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Photo: Luke Thomas



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Redistricting Reprieve for District 7 Neighborhoods

By George Wooding

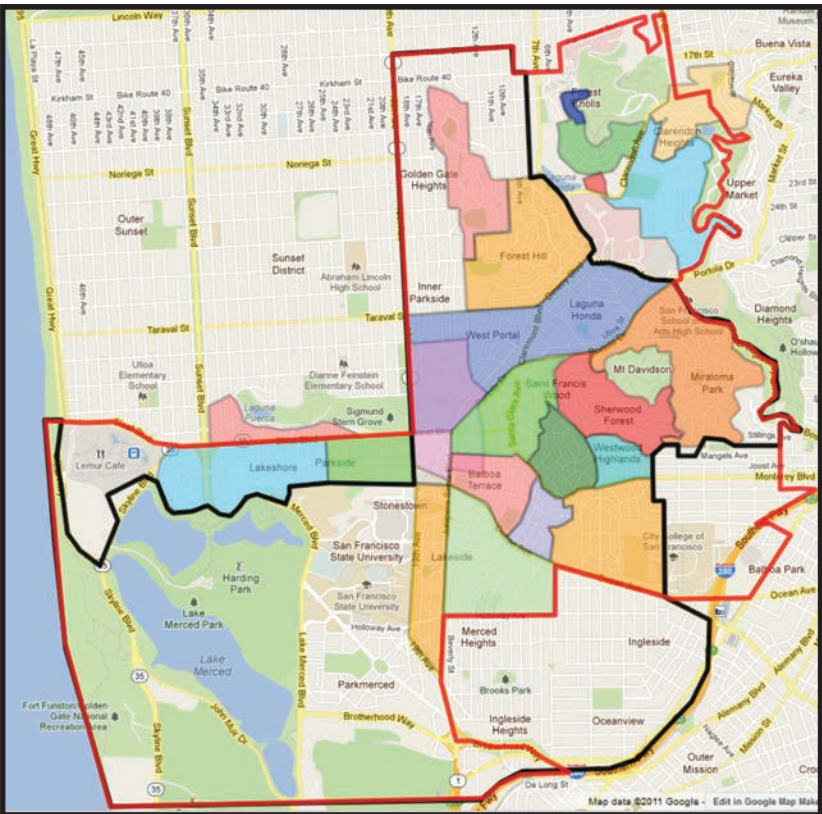
District 7's neighborhoods have been spared by the San Francisco Redistricting Task Force, while District 11 neighborhoods remain in limbo.

The San Francisco Redistricting Task Force (RTF) has given back some of the neighborhoods and districts that it had removed from District 11 (D11), and District 7 (D7) may be able to retain all of the neighborhoods that were removed.

In early January, the RTF moved seven District 7 neighborhoods—including Forest Knolls, Midtown Terrace, Mount Sutro, The Woods, and The Twin Peaks Improvement Association—into District 8 (The Castro District and part of the Mission District of Supervisor Scott Wiener), and moved Lakeshore Acres and Merced Manor into District 4 (the Sunset District of Supervisor Carmen Chu). District 11's Ocean View, Merced Heights, and Ingleside (OMI) neighborhoods have been removed from D11 and placed in D7.

Besides the addition of Lakeshore Acres and Merced Manor, District 4 remains almost unchanged.

Cont. p. 5



Red outline is the current District 7 boundary, black outline shows the initial proposed Task Force boundaries.

Public Testimony:

Beach Chalet Plan Deeply Flawed



Clair Dworsky at Hearing: Photo Dennis Minick

The San Francisco Planning Commission held a hearing on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Beach Chalet Soccer Fields in early December. Over 80 people testified, with over 60 people opposed to the project and critical of the Report. The people who took the trouble to troop down to City Hall and wait for four hours to testify are most eloquent when quoted in their own words:

FOLLOW THE PLAN: "... the Master Plan of Golden Gate Park is the result of thousands of hours, probably tens of thousands of hours, of thousands of people over many years - city employees, city commissioners and the public... Over the years, facilities have been added to the western park—the soccer fields in question—but the character of the landscape has remained as more wooded, less refined parkland. This distinction should be maintained..." [Jim Chappell, past Executive Director of SPUR]

Parks, first of all, are for people and other living things... We're a city that's hungry for green space and not faux green... When I was ill with cancer the Park was a restorative space... I want it to be a delight and not a blight for all..." Sue Englander, resident.

YOUNG SPORTS FAN: "... I play soccer, lacrosse, basketball and I run cross country. And I'm here to raise my voice against putting synthetic turf soccer field on the Beach Chalet fields. I love sports, but I can't be so selfish to harm the environment... As the winner of a National Science Foundation Kids Science Challenge, I studied the chemical content of grass and turf runoff water with Dr. Dina Deighton, from UC Santa Cruz, and we found that the water from the turf to be 100 percent fatal to all aquatic life... The State of California and USGS say the Beach Chalet is likely to flood in the event of severe ocean storms. It's a matter of when, not if there will be a flood. If turf and crumb rubber get into ocean beach water, aquatic life would die. I love sports but I also love Golden Gate Park and its ecosystem... Please, do not allow this." [Clair Dworsky, 6th Grader]

STALAG MEETS GGP: "My father worked most of his adult life with Golden Gate Park in the Rec and Park Department from World War II straight through to his retirement. ... Our next door neighbor was Jack

Spring, the general manager of Rec and Park... Both Jack Spring and my father felt very strongly about retaining the rural character of the Park. What's being proposed here is something very different... Frankly, what's being proposed for Golden Gate Park is Stalag meets Golden Gate Park..." [Terence Faulkner, resident]

FEWER BIRDS = MORE RATS: "... [the] great horned owl, red shouldered hawks, red tailed hawks and Cooper's hawks... These birds run on light cycles. Their mating behavior, their feeding, their ... whole cycle of life, how they migrate is based on light. We're ... being asked to turn this park into an all-day summer project where we have five extra hours of light some days in winter... So this is going to be potentially very, very bad for these birds. But also it's going to be very, very good for these birds' prey. And these birds' major prey is rats. These [birds] are the major suppressors of vermin in Golden Gate Park. If you get rid of these birds, the rats will increase." [John O'Dell, nest monitor, GGP]

Hardly Strictly By the Numbers

By Anmarie Mabbutt

First approved by the Recreation and Park Commission on October 4, 2001, the Hardly Strictly Bluegrass Festival began as a one day bluegrass festival in Speedway Meadow with 12 acts on 2 stages and a total of 6 hours of amplified sound. In 2011, the Festival covered all three of Golden Gate Park's western meadows and featured 80 acts spread out over 4 days and 6 stages. All total, the 2011 version of Hardly Strictly produced more than twenty five hours of amplified sound. Fueled by Warren Hellman's passion for bluegrass music and a Recreation and Parks Department desperate to appease one of its biggest philanthropic donors, RPD Management, the Commissioners and the Board of Supervisors have stood by and watched as the Hardly Strictly Bluegrass Festival has swelled to massive proportions. In 2011, media reports estimate between 650,000–800,000 people attended the Festival.

At 200,000-250,000, the daily attendance figures for Hardly Strictly are the equivalent of jamming more than three sold out Niners games into the Park's western meadows each day."

Knowing full well that Commission policy and local law prohibit events of this size in Golden Gate Park, RPD officials have taken the preparations for Hardly Strictly behind closed doors. The last time the permits and the exceptions to the amplified sound policy were approved by the Commission was June 20, 2002. In 2003, when the first year estimated crowd numbers approached 75,000, the RPD began to handle the preparations for Hardly Strictly secretly through a series of unauthorized permits. In 2004, Mr. Hellman threatened to move the Festival to Oakland, frustrated by the Department's administrative "red tape" and the preliminary injunction that temporarily halted

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BEACH CHALET (Cont. from p. 2)

NOT SCIENTIFICALLY VALID: “I was shocked at the lack of scientifically valid data presented in the Section, Hazards and Hazardous Materials ... Given the dearth of appropriate scientifically valid data presented in the report, I would like to ask that an unbiased independent expert with knowledge of scientific method and research conduct a thorough review of the scientific and medical literature before any conclusions are drawn about the hazards of artificial turf, either to the environment or to health, and its ability to reduce injuries. Additionally, I ask that the findings of RPD’s 2008 task force be removed from the Draft EIR owing to the clear conflicts of interest present in the sections on material compositions ... I further ask that only scientifically valid reliable studies that have been peer reviewed, or published in peer-reviewed journals be included in Section 4, for without valid studies the report cannot draw valid conclusions.” [Miriam Pinchuk, medical editor.]



Photo Dennis Minick

PARK AS GREEN RESPITE AND HEALER: “I’m a member of the Harvey Milk Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Democratic Club, and we oppose the corruption of the Beach Chalet and fields by the laying down of Astroturf and the installation of stadium lights. Parks, first of all, are for people and other living things ... We’re a city that’s hungry for green space and not faux green... . When I was ill with cancer the Park was a restorative space... I want it to be a delight and not a blight for all...” [Sue Englander, resident]

THROUGH OTHER SENSES: “ ... And now that I’m blind, I enjoy the Park differently than other people do. I don’t look at the grass and say, “Wow, it looks awfully green today.” There are a lot of times when I’ll be walking with my friends and I’ll say, “Wow, do you smell that? Do you smell the fresh-cut lawn?” And my sighted friends will say, “Wow, you’re right. That is one of the best smells in the world.” You’ll never get that with Astroturf. ... You cannot yield habitat to expedience.” [John Sargent, resident]

IMPACT ON THE ENTIRE PARK: “ ... How will this affect Golden Gate Park as a whole? Imagine this. Suppose a museum curator wanted to alter the position of the hands in the painting of the Mona Lisa, possibly adding a bright and dazzling ring,

“Given the dearth of appropriate scientifically valid data presented in the report, I would like to ask that an unbiased independent expert with knowledge of scientific method and research conduct a thorough review of the scientific and medical literature before any conclusions are drawn about the hazards of artificial turf, either to the environment or to health, and its ability to reduce injuries.”
Miriam Pinchuk, Medical Editor



would such change have a profound effect on the entire painting? Please ask yourself, how will the addition of artificial turf and new light standards affect Golden Gate Park as a whole, our masterpiece.” [Chris Patillo, ASLA, cofounder, HALS NCC]

NOT CONEY ISLAND! “I was shocked when I learned of these plans to put in artificial turf and the stadium lights... This is not Coney Island ...this is our Golden Gate Park, which was designed to be natural and wild ...” [Patricia Arack, resident]

BRIEF BUT ELOQUENT: “I don’t think that bright lights and artificial turf a park make. And the whole idea of a park is to bring nature into the city, and this does not do it.” [Denise D’anne, local resident]

These are just a very few of the many thoughtful comments made. The full transcript and video link can be found on the website for www.sfoceanedge.org.

Kathy Howard, GGP Preservation Alliance.

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Photo: Joseph Moss



WE ARE
WHAT WE SAVE



Crestmont Neighbors Mount Campaign Against Overlook Development—Again

Though there are no dates set for Public Hearings before the Planning Department, due to the delays caused by the Regatta, hearings are expected in February or March.

Information recently obtained from the Planning Department indicates that the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) on the SF Overlook project at the end of Crestmont Drive is expected to be published in December.

Once it has been published, we will have a 45 day period to write letters and e-mail our objections, critiques, concerns and objections and to petition the Planning Commission. We will mobilize all our resources at that time to make our neighborhood's voice heard.

There will also be a critical public hearing before the Planning Commission thirty days after publication of the DEIR. Place, time and exact date to be announced. The 2nd draft of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) pertaining to the SF Overlook 34-unit condominium project at the end of Crestmont Drive has been published, neighbors have 30 days from publication to express our concerns and objections regarding this oversized development which will add far too much traffic, parking congestion and density to our neighborhood. We will notify all of our Mt.Sutro Woods and Forest Knolls neighbors when the time comes to deluge the Planning Department with letters. It will also be important that we attend and speak at the public hearing which will be held by the Planning Commission.

Crestmont neighbors have mounted a successful campaign before, beating back this same development under a different name and with a different development firm once before. They believe they can stop this project in its present form. "If something must be built on this treacherous hillside, we are fighting for a much scaled-back development of far fewer single family homes which would address the critical issues of safety, congestion and density at the end of this fragile cul-de-sac, and be more in character with the surrounding neighborhood," the website crestmontpreservation.org says.

As a visible reflection of our resolve, neighbors have adapted the now familiar red and yellow "STOP SF OVERLOOK DEVELOPMENT" poster sends a powerful message of neighborhood sentiment and cohesiveness.

Many windows in the Crestmont neighborhood are displaying the poster. If you would like a poster, please call 415-640-3869 or email info@crestmontpreservation.org or go to the website: crestmontpreservation.org.



RUMINATIONS FROM A FORMER SUPERVISOR By Quentin Kopp

Taxation, Handwringing and Caterwauling

In the House of Commons on April 19, 1774, referring to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Edmund Burke declared: "To please universally was the object of his life, but to tax and to please more than to love and be wise is not given to men." One thinks of that bromide in watching contemporary gyrations of local, state and federal politicians.

Nationally, we learn of U.S. multinational corporations fighting the understandable effort of members of the Congress of the United States to tax overseas profits of such corporations at the regular 35% applied to revenue of American corporations in our country. To avoid paying the 35%, such corporations isolate their foreign income in foreign countries in which the income accrued. They generously offered to transport their foreign profits if such revenue is taxed at 5.25%. Never mind that during the administration of President Ronald Reagan in the 1980s, such tax reduction resulted only in larger corporate officer bonuses and repurchase of common stock owned publicly. That 2004 legislation conferred "tax amnesty" for the return of profit generated in foreign nations; it secured no discernible economic benefit for us but U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer, a liberal Democrat, wants to do it again.

Or, take the local legerdemain of imposing a 1.5% tax on the payrolls of San Francisco businesses with gross revenue of \$250,000, applicable to the pay of every hired employee. It's not enough that San Francisco constitutes the only city in California to levy such an illogical tax; in order to buy the loyalty of preferred businesses such as information technology companies, the Board of Supervisors and Mayor create exemptions for their favorite businesses. Thus far, those seem comprised entirely of information technology corporations.

Among the undisclosed further attempt by San Francisco city government to encumber San Francisco taxpayers lies another general obligation bond for purposes related to current expense money. The fundamental reason for asking voters to approve issuance of general obligation bonds is predicated upon improvements to city facilities by way of a new structure or replacement of an existing structure. It is a cardinal rule that government should not borrow money in order to pay current operating costs! Such costs should be (and are) paid from the general fund of the City and County. The general fund, in turn, emanates from collection of property taxes, the City and County share of sales taxation on all products and goods sold in San Francisco (note that one-half cent of such sales taxation is applied specially to transit and transportation projects in San Francisco and does not reach the general fund of the City and County) and fees such as a "transfer" tax on the sale price of real estate at a specified level or higher within San Francisco.

