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Par for the Course

Mismanagement: Harding Park Contract—The Final Insult

By Nancy Wuerfel

The sequence of events that led to the city's renovation of this classic golf course on beautiful Lake Merced, and its possible give-away to private entities *unknown*, provides a cautionary tale for all San Franciscans. The Recreation and Park Department's (RPD) mishandling of golf money—misleading the public about Harding's future, then making a bad deal for the city with a long-term contract—concludes RPD's decade of deception.

WARNING Be wary when the government promises to construct a civic improvement by making an agreement with the people, crafted solely to secure public financing support, which the government then subsequently ignores with impunity.

THE DEAL Ten years ago an arrangement fell apart to have a private golf company provide the money to renovate Harding and Fleming golf courses. Subsequently, RPD, golfers, well-intentioned citizens, and politicians crafted a covenant and financing plan to refurbish both courses. The "Guiding Principles" for Harding's future approved by the Recreation and Park Commission silenced the critics. The promises reassured everyone that the restored site would always remain—first and foremost—a municipal golf course, affordable, available to city residents, and



Harding Golf Clubhouse built from funds intended for the "most heavily populated and most economically disadvantaged area"

maintained by city gardeners.

The clincher was the city's "foolproof" self-financing plan: borrow money and repay it from future golf revenue. The "Golf Fund Ordinance" passed, requiring RPD to control *all* golf revenues and to use that money according to the new law's clear list of spending priorities through a special city account. The law allowed for procurement of a construction loan to be made from public funds and prescribed how it would be repaid. The Golf Fund could also rejuvenate the other city owned golf courses using the additional income that Harding Park would bring in. Optimistically, even neighborhood parks could benefit from excess golf revenue as the final priority.

THE BAIT AND SWITCH With the key political and monetary elements in place and PGA TOUR experts donating the new design of Harding Park, the project was approved. What could go wrong? Plenty! The initial project cost went from \$16 million to \$24 million. The course drainage plan was seriously flawed—so much so, that a chunk of the course fell into Lake Merced after the first heavy rain—a \$2,435,000 setback. Then, the unexplained size increase of the clubhouse from 10,000 to 20,000 sq ft—a \$3,592,000 setback. Then, the maintenance facility had cost overruns—another \$1,436,000 setback. Then came a decision to build a new cart barn—\$311,000, etc., etc.

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Water Bills and WSIP

By Steve Lawrence

On July 1 the rate charged for water rose about 15%. Rates have doubled over the past five years.

There are two rates, called tiers. For the first six "units" of water (about 4488 gallons) used in each two month billing period, the homeowner pays \$3.09 per unit. For more than 4488 gallons the homeowner pays \$4.12 per unit. So on average the first 75 gallons a day are charged at a lower rate. It does not matter if a household is one person or a family of ten. Each customer (meter) also pays a flat charge, usually \$12.40 for two months.

Renters and some condo owners share a water meter. Then rent or homeowner association fees pay for water. Different rates apply: \$3.28 per unit for lower tier, and \$4.37 for higher tier usage. Rent or monthly dues will tend to go up, as water must be paid for.

Wastewater rates are higher than those for water. The charge for wastewater (sewage) depends on your water usage. It is assumed that most of what you use in water goes down the drain and into the sewer system.

Why are water rates going up faster than inflation? Because of "WSIP", the Water System Improvement Program, a 13-year program upgrading the water system and making it more reliable and less vulnerable to earthquake and drought, says San Francisco Public Utility Commission (SFPUC).

WSIP's cost is now expected to be more than \$4.5 billion. In its eighth year, the program is just over a quarter completed, reports SFPUC. In the upcoming five

years, the balance of the program, about \$3 billion dollars worth, is to be accomplished. But to date no WSIP schedule has held.

The program was launched in 2003 with a \$3.4 billion price tag. More than seven years later, there remains about the same amount yet to be spent on improvements.

At the outset of the WSIP work, water rates were expected to triple. Now it is uncertain where they will end up.

In 2002 wastewater (sewer) work was removed from the capital program now known as WSIP. At that time that sewer work was priced at one billion dollars. While the sewer improvement program is still being finalized, the price has risen to about five billion dollars for the Sewer System Improvement Program.

More than half of WSIP's work is encompassed in five giant projects. There are over eighty projects in all. Of the five giant projects, one is now in construction; one is awarded and construction work should begin soon; three have yet to go out for bids. Three of these five giant projects are to be completed in 2015, the program's final year. Further delays to these giant projects may push the program past its deadline, and could further increase the program's cost.

The real deadline is in the hands of God. No one knows when the next big earthquake will strike, nor on which fault. If WSIP work is completed, our water system should stand a good chance of surviving.

Steve Lawrence is a PUC citizen activist.



Black Holes At Laguna Honda

By Patrick Monette-Shaw

Laguna Honda Hospital's (LHH) unresolved scandal with its patient gift fund, additional construction problems and potential cost over-runs exacerbate already-poor relationships with the community, donors, and its patients.

Construction Problems In recent months, there have been anecdotal reports that: 1) Air conditioning compressors, or some other units placed on the roofs of LHH's new buildings, have been emitting a high-pitch noise disturbing patients and surrounding neighbors. Sound-dampening blankets reportedly failed to work because they were exposed to the elements and weren't water-proof; 2) Passageways between the old building that will remain and the new "connector" building linking up with the new "Pavilion building" have encountered unexpected construction problems that may prevent safe patient transport on moving day; 3) A boiler in the new "connector" building may have had a blow-up, and may not be operational until February 2011; and 4) Inadequate cooling systems may be affecting the main telecommunications and data center in new computer server rooms. The equipment may have been turned off to avoid damage, because of inadequate air cooling, "value engineered" out of the plans to trim costs.

At a July 27 meeting of the LHH-Joint Conference Committee (LHH-JCC, a subcommittee of the Health Commission that jointly includes senior hospital managers), John Thomas, the LHH Replacement Project manager, noted that unexpected repairs to a significant portion of the roof structure of the existing old buildings, and newly-discovered "cracks and voids" in the concrete of the existing buildings, has added another \$1 million in costs for the cracks and voids and costs to repair the roof were not estimated.

LHH's staff assured the Health Commission members that patients would move in to the new facilities in

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The next regular Meeting of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission is scheduled for Tuesday, September 14, 2010, in Room 400, City Hall beginning at 1:30 P.M. For information, contact the Commission Secretary at 554-3165.

The next meeting of the SFPUC Citizens' Advisory Committee, will take place on Tuesday, September 28, 2010 at 5:30 p.m. at 1155 Market St., 4th Floor Conference Room.

Minutes and other information are available: www.sfwater.org

Is Jeff Adachi Now Public Enemy Number 1?

By George Wooding

Public Defender Jeff Adachi has been unofficially declared public enemy number one by San Francisco labor unions and City politicians. Adachi had the audacity to place Proposition B, "The Sustainable Employee Benefits Reform Act," on the November 2 ballot, against the will of City unions and local politicians.

If passed, Proposition B will force City union employees who are now paying nothing towards their retirement to make an annual retirement contribution of 7.5% of their income. [Editor's Note: In the 1990's, the City picked up paying retirement contributions for employees in lieu of giving them raises.] Police and firemen will have to increase their annual retirement contributions from an average of 7.5% to 10% of their base pay. Proposition B will also require that City employees who are now paying 25% of their dependents' health insurance benefits to pay 50%. City unions believe it is their right to negotiate pension contributions, salaries, and work rules with City Hall. Adachi altered this time-honored relationship by going directly to San Francisco voters with a ballot petition. He needed 46,000 valid signatures to place Proposition B on the ballot; he collected 75,614 signatures.

The success of Adachi's petition effort has scared the hell out of City politicians and unions for the following reasons:



how union salaries are negotiated.

We may have been too generous.

For many, but not all, job classifications, San Francisco has the highest-paid City employees in the country. The City can no longer afford the high salaries and unfunded benefit packages of City management, and safety employees such as firefighters and police.

Mayor Newsom—whose salary is \$250,903 is only 29th on the list of highest paid City employees. Top earner, Charles Keohane, a former deputy police chief who earned \$516,118 retired last year, cashing out stored up vacation sick days and comp time.

San Francisco's pension problems are being caused by our highest-paid City employees. Between 2003 and 2009, the payroll for City employees earning over

The success of Adachi's petition effort has scared the hell out of City politicians and unions. . .

1) Adachi went directly to the voters with his argument;

2) He did not bother negotiating with the Board of Supervisors, the Mayor's office, or the unions;

3) He showed that one individual with enough financial backing (\$314,295 in donations) working with volunteers can place a measure on the ballot;

4) San Francisco voters are prepared—even eager—to take benefits away from the unions; and

5) City politicians would be wise to start respecting the opinions of San Francisco voters over the opinions of union bargaining teams.

City government has always been San Francisco's biggest industry. Our City of 844,466 people employs 37,277 full- and part-time employees—a ratio of one employee for every 22.7 residents. The cozy relationship between City government and its "recognized" bargaining unions is complex. Union-supported candidates are usually elected to office; in return, many City labor unions enjoy preferential access to elected officials, favorable contracts, work rules, and pro-union legislation.

The government/union relationship has generally been good for elected officials, good for City labor unions, but extremely expensive for under-represented San Francisco voters. If our elected officials won't represent the citizens' interests, ballot petition measures may soon become the method-of-choice for giving citizens a seat at the labor negotiation table.

The citizens of San Francisco support City labor and have been very generous. During the past 25 years, voters have approved initiatives—such as 2002's Proposition H, which increased the maximum pensions for police and firefighters from 75% to 90% of their base salaries—that have either increased City employee benefits and pensions, or favorably changed

\$90,000 annually has grown from \$314.1 million, to \$1.48 billion, increasing the number of employees earning over \$90,000 from 2,918 to 11,981, a 9,063 increase. High-salaried employees represent one-third of the workforce, but consume 56%—\$1.5 billion—of the City's \$2.7 billion annual payroll. The City has failed to limit excessive management salaries.

These salary figures do NOT include the additional 32%–36% annual health care and retirement benefits each high-paid worker receives. A \$90,000 per year employee with benefits is actually costing the City over \$120,000 per year.

The average San Franciscan working in the private sector is making approximately \$74,000 per year, and many private-sector workers have to pay their own health care and retirement. Another 43,000 San Franciscans are currently unemployed. The City payroll, pension, and benefit packages are no longer self-sustaining.

The Double Standard San Francisco has been trying to reduce city salaries on the backs of its lowest-paid workers by demanding permanent salary and benefit concessions. Entire job categories—such as clerical secretaries and Recreation and Park Directors—have been eliminated in some City departments. Job standards have been changed to allow higher-salaried workers to replace lower-paid workers. Lower-paid union jobs are being replaced (privatized) by non-union workers who work for less money and fewer, if any, benefits. Job positions are no longer filled, or are turned into part-time, non-benefit jobs. Meanwhile, the higher-paid safety employees have taken temporarily-deferred salary increases, no permanent cuts in salary, and few job cuts.

Top City managers have agreed to furloughed work days and have been asked to voluntarily reduce their pay (very few

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MY TWO CENTS By Will Durst

Swamp Drainage Detritus.

There have been easier times to be a Democrat. Think way way back to the halcyon days of two years ago. Summer of 08. Basking like a lazy cat napping in a sun drenched window box. Now, not so much. Nancy Pelosi must be thinking someone on her team swallowed a bad news electromagnet the size of a Buick.

Obama's poll numbers are falling faster than barometric pressure in the eye of a hurricane. The wars rage on. Scariest of all may be the haunting cries from the swelling ranks of unemployed in the streets; like beckoning zombies: "Join Us. Join Us." And if the polls don't turn around, many incumbents will.

What the Dems definitely don't need is an ugly self-inflicted election-year corruption scandal twining up their legs like an anaconda in the primary stages of a goat swallow. They call it conflict of interest, a polite way of saying crookeder than a dump truck full of bicycle spokes mangled by a tugboat turbine.

In normal circumstances, nobody bribes a Democrat because they can't get anything done. Like handing an eggplant the keys to a Ferrari. Besides, you do give them money, they don't know what to do with it; they put it in the freezer for crum's sake. But these aren't normal circumstances and Charlie Rangel and Maxine Waters aren't normal Democrats. Like lions with a wounded zebra, they know what to do with it. Bones and all.

After 12 years of wandering in the wilderness, taking over Congress in 2006, the Speaker pronounced her intent to "drain the swamp." The problem is, do that, then you got to deal with all the creepies crawling around the bottom and those big old alligators got nowhere to hide. Drained or not, they still know where the sharpest marsh grasses are and how to blind adversaries with a face full of swamp gas.

Waters is a 10 term Congressman while Rangel is completing his 20th and both seem perfectly content to take their entire party down rather than walk away from the cash cows they affectionately call public service. When they say this is not about the money, this is about their dignity, you can pretty much bet... this is about the money.

