It’s Norman Yee by a Nose
By Christopher L. Bowman

In a race which wasn't decided until several days after the polls closed, School Board Director Norman Yee beat Labor lawyer F. X. Crowley by just 132 votes in District 7. The race was decided by Ranked Choice Voting (RCV), Yee received only 39.84%, with 60.16% of the voters in District 7 not choosing Yee as their first, second or third choice for Supervisor. Yee’s victory came as something of a surprise to those who closely observed the reporting of the early absentee ballots on election night. In the initial report, Yee and the four minor candidates aligned with Yee received just 37.14% of the first choice votes. As the vote count continued on election night and in the days after the election, Yee and his allies performed better than they did in the early absentee, and when at the end the provisional ballots were processed and those which were found valid were counted, Yee and his allies had 59.95% of those votes. Given the distribution of second and third choice votes of voters whose first or second choice candidate was eliminated from the running, that shift of more than 13 points was enough to put Yee over the top when all the first, second, and third choice votes were tallied. One explanation for this shift was that Yee and the minor candidates had a better GOTV effort than the other four candidates in the race. The vote in five precincts of Parkmerced and San Francisco State University was also instructive of the ultimate district-wide results. F.X. Crowley and Norman Yee received roughly the same percentage of the votes as they did district-wide in the vote at the polls, 22.56% and 28.22%, respectively in those five precincts, which constitute 8% of District’s vote, but Mike Garcia received only 0.02%, and the minor candidates was 24.88% compared to 11.66% for the district-wide vote at the polls. The vote in Parkmerced and at SFUSU represented a strong progressive tilt and also a protest vote against Mike Garcia who strongly supported the Parkmerced project (which tenants feared would cause their displacement).

The Department of Elections has provided a detailed analysis of how the votes of the various candidates transferred in the district under RCV. (Please see the table below.) Candidates were eliminated from consideration in the opposite order in which they placed, and when the combined totals for specific candidates would not add up to the next person in the ranking, several candidates were eliminated at the same time, but the data remain separate for the purpose of analyses.

Of the 31,385 first choice votes cast for the nine candidates for Supervisor in District 7, 14,457 first choice votes did not go to F.X. Crowley or Norman Yee. Of the 14,457 voters who cast first choice votes for specific candidates would not add up to the next person in the ranking, several candidates were eliminated at the same time, but the data remain separate for the purpose of analyses.

Who will pay for the cleanup still unclear
By Keith Burbank

The SFPUC approved the settlement during a Closed Session... recommended by the Rules Committee November 15, at another Closed Session and has to be approved by the full Board of Supervisors, where the opportunity for public comment is, again, unlikely… December 4, Supervisor Elsbernd said.

The disagreement that led to the settlement concerns the environmental damage caused by lead shot and a petroleum binder used in clay targets, Steve Ritchie, assistant general manager for water at the SFPUC said. The targets were used for skeet shooting. Both contain lead and a binder in materials used at the club. The club stopped using the lead shot in 1994, and the contaminated ducks in 2000, Ritchie said.

But if the club does not pay for the cleanup, then the SFPUC may have to pass along those costs to its customers. It’s unclear if the insurance policies held by the gun club — in place in the 1970s and early 80s — may pay for some or all of the costs, Ritchie said. “The biggest question regarding the cleanup is how much funding the club can contribute,” he added.

The idea that the gun club may have to move would make at least one SF resident happy. “It’s a very strong noise disturbance …and they are not serving the public recreationally,” said Felicia Zeiger, who lives within walking distance from Lake Merced. Zeiger said the membership of the club has not grown at all, or not very much, yet the population in the surrounding area has.

Pacific Rod & Gun Club: Such a Deal

By Joel Engardio

Who is paying to clean up the $10.7 million in environmental damage at Lake Merced? It’s unclear. But the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission and the club negotiated a settlement agreement last month that will keep PR&GC at the Lake.

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**Will Santa Deliver for Lake Merced?**

By Jerry Cadagan

As we approach the Christmas Season what would Lake Merced recreationists and activists like to have Santa Claus put under their Christmas tree? Well, love to see a simple Christmas card from the Recreation and Park Department, acknowledging that it has performed poorly for the past 62 years as co-manager at Lake Merced, and that it is now prepared to relinquish its co-management role at the lake, other than management of Harding Park golfing and the Natural Areas Program. Here’s a very abbreviated summary of the most important facts.

First, Lake Merced is owned by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC). Second, Lake Merced is not a “park” within the meaning of the City’s Park Code. Third, Rec & Park’s sole basis for having had a co-management role at the lake are these 24 terribly unfortunate words found in a 1950 SFPUC resolution: “The Public Utilities Commission hereby confers upon the Park and Recreation Commission, the right to occupy, use and improve, for park and recreational purposes” the Lake Merced Tract. Fourth, for many years it has been apparent to observers that having SFPUC and Rec & Park as co-managers was a mistake, and in January 2007 the Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution 14-07 requesting the two agencies to work out a modification of the ill-advised 1950 resolution in order to give SFPUC greater management responsibility. They have failed to do so.

The result of all this has been that since 1950, Lake Merced has acted as a veritable 365 day a year Christmas tree for Rec & Park. It has collected rent from tenants, with the annual rents collected by Rec & Park of late being $77,100. It has collected permit fees from picnickers and others with the total fees collected in 2011 being $15,294. (There is a serious question whether Rec & Park has the legal authority to issue permits and collect fees at the lake because Rec & Park’s permitting authority is limited to activities in “parks” within the meaning of the Park Code, and Lake Merced is not a park. Likewise, Rec & Park’s authority to regulate traffic and issue parking tickets at Lake Merced is highly dubious.) And while Rec & Park’s revenue collections at the lake have been running close to $100,000 a year for many years, the only known Rec & Park expenditure at the lake in recent years was a one time small contribution equal to about 50% of their annual rent revenue receipts. That was for a new ramp to the dock used by hundreds of high school rowers.

And while Rec & Park was raking in the money over the years, its performance while “occupying, using and improving Lake Merced for recreational and park purposes” would have made Scrooge proud. The result of all this has been that since 1950, Lake Merced has acted as a veritable 365 day a year Christmas tree for Rec & Park.

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And while Rec & Park was raking in the money over the years, its performance while “occupying, using and improving Lake Merced for recreational and park purposes” would have made Scrooge proud. Here are just a few of the lowlights—

- As early as March 1988 Urban Park Concessionaires, the concessionaire at the lake, was writing letters to Rec & Park asking for assistance in dealing with the declining water levels at the lake. Rec & Park routinely ignored such requests.
- Rec & Park has been the manager of the month-to-month lease with Pacific Rod & Gun Club (PRGC) from 1950 until very recently. Not once during that time did Rec & Park require PRGC to obtain the proper kind of insurance to protect San Francisco from liability from environmental pollution commonly associated with skeet shooting. Now San Francisco is faced with an estimated $10 million bill for cleaning up lead and other forms of pollution.

