Laguna Honda’s Unkindest Cut

By Patrick Monette-Shaw

Efforts underway to de-skil Laguna Honda Hospital’s (LHH) doctors and certified nursing assistants is the unkindest cut of all. Cutting medical care. De-skilling nursing home staff often precipitates a slide into substandard healthcare.

When newspapers reported the tragic murder-suicide at Oakland Springs Health Care Center nursing home involving a mother in failing health killing her brain-injured daughter, I was reminded of the Observer’s September staff report about LHH’s identity crisis and the so-called “la report” — which recommends replacing LHH’s doctors with nurses, psychologists, and social workers in order to increase mental health and substance abuse services at LHH.

Diana Harden had filed a series of complaints over the care of her daughter Yvette at Oakland Springs, which unlike Laguna Honda is a “free-standing” nursing home (one not affiliated with a hospital). But like LHH, Oakland Springs has had more than its share of complaints lodged with the State. Among the 152 complaints against Oakland Springs in the past three years, several involved residents waiting days or weeks to receive medical care. A common thread linking the two stories is the need for sufficient in-house physician staffing in nursing homes.

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Montessori School Celebrates 33 years! — p. 3

Business Corner Mebine & Assoc. Optometrists — p. 9

Breaches, Bridges & Buses

Within the past month, two disclosures reminded me of more history concerning San Francisco and the Bay Area. In order, one related to the West Portal Branch of our city-wide library system. In 2000 voters approved a general obligation city bond issue of $106,000,000. That evidently wasn’t enough; in 2007, tens of millions of dollars were additionally approved by San Francisco voters, long known for their admiration of San Francisco’s library system. A recent examination of the audit of the Department of Public Works (DPW) and the so-called “Branch Library Improvement Program” by the City Controller disclosed that not only was the West Portal Branch Library remodeling late in completion, but also costlier to taxpayers than the City’s contract with the general contractor allowed. In bygone years, the Department of Public Works, under the leadership of the late Myron Tatarian and City Engineer Robert Levy of Lakeshore Acres insisted upon compliance with standard public contract provisions which included all monthly schedules of expenditures and completed work, rigid evaluation of change order requests and additional costs relating thereto and meticulous final inspections of the public project before acceptance by the City.

Regarding the West Portal Branch Library project, the City Controller discovered that the DPW had waived $405,000 penalty payment required of the contractor for late completion of the project. Also discovered was a failure by the DPW to demand compliance with expenditure details, schedules or thorough final inspection. The Dept. of Public Works’ excuse was that such taxpayer protections were “overly burdensome…” The investigation also revealed that DPW did not even verify the validity of the contractor’s invoices, instead approving an insurance company which was in violation of state law. Mind you, this was an audit by the City Controller, not the famed Board of Supervisors Budget Analyst, Harvey M. Rose, whose time and effort since his first engagement by the Board of Supervisors in 1971 has produced tens, even hundreds of millions of dollars in savings for concerned taxpayers. In the post-WWII era of Controller Harry Ross and Controller Nat Cooper (his successor) it was common for controller audits to expose misspending. The advent of Mr. Rose inspired cooperative efforts by former Controller John Farrell. It is to expose misspending. The advent of Mr. Rose inspired cooperative efforts by former Controller John Farrell. It is not fantasy to observe that episodes like those described...
Raiding the Parking Meters

San Francisco’s new parking rates — higher parking ticket fines, new hourly parking rates and enforcement, and planned increases in parking meter operation hours — along with SF’s higher sales tax (at 9.5%), pack a double wallop hurting neighborhood businesses, shoppers, drivers, and neighbors.

It is less expensive for shoppers to drive to jurisdictions with lower sales taxes and free parking. City and local business revenue is bound to plummet just when needed most.

On July 1, San Francisco raised parking meter rates fifty cents hourly throughout the City. Parking locally now costs at least $2.00 to $3.50 hourly. Parking meter citations recently increased to $50 – $60 and are being vigorously enforced. Although San Francisco officials claim increasing parking meter rates and tickets will help local business, the current plan has the City creating a turn-over in neighborhood parking spaces, empty store fronts are sprouting up all over town.

Steve Dawson, the president of the Inner Sunset Merchants Association states, “This is no question that the higher meter rates and longer operation hours will impact local businesses by pushing customers to shopping malls where parking is free and ticket worry vanishes.”

Parking control officers issue at least three tickets every minute. At minimum, two million tickets will be issued this year, generating over $100 million in parking revenue for the City. Some of this revenue goes to San Francisco’s Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), which runs the Municipal Railway, traffic control, and parking meter enforcement.

The SFMTA is not returning the revenue back to the neighborhoods. The SFMTA saw its income drop from $30 million out, after Mayor Agnos took $6 million at the beginning of the fiscal year. We need the revenue now!

The SFMTA’s Board of Directors, Traffic Commissioners, and City Supervisor David Chiu, state that the subject of free parking has been put to rest. "There is no evidence that free parking is helping local businesses.”

The current plan is to implement parking meter increases on a revenue-generating basis. Instead, it claims parking meter increases will be used to provide more parking, 24 hours a day, creating availability, so that existing customers can access businesses, 3) Allow the SFMTA to use time limits and prices to achieve "availability goals," and 4) Reduce double parking and clogging. SFMTA spared one word about generating revenue.

