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City Ignores Safety of Unsound Structures

By Jack Barry

"In an earthquake similar to the '06 event many of the City's buildings constructed with "non-ductile concrete"—many built between the '30s and the '70s—will flatten like pancakes leaving more people dead in one building than in all the wood frame buildings combined."—Anonymous public official

I have a friend who lives in the Fontana East, and another who lives in the Comstock Apartments on Nob Hill, I wish they would read this, so they could become advocates for better reinforcements to their own buildings. There are department stores, schools, parking structures and office buildings throughout California that endanger our lives. Non-ductile concrete buildings often have large open stories on the ground floors held up by unreinforced or poorly reinforced concrete columns.

The next big one is not an unlikely event, it is an eventuality. A major quake on the Hayward fault is 2/3 more likely to occur within the next 9 years than a quake at a more remote site, so the experts say. When that happens, if at 7.1 on the Richter scale, these NDC buildings will, in many cases "pancake" completely to the ground, killing hundreds per building.

When the Hayward Fault ruptures, if it is as strong, as the '89 Loma Prieta quake, we will feel it 10 times more, because we are so much closer to the Hayward fault than we are to the Loma Prieta fault.

Unlike San Francisco, Los Angeles is beginning to prepare for the next big one by making an inventory

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Taxation Without Representation

by George Wooding



City officials talk about San Francisco's shrinking middle-class population, but no one is doing anything about halting the trend.

San Francisco's misguided Board of Supervisors continue pushing for a special municipal election, to be scheduled sometime this summer. The

State of California has already scheduled a special election for May 19 that features a variety of tax increases and fees on both homeowners and tenants.

San Francisco has a regular election scheduled for November 3. This summer's special election will cost the City approximately \$3.5 million dollars. To their credit, District 7 Supervisor Sean Elsbernd and District 4 Supervisor Carmen Chu, the two Supervisors with the most City budget experience, oppose the proposed City special election.

If held, San Francisco's special election proposes increasing the sales tax by half of one percent, imposing a \$150 to \$300 residential parcel tax and an estimated \$1,000 parcel tax on selected businesses, increasing vehicle registration fees (only the State is allowed to tax vehicle registration fees, but this may change), limiting budget set-asides, allowing the City to drain more money from its "rainy day reserve" fund, and creating some type of carbon emissions tax.

The Board of Supervisor's claim the revenue generated by these new taxes and fees will help off-set San Francisco's purported (but unproven) \$576 million budget deficit. The Board wants to maintain the status quo among the City's existing programs, employee salaries, and labor contracts by increasing taxes and fees, rather than making necessary budget cuts (especially cutting the 8,933 City employees earning over \$100,000 annually).

At a March 2 "community budget crisis" meeting, District 11 Supervisor John Avalos, Budget and Finance Committee chair, ended his speech about helping San Francisco's poor by stating, "I don't want to see San Francisco become a playground for the wealthy." Everyone wants to help San Francisco's poor and needy, but who exactly are San Francisco's "wealthy?"

Avalos, a former legislative aide to Supervisor Chris Daly, has been on the Board of Supervisors for less than three months, and was appointed by Board President David Chiu, who has also been on the Board for less than three months. Asked to quantify what he means by "wealthy," Avalos responded "The[y're] people with lots of disposable income."

Let's be clear: If you are currently paying taxes, have a job, pay a mortgage, own a small business, or own rental units, consider yourself to be among the "wealthy" just because you "dispose" of your middle-class income responsibly.

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TREASURE ISLAND or FANTASY ISLAND?

By Tony Hall

Former Supervisor Tony Hall speaks candidly about political shenanigans at Treasure Island—now and then.

Today, I just returned from Treasure Island where I was able to witness the only positive excitement to take place on that fantasyland since I left as Director there. An exciting game of Rugby followed by expert practitioners of the ancient sport of Gaelic football thrilled my heart, not only because of the athleticism involved, or the fact that the idea for the fields for such venues was spawned during my administration of the Island, but more by the fact that something real was actually happening there!

For many of you who have followed the history of Treasure Island, your head must be spinning as fast as the Newsom administration manufactures another fantasy plan to keep the public in a revolving state of hope while he and his biggest political donors milk another unknowing potential investor. With the upcoming Governor's race getting underway, I suspect that once again "Campaign Newsom" will come up with yet the latest plan to attract attention, dutifully detailed in their "campaign rag" the Chronicle, and affectionately affirmed by the "campaign lackeys" that he has placed on the City payroll, on various commissions, and the Board of Supervisors. (Remember Care not Cash? Well that little spin is now costing you—the taxpayer—about 2 billion annually compared to the 2 million when Newsom took office!) Perhaps his latest plan for Treasure Island might involve a politically correct, ecologically advanced, astrologically aligned, and magnetically balanced center for the study of political exploitation!

You might recall that Darius Anderson, the politically connected Democratic lobbyist and fundraiser, who as the principal of the Treasure Island Development

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Madam Speaker, I Object!

By Clint Reilly

Sanctioning a Bay Area newspaper monopoly in order to rescue the San Francisco Chronicle from bankruptcy is a horrible idea.

Does anyone know what I'm talking about?

Last week, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi sent a letter to Attorney General Eric Holder urging him not to enforce antitrust laws, which would pave the way for the Chronicle and MediaNews – the owner of every other paid-subscription daily newspaper in the Bay Area – to merge operations and have a monopoly over news and opinion in the Bay Area.

The logic is that the Hearst-owned Chronicle, which is rumored to be losing \$60 million per year, will be forced to close if it is not allowed to combine many functions – or merge altogether – with Denver-based MediaNews, which runs the Contra Costa Times, Oakland Tribune, Marin Independent Journal, San Jose Mercury News and many other local dailies.

I respectfully disagree, Madam Speaker.

That's why I brought two extensive law suits against Hearst for violating anti-trust laws.

In 2000, Hearst used political juice to influence U.S. Justice Department investigations into their monopolistic business practices at the Chronicle. Federal Judge Vaughn Walker called their lobbying "malodorous." And his colleague, Judge Susan Illston, placed a restraining order on their clumsy attempt to merge business operations with MediaNews in 2006.

But could even a monopoly save the Chron?

Hearst maimed the Chronicle long ago. Instead of radically slashing circulation and focusing on hyper-local coverage of San Francisco and Oakland, the Chronicle insisted upon being a regional newspaper. The bloated staff and production costs left it swimming in a sea of red ink.

Even partnered with MediaNews, the Chronicle will likely not survive without dramatically downsizing its daily circulation.

It is a fact that the only profitable dailies in the Bay Area are papers that closely cover their local communities.

Why do the Marin Independent Journal and the Vallejo Times-Herald – far smaller papers than the Chron – make money while the Chronicle loses more than \$50 million per year?

But what Democrat wants to

publicly differ with the Speaker of the House?

When I managed Pelosi's successful race for Congress in 1987, I observed the mix of charm and guile that would propel her to the House leadership nearly 20 years later. A master politician, the Speaker knows how to gain the upper hand over her local newspapers.

There is ample precedent in Pelosi's own district. In 1970, liberal San Francisco Congressman Phillip Burton reportedly voted for the Newspaper Preservation Act exempting newspapers from certain anti-trust provisions only after the Chronicle publisher Charles de Young-Thieriot promised him support from the hostile, conservative paper.

By drawing the bully Hearst close to her in its hour of maximum financial distress, the canny Speaker guarantees editorial support for her causes and congressional colleagues well into her dotage.

Someone dispatched deposed executive editor-cum-blogger Phil Bronstein to Washington to lobby the Speaker. Buried in Ambassador Bronstein's blog was the message of love and peace he later carried to Pelosi's office:

"It's about cooperation and what we call in California 'harmonic convergence,'" he waxed.

Phil Bronstein advocating "harmonic convergence" is like John Wayne at a Grateful Dead concert. Only a politician would shake his hand.

Bronstein's kumbaya hymn included a lament that the "iconoclastic, individualist and pugnaciously competitive" newspaper industry was "not so well prepped" for a new era of cooperation.

"Neither is the Justice Department Anti-Trust division, which itself has still been operating on a 1930s model," he continued. "There are no threatening monopolies in a graveyard, except a conspiracy of silence, something appreciated by people who abuse power."

Can we agree that if every department of our federal government was still operating on the 1930s model today, America would not be at the brink of economic Armageddon?

Democracy is a boiling stew of views, news, ideas, information and opinions. I say make Crybaby Hearst play by the rules! No changes in the middle of the game.

Clint Reilly appears as a public service in every MediaNews Group, Inc. newspaper each Tuesday and, for more, go to www.clintreilly.com

The ideas and opinions expressed in these pages are strictly those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the staff or publisher of this paper. The Westside Observer is a free monthly newspaper serving the entire West of Twin Peaks area of San Francisco. Our circulation is 20,000 copies, distributed 10 times a year. 12,000 are distributed door-to-door, 1,500 are distributed via free distribution racks in the West of Twin Peaks area, as well as key drop-off points, including merchants banks and public libraries.

COMMENTARY

Mourning Laguna Honda Hospital's Changes

by Patrick Monette-Shaw

When my article, "War on Laguna Honda Seniors Heats Up," appeared in the Observer's March issue describing changes occurring at Laguna Honda Hospital (LHH), little did anyone suspect the hospital's Executive Administrator, John Kanaley, would die unexpectedly on March 19 from a heart attack. His sudden demise deeply affected hospital staff. I'm as shocked and saddened as everyone.

LHH hosted a touching, standing-room-only memorial service to honor his four years of service at LHH. Its newsletter, The Grapevine, and speakers at his memorial service, trumpeted Kanaley's "agent of change" role, touting his "leadership."

While it's true Laguna Honda passed its state licensing surveys the past two years in a row on the first visit avoiding a re-inspection, and while it's true the number of deficiencies found by state inspectors has dropped dramatically, in mid-February Kanaley notified LHH's medical staff that based on its May 2008 state inspection LHH just received the lowest possible rating on the Five-Star Quality Report issued by the federal Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), receiving an overall rating of just one star.

Although by increasing resources Kanaley was able to reduce LHH's 56 deficiencies received between November 2005 and October 2006 to just 18 deficiencies received between November 2006 and October 2007, the state issued LHH 20 deficiencies between November 2007 and January 2009, a slight increase over the previous inspection. There are nine deficiency categories, including "mistreatment," "quality of care," "resident rights," and "environmental," among others.

CMS's rating system focuses on three measures: State health inspections, staffing levels, and quality measures. One star, the lowest-possible rating, represents "much below average;" five stars, the highest, represents "much above average."

A search of CMS's Nursing Home Compare web site returns a comparison of 125 nursing homes within a 50-mile radius of LHH (the system returns only 125, even if there are more facilities). Of the 125, there were only 21 including LHH, to its credit, which received the five-star rating for staffing levels, even though LHH's nurse-to-patient staffing ratio remains below California's average. Common sense indicates higher staffing levels leads to improved quality measures and favorable health inspections; indeed, low staffing levels typically involve providing substandard care. But 22 of the 125, including LHH, received the lowest one-star rating for the Health Inspections category, and 39 of the 125, including LHH, received one-star ratings for Quality Measures.

Of the 21 facilities that received the five-star rating for staffing, surprisingly 13 received a one-star rating for Quality. Only four of the 21 received a one-star rating for Health Inspections, illustrating a correlation between staffing and inspection performance. Of the 21 that received five stars for Staffing, Laguna Honda was the only facility that received a one-star rating in both Quality and Health Inspections, sinking LHH's overall rating to just one star. This couldn't have pleased Kanaley.

