

INSIDE

Quentin Kopp

Roasts the Central
Subway and the
Garbage Contract

—p. 3



Jonathan Farrell

Paving the Park

—p. 3

Brian Browne

Abandon the Oversight
Committee

—p. 3



Will Durst

Those French

—p. 4

Steve Lawrence

Utility Ratepayers
Beware

—p. 6



Joe's Back

He's Giving the DCCC
a Bit of the Shillelagh

—p. 5

Business Corner

Healthy Pets
Veterinary Hospital

—p. 6



More INSIDE

Letters to the Editor	4
Laguna Honda Fund	5
Public/Private	5
Rec & Park's Gambit	7
Money Matters	8
WOTPCC	9
Around the Town	11
Sharon the Health	13
Ruth Brinker Remembered	13
Jack Kaye	14
Kocivar on Education	14
Calendar	15
Remember When	16
Phyllis' Findings	16
Open Late	16
Sudaku/Brain Füd	16
At the Movies	17
On Stage/Theater	17
Real Travel	18
From the Border	19

Pension Reform Champion Jeff Adachi Enters Mayor's Race

An outspoken critic about how City Hall spends money tosses his hat in the ring for Mayor.

In August 12th Public Defender Jeff Adachi filed his papers to run. While there had been much speculation for weeks that he would decide to do so, Adachi told the Bay Guardian why he was prompted to jump in the race: “It wasn’t until I really listened to what the (other) candidates were saying in the last few debates about pension reform. I became convinced that **either the candidates don’t get it or they don’t want to get it.**”

Public employee union pension reform is the driving force behind this November’s ballot. San Francisco voters are being asked to approve more taxes for street repairs, schools and sales taxes this year because employee wages and benefits increasingly leave little of the city budget for vital services. Money for schools, parks, and infrastructure has been cut while the average city worker earns \$90,000 per year in wages and benefits. Thousands of current city employees earn six-figure salaries, and 900 retired workers, according to the *SFWeekly*, even enjoy **pensions in excess of \$100,000**, yet none of their unions think they should share the pain of the recession with taxpayers who are being asked to dig ever deeper into their pockets to pay salaries and pensions that vastly exceed those in the private sector.

How did the Public Defender become the Champion of Pension Reform?



Photo: Luke Thomas fogcityjournal.com

The 2008 financial crisis hit San Francisco government hard. San Francisco soon faced a budget deficit exceeding \$500 million. The over-generosity of San Francisco taxpayers toward its civil servants proved to be the root cause, and prevented correction.

Whether due to optimism or incompetency, previous pension cost projections were proved wrong. Last year San Franciscans contributed \$178 million to SFERS to keep it solvent, and in this fiscal year the figure is \$246 million. \$246 million is over 80% of the City’s overall projected deficit, and the pension cost driver will continue to climb through the year 2016 **when retirement costs alone will cost San Franciscans as much as an additional \$800 million.**

What to do? Adachi knew that his department would continue to see cutbacks to compensate for rising pension costs, and every year he would be fighting every other city department for every dollar, because at some point voters would stop approving new taxes.

Jeff Adachi circulated a petition to put pension reform on last year’s ballot before pension reform became popular. It was defeated by big money from the labor unions, and by politicians seeking union endorsements for this year’s Mayor’s race

Adachi is back this year with Prop D. Opponents include Mayor Ed Lee, who worked with the unions to offer a competing watered-down version, Prop C, banking on voter confusion to sink them both.



Photo: Luke Thomas fogcityjournal.com

Candidate Adachi reaches out to voter Danielle Sharabi—wins over Riko easily.

Adachi believes voters want a voice over how their money is spent, and decided to run for Mayor to stop the hemorrhage of red ink across the city before it’s too late. “I’m here because I want to see a real debate among candidates,” he said. “**And I think people want to know the truth.**”

Cont. p. 7

Road Repair Bond: NO, NO, NO

By George Wooding

The streets of San Francisco are terrible.

To fix their deplorable state of disrepair, the City is currently trying to convince San Francisco voters to “save the streets” by passing a \$248 million bond measure this November.

Safe, accessible, and well-maintained roads are at the very core of services a city should provide to its residents. Whether you walk, take public transit, bike, or drive, people rely on a safe, smooth and accessible route to exercise, or to travel to and from work, schools, parks, libraries, or local shops every day. People need good roads, but San Francisco has done a poor job of providing them.

San Francisco City government has failed miserably in the last 20 years to meet even the minimum standards of road repair. In 1989, San Francisco had a pavement condition index (PCI) of 78. On a rating scale of one through one-hundred, with a 100 PCI being the best, a 78 PCI was a good rating. San Francisco had one of the highest ratings of large cities in the country. San Francisco’s current PCI rating is at 64, which gives the City a “D” rating for road repair.

If everything goes as planned, and San Francisco voters approve the \$248 million Road Repair Bond, City officials estimate we’ll reach a new PCI rating of 66, according to Douglas Legg, Budget and Finance Manager of the Department of Public Works (DPW). If things don’t go as planned, Legg warns that without increased funding for street repairs, San Francisco’s PCI rating will drop to a 61 PCI rating by 2014, within only three years. The citizens of San Francisco have paid in full for street infrastructure maintenance and the City should have been able to maintain a PCI rating in the 70’s.

Cont. p. 1

Lake Merced: Irate Citizens Give PUC Bureaucrats No Respect

Over 50 people showed up at the Harding Park Golf Course Clubhouse on July 19 to listen to Steve Ritchie, Assistant General Manager of Water Enterprises for the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. His presence was well-received by the audience, as he knows many in the community. Residents and community groups have expressed skepticism about the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission plan to extend the conservatorship responsibilities of Lake Merced to the SF Recreation & Parks Department.

Yet when several in the audience, like Jerry Cadagan, were critical of Rec. & Park’s continued conservatorship of Lake Merced, Ritchie seemed to become reserved and eager to finish the meeting quickly.

Cadagan established one of the first local groups back in 1993 concerned about Lake Merced’s future and care. He fears that since that time not much has changed for the better. He was among the most vocal at the meeting, and asked most of the critical questions.

Precise details about how much

money is or was appropriated for repairs were not clear. Ritchie said that the Boathouse will be repaired, and a work schedule will be in place by the fall of 2011. Cadagan and others were skeptical and questioned the actual figures in the funding, causing obvious uneasiness in the flow of answers from Ritchie and others speaking on behalf of Rec. & Park.

Most of the criticism focused on the fact that, apart from the golf course and new clubhouse, most of the recreational venues around Lake Merced are poorly maintained.

The lake itself needs more attention. Water levels are receding and algae are multiplying. Ritchie noted that the water levels in the lake have been a long-standing issue. Water and environmental issues are SF PUC’s responsibility.

Residents noted that trees are withering and need of more care. Dead trees are cut down and then simply left to decompose along the edges of the lake.

Rec. & Park representatives Lev



Kushner and Lisa Wayne were among the other officials present at the meeting. They pointed out that the City is struggling to meet maintenance costs. In addition to overseeing the waterfront of the lake, Rec. & Park must manage over 1100 acres of Golden Gate Park as well as other neighborhood parks in the City. Budgets in every division and department are limited.

Residents told Ritchie that workers from Rec. & Park seem absent in attending

Cont. p. 6

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Save—Don't Pave Golden Gate Park

By Jonathan Farrell

For long-time residents and those who grew up near Golden Gate Park, the noticeable change in the quality of care that the park receives is very disheartening. Kathy Howard of the Golden Gate Park Preservation Alliance and many other concerned citizens called together a community meeting this past July 20 to let it be known that Golden Gate Park (GGP) needs better care.

"Save—Don't Pave Golden Gate Park" was the motto for that Wednesday evening meeting held at the Richmond District Police Station's community room on 6th Ave. Jean Barish, a community organizer, helped to coordinate the meeting. Dozens gathered to listen about the current condition the park and to voice their concerns about priorities in the maintenance of the 1,017 acre park.

being renovated to bring in revenue—Boathouse at Stow Lake, etc, access to the park is limited to those who can afford to pay vendors and admission fees. And the water treatment facility—Howard and others noted—comes under Homeland Security. She charged that the rendering shown to the public of greenery covering the building site is not actually what the public will see once the facility is built

If residents make it clear that these two projects are not feasible for Golden Gate Park by way of their vote, then maybe City Officials will pay better attention.

Mostly Barish, Howard and others, like past Parks, Recreation and Open Space Advisory Committee member Nancy Wuerfel have been very outspoken against plans for a soccer field complex and a water treatment facility in the Western edge of the park. Plea after plea to the various city officials asking that these plans be reconsidered and carried out elsewhere, have been ignored.

Wuerfel, who has served on many advisory committees and helped audit numerous planning drafts for the city and county over the years, sees problems with the two projects. This is especially true with regards to the natural habitat.

Those opposed to the proposed projects for the park, like the Golden Gate Audubon Society, among others, fear that once these projects get approved and break ground, the natural integrity of the park will be forever changed. The soccer fields and sports complex would have 60-foot high lighting, fences and a parking lot. Currently the soccer fields that are there now are grass. If completed, the new soccer facilities would have artificial turf filled with recycled tire crumbs.

People were concerned about using Golden Gate Park for just "revenue building" and more "money-making" enterprises for the park as a way for the City of San Francisco to make money.

As more aspects of the park are

and in full operation. In addition, once there is a security breach, "... you are going to have a hardened site. You are going to have concrete and barbed wire..." She and others said that the treatment facility will be an industrial use and "will include noise and traffic from utility vehicles." Motivation for the water treatment facility is "better water management," especially in the face increasing water demands. Some felt it's really about generating revenue. Wuerfel noted that the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission has not discussed any payment arrangements with the Rec & Park for use of the park land.

Opponents, question why our world famous park should be a site for a treatment facility. The argument from Rec & Park and SF PUC? "The treatment facility will help prepare for the City's anticipated population growth and new ways of managing water." While this may be necessary, the Golden Gate Audubon Society and others are pleading with the City and the SF PUC to find another spot for this plan for a water treatment and recycling facility. Each time these two projects are in the spotlight the public gets lots of promotion, and few details of the impact these two projects will have.

The Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Beach Chalet soccer fields will be issued in late September. Moderator

Cont. p. 9

RUMINATIONS FROM A FORMER SUPERVISOR By Quentin Kopp

The August 23, 2011 Wall Street Journal put it best: "Tony Bennett may have left his heart in San Francisco, but the politicians who contrived the city's Chinatown subway project must have left their brains somewhere else. The subway is a case study in government incompetence and wasted taxpayer money." That editorial, of course, will be recognized by discerning readers as a characterization of the so-called Central Subway project, which was also the subject of an exhaustive 55-page June 2011 report by the San Francisco Civil Grand Jury, entitled "Too Much Money for Too Little Benefit." The



Central Subway adherents represent that about 92 percent of the needed money will emanate from Federal and State governmental funds... but, if the Central Subway project costs more than now claimed, neither Federal nor State funds will be available for cost increases, which means that San Francisco will underwrite all cost "overruns."

Grand Jury investigation was laborious, involving seven months of painstaking, penetrating collection.

The amount of information. Its report deserves more respect than the disdain shown by City officials, from the Mayor down.

The project cost is currently estimated as \$1,578,300,000 cost. It is for a subway of 1.7 miles, starting from an above ground station at Fourth and Brannan Streets and travelling underground with stops at Moscone Center, Union Square and Chinatown. As the Grand Jury notes, in 1989 San Francisco voters were importuned to enact a ½ cent sales tax for just 20 years to generate an estimated \$200,000,000 for transit and transportation improvements along (1) the Bayshore corridor, also referred to as Third Street in the Hunter's Point / Bayview neighborhood, (2) the Van Ness corridor, (3) the Geary corridor and (4) the North Beach corridor. Voters were assured the ½ cent sales tax would expire in 2010.

The first project was the T-Third (Street) light rail system. It eventually cost approximately \$648,000,000, substantially exceeding the \$200,000,000 estimate for improving all four of the above-mentioned corridors. Thereafter, the "T-Third" was deemed the first phase of a two-phase project called the Bayshore/North Beach corridor project. The second phase was renamed the Central Subway. The sales tax money having been spent in 2009, San Francisco voters were induced to retain such ½ cent sales tax for transportation, and pay it this time until 2033.

The T-Third's first phase, authorized by voters in 1989, was not completed until 2007, 18 months late and vastly "over budget." The Central Subway phase, planned to complete the Northern extension, was scheduled to open this year, 2011. Its earliest completion date is now advertised as 2019. In 2003 the Central Subway was estimated to cost \$648,000,000; by 2004 the estimate was raised to \$763,000,000;

in 2006 the cost estimate rose to \$994,000,000; and, as stated, the 2011 estimate is \$1,578,300,000. (Want to bet it will break \$2,000,000,000 by 2019—if ever built?)

The Grand Jury noted that the T-Third budget in its final design was approximately \$567,000,000; including a contingency \$35,600,000 for inaccurate cost estimates. The cost "overrun" amounted to \$81,000,000, about 22 percent of the final design estimated cost. By extension, the Central Subway project by 2019 could cost over \$1,610,000,000 if the cost "overrun" is approximately 20 percent of the originally planned cost, the general expectation on large construction projects in the United States. Thus, at an approximate \$1,600,000,000 cost, the Central Subway will mean an expenditure of almost \$100,000,000 for each tenth of the 1.7 mile project.

The project's progenitors are one Rose Pak, executive chieftain and leading political intimidator of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, Willie Brown, onetime mayor in whose administration this irresponsible project was nurtured, and that sycophantic entity known as SPUR ("San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal") whose hectoring about San Francisco has disguised an empty headed superiority complex for much too long. For those who may think it is too late to stop this reckless, venal project because of construction-like inconveniences around Union Square, be advised that's precisely the despair the aforementioned villains desire from the relocation of utilities underway in that sector. (To be sure, over 130,000,000 of taxpayer money has been lavished on such "busy work," but hundreds of millions more taxpayer levies will, without nugatory civic indignation and action before this December, be wasted bit by bit.) Almost \$1,000,000,000 of federally-imposed taxes will be approved or not approved by Congress in November.

Cont. p. 6

Dracula Guards the Blood Bank

By Brian Browne

The City needs real versus politicized regulatory oversight. No oversight is better than the illusion of oversight.

The imperfections of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) regulatory oversight are often noted. These regulatory failings often pale in comparison with those of San Francisco's self-regulating system.

A case in point is the Public Utilities Revenue Bond Oversight Committee (RBOC). It was created by 2002 Prop P (sponsored by then supervisor Tony Hall) to provide independent, outside, and full public view of how revenue bonds issued by the SFPUC are spent.

This committee meets in the bowels of the SFPUC at 9:30am on Monday mornings. The RBOC has never held a public outreach meeting nor has it ever used outside-independent consultants. Both of which are mandated by its enabling legislation. Staff members attend in abundance (on the ratepayers' purse) and are treated like members. Their level of interference significantly counters what the voters assumed they were voting on.



The first three RBOC contracts were awarded to the same consultant. This consultant was chosen at a non-agendized meeting. Two RBOC members from the SFPUC and the Controller voted.

