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# WESTSIDE OBSERVER

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## Where Can Homeless Shelters Be Placed in San Francisco?

By George Wooding

Few citizens know this, but all of San Francisco’s Residential Housing with two attached units (RH-2) can be converted into a homeless shelter by the Planning Department.

While the City claims it does not significantly add to the capacity of homeless shelters, there is already a severe shortage of facilities.

Cruel as it sounds, most neighborhoods will not want a homeless shelter in their neighborhood due to the potential for problems with homeless residents and their friends who visit.

Last November 25, Mayor Ed Lee proposed an ordinance that would change the definition of homeless shelters. The Mayor’s proposal was adopted by the Planning Commission on December 18 and will be heard before the Board of Supervisors Land Use and Economic Development Committee in late February.

The proposed ordinance would amend the Planning Code to define what a “Homeless Shelter” is and to



establish zoning, open space, and parking policies for this use in compliance with California Government Code requirements. It would also amend the Administrative Code to require contracts between the City and shelter operators to contain operational standards.

The Planning Code currently does not include a definition for homeless shelters.

Planning is stating that the new ordinance will be almost identical to

the old homeless shelter ordinance, minus some changes in the regulations for tourist hotels.

The legislation will supposedly allow consistency in reviewing homeless shelter applications per the Planning Code. It would:

- Create a definition for homeless shelters in the Planning Code, reflecting the current implications of this type of use in the neighborhood based on the more current trends of

Cont. p. 5

## City Attorney’s Whistleblower Battle Lands in Court

By Dr. Maria Rivero and Dr. Derek Kerr

No City agency admits to retaliating against whistleblowers. Dennis Herrera *insists* that firing his former Chief Trial Deputy, Joanne Hoeper, “*was in the works long before she claimed...that she had uncovered a kickback scheme in the City Attorney’s Office.*” Hoeper charges Herrera with “*after-the-fact fabrications*” to justify her removal for exposing shady sewer replacement deals. Legally, she must show that whistleblowing was a contributing factor in her firing. Herrera must provide clear and convincing evidence that she was sacked for cause. Their battle entered Superior Court on 1/7/15.



Joanne Hoeper

After publicly praising Hoeper’s aggressive fraud litigation in 2003, Herrera says he began doubting her in 2005 for escalating expenses and underestimating liabilities. He focuses on 2 out of hundreds of cases handled by Hoeper’s team. In the \$7 million *Lopez* settlement against the School District, the judge rebuked City attorneys who “*tenaciously fought each stage of litigation and caused delay throughout discovery, which substantially increased the fees and costs.*” Hoeper responds that the litigation strategy was directed by the client and that Herrera’s “*failure to properly staff the case...seriously hampered the defense.*” In the \$27 million *Dominguez* verdict for a child killed by a Muni truck, Herrera claims Hoeper called it a “*no liability case.*” This she flatly denies, as she recommended a multi-million dollar settlement.

Once again, taxpayers are footing the bill for a plausible retaliation claim. John Kecker’s firm, a Herrera campaign donor, is collecting \$850/hour to defend him per a contract: “Expected to exceed \$50,000.” Ethical concerns are rising alongside legal fees. Kecker also received a conflict waiver to represent Herrera, while representing developers who are suing the City.

Herrera asserts that in 2005 several Magistrate Judges complained about Hoeper’s “*intransigence in settlement discussions and her failure to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of litigation.*” Hoeper explains that there were important policy reasons to oppose payouts in frivolous lawsuits against police officers. Further, Herrera persuaded the magistrates that her approach was sound – and told her to keep it up. In 2006, an *unwritten* cost-analysis reportedly showed that Hoeper’s team “*frequently outspent liability estimates for its cases.*” Hoeper retorts that, “*the managing attorneys on the Trial Team*” will affirm that she controlled litigation costs and pioneered cost-saving measures for which Herrera “*held up the Trial Team as an example of best practices.*” To Hoeper, who served until 2012, Herrera’s excavating issues from 2005-6 while ignoring “*dozens of cases...in which the City faced tens of millions of dollars of potential liability but won*” misrepresents her career and “*proves that*



City Attorney Dennis Herrera

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## SF Giants Champs! SF Taxpayers Chumps!

By John Farrell

First off, let me wish everyone all the best in this New Year. Now, where do I start. Most people do not think of our City government as a business. But I do. And if you do then you should be very upset, since taxpayers are not treated fairly and equitably and the City is losing hundreds of millions annually. As you know, many decisions are made, not based on what is best for the City, but what is best politically for those in office at the time.



Both of these processes are still sitting in a test environment for over the past 10 years gathering dust. You have the opportunity to be a pioneer or just another Assessor warming the chair and collecting a paycheck, as your last few predecessors did. You can do it.”

In October, the Board of Supervisors passed legislation to legalize short term rentals of homes, and in the process rezoned the City. Further, the Board rejected approximately \$25 million due in back taxes from Airbnb. Let see if the Treasurer - Tax Collector will do his job and collect the taxes or just look the other way. Only time will tell. And by the way, this legislation came about only as a platform for then-Supervisor David Chiu to run for the Assembly.

Cont. p. 5



## Public Land for Housing: Balboa Reservoir?

By Maya Lekach

When Mayor Ed Lee surveyed San Francisco looking for unused land that could be repurposed, the site of the Balboa Reservoir on Ocean Avenue was one of the first to be considered.

The newly created Public Land for Housing commission held their first community meeting on the subject of this site on January 21st at Lick Wilmerding High School.

The meeting and the impending development was advertised as the possibility of 6,000 new homes in San Francisco. While this might have held exciting promise in the Financial or SOMA districts of San Francisco, where many new residents work and play, the reaction was a resounding difference when the local community came out to speak their part at the meeting.

The discussion was an exercise in creating a town hall vibe in the big city. The attendees were mostly homeowners from the surrounding neighborhood, namely Ingleside, Sunnyside, Balboa Park and Crocker Amazon. Many came with their neighbors, some speaking for

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Notorious Crooks of San Francisco

Joe Barbosa, “the Animal” Shot Dead at 25th & Moraga

By Paul Drexler



On February 11, 1976, when Joe Barbosa was shot to death on Moraga and 25th Ave., there was little speculation about who did it or why. It was more “why did it take so long?” Nicknamed “The Animal,” Barbosa was described by the FBI as “The most vicious criminal in New England.” His own lawyer, F. Lee Bailey, described him as “one of the worst men on the face of the earth.” Joe had been a top enforcer for the New England Mafia, but lost favor and was abandoned by the mob when he was arrested on a weapons charge in 1966.

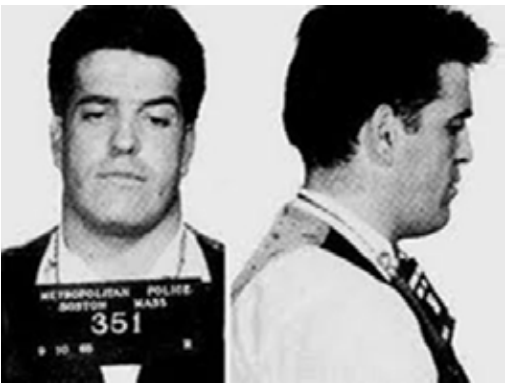
He became the first participant in the Federal Witness Protection Program and there was nothing a grateful FBI would not do for Joe. Although Joe admitted killing 26 people, he was given a sentence of one year, including time served.



He became the first participant in the Federal Witness Protection Program and there was nothing a grateful FBI would not do for Joe. Although Joe admitted killing 26 people, he was given a sentence of one year, including time served. The FBI agents he worked with also overlooked another of Joe’s foibles – five of the six people his testimony convicted in the Deagon case were actually innocent. Joe admitted later that “the Mafia screwed me and I’m going to screw as many of them as possible.” Twenty five years later the true facts came out and led to the disgrace and conviction of FBI agents Paul Rico and Dennis Conden.

Would you buy a used verdict from this man?

Meanwhile, Joe was paroled in March 1969 and told to leave Massachusetts forever. He was resettled in Santa Rosa by the Witness Protection program under the name of Joe Bentley and enrolled in a cooking school. He gave up cooking and went back to his favorite occupation, homicide, killing a local criminal named Clay Wilson. Although the FBI did everything they could to get Barbosa off, he was convicted of 2nd degree murder and served 5 years in a California prison. He was released with a new name, Joe Donati, and lived with a girlfriend at an apartment at 1250 La Playa Street. Two months later Barbosa was murdered outside the apartment of Ted Sharliss, a fellow ex-con, who later pleaded guilty to helping to set up the murder. In 1992 Joe Russo, a notorious hit man from Boston, plead guilty to the murder. By the time of his death Barbosa’s stature in the world had gotten somewhat classier. His nickname had changed from “The Animal” to “The Baron.”



Paul Drexler, Director, Crooks Tour of San Francisco, [www.crookstour.com](http://www.crookstour.com) 415-713-3077



Photo by: Otto Pippenger

Balboa Reservoir (Cont. from p. 1)

those who held less of a grasp on the English language. Before the real hubbub began, project manager Jeremy Shaw politely outlined the plan - both for the meetings and the development. He stated the planned goals of addressing public needs that the commission feels could be solved through the development of this large patch of land that has often been deemed an eyesore. neighborhood, the proposed goal of increased moderate income housing seems like a great idea for a city that seems to be bursting at the seams.

While low income housing is often subsidized by the government and market rate housing is subsidized by hearty paychecks (or trust funds), it is moderate income housing that takes a back seat. If the city carries on at this rate, it will quickly become a polarized environment: the ultra rich and the ultra poor.

Local residents were strongly wary of any sort of development that might impinge upon local character and, most of all, local traffic patterns. Whether those present at the meeting were suffering from a severe case of NIMBY (not in my backyard) or if their concerns were valid arguments amidst San Francisco’s rapidly changing urban landscape is up for debate.

As participants broke off into smaller groups from the nearly 200 who attended, personal issues were discussed and priorities were ranked, allowing the maximum amount of voices to be heard by commission proctors.

Many in these smaller groups voiced concerns over the already intense parking

Although the need for housing and public land is real, understanding the feelings of the nearby community is crucial to taking correct action with this plot of land now that it is in the city’s hands. The meeting was thus intended as a way for the community to understand the facts but also for concerned parties to help guide the process of development from the plethora of current options into an actual proposal and plan.

To outsiders, of either the city or



Traffic problems may not seem a good enough reason to maintain a large parking lot, although it may provide an impetus for bookmarking some of the space for a multi-level parking lot.

Many attendees argued that nothing could truly change unless the transit system was improved, allowing for less car traffic and a decreased need for housing in some of the hottest spots in the city, including this one.

What the traffic debate brings to light is the chicken-and-egg situation prevalent in such parking versus transit issues. The



Balboa Park Station Area Plan is part of a larger SF Planning project.

situation in the neighborhood. The influx of cars daily for use of the City College campus as well as the new Ocean Avenue Whole Foods is already overburdening the neighborhood for parking. The belief was that a loss of this massive parking lot, eyesore or not, could only harm this problem. Janet Lehr, a City College ceramics teacher and longtime neighborhood resident, had much to say on the subject of the college itself. “We need to recognize the importance of City College to our community. [Roughly] 1/7 San Franciscans have taken classes at City College,” Lehr said. And, it is true, that many of these student commute by car.

transit cannot grow without demand as students and other city residents continue to use their cars as they wait impatiently for busses that never arrive and trains that do not extend to their corners of even this small city. To many, increasing public housing seems a band-aid on a citywide problem of poor transportation, causing congestion at certain hot spots. The meeting heard many a cry of “first the Mission, now here!” These BART-adjacent neighborhoods have gone from quiet residences and ethnic communities to areas highly sought after by a the new influx of local elite who would not fit into the description

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Ruminations From A Former Supervisor By Quentin Kopp



Carl Bernstein is a longtime journalist, known for collaboration with Bob Woodward in the *Washington Post* in 1973 and 1974 to expose Richard M. Nixon’s shoddy conduct in the 1972 presidential campaign with White House staff which the media dubbed “Watergate.” Bernstein was quoted last year in *The Dartmouth Review* writing this truism:

“We are in the process of creating what deserves to be called the idiot culture. Not an idiot sub-culture, which every society has bubbling beneath the surface and which can provide harmless fun; but the culture itself. For the first time, the weird and the stupid and the coarse are becoming our cultural norm, even our cultural ideal.”

Proof of Bernstein’s observation exists across our Bay Area tableau. The University of California Bears graduation rate for football players is the lowest among all National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I institutions. Other Bears athletic team graduation rates are mainly in the lower tier nationally. The Board of Regents last month considered imposition by U.C. President Janet Napolitano, ex-Arizona governor and federal Homeland Security director, of new team eligibility requirements based on higher grades. The Governor and Lieutenant Governor demanded even better academic performance and graduation results. Ultimately, elevated standards were postponed indefinitely, but not before a regent named Eddie Ireland declared openly: “A college degree is not the goal of every athlete who comes to the university.” I kid you not! That’s an ignoramus’ manner of disregarding the taxpayer subsidy of Cal football players and other university athletes. Does the University of California purpose include

Hybrid and electric car usage has also caused declining revenue for the building and maintenance of roads. You don’t pay for roads from income, sales, or property taxation; it’s illogical to abandon a proven user fee. With surprise and approval, I thus note two Republican Congressmen have proposed consideration this year of increasing the federal gas tax. The state legislature must also act. Both should include bicyclists who use the gas tax products (roads, streets, and even highways), but pay no fee. Our battered streets and highways need repair and augmentation now.

financing future members of professional sports teams? And remember, regents such as Ireland are gubernatorial appointees for 12-year terms. Pity the taxpayers.

In July 2012, the Board of Supervisors and mayor combined to add over \$1,000,000 to the 2012-13 San Francisco Budget Ordinance to enable each of 11 supervisors to distribute \$100,000 within his/her district. Thereafter, for example, Supervisor Mark Farrell conferred tax money upon a treasure hunt at Aquatic Park! Each fiscal year since 2012-13, the practice has continued. Former Board member and president Aaron Peskin, who will run again in North Beach and Telegraph Hill this November, stated in 2013: “It is the most preposterous piece of public policy...giving themselves \$100,000 to hand out in little tidbits to buy political support? It’s like a TV game show.”

These same supervisors are paid over \$100,000 annually without voter approval needed. Moreover, they receive compensation from membership on a plethora of regional and local government boards, including the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation Agency, the Peninsula Rail Corridor Joint Powers Authority, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, the Bay Area Air Quality Maintenance District, the California Coastal Commission, the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, the Metropolitan Transit Authority, and the Transbay Terminal Authority. They qualify for the City’s Health Service System and Retirement System. And they call it “public service” to induce taxpayers to believe elected officials are somehow sacrificing themselves for all San Franciscans. A favorite term of City Hall figures is “political family,” which evidently begins with City Hall and operates like family members who protect each other. It’s supposed to convey togetherness. Maybe it does, but it surely doesn’t include taxpayers. Others rightly label it the “political class.” These days, district supervisors represent only about 75,000 people, unlike citywide supervisors of yore. Yet they drew voters a decade ago into granting them a third aide at up to \$100,412 per year; and I defy you to telephone a supervisor’s office and be greeted by any human being, let alone a living supervisor.

My last example of the accuracy of Carl Bernstein’s observation is the Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART)’s impending surrender of \$70,000 in taxpayer and fare payer money. Last November 28<sup>th</sup> (Black Friday) the BART system was unlawfully forced to close by protesters of events in Missouri and New York. Police arrested 14 lawbreakers. BART asked the Alameda County District Attorney (Nancy O’Malley) to recover its damages (\$70,000) as restitution in the criminal prosecutions. Left wing demonstrators demanded BART dismiss such claims. Last month BART director Rebecca Saltzman introduced a motion to do that, seconded, of course, by San Francisco director Tom Radulovich. BART’s board will vote on the motion February 12. It will tell the Alameda County prosecutor to forget our \$70,000 in costs and damages. Such stupidity will thus invite more law-breaking and BART closures in this era of the “idiot culture.”

A Los Angeles Congresswoman (Janice Hahn) last December declared that an alternative to the gasoline tax, namely a tax on miles driven, should be considered. I agree. The gasoline tax constitutes a user fee. Many people don’t realize that commencing in 1922, California’s highways, freeways, county roads, and city streets were funded from national and state gasoline tax revenue. The federal rate hasn’t been changed since 1996; the state’s hasn’t since 1994. Current politicians are afraid to increase gasoline taxation because most lack knowledge of history. They look for legislative “gimmicks” (usually borrowing through bonds) to avoid a user fee increase. Hybrid and electric car usage has also caused declining revenue for the building and maintenance of roads. You don’t pay for roads from income, sales, or property taxation; it’s illogical to abandon a proven user fee. With surprise and approval, I thus note two Republican Congressmen have proposed consideration this year of increasing the federal gas tax. The state legislature must also act. Both should include bicyclists who use the gas tax products (roads, streets, and even highways), but pay no fee. Our battered streets and highways need repair and augmentation now.

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

Best of the Net: www.engardio.com

Julie Christensen Is Designer of Change at Sf City Hall

By Joel P. Engardio



Julie Christensen is the recently appointed city supervisor for District 3

When you think about the ways government touches our lives — through public transportation, its tax and license bureaucracy, how it regulates what our streets and cityscape look like — the concepts of good form, function and design probably don’t come to mind.

We marvel at the beautiful aesthetic and flawless execution of our privately made smartphones while cursing the line at a government office that still uses paper files. Then we curse again, waiting for a public bus that seems to never come.

