A friend sometimes quotes her late father, sometimes with a Middle European accent: “The Shtupids! They’re everywhere!”

It’s a quote I like, one I’ve taken to repeating myself on appropriate occasions, which unfortunately are coming closer and closer together in recent days.

The latest appearance of the Shtupids is the crowd of latter-day Know-Nothings, of all races, creeds and colors, who have gathered to denounce a middle-of-the-road Sufi imam’s plan to build a Moslem version of the Y in lower Manhattan.

Here’s an approximate description of what’s been talked about:

“Our Mission: The _____, a _____ community center, is a vital neighborhood resource that welcomes people of all backgrounds. We provide a variety of programs with a distinctive downtown point of view, emphasizing excellence, innovation, creativity, and a questioning spirit."

It just so happens that this is actually the program of the 14th Street Y (formerly the YMHA, “Young Men’s Hebrew Association”) and the second blank is filled by “Jewish”, but “Moslem” would also work if this were a description of the proposed center.

This is not a radical or a novel idea here, but one that’s been part of the American religious scene, heretofore Christian and Jewish, for a long time.

Some of you young folks might not remember it, but the Ys of various genders and denominations didn’t use to be nothing but health clubs. They were dedicated to all kinds of uplift, from safe housing for young women in the big city to bible study, and in some places they still are.

In other places they have morphed along the lines of New York’s 14th Street Y or the fabled 92nd Street Y into cultural centers which serve the broader population. That’s what the good Imam and his charming wife say they have in mind for the center they envision. Yes, and they also plan to include a small room for worship services—commonly called a mosque.

Fortunately, the Shtupids everywhere are sometimes challenged by more thoughtful citizens, but it’s an uphill battle. I was encouraged by overhearing a family sitting in front of me at Shakespeare Santa Cruz last week.

Father (or Grandfather) with heavy New York accent: “It’s not even at Ground Zero, it’s blocks away.” Mother (or Grandmother): “There’s already a strip joint much closer.” Teenage Daughter (or Granddaughter): “It’s only 13 stories high.”

At least this family gets it—of course they’re part of the literati, or they wouldn’t be at a Shakespeare production.

The Republicans, on the other hand, don’t get it, or pretend they don’t. They’re no longer genteel upper-class conservatives like William Buckley: The Republican literati have long since left the building.

Evidently they don’t even believe in property rights the way that they used to, or they wouldn’t be challenging the right of the owners of the property in question to build whatever the zoning laws and the building codes allow on the lower Manhattan property. Their excuse is that they don’t happen to like the tenant’s religion.

That’s an old American tradition, of course. In the early 20th century my husband’s Birthright Quaker grandfather incurred the wrath of many people in his small town in Iowa because he sold land to the Catholic newcomers who wanted to build a church—the Whore of Babylon and all that.

But in this day and age religious institutions are even allowed by...
the zoning laws to build in residential neighborhoods where other institutional buildings are prohibited. Temple Beth El, on Berkeley’s north side, was strongly opposed by some neighbors on environmental grounds, but it would have been deeply shocking if anyone had said it shouldn’t be built because of Israel’s policies toward Palestinian-didn’t happen, and just wouldn’t happen here, we hope.

Similarly, all Moslems shouldn’t be punished for the bad behavior of their co-religionists. In Berkeley, we hope we’re preaching to the choir on that topic, but you never know. The Anti-Defamation League, an organization with a long proud history, came out against the Moslem community center, as did a number of rabbis and archbishops who ought to know better.

And while we’re on the general topic of Shtupidity, consider Dan Pine, staff columnist for “J. the Jewish Weekly for Northern California.” In his column in the latest issue, in honor of the Jewish New Year, he hands out “Golden Jack awards” for his favorite stories of the last year.

Among them:

“Most Disheartening Interview: Rae Abileah, a smart and thoughtful South Bay woman who grew up in the Jewish community, went on to join the far-left group Code Pink, and is now radically anti-Israel. We cannot keep losing our kids like this.”

But at least one of his readers is smarter than he is. Her riposte:

“One more Golden Jack Award for the record: Dan, I think you missed one category in your recent online post: Most Disheartening Interview Recap of the year: JWeekly’s Dan Pine summarizes interview with human rights activist Rae Abileah by saying “We cannot keep losing our kids like this,” though his article earlier this year quoted Abileah as saying, “The principle that resonated with me was tikkun olam, putting our faith into action. It’s such an amazing legacy of Jewish activism I learned in college. I feel I’m doing the work my ancestors have paid the pathway... [The Israeli] government is doing illegal things every day... We have a moral responsibility to speak up when that is happening.” Sounds more like a young woman embodying the values of Judaism than a loss to the faith!

Dan, it’s time to stop labeling human rights activists as “anti-Israel.... I am beyond exhausted from hearing this phrase “anti-Israel” used to describe actions that take a stand for human rights and justice....”

And there’s more, all equally cogent. Worth reading, as a reminder that the Dan Pines and the ADLs of the world don’t speak for the majority of Jews, even though they make a lot of noise.

While we’re on the subject of Shtupity, Dan Pine Division, here’s another one of his favorite stories of the year:

“Goodbye and Good Riddance:
To the print edition of the flagrantly anti-Zionist Berkeley Daily Planet (the web version lives on). This rag still rags on Israel all the time, and its editor doesn’t have the cojones to admit she flat-out hates the Jewish state.”

Guess what, Dan? Us gals have never wanted balls-yours appear to be occupying the cavity in your skull where the brains belong. Of course I don’t hate Israel, I just lament some of the policies of its current rulers, as many Israelis and Jews worldwide do.

When you exhibit glee at the loss of the print edition of the Planet, you only make yourself look-Shtupid. You’re doing harm to your own interests.

These days, when friends call my attention to articles in JWeekly, it’s usually with an apology, something like “I don’t normally read it, but I picked it up at my grandmother’s house.” People like you, as your comments writer pointed out, are losing the sympathy of conscientious members of the younger generation, for all the reasons she enumerates.

JWeekly, like the ADL, has had a sterling reputation, but if its staff writers continue to turn a deaf ear to all the answers about Israel now blowing in the wind, it will soon be as irrelevant as Abe Foxman.

Editor’s Back Fence
Copies of Back Issues Wanted: Can You Help?

We have been putting together bound sets of all the back issues of the Berkeley Daily Planet in chronological order to donate to libraries, and we’re putting together a bound set for ourselves and our grandchildren. One full set has gone to the Bancroft Library at UC already. These issues are missing for three more sets:

The most complete set is missing:
July 20-22, 2004
Oct 28-31, 2005
June 2-5, 2006
Dec 11-13, 2007

The 2nd set is missing:
July 20-22, 2004
Oct 28-31, 2005
Jan 3-5, 2006
Feb 14-16, 2006
Feb 28-March 2, 2006
May 2-4, 2006
June 2-5, 2006
Aug 15-17, 2006
Aug 22-31, 2006 (3 issues)
Dec 11-13, 2007

The 3rd set missing:
July 16-19, 2004
July 20-22, 2004
Feb 1-3, 2005
Oct 28-31, 2005
Jan 3-5, 2006
Feb 14-16, 2006
Feb 28-March 2, 2006
June 2-5, 2006
Aug 22-31, 2006
Nov 30-Dec 3, 2007
Dec 11-13, 2007

Does anyone out there have any of these stashed away?

No New Issue Next Week

Tue Aug 24 15:45:00 -0700 2010

Labor Day Weekend is coming up, and not much is happening around here.

Our dauntless volunteer printer Greg Tomoene is taking time off to attend the wedding of his son, Emio Tomoene, filmmaker extraordinary, known to those of you who saw Power Trip, his brilliant send-up of political correctness and the culture of greenwashing in Berkeley.

It seems like a good time for us to take a little time off too. We’ve been cleaning out the office, a dreary and seemingly endless task.

If anything big happens, we’ll post it in the current issue as an extra. If not, we’ll see you again in this space on September 7.
Children Exposed to Asbestos at Washington Elementary School

By Raymond Barglow www.berkeleytutors.net
Mon Aug 23 15:07:00 -0700 2010

Darwin Greenwell
Exposed asbestos tiles three feet away from sink.

Darwin Greenwell
Exposed floor three feet away from food utensils shelf on left and from food storage/ prep tables on right.

Darwin Greenwell
Exposed floor three feet away from sink.

Darwin Greenwell
Exposed asbestos tile three feet away from sink.

Darwin Greenwell
Exposed floor three feet away from food utensils shelf on left and from food storage/ prep tables on right.

Darwin Greenwell
Obliterated linoleum seam, exposing asbestos tile fragments near doorway.

Darwin Greenwell
Obliterated linoleum seam, showing shards and pulverization.

“I love teaching the kids, seeing their eyes light up when they learn something. But it has to be done in a safe environment.” -- Darwin Greenwell

For five months at Washington Elementary School in Berkeley, children attended cooking classes and music classes in a classroom that may have exposed them to dangerous asbestos. This hazard was verified by Cal/OSHA (California Division of Occupational Safety and Health) in late June 2010, and the room was closed down.

However, administrators at Washington Elementary and at the district level apparently had been notified about the danger in late January. The classroom’s condition was reported at that time to administrative authorities by Darwin Greenwell, one of the teachers conducting music classes in the room. Greenwell has taught in the Berkeley Unified School District for the past five years. Like many of the district’s music teachers, he teaches at several elementary schools during a single school year, and this past year one of them was Washington Elementary, where Greenwell taught brass (trumpet and trombone) to fourth- and fifth-graders. His classes met twice a week, for 45 minute sessions.

One morning, in late January, Greenwell entered the classroom and found that all the carpet runners, which previously had completely covered a long linoleum seam on the floor, had been removed. The linoleum seam had come apart, exposing floor tiles in a quite deteriorated state. In subsequent months, until the end of the school year, several of these runners were intermittently brought back into the room to cover a part of the exposed seam.

Greenwell was not the only teacher in the classroom who noted the condition of the floor and the carpet runners. A cooking teacher in this classroom confirmed that carpet runners had been removed from the floor early in 2010. Another music teacher in the room told the Planet that “the rugs were very dirty and dusty. The kids sat on the floor for music and they constantly pulled the loose threads. When they danced they would raise the dust.”

Greenwell was better prepared, however, than other teachers to recognize a possible hazard. It struck Greenwell, who has many years of experience in construction and is a licensed California real estate broker as well as a teacher, that the dusty tiles, which were shredded into fragments, partially pulverized, and loose, were probably made of asbestos and therefore unsafe. “I gave it an 85 to 95% chance of being asbestos tiles,” said Greenwell, “because I have removed this exact same kind of tile in my own family’s properties, and it almost always tested positive for asbestos.” Inhalation of airborne asbestos has been proven to cause respiratory illness and cancer.

A video of the exposed asbestos is available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V_lhtUWr4A&feature=player_embedded#

The adjacent photographs were taken by Greenwell in late June.

The Environmental Protection Agency defines a “friable” material as a material that “when dry, may be crumbled, pulverized, or reduced to powder by hand pressure ” and deems friable asbestos hazardous. Greenwell recognized the exposed, shredded floor tiles as friable, and thus dangerous if composed of asbestos.

All public school districts are required by the EPA’s Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act, which became law in 1986,
to monitor carefully all school premises to detect possible asbestos contamination. The regulations require, for example, that local education agencies “provide custodial staff with asbestos-awareness training.” The bungalow classrooms at Washington Elementary are cleaned regularly by the school’s custodial staff. Why did no one report the asbestos problem to administrative authorities?

According to Muriel Waller, an environmental expert who has managed environmental oversight and remediation projects under contract to US military agencies, the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratories, the Port of Oakland, and other government organizations, it is not entirely surprising that a local school district would fail to recognize an asbestos problem. “When the danger of asbestos was publicized back in the 70’s, it was likened to the devil,” said Waller. “There was removal of intact asbestos—which sometimes increased the danger—and even of asbestos underground. Today the pendulum seems to have swung in the other direction, and asbestos hazards are not given the attention they call for.”

Greenwell, on the other hand, was not disposed to overlook the shredded tiles in the classroom. He told the Planet that his grandfather was a machinist who died of occupational lung cancer and that his uncle has been a professional “asbestos abater,” someone who is called in to seal or remove exposed asbestos, for more than 25 years. “You better believe my family knows asbestos,” said Greenwell. “I learned this stuff, by osmosis from my uncle and from my own experience, over the years. When you see this kind of thing, you take a sample from an inconspicuous area and you have it tested.”

This particular room at the school serves multiple purposes. This past year it was not only the location of Greenwell’s music classes, but also of cooking classes. The shredded floor tile was three feet way from the sink and the shelf of cooking pots, pans and utensils on one side, and three feet away from the food storage and preparation tables on the other side.

Greenwell said that “The brass instruments that I teach require the children to bring a lot of air into their lungs, and it’s unacceptable if the air I’m asking them to breathe contains asbestos. Nor is it OK, in cooking classes, if children are eating food laced with asbestos particles.” Greenwell added that it would be easy for a child sitting on the floor to pick up a small fragment of tile, put it into his or her mouth, and swallow.

Asbestos, which enters the body through inhalation or food ingestion, is notorious for leading to asbestosis and mesothelioma, a form of cancer that affects the lungs, stomach, colon, or heart. The disease is often difficult to diagnose, but once it has been detected, it is one of the most painful and fatal cancers, usually leading to death within 12 to 18 months.

“I do not think there are any safe levels of friable asbestos exposure for children,” said Waller. “Childhood exposure to asbestos is particularly concerning because of the nature of asbestos-related diseases. Most of them have a very long latency period. Mesothelioma can take up to 60 years to develop. A middle-aged adult exposed to asbestos may never be diagnosed with mesothelioma or another asbestos cancer simply because he does not live long enough for the disease to develop, but children have a long lifespan ahead of them. It is important therefore to avoid early asbestos exposure.”

Greenwell said that when the carpet runners were lifted from the floor, revealing the tile fragments possibly containing asbestos, he contacted the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA), speaking with officials first in Oakland and then in Sacramento. Greenwell said that he also reported this situation to his immediate BUSD supervisor, Suzanne McCulloch. She in turn recommended that he bring the matter to the attention of Washington Elementary School Principal, Rita Kimball, which Greenwell says he did. (McCulloch told the Planet that she did not remember whether she spoke with Greenwell, and added that when a teacher brings a facilities problem to her attention, she advises the teacher to contact the principal.)

Greenwell said that he also spoke with the Superintendent’s office on one occasion and wrote two letters to the Superintendent about the possible asbestos hazard. But, Greenwell continued, no action was taken by any of these authorities. Finally, according to Greenwell, he was told by the Executive Assistant for the Superintendent on May 14, 2010 that “This situation is not the Superintendent’s responsibility. You will need to file a work order.” Greenwell found this response inadequate. It had been his experience in the school district, he said, that the processing of a work order takes a long time, whereas the shredded floor tiling called for remediation right away.

Cal/OSHA spokeswoman Krisann Chasarik told the Planet that the case of toxic asbestos at Washington Elementary School remains open, and that her agency would not provide detailed information to the public before the case is closed.

School district Public Information Officer Mark Coplan said that no carpets had been removed from the floor of the classroom, and that Cal/OSHA had been called in because of a report that the exposed seam in the room represented a “tripping problem,” not because of any asbestos danger. He confirmed that upon inspection, asbestos was found in the classroom flooring and that the classroom had to be closed down. He said that district administrators had acted responsibly in dealing with this situation, once it was brought to their attention.

During five months of the school year, from February through late June, the tiles remained exposed to children taking band, general music classes, and cooking classes in the classroom. When Greenwell saw that this situation was going unaddressed month after month, he began to document the condition of the room and his own efforts to bring that condition to the attention of Cal/OSHA and school administrators.