Three days before his untimely death, Kanaley answered questions posed by a community member who had inquired about issues raised in my March article. Kanaley attempted to minimize LHH's change to a "social health" model of care as dealing more with quality-of-life issues — like "providing a more home-like environment, involving patients in activities involving pets, gardens, and children for a more meaningful social life" — rather than the medical model of care focusing on illness and disease treatment.

Kanaley didn't acknowledge the social health model of care is a nationwide effort to move people out of nursing homes into lower levels of care in "assisted living" and "supportive housing," driven in part to reduce expenses from the exploding Baby Boomer population expected to overwhelm Medicare and Medicaid. Instead, Kanaley informed the community member he "wished I knew what motives Patrick [me] to be a conspiracy theorist."

I assure you I don't believe there's any conspiracy to implement changes at LHH, other than perhaps a conspiracy of silence designed to keep the community uninformed about changes actually taking place. A concerted effort is being made by City employees, with or without conspiratorial motives, to keep news about these changes out of the local media.

Another person wrongfully accuses me of presenting "assumptions" as fact, and not making clear to readers the difference between facts and assumptions. I completely disagree: My March article reported facts gleaned from ten public-record documents; I included minimal observations or commentary, not assumptions.

Laguna Honda's Communications Director, Marc Slavin, was so irritated by my March article, he reportedly took a copy to the Mayor's Long-Term Care Coordinating Council's March 12 meeting, where according to a reliable, impartial source, Slavin engaged in an ad hominem personal attack against me. This is the second time Slavin has attacked me personally when I wasn't present to defend myself, and he's done so elsewhere. The first time, during a West of Twin Peaks Central Council meeting, another community leader was so offended by his personal attacks she wrote Kanaley indicating how inappropriate Slavin's behavior had been. This hasn't stopped him; Slavin is viewed by several members of LHH's staff as another sly "change agent," and Mayor Newsom's minister of misinformation and propaganda.

Of the many changes at LHH, Kanaley didn't address the loss of 420 skilled nursing beds eliminated from LHH's replacement facility under construction. San Francisco has seen the closure of 312 skilled nursing beds since 1992, and another 618 are planned for closure, bringing to 930 the number of skilled nursing beds that will be lost just before the "silver tsunami" of San Franciscans expected to develop Alzheimer's will arrive, many of whom will need nursing home level of medical care. Hospital CEO's in the Hospital Council of Northern and Central California are so concerned about the loss of post-acute hospital discharge locations, they are currently conducting a study to measure the unmet availability of lower levels of care in nursing homes and other facilities.

The minutes of the Health Commission's March 3 meeting reports the City is being sued by Bay Area Legal Aid over whether San Francisco is failing its Health

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QUESTION MAN

If you had the ability to decide how to cut the SF City Budget, what three things would you start with? Send answers to:

Westside Observer
PO Box 27276
SF 94127

We will publish the best ones.



AROUND THE TOWN...

Comings and Goings...

Que Syrah Wine Bar just celebrated their 3rd anniversary of pouring and selling delicious wine at 230 West Portal Avenue. Owners Stephanie and Keith Mc Cardell feature many wines that you can't find in lots of places, and these treasures make for a great visit. They also have a Neighborhood Happy Hour every Tuesday night from 6-8. Check it out.

Some friends and I recently had the pleasure of attending the 6th annual Tim Baptista Memorial Crab Cioppino dinner at Sacred Heart Cathedral Prep HS. Over 340 people were in attendance for the dinner and the silent auction. The food was terrific as ever, and there were lots of good prizes in the silent auction with the proceeds for the evening going to support the programs at the school. Tim's family also sponsors a golf tournament in the summer. It's also a fun event, and it seems like half of San Francisco is there. For more information on these events, visit the website: www.TimBaptista.org.

A new "Private Spa" has opened on West Portal, and some of you may be familiar with the proprietor...Leslie Villarreal has returned to the Avenue, opening **Relaxologie**, at 262 West Portal Ave. You may remember her from when she ran **Relax Now**, from 1998 to 2004. She features her own line of skin care products, Relax Now Skin Care, and handles all of the spa services personally. Take the time to pamper yourself and make a date with Leslie. All appointments are "by appointment only." To experience this "private world" you can ring her at 415.999.8720.

I was at the WOTPCC meeting on Tuesday, and was surprised to see **Rae Doyle**, with her arm in a sling. It seems that she recently had shoulder surgery and is on the mend. We wish her a speedy recovery.



Observer columnist **Sharon Caren** conducted a workshop last month focusing on the many beneficial ways to use essential oils in your life (see the photo above). The workshop, held at the Curves-Twin Peaks on Portola Drive, was a great way to learn about and test some of the oils. The peppermint oil is amazing, just one drop in a bottle of water creates a tasty and invigorating drink. For those who missed the presentation, she will be hosting an encore presentation on April 19th. The location will again be at the Curves-Twin Peaks, located at 608 Portola Drive.

Make a point to visit the **West Portal Avenue Arts and Crafts Fair** on April 3-5. Many artisans will have their work on display, along with good food. It's a great time for the neighbors to get out and see each other. Let's hope the weather will cooperate.

The **Commodore Sloat School** is preparing for a Silent Auction Fundraiser for their annual "Rainbow-A-Fair", to be held on May 9th. If you have anything that you would like to donate as a auction prize, please contact Aaron Goodman at 415.786.6929, or send the donation to "Commodore Sloat School, attn: Auction, 50 Darien Way, SF, CA. 94127."

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

Upcoming Open House Event**Essential Oils
and Your Pet**

Sat, April 18th, 2:30 to 4:30pm

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RSVP Sharon Caren 650.359.6579

The Westside Observer's Health Columnist

**West of Twin Peaks
Central Council**

COMMUNITY

By Mitch Bull

NEWS AND VIEWS...



San Francisco Planning Director John Rahaim was the featured speaker at the West of Twin Peaks Central Council (WOTPCC) meeting, held on March 24th at the Forest Hills Clubhouse, but not the only reason to attend.

Council President Don Dutil opened the meeting by asking for an approval of the February minutes, following some discussion on the minutes and a few corrections the approval of the minutes ensued and a short Treasurers' report from Carolyn Squeri followed. The Treasurer also noted that changes have been made in the tax laws that now require many associations to file a 990-N form with the IRS. Failure to file could cause a non-profit association to lose their non-exempt status.

Next came the SFPD report, from Sgt. Pagano from the Taraval station addressing the crowd of 35. Last month we reported on the string of burglaries that had happened in our area. The SF Policewoman pleased the crowd with the news that some burglars were arrested on Sunday morning in St. Francis Woods. She also reported that burglaries were down over the past month, but that car break-ins were still a problem, not just at the Taraval station, but also across the city.

Condolences were offered from the meeting attendees to the Police Department in the City of Oakland for the tragic shootings that occurred last week. Sgt. Pagano said that officers from all over the state will be attended the memorial service for the fallen OPD members.

A question was raised about the rules for Skateboarding in the City. Officially, the law is that there is no skateboarding anywhere in the city limits except in skate parks. (What?) Of course it's almost impossible to patrol and enforce. Also, FYI, bicyclists are supposed to follow the same traffic laws as other drivers.

Aaron Goodman of the Parkmerced Residents' Organization (PRO) stated that a SFSU task force is working with the PRO and the University Police on these types of issues, and he feels that the WOTPCC should consider sending a representative to the next SFSU task force meeting.

A call for "New Business" followed and Rich Matthews, an advocate for the SF Civil Grand Jury, spoke on the process and merits of a civil grand jury. The 19 members of the SF grand jury can decide to investigate and report on anything they want. That's right, anything. Only two states have this provision, California and Nevada, and we are the only one where it is incorporated into the State Charter.

The information on the purpose, process, and selection for the Grand Jury was both detailed and very interesting, and we will cover it in more detail in a future issue of the *Observer*.

On the heels of the Jury discussion, I had the opportunity to address the attendees on the ability of this newspaper to help disseminate information to the public. Any WOTPCC member group that wishes to have events or information in the paper can send it to my email, Mitch@WestsideObserver.com.

The WOTPCC Communications Committee report was given by Denise LaPointe, detailing the discussions that the committee has had on how best to get information out to the members, through phone tree, newsletters, and new technology on the website. They reported looking at "Twitter, Facebook, Blogs", and the like but decided that most of us are "too old, tired, and generally not into that style of communicating."

Prior to introducing the speaker, Matt Chamberlain spoke about trying out new "guidelines" to follow for the keynote speakers that the WOTPCC has attracted as of late. Basically, speakers would get 10 minutes, moderated questions would cover 10 minutes; and delegates would then have 10 minutes for Q and A. The speakers would be given some questions in advance to prepare information for. This helps to eliminate ambush style questioning and allows for a more informed give and take of information.

With that, a test of the guidelines started with the introduction of the Planning Director for the City, John Rahaim.

Following a brief overview of his previous experience as Planning Director in Seattle (WA), and his work in Pittsburgh (PA). Rahaim took the stage and explained his take on the Planning Department, the Housing Element, Discretionary Review Process, and citywide projects, as well as SB 375, and the large areas in SF (50%) where the Planning Department has no jurisdiction.

He started by using Detroit (he's from Michigan) as an example of what happens when a city fails to plan for the future. The peak of the auto industry was in the 1920's and the city has been on a downward spiral since.

Rahaim said "Planning in San Francisco is like no other place; there is an amazing amount of interest in what we do." He then explained that when he was hired to run the Planning Department the Mayor and the Board asked him to do two things; 1). Implement

Cont. p. 15



Drunken Driver Rams House Sticks Elderly Couple With Bill

March 20th at approximately 9 p.m, a White Mazda pickup truck with a camper top, driven by a 30-45 year old woman bashed into the home of Bud and June Wilson at 267 Ulloa St. doing \$3-5,000 damage.

Police responded, but with no injuries, the incident was not pursued. According to a witness, the speeding vehicle ran a stop sign at Waithman and lost control leaving skid marks on the road and sidewalk for 30-40 feet before colliding with the right side of the house, narrowly missing a 12 yr. old boy about 3 feet away. It also missed 3 parked cars. Presumably, the driver, under the influence, left the scene of the accident, backed up and scraped across the garage door, losing a hubcap, clipping the other side of the house and running the stop sign at Laguna Honda. Unfortunately, no one got the License No. Anyone spotting this truck with major damage to right front fender and side of the vehicle, and a missing hubcap, please give Bud or June a call, (415) 759-0654 or the Taraval Station.

"We are asking the neighbors to lend support for speed bumps on the 200 and 300 blocks of Ulloa Street" Bud added.

Mayor's Office offers \$25,000 reward for information regarding a November 2008 Homicide in Golden Gate Park

San Francisco police are seeking the public's help in a homicide that occurred on November 29, 2008 in Golden Gate Park at approximately 11:00 P.M. A large group of young men and women were attending an outdoor party, which had been promoted on the Internet and by word of mouth, at the horseshoe pit near Conservatory Drive on the Saturday after Thanksgiving. The victim, Brandon Lee Evans, 20, who was attending the party, was shot when he went to retrieve something from his car parked nearby. He managed to return to the site of the party, where he collapsed.