Imagine if City Hall was filled with politicians who could engineer solutions that embrace innovation and streamline operations while paying attention to the user experience. Maybe there would not be such an embarrassing gap between the analog way San Francisco is run and its designation as the tech industry’s global hub.

Thankfully we have Julie Christensen,

the recently appointed city supervisor for District 3 in North Beach, Chinatown and several more neighborhoods. Christensen is a trained painter and sculptor with a prelaw background. She is also a successful entrepreneur who left a major design firm early in her career to start a business dedicated to elevating the look and feel of the mundane gadgets in our lives.

“The KitchenAid candy apple red mixer is what I’m most proud of,” said Christensen, who has created the surface designs for a variety of tech and consumer goods including computer speakers, gaming devices, MP3 players, modems,

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WEST OF TWIN PEAKS CENTRAL COUNCIL *By Mitch Bull*  
NEWS AND VIEWS...

The November 2014 election, and houses on the Balboa Reservoir, were the big items discussed at the January meeting of the West of Twin Peaks Central Council on January 26th. President Roger Ritter opened the first meeting of 2015 with approximately 25 attendees.

In the committee section of the meeting, recent meetings by the city on uses for the Balboa Reservoir were discussed, with some groups such as SF BARF calling for up to 6000 units of housing being built on the site, resulting in density parameters that would rival Manhattan. Although it's doubtful that anything of this magnitude would be built, the meetings point out that the public has to be involved and vigilant to ensure that constructive public input is offered and considered by the city planning officials and the SFPUC, which holds the land entitlement for the reservoir site.

A panel discussion followed, featuring Jim Stearns, Chris Bowman and Dr. Corey Cook, as they recapped the facts and lessons from the November 2014 general municipal election.

Stearns opened the discussion with an overview on the number and authorship of ballot propositions from 1961 to the present time. In those 55 years, 1004 propositions have been placed on the ballot, with 634 (68%) being approved by voters. Contrary to popular belief, only 145 of the propositions were placed on the ballot by voter driven campaigns. Of these, 73 passed and 72 failed. 715 of the 1004 were placed by vote of the Board of Supervisors.

The low voter turnout in 2014 was also compared to other elections as 53% of voters voted in 2014, compared to 50%



Chris Bowman, Dr. Corey Cook and Jim Stearns present analysis of the fall election

in 2002, and 61% in 2006 and 2010, when the elections had more statewide races to generate voter excitement. Within San Francisco, the West of Twin Peaks area, the Castro, and Noe Valley were the areas with the highest voter turnout.

Dr. Corey Cook, of USF, spoke on the trends of the last election and how the propositions fared in the city and in the WOTP areas. Not surprisingly, the WOTP areas were 13-18% more conservative in their voting than the rest of the city. In all but three propositions, the WOTP area finished in the lowest 2 or 3 districts in supporting the propositions (reflecting their conservative voting trends.) The Westside did support the propositions to develop Pier 70 (which won); Keep the soccer fields natural grass in Golden Gate Park (which lost), and to establish Transportation Priorities for MUNI (which lost).

Chris Bowman completed the panel and spoke on the demographics of the WOTP area as compared to the rest of the city. For the election, the WOTP voter turnout was 60.78% compared to 53% citywide and 42.20% statewide. The party breakdown for the WOTP is as follows: Republican 13.08%, Democrat 54.20%, Decline to State 28.44% and Other 4.28%. Demographic voting numbers were handed out reflecting how the WOTP area compared to the other voting segments for each of the local and statewide election races.

The final discussions of the evening centered on short presentations by Patrick Otellini, of the City's Earthquake Safety Implementation Program, and Ashley Summers, of Supervisor Katy Tang's office.

Otellini spoke of a program that would provide a \$3000 grant to 75 homeowners (selected randomly from applicants) to make improvements to seismically strengthening their foundations through "bolting and bracing" the home to the concrete foundation. The program application period runs from January 15 through February 15 and covers the zip codes of 94121, 94127, 94132, and 94112. For more information on the program, visit the website, Earthquake-BraceBolt.com.

Summers spoke on transit-oriented changes that are being proposed by Muni in the Westside districts, such as changes in bus stop and Muni Metro locations. For more information on this, the legislative aide can be contacted at Ashley.summers@sfgov.org.

A motion for adjournment followed at 9:15 and the meeting was concluded.

The next meeting of the WOTPCC will be on Monday, February 23rd at 7:30 PM at the historic Forest Hills Clubhouse. Info:www.westoftwinpeaks.org).

Why Prop 218 Must Not Be Ignored

By Brian Browne



It is time for the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), and other California utilities, to price water services according to 1996 Proposition 218, a constitutional amendment. Water may only be priced at reasonable cost of service without any non-regulatory add-ons. A quote from Howard-Jarvis Taxpayers Association is a powerful statement as to purpose sought by the framers of Proposition 219:

"It is the clear position, supported by the language of Proposition 218, the liberal construct provision, and the intent of the voters that fees and charges for water service are governed by Proposition 218. To the extent that tier rates are imposed in a manner that deviates from 'cost of service' requirements, those rates are in violation of Proposition 218. Local governments or special districts which do not abide which do not abide by the requirements of the new constitutional language do so at the risk of litigation."

Tier rates are specifically mentioned above. Unless tier rates perfectly mirror the cost function of producing water, they are illegal under Proposition 218. The way the two step tier rate program is portrayed by the SFPUC, this seems mathematical impossible. The lower rate is based on the earlier lifeline rate and the higher second tier rate is clearly a subsidy to permit a lower priced tier one. This type rate making is prohibited by Proposition 218 effective back to 1996. Not only are tiered rates illegal in California but a solid body of economic work indicates they are inefficient and exacerbate the goals of drought pricing. A new consideration

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## John Farrell-/ SF Giants v. SF Taxpayers (Cont. from p. 1)



In November, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (PUC) transferred to the Recreation and Park Department the Francisco Reservoir at 2445 Hyde Street for \$9.9 million. This 3.29 acre property expands the existing 0.96-acre park to over 4 acres of public open space. The PUC sold the property with restrictions, which they did not need to do, which provided the rationale for the appraisal at this low \$9.9 million sale price; if this 3.29 acre property had been rezoned in accordance with the highest and best use in the Russian Hill neighborhood, it would be worth well over \$100 million. A 2500 sq ft vacant residential lot in Russian Hill alone sells for over \$1.5 million. Our water rates continue to go up and the PUC transfers its property for pennies on the dollar. This to me is a gift of public funds, even if it is to another public agency.

Our World Champion Giants organization's appeal to reduce its ballpark's 2012 value from approximately \$196.8 million assessment to \$140 million has been postponed until May, per the Assessment Appeals Board. The Giants organization built its ballpark for over \$350 million in 2000, and pays the Port \$1.2 million annually under a 66 year lease for the 12.5 acre land site. Even though the existing 2012 value of \$196.8 million, least \$200 million under value in my professional opinion, resulting in a property tax loss to the city of over \$2.3 million annually, the Giants want to further reduce the value to \$140 million, an additional revenue loss to the city of over \$650,000 annually. The Giants have also filed appeals for 2013 and 2014 which have not been scheduled. And by the way, if the Giants are getting a tax break, what are the Warriors expecting?

As a taxpayer and Giants fan since birth, I appeal to the Giants owners and management to withdraw all their assessment appeals, which are insulting to the taxpayers of San Francisco, and to continue to be the class act that they are. Without the ballpark, the Giants would not receive its revenues from the tickets, vendors, restaurants, advertising, cable TV, etc... In 2013, the year in between World Series wins, the Giants had 3.37 million paid attendance, \$316 million in revenue, and \$53 million in operating income. Per Forbes magazine, the Giants club valuation is worth \$1 billion. Its revenues continue to grow, which is wonderful. But in my opinion and experience, the Giants should have never received such a reduction in assessment from the City.

The City is losing at least \$10 million a year in property tax revenue, and well over \$100 million from the Presidio Trust since inception. due to an unconstitutional loophole in the Presidio Trust Act, which allows that tenants are exempt from all taxes, except sales tax, and is subject to interpretation. In 1989, the federal government closed the Presidio as a military base. Since the Presidio is no longer for military use, the federal government transferred jurisdiction to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) in 1994. Did this transfer to GGNRA end its tax-exempt status and provide for the City to now tax private tenants? The City was told to look the other way by our Congressional representative who spearheaded in 1999 an unconstitutional provision in the Presidio Trust Act to exempt tenants. This has resulted in a tax savings to Lucasfilm alone of over \$50 million. I understand that the Presidio Trust needed to be financially independent, but this should have been handled in more of a business fashion and not a political one. Especially not

one that is unconstitutional, since Congress does not have the authority to tax exempt tenants (per Article 1 Section 8 of Constitution, which provides the Powers of the US Congress).

Due to this unconstitutional loophole, the City is losing an additional \$12.5 million from the sale of Lucasfilm to Disney in 2012 (based on a 2.5% transfer tax on a conservative \$500 million assessment). An ownership transfer in CA includes a lease of 35 years or more. Lucasfilm had a 66 year lease at the Presidio transferred to Disney. Per the CA Rev & Taxation Code, this is a legal transfer which the SBE will concur. There is no rationale why there is no transfer tax imposed, since all other ownership transfers in CA pay a transfer tax. The Assessor should appraise the transfer as is done in all other change in ownerships, and a transfer tax bill should be issued.

PG&E is getting a minimum \$5.2 million annual tax break. PG&E's franchise fee is subject to property tax but is not reflected in the annual appraisal by the State Board of Equalization (SBE). If this franchise fee was accounted for, it would result in property tax revenue to the City of approximately \$5.2 million annually (based on a market franchise fee of 3%). There are numerous companies with franchise fees that should also be appraised, resulting in addition millions to the City annually. There is also a potential increase in the existing PG&E franchise fee set in 1939 to fair market, resulting in from \$27 to at least \$45 million annually to the City (reflects a 3% to 5% fair market franchise fee) compared to the existing payment to the City of \$5.5 million (based on the existing franchise fee of 1/2% electrical and 1% of gas from P.G&E's gross receipts). PG&E rates continue to go up and the City continues to give them a tax break.

AT&T's naming rights at the Ball Park were never appraised by the Assessor's Office. Pacific Bell paid \$45 million for naming rights in 2000 over 25 years, which was subsequently transferred to AT&T. If valued accordingly, AT&T should be paying the City at least \$525,000 annually (based on a 1.1691% tax rate on a \$45 million assessed value). The Assessor's Office can go back 4 years and even longer, since AT&T's naming rights agreement is unrecorded. Therefore, AT&T should receive tax bills for approximately \$4.2 million, reflecting 8 years of benefits for the naming rights. What are these naming rights worth today? Keep in mind that the 49ers/York and Levi Strauss & Co recently entered into a naming rights agreement for a 20-year, \$220 million deal at \$11 million annually.

But keep in mind, there are many positives to note. It is good to see that one of the main priorities of our Mayor is now affordable housing for the middle class. It must be an election year.

It is also positive to see the current Assessor is finally addressing the extensive permit backlog costing the City millions annually by hiring 5 appraisers/specialist positions. Funding of \$1.285 million is provided from a State-County Assessor's Partnership Agreement Program Grant.

Keep in mind Madame Assessor, who I hope is reading this, that your existing system has the capabilities to direct enroll permits and all transfers, as it currently does for single family homes. This was the intent of the system. Check the test environment. Before the system went live in 2000, we set up a streamlining process which automatically changes ownership

and enrolls values once indexed by the recorder staff, which revolutionizes the appraisal process. We were also ready to implement an automatic partial ownership transfer process. Both of these processes are still sitting in a test environment for over the past 10 years gathering dust. You have the opportunity to be a pioneer or just another Assessor warming the chair and collecting a paycheck, as your last few

predecessors did. You can do it.

On behalf of all taxpayers in the City and County of San Francisco, *Everyone should pay their fair share.*

*John Farrell Broker/Realtor\* - Farrell Real Estate, MBA, Former City Asst. Assessor-Budget/Special Projects, 5th Generation San Franciscan, Westside resident - farrellreinvestments@yahoo.com*

## Wooding / Homeless Zoning (Cont. from p. 1)

shelter operation.

- Allow this use as a right in certain zoning districts, and with conditional approval in some other districts, reflecting the group housing zoning controls.

- Exempt homeless shelters from open space, car, and bicycle parking, as well as impact-fee requirements. More people can be placed in a RH-2 residence if there are no cars or bikes located in the facility.

According to the 2013 Homeless Count Report, 7,350 homeless people live in San Francisco, including sheltered and unsheltered persons, as well as unaccompanied children and transition-age youth. Of these, approximately 59% were unsheltered (about 4,200 people).

Current occupants of homeless shelters include people with disabilities, families, the elderly, transient individuals, and people who have mental illnesses.

City planner Kamia Haddadan explains the new homeless ordinance by stating, "Currently, homeless shelters are allowed in many zoning districts." Where and how they are permitted depends on if they are categorized as a Tourist Hotel or Group Housing, which is determined by the Zoning Administrator on a case-by-case basis. Homeless shelters are categorized as Group Housing when the length-of-stay is a week or more. If the length-of-stay is less than that, it is considered a Tourist Hotel. The majority of homeless shelters permitted to date have been categorized as Group Housing, which is allowed in most zoning districts including RH-2 with Conditional Use (CU) authorization.

Haddadan further states, "The proposed legislation would not change these controls, but it would create a separate use category for homeless shelters so that each proposal would not need a Zoning Administrator Interpretation to determine the appropriate use category. Also, the City's policy towards homelessness is to primarily provide permanent housing for the homeless population. While homeless shelters are necessary, the City's primary focus will still be on finding permanent housing for homeless individuals and families."

The proposed Ordinance would clarify the zoning controls to streamline the review process for any potential future homeless shelters applications across the City.

If the City's CU process were utilized, and the Planning Department wanted to place a homeless shelter in your neighborhood, they would need a Planning Commission hearing in order to determine if the proposed use is necessary, or desirable, to the neighborhood, and whether it may potentially have a negative impact on the surrounding neighborhood.

All owners within 300 feet of proposed new homeless shelters will receive notification of the hearing. The assigned planner will gather comments and concerns from the neighborhood during the notification period. Neighborhood support or opposition will be reflected in a staff report presented at the Planning Commission hearing, complete with the Planning Department's recommendation for approval or disapproval of the CU.

District 6 Supervisor Jane Kim, who helped to introduce the homeless shelter ordinance stated, "San Francisco has been at the forefront of helping the mentally disabled, but the City has been unable to adequately address mental illness problems."

Nearly one-third of people who are homeless have mental illnesses. With the appropriate treatment, care and support,

they could live successful, productive lives in the community. Unfortunately, most people who are homeless lack access to the services they need.

The number of acute-care psychiatric beds in San Francisco are rapidly being downsized in both the public and private sectors. Lengths of stay in acute-care psychiatric units are dropping. Unfortunately, inpatient psychiatric facilities lose money.

California became the national leader in aggressively moving patients from state and county hospitals into the community. By the time Ronald Reagan assumed the governorship in 1967, California had already deinstitutionalized more than half of its state hospital patients. That same year, California passed the landmark Lanterman-Petris-Short (LPS) Act, which virtually abolished involuntary hospitalization except in extreme cases. Thus, by the early 1970's by the time Ronald Reagan assumed the governorship in 1967, California had already deinstitutionalized more than half of its state hospital patients and, bypassing LPS, had made it very difficult to get patients back into a hospital if they relapsed and needed additional care. Ironically, President Reagan was shot in 1986 by John Hinckley, Jr., who was later found to be not guilty by reason of insanity.

The financial burden of mentally ill patient treatments quickly fell squarely on the cities and counties in California.

Consequently, San Francisco was inundated by mentally-ill patients. Many of these patients currently reside in local prisons. Many additional mentally-ill patients currently reside in the San Francisco community trapped between homelessness and shelters. The mental health problem is exacerbated by San Francisco's inability to provide medication to mental health patients on a regular basis.

In 1985, San Francisco voters approved a proposition authorizing \$26 million in bonds to construct a 147-bed psychiatric facility, the Mental Health Rehabilitation Facility (MHRF), on the grounds of San Francisco General Hospital (SFGH) to keep psychiatric patients in county. Eleven years later, the "MHRF" opened in 1996. By 2003, when the City was facing a huge deficit, DPH proposed closing the MHRF. A "Blue Ribbon Committee" eventually split the three-story building into multiple uses, and today, the MHRF operates only 24 psychiatric beds. Many of its patients were discharged out-of-county.

The bond measure was actually passed in November 1987. The voter handbook said 185 beds — not 147 — would be built for a "mental health skilled nursing facility," and that the measure would end up costing \$39.7 million, including interest on the bonds. It took 11 years before the MHRF was built and opened in 1996. Sadly, the MHRF has all but closed, converted to other mixed uses.

Chronic homelessness is now a way of life in San Francisco. We cannot neglect these people, but we need to understand why so many mentally ill patients are living on the streets of San Francisco. Homeless shelters can be a good way to help the mentally ill remain in the community.

The question is, as always, where should the mentally ill, transients and poor families live in San Francisco? The neighborhoods with RH-2 housing should carefully consider the impacts of homeless shelters they add in their communities.

