

Gung Hay Fat Choy

INSIDE



San Francisco
Pork Barrel

Quentin Kopp
-3

CleanPowerSF's
dirty little secrets

Steve Lawrence
-4



Whistleblowers
Reward (Not)

Dr. Maria Rivero
Dr. Derek Kerr
-4

One-sided Pork?

Tony Hall
-5



Crime and Safety

Capt. Curtis Lam
-7

Central Council

Mitch Bull
-9



Award-winning
Journalism in the
Neighborhood

INSIDE

My Two Cents/Will Durst.	4
Letters to the Editor	4
Money Matters.	6
Crime and Safety	7
Beach Chalet/Soccer	8
Taxes Already!	8
Around the Town	11
Calendar	12
Silent Film Festival	12
At the Movies.	13
On Stage/Theater	13
Jack Kaye	14
Public Notices	12
Sharon the Health.	15
Remember When	16
Open Late	16
Sudoku \ Brain Füd	16
Phyllis' Findings	16
Kocivar on Education	17
DeFibrillators	17
Real Estate Question Man	18
Real Travel.	19

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New Italian Flare to Replace Café For All Seasons

Local businesses are pleased the former site of Café for All Seasons will soon be filled by a new restaurant

By Keith Burbank

Opening in April at 150 West Portal Avenue, between The Village Grill and Citibank will be Trattoria Da Vittorio, serving southern Italian food. Owner Vittorio D'Urzo is spending nearly half a million dollars to open the family business.

Café for All Seasons was a favorite spot for locals when it was owned by Frank and Donna Katzl. After the Katzls sold the cafe, the new owners kept the name, but the business went downhill. The restaurant recently closed.

"It's nice to have another business there," said Richard Crain, owner, The Village Grill, which is one door down from the trattoria. "He will be such a great addition to the corridor," said Mark Norrell, owner, West Portal Optical. Another local businessperson, who wasn't aware of the change, said its great a new restaurant is moving in. "We can always use a new restaurant," he said. Andy Moussouras, a general contractor doing work on

the renovation, said the kitchen will be brand new, with all new kitchen equipment, including dishwasher. The plumbing will be new, the electrical will be relocated as needed, and the restaurant will be brought in line with guidelines for the Americans with Disabilities Act. "Everything will be new and fresh inside," said D'Urzo. "I've destroyed everything that was old."

"He plans to be open for a long time," Moussouras said of D'Urzo and the Trattoria Da Vittorio. Moussouras has also done work for The Village Grill, West Portal's Goat Hill Pizza, and Orexi, a recently opened Greek restaurant in the neighborhood.



Cont. p. 9 Contractor Moussouras and new owner, Vittorio D'Urzo



Laguna Honda's Continuing Scandals

A Sordid Tale of Two Non-Profits

By Patrick Monette-Shaw

The recent sordid history of two non-profits that purport to serve residents of Laguna Honda Hospital (LHH) appears to have resulted in the dissolution of one of the non-profits, declining contributions to the hospital from the other, and an eight-year low in public contributions to Laguna Honda Hospital's patient gift fund.

All of this may have been avoidable. But a confluence of factors appears to have contributed to unintended consequences for all three programs. Former City Attorney Louise Renne's unfortunate statements in June 2004 may have set the stage for their downward trajectory.

Renne—who claims that she was responsible for the groundbreaking lawsuit against tobacco companies that provided much of the rebuild funds, when it was former Supervisor Angela Alioto who accomplished that feat—and though she failed to raise a single dime towards new furnishings for the rebuilt hospital, Renne was awarded an engraved plaque in Laguna Honda's new facilities.

Renne appears to be finally throwing in the towel, and is reportedly dissolving her

foundation following an apparent investigation by the Registry of Charitable Trusts, a division of California's Attorney General.

RIP Laguna Honda Foundation

In response to a fairly innocuous "show us the money" request placed on January 13 by this *Observer* columnist for audited financial statements of Ms. Renne's Foundation, Melanie Beene, CEO and President of Community Initiatives—the "fiscal sponsor" handling the books of Renne's non-profit Foundation—responded unexpectedly on January 14, that Renne's foundation is no longer a sponsored project of Community Initiatives.

This loss means Renne can no longer shield her Foundation's revenues and expenses by aggregating them under lump-sum reporting

Cont. p. 5

Fleishacker Farewell Ends an Era

By Jonathan Farrell

A suspicious fire caused extensive damage to Fleishacker Pool on Dec. 1, 2012, causing city officials to condemn its remaining buildings' fading remnants to be demolished on Dec. 18.

The pool was built in 1925, when most of the outskirts of San Francisco were sparse farmland and dairies. Much of what are the outer parts of the City were built in the 1920's and early 30's before the Great Depression. Much of what is now the Sunset and Richmond Districts next to Golden Gate Park was sand dunes.

Known as Fleishacker Pool, it was over 1,000 feet long and 150 feet wide and filled with six million gallons of salt water. A recreational compliment to the adjacent Fleishacker Zoo (which eventually became the San Francisco Zoo) and Playland-at-the-Beach amusement park, the pool served the entire City. The *SF Examiner* reported that at its peak, the pool and its surroundings accommodated over eight million people.

The pool closed in 1971 when a water pipe in the filling system failed. Yet even more likely, it was due to declining attendance as Playland-at-the-Beach also closed during that time. Not long after its closure, Janet Pomeroy, the founder of the Recreation Center for the Handicapped, used a portion of the buildings to start her outreach work. Once established, Pomeroy eventually moved to a brand-new facility built across from Lake Merced near Skyline Blvd. The Rec. Center for the Handicapped is now officially called The Janet Pomeroy Center for the Handicapped, in her honor.

Since that time the massive pool, which required lifeguards in rowboats to watch over the swimmers, got filled in and the large parking lot paved over. The City hoped to make Fleishacker Pool and its once-opulent Mediterranean-style buildings part of an expanded and renovated San Francisco Zoo. But unfortunately, as the Zoo eventually became privatized in the early 1990's, that project fell apart. With no real solid commitments to restore the pool and its compound, the entire area became a magnet for vandalism. Graffiti germinated, making the entire area desolate and forgotten.

The pool was deemed a total loss and a safety hazard by SF Fire Department officials who surveyed the fire damage. "I don't have a lot of faith that anyone

Cont. p. 3

Diddling With Our Environmental Review Laws

Wiener Attempts to Gut CEQA Appeals

By George Wooding

Wiener's attempt to "streamline" the public environmental appeal process looks more like an attempt to "steam-roll" a favorable path for developers through SF's Planning Department.



So far, District 8 Supervisor Scott Wiener, has failed to demonstrate that his newly-proposed amendments to San Francisco's environmental appeal laws are necessary. That's not stopping him, as he continues tinkering with San Francisco's open government laws.

Wiener's legislative changes and project developers can then go behind closed doors to modify projects without further citizen oversight. "Democracy dies behind closed doors," as federal Judge Damon J. Keith wrote in a unanimous opinion



Supervisor Scott Wiener

Cont. p. 6

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with any clout wants to save this building, but I haven't completely given up," Woody LaBounty, a local historian and founder and coordinator of the Western Neighbor-*Fleishaker* (Cont. from p. 1)

hoods Projectsaid, just days after the fire.

Gloria Rogan, SF realtor and member of the local SF Historical Society, agreed, "with all the money that flows through this City, you think it would be a worthy effort. Yet," she surmised, "I think one of the reasons why things with real historical significance like the Fleishacker Pool get ignored or go unnoticed is because so much of the City is transient in nature."

"I am originally from Michigan not far from Detroit," said Rogan, "and what bothers me about this wonderful city of San Francisco is the short-sighted indifference. Back in Michigan the people there at least try to save some of the landmarks, and it's not easy, because Michigan has fallen on hard times. Yet here in San Francisco, where money flows more readily, interest in saving or restoring falls apart." Rogan made note of the recently completed restoration of the Dutch Windmills. But that was spear-headed a lot by private efforts, and the Dutch Government."

Some think most of the problem with these landmarks and public park areas is that the Recreation and Parks Dept. is not able to manage so much acreage and various property holdings. Golden Gate Park itself has over 1,100 acres, plus more than a dozen recreation

centers, and playgrounds. Rogan also noted that such landmarks are witness, not only to San Francisco's civic and public recreational past, but the entire national history. "People forget that previous generations went out of their way to support and ensure that parks, pools, zoos and such were a part of the public life that everyone could share."

Unlike the amusement parks of today, such as Great America, Six Flags and even Disneyland, Playland-at-The-Beach was free. Yes, rides did cost a fee, yet to walk into Playland or to stroll along the boardwalk was free to all. The Fleishacker Pool, the Zoo, the Sutro Baths and all of Golden Gate Park was a way for families to have a little vacation without having to travel that far or spend a lot of money.

It is hard to fathom that at one time the City's Zoo (also founded by Herbert Fleishacker), the Park, the Museum, the Academy of Science and other attractions were all managed and operated by the City of San Francisco. In the 1990's the trend to privatize has questioned the City's power and resources to maintain and administer these facilities without a public-private partnership.

"As most of us know, members of the public have asked the Zoo and Rec and Park to attend to the building over the past decade with no change in approach or plan," said LaBounty. Between loose tigers, soccer fields, dog walkers, coyotes, recycling center evictions, beach and road erosion, financial issues and department head turnovers, the departments with jurisdiction over the site have not been able to focus any energy or, frankly, interest. I hope I'm not doing too much of a disservice to the City in guessing that it sees the fire as solving a problem, and prefers a quick demolition."

Still LaBounty is hoping for a positive outcome despite the dismal forecast for the future of the Fleishacker Pool facilities. LaBounty called the *Westside Observer* shortly after the *SF Examiner* story was published to say, Architectural Resource Group is under contract to photograph the whole place.

"And, Rec. and Park wants to save what decorative elements they can, perhaps one of the portals whole.



Closed since 1971—ravaged by a suspicious fire, Fleishaker Pool will soon be a memory. They are leaning on ARG and others to help with assessment of what can be preserved," said LaBounty. "A likely scenario might be open space landscaping with some remnant and interpretive display. Yet that all depends on Recreation and Parks and the eagerness of people to help pull efforts and resources together to save what remains and is possible to salvage."



A magnet for vandalism and graffiti, Fleishaker's has sustained extensive damage

RUMINATIONS FROM A FORMER SUPERVISOR By Quentin Kopp



Pork Barrel, San Francisco Style

In the world particularly of national politics, the term "pork barrel" conveys an unjustified expenditure of taxpayer money. Contemporary discussants of "pork barrel" refer to the infamous Alaskan "bridge to nowhere" as a shorthand method of expressing disgust over members of Congress who procure taxpayer funds for special interest projects in the districts or states they represent. Occasionally, one finds it in California's annual Budget Act. Rarely (until recently) can I recall it as a part of San Francisco's annual budget ordinance, certainly not in the years in which supervisors were elected on a citywide basis.

It's a new world, however, for San Francisco property, sales and business taxpayers. First, we now have supervisors elected from 11 different districts. That ignoble experiment first occurred in 1977 and was repealed by voters in 1981 after the murders of Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk by another supervisor, Dan White. The current version arose about a generation later, after memories of this ill-advised aversion to "ward politics" had dwindled. For the foreseeable future, San Francisco voters and taxpayers are stuck with this provincial and costly system. Now, taxpayers can agitate over a new form of "pork barrel" for San Francisco's 11 supervisors. The 2012-2013 San Francisco budget stealthily includes an appropriation of \$1,000,000 in taxpayer money for individual supervisors to spend virtually without strictures. Ten supervisors have each received \$100,000 (or more) of taxpayer money to spend for purposes they choose. Thus, the spectacle of Supervisor Mark Farrell in the Marina spending \$300 on a treasure hunt (I kid you not)! The defeated Christina Olague distributed \$15,000 of taxpayer money for

"housing workshops," and another \$3,000 on "workshops" concerning the reusable bag ordinance.

Our own one-time Supervisor, Sean Elsbernd, spent \$141,000 in some undefined way for his favorite parks and the Hidden Garden Steps. Sunset District Supervisor Carmen Chu paid \$20,000 to private businesses of her choosing for compliance with Americans With Disabilities Act provisions (Can you imagine that one?) and \$2,000 for permit fees for unspecified "community events."

Supervisor David Campos stated publicly he would spend it on buying guns for Police Department disposition from private persons in the Mission. Supervisor Mar gave \$45,000 to nine schools, even though we pay property and parcel taxes to the S.F. Unified School District already, and Supervisor Avalos bestowed \$5,000 for Excelsior Street "historic names", whatever that means. To top off this ward boss method of ingratiating incumbent supervisors to their district voters, our heroes inserted the \$1,000,000 last July not in their own \$12,414,121 annual budget, where it could easily be located by

inquisitive taxpayers, but literally buried in the City Controller's budget!

In addition, the Supervisors have expended money exceeding \$100,000 annually each for a third aide, after covertly effectuating repeal of a prohibition on a third aide that had been inserted in the Charter by a voter initiative a few years previously. Hence, Supervisors who, instead of representing all 810,000 or so San Francisco residents, now represent less than 80,000 San Franciscans, operate with three aides (not one aide and one secretary, as was historically the case during at-large elections), are paid about \$100,000 per year, obtain membership in the San Francisco Retirement System after only a maximum eight years of service, and draw per diem payments of \$50 to \$100 per meeting for serving on the boards of regional governmental entities like the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District, the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Authority, the Association

of Bay Area Governments, and the like. It appears the supervisors have contrived their own form of special favors at taxpayer expense to influence voters with tax-paid "goodies."

Finally, the flawed system of "ranked choice voting" spawns practices which impair the purity of electoral voter decisions. While proponents have boasted of the cost-saving from eliminating runoff elections in the 11 supervisorial districts, plus mayor, district attorney, city attorney, sheriff, assessor and treasurer, they ignore the "hanky-panky" which inevitably becomes part of the ranking of choices by voters. Typically, two or more candidates in a multi-candidate district election will enter into a bargain by which Candidate A advises voters who rank him first to rank Candidate B second and vice-versa. This bartering system and the pre-ordained result of desperate politicians to secure election may eventually involve

...the former Assessor, Mr. Phil Ting, ran for Mayor in 2011 and garnered about 1,600 votes while spending over \$150,000 of public taxpayer funds on his campaign. If he withdrew or abandoned the campaign effort in the face of inevitable early defeat, he would suffer a legal duty to return the taxpayer funds ... he used taxpayer funds to advance his name in his hopeless mayoral campaign preparation for a successful 2012 candidacy for the California Assembly."

Robust Local Buildout

CleanPowerSF, the city's renewable electric power alternative to PG&E, is expected to launch its first phase late this year. Customers who are invited to join and who do not opt out will pay extra to receive 100% renewably generated electricity. Initially this renewable electricity will be purchased by Shell Energy for CleanPowerSF. (More below on what premium you would pay.)

The SFPUC's own consultant disses the CleanPowerSF phase one program as "not competitive, achieves no jobs, no security; very similar to PG&E proposed 'Deep Green' rate...except more expensive."



While initially renewable electric power for CleanPowerSF's customers will be purchased on the open market, that may not last; a key goal of the program is to replace power generated out-of-town with locally-generated renewable power. Officials promise a "robust local buildout" to achieve this. The goal is to supply all of San Francisco's needs with locally-generated renewable electric power. Really? All?

Hard though it may be to believe, now before the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission is a plan to spend a billion and a half dollars for green generation facilities.

So what will be built? How does San Francisco generate electricity from renewable sources right here in town? Windmills a-top Twin Peaks? How much local generation is needed?

So far windmills on Twin Peaks are not proposed. San Francisco now has 13 solar arrays and 2 biogas generators. The 13 solar arrays offer a capacity of 7.4 MW. San Francisco needs one hundred times more megawatts, so many more solar arrays would be constructed. Like 600 more. Six-hundred?

If recommendations of SFPUC's consultant are followed, to eliminate risk for the willing customer, and so that benefits are immediate, CleanPowerSF would finance, install, operate, and maintain renewable generation facilities on private property under "shared savings agreements." Three thousand jobs are promised. No wonder a billion and a half dollars of debt is forecast. This plan is rife with the possibility for disputes, empowers teams of bureaucrats, and opens another avenue for favoritism and corruption in a city wide open to such evils already.

While the buildout is described as both "robust" and "local," "local" is broadly construed. Oakville, in the Central Valley, is the proposed site of one large solar facility. The cost is estimated at \$210 million. A "regional" wind farm is proposed.

San Francisco has studied generating electricity by tidal power, but found that not feasible.