The SFMTA claims that higher turnover at parking meters will equate to higher merchant sales. There is no data or studies that support this flawed assumption. In fact, Oakland just extended longer parking meter hours and stringent new parking rules on July 1, despite many merchants noting their business is down by thirty percent. Oakland shoppers opposed the new parking enforcement hours, fees, and rules — and have stopped shopping at Oakland businesses, favoring instead shopping in nearby retail areas with lower parking costs.

San Francisco politicians take note: Disgruntled Oakland business owners are threatening to recall the Oakland City Council over the higher parking fees. Quoted in the Oakland Tribune newspaper, an Oakland business owner states, “A city councilman’s instinct doesn’t even begin to describe how I feel about our City Council. This is a public shakedown. It’s an extortion racket. I weep for Oakland and all the businesses that are going to close.”

Between 1947 and 1987, San Francisco and its local merchant associations agreed to share parking meter revenue collected in neighborhood shopping districts. The City placed parking meters throughout neighborhoods, promising merchants that collected parking revenue would be used to help local shop owners.

Collected fees were used to help local businesses. Collected fees were used to help local businesses. Collected fees were used to help local businesses. Collected fees were used to help local businesses. Collected fees were used to help local businesses. Collected fees were used to help local businesses. Collected fees were used to help local businesses. Collected fees were used to help local businesses. Collected fees were used to help local businesses.

But between 1987 and 1992, City politicians stabbed merchants in the back, looting the Off-Street Parking Fund, before the SFMTA agreed to place parking meters on a revenue-generating basis. Instead, it claims parking meter increases will be used to provide more parking, 24 hours a day, creating availability, so that existing customers can access businesses, 3) Allow the SFMTA to use time limits and prices to achieve “availability goals,” and 4) Reduce double parking and clogging. SFMTA spared one word about generating revenue.

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under the guise of discouraging outsid-
er businesses, and the encour-
er to cite his beloved “best
practices.”

The latest gimmick to raise dollars at the expense of driv-
ers is the blatantly obvious speed traps that have sprung up around the Westside. Over- staffed with cops who obviously aren’t directed to do some-
thing other than “enterprise” these strategic “entrapments” seem to be designed to snag unaware and in most cases, unsuspecting drivers. As many of you know, the city is now noticing, the potholes are starting to reappear on recently repaved streets. This
tation. Well, needless to say, it has now

Life in the western ring of the City,

to offer quality early childhood
education.

The Montessori Children’s Center,

T he West of Twin Peaks Cen-
tral Council (WOTPCC) held their regu-
lar meeting on Monday, September 28th
with their first meeting under the
leadership of President Dutil, who remains of the board

At 7:30 PM in front of a large crowd

Community

OBSERVATIONS AND
PREDICTIONS:

1. It just came out in the news that the
Obama administration does not favor
turning Treasure Island over to the
City for little or no money. It is obvious that there
are certain costs involved to the Navy for
to them to cite his beloved “best
practices.”

any retail business owner in any San
Francisco neighborhood will tell you
that one of the biggest impediments to
the success of their business is the lack of
available parking. In many cases, parking
for their daytime customers. With $3.50 per hour
meters and one hour time limits, (in many
places, 20 minute markers are end-
ed) drivers have done a masterful job in
destroying small busi-
nesses and more and more shoppers flee to the
other side of the hill for the

October 2009

Montessori School Celebrates
3 Years Serving Children

While some businesses have
responded to the
economic crisis by cut-
ting back services or
offering new ones, others
are

early childhood

the years is the early
childhood

by focusing on what they do best:

The Montessori Children’s

Center, in Parkmerced, is one of
these organizations.

The impact of the crisis has
been challenged to the
school, this

and

the Montessori Children’s Center. Judy

Flyn

Quality early childhood

education.

The early years of a child’s
life are the most important.

We’re choosing to continue to
offer the best educa-
tion, based on the principles of
Maria Montessori.

This year, the school celebrates its thirty-third year of continuous operation. Started
in 1976, it was originally located across from campus of San Francisco State University
on Font Boulevard. In 2004, due to SFSU’s acquisition of the building where the school
was housed, the MCC moved to a new, state-of-the-art building on Juan Bautista Circle,
Cont. p. 4
Kopp (Cont. from p. 1) relative to the West Portal library project spawned tax-payer revolt. Readers may previously not to increase the toll to $5. Readers may recall that this is why we did this costs. The Ja report replacement to subtract medical staff and shift resources from medical services to behavioral services in order to remain “cost neutral.” This is poppy-cock, and may involve actual, or perceived, conflicts of interest from not adequately acknowledging his personal relationships with staff employed by the City’s Community Behavioral Health Services department which commissioned the Ja study.

Insufficient availability of medical care at Oaklands Springs Health Care led to a tragic murder-suicide. Subtracting physicians and certified nursing assistants at LHH — both of whom provide direct patient care — is not the answer, and may lead to increased rates of premature mortality. Is this really what we want for San Franciscans who rely on LHH for part of their medical care?