*George Wooding, Midtown Terrace Homeowners Association*



# What's up with our water, sewer & power people?

SFPUC, SF Public Utilities Commission, with about 2300 city employees

By Steve Lawrence

The Water System Improvement Program (WSIP) is now \$4.8 billion, up from \$3.4 billion a dozen years ago. The program, which by state law was to be completed this year, is projected to be done in 2019. The largest project, Calaveras Dam, building a new dam downstream to hold the reservoir, continues to be challenging, overrunning in time and cost. Projects severed from the program, recycled water and SF groundwater, have yet to break ground, although the latter is to do so shortly.



“San Franciscan's residential use is below 45 gallons per day per person; ten years ago it was 61. By early November we had saved all the water officials asked us to save this past year because of drought.”

Between now and August 2018, the rate you pay for water will rise by nearly half (50%) to help pay for WSIP.

Water usage is down. The system expected to deliver 265 mgd (million gallons per day) by 2018. This past year it delivered 220 mgd, on a downward trend. San Franciscan's residential use is below 45 gallons per day per person; ten years ago it was 61. By early November we had saved all the water officials asked us to save this past year because of drought. In 2014 the system's wholesale customers (taking about two-thirds of system water) revised downward the amount of water they plan to buy going forward.

Re sewers, the Sewer System Improvement Program (SSIP), a \$6.9 billion, twenty-year set of projects, is now underway. The largest early project replaces Biosolids digesters at the Southeast Plant at a cost approaching \$2 billion. Engineers have been hired, and early planning—figuring out where, what, and how many, and perhaps how deep and high—has mostly been done. Two years of environmental review starts in July. Construction is scheduled for January 2018 to June 2022. (The Southeast plant treats 80% of SF's sewage; it is one of three treatment plants.)

There are many smaller SSIP projects. Rates are rising modestly now, but will accelerate as SSIP projects really start spending.

Both sewer and water projects are paid for with bonds. Typically bonds are sold shortly before funds are needed. Usually they are paid off over thirty years; the start of pay-off is often delayed by a year or so. Rates rise to pay off the bonds.

Quick overview of finances. Let's look at the Wastewater (sewer) division for the next ten years. About \$5.3 billion will be spent on the SSIP and capital improvement. Approaching \$5 billion comes from the sale of bonds (debt), and nearly half a billion comes from ratepayers (the monthly payments you make). \$44 million comes from capacity fees; these are fees developers pay to buy into the sewer system, using up some of its capacity. For Water, where the big capital work is mostly done, the amount to be spent is much less, about \$1.3 billion, and the portion coming from rates is larger, about \$440 million; most of the remainder comes from bonds (debt).

Power. CleanPowerSF is controversial. It would sell “clean” power, competing with PG&E. The challenge has been to sell what reasonably can be called clean power at rates not too much above what PG&E charges for its electricity, which is about one-quarter renewable. “Clean” is a less desirable category than “renewable,” it

includes power generated by large hydro, which does not qualify as renewable. As proposed, clean power also includes RECs, renewable energy credits. RECs are controversial because they pay for remote renewable power; but the power the payer gets is not renewable. As power delivered over the grid is fungible anyway, perhaps local or remote does not matter; but many want actual renewably generated power, not payment equivalent to indulgences.

Until recently the Mayor has opposed launching CleanPowerSF despite a Board of Supervisors that strongly supports the program. For the past six months a vacancy on the Commission has gone unfilled as there was little prospect that the Mayor and BOS could agree on an appointee. Recently, in response to a report about the CleanPowerSF program, the Mayor switched from opposed to qualified support, and he appointed a commissioner to the vacant seat: Ike Kwon, general manager of the Academy of Sciences. Now the Mayor and Board likely differ over how quickly CleanPowerSF will be launched, and what assurances will be given first.

The power enterprise of SFPUC has long delivered electricity to MUNI, City Hall, General Hospital, and other public buildings and places. Electricity is cheaply generated downstream from Hetch Hetchy Reservoir (160 miles east in the Sierras). One of the water tunnels needs work likely to cost half a billion dollars, or possibly more. After inspection Mountain Tunnel's problems should come into sharper focus.

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The Mayor's annual speech announces his intention to provide rent subsidies in “emergencies,” and eviction defense, to avoid evictions; to help rent controlled tenants buy their buildings; and to sell bonds (go into debt) to fund more affordable housing. Public policy used to abhor letting officials give away public funds. Favoritism and corruption was thought inevitable. Lead not to temptation. New York City enables tenants to buy buildings. (The author knows from personal experience.) Is it not odd that those who for years have benefited from rent control then get to cash in by “selling” their rights? Going into debt to build housing that costs nearly half a million dollars per unit, and becomes ready only after extended gestation, seems inefficient. Future generations are burdened while today's politicians strut and crow at ground-breakings. More and more, might makes right in the world of civic affairs. Will public policy rise again (from the dead)?

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

## Homeowner Renovation Opportunities

The SF Board of Supervisors has voted to reinstall its residential Property Assessed Clean Energy Program (PACE), which enables property owners to make energy and water efficiency upgrades to their homes, and pay for the upgrades through their property taxes for up to 20 years. PACE has proven an effective policy to help homeowners make efficiency upgrades affordably, and for cities to create jobs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The vote revives a program called GreenFinanceSF that will give homeowners access to Home Energy Renovation Opportunity (HERO) and two other PACE providers. Payments are made through the property tax bill for up to 20 years, and interest is tax-deductible. Applications start in spring 2015. INFO: HeroProgram.com



My 2¢ • Will Durst © 2014

## THE NEW ICE AGE.

“And that's it for sports.”

“Thank you Robert for the fascinating premier of your exclusive in-depth Channel 7, twelve-part series on underinflated balls, Can't wait to see what balls you have for us tomorrow. And now, here's Wayne with our exclusive Channel 7 Eyewitness Weather and your new up-to-the-minute national weather report, brought to you by Easy—the drug that will make you never wonder why. Ever again.”

“Well, thanks Padma. Hello Foggy Bottom. Batten down the hatches people, because it's about to get chilly out there. Not just cold. Long Island Ice Tea on a Vermont porch in January cold. Nostril hair cracking cold. Ice cube tray down your pants cold. Tongue stuck to the flagpole cold. Beyonce's sister talking to Jay-Z cold.

Due to a stubborn high-pressure system emanating from the bases of both the left and the right, the immediate political forecast is for a long hard freeze to descend upon Washington DC and stay there. After that, arctic relations are expected to crystalize, until all political activity grinds to a halt in the same kind of gridlock that sang the Woolly Mammoths to their rest.

“Storm clouds are gathering and the Doppler Radar indicates the Capital climate will become so incredibly frigid, the entire country is at risk of freezing solid over the next two years. And maybe longer, as the tropical winds of compromise appear to have been eaten by El Nino.

The long-term outlook isn't any rosier. Expect increasing rhetoric with gusts of empty blather to result in virtual legislative permafrost. Storm clouds are gathering and the Doppler Radar indicates the Capital climate will become so incredibly frigid, the entire country is at risk of freezing solid over the next two years. And maybe longer, as the tropical winds of compromise appear to have been eaten by El Nino.

On one side, you have a decidedly frosty GOP Congress promising that anything and everything the President sends is DOA. The issue could be the Republican dream of tort reform but if it comes from the desk of the Chief Executive-color it El Morte.

While a distinctly icy Barack Obama has announced he's prepared to unleash a blizzard of VETO's on any legislation that threatens his legacy. Which theoretically is anything. These two clashing icebox fronts could rival in intensity the cyclonic activity that has engulfed the great red spot on Jupiter for over 300 years.

The two sides are so far apart they can't see each other due to the curvature of the earth. And the lack of even glacial progress insures that snowy drifts of abandoned bills will accumulate on Congressional desks. So, like normal; only more so.

Folks out there in our viewing area might want to make a quick trip into town for provisions, because the biting winds and refrigerated relationships are going to make a hundred polar vortexes look downright balmy.

With bitterly biting ideological winds, heavy rains of disregard and no relief in sight, the 114th Congress looks destined to earn the nickname of... The New Ice Age. As they say in Game of Thrones: “Winter is Coming!” And not just any winter: nuclear winter.

So there you have it. The new up-to-the-minute exclusive Channel 7 national weather report, brought to you by Easy—the drug that will make you never wonder why. Ever again. Stay tuned as Heather unveils exclusive footage of how a rescue of baby kittens from a discarded piano makes for beautiful music. And cute too.”

Will Durst is an award-winning, nationally acclaimed political comic. Go to willdurst.com to find about about his new one-man show “BoomeRaging: From LSD to OMG,” and info about the San Francisco premier of the documentary film “3 Still Standing,” @ the Marines Memorial Theater.

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# Gambling With City Employees' Retirement Fund

## Looming Fiasco: Hedge Funds "Wealth Transfer"

By Patrick Monette-Shaw



Mayor Ed "Sharing Economy" Lee just proposed in his State-of-the-City speech sharing prosperity by tapping into City retiree funds for use in his down payment loan assistance program.

How benevolent of him. Retiree's must be thrilled that he wants to "share" their pensions so untold recipients can obtain mortgages.

Despite recent warnings from billionaires Warren Buffett and George Soros against investing public employee pension money using hedge funds, some members of San Francisco's Public Employees' Retirement System (SFERS) board of directors and SFERS' "chief investment officer" appear to know more than Buffett and Soros.

SFERS continues to consider investing in hedge funds, after a state pension fund (Calpers) and a Danish pension fund pulled out of their respective hedge-fund investments during the past two months.

That's why 81% of the City's 23,000 City retirees who have a monthly pension of less than \$2,500 (under \$30,000 annually) rightly worry about investment decisions made on their behalf, without significant means to influence those investment decisions.

They have good reason to worry about decisions affecting their retirement income, since there are multiple plans to tap into the retirement fund, including a claim presented by Mayor Ed Lee during his State of the City speech on January 15 to tap \$100 million from the retirement fund for a down payment loan assistance program that appears to be a premature claim, devoid of details.

Normally, investment advisors and trustees of public pension plans with fiduciary obligations — such as the Board of Directors of the San Francisco Employees' Retirement System (SFERS) — whose clients reject investment recommendations, have an ethical obligation to back off.

SFERS Commissioners are considering both various proposals to sink \$3 billion or more of the Pension Fund's \$20 billion portfolio into hedge funds, and worse, are being asked by the mayor to eventually consider allocating \$100 million to a new proposal to support Mayor Ed Lee's call to use the retirees' pension funds for problematic down payment loan assistance programs administered by the troubled Mayor's Office of Housing.

Despite a resounding 2,300 signature petitions, e-mails, and letters from current and retired City employees objecting to investing in hedge funds that were submitted to SFERS' Board members prior to its December 3 meeting, SFERS' Board continues to consider investing in hedge funds that Plan beneficiaries strongly object to, ignoring their fiduciary duties to honor objections raised by beneficiaries.

### Wealth Transfer

Although Mayor Lee indicated in his State-of-the-City speech on January 15 that Supervisor Malia Cohen and the Retirement Board staff have been "hard at work for months," developing a proposal, in fact SFERS has made no decision on whether to invest Pension funds in the Mayor's down payment loan assistance program (DLAP). The Mayor clearly reached a premature conclusion that SFERS' Board would approve of such an investment.

The Mayor claims this will help up to 1,500 families buy a first home in San Francisco, but he made no mention of "sharing prosperity" for people who are single, and the 66% of San Francisco residents who rent, and are not interested in home ownership. The Mayor may only be interested in families, not people who choose to remain single.

Indeed, in response to this author's January 19 records request to Supervisor Cohen for any and all proposals she may have presented to either SFERS' staff or to SFERS' Board to allocate any of SFERS portfolio toward DLAP, Cohen's office responded on January 20 indicating that she had only made a verbal request to SFERS staff at a Retirement Board meeting last year for SFERS' staff and the Mayor's Office of Housing to evaluate and study a possible \$50 million investment in DLAP.

Cohen's office indicated that the two departments are still in the process of reviewing and analyzing the City's current portfolio of loans and have not made any recommendation to either Cohen or the Retirement Board. Once the two departments conclude their evaluation, Cohen will reportedly then decide whether or not to move forward with a specific proposal to pursue

an SFERS investment in DLAP. Cohen's office has been advised that a SFERS staff decision may perhaps be made in February 2015.

A separate records request on January 22 to Olson Lee, Director of the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community (MOHCD) Development for any correspondence between Supervisor Cohen and Olson Lee uncovered a series of 16 e-mails between Maria Benjamin, Director of Homeownership and Below Market Rate Programs in MOHCD and Bob Shaw, SFERS' Managing Director of Public Markets. The e-mail traffic dating back to June 18, 2014 between Ms. Benjamin and Mr. Shaw is troubling.

Shaw indicated on June 18 that SFERS "will eventually need to review all of the loans that have been originated under the DALP," but requested "a 'test' set [of loan information] to determine what [SFERS's staff would] need for our initial financial due diligence." Shaw recommended looking at one specific year that was "reasonably seasoned," and asked for DLAP loan information for 2010 because it involved "a relatively small (17) set of loans, but should provide [him] with the ability to understand the DLAP program."

By October 17, Shaw indicated SFERS staff had completed analysis of the sample set and while results seemed promising, staff needed to examine the

full set of loans, apparently to see if the results from the small sub-set reviewed are representative. Shaw indicated that would be critical to any proposal submitted to the Retirement Board but indicted it was too early to determine when SFERS' staff could present an analysis to the Retirement Board, since staff still had due diligence work to complete.

On December 3, Ms. Benjamin submitted additional data to Shaw, providing active and repaid loans made since 1998 with our DLAP funds. It's not known whether Shaw has completed an analysis of the data Benjamin provided on December 3.

But from data MoH has provided to SFERS, it is clear that should SFERS fund the DLAP program — as the Mayor hopes SFERS' Board will eventually do — it is very clear that investing retiree funds in down payment loans would be highly illiquid with an unknown rate of return on any such investment.

Whether the retiree's pension fund will involve wealth transfer to hedge fund managers or will be tied up in illiquid down payment loans, Plan beneficiary opposition to both programs continues to grow, opposed as Plan beneficiaries are to the Mayor's "shared prosperity" agenda using their retirement funds.

The plan beneficiaries were warned by Matt Taibbi in his September 2013 article "How Wall Street Hedge Funds Are Looting the Pension Funds of Public Workers," that Wall Street firms are making millions in profits off of public pension funds nationwide. "Essentially it is a wealth transfer from teachers, cops and firemen to billionaire hedge funders," Taibbi noted. "Pension funds are one of the last great, unguarded piles of money in this country, and there are going to be all sort of operators that are trying to get their hands on that money."

It's not just about teachers, cops, and firefighters. It's also San Francisco employees who are nurses, librarians, secretaries, janitors, and bus drivers who rightly worry about the sticky fingers trying to gain access to their SFERS retirement fund.

Monette-Shaw is an open-government advocate. He received the Society of Professional Journalists-Northern California Chapter James Madison Freedom of Information Advocacy Award Feedback: monette-shaw@westsideobserver.

Prop 218 (Cont. from p. 4)

raised in this article is that complex and opaque financial gamesmanship of shifting the debt forward to future rate-payers, in high probability, offends Proposition 218. It is time to view Proposition 218 constraints in the future as well as the present.

Utilities develop a rate structure to cover their production costs. This is called the revenue requirements approach to ratemaking. The two main components of most utility cost functions are operation and maintenance and external capital costs such as revenue bonds.

Finance costs are all costs related to the issuance and repayment of debt, mainly revenue bonds in the case of the SFPUC. The SFPUC has issued \$4,039,972,895 for their Water System Improvement Program in 10 different sets of bond sales. The 76.39 percent actually flowing to projects seems low. This requires additional analysis.

Uses	Total	Percent
Costs of Issuance	7,830,791	0.19%
Underwriter's Discount	24,992,730	0.62%
Debt Service Reserve	153,804,276	3.81%
Capitalized Interest	416,844,265	10.32%
Projects	3,086,022,222	76.39%
Commercial Paper Refunding	350,478,511	8.68%
Contingency	100	0.00%
Total	\$4,039,972,895	100.00%

Direct O&M costs are probably easier to monitor than capital costs. Even this monitoring or oversight has become a near impossibility in San Francisco in that all attempts at independent oversight have been hijacked. People who think monitoring SFPUC-O&M costs is difficult will find trying to monitor and understand what the financial types are really doing with billions of revenue bond money is exponentially more trying to decipher. Bailing out the "too big to fail" financial intermediaries sent the wrong message to these gamers. Financial games were encouraged rather than discouraged. As a member of the Revenue Bond Oversight Committee (RBOC), I always felt the invisible hand that was blocking real regulatory reforms, dictated by an understanding of orthodox economics and the real mandates of the RBOC's enabling legislation, was coming directly from the financial types.

To repay, in level annual amortized payments, the \$4,039,972,895 currently issued in SFPUC-bonds, for a term repayment term of 30 years and a coupon rate of 4.5 percent, the SFPUC would need to blend into its rate structure an annual cost of capital amount of approximately \$250,946,083. Over 30 years these payments would amount to \$7,528,382,495, comprised of interest payments of \$3,488,409,600 and principal of \$4,039,972,895, all in nominal or dated dollars.

Traditionally, utilities capitalize interest on work-in-progress and then amortize, as plant goes on line, the total amount into level annual payments that are repaid in equal amounts in the rate structure. This is both transparent and an accepted way of sharing costs between present and future generations for large, long-lived capital items. The diagram below shows how the \$4.04 billion dollars would have been passed through to the ratepayers with a well planned and normative WSIP production schedule. Remember the run up to the 2002 votes on funding? The SFPUC stated: we have a plan. Fund us and we will deliver on time (2015) and on budget (\$3.6B).