Because of the location and time of the incident, police know that there are witnesses who observed the incident or who have some information regarding the incident that would be helpful to investigators. Anyone with information is urged to contact the Homicide Section, 415-553-1145, or to call the Confidential Tip Line, 415-575-4444.

The Mayor's Office has authorized a \$25,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and prosecution of the suspect(s) responsible for Mr. Evan's

POLICE BLOTTER



Police Captain Paul Chignell, Taraval Station

death.

For more information, please contact: 553-1651

Arrests

03/19 | 2:25 pm 200 block Arch

Officer Sam Martin spotted a stolen car being driven by a suspect in the 19th Avenue and Junipero Serra area. The driver failed to heed the red light and siren and a pursuit was begun by Officer Martin. He pursued the vehicle into Daly City and then back onto Highway 280 to San Francisco. At the Alemany exit the pursuit was cancelled due to safety concerns. Shortly thereafter, Officers Gregg Gotelli, Gregory Pak, Duane Elzey and Justin Erb (Cont. on p. 15)

For a complete daily Police Report from the Taraval Police Station, goto our website: www.westsideobserver.com

Taxes (Cont. from p. 1)

While their intentions may be good, the Board could use a lesson in basic economics. The City's proposed sales tax, coupled with the States proposed one percent sales tax increase, will push San Francisco's sales tax to 10%, leaving us with the distinction of having one of the highest sales tax rates in the nation. Sales taxes, known as regressive taxes, will lead to less consumption in San Francisco. Businesses in the City will suffer lower sales, and may have to either reduce staff or possibly go out of business.

Ironically, San Francisco's poor will be hurt the hardest by increased sales taxes, because they can't leave the City to shop, and will be forced to pay higher prices for fewer goods and services. Depending on the behavior of San Francisco's "wealthy," the City may actually collect less revenue from sales taxes than it does now. Ask yourself if you would buy a car in San Francisco, or would you go to Daly City to buy the same car for less money, pocketing the savings?

PARCEL TAXES ARE TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION: San Francisco's proposed parcel taxes absolutely screw San Francisco's homeowners and small property owners. Parcel taxes aren't even taxes; they're actually

fees and/or assessments on individual pieces of property. Homeowners often confuse parcel taxes with property taxes because they appear on the same bill. The owner of a downtown skyscraper will pay the identical \$150 to \$300 parcel tax that you will for your own home. Only the City's property owners will pay for the proposed parcel taxes; renters (67% of the voters) won't pay any parcel taxes because they don't own property.

"Ironically, San Francisco's poor will be hurt the hardest by increased sales taxes, because they can't leave the City to shop, and will be forced to pay higher prices for fewer goods and services."

This creates a divide-and-conquer situation where renters can increase homeowner taxes and fees at will, and never pay a dime of those taxes themselves. San Francisco voters, primarily renters, added an annual \$300 dollar parcel tax for schools just last year. The City should either stop proposing parcel taxes/fees, or let only property owners vote on the tax. You can't have a situation where one group of voters keeps adding fees on another group of voters.

If you own property in San Francisco, never vote for a parcel tax/fee.

On December 22, 2008, "the Controller's office released "The Stakeholder Input Report." The report was developed from interviews with elected officials, department heads, finance directors, members of the business community, and labor organizations. No groups representing either homeowners or small property owners were interviewed. Some of the findings: 1) Respondents largely shared the belief that communication is completely lacking between the current Board of Supervisors and the Mayor; 2) There is not enough leadership from policy-makers around the budget; 3) The Board of Supervisors has a lack of over-arching policy priorities or Board ownership of the budget; 4) Board members who do not sit on its Budget and Finance Committee are minimally involved in the budget process, which leads to a lack of institutional memory and very little knowledge of, or buy-in to, the final budget; and 5) Education: It was suggested, both by outsiders and by Supervisors, that each city Supervisor should have to undergo a budget training process.

This report helps explain why San Francisco has a \$576 million budget deficit. Me? I'm still unclear about what the term "lots of disposable income"

means for San Francisco's shrinking middleclass.

George Wooding is a resident of Midtown Terrace

Laguna Honda (Cont. from p. 2)

and Safety Code Section 17000 obligations to provide care to the [medically] indigent. Director of Public Health Mitch Katz reported that City officials have agreed to limit publicity about the lawsuit, because opposing counsel hope to reach yet another "settlement agreement." Details of the case haven't been made public, so it's unknown whether failing to provide care to Medi-Cal recipients at LHH is part of the lawsuit.

In addition to mourning Mr. Kanaley's premature passing, San Franciscans should be mourning the loss of nearly 1,000 skilled nursing beds so desperately needed, the loss of medical care to the City's medically-indigent frail elderly and disabled citizens, and the loss of publicity concerning the public's right-to-know about lawsuits against the City.

Monette-Shaw, an accountability watchdog, operates www.stopLHHdownsize.com and a member of the First Amendment Coalition, protecting and defending the public's right to know.



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SECOND THOUGHTS

How To Reduce Cancer and Heart Related Deaths, Save the Tobacco Industry, Raise Tax Revenue, Destroy the Drug Cartels and Make People Happier

by Jack Kaye



(Last month's column included a misprint. We apologize for the error. View the corrected Jack Kaye column at www.westsideobserver.com)

I have a simple plan that will do all of the above as well as free up law enforcement and shrink prison populations, reduce the incidence of Alzheimer's, cut America's dependence on alcohol as well as its incidence of the resultant liver and kidney problems.

Let us do what Walter Cronkite, Rick Steves, Congressman/Dr. Ron Paul, state legislator Tom Ammann and tens of millions Americans tell us we should do.

Legalize marijuana.

The way it is now, our economy depends on the viability of our tobacco industry. The industry includes huge farms, farm workers and factories producing large quantities of cigarettes for sale in our country and abroad. Like housing, weapons production and cars, cigarettes help run our economy. Cigarettes, unfortunately, cause cancer, emphysema, premature aging, and aggravate a number of other health-related problems like heart disease and stroke. We can't keep producing health hazards and yet we can't close down an entire industry. How can they continue to operate and make profit while producing something much less harmful? For many it may actually be therapeutic.

Legalize marijuana and have the tobacco industry convert to the marijuana industry. The companies would be licensed under strict guidelines ensuring the highest quality product in as pure a form as possible. This product would yield profits for the companies and employment for the workers as well as taxes for the government, potentially far exceeding revenues from tobacco taxes which are eaten up by resultant health care costs and lawsuits.

Without the production of cigarettes, people currently addicted would have to finally quit. Many currently suffering the pains of illnesses, will get some relief from marijuana smoking. People using alcohol to transcend their circumstances only to be more depressed by them, can turn to marijuana which has very few health risks associated with moderate use.

Marijuana will help young and old. The older citizens will not only get relief from their pains, but they will have a different dimension to dwell in when they are not busy with daily activities. They will enjoy the intrinsic joys of life and not miss some of the practical limitations of their advanced years. Elders who have been smoking this precious herb will have much less of a chance of developing Alzheimer's, according to recent findings.

Law enforcement officers on the federal, state and local levels now spending their time finding marijuana farms and arresting users, sales representatives and consumers would be freed up to pursue serious criminals. Prison populations would be reduced if marijuana-related arrests ended. Alcohol-related crimes might also decrease with more people choosing marijuana as their new drug of choice.

With marijuana legal, drug dealers here and south of the border would go bankrupt. Without riches from illegal marijuana sales, the drug cartels will have no power to control their communities and tempt others into lives of crime.

If you think that the abundance of reasons for legalizing marijuana cited above is all-inclusive, I would urge you to think again. There is a much more important reason than all of the above combined – it will change our culture for the better.

As I have already mentioned in previous columns, we Americans have gotten too busy. We are constantly rushing, talking on our cell phones, playing phone tag with friends who are as busy as we are and are unable to connect. We have been fooled into believing that more is better and that there can never be enough. There is a saying "you can't be too rich or too thin." Of course you can and you can be too busy too.

We need to stop and appreciate the paradise that surrounds us. We don't have to constantly be trying to prove ourselves. According to informed sources, marijuana is the greatest teacher of living life in the moment and enjoying what you are doing, no matter whether it's called "work" or "play."

With marijuana you don't need a big Hummer or pickup truck to feel like a man. With marijuana you don't need four-inch spike heels and a pushup bra to prove that you are a woman. With marijuana you realize that you are consciousness and are interconnected with everything and everyone else. You've got a friend inside and outside you.

Or, at least, so I've been told.



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West Portal



Gayle Mayhew

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Earthquake (Cont. from p. 1)

of the non-ductile concrete buildings within its boundaries. "Among the buildings which performed the worst were," according to the California Seismic Commission report on the 1995 Northridge Quake, "Buildings constructed with suspect materials and techniques, such as tilt-ups, non-ductile concrete frames (NDC), and unretrofitted unreinforced masonry (URM). Buildings designed or constructed with irregular configurations—for example; multistory buildings with inadequately braced first stories (like most of the apartment houses that collapsed) and hillside homes."

Yet, 13 years later, the State has not taken any corrective measures, such as mandating the retrofitting of these NDC buildings and San Francisco has not even ordered that an inventory be done to determine which buildings would be most likely to collapse in a strong earthquake.

Although our Building Dept has such an inventory way down on the "To Do List." They have a hunch that there are hundreds of buildings that would be on such a list. Nevertheless, they are tackling the issue of "strengthening" the soft story, 3-4 story buildings, like the ones that collapsed in the Marina, in our 1989 quake.

The Fontana East and West are two well-known NDC buildings. I believe the Comstock Apartments, on Jones Street, north of Grace Cathedral is another, and I suspect that the Avalon Tower, just east of 7th and Lawton, as well as the Park Merced Towers may also be NDC buildings. It is important to know how safe our buildings are so that we can begin to address the retrofit of these buildings.

Suspecting that there are many in the City, I have asked our Building Dept to determine which buildings are NDC, and what the total is. The reply: "We will get to it, eventually."

One reason for the foot-dragging might be the costs associated with the retrofits. The cost will not be feasible for some, and for those that can be strengthened, it will cost a ton of money. Bummer, but ignoring this "Sleeping tiger" is going to greatly increase the amount of death and damage to the City, and our public officials are turning a blind eye to the problems.

Building owners as well as business owners may not want to have their building on such a list, as it would undoubtedly be reflected in their bottom-line, and that may be the root cause of this unexplainable reluctance by officials who otherwise consistently root around in everyone's business seeking to impose fines and fees. Many in the business community fear their businesses will be out on the street if retrofitting is required but we must tackle this problem now.

The Building Dept. is NOT a policy-making Department. Therefore, it seems, we citizens have to get our Mayor and Supervisors to

set policy here. To me—in my ignorance as a mere realtor—I'd like to know if the building I'm selling my customer is a death trap and I think the customer has a right to know.

In 2006 there was a Conference of Engineers here in San Francisco that issued a report with chilling data. In support of the Pacific Earthquake Engineering Research (PEER) Center's Performance-Based Earthquake Engineering (PBEE) Framework, fatality and injury models have been developed for non-ductile concrete frame (NDCF) structures using available population survey data from the Kocaeli Earthquake of August 17, 1999. Population-based survey data for the City of Gölcük provides specific information on sample population demographics, deaths and injuries, building type, building damage, the injured's location within the building, and action taken at the time of the earthquake. Fatality and injury rates have been developed for NDCF structures suffering partial and total collapse, as well as selected other damage conditions (e.g., non-collapse structural and contents damage only). The resulting casualty rates may be compared to available published models, which are often based on expert opinion and limited historical data.

