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Award-winning
Journalism in the
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Will a Food Truck Event Benefit West Portal Restaurants?

By Keith Burbank

"No, absolutely not," said John Bedroussin, owner of the Submarine Center in West Portal for 32 years. "This neighborhood is clean. We have cleaned it up. One hundred percent not."

Bedroussin was responding to a question about the possibility of a food truck event coming to West Portal one night a week.

The idea has West Portal merchants asking if the event will hurt or help restaurants in the neighborhood recover from the recession.

Some West Portal merchants are in favor of the event because they think it will bring new people to the neighborhood. Supporters, such as local retailers, say these new people may drink or finish dinner at West Portal restaurants during the event or drink or dine at a West Portal restaurant at a night in the near future. Also, they say, the event will give people a reason to visit the neighborhood, reinvigorating the neighborhood business district.

But broker associate Art Belenson of Century 21 in West Portal, said business — at least among restaurants in the neighborhood — is down 30%, which is why the restaurants are opposed. They're afraid the food trucks will draw customers away from them.

Robbie Connolly, co-owner of The Village Grill in West Portal, said the food trucks have an unfair advantage compared with West Portal restaurants, due to higher operating costs than the cost of operating a mobile food truck.

"We pay taxes galore," said Esperanza Mahan, owner of El Toreador, a restaurant serving Mexican food on West Portal Avenue for 50 years.

The event would be set up by Off the Grid San Francisco, a company that groups mobile food vendors. Off the Grid owner Matthew Cohen said the West Portal Merchants Association approached him about the event. Off the Grid's website says the goal of its events is to "allow neighbors to connect with friends and families to reconnect with each other."

One supporter described the proposed event. Off the Grid would bring six trucks to about one half of 14th Avenue, between the RE/MAX office and West Portal Avenue. Centered among the trucks will be some chairs, but not tables, and a quiet trio of musicians. Fourteenth Avenue would be closed during the event, except for the half closest to Portola, so a resident can park his car in the garage.



Cohen said a similar Off the Grid event has been successful in North Berkeley, a neighborhood known for restaurants. The area nearby the food truck event has more than a few frequently-visited restaurants and is nick-named the Gourmet Ghetto.

Bedroussin is concerned the event will leave trash in the streets, and bring people who are homeless to the neighborhood. Also, people opposed are concerned about an increase in traffic congestion because residents will be arriving home from work as the event begins and there could be a lack of parking for the combination of visitors and residents.

Off the Grid has proposed the event for a Sunday, Monday or Tuesday night, from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., for one year. Cohen said perhaps 1,000 to 1,500 people will come to the event each week.

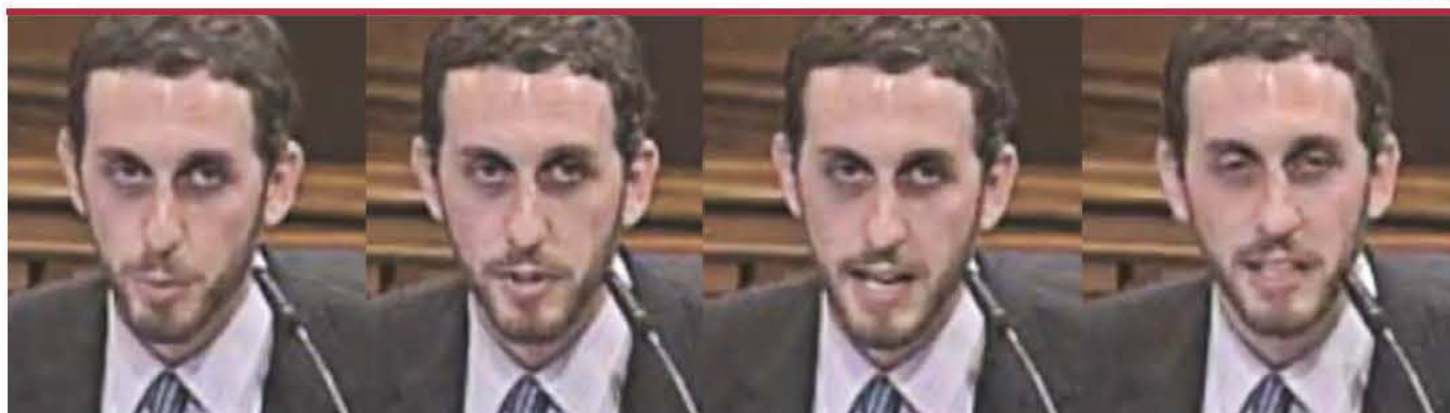
Another concern is restrooms. If the city does not provide portable toilets, some have asked what restrooms the visitors will use. Also, some people opposed asked if it will be too cold outside in the winter to draw any people to the event.

Mahan said 15 to 20 people from the neighborhood met at a community meeting about the proposal.

Connolly said, "Pretty much all of the food establishments are not in favor [of the food trucks], from whom I have talked to and what I understand. All the other attendees were in favor of the event."

Mahan said she thinks the event will only benefit retail establishments. "We don't know how expensive their dishes are. They

Cont. p. 7



Who Killed Sunshine?

By Patrick Monette-Shaw

Has Supervisor Scott "The Tinkerer" Wiener single-handedly killed open government "Sunshine" in San Francisco, however temporarily? Sunshine has left the City, leaving the Sunshine Task Force in official limbo.

Clearly peeved, Wiener kicked physically disabled member Bruce Wolfe off of the Sunshine Ordinance Task Force (SOTF) on May 22, whose by-laws require that a disabled member be seated "at all times," a requirement lawyer Wiener either didn't know about, or studiously ignored.

What was Vice Chair Wolfe's "crime?" Wiener claims Wolfe was "part of the Task Force when all of these things have happened," ostensibly including when it had found Wiener guilty of official misconduct. Removing Wolfe smacks of political payback.

Wiener presented no specific charges against Wolfe. Wiener went so far as to state conclusively during the Supervisors meeting that the SOTF engaged in official misconduct. He didn't qualify his accusation with "allegedly," or "potentially," or "perhaps" had engaged in misconduct.

Wiener went further, claiming that "the current Sunshine Ordinance Task Force ... frankly, has undermined both the Ordinance and transparency in government ... in several ways." To support this claim, Wiener lied.

What was the Task Force's crime? As the first of his lies, Wiener whined "This Task Force purported to exempt itself from the City Charter."

The Task Force did not exempt itself from the Charter. Instead, the Task Force amended its bylaws in April 2011, a lawful act. Because of ambiguities in Charter Section 4.104 — a section not clear that it even applies to the Task Force — the Task Force disagreed with an opinion from City Attorney Dennis Herrera regarding how many members need to be present during meetings to pass motions. When the Task Force adopted its rule, changing to a majority of members present rather than a majority of all members, those who voted for the bylaw change did so believing that they were not flouting the Charter or any other law, they just didn't agree with Herrera's interpretation, since City Attorney "interpretations" and "opinions" don't carry force of law.

Wiener Slanders the Task Force

Wiener stated, as if he were both the

judge and jury, "And frankly, that was official misconduct, in my personal view."

He didn't afford the Task Force an opportunity to respond or defend itself; he just falsely accused the Task Force and concluded with no debate or evidence, and without a hearing presenting any charges. After the Task Force lawfully amended its bylaws, why did Wiener wait for a whole year before making this an issue? Was it retribution for the Task Force finding Wiener guilty of official misconduct six months after it had adopted its bylaws change?

Perhaps Wiener is taking cues for slander from Mayor Ed Lee, who appears to have slandered Sheriff Ross Mirkarimi by claiming, as the mayor did on June 20, that Mirkarimi had "engaged in beating his wife," appalling many observers by not qualifying it with "allegedly." Lee reached this conclusion before the Ethics Commission or the Board of Supervisors completed their investigations of the wildly inflated charges against the Sheriff. Both Lee and Wiener are throwing false accusations against the wall, to see which libelous accusations may stick.

A Harvard Law School graduate, Wiener spent five years as an attorney at Heller

Cont. p. 5

Beach Chalet - a Simple Solution

By Gregory Miller

What is the big deal with the controversy over the Beach Chalet project? Why has a coalition of environmental organizations and neighborhood groups filed an Appeal with the Board of Supervisors?

Isn't this just a conflict of birds vs. kids? That is what the Department of Recreation and Park (RPD) would have you think. Well, that is NOT what this is about. San Franciscans of all ages and backgrounds love Golden Gate Park AS A PARK, and kids and active adults also love sports. The real problem is—how do we reconcile the two?

Sometimes the best solution to a problem is the simplest one.

Eight blocks south of Beach Chalet are the West Sunset Playing fields. The 2012 Parks Bond calls for the renovation of the 9-acre West Sunset Playing fields with natural grass. West Sunset is already given over to sports — basketball, baseball, soccer, and a great new kids' play area. It is not a place where one goes for a "walk in the park." Yet, oddly enough, RPD is planning to put real grass there.

The 7-acre Beach Chalet fields are in Golden Gate Park, where San Franciscans do go to enjoy prime parkland. The area is appreciated by hikers, dog walkers, and joggers. It is also habitat — the fields provide food, rest, and shelter to wildlife. Over 80 species of birds have been recorded there. All sizes of birds dot the fields, often even when there are teams playing. This is NOT barren land; it is living parkland. All this will be lost if this project installs over 7 acres of artificial turf and 150,000 watts of night lighting in the Park.

The simple answer is to swap the field materials for the two projects. Keep the natural grass in Golden Gate Park and put the artificial turf in West Sunset.

Let's repeat this obvious solution. Swap the field materials for the two sites — same benefits, same costs. The folks who have proposed this alternative have been talking about this for over a year. They have been ignored - so they have been forced to file an Appeal to the Board of Supervisors. They tried to meet with the RPD General Manager for months before the Appeal and were refused.

Why is this? Wouldn't it be more valuable to forge a compromise now? Wouldn't it save money for the City, instead of paying the City Attorneys (5 figure salaries + benefits) to handle the Appeal? The City has already spent over \$1 million on trying to justify this project in the environmental report. Now RPD is adding the cost of an Appeal and potentially even more costs for a court battle, as well as earning the increased enmity of San Franciscans who

could be allies in caring for our parks.

What does this mean for the future of our parks? The Mayor and RPD want San Franciscans to encumber themselves with over \$195 million in the 2012 Parks Bond. Yet, both have shown indifference to funding park operations from the City budget, instead treating our parks as cash cows, building or renovating facilities and then raising fees or, even worse, trying to lease the new facilities out to private companies. This has led to a city-wide distrust of RPD.

The Beach Chalet soccer complex is an example of Bond funding gone wrong. Funding for the Beach Chalet fields was in the fine print of the "2008 Clean and Safe Neighborhood Parks Bond." The 2008 Bond passed by a slim margin. Most of the people who found out about the proposed Beach Chalet project later said they would not have voted for the 2008 Bond if they had known it would put artificial turf and sports lights in Golden Gate Park. It is therefore logical for people to wonder about RPD's motives.

The Mayor and RPD need to earn the trust of people regarding our parks. It's fine to court wealthy donors, but in the final analysis, if you ignore the needs of the electorate, they will not support you or your programs. The first step for RPD and the Mayor is to meet with both sides and work out the very simple swap alternative for Beach Chalet.

And the first step for the public is to write to the Mayor and to the Board of Supervisors. Tell them that Golden Gate Park is too important to pave over. Tell them that there is an alternative, and that you are watching to see if San Francisco will protect its crown jewel, Golden Gate Park. The second step is to plan to attend the BOS Appeal hearing, scheduled for July 10, 2012, 4:00 p.m., at City Hall.

Gregory P. Miller, 36 year SF resident, retired senior financial analyst, US Navy veteran.



Photo © 2012 Jean Barish

Public Hearing: Appeal of the Environmental Impact Report for the Beach Chalet Athletic Fields to the SF Board of Supervisors

Tuesday, July 10, 2012 • 4:00 p.m.

Attend and express your concerns about the proposal to remove over 7 acres of natural grass and replace it with over 7 acres of artificial turf and 150,000 watts of sports lighting in Golden Gate Park. The project is located next to Ocean Beach and will have a major, negative impact on the park and beach experience for both people and wildlife.

Write and ask your Supervisor to support the Win-win Solution. The West Sunset natural grass fields are scheduled for a renovation in the 2012 Parks Bond. The simple solution is to swap the materials between the two sites — renovate the Beach Chalet fields with real grass to protect habitat and renovate the West Sunset Playing Fields with an appropriate artificial turf. Contact SF Ocean Edge for more information. www.sfoceanedge.org



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Whimsically designed painted concrete and large potted plants in bold-neon colors have replaced a peaceful sylvan meadow

Is 'The Arb' In Danger Of Becoming Privatized?

By Jonathan Farrell

Just off of Lincoln Way and 9th Ave, 55 acres within Golden Gate Park contain over 8,000 species of plants. This select area is known as the San Francisco Botanical Garden (SFBG) and Strybing Arboretum. Yet some residents who treasure the natural oasis are speaking up saying that they fear the garden and arboretum is in danger of becoming privatized.

A new nursery, along with a learning center will be built at the botanical garden and arboretum at an estimated cost of about \$14 million. Lobbyist Sam Lauter presented these plans January 30 to the members of the Sunset Heights Association of Responsible People (SHARP).

As a non-profit entity, the SF Botanical Garden Society was founded in 1955 and has been actively supporting the garden and arboretum through fundraising efforts. The society works in partnership with SF Recreation and Park Department, which owns the land. This complicated partnership has some people in the local community very skeptical of the proposed \$14 million upgrade plans.