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**Lake Merced Update**

By Jerry Cadagan

As we approach the Christmas Season what would Lake Merced recreationists and activists like to have Santa Claus put under their Christmas tree? We’d love to see a simple Christmas card from the Recreation and Park Department, acknowledging that it has performed poorly for the past 62 years as co-manager at Lake Merced, and that it is now prepared to relinquish its co-management role at the lake, other than management of Harding Park golfing and the Natural Areas Program. Here’s a very abbreviated summary of the most important facts.

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In April 1999, Urban Park Concessionaires’ contract with Rec & Park expired and it declined to renew the contract citing the low water problem and ‘15 years of talk, meetings and studies’.
In his reincarnation.

It's revealed that the city retirement system still faces inability in 10-20 years to satisfy financial obligations to retired city employees. Simultaneously, the City Controller revealed in a report last month a $4,420,000,000 liability in health care costs for retired city employees during the next 30 years. In fiscal year 2008, the city expended approximately $111,000,000 on health insurance premiums for retired city employees, by fiscal year 2012 that cost rose to about $151,000,000, and the Controller estimates it will double by fiscal year 2031 to $300,000,000 and reach $500,000,000 by fiscal year 2032. It's simple arithmetic and practice with businesses to require adequate contribution from employees in advance of receiving pensions or incurring medical expenses.

City Hall characterizes that as a "pre-funded model." Leave it to City Hall to utilize language that describes a system taken for granted in any business. It's as if city government discovered a better system than ensuring sufficient money in advance of retirement or medical expense for its employees. I suppose that why we get the city government we deserve.

With the foregoing observations, let hope for peace accomplishments in the Middle East and Africa in 2013 and a gladsome Christmas. Retired former Supervisor, State Senator and Judge Quentin Kopp lives in District 7.
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inconsistent intents—it’s a waffle shop.

Perhaps the surest thing, though no certainties in this business, is that the National Park Service has always had the ultimate say in what goes on under San Francisco streets…

letters to the editor

Phantom Votes

Three or four jack knifed 18-wheelers jam packed with Election Day ran-
cor have over turned and as you might imagine, rubber necking has resulted in hundreds of not so tender fender bend-
ers in both directions. It’s gotten so bad that major media outlet trucks are stuck on the shoulder filming each other, film-
ing each other.

It’s not just the Beltway that’s backed up. Main Street and Wall Street and the Path to Prosperity all report major slow-
downs due to a multitude of partisan struggles. Some drivers set out to pur-
posefully ramming fellow travelers right off the road while others speed across median strips to dive into oncoming traffic seemingly with no thought to life or limb. Casualties continue to mount and officials worry about running out of tankers.

Sky Nine over the Bridge to the Future reports that progress remains hopelessly clogged with all visible move-
ment being of the backwords variety and from their vantage all the right lanes look like Left lanes: not much better. Center lanes: you don’t want to know.

Many a reason have been offered up for Carmageddon spreading nationwide. Pure native stubbornness, leading to refusals to merge. Infrastructure deterio-
ration. Widespread smoke screens creat-

Part of the problem can be attributed to the numerous turnarounds closed by committee chairman to restrict desertion from party line movement and reports

December 2012 / January 2013

Page 4

It’s only $10 Million — so why should we have a public hearing?

Fiscal Cliff Traffic Report

“So, expect showers and gale force winds over the next couple of days and don’t forget that high surf advisory is in effect throughout the whole coast. We may even see some downed power lines and scat-
tered looting. That’s the weather here on Capitol Hill, now let’s go to Brandon with your Congressional traffic report!”

Thanks Brandon. Well, its gotten pretty ugly out there, people. My best advice is, stay in your homes. As expected, following the holiday recess, we’re seeing a lot of blus-
er and bombast building up on the Beltway, and the obstructionist blather has man-
aged to stall headway on nearly every budget deal ramp to a virtual crawl. Three or four jack knifed 18-wheel-
ers jam packed with Election Day ran-
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The Artful Dodger’s Testimony

She outlined her Foundation’s activities and cooperate.

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Lake Merced (Cont. from p. 2)
with very little being done." Rec & Park employee Marvin Yee told the Chron-
icle. "In the four years since the land was sold, the Park was "scrambling" to find a new con-
cessionaire to service the lake's fishing constituency. Now, 13 years later, they are hoping there might be a new tenant because there has not been a fishing concession at the lake since April 1999.
* September 2003 the Chronicle reported that the Gibbs Fishing Pier had rotted and collapsed. The Chron-
icle quoted Rec & Parks General Man-
ager as saying that the department would take care of that problem "as fast as we can." Nine years later the Gibbs Fishing Pier remains closed.
After 62 years of that kind of per-
formance it is time for Rec & Park to willingly relinquish management respon-
sibilities back to SFPU. Rec & Park has over 200 true parks to manage. It's no 
SFPUC/Lawrence (Cont. from p. 4)
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"Wee-sip. "
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The Rod & Gun Clubhouse on the Eastern end of the property hosts meetings and events for two years. During the 

Fishing Pier remains closed. "Nine years later the Gibbs Picnic Area has warned that costs are rising 

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COME ON AND TAKE A FREE RIDE

Celebrate Muni’s 100th Anniversary

A Muni Motor Coach and Streetcar 128 take passengers to the end of the B Line to visit Playland at Ocean Beach, March 20, 1927. Photo by Horace Chaffee.

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Preparing for the “Fiscal Cliff”

A phrase that has found its way into our daily lexicon is the “fiscal cliff.” It refers to a combination of Federal government spending cuts and expiring tax cuts that many fear could be a serious drag on the U.S. economy. The Bush-era tax cuts expire at the end of 2012, and the automatic spending cuts required by the “Sequester” that began in 2013, unless new legislation is signed into law. It is estimated that total deficit reduction spending cuts and tax increases have many economists concerned that if nothing is done legislatively to change current laws and avoid the cliff, a recession could result due to consumers cutting back on spending just as government reduces its own spending.

Changes on the docket

The estimated impact on the economy comes from a combination of expiring tax cuts, new taxes and automatic spending cuts. The most direct effect on individuals has to do with tax changes. They include:

- The expiration of the “Bush era” tax cuts of 2001 and 2003. Most notably, this would raise income tax rates for most people to levels that were in place prior to 2001. It would also eliminate major tax deductions, including an across the board decrease in tax rates on dividends and capital gains, a decrease in the child tax credit, and a reinstatement of phasing out some itemized deductions and personal exemptions for higher income individuals.
- The end of the “payroll tax holiday” that reduced individuals’ Social Security taxes.
- Less benefit from the American Opportunity Tax Credit, which provided up to $2,500 per student in credits (a dollar-for-dollar reduction in taxes) to offset qualified tuition expenses. In 2013, income thresholds to qualify for the credit – which will revert back to its prior name, the Hope Scholarship Credit – are lowered and the maximum credit is reduced to a projected $1,950.
- The loss of the “patch” that allowed many middle income Americans to avoid exposure to the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT).
- A drastic reduction in the exclusion amount for the estate tax from $5.12 million to $1 million, and an upturn in the highest maximum estate tax rate, from 35 percent to 55 percent.
- The implementation of a higher income threshold to qualify to deduct out-of-pocket medical costs as an itemized deduction. Currently, expenses valued at more than $5,100 are eligible for deduction. The 2013 AGI (Adjusted Gross Income) can be deducted. The threshold rises to 10 percent in 2013 for most taxpayers. For those at least age 65, the higher threshold phases in through 2016.
- The addition of new taxes that will apply to individuals earning higher incomes as part of the new Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

The effect these changes would have on individuals over the next year could be dramatic. In many cases, individuals are looking forward from hundreds of dollars to several thousand dollars or more in increased taxes for 2013 depending on individual circumstances.

