Because of the hallowed California tradition of “non-partisan” local elections, it’s hard for the infrequent voter to figure out which candidate to vote for. In Berkeley, the local elections, which used to be held in the spring, have been added to the huge November ballot. As a result, a lot of occasional voters here will be confronted on election day with a list of unfamiliar local names and incomprehensible local proposals when they show up to cast their Democratic ballots for statewide offices (as we dearly hope they will).

To fill the information gap, various self-appointed endorsing bodies have sprung up. Most of them have some sort of membership roster, but often anyone who shows up at the endorsement meeting qualifies to vote on who gets the nod. Around here, a fair proportion of these have “Democratic” in their name, a strategic choice since reapportionment gerrymandering guarantees that with very rare exceptions the Dems will attract the most local voters in the partisan races in these parts for November. Those extra Democratic votes are needed for the statewide races, but from the state legislature on down the ticket, primaries and/or machines have already sealed the deal in supposedly partisan contests.

Unsophisticated voters with generally liberal leanings are likely to look in local non-partisan races for someone endorsed by “The Democrats”, but that’s not as easy as it looks. For starters, positions on “slate cards” which are mailed to registered voters are available for purchase, though there are also some slate cards which represent actual endorsements by respected groups or people. Fair or foul, slate cards usually are headed by well-known candidates (Barbara Boxer, Jerry Brown) whose names are expected to attract votes to people listed on the bottom of the ticket.

Endorsements, however they are publicized and whoever they come from, are the main source of guidance for confused voters. Newspaper endorsements used to count for something, but as the influence of newspapers has declined their endorsements are less and less respected. The poor old San Francisco Chronicle seems to have hit a new low this time, admitting in print that their editorial board can’t tell the difference between Barbara Boxer and Carly Fiorina and so won’t endorse. Come on, guys, I know you’re asleep at the wheel, but that’s embarrassing!

The San Francisco Bay Guardian is still as good a guide as any on statewide questions, particularly the propositions, and on San Francisco offices. For local races outside the city they sometimes get a little squirrely. I vividly remember, when I worked there many years ago in my youth, someone hollering across the press room floor “Anyone know anyone in Marin?” when endorsements were being decided, and I fear it hasn’t changed much since then. For example, The Guardian endorsed Tom Bates for Berkeley mayor last time, under the mistaken impression that he was still “the progressive candidate”, long after he’d been outed as a Developers’ Democrat. They’d never endorse anyone with his politics in The City.

What about local endorsers? A reader who attended the endorsement meeting of Berkeley Citizens’ Action over the weekend was kind enough to send us the results, which can be seen here in our Election Section. This has inspired us to ask any and all attendees at endorsement meetings of whatever body wants to take a crack at it to send us the results, which we aim to compile into a master matrix.

Endorsements, however they are publicized and whoever they come from, are the main source of guidance for confused voters.
in hand.

Long, long ago, my children, even before we moved to Berkeley, there was an organization called the April Coalition, which morphed into Berkeley Citizens Action in due course. Hard though it might be for you to believe, Loni Hancock (originally Berkeley councilmember, then mayor, now state senator, now-but not then-wife of now-mayor Tom Bates) and Ron Dellums (first councilmember, then congressman, now outgoing Oakland mayor) were among the Young Turks who were the founding BCA members. (If you want the whole story, you’ll just have to read David Mundstock’s Berkeley in the Seventies website, an amazing history written by someone who was there.)

As of now, many in Berkeley still believe that the BCA endorsements represent the “true progressives”, though a number of name-brand Seventies Progs have long ago migrated to the center where the money is. It’s noteworthy that the Bates slate didn’t garner any BCA endorsements this time—not Measure R, the Developers’ Democrats’ vision statement for downtown Berkeley, and not one of his hand-picked candidates, not even incumbent Democratic Assemblymember Nancy Skinner, who inherited the Hancock-Bates seat. Independent progressives Arreguin, Worthington and Jones were chosen by BCA for three council districts, and there was No Endorsement for a fourth.

We’d like to get an eyewitness account of the endorsements of the Berkeley Democratic Club, formerly known as “The Moderates” back when BCA was sole claimant to the title of “The Progressives”. There’s a rumor that even Measure R came within one vote of losing the BDC nod, but we’d like that confirmed. Readers, write us.

And there are still more Democratic clubs, about which we know even less. The Wellstone Democratic Club was formed fairly recently by a core group with some historic ties to the Old Left. Probably a majority of its members live in Oakland, but that doesn’t stop them from weighing in on Berkeley elections. More Democratic clubs are out there too-Stonestall, John George, Cal Dems, Young Dems and more—and we’d love to hear from whom they’ve endorsed. They confine their favors to registered Democrats, leaving out the Greens who are running for some races.

How about the non-partisan parties? The Sierra Club, for example, tries to cut as wide a swath as possible in local races, and often deserves respect. Myself, I still think David Brower had a point when he left the Sierra Club trailing fire and brimstone, but many sincere voters pay close attention to Sierra endorsements, unaware that Machiavellian machinations sometimes underlie them. The League of Women Voters, which endorses measures but not candidates, has a similar affect, ostensibly fair and balanced but often with unexpected internal undercurrents created by partisan lobbying.