One very outspoken resident is Harry Pariser who lives within walking distance of the garden and arboretum. He provided a tour of the place for the *Westside Observer*, pointing out his concerns as he walked along the many paths and trails. "This has been a respite from the urban setting. Look around you," he said, "it is as if we are not in the City anymore."

Pariser treasures spots like the Redwood grove, where trees and plants transport visitors to a tranquil place. Squirrels and birds frolic freely as the atmosphere envelops visitors. Yet, he pointed to the redundant additions, like two signs posted to say the same thing. One is obviously much older than the other a new, sleeker sign. "The old sign is just fine, probably put up in the 1970's or '80's," he said. "But look at that one next to it," he said, "it looks more corporate, as if this place is going to be stylized and made more like a theme park."

Several days later, lobbyist Sam Lauter said, "Harry's point of view is exaggerated." Lauter reassured that the new plans would not damage the gardens, only enhance it. Lauter also said the plans would follow LEED certification ecological standards.

David Eldred, also a long-time resident of the Inner-Sunset, like Pariser, has witnessed the changes. "There is a lack of vision," he said. Eldred and others established keeparboretumfree.org. "My frustration is that we worked hard for a solution to the charging of admission fees, and it failed." He also believes the Arboretum should be free as it has always been.

Mary Sporer, who refers to the garden and arboretum simply as "The Arb," agreed. She too has noticed the changes. "I have been a resident since '69 and I have raised my children here," she said. "Now, families with children find it difficult and expensive to live here."

"The Arb, it was, and is our refuge from the stress of city-living. Few people visit The Arb now that the admission fees are charged," she said. She pointed out how the official name has been subtly changed to "The San Francisco Botanical Gardens." "The name of Strybing has been almost eliminated, in favor of a "more marketable title" said Pariser.

Advocates fear that selfish interests are trampling on the original intent of the garden and arboretum. Since the establishing

of an admission fee more than three years ago, debate and opposition have been ongoing. Lauter would not comment on the admission fees. He referred that question to Sue Ann Schiff, the current executive director. Schiff said she was "not able to find any proof" that Helen Strybing wanted the garden and arboretum to be free to the public forever. According to Schiff, Strybing made it clear that the City was to be responsible for operating and maintaining the garden. So the City must find ways to fund the garden and charging a fee is one way to do that.

"Helen Strybing was instrumental in establishing the garden and arboretum," Sporer said, "she wanted the poor to benefit from this free garden," her will stated it was part of the conditions in the Strybing family releasing the funds to establish the garden." Eldred and Sporer both said those intentions are within the Master Plan document of 1995. So why not procure the proofs from Strybing's will to verify the garden's original intentions?

SFBG reps, as well as Rec. and Park officials, claim "revenue generating" is needed to cover rising costs. Yet, the admission fee is only to pay for gardeners.

Sporer and others question the details, especially when there are things that don't add up. "Wasn't Prop N supposed to help pay for The Arb?" Sporer noted that SF voters approved the progressive real estate transfer tax structure initiative on the ballot in 2010. Eldred sees the situation as a "slippery slope," that will erode the natural integrity and historical significance of the garden, as well as Golden Gate Park.

With admission fees will there be a need for more management and administration? Pariser pointed to the many weathered wooden structures and projects seemingly abandoned. "I think these will be taken down in favor of something like this," he said, pointing to the concrete installation by designer Topher Delaney.

Lauter said the demolishing of observation decks and such were not in the plan. Pariser pointed to the whimsical design of painted concrete and large potted plants in bold-neon colors. "This was once a meadow, but now it is this," he said. "How does something like this, made of concrete and bold neon promote a more natural setting for people?" Lauter pointed out that the garden is like a museum and each installation does not have to meet with everyone's approval.

Maybe this is where the friction is? There are those that see the Arboretum as an organic oasis, and those who see it as "a museum," subject to change at the discretion of the garden society. Pariser wonders, when the \$14 million plans get underway, "what will be left that is as natural as the garden and the arboretum has been?"

For details on the new plans visit: <http://www.sfbotanicalgarden.org/> And for details about those opposed to the plans visit: <http://keeparboretumfree.org/>

Jonathan Farrell is a San Francisco freelance reporter.

Financial Flim-Flam at Fisher Fields

By Anmarie Mabbutt

Since its inception, the City Fields Foundation has been a driving force in the commercialization of San Francisco's public park space. In 2005, the same year that Robert, William and John Fisher created the City Fields Foundation, the Board of Supervisors codified, for the first time, the City's athletic field permit fees. The legislation, Ordinance #050990, increased resident fees for a single rental field 100% from \$10/hour to \$20/hour. Just two years later, upon the completion of the first two City Fields artificial turf projects at Garfield Square and Silver Terrace, the Board of Supervisors again increased the athletic field permit fees. Resident rates rose to \$25/hour and nonresident rates increased from \$30/hour to \$65/hour.

Under Ordinance #070815, not only did the Board drastically increase athletic field permit fees, the Supervisors took the commercialization of the city's fields even further – codifying for the first time a "for profit" rate of \$65/hour for use of the city's athletic fields. Beginning in summer 2007, residents now had to compete for field time with private organizations running large scale year-round for-profit programs on public athletic fields. The Recreation and Parks Department further restricted resident use by limiting the \$25 hourly rate to no more than four hours per month. Residents who wanted to reserve field play for more than four hours per month now had to pay the \$65/hour non-resident rate.

Mayor Newsom knew that more field time meant more revenue, so for him the City Fields partnership must have appeared endlessly appealing. For Mayor Newsom, the City Fields partnership was an opportunity to appease his big money conservative base while at the same time accessing tens of millions of dollars in private funds for artificial turf conversions of public athletic fields which would then be available for rent 365 days a year. But Newsom knew that convincing environmentally-conscious San Franciscans of the benefits of covering dozens of acres of green public park space with millions of tons of toxic materials would not be easy.

Since early 2006, Mayor Newsom, the Board of Supervisors, the Recreation and Parks Department and the Recreation and Park Commission have all worked very hard to keep the details of this partnership as far removed from public discussion as possible. As part of the legislation that approved the initial \$4.5 million gift, the Board of Supervisors delegated their authority for the acceptance of all future City Fields gifts to the RPD General Manager. And just like that, a process that should have been publicly vetted twice, first by the Recreation and Park Commission and then by the Board of Supervisors, had suddenly become a series of private secret decisions made behind the closed doors of McLaren Lodge. The abdication of the Board's authority over all future Foundation gifts to the RPD General Manager is a clear violation of Administrative Code Section 10.100-305(b) which requires Board approval of all gifts in excess of \$10,000.

For its part, the City Fields Foundation has spent more than \$2 million trying to sell the public on this partnership. According to City Fields federal tax returns, since 2006, City Fields has paid its Communications Director and former PROSAC Chair Patrick Hannan more than \$500,000. City Fields has also paid veteran big money consultant and political insider Susan Hirsch more than \$1.79 million to direct the Foundation and lobby city officials. According to General Manager Ginsburg's official calendars, for the last two years, Ms. Hirsch has had a standing monthly meeting with the RPD General Manager. But in official reports filed with the Ethics Commission, Ms. Hirsch



claims she was terminated by the Fishers as a lobbyist back in June 2010 and has since reported no contacts with city officials. On its 2009 tax return, the City Fields Foundation reports \$69,053 in payments to the lobbyist firm Barbary Coast Consulting. But according to official Ethics Commission records, none of the lobbyists at Barbary Coast, including Alex Clemens, have ever reported the City Fields Foundation as a client.

Like their lobbyists, the Fisher Brothers do not appear to be big fans of public disclosure laws. Sunshine Ordinance 67.29-6 requires all donors of gifts in excess of \$100 to file financial interest disclosure statements revealing "any financial interest the contributor has involving the city." Despite repeated public records requests for these statements, neither the RPD nor the City Fields Foundation has ever produced any financial disclosures from the City Fields donors. The RPD and the City Fields Foundation have also refused to reveal the identity of the contractors and subcontractors working under the gifted contracts. City Fields Communication Director Patrick Hannan claims this information is "private."

The identity of contractors performing work on public park land, regardless of whether they are paid by public or private funds, is most certainly public information. While City Fields continues to refuse to release any details regarding its contractors, according to the Foundation's 2006-2010 federal tax returns, the Foundation did pay \$5,566,842 to Robert A. Bothman Construction, \$6,236,702 to O.C. Jones Construction and \$451,886 to BayCor Builders. The Bothman website only mentions the Silver Terrace project and the O.C. Jones website only mentions the Crocker Amazon project so it is unclear how much and who City Fields paid for the work completed at the remaining City Fields sites. As for BayCor, it listed on its company website a \$5.8 million contract with City Fields for 2006 and \$10 million per year for the next five years. But if City Fields has only paid BayCor Builders \$451,886, then where did the rest of the money come from? Back in early 2011, members of the public began to ask questions about BayCor Builders' contracts with the City Fields Foundation. Within a matter of weeks, BayCor Builders disabled its website.

The lack of public oversight and disclosure of the City Fields Foundation gifts has had disastrous results. Over the last six years, it appears more than \$15 million in public funds have been illegally expended on the City Fields projects. Ordinance #060255, the legislation that approved the initial \$4.5 million gift, included a Memorandum of Understanding. The MOU is a legally binding contract governing the partnership and the duties and responsibilities of the Department and the Foundation. The MOU specifically states the Foundation is solely responsible for all hard costs associated with the purchase

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RUMINATIONS FROM A FORMER SUPERVISOR By Quentin Kopp

Quentin will return next month.



No Pinch in the Public Purse

By Steve Lawrence

Here in San Francisco we take pride in leading trends. But in over-paying public employees, we are part of a larger picture.

Throughout the country public employees command generous salaries and benefits. The twin towers of the dot com boom and 9/11 kicked the boom off. Back at the beginning of the new millennium, when a share of Yahoo sold for over \$300 as analysts eschewed profits and revenues for page views, public office holders waxed generous. Money was pouring into the public fisc. Generous benefits were even easier to bestow than salary increases. Pension funds would earn outstanding returns, it could be assumed. The complacent public was too busy making fortunes—or dreaming of doing so—to question assumptions justifying assumed pension returns.



“We’re exceptional! A magic land where rules are suspended. No harsh arithmetic for us. We define the cutting edge. But we don’t get cut. Do we?”

Then came 9/11. Firemen and “first responders” were heroes. No way would we not take care of heroes.

Next came the great housing boom and bubble. Heard throughout cities were loud lamentations about how public employees—teachers, policemen, fire-fighters especially—could no longer afford to live in the communities in which they worked. Pressure mounted for even more compensation and benefits.

Times worked to the advantage of public employees. Union reps are rarely shy about using every advantage. On the other side of the “bargaining table” were elected office holders. Rarely do they choose to alienate union reps and members. Endorsement by the firefighters’ union wins campaign workers, contributions and votes.

And so we arrived at a place that is less than “sustainable,” to use a term so favored by public workers.

The Great Recession and housing market’s fizzle makes it harder for public officials to spend other people’s money. Inconveniently, elected officials must worry about bothersome budgets. Deficits persist; one-time accounting tricks are mostly used up. (Sell city hall, lease it back?)

After years of recession, recently the median public employee makes on the order of one-quarter to one-third more than the median private employee. In San Francisco, without considering benefits, \$93,229 is the average annual pay for city workers. In the private sector it is said to be \$78,228, 84% of the average city worker salary. But salary tells only part of the story. City workers receive much greater benefits, enjoy more job security, tend to work closer to public transit, and receive more liberality at work. Also, the measure of the private median salary is high: eight percent do not have jobs at all, and many who receive no salary are “independent contractors,” scraping by. Were these included in the pool of private employees when median “salary” is measured, you can safely bet that median would sink.

Back in the 20th Century, city workers traded off salary for security, liberality, and benefits. As a city worker you would never

get rich, but you had job security and perhaps a less demanding employer.

Today the public employee can get rich. One police captain earned nearly \$539,000 last year. More than one hundred firemen earned over \$200,000. There are bound to be many households of public employees here in San Francisco qualifying for Obama’s millionaire’s tax. (Earnings are from city sources, and do not include investment earnings, rents collected, etc.)

Is this fair? Sustainable in our economy? What can be done? Once a year Matier & Ross publicize the outsized salaries. That’s something, if there is shame. Bet that elected officials will be slow to act: not only have they enjoyed—and do still enjoy—the largess, but also they are loath to alienate public union supporters and contributors. Down that road lies grief and regret.

Only when the money and accounting tricks run out will elected officials act. Then, perhaps, “saviors” like Chris Christie may be born. San Francisco seems very far from getting such religion. San Francisco lacks even an organization of taxpayers and ratepayers.

City government spends something more than \$8,000 per resident per year. Although most is collected from business, each San Franciscan pays indirectly: when you go out to eat, buy groceries and gas, and pay the PG&E bill. In setting prices you don’t imagine that business fails to pass through taxes paid, as well as water, sewer, and other utility bills, do you?

Not only does San Francisco spend liberally—we all know that—but also it borrows, and over-promises, very liberally. Forbes put SF’s unfunded pension liability at nearly \$35,000 per household.

It will be a cold day in Hades before San Francisco politicians embrace austerity and cut the salaries or benefits of public employees. We admire Euro social welfare, but not European austerity. We’re exceptional! A magic land where rules are suspended. No harsh arithmetic for us. We define the cutting edge. But we don’t get cut. Do we?

Steve Lawrence is a longtime utility activist. Feedback: lawrence@westsideobserver.com

Central Subway Goes Nowhere Fast

On June 29, the House passed its version of the Department of Transportation funding bill by a vote of 261-163 which includes Amendment No.13 prohibiting funding for the Central Subway Project: AYES: 235; NOES: 186.

The legislative process continues in the U.S. Senate and ultimately the Senate-House Conference Committee where the fate of the Central Subway will be debated for several months.