They were investigated by the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, one of the great oxymorons of all time. Like rotary cell phone or George W Bush Think Tank or Martha Coakley Campaign Strategy Handbook. The two members could have escaped with a slap on the wrist but are demanding public trials. And they'll get their day in court, in September, right before the general election, which the Democrats need the same way a musk ox needs day glo-targets painted on its sides in the shape of a rifle's crosshairs.

Republicans, like their mascot the elephant, *loxodonata africanus*, are herd animals and understand protecting the tribe is their number one priority. Donkeys, however, *equus asinus*—where we get the word asinine, are principally known for stubbornness, a demonstration of which is now in session. You got to love them. They're like carnivorous snails, who will eat their own, only when they get around to it. Democrats may not have invented the circular firing squad, but you got to admit, they sure have perfected it.

Will Durst is a San Francisco based political comedian who writes sometimes. This being a smoking example. Feedback: Durst@westsideobserver.com

Catch him as part of Comedy Talks on August 15th at the SF Presentation Theater with Robert Morse and Shelley Berman. For tickets: comedytalks.com or 800.838.3006.

Publisher's Note and Apology:

To our readers and associates,

All of us associated with the Westside Observer strive to produce a quality newspaper each month that attempts to inform, educate and give our readers something to think about that is important to the fabric of being San Franciscans, whether born here or transplanted from somewhere else. Sometimes in the rush to hit deadlines, our attention to detail is less than acceptable. In the last issue a joke passed by our censors that was offensive and hurtful. As the Publisher I am ultimately responsible for the product that is distributed and I apologize to all of our readers who were hurt and offended. It will not happen again. Thank you for your feedback, for it makes us better journalists and citizens.

Mitch Bull, Publisher

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I always enjoy the "remember when?" photo you print in your paper. I pick the paper up from my driveway each time with anticipation of what the old photo will be. So thank you for printing them. This month I was intrigued by the request for information. My first thought was that it reminded me of Ocean Avenue. As I happened to have a collection of old city directories, I thought I would look up the business and see if it was listed. Of course that would be too simple. So this information may be entirely wrong for your picture. There was nothing in the 1918 directory, and I don't have 1919, but in 1920 there appears "Westwood Pharmacy" at 1526 Ocean Avenue. The proprietor was E.L. Nelson. That pharmacy was there for quite a few years. In 1933 there appears a Westwood Grocery at 560 Monterey, the proprietor Irma Baumgartner. That was only listed that one year, and the geography doesn't fit the picture. The only other listed possibility was a Westwood Market, at 1708 Ocean

Avenue. It too was only listed for only one year, 1934. My City Directory collection only runs through 1935. Perhaps this is information that you already accessed and which proved not correct. If so, forgive me for taking up your time. I just had a lot of fun puzzling it. Thank you. *Linda Edwards*

I was just reading the Westside Observer online—and saw the photo of Westside Park Grocery -- sorry to say don't know the answer to your question.

However—and you guys may know this trick—if you go to <http://sflib1.sfpl.org:82/> and enter just <westside park> you get 94 photos of Westside Park, all dated "not before 1917" and many of them by Gabriel Moulin. One photo shows two women knitting on the front porch of a WP house. The notation on the back says "no 96", perhaps the house number/street number.

Since there are streetcar tracks in front of the grocery, I assume this is Ocean Avenue. *Tom Mayer*

Correction Dept: In our last issue we identified Marissa Sherman as being 12 years old in error. Miss Sherman is actually 9 years old.

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RUMINATIONS FROM A FORMER SUPERVISOR

Degraded, Disrespected And Disregarded

By Quentin Kopp

Baneul problems exist today at all levels of government, local, state and federal. The federal government operates financially without the assuredly legal restraints of state and local governments. Thus, the Congress and President of the United States lack any legal prohibition against spending money for military, domestic and foreign grant purposes every year and without the revenue from taxpayers and other sources needed to defray such expenditures. Thus, the United States of America continually incurs spending deficits of hundreds of billions of dollars and the accumulated national debt exceeds 11 trillion dollars.

At least in California, however, state and local governments must adhere to the concept of a balanced budget, meaning in the case of the State of California that the Governor, by January 10 of each calendar year, must submit to the legislature a budget for the ensuing fiscal year containing itemized statements for recommended state expenditures and estimated state revenues and, if recommended expenditures exceed estimated revenues, the Governor must recommend sources from which additional revenue should be provided. Such a state constitutional provision (Article IV, Section 12(a),) is replicated in the California Government Code for all local governmental entities, such as cities, counties, school district and special districts. In San Francisco, Charter section 9.100 mandates that the annual proposed budget ordinance shall be balanced so that the proposed expenditures do not exceed the estimated revenues. Charter section 9.102 additionally requires the San Francisco Controller to certify to the board of supervisors the accuracy of revenue estimates. (The fiscal year for California, state and local entities is July 1- June 30; for the national government it is October 1 to September 30).

Governmental financing practice basically involves two categories of funds: for example, the state general fund consists of revenue obtained for general purposes and predominately emanates from state income tax and state sales tax collections; a special fund involves revenue collected from a different type of tax, or a fee or charge. The state gasoline tax of 18¢ per gallon of gasoline represents a special tax; gasoline gas collections are deposited in a special fund commonly known as the state highway fund, although lesser portions are from time to time appropriated for non-highway purposes such as public transit systems. Each city general fund commonly consists of property tax revenue, a lesser portion of the sales tax, real estate transfer taxes (in cities that impose them) occasionally, and certain fees or charges for identified governmental services.

The general rule of proper, effective administration of state or local government treats the general fund as the singular repository of all money collected from residents and non-residents. Such doctrine rests upon the understandable principle that the legislature and chief executive, whether governor or mayor, should be able, without special interest impediment, to appropriate and allocate revenue for governmental functions and services according to their best judgment

in serving taxpayers (their constituents) in the best way possible. Encroachment upon their ability to do so from the general fund diminishes their effectiveness and the good and welfare of the people who have elected them.

Special funds exist for specific governmental service purpose and theoretically embody a justifiable rationale. Again, the state gasoline tax, first enacted at two cents per gallon in 1919 is often characterized as a “user fee.” That is, the money to build, maintain and repair streets and highways in California derives from motorists who buy gasoline to operate their motor vehicles upon such streets and highways. (One can reflect upon the omission of bicycle owners from such equation!) A direct relationship, therefore, ideally exists between payment of the fee and the use of revenue from such fee, and government should not make a profit from a fee.

After more than fifty years of watching state and local government and thirty years of holding local and state elected public office, I conclude that most time-honored principles have been, and are now degraded, disrespected and disregarded, not simply by local officials who should know better, but equally if not more by taxpayers and other voters.

Examples abound. Governmental officials often will claim that a fee represents solely the cost of providing a governmental service. For example, a marriage license fee of ten dollars is supposedly measured by the average amount of time required of a city or county employee to process an application. The San Francisco real estate transfer tax supposedly evolves from the cost of an employee in the recorder’s office stamping a transfer deed and filing it digitally or otherwise. That’s no longer true. The real estate transfer tax in San Francisco was enacted to soak real estate owners, commercial and residential. It is now viewed by so-called “progressives” as a cash cow, especially when exacted from the owners of commercial real property.

Special interests now dictate revenue policy, both for state government and local governments. The cigarette tax imposed by the state was changed two decades ago by voter-approved initiative, planned and implemented by medical and health special interests to garner money for mental health services. Instead of remitting cigarette tax proceeds to the state general fund, the historic practice, a Hollywood actor with millions of dollars of wealth sponsored and secured a special interest change of policy which reduced the scope

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FANTASY ISLAND ONE MORE TIME!

By: Tony Hall

This past week we all have been, once again, inundated with news releases and press conferences about the supposed hand-over of Treasure Island to the City and County of San Francisco. Here we go again!

I was interviewed at length by several news media outlets last week and thought I would share some of the points in question with you.

Having written about this Island several times before, I didn’t think I would find myself visiting it again so soon, but this mayor’s latest attempt to attract attention, by staging a “hand-over” from the Navy to the City, and then commencing to talk about how he is actually creating jobs with a false and unverified development plan is incredibly transparent and deserves a response.

The ceremonial signing over of the Island on August 18th was nothing more than a show for publicity by Newsom and Pelosi to try and make voters think that this mayor is really doing something to benefit San Francisco by creating jobs and therefore bolstering the economy. The actual signing over of the Island occurred in 1997 when the Navy turned the property over to the City as caretaker. Alert observers at the event, such as ABC’s channel 7, noted that no deed changed hands, and no details were released regarding who was paying the 105 million dollars for the land, or which bank or investor(s) were financing the so-called development project.

The reality and the facts are that Treasure Island today sits as a rotting, decaying toxic parcel of 500 acres of man-made terrain in the middle of the bay some thirteen years after the Navy turned it over to the City. The Navy is still the owner of the property, at least until they are paid 105 million dollars for it, or are pressured by the Democrats in power to turn it over for nothing. The Navy knows what so many of us now know. They have become skeptical with respect to the sincerity and the ability of the City to put forth a concrete redevelopment plan after all these years, but at this point has nothing to lose by going along with the “program” because the City and County of San Francisco is assuming the costs of maintenance of the Island as per the caretaker agreement of 1997.

Newsom’s latest fantasy plan that calls for a space-age green development with multiple 60 story residential, retail and hotel towers, new low-income neighborhoods, no on-island driving, a ferry terminal (that the State has already nixed) to accommodate the low-income resident boaters(!), and the best of all, a 40 acre organic garden! All of this is going on top of toxic bay land fill that floods year after year and sits on top of the most active earthquake fault in the bay area! I certainly don’t know what this guy is smoking but this latest fantasy surely isn’t the result of the red wine that he claimed he was addicted to.

You might recall that Darius Anderson, the politically connected democratic lobbyist and fundraiser, acquired the exclusive rights to negotiate for the development of Treasure Island as the principal of the Treasure Island Development Corporation (TIDC). Anderson, who is really a likeable fellow and a good businessman,



brought in the Lennar Corporation as the heavyweight to do the build out. Both partners are now dangling the financial carrot to other investors who might fancy the elusive dream to build on the Island since the Lennar Corporation seems to have fallen on tough times.

Therein lays the problem. Hundreds of millions must be spent to shore-up, fortify, do the environmental clean-up, and stabilize the Island before anything can be built. Whatever is to be built there must “pencil” and be profitable before any developer, investor or Bank would even think about getting involved. The Navy, who would like to get their money up front, knows this, and so does Newsom and his gang. The pre-development costs, which could easily run into the hundreds of millions of dollars, are just too great to be considered by any serious investor. This is exactly why you never hear about the lender being mentioned or even quoted in any of these wonderful schemes that hit the newspapers.

Mr. Michael Cohen, the Mayor’s economic guru, has pontificated, ad-nauseum, about “mello-roos financing” and “bonding against future property tax revenue.” Forget about all that malarkey, there is a host of reasons why that will never happen, beside the fact that the property must be built out first. Interestingly enough, Mr. Cohen has just announced his resignation. Perhaps he figured that he should get out while the gettin’ is good, having been the chief architect of a half-a-dozen other flops such as the developments at Hunter Point, Candlestick Park, the retention of our famed 49ers football team just to name a few. I predicted long ago that he will now go to work lobbying for one of the Developers because he is quite good at spinning the fantasy but short on delivery.

I will remind you of a few facts that I wrote about in several prior articles, as they seem to have even more relevance today.

1. With a current City budget deficit approaching \$600 million dollars, thanks to the mismanagement of this administration and this Board of Supervisors, where is the \$105 million dollars going to come from to pay for the project? We are told that developers will pick up the costs, but the exact developers with the money have not been identified or confirmed.
2. Even if the true cost were only \$105 million dollars, why are we now paying that amount for only 450 acres of the total 550 available, and more interesting, who benefits from the remaining 100 acres? Note, when I was Director there in 2005, the

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Au Contrair

SF PUC Takes Exception to Charges of Malfeasance

By Todd L. Rydstrom

Building for the Future – Transparency and Ratepayer Savings

The last *Westside Observer* issue contained an inaccurate depiction of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission’s (SFPUC) well-regulated, transparent financial bond-issuance process. The article lacked mention of the hundreds of millions of dollars of savings that the SFPUC has locked in place for the benefit of ratepayers. It also lacked explanation of the numerous independent reviews and audits undertaken each year that are required by the San Francisco Charter, state municipal code and the voters. So let’s take this opportunity to explain the substantial and multi-pronged oversight processes governing the SFPUC.

Firstly, some facts on project costs. The total cost for the Water System Improvement Program is \$4.6 billion, not \$5 billion. Next, the article incorrectly states that the City will be issuing up to \$5 billion for bonds to implement its community choice aggregation program. That is false; at present, the City has no plans to issue any debt for the community choice aggregation program.