The other aspect of the fiscal cliff is scheduled federal government spending cuts that are due to take hold in 2013 – another potential blow to the economy. These include:

- $110 billion in spending cuts agreed to in the Budget Control Act of 2011
- $26 billion from the expiration of emergency unemployment benefits
- $16 billion in reduced Medicare payments to physicians
- $105 billion in other scheduled changes to revenue or spending.

What should you plan for?

Here are some of what policymakers in Washington may choose to do – or not to do – to limit the potential economic shock created by the confluence of events that have led to the fiscal cliff. They could vote to alter the planned changes to tax laws and government outlays in order to temper the impact. However, any action in that regard may not occur before late this year or into 2013.

In the meantime, be prepared for what may come. It appears likely that the amount of taxes you pay in 2013 will be higher than what you paid in 2012. Whether it’s a big increase or a small rise, the current scheduled changes remains to be seen. Despite this, changes to the national economy or your personal financial circumstances will not occur overnight. They will happen all at once, but from a personal perspective, they would have a gradual effect. It could be dramatic over a year’s time, but it will be applied in smaller increments such as through wage withholding. Even the governing positions of both political parties have suggested that the situation will create challenges and should not be taken lightly. But it also offers the opportunity to carefully review your finances, everything from day-to-day spending to investment strategies and tax planning, to determine the best way to limit the impact on your own bottom line and move forward with your best financial strategies.

Prepping for the Fiscal Cliff

Preparing for the “fiscal cliff” can help you avoid the economic repercussions that have led to the fiscal cliff. They could vote to alter the planned changes to tax laws and government outlays in order to temper the impact. However, any action in that regard may not occur before late this year or into 2013.

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Money Talks - the 2012 Parks Bond

Sometimes money talks, and sometimes it shouts. What did it shout out about the passing of local Proposition B, the Parks bond, on November 6th?

We are the victims of unbalanced infusions of cash from wealthy individuals and from corporations. This syndrome has now permeated San Francisco’s local elections. More money was donated to “Yes on B” than to any other local proposition. In fact, the “Yes on B” proponents raised almost $300,000 more than the mere $9,000 war chest raised by cash-strapped neighborhood groups and individuals for the “No on B” campaign. This works out to “Yes on B” having available over $500,000 in media ads, compared to the less than 10 cents a vote available to “No on B.”

Despite this lopsided expenditure, the 2012 Parks bond campaign increased the margin for public support for parks by less than 1% over the 2008 Bond.

Everyone loves our parks. Why would a parks bond require such enormous campaign funding to succeed? The answer is the change in the nature of our parks. With the Department of Recreation and Parks (RP), a public agency now responsible for city street trees; designs, constructs and maintains city-owned facilities; inspects streets of its infrastructure. The department cleans and resurfaces streets; plants and maintains over 11,000 city street trees; designs, constructs and maintains city-owned facilities; inspects streets of its infrastructure. The department cleans and resurfaces streets; plants and maintains over 11,000 city street trees; designs, constructs and maintains city-owned facilities; inspects streets of its infrastructure. The department cleans and resurfaces streets; plants and maintains over 11,000 city street trees; designs, constructs and maintains city-owned facilities; inspects streets of its infrastructure. The department cleans and resurfaces streets; plants and maintains over 11,000 city street trees; designs, constructs and maintains city-owned facilities; inspects streets of its infrastructure. The department cleans and resurfaces streets; plants and maintains over 11,000 city street trees; designs, constructs and maintains city-owned facilities; inspects streets of its infrastructure. The department cleans and resurfaces streets; plants and maintains over 11,000 city street trees; designs, constructs and maintains city-owned facilities; inspects streets of its infrastructure. The department cleans and resurfaces streets; plants and maintains over 11,000 city street trees; designs, constructs and maintains city-owned facilities; inspects streets of its infrastructure.

The median greening project is part of community-backed efforts to make 19th Avenue corridors, originally scheduled to begin in “Sprint 2002.” As it stands currently, the project will transform a patch of green over 3 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays, and 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Fridays. However, motorized vehicles will be allowed to pass no more than one lane of traffic in each direction between the hours of 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays, and 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Fridays. However, motorized vehicles may experience traffic delays. Warning signs will be posted prior to the lane closures.

The goal is to complete construction by the end of the 5-foot-wide median, which will be transformed into a patch of green over the coming months.

Disruptions to the public, the construction team will work on two blocks of 19th Avenue at a time, closing off no more than one lane of traffic in each direction between the hours of 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. Motorists may experience traffic delays. Warning signs will be posted prior to the lane closures.

1 - A water Amendment must be passed to give voters the right to issue all revenue bonds by approval at the ballot box. This is a lot further than just rescinding Tom Ammiano’s 2002 Proposition E, which stripped voters of the right to approve some revenue bonds, but would require voter approval for all City and County of San Francisco revenue bonds.

2. All loopholes must be eliminated. San Francisco voters, who in 2002 believed they were actually approving 50-year water funding for the Hetch Hetchy project for $1.6B) and making financing easier (Proposition E) were hoodwinked by our representatives. (This was done by politicians with ambitions exceeding the narrow confines of the City) had passed 2002-SB1870 creating a Regional Financing Authority (RFA) to lend money to the Hetch Hetchy water system regardless of the November 2002 election outcome. This was really a very cruel hoax on those folks who thought they really had a say in how the Hetch Hetchy system was going to be funded.

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A Closer Look At Voter Fraud
By Former Supervisor Tony Hall

Voter fraud is the cancer that is eroding the very heart and soul of the American democratic system. For decades, those are those who choose to believe that it does not exist in our country, and they are certainly entitled to their beliefs. I am also sure that there are those who know exactly what I am writing about and they also are entitled to their beliefs. I have lived through such an unfair and destructive process that ultimately deprives all law-abiding citizens of their freedom of expression.

To illustrate my point, I will share with you my own experience in relation to voter fraud.

In the election for San Francisco Supervisor of District 7 in 2000, I was in involved in what many now consider one of the most controversial elections in this city in modern history.