The impact on wholesale rates of annually passing through the \$250,946,083, at a system reliable delivery of 239 MGD, equals approximately \$939 per acre ft, and

Cont. p. 17

## DID YOU OR A LOVED ONE SERVE IN THE ARMED FORCES?

## YOU MAY BE ENTITLED TO BENEFITS

We assist veterans, their dependents and survivors in obtaining federal and state benefits, such as disability compensation and/or pension, Aid and Attendance, educational benefits, home loans, burial benefits, and more.

Our accredited claims representatives will provide respectful advocacy for you and your loved ones. No appointments are necessary at our office, and please remember to bring your DD-214.

**San Francisco County Veterans Services Office**  
(415) 503-2000  
27B Van Ness Ave, San Francisco 94102  
Hours: Mon-Thurs 9AM-12PM and 1PM-4PM



WHISTLEBLOWER (Cont. from p. 1)

“Since Herrera was running for Mayor, she asked about her future if he won. She recalls that Herrera pronounced her position secure and encouraged her to stay. So she declined the State job offer. She concludes that Herrera either lied while secretly devising her ouster, or axed her for exposing the sewer scheme.

he terminated her for reasons other than her job performance.”

Herrera states he then supervised Hoeper more closely – but without using Annual Performance Appraisals. These require a dialogue and written employee responses to supervisors’ critiques. Herrera’s spokesperson, Matt Dorsey, told the Observer that executives like Hoeper aren’t subject to formal annual appraisals. Instead, in 2007, her supervisor Therese Stewart wrote a private appraisal – solely for Herrera. It lauded Hoeper: “She gives 100% of herself to the Office...tremendously dedicated. She is very loyal. She is extremely confident in herself...and that...serves us well in litigation.” In counterpoint: “Cultivates a pugilistic style of litigating, tending to polarize deputies and opposing lawyers, making settlement more difficult and possibly resulting in underestimation of...risk and exposure.” Hoeper maintains she was never told her performance was unsatisfactory. Rather, Herrera repeatedly assured her “that he valued her work and wanted her to continue...as Chief Trial Attorney.”

Though certified as “very loyal,” Herrera claims that, “With her subordinates, Ms. Hoeper openly disparaged the input of Mr. Herrera and Ms. Stewart, encouraging an ‘us versus them’ mentality.” One alleged taboo was calling her Trial Team “the real lawyers” and the Executive Team “the front office.” Hoeper calls such allegations “completely false”, noting how she lobbied Herrera to “address the morale issues... that plagued the City Attorney’s Office” by recognizing deputies who did a good job - “something the City Attorney was not in the habit of doing.”

In 2008, Herrera restructured the Trial Team, thereby reducing Hoeper’s duties. Herrera ties this decision to Hoeper’s “rebuffing” his guidance and “stoking divisions.” However, Hoeper recalls that Herrera assured his staff that the change reflected shifting priorities, rather than performance problems. Despite what Herrera announced publicly, she worried that the reorganization related to her work, as she was undergoing chemotherapy. So she asked him directly and quotes his reply, “You’re invaluable to the Office. Do not misunderstand what I’m doing. It has nothing to do with your job performance.”

Contending that he remained “dissatisfied with Ms. Hoeper’s performance,” Herrera reportedly sought to replace her in late 2010 with a partner from Kecker & Van Nest, the law firm now defending him. Over the next year, surreptitiously, other attorneys were reportedly approached, but none wanted or fit the job. Ironically, in May 2011, Hoeper herself was recruited for a high-level State position. Since Herrera was running for Mayor, she asked about her future if he won. She recalls that Herrera pronounced her position secure and encouraged her to stay. So she declined

the State job offer. She concludes that Herrera either lied while secretly devising her ouster, or axed her for exposing the sewer scheme.

In late 2011, Herrera’s Executive Team met without Ms. Hoeper to prepare a report titled: *Possible Leadership Changes 2012*. It’s undated, except for 12/21/11 scribbled in a corner. The actual date is important because Hoeper’s sewer investigation also began in late December 2011. The 2-page memo is entirely redacted save 2 sentences: “Put Danny in charge of Trial Team (for 2 years)” and “Maybe you could get Gascon to hire Jo to be Chief of Civil Litigation for the DA’s Office.” Matt Dorsey told us that the date on this memo, and on Hoeper’s 2007 performance review, were added after they were written “to reflect the documents’ actual dates.” Notably, “Danny” was not given Hoeper’s job as proposed.

It took more than 18 months of “actively searching” to find Hoeper’s successor. Supposedly, “the only factor holding up the process was finding the right person.” Strangely, the search was covert – with no job announcements. For Hoeper, “It defies belief that the City Attorney was unable to find highly qualified candidates...who would not leap at the opportunity to be the City’s Chief Trial Deputy.” Yet, just 2 months after speaking out, Hoeper was out. She describes a blitz to install her replacement - a surprised deputy “who had been in an office just down the hall from (Herrera) during most of his fruitless search.” Still, Herrera denies retaliation as he “made the decision to terminate Ms. Hoeper’s employment before she launched the investigation.” As for the 18 month gap between his “decision” and her removal, Herrera admits, “...the poor judgment she exercised during that investigation only served to confirm (his) decision to terminate her employment.”

Once again, taxpayers are footing the bill for a plausible retaliation claim. John Kecker’s firm, a Herrera campaign donor, is collecting \$850/hour to defend him per a contract: “Expected to exceed \$50,000.” Ethical concerns are rising alongside legal fees. Kecker also received a conflict waiver to represent Herrera, while representing developers who are suing the City. This conflict has churned Herrera’s staff, per an anonymous tipster. A Kecker partner, Benedict Hur, chairs our Ethics Commission that unflinchingly denies whistleblower retaliation claims. Herrera’s Office is one of 4 venues for whistleblower complaints, along with the Ethics Commission, the Controller’s Office, and the DA’s Office. Because these agencies reflexively shield City departments, Jo Hoeper had to seek redress elsewhere.

Dr. Maria Rivero and Dr. Derek Kerr were senior physicians at Laguna Honda Hospital where they repeatedly exposed wrongdoing by the Department of Public Health. Contact: DerekOnVanNess@aol.com

## Westside Drinking Water: SFPUC Responds

Steven Ritchie, Assistant General Manager, Water SFPUC

Brian Browne’s December 2014 article, “SFPUC Don’t Experiment with Our Drinking Water,” is inaccurate and misleading to all San Franciscans.

San Francisco’s Regional Water System is a critical regional asset for the San Francisco Bay Area. We serve 2.6 million Bay Area residents. We take that responsibility seriously every minute of every day.

**Groundwater** Mr. Browne has failed to follow the more than ten years of planning, environmental review, community involvement and water quality investigations that are the foundation of the San Francisco Groundwater Supply Project. This project will add up to 4 million gallons per day of reliable local drinking water into our San Francisco system at a reasonable cost. With wells in operation

review the more than 10 years of detailed work and studies related to this groundwater project at [sfwater.org/groundwater](http://sfwater.org/groundwater).

**Obligations to our Wholesale Customers** Mr. Browne also inaccurately represents our obligations as a regional water provider. As a wholesale water agency serving the San Francisco Bay Area we have



“Our Groundwater Project will create a diversified blend of up to 15% groundwater from the Westside Groundwater Basin in San Francisco mixed with Regional Water System water – adding to San Francisco’s current blend of surface water from Hetch Hetchy reservoir and our reservoirs in Alameda and San Mateo counties.

every day, we will be diversifying our supply to serve our drinking water needs and have reliable, tested facilities in place to serve us should an earthquake or other disaster sever deliveries from the Regional Water System. Many of our neighbors to the south – Daly City and San Bruno to name two – and over 80% of Californians rely on groundwater for part of their drinking water supplies.

Our Groundwater Project will create a diversified blend of up to 15% groundwater from the Westside Groundwater Basin in San Francisco mixed with Regional Water System water – adding to San Francisco’s current blend of surface water from Hetch Hetchy reservoir and our reservoirs in Alameda and San Mateo counties.

Every day we test and monitor all of our water sources and throughout the distribution system to ensure we meet and exceed all state and federal water quality requirements. We have spent more than 10 years studying the Westside Groundwater Basin, its historical use, current capacities, water quality, and potential for salt water intrusion. All of our work supports the quality of this water source and its viability to address our continued need to deliver safe, high quality water in San Francisco. It is not “recycled brine” as Mr. Browne suggests. And if you don’t trust our word, I encourage any interested party to learn more about the project and

binding legal agreements which provide the assurance of water delivery in perpetuity to our wholesale customers, including provision for reductions during times of drought. Just as the SFPUC serves the residents, businesses, and visitors of San Francisco, these agencies serve their individual communities. They equitably pay for their use of the system, which includes two-thirds of infrastructure upgrade costs for regional water facilities. And just as San Francisco has a phenomenal track record of conservation and wise water use, so do many of our wholesale customers. Some are now using even less water per capita than San Francisco!

**Safe Water Every Day Now and in The Future** Despite Mr. Browne’s allusion to the failures of other water systems, there has never been a case of waterborne illness in the history of the San Francisco Regional Water System. Nor has there been a case where we have completely run out of water thanks to our responsible planning, investments and management of our finite water supplies. We’re proud of our history and track record. We have delivered safe water to our customers for almost 100 years, and with the San Francisco Groundwater Project and other efforts to improve the reliability of our water supply, we plan to continue delivering safe, high quality water well into the future.

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63rd Annual Pacific Orchid Exposition

A Jungle Blooms

This year's theme, "The Thrill of Discovery," provides an exciting atmosphere and urges guests to venture beyond the wall of exotic tropical treasures at the 63rd annual Pacific Orchid Exposition, happening February 19-22, at the Fort Mason Center in San Francisco—a world of rare orchids seldom seen in the U.S.

This year's show will feature a 18 foot wide by 9 foot tall curved plant wall of orchids and tropicals on display at the Fort Mason entrance.



Photo: Gregg Case

Behind the plant wall you'll find a captivating world of discovery all with orchid oddities, waterfall and jungle noises.

For its 63rd annual show, the Pacific Orchid Exposition will feature several special varieties of orchids never before seen in the United States

The Pacific Orchid Exposition kicks off with the wildly anticipated Gala Benefit Preview, February 19th from 6:30-10:00pm. The Gala Benefit gives attendees the first chance to view and purchase some of the best orchids in the world.

Guests can also enjoy delicious gourmet hors d'oeuvres and wine tastings from some of California's premier wineries, including winners of the San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition, the largest competition of American wines in the world. They can bid on fabulous auction items which will include artwork by renowned water color artist, Sally Robertson, orchid greeting cards by Lydia Faiella, bottles of wine, ballet tickets, trips and much more.

The general show follows February 20-22 and boasts over 150,000 beautiful orchid flowers from across the globe. Throughout the weekend there will be docent tours, orchid potting demonstrations and much more.



Photo: Gregg Case



the Pacific Orchid Exposition will feature several special varieties of orchids never before seen in the United States



THE THRILL OF DISCOVERY  
SAN FRANCISCO ORCHID SOCIETY'S 63RD ANNUAL  
PACIFIC ORCHID EXPOSITION

- Who:** San Francisco Orchid Society
- What:** 63rd Annual Pacific Orchid Exposition, "The Thrill of Discovery"
- When:** Gala Benefit Preview: Thurs, Feb 19, from 6:30pm – 10:00pm  
General Show: February 20-22, 2015  
Fri. 10am-6pm, Sat. 9am-6pm and Sun. 10am-5pm
- Where:** Fort Mason Center's Festival Pavilion, San Francisco, Calif.
- Tickets:** Gala Benefit Preview: \$43 online; \$50 at the door  
General Show: \$14 online/\$15 at the door,  
Seniors (65+): \$11 online/\$12 at the door  
Weekend Pass with Gala: \$60  
3 Day Pass without Gala: \$25

Best of the Net / Supervisor Christensen (Cont. from p. 3)

But life is not a tableau. It is a parade. We can't stand frozen and expect everything to stay frozen around us."

washing machines, desk lamps and even Pyrex tops.

Christensen's re-examination of the lowly mixer changed people's relationship to it, boosting KitchenAid's mixer sales nearly 40 percent. Perhaps this is what we need when it comes to all the lowly aspects of government we are forced to endure.

"My design career requires me to imagine things that don't exist, and that prepares me for my civic work," Christensen said. "I got into civic work for the aesthetics — this park is ugly and we can make it beautiful. I stayed when I saw the impact of building a neighborhood."

Christensen has spent 30 years running her company while giving back to her North Beach and Chinatown communities. She led efforts to plant hundreds of new street trees, replace a dilapidated library, renovate a century-old playground and organize support for the Central Subway extension to North Beach and Fisherman's Wharf.

While historically significant, North Beach is becoming more isolated and irrelevant compared to today's popular SoMa and Mission neighborhoods. That's why Christensen calls the subway extension a "savior." By making all of District 3 accessible to the rest of San Francisco, it will allow small businesses and startups to fill empty second-story office space while providing an influx of customers for a renaissance of ground floor restaurants and retail.

However, critics driven by nostalgia versus a need to plan for the future want to keep Christensen from getting elected

in November.

"A new library and better transit shouldn't be controversial," Christensen said.

"But the same forces vilifying me now have been fighting against common-sense improvements for a long time. I am flummoxed by the resistance they have to change."

At 61, Christensen said she is a good choice to help manage San Francisco's inevitable evolution because she has been around long enough to appreciate the past her critics are holding on to. Yet Christensen has continually adapted to change, from an early divorce to bold career choices to remarriage and becoming a stepmother in her 40s.

"I leaned in," she said.

The newest addition to her life is a 3-year-old Aussie shepherd-hound mix named Cooper.

"Change is frightening for people who can't imagine things another way," said Christensen, who grew up in Louisiana and came to San Francisco in the 1970s when her generation was transforming The City into its own preferred paradise.

"But life is not a tableau. It is a parade. We can't stand frozen and expect everything to stay frozen around us."

The Best of the Net is a feature in which we present an outstanding journalistic effort to assure that our readers are the best informed in the City. Our choice is Joel Engardio's blog. Joel lives west of Twin Peaks. Follow his blog at www.engardio.com. Email him at info@engardio.com.

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**Viva 2015...** the holidays are behind us and it’s time to move forward into 2015, and there’s a lot on the agenda. The city is always changing and flexing, retail spaces open up and someone comes along to fill them in, no matter for how long.

Late January saw the return of **SF Restaurant Week** (remember Dine About Town), with fixe prix menus to bring people to locations that they wouldn’t normally try. Our own West Portal Avenue is home to wonderful spots such as **Orexì, Bursa, El Toreador, Paradise Pizza and Pasta, Spiazzo, Roti, Ristorante DaVittorio, Fuji** and others. Throw in other nearby favorites such as **Villa D’Este, Chiaya** and **Val’s** and we have a multitude of gastronomic proportions.

I highlight these wonderful places as they are all dependent on locals crossing their thresholds, and the stakes have never been higher. With the most recent election, SF voters approved the raise of the **minimum wage to \$15 per hour**. Combined with the sky-high cost of rent, and the mandatory health care surcharges that each restaurant has to levy, the margin between success and failure has never been tighter. I expect that prices will have to increase, but even that may not be enough. Many long time favorites in SF disappeared in 2014: **Fleur de Lys, Woodward’s Garden, Chez Papa Bistrot, Café des Amis, Joe’s Cable Car, Market and Rye (WPA), Joe’s Of Westlake** and the **Empress of China** are just several of the dining spots that have turned out the lights for the last time. Let’s support our local favorites and enjoy their hospitality; after all, these really are the “good old days.”



Casey Neill performs with the Norway Rats at Hillbilly Robot

**West Portal’s own music impresario, the Music Store’s Shelby Ash,** brings San Francisco’s newest music festival, **Hillbilly Robot**, back for round two throughout February. The festival, we mean event, runs every weekend in February and features a variety of urban-flavored Americana, from classic country to alt-country to traditional bluegrass to outlaw bluegrass to raw-rock-n-roll blues to indie-pop with hints of twang. No matter what your listening pallet may be (city or

country), there’s a little something for everyone. So break out your “bestest” overalls, spit-shine your boots, and head on down to Hillbilly Robot for some good old-fashioned downhome music.

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**At the Merced Branch Library**

**Children’s Programs:**

**Toddler Tales & Playtime** – Mondays, February 2, 9, & 23 at 10:15 a.m.

Rhymes, songs, and books. For ages 16 months to 2 years and their caregivers.

**Music with Keenan Webster** – Tuesday, February 3 at 4:00 p.m.

Hear the beautiful West African harp (kora) and other instruments of African

origin and play some too! For children of all ages and their caregivers.

**Baby Rhyme & Playtime** – Thursdays, February 5, 12, 19, & 26 at 10:15 a.m.

Rhyme, rhythm, and song. For infants up to 18 months and their caregivers.

**Adult Programs:**

**Merced Book Club** – Tuesday, February 3 at 7:00 p.m.

Join us for a lively discussion of James McBride’s novel, *The Good Lord Bird*, winner of the 2013 National Book Award for fiction. New members are always welcome to the Book Club, which meets bimonthly. For more information or to locate a copy of the book, please contact library staff at 415.355.2825.