The article postulates that the long-term borrowing rate would be 5.5% over 25 years for the SFPUC’s debt. This statistic is inflated in today’s environment; with rates at

historical lows, the SFPUC’s highly-rated water and sewer departments have garnered actual rates of between 2.5% to 4.8% for bonds issued over the past year. **In fact, along with the refunding of older bonds to lower interest rates, the SFPUC has already locked in place for its ratepayers over \$400 million in savings over the next 30 years.** Additionally, the article references Proposition E – 2002, which actually made it much more difficult for the Board of Supervisors to transfer surplus revenue to the General Fund, *not easier*, which is what the article erroneously implies.

Issuing Bonds and Debt – Saving Money for our Ratepayers

In the public sector, governments issue bonds to pay for long-term capital improvements that will benefit customers for years to come. A portion of the repair and replacement of existing infrastructure is funded through current year rates (pay-as-you-go), but without the disciplined and prudent use of revenue bonds, rates would need to dramatically increase in a given year to pay upfront for massive infrastructure projects. For example, the WSIP Program is \$4.6 billion, but our current water ratepayer revenues are just slightly greater than \$300 million per year, hence the need for government issued revenue bonds.

In 2002, voters approved Propositions A and E, which granted the SFPUC the limited authority to issue short-term debt (like commercial paper or notes) and long-term debt (like bonds) for capital improvements. Commercial paper is short-term borrowing of less than 270 days and is typically used to finance project design and early construction. Utilizing commercial paper, which is issued at lower interest rates than long-term

Cont. p. 11

Wooding (Cont. from p. 2)

volunteered for this salary sacrifice). Deferring salary increases into future years does not reduce the City's pension liability.

In 2009, the 17,508 city employees earning less than \$60,000 in base pay (excluding overtime) were reduced by 1,966 employees, cutting \$70.8 million from the City payroll; at the same time, the City added 779 employees earning over \$90,000, for a payroll increase of \$115 million. The City used the money gained from permanent salary concessions (cuts) from lower-paid workers or eliminating their positions entirely, to hire the 779 higher-paid workers. In San Francisco, this is alternatively called "pension reform," or "balancing the budget."

Former Mayor, Willie Brown, an expert in back-room deal-making with City unions, said it best in his January 3 Chronicle column:

"Over the years, the civil service system has changed from one that protects jobs to one that runs the show. The deal used to be that civil servants were paid less than private sector workers in exchange for an understanding that they had job security for life. But we politicians, pushed by our friends in labor, gradually expanded pay and benefits to private-sector levels while keeping the job protection and layering on incredibly generous retirement packages that pay ex-workers almost as much as current workers. Talking about this is politically unpopular and potentially even career suicide for most office holders.

"But at some point, someone is going to have to get honest about the fact that 80% of the state, county and City budget deficits are due to [increasing] employee costs.

"Either we do something about it at the ballot box or a judge will do something about it in Bankruptcy Court. And if you think that I am kidding, just look at Vallejo," Brown wrote.

What Willie Brown didn't acknowledge, is that Vallejo went into bankruptcy proceedings in large measure due to raises and benefit packages awarded to firefighters, police officers, and management employees that amounted to unfunded liabilities, not raises to clerical and lower-paid non-safety City workers.

The City's cost of pension fund contributions and health insurance for active and retired employees has seen an 85 percent-change increase over the past five years, from \$419 million in fiscal year 2004-2005 to a budgeted \$776 million in fiscal year 2009-2010. In 2010, the City faced a \$483 million budget shortfall and is expecting a \$789 million budget deficit in 2011.

The City's cost of pension fund contributions and health insurance for active and retired employees is projected to exceed \$1.1 billion by fiscal year 2012-2013. The City needs to address these pension problems immediately, and address the \$1.48 billion paid for \$90,000+ annual salaries.

Jeff Adachi is right in trying to reduce San Francisco's skyrocketing pension costs and unfunded health care costs. Someone in City government has to be brave and responsible.

Unfortunately, Adachi tried a shotgun approach that applies to the lowest-paid workers as well as to the highest-paid workers. The \$90,000 per year employees can afford Adachi's pension reform, but the lowest-paid City workers can't. According to Catherine Dodd, director of the City's Health Service System, "An employee using the City's Kaiser Permanent plan for them and one dependent would see their monthly premium rise from \$9 to \$249. Employees enrolled in the Blue Shield plan would see monthly health care premium for them and one dependent nearly quadruple, from \$121 to \$473."

This is what the 2009-2010 Civil Grand Jury wrote in its June 2010 report, "Pension Tsunami, The Billion Dollar Bubble" summary: "The Grand Jury is concerned that the public may conclude from our findings that all city workers receive excessive retirement benefits or gain from abusive pension practices. This is simply not true for the vast majority of city workers. The typical public servant who goes to work every day to serve the public will receive a modest pension after many years of service to the City. The Grand Jury and the public should be grateful for the dedication and hard work of a majority of city employees."

If Adachi had just gone after the \$90,000+ employees, he would win in a landslide. Even some of the City's lower-paid workers might have quietly supported this pension reform. The San Francisco public is suffering through financial hard times. We love our firefighters and police — and don't love our high-priced city bureaucrats — but we can no longer afford all of you.

If Adachi's Proposition B fails and the City fails to implement "real" pension reform for higher-salaried workers, it won't be hard to find 46,000 valid signatures for the next pension reform initiative aimed directly at City employees earning \$90,000+ salaries.

We'll prefer this before following Vallejo's bankruptcy trajectory. Just ask Willie Brown.

Feedback: wooding@westsideobserver.com

AROUND THE TOWN

Comings and Goings...

Que Syrah Wine Bar just celebrated their 4th anniversary of pouring and selling delicious wine at 230 West Portal Avenue. Owners Stephanie and Keith Mc Cardell feature many wines that you can't find in lots of places, and these treasures make for a great visit. They have a Neighborhood Happy Hour every Tuesday night from 6-8 PM and are featuring tapas on Thursdays as well. They just started a "Yappy Hour" for doggies and their owners on Sunday, August 29th. In September they're having a "Barbeque and Big Reds Event" on September 18th from 5-8 PM. Check it out.

What was with the hot weather last week??? 98 degrees in San Francisco...I know, I know...earthquake weather. People all around the town were happy when the fog started to roll back in.

Good luck to **Tsing Tao #3, Healthy Pets, and The Pawber Shop**, which recently had their grand openings. It's great to see storefronts starting to re-fill on the Avenue.

Have you checked out the Farmer's Market held each **Sunday at Stonestown**? Since it started the crowds have built steadily and in recent weeks, it's been very well attended with lots of people checking out the large variety of fruits, vegetables and baked goods. Get there early or get in line. The market has been so successful that the neighboring Parkmerced farmer's market has closed its operation. The Stonestown market is located in the rear parking lot at the Stonestown Galleria, towards the Buckingham



The Farmers Market at Stonestown brought out crowds of shoppers looking for healthy food

Way end of the lot.

Are we there yet? Work has been continuing on the St. Francis Circle, West Portal Avenue project, and you can see progress amid the swirl of cement mixers, detour signs and orange cones. So far the merchants have tolerated things as best as they can, although they say that business has been much slower. No wonder. At any given time you never know if the eastern end of West Portal Avenue will be open, and there seems to be no rhyme or reason to which days it's open. When closed you have to make the

drive up Portola and curl back around. Let's hope that this MUNI project gets finished SOON so we get back to normal. (Like complaining about the lack of parking, etc.)

I'd like to take a moment to thank the readers and contributors for helping all of us make the Observer a success. We are now in our third year of publishing the Observer, which celebrates 23 years of bringing local news to the West Of Twin Peaks area. Along with the *West Portal Monthly* the local beat is well docu-

mented thanks to publishers who care and lots of local writers, columnists, photographers and advertisers (who help all of us in the newspaper sector). The neighborhood is fortunate to have so many caring citizens and a vibrant setting. Twenty-three years, and there are still lots of new things to observe and report on.

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

SECOND THOUGHTS / By Jack Kaye

Responding To Our Loss

Now that I am reasonably old, many of the people that I know or once knew are also getting on in years and ever closer to their own personal finish line. Every so often I hear that someone I know has died. Sometimes I hear about it by reading the obits in the daily paper, sometimes I hear from mutual friends about the passing, and lately I have heard from friends that they themselves had lost several people close to them in a short period of time.

In less than one year, one friend lost the three great loves of his life: his father, with whom he was very close; his one and only mate, who died in a freak accident; and his beloved dog.

Another friend has lost three of his best friends and his wife in the past six months. He had known some of them for 60 years.

I found out recently that two people who meant the most to me in my youth had died tragically many years ago.

How does one respond to this kind of loss?

There are surely many possible responses to the loss of a loved one. Some people realize that life must go on. They find some way to close the book on the departed and move on to new relationships and challenges.

Some people try to remember the good times and hope that, if there is a hereafter, the person will find peace and joy.

Some people try to make a tribute in memory of their lost friend. Perhaps this helps bring closure as well as the feeling that some good has come from this great loss.

But many people feel one of the most profound human experiences - sadness. Surely, not all sadness is profound or even pleasant. It can be brutal and very painful, making a person feel that there is little reason to go on. Sadness can make us painfully aware of our vulnerability. We are mortal creatures who live, age, suffer, overcome, struggle and then die. We hope to lead long and healthy lives and sometimes are able to forget that it all must come to an end someday. We try to make the most of our time here, and by so doing are able to put off these thoughts of our own mortality.

But when we see our friends and relatives suffering and dying around us, we are reminded of our own fate. We too like all other living things are subject to the laws of nature. We are all matter, all matter is energy, and energy cannot be lost in the universe, so it gets disorganized. Energy gets disorganized in order to change. This is called entropy. It is the cause of everything from illness to the accumulation of dust, messy rooms or errors in judgment to, finally, death. Entropy is nature's way of saying "everything passes."

While we see the signs of entropy all around us, we are able to compartmentalize our reaction to it. We are not usually paying close attention to its effects until they become too much to contain. If entropy is slow over a long period of time, we might not even notice it. We grow old slowly and don't notice the changes until we look at old pictures of ourselves or run into people whom we haven't seen in a long time.

But when someone we care about dies, our existential condition becomes painfully clear—someday, we will also fall apart and die. It is not only losing our lives that is of concern, but also what comes next. No one (except maybe Sylvia Brown and the Dalai Lama) knows for sure what happens after we die. Those of us who are very religious and say we believe in an afterlife, still have concerns that we might not be successful in our new environment. Those of us whose liberal political views preclude belief in a Supreme Being whom others might find offensive and politically incorrect, scoff at the notion of life after death. But even those of us in this group have some secret concerns that while we are politically correct, we might not be metaphysically correct. What's an atheist to tell G-d on judgment day, if by some chance there is one?

So no matter what we say we believe, I think that somewhere inside us we realize that we have no idea what awaits us on the other side of life. But we keep this feeling locked up deep inside while we busy ourselves with the ways of the world. But when someone close to us dies, these locked up feelings threaten mutiny, seeking to leak into our mind and heart making our entire being fully aware of its limited warrantee.

The result is a strange feeling in our mind and body. Our face wants to change its shape. Our eyes seem to lose focus showing us a world that an impressionist painter might create. The salt water starts creeping down our face causing make-up to run and others to look away. And our thoughts are drenched in feelings of sorrow.

We feel sadness. Sadness that our beloved is no longer with us and will never be again and that everything that is will someday no longer be. We want everything that is good to last forever with only bad stuff disappearing. We want immortality because somewhere inside us we know that energy or life itself cannot be lost. We are upset when life reminds us again that we must lose our forms and move on into the great unknown. So we are sad, and we are afraid, afraid of the fate that patiently awaits us.

We remember the good times and pray that they will continue a bit longer. We remember our loved ones and what they meant to us. And then we become very sad because we will never see their face, hear their voice, never have new experiences with them. We can no longer hold them, or touch them or laugh with them at something that only we would consider funny.

Buddha said that life was suffering, but Buddha was an optimist. Life can be brutal but only because it is so wonderful.

Or as Shaw said in his "Androcles and the Lion" - "Be steadfast Lavinia. Those of us about to die salute you."

We must be steadfast in the face of life's greatest adversity and salute each other while we still can.

And if we miss our dearly departed we have every right to cry, no, to weep.

Feedback: Kaye@westsideobserver.com



BUSINESS CORNER

Dimitra's Medi-Spa – helping people look their best for almost 30 years
By Mitch Bull

It's not uncommon in this day and age to see multiple storefronts in a block with the word "Spa" in their name. From hair salons, nail salons and to massage treatment centers it seems that everyone wants to be in the "Spa" business.

For the West of Twin Peaks area, *Dimitra's Skin Care and Medi-Spa*, located at 324 West Portal Ave., pioneered the skin care business and has been helping clients look their best for three decades.

