

Kathleen Bolton Killed by Falling Tree in Stern Grove

On April 14th, Kathleen Bolton, a highly-respected San Francisco nurse, was killed by a falling section from the top of a tree, after walking her dogs in Stern Grove at 11:30am. Tree failure and gusting winds were blamed. She was loading her three dogs, Biscuit, Lulu and Giselle into the back of her Suburu Legacy when the 56 foot, 17 inch diameter tree section struck her and her car. Her beloved dogs were not injured and have found homes with Kathleen's circle of friends. She was 50 years old.



A report in the April 30th Examiner, that the tree was "hazardous" was taken "out of context," according to Rose Dennis, spokesman for Rec and Park, concluding that the accident was not the result of negligence. She said that the tree had been noted in a Tree Management Plan as a part of the 2003 Pine Lake Restoration, which included recommendations for the removal of dangerous trees, as a tree that warranted "aerial surveillance," a process that involves treeclimbers inspecting individual trees. She could not document whether the tree had

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A Civic Disgrace

RUMINATIONS OF A FORMER CITIZEN SUPERVISOR

by Quentin Kopp

While it's almost hackneyed to comment upon California's failure to develop systems to accommodate a surging population, now over 37,000,000 people and expected to reach 50,000,000 people by 2030, the hand-wringing cannot be dismissed summarily. Through robust economic times and feeble economic times, the Golden State continues to entice citizens and aliens alike.



Nowhere has California (and America) fallen so far behind the rest of the developed world as in the field of high speed rail transportation.

I'm not talking about conventional 50-60 mile-per-hour (or less) trains; I'm talking about 200-220 mile-per-hour systems which began 44 years ago in Japan with the Shinkansen system, spread in 1981 to France with the renowned TGV (Train à Grande Vitesse) high speed train from Paris to Lyon and in 1991 to Germany with the highly-regarded ICE system, and has since spread to England, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Spain, Italy, South Korea and Taiwan. Taiwan's newly-inaugurated high speed train transports riders from one end of the nation to the other in 90 minutes. Argentina is building the first Western Hemisphere high speed rail system between Buenos Aires and Cordoba, scheduled for completion in 2010. Africa and the Middle East are forging routes connecting the Moroccan cities of Tangiers and Marrakech, with lines to CasaBlanca and Rabat; South Africa plans a Johannesburg-Durbin line; Russia promulgates high speed lines from Moscow to St. Petersburg and Moscow to Helsinki, including high speed rail to the Black Sea resort town of Sochi in time for the 2014 Winter Olympics.

To state the obvious, California's economic vitality depends upon capitalizing on electrically-powered high speed rail. Meeting the needs for a safe, reliable travel alternative, which delivers predictable, consistent travel times and reduces air

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Still more talk as rowers continue to use Lake Merced's unsafe docks that need immediate attention

Lake Merced Watershed Plan

Standing Room Only: Residents Voice their Concerns

By Mitch Bull

Suzanne Gautier, of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission staff, was "overwhelmed ... in a good way!" at the number of people that attended the third community meeting to discuss the progress on the Lake Merced Watershed plan.

By 6pm, all of the 75 chairs placed for the April 22nd meeting at the Sunset Recreation Center were filled, with another 50-60 people standing in the rear for the duration of the roughly 100 minute meeting.

Following the introductions of the PUC staff and an overview of the Lake Merced planning mission statement, Steve Hammond, of WRT Planning and Design, the consultant hired by the PUC, spent 30 minutes going over the general condition of the lake and its' facilities, and the 3 different scenarios on which they are basing the direction of the final development plan. In the November 2007 edition of the Observer we detailed the poor condition of the boathouse and the problems that it causes for the groups that frequently use the lake for rowing and sculling. You can access this using our website: www.tpobserver.com/news/merced/htm

The three scenarios put forth by the consultant cover a comprehensive plan to address the health of the lake's ecosystem and the best way to use the resources of the area for the many recreational and educational uses that the public would like to have implemented. To read more specific details of the plan you can access the SFPUC website at www.sfwater.org.

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Campaign Contributions and City Hall Outcome

By John Dunbar

Does campaign money drive outcomes? This question comes up often, and it's one that percolates throughout American politics. This year's lively Presidential campaign has been filled with charges about the impact of campaign money upon decision-making.

"Less than one percent of the U.S. population makes financial contributions over \$200 to federal candidates, and these contributions represent the vast majority of funds that candidates receive from individuals. Of those who contribute over \$200, approximately 85 percent have household incomes of \$100,000 or more, 70 percent are male, and 96 percent are white."

San Francisco's sewage hauling contract helps illustrate this question locally. It involves two bidders, Norcal and S&S Trucking fighting over a contract to haul 240 tons of sludge a day. For a five-year contract, S&S Trucking had the low bid at \$8.5 million. Norcal's would cost the City's general fund \$3 million more. Mayor Newsom and Supervisor Chris Daly have teamed up to champion the S&S contract, the Board of Supervisors on a 10-1 vote is standing by Norcal. Why?

Board of Supervisors President Aaron Peskin argues that S&S Trucking contract is "too good to be true" and the firm doesn't have the experience to do the job. Another argument is that Norcal's union benefit and wage package is backed up by a better history than what S&S Trucking offers. The powerful Teamster's union also wants Norcal to retain the contract.

Except there is no evidence for the assertion that S&S Trucking would not pay prevailing-wages. The head of the City's Office of Labor Standards Enforcement, Donna Levitt, told the Chronicle (4/15/2008) that the firm, "has never been audited or cited by the city for failing to pay the required wage."

As to the argument that S&S Trucking is not up to the job, it's worked at the San Francisco Airport hauling 24 hours a day, next to live runways. Its fleet of trucks is large enough to move the sludge.

Critics charge that campaign contributions anchor this contract at the expense of a lower, qualified bid submitted by S&S Trucking. Michael Sangiacomo owns the Norcal Corporation, Sunset Scavenger, Golden Gate Disposal and SF Recycling and Disposal.

For example, according to campaign finance filings, District 7 Supervisor Elsbernd's re-election campaign through December 31, 2007 collected \$6,700 from 31 individuals who worked either for Sunset Scavenger, Golden Gate Disposal or San Francisco Recycling. All 31 contributions

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Mirkarimi’s “Do Not Deliver” Misdirected — Unenforceable

By Paul Kozakiewicz

In an effort to limit litter in the City, one San Francisco supervisor has introduced legislation that would hit newspaper publisher with stiff fines if they deliver to people who do not want the newspaper. The legislation calls for all publishers to maintain a “do not deliver” list that the public can get on to stop delivery of the newspaper. If a paper is delivered to someone on the list, they can appeal to the director of the Department of Public Works for action. The director would determine guilt or innocence. If a publisher is found guilty of an infraction, they could be fined \$100 for the first offense, \$200 for the second and \$500 for the third. Legal challenges would be handled by the City Attorney’s Office. According to the legislation’s sponsor, Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi, the fines are not set in stone and he is reconsidering the punitive aspects of the legislation. The “do not deliver” legislation would apply to newspapers and all handbills, including restaurant menus. Money from fines would go into the city’s General Fund.

Should Voters Trust the Department of Public Health (DPH)?

by George Wooding

The DPH has a terrible history of not delivering on bond promises made to San Francisco voters. The DPH repeatedly convinces voters to approve bond financing for specific projects, and then delivers results far different than plans originally presented to voters. What the DPH doesn’t want you to know is that two previous bond measures provide a great lesson for voters on how it operates with arrogance and impunity. In 1985, voters approved a proposition authorizing \$26 million in bonds to construct a 147-bed psychiatric facility, the Mental Health Rehabilitation Facility, on the grounds of San Francisco General Hospital (SFGH) to keep psychiatric patients in county. Eleven years later, the “MHRF” opened in 1996. By 2003, when the City was facing a huge deficit, DPH proposed closing the MHRF. A “Blue Ribbon Committee” eventually split the three-story building into multiple uses, and today, the MHRF operates only 47 psychiatric beds. Many of its patients were discharged out-of-county. In 1999, Proposition A voters were told by the DPH that Laguna Honda Hospital (LHH) would be rebuilt as a 1,200-bed, long-term care skilled nursing facility to care for San Francisco’s low income, frail elderly, and disabled populations. Seventy-three percent, or 139,000, of voters agreed to have property taxes increased to rebuild LHH. The Proposition A bond measure is currently \$152 million over budget, and two phases of the project yet to be bid may be reduced in scope. Only 780 beds, or two-thirds, of the project will be constructed, when it, too, opens ten years after the bonds were approved. LHH’s new focus will be for 90-day short-stay and rehabilitation patients. Many LHH long-term patients will be moved back into the community, supposedly to save money. Potentially, there may be no long-term care patients at LHH. The DPH will be forcing LHH residents back into the community or out-of-county, regardless of age, situation, or circumstance. Thirty-year-old drug users will be taking the beds meant for 85-year-old women. LHH is currently in the process of reducing its census from 1,060 to 780 patients, and is taking almost no new admissions. Sadly, the forced displacement of long-term patients into the community has been poorly planned. No comprehensive studies have been done on the costs, the quality of housing, or the quality of medical care patients will receive in the community. The City has conducted a single financial analysis dated April 2, titled “scattered housing,” which claims it will only cost San Francisco \$1,000 per month per resident for community housing subsidies. All other living costs will supposedly be covered by Medicare and Medi-Cal. But Medicare and Medi-Cal are currently planning major funding cuts to San Francisco due to state and federal budget deficits. This is a house of cards; the real bill will eventually be paid for by voters. As of April 15, the DPH has only been able to utilize 11 of 500 Medi-Cal “super waivers” providing \$77,640 in services for LHH residents discharged

Publishers in the city have some concerns about the legislation because they see it as being unworkable and a potential infringement on the First Amendment. Organizations and businesses that use volunteers to distribute fliers would also be affected. Many publishers use delivery services to distribute their newspapers and handbills. Under the legislation, the publishers would be responsible for the actions of the delivery service, even though they have no connection to the people who are walking the beat, delivering the paper. Mirkarimi said political fliers that are distributed door-to-door are exempt from the legislation. Another concern is the ability of the public to claim an action against a publisher for a delivered publication or handbill, whether true or not, that could result in an infraction and hefty fine. Mirkarimi said he is willing to work with the diverse group of publishers in the City to find solutions to the litter problem. He said he is considering starting off with a voluntary plan, which could be revisited if it does not achieve its intended results.

