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JUNE 5th



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Photo: Luke Thomas



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DPW Makes a Path: Still No “All Clear” at Bengal Alley



Fred and Kay Curry use the “potting bench” to transfer plants to their new planter boxes.

Behind the industrial fence on Miraloma, Bengal Alley winds its way up a steep climb to Casitas and Sherwood Forest’s quiet residences. At least it did, until the Department of Public Works declared it “unsafe,” and erected the cyclone-style fencing. It had been a convenient short-cut to the 43# bus stop at its foot, saving riders a two block walk around Casitas, so the neighbors above are anxious to reclaim what has been a public right-of-way for sixty years.

It has not been convenient for the abutting neighbors, whose responsibility it is to maintain the property, especially so for Fred and Kay Curry. Living above and to the side of the Alley, the Currys have taken the lead on the restoration of the walkway. They formed the Friends of Bengal Alley with their neighbors to pursue the project. “It’s really not useful for anything else,” Kay said, “we want to do it right so it will last for a hundred years. It has taken longer than we hoped. But it’s up to DPW, it’s not done until DPW says it’s done.”

Nick Eisner is the Project Coordinator at DPW. He has the final plans, submitted by the Friends of Bengal Alley, on his desk. It’s his responsibility to issue the final permits that will lead to the opening of the Alley to the public once again. “It’s next on my list,” Eisner said. But until the permits are issued and the path is declared “safe,” neighbors are not permitted access to the path.

Best of the Net



Brown-Lee Partnership Spells Money, Also Trouble

By Larry Bush (in Paper Trails), citireport.com
Photo: Luke Thomas, fogcityjournal.com

Inside the Willie L. Brown Money Machine (Part II)

As Mayor, Brown was viewed by many – including federal investigators – as playing fast and loose with city contracts going to contributors and allies.

This March, Brown’s controversial handling of city contracts came back to put Mayor Ed Lee in the news – and in a courtroom witness stand — as Brown’s factotum in approving a contractor alleged to be “fraudulent from Day One.”

According to a sworn deposition by the lead official in the process, the company went directly to Brown after failing to qualify. After Brown’s meeting, which was facilitated by Terrance Goggin later to be part of Brown’s team in pitching the Rapid Rail contract bid, Lee directed that the firm was to be allowed to bid.

According to a Chronicle story on the case, Lee was hit with a bout of forgetfulness when it came to the details of how that happened.

“Lee, when asked in

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“... it’s up to DPW, it’s not done until DPW says it’s done.” — Kay Curry



Redwood planter boxes span the mid section, while cobblestones (inset) ascend to the top

The cobblestone section at the top, built around 1952 is a picturesque hodge-podge of stone walkway that runs along the side of the Curry residence. The stones came from the city when they were replacing cobblestone streets with pavement and were installed by the developer of the project. The newly installed

Cont. p. 2

Laguna Honda Hospital Book Review

Errors Haunt “God’s Hotel”

By Patrick Monette-Shaw

One wonders whether *God’s Hotel*, just published by former Laguna Honda Hospital (LHH) physician Victoria Sweet, MD, PhD, uses LHH as a backdrop to illustrate her career, or to lament the loss of long-term care skilled nursing beds, a necessary component of the “slow medicine” for which she advocates.

While in many places the book is insightful, to those who worked there and know the hospital’s history intimately, the book’s omissions and factual errors are disturbing.

Glowing reviews of *God’s Hotel* have appeared in publications ranging from the *Wall Street Journal*, to the *Boston Globe*, to the *Huffington Post*. But those reviewers hadn’t witnessed events that transpired at Laguna Honda as this reporter has for 13 years, and aren’t aware of key errors and omissions.

Aware since May 2010 that Sweet’s book was in development, during an invitation-only April 28, 2012 book launch party this reporter was startled when Dr. Sweet indicated — literally in passing — “Patrick, I hope you won’t be too disappointed by what I left out.”

The book is an amalgam — part memoir, part story involving Sweet’s journey acquiring a PhD in the history of medicine, and part an extended op-ed arguing for a return to “slow medicine” — set against a backdrop of a very selective history of nearly two decades of patients and staff at Laguna Honda as it was transformed from a medical model of care for poor, safety-net

Cont. p. 5



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Bengal Alley (Cont. from p. 1)

redwood and cement stair-planter boxes spanning the midsection are in place, and the plantings are thriving, thanks to planning assistance from the Permaculture Guild. Still waiting for permit approval is a final section of crumbling concrete block of stairs that has no footings, it exits at the bottom to Miraloma, and must be replaced. It is the major hold-up in the project.

Dave Bisho is one of the anxious neighbors, “Bengal Alley has been closed for years. The gate that the neighbor on the left up on Casitas put up years ago makes the right-of-way look like private property. That gate should not just remain open, it should be removed. I’d like to know when they are going to open Bengal Alley—any year now I guess,” he said, lamenting the four year closure. “It’s been a pet peeve of mine,” he added.

The Curryrs are anxious to complete the trail as well, adding that they need the final accounting to present to the other abutting neighbors in hopes that they will be partially reimbursed for the estimated \$50,000 they will spend. There has been some help from the Miraloma neighbor, the San Francisco

Parks Alliance, and the SF Permaculture Guild, but the Curryrs have assumed the costs in order to move the project ahead. The city has declined to assist in the restoration of the space.

Bengal Alley will be a showcase as an inexpensive solution to slope challenges.

To join Friends of Bengal Alley, or for information on how to help with time or much needed cash donations, contact bengalstairs.org



At the foot of the stairs, a Muni rider waits for the 43 Masonic on Miraloma. It’s been an eight-year wait for Bengal Alley to open, and neighbors wonder when it will again be public

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Golden Gate Park The Beginning of the End

By Gregory P. Miller

With a few, quick votes, on May 24th, 2012, the SF Planning Commission and the Recreation and Park Commission approved the destruction of the western end of Golden Gate Park. How did they do this? By saying that they saw no problem with taking prime parkland and paving it over with 7 acres of artificial turf and installing 150,000 watts of night lighting, right next to Ocean Beach. This vote was arrived at in the face of the Departments receiving over 1,000 e-mails regarding the project, the majority of which were opposed to destroying the Park.



There were two sets of votes, neither of which reflects well on the Commissions involved. The Planning Commission approved the Environmental Impact Report (EIR), despite the submission of over 300 pages of arguments and documentation from the Environmental Law firm of Lozeau-Drury stating that the EIR is incomplete and inadequate. In fact, only one Planning Commissioner seemed to understand the duty of the Commission. The other four seemed more intent on currying favor with the sports fans present, than with upholding their responsibility to carefully evaluate an environmental document that will decide the fate of one of the few large meadows in Golden Gate Park and in the City. Park supporters were appalled that the Planning Commission did not uphold either the California Environmental Quality Act or the California Coastal Commission regulations.

documents. As one person testified, this is like throwing out the Downtown Plan in order to build skyscrapers.

Outside of City Hall was a well-stage media circus — teams of kids playing on the *natural grass* at Civic Center — an ironic counterpoint to the claims of how terrible natural grass is and how it should be replaced with artificial turf.

Next up was the Recreation and Park Commission. It has been documented that this commission always agrees with the Department. Dissension on this Commission is as rare as, well, finding anything living in a field of artificial turf. On the Recreation and Park Department website is the following statement about Golden Gate Park:

“We’re proud to welcome more than 13 million visitors each year to Golden Gate Park, one of San Francisco’s greatest treasures. From a vast, windswept expanse of

“The other four seemed more intent on currying favor with the sports fans present, than with upholding their responsibility to carefully evaluate an environmental document that will decide the fate of one of the few large meadows in Golden Gate Park and in the City.”

After a very brief discussion of the 369-page “Draft EIR”, and the 1,600-page “Comments and Responses” and letters, the Planning Commission voted to certify the EIR. From the limited discussion that took place, it was clear that the majority of Commissioners were unfamiliar with both the document and the concept of naturalistic parkland. They then took all of 30 seconds to adopt the CEQA Findings in the EIR, and another 30 seconds to approve the General Plan Conformity Findings. For those of you who are not policy wonks, this means that despite the City’s Planning documents stating clearly that this part of Golden Gate Park must retain its naturalistic character, the Planning Commission decided to throw out the planning

sand dunes, park engineer William Hammond Hall and master gardener John McLaren carved out an oasis—a verdant, horticulturally diverse, and picturesque public space where city dwellers can relax and reconnect with the natural world.”

The natural world did not rate mention by the Commissioners on Thursday. They ignored the pleas by parents, environmentalists, neighborhood activists, and child advocates alike to protect our scarce parkland from being plowed under.

This is a Rolls Royce of a project - the budget is up to \$13 million and rising. Yet the Commission ignored the proposed win-win solution of a much-less expensive renovation of the Beach Chalet fields



The meadows and playing fields at Ocean Beach soon to be replaced with plastic turf

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RUMINATIONS FROM A FORMER SUPERVISOR By Quentin Kopp

Election Recommendations and Other Issues

Now is the time for all good Westside Observer readers to make sure they vote on June 5th, if they haven’t already done so by “absentee” ballot, and particularly to vote “yes” on Proposition A and Proposition B.

Only Proposition A’s passage by voters will end San Francisco’s singular garbage monopoly, with its effective control of city government, and vindicate the unpaid efforts of San Francisco rate-payers like Tony Kelly of Potrero Hill, Judy Berkowitz of the Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods, Jennifer Clary of San Francisco Tomorrow, George Wooding, past-President of the West of Twin Peaks Central Council, Fred Martin of the West Portal Neighborhood Association, and even this now-retired, and humble, but not always obedient public servant.

I’m sure you’ve seen the million dollar campaign the monopoly has waged against Proposition A, spending some of the \$220,000,000 dollars per year extracted from us rate-payers. In watching Recology’s insidious ads, there’s no reference to the monopoly’s forthcoming post-election application for yet another massive garbage and recycling rate increase. Although denied by Recology’s President in a downtown editorial board meeting, documents from the Department of Environment give the lie to such heretofore concealed attempt to add financial burden to the 136% rate increase suffered by San Franciscans in the past 11 years.

processing and transfer facilities within the City limits...” Proposition A does require use of a transfer facility on city property. Why? Because that’s already the case at Piers 96, which the monopoly now uses for sorting recycling trash. The days of reliable City Controllers like Harry Ross, Nate Cooper and John Farrell are unfortunately gone.

At the May 21 West of Twin Peaks Central Council meeting, I watched and heard another demonstration of city government waste in the form of a presentation by Recreation and Park officials concerning removal of about 1600 trees on Mt. Davidson in the name of substituting



Photo: fogcityjournal.com

“The fanciful Central Subway project manipulators continue to try to deceive the public into believing it is a “done deal.” It is not. The Federal Transit Administration has not approved the MUNI’s requested \$942,000,000 contribution. Governor Brown, in 2011, vetoed a State budget appropriation of \$61,000,000 from the California High Speed Rail project bond issue. A proposed amendment to the Federal Surface Transportation Act to eliminate any federal money for the project is pending in the U.S. House of Representatives.”

City Hall’s Department of the Environment, a \$24,000,000, 115 employee bureaucracy, paid principally by us rate-payers, has issued requests for bids by alleged consulting experts to “review” (then rubber stamp) the contemplated rate increase by Recology.

And, if you have read or heard the monopoly’s touted 78% recycling rate, a press conference on May 24, 2012 disclosed lawsuits by Brian McVeigh to recover over \$1,000,000 of taxpayer funds obtained by Recology from the state and City from false claims respecting recycling material. The false claims lawsuit was filed under court seal in December 2010 pursuant to California law, which enables the state Attorney General to proceed against anyone fraudulently obtaining taxpayer money from the state.

The Attorney General, a San Francisco city government product, held the suit for one year before the seal was allowed to expire and Brian McVeigh, a West Portal native and former Recology manager, was allowed to proceed on behalf of the state. As a one-time supervisor at Recology’s recycling facilities on Tunnel Road and Pier 96, McVeigh alleges he uncovered fraudulent weight tag inflation (a higher rate was claimed for recycled material by Recology for redemption from the State Department of Conservation), theft of collected recyclable material, false reporting of content to the state agency and employee kick-backs from resultant fraudulent payments. The suit charges Recology with invalidly excessive reimbursement and redemption payments from California.

Perhaps you won’t be surprised to learn that after reporting such cheating to his superiors at Recology, Brian McVeigh was fired!

All of such alleged fraudulent conduct partially explains the ficticiously-claimed 78% recycling percentage by both City Hall and Recology. Another former Recology official has stated that San Francisco counts as recycling sand removal from the Great Highway!

In voting, don’t rely on the Controllers’ statement on Proposition A in the voter information pamphlet. City Controller Ben Rosenfield invidiously chose complicity with City Hall treatment of the monopoly by, among other things; incorrectly stating that Proposition A requires “publically-owned garbage collection,

“native species.” My colleague, George Wooding, discusses the subject fully in his monthly column but revelation of ten city employees, at our expense, engaging in such nonsensical “make work” represents evidence of the reason for a bloated yearly city budget of almost \$7,000,000,000.

Adding to such taxpayer injury is the now defined plan of the same city department to obtain voter approval in November of a \$195,000,000 bond issue for itself. Remember, approving bonds means creating debt. In February, the department intended to seek approval of an \$185,000,000 general obligation bond. It commissioned a poll under auspices of the Port of San Francisco, at taxpayer expense, probably because the department had just submitted to voter approval a similar amount of indebtedness a few years previously. According to the poll of 600 voters averaging 20 minutes in length, 21% of those citizens identified themselves as progressive, 33% as liberal, 28% as moderate and 13% as conservative, with 5% refusing to answer. If about 55% of San Francisco voters are genuinely “progressive” or “liberal” City Hall’s confidence of passage of more indebtedness seems warranted, although I can assure readers of my opposition. I urge the West of Twin Peaks Central Council to do likewise.

The fanciful Central Subway project manipulators continue to try to deceive the public into believing it is a “done deal.” It is not. The Federal Transit Administration has not approved the MUNI’s requested \$942,000,000 contribution. Governor Brown, in 2011, vetoed a State budget appropriation of \$61,000,000 from the California High Speed Rail project bond issue. A proposed amendment to the Federal Surface Transportation Act to eliminate any federal money for the project is pending in the U.S. House of Representatives. Meanwhile, the Municipal Railway confronts a dreadful operating deficit in the next fiscal year and thereafter, which reminded me that the MUNI constitutes one of the least financially efficient transit agencies in the Bay Area. According to a June 2011 statistical summary of Bay Area transit operators, prepared by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, the MUNI recovers but 25.8% of its operational cost from fares, lower even than the state statutory standard of 33.3% fare-box

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Open Government

Jettison the Ethics Commission

By George Wooding

It's time to jettison the dysfunctional Ethics Commission, whose annual budgets have cost taxpayers \$45 million in General Fund support (\$19 million to operate the Ethics Commission and another \$25.9 million in Election Campaign Funds that is part of Ethics' budget).

Sheriff Ross Mirkarimi's upcoming trial before the Ethics Commission will be more about why the Ethics Commission needs to be eliminated, than his fitness to serve as Sheriff.