That customary and generally approved method of public finance, however common, carries little or no panache with San Francisco city officials, from the Mayor and Board of Supervisors on down. Basic accepted principles of taxation are disregarded. Yet another example looms. Unknown to some neighbors and me, the Park and Recreation Department and its publicized leaders, General Manager Phil Ginsberg, Commission President Mark Buell and plainly compliant other commissioners, plan a general obligation bond issue of \$185,000,000. The Park and Recreation Department has engaged, directly or indirectly through a campaign committee, a polling firm to survey San Francisco voters. I received such a telephonic poll inquiry on January 12, 2012 and, based upon experience in such matters, the poll was phrased to attract affirmative responses from surveyed voters. The questions indicated the purposes for which bond proceeds, if voters are deceived into approving the measure in June 2012, would be used. Those uses include activity, which should be paid on a current basis from the general fund of our City and County. The West of Twin Peaks Improvement Council testified at the Board of Supervisors against submitting such a general obligation bond issue to voters and the unwarranted bond itself. I hope the Council will adopt a position of opposing publicly the actual bond issue as presented to voters in June.

...just as often, if not more, the seized property (think eminent domain) was given to a developer at less than market value for construction of golf courses, automobile dealership lots, and other non-housing activity, so as to satisfy those real estate developers with influence in local government. . . ."

Finally, I note the handwringing statewide over elimination of Redevelopment Agencies in the 2011-2012 State Budget Act at the instigation of Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr. I compliment the Governor for his initiative and success in ending a practice, which legislatively was authorized in 1946 by California Health and Safety Code provisions intended to encourage demolition of slum housing and replacement with improved residences. In order to justify use of the enormous power of any redevelopment agency, California law required a city (or county) to render a finding that a neighborhood was "blighted." Over subsequent years, the definition of "blight" was distorted. Real estate was thereby seized from one owner or more and transferred ultimately to a politically-influential developer or developers. Sometimes replacement housing was built; just as often, if not more, the seized property (think eminent domain) was given to a developer at less than market value for construction of golf courses, automobile dealership lots, and other non-housing activity, so as to satisfy those real estate developers with influence in local government, in San Francisco and elsewhere.

On December 29, 2011, the California Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the statute abolishing redevelopment agencies in our state and rejected a separate measure, which would have allowed redevelopment agencies to continue to exist if certain requirements were met. The parasitic redevelopment industry lost. As a result, redevelopment agencies will no longer seize property from one owner and divert it to another owner, with the consequent effect also of depriving school districts of property tax revenue while maintaining a redevelopment bureaucracy remarkable in size and wastefulness. The existence of redevelopment agencies' power to effectuate new land takings and projects ends this month. Cities and counties may still decide whether to create successor agencies to complete current unfinished redevelopment projects, but no new land grabs can occur. There will, to be sure, be unending caterwauling by the redevelopment agency lobby, and bureaucrats and local politicians, but an earnest post-WWII effort to eradicate slum housing, which evolved into favoring commercial land developers to the detriment of those without City Hall influence and school and community college districts with the taking of property tax revenue from the affected redevelopment areas has rightfully closed in the wake of California's contemporary governmental fiscal condition. Reformation efforts over the past 25 years or so having legislatively failed, the redevelopment titans have no one but themselves to blame for its denouement.

Former Supervisor, State Senator and Judge Kopp lives in Lakeview



Photo: Luke Thomas/fogcityjournal.com

Growing Expansively

Government expands. Let's look at our providers of Water, Power and Sewer services, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), an "enterprise department" of the City. Its recently published annual report helps tell the tale.

Over the past five years, spending has risen at a pace of about 6.5% per year, nearly 36% in five years, to \$695 million. While not growing quite as rapidly as China's economy, this city agency, about to occupy a spiffy new headquarters building, is growing briskly.

More is coming. Soon SFPUC launches its Sewer System Improvement Program, a \$6-8 billion work updating city sewers and plant. In the upcoming fiscal year \$236 million is to be spent.

This year SFPUC expects to launch its CleanPowerSF program to partially displace PG&E as provider of electricity. CleanPowerSF will offer "clean" electricity generated solely by renewables or hydropower for a premium of, hopefully, \$7-15 per month.

The Sewer System program and CleanPowerSF are just two of many initiatives and programs. GoSolar, building its super-green headquarters building, reclaiming Lake Merced, recycled water, gray water, community benefits, energy efficiency, and many other programs have been fueling growth.

SFPUC employs 2300, not quite one-tenth of the City's workforce. This figure does not include the many consultants, contractors and others who are not employed as city employees, but are doing the agency's work.

To illustrate the imperative of growth, let us examine one initiative from this past year: the updated Electricity Resource Plan of 2011.

While one can be cynical about bureaucratic plans, hundreds if not thousands of which cram shelves of our main library's government information center, and hold down City Hall (in danger of floating skyward on hot air), some plans do lead to action. Surprising action.

The updated Electricity Resource Plan (ERP) sets the mile-high goal of achieving zero greenhouse gas emissions by year 2030. Zero. You can't say our bureaucrats don't dare to aim high.

The building of generation facilities... does not make much financial sense. The City's Hetchy system generates electricity cheaply when water stored behind the Hetch Hetchy dam flows west to local use and storage. Surplus electricity is sold to irrigation districts at cost. Instead of using that cheap electricity, the City builds expensive solar here in the City. It replaces cheap clean electricity with expensive renewable power. It's a plan only a bureaucrat could love."



In order to clear the bar, big leaps are required. As PG&E cannot be counted on, bureaucrats and progressives feel it needs to be replaced. The City must "control its own destiny." To replace PG&E means public power. CleanPowerSF is the first step.

Other actions required to eliminate greenhouse gases by 2030 include building renewable generation facilities such as the solar arrays blanketing Moscone Center, the Sunset Reservoir and many other City facilities. The building of generation facilities, called by progressives "robust local buildout," does not make much financial sense. The City's Hetchy system generates electricity cheaply when water stored behind the Hetch Hetchy dam flows west to local use and storage. Surplus electricity is sold to irrigation districts at cost. Instead of using that cheap electricity, the City builds expensive solar here in the City. It replaces cheap clean electricity with expensive renewable power. It's a plan only a bureaucrat could love.

One reason the bureaucrats do love the scheme is that it helps generate a fund of money they can use. By selling more to the irrigation districts, there is more money for GoSolar and similar subsidy programs controlled by the bureaucracy.

Understand that there are two pockets to the Hetchy water/power system: one holds debt, the other holds funds for bureaucrats to dispense. The system has been divided into two parts, call them East and West. West is deeply in debt; East holds a fund of money. While we are told that GoSolar is paid for entirely out of the proceeds of selling electricity – and the implication is: *not* out of ratepayer funds – that is an artifice. There is *one* system that produces two goods, water and electricity. If the proceeds from selling electricity are diverted, as they are, then the "cost" of water is that much greater, and the ratepayer pays that much more for it. There is no free lunch; neither are GoSolar and other subsidies free. The bureaucracy makes subsidies appear free.

Thankfully, over the next four years one long-standing subsidy is to diminish. Now City facilities receive Hetchy electricity at no charge, or for a fraction of what the electricity costs. Hetchy Power (the East part) subsidizes City Hall, General Hospital, MUNI and more. One reason that SFPUC subsidizes energy efficiency is that City facilities lack incentive to reduce power consumption; they do not pay, or pay little. It's a perfect bureaucratic double play: one subsidy leads to another, and to double jobs and power for bureaucrats.

Is robust expansion of SFPUC best? Its recent annual report is all roses. But there are bugs in those flowers. Revenues have been unexpectedly low. Inevitably this will push utility rates higher. Rates have already risen steeply—for water, doubling over five recent years. On the power side, even with the big water flows of these past few years, the power reserve fund is plummeting to negative territory; this is why the Commission recently decided to modestly reduce subsidies. Utility rates are going to rise, and steeply. The Commission President recently acknowledged that he expects resistance to upcoming rate increases, and possibly political push-back.

The reader must remember that utility rates affect nearly everything. It is not just your (modest) utility bills. From your breakfast coffee to what you pay for a nightcap at the local pub...almost all spending is affected when utility rates rise. Every business pays utility bills.

Should the City spend freely so that SF is "a green leader," the better to attract young, smart, connected workers that propel high tech business? Or will SF become such a costly place to live and work that competitive edge is lost, along with tax base and diversity?

Who leads SFPUC next? Ed Harrington has announced his intention to retire. Harlan (repaint-the-new SUV) Kelly seems a chum of the Mayor. Despite his unfortunate newspaper debut, Kelly might work out well. The \$5000 paint job was probably a cost effective lesson; Kelly is not a slow learner. Further, he is a people person. He would probably leave intact Harrington's team of financial wizards. And he knows the organization. On its plate are big programs; thorough knowledge counts.

Feedback: lawrence@westsideobserver.com



MY TWO CENTS By Will Durst

HIGH ON THE MAINSTREAM EMBANKMENT

As rare and mythical as the unicorn, it too cavorts amongst the clouds with double rainbows birthing from its unfathomable depths. But instead of worshipful 12 year-old girls, it is conservative politicians who tack drawings of this inamorata on walls above their beds. We're talking about the legendary... Mainstream.

The message is relatively straightforward. Inside the Mainstream, you will rub elbows with everything that is good and right and true and just about America. Families have 2.4 children, none of whom sport barbed wire piercings or dragon neck tattoos or ever talk smack back. Lawns are broad and green and crabgrass free. And children are cheerfully shuttled to school in orderly processions of grey and beige Minivans. The place to be.

Outside the Mainstream, red turbo hybrids prowl discordantly with hip hop infused rock and roll blasting from after market Korean stereo systems. Uncomfortable shoe choices are flaunted by pregnant teenage girls, while Steve Jobs' subversive acolytes encourage impressionable minds to "think differently," actively disrupting the carefully nurtured herd mentality. The place to flee.

Dedication to Mainstream purity extends to within the holy liquid circle as well. Newton Leroy Gingrich castigated Ron Paul for being "totally outside the Mainstream of every decent American." And Ron Paul is a medical doctor. Apparently the Coast Guard patrolling the Mainstream is ever vigilant.

Then Willard Mitt Romney went and said pretty much exactly the same thing about Newt, which must mean he considers poor Dr. Paul dying of thirst two counties away in some desert of his own moistureless making. And President Obama? Forget about it. He can't even see the hint of a whisper of a shadow of dampness due to the curvature of the earth.

The obvious intention of Team Romney is to plant Mitt in the soft squishy loam as the sole candidate an ordinary person could expect to meet up with in the middle of the flood plains of normalcy. Preserving the Mainstream as a very exclusive territory. A restricted tributary complete with velvet rope and a couple of hulking bouncers protecting it from the dinghies of the hoi polloi. Sort of a watery gated community. Behind which the Governor seems plenty comfortable.

Only proper God-fearing decent Americans are allowed to soak in the aqueous chestnut that is the Mainstream. The rest of us boundary crossing reprobates are prohibited from enjoying the divine waters and directed to spend summer afternoons splashing each other in shallow muddy puddles.

Of course, even to those who can afford the initiation fee, recent responses from Republican debate audiences indicate that voyaging down the Mainstream is a very expensive way to travel. Exacting heavy-duty psychic dues.

First, crowds booed a gay soldier, then cheered the death of an unfortunate who couldn't afford health insurance, and finally leapt to their feet to applaud one of the grandstanding creekside tide surfers who ridiculed food stamp recipients.

If loss of your moral compass is a necessary qualification for luxuriating in the surging current of the Mainstream, more than a few of us will be happy to view the entire proceedings lounging high on the embankment. Besides, we have better picnic spreads.

And for those who do decide to soak in the narrow-minded current, you might want to invest in a heated wetsuit because that menacing red tide torrent of the Mainstream looks to be mighty cold.

The New York Times says Emmy-nominated comedian and writer Will Durst "is quite possibly the best political satirist working in the country today." Check out the website: Redroom.com to buy his book or find out more about upcoming stand-up performances. Or willdurst.com. Or don't.

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The great difference between the neighborhood redistricting plan developed and presented by D7 and D11, and the RFT's original draft redistricting plan, is that the D7 and D11 neighborhoods presented real, existing neighborhood boundaries and demonstrated that there were pre-existing communities of interest. The first draft map developed by RTF consultants did not always recognize neighborhood boundaries or communities

According to redistricting expert Chris Bowman, "The Neighborhood Groups map was created by the Planning Department as a bureaucratic tool to create a mailing list of individuals and organizations who had expressed an interest to be notified when a particular project or plan was being considered by Planning for a general area of the city." The maps were



George Wooding

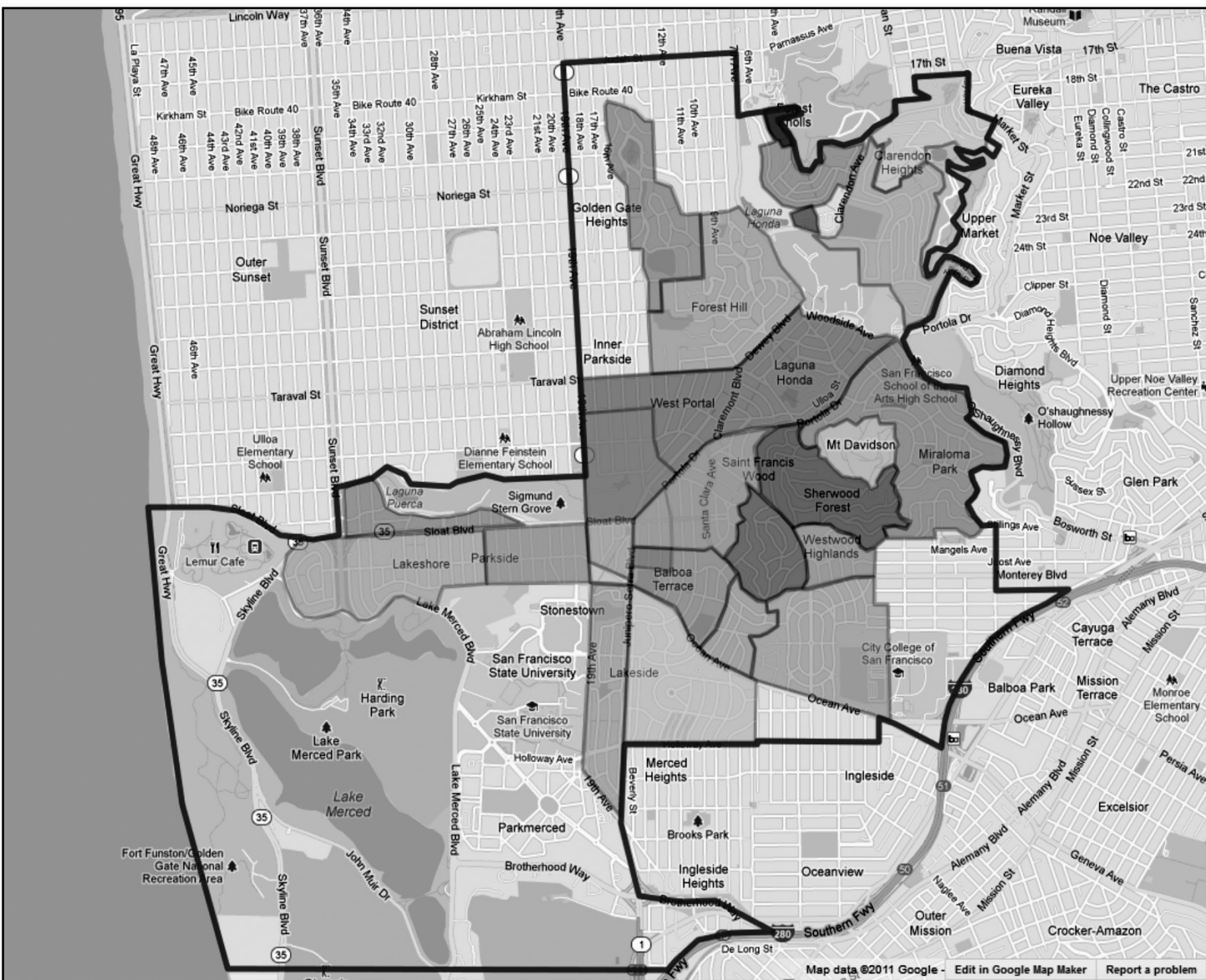
The RTF was created in August 2011 and consists of nine citizen members – three selected by the Mayor, three selected by the Ethics Commission, and three selected by the Board of Supervisors. The selected Task Force members are regular

The district boundaries drawn by the RTF can have a significant impact over the political landscape of the Board of Supervisors. Moderate districts can become progressive and progressive districts can become moderate with a boundary

Now that San Francisco is using district boundaries rather than citywide voting to elect Supervisors, the City must redesign district borders every 10 years to accommodate changes in population. The RTF must draw district boundaries that ensure that the population is equal in all districts. The 2012 RTF was formed because San Francisco now has 805,235 residents — 28,502 (3.5 percent) more people than the 2000 count of 776,733 people living in San Francisco — and the growth was not uniform in all districts. Each of the eleven districts must have a mean average of 73,203 residents.”

