



Quentin Kopp
Thoughts on the
Recent Election
— p. 3

**Soccer Field
Expense Report**
— p. 3



Will Durst
Gifts for Wall St.
Fat Cats?
— p. 4

Brian Browne
SF PUC—Who's
Watching the Store?
— p. 4



Jeff Adachi
Next Steps in Pension
Fund Reform
— p. 5

Tony Hall
Highway
Robberies
— p. 5



Real Estate
Signs and Sales
— p. 9

**West of Twin
Peaks Central
Council**
— p. 9



Public Notices	3
Education / Carol Kocivar	7
Jack Kaye	8
Seniors and Contractors	8
Around the Town	11
Real Travel / Sergio Nibbi.	12
Police Blotter	13
Hank Basayne	14
Sharon the Health	14
At the Movies	15
Theater	15
Remember When	16
Phyllis' Findings	16
Open Late	17
Sudoku/Brain Füd	17
Calendar	18
From the Border	19
What the Heck	19

Neighbors Outraged: Privatizing Our Parks by Lease

By George Wooding

To be privatized or not be privatized: That is the question.



On Nov. 15, the Recreation and Park Department held a meeting regarding privatizing the JP Murphy Park and its playground. The park is located at 9th Avenue and Ortega. The RPD's goal of leasing out the facility to a currently unknown non-recreational tenant met stiff resistance from a standing room only crowd of concerned neighbors.

Westside neighbors are just becoming aware that the RPD fired or reassigned all of its recreation and park directors on August 15. The 100 or so recreation and park employees and directors were the face, heart, and soul of the RPD. These were the people who put the band-aid on your kid's knee, helped with the tiny tot programs, and managed after-school programs, including baseball, football, soccer, and basketball. They sponsored Thanksgiving dinners. These smiling faces have all been fired.

The RPD used the recreation directors to promote the passing of the \$185 million, 2008 Clean and Safe Neighborhood Parks Bond. The bond money was to be used to renovate dilapidated clubhouses and playgrounds throughout the City. The renovated parks were going to be beautiful. It was assumed by all that the recreation directors would continue to provide services to the community in the new clubhouses.

If someone had told the public that recreation directors would be fired and recreational services eliminated just as soon as the clubhouses were remodeled, Proposition A would never have passed. Supervisor Sean Elsbernd was the driving legislative force behind Prop A.

It was sad to hear a former recreation director apologize to the crowd that the fired

recreation directors were sorry that they were unable to continue serving the public. The director went on to state, "The public uses recreation facilities hundreds of times more than they will ever use the police or fire department. Well-run parks with services add to property values, the character of the neighborhoods, and the value of people's lives."

JP Murphy Park is a perfect example. San Francisco spent \$3.9 million of Proposition A bond money to renovate the JP Murphy Playground and Clubhouse. Carli Fullerton, the former recreation director of JP Murphy Park was close to tears as she talked about how much she loved the new facility she helped to design, the local community, and plans she once had for the renovated JP Murphy Park. After years of great service to the local community, Ms. Fullerton lost her job on August 15.

The newly renovated JP Murphy Clubhouse is now locked and closed to the public. People can still purchase a permit and rent the facility out for parties. The tennis courts and park playground are still sporadically available to the public. Supervisor Elsbernd stated at a Nov. 22 West of Twin Peaks Central Council meeting that he has not heard "One complained about the clubhouse being locked and that he personally uses the park."

Cont. p. 7



RPD Representatives go through the motions at a public meeting of outraged neighbors.

Controller Restores \$350,000 to Laguna Honda's Patients

By Patrick Monette-Shaw

An audit of Laguna Honda Hospital's (LHH) patient gift fund conducted by the City Controller appears to vindicate the majority of allegations former doctors Maria Rivero and Derek Kerr raised in multiple whistle-blower complaints about potential mismanagement of patient gift funds.

However, the audit was clearly flawed. Initially, the Controller's office whitewashed the gift fund scandal, and stalled as long as possible before beginning an audit in September. Along the way, Supervisor Sean Elsbernd attempted to broker a "limited audit" focusing only on eight of the initial complaints.

The City also claimed it lacked funds to conduct an audit, until a Sunshine request uncovered the fact that the City Services Auditor had been allocated \$400,000 for audits at

LHH. The compromised audit findings have resulted, surprisingly, in restitution of approximately \$350,000 to the gift fund to actually benefit patients. Had the audit's flawed methodology been modified, it is thought that thousands of dollars in additional restitution may potentially have been required.

Had whistle-blowers not filed complaints, not one nickel of the \$350,000 in wrongfully-diverted patient funds would have been returned to patients.

Cont. p. 6

Laguna Honda Dr. Files Wrongful Termination Lawsuit

On November 16, 2010 doctor Derek Kerr — a former physician in good standing at Laguna Honda Hospital for over 21 years — filed a lawsuit in SF Superior Court, alleging retaliatory termination of employment.

His lawsuit names as defendants the City and County of SF; DPH director, Dr. Mitch Katz; Laguna Honda Hospital's executive administrator, Mivic Hirose; LHH's current medical director, Colleen Riley; and others.



Whistleblower Drs. Kerr and Rivero, formerly of Laguna Honda Hospital. A lawsuit may restore Kerr's position as head of LHH's hospice

Cont. p. 6

Pensions Unpayable

By Steve Lawrence

Among the many facets of San Francisco government, happily one group is composed entirely of volunteers: the Civil Grand Jury.

This past year the Jury reported on public pension liability. Few listened. That is too bad. With no axe to grind, and no turf to protect, these talented citizens are very likely motivated by nothing other than the desire to protect the citizenry of our fair city.

The Grand Jury's report is disturbing. They often are. Perhaps this is why the Civil Grand Jury is so often ignored.

The Jury tells it like it is. "The purpose of this report is to alert public officials and citizens that fundamental adjustments must be made to the City's employee pension program." In five years pension and health care costs will more than double, the Controller says.

The Jury believes that the financial future of San Francisco is in jeopardy. In the past the City has kept its pension fund fully funded. But City's actuaries project

growing unfunded liability in the future.

The Jury listed more than 900 retirees who receive pensions of more than \$100,000. Absent reform, pension costs will soar in just a few years.

Cost sharing mandated by 2002 proposition has not been instituted. The People's will has been ignored by politicians doing the bidding of the employee unions.

Not only are the overly generous City employee pensions like voracious termites eating the home, but also they affect everyday services. Revenues allocated for pensions and benefits soak up available revenue; policy makers choose to cut employees. Take Rec & Park as an example. "Cut costs" the mayor tells this department that delivers services to children and their parents. Does Rec & Park cut the upper managers? Of course not;



it closes all the City's Clubhouses and lays off the Recreation Directors that run them. Then, recently, it sends three very well spoken representatives to a community meeting about one clubhouse (J.P. Murphy, 9th Avenue) to explain why the best option is to lease out the Clubhouse, which was recently renovated at great cost. Those working with kids are gone; those working with words hang on; in the future, public facilities generate revenue.

Without quite saying so, the Civil Grand Jury says the City has been stupid generous. The City has painted itself into a fiscal corner. It will be messy to get out, but the City must act sooner rather later. In this case the "paint" just keeps getting deeper.

Will the citizenry mobilize? Without plenty of pressure, politicians are unlikely to act. It is like playing with a loaded gun to defy the public employee unions in this town. Public Defender Jeff Adachi tried, and B-B-B bombed. Citizens can heed the Jury's warning, applying the needed pressure, or the City can "go Vallejo".

The Jury is out.



320 West Portal Ave • 415.681.GAME
www.JustAwesomeTheWebsite.com



**Enjoy The
Holidays
With Us**

328 West Portal

**Sports Bar
Trivia Nite - Wed
\$3 Drinks - Thu, Sat & Sun**

**All of Us at
Dimitra's
Wish You a
Happy Holiday
Prosperous 2011**

**Have a Joyous Holiday
Thanks for Shopping at the
White Rose Boutique**
Ursula Marsten
242 West Portal Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94127 (415) 681-5411

Lovely Holiday Gifts

European Soaps: Lotions: Perfumes
Cashmere Socks: Scarves: Gloves

Stationary: Books

Jewelry:

Beautiful Gift Wrap

S.S.'s 111 West Portal Ave.

415-731-1108

GG

**Happy
Holidays**

Please **SHOP LOCAL**
on **West Portal Avenue**

There's something for
everyone of every age!

Z
ZEPHYR
REAL ESTATE

**Hoping For Your Success
Over The Holiday Season
from Our Entire
West Portal Office**

215 West Portal Avenue
San Francisco CA 94127
Tel: 415.731.5000
Fax: 415.731.5015



"Best Crust in the City"
(... possibly the world)

Salvatore & Catherine Alioto
393 West Portal Ave., SF 94127
415-759-1155 • email: salspizza@aol.com
www.paradisepizzaandpasta.com

Since 1989



Annabelle's
French Cleaners
10% OFF COUPON

363 West Portal Ave., San Francisco, CA 94127
(415) 731-6675 Mon-Sat 8am to 6pm

More Fun Than a Holiday Sweater!



Tel: 415.731.3120
Fax: 415.731.3127
312 West Portal Avenue
San Francisco CA 94127

**Edible
ARRANGEMENTS**
EdibleArrangements.com

SAVE \$5
on your
next order

Offer valid on select products. Cannot be
combined with any other offers. Offer code
must be used when placing the order.
Offer expires 12/31/10 Code: WPR10435

Happiness is always in season • Christmas • Hanukkah • Holiday Gatherings • Corporate Gifts
Delicious Fruit Design® with chocolate dipped strawberries in snowman keepsake • All stores open 7 days a week
©2010 Edible Arrangements, LLC. Containers may vary. Delivery not available in all areas. Available in a
variety of sizes. Franchises available; call 1-888-727-4258 or visit edfranchise.com.

**Our West Portal Office Thanks You
We Appreciate Your Business
Have A Marvelous Holiday**



RE/MAX
Prestigious Properties
2811 14th Ave Office: (415) 564-3776
San Francisco, California 94127

(415) 564-8020
Mon-Fri 7:30am - 7pm
Sat 7:30am - 6pm
15% Discount for Senior Citizens



Sandy's
CLEANERS & LAUNDRY

Andy Ko
Nina Ko

364 West Portal Avenue
San Francisco CA 94127

Happy Holidays

From

The Pawber Shop

Pet grooming Salon



**Free Holiday
Bandana
With purchase of
Bath or Groom!!!**



323 West Portal Ave

415-668-3992

RUMINATIONS FROM A FORMER SUPERVISOR

Math and Aftermath

By Quentin Kopp

In the aftermath of last month’s Federal, State and local elections, exciting but guileful political schemes abound, including replacement of the incumbent mayor and district attorney which should be resolved by the dawn of the New Year. What seems to concern many of my friends and neighbors is the lack of sound public administrative ability on the part of the alleged contenders and, in the instance of the district attorney’s office, a career dedication to prosecuting crimes resulting from arrests by San Francisco Police Department members. Because of the problems attendant to the infamous San Francisco Narcotics Laboratory, police arrests for crimes involving the need for laboratory tests that will be admissible in evidence at a trial and convincing to a jury and judge, have turned into a policy of not filing a criminal complaint against a person arrested by our police force until such laboratory evidence is demonstrably usable at trial. Therefore, citizens are subjected to the spectacle of release of persons arrested for narcotics and similar offenses until an actual criminal complaint is filed and judicial proceedings commenced. One wonders about the existence of data showing the number of arrested persons who are released from jail and subsequently cannot be found, much less detained for trail.

Amidst the potpourri of local results, one in particular fixed my attention: the demise of the disgraceful proposal to allow non-citizens to vote in San Francisco Unified School District elections. That constitutes the second time in ten years that voters have rejected the illogical notion of enfranchising aliens, despite its consonance with San Francisco’s puzzling policies of not reporting police detentions of illegal aliens to federal authorities. There still exists a covey of SF voters with respect for Federal law.

As we await the advent of a new mayor, citizens should be aware that under current Board of Supervisors policy the board’s budget analyst is precluded from recommending the diminution of any current service level. That is, the board of supervisors has directed the budget analyst in reviewing the mayor’s proposed budget to “assume” unchanged levels of service. That such policy continues in the face of yet another prospective gap between reliably forecasted city government revenue and desired expenditures should be of interest to all residents.

Recent inquiry of this correspondent about the modern history of compensation for our eleven supervisors (now amounting to over \$90,000 per year) caused me to remind inquirers of supplemental compensation garnered by all supervisors except Supervisor Sophie Maxwell, namely, service on regional agencies such as the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District, the Association of Bay Area Governments, the Metropolitan Transportation

Commission, the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board of Directors, the San Francisco Metropolitan Transportation Authority (whose governing board is composed entirely of the eleven supervisors) and the Treasure Island Development Authority Board of Directors. Most of such agencies use a per diem method of compensation to augment the supervisorial salary no longer salary controlled by San Francisco voters. For example, service on the Bay Area Air Quality Management District board includes a stipend of \$100 per meeting. Similar per diem sums

Cont. p. 6



Parkmerced • Planning Commission Special Hearing

Thur, Dec. 9, 2010 • 6:00 PM

SF State University, 1600 Holloway Ave. (Near 19th Ave.)

McKenna Hall, College of Creative Arts

(J. SWITZKY: (415) 575-6815) PARK MERCED MIXED-USE PROJECT OVERVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT – INFORMATIONAL ONLY Parkmerced is a rental housing complex constructed between 1941-1951 consisting of approximately 3,200 existing residential units and owned by Parkmerced Investors, LLC. This is an Informational Hearing to provide an overview of the proposed project components and draft Development Agreement. Specific topics to be discussed at this session include transportation and housing (including rent and tenant relocation considerations). The project, which would be implemented over 20-30 years in multiple phases, includes the addition of approximately 5,700 net new residential units, the demolition and replacement of approximately 1,800 existing units which would remain subject to the San Francisco Rent Stabilization Ordinance, rent-protections and relocation rights for existing tenants, re-alignment and re-design of streets and blocks, re-alignment and improvement of the M Ocean View light rail line, the addition of new neighborhood serving retail and office space, new and re-configured public open spaces including neighborhood parks, pedestrian and bike paths, athletic fields, a new organic farm, and community gardens, overall transportation improvements, ecological hydrology improvements, and provision of renewable energy and water infrastructure. Preliminary Recommendation: No Action Requested. Informational Discussion Only.



Housing Element Workshop

Conversation with the Director San Francisco Planning Department

Wed. Dec. 8 • 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM • 1650 Mission Street, Suite 400

Director John Rahaim will lead a two part discussion on the Housing Element with interested community members.

Outstanding Issues around the Housing Element. The Planning Department and Planning Commission continue to receive comments on draft 1 and draft 2 of the 2009 Housing Element update. The Director will lead a focused discussion on key issues.

The Department’s work program, related to the Housing Element. The Director will present ongoing and future Department work products that relate to issues the community has raised in relation to the Housing Element, including a discussion of the Department’s work program.

Planning Department’s Action Plan Stakeholders Group

Saturday, December 11, 2010 • 10am – 11:30am

Planning Department, 1650 Mission St. Rm 431

The Department’s progress on aspects of the Action Plan related to the Development Review process and three components. This final meeting concludes the Action Plan. There will be an informational briefing on the Department’s accomplishments of the Action Plan with the discussion centered on the updated Development Review process.

- 1. Preliminary Porject Assessment (PPA)
- 2. Project description stage
- 3. Project analysis stage.

For more notices of public interest, see the Calendar on page 19.

Beach Chalet Soccer Fields Cost Lots of Dollars But Don’t Make Sense

By Katherine Howard, ASLA

We have been told over and over again that one of the reasons for using artificial turf in Golden Gate Park is to save money. However, the figures do not bear this out.

The public has just learned the cost for the legally-mandated Environmental Impact Report for the Beach Chalet athletic fields project is \$400,000. Yes, that is a lot of money. The cost reflects the fact that the project may have major negative impacts on Golden Gate Park and Ocean Beach, and the EIR must cover the potential impacts in detail.

Before our readers get upset over the cost of following the environmental laws, let’s look at the real costs involved in this massive construction project.

The overall Beach Chalet project budget has been quoted at \$12 million dollars. Where is this money being spent? The project includes artificial turf fields, new grading, new irrigation, new concrete, expensive site amenities, and 60 foot sports lights. Let’s be clear about the lighting. The night lights are for the adult soccer leagues who play at night, and many of whom include players from outside of San Francisco. The lighting will have a limited impact on the number of hours that the kids can play.

Now let’s look at the Golden Gate Park Polo Field. The Polo Field has just been completely renovated with new grading, new irrigation, soil amendments, and new natural grass. The Polo Field occupies an area twice the size of the Beach Chalet fields—so, how much do you think that costs? Was it \$24 million? \$12 million? Maybe only \$5 million, since it is natural grass? If you guessed any of those amounts, you

What is wrong with this picture? For \$500,000 or only \$100,000 more than is being spent on the EIR alone, the Beach Chalet fields could be renovated today. No wait of 18 months for the EIR, and no more legal battles, which will cost the City even more money with uncertain outcomes.

would be far afield (sorry for the pun). The Polo Field renovation contract with natural grass cost \$1 million. And it did not require an EIR!

What is wrong with this picture? For \$500,000 or only \$100,000 more than is being spent on the EIR alone, the Beach Chalet fields could be renovated today. No wait of 18 months for the EIR, and no more legal battles, which will cost the City even more money with uncertain outcomes.

Or, looking at it differently, if so much extra money is lying around for the Beach Chalet fields, they could be renovated with natural grass every year for 24 years with the \$12 million!

Let’s look at what will happen if artificial turf is installed. It will have to be replaced in

8 years for hundreds of thousands of dollars. This is the fate of all the artificial turf fields in San Francisco.

Among all the city’s fields that will have to be renovated every 8 years, which fields will get budgeted? Will Beach Chalet be chosen at the expense of neighborhood artificial turf fields, that will be left to crumble into trash heaps of gravel, old plastic and rubber?

One other argument given in favor of artificial turf here is that the grass fields have to rest. The answer to that is easy -- Rec and Park has said that it does not need the construction area which is located next to the soccer fields. There is enough land there for at least one more multi-use meadow—in fact, it is designated in the



Golden Gate Park Master Plan.

San Francisco’s kids need safe, natural fields to play on. They need them now. Kids all over San Francisco need funding to pay for renovations of parks closer to their homes - studies show that there are many more children in other parts of San Francisco than in the outer reaches of the Sunset and Richmond Districts.

The artificial turf playing fields in Golden Gate Park do not make sense. They do not make sense in the context of Golden Gate Park. They do not make sense environmentally. They do not make sense in providing the most benefit for kids all over San Francisco. And they do not make sense in dollars and cents.

Katherine Howard, ASLA -The EIR for the artificial turf fields will start in December. If you are interested in being notified so that you can attend the scoping session or write a letter expressing your concerns about this project to be included in the official record, contact: sfoceanedge@earthlink.net, website: www.sfoceanedge.org

Foxes and Henhouses at SF's PUC

By Brian Browne

In 2002 the SF Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) estimated its Hetch Hetchy fix-up at \$3.6B. Today it is estimated at \$4.6B. A revision to \$5B by 2015 is likely. The ratepayers will pick up the check in significant rate spikes.

Proposition E of 2002 gave the SFPUC a virtual blank check. Its main target was the voter's historical right to veto revenue bonds. It also allows a transfer of funds from the SFPUC to the general fund.

Utilities use a revenue requirements approach to ratemaking: rates, multiplied by units sold, (theoretically) equal allowable utility operating and capital costs. Revenues may not be set in excess of legitimate costs to produce funds for non-utility use.