**A Question of Color: John Harris vs. Sutro Baths** – Wednesday, February 4 at 7:00 p.m.

Ranger Rik Penn discusses an 1897 case when John Harris, an African American, sued Adolph Sutro, the former mayor of San Francisco, charging that he was not allowed in the pools at Sutro Baths solely on the basis of his race. This story illuminates a pivotal moment in race discrimination and civil rights law.

**Emancipation Proclamation: Race, Image, and Sound:** From Minstrel Coon Songs to Negro Spirituals – Wednesday, February 11 at 7:00 p.m.

For Black History Month, Bill Doggett showcases audio and video samples of rare and famous Minstrelsy Coon Songs and Negro Spirituals that he places in the context of American social and cultural history.

**Birds—Near and Far** – Wednesday, February 18 at 7:00 p.m.

Sidney Hollister raises awareness of the birds that are around us and what roles they play in our world. Bird behavior, which can sometimes be comical, usually has a serious purpose.

ALL PROGRAMS AT THE LIBRARY ARE FREE

Merced Branch Library, 155 Winston Dr. (at 19th Ave) 355-2825, [sfpl.org](http://sfpl.org)

**Not in SF, but interesting nevertheless...** I recently experienced three places that I think our readers will enjoy.



**Hand-crafted cocktails**, retro “dives” and home-based entertaining have made a comeback. Throughout the city there are wonderful “throwback” types of “gin-joint” that are excelling at producing cocktails of days gone by using old recipes and creating new blends of delicious libations. But can you do this at home? The answer is yes, and if you are into cocktail chemistry, the place you have to visit is called “BittersandBottles.” Located just down the road at 240 Grand Avenue in South San Francisco, the store, located in a wonderful 100+ year old storefront features every type of artisanal spirits, bitters, mixers and cocktail making hardware, and most interesting glasses, too. Owners Joe and Meredith have created a great supply house for bartenders or home-based “faux bartenders.” Check them out at [BITTERSANDBOTTLES.COM](http://BITTERSANDBOTTLES.COM), or by calling them at 918.232.1373. Cheers!

**The best chocolate you’ve yet to discover...**

sometimes we just need a sweet, and if you’re a chocoholic, check out the website: [www.PhilipMarksChocolates.com](http://www.PhilipMarksChocolates.com). This Brisbane-based chocolatier is creating chocolate delights that are really, really good. Dark chocolate, milk chocolate and white chocolate Phil is doing it all. Try them out!



**Coastal Italian fare...** while I love all of the restaurants in West Portal, sometimes I’m not in the city. If I happen to be down the coast in Pacifica, and crave Italian, then Paisano’s is the place to go. Located in the Manor Shopping Center, owner Joe Murillo has opened a comfortable locale that is great with a date, or sit at the counter and watch the Warriors bring forth another win. But it’s the food that sets this place apart. Osso Bucco, Spaghetti Carbonara (to die for), Gnocchi like (my friend’s) Nonni used to make...and the panna cotta...delightful. So if you find

yourself down Highway 1 on a nice day, drop in, say hi to Joe and tell him you heard about it in the *Observer*. Or you can check it out at [www.PaisanosPacifica.com](http://www.PaisanosPacifica.com).

*Do you have an event, a neighborhood fact or just an observation to share? Drop us a line at [mitch@westsideobserver.com](mailto:mitch@westsideobserver.com)—share your ideas or let us know what you think.*



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# TARAVAL STATION Crime Report

Not all crimes are reported in the weekly reports. Reports below are partial excerpts from [www.taraval.org](http://www.taraval.org)

## Daily Crime Report : Fri – Jan 30, 2015

### Home Invasion Robbery

9:55 am • 100 Farallones St  
Officers responded to a report of a home invasion robbery. Two suspects entered a victim's home, tied her up, hit her, and demanded the whereabouts of her valuables. They claimed their actions were in retaliation on behalf of a third suspect who was not present in the house. The suspects ransacked the home and stole valuables. They told the victim to not contact the police and then fled. The victim was able to free herself and dial 911 from her neighbor's phone.

Suspect #1: White male; 6'00" tall; 170 lbs; LSW yellow sweatshirt, blue jeans, black beanie

Suspect #2: Hispanic female; 5'5" tall; 175 lbs; brown hair; LSW black sweater, blue jeans, sunglasses; walks with a limp and uses a cane

Suspect #3: Hispanic female; 5'4" tall; black hair; thin build

### Theft

9:26 am • 2400 41st Ave  
An Adult Protective Service (APS) worker walked into Taraval Station to report a theft on behalf of an elderly client. The elderly client's bank notified the APS worker about a suspicious transfer of funds from the elderly client's account to a medical marketing vendor. The elderly client did not recall purchasing or receiving any service or product from that medical marketing vendor.

### Assault with a Deadly Weapon

11:55 am • 2300 24th Ave  
Officers were flagged down in front of Taraval Police Station regarding an assault. A woman had been beaten unconsciously. She had voluntarily ridden in a vehicle with three men. The men tried to coerce her into working for them as a prostitute. When she refused, she was kicked and beaten into unconsciousness. She was found by a good samaritan at 20th Ave and Vicente St.

Suspect #1: Black male  
Suspect #2: Black male  
Suspect #3: Black male

### Burglary

6:11 pm • 00 Cambon Dr  
Officers responded to a report of a burglary. A victim went to her storage unit and saw its entry was damaged and opened. Two of her belongings were missing.

### Theft

7:05 pm • 1200 Irving St  
An officer responded to a report of a shoplifting. A known shoplifter was seen concealing merchandise items and exit without paying for them.

Suspect: Black male; 40-50 years; 5'6" tall; 150 lbs; black hair; brown eyes; LSW blue/black coat with a hood, black sweatpants, black shoes, short dreadlocks

### Attempted Robbery

7:06 pm • 1200 Irving St  
Officers responded to a report of a shoplifting. Employees confronted a known shoplifter who had merchandise items in a bag. He was asked to empty the bag and leave the store. The shoplifter however pulled-out a pocketknife. The employees feel threatened. The suspect then emptied the bag and exited without the merchandise.

Suspect: Black male; 40-50 years; 5'6" tall; 150 lbs; black hair; brown eyes; LSW black/blue coat with a hood, black sweatpants, black shoes

### Contributing to Delinquency of a Minor

7:13 pm • 100 Riverton Dr  
A man walked into Taraval Station to report that the person who is dating his teenage child is contributing to the

teenager's delinquency. The teenager had overdosed on drugs. The teenager had been coming home drunk or under-the-influence. The man believed the person dating his teenage child had supplied illicit drugs.

Suspect: White male; 21 years; 5'10" tall; 160 lbs; black hair; brown eyes

### Theft from Vehicle

Reported at 7:49 am / 1100 Moraga St / 2012 Chevrolet Cruze

Reported at 8:36 am / Vicente St and 15th Ave / 1999 Honda Accord

Reported at 9:50 am / Ashton Ave and Ocean Ave / 2003 Honda Accord

Reported at 10:17 am / 30th Ave and Quintara St / 1999 Honda CR-V

Reported at 11:30 pm / 1900 31st Ave / 2005 Infinity FX35

## Daily Crime Report : Thurs – Jan 29, 2015

### Theft

12:21 am • 00 Josepha Ave  
Officers responded to a report of a theft. A victim befriended two men he met over the internet. He invited them over to his home. The victim left the two men alone and took a shower. When the victim left the men alone to take a shower, the two men took his belongings and fled.

Suspect #1: White male; 5'10" tall; 150 lbs; brown hair; brown eyes; moustache; LSW black baseball cap, black shirt, black shorts with white lines, red tennis shoes; "Mike"

Suspect #2: White male; 6'1" tall; 190 lbs; blond hair; brown eyes; moustache; LSW tan baseball hat, white T-shirt, dark jacket, blue jeans; "Tony"

### Theft-Cited

12:29 pm • 1100 Ocean Ave  
Officers responded to a report of a shoplifting. An employee saw a man conceal merchandise items and exit without paying. The employee detained the man and placed him under citizen's arrest. Officers took custody of the suspect. He was cited and released.

### Burglary

4:43 pm • 2600 Great Highway  
Officers responded to a report of a burglary. A victim left his shared garage locked and secured. Upon return he saw the garage door broken, belongings missing, and his garaged vehicle damaged. An unknown suspect gained entry by breaking the garage door. The suspect took belongings without permission and damaged the victim's parked car.

### Battery

5:22 pm • 200 Gonzalez Dr  
Two women walked into Taraval Station to report a battery. The two women and their third roommate lived in the same home. The women and the third roommate got into a fight. The third roommate then fled in a car driven by a friend.

Suspect: Asian female; 21-22 years; 5'5" tall; 136 lbs; black hair

### Theft-Possession/Controlled Substance

6:31 pm • 200 Winston Dr  
Officers responded to a report of a shoplifting. Employees saw a man conceal merchandise items and exit without paying for them. He was detained and placed under citizen's arrest. When the employees searched the suspect for hidden merchandise, they found a suspected controlled substance. Officers took custody of the suspect arrested him for the violations.

### Fraud

7:15 pm • 1800 25th Ave  
A woman walked into Taraval Station to report a fraud. She attempted to get a personal loan. She was in contact with someone from a loaning institute. She was told to pay a loan service fee by buying preloaded credit cards. The woman was

tricked into buying these cards and giving-up "codes" that enabled the fraud suspect to add value to his prepaid credit card.

Suspect: male; "Alex Martin"

### Theft

Reported at 7:51 pm • 2400 41st Ave  
A woman reported a package that was delivered to her doorstep and left unattended was stolen.

### Threat to Harm

8:50 pm  
1800 20th Ave  
A man walked into Taraval Station to report a threat to harm. A vehicle was parked in his driveway without permission. The car was towed. Later two men knocked on his door and threatened to harm him or his spouse or cause property damage because their vehicle was towed.

Suspect #1: Middle Eastern or East Indian male; 30-40 years old; 5'11" tall; 190 lbs; black hair

Suspect #2: Middle Eastern or East Indian male; 30-40 years old; 6'00" tall; 190 lbs; black hair

Vehicle: Black 2009 Mini Cooper

### Theft from Vehicle

Reported at 10:22 pm / 400 Faxon Ave / 2013 Scion xB

Reported at 8:35 pm / 100 Saint Charles Ave / 2009 Dodge Charger

## Daily Crime Report : Wed – Jan 28, 2015

### Vandalism

8:38 am • 600 Eucalyptus Dr  
Officers responded to a report of a vandalism. A grounds manager saw graffiti on the outside wall of his church.

### Mental Health Detention

10:35 am • 1300 48th Ave  
Officers responded to a report of a person lying on the sidewalk. Officers determined she was gravely disabled and therefore unable to care for herself. She was transported to a mental psychiatric center.

### Fraud

10:40 am • 1600 Ocean Ave  
A man walked into Taraval Station to report a fraud. He checked his records and saw an unauthorized ATM withdraw. An unknown suspect took money out of his

account through an ATM.

### Vandalism

11:24 am • 40th Ave and Judah St  
A man walked into Taraval station to report a vehicular vandalism. He returned to his parked and unattended car and saw it had scratch marks on the sides.

### Vandalism

12:05 pm • 2200 40th Ave  
Officers responded to a report of a vandalism. An unknown person broke a victim's home window.

### Fraud

2:20 pm • 1200 Monterey Blvd  
A woman walked into Taraval Station to report a fraud. She received a phone call from a company claiming she owed them money. She did not have any dealing with or connection to this company.

### Suspicious Occurrence-Found Vehicle

5:32 pm • Juan Bautista / Burcareli Dr  
Officers responded to a report of a robbery. A possible suspect vehicle was stopped and the suspects were detained. A victim refused to cooperate. The vehicle was reported stolen and it was subsequently towed. The possible suspects were released since they could not be positively identified.

### Burglary

8:59 pm • 3200 20th Ave  
Officers responded to a report of a burglary at a store. An employee said two suspects took merchandise and fled without paying. Officers determined the suspects had intended to commit the theft, therefore committing a burglary.

Suspect #1: Black male; 6'2" tall; 215 lbs; LSW: Black overcoat, black slacks.

Suspect #2: Black female; 5'7" tall; brown hair; LSW: Dark coat, cornrow hair style.

Under the Influence of Alcohol in a Public Place-Arrest

11:12 pm • 100 Bright St

Officers responded to a report of a person screaming and fighting. A aggressive man appeared to be under the influence of alcohol. He was arrested for the above violation.

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1915 WORLD'S FAIR • TUE FEB 10 - 7:30PM • THE OLD MINT • 88 5TH ST

Illuminating the Jewel City: Spectacular Lighting at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition

Enjoy a nighttime tour of San Francisco's beautiful 1915 World's Fair. We will explore how Illuminating Engineer Walter D'Arcy Ryan implemented groundbreaking lighting effects like The Great Scintillator and The Electric Kaleidoscope in the face of tremendous skepticism. Learn about the more than 100,000 large, cut-glass Novagems that adorned the Tower of Jewels, how the San Francisco fog facilitated "The Devil's Fan" and "Fighting Serpents and Octopus," and how Ryan's advances permanently affected how architecture is lit. Ackley's

talk includes a discussion of World's Fairs prior to 1915 and is illustrated using photographs, stereoviews, postcards, maps, newspaper illustrations, architectural renderings, and lantern slides.

Ms Ackley holds graduate degrees in architecture from Harvard and University of California-Berkeley. An undergraduate course in cultural landscapes sparked her interest in the Panama Pacific International Exposition. Her book, San Francisco's Jewel City: The Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915, will be available for purchase at the February meeting, and also at a special event on March 3, 2015 at The Book Passage in Corte Madera. See the Book Passage website for details.

Program is free to current SFMHS members. Admission is \$10 for non-members (\$5 for students, K-12 teachers, seniors, and persons with disabilities) Please use side entrance on Mint Plaza. Info: www.sfhistory.org

5th Annual San Francisco History Expo



SAT FEB 28 • 11AM - 5PM / SUN MAR 1 • 11AM - 4PM



More than sixty local historical organizations, small museums, genealogical groups, and more are scheduled to participate in the Fifth Annual San

Francisco History Expo at the Old Mint.

For more information, including a list of participating organizations, and a schedule of local and nationally renowned speakers and raconteurs who will be presenting at the Expo, visit sfhistoryexpo.org and the Expo's Facebook Page.

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 TUE • COMPUTER SKILLS

Tue | 1:15-2:45 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.

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 THURS - NIGHTLIFE

Every Thu | 6–10 pm | The Academy of Sciences brings live music, 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

FRIDAYS @ OFF THE GRID/FT. MASON

Every Fri | DJs 5-7:30 - Live Bands 7:30-10:30 pm | Off the Grid: Over 32 food trucks and street food carts in a huge circle with a full bar and bands in the middle? Now that's a party. Ft. Mason Ctr. Marina Blvd.

MON • SCHOOL BOARD INTERVIEW

Mon Feb 9 | 7pm | Inside the SF School Board: Lee Hsu Interviews School Board Members Emily Murase and Rachel Norton. Every two years, voters are asked to choose candidates for the School Board. But how many of us know enough about it to choose

confidently? Sunset Heights Assoc. of Responsible People. Last Mon of each month - sharpsf.com for details. 1736 9th Ave @ Moraga.

MON • SAINT JUNIPERO SERRA?

Mon Feb 9 | Rcptn 5:30 pm - 6 pm | The mission system and Serra's role in the abuse and death of 65,000 Indians at the missions. Author Elias Castillo, three-time Pulitzer Prize nominee and the winner of thirteen journalism awards, will discuss "A Cross of Thorns: The Enslavement of California's Indians by the Spanish Missions." Members free \$20 nonmembers, \$7 students. Info/tickets: commonwealthclub.org/events. Commonwealth Club, 555 Post St.

WED • OCEAN AVE. CORRIDOR DESIGN

Wed Feb 11 | 6:30 - 8 pm | The Ocean Avenue Assn. & the SF Planning Dept's final open house for the Ocean Avenue Corridor Design Project. Lick-Wilmerding High School, 755 Ocean Ave to improve connections between the Commercial District and Balboa Park Station. Final designs will be unveiled: Ocean Ave between Phelan Ave and San Jose Ave: Ocean Ave between San Jose and Mission Street: Geneva Ave between Phelan Ave and I-280: Gateway Nodes along Ocean Ave & Proposed streetscape amenities. Public welcome to view project materials, ask questions and give your feedback. Info: Lily Langlois (415) 575-9083

WED • FREE E-BOOKS DROP-IN

Wed Feb 11, 18, 25 | 1:30-2:30 pm | Do you have an eReader? You can check out more than 40,000 electronic books for free. Bring your Kindle, Nook, iPad or other eReader — we will show you how to use it to download books and other materials from the Library website. W. Portal Branch, 355-2886, 190 Lenox Way.

WED • AUTHOR LEE BRUNO

Thu Feb 12 | 7 pm | Panorama: Tales From SF's 1915 Pan-Pacific International Exposition. It's the 100th anniversary and this fully illustrated coffee table book focuses on the exhibition and its fascinating participants. Bookshop West Portal, 80 West Portal.

SAT/SUN • FLOWER FAIR CHINATOWN

Sat-Sun Feb 14-15 | 10 am - 6 pm | Chinese New Year Flower Fair is the weekend before the holiday. Grant Ave from Clay to Broadway, Pacific Ave from Kearny to Stockton. FREE. Enjoy Chinese dance, music and cultural displays.

TUE • ASTRONOMY LECTURE

Tue Feb 17 | 7 pm | SF Astronomical Assoc. hosts leaders in the fields of astronomy, physics and related fields. Free Observation Post, Building 211, the Presidio. Lecture starts at 8.

