude and company. Many of us do the actual work of gardening alone for hours. The rhythmic solitudes of cultivation can soothe a soul overburdened with stress and stimulation. But we are seldom truly alone in a garden. Hummingbirds challenge us in their territory, squirrels and jays scold, bugs wander from overturned rocks. Our thoughts accompany us as well. As peace rises in the soul, intuitions may occur, connections may be made, conclusions may complete themselves, and decisions may form. The rituals of gardening open up space in the jumble of a hurried week.

Poppy The nutritious solitude of gardening has an angle of loneliness in it as well. Who will admire the perfect shaping of a shrub, the artistic spacing of the renewed perennial border, the loft of a fluffy seed-bed? Who will encourage us in a moment of hopelessness before the onslaught of oxalis, bramble, ivy invaders, the infestations, the crop soggy and molding or dry and bolting?

This is when gardening books and garden writers become important allies. The best books scold and strategize as well as inspire and encourage. They remind us of what is possible as well as saying "I told you so." They become good friends, whose humorous critique and encouragement are as useful as any other garden tool.

Here are three of my current favorite gardening companions.
Pam Peirce, *Golden Gate Gardening*: "You can eat fresh garden produce all year with little need for food preservation." (p. 27)



Wendy Johnson, *Gardening at the Dragon's Gate*: "In honor of wildness inside and outside the garden gate, every spring I leave a random corner of our garden untended." (p.xii)

Toby Hemenway, *Gaia's Garden*: "...using new techniques from permaculture and ecological design,

and old ones from indigenous people and organic gardening, a few pioneers have created landscapes that feel like nature but provide a home for people as well." (p. xv)

Why not stop by an independent bookstore and take home a friend to garden with?

Hilary Gordon is Perennial Plants Collection Manager at the GFE. A life-long gardener, trained at the City College Horticulture program, she has worked as a professional landscape gardener from 1984 until the present.

Have a question for Hilary? Meet her in the garden Wednesdays 10-2 and Saturdays 10-4. Feedback: hilary@westsideobserver.com



Plum at Garden for the Environment

Going Native Garden Tour - April 18

Are you interested in gardens that are water-wise and low maintenance, attractive to humans as well as birds and butterflies? Visit them on the Bay Area's 8th annual Going Native Garden Tour on Sunday, April 18, 2010, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. This is a free, self-guided tour of home gardens landscaped with California native plants.

This year's tour offers over 65 gardens for viewing — from townhome lots to 1-acre plots, from newly planted gardens to established ones. You won't have to go far to see one: the gardens are located throughout the Santa Clara Valley and the Peninsula. Visit as many gardens as you like — for inspiration and ideas and for pictures (with owner's permission). Native plants will be available for purchase at select gardens. Many gardens will feature talks on native plant gardening.

What's special about California native plants? They are adapted to our soil and climate, and are easy to care for. Many of our native plants are naturally water-wise and drought tolerant. They support a wide variety of wildlife that has co-evolved with them, and their distinctive look and elegant beauty gives your garden a sense of place that is uniquely Californian.

The self-guided tour is open to all. Admission is free; registration is required at www.gngt.org before April 18, 12 noon, or until the tour reaches capacity. Space is limited; register early to ensure a place. For more information, email info@gngt.org.

The tour is organized entirely by volunteers. Volunteers receive a t-shirt with original art and invitations to visit native gardens throughout the year. To volunteer, visit www.gngt.org and click on "Volunteer Registration". Knowledge of native plant gardening is a plus but not required to volunteer.

The Yerba Buena Chapter of the California Native Plant Society's 6th annual Native Plant Garden Tour is Sunday April 25 from 11am to 3pm. A map, descriptions and list of addresses can be found at www.cnps-yerbabuena.org.

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Durst (Cont. from p. 1)

minority voted for the health care bill. Not one. That's not a political party, that's the Borg. "RESISTANCE IS FUTILE." The reanimated Halloween pumpkin that is Senator Mitch McConnell remains determined to continue the construction of his cement wall of obstructionism turning "The Party of No," into "The Party of Hell No," veering dangerously close to "The Party of Screw You!"

