



**San Francisco needs cars**  
**George Wooding—p.2**

**Discretionary Review**  
**Jed Lane reviews our planning options — p. 3**



**West of Twin Peaks Central Council**  
**Police Chief Gascón—p.3**

**Business Corner**  
**Que Syrah Wine Bar—p. 9**



**"Hygienic Products"**  
**Sharon Caren takes aim — p.11**

**Hilary Gordon clarifies "drought tolerant"**  
**— p. 13**



**More INSIDE**

Comings and Goings . . . . .	2
Jack Kaye . . . . .	5
Oops! There Goes Sutro Forest. . . . .	5
Calendar . . . . .	6
Movies . . . . .	6
At the President's Cup . . . . .	7
Theater . . . . .	7
Hank Basayne . . . . .	10
Real Travel for Real People. . . . .	10
Sharon the Health . . . . .	11
Carol Kocivar . . . . .	12
Gardening with Hilary Gordon . . . . .	13
Games & Fun . . . . .	14
Phyllis Sherman - Phyllis' Findings . . . . .	15
Remember When?. . . . .	15

**HARDING PARK: Neglected, Re-built — now Raided!**

*By Former Supervisor Tony Hall*

**R**ebuilding Harding Park into one of the finest Municipal golf courses in the country is a major achievement San Franciscans should be truly proud of, but unfortunately where opportunities to defraud the public are possible, in this fine City, they are inevitable. The financial shell game afoot at Harding will require more than the usual public scrutiny.

One of my campaign promises in 2000 was to rebuild and restore Harding to the splendor that it deserves. My goals at the outset were:

- a) To ensure that residents and visitors in San Francisco have an exceptional recreational experience on a unique golf course at *reasonable* rates.
- b) To rebuild a treasured facility that would return enough profit to the City to maintain all of the City run courses, and provide extra cash for our park needs.
- c) To give our small businesses and community at large the opportunity to reap the estimated \$50 to \$80 million in benefits that the Tours and Tournaments would provide.

You might recall that in 1999, Mayor Willie Brown was



**Tony Hall sits at the new Harding Park Clubhouse—he says there's some Enron-style bookeeping going on.**

pushing to privatize the course and that the Arnold Palmer group was set to takeover and run Harding for whatever profits could be extracted from a wonderful but dilapidated and run-down 1925 golf course. My vision and work regarding Harding was based on the belief that, because of the physical uniqueness of the golf course, it could become a recreational treasure to San Franciscans once again; a profit yielding goldmine for the City coffers and businesses, and another example of civic pride; all possible if handled

*Cont. p. 4*

**RUMINATIONS FROM A FORMER SUPERVISOR**

**About the Election**

*By Quentin Kopp*

**R**ead the voter information pamphlet for the municipal election of November 3, 2009 reveals the relatively short list of local ballot measures but absolutely no contest for either of two public offices, City Attorney and Treasurer. Those could have been the subject of contested elections. For approximately 25 years, until completion of my last term as a California State Senator, I distributed voter recommendations regarding both City and State ballot measures. Even today, San Franciscans remind me of that endeavor, usually declaring that it assisted them in their election decisions. Voter reliance on recommendations represents the highest compliment an elected public official can receive. It means the people you represent trust your analysis of often-complicated ballot measures and associate themselves with your judgment. Such reliance means to me that the considerable time and effort that I devoted to analyze every State and City ballot measure was worth it.



I thought of those unsolicited, genuine expressions of confidence as I read City Proposition B. This would amend Section 2.117 of the San Francisco Charter to eliminate the limitation on no more than two administrative assistants or "staff members" per Board of Supervisors member. As always, I reflect on the history of a therapeutic provision adopted by voters some years ago, which current occupants of the Board of Supervisors seek to change. Bear with me.

The modern San Francisco Charter was promulgated by a devoted citizens' committee and approved by voters in 1932. It provided a salary of \$2,400 per year for each Board of Supervisors member that could not be changed without a voter-approved Charter Amendment. The position was considered part-time, for the obvious reason that the City and County of San Francisco's Chief Executive Officer was an elected Mayor, who divided responsibilities with the Chief Administrative Officer, nominated by the Mayor and approved by the Board of Supervisors. Supervisors were legislators, not administrators. In fact, the Charter specifically barred Supervisors from trying to intervene in the hiring or firing of City employees or the letting of City contracts, or speaking at City commission or board meetings. Even to appear was considered "bad form." Supervisors did not rely on taxpayer funds for livelihood. All eleven earned

*Cont. p. 4*

**Grand Opening: Stonestown Farmers Market**





# CITY CAR OWNERS PAY FOR MASS-TRANSIT

by George Wooding

The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency's (SFMTA) plan to increase parking meter operation hours throughout San Francisco has been tabled — at least for the time being.

Nathaniel Ford, SFMTA's executive director has said the agency will "discuss the plan extensively before moving forward." Hasn't the SFMTA paid attention to the citizen revolt that just overturned extending parking meter hours in Oakland? Is Ford not paying attention?

The plan to charge for parking meters on Sunday's and up until midnight on week-days in neighborhoods such as North Beach has been poorly received throughout San Francisco's diverse communities. Not one merchant's association or homeowner's association in the City currently supports the parking meter extensions.

At their October 20 Transportation Directors meeting, a tired SFMTA Board of Directors listened to three hours of public testimony opposing increasing meter operation hours. San Francisco's lower-income residents with cars testified that the plan was a regressive tax on the poor. Business owners and merchant's associations testified about losing business. The Chamber of Commerce, Cammy Blackstone from District 4 Supervisor Carmen Chu's office, homeowner's associations, and residents of all political persuasions were united in their belief that the plan was poorly conceived, and would financially harm both residents and local businesses. Even Mayor Gavin Newsom — who appointed the SFMTA Board and hired Nathaniel Ford — is against the SFMTA's meter extension plans.

Not surprisingly, groups that don't generally receive parking tickets or pay for parking, such as the San Francisco bicycle coalition and the Sierra Club, support SFMTA's plan.

The meter proposal is more about generating money for the SFMTA than traffic abatement. In April the SFMTA tried to pass a "blanket" parking meter extension plan that would have arbitrarily increased the operating time of almost every meter in the City to 10:00pm. The Board of Supervisors fought the proposal and gave the SFMTA 90 days to come up with a more equitable plan. The resulting "Extended Meter Hours Study" was of course, the predictable and self-fulfilling current plan to extend parking meter hours. It's no accident that the SFMTA is trying to generate parking revenue while they are flat broke.

District 7 Supervisor Sean Elsbernd stated, "The SFMTA would be making a major mistake if it implemented any of these changes on a citywide basis. Extended meters may work for merchants and residents alike in some neighborhoods, but they could be a disaster in others. This should only happen through a far more extensive outreach effort, and the demonstration of clear and convincing evidence of neighborhood desires."

The bottom line? San Franciscans who own cars are sick and tired of being punished for the financial failures of the SFMTA.

The SFMTA has a \$741 million budget, but has a \$129 million budget deficit. In a "transit first" city this is very bad. Muni is discontinuing routes, eliminating service to low ridership areas, and running fewer routes. The SFMTA is simultaneously increasing fare rates, parking meter rates, towing fees, parking garage rates, parking ticket rates, and increasing parking violation enforcement. Despite the infusion of an additional \$25 million annually to Muni as a result of the November 1997 Proposition A "transit reform" ballot measure (and untold additional revenue the Board of Supervisors could dedicate to the SFMTA from gas tax, vehicle license fees, and other motor vehicle-related revenues) the agency is still going broke, even with its voracious appetite to keeping adding new sources of revenue!

Last year, the SFMTA collected \$278 million for parking and traffic fees and fines (30% of its revenue), but collected only \$153 million in fares (20% of its revenue). Worried that fare increases will lead to declines in ridership, the SFMTA has decided to go after car owners for more revenue. Car owners are ideal targets because they: 1) Supposedly have more money, 2) Need to be punished for owning a green-house-gas emitting vehicle, and 3) Might be convinced to start using mass transportation given the higher parking fees. In a "green" city it's increasingly considered "bad" to own or use a car.

The SFMTA's parking meter plan is projected to generate \$17.2 million in total revenue, but a measly \$8.8 million in net revenue. If Muni simply collected all of the fares from transit riders who evade paying their fares, it would collect an additional \$19 million annually. The SFMTA's plan also requires spending: 1) \$2.7 million in Coin Collection labor costs, 2) \$5.0 million for 48 full-time workers and 26 part-time workers, 3) \$650,000 for maintenance and labor and 4) a one time \$2.5 million charge for equipment and marketing — for a total cost increase of \$10.9 million starting in 2010.. Expect actual costs to be about 30% over-budget. San Francisco Parking Control Officers (PCOs) are also afraid of working late at night. There have been several broad-daylight assaults on PCOs over the last three years, so the SFMTA will have to increase the safety of PCOs brave enough to work evenings

At an October 21 community meeting, City Attorney Dennis Herrera (who is rumored to be considering running for mayor) stated, "The approximate \$9.0 million the SFMTA is hoping to gain is a drop-in-the-bucket. We shouldn't nickel-and-dime people against their will. I hate the idea — it's crazy public policy. I'm not in favor of it."

The most insidious part of the SFMTA's proposal is what you don't see: It is planning to add/extend parking meters on many streets adjacent to shopping districts. So neighbors who live close to a merchant district may soon find a parking meter plopped in front of their house. On September 15, the SFMTA quietly passed by voice vote Section 10.15, which amends the Residential Parking Permit portion (Section 905) of SFMTA's Transportation Code. The new language in Section 905 states: "Nothing in this Section is intended to limit the SFMTA's ability to designate a Residential Parking Permit Area (RPP) on its own initiative."

Heretofore, 50% of neighborhood residents had to vote in favor of adopting an RPP to create a new RPP district. The SFMTA has quietly given itself unilateral authority to create and extend unlimited RPP's throughout San Francisco —with or without the consent of neighborhood residents, regardless of whether we (or the Mayor) like it or not!

The \$76.00 annual RPP fee (and inevitable parking violation tickets that will result) should be considered a tax, not a fee. The original intent of Section 905 amendment was to allow the SFMTA to create RPP areas in commercial districts, along freeways, and near schools, but the amended language clearly gives the agency the right to create RPP's almost anywhere throughout the City. The revenue generated from creating new RPP zones would be enormous, kicking the barn door wide open to further abuse.

San Francisco must develop a comprehensive transit plan for pedestrians, bicycles, buses, trains, and ... yes, even cars. Ironically, the success of San Francisco's mass transit system is completely dependent on cars. The SFMTA's current policy mantra — cars are bad, but let's nail car owners with as many fines and fees as we can — will backfire and end up hurting the character of San Francisco neighborhoods and local businesses.

The SFMTA needs to get its own financial house in order, before it kills the goose that laid their golden revenue egg. After all, if parking meter extensions were a disaster in Oakland, why does the SFMTA think it will play well in San Francisco?

*George Wooding is President of the West of Twin Peaks Central Council.*

## AROUND THE TOWN *Comings and Goings...*

From the Publisher's Desk. . .

**P**arking, Police changes and more ... the issue of parking is still a hot topic. At the WOTPCC meeting on Monday, 10/26 the proposed meter extensions were discussed. It looks like the MTA is planning to extend West Portal Avenue until 9 PM on Fridays and Saturdays, and from 11-6 on Sunday. They're saying it's about the need to have more rotation of the available parking spaces, and making the meters run longer will do that. It seems to this desk, that revenue has a whole lot to do with it.

I am trying to understand both sides of the topic. My concern is that Stonestown comes out ahead (with free parking) and Merchant Districts like West Portal continue to suffer. If you have a feeling about it, contact the Mayors office and the SF MTA. The MTA commissioners are appointed by the Mayor, not by the Board of Supes.

I met the new Police Chief, George Gascon, at the WOTPCC meeting and at first blush he seems to have a handle on what is going on. He is supporting the concept of "community policing," and is getting the detectives out into the district police stations. Sounds like a good start.

Sad note: It is still not determined if the Granada Café (on Mission) will reopen after their fire. I heard that the patriarch of the business, Giovanni, passed away three weeks ago, and that the plans to reopen are in limbo. Here's hoping for a revived Granada.

Lots of road construction coming in 2010...the major intersection of St. Francis Circle will be reworked and under construction from May – September in 2010. Prior to that project, the PUC and MTA will be closing the left land of Junipero Serra for several months to excavate and replace the main piping system that supplies water from Hetch Hetchy to the Peninsula. (start your breathing exercises for patience while driving now.)

I wrote last month about a new book about the community of houses built from old cable cars, horse drawn cars, etc. It's called "Carville-By-The-Sea"- San Francisco's Streetcar Suburb, and is written by Woody La Bounty of Outside Lands Media, and the Western Neighborhoods Project. The book is a delightful and interesting history of an artistic bohemian community living in cable cars in the sand dunes East of Ocean Beach. Check out the website at [www.carville-book.com](http://www.carville-book.com).

Congratulations to everyone involved in the Chinese Immersion Education Project, which started at West Portal Elementary School 25 years ago and became the model across the country. There were several celebrations in October honoring the program and the people associated with starting it and keeping it alive over these 25 years. Congratulations.

What about you? If you have an interesting snippet, or some other fact you'd like to get into the paper just drop it to us. You can reach me at: [mitch@WestsideObserver.com](mailto:mitch@WestsideObserver.com). Be sure to check out the Observer online @ [www.WestsideObserver.com](http://www.WestsideObserver.com).

