

Why is PG&E getting a \$5.2 million annual tax break?

By John Farrell



While most properties are reappraised upon ownership transfer or completion of new construction per Prop 13 by County Assessors' offices, privately held public utilities, such as the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), are assessed statewide by the State Board of Equalization (SBE). These utility properties are not subject to Proposition 13 and are annually reassessed at fair market value.

In 1939, the City granted PG&E ... franchises to use ... public property "in perpetuity." In consideration...PG&E annually pays a franchise fee to the City"

In 1939, the City granted PG&E and its successors two franchises to use city streets to transmit, distribute, and supply electricity and gas. The City further gave PG&E the right to use power and gas lines on public property "in perpetuity." In consideration for the two franchises, PG&E annually pays a franchise fee to the City based on a percentage of gross receipts from the sales of electricity and gas in the City. The franchise fee rates are 0.5% for electricity and 1% for gas.

The SBE values utility companies like PG&E based on a historic cost less depreciation and/or an income approach. Per the SBE, their annual appraisal does not reflect an amount for the franchise fee even though it is suppose to.

Per the Controller's Office Franchise Fee Audit of PG&E dated June 18, 2012, following are the franchise fees paid to the City in 2009 and 2010:

Gross Receipts Reported and Franchise Fees Paid		
Reporting Period (1/1/09–12/31/10)	Gross Receipts	Franchise Fees
2009 Electricity	\$656,053,375	\$3,280,267
2009 Gas	205,599,582	2,055,996
2010 Electricity	693,083,374	3,465,417
2010 Gas	211,614,245	2,116,142
Total	\$1,766,350,576	\$10,917,822

Based on an annual franchise fee of approximately \$5.5 million per the Controller's Office audit, PG&E should be paying the City at least \$1.052 million annually in property tax for the franchise fee (based on a 1.1691% tax rate on a \$90 million assessed value). This \$90 million assessed value reflects the present value of the \$5.5 million annual payment to the City over 35 years @ 5% interest rate. Since the PG&E franchise agreement is in perpetuity, I used 35

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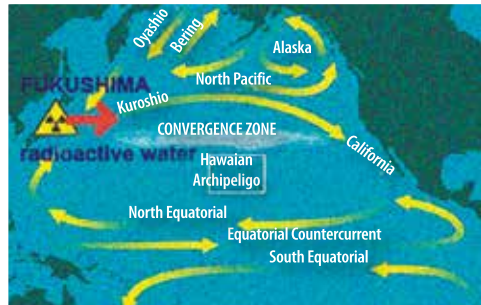
Fukushima Plume: "No Evidence" of West Coast Threat Officials Say

By Keith Burbank

Radiation from Japan's 2011 nuclear disaster is not affecting the fish Californians consume each day, according to government agencies and California fishing organizations. Reports that radiation from the disaster would reach the our coast in 2014 prompted some to wonder if harm would come to California residents. According to a report broadcast from sfist.com, dangerous levels of radiation were found at a beach in Pacifica, California. But even at grass roots levels, people are unconcerned.

"The story is, there is no story," said Lori French, founder, Faces of California Fishing, an advocate for the California fishing industry up and down the state's coast.

"There is no threat to the people and no threat to the fish," said Jeremiah O'Brien, a board member of the Morro Bay Commercial Fisherman's Organization, an advocacy group for commercial fishing in San Luis Obispo County.



Peaceful looking atomic plants?—"nothing to worry about," fishery spokesmen say—others not so certain

The organization has more than 100 members. O'Brien said the U.S. government would address the problem if there were one. He did point out that during the disaster, California Polytechnic State University detected radiation from the

Fukushima event in university dairy milk. The university verified that Fukushima was the source. But, drinking a

Cont. p. 4

we have a God-given right to know ... what is happening to the Pacific—and our beaches ... how much radiation is present and what kind of nuclides are involved."

SFMTA'S 19th Avenue Traffic Plan: A Study in Flawed Development

By Glen Rogers and Aaron Goodman



New locations where the M Streetcar crosses Highway 1 (Dotted line [to BART] is not included in the plan.) The City already committed to a version of these priorities in the Parkmerced Development Agreement. The agreement calls for Parkmerced to build a new segment of the M–Ocean View by crossing 19th Avenue at-grade twice: at 19th Avenue/Holloway and at 19th Avenue/Junipero Serra.

The 19th Avenue Transit Study proposes to improve traffic conditions along 19th Avenue. The study by the SF Metropolitan Transit Authority (SFMTA) seems more focused on money than public good, does not follow proper rules of transit design, shows favoritism to developers, does not consider how changes will affect senior citizens or the disabled, shows bias to certain businesses over others, provides a design that will create noise and blight in a tranquil residential community, and lastly, ignores more satisfactory solutions.

the new location of the 'M' streetcar in Parkmerced would eliminate a close stop ...where a Senior Center is located. This center provides many important services to disabled adults and seniors. Neglecting seniors and the disabled is not "commuter friendly."

Background The thrust of the SFMTA plan is for the 'M' streetcar to enter Parkmerced, where a new station would be located, partially funded by the Fortress Investment Group LLC, which would provide 70 million dollars. Federal funds are matched 80% by projects considered to be "commuter friendly." Unfortunately, this plan is not in the public's best interest because we will be forced to wait 20 more years to connect to Daly City BART via the 'M' streetcar. Thankfully, San Francisco Tomorrow has provided a serious legal challenge over the appropriateness of this project. ¹

Mass transit is at its best when it is in a straight line, connects two points or systems directly, and conjoins other lines along its route. At the request of the developer, Fortress Investment Group, LLC, the project has

been designed to enter a residential neighborhood, Parkmerced, deviating from a straight line route A more direct route would continue along the west side of 19th Avenue directly to Daly City BART, traveling over the 1952 Interchange at Brotherhood Way, then over the 280 Highway into Daly City.

In the SFMTA study, one of two 'M' streetcar lines is proposed to service Parkmerced exclusively. This could have a detrimental effect on the Oceanview district's fragile economy. Besides, we don't need one streetcar following another, one full of passengers, stopping for every patron, and an empty streetcar just behind.

No medical professional or agency has reviewed the study for its impact on the physically impaired, seniors or seriously ill. Reducing stops requires people to walk a quarter of a mile or longer to new 'M' streetcar stops. Also, the new location of the 'M' streetcar in Parkmerced would eliminate a close stop at the Temple Methodist Church, where a Senior Center is located. This center provides many important services to disabled adults and seniors. ² Neglecting seniors and the disabled is not "commuter friendly." The 19th Avenue Traffic Study and the urbanization of Parkmerced are founded on requirements they have not satisfied.

The plans show bias toward certain businesses and present hardships for others. They include no stop at Ocean Avenue, as the train crosses underground to Mercy High School and a Stonestown below-grade station. With the omission of this stop, Ocean Avenue businesses will lose customers. And the SFMTA plan envisions new businesses by SF State University, along with Parkmerced's new retail facility on Crespi Drive. Numerous existing stores on Ocean Avenue will lose business. SFMTA should not be picking "winners and losers."

The 'M' streetcar will create noise in a tranquil neighborhood, adversely effecting residents. Gunshots from the nearby gun club and police range already generate

Cont. p. 4

INSIDE	
Rain Go Away? Maya Lekach – 2	Bikes Quentin Kopp – 3
Surplus Funds? Hall/Browne – 3	Beautiful Tenderloin Dan Chew – 3
Water Hole Steve Lawrence – 6	Rich Bootstraps Will Durst – 6
Laguna Honda Rivero/Kerr – 7	Around the Town Mitch Bull – 9
WOTPCC.....5	Real Estate Q & A.....11
Editorials.....6	Jack Kaye.....11
Letters.....6	Calendar.....12
Money Matters.....8	At the Movies.....13
Remember When.....10	On Stage/Theater.....13
Open Late.....10	Kocivar / Education.....14
Sudoku / Brain Füd.....10	Real Travel.....15

Winter Fare at Farmers Market

Winter brings its bounty to market See page 2

Rain Please— But Some Other Day?

By Maya Lekach

Farmer's, who have been praying for rain for months, would nevertheless have preferred it on some other day—any other day than market day. Although it's February, it surely feels as though it is November at Stonestown Farmers' Market on what has



to have been one of the few rainy days of the past couple of months.

Although you're surrounded by cars at the nearby mall, there's also the banjo-pickin' country singer, the smell of freshly-cooking Indian truck food, and the sight of a veritable tent city in the form of booths from various farms and ranches coming from as far as three or four hours away.

Step into the streets of what seems to be an almost mini village, and you'll be greeted by a collection of colors and shapes, vegetables and fruits - not to mention friendly faces. This is the moment where you'll start to realize that you're really grateful that you live in California. While other regions of the country and the world are suffering from snowed-in fields, it would seem as though our only loss of produce is that the strawberries will soon start getting too wet. While we'll miss these sweet treats, there is a whole other cornucopia to enjoy.

It is indeed lucky for us Californians that we have locations like Fresno, where the weather is currently about 80 degrees. This is what Janet Vue, of Vue Farms, calls the

cooler season. This cooler weather, she tell us, is better for leafy greens, like chard, kale, and all variety of lettuces. Instead of tomatoes and cucumbers, you should be focusing on some green salads and orange squash dishes.

Another exciting winter option is the sugarcane, which was purveyed by a number of booths. The sugarcane is a crop that is grown over the course of a year. Winter is when it is most frequently harvested and it's found all around the market. While the cane looks like a large bamboo, and could look a little intimidating to some, it is often consumed as a snack. This could prove to be pretty fun, biting off a chunk of the thick stalk and spitting out the bits of pulp that come along with it. You could also juice the cane for drinking or use in a variety of recipes.

It also becomes clear that citrus season is among us. Rows of oranges of all varieties and sizes, as well as beautiful big Oro Grapefruits, are tempting to both the eye and the taste buds. The samples surely don't hurt either.

Also, you cannot fail to notice the recognizable root vegetables so often associated with this season. Gourds and pumpkins abound, not to mention almonds roasted and toasted and the beloved chestnuts. It's

not too late to get some of those roasting on an open fire! Beets, squash and broccoli were also popular among the booths. There was even a sighting (and tasting) of yogurt cheese.

It wasn't all sunshine and peaches though, as some of the farms, depending on their location, were

forced to declare that this would be their last weekend of the season. Many farms from Suisun Valley and Lincoln, CA were beginning to experience weather patterns not conducive to their harvest, causing them to take their booths into hibernation.

Speaking with any of the vendors at the market, you will be surprised to find that this farmers' market thing is totally a full time job. Traveling here from as far as the Feather River Valley and Fresno, these farmers also make trips around the Bay to places like San Rafael, Petaluma, and other popular San Francisco farmers' markets, like the one on Clement St.