Without critiquing the products produced by the consultant, all three RBOC processes were flawed. The third contract, for the supposedly independent RBOC, was signed by the SFPUC in April 2009. After numerous entreaties to the City Attorney, this contract came before the full committee and public at an agendized meeting.

We do need real oversight. A first step must be to rescind 2002 Proposition E (the blank check), which stripped San Francisco residents of the right to vote on the issuance of revenue bonds and handed this authority to the Commission and Board.

Following this 2009 procedural debacle, the RBOC Chair e agreed to improve the contractual process. The Contracts Working Group (CWG) of the RBOC contacted all major California universities with a request to help the RBOC determine if revenue bonds were being properly spent and if the SFPUC could meet its legal mandates: complete the Water Supply Improvement Program (WSIP) on time 12/31/15 and on budget (\$4.6B).

Enter Major Universities In the 2010 RBOC-CWG Report, what really happened with the universities was ignored: This subcommittee during 2010 openly

engaged in many significant exchanges with UCLA and UCB for independent, multidisciplinary, and outside consulting services.

Serious consideration for hiring UCLA and UCB did happen. the agenda item for the meeting of the RBOC-CWG reads: "Discussion and Possible Action concerning UC Berkeley and UCLA Joint proposal to development a Request for Proposal (RFP) concerning the Revenue Bond Oversight Committee (RBOC) and water System Improvement Program (WSIP)."

The minutes for this meeting state: "Chair Rhorer stated that the RBOC would draft a general scope of work based on the current discussion and bring before the Revenue Bond Oversight Committee to determine how to enter into a contract with UC Berkeley."

On August 17, 2010, the Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods (CSFN) passed the following resolution unanimously:

"Resolved, that the Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods strongly urges the Revenue Bond Oversight Committee to enter into a contract with designated experts at UC Berkeley and UCLA to conduct a thorough organizational review and status report of the WSIP (Water System Improvement Program) to determine if the projects can be completed on budget and by December 31, 2015, as mandated by State Law. Passed August 17 2010, Unanimous."

This resolution was delivered to RBOC Chair, Aimee Brown, of the RBOC, at the September 2010 meeting by Joan Girardot, Chair, CSFN, Water Task Force.

Cont. p. 12

It's Only (Your Ratepayer) Money

By Steve Lawrence

To the citizen on a budget, spending in San Francisco's public realm can seem unreal.

Let's examine one recent agenda from the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, the folks who provide water, sewer service, and, for now, power for MUNI, General Hospital, City Hall, and other public places.

Three lucky engineering firms get contract amendments worth \$6,700,000. For what? For "engineering design services." After the amendments, the contracts the three have are worth \$45.5 million.

Four less lucky engineering firms get amendments each worth \$2.7 million. This is for "continued engineering design and real estate services."

Seven firms get only time, no money. Yet.

Firms providing "ongoing environmental analysis services" ring up \$7.8 million in amendments, bringing their contracts to a total of \$19.47 million. As a percentage increase, ongoing environmental analysis is where it's at during this recent month.

Then there's "design, engineering and commissioning" services provided by a consultant who will also provide technical expertise on compliance with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. This firm is awarded a \$6 million contract.

Another engineering firm is awarded another \$6 million contract to inspect construction, and provide "program management support and technical services (general and review support)". That sure is specific. Not.



Often the agenda does not allow the reader to understand what programs or projects are being advanced by a seemingly endless parade of expensive consulting services.

Thus are many millions spent and added to your water and sewer bills. The City projects big population growth, and even bigger job growth in coming years. If that growth does not materialize, water and sewer bills will be split fewer ways.

The average citizen can hardly be expected to read the agenda, study the matters, and be heard at meetings. But lobbyists and special interests are there, you can count on it.

For CCA, community choice aggregation, which is the City's move to push aside PG&E as the main supplier of electricity to the city, two firms get one-year extensions to their contracts. No amount of money is mentioned.

A goodly portion of authority to spend on consultants is found on the "consent calendar," which is used when no opposition or discussion is expected. The General Manager (chief bureaucrat) is often empowered to negotiate consulting contracts and amendments.

Rarely are there more than a couple of questions from commissioners about such spending matters. It is very rare indeed for a vote on spending not to be unanimous. No one asks, "...what are the soft costs for this program as a percentage of the construction costs?" Rare it is for a commissioner to ask what the services are for, or, if a contract is amended, why they were not provided for originally. Often the agenda does not allow the reader to understand what programs or projects are being advanced by a seemingly endless parade of expensive consulting services.

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The average citizen can hardly be expected to read the agenda, study the matters, and be heard at meetings. But lobbyists and special interests are there, you can count on it.

Do organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce or SPUR monitor such spending? No.

There is a committee constituted to oversee bond spending, but it has been completely tamed and neutralized. Recently the Revenue Bond Oversight Committee has spent most of its time hiring its own consultant, picking from an approved list given to it by the City and its bureaucrats. This committee, members of which are paid a small stipend, has had the same Chair almost since its inception. When a citizen offers suggestions about what it might investigate, silence is generally the reply. Ratepayers cannot count on the oversight committee.

Perhaps a focus on mere millions spent on consultants is misplaced. The City sewer system wants \$8 billion of spending attention. That's 32 times what is asked this November for fixing City streets.

But you won't be asked to vote on bond spending for the upcoming sewer system work. Nine years ago voters abandoned their prerogative to vote before such spending.

\$4.6 billion is being spent on the water system. One-third of that sum has been expended (through June). Recently the program's completion was delayed seven months, and is now expected in July 2016. For the five years until program completion, \$50 million per month is projected to be spent.

Spending isn't just a state and federal issue. Recently Uncle Sam upped his debt ceiling by 17%, sufficient for only two years. During President Obama's first term, federal indebtedness is expected to increase by more than 50%, just as the older of the baby boomers arrive at age 65. Cities need not follow the federal example, must they?

It's your ratepayer money being spent. Add it to the tab.

Steve Lawrence is a longtime utility activist. Feedback: lawrence@westsideobserver.com

MY TWO CENTS By Will Durst

MISTER MUZZLE & NUZZLE

The Republican strategy for 2012 seems simple enough. It's a numbers game. They plan to flood the market. Set up an all- you- can- eat candidate buffet. If you don't like the potential nominee in front of you, try the next steam table. An appetizing aspirant is bound to bubble up. Or not. But at least you're moving around and getting some exercise.

The latest and greatest Great White GOP Hope to throw his hat into the ring is Rick Perry, and its no ordinary hat either; we're talking ten gallon here, folks. It appears we got ourselves another governor from Texas looking to be president. Yep, that's just what this country needs. And species- jumping hookworms. More of those too.

To Texas Democrats, he's "Captain Haircut," and to watch the high ranked coiffure campaign is déjà vu all over again. He's George Bush Lite. And yes, the redundant heights of that phrase are indeed vertigo inducing. Similar to saying... uncomfortable bus seat. Or... disingenuous oil industry spokesperson. Perry is the candidate for those of you who couldn't cozy up to Dubyah due to his intellectual elitism.

Governor Rick himself highlighted this distinction, crowing to supporters that he went to Texas A&M while Bush went to Yale. Ain't that just like a Texan? Bragging about attending a less prestigious school. See, he'd be better for the nation because he's not so smart. And already leading the polls. The Pied Piper of lowered expectations.

Perry claims he only entered the fray because God told him to. Of course, Michele Bachmann says God called on HER to run for President. So, either someone is fibbing, God is off his meds again, or we're talking about two entirely different deities. Begging the question: which god hates America that much? Kali? Pele? The Mighty Thor? Eric Clapton?

The longest serving Governor in Texas history possesses a mouth big enough to match his hat, having accused Fed Head Ben Bernanke of treason and calling Social Security a Ponzi scheme. Not to worry: staffers are proving their mettle with some nifty major league hemming and hawing and harrumphing and walking back that statement faster than a toddler can spit milk through his nose.

Demonstrating his Lone Star kick- buttedness, Perry vetoed a bill banning the execution of mentally retarded inmates, so he doesn't just embrace the death penalty, he nuzzles it. 234 on his watch. Probably can't go to sleep until sneaking a peek at his dog-eared lethal injection technical manual stuck between the mattress and box spring. One of those humane proponents of electric bleachers.

James Richard Perry also gained a bit of notoriety last year when he shot a coyote while jogging. Hate to play tennis with this guy. If he carries a .380 Ruger with hollow points while jogging, you'd always give him the net worried his racket handle had a built- in bayonet. And what does he pack on hunting trips, a Howitzer?

Be interesting to see if Perry can sell himself nationally while still maintaining Texas has a deal with the federal government allowing the state to secede at anytime. Should investigate whether that option is mutual. In the meantime, they're sliding another dish under the sneeze guard. It's smooth and chunky and piping hot. Hey! Is that Chris Christie?

The New York Times says Emmy- nominated comedian and writer Will Durst "is quite possibly the best political satirist working in the country today." Check out the website: will-durst.com to buy his book, "The All American Sport of Bipartisan Bashing."

Letters to the Editor

Lake Merced

There are new and discouraging developments in the mismanagement at Lake Merced by SFPUC and SF Recreation & Park. The two agencies have refused to follow the direction of the Board of Supervisors and revise the management responsibilities to shift primary management responsibility back to SFPUC. That refusal was met with disappointment by the 45 or so people who attended a July 19 meeting hosted by the two agencies.

Since that time SFPUC has released a six-page document dated July 27, 2011 entitled Lake Merced Boathouse Renovation. On the surface the document seems innocuous, but see the vague language at the end of page 6: "These improvements will update the exterior restrooms, give the upper level a cleaner and more pleasant appearance, and be ready for a new tenant to take over the project and pursue any improvements to suit their needs. In the future, if a tenant is not identified and additional funding is available, the Boathouse can be converted into a concessions area and meeting rooms, in full compliance with all codes, and available for immediate occupancy."

When recently asked whether that meant that after the \$940,000 was spent the building would not be in adequate condition for public use, a senior SFPUC staff member acknowledged that such was the case!

Why is SFPUC planning to spend close to a million dollars to make renovations to a building that will be unusable following the renovations? SFPUC spent about 4 years preparing a 187 page Lake Merced Watershed Report that was to guide future efforts at the lake. The Watershed Report was completed in early 2010. It can be found at sfwater.org/index.aspx?page=197

On page 24, in describing the condition of the Boathouse, the Report says, "...

it may be better to completely rebuild and expand the facility rather than renovate." At page 158 the Report suggests three possible scenarios for the Boathouse that "require further exploration of their feasibility and consistency with watershed goals".

The Committee to Save Lake Merced did a SF Sunshine Act records request to determine how much SFPUC's ratepayers paid to four consultants for the Watershed Report. The original contract amount was \$350,000. After change orders, add on and the like the total paid was a whopping \$588,434.87. And the SFPUC staff has yet to take the \$588,434 Watershed Report to its 5 Commissioners for their review and consideration.

This kind of scandalous mismanagement cries out for a bright light to be shone upon it by San Francisco's media. The Lake, the residents in the area, and the SFPUC ratepayers deserve much better treatment.

Jerry Cadagan socialchr@aol.com

Laguna Honda's Physician Responds

Back in September of 2009, 20 of 22 Laguna Honda Attending Physicians signed a Resolution criticizing a recommendation "...that higher salaried physicians be replaced by registered nursing staff, social workers and psychologists" in an edited report issued by Davis Ja, PhD & Associates.

We considered this recommendation to be invalid due to flawed methodology and professional bias.

The Ja Report was so troubling, that Dr. Maria Rivero and I decided to examine how this contract between Davis Ja and CBHS was awarded.

We found that Davis Ja, PhD and Deborah Sherwood, PhD - the CBHS Director of Research, Evaluation & Quality Management had a domestic and business relationship. This was the basis of

Cont. p. 18



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Laguna Honda Hospital Scandal

Patient Gift Fund Records Referred to D.A. and Feds

By Patrick Monette-Shaw

As I reported in the *Westside Observer's* July-August edition, fallout from the Laguna Honda Hospital gift fund scandal has expanded, with citywide implications into City Hall's ethical mess. It's amazing that Laguna Honda Hospital's CEO, Mivic Hirose, has retained her job.

The two Sunshine ordinance complaints filed by this author to unearth gift fund records have now been referred to the District Attorney's Office and the Ethics Commission for enforcement. Both the Ethics Commission and the City Controller's Office have refused, willfully, to release public records.

In another action, access to the Whistleblower Program's investigative files has moved into Federal court, in part for failure to release the same records.

In June, the Sunshine Ordinance Task Force issued two separate Orders of Determination to both the Ethics Commission and the City Controller's office, ordering that the records requested must be produced, since the City failed to demonstrate a valid exemption under California's Public Records Act justifying reasons for withholding the records.

The Task Force's compliance com-

Program staff. Both agencies declined allowing some of their respective employees to be deposed in Kerr's lawsuit.

On August 11, the Federal Magistrate assigned to Kerr's case requested all documents acquired to date during discovery. He apparently wanted to review them all, in addition to a potential *in camera* review of other whistleblower program records. *In camera* reviews allow judges to determine admissibility of documents before they are presented in open court. On August 24 the Magistrate ordered release of any documents showing communication between



It will be interesting to see if appointed District Attorney George Gascón, who is busy running to be elected as one of our top law enforcement officials, will step up to the plate and order enforcement, or whether he's too busy with his election campaign...

mittee ruled unanimously on July 12 that both the Controller's Office and the Ethics Commission had failed to comply with the Task Force's two Orders of Determination. The subcommittee returned the two complaints to the full Task Force, with a recommendation that the Task Force find that Tonia Lediju, the manager of the City Controller's whistleblower program, and John St. Croix, Executive Director of the Ethics Commission, engaged in willful failure and official misconduct for failure to comply with the SOTF's initial Orders of Determination.

The SOTF's referral for enforcement to the D.A. cited City Charter section 15.105(e), Official Misconduct, and Sunshine Ordinance Sections 67.34 (regarding willful failure) and 67.21(e) (requiring the D.A. to insure compliance when records custodians refuse to comply with a Sunshine Order).

On July 26, 2011, the full Task Force adopted the recommendation from its Compliance and Amendments Subcommittee, adding that in addition to referring the two cases to the District Attorney and the Ethics Commission, the two new "Referrals for Enforcement" should also be sent to Interim Mayor Ed Lee and to the San Francisco Civil Grand Jury.

The final determination by the SOTF highlights the City's resistance to releasing any patient gift fund records.

It will be interesting to see if appointed District Attorney George Gascón, who is busy running to be elected as one of our top law enforcement officials, will step up to the plate and order enforcement, or whether he's too busy with his election campaign to uphold his oath of office.

Surprisingly, news just surfaced that the Ethics Commission's Chief Enforcement Officer, Richard Mo, who unsuccessfully defended the Ethics Commission when my Sunshine complaint was heard on April 26, is suddenly no longer employed at Ethics, effective mid-August. His defense didn't work, and now he's gone?

It will also be interesting to see what our Interim Mayor, Ed "The Liar" Lee, does with the referrals on the Sunshine complaints.