The Central Subway is draining \$500 million of state and local funds from Muni triggering service cuts, crumbling infrastructure, higher fares, fees, rates, tickets and more parking meters.

Instead of a tiny 1.6 mile, \$1.6 billion subway, \$500 million of existing state-local funds can be poured into the citywide Muni system and the broad base of the economy, to increase local jobs. San Francisco’s economy can be jump-started with hundreds of miles of transit-priority streets energizing cafés, restaurants, retail, services, business corridors, and neighborhoods

The San Francisco Civil Grand Jury report, Central Subway: *Too Much Money for Too Little Benefit* has concluded the Central Subway project should be redesigned.

- The Jury believes SFMTA is currently unable to adequately maintain its fleet in good working order. Adding a new capital project while struggling to meet current needs could overwhelm the agency’s ability to deliver service.

- The Jury believes the SFMTA could design a better system to more fully address transit needs along the Chinatown/Financial District corridor.

Former Supervisor Quentin Kopp wrote for the *Westside Observer*: “the fanciful Central Subway project manipulators continue to try to deceive the public into believing it is a ‘done deal,’ it is not.” More info: savemuni.com



MY TWO CENTS By Will Durst

PLENTY OF G-20.

And now, your report from the front lines of the G-20 summit recently concluded in Los Cabos, Mexico. And the good news is... no knife fights. Very little broken furniture; and for the very first time in recent memory, the proceedings were judged to be more boring than watching varnish harden, which is considered a huge coup for the host country. So, Viva Mexico!

The G-20 meets once a year and is made up of 15 or 16 of the top 20 countries with the largest economies in the world, excluding Norway, the Netherlands, Spain and a couple others, but including the European Union and some other countries with special ties to the organizers. You know, like in high school. If you help decorate Prom, you know who’s compiling the guest list.

Of course, Spain is allowed to crash the festivities every year even though they’re not actually members. Like the quarterback who gets suspended for the food fight in the cafeteria, everybody loves Spain and is willing to sneak them through the back door of the party. Besides, they always bring the Sangria. And come on: they’re Spain!

An important thing to remember is the huge intractable distinctions between competing governmental conventions. The G-20 has absolutely nothing to do with the G-8, which is made up of 8 of the world’s top 10 economies excluding China and Brazil. And once in a while, the European Union wanders by, but that’s about it. Don’t even think of letting in Spain. We have our own Sangria, thank you very much. And we call it gin.

Like the G-20, the G-8 also meets once a year and was originally known as the G-6 and then G-7. So it would not take that great of a leap to put a couple of Euros down on another eventual name change to G-9. G-Double Digits, right around the corner.

And, as everybody knows, the G-20 replaced the G-33 which itself superseded the G-22, leading to speculation that the G-8 and the G-20 will someday merge and produce a mutant love child to be known as the GG-28 which will meet twice a year and hopefully be as boring as Day 3 of hospital pudding.

This was the seventh meeting of the G-20 and the politics involved were breathtaking in a stupendously vapid way. Then nothing happened. And for nothing to happen on a global scale with markets around the world as precarious as a glass sculpture above a nuclear test site located on an earthquake fault in a sand storm is exactly what everyone was praying for.

An official declaration recognized that agreements may very well be forthcoming but not until a framework can be forged to accommodate international justifications to absolve interested parties of any blame and/ or responsibility. And Greece and Spain were never mentioned by name. But we all know who they are.

Internally, it was heartily agreed that decisive action will definitely be required. Someday. By someone. But not now. And definitely not by anybody here. Then Asia and Latin America quietly bailed out Europe and nobody commented on the ignominy of it all and they all retired to the big balcony overlooking the sea to dance and smoke and drink Sangria.

The *New York Times* says Emmy-nominated comedian and writer Will Durst “is quite possibly the best political satirist working in the country today.” Check out the website: Red-room.com to buy his book or find out more about upcoming stand-up performances. Or willdurst.com.

PERFORMANCE Will Durst every Tuesday. Elect to Laugh! The Marsh. San Francisco. themarsh.org. Special \$10 tix. Use code “vote.”

WESTSIDE OBSERVER



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

Letters to the Editor

A Good Thing: New Soccer Field

I'm very grateful for being a lifetime resident of San Francisco and it is my opinion that the world would be a better place if everyone adopted those controversial 'San Francisco Values'. Unfortunately I feel like this city, its politicians and many of its residents are living more in the fantasy of San Francisco than the reality of San Francisco.

A few years back I had the same reaction about Crocker Amazon as the author's reaction about the west end of Golden Gate Park. The community had the same opposition to that project as to this. The response was almost identical in scope and numbers. The project involved replacing half of the grass area with next generation artificial turf. A huge chunk of open grass space was being replaced with soccer fields. Soccer is a sport I neither care to watch let alone participate in.

We can see Crocker Amazon from our back window and I'm happy to report that the soccer fields in that park are in constant use. Each week easily hundreds of people are exercising and playing soccer from sun up to sun down. And when I say till sun down I mean it, they play until the lights are turned off at 10:15PM. And from what I know there has been little if any trouble at the park.

And the surrounding area, driving and walking by the park, no longer feels unsafe. The ripple effect of having ongoing healthy activity makes the entire area feel 'family friendly'. Before the renovation the area could be considered somewhat suspect, especially after dark.

To address your article in particular, I challenge the notion that this is the beginning of the end. First lets start with the idea that GGP is one of San Francisco's crown jewels. I agree that it's SUPPOSED to be one of our jewels but in its current, neglected condition it is not. It can be a lot better. There is the constant drug dealing and numerous homeless encampments. You can find dirty needles and used condoms with frightening regularity, and the bathrooms are in indescribably filthy conditions. The web is littered with 'letters to the editor' from tourists who were tremendously disappointed by the condition of GGP. The park has its bright spots and conditions continue to improve with each new project, but having spent several summers in the park as part of my church's youth day camp program I can tell you the park today is not the park I grew up in.

I suggest this project has the potential to become another bright spot in the continuing evolution of GGP.

I'm not going to debate the 'political' process that took place to get this project approved, any City project can have its process debated to death (which I would suggest is exactly the strategy minority voices use to hold the rest of us hostage). What I will say is, and with all due respect to Mr. Miller, he starts his article with scathing assessments of both the SF

Planning Commission and Recreation and Park Commission, pointing out how they literally ignored 1000 emails from concerned citizens, many of who opposed the project. He then concludes his editorial stating this project excludes the 790,000 people who don't or can't play soccer. If this project were to impact 790,000 people I would expect you'd get more than just 1000 emails. And of those 790,000 people, how many of them even considered visiting the west end of GGP in the last year? The last 5 years? This just feels like another "just because I never use it doesn't mean you can take it away from me" stance.

I will be the first one to admit that one of the reasons I resisted the change to Crocker Amazon was the idea of the soccer fields. If I may be politically incorrect for a moment, my feeling was soccer is not a traditional American sport and the idea that 'American tax dollars' were going to support an activity I didn't grow up with kind of bothered me. But in the spirit of 'San Francisco Values', where the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few, seeing just how many people are using those fields absolutely validates the spending of the money to renovate that park. And for context, there are still two natural grass baseball diamonds sitting right next to those 5 soccer fields, and guess how often they're used? Almost never.

And with response to Mr. Miller's suggestion that city government completely ignored or dismissed errors in the submitted environmental impact report, I would submit that tirelessly debating EIRs is another tool for a minority voice to hold the rest of us hostage. There is no such thing as a 'perfect project', there will always be positives and negatives to everything. The idea is to see if the positive outweigh the negative. In this case, if the same thing happens to the west end of GGP that happened to Crocker Amazon, I would submit for your consideration that the environmental impact is hugely positive. If there are hundreds of people using those fields all day long, getting exercise while actually USING the park, brining with them a halo effect that cleans up undesirable activities in the nearby area, then how can one call this the 'beginning of the end'?

San Francisco has always been a city where we do things for the right reasons even if it means some self sacrifice. We take chances because our conscience tells us its the right thing to do. We do these things with the faith that the benefits will be there even if we can't absolutely see them in advance. And when we're wrong we make it right. We don't say 'no', we say 'let try and see what happens'. Mr. Miller and members of SF Ocean Edge, come out the the south side of the city - go out to Crocker Amazon on a sunny Saturday afternoon and take a look at your possible future. Then ask yourself what's better for our community as a whole.

Dean K. - 45 year NATIVE San Franciscan

Not So Much...

I'm Kathleen McCowin, a soccer mom for over ten years. My daughter plays in Viking Soccer, and this spring enjoyed playing on the Beach Chalet soccer fields, currently natural grass.

Many Viking parents support the hybrid alternative for the Beach Chalet soccer fields' renovation - that is, grass in Golden Gate Park, with plastic turf fields and 60' stadium lights reserved for more urban settings. We Viking parents believe real grass in Golden Gate Park is better for our children, the environment, and our City.

Viking Soccer Management writes "...we represent all of San Francisco" in its aggressive and very public lobbying for plastic turf replacement of the Beach Chalet soccer fields, now seven acres of Golden Gate Park grass meadow at Ocean Beach, between the windmills. 60' stadium lights will be installed, staying on until 10:00 P.M. This plan was approved May 24th by the SF Planning and Park & Rec Commissions.

However, Viking Management never asked us Viking parents what we think. I represent Viking Soccer parents and players who have not yet been heard.

Viking Management showcased dozens of child players at the approval hearing. Some of these children were taken to the hearing without their parents' knowledge or permission. These parents, who support natural grass renovation, thought their uniformed children were being taken to their usual soccer practice. Children were promised pizza and games to attend the hearing.

At a recent rally, I made a short public statement that we Viking parents were never asked our opinion by Viking Management on the Chalet Fields renovation. Immediately afterwards, I was personally confronted by the President of Viking Soccer, obviously very angry that I expressed my views publicly.

Facing this kind of response from the highest official in the Viking League, you will understand why parents feel they don't

have a real say in this Viking policy, and are afraid to come forward with their names if they support real grass fields. I have been asked by the many Viking Soccer parents who have contacted me to withhold their names, since their children are still in the Viking league. My youngest child, 16, is leaving Vikings this fall, so I am able to speak openly.

Many Viking players want to play on real grass. Children have no more injuries on properly maintained grass fields than on plastic turf. Our kids complain that plastic turf gives them skin abrasions they don't get on grass. The California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery studies have confirmed soccer players suffer 3X as many skin abrasions on plastic turf.

A Norwegian study of 60,000 teen soccer players found more back and spine injuries with plastic turf. European soccer leagues have banned its use. And the jury is still out on long-term health effects on our children of inhaling finely ground tire dust.

Remaining as natural grass, these fields could be renovated for \$1M. Even with the \$5M grant from City Fields Foundation, the plastic turf renovation with some other amenities will cost San Francisco \$7.5M. We soccer parents think that is irresponsible in these tough economic times.

Worse, the plastic turf and fill must be replaced every eight years, at a cost only 50% less than a full installation. If the City doesn't pay these costs, the result will be fields that are unsafe and unsightly. We, as soccer parents, don't want that for our kids.

Viking Soccer Parents Want Real Grass Fields in Golden Gate Park.

Thank you for your support of Viking kids and their parents. If you want grass in Golden Gate Park, please write e-mails to the Mayor and City Supervisors. And please email me if you are a Viking or other soccer parent who would like to be added to our members list. kmccowin@berkeley.edu

Kathleen McCowin, San Francisco

Wiener v Sunshine (Cont. from p. 1)

Ehrman White & McAuliffe, where he focused on financial, accounting-related, and commercial litigation. In 2002, he took a position with the City Attorney's Trial Team representing City departments in civil litigation. In both positions Wiener was thought to have a lily-white reputation.

Perhaps while a Deputy City Attorney, Wiener may have ran across the Sunshine Ordinance as a result of knowledgeable litigants who had used the City's open government Sunshine law during legal discovery. Then he ran for District 8 Supervisor, and his reputation began getting black marks.

Luckily for San Franciscans, Wiener has a number of setbacks to his various tinkering with transparency at City Hall. Here's the timeline that reduced Wiener to vindictiveness:

Wiener's Tinkering Timeline

On September 27, 2011 the SOTF heard a complaint from Parkmerced resident Pastor Lynn Gavin that Board of Supervisors President David Chiu and the board's Land Use and Economic Development Committee — composed by Supervisors Eric Mar, Malia Cohen, and Scott Wiener — violated local and state open-meeting laws by sneaking in 14 pages of amendments to the Parkmerced development deal only minutes before approving it. Pastor Gavin asserted the amendments were so drastic that the Board's agenda didn't accurately reflect the real deal under consideration, and that voting to approve it without sufficient time for review by members of the public violated open-meeting laws. The SOTF ruled in Gavin's favor, finding Wiener and the other three supervisors committed official misconduct, and referred the four Supervisors to the Ethics Commission for enforcement.

On November 8, 2011, voters rejected PropE that Wiener sponsored. Initially,

Wiener proposed granting the Mayor and Board authority to amend or repeal measures placed on the ballot by the Mayor, four or more Supervisors, or by citizens' initiatives. Facing intense public criticism in the spring of 2011, Wiener toned the measure down and eventually convinced only seven of the Supervisors on July 19 to place a modified version on the ballot, to allow amendments to, or repeal of, measures that only the Board or Mayor had placed on the ballot, but not to citizen measures, or Charter amendments and bond measures. Opposed by the Friends of Ethics — founded by five former Ethics Commission members — Prop E went down to defeat, handing Wiener a second public embarrassment.

