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The Ethical Inquisition of Tony Hall

By Michael Strickland

At the Ethics Commission's meeting, the first order of business was releasing their "Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Order" after three years of investigating the former City Supervisor Tony Hall for campaign spending irregularities when he was running for re-election in 2004, close to five years ago.

The investigation cost somewhere in the neighborhood of \$1 million and resulted in a \$5,000 fine for not dotting the i's and crossing the t's on a campaign expense report detailing gas fees, and another \$1,000 fine for using the wrong credit card when buying Hall's wife and daughter a pair of purses in Nevada.

To call this expensive, unethical and politically motivated investigation a travesty is a serious understatement, and any of the commissioners who have a shred of integrity should seriously consider resigning because the entire affair is stinking up City Hall.

For the last couple of years, (other than the Westside Observer) all the best reporting on the issue has been at Luke Thomas' "Fog City Journal," with an analysis piece by Hall's lawyer David Waggoner, an outrageously funny piece by h. brown about the case and the commission, and an article by Hall campaign



John St. Croix, Director

manager Frank Gallagher about possible perjury. (fogcityjournal.com).

Though the case is not as Dickensian and complicated as "Bleak House," it certainly does have its twists and turns. The story started in 2004 when newly elected mayor Gavin Newsom offered a well-compensated, cushy job to District 7 Supervisor Tony Hall as the director of TIDA (Treasure Island Development Authority). Hall accepted the position rather than continue to run for re-election, and he was replaced by his own former aide

Sean Elsbernd who was then working in the Mayor's Office. Elsbernd could be reliably counted on to vote 100% in line with Newsom's agenda, which is what he has done for the last four years. In order to accept the position, by the way, the Ethics Commission had to rule for a special exemption for Hall, which is when he got a first-hand look at how they essentially serve at the mayor's bidding.

The mayor's folks presumed that Hall would just put on a sailor's cap and watch the sailboats go by, but instead he actually looked at the books and uncovered a sweetheart deal with Darius Anderson and his Kenwood Investments group as the sole developer for the island, and when he objected the Board came

Cont. p. 6

RUMINATIONS OF A FORMER CITIZEN SUPERVISOR

The Kindness of Strangers

by Quentin Kopp

My wife Mara and I enjoyed the pleasure of attending our first presidential inauguration, departing San Francisco on Friday, January 16th and returning Wednesday, January 21st. We were afforded seats at the January 20th Inauguration of the 43rd or 44th President, depending on method of calculation, through the offices of United States Senator Dianne Feinstein and her San Francisco Chief of Staff, and retired San Francisco Police Department detective Jim Molinari.

Through the kindness of such luminaries as my former State Senate colleague and current Chairman of the California Democratic Party, the Honorable Art Torres, Congressman (and former State Senate colleague) Jim Costa of Fresno, Congresswoman Jane Harmon of Los Angeles, my fellow California High Speed Rail Authority Commissioner and former legislative colleague from Costa Mesa, Orange County, the Honorable Tom Umberg and David Dean, Executive Director of the Texas High Speed Rail Authority, we were guests at numerous functions, including the California State Society Luncheon on January 18th, the so-called "California Bash" that night, and the Texas State Society "Black Tie and Boots" Ball featuring approximately 12,000 participants on Monday night, January 19th. We were fortunate to enjoy the hospitality of a 95 year-old cousin in the Northwest neighborhood of Washington. We relied primarily on Washington's Metro system for daily journeys to and from events and the inauguration itself.

For the benefit of readers, let me recommend that no matter the manner in which you do so, please try to attend a presidential inauguration in your lifetime. Irrespective of your party affiliation (or in my



Cont. p. 4

HERE COME DA TAX INCREASES

By George Wooding

Due to a projected shortfall in the 2009-10 budget year of \$575 million dollars, the Board of Supervisors has officially declared San Francisco to be in state of "financial emergency." On January 27th, The Board of Supervisors will vote to certify a "special election" to be held on June 2nd. Several new city taxes could/will be placed on the ballot.

The State of California is currently considering having a "special election" in April to add new state related taxes. The taxes that San Francisco will attempt to add will be separate and unique from the taxes that the State of California will attempt to add. In order to save millions in city special election costs, San Francisco must schedule its election on the same date as the State's election date.

Rather than trying to balance the budget through budget cuts and legislation, both San Francisco government and California state government have decided to balance the budget by creating a series of "temporary" and long-term tax increases. Several past "temporary" tax increases have become permanent.

WHO WILL PAY? a majority of the new taxes will fall heavily on San Francisco homeowners, property owners and business owners.

BACKGROUND: The city's estimated \$575 million budget deficit has been caused by 1) a revenue decline in the city's sales taxes; 2) a steep decline in the property transfer tax; 3) increasing salary, transportation and public health costs; 4) mandated budget set asides for the police department, libraries, children's services and the symphony; and 5) chronic cost overruns in city departments. San Francisco's

Cont. p. 6



Newsom Aide Mike Farrah pitches the Mayor's \$6 billion budget at the West of Twin Peaks Central Council.

GUEST OPINION

Human Error, Murder or Steroid Abuse?

By H. Brown

Human Error or Steroid Abuse?

The New Years Day shooting of 22 year-old Oscar Grant III by BART Officer Johannes Mehserle, now under arrest, is a red flag for anyone who follows steroid abuse by law enforcement officials.

"The source described him (the officer who shot Oscar Grant) as physically fit and respected by peers within the organization." That's from Demian Bulwa's Chronicle piece. There is general agreement that the drug makes your body bigger and your actions more aggressive.

Go Google 'BART shooting' and check out the video of the murder (call it what it is) ... check out the video that draws a circle around the cop and clearly shows him up rise up clear of the victim, draw his weapon and simply shoot him in the back when the officer was in no danger whatever.

As someone who has studied the steroid phenomenon since my days as a fireman, I immediately recognized that these cowboys were way too large for normal people. Call me a silly, but it occurred to me that this could be yet another instance of steroid rage. I pushed all the media moguls on my list again. Challenged them to ask if the shooter was tested for steroids.

None asked. The Chronicle did a couple of editorials but despite their record of keeping the word 'steroids' on their front page for a couple of years black athlete, they kept it as long as it applies to a out of their reporting when it came to police.

The Examiner's Tamara Aparton was the only one who broached the topic of drugs at all. She got Alameda County D.A., Tom Orloff to say in the Examiner that "Results from drug and alcohol tests on former BART Officer Johannes Mehserie and findings from the autopsy of 22 year-old Oscar Grant III will also be expedited."

What drugs was he tested for? Steroids? You- can bet not. And, not testing for them should be a point at the guy's trial (assuming he's one of those rare individuals actually tried). Lemme give you a quick story.

On '60 Minutes' a decade or so back there was a segment where they interviewed a guy who had been a highway patrol officer in some western state. He was in prison for murdering a woman who ran a roadside diner. He killed her because she complained about him wanting to use the phone for free.

He told the correspondent that he got more and more angry with her as he drove away from the place and finally (under the influence of steroids) became convinced that she was such a danger to the police community that she had to be killed.

So, he drove back and killed her and buried her body in a shallow grave in the desert. Steroids may make you bigger and stronger but it does not improve your judgment. But, for some reason, though every editor in town knows that steroids and cops are a deadly combination, they will not touch the subject. Barry Bonds? Of course. Officer Mehserle? No way.

Steroids beget behavior problems. It is rumored to be de rigeur for members of certain units to take the drug in order to work in their surroundings. Motorcycle cops. Jail and prison guards. And, of course, anyone who wants to bat in the fourth slot for the Giants.

Grant family attorney John Burris should immediately demand this guy be tested for steroids. I've been lobbying for this for years and not a single local news outlet has had the guts to pick it up. 'Roids are a recognized problem nationally but not here.

Of course they're a problem here, too. Candidates to replace Heather Fong should all have to present their views on police use of steroids and testing of same. The SF Police Officers Association pushed through their last contract with provisions for drug testing of officers for everything *except* steroids.

I went home and Googled 'aggression and steroids' and got over a half a million entries. The National Institute of Health and their National Institute on Drug Abuse is of the mind that steroids cause female breasts on males, acne and heart attacks and several kinds of liver cancer.

They think steroids bring on early death and rage and mania and delusions. Without exceptions, contradictory claims are reported in astro-turf publications funded by various drugs companies who manufacture the various types of steroids.

I do not think it is too radical an idea that our safety officers should be tested for steroids.

Editor's Note: Video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKy-WSZMklc>

Correction: In our Dec-Jan story on the PUC and the water system, paragraph 2 should read "the system receives 80 to 85 percent of its water from the Tuolumne." It varies by year. Brian Browne apologizes, he meant to say that "non-Tuolumne River sources provide 15 to 20 percent" of the system's water.



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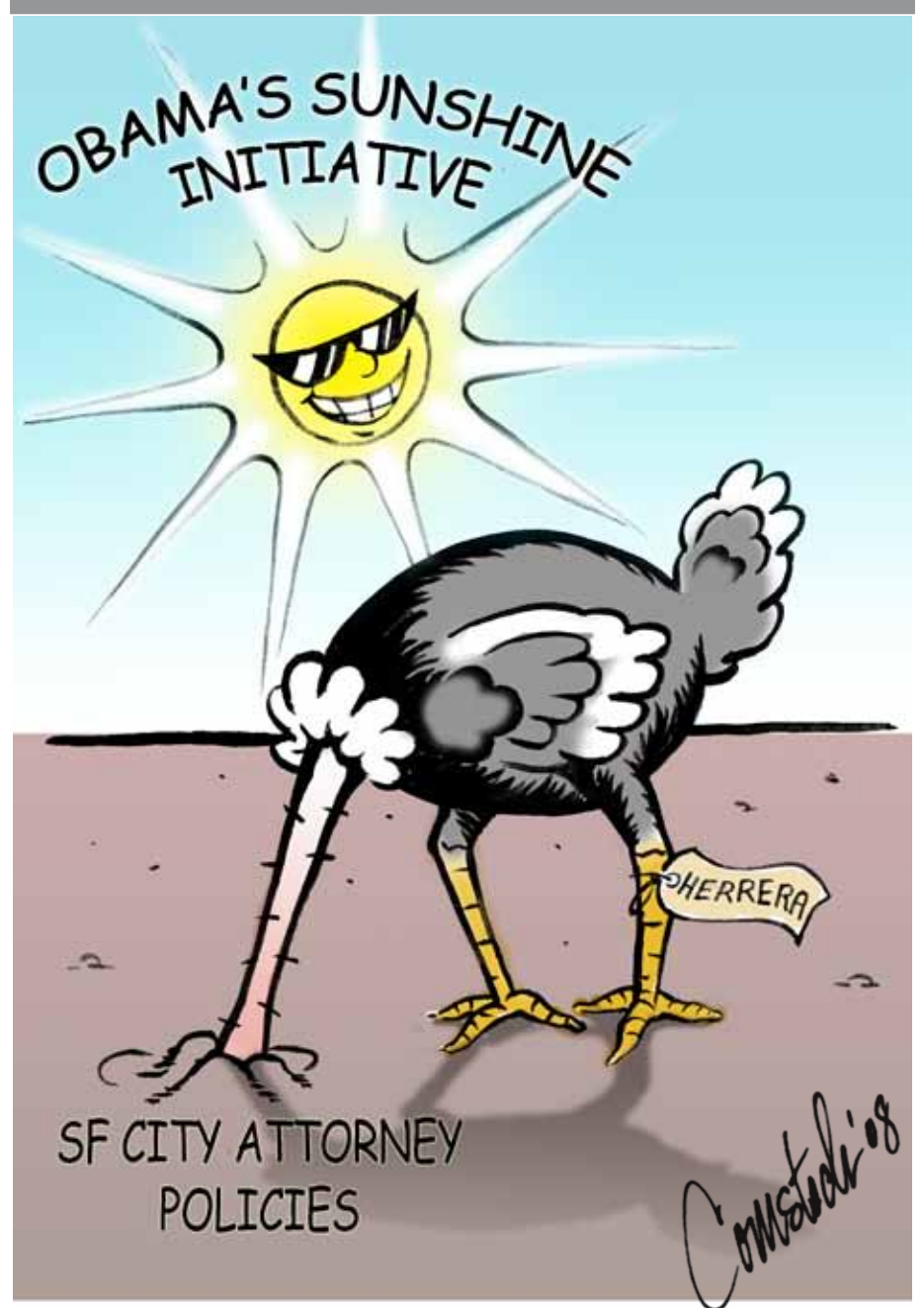
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COMMENTARY



OPEN LETTER TO THE SUPERVISORS

San Francisco's proposal to curtail free speech, and eviscerate First Amendment rights, during the proposed June 2 special election in San Francisco is completely shocking.

