City’s PUC Falling Behind on Water Fix-up?

By Brian Browne

The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) creeps along with the Hetch Hetchy (HH) system fix-up. HH is a complex gravity system including dams, hydro-power plants, siphons, pumps, tunnels and pipelines that stretches from the High Sierras to the Bay. It provides water for approximately 2.4 million local and regional water customers with undoubtedly some of the most pristine water available in the USA. HH is also probably the only federally mandated municipal power provider in the US.

The 1913 Raker Act granted San Francisco the right to build dams and extract water from the Tuolumne River and provide water and power to municipalities and municipal customers. The system receives approximately 15 to 20 percent of its water from the Tuolumne River. Under Raker the SFPUC has junior riparian water rights. The senior rights are vested in the Turlock and Modesto irrigation districts. The SFPUC may only extract water after the flows of the Tuolumne River meet certain criteria at different times of the year. Approximately sixty percent of all Tuolumne River water goes to the irrigation districts and SFPUC. The Hetch Hetchy system receives the residual amount of its deliverable water from sources west of the Oakdale intakes for the San Joaquin pipelines.

The system is over 7 decades old and for years it has been known that this marvel of engineering must be repaired and improved. Over the years, many plans were advanced but never became operational. In 2002 the SFPUC boldly announced that they had a 76 project local and regional fix-up plan, known as the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), and all that was needed was the funding authority and the SFPUC would implement and complete this plan by 2015.

Blank Check In 2002 San Francisco voters passed Proposition A granting the SFPUC the right to issue $1.6 billion in revenue bonds. This was trumped by 2002 Proposition E (Ammiano) that removed the voters’ the right to issue water and wastewater bonds and ceded it to the Board of Supervisors. SFPUC now had a blank check to implement their plan. The voters also passed Proposition P which created the Revenue Bond Oversight Committee (RBOC) as a ratepayer advocate to monitor the expenditure of revenue bond funds.

Who Controls the Water? The 29 wholesale customers making up the Bay Area Water Users Association were clearly dubious. Their politicians passed three pieces of legislation AB2058 which morphed their entity into the Bay Area Water Users Association (CIP), and all that was needed was the funding authority and the SFPUC would implement and complete this plan by 2015.

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Imagine sitting at home—or in your office, or on the drive to work (or the bus/BART) or in your favorite café or really anywhere with your iPod mp3 player (podcast)—and listening to what are now essential secret, back-door policy discussions and even decisions in the San Francisco mayor’s office just like Books on Tape. Imagine listening to a Department of Environment discussion about the need for more trees in the city which was not covered by the few full-time local City Hall reporters left. Or listening to discussions about the five/ten year capital planning for future bonds (like Prop A for the SF General Hospital seismic retrofit or the recent scandalous Library reauthorization) or reading a same day local political blog post about how the current bonds are being (mis)spent with accompanying scolding by the editors of the San Francisco Chronicle and the San Francisco Examiner. Possibly, you’ve stumbled onto the local government access COMCAST channels SFGETV 26 or 78? If so, you’ve seen colorful discussions at the Taxi Commission or video shorts about candidates for upcoming elections.

By Kimo Crossman

Guest Opinion

Listen Up

Nickle a Drink? Get Real.

Too little—too late!

Schwarzenegger’s proposal to raise the alcohol tax to a nickel a drink to help our flailing state budget displays a timidity that is out of character for a man who describes his detractors as “girly-men.” Whatever happened to the tough guy we elected? It’s a far cry from the current governor who describes his political opponents as “disingenuous.”

Last year the Marin Institute, the alcohol industry watchdog, proposed a quarter a drink tax increase which they estimated would raise an additional $3 billion to help lessen California’s budget woes, a substantial improvement over the nickel a drink tax increase which they estimated would raise an additional $3 billion to help lessen California’s budget woes.

The nickel a drink initiative was defeated at the ballot box back in 1990 because the liquor lobby spent $30 million to defeat it. Oddly enough, the most effective opposition came from the California Teachers Association, an unlikely source; its TV spots, paid for by the liquor lobby, somehow convinced voters that the enhanced transparency mandate would be too costly, but further research has shown that the enhanced transparency mandate has all the equipment, contracts and staff in place to implement this transparency mandate today, and the measure will probably save money. Yet the bureaucrats at City Hall continue to resist further public scrutiny. Jack Chin, head of SFGETV following apparent municipal prohibitions and Angela Calvillo, Clerk of the Board through Frank Darby Administrator of the Sunshine Task Force continue to raise spurious technical, budget or procedural reasons to prevent implementation of this simple improvement.

It is even more disappointing that the Sunshine Task Force has not been aggressively implementing the new law. So far the agency has only been one agonized discussion on this failure, and that lasted a paltry 20 minutes. Since this recording and posting procedure is now required over any regular job duty for a civil servant at SFGETV, the meeting clerk staff or any other city employee must comply.

It is sad that Newsom, city staff and Dennis Herrera’s City Attorney’s are doing everything they can to prevent the ability of you and me to easily monitor the discussions and decisions which happen every day in City Hall. Giving citizens and reporters quick access to the goings-on at City Hall is a major step forward, we should demand that the foot-dragging cease.

Kimo Crossman is a government watchdog, a member of the Sunshine Posse. He is available at kimo@webnetic.net

Dec 2008
San Francisco Firefighter's Toy Program

The San Francisco Firefighter's Toy Program is the city's largest and the nation's oldest program of its kind. Since 1949, it has evolved from a few firefighters repairing broken toys and bikes for 15 families to, in 2004, 300 firefighters and many other functions.

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The economy has been so bad, Americans have been sneaking into Mexico.

The local police asked recently in a note in their police blotter,..."What year was Real Estate John Barbagedata first elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors? The first correct answer will result in ten Police Stickers for the lucky winner. And what exactly does the winner do with 10 police stickers? Can they be used to pay for tickets for their friends volunteering their time to distribute over 200,000 toys to 40,000 disadvantaged children. Besides helping individual families in need, the Toy Program serves many community organizations, including shelters for abused women and children, inner-city schools, neighborhood groups, children's cancer wards, and other nonprofit charitable organizations. We also respond to displaced children who become victims of fires, floods and other such disasters.

Dependent solely on donations, the Toy Program places barrels at retail establishments, street fairs, Christmas parties and many other functions.