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I would just like to comment on the article "Laguna Honda's Unkindest Cut", by Patrick Manette-Shaw, published in the October 2009 issue. I have worked for over 10 years as a Nurse Practitioner in another Long Term Care facility in San Francisco, and I would like to clarify some of the comments made in the article. First, there is effort underway in all nursing homes to reduce costs, so Laguna Honda Hospital (LHH) is no exception. During this economic downturn, most hospitals and nursing homes are slashing staff positions to cut costs. However, the author feels that these cuts would be detrimental for the types of patients that LHH contains. He mentions the "Ja Report" is an incomplete analysis, and feels that their data is flawed. First, there are no studies in any literature that I have read that states that reducing the number of physicians and replacing them with nurses, social workers, and psychologists will worsen patient care, especially in regards to substance abuse treatment.

Secondly, the article voices concerns that losing staff physicians and using "traveling" physicians instead will cause patients to have to "wait weeks for medical care". Let me assure the public that this absolutely not the case. While it is true that federally mandated visits (every 60 days) are required if the patient is stable, if a patient becomes medically ill or needs more medical attention, then more frequent visits are warranted, and can be provided by physicians and other health care

professionals that come in to the nursing home. In fact, this is how the great majority of nursing homes across the country operate. Most nursing homes do not have staff physicians; all medical care is provided by outside doctors. The reason for this is that most physicians bill Medicare/Medicaid directly for their services, and most nursing homes cannot support a large medical group as LHH can. Therefore, LHH is lucky to have this kind of set-up, as it is expensive, so this is why there is talk of cutting this extra expense out.

I would also like to clear up the concerns the author has about the CNAs in LHH. First off, CNAs are not considered "skilled-care" providers. Most CNAs train for just a few months to be able to provide care to patients. In fact, the care they provide is the basics, like feeding and bathing, not management of behavioral or substance abuse problems. On the other hand, nurses, social workers, and psychologists are all positions which require more skill and training, which should improve the quality of care for most patients with behavioral health problems.

With our current health care system, unfortunately cost cutting is a necessary part of life. However, I do not agree with the author's comments that losing physicians and CNAs while replacing them with nurses and other health care professionals would be a negative move.

*Jennifer Serafin RN, GNP*

I just found the October issue of Westside Observer.

*Cont. p. 11*



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## West of Twin Peaks Central Council News &amp; Views

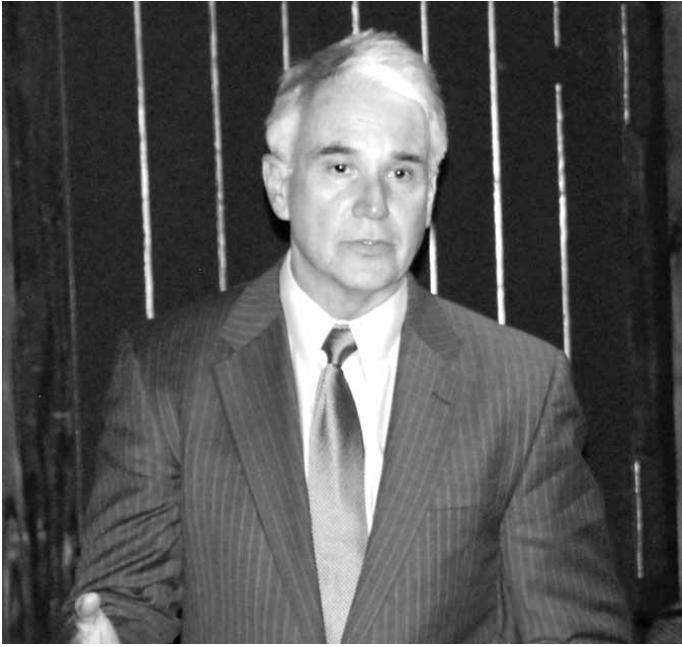
By Mitch Bull

New SF Police Chief George Gascón highlighted the West of Twin Peaks Central Council (WOTPCC) meeting on Monday, October 26th.

Council President George Wooding opened the meeting at 7:30 and in a break from the usual course of events, introduced the new SFPD Chief to the audience. As Gascón had a limited timeframe, he took the floor and addressed the 35 or so meeting attendees for about 40 minutes touching on topics such as illegal immigration, car impoundment, local problems involving marijuana growing houses, and his take on the culture since taking over the SFPD.

Gascón, formerly the Chief of Police in Mesa, AZ (3 years), and before that a member of the Los Angeles Police Department (28 years), started by giving an overview of the recent reorganization of the SFPD. He stated that the goal of the reorganization is to improve the quality of service at the neighborhood level, primarily improving the investigation side.

The SFPD will be moving approximately 100 inspectors out to the neighborhood stations. The chief stated that from what he has seen a major problem has been one of being too centralized, which has caused a lack of communication between patrol and investigation. As a result the clearance rate of major crimes in SF is among the lowest of any major city in the US. Improvements will be made to make the inspectors responsible for specific neighborhood areas, not for the entire city. Now, patrol and detectives will answer to a single assistant chief, who reports to Chief Gascón.



New Police Chief George Gascón addressed the delegates and public on Monday

The chief then opened the floor for Q & A and discussed the Police Department policy on going after the growing number of pot growers that have been exposed in neighborhoods such as the Sunset. He discussed the problem of the growing operations tapping into electricity supplies illegally and possibly causing fire dangers for neighbors adjacent to the structures where the growing is taking place.

The SFPD has conducted 36 operations on marijuana growers over the past several months and of those, only 4 were related to growers of “medical marijuana”, with the remainder being tied to organized crime.

Chief Gascón also addressed questions on massage parlors/prostitution and the vehicle programs on impounding cars of people who have no license and/or are illegal immigrants. He went into detailed operational issues on each topic including the SFPD position on trying to halt the practice of “human trafficking”, as well as the problems of having only one car for a multi person family where several people may have licenses, but the car is impounded for a driver that has no license, etc.

In wrapping up, the new head of the SFPD spoke about the relationship between his office and the SF District Attorney (Kamala Harris). He stated that in his short tenure (so far) the DA's office and the PD are working well together in programs such as the prosecution of drug dealers in the Tenderloin, etc. After 35 minutes, he left the meeting to attend to other departmental business.

Following Gascón, the Taraval Police Report was given by Lt. John Feeney, who discussed the planning for handling Halloween, as well as the recent smattering of “Window Smash Burglaries” that occurred on West Portal and Sloat Blvd. In most cases, petty cash, money tills, and a laptop were stolen from the vandalized retail establishments.

Feeney also informed the group about the upcoming change in the Taraval Station Management team. Capt. Denise Schmidt, the current head of the Police Academy will take over the command of the Taraval Station on November 14th, replacing current Capt. Paul Chignall, who is being reassigned to another post. Schmidt is no stranger to the neighborhood, having served at the Taraval Station as a Lieutenant earlier in her career.

The Lt. also discussed ways to reduce the chances of having your car broken into, citing GPS systems as a main focal point of burglars. Always take the GPS system (and the suction cup mounting base) out of the car when leaving it unattended. If thieves see the suction cup base, they will break into the car and go through the trunk and other compartments looking for the GPS unit that fits onto the base. Of course, leaving any valuables in plain site invites trouble when a car is left for long periods of time.

Feeney also told the attendees of a new phenomenon where people are breaking into cars, then lighting the interiors on fire when leaving the car behind.

He gave details about when it is appropriate to call the Taraval Station—if you see a crime taking place, or to report abandoned cars, or other items in the neighborhood.

Council President Wooding opened the business portion of the meeting by having (secretary) Rae Doyle conduct the Roll Call. The minutes from the September meeting were read and approved, and Treasurer Squeri gave the Treasurers' report. She also informed representatives of the various homeowner groups about new requirements to file an income tax report. The minutes from the September were approved.

Wooding then addressed the group to drum up volunteers for several WOTPCC Committees, such as Transportation (chaired by Avrum Shepherd)), Planning / Land Use (chaired by Matt Chamberlain) and Public Health (chaired by Wooding). He explained that the SFMTA had tabled plans (for now) to extend the parking meter hours. Wooding also informed the attendees about a change to Section 905 of the transportation code relating to Neighborhood Parking Districts, where stickers are required to park. Changes to the code now allow the MTA to establish neighborhood parking districts without the consent of the residents.

Dave Bisho addressed the group, representing the Planning Committee and reported that the committee is tracking four areas: the 2009 Housing Element; the proposal to allow in-law units; Planning Department Discretionary Review process changes, and Review of the West Portal Zoning Ordinances.

Supervisor Sean Elsbernd spoke about 2 upcoming projects that will affect the neighborhoods. From May through September of next year the SFMTA will be conducting a rebuild of the St. Francis Circle intersection. With 5 streets intersecting at the circle it could impact traffic significantly. The second project is a Hetch Hetchy upgrade which will require the left lane of Southbound Junipero Serra to be closed and excavated for a pipe replacement. The MTA/PUC plan is to have the San Francisco

Who's Going to Control Where Density Goes?

## Beyond Discretionary Review

By Jed Lane

I was in a conversation a member of the Board of Supervisors about planning issues here on the Westside of SF. One comment kept ringing through my head over the next few days: that we on the west side don't know the language of Planning; all we know is “Discretionary Review (DR) and No.”

As I've written before for the Observer, single family homes are viewed in some urban planning circles as an historic anomaly. Our neighborhoods consume more of everything that's becoming scarce and unhealthy. We hear it from government officials and Planners and we hear it from SPUR and the SF Housing Action Coalition; we take up too much space with our low-density housing. We drive our cars too many miles as we shop at our grocery stores and shopping malls that waste space providing free parking lots. We produce too much carbon exhaust from our cars and our inefficient single family homes with so few people living in them. We demand parking be included with every living unit and fight every reduction in space for parking our cars. We hear it now and the chorus will just get louder, more frequent and damning with State and Federal legislation that has passed.

As the City processes its Housing Element of the General Plan, it's clear to those that watch these issues for our neighborhoods that the Westside has dodged a bullet this time around. The bulk of the expected growth that San Francisco is mandated to be prepared for by the State, will be absorbed by the eastern neighborhoods. Once these plans are finished and become policy, the western neighborhoods will become the focus again.

Fortunately the days of top-down planning are presumed to be gone. The citizens of San Francisco have become adept at staying organized over the long term and keeping neighborhood delegates involved in watching the functions of the City. Too often though, we on the west side are viewed as incapable of having planning discussions or of understanding the benefits of planning to neighborhoods like Upper Market, Market/Octavia, Western SOMA and the eastern neighborhoods, because we don't seem to understand the benefits of higher density, or we are just single-mindedly reactionary. Whether or not we can see the benefits of higher density and choose not to live in North Beach or we are just being reactionary, not being engaged in the dialogue is to our detriment. In the coming years we will be carried kicking and screaming into the planning ring, and the more we know, the better we will fare.

Knowing what is going on now in Western SOMA as the residents try to maintain the production, distribution and repair (PDR) districts, reduce the influx of housing and office space, or the middle Polk neighborhood, as it works to replace the Cala Foods on California with something other than a wall-facing California Street and a box that is out of scale with the surrounding buildings, informs us about what is coming, as the desire to build higher density in transit-rich areas becomes the dominant argument.

It will be important to be conversant in the assumptions/benefits of higher density. Some say that living in higher density environs is healthier just from the standpoint that we will walk more as we go about the day. The San Francisco Department of Public Health has a “Healthy Development Measurement Tool” which they want developers to use as a measuring system to build a healthier citizenry. It's believed that an increase in density will allow an increase in services in the neighborhoods, and that is good for everyone. Everything from better public transportation to shoe repairs shops and restaurants will become available because there are customers within walking distance. The biggest “benefit” of higher density will be the reduction of vehicle miles traveled. These could all be true, but some benefits have unintended consequences that bureaucrats don't or won't foresee.

Every government entity in the world is looking at ways to decrease carbon emissions. Higher density is one of the most commonly cited means to accomplish this. These arguments may all have merit, but it's still important to force conversation and to engage so that the end result is good, reasonable planning. Historically we've seen bad planning and the detrimental effects of the unintended consequences. Take the redevelopment of the Fillmore, where simply the number of minority residents was used as a defining element of blight: substitute the number of vehicles or miles traveled as a blight-defining element, and top-down planning would open our neighborhoods to the bulldozers.

Now is the time to stop using the old arguments. We need to engage with our neighborhood associations and support the work those volunteers are doing. We also need to be sure that they are aware of the larger forces and are capable of negotiating the real choices that are available in this environment.

There are definitely benefits to good planning. Westside neighborhoods need to negotiate for the benefits as we are forced to deal with the impacts of rising energy costs both in dollars and environmental damage. It isn't just about one-for-one parking. It's about secondary units in our single family homes, our neighborhood commercial districts and transit-rich areas, Taraval Street, Stonestown, Ocean Avenue, Park Merced, Glen Park and Balboa Park. It's about the restrictions of destination parking, loss of parking space and extended parking charges. It's about better streets and public transit, and it's likely going to be about increases in density in some parts of the western neighborhoods.

Who's going to control where the density goes? Who's going to decide the cost/benefit of each decision, us or them?

Jed Lane is a civically engaged Realtor, Westside native and current resident of Miraloma Park. He can be reached at [Jed@JedLane.com](mailto:Jed@JedLane.com)

portion of this project completed prior to the May start of the St. Francis project.