In another development, former Laguna Honda Hospital hospice physician Derek Kerr's wrongful termination and whistleblower retaliation lawsuit has moved into Federal court. Kerr's legal team sought access to both the Ethics' and Whistleblower Programs' investigative files involving the Laguna Honda Hospital patient gift fund scandal, and sought in their Federal motion to compel depositions from Ethics and Whistleblower

the Ethics Commission and the Whistleblower Program to and from anyone in the Department of Public Health's staff, for the Magistrate's further *in camera* review. The Magistrate will then decide whether to order that additional staff be deposed.

The good news is that there has been some movement on the other whistleblower complaints doctors Kerr and Rivero filed that I mentioned in the last issue. Sadly, there has been no action regarding the whistleblower complaint against former Director of Public Health Mitch Katz, who I reported last month had received consulting fees from the Chicago firm, Health Management Associates. HMA collected \$103,000 from a DPH consulting contract, during the same period it paid \$30,000 to Katz over three years.

Belatedly, City Controller Ben Rosenfield (himself) finally took action on Kerr's and Rivero's whistleblower complaint about Davis Ja and Associates, which involved conflict-of-interests between DPH employee Deborah Sherwood and her husband Davis Ja, who had been awarded a \$1.9 million consulting gig. It turns out that because Sherwood co-wrote the RFP eventually awarded to her hubby, Ja; was the Project Manager for the contract; was an official answering questions about the RFP and possibly the final contract; and had allowed a direct-report to serve on the interview panel, Controllor Rosenfield belatedly cancelled the contract "for convenience," after he recently "discovered" through a public records request, that there was a problem.

This may potentially result in a refund to the City of some \$400,000, based on scheduled payments to Mr. Ja that were canceled on July 29, 2011

Rosenfield only canceled the Ja contract on July 29, almost two years after the whistleblower complaint had been submitted. Rosenfield claims he's informed of all "high-risk" whistleblower complaints, but now claims he only learned of this case just weeks ago through a public records request. Rosenfield didn't admit the new records request was placed by doctors Kerr and Rivero, even though they had filed a whistleblower complaint fully two years ago.

Sherwood, whose pal is her husband Davis Ja, was formerly supervised by Dr. Bob Cabaj, who abruptly resigned from the Health Department in May 2011. Two months later, Ja's contract was suddenly revoked, and Richard Mo also suddenly vanished.

What's wrong with this picture? Could any of this be related?

Cont. p. 12

Plain Talk—Straight Talk By Joe O'Donoghue



DCCC and Other Underhanded Machinations

About a year and a half ago, infirmities of the kind associated with old age suckered my well-being to an array of sleepless nights and an inability to focus or concentrate consistently. Not surprisingly, this unexpected upheaval of my daily routine necessitated a hiatus from my social, political and business activities.

But, as would be expected, I did not "into the night" go quietly. Instead, inspired by "CON CEAD CATHA" ("Con of the Hundred Battles"), an Irish legendary figure, I, like him, fought back with vigor. Consequently, thanks to modern medicine and an excellent physician at Kaiser, Dr. Chinn, coupled with work-outs at the Jewish Community Center, cannabis and acupuncture, my unwelcome visitors for now have departed. And my old vigor — no pun intended — has returned.

To say the least, it's great not only to be back, but to be back in full-mind battle gear...which leads me to ask, what gives with some of our Mayoral candidates? To paraphrase the comments of one political observer, "Never have I seen such a bunch of narcissist cry-babies and whiners". Prudence and political savvy should have dictated that all the Mayoral hopefuls welcome Ed Lee in the Mayoral arena before they began their ersatz kick boxing charades.

Meantime, the DCCC committed a major political faux pas when they chose not to endorse, from a field of 5 qualified Asian candidates, even one. What made their actions more repugnant was they had three clear chances to name one Asian. This insult showed an arrogant disdain for Asian American aspirations, and made their endorsement process a farce.

As we know, Aaron Peskin is an exceptionally talented political operative — a Machiavellian who, when he was Board President, displayed remarkable legislative skills. He was, when then exercising power, on par with Willie Brown.

While the DCCC controlling group denies that racism was the basis for failing to endorse an Asian Mayoral candidate, the fact is that it played a part. And today, we see the impact of similar underhanded machinations across this country.

And by my reckoning he should have cast into the Mayoral ring his hat. For by any measure of comparison, he was by far the best qualified to lead the progressive ticket. However, for whatever reasons, he chose not to, and instead opted to remain head of the DCCC, an organization which has a checkered past when it comes to treatment of people of color, or immigrants, like me; an organization that is presently seen as ideologically moribund, white dominated, and elitist; an organization whose aphrodisiac is power and control. So, I'm shocked that Aaron would allow himself to be trapped in this quagmire of racial divide by a group of neophytes.

But, in their action of no endorsement of an Asian candidate, the DCCC was merely carrying out a legacy that was

bequeathed to them by the anti-immigration Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798. Spurred out of fear, this Act of 1798 was devised so that the WASPs could retain their power and control, as they feared that the refuse of Europe, which included the Wild Irish, would take over. So, within the Sedition Acts, political exclusion became the elixir that ensured hegemony of power and control for elitist groups. And this elixir of exclusion, which was first used against successive waves of European immigrants, was soon embraced by these very same groups once their situation was secure. And today, we see these exclusionary practices used by the White European descendants against people of color.

While the DCCC controlling group denies that racism was the basis for failing to endorse an Asian Mayoral candidate, the fact is that it played a part. And today, we see the impact of similar underhanded machinations across this country. For instance, the fact that Republican state legislatures have passed voting restrictions in Alabama, Minnesota, Missouri and nine other states which negatively impact primarily African Americans, is a display of raw exclusionary politics. Unfortunately, the actions of the DCCC are on par with these same restrictions; at best it is "institutional racism." This is defined as an outcome that negatively impacts a minority group, even if the intent was not racist. In this instance, considering that 5 of the 11 Mayoral candidates are Asian, the proposition that the DCCC is guilty of institutional racism is a legal reality. The position that the DCCC advances — that they have

endorsed Asians for Supervisor and other elected offices — is flawed, as the endorsement of even three Asian Supervisors is nothing compared to the power that resides with the Mayor. Moreover, the DCCC's endorsement of Avalos, an Hispanic candidate, does not dilute the institutional racism argument, as that endorsement was merely an empty gesture; in a field of even two candidates, Avalos is unelectable.

Personally, I intend to vote for Mayor Ed Lee and Tony Hall, as Tony has shown the courage and independence of mind, and has the testosterone to stand up to the bully puppeteers who control San Francisco's politics. As for the third choice, that spot is still open.

Feedback: joeO@westsideobserver.com

Priority One: Public/Private Parks

By Anmarie Mabbutt

Public private partnerships are driving the commercialization of San Francisco's public park space. The loud voices ringing in General Manager Ginsburg's ears belong to the Department's private partners who are constantly seeking preferential access to park land and facilities while at the same time advocating for increased fees and reduced levels of service to the public. In the past year, the Department, responding to requests by the Botanical Garden Society and the San Francisco Parks Trust, reduced hours of operations at the Botanical Gardens, the Helen Crocker Russell Library and the Conservatory of Flowers without Commission approval and without any prior notice to or input from the public. In so doing, not only did the Department violate the public hearing and notice requirements of Section 4.104 of the City Charter, the Department showed how willing it is to sacrifice the public good for private interests.

Desperate for funding and all too eager to please its philanthropic donors, the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department continues to increase fees for the general public while offering its private partners highly discounted rates and sweetheart deals. Since 2002, the Botanical Garden Society has paid \$1/year to rent 4200 square feet of public park space in the Botanical Gardens and the County Fair Building. Yet, in advocating for the non-resident admission fee, the Society and the Department insisted \$7 was a reasonable fee for a person to pay for a single visit to the Arboretum. The Society's lease expired on February 28, 2011 and it

Cont. p. 7

BUSINESS CORNER by Mitch Bull

Healthy Pets Veterinary Hospital – the total holistic approach to pet care

Since its opening in September of 2010, the *Healthy Pets Veterinary Hospital* has been quietly growing and expanding as local pet owners are embracing the clinic for the holistic-based methods of treatment offered by Dr. Adam Piaseczny and his staff.

Located at 373 West Portal Avenue, “Healthy Pets” offers a convenient, centrally located facility that is easy to access from the Westside of the city, the Castro and the Mission. Parking is available on West Portal Avenue (metered) and in the surrounding neighborhoods within an easy walk. Metered parking lots are also a convenient stroll away.

I sat down with Dr. Piaseczny to discuss the challenges of dealing with patients who don’t communicate in our spoken language and how the practice of holistic veterinary medicine is different that most other facilities that assist us when our pets need medical attention.

Westside Observer (WSO): What are the biggest challenges you face and where do you start with a pet diagnosis?

Dr. Adam: When I am evaluating a new client, I like to start with a discussion of food and the diet of the patient. Our animals are pretty much just like us humans. Pets have hearts, kidneys, livers, brains, circulatory systems, nervous systems, etc. just like we do. It makes sense that they would require a variety of healthy foods, vitamins and minerals to keep them healthy and their bodies functioning at a healthy level.

It’s sometimes a challenge to change a pet owners perception about “human food” in a pet diet. Cats are carnivores, and require a diet high in protein, while dogs are omnivores and can enjoys diets with protein as well as vegetables, etc. With the ease that canned and dry pet foods offer, it’s easy to keep feeding your pets the same type of food each day with little or no changes. If we were forced to eat the same thing each day, we would get bored, so it’s perfectly acceptable to vary the diet by adding small amounts of chicken, beef, fish, rice, carrots and other vegetables to your pets’ diet. Even “human” foods like yogurt and cooked eggs can be good for your pet. We have even put some of our clients on a raw diet in cases of advanced inflammatory problems. Of course, your pet may not like certain foods either in taste, texture or smell.

WSO: Tell us how “Chinese Medicine Therapy is used in your practice.

Dr. Adam: There are five aspects of traditional Chinese Medicine and we use all five to treat our pet patients. The most well known is Acupuncture which is used both for pain management and to help correct imbalances in the central nervous system, just as it is used in human patients. The other aspects are TuiNa (massage), Food Therapy, Herbal supplements, and Chi Gong, a form of yoga. We also have a pet chiropractor that works with us to help our clients that need chiropractic adjustments. These therapies have been developed over thousands of years, and are very beneficial in treating many of the allergies and inflammatory problems that pets (like humans) can develop.

WSO: What sets “Healthy Pets” apart from other clinics?

Dr. Adam: I think we are different in two ways. With our full spectrum of treatments we take a



Dr. Adam Piaseczny and the staff at Healthy Pets

unique approach to preventative care. We rely less of vaccinations (although we do use them as necessary) and more on nutrition and the tenets of the Chinese Medicine I discussed above. We strive to keep the body in balance and try to maintain a long-term “tuning” of the (pet) patients for a total wellness result, instead of just using a shot, or pill to fix a specific clinical problem.

Secondly, we conduct a thorough follow-up with our clients. Since our patients do not speak our (human) language it is very important for our doctors, our technicians and our staff members to follow up right after the treatment and for several days as veterinary medicine is not an exact science and we may have to adjust treatments or prescriptions based on changed behaviors, responses, etc.

WSO: How has the clinic (as a new business) fared in its first year?

Dr. Adam: It has been a very successful launch as this location, in San Francisco, is a very good fit. Many San Franciscans are pet owners and have responded well to our services and our open houses. We are getting very good reviews online at Yelp, we have had great personal references, and we are having clients who found us by “word of mouth,” and our newspaper ads.

We have also conducted several open houses, and they have been well attended; in fact, our next Open House is scheduled for September 24th from 4 pm- 8 pm. We will be sponsoring a band, and having Hors D’oeuvres and wine. Mark your calendars now.

Overall our breakdown is: 75% cats and 25% dogs with an occasional pocket pet thrown in. (pocket pets are: hamsters, gerbils, chinchillas, etc. with a few reptiles).

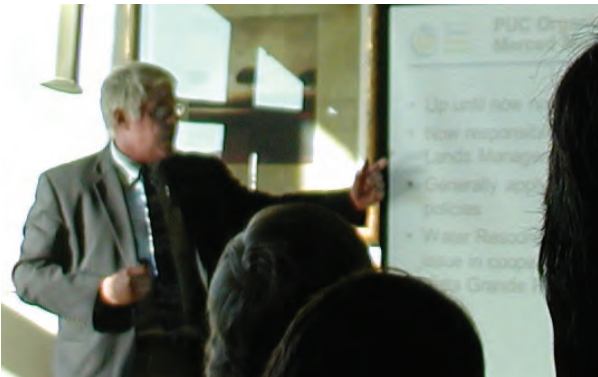
WSO: What would you like to tell clients and prospective clients?

Dr. Adam: Come to our Open House on September 24th to see what we’re all about. We have 2 doctors, 4 technicians and 3 receptionists that are dedicated to keeping your pet healthy and fit.

Healthy Pets Veterinary Hospital is located at 373 West Portal Avenue. The clinic is open Monday through Friday from 8 Am to 6 PM and on Saturdays from 9 Am to 2 PM. Their services include: Exams and Vaccinations; Surgery and Dentistry; Traditional Chinese Medicine; Herbs and Nutritional Supplements and Food Therapy. For more information visit their website at: sfhealthy-pets.com, or call them at 415.742.5961.



September 24th • 4 - 8 pm
Our Favorite Band
Hors D’oeuvres and Wine
Please come and meet our staff!



The MOU document governing the use and maintenance of Lake Merced is a 1950 era resolution. The 60 year old document notes that the SFPUC adopted Resolution No. 10,435 giving the Rec. & Park Dept. the right to “occupy, use and improve, for park and recreational purposes” the entire Tract, along with the right to grant concessions or leases.

It is the leasing and use of the lake and surrounding acreage that worries some residents. They fear Rec. & Park will “privatize” the lake as a way to create revenue, and limit public access in favor of events and venues that make money.

There was general agreement among those attending the meeting that the SF PUC will be unable to hold Rec. & Park accountable if their joint conservatorship of the Lake Merced area continues.

Jonathan Farrell is a freelance San Francisco journalist.

Kopp(Cont. from p. 3)

That’s because Central Subway adherents represent that about 92 percent of the needed money will emanate from Federal and State governmental funds. That involves \$966,000,000 (61% of the total) and \$488,000,000 from the U.S. Treasury and the State of California, respectively, and about \$124,000,000 (8% of the total) from proceeds of the local 1/2 percent transportation sales tax. But, if the Central Subway project costs more than now claimed, neither Federal nor State funds will be available for cost increases, which means that San Franciscans will underwrite all cost “overruns.” That’s why the Grand Jury recommended that the San Francisco Metropolitan Transportation Agency (”MTA”), the project sponsor, should hire an independent entity to investigate whether the current budget represents a “realistic estimate.”

There’s more. Project sponsors claim the Central Subway will serve Chinatown residents and shoppers. The Grand Jury concluded that “...to say that the Central Subway will alleviate this problem (overcrowded conditions on the 33-Stockton bus) is disingenuous.” The Central Subway would miss connections with 25 of the 30 light rail and bus lines that it crosses. No direct connection exists to BART—or to Bay ferryboats. Riders will need to walk 1000 feet to transfer between the Union Square / Market St./Powell Street stations. Direct connection from the T-Third line to the MUNI Metro will be eliminated. And, the Central Subway ignores service to the Financial District. A 2006 review of the Central Subway design by an independent engineering firm, commissioned by MTA, concluded that the project “promises to combine high capital costs with higher operating costs, and ...does not, apparently, effectively meet the market needs in the corridor it is intended to serve.”

