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Neighbors' Pressure Prevails

Good news for everyone who loves Golden Gate Park: SF's Public Utilities Commission (PUC) will move its planned waste water treatment facility out of Golden Gate Park!

By George Wooding

The PUC has finally agreed to move its planned waste water treatment plant due to opposition from park advocates and a general love of Golden Gate Park. Acting as a responsible City agency, the PUC wants to be a good steward to the environment and a friend to the people who use the park.

When completed, the proposed treatment plant will provide two million gallons per day of treated water for non-potable purposes, such as irrigation or toilet water. Customers would include Golden Gate Park, the Lincoln Park and Presidio golf courses, and the California Academy of Sciences.

According to Steven Ritchie, PUC Assistant Manager of Water Enterprises, "On one hand, I'm quite happy that the recycled water plant is no longer proposed for Golden Gate Park because it leaves options open for the future of the corner of Golden Gate Park. On the other hand, the proposed solution at Oceanside will cost more."

The proposed water treatment plant was going to be located at the corner of Lincoln Avenue and the Great Highway. The 4.0 acres of park land dedicated to the waste water plant are adjacent to the Recreation and Park Department's (RPD) planned 7.5 acre soccer stadium. The stadium will feature seating, 60-foot-high stadium lights, synthetic-turf soccer fields, and extra parking. The stadium lights will remain on until 10:00 p.m. every night. The \$12 million RPD soccer stadium has been designed to



Sheriff Ross Mirkarimi, his wife, Eliana Lopez, and son, Theo, at his inauguration Jan. 8, 2012

City Enters Uncharted Territory in Mirkarimi Case

Rules on official misconduct proceedings are vague to nonexistent

By Matt Smith, The Bay Citizen/baycitizen.org

When San Francisco Supervisor Ed Jew faced the prospect of an Ethics Commission hearing on official misconduct charges in 2007, his attorneys filed motions attempting to shut the process down, and when that failed, recommended that Jew resign rather than face an untested process with vague, and even nonexistent, rules.

Now, with Sheriff Ross Mirkarimi confronting official misconduct charges, the process is not much clearer.

"It's making it up as you go. If people say different, they're not telling the truth," said Stuart Hanlon, a lawyer who represented Supervisor Ed Jew in 2007 when he faced charges that he'd extorted business owners and falsely claimed to live in the district he was elected to represent. "What's the burden of truth? If hearsay comes in, what do we do? Who gets to ask questions? Is the standard a preponderance of evidence? Is it clear and convincing evidence? Nobody knows. They make it all up."

Mayor Ed Lee suspended Mirkarimi without pay for official misconduct Wednesday, two days after he was sentenced to three years' probation for falsely imprisoning his wife, Eliana Lopez, during an argument on Dec. 31. The case now moves to the city's



The Southwest corner of Golden Gate Park wins a major victory, but still faces degradation replace the current Beach Chalet natural grass soccer fields that will be irrevocably destroyed.

The PUC's waste water treatment facility's new location will straddle the boundary between the Oceanside Waste Water facility and the Armory property next door. The PUC's Steven Ritchie deserves a lot of credit for finding this new alternative location. Ritchie states,

"In looking at alternative sites, one thing I observed was that the National Guard Armory had always been discounted as a possible site because of the existing 99-year lease of which we're in year 57. It took some work, but we found the colonel in charge of facilities for the National Guard. They were unwilling to give up the use of their existing operational area, but we were able to reach tentative agreement to nibble at the edge of the leased property. We need

“

Neighborhood outrage about the problems caused by the old plant was so great that Section 4.113 was added to the City Charter in 1995, which states "No park land may be sold or leased for non-recreational purposes, nor shall any structure on park property be built, maintained or used for non-recreational purposes..."

to pin that down, but the result is a good plant site."

The PUC used to operate the Richmond-Sunset Water treatment plant at the corner of Lincoln Avenue and the Great Highway in Golden Gate Park until the plant was shut down in 1994. Neighborhood outrage about the problems caused by the old plant was so great that Section 4.113 was added to the City Charter in 1995, which states "No park land may be sold

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Sloat Blvd. Restriping Rankles Residents

Caltrans' reduction from six lanes to four lanes with the addition of two bike lanes meets with neighbors' backlash

In a letter strongly critical of the Mayor, Caltrans and the Municipal Transportation Agency, Bill Chionsini, President of the Lakeshore Acres Improvement Club (LAIC) blasted the agencies for failure to comply with the EIR, failure to include the community in planning decisions, improper notice of impending "improvements" and endangering pedestrians and vehicular safety and, adding insult to injury, gouging the taxpayers over \$100,000 for the project.

"The re-striping of Sloat Boulevard from a six lane highway to a four lane with a bike lane in each direction has not improved either pedestrian or vehicular safety on this portion of Sloat Boulevard," Chionsini said. "Vehicles still speed unimpeded in both directions along the one mile stretch of highway between 19th Ave and Everglade Drive."

Asking the Mayor "work with the neighbors", as he promised during his campaign, the LAIC further requests that stop signs be installed on Sloat between 19th Ave and Everglade Drive at intersections where bus stops are located, at intersections where drivers can cross Sloat from residential streets and further asked that Sloat be returned to its original configuration. "We strongly urge the City to instead consider routing a bike path on Ocean Avenue from 19th Ave. to Clearfield Drive," Chionsini said, noting that such a bike path would connect with the existing Clearfield bike path. Only the Public Works Dept. has responded so far.



Photo: Mark Dreger, sanfranciscoize.com





About 100 residents attended the Redistricting meeting in District 7 at the Irish Cultural Center (Inset: Redistricting Task Force Member, Myong Leigh. He is part of the nine members that spoke as a panel during the meeting)

## Redistricting: The Final Cut

By Jonathan Farrell

With only three weeks left to the redistricting process, engaging all of the people of San Francisco to speak up is a special task. The remapping process aims at having approximately 72,000 residents in each district while keeping communities of interest intact.

Balancing the populations of each district while respecting the wishes of several diverse communities in each is the challenge. Currently there are 120 distinct neighborhoods and communities of interest.

“We have to balance out the population between 11 districts with an average of 73,203 people in each district,” said Myong Leigh, who serves on the nine-member panel, at the task force meeting held at the United Irish Cultural Center this past March 22. “We are under the average in Districts 1, 2 and 3. If we could expand the boundaries in Districts 1, 2, and 3 then we can get closer to the established average.” West Portal Ave is in District 7, yet is adjacent to District 4, which has two

percent more population than District 7. For San Franciscans, the special redistricting task force assembles every 10 years to review the census data and then listen, to testimony from citizens about their particular neighborhood communities.

Everyone who made comments praised the nine panel members for their efforts. But each person representing or speaking on behalf of a community or neighborhood was adamant that new boundary lines not divide or disrupt the cohesiveness. For example, there was concern as to whether or not the University of San Francisco belonged in District 1 or District 2. Or, should one portion of the campus belong to District 1 and the other to



District 2? These types of questions are ones that the panel must address and will often debate in public.

“Selecting” or “deselecting” a line of boundary that represents a block or two could be significant. Depending upon its size and density, one city block can be as many as 300 to over 1,000 people. A consultant is always present to “clarify” helping the panel members understand what is contained in each line and point on the map they are considering.

This is why the community meetings are so important. The task force encourages people to speak up and be heard. “These meetings are useful and have had strong turnouts in each of the

Cont. p. 5

## Sidewalk Arts and Crafts Show Returns

The Fine Arts and Crafts Show takes place in the heart of San Francisco’s well-known West Portal Avenue – an area bustling with activity, quaint retail stores, restaurants, bookshops and coffeehouses. The event will run **Friday - Sunday, April 13-15**, from 10 am to 5 pm on West Portal Avenue between 15th and Ulloa.

Local residents and tourists alike flock to admire the works of more than 60 artists displaying everything from photography, paintings, ceramics, 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 is Zenon Hipolito of Lathrop, California—a first class weaver specializing in Zapotec Native Art. Zapotec natives originated in Oaxaca of Teotitlan Del Valle and are one of the country’s largest indigenous groups, dating as far back as the sixteenth century. Zenon will be weaving rugs during the show, where he will be offering many styles, colors and sizes of rugs and pillows. He will also be taking orders for special designs or sizes.

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.

Contact the West Portal Avenue Association at 566-3500 or Pacific Fine Arts at (209) 267-4394 or visit [www.pacificfinearts.com](http://www.pacificfinearts.com).



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Getting Around

## Central Subway Reconsidered

The flow of misinformation from City Hall attempts to conceal the problems of the proposed Central Subway and to project its inevitability. However, contrary to this, the federal government has *not* completely approved its share of funding for the project. The Central Subway is proposed to run 1.4 miles from the Fourth Street Caltrain Station to a surface stop near Brannan; on to a subway stop near Howard Street; crossing under the Powell Street BART Station to a stop near Geary, and a final stop at Clay and Stockton. This route parallels a part of Muni 45 Union/Stockton and 30 Stockton routes.



Photo: Luke Thomas/fogcityjournal.com

**The analysis never considered that using some of the improvement methods studied in the Van Ness project including: low floor buses; bus bulbs; all door boarding; simultaneous loading of two buses to eliminate bunching; priority traffic signals for transit and pre-paid fares would reduce total time for short bus runs to be less than total subway time."**

The problems include:

- High federal deficits and debt. The federal share will be almost a billion dollars when we are *not* flush with funds;
- High cost, about \$1.6 billion — \$175,000 a foot — for a project with only three subway stops and one surface stop;
- At least one Congressman, Tom McClintock of Roseville, is opposed and has submitted an amendment to the Transportation bill to remove Central Subway funding as a New Starts project;
- California has declined to furnish its share of funding (from part of the High Speed Rail project, which may not happen) with Governor Brown vetoing two requests for \$61 million;
- Low projected ridership because riding the subway will *not* be faster than riding the surface bus when a rider factors in longer walks and escalators to and from stations, plus longer waits between trains;
- San Francisco's share of the construction cost is about \$500 million, mostly from our sales tax;
- The federal government is refusing to consider covering any cost overruns. This sort of project usually costs about 20% more than predicted, so our share could very well be higher;
- The Third Street line, the last major project in SF, ran about 20% over;
- Some riders on the 'T' will have to transfer and receive worse service to get to their destination, while most riders already on a 30 or 45 bus will choose not to transfer;

Muni, continually in budget difficulty, will have an added operating cost of \$15 million per year for a subway under two continuing bus routes;

Additional maintenance costs will be necessary for the extra infrastructure.

These problems need not arise because the surface bus service can be greatly improved (obviously necessary) within a few years at minimum cost, using some of the same methods Muni is currently proposing for other lines. Based on all of the above a growing group of transit advocates, professionals and residents are running an electronic petition at: <http://tinyurl.com/NO-to-CentralSubway> to tell our legislators that there are a lot of people who oppose the subway.

If you are concerned about the costs and problems of this short subway you should go to the website and sign the petition. You are not alone! A delegation including former State Senator and Judge Quentin Kopp, and former Supervisor Aaron Peskin, are going to Washington to speak to some legislators, urging them to vote against final approval of this project.

Here's how a project this bad can get so close to construction.

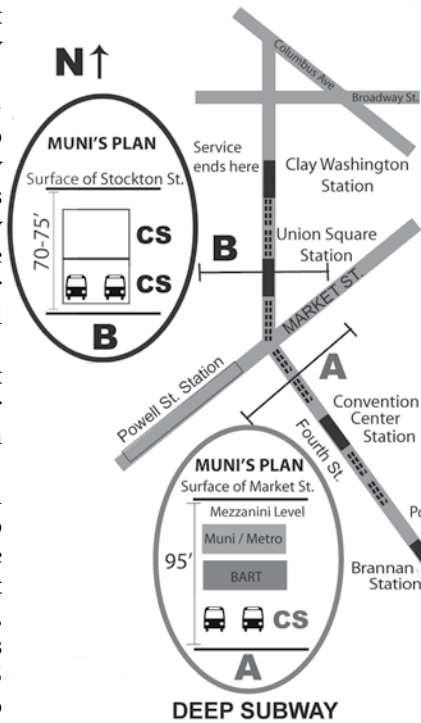
The subway is the product of a carefully-constructed script, including major

roles for:

- High rise residential development in Chinatown — a subway is thought to add value to a developer's project;
- Commercial growth as a replacement for customers lost to the tear-down of the Embarcadero Freeway after the 1989 earthquake;
- Neighborhood pride which suffers from bad transit;
- Mayor Willie Brown's promise;
- Removal of surface transit to supposedly make Stockton Street more accessible to auto traffic, even though a more complete analysis would show that most of the buses will continue to operate even if there were a subway;
- Legislative response to a growing ethnic community;
- More large contracts for large construction companies;
- High wage jobs for construction workers. These jobs will help Muni more, and happen more quickly, with the many small projects necessary to implement effectiveness improvements;
- Funding for local community groups and consultants;
- Construction of a connecting surface rail project on Third Street. This was built because a better project for Geary Boulevard was not acceptable in that neighborhood. Third Street then became part of the local matching funding that would make possible the major federal contribution.

But none of the above would have been enough without following rigid environmental analysis procedures. The analysis was based *only* on approved and scheduled improvements to Muni transit. But there were no approved improvements at that time, though many were being discussed. The analysis was based on predictions of future large increases of downtown congestion, even though many methods of reducing congestion were being discussed because the predicted congestion will unacceptably stall future San Francisco prosperity. The combination of these two required methods meant that the already slow surface buses would take 70% longer to cover the distance served by the proposed subway.

The analysis never considered that using some of the improvement methods studied in the Van Ness project including: low floor buses; bus bulbs; all door boarding; simultaneous loading of two buses to eliminate bunching; priority traffic signals for transit and pre-paid fares would reduce total time for short bus runs to be less than total subway time. Concentrating service to the core of the service routes by turning nearly empty buses back, a procedure used on other Muni routes, can increase service at no additional cost and eliminate



## RUMINATIONS FROM A FORMER SUPERVISOR By Quentin Kopp

### Malfeasance, Misfeasance or Nonfeasance?

As the April 2012 *Westside Observer* "goes to press", the major media event locally continues to emanate from the criminal action surprisingly instituted by the District Attorney against Sheriff Ross Mirkarimi. Readers already know that Mr. Mirkarimi, in a remarkable display of generosity by the District Attorney (and the Presiding Judge at the already-commenced trial), pleaded guilty to false imprisonment while the original charges of domestic violence, endangering a child and attempting to suppress evidence were dismissed as a result of a "plea bargain." (A recent United States Supreme Court decision by Justice Anthony Kennedy reminds us that approximately 95% of criminal cases in state courts result in plea bargains, actual trials are now the exception); Mirkarimi was then sentenced to three years of probation, a required anger management course, a \$590 fine and a continuing restraint against reunion with his wife, the alleged domestic violence victim who refused to testify and has proclaimed such refusal personally and through an attorney *ad nauseum* during the past two months.

**...the Mayor then suspended Mirkarimi, as sheriff, and immediately notified Mirkarimi, the Ethics Commission and Board of Supervisors in writing on March 21, 2012 of numerous written charges against Mirkarimi. Speculation as to the outcome of such proceedings abounds, particularly in questions to this one-time Board of Supervisors member and retired Superior Court Judge, probably because of my 15 years of service on the Board of Supervisors and subsequent tenure as a Superior Court Judge."**

Exercising power under Section 15.105 of the San Francisco Charter, the Mayor then suspended Mirkarimi, as sheriff, and immediately notified Mirkarimi, the Ethics Commission and Board of Supervisors in writing on March 21, 2012 of numerous written charges against Mirkarimi. Speculation as to the outcome of such proceedings abounds, particularly in questions to this one-time Board of Supervisors member and retired Superior Court Judge, probably because of my 15 years of service on the Board of Supervisors and subsequent tenure as a Superior Court Judge.