Twenty LHH physicians signed a resolution rejecting the Ja report's recommendations to reduce physician staffing, due to Ja’s bias, inadequate data, flawed methodology, and lack of professional qualifications to assess physician services at LHH. You can join them by contacting Mayor Gavin Newsom and Supervisor Sean Elsbernd and urging them to reject the Ja Report recommendations.

Montessori (Cont. from p. 3) designed by Mark Horton and Associates. With large, open classrooms and a high-quality play structure, the building has been admired for its design, and was recently featured in “Preschool and Kindergarten Architecture,” a book about the design of early childhood education buildings. The school has prospered in its new location. Jennifer Diaz, who has worked at the school as a teaching assistant for 13 years, thinks the new building is an improvement. “Parents are delighted by the classrooms,” she says. “They really like them.”

Despite the current challenges, the school has no plans to change the education it offers. “Every- one has had to tighten their belts a little bit,” says Flynn. “But seeing the children’s joy and enthu-iasm makes it worth it.” The school holds an open house for prospective parents in February. For details, contact the school at (415) 333-4410 or online at www.montessorichild- rencenter.org.
To What Are We Entitled?

A few years ago, people filled the streets to demand amnesty for those who entered the country illegally, used false documents to obtain employment, drove cars without benefit of license or insurance and in many cases failed to pay income taxes. Thousands of illegal immigrants (document-free imports) and their supporters waved the flags of their mother countries proclaiming that while they will always love and be loyal to their homeland (as long as they and their children don’t have to live there), they are entitled to all the benefits of American citizenship. Yet, they got away with it. Of course, the hope of countless citizens who paid taxes to be granted legal entrance to the promised land, but are they here now, they have worked hard for low wages. Some have even managed to start families here with American-born children. Are they really entitled to all the rights any American citizen enjoys? And when they then apply for work and if their children apply to colleges, should they also be entitled to affirmative action to level the playing field? And then what about two medical professionals—a doctor and a nurse in different locations who were found to have been practicing without benefit of a medical license or any education in their field? The doctor offered medical services to low-income patients who paid him only what they could afford. He was not a great doctor, but he helped many people. The nurse was accorded special honors by a non-existent nurses association. Should both be entitled to continue their careers even though they had been working without the necessary documentation? Sure they violated the laws governing entry into medical practice, but they have been doing the job and we need medical professionals.

Last year people were protesting the results of a ballot measure declaring marriage to be limited to the union of one man and one woman. The protesters were irate and outraged that it was possible in a democracy for the majority to vote on issues that affect the population. Marriage is a human right (read entitlement) that is for anyone who loves anyone else (as long as there only two involved, both are human, they are not otherwise related to each other, are not married, and are over a certain age) they say. Are all lovers really entitled to this right? Are the rights of marriages of homosexuals? The banking business was at the brink of collapse because of immense greed and poor judgment. Large banks and the insurance company that covered some of their losses needed tens of billions of taxpayer dollars to stay in business. Upon receipt of taxpayer bailout money, they laid off some bankers and brokers awarded thousands of employees huge bonuses. One bank is preparing to pay one individual $100 million in bonus while still owing the taxpayers billions. These hard-working employees had lost some of the value of their homes because they themselves had destroyed the value of their company. But still they worked hard and might be tempted to forsake their company and go to the competition if they are not given the bonuses to which they feel entitled. Loyal employees they are not.

Are they entitled to bonuses regardless of their work product and because of their lack of loyalty and abundance of greed?
The small radical fringe of the minority party continues to make absurd allegations about the President. Radio and television personalities like Rush, Bill O., Glenn, Sean, Michael and Lou, whose wealth depends upon encouraging this fringe group, keep insisting that our President is not a native-born American contrary to all evidence. They allege that he has an agenda to turn the country into a socialist or perhaps even a communist state. They imply that there are some dark secrets in the President’s college transcript and accuse him and his alma maters of a conspiracy to hide his report cards. They continually slander and libel the President. Is that why we have the first amendment guaranteeing and therefore entitling freedom of the press?

Are they entitled to say whatever they want in the name of journalism? Are they entitled to do whatever they want to people in the name of their beliefs? Are they entitled to improve the bottom line including hiring document-free imports at low wages and benefits or outsourcing work done here to less-expensive workers in India and China regardless how that affects our workers or our nation’s economy?

People are using cell phones to call police and to use them anywhere they can get a signal! They pay their exorbitant cell phone bill every month, so can they talk while on a checkout line, while waiting at a green light, while driving through a red light or stop sign, while driving through a yellow light, while talking on a cell phone while while driving drunk or while talking with a friend and driving illegally? Are they entitled to talk on their cell phones in a 35 mph zone, while strolling their baby as they hold and drink the ubiquitous cup of coffee, while out on a date or while in a park-
ing space before leaving it?

There are people with all the right political views entitled to double park when making ATM transactions, dropping the little ones off at childcare, buying flowers or just chatting with friends or acquaintances?

Are we all entitled to own our homes, even if we can’t afford the payments?

Are we entitled to do whatever we can afford to disregard of whether we need it and not matter how it affects the environment?