The RTF may be the hardest and most thankless citizens committee in San Francisco. As RTF president Eric McDonnell stated at the January 25th meeting which took District 6 Supervisor, Jane Kim out of her own District, “Every boundary line we change makes somebody unhappy.” After working non-stop from 10:00 am until 2:30 pm— on a Saturday— listening to hours of citizen testimony and redrawing maps, RTF member, Mike Alonso stood

Monday	February 06, 2012	Special Meeting	6 p.m.	Marina Middle School 3500 Fillmore Street/District 2
Saturday	February 11, 2012	Special Meeting	2 p.m.	Washington High School 600 32nd Ave/District 1
Friday	February 17, 2012	Regular Meeting	3 p.m.	Room 416, City Hall
Thursday	February 23, 2012	Special Meeting	6 p.m.	Old First Presbyterian Church 1751 Sacramento St./District 3
March				
Thursday	March 01, 2012	Special Meeting	6 p.m.	Everett Middle School 450 Church Street/District 8
Wednesday	March 07, 2012	Regular Meeting	6 p.m.	Room 406, City Hall
Monday	March 12, 2012	Special Meeting	6 p.m.	District 7
Saturday	March 17, 2012	Special Meeting	10 a.m.	District 5
Thursday	March 22, 2012	Special Meeting	6 p.m.	District 4
Thursday	March 29, 2012	Special Meeting	6 p.m.	City Hall



The West of Twin Peaks Central Council (WOTPCC) presented these proposed boundaries, based on apparent neighborhoods in the area. The Task Force has not made its final decision as of yet.

Hardly Strictly Bluegrass (Cont. from p. 1)

construction of the Music Concourse Parking Garage. The injunction was eventually overturned and no longer restricted by the rules and procedures that apply to all other special events. Hardly Strictly remained in San Francisco and has since become the largest music festival in the country.

The RPD’s Permits and Reservations Policy, Commission Resolution #9705-073, specifies the maximum capacities for several Department facilities including Speedway Meadow – 18,600; Marx Meadow – 4,000; and Lindley Meadow – 9,300. The policy clearly states that staff shall not issue permits for any event they have reason to believe will exceed the stated venue capacity. Yet, for at least the past nine years, the Department has continued to issue permits for the Hardly Strictly Bluegrass Festival knowing full well that expected attendance would exceed these venues’ capacities on an exponential scale. At 200,000-250,000, the daily attendance figures for Hardly Strictly are the equivalent of jamming more than three sold out Niners games into the Park’s western meadows each day.

The fact is there is no Bay Area venue, public or private, outdoor or indoor, that is large enough to accommodate this many people. Here’s a quick look at the numbers for the area’s biggest venues: Candlestick Park – 70,207, AT&T Park – 41,503, Oakland Coliseum – 60,000, UC Berkeley’s Memorial Coliseum – 75,662, Cow Palace – 16,500, Oracle Arena – 19,200, Shoreline Amphitheater – 25,000, Cow Palace – 16,500 and the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium – 7,000. The largest venue the RPD controls is the Candlestick Park parking lot with a stated maximum capacity of 100,000. The largest venue in Golden Gate Park is the Polo Fields at 50,000. Department officials are well aware of these capacity restrictions. For the Outside Lands Festival, each year great care is taken to limit daily attendance to no more than 60,000. Yet, for Hardly Strictly, it appears anything and everything goes regardless of the impacts to the park, the wildlife and the surrounding neighbors.

For more than a decade, nearby residents and park users have questioned the use of

The largest venue in Golden Gate Park is the Polo Fields at 50,000. Department officials are well aware of these capacity restrictions. For the Outside Lands Festival, each year great care is taken to limit daily attendance to no more than 60,000. Yet, for Hardly Strictly, it appears anything and everything goes regardless of the impacts to the park, the wildlife and the surrounding neighbors.”

Golden Gate Park as a location for large amplified sound events. In response to public concerns, the Commission did approve an amplified sound policy for Sharon Meadow back in 2004, but the use of amplified sound on all other park properties is still governed by the Department’s Permits and Reservations Policy. Approved May 15, 1997, this policy severely limits the use of amplified sound in the Park’s western end. For Marx Meadow, Department policy restricts the use of amplified sound to no more than two hours a day and one day per weekend and only between the hours of 11am – 5pm. **“To minimize the impact of noise in the west end of Golden Gate Park on weekends and holidays,” the policy also prohibits staff from scheduling any events with amplified sound for two consecutive days during a weekend or a weekend holiday of any given week in the west end of Golden Gate Park.”** The policy also limits the use of amplified sound in the Western Meadows to no more than twelve consecutive hours per week. Even though the Permits and Reservations Policy clearly requires Commission approval of all exceptions to the amplified sound policy, for the last nine years, RPD staff has issued the permits for Hardly Strictly secretly without Commission approval.

Even the annual gift of the Festival itself has never been approved by the Commission or the Board of Supervisors, a violation of both Commission Policy and the Administrative Code. Mr. Hellman’s annual gift of the Hardly Strictly Bluegrass Festival is no different than the America Scores’ gift of the World Cup Broadcasts back in 2010, and like that gift, should have been publicly approved by the Commission and the Board. Not only has the gift of the Festival never been approved, Mr. Hellman and Slim’s Production Company representatives have repeatedly refused to reveal the cost of this annual gift to the City.

Since its inception, RPD staff and the Commissioners have embarked on a deliberate campaign to keep the preparations for the Hardly Strictly Bluegrass Festival as far removed from the public discussion as possible. Eleven years of playing host to performers like Willie Nelson, Hazel Dickens, Emmylou Harris, Elvis Costello and Steve Martin, but neither RPD staff nor the Recreation and Park Commissioners ever spoke a word about it. It was only with the imminent passing of Mr. Hellman and the proposal to rename Speedway Meadow in his honor that the Festival was ever publicly discussed by Commissioners or RPD staff. Hardly Strictly brings great joy to many people but it has long since outgrown its location in Golden Gate Park. With all due respect to the memory of Mr. Hellman, may he and “Hellman Hollow” now rest in peace.

Anmarie Mabbutt is a San Francisco lawyer.

Golden Gate Park — Beach Chalet Soccer Development

Audobon Society: Beach Chalet Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) inadequate:

Wildlife survey fails to list the true number and species of birds present at Beach Chalet soccer fields site

The DEIR identified only seven bird species at the Beach Chalet soccer fields site. However, in their letter of December 12, 2011 addressing the DEIR, the Golden Gate Audubon Society states that “Just one Golden Gate Audubon volunteer has observed more than 64 species at the site including...”

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Canada Goose	Northern Flicker	Townsend's Warbler
Turkey Vulture	Downy Woodpecker*	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Osprey	Hairy Woodpecker*	Palm Warbler x
Cooper's Hawk	Hutton's Vireo*	Northern Waterthrush x
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Warbling Vireo	California Towhee *
Red-tailed Hawk *	Common Raven*	Fox Sparrow
Red-shouldered Hawk *	American Crow*	White-crowned Sparrow *
Peregrine Falcon	Western Scrub Jay*	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Merlin	Steller's Jay*	Clay-colored Sparrow x
Mew Gull	Barn Swallow *	Song Sparrow *
Ring-billed Gull	Tree Swallow	Lincoln's Sparrow
California Gull	Violet-green Swallow	Dark-eyed Junco *
Western Gull	Pygmy Nuthatch *	Black-headed Grosbeak
Glaucous-winged Gull	Northern Mockingbird *	Western Tanager
Mourning Dove*	Gray Catbird x	House Finch *
Rock Pigeon	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Purple Finch
Anna's Hummingbird*	Bushtit*	American Goldfinch *
Allen's Hummingbird*	Chestnut-backed Chickadee *	Lesser Goldfinch
Say's Phoebe	Cedar Waxwing	Killdeer
Black Phoebe*	Hermit Thrush	European Starling
Pac-slope Flycatcher	American Robin *	Brewer's Blackbird *
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Orange-crowned Warbler	Red-winged Blackbird
		Brown-headed Cowbird

(*=likely breeding in or near the athletic fields)
(x=rare or uncommon migrant)
The Golden Gate Audubon Society also refers the Planning Department to comments provided by Mr. Dan Murphy:

“which provide more specific information on bird use in the area. Other observers have recorded Black-bellied Plover and other shorebirds that use the athletic fields and the Beach Chalet during heavy storm events that make Ocean Beach uninhabitable. The need for these wet, grassy upland refuges may be even more pressing as climate change increases storm intensity and reduces available shoreline habitat. Unfortunately, the DEIR does not address this issue at all or even acknowledge the use of the fields as upland refuges for shorebirds and gulls.

“Moreover, raptors and passerines that occur in other parts of Golden Gate Park are also extremely likely to use the Beach Chalet area. According to data available on eBird, more than 120 species of passerines have been recorded in the database using Golden Gate Park...”

Park advocates still want to know why the City wants to destroy this important habitat area, when there is a viable alternative to this project?

SF Ocean Edge supports youth soccer. There is an alternative to this project that provides more playing hours for youth while protecting the habitat of Golden Gate Park for wildlife and preserving the beauty of the park and of Ocean Beach for youth today and for future generations:

Our Mission Statement

SF Ocean Edge supports active recreation and parkland with a win-win solution:

- Renovation of the existing Beach Chalet grass playing fields with natural grass, better field construction, and better maintenance;
- Use of the remainder of the \$12 million funding for other playing fields and parks, providing recreation opportunities for youth all over San Francisco;
- Preserving Golden Gate Park’s woodland and meadows as wildlife habitat and as a parkland heritage for future generations.

For more information, contact: Katherine Howard, SF Ocean Edge 415-710-2402

Use Tax Season to Organize for the Future

Financial Planner Shares Tips for a 21st-Century Filing System

Jane was not looking forward to going through her parents’ belongings to get their house ready to sell. Their health had been failing for some time and they finally agreed to move to a retirement community. Now that they were both comfortably moved into their new apartment, it was up to Jane to get rid of the things they no longer needed.

Her parents had lived in the same house for more than 50 years, so Jane expected to find things that should have been tossed out years ago. But she was amazed to discover 50 years of tax returns and bank statements carefully stored in boxes in the attic. Her parents had saved all their financial records!

Many people are confused about what records they need to keep and for how long. They hold onto tax returns, bank records, brokerage statements and other financial information simply because they don’t know if they’ll need it again. Like Jane’s parents, the documents get packed in boxes that eventually take over valuable

living or storage space.

Financial planner Rick Rodgers, author of The New Three-Legged Stool: A Tax Efficient Approach To Retirement Planning (www.TheNewThreeLeggedStool.com), says tax time is a great time to get organized.

“Most people are going through their records to get ready to file their return,” he says. “This is the time to get smart about what you need to keep and then set up a system to store it efficiently going forward.”

Rodgers suggests these five steps to help you effectively organize your finances for 2012 and beyond:

1. Out with the old – Discard the records you no longer need: Tax returns older than seven years; bank records and credit card statements that are not related to the tax returns you’re keeping; brokerage statements that aren’t related to purchases of current holdings. Be sure to shred all your old documents before throwing them out.

2. Go digital – Convert the documents you plan to save into digital images that are stored on your hard drive. Invest in a good scanner and scan as you go through your paperwork, shredding and tossing the hard copies as you go. On your computer, file by tax year, so your 2011 folder will contain your tax return for 2011 and all pertinent bank records and receipts. Organize the previous six years the same way. Next year you can delete the oldest folder when you add the 2012 folder.

3. Save a forest – All of the financial institutions you deal with would prefer to send your statements electronically. Stop receiving paper statements. Instead, download your statements electronically and store them in your new filing system. Most banks and credit card companies keep at least a year’s worth of statements available. You need to download these files only once a year to complete the year’s file.

4. Save backups in case of emergency – Make backup copies of your files on a CD. Choose a CD-R (recordable) as opposed to a CD-RW (rewriteable), because CD-R cannot accidentally be overwritten. Depending on your computer operating system, you

Cont. p. 7

Best of the Net

Ranked Choice Voting Before Rules Committee

By Jonathan Nathan, beyondchron.com

Activists and academics were joined by workers and voters yesterday to advocate in favor of an expansion of ranked-choice voting in city elections, and against a proposal that would return the city to old-fashioned runoff voting, in a meeting of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors Rules Committee. Although a few dissenters from the business community made their presence known, the overwhelming majority of public comment was in favor of ranked-choice voting.

The committee members themselves — District 2 Supervisor Mark Farrell, District 9 Supervisor David Campos, and committee chair and District 6 Supervisor Jane Kim — kept their own prefatory comments brief and factual in nature before turning over the floor to public comment. At issue were two competing amendments to the city charter, one which angled to repeal ranked-choice voting and return to conventional two-stage runoff elections, and one which called for an expansion of the system that would allow voters to rank as many candidates as currently available tabulation technology would allow.

“Among the most often cited were statistics from the most recent mayoral election. In Ed Lee’s 2011 victory, 73% of voters used all three of their rankings, and that another 11% used two. Ranked-choice voting activists argue that this disproves the theory that the methodology confuses voters.”

One of the earliest speakers in favor of ranked-choice voting, a citizen named Judy Cox, set the tone for much of the public comment session, arguing that ranked-choice increases voter turnout, cuts costs by eliminating expensive second-stage elections, and increases diversity of ideas, ethnicities, and gender among elected officeholders. “I see these people who want to get rid of ranked-choice voting and I keep asking myself: what is the problem they want to solve?” said Cox. As she listed off the advantages of ranked-choice, she bracketed each by asking, “Is that a problem?”

A representative from the Asian Law Caucus weighed in later, explaining that electoral systems need more time than ranked-choice voting has received, to have a complete evaluation of its effectiveness. He also argued that changing up the way elections are held is confusing and discouraging to voters, and to the organizations, activists, and community elements trying to drive up voter participation.