Finally, on June 25, 2010, after the school year had ended, the room was officially closed down by OSHA, which posted a notice on the outside of the door declaring the room “dangerous” and forbidding “all work ... at this location, under this condition.” Geraldine Tolentino, the Cal/OSHA official who had closed the room, telephoned Greenwell to notify him of the closure and acknowledging that that the hazard was indeed asbestos. Greenwell then visited the classroom himself and with his iPhone took photographs and video of the damaged floor, and later, of the abatement process that took place in July to repair the floor.

According to Greenwell, the history of the classroom’s asbestos condition is noteworthy for a number of reasons. The linoleum covering the asbestos tile was mislaid originally, with a seam running from the doorway along the most trafficked part of the room which was apt to rupture because of intense use, thereby exposing the asbestos tiling beneath. The rupture in the seam appears to be a longstanding one. Greenwell’s photographs show that in the past, tape was placed over the separated seam and that currently the exposed asbestos tiles are fragmented and partially pulverized.

In past decades, asbestos was incorporated into flame-retardant panels and tiles commonly used in construction. Asbestos production was outlawed in the U.S. in 1978, but the ban permitted installers to use up remaining stocks. Many buildings in
the Berkeley Unified School District currently contain asbestos, and as buildings age, asbestos materials are commonly exposed in these facilities.

Notwithstanding the apparent potential hazard in the Washington Elementary School classroom, and Greenwell’s communications to Cal/OSHA, the Washington Elementary School Principal, and the Superintendent’s office about that hazard, the room continued to be used for five months, until the school year was over.

When Greenwell notified his immediate supervisor and also the principal, he says that “I was told that I should keep on teaching in the same room. I was told there was no other facility available.”

Greenwell said to the Planet, “I was looking out for the children in the classroom, as an advocate. In eleven years of teaching, I’ve never seen anything like this. If the district is poisoning the kids accidentally or inadvertently with asbestos and isn’t aware of it, that’s one thing. That would amount to negligence and incompetence. But when they know about it, and do not take action, I don’t know what to think of that.”

The Principal at Washington Elementary, Rita Kimball, did not respond to repeated phone and email messages from the Daily Planet in early August requesting information about the potential asbestos danger in the school classroom.

The Abatement Process

After bungalow classroom 11 at Washington Elementary was declared unsafe by Cal/OSHA on June 25, 2010, the Berkeley school district contacted RGA Environmental, a company in Emeryville, and requested that an “asbestos abatement” be done in the classroom. The abatement procedure was carried out on July 9. The asbestos tiles were ripped from the floor, revealing a black layer of mastic (adhesive) attaching the tiles to the flooring beneath. This mastic is typically asbestos-laden.

Photographs and video taken by Greenwell during the abatement process indicate that it was conducted without removing or covering white boards, posters and fabrics mounted on the walls, or ceiling hangings made by the children. Dinnerware and cooking utensils on the shelves, and cleaning materials and storage bins near the sink, also remained exposed.

After the abatement had been completed, Greenwell and this reporter inspected the room in early August. All the materials that had been left in the room during the abatement process were covered with dust, as were the floors, walls, cabinets, and shelves.

New books, games, and other school supplies had been brought back into the room and were sitting on the floor.

In conversation with Greenwell on August 23, Geraldine Tolentino, the OSHA official who had closed the room, confirmed that the school district had been using the room during the summer, and that she had had a “Cease and Desist” order issued to the district, enjoining the district to immediately stop using the room, because it had been declared unsafe.

Although Greenwell told Tolentino that there was good evidence that the abatement had been improperly conducted, Tolentino said that the room would be cleared within a day or two for use by students.

Muriel Waller, who in her capacity as a consultant has managed many asbestos abatements, told the Planet that “If I were a parent and had a kid going into that room, I would be concerned, especially because there was reportedly thick dust in the room. The room should be tested again before students go back in there, to determine that the room is safe.”

RGA Environmental is the main agency that does asbestos assessment and abatement for the Berkeley school district. Waller said that she is not familiar with the work of this particular company and cannot evaluate it. She noted, however, that abatement firms are sometimes reluctant to report to their clients the full extent of environmental damage and of the remediation that a hazardous situation legally requires. Cutting corners on an abatement reduces costs and maintains cordial relations between the firm and its client—a school district for example.

ACLU Sues FBI to Reveal Surveillance of Bay Area Muslims

By Julia Cheever (BCN)
Tue Aug 24 15:23:00 -0700 2010

The American Civil Liberties Union and two other groups sued the FBI in federal court in San Francisco today in a bid for information on the possible investigation and surveillance of Bay Area Muslim communities.

The lawsuit was filed under the U.S. Freedom of Information Act. It seeks a court order requiring immediate processing of the groups’ request for FBI records.

The ACLU was joined in the suit by the Asian Law Caucus, a San Francisco-based civil rights group, and the San Francisco Bay Guardian, a weekly newspaper.

The three groups are seeking records on matters such as any investigations of mosques and Islamic centers in the Bay Area since 2005, the training of agents and the possible recruitment of Muslim school children into the FBI’s Junior Agent program.

The three groups filed an administrative Freedom of Information Act request with the FBI five months ago, but the lawsuit says they haven’t received any information since then.

The groups say the information is of great public interest because of the possible impact of surveillance on free speech and freedom of religion and the potential harm to community relationships that are important to national security.

ACLU attorney Julia Mass said, “Clear information about the FBI’s activities is necessary in order to understand the scope of their surveillance tactics to assess whether they have had a chilling effect on the right to worship freely or to exercise other forms of expression.”

FBI spokesman Bill Carter, at the FBI’s headquarters in Washington, D.C., said the agency has a policy of not commenting on pending lawsuits.

But Carter said that in general, the FBI receives several thousand Freedom of Information Act requests each year.

Carter said, “We comply with the law, which requires the review of records in the file system.

“We process the files as quickly as possible but it depends on the size of the files,” Carter said.

Chevron Tries Sacramento End-Run Around CEQA

By Mike Parker (Partisan Position)
www.richmondprogressivealliance.net
Tue Aug 24 11:09:00 -0700 2010

Chevron is trying to use Sacramento lobbying to bypass environmental protections for Richmond.

Negotiations are still going on between environmental groups, the city of Richmond
and Chevron about protections for restarting the Chevron expansion project. But Chevron is now lobbying the state legislature to sneak through a special exemption which allows the giant oil company to do its project without having to file an Environmental Impact Report and reach agreement with the city about environmental protections.

In July 2009 a court ruled that Chevron’s Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for its expansion project was flawed because it did not reveal its true plans for the expansion. Chevron stopped the project instead of submitting a revised EIR or negotiating with the environmental groups. Chevron then appealed and again the Courts ruled that its EIR was seriously flawed noting that Chevron told one thing to its stockholder but another to the community.

In the last few months a Democratic assemblyman has been serving as a mediator to find a way to restart the project. The city delegation for the mediation includes Mayor McLaughlin, Vice Mayor Ritterman, Council Member Viramontes, the City Manager and City Attorney (see Chevron Loses). In previous mediation attempts the environmental groups demonstrated a willingness to try other approaches to protect the community. Chevron has refused to seriously address concerns about community health.

Chevron asks CEQA exemption

Apparently Chevron is trying to bypass these negotiations by asking the legislature for a special exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This act requires that projects must file and get local community approval of an Environmental Impact Report. This is the main tool which allows communities to protect their air and water and other environmental conditions. An exemption for any project should be questionable under any circumstance. But to give an exemption to the company after judges have ruled that Chevron misled the public with its report would be a scandal and is only possible because Chevron has such deep pockets for politicians.

A number of mainstream environmental organizations like the Planning and Conservation League have drafted letters to send to the leadership of the State legislature asking them to refuse an exemption to Chevron.

Write your legislator and ask that they too refuse to give a free pass to Chevron. Our air and water and our lives are too important to trade for Chevron campaign contributions. We don’t want a further weakening of the California Environmental Quality Act. Demand that Chevron come to the negotiating table prepared to negotiate real protections of our air and water and to file a truthful and accurate Environmental Impact Report.

[Editor’s Note: For more information, see an article in the LA Times Political blog. Berkeley readers: See the comparison to UC’s legislative end run around the environmental regs for its Memorial Stadium project.]

Berkeley Orders Marina Boatyard to Clean Up or Else

By Thomas Lord
Tue Aug 24 13:28:00 -0700 2010

The Berkeley Marine Center, a boatyard at the Berkeley Marina, has been ordered by the City of Berkeley’s Toxics Management Division to take immediate corrective actions or else halt significant portions of its operations. At stake is an issue that pits deep environmental concerns against a popular local small business-and which involves a lease on City of Berkeley property that won’t expire until 2028. From the perspective of the city, the boatyard has dragged its feet on urgent environmental clean-ups for years. From the perspective of the boatyard, the city is overreaching and threatens to shut down a vital local business. Whichever side is closer to correct, push is coming to shove in the legal process.

The Orders Come Down, Late Negotiations Begin

On July 16, 2010, the Toxics Management Division of Berkeley’s Planning and Development Department issued a memo to Berkeley Marine Center titled “Notice of Violations: Corrective Actions Required”. The memo implies that there will be significant potential penalties if the orders it lists are not obeyed. This communication brings to a head a dispute between the city and the boatyard that started in 2006.

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The Berkeley Marine Center (“BMC”) operates the boatyard-a boat repair, construction, and storage facility-at the Berkeley Marina. According to its website, the
company has been owned and operated by Cree Partridge and his family since 1999. It's on a 4.5 acre property leased to the firm by the City of Berkeley.

According to a survey of comparable rentals done for the city of Alameda in 2005, BMC’s lease runs for 50 years, starting in 1978 under a previous owner and running until 2028. In 2005, according to the survey, BMC was paying a base rent of $1,700 per month for the 4.5 acres, adjustable upward if according to the company’s gross receipts.

The Toxics Management Division (“TMD”) issued its orders as Berkeley’s state-recognized “CUPA” authority. A CUPA (Certified Unified Program Agency) is a local governmental agency authorized by the state of California to coordinate the enforcement of a wide variety of state environmental programs. The orders to the boat yard are signed by Nabil Al-Hadithy, TMD’s Hazardous Materials Manager.

The memo gave BMC a July 31 deadline to change practices regarded as environmentally hazardous. The date has come and gone, but BMC continues to operate. Both sides of the dispute report that this is because negotiations towards a resolution are underway.

Because of the scope and seriousness of the TMD’s orders, and as part of a policy to encourage fair and uniform enforcement state-wide, the complaints against BMC and the resulting negotiations are now in the hands of the Alameda County District Attorney’s office.

The Main Environmental Issues

The idea of a boat yard seems innocent enough to the unininitiated: Boats are lifted out of the water, cleaned off, and brought ashore for repairs for sanding and repainting or even just for storage. In another part of the boat yard, perhaps an entirely new vessel is being built. What could be wrong with that?

From an environmental perspective, the situation is not so simple.

One significant issue is that the paint used on the bottoms (below water portions) of some boats. Sitting in the water, a boat will tend to accumulate barnacles, worms, seaweed, dirt and other threats.

To help discourage biological pests, many boats are painted with special paints containing copper and lead compounds. The poisonous copper and lead in these paints act roughly like common pesticides to get rid of the invading species. Nasty critters and weeds might attach themselves, but the metal-rich paints help kill them. Like some pesticides, these paints present significant environmental threats:

The coatings are designed to be “ablative” which means, roughly, that they “flake off” as needed. When unwanted life forms get started on a boat, the metals are designed to kill or weaken them before they “dig in” very far, and the paint on the affected area will flake off either spontaneously or at the next washing.

Periodically, it is necessary to clean the hull (with high pressure water). Less frequently but still periodically necessary, the hull must be sanded down a bit and repainted. Both of these activities can t spread the copper and lead into the surrounding land environment and the nearby ocean.

Copper can be extremely damaging towards sea life. Lead in any concentration is very dangerous for both sea life and humans, especially children and pregnant women (and the offspring they are developing).

The washing process generates clouds of dust and the water carries off paint flakes. Additionally, it generates a kind of sludge-the paint, dirt, and life washed off the boat. Both kinds of discharges can be rich in tiny particles of copper and lead, so washing boats tends to generate toxic waste.

When a boat needs to be repainted, the first step is to sand the hull. Sanding generates large quantities of dust particles which can contain metals as well.

In a boatyard, it’s a significant challenge to ensure that the waste from washing, and the waste from sanding are captured rather than being released into the environment, and that these hazardous wastes are disposed of appropriately. The city of Berkeley’s view is that BMC is failing on both points.

Workers sanding boats at BMC can be seen wearing full-body protection suits and gas masks. Nevertheless, the city contends that the dust generated by sanding spreads to the surrounding environment and into the ocean.

Berkeley’s contention (backed up by measurements) is that the Berkeley Marine Center has failed badly to prevent leaks of copper and lead toxics into both the human and ocean environment. Samples of ambient dust and soil in and around BMC confirm high concentrations of copper and lead. There are indications that BMC’s boat washing facilities cause problems--troublingly close to the open bay, public parking, and to the recreational public space at Cesar Chavez Park.

Speaking to the Berkeley Daily Planet, Cree Partridge of BMC agreed with the city that BMC had caused some contamination, but argued that while BMC owed (and was engaged in) some clean-up, the city had been demanding an unfair level of performance, holding BMC to a higher standard than the law requires.

The July 16th orders from the city reveal that the city is confident that it is asking for a legally mandatory level of clean-up. Public records indicate that the city began attempting to negotiate corrections beginning in 2006, and turns to final orders in 2010 only out of frustration from the failure of past attempts to work cooperatively with BMC.

The city demands (among other things): Permanent cessation of open-air “dry sanding” at BMC, installation and permitting of suitable management equipment for hazardous waste from sanding and cleaning, enclosure and at least partial relocation of the cleaning facility, and remedial clean-up of top-soils evincing hazardous waste from BMC.

The list of environmental concerns is long this summary touches on only a few of them.

Contrasting View Points Creek Partridge, of BMC, expressed resentment to the Planet about the recent legal action by the city.

“I’d rather be paying for clean-up, not a lawyer,” he said. He argued that the city is asking him to clean up legacy waste from the underlying landfill which preceded the marina and the adjoining park, over and above the lesser cleanup of his company’s wastes which he is happy to carry out.

The city’s complaint, however, contends that measurements during the clean-up process will be used to make sure that BMC cleans up its own mess, but is not held responsible for legacy messes. Nabil Al-Hadithy of TMD seems a bit relieved that after four years of attempted negotiations, at least now things are in the hand of the higher authority of the Alameda County District Attorney, and a legal resolution and more important, effective environmental action, may at last be in sight.

It’s a Bird—It’s a Plane—It’s a —HELIICOPTER! In Memorial Stadium

By Steven Finacom
Mon Aug 23 20:22:00 -0700 2010
The first occasion was just over three years after the Stadium was completed in 1923. In that era, California football teams had scored unprecedented triumphs, including playing five years without a loss. Andrew Latham Smith was the coach of those “Wonder Teams”, and the Stadium was sometimes referred to as “the House that Andy built”.

When the 42 year-old Smith died January 8, 1926, of pneumonia-apparently contracted at a chilly football game he attended in Philadelphia, after the California season was over-he was widely mourned and the campus planned a memorial service fit for a deceased statesman.

Smith’s body had been cremated in the East and the ashes brought west by his brother, his only known surviving relative. He had told those at his deathbed that he wanted his ashes scattered at Memorial Stadium and the campus acceded.

This was the only occasion I know of when the University permitted an official funeral and internment-so to speak-on the campus (as opposed to memorial services, of which there have been many).

The scattering of the ashes would be done by airplane, over the playing field.

A private, apparently all male, memorial gathering was held at Berkeley’s Elks Club, next to Berkeley’s main Post Office. Smith had lived just up the street in the Hotel Whitecotton (now the Shattuck).

The public funeral took place on Friday, January 15, 1926. Fog “settled suddenly” on the campus during the 11 am procession to the Stadium, led by UC President William Campbell and accompanied by muffled drumbeats.