On election night of November 7, 2000, I became the projected winner of that race by a margin of just over 1,300 votes. Needless to say, my campaign workers and I were elated with the understanding that we were entitled to the opportunity of engaging in the City's business. Within a week, we were informed that the voter turnout was the subject of a recount. My opponent had secured financing for a public recount to the City to be able to contest the business interests who felt that she would be more sympathetic to their causes if she were to be ultimately declared the winner.

In the weeks that followed the election, we undertook three recounts of the entire number of votes cast. This included all of the Election Day walk-in votes, polling place votes, the absentee votes and the provisional votes. With some 19,000 votes cast, we had been embroiled in a daunting undertaking, considering that I was represented by only one very knowledgeable attorney, Mr. Peter Bategal and myself as the candidate and campaign volunteer, Mr. Mike Kopec.

The two labored daily to counter the challenges that were presented to us by the members. During the challenged recount process, each individual ballot is publicly displayed, can be read by everyone, and after a final determination is declared by each side as to for whom that ballot was actually cast. Needless to say, an alert mind was absolutely necessary to be able to side as to for whom that ballot was actually cast.

As the recount weeks drew on, we marched up to the Mayor's office and rather loudly demanded my return to the D.O.E. office downstairs, to the opportunity of engaging in the City's business.

Until the last day of the recounts, a D.O.E. employee handed me a slip of paper that clearly indicated that the end of day tallies as prepared by the ECDE were not the same as the official count that the City was reported.
Greek Restaurant, Orexi, Opens with Passion

By Keith Burbank

Jon and Effie Loufas opened Orexi, a Greek restaurant, at 243 West Portal Avenue September 25. Since then, business has been good, the couple said, with customers returning each week and Jon sharing his passion for food.

For 20 years he and Effie operated a health food store in the North Beach neighborhood of San Francisco. Prior to that, Jon spent 10 years in the restaurant industry, which is his passion.

Loufas said he has lived up the street from the restaurant for the past 21 years, and when they decided to open a restaurant, West Portal was their first choice.

“I love it here,” he said. “The people are beautiful. We have great neighbors. It’s got it all,” he said of West Portal. “It’s a hidden village inside the city.”

Jon said it took seven and a half months to do the work necessary to open Orexi, which means appetite in Greek. “And we get really good feedback,” he said.

Many of the recipes have come from his mother and grandmother, which Jon has been gathering for the past two to three years. The flavor of the food comes from the sunny and fertile part of Greece, an area known as Peloponnese.

Popular dishes include: mousaka, a traditional dish of eggplant, ground lamb, ground beef and bechamel; paivada, seasoned lamb chops, grilled and served with Greek pita bread and appetizer, arnissia plevrakia, grilled lamb riblets with garlic and lots of lemon. Also, Loufas uses extra virgin olive oil from the Kalamata region of Greece, rather than butter and olive oil.

The Kalamata region is known for olives by that name, Jon said.

Inside the restaurant are wooden tables, each with a flower and candle. The floor is stone, and an iron chandelier hangs from the center of the ceiling.

On one wall hangs a honeycomb-shaped sculpture, and the bar is covered in brass. The restaurant takes reservations for tables of six or more. Otherwise, no reservations are needed. Orexi is open from 5 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Tuesday to Thursday, 5 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and 5 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Sunday. The restaurant is closed Monday, though people can find the space for private parties, Jon said. Also, Orexi hosts luncheons for companies and families.

The restaurant is open only for dinner to allow the couple to concentrate on the quality of food as the restaurant gets its feet. After the New Year, Jon said they may try lunch. The couple does not have any plans for more locations at this time.

The restaurant seats perhaps 40 people. The bar seats four.

At 4:30 p.m. on a Wednesday, the staff was busy getting ready to open. The rotisserie was loaded and one person was shining the bar.

The staff was busy getting ready to open. The restaurant seats perhaps 40 people. The bar seats four.

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$850,000
A perfect West Portal evening…my wife and I attended the holiday open house at Dimitra’s MediSpa last Thursday evening and had a wonderful time. Between 5-minute chair massages, a rejuvenating facial, appetizers and Dimitra’s famous homemade baklava it could not have been better. Even in the rainy evening over 40 people braved the elements to help celebrate the holidays with Dimitra, Elliot and staff…with perfect ravioli…at Paradise Pizza and Pasta, where Sal’s house made beef ravioli is the best ravioli I have ever had outside of Rome. You have to try it to believe it.

These are just two of the many wonderful stores that make up the special place known as “West Portal.” Think of them for the holidays and shop local if you can. It’s a great way to spread the holiday cheer.

Fire aftermath - assistance for employees…I wish to first thank all of our advertisers and all of my colleagues for helping us to keep local journalism alive. Our goal is to enrich the community through hyper-local news, events and opinions and have fun in the process. It’s been another fun year. I hope you have enjoyed letting us in to share our views of our little piece of San Francisco. Happy Holidays, we’ll see you in February.

As we close our 26th year, I just want to say “Thank You” to our readers, our advertisers and all of my colleagues for helping us to keep local journalism alive. Our goal is to enrich the community through hyper-local news, events and opinions and have fun in the process. I hope you have enjoyed letting us in to share our views of our little piece of San Francisco. Happy Holidays, we’ll see you in February.

Almost forgot—be sure to check out the newly renovated Sunset Recreation Center at 29th and Lawton—sometimes they do get things right! The old WPA (1937) building, 18,000 square-feet gym and clubhouse with seismic upgrade, etc. are top notch. Kids love the foam rubber “floor” beneath the children’s playground. The tennis and basketball courts and athletic fields, replacement of restrooms, doors, windows, roof and all mechanical and electrical systems add up to a real improvement for the neighborhood.

Do you have an event, a neighborhood fact or just an observation to share? Drop us a line at mitch@westsideobserver.com and share your ideas or just let us know what you think.
Happy Holidays!

Potrero Hill
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T

his year is very special to the cast and
crew of the annual Great Dickens Christmas Fair because 2012 marks the
200th Birthday of author Charles Dickens. Special celebrations like the Afternoon High
Tea hosted by "Mr. Chas. Dickens" for mem-
bers of the press on the opening weekend the
daft after Thanksgiving highlighted this year’s fair in particular.

Born in 1812, Charles Dickens was the second of eight children. His father
was an office clerk. With so many to feed, and
his father’s over-spending, Dick-
ens was forced to leave school at age 12 and
work in a factory. His parents and
younger siblings were sent to debtor’s pris-
on, while the lad Dickens helped to pay
off his father’s debts.

This and other hardships were
the basis for many of Dickens’ novels. Most
scholars and historians agree Dickens was
among the most prolific writers of
the Victorian Era. And it is because
of the many works he produced the annual
Dickens Christmas Fair at the Cow Pal-
ace is filled with over 700 characters. “We believe we have more Dickens charac-
ters brought to life here at the Cow Pal-
ace, more so than any other place in the
world,” said the fair’s producer and CEO, Kevin Johnson.