The Supervisor also addressed the MTA proposal for extending the times that parking meters are in effect. Trying to implement different solutions in different neighborhoods, the MTA is proposing extending West Portal meters to 9PM on Friday and Saturday and implementing 11-6 on Sunday (for the entire city). Their goal is to increase parking space turnover.

Diane Gooden followed with an invitation to the Ocean Avenue “Artwalk”, and asked for volunteers for the event.

The last speaker for the evening was Cindy Brandon, Executive Director for SF SAFE (Safety Awareness for Everyone). She gave a presentation about how easy it is to start a citizen “neighborhood watch” type of program that helps the SFPD as well as aiding in better preparation for dealing with a natural disaster, and helping to improve the quality of life in a neighborhood. It only takes 1 meeting per month for 1 hour to set up a watch program. Literature was distributed with information about SF SAFE. For more information contact their office at 415-553-1984.

Council President Wooding asked for a motion to adjourn at 9:15 and it was made and seconded. The next meeting of the WOTPCC will occur on Monday, November 23rd at the Forest Hills Community Club House at 7:30 PM.





Tony Hall (Cont. from p. 1)

properly. Mayor Brown enthusiastically signed the ensuing my legislation and it passed by unanimous vote at the Board of Supervisors on April 25th, 2002. The legislation contained the following guidelines:

- The need for Harding to be completely renovated in an environmentally sensitive fashion.
- Green fees were to be kept at a minimum thereby allowing golf to remain affordable and accessible to residents.
- The course was not to be privatized so that City coffers and local businesses would reap the benefits.
- A special “Golf fund” was to be established to capture golf course revenues that would be used to maintain all other City-run courses, with the excesses to be applied to neighborhood parks.
- A comprehensive youth golf program was to be established.

Tournaments such as the PGA TOURS and Presidents Cup should be a means and not an end, and as such should net the City at least one million dollars per tournament after all the City’s expenses and inconveniences to the local residents.

I enlisted the help of the private sector in order to add “insurance” to the revenue stream by getting the PGA to agree to make Harding Park the West Coast home of the PGA TOUR Championship. The agreement provided for course closure for a short period of time during each championship, and required payment to the City of a minimum of \$1 million (including 50% of the net revenues) for each Tour Championship, which would be held every three years. The initial term of the agreement ran from Jan.1, 2006 through Jan.1, 2015 with options to renew for three additional nine-year terms. (A potential profit to the City of some \$31 million, or double the cost to rebuild Harding.)

***“Without even taking into consideration profits from the Tours and other ancillary charges, something is not adding up here, or someone in this administration is guilty of “Enron style accounting”. I highly suspect the latter...”***

I might add here that the first vote at the Board regarding the Harding Plan was a 10 to 1 against my legislation until I was able to convince all of my colleagues that their neighborhood parks would reap benefits from the profits of such a plan in perpetuity because of the way it was funded. Some months prior to the vote I discovered that there existed a grant to the City under the Per Capita Grant Program provided by the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Air, and Costal Protection Bond Act in the amount of \$8.1 million and under the Roberti-Z’berg-Harris Block Grant Program in the amount of \$5 million for a total of \$13.1 million. These were State funds intended for the use of local neighborhood parks. My colleagues soon realized that when those funds were divided among the 11 supervisorial districts, a one-time infusion of approximately \$1.1 million per district paled in comparison to sharing in perpetuity the profits that a well-run Harding Park and properly administered golf fund could provide. We all assumed that there would be honest and transparent administration of the Park and the resultant golf fund, and thus the \$13.1 million was applied to the re-build of Harding.

Once I left office, the fun and games began. The current administration has exploited the plan to the detriment of the residents and taxpayers of San Francisco. Because of the large amounts of money involved, and the chance to use that money for purposes other than intended, nor are the guidelines of my approved legislation being adhered to.

In 2002, the annual projected revenue that a new Harding would produce was based on calculations that green fees for San Francisco residents would be set at \$28 maximum, and for non-residents, \$88 maximum. Using the historic yearly average of 77,650 rounds of golf played at Harding (not even taking into account the increase to be played on a newly renovated course) it would have to yield at least \$2.4 million to \$3 million per year in 2002 Dollars! After maintenance costs, and assuming that we would continue to employ professional golf-greens keepers, which we haven’t done, the City golf fund should have netted at least the \$6.5 million over six years as predicted by Economic Research Associates in 2002, if not much more than that amount! Without even taking into consideration profits from the Tours and other ancillary charges, something is not adding up here, or someone in this administration is guilty of “Enron style accounting”. I highly suspect the latter as, in violation of the original agreement, green fees for residents have now been jacked up to \$46 – \$59 and for non-residents are forced to pay \$135 – \$155. Even simple math will show that there is just no way the course could be running at a loss!

I won’t bore you with more details to prove my point, but will comment on a few realities that San Franciscans should be aware of lest their City be sold out from underneath them.

1. Harding Park is not running at a loss as is being depicted by this administration in the local media. The Golf fund revenues are not being properly accounted for, and are being diverted into other uses that have nothing to do with course or park maintenance.
2. Cost overruns for the renovation of Harding ran the bill up to \$16 million, not the \$23.6 million being quoted. The overruns were due to Dept. of Rec and Park inefficiency and inclement weather conditions during the re-build. I would love to know where the other \$7.6 million was supposedly spent, as it certainly wasn’t on Harding. The figure of \$23.6 was never revealed during my tenure on the Board of Supervisors, it was not revealed until 2005.
3. As \$13.1 million of the funding was in the form of State Grants, there is no need to make payments in the form of a loan for that amount, and the extra \$2.9 million required for the overruns was to come out of the Rec and Park budget in 2002-3. There is no 25 year loan due date approaching soon unless the books have been cooked. Why?
4. Harding is being portrayed as an operating loss to the people of this City by this Mayor and the District 7 Supervisor (his rubber stamp on the Board). By so doing, they attempt to justify their efforts to “privatize” its operation. Privatization is not always bad as there are cases where a private concern can utilize efficiency that a municipality cannot in order to provide for the common good. In this case, “privatization” means turning the operation of Harding over to the Mayors special interest political donors so that they can realize the profits that the City is now making—profits that are not being honestly and truthfully disclosed.

Finally, Harding Park took a lot of work to put together, work by a lot of smart people who had the City’s interest at heart and knew how a world class City should operate. It was a wonderful gift to all the residents of San Francisco, be they golfers or non-golfers (like me). It was the first step in the plan to revitalize the entire Lake Merced area to the benefit of all City residents. As it stands now, Harding is just another one of our misused assets.

My intention is to shed a little light on what Harding Park and its re-build was for, and what it should be all about. If it were handled properly, Harding would yield untold resources and distinguish San Francisco as the City that still knows how.

Tony Hall is the former District 7 Supervisor

Quentin Kopp (Cont. from p. 1)

income to support their families and themselves in the “private sector”, a term fancied over the past three decades as an antidote to that other currently revered term, “public service.” Their salaries could only be changed by the San Francisco voters.

In 1956, the voters did so, authorizing an increase to \$4,800 per year. In 1964, voters approved an increase to \$9,600 per year. In 1967, legislation was enacted to enable each Board of Supervisors member to engage one administrative assistant. In 1972, the annual Budget Ordinance was amended to allow an additional employee, namely, a secretary. Throughout the turbulent 1970’s and 1980’s, each member functioned ably with one administration assistant and one secretary. Those salaries were as modest as the voter-sanctioned supervisor salary. There were no answering machines. Every telephone call received during regular business hours was answered either by the administrative assistant, the secretary or the Supervisor. Voicemail didn’t exist.

Several times during the 1980’s efforts were undertaken by aggrandizing Supervisors to amend the Charter to eliminate voter approval of salary increases and link Supervisor salaries to higher paid public positions such as Superior Court Judges’ salaries. Those efforts were understandably rejected. In 1982, after voters mandated my Presidency for a second time of the Board of Supervisors, I sponsored a Charter amendment to change the salary by an increase based upon the increase in the local Consumer Price Index (CPI) from 1964 to 1982. Beloved Board of Supervisors Budget Analyst, (Harvey M. Rose) calculated the Consumer Price Index figure as \$23,924. My proposed Charter change, now embraced by then supervisor colleagues, was approved easily by understanding voters.

In the late 1990’s, however, a new generation of Supervisors, mostly without profession or business in which to earn a living, convinced voters their service was ”full-time.” Although voters had imposed term limits amounting to eight years upon Board of Supervisors members, the Supervisors persuaded voters to admit them to the Retirement System of the City and County, not withstanding the shortness of their “public service.” They then boot-strapped that tactic by altering the salary method of the Charter. Supervisorial salaries would be established upon the basis of comparing the salaries of other county Boards of Supervisors and using comparability as the measurement, similar to the hoary “like pay for like work” principle embedded in the Charter in 1932 for almost all City employees, except those with special compensation like municipal railway employees whose salaries were essentially set by computing the average of the two highest-paid public transit systems in the United States!

That, of course, has resulted in a current Board of Supervisors salary of almost \$100,000 per annum. Additionally, supervisors serve on regional agencies such as the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, Bay Conservation and Development Commission, Transbay Terminal Authority, Peninsula Rail Corridor Joint Powers Authority and, thus, receive additional “per diem” compensation based upon attendance at meetings of full governing boards and committees thereof. Although not at the level of State legislators, Board of Supervisors members today need not trouble themselves with businesses or professions – and they don’t.

Another change involved supervisors adding a third aide. Voters, however, removed that power by adopting Charter section 10.104, “allowing each supervisor two staff members”. (As of Nov. 1995, incidentally, under Section 2.203-3 the Charter authorized but one administrative assistant per member, non-civil service.) Obviously, appetites for staff are insatiable. Therefore, at the behest of a feckless former Board of Supervisors member (McGoldrick) whose departure emanated sheerly from term limits, on August 5, 2008 (before that “worthy” departed the Board of Supervisors) the Board voted 9-2 to place Proposition B on the ballot. Incidentally, the Controller, lamely states that Proposition B “would not in and of itself affect the cost of government.” Presently the legislative aide job classification pays from \$69,500 to \$93,100 annually and the total costs of those current 22 positions is approximately \$2,300,000 annually including salary and benefits. The Controller refuses to inform us how much 11 new aides will cost us.

As we all know, Supervisors now are elected from 11 districts, not from citywide voters in an at-large system. Each district contains approximately 70,000 people, not 770,000 or 800,000, the latter, a figure which some “experts” estimate as the current San Francisco population. (I doubt it). Supervisors like John Barbagelata, Dianne Feinstein, Ron Pelosi, Peter Tamaras, Jack Molinari, Bob Gonzales, Terry Francois and Terance Hallinan represented our entire San Francisco population with two administrative assistants. History is instructive. In 2000, voters emphatically rejected the same proposition, also Proposition B, and that was after the advent of both “voicemail” and answering machines, which, according to friends and neighbors, appear usually in operation during afternoon business hours at the Board of Supervisors.

Apropos of history, for those who still may be interested, I will vote against Propositions A, C and E, as well as B. Proposition A, establishing a two year budget bill and a 5-year financial plan, constitutes another guise for avoidance of continuing annual responsibility. I voted on 15 Annual City Budget Ordinances and 12 Annual State Budget Bills. Those were arduous responsibilities, trying to evaluate estimated revenue and expenditures annually. Can you image trying to do so over two years in the future? Allegedly brilliant economists of our nation disagree about the probable end of our current economic conditions. Do you think amateur elected officials can do better with two-year cycles and five-year financial plans? It’s tough enough to do it one year in advance. Ordinarily, I’d vote for Proposition C, which allows sale of the naming right to Candlestick Park. I won’t do it, because it contains the policy of requiring one half of all revenue from such sale to be divided between the 49ers and the City into a “special funding” account, the bane of financial public policy decisions. The money from the sale of the name should be deposited either into San Francisco’s General Fund or the Recreation and Parks Department, without specifying its finite use.

I shall vote for Proposition D simply because I don’t find billboards offensive, especially on Market Street and private property. (I don’t like the idea of selling advertising on public property. And I know-Candlestick Park signifies an exception). I’ll vote against Proposition E for that reason.

Don’t, however, rest your decisions on my personal predilections; even though California law renders voting decisions confidential to the voter, I don’t mind revealing my choices, which with my status as a retired judge don’t mean much anyway.

POLICE BLOTTER

Captain Paul Chignell has been transferred to a night captain’s position effective November 14, 2009. Captain Denise Schmitt, currently in charge of the Training Division, will be the new Captain of Taraval Station. She is a consummate professional with administrative, investigative and patrol experience. “It has been a pleasure to command the Taraval Station these past two years. The officers and the community have collaborated in extraordinary ways to enhance the quality of life for the residents, the merchants and visitors of the Taraval Police District.”



For a complete daily Police Report from the Taraval Police Station, go to:

www.westsideobserver.com





SECOND THOUGHTS

Weather You Can Believe In

By Jack Kaye

The first thing I check in the daily paper each morning is the weather page. I like to see what the weather was in San Francisco and what it will be. I then look at the surrounding area temperatures. After that I check state, national, and international weather conditions. It makes me feel like I'm traveling around the world each morning. I am a numbers man so I like seeing the increases and decreases, the record highs and lows. And temperatures seem so absolute, so objective, but are they?

Not only do the predictions for the day's weather usually end up being wrong, I have come to realize that even the reports of the previous day's actual weather are also suspect. After watching the evening news and weather on a few channels and then seeing the temps in the paper the next day, I find that there can be three or four different temperatures for the same place on the same day. And oftentimes none of the numbers agree with the temperatures that my car's weather monitor reports.