The Berkeley Chamber of Commerce is probably the farthest right of the endorsing organizations. They have a long history of creating political action committees and other front groups to benefit development interests in elections, and they’ve been chastised for it more than once by the relevant government regulatory agencies. They’re on their third executive director (they call them “CEOs”) in as many years, so it’s a bit hard to determine what they’ll try to push for this fall’s election. Check out their website—note the letter from Mayor Bates on the front page, coupled with “Chairman’s Circle” sponsorships from the likes of PG&E and the Berkeley Labs, to understand where they’re coming from if they endorse. The Chamber’s Governmental Affairs Committee, per their website, is not the same thing as their PAC, but the GAC committee chair told us he isn’t quite sure if there even is a PAC this year. In any event, the GAC is sponsoring a couple of candidate forums, but so sorry, you missed the first one. The announcement went out by email Monday at 9 a.m. and the forum was at noon the same day. Oh well....

Bottom line: don’t bite on the first slate card you get in the mail. Just because you were a “Prog” or a “Mod” in the olden days, don’t necessarily rely on people or groups you used to trust to do your thinking for you. You might want to go to candidate forums, if you can find them in time, and actually meet the candidates in person. We’ll try to let you know when they’re happening, if indeed they are.

Good luck, and don’t forget to vote early and often, as they say in Chicago. The absentee ballots go out this week.

Editor’s Back Fence
Now Read This: A Random Selection of Articles Elsewhere about Berkeley and Environ
UC’s Media Relations Department points with pride to two young faculty members who’ve named MacArthur Foundation fellows, complete with YouTube videos.

Bay Area News Group investigative reporter Thomas Peele endorses the Sunshine Ordinance proposed for Berkeley.

Berkeley’s Angela Arnold thrills the opera crowd at the ballpark on Friday.

Mercury critic gives Koh top marks, Berkeley Symphony orchestra a bit less.

Bayer Stays but Jobs Go, says The Bay Citizen.

Someone who’s caught the city of Berkeley planning department violating its own zoning rules has put her findings online for all to see.

News

Judge Orders Target to Stop Dumping Hazardous Waste

By Jeff Shuttleworth (BCN)
Tue Sep 28 10:38:00 -0700 2010

An Oakland judge has issued a preliminary injunction barring Target Corp. and employees at its 244 stores in California from illegally dumping hazardous waste into the environment.

The ruling by Alameda County Superior Court Judge Steven Brick on Friday prohibits Target and its employees from using unregistered haulers to transport hazardous waste and from transporting hazardous waste without the required manifests.

It also bars the company from illegally managing and disposing of universal waste such as batteries, telephones, and computer and electronic equipment.

In his ruling on a lawsuit filed last year by California Attorney General Jerry Brown, 20 district attorneys in the state, and the city attorneys of Los Angeles and San Diego, Brick said the plaintiffs “have shown a high likelihood of prevailing on their claim that hazardous waste was disposed of.”

The issuance of the preliminary injunction allows prosecutors to seek sanctions against Target for any violation of the court order.

The lawsuit also asks that Target forfeit profits generated by cutting corners and pay penalties for its violations.

Bay Area district attorneys who are participating in the suit are Nancy O’Malley of Alameda County, Robert Kochly of Contra Costa County, James Fox of San Mateo County, Dolores Carr of Santa Clara County, Dean Flippo of Monterey County and David Paulson of Solano County.

In a prepared statement, Target, which is based in Minneapolis, said it has “a com-
prescriptive program to ensure our handling, storage, disposal and documentation of hazardous materials complies with California law, and we train our store teams regularly as part of this program."

The company added, “We take any legal challenge to our program seriously and will continue to devote substantial resources in order to remain a responsible corporate steward of the environment.”

Alameda County Deputy District Attorney Ken Misfud, who is one of the prosecutors working on the case, said Target hasn’t indicated any interest in settling the suit, and that it’s expected that the case will go to trial early next year.

O’Malley said the lawsuit alleges that Target and its employees improperly disposed of various hazardous wastes and materials over a five-year period.

She said the illegally disposed of materials included bleach, pesticides, oven cleaners, paint, aerosols and other toxic, flammable and corrosive materials.

According to O’Malley, California law requires companies to store, handle, and dispose of hazardous wastes and materials in specified ways to avoid contamination of the environment.

But she said prosecutors allege that Target routinely ignored those laws in an effort to cut costs.

The suit alleges that Target employees disposed of defective, damaged, and leaking chemical products directly into the trash.

O’Malley said prosecutors believe that instead of sending tons of hazardous waste and contaminated materials to authorized disposal sites, Target crushed them along with discarded merchandise and garbage at its store compactors and then sent them to area landfills.

“Target’s unlawful actions have put the health Alameda County residents at risk,” O’Malley said in a statement. “The violation of our State’s environmental protection laws will not be tolerated.”

O’Malley said the investigation into Target began in 2005 with the help of her office, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, and many other environmental health agencies statewide.

New Arrests and Charges Related to the Mehserle Verdict

By Jesse Strauss
Mon Sep 27 16:13:00 -0700 2010

Approximately seventeen people have been charged over the past three weeks with crimes related to the protests against former BART cop Johannes Mehserle’s involuntary manslaughter verdict on July 8th. Some of those recently charged were arrested that night, while others have been identified by police in photos, and have been newly arrested. The latest set of arraignments on Monday, September 20th saw three Oaklanders charged with Unlawful Assembly, Remaining at the Scene of a Riot, and Rioting. They are set to reappear in court within the next month.