Dimitra Kokkalis Wagner, joined in business by her brother-in-law, Dr Andrew Wagner, MD, has been providing state of the art skin care at her West Portal salon since 1982. Born and raised on the Greek island of Corfu, Dimitra received her training in Athens, where esthetics (skin care science) is more closely aligned with the medical profession than it traditionally has been in the United States.



Dimitra's 'SkinCare & Electrolysis' became a day spa, one of the first in San Francisco, and continued to evolve, now leading the way as Dimitra's SkinCare & MediSpa. This local business has been described as "The Best of Both Worlds" in the skin care and medi-spa industry by continuing to provide leading edge services, enabling them to stay ahead of the curve... and their competitors.

With her education and experience, Dimitra is considered to be one of the leading experts in skincare, and frequently receives calls from other estheticians for advice and consultation. She personally trains each of the salon estheticians to ensure that every client is afforded the same high level of quality service. Wagner is passionate about providing 'results orientated' skin care, and her staff has the expertise to solve almost every type of skin care problem.

The expert staff members treat varying types of skin conditions for clients of all age groups. Treatments are provided for conditions ranging from acne to aging; services include microdermabrasion, peels, healing massage, Velashape (for cellulite reduction/body contouring), electrolysis, waxing and brow/lash tinting.

Dr. Andrew Wagner's talents earned him Spa Weeks West Coast Luxi award for the best medical treatments. He specializes in Laser Hair Removal, plus the latest techniques for anti-aging and Skin Rejuvenation.

Wagner has been described as an 'artist' using both Botox and Juvederm. But a daily regimen is necessary to maintain healthy skin, and creating this regimen is easy when you consult the advice of a licensed professional.

Dimitra's has amassed an array of skincare products from around the world, plus as a MediSpa, has the advantage of being able to offer physician- strength retail products. Renowned for the compassion they show their clients, the salon has earned the devoted loyalty of their clients, often serving 2-3 generations of a family.

Just as important as the daily business of medical skin care, Dimitra's desire is for her salon to support our local community through contributions of time, services, and money. The Wagners play an active role in the West Portal Merchants Association and are proud of having served thousands of people since opening 30+ years ago.

The staff members are friendly and courteous, a hallmark of customer service in an era where it can be difficult to find. We at the Westside Observer applaud the dedication of Dimitra and the Wagner family for their commitment to our community, and for providing a quality service.

When you are in the market for quality skin care services, or want to choose from a full line of professional skin care products, consider Dimitra's SkinCare & MediSpa as your friendly neighborhood family salon.

Dimitra's Skin Care and Medi-Spa is located at 324 West Portal Avenue. Business hours are: Monday –Thursday 10-7, Friday 9-6, and Saturdays from 9-4. To schedule an appointment or to request additional information please call them at (415) 731-8080 or via email at: info@Dimitras.com.

THE SWEETHEART DEAL TO MANAGE HARDING PARK

Based on real numbers from 2008, the actual management fee RPD paid to the current golf manager Kemper Sports **\$285,000**
COMPARED TO
The proposed management fee using the new contract method to calculate the "incentive" to be paid to PGA TOUR..... **\$1,144,000**

Harding Park (Cont. from p. 1)

The \$8.3 million deficit was to be made up from both State bond money and private sources, but contributions fell short. So, \$1.4 million was misappropriated from the newly formed Golf Fund to fill the gap. So much for the spending controls. RPD decided NOT to implement the city law protecting the Golf Fund money so it could take what it needed to rebuild Harding. Since RPD's initial abuse of the Fund, it has continued to ignore the law's inconvenient management requirements. Next, they claimed that "golf does not make money," and manipulated the General Fund for subsidies to balance the budget! Recently, RPD decided it "must" create new fees to backfill that hole, ergo charging to enter Strybing Arboretum.

RPD was supposed to manage the Golf Fund to allow for repayment of a portion of construction capital into the Open Space Fund. It was agreed that \$18 million (\$15 million of State bond funds and \$3 million from Open Space) would be borrowed

for the project to be repaid with interest. Never mind that the State money was intended to support projects in the "most heavily populated and most economically disadvantaged areas" of the city, it was used instead to pay for the Harding golf project. RPD promised to use the repaid loan money for the original State-specified purposes to benefit the less fortunate, but RPD never did so. Instead this year, they raided this special reserve fund to hand \$1 million to the Mayor to offset the deficit.

THE GIVE-AWAY In 2002 the city agreed to bring PGA Championship tournaments to the renewed Harding Park. At the time RPD emphatically stated "the PGA TOUR Championship is a means, not an end" and "the PGA TOUR has never suggested or offered to take over control of the Harding-Fleming golf complex." But now RPD has *invited* them to take over managing the \$8 million gross revenue Harding golf course by selecting the PGA TOUR as the winner of a contract bid.

RPD has awarded a sweetheart

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT:
THE FACTS ABOUT HEALTHCARE UNDER PROP B



By Jeff Adachi

Proposition B, which will be on the ballot in November, addresses not only the City's escalating pension costs for city employees, but also health care costs. There are two provisions to the measure. The first requires all city employees, including elected officials, to contribute between 9-10% towards their retirement pensions. Currently, nearly half of City employees do not contribute towards their pensions. The second requires that city employees contribute more towards their family's health care costs. Here are the facts about the cost of health care to taxpayers for the city's 26,000 employees and 28,000 retirees:

- Currently, the City is spending \$456 million for city employee and dependent health care each year. According to the City Controller, this number is expected to double within five years.
- The Controller estimates that the City's retiree unfunded health care liability is growing by \$300 million annually.
- Under Proposition B, all City employees and retirees will continue to receive 100% of their healthcare benefits paid. However, instead of the City paying 75% of dependent health care costs, all City employees will share 50-50 in the cost of the healthcare for their dependents.

THE WAY IT IS NOW - Under the lowest cost health plan:

- A city worker with no dependents pays nothing for his or her healthcare and the City pays \$481.70 per month.
- A city worker with one dependent pays \$8.84 per month and the City pays \$953.50 a month.
- A city worker with two or more dependents pays \$228 per month and the City pays \$1,132.54 a month.
- All of these payments into healthcare by city employees are with pre-tax dollars.

UNDER PROPOSITION B:

- A city worker without dependents would still pay nothing.
 - A city worker with one dependent would pay, on average, \$241.76 per month.
 - A city worker with two dependents would pay \$439.79 per month.
- (Sources: City Controller, Department of Human Resources, Health Service System)

COMPARED to what the average private sector employees receive:

- Only 60% of San Francisco businesses offer health care benefits for employees.
- Private sector employees with no dependents who do receive health care must pay an average monthly cost of \$402 (compared to City employees who contribute nothing) and pay \$1,114.58 with dependents.
- And while 100% of public sector employees receive retiree health benefits, only 29% of private sector employees receive such benefits.

Keep in mind that the average San Francisco city employee earns \$93,000 a year, not including benefits, compared to \$46,000, which is what the average private sector employee who works in San Francisco earns.

According to the Health Service

System, Proposition B would save the City \$83.3 million annually in health care costs. Some of these funds can be used to preserve health programs for the vulnerable adults and children who do not have health care coverage.

Even with these changes, City employees will receive a benefit package that is unparalleled in the private sector. More importantly, however, the City's health care fund will be made more sustainable and the savings from this measure will help preserve the essential services that are relied upon by all San Franciscans.

Opponents of Prop B have said.

In the voter's guide, the opponent's argument states that Prop B "cuts health care benefits for widows and children of police officers or firefighters killed in the line of duty." This is untrue. Under California state law (section 4856 of the Labor Code, passed in 1997) families of deceased public safety officers are entitled to receive health benefits "under the same terms and conditions prior to the death of the employee." **Proposition B does not change this.** In addition, under the federal Public Safety Officers' Act, widows and children of police officers and firefighters killed in the line of duty receive \$275,000.

The opponents have also declared that Proposition B fails to "distinguish between low-wage and highly-paid workers." San Francisco has never based contributions by city employees on the income level of its employees. All employees have always paid the same amount, regardless of their income level. **Proposition B does not change this.**

The opponents also say that Proposition B "makes San Francisco ineligible for \$23 million a year in federal health care reform funding." This is not true. Nothing in Proposition B makes San Francisco ineligible for federal reimbursement of health care costs.

Proposition B creates a reliable, annual funding stream of support as opposed to "one time" savings measures and uncertain state and federal revenue that San Francisco can't always count on.

This is why 49,178 San Francisco voters signed the petition to put Proposition B on the ballot.

VOTE YES on Proposition B!

Jeff Adachi is the elected Public Defender of San Francisco. For more information, please visit www.sfsmartreform.com to help on the Prop B campaign, call (415) 905-9100.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS: INTRODUCED

[Management Agreement: Harding Park Golf Course] 101107 Sponsor: Elsbernd
Resolution authorizing the Recreation and Park Department General Manager to enter into an agreement with Tournament Players Club of California, Inc., for management of clubhouse and golf operations at the Harding Park and Fleming Golf Courses, excluding course maintenance operations (Management Agreement)... RECEIVED AND ASSIGNED to Budget and Finance Committee.

What'd I say???

By Carol Kocivar ©2010

Please excuse me... but whenever I spend a little too much time in Sacramento or at an education conference I hear a little bit of a Ray Charles riff...

Why, just the other day we had a conversation to authenticate the reflective drive so we could utilize and unpack the structures that created the sustainable and seamless architecture.

You Betcha

This must resonate with you in a true pedagogy as we work to ensure transparency.

Ah...a 21st century skill!

We promise to hold all the stakeholders accountable with this high leverage transformative strategy.

Pushing the box or outside the envelope?

We can no longer work in silos but must work smarter not harder to implement the powerful connections.

Can I do this on Twitter or do I need a Facebook Account?

We have to be very clear that this is non-negotiable—a powerful vision for the future.

No tweaking here.

This is truly the new way of working—Did I mention we are breaking down silos?

The farmer in the dell, the farmer in the dell, hi ho Hi-ho, the derry-o

The farmer in the dell

And that's a wrap.

The bottom line

OMG.



Laguna Honda (Cont. from p. 1)

October. But the move-in likely won't happen until December, or the first of the year, months past the already-delayed April 2010 date that for the scheduled move.

Cost Over-Runs At the LHH-JCC's meeting, Thomas reported on potential problems with a "contingency" involved \$57 million budgeted for the remodel of the old buildings that will remain. \$44.5 million for the remodel work has been "executed" to date, indicating a "fair amount of contingency" —to adjust the scope of the work within the remaining \$12.5 million remodel budget.

Thomas also indicated that the \$23 million budgeted for Site Work package #3 — for demolition of the existing building wings D through O, the east parking lot and an access bridge, an ADA-accessible pathway — scope is being reviewed, which will be "key on whether we're able to stay within that \$584 million" overall project budget.

The total project budget may be increased \$5 million, along with further reduced scope in the final package. The "scope" of the project was reduced by \$17 million in Budget Revision #14, and another \$9 million in Budget Revision #15 to address "unfunded operating costs for the DPH." Now, the City Controller's "Discussion of the Mayor's FY 2010-11 Proposed Budget" indicates that the LHH Project returned \$2.1 million in "year-end surplus" savings from FY 09-10 to the Mayor's proposed budget for FY 10-11, apparently to the General Fund.

This totals at least \$26 million in "scope" features initially planned that have been cut, plus another \$2.1 million in unexplained "surplus," representing a black hole of at least \$28 million. Why isn't Louise Renne, chairperson of the Laguna Honda Foundation, looking into this?

Black-Tie Dinner Months after the June Black-Tie Gala Dinner, to "benefit Laguna Honda Volunteers, Inc.," ostensibly for patient benefit, the amount is unknown.

At least \$450,000 was potentially raised by the various major sponsors ("Gold," "Platinum," etc.), excluding an unknown amount added to gross receipts raised by individuals purchasing \$250 and \$350 event tickets.

Supervisor Sean Elsbernd's recent Form 803 reports indicate he made personal "bequests" (personally solicited requests) that raised \$165,000 for the Gala Dinner, plus another \$40,000 for Volunteers, Inc.

Community Initiatives, a separate non-profit organization that now acts as the "fiscal sponsor" for Renne's Laguna Honda Foundation (LHF), says her Foundation will share in proceeds raised at the Gala dinner, but refuses to disclose how much will be diverted to the Foundation, claiming event expenses are still unknown and the net amount raised is still unclear. Donors beware. **Refuses to Disclose** On August 12, Renne, refused when asked for summary-level non-profit financial data: how much was spent in the past three years on "program services," "management and general," and "fundraising." These three categories of information are typically used to evaluate non-profits, and are required by the IRS.

"I'm not taking a lot of time because I see no reason to put everybody to the trouble of doing busy-work" Renne said, she sees "no reason to provide details."