“In the presence of a sorrowing throng assembled before the Memorial Arch and on the hillsides above the Stadium, the University of California today paid final tribute to Andy Smith”, the Berkeley Daily Gazette reported.

The service took place not in, but just north of, the Stadium with the structure as backdrop. Then, “while the thousands stood silent with bared heads an army place, piloted by Lieutenant J.R. Glascock, a personal friend of the deceased, flew low over the arch and the ashes of Andrew Latham Smith were strewn over the field where he had directed so many battles, where he won so many victories and where by example and precept he made men.”

“During the period of meditation while the army plane circled over the university grounds, the students, alumni members and faculty who had gathered for this final tribute to their friend, stood with bare heads. The sun had dispersed the heavy fog. Swiftly the plane circled once again and then, sweeping from the north over the great memorial arch, it dipped toward the earth and the ashes of Andrew Smith were wafted to their final resting place.”

“As they settle gently to earth Dr. McCall (pastor of First Congregational Church) pronounced the commitment: ‘Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God to take unto Himself the soul of our brother and friend, where therefore commit his ashes to the air that they may settle and rest upon the ground of his own choice, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. The dust returns unto the earth as it was; and the spirit has returned unto God who gave it.’

Did the plane that scattered the ashes actually get below the rim of the Stadium as opposed to just flying low above? Who knows? “Jack” Glascock would have had to have flown fairly low so the ashes would descend within the oval, rather than scattering away onto the campus or adjacent hills.

A big press box didn’t exist in those days, but it would still have been some feat of flying to come over from the north over the Stadium near its highest point-the memorial arch-dip down within the several hundred feet between ends of the bowl, drop the ashes, then bank up and away before hitting a flagpole on the Stadium rim or crashing dead on into precipitous Panoramic Hill.

Still, the deed was accomplished and the ashes apparently dropped in the right place (one suspects some may have landed on the seats, but the respectful press didn’t mention that). The Stadium remained locked following the service, leaving the great bowl silent and vacant in tribune to Smith.

“Loyal Californians of the future who throng to the Stadium will almost be compelled to pause for a moment and recall the spell of the man who placed California football in the position that necessitated that immense structure of stone (sic) and wood to play it in,“ a Daily Californian staffer wrote on the day of the service.

That’s not necessarily true today. If you ask people attending Cal football games if they know who Andy Smith was, it’s quite possible you’ll get a blank stare in response. They may know of Pappy Waldorf, Bruce Snyder, or Mike White, but the Smith era is now far, far, removed.

However, for some decades generations of Cal fans were comforted—or perhaps simply intrigued-by the fact that particles of Smith could still be, theoretically, nourishing the
much experimentation, but no helicopter of the type had been both designed and flown successfully. Hiller sent out to try, beginning an invention and manufacturing odyssey that included presentations to skeptical Army officials, tests of models dropped from a San Francisco high rise, and a trip to Washington DC to get permission from the War Production Board to buy a motor for the full scale craft.

In May 1944, Hiller launched his helicopter—which he called the XH-44—from the driveway of the family home, now the Bentley School campus. It wasn’t a free flight; Hiller had tied the aircraft to the bumper of his car. The limited testing proved successful. He got ready for a free flight. He was just nineteen.

“Secretly he trundled his machine into the University of California’s football stadium,” reported Popular Mechanics in the November 1944 issue. “There he climbed aboard, started the engine, and manipulated the controls.”

The flight was on July 4, 1944. One wonders if the date was picked because the campus would be deserted for the holiday and it was a day when mysterious noises might escape notice? No matter. The test worked and the Stadium survived.

“The Hiller-copter, unfettered, was a perfect lady”, the article continued. “It climbed, turned, and gently came to rest on its tricycle landing gear at the will of the man in the cockpit.”

Stanley Hiller, Jr. had made history in Memorial Stadium. It was the first successful test flight of a co-axial helicopter design, and the first helicopter flight on the West Coast.

There were additional Berkeley flights. “Since that day it has put in a good many hours soaring over the stadium and the low hills near by;” the article added.

Hiller went on to fame as an aircraft inventor, manufacturer, and reorganizer of troubled businesses.

Although in the 1940s he did helicopter testing in both Oakland and Berkeley’s old Armory building on Addison Street, he ultimately based himself on the San Francisco Peninsula, where he lived as an adult.

The Hiller Aviation Museum in San Carlos recalls and showcases his innovations and work, including a replica of the XH-44, as part of its mission of public education about science and aviation. The original is in the Smithsonian Institution.

Hiller’s own name is not prominently remembered today in connection to the Stadium or to the East Bay where he grew up. However, Oakland’s Hiller Highlands subdivision, above the old family property, recalls the family name; Stanley Hiller, Sr. developed it.

Parting the Rain Sea

The third instance of flight inside Memorial Stadium that I can identify also had a Hiller connection.

In November 1950, Northern California experienced nine consecutive days of rain. Heavy rain and snowfall in September and October had already loaded the Sierras with snow.

Rain runoff and premature snowmelt poured down out of the mountains on both east and west. Usually bone-dry Nevada towns were filled with rushing water and nearly 700,000 acres of California’s Central Valley were flooded, 25,000 people evacuated, and riverside communities like Marysville inundated.

In Berkeley, the turf at Memorial Stadium was saturated by rain, and the Big Game was due. Wednesday, November 22, at the suggestion of a Cal alumnus, William Eddy, “a commercial helicopter pilot...joined forces against Mother Nature in an attempt to make the Memorial stadium at Berkeley a fit place in which to play football next Saturday...” reported the San Mateo Times.

“Flying his helicopter...just six feet above the green turf at the stadium, the terrific downdraft evaporated the water in short order. After making his first test, crossing on the 10-yard line, Eddy...reported that he was convinced the plane would do the job. A check by stadium custodians of the test strip found the grass almost completely dry and sod considerably drier than the rest of the field.”

“Eddy will spend the rest of the day swinging back and forth across the field. If he does not complete the job today, it is likely that he will return tomorrow morning, a University of California spokesman said.”

The article noted the concept of using the downdraft from a low flying helicopter in this way wasn’t new; the technique had been used to dry out orchards and blow snow and standing water off highways. The helicopter used at Memorial was a Hiller model.

The rain also stopped November 22 and the Big Game was played at Memorial Stadium that Saturday. Perhaps discomfited by the drier than anticipated turf, Cal and Stanford played to a rare tie, 7-7.

Gliding In

The fourth and final instance of an aircraft in Memorial Stadium that I can document
is also the only one that occurred before a crowd in the Stadium. All the other three flights had been when the Stadium seating bowl itself was largely vacant.

This last instance was in 1979 and it had a “front row” audience of thousands.

It was October 27, and Memorial Stadium was packed for the biennial home match-up against the Trojans. The teams were tied near half time and USC had just punted. Cal was setting up for a first down play.

Then an orange and yellow hang glider soared into the Stadium from the south, swooped low over the field, and came to a landing in the northeast corner.

An Internet search turns up the information that the hang glider was one Tom Kardos.

Two short videos of the landing can be found on YouTube (search for hang glider, Cal, USC) and following one of the videos a “tomkardos” has posted this note. “I took off from Strawberry Canyon, at the top of the ridge a mile away, about 1,000 feet elevation about the Stadium, flew directly above the game several hundred feet high then turned south for an approach, made a 180 and flew between two flagpoles at the South rim and descended over the stands to burn off height then flowed down just above ground effect along the diagonal-longest dimension of the field...sorry but had to touch down before the end zone to safely stop.”

I was at that game and remember the flight. From the east side of the Stadium fans had a good view of Kardos high above, turning in for his landing. If I recall correctly, he barely missed the flagpoles on the rim. The stunt was spectacular-and, today would probably draw a horde of security, criminal charges, and Homeland Security hoopla—but it didn’t help the home team. Cal’s fortunes waned after half time and USC won the game.

That incident ended, as far as I can recall, the record of aircraft visits within Memorial Stadium. But I may be wrong. Other events and stories may be out there.

The best that can be said at this point is that aircraft have flown low over, or in, the Stadium at least four times and that another such instance should occur this coming Thursday.

New Muslim College Launched in Berkeley
By Jeff Shuttleworth (BCN) 
Tue Aug 24 21:11:00 -0700 2010

Classes started today at a new school in Berkeley that aims to be one of the first accredited Muslim-run liberal arts colleges in the United States.

Zaytuna College, which is working toward accreditation with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, is initially offering two majors: Islamic law and theology and Arabic.

School officials said the accreditation process typically takes 4 to 8 years.

The school is starting out small with only 15 students and rented classroom space at the American Baptist Seminary of the West at Dwight Way and Hillegass Avenue, but officials said the college hopes to grow gradually and eventually have its own facility.

“The college will in due time graduate highly-trained and culturally aware professionals to lead the growing number of Muslim institutions and communities across the country as well as contribute in a meaningful way to the diverse American tapestry,” co-founder Hatem Bazian said in a statement.

Another founder, Zaid Shakir, said the school also aims to improve relations between members of the Muslim community and other local faith groups.

The third co-founder, Hamza Yusuf, said the school represented the realization of a long-standing goal.

“We have long desired to establish an institution that recognizes the importance of shaping Islamic scholars and teachers that fully understand American culture,” Yusuf said. “Zaytuna College is the first institution of higher learning to address that need.”

Six men and nine women are enrolled in the freshman class at Zaytuna, which has five faculty members and charges $11,000 each year for tuition. All of the students are Muslim, but the college says it welcomes students and teachers of all faiths and perspectives.

Zaytuna is also seeking accreditation from major educational institutions in the Muslim world, such as Egypt’s al-Azhar University.

Officials said the school is not receiving any government funding and instead subsists on contributions from the Muslim community in the U.S.

Courses offered at Zaytuna include Islamic theology, Islamic jurisprudence, Islamic business and finance law and Muslims in America.

UC Campanile Open Two Evenings This Week for Sunset Viewing

By Steven Finacom
Mon Aug 23 21:48:00 -0700 2010

The Campanile on the UC Berkeley campus can be a beautiful sight at sunset. The low rays of evening light often turn the white granite shaft a gentle gold.

The view from the Campanile observation deck at sunset can also be magnificent, but is rarely seen. Usually, entrance to the tower closes at 3:45 on weekdays and 4:45 on weekends.

Two evenings this week, however, the tower will be open for a special sunset viewing opportunity. This is part of Welcome Week, a program of orientations and special events for new students on the UC campus.

On Tuesday, August 24, and Thursday, August 26, the tower will be open from 7 to 9 pm for sunset viewing.

Admission is free during those special viewing times, and the general public is welcome.

Admission to the top of the tower typically costs $2 general, and $1 for seniors, those 17 and under, and California Alumni Association members with ID. Children under 3, UC Berkeley students, faculty and staff with ID are admitted free.

The Campanile is not wheelchair accessible; there are 38 steps from the top elevator landing to the observation deck.

See this link for the full Welcome Week Calendar:

-10-
Convocation began.

Chancellor Robert Birgeneau spoke, emphasizing the elite quality and opportunity of the incoming class.

“There are about 6,000 of you. Just think of the other 6 billion people who don’t have the privilege of being here today”.

“We expect you to challenge yourself, be inquisitive and, most importantly, be open to change.” He noted that the faculty had 21 Nobel Laureates, but that “25 Cal students have gone on to win the Nobel Prize.”

As he has done in the past at similar events, he invited the students to look at those sitting next to them, then recalled his own welcome to college many years ago as an undergraduate where he found himself sitting next to a fellow student who would become his wife.

“You may have right now just looked at your future soul mate for the rest of your life”, he said.

“Each of you should feel that Berkeley is yours, that you belong here, but just as important, that Berkeley belongs to you.”

Birgeneau outlined the demographics of the incoming students. About 4,300 are true freshmen, and 2,300 are transfer students. The youngest is 13 and the oldest 60. And “65 [military] veterans are part of our incoming class”, he said, to applause.

Eight out of ten of the new arrivals are from California, 11 percent from elsewhere in the United States, and nine percent are international students.

About one third of the new students, he said, are recipients of Federal Pell Grant financial aid, and one third are also the first from their families to attend college.

Birgeneau referred to the broader Berkeley community at only one point in his remarks. “Enjoy the campus and the community around you”, he said. But “I must urge you also to be street smart. Endeavor to be safe and aware of your surroundings.”

He also cautioned the students against binge drinking and alcohol and drug use in general, but concluded on an upbeat note.

“The air is full of dreams and ambitions here.”

Vice Chancellor for Equity and Inclusion Gibor Basri spoke next, telling the students that Berkeley “is a community that sees you as both an individual and a scholar.”

“I see people from all over the world among the new students, he said. “I see the future opinion makers and leaders of California.”

He read campus principles of community and said, “This is, after all, the birthplace of the Free Speech Movement. On the other hand, we want to respect our differences.” He called for “free speech of the productive sort.”

Noah Stern, president of the Associated Students of the University of California, mused that he had trouble coming up with what to say to highly qualified new students. “You were all leaders in high school. You all rocked your SATs. What should my advice be to you?”

“Going to Cal means waving the flag of change and progressive ideas,” he said. “UC Berkeley is unique because of a collective desire to do the unexpected.” He was the only one of the speakers to refer to the “painful budget cuts” the University had suffered in the past year.

Hundreds of the student spectators sat on the wide, sloping, lawn of Memorial Glade, while hundreds of others huddled in the shade of the small clusters of trees lining the perimeter berm.

Mother Nature had played her usual weather trick on Berkeley. False summer arrived just with the new students.

This past weekend, as the weather turned warm after a cool summer, freshmen were busy moving into the residence halls.

For days-possibly even weeks-those among them who have never been to Northern California before will mistakenly believe Berkeley has a balmy sub-tropical climate.

Finally, when they lose track of where they packed their coats and closed toe shoes, the inevitable “offshore breeze” and “marine layer” will educate them about the more moderate character of Berkeley weather.

For today, however, some astute orientation planner had produced and distributed round, stiff, paper cards with a bear head on one side and campus spirit songs on the reverse. Their wooden handles made them rather effective fans.

Memorial Glade was a sea of sun-struck people vigorously fanning themselves, a rare sight in Berkeley. The speaker podium was in the deep shade of an awning.

The Cal Band, quite casually attired, played, and the UC Men’s Octet, natty in white dress shirts and blue and gold ties, sang.

As the speakers continued, many of the students drifted to the sidelines, lining up for free hot dogs, kettle corn, and cold beverages handed out from tents.
Everyone Invited to Free High Holiday Services

By Dorothy Snodgrass
Tue Aug 24 13:52:00 -0700 2010

With Full just around the corner, it follows that the Jewish High Holidays will be celebrated, as always, in September. I’m reminded of this fact thanks to an announcement from Rabbi Sara Shendelman, who, with Rabbi Steven Fisdel, will be leading uplifting free High Holiday Services with musical accompaniment in an extraordinary, little known church, the South Berkeley Community Church, located at 1802 Fairview Street. This church was built in 1880 as the first purposely integrated church in the country. It has a beautiful and very peaceful sanctuary.

Rabbi Shendelman is a spiritual teacher and counselor, having conducted services for 26 years. Rabbi Fisdel, himself a counselor, is a classical Kabbalist with powerful insight into the heart and mind. He has created a journey for the soul. Using the name, Canfei Nefesh, which literally means “Soul Wings”, these two people share a desire to have a transformational experience during the High Holidays. To quote Rabbi Shendelman, “we celebrate creation, eat apples and honey to celebrate the sweetness of the world, and blow the shofar to wake up the heart to find our way back to our best selves. We lead through contemplative and joyous songs, stories and personal insights. We lead through contemplative and joyous songs, stories and personal insights.

Rosh Hashana Evening: Friday, September 8th at 7:00 p.m.
Rosh Hashana Day: Saturday, September 9th at 10:00 a.m.
Kol Nidrei: Sunday, September 17th at 6:30 p.m.
Yom Kippur (Shachrit): Monday, September 18th at 10:00 a.m.
Everyone, especially young people, is invited to attend these services.