People may mock Obama for his Messianic glaze, but you got to relish this resurrection of health care which makes Lazarus risen look like a third grade magician's trick. Focus a telescope and you can make out the scuff marks on the bill's knees from where it climbed out of the morgue drawer. Maybe now we should try handing the President seven loaves and seven fishes and see what he does with that. Or better yet, seven loaves and seven sausages.

Feedback: Durst@westsideobserver.com



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www.JulieBehn.com

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			4				1	
		9		3	2		4	
2	5			6				
					6		8	9
8		3				1		7
5	9		8					
				7			9	3
	4		6	5		2		
	7				1			

Rules: Each puzzle is a 9 by 9 grid of squares divided into nine 3 by 3 square blocks, with some of the numbers filled in for you.

The Object: Fill in the blank squares in such a way that each of the numbers 1 to 9 appears exactly once in each row, column and block.

Answer: The answer appears aside.

9	5	8	1	4	6	2	7	3
1	7	2	3	5	9	8	4	6
3	6	4	8	7	2	5	1	9
4	9	3	7	2	8	1	6	5
7	2	1	4	6	5	3	9	8
6	8	5	9	1	3	7	2	4
8	3	7	6	9	1	4	5	2
5	4	9	2	3	7	6	8	1
2	1	6	5	8	4	9	3	7

BRAIN FUD

It's about "Thirst"

This teaser is in honor of man's quest to quench his thirst with non-alcoholic beverages. Can you figure out what drinks are depicted below?

- Joint between thigh and lower leg + having great elevation + yielding readily to pressure + swallowing liquid contents.
- A practitioner of medicine + spicy hot pod like fruit that grows on plants.
- Dried and powdered rhizome used as spice + another name for beer.
- Underground portion of a plant + another name for ale.
- A natural elevation of the earth's surface having considerable mass and a height greater than that of a hill + water droplets condensed from the air.
- A powder made from cacao seeds + tropical African evergreen plant having reddish fragrant nutlike seeds.

1. Nehi Soft Drink. (Knee + high + soft + drink.)

2. Dr Pepper. (Doctor + pepper.)

3. Ginger Ale. (Ginger + ale.)

4. Root Beer. (Root + beer.)

5. Mountain Dew. (Mountain + Dew.)

6. Coca-Cola. (Cocoa + Kola.)

Answer

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Gold Mine Hill and the surrounding area in the Diamond Heights district, June 26, 1953 Notes Newscoy: "THE VACANT HEIGHTS—Big, empty hill in center of this picture is Gold Mine Hill, one of three vacant heights on which Redevelopment Agency proposes to build 2300 dwellings. In foreground is Miraloma Park, just beyond that is O'Shaughnessy-blvd and dropping off from the boulevard is Glen Canyon, part of Diamond Heights development which will become big park under present plan. To the left are Twin Peaks, with Midtown Terrace at far left. Photo was taken from Mt. Davidson."

PHYLLIS' FINDINGS

By Phyllis Sherman

THE CASE AGAINST VANITY PLATES

I have this thing about car vanity plates. I'm convinced that the people who invest in vanity plates (and it does cost money)...with their name or profession embossed...are either insecure, egocentric, vain or pretentious. (Maybe all four.) Why else is it necessary to proclaim to the world that "Joe Blow" or "Jay Tooth DDS" is driving his Chevy Blazer or yellow Mercedes, as the case may be. Seinfeld had a funny schtick recently when Kramer (in one of their reruns) ordered vanity plates and the DMV mixed them up with someone else's and so Kramer had plates that said ASSMAN. Jerry and cohorts spent quite a while until they discovered that they belonged to a proctologist who was glad to get them back.

I had a friend in Connecticut some years ago who was quite a ladies' man. As a matter of fact he "ladies' manned" all over town until he realized that his vanity plates caused him untold misery. Everyone knew where he was at all times which was certainly not his intention given his predilection for fun and games.

If you want to have vanity plates, stick to vanity dental plates. Then you only make a statement every time you open your mouth.