Asked for her Foundation's top five

contractors for "professional services" in each of the past three years, and her top five contractors who provide "other services," that the IRS requires 501(c)(3) organizations to report, along with grants made under required "grantmaking" purposes, Renne suddenly declared, "Enough!" refusing to provide any data, or to answer further questions.

This is summary data Renne must have, and should release, illustrating yet another enormous black hole.

Patient Gift Fund Scandal Don't believe public service announcements reporter Dan Ashley on Channel 7, claiming LHH's misspent patient gift funds "went back to patients" as a result of KGO TV's I-Team single broadcast on May 20. It simply isn't true, since there has been no audit, and no restitution of missing patient funds.

Indeed, Deputy City Controller Monique Zmuda is scheduled to return to LHH the week beginning August 30 to conduct yet another "review" — apparently not an actual audit — of LHH's patient gift fund. Her "audits group" will ostensibly determine under what "authority" LHH may have departed from the Municipal Code in administering gift funds earmarked to benefit actual patients, and whether the patient gift fund was administered in accordance with stipulated mandates, before potentially re-performing allocation of over \$100,000 in interest earned, diverted to staff sub-accounts, after determining "reasonableness" of the diverted funds.

Zmuda will need to dig deeper to quell concerns, since former LHH doctors Maria Rivero and Derek Kerr have recently uncovered, through additional public records requests, that massive "cost shifting" of expenses from the hospital's operating budget was pushed onto the patient gift fund beginning in 2004, despite provisions prohibiting use for routine hospital operations.

Basic patient care provided under hospital operating budgets is defined by Federal and State regulations governing skilled nursing facilities.

In the first eight months following John Kanaley's appointment as LHH's executive administrator in 2004, \$745,000 appears missing from the patient gift fund, when the fund plummeted from \$2 million to \$1.3 million.

Since 2004, the two doctors suspect, LHH has improperly cost-shifted at least \$550,543 for catering costs, basic patient activities and amenities, and patient transportation costs from its operating budget to the patient gift fund. Another \$76,013 has been diverted for staff amenities: catered meals, travel expenses, employee recognition awards including \$50 "thank you" checks to employees-of-the-month, and employee training expenses.

The patient gift fund has been depleted of at least \$1,360,065 in questionable expenses since Kanaley first began cost-shifting in 2004; staff amenities questionably charged to the gift fund appear to have spiked in 2009 after Mivic Hirose became executive administrator.

Zmuda's new "review" of the gift fund sub-accounts — still avoiding a full, impartial audit and still lacking actual restitution of misspent funds — may continue to whitewash LHH's various black holes.

Monette-Shaw is an accountability advocate, and the San Francisco Hospital Examiner at Examiner.com. Feedback: monette-shaw@westsideobserver.com



City College Update

By Dr. Anita Grier

Whenever I speak about City College, the well-publicized misuse of public funds in 2005-6 dominates the conversation; people want to know what went on behind the scenes and how such abuses escaped notice of the Board of Trustees.

• How could \$10,000 for rent on a college parking lot be diverted to a political campaign—even a campaign for

City College improvements?

• How could \$28,670 raised by PepsiCo for beverage sales on campus be diverted to the Foundation of City College, a politically active organization?

• How could public funds, \$7,000 from the non-profit College Bookstore Auxiliary and \$3,000 from a campus coffee shop, end up as political donations?

• Are there other misuses that have yet to be discovered?

I can't comment on specific charges until the case is settled, but I believe the oversight role of the Board of Trustees needs to be enhanced in order to prevent future questionable expenditures. I don't believe that any of the current members of the Board had any knowledge of the funds in question, but we are obliged to ask why we were left in the dark about these transactions.

I believe we need to adopt San Francisco's Sunshine laws to make our records more easily available to the public, the press, and the Trustees. Four years ago I drafted and proposed that similar laws be adopted by the Trustees that would mirror San Francisco's improved access to records but the administration at City College has been dragging its feet on implementation, presumably to keep its records out of the public eye.

The current standard for open records at City College is the California Public Records Act, which provides minimal access. It is used statewide. It has gaping holes so large that bureaucrats can simply ignore requests, refusing to release documents just because they allege it is not "in the public interest" to release them. In effect, this gives every employee veto power over disclosure of records and has been one of the most misused sections of the CPRA.

San Francisco voters approved Sunshine (Prop G) in 1999, allowing much stronger public access to records. The Board of Trustees approved similar changes four years ago, and recommended that the various departments and organizations within the institution review their procedures and evaluate the specific changes set forth by the Trustees.

What's happened since? We know very little. We do know that at one point our attorney advised that the documents were "lost."

Last month I reintroduced the Sunshine measure and at the next meeting of the Trustees it will be considered. At a preliminary hearing, there were no dissenting comments from my colleagues, i.e., we appear close to agreement.

Sunshine will ban the "public interest" withholding maneuver, and include a 24-hour Immediate Disclosure requirement. We still need to be vigilant, of course, but with this better access, City College of San Francisco will take the lead towards open government among community colleges in California.

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ON THE PLUS SIDE By Hank Basayne

My Superior Forgettery

Remember where you parked your car on your last trip to the mall? If you're old enough to remember *Dallas*, how about who shot J.R.? Any luck recalling the name of the Democratic candidate for Vice President in 1988, the one who debated Dan Quayle? How about the name of the second person you dated in high school?

It's unnerving to find that my once much more dependable memory has turned against me. In the twilight of my life I sometimes go from one room into another, then stand there, wondering what I went in there for. My best advice to myself: get used to it!



On the other hand, I'll bet you *can* recall your first telephone number. It was easier then: no area code to remember, no "Press One for..." And I'm sure you can recite your Social Security number—just be sure no one's listening.

I fight back. I make lists. If I'm feeling emotionally secure enough at the moment, I might even ask some else to remind me of the name of a movie or a song I once loved. Would that I had a personal, reliable, mental multi-megabyte hard disk with a good search function!

We're all like two-headed Janus, looking forward and looking backward at the same time. When I was young, it was easier. I hadn't accumulated so much of a past to re-examine. But as I've aged I'm increasingly tempted to explore the trail I've left. It may be that it helps avert my eyes from my future.

It was the German psychiatrist Alois Alzheimer who gave his name to the horrible kind of dementia that comes from organic disease, but the kind of intermittent, temporary memory loss I'm talking about is—I suspect—more often the result of inattention. On the general theory that everything has to be somewhere, I recognize that the thing I'm trying to remember right now has not vanished. Later, when I'm not staring directly at it, it may come back to me. It was lurking in the little gray cells all the time. Were I less distracted by my incessant flow of thoughts, plans, ideas and feelings, I'd be able to bring my full attention to the tasks of focusing, searching, finding and retrieving the memory I want. But—like you—I'm merely human: a flawed being, tantalized by the vision of who I *could* be while staying stuck with who I am.

We're all like two-headed Janus, looking forward and looking backward at the same time. When I was young, it was easier. I hadn't accumulated so much of a past to re-examine. But as I've aged I'm increasingly tempted to explore the trail I've left. It may be that it helps avert my eyes from my future.

I find that it pays to keep trying to hone the cutting edge of my memory. Mental muscles, like physical ones, gain strength and tone if reinforced with frequent practice. Whether I'm trying to gather memories to hand off to the generations that will succeed me, or merely to savor and re-visit parts of my own journey, I believe that my persistent attempt to search my past fortifies that ability.

I have spotty and highly selective remembrance of some of my triumphs and disappointments, my successes and my failures. Some of the memories that return make me want to cover my face with my hands, saying to myself--with embarrassment—"Did I do *that*?" But there are other fragments that generate a small, inward smile of remembered pleasure or even pride. As I think back in time I remember others—some now quite old, others gone—who enriched my understanding or influenced my beliefs. I'm grateful to them. But just as my life-long struggle against gravity is doomed to failure, so is my persistence in searching for a mind that will cough up the information I demand when I want it. I continue to strive because I hate feeling like a helpless victim. I continue to labor to remember, to revisit my earlier selves, as a way of trying to make sense of where I've been, where I am, and how I became the me that's telling you all this.

Now, where did I put my keys? Standing in the market, what else was I going to buy? Oh, that Vice Presidential candidate? Lloyd Bentsen.

Hank Basayne is a San Franciscan who doesn't care who shot J. R.

Westside Real Estate Report

Distressed Sales in San Francisco

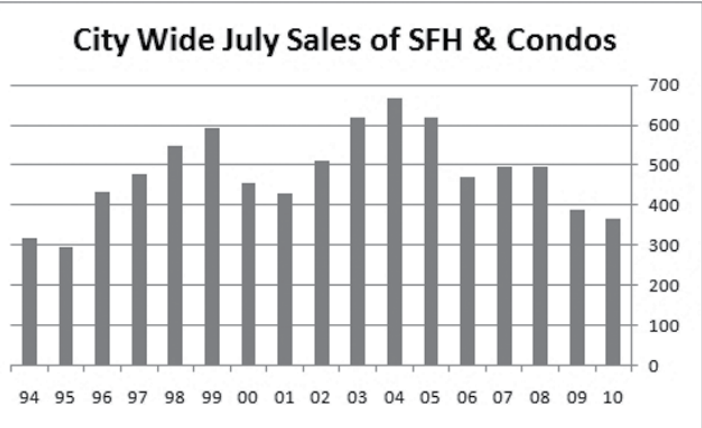
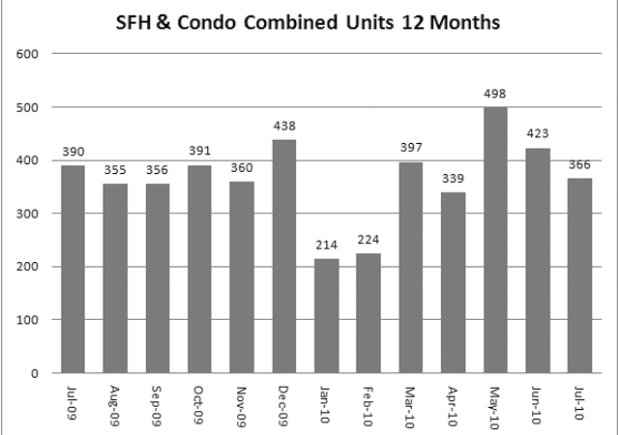
By Jed Lane

How many of sales over the past year were distressed? Has the banking crisis hit here forcing people to sell for less than they owe and what percentage of all sales are distressed?

First quick market checks of the Westside real estate. There are seventy-three properties on the market in the distribution area of this paper. Twenty-five properties sold in July which gives very close to three months supply of homes keeping the market leaning towards sellers over buyers. A balanced market is four to five months of supply. The median price for July's sales was \$815,000; the median size was three bedrooms, 2 baths and 1,350 square feet. There were forty-three homes in contract as of August 1, 2010. The median time on the market was thirty-six days. That doesn't sound bad at all!

City wide condo and single-family inventory is up over 11%, from 1,527 units on August 1, 2009 to 1,722 on August 1, 2010. The median price is up a bit from \$702,000 for sales in July 2009 to \$714,740 in July 2010, and the number of homes in contract on August 1st is equal to the July 1st 2009 number.

Much has been written of falling sales nationwide. Some reports state that July 2010 was the largest drop in history. As we know, San Francisco isn't the rest of the country in many ways including real estate! Sales in July 2010 are down only 6.5% from July 2009, 390 units to 366. We had a sharper drop from June's sales of 423 units to July's and there were sharper drops in July's of 2000 and 2006. Nationwide drops of 27%, as reported by Bloomberg for previously sold homes can cause the stock market to drop, but we continue to be OK. Now, if we could get the national banks to lend based on our local reality and not the national scene...



Recently, clients have been asking for investment "deals" in the City. The bank owned properties, known as REOs, are available and so are "short" sale properties, where a seller sells for less than they owe the bank. Whether or not the properties are "deals" is like

beauty, in the eye of the beholder. Of the REO properties, an example sold recently in the Sunset; it was tenant occupied and the rent was \$500./mo. and it sold for \$480,000. Is that a deal? Many properties in the Bayview and Visitacion Valley areas sold in the \$200,000 price range; that sounds good with rents still high. And a Pacific Heights mansion finally sold for \$11M after being reduced from \$16M; a \$5 Million dollar reduction! Now that's a "deal"!

While the California Association of Realtors reports that almost 50% of sales are either REO or Short Sales and the National Association of Realtors reports 29% of sales nationwide were distressed, San Francisco had only 15% of combined condo and single-family homes volume sold in the past year as either an REO or a Short Sale.

In conclusion this is a great time to buy. I have a new client that is getting a 30 year fixed rate mortgage at 4.5% —that is almost free money. If you have good credit and have a down payment it is time to buy. If you are selling, price your home correctly! As we discussed last month our market will absorb your home much, much faster if it's priced either below or at market than if it's overpriced.

