

## Grand Jury: Another Blank Check Bond?

by Patrick Monette-Shaw



Deeply concerned about this November's SF General Hospital "Proposition A" bond measure, San Francisco's Civil Grand Jury released its report, "Accountability in San Francisco Government," on June 26, highly critical of the previous Branch Library Improvement project (BLIP) and Laguna Honda Hospital (LHH) replacement general obligation bonds.

A footnote in the Grand Jury's report indicated a current City Supervisor acknowledged nobody has been minding the City's information technology expenditures store, apparently including himself. Similarly, the Board of Supervisors also hasn't been minding the bond measure store.

The Jury concluded the Citizen's Obligation Bond Oversight Committee (CBOBOC) can't utilize its experience to improve projects prior to placing bond measures on a ballot, including the proposed rebuilding of SFGH. The Jury is concerned key lessons weren't learned from the BLIP and LHH bond fiascos, which may be repeated.

Among other findings, the Grand Jury recommended increasing CBOBOC responsibilities. The Jury determined that pre- and post-election independent analyses of the Controller's voter guide estimates to establish whether the Controller's projections are accurate isn't being performed by either the Controller or the Board of Supervisors Budget Analyst. Failing to test accuracy of the Controller's financial projections leaves the Controller's Office unaccountable, the Jury noted.

***"...voters are left holding the financial bag and burden," from "the lack of accountability and oversight" of bond projects.***

San Francisco's elections code requires the Controller estimate increases to City government costs from ballot measures. The Grand Jury is critical that the Controller's Office has previously neglected to address whether proposed legislation may result in increasing the cost of City government.

The Bay Guardian's August 13 editorial "And now, the controller's big lie," exposes Controller Rosenfield vastly overestimated by "billions" this year's Clean Energy Act. In stark contrast, Rosenfield's August 11 Proposition A voter guide statement vastly underestimates City government cost increases, neglecting to mention the \$36 million annual operating costs that will result by adding 212 employees to SFGH when its rebuild is complete.

The Grand Jury noted that in both the BLIP and LHH bonds there was a lack of sufficient funding upfront to complete the facilities promised to the voting public, since both projects "far exceeded what could actually be constructed" from bond proceeds. Both projects also had grossly underestimated escalation costs. The Grand Jury noted LHH's escalation factors alone may well increase construction costs

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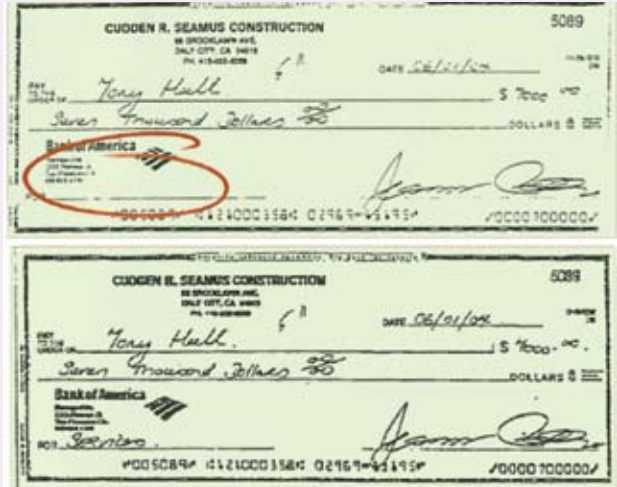
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And all the columnists and features exclusive to the Observer

## Inside the Tony Hall Ethics Investigation

By David P. Waggoner

### Who's Really Behind the Ethics Commission Investigation ?



Key evidence against Hall appears to have been altered.

Though unprecedented, Newsom then appointed his own aide, Elsbernd, to Hall's former seat on the board. Soon afterwards, the residents of District 7 received a letter supporting Elsbernd and purportedly signed by Hall. The letter — paid for by the Building Owners and Managers Association — was a forgery. Elsbernd of course went on to win election to the board in November 2004. After Hall declined to put Scanlon in a management position at Treasure Island, she began working for Elsbernd.

With its panoramic views of the San Francisco Bay, Treasure Island is literally a gold mine for developers. Top Newsom fundraiser and lobbyist Darius Anderson recognizes such opportunities. In 2005, Anderson's Kenwood Investments sought a contract — worth hundreds of millions of dollars — to develop the Island. But Hall, notoriously independent, opposed the sweetheart deal. The Treasure Island board, all appointees of Newsom, unceremoniously fired Hall after only 14 months on the job. Wielding the axe for Newsom was none other than current District 3 supervisorial candidate and Treasure Island board president, Claudine Cheng.

At about the same time Hall was fired, the Ethics Commission received an anonymous complaint — written in legalese — alleging Hall had used campaign funds to buy food and gas for campaign workers. Commission staff, led by chief enforcement officer Richard Mo, began to investigate. Mo is a law school graduate but has never passed the bar exam. Over the course of three years, Mo and his staff spent thousands of hours reviewing Hall's campaign records, all on the public dime.

Months later, Mo's investigation culminated in a formal accusation that Hall borrowed \$12,000 from Olivia Scanlon (now an aide to Elsbernd) and repaid the "loan" with campaign funds. During the course of Mo's sleuthing, he obtained photocopies of two checks totaling \$12,000 from Scanlon. Scanlon told Mo that the checks were loans to Hall to pay for his daughter's wedding. But the checks — drawn on the business account of Scanlon's husband, contractor Seamus Cudden — were payments to Hall for consulting services. Hall informally advised Cudden on land use matters, code compliance, investment strategies, not to mention many hours of personal advice. Hall declared the income on his 2004 tax return, paid taxes on it, and repeatedly sought an IRS form from Cudden. Cudeen has never complied with that law. While consulting fees are common forms of income for elected officials, as long as they conform with Conflict of Interest restrictions, Hall's consulting for Cudden pales in comparison to Newsom's



Ruled out of order, Supervisor Elsbernd attempted to testify against Hall

Long before Sean Elsbernd was a supervisor, he was a clerk at the political law firm of Nielsen Merksamer. While there, Elsbernd worked with political attorney Jim Sutton. Sutton, now Elsbernd's campaign treasurer, has often been referred to as "the dark prince of San Francisco elections."

For his part, Elsbernd began working in city hall after Tony Hall hired him as an aide in 2000. Upon Elsbernd's recommendation, Hall also later hired Olympic Club events planner, Olivia Scanlon. In a revealing move, Elsbernd left Hall's office in January 2004 to work for Gavin Newsom, who also employed Sutton. Seven months later, in the middle of an election season in which Hall was certain to be re-elected, Newsom appointed Hall to oversee Treasure Island.

consulting for billionaire Gordon Getty. But Mo knows where his bread is buttered.

Hall's campaign did pay Scanlon \$12,000 — for her fundraising work on his 2004 re-election campaign. And she was paid by the campaign before Cudden paid Hall, via one check with a notation written on the check that it was payment for "Campaign Services, Jan-Jun." But Scanlon now claims she was a volunteer the whole time. Her volunteer tale is contradicted by testimony from Hall's campaign manager, attorney, consultant, fundraiser and treasurer.

Eager to score points against his old boss, Sean Elsbernd showed up at the hearing to testify as a rebuttal witness, despite the fact that Hall had not yet presented any evidence. As there was nothing to rebut, Chairperson Susan Harriman would not allow him to testify.

At a hearing before the Commission on June 9, Scanlon repeated her loan allegation, and swore that the photocopies of the checks she provided to Mo were accurate copies of the originals.

After the June 9 hearing, and three years after initiating his investigation, Mo issued a subpoena for Cudden's bank records. In response, Scanlon and Cudden retained white collar criminal defense firm, Swanson, McNamara and Haller. The firm offered to provide a faxed copy of one of the checks to Mo in exchange for withdrawing the subpoena, to "spare his clients the expense of having to file a motion to quash the subpoena." Without questioning why Scanlon and Cudden hired a criminal defense lawyer to oppose a subpoena for evidence against Hall, Mo agreed to the deal and withdrew the subpoena. In contrast, Hall has not withheld a single document from the Commission.

After Mo withdrew the subpoena, Haller gave Mo a new copy of a check — which Scanlon swore was a loan to Hall — that was different than the first version Scanlon gave to Mo. The new version of the check has the word, "Services," written in the notation section of the lower left hand corner of the check. The "Services" notation is evidence that Hall was indeed paid by Cudden for consulting services. But the first version of the check that Scanlon gave to Mo three years ago did not have the "Services" notation. Neither Mo nor Scanlon has provided any explanation for why Scanlon provided a check which had apparently been altered to white-out the "Services" notation.

After the defense team discovered that Mo withdrew the subpoena, we subpoenaed the same records. Despite Scanlon's efforts to keep the records secret, defense finally has the records, and it is clear why Scanlon and Cudden were

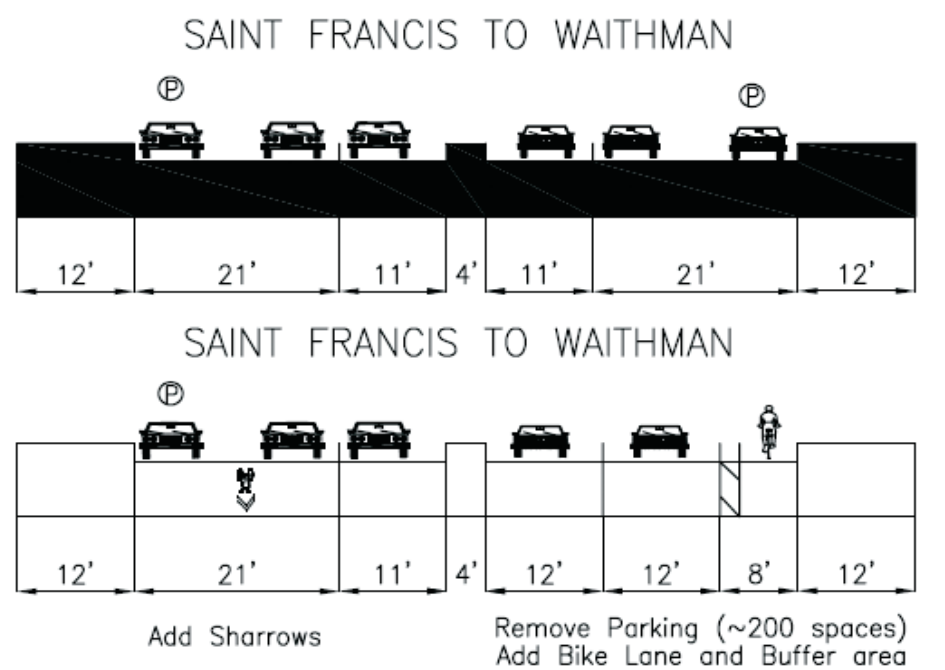
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Parking Removal Plan for Portola

By Pamela Stone

Last year, I learned that the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency was undertaking an environmental review of the Bicycle Plan, and proposing a substantial number of bicycle improvements for the safe utilization of bicycles and their promotion as an alternative means of transportation. In looking closer, I learned that there are two options for Portola Drive, one that would remove all 240 parking spaces on the northeast side of the street from Sloat Blvd. to O’Shaughnessey, coupled with removal of one driving lane from Evelyn Way to O’Shaughnessey. The second alternative would keep parking on Portola Drive but narrow driving lanes to implement a bicycle lane.



My family has lived on Portola Drive for over 40 years. Some of my neighbors have lived in this area for over 50 years. In discussing the proposal for wholesale removal of parking, none of my neighbors had heard of such a matter. I have also frequented the merchants of West Portal as long as I can remember. However, except for the President of the West Portal Merchants Association, no one that I spoke with had heard of the proposal, although it would impact them as well.

In June, the SFMTA Bicycle Program held an open house to discuss the bicycle plan implementation in the Western Neighborhoods. I attended, and was surprised to see that other than avid cyclists, there were few individuals who would be impacted by the proposed changes present. I inquired as to how notice was given, and I was informed that the fact of the meetings was published, and that the Presidents of the various Homeowners Associations were notified. They did not notify any of the impacted residents of the proposed changes, relying upon associations and the internet to provide actual notice.

Many residents in the area are elderly and not connected with the internet. Additionally, many residents are not avid cyclists and would not realize how the proposed Bicycle Plan would impact them. Thus, the result is that the Bicycle Program only has the input of avid cyclists, and not those who would be impacted daily by the proposed changes.