In September 1976, after then-Mayor George R. Moscone suspended Airport Commissioner Joseph P. Mazzola for official misconduct, as President of the Board of Supervisors I presided over a five day hearing on those charges which resulted in a Board of Supervisors resolution, adopted 10-1, finding Mayor Moscone's charges true and removing the Airport Commissioner from the office. Although such action was upheld in the San Francisco Superior Court, the California Court of Appeal reversed the Superior Court, holding that the evidence adduced at the Board of Supervisors five days of hearing contained no legal basis for a finding of official misconduct.

Although the Court of Appeal rejected the Airports Commissioner's contention that the term "official misconduct" was unconstitutionally vague, it held that the commissioner could not be charged with official misconduct because the charges had nothing to do with his official capacity as Airports Commissioner or performance of his duties as such. The Court of Appeal pointed out that Black's Law Dictionary defines "official misconduct" as "[any] unlawful behavior by a public officer in relation of the duties of his office, willful in its character, including any willful or corrupt failure, refusal, or neglect of an officer to perform any duty enjoined on him by law." The court also stated that "official misconduct" includes any willful malfeasance, misfeasance or nonfeasance in office and that to warrant removal of a public official, the misconduct must have direct relation to, and be connected with, the performance of official duties, and amount either to maladministration or willful and intentional neglect and failure to discharge the duties of the office in question. The court further declared that malfeasance refers to "evil conduct or an illegal deed, the doing of that which one ought not to do, the performance of an act by an officer in his official capacity that is wholly illegal and wrongful." Quoting a legal compendium, the Court of Appeal added that misconduct includes such acts "as amount to a breach of the good faith and right action that are impliedly required of all officers." The Court of Appeal the ruled: "Thus, there must be a

violation or omission of a *proscribed act* committed...*while in office*."

In this instance, the false imprisonment and the dismissed allegations of domestic violence and endangering a child occurred on December 31, 2011. Other acts assertedly occurring with next-door neighbors in the form of a potential effort to suppress a video, some e-mails and other possible evidence occurred no later than January 4, 2012. But Mirkarimi didn't become Sheriff until January 8, 2012. As far as the public and this commentator know, the acts complained of by the Mayor and City Attorney occurred while Mirkarimi was a member of the Board of Supervisors. All the foregoing is set forth to explain that a serious legal issue presents itself, even prior to Ethics Commission action much less any Board of Supervisors proceeding. Mirkarimi's attorney understandably filed suit in San Francisco Superior Court to prohibit further proceedings against him on the ground that the Charter Section 15.105, which defines official misconduct in pertinent part as "...any wrongful behavior by a public officer in relation to the duties of his or her office, willful in its character, including any failure, refusal or neglect of an officer to perform any duty enjoined on him or her by law, or conduct that falls below the standard of decency, good faith and right action impliedly required of all public officers..." Don't ask me to predict the judicial result of such legal action by Mirkarimi to stop the Ethics Commission and the Board of Supervisors proceedings. I'll leave that to the San Francisco Superior Court and eventually the California Court of Appeal. You'll observe, however, that although Charter Section 15.105 contains much broader language than existed in the Charter in 1976, the Mirkarimi case involves acts allegedly occurring *before* Mirkarimi held the office of Sheriff.

In the midst of all the turmoil, one benign and sensible event occurred, namely, the appointment of Vicki Hennessey as acting Sheriff. I know Ms. Hennessey and her husband, retired San Francisco Police Officer James Hennessey. I happily vouch for her competency. She also possesses the confidence and support of the Deputy Sheriffs and other employees of the department. She now provides San Franciscans and the Sheriff's office reliable and sound leadership and I convey to her my warm best wishes for further civic achievement and personal satisfaction in new, important responsibilities.

While all the aforementioned excitement occurred, our hard-charging Board of Supervisors was spending tax dollars again, even though in a minor way, enacting a law to provide, on a one-year test basis, attorneys to parties in civil cases.



# Beach Master

By Steve Lawrence

A master plan for Ocean Beach is being prepared. Like the ocean itself, it generally soothes the spirit, yet may hint at wildness and trouble. Three-and-a-half miles of surf, sand, and sometimes, sun is the wild west of our worldly city.

A myriad of public agencies and private groups are interested in Ocean Beach: Rec & Park, the SF Public Utilities Commission, which operates sewer infrastructure, the Zoo, Public Works with the Great Highway, and federal and state agencies from Ft. Funston to Seal Rock. Private groups include surfers, environmentalists, anglers, park protectionists and more. To tame all these, an outsider of sorts, SPUR, came to the rescue to referee and compile The Master Plan. SPUR is San Francisco Planning and Urban Research, a downtown group specializing in long-term planning.

**Will the sewer infrastructure really be protected? A storage tunnel said to be essential to the plant is vulnerable. The plan protects it with a berm of cobble and sand, and then with a hard buried seawall. As the tunnel is quite deep, it is hard to imagine how the buried seawall can be constructed. The cobble and sand berm seems cosmetic, vulnerable to the incredible wash of storm surging ocean water."**



Abundant opportunity for public input was provided. Despite that, there is fair chance that the reader has never before heard of the effort.

Planning is a balancing and juggling act. Twenty-five years ago San Francisco invested heavily in sewer infrastructure out at Ocean Beach. That investment is at risk of destruction by ocean storm waves. Environmentalists demand that threatened bird species be protected, and wish the remainder of the beach to be as natural as possible. Bikers, fishermen, surfers, kids, hang-gliders, residents and many more weighed in with their own interests.

The draft plan that SPUR has published first identifies *values* to be advanced. They conflict with one another, so the trick is to advance the most, while keeping costs reasonable and everyone happy—or not too unhappy.

The values the plan incorporates include protection of infrastructure, ecology, access, recreation, wildness, and cooperation among agencies and groups—what might be called sharing. Ecology includes protecting bird species that rely on the beach for nesting and reproduction, as well as allowing nature to take its course and thrive despite human presence.

The draft plan brims with bureaucratese, so here is a super-summary:

- South of Sloat Boulevard the Great Highway will close to general traffic. The Great Highway will be re-routed to run just east of the Zoo. Why? The rising ocean threatens; in the winter of 2009-10 it took part of the road. Some day it will take more. The idea here is to bow to the inevitable, while working to create better access and connectivity. The philosophy is called "managed retreat."

- North of Sloat the Great Highway will be reduced to two lanes. The oceanside space created will be used for amenities, for a promenade for bikers and walkers, and for dunes.

- Sand will continue to be placed, and dunes re-planted with native plantings—no more ice plant. Dunes will be allowed to migrate eastward (inland). Sand ladders for access, bike lanes, and parking, will be provided, and rest rooms.

- In the north, south of Land's End and the Cliff House, where the parking area is wide, permeable paving and plantings will create a more natural and inviting space, while the ability to host events is maintained. Bikes and pedestrians will get better access.

- The sewer infrastructure, which is mainly just south of the Zoo, is to be protected with cobbles and sand, and a buried seawall. Instead of boulders, which have been dumped when the ocean threatens, as it did two winters ago, softly rounded cobbles would be imported and encapsulated with sand to create gentle dunes as barriers against the ocean's wrath. Sand would come from the shipping channel courtesy of the Corps of Engineers, hopefully. No one is happy with the dumped boulders and rubble, a blight which would be cleaned up, or at least buried.

The cost of the plan is estimated to be \$343 million. The work required will not be done all at once; it will be done over a span of many years.

The plan has good balance. The plan's weakness? Will the sewer infrastructure really be protected? A storage tunnel said to be essential to the plant is vulnerable. The plan protects it with a berm of cobble and sand, and then with a hard buried seawall. As the tunnel is quite deep, it is hard to imagine how the buried seawall can be constructed. The cobble and sand berm seems cosmetic, vulnerable to the incredible wash of storm surging ocean water. Yet engineers can be imaginative. One hopes that where there's a will, there's a way...that is not overly expensive.

Steve Lawrence follows water and sewer issues. [lawrence@westsideobserver.com](mailto:lawrence@westsideobserver.com)

... AIN'T NO  
SUNSHINE WHEN  
YOU'RE  
GONE...



MY TWO CENTS By Will Durst

## WE'RE ALL MUPPETS HERE.

Not easy being a Muppet. Referring to Greg Smith, formerly of Goldman Sachs, who wrote an op-ed in the New York Times about getting the hell out of Dodge, due to his company's relentlessly spiraling moral depravity. According to Smith, associates are encouraged to pursue profit above all else, and that includes ripping out the eyeballs of their own billion-dollar clients at the same time they mockingly scorn them as Muppets.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. A complete shocker-big time brokerage firm with little or no conscience. My God. What next? High school prom parties where beer is served? Charley Sheen coming to, on the floor of a Vegas hotel after noon? Drive-through food that tastes like hot damp glued-together bar coasters? Mitt Romney making his own Robo-Calls?

Romney loves to hype his history as a private equity investment banker, so it's not difficult to imagine him as another of the sucking pods on a waving tentacle of the vampire squid. Wrapped so tightly in the "Me First," and "Success at any Cost" culture that he squeaks money when he moves. A sound that surely acts as a predatory mating call.

We're all Muppets to him. On a daily basis Mr. Bain Capital will say or do whatever he thinks might possibly help on the campaign trail. "Pro-choice, I got your pro-choice. Oh wait, not pro-choice, well, then neither am I." "What happens in the sanctity of one's own bedroom is nobody's business. Oh, Yes It Is!" Surprised every time he's not photographed wearing one of those whiplash neck braces from the twisting and turning necessary to cover his wide panoply of paradoxical convictions.

Recently, this shape shifter comically sucked up to the South pretending to like cheesy grits. Mitt, nothing personal, but if ever there were a non-cheesy grits eating kind of a dude, it's you. Even while referring to your NASCAR and NFL owner buddies, you still don't have a song in your heart. Probably consider them nothing more than slightly better constructed sock puppets. More realistic button eyes.

That's it, isn't it? We're all annoying obstacles to be overcome in order to better provide for your family. Who would be well advised not to get too comfortable, if there is anything to be learned from the fate of your valiant Irish Setter, Seamus. Is that going to be your solution to everything: hose us down?

The Politicrats even have a name for our particular kind of Muppetism. They call us Low Information Voters. People not paying too close attention. The ones that pretty much believe every ounce of slop our leaders shovel at us while greedy fingers fiddle at our orbital sockets.

Consider the 50% of Republicans in Mississippi and 45% in Alabama who still believe President Obama is a Muslim. While the hard of hearing think he's muslim, a loosely woven cotton fabric.

Maybe that's the ultimate goal of Republican Kingmakers like the Koch Brothers. Get rid of the messy unpredictable human element and create their own Muppet mouthpiece. Fold a spool of muslin into a head shaped ball, stick a hand up it and have it say exactly what they think we Low Information Voters, LIVers, want to hear. Or did they already do that and call it... Rush Limbaugh.

The New York Times says Emmy-nominated comedian and writer Will Durst "is quite possibly the best political satirist working in the country today." Check out the website: [Redroom.com](http://Redroom.com) to buy his book or find out more about upcoming stand-up performances. Or [willdurst.com](http://willdurst.com).

Don't forget "Elect to Laugh!" at the Marsh. Every Tuesday. 415.826.5750 [themarsh.org](http://themarsh.org). Special \$10 tickets. Use code "vote."

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## Letters to the Editor

Did anyone find the article (Help for Seniors to Pay for Long Term Health Care/Feb '12) that Sharon Caren, the health writer for the Westside Observer, of interest? [westsideobserver.com/columns/Caren.html](http://westsideobserver.com/columns/Caren.html)

This is a topic that the public most definitely should be aware of that specifically targets the senior community. It was picked up by the Mercury News.

Diane Reynolds

Mr Lawrence, in criticizing the RBOC (Mar '12), lumps every member of the RBOC into one cohesive group. He clearly has not been reading the articles by Brian Browne in your paper. Brian is a coauthor of Proposition P and was a member of the RBOC 2003-2012. He single handed tried to right many of the wrongs to which Mr. Lawrence attributes collective guilt. This is improper and inaccurate.

Any citizen, daring to attend a RBOC meeting at 930AM on a Monday morning would see Brian Browne bushwhacked and gang-tackled by the chair and his/her court on a continual basis. He never

quit. Brian Browne, a neighbor and fellow activist, laments he did not achieve the high-goals intended by the framers of 2002 Proposition P, but as many of us say; he did shine a very bright flashlight in dark and dim corners of government especially the SFPUC. I hope Mr. Lawrence is more forthright and balanced in his general condemnation of the entire RBOC.

Brian, as president of the Golden Gateway Tenants Association, along with many of us at the Golden Gateway Center, asserted our First Amendment Rights and initialized a court case that went to the California Supreme Court. So often in San Francisco, activists don't get the credit for their actions. I along with neighbors saved the most pristine park in San Francisco from commercial development. We wanted it named "Ferry Park." The politicians stepped in and named it "Sue Bierman Park." Sue was a fine person but had nothing to do with the creation of this beautiful park for the citizens of San Francisco.

Credit where credit is due, please.

Ernestine Weiss

The ideas and opinions expressed in these pages are strictly those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the staff or publisher of this paper. The Westside Observer is a free monthly newspaper serving the entire West of Twin Peaks area of San Francisco. Circulation is 20,000 copies, distributed 10 times a year. 12,000 are distributed -to-door, 1,500 are distributed via free distribution racks in the West of Twin Peaks area, as well as libraries and other key drop-off points (see [westsideobserver.com/hardcopy.html](http://westsideobserver.com/hardcopy.html)).





The Sunshine Ordinance Task Force, mandated by Prop G (1999) ensures accountability through public records and meetings

# Supervisors Tinker With Open Government

By Patrick Monette-Shaw

Since taking office to represent District 8 on the Board of Supervisors in November 2010, Supervisor Scott Wiener has distinguished himself by repeatedly tinkering with various San Francisco’s open government laws; in some quarters he’s referred to as Scott “The Tinkerer” Wiener. Others refer to him as “Tinkerbelle.”

He’s at it again, tinkering with San Francisco’s Sunshine Ordinance, our local open government law adopted to supplement the California Public Records Act (CPRA), and the Brown Act covering open meetings.

Surprisingly, Supervisor Jane Kim, also elected in 2010 to represent District 6, may also be tinkering with the City’s boards, commissions, and advisory bodies mandated to provide public oversight.

On November 1, 2011 the Sunshine Task Force issued an Order of Determination, finding that Supervisor Eric Mar, Chair of the Land Use Committee, Board president David Chiu, and Land Use Committee members Supervisor Scott Wiener and Supervisor Malia Cohen had collectively violated several sections of the Sunshine Ordinance by failing to provide the public with copies of 14 pages of amendments to the Park Merced Development Agreement.

The amendments had been provided to the Board of Supervisors in connection with an agenda item by Chiu, who had allowed the introduction of last-minute, substantive changes to the agenda without adequate public notice. The four Supervisors were also cited for failing to publish a meaningful agenda indicating the substance of the item involving the 14 pages of Park Merced amendments, in order to adequately inform the public about the nature of the proposed development deal’s

records concerning the Shelter Monitoring Committee in a timely manner, for failing to justify withholding of documents, and for failing to keep documents withheld to a minimum. She was ordered to produce the requested records within five days.

Sometime earlier in 2011, Supervisor Kim secretly requested, without public notice or during an open-to-the-public meeting, that the Board of Supervisor’s Budget and Legislative Analyst, the Harvey Rose Consultancy, perform a confidential cost-benefit analysis of the City’s 86 boards, commissions, task forces, and other advisory councils, 34 of which are authorized by the City Charter; the remaining 52 by the City’s Administrative Code. Rose’s May 13, 2011 analysis estimates the annual costs for boards, commissions, etc. totaled \$6.495 million, of which \$1.2 million — nearly 20 % of all costs attributable to boards and commissions — funds just ten Commission Secretaries serving nine City departments, each of whom have unique job classification codes and who collect median salaries and benefits of \$126,880.