Following in his father’s footsteps, Patterson strives to uphold the fair as a
local holiday tradition. For over 30 years the Patterson family has been bringing
this “living Victorian Christmas card” to audiences even when “there were times we
did not think the fair would be able
to go on,” said Patterson’s mother Phyl-
lip. She talked with this reporter some
time ago about the origins of the Great
Dickens Fair, and mentioned that it all
basically started as a theme for a holiday party for family and friends. The whole
family party at home grew into an annual event.

Yet what helped the event to carry on was the dedication and commitment of
hundreds of people volunteering their
time to ensure the fair would con-
tinue, with the addition of other Victorian novel characters, like Alice in
Wonderland or Captain Nemo from
The Under Sea. The Pattersons consider everyone who
contributes, participates, and attends the fair to be part of one large extended family.

Local actor Robert Young has been with the Dickens Fair since 1990. Over the
past two decades, Young has devoted much of his acting and speech
understanding of Dickens and his
times. He entertained the press on opening weekend at the Afternoon High Tea. This
reporter asked him if, after so many years,
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production like this can be stressful. As
Young and Patterson likened Dick-
ens to the greatness of Shakespeare, espe-
cially regarding the portrayal of various characters for their “universal aspects
that all people can recognize.”

Professor Rosemary Ashton of
University College in London contacted this reporter from “across the pond” to
clarify that what Dickens created with
his energy of writing was the “arche-
type figure,” such as Scrooge, who comes
to represent a certain aspect of human
nature, “not in a tired or clichéd way,
that’s a stereotype, “ she said, “but in such a
vital way that such figures come to be
exactly what we mean when we think of
a miser,” said Professor Ashton. When it
is said that man is “a Scrooge, everyone
knows what we mean,” she said. Recently
reired from her position as Quain Professor of
English Language and Literature at UCL, Ashton noted that the characters Dickens
created speak to a “deep, fundamental human concern or fear, and so become
the mythic embodiment of such a deep
concern. This is why works like A Christmas
Carol live on,” she said. She credits the
recent renditions of Dickens works produced by the BBC as helping to foster
an even more expanded appreciation of his
work for contemporary audiences.

The Great Dickens Fair continues each weekend at the Cow Palace in December 2012 at the Cow Palace, 2600 Geneva Ave. Doors open at 10 AM and close at 7 PM. Info: web www.dickensfair. com or call 800-510-1558, Ext. 114
Whistleblowers (Cont. from p. 11) increased, along with spending on outside contracts. How could this happen?

One reason is that Prop C gave the Controller carte blanche to neuter the SFWP under the cover of “confidentiality” and lax oversight. Oversight of the SFWP was assigned to the Citizens’ General Obligation Bond Oversight Committee (CGOBOC). But CGOBOC was given to purchase and enforcement powers over the SFWP. Organizationaly, CGOBOC is dependent upon the Controller’s Office for information, funds and oversight. As the 2010-11 City Controller’s report noted, “CGOBOC depends exclusively on information prepared by the Controller and the City Services Auditor (CSA) – the very department that it is charged with overseeing.”

When CGOBOC met in April 2009, newly-appointed SFWP Director Tonia Lediju announced a “revamping” – without mentioning the 41% cut budget then imposed. Deceptively, the CSA’s 2009-10 Work Plan budgeted $300,000 for the SFWP. But records show that only $133,707 – less than half – was actually spent. “Revamping” had leached 55% of the SFWP’s allocation.

In December 2006, the SFWP quietly revised its original 2005 Policy & Procedure Manual. The difference is telling. In 2005, a dozen pages were devoted to the purpose of engaging and responding to whistleblowers. By 2010, the Customer Service Procedure Manual. The difference is telling. In 2005, a dozen pages were devoted to the purpose of engaging and responding to whistleblowers. By 2010, the Customer Service Procedure Manual. The difference is telling. In 2005, a dozen pages were devoted to the purpose of engaging and responding to whistleblowers. The 2010 manual is less than a page long.

If the recipients of our aid and protection appreciate us or do they feel that we are controlling them and their culture? Do they become independent or dependent on our largesse as quickly as possible or do they expect it to continue indefinitely?

Meanwhile, back here in the States, we need to rethink our animal behavior. We are short of energy and food, of markets and military power.

We have been in Afghanistan with bases throughout the country for more than a decade, longer than most Americans are willing to hear.

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**FLIGHT**

After a rough night of drinking and sex with red-headed Nicole: Kelly Reiuly, pilot Whip Whittaker: Den- \n
don't know whether you want The Same Old Thing. Be sure to pee first, it's a reality that is constantly shifting and redefining itself."

**CLOUD ATLAS**

In the most unique film of the year, six stories are interwoven from beginning to end by an ensemble cast whose characters move through time and space, challenging works such as Another Way Home. This timeless classic relays the humorous encounters of a conservative family and the lunatic household of the Kirbys. You Can't Take It With You at Ross Valley Play- ers' Oct 22-Nov 17. For reservations, call 415-456-9555, ext. 1 or go online at www.rossvalleyplayers.com.

**SKYFall**

Agent 007 James Bond: Daniel Craig is on an Istanbul chase to save the lives of 1,000 genetic identities of all 007 British agents; he switches from scooters to a speeding train, exhausting the first 20 minutes. The train is dead and the speed training, M: Judi Dench writes 007's eulogy. Garrick Mallory: Ralph Fiennes recommends M's retirement when a bomb goes off and Bond (Daniel Craig) is the only one to survive and live to play at YouTube. Bond's co-worker Eve: Naomie Harris is a sly one. The villain Silva: Javier Bardem doesn't show up until halfway through the story. There's exotic eye candy Severine: Berenice Sevran in the Hong Kong scenes. When the plot gets to Skyfall (Bond's family home), look for the caretaker Kincade: Albert Finney, in a scene that balances the action, the adaptation, the story and the character. Agent 007's friend Sam Mendes and writers Neal Purvis, Robert Wade, and John Logan (based on Ian Fleming's characters) gives us a darker Bond story than usual, with less tongue-in-cheek humor but plenty of action. Intense violence throughout. Profanity. Some sexuality. Partial nudity. Smoking.