SF's Ethics Commission is now on trial. After operating for 18 years and costing just under \$19 million in tax dollars over the years, (excluding the \$25.9 million Campaign Election Fund that Ethics has administered since Fiscal Year '02-'03),

\$6,000 — just two-and-a-half percent of the \$240,000 the Commission had initially proposed. The Commission concluded that Hall mistakenly gave his daughter a campaign credit card to purchase a purse, and had used a campaign credit card to buy gas that was non-campaign related.

Former Supervisor Hall said: "The Ethics Commission should really be renamed the 'Unethical Commission,' since they are nothing more than a group of second-rate



How did an Ethics Commission established by the voters to serve citizen interests become an agency that serves the interests of politicians and the politically influential? It's a textbook example that power and influence corrupts absolutely.

the Ethics Commission has never even held a misconduct trial for an elected official, City department head, or manager. It has no trial guidelines and is currently trying to develop trial procedures for Sheriff Ross Mirkarimi's case.

In 2007, the Commission started preparing a trial for Supervisor Ed Jew, but Jew resigned before the Ethics Commission could develop procedures.

Attorney Stephen Gruel, Jew's attorney, was quoted in the *San Francisco Examiner*, "The Ethics Commission was unclear what process to follow and rules regarding removal were murky. A number of questions were raised, including what kind of evidence could be used, how witnesses could be called and examined, and if there really could be 'due process' since the commissioners are all appointed by the elected officials who brought the charges. It was a kangaroo court at best."

The obvious problem with the Ethics Commission is its inherent conflict of interest. The Mayor, Board of Supervisors, City Attorney, District Attorney, and the Controller each get to appoint an Ethics Commissioner. These are the same City officials who determine the Ethics Commission's budget. Only friends of the powerful need apply for appointment.

How did an Ethics Commission established by the voters to serve citizen interests become an agency that serves the interests of politicians and the politically influential? It's a textbook example that power and influence corrupts absolutely.

Ethics Violation Cases Some examples of potential Ethics violations that quietly disappeared:

- Rigged bidding allegations on a multi-million-dollar Parking contracts
- Morgan Stanley's advance IPO options to mayor Willie Brown and then winning multimillion-dollar Airport contracts
- DPW's contract to SLUG, the nonprofit urban gardening organization, for work on Newsom's 2003 mayoral campaign.
- Unregistered lobbyists—unions, the Chamber of Commerce, Rose Pak, the Association of Realtors, and Willie Brown freely roaming City Hall.

Mike Garcia, a former Ethics Commissioner and current candidate for District 7 Supervisor, states, "I maintain that given its budgetary restraints, the staff at the Ethics Commission does an exemplary job. As to charges that Commissioners are unduly influenced by their appointing authorities, I was never once called by any member of the Board of Supervisors (my appointing authority) about anything that we were dealing with. I feel reasonably certain that during my tenure, none of the other Commissioners were contacted ..."

In 2007, Ethics charges hindered Tony Hall from running for mayor. Hall's subsequent Ethics trial revealed that his violations were based on anonymous complaints, perjured testimony, and tampered evidence. Ethics took over three years before issuing any subpoenas.

Hall ended up settling his case for

political hacks who are appointed by those in power, and whose mission is to destroy the reputation of anyone who dares question the policies of the current administration. They are an administrative body with no judicial power whatsoever. They engage in the most deceptive, corrupt of undertakings as the lackeys for those who exploit people in politics. As a Supervisor, one of my regrets was not initiating legislation to disband this fraudulent Commission."

The Commission created to serve the public good now seems to be serving City Hall politicians who fund its budget.

"They do as good a job as can be expected with the resources they have in hand, Supervisor Sean Elsbernd said." His aide, Olivia Scanlon, was a star witness in the Tony Hall trial. Scanlon later pleaded the 5th amendment against self-incrimination for tampering with evidence.

No elected official seems to want to want a truly well-funded, effective Ethics Commission.

Sunshine Task Force In stark contrast to the Ethics Commission's 16-member staff, its \$2.3 million fiscal year 2011-12 budget, and its pathetic enforcement record, the Sunshine Ordinance Task Force (SOTF), which has no staff and no separate budget — although it receives \$110,288 in staff support from the Clerk of the Board's budget — has provided much more needed transparency and accountability, and has probably saved the City hundreds of millions in preventable lawsuits. The SOTF has provided far better cost-benefit return on investment than the Ethics Commission.

Supervisor's Tantrums On September 27, 2011, SOTF found Supervisors David Chiu, Scott Wiener, Malia Cohen and Eric Mar in violation of Sunshine meeting laws, guilty of withholding public information and violating public meeting laws at a Land Use Committee meeting that pertained to the Parkmerced development. Their official misconduct was referred to the District Attorney's office.

Supervisor Weiner is angry about the SOTF determination against him and used his position to remove incumbent SOTF members and replacing them with "friends." As Wiener stacks the SOTF, he destroys one of the last independent bodies responsive to the public. SF does not need both an Ethics Commissions and a Sunshine Task Force, or Wiener's temper tantrums. We'd be better off with just the SOTF, which actually takes citizen's complaints about open government seriously.

The Ethics Commission was created in 1993 by Prop K when 52% of the voters, and seven of the 11 Supervisors, were fooled into thinking that a new government department that dealt unethical conduct would reduce or mitigate it.

Although the Controller's statement in the '93 Voter Guide indicated that Prop K "would increase the cost of government in relatively minor amounts which may be offset by related fees" [and fines], Ethics' current annual budget is \$2.3 million. The

Cont. p. 14



MY TWO CENTS By Will Durst

AND LUKEWARM WAS HIS NAME-O.

You don't need a psychoanalyst to detect the latent theme running through the endorsements currently showering Mitt Romney like broken rain gutters pouring down on a concrete toadstool. And that premise is ennui. "Mitt? Really? Yeah. Okay. Whatever." Makes tepid sound like a crazed bellow. With wild enthusiasm as MIA as World Series Trophies in the Wrigley Field display case. Within the last 104 years, that is.

Someone should warn NASA because we are approaching stratospheric heights of apathy here. The only thing these highly solicited testimonials have accomplished is given a face to listless. The guy needs industrial strength hip waders to slog through the thigh high lethargy.

George W Bush carved a precious three seconds out of his busy schedule to make a momentous announcement from the inside of an elevator telling an ABC news crew, "I'm for Mitt Romney" as the doors closed on him. Not that the candidate-in-waiting was particularly lusting after 43's imprimatur which some might call the Kiss of Campaign Death. But it effectively does nail down the eminently sought-after spoiled rich kid vote.

Rick Santorum got around to his ringing endorsement 13 paragraphs into a 16 paragraph email sent out to supporters after midnight. The only subterfuge he neglected to employ was to disguise it in semaphoric code. And these are Romney's big-time Republican buddies. You'd think they were having their teeth pulled with families held at gunpoint on a listing catwalk yawning over an erupting caldera.

It's been like that ever since the nominee became presumptive. Politicians oozing from the woodwork with the same kind of energetic frenzy fifth grade school girls normally reserve for haggis flavored ice cream studded with garlic pickle chips.

You got to know this is just the beginning of a series of sluggishly recalcitrant pledges of approbation. Here are some other passion-challenged tributes we can expect over the coming weeks.

"Mitt Romney. Had to go with somebody, right?"

"Not the brainwashed Romney. That was his dad."



"Only 2 of Mitt Romney's 5 sons think he's a soulless Cyborg."

"May be out of touch with the mainstream but looks pretty good tanning on the embankment."

"Mitt Romney. Hey, it could be worse."

"Not the kind of guy who would hold you down and cut your hair, unless you really were asking for it."

"Pretty down to earth for someone building a 57 room mansion with a car elevator." "Will do for America what he did for Bain Capital."

"Survived the mean streets of Bloomfield Hills."

"Hardly ever sneaks out at night to kick homeless guys. Anymore."

"A man who stands by his previous statements, no matter what they are."

"Mormons are just like Christians, aren't they?"

"Mitt Romney. Not that bad, when you consider the alternatives."

"He's no John McCain."

"Going to make the world safe for rich people."

"Mitt Romney. When good things happen to bland people."

"He's Oxy-mormonic!"

"Hasn't strapped a dog to the roof of his car in over 28 years."

"Mitt Romney. He's got gas money."

"Never ridden a bus in his entire life."

"Looks more like Gordon Gekko than Michael Douglas ever did."

"Mitt Romney. A man who feels strongly about both sides of many issues."

The New York Times says Will Durst "is quite possibly the best political satirist working in the country today." Check out willdurst.com **Elect to Laugh! Every Tuesday (thru Nov.). The Marsh. San Francisco. themarsh.org. Special \$10 tix. Use code "vote."**

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“... Sweet notes she saved the healthcare system approximately \$400,000 by making the correct diagnosis that an artificial hip had been dislocated from its socket, detected by a relatively inexpensive X-ray. “If doctors were going to be held accountable for [healthcare] costs,” Sweet writes, “why shouldn’t we get some kind of credit for savings?”



God’s Hotel (Cont. from p. 1)

patients to a “social rehabilitation model of care” for San Francisco’s homeless.

A central character in *God’s Hotel* — a title taken from the French “Hôtel-Dieu,” a Middle Ages almshouse taking care of the chronically disabled — is twelfth-century mystic, nun, and medical practitioner Hildegard von Bingen, whose idea was that human bodies are more like a plant to be carefully gardened, rather than a machine of broken parts. Sweet’s premise is that doctors should be more like gardeners than mechanics, and that many non-desperate illnesses might be better treated by Slow Medicine, by nurturing *viriditas*, the natural greening power of healing.

Throughout the book, Sweet offers many insights that take your breath away. In one patient vignette about having an accurate diagnosis, Sweet notes she saved the healthcare system approximately \$400,000 by making the correct diagnosis that an artificial hip had been dislocated from its socket, detected by a relatively inexpensive X-ray. “If doctors were going to be held accountable for [healthcare] costs,” Sweet writes, “why shouldn’t we get some kind of credit for savings?”

In another vignette, Sweet acknowledges that “almost every patient I admitted had incorrect or outmoded diagnoses,” often taking medications for diagnoses they didn’t have and placing patients at risk for adverse outcomes. Many of the misdiagnoses Sweet attributes to over-zealous medical student interns at San Francisco General Hospital, who are apparently never held accountable for misdiagnoses that drive up healthcare costs and endanger patient outcomes.

She wonders how outcomes might be improved with correct diagnoses, instead of incorrect ones, and visits to emergency rooms avoided if doctors are provided sufficient time to spend with patients. These insights — and others — make *God’s Hotel* an important read.

Sweet concludes LHH’s three principles are hospitality, community, and charity. She relates these principles by examining the etymology of many Latin words, including *curare*, splitting cure (doctors) and care (nurses), that has long fueled a battle for command and control of hospitals.

Sweet notes that during the French Revolution, medicine began to change; doctors wanted control of the Hôtel-Dieu in Paris to correlate medical treatments with patient outcomes. The nuns, of course, objected on moral grounds that using patients as experimental things was a bad idea; they protested, refusing to serve under the doctors and refusing to leave. Eventually, administration rescinded its order giving doctors control, returning control of the Hôtel-Dieu to the nuns providing nursing, until they left after it was secularized in the 1900’s.

Much of Laguna Honda’s history during the past 20 years parallels the same battle for control, a feud between doctors, nurses, and administration played out in most hospitals to this day. For her part, Sweet acknowledges the dynamic between the Nursing, Hospital Administration, and Medicine departments needs to be kept in close check to advance optimal patient outcomes.

Throughout the book, it becomes clear that Sweet didn’t venture into the political environment at Laguna Honda, and didn’t become involved in efforts to stop the transformation of its medical model of care, or efforts to permanently alter LHH’s environment.

Sweet acknowledges that the same disability rights activist lawyers who disastrously shut down state mental hospitals around the country are now the same

people hell bent on shutting down skilled nursing facilities caring for the frail elderly. Their test case was shutting down Laguna Honda Hospital.

Sweet erroneously reports that just after John Kanaley was appointed as Laguna Honda’s Executive Administrator in 2004, Sister Miriam Walsh requested a meeting with him. In fact, within the first month of his tenure, Kanaley summoned three vocal LHH staff members to his office in a bald attempt to exert his authority. None of the three had requested meeting with him.

First, he summoned Sister Miriam Walsh to his office for a discussion about her advocacy against the “flow project” involving the transfer of psycho-social patients from SF General Hospital to LHH. When asked what Kanaley wanted, Sister Miriam reported “He wanted me to agree to a deal to keep Laguna Honda’s name out of the media and asked me to pipe down. I told him, ‘No deal,’ and that was the end of the meeting.”

Kanaley then summoned Dr. Maria Rivero and this reporter, separately, to his office for the same talk, and we both essentially told him the same thing: “No deal.” Kanaley’s attempt to bully vocal staffers by intimidation set the tone for the duration of his bull-in-a-China-shop administration.

Many Minor Errors ...

Sweet reports that voters passed Prop. “A” in 1999 to rebuild LHH for \$500 million, and that half would come from a general obligation bond and half from the tobacco settlement revenue account. This is untrue: First, voters were told the hospital’s replacement budget was \$401 million, not \$500 million (although the cost overruns 12 years later pushed the cost to well over \$593 million). Second, the bond was for \$299 million, and just \$100 million was to come from the settlement.

Sweet accurately reports there were two committees involved in the 2006 Prop. “D” ballot measure: “San Franciscans for Laguna Honda,” and the “Committee to Save Laguna Honda.” But she misreports that doctors Kerr and Rivero were members of both committees. This is patently untrue. The latter committee was formed by this author, Sister Miriam, Virginia Leishman, LHH resident Robert Neil, then-president of the Residents Council, and family members of the Traumatic Brain Injury Support Group. At the time, Kerr and Rivero made the ethical decision not to violate their doctor-patient relationships by joining an advocacy group that included patients of the facility.

Sweet asserts the hospital’s 1,200-bed replacement plans included three identical six-story buildings. In fact, the third residential tower eliminated was a 420-bed, seven-story building containing crucial infrastructure elements like the data center that had to be shoehorned into one of the remaining 320-bed six-story buildings.

Sweet reports that following a meeting between Sister Miriam and Mayor Gavin Newsom, Newsom ordered then Director of Public Health Mitch Katz to halt the many incarnations of the so-called “Flow Project” shuttling SFGH patients to LHH. Since this reporter attended that meeting, I can vouch that meeting wasn’t with the Mayor, it was with his Chief of Staff Steve Kawa, who has long been considered San Francisco’s real mayor ever since Willie Brown’s tenure. Earlier, this reporter had also attended a meeting between Sister Miriam and Mayor Newsom, which also included former City Attorney Louise Renne, chairperson of the Laguna Honda Foundation, but Sweet makes no mention anywhere in *God’s Hotel* about Renne’s meddling in Laguna Honda’s affairs.

There are a host of other minor errors.

Cont. p. 6

WEST OF TWIN PEAKS CENTRAL COUNCIL By Mitch Bull



Eric Miller, SF Forest Alliance debates Dennis Kern of Rec & Parks. Subject: Natural Areas Plan at Mount Davidson

An overflowing crowd of over 65 people attended the May WOTPCC meeting, held on May 21st at the Forest Hills Clubhouse. The major topic on hand was presentations from “both sides” of the Rec and Park Department Plan to “revitalize” the parkland and forest on Mount Davidson and throughout the city with their “Natural Areas Plan.”