into the community, due a lack of service providers who will participate in the program. The DPH has also proposed cutting \$36 million to \$44.5 million in community-based services to help the Mayor balance the City’s purported \$338 million deficit, even as DPH is sending LHH residents back to the community promising they’ll receive community services. Three DPH employees played key roles in both the MHRF and LHH operational changes: Mitch Katz, Director of Public Health; Marc Trotz, Director of DPH’s Housing and Urban Health; and Liz Gray, who oversaw patient placement for DPH’s Community Behavioral Health Services Division and is now DPH’s Director of Placement. Between the MHRF and LHH, none of this is what we voted for. The DPH has deliberately tried to hide these LHH rebuild bond changes from the voters by spending over \$200,000 annually for public relations employees, and an unknown amount on an outside public relations firm. The main goals of this public relations campaign are to: 1) Hide from the public what has happened to the LHH rebuild, 2) Hide what is happening to long-term LHH residents being discharged into the community, and 3) Encourage San Francisco voters to pass a \$887.4 million bond measure in November to rebuild SFGH, the largest bond measure in San Francisco’s history. The DPH has already spent \$25 million dollars on preliminary studies for the SFGH rebuild. Laughably, a final draft report for the SFGH bond measure dated April 1 cites the LHH rebuild as an example of what NOT to do. The DPH has shown no respect for the “will of San Francisco voters,” but they will try very hard to get your vote and your money next November. Please remember that the DPH needs to be judged on its accountability to San Francisco voters and its previous bond track record, not on its public relations campaigns. George Wooding Mid-Town Terrace Home Owners

On Fame, Fortune and Principle
Dispatch from the Westside

By Denise M. LaPointe



The April West of Twin Peaks Central Council monthly meeting had it all – fame, fortune and philanthropy. Our guest speaker was local celebrity Carmen Policy, the former President and CEO of the San Francisco 49er’s, our coffers are replenished as improved membership dues are coming in fast and furious, two solid and upright neighborhood groups joined our ranks and the West of Twin Peaks Central Council was the recipient of a \$2,000.00 check from Bud Wilson, former President of the District 7 Council. The West of Twin Peaks Central Council was extremely honored to receive the surplus monies from former Supervisor Tony Hall’s District 7 Council. That group has come to a close and as such their board determined that the functions and efforts of our group closely mirrored their valiant efforts. Further, West of Twin Peaks Central Council unquestionably served the interests of District 7 therefore an appropriate recipient of those funds. A great boost for our group, that is working hard to preserve neighborhood character, honor the history of our area, and keep a watchful eye on City Hall and its shenanigans. Thank you to all on the former District 7 Council for your work and contribution! Stonestown General Manager Rich Forster and his staff presented plans for the renovation of Stonestown and big changes are coming. Stonestown is embarking on a big new renovation, which changes the footprint of the mall, and removes parking from the front and places it in the back. Additionally, Trader Joe’s is moving in, major retail tenants such as Crate and Barrel and other big names are talking with management, and new movie screens are being proposed. We’ll be watching closely, as commercial development impacts traffic and congestion and has added impact given the level of proposed development from Brotherhood Way, Parkmerced, Camden Drive, and Ardenwood. Who knows, a couple good restaurants and new stores and San Franciscans will come to our side of town as a destination. Once City Hall starts charging \$60.00 for parking tickets, shoppers will defect to Stonestown in no time at all! In the endless shuck and jive from Republic Urban Properties on the Ardenwood project, the developer has contacted neighbors to help him with a workshop whereby they are asked to participate in helping him get his environmental application completed! Message to neighbors: tell the developer to present a decent plan and quit spending money on public relations firms and politicians and see what happens. This project is a textbook case on poor community outreach. Still the project is too big, and the developer has no track record of building anything in San Francisco. Another message to neighbors: demand lower density before this gargantuan, out of character development gobbles up your nice blocks around Wawona, Ulloa, 14th, 15, 16, and 17th Avenues! Stay tuned; in no time the neighborhood will be “treated” to more community workshops reviewing plans that have never been

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Letters to the Editor
Demand Accountability

Here we go again.

SF Unified School District with its history of waste, fraud, mismanagement, and even embezzlement of our hard earned taxpayer dollars wants more money. Hundreds of millions of dollars bond measures, special assessment taxes and tens of millions of dollars more in facility improvement funds from state, local, real estate fees and income from leases has been spent and squandered. Voters in 1988 voters authorized \$90 million city bond issue for major repairs and renovations at all but two San Francisco Unified school sites, 1990 a 20 year tax assessment, 1994 another \$95 million, 1997 authorizing \$140 million - \$90 million to SFUSD,

2003 \$295 million, and \$450 million including the illegal expenditure of \$100 million dollars in bond money for salaries and other unauthorized expenses! Proposition A is a regressive parcel tax masquerading as a cure for teachers salaries. Historically, parcel taxes are used to pay for capital improvements, not expenditures like salaries. Parcel taxes disproportionately burden property owners, with the same tax applied to each parcel regardless of value or land use. San Francisco Unified School District needs to regain the public trust from years of fiscal mismanagement and abuse. VOTE NO ON Proposition A – it’s the wrong approach. Good Government Alliance

(Letters Continued on p. 15)

DON'T GET SOAKED BY PROPOSITION E

by Barbara Meskunas

Ever wonder who sets our water and sewer rates? It's not the Mayor or the Board of Supervisors – it's the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (PUC). The Board can reject the rate increases and structure, but only the PUC can actually establish them.

Proposition E on June 3rd's ballot is the result of yet another squabble between this Mayor and Board of Supervisors. When the Mayor recently moved to fire the former head of the PUC for furthering her own political agenda with ratepayers money, several members of the Board were furious because they had personal relationships with her, i.e., she had hired many of their friends and allies to fatten the PUC's payroll. Those Board members tried to reject a couple of the Mayor's reappointments to the PUC in order to stop the firing, but were unsuccessful because they couldn't muster the necessary eight votes.

Proposition E was written to reduce the number of votes necessary to reject the Mayor's PUC appointments from eight to six. The rest of the measure that deals with qualifications is all window dressing – the qualifications proposed by Prop E for PUC commissioners exceed those of the former PUC director, and current director, and will surely be ignored.

When considering Proposition E, think back to the Charter changes made to the Planning Commission and the Police Commission – did subjecting the Mayor's appointments to Board of Supervisors scrutiny result in better appointments? Most people think just the opposite – that "dumbing down" the choices to individuals who can pass political muster on the other side of City Hall has resulted in less forceful advocacy for moderation, leaving a good many San Franciscans without a voice. The Mayor has effectively had to settle for people who were acceptable to his political opponents.

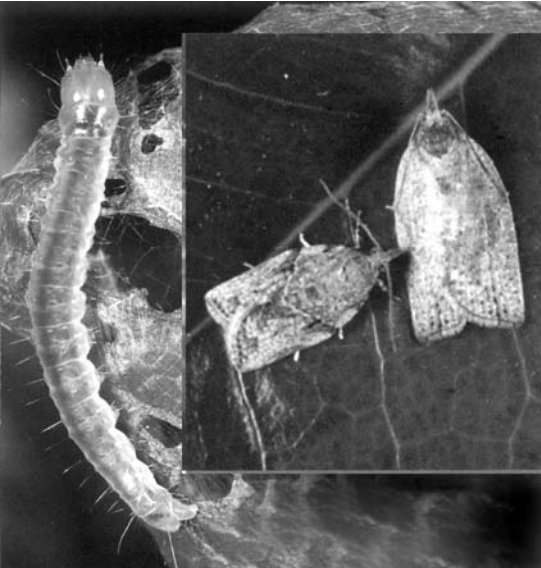
If Proposition E passes, a simple majority of the Board of Supervisors will have veto authority over the people who set your water and sewer rate increases. Think of the special interests that control that simple majority today – most work in San Francisco, but don't live here. Do you think they care how much San Francisco ratepayers get soaked for water and sewer services? Do you think they care if our billion-dollar water system bond measure is prudently spent, and its projects completed competently and on time?

Our current system of PUC governance is not perfect, but Proposition E would turn it into a ratepayer's worst nightmare.

June elections are seldom exciting. But if you are concerned about the increasing costs of basic services in San Francisco, please take the time to vote NO on this very bad idea for San Francisco water and sewer ratepayers.

Spraying Postponed—for Now

By Clark Milan



The light Brown Apple Moth

Local residents cheered at the April 24 Santa Cruz County Superior Court hearing as county Judge Paul Burdick postponed the June 1 light brown apple moth aerial spray. San Francisco county is scheduled for aerial spray August 1.

“The state did not prove that the invasive light brown apple moth poses as an immediate threat to life or property. As a result, there is an emergency exception to finish the review,” said Judge Burdick, reported by Santa Cruz Sentinel April 24.

Along with Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, Sen. Carole Migden and Marin County officials, they pulled the plug, ruling California leaders to complete environmental tests known as the “six-pack” toxicology test for eye, inhalation and respiratory irritants before allowing pesticides to be sprayed over Santa Cruz, and 11 other Bay Area counties.

Board of Supervisors Ross Mirkarimi told Santa Cruz Sentinel, “As it stands now, I am not convinced that there needs to be any spraying. I’m just against it.” With the aerial spray delayed until completion of the tests, it still comes as a health scare to the residents. KTVU News reported April 7 hundreds of Monterey and Santa Cruz locals having mild to serious respiratory problems from an aerial spray which took place last year.

The light brown apple moth, native to Australia, was spotted in Santa Cruz in 2006, and other California counties including San Francisco, and is a threat to agricultural crops, feeding on up to 200 plant species across the Bay Area. Federal and state agriculture officials claim that if the moth is allowed to spread throughout the state, it could cause up to \$640 million in crop damage each year.

Pesticide Action Network North America reported Gov. Schwarzenegger assuring officials in Marin county no aerial spraying will take place until at least August 17. As Santa Cruz was granted postponement San Francisco is still scheduled for its August 1 aerial spray. Spraying will continue through 2010. Info: www.cassonline.org

PHYLLIS' FINDINGS

LESS IS MORE!

By Phyllis Sherman

I recently saw a button that said, “If you had it all, where would you put it?” Now that would definitely be a problem. Even in a large house there's a point of no return.



Many years ago the slogan “Less is More” was popular. I could never really understand that “Less” is NOT “more.” “More” is “More.”

Mother always said, “Never throw anything away. It will always come back.” But how long must one wait? Even if a peplum skirt becomes the rage again, the odds are you will have outgrown it. In my last life I used to square dance (back in Connecticut.) There were lace “pettie” pants that you wore under your colorful soaring skirts ... for some reason, it's still in my drawer. Remembrance of things past? Yearning for what was? Of what use can I put white lacy knee length underpants that are still in good condition? Any square dancers out there who want to inherit them? Put them on EBAY? Remember snoods, harlequin glasses (Dame Edna-type) and bell-bottom trousers? The trousers have come back or at least they're now called “over- the-shoe denims” for the local guys who think it's “hip.” Women can also now buy pants that are “slim,” “normal” or “wide-bottom” Too many choices .. Saddle shoes have come back a bit and maybe even girdles and all-in-ones ... with different names ... “stretchees,” “flexees”and “tummy controllers.” Any way your look at it, bulging bellies are definitely out!

Some years back, Philip Roth wrote “Letting Go,” in which he describes the frenetic contest between one's sympathies for others and one's instinct for self-protection. Only at the end of the novel are we able to see the hero “letting go” and plunging headlong into the confusion of human life. Most people “hang on” too long and are dreadfully fearful of letting go. That goes for more than just old clothes. It also concerns outmoded attitudes and ideas ... and papers ... there's just no end to the paper wars.