HERE'S SOMETHING THEY DIDN'T TELL YOU IN THE SF PAPERS:

Anyone convicted of a crime knows a debt to society often must be paid in jail. But a slice of Californians willing to supplement that debt with cash (no personal checks, please) are finding that the time can be most bearable. For offenders whose crimes are usually relatively minor (carjackers should not bother) and whose bank accounts remain lofty, a dozen or so city jails across the state offer pay-to-stay-upgrades. Theirs are a clean, quiet, if not exactly recherche's alternative to the standard county jails, where the walls are bars, the fellow inmates are hardened and the privileges are few. Many of the self-pay jails operate like secret velvet-roped night-clubs of the correction world. You have to be in the know to even apply for entry, and even if the court approves your sentence there, jail administrators can operate like bouncers, rejecting anyone they wish. One 22 year old gal said "I'm aware that this is considered to be a five-star Hilton." She was recently booked into one of the Orange County jails and paid \$82 per day to complete a 21 day sentence for a drunken driving conviction She shopped around for the best accommodations and said from a sort of couch found in a hospital ER and spoke from a jail day room, "this place is clean, safe, and everyone

here is really nice."

Next time the cops pick you up, consider this option, tell them you'll pay a little extra and ask for the creme brulee.

On the entertainment front...DEN OF THIEVES at the S.F. PLAYHOUSE is a hilarious spoof about an odd quartet of misfits when they attempt to rip off the mob and are involved in a very funny 12-step program lampoon. Director Susi Damilano has done it again and you have until April 12 to enjoy. By the time you read this, VIGIL with Marco Barricelli and Olympia Dukakis will be at ACT. Written and directed by Morris Panych, early reports have given it rave reviews.

In the film department, if you're a depressive type, you may enjoy the hostile Ben Stiller in GREENBERG. He plays a 40 year old man recently released from a mental hospital who spends time writing complaining letters to the airlines about their lack of foot room and to Starbucks about some other deficiency and to sundry other organizations bitching about something. It received good reviews but I left more despondent after seeing this film than when I came in.

Another film that won accolades is the GREEN ZONE. Officer Matt Damon leads his men into worthless empty sites in Iraq in search of the elusive, non-existent Weapons of Mass Destruction. Another war movie with two hours of bombings and battles that you may enjoy if you like those things

ENDJOKES: An elderly woman in Florida is talking to her friend, "Everyone in the recreation room talks about their travels and I've never been anywhere." Her friend says, "Sara, they haven't been either. They're just making it up. You make something up too." So the next day she tells everyone, "You know what? I just returned from Rome and had an audience with the Pope." "No kidding," someone says, "what's he like?" "Well, I was invited to lunch and he was really very nice but I didn't much care for his wife."

A woman came home, screeching her car into the driveway, and ran into the house. She slammed the door and shouted at the top of her lungs, "Honey, pack your bags, I won the lottery!" The husband said, "Oh my God! What should I pack, beach stuff or mountain stuff?:" "Doesn't matter," she said. "Just get out!"



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Locals to Run in the Boston Marathon for the American Liver Foundation

Although best known as home of Plymouth Rock, the Boston Red Sox, The Kennedy compound and the Boston Tea Party, Massachusetts is widely acclaimed for its elite Boston Marathon® event. Over 20,000 people from across the world will gather on Monday, April 19 to run 26.2 miles of the most challenging race course in the world. San Francisco residents James Casby, 28, Sally Crocker, 29, Sakura Suzuki, 32, and John Fry, 47 are both competing in the Marathon and raising thousands of dollars for those who suffer from life-threatening liver diseases. As members of the American Liver Foundation's Run for Research® team, they are helping over 30 million Americans who suffer from liver disease. Fifty percent of US children and adolescents who are overweight or obese have non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) and approximately 21,000 Americans are diagnosed with primary liver cancer each year. Over 15,000 children are hospitalized every year with pediatric liver diseases or disorders. This year, 239 runners from 26 states, Washington , DC , and Canada , comprise the American Liver Foundation's Run for Research® (RFR) team. Each team member raises money to support liver disease research, education and advocacy. On Marathon Monday, hours of rigorous training will be a dim memory as these runners tackle the course from Hopkinton , Massachusetts , through the heartbreaking hills of Newton , and subsequently to the finish line in the heart of Boston.



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