The removal of parking from the front of my residence would make it easier for me to enter and exit my garage. However, it would have other severe impacts.

Although my parents are dead, I am fortunate enough to have retained the friendship of their friends and peers. As these individuals are quite elderly, unless parking can be had close to my home, I will not be able to enjoy their company, which I treasure. Additionally, some of my friends are disabled and need parking near my home. This would be impossible if all parking is removed from Portola Drive, as it will force those who presently park on Portola to move into the

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AROUND THE TOWN...

Comings and Goings...

Festivals Galore...Pull out your calendars. September and October feature two community festivals to highlight the fall season.

On Saturday, September 13, 2008, the Sunset District Autumn Moon Festival Committee will present the 4th annual Autumn Moon Festival in the Sunset. This annual festival has become an integral part of the San Francisco culture, attracting thousands of people to enjoy entertainment, art, products and, of course, delicious food. A “Kids Corner” will also be an attraction with a petting zoo and bouncy house.

Many local organizations and merchants have participated in the planning, including the Tzu Chi Foundation and the Richmond Area Multi-Services, Inc. There is a long and storied history to this traditional Chinese celebration held to commemorate the successful revolt to drive the Mongols from China during the Yuan Dynasty.

The festival will take place from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM on Irving Street, between 22nd and 25th Avenues. Admission is free. For more information about the Autumn Moon Festival, visit the website at [www.AutumnMoonFestival.org](http://www.AutumnMoonFestival.org).

Food and fun moves to Taraval Street on October 25th as the Taraval Merchants Association presents the 2nd annual Taraval Street Fair. Taraval Street, between 46th and 47th Avenues will be closed to make way for food booths, artisans, and a stage for bands. The festival will run from 10:30 A.M. to 6:00 PM. Admission is free, so join in the fun. For more information visit the website at [www.TaravalMerchants.org](http://www.TaravalMerchants.org).

Not Ready for Prime Time Dept.



JROTC in San Francisco Public Schools

By Dr. Dan Kelly

Vote No on Proposition V

Before phasing out JROTC, the School Board listened to students, parents and community members on both sides. It weighed the arguments and considered what might be lost and what might be gained. It learned that many students seek leadership and community service opportunities, and that they want electives and after school activities which confer skills that translate into careers later.

Students identified these qualities in numerous activities, such as Peer Resources, sports teams, outdoor education, student newspapers, activity clubs, Service Learning, Student Government, and others which already exist in the District without the drawbacks of JROTC. Eight hundred students petitioned the School Board to end JROTC and to use the \$1,000,000 saved to expand and add to existing programs.

JROTC’s contract with the School District requires a “course of military instruction” by instructors who don’t need even a college degree. No JROTC classes meet State academic standards, and military skills translate poorly into real-world job skills. Lower skills mean lower prospects for the poor and minority students who are the primary targets of JROTC. But four years of military classes leave less room for the math, science, and foreign language classes, which do provide solid preparation for college and careers.

San Franciscans overwhelmingly opposed recruitment in schools when they passed Proposition I in 2005, so JROTC supporters now deny that JROTC recruits children locally, while admitting that it does so elsewhere. JROTC directives and policy statements urge instructors to “facilitate contact with recruiters”, to “sell the Army story”, and to contact students as early as possible. “Seventeen is too late”, states one such directive. The Pentagon boasts that 40 – 50% of all JROTC cadets join the military. JROTC supporters continue to deny it. But the School District has no information on local enlistment and the supporters don’t either. They simply haven’t asked for real numbers from the Pentagon, the only agency that could know.

How voluntary is JROTC? Many students are forced into San Francisco JROTC for purely administrative reasons, or as punishment. Immigrants have been told to accept JROTC assignment to protect their families from deportation. Three quarters of those who chose JROTC said they wanted to avoid Physical Education, and half of JROTC cadets would take non-military marching band if offered.

Before it voted, the School Board also noted that JROTC instructors, who are chosen by the military, can’t be openly gay; that JROTC creates funding imbalances between schools; and that JROTC instructors, who carry half the student load, receive much higher pay than credentialed teachers.

Last year the School Board ended involuntary placements in JROTC, and enrollment dropped 30%. This year it is allowing more substitutes for Physical Education, exploring band funding, and starting a new, four-year Leadership track. It is responding to what students want and need.

Proposition V is a divisive wedge issue placed on the ballot with funding from conservative groups outside SF, and outside the State. Students deserve greater opportunities without military sponsorship. Vote No on Proposition V.





PHYLLIS’ FINDINGS

I was excited to hear Barack Obama’s dynamic speech last week accepting the Democratic nomination for President..(it cost the Dems 50 million to rent that stadium) .I know I’m preaching to the choir...but that was quite an impressive and historic speech, even though chances are he’ll never be able to achieve ALL he’s promised...we’ll see...it’s a start. What was flabbergasting was McCain’s pick of Governor Sarah Palin of Alaska as his running mate. He’s obviously hoping to energize all the women who loved and voted for Hillary for President. I can’t imagine women who were pro-Hillary, embracing this unknown woman as Republican V.P. They have already said it was an “insulting gesture.” If McCain dies in office, what can Governor Palin, with very limited experience offer the government? She hasn’t been “vetted” (examined...as other potential candidates were) and rumor has she’s being investigated for unknown malfeasance. People have wondered why if he wanted a woman, he didn’t pick EBay’s Meg Whitman, for example, who’s more experienced... and the answer is that Palin is NOT pro-choice and to attract his Conservative base, McCain felt it incumbent upon him to pick a woman (with a bevy of children) who’s against abortion.

The internet had a Media Advisory on August 23rd and it included a McCain Campaign Conference call with Republican Party Chairman Ron Nehring and former Secretary State Chairman, Bill Jones to discuss why Obama’s pick of Joe Biden would be bad for California’s economy. It included the remark by Biden, while he was hoping to be nominated as President, that Obama “is not ready for the Presidency.” They opened a phone # to readers to call in and spout their views and opinions. I called the number, added the pass code they requested and they had me speak my mind which included my erstwhile opinion that a “72 year old forgetful man with a violent temper who abused and cheated on Carol, his first wife, was hardly a role model.” I further suggested that it might not be wise to put such an intense man in a position with his finger on a button in such a powerful position. I further added a bit about his cursing Cindy, his current wife, with reporters present. At which point the moderator told the operator to cease my call and to continue to the next caller. They asked for my name at the beginning of the calling session, so who knows what could happen next? I may just be on the RNC list of noxious callers and banned forever from stating my provocative remarks... Tyranny will out! God Bless America!

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I’ve read that although fewer and fewer aspiring doctors are choosing “Geriatrics” as a profession, reports have it that the Geriatric physicians are happy with their specialty. Young residents deem it “depressing.”

Wall Street Journal recently had an article on people and their biases. Apparently, there’s not too much bias these days towards blacks and gays as formerly.... the predominant bias that persists today is “ageism.” Even “old” people are biased against the“old.” Now that’s depressing.

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Atkins diets are still in vogue, apparently. People are said to lose more weight on it than on any of the other popular diets. That’s all carnivorous me had to hear, I headed straight for the nearest charcuterie and bought a pound of boneless rib... (methinks a good place for boneless rib or any steak is still MOLLIE STONE’s) although didn’t eat it all at once. However, neither was it the size of a deck of cards, as the diet gurus recommend...it was quite thin cut, so if I stacked it, it might be the size of a deck of cards, but spread out it probably resembled a royal flush...(of cards.) The other alternative to weight loss is Bariatric surgery which is getting more popular day by day...not quite as popular as ATKINS...but if you need to lose a great deal of weight... check it out.

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In the Entertainment Arena...lots of goodies abound. If you like Woody Allen films, VICKY CHRISTINA BARCELONA is your cup of tea. Seductive, delightful, funny with Penelope Cruz, Scarlett Johansson,Javier Bardem and lots of other sexy, handsome people....set in lovely Barcelona, luminously photographed, and directed by Woody, it’s totally enjoyable. At the Stonestown Cinema, an attractive, remodeled variation of the old mystery train trip movies...TRANSSIBERIAN has Ben Kingsley and Woody Harrelson in an exciting film with glowering foreigners, erotic intrigues,conspiracies, duplicity...some excessive violence (R rated) but it’s definitely worth seeing.

Opening at the Berkely Rep is YELLOW JACKET and at ACT Tom Stoppard’s ROCK AND ROLL (directed by Carey Perloff and running through October 12. (NY Times calls it “Stoppard’s ‘finest’) I’ll keep you posted..

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NEW YORK IS STILL WHERE IT’S AT...

A few tips if you’re heading to NYC anytime soon...Patti LuPone is sensational in GYPSY..a Tony Winner; and make sure to see the 2008 Pulitzer Prize drama AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY, by Tracy Letts. It’s not-to-be missed if you enjoy REAL drama. ( it helps to sit in the orchestra.) Unbelievable 80 year old Estelle Parsons has the lead (Violet) and she only has a 6 month contract...so better hurry. It’s said to be coming to SF but right now it’s at the Music Box Theater on 45th Street in NY and worth a trip. Also reportedly the play is being adapted for a film.

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I can’t speak highly enough about the new NEWSEUM in Washington, D.C. There are 14 main galleries, 15 theaters and it’s an opportunity to explore the history of news and meet the men and women of the mediat who report it .In the NBC News Intereactive Newsroom you can shoot photosof a dramatic river rescue or email your friends a video of your turn as a TV reporter. You’ll find a Pulitzer Prize Photographic Gallery with stories that experience the sadness and artistry of the world’s greatest news photographs and then in the Berlin War Gallery you’ll see 83 ton sections of the graffiti-covered concrete barriers..one of the largest displays outside Germany. There are so many fascinating, unique things to see at the NEWSEUM, you’ll wish you could stay for days. And you’ll enjoy it even if you never pick up a newspaper.



Why Readers Reject Daily Newspapers

By Clint Reilly

Newspapers used to print money for their owners. Some — like Richard Thieriot, the former owner of the San Francisco Chronicle — did better than others.

Thieriot was smiling like the cat that ate the canary when I spoke with him at former State Senator Quentin Kopp’s recent 80th birthday party. Thieriot’s family sold the Chronicle and KRON television for more than \$1 billion at the market’s zenith in 2000. Hearst Corporation paid \$660 million for the Chronicle alone.



Today, rumors abound about the Chronicle’s financial picture. Including annual losses, Hearst has likely invested more than \$1 billion in the Chronicle, yet the paper is only worth a fraction of that amount. Facing a dismal economic picture, Hearst recently offered buyouts to more than 100 staffers, the second time it has done so in the last 18 months.

But the Chronicle is not alone. The entire newspaper business is in free fall. The Internet has stolen both readers and advertisers, and a grinding recession has further curtailed ad spending. And as younger readers flock online, circulation continues to plummet.

With declining revenues come repeated staff cuts. The papers are even shrinking physically, and vital coverage of local government has suffered in many communities.

Sam Zell, the real estate mogul who led the \$13.6 billion buyout of the Tribune Company – which includes the Chicago Tribune and Los Angeles Times – said, “Because newspapers have historically been monopolies, they have been insulated from reality. Newspapers have to respond to their customers.”

When papers failed to respond to their customers, Craigslist did. The website devoured newspapers’ classified advertising business by offering a more efficient model. I spoke with Craig Newmark, Craigslist’s founder, at a Barack Obama fundraiser we both attended recently. Newmark told me that poor journalism and lousy newspapers are digging their own grave – not Craigslist. While Craig may be too humble, others share his disdain for an industry seemingly incapable of responding to its first real competitive threat in 100 years.

Monopoly journalism allowed many owners, editors and journalists to fall out of touch long before the present crisis.

Letters to the Editor

I am an avid reader of your West of Twin Peaks Observer. I noted that you mentioned the meeting on June 3rd on the bicycle plan. Did you know that one proposal is to removal all parking on Portola Drive from Sloat Blvd. up to Forester?

I have attached a copy of a letter that I have written to SF MTA, and I believe that this is an issue which should be examined by your paper.

Pamela Stone

Editor’s note, see page 2 for a guest editorial by Ms. Stone.

As a political consultant, I repeatedly witnessed bizarre behavior at newspapers that no other business would ever allow. Some reporters and columnists were frequently drunk or on drugs on the job. Such conduct was not simply tolerated, it was condoned. These third-rate Hunter Thompsons screwed up appointments and scrambled facts but were never called to account for their mistakes, incivility or disruptive behavior. Violent behavior by a top editor was even defended by the company and the editor promoted. He

would have been summarily fired anywhere else.