Dennis Kern, the Director of Operations for the Rec and Parks Department, started his presentation by showing a short video highlighting the work that the department has been doing to open up long closed trails, reintroduce native plants and grasses, and bring some of the long-missing wildlife back to SF, including the Mission Blue butterflies, coyotes, and red tail hawks. Kern insisted that the program was to better manage the open space within the city, to improve the 30 miles of trails and hiking venues that exist, and to enhance biodiversity by planting other species of trees in the open space instead of having the forests consisting (mainly) of a single species of tree, such as eucalyptus or Monterey Cypress.

He went on to acknowledge that the landscape of San Francisco is man-made, and needs to be managed and maintained. He says the SF Parks Department shares the mission of the GGNRA that trees are important, but need to be managed to create the “next generation” of younger trees and a more open understory that would be better for wildlife than the existing understory provided by existing eucalyptus groves.

Kern stated that there are 131,000 trees in SF parkland and open space, of which 64,000 are in the scope of the “Natural Areas Program” (NAP). And the current 20-year plan only applies to 5% of the trees (about 3400), mostly eucalyptus.

Following the presentation by Kern, Eric Miller of the San Francisco Forest Alliance addressed the crowd and presented the counterpoint that the existing Eucalyptus trees are not hazardous, nor in ill-health, and have been part of the urban park landscape for over 100 years.

Miller pointed out that the budget of the NAP will cost well over \$34,000,000 over the next 20 years, not including the portion of the 2012 Parks Bond money that will be used for the project. He questioned the use of money for the NAP when the City is in such financial difficulty.

He cited the Alliance’s concerns that the actions of the NAP should reflect the interests of the community, not “activist” native plant proponents. To make a point, he showed a photo of Mount Davidson in 1885, with no trees or even scrub vegetation. Miller also stated that the group is against the mass deforestation of the existing forests because they are “non-native” trees, and showed photos of other San Francisco non-native tree plantings, such as the Embarcadero palm trees.

Contrary to the number of 6400 trees that Kern used in his presentation, Miller stated that in evaluating the Rec and Park NAP plan, the intent is to “remove or kill-in-place” over 18,500 trees that are non-native species, to close 9.2 miles of trails to the public, and to also close 19.3 acres of space that is currently used as dog-play areas. He concluded by stating that the general public is largely unaware of these issues and that taking down mature standing groves of trees to replace them with shrubs and small oak seedlings is the

wrong way to proceed and not what the public wants for City urban parkland.

During the question and answer session, mediated by WOTPCC President Matt Chamberlain, Kern admitted that no bird counts have been done in relation to the Mt. Davidson portion of the project, but that the department would welcome a partner to help them conduct a study. He went on to state that the NAP plan is not about “clear-cutting” large swathes of trees, but a way to ensure growth of the next generation of trees to replace the ones that will eventually reach the end of their natural lifespan as a group.

Other questions focused on the lack of public comment and outreach by Rec and Park regarding the NAP plan. Public meetings were held by the Parks Commission, but few people were aware of the actions of the commission.

Following the presentations and Q and A, a motion was made for a committee to draft language clarifying the WOTPCC’s position to oppose the NAP and the plan of the Rec and Parks Department. The motion was seconded and carried by a vote of 12-0 with 3 abstentions. The committee will prepare the response and have it delivered to the SF Rec and Parks Commission by the June 11th deadline for public comment.

Other WOTPCC News:

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, so the proposed slate will be voted on at the next meeting on June 25th.

WOTPCC President Chamberlain also asked for volunteers for the following:

A committee to plan and conduct a District 7 Supervisor Candidates’ Forum.

Forming a membership committee to interact and vet potential members (Paul Conroy and Roger Ritter have already volunteered).

A committee to identify, create a master listing, and extend a personal invitation to city department officials and insiders who are living in the WOTPCC hemisphere.

Working with a group to garner matching funds to bring an airplane back to Larsen Park. (remember the former plane / play structure??)

And finally...the WOTPCC members and officers invite you to the “75th Anniversary Celebration of the West Of Twin Peaks Central Council” on Monday evening, June 25th at the Forest Hills Clubhouse, starting at 7:30 PM.

Next meeting : Monday, June 26th at 7:30 PM at the Forest Hills Clubhouse. Info: www.westoftwinpeaks.org.

Correction: last month’s photo of Tony Kelly incorrectly labeled him as a supporter of the “garbage monopoly,” he opposes the monopoly and supports Prop A.

Brown-Lee Machine (Cont. from p. 1)

his deposition whether he had a role in approving Government Computer Sales as a vendor, replied: "I'm unclear about that. I can't recall a lot of details about that."

The most extensive examination came in 2000 by the Chronicle's investigative reporters, Lance Williams and Chuck Finnie, headlined "Willie Brown, Inc."

"Corporations and people with close ties to the mayor have received hundreds of millions of dollars in city contracts, development deals, subsidies and grants, records show," the paper reported.

"In deal after deal, bidders who are associates of the mayor — or who have retained Brown's associates as lobbyists or consultants — have won out over others with less political clout, sometimes after intervention by the mayor or his aides."

"During the FBI's corruption investigation, court records show, agents made inquiries regarding contracts worth more than \$1 billion and 63 different companies, people and other entities, many with connections to Brown."

Brown Re-Invented (lol)

Now out of office for close to a decade. Brown has reinvented himself, according to the Chronicle, which hired him as a star columnist.

In an August 2011 Chronicle article that dismissed the likelihood that Brown's association would harm Ed Lee, the paper helped ease Brown into his new persona by failing to quote a single Brown critic and treating Brown's way of doing business as an irrelevant past.

"Part of the reason is that the FBI probes, patronage and allegations of pay-to-play politics that swirled around Brown's administration a decade ago have

largely faded from memory — or were never known by voters who weren't here then, analysts said.

"Brown left under "more than a cloud — a thunderstorm," said University of San Francisco political scientist Corey Cook. But now Brown, a Chronicle columnist, is a tremendously popular figure in the city, viewed by many as an avuncular man-about-town, elder statesman and a uniquely San Franciscan character."

"It's not the same electorate it was a decade ago," Cook said. "The Willie Brown they know is the Willie Brown giving them movie reviews and restaurant tips. He sort of transcends his last years in office."

But if the Chronicle has aided in Willie Brown's reinvention, by no means does it follow that Willie Brown no longer does business exactly as before.

Out of office, Brown now enjoys the luxury of secrecy denied to officials and lobbyists who must disclose contracts, finances and contacts.

A hedge on Brown when he was in office was the necessity to meet the expectations of voters. He needed to deliver — or adjust — to meet the varied demands of San Francisco's political microclimates. When he went too far in one direction the voters would push him back, as they famously did in rejecting his appointees to the Board of Supervisors in the 2000 election.

Ed Lee: The Inside Man

Ed Lee became Willie Brown's Inside Man almost two decades ago, when Brown turned to him to approve minority contracts for his backers. Lee went on to hold positions where he could tweak the requirements for contractors, order

Cont. p. 18

Laguna Honda (Cont. from p. 5)
... Along With Many Major Errors

When Sweet turned her attention to the U.S. Department of Justice's first letter to mayor Willie Brown in May 1998, she speculates the DOJ had been "tipped off" to investigate LHH. Sweet dissembles, first speculating it may have been doctors Kerr or Rivero who contacted the DOJ, before Sweet then speculates it may have been LHH's forty-four-year Director of Nursing Virginia Leishman who provided the DOJ a tip, an allegation Leishman adamantly denies. (Leishman has, reportedly, received numerous calls since *God's Hotel* was published, some encouraging her to consider a slander suit.) Regardless, there is no proof that the DOJ received *any* tips, and may have launched its investigation simply by reviewing sentinel event, or annual inspection, reports.

Referring to the same first letter from the DOJ, Sweet asserts the DOJ was initially concerned only about LHH's Nursing department, saying the DOJ blamed Nursing for almost everything, except LHH's old-fashioned wards and aging infrastructure. This is also patently untrue. The DOJ, in effect, also blamed the Department of Medicine, which had then rightfully contained the sub-specialty of physical medical rehabilitation, including speech therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy, all components of physical medicine, for failing to provide specialized rehabilitation therapy.

As a result of the DOJ's claim in 1998, Laguna Honda hired within a year a new senior physical therapist, an occupational therapist, and a speech pathologist charged with developing a functional maintenance and restorative care program that subsequently hired four therapy aides to implement the program, which initially proved to be a success. Doctors were finally paying attention to writing rehab referrals.

Sweet reduces to a single page the 2006 Prop D ballot measure to protect Laguna Honda for the frail elderly with skilled nursing needs, as voters were promised by Prop. A in 1999. Sweet wrongly regurgitates, with no critical analysis, the lies Prop. D opponents used to defeat the measure: that the proposition would permit the Residential Builders Association (RBA) to build for-profit residential care facilities on city land; would put a zoning administrator in charge of making hospital admission decisions; and would require LHH to discharge 300 Alzheimer's and AIDS patients — all lies.

The RBA had no interest in building residential care facilities. The land use attorney who crafted the language for Prop. D — being an associate of former City Attorney Louise Renne who now operates the Laguna Honda Foundation — slipped in arcane language thought to be required for planning laws, but could be twisted into possibly permitting for-profit private development. Nothing in Prop. D allowed private development, but once City Attorney Dennis Herrera wrote that Prop. D would provide a "land grab" by private interests, the lie stuck, despite being a canard uncovered by a respected journalist who looked into the issue and exposed it as false.

Sweet doesn't report that in March 2006 — despite a prohibition in SF's Administrative Code §12G against using city funds to attempt to influence political activity, including ballot measures — then City Controller Ed Harrington, City Services Auditor Leticia Miranda in the Controller's Office, and Health Management Associates

employee Nicola Moulton exchanged a series of e-mails outlining the Prop. D ballot initiative and "themes" that might be used to defeat the measure, including whether 300 Alzheimer's and Parkinson's patients were part of those who would face discharge if Prop. D passed. Harrington and Miranda had to have known, if Sweet didn't, that Health Management Associates was a contractor receiving city funds who had made recommendations in 2005 to alter Laguna Honda's service mix. They also had to have known that using a city contractor to help develop arguments to defeat a ballot measure clearly violated Section 12G. Sweet mentions nothing of this.

Nor does Sweet mention that prior to publication of *God's Hotel* she had to have heard news that San Francisco's Director of Public Health Mitch Katz had been paid \$30,000 over a three-year period by Health Management Associates, the same firm to whom he had steered a contract.

There are other major errors too long for this review.

Glaring Omissions

Sweet mentions nothing about the closure of LHH's adult day health care program, nor does she discuss the loss of 200 to 300 assisted living facility beds planned for the facility. Nor does she discuss the impact of the loss of LHH's 420 skilled nursing beds on the rest of the city, and its effect on discharge locations

There is no mention of the \$190 million in cost overruns of the replacement facility, nor the shoddy workmanship in the new buildings (mold in the new kitchen is but one problem) that will cost additional millions to repair.

While Sweet reports doctors Rivero and Kerr had filed a whistleblower complaint about abuse of LHH's patient gift fund, Sweet never mentions that following a long-delayed City Controller's audit of the gift fund the hospital was eventually ordered to restore over \$350,000 misappropriated from patient benefit.

Nowhere does Sweet delve into the LHH public relations director's spin control deconstruction; he's the guy who claimed "LHH's patient gift fund isn't for patients." Marc Slavin was hired in 2007 to squelch "negative publicity about LHH" to help out his benefactress, former City Attorney Louise Renee, now head of the Laguna Honda Foundation non-profit that refuses to release any details of its income and expenses, a fact Sweet must have know about for years, but doesn't address.

Slavin is reportedly pursuing a PhD degree. While Sweet rightfully wonders about efforts to re-brand a public hospital with a new name from which Slavin had proposed eliminating "hospital," she doesn't wade into whether Slavin's marketing efforts over the years were designed to re-frame, for advertising purposes, that LHH can be used for just about anything, perhaps part of his pursuit of a PhD. He and Renne are at it again, now trying to re-brand LHH's patient auditorium into a revenue-generating community theater to support Renne's non-profit Laguna Honda Foundation. Sweet never addresses LHH Administration's ascendancy under Slavin, and the negative impact Administration has had on patient outcomes, while casting Nursing and Medicine asunder.

God's Hotel is certainly no match for Slavin's considerable skills in on-going deconstruction, and may be too little, too late to stop the transformation in how we provide "slow medicine" to care for the sick poor.

Despite errors haunting *God's Hotel*, it may still be worth a read. But save yourself some cash; check it out from a local library.

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. Feedback: monette-shaw@westsideobserver

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Lake Merced Update

Three Strikes and You Are Out

By Jerry Cadagan

In last month's update on this endless story, we said that SFPUC staff planned to take to its Commission on May 8 a slightly revised version of the proposed MOU with Rec & Park regarding management at Lake Merced. An earlier version had not been acceptable to the Commission last November. We should have come right out and predicted that on May 8 the Commission would again reject the latest draft. That's exactly what it did. The attitude of the Commissioners is best understood in this excerpt from the draft minutes of the May 8 meeting:

"Commissioner Vietor expressed her frustration with the amount of time that the SFPUC has been in discussions regarding the management of Lake Merced and the MOU, and doesn't feel the MOU is significantly different that was presented in November. She would like to see an MOU with a tight timeline, a plan that outlines recreational activities, budget numbers, staffing, and details how the relationship between the SFPUC and Recreation and Park will work."



Recreation both do an excellent job at recreational lakes in California.

There is also possible good news in store for Lake Merced, but with one potential problem currently at hand. There is a \$195 million Parks Bond being proposed for the November 2012 ballot. It will provide monies to both Rec & Park and the Port Commission. Early indications are that at least \$2 million will be earmarked for Lake Merced. However, we've looked at the draft bond ordinance

So, the Commissioners at SFPUC have now twice rejected vague proposals for two-headed management at Lake Merced.

So, the Commissioners at SFPUC have now twice rejected vague proposals for two-headed management at Lake Merced. Hopefully the third strike will come if and when staffs of SFPUC and Rec & Park take another swing at the issue. We have long said that a single agency should be fully in charge at Lake Merced. The limited recreational needs could easily be taken care of by contracting with a professional lake/reservoir management company, much as is done at numerous reservoirs and lakes around the state. Companies like Urban Park Concessionaires and Rocky Mountain

and are very concerned that the language is inadequate to assure that bond monies can be spent at the lake, because SFPUC, the owner of the lake, is not specifically named in the ordinance, as is the Port. We urge Observer readers to contact their Supervisor and specifically request that the proposed 2012 San Francisco Clean and Safe Neighborhood Parks General Obligation Bond make it explicitly clear that SFPUC may receive bond funds for expenditure at Lake Merced.

Jerry Cadagan is Co-founder of Committee to Save Lake Merced

Soccer Project at Beach Chalet (Cont. from p. 3)

with natural grass and no sports lights, and sharing the rest of the 2008 Bond funding with other playing fields for kids all over San Francisco.