Take good care.
Jed Lane is a Real Estate Broker associated with Coldwell Banker, West Side native and current resident of Miraloma Park.
If you have questions contact him at jed@westsideobserver.com

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333 Oak Park Dr	3	3	2	N/A	04/16/10	749,000	775,000
105 Gladeview	3	2	2	1,283	05/25/10	675,000	675,000
26 Greenview Ct	3	2	2	N/A	05/03/10	750,000	771,000
481 Dellbrook Ave	3	2	1	N/A	04/16/10	729,000	772,000
156 Midcrest Way	3	2	1	1,490	04/29/10	799,000	785,000
254 Dellbrook Ave	4	2	2	1,548	06/17/10	799,000	805,000
123 Dellbrook Ave.	3	2	2 Tandem	1576	10/30/09	750,000	805,000
33 Longview Ct.	4	3	1	N/A	05/14/10	799,000	882,000

Source: SF MLS

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HELP SAVE OUR CITY BY SUPPORTING PROPOSITION B!

San Francisco is going broke.

This year, the City is spending \$829 million to pay pension and health care costs for city employees. At the same time, the City faces a \$483 million deficit. Currently, 1 out of every 8 tax dollars is spent on city employee pension and health costs. According to the City's Controller, these costs will double in the next five years.

Prop B is real pension reform

Currently, nearly one-half of city employees and all elected officials contribute nothing towards their pensions. Prop B will change this by requiring every city employee and elected official to pay 9-10% toward their pensions.

Prop B will save the City \$600 million in the next five years

These funds may be re-directed to save vital services, such as health, education, street repair, parks, senior care and children's services.

Prop B helps protects the city and its pension system from bankruptcy

The current pension system is unsustainable, costing taxpayers \$50-\$100 million more each year. By requiring all employees to contribute towards their pensions, Prop B relieves the burden from taxpayers.

Prop B better manages health care costs.

Prop B helps reduces the city's \$456 million annual cost for city employee and dependent health care. The employee still receives free full coverage but pays 50% instead of 25% of the cost of dependent health care premiums.

Prop B doesn't change pension or health benefits.

Prop B does not change the employee's pension benefits or access to quality health care for city employees.

By requiring all city employees and officials to contribute towards solving our city's pension crisis,
Prop B will ensure that our pension debt is not passed down to our children.



Please join 49,178 San Franciscans who put
Proposition B on the ballot
by voting YES!

Public Defender Jeff Adachi

For more information, visit www.sfsmartreform.com

JOIN 49,178 SAN FRANCISCANS WHO SUPPORT PROPOSITION B!

While the City was spending **\$829 million** dollars this year on City employee pensions and health care.....

Summer school for all **10,000 children** was cancelled; the School District didn't have \$4 million to pay for it.

San Francisco slashed its **Recreation and Parks** budget by \$93 million.

San Francisco needs \$314 million to **fix our streets** but can only afford \$40 million while our streets crumble.

Some parking meters soared to **\$18 an hour**.

Top retired pensioners receive \$250,000 annually for the rest of their lives —possibly 30 years— equal to **\$8 million** for each employee.

A private sector employee would have to contribute almost **65%** of their annual salary for **30 years** for equivalent pension and health benefits of the average City employee.

A City employee with one dependent pays \$8 a month for health care; the City pays \$1,000 a month.

Elected officials and more than 10,000 City employees pay nothing toward their guaranteed pensions. The City picks up the entire bill.

THIS IS UNSUSTAINABLE AND MUST CHANGE!

Politicians and elected officials won't tackle this critical issue because of special interests; the people of San Francisco must save this City.

JOIN SAN FRANCISCANS FOR SMART REFORM AND VOTE YES ON PROP B!

Joe Boss
Janet Carpenelli
Tina Cervin
Carol J. Christie

Tom Donald
Kristine Enea
Paul & Penny Finochiarro
David A. Gavrich

Christopher Keane
Paul May
Eric Rasmussen
Willie Ratcliff

Ed Reiner
Frank Stein
Katherine Webster
Paul Wells



PROP B WILL ENSURE THAT ALL SAN FRANCISCANS RECEIVE QUALITY HEALTH CARE

Under Proposition B all City employees and retirees will continue to receive 100% of their healthcare benefits. However, instead of the City paying 75% of dependent health care costs, all City employees will share 50-50 in the cost of the healthcare for their dependents.



CURRENTLY

- A City worker with no dependents pays *nothing* for healthcare; the City pays \$481.70 per month.
- A City worker with one dependent pays \$8.84 per month; the City pays \$953.50 per month.
- A City worker with two or more dependents pays \$228 per month; the City pays \$1,132.54 per month.

UNDER THE PROP B:

- A City worker without dependents would still pay nothing.
- A City worker with one dependent would pay, on average, \$241.76 per month.
- A City worker with two dependents would pay \$439.79 per month.
- All of these payments into healthcare by City employees are with pre-tax dollars.

City employees get a benefit package that is unparalleled to private sector employees:

- Only 60% of San Francisco businesses offer health care benefits for employees.
- Private sector employees pay an average monthly cost of \$402 (compared to City employees who *contribute nothing*) and pay \$1,114.58 with dependents.
- And while 100% of City employees receive retiree health benefits, only 29% of private sector employees receive such benefits.

According to the Health Service System, Proposition B would save the City \$83.3 million in health care costs, funds that can be used to preserve health programs for people who do not have health care coverage.

Taxpayers with fewer or no benefits must pay to maintain City employee benefits; this is unsustainable!

JOIN ME AND VOTE YES ON PROPOSITION B

Matt Gonzalez



Target San Francisco: July 21 at a community meeting held at the old Sears Building at Geary and Masonic, Target executives unveiled extensive plans for the a Target and took questions from the an audience of about 100 neighbors and other interested persons. Most neighbors were concerned about traffic and Planning Dept is yet to consider the location. Supervisor Miriarimi, the District's Supervisor, spoke confidently about the fit and almost every neighbors made positive remarks.

Kopp (Cont. from p. 3)

of the general fund and the ability of the legislators and of then governor to shape a truly-balanced annual state budget instead of the fiction which every year passes for a balanced state budget.

In San Francisco during the mid-1970's another special interest, (special interests are not usually sinister or iniquitous in composition or objective) succeeded in securing board of supervisors' and then voter approval for an Open Space Acquisitions and Park Renovation Fund (Charter section 16.107). Starting as an alleged "15 year experiment," that measure seized two and one-half cents for each one hundred dollars of assessed valuation, money otherwise destined for San Francisco's general fund, and placed it in a special fund for maintenance (including salaries), acquisition and renovation of parkland locally, and for after-school recreation programs. Thus, albeit for an ostensible noble purpose, budget power of the supervisors and mayor was accordingly reduced. Later, in the 1980's, another invasion of San Francisco's general fund occurred with the enactment of a special fund known as the "Children's Fund." (Charter section 16.108) That special interest notion drained the general fund of property tax revenue amounting to one and one-quarter cents per one hundred dollars of assessed valuation at its beginning, increasing to two and one-half cents per one hundred dollars of assessed value for the next nine years. (It also resulted in creation of another City Hall bureaucracy.)

San Francisco's board of supervisors and voters have repeated that special interest funding with creation in the 1990's of a "Library Preservation Fund," again subtracting from the general fund two and one-half cents per one hundred dollars of assessed valuation for 15 years to increase the appropriations of the board of supervisors and mayor for the Library Department. Similar attempts to create special funds from property and other tax

revenue intended for the general fund will occur this fall. A notable attempt involves State of California parks, which have suffered appropriation reduction because of the state's impecunious financial position. Perhaps readers can analogize use of state parks to operation of motor vehicles on California streets and highways in some attenuated fashion; I cannot. Yet, California voters will vote on November 2, 2010 on a proposed state law to increase the motor vehicle registration fee (not for operation of the California Highway Patrol or Department of Motor Vehicles or streets and highways) but to augment money appropriated by the legislature and governor for the operation of state parks. Maybe the vehicle registration fee should be increased and who can dislike state parks? Not me. I do, however, dislike the special interest inclination of circumventing the allocation of general fund revenue by the constitutional process of an annual budget bill and simply seizing such revenue, so to speak, for such special state interest. Instant gratification does not usually inure to the future public good and welfare.

That is the repeated story of financial governance in the late 20th century and now in the nascent 21st century. I am an old fashioned believer in the so-called "eternal verities," One of those eternal verities imparted to me by elders, who were wiser than I in most instances, was usage of time-tested and fundamental principles, including the rule of law about which I will comment next month. As a taxpayer who has his own special interest of eliminating and stopping waste of tax and fee revenue, one hopes our current public officials and their constituents will return to their senses, and eliminate special funds in favor of appropriating all tax and fee revenue from a general fund..

Quentin Kopp is a former Supervisor, State Senator and Judge. Feedback: kopp@westsideobserver.com

SHARON THE HEALTH

By Sharon Caren

Lip Service From Water Departments

It's been a year since I last featured Citizens Concerned About Chloramine. This is an ongoing issue that needs our attention. Here's a letter I just received from Linda Corwin, VP of CCAC.

Dear Sharon, Thank you for your continuing research into common household and health care products and reporting what "FDA approved" chemicals are in them. It's nice to know there are natural, healthy alternatives so we can make better choices.



On the chloramine front, I appreciate all of you who have contacted Sharon to express your feelings about chloramine. Citizens Concerned About Chloramine (CCAC) is continuing to contact scientists about the issue, and the scientists are willing to set up testing protocols. However, there seems to be no Federal or State money to pay for the testing. In the mean time, we continue to hear from more and more people who are about to be subjected to chloramine.

Water providers are getting very good at keeping their plant's chloramine conversion under the radar until about two to four weeks before the actual start of chloramine use. Then, of course, it takes time for people to find our website. By the time we are contacted, the decision has been made, the permits have been issued, the facilities have been built, and there is no way to turn back.

I just ran into that very situation in a small community in the East Bay. After a concerned citizen showed some information from our website to the water board, they postponed the use of chloramine until they could get more information. They allotted ten minutes on their agenda for a presentation.

I attended their meeting on August 11th and in ten minutes, did my best to tell them what a Pandora's Box they were about to open. I then shared several alternatives they might be able to use. The board members were receptive to my information. But, alas, the General Manager said he only had two weeks before he had to start the chloramine. CCAC will be monitoring the situation and will continue to provide the board with information in an effort to help them realize there is an alternative that they can afford.

State Health Departments seem to be mandating the use of chloramine without letting these water boards know there are alternatives, a disheartening trend I hear over and over. The newest distress call we received is from the State of Alaska.

Please contact your legislators, both

local and state, to ask them to put a moratorium on the conversion of any more water systems to chloramine until the proper health studies are done.

If you are interested in going to CCAC meeting in San Francisco, contact me (phone or email below). You'll learn more about what's happening with our water systems today and the health issues being reported since the usage of the chloramine additive. I'm happy to get a meeting started in your area.

Thank you for your continued support, Linda Corwin (650) 355-6447 lindacor@earthlink.net Find much more information at: <http://www.chloramine.org/>

I want to thank Linda for her dedication and updates on this water situation. Many of us are discouraged. Let's all join together, contact the legislators to bring about change.

Here's a blurb from last year's article on chloramine:

Since 2004, when the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) unilaterally decided to put ammonia in our drinking water to form chloramine, people have been experiencing a variety of health problems.

Many people stopped drinking tap water after the change simply because it tasted so awful. Others developed itchy or rashy skin, sore, bloated stomachs, acid reflux, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) – like symptoms or varying levels of respiratory distress. Many of these people were able to connect the chloraminated water with their symptoms when they used non-chloraminated water while on vacation. They saw their symptoms disappear, then return when they came home and resumed using the chloraminated water.

To read my previous article on chloramine, go to: westsideobserver.com click on Sharon The Health and scroll down to Sept. 2009 I'd like to hear your comments. Please email me at caren@westsideobserver.com or call 650.359.6579. To find natural and healthy alternatives visit: www.sharoncaren.com

SFPUC Response (Cont. from p. 3)

debt, saves ratepayers money. Since the inception of the SFPUC's Water Commercial Paper Program, the SFPUC has saved ratepayers over \$24 million. Additionally, the SFPUC has no plans to double the size of its Commercial Paper Program, as was erroneously reported in last month's article.

Oversight of Bond Spending As mandated by San Francisco's Charter and Administrative Code, a complete and fully transparent process governs every aspect of the SFPUC's bond issuance process. It begins with independent monitoring by the seven-member Revenue Bond Oversight Committee (RBOC). The RBOC meets monthly to review pending bond issuance, examine recent bond transactions and discuss financing. Aimee Brown, the Chair of RBOC and a seasoned expert in municipal finance, along with the members of the RBOC, regularly question all aspects of the SFPUC's borrowing program. The RBOC conducts oversight of SFPUC project spending through detailed audits that are funded by a 1/20th of 1% fee on all bond issuances; in fact, the RBOC recently concluded an independent audit of a WSIP reservoir project, which found that the SFPUC complied with prudent financial management. The RBOC has reviewed the SFPUC's Commercial Paper program and found solid performance.