As more and more citizens, labor union representatives, community activists, and policy academics spoke out in favor of ranked-choice voting, many of the repeated refrains were familiar ones in the debate over ranked-choice voting. Among the most often cited were statistics from the most recent mayoral election. In Ed Lee’s 2011 victory, 73% of voters used all three of their rankings, and that another 11% used two. Ranked-choice voting activists argue that this disproves the theory that the methodology confuses voters.

Another familiar argument was the example of Portland, Maine. Ranked-choice voting was recently used in Portland’s mayoral race. In that election, voters were able to rank all 15 candidates on a simple, user-friendly ballot. In that race, argued ranked-choice supporters, there was no clear frontrunner and not much talk of confused voters. Said one speaker wryly, “But then again, there aren’t so many political consultants in Portland.” Community activists also argued that the two-stage system, with more opportunities for campaign spending and what academic and ranked-choice architect Stephen Hill has called “an older, whiter, wealthier, more conservative electorate,” favors stakeholders in the business community such as landlords and the Chamber of Commerce.

In general, as has tended to be the case throughout San Francisco’s debate on the subject, the voices against ranked-choice voting were conservative political types and angry, gesticulating commentators afraid of their votes being somehow cheated or stolen. The voices most strongly in favor of ranked-choice voting were similarly unsurprising: activists, organizers, and academics with a stated, strong, lifelong interest in make the electoral process more democratic, as well as ordinary voters themselves.

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WEST OF TWIN PEAKS CENTRAL COUNCIL By Mitch Bull

Development, redistricting, bonds, and Coit Tower protection were among the main topics of the West of Twin Peaks Central Committee Meeting on January 23rd.

Matt Chamberlain presided over a meeting attended by over 40 citizens, eager to find out about redistricting updates and the other items on the packed agenda.

Following the usual housekeeping and financial reports, Avrum Shepherd and Karen Breslin reported on the progress of the Goals Committee, charged with defining the 2012 objectives of the organization. This year, the goals submitted focused on the importance of: redistricting (and the impact of the WOTP Neighborhood Groups); communication (improving the dialogue between the WOTPCC, the neighborhood groups and city agencies such as MTA, DPW and Rec and Parks); government transparency (getting valuable information); and the protection of police and fire services. WOTPCC delegates and members of the neighborhood organizations are tasked with providing input and direction towards adding to and/or approving the Goals as submitted.

The night was awash in guest speakers and requests for organizational support for worthy causes. Dawn Kamalanathan, the Director of the Capital and Planning Division of the SF Recreation and Parks Department gave a short presentation on the progress of the 2008 Clean and Safe Neighborhood Parks and Citywide Program and a look at the upcoming 2012 bond measure. Several slides detailed the ongoing progress of the projects funded by the 2008 Bond Measure, setting the stage for the 2012 continuation of the upgrade of additional neighborhood parks and other citywide programs. While it was reported the projects funded by the 2008 Bond are all currently on time and under budget, much of the discussion focused on the problems associated with the refurbishment of playgrounds, parks and other city facilities which are then left for neglect as no operating funding is being allocated for staffing of the areas and maintenance needs. The feeling of many in the audience that the Recreation and Parks Department is not listening to the public in meetings was also broadly conveyed to the staff in attendance. Rec and Park is asking for feedback for their upcoming bond-related reconstruction project list.

A proposal that would add up to 36 units on the “dead-end” portion of Crestmont Drive was shown to the group by Charles Powell of the Mount Sutro Owners Association. The presentation cited many reasons why the development should not be allowed to proceed and asked the delegates to authorize a letter of opposition from the WOTPCC supporting the MSOA’s efforts to stop the project. The vote to prepare the letter of support was passed unanimously.

Another unanimous vote was reached on supporting the efforts of the Coit Tower Preservation Group to put an initiative on the ballot to limit commercial activities at the site, and to prioritize the spending of funds the City receives from the Coit Tower concessionaire. Jon Golinger of the Preservation Group explained that revenues in excess of \$500,000 annually were being generated from the elevator fees alone, but the funds are not being used to maintain and repair the WPA-era murals, lighting and other areas of maintenance.

To close, Chamberlain gave a very detailed explanation and overview of the current redistricting that is taking place in the city. As the city is divided into 11 supervisorial districts, and the premise is that districts are to be equally represented by the number of residents in each district, as certain districts grow in population the district lines have to be adjusted. This process is repeated after every 10-year census report showing changes in the number of people in each district. In explaining several different possible methods to balance the population shifts, the most favorably supported scenario is one where District 7 is expanded very slightly, while keeping the unique neighborhoods represented by the WOTPCC together in a single district footprint that very closely resembles the current district borders.

Even though a member of the redistricting committee stated the committee’s proposal is very close to the map shown by Chamberlain, it is imperative that citizens attend the meetings where public comments can be conveyed to the committee.

The unique neighborhoods that encompass the West of Twin Peaks district have been working together on common needs and issues over the past 75 years.

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

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be Monday, February 27th at 7:30 in the Forest Hill Clubhouse.



Jon Golinger pleads the case for saving Coit Tower. It was unanimously approved, and many signed his petition to put the question on the ballot.

may be able to continue adding data to a CD-R each year, until the CD is full. However, some operating systems won’t allow that, so you’ll need a new CD for each year.

5. Go paperless – Your new electronic filing system can be expanded to include all your financial records, from car maintenance receipts to pay stubs. Wills and insurance policies can also be scanned and stored but, of course, keep the originals of those in a safe deposit box or fireproof safe.

Gone are the days of saving your financial documents in box and shoving it into the attic. Technology advances have made organizing your personal finances easier with minimal cost. Make 2012 the year you get organized by moving your finances into a 21st century filing system.

Certified Financial Planner Rick Rodgers is president of Rodgers & Associates, a Certified Retirement Counselor and member of the National Association of Personal Financial Advisers. Rodgers has been featured on national radio and TV shows, and is available to speak at conferences and corporate events (www.rodgersspeaks.com).



MONEY MATTERS • By Brandon Miller and Joanne Jordan

Five Questions about Long-Term Care

1. What is long-term care?

Long-term care refers to the ongoing services and support needed by people who have chronic health conditions or disabilities. There are three levels of long-term care:

- Skilled care: Generally round-the-clock care that's given by professional health care providers such as nurses, therapists, or aides under a doctor's supervision.
- Intermediate care: Also provided by professional health care providers but on a less frequent basis than skilled care.
- Custodial care: Personal care that's often given by family caregivers, nurses' aides, or home health workers who provide assistance with what are called "activities of daily living" such as bathing, eating, and dressing.

Long-term care is not just provided in nursing homes—in fact, the most common type of long-term care is home-based care. Long-term care services may also be provided in a variety of other settings,

such as assisted living facilities and adult day care centers.

2. Why is it important to plan for long-term care?

No one expects to need long-term care, but it's important to plan for it nonetheless. Here are two important reasons why:

The odds of needing long-term care are high:

- Approximately 40% of people will need long-term care at some point during their lifetimes after reaching age 65*
- Approximately 14% of people age 71 and older have Alzheimer's disease, a disorder that often leads to the need for nursing home care**
- Younger people may need long-term care too, as a result of a disabling accident or illness

The cost of long-term care is rising:

Currently, the average annual cost of a 1-year nursing home stay is \$74,820* and in many states the cost is much higher. In the future, long-term care is likely to be even more expensive. If costs rise at just 3% a year (a conservative estimate), in 20 years, a 1-year nursing home stay will cost approximately \$135,133.

*National Clearinghouse for Long-Term Care Information, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2011

**Alzheimer's Association, 2011

The Rising Cost of Long-Term Care

3. Doesn't Medicare pay for long-term care?

Many people mistakenly believe that Medicare, the federal health insurance program for older Americans, will pay for long-term care. But Medicare provides only limited coverage for long-term care services such as skilled nursing care or physical therapy. And although Medicare provides some home health care benefits, it doesn't cover custodial care, the type of care older individuals most often need. Medicaid, which is often confused with Medicare, is the joint federal-state program that two-thirds of nursing home residents currently rely on to pay some of their long-term care expenses. But to qualify for Medicaid, you must have limited income and assets, and although Medicaid generally covers nursing home care, it provides only limited coverage for home health care in certain states.

4. Can't I pay for care out of pocket?

The major advantage to using income, savings, investments, and assets (such as your home) to pay for long-term care is that you have the most control over where and how you receive care. But because the cost of long-term care is high, you may have trouble affording extended care if you need it.

5. Should I buy long-term care insurance?

Like other types of insurance, long-term care insurance protects you against a specific financial

risk—in this case, the chance that long-term care will cost more than you can afford. In exchange for your premium payments, the insurance company promises to cover part of your future long-term care costs. Long-term care insurance can help you preserve your assets and guarantee that you'll have access to a range of care options. However, it can be expensive, so before you purchase a policy, make sure you can afford the premiums both now and in the future.

The cost of a long-term care policy depends primarily on your age (in general, the younger you are when you purchase a policy, the lower your premium will be), but it also depends on the benefits you choose. If you decide to purchase long-term care insurance, here are some of the key features to consider:

- Benefit amount: The daily benefit amount is the maximum your policy will pay for your care each day, and generally ranges from \$50 to \$350.
- Benefit period: The length of time your policy will pay benefits (e.g., 2 years, 4 years, lifetime).
- Elimination period: The number of days you must pay for your own care before the policy begins paying benefits (e.g., 20 days, 90 days).
- Types of facilities included: Many policies cover care in a variety of settings including your own home, assisted living facilities, adult day care centers, and nursing homes.
- Inflation protection: With inflation protection, your benefit will increase by a certain percentage each year. It's an optional feature available at additional cost, but having it will enable your coverage to keep pace with rising prices.

Your insurance agent or a financial professional can help you compare long-term care insurance policies and answer any questions you may have.

Deductions for Long-Term Care Insurance Premiums: 2011 & 2012

Age	2011 Limit	2012 Limit
40 or under	\$340	\$350
41-50	\$640	\$660
51-60	\$1,270	\$1,310
61-70	\$3,390	\$3,500
70+	\$4,240	\$4,370

Brandon Miller, CFP and Joanne Jordan, CFP are financial consultants at Jordan Miller & Associates, A Private Wealth Advisory Practice of Ameriprise Financial Inc. in San Francisco, specializing in helping LGBT individuals and families plan and achieve their financial goals. For more information, please visit jordanmilleradvisors.com.



All in the Family

By Brian Browne

The San Francisco Public Utilities (SFPUC) requested the six-term chair, Ms. Aimee Brown, of the supposedly independent Revenue Bond Oversight Committee (RBOC), write a rebuttal to my "misconceptions" as printed in the West Side Observer (WSO). A sunshine request revealed this article was a collaborative effort between the SFPUC and Ms. Brown.

In early 2011, the RBOC decision-makers, without notice, and off-camera, stopped ongoing negotiations with the University of California Berkeley (UCB) and University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) to do a reality check on SFPUC's plans and operations. The RBOC, instead, hired the Controller's City Services Auditor (CSA), also known as the Whistle Blowers.

The SFPUC is an enterprise organization. Its revenues are derived from rates. It claims to use a cost of service approach wherein only reasonable and allowable costs may be paid from rates. It is difficult to rationalize how costs generated in rebutting my articles . . . may be classified as reasonable and allowable and then blended into your water and wastewater rates.."



The universities gave freely of their valuable time and effort to understand the complexities of the SFPUC's plans, its business model, and developed a complete draft-proposal. They did not get a thank you, nor apology, nor even an official notification from the RBOC.

The CSA was awarded a lucrative memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the RBOC. This MOU basically made the CSA the sole vendor for RBOC contracts. The RBOC majority refused to pay the CSA for pre-MOU costs. Staff of the SFPUC, at the RBOC meeting, agreed to pick up these pre-MOU costs of the CSA.

The CSA was created in 2003 by Proposition C, aka the Whistle Blower legislation. The CSA has a budget of 0.002 percent of the entire city budget (including the SFPUC). This means the CSA budget is approximately \$13 million dollars. The CSA legislative charge is to investigate any and all city departments.

Immediate questions which come to mind are: Is using the CSA compliant with the RBOC's legislative directive to seek outside independent consultants? Why does the CSA require RBOC funds to do what it is already funded and mandated to do? Is the CSA comparable to the opportunity cost of displacing the universities? Hiring an academic and working as a private consultant with prior commercial ties to the SFPUC does not overcome this latter concern.

A major issue is who pays the bill when the SFPUC expends funds for these types of questionable activities. The SFPUC is an enterprise organization. Its revenues are derived from rates. It claims to use a cost of service approach wherein only reasonable and allowable costs may be paid from rates. It is difficult to rationalize how costs generated in rebutting my articles and pre-MOU costs (to hire consultants for its independent oversight committee) may be classified as reasonable and allowable and then blended into your water and wastewater rates.

I called the Ethics Commission and was told to check with the city Whistle Blowers, aka CSA. I did, and was told to check with the Commission (SFPUC). This clearly creates an ever imploding spiral. This does however, highlight the need for real regulatory oversight.

The RBOC will sunset on 1/1/2013. Its life can be extended by the Board of Supervisors (BoS). The BoS should let this Committee, mercifully for the ratepayers, sunset on 1/1/2013. Committee nullification is not good public policy. A new and effective regulatory body should be developed that fulfills the intended charter of being a ratepayer advocate in the expenditure of revenue bonds.

Brian Browne is the Board of Supervisor's appointed Member of the Revenue Bond Oversight Committee

Utility Undergrounding Information

For all property owners who are interested in undergrounding their utilities within their neighborhood, the Utility Undergrounding Tool Kit (PDF) provides San Francisco residents with a step-by-step approach to forming a property-owner funded undergrounding utility district. Listed below are the basic steps in the tool kit.

- Utility Undergrounding Tool Kit Basic Steps
- Step 1 Determine District Boundaries 1-2 months
- District boundaries are determined by the Neighborhood Committee made up of local residents
- Step 2 Circulate Petition 2-4 months
- The Neighborhood Committee gauges support for the project, collecting signatures and meets with city officials at DPW.
- Step 3 Legislate Underground District 2-4 months
- Once the Neighborhood Committee submits signed petitions to DPW, there is a Public Hearing required and then approval by Board of Supervisors for a Utility Undergrounding District.
- Step 4 Form Assessment District 1-2 year
- Property Owners Obtain Funding for Utility Design Plan and Engineering Report.
- Step 5 Construction 1-2 years
- DPW will oversee construction management and neighborhood notifications.
- For more information, call (415) 554-4860.

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Laguna Honda Hospital's 2010 Fundrasing Dinner

Black-Tie Gala Event's \$260,788 Expenses

ByPatrickMonette-Shaw

Who knew that it took spending over a quarter of a million dollars to throw a fundraising party that barely returned 34% of event proceeds to benefit actual patients?

Although Laguna Honda Hospital, and its two affiliated non-profits — Laguna Honda Volunteers, Inc. (recently renamed Friends of Laguna Honda) and the Laguna Honda Foundation run by former City Attorney Louise Renne — have refused for over 18 months to release financial information about its June 2010 fundraising Black Tie Gala Dinner, the truth was bound to come out eventually, since truth always trumps myth and secrecy.