In addition to the problems with inconsistency there is another of variation within a location. San Francisco weather can be cold and foggy by the ocean while being warm and sunny in the Mission. The high temperature can range up to 20 degrees in the two locations on the same day, so reporting only one temperature for the city must be wrong.

And then there is the fact that the very same temperature reading is not necessary the same temperature to the body. It can be 60 and sunny or it can be 60 and foggy or windy. To the mercury, it is the same. To the body, it is very different. In the East Coast and Mid-West, they give the temperature and then the chill factor.

The same temperature also varies with the degree of humidity. A day of 80 degrees can be unbearable in a humid New York City, while being very warm in San Francisco, and not bad at all in arid Tucson or Las Vegas.

I believe that we must change the way we measure and therefore report weather. In places like San Francisco with micro climates, the weather should be reported in a range. Instead of saying that it was a high of 68 degrees yesterday, the report should show the range of highs from the coldest part of the city and the warmest. These reports should factor in the effects of humidity, wind and fog on the effective temperature. This should also be done for all other areas as well. Tucson would look cooler and New York would seem warmer, at least in the summer, while the Mid West would look a lot colder in winter. And San Francisco would almost always appear a lot cooler than the raw numbers now indicate.

I would love to see the evening news have a segment on national or even international weather. Weather reports have become not only inaccurate but also provincial, concerned only with the surrounding area as though the rest of the world doesn't really matter. (It's like going to a restaurant where the food is so bad you don't mind the poor service.) While it was 70 degrees yesterday in San Francisco what was it like in Paris or Tucson or Venice or the Virgin Islands or Ventura? (The Chronicle has stopped telling us about Ventura and has never mentioned Venice or the Virgin Islands. Maybe they don't like places that begin with the letter V. They only mention Vienna and Vancouver, probably because they feel that they have to.)

I would also enjoy seeing all the weather reports coordinated so they do not differ so. The T.V. news and the daily papers should all get their numbers from the same place and that place should be accurate. So if the evening news reports that San Francisco was from 62 at the coast to 74 in Noe Valley, the other stations and the Chronicle should report the same numbers, otherwise none has any meaning.

And they should stop saying that there is a certain percentage chance of rain. It's like saying that something might happen or it might not. That's always true, except when it isn't.

But perhaps most importantly, the weather experts should try to do more to actually fix it. Why is there no fog from Sneath Lane south or north of Corte Madera? Can their fog resistant characteristics be used to stop fog in San Francisco? And don't say that you like the fog, I beg you. It is cold, wet and grey. It is nature's equivalent of sadness and depression, just as sunshine and warmth equal love and as the wind and cold are bitterness and indifference. But as I promise all those who claim that they would miss the fog, the weather experts could get rid of fog and then maybe give it back just to those who want it.

With all these changes made in the prediction and description of weather by the media and improvements in our actual weather conditions made by our trusty meteorologists, we could finally have weather that we can believe in.

Oops! There Goes Mt. Sutro Forest

Soon you could be hearing the whine of chainsaws if UCSF has their way.



The continued existence of the beautiful "Cloud Forest" on Mount Sutro is being threatened; UCSF is planning to "thin" 14 acres by cutting down up to 90% of the trees and bushes — because the 100-year-old trees are eucalyptus trees.

A MAGICAL PLACE

The eucalyptus trees comprise a 100-year-old forest in the heart of San Francisco, on the foggy slopes of Mount Sutro. It's full of birdsong and the calls of the juncos and woodpeckers and — at night — the Great Horned Owls that live there. All summer long, the tall trees capture the fog, dripping the water into the forest floor, a thick sponge of duff and dense undergrowth. When the grasses of nearby Twin Peaks turn dry and golden, the forest is green and damp.

A FOREST IN DANGER

Cloud Forest is a civic treasure, and although most of the property is owned by UCSF, it is open to the public. (The easiest approach is through the Aldea student housing area off Clarendon Avenue. Other trails into the forest start off Christopher Drive and down in Cole Valley.) UCSF has applied for a FEMA grant to cut down most of the trees on 14 acres, ostensibly to reduce fire danger. In fact, this damp, foggy forest has less fire-risk than most places. Even in the fall, between the foggy summer and the rainy winter, the forest barely dries out for a few days each year. So what is the real reason?

Many people believe that the real reason for the destruction is that the "Native Plant" interests have influenced UCSF into believing that the non-native eucalyptus trees and blackberry bushes must go. The non-native blackberry bushes provide cover and food to birds and small animals. The gist of the their stand is the non-native trees and plants must be replaced with native grasses and shrubs.

THE PLAN: THINNED, DRIED, POISONED

The plan includes removing up to 90% of the vegetation on 15 acres of the forest, and using gallons of a "Roundup" type of herbicide to prevent resprouting. Once the forest is thinned in this manner, it will become drier, more flammable, and more dangerous. Even the trees that are saved will be at greater risk, without the windbreak protection of the other trees. United they stand. As critics of the proposal, we expect, once this project is implemented, a thinner, drier, windier space. It will be a forest no longer — just an open park with a few surviving trees, in which poisonous herbicides will be used year after year (since eucalyptus can resprout for seven years afterward). If we want windy, open, hills we already have Twin Peaks.

THOSE WHO DESPISE IT

It is a tragedy that this amazing forest has fallen into the hands of those who despise the very trees and bushes that comprise it. Once it is gone, it will not return in our lifetime. 100 years of growth will end up as tinder on the mountain.

Save Sutro Cloud Forest

The 120-year-old Cloud Forest on Mt Sutro, a place of ethereal beauty and birdsong, is in danger. Owner UCSF has applied for FEMA funds to chop down 3000 trees on 14 acres — ostensibly to reduce Very High Fire Hazard.

This 61-acre forest lies squarely in the fog-belt, captures fog all summer, holds moisture like a sponge, and protects it with dense undergrowth. When Twin Peaks is dry and brown, Sutro Forest is green, its trails damp or even slushy. To date, this year has seen only seven consecutive fogless days in the forest. It's one of San Francisco's wettest places.

Many neighbors believe UCSF wants FEMA to fund conversion of the forest to native plants, (like Tank Hill or Twin Peaks), at the behest of Mt Sutro Stewards, a volunteer group doing excellent work building trails, but also doing native plant "restoration."

- Here's why neighbors oppose it:
1. Greater fire hazard. Gutting the forest will make it windier and drier; the brush that grows instead will increase, not reduce, the fire hazard — and affect home values and insurance rates.
  2. Toxic herbicides. Roundup and Garlon will be used to prevent resprouting. These persist in the soil up to a year and infiltrate water run-off, potentially a danger to hikers, dog walkers, wildlife, the water-table, and downslope communities.
  3. Landslides. Mt Sutro's steep slopes risk landslides, once the eucalyptus and blackberry that hold them are removed. In the Forest Knolls neighborhood just below the forest, a landslide destroyed a house. More recently, a large landslide area was stabilized with blue tarpaulin. Twin Peaks, for example, has persistent rockslides and rockfalls.

In view of the neighbors' response, UCSF held a meeting on Oct 19 to seek community input. This roughly polarized between Mt Sutro Steward volunteers, who naturally supported the plan; and neighbors, who mostly did not. (However, some neighbors did support the plan; and some volunteers were dubious.) Across positions, some agreed about toxic herbicides risk, about the need for Environmental Impact Reports (UCSF sought an exemption); and for an approach to managing the forest. (For more information and details access the following website: <http://www.savesutro.wordpress.com>)



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## November Calendar

## YMCA HEALTH SCREENINGS

**First Wed each month | 9:30–11:30 am** | Free health screenings at the Stonestown YMCA. Come every month for different screening: cholesterol, glucose, body mass index, blood pressure and bone density. Pre-register 923-3155 or cpmcchrc@sutterhealth.org. \$10 suggested.

## FRIDAY NIGHT JAZZ EVERY FRIDAY

**Every Fri | 7-11 pm** | Cliff House – 1 Seal Rock.

## HAPPY HOUR EVERY TUESDAY

**Every Tues | 4-8 pm** | Que Syrah. Take \$1 off of each glass / \$10 off of each bottle of wine consumed at the store. 230 West Portal 731.7000

## ART MUSIC AND LECTURES AT SF STATE

See our ad on this page for details!

## FARMERS MARKET'S

**Every Sat | 10 am–2pm** | Parkmerced: . at the corner of Arballo and Serrano.

**Every Sun | 10 am– 3 pm** | Stonestown: at Stonestown Galleria (19th Avenue @ Winston)

## LOST CITIES OF NORTH AFRICA

**Mon 2 – Fri, Dec 8 | 11 am–4 pm** | SFSU Museum Studies Exhibition featuring artifacts and photographs from ancient Roman archaeological finds. Humanities Building 510 at the corner of Font and Tapia St. SFSU Free.

## GWNPN MEETING

**Tue 3 | 7:30 pm** | Greater West Portal Neighborhood Association at West Portal Clubhouse, 139 Lenox Way

## PIANO RECITAL, MARILYN NONKEN

**Wed 4 | 1 pm** | Knuth Hall, Creative Arts Building, SF State campus, 1600 Holloway at 19th Ave., Admission: Free

## POETS ROBIN EKIS AND TROY JOLIMORE

**Thur 5 | 7 pm** | Local poet Robin Ekiss (*Mansion of Happiness*) and Troy Jollimore (*The Solipsist*) at BookShop West Portal. 80 West Portal Ave Info: 564-8080.

## THE VOICE OF MARGERY TEDE

**Sat 7 | 3 pm** | Professor William Corbett-Jones leads a concert of contemporary music in memory of SF State alumna Margery C. Tede, a mezzo-soprano well known in the Bay Area for her luminous voice and support of the arts Knuth Hall, Creative Arts Bldg, SFSU, 1600 Holloway at 19th Ave., SF Admission: Free

## AUTHOR ANNIE BARROWS

**Sun 8 | 11 am** | Barrows will read from *Ivy & Bean: Doomed to Dance*, her latest installment to her delightful kids' series at BookShop West Portal. 80 West Portal Ave Info: 564-8080.

## NOW AT THE MOVIES

by Don Lee Miller

## COCO BEFORE CHANEL

The young woman Gabrielle, known as Coco: Audrey Tautou, has a sister, Adrienne: Marie Gillain and in the early 1900's they entertain in music halls for coins tossed in their direction. She has yet to discover colors other than black, brown or gray. She sponges off Baron Balsan: Benoit Poelvoorde who has a country estate and welcomes her to live there, in exchange for visits to her boudoir at night. She learns to love racehorses as he does. To earn a living, she starts designing hats without the usual froufrou. Coco smokes a lot and rarely smiles. On a visit to the seashore, she's inspired by the sailor's attire. Though feisty, she's really not especially interesting, nor does she give promise of soaring the fashion world into a new era. French with subtitles. Language, nudity.

## AN EDUCATION

In pre-swinging London in 1961, Jenny: Carey Mulligan, a 16-year old private girls' school student, is going on 25; she's growing up much too rapidly, thanks to her affair with 30-something David: Peter Sarsgaard. He re-sells depressed property to black buyers. With his partner-in-crime, Danny: Dominic Cooper and Danny's wife, Helen: Rosamund Pike, they "liberate" antique maps from homes in villages they "hastily" visit. They lead an enviable social life, which is very attractive to young Jenny, especially her trip to Paris. She starts turning her back on her teacher,

## KAVAFIAN-SCHUB-SHIFRIN TRIO

**Sun 8 | 3 pm** | Milhaud: Suite for Violin, Clarinet and Piano; Saint-Saëns: Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 1; Poulenc: Sonata for Clarinet and Piano; and Stravinsky: Suite from "L'Histoire du Soldat" McKenna Theatre, Creative Arts Bldg, SFSU 1600 Holloway at 19th Ave. Free

## 20TH ANNUAL STILLWELL ART SHOW

**Tue 10–Wed, Dec 9 | 4–6 pm** | Reception: Tues 10, 4–6 p.m. Fine Arts Gallery, Fine Arts Bldg, SFSU 1600 Holloway at 19th Ave. Free

## AUTHOR SUSAN WELS

**Tue 10 | 7 pm** | Wels will discuss *Amelia Earhart: The Thrill of It* the comprehensive bio of Earhart with never-before-seen pics, letters, maps, and documents at BookShop West Portal. 80 West Portal Ave Info: 564-8080.

## TWELFTH NIGHT

**Tue 10, Thu 12, Sat 14 | 8 pm** | By William Shakespeare, Directed by William Peters. Studio Theatre, Creative Arts Bldg, SFSU 1600 Holloway at 19th Ave. \$10 general/\$5 students, faculty, staff and seniors

## JOEL RICHARD PAUL

**Thu 12 | 7 pm** | Paul will discuss *Unlikely Allies: How a Merchant, a Playwright and a Spy Saved the American Revolution* the story of Silas Deane, Caron de Beaumarchais and Chevalier d'Eon who quietly secured the French alliance that saved the revolution at BookShop West Portal. 80 West Portal Ave Info: 564-8080.

## BOREALIS STRING QUARTET

**Fri 12 | 1 pm** | Knuth Hall, Creative Arts Building, SF State campus, 1600 Holloway at 19th Ave., Admission: Free

## WINEMAKER EVENT AT QUE SYRAH

**Sat 14 | 5–8 pm** | Meet the winemaker from Mounts Family Winery (Sonoma) and taste their new releases. Details 415-731-7000

## AUTHOR JACQUELINE MALLORCA

**Tue 17 | 7 pm** | Mallorca will discuss *Gluten-Free Italian*, a groundbreaking cookbook from former *Chronicle* food columnist at BookShop West Portal. 80 West Portal Ave Info: 564-8080.