The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission also provides overarching regulatory oversight and approves all debt issuances. The Board of Supervisors then has the final say and must authorize the SFPUC's debt programs. Finally, projects

and all financial transactions are subject to audits by the Controller, the City Services Auditor, independent financial auditors (currently KPMG) and RBOC auditors.

The SFPUC's transparency and financial reporting is recognized nationally. Recent awards include the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award (Fiscal year 2009-10); and the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting (FY 2008-09).

Conclusion San Francisco is fortunate to own, operate and maintain one of the best water, power and sewer systems in the country. The SFPUC is an enterprise department; our annual budget of \$762 million is funded almost entirely through ratepayer customer charges like water rates, sewer rates and power rates. As a consequence, San Francisco taxpayers pay no taxes (ZERO DOLLARS) for SFPUC operations. Together, we will continue building for the future - strengthening our water, power and sewer systems.

Todd Rydstrom – Todd serves as the Assistant General Manager of Business Services and the Chief Financial Officer of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission.

Noted in the above article, Aimee Brown is the current Chair of the RBOC. She is a municipal finance professional with over 30 years of experience, including positions as VP at Goldman Sachs, Principal at Artemis Capital Group and Managing Director at RBC Dain Rauscher. Aimee has played a lead role in some of the most complex infrastructure financing programs in the nation.

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At the Theater • By Dr Annette Lust and Flora Lynn Isaacson

Alice Childress' Trouble in Mind Revived at the Aurora



Dr. Annette Lust



Flora Lynn Isaacson

For its 19th season the Aurora revives the 50's play *Trouble in Mind* by Alice Childress depicting the prejudices of being a black actor on Broadway. A company of black actors, one white actress, and a white director and writer attempt to stage an anti-lynching play on Broadway. Trouble ensues when the main actress in the play within the play ("Chaos in Belleville") Wiletta Mayer (vivaciously played by Margo Hall)

refuses to play mother's role as a stereotyped character who encourages her son to admit to a crime. The director ignores Wiletta and tells her to go on rehearsing without making more comments. Wiletta interprets the mother's lines in a mocking tone and then suddenly ceases to act and bursts out to the director: "Would you send your son to be murdered?"

This line is the focal point of the play's dramatic action that expresses the inhuman treatment of blacks by whites in forcing them to be portrayed as stereotypes and to abandon their struggle to own their dignity as well as bend to the superiority of the white man. Throughout the play there are a number of lines—often comedic— that refer to the conflict between whites and blacks. "White folks can't stand happy negroes," says one character that provokes laughter. Delivered comically these lines attenuate the playwright's direct jabs concerning the racial tension of the era.

Playwright Alice Childress had already combated perspective producers of her play depicting colored actors on Broadway. After rewriting the play for two years because they refused her critique of the racism problem on Broadway and obliged her to make changes to muffle the truth, she withdrew her play.

Robin Stanton's expert direction and the fine cast that brought the audience to a standing ovation were the most vital and strongest contributions to this production.

Childress' 50's play is highly relevant today in America, as well as globally, as it mirrors the struggle to combat racism and liberate those imprisoned by the shackles of prejudice.

Trouble in Mind plays until Sept. 26. For information call 1 510-843-4822 or visit www.aurora.org Dr. Annette Lust



Tony Hall (Cont. from p. 3)

Navy was willing to give the entire 550 acres, including Buena Vista, to the City for practically nothing if we agreed to do the environmental clean-up. Also, at that time there was a much stronger and more expensive real estate market, thus the possibility of attracting bon-fide investors and/or funding, something that is lacking today.

3. The Mayor's office claims the Navy has agreed to do the toxic clean-up. Any novice base re-use developer knows that the Navy will only comply with federal standards, not the more stringent and expensive State or local requirements. This alone will add hundreds of millions of dollars in costs to SF taxpayers, or to the yet to be disclosed "mysterious" developers.

4. Treasure Island is man-made of seismically unsafe, toxic landfill and sits on top of one of the strongest earthquake fault lines in the State. The cost to taxpayers to stabilize the perimeter of the Island and to eliminate the present rate of "sinking" will also be in the hundreds of millions of dollars, which has been documented in multiple in-depth studies commissioned by the Treasure Island Development Authority. Without the proper seismic stabilization that encompasses anchoring the entire Island 150 to 250 feet down to bed rock, and the proper soil remediation and soil compaction, and toxic clean-up, how is the Island going to support the three 60 story high rises, 6000 new homes and commercial center? Without the toxic clean-up, how is the 40 acre organic garden that this mayor is dreaming of going to work?

5. The partners mentioned in the development scheme are Wilson, Meany, Sullivan, a planning development firm that, I assume, will want to get paid for their work, and Lennar Corp. and Kenwood Investments, two corporations that are experiencing serious solvency problems of late.

6. Most importantly, there is no public or private lender that will loan money or insure a development of this nature in today's real estate market, much less without the positive results of all phases

of a properly completed Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Why is all of this happening? What interest would the mayor's office have in promoting this Treasure Island scheme? The answer is simple: smoke and mirrors. A quick-fix poster board attempt to polish his political image. It looks good, especially at election time. That is, before actual analysis. We can call this one "Care not Jobs!"

Here is the play to come: If Newsom can't capitalize on the Treasure Island scheme enough to make Californians think that he actually created jobs, he will remain as Mayor after November. The Treasure Island Project will have to go through the EIR process, and go before the Board of Supervisors. Some of the Board members, in their bumbling, self-serving way, will question the validity of such a strategy, and rightfully, vote against it. At this point, the Mayor, knowing full-well that the project was a loser all along, will have the benefit of posturing as if he were "trying" to create jobs. He will have the perfect excuse to, once again, blame the Board for stopping him from creating jobs. This isn't the first time he has pulled such a maneuver. If Newsom wins in November, it's "sayonara baby" — let the next guy worry about it.

PREDICTION: Same as I stated in 2005, nothing will happen at Treasure Island under this administration.

SOLUTION: Considering the City's finances at this time, the only alternative for the future of Treasure Island is to do what should have been done in the very beginning. Open the entire project up in a true and open competitive-bid process so that qualified developers, who have the experience and the ability to acquire financing, can submit bona-fide proposals that are realistic and workable given the conditions that are out there. Other than that, if the City is to try and do anything there by itself, it might as well convert the entire parcel into open space and recreational uses so that all may enjoy.

Tony Hall is a former District 7 Supervisor and Director of Treasure Island. Feedback: hall@westsideobserver.com

PHYLLIS' FINDINGS

By Phyllis Sherman

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

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

I arrived with all the data I'd been told to bring. Among the caveats from the book was, "even though they request you bring your return for the year before and the year after, don't do it." So, I didn't, and fortunately they weren't requested. My auditor, a nice young woman from Oakland, attempted to put me at ease and we talked about my return for over two hours. She was amazed at some of the errors considering the return was, ostensibly, professionally prepared. She ate a Tootsie Roll while we were talking and offered me one, admitting she was addicted to them. Hmm, I thought, and even asked her "Could I bribe you with a box of Tootsie Rolls?" We both laughed.

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

My advice, if it happens to you: Ask, and make sure your accountant will assist you BEFORE you have your return prepared. Get it in writing. Secondly, try to keep meticulous records and get Nolo's book on *IRS Audits*. It's a pretty good read considering the subject matter.

I notice that Dan Hoyle's *The Real Americans* is still playing at the Marsh Theater on Valencia. Dan is telling his story as he travels through rural America seeking country wisdom and fighting ignorance, homophobia, fears of socialism and this 90-minute tour de force is running through

November 6. It is worth seeing twice. A don't miss, hilarious one-man stand up. 800-838-3006.



There was a very funny, topical and poignant production by a group of seniors between the ages of 55 and 75, who produced instructional sex videos for senior citizens. Despite protests from their children and members of their retirement community, they overcome obstacles as they discover a new perspective on themselves, their relationships and their changing social roles. *Sex Tapes for Seniors* was at the Victoria Theater and may return.

In the film department, if you haven't seen *Joan Rivers: A Piece of Work* at the Opera Plaza is one of the best documentaries about show business life. It follows Joan for a year, as she tries successfully to resurrect her career. Not for the prurient, but for everyone else. The Kids are All Right is at the Stonestown, and the story about a gay marriage that becomes destabilized when the kids contact their sperm-donor, biological father. Mark Ruffalo is the sperm donor and Annette Bening and Julianne Moore are both superb as middle-aged lesbians in a long-term relationship. And, there's never a parking problem at Stonestown Cinema! Also showing at Stonestown currently is the Swedish film, *The Girl Who Played With Fire*, with English titles and totally absorbing.

Several weeks ago, there were two Comedy Talk Sundays. I met Carol Channing (90 yrs. old next week), Shelley Berman, Dick Little, Will Durst and a couple of other funny guys. An amusing line from Dick Little about Obama: "No matter his politics, you have to admire his not getting involved in anything." Carol married Harry a few years ago. She remembered him from elementary school some time back (and they just reconnected a few years ago and got married.)

Photo: Phyllis with Carol



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THU • LIFELONG LEARNING

Osher Lifelong Learning Open House | Sept. 2 | 3:30–5 pm | SFSU expands courses of arts and creativity-related subjects. For people 50 + With OLLI membership up to 15 courses, \$26 ea. Knuth Hall, Creative Arts Building, SF State campus, 1600 Holloway at 19th Ave. 817-4243

SAT–SUN • SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

2nd Annual Ardenwood (Fremont CA) Renaissance Faire & Shakespeare Festival | Sept. 11–12 | 10 am–6 pm (Sat) –5 pm (Sun) | 3 stages of continuous entertainment, Queen Elizabeth's court, Shakespearian plays, battle scenes storytelling for children, dancing, archery tournaments, arts and crafts. Tickets: \$18 adults, \$13 seniors, military, & ages 13-17, \$8 children 3-12. Info: <http://www.ardenwoodfaire.com/>

SAT • RORY MCNAMERA

Shelby Ash Presents American Roots Music | Sept. 11 | 2 pm | The Music Store, 66 West Portal Ave • 664-2044 • rorymcnamera.com

THU • AUTHOR BUCKLIN-SPORER

Arden Bucklin-Sporer | Sept 16 | 7 pm | The author will discull *How to Grow a School Garden: A Complete Guide for Parents and Teachers*. school garden pioneers offer know-how to build and support school gardens. BookShop West Portal, 80 West Portal Ave., Info: 564-8080

TUE • AUTHOR BOB HICOK

Poet Bob Hicoc | Sept 21 | 7 pm | will read from his new collection, *Words for Empty and Words for Full*. Hicok is the author of several poetry collections, including *This Clumsy Living*, which won the distinguished Bobbitt Prize from the Library of Congress. Bookshop West Portal, 80 West Portal Ave., Info: 564-8080

TUE• COMMUNITY MEETING

Taraval Police District Community Mtg | Sept 21 | 6 pm | Monthly Taraval/Community meeting at Taraval Police Station, 2345 24th Ave.(3rd Tues of each month).

THU • LET’S DANCE!

Social Ballroom Dancing for Couples/Bart and Judy Lewis | Sept 23 | Call for Time | Learn the Samba, Cha Cha, Mambo, Tango, Waltz, Foxtrot, Swing and more! Thursday evenings beginning Sept23 • Forest Hill Christian Fellowship Hall, 250 Laguna Honda Blvd. Six lessons for \$70.00 per couple. 661-2746

SUN • FUN FUN-WALK FOR S.A.F.E.

Project SAFE | Sept 26 | 11am | 2nd annual-raise awareness of personal safety and crime prevention. Music, BBQ and prizes. \$20, kids to 10 free.

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SUN • WALK ON SUNDAY

Out of the Darkness Community Walk | Sept 26 | 9am Registration 8am | Support the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. Lake Merced Blvd and Sunset Blvd. Following the walk, there will be speakers, live music, prize giveaways, and more!

MON • CENTRAL COUNCIL

West of Twin Peaks Central Council | Sep 27 | 7:30 pm | A resource for neighborhood organizations. Learn

and comment on issues. Fourth Mon each month Forest Hill Clubhouse at 381 Magellan Ave.