Five people arrested on July 8th remain in the Santa Rita County Jail, and at least three who were arrested last week remain incarcerated. According to the Oakland 100 Support Committee, one of the earlier arrests was held for over 30 days before charges were filed against him. He now faces a slew of charges which include failure to disperse, although, again according to the Oakland 100 Support Committee, he was arrested before the order to disperse was given. The people who have been incarcerated since July 8th have been charged with parole or probation violations.

Attorney Dan Siegel, a member of the National Lawyers Guild who acted as a legal observer on the night of July 8th, said in a recent interview that the city prosecutors especially target people who have been on probation or parole, but not for charges relating to protesting. “In these cases, the [District Attorney]... will virtually drop the new charge and just proceed on the probation violation because they know you don’t have a right to a jury trial; it’s not proof beyond a reasonable doubt, it’s simply proof by a preponderance of the evidence that someone’s violated their probation.” This strategy worked for one of Siegel’s clients, who chose to take a probation-related plea bargain after being charged with crimes that could land him in jail for 3 to 5 years. “After looking at all the alternatives, he was able to make a deal where he would wind up serving about 7 months in the county jail and everything else would basically go away and he would be on a new term of probation.”

Art Jackson, who spent 45 days in jail after being arrested on the night of the protests, has been charged with crimes related to the looting of the Footlocker shoe store on Broadway Avenue by 14th Street. In a recent statement, Jackson explained that he did not commit any of the crimes he is being charged with. Among those charges are second degree burglary, petty theft with a prior, and receiving stolen property.

Soon after the protests, the Oakland Police Department issues a press release explaining that some of the people arrested were taking “advantage of a chaotic situation by looting Oakland businesses.” While to some extent this appears true, Siegel and Walter Riley of the Bay Area chapter of the NLG make it very clear that it was the police forces themselves who made the situation chaotic.

In our interview, Siegel explained from his observations on the night of the protests that after around 7:30pm, when the rally ended, the police heightened tensions and created a dangerous situation for community members. “It was a mellow scene, and the police disrupted that by deciding to declare the unlawful assembly and pushing people, and just kind of creating a lot of anxiety and anger in the crowd. It was soon after that occurred that some people broke into the Footlocker, and yet the police did not attempt to protect the Footlocker or to intervene.”

Long time community activist and NLG member Riley agreed that in the protests, which in some cases turned into legal violations, the police, fully clad in riot gear, were not keeping the peace. Soon after the protests he said, “The police were provocative and seemed determined to instigate violence, which of course, served their police contract negotiations with Oakland at a time when they are facing layoffs of 80 officers.” He added, “The police helped to perpetuate a narrative of violence by allowing a small number of people to vandalize businesses when they could have stopped it.”

On the other hand, however, at a press conference on the day following the verdict, Oakland Mayor Ron Dellums made a statement praising the OPD for restraining itself and respecting the civil rights of community members.

The number of people charged with crimes relating to the protests against Mehserle’s verdict continues to increase, apparently in relation to responses the police have gotten to a press release pressuring community members to “Please take a moment to review the images [on their website] and help us identify individuals who looted Oakland businesses” spelling error and all.

The Oakland 100 Support Committee is calling for support from the community to help in the defense of the people who were arrested during those protests. A list of court dates and locations as well as a way to donate to support court and lawyer fees are available on their website.
Getting Infill Right in Berkeley

By Steven Finacom
Mon Sep 27 17:43:00 -0700 2010

The Wesley House and Campus Center stands at the southwest corner of the Bancroft Way and Dana Street intersection. The large oak on the corner was preserved and an entry courtyard created around it. Ground floor windows at right front a commons room. Wesley Center offices are in the back. The ground floor windows at far left open onto a small, separately rentable, office suit.

The fourth floor of the building includes an expansive deck connected by Gothic-inspired windows to the Kirk E. Peterson Study, a commons room. A towering west-facing window provides bay views.

Decorative elements, including trefoils and alternating heads of saints and bear heads, ornament the façade.

From Dana Street, the new building rises above the 1950s chapel on the Trinity Methodist Church complex, and reflects the neo-Gothic design of the old Trinity sanctuary building at left.

The north facing residential units look out over Spieker Aquatic Complex on the UC campus.

The stucco-clad, gable roofed, structure fits in quite harmoniously to its surroundings and is the latest piece in a chain of privately owned, religiously oriented, activity and housing facilities along Bancroft Way across from the UC campus.

Stand alone religious facilities that arose to serve the student community line Bancroft. They include Jewish, Methodist, Episcopal, and Presbyterian student centers and the University YMCA and YWCA (which, lest we forget, originated as substantially religious organizations).

Bookended on the east by International House, all these facilities and their programs make Bancroft a great boulevard of ecumenical and cross-cultural exchange and provide spiritual leavening to what is-and should be-a great secular university.

The new Wesley Center building is an appropriate and welcome addition to this corridor.

The building is traditionally styled, in keeping with the neighboring Trinity United Methodist Church facilities and Julia Morgan’s magnificent City Club on the same block.