I'm sure you have heard that one of President Barack Obama's first official acts, via one of his first Executive Orders, was to increase access to government records by expanding the federal Freedom of Information Act, in order to create greater transparency and government accountability.

So why is it that as our new Board of Supervisors president, you are considering condoning curtailment of First Amendment, free-speech rights in San Francisco?

I assume someone on your staff — or perhaps Board-President-in-Absentia Aaron Peskin, using his Ex-Officio puppet-master role in charge of the Triple-D-C — has briefed you regarding how language proposed for the special election will strip San Franciscans of their First Amendment rights. Right?

I'm speaking, of course, about the enclosed PDF file that contains language to be approved on Tuesday, January 27, during the full Board of Supes meeting (see agenda

Item #24 at http://www.sfgov.org/site/bdsupvrs_page.asp?id=97197), for the proposed June 2, 2009 special election to identify possible new sources of revenue for the City that will be put before the voters.

Section 3f in the attached PDF file, if I'm reading this right, proposes to eliminate from the voter guide [in the "Elimination of Paid Arguments" paragraph on page 8] any and all paid arguments for and against ballot measures and Charter changes. Of all our "civil liberties," this seems to be the most egregious of all and the height of arrogance, as it appears to eliminate publication of pro-and-con debate about

merits of each revenue proposal and Charter change.

In the 13 years I've lived, and voted, in San Francisco and have read our voter guides closely before each election, never has there been a prohibition on publishing voter guide arguments, whether for or against ballot or bond measures, or Charter changes. Why the sudden change? What is the Board of Supervisors afraid of that you suddenly propose to eliminate voter guide arguments that may sway voters?

San Francisco "values," I might remind you Mr. Chiu, have always permitted the citizenry to plop down their hard-earned money to pay for voter guide arguments. Just last November, I sprang \$800 (\$200 in filing fees, and \$2 per word for each word in the maximum 300-word limit, for a total of \$800), to exercise my free speech, first amendment rights for a voter guide statement. I could have sorely used that \$800 for other purposes, including my neglected wardrobe. Instead, I chose to spend money, not on "free speech," but "paid speech," in which I freely chose to use my limited discretionary cash on a matter of great public concern.

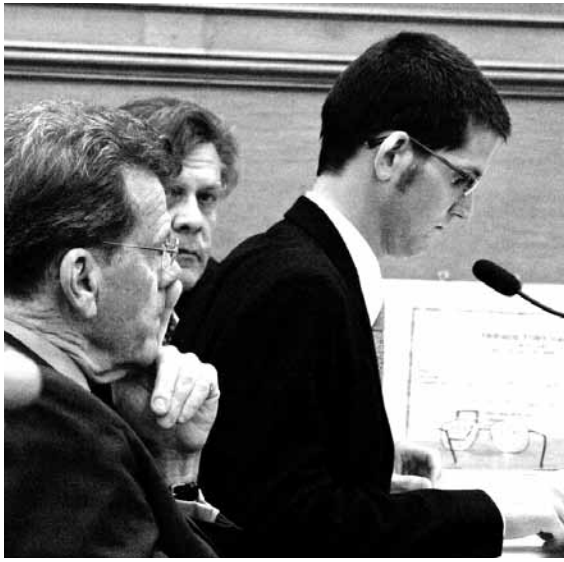
Now I'm being told, via this proposed ordinance authorizing the June 2 special election in San Francisco, that even if I wanted to spend, and can afford, another \$800 helping to educate voters on what they are about to vote on, that my free (err, costly) speech will simply not be permitted.

Any excuse that there is suddenly an "emergency" doesn't carry water. When I submitted my November 2008 voter guide argument, I had to do so by August 14, 2008, fully two-and-a-half months in advance. Here we are five months out from a June 2009 election, and you expect me to believe that there is not a two-and-a-half-month period in which I could submit a paid

Cont. p. 11

Truth Wins Out

By Tony Hall



Tony Hall, Peter Bagatelos and David Waggoner

At long last, my campaign committee and I have been vindicated, and found not guilty of any violations of FPPC rules and regulations. In my 30 years of public service, I have always fought against such abuse and injustice, and those of you who know me, and have helped me accomplish so much over the years, know the truth. To you and your unwavering support I am grateful. Yes, truth is the most powerful weapon against those who seek to advance their own careers by disparaging others. At long last, our efforts in pursuit of what is right and legal have won out over that which is corrupt and politically motivated.

It's unfortunate that the most important aspect of the four-year, million-dollar investigation, some have called it a "witchhunt," conducted against us was not reported accurately by the mainstream press. This is no coincidence, since the purpose of this injustice was to destroy my reputation. Mayoral sympathizers did not figure that I would fight and that two very savvy attorneys, David Waggoner and Peter Bagatelos, both honorable men, would donate their time and expertise.

The mainstream dailies, dutifully reported the charges against me, then ignored the vindication of those charges or the criminal violations including perjury and tainted evidence perpetrated by Supervisor Sean Elsbernd's Aide, Olivia Scanlon, the Ethics Commission's star witness. Not one word was printed regarding the origin of the anonymous, bogus complaints alleging that we had committed some \$300,000 worth of campaign violations. Not one word was printed about the "ethics" investigator Richard Mo, who led a commission of political hacks, chaired by wannabe Judge, Susan Hariman without regard for due process, on their four-year campaign of character assassination. Even when the truth was uncovered, the "press" failed to report it, and the committee continued their million dollar taxpayer funded folly regardless. As a final gasp, the committee imposed a nominally face-saving token fine, against my election committee without support of any findings of fact or law.

When a so-called "ethics" commission is nothing more than a Kangaroo Court for those currently in power, and the only people "investigated" are those who have been critical of the current administration, then we have corruption. When the press doesn't report the facts, citizens are deprived of the right to know and reputations are severely damaged. I sincerely thank David and Peter for having the guts to stand with me.

How all of this come about? In 2004, after I conducted a very successful

re-election campaign in District 7, Mayor Newsom repeatedly asked me to take over and develop Treasure Island. I had a successful record of developing facilities, such as Civic Center Courthouse, Hall of Justice and related court renovations, Harding Park, Lake Merced, Youth Guidance Center, and various neighborhood improvements. I realized that if Treasure Island were developed properly, it could yield tremendous revenue to the City, so I accepted the position. I knew I could accomplish more than I could in four years as the Lone Ranger on a left-leaning Board of Supervisors with a weak Mayor. Little did I realize that the Mayor's biggest monetary donors were in line to be gifted the exclusive right to develop the Island without public review, engaging in the mandated process of bidding, or even being held accountable for the millions that they already owed the Project. When I questioned these sacred cows, my reputation was attacked and the Mayor orchestrated my ouster by another one of his handpicked Boards.

Treasure Island was, and is, in reality just another "dream" that Newsom "spins" to the public while exploiting it as personal political capitol. The project remains a decaying junkyard that even the Navy has refused to go along with. On reflection, Newsom successfully maneuvered me off the Board of Supervisors, to silence the only moderate voice that scrutinized him from the other side of the political spectrum. My foolish mistake.

When I opposed "care not cash" as a supervisor, I felt Newsom was exploiting the homeless issue as a politically expedient campaign tactic. As I predicted, it would gouge the taxpayer and would not work. Today, we are spending over 2 billion dollars per year to provide the "care" that was formerly costing 200 million dollars for the exact same number of homeless individuals roaming our streets in 2004. The homeless are no better off now than they were before. Now they are imprisoned in a never-ending cycle of induced dependency for city services, without any "cash" and we still have panhandlers.

Newsom moved on to exploit the LGBT community. Same sex marriage was never an issue in San Francisco's live-and-let live atmosphere. It became another campaign tactic for Newsom in his quest for higher office. The resultant Prop 8 now pits neighbor against neighbor in never ending court battles while Newsom searches for his next exploitation.

Our city budget is 3 times what it was 5 years ago when Newsom took office, 10 times higher than it was 10 years ago, and is projected to be at least 600 million in the red for next year, with no change in population.

Exploitive spin for political expediency does not pay the bills. This era of political exploitation will end when we elect officials who want to serve the common good rather than their own careers. Knowing how to "fix the city" would be a bonus.

The immortal 12th century poet Dante Allighieri said it best: "The hottest places in hell are reserved for those who maintain their neutrality in a time of great moral crisis."

Tony Hall is the former Supervisor for District 11.

COMMUNITY

West of Twin Peaks Central Council

NEWS AND VIEWS...

The West of Twin Peaks Central Council (WOTPCC) meeting on Monday, January 26th kicked off the New Year, and was noteworthy by its speakers as well as a rather small crowd.

Following the approval of the November minutes, and the Treasurers' report Supervisor Sean Elsbernd addressed the room with information about the current fiscal situation at City Hall and detailed how the Board of Supervisors will be voting (on 1/27) on several resolutions revolving around having a special election on June 2nd. Elsbernd felt that it was a very good possibility that the resolution would not pass, as it would be difficult to garner the 8 votes needed to approve it. Most likely the probable tax increases would be pushed to a November vote in order to give the politicians more time to try and sell the merits to the 67% of the voters that need to approve any new taxes.

An alternative does exist where the Board could vote 11-0 to declare a "fiscal emergency." This would reduce the vote margin needed to enact to 50.1% (a simple majority). Both the Supervisor and Mike Farrah, of the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services didn't think this avenue would be undertaken.

They both discussed the facts that of the City's \$6 1/2B budget 50% are tied in entitlements (Police, Fire, Health Dept., etc.) that cannot easily be changed.

Matt Chamberlain followed by giving an update on the process to complete the 2009 Housing Element document. At this point the CAB is having their last meeting on 1/28, and a draft of the 2009 Element is expected to be completed by the end of February, followed by 2 months for public comment and an expected date of June for the final document to be forwarded to the State. His notes can be found on the WOTPCC website at www.WestOfTwinPeaks.org.

Three guest speakers addressed the attendees for the remainder of the evening. Phil Ting, the Assessor and Recorder, for the City and County of SF gave a spirited talk on the role of his office (basically providing a valuation or all real property within the city; and managing and recording all of the recorded documents and licenses that are filed with the city government, such as Titles, Liens, Marriage Certificates, etc.)

He detailed the state of the office when he took over of having a 5 year backlog where new and revalued properties were not being taxed for 5 years after transfer. This deprived the city of needed tax revenue. Ting reported that his staff has now whittled the backlog down to 11/2 to 2 years, while bringing in an additional \$260M into the City's coffers. One of the other pledges of his office is to close the loopholes that allow commercial and corporate property owners to skirt taxes and transfer charges.

Following Ting, Mike Kritzman of the Neighborhood Parks Council spoke on workshops to be held throughout the city to gather neighborhood feedback on open space planning issues. The city is attempting to work with neighborhood groups and individuals to map out a short term and long term (100 year) vision for the management of San Francisco's open space priorities.

There will be a Miraloma Workshop on March 4 from 6-8 PM at the clubhouse located at 350 O'Shaunessey.

The final speaker of the evening was Mike Farrah, from the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services. Farrah handed out a power point presentation that highlighted the fiscal challenges facing the City. With 400 layoffs and 700 positions eliminated, he feels that SF is moving in the right direction, but stills need to do tough work as the projected deficit in 2010 is estimated to be over \$570 M. He also feels that the WOTPCC and other neighborhood-based groups need to be more involved in the decisions that City Hall is making through active participation and creating "face time" at City Hall by showing up and speaking their feelings about taxes, the budget, etc., even offering his office number as a starting point to call to make your feelings known and to get involved.

It is important for the neighborhood groups and associations to be involved at these meetings as it is often times the best method to show support or disapproval of policies that are being enacted by the City Hall folk.