Are children of the very rich and famous entitled to getting advantages when applying to private high schools or universities in a 35 mph zone, while strolling their baby as they hold and drink the ubiquitous cup of coffee, while out on a date or while in a parking space before leaving it?

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Would you have a mortgage? Would you have been able to afford to buy a house and a car to drive to work if you didn’t have that mortgage and much more?

What about our workers or our nation’s economy?

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SATURDAY, OCT 17, 2:30 PM
MCKENNA THEATRE, FEE
PRE-COntenST TALK
7PM, ROOM 146, CREATIVE ARTS

KABUKI: BACKSTAGE PASS
Age Dept: A behind-the-scenes look at the color, magic and drama Experience the classical Japanese method from the world-renowned Shochiku Co. in this rare performance and lecture.

SUNDAY, OCT 17, 2:30 PM
MCKENNA THEATRE, FEE

CARTOGRAPHIC IMAGINATION/ AN ATLAS Mapping gets radical in these two shows.

WEDNESDAYS—Saturdays
11:30 AM–1:50 PM
FATHER DUFFY GALLERY, FREE

PROOF
BY DAVID AUBURN
Calculate the unknowns of life in this Pulitzer- and Tony-winning drama.

OCT 8, 10, 15, 17, 18, 21, 25, 27
SUNDAY, OCT 25, 6:00 PM
LITTLE THEATRE

STAY CONNECTED
TWITTER.COM/SFSTATEARTS
FACEBOOK.COM/SFSTATEARTS
CREATIVEARTS.SFSU.EDU/EMAIL
EVENTS HOTLINE: 415.338.2467

MORRISON ARTISTS SERIES
ERIOCA TRIO
This Grammy-nominated ensemble changes the face of classical music. Works by Beethoven, Tower and Brahms.

SUNDAY, OCT 17, 7:30 PM
MCKENNA THEATRE, FREE

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT
OCTOBER CALENDAR

October 2009
Westside Observer
GRAND OPENING AT THE STONESTOWN FARMERS MARKET

On Saturday, October 11th, the Stonestown Galleria and Marin Farmers Markets (MFM) will host a Grand Opening Celebration in honor of the new Stonestown Farmers Market.

Farmers market shoppers, local public officials, and community group representatives will join the Stonestown Galleria and MFM’s food purveyors, and artists for a pumpkin cutting ceremony at 11 am. Throughout the day, market-goers will enjoy live entertainment, special market give-aways, and market tours with Life’s Ingredients. Shortly after the pumpkin cutting ceremony the market will be blessed by Jing Mo Lion Dance, taking heads of lettuce from local dignitaries and kicking them throughout the market.

Richard Forester, General Manager of the Stonestown Galleria, is pleased with the partnership—"It’s been a very synergistic relationship. The Stonestown Farmers Market is a tremendous resource for our neighboring communities and we’re happy to offer our space and support to the local farmers and food purveyors of Marin Farmers Markets. We look forward to many more seasons to come."

Tyler Thayer, Market Manager, reflects on the immense outpouring of support from the community—"We feel so fortunate to have been welcomed by the local communities. Everyone I speak to is thrilled that the market is here. Customers are always asking friends, invite your neighbors, make this market a pivotal part of your community! Every week the market seems to grow. It’s exciting to watch."

"We’re coming home" and "Whatsername" bring the youthful exploits to a reassuring end. And as the piece draws to a high voltage energy of the singers, and the warm audience. Directed by Michael Mayer, the talented director of Spring Awakening, and choreographed by Steven Hoggett, the piece is comprised of nineteen actor/singers and an ensemble.

In this rock opera it is the theatricality of the lyrics that project a youth’s rebellious journey against his world and himself. Only a short recited line here and there supports the dramatic action. We are first introduced to the songs “The American Idiot” and “Jesus Of Suburbia,” sung by John Gallagher in the role of Johnny, Matt Caplan as Tuny, and Michael Esper as Will. At one point Johnny blasts out “I forgot to take a shower!” suggesting his reconciliation with a more structured world and self.

Christine Jones creates a spectacular set of a warehouse with scaffolding and multiple TV screens video scenes on a back wall that simultaneously change images along with brightly glowing strobe lights to suggest an electrifying atmosphere.

Costumes by Andres Lauer are causal togs worn by young people. Although the American Idiot rock opera remains basically a brilliant collage of songs well fused together under the theme of youthful disillusion rather than an opera providing dramatic conflict and development of dramatic action and characterization, this rendition of angry and dissatisfied youth success is pulling at our heart strings. Its popular success is due primarily to the beautifully written lyrics, the masterful musical rendition, the high energy voltage of the singers, and the realistic and timely portrayal of disheartened youth.

According to Director Robert Wilson, in this play Wasserman breaks the fourth wall and each character, with the exception of Professor Hawkins, has a wonderful monologue to the audience.