Here it is a year-and-a-half following the June 2010 event, and the public is just now learning about the event's financial shenanigans.

In December 2011, the IRS provided a copy of Laguna Honda Volunteers, Inc.'s Form 990 tax return for the period ending December 2010. The tax return exposes the myth that the Black Tie Gala Dinner would principally benefit Laguna Honda's patients, since facts in the return show that only \$189,504 (34%) of the \$558,821 raised by this event appears to have been retained by Volunteers, Inc. whose mission is to support patient benefit.

It is unknown how many party-goers attended the Black Tie Dinner event, so the cost-per-head may never be known to explain why the dinner cost \$108,095 just for food and beverages, nor why there was an additional \$58,943 in other non-food expenses, totaling \$167,038 in event expenses, fully 30% of the event's proceeds.

But that's without the lucrative professional fundraising fee of \$93,750 paid to Supervisor Sean Elsbernd's preferred event fundraiser, Nichelle Lyons, who snagged nearly 17% of the Gala Dinner's event proceeds for conducting "fundraising" (Volunteers, Inc.'s 2010 Form 990, Schedule G, Part I, Line 2b). Her steep fees, perhaps guaranteed for a percentage of the take, is eerily reminiscent of the fundraising scandal involving the

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San Francisco AIDS Foundation and its former fundraiser, Pallotta and Associates. After being gouged by excessive fundraising fees for years by Team Pallotta, SFAF had to go to court to end its unholy contract with its fundraiser.

I reported last February that Volunteers, Inc.'s 2009 Form 990 IRS tax return showed it had paid Lyons \$10,000 in 2009. In addition, Community Initiatives — Lousie Renne's so-called fiscal sponsor for her Lagund Honda Foundation — reported on its IRS Form 990 for the period ending June 2009 that it had paid Ms. Lyons another \$42,998 for fundraising related to Supervisor Sean Elsbernd's 2009 crab fest to raise funds for Renne's Foundation. While Elsbernd's 2009 Crab Fest raised a total of \$151,000, Lyon's fundraising fee took almost one-third from that event's purse, returning just \$108,652 to Renne's Foundation.

The 2009 tax returns show Lyons had been paid at least \$53,998. Tack onto that the \$93,750 Ms. Lyons earned from LHH's Black Tie Dinner reported on Volunteers, Inc.'s 2010 tax returns, and she's nearing the \$150,000-in-fundraising-fees pinnacle.

Beyond the \$260,788 spent in 2010 just to throw this fundraising party, including Ms. Lyon's fee, Volunteers, Inc.'s tax return for 2010 shows that it also awarded a \$108,529 "grant" to Louise Renne's Laguna Honda Foundation. Before the Black Tie event, Supervisor Elsbernd tried to push off on party goers that the June 2010 Gala event would benefit Laguna Honda Volnteers, Inc., apparently exclusively, even though Melanie Beene, CEO of Community Initiatives (the fiscal sponsor for Renne's Foundation) had indicated that

there may have been a pre-event revenue-sharing agreement in place with Renne's Foundation.

The purpose of the 2010 Volunteers, Inc. "grant" awarded to Renne's Foundation is reported to be to "support the new Laguna Honda Hospital building and other hospital patient services," but that is not the primary exempt purpose for which Ms. Renne's Foundation had been formed. When she applied for non-profit status, Ms. Renne told the IRS she would raise \$15,000,000 for furniture, fixtures and equipment for LHH's new digs (which she never did, and which appears to being funded by taxpayers through the General Fund and perhaps "Certificates of Participation"), and to raise funds for long-term care research. There was never any mention that Renne's Foundation would be involved in providing services to hospital patients, or in supporting the hospital's new buildings.

Unfortunately, Volunteers, Inc.'s tax return does not reveal whether Renne's separate Foundation received not only the \$108,529 grant, but perhaps also received a portion of the Black Tie event's proceeds in addition, since Ms. Beene had indicated Renne's Foundation was on track to share donations to the event.

In stark contrast, Volunteers, Inc. donated just \$48,743 in cash grants in 2010 to Laguna Honda Hospital to make resident outings possible, spending about half for resident outings than it paid to Nichelle Lyons for "fundraising." Another way of looking at this is that Volunteers, Inc. also spent over twice as much on a grant to Louise Renne's Foundation — for

Cont. p. 15

BUSINESS CORNER by Mitch Bull

"Resizing" Your Home? - Meet Paula Bailey...

As many of us are now "empty-nesters" with the kids launched into their own lives, there comes a time when we look at the family home and wonder, would it be easier to take care of something that is a little smaller? Or, are you starting out with a growing family where you could use more space as the kids are growing? Whatever your reason for change, a call to Coldwell Banker realtor Paula Bailey may be in order as she is someone who specializes in "resizing."

A native San Franciscan with over 20 years of banking and financial expertise, Bailey brings a comprehensive and professional background to the real estate transaction. A former lender, she knows what it takes to get through the current banking labyrinth of paperwork and processes. In her words, "I am a One-stop Realtor for Resizing, both up or down. With my financial experience and comprehensive approach to real estate I strive to help every client in a courteous and professional manner." Working with a team of professionals, Bailey knows full well that buying or selling a home is a very personal matter and in many cases success is tied to the trust that both agent and client establish during the business relationship.

If "resizing" is on you horizon, take the time to give Paula a call at 415.812.2257, or email her at: paula.bailey@cbnocal.com. Her website is at: www.mypropertysf.com.



Infrared Sauna Comes to West Portal at Dimitra's

Most of us are familiar with the process of how a "sauna" works. In an enclosed wooden structure, water is heated into steam by either pouring it over a heating element. The steam and high temperature of a wet sauna is used to draw toxins and oils out of the body through our ability to sweat. A "dry sauna" works in the same manner only using very hot dry air instead of steam.

A new type of heating process using infrared light has been developed and has resulted in a completely new kind of sauna experience. This new technology is now on West Portal Avenue at Dimitra's Medi Spa. The sauna, manufactured by the corporation Sunlighten, uses the near, mid and far spectrums of infrared light to provide a much more effective method of detoxification, skin rejuvenation, relaxation and muscle therapy than other traditional saunas. In fact, the patented solocarbon-heating element has been proven to be over 7 times more effective than a traditional sauna for heating the body core, which is necessary for detoxification.

The company is dedicated to health restoration and stress that in their stated company purpose, "to perpetuate the shift away from disease treatment and towards disease prevention."

Give the friendly staff at Dimitra's a call to book some time in the new sauna and experience what the infrared revolution is all about.

Dimitra's Medi-Spa is located at 324 West Portal Avenue. For more information visit their website at: sfhealthypets.com, or call them at 415.742.5961.

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47 Cityveiw Way Tastefully remodeled 2BR/1BA home. Living room with fireplace, kitchen with stainless appliances, bathroom with new tiles. Unfinished basement.
\$715,000



8 Dellbrook Avenue Modern 2BR/1BA home with great open floor plan, remodeled chef's kitchen, skylights, 2 car garage, garden. Located on large wooded lot.
\$675,000

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AROUND THE TOWN
COMINGS AND GOINGS • By Mitch Bull

The City is amazing in the number restaurants available for all of us, as well as the regeneration of the spaces. No sooner than one closes, a sign goes up extolling the “grand opening” of another. The regeneration of restaurant spaces seems to be never-ending, yet with few exceptions when a landmark closes, the name joins the ledger of the places we used to go to... The Gold Spike, Granada Café, Ernie’s, Paoli’s, the Chuck Wagon, the Blue Fox, Moose’s, Washington Square Bar and Grill, and Old Krakow are now just places in history, joining the Red Chimney, Clown Alley, Doggie Diner and the Carousel. How about Julius’ Castle? I saw the familiar façade staring down from high in the hills, wondering if it will ever reopen?

SF has a rich and varied history of culinary delights and with Valentine’s Day approaching and we look for that “special place” for a romantic dinner, we invariably remember the “ledger” of places that used to be while trying to decide on one that has reservations available for February 14th. Fortunately, we have many on the Westside from which to pick. Staying “local” helps our merchants, and helps to ensure that more of our favorites don’t become new names on that infamous “ledger.”

In this issue if the *Observer*, we devote a good amount of space to the subject of redistricting. Reformulated every 10 years to correspond with the census, the process works to balance out the number of residents in each of the city political districts. As the South of Market area has witnessed a dramatic increase in residents over the

past 10 years, the result is that other District lines have to be redrawn to balance out the number of inhabitants. Districts 4, 7 and 11 could be changed dramatically, with the possibility of neighborhoods being shifted from one district into another. The SF Redistricting Committee is soliciting feedback and input through scheduled meetings and presentations. All of the neighborhood groups and improvement associations should encourage their members to attend the meetings and make their preferences known to the committee members.

With new bond measures being prepared by the Park and Recreation department targeting local neighborhood park renovations, it is more important than ever to give them feedback and input so the decisions that are made accurately represent the views of a majority of the citizens in the neighborhoods affected.

Every voice counts when selecting which parks to renovate and the Park and Recreation folks cannot work in a vacuum. Attend a planning session and make your priorities known on where you want the bond money to be spent. Now is a great time to volunteer and get involved

Do you have an interesting story, idea, or some insights you’d like to get in the paper? Just drop it to us in the mail, or email me at: mitch@WestsideObserver.com. Be sure to check out the *Observer* online at www.WestsideObserver.com, or on Facebook and Twitter.

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EVERY • SUNDAY FARMERS MARKET

Farmers Market | Every Sun | 9 am–1pm | Stonestown: at Stonestown Galleria (19th Avenue @ Winston)

EVERY • TUESDAY NIGHT AT QUE SYRAH

Happy Hour Every Tues | 4–8 pm | Que Syrah. Take \$1 off each glass, 10% off of each bottle of wine consumed at the store.

EVERY • THU & FRI NIGHT AT QUE SYRAH

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230 West Portal Avenue 731.7000

EVERY • THURSDAY–BALLROOM DANCING

Social Ballroom Dance classes for couples - 6 lessons for \$70. per couple. Forest Hill Christian Church, 250 Laguna Honda Blvd. 661-2746.

EVERY • THURSDAY–NIGHTLIFE

6 pm–10 pm | Every Thur night, the Academy of Sciences is transformed into a lively venue filled with music, provocative science, mingling, and cocktails. GG Park/Tickets \$12 (\$10 members). calacademy.org/nightlife.

EVERY • FRIDAY NIGHT

Friday Night Jazz Fri | 7–11 pm | Cliff House, Balcony Lounge – 1 Seal Rock. Performances: www.cliffhouse.com/home/jazz.html

EVERY • FRIDAY NIGHT AT THE DEYOUNG

5–8:45 pm | Live music, poetry, films, dance, tours, and lectures. Cafe: special dinner, no-host bar. Art-making for children and adults. de Young Museum, GG Park. www.deyoung.famsf.org/deyoung/calendar/category/89

THU • ARTIST CARA GOLDSTEIN

Sat Feb 4 | 11 am–2 pm | Artist Cara Goldstein will teach a series of Art & writing classes beginning with Poetry and Portraits (\$125). Other classes (all at 11am):
Perspective Drawing: Sat Feb 11 (\$125)
Surrealist Drawing: Sat Feb 11 (\$125)
Creat a Comic Book: Sat Feb 11 (\$75)
BookShop West Portal, 80 West Portal.

TUE • MERCED PRE-SCHOOL STORYTIME

Tue Feb 5 | 10 am–12 pm | Pre-school storytime (Ages birth-5). Events start at

4 pm. Merced Branch Library, 155 Winston Dr. 355-2825.

TUE • FREE DAY CONSERVATORY OF FLOWERS

Tue Feb 7 | 9 am–4:30 pm | First Tuesday of each month is free at the Conservatory of Flowers, Special Exhibit fees, if any still apply. JFK Dr. Golden Gate Park.

TUE • PARKSIDE PRE-SCHOOL FILMS

Tue Feb 7 | 10 am & 11 am | Pre-school films (Ages 3-5). Events start at 10am and 11am. Parkside Branch Library 1200 Taraval St. 355-5770.

TUE • GREATER WEST PORTAL-GWPNA

Tue Feb 7 | 7:30 pm | West Portal Playground Clubhouse, 139 Lenox Way. We welcome new members at any time who are interested in the vibrant life of this community in the “Western Heart” of San Francisco. gwpna.org

TUE • MAKE A FOIL VALENTINE

Tue Feb 8 | 3:30 pm - 5 pm | Use printing foils and recycled materials to create a striking Valentine for mom, dad, or friend. 5 and older. Parkside Branch Library 1200 Taraval St. 355-5770.

WED • 37 AVE SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Wed Feb 8 | 7 pm | 2nd Wed each month. Meet your neighbors, discuss ongoing neighborhood concerns. Sunset Ministry, 3010 Noriega St. at 37th Ave. Art 452-7804/Art.Tom@cbnocal.com.

THU • PHOTOGRAPHER JOSIE ISELIN

Thu Feb 9 | 7 pm | Photographer and installation artist Josie Iselin will discuss *Sea Glass Hearts*, a companion volume to her popular book *Heart Stones*. BookShop West Portal, 80 West Portal. 564-8080

THU • SUNSET DIST COALITION MEETING

Thu Dec 9 | 7 pm–9 pm | Meets 2nd Thu each month. Info or to be added to the agenda please call Susan at 415.586.8103 or ssuval@sbcglobal.net Taraval Police Station, 2345 24th Ave.

NOIR CITY CELEBRATION

Crowds At West Portal Station Head for Noir City

By Jonathan Farrell

10 days of film noir immersed the Castro Theater as the Noir City film festival celebrated its 10th anniversary.

The L-Taraval, M Oceanview and the K Ingleside trolley lines going through West Portal Station were perhaps the best way to arrive to the festival. Despite the rain storm that arrived as forecast on Jan. 20, “the festival had a fantastic sold-out crowd for opening night,” said local film enthusiast and writer Tom Mayer. “Eddie Muller, Noir City founder, was in fine form, cracking jokes — the audience was vocal in their appreciation of “Dark Passage” and “House on Telegraph Hill.”

Devoted Noir City fans like Morgan Von Rueden and Jenifer Strickland were not going to take any chances with the rain, “we rented a car for the evening,” said Von Rueden. He was glad they did, because seats were filled and arriving early was a must. Von Rueden noted that the audience was most excited about the 1951 movie “House on Telegraph Hill.”

“That movie was filmed on location in San Francisco and is filled with recognizable scenes,” he said. “‘Dark Passage’ with Bogie and Bacall we have seen so many times, but the second feature opening night, ‘House on Telegraph Hill,’ I had not seen and, like the rest of the audience I was enthralled to see so much of the City as it was back then,” said Von Rueden.

Directed by “The Sound of Music” director Robert Wise, “House on Telegraph Hill” is a suspense thriller, starring Richard Basehart and Valentina Cortese, in which a survivor of WWII in Nazi occupied Europe takes on the identity of a fellow internee who did not survive. In assuming the identity, Cortese finds herself in a new life in a mansion in San Francisco. Yet, behind the charm and the fine living set amid Telegraph Hill, an intriguing plot of greed, avarice and murder surrounds her.

Cortese was schedule to appear for an interview with Muller. But now at age 90, traveling is not easy for her and so Cortese sent a letter to be read to the audience.