Several years ago in an attempt to attack the paper wars, I hired an Organization Maven, who showed me how to file, organize papers, throw out stuff and generally simplify my life. Now I know I could and should, do this on my own, but didn't I need someone to show me the how, what and where to put things and which things to discard? And I discovered that, yes, less IS absolutely More. Things are easier to find because there aren't so many of them. I'm able to perform tasks more efficiently and able to make the most of my time ... most of the time. I'll never miss that polka dot dress is which was two sizes too small. I also try to pay attention to William James' adage, “the art of being wise is knowing what to overlook.” There are very few documents that can't be retrieved from the original source, if absolutely necessary.

All that stuff you file, how much of it do you ever go back to? That doesn't mean that a cluttered desk for me is totally a thing of the past ... not in this business ... but it's fixable whenever I've a spare minute and if worse comes to worse and I can't handle it myself, there's always an Organization Maven to call upon. Remember, Mother doesn't always know best. Now what about those lace square dance pants?

Once called “The Pink Palace” and later, the Scott Street Residence Club which included 23 guest rooms, the current 2008 Decorator Showcase at 2820 Scott Street is a place fit for visiting royalty. When the visitor steps into the inlaid marble floored reception hall of this elegant Italianate-style mansion, the eye is immediately drawn to its gorgeous architectural details: the carved and painted ceiling, the elaborate wrought iron railings surrounding the majestic staircase, above which arches a multi colored Tiffany skylight, and the intricately tiled fountain. It is surprising to discover that several hundred people have lived here at various times. Of course, every house has a story, but this house seems to have more than its share of legend and mystery, including a connection to European royalty. Many residents may have come and gone, but its gracious dignity has endured for over a century. A must see for all ... the San Francisco Decorator Showcase 2008 sponsored by the Financial Aid program of the San Francisco University High School is open through May 26 at 2820 Scott Street. General Admission is \$30; Seniors \$25. Information at (415)447-5830 . www.decoratorshowcase.org

There are a few good films out there. The COUNTERFEITERS is at the Stonestown Cinema. This is a true story of Salomon Sorowitsch, counterfeiter extraordinaire and bohemian. After getting arrested in a German concentration camp in 1944 he agrees to help the Nazis in an organized counterfeit operation set up to help finance the war effort.

It was the biggest counterfeit money scam of all time. Professional printers, fastidious bank officials and simple craftsmen all became members of the top secret counterfeiter commando. If they cooperated with the enemy, they had a chance to survive, as first-class prisoners in a “golden cage” with enough to eat and bed to sleep in. If they sabotaged the operation, a sure death awaited them.

NIM'S ISLAND with twelve year old Abigail Breslin (Little Miss Sunshine) and Jody Foster will appeal to the entire family...both adults and children... and concerns a girl stranded on a tropical island with her father and some pelicans and sea lions. It's a fun and exhilarating

Next time you're on West Portal, visit ROTI Indian Bistro for the best Indian food you've ever tasted. Open for both lunch and dinner with very reasonable prices, you'll find delicious mouth-watering Indian delicacies. Interesting Naan, Kulcha, and rice dishes plus a lot more...all worth savoring.

On my last visit to Roti, i enjoyed a savory chicken dish in a delicate cream sauce (Tikka Masalla) and a tasty yogurt drink, Mango Lassi. My vegan companion loved the Aloo Gobi dish... spicy and satisfying. Try their wonderful curries.

WITNESS

“Anyone who witnessed the accident between a pedestrian and a MUNI streetcar on West Portal Ave. and 14th Ave., at 11:15 AM on Jan. 4, please call 652-0416.”



FORGETTING SARAH MARSHALL

Jason Segel not only stars in this hangdog romantic comedy, he also wrote the hilarious screenplay. Further ensuring Peter’s unforgettable: he has three frontal nudity scenes. His girl friend, Kristen Bell as the titled television actress, breaks off their five-year live-in relationship. Peter writes the music for the show but also has been working on a musical Dracula. Trying to forget S.M., he flies to a Hawaiian resort but finds S.M. there with her new British rock singer-lover, Aldous Snow (Russell Brand). Then the fun starts! Mila Kunis as Rachel, the hotel hospitality clerk, provides Peter with an alternate love interest. The beauty of Hawaii is the perfect setting for this funfest. Nicholas Stoller directs; Judd Apatow is responsible for the astute casting. Nudity, sexual content, language. Universal 113 min.

LEATHERHEADS

The beginnings of professional football in 1925 sets the background for this screwball comedy directed by and starring George Clooney. He plays funny, athletic Dodge Connelly, an almost over-the-hill Duluth team captain who finds he has no other profession. Renee Zellweger playing 31-year old fast-talking Chicago Tribune reporter Lexie looks every day of her 39 years. Her editor Harvey (Jack Thompson) pushes her for the real story behind WWI hero Carter the Bullet (John Krasinski: The Office). The escape from the speakeasy and the boxing bouts are especially humorous. The jazz score by Randy Newman keeps the love triangle moving. Language. PG-13. Universal 112 min.

Lake Merced (Cont. from p. 1)

The scenarios vary from repairing the existing facilities, while adding a Nature Interpretive Center, to demolishing most of the current rundown facilities and spreading the educational and recreational sites around the lake to minimize the traffic congestion that can be a problem on Harding Drive and possibly building new structures on Harding Drive, John Muir Drive, and Sunset Circle. In addition, the plan calls for improvements such as the completion of hiking and biking trails, a new snack bar, and facilities to support many water and land based recreational and educational activities.

All of the scenarios involved ranking activities that are “most consistent” and “least consistent” with the lake and ecosystem. This ranking, which was published on the SFWater.org website and discussed at the community meeting on March 18, sparked the large attendance and much of the discussion at the meeting. As the meeting progressed, the reason for the large number of attendees became clear. Of the approximately 130 people in attendance, more than half appeared to be members or supporters of the Pacific Rod and Gun Club, who are concerned that their activities will be eliminated in the scenario that is adopted by SF and the PUC.

The club, a non-profit that has leased a 14 acre lakefront site from SF for the past 75 years, is on the “least consistent” use list, and is at risk to be eliminated from the new plan. Some residents and others do not believe that the shooting range is a good neighbor in this day and age, citing noise and pollution concerns. Others feel that the Club occupies too much space, is under-utilized, and most importantly the presence of a shooting range is not an appropriate use for the lakefront parcel.

Each of the approximately 50 speakers were given a minute to make their comments. All of the speakers were passionate in their ideas for the project and their visions for the future plan.

While several speakers were in support of the proposed Nature Center and of sailing and boating on the lake, others tried to make the case for adding the establishment of a Wildlife Rehabilitation Center/Hospital for treating sick or injured SF wildlife

THE LIFE BEFORE HER EYES

James Horner’s background music sets the tone for this gloomy flashback tale of two best friends, Diana (Evan Rachel Wood) and Maureen (Eva Amurri) as the high school teens who go through a Columbine-like massacre. The audience shares their P.O.V. as the nutjob closes in on them in the girls’ restroom. Troubled art history teacher Diana (Uma Thurman), 15 years later, and Brett Cullen have a young daughter who hides at her girls’ Catholic school. This is the first film by Vadim Perelman, post his exciting 2003 debut, House of Sand and Fog. He intentionally leaves the third act ending vague. magnolia/2929 Productions 105 min.

SMART PEOPLE

Welcome to suburban Pittsburgh where widower Prof. Lawrence Wetherhold (Dennis Quaid) teaches literature at Carnegie Mellon U. When he is diagnosed with a concussion by former student Dr. Janet Hartigan (Sarah Jessica Parker), he can no longer drive. His down-and-out adopted brother Charlie (Thomas Haden Church) moves in to become chauffeur. Daughter Vanessa, Ellen (Juno) Page, supplies ‘You Can’t Read,’ a sellable title for Dad’s book. Over time, Prof. and Dr. learn to love. Noam Murro directs in his auspicious debut. Language, brief teen drug-alcohol use, sexuality. Miramax-Groundswell 94 min.

STREET KINGS

A day in the life of South Central LA Det. Tom Ludlow, Keanu Reeves, has him drinking vodka on the job from airline-size bottles and being beaten up by a Korean gang who steal his wheels. When he slaughters them while rescuing two imprisoned girls, he’s a hero. Capt. Jack Wander (Forest Whitaker) has memorable lines, like: “Wash your mouth out with buckshot.” Tom and Det. Paul Diskant (Chris Evans) use informant Squiggly (Cedric “the Entertainer” Kyles) to get to cop killers. Hugh Laurie (House) portrays the bitter internal affairs chief. Story and shared screenplay by James Ellroy (L.A. Confidential); David Ayer directs with a tight rein. Strong violence, pervasive profanity. Fox Searchlight 107 min.

into the proposed uses. Currently the city has no center providing these services to the wild animal population.

Other speakers addressed the restoration of wetlands around the lake for migratory birds and the establishment of an off-leash dog park area. The members of the PUC were asked what the costs will be on this project and questioned on how the improvements and ongoing maintenance would be paid for.

By far, the members and supporters of the Pacific Rod and Gun Club were the most vocal and organized group. From occasional shooters, to award-winning teens clutching their trophies, the parade of speakers stated their case for keeping the club at the present location. Fred Henneman, who spoke on behalf of many of the club members, emphasized that handing out photos showing a full parking lot indicating usage by members has misrepresented some of the facts on under-utilization. The Club and their supporters see themselves as “good neighbors” working with the police department, providing sport shooting classes to the SF Unified School District, and giving people a place to safely learn and practice the sport of trap and target shooting. It was also noted they have been self-supporting in maintaining the site and paying rent to SF for 75 years.

Many speakers cited that the nearest ranges are in San Jose and Martinez and that closing the Lake Merced gun range would eliminate the chance for many residents to continue in the sport. Addressing pollution concerns, shooters have not used lead shot since 1994 moving to steel shot to comply with the State Water Board Guidelines on lead pollution. A member from the SF Water District in attendance stated that the district has tested for lead content in the lake for years and has never found anything above the regulated minimum. The Club stated that they are willing to work with the task force on a comprehensive solution that is fair and issued an open invitation to anyone to visit the Club and see how the site is utilized.

Animated and vocal, at times, the PUC staff had to caution the club members to keep their cheering and clapping under control.

As the parade of speakers wound down, the meeting ended with Ms. Gautier explaining that the

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MIT math professor Micky Ross (Kevin Spacey) recruits his six brightest students (including Ben: Jim Sturgess, brother of The Other Boleyn Girl, and Jill: Kate Bosworth) to count cards in Vegas. They fly in for the weekend and rapidly clean out hotel casinos, changing disguises while pocketing millions. The casino headbasher Cole (Laurence Fishburne) is onto them. The cinematography of Vegas is unique and fascinating. The plot goes through a confusing phase but all is clear by the denouement under Robert (Legally Blonde) Luketic’s direction, inspired by a true story. Ultimately, the audience holds the winning hand. Violence, sexual content, partial nudity. Columbia 123 min.