The flying lettuce will surely help Marin Farmers Markets is a 501(c)(5) non-profit which runs 8 farmers markets in the Bay Area, including the Sunday Civic Center Farmers Market – the third largest farmers market in California. For 26 years, MFM has been bringing farmers and communities together to create healthy, viable local food systems. For more information please visit www.marinfarmersmarkets.org.
Smuin Ballet launches 2009 Program

By Mitch Bull

The world renowned Smuin Ballet Company launches their 2009 season on Friday, October 2nd with a trilogy of works highlighted by the world premiere of Choreographer-in-Residence Amy Seiwert's Soon These Two Worlds; Michael Smuin's classic Medea; and closing with Fly Me to the Moon, a tribute to Frank Sinatra.

Seiwert, a former dancer with the Smuin Ballet, has been choreographing since 1999 and has won numerous awards. Soon These Two Worlds is set to music from the Grammy Award-winning Kronos Quartet's Pieces of Africa, which reached number 1 on Billboard's Top World Albums chart.

Next on the bill is Medea, the late Michael Smuin's ballet that weaves a story of passion, jealousy and revenge. It focuses on the five main character of the myth of Medea, and is set to a suite from Samuel Barber's Medea, originally composed for the 1946 Martha Graham Ballet. The breakneck pace of the dance details the complex and treacherous relationships between the characters and showcases Smuin's gift for dramatic narrative.

The evening closes with Smuin's tribute to the genius of Sinatra. A blend of ballet and popular dance, it is the embodiment of the smooth and stylish songs that the "Chairman of the Boards" delivered so well. "I've Got You Under My Skin", "That's Life" and "The Lady is a Tramp" are several of the songs in the final ballet for the evening, which closes with a high-kicking version of "New York, New York."

"Michael was a great story teller with his work," explains Celia Fushille, the Artistic and Administrative Director of the Smuin Ballet. Fushille should know. As a founding member of the ballet company, Fushille worked closely with Smuin performing as the lead dancer and the inspiration for many of Smuin's works, such as Frankie and Johnny, Cyrano, The Blue Angel, and her signature role in "Santa Baby" from The Christmas Ballet.

She had worked with Smuin as Associate Director of the Ballet Company...
M ost people would agree that the ability to see, hear and speak are the three most important senses and tools that we possess. Yet, how often do most of us consider the impact that a loss or reduction in these abilities would have on our day-to-day lives? It seems that until there is a problem, we take these abilities for granted, usually without a second thought.

As a family vision practice, Dr. L. Bruce Mebine and Associates have provided quality eyecare to several generations of San Franciscans. In fact, they have been diagnosing and treating patients in West Portal for almost 60 years, starting with Dr. Bruce Mebine’s father, Dr. Loran Mebine, who founded the practice.

I recently visited with Dr. Mebine and Dr. Elio Polsinelli to find out the “secret” of their ongoing successful vision clinic. “We provide personal care in a friendly environment. That’s what we do,” explained Mebine, who went on to explain that the goal has always been to provide the very highest quality of vision care for each patient. “Whereas some places are only concerned with the lowest price, we treat each client as an individual with specific individual needs, and not as just a number,” continued the UC Berkeley trained Optometrist who has also been a clinical professor at the University’s School of Optometry since 1983.

Well respected within the “vision care community,” Mebine has served as the President of the SF Optometric Society, the Bay Area Optometric Council, and the California Optometric Association. Twice, he has been recognized and received the award as the “Optometrist of the Year”; in 1991 by the UC Berkeley School of Optometry, and in 1998 by the California Optometric Association.

His colleague, Dr. Polsinelli, earned his Doctor of Optometry degree from the State University of New York (SUNY) College of Optometry, subsequently training at the Oklahoma City Area Indian Health Service. While at the Oklahoma City clinic, he provided vision care management and services to patients with diabetes, hypertension (high blood pressure), glaucoma, dry eye, and cataracts. He completed his training at the Pediatric division of the SUNY College of Optometry where he gained knowledge in the diagnosis and treatment of children’s vision and eye health.

When asked about vision care for children, both specialists stressed the importance of having children examined early. “Ideally, we would like to have a child first examined at the age of 6 months. It may seem young, but we can diagnose and plan treatments for conditions such as “lazy eye,” or other congenital types of eye problems such as cataracts or glaucoma,” said Polsinelli. They both agreed that yearly check ups after the initial visit go a long way to ensure good eye health.

For most of us, vision problems can be caused by too much computer work (Computer Vision Syndrome) that can cause dry eyes, headaches, and other symptoms. Mebine explained that when we are looking at a monitor, we do not blink as often, which causes the eye to dry out. A method to avoid this is to follow the “20/20/20 rule” by taking a 20 second break, every 20 minutes to look away from the monitor at
What I Know For Sure
by Hank Basayne

The O’Shaughnessy Dam at Hetch-Hetchy

I can’t tell you anything about the origins of Life or what—if anything—happens after we die. As I (surprisingly) continue to age I am progressively less sure about less and less. I have only a dim grasp of the theory of flight, know nothing at all about metallurgy—except I can recognize it when I see it. Higher mathematics is completely mysterious. I find even lower mathematics somewhat depressing. I love words but numbers induce mild melancholia in me. I never will fully understand continua to grow, faster than I do. Although I bask in inanity in the arrogance of my youth, there are precious few things I now know for sure. Oh yes, I have lots of opinions. Often wrong. But never in doubt. I make some wild guesses, some of which—amazingly—turn out to be useful.