Wave power has also been studied and is considered feasible. The 2009 report on wave power proposes a 30 megawatt "farm" 7 miles west of the Zoo in 110 feet of water. Gray whales must be

accommodated; they migrate, and must not be disturbed. The capital cost is estimated to be \$120-140 million; O&M cost is hard to determine from the report, but annually seems somewhere between about 4% and 40%. The report cautions that "there is great uncertainty" concerning cost. Per kilowatt hour the cost is said to be 17-22 cents.

San Francisco uses about 5800 million kilowatt hours of electricity a year. Electricity usage is increasing. With electric vehicles, demand seems likely to grow even faster. Today about 28% of electricity consumption is residential. Very little electricity is generated locally. Despite much crowing about, and spending on, solar arrays, solar supplies just a tiny fraction. While much more solar could be installed, good locations are taken and returns are diminishing. Wave power? Well, maybe, but the cost is very uncertain, and waves, too, would supply only a small fraction of what is consumed. What else is there? Re-opening the Geysers is one possibility, i.e. geothermal.

Another listed generator is "electric, steam and natural gas." This may also be called "combined heat and power," which is estimated to cost \$191 million capital cost. Renewable? Gas? \$60 million is proposed to be spent for natural gas — how is that "renewable?"

What else will be robustly, and locally, built out? Stay tuned; much is undecided.

Is all this just a passing fantasy of city bureaucrats and officials? Is the city serious about providing its own local and "renewable" electricity, or is this bluster of green good intentions? The Board of Supervisors has been intent on creating a CCA (community choice aggregation entity), as Marin has. Bureaucrats have named it CleanPowerSF (note: not using the word "renewable"). Just what it will be, and how expensive and intrusive, remains unknown. All that seems sure is that City government will grow, providing electricity to customers once served by PG&E. A first step to public power and kicking PG&E out of town? Perhaps.

For this year, residential customers in San Francisco may become customers of CleanPowerSF, Phase One. Not all customers will be invited. The Westside is considered less enthusiastic, so homeowners here may not receive invitations. (If you want to join, there will be a

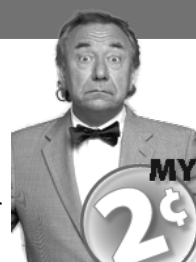
Cont. p. 8



My Two Cents / Will Durst

THE PARALLAX INAUGURAL

Astronomers have a name for the phenomena of an object appearing to be in different places, depending on the perspective from which it is viewed. It's known as the parallax view, and could be seen on display for the Second Inauguration of the Forty Fourth President of the United States. Speaking of it, folks described events occurring on different planets. Some called it a disaster, some a triumph. Crime scene in a cave versus ascension on a mountain top. White knight to the rescue- Darth Vader choking off a windpipe.



No one denies it was an auspicious ceremony, with Beyonce lip syncing and Michelle Obama resurrecting a 25 year old haircut, but Barack H. Obama's last Oval Office induction ceremony was totally defined according to which side of the aisle you watched it from. Seen through the blue lens was one thing but through the red lens, something semi-similar only inside out, upside down and backwards. With poop on it.

For Democrats, the January weekend of celebration was even more momentous than the first time around. Proving indubitably that America is the land of opportunity, where hope never dies and lots of little money for campaign coffers never hurts either. And if you ever get the chance to give a bunch of old people rides to the polls on fleets of rented buses, go for it.

For Republicans it was a three-day salt in the wound reminder of wasted opportunity. Exactly how bad a candidate Mitt Romney actually was. Think of it; in a lousy economy the guy managed to lose to a black incumbent, whose middle name is Hussein. The incumbent, not the economy. Permanent bruise; right above the knee, where the fist automatically slams down. At least twice a day.

Nobody could deny the emotional depth precipitated by the occasion of oath-taking on the Capitol's west side in front of freezing multitudes. So much so, that even John Boehner seemed moved to tears. Which, admittedly, isn't all that unusual. And kind of creepily, they were orange tears. Who sheds tears of Tang?

And while the event itself may have been polarizing, it paled like the cover of Sue Grafton's "A is for Alibi" in the front window of a west-facing bookstore in Equatorial Guinea- compared to the speech. The president waxed eloquent about a pursuit of progressive ideals; mentioning marriage equality, climate change and even slamming Paul Ryan's claim that society is being ruined by the takers. So as you can imagine, right after the President was sworn in, he was sworn at.

Oh my. The hew and the cry. He was called a socialist. A banana head. A foreign born evildoer attempting to destroy the country. Unveiling a left wing manifesto that finally reveals his true colors as a socialist usurper of all that is good and right and true and just. So... looks like, everything's back to normal.

We the people, were given the impression that this time around the rebooted Obama 2.0 will be less likely to roll over on his back begging Mitch McConnell to rub his belly. After getting poked with a sharp stick for four years, this dog may have grown some teeth. But that's where the parallax view kicks in again. Some see them as incisors and some vampire canines that enable him to suck the souls right out of our skulls.

5 time Emmy- nominee Will Durst's e-book "Elect to Laugh!" published by Hyperink, is now available at Redroom.com, Amazon and many other fine virtual book retailers near you. Or go to willdurst.com for more info.

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Letters to the Editor

Fact Checker for Supervisor Hall?

I read Tony Hall's December column with interest but found his recollection of the 2000 campaign to be highly inaccurate.

Tony writes that: "On election night of November 7, 2000, I became the projected winner of that seat by a margin of some 1,200 to 1,300 votes."

In fact, in the November, 2000 election Tony lagged behind Mabel Teng 13,269 to 6,706 but, as Mabel failed to achieve 50% of the 33,867 votes cast, a December run-off occurred. It was in the December run-off that Tony Hall secured his victory (9,333-9,294).

Tony delves deep into the 2000 campaign but fails to get essential details correct. What does this say about the value of his column?

Christmas time gift suggestion: a

fact-checker for Tony.

David Hooper

(Tony Hall responds from Ireland)

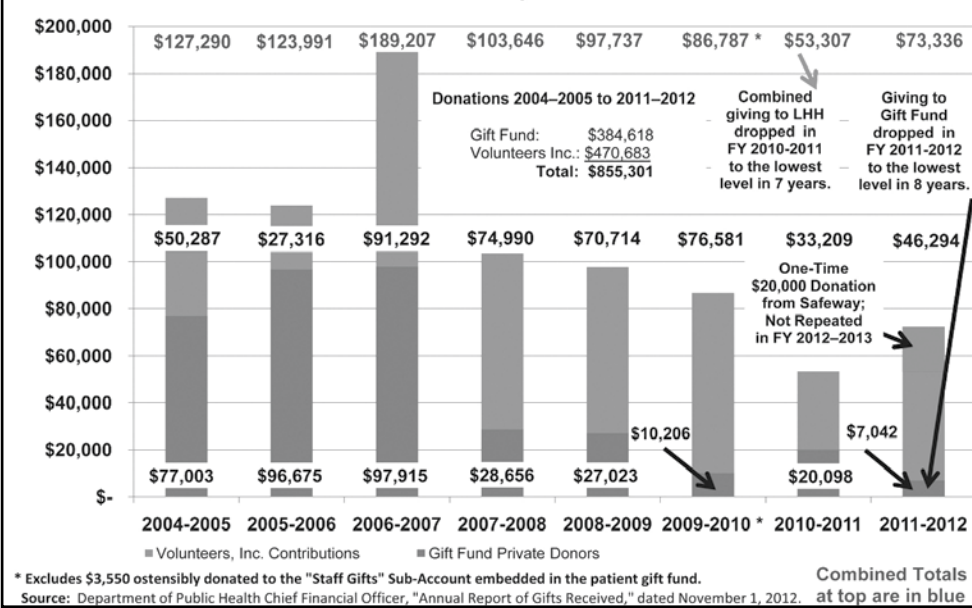
David Hooper makes a valid observation as I should have clarified that the election night I was referring to in my column was the December run off. His numbers are correct regarding the November election date but I was the projected winner in the December run-off by some 1200-1300 on that night. Only after 3 re-counts and re-canvassings was the final tally arrived at, that being 9,333-9,294. One of the points that I try to illustrate in my column is about how votes are stolen, even through the re-count process. Apparently David does not want to acknowledge that such voter fraud tactics exist.

Tony Hall

Cont. p. 6

Laguna Honda Hospital Donations Historical Trends — Gift Fund + Volunteers, Inc. FY 2004–2005 Through FY 2011–2012

Volunteers Inc.
Renamed to
"Friends of LHH"



Laguna Honda (Cont. from p. 1)
by Community Initiatives to the IRS. She has lost her IRS cover.

Beene also volunteered that, to the best of her knowledge, the Foundation is dissolving.

By mid-week, a source who spoke on condition of anonymity reported that the Attorney General's office—presumably the A.G.'s Registry of Charitable Trusts that oversees operations of non-profits in California had either investigated or audited the Foundation.

The source further reported that Renne's Foundation may have had to return a \$50,000 grant to one of its donors, and may have expended the

Gift Fund Donations Plummet Again

The "Annual Report of Gifts Received," issued by the Department of Public Health's CFO, shows that in Fiscal Year 2011-2012 ending in June 2012, private giving to Laguna Honda's patient gift fund dropped to just \$7,042, excluding a one-time \$20,000 donation from Safeway, Inc. for a nutrition project in the hospital.

That \$7,042 represents the lowest level of private contributions to the patient gift fund since FY 2006-2007, when donations to the gift fund were 14 times higher, at \$97,915. Even going back to FY 2004-2005, the year after the Foundation's formation, donations to the gift fund were ten times higher, at \$77,003.

"We were so shocked at being driven out of Laguna Honda, right after reporting irregularities with the Patient Gift Fund in 2010, that we figured we had touched on major violations that Laguna Honda and the Department of Public Health were desperate to hide," former Laguna Honda Hospital physicians Dr. Maria Rivero and Dr. Derek Kerr said.



last of the foundation's funds responding to the A.G.'s investigation. The A.G. noted that it is highly improper and very unusual business practice for a foundation that has received independent non-profit, public-benefit corporation status from the IRS—as Renne's Foundation has—to also operate as a so-called "project" of fiscal-sponsor entities such as Community Initiatives.

By January 18, not only had Laguna Honda Hospital removed from its web site its previous philanthropy web page link to the foundation, Attorney General investigators also reported they would neither confirm nor deny any investigation.

"We were so shocked at being driven out of Laguna Honda, right after reporting irregularities with the Patient Gift Fund in 2010, that we figured we had touched on major violations that Laguna Honda and the Department of Public Health were desperate to hide," former Laguna Honda Hospital physicians Dr. Maria Rivero and Dr. Derek Kerr said.

"So we reported our findings about the patient Gift Fund; Volunteers, Inc., and the Laguna Honda Foundation to the Attorney General's Registry of Charitable Trusts, the U.S. Attorney's Tax Division, and the IRS. Had we not been 'laid-off' and harassed, we would have reported solely to the City's Whistleblower Program," the two doctors disclosed. The Attorney General's office apparently followed up on their ethical concerns.

Dissolution the Foundation appears to be delayed fallout from the scandal involving Laguna Honda Hospital's raid of its patient gift fund in order to fund staff amenities, set in motion by previous Executive Administrator, John Kanaley, who died in 2009. The gift fund was eventually restored some \$350,000, following a long-delayed audit by the Controller.

Of interest, donations to the patient gift fund took a drastic "fiscal cliff" fall between Fiscal Years 2006-2007 and 2007-2008, plummeting from \$97,915 to just \$28,656, the year after Renne installed, former Deputy City Attorney Marc Slavin, as Laguna Honda's Director of Communications in 2007.

Slavin's abrasiveness with members of the public may have contributed to the decline in donations to the patient gift fund.

Volunteers, Inc. Support Dries Up

Since 1957, Laguna Honda's Volunteers, Inc. has financially supported both the patients at Laguna Honda, and its cadre of volunteers. In March 2012, Volunteers, Inc. re-branded itself, changing its name to "Friends of Laguna Honda." It also decamped from Laguna Honda Hospital, and moved its offices from 90 New Montgomery to an address in Mountain View, after its former president Joseph Lehrer stepped down.

As the graph of data from the Health Department shows, donations from Volunteers, Inc. to Laguna Honda and its Volunteer's Department have declined in the past five fiscal years, dropping by half—from \$91,292 in FY 2006-2007, to just \$46,294 in FY 2011-2012. But the CFO's data only shows part of the story.

Turning to Volunteers, Inc.'s Form 990 tax returns from calendar year 2010 to calendar year 2011, grants awarded by Volunteers, Inc. to Laguna Honda for patient recreation and other services (including bus trips off campus) plunged from \$171,261 in 2010 to just \$20,018 in 2011 (albeit, the \$20,018 grant more than likely came from Safeway, and may have been misreported by DPH's CFO as a donation to the patient gift fund).

The \$151,243 outright reduction in

Cont. p. 18

SPEAKING FREELY /Former Supervisor Tony Hall

FAIR REPRESENTATION

This is supposed to be a Country where lawful assembly and free expression of personal beliefs without government interference is not only guaranteed but also encouraged in a healthy democracy.



"Regardless of where you stand on the issue of abortion, is it proper for the Board of Supervisors to support and fund only one side of the issue, put public safety at risk, and attempt to undermine the public expression of those who believe that life in all its forms is of the utmost importance?"

By the time you read this article, another example of our city's leaders' stupidity, bias, and interference regarding such lawful expression will have taken place.

On Saturday, January 26th, 2013, our so-called "leaders" not only sponsored and promoted, but also used public funds to stage a counter demonstration of pro-abortion activists to take place at the same time as the scheduled Pro-Life Walk for Life West Coast event.

Regardless of where you stand on the issue of abortion, is it proper for the Board of Supervisors to support and fund only one side of the issue, put public safety at risk, and attempt to undermine the public expression of those who believe that life in all its forms is of the utmost importance?

There is no question that the Walk for Life West Coast has become a phenomenal expression of public sentiment since its inception in 2005. In spite of what the truth-deprived *Chronicle* has refused to report over the years, attendance at the rally and walk of pro-lifers is now estimated at between 40,000 and 50,000 people and is increasingly garnering national attention.

In contrast, the pro-abortion rally that was staged at the same time and location last year as the Walk for Life only drew about 80 people! This year the pro-abortionists again scheduled their rally and march to coincide with the pro-life Walk for Life event on Jan. 26th. In addition, The Board of Supervisors on Dec. 11th granted the pro-abortion side of the issue official sponsorship and funding of two city agencies, the Department of Public Health and the Department on the Status of Women, along with permits to hang promotional 3-by-6 foot banners from city light poles from Castro Street to the Embarcadero for the entire time of Dec. 27 to Feb. 7.

Have our City "leaders" established a level playing field regarding the ability of lawful expression of these two opposing points of view? Hardly! Is there a degree of manipulation going on for whatever

reason? Yes indeed! Is there a total disregard for the safety of those involved when participants of opposing sides of such an emotionally charged issue are permitted to march and demonstrate at the same time and place? You bet!

There is a history of the city elected opposing the Walk for Life event for political purposes. In 2005, poll watcher Gavin Newsom staged his own impromptu rally at Powell and Market streets at the same time as approximately 25,000 pro-lifers were gathering at Justin Herman Plaza, no doubt to draw attention to his alignment with what he believed to be the majority woman vote at that time. Today, the polls have dramatically shifted in favor of pro-lifers, so I doubt that even someone as shallow as Newsom would stage his own pro-abortion rally, yet this Board of Supervisors is doing just that. For those like our Supervisors who choose to celebrate the 40th anniversary Roe v. Wade, which actually took place on January 22nd, why did you insist upon conducting your march and rally at the same time date, time and place as the Walk for Life on Jan. 26th? Are you that starved for attention or just trying to capitalize on the success of your opposition?

Once again this year, the organizers of the Walk for Life, despite their huge turnout on the 26th, had graciously arranged to alter the location of their rally from Justin Herman Plaza to Civic Center, and the time of their march down Market Street so as not to provoke any potential threat of danger or confrontation from the miniscule but vocal pro-abortion activists supported by the Board of Supervisors. My congratulations to the cooler heads involved in this potential disaster.

To the members of the Board of Supervisors who all seem to envisage the White House in their future, try thinking about the safety of those you have sworn to protect, employing fairness in your deliberations, and above all read the tea leaves!