## TARAVAL POLICE DISTRICT COMMUNITY MTG

**Tue 17 | 6 pm** | Our monthly Taraval/Community meeting at Taraval Police Station, 2345 24th Ave (3rd Tues of each month).

## FALL INTO JAZZ

**Wed 18–Fri 20 | 8 pm** | Annual festival showcasing the best of the Jazz and World Music Nov. 18: Combo Night, directed by Andrew Speight | Nov. 19: Afro-Cuban Ensemble, directed by John Calloway, and Vocal Jazz, directed by Dee Spencer | Nov. 20: Gospel Choir, directed

Miss Stubbs: Olivia Williams and the Headmistress: Emma Thompson. Jenny doesn't want advice from her parents, Jack: Alfred Molina or Majorie: Cara Seymour. Lone Scherfig directs Lynn Barber's memoir/Nick Hornby's screenplay. Mulligan is getting Oscar buzz for her complex performance; Williams and Molina are being lauded. Sarsgaard's American accent is disturbing in a Brit. Well worth seeing! Sexual content, smoking.

## LAW ABIDING CITIZEN

Gerard Butler seems to becoming synonymous with the most graphic horror tales to come from Hollywood. Here, after watching his wife and daughter brutally murdered, Clyde takes years before exacting his revenge. When he does so, it is so vile and violent that it's unwatchable. The killer is rendered immobile but can feel everything, as his digits are removed one-by-one, then the et cetera, then the electric saw takes one limb at a time, finally the head is cut off. If one finds this entertaining to watch, this is your Halloween flick. When he uses a plastic spork to dispatch his prison cellmate, both are covered in dripping blood. Jamie Foxx plays Nick, the Philadelphia prosecuting attorney whose family is not spared by Clyde. Extreme violence and profanity!

## PARIS

Cédric Klapisch directs/writes this patchwork quilt of Parisian stories lovingly photographed by Christophe Beaucarme. There's Pierre: Romain Duris, who dances at the Moulin Rouge, until his need

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PRE-CONCERT TALK: 2PM, CREATIVE ARTS 146, FREE

**THE VOICE OF MARGERY TEDE**  
Friends and colleagues celebrate the late Margery Tede, SF State alumna and mezzo-soprano known for her luminous voice and support of the arts. Works by Gordon Getty, Kirke Mechem, Virgil Thomson, Ron McFarland, Roger Nixon and Jon Sutton.  
SAT, NOV 7, 3 PM, KNUTH HALL, FREE

**20TH ANNUAL STILLWELL STUDENT SHOW**  
This juried showcase features new student art in many media and works from the University's collection of paintings by Leo D. Stillwell Jr.  
NOV 10–DEC 9, WED–SAT, 11AM–4PM, FINE ARTS GALLERY, FREE

**SHAKESPEARE'S TWELFTH NIGHT**  
The beloved comedy. Fall in love again, just like Olivia.  
NOV 10, 12–13, 8PM, NOV 14, 2PM AND 8PM  
STUDIO THEATRE, \$5–\$10

**FALL INTO JAZZ**  
Following the giant steps of jazz greats, students showcase the diversity of this global art form. Performances by instrumental combos, Brazil Vox featuring vocal jazz, the Afro-Cuban Ensemble and Gospel Choir.  
NOV 18–20, KNUTH HALL, \$5–\$10

**AFTERNOON CONCERTS**  
Enjoy the sounds and sights. SF State's School of Music and Dance opens its Concert Music course with performances by guest artists, faculty and students.  
MON–WED–FRI, THROUGH DEC 11, 1PM, KNUTH HALL, FREE

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by Ja Ronn Thompson. Knuth Hall, Creative Arts Building, SF State campus, 1600 Holloway at 19th Ave., \$10 general/\$5 students

## DEBRA LAMBERT, MEZZO-SOPRANO

**Fri 20 | 1 pm** | Knuth Hall, Creative Arts Building, SF State campus, 1600 Holloway at 19th Ave. Admission Free.

## THE "LOST" SOUTHERN PACIFIC LINE

**Mon 24 | 7 pm** | SF History Assn., Richard Brandi will speak about the 1863 line that

once ran from SF to SJ. St. Philips Catholic Church, 24th and Diamond Streets. Free for SFHA members, \$5 for non-members.

## WEST OF TWIN PEAKS CENTRAL COUNCIL

**Mon 24 | 7:30 pm** | A resource for neighborhood organizations. Want to listen and comment on issues? The fourth Monday of each month Forest Hill Clubhouse 381 Magellan Ave.

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for a heart transplant forces him to quit. His older sister, Elise: Juliette Binoche, a divorced social worker, moves in with her three kids to care for Pierre. Prof. Roland: Fabrice Luchini has a crush on a student, Laetitia: Mélanie Laurent, and texts her anonymously. The funniest scene is when he shakes his booty for her amusement. The market seller, Jean: Albert Dupontel still has feelings for his ex-wife, Caroline: Julie Farrier. Language, sexual situations.

## A SERIOUS MAN

The Coen Brothers have directed and written a Jewish tale of a physics prof, Larry Gopnik: Michael Stuhlbarg, at a small Midwestern university whose life starts unraveling. There's his inept brother, Arthur: Richard Kind, who sleeps on the couch. Larry's wife wants to leave him for a more successful man. His daughter does nothing but wash her hair or have an appointment for same. His son, about to have his bar mitzvah, gets his radio confiscated in class with money in it and has run up a bill to a record club. A Korean student bribes him with big bills to change his 'F' to passing. Larry can't get an appointment with the rabbi to discuss his problems. He may, or may not, get tenure on the job. One neighbor always carries a rifle. The stacked neighbor sunbathes nude. "Jake, the ceiling needs painting." So, what's a modern day Job to do? Language, nudity, sexual situations.

## WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE

This children's film actually delivers more for adults, particularly those who

still remember their childhood fondly. Maurice Sendak, the original author, produces the Spike Jones-directed (and co-written with Dave Eggers) offbeat fable with all embellishments approved. Young Max: Max Records plays a 9-year old who runs away from home one evening and sails to an island populated by strange critters that make him their king. Temperamental-lovable Carol: James Gandolfini; funny Judith: Catherine O'Hara; insecure Ira: Forest Whitaker; Alexander: Paul Dano; Douglas: Chris Cooper; and reasonable KW: Lauren Ambrose comprise the Wild Things. After a coupla days, Max does get back home to his loving mom, Catherine Keener.

## WHIP IT

Why set a film in Austin and film it in Detroit? Drew Barrymore makes her directing debut with this dramedy centered around roller derby and the 17-year old newbie to it: Bliss Cavendar: Ellen Page (Juno). Bliss is a misfit in her small town of Bodeen, Texas where her mother, Brooke: Marcia Gay Harden, is a mail carrier, and her father, Earl: Daniel Stern, is a good ol' boy beer drinker. Her boy friend, Oliver: Landon Pigg dabbles in avant garde music. Her friends on the team are sisterly Maggie Mayhem: Kristen Wiig and skanky Smashley Simpson: Barrymore herself. Iron Maven: Juliette Lewis, on the opposing team, makes life miserable for Bliss. The announcer is played by Jimmy Fallon. Page and Harden turn in involving, interesting performances. Violence, language, nudity, sexual situations.



Having a Blast in Our Own “Backyard”

At the President’s Cup

By Peter Bencharsky

With the world on our “door-step,” my brother-in-law (Matt) and I decided to brave the crowds for the first day of the President’s Cup. What a time we had, as the San Francisco weather cooperated, (not a given in October), and we made our way to the BART station to start our adventure.

Even before play had started things couldn’t have worked out any better with the processing of the crowds. As parking was at a premium, the tournament organizers had arranged for a free shuttle service from the Daly City BART station to Harding Park and back to BART after play ended that day. The operation was so organized you would have thought The Disney Company had put it all together. It really made going to the event much easier than if we would have had to look for a parking place. Once we arrived at the entrance there was a feeling of magic in the air as if we were about to watch The World Series or The Super Bowl. Every spectator was so upbeat because they were lucky enough to have one of the sold out tickets. The crowd was large; we heard estimates of 18 to 20 thousand. With the kids in school, it was mostly made up of people in their 30’s to 50’s.

Instead of “flipping a tee” to see which team would start first, we were in for a

treat. To start things off, former President George H.W. Bush performed a coin toss to see which team would begin play. How many of us get a chance to see a former President of the United States in person? Regardless if one is a Republican or Democrat, it was very “cool” to have the 40th President of the United States standing not more than 150 feet away.

Then the fun began. There was so much going on all of a sudden. We weren’t sure which way to turn. “Do we stay and continue to watch the first foursome (including Phil Mickelson) once they all started off? No way, as too many people had that plan in mind. Ernie Els is teeing off soon, shall we wait for him? No, still too many people at the first tee. What about leaving the crowd altogether and walking forward to the third or fourth hole and getting a good spot there? “

We had decided to do the latter when we noticed that hardly anyone was at the practice green to watch Tiger Woods and Vijay Singh practicing. Walking over to the roped off area next to the practice green, we observed true professionals in action. Woods and Singh were practicing hitting balls out of a sand trap and chipping out of four inch rough. Time after time, they dropped the ball right next to the cup, making it look so easy that anyone should be able to do it. Any amateur golfer can

attest that it’s not that easy. Across the area watching from the other side was (former SF Giant and baseball MVP) Barry Bonds, who later walked the course following Tiger’s group for most of the day. All of this took place within the first fifteen minutes after we entered the gate.

Throughout the day we continued trying to get a good position to watch the golfers and appreciate the skills they have worked to perfect. Since Matt and I both have a fairly high golf “index” I was not only stargazing but also watching every move to get a “free” golf lesson from some of the best players in the world.

When we did see the pros teeing off, it was just amazing how far they can hit the ball. It’s really a different game than the one we play on the weekends. Even though the pros were hitting long, we saw (Tiger) Woods out drive his partners by a good 40+ yards.

Another difference between “them” and us is how relaxed they are. One of the younger pros on the PGA tour, Zach Johnson, hit a bad tee shot, bouncing the ball off of his opponent after several other bounces. As he and his competitor were discussing the rules with the Course Rules Official, Johnson was calmly eating a sandwich while waiting for the ruling. (He was not penalized, but had to go back to the spot he had hit the ball, and

hit again). Most of “us” weekend warriors would not have been so calm with such an errant shot. With the large number of Cypress trees at the course, golfers from both teams were hitting into and off of the trees. (We can relate to that.)

The celebrity watchers were also on hand to follow the US team’s ” special assistant.” NBA Hall of Fame player Michael Jordan was seen so much it became no big deal. After passing us by what seemed to be every twenty minutes, we simply said, “there goes Michael again.”

As we were getting ready to leave, I caught the glance and attention of a guy, who made eye contact and nodded “hello.” Later in the weekend, I saw him on TV, now recognizing him as the former PGA golfer and current commentator, Roger Maltbie, who grew up in the South Bay.

There were so many sights at the tournament that this is just the tip of the iceberg. I could go on and on with everything that we saw. All in all we had a great time seeing the pros play golf in a way that we will never equal. And to think there were no need for long distance travel, no airports, no luggage, no hotels and no extreme heat mixed with high humidity. San Francisco is beautiful in the fall and the weather at Harding Park was just right for this native San Franciscian. And to think it took place in our own “backyard.”

AT THE THEATER

Dr. Jean Lust and Flora Lynn Isaacson

TINY KUSHNER SHORTS

Mirroring The American Experience at the Berkeley Rep.

Tony Kushner’s West Coast premiere of his Tiny Kushner that opened in October at Berkeley Rep is in effect a “Big Kushner” regarding the panorama of contemporary American viewpoints the playwright is able to depict in five short acts. Presented from a fast paced East Coast perspective, the shorts are directed with the expertise of Berkeley Rep’s artistic director Tony Taccone.

The first play, *Flip Flop Fly*, catches the audience’s attention in its portrayal of two culturally opposing females, a popular young American song writer (played by a vibrant Valeri Mudek) and the sophisticated, exiled and deposed Queen Geraldine of Albania (authoritatively interpreted by Kate Eifrig) who meet on the moon after their deaths. We are reminded of Jean Paul Sartre’s No Exit in which a lesbian, an attractive female, and a male survive side by side despite their differences. In Kushner’s play the women’s contrasting characters are presented in vaudeville style ending in a hilarious song and dance routine.

*Veloren Sein or Ambivalence* revolves around a gay patient (performed by an endearing J.C. Cutler) in love with his lesbian psychiatrist (Kate Eifrig), with their lovers Jim Lichtscheidl and Valeri Mudek hovering about their partners while the

patient begs his unconvinced shrink to love him.

The third, a solo entitled *East Coast Ode to Howard Jarvis*, is brilliantly played by Jim Lichtscheidl who presents individuals from all walks of life who devise a scheme to prove they are exempt from paying taxes because they do not legally exist. This clever fantasy, although overloaded with details and never ending verbosity, has the audience racing to keep up with the narrator’s rapid delivery and quick change of characters.

In *Dr. Arnold A. Hutschnecker in Paradise*, we return to afterlife on the moon where a psychoanalyst (convincingly played by J.C. Cutler) complains to psychiatrist (Kate Eifrig) that he spends five days a week analyzing Richard Nixon. This amusing satire on psychotherapy revealing the character of Nixon is highly entertaining.

