**Subprime Crisis Hits Berkeley, Exact Dimensions in Dispute**

By RICHARD BRENNEMAN

Foreclosures nationwide soared 57 percent in March, and rates may be running even higher in Oakland as East Bay cities are caught in the turmoil of the subprime mortgage disaster.

Figures for Berkeley are harder to come by, but through RealTrac.com, a site cited as accurate by a well-placed industry officer, East Bay homes have been repossessed by banks, another 31 are slated for public auction and 103 are in the process of foreclosure—though owners could still pay off arrears and retain title.

Other sites, considered less authoritative, list different numbers. Patrick.net, a site that tracks forclosure rate is 1 in 33 homes. March, and rates may be running even higher in Oakland as East Bay cities are caught in the turmoil of the subprime mortgage disaster.

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Show Me the Street Money

By WINTON BURTON

We were standing on the corner in front of Rice’s Barbershop. There were about six of us between the ages of 18 and 21, African American males who had grown up together in the same West Philadelphia neighborhood. A black Chevy slowly approached and someone from inside the car rolled down the window leaned out the passenger side and shouted—

"Broom man, broom man, we got brooms—fruit vendor—‘We got freestone, freestone got red ripe, red ripe watermelon.’ The songing about whatever they were promoting—people coming through yelling or singing, ‘Vote yes on no!’ or ‘Vote yes on no!’

The riding around slowly through the polling places. One of our favorite assignments was putting up signs, taking down opponents’ signs, and getting people in front of the local polling places. Our task included getting into politics was as a foot soldier for the party’s workforce, for getting out the vote. For us, the tasks were a necessity and some hard-working people could easily make $100 a day. However, working on election day would pay at least $50 without working hard.

Alas, I kept looking for that familiar brown envelope with money from the local ward boss that paid in cash! I kept looking for that money! How backwards I was. The wards were about six of us between the ages of 18 and 21, African American males who had grown up together in the same neighborhood. A black Chevy slowly approached and someone from inside the car rolled down the window leaned out the passenger side and shouted—

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Berkeley Man Dies in Crash on The Alameda

By RYIA BHATTACHARJEE

A Berkeley peace activist, thwarted in his attempt to create a display at a California rally in honor of the 9/11 attacks, was killed in a car crash on The Alameda.

Jasper Summer, 46, died in a one-car, high-speed accident near the intersection of Bancroft Way and Fulton Street.

The home man said a piece of black plastic tubing was attached to the taillight of the vehicle and looped into one of the vehicle’s brake lights. Summer had pulled the tubing from the taillight and tried to talk to the man inside the vehicle, saying, “You don’t want to do this,” Kusmiss said.

A police sergeant was led to the vehicle, parked in a commercial area, and asked the man inside to roll down his window. The man refused, so the sergeant tried to break the window as the air inside began looking hazy, according to Kusmiss. The police sergeant followed him as he vlexed through various lanes of traffic and ran stop lights. Kusmiss said.

Officers following the man backed off due to his erratic driving, and last spotted him traveling at about 1:55 a.m. on Martin Luther King Jr. Way crossing University Avenue at a high rate of speed, Kusmiss said.

Two minutes later, police dispatch was flooded with 911 calls from residents who heard a loud collision.

Arriving officers discovered a crashed scene on the Alameda just south of Yolo Avenue, parking a red car face down on the hood of a Ford pickup truck, according to Kusmiss.

“The car was a dramatic collision,” she said. Summer was removed with the help of medical-cutting machines and pronounced dead on the scene, Kusmiss said.

Investigators determined Summer had been driving northbound on The Alameda between 80 mph and 100 mph when his vehicle crossed into the southbound lanes, hitting a parked green BMW. The BMW crashed into the parked Dodge Shadow, pushing the Dodge into a tree and causing it to spin into the middle of the road. The impact caused the Subaru to become airborne, sending it crashing upside down off the roof of the pickup truck, Kusmiss said.

Debris from the accident was spread about 246 feet down the roadway, and an investigation and cleanup kept the street closed for about 6.5 hours, Kusmiss said.

There were no eyewitnesses, and investigators may never know if the fatal crash was intentional.

Planning Commission Tackles Southside Plan EIR

By RICHARD BRENNEN

Berkeley planning commissioners will hold hearings Wednesday on the Southside Plan's draft environmental impact report (EIR) and proposed amendments to the plan.

Commissioners will also discuss the economic development chapter of the Downtown Area Plan as they continue to work on their own proposed revisions to the draft prepared by the Downtown Area Plan Committee (DAPAC).

The meeting begins at 7 p.m. in the North Berkeley Senior Center, 1901 Hearst Avenue.

The Southside Plan has been revised after five years on the back burner while city and state officials worked on revisions sought by the university.

The plan would create new denser and more walkable neighborhoods, with more open space, while creating a more integrated development along Telegraph Avenue and Bancroft Way.

Aram Ham calls for converting the currently one-way Dana and Ellsworth streets to two-way traffic, and for consideration of doing the same to Bancroft Way and Durant Avenue, with restricting through traffic on Telegraph Avenue.

The plan projects construction of 472 new housing units with 1,038 residents, along with construction of 638,200 square feet of new commercial development that would provide an additional 2,130 jobs.

Wednesday's hearing will focus on the issue of whether or not the proposed EIR adequately addresses the impacts of the ensuing changes.

The complete document is available for $30 at the city Planning and Development Department offices at 2120 Milvia St. or free online at www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/ContainDisplay.aspx?id=17998.

Revisions to the city's wireless telecommunications facilities ordinance, which regulates the installation of cell phone antennas, in the city must comply with federal law.

The city attorney developed the proposed amendments to the city's power to accomplish its expressed regulatory goals within the confines of federal law, according to Kusmiss.

Kusmiss said.

The Alameda and Yolo Avenue residences moments before 2 a.m.

Summers described himself as a landscaper in his campaign contributions to the Democratic Party. He was also a donor to presidential candidate Oussi Kucinich, and posted comments on peace sites and on sites questions presenting the official account of the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Petraeus.

Police Sgt. Mary Kusmiss told Bay City News the chain of events that ended in a crash that left the resident, likewise injured in an earthquake began about 1:50 a.m.

A homeless man riding a bicycle flagged down a police officer and told him he saw a man sitting in a silver Subaru parked near the intersection of Bancroft Way and Fulton Street.

The homeless man said a piece of black plastic tubing was attached to the taillight of the vehicle and looped into one of the vehicle’s brake lights. Summer had pulled the tubing from the taillight and tried to talk to the man inside the vehicle, saying, “You don’t want to do this,” Kusmiss said.

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Pacific Steel Casting's appeal of a small claims court decision which went against the company in November began last week and is expected to go on for the next two months, a spokesperson for the steel foundry told the Planet Friday.

On Monday Berkeley attorney Timothy Rumberger announced plans to file a class action lawsuit against the company.

The west Berkeley-based steel foundry filed an appeal on Dec. 6 in Alameda County Superior Court against a judgment which awarded $35,000 in damages to a group of West Berkeley neighbors who sued Pacific Steel Casting for loss of use and enjoyment of their property and mental distress.

Neighbors disagreed with the decisions made by the judge,” said Elisabeth Jewel of Aronem, Jewel and Ellis, the public relations firm representing Pacific Steel.

“They will be appealing all of the judgments in each of the small claims cases,” Judge Dawn Girard ruled at the November hearing that nine of the 19 plaintiffs who filed the small claims case in August 2006 would each get between $2,100 and $5,100 because of the “private nuisance created by Pacific Steel,” and “a real and appreciable invasion of the plaintiffs’ interests.”

A majority of the plaintiffs had complained of a burnt copper-like smell which they believed could be toxic.

Lead plaintiff Tom McGuire had called the judgment “a victory for the small guys” after the November hearing.

Alameda County Superior Court Judge Judith Jane Augenstein ruled on McGuire’s case Wednesday, to determine how the remaining eight cases would proceed.

“I think PSC is grasping at straws, suck- er punching, anything to put up the facade of a case to wipe the toxic egg off their face,” McGuire told the Planet.

“There is so much evidence that foul odors and noxious emissions are and have been emanating from their smokestacks that to deny it or try to defend it is folly,” says McGuire.

Since the defendants’ expert witness in small cases would not be available for the trial, McGuire said the group had brought in local activist LA Wood.

“We’re going to have to win this case based on our own strong and compelling testimony,” says McGuire.

Judge Tabor is retired and is returning to court only for this particular case. The hearing will take longer than usual since she will be working on the case only on Wednesdays, Jewel said.

Jewel explained that former City Attorney Tim Rumberger intends to file a class action lawsuit against Pacific Steel today (Tuesday) on behalf of hundreds of residents.

Calls to the Aronem, Jewel and Ellis firm for comment on Monday were not returned by press time.

Pacific Steel settled a lawsuit with the Bay Area Air Quality Management Dis- trict and installed a $2 million carbon absorption unit on Plant 3 to reduce emissions and odor last year.