Excess rate-revenues must be reinvested into the system or returned to the ratepayers as a rebate under California's Prop 218 and the affirmative Big Horn decision

The Revenue Bond Oversight Committee (RBOC) resulted from the passage in 2002 of Proposition P. It was proposed as an independent counter-balance to Props A and E that gave the SFPUC, without voter approval—and real oversight—access to vast sums of public funds.

The RBOC was to be funded by setting aside 1/20th of 1 percent of all revenue bonds issued. These funds were to be set aside in a special account (RBOC NOT SFPUC) at the Controller's Office.

The SFPUC decided to issue billions in Build America Bonds (BABs) created by the 2009 America Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). BABs' interest payments are currently subsidized by the federal government (taxpayers) at 35 percent of all interest payments. BABs are not tax exempt to most US citizens.

Prior to using BABs the SFPUC issued tax-exempt municipal bonds and included the RBOC funding fee in the issuance costs. The SFPUC in issuing BABs decided that this fee was contrary to the 2009 Act and/or IRS codes.

There are no such prohibitions either in law (ARRA) or codes (IRS).

The net result of this was that there was no longer an automatic set-aside automatically deposited in a special RBOC account at the Controller's Office. A special account, compliant with 2002 P, has not been set up at the Controller's Office to take such automatic deductions after eight years since the passage of P.

For the period 2006 to end of year 2010, SFPUC will have issued \$2,997,930,000 in revenue bonds. A lot of this money came as a result of recent BABs bond sales. RBOC's accrued funding (\$0.50/\$1000) for this amount is \$1,498,965 (less the \$223,310, paid to the same consultant for three contracts), gives the RBOC a net draw by December 31 of \$1,275,655.

It might be appropriate to review the applicable voter mandated text of Prop P: *San Francisco Administrative Code Chapter 5 §5.31(d) ... "from and after the effective date of this Ordinance one-twentieth of one percent of the gross proceeds from each issuance or sale of public utility revenue bonds shall be deposited in a fund established by the Controller's Office and appropriated by the Board at the direction of the Committee to cover the costs of said Committee."*

Yet now the SFPUC claims that over half of the mandated money, is optional. The RBOC must request its funding—putting the oversight committee in a very dependent relationship—and does not automatically accrue to the not yet created special and independent RBOC account.

Incredibly, the RBOC agreed to this dependent relationship, by a vote of 6 to 1, accepting this unprecedented decision to request the SFPUC grant them their money at a future budget time. This is a bad precedent.

Without a murmur the will of the people has been overturned.

If BABs forbade the SFPUC (which it does not) from including the RBOC fee, the SFPUC, on reaching such a financing fork in the road, should have issued very attractive tax-exempt municipal bonds and complied with the mandates of 2002 Proposition P: § 5.35. Application.

"(a) All public utilities revenue bond authorizations approved either concurrent with or after the effective date of this Ordinance shall be subject to the provisions set forth herein.

(b) All bond authorizations introduced at the Board after the effective date of this Ordinance shall contain a statement incorporating the provisions of this Ordinance in such bond resolution."

The 1/20th of 1 percent accrued to the RBOC belongs to the RBOC. It is difficult to comprehend how the SFPUC in its official bond statements can claim that after 36 months unspent RBOC funds must be returned to the SFPUC.

The SFPUC, in a rebuttal to my previous guest editorial (Sept '10), praises both the SFPUC and the RBOC. The RBOC has not lived up to the expectations of the authors of 2002 Prop P.

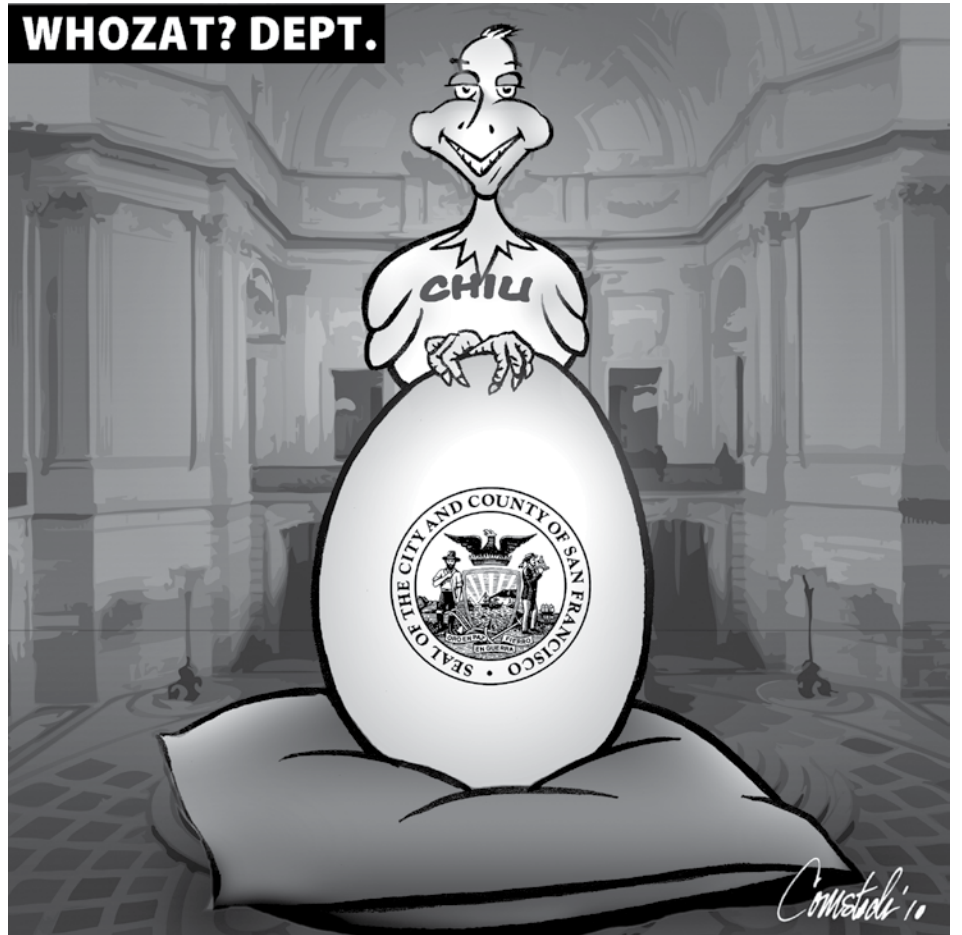
The last independent contract of the RBOC was signed by the General Manager in April 2009. Only after a painstaking plea to the City Attorney was this contract reviewed and approved by a vote of the full Committee of the RBOC in September 2009. Had this vote not taken place that contract would not be a legally binding SFPUC contract.

Tragically, it must be concluded, based on actual results, that the RBOC oversight has been short-circuited by classic San Francisco bureaucratic, role-reversal, fox guarding the hen house maneuvers. Shame on everyone concerned.

Brian coauthor of 2002 P and Board's No. 1 Chair on RBOC



WHOZAT? DEPT.



MY TWO CENTS By Will Durst

TOP TEN CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR WALL STREET FAT CATS.

It's the most... wonderful time... of the year. And the most frantic and anxious and mind numbing and expensive. The rewarding part is my on-going seasonal side job as a lumpy elfin holiday gift consultant, where it is an honor and a privilege to be able to pass along some hot tips for this year's Christmas shopping lists. None of which involve surplus uranium tailings from sales to the Iranians.

There's still more than a few of us struggling to climb out of financial holes so deep we're being tickled by the tendrils of redwood roots, but we're not that difficult to shop for. Dollar coins. Discount clothing. Used food. Lint covered gum and pennies. Road-kill wrapped in the Sunday Funnies. We are the re-giftable.

It's the other end of the spectrum that concerns me. The least needy of us. Wall Street is shoveling out record bonuses. Again. What to get the person who can buy anything? Perhaps the gifts you've lined up for your investment banker friends won't be considered up to snuff. Well, I'm here to convince you to let those worries go. After all, it's the thought that counts. Ha ha ha ha ha ha.

No, seriously. To ease your stress, we here at Durstco have come up with a catalog of prospective Christmas Gifts that any Wall Street Tycoon would be honored to find under their holiday shrubbery. And who knows, maybe in appreciation, he or she will slide you insider status on the newest IPOs. Probably not, but what the hell, here we go with the TOP TEN CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR YOUR WALL STREET BROKER BUDDIES.

10. A peacock. Provides the double benefit of being both the ultimate symbol of excessive extravagance and extremely difficult to care for.

9. A copy of George W Bush's autobiography because, during the holidays, everyone can use a good laugh.

8. A kidney in an ice chest. Purchased from a poor person. Always good to have one lying around just in case.

7. A Lexus. According to TV, that's what rich people give each other for the holidays. Don't forget the big red bow.

6. A get out of jail free card. No, a real Get Out of Jail Free Card. You must know somebody who knows somebody.

5. A Faberge Egg. Only 42 are known to have survived. Go for it. Check out eBay. Or call Meg Whitman direct.

4. A pair of Bernie Madoff's underwear. Or just frame any old pair of size 36s and say they're his. Its what he would have done.

3. A signed first edition of Tom Wolfe's "Bonfire of the Vanities" because nothing else says, "Master of the Universe" quite like it.

2. A US Senator. Oh sure, they probably already have one socked away, but who's ever thrown out a Senator because they went bad? Not Congress.

1. A soul. Odds are, they've sold, misplaced or ruined theirs. Just realize in advance they'll probably sell, misplace or ruin this one as well.

Will Durst is a San Francisco based humor columnist who frequently tells jokes. Out loud. On purpose. In front of people. Who laugh. Ideally. Catch an example at the Big Fat Year End Kiss Off Comedy Show XVIII, December 26-January 1.



WATER AND WASTEWATER REVENUES

The SF Public Utility Commission, the City department responsible for water, wastewater (sewer) and municipal power (expanding soon to supply most of the City's electricity), is experiencing a revenue shortfall.

This means rates will rise in the future. For now the shortfall means that "reserves"—funds in reserve—are reduced. Reduced reserves could lead to lower bond prices and the need to pay higher interest on borrowed funds. The cause of reduced revenues: sales of water are down. Both wholesale customers and City customers are using less water than predicted, and also less than has been consumed in the past. (Water usage determines both water and sewer bills.) And this is happening shortly after SFPUC adopted rates not for one year but for several.

THE WESTSIDE OBSERVER

PO Box 27176, SF 94127 • 415 517-6331

www.westsideobserver.com

415 517-6331

Publisher/Editor: Mitch Bull

mitch@westsideobserver.com

Associate Editor: Alice Bull

Managing Editor: Doug Comstock

editor@westsideobserver.com

Advertising Sales • Mitch Bull

Contributors: Jeff Adachi, Hank Basayne, Julie Behn, Brian Browne, Mitch Bull, Sharon Caren, Doug Comatock, Will Durst, Hilary Gordon, Flora Lynn Isaacson, Tony Hall, Kathy Howard, Jack Kaye, Dr. Carol Kocivar, Jed Lane, Steve Lawrence, Dan Liberthson, Dr. Annette Lust, Don Lee Miller, Patrick Monette-Shaw, Anise J. Matteson, Sergio Nibbi, George Wooding.

The ideas and opinions expressed in these pages are strictly those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the staff or publisher of this paper. The Westside Observer is a free monthly newspaper serving the entire West of Twin Peaks area of San Francisco. Circulation is 20,000 copies, distributed 10 times a year. 12,000 are distributed -to-door, 1,500 are distributed via free distribution racks in the West of Twin Peaks area, as well as libraries and other key drop-off points (see westsideobserver.com/hardcopy.html).

HIGHWAY ROBBERY

By Former Supervisor Tony Hall

Remember all the old stories about the early west wherein highway robbers and bandits would way-lay your trip to rob you or force payment for some kind of passage? Well, if the present gang of ideologues at the San Francisco County Transportation Authority has its way with this dim-witted Board of Supervisors, then history is sure to repeat itself and you, my friends, will once again be the victims.

Our “leaders” at the Board of Supervisors now want to spend \$60 million to \$100 million dollars to set up an electronic toll system that would charge commuters and residents alike \$6.00 a day to enter and exit the City of San Francisco from the south, mainly San Mateo County.

Under this proposal, drivers leaving or entering San Francisco at any of the southern borders would pay \$3.00 from 6:30 to 9:30 a.m. and another \$3.00 from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. on weekdays with a daily cap of \$6. Commuters would pay up to \$130 per month, or \$1500 per year. Tolls are to be collected electronically, via Fastrak and cameras.

Calling this plan the politically correct misnomer “congesting pricing,” they seek to justify such lunacy on the basis

how to tax and spend.

Who will gain from this latest pipe dream? Surely not the 65% of small business owners and their employees who work in San Francisco but live in the bedroom communities. Their annual incomes are already below that of the average San Franciscan. Do the majority of San Franciscans who drive and perhaps live in the south-eastern quadrant of the City gain? I think not, as many of these individuals and families now engage in activities that necessitate multiple cross border travels throughout the day.

The deputy director of the Transportation Authority argues that tolls would decrease traffic by 20%. At what cost to our local economy? Are the hundreds of thousands of commuters to our City only



Next Steps In City Pension Reform

By Jeff Adachi

Although Proposition B did not pass in November, 110,000 San Franciscans who voted YES ON PROP B understood why changes to our pension and health care costs have to be made to protect vital services and sustain our city’s pension and benefits system for its employees.

It is just a matter of time until the rest of the citizenry will see that we must act now in order to save our city government and the basic services we all rely upon. This is because the financial sinkhole of escalating city employee pension and benefits costs will only continue to worsen.

Over the next twelve months, the city’s benefits costs for city employees will soar by \$130 million more than the \$829 million we spent this year, and the city’s unfunded liability for city employee health care costs will grow by \$300 million more. At the same time, the city faces a \$400 million deficit next year. These costs will continue to climb, consuming scarce funding to support education, law enforcement, parks and recreation programs, public health and other basic services.

Labor leaders have promised to solve this pension and health care benefits prob-



health care costs are not. For retirees, retirees’ health care costs are set by the Charter. A similar provision could require a higher health care contribution by retirees who receive higher-end pensions or choose more expensive health care plans.

Fourth, police and fire employees should be required to contribute more to their pensions than other city employees. This is because their pension costs as well as the benefits they receive are much greater. Police and fire employees are able to retire at 55 years of age with 90% of their last year’s income, while other city employ-

The deputy director of the Transportation Authority argues that tolls would decrease traffic by 20%. At what cost to our local economy? Are the hundreds of thousands of commuters to our City only sightseers who do not spend money here or contribute to our local sales taxes by visiting our local shops, restaurants and attractions?

of needed funds for transportation and infrastructure needs and vehicle traffic reduction.

These very same people are responsible for the problems they have created, and now they are asking you and your neighbors to the south to pay for their mistakes. In brief, for years San Francisco officials have not only ignored transportation and infrastructure needs, but they have stolen the money dedicated for those purposes in varied bond issues and tax dollars that you have paid, and have diverted those monies in questionable and failed social programs to curry political favor.

I have written numerous times in prior columns about the famed Roger Boas CAO reports of the 1980’s that correctly predicted that without a dedicated and sufficient annual appropriation for roadway and infrastructure repair, we would be faced with the problems we now have today. The solution today is the same as it was back then. We need an annual street repair and infrastructure fund that is realistic and used for only that purpose.

As for reducing traffic congestion, any San Franciscan can attest to the increased traffic jams that are presently occurring throughout the City as a result of the poor planning from our traffic department. A good example for District 7 residents is the daily vehicular tie-ups that now exists along Portola Drive despite a multi-million dollar renovation of the St. Francis Wood circle at Sloat Boulevard. The corridors of 19th avenue, Market Street at Octavia, Market at 8th, Franklin Street, and Lombard Street are all impacted by the poor traffic flow patterns originating from City Hall. Even our beloved bicyclists are experiencing increased dangers because of poor planning. Coupled with unrealistically high parking meter rates and punitive enforcement, there is no question about what is going on. These designs are not just a deliberate attempt to get people out of their cars and into a public transportation system that is inadequate in its present form, but moreover a plan to raise revenue at any expense from you who live here, work here and visit our City. All of this is happening while statistics reveal that auto use in the City is declining, yet traffic flow is more restricted. This is because of poor planning. The solution is to start electing people who are responsive to the needs of those who live, work and visit our City as opposed to electing those who only know

sightseers who do not spend money here or contribute to our local sales taxes by visiting our local shops, restaurants and attractions? What is it outside of its people that makes San Francisco great, or are we just like London or any other city that has engaged in failed “congesting pricing” policies? Tolls are certainly not the answer. The solution lies in building a well planned and administered public transportation system that supports the local economy.

Where are our local elected who are supposed to be looking out for our welfare, especially those who represent the western ring of the City which will be most heavily impacted? We haven’t heard one word from our local State Senator, our Assemblywoman, or even our District 7 representative, we haven’t heard one word from them because instead of attending to the people’s business, they are all too busy playing political musical chairs to see where they will land next. It is time to take a good look at them before casting your next vote.

The only local elected that has had the courage, intelligence, and fortitude to weigh in on this matter has been Councilman David Canepa of Daly City. He is really proving his worth in representing his constituents, and is also doing San Franciscans a huge favor by speaking the truth. He has called this plan “absolutely nonsensical, atrocious, and egregious, and a slap in the face of San Franciscans and Peninsula residents alike, because those responsible have not made the proper decisions regarding their infrastructure or transportation needs.” Mr. Canepa is someone to watch for higher office because he has the people’s interest at heart. Having been born and raised in the City, he knows what the Johnny-come-lately types that occupy City Hall do not know: San Francisco is not an island, but a destination point at the tip of a very important peninsula.

It’s amazing how there is always some clarity that surfaces in cloudy times. All of us are just around the corner from one of the greatest and most joyous celebrations of a rough year. I will risk being politically incorrect here, and take this opportunity to wish you and your families and friends, a very merry and wonderful Christmas and a joyous and hopefully prosperous New Year! Thanks for being who you are!

Tony Hall is he former District 7 Supervisor and Director of Treasure Island.

The only way to achieve this is to increase contributions by existing employees to their pensions without providing a concurrent increase in wages. For example, in 2010, the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors agreed to give 10,000 city employees a 6% raise in exchange for a 7.5% contribution towards their pensions. This agreement actually exacerbated the city’s pension problems, since the taxpayers are on the hook not only for the 6% raise, but also for a 6% pension increase when the employees who received the raise retire. This “raise” will continue to cost taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars in the future.

lem in the upcoming year. But it remains to be seen if real reform will occur, or whether, as in the past, expensive trade-offs will be made that wipe out any potential benefits from the reform.

How will we know that a proposed effort to reform the city employee’s pension and benefits system truly addresses the problem?

First, any solution must offset the city’s cost to the pension fund and result in immediate savings in order to address the city’s current fiscal crisis. Proposition B would have resulted in immediate savings of \$121 million each year, every year. Any solution proposed must provide similar immediate relief. The only way to achieve this is to increase contributions by existing employees to their pensions without providing a concurrent increase in wages. For example, in 2010, the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors agreed to give 10,000 city employees a 6% raise in exchange for a 7.5% contribution towards their pensions. This agreement actually exacerbated the city’s pension problems, since the taxpayers are on the hook not only for the 6% raise, but also for a 6% pension increase when the employees who received the raise retire. This “raise” will continue to cost taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars in the future.