Prop F, another Wiener-sponsored ballot measure also went down in flames on November 8, handing him a third embarrassment. It would have redefined who would be required to register as campaign consultants; raised the threshold of campaign consultant earnings from \$1,000 to \$5,000; eliminated filing of paper reports, requiring only electronic reports instead; amended the annual fees to no longer depend on the number of clients campaign consultants represent; and allowed the City to change consultant ordinance provisions without further voter approval. Voters saw right through this, slapping Wiener with a third embarrassing defeat.

Sunshine Blackout

Given these embarrassments, on May 22 Wiener apparently engineered stripping Bruce Wolfe of his seat on the Task Force and held up four nominations to the Task Force by demanding that three nominating agencies, the Society of Professional Journalists, the League of Women Voters, and New America Media, submit multiple nominees from each agency, rather than single nominees (as they have since Sunshine became law) be forwarded to the

Cont. p. 6

BUSINESS BRIEFS.....

Mollie Stone's Named Outstanding Specialty Retailer by the National Association for the Specialty Food Trade

Recognized nationwide for excellence in customer service, product sourcing, merchandising, quality assurance and top-quality food.

The National Association for the Specialty Food Trade, Inc. (NASFT) selected Mollie Stone's Markets as an Outstanding Specialty Food Retailer of 2012. This award recognizes only five retailers nationwide each year for excellence in customer service, product sourcing, merchandising, quality assurance and a passion for presenting top-quality food.

"Mollie Stone's shows true commitment to providing premium service, well-edited choices of the latest new products, and a deep connection to its community that are hallmarks of the specialty food industry," says NASFT President Ann Daw.

Nominations for the award were made by members of the NASFT, a not-for profit association of food artisans, entrepreneurs and importers. Mollie Stone's was selected as a winner by a national panel of specialty food experts including previous honorees, manufacturers, distributors and editors of NASFT's Specialty Food Magazine.

Mollie Stone's is featured in the May/June issue of Specialty Food Magazine. Co-founder and co-owner David Bennett accepted the award on June 18, 2012 at the Summer Fancy Food Show in Washington, DC, during a ceremony hosted by chef and culinary innovator Jose Andres.

About Mollie Stone's Markets Founded in 1985 by Mike Stone and Dave Bennett, Mollie Stone's Markets is family owned and operated with nine locations in the San Francisco Bay Area. Mollie Stone's has been unflinching in its commitment to provide the best possible shopping experience for its customers by offering a wide range of high quality products and full service departments. For more information about Mollie Stone's Markets, visit www.molliestones.com.

MONEY MATTERS • By Brandon Miller and Joanne Jordan

The Long Road Back: A Progress Report on the Economic Recovery

It was just four years ago when investors faced their most dramatic challenge of recent times. In September 2008, Lehman Brothers collapsed and other financial giants were teetering on the edge of a similar fate. The government stepped in with the Troubled Assets Relief Program (TARP) and the bailout helped avoid a deeper crisis. Yet investors paid a price. A severe bear market would see stocks (valued by broad measures like the Dow Jones Industrial Average and S&P 500) lose more than half of their value in a period of 18 months.

A recession also took hold in 2008, the most severe America has seen since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Two of the most notable aspects of the economic slide that impacted Americans were the housing market bust and the unemployment rate rising above 10 percent.

For some of us, the sense of fear about the markets might have dwindled, but hasn't disappeared since that time – though much has changed for the better. Here is a brief summary of what's happened in various aspects of the economy and the investment markets since those dark days four years ago:

Economic Growth

The economy slipped into a recession in the summer of 2008, declining at an annualized rate of almost nine percent in the fourth quarter of that year, according to statistics from the Bureau of Economic Analysis. Positive economic growth did not return until mid-2009 and the recovery has remained modest since. The U.S. economy grew by three percent in 2010 but just 1.7 percent last year, and started this year with an annualized growth rate of about two percent. Things are moving in the right direction, but this is considered a very sluggish rate of recovery.

Jobs

In the midst of the crisis four years ago, the unemployment rate was around six percent, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. As the recession deepened, job losses multiplied and unemployment topped out at over 10 percent in October 2009. Now it stands at around eight percent, still higher than at any time since 1983, but an improvement from several years ago. Positive job growth began in 2009 and gained some steam in late 2011 before slowing recently. Again, progress has been made, but it could be better.

Inflation

Through the recession and the recovery, the inflation rate has remained relatively modest. After a cost of living hike of just under four percent in 2008, it dropped to 1.5 percent in 2010 and stood at three percent for 2011 (according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index). This is considered a modest rate of inflation that is not producing any significant economic concerns.

Housing

Nationally we continue to pay the price for a housing market that overheated over the last decade when the Case-Shiller

Home Price Composite U.S. Index peaked. By 2008, it had fallen dramatically, and nationally home values continued to decline through 2011, losing on average one-third of their value. Foreclosure levels remain high, and the housing market is not expected to show significant strength anytime soon.

Investment Markets

In September 2008, the Dow Jones Industrial Average stood at 10,850, already down about 25 percent from its peak less than a year earlier. It would proceed to dip to 6,547 by March, 2009. Since then the Dow has steadily recovered much of that lost ground, reaching above 13,000 in recent months before retreating somewhat in light of political and economic turmoil in Europe. The performance of individual stocks, mutual funds, ETFs or other investments varies. Bond markets have been stronger performers in that same time period. When the financial crisis hit in September 2008, the yield on the benchmark 10-year U.S. Treasury note stood at 3.82 percent. It has dropped well below two percent in 2012, and lower yields mean higher values for existing bonds. So the slow pace of economic recovery has actually benefited the bond market in recent times.

The road from here

We've come a long way from the crisis environment that existed in 2008. While the economy and investors are still feeling the impact, it is also notable that both have shown tremendous resiliency. Despite moving in fits and starts, the U.S. economy has managed to avoid another recession since 2009 and stocks have gradually recovered much of the ground that was lost during the meltdown. More challenges may lay ahead, with Europe's debt problems and worries over the slowing pace of economic expansion in China and other places looming over the global marketplace. But our experience since 2008 demonstrates why a patient, long-term approach to investing may be the most effective way to react to challenges facing the economy, no matter how severe they are. For advice on investing, consider working with a financial professional.

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

San Francisco, and he's in no hurry to let the Sunshine back in. For all anyone knows, Wiener may be counting on keeping the SOTF deadlocked and shut down for as long as possible.

The longer the SOTF is in limbo, the more likely it will be for City Hall to engage in backroom deals without sufficient public oversight. Call the Mayor's Office on Disability at 554-6789 and ask them for its support in getting Bruce Wolfe reinstated so the Sunshine Task Force can resume its operations.

Monette-Shaw is an open-government accountability advocate, a patient advocate, and a member of California's First Amendment Coalition. He received the Society of Professional Journalists-Northern California Chapter's James Madison Freedom of Information Award in the Advocacy category in March 2012. Feedback: <mailto:monette-shaw@westsideobserver.com>.



“Why Do they Keep Coming to this Doctor?...”

(Who admits to curing no one.)

Dear friend,

I've got to tell you something that I have never said out loud.

But what I am going to tell you makes so much sense that you'll probably get mad that no one told you this before.

I've been doctor in this town for 10 years now. And to this day I've never cured anyone. You may think that the word would get around and that no one would come to see me anymore. The opposite is true. The more people who understand, the more people come to see me.

Several times a day patients thank me for helping them with their health problems. But I can't really take the credit. I've never healed anyone of anything. What I do is perform a specific spinal adjustment to remove nerve pressure and the body responds by healing itself. And, we get terrific results. That is why our office is filled with people who have found help nowhere else.

Let me tell a little about me before I tell you about a terrific offer I have for you.

17 years ago something happened that changed my life forever. I was a young woman living in Philadelphia when it happened. I was driving with a friend, she missed a stop sign and rammed into the side of another car? We were all shaken up. The police were called and we all went to the hospital. No one was bleeding, so the medical doctors took some x-rays of our neck, gave us pain meds and sent us on our way. The next day I woke up with pain everywhere and it just kept getting worse.

For years I tried everything that I could find. For an answer to the pain, I went to medical doctors, physical therapists, acupuncturists; I tried special pillows, etc. I spent a lot of time and money. Along the way I had two more car accidents and the pain kept getting worse and worse. I had developed fibromyalgia, neck pain, mid-back pain and low-back pain with tingling and numbness down my right arm and leg. I was scared that something was really wrong with me. This could not be normal. I was only 33 years old and I felt like I was 100.

That is when someone told me about a chiropractor that they thought could help. As a matter of fact, after the first person told me about him, two more people did that same week? So I made an appointment with the chiropractor. Thank goodness that they took the time to help me! So I made an appointment with the chiropractor. I went to his office where he asked me about my problems, did an exam and took some x-rays of my head and back. After that he pointed out where my nerves were pinched and adjusted them. The adjustment was so light I barely felt it. I began crying as I felt the pain leave my body for the first time in years. It may sound strange but, I was so happy and grateful for the relief, I thank him every day!

After that, I knew what I had to do. I had to become a chiropractor.

I have adjusted babies within hours of being born. They obviously didn't complain of neck or back pain. I adjusted them to keep their spines in alignment so there were no pinched nerves to cause problems or pains... As with the many children that I care for in my office. And that is how it happened!

For the last 7 years, people from San Francisco and the surrounding area have

come to see me with their pinched nerve problems. They also come to me with their:

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

Here is what some of you neighbors have said:

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

—A. McGrath

“After two major car accidents, after trying all possible medicines and doctors, you made a miracle taking away my pain!! I am a happy wife and mother again!”

— L. Igudesman

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

— C. Brubaker

Exciting offer-look, I know you're smart. You want to get to the cause of the problem, and not just cover it up with drugs. When you are one of the first 20 people to call and schedule a new patient exam you will receive that entire exam for \$37. That's with a consultation with the doc-

tor, examination and x-rays... The whole ball of wax, and there are no hidden fees. But call right away because we expect to be flooded with calls as this exam costs \$318.

Again there are only 20 of these slots so don't miss out.

Great care at a great fee...Please I hope that there's no misunderstanding about the quality of care just because I have a lower exam fee. You'll get great care at a great fee. My qualifications. I am a graduate of Palmer College of Chiropractic who has published articles in leading chiropractic journals and taught chiropractors chiropractic. I've been entrusted to take care of tiny babies to athletes that you may know. I've been helping your neighbors in San Francisco since 2004. I just have that low exam fee to help more people who need care.

My assistants are Raquel and Lila and they are really great people. Our office is both friendly and warm and we try our best to make you feel at home. We have wonderful service at an exceptional fee. Our office is called San Francisco Family Spinal Care and it is at 505 Beach Street (we are at the corner of Beach and Jones on the edge of North Beach). Our phone number is 415-771-7071. Call Raquel or Lila today for an appointment. We can help you. Thank you.

— Dr. Christina Meakim D.C.

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

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

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



WHISTLEBLOWERS / Dr. Maria Rivero & Dr. Derek Kerr

Secret Investigations

In their 2011 report "Whistling in the Dark – the San Francisco Whistleblower Program" the Civil Grand Jury warned:

"From a policy perspective, there are several issues. Most glaringly, once a complaint is filed, the whistleblower is from that point forward, essentially shut out of the entire process and left to navigate a 'black hole' where further access to the investigation is denied."

City whistleblowers should know that most complaints to the Controller's Whistleblower Program (SFWP) are referred back to involved departments for investigation. The SFWP has masked the number of such referrals by asserting that complaints were "investigated or referred for investigation." However, the 2010-2011 Civil Grand Jury revealed that the "majority of the investigations were performed by the departments listed in the complaint rather than the Whistleblower Program investigators." Belatedly on 11/22/11, the SFWP admitted to a "majority" of cases being referred – without giving the number. The Jury concluded; "The investigation of whistleblower complaints is not independent when performed by the targeted agency or department."

Other Whistleblower Programs are more open about the work they do. For example, the Oakland Fraud, Waste and Abuse Prevention Hotline "independently conducted 34% of the investigations." The Los Angeles Program claims it investigates 36% of complaints independently. In San Francisco, the percent may be too small to mention.

Referring investigations to departments is reasonable for minor complaints. Indeed, most complaints received by the SFWP are gripes about City services. SFWP reports from 2006 and 2007 show that barely one-third of complaints were true whistleblower reports about fraud, waste and abuse of City resources. The Civil Grand Jury also found that just 36% were true whistleblower tips in 2009 and 2010. Nevertheless, some of the more serious complaints went back to the targeted departments. In fact, even "Medium-Risk" complaints involving sums of \$10,000 to \$50,000 and/or mid-level managers were sent back to the named department. The SFWP asserts that referring complaints leverages investigative resources, and that they oversee results. But conflicts of interest are also leveraged when departments probe their own misconduct.

It was the Civil Grand Jury that revealed the Department of Public Health received the most whistleblowers complaints. Since 2009, the SFWP ceased naming implicated departments, perhaps hiding wrongdoing and mismanagement. Had the SFWP conducted a Best-Practices survey, it would know that the Los Angeles Fraud Hotline identifies each department in a substantiated complaint. Further, when the LA Program refers a complaint back to a targeted department the outcomes are recorded as "Substantiated" or "Not Substantiated" or "Not Investigated" for every department. The public has a right to know these department-specific findings.

Instead, the SFWP conceals outcomes of departmental investigations by lumping all the results together. There is no way to identify City departments troubled by misconduct or mounting complaints. We don't even know how many complaints are outsourced for investigation. What's also kept secret is whether the SFWP conducts any investigations. The number, seriousness and outcomes of SFWP investigations should be reported, as well as those



performed by targeted departments.