Moreover, MUNI cannot provide an assurance of its ridership predictions. Those have fluctuated from a high of 61,000 to a current estimate of a mere 35,110 riders on the Central Subway. The MUNI is known for unreliable ridership claims and the trip times on the Central Subway will actually be longer than currently exists on surface buses. The Sierra Club, changing its prior support position, concludes that the project should now be abandoned and the local and state funds be applied to meritorious MUNI and other transit projects in our city.

Talk about misuse of taxpayer money, this project possesses the highest capital costs per mile of all 14 light rail projects in the Federal Transit Administration’s so-called “New Start Program” nationally has the highest capital cost on a “new rider basis” of those 14 projects, and the lowest percentage of “new riders” of all such Federally-funded projects. Meanwhile, taxpayer dollars will be drained so as to undermine MUNI maintenance and exacerbate the overburdened MUNI vehicle control systems, which must be a MUNI priority. The MUNI currently incurs an operating deficit of about \$150,000,000 per year and needs a new signal system at Forest Hill Station and elsewhere; using our sales tax levies for the Central Project will cheat us of a new MUNI communications system. To City Hall: Heed the 2011 Civil Grand Jury report or continue to savage taxpayers and MUNI riders. End the Central Subway Project.

During the Westside Observer’s summer vacation, it should be noted that the celebrated voter and ratepayer initiative to modify an antiquated 1932 ordinance governing garbage collection, transportation and disposal, which resulted in a monopoly never contemplated by San Franciscans in 1932, was certified for the June 2012 municipal election despite physical and financial efforts by its monopolistic opponent to prevent voters from signing the necessary petitions. The initiative also provides for the first time in history that the bid-winning garbage collector will pay San Francisco a franchise fee. Remarkably, San Francisco is the only jurisdiction in California which does not charge a franchise fee to a private garbage collection or transportation company. By comparison, Oakland, with less than one-half of San Francisco’s residents, receives \$30,000,000 per year as a garbage collector’s franchise fee. San Francisco is the only such jurisdiction which does not require competitive bidding for garbage collection, transportation or recycling. With a mayoral campaign involving some 11 or more worthies, voters now possess the opportunity to ascertain the support or opposition of each mayoral candidate respecting such June 2012 initiative. Already, candidates John Avalos, Tony Hall, Jeff Adachi, Phil Ting and Joanne Rees have declared their public support for next June’s ballot measure and candidate Dennis Herrera, prohibited as City Attorney by our charter from proclaiming a public position, has informed this writer he will vote for the proposition next June. The incumbent mayor, who as then-Director of the Department of Public Works over ten years ago, granted Nor-Cal Waste, now called Recology (a fancy “brand” name), a 44 percent rate increase in the face of a staff recommendation of a 20 percent increase, Supervisor David Chiu and candidate Bevan Dufty have refuse to support abolition of the monopoly in favor of competitive bidding. That should be instructive to all voters this November 8th.

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

Don’t Miss Another Issue!

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Lake Merced (Cont. from p. 1)

to the needs of over 200 acres of lake, marsh and park, but that the golf course gets lots of attention since its upgrade to PGA status more than six years ago. Some said the reason why the golf course and its clubhouse got more attention over the Boathouse and fishing docks was because the sport of golf is a moneymaker.

The SF PUC has jurisdiction over the lake as a water resource and must work with not only San Francisco, but also adjacent Daly City in its use and care. Ritchie reassured the audience that attention to the water levels, as well as erosion issues, are being addressed on an on-going basis.

Even though recreation use has increased, the quality of the lake’s recreation facilities seem to be much less than what it was in previous years. Hippo Lau said, after the meeting, that “fishing on the lake used to be shoulder to shoulder. It used to be the lake, a choice spot, to fish at in the 1950s and ‘60s. Over the years the lake has gone down in quality and maintenance.” Kelly Zito in the *SF Chronicle* observed. “Many of those docks are rotting under water. Fish stocks hover well below historical levels,” Zito’s article noted.

Most were concerned that the Memorandum of Understanding regarding Lake Merced was not complete, and that most of the handouts were drafts still in process.They expressed concerns about the political maneuvering between the City and the SF PUC, the MOU created decades ago will be undermined and rendered meaningless.

"We don't suffer from lack of ideas in

Adachi's campaign can be contacted at www.adachi2011.com or at 905-9100.



Adachi's mayoral candidacy and pension fight are both uphill electoral battles that defy political convention. If San Francisco voters are ready to confront a financial crisis from which other politicians shy away, and overcome an endless supply of special interest opposition money, Adachi believes he can win, and it will forever change how local elected officials campaign and operate in office.

By Katherine Howard



However, Wooding learned from other sources that these e-mails did exist. In these e-mails, Rec and Park employees, a Recreation and Park Commissioner, and

The panel discussion is featured in the August/September 2011 Commonwealth Club magazine. A video of the Commonwealth Club program can be accessed through SF Ocean Edge's website: www.sfoceannedge.org

Katherine Howard, Golden Gate Park Preservation Alliance, SF Ocean Edge

Not only did the Department not require the Society to provide any of the prior financial documents or disclosures required by the Agreement, the Controller has issued three grant payments to the Society totaling \$146,823.52 without first providing written certification of the availability of the funds as clearly required by the

Similarly, ever since the City Fields partnership began converting public athletic fields to artificial turf, whole communities have watched as their neighborhood parks were transformed into destination fields, used primarily by outside organizations and individuals who can afford to pay the \$25-\$65/hourly fee for use of the fields. Once the current artificial turf conversion is complete at Mission playground, the Department will only guarantee free open play for three evenings per week and a portion of Sunday afternoon. Like the other City Fields gifts at Crocker Amazon, South Sunset, Silver Terrace, Garfield Square and Kimball Field, the public notices for the Mission Playground project never mentioned the use of artificial turf or synthetic products.

In his book “Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Ruin,” Bay Area historian Dr. Gray Brechin notes “Power veils itself.” And once exposed, it quickly reaches out for ways to manipulate public opinion. December 1, 2009, the day after the Recreation and Parks Department received a public records request regarding Dana Ketcham’s volunteer work on behalf of the Foundation, Susan Hirsch registered as a contract lobbyist for the Fisher Brothers. Her first reported contacts began on

Cont. p. 14

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MONEY MATTERS • By Brandon Miller and Joanne Jordan

Smart Ways to Get Smarter

Are the season's hottest accessories—a cap and gown—in your future? You might be returning to school to advance your career—or start a whole new one. Maybe you've heard a rumor that your department is slated for the next round of layoffs. Perhaps your little one now needs diplomas instead of diapers. Or maybe you're finally ready to fulfill that promise to yourself.

Great, you've made a smart decision. Now the question is, will you be the one paying—or can you get someone else to do it? For many people, it's a combination of the two. But before you start figuring out who owes what on the bill, you have to know the total.

Decide When Enough Is Enough

Obviously, the school you choose is a key factor in how much money you'll need. Average annual tuition and fee costs range from \$35,000 or more for a private four-year college to \$2,700 for public two-year colleges.¹ If the upper end is beyond your reach, perhaps you can receive comparable training from online courses. It might also be possible to take prerequisites at an affordable community college and transfer those credits to a more expensive school later. If all else fails, there are tuition-free colleges, though they're very difficult to get into.

Your life—and living expenses—won't stop once your studies begin, so how will you balance school and work? Continue to work full time, shift to part time or not work at all? If your income will drop while you're in school, remember to add the gap in living expenses into your total equation. If you're only going to school at night, it will take longer to graduate and tuition costs may rise significantly during that time.

There are other factors that will influence your total sum, so be realistic to get a clear idea of how much help you need.

Leverage What You've Got

Since most student aid has to be repaid, a smaller debt load will make life easier once you've graduated. Here are some resources you might already have access to:

- Savings. Basic savings accounts, money market accounts, CDs, bonds, the cash under your mattress—the source doesn't matter. Just the amount.
- Traditional or Roth IRAs. Even if you're not 59½, you may be able to make early withdrawals without penalty to pay for school. Restrictions apply, of course, such as distributions can only be used for qualified higher education expenses and you have to own the IRA for at least five years. Just remember that any amount you withdraw will not be available for your retirement.
- 529 savings plan. If you have a few years to save, you can open this account where earnings grow tax-free, but must be used for tuition, books and other related education expenses. You have to designate a student beneficiary, which can be yourself or a child.

Find a Helping Hand(out)

To help you cover what your savings won't, look at these sources:

- Government-sponsored financial aid. Federal student loans usually offer lower interest rates and more flexible repayment options than loans from private sources. That's why it's wise to start here before turning elsewhere. At www.FAFSA.ed.gov, you can fill out one application to determine your eligibility for available grants, scholarships, work-study opportunities and federal student loans.

• Employer financing. Many employers offer education assistance as part of their benefits package. Even if you're facing a layoff, some companies will pay for all or part of education costs for training in a new field. Check with your HR department to see if you're eligible for any assistance.

• Pension plan. If you can borrow against your contributions, this could help you meet education expenses. The advantage to this loan type is that you don't need to worry about qualifying as long as you meet your plan's eligibility requirements.

• Private and home equity loans. Your great credit might qualify you for funding from a bank, credit union, etc. Just be aware that you'll probably have to begin repaying immediately. Other forms of student aid often defer repayment until after you leave school.

Any loans you secure could mean years—even decades—of repayment. Depending on where you borrowed, you can possibly modify the terms to suit your circumstances, such as making payments that get gradually higher as your salary increases. There are also some government jobs that will forgive all or part of your education debt if you stay in the job for a set number of years.

A smart first step may be to sit down with a financial professional to assess your situation before, during and after school. With a little planning—and a lot of hard work—you could be hanging a tassel from your rear-view mirror sooner than you think.

Brandon Miller, CFP and Joanne Jordan, CFP are financial consultants at Jordan Miller & Associ., A Private Wealth Advisory Practice of Ameriprise Financial Inc., helping individuals and families plan and achieve goals. For more information, please visit jordanmilleradvisors.com.

¹Trends in College Pricing 2010, College Board, 2011.

City Hall Debt (Cont. from p. 1)

San Francisco's low rating is no accident. The City worked hard to earn its current 64 PCI rating by deliberately deferring road maintenance in good times and bad. Just about 80% of the money that should have been spent on road repairs, but wasn't, was deliberately redirected to City employee salaries.

In 2003, the City had just 2,918 employees earning over \$90,000 in total pay, excluding fringe benefits, costing \$314 million. In 2010, the City had 11,838 employees earning over \$90,000, an increase of 8,920 such employees, who now cost \$1.47 *billion*, an increase of \$1.15 billion, by the stroke of the Mayor's pen signing the City budget, and a compliant Board of Supervisors passing Annual Salary Ordinance increases. Clearly, the unfunded salary increases exacerbate our unfunded pension problem, largely driven by overly-generous top salaries, which isn't being addressed in pension reform ballot measures, or discussed by City officials. Thank you Willie Brown and Gavin Newsom for our terrible roads and our abundance of highly-paid, managerial employees.

Now, after years of deferred maintenance, the City comes crawling back to the voters with a \$248 million Road Repaving and Street Safety Bond on the November ballot. This is what the road repair bond claims they will give us: We get to pay for our infrastructure repair for a second time by paying \$148 million for street repaving and reconstruction; \$7.3 million for street structure rehabilitation and seismic improvements; \$22 million for sidewalk and accessibility improvements; \$50 million for streetscape, pedestrian walkways, and bicycle lanes; and \$20.3 million for upgraded traffic signals.

The actual real cost of the bond will be \$440,749,617, after adding \$189,249,617 in interest payments over the next 24 years, plus \$3.5 million in bond issuance charges. Just \$155.3 million of the \$440.8 million — only 35 percent — will actually be used for street repaving, reconstruction, and seismic improvements.

If the City had just used the money that we gave the General Fund for the intended road repairs, voters would have saved at least \$189 million in interest payments. Imagine if you paid cash for a car, and then the car dealership made you pay a second time by paying finance and principal charges for the same car over the next ten years. This is exactly what San Francisco is trying to do to City property owners.

In 2009, when the proposed

\$368 million Road Repair General Obligation Bond was being considered, Supervisor Sean Elsbernd wrote in his July 2009 newsletter, "I oppose this bond because I believe that our City has the financial means, but not the political will, to prioritize the maintenance and improvement of our streets." In 2011, Supervisor Mark Farrell stated, "I don't believe that we should be funding street repairs with debt." And, Supervisor Scott Weiner — who "strongly" supports the 2011 road repair bond — has stated, "It is unrealistic for the City to pay for road maintenance with existing resources." Apparently, Supervisor Weiner doesn't mind having the voters pay twice for road repairs, including the additional interest.

DPW is pretending that all of the proposed street improvement projects are capital improvements and are not considered ongoing or routine maintenance. General Obligation Bonds (GOB) pay for capital improvements and are not meant to pay for one-time maintenance projects such as road repairs. Also, the length of a capital improvement GOB should exceed the life of the bond debt. Let's see: This 24-year bond will fund road repairs that will last only 12 to 20 years. The road repair project does not even qualify to be a GOB, but if it passes we'll pay for it for 4 to 12 years longer than the life of the repairs.

City officials have been going all over town telling voters that the road repairs will last 30 years. The newly-appointed acting director of the DPW, Mohammed Nuru, told the CFSN that the Road Repair bond would last 30 years. Hmmm. Apparently, misrepresenting the life of maintenance repairs to voters must be the best way to be appointed acting DPW director.

The Board of Supervisors Budget and Legislative Analyst, Harvey Rose, considers the proposed \$148.4 million in GOB's for Street Repaving and Reconstruction projects to be routine and ongoing when considering the entirety of the City's street system. Rose, therefore, "found that such projects would be most appropriately financed on a pay-as-you-go basis, without the issuance of the proposed general obligation bonds, which will result in long-term debt to the City." Translation: The road repair bond should never have been placed on the ballot as a capital improvement.

The Hidden Agenda: A large chunk of the Road Repair Bond is going to be used to fix-up Fisherman's Wharf so that it will look nice for the America's Cup yacht races. Let rich men play with their expensive toys, but not at the expense of

the City's taxpayers. If you say that you are going fix the road infrastructure, please make sure that you repair the entire city.

At a time when the City is cutting funding for health care, education and emergency services, this road repair bond would spend tens of millions of taxpayer dollars on a remodeling project in one tiny area of the City — Jefferson Street on the Wharf — in anticipation of the America's Cup race. The bond would direct more money to the Jefferson Street project than to all sidewalk, bridge, and overpass improvements combined, citywide.

According to a City-commissioned poll by Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz and Associates (FMMM), current road repair bond polling of likely voters shows 34% voting "Definitely Yes," 21% "Probably Yes," and 11% "Undecided, Leaning Yes," which totals (potentially) 66% "Yes." The Road Repair bond will need 66.66% to pass. The San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) has also added a \$513 million capital improvement bond to the November ballot. The Education Bond needs a 55% approval vote to pass. With both measures on the ballot, FMMM's poll shows San Francisco voters are far less supportive of either the education bond or the road repair bond.

