

Pork for Parks

By Barbara Meskunas

City Hall wants \$185 million from property owners and renters to fix up the parks – a job City Hall is already paid to do.

In recent years, City Hall has relied on issuing bonded indebtedness to compensate for a seeming inability to budget our over \$6 billion dollar annual tax haul in a way that makes sense. Instead of planning for future maintenance and replacement of infrastructure and improvements, our infectious bureaucratic habit has been to spend every penny on bloating the city payroll, and then crying poverty when something breaks and needs to be fixed, followed by begging the taxpayers for more money to feed the habit in the form of a bond measure.

Until the year 2000, the Recreation and Park Department managed its facilities without resorting to this unsustainable fiscal formula. In 2000, the department made a case for what we thought was a one-time expenditure to catch up on deferred maintenance items necessitated by age and overuse – the voters approved a \$110 million general obligation bond.

Since 2000, bond-related positions have been added to the payroll, and more “needs” have been identified. At the same time, TV reports have documented employee thefts of both time and materials – a couple of them were actually filmed loading up their trucks and driving home with plants that belong to the taxpayers – and those employees still work there.

Our parks are filled with homeless encampments. Trees haven’t been pruned in decades. It is a sick joke that only a handful of gardeners are supposed to maintain all of our city parks and fields while middle management positions and lucrative sweetheart contracts eat up the department’s operating budget.

Prop A will do nothing to address these problems – it will simply reward bad behavior. The Parks Department needs new management, not new tax money.

Prop A would authorize expenditure of \$117.4 million to improve twelve playgrounds – none in

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The Panhandle’s Million Dollar Toilet

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Artists rendering of proposed Ardenwood towers. Some treeline has been removed to reflect age of trees.

Towers on Wawona?

Strong Neighborhood Turnout at Town Hall Questions Oversize Development

By Eric Castongia

On November 1, a Town Hall meeting was held at St. Cecilia’s Church to educate the West Portal neighborhood to a proposed 4.6-acre development on the Arden Wood Christian Science property. Arden Wood Inc. has been working on the sale of the parcel for some time; necessary in

order to absorb renovation and operating costs for the facility.

The West of Twin Peaks Central Council and the Neighbors of Arden Wood (NOA), a group of neighbors in the immediate vicinity of a proposed development, sponsored the meeting. Denise LaPointe, President of the West of Twin Peaks

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Lennar Corp Wants Changes at Candlestick

By John Dunbar

The Lennar Corporation is circulating petitions to change how the land around Candlestick Point can be used. The measure will appear on the June 3rd, 2008 ballot and will require 50% plus one voter approval.

Publicly the initiative will state that it’s a way to keep the 49ers from moving to Santa Clara but the fine print shows that the land use changes stick whether or not the 49ers stay in San Francisco.

The political class is circling the wagons to support Lennar. Former Mayors Dianne Feinstein and Willie Brown support it. So apparently will Examiner owner Anschutz who according to Matier and Ross has been cut in on the deal. Eric Jaye who has been Gavin Newsom’s consultant and Board of Supervisors President Aaron Peskin’s consultant Jim Stearns have been retained for the campaign. For these interests Lennar’s stadium campaign is the ultimate cash cow.

The campaign is likely to tell voters that this is the best chance San Francisco has to keep the 49ers, but the terms of the deal will be binding even if the 49ers migrate south to Santa Clara, an outcome most observers think likely.

Notably absent from those backing the land use changes is Mayor Gavin Newsom, freshly re-elected with 74% of the vote. Two of his predecessors, Art Agnos and Willie Brown were politically hemorrhaged by divisive ballpark measures. Creative graphic artist and consultant Doug Comstock fueled insurgent efforts against both the Giants as well as 49er Stadium deals. Comstock now has the unusual distinction of being the campaign consultant for both Superior Court Judge Kay Tsenin and suspended Supervisor Ed Jew, whose residency case will make its way to Tsenin’s courtroom in February. At this point Newsom is shying away from risking his own political capital for one of the nation’s largest

and troubled homebuilders. Its stock was downgraded recently to “junk bond” status by Wall Street analysts.

Lennar is suffering its own legal and financial difficulties. It is being sued for employment discrimination by former President of the Board of Supervisors Angela Alioto. The veteran plaintiff’s attorney is representing a former Willie Brown appointee to the Public Utilities Commission who worked for Lennar. Much of the case centers on Lennar officials’ failure to exercise due diligence over the amount of asbestos kicked up into the air as a byproduct of their construction work at the old Navy shipyard at Hunters Point.

The initiative describes a general outline for the future of Candlestick. Propositions D and F, passed narrowly by voters in 1997, would be repealed. The \$100 million revenue bond and land use changes for Candlestick Point would be annulled. That would be replaced by a commitment to 8500 to 10,000 condominiums, 600,000 square feet of commercial office space and the commitment to rebuild the Alice Griffith (Double Rock) public housing development. The initiative is short on what Lennar has to accomplish and by when. The operative verb in the measure is “should” not “shall.”

Lennar is one of the nation’s largest homebuilders. It has been hit with the downturn in the housing market and sub prime mortgage market, and it has vacant units and lots across the country that can’t be developed. Lennar is restructuring either by selling off land or by deciding to hold its development rights until there is a market correction. But the San Francisco real estate market is robust and if toxic shipyards and Candlestick Park can be rezoned to become prime spots for commercial and residential development more than the local political class will profit. ❖

Second Thoughts

by Hank Basayne

THE IMPATIENT PATIENT

We Americans are constantly reminded how lucky we are. We are not only the richest country in the world, we are also the freest, most enlightened and we have the best possible medical care. People come from all over the world for American medical assistance. We are told that as many as 50 million of us have inadequate coverage, but that the other 250 million of us have the best medical system available at our service.

Living in San Francisco, all this is even more true. We have some of the best medical facilities and doctors in the world. We should kiss the ground beneath our feet to be so fortunate to have this great care. So why is this patient impatient?

I have lived with several life threatening diseases for at least 25 years. I have had five heart attacks, as many surgical procedures including two open heart surgeries. I also have diabetes and perhaps resultant kidney failure. The three different diseases are highly interactive.

It is incumbent on such a patient to monitor several functions every so often. For kidney and diabetes progress, one must look at blood test results. For kidney function one needs to know the BUN level, the creatinine clearance, the potassium level (which is also very important for heart patients to know) and finally the red blood cell count since that is controlled by enzymes produced in the kidneys. For diabetes one should check the A1C levels every three months to ensure that the long-term blood sugar level is acceptable. For the heart there are tests for chloolesterol levels and there are echo exams to be done on a yearly basis to see if the heart tissue is losing its ability to pump blood through the body.

A patient should take these tests when needed, but more importantly, the patient must receive the results of the tests. Just as schools give students tests not only to determine whether they are learning the material and to decide whether they should continue

to the next grade, but also to give feedback to the students so that students can make adjustments in study habits or test-taking strategies. It is a necessary part of the learning process.