Next Month, newly elected Supervisor, and President of the Board of Supervisors, David Chiu will address the gathering. Mark your calendars for Monday, February 23rd, 7:30 PM, at the Forest Hill Clubhouse.



Treasurer Phil Ting

Upcoming Open House Event

101 Uses of Essential Oils in Everyday Life



Sat, Feb. 28, 2:30 to 4:30 PM
Curves, 608 Portola Dr

Come by and expect to get your hands "wet" while experiencing the oils first hand!

RSVP Sharon Caren 650.359.6579
The Westside Observer's Health Columnist

Parkmerced featured in “Marvels of Modernism “ Exhibit

The design and gardens of Parkmerced have been selected as a premier site for The Cultural Landscape Foundation’s exhibit —“Landslide: Marvels of Modernism”.

The Cultural Landscape Foundation, the only not-for-profit foundation in America, is dedicated to increasing the public’s awareness of the important legacy of cultural landscapes and to helping save them for the future. “Marvels of Modernism” opened at the George Eastman House International Museum of Photography and Film in Rochester, NY, in November 2008 and remained at the Museum until Mid-January 2009. Since January the exhibit has been traveling across the country, sponsored, in part, by San Francisco design and furniture firm, Design Within Reach.

Of the 12 sites selected, the Bay Area figured prominently, with the gardens of “Parkmerced”, off of 19th Avenue, and the “Kaiser Roof Gardens” at the Kaiser Center in Oakland featured in the exhibit.

The description that accompanies the photo by Tom Fox, featured in the TCLF’s exhibit, describes the gardens. “Parkmerced was designed as a city within a city by architect Leonard Schultze and Associates with planning and landscape architecture by Thomas D. Church with Robert Royston. Its revolutionary site plan artfully melds individual housing units on pie-shaped blocks, vehicular



and pedestrian traffic, and a large central circle covered by a lush tree canopy. Today it is one of this country’s four remaining examples of large-scale, post-World War II urban planning. Unfortunately, there are numerous threats to the design, including plans by San Francisco State University and a private developer to subdivide the property, and recent re-planting and redesign of its historic traffic circles.”

The aerial photo by photographer Mix shows the unique and intricate design that encompasses Parkmerced, one of the largest planned rental communities in the Western U.S.

POLICE
BLOTTER

Police Captain
Paul Chignell,
Taraval Station



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

Alert: Robbery Series

The Taraval District has been experiencing a number of burglaries where suspects enter residences through rear windows or rear sliding glass doors. Be on the lookout for subjects in suspicious vehicles and subjects walking on sideyard pathways. Please call us at 911 if you see any suspicious activity. You are our eyes and ears---we need your help to catch burglary suspects.

Alert: Robbery Series II

A series of robberies have occurred in the Taraval, Ingleside and Bayview. There have been at least six robberies reported since December 9, occurring during the hours of darkness.

The suspects approach the victims as they are exiting their vehicles on the driveway, entering their garage, or have the garage door open. The suspects (Cont. on p. 15)

KOPP (Cont. from p. 1)

case, no party affiliation) we are Americans, and there is no more breath-taking, felicitous and sentimental moment than the installation of a president for a four-year term. I was tearful, thinking of my immigrant WWI father, Mara’s Latvian roots and her two-year residency in a displaced person’s camp after WWII in the British sector of Germany and the educational, social and economic benefits our country has bestowed on all of us. Moreover, I heard not an unkind word during our entire 5 days in Washington. Instead, we were uniformly greeted by friendly strangers and Metro employees who exercised devoted care to ensuring proper Metro service for us every day. The experience was extraordinary. Reflect on the fact that not a single arrest was recorded at the inauguration, that about one million rides occurred on the Metro that day, all without incident or injury. Now, we convey our warm wishes for, not simply improvement of economic conditions, but the good and welfare of all Americans, based upon the wisdom, the patience, the endurance and the intellectual honesty of our new President and his appointees.

Although one wouldn’t know it from the daily newspapers, administration of criminal justice and law enforcement appears to have suffered in San Francisco in the post-election era. Sadly, on January 4, San Francisco’s Most Holy Redeemer Parish was defaced. A spray-painted message was discovered the next day leading the Chief of Police to urge vigilance concerning threats, suspicious packages and other “hate-based acts.” No apprehension of responsible persons has occurred. There has, however, occurred baffling efforts by the City’s Assessor to contrive inter-Archdiocese transfers of various real estate holdings as “change of ownership” so as to impose on the Roman Catholic Church high levels of reassessed property taxation. As an almost singular supporter in 1978 of Proposition 13 among all then-elected public officials in San Francisco, and a one-time State Senator who devoted legislative effort to ensuring proper rules respecting true changes of ownership of real property, I was struck by the Assessor’s effort almost as if it represented financial punishment of the Roman Catholic Church arising from election activity. As readers know, Proposition 13 protects homeowners from the ravage of “paper profits” on their residences, residences whose value has suffered in the past year sizeable diminution, unless a residence is actually sold. Proposition 13 also expressly provides for reassessment of property to its sale price in the event a residence is actually sold to a different party. The legislature extended the benefit of Proposition 13 to the purchase of property in other counties after sale of a residence, depending on whether a county desired to grant such benefits. San Francisco, for example, grants such benefits; thus, if you sell your home in SF, and buy a new home, the assessed valuation of your former home applies to your new home. Paper transfers occurred among Archdiocese properties. The inevitable result of the City Assessor’s transparent punitive action will be litigation. Litigation costs money. Taxpayers sustain the cost of litigation if the Assessor

loses, as seems likely. Pity also the City Attorney who will represent the non-prevailing Assessor in such law suits.

Another sad disregard of history occurred during January. In November 2007, Board of Supervisors and Mayor submitted to voters a Charter Amendment consolidating transit and transportation activity under the Metropolitan Transportation Agency (MTA). That meant the Taxicab Commission would be merged in the MTA. As a matter of history, in June 1978 as a member of the Board of Supervisors, I effectuated a ballot measure, commonly known as Proposition K, which reformed the issuance of taxicab permits. In short, it treats taxicab permits as the public assets they represent, establishes a requirement that only a genuine taxicab driver can obtain a permit, charges that driver a modest fee based strictly upon the cost of processing his application, bars corporate ownership of a taxicab permit and imposes minimum annual driving requirements on all owners of permits.

In response to the expressed concern of many taxicab drivers and interested persons, on October 3, 2007 the Mayor and the then President of the Board of Supervisors stated in writing, that “the will of the voters” on taxicab issues, meaning Propositions K’s provisions, would be respected. In fact, Mayor Newsom stated in writing that while his intent was “to put all forms of public transit (including taxis) in the hands of professionals, it is also the goal to respect the will of the voters on Taxi issues.” He added: “we are not supportive of an effort to merge the Taxi industry unless proper guarantees are made to protect Proposition K.” He added in an letter to the executive director of the MTA and the executive director of the Taxi Commission: “Please keep our desires not to tamper with the intent of Proposition K in mind as you examine ways to streamline operations and develop a strategic business plan for this merge (sic).” Yet, some 15 months later, Mr. Newsom proposes that taxicab permits be auctioned by the City for \$100,000 or more, claiming that taxicab permit buyers would still be subject to the annual driving requirements of Proposition K and its consequent ordinances. How many taxicab drivers can afford to buy a permit at \$100,000 or more? Yet, an elected public official who memorializes a promise and then attempts to eviscerate it under the guise of an “auction,” would return the taxicab permit process to pre-1978 venality and allow doctors, stockbrokers, financial consultants, lawyers, business executives and corporations to own taxicab permits and lease such permits to plebian drivers? Apparently history means nothing compared to expediency.

Quentin Kopp is a former San Francisco Supervisor, State Senator and currently Judge.

World Famous
Original
“Irish Coffee”

the
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PHYLLIS' FINDINGS

By Phyllis Sherman

It was lovely watching Obama and Michelle's beautiful dancing to Glenn Miller's "At Last"...a special favorite of mine.The inauguration left the whole country glued together emotionally, one big American ball of hope. He's hired an impressive group of competent Cabinet choices to help with the monumental tasks ahead. A BBC poll in 17 nations found that an average 67 percent believed that President Obama would improve America's relation with the rest of the world: just 5 percent thought the opposite (or maybe feared that if they seemed critical of George W. Bush, they would be waterboarded) Everyone was impressed with Mr. Obama's inclusiveness in his address...he even embraced atheists..only Thomas Jefferson did that once upon a time. Let's hope the new President can remake America in a vastly different direction than previously.

On a vastly different subject, but closer to home...I've read that more traffic tickets are issued during a recession as local gov'ts look to offset drops in sales and property-tax revenue, according to a study in the Journal of Law and Economics that looked at 14 years of data from 97 counties in North Carolina and elsewhere. Researchers say it's reasonable to conclude that when times are tough, gov't officials tell police that they need more ticket revenue. To corroborate that data, a friend of mine was driving on Dolores Street late at night a few weeks ago and came to a red "stop-and-go" light. He slowed down and then continued but was stopped almost immediately by a police siren. Apparently, he should have stopped completely and did not. I could not believe that the penalty was \$488. And if he goes to traffic court, there's another \$40 due.

The New York Times last week reported from San Francisco --"Amid the din of naysayers who insist that newspapers are on the verge of death, a new company wants to start dozens of new ones --with a twist."

The Printed Blog, a Chicago start-up, plans to reprint blog posts on regular paper, surrounded by local ads. and distribute the publications free in big cities.The first issues of this Internet-era penny-saver will appear in Chicago and San Francisco this week. They will start as weeklies, but Joshua Karp, the founder and publisher, hopes eventually to publish free neighborhood editions of the Printed Blog twice a day in many cities around the country. "We are trying to be the first daily newspaper comprised entirely of blogs and other user-generated content," he said. "There were so many techniques that I've seen working online that maybe I could apply to the print industry."

"As pay newspapers lose readers to the Internet, where they can read the same articles without charge, many free papers have held their own" .He continues that the free newspaper business is still very workable as there's a huge readership that wants the local news, and local businesses tend to increase their advertising in bad times because they have to capture people's attention. He's still aware of the difficulties of being successful in the newspaper business these days. The Tribune Company, which publishes The Chicago Tribune and its free daily, RedEye, filed for bankruptcy protection in December. Some free papers have even started charging for the paper because of falling advertising and the rising costs of ink and newsprint.Mr. Karp expects that each issue of his new paper will be distributed twice a day to 1,000 people. It sounds daunting and It will be interesting to see how things develop.

ENTERTAINMENT. There's a brief overview of a few films I enjoyed recently: THE READER with Kate Winslet and Ralph Fiennes is an Academy Award nominee for Best Picture...very worth while for the sensitive movie-goer. Clint Eastwood does a double job of both acting and directing GRAN TORINO. DiCaprio and Kate Winslet in REVOLUTIONARY ROAD. It's directed beautifully by Winslet's husband, Sam Mendes. Meryl Streep is as amazing as ever as a tough nun in DOUBT. Philip Seymour Hoffman priest. DEFIANCE, Daniel Craig &Liev Schreiber act in a true story of the Bielecki partisans who fought the Nazis and rescued hundreds of Jews through the darkest years of war and genocide. Gripping and challenging. THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON with Brad Pitt is another contender for best picture and worth seeing although I doubt that it will win top honors. SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE or MILK with Sean Penn will probably take the honors...both exceptionally deserving.

Theater-wise, RICH AND FAMOUS written by John Guare can still be seen at ACT until February 8th and it's lively and over-the-top. And, thinking ahead: one of the best dramas I've ever seen will be at Curran Theater in August. Estelle Parsons (at 81 years of age) is fantastic in Tracy Letts' Pulitzer and Tony-winning the demanding role of the formidable mother in "AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY." You won't easily forget this one.



SECOND THOUGHTS

When Bad News Leads to Good News

by Jack Kaye

We have had so much bad news lately that it is hard to remember that most positive change comes from unfortunate situations.