Consider the following events in 2000 involving the purchase of the Chronicle by Hearst Corp, then owner of the SF Examiner:

The publisher of the Examiner offers to “horse trade” favorable editorial coverage for the mayor during his reelection campaign in exchange for the mayor’s support of the sale.

When the publisher admits this publicly, he is fired by Hearst, even though emails and hand-written notes indicate that he informed the president and chairman of the company of exactly what he was doing. Hearst later pays the ousted publisher a settlement reported to be near \$10 million.

A federal judge accuses both the president and chairman of lying about what happened. The editor-in-chief and the editorial page editor issue public denials that anything improper ever occurred. To “prove” it, the newspaper hires the former general counsel of Chevron to write a report exonerating the newspaper of any wrongdoing.

The final report – predictably stating that no breach of ethics occurred – is printed prominently in the newspaper, even though the lead adviser to the investigation, a well-respected journalist, refuses to sign it in dissent.

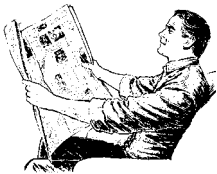
Years later, the now Hearst-owned Chronicle hires the now former mayor as a Sunday columnist.

Despite these clearly documented events involving the paper’s owners, publisher and editors, the San Francisco Chronicle would have us all believe that this type of behavior has nothing to do with Bay Area residents abandoning the paper in droves.

I wonder.

Clint Reilly writes a column which appears as a public service in every MediaNews Group, Inc. newspaper in the Bay Area each Tuesday and at www.clintreilly.com

Read the Observer online: www.tpobserver.com



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District 4 and 7 Candidates Meet Neighbors

By George Wooding

The West of Twin Peaks Central Council’s August 11th candidates night was a great success.

A 70 year-old organization, represents homeowners associations in both district 4 and 7. Candidates for Supervisor, from both districts, discussed issues that are important to west side voters. The Candidates introduced themselves, discussed their platforms and answered questions before a packed house of voters.

The final filing deadline for District Supervisor was August 8th. The WTPCC’s August 11th forum was designed to give new candidates a chance to compete and introduce themselves on an equal footing with better-known District incumbents.

The David and Goliath, District 7 Supervisor’s race pitted incumbent Sean Elsbernd against newcomer Julian Lagos. Elsbernd often cited his record and was especially proud of his work on the Park and Recreation bond, City infrastructure, and his legislation that will “save billion of dollars” by changing the City employees criteria for receiving retirement benefits. He also defended San Francisco’s immigration sanctuary policy.

Candidate Julian Lagos was very concerned with development and population density issues pertaining to the west side of town, particularly the proposed new development of Park Merced. Lagos felt

that the City had to take a comprehensive look at the west side development projects and their impact on the character and quality of life in Districts 4 and 7. Lagos also strongly recommended that the City could reduce it’s budget by eliminating many of the “over 8,000 City employees who are currently making six-figure salaries.



Julian Lagos, Supervisorial Candidate, District 7 found a receptive audience at the forum.

Moderator Denise LaPointe read a statement submitted by former District 7 Supervisor, Tony Hall explaining why Hall dropped out of this year’s Supervisor’s race. (see page 5).The City and State retirement system and the City Attorney had confirmed that Hall’s pension would be significantly reduced, permanently if he took a position on a Supervisor’s salary. Tony Hall was present at the statement reading.

District 4 has three interesting candidates running for Supervisor. Carmen Chu, the incumbent, was appointed by Mayor Gavin Newsom to replace former Supervisor Ed Jew. Candidate Ron Dudum, who lost the 2006 District 4 race to Ed Jew by a handful of votes and was overlooked by Mayor Newsom for the District 4 appointment. The third candidate, David Ferguson is a long time resident of District 4.

Incumbent Chu mentioned that she “loves” District 4, owns a house in the District and someday plans to raise a family in the District. Chu said that

the children of families should be able to attend local schools. She expressed concern about City spending, though expressed confidence in San Francisco’s healthy 5% growth, but the City’s spending needs to be controlled, she said. She spoke about making 19th Avenue safe.

Candidate Dudum said that City Supervisors had to be much more responsible and accountable to voters. He charged that local government is top-heavy and that Supervisors should stop creating unnecessary committees and commissions, roll-up their sleeves and start doing the job that they were paid to do. He promised to promote home-ownership programs and wants more neighborhood family houses built. He opposes the redistricting of police stations, which, he said, would be detrimental to District 4.

Candidate David Ferguson, a lifelong resident of District 4 and a former schoolteacher, pledged to serve as a District 4 Supervisor and never seek any other elective office. Among Ferguson’s concerns are the maintenance of Stern Grove, as a vital community asset, a strong middle-class advocate, he is concerned that families with children are being pushed out of the City because of the rising costs for goods and services and because of schools. He also wants to make San Francisco as “green” as possible.

Denise LaPointe, event moderator and outgoing president of the WTPCC asked relevant questions of the candidates. Incoming WTPCC President Don Dutil, selected audience questions and organized the event.

The election for Supervisors will take place on November 4th.

Cow Palace: Not Dead Yet!

By Kevin Patterson, Friends of the Cow Palace

Revitalization hopes for both the Cow Palace and Surrounding Community

Sometimes it takes throwing cold water on our face to bring things into focus. This is certainly the net result of the legislation proposed by State Senator Leland Yee. His bill, SB1527, backed by Daly City, proposed to sell the Cow Palace as surplus State property and clear the way for a massive condo and commercial development project. This bill brought into sharp focus the fact that many people believe both the Bayshore Community and the Cow Palace can and should be revitalized.

Due to an overwhelming public outcry, and a shared desire to see the Cow Palace continue as a Bay Area icon, Senator Yee amended his bill to spare the Cow Palace. The legislation, now on the Governor’s desk, calls for the sale of only 13 acres of Cow Palace overflow parking lots adjacent to the old Geneva Drive-In movie theater. The goal of this sale is to provide land desperately needed for a local grocery store and retail center.

The problem is, the Cow Palace Board of Directors has been working on exactly the same goal for over a year. However, it appears they have a better way to achieve it: a long term lease to a commercial developer who will build the retail center and pay the Cow Palace rent for 50 years.

With income from a long-term lease, and a retail center for the community, the Cow Palace and the local community both win. Supporters of this plan hope that the Governor will veto the sale of the 13 acres and allow the long-term lease to move forward. In a down real estate market, it is clearly a better choice to lease than to sell.

With income from the lease, the Cow Palace will begin to fund a long overdue revitalization, completing seismic and ADA projects and beginning a beautification, community outreach, and marketing process that will usher in a new future for the Bay Area icon. This will support local businesses, which in turn will encourage job growth, and hopefully begin an upward trend for an area.

“We love the Cow Palace, and so do many thousands of citizens from the local community and throughout the State”, says Steven Jonson, School Teacher from Pacifica. “I attend the Great Dickens Christmas Fair at the Cow Palace every year and believe that educational and family oriented events

(Cont. on p. 10)

Grand Jury (Cont. from p.1)

Controller’s Statement on “A”

City Contoller Edward Harrington has issued the following statement on the fiscal impact of Proposition A:

Should the proposed bonds be authorized and issued, in my opinion the costs would be:

Bond Redemption	\$299,000,000
Bond Interest	230,526,000
Debt Service Requirement	\$529,526,000

Based on a single bond sale, the average annual debt requirement for twenty (20) years at the current six (6) percent interest rate would be approximately \$26,476,300 which is equivalent to four and eleven hundredths cents (\$0.0411) per \$100 of assessed valuation in the current tax rate. The increase in annual property taxes for the owner of a home with an assessed value of \$300,000 would amount to approximately \$120.36 if all bonds were sold at the same time. It should be noted, however, that the City does not plan to issue all authorized bonds at one time; if these bonds are issued over several years, the actual effect on the tax rate would be less than the maximum amount shown above. Also, to the extent revenues that are expected to be available from a settlement with certain tobacco companies are used for debt service, the impact on future years’ tax rates would be substantially less.

Understimating the cost in the 1999 Voter’s Handbook misiinformed the public

as high as 69% over its baseline budget. Another of the Jury’s findings was that the Mayor’s Office, the CGOBOC, and the Department of Public Works either “knew or should have known that escalation calculations were inadequate for both projects.”

Mayor Newsom, for his part, has noted a “lot of angry people don’t trust” the City after the Laguna Honda bond measure; he claims the proposed costs to rebuild SFGH have been made “clear,” right from the start. But both Newsom and Rosenfield have neglected mentioning the SFGH \$887.4 million bond may underfund the project by at least \$55.6 million, if the Department of Public Health’s estimate SFGH construction costs may reach \$943 million turns out to be accurate.

To complete BLIP projects, the Mayor and Board of Supervisors have abused issuing revenue bonds that don’t require voter approval to supplement the BLIP funding shortfall. Even though the LHH project has been scaled back by 35% to rein in costs, the Mayor and Board are also abusing issuing \$185 million in Certificates of Participation (COP’s) to supplement bond financing for LHH, also without voter approval.

Astute observers have noted the Mayor’s Office of Public Finance has defined clear policies for issuing

COP’s to accomplish future savings to the City’s General Fund. But the LHH replacement project is funded by general obligation bonds and tobacco settlement revenues, not the General Fund, so it doesn’t appear to meet these, and other, COP best-practice policies.

If the SFGH bond is already underfunded by \$55.6 million, the Mayor and Board of will be handed a blank check to issue additional revenue bonds or COP’s to augment yet another inadequate general obligation bond, without voter approval.

The Jury noted private-sector projects experiencing significant cost overruns and delays would likely replace project managers. And the Grand Jury found that the Mayor and Board of Supervisors should authorize the CGOBOC to evaluate bond measures before placing them on the ballot to assure proper project “plans, escalation factors, milestones, damage clauses

and the like are in place to deliver projects on time and within budget the voters are asked to approve.” Although the City had several months to implement the Grand Jury’s recommendations before placing the SFGH bond measure on November’s ballot, none of the recommendations were adopted before doing so.

The Jury noted “voters are left holding the financial bag and burden,” from “the lack of accountability and oversight” of bond projects. The Grand Jury concluded the appropriate response is for voters to demand better governance from City officials.

We need both of our County hospitals. But we shouldn’t sacrifice increasing government accountability and project oversight to rebuild either LHH or SFGH.

Send City Hall a message it must implement the Grand Jury’s recommendations before we’ll pass another bond measure. Vote “No” on Proposition A’s blank check.

Patrick Monette-Shaw is an accountability advocate. The Grand Jury’s report can be found on its web page at [www.sfgov.org/site/courts\\_page.asp?id=3680](http://www.sfgov.org/site/courts_page.asp?id=3680).



# Boondoggle II: General Hospital

By George Wooding



The SF General Hospital (SFGH) rebuild, — Proposition A on this November’s ballot — is being aggressively marketed to San Francisco voters.

Almost every political organization, local politician, union, and special interest group in town will either endorse Proposition A, or will be pressured into not being “against” the bond measure. The City, already worried about the tremendous \$1.7 billion cost of this bond, has gone to great lengths to ensure the SFGH rebuild is the only general obligation bond measure on the ballot.

Officially, San Francisco is claiming that the bond will “only” cost \$887.4 million. But additional, remaining hidden costs haven’t been considered or discussed publicly: \$30 million preparing the bond; \$640 million to service the debt repaying interest; and \$157 million for furniture, fixtures and equipment — all of which seem to have been forgotten.

The future costs of seismically retrofitting the rest of the hospital campus haven’t been mentioned. And bond costs are open-ended because by the City’s own admission, the project may be underfunded by \$55.6 million, if the City’s projections that construction costs may reach \$943 million prove accurate.

Voters who own property will be annually taxed \$59 for every \$100,000 of property assessments over the next 23 years. Due to a 50% pass through clause, renters face annual \$100 to \$300 rent increases.

The City’s public relations machine is set to inundate voters with slick brochures, mailers, and automated phone messages. The local media will start placing favorable SFGH stories between September and the November 4 election. The City’s main arguments to voters will be emotional, because the facts and the City’s numbers simply don’t add up. Voters are going to be hearing a lot of public relations propaganda about “Compassion,” “desperately needed,” “no time left,” and “State law requires.”

Has anyone heard that the Titanic is about to leave the dock?