In the "tables" that are in this report, they project at least "20% fatality rate" where there will be "total collapse" of buildings!

In May of 2008, ShakeOut Scenario, a study done at UCLA, a 7.8 San Andreas quake clarifies that a systematic research on cataloguing the NDRCB stock in Riverside County, and assessing their collapse risk is an urgent need.

"Existing stocks of vulnerable structures arguably constitute the most critical hazard risk in seismic regions of the United States. A considerable portion of this stock consists of Nonductile Reinforced Concrete Buildings (NDRCB's)—a term used to signify a reinforced concrete structural system that has very limited capacity to absorb and dissipate the destructive energy of strong ground shaking beyond its limited elastic range, and hence, one that is extremely vulnerable to collapse.

Seismic design of reinforced concrete structures was at its infancy in 1950's, and lacked critical improvements to detailing requirements until 1970's. The watershed event that is typically cited to delineate the commencement of ductile reinforced concrete design is the 1971 San Fernando Earthquake. Observations of the performance of reinforced concrete buildings in this event and subsequent studies led to improved provisions that appeared in the 1976 Uniform Building Code. These design provisions and requirements have been further improved ever since."

A bit into the report you find "An important conclusion of a recent study by Kircher et al. (2006) suggest that 50% of the expected

Cont. p. 11

APRIL CALENDAR

April 1-5

FREE HEALTH SCREENING - FIRST WEDNESDAYS
Wed. 4/1 | 11:30am | YMCA Stonestown | www.ymcasf.org / 333 Eucalyptus Dr, Info: 242-7101

MACULAR DEGENERATION

Wed. 4/1 | 12-1:30pm | Community Health Resource Center Lecture on Age related Macular Degeneration. 2100 Webster St. Ste 106. Free. Info: 923-3155.

LEARN BALLROOM DANCING

Thu. 4/2 | Learn the Samba, Rhumba, Cha Cha Cha, Mambo, Tango, Waltz, Foxtrot, Swing —more! Forest Hill Christian Church, 250 Laguna Honda Blvd. Six lessons for only \$70.00 per couple. Reservations/times/info(415) 661-2746

WEST PORTAL AVE ART & CRAFT FAIR

Fri.-Sun. 4/3-5 | 10am-6pm | West Portal will be filled with music and art and our own great people.

FRIDAY NIGHT JAZZ - EVERY FRIDAY

Fri. 4/3 | 7-11pm The best Bay Area Jazz Musicians

in the Balcony, Cliff House Lounge 1 Seal Rock

April 6-12

ULCERATIVE COLITIS AND CROHN'S DISEASE

Mon. 3/6 | 6-7:30pm | Community Health Resource Center Update on the Cause and Treatment of Ulcerative Colitis and Crohn's Disease. 2333 Buchanan St. Enright Room. Free. Info: 923-3155.

QUE SARAH—HAPPY HOUR EVERY TUESDAY

Tue. 4/7 & Every Tuesday 4-8pm | Take \$1 off of eachglas /\$10 off of each bottle consumed at the store.

April 13-19

FREE LECTURE ON STRESS

Mon. 4/13 | 7:30pm | Learn where stress comes from and how to handle it. 2501 Judah St. Info: 661-9494

SUGAR AND CHILDREN

Mon. 4/13 | 5:30-7pm | Community Health Resource Center Sugar and Children—What Parents Need To Know. 2100 Webster St. Ste 106. Free. Info: 923-3155

WORD PAINTERS: POETRY READING

Wed. 4/15 | 7pm | West Portal Branch Library

ESSENTIALS OF SENIOR FITNESS

Fri. 4/17 | 2-3:30pm | Community Health Resource

Essentials of Senior Fitness. \$10 fee. 2100 Webster St. Ste 106. Free. Info: 923-3155

ZOO HOSTS "PARTY FOR THE PLANET"

Sat.4/18 | 10am-3pm | Celebrate, Learn and Laugh During Earth Day. 1 Zoo Rd. Info 753-7080.

ESSENTIAL OILS AND YOUR PET

Sat 4/18 | 2:30-4:30pm | Come by to learn the advantages of using essential oils to improve the health of your pet with our own Sharon Caren, (see her column on page 10 for more information.

MEET WITH LOCAL POLICE

Tue. 4/21 | 7pm | Talk with community police every 3rd Tuesday at the Taraval Station.. 2324 24th Ave.

April 27-30

AUTHOR MARY ROACH

Tue. 4/28 | 7pm | *Bonk: The Curious Coupling of Science and Sex* Discussion and booksigning. BookShop West Portal, 80 West Portal 564-8080

AUTHOR SHAWNA YANG RYAN

Tue. 4/28 | 7pm | *Ghosts* Discussion, booksigning. BookShop West Portal, 80 West Portal 564-8080

NOW AT THE MOVIES

by Don Lee Miller

THE CLASS (ENTRE LES MURS)

Teacher-novelist Francois Begaudeau relates a year of his teaching experience in the Parisian outskirts (with racially mixed immigrant-students from French colonies) in a tough high school. They rebel against any authority. Francois Marin plays him as a French teacher who believes in fairness for all. Laurent Cantet directs Begaudeau's engrossing screenplay which was nominated for the Oscar: Best Foreign Language Film. Winner: Gold Palm Award: Cannes Film Festival; French Cesar Award: Best Writing-Adaptation; Best Foreign Film 2009: Independent Spirit Award, Image Award. Profanity, disturbing images.

DUPLICITY

Former CIA Claire: Julia Roberts meets ex-MI6 Ray: Clive Owen in Dubai and scams him. When next they meet and spend three days + nights in bed, they decide upon a scheme to fleece two CEOs: Howard Tully: Tom Wilkinson and Richard Garsik: Paul Giamatti, who hate each other. Tony Gilroy, writer-director, jumps around the world and in time, losing some momentum the viewer has in the romance. Not only does the viewer want Claire and Ray

to wind up happily ever after, but with wealth, too. Now that gorgeous Julia is back (from mothering three) doing romantic leads, let's hope she continues providing Romance. Profanity, sexual content.

KNOWING

A New York state elementary school class of 1959 draws pictures to put in a 50-year school time capsule, but savant Abby fills her page with rows of numbers. Caleb: Chandler Canterbury attends the same school in 2009 and is the son of Prof. John Koestler: Nicholas Cage who, in deciphering the code, finds the dates and number of victims of all major catastrophes since and three that are yet to happen. John visits Diana Wayland: Rose Byrne, daughter of recently deceased Abby, to see if she has any clue what the other numbers mean. Alex Proyas, director and co-producer, develops his sci-fi adventure disaster of the last days of Earth, from the perspective of these characters. Cage is perhaps a bit too intense. The science is weak, but the special effects are extraordinary. Disaster sequences, disturbing images, brief strong language.

LOVE YOU, MAN

When Peter Klaven: Paul Rudd becomes engaged to Zooley: Rashida Jones, he realizes that he doesn't have

a best man friend, so he goes on man-dates to get one. The likely candidate seems to be Sydney: Jason Segel, a motor scooter musician guy, with whom he develops a bromance. Peter's parents, Joyce: Jane Curtin and Oswald: J.K. Simmons (Juno); Zooley's b.f.f.'s., Denise: Jaime Presley and Hailey: Sarah Burns provide as many laughs as the leads in this hilarious romp. Dog lovers beware: Sydney refuses to pick up after his dog. Co-writer/director John Hamburg zeroes in on the male story, nearly forgetting the fiancé until the wedding. Crude language.

TWO LOVERS

Suicidal, part-time dry cleaners employee Leonard Krador: Joaquin Phoenix finds himself falling in love with his new Brooklyn neighbor, Michelle: Gwyneth Paltrow and a family friend, Sandra Cohen: Vinessa Shaw. Her father wants to form a dry cleaning chain with his father. His mother Ruth is played with restraint by Isabella Rossellini. Michelle is a party girl having an affair with her married boss Ronald: Elias Koteas, who pays her rent and keeps telling her that he's leaving his wife...and she believes him. James Gray: co-writer, director relates his character study with focus on the performance Phoenix claims will be his final film

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

before becoming a rock musician.

WATCHMEN

Who's killing off the super-heroes of 1940? The Comedian/Edward Blake: Jeffrey Dean Morgan is the first to be tossed from his penthouse in 1987. The U.S. is about to be attacked by Russian nuclear bombs in Nixon's third term. The powerful graphic novel by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons (written by Moore) exposes the underbelly of criminals running amuck throughout the country. Two other superheroes, Night Owl II/Dan Drieburg: Patrick Wilson and Rorschach/Walter Kovacs: Jackie Earle Haley team up to investigate the murder and warn other superheroes. Dan assumes protection of Laurie Jupiter/Silk Spectre II: Malin Akerman who worries about her mother, Sallie/Silk Spectre: Carla Gugino. Vying titans, blue nudist Dr. Manhattan/Jon Osterman: Billy Crudup and power hungry Adrian Veidt/Ozymandias: Matthew Goode go all the way to Antarctica to fight it out. Zach Snyder directs the always fascinating-sometimes confusing sci-fi fantasy action thriller. Strong graphic violence, frontal male nudity, sexuality and profanity.

THEATER

By Dr. Jean Lust and Flora Lynn Isaacson

"THE STORY"

SF Playhouse / Lorraine Hansberry Theatre Stage Tracey Scott Wilson's "The Story" is based on the news article about journalist Janet Cooke's invention of the story of an eight-year-old heroine addict implicated in the murder of a white male in a black neighborhood. In Wilson's dramatization, cub reporter Yvonne (Ryan Peters) attempts to prove her value to her superior (Halili Knox) and the newspaper by making up the existence of Jimmy, the young addict whom they never can find and who is involved in the murder. Those working with her in the paper begin to doubt Jimmy's existence and the truth of her story when they discover that her resume was comprised of lies such as her former studies at the Sorbonne in Paris. Although she has invented these lies, Yvonne justifies her actions by declaring that she was supposed to have gone to the Sorbonne and that happenings of this kind based on racial conflict do exist. A second intrigue concerning Yvonne's dependence for help upon her white lover (Craig Marker), the newspaper's manager, who attempts to hide their relationship, places still more emphasis

on the racial conflict.

Knowing the true story of Janet Cooke beforehand excites the spectator's interest in this dramatization as well as clarifies the content.

Under the baton of Margo Jones, and the simultaneous double dialogues of two couples are well timed, direct and forcefully projected.

Ryan Peters' believable depiction of the ambitious, neophyte journalist presents a contrast with the authoritative Halili Knox's Pat, who is soon wary of Yvonne's lies.

This cooperation between SF Playhouse and Lorraine Hansberry Theatre offers a vital look at the pressures of journalism heightened by racial conflict.

"The Story" plays until April 25. For info call 415-677-9596 or visit www.sfplayhouse.org. Dr. Annette Lust

23RD FRINGE FESTIVAL

Bay Area and Dominican Players' Twenty-Third Fringe Festival of New One-Acts & Solos for Theatre Critics Award April 17 to May3.