**TWILIGHT SAGA: BREAKING DAWN, Part 2**

Director Bill Condon (Dreamgirls, Gods and Mon- sters and writer Melissa Rosenberg (screenplay) and Stephenie Meyer (novel) can at last be proud of the best of the series. It may never be great, but it does entertain in its own way. And this time, the hero's love interest is a hybrid who grows much faster than normal. Jacob: Taylor Lautner is firstly in the background to babysit, unless he's turning into a protective werewolf. Dr. Cullen: Peter Facinelli and his wife Alice (Ashley Greene) are competing to protect the family. Bella's b.f. Alice: Ashley Greene's psychic powers allow her to see Renesmee's future. The Cullen family is trying to get their hands on the baby to appease the masses. The use of propaganda in China's revolution is compared with the 21st century modern multi-media's influence on Western masses. As this sociopolitical content develops, it forms into a play within a play that takes on more human interest when we are drawn into a rapport between Julie (Cindy Im) and Mike (Wiley Nam Sieser), married and in conflict as to where the play's development should be going. Mike disdains Julie's preference for a narrative that's not as high-tech and involves a typical story of his ex, Lily. (Ariana Inouz). Julie is then looked upon as a martyr who is con- sidered essential to the play. The phrase "Econsciousness to mingle technology with history" is realized through a comparison of Mao's attempts to create a cultural revolution to pacify his masses with our "chaotic Facebook-a-tized mass con- sciousness." The set (Maya Linke) is filled with pieces of scenery lying about along with the use of projections and technology to interweave the two. The director and actors successfully concretize the play's abstract and surreal quality that they are free to continually spin before us in a spirit of experimentation. The Hundred Flowers Project presents a multitude of questions concerning the path of experimental theatre, as well as that of our globalized world: in Chens words that is contemporary and international. For info on Crowed Fire's productions call 415-764-9238 or visit www.crowdfire.org.Annette Lust

**annette lust and flora Lynn Isaacs on**

CIA operative Jack: Bryan Cranston engages extrac- \n
options for on sale on the way to a storm. When his plane loses altitude, with the help of stew- \n
**At the Theater - By Annette Lust and Flora Lynn Isaacs**

**Another Way Home**

Anna Ziegler's world premiere of her comedy drama Another Way Home concerning the alienation and communication between parents and their children today. And it also depicts family life and the problems of a couple's marriage relationship.

Joe90's sent off to a summer camp by his New York Jewish parents, Lillian and Phillip, who decide to visit him. When they arrive his mother flippantly announces that they don't want The Same Old Thing. Be sure to pee first, it's three hours long! Violence. Profanity. Nudity/Sexuality. Drug use.

**The Hundred Flowers Project**

Local playwright Christopher Chen's world premiere of The Hundred Flowers Project and the Playwrights Foundation, a 1950's Beijing love story set against the backdrop of the mid-1930's. The play takes place in the 1950's Beijing love story set against the backdrop of the mid-1930's. The play takes place in the mid-1930's on a mag- \n
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Another Way Home until December 2nd. \n
You Can't Take It With You

You Can't Take It With You by George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart just opened as the second show of Ross Valley Players' 43rd season. At the helm is James Dunn, renown \n
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After a rough night of drinking and sex with red- headed Nicole: Kelly Reiuly, pilot Whip Whittaker: Den-
Laguna Honda’s general fund operating theater’s operating funds come out of any operating losses from outsourcing. For example, if only 6 rental income is insufficient to pay the theater operating expenses in the event
auditorium and its adjoining chapel? Rennes' plan to take over operations of its patient auditorium. Should the auditorium and its adjoining chapel be appropriate. In order to raise an estimate of the $176,000 annual to run the theater to attract rental tenants, as well. The report notes that the 600 parking, will park their cars on days when rental events might require them to re- open Laguna Honda’s patient gift shop. Most of these costs are included in the design of the hospital when construction plans were drawn up a decade ago. Why are design changes now required? Two years after the theater was opened, Laguna Honda's staff tries to produce work at a "best standard" and I carried a lot of water for Tony Hall’s District 7 seat. The timing of Hall’s appointment allowed Newsom to appoint to the Ethics Commission three years earlier, and the same Mike Garcia that Sean Elsbernd had supported for the Ethics Commission waved the one-year waiting period and "fast tracked" Hall’s appointment as Director of Treasure Island. Hall was appointed immediately, allowing Mayor Newsom to immediately appoint his 28-year-old aide, Sean Elsbernd as District 7 Supervisor. The timing of Elsbernd’s appointment is highly-desired, construction improvements to the theater to attract rental tenants, as well. Cost factors are assessed.

It’s clear Rennes is seeking a dedicated funding stream for her Foundation. Monette-Shaw is an open-government accountability advocate, a patient advocate, and a member of California’s First Amendment Coalition. Feedback: http://westsideshower.com/news/patrick.html

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Almost a decade into Rennes’ stone walling, the Health Commission should simply go away. The City should put a red light on any future collaboration with Rennes until the Health Commission is facing its own funding stream for her Foundation.

The Heath Commission would never tolerate this level of secrecy from any of its other non-profit partners. Why would the Commission be favoring this behav ior from former City Attorney Louise Renne? Is it because she’s above the law, or is this just more of Rennes’ lack of open access to her financial data that are so different from her patient sensibilities, much like Mitt Romney’s tax returns were too much for public disclosure!

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Healing Oils of the Ancient Scriptures

The idea of using plant materials to restore our natural health and well-being is so old it seems new! At this joyous time of year, let’s look back on some historical data to find out what the Ancients did to promote healing.

China, 3000 BC. Shem Nung’s herbal book is the oldest surviving medical book in China. It contains information on over 300 herbs and their medicinal applications.

Egypt, 1470 BC. Queen Hatshepsut’s expedition to the legendary land of Punt was one of the greatest adventures of antiquity. Her army brought back wondrous riches. The greatest of all the treasures was the grove of myrrh trees, which were brought back to Egypt as gifts to the gods.

Egypt, 1330 BC. When King Tutankhamen’s tomb was opened, archaeologists discovered alabaster jars designed to hold precious essential oils that were valued above gold and jewels.

Israel, 1250 AD. An account from ancient Israel recorded in the Old Testament of the Bible that Moses anointed Aaron.

Greece, 400 BC. Hippocrates was commonly known as the “Father of Medicine.” Legend states that Hippocrates saved Athens from a devastating plague by fumigating the city with aromatics. “I believe that a daily aromatic bath followed by a scented massage will promote good health.”

Macedonia, 345 BC. After Alexander the Great defeated Darius III of Persia, he adopted the use of essential oils. It is said that his floors would be sprinkled with scented waters and that his clothes carried fragrant resins. “I am dying from the treatment of too many physicians.”

Israel, 0 AD. It is recorded in the New Testament that Wise Men visited the newborn Jesus and presented him with gifts of Frankincense, gold, and myrrh.

Italy, 100 AD. Flavius, a Roman historian, wrote a book titled Natural History that describes the uses of herbs and essential oils.

“...it is the belly, for the gratification of which the greater part of mankind exist, that causes the most suffering to man. No wonder then that the belly should have to be indebted to the aid of medicine in the very highest degree. Leaves of aitoum beaten up in wine, and dried alec. Alowed to the lie of purging pains in the bowels.”

Iran, 1000 AD. An Arab physician named Avicenna improved the quality of essential oils by developing steam distillation.

Germany, 1480 AD. Saint Hildegard, a herbalist, wrote Causes and Cures for Illness.

“...with earth was the human being created. All the elements served mankind and, sensing that man was alive, they buried themselves in aiding his life in every way.”