Hopefully, the road repair bond will not kill passage of the school repair bond, since voters are leery of approving \$761 million in new GOB debt across the two bonds. Most voters believe the education of our City's children is far more important than our City's deferred road repairs.

The Last Straw: Two years ago, on April 28, 2009, the Board of Supervisors (File 09-0404) approved the issuance of \$42 million in Certificates of Participation (COPs) to finance the same categories of street improvement projects included in the November GOB. A year-and-a-half later, on October 26, 2010, the Board of Supervisors (File 10-1159) approved the issuance of an additional \$48 million COP issuance, with the main difference being the specific streets and locations of those projects. Between these two COPs, we're already borrowing \$90 million, plus interest, for the same type of work proposed for the November GOB.

COP's are classified as "non-voter-approved debt." They are reviewed by the Budget and Finance Committee, and then require a two-thirds vote by the Board of Supervisors. Most of the COPs have passed unanimously, with few of the 11 Supervisors ever voting "No." The public has no say or input into COPs, nor control of how many hundreds of millions in COPs have been issued.

COPs are long-term debt with high interest payments that should not be used for one-time maintenance projects such as road repair. The 2009 road repair COPs cost \$42 million in principal, \$83.5 million with interest. The soon to be issued 2010 road repair COPs will cost another 48 million in principal with a yet unknown interest cost. Together, both COPs interest and principal payments will cost San Francisco's general fund over \$5.0 million annually. This COP money is the exact same money that should have been spent on road repair maintenance out of the General Fund and is now committed to principal and interest payments. If the City had simply done the right thing and not deferred infrastructure payments, the General Fund would be paying directly for road repair maintenance rather than paying unnecessary COP interest payments.

San Francisco's government has done a terrible job maintaining our road infrastructure over the last 20 years. The real question is: Should the voters now reward City government for doing such a bad job? Federal, state, and local infrastructure funds should be spent on purposes that were intended. As Supervisor Elsbernd stated, the City has the financial means but not the political will to prioritize the maintenance of our streets.

Please vote "Yes" on the Education GOB and "No" on the Road Repair GOB. After all, if the Road Repair bond passes on November 8, there's nothing you can do to stop the Board of Supervisors from issuing more street repair COP's on November 9 or sometime before the America's Cup race.

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WEST OF TWIN PEAKS CENTRAL COUNCIL *By Mitch Bull*

President Matt Chamberlain and the WOTPCC have been on Summer recess, but that doesn't mean they've been on vacation...in fact, they have been very busy putting the finishing touches on an upcoming WOTPCC organized and sponsored "San Francisco Mayoral debate" featuring many of the candidates for the upcoming Mayoral election in November.

Mark your calendars NOW! With a very large slate of candidates, many of whom have extensive qualifications, the debate will be a vital forum to help voters to select the best three (ranked choice) candidates to represent the city as the new Mayor of San Francisco.

The debate will be held on October 1st, from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon at the St. Stephen's Parish Hall, located at 473 Eucalyptus Drive. To date, the following candidates are expected to participate: Jeff Adachi; Michela Alioto-Pier; John Avalos; David Chiu; Bevan Dufty; Tony Hall; Dennis Herrera; Ed Lee; Joanna Rees; Phil Ting and Leland Yee. Light refreshments will be served from 9:30 to 10 AM.

For more information on the debate go to: www.WestofTwinPeaks.org

New-President Chamberlain will end the recess and convene the next meeting on September 26th at 7:30 PM in the Forest Hills Clubhouse.

Golden Gate Park (Cont. from p. 9)

Jean Barish expressed concern about rubber tire crumbs—old tires that the EPA does not allow to be dumped into landfill but are used for the fields. "There is a lot of discussion and debate and a lot of unresolved issues about whether this is a safe product," she said. Neighbor, educator, and panelist Gene Thompson expressed concern about the artificial turf because it contains many hazardous materials; EIRs are crucial in situations like these. State regulations require an EIR.

Local soccer father and coach George Wooding (also a Westside Observer contributor) confessed he was initially all in favor of the soccer field plan. He did not think the artificial turf concern was that much of a big deal—"until I heard the arguments more attentively and read up on more of the details," he said. Now, He is concerned that an artificial turf is not such a good idea, especially for GGP. Restoring the "natural field as it has been for the past 50 years or so would be most appropriate for the area. And, if people still want a sports complex soccer facility, it would be best to build it some place other than the park. The park's natural integrity and habitat, set aside generations ago for all citizens to enjoy is being undermined in favor of revenue building.

Wuerfel is most vocal about the cost. Who is going to pay for these projects? The City Fields Foundation through the Fisher family is contributing, over time, the equivalent of \$25 million to renovate and install artificial turf fields throughout the City. Rec and Park is matching this amount with \$20 million. Yet for the renovation of the soccer fields she has not seen any documentation of their gift or contribution.

She asserted that the foundation's agreement with the City is to "match" City funds. So far, the soccer field plan is moving forward based on "their word."

"Politics as usual," many said about the efforts to make the park more profitable.

Shawna McGrew, who has worked with Rec & Park for many years, said that residents need to "act politically." Most agreed that so much is at stake—GGP's future as a park land and natural habitat, San Franciscans, especially residents of the Sunset and Richmond Districts closest to the park, must tell officials how they feel by writing letters, talking to their representatives and mayoral candidates.

If residents make it clear that these two projects are not feasible for Golden Gate Park by way of their vote, then maybe City Officials will pay better attention.

Jonathan Farrell is a free-lance San Francisco journalist

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2011

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★ Dennis Herrera ★ Ed Lee ★ Joanna Rees ★

Phil Ting ★ Leland Yee

Light Refreshments will be served from 9:30 to 10:00 am

The West of Twin Peaks Central Council

is comprised of the following neighborhood organizations:

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Merced Manor • Midtown Terrace • Miraloma Park Improvement Club

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It's gonna be a fun election season...Now that the declaration period is over, we finally can see the field for the running of the SF Mayor's derby. Front-runners, dark horses and long shots abound with a candidate or two to fit every voter's profile. The next two months will be a blur with the candidates trying to get their messages out any way they can.

The good news is that the field is stocked with an overflow of political talent. Of the plethora of candidates vying for the Mayors' office, at least 11 look like they could do a very credible job as SF's chief exec. Leland Yee, Tony Hall, Dennis Herrera, Michela Alioto-Pier, Bevan Dufty, David Chiu, John Avalos, Joanna Rees, Phil Ting and yes, Ed Lee and Jeff Adachi give the voters an unusually deep field of quality candidates that have knowledge and experience about working in and running the SF city government. I wish them all well as it takes a tremendous amount of time, energy, family support, and funding to run any campaign to be elected to public office With "ranked choice" voting, where each voter is asked to provide a ranking of their top three candidates, I believe votes will be very spread out with a whole host of recalculations and tabulations at the end to bring us (eventually) a winner.

Speaking of "ranked choice," former District 7 Supervisor Tony Hall garnered the top endorsement this week from the SF Log Cabin Republicans, who also named Michela Alioto-Pier and Ed Lee as second and third respectively, as their recommendations for the ranked choice ballot in the November election for Mayor. The gay Republican group cited Hall as the most fiscally conservative candidate. While not a huge voting bloc in the city, nevertheless it is a good starting point for the "straight talking" former supe.

We will get a close-up and personal look at the major candidates at the West of Twin Peaks Central Council Candidates Forum. The forum, to be held on October 1st at the St. Stephen's Parish Hall, has been organized by the WOTPC, which represents the neighborhood associations within the West of Twin Peaks area. For more information go to their website, www.WestofTwinPeaks.org.

We also have elections for District Attorney and Sheriff. Six candidates (including incumbent DA and former police chief George Gascon) are in the DA's race, while five candidates (including Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi) are vying for the silver sheriff's badge. A full list of candidates can be downloaded off of the SF Government website (sfgov.org).

With the advent of ranked choice voting, where each voter can select up to 3 choices (in order of preference), it will be more important than ever to do research in order to make the most informed choice. We are fortunate to have such a choice of candidates; it's truly democracy in action.

Music has been at the forefront in the city with the annual Stern Grove (free) concerts, the very successful OutsideLands Festival and the Hardly Strictly Bluegrass fest. In addition we have great local venues such as The Music Store on West Portal, Café DuNord on Market Street (just over and down the hill), and the Independent (on Divisadero).

If the spoken word calls to you, check out the events at BookShop West Portal. This local gem brings authors from very diverse genres together for events and readings during each month. It's a great literary resource for the neighborhood.

Do you have an interesting story, idea, or some insights you'd like to get in the paper? Just drop it to us in the mail, or email me at: mitch@WestsideObserver.com. Be sure to check out the *Observer* online @ www.WestsideObserver.com.

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SFPUC Oversight (Cont. from p. 3)

These neighborhood organizations wanted real oversight. These ratepayers were just ignored without discussion.

Exit University Assistance The UCB-UCLA effort just disappeared somewhere in the winter of 2011. It died without comment. No agenda item. No discussion. No apologies to UCB and UCLA for their great interest and hard work. Also, the CWG vanished.

Would the multi-disciplinary professors and their brilliant PhD (independent) students have opened an embarrassing can of worms? We will probably never know.

Enter City Services Auditor Based on Brown Act sunshine requests it appears that a decision was made, *off camera* (via meetings, phone calls, and emails, etc.), to dump UCB/UCLA and cede control of RBOC contracting work and procedures to the SF Controller's City Services Auditor (CSA). The first appearance of the Controller's CSA staff was on a vague, non-decipherable agenda item, but at the meeting, it became clear this RBOC-Controller union was already well underway.

The CSA, created by 2003 Prop C (Whistleblowers Prop) is funded by 1/5 of 1% of every City budget including the SFPUC. It is inside, not outside, it is dependent, not independent: city bureaucrats monitor themselves. This memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the RBOC and the CSA is arguably illegal. The legal language in the two propositions does not appear to support this MOU.

The SFPUC stated that they have issued \$3,327,500,000 in WSIP revenues bonds. It has spent a total of \$1,549,000,000 on WSIP. The SFPUC has deposited \$1,778,500,000 of bond funds in a Treasuries Account earning 1.25% interest. The SFPUC pays an estimated average of 4.5% to bondholders for these funds. This means the ratepayer must pick up \$57,801,250 per annum in negative interest costs.

Why does the SFPUC require such a large amount of liquidity at such a high cost to ratepayers? This question requires

considerably more analysis. It must be framed in the context that the SFPUC has a commercial paper (CP) draw of \$500,000,000. The Federal Reserve estimates CP costs at less than 1% per annum.

When this interest differential versus commercial paper situation was brought to the attention (email) of the City Controller on 8/16/2011, he replied, "I obviously understand the issue you are raising related to the use of the CP program in lieu of bonds, and will take a look at the issue myself." Why did it take this reminder, in that he oversees the RBOC's new one-stop-shopping consultant per the recent MOU between the RBOC and the Controller?

Master Water Sales Agreement The failure of this committee to hold a true, un-orchestrated, public outreach meeting on the 2009 Master Water Sales Agreement (MWSA) between San Francisco and its suburban water customers is an oversight that must be readdressed.

San Francisco (the state's most conservation-conscious city) was treated unfairly in the MWSA. SF's actual supplies of Hetch Hetchy water deliveries were cut by over 10% and ceded to the peninsula at Hetch Hetchy system costs. Their historical use of water was increased by 10% as a result of this "transfer." SF must replace these supplies at costs up to 10 times Hetch Hetchy water costs.

This committee also refused to demand that the SFPUC include its 1/20 of 1% in the issuance cost for Build America Bonds (BABs) as allowed under the America Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA). No document in law (2009 ARRA) or IRS code justified this exclusion.

To avoid a sustained floor fight the SFPUC, with compliance from the RBOC, agreed to accept a transfer from the SFPUC from other bond issues. 2002 Proposition P is unequivocal 1/20 of 1% of all revenue bonds issued by the SFPUC. This is not what 2002 Proposition P mandated.

The RBOC sunsets in 2013, however, the RBOC has asked the Board of Supervisors (allowed under 2002 P) to extend

their sunset. To extend this particular committee past its sunset 2013 date would be a disservice to San Francisco.

We do need real oversight. A first step must be to rescind 2002 Proposition E (the blank check), which stripped San

Gift Fund (Cont. from p. 5)

Despite Rosenfield suddenly yanking the contract, the Ethics Commission is still dragging its feet and may still be "investigating." Why did it take the City Controller two years to arrive at yanking Ja's contract, and why is Ethics still investigating it? Should we start referring to this as the "Jerwood scandal"?

The Civil Grand Jury released its report on the Whistleblower Program after the *Observer's* last edition went to press. Their report is highly critical of the Controller's whistleblower program, noting that the Ethics Commission's efforts to protect City employees against retaliation for exposing wrongdoing aren't working.

During the Citizen's General Obligation Bond Oversight Committee's hearing on August 11, Controller Ben Rosenfield's proposed "response" to the Grand Jury's findings was debated. Remarkably, CGOBOC approved the Controller's response to the Grand Jury that there is no need to implement an "appeals" process for whistleblowers who are not satisfied with the disposition of their cases.

Rosenfield brazenly responded to the Grand Jury that citizens and employees can petition a court, or can appeal to the Board of Supervisors' heartstrings, if the outcomes of their whistleblower complaints aren't resolved satisfactorily. Rosenfield's slap in the face is appalling, since most citizens can't afford mounting a Court challenge, nor do they have easy access to an incontinent Board of Supervisors. The idiocy of CGOBOC's stamp of approval on Rosenfield's response is appalling, but may be explained by who appointed each CGOBOC member to their "oversight" seats.

Francisco residents of the right to vote on the issuance of revenue bonds and handed this authority to the Commission and Board.

Brian Browne is the Board of Supervisor's appointee to the oversight board,

It's not too surprising Rosenfield "disagreed" with most of the Grand Jury's findings. Had he "agreed," he would be admitting the whistleblower program is a failure, as the Grand Jury tried to explain. Even the *San Francisco Examiner* published an editorial spanking Rosenfield for resorting to "damage-control," rather than restoring public faith in the whistleblower program.

It took CGOBOC seven years to even get around to forming a subcommittee to review whistleblower complaints, despite clear language in the 2003 Prop "C" measure requiring them to investigate all whistleblower complaints. The subtext of CGOBOC's remarks on August 11 is that they may want to reevaluate what their role is in investigating whistleblower complaints. They still don't know what their role is, going on eight years later.

Candidate for Mayor Dennis "The Ultimate Clean-Government Menace" Herrera, and his so-called "public integrity unit," have been missing in action, and haven't lifted a finger in any of these whistleblower and sunshine complaints. Neither has George Gascón's — or his predecessor, Kamala Harris' — public integrity unit lifted a finger.

Is this what Laguna Honda patients — robbed of probable misappropriated funds — or we the voters, deserve by way of an ethical government? So far there have been no consequences of these abuses of government powers.