There is a big fight going on in the City now over the pittance of funding for parks in the 2012 Bond. Does the City really have enough money to throw at one pet project? Of course, project supporters will say that part of that funding will come from the Fisher-family-financed City Fields Foundation. An email from Viking Youth Soccer League stated that the donor will only pay for Beach Chalet or the money will have to be returned. Why is a private foundation deciding what happens to our Parks? Are we so short-sighted as to allow this leveraged buyout of our parkland, when there are other options available for getting kids a place to play soccer?

The 1998 Golden Gate Park Master Plan protects parkland for everyone — old, young, healthy, not so active, of all ages and backgrounds. That is the purpose of Golden Gate Park — active and passive recreation in a natural setting, but open to all. The soccer players claim 7,000 kids who play soccer. That is great — and they should have a place to play (see the win-win solution above). But at the Thursday meeting, the Recreation and Park Commission, in their rush to support

one user-group, rode roughshod over the 790,000 people in San Francisco who don't - or can't - play soccer. In the space of a few minutes, the Commission overrode the Master Plan and approved the project.

This is the beginning of the end of our parkland. There are many people who view parkland as space that is useless unless it is built on. Or, in the words of a Rec and Park Commissioner, it produces "site specific revenue generation." There will be more development projects, and they will come thick and fast. And each one will look like a great idea, it will have its own constituency, and it will be approved, all because the Recreation and Park Commission does not have the backbone to stand up for our Parks.

It is a sad day for Golden Gate Park, when the City departments charged with stewardship of our parks decide to destroy our crown jewel.

We still hold out hope for the win-win solution. There are other locations for this project — but there is only one Golden Gate Park!

Gregory P. Miller 37 year SF resident, retired senior financial analyst, US Navy veteran.

(Editors note: The group SF Ocean Edge is considering filing an Appeal to the Board of Supervisors. Info www.sfoceanedge.org.)

Great Highway Sand Maintenance Project

Annual Sand Maintenance Project to Impact Traffic from Lincoln to Sloat

Monday, June 4th to Friday, June 8th • 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. No weekend work

Department of Public Works crews will relocate sand on Ocean Beach to reduce sand blown onto the Great Highway and the promenade. The sand will be transported just south of Sloat Boulevard and strategically placed to simultaneously address the problem of erosion and stockpiled sand at Noriega seawall, the seawall area between Pacheco and Rivera, and sand at Judah, Lawton, Ulloa, and Vicente.

Southbound lanes at the Great Highway will be closed from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Monday, June 4th through Friday, June 8th. Southbound motorists are advised to take Sunset Boulevard. The duration of the project is estimated to be 5 working days.

Southbound traffic will detour to Sunset Boulevard during project hours. Motorists are asked to be mindful of neighborhood areas. Northbound traffic will not be affected by the sand maintenance project, but can expect minor impacts.

Pedestrian traffic can expect only minor impacts during project hours.

Please visit twitter.com/sfdpw for updates during the project. Email dpw@sfdpw.org with questions, or call 3-1-1.

Whistleblower's War Room

Can We Trust the Controller's Whistleblower Program?

By Derek Kerr, MD and Maria Rivero, MD

Whistleblower Programs need solid tips from insiders who confront wrong-doing. Two major barriers for tipsters are the belief that nothing will be done, and the fear of retaliation. Trust is essential. Do whistleblowers trust the SF Controller's Whistleblower Program (SFWP)?

Not Mercedes Hernandez-Bran. In 2004 she became the first SFWP whistleblower. As Director of Human Resources for the Juvenile Probation Department, she reported mispent funds, conflicts of interest, altered time-sheets, and the shredding of public documents. Once the City Attorney heard about her concerns, she was locked out of her office and her computer was seized. The scandal was widely covered by the Press. But like other high-profile whistleblower cases, it was invisible in the SFWP annual report. Hernandez-Bran explained:

"I reported the Chief Probation Officer for collusion and corruption, and I was laid off as a result. But not before being harassed and investigated... There are so many cases of City employees who have filed whistleblower complaints and then were targeted for layoffs. No one trusts this program. The City Attorney protects officials first, then acts against the informant."

Another half-a-dozen cases of retaliation were described in the July 2011 Civil Grand Jury report, "Whistling in the Dark — The San Francisco Whistleblower Program." Controller Ben Rosenfield was not moved. To date, no whistleblower retali-



Obviously, the higher the risk for the City, the higher the risk of buried complaints, whitewashed investigations, and retaliation for whistleblowers. Although the Civil Grand Jury found that "only high-risk" complaints were investigated by the SFWP, they did not confirm that

...SFWP... showed that only 16% of all complaints were substantiated. During this period, the Los Angeles program substantiated 23% of all complaints, while San Diego sustained 33%. Notably, both programs had investigated a greater share of complaints; 72% for LA and 100% for San Diego, compared to 59% for SF."

ation surveys — or even satisfaction surveys — have been conducted, though the Controller employs dozens of auditors and analysts.

Short of conducting a survey, whistleblower trust can be estimated from the number of complaints sent by insiders — City employees. The SFWP withholds this information. However, Oakland's Fraud, Waste and Abuse Prevention Program reported that in 2011, "City employees generated 44% of the reports... the first time that the volume of tips... from the public exceeded those tips from employees." A decline in employee tips should be reported to taxpayers. But the SFWP has a reason to overlook employee participation.

Over the past three years, complaints to the SFWP fell from 465 to 386 to 365, a 22% drop. Over the past 9 months, only 252 complaints came in. At this rate the fiscal year could end with another significant plunge. Likely, employee complaints are falling, too. This steady decline in participation has yet to be addressed.

A trustworthy program that focuses on serious wrongdoing will attract serious tips. From 2004 to 2007 the SFWP tried to do that. True whistleblower tips, about fraud, waste and abuse of City resources, were separated from gripes about shoddy City services. Consistently, however, true whistleblower complaints stayed around one-third of the total. Starting in 2007, whistleblower tips were merged a larger group of minor complaints pouring into the 3-1-1 call line. This mix created the illusion that the SFWP was doubly-busy responding to "whistleblower complaints" and checking malfeasance. Further, dispersing whistleblower tips in a sea of service complaints obscures the drop in claims from whistleblowers when they lose faith.

In 2011, the SFWP resumed sorting out high-value tips about major wrongdoing. The SFWP ranks incoming complaints as High-Risk, Medium-Risk and Low-Risk — depending on "the risk of loss to the City." But the resulting risk-profiles are kept secret. High-Risk complaints involve high-level City officials and a risk of loss of \$50,000 or more. Medium Risk complaints implicate mid-level managers. Low-Risk complaints involve regular employees or a sum under \$10,000. Note how the risk of loss to whistleblowers has no place in this calculus.

all of them were. Potential whistleblowers need assurance that serious complaints are actually received, investigated and substantiated, not just "referred and closed." A Whistleblower Program that acts on high-value complaints will be trusted with more of them. That's another reason why the SFWP should immediately contact whistleblowers who submit High-Risk and Medium-Risk complaints — and again within six months — to check if they saw results or retaliation.

A program that protects tipsters will get more who identify themselves. A major provider of whistleblower hot-line services, The Network, Inc., found that requests for anonymity dropped from 78% to 48% over 20 years, as employees became comfortable with reporting. The San Diego Fraud Hotline reported that only 46% of callers in 2011 requested anonymity. In fact, the SFWP's own 2008-2009 mid-year report disclosed that just 43% of callers were anonymous. A rise in anonymous complaints signals mistrust. Since 2009, the SFWP has withheld the rate of anonymous tips.

More important, substantiated complaints show that something is being done. This number was never disclosed — until 11/22/11 — after the public uproar over the Civil Grand Jury investigation. That's when the SFWP revised its 2010-2011 annual report and showed that only 16% of all complaints were substantiated. During this period, the Los Angeles program substantiated 23% of all complaints, while San Diego sustained 33%. Notably, both programs had investigated a greater share of complaints; 72% for LA and 100% for San Diego, compared to 59% for SF.

In the last half of 2011, the SFWP substantiation rate climbed to 21% of all complaints. This increase is linked to a surge of investigations into 71% of all complaints, compared to an average of 51% for the prior 3 years. Something is being done — but by whom? In our next column we will explore how most complaints sent to the SFWP are quietly referred back to the same City departments named in the complaints.

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

What You Should Consider Before Supporting A Family Member Financially

Families are comprised of people with very different personalities, values, and financial habits. You may, like many of us, also consider close friends or ex-spouses as members of your family. There may be high earners, low earners and no earners—and even those who are currently financially comfortable can hit hard times and need help with their finances.

According to recent research commissioned by Ameriprise Financial*, more often than not, family members—especially those that are part of the sandwich generation—afford a nice spring break or pay off a credit card debt may not be a necessity. If the expense isn't a basic need, or if you've assisted with the same expense in the past, ask yourself if following a parental instinct? If your expectations aren't met, will you be disappointed? If so, it may be better to say "no" than risk damaging your relationship.



Consider whether your family member's circumstances or past behavior indicate that they'll actually be able to repay you. Also ask yourself whether you'll be okay — financially and emotionally — if they don't. When you come to a conclusion, be sure to clarify with the recipient if the money is a loan or a gift"

oblige when a family member is short on cash. Of 1,000 baby boomers surveyed, more than half (58%) report assisting their aging parents in some way, and most (93%) report providing financial support to their adult children.

Helping family is admirable, but boomers may be failing to recognize the impact this support can have on their own retirement security. Only one-in-ten (10%) admit that helping their parents has slowed down their retirement savings; one-third (34%) feel the same about the support they've provided their adult children.

It can be difficult to turn down a family member who needs support, but before you say "yes," think carefully about your ability and willingness to provide financial support.

Want vs. Need

When it comes to living expenses, there is an important difference between a true need and a perceived need. If you are hesitant to help, consider how critical the request really is. Ensuring that a family member can make their rent payment or buy groceries is critical—but helping them

you are enabling irresponsible financial behavior.

Loan vs. Gift

Often family members who ask for financial help expect to be able to pay you back, but unfortunately these good intentions don't always materialize. Consider whether your family member's circumstances or past behavior indicate that they'll actually be able to repay you. Also ask yourself whether you'll be okay — financially and emotionally — if they don't. When you come to a conclusion, be sure to clarify with the recipient if the money is a loan or a gift, and decide if you will charge interest on the loan and if you're willing to continue providing financial support in the future.

Expectations vs. Reality

It can be easy to say "yes" to a request for financial help, only to have mixed emotions down the road. Consider your own feelings and ask yourself if you'll resent your decision—or your family member—in the future. Are you expecting the person to respond in a certain way, such as with appreciation or reciprocity? Are you doing it to feel needed or simply

The most important question to ask yourself is, "How will this affect my own financial well-being?" It's crucial to take a look at your short- and long-term goals and determine if you can really afford to help. It's natural to want to provide support, but don't let a struggling family member jeopardize your own financial security, especially if you're approaching retirement. By prioritizing your own financial goals and stability, you may even have the ability to comfortably help family members in the future.

Making financial decisions can be difficult—and communicating about finances can be even more challenging when you have a family member in need. Consider working with a financial advisor who can help you set goals, track your progress and include any support you'd like to give to family members into your overall financial plan.

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.

Golden Gate Park (Cont. from p. 8)

its own constituency, and it will be approved, all because the Recreation and Park Commission does not have the backbone to stand up for our Parks.

It is a sad day for Golden Gate Park, when the City departments charged with stewardship of our parks decide to destroy our crown jewel.

We still hold out hope for the win-win solution. There are other locations for this project — but there is only one Golden Gate Park!

Gregory P. Miller 37 year SF resident, retired senior financial analyst, US Navy veteran.

(Editors note: The group SF Ocean Edge is considering filing an Appeal to the Board of Supervisors. Find out more at www.sfoceanedge.org.)

Quentin Kopp (Cont. from p. 3)

rate recovery ratio. Only such inefficient agencies as AC Transit and the Valley Transportation Authority in Santa Clara County report lower fare-box recovery ratios, about 20% for AC Transit and 12% for Valley Transportation Authority bus service and 17.1% for its unsuccessful light rail operation. MUNI's cable car service, with its \$6 fare, reaches a 47.6% fare-box recovery. (The most efficient transit agency in the Bay Area is BART with a 66% fare-box recovery including a 95% ratio on its San Francisco International Airport service.) The Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District, which socks it to toll-payers and uses proceeds to subsidize its bus and ferry services, secures 15.6% of its bus operating expenses from fares, while recovering 47.1% of expenses from ferryboat riders. The best ferryboat operation in the Bay Area is Vallejo, with a 60% fare-box recovery, followed by Alameda at 55%. And SAMTRANS achieved 48.5% on the Cal Train operation, but a sad 17.9% of its bus operation costs.

Having already urged passage of state Proposition 28 to change term limits, I reiterate my opposition to Proposition 29 only because cigarette tax proceeds belong in the state general fund, not allocated to various special uses in defiance of sound governmental excise tax principles. I add a recommendation of a vote for James Pan for the 19th Assembly District. He's an honest real property appraiser with the highest reputation in the community for truth and veracity. He is also a Democrat.

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

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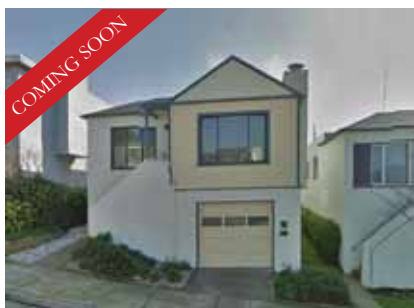
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- August 7** - “Cars 2”

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WEST PORTAL



It's hard to believe, but it is already June 1st and with that a California Primary Election. Due to the timing of the California Primary, many pundits feel that the primary election means little in the scope of the "national political scene." On the local level, each vote could be very important as this election could have a big effect on the Bay Area and California. The voters will be making history on several fronts. With the passage of the "open primary" concept, the "top 2" finishers (regardless of political party affiliation) in primary elections will face off in the November General Election for the first time.

Combined with the realignment of Assembly and State Senate Districts, passed previously as Proposition 11, this election could very well impact our legislative representatives for the next 12 years. As many as one-half of the seats in the 80-member California Assembly could change hands due to existing term limits and the aforementioned redistricting. Several of our local elected officials are at the ends of their terms and are running in "new" districts for other offices. In all, voters in SF will have the choice of candidates in two Congressional Districts, a US Senate Race, a State Senate District, three State Assembly Districts, and of course the Presidential Primary.

Changes to term limits in California is on the ballot (Proposition 28) enabling an elected official to serve 12 years in the Assembly, instead of the current six year ceiling. Senators are still limited to eight years. Prop 28 applies to officials elected for the first time this year. Officials previously elected would have their "year count" start anew. A much publicized additional tax on cigarettes for Cancer Research (Proposition 29) is also on the ballot.

San Franciscans also are voting on two Measures, the first, Measure A would change the way that Garbage and Recycling is handled within the city; the second, Measure B proposes to limit use of the dollars gained by the concessionaires at Coit Tower to the maintenance and restoration of the landmark, not for other city projects. It should be interesting to see how the voters respond, but however you feel, please make the effort to vote as we do have the power to affect change and make our voice heard.