The market, however, is more than just a



shopping trip, its much more like the perfect Sunday event. Why not take your family outside for a walk among the flowers (literally)? The sights and smells alone will get rid of your Seasonal Affective Disorder. Additionally, the market is a breeze to get to. Not only is there more than ample parking - it is located outside of a huge mall after all - but there are also Muni trains, and multiple bus lines serving the area. Located on relatively flat land, it is also conducive to riding your bike.

The farmers' market continues year round as a place to gather with family and friends, get in touch with your grander neighborhood, and take pride in many of the natural wonders that California has to offer. And probably sampling yogurt cheese too. Enjoy the winter months!

Maya Lekach is a local free-lance journalist in San Francisco



New Agreement
Options



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RUMINATIONS FROM A FORMER SUPERVISOR *By Quentin Kopp*



Amidst disagreements between motorists and bicyclists in San Francisco and other California entities and pundits in local newspapers, biased in favor of bicyclists, or less so, annoyed by bicyclist behavior, one quintessential fact is overlooked. If you purchase gasoline in California, you pay an 18.4 cents-per-gallon federal gasoline tax and a 39 cents-per-gallon State of California gasoline and sales tax. The proceeds of the federal gas tax are deposited in the Highway Trust Fund, created by the United States Congress and then-President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956 to pay costs of construction and maintenance of the Interstate Highway System. That same financial mechanism has been utilized in California since 1922; thus, all proceeds of the California gas tax are deposited in the State Highway Account. The purpose of that account is similar to the federal gas tax concept; the State Highway Account money is applied to pay costs of building and maintaining the State Highway System.

Additionally, California vehicle owners pay a registration fee to the Department of Motor Vehicles, proceeds of which are used to support the expenses of the DMV and the California Highway Patrol. Furthermore, the possessor of a California driver's license, whether for trucks, motorcycles or automobiles, must be licensed by the DMV and pay a driver's license fee. Proceeds of the driver license fee are utilized for, among other purposes, defraying the costs of the California Highway Patrol. To the contrary, however, owners of bicycles do not need to register such ownership with any entity, state, county or city. Bicyclists, additionally, need not possess a license to operate bicycles. Nevertheless, bicyclists use the city streets, county roads, and even state highways, which have been built by motor vehicle owners and drivers, both trucks and automobiles. (Would you call that a "free ride?") Gasoline taxation of motorists, both owners and drivers, has, additionally, been stripped of its original user fee status, a philosophy based upon the concept that those who use a public or governmental structure such as a street should pay for its construction and upkeep. Both the federal and state gasoline tax highway funds have, outrageously, been raided and distorted to finance uses unrelated to streets, roads, or highways. One example federally is the "Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act" enacted by the Congress and President in July 2012, and spending over \$105,000,000,000 in fiscal years 2012-13 and 2013-14 for "surface transportation programs" which are not just roads and bridges, but also include "transit, bike and pedestrian" projects. As Lawrence J. McQuillan of the Independent Institute in Oakland has noted, "Walking is now a Surface Transportation Program." Approximately \$800,000,000 of Federal Highway Trust money was appropriated to the OneBayArea Grant Program dealing with housing, transportation, and land use in the nine-county Bay Area through 2040 after approval by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Association of Bay Area Governments in July 2013. About \$10,000,000 of such money was routed to "priority conservation areas," which represent city and county purchases of land for "long-term protection." Thus, taxes from motorists are blatantly diverted to general government uses. Gasoline taxes will finance parks, bicycle paths, pedestrian walkways, scenic overlooks, viewing areas and even parking lots in the nine Bay Area counties, not better or more (God forbid!) streets, roads, or highways. Potholes be damned. Bicyclists be revered; they must be exempted from paying to use streets, roads, and highways.

And then there exists the problem of stolen bicycles. The San Francisco Police Department recovers thousands of stolen bicycles annually. The owners can't be located because they don't need to register their bicycles or obtain a license for their (sometimes) unsafe operation of bicycles. Motorists subsidize bicyclists, and no elected or appointed official demonstrates the integrity of rectifying such illogical public policy. Logically, bicycle owners should be compelled to register bicycles in the owner's city or county of residence or business. Bicycle operators should be required to possess a license. Violations of safety ordinances and statutes, local and state, by bicycle owners and operators should be treated as owners and operators of motor vehicles are treated for asserted violations of law. To do otherwise constitutes unequal treatment of those who pay for public structures which bicyclists use without tax or fee. If the gasoline tax is abolished as a user fee (which has occurred in large part) and continually spent not for road-building and repairs, but for current societal fads, it becomes a regressive tax similar to the sales tax, meaning that it is paid in greater proportional amount by those less able to do so than a progressive income tax which is levied on one's financial ability to pay the costs of government.

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

OVERSIGHT OR MISUSE?

By Former Supervisor Tony Hall and Brian Browne



Supervisor Tony Hall Brian Browne

San Franciscans may be pleasantly surprised to learn that they currently have \$5,691,278,327 sitting in the Treasurer's pool of "Surplus Funds." Surplus funds as defined by the Treasurer are monies resultant from bond issuances etc. that are not currently being used. The contributors to this Treasurer's pool of funds are the revenues from the departments and agencies listed below. San Francisco ranks fourth in California for the average size of its pooled portfolio of funds at \$6.2 billion.

The Contributors to San Francisco Surplus Funds Pool are as follows:

Agency	Amount	Percent
San Francisco Public Utilities Commission	\$1,702,596,114	29.92%
General Fund/Special City Funds/Internal Services Funds	941,580,441	16.54%
San Francisco International Airport	716,355,689	12.59%
Facilities and Capital Projects Funds – General	672,828,257	11.82%
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Authority	593,225,049	10.42%
San Francisco Unified School District	380,026,069	6.68%
Successor Agency – former SFRDA	187,707,403	3.30%
Port of San Francisco	124,097,291	2.18%
Pension and Retiree Health Care Trust Fund	70,538,599	1.24%
San Francisco County Transportation Authority	70,302,527	1.24%
San Francisco Community College District	53,316,527	0.94%
San Francisco General Hospital and Laguna Honda Hospital	17,266,241	0.30%
Other agencies (incl. Transbay Joint Powers, Trial Courts)	161,438,120	2.84%
Totals \$	\$5,691,278,327	100.00%

There does exist at the current time the Treasury Oversight Committee, which is supposed to ensure that proper investment strategies are optimized, and this is where the devilment begins. One only has to take a look at the track record of the past and present members of this Treasury Oversight Committee and recall how these same individuals worked to destroy the Revenue Bond Oversight Committee as established by you the voters in 2002.

To refresh your memory, as a Supervisor in 2002, I placed on the ballot Proposition P, which created a truly independent Revenue Bond Oversight Committee (RBOC) for the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, specifically tasked with reviewing the SFPUC's revenue bond expenditures. This RBOC also has the unique power to stop additional unnecessary bonds from being issued. You the public wisely passed this Proposition, which put a definite crimp into the politicians and money managers' self-serving practices at that time.

The current Treasury Oversight Committee is comprised of Joe Grazioli, Ben Rosenfeld, Charles Perl and Aimee Brown. There is one vacant seat to be filled by the Chancellor of the Community College District or his/her designee.

Three of the present members of this committee Messrs Perl (SFPUC), Rosenfeld (SF Controller) and Brown (Mayor's appointee and 5 term chair of the RBOC, and a former employee of a firm that deals with municipal bonds and securities), along with two past members, Todd Rydstrom (SFPUC Chief financial officer and Asst. General Manager), and Ed Harrington, (former SF Controller and SFPUC general manager) all conspired to nullify the very intent of your Proposition

P and negate any of the independent controls mandated by the RBOC. Why did they do this? Because without any controls or outside independent review they can do with your money what they decide is best for you, while at the same satisfying the political agendas of the politicians who appointed them and their "friends" with the aforementioned 4.5%. Creating more public debt via well publicized but unnecessary bond issuances is par for the course today for politicians who know nothing about true leadership or genuine public welfare. But this is so egregious, \$6B earning less than 1%, while costing us 4.5% is just too obscene to be ignored. The foxes that usurped the RBOC under guise of independent oversight are now the very caretakers of this great amount of money. Do you see how the game works? If you can eliminate any independent outside scrutiny, you can really manipulate public intent.

There are far too many instances of back room dealing involved with these individuals to list here. The failure of these past and present members of the Treasurer's Oversight Committee to implement 2002 Proposition P alone should have been cause for permanent dismissal from public service, or at least from any position involving fiscal oversight. The most amazing phenomenon is that these retreads keep appearing and that the body politic, especially the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors, keep reappointing them to positions of oversight. It is better to have no oversight than the illusion of oversight from people like this.

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Brian Browne was coauthor of 2002 Prop P and former member of the Revenue Bond Oversight Committee it created. Tony Hall served twice as Supervisor for District 7

Hidden Gems of San Francisco

Uptown Tenderloin: City's Architectural Boiling Pot

By Dan Chew

Usually when walking through the Tenderloin, most folks are either clutching their purses and wallets tightly while sidestepping the homeless, or making a beeline for the latest foodie discovery. Looking at your surroundings is a wise self-preservation technique in what has been referred to as "the worst neighborhood in the city." Originally called St. Ann's



Alcazar Theater, 650 Geary Street



Alhambra Apartments, 860 Geary Street

Valley, this area was completely destroyed during the 1906 earthquake. The neighborhood was rebuilt with more density, and more concrete. Prior to 1906 there were many single family homes with a smattering of hotels and apartment buildings, after 1906, building codes in this part of the city required safer and more fire-proof structures. Wood was out and concrete was in.

Along with the higher density and bigger buildings which now had to compete for more tenants, came a smorgasbord of architectural styles, instead of

Cont. p. 3

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Hidden Gems (Cont. from p. 5)



a Victorian neighborhood, something new was born out of the ashes. The name at that time was the “Uptown Tenderloin.”

Next time you happen to be in the neighborhood, take note of some of the spectacular architecture in this historic neighborhood. Some of the city’s most beautiful buildings (and some of the city’s tastiest bites) can be found tucked in among the many nondescript apartment buildings and neighborhood liquor stores.

A leisurely 45 minute stroll down just two streets reveals some true architectural gems “hidden” in plain sight. Starting at Van Ness and Geary, head east a few blocks opposite the one-way traffic on the south side of Geary, and just past Larkin Street, look across Geary, and gaze at the spectacular Alhambra Apartments (860 Geary Street). Built in 1913 in the Moorish style by native

the fact that traveling in a group is safer and more fun than venturing into the Tenderloin without guidance. We know of eateries here that will change your opinion of this part of the city forever more. Some of the places here are amazingly superb, join us!