SAT • CLEAN UP

Community Clean Team/Dist. 4 | Oct 2 | 9 am–12 pm | Beautify the shopping areas and neighborhoods of District Four. Volunteers plant trees, weeding, paint graffiti, and pick up litter. A celebration of Community Clean Team's 10-year anniversary and final cleanup follows. Meeting at Sunset Blvd., Sunset @ Pacheco

Got an event? The Westside Observer's priority is neighborhood, local events: editor@westsideobserver.com

Now At the Movies • By Don Lee Miller

DESPICABLE ME

In this animated feature, the villain is actually the hero, Gru: voiced by Steve Carell, who battles Vector: v. of Jason Segel to see who can first reduce and capture the Moon. Gru believes by adopting the three little girls who have entry to the lab of Vector to sell him sweets, he can accomplish his goal. Gru's Mom: v.o. Julie Andrews knows only his good side which he develops further as he comes to love Margo, Edith and Agnes. Directors Chris Renaud and Pierre Coffin and co-screenwriters Ken Daurio and Cinco Paul, from a story by Sergio Pablos, bring us a very different outer space animated feature for all ages. 3-D

EAT PRAY LOVE

Liz Gilbert: luminous Julia Roberts, thankfully, is on screen in almost every frame of this woman's story of a writer, based on her book, who divorces husband, Stephen: Billy Crudup. She then has a relationship with a stage actor, David: James Franco, leaving him behind in NYC when she goes on a year long journey to find herself. In Rome, she finds the good food and makes friends easily as she learns the language and habits of the Italians. Liz is told of a sect with a female leader in India where she can learn to pray and journeys there. In Indonesia, she falls in love with Brazilian Felipe: Javier Bardem, a sympathetic soul. Director and co-screenwriter, Ryan Murphy (Glee) with Jennifer Salt, keep the action moving along with Liz's travels, accompanied by the loving photography of Robert Richardson and are produced by Brad Pitt. Profanity, Sexual situations, Rear male nudity.

INCEPTION

Cobb: Leonardo di Caprio and his dream-invading crew (Arthur: Joseph Gordon-Levitt; Eames: Tom Hardy; Peter Browning: Tom Berenger; Ariadne, the newbie: Ellen Page) plus Marion Cottillard as Mal, Cobb's late wife, Michael Caine as his father, and Robert Fischer: Cillian Murphy as the banker who is to have info implanted, unknowingly, in his brain while he's in a dreamlike state. Pete Postlethwaite portrays the dying senior Maurice Fischer. The client is Tokyo businessman, Ken Watanabe. One of the thrills is when the next block in Paris is first upended, then becomes a roof to the block in which our characters are conversing, all the while the autos and pedestrians move along upside down! A sci-fi mystery action thriller, this is the best film, easily the

most original, released so far this year! Expect it to be prominent in next year's Oscar race. Director-writer Christopher Nolan deserves both awards. See it. Also in IMAX. Profanity, Violence.

THE KIDS ARE ALL RIGHT

Both gay parents of two siblings used the same sperm donor years ago. Now that Laser: Jeff Hutcherson is 15 and his sister Joni: Mia Wasikowska (the pouting Alice in Alice in Wonderland) is going on 18 and entering college in the fall. The teens want to meet him, but the ladies (doctor Nic: Annette Bening and garden landscaper Jules: Julianne Moore) object. Affable Paul: Mark Ruffalo lives locally in L.A. and owns several businesses, including a restaurant and bar. Director and co-writer Lisa Cholodenko, with Stuart Blumberg, deliver the warm lesbian parents with profanity, lesbian relationship, topless female nudity, urinating on a dog, interracial sex, and teen drug and alcohol use. It is absolutely one of the best movies of this summer.

THE OTHER GUYS

Two mismatched NYC cops, Allen Gamble: Will Ferrell and Terry Hoitz: Mark Wahlberg report to Police Capt. Gene Mauch: Michael Keaton. The hot Dr. Sheila Gamble: Eva Mendes has the abilities to get home from work in time to prepare scrumptious Italian meals for her Allen. If his partner, Terry, comes for dinner, too, he is awed by Sheila's presentation with nary a hair out of place. Terry's lady love, Francine: Lindsay Sloane is not so talented. Look for walk-throughs by the diversely capable Derek Jeter, Samuel L. Jackson, Dwayne Johnson, Damon Wayons, Jr., Anne Heche, Brooke Shields, Tracy Morgan, and Rosie Perez. Steve Coogan: David Ershon, European financier is the main villain. This unique cops-and-robbers chase is a no-holds-barred comedy as directed and co-written by Adam McKay (with Chris Henchy). A

fun time was had by all.


SALT

Evelyn Salt: Angelina Jolie, while interrogating a Soviet spy, Orlov: Daniel Olbrychski, is accused by him of being his chief U.S. contact and that she will try to assassinate the Soviet Premier present in NYC for the funeral of the U.S. Vice President. Evelyn's boss Ted Winter: Liev Schreiber and fellow agent, Peabody: Chiwetel Ejiofor, attempt to save U.S. President Lewis: Hunt (ATWT) Block, who excels as the firm, determined leader, facing his worst nightmares come-to-life. Jolie may be the only actress who can handle this muscular a role and not look exhausted. Phillip Noyce directs with a flair for the intense nonstop action from Kurt Wimmer's script. Action violence, profanity.

STEPUP 3D

A close group of NYC street dancers, including Luke: Rick Malambri and Natalie: Sharni Vinson, team up with newly arrived NYU engineering freshman Moose: Adam G. Sevani. His best high school friend, Camille: Alyson Stoner, has traveled to Greenwich Village with him. She supports his dance drive but knows how much his parents are relying on his becoming an engineer. The competing dance teams are extraordinarily creative and have the ambition to overcome all adversities. The music and routines are up-to-date in this dance drama directed by Jon Chu and written by Amy Andelson and Emily Meyer with characters written by Duane Adler. RealD 3-D. Profanity.





REMEMBER WHEN?

Golden Gate Heights - 15th Avenue at Noriega Street - steam shovel grading for wall May 10, 1927.
Permission: SF Public Library Historical Photograph Collection.

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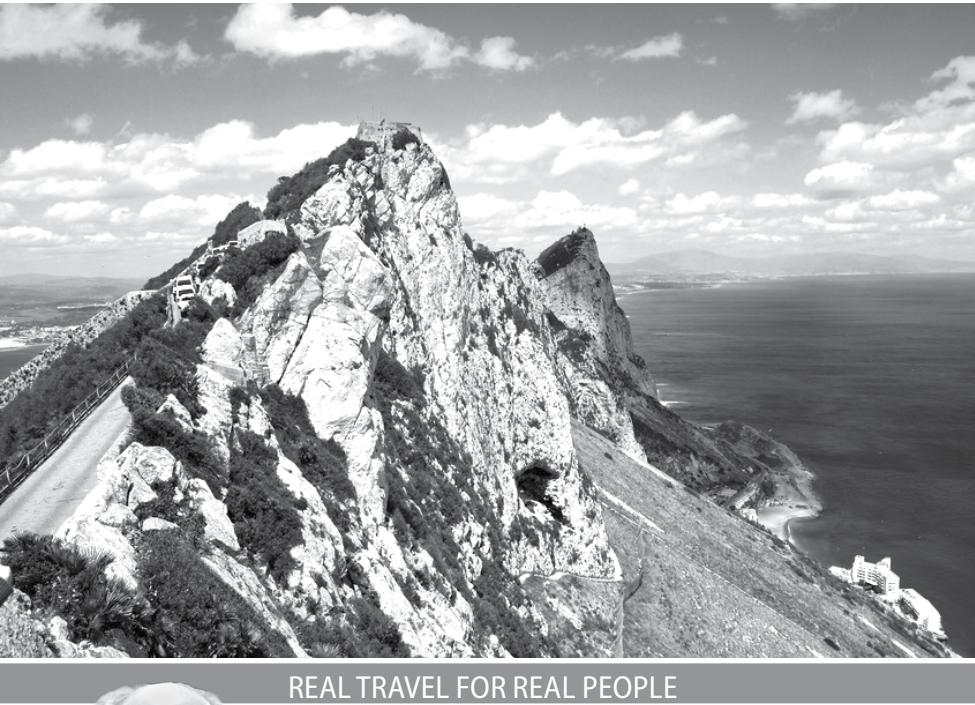
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By Julie Behn
www.JulieBehn.com



REAL TRAVEL FOR REAL PEOPLE



Like the Rock of Gibraltar

By Sergio Nibbi

Back to the ship, under the Abril Bridge and off to Gibraltar. So what's the big deal about a big rock sticking out of the ocean? Well, the first thing we saw, aside from the rock, was the most beautiful terminal we have visited so far. Marble floors, paintings on the wall and a scale model of Gibraltar greets the passengers going ashore. Once again, we decided to go it on our own and this time, with Harrison and Rochelle, we ended up with Charlie who has a six passenger mini-van not unlike all the other drivers. Not being able to find two more we worked over Charlie to take the four of us for the same rate.

Well, let me tell you, Gibraltar is not just a rock. First of all, the main airport is built on reclaimed land that now joins Gibraltar with Spain. In order to cross over to Spain the road crosses the main runway and when a plane is landing they close the road.

Before leaving the ship in the morning we watched as NATO jets took off across the bow of our ship as part of their training exercises going on at this time. So around the entire island we went, going to the highest point that is also reached by a cable car that climbs the face of the rock. Along the way we stopped to view the Atlantic, Mediterranean, Straits of Gibraltar, Northern Africa and Spain without so much as turning our head. We worked our way to the top, stopping to visit St. Michael's Cave, a grotto of spectacular stalagmites and stalactites that also has a small auditorium for recitals. Along the very narrow one-way streets are hundreds of caves that the various Armies dug through the years. At the very top, the Barbary apes were waiting to put on their endless show for us mortals. Is that what we really looked like all those many years ago? The apes are fairly small and very playful; they jump on cars, tease people and do what monkeys do best — act like monkeys. Like us, they are in no danger of going hungry. Our driver keeps a bag of dry pasta to feed them; at least on the boat we get it cooked.

Back down for a brief walk around the main shopping street where we found a rather simple looking Catholic church which provided a good place to barter for a couple of candles for our left over pounds. Once aboard we managed another round of cocktail parties, dinner, a fabulous show and off to bed for a few hours of sleep before arriving in Malaga Spain on Thursday morning.

Feedback: sergio@westsideobserver.com

Sudoku-fun!

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

Rules:

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

The Object:

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

Answer:

The answer appears aside.

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

BRAIN FUD

This month we look at trivia about none other than: Mark Twain

1. Twain was the first person ever to contact a publisher using what instrument?

2. Besides his trademark white suit, what did Twain wear to his daughter's wedding?

3. Twain hosted a party to help promote "The World I Live In." What was the name of the author, who was a good friend of Twain's?

4. What story did Twain write after busting out of his silver and surface gold mining efforts?

5. Who was Twain's neighbor in Connecticut?

6. What American forefather was an icon to Twain and referenced often in Twain's writings?

7. How many living descendants are there of Twain?

8. What was the first and last foreign land that Twain visited during his lifetime?

9. Ever since they were engaged, what did Livy Clemens help Twain do?

10. Where is Mark Twain buried?

Answers:

1). The Typewriter

2). His red doctoral cap and gown

3). Helen Keller

4). "Roughing It"

5). Harriet Beecher Stowe

6). Benjamin Franklin

7). None. Twain's only grandchild and last direct descendant, Nina Clemens Gabrielowitsch, died in 1966

8). Bermuda

9). Edit his books

10). Woodlawn Cemetery in Elmira, NY

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From the Border

WHAT WE'RE HUNGRY FOR

by Hilary Gordon/Photos by Blair Randall, 2010

One fine morning, I was pruning and shaping the flowering shrubs at the Garden for the Environment (GFE), when someone walked by and said, “Why don’t you pull all this out and grow food?” It’s a legitimate question.



Why do I care about flowering plants? If I were a bee or a hummingbird, I’d have a practical answer. These would be my food plants. And as an organic gardener, I can give a practical answer, too. The flowering borders around the GFE stabilize soil, build the water table, add organic matter to our soil, attract pollinators, and beneficial insects. The list goes on. (*Elder Berry at GFE*) But as a human being in an urban world, I have an impractical answer, too. People love beautiful gardens. Gardens nourish the eyes with beauty, but even more, gardens nourish the soul. From at-risk youth to elders in wheelchairs, people enter the garden with their eyes wide and wander slowly as if in a trance. They touch, they smell, and they stare. Relaxed



and transformed, they stop one of us and say, “It’s so beautiful!” The abundant, mysterious, graceful, spacious beauties of a good garden call out to something in us that is very hungry. Our urban hearts are starving for the connection and inspiration living green spaces provide. Gardens are a temple, a gym, a therapist’s office all rolled into one, to inspire and heal people from the inside out. We are built for gardens, and gardens are built for us. Hilary Gordon is Sustainable Landscape Education Manager at the GFE. A life-long gardener, trained at the City College Horticulture program, she has worked as a professional landscape gardener from 1984 until the present. Have a question for Hilary? Meet her in the garden Wednesdays 10-2 and Saturdays 10-4.



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