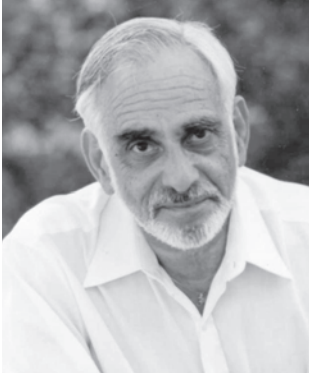
Modern medicine has not yet learned this lesson and neither have most patients. The medical establishment unlike that of education, acts as though their practice is strictly top down. The doctor who has studied calculus, physics and chemistry in addition to biology must decide what tests to give and then must review them to advise the patient what to do next. The patient is better off just doing what s/he is told by this master of science.

Besides the obvious problem of taking the main character out of the play by restricting the patient's knowledge of his own condition and progress to generalities like "a little above normal" or "within the range" or "nothing to be too worried about, yet," instead of getting the actual data like blood test reports, echo exams, stress tests, etc., there is a more basic one. Nowadays, your doctor is seeing one patient every 15 minutes. If s/he is a specialist who usually sees each patient twice a year, that doctor has more than 1,000 patients. If you are a patient, you have only one patient to worry about - yourself. Doctors, because of their overload of cases, can easily miss reviewing a test result or miss important parts of the report.

Also, with specialization being what it is, a patient may have to see several different doctors. They may need to see the information presented in a blood test given by another doctor. It would help if the patient had a copy of the test to show the other doctor. And with the burnout rate in the medical field, it is very likely that soon you will have a different doctor who may not have a copy of tests given by a predecessor in another practice. A patient who has copies of all medical test results would have this data available to share with the new physician.

We shouldn't have to wait patiently for our tests results any longer. These tests are given to us, for us, from us and are paid for by us. We have every reason and right to expect to receive them when they are available for our information and future reference.

We are patients, but please do not try our patience.



Park Pork Cont. from p. 1

District 7, by the way. It authorizes \$33.5 million for potential projects at a number of waterfront locations, to be supervised by the Port; \$11.4 million for park restrooms; \$5 million for a "community opportunity fund;" \$5 million for "nature trails," and the rest for athletic fields and "park forestry."

In regard to the \$5 million for "nature trails," a sizeable portion of San Francisco's park enthusiasts, including the San Francisco Tree Council, have taken issue with the department's plan to destroy over 18,000 "non-native" mature trees to make way for so-called "natural areas," i.e. sand dunes and indigenous weeds and wildflowers to replace trees and picnic areas that are enjoyed by the San Francisco residents and their families who pay for them. Since when is City Hall justified in asking for tax money to destroy public assets?

According to newspaper accounts, the Neighborhood Parks Council (NPC) was poised to oppose this bond until the \$5 million "community" fund was included to support NPC's laudable public-private partnerships. There is no insurance that the NPC will ever see this money, however, since the bond oversight committee that will be created to spend the money will be stacked with political appointees who generally hate private sector, volunteer efforts that accomplish neighborhood objectives without city employees.

Do our parks and recreation areas need improvement? Of course they do. But we need to first ask, who's minding the store? A restroom recently constructed on the Panhandle cost more than \$1 million - does that mean we should buy 10 new restrooms with this bond (perhaps far fewer, with inflation) and pay for them for the next 20+ years

with increased rents and property taxes? I'm sure we can all think of better uses for our tax money, and certainly, cheaper ways to provide restrooms.

The parks and playgrounds slated for renovation on this measure's list have been allowed to fall into critical disrepair for purposes of this bond campaign. Neighbors of at least half of them can tell you that the Parks Director has repelled volunteer efforts to clean up these parks, or raise money for these parks, and insists on paid city employees supervising even trash pick-up efforts by neighbors.

Proposition A on the February 2008 ballot is a City Hall jobs program disguised as a parks bond and should be soundly rejected by property owners and tenants alike, since 50% of the increased property taxes can be passed on to tenants in this particular bond measure.

San Francisco voters have rejected the Pothole Bond and two housing subsidy bonds in recent years for critical flaws similar to those in this measure - poor management and no fiscal accountability.

Prop A deserves the same fate - vote NO and save your money. ❖

Barbara Meskunas is Executive Director of the San Francisco Taxpayers Union

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Letters to the Editor

Regarding the proposed development for the Arden Wood property in the West Portal neighborhood. I am a resident of West Portal and am one of four generations of my family who have resided here.

As there is no mention that this is a paid advertisement, I must assume it is not, but throughout this article it reads as a flowing endorsement of this development.

On Thursday November 1, I attended a community meeting at St. Cecilia's Parish Hall. That evening there was a standing room only crowd in this large hall of neighbors from throughout West Portal. The comments rendered and the applause from this crowd in reaction to the statements of the neighbors were bolstered along with presentations made by an ad-hoc group of concerned neighborhood citizens. This suggested to me and I would say all there, that there is significant opposition throughout West Portal by neighborhood residents to this project.

On page six the author quotes developer Mendelsohn as saying that these will be "mid rise" towers and "only" 160 units. Facts stated by Mendelsohn on November 1 included the possibility that he would build up to 190 units and would have two towers; 13 and 6 stories respectively. Right now zoning is 40 feet. Thirteen stories verses 40 feet seems to overwhelm calling this a "mid rise" option.

There are options beyond cutting all the trees down and building hundreds of condos in buildings hundreds of feet tall though it sounds like Mr. Mendelshon does not want other options to be discussed.

Ed Reidy
West Portal

Note from Editor - see the front page story, hope this provides the balance, sorry we could not find an opponent at the time we went to press.

Thank you for the story about the Boathouse and the kids who use the facilities on Lake Merced. The future for the lake and those who use it looks pretty grim, while the City seems to favor the golf courses. While I don't have anything against golf, it seems to me those folks can afford to pay for the improvements and shouldn't need to drain the City's budget when it means shorting the families who depend on the Lake for recreation and enjoyment.

I don't think our Supervisor was watching out for the little guys.

Barry Wright
OMI

As soon as our District Attorney got wind that Supervisor Ed Jew, who had been a political thorn in the side of our mayor, might not live in his 28th Avenue home, she assembled a crack team of investigators. Within a month she filed nine felony charges against him, all related to his residency.

Almost a month ago, Ken Garcia, wrote that he had proof that other candidates were not current residents when they applied to run for office.

Does anyone believe for a moment that Kamala Harris investigated this accusation? Is there even one felony charge in the works for anyone who did exactly what Mr. Jew has been accused of doing? Of course not, because they are allies of the mayor. And what about the \$10,000 check the mayor's former girlfriend received from the City under the guise of "donated sick leave"? All independent analyses concluded that this was a misuse of public funds, which amounts to embezzlement. But did she or the mayor ever have to face criminal charges? Of course not, because their political allies protected them.

This action to remove Mr. Jew from the office to which he was elected is a purely political move.

As a Green Party member, I disagree with most of Ed Jew's politics. But I'm defending him in memory of the McCarthy era, when accusations alone cost good people jobs and homes, and even their freedom, and created a climate of fear where people were afraid to dissent.