Explore San Francisco is a locally owned co-op of guides who help us explore and discover the City’s “hidden gems”. For more information on touring SF, check out their website at ExploreSanFrancisco.biz or call them at 415.793.1104v



Castle Apartments, [Maybeck] 825 Geary Street

SF architect James Francis Dunn. Born and raised in a working-class, largely Irish, South of Market neighborhood by a widowed mother, Dunn was self-taught as an architect — but remarkably well taught. His buildings can be found all around the city. This apartment building is a beautiful example of some of his best work. The romantic penthouse and dome of the Alhambra are where the legendary Rudolph Valentino reputedly entertained his paramours.

Continue down Geary past Leavenworth and look across the street at the exotic Alcazar Theatre (650 Geary Street). This Moorish/Byzantine masterpiece was originally built as a Shriner’s temple in 1917 by architect T.Patterson Ross.



Admiral Hotel, 608 O'Farrell St,



WEST OF TWIN PEAKS CENTRAL COUNCIL By Mitch Bull

Priorities for 2014, a Supervisor’s update and trees, trees, and more trees dominated the agenda at the WTPCC meeting on Monday, January 27th. Approximately 25 people were in attendance for the first meeting of the year. WTPCC President Matt Chamberlain brought the meeting to order at 7:30 PM at the Forest Hills Clubhouse and started by listing the major priorities that the council will be working on for 2014. They include: An impending PUC increase; Traffic Calming Projects; Transit changes; ADA and other Parking Changes; Bicycle legislation; Housing and Density Issues (including the secondary unit legislation); and proposed new taxes on sodas, and “street trees.” Other topics include CCSF; the 19th Ave. Transit Corridor Project, and the impact of web-based services such as Airbnb and Uber. He also added that he is trying to schedule a return visit by Supervisor Mark Farrell (D2) to discuss the SF Budget. Chamberlain asked the audience to forward any other priorities to him for consideration for scheduling speakers, etc.



Supervisor Norman Yee announces a Community Budget Meeting for Saturday, Feb. 22nd at West Portal Playground, 10:30 am

District Supervisor Norman Yee followed with an update on several important issues within the district with much of the discussion focused on gathering community input on voting for “citizen nominated” projects on the Westside. He is holding a **Community Meeting** to discuss the process of Participative Budgeting for Projects on **Saturday, February 22nd at the West Portal Playground Clubhouse**. The meeting will run from approximately 10:30 AM to 12:00PM. The Supe also spoke of bond monies being allocated for two park projects (Golden Gate Heights and Miraloma Park), and although West Portal was left out of the funding, he is working to secure between \$100,000 and \$500,000 for additional park projects. Finally he spoke about more resolutions to be introduced for Pedestrian and Traffic Safety to go with the City’s “Vision 0” – to have no pedestrian fatalities by the year 2024. When asked about the pending legislation on secondary units, Yee said that he expects the Planning Commission to schedule a hearing to discuss the legislation in March.

Estelle Smith updated the crowd on the actions of the Planning and Land Use Committee as they are working on topics such as the secondary unit legislation, the SF Housing Element, Housing density and other items. George Wooding spoke on Public Health, mentioning the upcoming legislation on a “soda tax” as well as the stance by Commissioner Antonini of the Planning Commission that “open space and parkland” near Twin Peaks and Laguna Honda could be used for housing units. Avrum Shepard reported in his Transportation update that MUNI is planning to build dozens of “Operator Convenience Facilities” (bathrooms) for the MUNI driver fleet at various points around the city. The estimated cost is \$170,000 for each of the “facilities.”

Open Space and Tree issues comprised the last half of the meeting with Sally Stephens reporting on the ROSE (Recreation and Open Space Element) update that the Planning Department is attempting to finalize. Stephens noted that while many aspects of the ROSE are better than the 2009 draft element, there

are still many changes that the citizens advisory group wants to include before Planning finalizes the document.

On the “Trees of Mt. Sutro Forest” update, Rupa Bose reported some progress and good news; On November 21, UCSF announced they are revising their plans for the Sutro Forest by (1) agreeing to not use pesticides in the 47 acre park, and (2) to lower the concentration of forest “management” from the entire 47 acres to possibly 25-35 acres. This could result in “only” 4000-5000 trees being affected, rather than the 30,000 trees that were initially targeted. On the down side, Bose added that the Natural Area Program group is still using herbicides on ¼ of the forest and are expected to target approximately 140 trees for removal.

Jackie Proctor of the Miraloma Park Improvement Club gave a report on Mt. Davidson, highlighting findings and a report by a noted forestry expert from UC Berkeley disputing the fire dangers and the stated poor health of the forest, arguing that the forest is in good health and should last for many years. It has been proposed that 82% of the non-native eucalyptus and cypress trees be removed for “safety” and “fire danger.” Proctor asked that the WTPCC draft a letter of support for not removing trees from the targeted 30 acres, and to have the Mayor remove this area from the NAP (Natural Areas Program). The motion to draft the letter was passed unanimously.

Another letter of support was proposed to oppose the addition of private land off of Murrieta Drive to be protected acreage for the Franciscan Manzanita shrub. 3.2 acres of private land has been designated by the SF Recreation and Parks Department, and approved by the US Department of Fish and Wildlife, to nurture the return of the aforementioned Manzanita shrub, which, by the way, isn’t currently growing there. The motion to draft a letter supporting the removal of these lands from the NAP was adopted (with two abstentions).

Next meeting: Monday, February 24th at 7:30 PM at the Forest Hills Clubhouse. For more information see the WOTPCC website (www.westoftwinpeaks.org).

Water Worries

By Steve Lawrence

Ocean Beach is on the edge. Just as San Francisco is notoriously edgy, so is this wild world of water and sand. Removed from city, from people and buildings, from insanity and stress of complicated life. Opening on the vastness of the Pacific, Ocean Beach is wild and free. A place to clear your head, to renew; walk your dog or talk with friends.

Unnoticed by most of us, Ocean Beach is changing. Slowly sea levels are rising. Suddenly, at the time of winter King Tide, especially if a storm strikes then, the ocean can attack beach, sand, cliffs, road and man's "improvements." This last happened in



“Managed retreat” is the guiding philosophy. The southern section of Great Highway is to be re-routed inland around the Zoo; for a stretch...

2009-10. Next? Who knows.

In the past we have responded to the ocean's sudden strike with emergency measures, usually dumping rock. It's ugly and unwanted after the crisis passes.

To address the imperative of change in a better way, a master plan was released in early 2012.

Now the master plan is being implemented. SPUR's Ben Grant is the "czar."

Eventually an agreement will be reached whereby the main players agree on roles.

So far the Corps of Engineers has provided sand to the north end of the beach, and some has been moved to where it is needed at the south end.

While the master plan contains much about what should be done at the beach—access, amenities, trail, bikes, plantings and much more—details are being worked out. “Managed retreat” is the guiding philosophy. The southern section of Great Highway is to be re-routed inland around the Zoo; for a stretch, Great Highway will be reduced from four to two lanes.

But unlike the ocean's sudden attacks, man-made changes at Ocean Beach will happen slowly over years. The master plan's horizon is 2050. While key sewage infrastructure will be protected, managed retreat and soft accommodation will mostly rule. Pilot projects will tentatively try out ideas.

There is no place like Ocean Beach for open space, awe (at the mighty Pacific), and for renewing the spirit.

Water Supply

One might imagine that water supply and demand are matters long addressed and known. Rain and snow falls (usually), rivers run, water is captured and stored, people use what they use year in, year out. Population grows some, low-flow fixtures are installed; numbers are adjusted a bit.

Not that easy! No, complications are an important part of bureaucratic work. No one else must understand. Creative ambiguity is baked into every report.

So it is with water supply and demand.

Overall, so far as your interpreter can tell, the numbers look good. Less water is being used--much less than was predicted a decade ago. Even suburbanites to the south and east, who use two-thirds of the Hetchy system's water, are using less.

As for the future, while demand is expected to rise some in the next few years, it is then expected to stay about steady for twenty years.

Over the next five years demand in the

suburbs is to rise 16%, while city demand is expected to rise about 8%. Naturally, this assumes regimens of strict conservation.

The city must finish work to which it is committed. Recycled water (very expensive) and other “alternative water sources” need to be developed, or all projections evaporate. Groundwater is to supply “up to four million gallons per day.” Up to? (Would you be happy if your salary was “up to \$5000” per month?)

Construction of alternative water sources will take the next eight or nine years. Groundwater wells and lines within the city are to be built 2014-17. Two recycled water projects follow: Westside Recycled 2017-19; and Eastside Recycled 2019-22. The cost of these will be interesting to follow; already putting substantial upward pressure on rates, overruns on these projects could add pressure to raise rates. Past estimates have proven too low. A dozen years ago recycled water projects were to supply nearly three times what is now projected, at less cost.

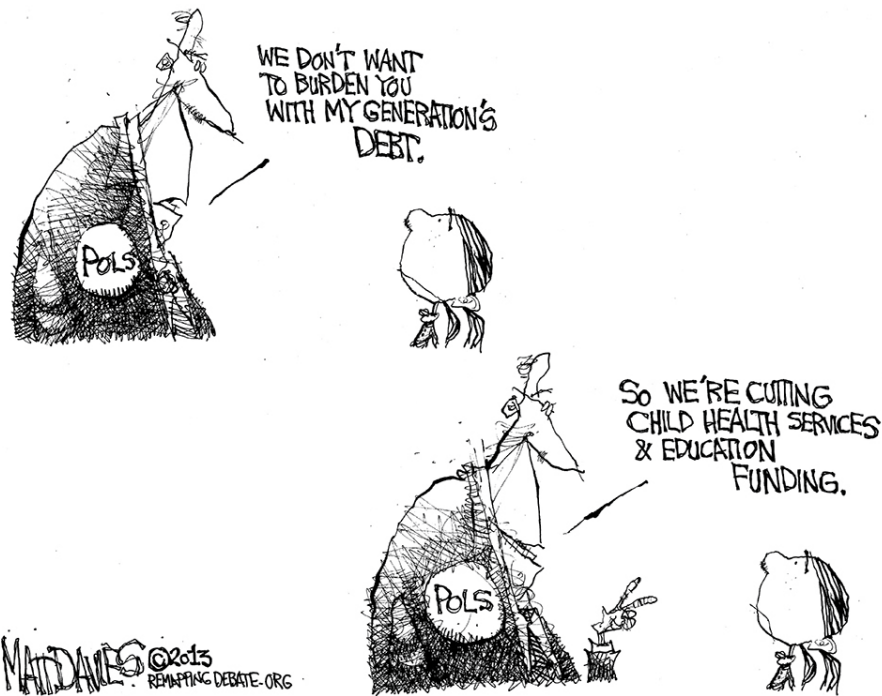
Delays in water projects have hurt. Calaveras Dam has been delayed by ten years so far. Filling a reservoir on the Peninsula is being delayed by a thistle.