On Saturday Jan. 21 following opening night of the festival, legendary TV and film star Angie Dickinson graced the Castro Theater stage for a live interview with Muller. On that night it was a double feature of Angie Dickinson films for the Noir City Festival. “The Killers” and “Point Blank,” which was filmed on Alcatraz, were both in color. Which for film noir is rare. Yet, the spirit of film noir is in these films and Dickinson shines in these classic cinema creations.

It was a memorable evening as the full house audience that night cheered and gave Dickinson a standing ovation. She was thrilled and honored. She talked with Muller about her career saying that she considered herself “very lucky.” As Dickinson explained, she was born and raised in North Dakota and her life was pretty much prescribed to get married and be a housewife. Yet, when her parents moved to Burbank, California to find better opportunities during the Great Depression, Dickinson sensed there was more to life than being a teacher, nurse or secretary.

“Those were the only roles, women back then did not have careers,” she said. Dickinson was working as a secretary when she entered a local beauty contest in Southern California. That in turn opened doors and she found her new path as an actress “accidentally.” But as she reiterated, she was very lucky. She thanked everyone for enjoying her work and for having such love for classic films and film noir.

Jonathan Farrell is a San Francisco free-lance writer. For more info about Noir City visit: <http://www.noircity.com/>



Creative STATE

Events • Performances • Exhibitions



Morrison Artists Series

Chanticleer

“Breathtaking” — Boston Globe
Concert, Feb 19, 3pm, Master class, Feb 15, 11am, Admission Free

Dance Performance

University Dance Theater

Featuring guest choreographer, ODC's Kimi Okada.
March 1-3, 8pm, McKenna Theatre, Tickets—creativearts.sfsu.edu

Morrison Artists Series

Parker Quartet

“Something extraordinary” — The New York Times
Concert, March 4, 3pm, Master class, March 5, noon, Admission Free

A Word for Word Production from the Z Space Studio

Sorry Fugu

Written by T.C. Boyle, directed by John Fisher
March 6, 7:30pm, McKenna Theatre, Tickets—creativearts.sfsu.edu

Written by Jose Rivera, directed by Roy Conboy

References to Salvador Dali
Make Me Hot

Husband and wife fight, make love and fall on grenades.
March 8-17, Little Theatre, Tickets—creativearts.sfsu.edu

The Morrison Chamber Music Center is funded in part by a generous gift from the May Treat Morrison Chamber Music Foundation. Concerts are admission-free in SF State's McKenna Theatre with a talk one hour prior to performances.

WED • FREE DAY ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

Wed Feb 15 | 9:30 am–4 pm | 3rd Weds are free on a first come, first served basis, and early arrival is recommended. Final entry on free days is 4pm. Music Concourse, Golden Gate Park.

THU • AUTHOR LISA SEE

Thu Feb 16 | 7 pm | Reading from *Dreams of Joy* the New York Times bestselling author returns to the story of sisters Pearl and May from *Shanghai Girls*, and Pearl's strong-willed 19-year-old daughter, who runs away to Shanghai in 1957 to find her birth father - the artist Z.G. Li. BookShop West Portal, 80 West Portal. 564-8080

MON • SUNSET-PARKSIDE MEETING

Mon Feb 20 | 6 pm | SPEAK aims to educate Sunset/Parkside residents on public safety, zoning, planning etc. 3201 Ulloa St. (Grace Lutheran) 3rd Mon each month. speaksanfrancisco@yahoo.com

TUE • COMMUNITY SAFETY MEETING

Tue Feb 21 | 7 pm | Taraval District Police 3rd Tue of the month. Taraval Police Station Community Room, 2345 24th St. at Taraval St. 759-3100.

WED • MERCED ARTS & CULTURE SALON

Wed Feb 22 | 7 pm | All Indians Do Not Live in Teepees or Casinos. Join SF author

Cathy Robbins discussing *All Indians Do Not Live in Teepees or Casinos*. Her book, which is about contemporary Native life, introduces vibrant artists, imaginative scientists, bold doctors, assertive lawyers, leaders and ordinary people living on a continuum that folds the past into the present and future. At this salon, Cathy would like to hear stories from American Indians; tell us about your experiences. For everyone else, she'd like to hear what you know about American Indians, especially those who live in the Bay Area. A book sale follows. Merced Branch Library, 155 Winston Dr. 355-2825.

MON • CENTRAL COUNCIL MEETING

Feb 27 | 7:30 pm | West of Twin Peaks Central Council | A resource for neighborhood organizations. 4th Monday each month. Forest Hill Clubhouse, 381 Magellan.

THU • TARAVAL-PARKSIDE MERCHANTS

Thu Mar 1 | 7:30 pm | Meet up with your fellow merchants of Taraval St. and Parkside Taraval Station 2345 24th Ave. YumiSam@allstate.com

Got a local event? Preference given to Westside events. editor@westsideobserver.com

AT THE THEATER • By Dr Annette Lust and Flora Lynn Isaacson**GHOST LIGHT: THE SEARCH FOR A FATHER**

Tony Taccone's Ghost Light, co-produced with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival where it was first performed and directed by Jonathan Moscone, is currently playing on the Thrust Stage of the Berkeley Rep Theatre. In the play we first meet Moscone's young son (Tyler James Myers) hearing the news of the assassination of his father, Mayor George Moscone, and Supervisor Harvey Milk in 1978 by former supervisor Dan White, whom Moscone refused to reappoint as supervisor. We attend Moscone's wake, among other introductory scenes that leave the spectator grappling for their meaning. Later, in a poignant scene, Jonathan is a young drama teacher (Christopher Liam Moore) directing a ghost scene between Hamlet and his father, who asks his son to revenge his foul death. Until we reach such scenes of the son's dramatic struggle with directing in the first half of the piece, the dramatic action wanders.

The second half of the play offers more intimate two-character scenes about Jon's constant quest to see his father that move the action forward psychologically and dramatically. In one such scene the stage director son confides in his confidante (Robynn Rodriguez) about his despair over his parental loss.

This last half is lightened by Taccone's sharp humor: such songs as "I left my heart in San Francisco," and the final scene in which Moscone ghost dances with his son.

To gain dramatic intensity, this fictionalized version of a historical incident needs to be trimmed in the first half in which overwritten scenes cripple the dramatic thread.

Although Christopher Liam Moore may at first not appear to be physically suited to the role of Jonathan Moscone, his excellent emotional and technical interpretation soon win over his audience. The remaining cast members offer polished creations of their characterizations.

Ghost Light is a fine tribute to the memory of Mayor Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk that is especially endearing to Bay Area audiences, brought to us through Tony Taccone's writing, Jonathon Moscone's direction, and the cast's creative interpretations.

Ghost Light plays through Feb. 19th. For information call (510) 647-2949 or click on BerkeleyRep.org. Annette Lust



Dr. Annette Lust



Flora Lynn Isaacson

WORD FOR WORD'S FOOD STORIES BROUGHT TO LIFE AT ZEE SPACE

With still more physicality, dance, mime, and even a bit of clowning to animate their stories, this season Word for Word presents the scintillating food stories Sorry Fugu by T.C. Boyle and Enough by Alice McDermott, adapted and directed by John Fisher at the San Francisco Zee Space

Sorry Fugu is staged as a farce that takes place in L.A in the 1980s and centers around chef Albert D'Angelo (Soren Oliver), the owner of a small restaurant who feels chastised by a female food critic who gives his cuisine a thumbs down in two reviews. He fears a third bad review that will ruin his restaurateur reputation. When Albert sees a photo of the critic (Molly Benson) he falls in love with her and concocts a plan to entice her into adoring his food. When she arrives, he forces the critic into his kitchen where he lovingly feeds her spoon full after spoon full of special dishes, a food tasting experience to which she gradually succumbs. The dramatic action ends in a lively dance with everyone cheering Albert's victory as a local chef.

Alice McDermott's Enough depicts the young daughter of a 1930s family licking the ice cream on the Sunday dinner plates she removes from the table. In a following scene she sits on the couch center stage cuddling up to boys her age when her parents or sisters and brothers are not around. The couch continues throughout the play to depict pleasures, from the young girl (Delia MacDougall) to the older woman (Patricia Silver).

McDermott's play reveals the gourmand and sensual cravings in each of us, who never get enough of these delights.

The actors in Word for Word succeed in faithfully interpreting the author's text as they enliven it physically and emotionally. The spectator becomes engaged in the dramatic action without being aware of the actors' recitation of the literary text. Objects and props are also personified through the physical movements of the actors.

Word for Word offers a highly animated physicalization of two stories that are transformed into mesmerizing dramatic stage material.

Food Stories runs through Feb. 3rd. For info about Food Stories or forthcoming Word for Word productions visit www.brownpapertickets.com or call 800-08383-3006 or visit www.zspace.org. Annette Lust

Attention Theatre Goers. Look for Annette Lust's "*Bringing the Body to the Stage and Screen*" just published by Scarecrow Press. See a description of the book and production photos on line WWW.AnnetteLust.com

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER—AN 18TH CENTURY COMEDY OF MANNERS AT RVP

Written by Oliver Goldsmith, She Stoops to Conquer was first performed in London in 1773 and is one of the few plays from the 18th century still regularly performed.

In the play, set in an English village in 1765, Mr. Hardcastle (Alex Ross) wants his daughter, Kate (Jocelyn Roddie) to meet and marry the wealthy Charles Marlow (Sean Mirkovich), but Marlow gets nervous around upper-class women so Kate needs to pretend to be "common" and "stoops to conquer" by pretending to be a barmaid.

British-born Director Judy Holmes breaks the fourth wall and makes the most of the asides the characters have with the audience.

Alex Ross as Mr. Hardcastle gives a great performance and is the glue holding the play together. Jocelyn Roddie as Kate has a wonderful sense of timing and is excellent in her alter-ego, the bar-maid. Sean Mirkovich as Marlow is able to switch confidently from stammering shyness of women of his social class to lascivious lothario with the barmaid. Maureen O'Donoghue is delightful as the fashion seeker who easily succumbs to flattery. Kushi Beauchamp as Constance and Adam Roy as Hastings make a sincere eloping couple. As Tony Lumpkin, Josh Garcia-Cotter has captured the oafishness of his character.

Set Designer Ken Rowland has created the perfect English country manor and Michael A. Berg's costumes are authentic and elegant.

She Stoops to Conquer is a wonderful play and excellently directed by Judy Holmes in the perfect style of an 18th century Comedy of Manners. She Stoops to Conquer plays through February 19, 2012. For reservations, call 415-456-9555, extension 1 or go to: www.rossvalleyplayers.com

Coming up next at Ross Valley Players will be 20th Century by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur, adapted by Ken Ludwig and directed by Billie Cox from March 23-April 22, 2012. Flora Lynn Isaacson

Now At the Movies • By Don Lee Miller**THE ARTIST**

Major silent film star George Valentine: Jean Dujardin accidentally meets dancer Peppy Miller: Bernice Bejo, puts her in a small part in his film and the press creates a romance that causes his jealous wife, Doris: Penelope Ann Miller, to divorce him. The characters are as winning as the movie terrier Uggie, who looks like he bounced out of a Thin Man movie. There is an element of the Star Is Born story. You even forget that it's a silent film; this is a remarkable tribute to classic Hollywood. Dujardin charms with laughs and tears and tap dances like Fred Astaire with Bejo as his Ginger. James Cromwell portrays Clifton, the chauffeur: John Goodman is Al, the explosive studio head. Directed/co-written by Frenchman Michel Hazanavicius, this is his first American film. Received the highest score from U.S. film critics: 97% loved it.

Awards: 10 Oscar nominations: Picture, Actor: Dujardin, Supporting Actress: Bejo, Director & Orig. Scrn.: Hazanavicius, Orig. Score, Art Dir., Cinematography, Costume Design. Golden Globes: won Best Comedy-Musical, Actor, Orig. Score, Nom.: Sup. Actress: Bejo; Dir.,

Cannes Film Festival: Best Film, Actor.

EXTREMELY LOUD & INCREDIBLY CLOSE

When Oskar Schell: Thomas Horn hears his dad, Thomas Schell: Tom Hanks, calling from the Twin Towers on the morning of 9-11, he freezes up and can't answer the phone. The cast is rounded out by his mom Linda: Sandra Bullock, Grandmother: Zoe Caldwell, Stan the Doorman: John Goodman, and The Renter: Max von Sydow. When Oskar finds a key in his dad's effects, his search through the NYC boroughs leads him to Abby Black: Viola Davis and, eventually to her husband, Wm. Black: Jeffrey Wright. Director Stephen Daldry with the writers: Eric Roth (scrn.) and J.S. Foer (book) supply a three-handkerchief movie that is well worth seeing.

Films about Sept. 11 are still hard to stomach, even this many years after the tragedy.

Awards: Academy Awards: Nom. Best Picture, Sup. Actor: Max von Sydow,

HUGO

There is a surprise in Ben Kingsley's history that I won't spoil here. This film has more charm than any I can recall any other movie having had for many years. The color of the 1930's Paris sets are spectacular, constantly amazing while the story is totally unique and pays tribute to the beginnings of the film industry with a magical touch called Scorsese. Both youths, Hugo: Asa Butterfield and Isabelle: Chloë Grace Moritz, add character to the film. Ray Winstone plays Hugo's Uncle Claude who tends the clocks in a Paris train station where they live. Other cast members include: the humorous wooden-leg Station Inspector: Sasha Baron Cohen, Lisette: Emily Mortimer, and Mr. Labisse: Christopher Lee. Director Martin Scorsese picks up his seventh Oscar nomination, winning in 2007 for The Departed. John Logan wrote his exceptional screenplay from Brian Selznick's book.

Awards: 11 Oscar nominations: Picture, Dir.: Scorsese, Screenplay, Costume Design, Visual Effects, Art Dir. Golden Globes: won Best Dir. Nom.: Best Score, and Cine.

THE IRON LADY

The chronicles of Margaret Taylor, a young Conservative political candidate who marries Denis Thatcher, provide an insight into British politics. Meryl Streep may be hard to beat in the Best Actress Oscar race as she ages from the powerful first female Cabinet Minister (1979-90) to her 80s with dementia, still chatting with her dead husband—all with the voice, posture and helmet hairdo of Thatcher. The Academy would love to give her another Award to prove her equal to Katharine Hepburn who won four Oscars. My personal disappointments were with the constant shifting of timeframes between her memories, and that husband Thatcher: Jim Broadbent didn't receive a supporting nod for his devoted portrayal that brought tears. Phyllidia Lloyd directs the shallow screenplay by Abi Morgan. Mild profanity.

Awards: Oscar noms.: Best Actress: Streep, Makeup. Golden Globes: won Best Actress-Drama: Streep.

TINKER TAILOR SOLDIER SPY

During the Cold War between Britain and Russia, espionage veteran George Smiley: Gary Oldman returns from semi-retirement to take charge of finding the mole who provides secrets to the Communist MI6. He has George's simplicity down pat. The suspects are numerous: Control: John Hurt, Bill: Colin Firth, Jim: Mark Strong, Percy: Toby Jones, Roy: Ciarán Hinds and Ricki: Tom Hardy. The bodies pile up as the search continues. This thriller keeps you on the edge of your seat. Fans of the le Carré mysteries who have been waiting for this espionage caper to hit the big screen will not be disappointed. Directed by Tomas Alfredson with mostly nighttime photography, the screenplay is by Bridgit O'Connor and Peter Straughan and based on John le Carré's best seller. Profanity. Violence.