UNDER THE SAME MOON

Carlitos’ (Adrián Alonso, Zorro’s son in Legend of Zorro) mother Rosario (Kate del Castillo) moved from Juarez, Mexico to LA four years before. She saves her maid’s salary to send for her son a.s.a.p. When the nine-year-old leaves to join her without her knowledge, he knows he must get there by Sunday when she always phones. Very touching and tender, his vicissitudes make for a fascinating tale directed by Patricia Riggen, guest-starring America (“Ugly Betty”) Ferrera as a student helping Carlitos across the border. Spanish w/subtitles & English. Fox Searchlight 109 min.

THE VISITOR

When widowed New England economics professor Walter Veil (Richard Jenkins) treks to his Greenwich Village apartment for the first time in months, he is surprised to find it has been sublet to two foreigners, illegally in the U.S. He bonds with Tarek (Haaz Sleiman) over the bongos. When Syrian Tarek is seized and threatened with deportation, Walter comes alive and drops his passive persona. Then Tarek’s mother arrives to further complicate matters. Writer-director Tom McCarthy can be as proud of this constantly surprising and thoughtful film as his first, The Station Agent. Overture Films 103 min.

SFPUC will keep the public comment portion of the planning process open until May 9th.

Anyone who is interested in contacting the PUC with views on the planning process can respond by sending e-mail to the following address: LakeMerced@SFWater.org.

The planning process is expected to continue through February 2009, when a final plan is to be presented for approval. Judging from last nights’ meeting

The PUC still has a lot of work to do to satisfy the demands of all of the interested parties and find a way to pay for the improvements.

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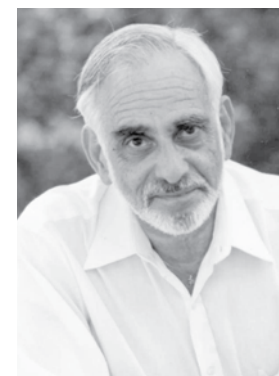
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ON THE PLUS SIDE

Don't Remember Mama

by Hank Basayne



Do you remember Spike Jones & His City Slickers? What a sassy bunch we were, making a hit of their outrageous 1942 recording of "In Der Fuehrer's Face!" What a peculiar, devastating, and satisfying way to heap scorn and ridicule on our then-enemy.

In a more sentimental and optimistic vein, I remember "I'll Be Seeing You," "When The Lights Go On Again," "I Don't Want To Walk Without You," and "Something To Remember You By." I can hum the tunes even if I can't recollect all the words.

If you, too, can recall those gems, you are also getting long in the tooth. But I think you're cluttering up your mind and memory with not especially useful stuff, not leaving enough space for more important things. Unfortunately we haven't yet learned to add more megabytes to our human hard drives; our mental storage space is sorely limited.

Marcel Proust wrote a long and impenetrable novel (sixteen volumes!) called "Remembrance of Things Past." Wallowing around in search of times

gone by seems to me like using a compass with the four directions unreadable and illegible. The nuggets he uncovers, both bitter and sweet, may appeal to the voyeur, but I doubt if it advances life in the Twenty-First Century.

In like manner, Vladimir Nabakov offered us his memoir, entitled "Speak, Memory." It's a rambling, intensely personal and sometimes clever collection of scenes from his life.

I say, Just shut up, memory.

I find it impossible simultaneously to live in both the past and the present. If you're a "Rashomon" fan you know how each eyewitness to an event can come up with an entirely different scenario. Our ability to recall is woefully unreliable, our current selves are constantly and selectively interpreting and re-interpreting the past, attributing meanings that may have no relation to what actually happened.

To be sure, I can sometimes find pleasure in reverie, wool-gathering and reminiscence. It can be fun to play What If with the past, concocting stories to tell myself, assigning blame or motivations to others, mentally re-living my handful of moments of triumph-- and playing clean-up, of course, with those choices I made that did not turn out so well.

But who wants to squander time fingering dry, dead pressed flowers when they could instead inhale the fragrance and intoxicate the eye with a bouquet of vibrant, colorful, live ones?

The tragedy of memory loss in our later years is in evidence all around us. Perhaps, because we are living longer, we now tend to outlive the "little gray cells" that Poirot uses so well. The old stuff seems to stay firmly lodged inside the cranium, while recent information and events are terribly transient. I can remember the name of my third grade teacher, and our telephone number when I was seven, but I'm hard pressed to remember the name of that nice chap I met last month who works for Microsoft. But then, no one promised me that the universe would work in ways that were just or helpful.

Remembering Mama, remembering that Night to Remember, remembering Pearl Harbor or the Maine, can help us revisit warm and fuzzy places, or rekindle old excitements. But like a diet restricted only to cream puffs and caviar, it can get in the way of true nourishment, preventing us from savoring the joys of the present.

Those of us who are aging for the very first time can look around us at those "old" people who share our chronological age and notice that we have choices: We can enlist in the cohort of Complainers with their endless organ recitals of aches and pains and failing body parts. We can sign up with the If Only-s who wish they had sold their Nasdaq holdings at the high, or the Grumblers whose kids never call them. We can join the Nostalgics who are loudly sure that things aren't as good as they used to be, or the Poor Me's whose list of miseries are endless.

Or we can pull up our socks, get ourselves up and doing, make the most of whatever cards we still hold.

I'm for staying in the Now, looking ahead, and moving onward.

Now, where did I put my keys?

As the Queen remarked in "Alice Through the Looking Glass," "It's a poor sort of memory that only works backwards."

EDUCATION & OTHER GOOD STUFF

by Carol Kocivar

Thank a Teacher Today

A couple of weeks ago—as I walked into the principal's office—I heard a voice calling my name. Hmm. Strange. I've never been in this school before. Even stranger...in an instant... I recognized the voice and the face that went with it.

My daughter is now...as they say...a young adult. But in that instant, I heard the voice of her kindergarten teacher. Now formally retired, she is a substitute when needed at the San Francisco elementary school near her home.

"Lucky kids. Lucky school", I thought.

And I remembered a "thank you" note I wrote years and years ago.

It was May, the end of my daughter's first year of school. I wanted to let her teacher know that my daughter had looked forward to going to school every single day. I wanted her to know that my daughter sang the phonics lessons at home just before going to bed. I wanted her to know that we hung the monthly calendar art projects on the refrigerator door.

As I heard my name, I thought "Wow, what a memory." How can she remember my name?

As I turned, she asked how my two children were... again by name.

I couldn't help but ask. With the hundreds and hundreds of students over a career of teaching, how did she remember my children's names?

She smiled. She told me she remembered all the children. Every one.

Is there a teacher who has made a difference for you and your child?

In schools throughout San Francisco and throughout California, there are thousands and thousands of teachers who every day help our children develop the skills they need to become responsible adults.

From encouraging the love of reading to sparking an interest in science or the arts, our teachers are on the front line of the future.

In 1984, the National PTA created teacher appreciation week in May.

I encourage you to take a moment to say "thank you." You can do it in many ways. Here are some ideas from the PTA :

E-mail a thank you.

Ask parents to drop by for a before-school coffee reception for teachers.


Ask parents to contribute classroom materials, such as poster board, stickers, high-quality chalk, stamps and ink pads, books, and other supplies, to their children's teachers.

Create a wall of fame for teachers; post quotes from students, parents, and principals on the special contributions of each teacher.

Make banners recognizing Teacher Appreciation Week and hang them in the halls and common areas.

Present each teacher with a certificate of appreciation at a schoolwide assembly.

You can find more teacher appreciation ideas on the California State PTA web site at www.capta.org.



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SERIOUS CRIMES GOING UNENFORCED IN SAN FRANCISCO

by Jack Kaye



All right, perhaps calling them serious crimes may be overstating the violations. Admittedly, there are much more heinous offenses that occur much less frequently. Crimes like murder, rape, kidnapping, aggravated assault and armed robbery are worse. So is the dealing of dangerous drugs like crack cocaine and heroin. These crimes physically injure innocent human beings and make daily life a little less pleasurable.

But what of a crime committed daily by hundreds of otherwise nice, law-abiding citizens. Many, especially in San Francisco, have taken all the right positions on the difficult issues of the day: war, immigration, poverty, taxes, medical coverage, nutrition and education. They understand that we live in a world village and that all of our actions affect others. And yet they repeatedly violate the law, inconveniencing a lot of innocent people. Why do they do it?

The crime they commit reflects almost every bad human characteristic: selfishness, inconsideration, laziness, lack of creativity. impatience and arrogance. It represents an absolute flouting of the law and is committed in plain sight, underlining its impunity.

The crime is rarely enforced in San Francisco. SFPD officers will actually drive around the crime scene going into the opposing lane of traffic to get away from it. Controllors, charged with the primary enforcement responsibility, are reluctant to engage the offenders.

The crime is double parking. Nice people do it for a few minutes while they do their errands. There is the ATM, the cleaners, the bakery, the little one's nursery school, that overpriced cup of coffee, we just can't live without. Some of us feel that we are too busy or important to take the time to find parking. We know that there is a greater chance of getting a ticket for an expired meter than for double parking, so we double park.

When the function of parking control was taken away from the SFPD and given to a separate department, police lost interest in it. Since there are no perks and no promotional possibilities for police, many tend to ignore parking problems like double parking. Parking controllers, who are not armed, feel intimidated to enforce these violations without police backup.

The controllers fear that some of these double parkers are not the nice people we think them to be but rather may be sociopaths who don't give a damn about parking regulations and are willing to physically demonstrate their displeasure.

In the meantime, the City's streets are getting congested with obstacle courses of double parked cars

on both sides of the street. Our byways will soon resemble the arteries of a person with advanced heart disease with veins that are clogged with plaque.

Some of the best examples of outright and constant double parking can be found on Union Street; on 9th Avenue between Lincoln and Irving; on Irving between 9th and 7th; on Clement Street and on Chestnut in the Marina. On any given moment of any given day before the stores close, there will be at least one double-parked car in each of these busy locations. If you go to Sacramento Street near Laurel Village, you may get to see cars double parked in both directions to allow its inhabitants to chat.

Of course, it should be noted, that we are all so busy nowadays that parking just becomes too time consuming. We have our endless cell phone calls, our unquestionable need for coffee, our many business transactions aimed at making the most for doing the least. We have our jobs and careers to which we are so dedicated for our daily bread, which we must share selflessly with whatever family we've been able to amass. We have our routines and we are always behind schedule.

And then when we want to do the right thing and wait for a parking space about to be vacated, we sit idling while the person in the parked car enjoys the enviable position for as long as humanly possible. While we wait patiently and proudly, we watch the parked drivers check their appearance, apply needed enhancements, check their voicemail, return phone calls to people desperately awaiting their reply, while our engine is running and the people behind us are getting impatient.

So what are we to do? Maybe, we could eliminate some of the many things we feel we absolutely have to do. Maybe we could leave early so that we are not rushed when looking for a space. We could try to remind ourselves that there are actually other people out there. We are not alone. We should consider their needs as well as our own, even though ours are so much more interesting.

The mayor and the well-reimbursed directors of the city's parking enforcement agency could decide that they are going to crack down on this socially unacceptable behavior. The mayor could have the SFPD motorcycle officers provide backup for Parking Controllers in the congested areas.

The city would gain needed revenue that could be used to pay for more Parking Controllers, the city streets would be less congested and driving time and fuel use would decrease. And all of us would find ourselves more motivated to behave like the caring, enlightened people we know we really are.

