

Go Ahead and Flush!

Yasha Levine— p. 2



Sister Miriam Walsh

Laguna Honda Icon Remembered — p. 2

Good Ship Lollipop Marooned on Treasure Island

Tony Hall— p. 3



West of Twin Peaks Central Council

Discretionary Review and other neighborhood business —p. 3

Bank Pranks, No Thanks

Joe O'Donoghue — p. 5



Quentin Kopp

Will return next month

More INSIDE

Message from the Publisher	2
Forest Hill Homeowners Fees	3
Laguna Honda Delays.	5
Questions for Laguna Honda	5
Calendar	6
Movies	6
Jack Kaye	7
Police Blotter.	7
Theater	7
Business Corner	9
Hank Basayne	10
Sharon the Health	11
Sciatica -Scott Swanson	11
H1N1 Update.	11
Carol Kocivar	12
Gardening with Hilary Gordon	13
Games & Fun	14
Phyllis Sherman - Phyllis' Findings	15
Remember When?.	15

Pastoral Meadows and Groves? Paving Over Golden Gate Park

By George Wooding

Can it really be that America's "greenest city" is actually going to convert 2.5 acres of grass fields — one-half of Golden Gate Park's western edge — into synthetic turf soccer fields? The same City politicians who spawn "green" spare-the-air-days, sorted garbage recycling, bicycle plans, higher taxes, and gardens in front of City Hall are quietly promoting this completely anti-environmental, and ironically un-green, Recreation and Park Department (RPD) project.

Golden Gate Park is special and San Francisco government's selective environmentalism is hypocritical.

Even worse news for San Franciscans who believe that the western edge of Golden Gate Park should remain in a natural state, the SF Public Utilities Commission will be building a \$120 million water recycling facility sometime after 2013, which will be located adjacent to the soccer complex. The combination of the recycling plant and the proposed soccer complex should erase any pretense of the western edge of Golden Gate Park ever again being dubbed "natural."

The proposed synthetic turf soccer complex violates the SF General Plan, the Park's own Golden Gate Park Master plan (1998), and the National Register of Historic Places application (2004). All of these documents state that the western end of Golden Gate Park is to remain pastoral, characterized by meadows (real grass) and surrounded by groves of trees (real trees). The RPD's synthetic turf soccer complex will have a larger footprint (473,000 sq. ft.) than Candlestick Park Stadium.

The RPD's public project presentations only show that four synthetic fields will be built. After weeks of foot dragging by the City's Planning Department, actual project approval plans were



finally made public. The soccer complex plans approved by the Planning Department show that six soccer fields will be built, not just four. The City will add the other two soccer fields in the future. The enlarged synthetic soccer field complex will also feature 60 foot-high field lights, bleachers, new bathrooms with an adjacent concession stand, enlarged sidewalks, a maintenance building, and an expanded parking lot.

In their haste to get the Golden Gate Park synthetic fields approved, the RPD publicly misstated to several citizens groups and politicians that the synthetic turf proposal has a "California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) exemption." A valid CEQA exemption would mean that the RPD does not have to perform an Environmental Impact Review (EIR) on the project. But on January 19, SF Deputy City Attorney Kate Herrman-Stacy told the

Cont. p. 12

Will the City Have Enough Water?

By Steve Lawrence

During an El Nino winter it is perhaps an odd time to ask whether San Francisco will have enough water in the future. Yet the question needs to be asked.

During the past eighteen months developments, when considered together, suggest that serious water shortages may occur.

In Fall 2008 the technical-sounding Phased WSIP Variant was adopted by the City. This limits the City's Hetchy water system to selling no more than 265 million gallons of water per day on an average annual basis. As this is about the quantity of water our the water system now sells, the limitation essentially says that we will not permit demand for surface (river) water to grow. Instead, the City has agreed to develop recycled and groundwater sources, and to conserve more aggressively than it has in the past.

Then last Spring the City made a new agreement with its suburban water customers. While the City owns the Hetchy water system, long ago it agreed to serve customers upstream and along, or near to, its water lines. Indeed, these suburban customers take more than two-thirds of the system's water. This past Spring the City assured these customers that they could take about 190 million gallons per day (mgd) of the 265 mgd the water system is limited to selling. The balance remaining to be sold to users in the City is about 75 mgd.

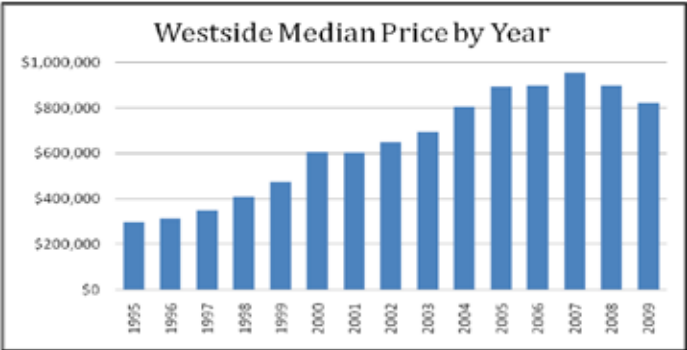
Demand for water in the City exceeds 75 mgd. Also, the City is growing. Candlestick Point - Hunters Point is to develop 10,500 units of housing; Treasure Island is about to build thousands of units; Park Merced is upsizing by 5700 units; and very possibly the Octavia corridor will add thousands of housing units as well. These are only the large developments; there are many smaller ones. Population in the City is growing and growth is expected to accelerate. This means more people to serve, and more property to protect after an earthquake.

While demand for water has been declining in the City, due to more efficient appliances and a felt need to use water wisely, the declines are considered unlikely to continue. San Francisco's population is aging as well as growing.

To bridge the gap between expected demand and available water supply, the City is developing groundwater and recycled water sources. Recycled water will be used for irrigating, for example in Golden Gate Park where groundwater is now used. That will free up groundwater, which will then supplement the drinking water we get from the Hetchy system.

But there are questions about groundwater. At a meeting held

Cont. p. 4



Westside Special Report Real Estate Holds Its Value

By Jed Lane

How is San Francisco real estate holding up? This question is asked at gatherings everywhere, especially after news stories reporting 25 and 30 percent monthly reductions in "San Francisco" property valuations. Does that mean that every house in San Francisco has lost up to a third of its value? No, it doesn't.

In these conversations, the median price is usually used. Median price represents the mid-point of all the sales in a given period. Tracking the median price over time is a perfectly valid tool, in order to see past trends. However, it doesn't reflect the value of any particular piece of real estate, except the one property that happened to be in the middle of the pack during that period.

If you've spent any time in sales, you've heard the adage that value or price is arrived at when a ready and willing buyer makes the purchase. My first training in the strength of this adage was as a teenager working part time at Kermani's Persian Rugs on West Portal. A Persian rug's value is completely dependent on the perceived desirability of the piece by the buyer. Kermani knew that value is a moving target, and he was a master at building the desirability and adjusting his own valuation to complete the sale. Building perceived value and using excellent negotiation skills are the keys to maximizing the sale price or minimizing the purchase price.

The homes on the Westside continue to be very desirable. First, San Francisco is a world-class city, and we enjoy a central location, comfortable neighborhoods and well-built houses. Over time, our homes will continue to appreciate in value, primarily because of the location but also because of the strength of our neighborhoods. The house my parents bought in Forest Hill Extension in 1960 for \$30,000 was sold in 1987 for \$89,000. The family that bought it lived there until 2005 and sold it for \$1,300,000. We are very fortunate to have good homes in well-maintained neighborhoods that attract buyers who are ready and willing to buy.

So how is the market right now? Among the numbers I track on a monthly basis is the absorption rate of single-family home (SFH) sales. The absorption rate is the number of homes for sale divided by the number sold last month. The result indicates how many months it would take to absorb the existing inventory. If the

Cont. p. 13

About not flushing

Why Just About Everything You Hear About California's Water Crisis Is Wrong, Wrong, Wrong

By Yasha Levine

We've been lied to for years now about the severity of California's water shortage. The media and state officials have been ringing the alarm, warning that the state was in the grips of the quite possibly the "worst California drought in modern history," when in fact the state nearly pulled in its average rainfall in 2009. The fear-mongering is about to go into overdrive, as powerful interests start whipping up fears of drought to push through an \$11 billion bond measure on the upcoming November ballot, setting up the Golden State for a corporate water grab.

One of the big boosters promoting the drought scare is Gov. Schwarzenegger, who declared a state of emergency in early 2009, and promised to reduce water deliveries across the state by a whopping 80 percent. (<http://gov.ca.gov/index.php?/print-version/press-release/11556>)

Such a huge cutback is alarming for a state in which most of the population lives hundreds of miles away from water sources and is dependent on a gargantuan aqueduct system for basic survival. Journalists in a wide range of publications have recently seized on this juicy disaster-in-progress story, hitting their readers with heavy-handed images of drought and suffering that seemed more in line with something filed on a UN humanitarian mission in Somalia than news from the heart of California.

Has the drought really been that bad? According to the November/December 2009 issue of *Mother Jones*, yes, it has: "[F]armers are selling prized almond trees for firewood, fields are reverting to weed, and farm workers who once fled droughts in Mexico are overwhelming food banks. In short, the valley is becoming what an earlier generation of refugees thought they'd escaped: an ecological catastrophe in the middle of a social and economic one — a 21st century Dust Bowl." *60 Minutes'* recent segment on California's water crisis agreed, proclaimed: "You don't have to go to Africa or the Middle East to see how much the planet is running dry. Just go to California." *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *McClatchy's*, *the Wall Street Journal* — all have sung the same tune. When left, right, print, broadcast and mainstream media outlets agree, it has to be true, right? Well, not exactly. Here's what an end-of-the-year update published in November 2009 by the *US Bureau of Reclamation* had to say about the drought: precipitation in 2009 was about 94 percent of average in Northern California, which is the most important region for precipitation, since it is where three-quarters of the state's water comes from.

Ninety-four percent of average? That does not sound like severe drought conditions at all. But don't tell that to California's *Department of Water Resources*, which still has a huge DHS-style "Drought Condition Severe" orange alert plastered on its Web site.

The power of simple fact-checking aside, why would California officials exaggerate — if not outright lie — about the drought? Well, the issue here is less about the drought itself and more about what a drought — real or not — can help achieve. If there is one thing 2009 revealed about California's "action hero" governor, it's that he is eagerly willing to serve as the front man for the sleaziest, most crooked business cartel in the state: a de facto water oligarchy made up of billionaire corporate farmers who run vast stretches of the state like their own personal fiefdoms, exploiting migrant workers for slave labor and soaking the taxpayers for billions of dollars in subsidies every year. And like all good businessmen, they aren't letting a good mini-crisis go to waste. Their objective is to whip up fears of a drought-related calamity to push through a "solution" they've been having wet dreams about for the past five decades: a multi-billion-dollar aqueduct the width of the Panama Canal that would give them near total control of more than half of California's water supplies.

That's what the state's "historic" \$11-billion bond measure that will appear on the November 2010 ballot is all about. A columnist at the *Stockton Record* said it best: It "really amounts to an old-fashioned California water grab based on the failure to face nature's limits."

In the convoluted world of California water politics, nothing is ever what it seems. And this time, it appears that even the most well-meaning of journalists fighting the good fight fell hook, line and sinker for the propaganda spun out by California's well-greased water oligarchy. But if everyone got something as basic as the premise of California's supposed water crisis — the drought — wrong, what else did they miss? Turns out, quite a bit. With no real drought in California, a lot of the myths, falsehoods and outright lies meant to stir up the masses might no longer make sense. On the other hand, just because the state has rain doesn't mean the state can't run out water, not with the way corporate farmers are ramping up the pumping of the state's increasingly-over-tapped water supplies. So here are the top five things your BS meter should be picking up:

Myth: Urban water conservation is key in protecting California's water resources.

Schwarzenegger's mandate that urban water use be cut by 20 percent has earned the governor a lot of green cred, but few people realize that his plan for water conservation is actually a forced wealth transfer scheme in an environmentalist disguise. Conservation is a good idea, but it won't do much good for California, no matter how diligent residents are about turning off the tap while brushing or the number of low-flush toilets they install, not unless farmers are forced to conserve water as well.

It is a simple matter of discrimination. Why is the agricultural industry exempted from mandatory conservation when it consumes an unreal 80% of California's water? There won't be much conservation going on even if every living soul in California up and moves to another state. Because no matter how much water city dwellers save, it'll be sucked up by

(Cont. on p. 4)



In Memoriam:

Laguna Honda's Torchbearer, Sister Miriam Walsh

By Patrick Monette-Shaw

Sister Miriam Walsh, beloved friend, and Laguna Honda Hospital's Director of Pastoral Care for nearly 30 years, passed away December 3, 2009 in Baltimore, Maryland following an extended illness. She was 82.

Sister Miriam, affiliated with the Mission Helpers of the Sacred Heart, began her service to elderly and disabled residents of Laguna Honda Hospital in 1981. Generations of residents at Laguna Honda and their families were comforted by Sister Miriam's service, faith, dedication, and her feisty spirit. As she said at the time of her retirement in December 2008, she knew she had found her calling to provide pastoral care services when she first began volunteering at Laguna Honda 27 years earlier.

A Laguna Honda resident submitted Sister's name to the 1996 Olympic Torch Relay Committee nominating her as someone who had given generously to the community. Sister Miriam was chosen to help carry the 1996 Olympic torch through the streets of San Francisco. At almost 70 years old, she saw herself as "no spring chicken," but was tickled that no one was able to keep up with her as she carried the torch for two City blocks. My hunch is that her dedication to spiritual service gave her extra adrenaline to shine while carrying the Olympic torch (see the Fall 2003 issue of the *Magazine of Mission Helpers of the Sacred Heart* available on line at <http://missionhelpers.org/html/WhoWeAre/Fall.03.pdf>).

In 1999, Sister Miriam worked tirelessly with the Laguna Honda First campaign to gain passage of the general obligation bond measure authorizing the rebuild of her beloved Laguna Honda Hospital. She considered the authorization to rebuild Laguna Honda as a highlight of her career providing help to the elderly at LHH for even more decades to come.

Sister Miriam believed fiercely that our society has a special obligation to care for the elderly and disabled. In December 2005, she published "We Won't Abandon our 'Old Friends'" in the San Francisco Archdiocese's newsletter, *Catholic San Francisco*, quoting Pope John Paul II's Lenten message that "the care of the elderly, above all when they pass through difficult moments, must be of great concern to the faithful." Sister Miriam had already made that her life mission, and she was deeply moved when the Pope declared caring for the elderly an ethical priority.

Just as tirelessly, Sister Miriam was a founding member of San Franciscans for Laguna Honda, a committee that placed Proposition D on the June 2006 ballot to create a special use district to protect vulnerable San Franciscans at Laguna Honda following the disastrous 2004-2005 so-called "flow project," which caused massive displacement of the frail elderly out of Laguna Honda to create psychosocial programming space for younger, disruptive, and dangerous San Francisco General Hospital patients.

Just after Laguna Honda's former Executive Administrator, John Kanaley, was appointed in 2004, he summoned Sister Miriam to his office to discuss her advocacy against the flow project. I remember the Irish twinkle in her eye — for which she was famous — when she relayed to me the story of her first meeting with Kanaley. "What did Mr. Kanaley want?" I asked her. She replied, grinning ear to ear, "He wanted me to agree to a deal to keep Laguna Honda's name out of the media and wanted me to pipe down. I told him, 'No deal,' and that was the end of the meeting." Sister Miriam was never intimidated by the "powers that be."

During the decade that I was privileged to be her co-worker at Laguna Honda, she taught me that the appropriate response to injustice is to actively resist by trying to change, and not accept, the political and social environments, inaction is never an appropriate response.

In 2008, Sister published "Dying Patients Lose Spiritual Care at Laguna Honda Hospital" in the *Westside Observer*, launching a fund-raising campaign to fund a half-time Hospice Chaplain position at Laguna Honda's Hospice when City budget cuts heartlessly eliminated a chaplain position in the hospice.

Sister Miriam almost single-handedly recruited and developed a loyal cadre of over 400 dedicated volunteers who donate their time caring for Laguna Honda residents.

A funeral mass for Sister Miriam was held December 9 in Baltimore, and a well-attended memorial service for Sister Miriam was held at Laguna Honda on December 16 led by Bishop William Justice from the San Francisco Archdiocese and Laguna Honda's Spiritual Care Coordinator Bob Deel. After nearly three decades of dedicated public service to Laguna Honda, noticeably absent from the memorial service were Laguna Honda's current Executive Administrator Mivic Hirose, Director of Public Health Mitch Katz, District 7 Supervisor Sean Elsbernd, and Mayor Gavin Newsom.

Sister Miriam is survived by her brothers John Walsh of San Mateo, and Raymond Walsh of Wilmington; by her sisters Loretta Marshall of San Francisco and Sister Maura Walsh of Baltimore; and by her extended family in the Mission Helpers of the Sacred Heart.

For nearly three decades, Sister Miriam carried the torch for elderly and disabled residents. Now it's our turn to keep carrying the torch for her on behalf of LHH's patients.

Contributions see: www.westsideobserver.com/news/MiriamWalsh.html.

A Message to Our Readers

In our December/January issue we hit a nerve with some of our readers. The opinion piece by Sharon Caren on considering whether or not to receive the vaccine for the H1N1 influenza generated a large amount of telephone calls and emails.

The column elicited well thought out comments from people both in favor of the piece and against the piece. Those against felt we were irresponsible (at best) and guilty of masking an advertisement in a story by a writer without a medical degree. Those in favor of the column cited the possible "rush" to push a vaccine onto the market that may have not been tested fully for all segments of the population.