I make a careful distinction between Information and Knowledge, and I try not to confuse Knowledge with Wisdom. Wisdom is sadly always in short supply. But to truly, completely understand anything? That happy condition continues to elude me.

I guess I have a world view, things I assume or take for granted. Most of us think certain things are true despite the lack of evidence for such beliefs. And it’s always a jolt to discover that my basic premises are not universally shared. In fact some of my presuppositions seem to be uniquely my own, not held in common with anyone else. The list of things that I take up in my own reality, inventing the strange Universe I inhabit? Does everyone else do the same thing? No wonder there is so much misunderstanding, conflict, confusion and disagreement. Author William Golding said that to communicate is our passion and our despair. Right on, Bill. This business of aging is more difficult than advertised. For instance, internally I’m only 32 but my body is fifty years older. That disparity really gets in my way. I make plans, lists, mentally undertake great creative leaps, then it turns out my body says it’s too tired, or it hurts, or it’s not strong enough, or let’s do that later—much later—or maybe not at all. As if I thought I would live forever! But in some quiet place, deep inside, I know I won’t. Turns out that this life is not just a rehearsal—it’s the actual performance, so everything counts.

My good intentions turn out not to be good enough. Someone lives in a distant city, for whom I hold happy memories and deep affection, has been out of touch for so much longer. I need to call him or write and reconnect. It’s on my list. Then, in order to avoid doing something else, I impulsively call him—and discover that he had died while I was busy not calling him earlier.

There is suddenly one less person I really care about who is available to me. My remaining life is again diminished. I’ve never been much good at farewells. Endings, exits and goodbyes make me sorrowful. That sad clown Pagliacci said we appear on the stage without asking, we take leave without wanting to go. But it’s the exits of the other players that wrench the heart—all the laughter that won’t now be shared, the hugs that will stay unbid, the mutual understandings that are broken now. If you’ve read this far it may be because you hoped to learn something useful, or because you share my humanity curiosity about each other, or because sometimes you find my musings entertaining. I’ve been thinking about you, too, as I’ve been writing this, although we may not have met or have not been together in a while. I’m writing this in a different time and place than you’re reading it, but it is a connection of sorts, one that I value. I started this talking about what I didn’t know for sure, but I am pretty sure about two things: We need each other. We ought to stop putting off important things.

Hank Basayne is a San Franciscan, and a minister, and an author, who didn’t want to delay telling you what he is thinking about right now.

By Sergio Nibbi

The Madness of it All

The real horror of war came into full perspective as we approached the seaside village of Sihanoukville in Cambodia. Yes, they now have improved facilities, shopping areas and air-conditioned buses, but the terrible memories of war are not distant past are still close at hand.

We attended a lecture aboard the ship a few days ago by an author, who didn’t want to delay telling you what he knows for sure, but I am pretty sure about two things: We need each other. We ought to stop putting off important things.

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In 1997 I read this book by Dr. B and was forever changed. I thought I was drinking a lot of water and realized I was only getting about half of what my body needed.

Starting my own study, I began asking all my clients about their water intake. Dr. B suggests a minimum of ½ your body weight in oz. of pure, clean water a day. If you weigh 150 lbs. it’s 75 oz. and I found most of my clients’ water consumption ran short. I also noticed the clients who drank a little to none, didn’t show much improvement after working with me. The light went on. With dehydration, the muscles in the body lose elasticity as well as flexibility and cannot be stretched.

Dr. B has treated over 3,000 patients in eliminating pain with plain old water when the highest forms of medication have failed. See www.watercure.com. Dehydration is a vicious cycle. When we feel thirst, we’re already dehydrated. Strangely, the more dehydrated, the less thirsty we feel. As a defense mechanism, the body moves the thirst markers—the less water, the less thirst.

• Stress is a huge factor in dehydration. Every function of the body depends on the efficient flow of water. So what happens?

• Solid Food Digestion—depends on large quantities of water absorbed in the stomach after it is ingested. Anti-acids and pain meds for heartburn won’t take the place of water needed to get the job done.

A misunderstood and upsetting condition of severe dehydration is bulimia. Most notable, Princess Diana became anti-social and suffered from constant hunger. When trying to eat without water for digestion, she couldn’t retain food and had the instant and uncontrollable urge to vomit. In bulimic people, the sensation of hunger is the indicator of thirst and the urge to vomit is a protection mechanism. If bulimics begin to rehydrate, the muscles in the body lose elasticity as well as flexibility and cannot be stretched.

Dr. Mebine explained, “We just can’t be a ‘museum’ company, perpetuating the untimely passing of Michael Smuin. Having performed many of Smuin’s most notable works, and assigned by Michael Smuin to be the creative caretaker of his legacy, Fushille continues to lead the ballet to further the vision conceived by the company’s namesake founder.

“I was prepared well by Michael to carry on the legacy of his works, Fushille continues to lead the ballet to further the vision conceived by the company’s namesake founder.”

Smuin Ballet (Cont. from p. 8)

an alternative to “laser” types of surgeries for nearsighted patients. It’s also completely reversible.