Reader Opinion

UCB’s DNA Testing and Academic Freedom.

By M.L. Tina Stevens, Ph.D.
Fri Aug 20 13:24:00 -0700 2010

Last week, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) instructed UC Berkeley to modify its “Bring Your Genes to Cal” program. From the beginning, UCB’s controversial plan to test the DNA of incoming freshman for three genes, brought into bold relief many of the complex questions that engulfs emerging biotechnologies, for example: how best to protect privacy rights; informed consent; the integrity of medical testing and research; and how to identify and reduce conflicts of interest?

Mark Schlissel, UC Berkeley’s dean of biological sciences, underscored another issue likely to be the subject of ongoing consideration: academic freedom. Defending the UCB program against the CDPH’s interpretation of relevant law, Schlissel declared that, “We have taken every precaution and are committed to following the letter of the law..., but we believe this is a flawed reading of the statute that raises questions about who has control over teaching at the university...”

How expansively we view academic freedom depends, in part, on recognizing the conflicts of interest that exist on the part of those doing the “teaching.” Deep structural conflicts of interest exist when science-entrepreneurs, who may stand to benefit downstream from emerging biotechnologies, use their positions as university academics to normalize the commercialization of those technologies. UCB’s press release describes the lead professor associated with the program, Jasper Rine, as a “genetics professor.” Yet he, like many of his academic colleagues, has strong commercial ties to the industry developing genetic technologies. Rine has served on the advisory boards of a number of biotech companies and has co-founded several California biotech companies, including his own genetics testing company.

UCB’s implicit endorsement of genetic testing as consumerism is especially audacious given the serious criticism that this type of testing has come under. Testifying at last week’s California Assembly Committee on Higher Education oversight hearing, Council for Responsible Genetics President, Jeremy Gruber, related that federal sources had dubbed such testing “snake oil,” and “not ready for prime time.”

From the 1940’s to the 1960’s, Princeton, Yale, Wellesley, and many other elite universities required incoming freshman to participate in medical anthropology/eugenic research by posing nude for photographs designed to document posture and body type, seeking correlations between physique and temperament. Since then, in the clear-sightedness of another era, many such photos have been destroyed. But many yet remain. How much humiliation and trauma could have been prevented if more disinterested authority could have prevailed? Those incoming freshmen who laid bare their DNA revealed the most intimate biological information not only of themselves but of those related to them. They chose to do so without prior opportunity to discuss the ramifications of their decision, without full disclosure of the scope of the conflicts of interest involved, and without clarity as to when or how the information would ultimately be disposed. They, and those who come after them, need protection from the overwhelming interests and conflicts of interest of the institutions in which they arrive, trusting, to learn.

M. L. Tina Stevens, PhD. is Director of Alliance for Humane Biotechnology, a non-profit dedicated to raising public awareness about the social implications of biotechnologies, is also a lecturer at San Francisco State University, Department of History.

The Burka: A Taliban Imposed Canvas Prison

By Ralph E. Stone
Mon Aug 23 21:42:00 -0700 2010

On our Iran Air flight from Frankfurt to Tehran, each of the stewardesses wore a “hiyab.” When we entered Iran’s airspace, an announcement over the intercom told the women to put on their hiyab or a head scarf. My wife, as did the other women on the flight, obliged by putting scarves on their heads. My wife wore a scarf covering her hair for our entire Iran visit.

Why do Iran and other Muslim countries
require a woman to hide her hair or her entire body? Because they believe God has made it an obligation for believing women. In the Koran, God tells the believing men and women to lower their gaze and to dress modestly. He (God) specifically addresses women when He asks them not to show off their adornment, except that which is apparent, and draw their veils over their bodies. (Koran 24:30-31) Thus, God requires Muslim women to dress modestly and to cover in public or in the presence of men who are not close relatives.

These verses of the Koran are known as the verses of hijab and many Islamic scholars believe that they make the wearing of a hijab mandatory. Some countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar do enforce a dress code. Women there are expected to cover their hair and wear some sort of loose fitting, full-length garment over their clothes. However, for the majority of Muslim women around the world, to cover, or not to cover, is a freely made choice. We have noted in our travels to Indonesia, Egypt, and Morocco, that very few women wore such coverings or even a hijab.

Ostensibly, the hijab frees women from being thought of as sexual playthings or from being valued for their looks, or body shape, rather than their minds and intellect. As the argument goes, no longer slaves to consumerism, the hijab liberates women from the need to conform to unrealistic stereotypes and images dictated by the media. Wearing a hijab and dressing modestly and covering the hair, may even minimize sexual harassment in the workplace. Supposedly, the aura of privacy created by a hijab is indicative of the great value Islam places upon women.

Afghanistan Under the Taliban

The Taliban is an Islamic fundamentalist group who emerged from the koranic schools in Pakistan. The majority of the Taliban are ethnic Pashtun. The “burka” is the mandatory garment of the Pashtun tribes. After the the departure of the Soviets in Afghanistan, the Taliban came to power and made the wearing of the full burka mandatory. The burka became a canvas prison, devaluing their women. Under the Taliban, Afghanistan went from a twentieth century country to a medieval society.

A women cannot clearly see more than a few yards away when wearing a burka. Those with glasses cannot use them. It guarantees control over a woman’s body as it covers the eyes with a thick veil, which prevents the wearer from seeing normally. And because the canvas grid limits peripheral vision, women become dependent on others to effectively move around, especially in open areas. The thick veil of the burka prevents the face and eyes to be visible. The garment extends to the wearer’s feet, making it difficult to walk or run. The burka weighs about 14 pounds. Imagine wearing a 14-pound garment every day.

The Taliban prohibits women from singing, dancing, playing musical instruments, engaging in sports, employment, schooling, and even flying kites, an Afghan national pastime. Only male physicians are allowed to practice in hospitals, but they are not allowed to treat or operate on women.

When a woman is pregnant, the Afghans say she is sick. Ninety-seven percent of Afghan women gave birth at home because they are forbidden to call male physicians. Forty percent of Afghan women died of childbirth complications. Under the burka, the child cannot see his or her mother’s face or receive skin contact. During breastfeeding, the child cannot see the mother’s face and the mother cannot clearly see her child’s expressions through the burka, thus negating basic bonding between mother and child.

Young guards of the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice once patrolled the streets with whips, sticks, and rifles. If women were seen wearing makeup, exposing their faces, or even laughing, they had to take them in without any legal defense. Women have even been beaten because they enlarged the holes in their burkas in order to see better. Some of the penalties for these violations include stoning, amputation, torture, flogging, and public executions.

In stoning, the woman is put into a hole in the ground and covered up to her chest with dirt, then men stone her to death. The stones should not be too big so as to cause immediate death, nor too small as then they are not considered stones.

There are thousands of widows who must beg in the streets or prostitute themselves because under the law they cannot receive their husbands’ inheritance.

Despite the new constitution of 2004, Afghan women can be purchased, sold, or be part of an inheritance. Forced marriages continue where about half involve young girls under sixteen. Many Afghan women leave their homes only twice in their lifetime, when they get married and go to live with their husbands, and when they die. Suicide by fire and domestic violence are widespread.

Since the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan by the United States, not much has changed for Afghan women, despite the promises of the international community, not only in areas controlled by the Taliban, but also in areas controlled by the international coalition. President Hamid Karzai was once seen as a champion of women’s causes and a welcome change to Taliban rule until he failed to deliver on promises to appoint women to cabinet posts. In 2009, he angered international allies by signing onto the so-called “rape” law, containing clauses making it illegal for woman to refuse to have sex with their husbands, and women could only seek work, education or visit the doctor with the permission of their husband. It was dropped under international pressure.

The United States’ war in Afghanistan is unwinnable. When the coalition forces finally leave, the Taliban will either regain control of the country or at least exert considerable influence over the country’s affairs ensuring that Afghan women will continue a miserable existence. Will the plight of Afghan women have any influence over our exit? Probably not.

When the niece of Aishah Bint Abu Bakr (the Prophet’s wife), Aisha bint Talha was asked by her husband Musab to veil her face, she answered, “Since the Almighty hath put on me the stamp of beauty, it is my wish that the public should view the beauty and thereby recognize His grace unto them. On no account, therefore, will I veil myself.”

I recommend the film “Kandahar” and “Kabuli Kid.” I also recommend the following books: “The Bookseller of Kabul” by Aring;se Meierstad; “The Kite Runner” and “A Thousand Splendid Suns” by Khaled Hosseini. I am sure there are many other films and books on Afghanistan.

Source: Partly based on “The Canvas Prison,” a PowerPoint presentation by an unknown author. The Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) has much information about the plight of women in Afghanistan. <www.rawa.org>
and frightened—mainly angry—at the spectacularly ignorant hate rhetoric against Muslims used recently by some politicians.

The current frenzy of Muslim-bashing ostensibly has to do with the “Ground Zero Mosque,” although it is neither at Ground Zero nor a Mosque. (It’s a community center.) Like the Sherrod case, this was first ginned up in the rightwing blogosphere by professional hate-mongers, then promoted by Fox News and the Murdoch newspapers. Then it was embraced by politicians such as Newt Gingrich, most of them Republicans.

This is a departure for modern American politics, and a dangerous one. As any study of anti-Semitism in Europe will demonstrate, once religious bigotry gets into a political culture—or a political party—it is almost impossible to get it out. A hundred years ago rightwing and nationalist groups in Europe declared Jews to be the cause of everything bad, and that kind of political anti-Semitism made Hitler’s ascent possible. Like the anti-Semites of the early 20th century, today’s Islamophobes also seek war, although today it is religious war the extremist elements want.

This is a direct and very dangerous threat to the First Amendment of our Constitution. Religious liberty is not just one Amendment in the Bill of Rights; it’s the most important. (That’s why it’s the first.) If we lose the First Amendment, America as we know it is finished. Religious liberty is, with the single exception of my children, the only thing I would die for. Secondly, it is precisely the strategy of Al Qaeda to stampede us into hate campaigns against Islam, to help the terrorists recruit Muslims abroad. How ironic that these Islamophobic, rightwing politicians are so willing to do the work of Al Qaeda. But they want the same thing Al Qaeda does—all-out religious war.

The Islamophobes fall into four groups. First are the evangelicals that believe that religious war against Muslims will usher in the Second Coming of Christ. Then there are people who are passionate about Israel, and think they’re helping Israel by spreading religious bigotry, when actually they are harming the cause of Israel. Third, there are sadists and mentally unstable types that get off on terrorizing vulnerable minorities. Fourth, there are the ambitious politicians—and for them, the fires of hell are not hot enough, because they are out for themselves and care nothing about America.

Do they ever stop to think that every time they say something needlessly inflammatory about Islam, it endangers our precious young men and women in uniform, who are already in harm’s way? No, they do not—despite wrapping themselves in the flag, they care only about getting elected.

People wonder why there is such hate now, so many years after 9/11. But it isn’t about 9/11—it’s about the dangerous potential of frustrated people. The American Dream is receding, spurred by the rapacious greed of the corporate upper class. Within the swirling currents of discontent that affect the American people, the influence of the Religious Right, the neo-cons, the Tea Party and other rightwing extremists is exponentially multiplied. Their answer is simple: Americans must find meaning in a state of permanent, apocalyptic religious war. In the Middle East, Halliburton and other war profiteers will set up a new empire; domestically, Muslims are to be expelled or interned.

Ultimately, Americans really don’t like to see a burly guy shoving a placard in the face of an eight-year-old Muslim boy and yelling “murderer!” as the child goes to Friday prayers. But for the American people to see how dangerous religious bigotry can be there must be strong, unequivocal voices making the case for religious liberty. And those voices must start now.

For me, it’s not theoretical. It’s a family thing.

Lawrence Swain is the Executive Director of the Interfaith Freedom Foundation, a public-interest nonprofit that advocates civil rights for religious minorities, and religious liberty for all. The Foundation is funded solely by donations.

Ending Homelessness
by Ralph E. Stone
Tue Aug 24 15:03:00 -0700 2010

Between 2.3 to 3.5 million Americans experience homelessness and it is estimated that the recession will force another 1.5 million more people into homelessness. The 2010 Update of “Without Housing - Decades of Federal Housing Cutbacks, Massive Homelessness and Policy Failures” by the Western Regional Advocacy Project (WRAP), an update of its 2006 report, has arrived.

(It can be downloaded at its website <www.wraphome.org>) In “Without Housing,” WRAP sets forth a timeline of modern-day homelessness, the past three decades of policy failures, provides a look at present-day realities, gives grassroot approaches on how to get involved, and possible solutions.

WRAP concludes that ending homelessness in the United States will require a serious recommitment by the federal government to create, subsidize and maintain truly affordable housing. It notes that the root cause of homelessness in the lack of affordable housing.

WRAP traces the cause of the present housing crisis to the Reagan administration’s elimination of affordable housing funding and the dismantling of the social safety nets created by the New Deal. As a result, in the 1980s, under Reagan’s policies, homelessness reemerged throughout the United States.

WRAP notes that recent homeless policy has focused on a series of underfunded, patchwork efforts that tend to pit sub-populations of people experiencing homelessness, service providers and advocates against each other in battles for meager funds. Rather than addressing homelessness by providing housing options at all income levels, homeless policy in the United States has devolved into byzantine formulas to count the number of homeless people and determine whether or not someone “qualifies” for less housing and services.

Unless we make a massive commitment to the construction and subsidization of affordable housing, homelessness will continue to grow no matter how many case managers or outreach workers we fund. We may alter the face of homelessness or shift its demographics through preferential outreach to particular sub-populations, but we will not change the underlying cause.

WRAP recommends that the United States government provide more new affordable housing, better maintain existing public and subsidized housing, place a moratorium on the demolition of any public housing without an enforceable guarantee of one-for-one replacement with a right of return, develop constructive alternatives to the criminalization of homelessness and ensure that all decisions impacting tenants in public and subsidized housing is made with full tenant participation and input.

WRAP argues that until we recognize housing as a human right, we will not end mass homelessness in the United States. We cannot solve the systemic causes of poverty until we recognize that quality education, economic security, and health care are all essential human rights.

The primary message of report then, is that building truly affordable housing and ensuring the human right to a home will end the contemporary crisis of mass homelessness in the United States. WRAP offers a
grassroots approach to getting involved, and possible solutions to what has become the everyday crisis we know as homelessness. Change is desperately needed. Millions of people without shelter are depending on it.

**Letters to the Editor**

November, November, November is the siren song so many Republicans and Tea Partiers are singing. But the road to this year’s midterm elections is not a cakewalk for anyone who voted against health care for all Americans, against the stimulus bill that has turned around a faltering economy and those who voted against unemployment benefits for American workers. Republicans voted no on all of them.

“The trouble with the Republican Party is that it has not had a new idea for thirty years” - Woodrow Wilson.

This statement is just as true today as it was then. Many conservatives and Republicans are actually flirting with the Tea Party as an alternative to the Republican Party. Republicans are no longer the only game in town. This election season Republicans and Tea Partiers are fielding many one issue candidates, far from the right the right rails.

From a purely partisan perspective, early election victories have improved Democrats prospects for November. Democrats have chosen stronger candidates and Republicans weaker ones in the midterm elections. This bodes ill for Republicans and bodes well for Democrats.

**Ron Lowe**

Dorothy Snodgrass made an egregious error in suggesting that I at any time have blamed the Berkeley City Council for the arson which took down the old Berkeley Inn on Telegraph avenue.

The fire was deliberately started by persons who were never charged, but who woke the residents in the wing in which the fire was set so as to at least minimize loss of life. I am happy to introduce Ms. Snodgrass or anyone interested to the tenants who were witnesses, and who escaped the flames.

Please, Ms. Snodgrass, read more carefully.