Second, any real solution must increase the employee share of the health care costs. Currently, city employees pay nothing for their health care costs, while the City pays 100% of the employees’ health care, and pays 75% of their family’s health care costs. Proposition B would have required city employees to pay anything above 50% of their dependent’s health care, using the lowest cost plan. During the campaign, Prop B opponents claimed that these changes were too drastic. A possible compromise solution would be to require city employees to pay at least 50% of the cost of the dependent’s health care plan they currently use, or to require that city employees earning above a certain income level to pay more for their health care costs. However, these would not come close to the \$80 million in annual savings that Prop B would have realized.

Third, retiree pension and health care costs have to be addressed. While a retiree’s pension is treated as a vested right, their

ees retire at 62 with 75% of their last year’s income. According to CALPERs, the state’s public safety pension fund, police and fire employees live just as long as other public employees, and thus, their pension costs are being borne by other city employees who must contribute equally to the pension fund. 2002’s Proposition H requires the police and fire to enter into a cost-sharing agreement with the city to bear their share of the cost of these enhanced benefits. It should first be determined what the real cost of these benefits are, and a fair amount, such as 50%, should be contributed by police and firefighters to their pensions, over and beyond what they currently pay.

Finally, for new employees, the city should consider increasing the retirement age, and explore the fiscal impact of combining a defined pension program with a 401K. Pensions should also be capped at a certain amount to avoid adding new members to the \$200,000 pension club. Currently, over 100 public safety officers earn over \$247,000 a year. They will each earn an annual pension which is 90% of their last year’s income upon their retirement. Pensions were never meant to provide an extravagant income to city employees, even those who are high earners. These extravagant pensions should be capped at a reasonable amount, so that employees can still earn good incomes, but not retire with \$150,000-\$250,000 annual pensions. Also, multipliers which increase pension costs, such as salary bumps for retention and training, should not be included in their pension payouts.

And what will happen if the City is unable to develop real reforms that offer real relief to the city’s financial crisis?

San Franciscans for SMART Reform will begin collecting ideas for the next Charter Amendment reform. To join our effort, please visit www.sfsmartreform.com and find out how you can participate. We also encourage your feedback on these proposals and other ideas you may have on how to reform our city’s pension and benefits system to protect vital services. You can also email us at sfsmartreform@yahoo.com. Thank you.

Jeff Adachi is the San Francisco Public Defender. Feedback adachi@westsideobserver.com



We’re Also On The Web: www.westsideobserver.com

Laguna Honda (Cont. from p. 1)

The Controller's demand, resulting in restitution of \$350,000, is clear proof that misappropriation of patient funds occurred. The Controller wouldn't have ordered restitution, if there had been no malfeasance.

But the City Controller's audit appears to ask readers to believe that hospital officials were clueless about how the patient gift fund was being mismanaged. Or perhaps they knew, but didn't care. Official response to the audit, and director of public health Mitch Katz's comments in the Chronicle were appalling.

Katz, for his part, told the Chronicle on November 23 that "not a single nickel of patient money was spent on anything but patients." As recently as September 2, Katz implied that only \$37,102 intended for patients may have been improperly deposited into staff accounts.

If Katz was correct, why would the Controller have directed that \$350,000—nearly ten times more than Katz admitted—be returned to the patient's benefit?

LHH Executive Administrator Mivc Hirose claimed, in her response to the draft audit report, that the audit "definitively ends any question about whether the money donated for patient benefits were used strictly for patient benefit."

Hirose is wrong: The audit has not ended many questions about the fund, and it is unclear whether all of the recommendations included in the audit report will be implemented.

The audit team noted that administrators could not provide supporting documentation for 112 expenditures. In other cases approval of expenditures was inconsistent to other similar transactions, or didn't have supervisory approval. Other transactions didn't identify the purpose of expenditures, and still other transactions had no supporting invoices.

The Controller noted that "the risk increases that improper accounts will be charged and funds for specific purposes may be misspent," contributing to the appearance of a lack of transparency. The Controller recommended administration improve its filing system so staff are familiar with how to file documents. Also that LHH "retain all documents in accordance with an established record retention policy," both basic accounting chores. LHH failed to explain why its "customs and practices" led to incomplete files and missing records.

George Wooding, president of West of Twin Peaks Central Council said, "The audit results are very sad for the residents. The audit recommendations couldn't put the administration in a much worse light."

Of the \$350,000 restitution the Controller's audit found that \$151,739 was incorrectly deposited into staff accounts and must be refunded to patient accounts.

The Controller also found an additional \$176,481 taken from the patient gift fund during former Executive Administrator John Kanaley's tenure, improperly moved into a capital fund to "clear a cash deficit" must be refunded. While the Controller's Office admitted it had approved the initial \$176,481 capital fund adjustment, it reverse the decision when additional information was supplied later during the gift fund "performance audit."

These two amounts total approximately \$328,000 which has been, or will be, restituted, but that excludes approximately \$20,000 in interest on the \$176,481 wrongfully that must be also repaid.

In its rebuttal to the Controller's audit, LHH and DPH claimed that audit results hadn't been vetted during an audit exit conference and claimed exceptions might not have been accurate. In the City Controller's rebuttal to administration's response, the Controller bit back, noting that the response cited incorrect information and wasn't entirely accurate.

The report noted the hospital failed to obtain Health Commission approval before changing its gift fund policy, a violation of the Administrative Code, and failed to report gift fund expenses to the Health Commission, also required by the City's Administrative Code.

Importantly, the audit recommended that LHH restore its Gift Fund Management Committee with a patient representative, and that detailed quarterly expense reports presented to the Health Commission be resumed—all recommendations that doctors Rivero and Kerr advocated.

Many of the Controller's audit recommendations mirror issues Kerr and Rivero had first reported between March and September 2010.

The Controller's audit report notes that LHH's chief financial officer (presumably Tess Navarro) brought the \$176,481 adjustment to the Controller's attention.

This is nonsense. Drs. Rivero and Kerr first pointed out the \$176,481 discrepancy in a records request on September 16, specifically asking that the City's auditors look into this questionable transaction. Administration's public relations officer, Marc Slavin, refused to supply the records sought on September 16, saying he couldn't release them while the audit was underway.

There is no provision in the Sunshine Ordinance that permits withholding of documents simply because the records sought are being audited.

The Controller admits it conducted a performance, not a forensic audit. Professional accounting staff believe that the Auditor team should have reviewed all expenditures, not just 2,000.

The Controller set out to examine 2,000 gift fund expenditures between 2004 and 2010, but used a sampling methodology. They selected 324 expenditures for review, but in the end reviewed just 212 expenditures — approximately 10 percent of all expenditures — since LHH claimed it didn't have supporting documentation for 112 (35%) of the 324 expenditures.

Laguna Honda's accounting staff claims that the lack of documentation for the 112 records was because various public records requests caused the misplacement of documents.

Since approximately 1,800 expenditures weren't even reviewed by the audit team, there is no definitive proof that unreviewed expenditures may have involved funds in patient subaccounts that were potentially spent on staff, instead.

For instance, this author placed a records request on October 16—before the audit had concluded—specifically asking for the source of funds used for \$50 employee-of-the-month incentive awards. The Controller's Office has stalled for over a month and has failed to respond to this request. If the \$50 rewards were funded by the patient gift fund, thousands of dollars in employee-of-the-month incentives may also need to be restored to the gift fund for patient use.

Hirose has not acknowledged that the \$350,000 should never have been diverted from patient subaccounts. Further, the Controller was unable to "determine the cause of the discrepancies, nor determine in many cases, whether the subaccounts charged were incorrect." Given these circumstances, how can this "definitively end questions?"

Although the audit concluded that multiple sections of the City's administrative code appears to have been violated, the audit report fails to note why other City oversight agencies have failed to look into the patient gift fund abuses.

Dr. Maria Rivero concludes, "The Controller's audit recommendations may not be enough. We already had codes, policies and rules, but they didn't help. Preserving the patient gift fund requires continued public oversight and follow-up audits."

Restitution of \$350,000 to patient benefit is a good first step, and the improved oversight recommended by the Controller is a good result. It has taken over a year to obtain both outcomes.

"At the very least, LHH's administration owes a huge apology to its residents and donors who contributed believing they were assisting LHH's residents," Mr. Wooding said.

Monette-Shaw is an accountability advocate, Feedback: monette-shaw@westsideobserver.com.

Kopp (Cont. from p. 1)

are paid to supervisors for service on the Golden Gate Bridge and Transportation District, the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, the Local Agency Formation Commission, the Association of Bay Area Governments, the California Coastal Commission, the Metropolitan Transportation District and the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board of Directors. Two of the supervisors, including the one whose family residence is in Solano County (shades of one-time Supervisor Ed Jew), serve on six such agency governing boards. In my youth, a popular song contained the catchy phrase, "It's nice work if you can get it, and you can get it if you try." Meanwhile, our City Hall legislative leaders propose to ban circumcision of newborn boys and meal toys in solemn exercise of their responsibilities.

I haven't yet (to my knowledge) met a "Tea Party" member, but I continually ponder the ability of Republicans to snatch defeat from victory. As a letter writer in one of the remaining local daily newspapers observed, the Tea Party "activists" (What a word!) succeeded in doing so respecting composition of the United States Senate. In Delaware, instead of nominating House of Representatives member Mike Castle, a highly intelligent, experienced Member of Congress, a bona fide extremist by the name of Christine O'Donnell emerged triumphant in the primary before colliding with reality and losing convincingly to her Democratic Party opponent. In Nevada, with springtime polls demonstrating the vulnerability of the leader of the United States Senate, Republicans rejected a former state legislator (Sue Lowden) and gave Nevadans one Sharron Angle. Within days after Ms. Angle's nomination in June, U.S. Senator Harry Reid had saved himself from electoral extinction. Similarly, in Colorado, the same "activists" succeeded in nominating Mr. Ken Buck (and not a respected former Colorado legislator, Jane Norton) who touted himself as a businessman capable of bestowing such principles upon the business of the United States Senate. He was humiliated by the incumbent Michael Bennet. But for Tea Party "activists", the Grand Old Party could have claimed 50% of the United States Senate.

Speaking of the probable San Francisco budget deficit for fiscal year 2010-11, maybe the Board of Supervisors should advertise a desire to receive taxpayer

Quentin Kopp is a former Supervisor, State Senator and Judge.

Wrongful Termination (Cont. from p. 1)

The five causes of action:

- Deprivation of his First Amendment freedom of speech activities;
- Deprivation of due process rights guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment;
- Violation of CA Govt Code §53298 that prohibits reprisals against employees who file complaints regarding gross mismanagement or a significant waste of funds, or an abuse of authority;
- Violation of CA Health and Safety Code §1432 that prohibits discrimination or retaliation against employees for initiating or participating in proceedings relating to care, services, or conditions of a long-term health facility; and
- Violation of CA Labor Code §1102.5 that prohibits retaliation against any employee for disclosing information to a government or law enforcement agency when an employee has reasonable cause to believe that the information discloses a violation of state or federal statutes, or a violation or noncompliance with a state or federal rule or regulation.

Kerr filed two whistle-blower complaints in September 2009 with his co-worker, Dr. Maria Rivero. On March 2,

suggestions on reducing expenditures. Wouldn't that be a novelty? Let me advance some candidates for liquidation. Although the Local Agency Formation Commission ("LAFCO") is an entity authorized in the 1960's by state law for counties that contain several cities, San Francisco, California's only city and county, remarkably boasts of such an agency. If all San Francisco local governmental agencies operate in boundaries contiguous with the City and County, one puzzles over the modern establishment of such an organization in city government. Moreover the general fund allocation of only \$848 is a deceiving aspect of the whole story. Its budget is supported by so-called "carry forward" funds that LAFCO received in previous years; primarily from our Public Utilities Commission (PUC) estimated at \$600,000 this fiscal year. In fiscal year 2009-10 LAFCO possessed a balance of \$806,157 from unexpended funds, primarily derived from prior year PUC appropriations from the PUC of \$700,000 annually. LAFCO possesses two "off-budget" positions, and a professional services retainer agreement with a law firm. In other words LAFCO is allowed to hire a law firm and not use the services of our city attorney's office.

The Film Commission is a particular favorite with City Hall, operating under the Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development, with an annual budget of almost \$1,000,000. That, of course, doesn't include Police Department and other relevant departmental costs incurred intermittently. Films are glamorous; thus, City Hall spends \$946,461 per year on the Film Commission. Concomitantly, it spends \$677,920 on the Entertainment Commission, which has distinguished itself by permitting operation of nightclubs at which fatalities occur on a nearly regular basis. Instead of leaving regulation of nightclubs with the Police Department, which deals with transgressors on a daily, hourly basis, this administration maintains a policy of divesting Police Department control in favor of a commission composed in part of nightclub representatives! Maybe you can propose similar non-budget necessities to City Hall or this column. It should be done.

On a personal note I convey to readers my warm best wishes for a Merry Christmas, Happy Chanukah and a healthy New Year. Until next month be of good cheer!

2010 Kerr and Rivero filed an unrelated complaint with the SF Whistleblower Program administered by the City Controller's office, alleging mismanagement and misappropriation of funds in LHH's patient gift fund, specifically identifying Ms. Hirose as a responsible party, possibly among others.

Three days later, Kerr was informed on March 5 he was being laid off and that his employment with the City would be terminated effective June 11, 2010.

On March 15, 2010 Kerr then filed a Whistleblower Retaliation Complaint with the SF Ethics Commission alleging that his termination was in retaliation for the multiple ethics complaints he had previously submitted.

Kerr's lawsuit seeks unspecified monetary damages for lost pay, general damages, punitive damages, and other relief a court may deem proper, among other penalties.

Kerr is being represented by the SF law firm Kochan & Stephenson, which has previously represented other Laguna Honda Hospital employees, including a case recently settled against the City for \$268,452.

A case management conference regarding Kerr's lawsuit has been set for March 18, 2011.



WE'RE ALSO ON THE WEB
www.westsideobserver.com



Most of the standing room only crowd attending Rec and Park's meeting on JP Murphy Playground objected to privatizing after spending over \$3 million to it fix up

J.P Murphy Clubhouse (Cont. from p. 1)

RPD management now believes that the JP Murphy Park is “underutilized” and they have developed a park privatization plan to lease JP Murphy Park. The RPD euphemistically calls this new for-profit leasing scheme “park revitalization.” The RPD is trying to lease out at least 24 of the 48 park clubhouses in San Francisco. After the meeting, Lev Kushner, RPD’s Assistant Director for Strategic Planning, casually mentioned that at least four tenants are looking to lease the JP Murphy Clubhouse.

It’s not that the groups that lease the parks are good or bad. The problem is that these private commercial groups take over large portions of the park at specific times and the neighbors (the public) who use these parks are not allowed to use the portions that are leased. The groups leasing the City parks often have nothing to do with recreation and are already working from an existing commercial location.

The RPD lease clearly states “The tenant shall have the right to shared access of all playground and garden space in areas surrounding the premises.” Additionally, “The City shall use its best efforts to avoid interfering with the tenant’s quiet and exclusive use of enjoyment of the premises.”

Whatever happened to the neighborhood’s rights to “the use and enjoyment of premises” of our own parks? We paid for these parks by passing the Prop A bonds.

The RPD is claiming that leasing the JP Murphy Park and Clubhouse is the best way to generate revenue for now “underutilized” facilities. It would be interesting to analyze what percent of the fired recreation directors salaries were off-set by the tiny tots program and the after school latch key programs.

The RPD started leasing parks and clubhouses throughout the City in July, usually charging between \$1.31 and \$1.51 per square foot per month. It is doubtful that the JP Murphy Clubhouse will be leased for more than \$1,500 per month, a mere \$18,000 annually. The RPD will be paying for all of the utilities.

Interestingly, Katie Petrucione, RPD’s budget director, told the assembled crowd that they would need to come up with at least \$40,000 to keep JP Murphy Park open as a public park. She didn’t elaborate on why \$40,000 would be needed, if RPD will collect just \$18,000 leasing it out.

She recommended that neighbors either: 1) Team-up with an existing non-profit organization, 2) Donate the money, or 3) Create a Park Improvement District (PID). A PID would mean that surrounding neighborhoods would agree to pay an extra tax assessment each year to pay for the park. PID’s would mean that the public is paying twice for a service that had already been promised: First through the Prop A bonds, and again with PID tax assessments.

The RPD stated that they wanted to work with the assembled neighborhoods before they sign a lease for the JP Murphy Park. This is a very good development, since the RPD usually asks for neighborhood representation only after they sign a lease. The RPD was sincere in its request for public outreach, but unfortunately the meeting sign-up sheet was either lost or taken, and the RPD now has no way of reaching meeting attendees.

The real question is how could the RPD be so inept to invest \$3.9 million to renovate JP Murphy Park, and then remove the person who operates it and padlock it?

The RPD had a \$12.4 million dollar budget deficit last year. It had to make hard budget choices and they made them. First and foremost, RPD’s General Manager Phil Ginsburg decided that the new goal of the RPD would be to privatize Recreation and Park assets and sell them off to the highest profit-seeking bidder. Second, the RPD staff would solicit donations from wealthy benefactors. Third, the RPD chose to remove lower-paid employees (saving about \$2 million in salaries) who work with the community, but keep the higher-paid management staff and gardeners (costing \$9.6 million in salaries).

This might have been a workable plan if any of these

government employees had any prior business experience. The guy who owns the corner deli has more practical business experience than Mr. Ginsburg. Ginsburg is an attorney who worked as a Deputy City Attorney in the City’s Human Resources Department as chief labor negotiator bargaining union benefits and salaries. He was promoted to Director of Human Resources by his friend, Mayor Gavin Newsom, after sticking it to Service Employees International Union, and then promoted again to be the Mayor’s Chief of Staff. Newsom then promoted Ginsburg again in July 2009 to be the General Manager of RPD— with absolutely no recreation and park experience. Park privatization is Ginsburg’s baby and he owns it.

Ginsburg must have thought that privatization was a brilliant move, but things are not working out so well for the RPD. They are currently stepping over twenty dollar bills to pick up pennies. Much of what the RPD has done has led to higher costs and little real profit. Many of the deals that they are closing will actually lose money. The firing of the recreation directors has led to a total disconnect between the RPD and the public it serves.

At the JP Murphy Park meeting, Nicole Avril, RPD’s Director of Partnership and Resource Development, defended the RPD’s new privatization policy of keeping the higher-paid employees at the expense of the lower-paid employees by explaining that higher-paid RPD employees are given a “multiplier” of up to ten times the value of their salary. For example, an RPD manager making \$100,000 per year with an 8-X multiplier needs to generate \$800,000 in money to justify their salary. The problem with this privatization formula is that managers will only be making decisions that generate the most revenue, not decisions dealing with the public’s actual recreational needs.

In the quest for profit and donations — and the rationale for their multipliers — the needs of the public are quickly forgotten. For instance, the RPD’s privatization has actually made them predatory. On July 15, the Recreation and Park Commission voted to let an expensive private preschool displace a free, 38-year-old City College parenting class at the Laurel Hill Clubhouse. The clubhouse was leased to Language in Action (LIA), a preschool offering nine-month terms immersing two- to five-year-olds in Spanish and Mandarin. LIA tuition can cost up to \$14,000 per year. The RPD leased the Laurel Hill playground to LIA for only \$1,427 per month, against the wishes of City College and the local neighborhoods.

“On the face of it, the RPD wanted to lease this property and they didn’t really care what the public thought,” City College Board of Trustee President John Rizzo stated. “The RPD cared so little about the public that it was too late once they were notified.”

If the RPD is so hell bent on privatizing public parks at the expense of public needs, voters will have to think long and hard as to why we would want to support the RPD’s proposed 2011 parcel tax or any other future bonds supporting the RPD. If the RPD is going to prioritize commercial enterprises, private donations and higher permit fees over public needs, don’t ask us for money.