For its 23rd season new short one-acts and solos by Bay Area playwrights, directors and actors will be performed to vie for Bay Area Theatre Critics Best Play, Actors and Directors awards. Recently granted a Special Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award, the

festival will take place in Meadowlands Assembly Hall Theatre at Dominican University of California, 50 Acacia Ave, San Rafael, from April 17 to May 3, Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m., plus a 2 p.m. show on Sat. May 2nd. The festival features premieres of one-acts and monologues ranging from light comedy, a spoof on sex in the jungle of Peru, pre-nups, friendship, sex abuse, and social issues to an original pantomime satirizing modern technology. Admission \$14-16; seniors and students \$10; children \$5. For reservations and information (415) 673-3131 or Jeanlust@aol.com Dr. Annette Lust

THE MODEL APARTMENT

Holocaust Memories—Unforgotten and Imagined. "The Model Apartment" by Donald Margulies, which opened at the Traveling Jewish Theatre, March 1, is a brilliant and bizarre black comedy about a pair of elderly Holocaust survivors and their outlandish, deranged daughter, which in a series of sometimes hilarious, sometimes moving scenes, traces the pervasive effect of their earlier trauma on the "better life" they have tried to build.

Having retired to Florida in 1988, Max and Lola are dismayed to find their new condo is not yet ready for occupancy, and they are obliged to stay

temporarily in a "model apartment"—a tacky, gaudily decorated facade with a fake television set and refrigerator where even the ashtrays are cemented in place.

Max and Lola had hoped to escape not only the nagging memories of their earlier lives, and the terrors of present-day Brooklyn, but also their fat, schizophrenic daughter, Debbie, whom they tried to "pay off" with generous cash before their hasty departure. But Debbie, who seems to symbolize for them their awful past and present failures, soon appears, followed in short order by her underage, mildly retarded, black boyfriend, Neil.

Jarion Monroe as Max repeats, "For this, I walked out of the woods?" Max is constantly haunted by memories of his daughter. Lola survived the Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp.

Naomi Newman and Jarion Monroe wonderfully play off each other with the edgy familiarity of a long-married couple. Amy Resnick all but steals the show as their obese and mentally disturbed daughter, Debbie. The Model Apartment, a part of the Traveling Jewish Theatre's 30th anniversary season, runs through April 5. For tickets or info about upcoming productions, call 415-292-1233 or visit www.ATJT.com.

Flora Lynn Isaacson

PHYLLIS' FINDINGS

By Phyllis Sherman



There's an educational nonprofit in Sacramento that has been using the My Health Manager website provided by Kaiser Permanente, to access a patient's electronic medical records. When a patient has her cholesterol checked, or one of her kids is tested for strep throat, the patient goes there to click on links that explain the test results. She regularly e-mails her doctor with routine questions on anything and everything health-wise. The system has led to a significant shift in the ability to be an advocate for her own health care.

When I e-mailed my doctor with a question at UCSF, I was told not to e-mail her...that she doesn't always read her e-mails but that instead I should call her office, give the question, or any information to one of the clerks, who would routinely insert it into the doctor's box and eventually, when she got to reading it, I'd hear from her. As she doesn't work full time, who knows when she'll read my query? The trend, known as information therapy, involves delivering reliable health information directly to patients to help them manage their conditions and make treatment choices. It sounds like a more efficient system than the one espoused by UCSF (and my doctor). Fewer than a quarter of doctors in private practice have full fledged online record systems. There's also a secure website where patients can see their records and communicate with their doctors. The system uses computerized health-risk assessments to determine if a patient has any potential areas of concern. Progress can be checked over time and, for a teaching hospital such as UCSF, it's time that they approved such a system. Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare, a nonprofit health plan in New England, recently began offering on its website, one of Health-wise's coaching programs called Information Therapy Conversations. Check out the site at harvardpilgrim.org/conversations. It deals with sleep problems, depression and lower-back pain. Also try uptodate.com. It offers lots of options for a myriad of conditions. (There's a charge for the latter site.) Both the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal have written about the use of online records and it's probably only a matter of time before the service becomes common. E-mailing your physician could save many office visits...perhaps that's why some facilities are loath to endorse it.

The Latest in Mental Health: Working Out at the 'Brain Gym'...San Francisco has a new "gym for the neighborhood"...you can work out three times a week at a new computer "Visual Processing" program for helping you find your car keys faster or sharpen your tennis skills. VIBRANT BRAINS has attracted about 200 members since December, 2007 according to its owners. Patrons pay \$60 a month to work out on 20 computer stations loaded with "mental fitness" software, including a "neurobic circuit" that purports to stretch the brain. There's an art-auction game that displays a dozen Monets for purchase. Then they'll intersperse them with other Monets and you have to tell them apart. Sessions are spent doing

mental nutrition games, cognitive training, genetic workshops and the like. The sites are getting popular throughout the country. I tried some of the games and they were fun. For more information, call 775-1138. They're at 3235 Sacramento Street or call 650-378-2685. Ask for Lisa. Tell them you heard about it from Phyllis at the OBSERVER.

On the theatrical front, highly recommended at the TRAVELING JEWISH THEATER at 470 Florida Street is Donald Margulies' darkly comic look at an older couple of Holocaust survivors settling in Miami with a problem daughter. Directed by Amy Glazer with Naomi Newman...THE MODEL APARTMENT plays through April 5. Info at: 292-1233.

Another winner is THE STORY at the San Francisco Playhouse at 533 Sutter Street...playing through April 25. 677-9596.

ENDJOKES; A Polish immigrant went to the DMV to apply for a driver's license. First, of course, he had to take an eye sight test. The optician showed him a card with the letters C Z W I X N O S T A C Z. "Can you read this? the optician asked. "Read it?" the Polish guy replied, "I know the guy."

Walking into the bar, Ronnie said to Charlie the bartender, "Pour me a stiff one—just had another fight with the little one." "Oh yes?" said Charlie, "and how did this one end?" "When it was over," Ronnie replied, "she came to me on her hands and knees."

"Really," said Charles, "now that's a switch! What did she say?" "Come out from under the bed, you little chicken s**t!!!"

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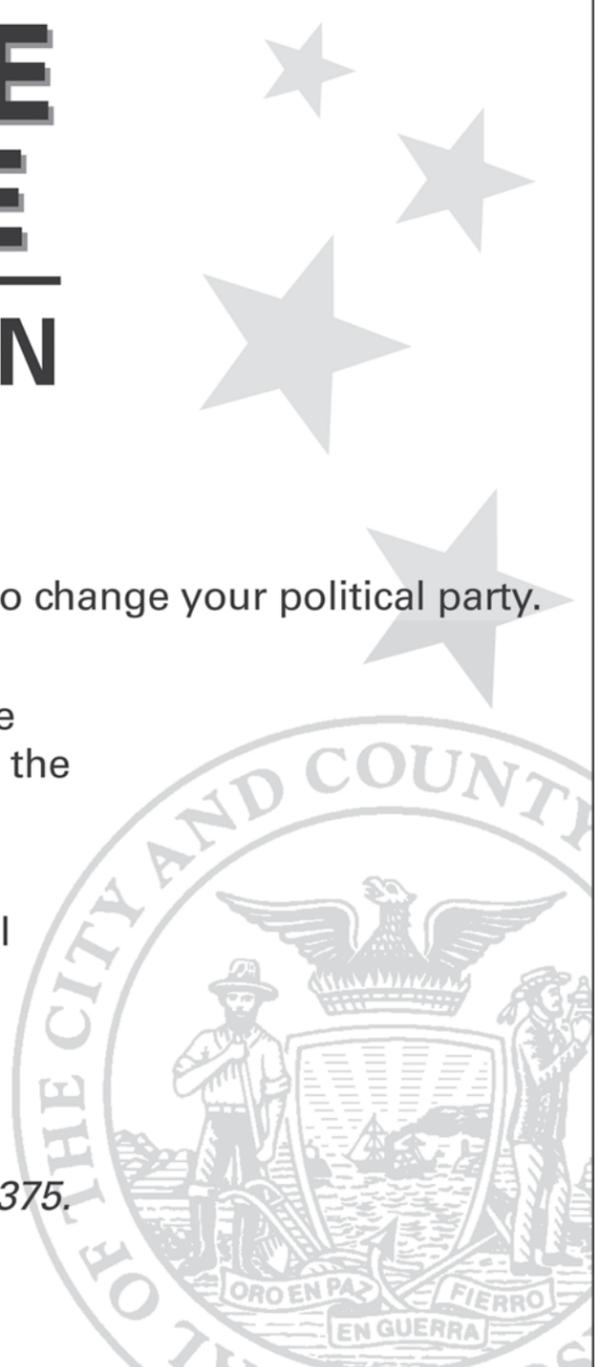
The Department of Elections is combining polling places for the May 19, 2009 Statewide Special Election. Make sure to confirm the location of your polling place before going to vote.

Become A Permanent Vote-By-Mail Voter.

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Visit sfelections.org to download a voter registration form, a vote-by-mail application or to confirm the location of your polling place, or call the Department of Elections at (415) 554-4375.

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58 City View Way	3	1	2	1,150	12/19/08	\$795,000

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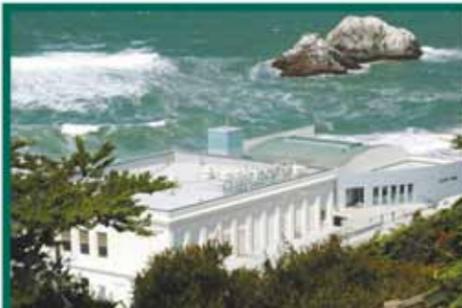
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BUSINESS CORNER

Take a tour of India at Restaurant Roti

By Mitch Bull

The aroma of exotic spices is the first wave that tickles your senses when you walk through the door into Restaurant Roti at 53 West Portal Avenue.

Walking through the front door feels as if you are being transported to another time and place as you enter a beautifully decorated space of dark wood, pillows, and marvelous photographs, with the smell of exotic Indian spices filling the air. Owner Rustom Swaleh and his staff have created a great place for dining; an attractive environment, friendly service, and best of all, a varied and enticing menu with something for everyone.

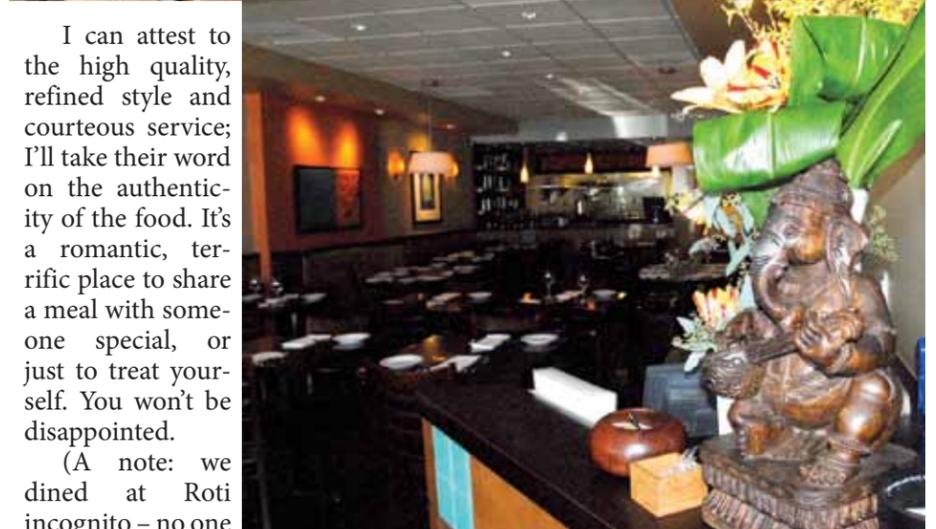
Most of us associate Indian cuisine with the many forms of curries and kabobs, and Roti features many delicious ones, but there is so much more. The restaurant prides itself on serving dishes from both Northern and Southern India. Northern Indian cuisine is represented by the Tandoori dishes cooked in the traditional way using a clay oven that is fired by mesquite charcoal, while the vegetarian dishes originate from the Southern end of the country. Seafood, rice dishes and many curries are also featured in the extensive menu.