Recently we have had a spike in oil prices. They went from under \$50 a barrel to almost \$150. Gas at the pump went from being less than \$2 per gallon to well past \$4.50. This sharp increase fueled by speculators caused shock waves in our economy. People who had bought gas guzzlers were feeling the most pain. Their valuable pleasure crafts sank in resale value and new models of behemoths were not selling, hurting our automobile manufacturers who ignored the need for economical family sedans in favor of more profitable pickup trucks including those dressed up as SUVs.

The speculators who believed that oil would go over \$150 a barrel bought options not caring about hurting the economy for everyone else, have lost their newfound fortunes and then some now that oil is below \$50 a barrel again. Now finally we may have gotten the message: conserving is better than wasting; thinking only about ourselves is not as good as seeing the whole picture.

The American automobile industry which has ignored our need for conservation and opted for easy profit is now begging for help promising to reform its ways with CEOs offering to take \$1 a year salary instead of their previous eight figure annual compensations.

Something similar happened to the finance sector of our economy. The greed, arrogance and resultant blindness of bankers, hedge fund managers and mortgage brokers caused the crash of our mortgage markets as well as of the banking institutions that were laying side bets on their shaky loans. Here too the CEOs went begging for help promising to reform and to cut back their outrageous salaries and ill-deserved golden parachutes.

Something similar happened in the political arena. One party that has dominated this country for eight years ruled with dishonesty, arrogance and the resultant blindness. Their ill-conceived war has cost us trillions of dollars, caused the premature violent death of more than 100,000 people and a loss of good will around the world. The party was soundly defeated not only in the presidential election but also in the legislature. The party is in shambles and if it is to have a future, it must dramatically change its positions and attitudes on many issues affecting its constituents.

Something similar is also happening to the very rich.

They have depended on rising stock and real estate prices for their wealth

and its growth. Those who also got outrageous salaries and bonuses feared that the new administration would deprive them of their unearned wealth. Now, many of them have much less of it to worry about. The days of multi million dollar salaries and bonuses or easy, insider profits may be coming to an end. And good riddance.

Then what will be left of our American dream? The dream of becoming rich beyond all imagination may be fading. The feeling that we are better than others and have a right to squander our wealth with large homes, expensive cars and frequent trips to exciting destinations is being challenged. As is the attitude that we can tell other countries and their people how to live, threatening to invade them to set them right.

What will be in their place? Could it be that we will once again be more self-reliant, using American workers to provide American goods and services without out sourcing to foreign workers or insourcing with illegal, imported ones? Maybe we can produce beautiful and efficient cars, stylish clothing, healthy food, and work toward a cleaner more decent environment. Maybe the incredible distance between the haves and the have nots can be dramatically reduced. Maybe we will stop importing, producing, selling and/or buying cheap lousy merchandise as well as the overpriced status-oriented needless mark-ups that so many of us have aspired to. Maybe we will stop building huge mansions and stop being slum landlords of run-down places for the less fortunate.

If, in fact, our country can be moved toward the middle ground away from ambitious greed and toward practical progress for a better life for everyone, then all our current suffering will be a blessing in disguise, a wake-up call for meaningful change.



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FEBRUARY CALENDAR

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FEBRUARY 1-7

Fri. Feb 6 | 7-11pm Cliff House Friday Night Jazz in the Balcony Lounge

FEBRUARY 8-14

Fri. Feb 13 | 7-11pm Cliff House Friday Night Jazz in the Balcony Lounge

Fri. Feb 13 | 7pm Clear Body/Mind Lecture on the effects of drugs, toxins, radiation and pollution on the mind, personality, confidence, emotions and the state of well being. Church of Scientology, 2501 Judah St.

FEBRUARY 15-21

Tues. Feb 17th | 7pm Monthly Police/Community Meeting at Taraval Police Station, 2345 24th Ave.

Tues. Feb 17th | 7pm Community Police Academy, a 15 week program that meets once a week and is designed to inform and teach interested participants various aspects of municipal Policing

Tues. Feb 17th | 7pm Author Jonah

Inquisition (Cont. from p. 1) uncovered a sweetheart deal with Darius Anderson and his Kenwood Investments group as the sole developer for the island, and when he objected the Board came up with some nonsensical charges against him and he was fired after 14 months.

When Hall announced he was running for Mayor against Newsom a couple of years ago, the news was leaked somehow from the Ethics Commission to the San Francisco Chronicle that there was a serious investigation going on into Hall's past campaign finances, and Hall decided to drop out of the race. When he considered challenging Sean Elsbernd in his recent District 7 reelection, the same tactic was applied. Finally, in a series of absurd hearings, the biggest charge against him from former aide Olivia Scanlon (who went on

Lehrer will discuss his book *How We Decide*. He will detail how we make decisions and the decision making processes from a wide range of "deciders." BookShop West Portal, 80 West Portal Ave. Info: 564-8080

Fri. Feb 20 | 7-11pm Cliff House Friday Night Jazz in the Balcony Lounge

Fri. Feb 20 | 7pm How to handle stress. Attend a free 1 hour lecture on finding the reasons behind your stress. Church of Scientology 2501 Judah St.

FEBRUARY 22-28

Mon. Feb 23| 7pm West of Twin Peaks Central Council Monthly Meeting. Board of Supervisors President David Chiu will address the gathering. Forest Hill Clubhouse, 381 Magellan Ave.

Tues. Feb 24 | 7pm Film critic and historian David Thomson will talk about his memoir *Try To Tell The Story*, a haunting and unsentimental memoir of growing up an only child in South London in the '40s and '50s. Bookshop West Portal, 80 West Portal Ave. Info: 564-8080.

Thus. Feb 26 | 7pm Author Jacqueline Winspear will read from *Among the Mad*. her portrayal of post WWI England (1931) closely aligns with our present day world in the novel, her sixth Maisie Dobbs mystery. Bookshop West Portal, 80 West Portal, 564-8080.

to work for Sean Elsbernd) came under deep suspicion when two different versions of the same check appeared, one with "Services" in the memo line and one without any notation.

Joe Lynn, who worked for the Ethics Commission from 1998 to 2003 and then served as a commissioner from 2003 to 2006, has written a scathing review of his old haunts. He is now advocating that the half million a year in the enforcement division be taken away from the commission altogether since it seems to be a complete waste of money. My suggestion would be first to get rid of commission director John St. Croix who seems to visibly ooze corruption.

Michael Strickland aka SFMike to the many readers of his blog at www.sfcivic-center.blogspot.com

TAXES (Cont. from p. 1)

\$1.2 billion discretionary budget may be cut in half.

THE PROPOSED TAXES: Many of these tax funds may be specifically earmarked to help public health or the city general fund.

01. A possible increase in the sales tax; the increase not to exceed 0.5% for a total tax rate of 9%. *COMMENT: This sales tax will affect all San Francisco citizens and will be punitive to the poor, elderly and people on fixed incomes. San Francisco's already ailing retail sector will continue to suffer as shoppers buy products through the Internet and outside of the city. This so-called temporary tax will be around for a long, long time.*

02. A possible increase in the payroll tax, the increase is not to exceed 0.2% for a total tax rate of 1.7%. *COMMENT: Many San Francisco businesses will either reduce employees or move out of the city if they are able to.*

03. A possible new residential utilities users tax, not to exceed 7.5%. *COMMENT: This punitive tax will compliment the exorbitant water rates that single-family homes are now paying. Due to the lack of water meters in multi-unit buildings, homeowners are already paying three or four times the water rates that multi-unit tenants pay. Everybody loses on this one.*

04. A possible increase in the commercial utilities users tax, the increase not to exceed 2.5% for a total tax rate of 10%.

05. A possible new parcel tax, not to exceed \$300 for a residential parcel and \$1,000 for other parcels. **SPECIAL WARNING TO HOMEOWNERS:** *A parcel tax is the worst and most unfair tax that can be placed on your home. The city's 67% renters do not have to pay this tax at all. The owner of a downtown building worth \$100 million will only be paying \$1,000 annually in parcel taxes for this property. The city renters and the Chamber of Commerce join forces to*

place this tax on homeowners. **ABSOLUTELY NO PARCEL TAXES.**

06. A possible new gross receipts tax on residential rental income, not to exceed 0.127%

07. A possible new gross receipts tax on commercial rental income, not to exceed 0.127%

08. A possible new gross receipts tax on all commercial transactions, not to exceed 0.1%

09. A possible new surcharge on the parking tax, the surcharge not to exceed 5% for a total tax rate of 30%

10. A possible amendment to Charter Section 9.113.5 allowing the city to appropriate up to 100% of the current balance in the Rainy Day Reserve, not to exceed 20% of the projected deficit, in years in which a budgetary deficit of \$250 million or more is projected. *COMMENT: This is like borrowing from your retirement fund to buy a brand new car.*

11. A possible new charter amendment that would cap all set-asides at their Fiscal year 2008-2009 levels, allow the City to reduce its contributions during budgetary shortfalls, and provide that year-end surpluses be returned to the General Fund. *COMMENT: This will impact the voter-mandated set-asides for the police department, libraries, children's services and the symphony.*

San Francisco's homeowners are already paying more than their fair share of taxes. It is not a good idea to increase homeowners taxes while property values are falling, investments diminish and personal incomes decline. The average city employee makes over \$6,000 more per year than the average resident, not including benefits. There is one city employee for every 26 residents and over 8,000 city government employees making over \$100,000 per year. Now is a good time to cut unnecessary local government, reevaluate city programs and reduce city spending.

Stern Grove Cleanup

On Monday, January 20th, in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. and National Service Day, a team of volunteers from Just Because Gift and Card Shoppe joined Supervisor Sean Elsbernd and other volunteers to help clean up Stern Grove. Raking leaves and piling them into trucks brought a spirit of accomplishment to the group. "It felt great to volunteer and even better to do it in one of the neighborhood's greatest treasures!" said Cynthia Pagan, owner of the retail shop.



Allison, Meredith, Cynthia and Michelle rake it in as the Just Because Clean Team!

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NOW AT THE MOVIES

by Don Lee Miller

THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON

Remarkably, Brad Pitt’s face is super-imposed on numerous other bodies to age him from his 80s back to an infant. When Button’s in his 30s and 40s it’s all Brad, even on a motorcycle. He’s born old and ages backwards! At the right ages, he hooks up with his love, Daisy: Cate Blanchett, a ballerina. Taraji P. Henson portrays the woman who raises Benjamin in New Orleans. All three are superb in their immersion into their characters. Julia Ormond is the daughter of Daisy and B.B. who hears their love story from her mother’s hospital bed. Tilda Swinton plays a fling of B.B. in Moscow. 167 min. Warner Bros. Paramount

Awards nominee: Best Picture: 13 Oscars, Brit. Academy Film (11 noms.), Producers Guild of America. Best Director: Oscar, Directors Guild of Am. Best Adapted Screenplay: Oscar, Writers Guild of Am. Best Screenplay: USC Libraries Scriptor Award. Best Actor: Pitt: Oscar, Sup. Actress: Henson: Oscar, Ensemble: Screen Actors Guild.

THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL

Keanu Reeves is well suited to play Klaatu, an alien, with his emotionless line delivery and unchanging facial expression. Jennifer Connelly portrays Helen, the scientist who believes him, and Jaden Smith, her adopted son, Jacob. John Cleese is her professor father. Kathy Bates as the acting U.S. President is strident. Jon Hamm portrays Michael Granier and Kyle Chandler, lab asst. John Driscoll. Director Scott Derrickson remains fairly faithful to the 1951 classic; most of the filming was done in British Columbia. (Also in IMAX.) 20th Century Fox 103 min.