The RPD can’t have it both ways: It can’t ask the public for bond money and subsidize for-profit companies, and then ignore the needs of the public. The RPD can change its budget priorities by simply firing all of the RPD employees who do not meet their salary multipliers and rehire the recreation directors who were fired. This would be a good step in the right direction.

If you love the parks and want to keep them public, please become involved by contacting nicole.avril@sfgov.org. Your efforts may hurt Ms. Avril’s salary multiplier, but you could certainly help keep JP Murphy Park from being leased to a non-recreational, profit-seeking business. The RPD will soon be leasing out other parks and clubhouses in our neighborhoods, and we need to be prepared.

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

Passwords

By Carol Kocivar



How many times has the ‘forgot password’ question on your computer asked “What is the name of your favorite pet?”

Well, year after year after year it was an easy answer. But last week, when I was asked one more time, it reminded me that my favorite pet—a 20 year companion—no longer lives at my house.

When Terry, my husband, asked me today what I was going to write my column about, I said it was about friends—old friends.

(That sure beats telling him I was writing about my dead cat.) Hey, guess what, this is a column about a dead cat. A well-loved and long-lived companion.

His introduction to our house and the human family was a little unusual. We got him about two days after our daughter broke her leg. I attribute his human mind-reading qualities to the fact that this tiny grey kitten spent the first two months sleeping on a couch next to my daughter: Total human companionship from a teenager confined by a heavy cast on her leg.

A true California cat, he started out as a real foodie. Before we convinced him that dry kibble really was the food of choice, he spent his time stalking fresh fruits and vegetables, with tomatoes a particular favorite.

(He also dutifully brought in extremely large rats, which he placed at the bottom of our stairs, for us to admire. Most of the time they were comatose. Sometimes, not.)

One day, while I was upstairs on the computer, the cat ran in and out of the room and then back to the window overlooking the back yard. Back and forth, back and forth—trying to get my attention. Finally, I followed to discover that he was trying to get me to run outside to scare away some dogs who had invaded the home of our rabbits.

Even after he was converted to the kibble diet, he never lost his food curiosity, spending every meal—our meal, that is—sitting on his own stool at the table observing our culinary delights.

I know you won’t believe this but our cat could actually talk. And the older he got, the broader and more diverse were his cat chats. He would become particularly vocal on Saturday mornings—yelling upstairs to us because we were late for breakfast.

He also was very protective of our house. A watch cat—taking care of everything.

When our kids were young, we had a number of rabbits in our backyard who were particular friends of our cat. One day, while I was upstairs on the computer, the cat ran in and out of the room and then back to the window overlooking the back yard. Back and forth, back and forth—trying to get my attention.

Finally, I followed to discover that he was trying to get me to run outside to scare away some dogs who had invaded the home of our rabbits.

Every evening we would sit together. He was the only one who really knew my reading habits. He knew my favorite TV soaps. He also spent any number of hours on my lap—paws on the computer—helping with emails.

A couple of weeks ago, when Terry was away on a trip, my cat seemed to be losing ground to old age. (He was over a 100 in human years.) Staggering a bit, but still wanting to spend some time outdoors, I watched him carefully as he spent some last few hours in his favorite spot in the sun.

As I write this, no longer with my favorite friend at the keyboard, I marvel at the rewards we have from our pets. And how our lives are enriched each day by their presence.

And I know I will never forget, especially as my entry into my computer asks me to type his name.

Feedback: kocivar@westsideobserver.com

Get the Westside Observer
Delivered to your mailbox!

\$15. per year

Mail to the Westside Observer with your check to:
POB 27176 SF, CA 94127
Or e-mail mitch@westsideobserver.com

Don't Miss
Another Issue!

SECOND THOUGHTS / By Jack Kaye

On Treats and Bonuses

Every day I take my dog to one of the nicest dog parks in the city. The people with dogs there are for the most part interesting, intelligent people who love their dogs and treat them well. Whether their dogs are young or old, on leash or off, these kind companions always have a treat ready for them. If the dog comes to his loving companion, that calls for a treat. If he retrieves a ball, as may be his nature, he gets a treat. If the dog lets someone pet him, he gets one. If the dog enjoys being petted, he gets one, too. If he finally stops barking at another dog or a person, he gets one. I wouldn't be surprised to see a dog get a treat for taking a treat.

Anyone watching the constant flow of special rewards would have to think well of both the dogs and their generous caretakers. Almost any dog trainer (but not Cesar Millan, the Dog Whisperer) will tell you that there is no better way to train or condition dogs than by giving them treats.

Highly competitive organizations like professional sports teams and large financial corporations give bonuses to their top employees to reward them for doing their very best at work. Young professional athletes are oftentimes given bonuses just for signing a contract to join the club at a very high salary. Stockbrokers can get bonuses larger than their salaries for being even more successful than anticipated. These bonuses are awarded to recognize successful efforts and to keep the best and brightest loyal to the organization. Absent these bonuses, the organizations could lose these super achievers to the competition, since it is only normal for people to want to get the very most for their excellent efforts. And isn't this what free enterprise capitalism is all about — producing excellence by finding and rewarding the best in the field?

Who could object to treats for obedient dogs and bonuses for high performing professionals?

Me.

I love my dog. I feed him, groom him, pick up after him and walk him every day. I take him to his favorite park where he can meet and greet his favorite canine companions. He gets love, food, exercise and a wonderful environment in which to live. Those are his treats. (Scientists have found that by petting a dog, both the giver and receiver increase their levels of oxytocin, a neurotransmitter produced in the brain that lowers stress and heart rate while also creating a bond between the person and the dog. This chemical process also occurs when a mother nurses her baby, creating a bond between them.)

My dog does what I want him to because he cares for me and trusts me, not because he is conditioned to expect to get a good-tasting treat. He knows that what I do is for him and he wants to reciprocate. I don't need to give him treats to win his love, respect or obedience.

While this may seem like a radical idea, think about human relationships. Do we carry treats around to give our friends and relatives as rewards for being with us or for doing as we would like? Do we give our children some money or food every time they do their homework, go to school or take a bath?

And while many economists will tell you that in order to compete in a business environment you must offer rewards to encourage senior members to do their utmost to succeed for themselves and their organization, I strongly disagree. They will tell you that while they pay their top people very well to do their very best, it is essential to pay them extra if they do even better than their very best. Again, I beg to differ.

How does one do more than his very best?

Would Barry Bonds have been less interested in winning the home run crown if he had not been promised \$18 million a year to hit home runs? Would Michael Jordan have played better if he had been offered bonuses to supplement his high salary? Will our stockbroker try harder to pick the best stocks for us if he knows that he will get a bonus? And why would we suppose that the benefits such as pride in one's work, wanting to help others or being loyal to an organization and its members are not reason enough for a person to do his/her very best? Why do we actually insult our best and brightest by saying that we know that they can do better than they are normally willing to do for the prospect of even greater reward — that greed is their greatest motivator.

Recent studies have found that offering bonuses to people doing creative work did not increase their productivity or creativity.

But even if people do not perform better

when offered an extra reward, what's wrong with giving people more? What's wrong with giving dogs treats even if we don't have to? Isn't it nice to be generous and even nicer to be the beneficiary of generosity? Isn't this extra reward system at the root of the free market and the Darwinian principle of survival of the fittest, which leads to a better strain of the breed? Why else should people and dogs perform better?

My answer to all these questions is that the more we emphasize extrinsic motivation, the more we de-emphasize and dwarf intrinsic motivation. The more we bribe our dogs and employees, the less they are likely to function out of love, respect, compassion, loyalty, identification or even the joy of accomplishment or pride in their own efforts — life's natural, organic, motivators.

When my dog was young, he ignored treats. When offered them he would spit them out. He had learned somehow to associate getting a treat with then having to do something that he did not enjoy, like being put in a cage at the groomer's where he had to wait for hours to be released only to be attacked with scissors and nail clippers and then soaked in soapy water. I think that he figured if he declined the bribe, he would also avoid the payment for it.

Now that he is an older dog in his golden years (he actually is golden), he wants treats and they are everywhere. Every day some very nice human dog companion offers him a treat. Sometimes he sees it or smells it and begs the person holding the goodies to spare him one. If he got one, he would want a second and a third, while even having only one treat could very easily upset his delicate digestive system causing him to lose control of his most toxic material. The result could be an accident in the living room made worse by not seeing it before stepping into it — worse yet, to not notice until you have carried it throughout the residence leaving parts of it embedded in every carpet.

Much the same has been happening to people who are eligible for bonuses in their chosen field. I see CEOs, stockbrokers, athletes and entertainers (not that athletes aren't entertaining) changing their behavior because of these large carrots in front of their faces. They start out in their careers because that is where their talents and interests are. An athlete usually begins his or her quest at an early age with the dream of becoming really good at the sport and someday doing it professionally. When the select few make it to the big time, the pros, they want to be the best that they can be. They want to keep their position on the team and help their friends and teammates succeed as a group.

When large bonuses seduce the athlete into changing his hopes and dreams, the behavior can change dramatically. Look at all the athletes who have been caught cheating in order to improve their already great

performance and talent. We see it in baseball, football and know that it is probably rampant in basketball too. The bonus-hungry players are the ones who violate the rules and also disengage themselves from their team and teammates. They are not playing for the team or for the joy of the sport — intrinsic motivators. They are playing for more money and fame — extrinsic ones.

We have seen the effect of bonuses on stockbrokers. We forget that many started out loving what they did and wanting to do their very best to help their clients and their brokerage house. We have seen CEOs betray their employees, customers and stockholders in order to garner greater extrinsic rewards. We have even seen it with entertainers who lose sight of the reason they chose to perform, replacing it with dreams of bigger paydays which would lead to more and bigger homes, and more stuff to put in and around them.

And in the end, just like with my dog having accidents in the living room, these bonus babies drop toxic material all over our world, made worse when we step in it — worse yet when we don't notice until there are traces of it all over our lives (think Bernie Madoff's victims, or sports fans who want to believe, or employees laid off so that the CEO can get a bigger bonus. A recent study showed that the CEOs who laid off the most workers got the biggest bonuses in 2009).

In short, giving extra treats to motivate behavior is neither effective nor beneficial to any of the involved parties.

So I say let us end the practice of giving treats and bonuses in order to get our dogs and highly-paid people to perform better. Let us build our society around a culture filled with intrinsic motivation like love, compassion, cooperation, loyalty, integrity, responsibility, accomplishment and lots of kisses (at least for the dogs and the hard-working spouses). I think that if we do, we will find that life is filled with natural, organic treats and bonuses that make us feel the joy of being alive. They come to us when we are not striving for them.

Let joie de vivre and savoir faire join forces to create a dolce vita for our dogs and people. If we do, perhaps the bonus will be a real treat for all of us.

Feedback kaye@westsideobserver.com



Senior Smarts: Know Your Contractor

By Anise J. Matteson

Although I am not qualified to provide legal advice I would like to reiterate to seniors and their loved ones to make informed decisions regarding your property and its maintenance.

Some people are fortunate to own one home during their lifetime. Do not give anyone a free house!

Before hiring a contractor check their ad in the Yellow Pages. Compare this information with their website, then review the Better Business Bureau Reliability Report [Business Contact and Profile]. You can contact the Better Business Bureau at (866) 411-2221 to hear a Reliability Report or visit www.oakland.bbb.org to view a report to view a report. Also, check the contractor's license through the Contractors State Licensing Board at (800) 321-2750 or www.cslb.ca.gov.

Do not be rushed into signing a contract relying on the 72-hour period in which you can change your mind. Take time to read the contract and understand the terminology. Thoroughly understand Mechanics' Lien Law.

Spend your money wisely. Get more than one estimate for the job. Ask for references.

Go with your gut feeling.

You will know if you should hire the contractor from the response you receive to your questions. If you do not receive a response to your query, or if their response is conditional [based of you performing as they request] it is not in your best interest to proceed.

With the current state of the economy, businesses are hungry for customers and will entice you to get your business—freebies unrelated to the project.

When I was a kid, I heard my mother say "there's no fool like an old fool."

With age should come wisdom. Request the time to make an informed decision. Do not permit your property subject to collateral for a contract unnecessarily.

Anise Matteson, a writer of reference books for seniors---Caring for an Aging Loved One: The Family Caregiver's Guide Book---can be contacted at cfaalo@yahoo.com.



This is MADLY INSANE!

Furnace Tune-Up Only \$79.01

That's right, we're going insane! Hurry and call before we come to our senses!

- Reduce the Risk of Fire, Gas Leaks or CO Poisoning
- Prevent Untimely Breakdowns
- Extend Your Equipment Life
- Lower Your Utility Bills

800-908-3888
DiscoverCabrillo.com

Not valid with other offers or discounts. Expires 3-31-11



CABRILLO
Plumbing Heat & Cool

506A

LIC# 629538



421 DELLBROOK AVENUE

Exceptional elegant & spacious entertainers dream home. Superior finishes. This home has it all. 2 levels. 3 bedrooms & 2 bathrooms. Gourmet kitchen. Upscale appliances. Beautiful granite counters. Large living room, formal dining room. Family room. Solid oak hardwood floors. Patio, landscaped garden. Street to street wooded lot. Dynamic views. 2 car SXS parking & storage. Wood burning brick fireplace. Large picture windows. Central SF location, close to Haight, Castro, Noe, West Portal.

Offered at \$925,000



John Kirkpatrick

Superior Performance. Superlative Results®



415 412-0559 | john@johnkirkpatrick.com | www.johnkirkpatrick.com | DRE#00921345

Westside Real Estate Report /Jed Lane

Signs Up — Is the House Really for Sale?

By Jed Lane



When a sign is placed in the front yard, is the home for sale? That's what everyone would assume but it depends.

If an agent has their name on a yard sign and it remains there for months and months, what's going on? Is the property really for sale or is it marketing for the agent and the brokerage?

In the area covered by this newspaper there are eighty-nine properties actively for sale. Sixty-eight of those have already been on the market for over a month, forty-five of the eighty-nine have been for sale for more than two months and eighteen of the total for more than three months.

In previous articles we've examined the sale value relationship to median price when the days-on-market (DOM) is factored. We've seen that 45% of houses sold in the City sell for over the original asking price in a shorter time than the 49% percent of sales where the original price was reduced to sell the property. We've seen that the houses that are comparable to the median size sell for nearly 10% more than the median price if they sell fast. Yet for various reasons houses are sitting on the market and losing value by the day.

Why would a seller place a property on the market for more than a ready and willing buyer would pay? Looking at the data it seems that many fall into a few categories. One is the "flip" house. The flip home is overpriced because the seller is pricing it according to what they paid for it and what they put into it, plus selling costs and profit. Right now there are quite a few homes like this on the market. Many have reduced the asking price considerably and are still not sold. Another category is the home with some defect. These homes are in good neighborhoods but might have a location flaw or a functionality flaw. The price is based on homes in the area without taking into consideration the flaw. An example is a house on Broadway at Hyde, great neighborhood but this house looked over one of the Broadway tunnel vents. It was marketed at \$1,998,000 and sold finally for \$1,150,000 after chasing the market down \$948,000 and being marketed for 532 days. There are also homes that are in pre-foreclosure or the seller is trying to sell and get their deposit back out. These homes are priced at what they were bought for but the market's declined.

The category that is the most troublesome happens when a seller doesn't listen to advice and demands a high market price be placed on the property. Some folks still believe that all buyers will offer below the asking price. Some just believe that they know more than the professional that is advising them. There are the agents that will give a high estimate of the value to "buy the listing." It's the view of many agents that we should never place an overpriced listing on the market; that it's not in the seller's interest and therefore is a breach of our fiduciary duty. Others rationalize it that if they don't "take the listing" at the sellers inflated price, "some other agent will" and it's more important to have the listings in your name than your competitors'.

With so few sales occurring at the list/offer price, what's a seller to do? Who actually knows what the value of the property is? The answer is really very simple; the buyers know what the value is. If you want to sell the home, market it to attract the highest number of buyers to come see it, create buzz about the property. Clearly that is the case with the homes that are selling in less than 40 days comprising 51% that sell at or above the asking price. The remaining 49% are taking more than 90 days, on average, to sell. Added to that is the fact that the faster selling homes sell for 10% more than the slower selling homes, it is clear that the market is telling sellers and agents what to do. Few markets are ever static. An agent's job is to sell the house for the highest possible price and in San Francisco that means selling it in the shortest amount of time, also.

The Westside market has 89 homes on the market at the time of this writing. 26 homes sold in October and there are 53 properties in contract. The median price in October was \$792,000 with the median DOM of 55. There was \$27,279,500 in total volume sales in the month of October and the sales prices ran from a high of \$2,353,200 to a low of \$575,000.

Jed Lane is a Realtor & Real Estate Broker associated with Coldwell Banker's Lakeside office. He is a West Side native and resident. If you have questions or comments contact him at jed@westsideobserver.com

News & Views West of Twin Peaks Central Council

By Mitch Bull

Debates on Parkmerced, Ranked Voting, Cellular phone antennas easements and other topics filled the agenda and provided valuable information to the standing room only crowd of attendees at the West of Twin Peaks Central Council meeting **November 22.**

When WOTPCC President **George Wooding** called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM, over fifty people had filled the seats at the Forest Hills Clubhouse. Following the roll call of delegates and the approval of the November minutes, **Omid Talai** from the San Francisco District Attorney's office addressed the gathering.

As part of the continuing outreach to the WTPCC community by the DA's office, Talai spoke briefly about growing up in the WTP neighborhood and discussed the topic of the month: **Victim Services.** Talai spoke on the range of services that are available through the D.A.'s office for crime victims, such as compensation for time lost at work while testifying, funeral expenses for families of crime victims and other ways in which the office strives to assist those who have been victimized.

Carolyn Squeri followed with the Treasurers report and reported that dues invoices for the neighborhood associations will be distributed in early January.

Committee reports followed with **Matt Chamberlain** (Planning and Land Use) reporting that four items are being watched by the committee: the upcoming **Parkmerced** hearings, the S.F. Housing Element for 2009 which is in process, the application for private **homeowner windmill installations** (covered in last month's Observer), and the homeowner concerns about the installation and proliferation of **cellular antenna equipment** on power poles. Arvum Shepard (Transportation) reported on both the proposed cost of the underground **subway project** into Chinatown from 4th and Townsend (1 and ½ miles at \$1 Billion), and the possible legislation from the Board of Supes to implement **"Congestion Pricing"** (tolls) onto those entering the city from the Peninsula. – (In my opinion this is a really bad idea!!)

George Wooding gave an update on the SF audit on the **Laguna Honda Gift Fund.** The auditors detailed over 20 instances where "nobody was minding the fund". The good news from this is that over \$160,000 has been returned to the Fund from the various other non-patient funds the monies had been siphoned off too. (Thanks to the tireless work of **Doctors Derek Kerr and Maria Rivero**).

In another example of citizen action, a



Supervisor Sean Elsbernd explains the position of the RPD to the audience at the WOTPCC meeting

representative from the office of supervisor **Carmen Chu** reported that the Planning Department has revoked the approval for the development of the **"pot club"** at 32nd St. and Taraval. Many people from the WOTPCC and District 4 were involved with the process that resulted in the (very rare) decision to revoke a previously approved permit. Wooding thanked WOTPCC stalwarts **Don Dutil, Denise LaPointe, and Dave Bisho** specifically, in addition to the Supervisor Chu and her staff.