Despite having been asked by Kim for a cost-benefit analysis, Rose wasted not one drop of ink in his 39-page analysis of

“...As deplorable as Mirkarimi’s off-duty behavior may have been, it had nothing to do with his duties as Sheriff, and occurred before he was officially sworn in.

In stark contrast, Lee hasn’t acted regarding the on-duty official misconduct charges against Gomez, or against the on-duty misconduct of the four supervisors in the Park Merced matter.



amendments.

The Sunshine Task Force referred all four Supervisors to the Ethics Commission and District Attorney, citing willful failure (to comply with the Sunshine Ordinance) and official misconduct.

As an aside, although Mayor Ed Lee referred official misconduct charges against Sheriff Ross Mirkarimi to the Ethics Commission, it has taken no action on the official misconduct charges against the four supervisors who sought to withhold the 14-page amendments of the Park Merced deal. Similarly, after the Sunshine Task Force referred official misconduct charges against Library Commission president Jewelle Gomez to the Ethics Commission on July 11 for on-duty misconduct, the Ethics Commission concurred Gomez had erred and forwarded its first-ever official misconduct charges to Mayor Lee. Eight months later, Lee has taken no action against Gomez.

In 1980 a state appellate court ruled in then-Airport Commissioner Joseph Mazolla’s appeal that levying official misconduct charges requires a direct relationship of alleged wrongdoing to an office held. As deplorable as Mirkarimi’s off-duty behavior may have been, it had nothing to do with his duties as Sheriff, and occurred before he was officially sworn in.

In stark contrast, Lee hasn’t acted regarding the on-duty official misconduct charges against Gomez, or against the on-duty misconduct of the four supervisors in the Park Merced matter.

For her part, Supervisor Kim was found by the Sunshine Task Force on June 7, 2011 to have violated the Sunshine Ordinance by not responding to a request for

any benefits of boards and commissions.

Nowhere in Rose’s confidential analysis for Supervisor Kim (obtained through a public records request), does he note that the purported — and likely inflated — estimate of \$6.495 million to operate the boards and commissions represents just one-tenth of one percent of the City’s \$6.834 billion budget (of which total budget Rose must surely be aware), a fractional amount most observers believe to be a small, necessary price to pay for oversight of City government.

In his analysis for Kim, Rose deliberately took a swipe at the Sunshine Task Force by alleging that its Executive Secretary III earned more (\$79,524) than the Police Commission’s Executive Secretary I (\$65,796). In fact, SOTF’s secretary earned only \$75,728, and no overtime, but Rose reported the highest pay step, not that secretary’s actual earnings. And Rose failed to report that minutes of the Police Commission show that its “secretary” during 2011 was then-Lieutenant III Timothy Falvey, who earned \$165,112 in 2011, including \$16,700 in overtime. (The Police Commission’s new “secretary” in 2012 is a Police Inspector I, John Monroe, who earned \$152,228 in 2011, including \$22,363 in overtime.)

The \$75,278 for SOTF’s secretary pales in comparison to the \$165,112 Falvey earned as the Police Commission’s secretary, which Rose failed to note.

If Jane Kim really wants to lower the costs of boards and commissions, she should start by taking sworn officers out of desk jobs and back to actual police work, and use more appropriate civilian clerical

Cont. p. 14

## WEST OF TWIN PEAKS CENTRAL COUNCIL By Mitch Bull

A quick and breezy evening was in store for those who attended the West of Twin Peaks Central Council meeting on March 26. With President Matt Chamberlain unable to attend, Vice President George Wooding opened the meeting at 7:30, promising a fast meeting. That was certainly the case, as few new officer and committee reports were given.

The majority of the discussion focused on three topics: Redistricting, the Caltrans/Sloat Blvd. problems and the revision of the WOTPCC By-Laws.

As the San Francisco Redistricting Task Force continues to look at balancing the number of residents within each district, District 7 has escaped any major issues, for now. Based on the latest maps there could still be some movement around Holloway Street, and the Twin Peaks area is currently split between Districts 8,7 and 5, with the Twin Peaks Improvement Association (TPIA) remaining in 7. There is still much anxiety as the final determination of boundaries will not be final until the very end, after the task force has considered all of the information at hand as well as the public input from areas such as the OMI and others. It is still imperative for the WOTPCC to be represented at the task force meetings. All meeting now are held at City Hall and there will be many between now and April 15<sup>th</sup>. To see the schedule; visit [sfgov.org/rdtf](http://sfgov.org/rdtf)

The “slimming down” from 6 lanes to 4 lanes on Sloat Blvd. was the next discussion point as former WOTPCC President Bill Chionsini addressed the attendees on his communications to Mayor Lee and Caltrans. (See the accompanying story on Page 1.)

Paul Conroy updated the group on the proposed changes to the WOTPCC By-Laws. He spoke of the changes that the committee (Dave Bisho, Roger Ritter and Paul Conroy) has proposed and also of the by-laws that were not changed. The meeting served as a legal 10 day notice. Final consideration, discussion and the vote for approval will take place at the next WOTPCC meeting. It is important for delegates to attend and vote at the April 23 meeting.

Denise LaPointe led the section on “Old Business” by asking if the WOTPCC officers had sent the groups’ position on redistricting to everyone involved, including Supervisor Elsbernd. Wooding said he would check and see if that was indeed the case. It was also asked what the District 7 supervisor’s position is on the topic.

Wooding also reported that the PUC proposed Wastewater Treatment plant will not be in Golden Gate Park, being instead moved into the Oceanside Water Treatment plant and the SF Armory property some adjacent space.

In a few final points, Wooding noted that the WOTPCC Anniversary committee is busy collecting volunteers interested in assisting on the WOTPCC 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event. The event will be held on June 25<sup>th</sup> and Roger Ritter is looking for volunteers to serve on the planning committee.

In other WOTPCC news, next month the WOTPCC meeting will feature both sides of the June garbage initiative giving their sides of the issue.

With that, Council Vice President Wooding adjourned the meeting at 8:35 P.M.

For more information see the WOTPCC website ([www.westoftwinpeaks.org](http://www.westoftwinpeaks.org)). The next regularly scheduled meeting will be Monday, April 23rd at 7:30 in the Forest Hill Clubhouse.



Former WOTPCC President Bill Chionsini spoke about the restriping of Sloat Blvd. and the danger to pedestrians and vehicles.

### Redistricting (Cont. from p. 2)

meetings throughout all the districts in the City,” said Jenny Lam, who serves as Vice Chair of the task force. “What all the meetings and districts share in common is an eagerness to provide testimony and share their point of view,” said Lam. “I find it very interesting,” said Kathy Howard, who as a local resident attended the March 22 meeting. “I appreciate the thoughtful deliberations of the Task Force and the considerable amount of citizen participation,” she said. Eric McDonnell, who serves as Chair of the Redistricting Task Force, told the Westside Observer that the process is going well and there has been good community input with “a good rhythm of feedback.” The meeting on March 22 had almost 100 people and other meetings held in various parts of the City, McDonnell said, were full to seating capacity with lots of representation. Yet he pointed out, “we are still not able to reach everyone.” He mentioned the importance of making more effort to reach the “monolingual” aspects of the City’s population. A major city like San Francisco must include citizens who don’t speak English as their primary language. “Part of our report will try to capture lessons learned since we started in August this past summer,” said McDonnell.

“We are close to completion,” said Lam. “Our priority is the inclusiveness and transparency in the process. We respect one another’s opinions. To be able to do the line drawing of district maps in public is very important. Having an open process is vital to the voting process, and it helps to strengthen the electoral process for all citizens.” When asked what they found most rewarding about the redistricting process, both Lam and McDonnell noted that it was the collaboration and the setting up of principles and guidelines within the framework of the SF City Charter. When asked if he would serve on the Task Force again, McDonnell took a breath and laughed a bit saying, “Ask me that question again in 10 years.” Lam had a similar response. She too sighed, took a moment, and said “yes, it would be an honor.”

The final and complete map will be submitted by April 14.

For details visit: [sfgov2.org/index.aspx?page=2881](http://sfgov2.org/index.aspx?page=2881)

### Scheduled Meetings of the Redistricting Task Force in April

Wednesday	April 04, 2012	Regular Meeting 6 p.m	Room 406, City Hall
Thursday	April 05, 2012	Special Meeting 6 p.m	Room 406, City Hall
Monday	April 09, 2012	Special Meeting 6 p.m	Room 406, City Hall
Wednesday	April 11, 2012	Special Meeting 6 p.m	Room 406, City Hall
Saturday	April 14, 2012	Special Meeting 10 a.m	TBD



## Lake Merced Update

## FIVE YEARS AND COUNTING

By Jerry Cadagan



The March edition of the Observer included our update expressing frustration with the lack of progress in dealing with the 62 year-old problem of having two bureaucracies (SFPUC and SF REC & Park) jointly in charge of management at Lake Merced. We also expressed our frustration that the folks at SFPUC (the agency that owns the lake) were totally ignoring suggestions for solving the management issue, and ignoring our requests for status reports. And in March we reported that the management issue was supposed to go back to the Commission of SFPUC on March 27. Try to imagine our shock and dismay when a recent calendar issued by SFPUC staff moved the date back to April 24 with this astounding explanation: “Staff needs more time to work with Recreation and Park staff on item.”

Why is that astounding? Simply because staffs of both agencies were asked by the Board of Supervisors in early January 2007 to come up with a proposal to fix the management mess, and they were asked to report back to the Supervisors in 90 days. Absolutely nothing happened for over four years until a group of activists met with senior SFPUC staff in late 2010. Incredulously, we were told that the matter had “fallen through the cracks,” but they’d get something done by early 2011. In July 2011 staffs of the two agencies produced a draft MOU and held a public meeting to get comments. It was not well received by the public, to say the least. Back to the drawing boards, and in early November 2011 a slightly revised version of the proposed MOU was taken to the Commission of SFPUC. We activists objected strenuously saying that it didn’t deal with the evils of confused and muddled responsibilities, and lack of specificity and accountability. The SFPUC Commissioners apparently agreed as they declined to adopt the proposal. Back to the drawing boards, and the matter is then scheduled for the March 27 Commission meeting and later hastily withdrawn and rescheduled for April because, “staff needs more time to work with Recreation and Park staff on item.” This nonsense has been going on for more than five years and the staffs of the two agencies need more time to work on it? As columnist and humorist Dave Barry would say, “We’re not making this up!”

All this has to make one wonder if we are not witnessing the “Mother of All Turf Wars” with nothing more at stake than a few fragile egos in the upper echelons of Rec & Park and SFPUC.

Meanwhile, no one knows who is in charge at Lake Merced, things are a mess, and there hasn’t been a much-needed fishing concession at the lake since 1999. Please call or email Mayor Ed Lee (415 – 554-6141; mayoredwinlee@sfgov.org) and demand that he bang some heads together at SFPUC and Rec & Park and put one agency in full charge at Lake Merced. And that agency should be the owner of the lake – SFPUC.

Jerry Cadagan, Co-founder, Committee to Save Lake Merced

## Mirkarimi (Best of the Net) (Cont. from p. 1)

five-member Ethics Commission, which must consider charges that Mirkarimi failed to uphold the standard of decency required of elected officials by committing acts of domestic violence against his wife.

The commission won’t meet to consider the charges for at least three weeks, said the body’s executive director, John St. Croix, who said he needs the time to hire an outside attorney to advise the commission, and to arrange a date that fits with part-time commissioners’ schedules.

According to the city charter, after a mayor files official misconduct charges, the commission must hold a hearing and pass a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors, which meets to decide whether the officeholder should be dismissed. But city rules don’t define exactly how such hearings are supposed to work.

After Mayor Gavin Newsom announced he would pursue official misconduct charges against Jew in 2007, commissioners took great care to devise rules and procedures that would be fair to both sides, St. Croix said.

“It was highly deliberative. Everyone was being extremely careful,” he said.

But he acknowledged that, unlike a court of law, neither side knows the rules until commissioners come up with them. In fact, commissioners’ first order of business at special misconduct hearings will be to devise ad hoc rules under which the rest of the sessions will proceed.

“Because the charter is vague, the interpretation is a little on the broad side,” St. Croix said.

Mirkarimi’s new attorney, David P. Waggoner, did not respond to a telephone message requesting comment.

The case of Ed Jew was complicated, his former attorney, Hanlon, noted, because Jew’s criminal trial had not yet begun when his misconduct proceedings took place, and giving testimony before the Ethics Commission could have jeopardized his criminal defense.

Mirkarimi’s case is far more nuanced, and thus will be even more difficult for commissioners to decide, according to Bill Fazio, who represented Jew in 2007 before leaving over disagreements with his client. Jew allegedly defrauded voters into thinking he lived in their district, and then sought \$80,000 in bribes for exerting influence as a public official — conduct that fit clearly within the definition of official misconduct.

Mirkarimi’s alleged acts didn’t occur while he was sheriff; he was still a member of the Board of Supervisors on Dec. 31. And his actions during the argument with his wife didn’t involve the exercise of official duties — a so-called legal “nexus” that might provide a logical link between the terms “official” and “misconduct.”

In the charges filed against Mirkarimi Wednesday, Lee writes that the city charter “does not require that the wrongful conduct at issue occur while the officer held the office from which the Mayor seeks to remove him,” and that the wrongful conduct does not have to be “related to the specific duties” of Mirkarimi’s office. But Fazio says the lack of a clear connection complicates the case.

“I have little doubt the commission was unprepared or ill-prepared last time. And this case is more difficult. Ed was charged with felonious conduct. Mirkarimi was charged with a misdemeanor. And when he committed the offense, he wasn’t the elected official they’re trying to remove him as,” Fazio said. “I hope Mirkarimi takes this one to the mat.”

The Best of the Net is a monthly feature of the Observer in which we present an outstanding journalistic effort of particular local interest in our effort to assure that our readers are the best informed citizens of San Francisco. Our featured story is from [www.baycitizen.org](http://www.baycitizen.org). If you have a suggestion for our BON feature, email: [editor@westsideobserver.com](mailto:editor@westsideobserver.com)

## Neighbors’ Pressure (Cont. from p. 1)

or leased for non-recreational purposes, nor shall any structure on park property be built, maintained or used for non-recreational purposes unless approved by a vote of the electors.”

The PUC always had alternative options on where to place the planned waste water treatment plant. This changed in 2008, when interim RPD General Manager Jared Blumenfeld asked the RPD to place the waste water plant in Golden Gate Park in the exact same location as the retired Richmond-Sunset plant. Blumenfeld had been on the job for less than two months when he struck this deal with the PUC.

Blumenfeld told the Recreation and Park Commission (RPC): “We will be asking (the PUC) for compensation and it’s a prerequisite before they’ll move forward with extraction [of] any groundwater, [that] they need to compensate us (RPD) for that, and they’ll also have to compensate us for any detriment to recreational uses, and for the lease of the footprint of the recycled water facility. So I think that we have two streams of revenue that will help us in both the short- and long-term [to] close budget gaps.”

The RPD wanted the PUC’s waste water plant located in Golden Gate Park for the money it would generate for the RPD.

There are some engineering advantages in having the new waste water plant in Golden Gate Park, but the RPD’s attempt to locate the new waste water treatment plant in Golden Gate Park was all about how much money the RPD could charge the PUC. The memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the PUC and the RPD never disclosed the annual lease and/or rental amount, but was rumored to be in the millions.