DEFIANCE

Four Jewish Belinski brothers: Tuvia: Daniel Craig, Zus: Liev Schreiber, Asael: Jaime Bell, and Aron, the youngest: George MacKay escape in 1941 from Nazis and, with other resistance fighters, build a safe town in the Belarussian forest. How they ingeniously survive the

bitter winter and get food and medical supplies makes for a fascinating film. Eventually, their village will number over 1,200 who are fleeing the oppression. Violence, profanity. 137 min. Paramount Vantage

Oscar nominee: Original Score: James Newton Howard

DOUBT

Principal at St. Nicholas Catholic school in the Bronx, Sister Aloysius: Meryl Streep, suspects Fr. Flynn: Philip Seymour Hoffman of abusing Donald, a black student new to the school. She tries to win the alliance of his teacher, Sister James: Amy Adams before speaking to Donald’s mother: Viola Davis. With no proof, only her moral certainty, Sister Aloysius locks horns with Fr. Flynn to have him ousted. John Patrick Shanley (Oscar winner for Moonstruck) adapts his controversial play for his screenplay and directorial debut. 104 min. Miramax

Awards winner: Critics Choice Award: Best Actress, Meryl Streep. Awards nominee: 5 Oscar noms.: 4 Acting, Adtpd. Scrnplay., 5 Screen Actor Guilds noms.; 3 BAFTA noms. incl. Best Actress

FROST/NIXON

David Frost: Michael Sheen, in 1977 a lightweight British TV interviewer, gambles on getting deposed Pres. Richard Nixon: Frank Langella for a series of TV interviews by raising \$600,000 to pay the prexy. How Frost turns the uninteresting, controlled dialogues into a history-making revelation is the crux of this film directed by Ron Howard. Both actors deliver brilliant performances. Kevin Bacon plays Nixon’s right hand man. Profanity. Focus 122 min. Universal, Image, Working Title

Award winner: Satellite Award: Best Screenplay, Adapted: Peter Morgan

Awards nominee: Oscar & Golden Globe: Best Dramatic Picture, Best Actor: Langella, Best Director: Ron Howard, Best Screenplay: Morgan

GRAN TORINO

Clint Eastwood as Korean War vet, Walt Kowalski, a widowed Detroit ex-auto worker is the most crochety neighbor one could imagine, very intolerant

of his new neighbors from Hmong. Director Eastwood delivers his tough love story with fine work from Sue: Ahney Her and Thao (whom Walt calls Toad): Bee Vang. When they are attacked, Walt gets revenge in a unique way. Profanity, violence. 100 min. Warner Bros.

Awards winner: National Board of Review: Best Actor: Eastwood; Orig. Screenplay: Nick Schenk; One of the Top Ten Films of the Year.

MILK

Director Gus Van Sant’s Harvey Milk: Sean Penn transforms himself into the gay San Francisco supervisor. Dan White: Josh Brolin delivers a riveting look at the misunderstood killer. Scott, Harvey’s first lover: James Franco; activist Cleve Jones: Emile Hirsch; and Harvey’s unstable second lover: Diego Luna round out the excellent cast. Written by Dustin Lance Black, the concentration is on Milk’s San Francisco (locally filmed) transition from camera store owner to supervisor/activist. Nudity. 128 min. Focus

Awards winner: Best Actor: Sean Penn: Boston Society of Film Critics (also Director, Screenplay); New York Film Critics Circle; L.A. Film Critics Assn.; Southeastern Film Critics (also Best Picture, Screenplay, Original). Best Supporting Actor: Josh Brolin: NY Film Critics Circle; National Board of Review

Awards nominee: Best Actor: Sean Penn: Golden Globe.

THE READER

Kate Winslet stars as an ex-Nazi concentration camp guard brought to trial. More recently, she has worked as a maid for the wealthy Berg family whose son, Michael: David Kross, grows up to become Ralph Fiennes. Rather than reveal a personal secret, Hannah is willing to take the blame for the deaths which are ordered at the camp. Winslet and Fiennes are both in top form under Stephen Daldry’s direction. Frontal nudity, profanity. 123 min. Weinstein Co.

Awards winner: Golden Globes: Best Sup. Actress: Kate Winslet

Awards nominee: Oscar & BAFTA: 5 noms. incl. Best Picture, Actress: Winslet, Direction,

Multiple sets by Bill English from a courtroom to a pie shop to a corn field and to scenes that require spaciousness for numerous characters dancing and moving about are both playful and well conceived.

Victoria Livingston Hall’s costumes of the multiple Abraham Lincolns in black period suits and top hats is charming along with simple attire that suits the characterization of each.

This timely play that relates to our current election of an African American president and the dissention over Prop 8 touches upon social, religious and financial issues. It is also a twentieth century mix of farce, satire, sentimental romance, politics, audience participation, dance, and an innovative way of fusing all of these elements.

Next up at the SF Playhouse is John Guare’s *Landscape of the Body*. Jan. 31-March 7.For info. 415-677-9596 or www.sfplayhouse.org-*Annette Lust*

Second Wind’s World Premiere of “Meadowland”

In “Meadowland” we have two parallel stories. The first story involves two brothers: one who chose a more righteous path to become sheriff of their small town (sensitively played by Leon Goertzen) and the younger, more rebellious sibling who marries his brother’s childhood love and then joins the Army to find bigger adventures (played with a spirit of fun by Arthur King).

The younger brother has already been dead for two years. The exact nature of his death a mystery. Unwilling to move on from his world, he has proven to be something of a pesky spirit until he brings his brother an unsolved murder, a retelling of the Roshomon story of a murder and a rape of the murdered man’s wife which is told from three different points of view.

Ian Walker’s imaginative staging

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Adtpd. Scrnplay., Cinematography

SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE

An orphan, Jamal (grown): Dev Patel, in Mumbai rises from hardship to fame as the winner on India’s version of Who Wants to Be a Millionaire, while trying to unite with his lost childhood sweetheart, Latika (grown): Freida Pinto. His best friend, Prem: Anil Kapoor, grows up to become a gangster. Two more actors portray each of the three leads at younger ages. Seldom does a film leave one feeling so good that you exit dancing. Partly in Hindi with subtitles. Violence, smoking. 120 min. Fox Searchlight

Awards winner: Golden Globes: Best Drama, Director: Danny Boyle, Screenplay: Simon Beaufoy, Original Score: A.R. Rahman. Critics Choice Awards: Best Picture, Dir., Writer, Young Actor: Dev Patel, Composer: Rahman. 8 Critics Groups: Best Picture.

Awards nominee: 10 Oscar, incl. Picture, Dir., Adtpd. Scrnplay., Cinematography, Score, 2 songs. 9 Guild noms. 11 BAFTA noms, incl. Best Picture.

THE TALE OF DESPEREAUX

Relocate Ratatouille to a 15th century castle and have really ugly, scary rats drawn who even kidnap Princess Pea (voice of Emma Watson) and plot to eat her. Her mouse friend, Despereaux (voice of Matthew Broderick), is alone trying to rescue her. Other voices include Roscuro: Dustin Hoffman, Miggery (her handmaiden): Tracey Ullman, and rats: Kevin Kline, William H. Macy, and Stanley Tucci. 94 min. Universal

Award: Film Advisory Board Award of Excellence

VALKYRIE

As Col. von Stauffenberg, the leader of a group of the inner circle who plot to assassinate Hitler, Tom Cruise delivers a thoughtful, great looking performance. The decision to not have anyone attempt a German accent may hurt the believability of the film. Other conspirators include Major-Gen. von Tresckow: Kenneth Branagh, Gen. *Cont. p. 11*

involves the use of four major playing areas--Meadowland, where the Roshomon story takes place is below the stage, right in front of the audience. He makes an interesting use of levels for the rest of the set.

There is a good contrast between the two stories. The story involving the two brothers and sister in law is at a conversational level, while the Roshomon story is like a Greek tragedy complete with costumes and masks which are lit effectively.

For info about future Second Wind productions, call 415-508-5614/ www.secondwind.8m.com*Flora Lynn Isaacson*

Glengarry Glen Ross: the Life of a Salesman

On the 25th anniversary of its U.K. premiere, Ross Valley Players opened “Glengarry Glen Ross” by David Mamet on Friday, January 16, 2009. Winner of the 1984 Pulitzer Prize, this explosive drama follows four small-time real estate salesman in Chicago pushing plots of worthless land on reluctant buyers and trying to make a living by any means necessary, from lies and bribery to threats and intimidation. The language of these con men and losers defined the Mamet style, creating a kind of grubby “Death of a Salesman.”

A great deal of high praise should also go to the experienced director, James Dunn, who has been directing and teaching theatre arts for 48 years. Under Dunn’s direction, all of these actors give convincing performances and capture the rhythm of the language and meld into a true ensemble.“Glengarry Glen Ross” plays at the Barn Theatre, Marin Art and Garden Center, in Ross January 16 through February 22.

Tickets: www.rossvalleyplayers.com 456-9555.*Flora Lynn Isaacson*

THEATER

By Dr. Jean Lust and Flora Lynn Isaacson

Lunatique Fantastique ‘s Wizardry Is Back in Town

Liebe Wetzel’s newest version of her popular *Wrapping Paper Caper* at the Marsh, incollaboration with and directed by Jeff Raz, is enriched with dramatic elements such as the use of words and vocal sounds and acrobatics, clowning and miming by her found object characters. And all the while her piece has preserved its original imaginative charm and freshness in a unique fantasy world peopled by inanimate objects that come to life.

As the black silhouettes of the puppeteer animators take their places behind a long table before us, imagine a light jacket (that the animators rapidly shape into a body), a hat and a magnifying glass lying there that rise up from the table to become Sherlock Holmes brandishing his magnifying glass. The puppeteers animate him and other characters created from Xmas wrappings, silverware, bread rolls, and everyday items. In the puppet theatre of **Lunatique Fantastique** one’s imagination is sparked because characters, props, and sets are cleverly created from so little. Children as well as adults are drawn into the inventive antics of these fantasy creatures born from familiar objects. We leave Lunatique Fantastique wondering if the chair on which we were sitting or the glass we held in our hand do not caper about when our heads are turned.

Lunatique Fantastique will be back in the Bay Area at the San Francisco Marsh in the Spring and Summer with **Executive Order 9066**. Info: www.Lunfan.com. *Annette Lust*

Abraham Lincoln’s Big Gay Dance Party Brings Freedom To Choose One’s Mores

Aaron Loeb’s (the esteemed playwright of **First Person Shooter**) play

about Abraham Lincoln begins with a scene in which three elementary school children interpret forefathers Thomas Jefferson, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln divulging the truth about Lincoln having on a certain occasion shared a bed with another male. “Who was I” asks the child playing Lincoln-“ a saint, gay, or a liberator?” “Totally gay!” he concludes. The audience is then asked to vote for the order in which it chooses to see the play performed, “liberty” “house divided” or “power”? A majority votes for “power” to begin the spoof on Lincoln’s lifestyle in a complex intrigue that revolves around an anti-gay senator (Joe Kady) in Menard County, Illinois. The latter attempts to keep the children in the county from being corrupted by information about gay sex, particularly in respect to the morally intact historical image of Abraham Lincoln. A trial follows over the culpability of the teacher (Lorraine Olsen) with the senator’s hard fast opponent running for governor defending the teacher. The teacher decries her innocence by declaring that children need to know the truth.

Directed by Chris Smith, former Artistic Director of the Magic Theatre where he helmed the introduction of a number of new works, the piece, in spite of the overwritten text and complex development of dramatic action, is lively and innovatively presented and put together. It is enriched by the mix of movement and dance choreography of Kimberly Richards and Tom Segal that has a chorus line of Abraham Lincoln’s brightening the stage and bringing satirical fun and cheer to the ensemble

Acting credits go to Velina Brown as a tough Republican senator running for governor and the role of the exotic Latino fashion photographer who makes sensual advances to the innocent senator’s son.



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86 Aquavista Way	2	2	2	923	11/26/08	\$727,000
58 City View Way	3	1	2	1,150	12/19/08	\$795,000
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BUSINESS CORNER

Now is the time to Shop Locally

by Mitch Bull

In a departure from our monthly highlight of one local merchant, this month we take a look at our local retailers in general and discuss why it is more important than ever to support and shop locally.

The “Westside” of the city is fortunate to have a diverse mix of locally owned retail shops within walking distance of our neighborhoods. West Portal Avenue, Taraval Street, Ocean Avenue, and 19th Avenue provide many opportunities to support our locally owned stores and restaurants. Most of the stores are small businesses, owned by people we know, or can connect with. They value their businesses and help to form the fabric of living in SF.

When shopping or dining we are most often dealing directly with the owners (or family members) working in the shops. They are knowledgeable of their products and provide helpful and personal service that the large box retail locations or chain stores and restaurants cannot match. A common complaint is that the small stores are more expensive than the “big box” because they cannot buy in the same volume. In some cases this is true, but when one looks at the true cost of retail, the pricing equation is not as clear.