Mr. Jew dissents from our politics. In some countries today dissenters are just murdered with impunity. Do we want our country to operate under

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PHYLLIS' FINDINGS

Lots of bits and pieces to report ... Craigslist is one of the best things that ever happened in the Bay Area. (And the rest of the world.) I recently got a brochure from the Diamond Certified Directory ... actually they sent me three for April! In it they list everyone from Auto Body people to Window Contractors. I don't know what the advertisers in there pay for the listings, but it must be pretty hefty because when I called one of the plumbers in there he also quoted a very high rate to do the work. When you need a handyman or any other service person, check out craigslist.org and you'll have a great variety of options.

It's also useful and lots of fun if you're single and looking for a date or a companion or a lover or whatever or whomever. Reading the guys and gals available is fascinating. I thought that seeking a mate this way was a comparatively new phenomena. However, I recently read that in 1727, Helen Morrison, a lonely spinster, became the first spinster to place a lonely hearts ad. It appeared in the Manchester Weekly Journal. The mayor promptly committed her to a lunatic asylum for nine weeks. We've sure come a long way.

Elderhostel is a travel organization for the "over 55 crowd." We recently joined a group of 30 who registered for a 5 day Napa Valley excursion. Elderhostel features trips worldwide and you can join train trips, boat trips, bus trips everywhere. A year ago I joined a group in Palm Springs for a film festival. There were a few canceled films and some disappointed movie buffs but generally it was considered a success. (I especially enjoyed THE FOLLIES where lithe and nubile Seniors danced, cavorted, and otherwise entertained the crowds.) The Follies were NOT part of the Elderhostel experience! Not to digress ... for just under \$900 we spent 5 days in the luxurious Embassy Suites Hotel (including 15 meals!) and listened to lectures on Art in Tuscany and the Music of George Gershwin. The art lecture was delivered by a very knowledgeable University Professor but after 2 1/2 hours of learning everything you ever wanted to know about Italian frescoes, we skipped the next day's lecture on Italian art and took off and drove to Calistoga which is a charming town (although we never partook of any mud baths.) Another day we drove to Sonoma which is lovely with chic shops to peruse ... and spent time at COPIA in the Napa Valley. Copia is a museum that offers speakers on wine, exhibitions of old kitchen utensils, videos of the Napa Valley and a delightful gift shop where you can buy anything you ever (or never) needed related to wine. Downtown Napa has some great outlet shops for the diehard shoppers. Actually, you can take a few delightful days in Napa without

an organized tour...only about an hour North. Get with it!

ROMANCE & CIGARETTES (My movie pick) is a down-and-dirty musical love story. Nick (James Gandolfini) is a New York Ironworker married to Kitty (Susan Sarandon), a strong but gentle woman who has three grown daughters. He is secretly carrying on a torrid affair with flame-haired Tula (Kate Winslet.) When his wife catches him and Tula wants a commitment, Nick finds himself a prisoner of his primal urges. A good man at heart, he



James Gandolfini Stars in Romance & Cigarettes

must find his way back to his family before he runs out of chances. The film was a big hit at the Venice Film Festival. If you want to see a trailer, Google Romance & Cigarettes. Written and directed by John Turturro, this is one you won't want to miss. Landmark Theater.

Mrs. Bob Cratchit's Wild Christmas Binge If you really want to see a fun play during this usual chaotic holiday season...you won't do any better than viewing this wild, hilarious performance at the San Francisco Playhouse. This zany play turns Charles Dickens' Christmas Carol on its ear, systematically and hilariously deconstructing the turgid holiday rituals that stand in the way of true connections. Director, Joy Carlin, a veteran of Christmas Carols at ACT, brings her vast experience to this affectionate send-up of the Dickens masterpiece. Joan Mankin stars as Mrs. Bob Cratchit and Victor Talmadge as Scrooge and they join an extensive, accomplished cast in this playful, cracked look at the perennial Dickens Christmas classes about mean Ebenezer Scrooge and his discovering the true meaning of Christmas through the visitation of Three Ghosts. There are also parodies of Oliver Twist, "The Gift of the Magi" and It's a Wonderful Life. Artistic Director, Bill English and Producing Director Susi Damilano have done it again. The cast is obviously having a great time and so will you. It's playing through January 12 at 588 Sutter St. 677-9596. ♦

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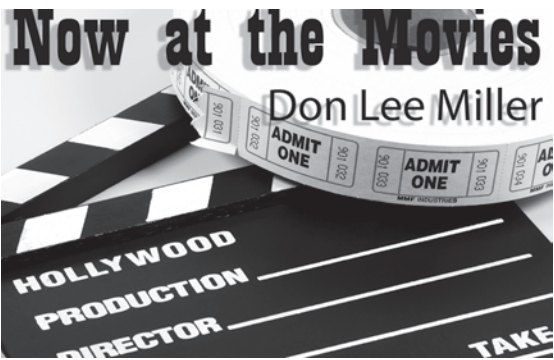
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AMERICAN GANGSTER

In the late 1960’s the drug lord of Harlem (Clarence Williams III) dies. Childless, he leaves the business to his savvy driver, Frank Lucas (Denzel Washington), who establishes a direct link to the Vietnamese supplier. About the same time, an honest Jersey cop, Richie Roberts (Russell Crowe), turns in a million-dollar drug bust, causing him to be an outcast who has to work out of his home. When Lucas takes his bride, Miss Puerto Rico, to the Frazier-Ali fight wearing a full-length chinchilla coat and hat, he comes under Roberts’ radar, whose mission in life becomes to take Lucas down. Lucas’s tiff with a tough dishonest cop (Josh Brolin) doesn’t help. Lucas’s mother’s (Ruby Dee) mansion is torn apart, looking for his stash. This true story over a decade relates the parallel lives of Lucas and Roberts until they finally meet when the Vietnam War is over and the pipeline via false-bottomed coffins of GIs is broken. There’s violence, pervasive drug content, and language aplenty, plus the nude (so they can’t steal samples) asian women who package Blue Magic. Under Ridley Scott’s brilliant direction and Steve Zaillan’s s cript, this is one of the outstanding films of the year, especially Denzel’s princely right on performance. Universal 157 min.

LIONS FOR LAMBS

Senator Tom Cruise regales TV reporter Meryl Streep with what’s going on in Afghanistan. Calif. prof Robert Redford (who also directed) tries to bring out the promise and potential of student Andrew Garfield. On the front, Peter Berg sends paratroopers Michael Pen~a, Derek Luke, others over enemy-held territory. Pen~a and Luke bail out onto a snowy plateau. A little action takes place there. Then, everybody talks! And talks!! Lots of arguing going on here. The excellent performances barely save this engaging debate on current politics with script-heavy and stagnant drama. MGM/UA 105m

NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN

Quiet country sheriff Tommy Lee Jones is suddenly faced with a cold-blooded serial killer (Xavier Bardem) whose victims have no bullet holes. It all revolves around drugs and money smuggled into Texas. Bardem is armed with a compressed air gun meant to kill cattle. Lawman Josh Brolin is on the money trail. Joel and Ethan Coen have created a suspenseful masterpiece. The decade’s most horrific villain may be around for a sequel since the end is wide open with two major and two minor characters

left alive. Plenty of Oscar buzz. Miramax 120 min.