Selling pieces of Golden Gate Park for money is business-as-usual at the RPD. Both the waste water plant and the planned soccer stadium go against the rules and intent of the 1998 Golden Gate Master Plan. The plan specifically calls for the Western edge of the park to remain in a natural state.

Shawna McGrew, a retired RPD director who worked for the RPD for 37 years stated, “Thank you PUC for realizing that Golden Gate Park is a world treasure and not a place for an industrial plant. I question the RPD’s adherence to their own mission statement as ‘stewards of the environment.’ Why is the RPD replacing the environmentally-friendly natural turf at the Beach Chalet with an industrial sports complex consisting of 7.5 acres of concrete?”

Phil Ginsburg, RPD’s current General Manager, stated, “We are thankful the SFPUC was able to identify a new potential site for this critical water-supply project. It is important to know the concerns of our park advocates were heard and addressed.”

What an interesting statement for Ginsburg to have finally uttered, since the RPD has consistently *not* listened to park advocate’s concerns regarding the proposed synthetic soccer fields. Thousands of citizens, neighborhood groups, local environmental groups, the Sierra Club, and the Audubon Society are all asking the RPD to relocate the planned synthetic turf fields, use alternative natural playing surfaces, or simply repair the tattered Beach Chalet grass fields that have not had a makeover for nearly 15 years, since 1998.

Despite the large opposition and lack of adherence to the RPD’s own environmental guidelines, Ginsburg forges ahead with a singular, tone-deaf certainty that only a synthetic soccer field complex located on the Western Edge of Golden Gate Park will provide local children and the Bay Area soccer community with the fields that they need and deserve. The money generated from extended playing hours, permits, and soccer tournaments will create another revenue source for the

RPD.

At the request of the City, the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR) has developed a comprehensive Ocean Beach Master Plan. One of the major features of the plan is to find ways to reconnect Ocean Beach with the western edge of Golden Gate Park. The plan prioritizes a welcoming, natural environment. Ginsburg’s planned synthetic soccer complex is located directly at the center of this “gateway” between Ocean Beach and Golden Gate Park. Ben Grant, principal author of SPUR’s plan diplomatically says, “I credit the PUC for relocating its planned water treatment plant outside of Golden Gate Park.”

Much more damaging to Ginsburg’s synthetic soccer complex are the comments in a March 4 letter to the San Francisco Planning Department from Frank Dean, General Superintendent for the Department of the Interior, Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). Dean states that Ginsburg’s project “Should complement SPUR’s Ocean Beach Master Planning process because there is potential for that plan to recommend changes in uses in the vicinity of Ocean Beach.”

Dean’s comments are a polite way of telling Ginsburg not to build the synthetic soccer fields in an area that should remain natural.

Dean further recommends that the Environmental Impact Review for Ginsburg’s synthetic soccer field consider a reasonable range of alternatives with associated mitigation measures, including renovating other athletic fields not adjacent to Ocean Beach; improving the Beach Chalet fields without the proposed lighting; rescheduling games earlier in the day in order to achieve the desired total hours of play time before sunset; and seasonal lighting limitations to avoid adding night lighting to the area during the times of bird migration, particularly to protect the presence of the Snowy Plover, a threatened small shorebird approximately the size of a sparrow.

Ginsburg’s field-of-financial-dreams will have a huge impact on Ocean Beach and surrounding areas. The bright lights will harm bird populations and change the night sky along Ocean Beach, not just in Golden Gate Park. Birds of prey that keep rodent populations in check will also be leaving the area, just as there is a tremendous increase in garbage from the soccer fields’ extended hours. Over 55 trees will be cut down. Despite the environmental harm he is causing inside and outside of Golden Gate Park, Ginsburg believes that the longer he keeps the lights on, the more money the RPD will make from soccer players using the fields.

Ginsburg’s artificial-turf fields should last between eight and ten years before they will need to be replaced, and he has no revenue stream lined up to replace decaying synthetic turf down the road. Once the natural grass is ripped away and replaced with layers of drainage beds, gravel, shredded rubber tires, and synthetic turf, it will be very difficult to restore the fields to their natural state ever again.

The PUC’s Ritchie states, “The PUC must be responsive to neighborhood concerns, just as it must be responsive to ratepayer, environmental, and regulatory concerns. We heard the concerns of neighbors and concluded that we needed to go the extra mile searching for alternatives [sites].”

The differences between the RPD and the PUC couldn’t be starker. The PUC listens to its customers and neighbors while Ginsburg schemes about new ways to generate revenue for the RPD.

Ginsburg owes the public and the City — not just permit-paying soccer players — better management of Golden Gate Park’s resources.

George Wooding. Feedback: [wooding@westsideobserver.com](mailto:wooding@westsideobserver.com).





BUSINESS CORNER by Jonathan Farrell



Robert Ayanian's father Zevan Ayanian stands outside the new Robert's Espresso at 1708 Irving Street

**W**est Portal holds many happy memories for Robert Ayanian, who recently returned to San Francisco after living many years in Southern California. This past February 15<sup>th</sup> he opened **Robert's Espresso** on Irving Street.

Filling the storefront that had once been the long-established Alvin's Scrumptious Coffee and Teas, between 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Avenues, is a challenge, especially with Starbucks only a block away. Yet Ayanian is confident he can be a success.

Ayanian was busy making "Haykakan surc" when he chatted with the *Westside Observer*. He explained that the coffee is a specialty that has been served in the Mediterranean and Middle East for centuries. Its rich, thick, and frothy texture is poured into a demitasse cup and often accompanies a pastry like baklava or nazook, another Armenian delight.

"My parents still live in the house I grew up in on Pacheco and Dewey," said Ayanian. He attended West Portal Elementary, Notre Dame des Victoires, St. Ignatius Prep, and got his degree at USF.

Ayanian recalled many happy memories, like going to the movies at the Empire Cinema, ice cream at Baskin Robbins, and ending with candy at Shaw's—all on West Portal Ave. He is pleased that the neighborhood still retains its small town charm after all these years.

From that upbringing in West Portal he ventured to Hollywood to pursue a career in broadcasting and media. He hosted his own TV show called "The Best List."

"Actually, it was originally to be called 'The B List,' as in how movies are often described," said Sonia Keshishian.

She is Ayanian's cousin and staunch supporter. Some of her artworks and photographs currently adorn the walls of the cafe.

"Robert is like a brother to me, so yes, I am partial," she said.

Yet she was emphatic as she said, "I can testify that whatever Robert does, he does with commitment and dedication." She explained that, even though the TV show Ayanian had hosted was on the local cable TV service and budgets were tight, "Robert stuck to it. He sought out local talent and businesses in the Los Angeles, West Hollywood and even Beverly Hills area."

"I know," she said, "because I was a guest on that show, twice!"

She mentioned that Ayanian had also hosted the pilot episodes of two local TV game shows. The work in Hollywood was exciting but very competitive. In between television endeavors, Ayanian supported his TV work

as a realtor. After five years of TV hosting, Ayanian decided to follow another career path. "My parents both encouraged me to go back to school and do well at something I love." For Ayanian, it was cooking. After he completed the program at Los Angeles Culinary Institute in Encino, he established his own catering business in Palm Springs.

"I was so glad that Robert returned to his roots," said Keshishian, "because he always amazed us with his holiday dinners — he cooks up an outstand-



Robert Ayanian pours another cup

ing turkey with all the fixings," she said. And with his flair for entertaining, Ayanian's catering as "Chef Robert's Culinary Experience" was doing well until the economic downturn in 2008. "Suddenly all went bust," Ayanian said. "Business dried up and people were not throwing parties or catering events as much."

Just as he thought another career venture had ended, he got word about the empty storefront on Irving. "It's like going full circle," he said, "I used to work at Caravansary on Sutter Street while in college."

"Caravansary (closed in 1999) was a coffee, tea and café spot on Sutter, (back in the 1970's and '80's) and Robert was a 'barista' there, doing just what he is now, serving up great coffee and Espresso," said Keshishian.

To wish him well in his endeavor, Candy Injaian, who was his boss at Caravansary, dropped by on opening day. "Robert has got the gift of serving the people with his culinary expertise," said Keshishian and he has a real genuine good feeling for everyone that makes what he does special."

*Open 7-days a week, from 7: AM to 6: PM, Robert's Espresso is located at 1708 Irving Street, between 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Ave. For details visit web site at: robertsespresso.com or call 415-213-5779.*

24<sup>th</sup> Annual Sidewalk Event

West Portal Arts & Crafts Festival

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Geoff Graham

Gary Chappell

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Don't Mess With Success

By Mike Sangiacomo, President and CEO, Recology

**S**an Francisco was recently named the "Greenest City in North America" by the North American Green Cities Index. Our City performed exceptionally in all categories, and was ranked #1 in the category of waste management.

Together, we are doing something right.

Yet an alarming measure, Proposition A, has been put on the June 2012 City ballot – a measure that would change the way your garbage and recycling is collected and handled. Prop A would undermine our efforts to reduce waste and has the potential to dramatically increase costs to both ratepayers and to the City's budget.

Since 1932, San Francisco has partnered with Recology to achieve award-winning environmental success while maintaining rates comparable to the region. Recology, in partnership with the City, has built our recycling and compost program from the ground up, developing technologically advanced recycling facilities, investing to make our fleet of trucks greener, and working with our customers to make recycling and composting easier and more available. The effort has paid off: our City has already achieved a 78% recycling rate.

How have we achieved so much? It's simple: take a community that cares, equip them with a local, employee-owned company that mirrors their values, and then regulate that company with a system that allows for innovation and flexibility. The result is a winning formula that the entire country is trying to replicate.

Prop A would jeopardize everything that makes the current system work so well. While it claims to be interested in competitive bidding, the initiative goes far beyond that by setting up a new waste bureaucracy that the City Controller estimates will "significantly increase the City's costs". In addition, Proposition A would:

**Create Confusion**  
Prop A would introduce 5 separate contracts,

requiring each to be bid separately. That means that the work Recology has been doing for decades could be split up between as many as five companies with no history in the City. With five separate contracts potentially awarded to different companies, who picks up your trash and who picks up your recycling? Which company do you call if you have a problem?

Remove a System That Works

You know Recology. Over 10,000 San Francisco residents and businesses have given their keys to their local Recology garbage truck driver so that trash can be collected more effectively. You wouldn't give the key to your home to someone you don't trust. Recology's employee-owners are members of your community, performing a service to our neighbors. We've spent decades building a system that San Franciscans know and trust, and Proposition A would put all we've worked for at risk.

Risk our Environmental Progress

San Francisco boasts the highest major city recycling rate in America. Recology built San Francisco's recycling system from the ground up, and we're committed to continuing to build the program. Prop A could put a huge out-of-state corporation in charge that may not be as committed to recycling and composting.

That's why leaders across San Francisco, including the San Francisco Democratic Party, the San Francisco Republican Party, the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, SPUR, Californians Against Waste, Assemblymember Fiona Ma, and Supervisors Carmen Chu and Sean Elsbernd have united in opposition to Prop A. Don't mess with success. Vote No on Proposition A.

N-Judah Another Month of Upgrade

By Jonathan Farrell

The repair work that has been going on along the N-Judah light rail line since November, at a cost of about \$2 million is part of a much larger rail improvement project costing \$18 million. Crews continue to work at the intersections along Judah at 19th Avenue and Sunset Boulevard. The inconvenience has annoyed some residents, yet the track improvement project is deemed "vital to meet current and future transportation needs," according to SFMTA officials.

The N-Judah line is among the most heavily used trolley systems in the City, providing direct service from Ocean Beach to the CalTrans station at 4th and King Streets. Worn out rails and crumbling pavement along the heavily used system has been in need of renovation. In addition SFMTA is repairing and replacing old tracks for the J-Church and the L-Taraval trolley lines.

Beyond simply installing new tracks and pavement, these repairs include new overhead wire poles, new curb ramps and MUNI train signal device units. With over 70 miles of tracks, most of it more than 30 years old —long overdue for replacement.

Paul Rose, public relations manager for the SF MTA told the *Westside Observer* "aside from the brief times work has been postponed because of rain, over-all work on the project has been smooth and progressing nicely. The Judah Shuttle has still been getting good feedback from riders."

"Work so far is on time and on budget and we expect about a month's time left to go for this portion," said Rose. He mentioned that a longer stretch of repairs is scheduled to begin around May 25 and that will last until June 4, 2012.

Central Subway (Cont. from p. 3)

the crush loaded buses stopped while passengers fight to get off and on the bus, not always in the ideal order. Additional bus running-time could be saved by employing transit first procedures, and minimizing the impacts of traffic on transit.

These improvements are not only low cost, they help all of the riders on the 45 and 30 lines, not just the few with a Chinatown destination, while leaving funding available for many other Muni routes.

Howard Strassner gets around on MUNI. [ruthow@dslextrreme.com](mailto:ruthow@dslextrreme.com)



Top Five Financial Reasons for Delaying Marriage

It's become rather obvious that marriage has lost some of its luster in America. According to 2010 census data, the number of adults aged 18 and older that are married has dropped from 72 percent in 1960 to just 51 percent in 2010. And not only are people opting out, but those who do marry are waiting longer before they walk down the aisle. According to a Pew Research Center study released in December, the average age at first marriage for both men and women has risen significantly, from the early 20s in 1960 to upwards of 27 for both sexes (higher for men) in 2011<sup>1</sup>.



Why the delay? Finances often play a significant role in the decision to wed or wait. Presumably, money has always had some influence in timing of matrimony for younger couples. The surprising news is that all age groups face financial roadblocks that may have implica-

their parent's plans, even if they are otherwise independent (and married). In fact, health insurance may provide an incentive to get married, when one party has a good health insurance plan that becomes available to the other only through marriage.

...household income of married folks is significantly higher than their unmarried counterparts. . . . This may in part be a result of the federal tax benefits that apply to married couples filing jointly, but it's quite possibly more than that. Couples who enter into the legal contract of marriage may take the step because they feel that it will lead to more stable circumstances that will contribute to their income-earning potential. They also may have more incentive to pool their resources and therefore may do so more efficiently, helping them to acquire a better financial position."

tions for a marital commitment. Following are five financial circumstances that may influence the timing of when people decide to tie the knot.

1) **The debt downer.** Taking time to improve a personal balance sheet is a good reason to wait before getting married. If the bride or groom is saddled with hefty college loans or maxed-out credit cards, the "honeymoon phase" may be over in a hurry. For example, an individual who has a strong credit history might also be less willing to commit financially to spouse with a recent bankruptcy on the books.

2) **Job insecurity.** Unemployment rates are still high, which can create anxiety about exchanging vows. It's hard to plan for the future when the here-and-now is unpredictable. Lack of a regular paycheck, or the likelihood of job loss, can affect the ability to make other commitments that often go hand-in-hand with marriage, such as signing a lease on an apartment, purchasing a first home or starting a family.

3) **Health insurance quandaries.** Health insurance is costly, but increasingly critical to have in order to avoid financial turmoil in the event of a catastrophic illness. It's a factor that needs to be addressed when two households become one. Fortunately, with the new healthcare reforms, adults 25 and under can still be covered under

4) **Child and spousal support.** A marriage can render alimony payments null or void, and may affect other financial agreements for a previously single parent, such as child support. According to a University of Michigan study, a divorced parent who remarries may see a substantial drop in child support payments<sup>2</sup>. That's enough to give some pause before taking a leap into marriage.

5) **Sticker shock.** The cost of a wedding can push marriage plans far into the future. Even a barebones wedding can easily cost \$5,000, and it's not unusual for the tab reach \$25,000 or more. Costs add up quickly when you consider the expense of the rings, followed by invitations, the wedding gown, tuxedos, photography, plus the reception and all it entails. If the bride and groom have their hearts set on a long guest list and pricey affair — and mom and dad aren't prepared to chip in — it may take time to accumulate the funds for the wedding.