Tony Hall served twice as Supervisor for District 7

Quentin Kopp (Cont. from p. 3)

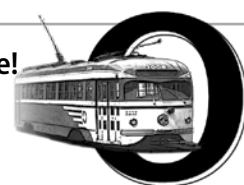
other and even more corrupting bargains between candidates and supporters. Adding to the descension into insidious political tactics is so-called public financing of campaign costs. Sure, candidates are compelled to raise certain amounts of money (varying upon the office sought) from a requisite number of contributors to qualify for taxpayer money to finance campaigns. The matching requirements, however, are not difficult, except for hapless candidates, so taxpayers pay for candidates to assay a higher political office and remain in a race despite the absence of any genuine ability to win. For example, the former Assessor, Mr. Phil Ting, ran for Mayor in 2011 and garnered about 1,600 votes while spending over \$150,000 of public taxpayer funds

on his campaign. If he withdrew or abandoned the campaign effort in the face of inevitable early defeat, he would suffer a legal duty to return the taxpayer funds to the City and County of San Francisco. Instead, he used taxpayer funds to advance his name in his hopeless mayoral campaign preparation for a successful 2012 candidacy for the California Assembly. For those who still believe public financing of political campaigns, local, state or federal, remains the solution to the corrupting influence of personal and corporate donations, San Francisco's current landscape of aggrandizing politicians and despairing taxpayers should be instructive.

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

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MONEY MATTERS • By Brandon Miller and Joanne Jordan

Caring for Aging Parents: Don't Wing It

As the boomers and their parents age, more and more family members are managing elder-care responsibilities. The emotional, physical and financial demands of caring for aging parents can be extensive. What's more, the healthcare needs of aging parents can become overwhelmingly expensive — and may include costs that affect family members in ways that aren't immediately apparent.



Healthcare and finances aren't easy topics for many families to broach. In fact, research from the *Money Across Generations II* study shows that 36 percent of boomers' parents feel that healthcare discussions with their family members are likely or very likely to create tension or spark an argument.

Having a long-term road map and a savings plan in place can help you care for your parents in the way they desire while enabling you to continue working towards your financial goals. This can be helpful in making informed short-term decisions, especially when there are unexpected expenses and emotions involved.

To get started:

Talk about finances now. While it may be uncomfortable for your parents to discuss their finances with you, it's essential that you are familiar with their financial strategy and resources. This includes knowing what type of medical, disability and long-term care insurance they have and what those policies cover. Use this information — along with if and how much you're willing to help from your own funds — to evaluate which healthcare options are realistically within reach when medical needs arise.

Create a contact list. Medical emergencies and sudden changes in health can happen as parents age. Because you may eventually need access to your parents' bank accounts and other financial resources on short notice, make sure

Anticipate future lifestyle changes and challenges. Even if they aren't yet needed, explore the costs of in-home, senior apartment, assisted living and memory care housing and services, as well as the costs of having a parent live with you. This includes determining whether your home would need to be modified to provide additional space or comforts, such as wheelchair access. Understanding these costs ahead of time can help you identify what you and your parents can afford and will give you time to consider the pros and cons of each option.

Become familiar with assistance programs. Your parents may qualify for government programs, supplements or services. Visit the government hosted benefits site — www.Govbenefits.gov — for information. Also, your county or city has a federally-mandated Area Agency on Aging staffed by professionals who can provide you with information about elder programs and services in your area. **Keep your retirement goals in mind.** Continue to manage your budget and save for your future. Be mindful that leaving the workforce even temporarily may seem tempting — and in some cases may be necessary — but exiting and re-entering affects your immediate income and can impact your ability to maintain your earning power. What's more, it can impact your ability to take advantage of an employer-sponsored retirement plan. Consider these factors when you evaluate

Thinking about caring for an ill or aging parent ... can save you headaches down the road when new circumstances may suddenly arise as your parents age.

they've compiled a list of account numbers, computer login names and passwords, and the names, addresses and phone numbers of the professionals with whom they work. In addition to knowing the location of the list, you'll also need to know the location of important financial and legal documents and lockbox keys.

Identify current healthcare costs and needs. Become familiar with the medical and pharmaceutical costs that your parent(s) currently incur and determine if there are ways to reduce these expenses. For example, you or your parents may consider moving from a name brand to a generic prescription or, instead of filling prescriptions at your local pharmacy, ordering a long-term supply from a mail-order provider.

Build a support network. Talk with siblings or other family members, neighbors and industry professionals to determine who can help you care for your aging parents — and in what capacity and at what cost. Proactively establishing a support network can help you avoid a strain on your time and energy down the road.

the total costs of any option.

Know your rights at work. The Federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) allows covered employees up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to provide care for a family member with a serious health condition.² If you are caring for a parent, inform your Human Resources department about your situation to take advantage of this legal protection, if relevant, and create a workable plan within your company's policies.

Thinking about caring for an ill or aging parent isn't always easy to do, but creating a plan now can save you headaches down the road when new circumstances may suddenly arise as your parents age. Consider working with a financial advisor who can help you plan for unexpected expenses and prepare for the costs of healthcare during your own retirement.

Brandon Miller, CFP and Joanne Jordan, CFP are financial consultants at Jordan Miller & Associates, A Private Wealth Advisory Practice of Ameriprise Financial Inc. helping families plan financial goals.

Letters (Cont. from p. 4)

While essential oils are often used as natural remedies, it is important to realize they may be just as harmful to our bodies. Plant extracts, while seemingly natural, can be just as fatal if used incorrectly or can possibly alter the effects of prescription medications.

There are various sources of herbal remedies today, including local pharmacies and grocery stores. With the increasing use of prescription medicines, it is important for patients to tell their pharmacists about the essential oils or

other herbal supplements they may be using. Pharmacists not only have access to informational resources for various herbal remedies, but they can provide general drug information and ensure there are no harmful interactions with the prescription medications patients take. Community pharmacists are not only doctors whom are accessible to the public, but they can also play a vital role in optimizing patient therapy when natural remedies and prescription medications are being used simultaneously.

Michelle Yee, Student Pharmacist UCSF School of Pharmacy Class of 2014

Wiener's proposed legislation to restrict CEQA appeals seems to be taking a sledge hammer to pound a nail...the Planning Department didn't even know the number of CEQA appeals, negative declarations, or exemptions filed last year before the Board of Supervisors. More importantly, the Supervisors have rejected every environmental appeal in recent memory, despite Wiener's claim that the Board approved one appeal relating to a Telegraph Hill development project. Sporting such a miniscule track-record of appeal reviews, Wiener needs to demonstrate that his CEQA legislation is even necessary, or beneficial, to the public.

Wiener/ CEQA (Cont. from p. 1)

for the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals concerning the *Detroit Free Press v. Ashcroft* case, concluding that "When government begins closing doors, it selectively controls information rightfully belonging to the people. Selective information is misinformation."

The First Amendment framers "did not trust any government to separate the true from the false for us," in their efforts to protect the people against secret government. "The public's interests are best served by open proceedings," Keith noted.

Wiener's proposal would slam the door shut, locking out many citizens, expanding secret government by limiting environmental appeals, preventing officials from having to answer citizens' questions—adding to the excessive secrecy that already undermines SF's government.

Last November Bill Wycko, an SF senior environmental planner wrote: "An important consideration beyond the amount of time that appeals add to different types of projects is the monetary and time cost of appeals."

The Planning Department receives approximately 90% of its operating income from developers' fees. The uncertainty of the public environmental appeals process is considered to be "bothersome," as appeals cost the Planning Department time and money. How much money is involved is rarely discussed, but is thought to be a fraction of the total.

The Planning Department is already brimming with excess cash. According to Keith DeMartini, the department's financial manager, "We're projecting better than a \$6 million surplus by the end of the fiscal year. We've seen more volume of development and more large projects."

In a "Build, baby, build!" San Francisco, citizen appeals are considered to be a monkey wrench to development. Developers contribute money to politicians, who in turn help developers build projects. This time-honored "you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours" restricts citizen involvement to the barest possible minimum.

Wiener's attempt to "streamline" the public environmental appeal process looks more like an attempt to "steamroll" a favorable path for developers through SF's Planning Department.

Wiener states that his legislative goal is to codify the environmental appeals process. Currently, public environmental appeals can be filed by average citizens throughout the life of any project. Wiener wants to limit the public's ability to appeal to only 20 to 30 days after the first entitlement/permit is issued.

Once the public is shut out after 30 days, project malfeasance may then commence in earnest. For an example of malfeasance, just look to the Parkmerced development deal, over which four City supervisors—including Supervisor Wiener—were referred to the Ethics Commission for official misconduct, as a result of withholding 14 pages of project amendments from the public until after the Supervisors voted on the deal.

Wiener and the Planning Department are currently writing a third version of his legislation.

Planning projects often change. If a project changes after the appeal process has expired, how will the public receive notice of the changed projects details? The Planning Department could simply notify the public of project changes by placing the notification of change in a file. How will the public know when a project is changed? How can a changed project be appealed again?

While Wiener experiments with our *participatory democracy*, we should be asking if it is a good thing to have our environmental appeal rights limited by an overzealous and very ambitious former Deputy City Attorney.

Wiener—the most pro-development Supervisor, and newly-appointed chair of the Land Use Committee—swears he's only trying to improve out-of-date legislation.

He claims, "This legislation is not about helping developers. They can navigate the appeals process. Largely, we are talking about small property owners who do the work. We want to create a predictable environmental appeals process. The more predictable the process, the less expensive it becomes."

The real question: *Can Wiener prove that his environmental amendments are even necessary?*

Susan Brandt-Hawley, an environmental preservation attorney, wrote in the SF *Bay Guardian's* September issue: "The truth is that while environmental review takes time and costs money, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process usually moves quickly. In terms of litigation, a recent report recounted 11 CEQA lawsuits filed against San Francisco last year, while many hundreds of projects were approved in the City. A more in-depth analysis by the Public Policy Institute of California found that only one CEQA lawsuit is filed per 354 projects, a fraction of a percent."

The fraction is actually less than three-tenths of one percent. Wiener's proposed legislation to restrict CEQA appeals seems to be taking a sledge hammer to pound a nail.

When asked for data, the SF Planning Department didn't even know the number of CEQA appeals, negative declarations, or exemptions filed last year before the Board of Supervisors. More importantly, the Supervisors have rejected every environmental appeal in recent memory, despite Wiener's claim that the Board approved one appeal relating to a Telegraph Hill development project.

Sporting such a miniscule track-record of appeal reviews, Wiener needs to demonstrate that his CEQA legislation is even necessary, or beneficial, to the public.

California Environmental Quality Act

In 1971, the State of California passed an environmental bill of rights called the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). CEQA became law because many California developers and city projects were deemed environmentally harmful. Prior to 1971, the public had little legal say over, and no way to

Cont. p. 7

Wiener/ CEQA (Cont. from p. 6)

appeal, environmental impact decisions concerning private and public projects.

CEQA allows us to “look before we leap,” protecting us from projects that may harm the environment, public health, or our quality of life, by requiring project proponents disclose and minimize environmental impacts. It also helps find better environmental alternatives to proposed projects.

The CEQA process ensures that we can participate in identifying and solving environmental problems, alongside self-interested project applicants and City Hall insiders.

CEQA applies to any discretionary governmental planning decision. Ours is the only city or county in California where every permit is discretionary — in San Francisco, a CEQA appeal can occur for any planning permit.

We should be aware of CEQA laws as they apply to our own house, our neighbor’s house, City projects, and large development projects. CEQA projects that are approved will affect City transportation, infill housing density, water and air quality, soil, fire and public safety services, and the character of our local neighborhood.

Different versions of Wiener’s CEQA amendments were previously submitted by former City Supervisor’s Fiona Ma and Michela Alioto-Pier; both former proposals failed and were never adopted.

To help prove his case for CEQA reform, Wiener continues to assert that CEQA should not exist as a tool to delay projects. “We make it very easy for one person to delay a project for a significant amount of time,” Wiener claims. He often cites Shannon Gallagher’s late appeal to San Francisco’s Board of Appeals regarding the revamp of Lafayette Park as an example of an appeal for the sake of delay.

Interestingly, the San Francisco Board of Appeals has no jurisdiction over CEQA-related appeals. The time period for CEQA appeals regarding Lafayette Park had already expired by the time Gallagher filed her appeal.

San Francisco *Chronicle* columnist C.W. Nevius wrote two columns about Gallagher’s Lafayette Park appeal. Wiener persists on making Gallagher a poster-child for the abuse of CEQA appeals that he asserts are designed just to be obstructionist.

“Sadly, I don’t go to the dog runs in the park anymore, after Nevius’ articles. I was publicly attacked on multiple occasions, and police reports filed. People yell profanities at me. One man left a hand print on my forearm, and a woman threw dog excrement at me,” Gallagher, who worked with the Pacific Heights Residents Association said.

Some of the impacts of Wiener’s new CEQA amendments, should they pass:

- The 20 to 30 day notification period will make it difficult for citizens and neighborhood groups to review projects. Project appeals may actually increase, because people will not have enough time to understand the ramifications of projects. This increases the risk of approving projects whose environmental impacts have not been thoroughly considered.
- Project notification now becomes vital. If citizens receive late notification or there are clerical errors, there is no time to review a project or development. Wiener’s call for weaker notice requirements by City officials and stricter appeal procedures for the community will result in citizens not being informed of certain determinations, or their right to appeal them.
- The language and procedures for filing a San Francisco CEQA appeal will become much more complicated, incomprehensible, and more difficult for people filing appeals. Clerks can disallow appeals that are not accurately filled out.
- Currently, any person who has submitted written or oral comments on a draft

environmental impact review (EIR) may appeal the Planning Commission’s certification of the EIR to the Board of Supervisors. Wiener’s proposed ordinance eliminates this right. This means that the Board of Supervisors would become the final CEQA decision-making body, and the separate public appeals process would be eliminated.

- The new CEQA language will be made vaguer and weaker. Wording such as “will” or “shall” will be changed to “may,” permitting a new discretionary loophole. The Wiener amendments replace the “fair argument” standard with a higher standard of proof, called “substantial evidence.” By adopting a higher appeal threshold, the number of citizen appeals will be restricted. Although San Francisco may not even have any constitutional authority to change the “fair argument” legal standard set by State law, this hasn’t stopped or deterred Wiener.

“The Amendments arguably would better reflect state law and streamline the CEQA process for various projects. However, they pose a substantial risk of significantly curtailing public participation and the ability of public officials to make well-informed decisions, contrary to the purpose of CEQA,” attorneys at UC’s Hastings College of the Law concluded:

Wiener claims that he has been reaching out to citizen groups for months, but no one seems to know who Wiener has talked to, or when. His real “dialogue” with citizens doesn’t appear to have started until after the Planning Commission’s November 28 meeting.

The Planning Commission voted 6 to 0, rejecting Wiener’s amendments, because they were 1) Confused by his legislative changes, and 2) Wiener appeared to have little, if any, citizen input or support for his proposed legislation.

Strangely, Wiener started out his comments to the Planning Commission by insulting citizen attendees, stating “Today you’ll hear quite a bit of hyperbolic rhetoric about how this legislation somehow undermines or guts CEQA and how it will cause the sky to collapse onto the earth.” His opening remarks were both a poor way to build consensus among neighborhood groups, and a poor way to convince Planning Commissioners of the rightness of his proposed legislation.

Wiener’s attempt to “fix” CEQA is eerily reminiscent of what went wrong with Proposition E, Wiener’s failed November 2011 ballot measure to allow the Board of Supervisors or the Mayor permission to amend or appeal legislation previously approved by voters.

First, Wiener finds, or creates, a problem. Then, he tries to simplify/streamline or solve the problem by making it more legislatively complex to “benefit the public.” Lastly, he places restrictions on the public to solve the problem he has magnified. Wiener is quickly developing a history of creating legislation that places limits on citizens’ rights.

Attorney Mary Miles may have said it best in her November 15 letter to the Planning Commission: “The purpose of [Wiener’s] proposed ordinance is to ‘streamline’ approvals, by denying the public adequate time to appeal actions of the Planning Commission and other decision-making bodies to the Board of Supervisors, by limiting the public’s right to be heard, by imposing restrictions on such appeals that violate CEQA, and by imposing burdens that limit the public’s right to participate in the CEQA process. The proposed legislation defeats CEQA’s principal purposes of informed self-government, participation in the decision-making process, and protection of the environment.”

San Franciscans need to unite with other groups alarmed by Wiener’s legislative agenda before he steamrolls the door shut any further, curtailing citizen involvement in our own democracy.

George Wooding Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods

Crime and Safety Focus

SFMTA Announces Sunday Parking Meters



On January 6, 2013, all San Francisco parking meters throughout the city began operating from noon to 6 p.m. on Sundays.

Meters operated by the Port of San Francisco around Fisherman’s Wharf and the Port, already operate from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. seven days a week. For the first three weeks of Sunday metering, violators also will get warnings rather than citations, with the hope that the dreaded sight of paper tickets flapping on the windshield will be an effective reminder of the change.