The next discussion followed up on an earlier report about the "privatization" of the local park clubhouses by the Park and Rec Department. Wooding reported on a spillover crowd that attended a recent community event at the **JP Murphy clubhouse** to give PRD input about a proposed plan to rent the clubhouse out to users that could exclude the public. **Supervisor Sean Elsbernd** spoke about the issue that although (with the passage of Prop A several years ago) \$185M was spent to renovate parks and clubhouses, the vast majority of clubhouses are closed and "locked" to public use during most park hours, as there is no city budget to staff them. He went on to explain that the Park and Rec department is just trying to see if there is interest from local entities to lease the facilities to allow them to open some of the time for community based organizations that are willing to pay for the use.

Elsbernd made a point of explaining in detail that at no time would a potential clubhouse renter close the use of the park to the public, (A vast majority of the clubhouses are currently closed all of the time) and that there is no RFP (request for proposal) and the ideas are just a Park and Rec idea to try and have the clubhouses used in some ways. Everyone agrees that it's very unfortunate that the clubhouses cannot be used to their potential due to budget restrictions.

The continuing story of **Parkmerced** was discussed next. **Aaron Goodman** made a short presentation on several upcoming meetings to gain input about the redevelopment project planning at Parkmerced. He referenced two meetings to be held in December but didn't have specifics on the locations, other than informing the crowd that the first meeting is on December 9th and the second is on December 16. Goodman stressed the

(Cont. p. 13)



Roger Ritter, Balboa Terrace Association, reads resolution opposit the installation of a cellular antenna at San Benito and Darien

Serving Food As Good As Our Prices Are Low



TENNESSEE GRILL

1128 Taraval St. • (415) 664-7834 • Open 6am-9pm
Where Friends Meet

53 WEST PORTAL AVE.
665-(ROTI)7684

Roti INDIAN BISTRO

WWW.ROTIBISTRO.COM
RSVP/CATERING/PARTIES
RUSTOMSWALEH



EXPERIENCE WORLD CLASS DINING
SPECIAL LUNCH MENU: TU-SA 11:30AM-2PM • DINNER SU/TH 5-10:30PM/FR-SA 5-11 PM

For *Me*, it feels like
someone truly cares.



Massage Envy

The gift of wellness lets me enjoy stress
and pain relief today, tomorrow...even
into the New Year with Massage Envy.



GIVE THE GIFT OF
WELLNESS.

DALY CITY • 494 WESTLAKE CENTER • THE SHOPS ON LAKE MERCED • (650) 757-ENVY(3689)

OPEN 7 DAYS: M-F 8AM-10PM, SAT 8AM-6PM, SUN 10AM-6PM
MASSAGEENVY.COM | FRANCHISES AVAILABLE

Rates and services may vary by location. ©2010 Massage Envy Franchising, LLC

Retail wines and by the glass

Tues-Thu: 4-10 pm • Fri, Sat & Sun: 3:30-11 pm
Closed Monday

Tuesday Happy Hour

\$1 off all wines by the glass from 4-8 pm

Now serving

TAPAS

On Thursdays

Small Plates \$3 - \$7

Also available for private events

230 W Portal Avenue

415.731.7000



specializing in small production wines
from around the world

A place to share joy.

"Residents are the heart of our community."



Assisted Living | Memory Care

Call Today to Schedule a Tour 415.335.4867

www.almaviasanfrancisco.org

Happy Holidays

ALMAVIA
of SAN FRANCISCO
an ELDER CARE ALLIANCE community

AlmaVia, an Elder Care Alliance community, a nonprofit organization, is cosponsored by the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas West Midwest Community & the Sierra Pacific Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. RCFE Lic # 385600270.

Sterling Salon Presents Holiday Glamour New Blowout Bar



"Flicky & Flirty"



"Stick It Straight"



"You But Better"



"Pretty Please"



"Glam - Rama"

I'll show you the new Blowout Menu, share our new BABOR Skincare and Make-up products and that special occasion look

BLOWOUT
BAR
\$30
For 30 Minutes



"Brazilian Braid"



"Posh"



"Twist"



"Sexy Buns"

Color me Grand for the Holidays
Haircut, Color and FREE Makeup Consultation for \$99.

650-219-5776 • Maureen Sterling

A STERLING SALON & SPA

450 Dondee Way, Suite 8 • Pacifica In Rockaway Plaza @ Paul Strom • Appts 8AM - 9PM / 7 days per week



MySelf Life Coaching Services For Women

Empowering Women to achieve goals
&
Life Balance

www.MySelfCoaching.org

info@myselfcoaching.org

TEL. 415.334.7415

Individualized Packages to suit your needs

CONTACT US FOR A COMPLIMENTARY INFORMATIONAL SESSION

VISION & EYE CARE



L. BRUCE MEBINE O.D.

& ASSOCIATES

- State-of-the-art Eye and Vision care in a personal and warm setting
- Family owned and serving our community for over 60 years

(415) 664-3089 • (415) 564-3072 (f) • 340 West Portal Ave • SF

www.drbrucebine.com



It's hard to believe that this issue closes out another year of the *Observer*. There was much to cover and report on in 2010 with the excitement of elections and baseball dominating the headlines in recent weeks.

On a more local level, the neighborhoods around West Portal survived the MUNI rebuild, and the merchants are looking to rebound as the general economy improves at a glacial pace (although the crowds on "Black Friday" could dispute this) and we hope that 2011 is a little brighter and more on the road to recovery.

This New Year will bring San Francisco a new (interim) Mayor, and quite possibly a new District Attorney as well. Several new members of the Board of Supervisors will be sworn in and will be faced with the task of working within the severe budget constraints that face San Francisco. I hope that the new officials will pledge to work together to represent and help the citizenry en masse, including the business community without which there are many less jobs and tax income.

Whatever happens, we will be continuing to observe and report the events and interesting facts about the western side of this wonderful city. My continuing thanks and appreciation goes out to the cadre of writers, columnists and staff members that work to keep this periodical in the boxes and on your doorstep. And, of course, the merchants and advertisers who enable us to buy the paper, ink and services through their support.



1090 Point Lobos
San Francisco
415-386-3330

Back by Popular Demand!

Three-Course Prix Fixe Dinner – \$25.00

Wednesday Evenings in the Cliff House Bistro



Visit www.cliffhouse.com for the weekly menu.



CLIFF HOUSE NEWSLETTER

The Cliff House is pleased to announce the recent launch of our e-newsletter, *On the Edge*. Stay informed about specially priced dining promotions and historical tidbits that we'll have some fun with. To sign up for the Cliff House newsletter please visit: www.cliffhouse.com/guest_book/newsletter.html



WINE LOVERS' TUESDAY

On Tuesdays bottled wines are half price all day with purchase of entrée! (Some restrictions apply.)

I believe that community based journalism is an important part of the fabric of the city and all of us from the editors, writers and readers are participants. The 16 monthly newspapers in San Francisco give a clear and detailed snapshot of each of the locales they cover and together bring the largest amount of local news to the readers. In attending neighborhood meetings and

events I often hear from readers how the local papers have much more local content than the larger papers.

While gratifying to hear, it's a sad fact that the once great dailies can no longer cover all sections of the neighborhood with the depth of writing that they once had, and that trend is probably irreversible as news and journalism continues to evolve. Email, blogs and "twitter" inform people in ways that were unimaginable even 5 years ago.

On the other hand, the neighborhood monthlies are in tune with the micro-local issues that you are interested in and exist to keep you informed. The "Westside" of San Francisco is fortunate to have four monthlies covering events and news. In addition to the *Observer*, the *West Portal Monthly*, the *Sunset Beacon*, and *Richmond Review* all strive to meet the needs of the neighborhoods. Relying on "volunteer" journalists, local columnists and reader inquiries these publications paint a hopeful picture of local news that will continue to evolve.

What about you? If you have an interesting snippet, idea, or some insights just drop it to us. You can reach me at: mitch@WestsideObserver.com. Be sure to check out the *Observer* online @ www.WestsideObserver.com.

Thanks for reading us. Have a very Merry Christmas, Happy Chanukah and a Happy and Healthy New Year!

VICTORIA TOBAR D.M.D.

Family and Cosmetic Dentistry

A professional and friendly neighborhood dentist, specializing in high quality dental care.

NEW PATIENT SPECIAL

Complete Exam, Full set of X-rays and Cleaning for \$99.* (\$344 value)

*non-insurance patients only

800 Santiago Street, Suite A
At the corner of 19th Avenue, San Francisco

415 566-2222
www.drviCTORIATobar.com



Bring the spirit of sharing
to San Francisco kids and families.

Please join our annual food and toy drive by bringing unwrapped, new toys and non-perishable foods to any of our offices throughout the City, now through December 21st. Supporting our community is a wonderful gift.



West Portal • 415.731.5000
Pacific Heights • 415.674.6500
Noe Valley • 415.695.7707
Potrero Hill • 415.315.0105
Upper Market • 415.552.9500
Castro • 415.552.9500

www.zephyrsf.com

Zephyr Real Estate. We're all about San Francisco.



Real Travel By Sergio Nibbi

Don't take any Wooden Drachma

Our second Dimitris in as many days picked us up at exactly 10 o'clock at the foot of the gangplank. Mercedes seems to be the car of choice and moments after the formal introductions we took off.....literally! If the car had wings we would have been airborne in minutes. The road to Delphi is a nicely paved two lane, steep, winding road that hugs the mountainside, with a double white line down the center. For all the good it does they could have saved themselves a ton of money and omitted that second white line. Our first stop was at the monastery of Hosios Lukas, a



spectacular group of buildings made of rough hewn stone with marvelous detailing. The huge stone buttresses with perfect arches still perform their job after all these hundreds of years. Sunday service had just finished and the black robed priest with his long black beard mingled with the parishioners, all dressed in their Sunday best. The crypt beneath the main church not only supplied the foundation for the church but it is covered with some of the loveliest wall-paintings and mosaics that we have seen so far. Photos: Monastery of Hosios Lukas



On the road to Delphi we passed a couple of small towns, one being Poseidon, the well known god of the sea, and a few villages with buildings hanging on the mountainside. Dimitris dropped us off in front of the main gate



to the archeological ruins and would wait for us in front of the museum down the road. What he didn't tell us is that you need to be a Billy goat to climb around the area. The original buildings were built on the side of the mountain where according to mythology Delphi became the center of the earth after two eagles released by Zeus in opposite directions returned to meet in this one spot. As a builder I would have picked up the eagles and relocated them to the valley below. Photos: Delphi

The steps go on forever and wind around the centuries old columns, stones, temple and ruins. Going up was not so bad but coming down was treacherous. Had it been raining it would have been impossible. We thought that the path from the top would lead to the museum but no such luck. It was all the way back down the hundreds of steps and then a short walk to the ultra modern, beautifully done museum. The displays are outstanding and masterfully displayed. The old temple walls were inscribed with words of wisdom such as "Know Thyself", "Nothing in Excess" and yes, "Don't take any Wooden Drachma." We enjoyed them all and in the process saw the omphalos, the sculptured cone that stood in the exact center of the world, and the famous bronze statue of the Charioteer, one of the most celebrated pieces of ancient art in the world.

Our next choice was lunch in the village of Delphi or back to the ship. We chose the latter where a hot pastrami sandwich became the center of my world.

The sound of the anchor digging deep in the ocean floor woke us out of a sound sleep and through groggy eyes we could see Zakynthos. We also saw the rain that was coming down in sheets. At that point we jumped back into ours and contemplated the day. The worst part was the fact that we had to take the tender into town and didn't really know if we wanted to watch the handicapped crowd on board slip and slide all over the boarding area. The sun finally shown it's face and in we jumped, bouncing and splashing all the way to town. The ship's paper said that there wasn't much there and that became an understatement. For five Euros apiece we took a 30 minute elephant train around town. The train took off to the prerecorded sound of a steam engine with dogs barking



in the background. Where can you laugh for 30 minutes straight for a mere 15 bucks? A short walk around town and it was back to the ship. We will cherish that train ride as long as we live.

The biggest surprise came the following day. Again, the ship's paper said very little about Montevasia, also known as "the Gibraltar of the East." Certainly a huge rock but nowhere near the size of the real one. Again we tendered and wondered if we should turn left or right into town. Left it was and after a walk of almost a mile we entered the old town. The cobblestone streets are narrow and steep but the views spectacular. Rock and stone buildings line the paths with the beautiful church of Elkomenos Christos sitting in the main square, a couple of old cannons still at the ready. The highest peak is over 650 above sea level and although we had gone about half way up we settled for a quick stop and relaxing break. We visited the small cemetery on the way back and decided that of all the places that we have seen so far, a week in this centuries

old town would be on our bucket list. The views of the ocean alone would make anyone want to come back. Across the moat and a quick visit to the new town. What a contrast!

In retrospect, one has to wonder about the all the incredibly hard work that went into building these villages. Find the water, gather the food, work like mules to move rock and stone up the endless steps. Rock upon rock to build shelter, churches, monasteries and McDonalds. Photos: Montevasia

Our erstwhile travel agent (Karen) had made arrangements for a private tour on Crete. The ship docked at Aghios Nikolaos and again we tendered to the pier. George



was waiting for us and the four of us squeezed into his economy class sedan for the one hour drive to Herakleion Museum where we visited four to five thousand year old displays of statues, weapons, paintings and jewelry. Next was the castle at Knossos. The structures are being reconstructed and at least here unlike Delphi the site was rather level. At one time 2,000 people lived in the castle and 9,000 outside the area. Earthquakes and fires destroyed the structures but it was rebuilt at various times. The outdoor theater is 4,000 years old and the oldest in the world. George then took us through a small village in the middle of the wine making area and then finally for a typical Greek lunch in a small restaurant where we got to sample many of the items on the menu. I had the rabbit with onions that was a true delight. The others had beef with zucchini, green vegetables and of course a Greek salad loaded with olives and thick, green

olive oil. We made the last tender back to the ship before the ship was repositioned to the dock for refueling. The weather was picture perfect and an almost full moon lit up the evening sky. Tomorrow it's Santorini and hopefully with it another Giants win. Photos: Knosis

Feedback: sergio@westsideobserver.com

Villa d'Este

RESTAURANT

An all Occasion art-deco inspired family restaurant serving traditional Italian cuisine since 1978

Open 7 days a week

Lunch 11-2 • Dinner 5-10

Full Bar

Featuring Sunday Champagne Brunch

2623 Ocean Ave. @ 19th Ave

San Francisco CA , 94132

415.334.0580

villadeste-sf.com

Holiday Hours

Christmas Eve 4-7 pm

Christmas Day Brunch 12-3 Dinner 3-10

New Years Eve 5-11pm

FRIDAY - NOVEMBER 19, 2010

7:52am - 800 blk of Head St - Stolen Vehicle Officers respond to a report of a stolen vehicle. The victim tells Officers that she parked and secured her vehicle on 11/18/10 at 6:00pm. The victim said when she returned to where she parked her vehicle she found it missing. A computer check revealed that the vehicle was not towed.

12:00pm - 1300 blk of 41st Ave - Recovered Vehicle Officers respond to a report of a recovered stolen vehicle. The victim said he was surfing craigslist recently and found a vehicle he was interested in purchasing. The victim said he made contact with the seller and arranged a meeting to purchase the vehicle. After purchasing the vehicle, the victim brought the vehicle home and after looking closer at all the paperwork provided to him decided to contact the police to have them take a closer look at the vehicle. A computer check revealed that the vehicle was recently report stolen.

THURSDAY - NOVEMBER 18, 2010

1:10pm - 100 blk Montana St - Theft from Vehicle Officers respond to a report of a vehicle theft. The victim tells Officers that she parked and secured her vehicle in front of her residence on 11/17/10 at 4:00pm. When the victim returned to her vehicle the next day she discovered that the right rear passenger window was shattered and several items were missing from inside the vehicle.

6:10pm - Capitol Ave / Sagamore St - Unlicensed Driver Officers respond to a report of a traffic accident. Officers speak with the parties involved and start to assist with the information exchange. A computer check reveals that one of the parties involved in the accident did not possess a California Drivers License. The driver is cited and released at the scene.

6:25pm - 500 blk Lawton St - Stolen Vehicle Officers respond to a report of a stolen vehicle. The victim tells Officers that he parked and secured his vehicle on 11/17/10 at 8:30pm. The victim said the next day he returned to where he parked his vehicle and found it missing. A computer check revealed that the vehicle was not towed.

9:19pm - 3200 blk 20th Ave - Trespassing Officers respond to a report of store security detaining a female for trespassing. Store security agents tell Officers, the female was previously banned from the store after she was caught on three different occasions stealing from the store. Officers take the woman into custody. The woman is cited and released at the scene.

WEDNESDAY - NOVEMBER 17, 2010

11:30am - Sloat Blvd / 42nd Ave - Indecent Exposure Officers respond to a report of a kidnapping. The victim tells Officers that while walking on Sloat Blvd she encountered a Hispanic male who unzipped his pants and exposed himself to her. The victim continued walking past the man and he grabbed her shoulder. The victim struck the man with a water bottle she was carrying. The suspect ran away, jumped into a parked vehicle and fled the scene.

11:30am - 34th Ave / Quintara St - Unlicense Driver While on routine patrol Officers observed a vehicle with a broken windshield. Officers conduct a traffic stop on the vehicle. A computer check revealed the operator did not possess a California Drivers License. The driver is cited and released.

1:00pm - 1600 blk 47th Ave - Explosive Device Located While conducting an eviction, San Francisco Sheriffs locate an illegal explosive device (hand grenade). Officers respond to the location, contact the Bomb Squad who respond, and take custody of the device to render it safe.

9:49pm - 19th Ave / Sloat Blvd - Suspended License While on routine patrol Officers observe a vehicle with a non working left brake light. Officers conduct a traffic stop on the vehicle. A computer check reveals that the operator of the vehicle has a suspended driver's license. The driver is cited and released. The vehicle is towed.

TUESDAY - NOVEMBER 16, 2010

1:23pm - Wawona St / 21st Ave - Possession of Air Gun Officers respond to a report of several males with guns around a vehicle. While searching the area, Officers locate three males sitting inside a vehicle that matched the description dispatch provided. Officers detain the three males and upon searching the vehicle find an air soft gun. Officers cite and release the owner of the air soft gun. The air powered gun is taken into custody.

11:15am - 17th Ave / Judah St - Stolen Vehicle Officers respond to a report of a stolen vehicle. The victim tells Officers that she parked and secured her motorcycle and when she returned she found it missing. A computer check revealed that the motorcycle was not towed.

11:00pm - Unit blk Cragmont Ave - Stolen Vehicle Officers respond to a report of a stolen vehicle. The victim tells Officers that she parked and secured her vehicle on 11/16/10 at 9:00am. The victim said when she returned, several hours later, her vehicle was missing. A computer check revealed that the vehicle was not towed.

MONDAY - NOVEMBER 15, 2010

8:30am - 500 blk John Muir Dr - Stolen Vehicle Officers respond to a report of a stolen vehicle. The victim tells Officers that he parked and secured his vehicle on 11/14/10 at 11:00am. The next day the victim returned to where he parked his vehicle and found it missing. A computer check revealed that the vehicle was not towed.

7:30pm - 3200 blk 20th Ave - Warrant Arrest Officers respond to a report of a fight. Officers learn store security observed a male steal several bras. The male shoplifter was accompanied by three other females. Security said she approached the shoplifter and asked him to return the bras he grabbed and placed into the bag he was carrying. The shoplifter handed 1 bra back to store security but continued to walk away. The other three females continued to walk away, into the parking lot and get into a vehicle. Mall security arrived when the shoplifter was about to get into the waiting vehicle. Mall security attempted to detain the shoplifter and a fight ensued. A computer check revealed the shoplifter had an outstanding warrant for his arrest for burglary. He was arrested.