Architecturally, Berkeley-both town and gown-had a brief “Collegiate Gothic” period in the ’teens and 1920s. But while some other North American college campuses went completely wild for the Oxbridge look, Berkeley saw considerable architectural experimentation around other Period Revival themes, such as Spanish and Mission Revival, and ended up with only a scattering of public buildings in the style of Medieval, Tudor, or early Renaissance England.

On the University campus, just three buildings were designed to recall the early epoch of higher education in the Old World: Stephens Memorial Union (now Stephens Hall) by John Galen Howard; Eshleman Hall (now Moses Hall) and Bowles Hall by his successor, George Kelham.

The older buildings of the Pacific School of Religion (Walter Ratcliff, Jr.) on “Holy Hill”, Canterbury House at Bancroft and College, Trinity Methodist Church itself, adjacent to the Wesley site, and Berkeley’s Second Church of Christ, Scientist, are among the more prominent off-campus exemplars.

And, of course, both Julia Morgan and Bernard Maybeck were richly involved with Period Revival motifs that drew on the Gothic for design inspiration. In Berkeley, Maybeck’s First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Morgan’s Berkeley Women’s City Club are splendid fusions of this style with other architectural inspirations, while Morgan’s
Hobart Hall (American Baptist Seminary of the West) is a magnificent red brick expression of Tudor Revival architecture.

On the block where the Wesley Center stands, Morgan’s City Club and Trinity Church and its adjacent Trinity Hall set a powerful tone. Peterson followed that theme quite wisely and well when establishing the design character of the new Wesley building. It’s a present day structure, but it integrates itself into the block with great harmony.

The ground floor serves a duel of gathering place for residents and offices and facilities for the Wesley Center program staff. There’s a lobby that feels more spacious and welcoming than those of newer residential buildings four or six times this size elsewhere in Berkeley, a large common room along Bancroft Way, and a second event room, with kitchen facilities, at the back of the floor opening out to a courtyard.

A small, separately rentable, ground floor office space (currently looking for a non-profit tenant) facing Dana Street and adds additional life and texture to the east facade.

The rear court, which is actually on the adjacent Trinity Church property, includes a huge California Live Oak, probably one of the largest remaining in Berkeley. Peterson did a splendid job of integrating the new building with the older structures-Trinity Church, Trinity Hall, and Trinity Chapel-which form the other three sides of the open space.

The ground floor porch at the back of the Wesley building is framed by three flying buttresses that Peterson designed to reflect elements of the Trinity sanctuary across the courtyard; they double as supports for vines.

A less imaginative architect would have simply put a generic Craftsman or Modern trellis here over the deck, which it would have been out of place. Instead, the buttresses and porch, with decorative iron railing, complete the courtyard.

The second and third floors of the Wesley Building are entirely residential. Suites containing double and triple rooms and their own bath, kitchen, and living room spaces, are arranged along a double loaded corridor.

The fourth floor includes more suites but also has a common, high-ceiling, room and rooftop deck on the rear. From the surrounding streets the deck largely goes unnoticed; the gable roofs of the building dominate the skyline.

From the deck, however, there’s a spacious view to east and west, taking in the Golden Gate, the Berkeley Hills, and the Southside neighborhood. This room also has a huge west-facing window that frames the view towards the Bay.

Residents on the north side of the building also look across Bancroft Way at Haas Pavilion and the Spieker Aquatic complex on the UC campus.

Despite a tight construction budget, Peterson designed a handsome facade on all four sides.

He’s one of the few architects working on major East Bay commissions today who is not afraid or dismissive of integrating high quality three-dimensional decorative detail into the design. Too many of his contemporaries, alas, use Modern industrial motifs for everything-homes, offices, stores, places of worship—or pretend that a stand alone piece of art here and there is sufficient for decorative purposes.

Locally at least, Peterson is close to unique in not discarding a couple of thousand years of design history that revered and perfected integral decorative elements in architecture.

At Wesley House, panels with quatrefoils resembling the arches of a Gothic arcade are inset into the exterior walls. When you look up at the slight ornamental water table that horizontally divides the first floor from the upper levels you’ll see something that may make you laugh with delight; tiny haloed human heads and heads of bears alternate along the facade, providing a clever and subtle fusion of the religious and secular orientations of the Wesley Center.

Peterson’s skill is evident not only in the little details but in the fact that the building is attractive and complex from all sides, unlike many urban structures that present one carefully designed face to the street, but abandon the sides and rear to utilitarian blandness.

This is particularly important on the Wesley House block where all the buildings are free standing and can be appreciated from various perspectives. It also means that-God forbid-should Trinity Church ever destroy its sanctuary and Trinity Hall annex that the Wesley structure can still hold its corner of the block rather than looking like a complete orphan.

The substantial windows also help make the building. They are operable casements and have true divided lights. They’re slightly inset to give the exterior walls a solid, masonry-like, feel. Instead of a flat exterior sill-a recipe for drainage disaster and water damage in the long term-they sit over a sharp inset bevel in the stucco that also accentuates the thickness of the exterior walls.

While most of the windows are vertically rectangular, little lancets light the east stairwell, and three large, Gothic, arches face the top floor deck on the back of the building and are visible from Dana Street. A three-story oriel on the north facade provides visual and architectural articulation and also a few more useable square feet (and excellent light and views) for the living rooms of the residential units on that facade.