Captain Curtis Lam

Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Arrest Suspect In 2010 SF Homicide Case

On December 3, 2012, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police arrested homicide suspect, 29 year old Andre Bueno while conducting a traffic enforcement stop. Bueno had an outstanding arrest warrant for a murder in San Francisco.

This case stems from a January 2010 homicide on the 2400 block of Moraga. In this case, the suspects entered a home and murdered the victim while assaulting others inside during a home invasion robbery.

Bueno was extradited back to San Francisco on January 16, 2013. Bueno remains in custody on murder charges.

This case remains under investigation. Anyone with additional information regarding this incident or the suspect contact Inspector Kevin Jones or Inspector Pam Hofsass, at the SFPD Homicide Detail at (415) 553-1145.

You may also call anonymously at (415) 575-4444 or text-a-tip to TIP411 with SFPD at the beginning of the message. A mug shot will not be available at this time due to pending identification matters.



The Line-Up

Pharmacy Rx Robbery with Gun

Weapon: Black Semi Auto Handgun

Description of Suspects: Suspect #1 is a Black male, 20 to 25 Years old, Black Hair, thin build, 5’08” to 5’10”. Last seen wearing possible Oakley baseball hat, black ski jacket, dark pants, blue backpack, white gloves, possibly pudgy nose, and may be left handed. Suspect #2 is a Black male, 20 to 25 years old, thin build, 5’10” black hair. Last seen wearing dark ski jacket, dark sneakers, black and white gloves.

MO: In both incidents the suspects entered family run Pharmacies during daytime hours with limited customers inside the store. Suspect #1 seen in the video wearing white gloves and holding a black semi-automatic handgun, forces employees towards the back of the store and attempted to take medicine containing oxycodone. The suspects took several medications in both stores with the word Oxy on the label.

Date of incident: 01/14/13 Location: 1800 block Noriega St. & 1900 block of Clement St.

Contact: Contact Inspector Peterson, Criminal Investigation Unit (CIU) at 415-553-1201

Sexual Assault Suspect

Weapon: Knife

Description of Suspect: The suspect is described as 35 years of age, 6’00”, 180 lbs., with black hair, and black eyes, with pockmarks on his face. He speaks Thai and limited English.

MO: The suspect, Ricky Philsith (aka Ratanaphon Philsith), attempted to sexually assault the female victim. When she resisted, he began choking her and then stabbed her in the head with a knife. The suspect had previously threatened to kill the victim and her boyfriend. The suspect is known to have two firearms registered to him and carries a knife and may be in possession of these weapons. A felony arrest warrant has been issued for Philsith’s arrest. He has been known to drive a 2011 Toyota Seneca, dark-gray, four-door, with license plate number KUMAN77.

Date of incident: January 7, 2013

Location: 400 block of 39th Avenue, San Francisco

Contact: If anyone has any information concerning the whereabouts of the suspect, please call the Special Victims Unit, 553-1361 or anonymously via on-line, phone, or text below. URL: <http://www.sanfranciscopolice.org/index.aspx?recordid=464&page=4091>



Scam Alert

Be aware of the latest series of scams targeting older Chinese victims resulting in great financial loss. The latest reported incident occurred on January 19th on the 2500 block of Noriega Street at approximately 10:15 am. As a result of the scam, the victim a 70-year-old San Francisco woman sustained a loss of currency and valuables amounting to approximately \$50,000.00.

In this incident, the victim was approached by the first of three Cantonese-speaking suspects, all female, just after the victim left a restaurant. One suspect asked her if she knew where to find a particular Chinese doctor. As part of the scam, the second suspect pretends to have overheard the conversation, telling the suspect that she knows where to find the doctor. These two suspects then convince the victim to walk with them to the supposed location of the doctor, on the 1600 block of Noriega Street. At this point, the two suspects meet up on the street with the third suspect acting as a the doctor, who, in conversation with the victim, tells her that she is suffering from an illness and that she is under a curse that will adversely affect her loved ones. To relieve the curse, the victim must present her with valuables to be “blessed,” thus relieving the curse. The suspects accompanies the victim to her home, where she got her valuables, consisting of currency and jewelry, and brought them to the suspects waiting on the nearby street. A “blessing” was performed and, in a dexterous switch, another bag containing worthless items were given to the victim, who was instructed not to look in the bag for a specified amount of time, lest the “blessing” be invalidated.

Police obtained video surveillance footage of the incident. The three suspects are all wearing hats. The suspect’s vehicle in the video is a late model silver Toyota Prius. A fourth suspect, a Chinese male, remained in the car.

Tips. Do not speak with strangers. Do not give money or valuables to be “purified”. There is no lucky jade bracelet. If you are approached by strangers with this story or something similar, call 911.

Anyone with information on these cases are asked to call the San Francisco Police Department Financial Crimes Unit at (415) 553-1521.

Appeals Aplenty at Beach Chalet Soccer Field

Two legal actions are currently in process for the proposed Beach Chalet project (installing over 7 acres of artificial turf and 150,000 watts of sports lighting in Golden Gate Park, next to Ocean Beach). The first is the appeal of the local coastal zone permit to the California Coastal Commission (CCC), and the second is a lawsuit under CEQA regarding the inadequacy of the Environmental Impact Report for the project.

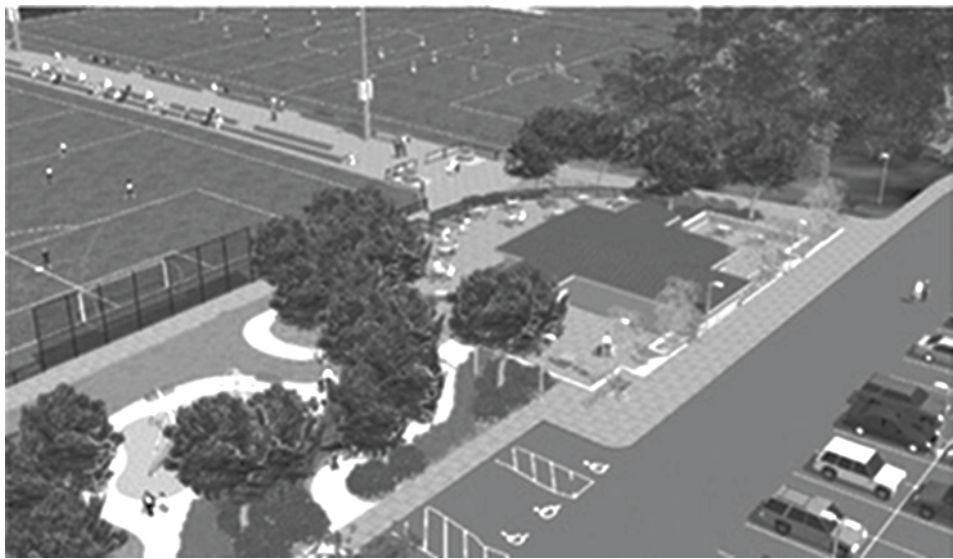
“...over 200 organizations and individuals have appealed the permit to the Commission. This is the most appeals ever filed against any project in the history of the California Coastal Act.

The City had originally said that the project could not be appealed to the California Coastal Commission; however, the CCC staff was very direct in stating that the project does indeed come under the jurisdiction of the CCC, and is appealable; therefore, over 200 organizations and individuals have appealed the permit to the Commission. This is the most appeals *ever* filed against any project in the history of the California Coastal Act.

When Coastal Commissioners were alerted to the project at the December CCC public meeting, several expressed severe reservations. Commissioner Steve Blank stated, “I am also familiar with the situation . . . at Ocean Beach where the Commission finally put an end to San Francisco not quite listening to the fact that the ocean isn’t the end dumping ground for San Francisco. I just wanted to communicate back to the City that you really ought to take a look at what happened there and think a lot about industrializing Golden Gate Park . . .”

The attorney for the CCC appeal is Mark Massara. Mark has many years of experience with the California Coastal Commission on behalf of environmental issues. He is the former Director of the Sierra Club’s California Coastal Campaign. He also surfs! Learn more about Massara on Wikipedia at:

The Coastal Commission is the best hope for protecting the future of Golden Gate Park and Ocean Beach. No date has been set for that hearing. To be kept posted contact SFOE at: sfoceanedge@earthlink.net.



WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Volunteer to help with flyering and getting signatures to protect Golden Gate Park and Ocean Beach.
- Invite SFOE to a meeting of your group, to talk about the project.
- DONATE through the SFOE website to help cover the CCC legal fees: www.sfoceanedge.org.

Public testimony on the Beach Chalet project is available at CCC video-on-demand: www.cal-span.org/cgi-bin/archive.php?owner=CCC&date=2012-12-13 “Click here to start” and go to Minute 12:00.

Go to en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Massara and watch a video interview of Mark on the NY Times website: <http://video.on.nytimes.com/video/2008/05/12/us/1194817116420/planet-us-the-coastal-warrior.html>

CleanPowerSF (Cont. from p. 4)

way.) For those who do receive invitation notices, unless you opt out, you join. If you join, how much more will you pay for electricity that is said to be 100% generated by renewable sources? That depends on what your monthly bill is. Your overall gas & electric bill will exceed what you would pay to PG&E by some 15% and 27%. Here are examples, which, unfortunately, include an unknown gas component: 288 kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity for which you would pay in your electric and gas bill \$76.76 to PG&E, you will pay \$21.21 more if you are enrolled in the CleanPowerSF program. But that electricity usage is less than most household use in a month. If you use 406 kWh and would typically pay PG&E for both electric and gas \$127.51, then if enrolled in the city program you will pay \$29.86 more; if 606 kWh paying a PG&E bill of \$237.29, then you pay \$44.56 more for 100% renewable; if 1122 kWh is your use, paying PG&E \$542.43, under the CleanPowerSF program you’d pay \$82.50 more. As you use more electricity, your “green” premium falls as a percentage of your bill. (It’s a city program; no one claims that it

makes sense.)

\$19.5 million must be appropriated by the Board of Supervisors to finance the launch of CleanPowerSF. While not yet done, the Board has pushed SFPUC to move this. The program also benefits the poor; this builds in a constituency. It gives \$2 million to GoSolar (another constituency). Energy efficiency receives a couple of million.

The SFPUC’s own consultant disses the CleanPowerSF phase one program as “not competitive, achieves no jobs, no security; very similar to PG&E proposed ‘Deep Green’ rate...except more expensive.” The consultant advises, accelerate the robust local buildout, include Hetchy power (which is clean but not renewable) in the mix, and buy RECs, renewable energy credits, which are modern day indulgences—I sinned, but paid for good works.

In other words, consultant sez, don’t put your toe in, jump in! What’s a billion-and-a-half in SF? Be roBUST!

Steve Lawrence is a Westside resident and SF Public Utility Commission stalwart. Feedback: lawrence@westsideobserver.com

NEW RULES FOR TAX TIME!

By Jonathan Farrell

Tax season is not far away and according to senior tax preparer, Susana Veamatahau Pau, it is best to file early. She is the supervising manager for Jackson Hewitt Tax Service for the San Francisco and San Mateo region and graciously answered a few questions for the Westside Observer.

1. What is the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012? What does it do for the average American tax payer?

Recently approved by Congress, the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 is a bill that retroactively extends many expired tax benefits for 2012, permanently patches the Alternative Minimum Tax and makes permanent most of the provisions of the Bush Tax Cuts that had technically expired on January 1, 2013.

Through the legislation, most taxpayers can now breathe a sigh of relief in having avoiding significant tax increases that would have come from the country falling off the ‘Fiscal Cliff’ had a deal not been reached.

There are many elements included in the bill, but here are three main elements taxpayers should note:

The Payroll Tax Holiday: The resolution to the fiscal cliff extended a lot of taxpayer friendly benefits into the 2012 tax year, but the Payroll Tax Holiday was not one of them, and Congress decided to let it expire January 1, 2013. This tax benefit lowered the taxpayer required Social Security tax payment by 2 percent in 2011 and 2012. With the expiration of the benefit, taxpayers’ payroll taxes increased on January 1 by 2 percent, which lowers total take-home pay.

The Alternative Minimum Tax: The Alternative Minimum Tax, commonly referred to as the AMT, was enacted in 1969 to ensure that individuals and corporations that benefit from certain exclusions, deductions, or credits pay at least a minimum amount of tax. The minimum income required to be subject to the tax is what was permanently ‘patched’ this year. The change protects more than 31 million taxpayers from an increase of almost \$3,000 in taxes.

Other deductions impacted by the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012: While the Payroll Tax Holiday was left to expire, other deductions were extended, such as the current versions of the student loan interest deduction and the credit for child care, both of which were permanently extended. Additionally, the American Opportunity credit was extended through 2017.

2. Are there any limitations or restrictions to the benefits that retroactively extends many expired tax benefits for 2012 and many of the provisions of the Bush Tax Cuts that expired on January 1, 2013?

The 2012 tax law changes were extended for two years only for January 1, 2012 through December 31, 2013

The Mortgage Debt Forgiveness was extended through December 31, 2013

The American Opportunity Credit, the expanded Additional Child Tax Credit, and the Expanded EITC rules covering married taxpayers and families with three or more children have been extended through December 31, 2017.

3. You say that it is best to Look for a local tax preparer who is knowledgeable and who has a Preparer Tax Identification Number (PTIN), which

the IRS requires for all paid tax preparers. Is this an indication that tax preparation and forms are now all electronic and that this way is the way for the 21st Century? For those people who are not tech savvy, will hard copy forms submitted still suffice? Or is that completely phased out now?

The Internal Revenue Service now requires all paid preparers to have a Preparer Tax Identification Number (PTIN) before preparing returns.

This requirement is part of the IRS initiative to set minimum standards for practice and knowledge for all preparers, whether a customer’s return is submitted electronically or on paper.

While it is still possible to submit a paper return via U.S. mail to the IRS, most taxpayers prefer to electronically submit their tax documents. In fact, more than 113 million income tax returns were e-filed last year (in 2012), or more than 80 percent of all individual returns filed. In addition, the IRS requires all tax return preparers who complete tax returns for more than 10 people to e-file returns. Taxpayers who wish to file a paper return may still do so, even when they use a tax professional.

E-file, or electronic filing, is a method of sending your tax return to the IRS and the state via a secure computer-to-computer channel. There are several benefits to e-filing a tax return:

Speed: The processing time is faster. The IRS expects 9 out of 10 taxpayers will receive their refund in under 21 days after the IRS receives the return again this year.

Accuracy: Before your return is accepted by the IRS, math errors as well as name and social security numbers are verified. Plus, paper returns are entered by IRS employees, thereby leading to potential mistakes and inaccurate entries.

Confirmation the IRS has received your return: The IRS responds electronically once your return is accepted as filed.

4. Is it good for everyone to keep track of all their receipts and bills all the time, so that when tax season rolls around, people are ready to file and file early?

It is beneficial to designate a place in your home to save relevant tax receipts and materials throughout the year, such as a drawer or a shoe box. Many online options also exist for storing records, such as Jackson Hewitt’s MyTaxManager, at the Jackson Hewitt web site. In general, knowing where you can easily access your records will mean less time spent gathering items needed for preparing a tax return each year.

And with approximately 75 percent of taxpayers receiving a refund each year, there is no reason to wait. It can be advantageous to file early.

5. How is identity theft impacting tax returns, why is it on the rise in terms of taxes? What can people do to safeguard



Susana Veamatahau Pau

Business Corner

New Italian Restaurant (Cont. from p. 1)

Asked why he decided upon West Portal, D’Urzo said, “Because when I moved to the United States in 1998, ...I moved to Twin Peaks. I used to work in an Italian restaurant in West Portal for one year. Then I lived on the Peninsula. I said one day I will come to West Portal to open a restaurant. It’s been 14 years.”

D’Urzo said he will be offering great food and great service. Much of the food will be homemade. The tomato sauce and the meatballs will be recipes from his mother, who is coming from Italy to help. The pasta, shortribs, ravioli, including lobster and artichoke ravioli, gnocchi, and pappardelle will be homemade. Other dishes may be homemade as well.

“Customers will see fresh fish and fresh produce each day,”



Homemade eggplant parmigiana from Mamma Francesca

and he will be using the best buffalo mozzarella cheese — “almost creamy,” D’Urzo said. His focus will be bringing a quality product to the people.

Restaurant work runs in the family. Two uncles have owned Piazza D’Angelo in Mill Valley for the past 30 years.

D’Urzo has 15 years of experience in the restaurant industry — from Rome, Italy, to New York, to San Francisco, and the Bay Area. His experience includes table service, kitchen work and management. For the past five years he has been a general manager at one of three Bay Area Italian restaurants: Locanda Positano, Limone, Acqua Pazza.