Monette-Shaw is an open-government accountability advocate, a patient advocate, and a member of California's First Amendment Coalition. Feedback: monette-shaw@westsideobserver.com.

SHARON THE HEALTH / By Sharon Caren



Sun Exposure – Good or Bad?

I’ve always loved the sun because I feel deeply energized when I’m in it. You know, that healthy glow after retiring from a day of fresh air in the sunshine? We haven’t had much of it this year but Indian summer is kicking in.

Over the years, we’ve heard much controversy on the subject. The fact is, sun exposure is necessary because the skin only makes vitamin D in the presence of sunlight. Without vitamin D, diseases like rickets and osteoporosis can result where bones become soft or too brittle. As we age, our skin becomes less efficient at making vitamin D. The governmental guidelines recommend anyone over 65 take a 10mcg vitamin D supplement every day. It also plays a huge part in brain health.

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- Help keep your bones strong and healthy

About UVA and UVB Rays

Ultraviolet light from the sun has two main wavelengths UVA and UVB. UVB is the “good guy” and helps the skin produce vitamin D. UVA is the “bad guy” because it penetrates more deeply into the skin and causes free radical damage. UVA rays are constant during all hours of daylight where UVB waves are low in morning and evening and high at midday.

Most sunscreens block out the “good guy”. This will prevent you from getting the vitamin D benefit from the sun. As I started my research on sunscreens, most all products on the market are full of chemicals that do not support healthy skin. I would not buy a sunscreen containing **dioxybenzone** or **oxybenzone**. These two potentially harmful chemicals are the most powerful free radical generators known to man.

It’s important to find a natural Sunscreen that blocks the UVA only, leaving the UVB to do its work. Dr. Mercola has the safest product I’ve found: Natural Sunscreen with Astaxanthin (an anti-oxidant added) It’s available in SPF

30 or 50. Don’t be alarmed when applied it will remain white until absorbed into the skin. For more information or questions about the sunscreen, you can click on the link below or call 877.985.2695. <http://products.mercola.com/summer-survival-kit/>

Dr. Mercola is an Osteopathic Physician and board-certified in family medicine. He served as the chairman of the family medicine department at St. Alexius Medical Center for five years. He is trained in both traditional and natural medicine.

Only a few foods such as fish oils, eggs, liver and meat fat have the best natural sources of Vitamin D. Some breakfast cereals have vitamin D added but diet alone cannot provide adequate amounts. Vitamin D really isn’t a vitamin. It’s a steroid hormone. Find a natural supplement. A very general dose recommendation for adults is 5000 units. The only way to know exactly is to have your blood tested.

Joint US and Norwegian studies suggest that the benefits of sunlight may outweigh the risk of skin cancer in countries that don’t get many hours of sunshine. The emotional component of living day in and day out with gray, gloomy skies or indoors with artificial lighting can breed depression and anxiety. Some who live under such conditions turn to alcohol or anti-depression drugs.

Protection From UVA

There are two main types of skin cancer. Basal cell carcinoma is the most common, easily treated and not life threatening. Malignant melanoma can be deadly unless it is caught and treated early.

The pure therapeutic grade essential oil of Lavender is the best application I know of if you do experience sunburn. It pulls the heat out as soon as it’s applied. Put it on straight from the bottle. Then use an all-natural lotion afterward such as Aloe Vera to give moisture back to the skin.

The prediction this year is one out of five Californians will get skin cancer in their lifetime. Let’s minimize the risks by following some tips from Kenneth Chao, M.D., board-certified oncologist at Epic Care in the East Bay.

Sun Rules

- **Use a natural sunscreen.** Choose one that offers protection from the UVA rays with an SPF of 15 or higher. Use it every day. UVA rays come through even with cloud cover.
- **Know your skin.** One great defenses against skin cancer is a quick, easy examination you can do yourself. A self-exam once a month helps you recognize any changes in your skin, such as new growths or changes to existing moles. Consult your physician if you notice changes.
- **Skip the tanning salon.** Tanning beds are no safer than

the sun. In fact, they nearly triple your chance of developing melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer.

- **Avoid sunburns at all costs.** Melanoma risk is doubled with five or more sunburns.
- **Invest in protective clothing.** Wear all natural fiber lightweight clothing to cover skin if in the sun for extended periods of time, a wide-brimmed hat or cap with a visor, and sunglasses that offer UV protection.

Most importantly, have fun and enjoy yourself. Do what you love and you’ll live with vitality. That’s always the best medicine!

Contact me 650.359.6579 or email Sharon@sharonthehealth.com with any questions or comments. Also visit www.sharonthehealth.com “The views expressed are those of the writer. If you have any questions about your health, you should always consult with your doctor.”

Founder of Project Open Hand Dies

Ruth Brinker, Founder of Project Open Hand, passed away peacefully at Eden Villa Assisted Living Center in San Francisco.

Ruth was born on May 1, 1922 in South Dakota and moved to San Francisco in the mid-1950s. She died after a series of strokes and the effects of vascular illness.

In 1985, having retired from a career in food services, Ruth heard about a neighbor who died of AIDS. She was shocked to discover that malnutrition was as much the cause of her neighbor’s death as the illness itself. She realized that many others living with AIDS were in the same situation and she knew she could do something. Ruth began preparing meals in her kitchen and delivered them to seven people. That number quickly grew and volunteers came to help her cook and deliver hot, nourishing meals all over San Francisco to people living alone and struggling with a devastating illness. “I didn’t think I was doing anything special,” Ruth said. “I did what anyone would have done under those circumstances.” With this simple act of kindness, repeated day after day with compassion and care, Project Open Hand was born.

When Ruth delivered her meals, she took the time to talk with each person and help each feel loved and cared for. For Ruth, it was more than nutritious, dependable food. It was ‘meals with love.’

Commemorative Service: Monday, September 12th at 5:30pm in the North Light Court of City Hall.



Meenakshi Jain, MD
INTERNAL MEDICINE



Robert Napoles, MD
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Exercise for the Brain

By Carol Kocivar

I can still remember the day I went to visit my daughter's first grade classroom.

I saw an empty desk just outside the open classroom door.

Hmmm. I wonder which child has that spot?

This was about the same time my daughter had gleefully announced to the whole class that her mommy had just turned 14.

40 ... 14.. Close enough. I like that new math. It was going to come in handy one day.

When I entered the class, I saw my daughter standing ...happily talking with some other children.

But... I couldn't find her desk.

You guessed it. That was her desk outside the room!

Time for a quick conference.

What was going on?

It turns out my daughter was active..very active

Her teacher had figured out that if she let her sit by the open door, just outside the room, my daughter could let off a little steam by walking over to the desk to get her work done and then come back into the room.

I was reminded of this as I spoke recently with Dr. John Ratey, a Harvard professor, who has done some fascinating research on the relationship between exercise and academic achievement.

This is fascinating not only because it helps parents and teachers understand how children learn but because of its implications for how we can improve our schools.

According to Dr. Ratey, exercise is the best way to optimize brain function.

"What we know from our work in neuroscience is that exercise is a very potent energizer of the brain. It stimulates much of the brain function and stimulates brain growth."

Here are some resources:

PTA Healthy lifestyles pta.org/healthy_lifestyles.asp

Let's Move www.letsmove.gov/

Shape Up SF sfgov3.org/index.aspx?page=1007

John Ratey Spark sparklinglife.org/



And that — he says—translates into better academic performance, fewer suspensions, and fewer absences.

Does anyone hear some themes that might have an impact on the achievement gap?

According to Dr. Ratey, exercise affects the brain systems and makes the attention system better, the memory system better. It improves motivation and decreases impulsivity, thus decreasing discipline problems.

"It helps better than anything else we know to boost the development of brand new nerve cells every day."

"We have to change the culture of our schools that says the best way to learn is to drill drill drill."

Suggestions for schools from Dr. Ratey:

- Implement 20 minutes of vigorous activity every morning for all students.
- Create brain breaks during the day. For example, give students four to five minutes of exercise by their desks to get their heart rates up and make their brains work harder. (Dance, calisthenics, etc.)

"The big currency we are dealing with is not money but time."

Want more information about exercise, academic performance and healthy lifestyle?



SECOND THOUGHTS / By Jack Kaye

Ridding The World of Bad Words

Lately, certain words usually only referred to by using their first letter have been identified for elimination. What these words represent and the effect they have on people have made these forbidden words unworthy of human utterance.

There is the "N" word that is used extensively in America's most famous novel, "Huckleberry Finn." Since this word appears more than 200 times in Mark Twain's book, many schools refused to let their students read it. Recently, a new edition was published substituting the "n" word with the word "slave," considered a much more tolerable label for human beings.

During a recent governor's race, someone in the background used the "w" word about a candidate during a telephone call made by her opponent. The word was meant to highlight this female candidate's willingness to do anything for money. The woman feigned great offense to her new title in such a way that the name seemed too good to describe her. She claimed that the word was an affront to every woman in the state. But was it a sexist slur? Should it no longer be used?

Now there is a movement to get people to stop using the "r" word out of consideration for people with learning challenges. Using this word with any reference should be stopped, immediately, advocates urge.

And then there is the word so bad that I don't even use its letter. It is the one between "e" and "g." While it describes what most people seem to greatly enjoy, it is considered unspeakable. There is now a record using the full word in its title and throughout the song. Is this pushing artistic freedom too far? Can this word followed by the second person singular be used at least when listening to a terribly dishonest politician lie on T.V.? (I must admit that at times I get so upset at disingenuous congressmen that I sometimes yell out "letter between 'e' and 'g' to your second person singular!" while watching them on T.V. I can only hope that nobody has heard me.)

What other words should be limited to just their first initial, if mentioned at all?

Surely all words that can be deemed racial or ethnic slurs could be banned or limited to their first initial. We could have the "J" word, the "k" word (the worse, though lower case, version of the prior letter's word), the "C" word (or the Ch if allowed two letters), the "P" word (all the jokes would be "P" jokes) and so on.

Then there are the words that denigrate character, like the "w" word that was so politicized recently. There could be the initialization of the "I" word for people who don't speak the truth, the "p" word for those who appear too gluttonous, and the "g" word for those of us who like airing the laundry of our friends and acquaintances.

But then we come to words like the "r" word. These words add insult to injury. They help us point out and ridicule the physical or mental shortcomings of others. Words like "stupid," "ugly," "moron," "dumb," "homely," "short,"

"stubby," "coward," "dimwit," and "slug," could be forever banned because of the hurt they cause those given these labels which are frontal assaults on their self-esteem and feelings of adequacy.

There is another solution, one that would save countless adjectives that could be reconditioned and used for peaceful purposes. Rather than limiting the kind of words available for use, why not work on creating and nurturing a culture that has such understanding and compassion that such words lose their negative meaning? Not only would we be beyond even considering expressing vulgarity or insensitivity, the victims of even the then-very occasional use of these terms would see them only as sad reflections of the speakers, and have compassion for their ignorance and apparent feelings of inadequacy.

But can a culture change? This question has risen in the minds of many watching the events in the Middle East and Northern Africa. Can these cultures change what seems to be their collective DNA? Can tribal nations come together as one people? Can education and exposure to the civilized world help them radically change their brutal attitudes, beliefs and behaviors?

The same could be asked about ours. Can we wean ourselves away from the violence and greed that drives some of our worst behavior? Can the elite learn to take less and give more? Can we spread intelligence and consideration to all corners and all aspects of our culture? Can we come together to end poverty and its resultant crime in our land? Can we come to learn that bigger is not always better and that more is sometimes less? Can our politicians stop their petty squabbling and partisan rhetoric and try their best to solve our country's pressing problems?

I think that the answer is "yes" for us and an almost "maybe" for some of the other cultures mentioned. Germany and Japan changed dramatically after World War II. I think that we are seeing that happening in China and India. Even in the Middle East there is the beginning of a recognition that their way doesn't work anymore and probably never did. It will take them a while to realize that first they must stop subjugating women, even if that makes the men feel even more inadequate. Men there will not be free of their tyrants until they stop being tyrants to their women.

We will never ban enough bad words to make all our people feel that their self esteem is not under assault. But we can work harder to ban ignorance and perhaps, to give all our people reason to have high self esteem, making using negative terms against others unimaginable.

Feedback: kaye@westsideobserver.com

Public/Private (Cont. from p. 7)

January 5, 2010, the same day I sent a letter to the District Attorney's Office questioning the legality of the portion of the 2006 Ordinance that delegated Board approval for all future City Fields gifts to the RPD General Manager.

That same day, City Hall insider Alex Clemens also began lobbying for the City Fields Foundation gifts at Mission Playground and Beach Chalet. Despite thirty reported contacts, Mr. Clemens apparently could not remember the name or address of his client. In official Ethics Commission records for 1st quarter 2010, Mr. Clemens lists a fictitious entity, The Fisher Foundation, as his client. The address given by Mr. Clemens, One Maritime Plaza, is a building with hundreds of suites but Mr. Clemens did not give a suite number. The phone number Mr. Clemens gives is for the Doris and Donald Fisher Fund, a philanthropic foundation devoted to educational reforms.

The Foundation and the Department have clearly gone to great lengths to conceal this partnership from public view. General Manager Ginsburg and Permits and Reservations Manager Dana Ketcham continue to refuse to provide the Budget Analyst and the public with the legally required quarterly fiscal lease reports detailing exactly who is using these fields and how much they are paying. The privatization of San Francisco's public park space is not a myth. It has just been a closely guarded secret.

Anmarie Mabbutt is a San Francisco attorney

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OPERA IN THE PARK • SHARON MEADOW-GOLDEN GATE PARK • SUN SEPT 11 • 1:30PM • FREE

On Sunday, September 11, 2011 at 1:30 p.m., the Company's annual free San Francisco Opera in the Park concert at Sharon Meadow in Golden Gate Park will be a special musical program commemorating the tenth anniversary of September 11, 2001. OPERA AT THE BALLPARK Free live simulcast of Turandot at AT&T Park Sunday, September 25, at 2:00 p.m., the Company's sixth free live simulcast at AT&T Park and its first matinee simulcast. Renowned artist and designer David Hockney's striking production of Puccini's masterwork will be conducted by Nicola Luisotti and sung soprano Irène Theorin (Turandot), Adler Fellow Leah Crocetto (Liu), tenor Marco Berti (Calaf) and bass Raymond Aceto (Timur). Simulcast live from the War Memorial Opera House to AT&T Park's high-definition scoreboard, last year's Opera at the Ballpark simulcast of Aida drew an unprecedented crowd of 32,000 people, many experiencing opera for the first time.

EVERY • SUNDAY MORNING

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

EVERY • TUESDAY NIGHT QUE SYRAH

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.

Tapas Every Thur & Fri | 5:30-9 pm | 230 West Portal Avenue 731.7000

EVERY • THURSDAY-BALLROOM DANCING

Social Ballroom Dance classes for couples - 6 lessons for \$70. per couple. Forest Hill Christian Church, 250 Laguna Honda Blvd. 661-2746.