*Only We Who Guard the Mystery Shall Be Unhappy* revolves around Laura Bush in Paradise addressing three little Iraqi children who died with thousands of other children because of American aggression. Laura Bush, well interpreted by Kate Eifrig, tries too justify husband Bushie’s actions by condemning Saddam Hussein as a cruel dictator who needed to be overthrown. This piece has more of a moral tone than the four others in its implication of America’s tactics that caused the death of innocent children.

Kushner offers sharp perceptions of the American scene set in a fantasy of the afterlife depicting the fantastical aspects of

psychoanalysis. Fantasy and truth about America experiencing a universe in peril presented on a light note is what renders Kushner a meaningful and profound recorder of our times.

*Tiny Tony plays through Nov. 29. For info and tickets call 510-647-2949 or click on BerkeleyRep.org. Dr. Annette Lust*

THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

When the kids are away, the parents will play. The San Francisco Playhouse just opened the World Premiere of *The First Day of School* by Billy Aronson to kick off its new season.

Susan (Zehra Berkman) and David (Bill English) meet outside an elementary school on the first day of school after dropping off their children. They begin by comparing notes on their kids new teachers. With a whole day to kill, they decide to fulfill a mutual fantasy and begin propositioning other parents. They introduce themselves by saying to a fellow parent, “Do you want to have sex with me?” The comedy takes flight by the reactions they get.

Susan begins by speaking to Peter, played by a flustered and neurotic Jackson Davis. David follows suit by speaking to Kim played by Marcia Pizzo as a righteous PTA activist, who turns him down. Next, David speaks to Alice played by Stacy Ross as an unapproachable, high powered attorney.

Scene II opens up into Susan and David’s comfortable living room beautifully designed by Bill English. Peter comes home with Susan and Alice comes home

with David, and then much to David’s surprise, Kim also shows up. Peter, Alice and Kim seem to be very uptight to swing with Susan and David.

Scene III is again in Susan and David’s living room four years later where everyone is having lots of fun and this evidently has been going on the first day of school over the ensuing four years.

High school student actors Torie Laher and Myles Landberg show up, when the parents are upstairs as teens who stumble into the midst of things. Chris Smith’s smooth direction and his talented cast make the most of Aronson’s deft touch with comic situations.

Imaginative costumes suited to each character were created by Bree Hylkema and Kimberly Richards’ movement design.

In this fantastically funny new comedy by Billy Aronson I found myself continuously laughing out loud! However, our protagonists in *The First Day of School* yearn for a connection that will stave off their loneliness. They hurdle into sexual situations hoping to find something in the arms of others to sustain them in the empty world of conformity and daily routine. Theirs is an eternal quest and Aronson opens the skin of the mundane to expose longings we all understand.

*First Day of School plays through November 7 For tickets, call 415-677-9596 or go to www.sfplayhouse.org. Up next at the San Francisco Playhouse will be “She Stoops To Comedy” by David Greenspan and directed by Mark Rucker, Nov. 18, 2009-Jan. 9, 2010. Flora Lynn Isaacson*

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Thanksgiving Weekend

58th Annual Kolo Festival, Croatian-American Cultural Center

For a very exciting weekend of Balkan and Greek dance, music, culture and food, come to the 58th annual Kolo Festival, Nov. 27 & 28. It will be held at the Croatian-American Center, 60 Onondaga Ave., San Francisco, with dance and music classes, review sessions, live music, culture corners, and specialty food. Dance classes will begin at 9:20 Friday (doors open at 9:00); singing classes begin at 11. Teaching dance will be Yves Moreau, popular Bulgarian dance specialist; John Filcich, (Kolo Festival founder), kolos; Jerry Duke, Greek Macedonian and Thracian; Bob Gardner, Greek; and Sani Rafiti, Romani dances of Kosovo. Singing classes will be taught by Michele Simon and Dragi Spasovski. Party bands include: Trio Zulum, Da! Mozem, Dragi Spasovski with Bill Cope and friends, Agapi Mou (both nights), Helladelics (Saturday). A pre-registration form and event schedule can be found on the website, <http://balkantunes.org/kolo-festival>. For volunteer/ work exchange inquiries, contact Jan Rains, [shepajmr@yahoo.com](mailto:shepajmr@yahoo.com), 925) 682-3727; Band/ kafana information, contact Bill Cope, [bill@thecopes.com](mailto:bill@thecopes.com); and for other information, contact Jerry Duke, Festival Chair, [jcduke@sfsu.edu](mailto:jcduke@sfsu.edu), or 415-759-5136. Pre-registration director is Marion Earl, [marionearl@yahoo.com](mailto:marionearl@yahoo.com). The Croatian-American Center is at 60 Onondaga Ave., San Francisco, 94112, corner of Alemany and Onondaga, 3 blocks from the Balboa Park Bart station.



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# Que Syrah – Bringing the wines of the world to the neighborhood

By Mitch Bull

Imagine a place where soft lighting beckons you to step out of the mist and into a small store where the aroma of fine wines and cheeses wafts through the air. Inside, the seating is comfortable and inviting. As you look at the tasting selection menu there are wines from all over the world produced by some of the finest “small batch” wineries. Is it a dream? No, it is Que Syrah, a terrific “neighborhood destination” just down the block, located at 230 West Portal Avenue.

Owners Stephanie and Keith McCardell have created a friendly, sophisticated wine tasting venue where fine wines (from small wineries) can be sampled with wonderful cheeses, meats, olives ...and assorted chocolate truffles. “We have tried to make Que Syrah unique in that we feature wines from “small batch” wineries; those winemakers that produce limited quantities each year. In small batches there is an emphasis on quality, not just who can make the most cases,” said Stephanie Mc Cardell.

With wine tasting and sales being such a big business in the Bay Area, there are a multitude of tasting rooms and wine bars but Que Syrah provides a most varied (and constantly changing) wine experience.

Many places feature wines “by the glass,” but Que Syrah features 15 in a tasting list that is reasonably priced from \$6.50 to \$13. In addition, McCardell changes the selections every two weeks so that between the “by the glass” menu and the “weekly featured flights” over 50 different wines can be sampled each month.

The geographic spread of the wineries featured reads like a Rand McNally atlas. Wines from Austria, Australia, Spain, France, Italy, Germany, Chile, New Zealand and Portugal are listed along with those from less “familiar” wine producing countries such as Hungary, Greece, Croatia, and Slovenia...Slovenia??

Of course, the tasting and retail menus feature an extensive assortment of California wineries, from Mendocino to Santa Barbara, and an equally varied assortment of varietals, including little known grapes such as “Charbono,” which is grown on less than 100 acres worldwide. Sprinkle in a smattering of selected vintages from Oregon and Washington and it’s easy to imagine a wine lover spending many a foggy (or clear) night at the tasting bar.

Not resting on their laurels to provide a quality wine drinking experience, the owners also feature 8 kinds of cheeses (from all over the world), house-marinated olives, almonds and a selection of cured meats to enjoy with your favorite glass of wine....or beer, as they also feature 5 different beers. Pilsner, Lager, Ale, Hefeweizen and Stout are all on the list. There are non-alcoholic water and spritzers available for those who prefer an alcohol-free experience.

After tasting and noshing there’s more. For those with a sweet tooth, there is a featured “Dessert Wine Pairing” featuring 3 award winning Australian dessert wines paired with three different hand-made chocolate truffles. If you are just looking for a “sweet wine,” relax, there are 11 other dessert wines you can sample.

Que Syrah also serves as a retail sales establishment, with over 125 different wines for sale by the bottle. Prices are reasonable and this portion of the business is growing. Mc Cardell explained, “The retail portion of our business is probably about 10% but we think it will continue to grow as we continue our focus on exposing our customers and friends to these “small batch” vineyards and the lesser known grape varietals. You can’t easily find many of the wines that we feature.”

An example is “Mounts Family Winery,” a winery that will be featured in a



Stephanie McCardell of Que Syrah Wine Bar

winemaker’s event in mid-November. “Mounts ” is a small, quality operation located in the Dry Creek area of Sonoma County. Known for their reds, the event on November 14th, from 5-8 PM, will feature their new releases. Que Syrah was the first San Francisco wine bar to carry the label.

Mc Cardell summed up her feelings about being in the wine business by relating to the neighborhood, “We really enjoy what we do. We’ve been open for 3 and ½ years and continually meet really great people from the neighborhood. We love the area and are local owners (Miraloma Park). Our goal is to keep rotating and changing the wines we feature, so that every time you visit, there will be something new.”

Que Syrah is also available to book for hosting birthday parties, wedding showers, corporate events and the like, holding up to 35 guests comfortably, with a maximum of 49.

In this era of “me too, copycat retail” few, if any, wine tasting bars can match the variety and quality of the varietals featured at Que Syrah. If you love wine, or know someone that does, it’s a great place to pass some time, learn about wines from faraway places, or to buy a great holiday gift. Check out their “neighborhood happy hour” on Tuesday evenings from 4 – 8 PM with discounts on tastings.

Que Syrah is located at 230 West Portal Avenue. The hours of operation are: Tuesday through Thursday 4PM – 10 PM; Friday, Saturday and Sunday 3:30 PM – 11 PM ; closed on Monday. Contact them at 415-731-7000 for details.



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ON THE PLUS SIDE

Two Threads

by Hank Basayne

I can find plenty of reasons to be pessimistic but, oddly, I can also see justification for looking on the bright side. Confused? Contradictory? No, not more than most. Just reminding myself that things are not always straightforward and simple. I find the world around me becoming increasingly fragmented, which makes it more difficult to take a stand, to stay consistent.

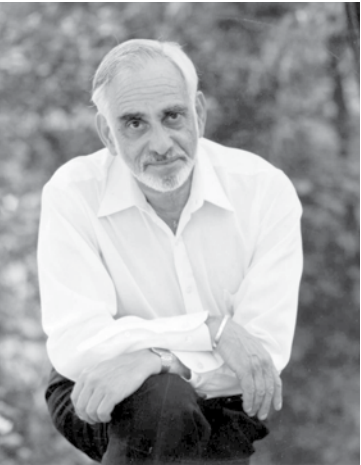
Not that I'm convinced that consistency is a always a virtue. Move it up a notch or two and one becomes a True Believer, an ideologue, unable to take in other points of view and enjoy the rare pleasure of a change of mind.

I wonder if those of us who can look back over three-quarters of a dozen decades all believe that, when we were young, life was simpler, more orderly, more predictable. I know that I've become quite skilled at self-deception. I know that my memory is shamefully selective. The further away I get from the starting line, the more likely it is that a rosy glow will suffuse my recollections.

But I do remember when I had a choice among five local daily papers instead of just one. Now there are hundreds available to me online. I remember being able to easily find legal parking places when I went downtown to shop. During the years when I was still in thrall to the corporate 9-to-5 rigidity there was still time to take an hour and a half for lunch, to visit with co-workers, to actually leave the office at 5. Take work home? Work on weekends? Breakfast business meetings? Never!

I remember when \$5000. was a good annual salary—spouse didn't have to work and there was still enough money left for vacations, an auto and savings. Gas was about 30-cents a gallon. The bank didn't ask for my I.D. It was okay to pick up hitch hikers and everyone watched Ed Sullivan on Sunday nights. Long gone now: My Nehru Jacket, flashbulbs, the Princess Phone and that silly Lava Lamp.

On the other hand—and there always is another hand—people died at much younger ages, polio crippled and killed, We stumbled on despite



assassinations, the A-bomb and its big brother the H-bomb, and suffered through almost perpetual wars in places we couldn't pronounce or find on the map.

I believe there's a case to be made for shadows. Paintings and movies would be much less interesting without them. If every day were sunny I'd probably stop noticing and appreciating them. Without the occasional pain, or headache or cold, I'd take my days of feeling good too much for granted. If I didn't have a feeling of hunger every so often I'd miss the pleasure of feeling well-satisfied after a good meal.

My life isn't just one thing—or rather, it is one thing, made up of many, many pieces. Joy, loneliness, love, anger, satisfaction, curiosity, affection, boredom and appreciation. Many more. Somehow the little separate tiles fit together, not always neatly, and make up the mosaic that is me. Some elements are cracked and irregular, some glow with beauty. But even as I approach the end of my journey, I cannot see the whole picture. Maybe I never will. But Chance and my choices have created whatever it turns out to be.

Ancient Greek mythology describes the Three Fates who determine the shape of our lives. There is Clotho, the spinner of the thread. There is Lachesis—the allotter—who measures the thread of life allotted to each person with her measuring rod determining how long it is to be. And there is Atropos—the inexorable—who is the cutter of the thread of life. She chooses the manner of each person's death; and when their time has come, she cuts their life-thread with her shears.

I'm not sure they got it quite right. I can imagine my life as two entwined threads, the dark and the bright, the gold and the black. And I suspect that when I can accept both of them as necessary and legitimate, I'll find a greater measure of serenity and tranquility.

*Hank Basayne is a San Franciscan and a Humanist Minister. He spends a lot of time these days sorting through all the threads that make up his tapestry.*

REAL TRAVEL FOR REAL PEOPLE

By Sergio Nibbi

We woke up Tuesday morning to a monster thunderstorm, the kind where you see the lightning through tightly closed eyes. We had planned to visit Orvieto, so after breakfast, we headed out in the rain for another day of sightseeing. I had often heard Rick Steves on his Channel 9 travel show talk about Civita di Bagnoregio, and being so close to Orvieto, we decided to go there first.