10:00pm - 1300 blk of 43rd Ave - Robbery Officers respond to a report of a robbery. The victim tells Officers he was walking on 43rd Ave near Judah Street when he heard someone running up from behind him. The victim said he began to turn around and saw an Asian male running up to him with a handgun in his right hand. The victim said the suspect grabbed his backpack, searched through it and gave it back to him. The victim said the suspect reached into his (the victims) pocket retrieved his cell phone and fled the scene. Officers searched the area and located the suspect and his handgun.

SUNDAY - NOVEMBER 14, 2010

3:37pm - Great Hwy / Taraval St - Unlicensed Driver While on routine patrol Officers observe a vehicle with expired tabs. Officers affect a traffic stop on the vehicle. A computer check reveals that the operator of the vehicle does not possess a valid California Drivers License. The driver is cited and released. The vehicle is towed.

12:10pm - Capitol Ave / Lobos St - Unlicensed Driver While on routine patrol Officers observe a vehicle operating on city streets without brake lights. Officers affect a traffic stop on the vehicle. A computer check revealed that the operator of the vehicle did not possess a valid California drivers License. The driver was cited and released.

6:12 pm - 500 blk of Lakeview Ave - Robbery Officers respond to a report of a robbery. The victim tells Officers that she got off the 54 muni line at Lakeview and Brighton and began walking eastbound on Lakeview Ave when two unknown suspects

approached her from behind. The victim tells Officers that one of the suspects grabbed her purse and she started to pull it back when she lost her footing and fell backwards hitting her head on the sidewalk. Officers search the area and locate the suspect. He is arrest and transported to Taraval Station.

SATURDAY - NOVEMBER 13, 2010

9:28am - 800 blk Capitol Ave - Warrant Arrest Officers respond to a report of a trespasser. Officers observe a subject standing in the driveway of the house matching the description given to the Officers by dispatch. Officers detain the man. A computer check reveals an outstanding felony warrant for the man. The man is arrested and transported to Taraval Station. The reportee wanted no further police action.

11:03am - 1600 blk 27th Ave - Stolen Vehicle Officers respond to a report of a stolen vehicle. The victim tells Officers that she parked and secured her vehicle on 11/12/40 at 11:00pm. The victim said the next day she returned to where she parked her vehicle and found it missing. A computer check revealed the vehicle was not towed.

5:30pm - 3200 blk 20th Ave - Shoplift Officers respond to a report of a theft. Officers are told by store security they observed two subjects, who they recognized from a previous theft, enter the store, walk directly to the fragrance wall select three items and place them into her purse.

FRIDAY - NOVEMBER 12, 2010

2:46am - 800 blk Brotherhood Wy - Firearm Possession

While on routine patrol, Officers observe a vehicle parked in a dark and empty church parking lot, occupied with three people. Officers make a u-turn and pass by the vehicle. Officers observe one of the occupants out of the vehicle walking towards the tree lined fenced area. When Officers approach they find two juveniles and one adult. Officers walk the fence line where they observed the adult occupant walking and recover a rifle, handgun and ammunition.

8:00am - 1800 blk 16th Ave - Burglary Officers respond to a report of a burglary. Officers are told by the victim that he parked his vehicle in front of his house the night prior. The victim did not recall locking the vehicle. The victim said sometime

WOTPCC (Cont. from p. 13)

issues with the **19th Avenue corridor study**, and the proposed plan by the developers to “bulldoze” a large portion of the gardens and grounds designed by renowned architect **Thomas Church**, as well as a loss of affordable housing.

John Gavin of Parkmerced offered a counterpoint asking the public to attend the (many) planning meetings to see what the owners and developers are working towards, and handed out fliers with the exact location of the meeting on December 9th. (The S.F. Planning Commission hearing meeting will be held on December 9th at the McKenna theatre (SFSU) at 1600 Holloway at 6PM).

Meeting attendees with an interest in the recent local elections and the concept of **ranked choice voting** were informed by the next presenter, **David Latterman**, of Fall Line Analytics, a political campaign marketing and data evaluation firm. Latterman gave a very interesting speech and video presentation on the recap of the November election showing how the districts voted on issues and how different the prospects of turnout for district wide and city wide elections can be. The data shows that District 7 is home to the greatest number of conservative voters in the city, and that a greater percentage of registered voters vote in the district. Other discussion centered on the election results showing District 8 moving more to a moderate side than very progressive (different than people would think about the district that contains Noe Valley, Glen Park and the Castro).

Much of the presentation discussed the results of District 2 and District 10 where **ranked choice voting** made a difference in that the initial “first place” finisher ended up losing the election once the lower ranked candidates were eliminated and their “second and third choice” candidate votes were redistributed until a candidate passed the 50% mark in votes received. The “quagmire” in District 10 took 19 “elimination rounds” to declare a winner in the hotly contested 21 person supervisor race.

The proliferation, aesthetics and safety of **cellular antennas** was discussed and debated next as representatives from the SF PUC, NextG Communications, Balboa Terrace and supervisor John Avalos offices discussed the proposed installation of a cellular antenna (and equipment) on a power pole located on Bob and Chris Olson’s property at San Benito and Darien.

Natasha Ernst (NextG Communications) spoke about the different types of communication installations and showed slides of the types of installations that NextG installs on behalf of companies such as Metro PCS, Sprint, T-Mobile, AT&T, etc. She went into detail on the issues in the SF area, and the evaluation of whether the power poles (wooden) are located on public easements or private property. She noted that the debated installation adjacent to the Olson’s home was not a realistically installable location and that it was basically a mistake by the evaluator as it would require a “use permit” by the PUC and the SF Planning Department which would most likely be denied.

Frances Hsieh, representing the office of Supervisor John Avalos, spoke about proposed legislation that would require these types of installation to “notice” the public on proposed antenna installations, and set guidelines for the amount of equipment placed on utility poles, as well as address the problem of aesthetics within business districts and neighborhood. Interestingly it is the aesthetics issues that give citizens the most leverage to battle these installations under the Federal Communications Act of 1996.

Doug Loranger (SNAFU) spoke next about the problems with these types of installations, from poles being overloaded with equipment and falling over sparking a fire, to the potential danger to people from the cellular EMF waves, to the potential leakage of the back up batteries needed to keep the equipment functioning in the event of a prolonged power outage.

Bob and Christine Olson then spoke and displayed photos of the various installations of cellular and other types of power pole mounted equipment around the city. The photos revealed equipment of differing sizes with a multitude of large and small boxes mounted to the power poles. A large vocal group of **Balboa Terrace** residents were on hand to add their concerns to the discussion and to ask questions of the installers (NextG) and of the representatives from the PUC on how the permitting and appeal process works on these types of installations using utility poles.

After more discussion, **Roger Ritter** (Balboa Terrace Association) read a resolution against the proposed installation of the antenna equipment at the Olson’s address. As the resolution mentioned possibly moving an antenna installation to the vicinity of Junipero Serra Blvd., the WOTPCC members asked that a letter supporting the Balboa Terrace resolution be amended to not propose other installation locations, but to support Balboa Terrace’s opposition to the proposed location and also detail the councils opposition to antenna installations in residential areas. Following floor discussion, a vote was taken and it passed 9-1 (with one abstention) to support the Balboa Terrace Association in their opposition to the antenna installation.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40. The next meeting will be Jan. 24, 2011 at 7:30 PM in the Forest Hills clubhouse, as there is no meeting to be held in December.





Vanity's End

Buried somewhere in the following 750 words, Gentle and Perceptive Reader, you may find a frequently overlooked truth that can save you time, money, grief, and anguish. This mini-epiphany came to me unbidden, a revelation which—if it ever caught on with the world at large— could ruin whole industries, severely injure the economy, and wipe out major publications. At the same time, it will greatly increase your own sense of comfort and confidence.

Do I now have your complete attention? This rarely acknowledged truth might even save you from committing four of the Seven Deadly Sins, namely pride, covetousness, anger and envy. (Pop-quiz detour: can you name the other three?)

From the mostly ancient of times, ostentatious display, conceit and the desire for admiration for one's personal attractions have been frowned upon by the keepers of public morality. The Bible wags its admonishing finger at us when we indulge in preening and vain-glory. Philosophers—and others who eschew heavy lifting—warn of the pitfalls of too much self-appreciation.

As I age and decry the lost image of myself as young, vigorous, lean and racy, I'm resigned to the sprouting of my love handles, my ever-rounding belly, my rapidly graying hair—and the loss of same on my head along with its uninvited, unwelcome appearance elsewhere. Gravity attacks and I try to distract myself from the evidence of its triumph over me.

To take away attention from what is actually happening to them, some people indulge in drastic cosmetic surgery or hair coloring in the forlorn hope that no one will notice that they have attained their 50s, 60s, 70s or 80s. Others pursue vigorous, unnatural activity—straining, sweating, and jarring their skeletons, forgetting that the true evolutionary purpose of running is to get away from something or to catch something.

I've also seen those who starve themselves in a silly yearning for that svelte anorexic look, exploring the binge-and-purge route. While I haven't hung on to the 30-inch waist wardrobe I enjoyed in my 20s and 30s I admit—with embarrassment—to retaining some clothing, for sentimental reasons, that I'll never be able to button again.

As a little tyke I sometimes enjoyed the warm, gentle radiance of being admired—someone thought I was cute, if not actually good-looking. Someone else has laughed at my jokes or praised me for I can't remember what. Later on, a small handful even thought they might want to spend their lives with me. Once—when they were too young to know better—my kids thought I was wise. And the resulting glow of self-satisfaction was marvelous, even if

dangerously addictive.

I, in my turn, have snapped my head to follow the stride of an uncommonly attractive person, even-featured, well-proportioned, tailored, confident. Sometimes I notice such a being with veneration, an appreciation of beauty. Sometimes I react with jealousy, sometimes with nostalgia for the era when I imagined I was the object of such esteem.

Being preoccupied with how I look has not served me well. I remember the night of my high school senior prom. ("Senior" meant something else to me in those days.) Fresh haircut, scoured skin, newly pressed clothing, blindingly shined shoes. But how quickly I shrank from feeling ten feet tall to something less than three. Corsage in hand, I rang the doorbell of my date, who appeared wearing a stunning frock, hair done to a T. She looked me over, and then after a moment said, "You forgot to zip your fly."

Oh, Vanity!

These days, I don't look in the mirror much, just enough for necessary adjustments like combing my remaining hair or making sure there's no jam on my beard. Appearing neat and clean does count; being the target of every admiring eye no longer does. Here's why:

Alert, vigilant and thoughtful readers will remember that earlier in this polemic I promised an insightful bombshell. Pay attention. Wait for it. Here it comes.

Somewhere in my journey through the decades I had a sudden realization: Mostly, people weren't concerned with how I looked; they were focused on how THEY looked!

Having gone through periods when I was not certain that I really was okay, not truly sure of myself, I might take some tucks in my attitude and behavior. But I've come to understand that preoccupation with my appearance—coming across as an improved or superior self—is like trying to polish a brick to a mirror finish. Waste of energy. Can't be done.

What a relief to discover I'm no longer in everyone else's cross-hairs. I probably never was.

Hank Basayne is a San Franciscan who wonders how much time you spend thinking about how you look.



Sick of Being Sick?

Tips to Safely Winterize your Home and Family

The weather has significantly changed this month and we can feel a chill in the air. With that, many have been down and out with colds and flu. Some are feeling the stress of the fast-approaching Holiday Season and the immune system is compromised.

About the Immune System Our immune system is made up of special cells, proteins, tissues, and organs that defend us against germs and micro organisms every day.

The immune system normally does a great job of keeping us healthy and preventing infections. The cells involved are white blood cells, or leukocytes, which come in two basic types that combine to seek out and destroy disease-causing organisms or substances.

However, problems with the immune system can lead to illness and infection. The four main categories of disorders are:

1. immunodeficiency disorders (primary or acquired)
2. auto-immune disorders (in which the body's immune system attacks its own tissue as foreign matter)
3. allergic disorders (in which the immune system overreacts in response to an antigen)
4. cancers of the immune system

Every year, your family probably faces its share of sore throats, colds and viruses. When you bring your child to the doctor or go yourself, do you automatically expect a prescription for antibiotics? Many do and are surprised or angry if they leave the doctor's office empty-handed — after all, who doesn't want to get well as quickly as possible? But your doctor could be doing you and your child a favor by not reaching for the prescription pad.

How Antibiotics Work Antibiotics were first used in the 1940s, and are one of the great advances in medicine. But over-prescribing has caused the development of bacteria that no longer respond to antibiotics that may have worked before. Plus, kids who take antibiotics when they aren't necessary run the risk of adverse reactions, such as stomach upset and diarrhea.

For a better understanding, there are two major types of germs that can make people sick: **bacteria** and **viruses**. Although certain bacteria and viruses cause diseases with similar symptoms, the ways these two organisms multiply and spread illness are different:

Bacteria are living organisms existing as single cells. Bacteria are everywhere and most don't cause harm, and in some cases may be beneficial. Lactobacillus, for example, lives in the intestine and helps digest food (a good bacteria). But some are harmful and can cause illness by invading the human body, multiplying, and interfering with normal bodily processes. Antibiotics are effective against bacteria because they work to kill these living organisms by stopping their growth and reproduction.

Viruses, on the other hand, are not alive and cannot exist on their own — they are particles containing genetic material wrapped in a protein coat. Viruses "live," grow, and reproduce only after they've invaded other living cells. Some viruses may be fought off by the body's immune system before they cause illness, but others (colds, for example) must simply run their course. Viruses do not respond to antibiotics at all.

Why It's Harmful to Overuse Them Taking antibiotics for colds and other viral illnesses not only won't work, but also has a dangerous side effect: over time, this practice helps create bacteria that have become more of a challenge to kill. Frequent and inappropriate use of antibiotics selects for strains of bacteria that can resist treatment. This is called bacterial resistance. These resistant bacteria require higher doses of medicine or stronger antibiotics to combat. Doctors have found bacteria that are resistant to the most powerful antibiotics available today.

Antibiotic resistance is a widespread problem, and one that the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention calls "one of the world's most pressing public health problems." Bacteria that were once highly responsive to antibiotics have become increasingly resistant. Among those that are becoming harder to treat

are pneumococcal infections (which cause pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections, and meningitis), skin infections, and tuberculosis.

Originally contributed by Steven Dowshen MD, November 2008

Natural Tips Ever wonder why we look forward to certain smells and tastes for winter? Or why, when we smell Grandma's home made goodies at holiday time, we feel warm all over and loved? She knew more than we may have given her credit for...old wives tales or maybe not!

For centuries, man has used plants for medicinal purposes. These substances can be found in spices, herbs and essential oils:

Clove – highly antimicrobial, antiseptic, analgesic, bactericidal, and a powerful antioxidant. Also, blood thinning and anti-inflammatory.

Cinnamon – antimicrobial, anti-infectious, and antibacterial for a wide spectrum of infections. It's antiviral, anti-fungal (candida), a general tonic. Increases blood flow when previously restricted and is a light anticoagulant.

Rosemary – anti-fungal, antibacterial, antiseptic, anti-parasitic, a general stimulant, enhances mental clarity and supports nerves and endocrine gland balance.

Eucalyptus Radiata – anti-infectious, antibacterial, antiviral, anti-inflammatory and expectorant.

Lemon – anti-infectious, antibacterial (spores), antiseptic, antiviral, and a disinfectant. Improves microcirculation, promotes white blood cell formation, and improves immune function.

You can see how the above blended together in a gel cap would be a great natural antibiotic!

The ability of essential oils to act on both the mind and the body is what makes them truly unique among natural therapeutic agents. The fragrance of an essential oil can be very stimulating—both psychologically and physically. The fragrance of other essential oils may be calming and sedating, helping to overcome anxiety or hyperactivity. On a physiological level, essential oils may stimulate immune function and regenerate damaged tissue. Essential oils may also combat infectious disease by killing viruses, bacteria, and other pathogens.

Using an essential oil blend internally in a gel cap, rubbing it on the bottom of your feet, and diffusing in you home will make your living space very clean and safe from harmful germs. The oils also enhance your immune system so you're rebuilding and detoxing at the same time.

The purifying action of the oil blend can't be beat when used in the home as a cleaning agent and for your family with hand sanitizer, handy wipes, throat lozenges, toothpaste and mouthwash, just to mention a few.

These unique oils also help with an overall feeling of wellbeing and energy, so we can enjoy our time with family and friends.

Drink lots of water (and lemon water) to rid your body of germs and toxins. Also, frequently washing your hands and getting enough sleep will help greatly this season. Your body needs time to rest at night to rebuild cells.

Have a blessed Holiday Season and be well!

*Feedback: Sharon Caren, 650.359.6579
www.sharoncaren.com*

Italian American Social Club

Since 1937

Open for Lunch - Wednesday through Friday

Now Open For Dinner

Wednesday through Saturday

Come try our new menu items and see what authentic Italian food is all about.

Banquet Rooms and Catering Services Available.

415-585-8059

25 Russia Avenue • San Francisco

Parking lot across from the club

Now At the Movies • By Don Lee Miller

BURLESQUE

Just when you thought Musicals were dead, you hadn't expected Christina Aguilera to executive produce and star in this fabulous mix of Chicago and Cabaret. As Alice from Iowa, she enters the Burlesque Lounge on Sunset Blvd. owned by Tess: Cher and her ex-husband Vince: Peter Gallagher. Creditors are dropping by daily with threats and deadlines, including wealthy patron Marcus: Eric Dane, who wants to build a high-rise on the space. The dancers perform to prerecorded tunes. Ali gets a cocktail waitress job, then moves into the chorus, but when she has her chance to lip-synch a solo, a jealous Nikki: Kristen Bell pulls the plug on Ali's sound. Everyone is surprised when Ali grabs the mike and belts out an original song. The format for the club is changed; she's the star of the new show. And STAR she is! She has moved into the apartment of the handsome bartender-songwriter, Jack: Cam Gigandet. Soon, Ali has her choice between Marcus and Jack. So that Aguilera is the only blond, both Nikki and Georgia: Julianne Hough (TV's Dancing with the Stars) who are natural blonds, go dark. Strong male support is provided by Sean: Stanley Tucci, Alexis: Alan Cumming, and Harold: Glynn Turman. Expect several Academy Award nominations for this tough love musical-drama, including Best Song for ballads done by Cher and X-tina. Partial nudity, Profanity, Adult situations.

FOR COLORED GIRLS

From the hit play by Ntozake Shange, writer-director Tyler Perry has cross woven a few weeks in the lives of numerous black women, all with about the same amount of screen time. However, several characters have much juicier parts than others, a couple of whom should qualify for supporting Oscar nominations in this ensemble drama. Religious fanatic Alice/

White: Whoopi Goldberg is mother to two young women: Tangie/Orange: Thandie Newton, a prostitute who can't know love and her younger sister, Nyla/Purple: Tessa Thompson, who won't borrow money from Tangie for an abortion. Jo/Red: Janet Jackson, is a wealthy magazine editor who is unable to show emotion, even when she finds her husband has given her the one thing she damn sure didn't want. Juanita/Green: Loretta Devine, needs support for the center she runs for young women. Crystal/Brown: Kimberly Elise, lives in a walk-up tenement with the broken-down father of her two young children, next door to the building manager, Gilda: Phylicia Rashad and Tangie. Jasmine/Yellow: Anika Noni Rose, is raped by a new acquaintance. Rounding out the cast are Kelly/Blue: Kerry Washington and Rose: Macy Gray. Profanity, extreme violence, rape, drug use.