Trattoria Da Vittorio will have about 15 employees. D’Urzo said he will be hiring about ten. Of those already employed, “I have my strong team,” he said.

Besides authentic Italian dishes, such as spaghetti carbonara and eggplant parmigiana, Trattoria Da Vittorio will also serve Naples-style thin crust pizza. Both pizza chefs, Antonio and Giovanni, worked with D’Urzo at Locanda Positano, which was rated best pizza in the Bay Area by ABC Channel 7, KGO-TV San Francisco within the last two years.

“We want to make sure the kids are happy too,” Antonio said. Mickey Mouse pizzas will be on the menu. Moussouras said D’Urzo is bringing a special oven from Italy for the pizza.

“Chi mangia bene, vive bene,” D’Urzo says, which means, “He who eats well, lives well.”

Keith Burbank is a local journalist.



Beets salat with arucola and burrata, a fresh Italian cheese, made from mozzarella and cream



New pizza oven is Italian import



Prosciutto and burrata crepes

WHISTLEBLOWERS / Dr. Maria Rivero & Dr. Derek Kerr

RewardsforWhistleblowers?

“... San Francisco has a paramount interest in protecting the integrity of its government institutions. To further this interest, **individuals should be encouraged to report...possible violations of laws, regulations and rules governing the conduct of City officers and employees.**”

So states the City’s Campaign and Governmental Conduct Code. Yet, the SF Controller’s Whistleblower Program (SFWP) discourages whistleblowers.

Whistleblowers are the last line of defense against fraud, waste and corruption. But they face strong disincentives, including harassment, ostracism, termination, and blacklisting. That’s why the government has long used bounties to encourage informants. Realizing that government alone was over-matched by fraudsters, in 1986 Congress rejuvenated the Civil War-era False Claims Act (FCA) expressly to improve rewards for whistleblowers who sue on behalf of taxpayers. Typically, rewards range from 15% to 30% of recovered funds. FCA prize information quality over informant motives. Seeing the success of these incentives, California became the first of 29 States to enact a FCA in 1987. Since 2005, local governments have followed suit, including New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Washington DC - but not San Francisco.

The fraud-driven collapse of the U.S. financial system in 2008 pushed lawmakers to reward whistleblowers, rather than just protect them. Accordingly, the 2010 Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act features mandatory rewards for securities fraud whistleblowers. The Department of Justice, Internal Revenue Service, and the Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC) provide bounties to eligible informants. On 8/21/12 the SEC announced: “We are seeing high-quality tips that are saving our investigators substantial time and resources.” On 6/28/12 the Office of Special Counsel, the agency charged with protecting federal whistleblowers, gave “Public Servant of the Year” awards to three Air Force whistleblowers, proclaiming: “Whistleblowers are patriots. They possess unusual courage. They come forward because they are driven by conscience.”

Statistics published by the US Department of Justice show that rewarding



informants pays. Between 1987 and 2010, the DOJ Civil Fraud Division recovered **\$9.03** billion without informants. But recoveries doubled to **\$18.17** billion with help from whistleblowers. A 2010 econometric study of corporate fraud by the University of Chicago showed that monetary rewards were the key “positive incentive” for employee whistleblowers. Rewards increased whistleblowing by 23% - without increasing frivolous claims.

While the SFWP rejects whistleblower incentives, other City agencies reward tipsters. The SF Assessor-Recorder’s “Real Estate Watchdog Program” offers bounties up to 10% of unpaid property taxes. In 2008, \$59,803 was awarded to a “watchdog” whose tip brought in \$1.07 million. The Department of Public Works has a “Littering, Nuisance and Graffiti Reward Fund” and publicly gives \$250 to “Good Samaritans” who report taggers. Illegal dumping informants may get \$500. Likewise, the Police Department offers \$100,000 for solid leads in homicide cases.

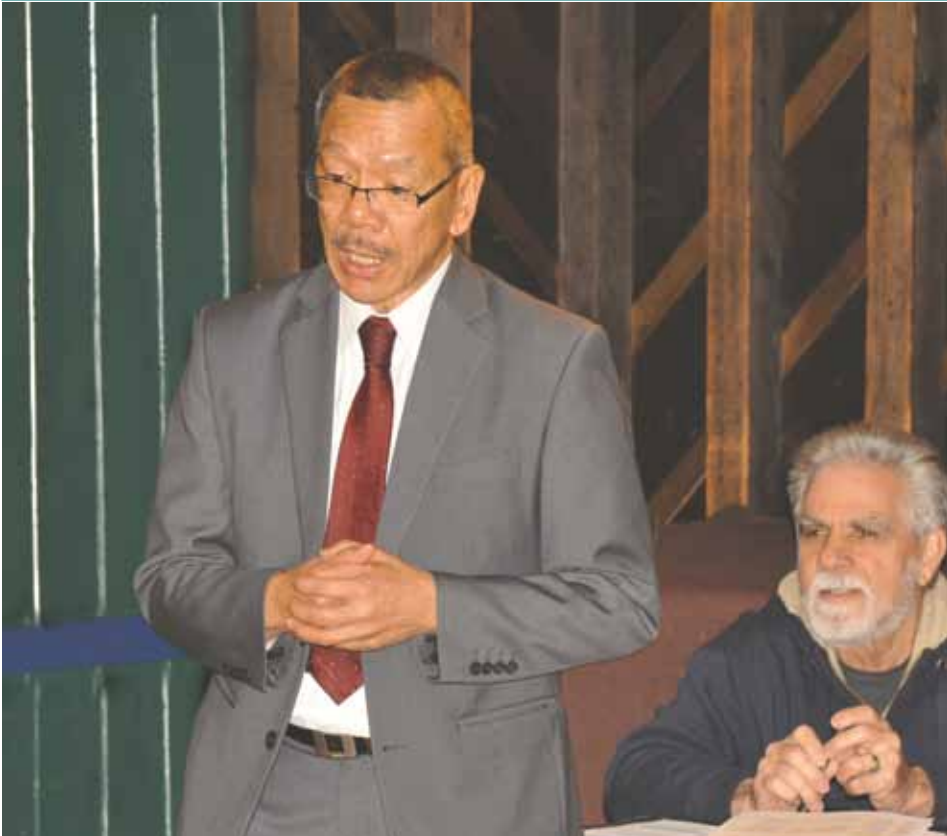
Reporting an illegal gun can bring \$1,000. Turning in someone who sounds a false fire alarm nets \$500. The Department of Public Health offers \$250 rewards for tips about dog-fight trainers. The Civil Service Commission rewards police officers with one month’s salary for “heroic or meritorious conduct.” Why not whistleblowers?

Well, the 2010-2011 Civil Grand Jury did recommend “a reward system for validated high-risk whistleblower complaints with a \$500 minimum or 10% of funds recovered...” This notion, that public benefit trumps whatever moral drawbacks come with rewards, roused a chorus of City Hall naysayers.

Controller Ben Rosenfield rightly asserted that City employees should report wrong-doing “as part of their jobs.” But most will not, to keep their jobs. Rosenfield warned about a “moral hazard,” that employees might delay reporting fraud in order to collect a larger reward. There’s no evidence of such scamming by City whistleblowers. Instead, the moral hazard

Cont. p. 14

WEST OF TWIN PEAKS CENTRAL COUNCIL By Mitch Bull



New District 7 Supervisor Norman Yee answers questions from the Council

The WOTPCC meeting on January 28th was a busy one, with speakers ranging from newly elected District 7 Supervisor Norman Yee; representatives from the SF County Transit Authority and a program to encourage the planting of more lemon trees in San Francisco.

Council President Matt Chamberlain opened the meeting at 7:35 PM with 30 or so attendees, noting that the January meeting would likely be the last one (for a period) to be held at the Forest Hills Clubhouse, which is schedule to be under wraps as a construction projects takes over in the Spring. Alternative sites being considered are Miraloma Park Clubhouse and St. Brendan’s Hall. More information will come from the WOTPCC leadership as decisions are finalized. Chamberlain also noted that the WOTPCC will not be conducting any candidate forums in the near future without first having the sponsorship funding lined up, as the group had a deficit from the supervisor candidates forum last October.

District 7 Supervisor Norman Yee then took the floor and spoke on his acclimation to his new role and the areas where he wants to focus in his first 6-9 months. While stating that he is still getting up to speed, he intends to focus on the issues of Pedestrian Safety and our Neighborhood Businesses.

Relatively soft-spoken, he addressed the audience in a forthright manner, explaining that he is committed to staying connected to the neighborhood groups and their issues. He also knows that expectations need to be realistic, saying, “I am at an age where I am realistic and know what I can do and will not promise things that I cannot do.”

Yee stressed that he will have an open office and wants to have a set time (probably Fridays) where he is out in the district neighborhoods meeting people and hearing what they have to say. He also promised that he, or a member of his staff would be present at the WOTPCC meetings. WOTPC President Chamberlain referenced the 20 or so important topics of the organization and that pedestrian safety and neighborhood business support encompass about 25% of the items.

Following Yee, the WOTPCC committee leads gave their reports with notable topics being the continuation of tree removal in Glen Canyon; Laguna Honda Hospital receiving a 5 star rating for staff levels per patient (but still managing only a 3 star performance level in health care); the dissolution of the LHH foundation; the draft EIR vote on the controversial Overlook Project; and a report on the TEP report showing that most MUNI routes in D7 will be minimally affected.

Cont. p. 15

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Red and Gold fever... All is right in the football world with the 49ers again going to the “Big Dance.” By the time you read this we will either be whoopin and hollerin, or crying in our beer...oh that’s right, all of us 49er fans are routinely characterized as wine sippers... tell that to the patrons at Portals, the Dubliner or the Philosophers Club... I beg to differ.

As a native Baltimorean (or Baltimoron) I will be rooting for the 49ers as I have been in the Bay Area longer than I was in Maryland, and really, MY team was the Baltimore Colts, the team of Johnny U., Ray Berry, USF grad Gino Marchetti, and Lenny Moore. A disgrace that they were allowed to slink out of town in the middle of the night to where?...Indianapolis.

But I digress. My “Ravens-rooting” siblings have made a wager with me and I hope to be enjoying some Maryland Crab Cakes in the very near future. Go Niners!



Local Historic Place to Check out... Congratulations to **Vanessa Villacarlos** and her team at the Historic **7 Mile House**, located at the corner of Geneva Avenue and Bayshore Blvd. The restaurant/bar is celebrating their 160th anniversary. No, that’s not a typo...160 years open for business in the same location. It is the only “Mile House” in the Bay Area that is still operating in its original building and location. Originally a stage coach stop exactly 7 miles from the ferry building it opened on February 6, 1853, just 4 years after the California Gold Rush. The team will be having a big anniversary celebration on Wednesday, with free adobo, live music and other festivities starting at 12 noon. The food and atmosphere is great and it’s fun to be standing in a place where gunslingers, miners, bootleggers, gamblers and others (politicians?) once downed some local suds...



Ode to “Café”... We have an article in this issue by Keith Burbank on the new Italian restaurant that will be opening soon in the location that was formerly Café For All Seasons. While its recent operators kept the name intact, the magic of the Café was gone, never as great as when long-time owners Donna and Frank Katzl owned the place. It was a must for brunch on the weekend and lines were routinely out the door. The cuisine was terrific, so much so that once I dined there for lunch and dinner because there were too many great specials to choose from. Annually listed in the SF Chronicle’s *Best Restaurants in SF* it is a place that has been missed by its fans for years.

Sharing “Sharon”...A note to our readers...this months’ Observer features a “Sharon the Health” column from writer Sharon Caren. It will be her last as she has decided to take a hiatus from writing a column and concentrate on her various business ventures. We thank her for her contributions over the years and wish her well.

Do you have an event, a neighborhood fact or just an observation to share? Drop us a line at mitch@westsideobserver.com and share your ideas or just let us know what you think.



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❖ FEBRUARY EVENTS ❖

EVERY SUNDAY • FARMERS MARKET

Farmers Market | Every Sun | 9 am–1 pm | Stonestown back parking lot: at Stonestown Galleria (19th Ave @ Winston).

EVERY TUES • QUE SYRAH HAPPY HOUR

Every Tue Happy Hour | 4–8 pm | Que Syrah Wine Bar. Take \$1 off each glass, 10% off each bottle of wine consumed on site. 230 West Portal Ave 731-7000

Every Thu | 5:30–9 pm | Chef Val's Tapas \$3–7.

EVERY THURS – NIGHTLIFE

Thu | 6–10 pm | The Academy of Sciences is transformed with live music, provocative science, mingling and cocktails. GG Park \$12 (\$10 Members). calademy.org/nightlife

JAZZ FRIDAYS @ THE CLIFF HOUSE

Fri | 7–11 pm | The Balcony Lounge at the Cliff House hosts jazz performances every Friday night. 1 Seal Rock. Performers: www.cliffhouse.com/home/jazz.html

FRIDAY NIGHTS @ THE DEYOUNG

5–8:45 pm | Music, poetry, films, dance, tours and lectures. Cafe: special dinner, no-host bar. Art-making children/adults. deYoung Museum, GG Park. deyoung.famsf.org/deyoung/fridays

TUE • PEOPLE OF PARKSIDE/SUNSET

7 Thu Feb 7 | 7 pm | Formerly Taraval Parkside Merchants Assn. Taraval Station, 2345 24th Ave 1st Thu each month.

SUN • CHINESE NEW YEAR

10 Sun Feb 10 | Chinese Year of the Snake. The New Years Parade usually follows in 2 weeks.



TUE • GREATER WEST PORTAL-GWPNA

1 Tue Feb 12 | 7:30 pm | West Portal Clubhouse, 139 Lenox Way. 2nd Tues each month. www.gwpna.org

WED • CIVIL GRAND JURY

1 Wed Feb 13 | 7:00 pm | What is the purpose of the grand jury? How does it work? : Selection of issues studied and how investigations are done. What happens with the jury's recommendations? Ask questions following the brief presentation by former civil grand jurors. Merced Branch Library, 115 Winston Dr.

WED • TOASTMASTERS

1 Wed Feb 13 | 7-8 am | Magic Sunrisers, an open house at the Taraval Station 2345 24th Ave. Come and find out how Toastmasters can help you improve your public speaking and leadership skills. Light breakfast. Info: 564-6069.

WED • CANADIAN WOMENS CLUB

1 Wed Feb 13 | 11 am | Canadian Consul General, Ms. Cassie Doyle, speaker 12 noon lunch. Guests and gentlemen welcome. Cost: \$30. RSVP required: www.canadianwomensclub.org or

President@canadianwomensclub.org
Old Presidio Golf Club, 8 Presidio Terrace.

WED • 19TH AVE—M-OCEANVIEW



1 Wed Feb 13 | 5:30 – 8 pm | Community Meeting Re: Improvements to M-Ocean View and 19th Ave., SF Transportation Authority an effort to develop transportation improvements along the southern portion of the corridor. Draft concepts for potential changes to the M-Ocean View light rail line, pedestrian enhancements, and bus and shuttle improvements. Special accommodations or language assistance, 415.593.1655 Nob Hill Rm, Seven Hills Conf. Ctr. SF State University 1600 Holloway Ave.

THU • DIST COALITION MEETING

1 Thu Feb 14 | 7 pm–9 pm | Meets 2nd Thu each month. Info Susan at 586.8103 or ssuval@sbcglobal.net Taraval Station, 2345 24th Ave.

MON • SUNSET-PARKSIDE MEETING

1 Mon Feb 18 | 6 pm | SPEAK aims to educate residents on public safety, zoning, planning etc. 3201 Ulloa St. (Grace Lutheran) 3rd Mon each month. speak-sanfrancisco@yahoo.com

TUE • COMMUNITY SAFETY MEETING

1 Tue Feb 19 | 6 pm | Taraval District Police Station. 3rd Tue of the month. Meet with Captain Curtis Lum. 2345 - 24th Ave 759-3100.

THU • AUTHOR MARY BURNS

2 Thu Feb 21 | 7 pm | Meet West Portal's own Mary Burns, author of *The Woman Who Wrote the Bible* and *The West Portal Mysteries* series. She will read from her new book, *Portraits of an Artist*, an imaginative historical novel that portrays the motivations and passions underlying John Singer Sargent's creative force and revealing art.

Sargent, once living in Paris and intimate with the celebrities there retreated in disgrace to London to start a new life. During this dark time, he produced two of his very finest paintings, the "Daughters of Edward Darley Boit" and "Madame X". BookShop West Portal, 80 West Portal. Info 564-8080.