Such disclosures are needed if the SFWP reveals whistleblower identities upon referring complaints to City departments. In their Quarterly Report of January 20, 2012 the SFWP warned, for the first time, that they may disclose tipster identities "...to take any enforcement action" and "also can release information as part of a referral when referring any matter to another City department..." This "information" may include clues about the whistleblower. In other words, there is no confidentiality within the City network.

Conversely, records requests by whistleblowers whose complaint investigations are "closed" without explanation are denied because, "Whistleblower Program practices do not permit a complainant to waive anonymity or confidentiality for the disclosure of investigation work-product." The SFWP has also refused to return documents that informants submitted in support of their complaint. The reason given is "to protect whistleblowers." By this reasoning, delays, inaction and lost-records may be disguised as "work-product." Further, the SFWB has rendered itself immune from Performance Audits, since the City's Director of Audits, Tonia Ledijs, also runs the Whistleblower Program.

Leaks in the investigative pipeline are likely to spring up during the Preliminary Review.

That's when the SFWP screens tips for jurisdiction, "risk of loss to the City," and level of management involved. Within five days, informants supposedly receive an acknowledgement from the SFWP. But when we reported misappropriations from the Laguna Honda Hospital Patient Gift Fund in March 2010, it took three weeks to get a response – and then only because we followed-up. We were told that the SFWP was still "determining jurisdiction." What kind of discussions – and with whom – would take three weeks? Even with "High-Risk" complaints like ours, the SFWP review process may include contacting the Director of the implicated department. When "High-Risk" or "Medium-Risk" complaints loop back to the involved department, informants should be notified and checked for retaliation. But that doesn't happen.

The SFWP has yet to conduct a Best Practices Survey. The Government Accountability Project (www.whistleblower.org), a national whistleblower advocacy group, compiled a set of international Best Practices. One standard is a "Credible Corrective Action Process." This principle allows whistleblowers to comment on the charges that merited an investigation, and on whether there has been a good-faith resolution. Whistleblowers are often the most knowledgeable and concerned witnesses. The failure of the SFWP to engage its informants discredits their investigations. Whistleblowers should not be silenced in the resolution of the alleged misconduct they risked their careers to challenge.

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



WEST OF TWIN PEAKS CENTRAL COUNCIL By Mitch Bull



An upcoming District 7 Supervisor Candidates Forum, the celebration of 75 years representing Westside homeowners, and the election of new council officers were the highlights of the West of Twin Peaks Central Council meeting on June 25th.

President Matt Chamberlain called the meeting to order and as a first order of business, thanked the assembled group, citing their influence in supporting the Coit Tower Initiative (Prop B). He also informed the group of a "Mt. Davidson" walk, coordinated by Jake Sigg, to be held on June 30th.

Vice President George Wooding followed with his officer's report, thanking the membership as he had decided not to run for a board seat for the upcoming term. Wooding, a past WOTPCP President, has served several terms on the Board and has been very involved with the organization. Secretary Blue Mudbhary also thanked the members as she is also stepping down from the board after serving two years as Secretary. Parliamentarian Roger Ritter joked that he will be "donating" his "Roberts Rules of Order" to the next parliamentarian, who will be selected by the next President.

In committee news, Avrum Shepard spoke on a project to initiate a Facebook link onto the WOTPCP website during the summer hiatus. Public Health Committee chair Wooding asked members to continue to vote for the "Laguna Honda Orchard," as LHH is in second place, and the online voting runs through July 3. In Open Space and Parks news, in response to the NAP plan a letter was written by Sally Stephens detailing the WOTPCP objections to the plan and sent to the Rec and Park Department and Mayor Lee. Dave Bisho stated that it was "the best letter he had ever seen."

It was noted that the controversial portions of the NAP plan that were to be included in the upcoming Rec and Park Bond measure have been taken out of the measure, which will target improvements to McLaren and Golden Gate Parks.

Avrum Shepard reported that MUNI is planning to hire more meter people and issue more parking tickets to help stem a \$6 Million revenue gap. With the parking ticket fines rising to \$70 the City will have the highest fines in the nation for parking miscreants. Discussion then took place on how these expensive fines are driving business away from the retail districts, instead of bringing people into SF to shop. Delegate Denise LaPointe made a motion that a letter be drafted to the city budget committee and MTA expressing the displeasure of the WOTPCP on the parking policy. It was seconded by Don Dutil and unanimously passed.

Roger Ritter brought the crowd up to date about a planned District 7 Supervisor Candidates Forum. The date has been set for Saturday, September 22nd at the Aptos Middle School at 10:00 AM. The format is expected to follow last year's Mayoral Forum with a moderated question and answer session.

"Recognition Chair" Denise LaPointe represented the membership in thanking George Wooding and Blue Mudbhary for their dedication and service to the WOTPCP. The membership is awarding gift certificates to Office Depot and Boulevard Restaurant respectively to the outgoing officers.

The controversial project on Crestmont Ave. is moving forward, with the next step being an Environmental Impact Report Preliminary Review by the Planning Commission. Opponents of the project asked the membership to assist them in voicing opposition in upcoming review meetings. For more information on this, visit the site at CrestmontPreservation.org.

Dave Bisho, representing an absent Paul Conroy and the Nominating Committee presented the delegates with the following slate of officers for the upcoming year: President – Matt Chamberlain; Vice President – Roger Ritter; Treasurer – Carolyn Squeri; Secretary – Sally Stephens (Golden Gate Heights). The President of the Council will appoint a Parliamentarian. No nominations were made from the floor, and the proposed slate was unanimously approved by a voice vote.

Other WOTPCP News:

Discussions were held regarding the vote to have the Sunnyside Neighborhood Association formally join the WOTPCP. Specifics were discussed and representatives from the Sunnyside Association were on hand to discuss the specifics on meetings, membership, etc. At this point the WOTPCP will take up action after the summer recess.

President Chamberlain called for volunteers for a "Tax Initiative Evaluation Committee" to consider November election proposals. The committee would only exist from August through October.

Denise LaPointe brought up an issue from the Twin Peaks Improvement Association relating to a 7 bedroom home that is being rented out as a "dormitory style" live-work office for "Glint.com," through the Airbnb service. The issue is a prohibited use within the zoning for the neighborhood.

Avrum Shepard read a proclamation from State Senator Leland Yee recognizing the 75th Anniversary of the West of Twin Peaks Central Council.

The next meeting of the WOTPCP will be on Monday, September 24th at 7:30 PM at the Forest Hills Clubhouse. Info: WOTPCP website (www.westoftwinpeaks.org).

Food Trucks (Cont. from p. 1)

don't pay rent. These are the concerns we are facing," Mahan added.

Past president of the West Portal Merchants Association, Marc Troy, said he thinks "selfish interests" are behind the idea. If a mobile truck to wrap and ship packages came to West Portal, do you think the local package shipper would be in favor of the proposal? Troy asked.

But Matthew Rogers, owner, Papenhausen Hardware said, "I think it would be very positive for the street. It would bring a lot of people to the neighborhood who are unfamiliar with West Portal. It gives them a reason to come here. In all likelihood, the food trucks will have no effect on my

business. But in general, it would improve business along the street," Rogers said. The food trucks would pull people from other parts of the city, besides the immediate surrounding neighborhoods. "It would be a shame if we missed that."

"I'm totally for it" said Rachel Lopez Metzger, owner, The Desk Set, at 3252 Sacramento Street and 207 West Portal Avenue in San Francisco. "I support it. It will be a very family-friendly event. It will probably help all the small businesses that are there [in West Portal]," she said by phone from the Sacramento Street location. "I want it to happen."

Keith Burbank is a free lance journalist

John Kirkpatrick Presents: 10 Portola Drive



Gorgeous Upper Market / Twin Peaks designer home with breathtaking views. Lovingly designed and fully renovated in 2006, this 3BR/3BA home on almost 3000 sqft enjoys panoramic city views, large living room with fireplace and built-ins, gourmet kitchen with designer finishes and high end appliances, large family room, beautiful view deck, spacious master suite.

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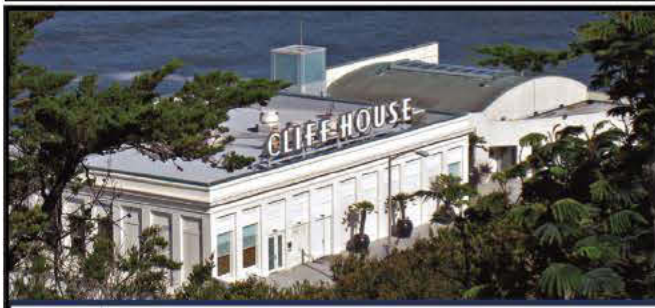
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Beginning July 10th reservations can be made online by visiting www.cliffhouse.com/history/Johns_Walk.html or by calling the Cliff House Gift Shop at 415-666-4006.

The Lands End Lookout

Be sure to visit the Lookout Cafe at the new Lands End visitor center. Operated by the Cliff House team, the cafe serves a delicious selection of locally sourced grab-and-go items including the famous *It's It* originally for sale at *Playland at the Beach*.

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Fall Session I Preview/Aug 30
1:30-4pm, Downtown Campus, Sixth Floor

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AROUND THE TOWN

COMINGS AND GOINGS • By Mitch Bull

Summer is here, and not a bit too soon. Our local “boys of summer,” aka the SF Giants, completed a three game sweep of the dreaded Dodgers this week, winning each game in a shutout. It was historic as it was the first time in the Giants SF history that the team had pitched shut outs for three games in a row against the Dodgers. Now tied for first, we shall see how the last three months of the season unfold.

The 75th season of the Stern Grove Music Festival is being celebrated this year with a great selection of music! One of the world’s best music venues for enjoying a great afternoon.

A new Greek restaurant is slated to open at the site formerly occupied by Round Table Pizza on West Portal Avenue. The construction is nearing completion and it’s good to see a new retailer opening. Unfortunately, WPA lost two tenants with the announcements that Fruition Spa and Lite for Life are both closing their operations. Although the recession is easing, somewhat glacially, business is still “a touch and go” for many of our favorites. A good reminder to “Shop Local;” explore West Portal and Portola Avenues and spread the word.

The *San Francisco Chronicle* featured the Avenue in their “Food” section of their April 22nd issue. The piece highlighted such neighborhood spots as the Submarine Center, the Bullshead, Shaw’s Candies, Fresca and Market & Rye, the new restaurant from celebrity chef Ryan Scott. A nice feature complete with a map, for those readers who have no idea where West Portal is. (I suspect there are many.)

Speaking of daily newspapers, did you know the *San Francisco Examiner*, recently purchased by a Canadian group, has in turn bought the “lion of the left,” i.e. the *SF Bay Guardian*. Rumors are swirling that the group is looking for other acquisitions. Could *SF Weekly* be next? Time will tell.

Bits and Pieces... a welcome to our newest Observer “staff member” Luke Griffin Casson. He’s not doing layout yet, having just been born on June 15. Parents Julie and Ronnie are doing well and his grandparents (Alice and I) are thrilled. I’m sure he will be typing in no time...

Congratulations.... To everyone associated with Mollie Stone’s Markets. This locally-based (Mill Valley) specialty grocery store was recently named the outstanding specialty retailer by the National Association for the Specialty Food Trade, one of only five U.S. companies honored for 2012.

Have an interesting story, idea, or some insights you’d like to get in the paper? Just drop it to us in the mail, or email: mitch@WestsideObserver.com. Check out www.WestsideObserver.com, or on Twitter @ Twitter!@WestS_Observer and Facebook.

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STERN GROVE CELEBRATES 75 YEARS

An interview with Executive Director Steven P. Haines

By Wendy Oakes

Wendy: Congratulations on Stern Grove Festival's 75th year! Would you tell me a bit about the history of the festival?

Steve: Thank you. The festival was founded in 1938, and has presented 75 consecutive seasons of music, but the history of the park goes back well before then. To look at the beginnings of what Stern Grove became, you really have to look back to the mid 1800s. There was a family, [named] Greene; they were homesteaders and had purchased a lot of about 160 acres of land in that area. A few of the other brothers joined, and collectively grouped the holdings to about 600 acres. They actually were the first family that planted eucalyptus trees west of Twin Peaks, and they built the first home west of Twin Peaks as well. That area was primarily used for farming, once the trees grew, and acted as a windbreak from the sand dunes. They mostly planted barley and potatoes out there. There's a lot of other history back and forth, as far as a land grab from another person, but that all finally became resolved [by] the early 1930s. At that time Mr. Greene had fallen a little late on his taxes with the land. At the same time, there was a woman whose name was Rosalie Meyer Stern; she was looking to purchase a plot of land, for a park. She was the head of the Recreation and Playground Commission for the city of San Francisco. She was a very philanthropic woman. She really believed in a lot of different areas - specifically the environment, arts, culture, and recreation. She really wanted to create a lasting legacy to her husband Sigmund, who had passed away a few years earlier. So, she purchased the land from Mr. Greene, and then gave it to the city for one dollar in 1931. The park was then named Sigmund Stern Grove. Historically, so you know who Sigmund Stern is, he is the second eldest nephew of Levi Strauss. At one point Sigmund Stern was the president of Levi Stauss & Company.

The first concert that took place actually was in 1932, but then nothing really formally took place until 1938, until the festival was actually established.

Wendy: And now today, you have such a wonderful annual festival season, with diverse performances by artists from around the world, and also from right here in San Francisco.

Steve: The concerts really have been created and shaped to mirror the diversity of the San Francisco Bay Area. Part of the mission was certainly to provide performance opportunities to Bay Area musicians as well. For the most part, every concert that takes place has a San Francisco element. This past Sunday was the opening day, and we had the Glide Ensemble, from Glide Memorial. This next Sunday, July 1st, we have a local blues rock group - The Stone Foxes, that will be opening up for Preservation Hall Jazz Band. July 8th is the San Francisco Symphony. July 22nd is The E Family, a San Francisco favorite: Pete Escovedo, along with Juan, Peter Michael and Sheila E. Then, the 29th is San Francisco Ballet. I'm leaving a bunch out, but it's just a great representation of the diversity of San Francisco that we present.