As the Publisher of the Westside Observer, I am responsible for the product that we produce and it has always been my intention to publish balanced (and diverse) views on the many topics that we cover.

I felt, as we went to press, that the piece raised some valuable concerns about the vaccine from the writer's point of view. I failed to grasp that the piece could be taken as an AMA sanctioned research document rather than the opinion and view of the columnist, who is a certified practitioner of homeopathic treatments. It was not our intention to discourage readers from consulting with their physician.

In this issue I have published the latest information from the World Health Organization (WHO) on the H1N1 virus and the available vaccination. Of course, each individual should always consult with his or her physician on all matters that concern your individual health care.

I value our writers and columnists, as well as our readers. All of us at the Westside Observer are committed to bringing news; diverse (and sometimes controversial) op-ed pieces and stories to our readers. We could have been clearer with the information that was presented in December, and for that I accept the responsibility.

As always, I encourage you to email us if you wish to comment about what we publish. Our society is fortunate to have the freedom of speech and we will continue to try to deliver a publication that you are interested in and that we are proud of.

Sincerely, Mitch Bull Publisher • mitch@westsideobserver.com

THE WESTSIDE
OBSERVER

PO Box 27176, SF 94127
www.westsideobserver.com
415 517-6331

Publisher/Editor: Mitch Bull
mitch@westsideobserver.com
Associate Editor: Alice Bull
Managing Editor: Doug Comstock
editor@westsideobserver.com
Advertising Sales • Mitch Bull
415 517-6331

Contributors: Hank Basayne, Julie Behn, Mitch Bull, Sharon Caren, Hilary Gordon, Tony Hall, Flora Lynn Isaacson, Jack Kaye, Dr. Carol Kocivar, Quentin Kopp, Jed Lane, Steve Lawrence, Yasha Levine, Dr. Annette Lust, Don Lee Miller, Sergio Nibbi, Blair Randall, Patrick Monette-Shaw, Phyllis Sherman, Scott Swanson, DC, Elliot Wagner, George Wooding.

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



Matt Chamberlain reports on the Discretionary Review revision negotiations with the planning department

By Mitch Bull

The West of Twin Peaks Central Council (WOTPCC) ended their holiday hiatus on Monday, January 25th. Twenty-five or so hearty folks braved the elements to attend the meeting, which was highlighted by speakers from both the SF Controller’s office and the SF Chamber of Commerce.

Council President Wooding opened the meeting at 7:35 PM. The minutes were approved and Treasurer Squeri gave the financial report that was also approved by the group.

Matt Chamberlain then gave an update about the possible Discretionary Review (DR) process changes that may be modified and adopted by the Board of Supervisors within the next month or so. In a positive development, Chamberlain explained that the working group supports most of the ideas put forth in the DR process revision-planning document, with the exception of two items. The first: that fees could be increased for those who are planning to file an application for starting a DR. No fee hike has been included in the revision document, it leaves the door open for increases on all fees with little approval needed from the Supervisors. The second item: to “delegate” the authority of DR review from the Planning Commission to the “Planning Commission Delegate.”

The working group has drafted a letter stating their findings and asked the WOTPCC to support them by approving a copy to be sent to the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission. The process revision document is slated to be reviewed for approval on 2/22.

Chamberlain also touched briefly on discussions regarding the Housing Element, a process to provide more Universal Notification for Permits/Projects, and a Community meeting to discuss Parkmerced planning (which was held on 1/27).

Avrum Shepard’s report on transportation focused on the new provision that gives the MTA the power to implement residential parking permits without neighborhood support or review. Characterized as a “mistake,” it got through the legislative process. The new process also allows the MTA to raise the parking permit fees from the current \$76 to \$96.

SFPD Lt. Henry Parra and Detective Sgt. Barret Chan followed next with the police report. Parra stated that the “Westside” area the crime statistics look very good, with the exception of a continued string of auto break-ins. That these types of thefts are opportunistic; if drivers take a “last look” in their cars before leaving the vehicle to ensure than no valuable property is in view, the chances of having the car broken into are decreased. Backpacks left

Cont. p. 4

Forest Hill Board Levy Surprise Fee Hike

By Steve Lawrence

January 4 the Board of Directors of the Forest Hill Homeowners Association increased members’ annual dues by 50%. Expenditures have been up for the past two years, and are expected to rise more in the future, according to the Treasurer and Board President. This year more than four times the budgeted amount has been spent on “Withholding and Employee Taxes.” The amount is more than the salary paid to the employee. No explanation was given at the meeting. More than \$7600 was spent for unbudgeted “other professional services”. “Legal services” has overrun budget. Cash on hand is just under \$209,000.

The Treasurer reported that during the last two years about \$65,000 has been drained from Reserves. One of the reasons for the 50% increase in dues is to replenish Reserves. The other reason is that spending is expected to continue to rise.

Less than three years ago a new board was elected in what was then characterized as a revolution in the quiet Forest Hill neighborhood. That Board rode in on the horse of greater transparency and responsiveness.

Only two homeowner voices were heard questioning the Board’s unanimous decision to raise the annual dues. After dues are raised they cannot be raised again for five years.

Forest Hill Assn. Responds

By Dan Kelly, President Forest Hill Association

The transition between the prior Board and the new one was not as smooth as one would have liked. There were certainly hurt feelings and both of the Association’s employees resigned with the turnover of the Board. All of the Associaton’s bookkeeping services had previously been provided by one of the employees who left, but after the 2007 election, one of the new Board members took them on. This was a mistake and several important functions were neglected, including the withholding of FICA and other taxes. We have since hired an accountant and a bookkeeper to prepare our taxes and take care of month to month record keeping. The budget for last year contains the retroactive withholdings for 2007 & 2008 for several employees, which is why this line is disproportionate. Recent Legal Service expenses were above budget because we were named in a lawsuit between two property owners and retained counsel to protect the Association’s interests in the matter. Other Professional Services included design of our newsletter, one-time accounting tasks, and other similar items. We also budgeted contingency funds for unanticipated storm damage and Clubhouse repairs, not all of which was used.

These issues, and others, were discussed at our meetings in October, November and January. Some line items were over budget last year, but others were under budget. The current year’s budget is running close to our projections; in fact, spending is slightly less than that projected up to this point.

We do try to be transparent and we communicate regularly with our members via both electronic and regular mail. Three mail notices (One letter, two Newsletter articles) were sent between October and December about the proposed increase. These same notices also went by e-mail to those members who use it for communicating with us. A modest number of comments and questions, both pro and con, were received in that time period; only two people questioned the increase at the January meeting, another sent a letter endorsing the raise. People in the neighborhood appear to appreciate the work we are doing on their behalf and neighborhood spirit is high.

No one likes a fee increase, but this one was thoroughly noticed, discussed and accepted by almost everyone as necessary. At \$.087 per square foot of property, most Forest Hill Association members will still pay under \$400/yr. and consider it a good deal.

Editor’s note: Forest Hill is one of the only non-condominium developments in the San Francisco that has an active homeowners’ association **requiring** membership of all property owners and payment of an annual fee for maintenance of the planted common areas (wikipedia.com)

The Good Ship Lollipop Marooned on Treasure Island!

By: Tony Hall / Former Supervisor and Executive Director for Treasure Island

I truly wish for the sake of all San Franciscans that there were a good, honest, realistic and forthright development project forthcoming for Treasure Island, but unfortunately this is not the case.

On December 16th, the mayor’s office held a much-ballyhooed press conference to announce that finally, San Francisco had reached an agreement with the Navy to purchase Treasure Island for the sum of \$105 million. The City will pay this amount over an unspecified period of time according to the *Chronicle*, for what Mayor Newsom termed a “Grand Vision” for the Island, replete with 3 residential high-rises for 6000 new homes, a 60 story hotel, commercial complex, marina, and believe it or not, a 40 acre organic farm! Never one to miss an opportunity to spin a new idea, Newsom was most excited about the 8000 new jobs that would be created, in fact so much so that he mistakenly stated that the jobs had already been created in his latest “State of The City” address along with some 70,000 more jobs for the Bay View Hunters Point project!

Following the Dec. 16th “fantasy press release” issued by the mayor’s office, several newspapers and television stations solicited my response. As the former Executive Director for Treasure Island, I was exposed to the intricacies and complexities of any development relating to that Island. I will share a few of my concerns with you here:

1. With a current City budget deficit approaching \$600 million dollars, thanks to the mismanagement of this administration and this Board of Supervisors, where is the supposed \$105 million dollars going to come from to pay for the project?
2. Even if the true cost were only \$105 million dollars, why are we now paying that amount for only 450 acres of the total 550 available acres? Those 550 acres we could have had for nothing five years ago when the Navy wanted to give it to us if the City did the environmental clean up, at a time when there was a much stronger and more expensive real estate market? (And surprise — who benefits from the control and development of the remaining 100 acres that the City does not buy?)
3. The Mayor’s office claims the Navy has agreed to do the toxic cleanup. Any novice base re-use developer knows that the Navy will only comply with federal standards, not more stringent and expensive State or local requirements. *This alone will add hundreds of millions of dollars in costs to SF taxpayers.*
4. Treasure Island is man-made of seismically unsafe toxic landfill 8 to 15 feet deep and sits on top of one of the strongest quake fault lines in the State. The cost to taxpayers to stabilize the perimeter of the Island and to eliminate the present rate of “sinking” *will also be in the hundreds of millions of dollars which has been documented in multiple in-depth studies commissioned by the Treasure Island Development Authority.* Without the proper seismic stabilization that encompasses anchoring the entire Island at least 150 feet down to bed rock, and the proper soil remediation and toxic clean up, how is the Island going to support the three 60 story high rises, 6000 new homes and commercial center, or the 40 acre organic garden that this mayor is dreaming of?
5. The financial partners in the development scheme are Wilson Meany Sullivan, a firm that, I assume, will want to get paid for their work, and Lennar Corp. and Kenwood Investments, two corporations that are experiencing solvency problems of late.
6. Most importantly, there is **no** public or private lender that will loan money or insure a development of this nature in today’s real estate market, without the positive results of all phases of a properly completed **Environmental Impact Report (EIR)**?

My reponses were published in the *Fog City Journal* on Dec. 19th, (*Somalia By The Bay*), the *Examiner* on Dec. 22nd, (*Nothing But Smoke and Mirrors on T.I.*) and the *Chronicle* on Dec.28th, in a featured article titled *Treasure Island Gets a reality check*, in the *Wall Street Journal* on Jan. 9th, (*Treasure Hunt in S.F. Bay*), and in several other publications as well as broadcasts on local TV stations.

Responding to questions in another article (*Chronicle*, Jan. 15th) *Shortfall Could Scale Back Treasure Island Plans*, Michael Cohen, the author of this latest fantasy plan, and the mayor’s so-called economic guru, revised the story. Now the developers will pay the \$105 million for the Island. This is wonderful news, except at the time of printing, the developers, namely Lennar and Kenwood would not confirm that any such financial arrangement exists. Cohen, in a last ditch effort to portray himself as a grown-up player in the real developers world, adds that “the revenue to build out the infrastructure for the project would come from taxes and fees that the project will generate.” My question to Mr. Cohen: *How can we collect taxes and fees before the project is built?* I’m sure his answer will involve some convoluted form of “bonding” that will inevitably be in conflict with my response #6 listed above. The *Chronicle* postulates that an admitted shortfall of funds could unravel the entire Treasure Island scheme and the Navy is reluctant to sign the Island over without a real deal being consummated!

Why is all of this happening? What interest would the mayor’s office have in promoting this Treasure Island scheme? The answer is simple: smoke and mirrors. A quick-fix poster board attempt to polish his image. It looks good. That is, before actual analysis.

What we have here is Newsom “exploiting” another issue that people are concerned about to boost his rapidly declining poll numbers. Lets call this one “*care not jobs.*”

Here is the play to come: The Treasure Island scheme will have to go before the Supervisors. Some of the board members, in their bumbling self-serving way, will question the validity of such a strategy, and rightfully, vote against it. At this point, the Mayor, knowing full-well that the project was a loser all along, designed to appear as if he were “trying” to create jobs, has the perfect platform to blame the Board for stopping him from creating jobs. This isn’t the first time he has pulled such a maneuver.

The only one that makes out under this scheme is the Navy which has nothing to lose. Mr. Mayor stop trying to fool the people you represent. If perhaps you are not willing to do that at this point in your political career, then look around and see if you have any political donors left that you can coerce into a “sweetheart deal” so that you can continue to keep the “Treasure Island Fantasy” alive until you are finally out of office.

OBSERVATIONS and PREDICTIONS:

1. Treasure Island will never be developed in any form under this administration.
2. Jobs will be central to a multitude of schemes put forth in attention grabbing press releases in upcoming months, but will they really be created?
3. San Francisco will be ready for a welcome makeover in about 6 months to a year, as the real natives are getting restless.
4. David Canepa, Daly City Councilman is the officeholder to watch in local politics. His commitment to his constituents as opposed to special interests is a rarity on this side of the City and into the peninsula, where he is being touted for higher office.

If you are interested my blog is tonyhallsf.wordpress.com and twitter.com/TonyHallSF



Water, water (Cont. from p 2)
wealthy corporate farmers who are always on the lookout for more taxpayer-subsidized wet wealth. And with water trading for a minimum at ten times what they pay for it on the open market, every gallon a city dweller conserves will end up as cash in the personal bank account of some wealthy corporate farmers. It's all part of the master plan because, even as the governor talks up urban conservation, he tries his darnedest to get them more water.

Myth: Irrigation water rationing is causing California's unemployment to spike to critical levels.

I could quote from a number of news sources — *Fox News*, *CBS*, *Mother Jones*, *the New York Times* — to demonstrate the pervasiveness of this bogus notion, but luckily there is no need because most of the stuff is oddly similar to the media spam cranked out by Governor Schwarzenegger's press secretary. Something like this: "[Drought] conditions are causing a loss of livelihood for many thousands of people, an inability to provide for families, and increased harm to the communities that depend on them . . . the Central Valley town of Mendota, as one example, already reports an unemployment rate of more than 40 percent and lines of a thousand or more for food distribution."

"Where has all that water gone? Well, some of the farmers have been selling it on the open market, frequently flipping their heavily taxpayer-subsidized water back to the government for twice the price. One millionaire farmer-cum-real-estate-developer made roughly \$60 million selling his welfare water to a McTractHome paradise in the Mojave Desert, selling water was easier and more lucrative than farming."

Had any journalist bothered to look up its unemployment rate for some other year, they would have seen that water has never been a factor. Over a decade ago, Mendota's unemployment normally ranged from 28 to 32 percent. In 1998, a wet year, it had an unemployment rate of 38 percent. In 2002, a slightly dry year, unemployment was still the same: 37.7 percent.

The chronic hardship seen in Mendota, and the much of the Central Valley, can not be neatly blamed on the weather. There are other bigger, more ominous forces at play here. Mendota is in a bad place, at once existing on the edge of America's poorest Congressional District and also in one of its wealthiest, most subsidized farming communities: the Westlands Water District. This is how Lloyd G. Carter, a veteran *UPI* reporter who has covered California's farming industry for three decades, describes it: "Rule is by the rich. Indeed, in Westlands, which is a public agency, the growers with the most land have the most votes in electing directors to the district's board. The late Justice William O. Douglas called this voting control by the big growers a corporate political kingdom undreamed of by those who wrote our Constitution."

To put it another way: the billionaire farmers who run Westlands like their own fiefdom have always liked to keep their labor costs down, preferring low-paid migrant workers to those who would register with the unemployment office.

Myth: The "drought" is hurting small, family farmers — "the backbone of America" — the most.

Small farmers are hurting, but rarely does it have anything to do with water rationing. You'll find gobs of farmer pity in just about every story filed on the Central Valley, but most forget to mention that the bulk of the land threatened by water shortages is owned by wealthy corporate farmers clustered in and around Westlands Water District, in the driest, hottest and most isolated corner of the Central Valley. Most of these "farmers" don't rise with the crow of the rooster, but fly in on private jets from Orange County and Beverly Hills. Most journalists, like the one who wrote a long rambling piece in the David Eggers special Bay Area newspaper production, *Panorama*, insist on painting scenes of family farm life in sentimental pastel while ignoring the agribiz moguls who really run the show.

But you get to meet one of the boys from Westlands doing his struggling farmer routine on *60 Minutes*, giving viewers a walkthrough of his family-farm-in-crisis,

explaining how the drought forced him to fallow some of his fields while, in the background, massive shredding trucks turned \$18-million worth of his almond trees into a neat pile of wood chips. The *60 Minutes* segment, like most other farmer profiles, left out the stuff that would squelch any sympathy for their cause. Like the fact that the Woolf family clan operates the "biggest farming operation in Fresno County" that receives \$4.2 million in taxpayer-subsidized water every year, enough to supply a city of 150,000 people. In the past decade, the dozen or so companies partially owned by Stuart Woolf have taken in roughly \$8 million in federal crop subsidies. But Stuart Woolf still feels like he isn't getting enough. In 2008, he threatened a congressional subcommittee that he'd move his family's farm holdings to Portugal, Spain, Turkey and even China if the feds didn't give him more taxpayer-subsidized water.

Myth: Water shortages threaten to wipe out California's agricultural industry, causing a chain reaction that will cripple the state's economy and raise food prices around the country, maybe even the world.