My wife and I recently dined at Roti, and were struck by the large assortment of choices for appetizers and dinner. The helpful server assisted us in trying to narrow down choices to give us an overview of the cuisine. We decided to try something from both the North and South, and share the entrees.

Not only are there many choices, the volume of the portions is also very generous for the price. Our entrees were the Seekh Kabab (\$16), (grilled portions of ground lamb, seasoned with cumin and cilantro); and the Vegetarian Thali (\$20), an assortment of Bengan Bharta (Tandoor-smoked eggplant sautéed with onions fresh tomatoes and ginger), Dal (yellow lentils sautéed with garlic, ginger and tumeric), Mixed Vegetables, Raita (a cucumber yogurt with caraway and cumin), Pulao (basmati rice cooked with saffron, cumin, cardamon and bay) and Kachumber (a mixture of fresh tomatoes, onions, cucumbers, herbs and lemon juice). On the side we had several kinds of Indian flat bread, Naan, and wine with dinner.

Although I am not normally a practiced aficionado of Indian cuisine, (due to several exposures to very spicy curry), I loved the dinner. The portions were large (we had leftovers), and the combinations of the curries, the spices, the tandoor cooking and the atmosphere were enough to make me a "Roti fan" for life. I admit, even as an avowed meat-eater, the vegetarian dishes were superb and I really enjoyed all of the components of the Thali. The kabab was also terrific and a large portion.

The restaurant website describes the restaurant: "Roti is about experiencing a feast – a celebration shared with family and friends in a warm modern setting; a place where authentic Indian cuisine is prepared using high quality local and organic ingredients, and served in a refined style."



I can attest to the high quality, refined style and courteous service; I'll take their word on the authenticity of the food. It's a romantic, terrific place to share a meal with someone special, or just to treat yourself. You won't be disappointed.

(A note: we dined at Roti incognito – no one at the restaurant was expecting us or knew about this article being written.) MB Restaurant ROTI is located at 53 West Portal Avenue. The restaurant is open Sunday through Thursday from 5:00 – 10:30 PM, and on Friday and Saturdays from 5:00 -11:00 PM. To book a reservation, call them at 415.665 ROTI (7684). Reservations are highly recommended.



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SHARON THE HEALTH

Hard Times and Canines

by Sharon Caren

I just heard that in the State of California, the unemployment rate is up to 10%. Everyone and everything is affected by it in one way or another. During the past 12 years of my alternative healing practice, I've learned the most important thing is that we "feel" good. Our emotional health is directly related to our physical body as I've mentioned many times in past articles. Stress and worry can kill and these feelings raise the cortisol (stress hormone) levels in the body as well as high blood pressure, hypertension and insomnia. So how do we focus on fun and happiness in hard times?

A Man's Best Friend – Dog

My husband and I are both small business owners working most of the time. I'm sure you can relate. On January 1st of this New Year, we were blessed with Little Charlie, a 4-pound Chihuahua. Friends, who have 3 dogs of their own, rescued Charlie from the dog pound, and gave him to us. My husband, Dave, said he couldn't stand little yipee dogs... "they were rats with hair." Well, how perfect.... Little Charlie doesn't bark and he thinks he's a big dog. He moved in and won us over. Charlie is Dave's very first dog ever and they are inseparable. We cannot imagine life without him. He's a little healer – knows just how to open our hearts and make everything right in our world. At Dave's last doctor visit, his blood pressure reading went from 130 over 90 to 101 over 70. This is a testimony to Little Charlie (emotionally) and Young Living Essential Oils (physically) and all natural.... yahoo!

Doom and gloom??? Not so, just look into that sweet face and see what truly matters, unconditional love. Rescue dogs are special. They seem to know how lucky they are to be in a loving home. These are wonderful dogs ready to make you the center of their world. How can you resist? If you are considering bringing a special healing dog home, be sure to research the different breeds. Each breed has a particular personality and has various care requirements. Look for the size and temperament that will compliment your life style and family situation. Doing your homework will lessen the risk of surprises. Picking your pooch is fun but also a big commitment as their lifespan can be up to 18 years. However, the joy and happiness you will reap will far outweigh the work.

Pets Promote Healing

"There are enormous health benefits associated with owning a pet," explains Rebecca Johnson, Ph.D., director of the Research Center for Human Animal Interaction at the University of Missouri College of Veterinary Medicine. "Studies have shown that interacting with our pets increases the production of the feel-good chemicals in our brains like endorphins and dopamine and decreases the stress hormone, cortisol."

Any type of animal you adore and are drawn to will make the best pet for you. Cats, bunnies, birds as well as fish will have this positive effect on your life. I'm an animal lover of all types. Sharing my personal experience and the new love of my life just happens to be a dog.

Physical Exercise – is a must for dogs. So walking your dog in the



sunshine and fresh air while enjoying the scenery isn't like the drudgery of exercising but it has all the great side effects; lower blood pressure, reduces stress and helps us sleep.

Socializing — What an easy way to meet new and interesting people. Being out with your dog is an instant ice-breaker and conversation starter. Dog people love to talk about their pets. There are also new dog parks popping up in all cities. You can sit and chat with the owners while the dogs run around unleashed.

Emotional Healing—each time you leave the house and return, there's the welcome committee waiting at the door for you even if you're only gone 15 minutes! This loyalty and unconditional love is something we all need in our lives and it's so easy for our furry friends to teach it.

Our pets keep us present. Not in the past or the future. Being in the moment is where the joy is. The animals are here on the planet to remind us of that when we want to go off on our worrywart tangents. Remember, happiness is just a BARK away.

I recommend using natural products with your pets. We shampoo Little Charlie every week with Animal Scents Shampoo. It makes his coat shine and he smells heavenly without toxic chemicals. Also there are Essential Oils like Peace and Calming that are good to use on high-energy dogs to help them relax. You just rub the Essential Oil on the pads of the dog's paws. They love it and it's the perfect solution to make barking dogs relax. Call me if you'd like more information 650.359.6579 or email sharoncaren@comcast.net.

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EARTHQUAKE (Cont. from p. 5) casualties in a repeat of the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake will be due to 5% of all the building stock. This small percentage comprises NDRCB's as well as soft-story wood and unreinforced masonry structures. The same study estimates that a M7.9 rupture of the San Andreas Fault will kill more than 1,800 and seriously injure 8,000 people if it occurs during the night. During the daytime these figures climb to 3,400 and 12,500, respectively.

Nevertheless, it is stated in the same study that little data on the actual number and square footage of NDRCB's were available. It was assumed that all pre-1974 concrete buildings were collapse hazards. Furthermore, a validation study performed with data from the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake indicated that the loss estimates could be as high as twice of what may actually occur, somewhat quantifying the uncertainty in these predictions.

Note: the "soft story wood" type is what partially collapsed in our Loma Prieta quake. Since they are 2-4 stories, they are much less likely to totally collapse, compared to a 20 story concrete and glass tower.

One report that stands out cites a Seismic official for the L.A. Building Department. He flatly says that "all non-ductile concrete buildings" should be torn down, they are so unsafe.

After some research and more than one sleepless night, I wrote to the City's point person on Seismic issues and standards, citing my concern that SF was doing nothing. Lawrence Kornfield, Chief Building Inspector, Department of Building Inspection. He wrote back to me about the "Concrete Coalition" bringing these problems to the fore and developing retrofit/repair and other options. He informed me about the website <http://www.concretecoalition.org/>.

There is no list of hazardous concrete buildings in San Francisco; each building must be separately evaluated by an engineer to determine its level of risk. Over the next two years, the CAPSS program will attempt to understand the scope of problems related to these and other building types in San Francisco, although we will not be doing an inventory of specific at-risk buildings. Priorities of seismic hazard mitigation are done either by the

State, through the adoption of codes and laws, or by local government, which may amend the State codes. Concrete building upgrade is particularly problematic as the buildings often require extensive engineering analysis and design; are usually massive structures, requiring extensive and expensive structural upgrade work; are often owned by multiple owners (like condominiums); and require upgrades that often intrude into usable space or require closing windows or doors."

On the other hand, I feel that IF the Mayor and Supervisors asked some questions, we might, as a City, get some answers about the "Houses of Pancakes" that so many folks in S.F. live in.

"I feel that if the Mayor and Supervisors asked some questions, we might, get some answers about the "Houses of Pancakes" that so many folks in S.F. live in."

We need to know:

- 1) What defines a Non-Ductile Concrete Building?
- 2) How can we aggregate the list of buildings that match that profile?
- 3) How can we check the records in the microfilm archives of DBI to see which of these buildings are, in fact "Non-Ductile Concrete" type?
- 4) What comments and recommendations for retrofits/tear downs do local, statewide, and national officials and experts suggest?
- 5) What can be inferred from all the "casualty modeling" of the performance of NDC buildings, found in the data of the past 14 years?

If the state has to come up with a "New Standard for Dealing With Non-Ductile Concrete Buildings" they have to do this sooner rather than later, in view of the ticking time bomb that the Hayward Fault represents. San Francisco has the most to lose, when that ruptures, given how many NDC buildings it seems we have. We can't just sit and fiddle while "Sacramento does its thing, or drags and delays the doing of it" Since, literally, it's not "their fault" that is ticking away, louder and louder, but ours.

San Franciscans deserve to have answers to these 5 key questions, in a simple, easy to read report. And then "Let the Chips Fall Where They May", so to speak, but let us all be not lulled into non-action, due to "non-reporting of accumulating evidence."

Jack Barry is a realtor living in the Sunset.

ON THE PLUS SIDE

Unexpected Detour

Hank Basayne

I know where I am—I'm Here. I know where I'm going—I'm going There. Simple? Clear? Not really, for even the sophistication of Google Maps fails to factor in the ever-lurking Unanticipated.

"What bars my path is the way along it." That murky, somewhat opaque thought—Camus, I think—doesn't immediately communicate a vivid picture. Yet, as my many years on our planet continue to accumulate, I've come to regard its wisdom as a given.

I'm Here. I'm going There, but along the way there's a fallen tree that blocks my road, or the bridge ahead is out, or—bad weather ahead—my flight is cancelled. Still desirous of getting There, I need to improvise, turn right or left, somehow get off the path I'd planned. Like it or not, I'm on a different path. I may still get There, but not in the way I'd intended.

Tickets for the opera or the ballgame? Didn't count on the sudden, severe stomach ache. On my way to a party? Didn't plan on an inattentive driver colliding with my car at a rainy intersection.

In the middle of writing a short essay the power goes off and my computer is turned into a very large, non-responsive, heavy paperweight. Or for no reason at all the cell phone abruptly stops working and I can't call to say I'll be late arriving.