**Carol Denney**

Corporations run the show. Primarily that’s going to come from the people who own and run our big corporations. So the G8 is this group of countries that represent the biggest multinational corporations in the world and really serve at their behest. It doesn’t really matter whether we have a Democrat or a Republican in the White House or running Congress; the empire goes on, because it’s really run by what I call the corporatocracy, which is a group of men who run our biggest corporations.

They really are the equivalent of the emperor, because they do not serve at the wish of the people, they’re not democratically elected, they don’t serve any limited term. They essentially answer to no one, except their own boards. They are the power behind this. Today, corporations exist for the primary purpose of making large profits, making a few very rich people a lot richer. That shouldn’t be.

Ted Rudow III, MA

This week the last combat convoy left Iraq. By the end of the month, the remaining combat forces will also leave the country. This puts the Obama administration on track to reduce the U.S. troop level to 50,000 by August 31.

This is an important step, but does not by itself end the occupation of Iraq. The Administration vowed to complete Iraq’s occupation by December 31, 2011. That is a deadline we must meet. The last 20 years of war, sanctions, and occupation have broken Iraq. Millions of Iraqis have been killed, injured, traumatized, displaced or forced to flee and live as refugees. Breaking our promises and prolonging the occupation will not help solve any of the challenges the war-worn country is facing. In fact, our continued presence would exacerbate the Iraqis’ woes.

V. Pellizzer

Unbelievably, 1 in 5 Americans believe President Obama is a Muslim. Guess we should never underestimate the power of ignorant people in large groups. By the way, he is a practicing Christian. Of course, Republicans know this, but they don’t mind a bit of public ignorance if it advances their cause.

Ralph E. Stone

Several hundred people have come down with Salmonella enteritides poisoning, leading to the recall of 380 million eggs from 17 states by the Wright County Egg Company of Galt, Iowa). According to the Centers for Disease Control, more than 100,000 Americans suffer from egg-borne Salmonella infections each year. Common symptoms include diarrhea, abdominal cramps, and fever.

Salmonella infection is only the most publicized health effect of egg consumption. An average egg contains loads of fat and 213 mg of cholesterol, key factors in the incidence of heart disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes.

Incidentally, those 380 million eggs were the product of nearly 1,500,000 birds suffering for a year in tiny wire-mesh cages that cut their feet and tore out their feathers. Their waste was dumped into a nearby stream, contributing to massive pollution of the Mississippi River, and eventually, to a “dead zone” in the Gulf of Mexico three times the size of the BP oil spill.

The good news is that our local supermarket offers a number of healthful, eco-friendly, delicious egg replacers. More details are available at www.chooseveg.com/vegan-substitutes.aspx.

Harold Kunitz

It’s like David Duke has taken over and is directing the election year strategy of the Republican Party. What you hear coming from the GOP about the mosque controversy in New York City are Muslim hate screeds and anti-Islamic rhetoric. Aren’t there two billion Muslims around the world - are they all bad?

Each election Republicans open up 9/11 wounds to whip up fear and loathing among its base and the inattentive American public. The GOP spin machine never ceases to amaze.

Prior elections it was marriage used as a Republican “wedge issue”; This election a proposed Islamic community center in NYC has become the GOP’s political football as they sweep the real issues, economy, jobs and war under the rug.

Ron Lowe

Recently, White House press Secretary Robert Gibbs criticized the “professional Left” for its constant anti-Obama rhetoric. Of course, left-wing blogs were unhappy at the characterization. But the shoe fits.

There’s a syndicate of journalists who make a living preaching that the President hasn’t created very many jobs or done enough to help the uninsured, and hasn’t delivered much relief to society’s most marginalized citizens. To which the President responds, “Well, duh.”

Who’s claiming that he has? Obama himself certainly isn’t. How could even the
By Conn Hallinan

“Lethal Blend”

Fri Aug 20 13:23:00 -0700 2010

How involved is the U.S. military in Yemen, and is the Obama Administration laying the groundwork for a new foreign adventure? According to several news agencies, including Agence France Presse, UPI and the Washington Post, very involved and likely to be more so in the future,

“U.S. military teams and intelligence agencies are deeply involved in secret joint operations with Yemeni troops,” says Dana Priest, the Post’s ace intelligence and military affairs reporter, including “the U.S. military’s clandestine Joint Special Operations Command, whose main mission is tracking and killing suspected terrorists.”

The quarry of these assassination teams are supposed leaders of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), but the deepening U.S. alliance with the authoritarian government of Yemen may soon entangle it in two complex civil wars—a rising by disenfranchised Shites in the north, and an increasingly powerful succession movement in the country’s south.

According to UPI, the White House is quietly expanding “the footprint” of “elite forces inside Yemen.” One military official told the news agency, “The numbers are definitely going to grow.” The Obama administration increased “security” funds for Yemen from $67 million to $150 million.

Navy Seals, Delta Force troops, and intelligence units are working closely with the government of President Ali Abdullah Saleh, providing weapons, training and intelligence. And sometimes more.

On Dec. 17, 2009, a U.S. BGM-109D Tomahawk cruise missile attacked the village of al-Maajala in south Yemen, killing 55 people, the bulk of them women and children. The Tomahawk—launched from a U.S. surface ship or submarine— was armed with a cluster warhead that spread a storm of razor sharp steel and incendiary material over 500 square feet.

Amnesty International’s Mike Lewis said his organization was “gravely concerned by evidence that cluster munitions appear to have been used in Yemen,” because “cluster munitions have indiscriminate effects and unexploded bomblets threaten lives and livelihoods for years afterwards.”

The target was a supposed al-Qaeda training camp, but the Saleh government draws no distinction between AQAP and the Southern Movement (SM), a group advocating an independent south Yemen. The SM has a long list of grievances reflecting problems going back to 1990 when North Yemen and the southern Democratic People’s Republic of Yemen were unified.

That merger between the conservative north and the better educated and socialist south was never a comfortable one and led to a particularly nasty civil war in 1994. The north won that war by using jihadists freshly returned from fighting the Russians in Afghanistan. Since the end of that four-month war, the SM charges that the north siphons off the south’s oil without adequate compensation, discriminates against southerners on access to jobs, and has cornered the country’s vanishing water supplies. Southern protests are met with tear gas and guns, and, according to SM leaders, some 1500 “secessionists” have been imprisoned and more than a hundred killed.

According to UPI, “The [Saleh] regime’s heavy-handed response to the southerners has only fueled the demand for independence and encouraged the disparate southern groups to come together.”

Saleh claims the SM is closely tied to AQAP, which immediately gets Washington’s attention, and has allowed his government to tap into the resources of the American “war on terrorism.” Southern independence leaders, like Tariq al-Fadhli, deny any ties to AQAP and say the Southern Movement is non-violent. Whether it will remain so under the Saleh government’s continued assaults is an open question. The December cruise missile strike is not likely to encourage pacifism.

The fighting in the north between the Saleh government based in the capital, Sanaa, and the Shi’ite Houthi, who inhabit the north’s forbidding terrain, is long-standing. While Saleh and his supporters in Saudi Arabia say Iran is stirring up the trouble, there is no evidence for ties between Iran and the Houthi. The tensions between the Saleh government and the Houthi are local and generally have to do with access to political power. But by bringing Iran into the picture, Saleh can claim he is fighting terrorism, thus making his regime eligible for arms, intelligence, and training.

The U.S. is ratcheting up the use of Special Operations Forces (SOF) worldwide. The administration has increased the number of countries in which SOFs are deployed from 60 to 75, and upped the SOF budget 5.7% to $6.3 billion for 2011. The White House also added an additional $3.5 billion for SOFs to its 2010 budget.

One military official told the Washington Post that the Obama administration had given the military “more access” than former President George W. Bush. “They [the

Columnists

Dispatches From the Edge: The U.S. & Yemen: A “Lethal Blend”

By Conn Hallinan

Simon Max
target for politicians seeking to distract attention from problems at home by playing on fears over security.” That strategy was stage center in early August when France’s conservative government shipped several hundred Roma back to Romania and French President Nicolas Sarkozy pledged he would bulldoze 300 Roma camps over the next several weeks.

Europe is certainly in need of distraction these days. Sarkozy’s poll numbers are dismal and his administration is plagued by scandals. The economic crisis has seen France’s debt soar, and European governments have instituted savage austerity programs that are filling the jobless rolls from Dublin to Athens. Since most politicians would rather not examine the cause of the economic crisis roiling the continent-many were complicit in dismantling the checks and balances that eventually led to the current recession—“criminal gypsies” come in very handy.

France’s crackdown was sparked by an angry demonstration in Saint-Aignan following the death of a young “traveler” at the hands of police. Sarkozy never saw a riot he couldn’t turn to his advantage. On July 29 his office declared it would dismantle Roma camps because they are “sources of illegal trafficking, profoundly shocking living standards, exploitation of children for begging, prostitution and crime.”

Living conditions in Roma camps are, indeed, sub-standard, but in large part because local French authorities refuse to follow a law requiring that towns with a population of over 5,000 establish electrical and water hookups for such camps. And because countries like Germany, France, and Britain refuse to use any of the $22 billion that the European Commission has made available for alleviating the conditions that the Roma and other minorities exist under.

As for the “crime” and “drug trafficking” charge, research by the European Union (EU) suggests there is no difference between crime rates among the Roma and those in “the population at large.”

“Indeed there are Roma who are in charge of trafficking networks, but they represent less than one percent of this population, the rest are victims,” David Mark, head of the Civic Alliance of Roma in Romania, a coalition of over 20 Roma non-governmental organizations, told IPS News.

Mark went on to point out that “Because that one percent commits crimes and the authorities are not able to stop them, all Roma are being criminalized.” The expulsions and demolitions, he charged, are “based on criminalization of an entire ethnic group, when criminality should be judged on a case by case basis in courts of law.”

In some cases the level of hysteria would be almost laughable were it not resulting in the most wide spread roundup of an ethnic minority since World War II. Italy declared a “Gypsy emergency,” in spite of the fact that Italy, which has a population of 57.6 million people, has only 60,000 non-Italian Roma.

Estimates are that there are between 10 and 12 million Roma in Europe, making the group the continent’s largest minority.

For several weeks, the EU’s executive body, the European Commission, played hot potato with the issue. The EC insisted that it was doing everything it could to help the Roma and pointed to the $22 billion pot that remains pretty much untapped. But it also kept silent on charges by human rights organizations that countries like Germany, Italy and France were violating EU law guaranteeing freedom of movement.

These nations—primarily France—argue that since the Roma are from Romania and Bulgaria, and both countries are newly minted EU members, the freedom of movement clause doesn’t kick in until 2014. And, in any case, French officials charge that the Roma can’t show they are gainfully employed and self-supporting.

On this latter point, rights organizations point out that Roma are discriminated against in employment. “It’s somewhat hypocritical to complain about people not having money to subsist in France when you don’t offer access to the labor market at the same time,” says Bob Kushen, managing director of the European Roma Rights Center in Budapest.

With the exception of Spain and Finland, most EU members have the same restrictions on staying in a country more than three months without a regular job.

France is certainly not alone in singling out the Roma. Germany is preparing to deport 12,000 to Kosovo, a destination that may well put the deportees in danger, because Kosovo Albanians accuse the Roma of siding with the Serbs during the 1999 Yugoslav War. From the Roma’s point of view Serbia had long guaranteed their communities a certain level of employment and educational opportunities, while the Albanians had always repressed them.

Other countries singling out the Roma include Britain, Sweden, Denmark and Belgium. The Swedes deported some 50 Roma for “begging,” even though begging is not a crime in Sweden.
But France has instituted the most aggressive anti-Roma campaign, which also includes its own “gens du voyage,” all of whom are French citizens and theoretically guaranteed encampment facilities. France is estimated to have between 300,000 and 500,000 of these “travelers.”

The French campaign, however, has sparked a backlash.

Romania’s Foreign Minister, Teodor Basconschi, blasted France for “criminalizing ethnic groups” and warned of “the risks of populist provocation and creating xenophobic reactions at a time of economic crisis.” Basconschi called for a joint Romanian-French approach “devoid of artificial election fever.”

The Vatican’s secretary of the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People Commission said, “The mass expulsions of Roma are against European norms.”

The growing chorus of protest by human rights groups, the United Nations, the Vatican, and Romania finally moved the EU to inject itself into the controversy.

“Recent developments in several European countries, most recently eviction of Roma camps in France and expulsions of Roma from France and Germany, are certainly not the right measures to improve the situation of this vulnerable minority. On the contrary, they are likely to lead to an increase in racist and xenophobic feelings in Europe,” said Mervu Cavusogiu, president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Cavusogiu cited Protocol No. 4 of the European Convention of Human Rights that prohibits “the collective expulsions of aliens,” as well as the right to freedom of movement for all EU citizens.

However, France was sticking by its guns, claiming that it was not “deporting” anyone: the Roma were leaving voluntarily for a nominal payment of $386 for adults, $129 for children. But some members of Sarkozy’s party, the Union for a Popular Movement, were using the word “deport,” and even the more explosive term “rafles.” That was the term used to describe the rounding up of French Jews during WW II, most of whom died in the death camps.

Roma suffered a similar fate at the hands of the Nazis. It is estimated that between 200,000 and 1.5 million Roma perished in the concentration camps.

Scapegoating the Roma is an old European tradition, almost as old as the initial migration of the Romany people out of Rajasthan, India in the 11th century. Most of those Roma settled in Moldavia and

Wallachia-today’s Romania—where they were quickly enslaved. Those Romany who did not escape enslavement by taking up the nomadic life remained slaves until 1856.

According to Maria Ochoa-Lido of the Council of Europe, those centuries of slavery essentially sentenced the Roma to poverty-stricken lives on the margins, with life expectancy considerably lower than other populations in the EU.

A lack of access to education, social services, education and the legal system for Romania’s 2.5 million Roma still drives many of them to take to the road. As bad as conditions for the Roma are in countries like France and Germany, they are better than those in poverty-stricken Romania.

The attacks on the Roma could well be a prelude to similar campaigns against other European minorities: Turks in Germany, Pakistanis in England, Moroccans and Algerians in Spain and Italy, and Africans scattered throughout the continent. Xenophobia in a time of economic crisis rarely restricts itself to a single target.

The Public Eye: The 2010 Elections: What’s at Stake?

By Bob Burnett
Fri Aug 20 15:49:00 -0700 2010

With the less than three months before the November 2nd elections, the political parameters are clear. Despite the accomplishments of the 111th Congress, Democrats are on the defensive and Republicans smell victory. Regardless of the outcome, it’s likely little will change in Washington; Congress will spend the next two years avoiding America’s most pressing problems.

US politics has entered a strange twilight zone where substantial legislative accomplishment is met with contempt and anger. The Democratically-controlled Congress passed a major economic stimulus bill, 2009’s American Recovery and Reinvestment Act that “helped avert a second Depression” Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act to prevent another financial crisis. And of course the signature accomplishment of the 111th Congress was Health Care Reform which guaranteed all Americans access to affordable health care. Nonetheless, voters are angry at Democrats.

Meanwhile, Republicans feign disgust and rail against the “overspending, deficits, and debt” they contend characterized this Congress but was actually the enduring legacy of the Bush Administration. The GOP has claimed the coveted political mantle of “outsider” and, at least for the moment, convinced Independent voters the US is best served by dividing power between Democrats and Republicans.

Imagine that in November’s mid-term elections, Republicans win control of the House or Senate. What difference will that make?

The good news is that it’s unlikely that any of the legislative accomplishments of the 111th Congress will be reversed. Republicans won’t be able to kill the Health Care initiative or the Financial Reform legislation; neither will they be able to privatize Social Security or make fundamental changes to Medicare. Even if these changes passed the House, they’d die in the Senate, as the very same cloture rules that slowed legislation to a crawl in the current session will prevent any draconian legislation from being passed. Of course, if a new Congress passed rollback legislation, President Obama would veto it.

The most likely result of the November 2nd election is absolute gridlock. Political constipation on a scale not seen for decades. Extreme partisanship that makes it impossible to pass any significant legislation.