In articles presented by the International Council of Shopping Centers it is expected that over 150,000 store locations will close this year and many will be smaller independent retailers although the big box sellers are not immune, as we have seen with the recent bankruptcies of Linen and Things, Mervyns, and Circuit City.

When we shop at larger chain stores, the stores are part of a larger corporate that doesn’t generally use local services such as architects, planners, suppliers,

etc. They are “cloned” from cookie cutter designs and the profits generated are almost always exported to out of state headquarters.

In contrast, independent stores typically spend much of their profits locally, give back to the local communities, and create jobs for local, planners, suppliers, accountants, ad agencies, and other service providers.

As reported in the January 4 edition of the San Francisco Chronicle, a 2007 study in San Francisco by Civic Economics detailed the premium that cities receive from local ownership. The study found that dollars spent at independent businesses yielded 3X local economic benefit and created about 80% more jobs than those spent at chain store competitors.

Another problem is the unfair “advantage” that online suppliers have over “brick and mortar” businesses. We, as consumers, avoid sales tax for items bought on the web from companies outside California. Although it saves each of us money, is it doing more harm by contributing to California’s shortfall by denying the state a chance at sales taxes, and creating an atmosphere where local business owners have an uphill battle just to survive.

If, as consumers, we value the ability to walk to a local store, interact with local merchants, and maintain the retail portion of our unique neighborhoods then maybe we should forego the car trip to Home Depot, Marshall’s, or Petco and instead walk up the block to Papenhousen Hardware, Little Fish boutique, or Sunset Pet Supply.

In the end, we all benefit from a vibrant, local retail economy. It’s good for our neighborhoods, San Francisco, and California.



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SHARON THE HEALTH

Matters of theHeart

by Sharon Caren

Every year on February 14th, we reach out to our friends and loved ones, sending cards, flowers, and chocolates in the name of St. Valentine. Have you heard the Valentine story?

It's said that in the Third Century there was a Priest named Valentine of Rome. At that time the Emperor Claudius was ruling and wasn't very popular. He wanted to build a huge army and expected men to volunteer. Married men didn't want to leave their families so not many signed up. The Emperor was furious and decided he'd disallow any new marriages. He felt the men, being single, would volunteer. The young people rebelled at the cruelty of this new law and so did Valentine. His favorite activity was to marry couples and even after the law went into effect, the Priest kept performing marriage ceremonies in secrecy. He was finally caught and thrown in jail with the punishment of death. The young people loved Valentine and came to visit him, throwing flowers and notes up to his window. One young girl, a prison guard's daughter, was allowed to enter Valentine's cell where they talked for hours at a time and kept up his spirits. On the day of his death, February 14th 269 AD, he left a note of gratitude and appreciation for her friendship signed, "Love from Your Valentine". Nothing really stands in the way of Love, does it?

On this special day we think of ways to bring happiness to the ones we love; a Valentine card, Chocolate, Roses....

Chocolate—the comfort food

Chocolate, composed of 300 chemicals, has numerous and varied effects on our bodies through the nervous system. Eating chocolate increases the levels of endorphins released in the brain and also affects serotonin levels. Endorphins work to lessen pain and decrease stress in the body. Serotonin is known as an anti-depressant. The chemical tryptophan found in chocolate causes the release of serotonin. A unique neurotransmitter released by chocolate is phenyl ethylamine and is called "chocolate amphetamine". It causes changes in blood pressure and blood sugar levels leading to feeling excited and alert. Like amphetamines, it increases good moods and decreases depression without the same addiction level. Phenyl ethylamine found in chocolate is also called the "love drug" as it quickens the pulse like when we "fall" in love. Chocolate brings feelings of well-being,

euphoria, relaxation and has been used as an aphrodisiac. With all the mood-enhancing qualities, can it be an addictive substance? Scientists think not and feel chocolate effects people how they believe or hope it will. Am I encouraging you to eat chocolate as a healthful diet (no) or eat it instead of using pharmacology (maybe)? If you like it, enjoy in the name of St. Valentine for a day.

Roses – 35 Million Years Old!

Greek Mythology tells us Chloris, the Goddess of Flowers, created the rose but it was Aphrodite, the Love Goddess, who gave the rose its name. If love could be defined in one symbol, it would be the rose. In Roman times, roses were used as confetti in celebrations as well as for medicinal purposes. During this time of the worst excesses in the Roman Empire, Emperors filled swimming baths and fountains with rose water and sat on carpets of rose petals for feasts and orgies. In the Seventeenth Century, royalty considered roses or rose water as legal tender and was

often used as barter and for payments. Throughout history no other object has played such a significant part in romance as the rose. Until the Nineteenth Century, all roses in Europe were shades of pink or white. Our romantic symbol of the red rose first came from China around 1800. The Essential Oil of rose has the highest energetic frequency of all the oils. It takes many, many pounds of organic rose petals to distill one ounce of pure therapeutic grade rose oil. This means cost is high but it's said the healing powers of rose oil, especially for the heart, are phenomenal. 100% pure therapeutic grade essential oils are used in 3 ways; topically, diffused and internally. My absolute favorite gifts; roses and rose oil!

Taking Care of the Heart

Heart disease is the leading killer of both men and women in the U.S. says the American Heart Association. They estimate about 71 million Americans have some form of heart disease. The most common is hypertension (high blood pressure) and next is coronary artery disease. These 2 conditions contribute to more than 7 million heart attacks every year and high blood pressure is a leading contributor to the 5 million strokes occurring annually. Promoting heart health is a complicated issue but here are some basics. It's important to know family history but heredity is an uncontrollable factor. Some controllable factors are diet and exercise. Making healthy choices for a balanced diet of complex carbohydrates, healthy fats and lean protein is important for overall health. Also, a high-fiber, low-fat diet rich in

HEALTH & WELLNESS

fruits and vegetables is associated with higher levels of protective cholesterol and reduce risk for heart attack. Also, adequate intake of vitamins and minerals also helps the heart. Regular exercise can't be overstated, as the benefits are profound; lowering blood pressure, reduce body fat and lower risk of diabetes, which reduces risks of heart attack and stroke. Also, life style changes such as not smoking and limiting alcohol intake will improve heart health.

Speaking from the Heart

Another component of a healthy heart is being in a state of appreciation or gratitude. This is a factor we have control over and the by-product is healthy and loving relationships. Communicating true feelings to the people in our lives creates respect, honesty and love back at us. Some ways to practice this is to simply say, "I appreciate you for (fill in the blank)" and do it on a regular basis. It becomes a way of life and easier the more we do it. Try an Essential Oil of Gratitude to help in the process. Of course, the non-verbal ways are much fun to add; leaving little unexpected notes, extra hugs, winks and blowing kisses...the thoughtful gifts of love...flowers and chocolates. Make this February 14th the day for an open, loving, healthy heart!

If you have interest in learning more about the benefits of Rose or Gratitude Essential Oils, please call me at 650.359.6579 or email sharoncaren@comcast.net

Upcoming Open House Event 101 Uses of Essential Oils in Everyday Life

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Complementary Community Outreach Educational Program
Research used:

Chocolate on the Brain by Kristen Coveleski
University of Illinois Extension – Roses
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For more Sharon Caren, go to our website: www.westsideobserver.com

Twin Peaks Curves to Offer Free Weight Management Classes

The Twin Peaks Curves location on Portola Drive will be offering free weight management classes to teach people its proven method to lose weight and increase your metabolism.

The classes include a 90 minute "Start Up" class for first-time participants, and a 30 minute "Phase 3" class which teaches the most important stage of the Curves weight management plan.

Other classes will include special topics such as Smart Grocery Shopping, Choosing the Right Carbohydrate, Eating Out, Emotional Eating and more.

Classes will be taught by Curves' Registered Dietitian, Nadia Rodman, and facilitated by weight management coaches from the Portola Drive location, through a series of DVDs that alternate teaching and hands-on activities. All participants will be encouraged to make a weekly appointment to weigh-in with their weight management coach.

"We're excited to be offering free weight management classes," said Bonnie Farrell, owner of the Twin Peaks Curves. "This dynamic program and the book are brand new and packed with cutting-edge information and lots of practical advice that women can use immediately. Every woman who is thinking about losing weight should check out the free classes."

The classes will be on both the 3rd Saturday of each month at 1 PM, and on the 3rd Tuesdays beginning at 7 PM.

For more information contact Bonnie Farrell at Twin Peaks Curves – 415.759.9103, or at TwinPeaksCurves@gmail.com.

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ON THE PLUS SIDE

Pink Feathers

by Hank Basayne

There were precious few jobs available in the San Francisco area when I arrived. It was 1948. I was 21, somewhat brash and optimistic, knew no one in the Bay Area, and had fled the East Coast to get as far from my family as I could without getting wet.

Broadcasting had fascinated me since I was about 10. During my last two years of college in New York I had actually been hired by CBS as the first male mail-boy after the war. CBS by day, school at night. So, in my innocence, I was sure I could find a revenue-producing spot for myself in radio, TV, advertising or journalism.

I did all the usual things: want ads, employment agencies, some cold-calling. Nothing. There was no Craig's List in those days. One month I actually earned \$15, writing and tape-recording a speculative ad for a beer company. Their ad agency took pity. They didn't use the spot, but they did send me a check and an encouraging note.

Desperation—and the threat of starvation—are powerful pitchforks poking one's rear. After a long dry spell and more negative responses than I can count, my longed-for flash of inspiration struck! Since I wanted a writing job my goal was a berth as a promotion writer. But rather than writing job-seeking letters and risking more rejection, I decided to promote myself as if I were a product.

I carefully selected five targets in my desired fields: a newspaper, a brand new television station, two ad agencies and a radio station. I researched the names and addresses of the decision-making executives at each of them, then embarked on a week-long, anonymous direct mail campaign. On Monday each of them received a 3 by 5 card from me, without name or address or anything identifying myself, saying, "I'd be tickled pink to work for you" with a pink feather attached. On Tuesday, they received another card with a small cog-wheel pasted on, with the words, "I'd be a valuable cog in your organization." Wednesday the card read "Don't get stuck, play it safe, hire

me" with safety-pin attached. And for Thursday I scotch-taped two pennies on each which said "I don't give two cents who knows it: I want to work for you."

Friday's card had a dime taped to it with nothing but my phone number. (Can't remember whether phone calls were a nickel or a dime back then, but I attached the proper coin). The following Monday I received five calls.

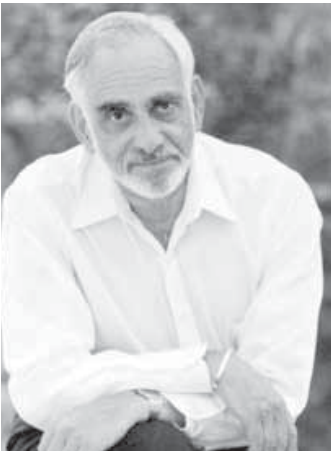
One of the ad agency guys threatened to sue me for the time wasted by his staff, waiting for each day's mail. Then he invited me to lunch. The other four each set up interviews with me. And those connections resulted in three firm job offers.

Radio station KQW had just been bought by CBS and changed it's call letters to KCBS,

The executive in charge of hiring asked if I could keep busy for four months and then he'd hire me as Promotion Writer for the station. How, I asked, did he know he'd have a job available in four months? "Because the person holding the job now is pregnant", he answered. I found a low-paying job writing ads for a San Jose radio station (miserable commute—there was no freeway then—and at the end of four months I was a member of the KCBS staff. That position launched an 18-year career with CBS, where I ended up as a program executive, hiring new talent, inventing programs, managing the on-the-air staff.

My point? In hard times, with massive layoffs and high unemployment, it's not enough to pursue the usual paths to a job. We are all more creative than we know. We all have untapped reserves of imagination. Sometimes it takes extreme difficulty—or even desperation—to jog us loose from our set ways. But demonstrating to a prospective employer that you can help solve its problems, showing your uniqueness, going beyond the limits we so often set for ourselves, can pay off big time.