Look for John (Jack) Kaye's new novel, "Reflections of a Freelance Monk" available at the West Portal Bookstore, Green Apple Books on Clement and Books, Inc. in Laurel Village.

Contributions (Cont. from p. 1)

were received on the same date, October 19, 2007. On the sewage contract, Elsbernd, along with nine of his colleagues, sided with Norcal. Supervisor Elsbernd is not alone - many of these individual contributors show up in other local campaign finance filings as well. It's a cost of doing business.

S&S Trucking was bumping against one of the hard facts of US politics: there is not a surplus of individuals who can afford or choose to write campaign checks. This is true at all levels. Even George Bush, who raised over \$360 million in 2004 to win re-election, had approximately 161,000 contributors who gave more than \$200, and 61,700 that gave more than \$2,000.

Concerning federal campaign spending, Spencer Overton, a George Washington University law professor wrote (Univ. of Pennsylvania Law Review, 2004):

"Less than one percent of the U.S. population makes financial contributions over \$200 to federal candidates, and these contributions represent the vast majority of funds that candidates receive from individuals. Of those who contribute over \$200, approximately 85 percent have household incomes of \$100,000 or more, 70 percent are male, and 96 percent are white."

There has not been a comparable study of local campaign spending, but one survey of a successful 2003 campaign that raised \$8 million consisted of an estimated 1200 individual donors. Not all of the \$8 million was raised from those individuals, however, since corporate contributions to local campaigns were legal in 2003.

The business of winning a campaign is expensive. New York's late Senator Patrick Moynihan complained about the class bias that was inherent in the new politics of the 1960s that sought to increase voter participation at all levels of American government. To win, candidates or proposition campaigns must persuade thousands voters who may be disengaged from the details of what is on the ballot. Campaigns have to test market their best arguments, figure out ways to derail the opposition's best case, and communicate their pitch either in print or through media. In a San Francisco citywide contest, a credible campaign has to reach at least 250,000 frequent voters. In San Francisco's District 7 alone over 50,000 people are registered to vote.

Mayor Gavin Newsom's opposes Norcal winning this contract. One basic reason is that his political career is so established at this point that he needs general fund dollars more than he does Norcal. He can raise money nationally whether he runs for Governor in 2010 or the United States Senate in 2012. So he has outgrown this comparatively small pool of donors. As Mayor he needs to fund police academy classes, retain psyche beds at SF General Hospital and buy MUNI bus parts. In a down budget cycle he is looking for every dollar to accomplish such goals while minimizing his exposure to bad headlines - as Newsom prepares to launch a statewide campaign, that is one of his last remaining challenges.

Supervisor Chris Daly opposed the Norcal contract because he is irreverent, and for him to defy local convention is expected. It's part of his makeup.

However, for Board of Supervisor incumbents who live with political necessity and are figuring out how to pay for consultants, polls or postage without risking the ire of the Teamster's Union, siding with Norcal makes transactional sense. It's an established firm with a long history of knowing what it takes to make San Francisco government work. The extra \$3 million cost of the sludge contract, even in a tough budget cycle, is ancillary. Any guilt can be rationalized on the basis that S&S Trucking may successfully litigate their way to this contract despite the Board of Supervisors.

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Kopp: High Speed Rail (Cont. from p.1)

pollution without an operating subsidy from taxpayers, is critical for the sturdiness of our regional and statewide economy. Using proven, steel wheel-on-steel tracks train technology, first constructed by Japan for the 1964 International Olympics, a California high speed rail system will contribute to satisfying forecasted intercity travel demands in 2020 at 2-3 times less the cost of trying, against environmental odds, to build airports and freeways.

Since introducing the legislation creating the California High Speed Rail Authority as a State Senator in 1996, I have actively emphasized the most logical transportation option for Californians, carrying passengers about 425 miles in its first phase of development from downtown San Francisco to downtown Los Angeles in two and one-half hours, with an additional 15 minutes to Anaheim and its glorious new transportation center. Subsequent second phase extensions of service to San Diego and Sacramento will produce a nearly 800-mile system spanning not just San Francisco and Los Angeles, but the Central Valley cities of Bakersfield, Fresno, Merced, Modesto, Stockton, Sacramento as well as San Diego, Riverside, San Bernardino and Palmdale. While the entire statewide project contains an estimated construction cost of \$42,000,000,000, the first phase from Anaheim and Los Angeles to the Bay Area will cost approximately \$30,000,000,000.

Appointed to the California High Speed Rail Authority by the State Senate in June 2006 and elected and still serving as Chairman since August 2006, I have presided over an evolving financial plan, encouraged by the Governor, his Authority appointees, enthusiastic legislators and business leaders, which generally rests on a one-third contribution from California, one-third from the federal government and one-third from private investors. That's right: private investors. State Treasurer Bill Lockyer advises that approximately 37 funds devoted to investment in public structures now exist, ranging from Wall Street firms to the California State Teachers Retirement System and the California Public Employees Retirement System.

In 1994 an act of Congress, sponsored by then

Congresswoman Lynn Schenck of San Diego, now a member of the High Speed Rail Authority Board of Directors, identified 11 high speed rail corridors in the United States, including Southern California to the Bay Area. Last November, Congressman Jim Costa of Fresno County introduced legislation establishing a National High-Speed Rail Authority and companion legislation to provide money to build such systems throughout the United States. No other state has progressed in high speed rail development to the extent of our Authority. On November 4, 2008, for example, California voters can approve a \$9,950,000,000 bond measure to commence construction of the project's first phase and establish a predicate for matching federal and private dollars. If approved by voters (a late February 2008 poll demonstrated a 58% "yes" vote), we will begin construction by early 2010, using bond proceeds to complete the engineering design which has been delayed by insufficient annual state general fund appropriations. Actual construction will require approximately 8-10 years for completion.

The second phase of extension to San Diego and Sacramento will cost in future dollars another approximate \$12,000,000,000, but require only an additional five years for completion. A one-way fare for the electrified, 150-minute ride from San Francisco to Los Angeles, will cost \$55 in future dollars. Thus far, no organized opposition to the bond issue exists.

Moreover, so-called "clean up" legislation, introduced by Assemblywoman Fiona Ma, a distinctive high speed rail system advocate, and 15 coauthors, removes any legal impediment to private investment, prohibits no more than 10% of the bond proceeds for environmental studies, planning and engineering activities, requires our Authority, prior to awarding a construction contract for each segment of construction, to present a detailed funding plan for that segment and identify the full cost of segment construction and the sources of all money needed to complete such segment. It mandates priority in segment selection to those segments which require the least amount of bond funds as a percentage of total construction costs. The Authority must also consider the utility of that segment for other passenger rail services and ensure that any other passenger service

provided on such segment won't result in any operating or maintenance cost to the Authority. To preserves grasslands, the bill also bars any station between Merced and San Jose.

Even with improvements in automobile fuel efficiency, high speed rail will save 22,000,000 barrels of oil per year by 2030. Comparing the energy required to transport a passenger one kilometer, the high speed train needs but one-third of the energy of an airplane and one-fifth of an automobile trip. High speed rail regenerates about 20% of its electrical energy by consumption banking. It decreases air pollutant statewide and in all regional air basins by approximately 17.6 billion pounds of carbon dioxide per year by 2030. Those reductions in carbon dioxide emissions increase with higher ridership such as the estimated 100,000,000 trips by 2030. With fully grade-separated tracks, and a 50-foot right-of-way, most of the system will be at-grade alongside existing rail and highways.

California would need construction of nearly 3,000 miles of new freeways, plus five airport runways and 90 departure gates in the next 22 years, at a cost of \$82,000,000,000, to match the capacity of California's high speed rail project. Ridership engineers forecast annual gross revenue of \$2,600,000,000 to \$3,900,000,000 by 2030 and net operating revenue of approximately \$3,000,000 annually to repay bondholders and private investors. Moreover, no existing steel wheel-on-steel tracks system in the world requires an operating subsidy from taxpayers.

Based upon tedious preparations since 1996, the time is now for Californians to protect their transportation future with passage of the high speed rail bond issue this November. Do it for our children and grandchildren.

(Superior Court Judge Quentin Kopp retired from the San Mateo Superior Court in 2004, but has continued to exercise judicial responsibilities in San Mateo and other California counties as a member of the Assigned Judges Program. A former State Senator, 1986-1998, and San Francisco Board of Supervisors member, 1972-1986, he was reappointed by the State Senate to the California High Speed Rail Authority for a four year term commencing January 2008.)



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Help Us Transform Your Muni System

TEP preliminary proposals aim to transform Muni into a first-rate transit system to reduce congestion, decrease pollution and get people where they want to go efficiently, safely. Proposals range from more service on the busiest routes to eliminating routes with the fewest customers. You can help shape these proposals to improve Muni – come to a community meeting and share your feedback.

Sat., April 19th at 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
West Portal Elementary, 5 Lenox Way at Taraval St. Wheelchair access through Claremont St. school yard. *Nearby Muni routes: 17, 48, K, L & M to West Portal Station*

Thursday, April 24th at 6 p.m.-8 p.m.
Jewish Community Center, 3200 California St. at Presidio Ave. *Nearby Muni routes: 1, 1BX, 2, 3, 4 & 43*

Sat., April 26th at 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Dianne Feinstein Elementary, 2550 25th Ave. at Vicente St. *Nearby Muni routes: L, 28 & 66*

Monday, April 28th at 6 p.m.-8 p.m.
Southeast Community Facility, 1800 Oakdale Ave. at Phelps St. *Nearby Muni routes: T, 23, 24, 44 & 54*

Wed., April 30 at 6 p.m.-8 p.m.
City College Mission Campus, 1125 Valencia St. at 22nd St. *Nearby Muni routes: 14, 26, 48, 49 & 67*

Sat., May 3 at 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Jean Parker Elementary, 840 Broadway St. at Powell St. *Nearby Muni routes: 9X, 12, 30, 45, Powell & Mason Cable Car*

Monday, May 5 at 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m.
Visitation Valley Elementary, 55 Schwerin St. at Visitation Ave. *Nearby Muni routes: 9X, 9BX, & 56*


Sat., May 10 at 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy, 4235 19th St. at Diamond St. *Nearby Muni routes: F, K, L, M, 24, 33 & 35*

Monday, May 12 at 6 p.m.-8 p.m.
West Bay Conference Center, 1290 Fillmore St. at Eddy St. *Nearby Muni routes: 5, 22, 31 & 38*

Wed., May 14 at 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m.
Bessie Carmichael Elementary, 375 Seventh St. at Harrison St. *Nearby Muni routes: 9X, 12, 14X, 19 & 47*

Sat., May 17th at 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Mission YMCA, 4080 Mission Street at Bosworth St. *Nearby Muni routes: 14, 23 & 49*

For more information, go online www.sftep.com or call 311

 All sites are wheelchair accessible. Materials in large print will be available at the meeting. To request assistive listening devices, a sign language interpreter or other accommodations, please call 415.226.1313, TTY: 415.701.2323. Providing at least 72 hours advance notice will help to ensure availability.