It's true, a total meltdown of California's agricultural industry, the largest in the United States, would be bad news for everyone involved. But the problem with

this apocalyptic domino effect, which pops up as a talking point on Schwarznegger's press releases and is parroted by the likes of Bloomberg and the *Wall Street Journal*, is a pesky thing called reality. Most irrigation districts have been getting their water on schedule. And because the drought has only affected a tiny sliver — about two percent — of California's total farmland, most of which happens to be some of the most heavily-subsidized growing operations in the state, any "multiplier effect" is bound to be limited, if noticeable at all.

Take Westlands Water District, where a sizable chunk of the state's fallowed farmland is concentrated. The district produces about \$1 billion in gross income a year, \$750 million of which is funded by water subsidies. Add to that hundreds of millions more in direct crop subsidies, and pretty soon the government ends up funding most, if not all of Westlands' economic output. Even if Westlands farmers weren't such welfare queens, it would be hard to get worked-up even if the entire old billionaire club went under. After all, their entire output amounts to one-half of one percent of California's \$1.8 trillion. And we're not talking about missing out on vital crops here: who'd even notice an uptick in almond prices?

Myth: Big city environmentalists are making the drought more serious than it actually is.

In 2007, a federal judge limited the amount of water that could be pumped out of Northern California because it endangering a small, but important fish called the Delta smelt, which is now protected by the California Endangered Species Act. Ever since, California's wealthy Central Valley farmers — including Westlands — have staged a public relations war, blaming big city elitists for caring more about the environment than they do about American farmers. "Thanks to environmental regulations designed to protect the likes of the three-inch long delta smelt, one of America's premier agricultural regions is suffering in a drought made worse by federal regulations," pronounced a *Wall Street Journal* editorial in September 2009.

Fox News took the attack to a whole new level, with Sean Hannity proclaiming that the President and his Royal Democratic-Socialist Guard were single-handedly killing off hardworking American farmers and demanded that Obama "turn this water on now." The funny thing is that Obama had already done that, when the court-ordered pumping restrictions were lifted three months earlier.

The reason these farmers weren't getting

their water had nothing to do with the fish, and all to do with their "junior" water rights and a bailout business mentality. In the past decade, farmers had lobbied for and received 30% more water than they did in the 1990s, knowingly taking a gamble by planting permanent, high-cost crops in an area first to suffer water cutbacks during dry times. But they did it anyway, fully expecting to get the government to keep delivering the water, even in a time of drought, which it has. According to the *Environmental Defense Fund*, even the most junior water rights holders were receiving almost all of their water throughout 2009.

Where has all that water gone? Well, some of the farmers have been selling it on the open market, frequently flipping their heavily taxpayer-subsidized water back to the government for twice the price. One millionaire farmer-cum-real-estate-developer made roughly \$60 million selling his welfare water to a McTractHome paradise in the Mojave Desert, selling water was easier

WOTPC (Cont. from p. 3)

behind can be a target for thieves as many contain laptops, iPods, or other electronic devices which are attractive to auto burglars.

Detective Chan then explained how the investigators have been moved from a central location at the Hall of Justice and are now deployed at local stations where they conduct investigations on all types of crimes in their geographic areas instead of working on a specific set of crimes (e.g. just robberies) across the entire city.

The key is for each of us to be observant and to report when something "just doesn't seem right". Detective Chan asked everyone in attendance to trust their intuition, and call something in to the Police Department.

Following the police report, Monique Zmuda from the Controller's office presented an outline of the current shortfalls in the SF budget, how it got that way, and some of the steps that the City is trying to implement in order to balance the budget (which is required by law) by June 30th.

The Assistant Director for the Controller's office, who has 28 years of financial expertise within the city government, described the Controller's office as "like Switzerland," a neutral group that often has to assist the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors to reach a mutually agreeable consensus to balance the budget each year. She described the upcoming 550+ million dollar shortfall as much larger than we've had in the past, although she was very clear that a default or bankruptcy is not foreseeable because the government is required to balance the budget each year by July 1. The problem is that the economy has slowed and as hotel taxes, commercial property taxes and business payroll taxes have fallen there is not an easy method to bring more revenue into the coffers. The large shortfall will have to be met by increasing fees for goods and services and large spending cuts in virtually every department.

Jim Lazarus, from the SF Chamber, spoke about the budget shortfall and the challenges that it creates. The city government tries to increase revenue by raising most fees and implementing programs such as increasing parking meter rates. This helps to discourage companies from selecting San

City Water Supply (Cont. from p. 1)

Wednesday January 20, questions about the quality of groundwater, and about whether the City could develop it quickly enough and in sufficient quantities arose. Officials did not say, as they had in the past, that groundwater would be blended so that it makes up only a small percentage of the drinking water of those served by Sunset Reservoir. Also, officials asserted broadly that groundwater was safe, that it would not be blended for health—but would only be blended for taste. Despite these assertions, some fear that groundwater contains troublesome concentrations of manganese, or of pharmaceuticals for which there are not yet state and federal requirements. Questions also arose about whether the groundwater aquifer (underground reservoir) would

and more lucrative than farming.
Bonus myth: the drought has sparked a grassroots movement of farm owners and farm workers, uniting to pressure the government for more water.

Nothing exposes Arnold Schwarzenegger and his billionaire farmer-backers for the sadistic slime balls that they are than the Latino Water Coalition, an astroturf group created by farming interests, paid for by taxpayer money and blessed by the governor himself. The group was designed to give a populist face to a purely corporate cause, paying poor Latino migrant workers to take part in protests staged for the benefit of *Fox News'* camera, even sent to go on a 5-day "March for Water" to draw attention to California farmers' plight and generally exploiting the exploited so that *you* can help *you* exploit them even more. But the worst part about it is that well-meaning journalists fell for it.

Yasha Levine is an editor of *The eXiled*. Read more at exiledonline.com

Francisco as a potential site . In order to create jobs and lure companies to the City perks such as payroll tax or property tax breaks (for a finite number of years) could be used to grow the job market in San Francisco but this is difficult, if not impossible to enact in light of the current budget shortfall.

A big issue is the cost of the city employees and an inability to cut costs through "contracted outsourcing" or other methods. Lazarus explained that, while the median wage package for SF residents is approximately \$80,000 per year, the cost for each SF city employee averages out to be over \$127,000 per year, or more than 50% higher. To reach the point where the city financial planners do not have to implement draconian cuts each and every year, the city government must work together to bring these costs more into the line of the present day reality.

The challenge is large. Providing the types of services that the public wishes to have provided (e.g. Police, Fire, Muni, Public Health, Park and Rec, etc) in an economic environment where city income is falling, but payroll and medical/pension plan costs are rising creates challenges that have to be addressed each and every year by June 30th.

Addressing a question about "condo conversion lottery's" Lazarus cited an interesting fact, that in SF, roughly 70% of resident are renters, while in New York (counting the 5 boroughs) roughly 70% of residents are property owners.

Although there are no easy answers, it seems that the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors have to work together to encourage the growth of the business sector to provide the jobs, and revenue to keep the city's budget in balance.

Discussion followed on possibly banning U-turns on West Portal Ave. at Vicente and at 14th Ave. and on drilling of the Golden Gate Park aquifer and its relation to the recycled water plants that are proposed to treat and reuse grey water in the city.

Following the discussion Wooding asked for and received a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:35. It was approved.

The next meeting of the WOTPCC will occur on Monday, February 22nd at the Forest Hills Community Club House at 7:30 PM.

recharge sufficiently so that in the long wells will not run dry.

Should groundwater not pan out as hoped, questions remain about whether and how the City can make do with 75 mgd of water. Already San Franciscans use less water per person than anywhere else in the country.

So as the El Nino rain falls, let us hope it lasts. Lastly, let us hope that the City has sufficient water not only for ordinary times, but also for a disaster. After all, it was only after the big 1906 quake that it came to be recognized that the City needed to develop a larger, more reliable water supply.

Steve Lawrence is a Westside resident and is a stalwart defender of the public purse at SF Public Utility Commission meetings. Feedback: lawrence@westsideobserver.com



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

Plain Talk – Straight Talk

The No Loan Banks

By Joe O'Donoghue

With over 20 million Americans walking the highways of unemployment and underemployment in pain, our economic recovery is still very much in limbo. Clearly, after ignoring this issue for over 1 ½ years, the body politic, Democrat and Republican, needs to develop a comprehensive strategy and implementation plan that will illustrate and triangulate the means whereby these 20 million or more unemployed Americans will be put back to work. And this great country has at its disposition templates to so do — those used by FDR in the 1930's or those used in the 1950s when the 42,500 miles of interstate highway construction was begun and completed across the USA.

Secondly, the body politic — Democrat and Republican — needs to view and understand these economic meltdown issues not just from the bankers' perspective, but from the middle class. As it now stands, small businesses and their customer base are finding credit and borrowing lines reduced and in many cases eliminated. These banking customers are those who, in the past, never had any credit repayment problems, yet they are now finding themselves "tarred and feathered," as if they were the bad credit risks who helped generate the economic meltdown.

Apparently the regulators — the ones responsible and negligent for allowing the bad lending practices of the banks to occur in the first place — have now issued new lending regulations forcing banks to curtail lending. And what the administration needs to realize is that these small business customers, if denied credit, won't be able to rehire nor will their customers be able to buy. The net effect of this bad policy will be to stymie and stifle the economic recovery envisioned by the administration.

Consider the example of one investor — a customer of a "big" TARP recipient bank via a buy-out of his original bank, who never had a late payment on his original loan. The loan was for a building with a healthy cash flow, yet when the loan became due and he applied for an extension, he found himself transferred to the Bank's "special assets" section — which is a euphemism for the "toxic assets" section. The Bank refused to extend this individual's loan beyond nine months. This same bank, the beneficiary of the government bailout and money borrowed at no cost from the Federal Reserve, raised the customer's interest rate from 5½ % to 8%.

Thirdly, the body politic also needs to realize that the big banks, because of their ability to earn billions of dollars outside of the middle class base, have no need of this middle class base. But the administration also needs to realize that if such bad policies are allowed, it could in fact induce future economic disasters.

Fourth, the body politic needs to correct its past flawed oversight which failed to demand that all big banks be required to extend credit to customers who in the past, before the meltdown, were credit worthy.

Another example is a single homeowner, with an excellent job as an RN, who had completely remodeled her home; she also had a near perfect credit score of 840. Because her payments on her present loan were scheduled to double this year, she applied for refinancing but was turned down by several big banks (all recipients of TARP funds). Their lopsided reasoning was that they were only refinancing loans for people who were considered bad credit risks. Clearly, an "ostrich with its head in the sand" policy. Another single woman who had a credit score of 750 points who has never been unemployed, never made a late payment on her existing loan, and who also remodeled her home, failed to get refinancing. Her payments were also due to double. The basis of this denial was that her home value had dropped.

Finally, the body politic needs to extend stimulus lending packages to the smaller banks. This will have the positive effective of creating competition and be a more effective means of recovery disbursements.

Clearly, the body politic lost its perspective when it ignored — for over 1 ½ years — the middle class economic and unemployment issues. Although it embraced the Big Banks' issues of bailouts, the Big Banks did not reciprocate in kind when it came to extending credit to good middle class customers and small businesses. Furthermore, considering that the stimulus money went to well connected self-interest groups — with one exception, the "cash for clunkers" program — this raises the question as to whether or not the body politic has been compromised by these special interest groups, and whether or not the special interest groups have in fact hijacked the entire body politic at the expense of America's middle class.

Feedback for Joe :odonoghue@westsideobserver.com

Laguna Honda Hospital Won't Discuss Delay

By Patrick Monette-Shaw

Reasonable people think that news released in late December indicating Laguna Honda Hospital (LHH) has again delayed the opening of its replacement facilities by somewhere between three and six months would be shared openly with the public, since it appears the delayed move-in may be a result of possibly failing one or more required State inspections.

Other reports that have surfaced since late December speculate that the State inspections may have involved:

1. Fire alarms, or fire alarm systems, in LHH's new buildings being unreliable.
2. Furniture may have been moved into the new buildings before the State completed fire alarm / sprinkler inspections.
3. Pipes in the new, or existing, facility may have burst, causing damage.
4. Failure to pass a "substantial completion" inspection and certification thought to be scheduled in December 2009.
5. Failure to pass a review of policies and procedures in another (Dec) inspection.
6. Reports from exterminator's that big rats are getting into the building because door jams aren't tightly sealed and the hungry critters may have damaged electrical wiring or other things.

But Laguna Honda Hospital's Executive Administrator, Mivic Hirose, appears to be following the playbook from the famous saying, "While Rome burned, Nero fiddled,"

since she refuses to answer questions raised by members of the public.

For over nine months, the president of the West of Twin Peaks Central Council has attempted to ask a series of questions on behalf of his members about LHH's replacement digs and the hospital's plans for the future, but has run up against the proverbial brick wall of silence offered up by Hirose.

When, without forewarning, LHH announced on December 22, 2009 that it had suddenly postponed its move-in date to its new facilities from April 2010 until "June or July," it apparently notified LHH's staff, and potentially residents of the hospital. The December 22 announcement may explain why LHH had also suddenly canceled a meeting five days earlier of a joint subcommittee of the Health Commission and Laguna Honda's executive staff scheduled for December 17.

But it was almost as if the Grinch had stolen Christmas, since LHH doesn't appear to have notified the media, taxpayers, or policy and oversight agencies, that it had suddenly short-sheeted the long-scheduled move date into its new buildings.

Reports quickly surfaced that the move-in date may be, more realistically, September or October, adding significant expense to the rebuild project, and potential fines against the bond financing.

Facing potential fines or penalties, you'd think LHH would want to communicate the

Cont. p. 12

Questions Laguna Honda Needs to Answer

By George Wooding

Policy decisions regarding Laguna Honda Hospital (LHH) are going on behind the scenes that Miraloma Park residents and the City's voting public aren't aware of, since the City doesn't want to use the hospital for purposes presented to voters in 1999 to gain passage of the bond measure to rebuild LHH — and now doesn't want to tell you about.

During the past ten years of planning and construction, LHH's project scope has changed multiple times, including cutting 420 of LHH's planned 1,200 beds, eliminating another 200 assisted living units for people needing a lower level of care, and chopping the Adult Day Health Center for elderly residents with dementias unsafe to stay in their own homes during the day, among other changes. Now, just four months before the new hospital is scheduled to open, LHH appears to be changing the type of patients it will serve, even though construction is all but complete. It's not even clear whether LHH will continue to call itself a hospital, after spending almost \$600 million to rebuild a facility with an initial \$401 million budget.

When the City pitched the LHH rebuild bond in 1999, its entire advertising campaign claimed to be helping frail elderly and severely disabled San Franciscans. When 73% of voters passed Proposition A, they thought they were voting to rebuild a nursing home for indigent elderly and disabled San Franciscans. Now that the rebuilt hospital is almost completed, the Department of Public Health (DPH) is planning to add mental health and substance abuse patients at the eleventh hour.

LHH is not, and has never been, a psychiatric facility, and doesn't have a psychiatric license. But DPH is actively planning to mix in a large number of younger, "behavioral health" patients with LHH's current population of elderly adults with chronic, complex, and progressive medical conditions. ("Behavioral health" is defined as providing both mental health and substance abuse treatments.)

Heretofore, LHH admitted patients with physical medical conditions needing medical and nursing treatment or rehabilitation. Patients with secondary psychiatric problems were also treated, but their primary diagnosis had to be medical in nature for admission. LHH is once again contemplating discarding its long-standing "medical model of care" and embracing a psychosocial rehab, or "social wellness," model of healthcare (which was introduced in 2003, but failed miserably in 2004) that relies less on medical doctors and more on psychologists, social workers, and nurses. What we really don't know is what a "social model" of care even is, which nobody seems capable of adequately defining. This is one of the jargon-war terms that DPH's administrators throw around whenever they want to claim LHH's model of care is too "medical," asserting "medical" is bad but that they know what is good for us.

This is the second time LHH has tried to add psychosocial programming at the expense of the elderly. In 2003, Mitch Katz, the Director of Public Health, overrode LHH's admissions policy by sending a variety of younger, ambulatory patients from San Francisco General Hospital (SFGH) to LHH. Katz claimed huge economic and political pressure to unload SFGH patients into LHH, dubbing the plan as a "flow project." Back then, and still today, there has been stunning dishonesty with the public about the flow project, which appears to be a key component of Mayor Newsom's "10-Year Plan to End Homelessness" by sweeping the homeless into LHH.

Many of the younger patients suffered from substance abuse or mental health issues, and elderly LHH patients were

not only displaced out of the facility and dumped out-of-county, they were harassed and attacked by the behavioral patients. LHH staff members were attacked, a wing of LHH was deliberately set on fire, and there was another fire set at the Laguna Honda reservoir. LHH was completely unprepared for these new patients, since staff had little training and LHH employed only two security guards. No resources were allocated to manage these behaviorally-troubled, younger, male patients dumped into LHH with nowhere else to go.

Hospital conditions were so disrupted the U.S. Department of Justice became involved, mandating specific types of patient care and treatment to prevent "institutionalizing" behavioral patients. LHH doctors and patient advocates reached out to community neighbors, and neighborhoods such as Miraloma Park became so vocal that the Mayor ordered Dr. Katz to reinstate LHH's pre-flow project admission policies, end the flow project, and resume LHH's previous patient demographics, which the Board of Supervisors now monitors.

LHH is about to reinstate the 2003 flow project by adopting findings from DPH's new "Ja Report," which recommends rehabilitating behavioral health patients at LHH, reducing the number of LHH's doctors, increasing behavioral health staffing, and expanding transitional behavioral health beds. The Ja Report states: "There is a great concern over patient and staff safety due to a mixing of high-level substance abuse and mental health patients with older lower-level patients in open units. We recommend some type of separation."