Jewel is still talking with Communities for a Better Environment which required it to install an air filtration system.
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FRIDAY, APRIL 25

SUNDAY, APRIL 27

THURSDAY, APRIL 24

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23

MONDAY, APRIL 27
The U.S. economy is going through a very difficult period. But among the great strengths of our economy is its ability to adapt and respond to diverse challenges. Much necessary economic and financial adjustments have already taken place, and monetary and fiscal policies are in train that should support a return to growth in the second half of this year and next year.”

But minutes of the Fed March 18 policy meeting were recently released, and they paint a decidedly darker picture. Some of the policy committee members were predicting a continuation of the drop in housing prices and possibly “a prolonged and severe economic downturn.” In March alone the U.S. economy lost 80,000 jobs, the biggest drop in five years, and the losses are spreading beyond the housing and financial sectors to a wide cross-section of industries. In all likelihood, we are already in a recession. What isn’t known is how long it will last and how deep will it cut. The frustration and fearfulness of the Fed rate cutters is nearly palpable. Usually they speak in nearly indecipherable jargon about economic growth, inflation, and what they’re planning on doing with the short-term rates they use to control the flow of money into the economy. Now the Fed is warning that there’s only so much a central bank can do: “Monetary policy cannot, on its own, fully address the underlying problems in the housing market and in financial markets.” That is the Fed’s way of introducing the new guiding principle of our economy: Have high hopes, but low expectations. Last week the International Monetary Fund added to those low expectations when it announced that the global banking and financial system would suffer losses of about $1 trillion due to the mortgage crisis and that “systemic risks have risen sharply.”

In other words, the possibility of a worldwide financial meltdown has increased and despite the current calm we are still deep in the woods. If the IMF estimate is even close to correct, this will make our current problems the most expensive financial crisis in history, according to the Financial Times. The IMF puts the changes of our borrowing binge ending in a worldwide recession at one in four. Some economists are arguing that the losses will be a minimum of $1 trillion and are likely to exceed that if there are unforeseen shocks to the system: Say, for example, a major international bank collapse or the U.S. military attacks Iran or one of the world’s current riots over escalating food prices seriously destabilizes an important country such as Egypt. If you think gasoline is expensive now, you don’t want to think about what $150 a barrel oil will do to the world. But even if we leave aside those dire possibilities, there are many current realities that suggest we may soon find ourselves caught up in a rough cycle of financial crises followed by deeper economic downturns. You’ve heard of that fabled “soft landing” of our falling economy? Well, there are a lot of reasons we could lose altitude in a hurry. Consider these sobering facts: Oil now costs $177 a barrel and commodity prices across the board are hitting new highs. Meanwhile, the dollar continues its steady downward retreat. The severe credit crunch in mortgages is now spreading to other segments of the consumer credit market, for example, credit cards and car loans. Without government intervention, nearly two million homes will face foreclosure over the next two years. Most option ARM loans—those adjustable rate mortgages that have lower teaser rates and let you pay less than you owe—have not yet adjusted upward. When those loans adjust up to the new higher rates and the lenders demand full payment each month, the other shoe in the mortgage crisis will begin to fall. Remember, our high household debt ratio—130 percent of income—means tens of thousands of households are barely able to shoulder the monthly payments even when rates are low. The U.S. economy has

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK: HIGH HOPES, LOW EXPECTATIONS

By RICHARD HYLTON
Special to the Planet

Ben Bernanke has a lot in common with the next Fed chairman. The pinnacle of his career will mostly involve cleaning up someone else’s mess. When he took over as chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank in 2006, Bernanke stepped into a quagmire so deep and wide that he sometimes has that stunned, wide-eyed look of a drowning man.

Meanwhile his predecessor, Alan Greenspan, is telling anyone who will listen that it’s not his fault that the economy might slide into a crippling recession and that the nation’s financial system is teetering on the edge of systemic failure. Greenspan is worried about his place in history and the yet-to-be-written books that will trash his record as America’s economic steward.

Even Paul Volcker, the stern and widely revered Fed chairman who preceded Greenspan and wrestled inflation to a standstill in the 1980s, has lately been wagging his finger at Bernanke for orchestrating the rescue of Bear Stearns and at Greenspan for his Wall Street boosterism that helped create this mess. Recently, Volcker told the Economic Club of New York that our “bright new financial system” had failed the test of the marketplace.

It was lost on no one that Greenspan had played midwife to the birth of that new system and that he had defended it against criticism and calls for regulation by many in Congress. That of course made Greenspan a hero on Wall Street, and so long as the good times kept rolling he was feted by the media as a financial god. Well, the good times have now stumbled.

“We have moved from a commercial bank-centered, highly regulated financial system to an enormously more complex and highly engineered system,” Volcker told his audience. Much of today’s financial activities “takes place in markets beyond effective official oversight and supervision, all enveloped in unknown trillions of derivatives instruments,” he added. “The sheer complexity, opacity and systemic risks embedded in the new markets—complexities and risks little understood by even most of those with management responsibilities—have enormously complicated both official and private responses to this the mother of all crises.”

Well, that sure doesn’t sound good. How bad are things? If you listened to Bernanke’s testimony before the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee, you heard him say, “Clearly, the U.S. economy is going through a very
A Holiday, a Change, a Party—Let the Sun Shine

Today is the 38th anniversary of the first Earth Day, a media event that was first held in the United States with the sponsorship of a senator, Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin. In other countries around the world, Earth Days coincide with the vernal equinox, around March 20, but in this country it’s been April 22 since it started. (The DAR once spread the scurrilous rumor that the date was chosen because April 22, 1689, was the centennial of Lenn’s birth.)

Still, we wonder what more we can do, at what level, to Make a Difference. In the five years we’ve been running this paper, we’ve already taken the small steps and tried new things: we’ve been recycling paper bags, we’re now told to bring our own bags, but those among us who wonder what good that will do are not totally out of luck. Little drops of water, little grains of sand, said the poet, make a mighty ocean. As for us, we’re not. Maybe just a flood or a desert.

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MAYOR BATES SHUTS REAL SUNSHINE OUT

By SUNSHINE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Most of us hold an unshakable belief that an informed citizenry is the very heart of democracy. Motivated by this belief, our city leaders have enacted the Sunshine Ordinance intended to make the workings of our local government transparent. Similar ordinances have already been approved by several Bay Area cities, but the effort has been response less than effective. Why Berkeley could possibly oppose this idea? Not surprisingly, officials who benefit from keeping the public uninformed have for years resisted shedding light on City business. Now, however, these sunshine-obstructionists, led by Mayor Bates, have sprung into action; they are promoting a weak, so-called “Sunshine Ordinance” in an effort to preempt our proposal.

In reality, their bill is more of a sun-shine ordinance with no enforcement provisions, only masquerading as sunshine. It’s based on a draft prepared by the current City Attorney Manuela Albuquerque before she left office. It’s on today’s (April 22) council agenda, because the Agenda Committee refused to post the matter long enough to hear a presentation and question from our citizens, which, for over a year, worked on its own-open government measure that provides real sunshine for Berkeley residents.

So, why is Mayor Bates suddenly in such a rush? Maybe he really prefers Albuquerque’s weaker version to the one written by citizens, for citizens. Her draft is based on a resolution passed by the council nearly five years ago, but never implemented. It’s loaded with unenforceable language—offering officials and bureaucrats (rather than citizens) to determine how much open government they are willing to provide.

Put bluntly, the mayor’s proposal is empty rhetoric. It does nothing to ensure the public’s right to know and allow the city to continue current practices, that the public out of the darkness.

Yet, it was the mayor who convened a Sunshine Workshop in March of 2007, to which four distinguished panelists were invited to give their views; they were Terry Francke of Californians Aware, Jinky Gardner of the League of Women Voters, Mark Schlosberg of the ACLU, and Judith Scherr of the Berkeley League of Young Republican Journalists. All petitioned the mayor in a hand-delivered letter, dated April 2, to postpone voting on the Albuquerque proposal until citizen alternatives have been heard; none favored the mayor’s proposal. So why, after having solicited their opinions, is the mayor prepare to ignore their advice? There is only one answer—Mayor Bates and his allies want to keep the current system with its built-in barriers to open government—barriers like the following:

• Present practice is to present the City Council’s agenda on the Thursday before the council meeting. Only two to three business days for interested citizens to study the items, obtain information, and respond. This leaves almost no chance for councilmembers to receive and consider dissenting opinions.

• Key decisions relating to agenda items are made by the City Manager, not councilmembers, even until the day, but are often listed as “to be delivered.” In these cases, neither the public nor councilmembers see the documents—until the beginning of the meeting; there is no time to seek background information, let alone prepare a reasonable response.

• Published documents are often sanitized to include only arguments supporting staff recommendations; key internal memos stating contrary possibilities should be made public.

• Members of the public are typically given no more than two minutes each to discuss an issue, and often are allowed only one minute to speak. Once public comment is received, the floor is closed. In other words, staff memos are allowed to discuss the issues among themselves. There is no process to allow members of the public to present their misstatements before councilmembers vote.

• The public has the right, under state law, to examine documents that were not revealed prior to the debate, but the city typically delays its response to such requests indefinitely. When it does reply, it often denies that these documents are “privileged” or “confidential.” Usually, the city refuses to produce any draft memordanda or preliminary studies exchanged among staff and elected officials.