Voters should support SFGH’s healthcare mission and want a seismically-safe hospital. But the proposed SFGH rebuild is a poorly planned, poorly located, and an overpriced “trophy” hospital. The project should be rethought, and re-designed, before asking

voters to approve bond financing.

In 1994, state law SB1953 created new seismic standards for hospitals. Current California standards require hospitals should be able to withstand an earthquake without collapsing. But SB1953 created a second, higher compliance standard that requires hospitals to also be able to continue to operate, and function, after an earthquake.

The proposed new, 90-foot-high, glass-walled SFGH hospital will be wedged forty feet, or less, between two non-seismically retrofitted brick buildings built in 1915. The 93-year-old brick buildings are 85 feet high, and aren’t scheduled to be retrofitted until sometime after the year 2015. The proposed hospital sits within the fall-zone of both brick buildings. In the event of a catastrophic earthquake, the brick buildings will collapse on the new hospital and render it inoperable.

The City is claiming that a large basement underneath the hospital called a “super-floor” will supposedly allow them to build the hospital at this location. This super-floor does not actually retrofit the two red brick buildings.

When asked about the strength of the non-retrofitted brick buildings, Gene O’Connell, SFGH’s CEO, stated on August 13 that “the brick buildings did not collapse during the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake,” and said she felt that they would not collapse in a future earthquake. The City needs to retrofit the adjacent red brick buildings before building the proposed replacement hospital.

In 2006, the proposed design for the SFGH replacement was a rectangular building, estimated to cost \$622 million. The Department of Public Health then reconsidered the design, and chose a more aesthetic, oval shaped hospital with glass walls. The redesigned building added \$265 million dollars, including \$7 million for art.

The proposed hospital’s bed capacity is insufficient for future needs. The project only adds an additional 32 beds, increasing 19 neonatal ICU and pediatric beds, and eliminating 16 medical/surgical beds. The City’s final project report does NOT discuss emergency room capacity. The hospital was designed before the DPH’s commissioned Lewin report cited a citywide shortage of 533 acute hospital beds by 2030, 24% below the City’s projected needs.

The same DPH administrators

Cont. p. 6

## PERMISSION TO SPEAK FREELY

### Former Supervisor Tony Hall Bows Out of District Race

#### REAL WORDS for REAL PEOPLE

By Tony Hall

To the many residents of District 7 who urged me to run for re-election as your Supervisor, I express my sincere thanks and gratitude. Thank you for the many wonderful accomplishments we achieved together, and gratitude for allowing me to serve you. By now you know that I will not be a candidate because the City and State retirement systems informed me that after a 30 year career in local Government, as an executive in eight different Departments, the pension benefits that my family currently depends on would be permanently halved if I returned at the level of Supervisor. I even volunteered to return for no pay but was declined via an opinion by the City Attorney.

It is important to understand why I considered running again. As your Supervisor, I kept the promises I made to you during the campaign of 2000 to resolve our district’s biggest problems. In the ensuing four years, we did just that. Now, those who place political ambition before public service threaten much of what we accomplished.

We re-built Harding Park as one of the finest municipal golf courses in the country with the understanding that it would be maintained for affordable resident use, attract lucrative PGA tournament dollars for our City coffers, and most important, that it would remain a public course, not fall into private hands (AKA highest political donors!) as is now being promoted by our local politicians.

We restored Lake Merced to all-time water level highs and set the course for its restoration as one of the most unique family recreation districts of any city in the country. That project is now being pushed off by our local representative as a Public Utilities “watershed project” thereby eliminating the responsibility of the Recreation and Park Department in the development of that park.

We passed the legislation for the rebuild of Laguna Honda Home for our senior citizens in need. That mission and the bond monies that you voted for is now wrongfully distorted and misused as our local representatives push for halfway house for care-not cash recipients.

We passed the necessary legislation to build the new Youth Guidance Center complete with vocational and rehabilitative services so that our misguided youngsters could have the opportunity to become productive members of our society as opposed to runaways from city-sponsored halfway houses. Any opinion as to the rationale for San Francisco to remain a “sanctuary city” is absurd and an affront to families of the recent victims of such a ridiculous policy.

We completed the renovation of the Ocean Avenue commercial corridor so that our small businesses would



be encouraged to prosper as opposed to penalizing them with ever-increasing fee hikes, as is suggested by the Board and Mayor today.

To preserve our neighborhood character such we prevented construction on Edgehill Mountain and excessive development at Stonestown. Today, unbridled developments at SF State, Park Merced, Brotherhood Way, Wawona and Sloat threaten to clog 19th Ave. with nightmarish traffic and undo the many neighborhood traffic safety precautions we installed. Sutro Tower is again gearing up for unprecedented expansion.

We passed many Quality of life and public nuisance laws and ordinances relating to public cleanliness, obstruction of justice, the monitoring of homeless encampments and increased police presence. Today these laws are not being enforced.

I initiated district Town Hall meetings and formed the District 7 Council so that your voice would be heard. Today, that Council is non-existent.

There were countless measures and proposals that I worked on to limit waste, promote honesty and increase efficiency in City Government. I was very proud to have served you in the most respectable manner that I could because of my love for this great City. It was with this desire that I chose to take the helm at Treasure Island in 2004 in the sincere and yet mistaken belief that I could do more good for the City by developing that last national jewel into a positive cash flow for generations to come. Unfortunately, political circumstances beyond my control prevented me from achieving that success, and the project today lies in an ever-changing public relations scam. We all learn from our experiences, and my family and I have paid dearly for those lessons in the form of personal attacks and attempts to smear my reputation. Thankfully, people usually come to know the truth.

The above “State Of The District” is not meant to castigate anyone, but rather serve as a guideline to what you should be demanding of your district representative. Politics is a tough business, and we must support those who step up to the plate, but also distinguish between those whose motivation is to serve the public as opposed to satisfying ones political ambitions. Being able to stand up for what is right and do something for the common good of all the people is what is most important in the political world. You have the right to expect that from your representatives. You have my word that I will continue to fight for that principle above all else.

*Supervisor Hall is retired, but promises to keep in touch with the residents of the area and will contribute to the Westside Observer as his time permits.*



BUSINESS CORNER



Nora Cacaindin, Kristin Henry, Clayton Wu

Back to Sports Fitness and Therapy

by Mitch Bull

We live in an era where packed waiting rooms are much too common when dealing with most medical practitioners. And when you finally get in, in many cases, you don't get to see the medical professional, as aides, and assistants do most of the evaluations.

The owners and staff at West Portal's Back to Sports-Therapy and Fitness have broken the mold as they provide "old-fashioned" service for their physical therapy, fitness, and chiropractic clients.

Located at 254 West Portal Ave. (in the former Copperfield's location) owners Cynthia Pagan and Darren Badong have assembled a friendly, professional and experienced PT and chiropractic staff that strives to provide individually-tailored therapy programs for each of their clients.

Clayton Wu (D.C), Nora Cacaindin (MPT) and Kristin Henry (MPT) have all worked in the large "assembly-line" types of clinics where "hands on" type of work is not possible. Each of them loves the environment at the West Portal therapy and fitness center.

As Cacaindin described, "In my 28 years of providing PT I have been in all types of clinics. I love the environment at Back to Sports because we can really simplify the treatment processes and provide targeted individual service so that our clients don't feel like they are being shuffled around". The UC trained Kinesiologist and Therapist went on to say that by providing a smooth effortless transition from recovery to fitness each of the staff can chart each person's progress and needs."

Kristin Henry, who studied at the University of Michigan and Northwestern University, has been working in PT for over 12 years, and in addition to general therapy, she also works with women who are new moms or moms-to-be.

"I like to work with both pre-natal and post-partum women as they face different health issues, especially with muscles that can be tweaked during pregnancy. Often times, they try to do the same workouts that they "used to do" and end up with a muscle or tendon injury. That's where I can help them get back to good health", said Henry, who can relate to her clients as a mom herself.

The third member of the team is Clayton Wu, who earned his Doctor of Chiropractic degree from the Palmer West Chiropractic College, in California. As a chiropractor he can evaluate and diagnose injuries and recommend a course of treatment for the patient and therapists' to follow. He also enjoys the close patient contact that he can have. "Unlike a typical "office" with examination rooms, our rooms are adjacent to our working areas. It's more like a gym than a clinic. We use state of the art equipment such as ultrasound, bio feedback, electrical stimulation units, inversion tables, traction and the basic cold and hot packs to work the muscles, but unlike most places I have worked, we can then personally show our clients the specific exercises for strengthening by just walking them around the corner and doing the exercises with them", stated Wu.

With the ability to tailor recovery and fitness programs to each individual client, the staff members can help everyone reach their own specific goals, such as increased flexibility, pain relief and management, or increasing the level of fitness. They see themselves as guides to help each of us on our journey to good health.

Cacaindin summed it up best when she said, "Invest in yourself. Your health is your biggest asset, and after all you can't fully enjoy your life if you are in poor health."

Back to Sports Therapy and Fitness is located at 254 West Portal Avenue. In addition to the staff members listed certified personal fitness trainers are available to structure a fitness program. The center is open by appointment only. Contact them at (415) 759-8978 to schedule an appointment.

Investigation (Cont. from p. 1)

determined to keep the records concealed. The date on the check that was altered, June 1, 2004, is out of sequence with the rest of the checks before and after it, indicating that the check was backdated by about six weeks. Why would Scanlon backdate the check, and white-out the "Services" notation? Did the prosecution's star witness commit perjury? Did Scanlon concoct this scheme all on her own, or did she have help?

Throughout the whole ordeal, Commission Executive Director John St. Croix and Chief Enforcement Officer Richard Mo have demonstrated a consistent willingness to ignore the facts, distort the law and show contempt for due process and the presumption of innocence. As the hearing process unfolds, Hall is confident the public will see this case for what it is: a publicly funded, politically motivated, completely unsubstantiated smear campaign. The altered check raises very serious questions about who was really behind the effort to politically destroy Tony Hall. As the Commission spends untold resources to pursue a frivolous case against Hall, sweetheart deals for developers remain obscured by smoke and mirrors at Treasure Island.

The public is also beginning to question the usefulness of an Ethics Commission that can be easily manipulated by political factions. Filing a complaint is becoming common practice to effectively prevent candidates from running for office or to score press hits against an opponent. The mere threat of an Ethics Commission "investigation" through an anonymous complaint triggered by a well-financed politician can be more valuable than a dozen mass mailings. Perhaps this is a contributing factor to the reason the voters turned down the last initiative put forward by the Ethics Commission to give themselves more power and funding.

David P. Waggoner is an attorney in San Francisco specializing in political law. Waggoner successfully defended grassroots public power treasurer, Carolyn Knee, before the Ethics Commission. Waggoner is also a supervising attorney at a nonprofit legal services organization that advocates for income and health-care for people who are homeless and

Parking Plan (Cont. from p. 1)

residential areas for parking. Additionally the curbs at the intersections have been upgraded for disabled access; query the good that will do if the disabled are unable to park.

Having a home which is not new necessitates continual repairs. In the last several years, I have had to do all sorts of maintenance and repairs. How are contractors supposed to bring in heavy materials if they cannot park near the location of their jobsites?

Another factor is the speed at which vehicles travel Portola Drive. Over the years, speeding has increased. In reviewing the Pedestrian Summit, also sponsored by SFMTA, I learned that parking has the effect of reducing speeds on our street. The wholesale removal of parking would encourage even more speeding on Portola Drive. I have also seen the parking lanes, when there are no cars occupying it, utilized for passing on the right. This would continue if parking is removed.

In addition to elderly individuals who live in the area, there are a substantial number of families with young children, and the number of children in strollers has increased as young families have moved in the area. The lack of parking and the increase in speed would be dangerous to young children and the elderly as they try to negotiate Portola Drive to go to West Portal.

San Francisco is a "Transit First" city, but due to location and physical impairments, not everyone is able to utilize public transportation for all purposes. It is difficult to find parking in the West Portal area to frequent the merchants in the area. Removal of parking from Portola will only exacerbate the problem. If parking is unavailable, individuals will go to other locales for the purchases and services.

I am not opposed to bicycle lanes. I used to ride my bicycle decades ago to attend the University of San Francisco. I believe that bicycle lanes encourage safety and remind drivers that they must be careful of bicyclists. However, I firmly believe that the needs of all of the residents of San Francisco be taken into account when establishing a comprehensive bicycle plan.