FOR THE YOUNG IN HEART: AUGUST RUSH

Orphan Freddie Highmore’s tremendous faith tells him that his parents are alive and he can reach them through his music. He was the product of a one-night stand between concert cellist Keri Russell and Irish rock leadman, Jonathan Rhys Myers. She is told by her dying father, William Sadler, that he has lied to her for 13 years that her son is dead. While music prodigy Highmore searches for his parents, Myers seeks Russell with only a Polaroid taken by his bandmate (Moonlight’s Alex O’Laughlin). Fagin-like Robin Williams almost throws everything off kilter. Get out the handkerchiefs for this charming tale, mostly well-acted and written plus some saccharine, with sophomore direction by Kirsten Sheridan that culminates at a Julliard concert in Central Park. Warner Bros. 113 min.

BEE MOVIE

Harry (voice of Jerry Seinfeld, also co-writing and producing) has reached that day in a bee’s life when he must decide upon a career. His best friend Adam (v.o. Matthew Broderick) encourages him to take a usual job. Bratty Harry revolts and goes outside the hive where he meets Vanessa, a human florist (v.o. Renee Zellweger), and he disobeys the first rule: “No talking to humans”. We enter into The Graduate/Mrs. Robinson phase when she saves his life. Together, they mount a class action legal suit against the honey bottlers as this animated tale takes on ecological tooth. Intricate drawing, humor, and interesting twists envelop all ages. Other voices: John Goodman, Chris Rock. Paramount/DreamWorks 90 min.

ENCHANTED

With a few minutes at the outset and two at the end animated, director Kevin Lima brings to life a Cinderella-Snow White witty musical comedy of a fair maiden banished to Manhattan via an evil spell from Queen Susan Sarandon. Her son, the prince (James Marsden) follows his true love Amy Adams (Junebug) to Times Square. One light bulb short of bright, he somehow manages to track her to the single father, Patrick Dempsey, who has rescued her. Amy bonds with his winsome daughter in this perfect delightful holiday romp for everyone. With Timothy Spall, Idina Menzel. Walt Disney 108 min.

MR. MAGORIUM’S WONDER EMPORIUM

Mr. Magorium owns a magical toy shop in NYC. That he is 243 years old and is tiring is significant. Unfortunately for all concerned, Dustin Hoffman plays him with the energy of one 243 years old. His assistant to whom he is leaving the shop, peppy Natalie Portman (an aspiring classical composer), almost makes up for his lethargy. Enter dull Jason Bateman, the accountant, but no love interest develops. Nine-year old Zach Mills builds Abe Lincoln with Lincoln logs and helps inspire the store to return to its usual perk. This holiday delight was written and directed by Zach Helm. Twentieth Century Fox 109 min.

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Development *Cont. from p. 1*
Central Council, moderated the energized meeting. Guests included, the developer, Bob Mendelsohn, President of Republic Urban Properties West Coast Division, who presented the latest proposal for the site. Former Planning Department Zoning Administrator Bob Passmore answered planing questions, and Supervisor Sean Elsbernd and Carmen Chu listened and answered a few questions.

Republic Urban, the second developer for the site, after Union Property Capital LLC pulled out, has been pushing a plan to neighbors and surrounding community groups to build two high-rise towers, the tallest at 13 stories. The developer plans to file for a Planned Unit Development (PUD), to increase the current allowable 40-foot height limit, in order to build the towers.

NOA has been vocal in their opposition to the tower plan since it was presented in early 2007, as they do not accept it as a viable option; wanting the historically quiet, green and low density single family home area to remain so. To date, Republic Urban has not revised their plans despite their claim to be open to community input. Mr. Mendelsohn has stated that if the towers are not built, and low-rise buildings in keeping with current zoning restrictions are required, the green space will be cut down and site maxed out with condominium units. At a neighborhood meeting on September 24, 2007, Mr. Mendolsohn stated he would be filing plans in a matter of days for Environmental Assessment. Since that time, Mendelsohn has stated that plans will not be filed for approximately 90 days, stating that they hope to incorporate community concerns.

During the question and answer period, concern about the additional traffic flowing onto 19th Avenue was raised as a critical issue. One neighbor also questioned if the State would permit access from the site onto 19th Ave. (State Highway 1) since the state prohibited such access from the housing project built on the Shriner Hospital site. An alternative to developing this site for housing was also raised which was that the City for open space purchase the land. San Francisco voters renewed the open space fund in 2000 and are still contributing to the fund in a percentage of their property taxes. Both Supervisor Sean Elsbernd and Carmen Chu indicated that the City would not be in a position to purchase the property.

NOA considers the meeting a success, in that many of nearly 250 people attending had heard little to nothing of the development and are now more aware of happenings on the site. Sign the petition and stay involved and we build our coalition to wrestle City Hall for the preservation of our neighborhood.

Editors note: We heard from the developer last month, now from the opponents, more to come.

Notes from the Deck

By John B. Shanley
Man, they don't make nothin' round here no more
Union Sundown, by Bob Dylan

Dylan wrote those lyrics back in 1985 and today I see proof that he was on to something just by looking in a westersly direction.

From my deck on the back of my house I can see big freight ships come and go. They go out real high on the water and they come in real low. There is a reason for this, and it is, as Dylan said, because "We don't make nothin' round here no more."

We Americans are indeed a consumer society. We buy stuff and we discard it at an ever-increasing rate. But what do we make anymore? Not much.

I have long been asking the question that I heard CNN's Wolf-boy Blitzer pose to the Democratic candidates for president. "Was NAFTA (the North American Trade Agreement a mistake? Was Ross Perot right?" He could have added Pat Buchanan who also railed against NAFTA in the 92 campaign, stating that it would destroy traditional union jobs and wages.

In responding Hilary Clinton did what politicians often do – rather than answer the question she mocked Perot. "All I seem to remember is a lot of charts." I suppose this was an attempt to be funny, but when asked a serious question during a presidential debate I would prefer an intelligent answer to a joke. When pressed to respond to the question,

Hilary said something to the effect of, "NAFTA was a mistake to the extent it did not give everyone everything they expected." OK...so does that mean it was a mistake or not.

Let me be frank that I think NAFTA has been a huge mistake and I am disappointed that Democrats can't see this. For those of you who may consider yourselves to be progressives, let me ask you about traditional progressives issues that are important to me.

First, do you support minimum wage laws? Do you support child labor laws? Do you support workplace safety laws? Do you support clean-food and drug regulations. If so, why do you support NAFTA? How do you feel any of these measures designed to support working men and woman have been enhanced by NAFTA?

I see nothing noble about NAFTA and the Democrats inability to even discuss it in an intelligent manner is disappointing to say the least. So now the Christmas (yes, I said it) holiday season is upon us and parents are concerned that their children might be poisoned by cheap toys made oversees. Where is the concern for the workers, many of whom are underage and almost all of who are paid slave wages? I have not heard those concerns expressed.

If we are now a nation that is comfortable buying cheap goods made by people in slave like conditions then I fear that we are poisoning our children with something much worse than lead. We are poisoning them with a sense of elitism that may do our nation more harm than lead.