Interestingly, the Ja Report didn't consider the safety of surrounding neighborhoods. Its only mention of LHH's surrounding neighborhoods was: "The Ja report recognizes that local neighborhood and community concerns have been raised regarding the role of LHH with mental health and substance abuse patients. However, it is critical that the appropriate balance be struck between neighborhood concerns and the necessity for LHH to respond to the needs of the entire city and DPH as a whole." Actually this statement is a lie. Virtually no one in the surrounding neighborhoods is aware of plans for the "new" LHH, since LHH hasn't held a public meeting with any neighborhood organization about its potential population changes and probably won't, unless they are pressured to do so. Instead, LHH offers tours of the new facility, but won't hold town hall meetings to discuss substantive changes to its patient population or accountability of its bond expenditures.

The Ja report wrongly claims LHH needs to improve its interdisciplinary care. This recommendation is a red herring, since in 1986, then Mayor Dianne Feinstein's Blue Ribbon Committee on LHH recommended changing from LHH's old "nursing model of care," by increasing the number of certified nursing assistants, doctors, social workers, and activity therapists working more collaboratively as an interdisciplinary team with the nurses, and adding an Ethics Committee and a hospice program. LHH has been using an interdisciplinary model of care for over two decades, utilizing medical doctors as a central component. Since 1999, LHH has added 20 new positions in its physical medicine rehabilitation department, including physical, occupational, and speech therapists, and restorative care aides. The bottom line? Now, in the absence of a new Blue Ribbon Committee on Laguna Honda, the Ja Report recommends LHH add psychologists and remove (fire) its medical doctors. This would be a step backward to the unidisciplinary nursing model of care the DOJ objected to in 1998.

The Ja Report raises the possibility that

Cont. p. 6



February Calendar

YMCA HEALTH SCREENINGS

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

FRIDAY NIGHT JAZZ EVERY FRIDAY

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

HAPPY HOUR EVERY TUESDAY

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

FARMERS MARKET'S

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

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

BALLROOM DANCE CLASSES

Wed 3–each Wed | 7:30–9 pm | Fun exercise -learn how to dance. No partner needed. Covenant Presbyterian Church, Taraval & Funston \$7. Bill 668-9132 bdproductions94121@yahoo.com.

COSI FAN TUTTE

Thu–Sat 4–6 | 8 pm | Fri-Sat 12–13 | 8 pm | Sun 14 | 2 pm | Opera by By W.A. Mozart, Libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte, Director Alissa Walters Deeter. Knuth Hall, Creative Arts Building, SF State campus, 1600 Holloway. Adm: \$10 adv. \$12 at door.

AFIARA STRING QUARTET

Sun 7 | 3 pm | Mozart: Quartet No. 19 in C, “Dissonance”; Berg: Lyric Suite; and Mendelssohn: String Quartet No. 2, McKenna Theatre, Creative Arts Building, SF State, 1600 Holloway. Adm: Free

LILI AND NADIA BOULANGER

Fri 12 | 1 pm | Songs performed by sopranos Hillary Hight Daw, Alissa Walters Deeter and Sara Ganz. Knuth Hall, Creative Arts Building, SF State campus, 1600 Holloway. Adm: Free.

11TH ANNUAL BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL

Fri 12–Sat 21 | 7:30 pm | Such as: Fri 13 Fret Not,

The Wranglers, Family Lines \$16 adv./\$18 door • Portland Invasion, Jerks of Grass, Whiskey Puppy, The Mighty Ghosts, with: Erik Clampitt 8:00 pm at Cafe du Nord \$13 adv/\$15 door—over 40 events at. Only grass-roots, non-profit, volunteer-run festival Info: sfbluegrass.org

CHINESE NEW YEARS AT STONESTOWN

Sun 14 | 12–3 pm | Bring a camera to take pics with the Lion Dancers. Red Envelopes with gift cards for the Lucky. Lantern-making class is 12:30–3 pm | Lion Dance classes at 2 pm. Stonestown Center Court, 19th Ave. at Winston.

CELEBRATE YEAR OF THE TIGER AT THE ZOO

Sun 21 | 10 am–3 pm | Red Panda Acrobats and the Chung Ngai Dance Troupe perform amazing contortions, traditional lion and folk dancing, as well as Chinese yo-yo tricks. Admission: Free with Zoo Admission. 1 Zoo Rd. 753-7080/sfzoo.org.

AUTHOR PETER HESSLER

Thu 18 | 7 pm | The author will discuss *Country Driving: A Journey Through China from Farm to Factory* at BookShop West Portal. 80 West Portal Ave Info: 564-8080.

TARAVAL POLICE DISTRICT COMMUNITY MTG

Tue 16 | 6 pm | Our monthly Taraval/Community meeting at Taraval Police Station, 2345 24th Ave (3rd Tues of each month).

IPALPITI

Wed 17 | 1 pm | Jenkins: Palladio–Allegretto; Haydn: Divertimento For Cello and String Orchestra In D major (arranged by Piatigorsky); and Piazzola: Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas (The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires) Knuth Hall, Creative Arts Building, SF State 1600 Holloway. Free

GOLD COAST TRIO

Fri 26 | 1 pm | Beethoven: Trio in B Flat Major, “Archduke.” Knuth Hall, Creative Arts Building, SF State campus, 1600 Holloway. Adm: Free

WEST OF TWIN PEAKS CENTRAL COUNCIL

Mon 22 | 7:30 pm | A resource for neighborhood organizations. Want to listen and comment on issues? The 4th Monday of each month Forest Hill Clubhouse 381 Magellan Ave.

Got an event? editorwso@me.com

Laguna Honda (Cont. from p. 5)

LHH's license will be changed to a hospital-based nursing home to formalize SFGH's control over Laguna Honda's mission, ending any possibility that Laguna Honda will serve the elderly from all over the City. Indeed there are some who believe the Ja Report is designed to provide “cover” to allow Dr. Katz to unilaterally determine LHH's role in providing behavioral health care, and once again change LHH's mission using another flow project. This is something we all must watch out for and oppose.

San Francisco has inadequate discharge locations for behavioral health patients. In July 2004, DPH shut down San Francisco's only long-term care psychiatric facility, the Mental Health Rehabilitation Facility (MHRF), closing 145 psychiatric beds. To defend its closure of the MHRF, DPH officials cited the 1999 U.S. Supreme Court's Olmstead decision that “mental patients should be able to live in less restrictive community based settings, rather than in locked hospitals, if they are medically able to.”

The real challenge for DPH is the Chamber's lawsuit settlement agreement. The 2007, Chamber's agreement limits LHH to 780 beds (City officials deny this) and basically forces LHH to place residents back into the community as quickly as possible. The goal of the lawsuit is to keep patients from living in an institution, specifically not at LHH. Almost all of LHH's behavioral health patients will come from SFGH. LHH, an institution which used to be autonomous, is now controlled by SFGH. Under Newsom, LHH has quickly become cheaper housing for indigent patients that SFGH needs to release but can't place back in the community. Under terms of the Chamber's settlement, many of these behavioral health problem patients should be placed directly back into the community and treated using community-based services. Unfortunately, the City has nowhere to house them and sends them to LHH, ostensibly for rehabilitative or “habilitative” treatment. After behavioral health patients have been “rehabilitated” at LHH, the City still has nowhere

to place them in the community. Over time, LHH's behavioral health population will expand at the expense of LHH's geriatric patients too ill, demented, or recovering from strokes to be cared for at home.

The bed that once was used for grandma's long-term care will now be filled by a behavioral health patient. Who will bring their mom or their grandma to LHH for stroke rehabilitation, knowing there are hundreds of younger, unruly substance abusers wandering around LHH's campus?

As LHH stockpiles behavioral health patients, it will be in direct violation of the Chamber's settlement agreement. LHH is becoming the safety valve for San Francisco's indigent mental health and substance abuse patients. San Francisco voter's never expected LHH would become a “behavioral health” hospital, and this isn't why we voted for the LHH bond measure. What will happen to San Francisco's geriatric and disabled patients needing long term care who can no longer be placed at the hospital and who can't be cared for safely at home?

While City government has a strategic goal of increasing transparency and accountability, Mayor Newsom appears to be hiding behind the skirts of LHH's new administrator Hirose, who offers tours, but not answers to compelling questions about LHH's mission, policies, or bond spending.

To be a good neighbor and a responsible institution, LHH needs to immediately start talking with its neighbors about LHH's future patient population plans. We don't know what population LHH intends to serve when it opens just four months from now, and whether LHH will be serving geriatric patients with chronic medical illness, or psychosocial patients with mental illness and substance abuse needs.

We don't need more broken promises over how Laguna Honda bond money is being spent. We do need greater transparency — and a new Blue Ribbon Committee for LHH — to address Laguna Honda's unanswered policy questions.

George Wooding, President, WOTPCC: Feedback: wooding@westsideobserver.com

NOW AT THE MOVIES

by Don Lee Miller

AVATAR

Writer-director James Cameron has already topped the No. 1 all-time money-making film Titanic with his new futuristic fantasy. It has action, love, incredible settings, war and human interest! Paraplegic marine Jake Sully: Sam Worthington is lured by the U.S. military on a mission to the planet Pandora to replace his twin who, after years of training, died just before the 5-year flight to Pandora. Gung-ho Col. Miles Quaritch: Stephen Lang will wipe out the Na'vi population and culture to mine a precious mineral for Parker: Giovanni Ribisi if the diplomatic path pursued by the avatars (surrogate humans of natives) of Dr. Grace Augustine: Sigourney Weaver and Jake don't succeed. Jake, during Na'vi training, falls in love with the princess Neytiri: Zoe Saldana. IMAX 3-D. Awards winner: Golden Globes: Best Drama, Best Director. 15th Critics' Choice Movie Awards: Best Action Movie, Cinematography, Art Direction, Sound, Editing, Visual Effects. Phoenix Film Critics: Best Cinematography, Film Editing, Production Design & Visual Effects. Awards nominee (8): British Academy Film Awards (BAFTA)): incl. Best Film.

DAYBREAKERS

This sci-fi thriller set in 2025 uses buckets of blood as bodies explode and vampires devour their victims live, rather than just drain their blood. As humans only make up 10% of the world population, hematologist researcher Edward Dalton: Ethan Hawke seeks a blood substitute for pharmaceutical titan Charles Bromley: Sam Neill as the blood supply diminishes to less than one month's worth as the humans hide from the vamps. Lionel 'Elvis' Corman: Willem Dafoe is an underground leader of the humans. Edward hasn't made the adjustment to living on blood, but his handsome younger brother sure has. Edward's brother, Frankie: Michael Dorman is loyal to Bromley. The “daybreakers” are those who can't stand to be vampires any longer and wait for the morning sun to set them afire and turn them to ashes. Michael and Peter Spierig direct and wrote the engrossing screenplay. Profanity, gore, violence.

FANTASTIC MR. FOX

Director/co-writer Wes Anderson directs the stop-motion animation of the Roald Dahl novel. George Clooney provides the voice for Mr. Fox with Meryl Streep doing the same for Mrs.

Felicity Fox. They have problems with three neighboring farmers who don't like their chicken hatches being raided and threaten reprisals. Mr. Fox organizes the other animals (voices include Bill Murray, Owen Wilson, Willem Dafoe) to tunnel beneath the poultry houses and join him in a raid. Much of the deeper subject matter will probably not interest kids who will enjoy the simple story. Awards winner: New York Film Critics Circle Award*: two George Clooney films; Best Animated Film. Los Angeles & Las Vegas Film Critics: Best Animated Film + Best Family Film (L.V. only). National Board of Review: Special Achievement Award: Wes Anderson. Toronto Film Critics: Best Animated Film. San Francisco & San Diego Film Critics: Best Screenplay, Adapted. Awards nominee: Golden Globes & British AFTA: Best Animated Film.

INVICTUS

One of the best films now playing stars Morgan Freeman (also Exec. Prod.) as recently elected Nelson Mandela in 1995, who wants a World Cup soccer team to improve South Africa's press image. Team captain Francois: Matt Damon meets with Mandela to help unite their racially divided country and then inspires his teammates to win. Director-producer Clint Eastwood delivers a clean story that entertains anyone over 12. Awards winner: National Board of Review(3): Best Actor, Freeman; Best Director, Eastwood; Freedom of Expression Award. Awards nominee: Critics' Choice, SAG, Producer of Year Award.

THE IMAGINARIUM OF DR. PARNASSUS

Director-writer Terry Gilliam's experience with Monty Python puts him several beats ahead for this fantasy adventure. The complication of Tony: Heath Ledger dying in mid-production was solved by having his character step through a magic looking glass and emerge in the fanciful imaginarium world as Johnny Deep, Jude Law or Colin Farrell. Dr. Parnassus: Christopher Plummer manages the caravan which travels from one town to the next. When Tony is rescued from hanging from a London bridge, he moves their venues into more profitable environs. Seems the good doctor entered into a contract with Mr. Nick: Tom Waits that he would deliver the soul of his daughter Valentina: Lily Cole on her 16th birthday and the day is arriving. Awards nominee (2): British AFTA: Best Production Design, Makeup and Hair.

IT'S COMPLICATED

Jane: Meryl Streep, a bakery owner begins an affair with Jake: Alex Baldwin, from whom she has been divorced for nine years (during which

time he has married a younger woman, Agness: Lake Bell). Their four offspring and Jane's galpals are scandalized. Jane is also dating her architect, Adam: Steve Martin. Nancy Meyers wrote and directed this comedic love fest for women of all ages. Martin and Baldwin will co-host the March 7th Academy Awards. Language, partial nudity. National Board of Review: Best Ensemble Cast Award.

NINE

Italian director Guido Contini: Daniel Day-Lewis is at a breaking point as he starts a new film. His problem is too many women: his sometimes forgiving wife Luisa: Marion Cotillard; his suicidal mistress Carla: Penelope Cruz; his wardrobe designer Lilli: Judi Dench; Saraghina: Fergie lets the sand sift through her fingers as she lures 10-year old Guido and friends; reporter Stephanie: Kate Hudson; his film star muse Claudia: Nicole Kidman; and Mamma: Sophia Loren. This magical musical version by Oscar-winning director Rob Marshall (Chicago) of the Fellini film 8 1/2 gives each star her own musical number(s): Luisa gets the ballads; Carla has a sexy romp; Lilli exposes her Follies Bergere past in a bustier; Stephanie (20 lbs. thinner than her other scenes filmed six mos. earlier) lets loose with a bombastic explosion; and Claudia has a romantic auto tour of Naples. Song highlights: Cinema Italiano and Take It All. Awards winner: Sattelite Awards: Best Motion Picture-Musical, Cinematography; Special Achievement Award: Best Ensemble- Motion Picture. Awards nominee: Golden Globes (5):incl. Best Musical Film.

PRECIOUS

An obese teenager, Precious Jones: Gabourey Sidibe is raped by her father and has two kids by him before she's 15. Her abusive mother, Mary Jones : Mo'Nique throws objects like TVs at her. She's kicked out of her junior high class because of the second pregnancy and told to go to a special school. There she finds fellowship and love from her teacher, Ms. Rain: Paula Patton, and classmates. Ms. Sidibe was actually 26 when she filmed the powerful role of Precious. The Jones' case worker, Mrs. Weiss: Mariah Carey, underplays magnificently without makeup. This hard-hitting drama may be difficult for some to stomach.

Awards winner: Screen Actor Guild (SAG), Golden Globes & 15th Critics' Choice Movie Awards: Best Supporting Actress: Mo'Nique. Awards nominee: British AFTA (4): Best Picture, Actress: Sidibe, Best Sup. Actress: Mo'Nique & Adapted Screenplay.

SHERLOCK HOLMES

Director Guy Ritchie presents a new take on Sherlock as a bromance between Sherlock: Robert Downey, Jr. and Dr. Watson: Jude Law, with jealousies arising as Watson becomes engaged to Mary: Kelly Reilly. Nemesis Lord Blackwood: Mark Strong heads a mysterious fraternal order that brings him back from the dead after his prison execution. Much of the entertaining film is spent chasing him about on the docks of Victorian London or pursuing the elusive Irene Adair: Rachel McAdams. Sherlock himself is less secretive and more interested in bare-knuckled fist-cuffs with ruffians. Maybe it's just an excuse for Sherlock to show his six-pack. There is one harrowing scene when Holmes, Watson and Adair must cut through handcuffs, lest they fall into a meatpacking chainsaw. Language, violence. Awards winner: Golden Globes: Best Actor, Comedy: Robert Downey, Jr.

UP IN THE AIR

Ryan Bingham: George Clooney, a corporate personnel firer-for-hire, has proudly racked up almost ten-million air miles. Ryan meets Alex Goran: Vera Farmiga, whose job also requires lots of flying so whenever their flight plans coincide, they meet for R&R. Enter an inexperienced overachiever Natalie Keener: Anna Kendrick who convinces their Omaha boss Craig Gregory: Jason Bateman, that the firings could be done with videoconferences. Nudity, violence, language. Awards winner: New York Film Critics Circle Award*: two George Clooney films. Golden Globes: Best Screenplay; 15th Critics' Choice Movie Awards: Adapted Screenplay. National Board of Review, Dallas-Ft. Worth Film Critics, Florida F.C., Kansas City F.C., Southeastern F.C.,& Washington DC F.C.: Best Film, Actor, Screenplay–Adapted. Awards nominee: (6) British AFTA: Best Picture, 2 Sup. Actress, Adapted Screenplay, Editing.