GENIUS WITHIN: THE INNER LIFE

Since his death in 1982, classical Canadian pianist Glenn Gould has become more well known as an interpreter of J.B. Bach's keyboard music. Coming from a wealthy family, Glenn was given every advantage, including the finest teachers and early filming of his family life. An eccentric fellow, he guarded his privacy so that much of this footage has never been publically displayed before now. When he wowed the Russians with a concert tour of the cities in 1957, that film is now seen. Included are his private home recordings and diaries as well as new interviews from his friends and lovers, some speaking out about Gould for the first time, revealing his thoughts on Life, Love and the more mundane music, art and society. Profanity, adult situations.

HARRY POTTER - DEATHLY HALLOWS-PT1

J.K. Rowling's final Potter book has

been divided into two parts to extend the money-making franchise a bit further. The seventh will present the final epic next July. There are disappointments in this half, including cheap tents that make up a large part of the sets, lacking the grandeur of Hogwarts, now that the youths are out of school. The rivalry that Ron: Rupert Grint feels for Hermione: Emma Watson comes to a climax with Harry: Daniel Radcliffe. The other students are seeking to find and destroy the Horcruxes, those pieces of his black soul that the Dark Lord has hidden, which help him to cling to his immortality. The scene at Voldemort's dinner table surrounded by his Death Eaters is frightening, as is Voldemort: Ralph Finnes with his hideous nose-less face. The three friends grow into adulthood as they love each other and their devoted house elf, Dobby. The wicked bloodthirsty villainess, Bellatrix Lestrange: Helena Bonham Carter commits murder on-screen. Violence, adult situations.

MEGAMIND

Anyone remember in 1978 in Superman when Brando (as JorEl) sent his infant alien to earth? This time around, two alien infants are sent to Metro City as their planet is being sucked into a black hole. The one that lands in the prison yard is nurtured by the convicts and becomes Megamind: Voice of Will Farrell. The other, who lands at a nearby mansion, becomes his lifelong competitor and grows up to be everybody's hero, Metro Man: v.o. Brad Pitt. When Megamind becomes bored he creates a new rival, Titan: v.o. Jonah Hill. The damsel in distress is news anchor, Roxanne Ritchi: v.o. Tina Fey, secretly loved by Megamind. Disguised as Bernard/v.o. Ben Stiller, the curator of the Metro Man Museum, he woos Roxanne. His henchman, Minion: v.o. David Cross, tries to break up Megamind's romance. This more adult animated fare is credited

to Tom McGrath: Director (Madagascar movies) and the Writers: Alan J. Schoolcraft and Brent Simons. 3-D. Adult situations.



MORNING GLORY

Director Roger Michell and Writer Aline Brosh McKenna present a TV producer, Becky Fuller: Rachel McAdams on the 4th network morning show with warring co-hosts: Mike Pomeroy: Harrison Ford, who has been presented every TV award there is, and spunky, amusing Colleen Peck: Diane Keaton. Becky has been hired by Jerry Barnes: Jeff Goldblum, but quickly falls into lust with her handsome coworker Adam Bennett: Patrick Wilson. The behind-the-scenes activities of the TV show are interesting, but this is essentially a character study of the three leads. The acting is fine but could have benefited from a stronger script with everyone on the same page. Profanity, adult situations.

UNSTOPPABLE

An almost retired engineer Frank: Denzel Washington and a freshman conductor Will: Chris Pine (Star Trek) happen to be working the day shift together when they must endeavor to stop a driverless runaway train that is barreling across Pennsylvania in the direction of a big curve next to flammable storage tanks in Scranton. Will's marriage is on the rocks due to a misunderstanding. Dispatcher Connie: Rosario Dawson does verbal battle with pompous Area Director Galvin: Kevin Dunn. Topnotch action director Tony Scott and writer Mark Bomback stop the viewer's heart several times and have you clutching your armrests. The build-up for the finale is spectacular. Profanity, adult situations.

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

MUMMENSCHANZ RETURNS



Dr. Annette Lust



Flora Lynn Isaacson

After thirty years the Swiss company Mummenschanz, one of the most renowned mime/mask companies, returns to perform at Cal Performances bringing with them a retrospective of their most successful creations. The title of their present production is "3x11," a 33 year collection of their most appreciated pieces.

"Mummenschanz" is derived from "mummer," a pantomime performer (from whence the word "mum" meaning silent) and has as synonyms the words mask and buffoonery. "Schanz" means chance. The company was founded after clown-acrobat Andrés Bossard and pantomimist Bernie Schirch trained at the Lecoq School of mime in Paris and staged their first show in 1969. They were joined by Italian-American Floriana Frassetto in 1971 and then performed as a threesome. After the death of Andrés Bossard, in 2000 the company was joined by Raffaella Mattioli, Pietro Montandon, and technical director JanMaria Lukas.

Influenced by cubism and dadaist skits in Swiss cabaret shows, the company reduces content to a given theme or essence of an idea. Rather than utilizing illusion mime, classical pantomime's anecdotal content, or whiteface, the mimes move spectators on a visceral as well as imaginative level through an original use of masks. These masks are made of oversized props that cover the body of one or more mimes. They are made from such items as toilet paper rolls for the eyes, nose and mouth, from prosaic hardware items or from clay to create imaginative images. With plastic bags, salad strainers and other everyday items found in department stores,

supermarkets, factories and trade shows, the mimes improvise and develop movement patterns and innovative content. As they manipulate these objects they transform them into amoebas, worms, frogs, monkeys, and primates and into figures with paper-bag, chessboard, drawings, and heads and faces made of ping pong balls. At one point they mold clay masks on their faces, pull them off and begin again. Or they draw luminous profiles of faces in the air— all geometrical and abstract forms performed without words or music. The fantasy world it creates likewise reveals serious content. "It displays man's development from the cell and his relationship with animal forms while ripping away our own masks of pomposity" (program notes, Berkeley, 1979). We become aware of the poetry of everyday objects within a world of growing materialism.

Mummenschanz performs in other American cities after Nov. 28. For info: www.Mummenschanz. Annette Lust

FRINGE OF MARIN • PROGRAM ONE

The 26th Season of the Fringe of Marin begins with three plays and three solo performances. In all, 12 new plays and solos, one of which will be selected by Bay Area Theatre Critics for Best Play Award.

David Hirzel's **Francis and Sophy: A Victorian Romance** (based on a true story) opened the program. This play is an imagined encounter between two historical figures, Captain Francis Crozier (Byron Lambie) and his intended bride, Sophy Cracroft (Alexa Chipman) in 1845. Sophy declined the Captain's proposal of marriage before he left on a long and dangerous voyage to explore the Arctic wilderness, however to inspire him, she gave him a letter to open in six months and another a year later, knowing his ship would still be frozen in the ice of the Northwest Passage. Byron Lambie gives a heartfelt performance as the Captain who is struggling to make the best of a difficult situation. Alexa Chipman is a vision of loveliness as Sophy in a beautiful peach Victorian gown. The sound effects are especially effective as is Hirzel's

direction of the two contrasting scenes.

In **A Writer's Dilemma**, written and performed by Judy Baldassari and directed by Suresa Dundes. With especially good eye contact with the audience and wonderful facial expression, Baldassari spoke about writing, a mixed blessing as she moves along roads of self discovery and comes face to face with her fears, providing us with a good analysis of her true feelings.

Line Load, written and performed by Steve North, closed the first half of the program. North is a superb solo performer whose timing and imagery are perfect example of the Art of the Solo Performer.

Lights, Camera, Love, written and directed by George Dykstra, opened the second half of the program. Harold Delinsky enters as the cameraman who sets up the scene. Obreanna McReynolds delightfully plays three different women who speak to the camera about what women want in a man. Ross Turner plays two contrasting men in a very professional performance. Both actors had great timing and seemed very natural in front of the camera.

With **Held**, written and performed by Jeremy Julian Greco, offered a true story of an artist named John Held. Greco, as Mr. Held, his energy and his stage performance were top notch.

Last, but not least, **A Thief with Principle**, written and directed by Harry Diavatis, who also starred. Mr. Diavatis was Bernie, a mortgage broker with a Cadillac. The thief was played by Dal Burns with a British upper lip and much humor alternately the thief is played by Nathan Day, a particularly good chemistry playing opposite Diavatis. A play of real substance and it leaves you questioning who is the thief.

Program One Sat. December 4 at 7:30 p.m. at Meadowlands, Dominican University, 50 Acacia, San Rafael. Reservations/info 415 673-3131/www.fringeofmarin.com.

PROGRAM TWO AT FRINGE OF MARIN

Program Two included five plays and one solo performance. **Emily and Walt**, by Carol Hochberg and sensitively directed by Linda Ayres-Frederick: an imagined

meeting between Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman. Heidi Wolff plays the shy and aloof Emily. Miriam Chase plays her sister, Lavina, in a comedic fashion and Raul R. Rubio gives a bravura performance as Walt Whitman, the complete antithesis of Emily.

What Do We Do with a Coffin, a comedy written and directed by Carol Sheldon. Much of this farce is true—the mortician gets busted. In on the fun are Carol Eggers, Crystal Nezgoda, Stuart Chappell, Roger Marquis and David Klein.

Scramble Time is a light comedy written by Shirley King, and cleverly directed by Robin Schild. It takes place in a garage where Kelly (Gigi Benson), as a stewardess, treats people in the garage including a businessman, Jason, (Monty Paulson) and Gracie (Crystal Nezgoda), a woman kept from going to the bathroom for 5 hours by the flight attendant who tries to control them as if they were passengers on an airplane.

A Magical Trio: The Movies of my Mind are three beautifully written monologues performed by magician Michael Belitos. The first, **The Paradise Program**, is a dream about three personal books with soothing classical music in the background. The second, **Red Silk Memory** is about his grandfather who was a magician and the third, **Martini-In the News** involved a trip to Paris. This was a hauntingly beautiful performance.

Healing Court written by Micheline Birger and fabulously directed by Suzanne Birrell brings Crystal Nezgoda back in a third performance as a mixed-up girl in search of herself. Scott Zanassi is a wise Judge Guru who tries to help her.

The Story of Oh, Revised and Abridged, a comedy written and directed by Jim Colgan. Amusing performances by Racheal Denny, Simon Patten, Rana Kangas-Kent and Conrad Cady. The word "Oh" is used to mean many different things.

Fall 2010 Program Two Fri. Dec. 3 at 7:30 p.m., Sun. Dec. 5 at 2 p.m. at Meadowlands, Dominican Univ., 50 Acacia, San Rafael. Reservations/info: 415-673-3131/ www.fringeofmarin.com. Flora Lynn Isaacson



Midtown Terrace May 26, 1958. LATEST BIG S.F. HOME DEVELOPMENT—Scene of San Francisco's latest major home development now under construction on the western slopes of Twin Peaks and Suto Forest. First of the new Sunstream Homes in the Midtown Terrace project will be opened to the public June 4. Mayor Christopher will officiate at the opening ceremonies. Permission from the San Francisco History Center, SF Public Library.

Phyllis’ Findings / Phyllis Sherman

The following is a reprint of an article I wrote for the now defunct SF Progress newspaper in July of 1983 (my how time flies when you’re having fun!)

Mother came to visit. For two and one half years I’ve been urging her to come out from the East Coast and see what San Francisco is all about. “But, I was there, Phyllis. 15 years ago I came out on a tour and visited Fisherman’s Wharf. I know it’s nice there.”

When I decided to move to California, Mother vehemently protested. “I know people in California who aren’t happy! Whoever heard of moving cross-country like that?” “If you want to move from Hartford, (where I was living), why not try Boston? Remember their great chowder? At least you’d still be on the East coast.” Finally, “O.K., so you’re going to California. At least leave your furniture here. It shouldn’t be so hard to come back if you don’t like it there.” You can’t say she didn’t give it the old one-two. A big E for Effort. So getting her out here to visit was quite a feat.

I took her to several of my favorite restaurants. We tried FUJI, the Japanese restaurant on West Portal. THE HIGHER TASTE, the Indian vegetarian restaurant in the Haight, and PANOS, the Greek restaurant on 24th St. She thought the Miso soup that you drink directly from a bowl was pretty cute in the Japanese restaurant but thought some kreplach tossed in would improve it. The curry concoctions were not sufficiently identifiable for comfort in the Indian restaurant, although the background chanting was quite atmospheric, she agreed. She enjoyed the salmon at PANOS, and especially the “Greek-God-type” waiters. She raved about the wonderful pasta at PICCOLO PUB on Columbus Avenue in North Beach and though LA ROCA, the Spanish seafood restaurant outstandingly good. But finally said, “Can’t we go to a REAL restaurant. So we went to BAGATELLE in West Portal, a “real restaurant,” and she enjoyed every minute of it. I didn’t have the heart to tell her it was quasi-French.

A visit to the CLIFF HOUSE and their interesting Musee Mechanique was good fun. Especially when for ten cents the Fortune Telling Lady in the black booth told her she was “quite sensitive, with master mind, great organizational and analytical powers.” Also “good money sense and diplomatic skills.” So what else is new? Like we didn’t know!

We watched the seals through telescopes, learned all about the original Sutro Baths, and had delicious sandwiches in their Cafe. Mother bought a postal card of a 1920’s bathing beauty and sent it back home to a friend. She inscribed it, “Look how revitalized I look after two weeks in San Francisco!” I know she had a good time and yet when I commented, “Aren’t the views fantastic? Isn’t this a beautiful city?” she countered with “Central Park isn’t beautiful? Something wrong with Fifth Avenue? Did you forget what it’s like to watch the skaters in Rockefeller Plaza?”

Try as you might, with Mother you didn’t win. It’s been almost sixteen years since I wrote that piece. In that time, many of the restaurants have either changed hands or gone out of business. And we miss them...but even more, we miss Mother. Mother has died...even though she downplayed our City...well, that was Mother. She was a good old gal who used to say, “Phyllis, there’s nothing that you can’t do if you want it enough.” Still, she probably never forgave me for choosing San Francisco over Boston. In retrospect, I realize that the only things that have remained the same here are the magnificent views. You can’t go home again...although JETBLUE keeps urging me to try.

Some unsettling news on the Geriatric front. Report has it that fewer medical students are going into Geriatrics as their specialty. It’s seen as a depressing field and not “glamorous.” A recent survey of physicians, however, said that Geriatric doctors are more satisfied with their work than other specialists. The JAMA said that more standard training is needed across all medical specialties. Residence requires little or no training in Geriatrics and there needs to be more to incorporate this training into all areas of medicine. By the way, if you haven’t seen SICKO, Michael Moore’s documentary on the Medical Care industry, order it from NETFLIX or wherever you can. It’s a real eye-opener on the horrors going on in the MEDICARE and MEDICAL business. It’s a not-to-be-missed!



Salvation Army Needs Kid’s Toys for Christmas

Join us in helping to spread some joy to families and children in San Francisco. During this Holiday season, needy families can turn to The Salvation Army for toys and other forms of Holiday assistance. Each year, The Salvation Army distributes approximately 35,000 toys to their clients at Christmastime, made possible by cash and toy donations from the public. This year, a major annual toy drive was cancelled, resulting in an estimated deficit of 5,000 toys. The challenge? The amount of families needing assistance has increased this holiday season.

The Salvation Army is asking the community to assist in making this Christmas very special for needy children in San Francisco. You can make a difference by donating new, unwrapped toys at any San Francisco Salvation Army location or make a monetary contribution by calling (415) 553-3500. For more information, please contact Rebecca Cortez at (415) 553-3568. Thank you for your understanding and help during this holiday season.

Shop San Francisco!

By Gavin Newsom

As our city slowly recovers from the recent economic downturn, we need to continue to show our resilience as one of the greatest cities in the world by supporting our local businesses. That is why I am launching the Shop SF, Get More campaign once again to invite local and Bay Area residents to visit, shop, and stay in San Francisco this November through January.

We have over 200 merchants participating in this year’s campaign. Many of them are offering very generous discounts such as 20% off, buy one -get -one free or even free appetizers or desserts with your meal. From great restaurants and hotels, to various attractions and local specialties, you and your family will have an amazing time while supporting our local businesses. All you have to do is present your ID showing you live in one of the nine Bay Area counties to receive the discounts and promotions.

Another way to save and help our environment during this holiday season is to take advantage of public transit and parking offers. From Dec 5 - 29, you can ride Muni and explore San Francisco using one transfer all day, every Sunday. Rather than drive and deal with traffic during the holiday rush, you and your family can visit San Francisco all day Sunday and only pay for one Muni transfer per person. If you must drive, we’ve got a great parking deal for you as well. Cars entering designated city -owned parking garages between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. get a 1 - hour validation for cars with three persons and a 2 -hour validation for cars with four persons. Participating garages include: Sutter Stockton, Union Square, Ellis O”Farrell, 5th & Mission, Lombard St., Mission Bartlett & Civic Center (Civic Center on weekends only).

Click on the Shop SF on the Convention & Visitors Bureau website (OnlyInSan-Francisco.com) to see a list of all participating merchants and available discounts and promotions. Click on the Mobile Spinach logo on the homepage if you want special discounts and promotions sent to your cell phones.

I urge you to support our local businesses by taking advantage of all the wonderful Shop SF offers. As you know, most of the money spent at local businesses is reinvested into our community. This is extremely important, especially during these tough economic times, because local businesses help create new jobs, retain existing jobs, and boost our City’s economy. Shopping locally and supporting our small businesses also helps to preserve the diversity of our neighborhoods and their unique appeal.

Remember that when you Shop SF, you will definitely Get More!
Happy Holidays!

Blotter (Cont. from p. 13)

throughout the night someone entered into his vehicle stole his gym bag and his garage door opener. When the victim left his house that next morning the garage door was open and the light was on.

7:50pm - 1800 blk Vicente St - Battery Officers respond to a report of a fight. The victim tells Officers that he and another juvenile were playing video games and got into an argument over who won. One of the juvenile got up and hit the other.
More Police Blotter: www.westsideobserver.com OR taraval.org

BRAIN FÜD

Find an anagram for each word in Group A. Each anagram will answer one of the clues in Group B.

Group A

1. Optic
2. Civet
3. Toner
4. Rosin
5. Lease

Group B

1. Painter's stand
2. Singing voice
3. Golf clubs
4. Subject
5. Throw out

The Dog Spa



Truly Fine Grooming...

\$5.00 OFF
your next grooming

CONSUMER: limit 1 coupon per customer
Coupon only valid for grooming services.
Must present this coupon. Exp. 11/31/10

169 West Portal Avenue • 415 661-8333
www.the dogspasf.com

OPEN LATE



By Julie Behn
www. JulieBehn.com

Sudoku-fun!

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

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 below.

BRAIN FÜD
ANSWER

1. Easel (5) 2. Tenor (3) 3. Irons (4)
4. Topic (1) 5. Evict (2)

SUDOKU
ANSWER

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

Proudly Serving The Families of West of Twin Peaks

“Caring Service
is our Highest
Priority”



The Bud Duggan Family Serving the Bay Area Since 1903
Duggan's Serra Mortuary, Daly City 415/587-4500 FD1098
Driscoll's Valencia St. Serra Mortuary, SF 415/970-8801 FD1665
Sullivan's Funeral Home, SF 415/621-4567 FD 228

Parking Available at all locations



Most Convenient San Francisco/Peninsula Locations
Traditional and Cremation Services
Contact our Pre-Arrangement Department for your
FREE Personal Planning Guide
“My Funeral, My Way”



VISA, MASTERCARD & DISCOVER ACCEPTED
duggansserra.com driscollsmortuary.com sullivanfuneralandcremation.com

The Steak Experience

Alfred's

STEAKHOUSE

Since 1928
Real Steak Real Martini
Real San Francisco

Complimentary Self Parking (For Dinner Only)
At The Financial District Hilton's Public Parking Entrance on Washington St.