Letters to the Editor *Cont. from p. 2*
a more "civilized" version of these assassinations? Whoever is in the majority just removes their opponents? How outraged we were when the Republican Senate held absurd impeachment proceedings against the last Democratic President -- just because they could.

I remember a time in this city in which there seemed to be just one lone progressive on the Board of Supervisors, speaking for me, and inconveniencing the powers that be. How grateful I am that no one looked to his past and found something to be used as a pretext to remove him from office. And, I must add, how sad I am to know that he now is one of the people supporting the removal of Ed Jew.

Rita A. Goldberger
Taraval/Sunset

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CALENDAR

December • January

Calendar



Mrs. Bob Cratchit's Wild Christmas Binge

Written by Christopher Durang, Directed by Joy Carlin

Opens, Saturday Dec. 1st through Jan. 12, 2008

Mrs. Bob Cratchit's Wild Christmas Binge is a playful, cracked look at the perennial Dickens Christmas classic about mean Ebenezer Scrooge and his discovering the true meaning of Christmas through the visitation of Three Ghosts. In Durang's giddy version, the Ghost's magic is off, consistently transporting Scrooge and the Ghost to the wrong time and place.

Mrs. Bob and Scrooge and the Ghost keep showing up at Bob Cratchit's house way too early, where Mrs. Bob Cratchit – a long suffering saint in the Dickens – is in a state of fury, hating her life – no longer loving and long suffering, is in a rage: She's sick of Tiny Tim (the goody-goody crippled child), she hates her twenty other children (most of them confined to the root cellar), including oversized Little Nell, and she wants to get drunk and jump off London Bridge.

As the Ghost loses more control, the plot morphs into parodies of Oliver Twist, "The Gift of the Magi" and It's a Wonderful Life. And to make matters worse, Scrooge and Mrs. Bob seem to be kindred souls falling in love. With a dénouement that is two parts Touched by an Angel and one part The Queen of Mean, Scrooge's tale of redemption and gentle grace is placed squarely on its head.

SF Playhouse, 533 Sutter St. For tickets \$38 regular, and \$20 preview performances) or more information, 415-677-9596, or visit www.sfplayhouse.org

SHARKS: STEWARDS OF THE REEFS

Tues. Dec. 4th, 2 pm and 7 pm Special screening of David McGuire's documentary film. Stunning footage of remote island atoll of the Pacific. Impact of overfishing. \$8 (non-members) California Academy of Sciences, 875 Howard St., 321-8000, www.calacademy.org

HOW WE ALMOST LOST THE MARAIS

Wed. Dec 5th, How a posh Parisian neighborhood turned into a slum and is now transformed again. Main Public Library, 100 Larkin St. Koret Auditorium.

BUTTERFLIES & BULLDOZERS

Thu. Dec. 6th, 7 pm SF Botanical Garden screens a documentary film about San Bruno Mountain and preserving a local piece of California ecology. Non-members \$20, proceeds to Save San Bruno Mountain Fund. County Fair Bldg. 9th and Lincoln.

FAMILY FUN ABOARD THE BALCUTHA

Sat. Dec. 8th, 3 pm and 6 pm Balcutha, Hyde Pier, Christmas at Sea with music, costumed characters from 1901, music and Santa arrives by boat at 4:20. RSVP required for 6pm festivities., 447-5000. Regular admission fee: \$5. Free for 15 and under. www.nps.gov/safr

TWELVTH NIGHT

Wed. Dec. 12th, 7 pm West Portal Branch Library. Shakespeare's greatest comic achievement. San Francisco Shakespeare Festival.

PARKSIDE RENOVATION PLANS

Sat. Dec. 15th, 2 pm Neighborhood Meeting regarding the plans for the Parkside Branch Library. 1200 Taraval St. (at 22nd Ave.). Meet the architects and comment on designs for the branch. 557-4354.

GILEAD - MARILYNNNE ROBINSON

Wed. Dec. 19th, 6:30 pm Book Discussion at the Glen Park Library, 2825 Diamond.

FREE SFPUC CALENDAR AVAILABLE

Last week in December the colorful gardening calendar is available at any Public Library.

CHINESE PAPER CUT DEMONSTRATION

Sat. January 5th, 2 pm, Ortega Branch Library, 3223 Ortega St.

CLOSING DAY FESTIVITIES

Sun. Jan. 6 10AM-5 pm California Academy of Sciences closes its temporary location at Howard St. in preparation for the opening in October 2008. Special day of lectures, slideshows, and arts-and-crafts. 875 Howard St., 321-8000, www.calacademy.org

BANISHED

Wed. Jan 9th, 6-7:30 pm. From the 1860s to the 1920s towns and counties expelled entire African American communities. Independent Television Services, KQED & SFPL present film by Marco Williams. Main Library, Koret Aud. 100 Larkin St.

HISTORIC PHOTO LECTURE

Sat. Jan. 12th 2-4 pm. Photos and lecture about Islais

Creek, Bernal and Glen Park Neighborhoods. Bernal History Project and SF's Blen Park and Diamond Heights by Emma Bland Smith. Glen Park Branch Library, 2825 Diamond St.

WOODIE GUTHRIE & FOLKSONG

Mon. Jan. 14th, 7 pm. Tim Holt plays American folksongs and early gospel to depression-era songs. Sunset Branch Library 1305 18th Ave.

CHINATOWN KID

Sat. Jan. 26th, 2-4 pm. *The Adventures of Eddie Fung: Chinatown Kid, Texas Cowboy, Prisoner of War* — a slide show and book signing by Judy Yung and Eddie Fung. Main Library. 100 Larkin St.

RUTHANNE LUM MCCUNN

Tues. Jan. 29th 7 pm. The author reads from the *God of Luck*, based on the abduction of a million men from China to labor in Latin America between 1840 and 1875. The book won many awards, and has been translated into 11 languages and adapted to stage and screen. Sunset Branch Library, 1305 18th Ave.

CRAB BOWL 2008

Sat. Jan. 26th, 6 pm. All-you-can-eat marinated crab extravaganza, includes hors d'oeuvres, pasta, crab, wine and dessert. No host bar. Carroll Hall, St. Thomas More School. Reservations required. \$40. RSVP Linda e-mail Lp1114@aol.com or 218-0401.

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An Open Letter to the Community

Dear West Portal Neighbor,

I am writing today to share some important news. As you may have heard, the Arden Wood Christian Science Nursing Facility located at 15th Avenue and Wawona Street recently sold 4.6 acres of its property, which is approximately one third of their holdings, to Republic Urban Properties.

We are very happy to be purchasing this unique and special property on which we hope to build condominiums and town homes for west side residents, young families and empty nesters. As a former member of the City's Board of Supervisors and former resident of St. Francis Wood, I am committed to this neighborhood and making sure this project is a good fit for the West Portal community.

To date, we have discussed our proposed project with several different community organizations; however we have not yet filed an application because we want to hear more from you. We have designed what we think is a good project that creates housing and preserves the natural beauty of the urban forest. Our vision for this development will include two LEED-certified green mid-rise buildings and eight town homes. In total, 154 new housing units will be created.