ME AND ORSON WELLES

NYC high school senior Richard Samuels: Zac Efron in 1937 is cast by Orson Welles: Christian McKay in his Broadway production of Julius Caesar. Richard has his eye on Welles' office worker Sonja Jones: Claire Danes. Welles plays Brutus to George Coultryis as Mark Antony: Ben Chaplin; Joseph Cotten as Publius: James Tupper; Muriel as Portia: Kelly Reilly.

A battle of wits between Richard and egomaniacal Welles for Sonja. The '30s personas become nervous as opening night arrives. Sexual situations, profanity. Awards nominee: British AFTA: Best Supporting Actor: Christian McKay.

Feedback: movies@westsideobserver.com

SECOND THOUGHTS / By Jack Kaye

What is Real Wealth?



I recently saw a Chris Rock comedy special during which he explained the difference between being rich and being wealthy. He said that a rich person can lose everything while the wealthy will always be rich as will all their descendants. He said that while Oprah, worth a few billion, was rich, Bill Gates, at \$50 billion, was wealthy. I think that most of us would say that anyone worth more than \$50 million is wealthy, but that is in a materialistic sense. What is true wealth?

If wealth is that which provides for freedom and happiness, why are so many financially wealthy people slaves to their lifestyles which include making sure that their vast fortunes make money and don't lose their value? Unlike modestly rich people, the wealthy cannot put all their assets in a savings account or even CDs. They have to diversify their massive portfolios hedging their bets by also investing in possible, or probable, failures. If the stocks do well, the bonds might lose their value. If real estate is up, gold might be down. If there is an inflation, foreign currencies might be the answer.

Financial wealth not only affords the finer things in life without fear of poverty, it also attracts people to its possessors. People are attracted by the luxury, beauty and power of the wealthy. They want to be invited to the mansion for the galas and sip champagne on the lovely veranda. They know that the wealthy can afford to be generous to their friends and providers. But this same magnet attracts those who are interested only in the outer trappings. Their feelings and loyalties are more to the money and what it provides than to the person with the wealth.

The wealthy sense this. They know that many of the kind words and uncontrolled laughter are more affect than effect. At some point many must realize that their relationships are not necessarily heart-felt. They begin to distrust people and feel alienated from them.

J.Paul Getty, who was the richest man in the world at the time, was asked if he was happy. He responded by asking how anyone worth billions could be. We read so many stories of wealthy families split apart over money and power. Howard Hughes, one of the richest men of his day, became so obsessed that he was unable to function.

The seriously rich seem always to be very busy and terribly involved in the ups and downs of their estates. They have to manage the people hired to invest their wealth. Then there are the real assets like homes, businesses and luxury transportation vehicles. They must not only be purchased, they must also be maintained. The economically advantaged must also manage the people who maintain them.

Now many of the wealthiest are giving much of their money away in order, perhaps, to lighten their loads as well as to help the beneficiaries of their generosity.

So what do I think is wealth, real wealth? Real wealth is having what you want and wanting what you have. And "having" need not mean owning or controlling. And wanting does not have to be more for its own sake. So, a 15,000 square foot mansion worth \$20 million is not necessarily better than a 2,000 square foot home with a nice view for a family of four. Why do they need a grand ballroom or six bedrooms and seven baths? Why should they have to be responsible for its maintenance? The same with second, third and fourth homes. Who needs the aggravation even if the extra real estate appreciates in value?

Real wealth is loving your environment. Living here in San Francisco, it is hard to go far without being overwhelmed by the city's natural beauty. We have eye-caressing views, voluptuous hills, a sparkling blue sky, and mild weather almost every day. Having all this is to me the best kind of wealth because we are not individually responsible for its maintenance. We don't pay insurance for the beautiful hills and we don't pay rent for the crystal blue sky or for the bright shining sun that caresses our skin. We can enjoy the beautiful natural and cultural surroundings every day without having to worry that each jewel is being properly maintained at our expense.

Real wealth is enjoying good health. I have come to realize through experience how many things can go wrong with the human body, marvelous as it may be. As though an answer to a prayer for greater compassion and patience, I have had the strange fate of experiencing almost every medical malady at one time or another. I have usually recovered quickly allowing my body to experience the next physical breakdown with undivided attention. When I feel fine, which somehow is most of the time, I feel blessed with a wealth money can't buy. I know because I've spent so much of mine trying.

Real wealth is having time to smell the roses of life without worrying about being late. I have come to the conclusion that the key to a happy, successful life is the ability to treat every person and activity as an end in itself as well as a means to an end. In order to maintain this balanced approach, I think that it is essential to have time. Many who pursue financial wealth as though it were the Messiah seem to never have enough time and therefore treat people and their "work" only as means to more important ends like wealth, social status and self-image. Then they wonder why they can never make enough money or gain enough recognition.

Real wealth is being able to love and be loved in return. It is finding people among family and friends who are much more ends in themselves than means to our ends. And failing that, or in addition to it, loving and being loved by an ever-faithful dog.

And, most of all, real wealth is feeling truly blessed for just being alive. For life itself is the greatest treasure of all.

POLICE BLOTTER

The Home Invasion Robbery with a Homicide committed on Wednesday evening on the 2400 block of Moraga is certainly of great concern to all of us in the Taraval. Our officers responded to a call of a woman needing help inside a residence. Upon arrival they found several occupants who had been restrained and one 44 year old male with a gun shot wound. That man died from the injury.

The Department is putting a great deal of resources into this case. This incident is being aggressively investigated by the Department's Homicide Unit and Crime Scene Investigations Unit. Information on the progress of this investigation will be released by the Homicide Unit via our Media Relations Unit. We share your concern for safety in all the neighborhoods of the Taraval. Keep our neighborhoods safe by reporting suspicious behaviors that you observe.

Taraval Station Leads the City in Latent Fingerprint Identifications Recently, the Department instituted taking fingerprints on Auto Burglary, Stolen Auto, and other property crime cases. For the first time, patrol officers at the Station Level were provided training and equipment to collect this crucial evidence. For several weeks officers Citywide have been taking fingerprints which the members of the Crime Scene Investigations Unit (CSI) have been analyzing and entering into the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS). This week, prints taken on two cases by Taraval Officers

came back to known suspects, linking them to the scenes of the crimes. Officer Kris Shinbori gets credit for the first Latent hit in the City linking a parolee to a stolen vehicle. Officer Duane Elzey collected a print from a follow-up case and got the second hit in the City, identifying a suspect in a burglary.

Bomb Squad Renders Neighborhood Safe On January 25th, at approximately 0930 hours, a woman reported that she had located a live grenade in the basement of a residence on the 1400 block of 21st Ave. Officers Dharmani and Mitchell responded to the scene. They contacted the resident, a Veteran of World War II, the Korean Conflict and Vietnam War, who had brought the item home after his deployment during World War II. Lt. Jerry Lankford established a command post. Sergeant Jennifer Dorantes, Officer Joe Chang and Officer John Higgins advised residents to shelter in place. Officer Mitchell utilized his military training to identify the ordnance, called for the Department's Explosive Ordnance Disposal Unit (EOD) to respond. Officer Dino Zografos safely contained the grenade and removed it.

These devices turn up from time to time in the homes of veterans, usually long forgotten until discovered by family members. Should you discover such an item, do not touch or move it. Call the police. No matter how long the device has been sitting quietly, it needs to be removed by professionals trained to deal with these items safely.

This is a partial report; for a complete posting of news from the Taraval Police Station, go to: www.westsideobserver.com/blotter.html

AT THE THEATER

Dr. Annette Lust and Flora Lynn Isaacson

COMING HOME, A STORYTELLING DELIGHT

Award winning playwright Anthol Fugard's *Coming Home* that opened at Berkeley Rep on January 20th is a delightful adventure into storytelling based on the memories of the South African Veronica, her deceased father, and Alfred, a family friend. And beneath the lyricism of these stories is a powerful message about social injustice. After Veronica leaves the small South African town where she cares for her father (played by Lou Ferguson) to realize her dream in the big city, penniless and ill with AIDS, she returns with her little son (played by Kohle T. Bolton when younger and by Jaden MalikWiggins when older) .ten years later to the little shack where she had lived She is greeted by her family friend Alfred (wonderfully played by Thomas Silcott as the town fool), who will help her nurture her small son, whom she compares to a tiny pumpkin seed that will some day grow into a fine pumpkin. Memories of their past, of her father's last days and of Veronica's life in the big city are narrated and sung by Veronica (Roslyn Ruff singing and told with charm and dynamic stage presence), and by Alfred and the father's ghost.

Well directed by Gordon Edelstein, Fugard's magical storytelling gently transmits a relevant message that aims to bring about an awareness of the pitiful situation in South Africa and beyond of not providing for impoverished AIDS victims that has brought about the deaths of thousands. This is revealed convincingly through Veronica's quiet and courageous persistence to resume the pursuit of her dreams for her young son to one day attend a university.

Coming Home wins us over by the poetry and wisdom of Fugard's writing that at the same time awakens our conscience concerning one of the world's worst plagues. *Coming Home* plays through Feb 28th. Info 510-647-2949 or visit Berkeleyrep.org. Dr. Annette Lust

CROSSING THE BORDERS: AURÉLIA'S ORATORIO

Spectators at Berkeley Rep's opening night of *Aurélia's Oratorio* are from the start intrigued after a male voice on a phone insists that the female protagonist respond and then view an arm, a leg and finally a young woman's body emerging from the drawers of a dresser. They are still more stunned as, to the sounds of chamber music and gypsy jazz, the female performer swings across the stage on red streamers and performs acrobatics in the air, viewing the world upside down just as the audience does throughout the piece filled with illusionary images.

Aurelia's Oratorio purposely defies the definition of the word oratorio, defined in Webster's dictionary as a "lengthy choral work usually of a religious nature and consisting of recitatives, arias and choruses without action or scenery."

Charles Chaplin's daughter Victoria, who conceived and directed the piece, and granddaughter Aurélia, who stars in the piece, have not only continued the tradition of their father and grandfather's silent film acting art. They have gone a step further to enhance that silent art by combining multiple theatre arts in an imaginative and original single theatrical form. As they tour across continents they readily reach audiences through mime, circus and acrobatic feats, dance, theatre of objects and illusions, puppetry and film. Their work provokes shock as well as delight..

Up next at Berkeley Rep is the West Coast Premiere of Athol Fugard's Coming Home Jan. 15-Feb. 28. For tix and info call 510-647-2949. Dr. Annette Lust

SWEET CAN'S DANCE THEATRE

Sweet Can, founded in 2006 by three teachers at the SF Circus Center, Beth Clarke, Kerri Kresinski, and Natasha Kaluza, has grown into a company of eight members with a mission to perform intimate circus, dance, acting and mime that interacts with the audience. In their recent second piece performed at the Dance Mission, there was a subtle underlying theme relating to our confrontation with a troubled world we can transform through our creative imagination and resources of everyday life. "Yes, Sweet Can, Can" is the company's motto

that reappears throughout the show.

This theme is portrayed at the start by four performers, directed by Wendy Parkman and Joanna Haigood, who survive the torrential effect of a devastating storm. In another scene Matt White buries his woes in an elegant dance with a broom which he woos with humor proving that interaction with everyday objects can lift our spirits.

Comical improvisation: the players race to sit on blocks and another scene tap-dancer's bodies are covered with trash cans. Some sections are more virtuoso in style: Beth Clarke's breathtaking slack rope and balancing of cups, Matt White's stick balancing, Kerri Kesinki's stunning aerial acrobatics, and Natasha Kaluza's dizzy hula hooping. These scenes are performed to the brilliant notes of Eo, a master composer playing live music on stage with the company.

Sweet Can's blend of clowning, acting, dance, mime and live music punctuated by acrobatic skills has opened doors and crossed artistic borders to reimagine circus as an art. *For information about Sweet Can's future productions, visit sweetcanproductions.com. Dr. Annette Lust*

SHE STOOPS TO COMEDY— GAY ROMP AT SF PLAYHOUSE

SF Playhouse opened the West Coast Premiere of "*She Stoops to Comedy*" a playful gender-bending comedy by one of New York's most innovative writer/performers David Greenspan. Set in a summer-stock production of Shakespeare's "*As You Like It*," actress Alexandra Page (Liam Vincent) schemes to woo back her estranged female lover by playing Orlando (who everyone knows is a man) opposite her lover Alison's (Sally Clawson) Rosalind.

Under Mark Rucker's inspired direction, the excellent cast enlivens Greenspan's script. Liam Vincent delivers his lines with perfect dry wit. Sally Clawson as Alison enacts her character's wish that an actor be more relaxed. As Director Hal and his assistant, Eve, Cole Alexander Smith and Carly Ciotti provide comic relief from the intensity of the lovers. Two people steal the show, Scott Capurro (who does an amazing monologue) as Simon Languish, an aging homosexual and Amy Resnick playing two characters in conversation with each other—one the very butch Kay Fein, an archaeologist and lighting designer and the other a vain, pretentious actress, Jane Summerhouse.

Artistic Director Bill English provides a great set. Kurt Landisman's lights were fantastic, and Valera Coble's costumes, imaginative. Of course, without the inspired directing by Mark Rucker, this play would not be as compelling.

Next at SF Playhouse on Jan 23 will be Animals out of Paper by Rajiv Joseph directed by Amy Glazer. Tickets: 415-677-9596 or go online at www.sfplayhouse.org. Flora Lynn Isaacson

THREE SISTERS AT THE SF JEWISH THEATRE

In a posh home in Queen Ann's Gate, London in the early 1990's, Sara Goode, a twice divorced bank executive, hosts a family reunion in celebration of her 54th birthday. Sara seems more successful than her two younger sisters, with a successful career and an involvement with a distinguished member of the British peerage (Victor Talmadge).

Meanwhile, Pfeni, the youngest 40 year old sister, is enjoying her travel writing career though her life is bit embroiled in an affair with a bisexual theatre director, Geoffrey (a flamboyant Cassidy Brown). Finally, Gorgeous, who seems to have it all in the marital department, is struggling to carve out a career as an on-air advice columnist.

The three sisters know where they've been but are less clear on where they are and where they are going—a condition echoed in the world around them as Communism fails and Capitalism struggles to fill the void. That is a struggle in which Sara's daughter Tess (Sarah Schwartz) is about to involve herself firsthand, smitten as she is with a young Lithuanian ex-patriot (Matt Hooker) who wants to return to his homeland to witness its liberation.

Mervin (Dan Hiatt), a Zionist furrier, drops by and throws in a wrench to Sara's well-ordered existence.

Director Aaron Davidman assembled a fine ensemble. *Coming up at the Jewish Theatre: Fabrik; the Legend of M. Rabinowitz, Feb 4-28, at 470 Florida Street. Info: 415-292-1233 or www.tjt-sf.org. Flora Lynn Isaacson,*



John Kirkpatrick
415.412.0559
john@johnkirkpatrick.com
www.johnkirkpatrick.com

Top Individual Producer in San Francisco's Largest Office



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

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

Address	BD	BA	PK	Sq.Ft.	Sold Date	Sale Price
25 Crestmont Drive	3	2	2 side by side	1282	12/29/09	727,500
227 Christopher Dr.	2	2	2 side by side	1570	12/30/09	735,000
90 Woodhaven Ct.	3	2.5	3 side by side	1282	12/16/09	775,000
237 Warren Drive	4	3	2 side by side	2177	11/30/09	1,088,000
92 Farview Ct.	2	1	1	1123	10/23/09	715,000
123 Dellbrook Ave.	3	2	2 Tandem	1576	10/30/09	750,000
678 Panorama Dr.	4	2	1	2048	10/23/09	849,000
373 Dellbrook Ave.	4	3	2 side by side	1558	10/30/09	885,000

Source: SFMLS

The TRI Coldwell Banker agent who sold the most San Francisco properties companywide in 2007 and 2008

VICTORIA TOBAR D.M.D.
Family and Cosmetic Dentistry

SUNSET DENTAL BUILDING
800 SANTIAGO ST. SUITE A
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94116

415 566 2222 | www.drviactoriatobar.com | info@drviactoriatobar.com

-SAY-
"I love you"
FROM HEAD TO TOE
WITH A MESSAGE ENVY
GIFT CARD

Perfectly HEALTHY. Perfectly CONVENIENT. Perfectly PRICED.

With professional therapists, convenient locations, and late night and weekend hours, a healthy escape will be waiting when your sweetheart needs it most.

Massage Envy

DALY CITY
494 Westlake Center
The Shops on Lake Merced
(650)757-ENVY (3689)

Franchises Available | [MassageEnvy.com](#) | Convenient Hours
Open 7 days. M-F 8am-10pm, Sat 8am-6pm, Sun 10am-6pm

Rates and services may vary by location. ©2010 Massage Envy Limited, LLC.

LOGOS • MENUS • BRANDING
LETTERHEAD • SIGNAGE
BOOK DESIGN • ILLUSTRATION

Ronnie
Casson
illustration
& design

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!
Three-Course Prix Fixe Dinner
\$25.00
Wednesdays in the Cliff House Bistro from 4:00 – 9:30 pm.

CHASE AWAY THE WINTER BLUES!

Wine Lover's Tuesday
Every Tuesday bottled wines are half price all day with purchase of entrée! (Ends 3/31/2010)

\$3 Moonlight Martinis
Sunday – Thursday 6 – 10 pm!
Featuring SKYY® Vodka and Tanqueray® Gin (Ends 3/31/2010)

Some restrictions apply. Promotions are not valid on holidays and cannot be combined with other offers.