Given all of the above, it’s not surprising that the mayor’s proposal was adopted word-for-word. Where advice is overruled, it’s because of behind-the-scenes lobbying; rather than as the result of public debate. The Albuquerque/Bates draft does nothing to address the above issues. In fact, it perpetuates Berkeley’s practice of government-by-stealth, and it ignores the hard truth, that when the city acts outside of the public good, citizens may only learn about it too late to react.

The Berkeley Sunshine Committee has previously written a draft that is designed specifically for Berkeley. It’s also what this comment is about, members of a citizens’ Sunshine Committee, which has written a Sunshine Ordinance designed specifically for Berkeley. The meetings are open to everyone and include people who call themselves “progressives” and others who refer to themselves “moderate.” Some may like the mayor, and others may not. But all agree that our council has routinely made policy with no public participation; the public does not have a say in what happens with its money.

The Berkeley Sunshine Committee meets weekly and welcomes new members. Write to drmla2@sbcglobal.net or contact the League of Women Voters for more information.

HILLARY: ANOTHER FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

By LAURA SANTINA

Chelsea Clinton recently forwarded me an article by New York feminist Robin Morgan in support of her mother's candidacy. Though Chelsea and I have never met, I somehow ended up on one of her thousands of listserves. Morgan and I have no political behavioir practices varied in locations around the world and in different periods of history. Her analysis seems less than convincing. The logic she bundled them all together as proof that Hillary is the best candidate, and anything less than her must be eliminated. I would like to support Hillary.

It’s not the acerbic, attack-dog demeanor of her campaign. It’s not her discomfort and the inability to handle any tautune lack of charm. I’m not much of a charmer myself. It isn’t even her embar- rassingly childish proclamations such as, “I’m ready to lead!” or the “red phone” fairy tale. After all, her campaign rhetoric fits the Checkers speech mode established by Richard Nixon in 1952 and which, according to George Packer, still domi- nates the modern political game.

I can’t support Hillary because I don’t know who she is and I don’t think she does know who she is. How could a woman who found herself at the feet of a political party whose core values center on de-industrializing the country and who opposed the idea of given poor people a second chance be the good daughter of a woman who spent her career fighting for them? How could a woman who was raised in a household where Wal-Mart managers were being sued for $1 billion as the work force was being killed by lethal toxins and who was one of the 567,000 children (the lowest approxima-

The Daily Planet accepts commen- tary page submissions at opinion@thedailyplanetnews.com. All comments should be at least 200 words long. Please include name, address and phone number for contact purposes, as we reserve the right to publish or not to publish it ourselves. We prefer to not publish open letters.

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I’m afraid that Hillary’s calculated lie about being under sniper attack in Bosnia—which she and Bill continue to write off as a late night memory lapse but which obviously wasn’t because she repeat- ed it three different times at different times of the day—made me cringe. A mother would never willingly take her daughter into a war zone. Even the fuzzing out of that would fade in Chelsea and fade out snipers on the way to the vocal chords. Calculated lying may be endemic to politics and cer- tainly George W. Bush has perfected the art form, but frankly I need (and I think we need) something better.

The sad and hollow Hillary Clinton-as-feminist myth came into purview when I learned that she had set up her email account on the Wal-Mart Board of Directors while she was the wife of the governor of Arkansas. A feminist, even a Republican feminist, wouldn’t serve on the Wal-Mart Board of Directors. Wal-Mart is not only anti-worker and anti-union, but it is anti- woman. Two thirds of the Wal-Mart employee workers are women, ten percent are managers. A gender bias class action suit against Wal-Mart on behalf of one million women is pending.

There will be a woman president. She may even be Hillary, but I hope not. We can do better. A woman of integrity will step forward. She’ll use “we” instead of “I” when she thinks about the country and when she addresses voters. She won’t be married to an ex-presidential candidate who has the burdens or reap the political rewards of his reign. She’ll be more thoughtful, more truthful and more comfortable with herself. She won’t lean on or spout the old male-driven military solutions to the world’s problems. She’ll be a global feminist, an inspirational, redemptive, femi- nist vision of peace and social justice that can rally and unite all segments of our nation.

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Laura Santina is an Oakland resident.


THE BERKELEY DAILY PLANET

COMMENTS

Opinions expressed in Daily Planet commentary and letters to the editor are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Daily Planet or its staff.

By PAUL GLUSMAN

Opinions expressed in Daily Planet commentary and letters to the editor are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Daily Planet or its staff.

An Open Letter Regarding Professor John Yoo

Dear Christopher Edley Jr., Dean of UC Berkeley Law School:

If a mathematics professor would suddenly proclaim that one plus one equals three, there would be some questions about the ability of that professor to teach mathematics to students. If a history professor were to teach his students that Columbus first landed in the Americas at Times Square, Manhattan, in 1927, history department would likewise wonder about whether that professor knew his history. But what would happen if, when a law professor gets the law wrong and says that torture of prisoners is legal, should a university not distance itself from that law professor, and say that is still true when the law professor advises criminal activity that is then carried out?

Professor John Yoo not only has taught, but has advised the present Bush administration that it is legally permissible to torture prisoners. In one exchange in 2002, he stated that there was no legal reason why the president could not exercise his right to determine who is in the country's best interests when it comes to the law. The U.S. Constitution does not contain any provision which would allow a president to ignore the Constitution whenever it felt like it. The Bush administration that it could ignore the Constitution whenever it felt like it. The Bush administration that it could commit crimes against humanity and that they were not really criminals. Unlike the imaginary math and history professors I used in my examples above, Law Professor Yoo's perversion and denial of the Constitution's provisions—as well as his repudiation of U.S.-ratified treaties such as the Geneva Convention and the Convention Against Torture—has had ugly and horrendous consequences.

For some reason, Dean Edley, you seem to believe that Professor Yoo's responsibility for the criminal acts he authorized the government to commit is of a lesser culpability than the responsibility incurred by those who actually committed those criminal acts. Your point is that advising the government that it is legally permissible to torture prisoners is different from actually committing those acts.

Apparent because Professor Yoo is intelligently, or at least with a well thought out, and who advises cowardly, and who advises wrongfully. He has shamed this nation and undermined its standing in the world. I strongly advise you to view the film Judgment at Nuremberg. That movie was about the trial of the top Nazis who ordered war crimes. The film did not deal with a later and lesser know trial of those in the Bush administration who, while they would never have committed war crimes themselves, were given legal and moral cover to violate international law for their crimes. That film provided a venerated to the crimes of the Nazi government. I can only urge you, Professor Edley, to consider whether the Bush administration's own legislation to allow torture and giving wrongful legal permission to order torture when one knows that such permission will be used to justify the later wrongful act.

And the worst thing, from the standpoint of truth, is that the Bush administration can justifiably by contending that it only acted upon the advice of a professor at the esteemed UC Berkeley School of Law who is still in good standing as a faculty member at that law school. In continuing to give such advice, not only are those professors lending its name and legal backing to Yoo's incompetent, immoral and unlawful advice, they weaken the credibility of the UC Berkeley School of Law is ratifying those who advise cowardly, and who advise wrongfully. The Bush administration that it can commit crimes against humanity and that they were not really criminals. Unlike the imaginary math and history professors I used in my examples above, Law Professor Yoo's perversion and denial of the Constitution's provisions—as well as his repudiation of U.S.-ratified treaties such as the Geneva Convention and the Convention Against Torture—has had ugly and horrendous consequences.

Paul Glusman is an attorney practicing in Berkeley and a graduate of the Boalt Hall. He attended Golden Gate University School of Law.
Continued from Page Six

Luther King Jr. Way and send e-mails to kslee@ci.berkeley.ca.us and tstroshane@ci.berkeley.ca.us. You are also asked to call 981-5422 with any ideas or comments.

P. Smith

Berkeley Citizens for Fair Housing

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**CLINTON’S TITANIC FAILURE**

Editors, Daily Planet:

In retrospect, Hillary Clinton’s campaign probably hit its iceberg when it started spreading the vicious innuendo that Barack Obama, as a black candidate, was unelectable. Race is, after all, the quintessential American issue that is still 10 percent visible and 90 percent below the surface. Now, Clinton’s problem is more clinical. She has a hearing problem. In her head, she still hears the band striking up “Hail to the Chief”—but the sounds really are just her loyal musicians playing on deck as the ship sinks, realizing the futility of the situation but knowing that it would be pointless to tell the captain. In fierce denial, she seems determined to go down with the ship. One question remains: Is the Democratic Party one of the passengers on it?

Doug Buckwald

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**STIMULUS PACKAGE**

Editors, Daily Planet:

Are you wondering what you’re going to do with that generous “stimulus package” check from the government? If you can find the courage to turn your “stimulus package” check into a “Moral Stimulus Package” by donating to the Center for Constitutional Rights, which is one of the most vigorous defenders of human rights in the United States? They are actively working to bring back habeas corpus and to press for criminal prosecutions of Bush administration officials. And not only the ones they have already admitted to on national television.