TUE • COMMUNITY SAFETY MEETING

Tue Feb 17 | 7 pm | Meet with Captain Curtis Lum. 3rd Tue of the month. Taraval Police Station 2345 24th Ave. 759-3100.

FRI • DINNER & MOVIE

Tue Feb 17 | 5 pm | OMI Family Resource Center invites you to their free monthly dinner and movie night at Minnie & Lovie Ward Rec Park, 650 Capitol Ave. RSVP required - call Priscilla 406-1370

WED • THE BIRDS AROUND US

Wed Feb 18 | 7 - 8:30 pm | Sidney Hollister brings the birds we live with to life, including two short films. Merced Branch Library, 155 Winston Dr.

SUN • ACADEMY OF SCIENCES FREE DAY

Sun Feb 22 | 11 am - 6 pm | GG Park's world class scientific and cultural institution, the California Academy of Sciences will be free all day. First-come, first-served. Possible wait at the door - come early. 55 Music Concourse Dr., Golden Gate Park.

MON • CIVIL GRAND JURY / SHARP

Mon Feb 23 | 7 pm | Civil Grand Juror and SHARP vice-president Charles Head will convene fellow members of the 2013-14 San Francisco Civil Grand Jury to present evidence from their 2014 report, "Ethics in the City: Promise, Practice or Pretense." Sunset Heights Assoc. of Responsible People. Last Mon of each month - sharpsf.com 1736 9th Ave @ Moraga.

MON • CENTRAL COUNCIL

Mon Feb 23 | 7:30 pm | West of Twin Peaks Central Council meets to discuss topics of interest to Westside residents. Meets the last Monday each month. Forest Hills Clubhouse, 381 Magellan Ave.

WED • SISTER ACT

Wed Feb 25 | 6:30 - 8:30 pm | A worldly singer witnesses a mob crime and must hide out in a San Francisco convent: Whoopi Goldberg and Maggi Smith at West Portal Branch Library, 190 Lenox Way

THU • AUTHOR MATT RICHTER

Thu Feb 26 | 7pm | The Doomsday Equation from the Pulitzer Prize-winning New York Times journalist comes a pulse-pounding technological thriller—in which one man has three days to prevent annihilation: the outbreak of World War III. Bookshop West Portal, 80 West Portal.

THU • ORPHEUS IN THE UNDERWORLD

Thu Feb 26 | 6:30 pm |Orpheus and Eurydice gets a fresh retelling and this revealing account from Larry Oppenheim (Kensington Symphony) makes Offenbach's opera enjoyable—even if you don't like opera. West Portal Library, 190 Lenox Way.

THU • OMI NEIGHBORS IN ACTION

Thu Feb 26 | 7 pm | Meets last Thu each month. This meeting is at Temple UMC 65 Beverly/Sheilds Street.

SAT • THE BEATLES CHOIR SINGALONG

Sat Feb 28 | 9:30 am | Take a sad song and make it better! The Beatles Choir brings cheer to the residents of Laguna Honda Hospital. Come and join in the songs and be part of the event. LHH 375 Laguna Honda Blvd.

SUN • ASIAN ART MUSEUM FREE DAY

Sun Mar 1 | 10 am-5 pm | Every first Sunday is free at the Asian Art Museum (save \$12) -17,000 artworks spanning 6 thousand years. Special exhibitions may require separate charges. 200 Larkin St.

SUN • HILLBILLY HOOTENANY WEST SIDE

Sun Mar 1 | 7:30 pm | Country and Western, Hill-billy, Bluegrass, Honky-tonk, Americana and old-time night at the Riptide, 3639 Taraval St. Free.

TUE • LEGION OF HONOR FREE DAY

Tue Mar 3 | 9:30 am - 5:15 pm | 4000 years of ancient and European art in the exquisite Beaux-Arts building in an unforgettable setting overlooking Golden Gate Bridge.

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# At the Movies / By Don Lee Miller

## AMERICAN SNIPER

Navy SEAL sniper Chris Kyle: Bradley Cooper distinguishes himself with 160 confirmed kills in his four tours of duty in Iran. He's home for the conceptions with his wife Taya: Sienna Miller but not the births. His close combatants are Mark Lee: Luke Grimes and youthful Goat-Winston: Kyle Gallner. Director Clint Eastwood gets to the nitty-gritty from writer Jason Hall and the book by Chris Kyle, Scott McEwen, and James Defelice. DIA Agent Sneed: Eric Close (Without a Trace, 2002-09) has a ten-minute cameo midway. Strong and disturbing war violence. Profanity throughout including some sexual references.

Awards: 6 Academy Awards (AA) nominations: Best Picture, Actor, Adapted Screenplay, Editing, Sound Mixing, and Sound Editing. Won AFI Award: Movie of the Year. Won Broadcast Film Critic Assn. Award: Best Actor in an Action Movie: Cooper; nom. Best Action Movie. Won Natl. Board of Review: Best Director: Eastwood, and Top Ten Films. + 11 other noms.

## BIG EYES

Burton and his screenwriters take on the true life of Margaret Keane: Amy Adams and her tumultuous marriage with Walter Keane: Christoph Waltz. Her paintings of big-eyed children were widely popular from the late 1950s for years. Margaret's problem was she was not given credit for having painted them; Walter saw to that as he promoted and sold them... taking full credit himself.

Dick Nolan: Danny Huston and Enrico Banducci: Jon Polito provide support. Director Tim Burton rarely delves beneath the surface of what could have been more interesting, particularly if his reigns on Waltz hadn't snapped so early on. Adams acts circles around his haminess. Even when angry, she maintains her control. She leaves their luxurious Woodside home, the SF gallery behind her and moves to Hawaii where she continues painting and sues Walter for divorce. The court gives them an hour paint-off to prove who is the real Keane painter. Adams evolves from mousey to gutsy and Margaret develops a movement, leading women to find their inner power. Thematic elements. Brief profanity.

Awards: Academy Awards (AA) nominations: GG win: Best Actress, Comedy: Adams. Won Capri Actress Award: Adams. Women Film Critics Circle Awards - noms. Amy Adams: Karen Morley Award, Invisible Woman Award, Worst Male Images in a Movie.

## EXODUS: GODS AND KINGS

Moses: Christian Bale leads 600,000 Egyptians, slaves and prisoners on foot across the Red Sea to escape the tyrannical reign of Seti: John Turturro. On Seti's death, Moses's half-brother becomes Pharaoh Rameses: Joel Edgerton. Moses leads his people in their flight from the terrifying cycle of deadly plagues. If Bales' British accent isn't enough, God appears as a 10-year old boy with the thickest British accent this side of Liverpool. The spectacle of the statues, buildings, etc. being built under the whip of Viceroy Hegep: Ben Mendelsohn becomes disconcerting. Nun: Ben Kingsley offers spiritual guidance to Moses. Tuya: Sigourney Weaver appears briefly. The hard work of director Ridley Scott and writers Adam Cooper, Bill Collage, Jeffrey Caine, and Steven Zaillian has produced some memorable images. Profanity throughout. Some sexual content. Violence including battle sequences and intense images.

## FOXCATCHER

The 1988 U.S. Olympic wrestling team is sponsored by wealthy John DuPont: Steve Carell with huge putty nose. The stars are the brothers team of Mark Schultz: Channing Tatum and David: Mark Ruffalo, a family-man. Mother Jean DuPont:

Vanessa Redgrave has three short scenes; one actually has dialog! The wrestling scenes are quite good, Director Bennett Miller used only two writers: E. Max Frye and Dan Futterman. Some drug use. A scene of violence.

Awards: 5 AA noms.: Actor: Carell, Sup. Actor: Ruffalo, Dir., Orig. Scrnplay., Makeup/hair styling. Cannes: Best Dir. Won Gotham Awards: Best Ensemble.

## THE IMITATION GAME

Teen Alan Turing: Alex Lawther ages to mathematician Benedict Cumberbatch who builds the first computer to solve the Nazi Enigma code with a team of British mathematicians including Hugh: Matthew Goode and Joan: Kiera Knightley. The group reports to Stewart: Mark Strong who is under an impatient CDR Denniston: Charles Dance. Well played by the cast as they slowly get through WWII. Some sexual references. Mature thematic material. Historical smoking.

Awards: 8 AA noms.: Pic, Actor: Cumberbatch, Sup. Actress: Knightley, Director: Tyldum, Adapted Screenplay: Graham Moore, Orig. Score: A. Desplat, Film Editing, Prod'n. Des. 3 SAG noms.: Best Ensemble, Cast; SAG Best Male Actor in a Leading Role, Film: Cumberbatch. Producers Guild nom.: Best Pic, winner: Zanuck Producer of Year Award. Directors Guild nom.: Best Dir.

## INTO THE WOODS

There are multiple storylines which culminate with a curse by the Witch: Meryl Streep. First, there's Cinderella: Anna Kendrick (who has a fine voice). Her wicked stepmother: Christine Baranski and step-sisters: Florinda: Tammy Blanchard and Lucinda: Lucy Punch keep her working their bidding. Her Prince: Chris Pine uses the crystal slipper to find her. The Baker: James Corden and his wife: Emily Blunt are having problems becoming parents so the Witch tells them the four items she needs to make her fertile. They proceed to seek the missing links. Little Red Riding Hood: Lilla Crawford encounters the Wolf: Johnny Depp on her way to Granny's: Annette Crosbie. Jack: Daniel Huddleston and his mother: Tracey Ullmann must deal with the female Giant: Frances de la Tour when the planted beans instantly grow a tree to the heavens. Then there's Rapunzel with the long hair: Mackenzie Mauzy with her handsome Prince: Billy Magnussen. Everybody is singing Stephen Sondheim's score. Some have better voices than others. Act One is followed fairly faithfully; but Act Two suffers from cuts...when the Witch sings her Still Midnight song, where are the three Midnight songs that preceded it? It lacks power though Streep is melodious. Thematic elements. Fantasy action and peril. Some suggestive material.

Awards: 5 AA noms.: Sup. Actress: Streep (has 3 AAs), Prod'n. Des., Costume Des.,

## SELMA

This story of Martin Luther King's march from Montgomery to Selma, Alabama falls short, as if it's missing a spark plug. There are numerous walk-outs. Several people told me they found it boring. Personally, I didn't; I just kept expecting it to come alive but it didn't. I don't fault David Oyelowo, who is actually quite good as King; I only wish the film could have been made while Paul Winfield was still living...he would have been terrific! Familiar faces populate the cameos: Pres. LBJohnson: Tom Wilkinson, Annie Lee Cooper: Oprah Winfrey (also Producer), Gov. George Wallace: Tim Roth, James Bevel: Common (who co-wrote Glory), Lee White: Giovanni Ribisi, J. Edgar Hoover: Dylan Baker, and Fred Gray: Cuba Gooding, Jr. Brief Strong Profanity. Disturbing thematic material including



Cont. p. 17

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

## IMPRESSIONISM

Strong Cast and Direction Steers *Impressionism* at RVP. The New Year gets off to a great start at RVP with the romantic comedy *Impressionism* by Michael Jacobs and directed by Billie Cox. *Impressionism* raises the question: Does art imitate life, or does life imitate art?

The playwright, Michael Jacobs has written for Broadway and television. For many years, Director Billie Cox has been a director, playwright, composer, lyricist, and sound designer.

The setting by Malcolm Rodgers is a small art gallery of Katharine Keenan (Mary Ann Rodgers) where Thomas Buckle (Tom Reilly) has been employed for the past two years. Thomas brings Katharine coffee each morning and tells her his stories. These stories lead to flashbacks that have led to the present state, as well as a relationship to the art that hangs in the gallery. Both people use the gallery as a "hiding place" to separate themselves from a world which has wounded them - Thomas, by his time as a world-traveling photojournalist, and Katharine, by many failed relationships.

In *Impressionism*, we're informed by artwork wonderfully projected onto the gallery's rear wall. Katharine can't bring herself to sell her merchandise, and Thomas is a photographer who seems to be suffering from the photographer's version of "writer's block."

In the end, the audience is taken on

a journey through which a love story shows Katharine and Thomas that, just like the impressionist art on the walls, the more they step away from the canvas of their lives up to now, the more they realize their future together might hold more depth than the past that has led them to each other.

The two lead actors, Tom Reilly and Mary Ann Rodgers, give professional performances. They're supported by an outstanding cast, including Ellen Brooks, as Julia Davidson; Phillip Percy Williams as Chiambuane, and also as Mr. Linder; Dale Camden as Douglas Finch; James Montellato as Ben Joplin; Alana Samuels as Nicole Halladay; and Elena Gnatek (Juliana Postrel and also alternating as young Katharine).

*Impressionism* is a gentle romantic comedy which weaves a spell that will remain with you long after you've seen the show. *Impressionism* runs January 16 through February 15, 2015, with performances on Thursdays at 7:30pm; Fridays and Saturdays at 8:00pm; and Sundays at 2:00pm. Please note there will be no matinee performance on Super Bowl Sunday, February 1st, and there will be two performances on February 14th: at 2:00pm and 8:00pm. All performances take place at



Flora Lynn Isaacson



Linda Ayres-Frederick



the Barn Theatre, home of the Ross Valley Players, 30 Sir Francis Drake Blvd. in Ross CA. To order tickets, telephone 415-456-9555 ext. 1, or visit [www.ross-valleyplayers.com](http://www.ross-valleyplayers.com) Coming up next at Ross Valley Players is A Month in the Country, a tragicomedy adapted by Brian Friel from Turgenev, from March 13 through April 12, 2015.

Flora Lynn Isaacson



Money Matters By Brandon Miller

Managing Your Taxes in 2015



There's one thing you can count on as we kick off a new year – changes to the tax code. While there are few major new laws affecting taxpayers in 2015, it is important to understand how any adjustments to tax rules or your income might affect your tax liability. It is a critical aspect of your overall financial plan and can help you avoid any surprises when you file your 2015 tax return next year.

Be aware that new laws can be implemented during the year. Congress has the ability to adjust tax laws and even do so retroactively. The tax code in place at the start of 2015 could be altered before year's end, with those changes being made effective for the whole year.

Here are some important tax considerations for the New Year:

**Get health insurance or pay** The individual mandate under the Affordable Care Act that took effect January 1, 2014 requires most individuals to obtain a qualifying level of health insurance or be subject to a fee. In 2015, the fee has increased to the higher of:

- 2% of your yearly household income (capped at a certain level); or
- \$325 per person (\$162.50 for a child under 18), with a family maximum of \$975.

If your employer provides health coverage, you do not have to purchase additional insurance on your own. Those who don't have employer coverage can review options available from the health insurance exchanges. Visit [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov) for more information. Take advantage of tax savings by deferring income

If you typically "max out" your workplace retirement plan contributions, you are able to adjust those deferral amounts to a higher level in 2015. The elective deferral limit for employees has risen to \$18,000, \$500 more than in 2014. Those 50 and older can make an additional \$6,000 in contributions (\$500 more than 2014) to their 401(k), 403(b) or federal government Thrift Savings Plan. Remember that for every dollar of income you defer into your retirement plan on a pre-tax basis, you reduce your current tax liability.

Pay attention to a new limit on IRA rollovers

IRA contribution limits remain the same for 2015, but there is an important rule change for IRAs. Now, tax laws allow only one rollover from an IRA to a different IRA in a 12-month period. The "one rollover per year" limit applies in circumstances where you withdraw money from an IRA, but then roll it to another IRA within 60 days to avoid any current tax or penalty consequences. Direct transfers from an IRA with one trustee to an IRA with another can happen as often as you wish. Unless it is absolutely necessary, you want to avoid taking IRA distributions prior to age 59-1/2 to eliminate the risk of incurring a penalty. It's best to talk with a tax professional before doing an indirect rollover to make sure you understand all the rules.

Account for inflation in tax rates and your income

Tax brackets are adjusted yearly for inflation. In 2015, the income thresholds for each bracket were raised by about 1.5%. The standard deduction amount (used if you don't itemize deductions) and the personal exemption amount are also adjusted for inflation. It is important to be aware of how all of these factors might affect your tax liability. On the other side of the coin, if you receive a salary increase and/or bonus in 2015, it could impact your tax bill. Work with your tax advisor to help determine if the amount of tax withheld from each paycheck is sufficient to avoid an under withholding penalty.

Brandon Miller, CFP is a financial consultant at Brio Financial Group, A Private Wealth Advisory Practice of Ameriprise Financial Inc. in San Francisco, specializing in helping LGBT individuals and families plan and achieve their financial goals

Choosing between prioritizing local residents' traffic and parking concerns, the need for City College expansion and maintenance, urban beautification, and the pressing need for more housing can't possibly be an easy task for those in charge of the commission."

Balboa Reservoir (Cont. from p. 2)

of moderate income.

Discussions of housing and parking made earlier ideals of creating an open space and public activity space seem like more of a utopia amidst more pressing city needs. Although arguments for a development that focused on sustainability, even going so far as to request an actual reservoir be created on the land for which it was originally intended, were hard to ignore.

Despite smiling in the face of criticism, the planning commission faced a variety of voices - many of them strong - in regards to what their priorities should be for the space.

Choosing between prioritizing local residents' traffic and parking concerns, the need for City College expansion and maintenance, urban beautification, and the pressing need for more housing

can't possibly be an easy task for those in charge of the commission. Faced with the option of sectioning off the land into small parcels for each initiative or prioritizing some over others will be certain to anger members of the community.