Peterson also made excellent use of varied massing elements on the very tight site to make the building relate best to its neighbors and create its own presence, rather than being a hulking, featureless, block.

Carving out open space at the Dana / Bancroft corner provided an entry court and preserved an oak tree. The setback also visually splits the main structure into two wings, one facing each of the adjoining streets, and neither overwhelming, despite coming up to the sidewalk edge.

Again, this was a particularly sensitive and astute design gesture for this special block. Each corner of the block is anchored not with a building but a piece of landscaping, including (in three of four cases) a large tree. This helps give a real (not fake) green feel to the block even in the presence of very large buildings.

In contrast, St. Mark’s Episcopal Church at the other end of the block seems hell bent-so to speak-taking down its corner tree at Ellsworth and Durant Avenue and cramming a generic, five story, residential block up against the street as if Durant were Shattuck Avenue in Downtown Berkeley.

The roof forms of the Wesley building properly echo the adjacent Trinity Church complex and the City Club. The roof is designed like a fifth facade with equipment almost entirely concealed and powerful architectural forms predominating rather than mechanical clutter.

The top of the elevator tower is detailed with quatrefoils and a pyramidal roof. It reads as an architectural element and echoes the stairwell tower of the City Club several hundred feet away to the southwest, giving this block a little bit of an Italian Renaissance feel.

Flat roofs alternate with two main gables on Wesley House; the latter come to substantial terminations on the skyline. Peterson also designed the roof deck at the back of the fourth floor with a solid, rather than picketed, railing, making it part of the building mass rather than a frail-looking structure perched several stories up.

This is a building that works well for, and with, Berkeley. One hopes that it will
prove an exemplar, not an outlier, in local design. I would encourage Berkeley’s “smart growthers” to come appreciate this structure which is highly urban and urbane-90 residents, plus offices, on a postage stamp lot, along a busy corridor—but does not overwhelm, insult, or diminish site or surroundings.

UC Berkeley Chancellor Cuts Sports to Save $4 Million

By Jeff Shuttleworth (BCN)
Tue Sep 28 15:48:00 -0700 2010

University of California at Berkeley Chancellor Robert Birgeneau announced today that the university will eliminate its baseball team and three other varsity sports teams in a move aimed at saving $4 million a year.

The other sports being cut are men’s and women’s gymnastics and women’s lacrosse.

In addition, the men’s rugby team will be reassigned to “varsity club” status.

In a letter to the campus community, Birgeneau said he decided to make the cuts because “the costs of delivering our Intercollegiate Athletics program have been rising dramatically, requiring growing financial support from the campus budget that now exceeds $12 million annually.”

“This is not sustainable for our campus in a time of drastic state budget cuts to the university that are affecting all of our faculty, staff and students,” he said.

PG&E Recommends Saving Energy as Heatwave Causes Outages

By Bay City News
Sun Sep 26 23:05:00 -0700 2010

PG&E officials are recommending careful energy conservation today and during the week’s forecasted heat wave after more than 30,000 Castro Valley customers lost power Saturday due to system overload.

Saturday’s power outage was reported just before 6 p.m. and affected up to 33,680 customers in Castro Valley and Hayward, PG&E spokesman J.D. Guidi said.

The cause of the power loss was a heat-related equipment failure at PG&E’s Castro Valley substation, Guidi said.

Power was fully restored to the area by about 8:40 p.m., Guidi said.

High temperatures were around 90 degrees Saturday and forecasted to push even higher today and Monday.

To help stave off the possibility of further heat-related outages, PG&E recommends shutting windows and keeping blinds closed in the morning to save cool air indoors from the night before. PG&E also recommends turning off lights and appliances when they’re not being used and resetting air conditioning to around 85 degrees when out of the house and around 75 degrees when home.

A handsome new Berkeley building was formally dedicated Sunday, September 26, 2010. The event represented the culmination of a several year effort by the Wesley Foundation—the United Methodist Church student center in Berkeley—to provide not only a new home and income for its program facilities but residential quarters for Cal students.

The four story Wesley House and Campus Center rises at the southwest corner of the intersection of Bancroft Way and Dana Street, immediately across from the University of California, Berkeley, campus and continues an 85-year tradition of the Wesley Center presence in the University community.

“It’s been a dream of Wesley to have a self-supporting campus ministry program”, Wesley Foundation Board President Vincent Wong told about 75 people gathered for the building ribbon cutting and dedication.

“It’s just now hit me. We’re done!” said the Reverend Tarah Trueblood, the Executive Director and Campus Pastor said, to applause. “Today we gather in deep gratitude for the miracle of this new building.”

“Let us seal this dedication together”, she said, inviting the audience to join her in a multicultural invocation of “Shalom, Salaam, Namaste, Amen.”

Several of the speakers emphasized how changing times and student interests required a rethinking of the campus ministry approach. “The 1950s model of doing campus ministry is ineffective in this Post-Modern world” said Trueblood.

“We could no longer expect that the students would walk across the street to us”, said Asca Welker. “We had to take our ministry to the students.”

“By providing student housing Wesley has entered into a new way of relating to students”, Trueblood added. “When students walk through our doors they bring all aspects of their identity.” They are coming from different backgrounds-financial, cultural, racial, sexual.