VALET PARKING NOW AVAILABLE AFTER 5:00 PM!
www.CliffHouse.com
1090 Point Lobos San Francisco 415-386-3330

Serving Food As Good As Our Prices Are Low

TENNESSEE GRILL

1128 Taraval St. • (415) 664-7834 • Open 6am-9pm
Where Friends Meet

www.ronniecasson.com

VISION & EYE CARE

L. BRUCE MEBINE O.D.
& ASSOCIATES

- State-of-the-art Eye and Vision care in a personal and warm setting
- Family owned and serving our community for over 60 years

(415) 664-3089 • (415) 564-3072 (f)
340 West Portal Ave • SF
www.drbrucemebine.com

Master Stylist & Color Specialist | Maureen Sterling

Custom Geometrical Framework Haircuts
NY High Fashion Runway Styles

International expert in hair, make-up and skincare, ranging from photography, magazines, runways to movie-sets & celebrities!

Appts available Mon-Sat
Late evening appointments available
450 Dondee Way, Suite 8
Located in Rockaway Plaza @ Paul Storm Pacifica

FREE
Dimensional Color with Haircut
Introductory Offer – for a limited time only

Sterling Salon & Spa 650-219-5776

DRAMA

HAS ITS PLACE...
ON STAGE OR ON THE SCREEN

BUT NOT IN YOUR HOME IMPROVEMENT PROJECT!
Careful planning and management can minimize the stress and strain on both your spirit and your wallet.
Call for a free estimate and benefit from our 35 years of experience.

WILLIAM PATTENGILL
415-517-0287
Residential Design & Build Service
Lic. No. 898755

West Portal Merchants FireFighters Toy Program Catches Fire

By Elliot Wagner

The magical music was catching their attention, and on top of that came the voice; sounding like an old carnival barker, urging them to come in closer and see what mysteries were in store for them. Like in the Pied Piper, all the kids, and their parents, were being led off of the streets and into BookShop Plaza. The only thing missing was the bright red fire truck and its bells and sirens, but that would come later.

This was the grand finale of West Portal's own SF FireFighters Toy Program Drive & Raffle.

Both the young and "older" kids became a "captive" audience as "Kraynork the Magician," Mark Kronar, plied them with his bag of tricks. "Abra Cadabra," and another coin came out of the little girl's ear. Gosh, how many scarves can come out of one of his pockets? Say, have you seen a pesky wabbit wun by here?

BUSINESS CORNER

So, what could upstage an act like Mark's? Well how about Erin, from the Dubliner, decked out as Santa, snowy white beard and all. (For her own Xmas gift, I offered her Free Laser Hair Removal from Dimitra's...) Santa's lap was open to all who wanted to read their Christmas wish lists. Santa even posed for a licking by two bull dogs (but made them buy extra raffle tickets). So how did Erin get recruited to be Santa for the day? It turned out that our "FireFighter" Santa fell off his sleigh with a cold nose, so the merchants

Back or Neck Pain?

If you suffer from back or neck pain, you know they can interfere with a normal lifestyle. But there's good news! You don't have to live with it...

Dr. Scott Swanson & Team
We're here for you.
Parkside Chiropractic
parksidechiropractic.com • 2394 31st Avenue • San Francisco
415-566-7134

Assisted Living | Memory Care

Call Today to Schedule a Tour:
415.337.1339
One Thomas More Way, San Francisco
www.almaviaofsanfrancisco.org

"Residents are the heart of our community."

specializing in small production wines from around the world

Que Syrah retail wines and by the glass
Tuesday - Thursday: 4pm - 10pm
Friday, Saturday & Sunday: 3:30pm - 11pm
Closed Monday
Also available for private events
Tuesday Happy Hour
\$1 off all wines by the glass from 4-8pm every Tues.
230 W Portal Avenue
415.731.7000

Congratulations Green Family Contest Winners! Welcome Home Brook Family

**Thank You
Parkmerced!**
Green Family Contest Winners
The Brook Family

The future is here now. The Eco-Home is an early example of Parkmerced's future. It is the only home with a real-time utility monitoring system, sustainable construction and a design that promotes healthy living.

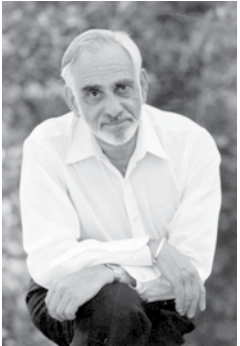
ON THE PLUS SIDE

MERidian 7-1212 or POpcorn

By Hank Basayne

I think we’ve lost something. Despite the many conveniences we enjoy with the wondrous advances of technology, there was a simpler, more predictable and more graceful time within living memory—say the middle of the last century. If you were born in the 1950s, or earlier, you’ll probably agree.

I know what time it is, or—if I don’t—my iPhone, my computer, or my television set will tell me, with alarming precision. But back in those days, when I had to wind my watch every night and set it frequently, if I wanted to know the correct time, I’d rely on Ma Bell. As a kid, growing up on the East Coast, I had only to dial MERidian 7-1212 and I’d hear a mellifluous female voice say, “When you hear the signal, the time will be eight-thirty-one and ten seconds, exactly.” Then a brief pause, then a beep. My children grew up here on the Left Coast and they learned very early that to get the right time they had only to dial POpcorn (which works out to 767-2676).



In my grandfather’s time he’d simply tell the telephone operator the name of the person he wanted to speak to. In my father’s time, he would tell her—always a her—the number he wanted to be connected to. But those numbers had prefixes that were names, names that told him, more or less, where the person was. I can remember, as a child of four, being drilled to remember my home number, which was Schuyler-4-3887. That was 79 years ago. Some memories die hard.

Glenn Miller had a popular record called PENnsylvania 6-5000. Jimmy Stewart starred in a movie named NOrthside 777, which took place in Chicago. John O’Hara wrote a book called BUtterfield-8, a glitzy New York neighborhood. Each of those prefixes evoked a place, an ambience.

Here in the Bay Area I was intrigued by the many San Francisco prefixes, colorful names that would bring to mind the exotic history of the West or feelings from the past. I loved YUkon-2, which was my first business phone prefix, and KLondike-5 made me know I was really in the romantic West. There were many other wonderful, rich phone numbers here that began with LOmbard-4, SKyline-1, TUxedo-5, MArket (the Van Ness area), EXbrook (the financial district), WEst-1 (the Marina). Others I remember include SEabright, MOntrose, JUniper, BAyview, BAAlboa, FIllmore, GArlfield, PRospect, DElaware, EVergreen, WAlnut, HEmllock, MIssion, VAlencia, and JOrdan.

My life is increasingly digitized. Area Codes, door-entry buttons, PIN numbers, clock faces. (I really miss “...the big

hand is on the four and the little hand is on ten”.)

The Arabs gave us numbers which are amazingly useful. Otherwise we’d still be stuck with just One or More Than One. Our civilization would be unrecognizable without that precious gift. But there is ancient power in names. To name something is to exercise a certain control over it, which began with Adam and Eve in Eden. I count myself fortunate to live in a time when the geographers have not (yet) succumbed to numbering places instead of naming them. Otherwise I’d miss the magic and mystery of knowing places called Thief River Falls in Minnesota, Death Valley, Hangtown, Oxbow, Bull Run and the ever-enigmatic Yreka. I’d miss all the wonderful Native American place names that describe, locate and identify where we are and where we are not, from Ottawa, Miami, Saginaw, Natchez, Chattahoochee, Oshkosh all the way to Walla Walla. I’d miss the Spanish named cities and towns from Santa Fe to La Jolla, Sacramento, Coronado, El Cajon, Laguna and Los Banos... not to mention all of the many western cities that begin with San and Santa, named for the saints.

I think we’ve lost something important as we’ve become more mechanized and tech-savvy. We’ve lost a lot of the warmth and color and romance that used to suffuse our lives. My present phone number begins with 567-. I think that used to be JOrdan-7. I may start using it again. A man does not fight only to win.

Hank Basayne is a San Franciscan, an author and a minister. He’s glad he has a name, not a number.

Toy Program (Cont. from p. 9)

were faced with a Santa suit but no one to fill it. Then Erin McLaughlin, manager & bartender at the Dubliner, stuffed a pillow into the suit, took on the challenge and won the day!

Martial arts were featured — with a flurry of kicks and flying fists, students from Jill Doherty’s Tat Wong Kung Fu Academy put on a mighty awesome demonstration of why nobody ever picks on these kids: strength, discipline, and respect.

In the finale, the firefighters made their grand entrance, zooming up the Avenue on the bright red fire truck from Portola Station #39. Big grins broke out on the kid’s faces as they were lifted up onto the fire truck and allowed to ring the bell. Guess what happened next? You know the trouble about being all dressed up and supposedly nowhere to go: A FIRE! So, with sirens blaring, the firemen jumped onto their truck and raced off to put the fire out. Oh well, picking the winning raffle tickets would just have to be put off till later.

Behind all this frivolity was something very serious, the joy of helping 25,000 disadvantaged children that might never have felt the love and joy of receiving a Christmas present this year if it were not for the San Francisco Firefighters and their Toy Program, the City’s largest and the nation’s oldest program of its kind. Besides helping individual families in need, the Toy Program also serves many community organizations, including shelters for abused women and children, inner-city schools, neighborhood groups, children’s cancer wards, and pediatric AIDS units.

In spite of the hard economic times this year, with generosity such as ours in West Portal and in other districts throughout the City they were able to rack up some amazing numbers: by playing Santa with a sleigh filled with 40,000 toys, it meant that over 25,000 of our SF children were smiling and happy when they received some toys on Christmas morning.

It hasn’t always been this way; For years, Dimitra’s has had a Firefighters Toy Barrel outside the front door of the salon, guarded by 2 colorful six-foot tall Nutcracker Soldiers. But they were forlorn, because no one came to Dimitra’s (the Greek) bearing gifts. It was decided to switch our strategies. Four years ago, we set a “Donation Jar” on our front desk, with a sign announcing that Dimitra’s would match whatever money our clients gave.

In 2008, Dimitra’s was able to buy over \$700 worth of toys. Seeing this as a good idea, I decided to let all of West Portal join in this year, by holding a huge Toy Program Raffle: 81 prizes worth over \$4K from 31 merchants. Now, all we had to do was sell tickets. It’s a well known secret, if you really want something from someone, bribe them! So

the gauntlet was thrown down: Dimitra’s would give two pieces of homemade Baklava for each \$10 worth of tickets, and \$20 would get a 10 minute chair massage. Taking up the challenge, Ron, the owner of the Dubliner, offered up drink tokens, 1 for \$10, 3 for \$20. Dimitra’s edged out a victory, but together we sold 75% of all the raffle tickets.

As promised, all of the Raffle ticket money was spent in West Portal, as our own economic stimulus package. Through everyone’s efforts the West Portal /SF Firefighters Toy Program Raffle was able to purchase over 350 toys, books and games, with the help of generous discounts from BookShop West Portal, Just Awesome Board Games, Growing Up Toys, Ambassador Toys and Walgreens.

It is not easy to put on an event of this magnitude and I would like to thank everyone who donated their time and energy to help make this event a success. I would especially like to thank the staff of the Dubliner, for making it “competitive,” and Maryo of the Postal Chase for his generosity in copying all of the posters. A special thanks for the free performance by our Premiere Magician, Mark Kronar, who can be contacted at (415-868-4904). In addition, I would like to give a big Thank You! to our Supervisor, Sean Elsbernd, for his donation of our grand prizes: (2) Tickets, plus parking, to the ‘49er 2010 Season Game of Their Choice (won by Sharon Udovich), as well as (2) Tickets to the Nov 2010 Charles Schwab Golf Championship at Harding Park (Vicky Potthoff).

Finally, we could not have succeeded without all the donations by our own West Portal Merchants, and especially, the SF Firefighters for their never-ending time and devotion to a great program .

As every good optimist would say, “The fire truck was ½ full of toys.” So, next year, when its time to buy 2010 Raffle Tickets, remember “Buy Big, Win Big.” For the West Portal merchants, take note that there is nothing quite as rewarding as having

your customers come back in, bragging and telling everyone about all the prizes they won from the Raffle Ticket that they bought at the local store. Thank you to everyone who contributed in both large and small measures.

** The West Portal / SF Firefighters Toy Program photos and a complete listing of the merchant raffle prize donations and ticket sellers, are available on the merchants’ website: www.westportalmerchants.com

Elliot Wagner, his wife Dimitra, plus brother Dr Andrew Wagner, have operated Dimitra’s SkinCare & Medi-Spa on West Portal Avenue for over 30 years. Elliot is also serving as the new President of the West Portal Ave Merchant Association, as well as being a VP on the SF Council of District Merchants. His other annual WP raffle, held in May during Small Business Week, sponsors Dimitra’s “WP Boobies & the Beast” Team in the Susan G. Komen 3-Day 60-Mile Breast Cancer Walk.

Your Neighborhood Treasure



Our Original Location at 637 Portola Drive • 415-753-0750

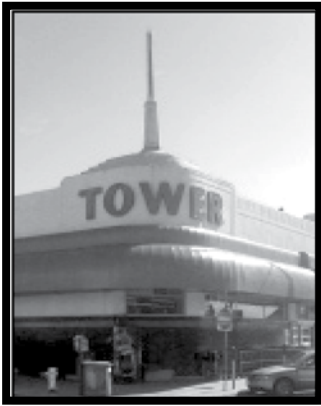
Monday – Saturday 6:30am to 7pm, Sunday 7am to 6pm

Visit the new Creighton’s Bakery

In the Diamond Heights Shopping Center at 5214-D Diamond Heights Blvd
Monday – Saturday 6am to 7pm, Sunday 7am to 6pm • 415-282-2366



Present this ad & receive 10% off your purchase
2-7 p.m. Monday through Thursday



Tower Market
635 Portola Drive
(415) 6641600

MOLLIE STONE’S
The Best of Both Worlds®



Grand Central Market
2435 California Street
(415) 567-4902

Your Local Grocer for Fresh Meat, Seafood, Poultry, Produce, Deli and Catering

A Winning Treatment for Sciatica

Scott Swanson, BS, DC

Sciatica often starts suddenly with pain in your lower back that radiates down from your buttock to one thigh and into your leg. You may have pain when you sit, sneeze or cough. You may also feel weakness, “pins and needles,” numbness, or a burning or tingling sensation down your leg.

Sciatica symptoms may result from general wear and tear, plus any sudden pressure on a disc. Most commonly, this occurs when a protruding or herniated disc irritates the sciatic nerve. Sciatica is a major source of disability and impairment of daily living activities. About 20 percent those with sciatica experience symptoms for more than six weeks. Fortunately, new evidence published this year in an international medical journal, *The Spine Journal*, identifies an effective treatment for this debilitating condition.

Medical doctors recently published the results of a study involving sciatica treatment. In the high quality study, 102 patients with acute back pain and sciatica with disc protrusion were randomized to active and simulated manipulation. Treatments were administered 5 days per week by experienced chiropractors for up to 4 weeks.

Results of the study were dramatic. Chiropractic care delivered a significant pain reduction benefit compared with simulated manipulation, and no patient experienced an adverse event. These impressive findings have important implications for the treatment of sciatica. Practitioners managing patients with acute back pain and sciatica with protruding discs should consider chiropractic care as a first option.

Dr. Scott Swanson is a chiropractor in Outer Sunset District of San Francisco specializing in the treatment of non-surgical spinal conditions. Call 415-566-7134 for additional information.



WHO’s Update on the H1N1 (Swine Flu) Virus

In April 2009, WHO was informed of human infections caused by a new H1N1 virus. The report was of immediate concern because the genes contained in the virus were from animal influenza viruses, definitively establishing this virus as very different from the usual seasonal human influenza viruses. Further laboratory testing confirmed that existing antibodies to the current human H1N1 viruses did not react to the new H1N1 virus further underscoring the potential of the new virus to cause a pandemic. But the most important information was when investigations indicated that this new virus was causing community outbreaks with person-to-person spread. In Mexico, early outbreaks included deaths and severe respiratory illnesses requiring ventilators among previously healthy young people.

The H1N1 pandemic is not the same as seasonal influenza and differs in major respects. Large outbreaks occurred outside the usual season for influenza. The virus caused a striking and unusual pattern of severe illness and deaths in younger people, with many deaths caused by viral pneumonia, an especially aggressive form of pneumonia. This pattern is not typically seen during seasonal influenza.

The pandemic is not over, but to date, more than 14,000 laboratory-confirmed deaths have been reported. We often see the number of deaths compared with figures from seasonal influenza. This is like comparing apples with oranges. Deaths from seasonal influenza are based on statistical models. Deaths from the pandemic have been confirmed one by one through laboratory tests and unquestionably are much lower than the true number. It usually takes about one to two years after the end of a pandemic to get more realistic estimates of deaths using statistical modeling.

SAFETY of the VACCINE (As Reported by WHO)

Are pandemic vaccines safe? Outcomes of studies completed to date suggest that pandemic vaccines are as safe as seasonal influenza vaccines. Side effects seen so far are similar to those observed with seasonal influenza vaccines.

SIDE EFFECTS What are the expected side effects of the new vaccines?

Some side effects can be associated with influenza vaccination. How often they result depends on the type of vaccine, how it is administered, and the age of the vaccine recipient. There are two main types of vaccines: one is manufactured with inactivated viruses, the other uses live viruses.