MON • SHARP

2 Mon Feb 25 | 7 pm | Sunset Heights Assoc. of Responsible People. This Monday: Supervisor Norman Yee, and

SF Silent Film Festival's Annual Winter Event

Saturday, February 16

By Tom Mayer

The SF Silent Film Festival once again presents its one day Winter Festival, presenting the best in silent film, with live musical accompaniment, on Saturday, February 16 at the Castro Theater. Get a taste of what's in store for the big Festival in July. See www.silentfilm.org for more info and tickets.

Snow White (US, 1916) 10am. Walt Disney was a 16-year-old newsboy when he attended a free event at the Kansas City Convention Center in 1917 to see Marguerite Clark, Dorothy Cumming, and Creighton Hale on screen in a live-action rendition of the fairy tale, *Snow White*. It was one of the first features he'd ever seen and he was hooked. "I thought it was the perfect story... It had the sympathetic dwarfs...the heavy...the prince and the girl. The romance...the perfect story." This rare film is being shown as part of the Walt Disney Family Museum celebration of *Snow White*. Directed by J. Searle Dawley with Marguerite Clark in the lead role, the film was thought lost until materials were discovered in the Netherlands, and a print was preserved at George Eastman House. Musical accompaniment by Donald Sosin on grand piano. Copresented by the National Film Preservation Foundation.

Act Slow, Think Fast: Short Films of Buster Keaton (12 noon)

"Think slow, act fast" is a quote attributed to Buster Keaton, and perfectly exemplifies his movies. Keaton is a true comic genius and a great filmmaker. Repeated viewing of any Keaton will reveal the thoughtful filmmaking, the elegant structure and beautifully expressive camera, and deepen your amazement at the gravity-defying stunts. Our program features three early Keaton shorts, made shortly after Keaton left Fatty Arbuckle to work on his own—three of the funniest, most innovative comedies ever put on film! **One Week** (1920, with Buster Keaton, Sybil Seely, Joe Roberts) **The Scarecrow** (1920, 18 m., with Keaton, Joe Roberts, Sybil Seely, Luke the Dog), **The Play House** (1921, 23 m., with Keaton, Virginia Fox). Musical accompaniment by Donald Sosin on grand piano.

The Thief of Bagdad (US, 1924) 2:30pm

Douglas Fairbanks's personal favorite, *The Thief of Bagdad* shows him at the top of his charming, acrobatic game. Directed by Raoul Walsh and adapted from *One Thousand and One Nights*, the story revolves around a thief (Fairbanks) who falls in love with the daughter (Julanne Johnston) of the Caliph of Bagdad. So overcome with love that he refuses to be deceptive about his true identity, Fairbanks's thief still has the chance to win the fair maiden by bringing back the world's rarest treasures. Thus begins a rousing fantasy replete with flying carpets, winged horses, and underwater sea monsters. Lavish sets and cinematography support early special effects to make *Thief* a wildly entertaining spectacle. Inducted into the National Film Registry in 1996 and voted one of AFI's top 10 classics in 2008, *Thief* has recently received a crisp 2K restoration. Live music by Mont Alto Motion Picture Orchestra

My Best Girl (US, 1927) 7pm

Mary Pickford's last silent film is a comedy so warm and ebullient, it is a fitting adieu to America's Sweetheart. Although she would make four more films—all talkies—*My Best Girl* (1927) is the pinnacle, the exemplary illustration of what made Pickford the most loved movie star in the world. Directed by Sam Taylor (famous for his work with Harold Lloyd), *Girl* is the story of Five & Dime store stock girl, Maggie Johnson (Pickford), who falls for the owner's son, Joe Merrill (Buddy Rogers), who's masquerading as a new employee that Mary has to train. Of course, Joe's parents have other ideas about the kind of girl Joe should marry. Pickford and Rogers (in his first role after the hugely successful *Wings*, 1927) are wonderful together. Pickford would divorce Douglas Fairbanks and marry Rogers—a marriage that lasted her lifetime. Copresented by the Pacific Film Archive. Musical accompaniment by Donald Sosin on grand piano.

Faust (Germany, 1926) 9pm

F.W. Murnau's *Faust* is the greatest movie version of the old legend, immortalized by Goethe, of the learned man who sells his soul to the devil. Magnificent in its surreal depictions of heaven and hell and a nightmarish otherworld, *Faust* is masterpiece of German Expressionism, as distinctive as Murnau's other horror masterpiece, *Nosferatu*. When Mephisto (Emil Jannings) shows up to tempt Faust (Gösta Ekman), a man of books and learning, with the ability to cure the plague and a 24-hour return to his youthful body, it seems God may have lost his wager with the devil over Faust's immortal soul. Or has he? Murnau's use of chiaroscuro effect beautifully contrasts light and dark, life and death; and evil is chillingly limned by Jannings's brilliantly nuanced, subtly comic performance. Musical accompaniment by Christian Elliott on the mighty Wurlitzer.

the "Ellis-ing of 1637 Tenth Ave.—8 units—all out on the street. Last Mon each month. 1736 9th Ave. @Moraga.

MON • WOTP CENTRAL COUNCIL

2 Mon Feb 25 | 7:30 pm | West of Twin Peaks Central Council meets on 4th Monday each month for those interested in local issues. No meeting in Dec. Forest Hill Clubhouse, 381 Magellan.

THU • OMI NEIGHBORS IN ACTION

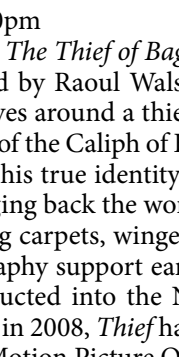
2 Thu Feb 28 | 7 pm | Meets last Thu each month. This meeting is at Temple UMC 65 Beverly/Sheilds Street, speaker not yet determined.



THU-FRI-SAT • 42ND STREET

2 Thu-Fri-Sat Feb 28-Mar, Mar 7-9 | 7:30 pm | A big bold musical set in 1933. A story of hard work, talent, love. A Tony Award-winning production for the whole family!

Includes: You're Getting to Be a Habit with Me, Dames, We're in the Money, Lullaby of Broadway, Shuffle Off to Buffalo. SF School of the Arts, 555 Portola Dr. \$15. sfsota.org/sota42ndst.cfm



Have a local event? Contact:

editor@westsideobserver.com

19TH AVENUE TRANSIT STUDY



19TH AVENUE TRANSIT STUDY

COMMUNITY MEETING

FEBRUARY 13
5:30 – 8:00 P.M.
NOB HILL ROOM, SEVEN HILLS
1600 HOLLOWAY AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY

WHAT'S NEXT FOR 19TH AVENUE?

Community Meeting to discuss transit and related improvements to the M-Ocean View and 19th Avenue

The San Francisco County Transportation Authority invites the community to participate in a meeting about the 19th Avenue Transit Study, an effort to develop transportation improvements along the southern portion of the corridor (also known as "Tier 5").

The meeting will highlight draft concepts for potential changes to the M-Ocean View light rail line, pedestrian enhancements, and bus and shuttle improvements.

For special accommodations or language assistance, please call 415.593.1655 at least 72 hours in advance.

FOR MORE INFO VISIT <http://www.sfcta.org/19thave>



Now At the Movies • By Don Lee Miller

ANNA KARENINA

Joe Wright directs this umpteenth version of the Russian melodrama of Tolstoy's novel with many new twists added by screenwriter Tom Stoppard. The interiors unfold within a 19th century theatre, including a skating rink and horse racetrack. Two-shots are played within a large picture frame. The exteriors of fields, a maze and buildings open up for contrast. A feast for the eyes, the acting doesn't disappoint either: bored young Anna: Keira Knightley is married to Judge Karenin: a stodgy older-looking Jude Law. She starts an affair with wealthy Count Vronsky: Raphaël Personnaz (a very busy young French actor). Two leading ladies appear here in supporting roles: Countess Vronsky: Olivia Williams and Countess Ivanova: Emily Watson. From Downton Abbey, two actors grace Moscow: Princess Myagkaya: Michelle Dockery and Yashvin: Thomas Howes. The musical score by Dario Marianelli is distinctive. Nudity/sexuality. Violence.

Awards: Winner: Critics Pick: New York Times, Washington Post. Critics Choice: Best Art Direction, Best Costume Design. Hollywood Film Award: Production Designer of the Year. Las Vegas Critics: Best Costume Award. Nom.: Golden Globes: Best Score. 4 Academy Awards. 6 BAFTA noms. 6 Satellite Award Noms.

DJANGO UNCHAINED

Pre-Civil War, a slave, Django: Jamie Foxx is bought by a former dentist, Dr. King Schultz: Christoph Waltz, turned bounty hunter. After Schultz trains Django to be a crack shot, he makes him his partner. Django wants to find his wife in Mississippi and buy her freedom from the ruthless plantation owner, Calvin Candie: Leonardo di Caprio, who can sometimes be charming but when he threatens Broomhilda: Kerry Washington with a hammer to her head, Candie shows his evil side. His servant, Stephen: Samuel Jackson (under lots of make-up) has a wicked streak. Director/screenwriter: Quentin Tarantino sets his "Western" in the South, but it's basically a rip-off of Sergio Leone with lots of cameos hidden behind those beards and KKK masks. Wait for the end credits. The acting is first-rate. Strong graphic violence throughout (if you count about 50 bullet holes, each spurting a pint of blood). A vicious fight. Profanity. Some nudity.

Awards: Winner: Golden Globes: Supporting Actor-Drama: Waltz, Orig. Screenplay: Tarantino. Critics Choice: Orig. Screenplay. Nom., 5 Academy Awards: Pic, Supporting Actor: Waltz, Orig. Screenplay, Cine., Sound Editing; Best Pic: PG. Nom., Best Pic: Directors Guild (DG).

GANGSTER SQUAD

L.A. in 1949 is ruled by mobster Mickey Cohen: Sean Penn (almost unrecognizable beneath heavy makeup), to whom brutality and violence is no more significant than stomping out a cigarette. Police chief Parker: Nick Nolte forms an undercover group tasked with taking down Cohen. Sgt. O'Hara: Josh Brolin and Sgt. Jerry Wooters: Ryan Gosling lead ex-pulp novelist, Officer Kennard:

Robert Patrick, Ofc. Ramirez: Michael Peña, Ofc. Kee-ler: Giovanni Ribisi, and Ofc. Harris: Anthony Mackie. Cohen's mistress: Grace: Emma Stone attracts Jerry's interest and soon they are sharing a bed. Director Ruben Fleischer brings the L.A. period to life with Will Beall's screenplay, based on Paul Lieberman's novel. For lotsa action, this one is unbeatable. Graphic violence (incl. a man being pulled into two halves chained between two cars). Many bleeding bullet wounds. Profanity!

JACK REACHER

When an expert sniper is imprisoned for shooting five random people on the sidewalk below, he asks for homicide investigator Jack Reacher: Tom Cruise to come to his defense. His court appointed attorney, Helen: Rosamund Pike is the daughter of the strict believer, D.A. Rodin: Richard Jenkins. Reacher barely sets foot in town before he is confronted by a gang of five young huskies. Shooting range owner Cash: Robert Duvall aids Jack in his search for the truth in this action thriller. Jack uncovers the head gangster The Zec: Werner Herzog. Based on the popular novel/series by Lee Childs. Violence. Profanity. Some drug material.

LES MISERABLES

Jean: Hugh Jackman is released from a French prison, but fails to keep the terms of his parole, always looking for the persistent Inspector Javert: Russell Crowe to catch up with him. Young mother Fantine: Anne Hathaway can barely feed herself, let alone her daughter. Thenardier: Sasha Baron Cohen and Madame Thenarier: Helena Bonham Carter raise young Cosette as a servant. When Jean is elected Mayor of his village, he buries the frail Fantine and retrieves Cosette and rears her as his ward. Cosette grows up to be Amanda Seyfried, who falls in love with a revolutionary, Marius: Eddie Redmayne (My Week with Marilyn). The record-breaking Bdwy. musical is entirely sung. The performers sing live on the set. Jackman and Hathaway have the best voices and also are the most compelling, sympathetic characters. Sexual and suggestive material. Violence. Thematic elements.

Awards: Winner: Golden Globes: Motion Picture, Comedy or Musical: Actor: Jackman, Sup. Actress: Hathaway; Critics Choice: Best Sup. Actress: Hathaway. Nom.: 8 AA: Pic, Actor, Sup. Actress, Song: "Suddenly", Prod. Des., Cos. Des.; DG: Best Pic, Hooper: Past winner (The King's Speech).

SILVER LININGS PLAYBOOK

When Pat: Bradley Cooper walked in on his wife in the shower with another teacher, he lost it big time and has just spent the past eight months in a Maryland sanitarium. His mother, Dolores: Jacki Weaver secures his release. A buddy, Danny: Chris Tucker tries to leave with them, but it's not quite his time yet. Pat Sr.: Robert DeNiro and his betting buddy are gambling Pat's best friend, Ronnie and his wife invite Pat to dinner to fix him up with

her sister, Tiffany: Jennifer Lawrence. While running, Pat is surprised when Tiffany jumps out of the bushes and runs with him. They soon develop a relationship in this comedy by director/screenwriter: David O. Russell based on the novel by Matthew Quick.

Pat's older brother John Ortiz: Ronnie and his wife, Veronica: Julia Stiles, are cautious about Pat because they are still friendly with his wife, who wants to divorce Pat. Tiffany gets Pat to be her dance partner in a competition in an exchange. What is basically a character-driven love story sure has a lot of subplots to add interest, but is still the best romantic comedy of the year. The actors really nail their characters down pat. This is the only AA Best Picture nominee to have all four lead actors and director nominated. Profanity. Sexual content/nudity.

Awards: Winner: Golden Globe: Actress: Comedy: Lawrence. Critics Choice: Best Acting Ensemble, Best Comedy Movie, Actor: Comedy: Cooper, Actress: Comedy: Lawrence. Nom., 8 AA: Pic., Dir.: David O. Russell, Actor: Cooper, Actress: Lawrence, Sup. Actor: DeNiro, Sup. Actress: Weaver, Adapted Scrn., Editing; Best Pic: PG.

ZERO DARK THIRTY

When CIA operative Maya: Jessica Chastain arrives at a Pakistani prison in 2003, she witnesses torture (repetitive waterboarding and nude humiliation) which makes the Al Qaeda prisoner give up the name of a lead Ahmed of Kuwait. The interrogator, bearded Dan: Jason Clarke, and she must subjugate their feelings to duty. Little do they realize it will be eight long years before they catch up with Osama bin Laden. Maya remains dedicated to the cause with Islamabad station chief, Joseph: Kyle Chandler. Maya's persistence that bin Laden must have a courier, since it would be too risky to use the Internet or cell phones, goes without acceptance until, at breaking point, she threatens the C.I.A. station chief with incompetence. It ultimately pays off when they track Abu Ahmed, driving his white S.U.V. from Peshawar to Abbottabad at regular intervals. The climactic gripping 25 minutes simulates the night-vision goggle views with green-lighted action of the Navy S.E.A.L.s seizure of the compound with goats in the yard. Director Kathryn Bigelow uses Mark Boal's taut screenplay for an unflinching courageous exposure of war at its grittiest. Chastain produces a believable American heroine with perseverance and strength.

Awards: Winner: Best Film: Golden Globe, Critics Choice, Natl. Board of Review: Best Actress- Best Picture: Natl. Board of Review (NBR), Film Critics: New York, Boston, Wash., D.C. Best Actress: NBR: Drama: Chastain., Film Critics: Boston Online, Wash. D.C. Best Dir.: NBR, Film Critics: New York, Boston, Wash., D.C. Noms., 5 Academy Awards: Pic, Actress: Chastain, Orig. Screenplay, Film Editing, Sound Editing. PG: Best Pic; DG: Past winner Bigelow (Hurt Locker): Best Pic.



At the Theater • By Annette Lust and Flora Lynn Isaacson

Pack of Lies

Ross Valley Players is currently presenting *Pack of Lies* by Hugh Whitmore, directed by Molly Noble.

Pack of Lies takes place in a suburb of London during the autumn and winter of 1960-1961. The main events of the story are true.

In 1961, Peter and Helen Kroger (Craig Neibaur and Mary Ann Rodgers) are two Americans living in a London suburb convicted of spying for the Russians and sentenced to 20 years in prison. Whitmore writes a powerfully moving fictional account of the events leading up to their arrest.

The action is centered on the totally unsuspecting Jackson household—Bob (Malcolm Rodgers), Barbara (Tina Taylor) and their daughter Julie (Tess O'Brien). The Jacksons live opposite the Krogers, believing them to be a convivial Canadian couple and their closest friends. Then a mysterious stranger, Mr. Stewart (Steve Price) arrives, announcing he is from MIS and quietly coerces the Jacksons into allowing their house to be used as a surveillance post. During the nightmare of the months that follow, the Jackson's tranquil, happy life is shattered as the truth about the much-loved friends is gradually revealed to them. Feeling helpless in a world of deception and treachery, Barbara reaches a breaking point with the agonizing realization that the Krogers have betrayed her, and she, in turn, has betrayed the Krogers.