A recent meeting of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission discussed what effect Governor Brown's declaration of drought has on San Francisco. None, was the initial answer, then qualified: Customers who buy water from our system will likely receive less from the State, and will then ask the Hetchy system for more. As wholesale customers have been receiving less than they are entitled to take, it is foreseeable that demand may rise. The discussion did not quantify. The Hetchy system has about a million acre feet stored. This is much more than sufficient to provide for the next year, but not all stored water is immediately available, and it is important that it be replenished as insurance against a long drought. It is very possible that a shortage will be declared, probably on April 22. The first step would be a 10% voluntary cut-back.

Also on April 22 rates are being set. Costs are not decreased by drought. To the extent less water is sold, rates need to be higher. If customers reduce use, more is sold at the lower rate tier. Rates are likely to rise by 12-12-10% beginning July 1 of the next three years.

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

How Thoughtful



My 2¢ • Will Durst

GUILLOTINE TIME.

Scott Fitzgerald famously said the rich are different from us. To which Hemingway snorted, “yeah, they have more money.”

And now seems like a good time to offer up a few words of sympathy for the rich. Because our wealthy brothers and sisters are going through some tough times. Not financially. No, no, no. They're doing pretty good on that end. Last year the stock market shot higher than the 4:20 break at a Denver pot dispensary on Jerry Garcia's birthday.

The fortunate among us are comfortable alright, but becoming increasingly uncomfortable, if you catch my drift. It's us nasty poor people. Again. It appears that we're picking on them. You know. Whining. Complaining. Jealous. Hungry. Rather than pulling ourselves up by the bootstraps like they did when their daddies left them all that money.

Cries of financial inequity have been so alarming lately that venture capitalist Thomas Perkins felt compelled to compare we poor to the Nazis. He wrote that while Germany's 1% were the Jews, America's 1% are the Well-Heeled. And did it in a letter to the Wall Street Journal. No surprise there. Where did you think he'd get it published? The San Francisco Chronicle? Progressive Magazine? Rachel Maddow's blog?

Sporting a Richard Mille watch which lists for \$330,000, Perkins later apologized for using the term “Nazi” but doubled down on his assertion that the rich are being demonized. The bellyaching billionaire: a uniquely American phenomena. Pretty sure the Romanovs expressed similar sentiments. The Marie Antoinette Bakery has reopened and is proud to be serving day-old cake.

Apparently, acute affluence causes the outer epidermis to shrink profoundly. Causing the prosperous to exhibit super-sensitivity to the slings and arrows tossed at their outrageous fortune. To say that reaction was loud and swift is akin to implying that Mr. Everest slopes. Many malcontents called for the Perkins to have his analogy completed by tattooing a serial number onto his arm.

But in America, that anti-rich stuff doesn't fly because folks worry that any restrictions on the loaded and bloated will come back to haunt them when their ship comes in and they themselves start rolling in it. Wealth projection. Another American exclusive.

A recent study revealed that 85 people in the world now control the same amount of wealth as half the population of the planet. 85 people have as much money as 3.5 billion. Admittedly, some of those 3.5 billion people have taken a vow of poverty. But not all.

4 of America's 9 richest are members of the family that owns Wal-Mart. Really? Couldn't they pay their workers a tad more and still be 4 of the top 30 richest Americans? Top 100? 2 million employees and the last year's profit was 16 billion dollars. That's 8K profit off every employee. Imagine how much more stuff Wal-Mart could sell if each employee made \$2,000 extra?

They call sharks-eating machines. And corporations are sharks that eat money. But even stockholders are starting to question the \$100 million CEO salary. Although, its nice to know that when there's a run on guillotines, Wal-Mart will stock a nice selection of attractively priced models. But if you want something extra sharp with a built in timer, might want to check out Richard Mille.

Will Durst is an award-winning, nationally acclaimed political comic. Go to willdurst.com to find about more about his new CD, “Elect to Laugh” and calendar of personal appearances including “Boomeraging: From LSD to OMG,” Wednesday the 5th @ Angelica's in Redwood City.

Letters to the Editor

Support the Mountain Tunnel

Our City's Hetch Hetchy Water System Improvement Program (WSIP) is poised to celebrate its ten year anniversary in March. In the 1990s, a group of concerned residents formed Citizens Against Water & Sewer Rates Abuse, an ordinance I wrote to advocate for change in how the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) used our rate fees...in essence the legislation froze the rates until such time that the PUC changed policy. You, the electorate, passed the law with over 68% support. At that time millions were being transferred to other departments inappropriately.

In late 1990 it became evident that there was a great need for maintenance and major infrastructure improvement to our water system. Our rates were at

that time being directed properly into the water system. In 1998 after many meetings and discussion with the Mayor's office I was appointed by then Mayor Willie L. Brown Jr. to the SFPUC Infrastructure Task Force (2000-2003) as Chairman. Sixteen citizens and experts were appointed to the Task force. As the Infrastructure Task Force completed its basic purpose we can be proud to say we, the citizens, have fundamentally transformed how the SFPUC approaches and pays for infrastructure projects.

My early work has helped launch the SFPUC's historic WSIP – a \$4.6 billion endeavor and one of the nation's largest water infrastructure improvement programs. Today, WSIP is not only 80% complete; it's miraculously within 1.5% of

Cont. p. 7

WESTSIDE OBSERVER

San Francisco's Award Winning News for the Neighborhood

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Watchdogs & Whistleblowers Dr. Maria Rivero & Dr. Derek Kerr

FEAR and FAILINGS at LAGUNA HONDA

Employee morale is a key driver of quality of care in hospitals. In April 2010, one year into the tenure of CEO Mivic Hirose, Laguna Honda Hospital (LHH) commissioned an Employee Satisfaction Survey. The results were dismal.

Employee Morale	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Concern of Management	4%	22%	35%	39%
Attentiveness of Management	4%	19%	37%	40%
Assistance with Job Stress	2%	21%	29%	48%
Communication by Supervisor	15%	31%	32%	22%
Appreciation of Supervisor	12%	27%	28%	34%

Out of 1,350 surveys distributed, only 258 were returned. A response rate of 19% indicates apathy, mistrust, or fear of management reprisals.

One month before that survey, City employees had been rocked by mass lay-off notices. Few LHH staffers were willing to convey criticism when their livelihoods were threatened. Having scrambled through administrative shake-ups, mission changes and altered plans, many felt unsettled before the December 2010 move into the new building.

The survey asked a series of questions to which staff could respond “Excellent”, “Good”, “Fair” or “Poor”. Excellent and Good indicate satisfactory, while Fair and Poor show dissatisfaction.

Although 70% of responding staff recommended LHH for patient care, only 49% recommended working there. Just 46% were satisfied overall. Notably, a majority were dissatisfied with LHH Administration, their Supervisors, and with the hospital’s response to job stress.

Not surprisingly, this Employee Satisfaction Survey, obtained via a public records request, was neither made public nor presented to the Health Commission. No remedial plan was announced and no follow-up survey was conducted. LHH did not renew its contract with the surveyor.

However, in July 2013, LHH hired the

market research firm Corey, Canapary & Galanis (CC&G) to conduct a follow-up survey. In his contract proposal, VP Jon Canapary slyly promised, “We respond to the accountability and scrutiny public agencies must operate under with real-world solutions.” CEO Hirose values spin, and

expect something more than straight data analysis. Unlike Laguna Honda’s prior survey contractors, CC&G doesn’t specialize in healthcare surveys. It does, however, have political polling experience, having assisted in the “Willie Brown for Mayor” campaign. Its motto is; “Ask the right questions, and you get the real answer.”

Four years after its first Employee Satisfaction Survey, LHH has had enough time to perk up staff morale. Layoff threats no longer depress hospital workers. They’ve had 3 years to settle into the new facility. With these situational changes, plus new, savvy surveyors who “ask the right questions,” satisfaction scores are bound to improve – regardless of who’s in charge.

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

“...this Employee Satisfaction Survey, obtained via a public records request, was neither made public nor presented to the Health Commission. No remedial plan was announced and no follow-up survey was conducted.”

Letters (Cont. from p. 6)

its original budget. Not perfect, but you would be hard pressed to find a program of this magnitude even close to being this efficient.

More importantly it has significantly increased the seismic and supply reliability of a system that traverses 3 major seismic faults before delivering water to 2.6 million people in the San Francisco Bay Area. And while this system is more resilient than ever, challenges still remain.

One of those challenges is Mountain Tunnel. The tunnel is one of the most critical components of our water system and it must be repaired after 89 years of continuous service.

The SF Examiner reports a doomsday scenario that reads like a bad graphic novel. However, I want to assure the public that the SFPUC is in capable hands with their new General Manager Harlan Kelly. As one of the chief architects of WSIP, I

know Harlan and his seasoned staff are well equipped to tackle the repair of Mountain Tunnel and the multi-year Sewer System Improvement Program with the same patience, transparency and expertise that they afforded to WSIP.

It doesn’t mean that we the public shouldn’t continue ask the tough questions, but the reality is that we can now confidently invest in the Hetch Hetchy water system infrastructure. Thanks to the past ten years, and good citizens’ work, I believe that path forward is clear. We must support the needed upgrades at the Mountain Tunnel.

Let us all support the work of the SFPUC that will keep our tap water flowing, streets lit, and our toilets flushing. Our future depends on it.

Richard Bodisco, Westside resident, Author – Water Rate Freeze, Term Limits for SF Supervisors

MONEY MATTERS • By Brandon Miller and Joanne Jordan

Smart Moves for Retirement Relocation



Retirement opens the door for many retirees to consider a change in residence. Here are answers to questions about the financial implications of relocation at this stage in life.

Q: When I retire, I’d like to spend the winter in a warmer climate. Should I purchase a second home in my favorite destination?

A: The decision to buy a second home in another state may depend on how well your budget can endure the costs. Can you afford to take part of your nest egg to buy another home or allocate monthly income to new mortgage payments? Will you be left with sufficient funds to manage unpredictable retirement expenses, such as future medical care? And are you prepared to hire a property management company to maintain your property when you’re away? You also need to think about travel, upkeep, homeowner’s insurance and taxes as you tally up projected expenses of owning a second home.

Moving also gives families the opportunity to look at all of your possessions, pass on some heirlooms to loved ones and “let go” of nonessentials. Clearing away the clutter is not only personally freeing, it can reduce the burden on those who will ultimately be responsible for dividing your estate at some point.

Q: I’ve heard of retirees moving abroad to stretch their retirement dollars. Is this a good idea?

A: It’s true that some Americans are moving abroad in retirement. If you’re eager to experience a different country and culture firsthand and have the resources to make such a move, foreign relocation might be a dream come true. Popular relocation spots in Europe, Central America and South America can provide a warmer

“On the other hand, living in a foreign land can have drawbacks. Medicare dollars will not follow you overseas.”