Inve...
Next to love, one of the best gifts parents and caregivers can give their children is a clear and consistent set of limits. Because discipline is often confused with punishment, many parents and caregivers give up before they begin. Children need limits and boundaries to learn positive behavior and don’t help children learn from the experience.

Proper discipline – not punishment – is critical to the growth of a healthy and happy child. The challenges of raising a child can sometimes seem overwhelming, but set appropriate limits.

To help, the Bay Area First 5 county commissions provide the following tips for correcting negative behavior while still being a positive parent.

**DO’S OF DISCIPLINE**

Set appropriate limits: Keep your child’s age in mind when thinking about discipline. Children do not understand the concepts of “yes” and “no” until they are approximately 12 months old. At this age, they’ll begin to test limits. Children’s ability to understand “right” from “wrong” develops as they get older.

Be consistent: It is important to stick with the rules and consequences you set. If you don’t, your child isn’t likely to stick to them either. Consistency helps your child learn that his or her behavior has a specific result.

Inconsistency confuses children and encourages them to test limits.

Include your child in the solution: Help your child learn from mistakes by including him or her in the solution. For example, if your child purposely spills a cup of milk, give him or her a cloth to clean it up.

Be encouraging: Use praise and encouragement whenever possible to promote good behavior. Praise is especially effective when it’s specific. Don’t just say, “Good job.” Instead say, “You did a good job putting your toy back where it goes.” Remember that a little praise goes a long way.

Model appropriate behavior: Your child watches you closely for cues on how to behave. Children imitate their parents and caregivers and the old saying, “Do as I say, not as I do” doesn’t work with kids. Be calm, but firm, when setting limits and model behaviors you want to emphasize, such as sharing and saying “please” and “thank you.”

Avoid gifts: Do not give items, particularly food, to reward good behavior. Instead, use smiles, nods or verbal praise to tell your child that you approve.

Don’t shame or belittle a child: When your child misbehaves, be sure to clearly tell him or her that it’s his or her behavior that’s unacceptable. Shaming or belittling your child damages his or her self-esteem. Use a respectful, encouraging tone of voice and avoid harsh words. This helps prevent hurting your child’s self-image and promotes your child’s willingness to cooperate.

Notwithstanding that historical background, the SF Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors rejected the Brotherhood Way Coalition requests for an environmental impact report, instead allowing the project owner to proceed with merely a mitigated negative declaration as to any adverse environmental effect. Disaggregating neighborhood pleas for a bicycle lane and California Environmental Quality Act, the Planning Commission imposed conditions for the issuance of a building permit as a conditional use authorization. (The change in development does not conform with the residential mixed low-density zoning for the site.)

We’re also on the web: www.westsideobserver.com

A final historical note involves the SF Taxi Commission. After the insolvency collapse of the Yellow Cab company with its hundreds of taxicab driving permits (often called medallions) in 1977, I twice introduced an ordinance to render unlawful the sale of taxicab permits, require returns of existing permits to the Police Department, authorize reissuance of such permits only to proven taxicab drivers to have a fee covering actual city government expenses in the issuance process. After the then mayor vetoed each ordinance, I decided to enact such law by an initiative. (It was known as Proposition K.) Voters approved it overwhelmingly in the June 1978 election. Thereafter, the then permit holders, who were corporations, lawyers, real estate brokers, even doctors and nurses, many of whom lived out of state, and few of whom actually ever drove a taxicab, but instead made tens of thousands of dollars annually by rent- ing the permits to actual drivers, pursued in state court and federal court suits to overturn Proposition K. They even sought United States Supreme Court intervention. They failed. At the same time, and thereafter, they tried on nine occasions to abolish Proposition K or dilute its provisions. The voters rejected such subterfuge times two. During the era I was a California State Senator, the present Mayor introduced a law to replace Police Commission administration of Proposition K with a Taxi Commission. He did so against my advice. Taxi Commission membership included old and some new permit holders, the later of whom, have constantly tried to retain permits after the cessation of their driving career. The Taxi Commission is now dominated by those special interests, to wit, corporate executives in individual and individual development, not illegally. A recently adopted charter amendment authorizes a Board of Supervisors’ ordinance to consolidate the Taxi Commission with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, operator of the Municipal Railway. Both the Mayor and the President of the Board of Supervisors have repeatedly said publicly that the new consolidation is not to change or repeal the taxi driver and permit protections of Proposition K. Skeptics believe otherwise and I am the true motivation for such an ordinance as authorization of the sale of these government permits on a private asset basis and an elimination of the current legal requirements that a permit holder must drive a taxicab personally a minimum number of hours per year. An MTA official recently declared: “when it comes to changing Proposition K, adjusting how medallions are allocated, I can’t be influenced by...” 

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KOPP (Cont. from p. 1)

the Director of the California Department of General Services to enter into negotiations to purchase 13 acres of property to a third party, except that the Daly City Redevelopment Agency had the right of first refusal, thus hindering the discretionary power of the Department of General Services. As a result of the rezoning and development of 40 acres of Palower-supporting Cove Palower supporters, the Governor vetoed SB 1527 on September 30, 2008, noting correctly that the measure instruments private financial incentives by allowing a tax deduction that would potentially limit the state’s financial return for the sale of state-owned land without need of an appropriation. We refer you for this important community! Meanwhile, the Cow Palace had begun and signed a letter of intent to lease such 13 acres to Cypress Development Company a nonprofit organization formed from whose principal is former Navy and Dallas Cowboys quarterback Roger Staubach. The lease term will be 60 to 66 years. The lease will enable the Cow Palace development with guaranteed development structure, and thereby increase employment events, even beyond those loyal boosters who preserved the Cow Palace from an unmitigated publicity campaign against its historical place in San Francisco and the Peninsula. The development project includes some 90 acres of park and open space, community, stores and middle class housing.

Some readers may recall the efforts of religious organizations along the Brotherhood Way, respecting a proposed 182-unit development commonly referred to as 800 Boulevard Way. That effort began when the proposed project was initially planned to develop a 10-acre tract and a 280-unit development project. The development project includes some 35 acres, community, stores and middle class housing.

In this situation, you could remove the spoon and help your child clean it up.

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When questioned about the number of staff layoffs, the Supervisor said that he didn't have exact numbers, but thought that as many as 300 staff positions could be lost.