Awards: Oscar nom.: Best Actor: Gary Oldman.

THE WAR HORSE

Spielberg starts the film in a National Velvet vein, always following the horse, Joey, as the central character. The people he meets are almost peripheral. None are with him throughout the story of his upbringing and going into WWI with a young British officer, Capt. Nicholls: Tom Hiddleston, who swears to the lad, Albert: Jeremy Irvine, who raised him that he will take care of him. He even sketches a picture of Joey and plans to send it before being called into battle. Albert's parents, Rose: Emily Watson and Ted: Peter Mullan, hate to sell him to the cavalry. Later, there's the Dutchman: Niels Arstrup and his granddaughter, Emilie, Celine Buckens, who also love the horse. Warning: Joey gets tangled up in barbed wire on the battlefield which brings a moment of peace between the British and the Germans. Lee Hall and Richard Curtis based their screenplay on Michael Morpurgo's novel. Composer John Williams now has 47 Oscar nominations, with three of his five wins for Spielberg films.

Awards: 6 Oscar nominations: Pic., Art Dir., Cine., Score, Sound Editing, Sound Mixing. Golden Globes: Nom. Best Drama, Score. Profanity. War violence.

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Real Travel By Sergio Nibbi

Tiny Bubbles

Two ships, five days at sea and a tad under 2,400 miles to paradise. It was 1960 and Matson Lines had a pair of cruise ships plying the Pacific Ocean to Honolulu every five days. At the midpoint of each cruise the celebrating began with horns blaring, lights flashing and more than an occasional cocktail enjoyed on deck as the two ships passed in the night. The Lurline and the Matsonia were the stars of Matson's cruise business and were affectionately known as "the white ships," world class luxury liners at that time but certainly not the behemoths of today's cruising scene.

It was also 1960 when Karen and I got married and became another honeymooning couple on the Matsonia, the sister ship of the Lurline. Somehow the Lurline's name had more charm and recognition but our schedule put us on the lesser know sister. Today's security was nonexistent as was concern for the environment. Guests came aboard, enjoyed the pre-cruise parties, walked all around and most left when the ship's horn sounded. Most, except for a few that imbibed a bit too much and were eventually escorted back to the terminal after a free ride on the pilot boat once the ship was safely on its way past the Golden

Gate as it chased the setting sun. Before the lines were loosened and the ship slowly edged its way towards the bay, the paper streamers were tossed overboard until the ship was draped in a basket weave of multicolored bands eventually landing in the bay waters. Were they biodegradable? Not in those days! As landlubbers, cruising was new to us as we discovered the true meaning of "mal de mer" as we made our way past the infamous potato patch on our way to open water. We were soon reminded of our wedding vows just a few days earlier "for better or for worse."

The next day the sun shined brightly as we enjoyed the picnics on deck, the lovely dinners, meeting new people and actually sitting at the captain's table to celebrate the start of our new life together. Not exactly occupying the owner's suite, we were relegated to an inside room where our first duty every morning was to call the front desk and find out what the weather was that day. Clear and sunny, as we enjoyed the chaise lounges surrounding the fresh water pool.

At exactly 10:00 am on the 5th day, the ship was warmly welcomed as it tied up at the Aloha Tower in downtown Honolulu, but not before watching the young Hawaiian kids diving for coins in the warm waters as we inched our way to the terminal. We were greeted by the obvious Hawaiian music and the complementary flower leis. By 5:00 pm that evening we watched our ship making its way past Waikiki on the way back to the Bay Area. Another crossing, another mid-way celebration.

On a friend's recommendation, we stayed at the Reef Hotel on Waikiki where for \$16.00 a day we had a top floor, ocean front room with a veranda, and swinging porch chair to enjoy the amazing view. A tour of the island in a rented Fiat convertible gave us a start on our Hawaiian tan. In a few days I encountered another first for me, my first airplane ride. A dear friend and fellow schoolteacher of Karen's was getting married at her home on Kauai. I still cherish the photo of the Hawaiian Air Lines, two engine prop plane that took me on my maiden voyage.

After a few days it was back to Honolulu for a few more golden rays of sunshine and then back home. One of the highlights of our trip was



Aloha Tower watching Don Ho singing "Tiny Bubbles" at the Beachcomber Hotel.

At the time it was not uncommon to cruise over and fly back and so, with another first for both of us; we made our way to the airport, if you could call it that, and boarded a Pan Am Boeing 707 for the five hour ride back to SFO. The jets were fairly new at the time, having replaced the Pan Am Stratocruisers that lumbered across the Pacific in a record setting 10 hours.

In the ensuing years Matson continued its Pacific crossings as Pan Am expanded its international flights. As it happened, we made a return trip in 1969, once again boarding in San Francisco and arriving at exactly 10:00 am at the Aloha Tower. On this second trip we were on the Lurline, but ironically, the old Mariposa had now been renamed "Lurline" so we finally got our wish. The excitement of the trip was still there, but not as exciting as our three children that had enriched our lives in the previous nine years. Matson went out of the cruise business, Pan Am went broke, but thankfully we're still here to talk about it. Aloha and Mahalo.



Kids diving for money



Lunch on the ship

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Weekends beginning February 24 until mid-April 2012
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A multiple-day shutdown of the N Line is scheduled to start at 8 p.m. on Friday, May 25 and ending at 5 a.m. on Monday, June 4

Construction is part of the ongoing Church & Duboce Track and Street Improvement Project and the Carl Street Rail Replacement projects which will continue until early 2013 and require multiple rail service shutdowns and substitute shuttle bus service on the N Judah Metro Line.

For project details and updates visit: www.sfmta.com/carl or www.sfmta.com/duboce or contact 311

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SHARON THE HEALTH / By Sharon Caren



Help for Seniors to Pay for Long Term Health Care

As the clock struck midnight 2012, almost 4 million Baby Boomers will have turned 65. I wonder how many of these folks have invested in Long Term Care Insurance Policies? Personally, I haven't yet!

Many senior citizens are struggling to pay up to \$6,000.00 per month for Assisted Living or Home Health Care. In addition, many have Life Insurance premiums costing an additional 5 to 6 thousand dollars annually. When faced with having to choose to pay one or the other, paying the cost of Long Term Care is not an option. It has to be done. So many people let their valuable life insurance policies, sometimes worth in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, lapse and eventually receive nothing, or next to nothing. This is a problem throughout our nation.



This is the first time in U.S. history that a law has been passed to require insurance agents to explain the fact that Life insurance policies may be converted into a vehicle to cover Long Term Care."

In response, in November of 2010, the National Council of Insurance Legislators (NCOIL) unanimously passed the Life Insurance Consumer Disclosure Model Act Law. This law requires an Insurance Company to notify the Consumer that their Life Insurance Policy can now be converted into payments for Long Term Care.

This is the first time in U.S. history that a law has been passed to require insurance agents to explain the fact that Life insurance policies may be converted into a vehicle to cover Long Term Care.

- Now we have an alternative to:
1. Lapsing life insurance policies and getting nothing
 2. Selling the family home to cover Long Term Care costs
 3. Children paying the care costs for parents
 4. Spending life savings to fund Long Term Care

To give a bit of background, this law passed in 2011 after Congressman Robert Damron, Democrat, KY, worked to move this forward for 6 years.

Congressman Damron, President of NCOIL, held a panel discussion to get the word out about this wonderful new consumer benefit at the Senior Market Advisor EXPO last August 25th in Las Vegas. A local Long Term Care Consultant of 30 years, David Kitaen CLTC, of Marin County, was asked to be on the panel as he was the first LTC Broker in the US to actually facilitate the Life Insurance Policy Conversion for one of his clients, a senior, living in Napa, CA.

Chris Orestis, a prominent figure in National Long Term Care Legislation, and Jayne Sallerson, of Emeritus Senior Living, one of the largest Long Term Care providers in the US, were also on the panel which discussed how this type of insurance conversion can help the growing group facing increasing costs for Senior Care and Housing.

The important conditions to make the Conversion are:

1. Must be 65 years or older
2. Must be receiving care at home or in a facility
3. Must have an "in force" Life Insurance Policy, not lapsed
4. Anywhere in US

When converted, the money is paid directly to the Health Care Provider.

To get started, contact a professional in the insurance industry to determine if you meet the requirements to qualify. The afore-mentioned expert, David Kitaen CLTC, may be contacted at 415.382.1300 with questions or to arrange a free consultation. His website also offers lots of valuable information about Long Term Care: www.davidkitaen.com.

I'm excited to spread the word and I hope you'll pass along this information as well. The public "needs to know"! If you have any questions about this exciting development, contact me at 650.359.6579 or email caren@westsideobserver.com.

Blessings to you and your family for a happy and prosperous New Year.
Info: www.SharonTheHealth.com

Gala Party (Cont. from p. 9)

God only knows what purpose — than it spent for patient outings.

Between overhead for throwing the Black Tie Gala Dinner and the "grant" to Renne's Foundation, fully 66% of the Black Tie event's proceeds appear to have been spent on everything but patient amenities.

Although Volunteers, Inc. claims it spent \$409,240 on actual program services in 2010, \$108,531 is attributed to "Laguna Honda Hospital and Rehabilitation Center 'Promotions,'" a new category not previously reported and not defined, an amount just \$2 more than the \$108,529 reported as having been awarded to Renne's Foundation. Nobody has a clue yet what the "Promotions" category of spending is intended to fund, or how it is "Program Services" — or whether the "Promotions" spending was the same

funds given to Renne's Foundation.

Only 63.5% (\$409,240) of Volunteer, Inc.'s 2010 expenditures in 2010 were for actual program services (which may be inflated by the giving to Renne's Foundation). The remainder — 36.5% (\$235,228) — was spent on "management and general" and "fundraising," almost evenly split at 18% each. This is the first year that Volunteers, Inc.'s fundraising expenses reached 18.5% (\$119,148) of all expenditures.

Has Laguna Honda Hospital, and it's affiliate non-profit organizations, forgotten that Sunshine always trumps secrecy?

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.

Easier Parking Coming Soon to a Meter Near You?

The SF Municipal Transportation Agency is introducing the "PaybyPhone" parking meter payment service, initially starting in the Castro. Drivers will have the option of using their phones to pay for parking, receive text message reminders before their parking meters expire, add time remotely (subject to time limit restrictions), and receive receipts by email. The service charges a 45-cent convenience fee per transaction, and MTA hopes to reduce that charge as the program expands.

The MTA will also expand its credit card meters to more neighborhoods. Currently, Noe Valley has those meters, and they have been working well. The SFMTA now provides real-time parking availability and rate information for SFpark pilot areas via Androids, iPhones, SFpark.org, and a garage-only text message service. SFpark, a federally funded pilot project run by the SFMTA, uses new smart parking management technologies and pricing policies to



parking spaces reduces time spent looking for parking."

The SFMTA, also announced the release of its SFpark Android application, it can be downloaded at SFpark.org/Android. The iPhone app is available at SFpark.org/iPhone.

SFpark.org provides the ability to see parking availability and cost. The mapping tool on the home page shows location, high, low or medium availability and rate information for garages and on-street parking spaces within the pilot areas. Currently 13 of the 15 SFpark garages have data in the real-time feed.

The SFpark pilot covers 7,000 of San Francisco's 28,800 metered spaces and



make it easier and faster to park in San Francisco. Better management of parking will open streets and result in cleaner air, improved safety and faster Muni times.

"When customers can see where parking is available and how much it costs, they make better decisions about where and when to drive," said Edward D. Reiskin, SFMTA Director of Transportation. "Steering drivers to blocks with open

12,250 spaces in 15 of 20 SFMTA-managed parking garages. These garages and spaces are located in Civic Center, Hayes Valley, the Financial District, SoMa, the Mission, Fisherman's Wharf, the Fillmore and the Marina. The SFpark pilot is 80 percent funded by the United States Department of Transportation's Urban Partnership Program and will run until summer 2012.

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Remember When?



Admission Day at Glen Park. Sept. 17, 1898. Written on front: "With S. F. News Letter. September 17, 1898." "The Big Picnic at the Mission Park and Zoo on Sept. 9, 1898." • By permission SF History Center, SF Public Library.

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

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.

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

Phyllis' Findings / Phyllis Sherman

I've been watching the Republican debates with much interest... although I've never been a Republican and can't imagine ever voting Republican. Nevertheless I can't imagine why Newt Gingrich is trying to win. He and his Barbie Doll wife, Calista are up there. I guess hope springs eternal. He is so erratic, so much a bigot and liar and I haven't read anything that makes me think that he has a chance... so if he asked me, I'd suggest he drop out. However, he hasn't asked me. Mitt Romney will make it to the finals and while I think he's a better bet than Gingrich, I'm still an Obama supporter...like most of the rest of the country. So, RIP, Newt.

Another subject close to my heart is entertainment: theater, film and all other forms of mayhem. For starters, you'll enjoy HUMOR ABUSE, which is a one-man show featuring Lorenzo Pisoni, direct from New York. It concerns growing up as the smallest clown in the Bay Area's pioneering Pickle family Circus, and who doesn't like circus action? (Possibly even Newt?) The tall, attractive Pisoni tells us all about his fun family and in between regales us with pratfalls, juggling, balloon stunts and if you're seated in the front row, he might pick on you to join him onstage. Watching him fall head-first, backwards down a long staircase is a feat not-to-be tried by sedentary mortals. Not that I'd attempt it. The show is at the American Conservatory Theater through February 5th. If you don't make it in time, next coming to ACT is the world premiere of HIGHER by Carey Perloff and Mark Rucker. It's called a "gripping love story about two architects competing to build a memorial in Israel." HIGHER whisks us from sleek New York studios to the shores of the Sea of Galilee, as the architects confront their own pasts in a race to make their mark in history. Company member Rene Augn is featured in this thrilling new work. The show will continue until February 19th, 4-2228.

The San Francisco Playhouse is open with BECKY SHAW by Gina Gionfriddo, directed by Amy Glazer. The last show I saw at the Playhouse was an old Tennessee Williams show, PERIOD OF ADJUSTMENT which was quite absorbing. I haven't seen the new Becky Shaw play but the NY Times calls it "as engrossing as it is ferociously funny." The play asks what we owe the people we love the most and the strangers who land on our doorstep. It was a 2009 Pulitzer Prize finalist .677-9596

Another solo show that's very worthwhile is Marga Gomez in NOT GETTING ANY YOUNGER, in which Marga comes out about lying about her age and growing older. It's a hilarious 85-minute mix of childhood memory, social satire, confession and a laugh riot of characters. Playing through Feb. 25 at the Marsh on Valencia Street. 282-3055.

The Academy Awards are coming up and the silent film, THE ARTIST, will probably win. It's been written that someone requested their money back when they found out it was a silent film. Also in the running is THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO, which may win for best actress although not recommended for the squeamish among you.

For all you art lovers out there, opening February 18th at the Legion of Honor is THE CULT OF BEAUTY, THE VICTORIAN AVANT-GARDE 1860-1900, organized by the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco and the Victoria & Albert Museum, London in collaboration with the Musee d'Orsay, Paris. It will be running until June 17.