Bits and Pieces....on a sad note, we lost two friends last week. Bill Kruse, an avid golfer and family friend, and Dante Santora, who both passed away last week at the age of 96. I had the pleasure of Bill's company for years, and whatever the season he always asked how I thought the 49ers were going to do this year. Dante was a former catcher in the SF semi-pro leagues and a retired longshoreman. He loved the game of baseball and was a long-time fixture in the SF baseball community as he still followed the game and was always seen in his SF Giants World Champion jacket. Both men were in (relatively) good health until recently and enjoyed their friends and



Father's Day is Sunday, June 17

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families. They will be missed and remembered.

Congratulations.... To everyone associated with the West of Twin Peaks Central Council, which will celebrate its 75th Anniversary of representing the citizens on the Westside. There will be a celebration party at their next meeting, Monday, June 25th at 7:30 PM at the Forest Hills Clubhouse.

Do you have an interesting story, idea, or some insights you'd like to get in the paper? Just drop it to us in the mail, or email me at: mitch@WestsideObserver.com. Check out www.WestsideObserver.com, or on Twitter @ [@WestS_Observer](https://twitter.com/WestS_Observer) and Facebook.

MAY

EVERY • SUNDAY FARMERS MARKET

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

EVERY • MONDAY DIABETES SEMINARS

St. Mary's Medical Center | Every Mon | 4pm
Free weekly classes on diabetes care. Level C Mercy Conference Rm, Hayes at Stanyan St.
Info 800 444-2303stmarysmedicalcenter.org

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.
Tapas Every Thur & Fri | 5:30–9 pm
Family Winery Tasting Sat Jun 9 | 5pm
Iberian Wine Tasting Sat Jun 30 | 5pm
230 West Portal Avenue 731.7000

EVERY • THURSDAY—NIGHTLIFE

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

EVERY • FRIDAY NIGHT

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

EVERY • FRIDAY NIGHT AT THE DEYOUNG

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

TUE • FREE DAY CONSERVATORY OF FLOWERS

5 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.

TUE • GREATER WEST PORTAL-GWPNA

5 Tue Jun 5 | 7:30 pm | West Portal Playground Clubhouse, 139 Lenox Way. First Tuesdays. The “Western Heart” of SF. gwpna.org

THU • KINDERGARTEN PREP WORKSHOP

7 Thu Jun 7 | 5:30–7pm | Ocean View Branch Library presents a workshop to prepare your family for the kindergarten step. 345 Randolph St. (at Ramsell) 355-5615.

THU • AUTHOR AL BARKOW

7 Thu Jun 7 | 7 pm | Author Barkow discuss *The Upset: Jack Fleck's Incredible Victory Over Ben Hogan at the U.S. Open*. BookShop West Portal, 80 West Portal 564-8080.

THU • TARAVAL-PARKSIDE MERCHANTS

7 Thu Jun 7 | 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

TUE • NERT—DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

10 Sun Jun 10 | 2–3:30 pm | Neighborhood Emergency Response Training at St Aidan's Church, 101 Goldmine Dr. RSVP to sffdnert@sfgov.org or call 415 970-2024 to register.

TUE • NERT—DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

12 Tue Jun 12-Jul 17 | 6:30–9:30 pm | Daughters of Norway Demonstrations Day-come and learn about Norway's Heritage! (free to the public, with special interest to those of Norwegian/Scandinavian Heritage) Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church 3201 Ulloa Street.

WED • CENTRAL CORRIDOR PLAN

1 Wed Jun 13 | 6 pm–8 pm | Central Subway planning includes this Central Corridor Plan, a public meeting at SPUR, 654 Mission St.

WED • GG BRIDGE ON THE SILVER SCREEN

1 Wed Jun 13 | 7 pm | Merced Arts & Culture Salon. The Bridge has starred in more movies than any other American architectural icon. From Dark Passage (1947) to The Rise of the Planet of the Apes (2011). Jim Van Buskirk, author of Celluloid San Francisco, (and former SFPL librarian). Merced Library, 155 Winston.

THU • SUNSET DIST COALITION MEETING

14 Thu Jun 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

THU • C.W. GORTNER

14 Thu Jun 14 | 7 pm | Author will read from *The Queen's Vow: A Novel of Isabella Castile*. One of history's most famous and controversial queens. She united a fractured country, her reign gave rise to the Inquisition, and the visionary who sent Columbus to the New World. BookShop West Portal, 80 West Portal 564-8080.

MON • SUNSET-PARKSIDE MEETING

18 Mon Jun 18 | 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 • SPECIAL COMMUNITY SAFETY MEETING

19 Tue Jun 19 | 7 pm | Taraval District Police 3rd Tue of the month. The June meeting will ber at the Minnie and Lovie Ward REc Ctr at 650 Capitol Ave. Meet with Captain Curtis Lum. 759-3100.

WED • HEALTH AND HEALING WITH MUSIC

2 Wed June 20 | 7–8:30 pm | Sharon Caren's Free Health and Healing Through Music and Sound, a discussion with Dave Crimmen, 35 year Musician at Floreys Books, 2120 Palmetto Ave, Pacifica. Info 650-355-8811

THU • AUTHOR ALAN FURST

2 Fri Jun 22 | 7 pm | The New York Times bestselling author and “modern-day master of the genre” (New York's Newsday) has written a gripping novel of espionage and deception *Mission to Paris*. BookShop West Portal, 80 West Portal.

MON • CENTRAL COUNCIL MEETING

Mon Jun 25 | 7:30 pm | West of Twin Peaks Central Council | A resource for

2 neighborhood organizations. 4th Monday each month. Forest Hill Clubhouse, 381 Magellan. See page 5 for minutes of last meeting.

MON • SHARP

2 Mon Jun 25 | 7 pm | Sunset Heights Assoc. of Responsible People. Last Mon each month 1736 9th Ave. (Moraga)

THUR • OMI NIA

28 Thu Jun 28 | 7 pm | Ocean View-Merced Heights-Ingleside Neighbors in Action 65 Beverly, Temple Methodist Church maryharris_dist@msn.com)

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

AMERICANA JUKEBOX

Hillbilly Music For The 21st Century!

Sat | Jun 9 THE TWANG BANG! Featuring:
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The Shants - slow burning Americana
The Rogers - Americana - with a groove.
@ The Great American Music Hall 859 O'Farrell
\$13 adv / \$15 door / 7:30 doors / 8:30 show / all ages

Fri | Jun 15 URBAN HILLBILLY Featuring:
T.V. Mike and the Scarecrows
And Eight Belles
@ Café Du Nord 2170 Market Street, 8 PM
doors/ 9 PM show / \$10 adv / \$12 door / 21+

Fri Jun 15 BLUEGRASS BONANZA! Featuring:
The Creak
The New Thoreaus
@Plough & Stars, 116 Clement Street, SF. 9pm
doors / 9:30 show / \$6-\$10 sliding scale / 21+

Fri | Jun 22 OZARK MOUNTAIN MUSIC SHOW
The Chapmans
@Plough & Stars, 116 Clement Street, SF. 9pm
doors / 9:30 show / \$6-\$10 sliding scale / 21+
The Music Store • 66 West Portal Ave, SF
415-664-2044 • 11-8pm
www.themusicstoresf.com
http://shelbyashpresents.net/

Now At the Movies • By Don Lee Miller
THE BEST EXOTIC MARIGOLD HOTEL

A motley bunch of Brits fly to Jaipur, lured to retire in a luxurious hotel by the misleading brochure produced by the owner of the title hotel, Sonny: Dev (Slum-dog Millionaire) Patel. Narrator widow Evelyn: Judi Dench; upbeat Douglas: Bill Nighy, henpecked by his bitchy wife, Jean: Penelope Wilton; cautious sourpuss Muriel: Maggie Smith who “won’t eat anything I can’t pronounce” and brings jars of her favorite foods; Graham: Tom Wilkinson, a retired judge who wants to look up the lover he left behind 40 years ago; and Norman: Ronald Pickup & Madge: Celia (Una in Bridget Jones movies) Emrie, who are both searching for love, all encounter an “assault to their senses” amid the colorful historical setting. They soon realize that Sonny has oversold his bedraggled rundown, in need of many repairs, residences. Muriel is there for a needed cut-rate hip replacement. Director John (Shakespeare in Love, The Debt) Madden and screenwriter Ol Parker move the location from Bangalore in a 2004 novel by Deborah Moggach.



By the end, most have adjusted to their compatriots and surroundings. Profanity. Sexual content.

CORIOLANUS

Director Ralph Fiennes has updated this Shakespearean tragedy for modern times. As the title character, he has created a very complex military officer with complicated familial ties. His manipulating power-behind-the throne mother, Volumnia: Vanessa Redgrave and his red-headed wife, Virgilia: Jessica (The Help) Chastain do little to make his life easier. And then there’s his adversary, Aufidius: Gerard Butler in another of his bloodbath roles. Senator Menenius: Brian Cox stands out. This one is the horror of fighting men/ground forces that face tanks and artillery blowing them to bits. Screenwriter John (Hugo, Gladiator) Logan sets his tale in Rome, though it was filmed in Serbia. Highly recommended! Bloody war violence. Profanity.

DARK SHADOWS

In 1752, the Collins family with young son, Barnabus, sail from England to Maine. Years later, Barnabus: Johnny Depp breaks the heart of witch Angelique Bouchard: Eva Green, who curses him, turns him into a vampire and buries him alive. Suddenly freed from his entombment, he finds himself in a very different 1972. Not only is his mansion a mess; his relatives aren’t in much better shape. To help the troubled matriarch, Elizabeth Collins Stoddard: Michelle Pfeiffer, she has a full-time live-in psychiatrist, Dr. Julia Hoffman: Helena Bonham Carter. Both Roger Collins: Jonny Lee Miller and Carolyn Stoddard:

Chloë Grace Moritz are eccentric misfits. There’s also handyman Willie Loomis: Jackie Earle Haley with guest appearances from Clarney: Christopher Lee and Alice Cooper performing for the senior prom. Angelique is around to make life hell for the Collins family in every way she can as they get their canning business back on track. Director Tim Burton adds his gothic touch, while failing with his impersonal approach and story momentum, to the screenplay: Seth Grahame Smith and story: John August +2. Adult themes. Vampires: blood. Sexual content. Profanity.

MARVEL’S THE AVENGERS 3-D

When Loki: Tom Hiddleston and his thugs threaten world security, Nick Fury: Samuel L. Jackson, the director of the global peace-keeping agency S.H.I.E.L.D., summons all the superheroes to save Earth from the impending tragedy. This includes Tony Stark/Iron Man: Robert Downey Jr. and his secretary Pepper Potts: Gweneth Paltrow; Steve Rogers/Captain America; Chris Evans; Bruce Banner/The Hulk: Mark Ruffalo; Thor: Chris Hemsworth; Natasha/Black Widow: Scarlett Johansson; Clint Barton/Hawkeye: Jeremy Renner. Selvig: Stellan Skarsgard assists Fury. This is THE action thriller of the year—a must see! The massive destruction within Manhattan is not to be believed; this is the central point of the warfare. Joss Whedan directs his screenplay from a story by Zak Penn + 3. World-wide grosses have already topped \$1-billion! Sci-fi violence and action. Mild drug references.

MEN IN BLACK III 3-D

Agent J: Will Smith must travel back in time to 1969 to save the life of Agent K: Tommy Lee Jones when he first encountered Boris, the Animal at Cape Canaveral. Boris has escaped from a satellite prison and decides to travel back to get his severed arm. J protects Young Agent K: Josh Brolin, much more jovial than the sour K. Not much new here from the last one, except a new boss, Agent O: Emma Thompson. Good special FX. Sci-fi action violence. Suggestive content.

NOBODY ELSE BUT YOU

A best-selling crime novelist, David Rosseau: Jean-Paul Rouve, is desperately seeking a new story and hones his focus on an apparent suicide of an aspiring blond starlet, Martine Langvine/Candice Lecoœur: Sophie Quinton, who thinks she is the reincarnation of Marilyn Monroe. She has been filming TV cheese commercials, topless, in the small French town of Mouthe. Quinton has the figure of MM. French with subtitles. Extreme violence. Blood and gore.

THE PIRATES! BAND OF MISFITS

The cutthroat competition for Pirate of the Year is here. Competitors crossing swords include the Pirate
Cont. p. 15

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

BERKELEY REP’S IN PARIS

A European Multimedia Visual Challenge *In Paris*, based on a short story by Ivan Bunin and staged as a multimedia production, moves at a slow pace deploying Russian and French dialogue with English subtitles, music, song, mime, video, and several rapid dance moments magnificently performed by Baryshnikov as the male protagonist. In this 1930ties piece, we watch the former principal Kirov Ballet dancer navigate with elegant ease as the retired Russian general seeking the company of a young waitress (Anna Sinyakina), also looking for love and a companion. After the young waitress attends a movie and spends the night with the older man, their search to fulfill their mutual loneliness is for a time resolved.

The sober simplicity of the dramatic action in this eighty minute piece, directed by Dimitry Krymov, sparks the curiosity of the spectator from the opening caricature of a male protagonist, who repeatedly picks up his overcoat and hat that fall from hooks, and in the following scenes as he pursues the young waitress. Although the spectator does not share the thoughts and emotions of the protagonists, he is intrigued as the protagonists climb into

a cab, see a movie, go to Montmartre to dance and drink, and then return home to remain together. Prompted to search for the protagonists’ subconscious motives, the spectator participates more actively.

Strong visual elements are the expressive movement (and sometimes the stillness) of both Baryshnikov and Anna Sinyakina and the other cast members, along with Alexiei Ratmanský’s choreography, the imaginative surrealist love scene, and the elegant scenic and costume designs of Maria Tregubova. Added to this are the songs and music of Dimitry Valko, Baryshnikov’s dynamic (but all too short) dance numbers, and Tei Blow’s accomplished audio and video designs.

The stark simplicity of the production thus serves the visual lyricism of this challenging crossbreeding of postmodern elements depicting two lonely beings in search of love. It is a unique Russian styled postmodern experience and a rare European theatre conception that should not be missed.

For the upcoming Berkeley Rep production of Eve Ensler’s (author of *The Vagina Monologues*) *Emotional Culture*, June 14 to July 15, visit www.berkeleyrep.org

BECKETT’S PLAY AND ENDGAME AT ACT

In Beckett’s *Play*, a male and two females are trapped in funeral urns up to their heads, rapidly babbling with search lights on each one as he or she speaks. When we hear such lines as “*Get off of me!*”, “*Finally it was too much*” and “*Maybe we can be friends*” we suspect they are speaking about a conflict between these characters or others in an intimate relationship

that has failed.

As in Beckett’s other plays, these characters are trapped and in this case unable to move in their funeral urns as they repeat the grim memories of their relationship. This familiar Beckett absurdist theme depicts the hopeless human condition that leaves one inert before the sordidness and senselessness of life that has to be

nonetheless endured.

Expertly directed by Carey Perloff, and well performed by René Augesen, Anthony Fusco, and Annie Purcell, this 25 minute introductory play sets the stage for one of Beckett’s major works, requires the spectator’s collaborative efforts to discover its meaning.