Starting in January, we will be hosting several workshops for the West Portal community to become more involved in the planning and design process of the project. If you are interested in participating, please let us know and we will provide you with the dates, times and locations. These sessions are designed to be an informal, interactive exchange between residents and the developer in order to get your feedback and suggestions on the proposed project. If you are interested please RSVP by December 19, 2007 to ardenwood@republic-urban.com, or by phone at 415-788-1000 ext 209.

We are enthusiastic about this project and it is our intention that this development will be a welcomed addition to the neighborhood. As part of our application, we will be asking the City for a full Environmental Impact Report, the scope of which will be greatly influenced by you and your neighbors and will certainly include important issues like traffic and noise.

In addition, we are also thrilled to announce the launching of the website for this project at www.ardenwoods.com. This site will have information about the project, neighborhood outreach, and will provide an opportunity to ask questions and give feedback on the proposed project via email.

We hope that you will take these opportunities to share your thoughts on our vision for Arden Wood and we look forward to hearing from you soon.

Best wishes this holiday season,



Bob Mendelsohn
President, West Coast Division
Republic Urban Properties LLC

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EDUCATION & OTHER GOOD STUFF by Carol Kocivar

SPEELL CHECK

shhh. Ooops. Its sohard to do this with my hands hidden under the table. Theboarf neeting is underway but I cnat ..oops ...cant put this pda down.

Evr since I got this toy I have been in a slef imposed try out fr multitaskig

my sisaters husand just got a new hand held which I tried d ut I rally could not use the keybrd verry well.

After all, I have beeb using this pne for so lpng that I really have it down put.

its really pretty easy. np one can even notice I am not payong full attention. I certainly can meet my fiduciary repsonability hands down.

speaking of hands down, this thong..thing has been magnifient in developong eye thumb coordination.

Its a transferable skill. I have dropped a lot fewer vegetBLES in my lap sine I started usibg this.

I can text my kids really quickly. But this kids seem so unresponsive. They don't seem to uderstand my facilty with this new tchnogy.

Yould think I was into ur space...hmmm my space...whose space???

don't let anyone tell you that you can't do tow or thee things at once.

Remember the presidential debate over walkibg and chewing gum?

Well I assure you that I can even run, listen to nusic on my oopod...hmm ipod and oops.

Slow down I almost ripped over my shooos.

you night surmise that I have had one too many pinks..rinks...hmm drinks. Not soo.. I never rink and rite..write..iam really careful about abiding by proper pda protoocal.

Never ever lift a glaff wheb you are pda ing. If you lift it while you are holdding your hands under

the talbe ..it is big trouble.

Splat...not only can you hurt your thumbs but ypu put your expensive toy risk.

Do u think I am being a kttile silly. Tis is sooo east...esay..sample in fact. If you are having the same amout of fu nn with tour knew toy..p.ease end me an...enail.

You can reach me at cjcivar * pda central.come

Editor's Note: Last month I accidentally corrected the spelling on this column, thinking it's title meant for me to check it for spelling. Sorry Carol. ❖



Kids Reach Out to Darfur

So far students have purchased 206 goats which are loaned to families in Darfur, Sudan. The goats serve as a much needed source of vitamins and proteins, and a way to keep families out of camps and in their own villages.

Students are now reaching out to attract other ambassadors for the "Kids for Kids" program, which seeks to improve the lives of children in one of the harshest environments in the world. Pictured below are the students (l-r) Lauren Gomez, Nadia Nasrah, Georgina

Stiegeler, Nathaniel Nathenson, Emily Pineda, Caroline Macguire and Makayla Swanson (who led the efforts at St. Gabriel School). Seated in the center are two former parishioners of St. Gabriel—Mario Conti and Josephine Sommerville—who were among an enthusiast group of residents who pledged to support the project.

Fourth graders of St. Gabriel's School took their campaign to end world poverty to AlmaVia of San Francisco, an assisted living community on Brotherhood Way, sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy and the Lutheran Church.

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MAE WEST’S “SEX” REVIVED

If Mae West was arrested in 1929 for her so-called infamous play Sex, performed at Daly’s 63rd St. Theatre in New York city for almost a whole year, this would never occur today, especially at the Aurora where the revival of her play appears today to be done in a mild manner and with good taste in both content and staging. The play revolves around Margy Lamont’s attempt to to free herself from her pimp and begin life anew with a man who loves and respects her. She will have to make a decide between a sea captain and a high society millionaire whose family could reject her because of her past.

Delia Mc Dougell’s interpretation of the out-spoken heroine is thus far from getting her arrested for corrupting youth’s morals and being thrown into a paddy wagon with the rest of her cast to spend 10 days in jail. The Aurora production, directed by artistic director Tom Ross, does not emphasize sex any more than it does the tantalizing early twenties songs and dances. Rather it demonstrates the open and innocent attitude toward sex of the period along with a blasé Mae West’s ironic allusions of how males mistreat females.

Despite the fact that she does not have the physical appearance of Mae West as a tall female wearing high heels and with curves, Delia MacDougall in the role of the sexy idol does a fine job utilizing her own physicval attributes to evoke memories of what Mae West was all about in the sensual domain. The remainder of the cast is up to the challenge of presenting the ambience of the era when sex was just beginning to find its liberation from being a guarded subject. An outstanding interpretation is offered by Maureen McVerry as the high society lady who regrets her involvement with Margy Lamont’s lover Rocky (Magy Lamont’s pimp) dynamically played by Danny Wolohan.

Billy Philadelphia takes first prize as pianist and for his musical arrangements and his dramatic interpretation of songs of the period along with his three new songs that so well evoke Mae West in her time.

All the elements that integrate acting, movement, song and dance in a well coordinated ensemble honoring the Mae West legend in a lively and

enticing manner may be found in this production. Sex runs at the Aurora Theatre until Dec. 9. For info. call 510-843-4822 or click auroratheatre.org.

FRINGE FESTIVAL 20TH ANNIVERSARY FOR BAY AREA WRITERS AND ACTORS
Call for New Plays for Spring ‘08

As the Fall 2007 20th Annniversary Fringe Festival comes to an end, the Spring Fringe 08 is open to submissions of original short plays. For information call (415) 673-3131.

In Program One of the Fall Fringe Festival, among the 6 new short plays and solos my particular favorite was **Switching Teams** written by Anthony Martinez and directed by Cindy Brillart-True. In this comedy of errors, Ted (played by Ken Bacon) jeopardizes his friendship with Mike (played by Anthony Martinez) by switching to a rival team.

20 Minutes Remaining, a propaganda play concerning the Israel and Palestinian conflict, scored high on my list. Junelle Barrett Porter gave the best performance of the evening as Myriam, a Lebanese woman caught in the discord.

Steve North, a whole show by himself in **This Life**, deserved my vote as best actor and director. It takes a lot of courage to put your life on the stage. Bravo Steve!

In **Murder on the Mind**, my 4th choice, Sallie Romer and Susan Puttele gave outstanding performances as two women having affairs with each other’s husbands. This dark comedy written and directed by Samantha Skinner employed the device of letting the audience know what the characters were thinking in contrast to what they say to each other.