Interpretation in Cantonese and Spanish will be provided. There will be a FastPass raffle at each meeting.

Calendar



Curse of the Starving Class

Shepard's Timely Beyond Realism Message at A.C.T.

April 25 - May 25 American Conservatory Theater 415 Geary St. Review: Annette Lust

If naturalism depicts life without "idealization or the avoidance of the ugly", Sam Shepard's "Curse of the Starving Class" that just opened at A.C.T. is a model example. In his 1977 play, expertly directed by Peter DuBois regarding the play's naturalistic tone, Shepard presents a family in which the members do not relate to one another but even attempt to destroy one other both physically and emotionally. The alcoholic father has kept his family frigid- aire empty. Frequent opening the door to view its empty shelves symbolizes the content of the piece in which Shepard's message about the impossibility of achieving the American Dream is developed. There are still other naturalistic

effects that make the audience cringe. Wesley, the young son's pissing on stage on his sister's posters for a presentation she is preparing about how to cut up a chicken and the hungry Wesley's arrival on stage with bloody hands after killing a lamb (a real one baaing away appears on stage before he kills it) are a few examples. All of these gruesome effects demonstrate the disintegration of a family in which the alcoholic father has indebted them to the point of being forced to sell their house and land to swindlers. Throughout Shepard keeps pounding his frightful message about the impossibility of throwing off the curse of the American common people as they persist in believing in their fantasy of rising above their demise.

Pamela Reed as the "not in touch with reality" mother, Jud Williford as Wesley the beaten down son attempting

to hold up the disintegrating family, Nicole Lowrance as the rebel daughter taking revenge on her father's creditors by shooting bullets all over the club where he drinks, Jack Willis as the father moving from alcoholism and violent despondency to recovery and back again to despondency, all offer along with the other cast members strong characterizations.

Scenery by Loy Arcenas, lighting by Japhy Weidman and costumes by Lydia Taji reflect the exaggerated realism of the play.

Shepard's 1977 play exceeds realism to enter into stark naturalism in which he presents a sordid tableau-so timely today- of what is happening to the illusions of the everyday American family.

"Curse of the Starving Class" plays through May 25. For information call 415.749.2228 or visit www.act-sf.org.

ARCHITECTURE WALKING TOUR

Every Day 11:30 am & 3pm | Walking San Francisco's Financial District is loaded with secret gems and hidden jewels of the city! In addition to learning about the history of the buildings in the Financial District, you will also discover special public outdoor spaces, hidden treasures and special rooftop gardens. Galleria Park Hotel, 191 Sutter Street (nr. Kearny) Reservations Needed! .264.8824 www.architecturesf.com.

INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Daily Apr 24-May 8 | The longest-running film festival in the Americas. The Festival attracts an annual audience of more than 80,000 at multiple venues throughout the city www.fest08.sffs.org for calendar.

MAKER FAIRE BAY AREA 2008

Sat-Sun May 3-May 4 | Make and Craft Magazine A two-day, family-friendly event that celebrates arts, crafts, engineering, and science projects and the Do-It-Yourself (DIY) mindset. It's for the creative, resourceful people who like to tinker and love to make things. San Mateo County Fairgrounds, 2495 S. Delaware Street, San Mateo

CINCO DE MAYO

Sat May 3, 10am -5pm Annual SF Festival showcases the very best of Mexican, Latin American and Chicano cultures with a diverse array of music, dance and artistry for the entire family to enjoy. Dolores Park Dolores & Church

BIG BASH AT THE CLUBHOUSE

Sun May 4, 2-7pm | A five-hour launch party for the Bird & Beckett Cultural Legacy Project with bands, poets, food & high hilarity

At 4pm Reading: Dan Liberthson (Miraloma Park) from his book, "The Pitch is on the Way: Poems About Baseball and Life" www.bird-beckett.com Clubhouse O'Shaughnessy Blvd., At Del Vale

9TH HOW WEIRD STREET FAIRE

Sun May 4, 11:11am - 5:55pm | An experiment in creating peace, and a

benefit for the non-profit World Peace Through Technology Organization. For its ninth year, this fun-filled event is moving to a new location near downtown San Francisco. Performance artists and thousands of people in colorful costumes dancing in the streets. Howard Street @ 12th, Requested donation of \$10 (or \$5 in costumes, kids are free)

CINEMA:NEW YEAR BABY

Wed May 7, 6-7:30pm | A special screening of "New Year Baby" by Socheata Poeuv. Born in a Thai refugee camp on Cambodian New Year, filmmaker Socheata Poeuv grew up in the United States never knowing that her family had survived the Khmer Rouge genocide. In "New Year Baby," she embarks on a journey to Cambodia in search of the truth and why her family's history had been buried in secrecy for so long. A panel discussion follows the film. Main Library Koret Auditorium, 100 Larkin St. SFIFF/CLOSING NIGHT

Thur May 8, 7pm SF International Film Festival: Gonzo: The Life and Work of Dr. Hunter S. Thompson West Coast Premiere. Castro Theatre, 429 Castro Street www.fest08.sffs.org

BIRDWATCHERS NEEDED

Sat. May 10, 8:30 to noon | Volunteers will convene at the Crissy Field Center. Monitoring materials are provided to teams consisting of both amateur and expert birders. Golden Gate Audubon Soc. jrobinson@goldengateaudubon.org, or 510-919-5873

BOOK A LIBRARIAN

Tue May 13, 10am-12pm | Do you need personalized help using a computer or the Internet? This program is offering 30-minute slots of one-on-one computer training sessions with a librarian. During this session, a librarian can provide instruction in the use of the library catalog, subscription reference databases, the Internet, Web based e-mail and applications supported by library computers. Sorry, but the library cannot offer technical support or assist

with any problems patrons may be having with their own personal computers/laptops. Call (415) 557-4400 to book an appointment or for more information.

GOING GREEN WITH YOUR FAMILY

Thur May 15, 10:30am-12:30pm | From small steps to world-changing strategies, learn how to be green at home with your family and discover the fabulous resources available for city kids and their caregivers. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey St.

HALLELUJAH! I'M A BUM!

Tue May 20, 7pm | Richard Wahlberg brings original 78 rpm records from his music archives and plays them on an historic, open-horn victrola from 1906 to capture the sounds and the spirit of the 1930s. This is part of the Library's celebration of the 75th anniversary of the WPA (Works Progress Administration) and it is fitting that you will hear it at the West Portal Branch Library, one of the three WPA branch libraries in San Francisco. West Portal Branch, 190 Lenox Wy.

LIVING WITH COYOTES

Thurs. May 22, 7:30pm | Filmmaker Melissa Peabody, "San Francisco-Still Wild at Heart," is enthusiastically

recommend this for schools, libraries, and anyone who's interested in animals and/or nature. Randall Museum, 119 Museum Way, 554-9600

ARE YOU GAME?

Thur May 24, 4-5:30pm | Get your game on! Think you've got what it takes to battle it out with other local teens in Rockband or dance it off with your friends in Dance Dance Revolution? So what are you waiting for, come to the Parkside Branch Public Library and show us what you've got! Parkside Branch, 1200 Taraval St.

OCEAN VIEW BOOK CLUB

Wed May 28, 6pm | Please contact the Ocean view Branch at 355-5615 for the current selection. Ocean View meeting Room 245 Randolph St. (at Ramsell)

LITQUAK

Tues May 20, 7pm | The Library Presents Noe and Nearby Poets: Debbie Yee, Keith Ekiss, Pireeni Sundaralingam and Colm Ó Riain, Kirsten Lee Andersen and Zack Rogow will read from their work and join the audience for a reception afterwards. Space is limited; please call 355-3707 to reserve your spot. Noe Valley Meeting Room 451 Jersey St.



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Judges Answer a Few Questions



Photo: Jane Cleland

June 3rd Election Asks Voters to Pick a Judge

Judge Thomas Mellon, Jr. faced two challengers in the race for seat 12 on the Superior Court of San Francisco at the Bar Association’s Forum on April 17th. Mary Mallen, an attorney, and Supervisor Gerardo Sandoval have filed to replace the Judge appointed 14 years ago by Republican Governor Pete Wilson.

Judge Thomas Mellon, Jr. continually referred to his 14 years of experience on the bench as the main reason that he is best qualified. Referring to the jury system, “We need to be very well organized to make that process as pleasant a process as possible and when you do, you increase the quality of the jury service considerably,” he said.

Mary Mallen pointed to her extensive experience as both Assistant District Attorney and Deputy Public Defender as well as her time as Legislative Aide to newly elected Supervisor Gavin Newsom. “I have tried 25 trials in the felony and misdemeanor Courts of San Francisco. Of my 25 trials, 24 of them met my pretrial objectives. In addition to my extensive trial experience, I have represented both the people of San Francisco and hundreds of its indigent citizens in serious felony cases.”

Supervisor Gerardo Sandoval stressed his life experience and philosophy as an alternative to the background and temperament of the current Judge. “My parents came here from Mexico. My dad and my mom came over in the early ‘50s, my two older brothers and sisters were born in Mexico and my older sister and I were born in the United States. We straddled both sides of the border. In my neighborhood most people did not go to college and in the early ‘70s it was not a pretty place, where the public had largely abandoned the inner city,” he said.

Should no candidate receive more than 50% of the vote, there will be a runoff election in November.

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77 Amber Dr	4	3	2	N/A	04/15/08	950,000
436 Gold Mine Dr	4	3.5	2	3,000	04/16/08	1,360,000
441 Dellbrook	3	2	2	1,127	03/27/08	805,000
source: sfmls						



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West of Twin Peaks Central Council (Cont from p. 1)

submitted, no plans for access from 19th Avenue, no environmental review, and no community benefits.

We'll continue to keep you informed on the meddlesome bike plan, removing parking from Portola Avenue (keep telling your supervisor NO), and the important interim control legislation to be introduced soon by Supervisor Elsbernd addressing the unprecedented development heading our way. If you ever think it doesn't matter, or you are too busy to be involved, watch HBO's spectacular series John Adams for a delightful history lesson on why being a conscientious citizen matters and the value of principled positions and the willingness to fight for them.

Carmen Policy articulated San Francisco's best chance to keep the San Francisco 49ers is voters affirming Proposition G on the June ballot. As usual the questions were genuine, informed, and made for a good discussion. I thought it was great information for voters, and important to hear of development plans other than the ones facing our side of town.

West of Twin Peaks Central Council will continue to strive to the highest standards to make sure regular, ol' taxpaying, hardworking, civic minded people are represented on the issues that effect our neighborhood.

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www.tpobserver.com

POLICE BLOTTER



Breaking News | Tuesday, April 29 Taraval Officers Have Been Saturating the Sunset due to Recent Multiple Thefts from Vehicles. Officers Under The Direction of Lt. Michael Caplan Just Detained Two Individuals Who Broke Into a Vehicle at 39th and Noriega

Breaking News | Murder Occurs From Stabbing Incident On Sunday, April 27 Taraval Plainclothes Officers Arrest Suspect Returning to the Scene of the Crime at 2:00 am Monday, April 28, 2008. More Information Later Today in the Sunday Report.