Don’t you think a return to the rule of law and the protection of human rights will look much better on America than a new pair of shoes or a flat screen TV? If you can figure out how to get the government to do it for you, I would love to get your turn “stimulus package” check into a “Moral Stimulus Package” for humanity, then please consider donating to the Center for Constitutional Rights. For more information on the Center for Constitutional Rights visit www.ccrjustice.org.

Amanda Duisman

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**BAD BICYCLE BABY BUGGIES**

Editors, Daily Planet:

As a native Berkeleyan, I am alarmed at the number of parents riding bicycles on the streets with their small children behind them in little nylon trailers. These little trailers are about wheel-high, maybe three feet off the ground. They come in one- and two-child carrying sizes.

I often see them on Ashby Avenue or Gilman or on the designated bicycle boulevards. Parents must be aware there is danger since I often see children in little bicycle helmets or orange flags attached to the tops of the trailers themselves. I think these protective measures are woefully inadequate. I believe that these bicycle baby trailers are a tragic accident just waiting to happen. A car taking a corner too fast or simply misjudging the distance could easily kill the children contained within them.

I don’t understand why it is illegal to drive with your toddler in the car absent a car seat but it is legal to put a tiny little tent on wheels and trundle off down the road on a bike dragging them behind.

The Berkeley City Council should pass a law to protect these children by ruling that these types of bicycle trailers are only appropriate for park and trail like settings. They should be barred from the public roads.

Bryan Bowman

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**BUS RAPID TRANSIT**

Editors, Daily Planet:

A recent opinion piece claims that today’s Bus Rapid Transit opponents are like the Berkeley activists of a half century ago who wanted BART to be underground rather than elevated, so it would have less impact on Berkeley.

But there is an obvious difference. Elevated or underground, BART would be separated from traffic and would provide the same level of service to riders. But without bus-only lanes, BRT would get stuck in traffic and would provide worse service to riders.

For a real analogy to today’s BRT opponents, imagine that there were Berkeley city activists a half century ago who wanted BART to run on surface streets in lanes that trains shared with other traffic, so that train delays would be delayed whenever traffic was congested. Under this absurd scenario, the unrelatability of BART service in Berkeley would jam up the entire BART system. Likewise, without exclusive bus lanes in Berkeley, unreliability of service would jam up the entire BART system.

BRT opponents claim that their RapidBus Plus plan would give new advantages of BRT at less cost. If that is true, then why is this BRT with exclusive bus lanes being used or proposed in 25 cities across the United States? Why did New York’s plan for congestion pricing rely on BRT with exclusive bus lanes as its main means of extending transit service? The answer is obvious: because transportation planners around the country know that buses with exclusive lanes gives faster, more reliable service than buses that are stuck in traffic.

If BRT opponents really know better, if they really have evidence that RapidBus Plus is as good as BRT, they should not confine their efforts to Berkeley. They should publish their findings in professional journals that have wide circulation, so they can enlighten the world’s transportation planners by sharing their superior knowledge.

Charles Siegel

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**DEDICATED-LANE BRT IS CURRENT CITY POLICY**

Editors, Daily Planet:

While some impassioned southside neighborhood activists continue to raise the worst fears about Bus Rapid Transit on Telegraph, it’s worth noting that the city already has an official endorsement on the issue. On July 10, 2001, the City Council unanimously passed a resolution setting forth the city’s position on how AC Transit service could easily kill the children contained within them.

Continued on Page Fifteen
“One of the penalties of an ecological education is that one lives alone in a world of wounds.” Aldo Leopold wrote long before the first Earth Day. He was thinking about land abuse in the Southwest, but his words have a much broader resonance.

Maybe we’re not quite so alone anymore. The bad news is better known: more of us are aware that we’re losing chinook salmon and delta smelt, whitebark pines and coast live oaks, polar bears and Tasmanian devils, bats, frogs, shorebirds, reef-builders, pollinators. It would be simpler to take stock of what we’re not losing.

Last fall, while volunteering at the International Bird Rescue Research Center after the Cosco Busan spill, we met a veterinarian named Greg Massey who had previously worked in an endangered-bird program in Hawaii’s, trying to save native songbirds from the effects of habitat destruction and exotic diseases. Massey told us he had watched the po’ouli, a small brown bird endemic to Maui, go extinct.

People have a much broader resonance. Words have a much broader resonance.

One of the penalties of an ecological education is that one lives alone in a world of wounds. Why reject the gifts of the gods? Who knew that the next island wouldn’t have its own big slow tasty birds? The myth of the inexhaustible resource runs deep. Some of the Plains Indians believed the missing bison had taken refuge underground. Other Americans refused to credit the extinction of the passenger pigeon: maybe they had flown to Cuba, or to the moon. The corncupia would never be empty.

Now we know better. Or should. But collectively, we still act as if the bounty of the oceans will never be depleted; as if there will always be enough tropical forest to supply all possible chowder bases. Either way, there’s no conflict between runaway population growth and the survival of whole communities of large flightless birds. And Zealand and others—they found unique

For anyone who has been ignoring the news of late food is an enormous issue this year. Prices are up 83 percent since 2005, sparking riots in countries around the globe including Egypt, Ivory Coast, Ethiopia, and Indonesia. In Haiti the unrest has even led to deaths and the fall of the government.

Big rice producers like China, India, and Vietnam are becoming worried about their own supplies and are moving to restrict their exports further fueling food insecurities. Through this all our policymakers at the World Bank and the IMF are calling for more of the same practices that got us into this mess. The question that confronts us is: how has this come about and what can we do to begin to address the problem?

Food prices are up for a number of factors and most analysts agree that they are probably not going to decrease significantly anytime soon. Increasing consumption of meat (which requires vast quantities of feed to produce), bad weather, hoarding, and demand for biofuels (which use land that could be used to produce food) have all done their part to dramatically boost food prices.

While some of these factors may become less influential in the future the fact remains that demand is going to continue to grow at a strong pace. The world’s billion plus people that subsist on less than a dollar a day are not going to enjoy affordable food anytime soon.

In order to address this grave problem the officials at the World Bank have proposed an “action plan,” which includes emergency food aid and more loans to farmers, so they can increase their productivity with pesticides, chemical fertilizers, and genetically modified seeds. While this may sound reasonable at first, it is in fact precisely the same policy, which the Bank and massive agricultural corporations (who lobby aggressively to sell pesticides, fertilizers, and seeds) have promoted over the past few decades, and a large part of the reason that we are in this mess.

Food aid, while obviously needed in the short-term, does nothing to address the actual reasons why people cannot buy food or grow their own. We cannot allow ourselves to think that we are solving hunger by handing out some free bread. Actually tackling the issue requires a deeper examination of the problem.

The fact is that hundreds of millions of people in the world face malnutrition and hunger because of policy failure. We have encouraged small farmers to take out loans to buy chemicals, fertilizers, etc. in order to boost their productivity; meanwhile when their crop fails or soils become infertile due to those same products we sold them and they lose their land, we tell them to just go to the city.

So the displaced farmers go in great numbers to the mushrooming slums where there are far too few jobs to sustain them. Their options are mostly limited to subsisting on handouts or migrating to a richer country. Ten years ago this was a huge problem; now it has been greatly exacerbated by the massive hike in food prices.

If we are to do something other than business as usual what should be our course? We need to start with policies that allow small farmers to stay on their land, and thus can continue feeding themselves and their neighbors far into the future. The first step in this direction would be to encourage agriculture that does not require expensive inputs and machinery, so farmers can avoid getting caught in a cycle of debt. Part of this will mean spending more money on agricultural research, which utilizes this low input model. An actual worth-while foreign aid project would be helping finance land reform and training for those individuals that receive plots of land. This could ease the number of people moving to cities, which are then unable to support themselves. We could pay for this by slashing the billions of dollars in subsidies we give to our own agricultural giants here in the United States.

Continued on Page Eleven.
Biofuels: Our Latest and Greatest Band-Aid

By ELIZABETH JEAN DOW

As a graduating Berkeley student majoring in the biological sciences, a left-leaning member of the San Francisco Bay Area and a voter wishing to make informed decisions, not a day goes by that I don’t hear something on campus or in the news about biofuels. Biofuels are the controversial topic of conversation today, and with politicians voicing their support and violent food riots occurring in Haiti, perhaps it is time to seriously question the merits of biofuels and take some time for self-reflection.

The first time I began to really hear people discuss biofuels was during the recent financial agreement my university made with British Petroleum to the tune of $500 million dollars. This money was to go toward the research and development of biofuels. Both Hillary Clinton and government energy policies continue to push for biofuels. Both Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama support further research in alternative energy solutions, primarily biofuels. This deal was immediately met with student, faculty and public outcry concerning the ability of Berkeley to maintain its academic integrity and whether biofuels should have such heavy funding over other types of alternative energy.

After all, biofuels promote the use of controversial GMO crops, and actually increase greenhouse gases when conversion of natural ecosystems to biofuel production land is taken into account. Not only that, but even if all of America’s corn and soybean farms were converted to biofuel production, only 12 percent of our gasoline and 6 percent of our diesel needs would be met. Some people may suggest that this unmet need could be an opportunity for farmers in third world countries. However, these opportunities manifest themselves only through environmental degradation, and the displacement and starvation of the world’s most impoverished.