It is these difficult decisions, however, that need to be made in order for progress to be made. Much ink has been spilled over those who want the city to remain the same amidst the sea of changes, but what is most important now is how the city will respond to new needs and create new solutions.

This meeting was the first of a series, with the next arriving in Spring 2015. As San Francisco takes its next steps, this is perfect opportunity to have your voice heard and shape the future of our city. It is these decisions that will affect the city for years to come.

Maya Lekach is a local journalist



Photo: Heidi Alletzhauer

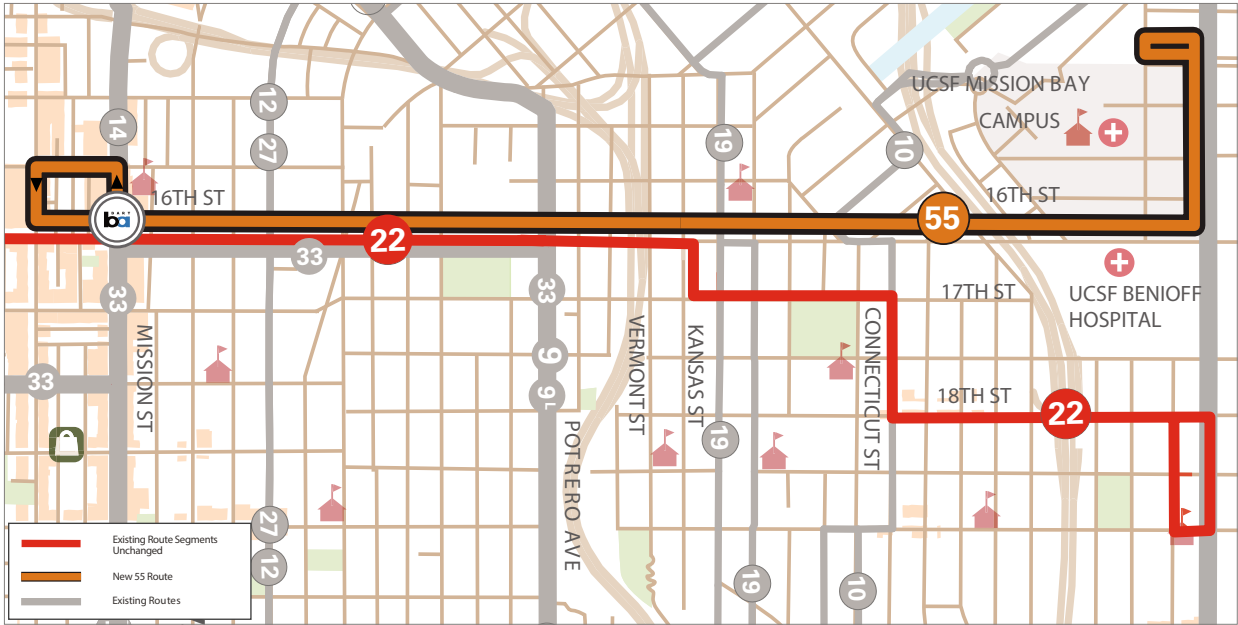
MUNI FORWARD

NEW BUS ROUTE: THE 55 16TH STREET

This new service is part of Muni Forward, an initiative to create a safer and more reliable transportation system.

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## Second Thoughts / By Jack Kaye



## Hopes and Expectations - Gratitude and Entitlement

A few years ago, comedian Lewis Black had a routine about our expectations. The upshot was that we should start lowering our expectations.

We should lower our expectations of our elected representatives with Congress hitting a new low of 9% approval rating. Rather than serve the public, many politicians want to serve their party even if it hurts the country as a whole.

We have been forced to lower our expectations of organized religion with years of revelations about the corruption of the Catholic Church and the violent misunderstanding of Islam by millions of its believers.

We have been forced to lower our expectations about our banking sector after the unbridled greed of Wall Street traders led to the near collapse of our economy in 2008.

We have been disappointed in our public education system, losing our confidence that students will get an excellent education that will prepare them to succeed in the future. It seems that families that can afford it are putting their children in private or parochial schools rather than having them suffer through years of inadequate education.

We have had expectations of our mainstream media. We expected them to be objective, thorough and responsible. Instead we find subjective, sensationalist and superficial reporting. We didn't

you a lot of unnecessary, but predicable, disappointment.

While we are told of the advantage of diversity, we are painfully aware of its many downsides. Remember the Tower of Babel. It was not created to make humans more productive. It was not a reward.

I have decided to cultivate hope and I believe that expectations are to entitlement (if not disappointment) as hope is to gratitude.

I hope for the best in everything I do but have no expectations.

Having had a very successful career as an analyst, I send suggestions to our representatives in the hopes that they will read them and use them to help the affected population. But I don't expect them to even read them. I would be grateful if they did, but I don't feel that I am entitled to their attention.

I have suggested a way to avoid the massive foreclosures that occurred in 2008 and continued for years. I could not get a response from any of our representatives, even though my idea would have saved thousands of people their homes and would have prevented, or at least eased, the collapse in housing values. I now believe that they knew my idea but wanted to give billions to homeowners. (I wrote to the

President Obama campaigned on the prospect of hope. He said that we can hope for a better future that includes greater prosperity for a larger share of the population. The optimism he espoused has drowned in a sea of partisanship, ego, and limited intellect.

expect stories to drag on daily for weeks and months with the very coverage inciting the news segment. Coverage of the four month-long protest riots in St. Louis is just the latest example. It's as though the press is saying "giving us more dirt for our report. The more outlandish the better, the longer the better."

And it's gotten down to the individual level. We have been disappointed by our colleagues, employers, friends, acquaintances and family members. Promises are broken and truth gets lost in the shuffle. It seems that we no longer know what to expect or whom to trust.

A recent poll taken by the media asked Americans if they still believe in the American dream. Half of those surveyed said "no." We've lowered our expectations.

President Obama campaigned on the prospect of hope. He said that we can hope for a better future that includes greater prosperity for a larger share of the population. The optimism he espoused has drowned in a sea of partisanship, ego, and limited intellect.

I have realized that expectations can lead to disappointment because we are not all the same. We do not share the same values and beliefs or cultural identification. Our goals and objectives are different, as are our talents, abilities and ethics. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (creating an expectation and possible disappointment) should be changed to "do unto others in the hope that they will do that unto you, but without expectation of that happening," saving

CEO of the largest lender with my idea. He had the executive in charge of the bank's mortgage program respond, telling me that that option had been available from the start, but it was never mentioned or publicized. That was unexpected.)

I have recently suggested a way to save the Affordable Care Act by eliminating the need for it to be mandatory for individuals, have penalties for non-compliance, or provide tax credits to subsidize the insurance companies by allowing them to charge higher rates knowing that the customer will get a tax rebate. My idea is so obvious and so much better than the current plan you would think that the many great minds that engineered this important legislation would have also come up with it. Yet, I still hope that a decision maker will read my plan and make good use of it. But I don't expect it. Just because I am a constituent and supporter, a taxpayer and a neighbor, I don't feel myself entitled to their response, but I'd sure appreciate it.

I write a column and a blog that is also available on Facebook. I write in the hope of helping people by stimulating thought and conversation about issues that I think are important. I hope that people will read and appreciate my ideas. But I don't expect it. I would hope to get feedback from my readers and am grateful when I do. I don't think that I am entitled to thoughtful response from my audience.

I hope that this very column will be read and be helpful to a number of people.

Feedback: [kaye@westsideobserver.com](mailto:kaye@westsideobserver.com)

## Senior Smarts By Anise J. Matteson

## Learning from Grief

The subject of grief is emotionally challenging and explains the deficiency in family pre-needs planning.

Being a health care professional does not lessen coping with the loss of a loved one.

Clergy were contacted for contribution to this article, but did not respond; therefore, the article addresses the subject of grief from a medical terminology perspective. For specific questions and advice, please contact your health care professional. If you require legal advice, you should seek the services of an attorney.

As an advocate for National Healthcare Decisions Day (April 16), I encourage you to discuss advance care planning and complete an Advance Directive form so that your representative can speak for you should you become unable to speak for yourself. This will facilitate the grieving process [in the event of a death in the family].

### Words of Wisdom

Say 'I love you' and 'goodbye' every day to your loved ones while they are alive.

Keeping secrets from adult children complicates the grieving process. The offspring need this information, especially if they are the executor of the estate.

Your age and the length of time you knew the deceased affects the grieving process.

Read books on the subject to know what to expect as you go through the grieving process.

People will take advantage of your vulnerability (e.g., before your loved one has been buried: a realtor solicits you to sell your house; a neighbor wants to buy your house for an offspring). These actions are disrespectful to the griever!

Your coworkers are not your grief companion. Limit your discussion. They will ask probing questions, listen, share 'their loss' story, and then complain to your supervisor about having the conversation.

Death changes relationships. Not everyone you know has a need to know of your loss.

Take enough time off from your job.

The first 60 days following the death of a loved one are the most crucial. Important decisions have to be made that cannot be postponed and require discussion with an attorney. Any irreversible decisions should be postponed and decided after considerable thought and discussion with an attorney.

If you are experiencing medical complaints, you should seek medical care from a medical doctor who recognizes your symptoms as part of the grieving process and prescribes an appropriate treatment plan.

In time, you will be able to adjust to a new chapter in life's journey—planning for new goals, cherishing the memories and finding hidden gifts. Those gifts may be hidden amongst the clutter.

### DEFINING GRIEF

Grief reaction is a bereavement by the death of, or separation from a significant person which may be first expressed by feelings of numbness and later by profound yearning for the lost one, restlessness and psychophysical responses. It may also be related to matters of importance such as enforced retirement or loss of home. (Understanding Medical Terminology)

#### Facts about grief response

Louis E. La Grand, PhD explains grief response in *Healing Grief, Finding Peace*:

- Grief is your response to deep love—an essential of life.
- Grief is exclusively individual.
- A condition—legitimate suffering.
- In the mourning process we start a transition, in effect to build a new persona and way of life.
- Healing grief is a natural process.

#### Types of grief

Chronic grief is the unresolved denial of the reality of a personal loss. Also called dysfunctional grieving.

Anticipatory grief is the intellectual and emotional responses and behaviors by which individuals (families, communities) work through the process of modifying self-concept based on the perception of potential loss.

It is characterized by sorrow; guilt; anger [choked feelings]; denial of potential loss; denial of the significance of the loss; Expression of distress at potential loss, [ambivalence, sense of unreality]; bargaining; Alterations in activity level, eating habits, sleep patterns, dream patterns, libido.

Dysfunctional grieving is the extended, unsuccessful use of intellectual and emotional responses by which individuals (families, communities) attempt to work through the process of modifying self-concept based upon the perception of potential loss.

It is characterized by Persistent anxiety; Depression; Altered activities of daily living; Prolonged difficulty coping; Loss-associated sense of despair; Intrusive images; Feelings of inadequacy; Decreased self-esteem; Diminished sense of control; Dependency; Death anxiety; Self-criticism.

Risk for dysfunctional grieving is the at risk for extended, unsuccessful use of intellectual and emotional responses and behaviors by an individual (family, community) following a death or perception of loss.

Risk factors include Preloss neuroticism; Preloss psychological symptoms; Frequency of life events; Predisposition for anxiety and feelings of inadequacy; Past psychiatric or mental health treatment.

(Taber's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary)

Disenfranchised grief is losses that are not socially recognized or sanctioned and given status of culturally recognized losses; therefore, they are not publically mourned. Formal rituals are limited or nonexistent. It may also occur to professional caregivers after the death of a patient. (La Grand, p. 189)

Ambiguous loss involves a lack of certainty that a loved one has died. May be psychological as well as physical (addictions, Alzheimer's disease, comas caused by accidents). (La Grand, p. 196)

### PHYSICAL RESPONSES OF GRIEF

Dr. La Grand describes the physical responses of grief as thus: "Sadness and sorrow will be expressed throughout the body in painful ways. Headaches, digestive disturbances, stress-related disorders of sleep and fatigue, and various aches and muscle pains are not uncommon when grieving. The degree of physical discomfort is directly proportional to the constant sad and hopeless thoughts you dwell on without deliberately deciding to take a break."

### EMOTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH GRIEF

Emotions associated with grief include: sorrow, longing (to see them again), guilt, numbness, anger, hopelessness, loneliness, and despair. ([www.counselling-directory.org.uk/bereavement.html](http://www.counselling-directory.org.uk/bereavement.html))

### HOW WE GRIEVE

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, MD explains how we grieve in her book, *On Death and Dying*:

#### Children

Young children have different concepts of death, and they have to be taken into consideration in order to talk to them and to understand their communication.

Children will react differently to the death of a parent...

#### Adolescent

Things are not much different than

Cont. p. 18

## Don't Miss Another Issue!

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# WEST OF TWIN PEAKS PROPERTIES SOLD SINCE 12/5/14

FACT: INVENTORY HAS NEVER BEEN LOWER WHEN COMPARED TO BUYER DEMAND

ADDRESS	TYPE	BEDS	BATHS	PK	ASKING	SOLD	%OF ASKING
62 Castenada Ave	Forest Hill	2	1.5	1	1,635,000	1,750,000	117.06
159 Castenada Ave	Forest Hill	3	2	1	1,495,000	1,850,000	123.75
55 San Benito Way	St. Francis Wood	3	3	2	2,150,000	2,430,000	113.02
135 San Leandro Way	St. Francis Wood	4	2.5	2	2,475,000	2,908,000	117.49
225 San Anselmo Ave	St. Francis Wood	5	4.5	2	2,995,000	3,817,000	127.45
14 Southwood Dr	Westwood Park	2	1	2	798,000	1,085,000	135.96
2730 15th Ave	West Portal	3	2	2	1,189,000	1,354,000	113.88

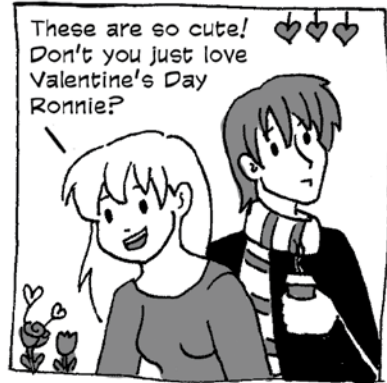
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PUT MY MARKET KNOWLEDGE, NEGOTIATING SKILLS, AND EXPERIENCE TO WORK FOR YOU.

Then & Now



View from Cliff House 1865. Printed with permission, SF History Collection, SF Public Library

Open Late



By Julie Casson

**Congratulations to Julie Casson** — her Open Late is celebrating it's 6th anniversary at the Westside Observer. This is the very first one she did for the paper. Check out her entire collection: [westsideobserver.com/julieComics.html](http://westsideobserver.com/julieComics.html)



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## BRAIN FUD

### A Stitch in Time is What You'll Reap

I am four words  
Though there appear to be three  
Two ways of pronouncing  
Three spellings there be.  
The first is a manner of indicating,  
a case being such, or therefore, or a  
measure of degree.  
The second is a pig, female you see.  
The third is also on a farm, a manner  
of planting of seed.  
The fourth is to stitch, to hold fabric  
together, indeed.

Can you tell me now, what word  
could this be?

The title is a reference to the fact that both sew  
and sow appear in proverbs ("a stitch in time, saves  
nine" and "you reap what you sow")

In order of appearance:  
Sow  
Sow  
Sow  
Sew  
Answer

## Sudoku-fun!

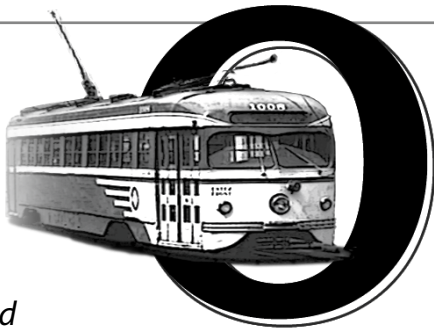
**Rules:**  
Each puzzle is a 9 by 9 grid of squares divided  
into nine 3 by 3 square blocks, with some of the  
numbers filled in for you.  
**The Object:**  
Fill in the blank squares so that each of the  
numbers 1 to 9 appears exactly once in each  
row, column and block.

**Answer:**  
The answer appears below.

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



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## What Have You Done for Me Lately?

By Carol Kocivar ©2014



Francisco.

In 1897, Phoebe Hearst contributed to the establishment of the National Congress of Mothers, which evolved eventually into the National Parent-Teacher Association.

This was a BIG event.

The PTA was created when women did not have the right to vote and social activism was not popular.

It was created when our country was feeling the enormous impact of the Industrial Revolution. An immense wave of immigration was flowing into the country. Children worked in factories, in mines, and in the streets of the cities. Some could not attend school or obtain enough food to eat.

Phoebe and PTA co-founder Alice McLellan Birney believed mothers would support their mission to eliminate threats to children, and in early 1897, they started a nationwide campaign.

On Feb. 17, 1897, more than 2,000 people—mostly mothers, but also fathers, teachers, laborers and legislators—attended the first convocation of the National Congress of Mothers in Washington, D.C.

In 1970, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers (National PTA) and the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers (NCCPT)—founded by Selena Sloan Butler in Atlanta, Ga.—merged to serve all children.

As the largest volunteer child advocacy

organization in the nation, PTA is the conscience of the country for children and youth issues.