It’s also important to recognize that real estate may not be the best investment for your situation. As the recent recession clearly demonstrated, there’s no guarantee that a property purchased today will retain its value when you want to sell. Additionally, many warm weather states were hit hard by the real estate crash and remain vulnerable.

As an alternative to buying a second home, consider renting a vacation property in the desired area. This option poses less financial risk, and ultimately offers more flexibility, including the freedom to visit other locations to get your warm weather fix.

Q: My spouse and I are debating whether to stay in our current home or move to a smaller residence once we retire. What are the pros and cons of downsizing?

A: Trading in the family home for something smaller can be a good financial decision for some people. Generally speaking, a smaller home is easier to maintain. That means less work and expense for the occupants. Assuming your new home is less expensive, you can put the difference toward retirement savings or remodeling projects in your new home. Downsizing also provides the option to choose a home with fewer levels or other features that may be more suitable as you age. And, with less room to fill, you won’t be as tempted to make unnecessary purchases.

climate, more relaxed lifestyle and may be more affordable.

On the other hand, living in a foreign land can have drawbacks. Medicare dollars will not follow you overseas. If you’re wary of healthcare services in your new country of residence or can’t afford to purchase care abroad, you’ll have to travel to the U.S. to use these benefits. Trips home will be subject to fluctuating airfares and may become more difficult to manage as you age. In addition, social security dollars generally can’t go to foreign banks, and Americans retired abroad will likely still need to file a U.S. tax return. Furthermore, foreign currencies can be unpredictable. Should conversion rates change abruptly, the buying power of your American dollars may fall quickly.

If you’re serious about foreign relocation, consider a trial run to see how it goes. After the experience, you’ll be more likely to make the right decision for you and your family.

Regardless of where you end up living in retirement, it’s important to consider the implications that relocating may have on your financial goals in retirement. Consider meeting with a financial advisor to discuss this topic.

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.



SUPERVISOR NORMAN YEE’S

Community Meeting

A discussion of the process of Participative Budgeting for Projects


Saturday, February 22nd

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Philippines: Reaching Out to Isolated Communities

As the people of the Philippines struggle to recover from the devastation of Typhoon Haiyan, the plight of the population in many rural and isolated areas of the islands has gone largely unreported.

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AROUND THE TOWN

COMINGS AND GOINGS By Mitch Bull

Waste Water (or Wasted Water)...it has been brought to my attention that as the water situation worsens and Sacramento calls for a drought emergency, our friends over at Park and Rec have a situation that needs further investigation. It seems that a wastewater system to use “grey” reclaimed water for irrigation in Pacifica and at the SF Owned Sharp Park Golf Course is not being used by the Park and Rec department to irrigate the golf course, even though the City of SF picked up approximately 72% of the cost of the system. So while the City of Pacifica is using the completed system to use reclaimed wastewater to irrigate public lands and recreation fields, the City of SF is still using potable Hetch Hetchy water to irrigate the Sharp Park Golf Course, even though they paid for the system to use reclaimed water from Pacifica’s Calera Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant. Rest assured, we will be looking into this, and trying to find out what is going on over at Rec and Parks and at the SF PUC. In a “water emergency” someone better have a “dam” good reason...

Photo: Courtesy of Wild Equity Institute

Post Holiday “Hangover”...Here we are in February and it seems like we just got through Thanksgiving and Christmas and we’re already looking at Valentine’s Day, Easter and the arrival of Spring. Time just seems to fly by. Of course time never stops in the world of news and deadlines keep popping up seemingly faster and faster.

Of course our outlook would be a little brighter if the 49ers had figured out a way to hold on and defeat Seattle for the right to go to the Super Bowl, speaking of which, have you seen the weather back East and in NY? We could have 3 feet of snow for the game in NYC in February. (Boy those \$10,000 seats will really feel good...blankets are not included....)

With the jet stream running North and our mild weather (and drought) continuing, it’s hard not to feel guilty about the wonderful weather we have been having in the city, but since there is not a lot we can do to change it (other than the big anti-global warming things we do) we should enjoy the sunny days and mild temperatures. We recently went into downtown and “played tourist,” visiting places that we don’t usually get around to. A real find is the Cable Car Museum and Powerhouse. It’s a great self guided tour through the history and mechanical workings of the cable car system, from the visionary engineer Andrew Halladie’s building of the first line, to the citizens who rose up to save the system when the city tried to scrap them in 1947. A fascinating way to spend several hours and it’s free to the public. We also strolled around Nob Hill (visited the Tonga Room), Union Square and took in a play at the A.C.T. We met lots of “out of towners” and enjoyed the sights and sounds of San Francisco that are so easily missed when doing our daily chores.

Stradivari anyone??? Have you always wanted to hear a world-class violinist play an actual Stradivarius? Now’s your chance. The Cypress String Quartet will be performing at Mission Blue Center in Brisbane on February 15th as part of the long-running Live at Mission Blue series, and will feature one of the most famous violins in existence. Go to: LiveatMissionBlue.com for more details.

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

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110 Santa Clara Ave	St. Francis Wood	4	3	1	1,575,000	1,800,000	114.29
12 Sherwood Ct	Miraloma Park	3	2	2	788,000	1,000,000	126.9
850 Darien Way	Mount Davidson Manor	5	5.5	2	1,500,000	1,330,000	95
94 Eastwood Dr	Westwood Park	2	2	0	898,000	1,085,000	120.82
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Remember When?



Diamond Heights- (Undated) Written on back: "San Francisco--Diamond Heights Redevelopment Project. Unbuilt hilly area as not been developed because of poor street design unsuited to topography. Purchase of property and redesigning of the 325 acres will make this land available for building under the provisions of the California Redevelopment Act and with federal government assistance." By permission of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

OPEN LATE

So how does it work?

Seems like you send a request through this app and a car picks you up. Oh! It's here! Let's cross the street

How do you know which one it is?

It's a black car. Oh.. the other side of the street maybe?

I see it!

Oh wait. Is that it?

I think it's actually where we just were. Are you sure?

...Nope. Wait yes! There!

Boy you guys sure looked funny on my GPS! Haha ha!

Oh... Uh... Sorry.

By Julie Casson 2-14

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

Sudoku-fun!

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

The Object:
Fill in the blank squares so that each of the numbers 1 to 9 appears exactly once in each row, column and block.

Answer:
The answer appears below.

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

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Do you have a pinched nerve? We can help.

Dear friend,

It's hard to believe, I know, but it's true. Last year more Americans were killed by prescription drugs than by guns, AIDS, suicides and terrorists combined...But we'll get to that in a minute.

Let me start by explaining the photo in this letter. You know when I meet people in town they usually say, "Oh yeah, I know you, you are Doctor Meakim. You have been on the corner of Beach and Jones for years....." Well, that's me. I'm also the woman hugging her niece at the jersey shore in the picture.



17 years ago something happened that changed my life forever. I was a young woman living in Philadelphia when it happened. I was driving with a friend when she missed a stop sign and rammed into the side of another car. We were all shaken up. The police were called and we all went to the hospital. No one was bleeding, so the doctors took some x-rays of our neck, gave us pain meds and sent us on our way. The next day I woke up with pain everywhere and it just kept getting worse. For years I tried everything that I could find. For an escape from the pain, I went to medical doctors, physical therapists, acupuncturists, I tried special pillows, and anything I thought might help. I spent a lot of time and money. Along the way I had two more car accidents and the pain kept getting worse and worse. I had developed fibromyalgia, neck pain, mid-back pain and low-back pain with tingling and numbness down my right arm and leg. I was scared that something was really wrong with me. This could not be normal. I was only 33 years old and felt like I was 100. That is when someone told me about a chiropractor that they thought could help. As a matter of fact, after the first person told me about him, two more people did that same week. So I made an appointment with the chiropractor. Thank goodness that they took the time to help me! I went to his office where he asked me about my problems, did an exam, and took some x-rays of my head and back. After that he pointed out where my nerves were pinched and adjusted them. The adjustment was so light I barely felt it. I began crying as I felt the pain leave my body for the first time in years. It may sound strange, but I was so happy and grateful for the relief that I still thank him every day! After that, I knew what I had to do. I had to become a chiropractor, and that's how it happened!

I have adjusted many children within the first 15 minutes after birth. They obviously didn't complain of neck pain or back pain; I adjust them to keep them healthy... as with all the hundreds of children I care for in my office.

You see, it's not normal for kids to get ear infections, asthma, allergies or a number of other illnesses we see clear up in our office everyday.

When the nervous system is working correctly your internal resistance and healing powers are enhanced.

A healthy family does NOT rely on medication to make them well. My family does not turn to medication to seek health and we don't have a "medicine chest" in our home. Due to years of advertising saturation from the pharmaceutical companies most Americans do seek health from outside- in and most families have a "medicine chest" filled with an average of 16 different medications.

In an average year, the World Health Organization (WHO) reports over 1.5 million hospitalizations due to medication. Last year the WHO reported 350,000 deaths due to medication people took... and 160,000 were when the drugs were prescribed correctly. More people died last year from medication than at Pearl Harbor and Vietnam. Amazing huh?

If drugs make people well, then those who take the most should be the healthiest, but this simply isn't the case.

Many people are beginning to understand that health comes from within. This is why chiropractic helps so many people. You see, your body can heal itself. Your body doesn't need any help; it just can't have any interference. With chiropractic, we don't add anything to the body or take anything from it. We find interference in the nervous system and remove it thus enhancing the healing capacities of the body.

We get tremendous results... it really is as simple as that.

For the past eight years, people from San Francisco and the surrounding area have come to see me with their pinched nerve problems.

• Headaches • Migraines • Chronic Pain • Neck pain • Shoulder/arm pain • Whiplash from car accidents • Backaches • Numbness in limbs • Athletic injuries just to name a few.

Here is what some of your neighbors have said:

"I had back pain for 15 plus years and two back operations. Now I play tennis, sit at my computer and enjoy an active pain free life! Thank you Dr. Meakim!" — A. McGrath

"All possible medicines and doctors, you made a miracle taking away my pain!! I am a happy wife and mother again!" — L. Igudesman

"I have had chronic neck, shoulder and arm pain for the last 4 years. After seeing Dr. Meakim I can now twist off caps, button/zip my own pants and there is no longer a need for me to ice my arm in the morning and night! I feel more energetic, and can move my arm and neck pain free!" — C. Brubaker

Now...Find out for yourself and benefit from an AMAZING OFFER- Look, It should not cost you an arm and a leg to correct your health. You are going to write a check to someone for your health expenses, you may as well write a lesser one for chiropractic. Ani I know you're smart. You want to get to the cause of the problem, and not just cover it up with drugs. When you are one of the first 20 people to call and schedule a new patient exam (by October 24th) you will receive that entire exam for \$37. That's with a consultation with the doctor, examination and x-rays... the whole ball of wax, and there are no hidden fees. But call right away because we expect to be flooded with calls as this exam costs \$317. Again there are only 20 of these slots so don't miss out. I hope that there's no misunderstanding about the quality of care just because I have a lower exam fee. You'll get great care at a great fee. I just offer that low exam fee to help more people who need care.