EVERY • FRIDAY NIGHT

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

SAT • FREE FISHING DAY

3 Sat Sept 3 | All day | Two days per year, you can fish without a sport fishing license. Free Fishing Days provide a great, low-cost way to give fishing a try. # North Lake Merced: 105 acres. Stocked with catchable trout. Daily fishing access permit costs \$3.00. # South Lake Merced: 203 acres. Stocked spring, summer, and fall with catchable trout.

SAT • AUTUMN MOON FESTIVAL

3 Sat Sept 3 | 10am-5pm | 7th Annual Autumn Moon Festival on Irving St. 22nd–25th Ave.



THU • POET BIN RAMKE

8 Thu Sept 8 | 7pm | The award-winning poet reading from *Tendril and Theory of Mind* BookShop West Portal. 80 West Portal Ave. Info: (415) 564-8080.

SAT-SUN • CHOCOLATE FESTIVAL

10 Sat-Sun Sep 10-11 | 12pm | the 16th Annual Ghirardelli Square Chocolate Festival. Chef demonstrations from chocolatiers, cupcake bakers and mixologists, ice-cream sundae eating contests, live music FREE Ghirardelli Sq 900 N. Point

SUN • OPERA IN THE PARK

1 Sun Sept 11 | 1:30pm | See lead story FREE / Come early, bring a picnic-NO tall lawn chairs.

MON • RUTH BRINKER REMEMBERED

1 Mon Sept 12 | 5:30pm | Project Open Hand founder Ruth Brinker memorial service: North Light Court, City Hall.v

TUE • TARAVAL PUBLIC SAFETY

1 Tue Sept 13 | 7pm | Captain Curtis Lum, Taraval Station Public Safety Community Meeting, the 3rd Tuesday of each month at Taraval Station 2354 24th Ave.

TUE • AUTHOR JULIE OTSUKA

1 Thu Sept 15 | 7pm | The author will read from *The Buddha in the Attic* BookShop West Portal. A story of Japanese mail-order brides in America before World War II 80 West Portal Ave. Info: (415) 564-8080.

SUNSET/PARKSIDE NERT

1 Thu Sep 15 | 7pm | Neighborhood Emergency Response Team, www.sfgov.org/site/sfnert meets on the 3rd Thursday of each month at Incarnation Episcopal Church, 29th Avenue near Noriega

THU • SF JAZZ FESTIVAL

1 Thu Sep 15–Dec 18 | 7:30pm | 29th Annual Jazz Festival at various locations. Info: www.sfjazz.org - (866) 920-5299 \$20.00 - \$95.00

SAT • OMI FAMILY FESTIVAL

1 Sat Sept 17 | 11am–4pm | 11th Annual Festival, Faxon Ave. btw De Montfort & Ocean Ave. Info: www.omi-cpp.org



TUE • AUTHOR MIRIAM GOODMAN

1 Tue June 19 | 7pm | Poets Judy Halebsky, Matthew Zapruder and Troy Jollimore will read from their latest works. 80 West Portal Ave. Info: (415) 564-8080.I

TUE • TARAVAL PUBLIC SAFETY

1 Tue July 19 | 7pm | Captain Curtis Lum, Taraval Station Public Safety Community Meeting, the 3rd Tuesday of each month at Taraval Station 2354 24th Ave.

TUE • 3 POETS

2 Tue Sept 20 | 7pm | Poets Judy Halebsky, Matthew Zapruder and Troy Jollimore will read from their latest works at BookShop West Portal.

THU • NERT INTENSIVE TRAINING

2 Thu Sep 22 | 8:30am-5:30pm | 2-day Intensive Neighborhood Emergency Response Team, (www.sfgov.org/site/sfnert) 7 Hills Conf. Ctr. 800 Font Blvd@ Lake Merced Blvd. Info: 970-2022

TUE • AUTHOR ELEANOR BURKE

2 Thu Sep 22 | 7pm | Artist and author Burke will discuss her new book *Sketching San Francisco's Neighborhoods* BookShop West Portal.

SUN • OPERA AT THE BALLPARK

2 Sun Sep 25 | 2pm | Free live simulcast of Turandot at AT&T Park See above.

SAT • WOTPCC MAYOR'S DEBATE

1 Sat Oct 1 | 9:30am–12:pm, St. Stephen's Parish Hall, 473 Eucalyptus Dr. Come meet the candidates and hear them speak: candidates' forum on the Westside. INFO: www.WestofTwinPeaks.org

Got a local event? editor@westsideobserver.com

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Irving St. Between 22nd and 25th



1945

Sunset Dist. from 26th & Quintara St. to Ocean

Sunset Dist. from 26th & Quintara St. to ocean 1945. By permission of SF History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

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

Sudoku-fun!

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 so that each of the numbers 1 to 9 appears exactly once in each row, column and block.

Answer: The answer appears below..

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

Phyllis' Findings / Phyllis Sherman



A few bits and pieces to report... I looked on Craigslist to find a plumber/handyman who could install a new food waste disposer after my good friends at Glen Park Hardware suggested I call Cole Hardware on Mission Street. The folks at Cole Hardware couldn't have been nicer. They had a large selection of ACE Disposers and suggested I get one that's guaranteed for 5 years. (3/4 horsepower) and said that they give senior citizens 10% discount on most purchases. When I told them that last Tuesday was my birthday, they said that in that case, it would be 40% discount! What a deal! They sent me their interesting newsletter and the variety of items they offer are worth considering when you're planning to make a hardware purchase.

They suggested I call O'Grady Plumbing, who were also quite nice, but when I asked about charges for installation was told, "we never quote prices over the phone but we'll tell you when we get there." That seemed counterproductive, but they sent someone over and the plumber told me it would cost \$238 to install the disposal, about 3X the price of the disposal. When I asked why it costs so much, he responded, "Do you realize that you live in one of the most expensive cities in the country?" Like I didn't know...but that's a reason? Needless to say I promptly contacted plumbers on Craigslist and a less pricey individual is due to show up tomorrow. That Craigslist is one of the best things that ever happened in the Bay Area (and the rest of the world.) I recently received a brochure from the Diamond Certified Directory. In it they list everyone from Auto Body people to Window Contractors. I don't know what the advertisers in there pay for the listing, but it must be pretty hefty because when I called one of the plumbers listed in there, they also quoted a very high rate to do the work. When you need a handyman or any other service person, check out CL and you'll have a great variety of options.

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. Residency requires little or no specific training in Geriatrics and there needs to be more to incorporate this training into all areas of medicine. I wonder what medical specialty is considered more "glamorous?" Obstetrics? Pediatrics? In-Vitro Specialty? At least it's the "beginning" of something. Got any ideas? Let me know...maybe I'll switch careers.

On the entertainment front, I ordered the Chronicle's new TV WEEKLY and have had nothing but problems receiving it. It didn't show up in the Sunday SF Chronicle for several weeks and when I called, they said they'd put one in the mail...it never made it for over a week. I don't get the Chronicle every day so if I want to know what's on TV on a particular night, I'm out of luck. The SF Chronicle in general leaves much to be desired. I do subscribe to the NY Times daily and to the Wall Street Journal (which has the largest circulation in the world) but neither publication lists the San Francisco TV programs. So if I want to know what's on TV on a special night or time, I just have to forget about television and read a REAL paper, or even better, a book.

I went to see BILLY ELLIOT at the Orpheum Theatre before it ended and was somewhat disappointed. The dancing was impressive, especially by five young "Billys" who take turns being the lead, and also are understudies for the role. All the other children in the cast were also exceptional dancers. The sound was a bit of a problem as the cockney accents were mostly difficult to follow and with the blaring orchestra and the pounding dancing, I was glad when the full three hours were over.

Feedback: phyllis@westsideobserver.com

BRAIN FUD

A Name Train is a puzzle where each name is connected together like box cars in a train. You are given the first car (the Engine) and the last car (the caboose), and you have to fill in the car or cars in between. Every two consecutive cars will form a name of a person or character. Joan [] Li. The answer is Joan Jet Li (Joan Jet-Female singer, Jet Li-Actor) Ready? OK here goes:

1. Matthew [] Mason 2. Bruce [] Majors 3. Larry [] [] Fonda 4. Ashley [] [] Mandela 5. Rick [] [] [] Luther

1. Matthew Perry Mason
2. Bruce Lee Majors
3. Larry King Henry Fonda
4. Ashley Judd Nelson Mandela
5. Rick James Dean Martin Luther

Answer

Now At the Movies • By Don Lee Miller

CAPTAIN AMERICA: THE FIRST AVENGER

Wimpy Steve Rogers: Chris Evans can't get accepted by a draft board when he really wants to serve. Dr. Abraham Erskine: Stanley Tucci finds him the ideal candidate to test a new drug that could make him a super hero. Presto! He is Captain America with muscles and height and superpowers. His boss, Peggy Carter: Lesley Atwell, an attractive redhead, finds him drawn to her and she to him as he wins European WWII battles with a high Nazi casualty list. His titanium shield is all he needs for protection and armament. He reports to Col. Chester Phillips: Tommy Lee Jones. Phillips' sidekick is Nick Fury: Samuel L. Jackson. Capt. America and his team even invade the Nazi's secret hideaway and take on his nemesis, the Red Skull: Hugo Weaving. Violent action. Profanity.

GLEE 3-D

This is a 3-D concert movie in which some of the TV cast performs before a live audience while being filmed. The singers give their fans numbers that they are familiar with and can sing along. As would be expected wherever their tour bus moves around the country, they hype show memorabilia at each stop. They deliver high energy entertainment.

HARRY POTTER AND THE DEATHLY HALLOWS—PART TWO

This is the one that Harry Potter fans have been waiting for, where all the loose ends are tied together and he wins his battle with Lord Voldemort: Ralph Fiennes. That's not telling anything that you wouldn't expect since the hero must always win; it's the how he does it that is of interest. His pals, Ron: Rupert Grint and Hermione: Emma Watson also search for Voldemort's three still living Horcruxes (which insure his immortality) and must be destroyed to kill the Dark Lord. Once Voldemort discovers what the heroic trio is doing he unleashes his deadliest weapons. Series regulars are given less than three minutes of screen time each: Professor Minerva McGonagall: Maggie Smith, Prof. Albus Dumbledore: Michael Gambon, Prof. Horace Slughorn: Jim Broadbent; Remus Lupin: David Thewlis; Cirián Hinds: Abelforth Dumbledore; Molly Weasley: Julie Walters; Helena Ravenclaw: Kelly Macdonald; Ollivander: John Hurt; Prof. Pomona Sprout: Miriam Margoyles; and Madam Pomfrey: Gemma Jones; and students: Luna Lovegood: Evanna Lynch and Ginny Weasley: Bonnie Wright. Harry gets his first screen kiss. The baddies include: Prof. Severus Snape: Alan Rickman; Beatrix

Lastrange: Helena Bonham Carter; and Sirius Black: Gary Oldman. How many of those did you miss? I've only included actors who had leading roles in other films! There is a short epilogue of the characters later in life with their children. The world-wise gross as of my deadline: over \$900-million. Not to be missed! 3-D. Action violence. Frightening images.

THE HELP

Skeeter: Emma Stone, recent college graduate and liberal writer, wants to tell the employment tales from the side of black maid-nannies. The two black maids she persuades to tell their stories: Aibileen: Viola Davis and Minny: Octavia Spencer wrestle with their consciences. Minny has THE scene of the film: the day after she is fired she bakes a special conciliatory pie to present to her former employer, Hilly Holbrook: Bryce Dallas Howard. After half a slice has been eaten, Minny tells her: "You-ah just ate my sh*tt!" This is a winning adaptation of Kathryn Stockett's best-selling novel about black maids working for white socialites and the friendship that develops within the threesome as they break unwritten codes of behavior in small-town Mississippi in the 1960s. Profanity. Off-screen violence.

RISE OF THE PLANET OF THE APES

Another film made partially in San Francisco. Yeah! While searching for a cure for Alzheimer's for his father, Charles Rodman: John Lithgow, scientist Will: James Franco discovers a brain improvement drug for the pet ape that they have raised, Caesar: Andy Serkis (in another brilliant performance). When Caesar bites off a coupla fingers of a neighbor, he is housed at the Landon facility, owned by John Landon: Brian Cox. Dodge Landon: Tom Felton, his son, works with the apes in their cages and is a narsty youth who abuses the animals. Will's love interest, Caroline, Freida Pinto, works at the SF Zoo. Caesar becomes the Caesar of all the apes as they escape and take over the Golden Gate Bridge and Muir Woods. To learn how they do it, go see the film. Director Rupert Wyatt and writers Rick Jaffa and Amanda Silver worked from Pierre Boulle's novel for this entertaining tale. Some violence. Mild profanity.



Feedback: miller@westsideobserver.com

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

AMERICAN BUFFALO

David Mamet's *American Buffalo* Francisco Actor's Theatre salon tragic-comedy, considered one of Mamet's best written plays, revolves around three petty crooks' attempt to rob a client's coin collection. Will their friendship be sacrificed to their so-called business partnership involving the robbery? In his Chicago Resale Junk Shop, Don mentors and teaches the ropes on how to become a crook to his young gofer Bobby. But Teach advises them not to mix friendship with business. After Bobby returns that evening with an American Buffalo nickel he bought from another collector, he offers to sell it to Donny. But how did Bobby get the coin? Did he commit the robbery, possibly with Fletcher, whom they are awaiting to accomplish the robbery with Teach? Suspicious of Bobby, Teach beats him up and, angry over Donny's protectiveness of Bobby, throws Donny's shop into shambles. Donny is mortified but he will put all back together when they return from bringing Bobby to the hospital.