Considering how difficult it has recently been for Democrats to enact commonsense legislation such as extending unemployment benefits, it’s unlikely the 112th Congress will make progress on any of the major issues that confront America. If Republicans control the House of Representatives, it will be extremely difficult to pass a reasonable budget. (For example, the GOP will try to undermine healthcare by defunding community health clinics.) Congress will battle on all but the most trivial matters and the combative environment will segue into the 2012 General Election, where voters will get to decide, all over again, whether or not they want Washington power split between the two parties.

On November 2nd, voters who chose Republican over Democratic candidates are voting for the US to down shift into neutral for two years. A Republican controlled Congress would be dominated by negativity and accomplish nothing.

But there’s a lot that should be done and that’s what’s at stake, progress on campaign finance reform, job creation, and global climate change.

In June the House passed campaign finance reform legislation that alleviated the impact of the Citizens United vs. FEC Supreme Court ruling. This legislation was filibustered in the Senate. In a Republican dominated 112th Congress the legislation
has no chance of survival; we’d have at two more years where right-wing ideologues spend millions of dollars on independent expenditure political ads.

Many economists believe the US needs an additional stimulus package; we need to expend more Federal funds to create jobs and drive down unemployment. Yet the GOP is adamantly opposed to any new stimulus package that has job-creation as its central theme. (Republicans want to remedy unemployment by lowering taxes for the rich.) In a Republican dominated 112th Congress there would be no action taken to alleviate persistent unemployment.

Meanwhile, we just experienced the second hottest July ever recorded and 2010 is on track to be the hottest year. Every day we hear news of global climate events ranging from floods to massive forest fires. Yet the U.S. remains the only major industrialized nation not to have legislated caps on carbon emissions. On June 26, 2009, the House approved the American Clean Energy and Security Act but the GOP blocked similar legislation in the Senate. In a Republican dominated 112th Congress, no action would be taken to cap greenhouse gases; instead there would be efforts to limit the actions of the Environmental Protection Agency.

There’s a lot at stake in the November 2nd elections. The US is running out of time to address our most serious problems and having Republicans control one or both house of Congress would be a giant step backward.

Get a grip America! Congress needs to solve our problems rather than play blame games.

Bob Burnett is a Berkeley writer. He can be reached at bobburnett@comcast.net

Senior Power: Senior Center Month

By Helen Ripper Wheeler
Fri Aug 20 15:35:00 -0700 2010

National Senior Center Month is coming up, in September. It is estimated that there are 10,000-16,000 senior centers in the United States. Of these, more than 6,000 receive some funding support from the Older Americans Act through service contracts awarded by state and Area Agencies on Aging for program activities.

The National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC) is a network of senior center professionals from around the nation “helping senior centers succeed... We believe that senior centers create opportunities for successful aging in our communities.” To advance the quality of senior centers, NISC promotes the nation’s only National Senior Center Accreditation Program, which provides official recognition that a senior center meets nine standards of senior center operations based on excellence in programs, mission, community collaboration, administration and human resources (including volunteers), governance, planning, financial controls, reports and records, and facility. More than 200 senior centers have been accredited.

A senior center can serve and function in important ways that are not readily seen and understood. A senior center can uniquely foster the well-being of members of diverse groups in their quests for equality, recognition and congeniality.

A shopping bag lady may be viewed as an eccentric. In reality, she is likely to be homeless and elderly, existing in public places and lugging her possessions in shopping bags and a shopping cart, relying on a senior center for a daily meal and a destination. A shopping bag lady acquaintance was evicted from a housing project when other tenants did not find her congenial and she neglected as some of her neighbors also did to pay her rent in full and on time. The senior center arranged for a unit in a different developer’s project and gave her taxi scrip.

A senior center can be an ideal place in the community to hold a free flu immunization. Adults 65 years of age and older are among the groups hardest hit by influenza, and annual vaccination remains the best protection, particularly for this population.

A senior center’s large meeting room is ideal for candidates’ panels during pre-election periods, involving only staff or volunteer initiative and effort.

Berkeley senior centers are non-profit community agencies funded by the City with additional funds from the Alameda County Area Agency on Aging, Measure B, corporate and individual donations and seniors’ own fundraising activities. As the largest center, the flagship North Berkeley Senior Center (NBSC), serves residents 55 years of age and over. Weekday lunch is available for a suggested donation to persons age 60+. Following decades of accomplishments, NBSC’s founding-director retired in 2007 (See August 17, 2010 Planet). Staffing has since been further reduced; services and attendance have dropped. (See January 15, 2009 Planet.)

The following gobbledygook, fraught with historical inaccuracies, is reprinted from an Internet posting about the City of Berkeley’s Aging Services Division (ASD), which...coordinates a variety of services for senior residents, including running three active senior centers, a nutrition services program, and a social services program. The age, health condition, and socio-economic status of the ASD’s clients vary greatly but the services offered make a great impact. The centers and nutrition program provide opportunities for frequent interaction between service providers and clients. We are partnering with the Aging Services Division and the City’s IT [Information Technology] department for our final project in order to address the lack of technical infrastructure around social service delivery in our community. Our project will assess the current situation using a variety of methods and then turn to designing, prototyping, and testing a client registration, activity tracking and reporting system for the senior centers. The system needs to be able to accommodate the regular ‘ground-truth’ interactions which can help identify additional services available to, or required by, clients. It also needs to serve a reflective capacity within the organization, allowing it to understand itself more effectively and allow for coordination between geographically dispersed workplaces. The ASD staff are constrained by their existing information infrastructure, which is unable to support these functions in the way that a networked system would be able to. Working with the IT [Information Technology] department we will conduct a full business analysis, and offer a viable implementation plan that takes into account both social and technical considerations. Our goal is to understand the complexity of social service delivery and deliver actionable designs for a system which respects the lived reality of the staff and presents them with the opportunity to participate in the design process, yielding a better end result.

Four students studying for the Master in Information Management and Systems degree at the UC Berkeley School of Information (formerly the “library school”), have explored ways and means of “Increasing senior center participation through participant-centered activities” in a project that is part of the ASD’s “Supporting community services for aging populations”:
The students’ research involves two articles. One is about the way “territories” or “cliques” can supposedly form in a senior center, and suggests that a more open participant driven center has fewer territorial qualities and is more open to newcomers. They conclude that it is important to examine the physical, organizational, and social environments of these centers to identify the patterns of spatial claims and social behaviors.

The other article concerns the reasons that a group of seniors self-organized meetings at a fast-food restaurant for fun and socializing and why they chose this setting over a senior center. “Senior centers were seen by this group as places where old people went to get help, and were perceived as overly structured. Many were not interested in the activities offered at senior centers such as arts and craft work (e.g. crochet and watercolor painting). These older adults did not see that they needed the level of help, structure, or constraint that they felt were characteristic of senior centers. What they most wanted to do at the restaurant was to ‘hang out with my friends.’ “

xxx

Attention, candidates... Running for election? You are invited to email to Senior Power (pen136@dslextreme.com) a statement of your “platform” concerns regarding senior citizens. If you are running for re-election, please describe the highlights of your record on issues important to seniors.

Wild Neighbors: It’s a Bird! It’s a Bee! No...

By Joe Eaton
Mon Aug 23 20:04:00 -0700 2010

Cody Hough

Snowberry clearwing, a day-flying sphinx moth.

A couple of weeks ago I ran into an old acquaintance from the South: a dayflying moth variously known as the bumblebee moth or the snowberry clearwing (Hemaris diffinis.) Unfortunately, the moth was in dire straits, having blundered into a spiderweb in some kind of exotic Asian maple. It was intact but not moving. If the web had been within reach, I would have been tempted to free the moth. Its height saved me from violating the Prime Directive.

Diurnal moths of any kind are uncommon, and I believe Hemaris is the only dayflying genus in the huge sphinx moth family. Representatives occur across North America and Europe. In general they’re big burly moths with, as one of the names implies, mostly scaleless wings. Their bodies are patterned in more or less bee-like bands of green, black, and yellow.

I used to see them in action when I lived in Georgia, and they were striking things to watch. The first impression was as much hummingbird as bumblebee. The moths hovered over flowers in an upright hummingbirdlike posture, deploying their extraordinarily long tongues. Their vibrating wings made appropriate humming noises.

Entomologists have speculated for a long time that Hemaris moths were bee mimics, the logic being that if you resemble something that’s capable of delivering a wicked sting, predators are more likely to leave you alone. Bees seemed a more probable model than hummingbirds since the moths occur in hummingbirdless Europe. The recent discovery of fossil hummingbirds in, if I recall correctly, Germany suggests the possibility of dual models.

There are several kinds of model-mimic relationships in nature. The most widely known is called Batesian mimicry, after Henry Walter Bates, Alfred Russel Wallace’s traveling companion in Amazonia. A Batesian mimic gains protection from its resemblance to a chemically defended species. The stock example is the relationship between the monarch butterfly, which sequesters toxins from the milkweeds its larva feeds on, and the viceroy (but recent research suggests the viceroy itself is unpalatable.) The Lorquin’s admiral, a relative of the viceroy, appears to mimic the oak-eating California sister. The pipevine swallowtail, loaded with aristolochic acid, has mimics in the eastern part of its range, although not in California.

The other type of mimicry is Mullerian, named for another 19th-century naturalist, Fritz Mueller. In this version both species are toxic or unpalatable, and their close resemblance is a way of amplifying the don’t-touch-me message—a kind of branding. Among the best known Mullerian mimics are the tropical longwing butterflies you can encounter in the California Academy of Science’s rainforest exhibit. Some widespread longwings have local races that match counterparts with more restricted distribution.

It appears that at least one bumblebee
sphinx moth, the European *H. fuciformis*, is distasteful to predators, thus arguably a Meullerian rather than Batesian mimic. Its larva feeds on honeysuckle, some species of which berries that are toxic to humans. That’s also true of snowberry, the primary food source of our local clearwing *diffinis*. I don’t know if anyone has done palatability studies with likely predators of this insect.

Bumblebee moth larvae don’t wear obvious warning colors: they’re just plain green caterpillars, not unlike tomato hornworms in appearance. Maybe their leaf-matching camouflage is sufficient.

When they reach their full growth, they drop to the ground, spin a cocoon, and pupate in the leaf litter under their food plants.

Adaptive mimicry is a wonderful phenomenon. Even plants do it—there are species that lure pollinators to their nectarless flowers which resemble nectar-rich models. But it’s no guarantee against rotten luck. Looking like a bee won’t do you much good if you don’t watch where you’re flying.

**Arts & Entertainment**

**Film Review: The Gently Unfolding Dramas of Yasujiro Ozu**

*By Justin DeFreitas*  
*Mon Aug 23 20:08:00 -0700 2010*

Almost from the beginning of the medium, filmmakers were eager to transcend the limits of traditional theater by putting the camera in motion, by sending it racing, swooping and soaring; by using a variety of lenses to shape the image, to magnify, distort and exaggerate; and by using the editing process to suggest, startle and surprise. And while some of the most exciting filmmakers over the past century have been those who found ways to employ these devices with flash and panache, one of the greatest directors the medium has ever produced was one who limited himself to the simplest and most austere techniques.

Yasujiro Ozu used his camera simply to observe his characters, to linger on their faces, their homes, their possessions—to look into the souls of everyday people under everyday circumstances. He was both a naturalist and a rigorous formalist, a director who sought to capture life as it is lived, but within a framework of rigidly defined restrictions. He limited the camera’s range of motion and the angles from which it could gaze; he limited his editing to simple, direct cuts—few dissolves or fades; and dialogue was conveyed in simple master shots followed by alternating close-ups. This artistic code focused greater attention on content over form, allowing character to reveal itself, allowing dialogue to breathe, and allowing revelatory spaces to open up between words and gestures and characters. Thus relationships and motivations and plot points would gradually take shape before the viewer’s eyes.

Criterion has just released two rarely seen examples of Ozu’s mid-career work, *The Only Son* (1936) and *There Was a Father* (1942). The two films have many parallels, both tracking the relationship between a son and a single parent who must make great sacrifices for him.

In *The Only Son*, a mother lives a life of toil in order to send her son to college and eventually Tokyo, where she hopes he will rise in the world. When she is finally able to visit him, she is surprised to find that not only has he a wife and child, but a rather lowly job as a night school teacher. And the school teacher who had served as his mentor has fared no better in the big city; he runs a shabby restaurant, serving pork cutlets in a poor part of town. Mother and son spend several days together, for the most part avoiding the issues at hand. But there are two conversations in which these issues finally come to the service, and Ozu’s muted approach captures the spoken and unspoken emotions that permeate the dialogue.

In *There Was a Father*, Chishu Ryu as a man who seeks the best for his son, only to find that his decisions lead to their continual separation. This was a wartime film, and themes of duty and sacrifice were considered patriotic, lending the movie a political subtext, a rarity in Ozu’s work. Far from the American form of propaganda film, in which virtuous leading men with broad shoulders committed acts of heroism on the front line while their pinup-worthy wives kept the home fires burning, Japanese propaganda featured a more quiet form of sacrifice, of fortitude and dutiful dedication to the nation’s interests. *There Was a Father* shows that that dedication even trumps the father-son relationship, as Ryu consistently steers his son in directions that will make him most useful to Japan, even though it drives the two of them apart.

Ozu’s work is almost literary, owing more to the novel than to film; his means of expression are subtle and powerful. His method for conveying the growing gap between father and son is to show the two fishing side by side. The camera watches from behind as the pair cast their lines over and over again in perfect unison. When the boy finally stops, the meaning and impact of the gesture is startling and poignant; there is no need to show tears or an exchange of words or glances.

Though he is often regarded as the most Japanese of Japanese directors, whose cinema captured unique and specific aspects of that nation’s life and culture, Ozu’s work easily transcends international boundaries, delving into character, relationships and commonplace issues to find the universal. His favored subjects include families and the relationships between generations; the aging process; city life versus rural life; and all the values that complement and conflict with one another in the ensuing drama: pragmatism and idealism, love and kindness, justice and forgiveness.

“Rather than tell a superficial story,” Ozu said, “I wanted to go deeper, to show ... the ever-changing uncertainties of life. So instead of constantly pushing dramatic action to the fore, I left empty spaces, so viewers could have a pleasant aftertaste to savor.”

Ozu’s calm, gently unfolding dramas give us time to not only get to know his characters, but also deeply care about them—to enjoy their humor, to admire their strength and to forgive their transgressions—so that, when a film ends, there is often a feeling of regret that these characters are gone from
our lives. “Every time I watch an Ozu film,” says actor Eijiro Tong, “I start to feel very sentimental as the end of the film nears. As I think back over the story, it’s like a flood of old memories washing over me, one after another.”

This is the essential sadness and loneliness that resides at the core of Ozu’s work - the awareness of the inevitability of change, and that beginnings are followed all too soon by endings.

The Only Son (1936) and There Was a Father (1942): Two Films by Yasujiro Ozu. 
83 minutes; 87 minutes. www.criterion.com. Two-disc set includes essays by critic and historian Tony Rayns, an appreciation of Chishu Ryu by film scholar Donald Ritchie, comments by Ryu on Ozu, and video interviews with film scholars Tadao Sato, David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson.

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Theatre Review: Beauty and the Beast-for ages 3 to 8

By John A. McMullen

Tue Aug 24 13:33:00 -0700 2010

Joan Marcus

Liz Shiven and Ensemble

I’ve watched a number of animated feature films lately, and the formula of such rich creations like “Toy Story 3,” “The Fantastic Mr. Fox,” and “Up” seems to be that they are enjoyable for the parents and the kids. This is not the case in SHN’s production of Disney’s Beauty and the Beast at the Golden Gate Theater in SF. I was not expecting Cocteau’s surrealistic filmic 1946 version, but neither was I prepared for bad children’s theatre in which everything from the acting to the set is two-dimensional.