Inactivated vaccines, administered by injection, commonly cause local reactions such as soreness, swelling and redness at the injection site, and less often can cause fever, muscle- or joint- aches or headache. These symptoms are generally mild, do not need medical attention, and last 1 to 2 days. Fever, aches and headaches can occur more frequently in children compared to elderly people.

Rarely, such influenza vaccines can cause allergic reactions such as hives, rapid swelling of deeper skin layers and tissues, asthma or a severe multisystem allergic reaction due to hypersensitivity to certain vaccine components.

Live vaccines are given via a nasal spray, and can commonly cause runny nose, nasal congestion, cough, and can less frequently cause sore throat, low grade fever, irritability and head- and muscle- aches. Wheezing and vomiting

RISKS FALSELY ASSOCIATED WITH VACCINES Will pandemic vaccines contain thiomersal, which some believe is a risk to health?

Thiomersal is a commonly used vaccine preservative to prevent vaccine contamination by bacteria during use. Inactivated vaccines will contain thiomersal if they are supplied in multi-dose vials. Some products can have “traces” of thiomersal when the chemical is used during the production process as an antibacterial agent, which is later removed during the purification process.

Thiomersal does not contain methyl mercury, which is a naturally-occurring compound and whose toxic effects on humans have been well studied. Thiomersal contains a different form of mercury (i.e. ethyl mercury, which does not accumulate, is metabolized and removed from the body much faster than methyl mercury).

The safety of thiomersal has been rigorously reviewed by scientific groups. There is no evidence of toxicity in infants, children or adults, including pregnant women, exposed to thiomersal in vaccines.

Additional information World Health Organization: <http://www.who.org>



**RELIABLE DRIVER
LUXURY TOWN CAR**

- All Bay Area Airports
- SFO \$42
- OAK \$65
- SJO \$125
- City Transfers \$25 (except holidays \$40)

Romulo @305-0819

SHARON THE HEALTH

Small changes in your diet make a big difference Healthy Eating, Healthy Heart

By Sharon Caren

My Valentine gift to you and your loved ones: Tips for a healthy heart. The American Heart Association is dedicated to reducing deaths caused by cardiovascular disease by embracing prevention. Their motto is Learn and Live. You’ll love their website www.americanheart.org to find all sorts of helpful information: healthy cooking, dining out, healthy eating for kids, and heart-smart shopping. They suggest making small changes in your diet every chance you get and you’ll have a healthier and happier heart!

Sometimes we need a more personal approach, especially if there’s a health crisis at hand or some chronic conditions such as diabetes, eating disorders or just plain fatigue with diets that don’t work. I’d like to introduce a colleague of mine, Mandisa, who’s a certified nutrition educator and a pleasure to work with. Her website also has wonderful information; www.simpleholisticliving.com.

The Secret (Everyone Should Know) to Boost Metabolism and Weight Loss

Are you ready to get off the diet roller coaster once and for all? It’s February and most of us have convinced ourselves “this year, I’m starting my diet.” However, almost every year most of us have our new year resolution and we do pretty good for a while. We learn new nutrition information and renew our commitment to stick to our diet. Then what happens? We lose motivation. We fall off track and stay stuck. Sound familiar?

Healthy living and eating has many benefits. However, in this society we have been conditioned to think of healthy food as boring and bland. And stress is socially acceptable and not many of us have any time for ourselves. This somehow fuels the possibility that living healthy is dreadful and unreachable. This is a very limiting belief of what healthy eating and healing can be.

How does this relate to boosting your metabolic power? Let’s first look at the metabolic connection between stress and metabolism. According to the American Medical Journal of Sciences, the human body is built with a brilliant system called the Autonomic Nervous System (ANS).

Scientists show the ANS is responsible for digestion. The Parasympathetic Nervous System and Sympathetic Nervous System are two sub-systems of the ANS. The Parasympathetic Nervous System is commonly known as the “Rest and Digest” response. This is the optimal state for digestion and boosting metabolism. When the Parasympathetic Nervous system is activated, our metabolism increases. The sympathetic nervous system is known as the “fight or flight system.” This is our stress response. Studies show that when we are stressed out, our digestion shuts down. So how does this relate to increased weight loss?



Well, even though most of us don’t confront tigers on our lunch hour, we do encounter daily stress. On a physiological level, the body doesn’t differentiate between a tiger chasing you, your boss yelling at you or even just getting tense in traffic. All are stressors and tend to trigger the body’s survival mechanism that includes shutting off digestion, directing blood flow away from the gut and to arms and legs, as well as quick thinking. This is a great mechanism for our survival in short term circumstances but also leads to a decrease in our metabolic power in the long term.

Another hormone the body excretes when the body is stressed is cortisol. According to MedicineNet.com, studies show that increased cortisol in the system leads to increased fat accumulation. That means people who are stressed out also tend to gain weight. If you seem to be doing everything right for weight loss but stuck on the same plateau, ask yourself about stress. In a stressed state, no amount of calorie counting or exercise will get you the body you really want.

The Secret to boost metabolism instantly is relaxation to keep the body from producing excessive cortisol. The number one way to do this is to slow down, relax, and practice mindful eating. How can you do this? If you eat breakfast in 10 minutes, make it 15. Give yourself at least 30 minutes to eat lunch and dinner. Maybe you can reschedule your home and work time to give yourself a little more time to eat and relax.

It only takes one minute to get the body back into an optimal metabolic state and that is mindful and conscious breathing. Deep belly breathing helps to turn off the stress and activates the Parasympathetic Nervous response. When we consciously adopt the deep, belly rhythmic breathing patterns of the relaxed state, we trick the central nervous system and allow our body to shift from low digestive activity to a state of full digestive activity.

At every meal ask yourself, “am I about to eat under stress?” If the answer is yes, take 10 long, slow, deep belly breaths. Breathing this way before and during meals is great way to become a more relaxed eater and boost metabolism that leads to increased weight loss.

To learn more about a holistic weight loss series and programs to help you get unstuck in your weight goals, call 650.557.1463 or visit simpleholisticliving.com. Mandisa Fabris is a Certified Nutrition Counselor, Wellness Expert and Life Coach. References: www.westsideobserver.com/columns/Caren.html

I love your feedback, how you like the articles, any questions, or any suggestions for future articles. Please call me at 650.359.6579 blessings, Sharon Caren.



Welcoming New Patients

- ◆ Same Day Appointments
- ◆ Primary Care for Men and Women
- ◆ Most Insurance Accepted
- ◆ Access to Hundreds of Sutter Specialists

Meet Our New Doctor
Meenakshi Jain, MD
INTERNAL MEDICINE

Call 415-731-6300
to make an appointment



**Sutter Pacific
Medical Foundation**
A Sutter Health Affiliate
With You. For Life.

595 Buckingham Way
San Francisco
(next to Stonestown Mall)
sutterpacific.org

Don't I know you from somewhere?

By Carol Kocivar © 2010

We kept looking at each other, not so silently thinking, "Don't I know you from somewhere?" Where do you shop? Were our kids in pre-school together?

More and more, the answer seems to be we pass each other in sweat clothes at the YMCA. I see my neighbors from across the street more frequently at the Y than on the corner.

I was at a work meeting the other day when we finally figured out we "knew" each other because we see each other in the hallway at the Y.

New Year's resolutions are drawing many at the oddest hours to sweat on stationary bikes.

I can just hear the kids saying, "Get A Life!" Well, that is what we are doing on Friday evenings at 5 PM lifting weights.

My YMCA of choice is Stonestown. I can combine a walk to the Y with weights and stretching and back again in an hour.

And you know me. It is a chance to not only listen to music but to also try out the latest App on my phone. Too cool. A full body workout just a click away.

I don't know if it is luck or whether kids really sometimes DO use parents as role models. But I now get a kick when I visit my kids and they take time in their day to work out.

The really nice thing about the Y is that it is not only a place to work out.

Its mission is to "build strong kids, strong families and strong communities by enriching the lives of all people through spirit, mind and body."

There are programs for kids, teens, seniors that go way beyond lifting weights. Here are some highlights of recent student Excel programs:

The Jose Ortega After School program participated in the Lights On After School event, which brought awareness for the need of after school programming.

Aptos Middle School students participated in ExCEL's annual Youth Action Conference—going to workshops on tutoring, preparing for the future, public speaking, and conveying ideas effectively.

The Sheridan After School Program is working on a gardening project.

The Miraloma After School Program gardening group did significant work in the after school garden area. The kids have been cutting down, clearing out, and composting all of the shrubs and debris. The Stop Motion Animation class has been working on short stop-motion films, complete with lighting and sets.

The Lawton PRIDE After School Program now offers a Fencers' Club.

So even if I may miss a day or two at the gym, I know involvement with the Y not only literally strengthens me but also strengthens my community.

You can catch me at the Y at about 6. (You guess whether AM or PM.)

(In the spirit of transparency, I am a member of the Board of Directors of the Stonestown Family YMCA.)

Feedback: kocivar@westsideobserver.com

Soccer Fields (Cont. from p. 1)

RPD that they do NOT have a CEQA exemption and they must submit additional environmental information for the project. This makes sense when you consider that each field will be made from 30,000 to 50,000 ground-up rubber tires and then covered with plastic grass. The RPD now needs to do a complete EIR on this project.

The RPD also needs community support to install synthetic turf fields. The neighborhoods surrounding the Potrero Hill Recreation Center and Rossi Playground both stopped the installation of synthetic turf fields at their parks.

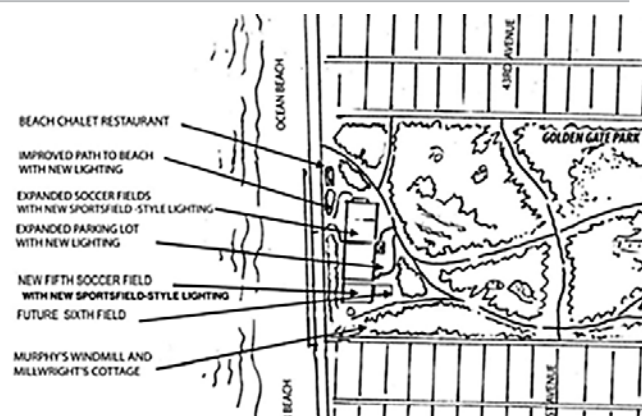
On May 15, 2009, a form letter email was sent only to soccer players and coaches telling them to submit a form letter/petition supporting the GG Park synthetic soccer fields or they would not be built. Of course, many of the contacted soccer players signed petitions and wrote letters, including children and soccer players living outside of San Francisco. These petitions and emails supposedly fulfilled the RPD's "community support" requirement. Unfortunately, almost all of the 800,000 people who live in San Francisco and do not play soccer were not informed about the project, nor were they invited to submit petitions as the soccer players were. The RPD finally started conducting community meetings in November, which they staged using RPD-invited soccer players and coaches. But RPD seems to have forgotten that Golden Gate Park is everyone's park.

SF's RPD's newly-appointed General Manager, Phil Ginsberg (Mayor Newsom's former Chief of Staff), is pushing hard for the synthetic turf fields to be installed. Ginsberg, appointed on July 7 after his predecessor, Yomi Agunbiade, resigned, claims that the installation of synthetic turf fields will increase field revenues, increase soccer field usage, reduce field maintenance costs by 75%, and save water, all at the same time. Ginsberg may be right about the water and the field usage, but the rest of his claims are debatable.

Well-maintained grass fields are much less expensive than synthetic turf fields, and preferred by most soccer players. According to the RPD's single cost analysis, each field will cost \$800,000 to install and \$6,000 to maintain annually. The synthetic turf fields will have to be replaced every 10 years, at a cost of approximately \$350,000 for each field. The report states that it costs \$42,000 per year to maintain an existing grass field and about \$50,000 per field every time the RPD wants to completely replace irrigation and turf. The current grass fields are in poor condition because the cash-strapped RPD failed to budget for renovating the fields for the past 12 years, since 1998.

The projected \$9.9 million project costs will be paid for by the City Fields Foundation and money from the 2008, \$185 million, Clean and Safe Neighborhood Parks general obligation bond. The City Fields Foundation works with the City in a public-private partnership to help renovate sport fields with synthetic turf and field lighting installations. The City Fields Foundation and the RPD have renovated park fields at Garfield Square Park, Silver Terrace Playground, Kimball Playground, and Crocker-Amazon Park.

The RPD and Ginsberg are falsely claiming that placing synthetic fields in the Park will be cheaper than the existing-grass fields over time because the field usage will almost triple, hoping we'll believe revenue will also triple. Even



Sketch showing the proposed soccer field layout, including a fifth and sixth field. The fields are shown in the documents submitted by RPD to the Planning Department, but they are not included in the literature that RPD and City Fields Foundation have been giving to the public.

with all of SF's newly renovated fields and fee increases, the RPD's athletic field permit revenue declined by over four percent last year. In 2007, the RPD increased its field rental rates from \$25 per hour to \$65 per hour, a 160% increase. The 100-year-old, 70-team SF Soccer Football League saw six teams leave the City league last year, and now the whole league is considering playing out of town because it is too expensive to play soccer in SF. Boxer Stadium has reportedly lost over \$100,000 from teams changing venues. Desperate-for-money, RPD keeps increasing field fees, it may soon see many empty fields, especially between 6pm and 10pm.

Ironically, as the RPD attempts to pave over the west end of GG Park with artificial turf, they are also trying to implement a Park preservation fee that would be added to the cost of tickets for the de Young Museum and the California Academy of Sciences. RPD's Ginsberg is also thinking about a new citywide parcel tax on City property owners. Ginsberg will soon find out that the passage of his synthetic fields project will cost him any chance of passing a property assessment tax dedicated to the Rec and Park Department.

There are many other parks and high schools outside of GG Park where synthetic turf soccer fields could be built. Locating synthetic turf fields outside the Park may increase the number of synthetic soccer fields in the City and still allow park soccer players to continue playing on a uniquely reusable and environmentally sustainable surface known as real grass.

This is a simple but contentious issue.

People who believe that sports recreation should be the main use of Golden Gate Park want the synthetic turf soccer fields and 60 foot-high field lights. People who believe Golden Gate Park should accommodate sports recreation but should remain as natural as possible, want better-kept grass fields and no lights.

If you are opposed to the placement of synthetic turf soccer fields and 60 foot lights in Golden Gate Park, please write to your District Supervisor, volunteer to help out, and go to www.sfoceanedge.org and sign a petition against the synthetic turf fields. Golden Gate Park is everyone's park!

George Wooding, President, West of Twin Peaks Central Council. Feedback: wooding@westsideobserver.com

Laguna Honda Delays (Cont. from p. 5)

delayed move-in date to taxpayers. You'd be wrong.

Facing (at last report), that each month of delay on the construction project would cost an additional \$1.5 million monthly, you'd think a potential five- to six-month delay that may cost \$7.5 million to \$9 million in additional expenses would be something LHH would want to communicate to taxpayers footing the bill. You'd be wrong.

Facing a \$522 million deficit next fiscal year, the City doesn't need surprising new expenses, so you'd think that the increased cost of operating both LHH's current facilities and its new facilities — long feared by City officials as a dual-expense — would prompt LHH to communicate with the community. You'd be wrong.

Facing a delayed move-in date, you'd think LHH (given its handsomely-paid three-member Communications Department) would update its web site and its separate Replacement Project web site with information regarding the postponed grand opening. You'd be wrong, since as of January 18, a month after announcing to its staff the postponed move date, neither web site reflects the delay. The web site's "New Construction" feature "What's New - Project Updates" links you to a one-page status report dated January 2009 — a year-old document! Has nothing significant happened with construction during an entire year?

And there's more. In a January 5 letter to Mivic Hirose, the president of the West of Twin Peaks Central Council, George Wooding, raised a number of questions about the postponed move-in date, asking detailed questions about what may have caused the delay. He requested that LHH re-establish communications with the local community, specifically asked Hirose to respond to each question raised in his letter, and asked for a date on which LHH intends to hold a community forum.

Hirose's response was characteristically pathetic, completely evading answering any questions raised by Wooding and artfully dodging answering whether LHH will hold a Town Hall meeting with the community any time soon. Of note, her response failed to confirm or deny the six potential reasons that the LHH Replacement Program may have failed State inspections of its replacement facilities.

But her reply needs to be placed in perspective. Hirose's

evasiveness has been ongoing since her appointment as the interim, and then actual, Executive Administrator of Laguna Honda Hospital following John Kanaley's death last March.

On April 16, 2009 Wooding had e-mailed a list of questions to Hirose regarding plans for the new hospital and whether there were any plans to integrate patients at SFGH's Mental Health Rehabilitation Facility as patients at LHH — in effect turning LHH into a mixed-use facility serving both elderly and disabled patients with patients having primarily mental health diagnoses in a single facility. After no response from Hirose, he e-mailed her again asking pretty much the same questions, but she again never responded. So on June 25 he sent an e-mail to Hirose requesting a meeting. After several delays, Wooding and two associates were able to obtain an appointment with Hirose on August 14, four months after he contacted her in April.

From his standpoint, the August meeting in Hirose's office was a failure since no opportunity to ask LHH about policy questions was permitted, and no policy questions answered. Hirose eventually agreed that LHH wanted to be good neighbors. At the end of the meeting, she agreed to introduce herself to the community at a West of Twin Peaks Central Council meeting.

Provided a five-minute slot on the October WOTPCC meeting agenda, Hirose introduced herself, but according to reports from attendees didn't discuss any LHH policy questions other than to state that "LHH cares about helping its residents and is proud of its newly built hospital." By reports, Hirose went over her allotted time by spending approximately eight minutes discussing her background, and spent another seven minutes showing pictures of the artwork proposed for the new campus and discussing the "success stories" of two or three of LHH's residents. She apologized for having only brought only one copy of LHH's annual report for 2009, failing to mention that it is readily available on LHH's web site.