2009 HOUSING ELEMENT
Matt Chamberlain gave an update to the group about the work that is being conducted to draft the 2009 Housing Element document. The HE defines the “general plan” for housing in the city and is used by the city government to incorporate the feedback of the citizens into the project planning and approval process. Chamberlain is serving as a citizen representative on the Community Advisory Body to the 2009 Housing Element and has compiled extensive notes on the meetings. He listed a 4-point “call to action” that citizens should consider if they want to have an impact on the final draft. His notes can be found on the WOTPCC website at www.WestOfTwinPeaks.org.

FINANCIAL CRISIS
The featured speaker for the evening was Ms. Nadia Sesay, the Director of Public Finance for the City. She administers the city’s debt portfolio by evaluating the bond markets and adjusting the city’s bond strategies to achieve the highest return for the lowest expenditures. Needless to say, in the current financial market she has become very busy. Sesay stated that in this current market crisis, San Francisco is fortunate as they have followed a conservative stance in their portfolio and as a result have maintained a “Double A” rating. Her focus is trying to reduce the city’s exposure for long-term debt, and she said that the city is looking to propose some short-term interim financing at 1-2% for a period of 12-18 months to pay down the debt balance while the short-term rates are so favorable (versus a budgeted 6%).

When asked if the current market crisis and credit crunch has impacted the Capital Planning and Expenditure process, Sesay said that capital planning projects are moving forward with no slowed pace and that there is no foreseeable impact to homeowner’s tax base for 2008-09, but that an impact could occur as early as 2009-10.

Laguna Honda Layoffs-Deficit
On the painful side, the Supervisor spoke about probable upcoming layoffs at Laguna Honda. The patient census has slipped to 800, while the staffing level has remained at a size to handle a caseload of 1000 patients. He said that the city couldn’t support this difference, to handle a caseload of 1000 patients. He said while the staffing level has remained at a size about probable upcoming layoffs at Laguna Honda, but also throughout city staff. Another problem that the police have is not everyone reports vehicle break-ins, so the citywide figures are not as accurate as they could be.

Sgt. Riggle said that vehicle break-ins are a problem throughout the city and stressed how important it is for anyone who experiences a robbery to take the time to fill out a report. In this way the true number of crimes can be tallied and a more accurate scope can be detailed for response planning. Riggle went on to discuss how the SFPD is using several “plain clothed” officers in cars to step up the fight against the graffiti that has plagued the West Portal and Ocean Avenue corridors lately. As we have reported before, a key to to have the owners clean up graffiti as soon as possible after an occurrence.

Playgrounds
Supervisor Sean Elsbernd then addressed the room with both good and painful news. On the good side he announced that ribbon cuttings had occurred on two new playgrounds, Upper Serra playground in Lakeside and the JP Murphy playground in Forest Hills. He described both parks as “great toddler playgrounds” after their renovations.

Laguna Honda Layoffs-Deficit

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In the Diamond Heights Shopping Center at 3214-D Diamond Heights Blvd.
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YMCA membership and programs are open to everyone. To the extent possible, financial assistance is made available through generous donations.
FESTIVE FRIDAYS
Every Friday: All West Portal Merchants open until 8PM every Friday in December.

FLU SHOTS: IT’S TIME! 12/1-31 Daily | FLU SHOT INFO: Dial 2-1-1 to get information about Bay Area flu-shot locations, times and fees.

FREE WALKING TOURS | CITY GUIDES Sat. 12/1-Daily | 10am | Informative glimpses into SF history in 2 hours or less. Free walking tours every day, year-round (except Holidays). SF Main Library, 101 Larkin St. www.sfcityguides.org

OLYMPIA | SOUTHWEST LUXE 12/1-31 Daily | Market Street’s “Sound Money” Parade, 1896. 35,000 people marched down Market Street on October 31, 1896 in support of “sound money” and the gold standard, protectionism and William McKinley. This exhibition features political banners carried that day, along with press reports and political cartoons published in the months leading up to the November general election. Main Library, 6th Floor, SF History Center, 100 Larkin Street.

AUTOR TERRY TEMPEST WILLIAMS Wed. 12/3 | 7pm | Author Terry Tempest Williams will read from her book’s “Finding Beauty in a Broken World” Bookshop West Portal 80 West Portal Ave. for more info call 415.564.8080

SHAREING NIGHT AT CHOUC CHOUC Thu. 12/4 Every 1st Thurs. | Bring your favorite wine, there is no cork fee. Chou Chou Restaurant 1305 18th Avenue (at Irving) Reservations suggested: 428-0960

WEST PORTAL TREE LIGHTING Fri. 12/5 | 6:30pm | West Portal Ave – Holiday Tree Lighting (Located at the Bookstore Courtyard) Festive Friday

JAZZFRIY | CLIFF HOUSE Fri. 12/5 Every Friday | 7–11pm | Cliff House 1 Seal RockFriday Night Jazz in the Balcony Lounge

BAND CONCERT Fri. 12/5 | 7pm | The Carol Channing Theatre at Lowell High School 1101 Eucalyptus Drive 759-2730 x3062. Suggested Donation $10 per family.

AUTHOR CALVIN TRILLIN Sat. 12/6 | 7pm | Author and Poet Calvin Trillin will read and discuss “Deciding the Next Decider: The 2008 Presidential Race in Rhyme.” For more information please call 415.564.8080

HEAVEN CANT WAIT Sat. 12/6 | 4pm | Gala fundraiser for the Laguna Honda Hospice Chaplain. This heavenly evening will feature a 20 style cabaret with music by Saria Klotz de Aguilar & friends, a special performance by The Deco Poles, raffle prizes, cocktails, food and dancing. All in the art deco ambiance of the private Elks Lodge 450 Post St. 3rd Fl. Tickets: $25 in advance $30 at the door. Info 510.594.190 www.heavencantwait.net

THE LIZARD BAGG Sat. 12/6 | 4pm | The lizard lady brings an impressive array of reptiles, some local, some from far away, many endangered. For ages 5 and older. Space limited. 355-5652 for reservations. Merced Branch Library, 155 Winston Drive (at 16th Avenue)

HOLIDAY WREATH MAKING Sat. 12/6 | 2:30-3:30pm | Getting ready for the holidays? Let’s make a wreath that you can hang on your door. Enrollment is limited to 10. Call 355-2898 to sign up. Ingleside Branch Library, 1649 Ocean Ave.