We can trace a lot of the improvements to the lives of children to the advocacy of PTA:

- Creation of Kindergarten classes
- Child labor laws
- Public health service
- Hot and healthy lunch programs
- Juvenile justice system
- Mandatory immunization
- Arts in Education
- School Safety

If we just look to San Francisco, we can thank the PTA for those yellow pedestrian sidewalks near every school, for helping children get library cards, and for campaigning for funding that provides the arts, librarians, and physical education in all San Francisco schools, and for pre-school.

We can thank PTA volunteers in

schools throughout the City for reaching deep into their own pockets to help support our schools as the state of California continues to underfund our schools. (No boasting about being 46<sup>th</sup> in the nation in education funding.)

And we can thank our parents for supporting our teachers and our administrators and school communities.

And that group of parents at Burton High School?

They were there to start a new PTSA to help their school. They were there to continue the legacy of activism to improve the lives of children that we can trace back to San Francisco.

So I am guessing—Phoebe must be smiling.

*Carol Kocivar is former President of the California Parent Teachers Assn. and lives in the Westside. Feedback: kocivar@westsideobserver.com*

### Movies (Cont. from p. 13)

violence. A suggestive moment.

Awards: AA noms.: Pic, Song; Glory. GG nom. Best Director: (1st African – Am. woman: Ava DuVernay) + win: Song. Critics Choice Awards: Song.

### TAKEN 3

Ex-government operative Bryan Mills: Liam Neesom is accused of the murder of his ex-wife, Lenore St. John: Famke Janssen. She is found with her throat slit in his apartment. Her husband Dougray Scott had asked her not to see Bryan, even though they share a teen daughter, Kim Mills: Maggie Grace. Kim is very devoted to her dad. When the cops, headed by Franck Dotzler: Forest Whitaker, close in on Bryan, he ducks under a vehicle and drops into the sewer below. He meets with Kim in a place where he never expects cops to find him. By back-tracking Lenore's last few hours, he sees a tattoo that leads him to a culprit. He has an intricate network of friends who aid him in eluding Dotzler and other officers. The tension is as taut as in the first two Takens. Bryan brings his unique sense of justice to the killers. Intense sequences of action and violence. Brief profanity.

### THE THEORY OF EVERYTHING

Cambridge student Stephen Hawking: Eddie Redmayne meets Jane Wilde: Felicity Jones and they start dating. He soon learns about his illness and is given only two years to live. Still they marry and his determination gets him his doctoral degree. He turns his interest to cosmological physics. Jane stands by him as his illness progresses, impairing his speech, swallowing, locomotion, and balance. They produce two children as his work begins receiving recognition. When Jane begins to drift, her mother suggests joining the church choir.

The choir leader, Jonathan, takes an interest in Jane and vice versa. They are together at the same opera as Stephen when he has a seizure, resulting in Jane having to give permission for a tracheotomy, knowing with his atrophied muscles it could save his life. It will also make him difficult to understand. The children are Robert Hawking, age 17: Tom Prior, Lucy Hawking, age 14: Sophie Perry, and Timothy Hawking, age 8: Finlay Wright-Stephens. Supporting players include Dennis Sciama: David Thewlis. Director James Marsh brilliantly presents this biography of Anthony McCarten's screenplay based on Jane's book.

Awards: 5 Academy Awards (AA) nominations: Pic, Actor, Actress, Adpt. Scrn. Original Score. GG wins: Actor Drama: Redmayne, Original Score. SAG Best Male Actor in a Leading Role, Film: Redmayne. Another 15 wins and 78 nominations!

### UNBROKEN

Record-breaking runner at the 1938 Berlin Olympics, Louis Zamperini: Jack O'Connell later joins the armed forces in WWII and finds himself flying over the Pacific. The plane crashes and

some of the men survive for 47 days until they are 'rescued' by the Japanese navy. They are thrown into a Japanese prison camp and tortured on an almost daily basis for more than two years. The battle is just to survive. Louis's torturer Watanabe: Takamasa Ishihara was also an Olympic runner in Berlin who must have invented the term 'sore loser'. Other prisoners are: Phil: Domhnail Gleeson (About Time), Fitzgerald: Garrett Hedlund, and Mac: Finn Wittrock (Noah). Director Angelina Jolie brings it all together with an uncanny knack. War violence including intense brutality. Brief Profanity.

Awards: 3 AA noms.: Cinematography, Sound editing, Sound mixing. SAG win: Action performance by a stunt ensemble in a motion picture. AFI movie of the year award. AAFCA: won 7th place in Top Ten Films of 2014. National Board of Review, New York Film Critics: Breakthrough Performer: Jack O'Connell. Heartland Film: won Truly Moving Picture Award: Angelina Jolie, Director. Another 10 wins and 22 noms.

### WHIPLASH

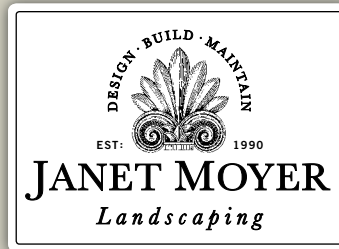
Tyrannical orchestral prof Terence Fletcher: T.K. Simmons browbeats his students, especially 19-year old drummer Andrew Neiman: Miles Teller, who practices until his hands bleed. He wants to be the best; that means not only studying with Fletcher but being a member of his jazz ensemble, which represents the conservatory at jazz festivals. This means enduring Fletcher's provocations and artistic torment. His dad Jim Neimann: Paul Reiser is a failed teacher. Director/writer Damien Chazelle presents his character study with warts and all, no holds barred. Strong profanity. Sexual references.

Awards: 5 AA nom.: Pic, Sup. Actor: Simmons, Adpt. Scrn., Editing, Sound Mixing. GG win: Sup. Actor: Simmons. SAG Best Male Actor in a Sup. Role, Film: Simmons. Another 52 wins and 72 noms.

### WILD

Cheryl Strayed: Reese Witherspoon, an ex-heroin addict with zero-hiking experience sets off on the Pacific Crest Trail from the desert northward 1,100 miles to Oregon. Her drama is based on her autobiography of the experience. Although her difficult solo trek will interest most viewers, some may be unmoved by the excellent narration and interesting scenery along the way. Witherspoon's comprehension of her role is beyond reproach, flawlessly acted. The tale is enlivened by her memories of her mother, Bobbi: Laura Dern, as well as the men Cheryl encounters along the trail, Paul: Thomas Sadoski, Leif: Keene McRae, Jonathan: Michiel Huisman, and Frank: W. Earl Brown. Director Jean-Marc Vallée and writers Nick Horby and Cheryl Strayed respectfully attack Cheryl's trek on film. Sexual content, Nudity, Drug use. Profanity.

Awards: Academy Awards (AA) nominations: Best Actress: Witherspoon, Sup. Actress: Dern.



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Grief (Cont. from p. 15)

with an adult. The loss of a parent, in addition to adolescence, is often too much for them to endure.

Adults

Five Stages of Grief

**Denial and Isolation:** Denial is usually a temporary defense and will soon be replaced by partial acceptance.

**Anger:** When denial cannot be maintained any longer, it is replaced by feelings of anger, rage, envy and resentment. “Why me?”

**Bargaining:** An agreement which may postpone the inevitable from happening. Making a bargain with God in exchange for some additional time. Sets an imposed deadline (e.g., an offspring’s wedding).

**Depression:** A sense of great loss replaces anger and rage.

**Reactive depression:** Depression that is usually self-limiting following a serious event such as a death in the family, the loss of a job, or a personal financial catastrophe. The disorder is longer lasting and more marked than the usual reaction. (Taber’s)

**Preparatory depression:** Is taking into account impending losses. Preparatory grief. Preparing for final separation in order to facilitate the state of acceptance.

**Acceptance:** Almost void of feeling. (pp. 52, 63, 93, 97, 124, 185.)

DEFINING BEREAVEMENT

**Bereavement** is the time we spend adjusting to loss. The period of grief and mourning we go through after someone close to us dies. The expected reactions of grief and sadness upon learning of the loss of a loved one.

Stages of Bereavement

- Accepting that your loss really happened.
- Experiencing the pain that comes with grief.
- Trying to adjust to life without the person who died.
- Putting less energy into your grief and finding a new place to put it (i.e.,

moving on).

Bereavement Counseling

**Bereavement counseling** is designed to help people cope more effectively with the death of a loved one. Specifically, bereavement counseling can:

- Offer an understanding of the mourning process.
- Explore areas that could potentially prevent you from moving on.
- Help resolve areas of conflict still remaining.
- Address possible issues of depression or suicidal thoughts.

Bereavement counseling aims to get you to a point where you can function normally—however long it takes. (www.counselling-directory.org.uk/bereavement.html)

Bereavement Support Groups

**Bereavement support groups** provide opportunities for you to discuss your experiences and learn about grief with others who have experienced loss. (http://www.ucsfhealth.org/education/bereavement\_services\_and\_information/bereavement\_resources\_and\_services/)

For a list of support groups, see “Senior Smarts: Coping with the Holidays During Bereavement” (December 2014) at www.westsideobserver.com/health.html.

MOURNING

**Mourning** is normal grief produced by the death of a loved one. It is an important part of bereavement. Mourning involves rituals—funerals, wakes—allows us to say goodbye.

**Cyber mourning** is the use of social media by mourners to express their condolences.

RITUALS

Formal and informal ritual promotes connection to the deceased and helps survivors by giving support, facilitating transition, and providing comfort. Ritual connections help establish an important pathway to accepting loss, establishing a new relationship with the deceased.

GRIEF COMPANION

**Grief companions** are people who will stand with you, listening to the pain being experienced and expressed.

GRIEF COUNSELOR

**Grief counseling** is a form of psychotherapy that aims to help people cope with grief and mourning following the death of loved ones, or with major life changes that trigger feelings of grief (e.g., divorce). (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grief\_counseling)

CHAPLAIN

A **chaplain** is accountable as part of a professional patient care team; provides supportive care through emphatic listening, demonstrating an understanding of persons in distress; provides grief loss care; designs and leads religious ceremonies of worship and rites (memorials and funerals). (www.healthcare\_chaplaincy.org/userimages/professional-chaplaincy-its-role-and-importance-in-healthcare.pdf)

HEALING

Dr. La Grand explains how grief helps you heal and be at peace with the loss:

To successfully heal from suffering the death of a loved one is peace of mind through radical acceptance.

To help yourself experience inner peace: increase your ability to relate to others with courtesy, respect and humility, even as you grieve.

A crucial task of grieving is to establish new routines; create a nurturing support network; recognize when denial has run its course; “bad days” are normal; honor your spiritual self; start loving in separation; never self-pity.

GRIEF JOURNAL

Dr. La Grand explains:

Writing is a major therapeutic release.

**Writing a journal** serves as tool for managing the pain of grief. It helps you gain perspective and understanding of life that you did not possess previously.

Write in the journal at a selected time each evening or whenever you feel overwhelmed by feelings that need to be expressed.

Write your “specific” goals, either the night before or the first thing in the morning. Identify exactly what you want to get through and how you will do it as the day unfolds. (pp. 105-108)

WORDS OF CONSOLATION

“After the funeral, after the departure of relatives—family members feel most grateful to have someone to talk to, especially if it is someone who had recent contact with the deceased and can share anecdotes of some good moments towards the end of the deceased’s life. This helps the relatives over the shock and the initial grief and prepares him for gradual acceptance.” (Kübler-Ross, MD, p. 184)

RESOURCES: GRIEF COUNSELING/ SUPPORT GROUPS

**San Francisco Suicide Prevention.** [www.sfsuicide.org](http://www.sfsuicide.org). **Crisis Line:** (415) 781-0500 or (800) 273-TALK (8255). Crisis Lines are for anyone experiencing crisis, grief or distress. **Grief Support Group:** Eight week peer led (not clinical) support groups for people who have lost a loved one to suicide. For information, call (415) 288-7105.

**St. Mary’s Cathedral.** [www.stmaryscathedral.org](http://www.stmaryscathedral.org). Sessions provide information on grief process, and tips on coping with loss of a loved one. Third Wed., 10:30 am-noon. Contact: Sr. Esther McGegan, RSM, (415) 567-2020, ext. 218.

**Institute on Aging. Center for Elderly Suicide Prevention and Grief Counseling.** [www.ioaging.org/collaborations-elder-protection/center-for-elderly-suicide-prevention/grief-services](http://www.ioaging.org/collaborations-elder-protection/center-for-elderly-suicide-prevention/grief-services). 8-Week Basic Traumatic Grief Group, 8-Week Advanced Traumatic Loss Grief Group, Monthly Traumatic Drop-In Grief Group, Saturday morning Drop-In Grief Group, and Individual Trauma Loss Grief Counseling. Contact (415) 750-4111 for more information or to enroll.

**Life Transitions Network (LTN).** [www.transitionalworkshops.com](http://www.transitionalworkshops.com). (415) 263-4822. Moving Through Loss and

Cont. p. 19



# TRACKWAY IMPROVEMENTS

## Twin Peaks Tunnel Community Meeting

**Please join us to discuss the Twin Peaks Tunnel Trackway Improvements project on Tuesday, March 3 at 7 p.m. The meeting will take place in the West Portal Playground Clubhouse at 131 Lenox Way.**

The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) will provide further information and address your questions and concerns at the meeting.

For more information and updates in the meantime, please visit [www.sfmta.com/twinpeaks](http://www.sfmta.com/twinpeaks).

### Summary:

SFMTA, which operates Muni, is replacing the light rail tracks along the entirety of the Twin Peaks Tunnel in an effort to keep the Muni system in a state of good repair, allowing trains to move faster through the tunnel and improve travel times. Additional work to the tunnel’s infrastructure will take place at the same time as the track replacement.

The tunnel connects Castro Station to West Portal Station and carries a number of the light rail lines, including the K, L and M.





Real Travel By Sergio Nibbi



When the Wall Came Tumbling Down

With the price of gasoline in the tank, and the ruble in freefall, I couldn't help but think about our first trip to Russia. It was in June of 1990 and the Berlin wall was coming down. Our trip started from London on Royal Cruise Lines' Crown Odyssey as we journeyed through the Kiel Canal and its many locks, taking us through a Disneyland-like sojourn of small villages, beautifully decorated homes, and acres of agricultural flatlands.

Our first stop was in Hamburg, Germany where we visited the major tourist spots, enjoyed lunch with our tour group at a beautiful local restaurant, and boarded a bus that was to take us to the outskirts where a barbed wire fence still remained, which in fact was an extension of the Berlin wall. The guards were no longer armed, and in fact greeted us



graciously as we passed through the wire gates, walked around, and even allowed us to have our passports stamped from their side of the border. Still visible were the sand dunes and trenches that separated the two opposing sides. Each night the sand would be raked smooth so that

ralty Building and it was time to head back to the ship to enjoy our lunch. No food in town because as they told us at the time, "we only have one doctor aboard the ship." (Considering some of the outbreaks lately on these cruise ships we might have been better off eating in the city!!) The afternoon bus ride brought us through the more residential areas, where I noticed that most of the buildings were desperately in need of repair. The traffic was light and the people standing in endless lines for food and clothing. By mid-afternoon we were treated to a shopping spree at the Beriozka, the State-run retail store that accepted credit cards and hard currency. We did buy a few Russian boxes and other trinkets but shopping there was certainly not as much fun as haggling with the street venders who had Russian boxes and Russian watches for a fraction of the retail prices.

A brief stop at The Cathedral of Our Savior of Spilled Blood to admire the more than 7,000 square feet of mosaics, and then it was off to the Hermitage, where we enjoyed endless rooms full of priceless art from the old masters such as Picasso, Rubens, Titian, Rembrandt, and beautiful paintings from the French Impressionists.

It was certainly a full and memorable day, and not at all like our second trip to St. Petersburg in 2006 where democracy was in full swing and capitalism the rule of the day. The funniest part of the trip was going through Passport Control in San Francisco where the customs officer, after seeing our passport stamped from East Germany, asked us with a stern face, "Where have you been?" We have since gotten a new passport.



any footprints found the next morning would be indications of individuals trying to make it across.

From there our next stop was in Gdynia and Gdansk, where again our tour bus took us through the major areas where we saw high-rise residential buildings that ran for blocks and were built after the Second World War to house the survivors of this horrible conflict. We also visited the main tourist area of the old town. Narrow, tall buildings had not only interesting architecture but years of history to tell.

From Poland it was off to Leningrad, formerly known as Petrograd and now St. Petersburg. Although we were there for only one day we were greeted warmly by our tour guide and spent both the morning and afternoon touring the usual tourist attractions.

Our first stop was at the Bronze Horseman, a monument to Peter the Great, followed by a quick tour of Palace Square, the main square of the Russian



Lessons from Grief (Cont. from p. 18)

Transition workshops provides a safe place to share your story, fully experience your feelings and learn new approaches to coping with losses and obstacles of all kinds

RESOURCES: BOOKS

- Available at San Francisco Public Library:
- How we grieve: relearning the world.** Thomas Attig (1996).
- Bereavement: counseling the grieving throughout the life cycle.** David A. Crenshaw (1990).
- The Mourning Handbook: The Most Comprehensive Resource Offering Practical and Compassionate Advice on Coping with All Aspects of Death and Dying.** Helen Fitzgerald (1995, c1994).
- Death and the family: the importance of mourning.** Lily Pincus (1974).
- Anise Matteson is an elder care consultant, retired Registered Health Information Technician, writer of reference books for seniors, forum host Caring for an Aging Loved One ([forums.delphiforums.com/elder\\_care](http://forums.delphiforums.com/elder_care))—[mattesonecs@yahoo.com](mailto:mattesonecs@yahoo.com)

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