The well being of patients extends throughout the office. Assisting Drs. Mebine and Polsinelli are Marilyn Overbay, (a sister of Dr. Mebine) who has had a career as an optometric assistant/office manager for over 20 years. (19) Dr. Mebine, Marc Milechman, an optician with over 30 years experience in the optical industry, and Joann Tawasha, an Optometric Assistant who has worked with the team for over 12 years.

With hundreds, (if not a thousand), designer frames, different types of contact lenses, a friendly, welcoming staff and the expertise of Drs. Mebine and Polsinelli, it’s easy to understand how the office has provided vision care solutions to the neighborhood for almost 60 years. That kind of track record shows the satisfaction and loyalty of their many patients.

If you want a vision care team that is easy to talk to, understanding of your needs, and one which shows the satisfaction and loyalty of their many patients.

Finding the health care are more interested in making money with high powered drugs, X-rays, and Polsinelli detailed a new therapy, Corneal Crosslinking, which uses a special “contact lens” to strengthen the collagen fibers of the cornea and prevent it from further breaking down.

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Pstt….Have you joined PTA?

By Carol Kocivar

More than one person has asked me why I still go to PTA meetings. Good Question! After all, both my kids have already graduated from our public schools. The answer is easy. And it has nothing to do with fundraisers or selling candy or sweatshirts.

It has everything to do with our commitment to our children and to the future of our community and our country.

If you look up and down the streets of San Francisco, you can literally see the work of the PTA. The yellow crosswalks in front of our schools are the result of PTA advocacy.

- Small class size? Thank PTA
- From parent education to college fairs, from arts programs to field trips, from teacher appreciation events to health and fitness programs, mothers and fathers and grandparents and guardians are volunteering through the PTA.

Now, more than ever, we need to work together. Now, more than ever, we need to remind our elected officials of our responsibility to children.

Everyone is invited. Just contact your local school to join PTA.

For more information about PTA, click on to www.pta.org

New Harvey Milk Center Opens

By Marjorie Leet Ford/Photos Mark Luthringer

P resident Obama has awarded the late Harvey Milk the Presidential Medal of Honor. The California Legislature has proposed that May 22 be named Harvey Milk Day. And San Francisco has just opened the new Harvey Milk Center on Duboce Park. Of all the honors, the new recreation center may be the most enduring, because for generations it will tangibly and usefully enact Harvey Milk’s values: “The American dream starts in the neighborhoods.” And this one on the street side, one on the park side. From parent education to college fairs, from arts programs to field trips, from teacher appreciation events to health and fitness programs, mothers and fathers and grandparents and guardians are volunteering through the PTA.

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More than a century ago, the first meeting of the California Home and School Child Study Organization occurred in San Francisco in 1897. That’s right. Progressive from the start, San Francisco is the birthplace of the organization we now know as the PTA.

For more than a century, PTA has reminded our nation of its obligations to children and provided resources and important information to parents and teachers. Whenever young people’s education, health, safety, or well-being were threatened, PTA members were on the forefront of working to resolve those challenges.

PTA has been instrumental in the passage of important laws and guidelines that we sometimes take for granted.

Creating a separate criminal justice system for juvenile offenders

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Food and flavor, wildlife, the sun and stars, all draw me outside. But what makes me wake up breathless with excitement is the eye-crossing beauty of the garden. It is more lovely to me than any artwork, because it is alive, fragile, and swiftly passing. The garden may draw me outside because (yum) I want furry, pungent sage leaves to sauté in olive oil and drop into my white bean soup. It might draw me out to watch the drama of a hummingbird nectarating in the pineapple sage, dive-bombing and quarrelling with any other hummer who might try to get a sip. Or I might want to watch my veggies, visibly bigger than yesterday, stretching out in the fertile, moist soil. (Photo: Flowering Maple, Abelia at GFE)

As the garden matures, and as the gardeners mature, the pace and transition of these effects will be refined, but it will never be exactly the same again. The thrill of the detective, of the artist, and of the lover wake me up early in the morning, and draw me to “go outside and play”. Hilary Gordon is Perennial Plants Collection Manager at the GFE. A life-long gardener, trained at the City College Horticulture program, she has worked as a professional landscape gardener from 1984 until the present. Have a question for Hilary? Meet her in the garden Wednesdays 10-2 and Saturdays 10-4.

When she had things to do, we were hustled out the back screen door to find our own way around the gardens, climb the trees, make forts under the shrubs, and pretend to be cowboys, superheroes, or pirates.

What makes a grown-up go outside and play? When my garden space is connected to my growing-up desires and values, it draws me outside. The garden may draw me outside because (yum) I want furry, pungent sage leaves to sauté in olive oil and drop into my white bean soup. It might draw me out to watch the drama of a hummingbird nectarating in the pineapple sage, dive-bombing and quarrelling with any other hummer who might try to get a sip. Or I might want to watch my veggies, visibly bigger than yesterday, stretching out in the fertile, moist soil. (Photo: Flowering Maple, Abelia at GFE)

The dramatic stems and bracts of these flowers are still standing, although the flowers have faded. (Bracts are modified leaves growing just below a flower. Sometimes they are more dramatic than the flowers themselves, i.e., Bougainvillea "flowers" are actually bracts.) (Photo: Salvia at GFE)

The Phormium on the right (if you are standing on the sidewalk) is variegated, with cream and pink tones in its leaves. These leaf colors with the deep reddish-brown color of the flower stalks look beautiful against the dark burgundy bracts of the flowering Abelia behind them. The delicate pink of the Abelia flowers on their arching branches also matches the pink in the Phormium foliage. Add to these the red bells hanging from the Flowering Maple and you have a color colony of burgundy, red, pink, and mahogany—any which created a glowing, shady room of color all through the month of August.