The audience is left to resolve whether Bobby did betray his bosses and what the playwright is attempting to convey about friendship and business. Keith Phillips sensitively directs his brother Chris Phillips, who plays Teach as the tortured, tempestuous crook with an iron will to succeed in his criminal schemes. Randy Hurst plays Donny, the mentor and fatherly image for young Bobby (Vlad Sayenko), who creates a docile kid. In this crowded Resale Junk Shop all three characters admirably handle a highly verbal text with individual expressive body movements establishing their characterizations. Teach's irate suspicious nature has him constantly bobbing up and gesturing with each word as he sits on stage right, the subtext of his angry words manifesting in his abrupt, bellicose movements his pugnacious beliefs that all humans are f**ked up and everyone is a s**t ass. Donny, the more giving character, remains calm and relaxed in his chair center stage, and Bobby sits slightly upstage left, timid, tense and rigid in his efforts to comprehend his bosses' schemes. Sets by James Baldock and Jen Welch offer a cluttered junk shop with piled up props that take on a dramatic role of their own when they are violently thrown about by Teach. Costumes by Carole Robinson, lights by Rachel Klyce, and sound by James Baldock add to the believability of the action. The idolatry of money symbolized by the *American Buffalo* nickel is at the basis of the relationship between these three petty robbers. In this worship of

money, is the playwright portraying a possible breakdown of the human value of friendship? Only momentarily because after the dramatic climax of Bobby's beating and the wrecking of the Resale Junk Shop, the three characters' shift their concerns to Bobby's well-being and the reestablishing of the Junk Shop. In this vigorous and meaningful revival of the *American Buffalo*, due to the gripping tour de force acting and directing by the Phillips brothers and their accompanying cast members, the Actors' Theatre offers a forceful tribute to the Mamet masterpiece. Through Sept. 3, Actors Theatre SF. Info 345-1287 or www.actors theatresf.org for upcoming productions. Dr. Annette Lust

THE COMPLETE HISTORY OF AMERICA

It was a beautiful night. The audience entered the theatre to Billie Cox's patriotic music and were greeted by an ingenious set by Mark Robinson: a large poster-board covering the stage showing images highlighting events from 1492, 1776, 1861, 1942, 1952, 1969 and 2011. Directed by Robert Currier and produced by Leslie Schisgall Currier and featuring just three actors, *The Complete History of America (abridged)* is a roller coaster ride taking us through the entire course of American history with brilliant comedic genius. As you can imagine, it is a wild ride with actors Darren Bridgett, Cassidy Brown and Mick Mize. The actors rely on accents, hats and wigs thrown on over patriotic clothes designed by Michael Berg, plastic vegetables, pasta and Super Soaker water guns (no matter where you sit you might get wet). One of the highlights of the show was showing rejected flags made by Betsy Ross and her sister. A big hit was a song and dance vaudeville style of Lewis and Clark as they told the latest jokes of 1805. Act I ended with a large timeline banner carried by the three actors throughout the audience in the spirit of fun. Act II opened with World War I to the music of "Over There." This is when the audience really gets sprayed with water by the men in the trenches. *The Complete History of America (abridged)* requires the impeccable

timing shown to advantage by the three talented actors. Robert Currier shows much imagination and style in his inventive direction. If you are looking for an evening of good fun, *The Complete History of America (abridged)* is worth your time. This show received a standing ovation! *The Complete History of America (abridged)* continues with *Macbeth* through Sept 25. For tickets, 499-4488 or go online at www.marinshakespeare.org. Next at Marin Shakespeare: *Shakespeare's The Tempest* directed by Jon Tracy August 27-Sept 25 Flora Lynn Isaacson

TABLE MANNERS

Ross Valley Players ends its 81st season with *Table Manners* by Alan Ayckbourn. Three couples are involved on this particular July weekend in a Victorian house not far from London in 1973. They are all related either by blood or marriage except for Tom, the veterinarian (Christopher Hammond). Table Manners introduces us to the characters, starting with the overworked Annie, the unmarried daughter of the family who cares for her ill, but never seen mother who lies bedridden upstairs. Annie has been involved for about ten years with Tom, a shy veterinarian. He cannot bring himself to pop the question and prefers the company of his four-legged friends. Reg, Annie's brother, is a real estate agent who is very involved with his work. He is married to the stern, moralistic Sarah (Pamela Ciochetti) who continually sets about preserving order and preventing much fun from taking place, like seeing that Annie does not go off on a clandestine weekend with Norman. Then there is Norman himself, an assistant librarian,

somewhat silly, but possessing an irresistible charm. Director Robert Wilson directs all of the proceedings with a great deal of humor. Associate Director Judy Holmes, being British-born, coached the cast with impeccable British accents. Both brought out wonderful performances from the talented cast. Monique Sims stands out as a frowsy and brusque Annie and blossoms into a real beauty. Pamela Ciochetti is a thin-lipped controlling Sarah, Robin Schild is a passive and clownish Reg, Christopher Hammond is a slow thinking and stoical Tom, Robyn Wiley is a brittle and near-sighted Ruth, but Joseph Hoeber steals the show in a clownish and magnetic performance as Norman. Set Designer David Apple built the charming set, a replica of an aging British country house. Michael A. Berg designed the very appropriate costumes. Cheers to Robert Wilson and Judy Holmes and their talented cast for making *Table Manners* so much fun for us to enjoy! Next at Ross Valley Players: *Marc Camoletti's Don't Dress for Dinner*. Reservations 415-456-9555 or rossvalleyplayers.com Flora Lynn Isaacson



Flora Lynn Isaacson

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Real Travel By Sergio Nibbi



Scotch and Soda

To me Scotch has always been a late night drink; add a splash of soda with crystal clear ice cubes and listen to them gently clinking on the side of the glass. Mix in some soft jazz and finish with a muted trombone wailing in the distance. Dave Guard wrote the lyrics and the Kingston Trio left it for all of us to enjoy: “Scotch and soda, mud in your eye. Baby, do I feel high, oh, me, oh, my. Do I feel high.”



Recently a very dear and generous friend gave me a bottle of Bruichladdich scotch, a priceless gift entrusted to my inquisitive taste buds. My immediate reaction was to pop the cork and pour a drink but my curiosity got the better of me; a little research was in order. Start with a 16 year old single malt scotch, age it in discarded oak barrels from Château d’Yquem too old to perform their magic and let your imagination soar. As my fingers did the research on this centuries-old distillery flung out on the edge of the wild Atlantic Ocean, my mind drifted back to 1971, our first visit to London and Wales with our young family. Some close friends from San Rafael had invited us to stay with them for a few weeks while they were exchanging teaching assignments for a year with a British couple. Their new home was in Whaley Bridge, Derbyshire. After a pleasant train ride from London we met our friends in Stratford upon Avon where we enjoyed an authentic Shakespeare production of the “Merchant of Venice”. After a short train ride we arrived in Whaley Bridge, a quaint little town of Disneyland shops and stores. As we settled in, the cows in the back pasture nuzzled up to our children while the chickens in the rear yard pecked at the fertile soil. Driving on the wrong side of the road was a real adventure and a first for all of us. Visiting the village and meeting the locals was a treat, especially meeting

Andrew, the “High Class Butcher”, as proclaimed on his storefront window. But the biggest treat was listening to our friends with their newly-acquired British accent. After a few days of home cooking our friends surprised us with a visit to Ruthen Castle, a magical Welsh hotel with medieval roots dating back to the day of Edward I. The biggest surprise for us was that we were going to be the Duke and Duchess for the evening. We all sat down at the old wooden tables with only a knife with which to eat, no forks, no spoons. Before the meal it became my responsibility to say grace for the hungry crowd and I’m sure that my Catholic rendition was not an impairment to the multinational gathering. Fortunately, we still have a photo of the event to enjoy after all these years. On the way home I was allowed to drive the hour plus trip back to the house, yes, driving on the wrong side of the road. A day trip to visit the Greenwich Observatory allowed us to set our watches to the second. After a few more days with our friends we headed back to London for more sightseeing and then to Venice, Milano, Lucca, Pisa and ending in Monaco. Looking back, it was a real adventure going to Europe for six weeks with three young children. As Shakespeare would have said, “All’s Well that Ends Well,” and so it did. But looking back at our youthful innocence and energy we know that it was a good thing that we did it while we could. At my age the best I can do is to pop that cork and enjoy the scotch while listening to some smooth jazz and let my mind drift back to the Isle of Islay in Scotland where in 1881 William Harvey and his two younger brothers decided to try their hands at distilling. Yes, it is enjoyable and to all of you, “here’s to your good health.”

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Letters to the Editor (Cont. from p. 4)

a Whistleblower Complaint we filed on 9/18/2009 Two months before we filed our complaint, the City decided to award another contract to Davis Ja & Associates - for \$1.9 million, to assess CBHS Substance Abuse Treatment Services. Our potential conflict of interests complaint applied to this contract as well. It took 2 years - and public pressure, but today City Controller Ben Rosenfield told me that the second contract has been revoked, and that the remaining \$600,000 will not be paid to Davis Ja & Associates because of the conflict of interests we identified. The remainder of the work will be completed “in-house”. Mr. Rosenfield also informed the Whistleblower Program oversight committee (CGOBOC) that there will be some “personnel action”. However, former CBHS Director Dr. Robert Cabaj resigned in May 2011. I am grateful to my former LHH and UAPD colleagues who took a stand on this issue. Derek Kerr, MD Thank you Dr. Kerr, and please see Patrick Monette-Shaw’s full report on p. 5 -Editor.

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From the Border Hilary Gordon

LATE SUMMER GARDENS,
SUMMER-DRY CHALLENGES

For summer dry gardens, August begins to separate the fabulous gardens from the rest. It's relatively easy to make a garden gorgeous in the late winter, spring, and early summer. There are a multitude of plants to choose from, all of which thrive in the cool moist soils and sunny warm days between rains. But by August, our foggy season is well advanced, and plants have already suffered through weeks of cool moist air and warm dry soil. This is the opposite of what most plants need. And there's nothing ahead but more of the same.

Most San Francisco gardens have a big let-down at this time of year, when unhealthy plants and spent flowers compete visually with the few that are still blooming. But there are a few simple tricks of the trade which will allow



Salvia

you to rejuvenate your garden this August, and allow you to look forward to the late summer and fall garden in future years.

First and foremost, good garden design calls for a sequence of bloom, with new plants coming into their first flush of bloom in each season. There are not as many choices in summer dry gardens of plants just now starting to bloom, but the ones we have can be spectacular. Here are a few choice plants that are coming into bloom now at the Garden for the Environment, helping us keep the foggy doldrums away.

Glossy abelia (Abelia grandiflora) is a graceful, arching shrub with an open habit. Its shiny foliage has a reddish cast at the growing tips, which echoes the burgundy bracts holding the pendulous pink flowers. A tough performer, Abelia can take quite a bit of shade and dryness and still look lovely at this time of year as it begins to bloom. The arching shape of this plant can be maintained by pruning out one-third of the oldest canes each year, cutting them right down to the ground, to stimulate new canes breaking out at the base.

Lion's tail (Leonotis leonurus) is a big, strong upright shrub and a vertical accent in the back of the border. It is just now beginning to open its dramatic, fuzzy orange flowers which grow in whorls up each vigorous stem. A big bright statement for late summer and fall, Lion's tail also attracts hummingbirds and butterflies.

Many different sages (Salvias) from the littlest groundcover to eight-foot shrubs covered with bright flowers are either in full bloom or just now starting at the GFE. My personal favorite is Salvia mexicana "Limelight" which is at its best now, with bright blue tubular flowers blooming out of lime-green bracts, a dramatic color combo that explodes visually. Like other salvias, this one attracts hummingbirds.

Here is the big challenge for summer-dry gardeners at this time of year. It is a terrible time to buy and plant new plants, but now is the time nurseries have late-summer blooming plants in stock. Ideally, planting time for summer-dry gardens is in fall, when soils are still warm

but the first rains are falling. Second best is early spring, with several rainy months still ahead. The worst possible time is now, with soils completely dried out and several months ahead without rain. As a result, many home gardeners have gardens well stocked with winter and spring blooming plants and very few late summer/fall blooming plants that have survived from previous years.

Even plants that are well-suited to dry summer soils can't survive if planted from a container into a dry garden when in full bloom. So to get late summer blooming plants established requires extra attention from the gardener. If you plant a beautifully blooming sage this week or next, it will need a generous planting hole, several times the size of the root ball of your new plant. The hole should be amended and watered so there is improved, moist soil all around and under the new plant's roots. Your newly-planted youngster will need plenty of extra watering this summer. A plant that usually prefers a dryish soil and performs best with weekly watering or less, may need to be watered every day or every other day, just for this first summer. After several weeks you can begin letting the plant go a little drier between watering, but do not let it wilt. The extra effort now will reward you with a plant that will thrive and surprise your garden with late summer bloom for years to come.

Having the right plants in your garden for late summer color is only half the battle. The other half is tidying up the parts of the garden which were so lovely a



Salvia mexicana "Limelight"

few months ago. Many older San Francisco gardens feature camellias, rhododendrons, and azaleas, all of which may be covered with faded, brown flowers at this time of year. Even gardens with a more modern plant palette probably have many plants covered with spent flowers. Deadheading, or cutting off the faded flowers, is an important part of garden care at this time of year.

We grow ornamental garden plants for the beauty of the blossoms. But for the plant, the blossoms are just a means to an end. They attract pollinators with their colors and fragrance, and once the flowers fade, the serious business of ripening seeds begins. Most of your plant's energy at this time of year is going into the seeds, unless you remove the faded flowers to prevent seed formation. If you do so,



Abelia grandiflora one of the many late summer blooms at Garden for the Environment

the plant will put its extra energy into other tasks such as growing a stronger root system, a sturdier immune system to fight off pests and diseases, storing energy in woody tissue, and last, but not least, into forming buds for next year's flowers.

You will also be glad you did from a visual perspective. Deadheading can be tedious, but when you step back and see your newly groomed plants, it will be just as though you washed their faces and combed their hair. They will look sweetly fresh, and instead of distracting the eye with their forlorn disheveled look, they will step into the background and allow other parts of the garden that are lovely now to step forward.

Even with the fog and dry soils, our summer gardens can be beautiful and appealing. If you need a little extra inspiration, step over to the Garden for the Environment (7th and Lawton) and see how lovely and varied the late summer garden can be in San Francisco. If you come on a Wednesday or Saturday, you are likely to find us working there, ready to answer all your questions about sustainable garden practices in a summer-dry climate. Happy gardening, and may many hummingbirds visit your salvias!

Hilary Gordon is Sustainable Landscape Education Manager at the GFE. 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. Garden for the Environment is at 7th Avenue and Lawton



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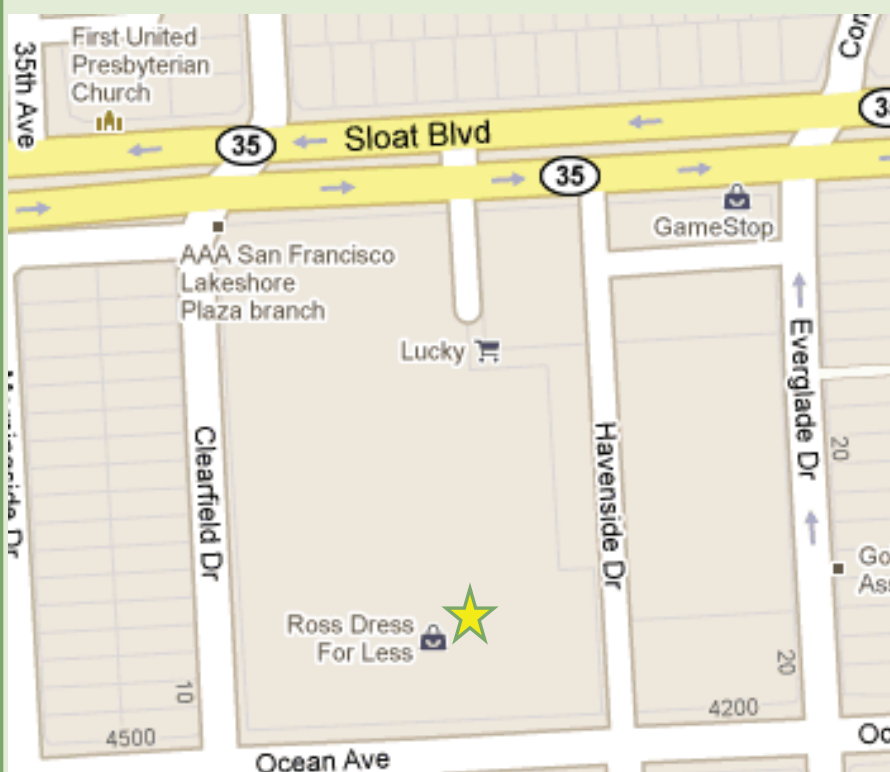
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