As a minister I conduct a fair number of weddings, some scheduled as much as a year in advance. Yet last year, despite the most careful preparation, I failed to anticipate a cat bite that developed into an infection that put me in bed for almost two months. The weddings went ahead with another Celebrant. I got to catch up on my reading.

There are far more dire interruptions that can shatter the designs we construct for moving ahead. Job loss, house foreclosure, the sudden death of someone close, a broken foot or hip from a fall, earthquake, tsunami—all of these totally halt the flow of a chosen direction.

Not all unanticipated events are negative. I've never won the lottery—never even got my buck back—but I imagine I would welcome the sharp turn in my path that such an unlikely occurrence would cause. (Herb Caen said that one's chances of winning the lottery were the same, whether or not you bought a ticket!)

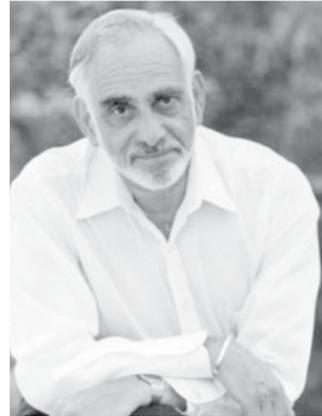
Take the cat bite: it gave me the chance to read some delicious mystery novels, meet some lovely people among the medics who attended me, and gave me new appreciation of mobility once I was able to walk unaided again. Or think about the lives saved by penicillin, fortuitously discovered by a laboratory accident. Post-It Notes, too, began

as a failed glue experiment. In such an uncertain world, with the unexpected constantly waiting in a shadowy corner preparing to pounce and dramatically alter my day, is there any sense in continuing to make my plans? Of course, my answer is yes. It's not in my nature to drift aimlessly from moment to moment, becalmed and directionless.

The cornucopia is not going to turn itself upside down over my head all by itself. My life is more fulfilling when I start the day with some direction, even if it's just the decision to go back to sleep for another hour, or spend the afternoon listening to the birds sing to each other, tickle my eyes with the colors and shapes of the Spring blossoms, or brush the cat.

I will continue to make occasional lunch and dinner appointments, plan visits with my kids and grandchildren, schedule future weddings, and renew my New Yorker subscription. But as I make my plans, to spare myself from frustration and disappointment, I will try to remain mindful of the Buddha's instruction: Do not become attached to the outcome.

Hank Basayne lives with uncertainty in San Francisco. His next book, a compilation of these columns, is called *I'm Still Vertical, Thank You!* and who knows whether or not it will be finished later this year.



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EDUCATION

Invasion of the Body Snatchers

By Carol Kocivar

When I was a kid there was a movie title that scared the heck out of me: "Invasion of the Body Snatchers." No Way. No How would I ever go and see that one.

Fast Forward.

I went clothes shopping the other day—something I avoid for years and years. In my own private economic stimulus package, with three way mirrors highlighting every move—my first thought: OMG. Invasion of the body Snatchers had come to haunt me.

There is no justice.

Please tell me. Why do they feature clothes that hang perfectly on the rack—but so imperfectly on the bod?

I thought we had passed consumer protection laws with teeth until I tried on some of those great aqua sweaters.

With an apology to Barack Obama, I spent what felt like an Olympic triathlon moving and removing items. My percentage rate was lower than a leading pitcher's batting average.

I felt like I was part of one of those seriously flawed ethnic jokes asking how many

How many pairs of pants must one woman try on to find just ONE to fit?

Did I mention this was at an outlet--with 30 per cent off the 60 per cent off the 10 per cent off?? They were throwing things at you just to get them out of the store and I could barely catch.

There is a phrase that comes to mind:

Too many cooks spoil the broth?... No. Umm.

If it is too hot get out of the kitchen? No. Umm.

You are what you eat?? No. No. No.

When I got back from shopping I felt exhilarated—I know I spent more calories in the front of the three-way mirror than a run around the lake.

I marked the calendar. Several years hence I will do this again.

No pain. No gain. Dare to compete!

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Treasure Island (Cont. from p. 1)

Corporation (TIDC), acquired the exclusive rights to negotiate for the development of Treasure Island by delivering multi-millions to the campaigns of Willie Brown and Newsom. Anderson, who has never built a doghouse, must now dangle his carrot to other builders who might fancy the elusive dream to build on the Island now that the Lennar Corporation seems to have fallen on tough times, and doesn't seem willing to buy out Anderson's position in the development scheme. At a recent sighting, the ultimate broker, Aaron Peskin, was seen holding hands with Anderson and none other than what is left of the Residential Builders Association (formerly headed by Joe O'Donahue) at the Washington Square Bar and Grill a few weeks ago at a mysterious fundraiser. See link <http://www.fogcityjournal.com/wordpress/2009/03/16/the-crackberry-chronicles-luck-o-the-irish-edition/#comments>.

A bit of advice to my Irish brethren: C'mon now lads, haven't ye been fleeced enough? Don't let the likes of these scoundrels dip into your pockets!

For those readers who might want to refresh their memories about the corruption at Treasure Island, try reading some of the many articles written by Chuck Finnie 1998-1999 for the Hearst Examiner and later with the Chronicle. They really were quite accurate and well researched and can be found on the net.

Interestingly though, Finnie's passion for exposing the truth seemed to evaporate at Newsom's Coronation, and he was most silent during the time when I exposed the "sweetheart deal" that Newsom was trying to get me to go along with as Director of the Island in 2004-5. It is no wonder that the Chronicle is going out of business as a newspaper that reports the facts.

I accepted the job at Treasure Island with the sincere belief that this mayor really wanted to do something with Treasure Island that was beneficial to the City. After a 30 year career of City Service involving many building projects in seven different City Departments, I believed I could initiate a development project that would, after significant seismic stabilization and a true open competitive bidding process as mandated by the City charter, result in a project that would return millions to our general fund every year thereafter. Boy, was I fooled! This mayor, as has his predecessor, only used this dream in the middle of our Bay to raise political capital and exploit those willing to donate.

In short, you might recall that I was released as Director of Treasure Island when I refused to go along with the latest round of corruption involving the Island in 2005. The Mayors Office insisted upon renewal of the contract for TICD (the Anderson group) for exclusive negotiation and developmental rights, despite the fact that that group had not met the terms of its contract, including substantial payment shortfalls for specific developmental milestones, as well as a series of discarded timetable extensions that continue till this day. Needless to say, the mayor engineered my ouster when I refused to sign the contract that would again allow his largest political donors to continue their scam by having the Island administration pick up their expenses while they publicized ever changing plans in their search for deep pockets. I refused to compromise my ideals in favor of an effort to recover integrity for the future of any true development of the Island, but to no avail. His hand-picked, seven-member board of political hacks voted to terminate my services in the midst of considering a raise for me and my staff for a very successful year and a half of management that resulted in businesses

and spirit returning to the Island. To justify their actions at that time, they alleged the altering of books at Treasure Island. This false allegation came after the Controller, Mr. Ed "never let the truth get in the way" Harrington, sent an anonymous letter to the Chronicle. The only problem with their play was, that since the Treasure Island Development Authority was under the auspices of the Mayors Office, it was the Controller himself who was handling our books! Harrington is the same cat who is now in charge of the SFPUC and is most responsible for your water rates skyrocketing.

The vindictiveness of this mayor and the "lackeys" that surround him is unprecedented in San Francisco. Anyone who has ever opposed him or his programs has been the subject of a subsequent media smear, investigation by the so-called Ethics Commission, or direct mail hit campaign. Indeed, since my tenure on the Board of Supervisors, they have launched one attack and defamatory allegation after another, all because I dared question the status quo. Much to their embarrassment, their final attempt to besmirch my reputation, a phony Ethics Commission investigation cost that department almost a million dollars to conduct. Because I chose to fight rather than accept their cowardly abuse, their tactics involving perjury and falsification of evidence were exposed. Truth won out and I was exonerated.

The reality and the facts are as follows: 1. Treasure Island today sits as a rotting, decaying toxic parcel of 500 acres of man-made terrain in the middle of the bay. 2. It is still owned by the Navy, who has refused to turn it over to the City, which acts as a caretaker. 3. The Navy has a financial investment and responsibility in the future development of the Island and knows what so many of us now know. They have become skeptical with respect to the sincerity of the City and the ability of the Anderson group to put forth a concrete redevelopment plan after more than twelve years. Take for example, Newsom's latest fantasy plan that calls for a space-age green development with several 40 to 60 story residential, retail and hotel towers, new low-income neighborhoods, no on-island driving, a ferry terminal (that the State has already nixed) to accommodate the low-income resident boaters(!), and the best of all, a 40 acre organic garden! All of this is going on top of 8 ft. of toxic bay land fill that floods year after year and sits on top of the most active earthquake fault in the bay area! I certainly don't know what this guy is smoking but this latest fantasy surely isn't the result of the red wine that he claimed he was addicted to.

My efforts and opinions at this time are being directed to San Franciscans who really care about our City. I am not deliberately trying to deride anyone or prevent him or her from attaining their dream of higher office, but I do draw a line at the cost to the public. In fact, with most of them, the sooner they move on to their great 'white house in the sky' the better for those of us who remain. My hope today is that future public servants can be encouraged to emerge who are dedicated to ensuring that San Francisco will rise above the pitfalls of corruptive influences while retaining a growth towards the world class status that our outstanding attractions deserve. My wish for all San Franciscans, is that we can re-establish standards of integrity based upon transparent political accountability that will diminish the dubious empirical exploitations of corruption that have befallen our wonderful City. Former Supervisor Tony Hall was Director of the Treasure Island Development Authority in 2004-5)

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FROM THE BORDER

California Natives Show Off Their Winter Colors

by Hilary Gordon • Photos by Blair Randall

On any open garden day in February, casual visitors to the Garden for the Environment stop just south of the main gate, amazed and curious about the lovely shrub whose bare branches are covered in delicate pendulous pink flowers. Thinking it must be some tender exotic, they ask a passing gardener, who is likely to say “Oh, that’s a Ribes, a tough, drought tolerant native. It is so vigorous that it self-seeds in this border every year, we don’t know what to do with all the seedlings.”



GREEN IDEAS

Ribes sanguineum at the Garden for the Environment.

California Natives: A Beautiful Choice

Many people, when they think about native plants, conjure up a vision of rangy, sparse, weedy looking shrubs. And sadly, many native plants have been set out around town in well-meant projects and then neglected, giving native gardening a bad name.

But native plants, when well-cared for, can produce as many graceful, magical effects as plants from anywhere else on the planet. And with future irrigation water for California



Ceanothus at the Garden for the Environment

homes very much in question, natives have a stronger appeal than ever. Since these plants evolved for our climate, they are among the best candidates to survive our cyclical droughts.

At this time of year, our native hillside at the Garden for the Environment has a watercolor wash of color, and one set of blooms will replace another all through the spring and summer. Now, Ribes and Ceanothus offer baby pinks and blues, along with darker blues and lavender. Soon lupines, monkey flower, flannel bush, sages, poppies and many bright daisies will parade their spring and summer wardrobe for us.

The natives will unfold one generous effect after another until well into our annual drought. By late summer, the hillside will quiet down, and only a few late bloomers, such as St. Catherine’s Lace, will note the arrival of fall. Late summer and fall are the resting times for California native plants, during our warmest and driest months, just as in other climates plants may rest during the coldest times. Then, as the first rains penetrate the dry soil, the native plants begin their growing season again.