ECO-FRIENDLY PROJECTS FOR THE HOLIDAYS Sat. 12/6 | 2–4pm | Ring in the Green: Printed Cards and ‘Writing’ Paper. Use reusable art parts to make “new” and beautiful holiday projects. For adults and teens. Presented in partnership with SCRAPP (Scroungers’ Center for Reusable Art Parts). Ortega Branch Library, 3223 Ortega Street (at 39th Avenue)

HOLIDAY TRAINS Sun. 12/7–1/7 | Featured is a Lionel O Scale replica of the Polar Express, which starred in Chris Van Allsburg’s 1985 holiday classic and in the subsequent 2004 movie adaptation. Accompanying the Polar Express, you’ll see another face familiar to children and adults who love trains — Thomas the Tank Engine, with his friends, the passenger coaches Annie and Clarabel. Large, easy to use push buttons allow children of many ages and abilities to start the trains and to operate accessories, including a ski gondola, a toboggan run, and lights for the Holiday Village, Main Library, Second Floor, 100 Larkin Street (at Grove)

BAND NIGHT Wed. 12/10 | 7pm | Featuring folk songs with Jim Stevens. For children of all ages. Parkside Branch Library, 1200 Taraval Street (at 22nd Avenue)

MAGICIAN AL FODOR Thu. 12/10 | 7:30pm | Witness wonderful tricks and amazing feats! For ages 3-5. Sunset Branch Library. 1305 18th Avenue (at Irving)

SANTA CLAUS COMES TO WEST PORTAL Sat. 12/12 | 12 Noon | SANTA CLAUS comes to West Portal with the San Francisco Fire Department (Bring a toy donation)

MORE WINTER READING PROGRAM 12/13-1/17 | Earn a small prize just for reading! Everyone who completes the program will be eligible for the grand prize raffle drawing! Info: 355-2858. Glen Park Branch Library, 2825 Diamond St.

THE PUPPET CO–THE NUTCRACKER Sat. 12/13 | 3pm | A winter treat for all ages, featuring over 40 puppets! Ortega Branch Library, 3223 Ortega Street (at 39th Avenue)

CHUNG NGAI DANCE TROUPE Sun. 12/14 | 2:30pm | Featuring traditional folk dances, lion dance, drumming and martial arts. For children of all ages. Ingleside Branch Library, 1649 Ocean Avenue (at Faxon)

TARAVAL POLICE COMMUNITY MEETING Tues. 12/16 | 7pm | Talk to Captain Chignelli about public safety and community issues. 2345-24th Ave.

TOY BARREL PICKUP Tue. 12/16 | 12 Noon | San Francisco Fire Department Toy Program Barrel Pickup

INTERNET BASICS Tues. 12/16 | 2–3pm | Learn to find information on the Webby following a link, using a search engine and entering a specific address. Basic mouse and keyboard skills required. Sign up at the information desk. Glen Park Branch Library, 2825 Diamond St.

HERE COMES THE CLOWN Sat. 12/20 | 11am | Boswick the Clown’s Clown! For children of all ages. West Portal Branch Library, 190 Lenox Way (at Uloa)

HOLIDAY CRAFTS Sun. 12/21 | 2–3pm | Fun, easy holiday crafts for little ones, led by our friendly children’s librarian. For ages 7 and younger. Ingleside Branch Library, 1649 Ocean Avenue (at Faxon) Crafts with Mrs. Wong

MERRY CHRISTMAS Mon. 12/22 | 3pm | Learn to make your own bracelets. For ages 8 and older. Space limited, 355-5770 for reservations. Parkside Branch Library, 1200 Taraval Street (at 22nd Avenue)

HAPPY HANUKAH Mon. 12/22 | Happy Hanukah to all!

MERRY CHRISTMAS Thu. 12/25 | Merry Christmas to all!

HAPPY KWAANZA Fri. 12/26-1/1 | Happy Kwanzaa to all!

HAPPY NEW YEAR Thu. 1/1 | Happy New Year! 

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In 2005 a new plan, Water Supply Improvement Proposal (WSIP) was unveiled under a new manager. It proposed major changes to the CIP including a system wide project environmental impact review (PEIR) and established a new concept called level of service. The large and expensive PEIR basically caused a major re-work of the original plan (CIP) and cost large amounts of time and resources. The levels of service are attractive goals to how quickly and at what levels the system may be restored after a major system break. It is unclear what, if any, mathematical model derived these so called 'levels of service.'

Score card. The local percent complete is shown as 48.1% complete. The local regional fix up is 13.3% and the total bill has reached approximately $4.5 billion. Why? It appears, based on extrapolation of current SFPU costs and the blending in of the debt service for these billions in expenditures that conservation rates will increase by a factor of 5 (6) before this system is finally completed.

Looking Forward. San Francisco can look forward to the strong possibility of ceding governance of the Hetch Hetchy system, rate spikes of a magnitude that are not being discussed, intergenerational transfers of great debt to future San Franciscans, and the real possibility the system won't really get fixed and all these well advertised calamities will befall an unprepared service area.

The Mayor, Board of Supervisors, Commission, and BROC must exert real oversight and not externalize their impulsive political aspirations onto our water and municipal power systems. These folks need to confront the real issue: Can the current business model at the SFPUC actually plan and implement such a vast infrastructure project?

**Senior Corner**

**Time to Sign Up for Part D**

By Robert Goldberg

From now until Dec. 31, Medicare Part D is offering an “open-enrollment” period, meaning that seniors can change their prescription drug coverage to pick a new plan that better meets their needs. SB 1870 collaborative efforts by local and regional folks created a regional financing authority to ensure the fix up would be funded in the event Props. A and E failed.

In 2002 both Props A and E passed and the SFPUC was given the green light to implement its multimilion dollar CIP. In 2005 a new plan, Water Supply Improvement Proposal (WSIP) was unveiled under a new manager. It proposed major changes to the CIP including a system wide project environmental impact review (PEIR) and established a new concept called level of service. The large and expensive PEIR basically caused a major re-work of the original plan (CIP) and cost large amounts of time and resources. The levels of service are attractive goals to how quickly and at what levels the system may be restored after a major system break. It is unclear what, if any, mathematical model derived these so called ‘levels of service.’

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Don’t forget a toy donation for the SFFD Toy Program

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John Kirkpatrick is one of the top professionals representing San Francisco homes and investment properties.