If you, or your child, or your grandchild, or a friend is job hunting, looking for work and feeling discouraged, tell them this story. It may help generate that necessary flash of inspiration, your own pink feather to help you create what you desire.



Movies {Cont. from p. 7}

Olbricht: Bill Nighy, Gen. Fromm: Tom Wilkinson, Major Remer: Thomas Kretschmann, General-Col. Beck: Terence Stamp, and Gen. Fellgiebel: Eddie Izzard. Bryan Singer directs with a good sense of action; much of the filming was done in Germany. Violence and brief strong language. UA, MGM 115 min.

THE WRESTLER

Randy, 'the Ram': Mickey Rourke, an over-the-hill wrestler, reveals how far they go to 'thrill' their audience. Self-induced razor blade cuts were too much to tolerate; staples from a staple gun into

the flesh weren't any more appetizing. How this film won an award for anything other than inducing a nap or a run for the exit amazes me; patrons walked out throughout the film. Marisa Tomei as Cassidy, the stripper-girl friend shows more than most would for a role. Evan Rachel Wood as his neglected lesbian daughter, Stephanie, has a thankless part. Profanity, nudity, wrestling violence. 125 min. Fox Searchlight

Awards winner: Golden Globes: Best Actor, Drama: Mickey Rourke; Original Song: sung & written by Bruce Springsteen.

Awards nominee: Actor, Sup. Actress: Tomei: Oscar. Best Picture: BAFTA

Letter (Continued from p. 2)

argument and have it printed? Or that you can't shorten the two-and-a-half months lead time to some shorter period, in which I'd be eligible to submit a paid argument (for or against) in a shorter period of time?

May I suggest that you need to get a hold of President Obama, and quickly. After all, San Francisco values do not condone curtailment of free speech.

Perhaps he has a lesson you might learn early in your Board presidency, if only you'd stop Citizen Peskin from whispering in your ear.

Eliminating free speech is not a San Francisco value, President Chiu, that you want dogging you the rest of your political career, is it?

Not-so-respectfully submitted,
Patrick Monette-Shaw

The Rule of 5's
for a
Happy Valentine's Day!

- ① Call *Petals* to place an order for a beautiful bouquet one week ahead. P: 682-8590
- ② Shop for unique cards and gifts, like personalized sterling silver jewelry, at *Just Because...*
- ③ Go to *SHAWS* for the perfect box of chocolate for that perfect someone.
- ④ Stop in at *West Portal Spa* for a gift certificate of pampering for that special someone... good for men too!
- ⑤ Dine at any one of the *Avenue's* many great restaurants on Saturday, February 14th!

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EDUCATION

OMG! Another Bad Budget 4 Kids :-(

By Carol Kocivar Copyright 2009

Sometimes I think Yogi Berra lives in Sacramento.

How else do we explain yet another budget proposal to cut billions of dollars from schools and children's services?

"Déjà vu all over again?"

A Sacramento Senior Moment???

Is there something in the water up there that causes people to forget our basic responsibility to children?

Just as *Education Week* announces that California has dropped to 47th in the nation in per pupil spending, a budget proposal comes along that makes 47th look good—cause we are heading for dead last!

Parents said they were "*Mad as XY@#!*" when just a couple of billion dollar cuts were proposed the last time for our schools.

Stand back folks. The proposed cuts now reach \$10.8 billion over the next 18 months.

Join me in texting the following to Sacramento: **9 P911 PA PAL PAW**
(Ok. Okay I had some help on this):
9= Parent is watching
P911=Parent Alert

PA=Parent Alert
PAL_ Parents Are Listening
PAW= Parents are Watching
The Message:
Our responsibility to children cannot be cut in bad economic times.
The smartest economic recovery plan for California is to invest in children.

We must find a balanced approach to the budget crisis that includes **sufficient new revenues** to protect children and the future of California.

These budget cuts threaten an entire generation of children. They devastate schools and colleges. The cuts will *totally* change public schools in California as we know them. Here is just a short list of what is on the chopping block:

- Small class size
- Arts and Music
- Science programs
- Sport programs
- Counselors
- Librarians
- Instructional Materials
- Bus Transportation
- Teachers
- Para Professionals
- Health services
- And more...that is the really scary thing!

Cuts of this magnitude fail the basic test of good government. They hurt our children.

Healthier, Cheaper and Better: How to go Non-Toxic When Cleaning Your Home

By Jorge Lee

Common household cleaners that are sold to consumers today are largely harmful to your health, and can be potentially deadly to children and pets if ingested . The runoff from these cleaners pollutes and degrades the environment. Yet with all of the focus on "green" initiatives in San Francisco, little attention is being paid to going non-toxic while cleaning your home. Making your own non-toxic cleaners at home out of basic ingredients found in most supermarkets is simple, inexpensive and will make your home significantly healthier for you and your family.

Perhaps the most disturbing fact about standard cleaning products is that most of them can be harmful during use, even when the application directions are followed exactly. Labels only tell you if the ingredients are poisonous, flammable, caustic or irritating. Danger from long-term inhalation and skin exposure, the most common methods of exposure for consumers, are very rarely mentioned.

Chances are you know how bleach smells. Yet it is important to remember that any time you inhale toxic fumes the toxicants go directly into the bloodstream and travel to organs such as the brain, heart, liver and kidneys. Immediate effects can include headaches, muscle aches and lightheadedness. The consequences of many repeated exposures to small amounts of chemicals over a long period of time, cancer, birth defects and genetic changes, may not show up for years.

The mixing of cleaners is particularly dangerous. When mixing ammonia (a common ingredient found in products such as all-purpose cleaners) with bleach, toxic chloramines gas is released. This gas is similar to the poisonous gas used in World War I. Many individuals use all-purpose cleaners for their shower walls and bleach for their tubs, inadvertently creating a

gaseous enclosure while cleaning their bathrooms.

Many of the "green" cleaners on the market are socially responsible, but are priced much higher than their non-green alternatives. "Making your own" is much more financially efficient and quite simple to carry out.

The following are a few simple recipes for making household cleaners:

All Purpose Cleaner:
Add 1 tablespoon of liquid soap (castile soap is preferable), ½ cup of vinegar, 2 teaspoons of borax, 15-20 drops of essential oil and hot water into a sprayer and mix until ingredients are dissolved.

Window Cleaner:
Fill a spray bottle with club soda and add 15-20 drops of essential oil for a fresh smell.

Tub and Tile Cleaner:
Rub baking soda using a damp sponge and rinse. For tougher jobs wipe surfaces with vinegar first. (Note – vinegar can break down tile grout).

Air Freshener:
Fill a mist sprayer with vinegar and add 20 drops of essential oil. Will absorb odors as well as leave a pleasant smell.

Furniture Polish:
Add 2 teaspoons of olive oil, 15-20 drops of essential oil, ¼ cup of white distilled vinegar and hot water to a spray bottle.

Not only will switching to a non-toxic cleaning lineup create a healthier living space for you and your family, it will also significantly reduce the toxins entering our outside environment. Encourage friends and families to make the switch and together we can continue San Francisco's tradition of being at the forefront of sustainability.

About the author: Jorge Lee is the Founder of Marin House Cleaning LLC, a non-toxic house cleaning company service to the residents of San Francisco and Marin counties.

City CarShare Expands to West Portal and Daly City!

Can you imagine life without the costs and headaches of car ownership? Since 2001, the Bay Area nonprofit City CarShare has made it possible for tens of thousands of Bay Area residents to give up their cars and still have access to a car when they need one. With new locations popping up in West Portal and Daly City, City CarShare is able to reach a larger demographic and give more people the option to be reduce the hassles of car ownership while improving the environment.

Now seven years strong, City CarShare's fleet has grown to over 300 cars that are shared at more than 160 locations in San Francisco and beyond. City CarShare has been looking for a spot near the West Portal Muni station for years. "We have been a bit frustrated but we never gave up," said Kelly Gilliam of City CarShare. "We tried every business, gas station, city lot and alleyway we could find to no avail for almost two years."

Fortuitously, a community-oriented resident near the West Portal Muni station recently offered a prime parking space only a few minutes walk from the train and bus depot. Now, even City CarShare CEO Rick Hutchinson has access to a car near his home in West Portal. "We live in one of the greatest neighborhoods in San Francisco and now we have access to car sharing, too," he said. Westsiders want to help reduce congestion and improve the environment. Car sharing is part of the solution."

Last August, City CarShare reached another new neighborhood, so Westsiders now have easy access to a car via Muni or BART. This "pod location" at the Daly City BART station serves the local neighborhood and public transit riders. Expanding near transit lines like BART – City CarShare is at or near 20 stations in the Bay Area - makes it easier for members to access any of City CarShare's 16 vehicle types. Now, people who need to go south of San Francisco can bypass traffic by taking BART to Daly City then pick up a City CarShare vehicle for the last leg of their trip.



The concept behind City CarShare is simple. It allows you to reserve and use a variety of unattended vehicles by the hour, whenever you need one. Vehicles can be reserved 24/7 for as little as 15 minutes or for days at a time. Member's only pay for how much they drive and gas, insurance and maintenance are always included. Members reserve a car, get in and go. Once you're a member, you have access to City CarShare's entire fleet, which includes hybrids, trucks, capacity vehicles and even Mini Coopers.

With every City CarShare vehicle replacing up to 15 other cars according to a University of California, Berkeley study, city parking problems and congestion are decreased. City CarShare members drive less and increase their use of alternate modes of transportation like biking, public transit and walking. In fact, with more efficient driving habits, City CarShare members collectively saved 25 million pounds of CO₂ in 2008. Not only is this convenient transportation mode eco-friendly, but it also saves members thousands of dollars each year. City CarShare members pay an average of \$50 a month, compared to \$600 to \$700 a month that AAA estimates San Francisco car owners shell out.

Click below to see City CarShare locations (pods) near you.

West Portal: *Claremont & Allston*
Forest Hill: *Portola & Woodside*
Excelsior: *Phelan & Ocean, Balboa Park*
BART
Daly City: *Daly City BART*

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Garden Corner

BLESSING OF RAIN

by Hilary Gordon Photos by Blair Randall, 2008

December brought the blessing of rain, and a few cold nights; just enough to let the plants know that it is wintertime. In our microclimate, the year is like the proverbial snake eating its tail. Fall's colorful leaves still persist as the first spring blossoms make a tentative trial. In just a few short weeks, we'll see our first plum blossoms, and then the year will unfurl again, as it has so many times before.

But this year brings change, and not just on Inauguration Day. During the end of the twentieth century, drought in California was news. Water rationing came, but mostly went. Gardeners let their lawns go brown, and carried water from the shower in buckets to their favorite roses and rhododendrons. Then, we mostly just waited for water rationing to go away again after a year or so. (Photo: Matilija Poppy)

Now, because of population growth, urban sprawl, and climate change, water rationing is beginning to look like a semi-permanent situation. Housing developers, agriculture, and wildlife protection all compete for the scarce drops of water, and home gardeners must stand in line with everyone else. Many of us will need to "retool" our gardens for a new reality.

One of the most important tools in our toolbox is called 'hydrozoning.' Just as the garden is divided into sunny and shady areas, with appropriate plants in appropriate places, it can also be divided into irrigation zones, such as completely non-irrigated areas, areas with occasional deep summer watering, and areas with regular water. For this to work, plants with similar water needs must be grouped together, just as sun-loving plants are grouped together in a south facing border while ferns and fuchsias gather in the shade.

If part of the garden is designated a "no irrigation zone," perhaps a sloping area, or the back or side of the garden, this area can be planted with California natives, or non-thirsty plants from other similar climates zones where a half-year drought is nothing unusual. This garden area will reward you with bursts of color in the winter and spring, as our annual rains stimulate the growth cycle of these plants. During the summer, they will stay neat while dormant and



discourage weeds which would otherwise grow there. It makes sense that native plants from the S.F. Bay Area or nearby parts of California, will thrive in our unamended soils and with the weather conditions provided by nature. But some of these plants can also give fabulous blooms and garden effects that make them classy performers anywhere. Some examples are California Lilac (Ceonothus), Flannel Bush (Fremon-todendron), California Sagebrush (Artemesia californ-ica), and Matilija Poppy (Romneya coulteri).