“Come as you are”, is the message of Wesley, said Trueblood. “The mission of the new Wesley Center is to create a place of ‘radical hospitality’.”
The Reverend Gary Putnam, a former member of the Wesley Board, echoed her theme. University life, he said, presents individuals with four fundamental questions. “Who am I? What should I do with my life? With whom shall I do it? Is there any meaning in it?”

“If the Christian Faith is to be relevant in this life it has to be immersed in those questions.” He emphasized engagement of the Wesley Center with student life, saying, “The miracles of today are not to be found in burning bushes but in burning issues.”

His theme was recalled by Amanda Mohammed, the student speaker at the dedication, who talked about working for Sudan humanitarian relief, and by the Reverend Jeffrey Kaun of the Oakland Chinese Community Church who said “we are not preparing our younger generation for the Church of tomorrow. We are preparing them for the Church of today. The work of this building may be done. But the work of campus ministry will continue.”

Several of the speakers recalled daunting financial, planning, and procedural challenges that faced the project. It verged on financial collapse and cancellation at some stages but at each turning point organizers and supporters were able to find a way to continue.

“It was a testament to the fact that God gives us just enough to get to the next level”, said Derek Lang, the chair of the Wesley Development Committee.

Speakers praised project architect Kirk Peterson for helping them persevere. “Kirk Peterson was the one who said this project was a series of small miracles which got us through each day”, said Lang.

Trueblood said, at one point in the process she was deeply discouraged and told Peterson that the project needed a big miracle to survive, and he encouraged her to go on. “Those were the words of an architect to the pastor. Have faith.”

The Reverend Bridgette Young, from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of the United Methodist Church, traveled to bring national congratulations to the project. “You can tell we’re from Nashville and the South. We’re wearing suits”, she led off, to laughter.

“John Wesley (one of the founders of the Methodist denomination) was a campus minister, he started his ministry on the Oxford campus,” she said. She noted that the movement was active across the country, and she had recently been to a dedication of a Methodist student facility in Florida.

“This is a place of hope, a place of miracles”, she added. “God tells the Children of Israel never to neglect to show hospitality to strangers. What this Wesley House does is it says those who are not like us are welcome among us.”

Deborah Matthews, a member of the City of Berkeley’s Zoning Adjustments Board, was the next speaker at the podium after Putnam and Young. “It’s hard to follow the clergy”, she said. But “it’s wonderful to be here today for the completion of this building.” Matthews is now a member of the Wesley Center Board.

She said that since the building had been supported by the Zoning Board, City staff, and the City’s Design Review Commission, “I feel really comfortable saying the City of Berkeley is so happy to have this building here.”

“We do not remove the old, we embrace it” is a Berkeley philosophy she endorses, Matthews said. The new building, she added, is appropriately located on a major corridor. “It sets a precedent for the type of development we’d like to see here. With this particular facility, the bar is set really high.”

The four-story building combines program facilities for the Wesley Center ministry and residential space for 90 Cal students in several suites. Students do not need to be Methodists or Christian to live there.

The building, completed in time for the fall semester, is not yet full, and the Wesley Center temporarily dropped starting rents to $650 per month according to flyers posted on the building in recent weeks.

The challenge of reaching full occupancy is shared with numerous other private residential facilities around campus. In the past year, particularly on the edge of campus, I’ve seen many flyers advertising apartments for rent, hawkers trying to get students to look at their buildings, and semi-permanent “Apartment Available” signs at numerous buildings.

Despite the current shortage of student renters, the Wesley facility is probably positioned for long-term success. It’s right across from campus and the Recreational Sports Facility / Haas Pavilion athletic complex.

The furnished units look comfortable and spacious, with plenty of light and air. The building is large enough to have a community feel and there are several excellent common spaces for the residents to use.

Steven Finacom wrote about the ground-breaking for the Wesley Center in the July 9, 2009, Planet.

Pow Wow Now: The Drums

By John Curl
Mon Sep 27 20:26:00 -0700 2010

Pow wows often have two host drums, one Southern and one Northern. All other drums are invited, and some often show up unannounced. At this year’s Berkeley pow wow the Host Southern Drum is Rockin Horse, with lead singer Rick Leroy, and the Host Northern Drum is All Nations, with lead singer Michael Bellanger. The drums usually take turns, unless the MC or arena director specifically asks one drum to play a particular song.

Many drums travel from powwow to powwow each week and are in high demand. Many have recording contracts, and each year drum groups are nominated for Grammy awards in the Native American category.

The drum is heartbeat of the pow wow.

Each drum has a lead singer and a second lead. The lead singer is responsible for knowing any kind of song requested by the MC or arena director. When the lead singer sings a line, the second lead usually repeats it in a variant key.

There are two basic styles of pow wow drumming and singing, Southern and Northern. These are not geographical locations so much as different styles and arrangements. Southern singing is in a lower pitch and slower than Northern, which is often in a high fast falsetto. Songs are usually in Native languages. Sometimes the songs are not in words at all, but in vocables, “meaningless” syllables carrying the melody and meaning.