The singers have those perfect, dime-a-dozen, trained voices that have no character. The musical theatre thrives on voices with character from Ethel Merman to Bernadette Peters to Kristin Chenoweth, from John Raitt to Mandy Patinkin to Nathan Lane. There is not a real emotion expressed in the entire musical. Everything is dumbed down in the way kindergarten teachers patronizingly address the kiddies, and the slapstick isn’t even up to the level of the Three Stooges. The choreography is minimal in the closed-in space which the set provides, and except for LeFou’s impressive tumbling, movement is minimal (interesting homo-erotic attraction that LeFou displays toward bully he-man Gaston, though).

The scenery is so busy that it’s hard to focus. Three receding portals framing the stage like the drawings in a storybook might have been a great idea on paper, but they are ornate filigree of acanthus vines and leaves that dwarfs the players. Adding to the eye-swirling effect, at the back of the stage is a multicolored tapestry of hills and dales and fields and trees. Cut-out, reversible little buildings for Belle’s home, the tavern, the bakery, etc., are wheeled out, accentuating the comic-bookiness. The very large stage of the Golden Gate Theatre is thus shrunk to a little space, forcing the 16 players to line up laterally. Did the director ever hear of diagonals and levels? At one point, Gaston stands on a little barrel to change levels. In the castle of the beast, the rococo set pieces with no depth make it even harder to, well, focus.

Now the story is about this intelligent and beautiful woman-in a time when those two attributes did not go together so well-who is threatened from all sides. She has to care for her unbalanced inventor of a father. The local tough guy keeps manhandling her in his attempts to get her consent to marry him while it’s clear he has no intention of giving up his philandering. Then she is held captive by a half-human who might eat her at any time. She takes it all in stride: just another day in the life.

I was not worried for one moment about her safety, and I should have been. That’s the fun of a fairy tale. I still get shaky when I watch the Witch give Snow the apple. The Beast should make us grip the arms of our seats.

The costumes are a hodgepodge of colors as if they were pulled from costume stock by the players themselves. The clock does not look like a clock. It took me a minute to recognize who the tea pot was, but as soon as she started with the bad Cockney accent, I realized that this was a sad excuse for Angela Lansbury.

The lighting was too low in most places until they brought out the big guns in the last two numbers of the first act to hopefully coax everyone back to their seats after the interval.

Thirteen songs (not counting reprises) and thirteen principals, and not so lucky for those who buy a ticket. The only memorable number is the title song, and probably only because Ms. Lansbury added her character to it.

There were a couple of moments of amazing stagecraft with scrims and puppets. The old beggar woman who turns the narcissistic, cruel young prince into The Beast is a puppet that transforms in a flash into a gigantic Enchantress. Belle’s father is attacked in the woods by white wolves which are puppets. It would have been perhaps more creative to do the whole production as a puppet show so that the characters could be of a fitting scale to the tale and the stage.

A friend told me she took her three-year-old to preview night, and her little one sat there rapt. If you can see the world through the eyes of your very young children, you may enjoy this, particularly to see the joy in their eyes. At $30-$99 a pop, it’s asking a lot. It’s a great idea to foster the next generation of theatre-goers by starting them young. But a little meat on the bones of the dramatic moments and not throwing every color on the wheel at the stage might give them an aesthetic that would foster creativity and taste. Seeing the theatre as an alternative to the cartoon rather than a regurgitation of it, and as a place where you can get into depth and emotionally expand the story would be a good lesson, too.

SHN “Best of Broadway” production of Disney’s Beauty and the Beast at the Golden Gate Theater, 1 Taylor St., SF.

Tue-Sat @ 7:30 pm, Sat & Sun @ 2 pm., Sun 8/22 @ 7:30 pm, Wed 8/25 @ 2 pm through 8/29.

Info/Tickets: (415) 512 7770 or www.shnsf.com


Don’t Miss This: Fall Showings at PFA

By Dorothy Snodgrass

Tue Aug 24 13:40:00 -0700 2010

Have you had it up to here with the insipid, mindless movies currently showing in East Bay theatres -- films certainly not worth eight dollars, much less your valuable time? If such is the case, you’d be wise to
pick up a Pacific Film Archives calendar at the Berkeley Art Museum at 2626 Bancroft Way. Whether hosting authors and artists in person, campus discussions, silent film restorations, and old-time music celebrations, the PFA theatre continues to be the place for the campus and local community to come together and access the most eclectic cinema-related live events that the Bay Area has to offer.

PFA is proud to introduce an ongoing series that gives audiences a rare chance to hear from -- and meet -- those “behind the scenes.”, the cinematographers, producers, editors, designers and others who collectively bring the “directional vision” to the screen. This September’s guest is the producer Sid Ganis, former President of Motion Picture Art and Sciences. Ganis will talk about the integral role of the producer, his or her creative and financial responsibilities, and the areas in which the producer directly influences the final aesthetic outcome. On September 26th at 4:00 p.m., Ganis will introduce his film, “Hud”, made in 1963, starring Paul Newman and Patricia Neal. Other films in this series will be “In a Lonely Place,” starring Humphrey Bogart, Thursday, Sept. 2nd at 7:00 p.m.; “Picnic” starring William Holden and Kim Novak, Sept. 5th at 6:45, to name just a few successful films.

Another program presented in conjunction with the fall semester avant-garde course is Alternative Visions, with the Luis Bunuel film, L’Age d’or” and “Un Chant d’amour” written by Jean Genet from his prison cell during the war. This is a silent film, deemed obscene by the Alameda Superior Court, concurred by the Supreme Court in 1967.

William Shakespeare has provided inspiration for filmmakers around the world. PFA cooperating with California Shakespeare Company, offers up some of the most eclectic films: a German “Hamlet” made in 1920; Franco Zeffirelli’s “Romeo and Juliet”, Lawrence Olivier’s unforgettable “Henry V”; “King Lear”, with Peter Sellars and Burgess Meredith, etc., etc.

In October, PFA will offer “Days of Glory: Revisiting Italian Neorealism” --born out of the ruins of World War II. You’ll recognize these familiar classics: Paisan (Roberto Rossellini); “The Bicycle Thief” (Vittorio de Sica) and, of course, “Bitter Rice” starring gorgeous Silvana Mangano.

With such an ambitious and imaginative program of outstanding films, it should be mentioned here that BAM/PFA this past June announced the selection of the award winning architectural firm, Diller, Scofidio-Renfro to collaborate with BAM/PFA and the University on the execution of a design to repurpose an Art Deco printing plant and to integrate it with a new structure on a site along Oxford Street, between Center and Addison Streets.

A BAM/PFA Member event will be a Full Celebration, Tuesday, October 12, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., marking an exciting new exhibition season, namely the highly anticipated “Radical Light: Alternative Film and Video in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1945-2000. Oh, and we mustn’t forget the very popular Friday night performances at L@TE, showcasing some of the Bay’s Best local music. The five-floor cement reverb chamber is a wonderful acoustic space for artists to fill with sound. Well, now, after all of the above -- if you’re not a BAM/PFA member, you may be tempted to join. You can sign up at bampfa.berkeley.edu/join.

Obituaries

Franz Schurmann, 1926-2010
By Sandy Close
Mon Aug 23 19:58:00 -0700 2010

Franz Schurmann, the foremost scholar of communist China during the Cold War, an early opponent of the US war in Indochina, and the co-founder of Pacific News Service, died at his home in San Francisco on Aug. 20. The cause was advanced Parkinson’s disease and Alzheimer’s disease. He was 84.

Schurmann taught history and sociology at UC-Berkeley for 38 years. Nevertheless, he chafed against the confines of the academy, and preferred to describe himself as an explorer-journalist rather than as an academic. He was fluent in 12 languages.

His first great exploration was a trip on horseback through Afghanistan in the late 1950s-a journey of two years that led Schurmann to discover what, until then, had been considered by anthropologists a mythical tribe of blue-eyed, blond-haired Mongols who descended from the military expeditions of Genghis Khan. (“The Mongols of Afghanistan”, 1962)

In contrast to the Cold War polemics that dominated China studies in the U.S., “Organization and Ideology of Communist China” (1968) drew heavily on Schurmann’s interviews of Chinese refugees in Hong Kong-interviews that enabled him to convey to western readers how Chinese society and governance truly worked.

Schurmann’s knowledge of the histories and cultures of the Far East gave him an expertise within the anti-war movement few other critics of American foreign policies of the time commanded. In 1966, he coauthored, with Reginald Zelnik and Peter Dale Scott, “The Politics of Escalation”, documenting a parallel chain of command operating within the US military and intelligence agencies that intended to thwart White House diplomacy.

An invertebrate reader of the world press, Schurmann often told the story of a great WWII spy whose primary sources were daily newspapers. Schurmann tracked the rise of the post-Cold War global economy in “The Logic of World Power” (1974) and went on to challenge the almost universal demonization of Richard Nixon by America’s intelligentsia with “The Foreign Politics of Richard Nixon” (1987).

Despite the acclaim his early writings had achieved, and his reputation as a rigorous if provocative scholar and thinker, no one would publish Schurmann’s Nixon book, until Seymour Martin Lipset intervened on the book’s behalf. Even then, the book - which credited Nixon rather than Kissinger with Machiavellian brilliance in creating the architecture of the post-Cold War world-never won an audience among officials Nixon watchers, let alone academics.

Schurmann’s last book, “American Soul” (2001) was a personal narrative, a view of the world from 29th Avenue in San Francisco, at the shore of the Pacific. He described an America that was transforming the world and being transformed by the emergence of a one-world culture and economy.

Herbert Franz Schurmann was born on June 21, 1926, in New York City and raised with his younger sister, Dorothy, in Bloomfield, Conn., just outside Hartford. He described his childhood home in “American Soul” as divided by silences that resulted from the meeting of separate cultures. His father - a migrant tool and die maker from Slovenia-had found work in Germany, Poland, Greece and Italy before immigrating to America. His mother fled starvation and the chaos of post-WWII Germany and found work as a housemaid with a German Jewish family in New York.

Schurmann, inheriting his father’s gift for languages, absorbed the languages of the immigrant families of Hartford. He recalled fondly his Italian godmother, his French Canadian friends, and the meals served forth at his “Polish mother’s” table.

A combative misfit at school, he papered
his bedroom walls with maps of the world and kept a meticulous stamp collection. His father died when he was fifteen. He left high school early with a scholarship to Trinity College in Hartford. But he was a working-class commuter student, and he felt out of place.

During WWII, he was drafted and assigned to language school. While waiting in line to get his papers, he switched places with a Japanese-American soldier and ended up studying Japanese instead of German. Shipping off from San Francisco, he joined the US occupation forces in Japan, where he worked as a censor in the offices of a Japanese newspaper. He would later recall this as the beginning of his fascination with newspapers.

Thanks to the GI Bill, he entered Harvard after his discharge to pursue a doctorate in Asian studies, without ever having earned an undergraduate degree. While in the army, he formed what would be a lifelong friendship with a fellow draftee, Stefan Brecht, son of the German playwright Bertolt Brecht and the actress, Helene Weigel. During summer breaks from Harvard, where the younger Brecht was also a graduate student, the pair would hitchhike to Santa Monica to join the Brecht household. Schurmann’s intellectual life, he later would say, began at the Brechts’ dining room table, in conversation with Thomas Mann and other European intellectuals who had forged an exile colony in and around Hollywood.

For his Harvard Ph.D., Schurmann translated into English the Chinese Mongol dynastic tracts. Schurmann returned to Japan after completing his doctorate to study Chinese agricultural economics for a year at Kyoto University. A two-year fellowship allowed him to pursue his studies of the Mongol tribe in Afghanistan and later to learn Turkish and Persian in Istanbul. He lived for a time in Paris, before returning to the United States, to San Francisco, which he remembered from his Army days.

“My life was a series of fortunate accidents,” he would later recall, describing how a visit to UC Berkeley led to an offer by the Dept. of Oriental Studies to teach Turkish and Persian, filling in for a professor who was on sabbatical. Schurmann subsequently earned a tenured appointment in both sociology and history.

Schurmann’s work on Communist China and the accuracy of his prediction of a Sino-Soviet split prompted offers from RAND and US intelligence agencies. But the growing US involvement in Vietnam caused him to become a critic of U.S. foreign policy.

A founding member of the Faculty Peace Committee at UC Berkeley in the fall of 1964, Schurmann immersed himself in the nascent anti-war and Free Speech movements. He gave-along with anti-war intellectuals like Noam Chomsky, Richard Barnett, Seymour Melman and Richard Falk - an intellectual backbone to the movement. In the spring of 1968, he traveled to Hanoi with Mary McCarthy for a two-week fact-finding trip at the invitation of the North Vietnamese government. Deplaning later in Phnom Penh, Schurmann’s belligerent confrontation with US Ambassador William Sullivan over America’s secret war in Laos earned him headlines at home: “UC Berkeley Professor Squares off with US Ambassador” (Time Magazine). On his return, he was debriefed by Sen. J. William Fulbright, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. “The government is perpetuating so many lies,” Schurmann reported. “I wish it were that simple,” Fulbright responded (according to Schurmann). “The government lies so much it no longer can tell the difference between what’s a lie and what’s the truth.”

To promote independent research and writing, Schurmann founded the nonprofit Bay Area Institute and later, with a former student, Orville Schell, the Pacific News Service, in 1970. After President Nixon’s breakthrough diplomacy to China and the subsequent end of the Indochina War, Schurmann expanded the scope of his inquiries beyond East Asia to domestic affairs, especially the transformation of American cities with the onset of the global economy. A background session with Huey P. Newton about Newton’s upcoming trip to China led to an intellectual association. Schurmann wrote the introduction to Newton’s book, “To Die for the People.”

Schurmann’s devotion to Pacific News Service reflected his passion for newspapers. In 1974, his partner, Sandy Close, a former Hong Kong-based journalist and founder of the Flatlands newspaper in Oakland, California, took over the news service. For more than 35 years the couple ran PNS as a shared enterprise.

Schurmann’s columns reflected the range of his inquiries - he translated the poetry scrawled by student demonstrators on the walls of Tiananmen Square; he analyzed the manifesto of the Taliban, which he translated from Pashtun long before the group had even surfaced as a political movement of interest to the US press; he warned in 1996 of the spreading of desertification of the globe: “I can taste the sand of the Gobi Desert on the streets of San Francisco.”

A one-time director of the Center for Chinese Studies at UC-Berkeley, Schurmann bridled at any official designation of himself as a “China expert” - as if such a designation would proscribe his intellectual freedom.

“I’ve moved on,” he would say, restless as always to resume his intellectual journey - to quantum physics, and then-in the early 1990s to the study of written Arabic and to Islam. He mastered the script sufficiently to be able to read the Koran and the Arab language press which became his source of information for hundreds of columns, tracking the spread of militant Islam and America’s deepening engagement with the Muslim world.

Schurmann retired from UC Berkeley in the mid-1990s, a move he believed would free him to travel and to write. Stung by the rejection of his writing on Nixon by the East Coast publishing world, he slowly cut his ties to academia and many intellectual circles. Though in the 1960s Time named him one of America’s 50 most influential thinkers, by the 1990s he returned to his roots - traveling, observing, listening. His late travels took him to Latin America, Africa, India and China. On his last trip to China, Franz was accompanied by his younger son, Peter, and his son’s friend, a fellow New York bike messenger at the time, a young man with bright red hair who towered over everyone they met.

He mentored colleagues at PNS - from noted author and essayist Richard Rodriguez to young writers at YO! and the Beat Within, more than a dozen of whom shared, at various times, the Schurmann’s home. He served as the intellectual inspiration for the founding of New America Media by his partner, Sandy Close. “Franz was constantly shifting and expanding his lens, drawing on his readings of foreign-language media. PNS would never have made the breakthrough to NAM had it not been for his example,” said Close.

In those same years, not a day passed when he did not walk miles through San Francisco, often walking the eight miles from his home in the Sunset to the PNS offices downtown in less than 90 minutes.