Pamela Stone lives on Portola Drive.

Hospital Bond (Cont from p. 5) who planned the disastrous Laguna Honda Hospital (LHH) rebuild are also in charge of the SFGH rebuild. This should give voters absolutely no confidence that the SFGH rebuild is well planned. LHH's ten-year rebuild is currently \$241 million (60%) over budget and 420 beds (35%) smaller than originally promised.

Voters were led to believe that LHH's primary mission would be to provide long-term care for our frail elderly and severely disabled. Suddenly, LHH's new primary mission will be to provide 90-day stay short-term and rehabilitative care.

The City and the DPH have no accountability to voters. Who knows what the DPH will do or accomplish

with the SFGH rebuild money, given its track record.

The 2013 deadline for completing the hospital is manmade. Senate Bill 306 (October 2007) provides building extensions to 2020 and beyond.

The City should take the time to correct project flaws before constructing the replacement hospital. The City must reconsider using the original plans for the rectangular hospital, increase bed capacity, and retrofit the brick buildings adjacent to the proposed SFGH hospital location.

Vote No on Proposition A. It's a poorly planned, poorly located, and overpriced hospital bond measure.

George Wooding, Mid-Town Terrace Home Owners Association

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5 Things You Never Knew Your Cell Phone Could Do

For all the folks with cell phones. There are a few things that can be done in times of grave emergencies.

Your mobile phone can actually be a life saver or an emergency tool for survival. Check out the things that you can do with it:

FIRST Emergency  
The Emergency Number worldwide for Mobile is 112. If you find yourself out of the coverage area of your mobile network and there is an Emergency, dial 112 and the mobile will search any existing network to Establish the emergency number for you, and interestingly, this number 112 can be dialed even if the keypad is locked. Try it out.

SECOND Have you locked your keys in the car?

Does your car have remote keyless entry? This may come in handy someday. Good reason to own a cell phone: If you lock your keys in the car and the spare keys are at home, call someone at home on their cell phone from your cell phone. Hold your cell phone about a foot from your car door and have the person at your home press the unlock button, holding it near the mobile phone on their end. Your car will unlock. Saves someone from having to drive your keys to you. Distance is no object. You could be hundreds of miles away, and if you can reach someone who has the other 'remote' for your car, you can unlock the doors (or the trunk).

THIRD Hidden Battery Power  
Imagine your cell battery is very low. To activate, press the keys \*3370#. Your

cell phone will restart with this reserve and the instrument will show a 50% increase in battery. This reserve will get charged when you charge your cell phone next time.

FOURTH How to disable a STOLEN mobile phone?  
To check your Mobile phone's serial number, key in the following digits on your phone: \*#06#. A 15-digit code will appear on the screen. This number is unique to your handset. Write it down and keep it somewhere safe.

When your phone get stolen, you can phone your service provider and give them this code. They will then be able to block your handset so even if the thief changes the SIM card, your phone will be totally useless. You probably won't get your phone back, but at least you know that whoever stole it can't use/sell it either. If everybody does this, there would be no point in people stealing mobile phones. And Finally....

FIFTH Free Directory Service  
Cell phone companies are charging us \$1.00 to \$1.75 or more for 411 information calls when they don't have to. Most of us do not carry a telephone directory in our vehicle, which makes this situation even more of a problem. When you need to use the 411 information option, simply dial: (800) FREE411 or (800) 373-3411 without incurring any charge at all. Program this into your cell phone now.

(This should be printed and kept in your car, purse, and wallet Good information to have with you.)

Stand Up for Children

As I write--our state budget is more than two months late.

School districts are cutting transportation and counselors and arts and music. They are increasing class size. This is bad news for our children and bad news squared for the future of California.

Social services are stretched thin. Cuts target critical services to California's children and families.

The battle over the budget reminds us that not all decisions affecting our children happen at our local school or even at our local school district. Decisions in Sacramento control funding for our schools and children's services.

For those parents who may be asked to up the ante in local fund raising: A word of warning:

You can't close at \$15.2 billion dollar state budget shortfall selling sweat-shirts and gift-wrap.

The best fundraiser we can hold is to join together as advocates for children.

• It's time to tell our legislators to Stand Up for Children. Our students didn't create this budget crisis and their futures shouldn't be sacrificed to solve it.

• It's time for lawmakers to put partisan politics aside. Our students and schools need real state budget solutions, not gridlock.

• It's time to take a balanced approach of cuts and revenue increases in order to solve the state's budget crisis.

The California State PTA supports the original Conference Committee Budget because it takes a balanced approach and generates new revenues to prevent even deeper cuts to education and children's services.

Parents need to let their legislators know they oppose any efforts that would undercut the Proposition 98 school-funding guarantee in future years.

Our public schools have already experienced more than \$500 million in unexpected budget cuts this year--forcing many schools to lay off teachers and education support professionals

EDUCATION

& OTHER CONSIDERATIONS  
by Carol Kocivar



as well eliminating art, music, and vocational education programs that help students learn and succeed.

These cuts come at a time when California already ranks 46th in per-pupil spending, and dead last in the number of counselors, librarians and school nurses per student.

The simple fact is California's schools need additional revenues to provide our students with the education they deserve.

The recent "Getting Down to Facts" studies from Stanford University show that California seriously under funds its public schools and would need to spend 40 percent more to ensure that all students meet the state's rigorous academic standards. The studies also show that other states like New York spend 75 percent more on students than California.

We must pass a budget that does not compromise our most important obligation to support the education and welfare of children.

• A budget that makes severe cuts to children's healthcare, foster care and other support services fails the test of good government: It hurts our children.

• A responsible budget doesn't make people choose between the health of children and their education--both are essential.

• We must focus on how much we need to invest in our children, not how much we can afford to cut.

• Only by adequately investing in our children today, can we ensure that California has a viable economy in the future.

• If there is not enough money in the budget now, just imagine how little there will be when we have an uneducated California.

Just imagine how strong, vibrant and successful California will be if we are willing to invest in our children today.

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September 2008

# Calendar



## California Academy of Science Golden Gate Park Grand Opening Celebration Sept. 27-28

After years of anticipation, the doors of the new California Academy of Sciences will open to the general public for the first time on the weekend of September 27-28 in Golden Gate Park. The main attraction will be the Academy itself and the innovative exhibits and animals inside, but the celebration will also spread out onto the Music Concourse in front of the Academy,



with science and art activities for visitors of all ages, and food and entertainment from around the world. Admission will be free on Saturday the 27th, and the museum will be open with extended hours on both days.

Visitors can enjoy interactive activities, as well as top-notch entertainers and food offerings, inside the



Music Concourse all weekend long. Booths staffed by conservation organizations and energy experts will tie the themes being explored inside the Academy to ongoing efforts to help build healthier habitats for people and animals alike.

Shown above: front entryway, roof garden, interior rainforest. [www.calacademy.org](http://www.calacademy.org). (415) 379-8000

### FRIDAY NIGHT JAZZ AT THE CLIFF HOUSE

Sept 1-Oct. 4, Fridays, 7-11pm | Cliff House, 1 Seal Rock, John Kaleen, Mad and Eddie Duran, Anna Estrada, Fred Randolph (Respectively). Info: 386-3330, [www.cliffhouse.com](http://www.cliffhouse.com)

### SATURDAY WINE TASTINGS

Sept. 6 to Oct. 4 (Saturdays) 2 - 5:30PM | SF Wine Trading Company, 250 Taraval St. Enjoy selected wines from the south of France paired with tasty hors d'oeuvres,. \$10.00 to sample 6 wines. Info 731-6222.

### CANCER PREVENTION & SURVIVAL COOKING

Sept. 8-29 (Mondays) 6 to 8 pm | Ida's Cafe, UCSF Medical Center, 2356 Sutter St. Info 885-3693 Free (Suggested donation \$10-20 per class).

### WILDLIFE IN A WARMING WORLD

Sept. 8-Dec. 31 | SF Main Library, 100 Larkin St. "Irreplaceable: Wildlife in a Warming World" an exhibit that raises awareness about plants and animals threatened by global warming. Info 557-4277

### SETTING UP AND USING E-MAIL

Sept. 13, Sat. 2-3pm | Glen Park Library, 2825 Diamon St. Learn how to set up an e-mail account and how to send, receive and organize messages. Basic mouse and keyboard skills required. Please sign up at the Information Desk.

### NATURE IN ART

Sept. 17, 7-8pm Wednesday | West Portal Library, 190 Lenox Wy. Ms. Aron will discuss the history of artists and artworks of Monet, Cezanne, Renoir, Millet, Pissarro and Gauguin, Minor White, Ansel Adams and Georgia O'Keefe and many others.

### BALLROOM DANCE CLASSES FOR COUPLES

Sept. 18 Thursday evenings. | Forest Hill Christian Church, Fellowship Hall, 250 Laguna Honda Blvd. Six lessons for \$70.per couple. Reservations 661-2746.

### AUTHOR MADELINE LEVINE, PH.D

Sept. 23, Tuesday 7:pm | West Portal Books, 80 West Portal Ave. Discussing her book *The Price of Privilege*.

### WILLIAM SAROYAN CENTENNIAL

Sept. 23, Tuesday, 6:30-7:30pm | West Portal Library,

190 Lenox Wy. Jacqueline Kazarian, founder of William Saroyan Literary Foundation International will talk about his work and life.

### INTRODUCTION TO THE COMPUTER

Sept. 24, Wed. 10:30-12pm | Ocean View Library, 345 Randolph St. (at Ramsell). Learn the basics in this class for those with no computer experience.

### MUSIC NIGHT AT VILLA D'ESTE

Sept. 25, Thurs 6-9pm | Villa D'Este, 2623 Ocean Ave. Kathy Holly, vocals — Jim Rousey Piano; Karl Karlton — sax and vocals. Reservations please: 334-0580

### ONE CITY ONE BOOK

Sept. 27, Saturday 2-3pm | Merced Library, 155 Winston Dr. Discussion of "West of Kabul, East of New York: An Afghan American Story" by Tamim Ansary.

### 9TH ANNUAL WORLD VEGETARIAN WEEKEND

Oct. 4-5 10am-6pm | County Fair Hall, Golden Gate Park. Learn about vegetarianism and sample healthy foods. Speakers include: Dr. John Robbins, Howard Lyman and more. Free before 10:30am, \$6 suggested donation. Info: 273-5481, [www.sfv.org/wvd](http://www.sfv.org/wvd)

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## BRIDESHEAD REVISITED

Bisexual, middle class Londoner Charles Ryder (Matthew Goode) accompanies his gay friend, Sebastian Flyte (Ben Whishaw) to his lush country mansion (Brideshead) and becomes entranced with its grandeur. It's the 1920's and the Oxford students are carefree. There are several passages on the roadways of Charles and Sebastian's sister, Julia (Hayley Atwell). Lord Marshmain (Michael Gambon) left controlling wife and mother, embittered Lady Marshmain (Emma Thompson in silver wig) a devout Catholic. Besides England, director Julian Jarrold takes viewers to Venice where Lord M. lives with Cara (Greta Scacchi); Morocco where Sebastian retreats in an alcoholic stupor and the cruise ship where Charles and Julia meet years later when Charles is a famous painter. At times, the compelling drama seems stifling and trying to cram in too much while the acting and scenery are always top drawer but it's not the 11 hours of the BBC miniseries. It spans about 25 years, ending in 1946 with Brideshead turned into a temporary military base. Sexual situations, nudity. Miramax 135 min.

## THE DARK KNIGHT

The Joker (the late Heath Ledger, brilliant here) has Christopher Nolan's Gotham City under his evil control. He continues to stay one step ahead of Bruce Wayne-Batman (Christian Bale) and his lady-love, Rachel (the homely Maggie Gyllenhaal). The Good vs. Evil reaches a pinnacle when a boatload of "good people" have the bomb detonator for a nearby boatful of villains and vice versa. Then the Joker blows up a hospital in this much more violent sequel. D.A. Harvey Dent (Aaron Eckhart) undergoes a hideous transformation to become the homicidal Two Face. IMAX adds nothing special to the big chase scene. Some special effects are as frightening as the gruesome clown imagery. Warner 152 min.

## JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH 3-D

Geophysicist Trevor Anderson (Brendan Fraser) and his 14-year old nephew Sean (Josh Hutcherson) enlist Icelandic guide, Hannah (Anita Briem) in the

quest to retrace Jules Verne's route downward. Who would have thunk they would be chased by dinosaurs and have them nip at one ... in 3-D? Many adventures later and wonderful use of the 3-D, they manage to make their escape to the surface. New Line 92 min.