Design Challenges With Natives

In a small urban garden, the natives’ quiet time in late summer can be a design problem, since it is also the time people plan to be outside more often

and want their gardens looking good for a barbecue or a vacation week. For the non-purists, it is easy enough to include plants with late summer or fall bloom from other climate zones.

Tibouchina at the GFE

One plant which is included in many San Francisco gardens for this reason is Tibouchina, or Princess Flower (from Brazil). Although a healthy or old specimen may have some flowers on it all year long, its biggest annual flowering occurs in fall, just as most California natives have given up for the year. Pineapple Sage (from Mexico) and Lion’s Tail (from South Africa) are some other brilliant bloomers that will give a garden dramatic color in the fall.

Another possible approach to the late summer let down in native gardens is to include plants that will hold colorful foliage, or foliage with dramatic textures during this time of year. Many ornamental grasses bloom late in the summer, and plants like Phormium or Coprosma (both from New Zealand) can offer dramatic foliage color that can fill in when not much else is blooming. All the plants with fall interest which are mentioned here are drought-tolerant, and will blend into an unwatered native planting as far as their irrigation needs, with the exception of the Princess Flower which does need summer irrigation for success.

Loving The Natural Rhythm

This is a wonderful time of year to plan a visit to a well-designed and maintained native garden. In addition to the GFE, the California Native section in the Arboretum can offer inspiration, as can the wonderful public native garden on Corwin street in the Upper Market neighborhood.

Those who come away inspired may choose to redesign an existing garden to include more natives, or to begin a new gardening project with all native plants. Either way, gardening with natives promotes diversity, saves irrigation water, and offers habitat to our native insects and birds. Considering all these benefits, it may not be too hard to learn to love the seasonal quiet of late summer and fall. When California hills turn brown, and the native plants are resting, it is time to dream about winter, when the watercolor wash of bloom will begin again.

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

URBAN COMPOSTING!

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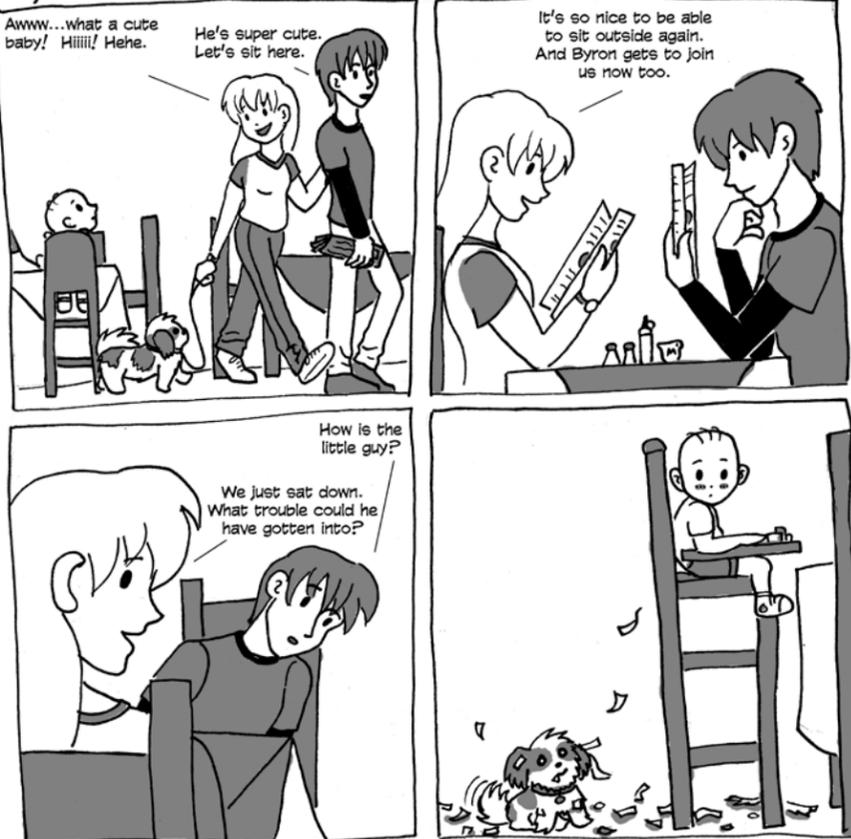
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Sudoku-fun!

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

Rules: Each puzzle is a 9 by 9 grid of squares divided into nine 3 by 3 square blocks, with some of the numbers filled in for you.
The Object: Fill in the blank squares in such a way that each of the numbers 1 to 9 appears exactly once in each row, column and block.
Answer: The answer appears in on the next page.

BRAIN FOOD

12 Points to Ponder:

- Can you cry under water?
- How important does a person have to be to be considered "assassinated" instead of just "murdered"?
- Why is it that people say they "slept like a baby" when babies wake up every 2 hours?
- Why are you "in" a movie, but you are "on" TV?
- Why do people pay to go up in tall buildings and then put money in binoculars to look at things on the ground?
- How is it that we put a man on the moon before we figured out it would be a good idea to put wheels on luggage?
- Why is "bra" singular and "panties" plural?
- Why do you have to "put your two cents in"...but it's only a "penny for your thoughts?" Where does that extra penny go?
- Did you ever notice that when you blow in a dog's face, he gets mad at you, but when you take him for a car ride, he sticks his head the window?
- Can a hearse carrying a corpse drive in the carpool lane?
- If corn oil is made from corn, and vegetable oil is made from vegetables, what is baby oil made from?
- And finally...If electricity is made from electrons, does morality come from morons?

Answers: There are no answers...

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REMEMBER WHEN?



St. Francis Wood 1912

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

WOTPCC (Cont. from p. 3) and complete the City's Neighborhood plans for the Eastern Plan, the Market/Octavia Plan, the Balboa Park Plan, and the Visitation Valley Plan; and 2). Revise the Planning Department to become more transparent and friendly towards the citizens.

He addressed the two major items by showing that the four large neighborhood plans listed above will be where the majority of growth is expected to be for the next 20 years, with additional new plans for the TransBay area and Japantown, in the Japan Center block.

The discussion next focused on the housing element and the timing. A draft version is expected to be submitted to the city in July, with a final version submitted by November. When asked what the delay was for, he said, "I wanted to have time to collect more public input than was done in 2004." He went on to explain that he didn't think the Planning Department does a great job of explaining their thought processes, "We fail in saying, here's where we disagree and why, or, here are the reasons why a project is moving forward." When questioned about the Housing Element document he said, "the Housing Element is a policy document, not a zoning element. Zoning may only be changed by the Planning Commission, the Board and the Mayor."

When asked about the Westside projects, Rahaim described the Parkmerced project as moving forward, but added that many of the 19th Ave. corridor projects have been stopped due to developer problems in securing financing.

A ten minute Q and A session followed

with comments being made on height limits," A very sensitive issue;" Secondary Units, "another sensitive issue, but one that needs to be looked at very carefully," and the Discretionary Review Process, "a very hot topic, since we are the only major city that manages the process in this way." He feels that the current system serves no one well, and sets up neighbors to fight with each other.

The session closed with discussion and answers on SB375, the anti-sprawl ordinance that expects San Francisco to absorb another 200,000 people by 2014. This would give the City 1 million people (in 49 square miles). To put this into perspective, Rahaim cites figures that show that San Francisco is currently 2nd in the US in density (behind only NY). The greater NY city area has 8 million people in 330 square miles. By contrast the greater Bay Area has 7.2 million people in 7000 square miles. This type of sprawl is what the State Senate bill is trying to control.

In closing, the Director, informed the group that his department only has control and jurisdiction over 50% of SF land, having no control over parcels that are in the redevelopment areas, Court Properties, State Property, and Properties belonging to groups concerned with higher education (like SF State). People in the audience seemed to be surprised by the amount of space that is not controlled by the Planning Department.

Additional smaller items were covered and discussed. Once finished, Rahaim stayed after the meeting to answer individual questions from the attendees.

The next meeting will be on Monday, April 27th at 7:30 in the Forest Hill Clubhouse.

Blotter (Cont. from p. 4) spotted the vehicle crashed against a fence near Sagamore with the driver exiting the vehicle. The officers yelled for the suspect to stop but he scaled the fence and ran away. The officers chased the suspect on foot with Officers Elzey and Erb tackling the suspect and subduing him. The suspect, who lives in Pacifica, has multiple arrests for auto theft and is on probation for auto theft, was arrested on a multitude of charges.

03/26 | 7:40 pm | 1700 Ocean

A man was sitting in a cafe on the 1700 block of Ocean working on his laptop computer. Suddenly two suspects came up from behind him, grabbed his computer and ran out onto Ocean avenue. The victim and witnesses gave chase to the two suspects. The suspects ran west on Ocean avenue and then up Keystone where they jumped into a car being driven by a third suspect. The suspects took off in the vehicle

with a witness following them. The suspects parked the car on Junipero Serra with two suspects walking over to a bus stop at West Portal and Sloat. Officers Christina Pena, Juanita Stockwell and Patrice Scanlan, working in plainclothes, found the parked vehicle and waited for the suspects to return. One suspect did return and started the vehicle. The officers confronted him and took him into custody. Officers Scott Biggs and Chris Oshita located the other two suspects at the bus stop and took them into custody. Officer Stockwell methodically searched the area of the parked vehicle and located the stolen computer in some bushes. The suspects were positively identified by the victim and witnesses. The suspects, who live on the first block of Acton, the 200 block of Orizaba and in Hercules, were arrested for grand theft and conspiracy.

CRITICAL INFORMATION

- 911 Emergency
- 553-8090 Emergency from Cell Phone
- 553-0123 Police Non-Emergency
- 575-4444 Anonymous Tip Line
- 311 Any City Department

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

Where Can I Find the OBSERVER?

- West Portal Avenue Area:**
 - Century 21 – Scott Keys – 101 Vicente
 - Dubliner Irish Bar
 - Greenhouse Café
 - West Portal Books
 - West Portal Music Store
 - West Portal Library
 - Zephyr Real Estate Office
- Ocean Avenue Area:**

- Lakeside Grill** (Ocean Avenue)
- Villa D'Este** (Ocean Avenue)
- Stonestown Area:**
 - Stonestown Cinema – behind Stonestown
 - Stonestown YMCA
- Portola Ave Area:**
 - Creighton's Bakery - Portola Dr.
 - Curves – 608 Portola Drive
 - Mollie Stone's Market – Portola Dr.
- Sloat Blvd Area:**
 - Aqua Surf Shop (Across from SF Zoo)

- John's Ocean Beach Café on Sloat**
- Taraval Street Area:**
 - Tennessee Grill (1128 Taraval)
 - Trolley Cafe (1300 block of Taraval)
 - Parkside Library (1200 block of Taraval)
 - Sunset Pet Supply – (2226 Taraval)
- Parkmerced Area:**
 - Park Place Market – Parkmerced
- Noe Valley Area:**
 - Bell Market (24th and Noe)
 - Fresca Restaurant (24th and Noe)

- MRW Hairdresser**
- Nail Chic on Castro at Noe**
- Noe Valley Library**
- Other Locations:**
 - Italian American Social Club – 25 Russia Ave. – Excelsior Dist
 - Liberty Fitness – 3725 Noriega St.
 - Massage Envy – Westlake Shopping Center – Daly City
 - Merced Library Branch – 19th Ave @ Winston
 - Sunset Library – 18th Street @ Irving
 - Main Library – 100 Larkin St.

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