As developing countries create momentum for biofuel production, the intensified industrial farming practices and rapid expansion of agricultural frontiers into ecosystems results in regions of soil degradation, poor water quality, and strained water tables. More than 91 million acres of rainforest and grassland have already been cleared in South America for soybean production, with an addition 143 million needed to meet world demand.

Along with a damaged environment, farmers are pushed off their land so that biofuels can be grown in place of food crops to meet the energy demands of the United States. These practices have put the food security of many countries at risk. Recent weeks have seen food riots and unrest in Egypt, the Ivory Coast, Ethiopia, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Haiti. World food staple prices have risen by 83 percent in the past three years and threaten to put 100 million of the world’s most impoverished people deeper into poverty. Specifically, corn tortillas prices in Mexico have gone up 400 percent. Hundreds of thousands of people are at risk for starvation and the recent rise demand for biofuels is no coincidence. When starving people are weighed against filling up a 25 gallon tank with ethanol that could have fed a person for a year, perhaps other solutions to our energy problems should be examined.

Christopher McCourt is a UC Berkeley student.

Elizabeth Jean Dow is a UC Berkeley student.
TUESDAY, APRIL 22

CHILDMERICA
First Stage Children’s Theatre presents an evening of arts at 7:30 p.m. at Julia Morgan Center for the Arts, 2640 College Ave. Tickets are $7, children under 12, $5.

READINGS AND LECTURES
Christina Gilliss discusses her new novel, "Stone Singer" from a Maine Island Life" at 5 p.m. at Alcatraz, 2348 Bancroft Way. www.universityofcalifornia.edu. 510-642-4864.

Garrett Caples on the poems of John Ashbery and Philip Lamantia at 7:30 p.m. at Moe’s, 2476 Telegraph Ave. 510-848-4696.


WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23

EXHIBITIONS
“Diversity in Play” Paintings by Tessa Lamantia and Hazel Sila-Dagdagan at 6 p.m. at Dimond Cafe, 3430 Fruitvale Ave., Oakland. www.tissokoharu.com

BERKELEY ART CALENDAR

Rebecca Riots, Melanie DeBono and Kelly Takeda-Orphan in a benefit concert for Transgender Health & Housing at 8 p.m. at La Peňa Cultural Center. Cost is $10-$20. 849-2566.

Yoshi’s at Jack London Square.

with Keynotes, exploring the ensembles from Berkeley Jazz Showcase of up-and-coming Project at 8 and 10 p.m. at Parkway, Alameda.

noon at College of Alameda students share their writings at Ian Carey Group Wednesday Noon Concert and Crafts Architect in California Bernard Maybeck: An Arts Lecture by Sissel Hamre at 12:15 p.m. at Hertz Hall, UC Campus. Tickets are $10-$25. 548-5198.

www.ritasklar.com

with Beep at 7 849-2087.

548-0585. www.universityoffalkirk.org

Yoshi’s at Jack London Square.

with Beep at 7 849-2087.

8 p.m. at The Firehouse Cultural Center.

Cost is $10-$12.

5 p.m. at Photolab Gallery, 2235 San Pablo Ave. Cost is $5.

www.lapena.org

www.jazzschool.com

MUSIC AND DANCE

Bay Area Classical Harmonies with Beep at 7 p.m. at The Pro Arts Gallery, 2021 Shattuck Ave. Tickets are $12-$18. 868-6895.

Berkeley Dance Project 2008 Friday at 8 p.m. and Saturday at 7:30 p.m. at Zellerbach Playhouse, UC Berkeley. Tickets are $10-$22. 642-8827. theater.berkeley.edu

Rambin Jack Elliott and Country Joe McDonald an evening of song, stories and music at Cafe de la Pa, 1600 Shattuck Ave. Tickets is $40-84.662.

David Bernker New Trio at 8 p.m. at the Jazzschool. Cost is $15-843-1573.

The Uptonees and a Shan’Dale Band with Asta Martin at 8 p.m. at Anna’s Jazz Island, 2120 Allston Way. Cost is $14, 841-JAZZ.

The Cowlicks at 8 p.m. at Berkeley Rep’s Roda Theatre, 2640 College Ave. Cost is $17-$25. 841-6500. www.lapena.org

Shooting Gunners “Mrs. Warren’s Profession” with Bernard thumbnail. Thu., April 24, 8 p.m. at the Alley Stage, 908 Brannan St., South of Market. Cost is $17-$25. 841-6500. www.shootinggunners.org


Theater of the Tobacco Playhouse "Tartufi" Fri., Sat. at 8 p.m. at 103 Park Place, Pl. Richmond, through April 26. Tickets are $12-20. 238-4071.

Gina Macri at 8 p.m. at The Jazzy Jamboree, 2021 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. Cost is $14.

5 p.m. at Photolab Gallery, 2235 San Pablo Ave. Cost is $5.

MUSIC AND DANCE

with Beep at 7 849-2087.

Benjamin Barber

inc., at 7 p.m. at the Jazzy Jamboree, 2021 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. Cost is $7.

8 p.m. at Berkeley Rep’s Roda Theatre, 2640 College Ave. Cost is $5. 841-6500. www.lapena.org

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Jared Bernstein reads from California Squeeze (And Other Unsolved Economic Mysteries) at 7 p.m. at the Jazzy Jamboree, 2021 Shattuck Ave. 539.9590.

Sparking Art with Soul: A benefit of the ANTON’S from noon to 4 p.m. at John Fleckner’s. The Body Workshop Business Center, 2956 San Pablo Ave. Free, but registration required. www.jkuso.com

www.expressionsog.org

MUSIC AND DANCE

Berkeley's "City of Firsts" Bay Area JazzPoetry Festival at 7 p.m. at the Jazzy Jamboree, 2021 Shattuck Ave. Tickets are $20. 848-1237.

Poems Here and There, from the San Francisco Bay Area, at the Laguna Playhouse, 3001 Pacific Ave., at Dwight. 649-1320.

Jared Bernstein reads from California Squeeze (And Other Unsolved Economic Mysteries) at 7 p.m. at the Jazzy Jamboree, 2021 Shattuck Ave. 539.9590.

Sparking Art with Soul: A benefit of the ANTON’S from noon to 4 p.m. at John Fleckner’s. The Body Workshop Business Center, 2956 San Pablo Ave. Free, but registration required. www.jkuso.com

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El Cerrito’s Contra Costa Civic Theatre Stages ‘Foxfire’

By KEN BULLOCK Special to the Planet

What the eye don’t see, the heart don’t grieve.” Foxfire, now onstage at Contra Costa Civic Theatre in El Cerrito, is about the grieving of a vernacular culture for what’s gone, whether it’s seen or not.

Aunt Annie Nations (portrayed splendidly by Pat Parker) has lived on the farm at Stony Lonesome in the Appalachian country, Rabun County, Georgia, “since I got married.” It’s all she’s looked at in her no-nonsense manner for a long while.

Her husband, Hector (another sterling performance by T. Louis Weltz, showing a man both diffident and occasionally ebullient), who inherited the farm from his father and worked it all his life, died five years before the curtain goes up, buried in the orchard offstage. But Annie still sees him, talks to him, listens to him and argues with his jealously framed scriptural quotations, all designed by this matter-of-fact presentation, all enjoyable in themselves, never quite becomes either a play or cabaret, not that its value as entertainment is compromised. The different modes of presentation, all enjoyably in themselves, sprawl rather than coalesce. The character of Holly seems important at first, then fades away. And the part of ghostly Hector, obviously a vehicle for coauthor (with Susan Cooper) Humie Cronyn for a star turn, ends up being less than they have a few simple, difficult choices to make, after all.

There are some particularly fine soliloquies delivered straight to the audience, which amount to Hector’s dead over duty and steadfastness, and fine repartees between the living and the dead. And throughout, from before the lights go down to the curtain call, there’s lots of good, well-played, well-sung country music, written by Jonathan Holtzman for the original show, directed for CCCT by Alan Spector, and performed by Rodgers, Chuck Ervin on bass, Polly Frizzell and Tony Phillips on fiddle and George Martin on banjo, with a few airs sung rough by other members of the cast.

Annie’s musi- cal son visiting with a sack of oranges, for her husband, Hector (another sterling performance by T. Louis Weltz, showing a man both diffident and occasionally ebullient), who inherited the farm from his father and worked it all his life, died five years before the curtain goes up, buried in the orchard offstage. But Annie still sees him, talks to him, listens to him and argues with his jealously framed scriptural quotations, all designed by this matter-of-fact presentation, all enjoyable in themselves, never quite becomes either a play or cabaret, not that its value as entertainment is compromised. The different modes of presentation, all enjoyably in themselves, sprawl rather than coalesce. The character of Holly seems important at first, then fades away. And the part of ghostly Hector, obviously a vehicle for coauthor (with Susan Cooper) Humie Cronyn for a star turn, ends up being less than

Nothin’. Just livin’” Rodgers’ Dillard shows the glib smile from town and honky-tonk that is covered over the deadpan of the hills. Yet there is a mournful twinge to his grin, the same catch heard in his songs. When his mother finally consents to see a show of his, her first, the pretty schoolmarm who accompanies her, Holly Burrell (Jennifer Antonacci), later tells Dillard she doesn’t like him so much as an entertainer, a professional hillbilly, dressed up “like an ice cream soda” and talking about his old neighbors so they sound like they are “out of L’il Abner.” She preferred his amateur style, “just your voice and guitar.” “It wouldn’t pay the rent,” Dillard dryly replies.