A pow wow drum is considered a sacred instrument. In many traditions it is never left unattended, nothing is ever placed on top of it, and no one can reach across it. It is constructed with a wooden shell covered on both ends by the stretched hide of a deer, buffalo, elk, or steer. The tension on the drum heads tune it, determining pitch and voice. Usually about 26 – 32 inches across, standing off the ground, it is large enough for five to ten people to sit around. There are usually at least four drummers, one for each of the directions. The drummers beat it in unison with hide-covered sticks. They are also singers, and their song arises from their unique blend of voices and drumming. Each group of singers is called “a drum.” Most drums are all men, but some have women members and some are all women. Drummers usually dress in ordinary clothes. Most drum carriers and singers have studied many
years learning the traditions and the songs. Many of the songs have been passed down for unknown generations, while some are recent. During a song, there will be occasional “honor” beats, louder and in a slower tempo, which are said to be done out of respect for the drum. A single drum beat supposedly represents Mother Earth and a double drum beat represents human beings. Every pow wow drum is said to contain its own spirit, so the singers must comport themselves with traditional dignity around it.

Numerous stories are told about pow wow drums, that a woman’s spirit lives inside them, that they place the people in touch with their heart, bringing balance, life, and spirituality, that they channel ancestral voices to heal the people and the earth, that the drum carries its beat down into the heart of the planet, and returns carrying the earth’s heartbeat up into the pow wow, summoning the people together and harmonizing them.

This year Berkeley Indigenous Peoples Day Pow Wow and Indian Market will be held in Civic Center Park on Saturday, October 9, 10am to 6pm. Sponsored by the City, it is always free.

Annual Berkeley Campus Memorial Service

By Steven Finacom
Tue Sep 28 08:24:00 -0700 2010

Bagpiper Jeff Campbell began and ended the ceremony.

More than 100 University of California, Berkeley, campus faculty, staff, students, and retirees gathered September 27, 2010 for the annual campus memorial service to remember those in the University community who died during the previous year. Other friends and family of many of the deceased joined them.

Chancellor Robert Birgeneau officiated at the event, the ninth annual commemoration since the tradition was revived by Birgeneau’s predecessor, Robert Berdahl.

The ceremony took place on the lawns west of California Hall and above the Valley Life Sciences Building. This year is 150 years since the campus site was dedicated to academic purposes by the College of California.

The flag on the Class of 1927 flagpole hung at half-mast and formed a backdrop for the ceremony, along with two wreaths of blue and gold flowers.

The ceremony “has become a beautiful annual tradition” Birgeneau said. “Today we mourn the loss of some 75 members of our campus community.”

He called attention to the deaths of six undergraduates. “Their brief time at Berkeley has left an indelible mark for all those who knew and were inspired by them. These students will always be cherished as part of Cal history.”

Four current academic staff and faculty were also among those remembered, as were ten staff and four graduate students.

More than fifty emeritus and retired faculty and retired campus staff were also among those remembered. Five UC police officers were on the list, and other working members of the campus community from custodian Ing Thongban to Professor David Blackwell of Statistics who Birgeneau recalled as “the first African American professor in campus history.”

“Each and every person we lost this year was a vital member of our Cal family.”

Birgeneau noted that this particular ceremony does not include alumni by name, since there are so many and it would be near impossible to assemble a comprehensive list of the recently deceased, “but we also think of them at this time.”

After a moment of silence, the names of the deceased were read by representatives of different campus communities: Professor Fiona Doyle, chair of the Academic Senate, for faculty; Staff Ombudsperson Sara Thacker for staff; ASUC President Noah Stern for students.

“We miss our colleagues. Our lives have
The ceremony was being filmed by a crew of local businesses, which would yield additional revenue for the City. Doyle noted his participation on the Chancellor’s task force on town/gown relations and the building of smart economic development. “I bring to you a 20 year experience as a small business owner in San Francisco. At the same time I was also very much of a community activist”, she said. “What I bring to you is my ability to see what’s going on” and “my ability to bring people together.”

“I want to promote, advance and support the building of smart economic development,” she said.

“The relationship with the University has been very antagonistic”, she added, a situation she wants to change. She said she would work to encourage students to buy from local businesses, which would yield additional revenue for the City.

George Beier

George Beier said he had gone to high school overseas and lived in New Delhi and Mogadishu while growing up. After earning undergraduate and MBA degrees at UC Berkeley, he started a software business. After he sold it, “I’ve pretty much devoted myself to community activism since then.”

He noted his participation on the Chancellor’s task force on town/gown relations and...
previous service on the Waterfront Commission and Zoning Adjustment Board and Planning Commission. “I’ve always been involved in my community for the last 20 years.” He noted the successful effort to get dumpsters put in Southside neighborhoods at the end of the academic year so student discards wouldn’t end up on the street. He mentioned working on disaster preparedness and efforts to reduce alcohol-related problems near campus.

He described working with Rebuilding Together (which organizes volunteers to repair the homes of those who can’t afford it), and on the board of Options Recovery. “I’ve very close to the recovery community myself”, he said.

Beier stressed his endorsements. “There are eight people on the City Council other than the incumbent and six have endorsed me.”

He said there was a real problem with public safety issues in and near District Seven, including recent murders on Haste Street and on Adeline, and “I’m devoted to reviving Telegraph Avenue.” “We can turn that around.”

If he’s elected, he said, “I really hope after four years of my tenure people will walk down Telegraph and say, this is still interesting, this is still funky, but it’s a lot safer.”