## MAMMA MIA!

Daughter Sophie (Amanda Seyfried) of a single mom, Donna (Meryl Streep) delves into Mom's diary to determine who her father might be, inviting the three possibilities to her upcoming wedding to Skye (Dominic Cooper, The History Boys). American Sam (Pierce Brosnan), Swedish Bill (Stellan Skaarsgaard), and Brit Harry (Colin Firth) arrive at the Greek island simultaneously with Donna's old musical sidekicks: Tanya (Christine Baranski) and Rosie (Julie Walters) join the songfest. The production numbers are best when the islanders become the chorus. They all jump into the sea. One cannot help leave the theater smiling and maybe humming. Female sex chatter. Universal 108 min.

## THE MUMMY: TOMB OF THE DRAGON EMPEROR

Chinese Emperor Han, who built the Great Wall (Jet Li), wants to live forever. Good sorceress Zi Juan (Michelle Yeoh) knows the eternal secret but loves General Ming Guo (Russell Wong), unfortunately for him. Zi Juan puts sleep curse on the Emperor and his army. In 1946, adventurer Rick (Brendan Fraser) and his wife, adventure novelist, Evelyn O'Connell (Maria Bello) are entrusted to take a fist-sized jewel to China. It is the key to the reawakening of the emperor and his resurrected hordes. The fight scenes are enhanced by the O'Connell son, Alex (Luke Ford, who at 27 is only 12 years junior to Fraser), and the daughter of Zi Juan and Ming Guo (lovely Isabella Leong). Director Rob Cohen provides special effects, costumes, and fight scenes that are spectacular. The humor throughout adds considerably. Lots of action, smoking, and bodies piling up. Universal 111 min.

## THE SISTERHOOD OF THE TRAVELING PANTS 2

This time around our quartet are college students reunited the summer before their sophomore year. Bridget (Blake Lively) participates in an Aztec



excavation in Central America but departs to visit her grandmother (Blythe Danner) for some answers. Tibby (Amber Tamblyn) could win awards as The Lousiest video store employee. Carmen (America Ferrera) makes a crummy Shakespearean actress... until opening night. Lena (Alexis Biedel) goes to Greece and the other follow. They all jump into the sea. Oh, yes, they do exchange the well worn pants. Three Ann Brashares' teen novels condense into one screenplay filled with pathos as they lead their soap opera lives. 117 min.

## SWING VOTE

Only in a presidential election year could this lightweight comedy weigh in on the comedy scale. Beer-guzzling Bud (Kevin Costner) had promised his daughter, Molly (Madeline Carroll) that he would vote. She's doing a report for her fifth-grade history class in Texico, New Mexico. After the voting machine bungles her/his vote, Bud becomes the deciding vote in the presidential race between Republican incumbent Boone (Kelsey Grammer) and Democratic challenger (Dennis Hopper). When the candidates, their entourages and media descend upon Texico to woo Bud's vote, the Frank Capra influence is definitely noticable. Humore emanates from the presidential campaign managers, Stanley Tucci and Nathan Lane, and the special commercials zeroing in on Bud's vote. TV news reporter Paul Patterson is Bud's love interest. Strong language. Touchstone 100 min.

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## Cow Palace (Cont. from p. 4)

like the Fair bring culture and the arts to the area. We need to help bring more events like this to the Cow Palace. Especially with the high price of gas, having an accessible community event center is increasingly important. We need to come together as a community and make sure the Cow Palace can continue to make a valuable contribution for another 60 years".

The Great Dickens Christmas Fair, celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, takes place for 4 weekends between Thanksgiving and Christmas. With an aggressive new marketing plan and the momentum of the strong outcry from thousands of Bay Area citizens in support of saving the Cow Palace, it appears we are on the verge of an exciting new era for the iconic venue.

Mara Kopp, Cow Palace Board-member and wife of former State Senator, Judge Quenten Kopp, had this to say: "The Cow Palace's original mission as a venue for State agricultural community events like the Grand National Rodeo held each Spring, is naturally evolving to provide much more than a venue for rock concerts and conventions. It is now beginning to serve as

a celebration center for our multi ethnic population, and along with many other future benefits, will serve as an educational center for inner city youth. When it was threatened with destruction, the outpouring of enthusiasm and creative ideas for the future showed us that the Cow Palace is not only loved for nostalgic reasons, but people feel that it can change with the times and become an ever more valuable resource to the community".

Senate Bill 1527 is still pending, which would sell the 13 acres of Cow Palace parking lots instead of the long term lease in process. The threat that the Cow Palace could be torn down is still real, especially if the funding for its revitalization is cut short by a sale instead of a lease. The future of the revitalization of the local community is also tied to the fate of the Cow Palace. With over 650,000 people attending Cow Palace events last year, and the potential of significantly increased numbers after it's revitalization, the success of any new retail center on Geneva Avenue will certainly be tied to the success of the Cow Palace. You do the math.

Info: [www.savethecowpalace.com](http://www.savethecowpalace.com) or email [info@savethecowpalace.com](mailto:info@savethecowpalace.com)

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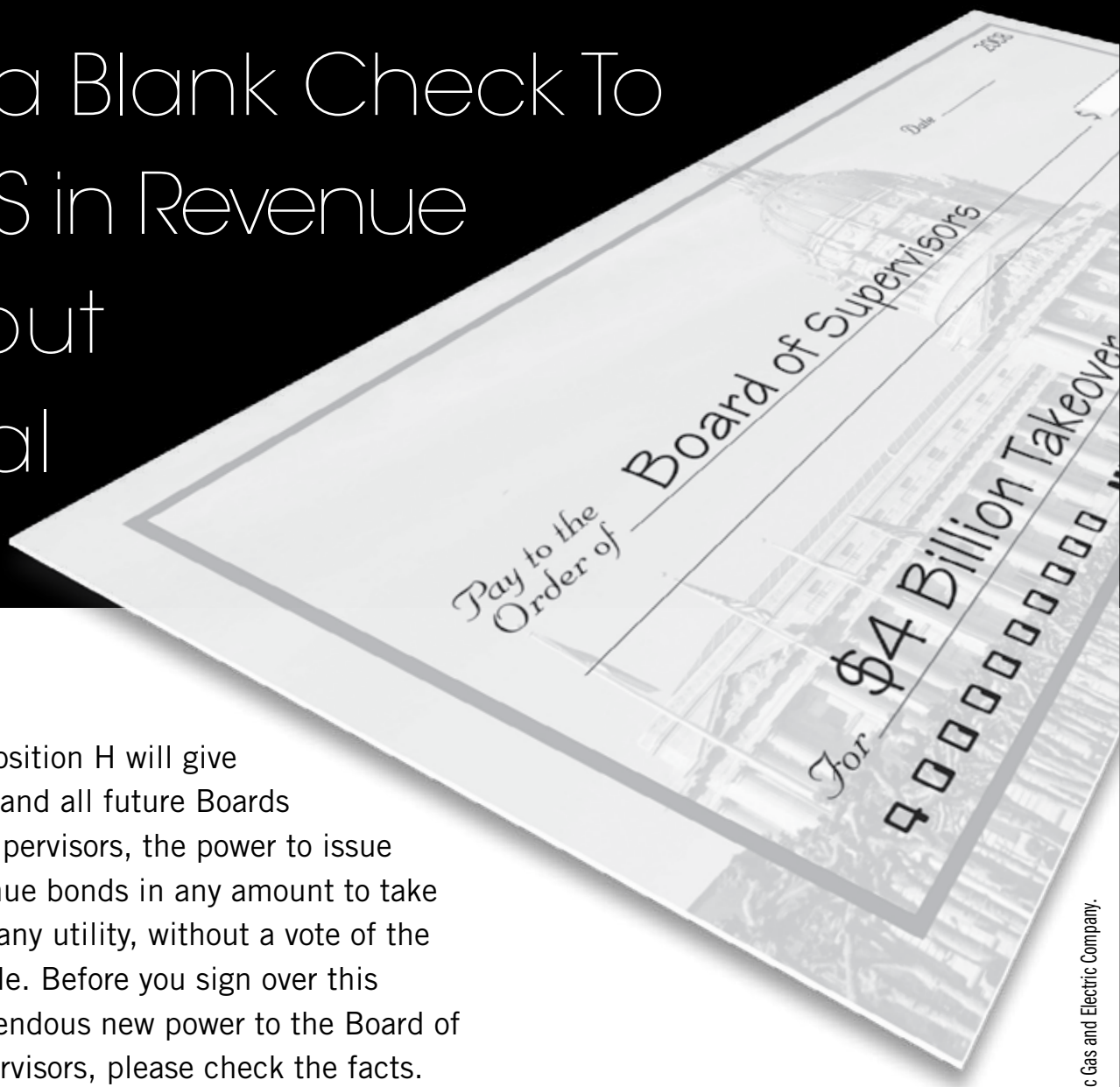
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# Proposition H Gives the Board of Supervisors a Blank Check To Issue BILLIONS in Revenue Bonds without Your Approval



"This is not the time to ask hard-pressed San Franciscans

to pay hundreds more each year to take over the electric system. I don't think we should give the Board a virtual blank check to take over any utility at any cost."

— Supervisor Carmen Chu



"Before you vote on Proposition H, make sure to

read the facts. The cost will be in the billions, your rates will go up substantially and you won't be able to vote to prevent something like this again."

— Supervisor Sean Elsbernd

Proposition H will give this, and all future Boards of Supervisors, the power to issue revenue bonds in any amount to take over any utility, without a vote of the people. Before you sign over this tremendous new power to the Board of Supervisors, please check the facts.

## No Accountability

Right now, bonds for initiatives of this kind must first be approved by the people. But starting in Section 9.107 of Proposition H, the language of the measure itself makes clear what the Board is trying to hide: "...no voter approval shall be required with respect to revenue bonds" [issued to finance the takeover of utility facilities].

## It Will Cost Billions

According to the independent financial analysis prepared by the City Controller: "There are several possible methods for costing the purchase or construction of power facilities and estimates range widely. Under any method, the amounts are certainly substantial—likely in the billions of dollars..." Initial estimates put the cost of a takeover of just the PG&E electric system at more than \$4 billion.

## We Will Pay for It

The financial burden of paying back a \$4 billion bond will fall on our shoulders. Our utility bills will go up, on average, by over \$400 a year for 30 years. That's just a preliminary estimate. The final figure could be much higher.

**The Stop the Blank Check Coalition is now over 12,000 strong. It's a growing citizens' movement of San Franciscans who oppose Proposition H, the Board of Supervisors' \$4 billion plan to take over the PG&E power system.**

**Senator Dianne Feinstein, Mayor Gavin Newsom, Supervisors Michela Alioto-Pier, Sean Elsbernd and Carmen Chu, the San Francisco Fire Fighters Association, the Deputy Sheriffs' Association and the Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods are all united in opposition to Proposition H.**

Paid for by The Committee to Stop the Blank Check, No on H, a coalition of concerned consumers, small businesses, labor, community organizations and Pacific Gas and Electric Company.



**Get the facts before you give the Board of Supervisors a blank check**

Join our growing citizens' movement to stop the blank check. **Go to [www.StoptheBlankCheck.com](http://www.StoptheBlankCheck.com).**



# Antioxidants, Free Radicals and Aging

by Sharon Caren

There is much talk today about the value of anti-oxidants and how they “fight off free radicals.” But what does this mean? It is a complex but natural chemical reaction that happens in our body.



So what are Antioxidants anyway? Antioxidants are substances that protect cells from damage caused by unstable molecules known as Free Radicals and Free Radicals are molecules with incomplete electron shells. This makes them more chemically reactive than those with complete electron shells - Whew, did you get all that? Antioxidants interact and prevent damage free radicals can cause. Just the name, free radicals, sounds like trouble!

Plant foods, such as fruits, vegetables and whole grains contain many components beneficial to our health. A healthful diet has the potential to delay many age-related diseases. An Antioxidant is a specific bioactive component in foods that can be responsible for improving and maintaining health.

Here are examples of Antioxidants:  
Beta-carotene - found in foods of orange color; sweet potatoes, carrots, cantaloupe, squash, apricots, pumpkin and mangos. Also green leafy vegetables; collard greens, spinach and kale.