France, 1400 AD. During the Medieval plague, Four Thieves in Marseilles robbed the dead without becoming sick. When captured, the men revealed a mixture of aromatics they used to protect themselves against the deadly plague.

Central America, 1500 AD. When the Spanish Conquistadors invaded the Aztecs, they were amazed by the abundance of medicinal herbs found in Montezuma’s botanical garden.

France, 1795 AD. Napoleon and his bride Josephine used essential oils as perfumes. Occasionally, Napoleon would not approve of the oil Josephine selected, hence the famous phrase “Not tonight, Josephine.”

Vietnamese Coast, 1940 AD. The Safeway located at the corner of 17th Avenue and Taraval.

When we are here on the planet with everything we need to sustain ourselves according to the Divine plan. Is this a coincidence? I don’t believe so. What is an Essential Oil?

An essential oil is the life-blood of the plant and is a very special natural substance chemically. If used in a pure concentrated state (the whole juice, the fresh plant, dissolved in a fat, or as aromatic vapors inhaled out of the air) their healing power has been known and used for thousands of years. It is testified in Egyptian hieroglyphics dated more than 5,000 years ago. They are considered to be the first medicines of mankind and were an important part of the prescriptions of Hippocrates whose works were published around 400 BC.

Essential oils are composed of tiny molecules, all smaller than 500 amu (atomic mass units) in molecular weight. Fatty oils are composed of much larger molecules, many weighing 1000 amu or more. This difference is crucial to understanding why essential oils heal and fatty oils do not, at least not in the same ways.

Because the essential oil molecules are so small, they easily pass through tissues and through cell walls as well. They bring nutrition and information into the cell and carry waste products out of the cell. Can you see why this may be important in aiding the body’s immune system to ward off toxins and disease?

Any essential oil placed anywhere on the body is transdermal and can reach every part of your body within minutes. So the importance of using a pure therapeutic grade essential oil is paramount. You must be sure you are not using an adulterated oil because first, it won’t have the healing properties, and next, may even be harmful. If you have a bottle of essential oil and says “Do Not Ingest,” don’t use it at all!

Essential oils perform many duties in the plant, like regulating plant growth as hormones, and metabolism as enzymes. These plant oils can also aid us in the same way to support and balance the endocrine, circulatory, digestive, and nervous systems. They can clear our sinuses and lungs to help us breathe better. They can help us metabolize alcohol, caffeine, and other toxins. They can also boost the natural defenses of our immune systems so we can fight off disease by our own abilities. And while they are friendly to our body, they can get rid of bacteria, viruses, parasites, and fungi. When applied to the skin, the oils are effective insect repellents, like cedarwood and myrrh used in ancient times.

If you would like more information on how to get these healing oils as well as how to use them, I will be holding bi-weekly phone sessions starting in January and would love to send this valuable information to you. Please contact me at 650.359.6579 or email Sharon@sharonthehealth.com and I’ll provide the call in information. Also, you can visit www.sharonthehealth.com and under services in the menu bar, click on Essential Oils.

Found in the Bible in Ezekiel 4:22 it’s suggested that the Creator Source gave us natural herbs with their extracts to be our medicines. So God, The Creator (or whichever name you may use to address the higher consciousness) was actually the first farmer and botanist on Earth! His intent was for us to take responsibility for our own health care and use our intelligence with his divine guidance.

From my house to yours, I wish you a Happy and Healthy Holiday! Thank you for your interest in reading my column, Sharon The Health in 2012. Stay tuned for more in the New Year 2013.

“The views expressed are those of the writer. If you have any questions about your health, you should always consult with your doctor.”
SUdoku-Fun!

Rules:
Each puzzle is a 9x9 grid of squares divided into nine 3x3 boxes, with some of the numbers filled in for you.
The Object:
 Fill in the blank squares so that each of the numbers 1 to 9 appears exactly once in each row, column, and box.
Answer:
The answer appears below.

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I Do Love the Holidays

Phyllis’ Findings / Phyllis Sherman

Y ears ago Jerry Seinfeld had a joke which said, “When New Yorkers turn 65, a bus shows up and takes them to Florida.” I didn’t believe it, but when I arrived in Florida several weeks ago, I believed it. It was difficult to find anyone in Florida who wasn’t from N.Y. or L.I. (couldn’t miss them with the New York accents). I found most of the days in Florida hot and humid...”mugginess” was the correct adjective. I’ve been spoiled by the moderate weather in San Francisco.

I decided that what to do in Florida if you’re a Senior is find a nice Independent Living facility (which there are several of on each block), and for a minimum several thousand dollars for a month you can move in and see what it’s all about. Usually you need to bring your own furniture but I asked for a respite arrangement where I’d use their furniture, facilities, etc. for a month and, if satisfied, would arrange a permanent stay.

Okay. I moved into Horizon Club, an Independent Assisted place that prided itself on being a Marriott Hotel formerly. It was huge and there was a lengthy walk from my room to the elevator and then to the lounge, dining room, front desk. So be it. The inmates (a polite euphemism I’ll use) were a varied lot...almost 300 of them in various states of disable-ability...legally blind, hard of hearing, aphasia, some dementia...and the facility took anyone, in any condition...even those suited for nursing homes...who could pay the healthy prices for all the empty rooms available. Macular degeneration was the operative word for many...some hard of hearing residents had refused to get hearing aids and it was necessary to shout at them to be heard and they usually shouted back. It was quite a scene. Several were quite demented and some had fascinating stories to relate...I hear Obama is really in a terrible marriage. Michelle’s been trying to divorce him for 4 years.” Another story...I’ve had 6 boyfriends...one was from the Mafia!” “The guy in the next room is gay but wants to marry me” “I’m only 66 but they tell me I have Alzheimer’s.”

There were several “regular” people, fortunately. Bud was from Ohio and said he’d owned 5 furniture stores and regaled us with stories about types of couches he’d sold over the years. Morris liked films a lot but insisted on eating alone because he didn’t want to “get involved.” Lenore still had problems). An occasional diner removed his dental bridges to soak them in his water glass. I will say that many of the ladies at Horizon Club were dressed to kill...very affluent in former lives with rings on each finger and expensive, impressive jewelry.

Once a week a visit to an outside movie theater was nice. I (did see Argo and Flight), and also there was a visit to a mall for those who could shop (albeit “shuffle”) with canes, walkers, wheelchairs and even speedy scooters. I did receive a few calls from other Independent Living facilities who invited me to visit them and check out how impressive their services were, but putting around without a car proved difficult. I found it impossible to get on-line on the computer at Horizon Club and receiving mail in boxes with keys that frequently didn’t work was another problem. There really was never sufficient staff to cater to the variety of residents’ problems.

The local paper in Deerfield Beach was an unmitigated disaster (detailing local fender benders and obits), but even the daily Florida Sun-Sentinel left much to be desired. One didn’t expect NY Times coverage but a front page article about a woman who had size “E” breast implants seemed somewhat irrelevant. A secondary story complaining about the long lines (an eight hour wait) to vote covered the rest of the page.