In her first directorial role with Ross Valley Players, Molly Noble is to be congratulated, with a few minor criticisms. The pace lags at times, and the mostly authentic British dialects are at times difficult to understand. Especially effective are the monologues each character delivers to the audience when each actor steps out on a platform down stage. The split set by Ron Krempetz is excellent and works very well with the costumes of Michael Berg.

Tina Taylor as Barbara Jackson looked wonderfully anxious throughout as she fussed over her wayward

daughter, ably played by Tess O'Brien and contrasted beautifully with the exuberant warmth of Mary Ann Rodgers as Helen Kroger. Craig Neibaur played an enigmatic Peter Kroger who gave nothing away, while Steve Price gave a strong and well-paced performance as the mysterious Mr. Stewart, whose surveillance operation led to the Kroger's downfall. Also, the beautifully observed performance of Malcolm Rodgers as the genial, bewildered Bob Jackson was genuinely moving. There were nice supporting performances, especially by Melanie Bandera-Hess as Thelma and Livia Demarchi as Sally, the two MIS girls who stay with the Jacksons during the operation.

Pack of Lies is a bit on the "talky" side and demands your strict attention but it is well worth the effort!

Pack of Lies runs Jan 18–Feb 17 at Ross Valley Players Barn Theatre. Reservations 415-456-9555 x1.

Coming up next at Ross Valley Players will be *Enchanted April* by Matthew Barber directed by Cris Cassell, Mar14–Apr 14. Flora Lynn Isaacson

Bell Book and Candle

SF Playhouse ushers in the holiday spirit for the company's 10th season with the romantic comedy, *Bell Book and Candle* by John Van Druten, directed by Bill English.

The play opened on Broadway in 1950 and starred Lily Palmer and Rex Harrison. The movie version which starred Kim Novak and James Stewart opened in 1958.

Gillian Holroyd (Lauren English) is a young, sultry witch who admires her neighbor, a publisher, Shep Henderson (William Connell). One day he stumbles into her gallery to use the telephone. When she learns he is about to marry an old college enemy of hers, she impulsively takes revenge by casting a love spell on him that backfires when she ends up falling for him herself.

Once Gillian falls in love, she loses her witch's powers. She is unable to cast spells. Her sister Queenie (Zehra Berkman), and brother Nicky (Scott Cox), a witch and

warlock, do not quite know how to relate to this new human Gillian.

Lauren English sparkles as Gillian! She plays her role with a combination of sophistication and naivete, and creates a warm and touching portrait of an unhappy, bewildered witch.

William Connell gives a solid performance as Henderson, the straight-laced book publisher. Gillian's wacky sister Queenie is played by Zehra Berkman with delightful nervous energy. Scott Cox gives a strong performance as Nicky, Gillian's immature brother. Louis Parnell gives a flawless performance as Sidney Redlitch, who wants Henderson to publish his manuscript on modern-day witchcraft.

Bill English's handsome set, done in red velvet, gives a marvelous view of the Chrysler and the Empire State Buildings from Gillian's arched picture window. The imaginative costume design is by Abra Berman, with Kurt Landisman doing the lighting design.

Bill English has assembled five talented actors for this production and keeps the action fast and snappy. *Bell Book and Candle* is light holiday entertainment and this production is thoroughly enjoyable.

Performances: SF Playhouse, 450 Post St. (2nd flr b/n Powell and Mason). For tickets, contact the SF Playhouse box office at 415-677-9596 or go online at www.sfplayhouse.org.

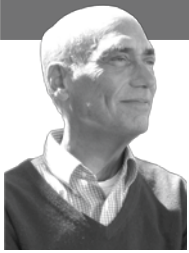
Coming up next at SF Playhouse will be *The Motherf**cker with the Hat* by Stephen Adly Guirgis, directed by Bill English, opening January 29, 2013. Flora Lynn Isaacson



Dr. Annette Lust



Flora Lynn Isaacson



SECOND THOUGHTS / By Jack Kaye

Life After 12/21/12, A New Year and a New Chapter

The Mayan calendar supposedly predicted that the world would end on 12/21/12. The Mayans obviously did not celebrate Christmas, otherwise they would have put the end date off until our after-Christmas sales were over. The Mayans were not that good at predicting endings, especially when it came to that of their civilization. They somehow missed that one.

Now that this day has come and gone with no more than the usual amount of death and destruction, we are told that the Mayans actually believed that this was just the end of a cycle and the beginning of the next. So what can we expect from this next cycle?

I believe that this date marks the beginning of the end of the following systems and institutions:

The right wing of the Republican party. The vast majority of Americans are against all of the conservatives' core issues. Most Americans want the rich and corporations to pay higher taxes to afford government programs our civilized nation has come to expect. The right wing doesn't agree. Most Americans feel that it should be an individual's

established laws and traditions based on centuries of past human experience. We have a vibrant art and music culture supported by private as well as public resources. We have a vast array of spiritual, political and philosophical schools of thought to attend, participate in, and identify with. While we may no longer need organized religion, some of the trappings of religion should continue - the great music like Ave Maria (Hail Mary), Hallelujah, the Kaddish, and Silent Night. The beautiful architecture reflected in many churches around the world should be maintained and used for community gatherings and weddings. And we wouldn't want to lose Christmas with its trees, lights and loving feeling. We could perhaps cut back on the holiday toy spending to the tune of

No one can be in favor of waste, and yet, so little is being done to prevent it. We waste money on foreign military bases that protect no one, on foreign aid that usually gets squandered, and on a lack of accountability within government agencies to ensure maximum efficiency and effectiveness. A recent large study found that we waste \$750 billion a year on unnecessary medical costs, either because the tests, procedures, and prescriptions are unjustified, or because of actual fraud, billing for products or services that were never provided.

free choice whether to have a full term pregnancy that would result in injury or death. The right wing doesn't. Most Americans believe that women should have access to birth control to avoid unwanted or unhealthy pregnancies. The right wing disagrees. Most Americans believe that certain weapons and ammunition magazines should be banned and that all gun owners must have a background check before getting a weapon to prevent future mass shootings. The right wing doesn't. Most Americans believe that everyone should have health care coverage either through their employer, the government, or affordable individual coverage. The right wing doesn't. Most Americans want Social Security and Medicare benefits maintained. The right wing doesn't. Most Americans believe in evolution; the right wing doesn't. Most people in the world believe in science. The right wing doesn't. The right wing of the Republican Party will become the dodo bird of the new era. We will soon hear no more about Rush, Karl, Sean, Sarah, Michele B., Paul R., Eric H., and their ilk. Fox "news" will no longer have an audience. It cannot be soon enough.

The National Rifle Association has proven itself to be tone deaf and morally blind to the inadequacy of their position. They stand firmly behind the second amendment, wanting it to mean that there can and should be no restriction on gun possession by American citizens. They believe Americans should be able to carry concealed weapons, assault rifles, even machine guns if they want to. Their solution to increased violence caused by increased gun possession is more gun possession to counter it with good guys with guns killing bad ones with guns. Even gun owners have become sickened by and ashamed of their lobbying organization. The N.R.A. will soon lose its influence, having shot itself too often in the foot while it was in the association's collective mouth.

Organized religion has also outlived its past usefulness. Religion gave us a moral code to live by. It inspired great art, architecture and music. It gave us a sense of community and encouraged us to help our fellow man through acts of kindness and charity. But each religion based its teaching on its assessment of G-d's will. It was not logic or thoughtfulness that guided our actions, not intuition or instinct, but a high priest's pronouncement of what G-d wanted of us. Different religions offered different assessments. They have been mutually contradictory so one had to be right and the others wrong. But which? It has been ours is the true one and the others are mistaken. People who identify strongly with their religion have felt offended by the claims of those in other faiths. Wars continue to break out. And all of religion's most cherished beliefs and teachings are forsaken. We now have religious extremists who commit suicide in order to kill innocent people, thinking that it is a path to paradise. What could be worse?

We now have governments with social services and support of the arts and sciences. We have

\$600 billion during the holiday shopping season, acquiring useless junk that even the kids don't want but won't admit.

Laws against marijuana will be revised, making this beneficial herb legal but not mandatory. It's about time.

Labor unions. The American worker would not be where he is, or even close to it, were it not for the unions. We got the eight-hour work day; the five-day work week; safe working conditions, unlike those in India and China; fair retirement pensions; paid vacations; and a greater degree of job security. But unions have had problems in the past, from corruption to overreaching, making some companies and industries wanting out, either of union control or this country, taking their jobs to non-union states and countries. Some industries became uncompetitive because of all their union-requested concessions. Now Republican governors and state legislatures are pushing to limit the power of unions by imposing "right-to work" laws that allow workers to avoid union membership and fees while still receiving the benefits. This could destroy unions by eventually letting everyone get a free ride. So far, 24 states have passed right-to work laws. Republican state politicians also want to end the power of unions representing government workers to have any say about working conditions. Soon workers will have to rely on the government to ensure their rights.

Waste in government. We might start getting serious about waste in government, including fraud. No one can be in favor of waste, and yet, so little is being done to prevent it. We waste money on foreign military bases that protect no one, on foreign aid that usually gets squandered, and on a lack of accountability within government agencies to ensure maximum efficiency and effectiveness. A recent large study found that we waste \$750 billion a year on unnecessary medical costs, either because the tests, procedures, and prescriptions are unjustified, or because of actual fraud, billing for products or services that were never provided. Our federal income tax code provides ample opportunity for false claims or intentional omissions. We could get rid of the penny and nickel, both of which cost more to produce than their worth and are rarely used anymore. We could end Saturday mail deliveries since most of it is junk mail anyway. We could end travel by government workers for training or conferences since both can be done via video conferencing. We could end expensive publicity shows like the Blue Angels and Fleet Week.

There is so much that we can do to make this a better country and world. We again have a chance to start a new chapter, avoiding the mistakes of the past and replacing them with realistic solutions for the future.

Feedback: kaye@westsideobserver.com

MUNI Service Plan

The Planning Department is accepting written public comments on the environmental analysis in the Initial Study for the Transit Effectiveness Project (TEP). The Initial Study public comment period is from Thursday, Jan. 24, through 5:00 pm on Friday, Feb. 22, 2013.



The proposed Service Policy Framework work is a policy document consisting of objectives and actions to enable the SFMTA to effectively allocate transit resources, efficiently deliver service, improve service reliability, reduce transit travel time, and improve customer service. The Service Policy Framework also organizes Muni services into four distinct service types: Rapid Network, Local Network, Community Connectors, and

Specialized Services. Details: tepeir.sfplanning.org submit written comments: SF Planning Department, Attn: TEP 1650 Mission St., # 400, SF 94103 or email: debra.dwyer@sfgov.org

The proposed Service Improvements include: creating new routes, redesigning existing routes, or adding service to new streets; eliminating unproductive existing routes or route segments; changing vehicle type; changing frequency and span of service; changing the mix of local/limited/express service;

Cont. p. 17

Whistleblowers (Cont. from p. 14)

comes from encouraging employees to not blow the whistle by denying incentives to do so - and by tolerating retaliation.

The formal responses to the Grand Jury were gems of bureaucratic resistance: "The Controller's Office does not believe that rewards will enhance the effectiveness of the program...rewards are not a standard or recommended practice for local government whistleblower programs." Mayor Lee responded, "the Civil Grand Jury does not provide any evidence where other jurisdictions have a reward system and where that reward system has improved the whistleblower program." Nevertheless, since 1992 the Los Angeles County Auditor-Controller's "Fraud Reward Program" has tendered up to \$1,000 for tips toward convictions. The LA City Office of Finance "Whistleblower Program" pays up to 10% of any recovered unpaid business taxes.

At the 10/27/11 SF Government Audit & Oversight Committee hearing, Controller Rosenfield pleaded to Supervisors David Campos, David Chiu and Mark Farrell, "the unintended consequences of financial rewards are somewhat scary to us." Along with the canard about City employees who "delay reporting a fraud until it reached a dollar-value threshold", Rosenfield fathered another Boogeyman; city officials "who are part of the control system, whose job is to report fraud, waste and abuse," might report violations solely to the SFWP - just to get rewards! Supervisor Farrell surpassed Rosenfield's paranoia, calling rewards "perverse incentives." In reality, employees whose jobs are to detect fraud, and those who are complicit in fraud, are always disqualified by government reward programs.

What went unsaid is that whistleblowers present a threat to unethical officials - and an implicit rebuke of the City's control systems. That's why the City rewards tips about citizen misconduct - never about government wrongdoing. Rewarding whistleblowers is taboo in circles where retaliation is more often orchestrated than experienced. As long as obedient employees are preferred over honest ones, City whistleblowers won't be rewarded.

Fortunately, most whistleblowers aren't driven by monetary rewards. But they do need acknowledgement and respect. The SFWP offers neither, much less incentives. One option is to offer "Public Service Awards" to whistleblowers who deliver high-value tips - and who desire such recognition. Such awards would reduce the "fink" stigma, curb retaliation, and show that the Whistleblower Program values those who justify its existence.

Dr. Maria Rivero and Dr. Derek Kerr were senior physicians at Laguna Honda Hospital. They repeatedly exposed DPH wrongdoing. Contact: DerekOnVanNess@aol.com



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Letters (Cont. from p. 8)

their tax returns from being tampered with or mishandled? How does filing tax forms early safeguard against identity theft?

A thief can steal someone’s identity by taking an unsuspecting person’s social security number and personal information, and then using it to file a tax return under the person’s name and identity — typically with fabricated information and deductions, and a resulting fraudulent refund. Unfortunately, in many cases, the victim is unaware that this has happened until a tax return is filed, only to find that a return has already been submitted in their name with fake information.

Here is what consumers should do to keep personal information out of the wrong hands as they prepare and file a return:

- Plan to file early – the sooner that your information is properly received by the IRS, the less likely it is that a thief will be able to access it.
- Make sure you e-file, or electronically file, your tax return. By e-filing, only you and your tax preparer will be handling your documents. The less people handling your information, the lower your chances are of having your personal information compromised.
- Keep important documents, such as copies of tax returns, credit card statements, cancelled checks, paystubs and similar data in a secure location like a locked file cabinet, or scan the information into a secure computer or web-based document storage program and destroy the original copies.
- Be sure to destroy documents older than four years. DO NOT simply throw them away — destroy them or at least shred them.
- Be cautious and vigilant when it comes to providing any personal information, such as your social security number, bank or credit account numbers over the phone or via e-mail, and avoid carrying your social security card in your wallet.
- Be aware that the IRS never communicates via e-mail. If you get an e-mail inquiry from someone claiming to be from the IRS, or if you get a phone call asking for you to e-mail personal information, do not provide these details without verifying the legitimacy of the request first.
- If you suspect your identity has been stolen, contact the IRS right away.

6. Do life changes that impact tax returns? In the past year or so what has been the most common life change that has impacted people’s tax returns? Has it been, buying home? (What about refinancing? Has the most common been going back to school? Having a baby or caring for an elderly parent?

Even with everything we’ve just been through with the fiscal cliff and the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012, nothing drives more changes to taxes than life changes.

While each person’s tax situation is different and we cannot speak to which life changes are most prominent, three of the most usual ones are having a baby, getting married (or divorced) and buying a home. There are significant tax considerations involved in each of these; be sure to speak with a tax preparer about them to ensure that you are claiming all of the benefits available to you.

In addition, apart from these, there are other life changes that can lead to a larger refund, such as a child returning to live at home after completing college, caring for an aging parent (and the parent does not necessarily have to live with you to trigger the tax benefit) or even you or your spouse deciding to go back to school.

7. How has the recession economy impacted tax returns over the past few years? Or does that matter?

Many people are still out of work, but it is important to know that there are many tax implications related to unemployment.

First, unemployment compensation is fully taxable, so if you were unemployed during the year, you will probably need to file a tax return. You may even be surprised to discover that you owe a considerable amount in taxes. If you did not have enough withheld during the year or if you did not make quarterly estimated tax payments, you may also owe an underpayment penalty.

If you collected unemployment benefits during the year, you should receive Form 1099-G, Certain Government Payments. All state unemployment benefits are taxable income for federal tax purposes and are reported on Form 1099-G, Box 1. The federal withholding amount, if any, is reported in Box 4.

Finally, know that if you started your own business during the year, or offered your services as a consultant while looking for a new job, your income is considered self-employment income. This income is reported on Form 1099-MISC, Miscellaneous Income. If you are considered self-employed and your net earnings are \$400 or more, you must pay self-employment tax on the income you received. In addition, you may need to make estimated payments to cover the amount of self-employment tax and income tax associated with the income you earned.