We have experienced a number of auto burglaries in the area of St. Ignatius College Preparatory School over the past few days. Officers from Taraval will be making frequent passing calls in uniform and in plainclothes. You can help---please call us if you see suspicious persons or vehicles and note the descriptions carefully to give to dispatch.

To see the complete month's reports, go to:
www.tpobserver.com.

To receive a daily, complete police report e-mailed to you, call 759-3100

CRITICAL INFORMATION

911.....Emergency

553-8090.....Emergency from Cell Phone

553-0123.....Police Non-Emergency

575-4444.....Anonymous Tip Line

311.....Any City Department



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Clean Up the Shipyard *Transform a Neighborhood*



This June you have the chance to help transform the most neglected corner of our city. Since 1974 the Hunters Point Shipyard has been largely abandoned and the toxic clean up has been underfunded, moving at a snail's pace.

After ten years of planning and hundreds of community meetings there is a process in place to bring life to the Shipyard — at no new cost to taxpayers.

Proposition G will speed the long-awaited clean up of toxins at the Shipyard site. It will bring up to 10,000 homes, with as many as 25% being entry level, affordable homes and apartments; 300 acres of parks and open space; and over 8,000 new jobs.



Lennar Homes of California, Inc., 49 Stevenson St., Suite 600, San Francisco, CA 94105

On June 3, Speed Up the Clean Up, Vote Yes on G

Stern Grove Tragedy (Cont. from p. 3)

been inspected since the five year old report, because the operation is ongoing, and couldn't speculate as to the progress of that process. "The removal of designated dangerous trees has been fully implemented," she said.

Brian Spiegleman, an arborist who supervises the treetopping operations in the park, examined the tree and the fallen section at the scene of the accident. "It was a 60 to 80 year-old Coastal Redwood tree that appeared to be sound, a section of the tree with no decay or disease," he said, "it was not a limb of the tree, but a secondary trunk that split from the main tree." He estimated the tree at 100 feet. He had not seen the assessment before he examined the tree, however, he told the Observer. The section of the trunk was from tree #1243, as identified by the tag attached to the tree. The Tree Management Plan that assigned this tree a hazard rating of 8 on a scale of 12 and the "target" of the hazard as the parking lot in which Kathleen Bolton and her car were crushed.

Mary McAllister, frequent critic of Rec and Park wrote the Observer that "the hazardous trees that remain in Stern Grove are even more dangerous than when they were identified in 2003 because hundreds of trees at the western end of the park have been removed. The wind enters this park—which is shaped like a wind tunnel—from the west. The remaining trees are exposed to more wind and that makes them more dangerous. Trees develop their defenses against the wind in a specific environment. When they are suddenly exposed to more wind, they are more vulnerable because they don't have the root structure, limb structure, bark structure to withstand more wind. All this was said (and written) many times to the Dept, the Commission, the mayor, and the Urban Forestry Council. I asked for a wind study that would have phased the tree removal to prevent the failures that are now occurring in the park. It fell on deaf ears."

In a letter to the Rec and Park Commission, Ms. McAllister notes "Comparing the Tree Management Plan with a visual inspection of this area suggests that many hazardous trees remain in Stern Grove. Apparently, the Recreation and Park Department has not taken the actions recommended in 2003 by the Tree Management Plan for Stern Grove. The death of Kathleen Bolton suggests that the public is in danger in Stern Grove until all of the actions recommended by the Tree Management Plan are implemented.

Therefore, I am simultaneously informing the press of this dangerous situation in the hope that the public will be informed. I think the public should be in a position to decide for themselves if they wish to take the risk of continuing to visit this park. If I were the Recreation and Park Department, I would consider closing portions of this park until they are safe. Certainly, the Department will have even greater liability if they choose to expose the public to further harm after this fatal reminder of the risks.

I have written the Department and the Commission and testified to the Commission and the mayor many times about the hazardous trees in Stern Grove, and other parks as well. In conclusion, I quote from my letter that was delivered to the Commission during my testimony on May 5, 2004: 'If massive tree failure occurs in this park, resulting in the destruction of property or life, the Recreation and Park Department will be liable for compensation because there is substantial public record that these failures were predicted and could have been avoided by responsible preventive measures.'

"Wherever there are trees, there is the possibility of failure," Spiegleman said, "whenever you are under a tree this can happen." Asked about the report that a park user heard a loud noise, similar to a gunshot, he said that noises frequently accompany a falling branch, but that the noise "may not have alerted Ms. Bolton to look up," because the public does not understand the dangers from above that come with the presence of trees. He conjectured that the combination of strong wind gusts coming at the wrong angle could cause failure to limbs and trees, and that the winds could weaken a limb



Kathleen Bolton began her career as a nurse at New England Deaconess Hospital in Boston. When she was 18 years old she worked as a critical care and surgical nurse for the National Medical Consultants, also in Boston. She moved to the Bay Area to attend Sonoma State University, where she received her bachelor degree. She was a Nursing Honor Society recipient, presidential scholar and graduated with distinction. She held a variety of jobs within her profession as well as pursuing her interests in film and her passion for dogs. She served at St. Luke's Hospital as emergency room and critical-care nurse and worked in public health and case management, hospice and home care. She was a familiar face throughout the AIDS epidemic, working for the SF Home Care Agency beginning in 1989 and dedicating much of her free time to people with AIDS/HIV. She was active in PAWS, Pets Are Wonderful Support.

As Medical-Legal Nurse Consultant, her services included screening for merit, causation, liability, damages, and standards of care, she frequently assisted the courts, lending her expertise as a witness for cases at trial. Even though she was not an attorney, she was a member of the Bar Association and served as President of the American Association of Legal Nurse Consultants, Bay Area Chapter. She testified to the Senate House Subcommittee on Aging and presented her written work on geriatrics.

Most recently she consulted with filmmakers, adding considerable realism to documentary film and commercials, using her first-hand experience with hospital routine and procedures as well as patient behavior.

Her passion for dogs led to another avenue as professional dog walker and trainer. She owned and operated Dog Heaven and provided shelter and refuge to countless dogs. She found homes for many homeless dogs in the wake of the Katrina disaster. More information is available at www.kathleenbolton.org

to cause failure at a later time. California Tree Failure Report Program lists 4500 tree failures since it began reporting in 1987. <http://groups.ucanr.org/treefail/>.

Rec and Park officials arrived at the scene minutes after the police reported the incident, and the park was closed for 2 days while police, fire and urban foresters assessed the accident scene and then assured the safety of the area as a part of their due-diligence efforts.

Rose Dennis, public relations manager for Recreation and Park Department said "the public should not be alarmed, the park has never looked better, Stern Grove is safe for public use. The concerts will go on as scheduled."

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On June 3 your vote will help shape the security of our public water system, the viability of city budgets, the quality of our public schools, the revitalization of our Bay View / Hunters Point neighborhoods and the possibility of a new 49er's stadium.

Don't sit on the sidelines. VOTE!

YES ON A

VOTE YES ON A to support our public schools: Join businesses throughout the city, labor, Mayor Newsom and the Board of Supervisors as we work together to build a public school system that we can all be proud of. **VOTE YES ON A** for our future, for our children, for our schools.

YES ON B

VOTE YES ON B, help ensure San Francisco's fiscal health and protect health care for retired city employees. Prop B was passed unanimously by the Board of Supervisors and is strongly supported by Mayor Newsom, city employees, their unions, San Francisco taxpayers associations, business leaders and both the San Francisco Republican Party and the San Francisco Democratic Party.

YES ON G, NO ON F

YES ON G-

VOTE YES ON G to create thousands of new affordable and market rate homes for working families, thousands of jobs, green businesses, 400 acres of parks, and a site for a 49ers stadium. The Bayview/Hunters Point community has waited over a generation for this type of investment. **VOTE YES ON G AND NO ON F** for real economic development.

NO ON F

Don't be fooled by Chris Daly. Proposition F will kill the Hunters Point Shipyard rebuild and the stadium project. Don't make the residents of the Bay View wait another generation for real economic development. **VOTE YES ON G, NO ON F.**

NO ON E

VOTE NO ON E. Don't let the Board of Supervisor's politicize the Public Utilities Commission. San Francisco is in the middle of a multi-billion dollar Hetch Hetchy rebuild. Now is not the time to have the Supervisors meddling in the management of the PUC. Protect our water system. **VOTE NO ON PROP E.**



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THRILL KILLERS LEOPOLD AND LOEB

In Stephen Dolginoff’s award-winning musical drama “Thrill Me” directed by Dennis Lickteig, the passion of a young future law student, Nathan Leopold, for his future law student lover Richard Loeb leads from smaller to larger and more and more crimes that eventually lands them in prison. Based on a true event in Chicago in 1924, the musical play develops step by step the relationship and events that end in their demise.

Nathan’s adoration and love for Richard, a follower of the superman philosophy of Nietzsche, causes the former to do whatever the latter commands in order to retain his love. The dramatic action revolves around Richard’s addiction to experiencing thrills and his need to prove his superior intelligence that will propel the two on to commit any kind of crime. This results in their progressing from small robberies to the murder of a young boy only for the thrill of being able to accomplish the crime.

This combination of the passion of a young lover for another student who will do anything to win his love and pay the price for it along with some of the suspense elements of a murder mystery is the basis of this compelling Leopold and Loeb story. These romantic and suspense elements offer both lyricism and drama to this musical theatre piece.

Stephen Dolginoff’s book, music, and lyrics, well directed (aside from a repetitive use of blocking and stage movement downstage center) by Dennis Lickteig and Tim Hanson (Musical Director), are clearly and vividly developed. The roles of actor/singers Ricardo Rust (Nathan) and William Giammona (Richard) are believably, sensitively and emotionally well rendered.

This seventy-five minute piece about an obsessive love and a youthful need for the thrill of committing crime that destroys the lives of two students offers dramatic content well performed and sung that pulls on the heart strings of the spectator.

“Thrill Me” plays at the New Conservatory until May 4. Info (415) 861-8972 or visit www.netcsf.org.

Annette Lust

EURIPIDES INSPIRED ANTI-WAR TROJAN WOMEN

Ellen McLaughlin’s Euripides-inspired Trojan Women at the Aurora Theatre depicts the fate of the Trojan women after the Greek defeat of Troy. This

drama is visually reinforced by John Iacovelli’s set that offers a modern depiction of the giant wooden horse that hid a few dozen soldiers who then surprise attacked the Trojans, leaving behind their wives and daughters to mourn their fate under the tyranny of the Greeks.

McLaughlin, who herself has been an actress on and off Broadway and has written plays that were nationally and internationally produced, has created a work that requires a dynamic and increasing level of dramatic performance throughout. The dramatic intensity increases as it moves from the lamenting of these women’s losses of their husbands and fathers and the cruelty of their vanquishers to a scene of the now demented Cassandra, the prophetic daughter of Hecuba, to another horrific scene of the slaying of Hecuba’s baby grandson by the Greeks, and a final scene of the women being led away in barbaric enslavement by Greek soldiers.