In Beckett’s longer *End Game* that opened in London in 1959 in French, we see the master Hamm (Bill Irwin), blind and immobile in his chair, his crippled servant Clov (Nick Gabriel) hobbling about, Hamm’s father (Giles Havergal), and his mother Nell (Barbara Oliver) locked in garbage cans. Being miserably stuck is the theme reiterated here in Hamm’s immobility, Clov’s inability to leave Hamm, and Hamm’s parents locked in garbage cans. The title and play’s content suggest that it is the end game of a miserable life. At one point Hamm relates to Clov that one day he will undergo that “miserable end of infinite emptiness and be like a little bit of grit in the middle of the steppe.”

This production of *Endgame* deepened Beckett’s piece on absurdity that Beckett described as a “despairing play about despair.” Although I missed Bill Irwin’s genius for physical movement, it offered

A BEHANDING IN SPOKANE AT S.F. PLAYHOUSE RECALLS COMMEDIA LAZZI.

Martin McDonagh’s black comedy is about a killer searching for his missing left hand lost when a gang of ruffians forced him to have it chopped off by a train running near Spokane, Washington. Twenty seven years later he meets a couple who take advantage of his mania to locate his severed hand by claiming they have found it. The dramatic action happens in the main protagonist’s (Carmichael played by Rod Knapp)) dingy hotel room where he deals with the low-life Lisa (Melissa Quine) and her black boyfriend Toby (Daveed Diggs) who want cash for having found his hand that is black and, countering Carmichael’s doubts, is dark colored because it is 27 years old.

In *A Behanding* director Dusi Damilano cleverly brings out the comical aspects of the somewhat less gory but nonetheless sadistic elements of the play. The shots Carmichael takes at the young couple, so comically portrayed by the actor as an eccentric clown, and the couple’s innocence and fear of him as he attempts to blow them up with a lit kerosene hat, are funnier than they are scary. Added to this are the moronic reactions of the desk clerk Mervyn (Alex Hurt) in the midst of all this violence and the angry throwing of human

strong static enigmatic moments, as the one in which after Hamm dismisses Clov from his service and Clov appears with his valise and coat to watch Hamm ring the bell he used when he was needed. And Clov stands there as if stuck to the ground. If Clov leaves will this mean a despairing suicide for Clov and death for Hamm? Or will they continue a love-hate relationship of mutual torture?

Director Carey Perloff’s *Endgame* communicates the meaningful content of Beckett’s oeuvre performed by four of our most dynamic local and national American actors.

For information about *Play* and *Endgame*, performing through June 3, and upcoming productions visit ACT-SF.org or call 415-749-2228. Annette Lust



Dr. Annette Lust



Flora Lynn Isaacson

hands at one another, and the play turns into a hilarious farce.

If one can view the play with a detached sense of humor and not take the exaggerated use of blood curdling violence seriously, but rather accept it as a good theatrical device, this dynamically staged and acted play is very enjoyable. In fact *The Lieutenant of Inishmore* and the *Behanding in Spokane* recall the crude buffoonery at the basis of the lazzi (comic routines) of the Commedia dell’Arte, the most vital dramatic form in Western Theatre. Carmichael calls to mind the Commedia Pantalone, the older clown who ends up as the butt of the jokes of the younger characters.

Bill English’s attractive set of a cheap hotel could be tawdrier. Miyuki Bierlein’s costumes suit the characters. Michael Palumbo’s lights and Jacquelyn Scott’s props serve the play well.

A Behanding in Spokane that mixes elements of Commedia with those of Irish storytelling is a playfully imaginative production with an enigmatic ending that poses the question “why search so ardently for what we may already have?”

*A Beheading Plays until June 30th. For information call 415-677-9596 or visit SFplayhouse.org.*Annette Lust

THE NIGHT OF THE IGUANA AT RVP- A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

At the Ross Valley Players, an impressive set by Malcolm Rodgers of La Costa Verde Hotel in Puerto Barrio on the West Coast of Mexico in 1940 greets us. The

Ross Valley Players are celebrating Tennessee Williams’ 100th birthday with its own spin on the popular play and movie.

Cont. p. 15



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Jettison Ethics (Cont. from p. 4)

Controller proposed a new definition of “minor amounts.” That annual \$2.3 million might be better spent fixing pot holes or our parks or Muni, or allocated to schools. The costs of the Ethics Commission has not been “offset” by the paltry \$5,226 in fees and fines collected in 2010.

The Mirkarimi Case Ross Mirkarimi — as a private citizen long before he was ever elected — was one of 53 people who signed a paid Voter Guide argument in favor of Prop K. The same ballot argument was also signed by City Attorney Louise Renne, the Alice B. Toklas Lesbian/Gay Democratic Club [which Wiener has co-chaired], Supervisors Angela Alioto and Terence Hallinan, Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi, and David Pilpel [the latter was just appointed to serve on the SOTF by Supervisor Wiener]. Ironically, Mirkarimi will now be tried under the system he encouraged be created. Careful what you ask for.

Deputy City Attorney Peter Keith, representing Mayor Lee in Ethics’ “kangaroo trial” of Mirkarimi, wrote a letter to the Ethics Commissioners delineating what their legal role will be. “The commission does not participate in the investigation conducted by the Mayor and the City Attorney. The commission is an adjudicator, and does not make prosecutorial decisions.” In stark contrast, Ethics is *not* supposed to re-adjudicate cases previously heard by SOTF, but is must simply enforce referrals involving official misconduct

Keith continues, “The commission must hold a hearing on the charges, make a recommendation as to whether they should be sustained, and transmit that recommendation and full record of the hearing to the Board of Supervisors.”

Yawn. Regardless of how you feel about Mirkarimi, the Commission’s real job is to make Mayor Lee’s decision to fire Mirkarimi look justified, then make Mirkarimi look bad enough to have the Board of Supervisors uphold the firing.

There is no Perry Mason drama here. The Mayor wants Mirkarimi gone and the Commission’s role is to help get rid of him. If the Mayor wanted to keep Mirkarimi around, there wouldn’t be a trial.

Does anyone remember the ethics trial after Gavin Newsom’s admitted substance abuse problems, and sleeping with his best friend’s wife while she was working for him in the Mayor’s office? Selectively, there was no ethics trial of Newsom.

Voters Hoodwinked The Board of Supervisors proponent argument in the 1993 Voter Guide: “We recognize that the people of San Francisco are in danger of losing faith in our city government. Every few weeks another scandal arises and public confidence sinks to new lows.” A separate paid argument in the voter guide noted above further said: “Proposition K will put teeth into San Francisco’s Ethics laws, ensuring that they are some of the toughest in the country.”

News flash: The people of San Francisco are still in danger or losing faith in our City government after two decades of the Commission’s squalid track record.

Supervisor Kevin Shelley wrote in 1993, “San Francisco is long overdue for serious ethics reform. That’s why I wrote Proposition K. The city must get tough on politicians who break the rules.”

Kevin Shelley became Secretary of State in 2002 and was then accused of “abusive behavior toward his underlings,” Shelley was later accused in 2004 of receiving \$125,000 in laundered state grant funds for his Secretary of State Campaign.

State Attorney General Bill Lockyear publicly exonerated Shelley, of any wrongdoing. SF community activist Julie Lee, who made donations to Shelly, was designated to be the “fall guy,” she was convicted of five counts of mail fraud and three counts of witness tampering.

Then State Senator Quentin Kopp’s paid argument against Prop K said that creating an Ethics Department would “create a useless layer of bureaucracy.” Now almost 20 years later, Kopp has been proven right after SF wasted over a \$19 million on this useless bureaucracy over the years.

Prior to the creation of the Ethics Commission, the District Attorney and the City Attorney enforced laws regulating campaign contributions, conflicts of interest, and lobbyists. The Mayor’s office investigated complaints of improper activities by officials and employees (whistle-blowing). The Registrar’s office kept campaign finance reports. The Board of Supervisors held ethics trials.

Had all these agencies kept their respective responsibilities, San Francisco would have been better off.

Why not put the Commission on trial? In 2011 the Grand Jury’s report, *San Francisco’s Ethics Commission: The Sleeping Watchdog*, focused on the Commission’s investigations. These included fines and enforcement irregularities; the arbitrary method by which fines are determined; failure to provide adequate transparency; the excessive influence of Executive Director, John St. Croix, over commissioners, leading to abdicating their responsibilities to serve as our independent watchdog; and staff’s investigations.

The Commission fines miscreants just two to three percent they could assess. Being fined by the Ethics Commission is financially analogous to having to buy lunch.

The Commission’s fines for lobbyists and politicians average between \$5,000 and \$6,000 annually. These low fines hardly inspire honesty and certainly don’t collect enough to “offset” costs.

The City’s Sunshine Ordinance is not being enforced. Between October 2004 and December 2010 the SOTF referred 18 cases to the Ethics Commission for enforcement of proven “willful failure and official misconduct” allegations. In all 18 cases the Commission took no action, dismissing all 18 cases. This lack of enforcement neuters the Ordinance and is an embarrassment to transparency. All of these Sunshine cases had some degree of merit, but were dismissed without any public hearings.

Ethics isn’t the only entity ignoring the SOTF’s requests for enforcement: Of all the cases referred to the Supervisors for action, they have held no hearings on violations.

Since December 2010, there have been at least six other official misconduct complaints referred to the Ethics for enforcement; Ethics has taken action on only one case. In my own case, *George Wooding vs. the Recreation and Park Department* (RPD), I requested documents from the Phil Ginsburg, Sarah Ballard, Mark Buell, and Olive Gong which they denied they had. and the SOTF ruled in my favor.

One small problem for RPD: I already had the documents that I requested, so it was relatively easy, though painfully slow, to prove withholding of public records.

This episode is a case study in the total eclipse of Sunshine enforcement in the City and how one poorly managed and dysfunctional City department, the RPD, tried to stifle public dissent. Not surprisingly, no RPD employee was fined, suspended, or faced any disciplinary action.

Ethics has postponed a hearing date on my case while they are drafting newly-proposed guidelines for Sunshine violations referred for enforcement. My case will be heard as soon as these new regulations have been developed and adopted. This may be a very long wait, since prosecution of Mirkarimi’s so-called Ethics violations has interrupted the workload.

The complete lack of Sunshine enforcement by the Ethics Commission — just one official misconduct case upheld by Ethics of at least 25 cases over a 20-year period — lets every City Department know they don’t really have to be honest or forthcoming about public transparency or public information. San Francisco’s government has failed its citizenry in very fundamental ways.

The Ethics Commission won’t begin any investigation until the District Attorney and City Attorney have decided not to pursue a given case, even though the Grand Jury noted that Ethics does not have to wait until either agency completes its investigations. Consequently, there are almost no proactive investigations regarding ethics violations.

Ethics commissioners are appointed by elected officials. In turn, they scrutinize expenditures and activities of those same officials. The Civil Grand Jury felt this leads to the appearance of impropriety, or very real impropriety.

Whistleblower Program The Civil Grand Jury’s second report on the Ethics Department in 2011, titled *Whistling in the Dark: The San Francisco Whistleblower Program*, said “The existing whistleblower program deals with mostly low-level issues, does not foster transparency, lacks a comprehensive tracking system, angers and confuses whistleblowers, lacks an appeal system, and fails to create effective and independent oversight.”

SF’s whistleblower program has inadequate protections against on-the-job retaliation for whistleblowers. Judging from the experiences of past and current whistleblowers, it is a very bad career move to become a whistleblower.

If you’re a City employee and your boss is stealing, or your Department is cheating, wasting tax dollars, or committing fraud, look the other way or face career suicide. The City will protect your Department and supervisor; they won’t protect you.

Whistleblowers “protected” by the Ethics Commission are routinely fired, suspended, laid-off, shunned at work, demoted, or treated as traitors, regardless of the value they provide to the City as dedicated public servants. Retirement and Social Security benefits have been denied. Many whistleblowers end-up suing the city for retaliation. The City loses many lawsuits, costing unknown millions of dollars annually, to settle.

A whistleblower said: “I assure you, the next time I witness somebody dipping their hands into public funds to steal money intended to serve the disabled I will certainly not stick my neck out by blowing the whistle and being left abandoned to suffer the

blowback of retaliation and retribution.”

Between 1989 and 1993 the Whistleblower program was introduced by Mayor Art Agnos and administered by then City Administrator Ed Lee. The Ethics Commission took over between 1993 and 2003, but did such a bad job that a large part of the whistleblower responsibilities were taken over by the Controller’s Office in 2003 following passage of Prop C.

The splitting of the whistleblower program responsibilities between Ethics and the Controller’s Office has created such a poor program that the Grand Jury noted, “[the] whistleblower program has failed in its mission to promote the identification of waste, fraud, and abuse.”

The Ethics Commission is not worth saving. Its only defense? They don’t have the money to do a good job (apparently its average \$2 million annual budget isn’t enough to satisfy them). An in-house analyst indicated last year that the 16-person agency would almost need to double its staff to handle the agency’s current workload; the analyst neglected noting this may add another \$2 million in staff costs on top of the current \$2 million in salaries and benefits in the current fiscal year. Who needs a political bureaucracy costing \$4 million annually that favors politicians over citizens?

It would be much easier, and cheaper, to go back to the pre-1993 days when San Francisco didn’t have a “politically correct” Ethics Commission. This would certainly be as good as what we have today, may possibly be much less expensive, and perhaps might lead to meaningful enforcement of ethics laws. After all, we could save \$2 million annually by jettisoning the Ethics Commission.

And some of that savings could be better spent on strengthening our Sunshine Task Force, our only local agency that exposes misconduct of City officials.

George Wooding lives in Midtown Terrace. Feedback: wooding@westsideobserver.com

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At the Movies/Don Lee (Cont. from p. 13)

Captain (voice of Hugh Grant) with his wacky scalawags; Cutlass Liz: (v.o. Salma Hayek) and Black Bellamy: (v.o. Jeremy Piven). They encounter Charles Darwin (v.o. David Tennant), who likes the Captain's "big-boned" parrot, Polly, actually a dodo, and the pirate-hating, evil Queen Victoria (v.o. Imelda Staunton). With Wallace & Gromit to their animation credit, they add another bone to the flag of directors Peter Lord & Newitt and writer Gideon Defoe. Rude humor. Profanity.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU'RE EXPECTING

There are a few laughs here and there in director Kirk (Nanny McPhee, Waking Ned Devine) Jones' movie inspired by Heidi Murkoff's book published in 1985. Several women seem to get pregnant about the same time so their deliveries will (impossibly) coincide. There's TV fitness expert Jules: Cameron Diaz and reality show partner, Evan: Matthew (Glee) Morrison, who confront her pregnancy with busy schedules. Photographer Holly: Jennifer Lopez and her husband, Alex: Rodrigo Santoro give up trying after years and decide to adopt in Ethiopia. The owner of a breast-feeding boutique, Wendy: Elizabeth Banks and husband, Gary: Ben Falcone have been trying for some time. Rosie, 20-something: Anna Kendrick and Marco: Chace Crawford, ex-high school classmates, now competing food truck owners, slipped up one night. Brooklyn Decker and Dennis Quaid host a hilarious backyard Bar BQ. Daily park meetings of fathers with baby carriages (Chris Rock, Ron Huebel and Thomas Lennon) who chat about guy stuff are the males in this ensemble cast. Crude sexual content. Profanity. Thematic elements.