The other side of the coin

While many of the reasons to delay marriage have merit, following through with it isn't all bad for our pocketbooks. The Pew Research Center also reported that the household income of married folks is significantly higher than their unmarried counterparts. That's true for both college-educated and non-college educated couples. This may in part be a result of the federal tax benefits that apply

to married couples filing jointly, but it's quite possibly more than that. Couples who enter into the legal contract of marriage may take the step because they feel that it will lead to more stable circumstances that will contribute to their income-earning potential. They also may have more incentive to pool their resources and therefore may do so more efficiently, helping them to acquire a better financial position.

Say 'I Do' to financial planning

If you're thinking about marriage, include financial planning as a couple on your list of to-dos. Have a conversation about what kinds of things each of you plans to do, and what your financial situation is like. Since money is often a leading cause of discord between couples, it's wise to pay special attention to the role it may play in your relationship. A financial advisor can help you and your future spouse explore your individual attitudes about money and develop a plan that reflects your shared goals, so you are better able to make the most of your lives together.

Brandon Miller, CFP and Joanne Jordan, CFP are financial consultants at Jordan Miller & Associates, A Private Wealth Advisory Practice of Ameriprise Financial Inc. in San Francisco.

Kopp (Cont. from p. 8)

The beginning cost to us is \$100,000 per year. Only two supervisors, Elsbernd and Chu, voted against this unnecessary expenditure. The United States Supreme Court has long held that an indigent defendant in a criminal case is entitled to an attorney at taxpayer expense. That principle has never been extended to civil litigants, defendants or plaintiffs. Think about the ramifications if every indigent person wanting to "sue" is furnished without charge, an attorney by the taxpayers of San Francisco. Although the United States is often referred to as a "litigious society," you haven't seen anything yet if legislatures like the San Francisco Board of Supervisors begin to enact laws granting every non-criminal case litigant an attorney. Anyone want to bet the \$100,000 this year won't be more next year? It's another example of why San Francisco's \$6,600,000,000 yearly budget is higher than Philadelphia's, a city comprised of four times or more people as San Francisco!

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

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WEST PORTAL

**P**arking in SF... seems to be on everyone's agenda. Merchants are torn over the proposed extension of meters to times after 6PM and on Sundays. There are valid points to be made, but the bottom line is that MUNI needs the money, so anything to bring in more revenue will probably be approved.

Earlier this month I had a visit from one of my brothers and his family. On a rainy day we decided to go to the Academy of Science and the deYoung Museum. Driving the group into the city we got to the (underground) garage in the park and were greeted with a sign at the entrance that said "Garage FULL." Not an uncommon occurrence when many people are looking for a place to go on a (very) rainy day. But there is a hitch...

Seeing cars exiting the garage, we decided to take a chance and see if a slot was open for us. Taking our ticket we motored down the ramp and through the North garage. To our amazement, not only was a slot available, there were at least 100 slots open. We couldn't believe it. Walking through the "South" garage, we were treated to the same sight.

So, the question begs: We live in an area where we are renowned for our technology acumen, yet we cannot install a system that shows us electronically how many open slots there are in a garage that is extensively used. I have seen this technology in other garages, so I know it exists. In this wireless age, it couldn't be too expensive to install a real time system. Certainly the loss of revenue for the people that left when they saw the "Garage Full" sign would help to make up for the cost of the system, or at least lessen the gap in the City's finances. Maybe someone in the city could explain it to me. (My address is still in the staff box at the front of the paper.)

Parking aside, the deYoung and the Academy of Sciences are both terrific facilities with lots of things to do and see for kids and adults. Friendly docents are there to explain anything that you have questions about and the quality of the exhibits is top notch. Well worth your time on a rainy, or a sunny day.

A plug or two – Check out the new restaurant on West Portal, MARKET AND RYE. Early reviewers are gushing about the lunch entrees and the salads. Right up the street, THE MUSIC STORE will be having a special "Record Store Day" on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, celebrating the art of music. Limited Edition Vinyl will be featured and big discounts (25% on all USED music and movies on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor; and 50% off of ALL records on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor AND FREE gifts to the first 100 customers). But wait there's more...no, not steak knives, but LIVE Music and cheap drinks and snacks. Check it out!

Finally, the Golden Gate Men's Chorus will be presenting "Pure Imagination" at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church on Saturday, April 29<sup>th</sup> at 3 PM and Tuesday, May 1<sup>st</sup> at 8PM. Tkts are \$20. Visit their website: [www.ggmc.org](http://www.ggmc.org) for the details.

Do you have an interesting story, idea, or some insights you'd like to get in the paper? Just drop it to us in the mail, or email me at: [mitch@WestsideObserver.com](mailto:mitch@WestsideObserver.com). Be sure to check out the *Observer* online @ [www.WestsideObserver.com](http://www.WestsideObserver.com), or on Facebook and Twitter.



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## APRIL

### EVERY • SUNDAY FARMERS MARKET

Farmers Market | Every Sun | 9 am–1pm | Stonestown: at Stonestown Galleria (19th Avenue @ Winston)

### EVERY • TUESDAY NIGHT AT QUE SYRAH

Happy Hour Every Tues | 4–8 pm | Que Syrah. Take \$1 off each glass, 10% off of each bottle of wine consumed at the store.

### EVERY • THU & FRI NIGHT AT QUE SYRAH

Tapas Every Thur & Fri | 5:30–9 pm  
230 West Portal Avenue 731.7000

### EVERY • THURSDAY–LET’S DANCE

Social Ballroom Dance classes for couples - 6 lessons for \$70. per couple. Forest Hill Christian Church, 250 Laguna Honda Blvd. 661-2746.

### EVERY • THURSDAY–NIGHTLIFE

6 pm–10 pm | Every Thur night, the Academy of Sciences is transformed into a lively venue filled with music, provocative science, mingling, and cocktails. GG Park/Tickets \$12 (\$10 members). calacademy.org/nightlife.

### EVERY • FRIDAY NIGHT

Friday Night Jazz Fri | 7–11 pm | Cliff House, Balcony Lounge – 1 Seal Rock. Performances: www.cliffhouse.com/home/jazz.html

### EVERY • FRIDAY NIGHT AT THE DEYOUNG

5–8:45 pm | Live music, poetry, films, dance, tours, and lectures. Cafe: special dinner, no-host bar. Art-making for children and adults. de Young Museum, GG Park. www.deyoung.famsf.org/deyoung/calendar/category/89

### TUE • FREE DAY CONSERVATORY OF FLOWERS

Tue Apr 3 | 9 am–4:30 pm | First Tuesday of each month is free at the Conservatory of Flowers, Special Exhibit fees, if any still apply. JFK Dr. Golden Gate Park.

### TUE • GREATER WEST PORTAL-GWPNA

Tue Apr 3 | 7:30 pm | West Portal Playground Clubhouse, 139 Lenox Way. New members always welcome. The “Western Heart” of SF. gwpna.org

### WED • TOM HOLT: RAMBLIN’ ROUND

Wed Apr 4 | 7 pm | Ramblin’ Round: Songs of the Open Road Tim Holt will perform and discuss the songs of Tom Paxton, Utah Phillips, Woody Guthrie, and a number of others in a program that will include songs of the Western migration, and Dust Bowl ballads. Merced Branch Library, 155 Winston Dr. 355-2825.

### THU • AUTHOR SARAH GLOVER

Thu Apr 5 | 7 pm | Local author Sarah Glover will read from her debut novel, *Grave Refrain: A Ghost Story*, a darkly humorous tale of intrigue and rock-and-roll romance set in San Francisco. BookShop West Portal, 80 West Portal 564-8080.

### THU • TARAVAL- PARKSIDE MERCHANTS

Thu Apr 5 | 7–8:30 pm | Meet up with your fellow merchants of Taraval St. and Parkside. Taraval Police Station, 2345 24th Ave. at Taraval St Contact: Yumi Sam YumiSam@allstate.com

### SAT • ULTRASOUND BONE DENSITY TESTING

Sat Apr 7 | 1 pm–3 pm | Only \$20 could save your life. Florey’s Book Co, 2120 Palmetto Ave., Pacifica. Sharon Caren 650 359-6579

### TUE • AUTHOR WENDY MCCLURE

Tue Apr 10 | 7 pm | Author Wendy McClure discusses *The Wilder Life*, and her research into Laura Ingalls Wilder’s life, literary controversies and social history BookShop West Portal, 80 West Portal.

### TUE • LAKE MERCED @ SF PUC

Tue Apr 10 | 1:30 pm | The Lake Merced Hearing was postponed at the March 2th Meeting. It should be on this agenda. Check the SFPUC Agenda (415) 554-3163 City Hall, Rm 400

### WED • 37 AVE SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Wed Apr 11 | 7 pm | 2nd Wed each month. Meet your neighbors. Sunset Ministry, 3010 Noriega St. at 37th Ave. 452-7804/ Art.Tom@cbnocal.com.

### THU • SUNSET DIST COALITION MEETING

Thu Apr 12 | 7 pm–9 pm | Meets 2nd Thu each month. Info or to be added to the agenda please call Susan at 415.586.8103 or ssual@sbglobal.net Taraval Police Station, 2345 24th Ave

### SAT • FINAL REDISTRICTING MEETING

Sat Apr 14 | 10 am | This Special Meeting is the final presentation of maps of the new districts. Contact ) 554-7710 for the yet to be determined location.

### SUN • NATIVE PLANT GARDEN TOUR

Sun Apr 15 | 6 pm–9 pm | The Yerba Buena Chapter of the California Native Plant Society’s 8th. Descriptions of the free, self-paced tour and gardens participating, along with a map, are available at sfnativegardentour.org.

### MON • SUNSET-PARKSIDE MEETING

Mon Apr 16 | 6 pm | SPEAK aims to educate Sunset/Parkside residents on public safety, zoning, planning etc. 3201 Ulloa St. (Grace Lutheran) 3rd Mon each month. speaksanfrancisco@yahoo.com

### TUE • COMMUNITY SAFETY MEETING

Tue Apr 17 | 7 pm | Taraval District Police 3rd Tue of the month. Taraval Police Station Community Room, 2345 24th St. at Taraval St. 759-3100.

### TUE • AUTHOR JAQUELINE WINSPEAR

Tue Apr 17 | 7 pm | Author Winspear discusses *Elegy for Eddie*, the latest in the acclaimed, bestselling mystery series-Maisie Dobbs takes on an investigation into the brutal killing of a street peddler that leads into London’s highest circles. BookShop West Portal, 80 W Portal

### MON • CENTRAL COUNCIL MEETING

Mon Apr 23 | 7:30 pm | West of Twin Peaks Central Council | A resource for neighborhood organizations. 4th Monday each month. Forest Hill Clubhouse, 381 Magellan. See page 5 for minutes of last meeting.

## AMERICANA JUKEBOX

*Hillbilly Music For The 21st Century!*

### April 23 • RECORD STORE DAY • Monday

This is *the* one day that all independently owned record stores come together with artists to celebrate the art of music. Special vinyl and CD releases and various promotional products are made exclusively for the day.

The Music Store will carry limited edition vinyl and offer 25% off all USED music/movies on 1st floor and 50% off ALL records on the 2nd floor. And FREE gifts to the first 100 customers. Live music and cheap drinks & snacks!

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66 West Portal Ave, SF  
664-2044 • 11-8pm

www.themusicstoresf.com

### 2THU • AUTHORS BRADY & TENORIO

Thu Apr 26 | 7 pm | Catherine Brady will read from her Flannery O’Connor award-winning story collection, *Curled in the Bed of Love*. Lysley Tenorio *Monstress*, vivid stories set amongst the Filipino-American communities of California and the Philippines. 80 West Portal.

### THUR • OMI NIA

Thu Apr 26 | 7 pm | Ocean View-Merced Heights-Ingleside Neighbors in Action 65 Beverly, Temple Methodist Church maryharris\_dist@msn.com)

### SAT & TUE • GOLDEN GATE MEN’S CHORUS

Sat Apr 29 | 3 pm & Tue May 1 | 8 pm | GG Men’s Chorus presents Pure Imagination at St. Matthew’s Lutheran 3281-16th Street (at Dolores). \$20 -ggmc.org

### MON • SHARP

Mon Apr 30 | 7 pm | Sunset Heights Assoc. of Responsible People. Last Mon each month 1736 9th Ave. ( Moraga)

Have a local event? Contact: editor@westsideobserver.com



AT THE THEATER • *By Dr Annette Lust and Flora Lynn Isaacson*

RED, A CHALLENGING ARTIST’S DILEMMA

In Berkeley Rep’s recent opening of John Logan’s Broadway success *Red*, directed by Les Waters, we are invited to probe into the minds of two artists, the celebrated older painter (Mark Rothko played by David Chandler) and his younger apprentice (Ben played by John Brummer). The exchange of ideas representing the older and younger generation a propos the role of today’s artist is an immediate intellectual challenge. Mark Rothko is a Jew who immigrated from Russia and hires Ken to assist him to paint red mural paintings for the popular Four Seasons New York restaurant. Mark explains to his quiet obedient assistant his theories on art, how society superficially appreciates art today, the value of some current painters, and his own abstract expressionist works that he resists describing to the latter because “Silence is so accurate.”

While the piece does not offer that much emotional or dramatic content until it nears the final scenes, it does challenge the spectator in a remarkably perceptive and profound manner to think about the mental and emotional turmoil the artist painter undergoes during the creative process, and his illusions and delusions about his art work. The audience is also invited into sharing the artist’s inner feelings regarding the public reaction to his creation. Otherwise the major dramatic conflict surfaces in the final scenes to show the older and younger artists’ differences of aesthetic approach. Again the resolution of this conflict is more intriguing intellectually than emotionally or dramatically.

The challenge of dramatizing content immersed in aesthetic discussion is well met by playwright John Logan. The double challenge of engaging actors to succeed in interpreting and performing intellectual content is mastered by Chandler and Brummer as actors and Les Waters as director.

*Red performs through April 29<sup>th</sup>. For information call 510-647-2949 or click on Berkeley Rep .org. Dr. Annette Lust*



Dr. Annette Lust



Flora Lynn Isaacson

THE 36<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL AWARDS GALA HOSTED BY MARGA GOMEZ

Nominations for 2011 theatre achievement have been announced in 82 categories. Awards will be presented at a ceremony hosted by **MARGA GOMEZ** featuring presenters from all around the Bay Area theatre community, plus selected performances from nominated musicals.

*Monday, April 2, 2012. Reception 7 p.m. Ceremony 8 p.m. Palace of Fine Arts, Free Parking. Tickets: \$25 in advance \$30 at the door. (800) 838-3006 or click [www.sfbatcc](http://www.sfbatcc)*

29<sup>TH</sup> BAY AREA FRINGE OF MARIN ONE ACTS FESTIVAL

For its 29th season, new short Bay Area one-acts will be performed to vie for a Best Play \$100 Award and Actors and Directors certificates. The festival will take place in Meadowlands Hall at Dominican University of California, San Rafael April 13th to April 29th, Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m., plus an extra 2 p.m. matinee on Saturday April 21st. It features premieres of new short one-acts and monologues ranging from light and dark comedy and drama to dance, song and fantasy pantry tales. This season there will also be a program for young audiences as well as one for more mature audiences.