"My doctor told me to stop having intimate dinners for four unless there are three other people" - Orson Welles.

OPEN LATE

Have you come up with any baby names yet?

Not really.

How about Ester? Like grandma's name.

But grandma hated that name and had it changed.

I never liked it either.

By Julie Casson

BRAIN FÜD

In this teaser, you have to find the odd ones out in the groups of words. BUT WAIT! There's a catch. Each group of words has TWO words which do not belong. Can you find them both? EXAMPLE: Lily - Jane - Tulip - Rose

Jane does not belong as it's the only one which is not a flower. Tulip also does not belong because it's the only one which is not a girl's name.

You're on your own for the rest!

1. Dodge - Ford - Lincoln - Hoover

2. King - Earl - Knight - Bishop

3. Yellow - Green - Dead - Black

Answers on p. 17

SECOND THOUGHTS / By Jack Kaye



Does America Got Talent?

Nowadays some of the most popular T.V. shows are neither comedies nor dramas - they are “reality” T.V. shows. Among the most popular are American Idol and America’s Got Talent. Both shows audition thousands of American hopefuls who truly believe that they have a great talent. The judges on these programs reduce the thousands to about 48 or 24 and then ask the American public to judge the performers, and by their vote select and reject participants until only one remains.

Both shows originated in England (yes, I said England, not Great Britain or the U.K., but England!). Both use judges from England as well as a few Americans to see if America really has talent. And do we?

We watch the many pathetic souls who believe that their life’s salvation depends on some great talent, if only it could be discovered. Many have tragic stories to tell, almost competing to have the saddest. We watch them perform only to learn that there is absolutely no hope for their salvation, since their talent was only imagined. It’s like watching the characters from Midnight Cowboy competing, hoping for a miracle that never happens.

It soon becomes painfully obvious that barely a handful of the contestants have a talent of any real value. The choices are usually so obvious that the voting seems spot on. But then when the only really talented people remain, the top five or six, the voting becomes a popularity contest rather than one for talent. The clearly best singer or act might not win because of some personal characteristic that does not appeal to the masses. In American Idol it is usually because the talent seems too gay or too ethnic. The winner is usually the nice, white, Christian person with some real talent, just not the most. The most recent winner was an exception to the rule.

I look at our country and see a similar situation. We have nationwide, statewide and local talent contests every two, four and six years. In every race, there are more contenders than positions and so the audience (voters) must choose the one with the most talent for the elected office. Many of those running think that they have great talent that needs only to be discovered. Many think that they can lead their electorate by making wise decisions on their behalf. And we see it again now as the minority party tries to select a nominee to run against the President of the United States in the new reality show, “Does America Got A Talented Leader?”

There have been about nine people who formally announced their ambition to run for the highest office in the land. How many of them have any real talent for this competition?

There is the smartest of the group. He has a Phd. in something basic like history. He has white hair and used to be the Speaker of the House until his caucus told him to stop speaking for them and invited him to return to private life, suggesting the professorial route given his education. He chose the lobbyist/consultant route, given his apparent propensity for greed and gluttony. He had been doing the worst of the group putting his foot into his mouth each time it opened. He reminded us why he lost his government job 15 long years ago. We had almost forgotten how severe his hypocrisy really was. But he somehow stayed in the competition and by a process of elimination rose to the top of this unsightly heap, until people started to remember who he was and what he had done.

There is the one also exited from office and whose name means something unimaginably vile while his political opinions are almost worse. He would eliminate Social Security and Medicare. That would really do the trick. No doubt, this candidate is eligible for neither so why should anyone else be? He appeals to the Christian conservatives by being against homosexual lifestyles, abortion under any circumstance, gun control and raising taxes - their bread and butter issues.

Then there was the businessman who must have gotten lucky and made some money somehow. It was not with intellect — no thinking or analysis there. He got confused about what Libya was, came out with an absurd economic plan and then forgot about the settlements made to women who claimed he harassed them while he was carrying on a 13 year extra-marital affair which he confused with a friendship with benefits. He bowed out gracefully, or as gracefully as he could under the circumstances.

These three contestants would have been eliminated at their first audition if this were a talent show. That would leave six. Check them out.

The leader of this group has been on the show before. He was a contestant four years ago and was doing well until his policies came back to contradict him at every turn. People quickly saw him as a phony who would say anything to get a vote. His big pluses are that he is very rich and very good looking. But those are his only pluses. He is considered the odds on favorite for the party nod as long as his past and his tax returns don’t make him seem too unelectable.

The understudy, who was hoping to be there when numero uno falls, has a first name that seems to be an abbreviation of his character flaw — timidity. He could not help appearing desperately weak while being too nice to be saying all those terrible things about his opponents. He has since departed quietly from the stage, almost unnoticed. His best bet would be to change his name, strengthen his chin, grow a beard, die his hair white and run as an unknown, in Canada.

There is also a backup understudy who might even be related to the declared front runner. They are both rich and are both very handsome and they share the same religion. The understudy was more of an independent than a bone fide contestant in this talent show. He was there just in case the judging audience came to its senses, an unlikely scenario. They didn’t and wouldn’t so he also bade farewell, disappointing his handful of supporters who will continue to be related to him.

Then there are the next two. One can only wonder who persuaded them to consider running for an office they could never win or even spell. The two are very similar but not in good ways. They both claim to be evangelical, which means against gays, minorities, the poor, welfare, abortion, evolution and science. They both feel that G-d speaks to them and that they respond because they want to help G-d do His work. Neither has a clue about economics or foreign policy. Their mantra is identical — cut taxes and shrink the government to its minimal and let the kindness and wisdom of the free market system driven by the richest among us rule the day. The fact that this is the formula that almost bankrupted the country does not give them pause. And the fact that both have spent their entire professional lives working for the government also does not seem to faze them; it might actually strengthen their argument by making government employees look even worse. The more attractive of the two has already departed from the competition and the other is doing so as I write this, thus avoiding finishing last in South Carolina, behind TV host Stephen Colbert who is not even on the ballot.

At least with America’s Got Talent and American Idol, the five finalists have talent. In this case the only one among them with any talent is the one most neglected because he is such a libertarian. If he were on the talent shows he would lose because he isn’t the type to be popular even if he is the most talented. Could he ever be forgiven for raising the son who went on to become Kentucky’s junior senator and its senior crazy? Will he try to deny paternity retroactively at this late date? Would he really cut the annual deficit by one trillion dollars in his first year and close all 700-1000 foreign military bases?

I find it sad not only that this is all the talent the minority party can bring to such an

Cont. p. 18

Happy Birthday San Francisco PTA

By Carol Kocivar



Take a deep breath. Make a wish. And together, let’s try to blow out all the candles. In case you are counting, that would be 100 candles because this month the San Francisco Parent Teacher Association is 100 years old!

You may not immediately tie progressive San Francisco to what has become a venerable name throughout the world: PTA

But it is that same spirit of innovation, advocacy and hope that our City is known for that created the PTA and continues to drive the PTA.

A little history.... In 1897, the California Home and School Child Study Association was organized in San Francisco. Around the same time, Phoebe Apperson Hearst of San Francisco helped fund a school to train kindergarten teachers and started the first free kindergarten in the United States. * Also in 1897, she co-founded, with Alice McLellan Birney, the National Congress of Mothers, a forerunner of the National Council of Parents and Teachers.

Think back on history. They created this association and a national movement at a time when women did not have the vote, at a time when women were not at the forefront of political advocacy.

- The United States was feeling the impact of the Industrial Revolution.
- Few children’s educations went beyond the 5th grade.
- Children (most often immigrant children) worked in industrial jobs, factories, often doing dangerous work.
- Children had little recreation.
- Millions of children died of childhood diseases.
- What many of us take for granted today was created through consistent hard work, sometimes after years of perseverance, of the Parent Teacher Association:
- Kindergarten classes
- Child labor laws
- A public health service
- Hot lunch programs
- A juvenile justice system
- Mandatory immunization

PTA’s founders Phoebe Apperson Hearst and Alice McLellan Birney, and the founder of Georgia’s Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, Selena Sloan Butler, understood the power of individual action, worked beyond the accepted barriers of their day, and took action to change the world.

In 1897, Mrs. Birney appealed “to all mankind and to all womankind, regardless of race, color, or condition, to recognize that the republic’s greatest work is to save the children.

The republic’s greatest work is to save the children. The San Francisco PTA has played a role, big and small, is this great effort.

From making sure there are safety cross walks in front of all our schools to advocating for arts education and healthy school food, from supporting grass roots campaigns to fund our schools, to volunteering in our classrooms, parents and teachers in San Francisco have been at the forefront of a community dedicated to improving the lives of children.

Happy Birthday San Francisco PTA. And may you have many more.

For more information about the history of the PTA go to: <http://www.capta.org/sections/basics/purposes.cfm> *For more history on the work of Phoebe Hearst, go to: <http://www.californiamuseum.org/exhibits/halloffame/inductee/hearst-family>

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Brain Füd Answer

1. Hoover does not belong as it's the only one which is not a car manufacturer. Dodge does not belong as it's the only one which is not the last name of a President of USA.
2. Bishop does not belong as it's the only one which is not a class of nobility. Earl does not belong as it's the only one which is not a Chess piece.
3. Dead does not belong as it's the only one which is not a color. Green does not belong as it's the only one which is not the name of a sea.

Kaye (Cont. from p. 17)

important election, but that the American people are not surprised at our lack of political talent. We have gotten used to being disappointed, so human failure is no shock to us. We've gotten used to inadequate news coverage of complex issues, and incomplete medical care caused by assembly-line-like appointments necessitated to maximize corporate profit. We accept the fact that our public schools cannot properly educate our children and that our precious tax dollars will be squandered in vain attempts to assist countries controlled by dictators. We recognize that most of our T.V. shows and commercials as well as most of our movies will fail to entertain or enlighten us. We have already stopped believing our politicians, but nowadays we don't even expect them to be intelligent, informed or to have any integrity, with one notable exception, the current White House incumbent.

Foreigners always say that they hate the American government but love the American people. Many of us have learned to accept that as making any sense at all. In America we freely elect fellow Americans to run our government. How are the two different? The answer is they are not.

We Americans who know that we are the greatest people on earth living in the greatest country on earth under the greatest political system on earth, also accept all these aforementioned shortcomings in direct contradiction and opposition to that greatness.

Does America got political talent? Does the emperor got new clothes?

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From the Border Hilary Gordon

TO PRUNE OR NOT TO PRUNE, THAT IS THE QUESTION

By Hilary Gordon, 2011 Images by Blair Randall, 2011

An early winter Sunday recently found me hip deep in an old, bedraggled summer flowering perennial and shrub border, with my pruners trigger-happy and my heart full of indecision. The tall stems of *Verbena bonariensis* bent all around me under the heavy weight of their ripening seed heads, crossing and tangling in the fluffy seed pods on the long, browning milkweed branches. Bog sage stems taller than me still held a few little sky blue flowers, but most of the seed heads were spent, and tiny black seeds rained to the ground when I brushed into them.

During the summer months, this had been a butterfly garden, full of dozens of different pollinators. The buzz of all the many tiny jewel-colored wasps, flies and bumbling bees filled the hot afternoons, while different sizes and colors of butterflies drifted and fluttered through the blossoms.



Salvia karwinskii.

Now, with late fall turning into winter, it was time to cut back and shape the garden for next year's pleasure. One of the *Verbenas* needed to be moved out from under the shade thrown by a huge *Salvia karwinskii*. A one gallon *Leptospermum* which never took root and simply died

very privately under the teeming mass of flowers above it needed to be dug up and tossed in the brush pile. I wanted to try another *Leptospermum* in this garden, but needed to clear some space for it. There was never a better day for a sharp pair of pruners.

And yet, only this morning I had seen fat juncos feasting on the *Verbena* seeds which goldfinches also love. Hummingbirds were still visiting the bog sage during the brief hour that the winter sun struck it, and nectaring in the remaining flowers. I felt like the grim reaper with my wintry scythe, making an end to all the last bits of the past season.

Many people think that gardeners make plants grow, and that we love to nurture all the little living things with the



Sparaxis (harlequin)

powers of our green thumbs. But in fact, gardeners can't make anything grow. Only mother nature can do that. We usually restrict our activities to various forms of murder. Lopping off unsightly branches, exterminating slugs, aphids and caterpillars in various gruesome ways, uprooting and beheading weeds, these felonies are our daily grind. And I was getting ready to begin a real crime spree.

I finally ended with a compromise. The butterfly garden did get a complete haircut, with transplanting and new planting included. But the hummingbirds got a reprieve when I left the sprawling, overgrown sages on the other side of the path with their last few flowers untouched, and the juncos can still stuff themselves on *verbena* seeds in the backyard.

We are approaching the hungry time of year for our little wild birds, and gardeners can help by choosing some plants for the garden which provide nectar in January and February for our resident hummingbirds. At the Garden for the Environment, we have divided out our Tree Aloes, and now have several dozen plants all of which will be full of bright orange-red flowers during midwinter. Hummingbirds love them. We also let many



Erhardta Grass

find his or her own balance between tidying up the garden and providing for the wildness of seed-set and fertility, as fallen leaves decompose in untidy heaps to add life to the soil.

In last month's article I wrote about the new weed season, and what local gardeners can do to minimize their weed problems for this year. We talked about *Oxalis* in detail, and I promised that this month I would write more about the dreaded *Erhardta* grass.



Verbena bonariensis

Erhardta is an invasive exotic grass that appeared in the Bay Area fairly recently. You may not have seen it yet in your garden. It arrived in mine about five years ago, from a neighbor's neglected yard, and I didn't know right away what a beast it was going to be. If you see a new weedy grass with long arching seedy stems covered with hundreds of tiny seeds, beware. Do not let these seeds ripen and fall. Immediate eradication is in order.

When weeding out *Erhardta*, the pale pinkish crown of the plant is your target. Right where the roots of the plant meet the top, there is a single whorl of pale stems, and you have to get all of them. This grass loves to break apart, and you may get a lovely big chunk of it only to notice that it has left one little bit of root and a small bunch of stems behind. Each plant may take several tries to remove all of the crown.

Please make sure to put the weed directly into a bucket or onto a tarp when weeding. If you toss this weed onto the ground or into a path, or carry it through the garden to your green bin, tiny grass seeds will be raining down all around you, and your problems will be multiplied next year.

December will bring rainy cold days if the weather gods love our watershed, and many days when we can only look out the window at our gardens. These are good days to spend with seed catalogs, imagining the heirloom varieties of yummy summer vegetables and new and sophisticated arrangements of blossoms in next year's border. Spread some newspaper on the table or counter and get after those garden tools with some oil and a sharpening stone. Or curl up with a good gardening book. My favorite winter reads this year are Vita Sackville-West's "In Your Garden" and "Gardening at the Dragon's Gate" by Wendy Johnson.

Happy Holidays, and many muddy returns of the season. See you next year!

Hilary Gordon is Sustainable Landscape Education Manager at the GFE. A life-long gardener, trained at the City College Horticulture program, she has worked as a professional landscape gardener from 1984 until the present.

Have a question for Hilary? Meet her in the garden Wednesdays 10-2 and Saturdays 10-4.v



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