John is a marketing expert with a strong professional and academic background. Dedication to detail and hard work have enabled John to earn an exceptional reputation. John wins clients through proven results; achievements consistently exceed client expectations.

The TRI Coldwell Banker agent who sold the most San Francisco properties companywide in 2007.
“Just Because” Gift and Card Shoppe

We live in a time when many of our independent stores have been replaced by “cookie cutter” chain stores that offer somewhat lower prices, but also a set selection and often questionable levels of service as the employees are not vested in the success or failure of the store. This month we visit “Just Because” Gift and Card Shoppe—a store that excels in service and selection and where you can plan events and design invitations for four or four hundred.

The owners and staff at the West Portal’s store have taken the time to expand the concept of the corner card and gift shop to provide one-stop shopping for your card, gift, and event planning and design needs. Located at 162 West Portal Ave. owner Cynthia Pagan has assembled a friendly, professional and well-trained staff that creates a retail environment that is warm, friendly and very different that the typical “card store” that handles singular products with cheesy branded gifts that go along with the corporate ID. “We provide Grab and Go gifts that you can be proud to give”, says Pagan, who added, “We’ve expanded our wrapping paper selections to create wraps that are complementary to our gifts and are fun. We want our customers to have fun with gift giving and to make a statement about the thought and planning that went into picking out a thoughtful gift.”

Walking towards the back of the store one is struck with the attention to detail in the layout and selection of the cards and gifts, not the usual assortment, but stand out staff that is fun and quickly, in fact the word “cute” is one that may best describe the environment…but wait, there’s more…

A sign hanging in the rear of the store reads “Invitation Station”, and this is where the store really sets them apart. Although the shoppe has been providing custom printed invitations for almost 4 years, they have expanded the emphasis on this part of the business due to customer demand. From weddings, to birthdays, graduations to retirement parties Cynthia and her staff can assist you in designing invitations and other printed materials to ensure that your event is a success.

Depending on your needs, the staff can help you with “Plug and Play Invitations” set up for easy browsing and design, or custom designed invitations using distinctive paper stock and multiple layering and printing options. By training all of their staff members and handling quality paper stock and albums, Just Because has created an all-in-one event planning and consulting service that allows a customer to create a “theme and tone” that carries throughout the invitations, envelopes, party favors, thank you cards, and albums.

Your imagination is the limit as they can custom design virtually “anything you want” from ivory or white to polka dots, stripes and other designs. Pagan feels strongly about working with local vendors to source the paper, card stock and to have it cut and printed. “Our desire is to Buy Local items that are US and California produced”, said the owner, who is also the outgoing President of the West Portal Merchants Association. She summed up their capability by explaining that, “No invitation order is too big or too small from planning and designing an event for four or four hundred, we can do it all!”

“Just Because Gift and Card Shoppe / Invitation Station is located at 162 West Portal Avenue. The store is open Monday-Saturday from 10-6 and on Sunday from 12-5. They can be contacted at 415-566-4483.

Cynthia Pagan, owner of Just Because, with a sampling of the invitations available to print, or design your own.
In the 1750s in Britain, Georgina, the Duchess of Devonshire, known as G. (Keira Knightley) becomes the darling of society with her three-foot high wigs and sumptuous gowns. Her upright husband (Ralph Fiennes) and her mother, Lady Spencer (Charlotte Rampling) disapprove of her extravagant partying and affairs, especially Charles Grey, a politician who becomes Prime Minister, (Dominic Cooper). The double standard of the time permits the Duke to have a live-in mistress, but it only makes it possible for G. with the three of them (anyone come to mind?) at the formal dinner every meal. When she risks one come to mind?) at the formal dinner every meal. When she risks

In Arizona, the Wildcats rule at East High. Basketball captain, Troy (Zac Efron) heads for New York, but it only makes it possible for the Duke to have a live-in mistress, but it only makes it possible for him to visit his strong points of the avant-garde modern English. Profanity, sexual situations. Miramax 119 min.

In the tale of 1001 nights, the princess is taken to the court of the Sultan, where she is expected to choose a husband from among the courtiers. She chooses the Sultan himself, and the story continues with the adventures of the two. The movie is a romantic comedy and an adventure story, and it has been praised for its beautiful costumes and sets. The main themes of the movie are love, honor, and the power of women.

In the 1920s, the story of a little girl named Poppy (Sally Hawkins) begins. Poppy's relationship with her driving instructor Scott (Eddie Marsan) becomes tetchy for the point of exasperation, has been working with Rev. Brigley: John Malkovich to unself the truth; now it's up to him to try to find her. Chief Davis: Colin Peute further complicates matters. Clint Eastwood directs with his usual brilliance, allowing the true tale to unfold naturally, but with much suspense. Expect Oscar nods to Jolie, Malkovich and Eastwood. Universal 140 min.

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One More List

I am astounded by the lists everyone is compiling to help our newly elected president.

Well, here One More List for economic times.

File this under the folder: Working Smarter Not Harder.

And don’t send it to TheNEWpurer@whitehouse.com. Send it to parents and community members.

Subject Line: What can we do to improve our schools without having to sell more sweatshirts and giftwrap.

Now don’t take this as advice that we don’t need to invest more in our children and our schools.

With education funding in California among the lowest in the nation, that is NOT what this list is about.

It is about the power of partnerships. It is the idea of leveraging resources. It is about welcoming parents and community into our schools.

As schools are being asked again to do more with less, it suggests that the first thing we do is NOT ask parents to hold another fundraiser.

Let’s first look at our family community partnerships in a systemic way. Why?

- Family involvement helps children succeed.
- A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement, a 2002 research synthesis of more than 50 studies, finds that there is a positive and convincing relationship between family involvement and student achievement.

Take note: This holds true regardless of race/ethnicity, class, or parents' level of education.

Look at the major educational research and you will find the Power of Partnerships.

Take the recommendations of the California P–16 (Pre kindergarten through Higher Education) Council convened by State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O’Connell:

- Develop Partnerships to Close

Recognizing Dementia: How the Holidays Help

The approaching holiday season is great for spending time with family and friends that you might not see that often. It is also a good time to check up on their health and wellbeing and that includes watching for signs of dementia. The Alzheimer’s Association has compiled a checklist of common symptoms that can help people identify behaviors associated with dementia.

So what is dementia disease?