The road from Todi to Orvieto is about 15 miles of twists and turns littered, interestingly enough, with shall we say, young women in their business attire showing more than their entrepreneurial spirit. Talk about curb service! After more curves and narrower roads we finally arrived at Bagnoregio, a nice old town, but what's all the fuss about? Five more kilometers and we reached Civita di Bagnoregio, and what a surprise. Here was a sliver of a town sitting on top of an inverted sugar cone. Not even Disney could have thought this one up.

This town sits on top of a sheer cliff overlooking the valley below. It looked deserted from the bottom so we

almost didn't go up the narrow bridge that leads to the town itself. Half way up the bridge we stopped and reconsidered if we were brave enough to continue. It was like being on a narrow scaffold suspended hundreds of feet in the air. Neither one of us wanted to chicken out first, so we proceeded to the top of the steep, narrow, concrete ramp about two blocks long and reached the entrance to the town. It was so beautiful it was surreal. If God ever wanted a second home, this would be it.

We walked around and to our surprise found a small shop advertising bruschetta and local wine. Joining the two other people already there, we sat down at one of the four tables and watched as Antonio cooked the home-made bread on the fireplace embers. Karen and I shared bruschetta with cheese, tomatoes and beans and enjoyed a glass of his freshly made wine. We found out that there are 20 people who live in the town, mostly older people whose parents and grandparents had also lived there. A few other people came in, all Americans, and all had Rick Steve's book in hand. Following warm handshakes and a bunch of photos we reluctantly left Antonio and his daughter, leaving them to take care of the few others in

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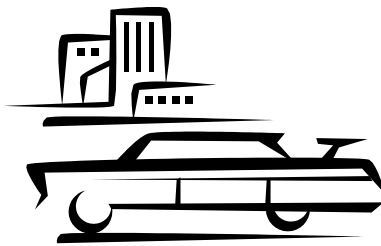
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## SHARON THE HEALTH

# Rub a Dub, Dub...Know what's in your Tub?

*How some personal care products may threaten your health...*

By Sharon Caren

**F**irst, a big "Thank You" for all the phone calls and emails I received regarding the Chloramine article. It's time to voice our disgust to the politicians and get the Chloramine out of the water supply. If you'd like to write a letter and need the information, please go to [www.westsideobserver.com/columnists.htm](http://www.westsideobserver.com/columnists.htm) and look up my September 2009 article.

Second, a special thanks Sena Miller, for inspiring this article and sharing research on toxins found in our personal care products that deposit unhealthy amounts of toxic chemicals in our body every day.

Here's a brief summary of the most common toxic ingredients in personal care items:

**DEA – Diethanolamine** is found in over 600 home and office products. It's linked to cancers of liver, kidney, stomach, and esophagus as well as dangerous in fetal brain development and miscarriages (according to studies at University of North Carolina). It's a lathering agent additive and found in toothpaste, shampoo, soap, and lotion.

**Propylene Glycol** is the main ingredient in anti-freeze solutions, hydraulic fluid, de-icing applications and paint. It helps keep liquids smooth. Taken from Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS), this substance can inhibit skin cell growth and damage cell membranes causing rashes, dry skin and surface damage. Harmful by inhalation, ingestion or skin absorption, eye irritation, gastrointestinal disturbances, nausea, headache, vomiting and central

nervous system depression. It's found in toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo, soap, and lotion.

**SLS/SLES – Sodium Lauryl Sulfate/Sodium Laureth Sulfate** is a foaming agent and used in industrial capacities to clean concrete floors, degrease engines and as car wash detergent. It effects the body as a mutagen, meaning that in sufficient amounts, it's capable of changing genetic information found in cells. In fact, SLS has been used in studies to induce mutations in bacteria. It's a skin irritant, corrodes hair follicles and impairs hair growth, can damage the immune system and cause inflammation. It's found in toothpaste, shampoo, and soap.

**Talc** is a very fine substance used as a dry lubricant to make the skin feel slippery and smooth. In the 1930's it was linked to post-op lesions. In 1973, we learned it has components similar to asbestos, a known cancer-causing substance. Women who used talcum powder on genital area had 60% risk of ovarian cancer and women who used feminine deodorant spray had a 90% cancer risk. It's found in body and

baby powders, feminine powder, condom lubricant and cosmetics.

**Alcohol** is found in mouthwash. Those mouthwashes with a 25% alcohol content have been implicated in mouth, tongue and throat cancer.

**Aluminum** is the 3rd most common element in our environment and is highly toxic to the human body. The World Health Organization suspects a link between Alzheimer's disease. Aluminum toxicity findings came from autopsies on the brains of Alzheimer's victims according to a November-December 1993 issue of Public Health Reports. A 2000 issue of Neurotoxicity also discusses the negative effects of environmental aluminum, including decreased renal (kidney) function, neurodegenerative effects, and oxidative injury (free radical damage). It's used to prevent things from drying out. Example; keeps pet foods soft and chewy. Applied topically, it makes skin feel moist and soft. Found in processed foods, antacids, deodorants, cosmetics, paper products, beverage cans, cooking foil, cookware and baby wipes.



## Why are these Ingredients used?

The information here is presented to educate not to scare. Don't take my word – get out your products and read the labels. If you haven't a clue what the contents are, it's usually because the company will sometimes use long technical terms so it's not obvious. Beware and look up those unfamiliar words and let me know what you find. Seem crazy to find industrial chemicals in our personal hygiene products? Well, everyone wants to save money by purchasing cheaper consumables so here's the trade off. These additives used by large corporations are inexpensive fillers and they've been getting away with it for years. As long as the general public is blinded by the long chemical terminology of the mystery ingredients, these companies will continue to use them. Also, many folks justify it by "Oh well, the price is right" and "After all, these products are FDA approved!"

## Make better choices—

The time is now to take responsibility, get educated and put our money where our health is. I've been studying and using all natural non-toxic products for the past 10 years after discovering the material above. I'm happy to pay for the best quality, healthful products. My life depends on it.

I'm happy to share with you what I've found. Buy your self, your family and friends a gift of love and long life this Holiday Season—you will experience the difference. There are products and gift certificates available. Call me 650.359.6579 or email [sharoncaren@comcast.net](mailto:sharoncaren@comcast.net). Get the industrial toxins out of your life!

## Letters (Cont. from p. 2)

The Remember When? photo shows a view looking north from the top of Merced Heights, probably Shields or Grafton Streets. The left side of the photo shows the Homewood Terrace Orphanage, on Ocean Ave between Faxon and Ashton Avenues. That's Mt. Davidson at the rear.

At the right front corner of the photo is what looks like the old Farragut Grammar School--since turned into condos. It probably dates to the late 1930's. I'll be checking to see if I am right this time!

Thanks for your great publication.  
Carole Issel - San Francisco

I'm glad you were amused Mr. Hall, I'm ~~actually one of your ex-supporters~~ and we've met at least five times, I guess you've forgotten. I have no need to "stalk" you, you're a recognizable man and you live on the street where I grew up. I pass by the intersection that's the entrance to your street many times a day. If you don't own the Harley I've seen you on - my mistake. I'm far too old to be considered one of

"those self-appointed whiz kids" having graduated from St Brendan's long before you moved into the parish. Nor am I a "holier than thou San Francisco liberal", since I actually fall on the conservative side of SF politics. Sorry I don't fit your description of the bad bogeymen "other" that your straw-man argument needs to have any credence.

Let's put all of that aside - who you think you are or who you wish I am - the state IS passing laws that will affect us all, even you. My goal was to bring the

attention of my neighbors to the use of punitive parking fees to reduce vehicle travel. Raising fees to get people out of cars is happening in many cities around the world. Zurich, London, Stockholm, San Francisco to mention just a few.

Muni service is so terrible in our hilly neighborhoods that we can't rely on it so we don't ride it. We don't have the ridership so MUNI cuts

Jed Lane, Miraloma Park

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*A Night On The Town*

## Chicago, Chicago that toddling town.

By Carol Kocivar ©2009

I just sent my mom 13 email photos of a shopping trip to Whole Foods in Chicago. Cheese plates...sushi...chocolate desserts with raspberries...

Tucked away in a nondescript neighborhood is the third largest Whole Foods in the world. Yes. It does cover a complete city block. And yes, there is wine bar.

Let me explain my Saturday night. I am visiting my daughter who is about to have a BABY!

Our idea of evening fun was grocery shopping. This follows our morning idea of fun -- a breakfast burrito and French toast.

Did I mention my daughter is about to have a BABY?

(I felt a little like that famous incident with the first president Bush--who went out shopping and discovered the electronic checkout at the grocery store.)

After we passed the truckload of fresh apples and the pork loin and the six types of prawns in sauces from Thailand to Italy, my son in law asked if we should get some wine. Silly me. I thought he meant a bottle to bring home

Nope. He steered me over to the wine bar--where I could select various flights of wine for the tasting.

Flights of wine! I didn't even have to

make a reservation.

However, from looking over the young folks in front of the wine crystals-- I could recognize some frequent flyers.

Que sera sera... Whatever will be will be. I tasted a tinsy glass of Pinot to help me navigate the rows of Almond milk and sparkling waters.

My daughter got a sarsaparilla. Did I mention that she is going to have a BABY?

I am in Chicago for a baby shower. And I am sending pictures galore to MY mom.

Friday night featured some home shots of her first grandchild with a side view of the great-grandchild to be.

Saturday --the wild night at the grocery store followed by homemade beet and carrot soup. (I learned something: Don't worry if you forgot the recipe. Just check it online at the store.)

Sunday was the shower. Women from work and play sharing well loved baby books. (Doesn't every newborn get a Barak Obama coloring book?)

We shared baby stories and salmon and potatoes and asparagus and salad. Whew... Love those little tomatoes.

And homemade cupcakes and cookies.

Did I mention my daughter is going to have a BABY?

Local Politician Publishes Book

## Ron Dudum Accentuates the Byzantine

By Jonathan Farrell

In 2006 Sunset District supervisor hopeful Ron Dudum lost by only 53 votes. It might be fitting to say that disappointments in local politics inspired him to write his first book, *Three Paradigms of Reality: from Homer to Einstein*.

"Had I not lost the election for supervisor I probably would not have finished this book," Dudum told the Sunset Beacon as the book debuted this October. "Actually, the book took me over 15 years to write and with the help of a really brilliantly precise editor I was able to get it done after three arduous drafts."

"My thoughts were there," he said, "I just needed some help to really get a clearer perspective to get them all together," said Dudum.

With the editor's help and a few extra courses of study, Dudum was able to sort through the collective knowledge and experience of his life. Dudum recognized that the traditional Western approach to philosophy has five periods such as the ancient, medieval, modern, post-modern and then contemporary. In Dudum's view these five periods of philosophical history can be condensed into three.

"Western philosophy history sort of skips over the Byzantine period which I think is crucial," said Dudum. Condensing the five time-periods of philosophical thought into "Three Paradigms" of philosophy history is what he considers to be a more proper order of how to explain why so many people believe so many different

things.

Born and raised in San Francisco by parents from Palestine Dudum mentioned that his life has been a mixture of Eastern and Western culture. Yet all the social and technological changes of the past 40 years have created the most impact upon San Francisco as well as the world.

In Dudum's view there are two aspects to The City. One side is the popular that has its international flair attracting people from all over the world and the other side is that of the village. "I live in the village, as a native the City has a much different angle," said Dudum.

"People come here to the City usually from some other place with lots of ideals, get involved with politics, make an impact and then leave to settle down someplace else."

Dudum finds this rather frustrating because some of those political impacts cause problems. In a seemingly permissive place like SF how does Dudum keep focus of the traditional values like family, faith and community? "Commitment," he said.

Dudum said that amid all the permissiveness and diversity that characterizes San Francisco it is interesting how people can view the same facts and interpret reality and truth differently.

On sale at Amazon.com, for more information about *Three Paradigms of Reality: From Homer to Einstein* visit [www.threeparadigms.com](http://www.threeparadigms.com).

PROP A:

## Local Budget Measure Falls Short Of True Reform

By Jeff Adachi

While Proposition A, titled "Budget Reform," takes a few steps toward changing the current process by which our city's annual budget is decided, it falls far short of the reforms necessary to address our city's long-term fiscal health.

Prop. A would establish a rolling two-year budget process to replace the current one-year cycle. It would also require a five-year financial plan and a certification by the city controller that San Francisco has enough money to pay its contracts. Additionally, it provides that all labor agreements be approved before the beginning of the fiscal year.

While Prop. A affords more time for reasoned decision making, it fails to address the fundamental structural problems that threaten San Francisco's fiscal viability — skyrocketing pension costs, inflexible spending requirements and salary negotiations made without regard to The City's ability to pay for them.

Prop. A fails to rein in The City's pension liability. In July, the civil grand jury determined that San Francisco's pension costs will increase by nearly 300 percent — from \$178 million a year to \$520 million — during the next three years. The increase is compounded, according to the report, by the fact that 40 percent of city employees are now eligible for retirement and another 15 percent will become eligible in the next five years.

The measure does not permit a reassessment of voter-mandated expenditures, known as set-asides. Currently, 60 percent of San Francisco's \$6.6 billion budget is spent through automatic spending formulas. While many of the services provided by these set-asides made sense in good economic times, in a recession it ties the hands of elected officials.