On Eugene DeChristopher’s set, rough-hewn wood structures above fog-shrouded valleys and distant ridges, where a picnic table serves in memory as the site both of a birth and of laying out the dead, a great deal unfolds in scenes from the past and present.

The other members of the cast.

“Our”Hardware” is as simple as the young Annie, ecstatically stepdancing, when Matt Davis’ young Hector comes to awkwardly ask her hand, after poaching a red cob of corn at the shucking so he could kiss the prettiest girl; Holly as a student, recording the Nations family’s stories, being put on and charmed by Hector as Dillard listens, amused, later singing “Sweet-Talkin’ Man”; fine repartees between the living and the dead over duty and steadfastness, and equally fine soliloquies delivered straight to the audience, which amount to Hector’s show-within-a-show, revealing both his hard life and not-so-stern humor at times.

And throughout, from before the lights go down to the curtain call, there’s lots of good, well-played, well-sung country music, written by Jonathan Holtzman for the original show, directed for CCCT by Alan Spector, and performed by Rodgers, Chuck Ervin on bass, Polly Frizzell and Tony Phillips on fiddle and George Martin on banjo, with a few airs sung rough by other members of the cast.

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The coming week is likely to see a great many individuals reassessing current positions — at the workplace, at home and indeed in all venues that figure prominently in daily life. Nothing should be taken for granted at this time, as those things that are may well be gone for good before there is any time to recapture them. Neglect can be a source of real heartache; people and issues alike will suffer greatly when they are not given their due. Young and old alike can learn from those who have experienced loss recently; and any continued loss must be avoided at this time.

Those with a studious bent are likely to get more out of this potentially difficult week than those who are not likely to engage their minds and tackle the tough issues. The tendency toward shying away from things must be avoided, no matter what danger seems to loom.

TAURUS (April 20-May 5) — You must be ready and willing to respond on cue. Pay attention to everything that goes on around you; it will all have a marked impact.

GEMINI (May 21-June 6) — You may feel as though things are shaping up just as you had expected — but don’t get too comfortable. Something is bound to rock the boat.

CANCER (June 21-July 7) — You can zero in on a major personal goal with some success, though certain aspects of your endeavor may still prove incomplete.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 7) — Working more closely with a partner or teammate is advised. Both parties can learn a great deal and recognize greater potential.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 7) — Others are likely to listen to you with more regularity, and to accept your unusual and highly controversial ideas more readily.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 7) — You’ll feel empowered — and just in time. A major problem is likely to develop that only you will know how to solve.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 7) — Now is the time to go back and review your steps, fixing those tiny errors along the way. (Dec. 8-Dec. 21) — Personal power will certainly increase, so long as you concentrate on more than one outlet and work to hone your skills.

ARIES (March 21-April 4) — Things may have been sluggish recently, but you’ll enjoy a faster pace. The need to concentrate will increase, too.

The Berkeley Daily Planet
DOONESBURY FLASHBACK
G. B. Trudeau

LOU’S GARAGE
Peter Conrad

Sylvia Nicole Hollander

Today’s Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS
1. Oils monos
5. Hide
9. Continual
14. Gould cousins
15. Lake Tahoe lodge
16. Hamster post
17. Fabula or fable
18. Most whining
20. Lawn game
21. Start off
23. Take advice
25. Travelers tags
26. Four pegs
27. Lock plug
31. Start the day
32. Author — Agrest
33. Fly away
35. Men of Mark
36. Shadowed
41. House ad
42. Poetic adverb
43. Film trash
44. Small producer
45. Not there
47. Gorge by
49. Corne by
51. Margarita mix
52. Please the dent
54. Egg yolk sauce
55. Minor player

DOW
1. Body
2. Luster
3. Spiritual
4. Oriental poison
5. Drops a glass
6. Bowed
7. In a way
8. New, to Caesar
10. Have rapport
11. Call calling
12. Tell the truth
13. Winter vehicle
14. Janitor topple
15. Lovers’ rise
16. Common coo
17. Nut
18. Fishing net
19. Soda fountain treat
20. Platform for a speaker
21. Cat scarcer
22. In a way
23. In a way
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55. In a way

PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED

1. No
2. Take
3. Bland
4. Soft
5. Tend
6. Tend
7. Tend
8. Tend
9. Tend
10. Tend
11. Tend
12. Tend
13. Tend
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LOU’S GARAGE
Peter Conrad

MY ONLY CHANCE OF ESCAPE IS TO USE MY CLOWN WAGON SIGNAL.

I’M NOT FIT FOR THIS STATIC AIR AT HOME.

COME HELP ME, WHOMEVER YOU ARE.

WHAT’S UP WITH BUTTER?

THANKS, LORD. I’VE GONE A LONG WAY, HAVE I NOT? I’M SCARED TO BE HOME.

HELLO! I’VE GOT TO DO MY OWN SHOPPING.
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Continued from Page Nine

should orient its “major investment study” for improving bus service to downtown. That resolution, still in force today, noted that Berkeley has a “Transit-first policy that supports the use of exclusive transit lanes,” and affirmed that the “preferred alignment will be Telegraph Avenue and the preferred mode will be bus rapid transit.”

Voting for this initiative were current councilmembers Maio, Olds and Worthington—along with then-mayor Shirley Dean, now a leader of the opposition. (I’m sure Ms. Dean has a perfectly good explanation as to why she voted for BRT before she was against it.)

This resolution shows the context in which the current “controversy” (the Planet’s favorite headline word) should be placed—it’s a tempest in a teapot. Whenever the project is looked at in its entirety, it comes out in months to come, support for BRT will continue to grow. Bus Rapid Transit is good for Berkeley, good for the environment, and even good for the southside.

Alan Tobey

BRT OR DEDICATED LANE CORRIDOR

Editors, Daily Planet:

I think this is another horrific idea for getting people out of their cars. (And this is again coming from someone who is dedicated to not using his car: the same cyclist who in 2003 panned the idea of adding bicycle lanes on Telegraph Avenue in downtown Oakland because of the congestion and safety issues.)

I am all for getting people out of their cars. But I would not promote the use of AC Transit’s buses until they become much freer of the personal safety/harrassment issues than is current-ly the case. Do not go about “putting the cart in front of the horse.”

Michael Sachs

Oakland

ISRAEL-PALESTINE

Editor, Daily Planet:

John Gertz’s April 15 letter is an explicit endorsement of war crimes against innocent people of Gaza. The claim that Israel is no longer occupying Gaza and has no responsibility for the Gazans welfare is hogwash. Although Israel redeployed its illegal colonial settlers from Gaza to the West Bank, it continues to occupy and enforce a land, sea and air blockade. Even the border with Egypt is under Israeli control and Egypt is treating Gazans not to interfere. I know, I was a member of an American delegation to observe the Palestinian elections in January 2006 and our delegation was stranded on the Egyptian-Gaza Rafah crossing for 24 hours wait- ing for Israeli approval. Former Presi- dent Carter who is now visiting Israel- Palestine stated this week that Israel’s blockade of Gaza is a “crime against humanity” and noted that Gazans were being “starved to death.”

Israel atrocities and systematic abuse and liquidation of Palestinians led Prof-essor Richard Falk (professor emeritus of international law and practice at Princeton University) to, I am sure painfully for an American Jew, describe the abuse as a Palestinian holocaust. Prof- Falk also writes that compared to Dar- fur: “Gaza is morally far worse.”

Shifting the blame to Hamas is also fraudulent. As documented by Israeli historian Ilan Pappe, the ethnic cleans- ing of Palestine started in 1947 and continues to this day. That is, it started 40 years before the 1987 founding of Hamas. One of many examples is the massacre of Deir Yassin when Euro- pean Jewish gangs (later incorporated into the Israeli army) massacred between 107 and 120 native villagers. That massacre took place on April 9, 1948, not only long before Hamas was founded but also weeks before the ini- tiation of hostilities with neighboring Arab States. Readers should note that Deir Yassin village is located in West Jerusalem far from the area intended for the Jewish state by the UN parti- tion plan. This exposes another fre- quent lie that Israelis only attack in self defense.

Everyone knows Hamas is not in con- trol of the West Bank and that no rockets are fired from this occupied territory. Yet, just as in Gaza, a reign of terror is inflic- ted by the Israeli army on West Bank Palestinians daily and is documented in the UK newspaper The Independent.

That American media is silent on Israeli atrocities and that, like John Gertz, many American Zionists (Jews as well as Christians) feel duty bound to justify and even cheer Israeli crimes is shameful.

Hasan Fouda

Kensington

THE REAL NEWS ABOUT PEOPLE’S PARK

Editors, Daily Planet:

If you ask people what’s happening in People’s Park lately, they might tell you about the mass resignation of the park-facilitating advisory board, or the uppity consultant group that refused to submit a clear, perma- nent redesign proposal, or the refusal of the university to support a public design contest for a newly configured park.