Pau works out of the San Mateo Jackson Hewitt office on West 39th Ave. Her schedule as manager is busy often helping other offices like the one in Walnut Creek. Yet despite her busy schedule Pau and her home office in San Mateo have received five-star ratings on Yelp. There are other tax services out there like H and R Block.

For more information about tax preparations for this year contact the Internal Revenue Service or a trusted, certified and licensed professional like Susana V. Pau. To contact her or the Jackson Hewitt office call 650-349-4491.

SHARON THE HEALTH / By Sharon Caren



Raindrop Technique
A Regimen for Spinal Health and Well-being

What do you get when you combine modern day Essential Oil research with ancient healing wisdom? A natural application you can do in your own home that results in energy alignment, stress relief and the harmonious balance of every system in the body!

Yes, it’s actually that simple. The results I’ve experienced using this technique with clients, family members, and myself are remarkable.

Some Background

Dr. Gary Young developed the Raindrop Technique in 1989. He is one of the world’s foremost authorities in essential oils. For decades he has shared nature’s healing powers and helped millions to transform their health. Dr. Young is the author of seven books and co-authored four research papers published by the Journal of Essential Oil Research. He currently oversees six farms on four Continents directing the growth, harvest and distillation process of the highest quality of essential oils in the world. He also directed research at Young Life Research Clinic – Institute of Natural Medicine that validated the therapeutic value of essential oils and other natural healing modalities.

Dr. Young studied cultures from all over the world to see what the ancients did for healing when there were no pharmacies. He found the Lakota Indians believed in energetic balancing and mental healing powers. The tribe’s medicine men actually used *effleurage*, or a feathering stroke with the fingertips along the spine to help move blocked energy and improve health when their tribe people would fall ill.

The Raindrop Technique is based on this art as developed by the Lakota Indian nation. Dr. Young discovered when he incorporated essential oils (nature’s living energy) while using the fingertip feathering up the spine, this became a nontraditional means of addressing health concerns. The technique has proven to be a successful alternative to more invasive remedies.

Oils Used These Nine Therapeutic Grade Essential Oils are layered on the spine in sequence and worked into the spine:

- Oregano
- Thyme
- Basil
- Cypress
- Wintergreen
- Marjoram
- Peppermint
- Aroma Siez (special blend)
- Valor (special blend).

These oils help support the immune system, ease respiratory discomfort, promote normal breathing, and relax stressed muscles. They also balance energy, lift the spirit, and assist the ability to concentrate.

Some History

Since recorded history, man has been drawn to aromatics and fragrant resins. In fact, aromatics reigned over the ancient world in Egypt, Greece, and Rome. From the dawn of time to the space age, aromatics continue to exert a powerful influence. Plants are the basis of allopathic (conventional prescription) medicine, molecularly altered so drug companies can patent them and charge a great amount for profit. Natural substances cannot be patented. The plant material in its natural form has no negative side effects.

In the 1940’s, the French chemist Rene-Maurice Gattefosse and physician Jean Valnet led the resurgence of interest in essential oils. Dr. Valnet wrote a book, *The Practice of Aromatherapy*, which told of research documenting the power of essential oils such as clove, thyme, and cinnamon in studies from the 1800’s.

It wasn’t until 1989 that researchers realized the importance of the amygdala. That is the part of the brain that stores and releases emotional trauma. Pure

therapeutic grade essential oils assist in the process of releasing trauma from the brain and the body. On the same note, the sense of smell is the only one of the five senses directly linked to the limbic lobe of the brain (the emotional control center). A powerful aroma will evoke emotion long before there is a conscious thought of it. By understanding how the oils work for us on many levels, mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually, you may begin to understand how these oils work in our overall healing process.

My friends tell me they’ve used Raindrop Technique for many ailments such as, depression, disk herniation, arthritis, ear ache, tooth ache, head ache, bronchitis, and lung disease with great results.

Personally, I’m never without this group of oils in our home. If my husband feels something coming on, like a cold, flu, or back ache/pain, I put the oils on his spine and by the next day, he’s back to normal. Like magic? No, it’s TRUE! We also use these oils diluted in organic vegetable oil on Little Charlie, our five-pound Chihuahua, who’s suffered with a bad back and adrenal dysfunction. He now acts like a puppy at age 8.

Be careful that you only use therapeutic grade essential oils for this application. If they are not the highest quality oils, you will not find the results I am speaking of with the Raindrop Technique. Therapeutic grade essential oils are used in hospitals all over Europe and many natural healing clinics here in the U.S. I don’t know of a store in the area to refer that sells therapeutic grade essential oils. However, there is a kit you can order and I’m happy to help you get what you need if you are interested.

Today we are living in the best of both worlds with such wonderful modern technology along with the ancient healing knowledge at our fingertips like the Raindrop Oils. It doesn’t get any better than this!

I invite you to keep an open mind and try something different if you or someone you know is suffering from a chronic ailment. What have you got to lose but the pain?

Please call me at 650.359.6579 with any questions or comments you may have regarding the above or email: Sharon@sharonthehealth.com

Also visit www.sharonthehealth.com for more info on Essential Oils.

I’m at your service—Sharon

Don't miss this upcoming event!

How Foods Heal

Wed. Feb. 27th at 5:30-8:30 pm

Guest Speaker

Dr. Marisa Williams, N.D.

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Please RSVP as space is limited.

650.359.6579

WOTPCC (Cont. from p. 9)

Tillie Chang and Chester Fung of the SF County Transit Agency introduced themselves to the attendees and gave an overview of both how the SFCTA is different from the MTA, and what their role is in administering the Prop K transportation sales tax program. Fung went into detail on the upcoming 19th Avenue proposed transit projects. including sidewalk extensions to improve pedestrian safety. For more information, check the CTA website at: www.sfcta.org

Sustainable citrus in San Francisco? That’s the hope and goal of “Just One Tree, “an organizational program designed to promote the planting of fruit

trees as the most efficient crop for dense cityscapes. Spokesperson Isabel Wade explained how the environment in San Francisco is ideal for growing lemon trees, and that the plan is to identify existing and to plant new citrus trees that will enable San Francisco to become sustainable in providing the annual consumption of 3 pounds per person (of lemons). Just One Tree estimates that it will take 12,000 lemon trees to achieve sustainability. To start, register your (or your neighbor’s) lemon tree at www.JustOneTree.org.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 25th at 7:30 PM at a location to be determined.

For more information see the WOTPCC website (westoftwinpeaks.org).

Remember When?



1000 'MARINE VIEW' HOMES SET FOR MIDTOWN TERRACE--Here's an aerial view of the Midtown Terrace subdivision at Twin Peaks. Some 1000 modern detached homes with panoramic marine views and full-sized basements will be built by the Standard Building Co. Date Apr. 27, 1957. Permission to use this image was obtained from the San Francisco History Center, SF Public Library

BRAIN FÜD

Sherlock Holmes and the snowball...

One snowy night, Sherlock Holmes was in his house sitting by a fire. All of a sudden a snowball came crashing through his window, breaking it.

Holmes got up and looked out the window just in time to see three neighborhood kids who were brothers run around a corner. Their names were John Crimson, Mark Crimson and Paul Crimson.

The next day Holmes got a note on his door that read " ? Crimson. He broke your window."

Which of the three Crimson brothers should Sherlock Holmes question about the incident?

Answer

" ?" = question MARK, so the note on the door reads "Question Mark Crimson. He broke your window."

Mark Crimson

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

Sudoku-fun!

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

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

Phyllis' Findings / Phyllis Sherman

When I was about 8 years old I used to make lists of movie stars Names, just names. Barbara Stanwyck, Robert Taylor...no information or data next to the names, just endless lists. My Mother used to look at my pages of names and say that she wished I was as good at arithmetic as I was with lists of movie stars. Subsequently, my parents took me to my first play. I was a bit nervous...weren't plays for grownups? However, I loved it. It was Ezra Stone in "What a Life"...the forerunner of the Henry Aldrich show.

Remember, "Coming Mother?" It concerned high school students and even though I wasn't old enough for high school, I understood and enjoyed it. My next theatrical venture was to a matinee of Moss Hart's "Junior Miss." Again I reveled in live theatre and when I read in the New York Post that Mr. Hart was casting for the road company of "Junior Miss," guess who wrote to him requesting an audition? He responded asking me to come to an address with something to read. I guess my Mom couldn't see herself schlepping around the country as a stage Mom and so she never let me keep the appointment. I secretly felt she must be jealous. She did let me take acting lessons though, at a place in New York City called the Schick Center. Once a week I went with other kids and I remember when we were all told to "cry." I was singled out by the teacher as the "best crier." "Look, children she said "watch Phyllis cry. See how her chin quivers." I was so proud. Little did they know I was crying for the Sara Bernhard (or Meryl Streep from another era) that I'd never be. I'll say one thing...there have been several occasions in life when chin quivering has come in mighty handy. It'll never replace beating your breast or holding your breath, or throwing plates, but with the right audience it can be quite effective. I wonder if my Mother ever felt guilty not letting me fulfill my heart's desire to be a movie queen? She could make anybody feel guilty. She used to get letters of apology from people she didn't even know.



Part Two

Son, Randy, came to visit and he surprised me with two tickets to the fantastic Gershwin musical "ANYTHING GOES" from way back in 1934. (it's too late for you to get to...but it's probably touring somewhere...check it out) Film-wise we saw three movies in one day! It's my homage to Mike LaSalle...the best film reviewer of all time.

THE IMPOSSIBLE concerns the 2004 tsunami in Thailand that re-creates the devastating disaster that befalls a family of five. Naomi Watts (as the Mother) and Tom Holland (as her son) are terrific in this true story.

DJANGO UNCHAINED is the latest Quentin Tarantino's epic about an escaped slave who joins a bounty hunter (Christopher Waltz) to rescue his wife from an evil plantation lord (Leonardo DiCaprio.) Well reviewed, it wasn't our cup of tea. Too much gore.

But best of the bunch ...be sure to see ZERO DARK THIRTY. Jessica Chastain will probably win an Oscar for her memorable performance ...and it's based on facts. about the CIA agent who devised a plan to find Osama Bin Laden.

You'll also like ARGO, LINCOLN and FLIGHT.

ENDJOKE: " I have one last request. Don't use embalming fluid on me. I want to be stuffed with crabmeat."—Woody Allen

Feedback: phyllis@westsideobserver.com



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OPEN LATE



BY JULIE CASSON



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147 Ashbury	TIC	1	1	0	379k	390k
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THE REAL ESTATE ANSWER MAN By Kevin Birmingham



Q I want to sell my property that is currently leased to section 8 tenants. When I told the tenant my plans to sell, she became very upset. What do I do if she decides to intimidate potential buyers?

Bill Branchini

A First contact the rent board, document your conversation and send her a letter by registered mail telling her what they say. Begin documenting ALL of your discussions with this tenant. If this fails, call an attorney who specializes in landlord tenant matters. You will need to disclose this tenant's hostility to potential buyers.

Q What is the difference between a real estate agent and a real estate broker?

Arianna

Kevin Birmingham is a licensed real estate broker, have a question for the Real Estate Answer Man? Submit them to kevinb@zephyrsf.com

A A real estate broker is licensed to act as a fiduciary for principals in a real estate transaction without supervision and can supervise licensed real estate agents. Many brokers, including myself, choose to work for real estate firms for support, technology and brand name recognition.

Q I've seen these "No Down Payment" plans on late night television and want to know if they are real or just a scam?

Cindy Wu Leonard

A People in infomercials make a lot of money, but not in real estate. Making money in real estate requires time and a lot of hard work. It isn't a "get rich quick" scheme. The primary 'no money down' option is for Veterans with the VA. The lowest down payment option is FHA, which requires 3.5% down.

Laguna Honda (Cont. from p. 5)

Volunteer, Inc.'s grants to Laguna Honda also tells only part of the story. Overall, Volunteers, Inc. reports on its tax returns that it had spent \$394,250 on patient amenities, recreation, refreshments, and other "program services" to hospital residents in 2010, but cut that amount to \$179,731 in 2011, a net loss of \$214,519 in various services to patients.

In 2011, the \$179,731 in program services for residents translates to 49.4% of Volunteers, Inc.'s total expenses of \$363,932, down from 56.9% spent on program services from its total expense spending in 2009. The remainder in both years was eaten up by fundraising and management-and-general expense categories.

Charity watchdog groups, such as GuideStar.org and Charity Navigator, suggest that the standard benchmark for non-profits is to spend at least 70% of their total expenses on "program services" to serve actual beneficiaries. Volunteers, Inc.'s spending of just 49.4% on program services in 2011 fell short.

Although Volunteers, Inc. awarded \$14,990 to LHH's Volunteer Services in 2010, its tax return shows that it eliminated any financial support whatsoever to the Volunteer Services Department in 2011, in addition to the \$151,243 grant reduction for patient amenities.

Between curtailing support to patients and completely eliminating support to actual volunteers of the hospital, Volunteers, Inc. cut its total spending on program services by \$230,000 across a single calendar year. Across the same period, its tax returns show Volunteers, Inc. tripled its spending on public relations, from \$11,072 to \$33,693.

Who Does PR Slavin Work For?

Renne hand-picked Marc Slavin who had been her public information officer

when she was the City Attorney.

Slavin informed this author shortly thereafter that his job was to "stop the negative publicity." He never clarified whether it was to stop negative publicity for Renne's Foundation, or for the Department of Public Health (DPH), which never had a PR officer assigned to LHH for 100+ years until Slavin's arrival.

Between his base salary and fringe benefits, Slavin has cost taxpayers over \$950,000 in six short years. His assistant, Linda Acosta, adds another \$500,000 in salaries and benefits. Between them, \$1.5 million in taxpayer funds may have gone up in P.R. smoke and mirrors.

Slavin, of course, is the P.R. wizard who told the I-Team's investigative reporter Dan Noyes that LHH's "patient gift fund isn't for patients." His propaganda campaign continues.

Magical Commingling of Funds

The unholy commingling of private and public sector funds began when Volunteers, Inc. awarded \$375,000 to hire staff for Renne's new Foundation in 2003. This was an expense completely unrelated to the exempt purposes for which the IRS awarded non-profit status to it.

As the Observer has reported in "A Foundation's Dirty Laundry" (Dec '12), the commingling of public and private funds between the City, the Foundation and Volunteers, Inc., has never been audited, adequately or otherwise.

In addition to the \$1.5 million in salaries and benefits funded by SF's general fund for Slavin and Acosta to perform liaison work for Renne's Foundation across the past six years, the City has provided free office space in Suite A-150 to house Renne's Foundation, replete with janitorial services supplied by City employee staff, and free utilities.



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Shooting Herself in the Foot

Renne published a guest opinion piece in the San Francisco Chronicle ("Laguna Honda needs more than what bonds provide" (6/3/04), claiming that the driving purpose governing formation of her Foundation was to raise private-sector funds for furniture, fixtures, and equipment for the new LHH. But by claiming that "regardless of the [patient] population mix receiving services at Laguna Honda—a policy decision in the hands of the city's director of public health"—her Foundation had been established to meet the immediate needs of residents and other users. And she claimed the new LHH would move LHH "from a traditional medical model to a social residential model of care."

Renne's phrase "regardless of the patient population mix," may have unwittingly sent the message that displacing the frail elderly and disabled that Laguna Honda had traditionally served was OK, and that using the hospital for psychosocial mental health rehabilitation, instead, was acceptable and a decision best left to then-Director of Public Health Katz.

That op-ed may have directly led to a drop in donations to LHH's patient gift fund, and may have effectively killed any chance to attract donors. After all, Renne announced a major shift in the hospital's mission that may have chilled philanthropic donors. Charitable donations to

the elderly are one thing; but "psychosocial rehabilitation" has a much smaller universe of donors.

Ms. Renne Fails to Respond

Ms. Renne was offered an opportunity to confirm or deny whether she is, in fact, dissolving her foundation, and if not, what her plans may be, but failed to respond by press time. She appears to have chosen to withhold information again, just as she has from the IRS, the Health Commission, and the charity-donating public, any and all details concerning her foundation's revenue and expenses.

SF's Health Commission still has work to do: it should fully audit the commingling of funds at LHH and unplug its PR division.

The Health Commission has an ethical responsibility to formally notify Renne that the Commission expects any funds and all assets remaining in the foundation upon dissolution be donated only to Volunteers, Inc., or to LHH's patient gift fund, for direct patient benefit.

Renne shouldn't be let off the accountability hook quite so easily.

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

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