Lutein - known for association with healthy eyes; green leafy vegetables, collard greens, spinach and kale.

Lycopene - found in tomatoes, watermelon, guava, papaya, apricots, pink grapefruit and blood oranges. Most folks dietary intake of lyopene comes from tomatoes and tomato products.

Selenium - is a mineral, not an antioxidant nutrient - it is a component of antioxidant enzymes. Plant foods like rice and wheat are the major dietary sources of selenium in most countries. The amount of selenium in the soil determines the amount showing up in the foods grown in that soil. Animals that eat grains of plants grown in selenium rich soil have higher levels of selenium in their muscles. In the U.S., meats and bread are common sources of dietary selenium. Brazil Nuts contain large quantities of selenium.

Vitamin A - foods include liver, sweet potatoes, carrots, milk, egg yolks and mozzarella cheese.

Vitamin C (ascorbic acid) - in many fruits and vegetables. Also, in cereals, beef, poultry and fish.

Vitamin E (alpha-tocopherol) - in almonds and many oils like wheat germ, safflower, corn and soybean oils. Also, mangos, nuts, broccoli.

Look for foods with distinctive colors.

- Deep Red of cherrys and tomatoes
- Orange of carrots
- Yellow of corn, mangos, and saffron
- Blue purple of blueberries, blackberries, and grapes

My mother always said when making a salad, “Put in all the colors you can find!”

The combination of fruits and vegetables has a synergistic effect on antioxidant activities leading to greater reduction in risk of chronic disease, specifically cancer and heart disease.

The job of the antioxidant is to neutralize free radicals as the natural by-product of normal cell processes. The most common form of free radicals in humans is oxygen. When an oxygen

molecule becomes electrically charged or “radicalized” (hence the name) it tries to steal electrons from other molecules, causing damage to the DNA. Over time, this damage may become irreversible and lead to disease including cancer.

Toxic things in our environment such as tobacco smoke and radiation (and many, many more) that we become exposed to, can lead to free radical formation. Antioxidants mop up free radicals, meaning they neutralize the electrical charge and prevent the free radical from taking electrons from other molecules. Because oxidation is a naturally occurring process in the body, a balance with antioxidants must exist to maintain health.

## Aging

While the body has its defenses against oxidative stress, these defenses become less effective with aging as the oxidative stress becomes greater. Researchers claim there is involvement of resulting free radicals in degenerative diseases associated with aging, such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, cognitive impairment, Alzheimers, immune dysfunction, cataracts, and macular degeneration.

Certain conditions like chronic disease and aging, can tip the balance in favor of free radical formation and contributes to poor health.

## Protecting DNA

If free radicals remain unchecked, they can attack DNA (the blueprint used to create each new cell in the body). If not repaired, damaged DNA copies itself to new cells created. In this manner, each new cell is damaged and mutation occurs.

Studies show the Chinese Wolfberry (or goji berry) is protective against DNA breakage and mutations. Chinese scientists have determined that the wolfberry polysaccharide has protective effects on the pancreas cells that regulate the body’s insulin system. Also, they have prominent hepatoprotective activity, protecting the liver. The wolfberry is a wide-spectrum antioxidant and protects the body from many different types of free radicals, specifically superoxide, the most abundant free radical in the human body. Additionally, ellagic acid (a crystalline compound obtained from oak galls and tannins and reduces bleeding) found in blueberries, raspberries, and pomegranates “protect DNA against injury.”

## Ancient Tradition

Historically, many Chinese who used the wolfberry in their everyday life, lived to be 100 plus years. The tiny red berry has been cherished for centuries for its health benefits, particularly in the NingXia Province of China at the foot of the Himalayas. The soil is so fertile from the silt run off, the wolfberries grown in that region have the highest antioxidant rate of all. Ancient medical texts mention the Chinese wolfberry in conjunction with regulation of the “vital energy” and nourishment leading to longevity. Even more anciently, it’s said to replenish vital essences and strengthen and restore major organs.

Conclusion: That old cliché “We are what we eat” looks to be true in this case. Let’s eat our way to health and longevity!

*Info from the International Food Information Council Foundation.*

*If you'd like more information on aging and protecting DNA with the Wolfberry, Contact me at 650.359.6579. For more of Sharon Caron go to [www.tpobserver.com](http://www.tpobserver.com)*

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# Cancer Prevention and Survival Free Cooking Course

Learn How Proper Diet Can Help Them Prevent and Survive Cancer

The Cancer Project, a national nonprofit dedicated to advancing cancer prevention through education and research, is offering a FREE, four-session cooking course designed to help San Francisco residents prevent and survive cancer through proper diet and nutrition.

“The single easiest and best thing most of us can do to prevent cancer or its recurrence is to eat right,” says Jennifer Reilly, R.D., a senior nutritionist for The Cancer Project. “More than a third of all cancer deaths in this country are due to poor diet.”

The Rx for better health? It’s a low-fat vegetarian diet. Load up on fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, Reilly says; they’re naturally low in fat, chock-full of fiber, and filled with cancer-fighting antioxidants and phytochemicals.

Cut down on fatty foods and added fats and oils, particularly saturated fats, which have been linked to an increased risk of breast, colon, and prostate cancer. Likewise, look for healthy substitutes for dairy products such as milk, cheese, and yogurt, which have been implicated in the occurrence of breast and colorectal cancers.

The challenge, Reilly acknowledges, is not only to teach people which foods



are good for them, but also to show them how to make the foods taste good.

Each class centers on important cancer-nutrition topics as local cooking instructor Kristin Doyle guides students through the preparation of tasty and easy-to-prepare recipes.

- The class lineup is as follows:
- Sept. 8, 6-8 p.m., Favoring Fiber
  - Sept. 15, 6-8 p.m., Discovering Dairy Alternatives
  - Sept. 22, 6-8 p.m., Replacing Meat
  - Sept. 29, 6-8 p.m., Antioxidants and Phytochemicals

For more information about Cancer Prevention and Survival Cooking Classes, visit [www.CancerProject.org](http://www.CancerProject.org) or call 202-244-5038.

*Cancer Project Web site*  
<http://www.cancerproject.org/>

## Letters to the Editor (Cont. from p.3)

In response to the 7/8/08 article on the San Francisco General Hospital rebuild funding measure, I feel it important to clarify inaccuracies that are being perpetuated by SFGH CEO Gene O’Connell in an effort to galvanize the public support needed for a two thirds majority passage of the November bond measure. The merits of the county hospital’s worth to the broader community need not be embellished by misleading statements perpetuated by the mainstream media.

SB 1953 was passed in 1996. It requires that the states hospitals be seismically upgraded to Life Safety level by 2013 not 2015. Over half the states total hospitals or 500 facilities are not earthquake safe...including the SFGH whose main hospital has been rated SPC-1...most likely to collapse in the event of a major seismic event.

SB1953 does not require that the SFGH be rebuilt. A 2004 Blue Ribbon Committee convened when the local and national economy was more stable

chose the rebuild option over the seismic retrofit alternative and the alternative to co-locate the SFGH at the Mission Bay campus with the new 300 bed UCSF Women and Children’s hospital which is slated for construction simultaneous with the proposed SFGH rebuild project.

Sixteen northern California hospitals filed with the State to see if they qualify for extension until 2030. SFGH filed in January of 2008. Additionally, hospitals operating under severe fiscal constraints can apply for extensions until 2020.

The urgency that prompts immediate action to seismically upgrade the cities county hospital and level one trauma center is the very real risk of a seismic event occurring within the next decade. That risk should be the emphasis of public relations efforts to garner support for the SFGH rebuild project.

*Ahimsa Porter Sumchai , M.D. UCSF School of Medicine Class of 1981 Resident in General and Neurological Surgery. SF General 1981-1984*

Send Letters to the Editor to [tpobserver@aol.com](mailto:tpobserver@aol.com)



## ON THE PLUS SIDE

### What—Me Take a Risk?

by Hank Basayne

My second most favorite word in the English language is “choice”.

I love the idea of smorgasbord—whether I’m being given the freedom to select my meal from a variety of foods, or I’m considering how I may choose to spend my day, or I’m in a reverie, examining various possible next steps on my path.

The ability to say “No, thanks, I don’t want that, but I’ll have some more of this” is a delicious experience of instant power, a sense of control over at least some parts of my life. Now, deep into the third act of it I’ve found that I enjoy many more opportunities to pick a preferred direction than I did earlier in my journey. Unburdened by the daily demand to be at my desk between 9 and 5 and no longer responsible for the day-to-day care and guidance of my now adult children, I’m afforded more frequent chances to decide what I’ll do next.

But one of the dilemmas that come with “I want” instead of “I must” or “I should” is determining exactly what I do want. As a mid 20th Century philosopher asked, “Now that you’ve found a new key, what tune will you play?” And for many of us, that’s a scary question, for we are so used to being on automatic pilot, our journeys defined by “shoulds” and “musts”, that we rarely take the time to re-examine what is that we truly want.

The Sufis have a saying: “Deep in the sea are riches beyond compare.

But if you seek safety, it is on the shore”

As I’ve moved, more or less gracefully, into my later years there is another kind of life-enhancing choice that I can make, and it’s about risk-taking. If, indeed, there are untold riches deep in the sea, do I dare to choose to go after them? Or do I seek the safety of the shore? Making that choice might consciously dictate the next turning on my path, perhaps even shape the rest of my life and determine how I might spend these twilight years.

I think I understand why many seasoned citizens opt for the shore. After a lifetime of struggle, juggling responsibilities, experiencing disappointments and frustrations, there is something

attractive about the possibility of peace and quiet. An existence of reduced effort and danger and the opportunity to explore a contemplative way of being seems highly inviting. It is a perfectly legitimate choice.

But so is the decision to take the other fork in the road, the one that leads toward the unknown, toward greater risk-taking. Isn’t old age the time to try new things, to check out the trails I haven’t had the time or leisure to investigate?

Now is probably my last, best chance to try to develop new skills, to risk failure, to explore new places, new foods, new kinds of acquaintances. I know I might also risk disappointment. Seeking new experiences or re-visiting old, unsuccessful ones invites frustration. But this is, above all, the time to replace other people’s Musts, Shoulds and Wants with my own.

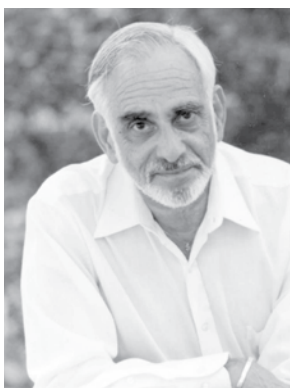
One of the risks of risk-taking is having to deal with the expectations of others. The kids think they know who you are: that nice old guy who reads by the fire with the cat in his lap. How dare you suddenly take up sky-diving or line-dancing? So what if the neighbors gossip about your new red convertible, the two-seater you’ve wanted all your life, or the buzz cut that ends your concern with your thinning hair? Whose head is it, anyway?

Isn’t this the time to finally please myself, to let go of worrying about what other people will say or think? I’ll never have a better chance to switch the channel from what “they” think to what I want. So I might surprise the kids and the neighbors... so what!

As the days dwindle down to a precious few I might finally get to be who I really am.

I told you about my second favorite word. My number one favorite is that most human of words: Nevertheless. To me it represents the courage to mush on, even in the face of overwhelming odds. I see it as a refusal to accept limitations on what’s possible. The word Nevertheless incorporates grit, audacity and guts. To me it is human bravery in its most elevated form.

I know that it is hard for me to face taking a risk. Nevertheless, the choice to take it opens up the wonderful possibility of adding new richness to my life.