My qualifications:

I am a graduate of Palmer College of Chiropractic, I have published articles in leading chiropractic journals and taught chiropractic to chiropractors! I've been helping your neighbors in San Francisco since 2004. I've been entrusted to take care of tiny babies to athletes that you may know.

My assistant is Karen and she is friendly and ready to assist you to set up an evaluation. Our clinic is both friendly and warm and we try our best to make you feel at home. We have wonderful service at an exceptional fee. Our clinic is called San Francisco Family Spinal Care and it is at 505 Beach Street (we are at the corner of Beach and Jones on the edge of North Beach). Our phone number is 415-771-7071. Call today for an appointment. We can help you. Thank you. — Dr. Christina Meakim D.C.

P.S. When accompanied by the first, I am also offering the second family member this same examination for only \$17.

P.P.S. Can you imagine not having to wait at a doctor's office? Well, your time is as valuable as mine. That's why we have a no-wait policy. You will be seen within minutes of your appointment.

P.P.P.S. Of course, all people respond differently to care.

THE REAL ESTATE ANSWER MAN By Kevin Birmingham



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

Bill Branchini

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

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

Arianna

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

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

Cindy Wu Leonard

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

Ask local real estate expert Kevin Birmingham: kevin@kevinbirmingham.com

SECOND THOUGHTS / By Jack Kaye



Listening and Hearing

I love music. I love listening to it and I love singing it. I consider my iPod one of the great inventions and use it every day. But surely, there's a time and a place for it. I think that listening to music while driving is wonderful, enhancing both experiences at the same time. I think that listening while walking is also quite nice depending on where you're walking and what you are listening to. Live concerts can be great place to hear your favorite singers. But must we endure it while on hold, or much worse, while listening to someone speaking on T.V.?

I must disclose that I am a bit hard of hearing. I'm usually fine on the phone, or when talking with someone who is articulate and whose mouth I can see making the sounds. My hearing, like that of many of my contemporaries, starts failing when there is a bit of background noise. I can't hear in a noisy restaurant or at a semi-wild party. Sometimes, this cannot be avoided. But then there's television.

I resent background music on T.V. while someone is talking. It makes it almost impossible to make out the words in the midst of this unnecessary musical noise. I find it very frustrating. I don't need music to have a reaction to the words the character is speaking, the ones I could hear were it not for the background sound. The words and the speaker's presentation of them in context should suffice. I am hard of hearing, but I am not stupid or without the ability to react to verbal and non-verbal stimuli.

At this point some might be thinking, "why not use closed captioning to see the words you can't hear?" Have you seen it lately? Sometimes it is so delayed that you have forgotten what the scene was. Sometimes when there are just one or two words you can't quite hear, it turns out that whoever is typing the closed captions didn't hear it either. Sometimes it seems like the transcriber just gave up. Being so much behind, the captioner just says "the hell with it" and stops writing and we stop knowing what was being said. Why can't whatever is not scripted be taped and then transcribed so when it airs we can see the words as they are spoken and not several minutes later? Those already scripted should have simultaneous subtitles. And it would be great if the words could be spelled closer to the actual.

And while we're on the subject of gratuitous background noise, there are the laugh tracks. They do not interfere with my hearing. They interfere with my enjoying. Again, I understand the language well enough and get jokes well enough, as most of us do, to know what is funny and react accordingly. I find it superfluous and insulting to have a laugh track tell me what's funny and when to laugh along with the make-believe crowd.

While I have a problem of listening but not hearing, there is also the issue of hearing without listening.

What is that noise at eight A.M.? Is it construction? No. Is it tree trimming?

No. What is it and when will it stop? It is someone with ears covered using a leaf blower. Next question - why? Why is this person using a gas guzzling, noisy machine to do what a rake and/or broom could do more efficiently, more effectively and much more quietly? Why is the person who hired him letting him, or has the homeowner left for work already or gone deaf? Why is the worker chasing a single leaf out to the street? Why do we even allow noisy leaf blowers?

And what about people talking on the cell phones while in public? Must we hear their innermost thoughts even though we are not listening? What about privacy? Isn't that the rage nowadays, that we are all concerned that the government might have access to our communications? We have otherwise intelligent people acting outraged at the invasion of their privacy because the government has access to all hundreds of billions phone records that do not include the name of the person or what was said - just what number called what number for how long at what time. Then why are we forced to eavesdrop on our neighbors and fellow customers? And it wouldn't be so bad if the conversations we were subjected to were interesting. It might not be so bad if there was any humor or gossip or metaphysical speculation. But it is usually so boring you almost want to interject something to raise the level of discourse. I sometimes start singing real loud or I shout at my dog even if she isn't with me at the time. If I have to listen to them, let them have to listen to me.

Then there are those who want to share their rap music with us. They drive worthless cars with state-of-the-art sound systems and they want the world to know. The bass is usually overwhelming, making it impossible to hear the moronic lyrics. It's like going to a restaurant where the service is so bad you forget about the terrible food.

It is now late at night and the only sound I hear is that of my steam heat radiator sizzling. It is one of my favorite sounds - the sound of warmth. This sound is being interrupted by the sound of my fingers touching the various keys to form the words I am writing. I'm going to stop now so to better hear the sound of soothing warmth.

Feedback: kaye@westsideobserver.com

MODERN NATURE: GEORGIA O'KEEFFE AND LAKE GEORGE**de Young Museum****February 15–May 11**

The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco present Modern Nature: Georgia O'Keeffe and Lake George, organized by The Hyde Collection in association with the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. The exhibition, which begins its exclusive West Coast presentation at the de Young on February 15, 2014, is the first major exhibition to examine the body of work that Georgia O'Keeffe (1887–1986) created based on her experiences at Lake George.



Georgia O'Keeffe, American (1887–1986), Starlight Night, Lake George, 1922. Oil on canvas.

From 1918 until 1934, O'Keeffe lived for part of each year at the family estate of Alfred Stieglitz (1864–1946) on Lake George in New York's Adirondack Park. The 36-acre property, situated near Lake George Village along the western shoreline, served as a rural retreat for the artist, providing the subject matter for much of her art, and inspiring the spirit of place that she continually evoked in her works from this era, an essential aspect to her evolving modern approach to depicting the natural world. During this highly productive period she created more than 200 paintings on canvas and paper in addition to sketches and pastels, making her Lake George years among the most prolific and transformative of her seven-decade career. This period coincided with O'Keeffe's first critical and popular acclaim as a professional artist, helped define her personal style, and affirmed her passion for natural subject matter prior to her well-known move to the Southwest.

February
CALENDAR**EVERY SUNDAY • FARMERS MARKET**

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

EVERY MON & TUE • JOB SEEKERS LAB

Mon 11 am–2pm & Tue 10 am–1 pm Internet-ready computers are available for independent work such as resume, preparing job applications and/or searching for jobs. Some staff assistance. Bring a flash drive. Main Library, 100 Larkin, 5th Fl.

EVERY TUES • QUE SYRAH HAPPY HOUR

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

EVERY WED • FEAR OF PUBLIC SPEAKING?

Every Wed | 7-8 am | Toastmasters helps you become a confident public speaker. Tennessee Grill, 1128 Taraval. RSVP 564-6069.

EVERY THURS - NIGHTLIFE

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

JAZZ FRIDAYS @ THE CLIFF HOUSE

Every Fri | 7–11 pm | The Balcony Lounge at the Cliff House hosts jazz every Fri night. 1 Seal Rock. cliff-house.com/home/jazz.html.

FRIDAY NIGHTS @ THE DEYOUNG

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

WED • GWPNA

Wed Feb 2 | 7-9 pm | Greater West Portal Neighborhood Assn, West Portal Playground Clubhouse, 131 Lenox Way, 1st Wed each month.

WED • CURE FOR AGING?

Wed Feb 5 | 8 pm | Renowned aging experts Dr. Brian Kennedy and Dr. Dean Ornish will offer their take on the impact of nutrition and lifestyle on the aging process. Dr. Brian Kennedy currently serves as the president and CEO of the Buck Institute for Research on Aging. Dr. Dean Ornish is the president of the Preventive Research Institute and Clinical Professor of Medicine at UCSF. Commonwealth Club, The Outdoor Art Club, One West Blithedale Ave. Mill Valley \$45 non-members, \$35 members. Tickets 597-6705 or www.commonwealthclub.org

THU • PEOPLE OF PARKSIDE/SUNSET

Thu Feb 6 | 7 pm | Formerly Taraval Parkside Merchants Assn. Taraval Station, 2345 24th Ave. 1st Thu each month, 945 Taraval St. #350 Phone: (415) 269-7080 www.sf-pops.com/

TUE • LEARN COMPUTER SKILLS

Tue Feb 11, 18 & 25 | 10 am-1 pm | Come get help with setting up email accounts, word processing and other basic computer related tasks. Most Tuesdays at this time. Ask questions and learn the basics of using a computer! Main Library, 100 Larkin St.

THU-MON • SF WRITERS CONFERENCE

Thu Feb 13-Mon Feb 16 | 6:30 pm | Four days of 60+ sessions with over 100 bestselling authors, literary agents, editors and publishers from major publishing houses! Presenters include Dan Millman, Chitra Divakaruni, Rhys Bowen, and Barry Eisler. Info, times, costs: sfwriters.org.

THU • DIST COALITION MEETING

Thu Feb 13 | 7-9 pm | Meets 2nd Thu each month. Info: 586.8103 or ssuval@sbcglobal.net Taraval Station, 2345 24th Ave.

FRI • OVERSIZED VEHICLE HEARING

Fri Feb 14 | 10 am | SFMTA Public Hearing. The oversize vehicle overnight parking restriction has been effective in pilot locations this hearing is to determine new locations. City Hall, Rm. 416

SAT • TAI CHI CLASSES

Sat Feb 15 | 10-12 pm | The Taoist Tai Chi Society will be starting beginner Tai Chi classes. DSG Studios, 564 Monterey Blvd, Studio A: far right.

SUN • PARTNER YOGA WORKSHOP

Sun Feb 16 | 4-5:30 pm | Instructor Barbie Levasseur teaches you to strengthen a relationship by fostering trust and communication. Sign-up at thriveabilitysf.com. Pre-Reg \$25 each - walk-in \$30 per person. 300-B West Portal Ave., 566.0888.

TUE • COMMUNITY SAFETY MEETING

Tue Feb 17 | 7 pm | Meet with Captain Curtis Lum. 3rd Tue of the month. Taraval Community Room, located at 2345 - 24th Ave. 759-3100.