Equally good in unwatered plantings are tough customers from similar climate zones all around the world where they have evolved to thrive with mild wet winters and cool, dry summers. Some of the top performers are Leptospermums and Grevilleas from Australia, and Leucadendrons and Phormiums from South Africa. Consider also plants from the Mediter-ranean such as Rosemary, Lavenders, and Rockroses.

The next part of the garden can feature plants that benefit from a occasional deep watering during our annual drought, but that don't mind going dry in between. Think about creating a transition zone between the completely unwatered background areas, and those that receive regular water and attention, which are probably closer to the house. Because these plants are sustained by occasional deep watering, they can extend your garden's beauty into the summer and fall months. They can be useful as well as beautiful.

This would be the perfect water zone for a plant-ing of culinary herbs such as Sage, Thyme, and Oreg-ano. (Annual herbs like parsley and basil belong with the vegetables in the regular watering area.) Many other fragrant and lovely plants will perform their best under these water conditions. They actu-ally don't want their soil constantly moist and will benefit from drying out between waterings. Some of these plants are the cornerstones of the perimeter border here at the Garden for the Envi-ronment, and some of

GREEN IDEAS

them bloom without stopping all year around. They include Copper Canyon Daisy (Tagetes lemonii), Tree Mallow (Lavatera bicolor), and many dramatic Sages, including Salvia mexicana.

The final section of the garden will receive regu-lar watering; here are the vegetable and annual flower beds, and the fruit trees along with a few prized orna-mentals such as the rose from grandma's garden or the white azalea which reminds you of home. By con-centrating irrigation water where it will do the most good, and grouping plants together that need a moist soil during the summer months, we can save water and money while still getting great results from our plantings.

For those of us with established gardens, this is a great time of year to look over the garden as a whole, and make some decisions that will save water next summer and for the future. The rainy season is the best time to transplant old favorites into new garden spots, or to plant out new purchases. Many ornamen-tal trees, fruit trees, and roses are available bare-root now, and it is an excellent time for planting. Many natives and other drought tolerant plants are best planted in the fall as the rains first begin, but that chance is gone for this year, and now is the second-best time, with days beginning to get longer and many months of moist soils still ahead. Those of us who are just getting started with a garden, have the advantage of planning hydrozones from the beginning, and can put each plant in the watering zone it prefers.

Any plants transplanted to new locations in the garden, or newly planted out, will need irrigation in the summer months ahead, even if they will eventu-ally be drought tolerant when established. The first few years in the ground, even drought tolerant plants need regular, deep watering, in order to get a strong deep root system established. If you reorganize your garden this winter to hydrozone, keep a close eye on transplanted and newly planted friends. Don't let them wilt. Keep them growing this summer and next, and they will reward you with many years of beauty for years to come, without running up your water bill.

Pick a sunny day and stop by the Garden for the Environment at 7th and Kirkland to see these and many other wonderful plants doing their best to woo you. We are there Wednesdays 10-2 and Saturdays 10-4, and we would be glad to show you some of these plants, and share some hydrozoning tips.

Hilary Gordon is Perennial Plants Collection Man-ager at the GFE. A life-long gardener, trained at the City College Horticulture program, she has worked as a professional landscape gardener from 1984 until the present. Question for Hilary? Meet her in the garden Wednesdays 10-2 and Saturdays 10-4.

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Blood Clots/Stroke — They Now Have a Fourth Indicator, the Tongue *STROKE: Remember the 1st Three Letters....S.T.R.*

If everyone can remember something this simple, we could save some folks. Seriously.

STROKE IDENTIFICATION:

During a BBQ, a friend stumbled and took a little fall — she assured everyone that she was fine (they offered to call paramedics). She said she had just tripped over a brick because of her new shoes.

They got her cleaned up and got her a new plate of food. While she appeared a bit shaken up, Ingrid went about enjoying herself the rest of the evening

Ingrid's husband called later telling everyone that his wife had been taken to the hospital - (at 6:00 pm Ingrid passed away.) She had suffered a stroke at the BBQ. Had they known how to identify the signs of a stroke, perhaps Ingrid would be with us today. Some don't die. they end up in a helpless, hopeless condition instead.

A neurologist says that if he can get to a stroke victim within 3 hours he can totally reverse the effects of a stroke... totally. He said the trick was getting a stroke recognized, diagnosed, and then getting the patient medically cared for

within 3 hours, which is tough.
RECOGNIZING A STROKE

Thank God for the sense to remember the '3' steps, STR. Sometimes symptoms of a stroke are difficult to identify. Unfortunately, the lack of awareness spells disaster. The stroke victim may suffer severe brain damage when people nearby fail to recognize the symptoms of a stroke.

Now doctors say a bystander can recognize a stroke by asking three simple questions:

S Ask the individual to SMILE.

T Ask the person to TALK and speak a simple sentence (Coherently) (i.e. It is sunny out today)

R Ask him or her to RAISE BOTH ARMS.

If he or she has trouble with ANY ONE of these tasks, call emergency number immediately and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher.

New Sign of a Stroke — Stick out Your Tongue. Another 'sign' of a stroke is this: Ask the person to 'stick' out his tongue.. If the tongue is 'crooked', if it goes to one side or the other,that is also an indication of a stroke.

Sudoku-fun!

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

- Rules:
- Each puzzle is a 9 by 9 grid of squares divided into nine 3 by 3 square blocks, with some of the numbers filled in for you.
- The Object:
- Fill in the blank squares in such a way that each of the numbers 1 to 9 appears exactly once in each row, column and block.
- Answer:
- The answer appears in another section of the paper.

BRAIN FOOD

The following are humorous quotes from **Part 2:** famous people in history. Can you match the quotes in Part I with the person who said it in Part 2? Good Luck!

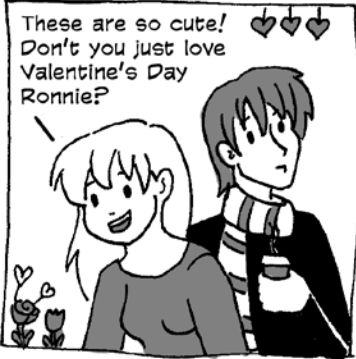
Part 1:

- “Common looking people are the best in the world; that is the reason the Lord makes so many of them.”
- “I like pigs. Dogs look up to us. Cats look down at us. Pigs treat us as equals.”
- “Put your hand on a hot stove for a minute, and it seems like an hour. Sit with a pretty girl for an hour, and it seems like a minute. That’s relativity.”
- “A classic is something that everybody wants to have read and nobody wants to read.”
- “Live in such a way that you would not be ashamed to sell your parrot to the town gossip.”
- “God heals and the doctor takes the fee.”

- Will Rogers
- Abraham Lincoln
- Mark Twain
- Benjamin Franklin
- Winston Churchill
- Albert Einstein

Answers —————>

Open Late



By Julie Behn
www.JulieBehn.com

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

Abraham Lincoln – “Common looking people...”
Winston Churchill – “I like pigs...”
Albert Einstein – “Put your hand on a hot stove...”
Mark Twain – “A classic is something...”
Will Rogers – “Live in such a way...”
Benjamin Franklin – God heals and the doctor...”

Answers



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AROUND THE TOWN...



Julie Behn and Ron Casson enjoy reading the Observer from their casita in San Miguel deAllende, Mexico. The couple, formerly of San Francisco, enjoy reading the neighborhood news and reviews ..especially since it is printed in English! There are only a few English-language papers available in SMA. SMA is a colonial Spanish city in Central Mexico, about 3 hours from Mexico City.

Are you going on a trip? Bring along a copy of the Westside Observer with you and send in a photo of you and your family and friends reading it at your favorite destination. Please include information about the trip and the names of those in the photo. Email photos and information to: mitch@westsideobserver.com, or mail it to: Westside Observer, P.O.Box 27176, San Francisco, CA. 94127.

Blotter: Cont. from p. 4

demand the victims’ money and remove their rings and watches. The suspects then enter the victims’ home and rob the family members and ransack the house. In most of the incidents two suspects have been reported, however, in two incidents there was a third suspect.

Two suspects are described as African American males, aged eighteen to twenty five years old. One suspect is 5' 10" and 160 to 200 pounds, and described as chubby. The second suspect is 6' 02" with a thin build. Victims have reported that both suspects wear dark clothing and ski masks. A black hand gun has been seen, and was used to pistol whip two victims.

Be very cautious and aware of your surroundings as you enter or leave your home. If you see anything suspicious to call 911.

Alert: Phone Scam

The phone rings, you pick it up, and the caller identifies himself as an officer of the court. He says you failed to report for jury duty and that a warrant is out for your arrest. You say you never received a notice. To clear it up, the caller says he’ll need some information for “verification purposes”—your birth date, social security number, maybe even a credit card number. This is when you should hang

up the phone. It’s a scam.

Jury scams have been around for years, but have seen a resurgence in recent months. As a rule, court officers never ask for confidential information over the phone; they generally correspond with prospective jurors via mail.

The scam’s bold simplicity may be what makes it so effective. Facing the unexpected threat of arrest, victims are caught off guard and may be quick to part with some information to defuse the situation.

“They get you scared first,” says a special agent in the Minneapolis field office who has heard the complaints. “They get people saying, ‘Oh my gosh! I’m not a criminal. What’s going on?’” That’s when the scammer dangles a solution—a fine, payable by credit card, that will clear up the problem.

With enough information, scammers can assume your identity and empty your bank accounts.

“It seems like a very simple scam,” the agent adds. The trick is putting people on the defensive, then reeling them back in with the promise of a clean slate. “It’s kind of ingenious. It’s social engineering.”

Protect yourself. Never give out personal information when you receive an unsolicited phone call.

The Great
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Survey

All of us at the Westside Observer strive to produce a monthly newspaper that delivers informative news, community information, insightful columnists, puzzles, and local advertising.

We care about what you think and what items you would like to see in future issues.

Please take a moment to read and fill out the following short survey. We will pick 2 readers as survey contest winners. Each winner will receive a gift certificate for 2 tickets to a local movie theatre.

Please rate your interest in the following items by ranking them from 1-5 with 1 being lowest and 5 being highest.

News Stories based on SF/Community issues _____

Feature stories about neighborhood people _____

Business Corner stories on our local businesses _____

Puzzles: Sudoku ; Brain Teasers ; Cartoons _____

Columnists: _____

Do you read our columnists? _____

Favorite Columnist _____

Reviews:

 Theatre _____ Movie _____

 Music _____ Restaurant _____

Would you be interested in the following?

 Travel stories _____

 Food related stories _____

 Gardening tips _____

 Real Estate Tips _____

 Financial / Legal tips _____

 Green Section/Environment _____

What would you like to see?

You can reply in 2 ways: Clip and mail the survey to:

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Or

Send an email with your answers to:
Mitch@WestsideObserver.com
Thank you and Good Luck !!

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the OBSERVER?



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Dubliner Irish Bar
Greenhouse Café
West Portal Books
West Portal Music Store
West Portal Library
Zephyr Real Estate Office

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

Stonestown Area:
Stonestown Cinema – behind Stonestown
Stonestown YMCA

Portola Ave Area:
Creighton’s Bakery - Portola Dr.
Curves – 608 Portola Drive
Mollie Stone’s Market – Portola Dr.

Sloat Blvd Area:
Aqua Surf Shop (Across from SF Zoo)

John’s Ocean Beach Café on Sloat

Taraval Street Area:
Tennessee Grill (1128 Taraval)
Trolley Cafe (1300 block of Taraval)
Parkside Library (1200 block of Taraval)
Sunset Pet Supply – (2226 Taraval)

Parkmerced Area:
Park Place Market – Parkmerced

Noe Valley Area:
Bell Market (24th and Noe)
Fresca Restaurant (24th and Noe)
MRW Hairdresser

Nail Chic on Castro at Noe
Noe Valley Library

Other Locations:
Italian American Social Club – 25 Russia Ave. – Excelsior Dist
Liberty Fitness – 3725 Noriega St.
Massage Envy – Westlake Shopping Center – Daly City
Merced Library Branch – 19th Ave @ Winston
Sunset Library – 18th Street @ Irving
Main Library – 100 Larkin St.

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