So much for local journalistic coverage in our area of Southern Florida.

Feedback: phylis@westsideobserver.com


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BRAIN FUD

Riddles are little poems or phrases that pose a question that needs answering. Riddles frequently rhyme, but this is not a requirement.

You will know that I am coming
From the jingle of my bell,
But exactly who I am is not an easy thing to tell.

Children, they adore me
for they find me jolly,
but I do not see them when the halls are decked with holly.

My job often leaves me frozen,
I am a man that all should know,
But I do not do business in times of fleet or ice or snow.

I travel much on business,
But no reindeer haul me around,
I do all my traveling firmly on the ground.

I love the time of Christmas,
But that’s not my vocational season,
And I assure that is because of a sound economic reason.

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Remember When?

Construction on Mt. Davidson. Written on back: “New housing on slopey Mt. Davidson” Photo by Eddie Murphy. Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, SF Public Library

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OPEN LATE

PHOTO BY JULIE CASSON

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public at the polling place. These enterpris-
ing frauds would check the names listed late in the day and decipher who had not voted yet and would be unlikely to do so by closing time. A call to the residence of that potential voter as listed on their campaign lists would reveal if that person was even home. If no answer, bingo, into the poll they would waltz at the last moment to cast a vote under that person's name.

3. Voter Rolls: Voter rolls maintained by the D.O.E. containing the lists of voters in San Francisco are almost never purged to eliminate those who have either died or have moved out of the City. With absentee voting now compromising 55 to 60% of the total votes cast, the D.O.E. automatically mails out absentee ballots to those who have requested such unless the department is notified of the voters departure. Herein lays the problem. If the status of these tens of thousands of departed voters is not duly and properly recorded in a timely fashion, then there exists a tremendous opportunity for fraudulent ballots to be recorded by those who would manipulate the system. In San Francisco there are political consultants who are paid a handsome sum because of their ability to control a significant portion of the absentee ballots in circulation. The insiders call it the "ACE" factor, and it has been instrumental in affecting the outcomes of several mayoral races, most notably in the Newsom - Gonzalez cliff-hanger of 2003.

4. Voter Identification: In my opinion, there is absolutely no argument that holds up against the requirement that all voters show some form of identification. Voting is one of the privileges that come with citizenship as guaranteed by our Constitution. The hue and cry that the requirement of I.D. in order to vote will discriminate against those who do not possess identification is pure bunk. Virtually any-one who desires a form of I.D. can easily get one in today's society; especially those who are receiving any form of assistance. The less fortunate are the very ones who are most victimized by a no I.D. require-

ment because the weight and influence of their own vote is diminished in proportion to the number of false votes cast. When voter fraud exists, they become even more exploited by those who are manipulating the system, resulting in a situation where the most powerless become even more so.

In closing, may I say thank you for tak-
ing the time to read this because it is impor-
tant. It is time for us to forget the Monday morning quarterbacking about why a can-
idate won or lost a particular race. We no-

longer understand what voter fraud is—think VCR, phonograph, Polaroid, videotapes, land line phone. Yes. There still are books …

6. A California that finally does commit to investing in a quality educa-

tion system. We are not there yet. California is still languishing near the bottom of the nation in education funding. The good news is that voters want to support our schools. However, the vote this November did NOT commit significant funding to move California out of that dubious distinction of having one of the largest economies in the world that fails to adequately invest in its schools.

Parents and teachers and administrators need to continue to let the general public know what is really happening. The lottery did not solve the school-fund-

ing crisis and neither did the vote in November.

7. Ignore the title of "Top Ten" and put as number one good health and good health care for everyone.

Feedback: kocivar@westsidewebserver.com
Q: Where is the best place in Bay Area to buy a second home as an investment property? I am looking at a price of $300K or less. Jerry Keys
Santa Cruz is one place you might consider. With state cutbacks in UC housing and a need for UCSC student housing, they have a strong rental market. Santa Cruz has a significant number of homes for sale in your price range and I can refer you a reputable agent there or throughout the Bay Area.

Q: Does a landlord have to allow a handicapped person to make modifications to a rental unit? Alicia
Landlords are required to allow modifications for handicaps as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act. If the modification is one that can’t be easily removed, have an attorney write a clause in the lease for your specific situation.

Q: We plan to make an offer on a condo with no inspection reports and the seller wants to sell it AS-IS! Ed Wu
“AS-IS” is simply means that the seller would rather not make repairs. Both the local and statewide Realtor contracts allow for inspections. If you find a problem while in contract, you can cancel the escrow.

Kevin Birmingham is a licensed real estate broker, have a question for the Real Estate Answer Man? Submit them to kevinb@zephyrsf.com

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With the holiday season upon us I started thinking about all the various locations where we’ve celebrated Christmas and New Year’s, or more importantly, about places where I’ve never been during this special time of the year. Christmas Eve at Santa Croce in Florence was unforgettable as we watched the crowds milling around the church while the priest preached fire and brimstone. New Year’s Eve in Milano was an adventure all of its own as we revelers packed into the main dining room where the exit doors had been chained and padlocked to keep out the uninvited.

But aside from all the charm one thing is for sure, you’ll never see me (all of me) celebrating New Year’s in the Castro…there is no way that I’m celebrating the evening in the buff freezing my ass off.

The many celebrations with friends and family all have great memories, but how about Christmas at St. Peter’s in Rome, or New Year’s in the Alps? How do the Asians celebrate, or the Jewish people and the Muslims? With all the nationalities in this beautiful City of ours one could run ragged trying to figure out all the customs and traditions.

While visiting St. Petersburg, we spent a short time in the Church of our Savior on the Spilled Blood and the architecture was stunning, but in San Francisco one could visit The Holy Virgin Cathedral on Geary Boulevard and feel right at home where the mosaics on the walls and ceilings are just as beautiful. In Dublin we visited Trinity College, but think about the camaraderie at the Irish Cultural Center where friendship and good cheer are always part of the evening’s bliss. We have St. Peter’s and Paul’s Church in North Beach for the Italians and Asians, and Glide Memorial that caters to all faiths including the Muslims, and are all living testaments to San Francisco’s diversity.

From the blue Pacific to our own pyramidal, from Alcatraz to AT&T Park, and the views of the two bridges never cease to amaze. From Golden Gate Park to the crookedest street in the world, anyone can get a glimpse of the world without so much as getting out of their car. We are so blessed to have such beauty in such a relatively small area.

But aside from all the charm one thing is for sure, you’ll never see me (all of me) celebrating New Year’s in the Castro. With the temperature surly hovering around 40 degrees there is no way that I’m celebrating the evening in the buff freezing my ass off. Those park benches can get mighty cold, even with a towel on which to sit.

Enjoy the city and enjoy the world and to all, my fondest wishes for this holiday season and warmest greetings for the New Year, which I plan to spend fully clothed.

Feedback: sergio@westsideobserver.com

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