Free concerts in Stern Grove have been a major crowd pleaser since the '30s — get there early to get a good spot, and bring a picnic lunch and a blanket.

Wendy: Stern Grove Festival is, of course, free, but costs quite a lot to put on each year. You receive funding from various types of donations, including a membership option.

Steve: While it's free to attend, it's not free for us to produce, which is, in this year, well over two and a half, close to three million dollars. We have a lot of different types of support: corporate support, foundations, and as you mentioned, individuals and membership. So, while admission is always free to our festival, we do have this program where members make various levels of contributions, and in return, there are certain benefits. One of the most prized benefits is reserved seating at the picnic tables that we have in the concert aisle. One of the other benefits of becoming a member is the opportunity to have, and to take advantage of, some reserved parking. As you know, there's no parking for the general public at Stern Grove. There just isn't room, and there are no large parking lots, but we do have some very small areas that we've made available to members. Another way you can support the festival is to become a volunteer. We have the need each Sunday for volunteers, and many times have in the range of 100 people volunteering. We also offer reserved parking for our volunteers.

It's a festival for the people, but by the people as well. It is because of our fans and our attendees that this is possible. We love people coming out and taking advantage of all this wonderful art and culture, and at the same time, we appreciate everybody's support.

JULY-AUGUST

EVERY • SUNDAY FARMERS MARKET

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

SPECIAL NIGHTS AT QUE SYRAH

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

Tapas Every Thu & Fri | 5:30–9 pm

EVERY • THURSDAY–NIGHTLIFE

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

EVERY • FRIDAY NIGHT

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

EVERY • FRIDAY NIGHT AT THE DEYOUNG

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

TUE • FREE DAY CONSERVATORY OF FLOWERS

Tue Jun 5 | 9 am–4:30 pm | First Tuesday of each month is free at the Conservatory of Flowers, Special Exhibit fees, if any still apply. JFK Dr. Golden Gate Park.

THU • TARAVAL- PARKSIDE MERCHANTS

5 Thu Jul 5 | 7–8:30 pm | Meet up with your fellow merchants of Taraval St. and Parkside. Taraval Police Station, 2345 24th Ave. First Thursdays. Contact: Yumi Sam YumiSam@allstate.com

SUN • NERT TRAINING

8 Sun Jul 8 | 10am, 1pm or 3:30 pm | 2310 Folsom St. at 19th. Join the SF Neighborhood Emergency Response Team and the SF Fire Dept. to learn how to prepare for any emergency, RSVP: 970-2024/email sffdnert@sfgov.org with "Get Really Ready" in the subject line.

TUE • BEACH CHALET EIR APPEAL

10 Tue Jul 10 | 4 pm | Attend the Board of Supervisors meeting and express your concerns about the proposal to remove over 7 acres of natural grass and replace it with over 7 acres of artificial turf and 150,000 watts of sports lighting in Golden Gate Park. Appeal of the Environmental Impact Report.

THU • COMPUTERS FOR SENIORS

1 Thu Jul 12 | 2:30–4pm | Basic Computer Classes For Seniors: Mouse & Keyboard Ocean View Computer Lab. 345 Randolph St. 355-5615.

SAT • NATIVE AMERICAN STORYTELLER

1 Sat Jul 14 | 3–4 pm | Ocean View Branch Library presents Yaqui Indian Storyteller and Hoop Dancer to entertain and amaze with stories, songs, and dance from Native American cultures. 345 Randolph St. (at Ramsell) 355-5615.

THU • SUNSET DIST COALITION MEETING

1 Thu Jul 14 | 7 pm–9 pm | Meets 2nd Thu each month. Info or to be added to the agenda please call Susan at 415.586.8103 or ssuval@sbcglobal.net Taraval Police Station, 2345 24th Ave

MON • SUNSET-PARKSIDE MEETING

1 Mon Jul 16 | 6 pm | SPEAK aims to educate Sunset/Parkside residents on public safety, zoning, planning etc. 3201 Ulloa St. (Grace Lutheran) 3rd Mon each month. speaksanfrancisco@yahoo.com

TUE • COMMUNITY SAFETY MEETING

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

WED • COLOR AND HEALTH, WELL BEING

1 Wed Jul 18 | 7–8:30 pm | Guest speaker Cindy Rodoni, Certified Color Analyst and Consultant. How we see color and what it does for us. Florey's Books, 2120 Palmetto Ave., Pacifica

WED • HISTORY OF INGLESIDE TERRACES

Wed Jul 18 | 7–8:30 pm | In 1895 the Ingleside Racetrack opened in the foggy

1 reaches of southwestern San Francisco as the most opulent horse racing venue west of the Mississippi River. The track became a Progressive Era battleground between gambling "turf men" and civic reformers before serving as a refugee camp for the city's most vulnerable after the 1906 Earthquake and Fire. Merced Library, 155 Winston. Space limited: RSVP 650 359-6579

SAT • SUMER ART CLASSES-CARA GOLDSTEIN

2 Sat Jul 21 | 12 pm–2 pm | Tweens and Teens, 3–5pm Adults Still Life. Limited to 9 students. Enjoy individualized instruction, small class sizes and an opportunity to expand on your style and method.\$45–55. Bookshop West Portal, 80 West Portal Ave. Info 564-8080.

SUN • MUNCHKIN KIDS RUN

2 Sun Jul 29 | 9 am | The San Francisco Child Abuse Prevention Center is inviting kids of all ages to participate in the 3rd annual Munchkin Kids Run 989-9000 Participants run along the Embarcadero 1 mile, 1/2 mile or 100 yard dash. Pre-registration is required and the cost to participate is \$25.

TUE • GREATER WEST PORTAL-GWPNA

1 Tue Aug 11 | 7:30 pm | West Portal Playground Clubhouse, 139 Lenox Way. First Tuesdays. The "Western Heart" of SF. gwpna.org

THU • AUTHOR JONATHAN TROPPER

2 Sat Aug 25 | 7 pm | Tropper will read from his latest novel, which follows the New York Times bestseller This Is Where I Leave You. A broken family attempts to reconnect - without destroying each other in the process - in this funny and moving story. BookShop West Portal, 80 West Portal

MON • SHARP

3 Mon Jul 30 | 7 pm | Sunset Heights Assoc. of Responsible People. Last Mon each month. 1736 9th Ave. (Moraga)

Have a local event? Contact: editor@westsideobserver.com

Stern Grove Festival

A Month of Sunday Fun

Jul 8 | San Francisco Symphony

With Music Director Michael Tilson Thomas program features the iconic sounds of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with members of the San Francisco Symphony Chorus. The performance will also include Copland's Billy the Kid Suite.

Jul 15 | Nitin Sawhney/Meshell Ndegeocello

Cross-cultural cool with internationally renowned Indian-British and multi-instrumentalist, Sawhney Singer-songwriter Ndegeocello brings her eclectic blend of folk, jazz, hip-hop, funk, and rock sensibilities.

Jul 22 | The E Family

The Escovedo family brings the beat featuring the Pete Escovedo Orchestra, The E Family Band with Pete, Juan, Peter Michael, and Special I performance by Sheila E.

Jul 29 | San Francisco Ballet

SF Ballet's only summer performance in the Bay Area! Program includes: Wheeldon's Within the Golden Hour, Tomasson's 7 for Eight (First pas de deux), van Manen's SOLO, Balanchine's Scotch Symphony.

Aug 5 | Ozomatli /SMOD

Latin favorites Ozomatli return with their genre-spanning, high-energy sound. Opening the afternoon is Malian hip-hop trio SMOD.

Aug 12 | Al Jarreau /George Duke, Mara Hruby

Legendary Al Jarreau and The George Duke Trio reunite for an afternoon of jazz classics. Oakland's neo-soul songstress Mara Hruby opens with her mesmerizing, smooth vocals.

Aug 19 | San Francisco Opera

There's nothing quite like opera in the Grove! Enjoy the renowned SF Opera and SF Opera Orchestra with conductor Giuseppe Finzi. The afternoon's program features soprano Leah Crocetto, tenor Michael Fabiano, and more soloists performing operatic favorites.

Aug 26 | OK GO/The Family Crest

Known for their viral videos and quirky sound, rockers OK Go close Season. Local band The Family Crest opens with an eclectic blend of indie rock and classical musicianship.

Now At the Movies • By Don Lee Miller

ABRAHAM LINCOLN: VAMPIRE HUNTER

Young Lincoln: Benjamin Walker (Bdwy's Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson) supposedly was witness to his mother's death via vampire fangs! This contributed to his outlook on Life. Accept this premise and you're halfway there. Seeking vengeance, he is rescued by Henry Sturgess: Dominic Cooper, who takes a mysterious interest in Abe. After teaching him how to fell a vampire with a silver-bladed axe, Henry identifies those to be felled by Abe's axe. Abe moves to Illinois, encounters his bride-to-be Mary Todd: Mary Elizabeth Winstead, political opponent



Stephan A. Douglas: Alan Tudyk, self-assured Joshua Speed: Jimmi Simpson, and his (fictional) childhood black friend (who had been abused), Will: Anthony Mackie. Years later, as our 16th President, he must dig out his axe when undead Confederate soldiers group to attack. Some humor would have helped this yarn that takes itself too seriously while muddling history. The best scenes involve a chase within a herd of stampeding horses and the climactic fight on board a train. Director Timor Bekmambetov (Wanted) instills visual flair in the aerial shots of fight scenes. Screenwriter Seth Grahame-Smith (Dark Shadows) adapts his popular novel and adds new rules to the vampire mythology. If you must ... Constant violence. Brief sexuality.

BATTLESHIP

Lt. Alex Hopper: Taylor Kitsch and his handsome brother, Commander Stone Hopper: Swedish Alexander Skarsgård are serving in the Navy in Hawaii. Admiral Shane: Liam Neeson, who just turned 60!, isn't very pleased with the interest of his daughter Samantha Shane: Brooklyn Decker in Alex. Petty Officer Cora "Weps" Raikes: Rihanna is a force to be reckoned with in the battle scenes with the aliens who seem invincible. Sec. of Defense: Peter MacNicol is in over his head, trying to cope with the attack. Once again, Hawaii has forces wanting to destroy the U.S. fleet, only this time they are from outer space and have huge, horrific machine-weapons. And the crew members thought they were there for exercises! Director Peter Berg with screenwriters Erich and Jon Hoeber cope with attack, romantic and sci-fi scenes. Profanity. Violence. Action and destruction.

BERNIE

The assistant funeral director (who sang in the church choir, taught Sunday School, and would lend a helping hand to anyone) Bernie Tiede: Jack Black became best friends with wealthy widow Marjorie Nugent: Shirley MacLaine. He took vacations with her and managed all her banking, despite the fact that she was grumpy and increasingly demanded more time from him. Sheriff Danny Buck: Matthew McConaughey enters the picture when no one has seen Marjorie for months. From Cathage, Texas comes this true story directed by Richard Linklater, who co-wrote the black comedy screenplay with Skip Hollandsworth. This one converts midway but constantly keeps the audience involved. Violent images. Profanity.

BRAVE

The feisty, fiery heroine Merida: voice of Kelly Macdonald, has red hair so soft and curly that it took the Pixar animators three years to get her hair, Merida's outstanding feature, perfect to their satisfaction. The filmmakers' 13th feature finally has a heroine as brave as their heroes have been. Our tale begins with her hopping onto her valiant horse, galloping through the green Scottish countryside, hitting her targets with her bow and

arrow. Co-directors Mark Andrews and Brenda Chapman also co-wrote the screenplay with Steve Purcell and Irene Mecchi, relying on known Disney themes and familiar character types. Unfortunately, after its promising opening, it changes its tune to a kiddie comic, disappointingly. Merida's parents, King : Billy Connolly and Queen Elinor: Emma Thompson enliven the tale. Rude humor. Scary action.

CHERNOBYL DIARIES

Chris: Jesse McCartney, Paul: Jonathan Sadowski, and Natalie: Olivia Dudley + 3 hire a guide, Uri: Dimitri (born in SF in 1968) Diatchenko, to see the forbidden residences of the Chernobyl factory workers, deserted since the disaster 25 years ago. They soon realize they are not alone. Sometimes spooky but ultimately disappointing. No director wants to be credited (a bad sign) so writers Oren Peli and Carey Van Dyke + 2 are left holding the blame bag for this low budget horror flick. Violence. Bloody images. Profanity!

PROMETHEUS

Director Ridley Scott and writers Jon Spaihts and Damon Lindelof seem to have seen Alien once too often and have been influenced by it. A space crew of scientists [Elizabeth: Noomi Rapace, Charlie: Logan Marshall-Green (Devil), Meredith: Charlize Theron, robot David: Michael Fassbender (Shame) and Peter: Guy Pearce] land on a distant planet and encounter one setback after another. They must fight not only for their lives but for the future of mankind. Sci-fi violence. Some intense images. A birth scene. Brief profanity.