The probability of anyone mentioning the SLAPP-suit would be low. Only a few people remember that the University of California attached a $100,000 price tag to the free speech of a few People’s Park advocates in 1999, hoping to silence the entire community. The silence about the SLAPP-suit six- years later is strong evidence that Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Par- ticipation are very effective.

Imagine waking up to a voice machine message from a UC lawyer letting you know you were expected in Superior Court the following day to answer charges that you were the nexus of a vio- lent conspiracy with people whose names you’d never heard before.

Imagine scrambling down to the courtroom to find that you’d been accused of creating cardboard stage props and carrying roses, and that the sixth largest nuclear weapons manufac- turer in the world was arguing that you therefore constituted a public danger, for which they needed a temporary restraining order, followed by a perma- nent injunction.

Imagine that the injunction including digging in People’s Park, an activity you had enjoyed since the park’s creation as a part of years of working in the com- munity garden.

It should be obvious that none of the 50 Jane and John Does involved in the still current injunction possibly could feel free to attend public meetings and express opinions about the park, since those very activities were the charges against them in the SLAPP-suit. Those who still do are risking another $100,000 gauntlet through Superior Court, anoth- er five years of their lives.

People’s Park may need a few repairs, some weeding, and better drainage dur- ing the rains. But the most important repair is the one they won’t let anyone discuss; dropping the SLAPP-suit so that all of us can share equally in any discussion about the park’s future.

Carol Denney

THE OIL MEN

Editors, Daily Planet:

Was gas $4 a gallon when oil men Bush and Cheney took office seven years ago? Did you vote for Bush twice? Are you happy with the return? Sky- high gas, food, and housing prices. Was it costing $50, $70, $100 to fill up when Oil Ministers Bush and Cheney arrived on the scene? Did anyone think to ask the president and VP, wedded to the oil industries as they are, what might be the results of their energy policy seven years down the road? Have you heard either of these Republicans explain away the excessive and obscene profits Corporate Oil continues to make?

The one bright spot might be that the environment and nature are taking a breather as gas prices continue to rise and people drive less and less.

Ron Lowe

Grass Valley
UC, International, Community College & Extension Students
- Housing
- Meals
- Social Activities
- Clean & Safe Place to Live
- World Wide Friendships
- Large Triples & Doubles Available

UCD, International, Community College & Extension Students
- Housing
- Meals
- Social Activities
- Clean & Safe Place to Live
- World Wide Friendships
- Large Triples & Doubles Available

ATTENTION READERS
Classified scammers are frequently committed to the Daily Planet.
99% of these are filtered out through our system. However, occasionally one will slip through our filters.
Please be advised never to give out banking or personal information when responding to any classified advertisement.

CAL RENTALS
UC Berkeley’s Online Listing Service
> See ALL the listings online
> See photos of rentals
> Rentals are linked to an online map
> Housing counseling service
> Get yourself as an available housemate!
Wheelchair-Accessible CarShare Van

Continued from Page One

comes with a $50,000 price tag.

Berkeley used $25,000 in award money from winning the 2007 National Organization on Disability’s Accessible American contest to split the cost with City CarShare, which matched the amount.

“Just made sense,” City CarShare CEO Rick Chatham said. “We loved the idea of how we could extend our services to senior centers, low-income and moderate-income families, and this seemed like a great first step. But we didn’t want to compete with public transportation. Before people jump into any of our cars, we want to make sure they have explored other alternatives, such as biking, walking or the bus.

Disabled residents who don’t have a driver’s license will also be able to register as members, as long as they have a family member or an attendant to drive them around, Hutchinson said.

City CarShare spokesperson Anita dailey said that disabled members of the community would not be subject to a screening process or required to have any prerequisites.

A disabled City CarShare member will have to pay $6.50 per hour to use AccessMobile—which includes gas, insurance and maintenance, Hutchinson said.

“Anything that includes the disabled is good but this just seems a bit elitist,” San Francisco, she said. “I can’t use the money to reign in on the services that I would like to see the city provide for seniors and wheelchair users,” she said.

Outside, who gets around Berkeley on a wheelchair. “I would like to see the city give them permission for the van to use public parking in the downtown,” she said.

The city, which pays the standard CarShare rate of $5 per hour and 40 cents per mile for the service, has saved a significant amount of money from the program, about $50,000 per year, he said.

“Not only does the program reduce fleet costs, but it also saves in personal mileage reimbursement costs, and it frees up public parking in the downtown, which supports economic vitality for our merchants,” he said. “The city doesn’t have to pay for gas, insurance, cleaning or maintenance, so we haven’t had to pay for the recent rise in gas prices. Of course, the program also reduces air pollution and Berkeley’s ‘population explosion’ of car ownership.”

To become a member of CarShare, visit www.citycarshare.org or call 352-7000.
Foreclosures
Continued from Page One

reports of troubles with two others.
She said one West Berkeley home that sold for $705,000 last year was foreclosed and is currently on the market for $475,000.
The Berkeley picture contrasts sharply with Richmond, she said, “where almost everything on the MLS has been foreclosed.”

An industry official who declined to be identified said that generally Southern California is much worse off than that Northern California. However, a recent 60 Minutes broadcast listed Stockton as the site of some of the worst foreclosure numbers in the country.

DataQuick, another service relied on by the real estate industry, reports that default notices for Alameda County had jumped 19.4 percent between the fourth quarters of 2006 and 2007, compared to 151.8 percent in Contra Costa County and 93.1 percent for San Francisco.

Home sales in the Bay Area are at a two-decade low, the company reported.

Lender collapse
Meanwhile, since the last months of 2006, 251 major U.S. lenders have collapsed or faced major restructuring, according to Mortgage Lender Implode-O-Meter, a website that tracks lender failures (see mlimplode.com).

The problem comes when subprime loans convert to significantly higher fixed rates at the same time that housing values plunge with the collapse of the housing bubble, though one industry official was quick to point out that 80 to 90 percent of subprime loans are currently being paid on time.

One major lender heavily hit is Wachovia Corp., which last year bought World Savings, then an Oakland-based, conservatively run and family-owned lender. Wachovia recorded a $393 million first quarter loss for 2008 and officials said $8.3 billion in loans are “non-performing,” meaning payments aren’t being made.

Don Truslow, Wachovia’s chief risk officer, told investors in a conference call last week that “when a borrower crosses the 100 percent loan to value, somewhere north of that and they presumably run into some sort of cash flow bumm... (and) their propensity to just default and stop paying their mortgage rises dramatically and I mean really accelerates up regardless of credit scores and past history.

Foreclosure sales nationwide leaped 70 percent in the year’s first quarter, according to Foreclosures.com, a site that tracks trends. California leads the list with a total of 120,064.

In California, many—and often most—homes for sale in regional markets are foreclosures.

With economists like Paul Slichter openly warning that the nation is headed into an economic downtown of a scale unseen since the Great Depression that followed the 1929 Wall Street crash, just what the downturn means to the city remains unclear.

Berkeley collects a real estate transfer tax, and a downturn in prices combined with a declining number of sales could pose problems for an already strapped city budget. City Manager Phil Kamlzar did not return a call for comment.

While 24 percent of California’s homeowners hold their properties free and clear, according to a just-released study by the National Association of Realtors, 65 percent hold loans at standard, or prime, rates, and one percent hold federally backed FHA and VA loans, that leaves 10 percent holding the troubled subprime loans.

And it’s subprime loans which comprise the lion’s share—65 percent—of the 22 percent of loans currently in foreclosure.

Renters
While most of the focus has been on single family homes, Berkeley Housing Advisory Chair Jesse Arreguin said he’s concerned about renters who may be caught in a bind when their landlords default.

“We’ve heard about a lot of problems in Oakland and Richmond and threats of foreclosure,” he said. “And a number of tenants here have contacted the rent board with reports that their landlords were saying they were threatened with foreclosure. We’ve been concerned that they may be using that as a way to increase rents.”

He said the City Council passed a resolution in December directing City Manager Kamlzar to prepare a report on foreclosures and what the city could do to help owners and tenants. “It hasn’t come yet,” he said, “but at some point there will be a report.”

Meanwhile, he said, the Rent Board is developing information for tenants, and at some point will likely send out a mailing. Scattered news reports document apartment building foreclosures, and Las Vegas has spawned a blog devoted to apartment foreclosures—especially near the Strip—as investment opportunities. But stories about apartments place in comparison to the vastly more frequent accounts of home foreclosures.

One reason may be that apartments are traditionally held longer than single-family homes.

Arreguin said the Berkeley City Council will consider a resolution tonight (Tuesday) on supporting Assembly Bill 2586, now pending before the state legislature, which would establish protections for tenants of foreclosed properties, including provisions allowing them to deduct utility bills from their rent if they had taken them into their own names after the landlord stopped making payments.

Economic Outlook
Continued from Page Five

lost at least 230,000 jobs since the start of this year. Meanwhile the number of people who stopped looking for jobs because they didn’t think there were any out there rose to 401,000 in March. Consumer spending, the engine of our boomtime growth, is dropping fast.