Enter the garden up the wooden stairs and turn left. Ahead on the left side of the pathway, Salvia Mexicana "Limelight" is earning its name. The bracts on the deep blue flowers of this salvia are a brilliant chartreuse. Right now, this salvia is in full bloom, next to the large yellow flowers of our native Evening Primrose Oenothera Hookeri. Another blue flowering Salvia is weaving between them (Salvia Cacaliifolia) backed up by a wall of peachy Alstromeria. The promiscuous bloom of Lavatera玛丽亚是这个本月殖民地的颜色，就像恋人一样彼此配对。这些颜色的花朵与花园中相似的大小和颜色，但具有完全不同的形状。之间的和在面前的Cannas是令人惊叹的与热带红色-橙色的玫瑰花，刚刚开始生长和规划来弄乱我们的思维。尽管这些，匹配得那么好，因为看起来像是在装腔作势，年轻的Salvia Conferata已经开始了它的第一次开花。 (Photo: Salvia Mexicana "Limelight" at GFE)
BRAIN FÜD

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

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

Answer: The answer appears aside.

1. California grows more oranges and grapefruits than any other state.
2. The La Brea Tar Pits in Los Angeles are famous for their fossils.
3. Kansas City is located in two different states, one is Missouri and the other is Illinois.
4. Philadelphia is the capital of Pennsylvania.
6. The State that borders the largest ocean in the world is Florida.

BRAIN FÜD

1. False – Florida leads the way in growing oranges and grapefruit.
2. True
3. False – Kansas City is located in two states; Missouri and Kansas.
4. False – Harrisburg is the capital of Pennsylvania.
6. False – Washington, Oregon, and California border the Pacific Ocean (the world’s largest).
PHYLLIS’ FINDINGS
By Phyllis Sherman

S
ingle women are always complaining about the lack of inter-
esting single men in the Bay Area. They say single guys
are like parking spots...they’re either already taken or they’re
handicapped. Well, I’ve got an idea for you single gals...the rest of you can stop reading now. Have you checked out Craigslist...women seeking men or men seeking women?

If you’ve got a few bucks and are planning to take a cruise...Craigslist has over 200 cities all over the world men seeking women?

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handicapped. Well, I’ve got an idea for you single

either already taken or they’re

are like parking spots...they’re

checked several foreign
cities...and this is what I found out.

There’s a Russian lady in Seattle who’s put an ad for a friend for her Mom who’s moving to Mos-
cow...she wants a man who’s 60 to 63 and has inserted
a photo of her Mom who looks more like 60 to 73.
She said she’ll translate for her Mom who only speaks
Russian.

In Buenos Aires there’s a 59-year-old guy who’s
seeking a nice female. There’s an ad in Frankfort put in
by a fellow in Austin, Texas who is offering citizenship
to anyone. In Berlin a man advertises that he likes Ger-
man women. And in Amsterdam a 56 year-old Dutch
guy seeks relocation to wherever you live and he’d
like to start another family. Here’s your chance! A 49-
year old in Rose is seeking a big-breasted Italian
woman to spoil him with money so he can race motor-
cycles. He’d like good cook also. So if you’re busty and

25 RUSSIA AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO
Since 1937

LAD, HO

PHILLY HO

can come up with a good spaghetti sauce, he might

be interested.

In Orleans...many still doing some Katrina relief work
there. There are twenty-two agile (hopefully) men in New
Orleans...and they’re continuing to help in their son’s
or their sons. The first said, “My Patrick is such a saint.
He works hard, doesn’t smoke, and he hasn’t so much

as looked at a woman in over two years.”

The other woman said, “Well, my Francis is a saint
himself. Not only has he not looked at a woman in
over three years, but he hasn’t touched a drop of liquor
in all that time.”

“My word,” the first mother said. “You must be

so proud!”

“I am,” the second mother replied. “And when
he’s paroled next month, I’m going to throw him a big
party!”

END JOKES: Two mothers were talking about their
sons. The first said, “My Patrick is such a saint.
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Parkmerced Goes Green

San Francisco's most environmentally-friendly family will win the chance to live rent-free for a year in our new fully-sustainable Eco-Home apartment! Visit www.parkmerced.com/GoGreen for more information on our Green Family Contest and Parkmerced's current Sustainable Initiatives.

You can also find us exhibiting at the Green Festival in San Francisco November 13th-15th, where we will celebrate the city's solutions that help make our lives healthier - socially, economically and environmentally.

Imagine A Cleaner, Safer, Healthier Community. Parkmerced will be transformed into a vibrant resident focused neighborhood and a recognized leader in socially and environmentally responsible living. Imagine....Parkmerced

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