ROCK OF AGES

Set in 1987 during the Rock era, singer Sherrie: Julianne Hough arrives in LA from the Midwest and through a series of misfortunes, finds herself in need of a job. Drew: Diego Boneta gives her one at the famous Bourbon club. She, in turn, gives him the self confidence to sing on stage. The club was put on the map by the King of the Rockers: Stacey Jaxx: Tom Cruise. Cruise does his own singing while appearing on stage with pecs showing and in a black leather jock strap. Girls nibble his nipples on stage! He has a revolving gate to his bed with no count being kept, or no involvements, all in a drunken daze. Rolling Stone reporter Constance: Malin Akerman falls for his sad tale of "sex without love" and they slither onto a pool table to resolve the issue at once. Bromates Dennis: Alec Baldwin and Lonny: Russell Brand own the Sunset Strip club where it's all happening, or at least used to, but is now in dire financial straits. Across the street, female church lady pickets are led by the new mayor's wife: Patricia Whitmore: Catherine Zeta-Jones. She has a special reason for wanting to shut down Bourbon and Jaxx. Director Adam Shankman tries to resurrect the past frenzy but, although it hits some high points with the songs and reveals a lot, it revels in the seamy aspect. Nudity. Simulated sex acts. Drinking. Pot smoking. Profanity.

SNOW WHITE AND THE HUNTSMAN

Queen Ravenna: Charlize Theron asks her mirror "Who is the fairest?" once too often. She is not prepared for the answer "Snow White" and breaks everything in sight. Then, she sends the Huntsman: Chris Hemsworth to slay the daughter of the late king: Kristen Stewart, even more sullen and emotionless than in her Twilight films. Wisely, somebody gave her less than 50 lines of dialog but plenty of action until she finds the eight dwarfs living in the forest, who protect her, as well as the Huntsman who sets out to oust Ravenna from her throne. Director Rupert Sanders and writers Evan Daugherty and John Lee Hancock +2 present this action adventure drama-fantasy update of the fairy tale. Some intense images. Brief profanity.

AT THE THEATER • By Dr Annette Lust and Flora Lynn Isaacson

SALOMANIA AND TRIAL OF DANCER MAUDE ALLAN AT THE AURORA

The Time, 1918, the Subject, a Court Case in Great Britain, the Dramatic Conflict, Dancer Maude Allan Sues Noel Pemberton-Billing for criminal libel.

The play revolves around the accusation of Maude Allan, in Pemberton-Billing's Vigilante newspaper article The Cult of the Clitoris, of being a lesbian and sympathizing with Germany's intention to weaken Britain by encouraging homosexuality. But since Allan portrayed the Dance of the Seven Veils, based on Salome, Oscar Wilde's play prohibited from being performed in Britain, her chance of winning her case was minimal.

Founded on the original transcripts of this case, auteur/stage director Mark Jackson depicts scenes of the First World War in the trenches, as well as in London.

After Allan appears, a scene with British soldiers in the trenches, and later joking and describing their favorite chocolates, that does not seem pertinent.

In the trial that follows, Maud Allan sues British right-wing M.P. Pemberton-Billing for having seen her in a banned private performance and published an article accusing her of being an indecent dancer and lesbian. In a final scene, Allan moves around dead soldiers, gently touching their heads to soothe their violent

deaths that evokes Salome's kiss on the lips of John the Baptist's severed head.

Strong acting is offered by the entire cast, Kevin Clarke as Oscar Wilde, Mark Anderson Phillips as Pemberton-Billing, Liam Vincent, Alex Moggridge, Anthony Nemirowsky, and Marilee Talkington all playing several roles and a soldier. Madeline H.D. Brown's Maud Allan is more ladylike than seductive and restrains the very quality for which she was condemned.

Although the poetry and social wisdom of the play gets bogged down by the length and war scenes played with heavy English accents and rapidly-delivered lines, it is creatively written, precisely

directed by Jackson and morally and socially challenging as it takes us beyond the story of Maude Allan to depict the futility of war, media sensationalism, Gay rights, equality of genders, and free artistic expression.

Salomania closes July 22. For info call 510-843-4822 or visit auroratheatre.org



Dr. Annette Lust



Flora Lynn Isaacson

EVE ENSLER'S EMOTIONAL CREATURE "IT'S A GIRL THING"

Vagina Monologues author Eve Ensler's Emotional Creature, directed by Jo Bonney, offers authentic monologues by young girls revealing their most innermost thoughts. Girls from countries ranging from Africa and China to Europe and America begin by describing their relationships with boys, girlfriends, parents and current issues like global warming and gay rights. During the ninety minute piece they express their emotional reactions, along with song and dance, in a collective and spirited uprising.

Among their secret sorrows are those of an American student who, alienated from her friends Wendy and Julie for not living up to their teenage expectations, desperately pleads that they not discard her.

Another girl with a big nose liked her clownish nose. But when her parents forced her to undergo a nose operation to diminish it she lost the ability to make others laugh.

An African American did not take precautions during sex and now feels the baby growing inside of her without knowing what to do with it

Another sixteen year old thinks she is little more than a garbage can and a slave to men. Her father's best friend raped her and her parents blamed and disowned her and left her homeless.

A girl dressed like a boy and wearing a wedding veil is to be married according to her parents' wish, but takes a pill that is about to explode and spatter her bloody insides onto her parents' foreheads forever.

These revelations and others are followed by their signature song "I am an emotional creature" and the declaration, "It's a girl thing!"


But is it only a girl thing? Getting the message to fathers, brothers, male family members as well as boyfriends could render them allies in recognizing the injustices young girls suffer help strengthen their empowerment.

The six girls, played by Ashley Bryant, Molly Carden, Emily S. Grosland, Joaquina Kalukango, Sade Namei, and Olivia Oguma, offer testimonies that never seem to be acted but rather project as true to life accounts of girls confiding in us about their emotional and physical abuse.

The production staff, scenic and costume design by Myung Hee Cho, lighting, Lap Chi Chu, sound, Jake Rodriguez, choreography by Luam, and music and musical direction by Chari-Johan Lingenfelder contributed to this energetic ensemble of drama/comedy, dance and music.

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SHARON THE HEALTH / By Sharon Caren



Color is Energy/Chromotherapy

Since recorded history, it's been known that color affects our feelings, moods, and emotions. In ancient times, great halls of color healing were built. Individuals entered and then bathed in light filtered through various colored glass panels or windows. Chromotherapy may seem like a new healing technique but it's very old.

What is color?

Colors are wavelengths of electro-magnetic energy seen through our eyes. The color we see is the part of the visible spectrum that's reflected back by a certain object.

When someone is "color blind," there is no actual

blindness but a fault in the development of one or more sets of retinal cones that perceive color in the light and transmit the information to the optic nerve. Color blindness is found in males more often than females because men have only one X chromosome where women have two. The X chromosome is the one that carries photopigments, so the chance of it occurring in men is dramatically increased.

How can color help in healing a tired or diseased body? Color is energy, and therefore, color can improve energetic balance. When incorporating color tones in harmony with an individual's natural vibration, the body's immune system strengthens. By the same token, incorporating colors not in harmony will increase the imbalance and further compromise the body's natural ability to heal.

When all colors join together, the result is white light. When using white light for healing, that light (encompassing ALL) brings completeness, oneness, the union of all complementary parts.

Color is all around us and we may take it for granted.

In nature we have the luscious blue sky, crisp green leaves of trees and plants, and beautiful flow-

This was at the time my parents divorced.

The color Green – has all healing properties; the color of Nature and the earth. It's a balance and harmony essence and possesses a soothing influence upon both mind and body. It's neither relaxing nor astringent and can be used for any condition in need of healing.

Interesting how on a subconscious level, we are attracted to what we need!

The color Blue – is cooling, electric, astringent, and a great antiseptic. Helps ailments of speech, communication, or the throat and laryngitis.

The color Red – brings warmth, energy and stimulation. Good for energy, fatigue, colds, energizes heart and blood circulation, as well as building up the blood.

The color Orange – warm, cheerful, non-constricting. It has a freeing action on the body and mind, relieving repressions. Also shows new possibilities and other options in life while stimulating enthusiasm and new ideas.

The color Yellow – helps strengthen the nerves and the mind, stimulates higher mentality and good for nervous or nerve-related conditions, and energizes the muscles. Dark Yellow soothes shooting pains.

If you're feeling down and BLUE (pun intended) go into your closet and find a green, orange, or red shirt to put on. Then go outdoors and look around. Imagine you're a newborn opening your eyes here on earth for the first time... wow... Mother Nature never lets us down.

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Color is energy, and therefore, color can improve energetic balance. When incorporating color tones in harmony with an individual's natural vibration, the body's immune system strengthens. By the same token, incorporating colors not in harmony will increase the imbalance and further compromise the body's natural ability to heal."

ers embodying all the colors of the rainbow. One of the best ways to uplift the spirit is to get outdoors, not only to breathe the fresh air but also to experience the breath-taking sights full of ALL colors. Did you ever wonder how many different colors there are? Step out your door, look around, and you'll find the number is infinite.

Have you visited or seen pictures of Zion and Bryce National Parks in Utah? Bright reds and oranges like fire, purples and pinks in the mountain rocks, and deep, glimmering blues of the lake water. Who could have imagined this painters' pallet of color beauty but the Creator? What a fabulous color healing vacation it would be!

As a child were you ever asked, "What's your favorite color?" When I was a very young girl, my favorite color was pink.

The color Pink – heals grief and sadness, restores youthfulness and brings us in contact with our own feelings. It's regarded as a feminine color and symbolizes softness, sweetness and innocence.

An aversion to Pink may mean someone has a challenge with expressing and embracing their soft and tender, loving side.

As a teenager, my favorite changed to green.

While indoors, make sure your surroundings are in color tones that reflect the mood or feeling you'd like to create. Paint the chosen color tones on the walls of your home, pick carpet and furniture which both accent and harmonize like pillows, curtains, and wall hangings to best serve your personal healing. Make sure you have things you enjoy looking at. Buy a beautiful piece of art to accent your favorite room. Hang it where you'd like to create an energetic healing. It doesn't take much and can be a fun exercise. Try redecorating your living space before starting on an anti-depression drug and see what happens.

Color used for healing is a blossoming, cutting-edge healing art that has not gone mainstream. Many more case studies need to be documented. So in this context, it's a fairly new idea. You won't find much information written on the subject. I invite you to the next interactive discussion group and hear what a certified color analyst has to share. It's fascinating!

"The views expressed are those of the writer. If you have any questions about your health, you should always consult with your doctor."

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Fisher Fields (Cont. from p. 3)

and installation of the turf. Yet, as soon as the initial projects at Garfield Square and Silver Terrace were completed, the Department began soliciting bids for the purchase and installation of the artificial turf at Crocker Amazon and South Sunset. For just these two projects alone, the RPD misappropriated more than \$1.87 million in public funds purchasing and installing thousands of tons of admittedly toxic materials over more than a dozen acres of public park land.

The MOU also limits the city's funding of the artificial turf projects to the partnership's "initial phase." The "initial phase" is described as preparation of conceptual plans for up to eight Turf fields, the preparation of construction documents for the first two sites selected and construction of artificial turf fields at the two sites. Once the first two projects at Garfield Square and Silver Terrace were completed, any additional field conversion projects would be "subject to Amendment of this Agreement." The City Fields MOU has never been

modified or amended. Yet the City has appropriated more than \$17 million (\$8.5 million in revenue bonds in FY 07-08, \$8.5 million from the 2008 Clean and Safe Neighborhood Parks Bond Fund) in public funds for the City Fields projects at South Sunset, Crocker Amazon, Kimball Field, Franklin Square, Beach Chalet and Minnie and Lovie Ward.

The current artificial turf projects at Mission Playground, Beach Chalet and Minnie and Lovie Ward are clearly outside the scope of the City Fields MOU. Unless and until the MOU is amended, there should be an immediate halt to any further expenditure of city funds on these projects. It is time for the District Attorney to hold the Mayor, the Board of Supervisors, the RPD General Manager and the Recreation and Park Commission accountable for this massive misappropriation of public resources.

Anmarie Mabbutt is a California attorney and former longtime SF resident. Feedback: anmarie@westsideovserver.com

Remember When?



Sunset District Homes, looking from 16th Ave to Golden Gate Park. Dated as ca. 1950? This would appear to be an error, Have a better date? Contact editor@westsideobserver.com. Permission: SF History Center.

Phyllis' Findings / Phyllis Sherman

The older I get, the more I remember with great nostalgia the glorious days of childhood. I suppose I recall a sentimental memory of things of the past. When I was about seven years old my parents decided that maybe it would be a smart idea to buy a house. We were living in an apartment in New York and I had my own bedroom, but the idea of a living in a "house" like the rich people really appealed to me. So we took my father's rich brother Oscar, who already owned a house, and was also a CPA and an income tax specialist and therefore an expert on houses and everything else that nouveau riche people ascribe to, up to Yonkers.



My folks had seen a house there for \$8,000 that seemed affordable and now the "expert" was going to give us his knowledgeable, qualified opinion. We should have left him at home. Uncle Oscar found innumerable flaws... the most flagrant being the fact that he thought a new roof

was needed and that would be expensive. My parents seemed relieved that they didn't have to go ahead with the purchase now that the "expert" had spoken. I was disappointed because it seemed like a real nice brick house...(my father always favored brick)...with large rooms and a good-sized yard with pretty colorful plants. My horticultural experience at that time was limited to Marigold seedlings in a cheese box. It wasn't until years later that I realized that this uncle and my father never really got along. He was the affluent older brother who had "made it" and wasn't about to help anyone else get there. He always acted bossy and lorded it over his five younger siblings. No one really much liked him ...and when he went and married a Catholic woman...a "shiksa"...don't ask! Hell and damnation. I recall Aunt Millie as being a rather pleasant blonde lady and felt sorry that she had to put up with the loud mouth Oscar. They had one placid blonde son, Victor, with whom I got along with well, and who subsequently became an eminent attorney on the East coast. So Millie had obviously done something right. Sometime in there I received as a gift one of those see-through plastic domes with falling snow that swirled

all around when you gave it a shake. In the center of the dome was "our" Yonkers house. I cherished that gift for a long time, and sadly enough my folks never did buy a house and remained apartment dwellers forever. ***** Cowboy Jim appeared before St. Peter at the Pearly Gates. "Have you ever done anything of particular merit?" St. Peter asked. "Well, I can think of one thing," the cowboy offered. "On a trip to the Black Hills out in South Dakota, I came upon a gang of bikers who were threatening a young woman. I directed them to leave her alone, but they wouldn't listen. So, I approached the largest and most tattooed biker and smacked him in the face, kicked his bike over, ripped out his nose ring, and threw it on the ground. I yelled, "Now, back off or I'll kick the daylights out of all of you!" St. Peter was impressed, "When did this happen?" "Couple a minutes ago." ***** Feedback: phyllis@westsideobserver.com

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

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.