Fiasco, a farce, written and directed by Linda Ayres-Frederick and Blind Loyalty, a terrorist twist by Clayton Schuster directed by Steve North, filled out the bill. Many thanks to Dr. Annette Lust and Lnda Vita, Artistic and Assistant Artistic Directors, for their hard work and supportive efforts to encourage Bay Area playwrights, actors and directors to present their works to the Fringe of Marin.

Flora Lynn Isaacson

The second program of new works, featured Joanne Green’s **Starting to Show**, directed by Linda Lowry, a cute, witty modern take on pregnancy and motherhood. A couple of very pregnant women (a huffing, puffing Joanne Green as Kay and a just ‘starting to show’ Sallie Romer as Lorraine) sit in their doctor’s waiting room, and a tall, willowy, woman, Celia (Jennifer Chambers), arrives with a baby (unseen) strapped to her chest in a cloth carrier. They discuss their current situation in clever, sharp and funny dialogue overriding their deeper concerns.

Fly me to the Moon, written by Lisa Juris, featured Kathleen Freitug as long-suffering wife Shar and Erica Badgeley as the daughter, Alison, of easily conned inventor Ken (Mike Morrow). He’s invested

in a set of rocket blueprints and intends to build it, fly to the moon and mine gold. He owes money to sleazy Johnny (Craig Logan), who comes to believe in Ken, while his family disintegrates before his deluded eyes.

A **Very Private Party** concerns Becca (Sally Devoto) and Katherine (a strong Heather Shepar-dson) who get together to have a few drinks and talk. A conflict arises when one wants to go out to a club and the other wants to stay home. Secrets are revealed. This play was written by Debra Turner and directed by Linda Vito.

Ulysses is based on what inspired James Joyce to write his most famous book. Written by Paige Lehmann and directed by Steve Galiani, it opens with a clever prologue where a student (Mark Devoto) reads a paragraph from “Ulyssess” and asks the audience that question. Through Joyce’s (played by Mike Morrow) wife, Nora (Molly McCarthy) and daughter Lucia (Erica Badgeley), during his self-imposed exile to Italy, we find out. The actors nailed the Irish accents and Flora Lynn Isaacson as Joyce’s lugubrious maid, had a perfect Italian flair, when she wasn’t crying into a towel.

Program Two closed with Annette Lust’s **Vinaigrette**, directed by award-winning Sasha Litovchencko. Actors Mike Morrow, Clara Lamers, Sallie Romer, Charles Grant, Erica Badgeley and Mark Devoto played condiments that make up a vinaigrette: Garlic, Mustard, Olive oil, Vinegar, Salt and Pepper, respectively, imparting their essences through dialogue and action, including a dance! The motif was spare, done in black, white, and gray, with colorful wigs to denote the condiment. The theme was overcoming differenecs and difficulties through acceptance, compassion, and understanding, instead of denigration, disrespect, and violence. A perfect ending to a wonderful program.

Gaetana Caldwell Smith

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Your Medicare Drug Plan

By Grace-Marie Turner

The holidays are here again. That means it's time for decorations, gifts, family, friends, and food. But during all the celebrating, seniors enrolled in Medicare Part D should carve out time to consider whether they want to stay with their current prescription drug plan.

At the end of each year, from Nov. 15 through Dec. 31, Medicare Part D provides seniors with an open enrollment period, an easy and convenient way to switch plans -- or sign up for the first time.

Thanks to the plan's unique design, seniors can choose from a variety of plans offered by private insurers. Unlike traditional government programs, where there's just one plan for everyone, Medicare Part D is structured so that insurance companies must compete for customers. Consequently, prices have stayed relatively low while coverage options

have flourished.

In fact, some plans cost just a few dollars a month.

That's why more seniors than ever before have prescription drug coverage. This past year, Medicare Part D provided benefits to almost 24 million people.

Meanwhile, polls have indicated that most seniors are happy with their coverage. This isn't to say the program has no pitfalls.

Many plans don't cover every brand-name drug, so members might have to take a generic medication instead of the brand they were using prior to signing up for Part D. Furthermore, for brand-name drugs that still are under patent protection, a generic version won't even exist. To access these treatments, members might have to pay more out of their own pocket. Or they might have no choice but to take an alternative drug.

So be sure to go over the options carefully, as different plans cover different drugs. And the drugs covered by each plan may change from year to year.

How to Buy Your Meds Online —Safely

By Bryan A. Liang, M.D.

Buying drugs online has never been easier.

Today, there are thousands of websites offering brand-name medications like Lipitor and Viagra at a fraction of what they cost at your local drugstore. Many even sell drugs without asking for a prescription. Some offer "in-house" doctors that will both diagnose you and prescribe medications over the internet, saving you the hassle of going to your physician and then the drugstore.

If that sounds too good to be true, that's because it is.

Hunting online for bargains makes sense, but it can be incredibly dangerous. It is often difficult -- if not outright impossible -- to tell whether or not drugs purchased online are authentic. That's a risk that can be deadly.

According to the World Health Organization, about 10 percent of globally traded drugs are fakes. In some countries, according to the Food and Drug Administration, more than half of all drugs are fake.

Counterfeiting networks use high-tech graphics and fraudulent serial numbers to mimic brand-name drugs. Smugglers bribe officials to move drugs across borders and set up phony mailing addresses to ship products over the internet. Many open and close several websites each day to sell their stock of phony drugs, make a profit, and move on without a trace.

Most counterfeits originate in Asia and Latin America where regulations are poorly enforced. Penalties for counterfeiting in these regions are slight compared to the profits criminals can reap. Some experts have estimated that counterfeit sales will total \$75 billion worldwide by 2010.

Purchasing drugs closer to home is hardly any safer. Many Canadian pharmacies obtain their drugs from European wholesalers. And because pharmaceuticals move freely among the 27 EU members, drugs purchased from England or Germany could have

easily originated in Romania or the Czech Republic, where safety regulations are poor.

Earlier this year, a Canadian named Marcia Bergeron purchased counterfeit Xanax and Ambien from what she thought was an online Canadian pharmacy.

After taking the pills, she died. Authorities discovered that Bergeron's pills contained aluminum, tin, and even arsenic -- common "filler" in counterfeits.

They traced the purchase to a website in the Czech Republic and the pills to a plant in Southeast Asia.

With more websites selling counterfeit medicines, it's more important than ever to follow a few simple guidelines when purchasing drugs online.

First, never purchase prescription medication from a website that does not require you to mail in a prescription. Moreover, legitimate e-pharmacies should always have an easy way for you to contact a certified pharmacist for medical consultation.

Avoid sites that do not display a physical U.S. street address and a toll-free phone number. Also, avoid websites selling only "lifestyle" medications for conditions like obesity and impotence.

Finally, you can search for "Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Sites" by going to www.vipps.info. This website was created by the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy to identify online pharmacies that are safe and appropriately licensed.

The VIPPS team reviews the policies and practices of internet pharmacies and performs on-site inspections of each pharmacy's facilities. Those that are up to code display the blue VIPPS seal.

Shopping for medicine online can be a great way to save money. But do it safely.