*Cont. p. 17*

Now At the Movies • *By Don Lee Miller*

21 JUMP STREET

The high school dork, Schmidt: Jonah Hill, and the popular athlete with zilch IQ, Jenko: Channing Tatum, wind up in the same police training academy seven years later. Schmidt helps Jenko get through the class work and they are assigned as partners. When they screw up their first arrest, they are reassigned to the drug unit run by Capt. Dickson: Ice Cube at a Korean Church cover. Address: 21 Jump St. Their assignment is to infiltrate a high school drug ring and bring down the supplier. With only a month of school left, Schmidt gets the part of Peter Pan in the H.S. musical. Jenko, posing as his brother, gets into sports. Molly: pretty Brie Larson falls for Schmidt. The drug dealer, handsome Eric: Dave Franco is the younger brother of James Franco. The star of the original TV series, Johnny Depp, has a 5-minute cameo. Directed with filthy humor and suspense by Phil Lord and Chris Miller from a screenplay/story by Michael Bacall +3. Crude sexual content. Pervasive profanity. Drug material. Teen drinking. Violence.



CASA DE MI PADRE

Mexican brothers, Armando: Will Farrell and Raul: Diego Luna, join forces the help their father, Miguel Ernesto: Pedro Armendariz, Jr., to save his ranch from the brutal drug dealer, Onza: Gael Garcia Bernal. If you can make it past the familiar clichés, there is some humor. Latina spitfire Sonia: Genesis Rodriguez is there to marry Raul but has an eye for Armando. This comedy is directed by Matt Piedmont and written by Andrew Steele. In Spanish with English subtitles. Sex jokes. Bare butts. Extreme violence. Blood and gore.

DR. SEUSS’ THE LORAX

From the creators of “Despicable Me” and Dr. Seuss’s 1971 book comes this whimsical 3-D animated tale for kids of all ages. The corporation magnate O’Hare: voice of Rob Riggle, who owns Threadyville, is furious when the hidden cameras reveal that idealistic teen Ted: v.o. Zac Efron has dared to leave the walled-in confines of the village. Ted has been told to seek out the Once-ler: v.o. Ed Helms, who knows why there are no more trees in ville and how to find the Lorax: v.o. Danny DeVito. Ted’s dream girl, Audrey: v.o. Taylor Swift, awaits his return. Ted’s wise Grammy Norma: v.o. Betty White counsels Ted.

THE HUNGER GAMES

In the future after wars, droughts, famine, fires and an unspecified catastrophe have devastated North America, it is replaced by Panem, a country divided into the Capitol and 12 districts. Each year, two teen representatives, one male and one female per district, fight to the death on national TV in The Reaping with all residents required to watch. When the younger sister of supple 16-year old markswoman, Katniss: Jennifer Lawrence, is selected, Katniss chooses to sub for her, despite the fact that she faces the baker’s son, Peeta: Josh Hutcherson (see Journey 2), the youth who loves her. She hunts with Gabe: Liam Hemsworth, whose part should be larger in the next films in the trilogy based on the Suzanne Collins’ books. President Snow is played with his usual dignified aplomb by Donald Sutherland. Katniss is ravishing, whether dressed in her backwoods hunter attire or a fancy ballgown. The games are brutal and bloody with bricks used as weapons! Hunger-lites will not be disappointed and are guaranteed to have started yet another franchise. Director Gary Ross and Collins + 2 wrote the compelling screenplay. Intense violence. Disturbing images.

JEFF, WHO LIVES AT HOME

Unemployed hermit Jeff: Jason Segal leaves his basement room to get glue to repair a wooden blind for his widowed mother Sharon: Susan Sarandon. He encounters his older brother Pat: Ed Helms and together they track Pat’s wife Linda: Judy Greer for the day in this dramedy by filmmaking brothers Jay and Mark Douglas (Cyrus). Pat suspects Linda of infidelity. Sharon is surprised by a secret admirer at work. Carol: Rae Dawn Chong is a co-worker. Everything is resolved in a traffic jam with all the cast present. Profanity. Brief nudity. Sexual references. Drug use.

JOHN CARTER

The title character, played by hunky, usually shirtless Taylor Kitsch, is a Civil War Virginia Confederate officer, transported in the Edgar Rice Burroughs’ film version to a Barsoom (Mars) desert. He soon discovers his single defense is that he can make incredible leaps, due to the gravity. He is attacked by Tharks: ten-foot skinny green creatures with horns and four arms, via CG, including actors Thomas Haden Church, Willem Dafoe and Samantha Morton. More human-like, King Tardos: Ciarán Hinds (who looks uncomfortable) of the crimson-tattooed Heliumites and daughter, Princess Dejah: Lynn Collins, never convincing, (seems more like a Maria Montez handmaiden - who looks uncomfortable - from a 40s B-flick) needs rescuing. John’s challenger for Dejah is untrustworthy Sab Than: Dominic West, leader of the Zodangans. Andrew Stanton from Pixar (director of Finding Nemo and WALL-E) directs/co-writes this \$250,000-budgeted flick. This franchise may never leap forward (as of my deadline, it has not made back 1/4<sup>th</sup> the cost). Mild profanity. Intense war violence. Beheading. Cleavage.

JOURNEY 2: THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND

This sci-fi adventure has resources in Edgar Rice Burroughs, Robert Lewis Stevenson and Jules Verne’s novels. Piecing clues together teen Sean: Josh Hutcherson and his adventurous stepdad, Hank: Dwayne Johnson, come up with a map of the Mysterious Island, where Grandad Alexander: Michael Caine is said to have disappeared years before. Mom Liz: Kristen Davis stays behind. They hire helicopter transport from Gabato: Luis Guzman whose daughter Kailani: Vanessa Hudgens comes along, beautifying the tropical scenery. The island has prehistoric critters that threaten them. 3-D. Mild obscenities. Some scary scenes.

THE SECRET WORLD OF ARRIETTY

This delightful Japanese animated film uses U.S. actors for its voices: teen Arrietty Clock: Bridget Mendler, her mom Homily: Amy Poehler, and her dad Pod: Will Arnett are a family of borrowers 4-inches high, who live in a basement corner and do not associate with people. She and Dad make raids in the night to find necessities. When Arrietty is seen by the teenage son Shawn: David Henrie, they fear they must move. She develops a friendship with him and he helps her “borrow” sugar cubes, tissues and items they need to live in comfort. Shawn is growing stronger out of the city while awaiting heart surgery. The vicious maid Hara: v.o. Carol Burnett tries to harm the Clocks. Directed by H. Yonebayashi from Mary Horton’s award-winning novel, “The Borrowers” with screenplay by H. Miyazaki and K. Niwa.

A SEPARATION

A family is torn apart when the wife, Simin: Leila Hatami, moves out to have a better life. The businessman husband, Nadar: Peyman Hoadi, stays behind to be with his father with Alzheimer’s and keeps their 11-year old daughter, Termeh: Fatima Sarhadi. Simin engages a caretaker, Razieh: Sareh Bayat, to care for the elder. When he soils

*Cont. p. 15*

Trio Valtorna, photo by Bernard Mindich

Spring Awakening, photo by Clyde Sheets

Hamlet, photo by Clyde Sheets

...Precision  
Passion...  
...Murder

**Morrison Artists Series: Trio Valtorna**  
Violinist Ida Kavafian, French horn player David Jolley and pianist Gilles Vonsattel perform works by Brahms, Harbison.  
Concert: April 22, 3pm, McKenna Theatre, pre-concert talk, 2pm  
Master class: April 23, noon, All Events Admission Free  
*The Morrison Chamber Music Center is funded in part by a generous gift from the May Treat Morrison Chamber Music Foundation.*

**Big Band and Jazz Combos**  
Instrumental bands present their take on the standards of straight-ahead, post-bop jazz. Directed by Andrew Speight.  
April 19, 7pm, Knuth Hall, Admission Free

**Master of Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition**  
Nine emerging, prolific artists present sculpture, drawing, printmaking, painting, photography, video and installation art.  
April 21–May 11, Reception, April 21, 1–3pm  
Fine Arts Gallery, Admission Free

Book and Lyrics by Steven Sater  
Music by Duncan Sheik  
Directed by Barbara Damashek  
Musical Direction by Sean Kana  
Conducted by Dee Spencer  
Choreography by Ray Tadio

The Broadway sensation of *Spring Awakening* celebrates the journey from youth to adulthood with power and passion.  
April 26–May 6, Little Theatre, Tickets—[creativearts.sfsu.edu](http://creativearts.sfsu.edu)

**Hamlet**  
By William Shakespeare  
Directed by William Peters  
An all-female cast adds an additional layer of intricacy. Come and watch her build the world’s most ingenious mousetrap.  
April 20–22, Boxcar Theatre, 125A Hyde St., San Francisco  
April 26–29, Studio Theatre, Tickets—[creativearts.sfsu.edu](http://creativearts.sfsu.edu)

Buy tickets ahead and save 415/338-2467  
**TICKETS—CREATIVEARTS.SFSU.EDU**



**Tinkering** (Cont. from p. 5)

employees.

It's unclear whether Ms. Kim will publicly admit to requesting this confidential analysis, whether she will ever hold a public hearing to release Rose's analysis, or what her motives are tinkering with board and commission oversight bodies.

As for Tinkerer Wiener's track record, he has sought to dilute historic preservation at the Planning Commission, and sponsored ballot Proposition F last November to weaken campaign finance disclosure by redefining upwards the threshold of consulting service total fees so fewer consultants would be subject to disclosure. Prop. F would also have allowed the City to change any campaign consultant ordinances without further voter approval.

Wiener also sponsored Proposition E, that would have granted the mayor or Board of Supervisors expanded authority to amend or repeal, not just clean up, ballot measures put before voters by the mayor or members of the Board of Supervisors three years following passage. He had initially introduced Prop. E to permit amending or repealing *all* ballot measures, including signature initiatives placed on the ballot by citizens, but had to tone down Prop. E following widespread voter outrage.

Luckily, the Friends of Ethics — a committee formed by five former Ethics Commissioners and Larry Bush, proprietor of [www.CitiReport.com](http://www.CitiReport.com) who just received the Society of Professional Journalists' James Madison award in the Community Media category — stepped in to stop Wiener's busybody and nannyish tinkering; their efforts led to the defeat of both E and F.

Facing the twin disgrace of having been referred to the Ethics Commission over Park Merced misconduct on November 1, and slapped at the ballot box by voters on November 8, Wiener went back to his tinkering rabbit hole and on December 13 requested that Rose's Budget and Legislative Analyst team survey each City department's costs to comply with San Francisco's Sunshine Ordinance.

Wiener discarded the niceties of requesting a cost-benefit analysis of complying with Sunshine, asking Rose to provide a one-sided cost analysis, apparently presuming no benefits accrue from the Sunshine Ordinance. Rose dutifully complied, again asking respondents no questions about the benefits side of the equation, just as he did on the Kim flawed survey instrument.

Like Kim before him, Wiener also did not request this analysis during an open-to-the-public meeting, nor did he issue a public notice announcing his request. Indeed, neither the Clerk of the Board nor Sunshine Task Force

members were aware until late January that Wiener had placed his request to Rose, and it's not known whether Wiener even told the other ten Supervisors what he is up to.

Wiener's request claims to be evaluating the "effectiveness and efficiency" of implementation of the Sunshine Ordinance. His request claims "once we know how much the City spends to comply with the Ordinance, we can work to ensure we are getting the best value for our investment." In truth, he's engaging in payback to the Task Force, alleging the Task Force itself is the root problem for being "inefficient."

The five-page survey Rose's staff sent to each City department is both highly flawed, and clearly riddled with multiple biases.

First, the survey does not ask departments to quantify how many of their records requests are requested under the Sunshine Ordinance vs. what proportion were requested under the state's CPRA statute. Obviously, the costs to comply with CPRA should be subtracted from the costs of the Sunshine Ordinance, but that question wasn't even asked.

Second, the survey contains no data verification procedure to weed out incorrect data entries, in part because the survey provided no guidance to departments on how to complete each question. For instance, the Elections Department initially reported 28,014 hours spent responding to information requests, wrongly including hours for poll worker, precinct level, and other mandated duties. Following a records request I placed, Elections submitted a revised survey to Rose, adjusting the inflated total down to just 4,847 hours.

Similarly, MUNI initially reported 1,877 formal Sunshine requests, but when I placed a request for its records requests log book, the log suddenly showed just 322 formal records requests (that MUNI appears not to have reported as a revised number to Rose).

Other departments reported incorrect job classification codes of employees providing public records, and at least three departments submitted revised surveys to Rose following my fact checking.

Third, multiple biases are involved, including "negative respondent bias," involving those with an animus to Sunshine who may be overstating estimated costs.

Rose's survey relies on "retrospective recall bias," in which employees were asked to report from foggy memories estimated vs. actual hours spent responding to records requests. (Of the 41 City department responses received to date, just 4 of 264 staff members who reported having spent time responding to formal Sunshine requests

indicated they were reporting actual hours; 120 reported estimated hours; and 140 failed to report whether their time was estimated or actual.) Of the claimed 48,787 hours initially reported for this question (before the data were challenged and revised downward), just 658 hours (1.3%) were reported as "actual," 12,018 hours (24.6%) were "estimated," and the balance — 36,110 hours (74%) — failed reporting whether estimated or actual.

It's well known that retrospective recall is affected by a number of factors, including how far back in time respondents are asked to recall vague memories, ambiguity of questions asked, importance or aversion to the topic being asked, and motivations of those being questioned. Those harboring animosity to open government may have deliberately inflated their estimates.

Rose must surely know caution needs to be exercised with retrospective recall estimates, since errors due to confounding and bias are more common in retrospective studies than in prospective studies.

Fourth, Tinkerer Wiener did not request Rose evaluate benefits to taxpayers and the public of Sunshine, since the analysis focuses simply on "costs," not a full cost-benefit analysis. For instance, we now know Dr. Kerr's and Dr. Rivero's dogged Sunshine requests led directly to restitution of \$350,000 wrongly misappropriated from Laguna Honda Hospital's patient gift fund, just one of many clear benefits of Sunshine.

My persistence researching and publishing articles about change orders regarding Laguna Honda Hospital's \$183 million in rebuild cost overruns may have contributed to the City finally suing Laguna Honda's architects in Superior Court, hoping to recover \$70 million of the now-admitted \$87 million in change orders.

Surely there are other examples of Sunshine benefits related to Sunshine records requests, which Wiener ignores and Rose isn't examining — just as Rose failed to examine for Ms. Kim any benefits the City's 86 boards and commissions bring to public oversight.

Fifth, Rose's flawed survey asks for neither the types of records requested — many of which are codified for disclosure by other laws — nor the types of requestors.

For example, the Department of Emergency Management dutifully reported it had received 1,221 formal records requests, and admirably provided its records request log to George Wooding, which reveals that just 59 requests — a scant 4.8% — were for information that were *not* related to the City's 9-1-1 call center for computer-aided dispatcher records. Of those 59 requests, fully 25% were placed by insurance companies, lawyers, or

Cont. p. 15

# HELP MUNI IMPROVE TRANSIT TRAVEL TIME



**Please attend a series of workshops to evaluate options that will reduce travel time on eight of the city's busiest routes and lines shown above. Please visit [www.sfmta.com](http://www.sfmta.com) or contact 311 for further information and language assistance. Workshops will have Chinese and Spanish interpreters. For other language needs, including American Sign Language, please notify staff at 415.701.4453 or TTY 415.701.4730 72 hours prior to the meeting.**

## WORKSHOP DATES AND LOCATIONS

Las fechas y ubicaciones de los talleres / 研討會日期和地點 / Семинар даты и места / Hội thảo Thời gian và địa điểm/ Gawaan Petsa at Lokasyon			
Workshop Topic	Day/Date	Time	Location
28 19th Avenue and N Judah proposals	Sat., March 31	10 a.m. – 12 noon	Jefferson Elementary School 1725 Irving at 18th Ave.
14 Mission (Downtown) and 30 Stockton proposals	To be rescheduled	6 – 8 p.m.	Bayanihan Center 1010 Mission at 6th St.
30 Stockton and 8X Bayshore Express proposals	Sat., April 7	10 a.m. – 12 noon	Gordon J. Lau Elementary School 950 Clay at Powell
J Church and 14 Mission (South of Cesar Chavez) proposals	Tues., April 10	6 – 8 p.m.	Fairmount Elementary School 65 Chenery at Randall
14 Mission (Inner Mission) and 22 Fillmore (16th Street) proposals	Wed., April 11	6 – 8 p.m.	Women's Building 3543 - 18th St. at Valencia
8X Bayshore Express, J Church, 14 Mission (Outer Mission) proposals	Thurs., April 19	6 – 8 p.m.	City College of SF, MUB 140 50 Phelan at Ocean
8X Bayshore Express proposals	Sat., April 21	10 a.m. – 12 noon	Vistacion Valley Community Center 50 Raymond Ave. at Bayshore Blvd.
28 19th Avenue proposals	Tues., April 24	6 – 8 p.m.	Lakeside Presbyterian Church 19th at Eucalyptus
5 Fulton and 22 Fillmore (16th Street) proposals	Sat., April 28	10 a.m. – 12 noon	Ella Hill Hutch, McAllister and Webster 1050 McAllister St. at Webster
All corridor proposals	Sat., May 5	10 a.m. – 12 noon	SFMTA, 2nd Floor One South Van Ness Ave at Market St.