Most simply explained dementia refers to a gradual decline and loss of mental ability, and thus an increased need for support and care from others. The increased awareness and improved medical evaluations are leading to a rise in the numbers of people being diagnosed with dementia disease. In San Francisco, by the year 2010, it is projected that 17,607 seniors (people 65 and over) will be living with Alzheimer’s (one of the many forms of dementia), by the year 2020 that number will grow to 18,523. And these numbers do not even include people under 65.

Ten Warning Signs

1. Memory loss
2. Difficulty performing familiar tasks
3. Problems with language
4. Disorientation to time and place
5. Poor or decreased judgment
6. Problems with abstract thinking
7. Misplacing things
8. Changes in mood or behavior
9. Changes in personality
10. Loss of initiative

If many of these behaviors are noticed in someone, talk to them about seeking a doctor to help determine the cause. Early diagnosis provides a better opportunity for treatment and planning for the future.

The Mental Health Access Workgroup has much more information to share about the rise in progression of care for people living with dementia in San Francisco.
Some Tips
1) Salads – Eat salad slowly before the 1) and before the 1) and 2) .
2) Turkey – A healthy protein choice for a main course 
3) Whole wheat bread and bread sticks – Better than white bread. White flour as the body has to work harder to metabolize wheat flour and burn calories in the process. 
4) Raw and steamed vegetables – best ones are non-starchy green vegetables, asparagus, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cucumber, celery, eggplant, green beans, lettuce, spinach 
5) Yams and sweet potatoes – better than white potatoes 
6) Turkey gravy – add about 25 to 50 calories per 2 oz. serving – use sparingly

Note: Take 20 minutes for the brain to tell us we’re full. After eating, sit, relax, and you’ll find you won’t want seconds.

About Sugar
Berries of the huge amounts of hidden sugars:
1) Cranberry sauce: 12 teaspoons of sugar in every cup
2) Cola: 9 teaspoons of sugar in 12 oz. 
3) Coffee and tea – some folks use 1 to 3 teaspoons of sugar per cup 
4) Turkey gravy – add about 25 to 50 calories per 2 oz. serving – use sparingly

Note: Take 20 minutes for the brain to tell us we’re full. After eating, sit, relax, and you’ll find you won’t want seconds.

Drinks and Celebrating
Another concern may be parties and drinking.
1) No one wants to spend the night in the clink on Christmas as we be aware; the average metabolism burns 1/2 oz. of pure alcohol per hour. This will vary depending on size and body weight.

Lowest Calories in Wines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wine Type</th>
<th>Calories</th>
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<tr>
<td>avocado</td>
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<td>actor</td>
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<td>actor</td>
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Digestive Enzymes

Taking an enzyme supplement with meals aids the body in breaking down and processing the food we eat. If you experience feeling bloated or heartburn after meals, these enzymes are a must and will change your life.

We’re born with an original supply of enzymes, and as we age, our natural enzyme bank decreases. Enzymes are needed in the body for every bit of cell reproduction. That means the rebuilding of all of our major organs, heart, kidneys, liver, lungs, as well as the immune and muscle systems virtually everything! Eating organic fruits and vegetables and the roots, the stems and the natural enzymes, at least 5 servings each day. If we aren’t eating these amounts or supplementing with digestive enzymes, our body must call on the enzyme supplies we have left. Those enzymes then stop the important rebuilding work they do in the brain, intestines, and sexual organs, and have to come over to digest food every time we eat. My choice is to take an enzyme every time we eat. My choice is to take an enzyme every time we eat. My choice is to take an enzyme every time we eat.

By sharing their experiences with other people who have similar feelings and fears, they discover that they are not alone in their “journey.” They find the doctor, who added, “in fact, auto immune type illnesses are the 3rd most common disease in the US and others are heart disease. Nearly 60% of the people diagnosed with autoimmune diseases are women.”

Autoimmune disorders include Lupus, Multiple Sclerosis, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Crohn’s Disease, Fibromyalgia, Hashimoto thyroiditis and Type 1 Diabetes.

Caplin described the seminars as a process to discover what is in each person’s subconscious mind regarding their chronic health condition. Feelings of despair, helplessness, and anger often come up. When the people can see into their subconscious and their triggers, they can help to transform it into a powerful internal resource for their positive healing process.

Given her experiences within the medical community with her own illness, Caplin reflects on feelings shared by many with chronic illnesses. Some doctors are OK, but can’t really connect to their patients as anything but a number, and really aren’t listening and talking to the patient. Even as a M.D. this was my experience. As a result most patients feel objectified, categorized and under-served. I certainly felt this as a patient”, she explained.

The writing workshops give people a chance to work within a group to share experiences and gain insight and tools to battle their illnesses. Past participants have described the experience as “fantastic”, “thought-provoking” and “fun”. One person wrote that “the seminaries gave me tools to deal with my health, using tools that I did not anticipate loving.” I grew here. Abby (Dr. Caplin) created a safe and sympathetic environment.

Bookshop West Portal will host both sets of work shops on 5 successive Sunday evenings from 7:00 to 8:30 PM. The first set is scheduled from January 18th through February 22nd, and the second set from March 1st through March 29th. The cost for the total workshop (5 classes) is $145 per person, and enrollment is limited to 8 participants per session.

To book space at this workshop or to learn more about Dr. Caplin and her work, you can call her at 415.255.9981 or contact her through email at abby@abbycaplinmd.com
Fly on the Wall
by Hank Basayne

I’ve enjoyed the fantasy of being invisible since I was a little kid—six or seven, maybe. Now, edging into my ninth decade, the fantasy came true—almost.

I recently found myself unexpectedly in hospital for a fascinating reason, but that’s a tale for another time.

Unhappy, in pain, I survived the elaborate ritual of the ER—the parade of technicians, interns, nurses, residents and doctors, the endless questions, attachment to an IV rig. Finally, some four or five hours later, I was moved to a semi-private room. A curtain separated me from the other occupant.

I’ve always been interested in the lives of other people. Learning their stories, travails, triumphs, fears, hopes and the settings in which their personal dramas unfold, enriches my own life and experience. Every novel, movie or play is an entrance to a vicarious enlargement of my own journey. I find out things I wouldn’t otherwise know.

In the afternoon of the first of my ten-day stay, a little foggy from the blessed periodic infusions of morphine, I became aware, of a conversation between two men. They were less than two feet away from my bed but, shielded by the flimsy drape, they were totally unaware of me.