TUE • LEARN TO USE LINKEDIN

Tue Feb 18 | 6-7:30 pm | Business and media experts will take you step by step through the process of creating a LinkedIn account and profile, how to connect with people on LinkedIn and use it for your professional development. Bring your own laptop — due to renovation the Computer Training Room does not include computers. Main Library, 100 Larkin St.

SAT • SUPE. YEE COMMUNITY MEETING

Sat Feb 22 | 10:30 am - 12 pm | The process of Participative Budgeting for Projects West Portal Playground Clubhouse, 131 Lenox Way.

MON • CENTRAL COUNCIL

Mon Feb 24 | 7:30 pm | West of Twin Peaks Central Council meets to discuss topics of interest to Westside residents. Last Monday each month. Forest Hills Clubhouse, 381 Magellan Ave.

MON • SHARP

Mon Feb 24 | 7 pm | Sunset Heights Assoc. of Responsible People. Last Mon each month - sharpsf.com for details. 1736 9th Ave. @Moraga.

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Sunday through Thursday 6:00 – 9:00 pm

Wine Lovers' Tuesday
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all day with purchase of an entrée!

Valet parking every night after 5:00 pm. *Some restrictions apply.
Promotions are not valid on holidays and Valentine's Day.

1090 Point Lobos 415-386-3330 www.CliffHouse.com

TUE • SUTRO LIBRARY HISTORY

Tue Feb 25 | 7:30 pm | Gary Kurutz, previously the head librarian at Sutro Library, will describe the history of this extraordinary rare book and manuscript library, from its inception by Adolph Sutro to its relocation SF State University. That it survives today serves as a tribute to all who believe in the importance of a publicly financed research library. \$5, SFHA members FREE. St. Philip's Church, 725 Diamond St (24th St.) Limited parking MUNI: 24-Divisadero, 48-Quintara and 35-Eureka

THU • OMI NEIGHBORS IN ACTION

Thu Feb 27 | 7 pm | Meets last Thu each month. SF State Warriors and Recology are invited. This meeting is at Temple UMC 65 Beverly/Sheilds Street.

THU-SAT • SPAMALOT

Feb 27, 28, Mar 1, 6, 7 & 8 | 7:30 pm | Mar 1 &

8 | 2 pm | Lovingly ripped off from the classic Monty Python and the Holy Grail, the legend of King Arthur and his Knights features a bevy of beautiful show girls, not to mention cows, killer rabbits, and French people. The Technical Department team brought you Ragtime, The Producers, and 42nd Street. Ruth Asawa School of Arts. Tickets: sfsota.org. 555 Portola.

FRI-SUN • FREE/ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

Fri - Sun Feb 28, Mar 1 & 2 | 9:30 (11 Sun) am-5pm | Free Day for St. Francis Wood, Lake Merced residents. California Academy of Sciences, GGP. Info: 379-8000.

Local event? editor@westsideobserver.com

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At the Movies / Don Lee



ALL IS LOST

Unnamed “Our Man” alone: Robert Redford is sleeping on his 39-foot yacht adrift in the Indian Ocean when he awakens to find water two feet deep in the cabin. Going on deck, he sees what caused the gash where water has been washing in. His repairs seem futile. How the sailor copes with his inoperable radio and navigation equipment and a horrendous storm is the substance of his weathered, brilliant, nearly silent performance with the camera staring into every furrow on his face and neck as the summer sun beats down. **Brief** profanity.

AMERICAN HUSTLE

A conman with the world’s worst comb-over, Irving Rosenfeld: Christian Bale; a redhead sharp con artist sans-bra who pretends to be British royalty, Sydney Prosser: Amy Adams; an FBI agent with a loose screw and hair curled with tiny pink rollers, Richie DiMaso: Bradley Cooper; crooked New Jersey Mayor Carmine Polito: Jeremy Renner; a sexy blonde without common sense = a loose cannon with a lit fuse, Rosalyn Rosenfeld: Jennifer Lawrence; and Stoddard: Louis C.K. comprise the varied cast members. Director and screenplay co-writer David O. Russell with Eric Singer keep the activity moving fast and loose. This 1970’s tale of N.J. con artists is full of surprises. Pervasive profanity. Brief violence. Mature thematic material. Some sexuality. **Awards:** Winner: 3 Golden Globes: Best Comedy Film, Best Performance by an Actress: Adams, Sup. Actress: Lawrence + 4 noms. + 40 awards; 10 Oscar nominations + 83 other noms.

AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY

Bev Weston: Sam Shepard has been unhappily married his adult life to Violet (the non-shrinking variety): Meryl Streep, who smokes, drinks and has quite a mouth, putting down most everything. They live in Osage County, Oklahoma with family nearby. When Bev drowns, the family gathers for his funeral. One daughter, Barbara: Julia Roberts, lives in Colorado with daughter Jean: Abigail Breslin and arrives in a separate vehicle from separated husband Bill Fordham: Ewan McGregor. The rest of Barb’s siblings, Mattie Fae: Margo Martindale, married to Charlie: Chris Cooper, with son Little Charles: Benedict Cumberbatch (PBS’s Sherlock); Ivy: Julianne Nicholson; Karen: Juliette Lewis and husband, Steve: Dermot Mulroney move back into their old bedrooms for the week. Secrets spew out amid the dirty linen. The long-running Broadway drama has been well adapted for the screen by its playwright Tracy Letts and directed by John Wells. Shot on actual location, they forgot to fake a single Oklahoma accent. Shame on Streep especially, who has won two Oscars for her European femme roles. Roberts, as a Georgia native, should have had no trouble. **Awards:** Winner: 7 awards, 2 Oscar nominations + 34 other noms.: most for Streep and Roberts.

THE BOOK THIEF

Hans: Geoffrey Rush and Rosa: Emily Watson adopt orphaned teen Liesel: Sophie Nélisse in 1940. They hide a Jewish youth in their basement, despite the frequent house searches of their German village by uniformed Nazis. Leisel’s young pal Rudy: Nico Liersch comes to hate the Nazis. Frau Heinrich: Kirsten Block, wife of Buergermeister Hermann: Rainer Bock (War Horse), shares their library with courageous Liesel, who is eager to learn. Hans tutors Liesel in the basement. Director Brian Persival and writer Michael Petroni, who adapted Markus Zusak’s novel, keep their focus on the villagers and not the War, even the Nazis are incidental. Some violence. Intense depiction of thematic material.

FROZEN 3D

This musical tale of two Scandinavian sisters is the latest hit for Disney. Viewers can easily see how the faults and loves of Princesses Anna: voice of Kristen Bell and Elsa: v.o. Idina Menzel could be transformed into the next Broadway stage success to replace Beauty and the Beast. Christoff: Jonathan Groff and Olaf: Josh Gof are the men in young Anna’s life. Queen Elsa is cursed with a freezing touch that changes the climate and freezes the fjords so the fishing industry is kaput. Action. Mild rude humor. **Awards:** Winner: 18 Best Animated Feature + 34 nominations. Oscar noms.: B.A.F. and Best Song: “Let It Go.”

HER

Lonely hearts letter writer Theodore: Joaquin Phoenix is almost divorced from Catherine: Rooney Mara. He purchases an OS1, advertised as “not just an operating system, it’s a consciousness.”Samantha: voice of Scarlett Johansson, the voice of his OS1 and Theodore become acquainted and spend more and more time together. They find they are in love. She helps him deal with some of his problems but can’t assist him with being in love with his OS. **Awards:** 37 wins + 53 noms. Five Oscar noms. incl Best Pic, Orig. Screenplay, Score.

THE HOBBIT: THE DESOLATION OF SMAUG IMAX 3D

Bilbo Baggins: Martin Freeman with his ring of magical powers reaches the human village Lake-town to keep his contract with the dwarves. Thorin: Richard Armitage and friends transverse the Misty Mountains, then tackle the Milkwood Forest. Bilbo has an exciting chase with Smaug, the dragon, over hills of gold coins within his lair. Director Peter Jackson never disappoints his fans of the spectacle. Intense fantasy action violence. Frightening images.

JACK RYAN: SHADOW RECRUIT: IMAX

A young CIA covert security analyst Jack Ryan: Chris Pine discovers a Russian plot designed to coincide an attack on the U.S. economy with a planned terrorist attack by Russian KGB Viktor Cerevin: Kenneth Branagh [who does double duty as director, excelling at both]. Ryan’s handler, Thomas Harper: Kevin Costner checks on him regularly, coordinating the intrigue that Viktor must not know about. Jack’s bride and his former physical therapist, Cathy: Keira Knightley turns up unexpectedly in his Moscow hotel room which he just trashed defending himself from an assassin. Writers Adam Cozad and David Koepp add even more breathtaking activity for Tom Clancy’s hero. Expect Pine to be around awhile as Ryan; he does an admirable job. Violent intense action. Brief profanity.

LONE SURVIVOR

Marcus Luttrell: Mark Wahlberg and his team, Michael: Taylor Kitsch, Danny: Emile Hirsch and Matt: Ben Foster, are dropped by helicopter into the mountains of Afghanistan to kill an al Qaeda leader in June 2005. Their radio base contact, Erik: Eric Bana, is awakened to learn they are having problems. Director Peter Berg presents three days in the brutal and bloody lives and deaths of the four-man Seal team. Strong bloody war violence. Profanity.

NEBRASKA

Woody Grant: Bruce Dern and his son David: Will Forte drive from Billings, Montana to Lincoln, Nebraska so Woody can cash in his “winning” million-dollar Mega Sweepstakes Marketing ticket. Brilliantly, Alexander Payne directs in black-and-white Bob Nelson’s character study screenplay as the men tangle, explaining their years-long estrangement. Woody’s spunky wife Kate: June Squibb rounds out the trio. They get sidetracked in the small town where Woody grew up and left some unsettled issues with his former neighbors, including Ed: Stacy Keach. All the performances are extraordinary without any gloss. Mild profanity. **Awards:** 6 Oscar noms. incl. Best Pic, Actor, Sup. Actress, Dir., Orig. Scrn.

PHILOMENA

Irish girl Philomena Lee: Sophie Kennedy Clark had a son out of wedlock which she brings up in a Catholic nunnery until he’s about four and suddenly given to an American couple for adoption. A BBC correspondent Martin Sixsmith: Steve Coogan [also co-producer] talks Lee: now aged to Judi Dench, into tracking down her son, who would be in his late 30’s. They fly to Washington, D.C., to find he has been close to The President. Sister Hildegarde: British actress Barbara Jefford is the close-mouthed villainess. Some violence. Thematic elements. Profanity. Sexual references. **Awards:** 17 Wins: incl. 9 awards: Venice Film Festival. 4 Oscar noms.: Pic, Actress: Dench, Adapted Scrn., Orig. Music Score + 37 other noms.