Schurmann gradually withdrew to his study, acquiring an early facility with the computer and masking the onset of Alzheimer’s disease with a prodigious flow of ideas. His last five years were lived in seclusion, though he was visited faithfully by many students and PNS colleagues, even after he could no longer communicate. “This thinker and explorer whose gift was his ability to listen and learn from so many ordinary
people all over the world finally retreated to the world of his mind, a universe by itself,” said Close.

Schurmann is survived by his partner of 42 years, Sandy Close; two sons, Mark Anderson Schurmann of Olympia, Washington; and Peter Leon Schurmann and his wife Aruna Lee, and grandson Leon of San Francisco; a sister, Dorothy Schurmann of Oakland; and a godson, Hanif Bey of San Francisco.

A memorial service will be held at the Alumni House in UC Berkeley (date to be determined by Monday).

Arts & Events Listings

Stage-San Francisco Through September 5

ACTORS THEATRE OF SAN FRANCISCO

“Cat on a Hot Tin Roof,” through Sept. 4, 8 p.m. Wed. - Sat. A wealthy Southern family deals with a shocking revelation. $26-$38.


BEACH BLANKET BABYLON
This long-running musical follows Snow White as she sings and dances her way around the world in search of her prince. Along the way she encounters many of the personalities in today’s headlines, including Nancy Pelosi, Condoleezza Rice, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Harry Potter, Tiger Woods, Oprah Winfrey, Britney Spears, Dianne Feinstein, Barbara Boxer, Hillary Clinton, George and Laura Bush, Michael Jackson, Martha Stewart, Tom Cruise, Angelina, characters from Brokeback Mountain and Paris Hilton. Persons under 21 are not admitted to evening performances, but are welcome to Sunday matinees.

“Steve Silver’s Beach Blanket Babylon,” 8 p.m. Wed. - Thurs.; 6:30 and 9:30 p.m. Fri. - Sat.; 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. Sun. $25-$78. Club Fugazi, 678 Beach Blanket Babylon Blvd. (formerly Green Street), San Francisco. (415) 421-4222, www.beachblanketbabylon.com.<

CHANCELLOR HOTEL UNION SQUARE

“Eccentrics of San Francisco’s Barbary Coast,” 8 p.m. Fri. - Sat. Audiences gather for a 90-minute show abounding with local anecdotes and lore presented by captivating and consummate conjurers and taltellers. $30.


CLIMATE THEATRE

“The Clown Cabaret at the Climate,” 7 and 9 p.m. First Monday of the month. Hailed as San Francisco’s hottest ticket in clowning, this show blends rising stars with seasoned professionals on the Climate Theater’s intimate stage. $10-$15.


CURRAN THEATRE


GOLDEN GATE THEATRE

“Beauty and the Beast,” through Aug. 29, Time and days vary; 2 p.m. matinees, 7:30 p.m. evening performances; check website or call for details. Disney’s “Beauty and the Beast” comes to life on stage, based on the book by Linda Woolverton, with music and lyrics by Alan Menken, Howard Ashman and Tim Rice. $30-$99.


THE MARSH

“The Mock Cafe,” 10 p.m. Saturdays. Stand-up comedy performances. $7.


EXTENDED -- “The Real Americans,” by Dan Hoyle, through Sept. 25, 8 p.m. Thurs. and Fri.; 5 p.m. Sat.; 3 p.m. Sun. Hoyle connects liberal city life with small-town America. $20-$50.


SHELTON THEATER


Stage-East Bay Through September 5

ASHBY STAGE


1901 Ashby Ave., Berkeley. <

Readings-East Bay Through September 5

BOOKS INC., BERKELEY

Tom Roberts, Sept. 1, 7 p.m. The author discusses his book “Drake’s Bay.”

Rick Moody, Sept. 3, 7 p.m. The author presents his book “The Four Fingers of Death.”


MRS. DALLOWAY’S

Arden Bucklin-Sporer, Rachel Kathleen Pringle, Aug. 29, 4 p.m. The authors present “How To Grow A School Garden: A Complete Guide for Parents and Teachers.”

2904 College Avenue, Berkeley. (510) 704-8222.<

Professional Dance-San Francisco Through September 5

PENA PACHAMAMA

“Flamenco Thursdays” with Carola Zertuche, 8:30 p.m. Thursdays Music and dance with performers of traditional flamenco. $10.

Georges Lamman Ensemble, 8:30 p.m. Sundays Event features music and dancing from the Middle East. $10.


Museums-East Bay Through September 5

AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM AND LIBRARY AT OAKLAND

The Oakland Public Library’s museum is designed to discover, preserve, interpret and share the cultural and historical experiences of African Americans in California and the West. In addition, a three-panel mural is on permanent display.

Free. Tuesday-Saturday, noon-5:30 p.m. 659
BADE MUSEUM AT THE PACIFIC SCHOOL OF RELIGION

The museum’s collections include the Tell en-Nasbeh Collection, consisting of artifacts excavated from Tell en-Nasbeh in Palestine in 1926 and 1935 by William Badh, and the Howell Bible Collection, featuring approximately 300 rare books (primarily Bibles) dating from the 15th through the 18th centuries.

“Tell en-Nasbeh,” This exhibit is the “heart and soul” of the Bade Museum. It displays a wealth of finds from the excavations at Tell en-Nasbeh, Palestine whose objects span from the Early Bronze Age (3100-2200 BC) through the Iron Age (1200-586 BC) and into the Roman and Hellenistic periods. Highlights of the exhibit include “Tools of the Trade” featuring real archaeological tools used by Badh and his team, an oil lamp typology, a Second Temple period (586 BC-70 AD) limestone ossuary, and a selection of painted Greek pottery.

“William Frederic Bade: Theologian, Naturalist, and Archaeologist,” This exhibit highlights one of PSR’s premier educators and innovative scholars. The collection of material on display was chosen with the hopes of representing the truly dynamic and multifaceted character of William F. Badh. He was a family man, a dedicated teacher, a loving friend, and an innovative and passionate archaeologist.

Free. Tuesday-Thursday, 10:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Holbrook Hall, Pacific School of Religion, 1798 Scenic Ave., Berkeley. (510) 848-0528, www.bade.psr.edu/bade.<

BERKELEY ART MUSEUM AND PACIFIC FILM ARCHIVE

“Thom Faulders: BAMscape,” through Nov. 30. This commissioned work, a hybrid of sculpture, furniture, and stage, is the new centerpiece of Gallery B, BAM’s expansive central atrium. It is part of a new vision of the gallery as a space for interaction, performance, and improvised experiences.

“Perpetual and furious refrain / MATRIX 232.,” through Sept. 12. Exhibition features works by Brent Green.

“Marisa Olson: Double Bind,” through Aug. 31. With a pair of provocative YouTube videos, Olson unravels the promise and pitfalls of online participatory culture.

“Himalayan Pilgrimage,” through Dec. 19. Exhibition features sculpture and painting dating from the ninth to the eighteenth centuries and drawn from a private collection on long-term loan to the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive.

“Hauntology,” through Dec. 5. Drawn primarily from the museum’s recent acquisitions of contemporary art, this exhibition explores a wide range of art through the lens of the concept of “hauntology,” a term coined by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida in 1993 to refer to the study of social, psychological, and cultural conditions in the post-Communist period.

2626 Bancroft Way, Berkeley. <

CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HISTORY WALKABOUTS -- A series of walking tours that explore the history, lore and architecture of California with veteran tour guide Gary Holloway. Walks are given on specific weekends. There is a different meeting place for each weekend and walks take place rain or shine so dress for the weather. Reservations and prepayment required. Meeting place will be given with confirmation of tour reservation. Call for details.


CHABOT SPACE AND SCIENCE CENTER

State-of-the-art facility unifying science education activities around astronomy. Enjoy interactive exhibits, hands-on activities, indoor stargazing, outdoor telescope viewing and films.

Center Admission: $14.95; $10.95 children 3-12; free children under 3; $3 discount for seniors and students. Telescope viewing only: free. Wednesday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Friday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-10 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; Also open on Tuesdays 10 a.m.-5 p.m. after June 29. 10000 Skyline Blvd., Oakland. (510) 336-7300. www.chabotspace.org.<

JUDAH L. MAGNES MUSEUM

The museum’s permanent collection includes objects of Jewish importance including ceremonial art, film and video, folk art and fine art, paintings, sculptures and prints by contemporary and historical artists.

“Projections,” Multimedia works from the museum’s extensive collections of archival, documentary and experimental films. Located at 2911 Russell Street.

SPECIAL EXHIBITS --

$4-$6; free for children ages 5 and under; free to all on the second Sunday of the month. Special events are free with museum admission unless noted otherwise. Wednesdays-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, noon-5 p.m.; first Friday of the month, 10 a.m.-9 p.m. 1000 Oak St., Oakland. (510) 238-2200. www.museumca.org.<

PARDEE HOME MUSEUM

The historic Pardee Mansion, a three-story Italianate villa built in 1868, was home to three generations of the Pardee family who were instrumental in the civic and cultural development of California and Oakland. The home includes the house, grounds, water tower and barn. Reservations recommended.

EVENTS --

MUSEUM OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN TECHNOLOGY SCIENCE VILLAGE

A science museum with an African-American focus promoting science education and awareness for the underrepresented. The science village chronicles the technical achievements of people of African descent from ancient ties to present. There are computer classes at the Internet Cafè, science education activities and seminars. There is also a resource library with a collection of books, periodicals and videotapes.

$4-$6. Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday, noon-6 p.m.; Sunday, 2 p.m.-6 p.m. 630 20th St., Oakland. (510) 893-6426. www.ncalibblackengineers.org.<

OAKLAND MUSEUM OF CALIFORNIA

ONGOING EVENTS --

“Art a la Carte,” Wednesdays, 12:30 p.m. Art docents offer a variety of specialized tours focusing on one aspect of the museum’s permanent collection. Free with museum admission.

“Online Museum,” Thursdays, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Explore the museum’s collection on videodisks in the History Department Library.

Docent Gallery Tours, Saturday and Sunday, 1:30 p.m.

“Explore our New Gallery,” through Dec. 2. The new Gallery of California Art showcases more than 800 works from OMCA’s collection-one of the largest and most comprehensive holdings of California art in the world.

“Gallery of California History,” through Dec. 2. This new gallery is based on the theme of Coming to California.


$5-$8; free for children ages 5 and under; free to all on the second Sunday of the month. Special events are free with museum admission unless noted otherwise. Wednesdays-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, noon-5 p.m.; first Friday of the month, 10 a.m.-9 p.m. 1000 Oak St., Oakland. (510) 238-2200. www.museumca.org.<

$5; free children ages 12 and under. House Tours: Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sundays by appointment. 672 11th St., Oakland. (510) 444-2187; www.pardeehome.org.<

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY HEARST MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY
ONGOING EXHIBITS --
“Native California Cultures,” This is an exhibit of some 500 artifacts from the museum’s California collections, the largest and most comprehensive collections in the world devoted to California Indian cultures. The exhibit includes a section about Ishi, the famous Indian who lived and worked with the museum, Yana tribal baskets and a 17-foot Yurok canoe carved from a single redwood.

“Recent Acquisitions,” The collection includes Yoruba masks and carvings from Africa, early-20th-century Taiwanese hand puppets, textiles from the Americas and 19th- and 20th-century Tibetan artifacts.

“From the Maker’s Hand: Selections from the Permanent Collection,” This exhibit explores human ingenuity in the living and historical cultures of China, Africa, Egypt, Peru, North America and the Mediterranean.

S1-$4; free for children ages 12 and under; free to all on Thursdays. Wednesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Sunday, noon-4:30 p.m. 103 Kroeber Hall, Bancroft Way and College Avenue, Berkeley. (510) 643-7648; www.hearstmuseum.berkeley.edu.<

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY MUSEUM OF PALEONTOLOGY
ONGOING EXHIBITS --
“Tyrannosaurus Rex,” A 20-foot-tall, 40-foot-long replica of the fearsome dinosaur. The replica is made from casts of bones of the most complete T. Rex skeleton yet excavated. When unearthed in Montana, the bones were all lying in place with only a small piece of the tailbone missing.

“A suspended skeleton of a flying reptile with a wingspan of 22 to 23 feet. The Pteranodon lived at the same time as the dinosaurs.

“California Fossils Exhibit,” An exhibit of some of the fossils that have been excavated in California.

Free. During semester sessions, hours generally are: Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-10 p.m.; Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, 1 p.m.-10 p.m. Hours vary during summer and holidays. Lobby, 1101 Valley Life Sciences Building, #4780, University of California, Berkeley. (510) 642-1821; www.ucmp.berkeley.edu.<

Exhibits-East Bay Through September 5

DAVID BROWER CENTER
“Water, Rivers and People/Agua, Rios y Pueblos,” through Aug. 31. Exhibition depicts those who are fighting to defend rivers and the people who depend on them.
2150 Allston Way, Berkeley.<

JOHANSSON PROJECTS
Free. Thursday-Saturday, noon-6 p.m. 2300 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. (510) 444-9140; www.johanssonprojects.com.<

OAKLAND ASIAN CULTURAL CENTER
“Oakland’s 19th-Century San Pablo Avenue Chinatown,” A permanent exhibit of new findings about the rediscovered Chinatown on San Pablo Avenue. The exhibit aims to inform visitors about the upcoming archaeological work planned to explore the lives of early Chinese pioneers in the 1860s.
Free. Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Pacific Renaissance Plaza, 388 Ninth St., Suite 200, Oakland. (510) 637-0455; www.oacecc.cc.<

Classical Music-San Francisco Through September 5

GOLDEN GATE PARK
Golden Gate Park Band, Aug. 29, 1 p.m. The concert will celebrate Ukrainian-American Day, with Ukrainian music, singers, dancers, and costumes. Free.
Fulton at 36th Avenue, Lincoln at 41st Avenue, San Francisco. <

LEGION OF HONOR MUSEUM DOCENT TOUR PROGRAMS -- Tours of the permanent collections and special exhibitions are offered Tuesday through Sunday. Non-English language tours (Italian, French, Spanish and Russian) are available on different Saturdays of the month at 11:30 a.m. Free with regular museum admission. (415) 750-3638.


Highlights-East Bay Through September 5

“DOWNTOWN BERKELEY MUSICFEST,” -- through Aug. 29. More than 50 performances will take place at 11 different venues across Berkeley’s Downtown Arts District, with bands and artists such as The Blasters, Terence Brewer Trio, Dawn Drake, Turtle Island Quartet, Mark Hummel and more. Visit website for complete lineup and locations.

ALAMEDA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS
“Good Guys 24th West Coast Nationals,” through Aug. 29, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Fri.-Sat.; 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Sun. The west’s largest automotive event, featuring more than 3,500 classic cars, hot rods and customs. The event also includes hundreds of vendor exhibits, an automotive swap meet, live entertainment and more. $6-$18; $8 Parking. (925) 838-9876; www.ggwestcoastnats.com.

ASHKENAZ
Lavay Smith and Her Red Hot Skillet Lickers, Sept. 4, 9 p.m. $12-$15.

JACK LONDON SQUARE
“Eat Real Festival,” through Aug. 29, 2-9 p.m. Fri.; 10:30 a.m.-9 p.m. Sat.; 10:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Sun. A festival celebrating delicious, convenient, affordable and sustainable food, along with live music, beer and wine, contests, literature events and more. Event takes place the weekend of August 27-29._www.eatrealfest.com.

YOSHI’S
Kenny Burrell Quintet, Sept. 3 through Sept. 5, 8 and 10 p.m. Fri.-Sat.; 7 and 9 p.m. Sun. $18-$26.
Shows are Monday through Saturday, 8 and 10 p.m.; Sunday, 2 and 7 p.m., unless otherwise noted. 510 Embarcadero West, Oakland. (510) 238-9200, www.yoshis.com.<
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