659 Merchant Street (by Kearny & Washington)
415.781.7058 www.alfredssteakhouse.com



WE'RE ALSO ON THE WEB
www.westsideobserver.com

EVERY • SUNDAY MORNING

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

EVERY • TUESDAY NIGHT

Happy Hour Every Tues | 4–8 pm | Que Syrah. Take \$1 off each glass, 10% off of each bottle of wine consumed at the store. 230 West Portal Avenue 731.7000

EVERY • WEDNESDAY NIGHT

Tapas | 5:30–9 pm | 230 West Portal Avenue 731.7000

EVERY • FRIDAY NIGHT

Friday Night Jazz Fri | 7–11 pm | Cliff House, Balcony Lounge – 1 Seal Rock.

DAILY • HOLIDAY TRAIN EXHIBIT



The Library's 5th annual Holiday Train exhibit returns and this year it's bigger than ever. Look for three separate tracks carrying three of literature's favorite trains -- the Polar Express, from the book by Chris Van Allsburg, Thomas the Tank Engine, from the book series by W. Awdry, and the Hogwarts Express from the Harry Potter series, by J.K. Rowling. Children love visiting the interactive display which features buttons that they can push to power the electric toy trains. The trains will be on view from Dec. 3, 2010 through Jan. 7, 2011, at the Main Library, Fisher Children's Center, Second Floor, 100 Larkin St.

32ND GREAT DICKENS CHRISTMAS FAIR

Sat-Sun through Dec 19th | 11 am–7 pm | Cow Palace The bustling streets of London, immortalized for all time by the mighty pen of Charles Dickens, form the living backdrop of your excursion into Christmas Past. You are a living part of a Victorian Christmas card come to life! A Bay Area tradition since 1970. 2600 Geneva Avenue Daly City, CA 94014. www.dickensfair.com.

SAT • REINDEER ROMP CONTINUES!

SF Zoo | Dec – Jan 1 | 10 am–4 pm | The Reindeer are coming—Santa's special reindeer – Holly, Velvet, Peppermint and Belle. Free with paid Zoo admission and is available daily, rain or shine. Info: visit www.sfzoo.org.

WED SF STATE ORCHESTRA

Recital | Dec. 8 | 1:pm–2:pm | Knuth hall, Creative Arts Building Contact: SF State box office E-mail: smd@sfsu.edu, Phone: (415) 338-2467 Conductor Cyrus Ginwala

WED • HOUSING ELEMENT WORKSHOP

Planning Department | Dec 8 | 6–7:30 pm | Outstanding Issues around the Housing Element. The Planning Department and Planning Commission continue to receive comments on draft 1 and draft 2 of the 2009 Housing Element update. The Director will lead a focused discussion on key issues. Planning Dept. 1650 Mission St., Ste. 400.

THU • PARKMERCED SPECIAL MEETING

Planning Commission | Dec 9 | 6 pm | An Informational Hearing to provide an overview of the proposed project components and draft Development Agreement. Specific topics to be discussed at this session include transportation and housing (including rent and tenant relocation considerations). SF State University, 1600 Holloway Ave. McKenna Hall, College of Creative Arts (415) 575-6815/M. Yarne: 554-6512)

THU –SUN ENGAGED

Thur Dec 9–Sat Dec 11 | 8 pm | Sun Dec 12 | 2 pm | A topsy-turvy farce in three acts, *Engaged* illustrates W.S. Gilbert's gift for absurdly complicated plots, wildly comic dialogue and sharp, exuberant social criticism. In this almost-forgotten masterpiece, one-half of the immortal team Gilbert and Sullivan takes great delight in skewering every pretension affecting money-minded people who take on the burden of falling in love. Little Theatre, SF State, Creative Arts Bldg. 1600 Holloway. \$8–15.

THU A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Dec 9 | 10:30–11:30 am | British actor Martin Harris plays Charles Dickens in a dramatic reading of this beloved story. Mr. Harris also appears as Ebenezer Scrooge at the annual Great Dickens Christmas Fair while on his American Tour. Ages 8 and older. Space limited, call Tim at (415) 557-4549. Main Library, 100 Larkin.

SAT • THE MUSIC STORE HOLIDAY SHOW

Dec 11 | 9 pm | 12th Anniversary celebration of West Portal's favorite record/cd store! Featuring: Trainwreck Riders, The Devotionals@Cafe du Nord, 2170 Market \$10 / 21+ www.shelbyashpresents.net

SAT • PLANNING ACTION PLAN

Planning Department | Dec 11 | 10–11:30 am | The Department's progress on aspects of the Action Plan related to the Development Review process and three components. This final meeting concludes the Action Plan. There will be an informational briefing on the Department's accomplishments of the Action Plan with the discussion centered on the updated Development Review process. Planning Dept. 1650 Mission St. Rm 431.

National Call for Christmas Boxes for the Troops

Isn't it time to show them how much we care?

'Tis the Season! And this is a national call to show their love and support this holiday season for our deployed troops. Join us in our mission to ship Christmas Care Boxes to our soldiers overseas, and help us send a little bit of home and comfort their way.

SupportOurTroops.Org makes this call on behalf of the 60+ troop support groups across America who send care packages to the troops.

Our deployed soldiers are far away from their loved ones, sacrificing daily for us and our country. Many don't have a support network at home. We need to show them we are with them now more than ever during the holidays, when things can be especially tough.

"We currently have Airmen stationed at forward operating bases throughout Afghanistan performing "outside the wire" operations in harsh conditions and many of them haven't received anything from home. I was hoping you could send some care packages this way. I know it would definitely boost their morale. Thank you for your continued support! It really means a great deal to everyone here." — *Chief Bud, Afghanistan*

Want to make a difference in the life of a soldier this Christmas? It's simple!

- Just go to SupportOurTroops.Org, and click on the Christmas 2010 Care Package Icon.
- Over 90 groups are listed there.
- Just pick the one you want to send your care box goods to and follow the instructions.
- The types of things the troops request are listed there.
- The care box rules are posted there.

Martin C. Boire, Chairman of Support Our Troops, said "during 2010 SupportOurTroops.Org has shipped over \$7,200,000 in goods to the troops worldwide with a 1.3% overhead. To Afghanistan, Iraq, Korea, Japan, Bosnia, Qatar, Kuwait, Guam and on and on. We are asking everyone to help us spread the word to send care packages to the troops for the holidays."



BEYOND GOLDEN CLOUDS: FIVE CENTURIES OF JAPANESE SCREENS • ASIAN ART MUSEUM

Through Jan 16th. A special exhibition of forty-one rarely seen large scale Japanese screens dating from the 1500s through the present. The exhibition—on view October 15, 2010 through January 16, 2011—celebrates the evolution of the folding screen, or byōbu ("wind wall"), from pre-modern to contemporary, highlighting its distinctive position in Japanese culture as both a functional and expressive art form. The exceptional, yet diverse artworks are borrowed from the esteemed collections of the Art Institute of Chicago and the Saint Louis Art Museum. The phrase Beyond Golden Clouds describes one of the most popular motifs in classical screens, while also expressing the departure from conventional compositions and techniques in the past century.

Asian Art Museum 200 Larkin St.

HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON • SFMOMA



Through Jan.30

An innovative artist, trailblazing photojournalist, and quintessential world traveler, Henri Cartier-Bresson ranks among the most accomplished and original figures in the history of photography. His inventive images of the early 1930s helped define the creative potential of the medium, and his uncanny ability to capture life on the run made his work synonymous with "the decisive moment." This major retrospective offers a fresh look at Cartier-Bresson's entire career, revealing him as one of the great portraitists of the 20th century and one of its keenest observers of the global theater of human affairs.

SF Museum of Modern Art, 151 3rd St. 357-4000

SUN • SANTA & FRIENDS AT THE ZOO

Dec 12 | 11 am–1 pm | Join Santa and his Reindeer in from the North Pole for Brunch of eggs, sausage & waffles. Great Hall. SF Zoo. Adult: \$23, Child \$18. Members \$20/15. 753-7236.

SAT • SANTA & FRIENDS AT THE ZOO

Dec 18 | 11 am–1 pm | Join Santa and his Reindeer in from the North Pole for Brunch of eggs, sausage & waffles. Great Hall. SF Zoo. Adult: \$23, Child \$18. Members \$20/15. 753-7236.

TUE • COMMUNITY MEETING

Taraval Police District Community Mtg | Dec 21 | 6 pm | Deputy City Attorney Jana Clark at the monthly Taraval Community meeting at Taraval Police Station, 2345 24th Ave. (3rd Tues of each month).

MON • NO DEC CENTRAL COUNCIL MEETING

West of Twin Peaks Central Council | Dec 27–No December Meeting | A resource for neighborhood organizations. Learn and comment on issues. Fourth Mon each month Forest Hill Clubhouse at 381 Magellan Ave.

SAT • HONKY TONK SHOWDOWN

Classic Country | Jan 8 | 9 pm | A celebration of classic country music & dance! Featuring: Whisky Richards, 77 el Deora (CD Release Show), The Bootcuts, Songs Hotbox Harry Taught Us, DJ Blaze Orange@Cafe du Nord, 2170 Market St. 861-5016\$11 / \$13 doors / 21+www.shelbyashpresents.net/honkyTonk/honkyTonk.html

THU • BLUEGRASS & OLD TIME FESTIVAL

Jan 13 | 9 pm | "Benefit Show" Fund-raiser for upcoming 12th annual non-profit, volunteer-run festival (Feb 11-20, 2011). Featuring: Possum and Lester, Hang Jones, Walking in Sunlight @ Cafe du Nord, 2170 Market Street, SF.

861-5016 \$15-\$20 sliding scale / 21+.
www.sfbuegrass.org

THU • BALLROOM DANCING FOR COUPLES

Jan 13 | Call for time | Learn the Samba, Rhumba, Cha Cha Cha, Mambo, Tango, Waltz, Foxtrot, Swing and more! Forest Hill Christian Church, Fellowship Hall, 250 Laguna Honda Blvd. Six lessons \$70. per couple.RSVP/info (415) 661-2746.

TUE • COMMUNITY MEETING

Taraval Police District Community Mtg | Jan 18 | 6 pm | Deputy City Attorney Jana Clark at the monthly Taraval Community meeting at Taraval Police Station, 2345 24th Ave. (3rd Tues of each month).

THU • AUTHOR TOM RACHMAN

Tom Rachman | Jan 20 | 7 pm | Discussing *The Imperfectionists*. His debut novel is one of most acclaimed books of the year. It follows the topsy-turvy private lives of the reporters and editors of an English-language newspaper in Rome. Bookshop West Portal, 80 West Portal Ave., Info: 564-8080

SAT • YEAR OF THE RABBIT

Jan 22 | 3–3:30 pm | Chinese Lion Dancers join the West Portal Branch Library as it celebrates The Year of the Rabbit on January 22, 2011. Enjoy a traditional lion dance and martial arts performance. 190 Lenox Way

MON • CENTRAL COUNCIL MEETING

West of Twin Peaks Central Council | Jan 24 | 7:30 pm | A resource for neighborhood organizations. Learn and comment on issues. Fourth Mon each month Forest Hill Clubhouse at 381 Magellan Ave.

Got an Event? Westside local events get priority treatment: editor@westsideobserver.com

CLIMATE-WISE SPRING BULBS

By Hilary Gordon/Photos by Blair Randall, 2010

At this time of year, if you make a visit to the nursery you will be greeted with pictures, signs, boxes and bins of spring blooming bulbs. Tulips, crocuses, hyacinths, daffodils, and narcissus bulbs are surrounded by displays of special bulb fertilizer and special tools for planting bulbs.



These are the spring bulbs I grew up with on the East Coast, and they were wonderful in our gardens, coming back more strongly year after year, and making the first days and weeks of snowmelt magical.

But here in California some of these bulbs are not really at home. Tulips, hyacinths, and crocuses, for example, need a frosty winter to bloom successfully.

Here in our mild winter climate, those who really want to see these flowers in the spring must buy the bulbs early and chill them for 4-6 weeks in the refrigerator before planting in order to get a successful show. After they bloom, they must be dug up and discarded. Next year, they must be bought and refrigerated again. Daffodils and narcissus can sometimes naturalize in our climate, but the real gangbuster spring bulb shows come from bulbs which may be unfamiliar to garden traditionalists, bulbs which have their ancestry in climate zones similar to California's rather than in Northern Europe. (Image: Watsonia borbonica)

Instead of crocuses, for the earliest little cheerful-faced flowers, consider planting Ipheion uniflorum or Spring Star Flower from Argentina. This little beauty is already fully leafed out in established clumps in San Francisco gardens. In just a few weeks, it will be sporting cheerful little starry pale blue flowers, and it will continue blooming until late Spring. Each year the clumps will increase, and it is easy to divide. Either use the extra bulbs to start new clumps, or give them to your friends. They will never stop thanking you for this hardy, reliable, charming plant.

Instead of tulips, for that large, dramatic, colorful effect, consider trying Sparaxis tricolor, or Harlequin flower from South Africa. These bulbs grow their foliage during the winter months, and bloom over a long period in early spring with a vivid long-lasting show. Red, orange, yellow, pink and purple flowers are blotched and striped with contrasting colors. These plants will give you a "Wow" in your spring garden that will be repeated more and more in each succeeding year.



Again, they are easy to divide, and you can either spread them around your garden, or give them to friends. This year, our Sparaxis at the GFE needed protection from slug damage, so you might want to locate them somewhere in your garden that is unwatered during the summer months, to cut down on the slug population. (Image: Sparaxis



tricolor)

Tall and stately, Watsonia borbonica is another gorgeous choice for a climate-appropriate bulb. Ours at the GFE are already leafing out vigorously from last year's clumps, and the tall stately flower stalks will form in the early spring and bloom in the late spring rising up to six feet above the border. Ours are all white, but there are also pink ones available. Again, these bulbs are so comfortable in our climate that they will form bigger clumps year after year.

Other bulb-forming plants which work perfectly in our mild, summer-dry climate include Chasmanthe, Calla lilies, Amaryllis belladonna or Naked Ladies, Montbretia, and Agapanthus or Lily of the Nile. For detailed information on how to grow these bulbs, have a look in Pam Peirce's wonderful book, Wildly Successful Plants for Northern California. (Image: Calla Lilly)

All of these spring blooming bulbs are perfectly suited to our climate. They begin to grow leaves during the first rainy weeks of the year, bloom in turn, and as the end of our rainy season comes, they die down. You must let the leaves turn brown and die down naturally, while the plant stores its energy for the dormant season. Once the leaves have turned brown, you can cut them off and compost them. The plants will store the energy they gathered during their growing season deep in the ground in fat bulbs or corms, and lie dormant throughout our dry season, all ready to spring back into action when the rainy season returns. They need absolutely no summer irrigation, and they mix well in the garden with other summer-dry plants which bloom, or hold neat or colorful foliage through the summer. These bulbs shine in a border with plants like lavenders, leucadendrons, sages and native grasses which will fill the summer-dry border and please the eye while the spring blooming bulbs die down and rest.

These bulbs will form a bigger, more vigorous clump every year for many years, but eventually they will crowd themselves and begin to bloom less. When this happens, dig up the whole clump, choose the most promising looking bulbs to replant, and give away your extras. You will make life-long gardening friends if you introduce them to these wonderful bulbs.

HAPPY GARDENING!

Hilary 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.



Last month we asked our readers what this gorgeous plant with bright yellow flowers is?

"I think it's Verbascum, one of my favorite garden plants here. I've gardened in San Francisco and this was one of the more unusual and interesting flowers I've come across. It's not really common but available in some of the better East Bay (like Berkeley) Nurseries specializing in unusual plants and places like the Arboretum sales here in SF. I sought out and planted a verbascum in a garden at Fulton and Divisadero a few years ago. Some things just don't show up at Lowe's Garden Centers. I'm pretty sure it's written up in Sunset Western Garden Book."

http://www.west-crete.com/flowers/verbascum_macrurum.htm

Steve Owsley, West Crete

This soft fuzzy-leaved plant with bright yellow flowers is known as common mullein in California.

What the Heck? Something puzzling you? Send your photos and questions or answers to editor@westsideobserver.com.

ADDITION & GARAGE BUILDER

DESIGN/PERMIT & BUILD SERVICES

FOUNDATION & RETAINING WALL
FRAMING & STRUCTURAL UPGRADE
DECK, BALCONY & WATER DAMAGE REPAIR
SOFT STORY EARTHQUAKE UPGRADE

FREE ESTIMATES

More than 20 Years of Experience
Civil Engineer Lic.#043437
General Contractor Lic.#564297

415-747-1000

SAFE ENGINEERING

www.SanFranciscoFoundationConstruction.com

Janet Moyer
Landscaping is a
full-service
landscaping company
specializing in
sustainable landscapes

One of the
"100 Fastest Growing
Private Companies"
in the Bay Area
SF Business Times,
2008 & 2009

Award winning design-
"Outstanding
Achievement" Award
California
Landscape Contractors
Association, 2007 & 2008

415-821-3760 · 1031 Valencia Street, San Francisco · jmoyerlandscaping.com

Landscape Contractor License 853919 · Pest Control License 36389

Get the Westside Observer
Delivered to your mailbox! \$15.^{per year}

Mail to the Westside Observer with your check to:
POB 27176 SF, CA 94127

Or e-mail mitch@westsideobserver.com

Don't Miss Another Issue!

Winter Goes Wild

See the return of the reindeer.

NOW THROUGH NEW YEAR'S DAY

Come see your favorite reindeer friends
Holly, Velvet, Peppermint and Belle.
'Tis the Season for fun and adventure
only at the San Francisco Zoo!



For more information, visit www.sfzoo.org



Healthy Pets

Veterinary Hospital

**Your New Neighborhood
Veterinary Hospital Just Opened!**

Healthy Pets Veterinary Hospital is a new state-of-the-art medical and surgical facility located on West Portal Avenue. We strive to provide the most gentle and comfortable medical and surgical care for your pets, and the best veterinary experience for our clients.

- + Annual Exams
- + Surgery & Dentistry
- + Comprehensive Pharmacy
- + Digital X-Rays
- + Flea and Tick Prevention
- + Nutritional Consultations
- + Exotic Animal Care (rabbits, birds & small mammals)
- + Traditional Chinese Medicine (herbals, Tui Na & acupuncture)

Extended Evening Hours Beginning in December

Mon, Tue & Thu
8am-8pm

Wed & Fri
8am-6pm

Saturday
10am-2pm

Make an Appointment: **415-742-5961**
373 West Portal Ave. SFHealthyPets.com



Jerome Franz, MD
INTERNAL MEDICINE



Stacy Drasen, MD
PEDIATRICS



Charles Delatore, MD
INTERNAL MEDICINE

WELCOMING NEW PATIENTS

Need a doctor before cold and flu season arrives?

Call **1-888-699-DOCS (3627)** or visit **sutterpacific.org** to find the doctor for you.

- PRIMARY CARE DOCTORS THROUGHOUT SAN FRANCISCO
- SAME DAY APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE
- MOST HEALTH PLANS ACCEPTED

Sutter Pacific's 230+ doctors provide care throughout San Francisco and are affiliated with California Pacific Medical Center and Brown & Toland Physicians. All so you can have expert, personalized care in a convenient location.



**Sutter Pacific
Medical Foundation**

A Sutter Health Affiliate

With You. For Life.