THE WOLF OF WALL STREET

Jordan Belfort: Leonardo DiCaprio learns how to make big money as a Wall St. broker from his first stock broker hero Mark: Matthew McConaughey. He’s living the good life when a crash forces him to reinvent himself. From a garage, he starts with penny stocks and soon has a staff. His best pal/No. Two man at work, Donnie: Jonah Hill revels in their success. Soon, Jordan has his second Mrs. B./voluptuous fashion designer Naomi: Margot Robbie and two kids. Manny: Jon Favreau, his dad Max: Rob Reiner and a huge staff have him making frequent deposits with Swiss banker Jean: Jean Dujardin (Oscar-winner for The Artist). Perseverant FBI Agent Patrick: Kyle Chandler gets on his trail and upsets the gold cart. Based on Belfort’s book, director Martin Scorsese presents the excessive parties with 50 hookers, drugs and booze flowing like water. Pervasive profanity (if you count the 506 F-bombs in the 3-hour running time). Is Scorsese or writer Terence Winter trying to get into the Guinness Book of Records? Drug usage! Nudity. Frequent sexual content. **Awards:** Winner: 15 + Golden Globe: Best Actor, Comedy or Musical: DiCaprio. Noms.: 5 Oscar noms.: Best Pic, Actor: DiCaprio, Sup. Actor: Hill, Dir., Adpt. Scrn. + 44 noms.

At the Theater / Flora Lynn Isaacson and Linda Ayres-Frederick



Linda Ayres-Frederick



Flora Lynn Isaacson

Journey’s End

Ross Valley Players presents the West Coast Premiere of the World War I drama *Journey’s End* James Dunn’s Gripping New Production by R.C. Sherriff. Set in the trenches of war, the play gives us a look into the experiences of the officers of a British Army infantry company as they prepare for an enemy attack. Set in a dugout at St. Quentin, France in 1918, toward the end of the war, the entire story plays out over four days—March 18, 1918 to March 21, 1918. First of all the set (Ron Krempetz) was excellent. A window dead center was brilliantly lit by Ellen Brooks and really helps to set the scene; as day breaks, the sun streams down, and at night, the candles and lamps glow in the darkness. The attention to meticulous detail takes us straight back to the damp, inhospitable setting of the trenches. We could see two bunks, a table with candles, and several makeshift chairs. The play begins as Captain Hardy (Steve Price) prepares to go on leave—new officers will replace him for the next six days. Captain Stanhope (David Yen) has been at the front for three years, is mentally on the edge and is always drinking whiskey. He is joined by Lt. Osborne (Tom Hudgens), 2nd Lt. Raleigh (Francis Serpa), 2nd Lt. Trotter (Stephen Dietz), and 2nd Lt. Hibbert (Phillip Goleman). Sean Gunnell (Private Mason) is the omnipresent cook that appears hour after hour. Jeff Taylor has a wonderful cameo as the company sergeant major. The men eat, smoke and drink, all to excess, since there is nothing else to do in between being on duty. There is tension, sadness and constant fear, but stories and laughter too.



The performances from the nine strong ensemble are exceptionally good, with brilliant performances from many. The sound design (Stephen Dietz) really set the tone of the play, and rather than drown us with constant fire, gave us deafening bombardment to spectacular effect when necessary, but mostly just eerie silence and pops of distant shells. The end of the journey is a sad one, but the story of the journey is highly recommended, due to Dunn’s magnificent staging and his sterling ensemble cast. Everything about this production has been rendered with a sensitivity and craftsmanship that represents theatre at its finest.

Journey’s End runs January 16, 2014-February 16, 2014. Regular Thursday performances are at 7:30 p.m., Friday-Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. All performances are held at the Barn Theatre, home of the Ross Valley Players, 30 Sir Francis Drake Blvd., Ross, CA. For tickets, call 415-456-9555, extension 1 or go to www.rossvalleyplayers.com. Coming up next at Ross Valley Players will be *Arms and the Man* by George Bernard Shaw and directed by Cris Cassell, March 14-April 13, 2014. **Flora Lynn Isaacson**

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School SMARTS Parent Academies Come to San Francisco

By Carol Kocivar©2014

The sign in the classroom at Visitacion Valley Elementary School in San Francisco says "Congratulations Parents!" If you look really carefully you can see— written in the handwriting of children— small hearts and rainbows and smiles.

Proud children saying "thank you" to their parents for graduating from the first School SMARTS parent academy in San Francisco.

And proud parents receiving graduation certificates for completing a 7-week program created by the California State PTA.

The School SMARTS programs is designed to give elementary school parents the big picture of how the education system works and the skills and resources to support student success.

Several more San Francisco elementary schools, including Hillcrest, Alvarado, Sunnyside, and Paul Revere, are scheduled to provide the SMARTS parent academies this semester

The California State PTA developed this award-winning program to meet the needs of new parents, many of whom don't speak English and are new to California's education system.

The Parent Academy sessions include lessons on communicating effectively, diverse learning, styles, advocating for a quality education, and how important parent involvement is for children and for schools. The academies and materials are

in English, Spanish, Cantonese and Arabic.

Each session includes an art activity, which builds a sense of community and underscores the importance of a complete education that includes the arts.

Though still offered as a pilot program this year, parents in nearly 50 elementary schools in 11 school districts in California are scheduled to participate.

Engaging parents in their schools and providing them with the skills to help their children

is even more important this year, as the state moves decisions on education to local communities through the new Local Control Funding Formula.

Research shows that parent engagement in schools increases a child's chances of success across all socio economic groups.

You can find more information about the School SMARTS program—with pictures of parents and the arts projects—at <http://www.capta.org/sections/school-smarts>

The program is generously supported by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

Feedback: kocivar@westsideobserver.com

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Real Travel *By Sergio Nibbi*



It Takes a Village

Barrier or no barrier, driving across the Golden Gate Bridge will always be a challenge. Narrow lanes of traffic separate the oncoming cars by mere inches while spectacular views on either side add to the distraction. The potato patch and the Farralones face the setting sun, while red and white boats carry tourists around the bay on the eastern side. As locals, how many times have we stopped at the vista point acting like tourists, and enjoyed the breathtaking views of the San Francisco hills and skyscrapers?

Down the steep incline, the road becomes a bit more manageable as we head for Sausalito, a relatively quiet maritime village hosting some of the finest boutiques and restaurants in the county of Marin. To the tourist it could be reminiscent of Portofino, Viareggio, Barcelona or dozens of European sea towns, but to the locals its history is long and fascinating. As a youngster I remember seeing the massive ship building yards where Bechtel Corporation's Marinship built a ship a week during the peak of the Second World War. With its six shipways operating

point for our troops heading to the war in the Pacific, and temporary housing was being built for all the support personnel working tirelessly for



the war effort. Many years later, as a member of the 91st Infantry Reserve, I spent many a weekend at Fort Berry and Fort Cronkite's rifle range sharpening my marksmen's skills in preparation for active duty.

What was once home to ships and shipyards soon became a mecca for houseboats and hippies. Famous and infamous were to be seen in various roles, and the likes of Sterling Hayden, Shel Silverstein and of course, Sally Stanford, drew the comments and the crowds.

When we first got involved in boating our first berth was at Clipper Yacht Harbor in downtown Sausalito, our little 25 footer dwarfed by the mega-yachts surrounding us. Cruising around

the area we were treated to years of history for our young family to enjoy. They were too young to understand or appreciate the real history of Sausalito from Native Amer-

ican to Spanish, Mexican and the Europeans. From the iconic William Richardson, to the commercial fishermen and yachting enthusiasts, the area was further expanded once ferry service was opened between San Francisco's

24 hours a day, the more than 20,000 workers rolled the sleepy little town back in time to its 1920's Prohibition days, with its legendary speakeasies and rumrunners. I still vividly remember attending a christening of one of those ships, as some obscure dignitary cracked a bottle of Champaign across the bow of the newly completed ship, which signaled the release of the behemoth as its keel slipped slowly down the ways.

During the war years the Bay Area was a mecca of military activity. A submarine net was stretched across San Francisco Bay, which would be raised and lowered as ships arrived and left. Pittsburgh was a major embarkation



Hyde Street pier and downtown Sausalito. With a new bridge being christened in May of 1937, the hustle and bustle was reduced to a trickle as Highway 101 bypassed Sausalito entirely. Although our little boat is now gone and our children have long forgotten this village of their youth we still return to visit and re-visit some of the area's most exciting restaurants and shops. Once our children grew older we did take them to the Valhalla Restaurant, but not bringing up the checkered past of its colorful owner, Sally Stanford. Yes, she was mayor of the city and certainly civic minded and for them that was enough history.

On a recent visit we enjoyed a wonderful lunch at Poggio. Another one of our favorites is Scoma's. Perhaps the time has come to abandon that spectacular Golden Gate and grab a scenic ride on one of those red and white boats and revisit and recapture some of those wonderful moments from our earlier years. A stroll along the waterfront, a relaxing lunch along the way and a final stop at Sally Stanford's fountain and, as the inscription says, "Have a Drink on Sally."

Sergio Nibbi gets around—the world! Feedback: sergio@westsideobserver.com

CELEBRATE THE YEAR OF THE HORSE

SF Zoo's Annual Lunar New Year party Free to those born in the Year of the Horse (1930, 1942, 1954, 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002, and 2014).



To commemorate the Year of the Horse, the San Francisco Zoo will host Lunar New Year entertainment for children of all ages. Come marvel at Chinese acrobatic performances, traditional Chinese lion and folk dancing, Chinese yo-yo tricks, and much more. Make a take-home horse craft near the entertainment stage. Go on a Zodiac Scavenger Hunt through the Zoo to learn fun facts about the animals found on the Chinese calendar; complete the Zodiac Scavenger Hunt and receive a lucky red envelope with a special surprise inside. The Zoo's Chinese New

Year festivities will be held at the Event Tent near the entrance to the Fisher Family Children's Zoo. Access to the celebration is free with paid admission to the Zoo. However, guests born in the Year of the Horse (1930, 1942, 1954, 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002, and 2014) will receive free Zoo admission on that day.

Where: San Francisco Zoo
When: Sunday, February 9, from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

- Schedule of Performances:**
- 11:00 - 11:30 – Red Panda Acrobat
 - 11:45 - 12:15 – Chung Ngai Dance Troupe
 - 1:00 - 1:30 – Red Panda Acrobat
 - 1:45 - 2:15 – Chung Ngai Dance Troupe
 - 2:30 - 3:00 – Red Panda Acrobat

- Horse-themed Keeper Talks in the Fisher Family Children's Zoo: 12:00 and 2:30
- The special exhibition, The Scoop on Poop, the science of what animals leave behind
 - Our 6-month-old female western lowland gorilla, Kabibe
 - The newly renovated \$3.2 million Elinor Friend Playground
 - A red-necked wallaby joey (peeking out of the pouch)



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