These high voltage scenes are knowledgeably piloted by veteran stage director Barbara Oliver who worked with both professional as well as student intern actors from U.C. Berkeley as members of the chorus to create a mix of experienced actors with student actors. Although this has lent a youthful dynamism to the production, the all-around rendition, and particularly the stylization of the production does suffer a bit at times from this mix of performers not acting and moving on the same performance level. Rmedy: more training of student actors.

Carla Spindt’s role as Hecuba evokes a modern CEO in control of all-even in tragic times. Nora el Samathy plays Helen like a 21st century model. Sarah Nealis’s Cassandra and Emilie Talbot’s Andromache, whose baby is killed by the Greeks, offer dramatically potent characterizations that provoke our pity.

Julian Lopez-Morillas’ Poseidon, god of the ocean, in a naval officer’s suit, plays the role with authority but wears an officer’s hat that covers half of his face (supposedly to give the effect of a mask) that is distracting if not comical.

John Iacovelli’s giant modern horse is a breathtaking sculpture representing the fall of Troy but takes up a third of the stage space to considerably limit the choral and other movements in the piece.

Costumes by Anna Oliver, with the exception of Helen who is dressed in the attractive attire of a privileged female, are simple and plain to suit the impoverished state of the Troy women.

One of the finest aspects of this production is the collaboration with the drama department at U C Berkeley that integrates a number of drama students into the staging to bring with it fresh artistic vitality. As this production opens its doors to the merging of drama students with professional actors, directors and playwrights in the Bay Area, it sets a precedent for the same kind of collaboration in other parts of the country.

The Trojan Women plays until May 11. Info: 510-843-4822. Or visit auroratheatre.org.

Annette Lust

FRINGE OF MARIN SPRING 2008.

Call for Fall Short Plays for Fall 08.

The 21st Season of the Marin Fringe once again did not disappoint. Program One staged six fresh, original short plays with themes ranging from the state of war veterans to wanna-be lesbians.

The program led off with the excellent comedy, “Board Stiff” with a clever script by Michael-Paul Thomsett who also directed. Six community theatre (or semi-professional, as one member insisted) board members gossiped as well as voiced conflicts about the status of their actors, raising money, or whether oatmeal-raisin (touted by Pam, an effectively prim Lynn Lewis) or chocolate chip cookies should be offered in the fundraiser. Right off, George (Bill Lehrke) got the audience’s attention by screaming, “Hot!” as he set down his cup of coffee. President Tracey (Linda Ward) tries to keep things together as Dexter (Skye Pelicrow) tears them apart. Dorie (Erika Alstrom), in black top over a white lace blouse, sits silently, taking in everything. Cut off when she does begin to speak, she blows, jumping to her feet and shouting, “I wasn’t finished!” The play ends with a tableau of Pam holding a box of oatmeal cookies, George, his coffee cup, and Dexter and George choking each other as the rest look on in horror.

“Lesbian Rhapsody” written and directed by Carol Marshall, is a light-hearted number featuring frustrated wives: Judy and Susie, believably and naturally acted by Candice Brown and Janice Bacich. They start off by dissing their husbands. One says, “Too bad we’re not lesbians.” Entertaining this idea, they argue whether lesbians are born or made. “What do lesbians do?” Susie asks. They drink wine, play romantic music, dance to turn themselves on. When Judy puckers up to kiss Susie, they break up, laughing hysterically, then decide that their husbands aren’t so bad after all.

The subject of the Iraq war, let alone its returning veterans, is a subject that makes some people uncomfortable. Playwright David Talley’s brave “Heroes,” partly based on a true story, tells of two generations of Marines, played by actor Johann Schiffer in an honest portrayal of a by-the-book Lance Corporal and his Colonel (John Clevenger). Schiffer goes before his hard-line Colonel to sign papers declaring him PTSD. It is revealed that the Colonel is a Vietnam vet who has seen his share of horrors. He razes the soldier for weakness; the Marine stands up to him.

Actress Molly McCarthy, in her role as Virginia Woolfe in Roberta M. Palumbo’s biographically interesting, but rather static, “Leonard & Virginia,” directed by Flora Lynn Isaacson, brought out impeccably Woolfe’s conflicts regarding marriage, children, and her staid suitor, Leonard.(Charles Grant). The play suffers by its condensed time-frame as it covers many years. Ms. McCarthy’s costumes are wonderful. When she puts on her cloche hat and long dark coat, I couldn’t help thinking that she would soon put rocks in her pockets and throw herself into the river.

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Thank you for the article on the Laguna Honda Chambers settlement. The (slightly) revised Chambers settlement agreement recently approved by the Board of Supervisors will, if implemented, effectively end long-term care at Laguna Honda. Chambers requires that “the mission of the rebuilt LHH facility shall include as a goal that the facility is for short-term, rehabilitative treatment.” It goes on to state that the operational focus of the rebuilt Laguna Honda will emphasize enhancing community living skills and rehabilitating people in order to return them to the community. There is no mention whatsoever of long-term care at Laguna Honda. This agreement would severely worsen the shortage of skilled nursing beds for long-term care in San Francisco for people on Medi-Cal. Many frail seniors are already being forced to leave San Francisco because no spaces are available here. According to Laguna Honda’s Executive Administrator, John Kanaley, Laguna Honda stopped maintaining a waiting list for skilled nursing admissions as of January 2008.

It is simply impossible to reconcile Chambers’s exclusive focus on short-term care with the admissions policy Laguna Honda had until only a few days ago. On February 19, 2008 and again on April 9, 2008, I went on the Department of Health’s website, www.sfdph.org, and found the policy. Section A.3. stated: “Elderly and physically disabled patients requiring long term skilled nursing care in general are given priority over persons requiring short term skilled nursing care (excluding specialty programs such as Rehabilitation, AIDS, Hospice and Respite care). Yesterday I went on the website and the policy had been changed: the quoted language has been removed and there is no mention of long-term care! (The file number and revision date remain the same, however; this is either a sloppy error or an attempt to make it appear that the new policy has been in effect since November 22, 2005.)

What has long been an important specialty program — rehabilitation — ultimately will become the exclusive focus at Laguna Honda. A snapshot of length of stay on October 31, 2007 shows that only 16% of Laguna Honda residents had been there 90 days or less; the other 84% were there on long-term stays of greater than 90 days. From January 2002 through December 2007, only 24% of admissions to Laguna Honda were to the rehabilitation unit. Under Chambers what has been a specialty program will, ultimately, swallow up everything else.

Make no mistake: eliminating long-term care

(and hospice care — see below) will be a major policy change. Laguna Honda has provided long-term skilled nursing care to thousands of people for decades. In 2005 Mayor Newsom and the Board of Supervisors put long-term care back into the mission of Laguna Honda in response to a widespread outcry after the Department of Health had removed it.

Laguna Honda also has long provided rehabilitation, as it should. The opponents of the Chambers agreement support continuing rehabilitation services at Laguna Honda. But by making “short-term, rehabilitative treatment” the exclusive focus, Chambers will result in long-term care being crowded out. There are many serious, presently incurable, ultimately fatal degenerative diseases for which, especially in the later stages, significant rehabilitation is impossible. People in this condition need long-term care of the type that Laguna Honda has provided so well to so many people for so many decades.

The Board of Supervisors delayed approving the Chambers agreement by several weeks, during which, apparently, City officials negotiated a handful of changes. For the most part, however, these changes concern dispute resolution and attorneys’ fees. No changes whatsoever were made regarding the short-term focus of Laguna Honda and the eventual elimination of long-term care, despite strong concerns expressed by patient advocates, family members of Laguna Honda residents and others familiar with Laguna Honda, and despite ample opportunity to make changes. Had the Mayor, the Board of Supervisors and the Department of Health wanted to protect long-term care at Laguna Honda, changes such as these could easily have been made - had plaintiffs and their advocates agreed about every class member (and, it appears, future Laguna Honda residents and potential residents even if they may not technically be part of the plaintiff class), including progress notes. The class is very broadly defined to include all adult Medi-Cal beneficiaries who are residents of Laguna Honda (essentially, almost every resident of Laguna Honda). Although some of this information is subject to a protective order, why should plaintiffs’ counsel have access to it at all if a Laguna Honda resident (or, in the case of a resident who is unable to understand or communicate, his or her family members or legal guardian) objects? And although it’s plaintiffs’ counsel who are explicitly given access to the information, is it reasonable to expect that the information won’t find its way to the institutional plaintiff Independent Living Resource Center - San Francisco?

Howard L. Chabner

END JOKES

Tax Rebate

President George Bush said each one of us would get a \$600.00 tax rebate. It was previously slated to be \$800.00, but they dropped it to a \$600.00 tax rebate because of various budget problems.

Now, if we spend that money at Wal-Mart, all the money will go to China, if we spend it on computers, most of the money will go to Korea or India. If we spend it on gasoline it will all go to the Arabs.... and none of these scenarios will help the American economy.

We need to keep that money here in America so the only way to keep that money here at home is to drink beer, gamble, or spend it on prostitution. Currently it seems that these are the only businesses still left in the U.S.

I’m Elliot Spitzer and I approve of this message.

Think a gallon of gas is expensive?

This makes one think, and also puts things in perspective to other things we buy.

Diet Snapple 16 oz \$1.29 \$10.32 per gallon
Lipton Ice Tea 16 oz \$1.19 \$9.52 per gallon
Gatorade 20 oz \$1.59 \$10.17 per gallon
Ocean Spray 16 oz \$1.25 \$10.00 per gallon
Brake Fluid 12 oz \$3.15 \$33.60 per gallon
Vick’s Nyquil 6 oz \$8.35 \$178.13 per gallon
Pepto Bismol 4 oz \$3.85 \$123.20 per gallon
Whiteout 7 oz \$1.39 \$25.42 per gallon
Scope 1.5 oz \$0.99 \$84.48 per gallon
And this is the REAL KICKER...

Evian water 9 oz \$1.49 \$21.19 per gallon!
\$21.19 for WATER and the buyers don’t even know the source

(Evian spelled backwards is Naive.)
Ever wonder why printers are so cheap?
So they have you hooked for the ink.
Someone calculated the cost of the ink at—you won’t believe it—but it is true \$5,200 a gallon
So, the next time you’re at the pump ,be glad your car doesn’t run on water, Scope, or Whiteout, Pepto Bismol, Nyquil or God forbid, Printer Ink!
Just a little humor to help ease the pain of your next trip to the pump!

Parting Thought

“If Columbus had an advisory committee he would probably still be at the dock.”

Arthur Goldberg



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West of Twin Peaks

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Have You Viewed Our New Design for Arden Wood?



In February, Republic Urban Properties unveiled its updated project design for the Arden Wood project, located at Wawona and 19th Avenue.

Through a collaborative process with the community, we believe this new design blends beautifully with the unique character of the West Portal neighborhood. Our new design elements include:

- ❖ Four buildings the same height as The Grove (an average of 40 feet)
- ❖ State-of-the-art parking system to accommodate resident and guest parking on site
- ❖ Extensive landscaping and roof gardens atop each building to further screen the development from nearby neighbors
- ❖ One entry/exit to the development at 19th Avenue
- ❖ Sustainable, LEED certified development

Please visit our updated website www.ardenwoodsf.com for additional information, or contact us at ardenwood@republic-urban.com.



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