At the Theater (Cont. from p. 13)

In the exotic world of the Mexican coastal jungle, Williams has given us an exotic collection of characters in search of redemption. Shannon (Eric Burke) had been an Episcopalian clergyman but has fallen from grace and is now a tour guide in a second rate Mexican travel agency.

Shannon abandons a bus full of 20 American Baptist women and seeks refuge in a cheap hotel near the coast run by Maxine (Cat Bish), a fading recent widow who still holds a large appetite for a male in her life. New arrivals there are Hannah (Kristine Ann Lowry), a younger artist who tries to sell her paintings, and Nonno (Wood Lockhart), her grandfather who is a poet. Tied to a post in the yard is a captured iguana—like the others, seemingly

at the end of his rope. Williams mixes these characters into a steamy, passionate and dramatic search for redemption. This metaphor is intensified when Shannon tears at his golden cross on his neck, lacerating himself as if to free himself from its constraints.

Sensitively directed by Chris Cassell, this production has outstanding performances by Eric Burke as Lawrence Shannon, Kristine Ann Lowry as Hannah Jelkes and Wood Lockhart as Nonno. They were ably supported by Cat Bish as Maxine, Sandi Rubay as Miss Fellowes, the leader of the Baptist women tourists, and Kushi Beauchamp as Charlotte, a young girl who has a crush on Shannon.

Special mention should be made of Billie Cox's sound design and the lighting design by Ellen Brooks of the incoming storm. Michael A. Berg deserves credit for his outstanding costume design. This was truly a night to remember!

Night of the Iguana runs May 17-June 17 at Ross Valley Players' Barn Theatre at Marin Art and Garden Center. RSVP 415-456-9555x1 visit www.rossvalleyplayers.com Flora Lynn Isaacson

SHARON THE HEALTH / By Sharon Caren

Music's Healing Power

When you're feeling down or blue, have you ever noticed how comforting it is to listen to a favorite CD?



Music is Healing for all ages

Everyone from tiny infants to octogenarians experience little miracles everyday with the power of music. Some are healed, some are given a few moments of relief from pain, and others are comforted in passage to the beyond. We find this type of therapy in alternative health practices.

Unfortunately, our western medicine health care system has a hard time acknowledging the therapeutic benefits of music. There is much anecdotal evidence that music heals but medical establishments will argue that there isn't scientific proof of the efficacy of music. Only about 15% of American hospitals employ this method and it's not covered by insurance.

Healing isn't about science, it's about people. Many people everyday are experiencing very real results from the healing power of music in relieving anxiety and stress. This is happening more often through the efforts of volunteers in hospices, senior centers, and in cancer wards and children's wards. Stress is the number one indicator of heart attack or stroke over diet, family history or weight. That favorite CD might be doing more than we thought!

Music therapy is an allied health profession and one of the expressive ones. It consists of an interpersonal process where a trained music therapist uses music and all of its facets (physical, emotional, mental, social, aesthetic, and spiritual) to help clients improve or maintain their health across various domains such as cognitive functioning, motor skills, emotional and affective development, behavior and social skills, and quality of life. They use musical experiences like singing, songwriting, listening to and discussing music, and moving to music to achieve treatment goals and objectives. It is considered both an art and a science, with a qualitative and quantitative research base.

Music therapists work in nearly every area of the healing. Some commonly found practices include developmental work like communication and motor skills of individuals with special needs, songwriting and listening in reminiscence/orientation work with the elderly, processing and relaxation work, and rhythmic entrainment for physical rehabilitation in stroke victims. Music therapy is also effective in hospitals, cancer centers, schools, alcohol and drug recovery programs, psychiatric hospitals, and correctional facilities.

Journal of Advanced Nursing report

"Effect of music on power, pain, depression and disability." June, 2006

Researchers conducted a controlled clinical trial with 60 people who were recruited from pain and chiropractic clinics in Ohio. The participants were suffering from a range of painful conditions including osteoarthritis, disc problems and rheumatoid arthritis for an average of six and a half years.

Participants were divided into three groups of 20.

Two of the groups listened to music on a headset for an hour a day.

The third group did not listen to music and served as the control group.

All three groups kept a pain diary.

The first music group chose their favorite music to listen to. Choices included pop, rock, slow, melodious and nature sounds.

The second music group was given relaxing music selected by the researchers.

Before the study began, the participants reported their average pain to be just under six on a zero to ten scale, with their worst pain exceeding nine. 90% experienced pain in more than one part of their body and 95% said their pain was continuous.

Results of the Study

The music groups reported a 12 to 21% reduction in pain. The control group reported pain had increased by 1 to 2%.

The music groups reported 19 to 25% less depression than the control group.

The music groups reported feeling 9 to 18% less disabled than the control group.

The music groups felt they had 5 to 8 % more power over their pain than the control group.

In a press release after the study, Dr. Sandra L. Siedlecki, nurse researcher at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation in Ohio, stated, "Our results show that listening to music had a statistically significant effect on the two experimental groups, reducing pain, depression and disability and increasing feelings of power. There were some small differences between the two music groups, but they both showed consistent improvements in each category when compared to the control group.

"Non-malignant pain remains a major health problem and sufferers continue to report high levels of unrelieved pain despite using medication. So anything that can provide relief is to be welcomed."

Co-author Professor Marion Good from the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing at Case Western Reserve University in Ohio added, "Listening to music has already been shown to promote a number of positive benefits and this research adds to the growing body of evidence that it has an important role to play in modern healthcare."

Music for Life

My husband, a professional musician and entertainer, says music is his healing modality. "The music comes from my heart and when I'm hired to perform, folks of all ages smile and move to the beat. Their body's frequency is raised through sounds resonating with musical notes bringing the listeners joy no matter what is going on in life." Dave plays his music in Senior Centers and outdoor Concerts where there are many who come in with wheelchairs and walkers. "Some actually forget...get up and dance without the walkers. It's wonderful to see."

Going to concerts, the opera, symphony, ballet or any live musical venue is very uplifting for the spirit. This type of event can provide healing energy for your physical and emotional body as well. Try playing music in your home or car if you don't already, to see if you feel a difference. Also, find some soft, relaxing music like you might experience when receiving a massage. Get in a quiet place alone, put it on, close your eyes and use it as a meditation time.

No matter what type of music you enjoy and whether you play it soft or loud, try it sometime when you are feeling stressed, anxious or upset. I'd like to hear how your music therapy works for your personal healing. If you have questions or would like more information and ideas on how to use music for healing please come to this discussion group:

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Remember When?



Partly constructed Golden Gate Bridge deck hung from steel cables. Not dated. Permission: San Francisco History Center.

The Forever Bridge

The Sierra Club opposed the Golden Gate bridge. So did prominent San Franciscans—on esthetic, safety and financial grounds. Even the War Department doubted for a time; would a fallen bridge block entry to the Bay? Now the elegant bridge is universally admired. What more defines San Francisco? The bridge is one of the best known structures in the world.

Color schemes for the bridge ranged from fog gray to black. One color not proposed was International Orange, now the bridge’s trademark. It came about accidentally. Primer happened to be that color, and it worked. Another color not proposed, and of course not used: gold.



“One color not proposed was International Orange, now the bridge’s trademark. It came about accidentally. Primer happened to be that color, and it worked. Another color not proposed, and of course not used: gold.”

Twice the bridge has been in danger of coming down: once during its construction, and again in the early 1950s. Both times wind, and a harmonic vibration that wind can cause, was the threat.

Yet the bridge has lasted through war, earthquake, terror danger, and even the weight of celebration. It has lasted more than seventy-five years.

The bridge is an assemblage of statistical wonders. Over a million rivets, placed white hot, heated by coal fired forges. Eighty thousand miles of spliced wire formed into strands and compacted into cables capable of supporting 400 million pounds. Two hundred and fifty pairs of vertical steel rope supporting the roadway. Towers rising 746 feet above the water, taller than the Washington Monument. One hundred and thirty thousand cubic yards of concrete poured. A south pier more than a thousand feet offshore, built despite ripping tides of five to seven knots. Anchorages weighing

270 million pounds each. The stats go on and on.

No bridge like the Golden Gate had ever been built. Mathematicians who helped design the bridge did so without the aid of any computer; all calculations were by

hand, on paper.

While today we know the bridge as graceful and beautiful, that was not preordained. An early design was called “an upside down rat-trap.”

Forgotten today are the battles of personalities, and financial interests. Ferry companies were obvious losers. Shipping interests feared that larger ships would not clear the bridge. Bankers took big risks, and collected 5.25% interest, too—an amount considered high, and, by some, unwarranted. Challengers sued—and lost.

Should the reader wish to delve into the building of the Golden Gate bridge more deeply, read Golden Gate: the Life and Times of America’s Greatest Bridge, by Kevin Starr.

When asked how long the bridge would last, its promoter, Joseph Strauss, replied, “Forever.” May he be close to right.

BRAIN FÜD

Country Anagrams The following are anagrams of countries. Can you decipher all of them?

1. Glib Emu

2. Neat Grain

3. Age Lens

4. Dark Men

5. Serial Answer

1. Belgium

2. Argentina

3. Senegal

4. Denmark

5. Israel

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

OPEN LATE

No we're totally fine. We have 30 minutes left.

Cool.

WHAT!?

How can this be? We have 30 minutes on the meter, tires are angled, evenly spaced between other cars...

It says we are 13" from the curb...

Seriously? They are really getting desperate. Like our vw bug blocks more road than that SUV.

By Julie Casson

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

Phyllis' Findings / Phyllis Sherman

San Francisco is a wonderful place to live. Did you know it boasts the second most expensive housing in the U.S? What's first? No, not New York...Honolulu! And because housing is so expensive, the gasoline companies decided we can afford to pay more for gas than they pay in Los Angeles. They attribute the increased cost to the fact that the people here are more affluent than in L.A. and we do less driving. So with the increased cost of living here, who's for moving to Los Angeles? Unless you want to break into the movie business, better stick around S.F. If you really want to make lots more money, go to Korea. I hear that teachers of E.S.L. can command \$100 or more per hour. Of course you have to learn how to teach E.S.L. first, but if you have a smattering knowledge of Ebonics, you'll find a job.

Diets, diets, diets...I've tried several..even sent for some on-line product which promised a size 12 in twelve days or something similar...although size 12 was from yesterday...size 12 these days is considered size 9 or so. The first dose I tried provided a hallucination effect, which was disconcerting to say the least. Now something new is on the market...the Baby Food Diet. Have to check that out. They do say it's a bit of a problem getting the vodka into the juice box.

On the film front, I highly recommend "A SEPARATION." This tightly wound, complex drama is from Iran, and a couple's marital crisis reveals a division of class, sex, age and ideology. It's directed and written by Asghar Farhadi and he achieves the pace and suspense of a thriller, and the psychological depths and social insight of a good novel in this Oscar-winning film.

You'll also like "THE BEST EXOTIC MARIGOLD HOTEL, whic"THE FIVE YEAR ENGAGEMENT" with Jason Segal and Emily Blunt is a fun, if somewhat inconsequential movie about a couple whose matrimonial plans encounter various complications, some hilarious, some wrenching, in this genial comedy directed by Nicholas Stoller from a script he wrote with Mr. Segal. No great surprises, but the supporting cast including Alison Brie as Ms. Blunt's chatty, fertile sister are worth your time.

A magazine, doing research, goes into a rest home asks a 95 year old lady, "What's the best thing about being 95?" "No peer pressure."

Feedback: phyllis@westsideobserver.com

SECOND THOUGHTS / By Jack Kaye



Surely, Their 15 Minutes Are Up

I always liked Andy Warhol's idea that everyone wanted and eventually got their 15 minutes of fame. One of the current news shows now has a segment called "Your 15 Minutes Are Up." I think that this good idea should be applied more broadly. The media should stop quoting certain people who have long since been irrelevant. Here are some suggestions:

In the field loosely called "entertainment" we have already seen some famous quotables disappear from the public eye and ear. Remember Paris? Remember Nicole? Remember Brittany? No? See how it works? So how about no more stories about Lindsay, Charlie, Ted, the Donald, Jessica, Kim or Khloe? Aren't their 15 minutes way more than up? Who are they and what do their lives have anything to do with us? Why should we care what they were or weren't wearing? Why need we know what they did wrong lately? Why are they getting paid for being celebrities? Last year while 13 million Americans were unemployed, Kim made more than \$10 million. For What? For whom? Let us live without major news stories about these celebrities in name only. If we want to hear about them, we can tune in to our favorite celebrity gossip show, but let's keep them off the Nightly News, please. They are narcissists and coverage only encourages them.

But what about politics? We have forgotten Spiro, most former House speakers, many former mayors, almost every unsuccessful candidate for Vice President and even some villains from the previous administration like Rummy, Wolfowitz, Perl, Gonzales and Ashcroft. Can we start forgetting to mention people like Karl Rove, Dick Cheney, Sarah P. (or her family), Michele B., Newt, Herman, Glenn, Sean, Rush, Rick P., Rick S. and most of the Fox News cluster of political hacks? Must we continue to hear hatred and disinformation from a group that claims to represent a part of our country that should not be encouraged? Do we think that they will someday say or do something that seems honest or intelligent? Really? Let's try to name one thing that any of them ever said that reflected intellect, education, wisdom, insight, decency, kindness, goodness or

side of an issue, let it be respected experts with no political axe to grind. It makes no sense to ask lobbyists or politicians who have a clear bias to tell us the way it is when we know that these people have lost their integrity years ago. Do we believe Paul Ryan, John Boehner, Eric Cantor or Mitch McConnell? Really? Do we respect Paul's grasp of macroeconomics or John's emotional facial expressions and his imitation of penguins walking or Eric's denial that he was adopted or Mitch's impression of Tommy Turtle or Huckleberry Hound that he offers up daily to distract us from his real intent? Clearly Speaker Boehner should never play poker, because he has no poker face — it reacts badly every time he lies and the cameras seem to always catch it because of its frequency. And must we be subjected to John McCain insisting that we go to war — with everyone: Libya, Egypt, Syria, Iran, Russia and soon maybe North Korea, China and all of Africa? Is Randy Newman's "Let's Drop the Big One" Mr. McCain's favorite song? When grapes turn sour and bitter must we still be expected to swallow them?

When interviewing political figures, reporters can start not only quoting their sometimes absurd comments or answers, but also challenging them. When the Republicans in the House were trying to blackmail the President into concessions in exchange for raising the debt ceiling, their leaders said that it was a balanced approach and was needed to force cuts in our bloated budget. They said that we have kicked the growing deficit down the road too long. The press should have asked if they remembered that at the end of the Clinton administration in early 2001, we were running surpluses and planned to eliminate the accumulated deficit by 2003. They could have asked if the GOP members remembered what

My hope is that the majority of freshmen members of the House are encouraged to rush back to their lives of obscurity and let us hear from intelligent, responsible representatives whose integrity is still intact. But an informed electorate is dependent upon accurate information. The mainstream media could take it upon themselves to change their ways and begin focusing on serious reporting."

compassion. Give up? Let's try to remember why these political prostitutes ever got our attention. Can we? So let's not quote them anymore. Their views will always be welcome on their party's official propaganda network of fixed news. Let that be the quarantine of their hypocritical negativity.