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

BRAIN FUD

Spoonerisms...

A spoonerism is a pair of words that can have their initial sounds switched to form new words. The pairs need only sound the same, not necessarily be spelled the same (power saw & sour paw, horse cart & coarse heart). There may sometimes be one or two connecting words (kick the stone & stick the cone, king of the rats & ring of the cats). Given the following definitions, what are the spoonerisms?

1) no-cost fish lures & honey shipment 3) crustacean movement & criminal sunscreen

2) leaping legumes & colliding dungarees 4) baseball term & seasonal pig

3) lobster motion & mobster lotion

4) ball four & fall boar

2) jumping bears & bumping jeans

1) free bait & bee freight

Answer

OPEN LATE

Yay! The hot weather is here!

Let's go to the BEACH!

Let's see... we've packed sunscreen, leash, sunglasses, and of course...

Ocean Beach

...a sweater.

By Julie Casson



SECOND THOUGHTS / By Jack Kaye

What Could Be Goals for the Second Term

Looking at the small number of voting groups that would favor Romney: Mormons and evangelicals; some of the top one percent of income earners (\$387,000 and over), those who get their wealth from inheritance, Wall Street, the defense industry, or big oil and who care about their tax rate more than their country; racists who are not evangelicals; anyone who watches Fox “News” not in these groups, and Catholic bishops, who consider fighting for heterosexual marriage that does not include recreational sex, just procreational, more important than helping the poor, it seems unlikely that the President will be denied a second term. He will be given four more years to reshape our country. What should he do? He has already saved the U.S. economy from a deep recession; passed a sweeping financial reform; rescued the American auto industry from ruin; ended “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell;” crafted the Affordable Care Act, almost as sweeping as Medicare when introduced; killed Osama and crushed Al Qaeda leadership; gotten us out of Iraq and initiated an effort to improve our public education system.

What should he do in his next term? Here’s what I would like to see:

Reduce the annual and accumulated national budget deficit by changing the tax code; reducing our foreign military presence; reducing foreign aid; cutting out waste and fraud in government programs; eliminating, combining and reducing government agencies; changing our immigration criteria; and discouraging the outsourcing of American jobs while encouraging the creation of millions of new American employment opportunities and creating a broader tax base.

Changing our federal income tax code for individuals by eliminating all itemized deductions (except for the self employed) and credits with only a standard deduction; considering all sources of income equally including capital gains, dividends, Social Security benefit payments, earned income, food stamps, unemployment insurance payments etc.; and with only five tax brackets ranging from 10% to 30%.

Reducing our foreign military presence by closing many of our more than 700 foreign military bases especially in Europe, Asia and the Middle East. We should withdraw all troops from Afghanistan as quickly as possible and give up on trying to create a new country there.

Reducing foreign aid which is now at \$51 billion by first ensuring that what we give is used as intended and that it will soon end. Much of it now seems wasted on corrupt governments and making failed countries dependent on our largesse.

Eliminating, combining and/or reducing government agencies after determining what functions are now being done and which are either duplications of other efforts or have no impact on goals and objectives. Could the Dept. of Education by recombined with Health and Human Services, formerly know as Health, Education and Welfare? Could the Dept. of Energy be part of Interior? Could the many Homeland Security agencies be combined and eliminated? Can we almost eliminate all travel by government employees for training or conferences? How many federally-funded think tanks do we really need? Should we still produce pennies and nickels when they are not even worth the cost of making them? Should any law enforcement resources be wasted on marijuana when it is more beneficial and less harmful than alcohol or cigarettes, which are considered legal?

Changing our immigration criteria by accepting applicants who have something to offer in terms of talent or skills and not inviting the

poorest and neediest to our shores or people who are related to someone already here. We have tens of millions of Americans who are poor and needy, let us help them before adding to the problem. Those here illegally should be encouraged to return to their beloved homeland. All employers should check all their employees’ status by running an EVerify on them.

Discouraging outsourcing by eliminating all incentives for it and by creating disincentives making hiring Americans more cost effective.

Secure the future of Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security benefits for the aged and disabled by raising the salary ceiling for payroll tax deductions and making Americans healthier through improved education, nutrition and exercise, thus preventing the onset of serious and costly illnesses like heart failure, cancer, diabetes and kidney failure. Currently, ten percent of our people account for 67% of all medical costs. Let us focus on that 10% while keeping the other 90% from joining them. Reduce or eliminate waste and fraud which costs hundreds of billions of dollars each year.

Dramatically improve public education to ensure that every child can have an excellent elementary and high school experience which will produce an adult who can read, write and speak our language correctly; who can do math at least up to algebra - able to easily add, subtract, multiply and divide numbers; who understands how our government works as well as the world’s geography; who can relate to science and its methodology; and who can think critically by analyzing available information and coming to rational conclusions.

Reform politics by ending campaign contributions making all local, state and federal elections shorter, issue oriented and consisting mainly of public debates and interviews for the candidates. This will end the influence peddling that currently goes on and will keep the rich from buying elections. It will also end bribery disguised as lobbying. Lobbying would consist only of presenting the special interest’s positions on pending legislation - positions based on actual facts and figures organized in a logical argument.

If President Obama can accomplish these changes in his second term, I think he will be known as one of our country’s greatest presidents. The Democrat who succeeds him can then work on ending poverty in America and putting an end to war, the final pieces to the puzzle we like to call America.

Feedback: kaye@westsideobserver.com

The Real Me.

By Carol Kocivar©2012



I just returned from a conference where they discussed generational differences.

Years ago, someone might have asked, “Do you sleep in pajamas?” (I have no idea what the right answer should be but my answer was always “Yes.”)

The question of today—just to find out what generation you belong to—is: “Do you sleep with your phone?”

Now that is getting personal.

There were people at the conference from all over the country, but I was one of the few from San Francisco. I discovered that by this one question, I had joined the Millennials. I went from a Boomer to a Twenty-Something with the answer of one question. I loved it.

I don’t think they were literally asking if I sleep with my phone. It was more like:

Is the phone charging next to your bed?

(Yes, when I manage to attach it correctly.)

Do you play games on your phone while in bed?

(Yes, indeed I do. I play Words with Friends most evenings with my mother—who I am sure is in her pajamas some of the time.)

Do you watch movies on your phone just before you drift off?

(Yes, but I don’t know if watching Masterpiece Theatre really slips me into the teen to mid-twenties

demographics.)

Do you check your emails before getting out of bed in the morning? (Doesn’t everyone?)

Ok...Ok... After all these probing questions, it was revealed I am a true Millennial.

More evidence:

I read the newspaper in the morning—on my phone.

(“News” would be more like it—no paper whatsoever.)

I toss away paper business cards and affinity cards

(Hey, they are scanned and why do I need the paper and plastic any longer?)

There is just one niggling issue that I have to deal with related to my phone.

It happens on the muni in San Francisco. Just like the thousands of others, I board the train, earphones linked to music.

Every once in a while there is some eye contact, some signaling, and a real Millennial stands up and offers me a seat.

Should I ask them if they sleep in pajamas?

kocivar@westsideobserver.com

THE REAL ESTATE ANSWER MAN By Kevin Birmingham



Q: I want to rent my house in SF, what do I do first? — Wendy

A: It is important not to rent two sections of your house with two different leases, or else you will be defined as a two unit rental and be subject to eviction control and rent control. The SF Apartment Association can recommend property managers for leasing only or full management.

Q: Is there a reason to replace a working water heater with a new tankless water heater? — Lynn Anderson

A: With a standard water heating system, you always run the risk of running low on hot water. With a tankless system, this does not happen. You may want to get estimates now and install the new system when your current water heater breaks.

Q: Should I pay all cash for a SF home? — Gregg S.

A: It is in your best interest to consult a financial advisor and a tax person. Can you use some deductions that the interest on a mortgage loan can give you? If you do buy all cash, you can obtain a mortgage after you own.

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

Theater (Cont. from p. 11)

Creature thru July 15. 510-647-2949 berkeleyrep.org Annette Lust

CAL SHAKES’ TEMPEST BOTH CREATIVE AND FUN

In complete contrast to Jon Tracy’s dark and gloomy adaptation of The Tempest at Marin Shakespeare last September, The Tempest at Cal Shakes is lighthearted and fun. Director Jonathan Moscone’s adaptation trims the text, cuts the subsidiary characters, and rearranges the text for six actors to play eleven roles.

When we walk into Bruns Amphitheatre, we see a rough-hewn wooden boat run painfully aground. Emily Greene effectively designed this shipwreck of sea chests to reveal a wealth of props, nets and books all over the place.

Scene One opens with a violent storm that befalls Alonso, King of Naples (James Carpenter); Antonio, Duke of Milan (Catherine Castellanos); Alonso’s brother Sebastian (Emily Kitchens); and Alonso’s son Ferdinand (Nicholas Pelczar) on their journey through the Mediterranean. They all wear yellow slicker raincoats designed by Anna Oliver. This storm has been conjured by the magic of Prospero (Michael Winters), the exiled Duke of Milan, unjustly ousted by his brother and washed up on a remote island with his daughter, Miranda (Emily Kitchens), where he is a master magician and a king.

Next, Erica Chong Shuch, who choreographed the production,

emerges from a trunk as Ariel to do Prospero’s bidding. She charmingly flits and flies about assisted by three other dancers. Soon Ferdinand meets Prospero’s daughter Miranda and the two fall in love.

The high comedy scenes between Caliban (Catherine Castellanos), Trinculo (Nicholas Pelczar), and Stephano (Michael Winters) are the strongest, with much audience involvement.

Ferdinand and Miranda happily marry to Nat King Cole singing “Stardust,” and Prospero reveals to Antonio the results of his “rough magic.” Michael Winters gave a solid performance as Prospero.

Thru May 30-June 24 at Bruns Amphitheatre in Orinda. Call 510-548-9666 or calshakes.org.

Coming up is Spunkfrom July 4-29. Spunk is made up of three tales by Zora Neale Hurston, adapted by George C. Wolfe and directed by Patricia McGregor. Flora Lynn Isaacson

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Real Travel By Sergio Nibbi

A Caribbean Paradise

It was a beautiful Tuesday afternoon as we set off for San Juan, but not before a morning massage from Nathasia, an Italian-speaking young woman who had the warmest hands and the gentlest smile. We were an hour late docking in San Juan, not getting off the ship until 3:30, but still managed to enjoy the city and its people. San Juan has a beautiful red, white and blue flag, not unlike ours, and the people seem to be very polite and anxious to cater to the three monster ships that were tied up at the docks right across from Old Town. It was just another day with another 5,000 people making their way through the narrow streets, fighting for an opportunity to spend some money and run.

San Juan has a very French flavor and the old buildings reminded us of New Orleans. The horse-drawn carriages look very appropriate on the cobbled streets, with cars and taxis looking totally out of place. Karen bought a beautifully crafted doll made of starched linen and I settled for a sweatshirt that says Old Town San Juan, Puerto Rico.

The biggest seller seemed to be the booze in the Duty Free shops adjacent to the gangplank. This crowd smokes, drinks, and from the looks of the midnight buffet, also likes to eat. After a stop at McDonalds for a frosty, we headed back to the ship. I took a hot tub on our veranda while looking out at the city lights in front of us, thinking that a nice Cuban cigar and a tall Rum drink would be the perfect props for the moment. Too bad I don't enjoy either one, so I settled for the thick smell of cigar smoke that traveled on the gentle evening breeze, quietly laughing to myself as I thought of the many happy shoppers and the even happier shopkeepers.

Catalina Island as the name implies is an "island," period. It might be better described as a look-alike for a South Pacific atoll that our Navy pilots use for strafing and bombing practice. Having survived that fate, the cruise ship industry put the Island to better use as a Fantasy Island for those of us looking for hot sand, warm water, palm trees and endless little shacks full of stale cigars and second hand trinkets.

Wednesday morning we anchored off Catalina Island and tendered to the makeshift dock, no small task I might add, considering the age and size of some of our passengers. The water was flat calm, but not easy for the people to get in and out of a bobbing boat moving three to four feet up and down while being tied off against the floating platform of our ship. Earlier in the morning the crew loaded a couple of small ferry boats with food and supplies for the shore party that our ship hosts.

Looking past the first aid station and the oxygen tank that first greets you, we were treated to a view of endless beach chairs, local girls selling hair braiding, one of our ship's bands playing calypso music, a bar and large tents covering the hamburgers, hotdogs and Chili beans. Not even the flies have found this place yet. The wooden tables serve their purpose but the benches on the loose sand provide for interesting moments and movements — don't worry, the medical staff is only a few feet away.

After our picnic lunch we strolled about 50 feet away to the shopping arcade. No Donald Trump development here, just tiny shacks, one after the other, all selling the same items — cigars, bracelets, purses and just plain junk. Using my best negotiating skills, I rather quickly managed to buy a ten-dollar boat for twenty dollars. Seems like everything they sell is twenty dollars until you go to the shack next door. Oh, well, I guess they have to eat too.

Feedback: sergio@westsideobserver.com



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