Tinkering (Cont. from p. 14)

the media. Of the remaining 1,168 CAD-related 9-1-1 requests, 34% were placed by insurance companies, lawyers, and the media.

Over at the Mayor’s Office, of 102 public records requests, just 44% requested the mayor’s appointment calendar, his correspondence, or miscellaneous records. The remaining 56% of information requests to our mayor concerned development issues, public policies, Occupy SF, appointments to boards and commissions, the City budget, and assorted issues. And of those 102 requests to the mayor, 40.2% were placed by members of the media, 44.1% placed by private citizens, and the remaining 15.7% were placed by lawyers, organizations, political candidates, intergovernmental organizations, and other requestors.

Rose isn’t likely to report on either the types of records requested or the categories of records requestors, and Wiener may not understand — despite being a Harvard University-trained lawyer and former deputy city attorney who must have heard of the First Amendment, if only while in law school — that the media and lawyers are expert at using state and federal laws to pry loose public records, with or without our local Sunshine Ordinance, even if Wiener’s agenda may be to weaken San Francisco’s own open records laws.

Rose isn’t likely to report, either, about the increased costs of Sunshine compliance caused by a handful of recalcitrant City departments who fight open disclosure every step of the way, often on advice their claim was provided by City Attorney Dennis Herrera’s office. Herrera claims well over \$1 million was spent advising City departments about Sunshine. Rose

may not factor into the costs of Sunshine compliance the cost of deliberate non-compliance fueled by the City Attorney’s bad advice to City departments stalling disclosure.

While it may be an admirable goal to determine costs of Sunshine, Rose can’t do that with the deeply flawed survey data he’s collecting.

The value of open government far outweighs the cost. If Rose also wrongly estimates Sunshine costs are \$6.5 million — as he did estimating costs of boards and commissions for Supervisor Kim — that will again represent less than one-tenth of one percent of the City’s \$6.834 *billion* budget, a paltry sum to provide right-to-know information to the public about what our government is up to.

Instead of swatting at potentially two-tenths of one percent of the City budget spent on boards, commissions, and compliance with Sunshine, Supervisors Kim and Wiener might more appropriately focus on the City’s escalating overtime budget approaching \$300 million, fixing potholes, or finding a way to reduce the City’s now \$1.49 *billion* spent in “total pay” excluding benefits for the City’s 11,756 highest-paid employees now earning over \$90,000 annually.

After all, picking on Sunshine is bull-lying by any other name. Bullies Wiener and Kim must surely know this, even as they tinker attempting to change open government using Rose’s flawed analyses as fodder.

*Monette-Shaw is an open-government accountability advocate, a patient advocate, and a member of California’s First Amendment Coalition. Feedback: monette-shaw@westsideobserver.com.*

At the Movies/Don Lee (Cont. from p. 13)

himself, she is torn by religious beliefs whether she should bathe him. Simin remains determined to leave the country and take her daughter. Director-Screenwriter Asghar Farhadi presents his exquisite drama in Persian with English subtitles. Mature thematic material.

*Awards:* 2011 Academy Award: Best Foreign Film, nom.: Best Writing, Original Screenplay. Asia Pacific Screen Awards: won Best Film + 3 noms. 5 Berlin Film Festival Awards: won Golden Berlin Bear; Silver Berlin Bear: Best Actor & Actress; Prize of Ecumenical Jury; Reader Prize of “Berliner Morgenpost”. Bodil Award won: Best Non-American Film & Director. British Independent Film Award: won Best Foreign Film. Broadcast Film Critics Assn. Awards: won Best Foreign Lang. Film + won 31 other international awards!

SILENT HOUSE

Unrelentingly and in what is actually one long continuous take, without cliches, filmmaking duo Chris Kentis and Laura (also co-producer and writer) Lau (Open Water: 2003) establish ominous terror in a lake-house for its occupants, twenty-something Sarah: Elizabeth Olsen; her father, John: Adam Trese; and uncle Peter: Eric Sheffer Stevens. She is scared out of her wits and manages to show it in variable ways while still the focus of the camera’s attention. Surprisingly, it is based on a 2010 Uruguayan film. Disturbingly violent. Incestuous rape. Terror. Blood. Profanity. Cleavage.

WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT KEVIN

This unsettling drama about a disturbed youth, Kevin, played as a toddler, age 8 and almost 16 by three actors, spotlights a brilliant performance by the guilt-wracked mother, Eva: Tilda Swinton, once a successful travel writer. Complacent dad Franklin: John C. Reilly buys Kevin stronger bow-and-arrow sets each birthday. Defiant teen, a psychopathic sociopath, Kevin: Ezra Miller causes much suffering and mayhem, affecting classmates, even his father and younger sister, plus bringing much grief to Eva. When she walks into his bedroom, he continues masturbating. Director/co-writer Lynne Ramsey pulls no punches in her tale of teenage horror, blessedly not shown on screen. Intense violence. Blood. Profanity. Brief nudity. Sexual situations.

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SHARON THE HEALTH / By Sharon Caren



Thinking about a Vasectomy?  
Consider the Long-Term Complications

In these tough economic times, more men are making a tough decision: vasectomy. Urologists across the country are reporting that nearly twice as many men have been seeking permanent sterilization via vasectomy since the economic crisis began.

“Infection can settle in the testicles and become so bad the testicles must be removed, causing major hormonal repercussions. . . Some prostatitis can go on for 5 years or more. The post-vasectomy infection rate is 32.9%.”

There’s no official count but it’s clearly a trend, says Lawrence Ross, MD, professor of urology at the University of Illinois at Chicago and a past president of the American Urological Association.”We are definitely seeing increasing numbers of patients requesting vasectomy. A rough estimate is perhaps twice the number per week we saw a year ago,”

Many men now coming to urologists’ offices have already decided on vasectomy, but were motivated to act by fear of losing their health insurance. Ross warns that the decision to have a vasectomy should not be made lightly. While the procedure is safe, inexpensive, and relatively minor — recovery is rapid and takes only a day — it should be considered permanent.

**But how safe is it?** I had no prior knowledge of vasectomy health risks until my nephew, father of five children, had the procedure ten years ago. He was left with ongoing pain and erectile dysfunction. Because it’s such a personal issue, I knew nothing until two years ago when he had the reversal surgery. Now he has seven children, feels great and that’s another story J.

What is Vasectomy – a surgical procedure for male sterilization and/or permanent birth control. During the procedure, the vasa deferential of a man are severed, and then tied and sealed to prevent sperm from entering into the seminal stream (ejaculate).

**What happens to the sperm?** After a vasectomy, sperm production continues as before, around 50,000 spermatozoa per minute. Lacking a normal anatomical passage, these cells are either consumed by destroyer cells (macrophages) or degenerate and produce antigens that cause antibodies to be produced. These antigens frequently infiltrate into the bloodstream and induce other cells throughout the body to manufacture antibodies against the sperm called “anti-sperm autoantibodies.”

When the body gears up its defenses to destroy cells of its own making, as after a vasectomy, then the body becomes “auto-Immune” – allergic to itself.

A healthy immune system is our day-to-day defense against cancer. Prostate cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths among American men, claiming some 30,000 lives per year. Although studies are not conclusive, it’s important to be aware of the risk.

**I wonder how many doctors fully disclose startling side effects. Let’s look at some.**Painful sex – the act of cutting the vas during vasectomy and other unnatural manipulations associated with it change the entire character and performance of the ejaculatory system up to the point where the vas is cut. Vasectomy effectively plugs the site where sperm are matured and segregated depending on their viability. The muscles and nerves respond differently and the system’s natural ability to cleanse itself is disrupted.

Infection can settle in the testicles and become so bad the testicles must be removed, causing major hormonal repercussions.

Chronic prostatitis (inflammation of the prostate gland) is common after vasectomy.

Scrotal abscesses, staph infections at surgery site, bleeding under the skin (hematoma), swelling, cellulitis (infection), multiple hydroceles (fluid pockets causing discomfort) are a few more. Some prostatitis can go on for 5 years or

more. The post-vasectomy infection rate is 32.9%.

At the Mayo Clinic, doctors reported several serious infections in vasectomy patients:

One man developed a staph infection and it settled in his heart. After seven weeks of a series of antibiotics, he underwent a subsequent mitral valve reconstruction surgery.

More serious is occurrence of gangrene after vasectomy, difficult to treat and deadly. There was a case published in the journal of Urology where a young healthy man had gangrene and died. Seven other men died from vasectomy over a 15-month period reported by Grimes in 1982. Three of the deaths were attributed to the same surgeon on the same day - that was a bad day! Doctors need to perform simple checks before surgery. Some infection could already exist before the surgery and brought out after the procedure.

**Don’t suffer in silence!** Some reported problems - extreme pain caused from pressure and congestion in the epididymis, infection or a combination of both. The dangers of having the epididymis removed to relieve chronic testicular pain can lead to removal of testicles because it restricts the blood flow to the testicles.

If you have developed post-vasectomy pain, seek the care of an experienced physician with a good understanding of the treatment options. “These doctors are not easy to find”, says Dr. Pollock, Vasectomy Surgeon in Vancouver B.C. email: drneil@netrover.comwww.pollockclinics.com

**Natural Remedies** UCLA is using a medication called Quercetin, a soy based “bioflavonoid” herb with antioxidant characteristics that’s found to work on Chronic Pain Syndrome.

Acupuncture treatments have been successful in significantly relaxing the pain response. Placing needles on pain-relief points cuts blood flow to key areas of the brain within seconds. Also, Chinese herbal medications and diet counseling are also helpful in pain management.

**Vasectomy Methods** U.S. Close ended Vasectomy and Open ended Vasectomy - Surgeons who changed to the Open Ended method reported a significant drop in the incidents of Chronic Pain Syndrome.

Two new methods developed in the People’s Republic of China by Li Shung-ang are known to minimize trauma and infection: Microvasectomy and Percutaneous Injection Vasectomies

Vasectomy reversals are more in demand and increasing dramatically. However, studies report between 30% and 80% of men who seek reversal are unable to father children afterward. The reversal process is more difficult on certain types of procedures, particularly the procedure performed with an electric needle that cauterizes.

If you are considering vasectomy, find a doctor who is dedicated to performing vasectomy as the focus of their surgical practice, performing from 20 to 200 vasectomies annually. Make sure to find out in what procedure that doctor specializes.

*I welcome your feedback. If you have any questions or comments, contact me at 650.359.6579 or email [Sharon@sharon-thehealth.com](mailto:Sharon@sharon-thehealth.com) . Also visit: [www.sharonthehealth.com](http://www.sharonthehealth.com)*

*“The views expressed are those of the writer. If you have any questions about your health, you should always consult with your doctor.*





Ingleside Terraces Homes ( circa 1911?). From other images that the Ingleside Terraces Home Archives have identified, it's possibly a view of construction looking south with Merced Ridge in the background. Know more? Contact editor@westsideobserver.com. We will pass the information on to the SF Historical Photo Collection. Printed by permission, SF History Center, SF Public Library.

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

Sudoku-fun!

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 so that each of the numbers 1 to 9 appears exactly once in each row,column and block.

Answer: The answer appears below.

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

BRAIN FUD

Each of the following clues describes two words. One of the words is a type of fruit. The other word is that fruit with one of the following changes: a letter added anywhere (apple applet), a letter deleted anywhere (orange range), or a letter changed anywhere (cheery cherry). There is no rearrangement of the other letters. No fruit is used more than once. (Answers: bottom of page)

1) This is a devilish fruit.

2) This is a crippled fruit.

3) This is a happy fruit.

4) This is a criminal fruit.

5) This is a large fruit.

6) This is a tardy fruit.

7) This is a sullen fruit.

8) This is an up-to-date fruit.

9) This is a handkerchief worn by a fruit.

10) This is a popular dance among fruit.

11) This is a complaint by a fruit.

12) This is a weapon used by a fruit.

Phyllis' Findings / Phyllis Sherman

BE AWARE OF TENANTS

The story below took place a year ago and I neglected at the time to write about it...but here it is:

To find a suitable tenant I tried the old, reliable (?) CRAIGSLIST...and sure enough found what appeared to be a solid, gentleman in his 60's...pretty good references. Naturally, I called a friend of his who said "Oh sure, great guy." He was agreeable, personable, no immediate problems. Divorced a few times. To make a long story short...after about a year or so, I left San Francisco to visit family back in Washington, DC, and because I was confident and sure he was honest, went to the East Coast for two weeks...and voila...17 valuable rings and three gold bracelets were missing from the second drawer. One heavy gold bracelet had gold charms from several cities I'd visited in Europe. Naturally, I was devastated and I am still a year later emotionally distraught. My diamond engagement ring, and my Mom's engagement ring, were taken, as well as an opal, turquoise, pearl/diamond and other rings...all valuable and especially of sentimental value. I called the police and they came and made a report with a case number...a San Francisco Police officer came out, but they found no evidence against him. The tenant denied taking anything, saying it must have been an intruder who came when the door was open and committed the crime. Coincidence? Perhaps. Nothing in the bedroom was amiss as it would have been had an intruder entered the upstairs bedroom....no drawers ajar, nothing opened...a box of costume jewelry atop a dresser was untouched....the perpetrator knew where to look. My homeowner's insurance covered some of the loss, but that was it. In short order, I evicted the tenant, I could no longer trust having any tenant in my home. Sorry to say, I'm still distressed over the loss and have learned my lesson.

\*\*\*\*\*

Some Things You Should Get To:

THE CULT OF BEAUTY....The Victorian avant-garde 1860-1900 is running at the Legion of Honor at Lincoln Park, through June 17, 2012. The Grand Patron is Diane B. Wilsey. This is a must-see exhibition.

\*\*\*\*\*

At the Contemporary Jewish Museum "Houdini: Art & Magic" is an interesting exhibition with pictures and videos of the magician in action. Also some fun magic gifts in the Museum store for the magician kids in your life.

\*\*\*\*\*

ANNAPURNA is an absorbing drama at the Magic Theater by Sharr White and directed ably by Loretta Greco. This two character play concerns a terminally ill cowboy and his Eastern seaboard ex-wife who tracked him to a remote part of the Rockies to resolve of an incident that drove them apart 20 years ago.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Marsh on Valencia Street is featuring a very funny solo show with Marga Gomez in "NOT GETTING ANY YOUNGER." It's a hilarious mix of childhood memories, lying about her age, reflections about her childhood and some social satire that will keep you laughing.