They too are narcissists and coverage only encourages them.

What would our daily news be without stories and opinions involving the above mentioned who are well past their 15 minute time limit? The news could be about important issues of the day. The news could avoid hyperbole and easy fixes by not interviewing the brave souls who survive some of the natural disasters that are occurring almost weekly now. "It was a miracle that even though we lost everything, no one was killed and that's all that matters." We know and appreciate your faith and courage, but we have heard it a million times. We can live without reporting on tragedies night after night until we no longer care. We could live without interviews of people on the street to get their views. We don't care.

So what could the mainstream news be like? It could be like the PBS Newshour which briefly covers the day's events but then focuses on three or four stories to get an in-depth analysis of each issue and its context. There should be a minimum of speculation which almost always turns out to be completely wrong — more about the speculator than the speculation. Many reporters are timid and they propose timid concerns rather than facts and figures.

We could be given more facts and figures rather than a lot of adjectives and adverbs. If we hear a report about a labor dispute, give us the numbers. How much do they make now and how much do they want? If we are talking about unemployment tell us who the unemployed are: what is the percentage of the 12.5 million by age group, educational status and type of work. That way we can start focusing on the solution instead of thinking it is happening everywhere, to everyone.

When inviting experts to represent each

happened to derail that prospect and drive us into \$15 trillion in debt. They could have asked him how it was balanced when the debt had to be raised as it had eight times under the previous administration as it had been without debate dozens of times in the recent past.

When the very unsuccessful candidate for President in 2008 said that we could not deport people here illegally because they were G-d's children, why didn't every reporter, or at least one, ask him that with that logic aren't all creatures G-d's children and if so how can we go to war with them or put them in prison when they commit crimes? When this same candidate accused Barack Obama of wanting to use taxes to redistribute wealth, why didn't the media point out that that was the very function of government and always has been. When the press is given a photo of a crime victim to show on T.V. and realize that instead of being of a 17 year old football player who is over six feet tall, it is of a small 12 year old, they could demand a more up-to-date picture.

This November, we will be given an opportunity to tell many members of Congress that their 15 minutes are up. My hope is that the majority of freshmen members of the House are encouraged to rush back to their lives of obscurity and let us hear from intelligent, responsible representatives whose integrity is still intact. But an informed electorate is dependent upon accurate information. The mainstream media could take it upon themselves to change their ways and begin focusing on serious reporting. If a candidate being interviewed is saying something that doesn't make sense, the reporter must pursue it. "What does that mean?" or "Could you be more specific?" or "Can you give me an example?" or "Do you want to listen to the tape yourself to hear what you said ten minutes ago?" or even "Are you kidding?" or finally, "Are you crazy or something?"

I could say so much more about this, but I'm afraid that my 15 minutes are now up.

Feedback: kaye@westsideobserver.com

Summertime

By Carol Kocivar ©2012



When the fog rolls out and the sunny days make their fleeting appearance in San Francisco, I hear the sound of summers gone by.

I grew up in a small town. Let me start over. I grew up near a village with miles and miles of open spaces and a pond across the street.

Summer was little league baseball and visits to the library and hour after hour sitting by a lake hoping a fish would find the bait on the end of the hook dangling in the water.

It was discussions about catfish and bass, of double plays and singles. But most of summer was a time of dreaming with a pile of books from our local library.

It was a special trip—about three miles—to that small village library and the corner where I knew they had all the editions of the Oz Books. No movies. No videos. Just books with wonderfully colored pages and stories that went on and on and on.

This was way before *Summer in the City*¹ or *Hot Fun in the Summer Time*.²

The Beach Boys had not even found their groove.

Now multiply this by year after year of no summer learning.

"By the end of 5th grade, the cumulative learning loss means that low-income children are more than 3 grade-level equivalents behind their more affluent peers."

"Middle income and low-income children progress at about the same rates during the school year. But the research found that while middle-income children on average increase their reading level a small amount in the summer, children from low-income families are losing more than 2 months in reading achievement levels. The gap widens every year."³

This is a BIG DEAL.

Our schools have cut summer school. Our schools have cut instructional days.

Silence on this is not golden. Take a moment and see what you

the research found that while middle-income children on average increase their reading level a small amount in the summer, children from low-income families are losing more than 2 months in reading achievement levels."

But imagination and the freedom to read, to find out more and more about a world outside of a little village—that was the summer after summer that I remember.

I was thinking of this as I read the recent reports on summer learning loss and the efforts to make summer count.

New research points out cumulative summer learning loss—especially for low-income students—makes a significant contribution to the achievement gap.

So how does this happen?

Take a student who starts out behind others in kindergarten. Even if that student shows a year's worth of progress at the end of the school term, that student is still behind. And then if learning is not continued during the summer, that student falls further behind.

can do to help. Communities throughout California are taking action. Will you join?

The California State PTA has a great set of resources for PTAs: You can find them under Summer Matters on the state education page.

<http://www.capta.org/sections/programs/education.cfm>

Let's make sure all our kids have time to read, to dream, to be involved and engaged every summer.

1 Lyrics by Lovin Spoonful
2 Lyrics by Sly and Family

3 National Summer Learning Association, Research Brief: "Doesn't Every Child Deserve a Memorable Summer?" www.summerlearning.org

kocivar@westsideobserver.com

THE REAL ESTATE ANSWER MAN By Kevin Birmingham



Q: Before selling, how does one decide on what to remodel

Alan Chu

A: Remodeling can be very expensive and does not always create a great return on investment. Generally the best thing you can do is get rid of the clutter, refinish hardwood floors, replace worn carpet, and apply fresh interior paint. Also it is a good idea to obtain a pest report to see if there is dry-rot damage that should be cleared.

Q: I am trying to sell my property with a bad section 8 tenant inside; she intimidates all buyers by asking for drivers licenses from buyers and agents

Bill

A: Do not do anything further without hiring an attorney that specializes in landlord-tenant disputes. The value of an income property is based on location, condition of the property and the inhabitants. The tenant you are describing will have a serious impact on the value of this property. You may want to take the property off the market until the issue is resolved.

Q: We are looking to buy a single family house with an unwarranted "in law" unit. Will we get in trouble for renting it?


Ms. Holman

A: "In law" units are generally un-permitted units. The building department can come in and require the kitchen be removed if a violation is reported. Keep in mind that when you rent an In-law unit, the Rent Board considers the property to be multiple units even if it is a single family home. While single family houses are exempt from rent control, multi-unit buildings are not.

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

Real Travel

By Sergio Nibbi



A French Kiss

We arrived in Villefranche Saturday at 11 a.m., giving us a chance to enjoy a leisurely breakfast while our captain battled two other ships for a closer spot to anchor. Our captain bravely fired two shots across their bow, one of scotch and one of bourbon, but the cowards didn't respond so we declared victory, dropped anchor and made our way to the tenders and floated quietly to shore.

Villafranche is picture post card perfect, and being Saturday the mood was calm and relaxed. Our plans were to take the train to Monaco and then backtrack to Nice. With two other couples, we walked the long block to the train station and then the fun began. Next time we are going to select our friends by the languages they speak. We have English, Spanish and Italian but where's the guy that speaks French? Trying to buy two one-way, senior discount tickets for the six of us, charged to our Visa and trying to figure on what side of the track we need to be on was fodder for a Laurel and Hardy movie.

We missed the first train but managed to catch the next one just a few minutes later only to find out that we were in a smoking car. Fortunately, it was only a 15-minute ride to what turned out to be the most beautiful station I have yet to see. The train station in Monaco is about two blocks long, newly build, well lighted, well marked and the only station where you go down instead of up to get out. Just imagine what they could do if they collected income taxes!

In two weeks the Gran Prix hits Monaco and from what we saw, they're ready for it. We walked out into a jungle of scaffolding, bleachers, tires bolted together to create monster bumpers and steel railing that ran on forever. The only thing missing was the roar of those jet fuel-fired engines propelling sleek, brightly colored cars racing just inches apart around those narrow roadways.

Our exercise for the day took us to the top of the mountain where the castle and cathedral sit. The endless steps finally took us to breathtaking views of the city up high with the recently reclaimed land down below. The last time we were here we they were filling in the ocean, and since then they have built a new city of its own.

At the top we took a 30-minute elephant train ride that took us through the major sites, including the casino. Off the train and off to lunch, plus a taste of the local gelato to give us strength for the trip back down and our struggles with the ticket agent.

But before that we did visit the cathedral where Princess Grace is buried and took a walk past the castle with its smartly-dressed guards. The old cannons, with the stacks of cannon balls welded together, look so ancient and helpless, their days of glory long gone. We finally got the ticket buying down pat, six fingers for the six tickets and one finger for the one-way ride back. Grabbed the first non-smoking car and we were off to Nice, which was one stop past Villafranche, but during the short hop back we talked ourselves into the fact that we were all too tired to visit Nice, so we jumped off at Villefranche and spent some time exploring the quaint little village that it is.



We've gotten good at the business of exchanging money for each country: \$20 to \$40 dollars is enough for the incidentals; the rest is all done by credit card or use of the good old sawbuck. We're very proud that our purchases have been limited to a few label pins, a doll or two and a ship in a bottle — which should all fit in our suitcases very easily, which incidentally, have to be packed and by our cabin door by tomorrow night. Our cruise seemed more like 12 hours instead of 12 days. Let's start planning the next one.

Feedback: sergio@westsideobserver.com



Brown Money (Cont. from p. 18)

“re-evaluations” where necessary, even reverse his staff and his own earlier findings on behalf of contractors tied to Brown.

Some of those instances were reported during the 2011 mayoral campaign or were seized on by Lee’s opponents. They ranged from contracts awarded for computer services later determined to be fraudulent to contracts at the airport to a bidder that twice failed to get top ratings to a “nonprofit” that didn’t actually exist and that federal official ordered its grant returned to the city.

By 2011, when Ed Lee became the Interim Mayor, many of the economic engines that powered Willie Brown’s machine had peaked or soon would.

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From the Border Hilary Gordon

Wednesday At A Time

By Hilary Gordon©2012/Photos: Blair Randall



At the Garden for the Environment this phrase takes on a special meaning, since we have really only one day to do the basic maintenance of the garden areas and vegetable beds. On Wednesday every week, a dedicated group of volunteers and interns show up by ten in the morning and for the next four hours, we break into crews to weed, prune, compost, and fertilize. This is the day that sets the stage for the school field trips on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and for all the wonderful Saturday programs, from the adult classes and class series to the harvest program.

Today was a typical Wednesday in the garden, and by ten the crew was ready to work. One group went up the hillside to the newly improved native plant pathway. Here they weeded and mulched the native plants, and watered the newly planted ones.



Many of the plants on this pathway now have labels thanks to the work of this crew, so visitors to the garden can see native plants blooming and

One day at a time is a slogan used by many ambitious people, such as athletes, business entrepreneurs, and politicians. It conveys the wisdom of breaking up a difficult or prolonged task into manageable parts. Many religions and philosophies also emphasize that the present moment is all we have to work with.

beautiful, and take home the inspiration to plant natives in their own backyards.

Another crew broke out the big tarp and turned the compost pile. Our middle bin was up to about 110 degrees, full of happy red worms, but it had cooked down to half it's original size. Compost decomposes fastest in a large pile, ideally about a 3x3 foot cube. So we incorporated the newly chopped, unprocessed compost into the hot pile, in order to get them both cooking faster. Now we have an almost empty bin to start building a new pile in!

Another crew took a walk around the garden to see what work needed to be done in the veggie beds. Some winter greens were bolting and had to be pulled and composted. Many spring planted starts were ready for fertilizer, and the squash seedlings in the greenhouse were calling out to be planted. One of our irrigation valves hasn't been working properly, so we pulled out the hose, and hand-watered. There was some dog damage and some theft of plants to be dealt with as well. The beauty and the challenge of caring for a public garden is that everyone can use it!

Suddenly here comes a preschool field trip, and the kids are full of questions. What are you doing? Why are you pulling those plants? I want to hug you! Next thing you know, an intern is getting multiple kid hugs and beaming like spring sunshine!

Throughout the day individuals, couples, and small groups of friends wander though the garden. "Can you believe I've lived here for ten years and never come



Every Wednesday the volunteer "crew" gathers prior to breaking up into smaller work groups at the Garden for the Environment inside the garden?" "I saw the article in Sunset magazine and I thought this was the garden they meant." "How close can you plant strawberries?" "What is the name of that purple plant?" Next comes our neighbor, the nicest guy you'd ever want to meet, who politely asks if we can prune the giant bush that's starting to block his driveway. Loppers and wheelbarrows and away we go!

Suddenly it's two o'clock already and folks are starting to head home. The garden quiets slowly as the tools come back into the tool shed and get cleaned. The tarp is folded up and the compost education center is tidied. The greenhouse seedlings get a last watering, and we turn the water off. Traffic is picking up on Seventh Avenue as the afternoon commute starts.

As the garden empties of volunteers, the birds begin hopping in the paths and feeding in the shrubbery. One final sweep of the native hillside turns up a few tools that got left behind, and I stand for a quiet moment, entranced by the rich bloom of Ceanothus and the buzzing of so many different pollinators nectaring in the fragrant drifts of blossom.

One Wednesday at a time, it somehow all gets done.

Hilary Gordon A life-long gardener, trained at the City College Horticulture program, she has worked as a professional landscape gardener from 1984 until the present. Have a question? Meet her in the garden Wed 10-2 and Sat 10-4.

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CAGE-FREE EGGS ARE NOT ALL THEY'RE CRACKED UP TO BE



Photo by Steve Peixotto

MEET DAWN DOLCINI OF TULLY DOLCI ORGANIC FARM & HER PASTURE RAISED EGGS

What does "cage-free" really mean??? What about "free-range"? These terms can be confusing and understandably so - in fact, the USDA doesn't even regulate these terms for egg production. And that leaves a lot of room for mis-interpretation and mis-use. Here's some clarification:

"Cage-free" basically means that chickens are not kept in individual cages (as in most factory farms), but they are typically confined to large indoor houses with up to 10,000 other birds. "Free-range" is misleading too - and just means that there is a door to a small, usually totally depleted outdoor area, which most of the chickens never even access.

That's why we've gone a step further, offering only "pastured" (also called "pasture-raised") eggs at our farmers markets. Pastured hens are raised outdoors, with free access to water and feed as well as grass, bugs and grubs - the way chickens were meant to live. This is more sustainable and makes for happier hens and more nutritious eggs.

Visit any one of these vendors for eggs at AIM's farmers markets to learn more and taste the difference for yourself:

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Barrett Farms
Canvas Ranch
E-Z Does It Farms
Fallon Hills Ranch
Full Belly Farm

Marin Sun Farms
McClelland's Dairy
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Say Hay Farms
Tomatero Farm
Triple T Ranch & Farm
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