Their conversation was halting and vaguely unfriendly. It developed that they were father and son who hadn’t seen each other for a long time. The father was the patient—seriously ill; the son sounded in his late twenties. Son was dutifully trying to make small talk. Dad was irritable. Son was in touch with his mother, but his father was not. Son was itinerant, talked of next going to Oregon. Dad wanted to know how he was supporting himself but the only response he got was, “This and that.” It was an uncomfortable visit and the son ended it abruptly, saying only that he’d be in touch. I was reminded how lucky I was to have warm, respectful and loving connections with my own children.

A few days later a new patient replaced my unseen roommate. He sounded quite old, foreign-born, his wife in constant attendance. They lived a few hundred miles from the hospital. His two grown children visited often. They seemed to be deeply religious and hopeful. He had come for tests to determine whether his liver cancer was reversible.

One afternoon when they were all together, a social worker came to talk with the family. Her voice was gentle but confident. Her task was to let them know that the patient was terminal. While they had hoped that chemotherapy and radiation and prayer would cure him, they tenderly, gradually, skillfully and lovingly helped steer their hopes toward the uncomfortable reality that he would soon die.

Her competence and expertise were astonishing. Her gentleness and obvious caring—over a two-hour period—were amazing as she guided them through the various options that remained to them. She helped shift their wishful longings toward how they could make and keep him comfortable and make the most of his remaining time. She explained the concept of hospice and helped them visualize how that might work easily and effectively in their own home. She gradually gained their assent, and, before she left, they agreed to let her make the necessary arrangements.

There were tears but there was also a satisfied acceptance.

I marvel at the compassion and expertise of that social worker. I never saw her (or the family) and never learned her name. I’m grateful that such people exist, wish that I could have otherwise known.

I embraced the lives of two other families during my hospitalization, and then returned to focus on my own recovery and return to the dailyness of my life. It was as if I had read four rich novels during my hospitalization, with much to think about, appreciate and understand. And it did provide the opportunity to be the fly on the wall, to be invisible—almost.
SECOND THOUGHTS

by Jack Kaye

In Praise of the English Language

Having studied many languages, I find English to be the most up-to-date of the bunch and has eliminated many of the shortcomings with which other languages still struggle.

English evolved from its Germanic roots when the Normans invaded and conquered England in 1066. The Normans brought the French that was then in use to the British Isles. (The Normans from France were originally from Norway, hence the name.)

English adopted many of the words that have since changed in French. Many modern French words that began their lives in English are still used but are now used in a different way than they were originally used to be different and more like our English. I don't think even the French realize this. Here are some examples:

- The verb "to shun" with an "s" and see what happens: étage, étudier, étude, cycle, écuyer, écarté, étalé, échine, espèce, espérer, état, étroite, étranger and étúve.
- They become stage, stranger, study (stude), scale (school), scarlet, schalos, (shallot), scope (scopop), spouse, square (square), stai (stay), state, strole, strangle and stuve (stove).

The French also did the same to its letter "s" in the middle of words if the "s" is followed by a consonant. They replaced the "s" with an upside "v" over the preceding letter. So the Latin vocentia became fenestrare, nostre became nôtre, etc. But unlike English, French never got rid of the ancient practice of giving objects to and then dragging out the modifiers. So French and the other Romance languages require the user to know which inanimate object has which gender. Is a table feminine because it is a comical character or is the entire scene between its legs? An object with two different names to describe it can have one that is masculine and one that is feminine. Different Romance languages may assign a different gender to the same word, but you have to be very careful not to be in one masculine in one and masculine in the other.

I have tried to trace the origin of this strange practice. I believe I have found it. It is the same as the alphabet. Did you say Greek? Yes, Greek had genders for subjects and had an Alpha Beta, but that's not it. And since it predated Latin, it is not Latin which caught the habit from Greek. It was Hebrew. And Hebrew had the first Alef Bet, which became the Greek Alpha Beta.

English has all the verb tenses that Latin has like present, past, pluperfect, future, conditional subjunctive, and imperative. But it does not require us to cast a magicial spell on the audience. The only time this magicial spell is broken is when someone is in a world of fantasy that one rarely has the occasion to be in. Gabriel Marin as Loomis is searching for a home away from home and is milked so long that it soon becomes rather tedious. He is casting out these exotic stories present fascinating caricatures of a King and the members of his court, jesters, a madman, pastry cook, butcher, musician, a sage, slave girl and more. Soña Jean Gomez creates a gracious, elegant heroine. Mary Zimmerman's adaptation of the Book of the Thousand and One Nights, translated by Powys and, and by its director, this enchanting production harmoniously combines comedy and moral wisdom, choreographic and scenic beauty, offers a virtual fairy tale power along with meaningful content that challenges us spiritually, stimulates our fancy and captivates our imagination.

Arabian Nights runs until January 4, 09. For information call 510-647-2949, or online at 510-647-2949, or www.berkeleyrep.org.

THE WEST SIDE OBSERVER

PO Box 27176, SF 94127
510 517-6331
www.westsideobserverserver.org

Contributors:
Karen project her voice was the child actress Nia Warren. Surprisingly, one of the few other actors who could match the performance a subdued atmosphere, until the entire West of Twin Peaks area of San Francisco. Dressed in 5000 copies, distributed in 10 times. 12,000,000 distributed door-to-door. 1,500 are distributed via free distribution racks in the West of Twin Peaks areas, as well as drop off points, including merchants banks and public libraries.

Suduko Answers:

Answer to Brain Food:

- China – is the world’s most populous country
- Nigeria – the capital of this country is Abuja
- Iceland – the only country in the world with atomic weapons
- South Korea – the capital of this country is Seoul
- United Kingdom – a great industrial power despite the fact it is not what it once was
- South Africa – the capital of this country is Pretoria
- Romania – it is the home, Transylvania in this country

In Praise of the English Language

In Praise of the English Language
Where Can I Find the OBSERVER?

West Portal Avenue Area:
- Newspaper Box in front of Post office on West Portal Ave.
- Century 21 – Scott Keys Realty – 101 Vicente St.
- Dubliner Irish Bar
- Zephyl Real Estate Office

Westside Observer

Dec 2008

For a complete daily Police Report from the Taraval Police Station, go to our website: www.westsideobserver.com

Locations may run out of papers alert us 415 517-3661. We support local business, call if you can help to supply the Observer to the public, and add your name to this list.

CITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO
SPRING SEMESTER BEGINS JANUARY 12TH

Space is still available in many courses this Spring semester at City College of San Francisco’s Ocean Campus located at 50 Phelan Avenue (corner of Ocean Ave.). Instruction begins January 12th. Credit courses are just $20 per unit. See sampling of courses below. Visit www.ccsf.edu for a complete list of courses.

CRN # Course Title Days Times Location
38912 Air Cond & Refrigeration T 7–10 p.m. Science 133
23066 Bay Area Arch. History T/R 2–3:30 p.m. Batallion 551
38872 Biology of HIV W 1–4 p.m. Science 302
37873 Briefings in Biotechnology W 4–6 p.m. Science 200
38338 Collaborative Design F 9 a.m.–12 p.m. Batallion 451
36034 Comp. Aided Drafting (Intro) W 6–10 p.m. Cloud 203
36035 Comp. Aided Drafting (Intro) Th 6–10 p.m. Cloud 203
39079 Contemp. Women Writers MWF 10–11 a.m. Art Ext 184
38002 Conv. Japanese (Contin) T/H 12:30–2 p.m. Bungalow 716
35250 Conversational Filipino M 6:15–9:45 p.m. Arts 267
38851 Demystifying Middle East MWF 1–2:30 p.m. Cloud 267
39036 Demystifying Middle East T 6:30–9:30 p.m. Cloud 261
38639 Dreamweaver Web Design W 6–10 p.m. Art Ext 264
30462 East Asian Literature in Film W 2–5 p.m. Health Center 206
36405 Elec. Measure/Passive Circuit W 6–10 p.m. Science 46
30935 Elementary French 2 MWF 8–10 a.m. Health Center 213
38569 Ending Sexual Violence T 1–4 p.m. Cloud 266
38913 Engineered Plumbing Violence T 7–10 p.m. Science 133
38833 ESL for Child Development T 6–8:30 p.m. Bungalow 714
38889 Exploring Sci. in Childhood Sat 9 a.m.–12 p.m. Orleka 100
38971 Feature Writing Th/H 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Bungalow 214
36373 Fund. of Building Structures T/H 11:30 a.m.–1 p.m. Batallion 411
37037 Game Design for Multimedia T 12–4 p.m. Art Ext 264
37826 GIS (Intro) M 6–9 p.m. Cloud 203
39076 Green/Sustainable Business W 6:30–9:30 p.m. Batallion 651
38838 History of Interior Design W 6:30–9:30 p.m. Art Ext 180
37958 Islam (Intro) Th 12:30–2 p.m. Art Ext 203
36031 Manufacturing Processes MW 6–9 p.m. Science 404
36032 Manufacturing Processes Sat 9 a.m.–3 p.m. Science 404
37712 Photojournalism (Intro) W 7–10 p.m. Health Center 213
38569 Politics of Sexual Violence Th 4–7 p.m. Cloud 229
38599 Technical Drawing (Intro) T 6–9 p.m. Science 143
37264 Technical Drawing (Intro) W 6–9 p.m. Science 143
37798 Trauma & the Arts W 6:30–9:30 p.m. Batallion 551
38869 Youth Dev & Leadership T 6–9 p.m. Cloud 232
39056 Ecology (Intro) Lecture W 9–10:30 a.m. Science 302
39056 Ecology (Intro) Lab Class F 2–5 p.m. Science 314

CRN # Course Title Days Times Room #
36554 Anti-Semitism/Anti-Asianism Sat 4/18–4/25 10 a.m.–6 p.m. Cloud 232
39074 Careers in Law (Intro) Th 2/5–4/2 4–6 p.m. Cloud 259
39556 Diversity: Classism Sat 2/7–2/14 9 a.m.–1 p.m. Cloud 258
39555 Diversity: Racism Sat 3/7–3/14 9 a.m.–1 p.m. Cloud 258
39035 Diversity: Sexism Sat 3/21 9 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Cloud 258
37125 Scientific Illustration Sat 2/7–2/28 9 a.m.–3:30 p.m. Field
37125 Orientation (above course) W 2/4 6–9 p.m. Science 322

CREDIT SHORT TERM COURSES

POLICE BLOTTER

Police Captain Paul Chignell, Taraval Station

Case #081264126

Armed robbery of a woman at Stonestown

Taraval officers responded with alacrity to the scene, Wednesday, November 26, at noon, in the underground garage of Stonestown and broadcast a description. Daly City and CHP officers arrested the suspect on Highway 280. The suspect is believed to be responsible for armed robberies today in Serramonte, Colma and the Stonestown attack. He was turned over to San Mateo County authorities for prosecution.

Lower Great Highway

In response to speeding, stop sign violations, pedestrians safety and auto burglaries in the lower Great Highway area, Taraval officers in conjunction with motorcycle officers from the Traffic Bureau will be visible in that area effective immediately.

Graffiti Arrest

11/25/08, 8:19 p.m., Irving and 9th Avenue

Officers Alan Levy and Esther Gonzalez were on patrol when they observed a group of juveniles congregating at the corner. On closer inspection the officers observed one of the group using a black marker to commit graffiti on a news stand. The officers drove directly up to the suspect and not noticing the officers, he continued to mark up the news stand. The suspect then saw the officers, said “oh s—” and took off running full speed towards 8th avenue with the officers in foot pursuit. As the suspect turned south on 8th avenue, a local resident saw the chase and pushed the suspect to the ground. The officers then placed the suspect under arrest. The suspect, who lives on the first block of Juanita, was cited for two counts of malicious mischief and resisting arrest.

Case #081274761

Armed Suspect Robs Gas Station

Breaking News:

A man walked up to the service counter of the Shell Gas Station at 19th and Taraval with a white plastic bag over his head. The man produced a gun from his waistband and demanded money. The employee complied and got down on the ground as ordered by the gunman. The suspect fled the premises but the employee followed him and saw that he got into a black car heading south on 19th avenue. Officers Allan Wong and Adrian Payne stopped a black car for a stop sign violation, they heard the broadcast and later but before the robbery broadcast came over the police radio. As they were about to cite the driver for the stop sign violation, they heard the broadcast and took the suspect out of the vehicle at gunpoint.

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