Prop. A also doesn't control salary increases. Salary negotiations are made exclusively by the Mayor's Office and approved by the Board of Supervisors, often without any input from department heads. It's a common practice for raises to be handed out with no additional funding given to departments to pay for them.

This has resulted in departments having to lay off staff in order to pay raises it has no control over. For example, this year my department faces an \$800,000 salary deficit because insufficient funding was provided to pay my current staff.

Unless these and other fundamental problems are addressed, The City will face even greater budget deficits, layoffs and a retirement system that will eventually go bankrupt.

So what's the answer to improving the budget process itself?

The budget process needs an objective referee. The Municipal Executive Association, which is comprised of more than 1,000 city leaders and managers, has called for the creation of a professional budget office that would be accountable to the mayor and supervisors to develop the annual budget, facilitate negotiations with the mayor, Board of Supervisors, department heads and city contractors earlier in the fiscal calendar, and provide independent analysis.

According to a report issued by the association, "Nowhere in the process is the budget prepared or analyzed by a neutral professional manager who, while not the ultimate decision maker, is accountable for protecting the long-term fiscal health of San Francisco government and its core programs, and has the independence to stand up to political pressure."

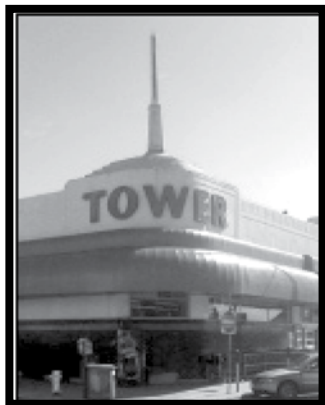
The study examined the budget processes of 16 similar local governments across the United States. Only King County, in Washington state, and San Francisco directly invested one elected official with the responsibility to develop a budget. In other jurisdictions — such as Chicago, Honolulu and even Los Angeles — the agency that develops the budget is accountable to both the executive and legislative bodies, and the independent budget officer is not an elected professional.

San Francisco would benefit from an independent budget office because it would require the mayor, the Board of Supervisors and department heads to work together in preparing the budget, while providing taxpayers with an objective evaluation of The City's budget process and programs. It would also help to reconcile genuine political differences that exist, while lessening the influence of short-term political decisions.

Of course, these fundamental changes, like the efforts to redesign our nation's health care system, won't come easy. Transforming this process will require not only amending the City Charter, but also reorganizing The City's various budget agencies into a single, independent budget office.

We are fooling voters and taxpayers by labeling Prop. A "budget reform." Only real, structural reforms to our fiscal process will get city government back on the road to a sound and sustainable economic recovery.

Jeff Adachi is the public defender of San Francisco. To see a copy of the Municipal Executive Association's report, visit [www.sfmea.com](http://www.sfmea.com).



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FROM THE BORDER

100 WORDS FOR DROUGHT TOLERANT

by Hilary Gordon / Photos by Blair Randall

As a schoolgirl I learned that Eskimos have 100 different words for snow. That made sense, since snow could be what you build your house out of, or what blinds you in a life- threatening storm, or what the seal you are hunting is surfacing through, or 97 other meanings, each different, each very important.

As a college student in the (then) Ornamental Horticulture Department at SF City College, I only learned one word for drought-tolerant plants in 1984. In plant ID class we had to memorize the names, common and botanical, and the characteristics of plants. Each plant was either drought-tolerant or not drought-tolerant.

Twenty-five years later as water policies and practices have come under more and more pressure from increased demand and shrinking resources, we need one hundred words for drought-tolerance. Part of the task of the Garden for the Environment is to refine what this word can mean, and experiment with real world plants, soil, weather and exposure, to find out which plants can thrive with little or no reliance on summer irrigation. (PHOTO: *Zauschneria* at GFE, 2009)



Our first task was to create ‘hydrozones’ in the garden. This meant that instead of watering the entire garden every time we watered, some garden areas, where vegetables, fruit trees, roses, and other tender plants lived would be watered twice a week, while the drought-tolerant demonstration areas would be watered twice a month in dry weather. Some garden areas, where native plants were well established, actually needed no summer water.



The next step was to observe the success of plants in the drought tolerant areas of the garden. It turned out that many of the plants from the original plantings in the 1990’s were not actually capable of performing with really limited irrigation. One important plant in the original drought tolerant areas of the garden is *Miscanthus sinensis*. This is a large, arching, variegated grass which flowers beautifully at the end of summer with

silky, bronze blooms shooting up over the clump of leaves. These blooming grasses were a big part of our loveliest cut flower bouquets the first Fall I worked in the garden. But it turns out that these grasses are not actually able to bloom without regular watering. They grow, but don’t bloom on the twice a month regimen. They may be more drought-tolerant than water-hogs like roses or Japanese maples, but they don’t actually belong in the drought-tolerant garden display. (PHOTO: *Miscanthus* at the GFE, 2009)

According to the Sunset Western Garden book they need “moderate to regular water.” They do make it into the East Bay MUD book Plants and Landscapes for Summer-dry Climates, which lists only plants appropriate for our Mediterranean climate. This authority says that they need “moderate” water. According to the Dry Gardening Handbook, by Olivier Filippi, “if they are to give generously of their foliage and flowers, they really do need water”, all except one cultivar, *Miscanthus sinensis* ‘Yaku-jima’.



So which is it? Are they appropriate for a summer-dry climate? Do they need moderate water? Or regular water? What about if they are planted in poor, sandy, soil? They would probably need more. How about right near the ocean? They would probably need less. If planted in a hot location, like the east side of Bernal Heights, would they bloom with only occasional water if given part shade during the middle of the day? (PHOTO: *Yarrow* at the GFE, 2009)

To completely muddy the waters, Plants and Landscapes for Summer-dry Climates gives the following six warnings to go with their water recommendations for plants in our dry climate. First, plants that prefer seacoast conditions must be planted near the coast. Drought-tolerance on 33rd Avenue in San Francisco or in Walnut Creek would be a completely different story. Second, that the previous winter and spring have provided “normal” amounts of rain. Third that plants are already well established. During their first and sometimes second years in the ground, even very drought-tolerant plants require extra irrigation. Fourth, when irrigation is used, plants are watered deeply. Superficial watering will cause even a drought-tolerant plant to develop a superficial root system which will never stand up to prolonged dry soils. Fifth, soil is well-mulched, and finally that drainage is adequate.

So is my newly-purchased plant drought-tolerant or not? The answer comes in many shades of grey. I can’t yet offer 100 words for drought-tolerant, but here is a beginning.

**Summer-Dry Climate:** Our normal climate in the Bay Area generally provides no rainfall from June until November. There are many regions of the world with similar climates, known as “Mediterranean” climates. Plants from these regions often do well in the Bay Area.

**Drought:** A year, or series of years, in which winter rainfall is below normal, resulting in dry soils, small snow packs, and low reservoirs. Little or no water is available for garden irrigation.

**Drought-tolerant once established:** A phrase traditionally used by gardeners to describe plants that can thrive in dry soils for some period of time. How long? Ask the gardener. Better yet, ask the plant.

**Not drought-tolerant:** A plant that needs continuously moist soil for good results.

**Best with occasional watering:** An irrigation regimen that calls for several deep irrigations during our dry summers, such as 3-4 times a year. These plants might become



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Sisyrinchium at the Garden for the Environment

dormant and stop blooming if they do not receive any summer water.

**Moderate watering:** An irrigation regimen that calls for regular but infrequent deep irrigation during our dry summers, for example, every other week, or 10-12 times a year. These plants might actually wilt and die if they do not receive any summer water.

**California native plants:** Careful! Some California natives are streamside plants, like willows or big-leaf maples, that actually expect lots of summer water.

**Xeriscape or Raingarden plants:** Plants that require or prefer no summer water once established. Many, but not all, sun-loving California natives fit this profile.

In the San Francisco Bay Region we don’t really need more than one word for snow. But we could use much more specific language about drought-tolerance. Sometimes a slight shift in language can reflect a sea-change in awareness.

Hilary Gordon is Perennial Plants Collection Manager at the GFE. A life-long gardener, trained at the City College Horticulture program, she has worked as a professional landscape gardener from 1984 until the present. Have a question for Hilary? Meet her in the garden Wednesdays 10-2 and Saturdays 10-4.

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

Rules:

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

The Object:

Fill in the blank squares in such a way that each of the numbers 1 to 9 appears exactly once in each row, column and block.

Answer:

The answer appears aside..

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

BRAIN FUD

Four words with the letters PIE, in that order, have all their other letters removed. You must use the letters in the pool to fill in the blanks.

PI\_E\_\_

P\_\_I\_\_E

\_P\_\_I\_\_E

\_P\_\_E\_\_I\_\_

Pool: A, A, C, E, E, E, G, I, M, N, N, O, O, P, P, R, R, R, S, T, T, V

Answer

The words are:

pigeon

premiere

appositive

apprentice

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REMEMBER WHEN?

Can you guess where this was taken and when?  
Houses and sand dunes in the Sunset District

Photo courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, SF Public Library

PHYLLIS' FINDINGS

By Phyllis Sherman

According to reports, most people's greatest fear is speaking in public. Somewhere on the list, however, is fear of being audited by the IRS. Well, some weeks ago I received the ominous notice: We selected your Federal Income Tax return for the year shown below to examine the items listed at the end of this letter. Please callus at the number shown above to arrange a convenient appointment." Fear strikes the heart. My return was prepared by a CPA...so naturally a call to that office was appropriate.

My call for help was to no avail. I was told in no uncertain terms to please find another accountant. She was too busy with other tasks. I called another firm who at least helped fill me in (after reviewing my return) on what supporting data to bring to the audit. Most helpful of all, however, was Nolo's Press' book, "How to Handle an IRS Audit." I was up until 2 AM the night before my appointment reading the specifics. It's quite comprehensive and not at all unwieldy. Among the many items of advice was, "Never attempt to bribe your auditor." Ha! What shall I bribe her with? An ad in the Westside Observer?

I arrived with all the data I'd been told to bring. Among the caveats from the book was... "even though they request you bring your return for the year before and the year after, don't do it." So, I didn't,

and fortunately they weren't requested. My auditor, a nice young woman from Oakland, attempted to put me at ease and



we talked about my return for over two hours. She was amazed at some of the error considering the return was, ostensibly, professionally prepared. She ate a Tootsie Roll while we were talking, and offered me one, admitting she was addicted to them. "Hmm...I thought...and even asked her "Could I bribe you

with a box of Tootsie Rolls?" We both laughed.

To make a long story short. I must send in some cancelled checks, verification of certain expenses, verifications of certain insurance payments, etc...plus, a healthy amount of money. Nevertheless, my initial trepidation and anxiety were unnecessary. The anticipation was worse than the reality. The experience was not as bad as a poke in the eye. It's only money.

My advice if it happens to you: Ask, and make sure your accountant will assist you BEFORE you have your return prepared. Get it in writing, get Nolo's book on IRS Audits. It's a pretty good read considering the subject matter. Incidentally, when you need an accountant, I would avoid a firm on Vicente Street...they charge more than any other firm I've ever used and left much to be desired! They asked few questions and merely copied data from the previous year's tax return.

Check for more Phyllis on the Web: [www.westsideobserver.com](http://www.westsideobserver.com)

Beloved Cat Still Missing in St. Francis Wood

Last seen afternoon of Sunday, October 18 in the 5-95 block of Santa Ana. Likely stuck in a garage/shed/basement nearby. Friendly 7 yr spayed female domestic short-hair. Tabby/Tortoise Shell Mix: black & tan blend withorange stripe undertones; white patch on chest; green eyes; black & white whiskers. Orange "Egyptian markings" on both cheeks. No collar. Microchip # 440E674927. Please search in & around your house and call/whistle for her. She answers to Tia, Tia-Treat, Tia-Weeah. Past surgery on pelvis & tail, so do not pick up. Call Julia & Christopher 415.566.5135 / 810.6144



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- West Portal Avenue Area:**  
Century 21 — Scott Keys — 101 Vicente  
Dubliner Irish Bar  
Greenhouse Café  
West Portal Books  
West Portal Music Store  
West Portal Library  
Zephyr Real Estate Office
- Ocean Avenue Area:**  
Lakeside Grill (Ocean Avenue)  
Villa D'Este (Ocean Avenue)
- Stonestown Area:**  
Stonestown Cinema  
Stonestown YMCA
- Portola Ave Area:**  
Creighton's Bakery – Portola Dr.  
Curves — 608 Portola Drive  
Mollie Stone's Market — Portola Dr.
- Sloat Blvd Area:**  
Aqua Surf Shop (Across from SF Zoo)  
John's Ocean Beach Café on Sloat
- Taraval Street Area:**

- Tennessee Grill (1128 Taraval)  
Trolley Cafe (1300 block of Taraval)  
Parkside Library (1200 block of Taraval)  
Sunset Pet Supply — (2226 Taraval)
- Parkmerced Area:**  
Park Place Market — Parkmerced
- Noe Valley Area:**  
Bell Market (24th and Noe)  
Fresca Restaurant (24th and Noe)  
MRW Hairdresser  
Nail Chic on Castro at Noe  
Noe Valley Library
- Other Locations:**  
**Garden for the Environment**  
Lawton and 7th Ave.  
**Italian American Social Club**  
— 25 Russia Ave. — Excelsior Dist  
**Massage Envy** —  
Westlake Shopping Center — Daly City  
**Merced Library Branch** — 19th Ave @  
Winston  
**Sunset Library** — 18th Street @ Irving  
**Main Library** — 100 Larkin St.





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