Bryan A. Liang, MD, is VP of the Partnership for Safe Medicines.

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West of Twin Peaks

Observer

Publisher: Phyllis Sherman **Managing Editor:** Doug Comstock **Assoc. Editor:** Hilda Abrevaya

Account Representatives: Billie Lowe (415) 665-7942 • Marjorie Ford (415) 674-3570

Contributors: Writers: Hank Basayne, John Dunbar, Carol Kocivar, Annette Lust, Barbara Meskunas, John B. Shanley

Photos: Michael Gorman, Doug Comstock

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PO Box 31489, SF 94131 • 415 821-9443

TPObserver@aol.com • www.tpobserver.com

END JOKES

A little old lady was sitting on a park bench in Trailer Estates, a Florida mobile home park. A man walked over and sits down on the other end of the bench. After a few moments, the woman asks, "Are you a Stranger here?"

He replies, "I lived here years ago."
 "So, where were you all these years?"
 "In prison," he says.
 "Why did they put you in prison?"
 He looked at her, and very quietly said, "I killed my wife."
 "Oh!" said the woman. "So you're single ..."

Another two elderly people living in Trailer Estates - he was a widower and she a widow - had known each other for a number of years. One evening there was a community supper in the big activity center.

The two were at the same table, across from one another. As the meal went on, he took a few admiring glances at her and finally gathered the courage to ask her, "Will you marry me?"

After about six seconds of 'careful consideration', she answered "Yes. Yes, I will."

The meal ended and, with a few more pleasant exchanges, they went to their respective places. Next morning, he was troubled. "Did she say 'yes' or did she say 'no'?"

He couldn't remember. Try as he might, he just could not recall. Not even a faint memory. With trepidation, he went to the telephone and called her. First, he explained that he didn't remember as well as he used to. Then he reviewed the lovely evening past.

As he gained a little more courage, he inquired, "When I asked if you would marry me, did you say 'Yes' or did you say 'No'?"

He was delighted to hear her say, "Why, I said, 'Yes, yes I will' and I meant it with all my heart." Then she continued, "I am so glad that you called, because I couldn't remember who had asked me."

A man was telling his neighbor in Trailer Estates, "I just bought a new hearing aid. It cost me four thousand dollars, but it's state of the art. It's perfect."
 "Really," answered the neighbor
 "What kind is it?"
 "Twelve-thirty."

Morris, an 82 year-old man, went to the doctor at The Trailer Estates Medical Clinic to get a physical. A few days later the doctor saw Morris walking down the street with a gorgeous young woman on his arm.

A couple of days later the doctor spoke to Morris and said, "You're really doing great, aren't you?"
 "Just doing what you said, Doc: 'Get a hot mamma and be cheerful,'" Morris replied.

To which doctor said, "I didn't say that. I said, 'You've got a heart murmur. Be careful!'"

Q: Why should 50+ year old people use valet parking?
 A: Valets don't forget where they park your car.

Q: Is it common for 50+ year olds to have problems with short term memory storage?
 A: Storing memory is not a problem, retrieving it is a problem.

Q: As people age, do they sleep more soundly?
 A: Yes, but usually in the afternoon.

Q: Where do 50+ year olds look for fashionable glasses?
 A: Their foreheads.

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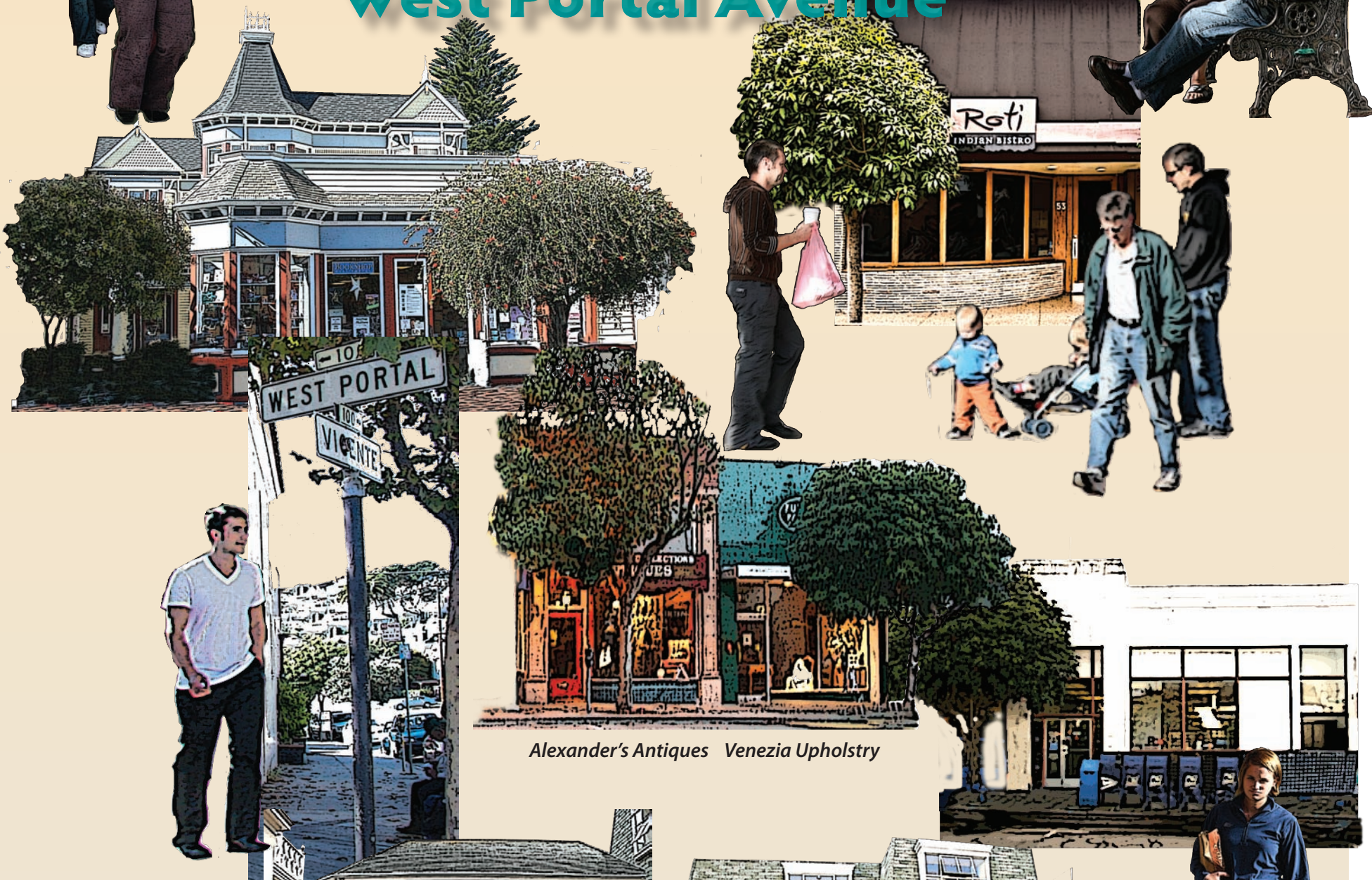
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