## POLICE BLOTTER

Police Captain Paul Chignell, Taraval Station



### Officers Pop Street Robbers

08/08/08 1:05 pm Corona & Urbano

Three young men were walking on Urbano at Corona when they were suddenly surrounded and attacked by five men, one with a large stick. The suspects put the victims in headlocks, struck them with the stick and demanded their cell phones and Ipods. One of the victims fought back but was overpowered by the suspects. The victims screamed for help at which point the suspects fled on foot towards 19th Avenue. Numerous Taraval officers responded to the area including Officers Kevin O’Leary, Matt Friedman, Jamie Hyun, Jerry King, Neil Fanene, Michael Evans and James Drilon. The officers took the victims separately in their police cars and commenced a search for the robbers. Officer King located one suspect at 19th and Holloway. He was arrested and positively identified. A second suspect was reported to have dashed into a building on the campus of SF State. The officers set up a perimeter around the building and then saw the suspect a few minutes later run full speed out the building out into the street. Officer Hyun and Friedman chased the suspect and finally cornered him in a courtyard on Serrano Street. The suspect threw a phone to the ground as

he ran to the courtyard. The officers then engaged in a violent struggle with the suspect but finally subdued him. The phone that he dropped was the victim’s property and the suspect was positively identified. A third suspect was captured by Officers Fanene and Evans at Holloway and Cardenas and identified. The suspects, who live on the 100 block of Lobos, 100 block of Sadowa and the 200 block of Minerva, were charged with robbery, conspiracy and resisting arrest. This was excellent police work coordinated in a premier teamwork manner. Case #080834073 We are pleased to tow vehicles that have registration expired by over six (6) months.

We receive many emails on these vehicles. Remember that we can only tow off of public streets. If there are abandoned vehicles with expired registration on private property we cannot tow those vehicles.

To see the complete month’s reports, go to: [www.tpobserver.com](http://www.tpobserver.com). To receive a daily, complete police report e-mailed to you, call 759-3100

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UNCLE VANYA

Chekhov's Uncle Vanya, originally entitled The Wood Demon that failed in small provincial theatres, was rewritten by the playwright as Uncle Vanya (Dyadya Vanya) when staged in Moscow by Stanislavski in 1900. Although considered to be a tragicomedy about sexuality and thwarted desire, the play's content actually offers still more philosophically and psychologically about the human failure to realize self worth and life accomplishments. Within these themes the dramatic action centers around the visit of retired Professor Serebryakov and his young beautiful wife Yelena to the estate belonging to himself and his first wife. But the Professor is bored with being on the estate with his daughter Sonja, Uncle Van, Ilya, a simple minded landowner, Dr. Astrov, Maria, the mother-in-law of his first wife, and even with Marina, the family Nanny. Those living on the estate also wish the Professor and his wife would leave so that they might peacefully continue their unambitious life style of unfulfilled dreams.

Chekhov is said to have written about suffering with compassion but not without humor. Suffering concerning thwarted desire renders Chekov's play one of the most stirring in dramatic literature. However, whether this is due to the adaptation of the play (Emily Mann) to the direction (Timothy Near) or to the acting, the portrayal of suffering is realized minimally in this production. There is an exception in the plight of Sonja, sensitively portrayed (Annie Purcell) who is desperately in love with Dr. Astrov (Andy Murray) who ignores her feelings. As for the other characters, we are rarely moved by their failure to realize their personal desires. The retired elderly professor (convincingly played by James Carpenter), who hardly appears on stage until the second half, does not spark much empathy concerning his egotistical and pessimistic outbursts about the mediocrity of the human beings around him. His beautiful wife Ylenna's (Sarah Grace Wilson) declarations of being bored with individuals "who are desperate excuses of people," along with her rare moments of tenderness

toward Sonya in her distress, seem to be coming from a beautiful mannequin who cares more about her own pain. Sonya's grandmother, Maria, the Professor's first wife (Joan Mankin), is an eccentric figure who enters and exits, moves about erratically and sits upstage reading. Landowner Ilya (Howard Swain) is a colorful smiling character whose simple mindedness at times amuses us. Dr. Astrov, aside from his periodic erotic advances toward the beautiful Yelena, is mainly absorbed in salvaging forests that man is destroying and showing off the maps he has made of the areas he wants to preserve. Uncle Vanya, Sonja's uncle (Dan Hiatt), never wins our sympathy over his dissatisfaction about his life. We mostly laugh at his clownish bantering and are entertained by his playful complaints and actions. Even at the play's end, when Vanya undergoes the depth of defeat as he witnesses Yelena in the arms of another man, we still do not feel any empathy for this main character. Aside from Sonja, whose tragic dilemma over her love for a man who ignores her deep love for him because he finds her too plain, there is only one character that succeeds in not being a farcical type. That is Marina (Barbara Oliver) whose grounded wisdom and devoted caring for others on the Estate wins our sympathy.

Sets by Erik Flatmo that include the Orinda hills in the background with the occasional passing of a watchman and farmhand (T. Louis Weltz) are as beautiful and reposing as a painting. Costume design (Raquel M. Barreto) is perfectly suited to the period. Effective sound (Jeff Mockus) and lighting (York Kennedy) enhance the production.

Although the play is known as a tragicomedy it fails to portray the suffering of characters with which we do not empathize, it is a quite an impressive one, well acted and, under the direction of Timothy Near, expertly integrates sets, costumes, sound, and lighting in a fine theatrical ensemble that nonetheless succeeds more as a comedy. For information about Twelfth Night at Cal Shakes from Sep.10 to Oct 5, call 510-548-9666 or visit [www.calshakes.org](http://www.calshakes.org).

Annette Lust, Member Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle.

THE WINTER'S TALE

Lesley and Robert Currier opened their 19th season of the Marin Shakespeare Festival on July 18 co-directing Shakespeare's The Winter's Tale. It is deplorable that "The Winter's Tale" is so seldom revived. For this dramatic romance affords delightful and comprehensive entertainment. The last production of "The Winter's Tale" was the Berkeley Rep's production at the Oakland Auditorium in 1990.

The Winter's Tale is part of a trio of tragicomedies written during Shakespeare's last years—"Cymbaline" (1609), "The Winter's Tale" (1610), and "The Tempest" (1611).

The Winter's Tale is reminiscent of Othello. The

passion and jealousy of Leontes almost parallels that of "The Moor." Leontes is not an heroic role, but as played by Rafael Untalan, a very human one. Rafael Untalan knows how to take the stage with his kingly bearing and wonderful use of large gestures. He has a fine chance to rant and rave before the trial, and then to win the audience with a good display of repentance. Leontes' best friend and childhood playmate is Polixenes, the King of Bohemia, who has been in Sicilia for a long visit. When Polixenes insists on returning home, Leontes asks his wife, Hermione to convince him to stay which she does. Leontes becomes consumed with irrational jealousy. Polixenes, portrayed by Scott Coopwood, is a sympathetic figure as we know he is innocent.

Hermione, beautifully played by Alexandra Matthew is so high minded, so spirited and so dignified in her anguish that she is perfection in both queenliness and womanliness.

Camillo is a strong performance by Michael Ray Wisey. The calm, cool and collected advisor to the King is shocked when Leontes asks him to poison Polixenes. Camillo has to decide which is more important—loyalty or doing the right thing. Camillo tells Polixenes what Leontes has asked and the two leave Sicilia immediately to flee to the safety of Bohemia.

Paulina, strongly performed by Celia Madeoy, is both true as steel and free of tongue as Hermiones' lady-in-waiting when she learns that Hermione has given birth to a baby girl. She takes it to Leontes, hoping his heart will soften at the sight of his daughter, but Leontes is too far steeped in jealousy and forces Paulina's husband, Antigonus (sympathetically played by Jerry Hoffman) to take the baby girl into the wilderness.

Act One closes with Antigonus abandoning the child whom he calls "Perdida." Enter through the audience an Old Shepherd, comically played by veteran actor George Maguire and his son, played with relish by Drew Hirshfield who stumble upon the baby, find gold stashed in her swaddling clothes and take her home. Act Two begins with Time played by the ever-present Matthew Cavanna bridging the wide gap of time which is 16 years and we revert to the pure romantic for an act of exquisite charm and humor.

No sooner do we meet Autolycus in an amazing transformation by Jerry Hoffman who, like Falstaff, is one of those poet-rogues securely above all comparisons because they have to be taken on their own lyrical terms, we are absorbed in the society of Cloud-Cuckoo-Land. We also meet the lovely Perdita, charmingly portrayed by Kate Fox Marcom who is in love with Florizell, the Prince of Bohemia—the handsome Mark Robinson.

The spirited choreography is by Cynthia Pepper. Billie Cox composed some interesting original music.

Bruce Lackovic designed some good contrasting sets for Sicilia and Bohemia. I was particularly impressed by Abra Berman's magnificent costumes—all characters wore white in Sicilia and very bright colors in Bohemia.

Shakespeare's The Winter's Tale is the only play to have a character actually named "Time," a Chorus who tells us of the passing of 16 years between the first and second part of the play. My only criticism is of the director's concept of bringing time to the forefront in all his many guises. Time was forever present which I found greatly distracting to the main story line.

Leslie and Robert Currier deserve a great deal of credit for bringing this complex and wonderful production to the Marin Shakespeare Festival.

Watch for Much Ado About Nothing, August 29-September 28, at Forest Meadows Amphitheatre, 1475 Grand Avenue, Dominican University, San Rafael. Forinfo and tickets, call 415-499-4488 or visit HYPERLINK "http://www.marinshakespeare.org" [www.marinshakespeare.org](http://www.marinshakespeare.org)

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SECOND THOUGHTS  
by Jack Kaye

Can a Victim Be Responsible?



A woman lets her two year old go off in a water park with the child's four year old sibling to watch him. The two year old child drowns. The water park is sued because this mother has lost her child on their grounds. What's a mother to do when a park lets two year olds die?

A large energy company is cheating the residents of the nation's most populous state. The employees and stockholders know what the company is up to but stay on to reap the financial rewards. When the dishonesty of the company becomes overwhelmingly obvious, the company goes bust. The employees lose their jobs, pension benefits and 401 Ks. The stockholders lose all their stock's value. What are employees and stockholders to do when their company is caught cheating? Why must they suffer the consequences?

People sign up for mortgages they know they cannot afford. Lenders give loans to people they know do not qualify for them. They all think that they will somehow get away with it if the market can rapidly increase toward

infinity. The bubble bursts. The borrowers cannot pay and cannot sell their property to pay off their debt. The lenders see their loans go unpaid and the collaterals' value shrink by the day. And then the market collapses. The new homeowners lose their property and are thrown out into the streets forced to return to wherever they had recently moved up from. The lenders see their jobs and companies threatened. Why must they suffer just because their plan failed?

Two states want to buck their party's schedule for primaries so that theirs will be first or at least sooner and more influential. The states' representatives are told that if they hold their primaries early, the votes won't count. All the candidates agreed not to campaign in those states.

In one state, all but one of the candidates took their names off the ballot. The people in the two states knowing the promise that their votes won't count and knowing that they would be meaningless anyway because no one campaigned in their states, voted anyway.

They were then reminded that their votes would not be counted. They were angry. Why won't their votes count? It wasn't their fault their states broke the rules, they didn't break them. The only candidate who profited from this improper vote had agreed that their vote should not count until the results were in and they were so good. Why

shouldn't this candidate count the votes even though they were improper?

Many of us bought large pickup trucks and SUVs. Some of us did so to keep our family safe in case of a collision not so concerned about the safety of those outside our vehicles. Some of us bought them because we liked having extra space inside not thinking that there will be that much less space outside. Some of us bought them to sit high while driving so we could see over the other cars not realizing that we might be blocking the view of others. We knew that our trucks were gas guzzlers but figured that we could always afford it. We knew that small car owners looked at us with derision but we just figured that they were jealous. Now our trucks are unaffordable to run and are almost impossible to sell. We are now stuck with our gluttonous behemoths. Why must we suffer just because we like things big and now gas prices are too high?

We didn't set the price OPEC charges for oil.

When do knowing victims of improper actions realize that they themselves may have been the villains in their own tragedy? When do those who at first benefited from the violations of moral conduct accept responsibility for the eventual outcome?

When do we learn the meaning of cause and effect, action and responsibility otherwise known as *karma*?

END JOKES

Two women were talking about their sons. The first said, "My Patrick is such a saint. He works hard, doesn't smoke and he hasn't so much as looked at a woman in over two years."

The other woman said, "Well, my Francis is a saint himself. Not only has he not looked at a woman in over three years, but he hasn't touched a drop of liquor in all that time."

"My word," the first mother said, "You must be so proud."

"I am," the second mother replied, "And when he's paroled next month, I'm going to throw him a big party."

A golfer was leaving the golf course and as he leaves he sees a few leftover golf balls on the side of the road...he picks them up, pockets them and takes a local bus home. He's sitting next to a corpulent woman and the golf balls are bulging over in his pocket against her. He says apologetically, "Golf balls." She smiles sweetly..." Oh, I'm so sorry. Is that anything like tennis elbow?"

Parting Thought

"Personally, I am always ready to learn although I do not always like being taught." - Winston Churchill

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