Feedback: phyllis@westsideobserver.com

OPEN LATE



By Julie Casson

- Answer
- 1) demon lemon

2) lame lime

3) merry berry

4) felon melon

5) big fig

6) late date

7) glum plum

8) current currant

9) banana bandana

10) mango tango

11) grape gripe

12) pear spear



SECOND THOUGHTS / By Jack Kaye



# But What Can We Do?

This column has questioned the truth or wisdom of some of our most famous and revered national and religious quotations. But there are some that even this column will not challenge. One is JFK's famous "ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." It seems more valid today than it was 50 years ago. How many of us remember it, or think about its meaning?

Today we are facing many serious challenges to our well being. America has been digging out of a severe recession for three years now. More than 13 million Americans are out of work. Millions of homeowners are losing their homes, owing much more for them than they are now worth. We seem held captive by OPEC, which sets oil prices affected by supply and demand as well as speculation and forces us to pay more when filling our cars. Some of us feel that we are not getting enough information from our mainstream media. Many of us feel that we are not getting the same advantages as others take for granted.

We want the government to help us. If we are unemployed, we want the government to give us unemployment benefits for as much and as long as possible. We want our elected officials to fix our economy, which is affected by various global factors. If we have borrowed more than our homes are worth, we want the government to help us get the principal and interest rate reduced. If we have large cars and trucks and are being forced to pay a fortune to fill up, we want the government to do something to lower gas prices. If some, like the rich, are getting advantages that we aren't, we want the government to fix the system so that we all get a fair deal. Many of us have lost faith in our elected officials to fix our country the way we want. Our government, like our very nation, appears fractured and moving in different directions. We fear that our representatives cannot be counted on to make the needed changes to make sure our lives only get better. What are we to do?

We could ask "what can we do for ourselves as well as our country?"

If we are unemployed, sending out resumes to get back into our former careers, we might consider other employment options. What else can we do that needs be done? We could get a specialized education doing a different kind of work. We could do work that people have said Americans won't do, like gardening, housecleaning, child care, manual labor, farming, building maintenance, dog walking and handy-person jobs. We could offer our services to our neighborhood as well as to the larger community.

But most of us are not unemployed. What can we do about the unemployment problem? If we run a company, we can refuse to outsource work to other countries. We could comply with federal law and hire only legal residents and citizens even for yard work or child care. We could go out of our way to buy products made in America, even if they cost a little more. When making calls to large corporations that outsource their customer service, we can ask to speak with someone working in America.

If we borrowed more than our home is currently worth, should we stop making payments and move out only when forced regardless of its effect on the neighborhood or our economy, not to mention our credit rating? When our homes were worth much more than we paid for them, should we have offered to pay the bank more? Do we have any personal responsibility for borrowing too much or too often to have something we could not afford? We could realize that the home is worth to us exactly what it was before the crash. It is not just an investment, it is a place to live in comfort and security. We could try to remember that homes were not always seen as profitable investments. Their value used to decline with age, like cars, refrigerators and washing machines. When we buy a new car or appliance on credit, as most of us do, we are immediately underwater. Not only are they worth less than we owe for years, when we sell them, if we do, we get much less than we paid. Should we immediately walk away from all these purchases?

We recently got a reduction in our payroll taxes. It amounts to, on average, about \$2 a day per worker more in our pockets. We

were excited to get this small amount because it would help us and the economy recover. Now gas prices are up by almost \$.50 a gallon. We are in shock. It threatens to destroy our personal and national economic recovery, the media tells us. We hear that the increase is due in large part to speculations driven by media hyperbole. We watch interviews of our fellow Americans in the back of their large trucks and SUVs saying that this is outrageous. They say that the government should do something to lower prices at the pump. Is drilling the answer, even though the effects would take many years to realize?

It has been only a few weeks since the payroll tax cut extension was signed into effect, meaning that the average worker will save \$14 a week, but we have already forgotten. This additional amount per week would pay the additional \$.50 per gallon for 28 gallons of gas per week. If we drive 60 miles a day (most of us don't) and get 15 miles a gallon for the same seven days we would come out even. But there's more. Are we driving a truck or SUV? Why? Is it just for work? If yes, can the additional cost be written off or passed on to the consumer of the services? If the truck is not needed for work, why have it? We could sell the SUV or pickup and buy a more practical family car. They get much better gas mileage and are easier and more fun to drive. Or can we reduce our driving by the percent of increase in the price per gallon? So a \$.50 increase is about a 14% change from a \$3.50 a gallon base. Can we cut our driving by 14%? We could do our errands more efficiently. We could carpool, take public transportation or even walk when possible? Could we cut waste in other areas, like spending four dollars a day on coffee at our favorite cafe?

Could we stop whining and do something?

And if we no longer trust our elected officials, we should work to replace them with people we trust more, if not completely. When we see what the conservatives in the Congress have been up to these last few years, many of us are starting to realize that more must be done. We must change the way we pay for elections, and should restrict lobbying to clear presentations of positions without the exchange of any money or favors so that our legislators are not tempted to prostitute themselves to special interests. We must also encourage our best and brightest to go into government service. In order to have enough best and brightest, we must significantly improve our education system. This would involve not only hiring, training and encouraging more great teachers, it would also mean changing our high school curriculum to better prepare our students for college and life. A better educated population should produce better voters as well as improved candidates. These are changes that we must know enough to care enough to fight for.

And if we believe that some are getting more advantages than the rest of us, we should insist on better coverage by the media and organize for changes in our tax code, which is usually at the heart of economic and political inequity. (*This column has proposed a new, simple and fair tax code with no itemized deductions, just a standard one; treating all sources of income as equal; and with only five tax brackets ranging from 10% to a maximum of 30%. See this previous column online.*)

So maybe we, as a strong, self-reliant people, can stop complaining about our difficulties and blaming the government for not doing more to help us, and instead, ask ourselves what can we do for ourselves and our nation?

Taking positive action to effect change is the best way to get over our depression about life's cruelty and our own shortcomings.

So let us not ask what our government can do for us, but rather discover, declare, and demonstrate what we can do for ourselves and our country.

Feedback: [kaye@westsideobserver.com](mailto:kaye@westsideobserver.com)

## Investing Early

By Carol Kocivar ©2012



My kids always used to tease me when I stopped to turn and look at a new baby. It usually started with a smile to the mom or dad and then the question, "How old is your baby?"

It was really a conversation starter just to spend a little more time looking at the miracle.

I still do it—but with a little more knowledge about the public policy implications of how we support new parents and young children.

So when support for early childcare is on the chopping block, it is time for people to speak up.

And when it is time to make decisions on how and when we invest in early education, it is time to speak up.

There are two issues we need to look at right now.

- Proposed cuts in the state budget for early child care
- Investment of ballot initiative revenue in early child care and child development

### State Budget Cuts

The proposed state budget would cut more than \$500 million from childcare programs statewide, cutting services to as many as 62,000 low-income children. The new cuts would come on top of nearly \$700 million in reductions to these programs over the last four years—a 42 percent reduction in state funding.

According to Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson, "For decades, California has been committed to a simple but powerful idea: Children

**The proposed state budget would cut more than \$500 million from childcare programs statewide, cutting services to as many as 62,000 low-income children. The new cuts would come on top of nearly \$700 million in reductions to these programs over the last four years—a 42 percent reduction in state funding."**

deserve more than just a safe place to wait while their parents work. They also deserve a chance to learn and to grow. It pains me to say it, but California's budget crisis has put that commitment to our children in jeopardy."

It is no mystery that early childhood education is important. We have a growing field of research that tells us that this is where to start providing all our children with the skills they need to succeed.

"If we are to be serious about reducing the dropout rate in this country," says Madelein Kunin, "we have to begin much earlier. Many low-income children fall behind their classmates as early as kindergarten. If we want to increase the number of high school graduates we have to focus on the years one through five. That's when critical brain development takes place that often determines whether the young child will grow into a successful, productive adult."

### So what do we do?

First, let's not be silent. Let your elected officials know this is an important issue.

The California State PTA has written to both the Senate and the Assembly budget committees opposing the Governor's proposals to reduce childcare and preschool availability and devolve significant programmatic responsibility to the Department of Social Services and ultimately to counties.

Second, when the issue of new revenue for education is discussed, ask an important question:

Does this invest in early childhood education?

And let me give you a clue—if you ask that about the Our Children Our Future Initiative for the November 2012 state ballot, the answer is clear and the answer is "Yes."

Funding is provided to help prepare disadvantaged young children to succeed in school and in life by raising standards for early childhood education programs and by expanding the number of children who can attend.

Let's start early—for all children. This is where our investment needs to begin.

Feedback: [kocivar@westsideobserver.com](mailto:kocivar@westsideobserver.com)

## Theater (Cont. from p. 13)

Admission \$15 to \$20: seniors and students \$10; children under 12, \$5. For reservations and information call (415) 673-3131 or email [Jeanlust@aol.com](mailto:Jeanlust@aol.com)

### A TRAINLOAD OF LAUGHS ON THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AT RVP

As one enters the theatre at Ross Valley Players, a large-scale model of the 20th Century Limited and a diorama created by Images of the Past Railroad Modeling Company are on display, with authentic 30's recordings by Director Billie Cox.

One may compare this production of this *Twentieth Century* by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur, based on a play by Charles Bruce Millholland in a new adaptation by Ken Ludwig, with a production of the musical *On the Twentieth Century*, with book and lyrics by Adolph Green and Betty Comden and music by Cy Coleman, that was staged at Novato Theater Co. last October. The story was basically the same but with gender changes and a different ending.

The Ross Valley Players' *Twentieth Century* is as fast-paced as the repartee of the famous luxury train itself. Ken Ludwig's adaptation is reminiscent of the 1934 movie starring John Barrymore and Carole Lombard in which the characters plot to rescue a director's failing theater career.

Directed by Billie Cox and produced by Karen Laffey, *Twentieth Century* is based on a legendary, eccentric, Broadway producer Oscar Jaffe (Dale Camden), who must convince his former leading lady Lili Garland (Jennifer Reimer), once a chorus girl and now a Hollywood starlet, to return to Broadway for his upcoming show.

The play takes place aboard the luxurious 20th Century Limited from Chicago to New York City in 1938. The fabulous set is by Ken Rowland, with beautiful costumes for Lili Garland by Michael A. Berg.

Under Billie Cox's imaginative direction, the entire cast has a spirit of camaraderie as well as excellent playing energy and comic timing.

*Twentieth Century* plays from March 23-April 22 at Ross Valley Players. For info call 415-456-9555, extension 1 or click on [www.rossvalleyplayers.com](http://www.rossvalleyplayers.com). Up next at Ross Valley Players is *The Night of the Iguana* by Tennessee Williams, directed by Chris Cassell, May 18-June 17, 2012. Flora Lynn Isaacson





Real Travel By Sergio Nibbi

Been There, Done That.

Having spent a pinch over three quarters of a century inhabiting this beautiful world of ours, I've been blessed to have visited countless interesting and exotic places. There's the usual like a Caribbean cruise, Hawaiian vacation, lighting a candle in St. Peters in Rome, or watching a muzzled bear wrestling in St. Petersburg. But what about all the other places that I've yet to see? Most people would call it a "bucket list" but isn't it more than that?

With the clock running how many more trips do we have left in us? I've yet to go on a safari or see the Great Wall of China. Angkor Wat would be great to visit, and what about the Grand Canyon or Niagara Falls? I certainly wouldn't want to go over in a barrel but I would love to see it, never the less. There are so many beautiful places in this country alone. One of my dreams has always been to travel from coast to coast in a motor home. We tried that for a couple of weeks many years ago with three young children and it was great seeing the North West and putting our rented Winnebago on a ferry and floating through the San Juan Islands. The one thing we like to forget, however, was stopping every night to fill the water tank and emptying out the holding tank. Cruise ships are so much better.

We constantly get brochures from UC Berkeley, or Abercrombie and Kent, and just last week we received a very classy brochure for an around the world trip by private jet. It even came with its own physician aboard. Eat and drink all you want and there's someone there in the morning to hold your head.

“And speaking of the Golden Gate Bridge, I just realized that I've never walked across the bridge. Does that sound like a lead in? It certainly does — next stop Sausalito from San Francisco, one step at a time. See you on the other side and I'll buy the drinks at Sally Stanford's.”

Looking back, we've had the pleasure of traveling with many dear friends, but traveling with just my wife has never been a problem. People ask me all the time if we get tired of each other after three or four weeks together and my answer has always been "no." Every day is a new adventure and the adventure continues.

I love reading the Sunday travel section in the local papers, and especially in the New York Times, but as enticing as they sound where is one to venture off to these days? We were in Athens last year as the protests were just starting in front of the Parliament Building and they've worsened since. An acquaintance was in Egypt a few months ago during the riots that killed 26 people in one day. Mexico is overridden by drug cartels and even the usual cruise stops are suspect. The Middle East is a hotbed of revolt and the only reason to go there is to negotiate for a nuclear weapon.

All in all it sounds like the Bay Area is the place to be at this point in time. The economy is stable, we speak the language, the food is great and our cell phones work. Where in this world can you enjoy the beauty of Lake Tahoe, Yosemite, the wine country, and San Francisco Bay while watching the setting sun filtered through the glistening cables of the Golden Gate Bridge? And speaking of the Golden Gate Bridge, I just realized that I've never walked across the bridge. Does that sound like a lead in? It certainly does — next stop Sausalito from San Francisco, one step at a time. See you on the other side and I'll buy the drinks at Sally Stanford's.



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From the Border Hilary Gordon

GARDEN/GUARDIAN

By Hilary Gordon©2012/Photos: Blair Randall

On Wednesday morning I was standing rapt in the early morning garden. The sun was touching the first, highest branches of the trees, but the night's moisture still beaded the spiderwebs in the rosemary. The fingers of sunshine were closely followed by groups of little grey birds, hopping and chattering as they cleaned tiny insects off the plants. Handsome white-crowned and yellow-crowned sparrows foraged under shrubs and in the pathways until the shadow of a red-shouldered hawk sent them scattering. Although the traffic on seventh avenue jostled and complained only a few yards from where I stood, I was in a magical world apart.



Sparaxis (harlequin)

The word garden, like the word yard, comes from ancient linguistic roots meaning an enclosed space. The garden is a protected place, set apart from current dangers. In the countryside, the garden might be protected by a deer fence. In the city, our garden is protected by layered foliage of established trees and shrubs from the noise and smoke of traffic.

In the raised vegetable beds, the tender plants and rich soil are protected from foot and wheelbarrow traffic in the pathways. In the greenhouse,



Rose

our seedlings are protected from the elements and the foraging birds and snails. On the steep sandy hillside, a thicket of native plants guards the shelter and nesting spots of birds and insects, and provides cover for the possum, raccoon, and skunk families that call Twin Peaks and the nearby reservoir their home. The garden is also a guarded place for people. Our outdoor classroom, compost demonstration area, our greenhouse, and our lunch spots provide habitat for learning and growing. Kids and grownups have held their first worm, and tasted their first snap pea straight off the vine. They've watched the foraging honeybees loaded with pollen, and seen the steam rise from the compost pile as it is turned.

post bin, each family with salad and Swiss chard growing in barrels on the fire escape, or with bees or chickens in the backyard, weaves back a little of the broken thread of nature's web. Our food, our water, our sea-

sons, the wild animals and birds we share our city with, can be tended and understood, watched and protected. The Garden for the Environment, and the many other community gardening projects here in San Francisco, create space for people to belong to nature rather than just long for nature. And by guarding nature and our connection to her, perhaps we can open wider the garden of our hearts. Hilary Gordon 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? Meet her in the garden Wednesdays 10-2 and Saturdays 10-4.



Ribes sanguineum, Pink-Flowered Currant This is a very classy looking shrub with many large pendant pink flower clusters

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