At the time of the October meeting — seven months following John Kanaley's untimely death — LHH had not answered one policy question that had been asked.

Three months later, Hirose claimed in her January 5 response about the postponed opening of LHH's new facilities that she had attended the October WOTPCC meeting,

so she doesn't "understand why" anyone would say she has not communicated with neighbors.

How can a woman of her education and experience as a City employee not understand that now 10 months following Kanaley's death, still not one policy question about LHH has been answered for the community? How can someone of her purported stature pretend that her October presentation can be construed as effective community outreach by LHH?

The last community forum LHH sponsored was in September 2008; since then it has failed to do any community outreach, despite having a staff of three people in its Communications Dept. paid \$380,000 annually (including fringe benefits), and despite the Nov 2008 Wide Angle Communications consultant report that recommended increasing community outreach.

If one of LHH's public relations goals is to hide information from the surrounding community and the broader public, it has done a great job.

Will it take placing public records requests with California's Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD) to uncover whether LHH's delayed move-in date is the result of failing one, or more, required building inspections? And once that material becomes available publicly, will LHH then start communicating to all San Franciscans the status of its \$584 million replacement buildings that are way over budget and approximately four-and-a-half-years way behind schedule?

Or will District 7 Supervisor Sean Elsbernd — with his seats on the Board of Supervisors Budget and Finance Committee, and the Board's City Operations and Neighborhood Services Committee, the latter of which has authority to hold hearings on issues involving public works, infrastructure, public health, seniors, and the disabled, among others — perform his ministerial duties to schedule and hold a hearing on Laguna Honda's newest delay?

What is it going to take for City officials to provide accountability about the Laguna Honda bond measure to San Franciscans in a truly transparent and timely manner?

Monette-Shaw, an accountability watchdog, operates www.stopLHHdownsize.com, where reports cited in this column can be found. Feedback: monette-shaw@westsideobserver.com

FROM THE BORDER

REVISIONING THE GARDEN:

LOSING THE LAWN

By Hilary Gordon / Photos by Blair Randall, 2009



Lawn replacement: Garden for the Environment makes a community decision.

Winter is a time to reimagine the garden. Deciduous trees and shrubs are bare, winter pruning is done and the spaces in the garden open up visually. Winter is also dreamtime, when rainy days or weeks let the view of the garden through wet windows blur and run. It is easier to imagine now, what if we moved, removed, cut back,

replanted, reshaped?

Winter visions at the GFE also involve moving the garden step-by-step closer to its goal of demonstrating sustainable gardening principles. Where can we improve, and make our walk match our talk more closely?

One winter renovation this year has been somewhat drastic. We removed the small lawn in the outdoor classroom area.

"People who dare to make this change also benefit by saving on their water bills and on gas for the lawnmower, as well as reducing the use of commercial fertilizers and weed killers."

We did this because mowed turf is not a sustainable choice for most garden situations in our arid state. Turf areas in the West are reported to absorb "as much as half of outdoor residential water use." (*Water-Wise Gardening for California*, editors of *Sunset magazine*) In most garden settings, there are more sustainable alternatives to turf.

But blocking this much-needed change is an outdated aesthetic which equates stretches of neatly mowed, uniformly green lawns with suburban civilized living. In our imaginations lawns are associated with healthy outdoor lifestyles, although in reality they may be an indicator of weekends spent with gas fumes, noise and chemical fertilizers and weed killers.

Lawns are also associated with the safety and discipline of conformity. But now even in the more conservative neighborhoods of San Francisco the little scalped lawns in front of the Marina style row houses are being replanted one by one with mixed, drought-tolerant borders.



These borders can delight the heart, offering a seasonally changing show of beauty, attracting birds, honeybees, and butterflies. People who dare to make this change also benefit by saving on their water bills and on gas for the lawnmower, as well as reducing the use of commercial fertilizers and weed killers.

So what were we doing with a lawn at the GFE?

The toughest decisions about lawn areas are when kids and adults actually play, lie, and picnic on them. It's hard to wean ourselves away in those cases, and the lawn in the outdoor classroom area was the lunch and snack picnic area for many a school field trip.

Nevertheless, part of our job is to experiment with and demonstrate alternatives. So right now, students from the Fall GCETP class are studying our choices. We're looking forward to an exciting new experiment in urban sustainability when they redesign this area with boulders? Native bunch grasses? Walk-on ground covers? Permeable hardscape? Stay tuned for the exciting conclusion.

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

FOUNDATION AND RETAINING WALLS SEISMIC RETROFITS DECKS AND STEEL FRAMING

GARAGES AND ADDITIONS

415 747-1000

Safe Engineering Construction

Engineering
Design & Build
20 Years Experience
Free Estimate

Lic# 564297 • Engineer Lic# 43437

Real Estate Values (Cont. from p. 1)

number exceeds 4 or 5 months, then the buyers have negotiation position. As long as it's lower than 3 months, the sellers are perceived to have the stronger position. In February 2009 the rate peaked at 7 months. Since then it has dropped back to 1.8 months as of January 1, 2010 for the area of the distribution of this paper. Currently the market forces are back to favoring sellers. As of January 1st there are 60 homes for sale and there were 34 sold in December. There are 42 homes in contract at the time of this article.

The Westside has neighborhoods that vary from Midtown Terrace and Miraloma Park to St Francis Wood, West Portal and

Forest Hills. The prices range from multi-million to low seven hundred thousand. Our homes have appreciated very well over the past 15 years. (See chart above). From 1995 till 2009 the median went from \$298,000 to \$822,000 which is a rate of change of almost 64%.

We are fortunate to live in these neighborhoods, as with the home I grew up in, the people change from time to time but the neighborhoods remain elementally the same. Good solid housing for creating homes.

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



Janet Moyer
Landscaping is a
full-service
landscaping company
specializing in
sustainable landscapes

One of the
"100 Fastest Growing
Private Companies"
in the Bay Area
SF Business Times,
2008 & 2009

Award winning design-
"Outstanding
Achievement" Award
*California
Landscape Contractors
Association*, 2007 & 2008



415-821-3760 · 1031 Valencia Street, San Francisco · jmoyerlandscaping.com

Landscape Contractor License 853919 · Pest Control License 36389

KEN TOPPING HOME IMPROVEMENTS



"Your cabinet and remodeling source."

KITCHEN & BATH Contractors & Designers

***From start to finish...
we can do it all!!***

Mon. - Sat., 9am - 4:30 pm

415.731.3930

kentopping@sbcglobal.net • Since 1953 CA Lic. #141304

3101 VICENTE ▼ SAN FRANCISCO

Call Ken

415-602-8205



MOBILE NOTARY SERVICE



Experience World Class Dining In the Neighborhood

*An intimate gathering with friends
or a festive luncheon event for a large group*

Special Lunch Menu: Tu-Sa: 11:30 am - 2 pm • Dinner Hours: Su-Th: 5-10:30 pm / Fr-Sa: 5-11 pm

53 West Portal Avenue • (415) 665-ROTI (7684) For Reservations, Catering, Parties: Rustom Swaleh • www.rotibistro.com

Open Late

DON'T FORGET THAT WE'RE GOING TO MOM'S HOUSE FOR DINNER IN AN HOUR.

OKAY. I'M GOING TO GET SOME WATER. DO YOU WANT ANYTHING?

NO THANKS.

OH HEY RONNIE... NO SNACKS!!

I'M NOT GETTING A SNACK...

...I'M GETTING A BITE TO EAT!

By Julie Behn
www.JulieBehn.com

Sudoku-fun!

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

Rules:

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

The Object:

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

Answer:

The answer appears aside.

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

Villa d'Este

Traditional Italian Cuisine

Owned & operated by the Oropreza Family since 1978. Villa d' Este is known locally as one of the best family restaurants in San Francisco.

Champagne Brunch Every Sunday

2623 Ocean Avenue (bet. 19th & Junipero Serra)
(415) 334-0580
www.villadestessf.com

Open Daily for Lunch 11:30am-2:3pm
Dinner Served Mon-Sat 5-10pm, Sunday 4-10pm

Best Value for Your Dollar

Cage Free
Eco-Friendly
Daycare 7 Days a Week
Staffed 24 Hours a Day
Short and Long Term Boarding
Pick-up and Delivery Available

High Tail Hotel
2275 Revere Ave., San Francisco
415.913.7101
www.HighTailHotel.com

Proudly Serving The Families of West of Twin Peaks

"Caring Service is our Highest Priority"

The Bud Duggan Family Serving the Bay Area Since 1903

Duggan's Serra Mortuary, Daly City	415/587-4500	FD1098
Driscoll's Valencia St. Serra Mortuary, SF	415/970-8801	FD1665
Sullivan's Funeral Home, SF	415/621-4567	FD 228

Parking Available at all locations

Most Convenient San Francisco/Peninsula Locations

Traditional and Cremation Services

Contact our Pre-Arrangement Department for your FREE Personal Planning Guide "My Funeral, My Way"

VISA, MASTERCARD & DISCOVER ACCEPTED

duggansserra.com driscollsmortuary.com sullivanfuneralandcremation.com

BRAIN FUD

When you behead a word, you remove the first letter and still have a valid word. You will be given clues for the two words, longer word first.

Example: Begin - Sour, Acidic
Answer: The words are Start and Tart

Belonging to him - Exist
Time Interval - Belonging to us.
Sharpen; Improve - A Number
Stature; altitude - A number
Device from which clothing is suspended - Feeling of annoyance
To be suspended in the air - Complete; above
Regarded as holy - Permitted
Visit frequently (as a ghost) - Female relative

Answer
His - Is

Hour - Our
Home - One
Height - Eight
Hanger - Anger
Hover - Over

Hallowed - Allowed
Haunt - Aunt

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

REMEMBER WHEN?



Golden Gate Heights • May 10, 1927 • From Pacheco and Funston North along 14th & 15th Aves. • Photo courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, SF Public Library

PHYLLIS' FINDINGS

By Phyllis Sherman

A STORY WITH TEETH

Here's something I'll bet you didn't know. In 18th-century England, straight, white, teeth were a sign of beauty, affluence, and moral fortitude, perhaps because tooth loss was a common result of venereal disease and its treatment with mercury. Wealthy and fashionable citizens engaged in a fad known as live-tooth transplantation similar to the way today's socialites and celebrities purchase foreign substances, like Botox injections and saline implants to augment their bodies.

At a time when dentistry was still new, ladies and gentlemen had their damaged or rotten teeth pulled out and quickly replaced with teeth taken from the mouths of live donors—indigents who were forced to sell their teeth for cash. Fear of disease transmittal and criticism of the exploitive nature of the practice contributed to its disappearance at the turn of the 19th century.

This bizarre and short-lived dental procedure provides insights into many aspects of late 18th-century life, including divisions between the rich and poor, changing standards of beauty and the rise of consumer culture. Our culture, in which people's bodies play a key role in their personal and social identities, and where body parts are viewed as commodities that can be bought and sold. Many contemporary trends, such as cosmetic surgery, tattooing, body piercing, and the sale of organs on the black market, can be traced to this strange and largely unknown fad.

I gleaned this information from Professor Mark Blackwell, chair of the Department of English in the University of Hartford College of Arts and Sciences. The article entitled "Extraneous Bodies: The Contagion of Live-Tooth Transplantation on Late-Eighteenth-Century England" earned Blackwell the prestigious James L. Clifford Prize, conferred by the American Society of Eighteenth-Century Studies on an outstanding study of some aspect its culture.

I guess your dentist never heard of this mouth enhancing improvement.

San Francisco women complain about the male shortage in the Bay Area. Well, there's a surplus of bachelors in China. Here's your chance! With no eligible women in his village (X'IN'AN VILLAGE, Hanzhong, China) Zhou Pin, 27 years old, thought he was lucky to find a pretty bride whom he met and married within a week, following the custom in rural China. Ten days later, Cai Niucuo vanished, leaving behind her clothes and identity papers. She did not, however, leave behind her bride price: 38,000 yuan, or about \$5,500, which Mr. Zhou and his family had scrimped and borrowed to put together.

When Mr. Zhou reported his missing spouse to authorities, he found his situation wasn't unique. The first two months, Hanzhong town saw a record number of scams designed to extract high bride prices in a region with an over supply of bachelors.

The fleeing Mrs. Zhou was one of 11 runaway brides--hardly the isolated case or two that the town had seen in years past. The local phenomenon has fueled broader speculation among officials that the fast-footed wives may be part of a scam which is being investigated. China's rule of allowing abortions of female fetuses is certainly a probable cause of the dearth of marriageable females. Boys are preferred in Chinese families, believing that boys will be able in later years to support their elderly parents.

The survivors of Haiti's horrendous earthquake are still numb from the shock of losing everything in their already depleted world. Countries world-wide are attempting to help and it was very difficult to watch CNN's pictures of death and devastation that they ran continuously on the network.

A few people were rescued alive even a week after the earthquake...truly a miracle. San Francisco knows what earthquakes are but any devastation here can't begin to compare with Haiti where no building codes exist... I was on a cruise ship years ago that stopped in Haiti and the people were extremely warm and welcoming...I remember purchasing some beautiful carved figures from a local sculptor. Apparently some cruise ships are still arriving there despite the destruction. Four ships are not heading to Port-au-Prince...but to another far flung beach area in Haiti for vacation. The first arriving one, a Holland-American vessel is promising aid to the emergency effort while it's passengers sun and surf on the beautiful beaches.

On the movie scene, I enjoyed *It's Complicated*. It didn't get great reviews but Meryl Streep, Alec Baldwin and Steve Martin will keep you laughing. The Spanish film *Broken Embraces* is at times confusing, but worth seeing, and *Precious* is enthralling and has already won a Golden Globe award. At the Berkeley Repertory Theater, *COMING HOME* by Academy Award-winner Athol Fugard received a well-deserved standing ovation from the opening night audience. It tells the story of Veronika, who ten years after running off to the city to pursue her dreams, returns in rags. Among her meager belongings, she carries a desperate secret—and a determination to plant the seeds of a new life for her son. Roslyn Ruff plays Veronica and she has won several awards around the country. Gordon Edelstein is in his 8th year as Long Wharf Theatre's Artistic Director, and author Fugard, born in South Africa, has won many awards in US and England. *COMING HOME* closes on Feb 28, 2010. The Berkeley Rep is just 1/2 a block from BART.

END JOKE: A man in a hurry was speeding down the highway...60 miles per hour, 70 miles per hour...80 miles per hour.90 and up and then 100. A cop finally caught up with him and said, "Listen, Mister. I've had a pretty rough day. If you can give me the one reason why you were speeding like that.I might have pity on you and let you go. It better be pretty good." The man though momentarily and said, "Officer, some months ago my wife ran off with a policeman. I thought you were trying to bring her back."

Feedback: phyllis@westsideobserver.com



Italian American Social Club
25 RUSSIA AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO
Since 1937

Open for Lunch - Wednesday through Friday

Now Open For Dinner
Wednesday through Sunday

Senior Special: \$9.95 Dinner
Wednesday to Friday only from 5PM to 6:30 PM



415-585-8059

Parking lot across from the club
Manager: Rich Guaraldi,
Past Grand President of the YMI

The Steak Experience

Alfred's
STEAKHOUSE

Since 1928
Real Steak Real Martini
Real San Francisco

Complimentary Self Parking (For Dinner Only)
At The Financial District Hilton's Public Parking Entrance on Washington St.

659 Merchant Street (by Kearny & Washington)
415.781.7058 www.alfredssteakhouse.com



Ken Eggers



Deborah Nguyen



Joost Van de Water



Tim Hawko



Harry Clark



Vicki Valandra



Anna Spathis



Don Woolhouse



Tanya Dzhibrailova



Daniel Fernandez



Danielle Lazier



Julie Reber



Susan Olk



Tanja Beck



Chris Sprague



Sam Avery



Andrew Roth

Congratulations 2009 Zephyr Top Producers

FRONT: Mollie Poe #1 Company Top Producer, Michael Ackerman #3 Company Top Producer, Robin Hubinsky West Portal Top Producer, Bonnie Spindler Upper Market/Castro Top Producer. **BACK:** Bill Kitchen #2 Company Top Producer, Richard Meyerson Noe Valley Top Producer, Christine Doud Potrero Hill Top Producer, Debbie Dells Pacific Heights Top Producer, Britton Jackson SOMA Top Producer.



John Zhou



Alex Clark



Peter Goss



Duncan Wheeler



Darryl Honda



James R. Holloway



Gillian Pontes



Jan Medina



Joan Loeffler



Sherri Howe



Dean Catiis



Tim Gullicksen



Marion Broder



Stefano DeZerega



Laura Kaufman



Gary Tribulato



Tara Donohue



Jane Mermelstein



Michelle Stephens



Else Townsend



Susanna Townsend



Jayne Jones



Erik Reider



Seth Skolnick



Richard Sarro



Martin Harris



Ravi Malhotra



Karen Tarantola



Wes Freas



Virginia Thackwell



Stephanie Johnson



Patrick Lowell



Luba Muzichenko



Jennifer Kauffman



Eric Castongia



Todd Wiley



West Portal • 415.731.5000
Pacific Heights • 415.674.6500
Noe Valley • 415.695.7707
Potrero Hill • 415.315.0105
Upper Market • 415.552.9500
Castro • 415.552.9500

Zephyr Real Estate. We're all about San Francisco. www.zephyrsf.com