It’s enough to keep you awake at night. Unlike former Alan Greenspan, Mr. Greenspan—who in fairness is not responsible for everything that has gone wrong, just a whole lot of it—recently told the Wall Street Journal that he doesn’t regret a single decision he made while he was chair of the Fed. Let’s hope that Ben Bernanke isn’t quite so sure of himself.

Street Money
Continued from Page Two

So going back to the day we were approached to defeat the Republicans, I was sorely tempted to take the $75 over the $30 we were getting paid by the Democrats. Some of my buddies took off immediately, most of us were too young to vote anyhow, but I stayed because this election was different. There was a neighborhood guy running for office, a black man with an Africanized name, which made this a historic event for us. Chaka Fattah won, and is now serving his seventh term in the U.S. House of Representatives. With his victory we knew we had political power and a say-so in our local community. The Philadelphia political machine is still running strong, and it’s still fueled with cash. St. Se Paucee!
Continued from Page One

Endorsements

Continued from Page One

employee organization endorsements, which accept cash or credit cards—
driver’s license numbers. (Blackout of names of organizations by elected officials, and lists only two or

ORGANIZATIONAL ENDORSEMENTS

Business

Thurmond and Worthington have split the two business-orientated endorsements, with Skinner getting the Oakland Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, and Worthington getting the East Bay Small Business Council PACT.

Environmental

Skinner and Worthington have split the endorsement environment, Skinner getting the Sierra Club, and Worthington the Alameda County Conservation Voters and the two candidates sharing the Sierra Club endorsement (the Sierra Club is a non-party organization, not controlled by the candidates, but is used by four of the votes of several Sierra Club groups).

Labor

Endorsements by various labor organizations are spread out, with all the candidates, the most diverse of all the endorsement categories. Skinner and Thurmond both got the Laborers, Worthington lists four, and Polakoff one.

Skinner: SEIU State Council (dual-endorsed with Skinner), AFSCME Local 3299 (dual-endorsed with Thurmond), International Association of Fire Fighters Local 1546, Teamsters Joint Council 7 (dual-endorsed with Polakoff); Worthington: Teamsters Joint Council 7 (dual-endorsed with Worthington).

Public Safety

With five endorsements from public safety
drive-up kiosks, city officials

City Council

Continued from Page One

A $32 million stand-alone bond measure to

defense contractors.Most employees

Sunshine Ordinance

The council is also scheduled to hold a

Proposition 98. The council will vote on whether
to hold a special election to ask voters?

INDIVIDUAL ENDORSEMENTS

AC Transit Board

Skinner three endorsements (Board President Chris Peebles, Rocky Fernandez, Greg Harper), Thurmond one endorsement (Joe Wallace) along with Worthington one endorsement (Elta Ortiz).

Albany City Council

Skinner four endorsements (Mayor Bob Lieber [dual with Worthington], Marga Athkinson [dual with Skinner], Farid Javandel). Worthington three endorsements (Bob Lieber [dual with Skinner], Marga Athkinson [dual with Skinner], Farid Javandel).

BART Board of Directors

Skinner one (Gail Murray). Thurmond one (Lynette Sweet).

Berkeley City Council

Skinner four (Mayor Tom Bates, Linda Maio, Darryl Moore [dual with Worthington], Darrell Boyer [dual with Worthington]). Worthington three endorsements (Darryl Moore [dual with Worthington]).

Berkeley School Board

Worthington two (John Schreasy, Ria Bace), Skinner two (Karen Hempill, Nancy Riddle).

California State Assemblymembers

Thurmond six (Amnia Wilmer Carter, Mark DeSaulnier [dual with Skinner], Mervyn Dymally, Fiona Ma, Sandre Swanson, Alberto Torrico). Skinner four (Speaker Pro Tempore Sallee Lieber, Mark DeSaulnier [dual with Worthington], Jewel Okawachi, Joanne Willie). Worthington three endorsements (Bob Lieber [dual with Skinner], Darrell Boyer [dual with Worthington]).

California State Senate

Skinner two (Sheila Kuehl, Tom Torlakson). Thurmond one (Mark Ridley-Thomas).

East Bay Regional Park Board

Skinner two (Doug Lamphier, Andy Katz [dual with Worthington]). Worthington two (Doug Lamphier, Andy Katz [dual with Skinner]).

El Cerrito City Council

Skinner four (Mayor Bill Jones, Janet Abeelson, Jan Bridges, Sandi Potter). Worthington one (Ruth Skinner).

Emeryville School Board

Skinner two (Joshua Simon, Cheryl Webb). Thurmond one (Miguel Dwin).

Emeryville City Council

Skinner three (Vice Mayor Ruth Atkin [dual with Worthington], Nora Davis John Frick). Worthington two (Ken Bukowski, Vice Mayor Ruth Atkin [dual with Skinner).

Oakland City Council

Skinner four (Wendy Gruel, Linda Maio, Mark DeSaulnier [dual with Worthington], Tom Butt). Worthington one (Nancy Riddle).

Oakland School Board

Skinner two (David Kakishiba, Kerry Hamilton). Thurmond one (Greg Hodge).

Peralta Community College District Board

Skinner two (Board President Cygalas, Nicky Gonzalez Yuen). Thurmond one (Abel Gual). Richmond City Council

Thurmond six (Nat Bates, Tom Butt, Lawrence sentinel.

COUNTY SHERIFFS

Skinner one (Alameda County Sheriff Gregory Aellig, Contra Costa Sheriff Warren Rupf).

West Contra Costa School Board

Thurmond two (Dave Brown, Audrey Martinez). Skinner one (Madeline Kronenberg).

Individual endorsements in the AD14 campaign can be found on the candidates’ website endorsement pages:

Wild Neighbors

By Joe Eaton

An Alameda whipsnake, looking alert.

An Alameda whipsnake, Masticophis lateralis euryxanthus, the cousin of the black and yellow California whipsnake (M. lateralis lateralis), the bane of East Bay developers. Whether these plans are anywhere near adequate is another question.

My only encounter with a whipsnake took place in Briones Regional Park a few years ago. A ripple in the grass resolved from a black-and-yellow blur into a four-foot-long snake. It stopped and looked back at me, head raised like a cobra’s, neck weaving back and forth. It had large eyes for a snake, and a jet-black tongue that flickered in and out. Then it turned, and in an instant was gone in the nearby brush before I even thought to reach for my camera.

Whipsnakes are active by day, waiting out the night in rodent burrows. When the morning sun has raised its body temperature to the optimum level, a whipsnake goes on the prowl, hunting by sight, not smell or thermal cues like many other snakes. Its primary quarry is the western fence lizard. If you’ve ever tried to catch a fence lizard, you can appreciate what the snake is up against; they’re fast and skilled in evasive maneuvers. But the whipsnake chases them down, pinning them and swallowing them alive and thrashing. It wastes no time on constriction.

For a whipsnake, prime real estate has tall enough grass to conceal it from its own predators, patchy shrub cover to let it bask. Females also require grassland for egg-laying. The mosaic of microhabitats has become increasingly fragmented the snake’s range, isolating remnant populations and obstructing gene flow among them.

The Alameda whipsnake, found only in Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Joaquin Counties, was state-listed in 1971 and federally listed in 1997. A suit by the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) and Christians Caring for Creation forced the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to identify 400,000 acres as critical habitat. That was set aside after litigation by the Home Builder’s Association of Northern California, claiming the habitat criteria were too broad. FWS’s second critical habitat designation in 2005, under the aegis of Interior Department hatchetwoman Julie MacDonald, cut the protected area by over 62 percent. Last November CBD declared its intent to go back to court on this and other endangered-species determinations. See their website for details: www.biologicaldiversity.org/species/reptiles/Alameda_whipsnake. For now, critical habitat officially includes the eastern portion of the Lawrence Lab’s territory, although not the CRT or Helios sites.

Surveys by contract biologist Karen Swaim have not detected Alameda whipsnakes in the portion of Strawberry Canyon targeted for the next round of development. However, both the CRT and Helios project sites were designated as “highly suitable potential habitat” for the snake. In the case of a creature that hibernates for a good part of the year and is very good at not being seen, the old adage “Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence” would seem to apply. According to the UC EIRs, any whipsnakes encountered during pre-construction site surveys would be dealt with in accordance with the Alameda Whipsnake Relocation Plan. Although this phrase has a reassuring solidity, there does not appear to be an actual plan, at least not in writing.

UC also goes into detail about efforts to minimize incidental take (a semantic cousin of “collateral damage”) of the whipsnake, which would include hiring a Whipsnake Monitor for the construction sites, whipsnake awareness training for the crews, and building snakeproof fences once a site has been cleared. But the fate of individual snakes isn’t really the issue here. It’s how the CRT and Helios projects, and whatever follows them—the buildings, the parking lots, the roads, the vegetation management—would fragment existing habitat. Without connectivity between suitable patches, any Strawberry Canyon whipsnake population would be doomed to extirpation.

Rumors that UC has retained Samuel L. Jackson as a consultant could not be confirmed.

Next week: the harvestman paradox.

Joe Eaton’s “Wild Neighbors” column appears every other week in the Berkeley Daily Planet.