“I want to change the agenda of the City Council,” he added. At Council meetings “the neighbor agenda stuff happens at the end. It drives me crazy.”

“I really want to change People’s Park”, he stressed. “I think we should keep it as open space” and “I want to keep it as a community park” but “That park has got to change. It does not work now as a community park.”

“I’ve also worked to defeat the BRT (Bus Rapid Transit). I think that was a disaster.”

In summing up, Beier said “I have a very broad coalition of support. I’ve had six people endorse me on the Council. I’ll be the seventh vote.” “I know I’ll be a stalwart community advocate for you for the next four years.”

Kriss Worthington

Kriss Worthington spoke last. “My definition of a broad coalition includes the community”, he said. He noted his endorsements from the Sierra Club, AFL-CIO, Stonewall Democratic Club, and the Green Party.

“Most of the groups that have endorsed anyone have endorsed me”, he said. “The progressive activist groups know that I will fight for all of their causes.”

Worthington noted he had proposed numerous reforms to City development policy. “I learned before I was on the City Council what a nightmare the City Planning Department is.” He said on landmarks issues “I’m the only person in this race who says I see preservation as an environmental issue. Don’t undermine the protections for landmarks in Berkeley.” “I’m the only one standing up for neighborhoods on this issue.”

He said he had gotten the City Council to reform the permit process for businesses on Telegraph and adjacent commercial blocks. “Those streets can get a permit faster than anywhere else in Berkeley.”

Worthington said the Council had voted for most of his proposals and “I do community organizing with neighbors to come to the Council.”

On UC relations, he said, “the University bureaucracy, the administration...the highly paid executives are making decisions (similar) to what big corporations are making to screw up our entire city.” He included Alta Bates medical center as a large institution in District Seven that can work against community interest.

“I have succeeded at getting the city to order the University and Alta Bates to stop doing illegal things.”

Worthington said one of his working premises is that “looking out for middle class taxpayers is a progressive issue.” He said he had worked to get the City to put a previous budget surplus into a rainy day fund, which helped ease the City’s current budget problems when economic crisis arrived.

Worthington talked about working for what he called “the left out groups in Berkeley”, giving as examples Holocaust survivors worried about the number of local hate crimes, and veteran’s organizations that want to use the City-owned Veterans Memorial Building.

“Yes, I am the most dangerous man in Berkeley” he concluded. “I am the one who the corporations don’t like, the big landlords don’t like...but I’m also a nice, gentle, person who works for you.”

Q and A

Candidates were asked to answer the questions in rotating order, each time beginning with a different candidate. That same order of response is preserved below.

“Smart Growth”

The first question (from this writer) was regarding “smart growth”. Do the candidates support increased development in the Le Conte neighborhood? If so, where would they want to see it occur?

Rosales said she supported Measure R, the Mayor’s downtown proposal, and that would be the place for more development. “If you think of putting it in our neighborhood, I can’t see where”, she added.

“Le Conte neighborhood and my neighborhood (Willard) are the densest in Berkeley,” Beier said. “I would not support new housing in the neighborhood”, with the exception of “some new housing on Telegraph itself”, but not on the adjacent neighborhood streets.

“The majority of the City Council tends to blindly vote for more development”, Worthington said. “The issue is are we going to actually make developers follow the law?”

He said a strong issue for him was getting the City to follow its own regulations when approving infill development proposals.

The next question was regarding the City’s contract with Easy Does It, which provides non-emergency services for the disabled community. The organization, the questioner said, has been criticized for not providing services to enough people for the $800,000 it receives from the City.

Beier said he was not familiar with the issue but support pursuing a thorough audit of the contract. He said he would be able to analyze it, noting he has an MBA in finance from UC.

Worthington said that “on contract monitoring my office is the most activist office” among Council members, and noted he had pushed for the City’s audit of its Office Depot supply contract that had uncovered savings for the City.

Rosales said he was not familiar with the particular issue, but “we in Berkeley are all very compassionate.” “The reality is there is not enough money in the City” to pay for City services. “What are we going to do to generate income?”

Safety and Crime

The next question asked the candidates for their views on public safety and crime issues.

Worthington said “contrary to the media myth”, “I have sponsored the most Council items related to public safety and crime.”

“I’ve sponsored items to get more police.” He said that after considerable delay under previous staff, Berkeley’s new police chief “is actually taking many of the things I’ve sponsored and implementing them.”

Rosales said “this issue is precisely why I’m running for City Council.” “There is a need to look at this a lot more closely.”

“Crime is not lessening, it’s actually getting
worse."

Beier pointed to his efforts to bring police to neighborhood meetings and control disruptive student parties, and added “I’ve been badgering them (the police) forever to have a joint patrol” in the Southside, a measure the City and University police just began to implement.

Views on Bates
The next questioner invited candidates to say what they think of Tom Bates.

Current Mayor and former State Assemblyman Bates lives in the Le Conte neighborhood on Ward Street with his wife, Loni Hancock, current State Senator and former Mayor of Berkeley and former State Assemblymember.

Bates has endorsed both Beier and Rosales against Worthington.

“I see Tom Bates as a leader trying his best to do what he can for the City,” Rosales said. “I want to trust that each leader, each and every one, including Kriss, is doing the best they can.”

“This job isn’t about personalities”, Beier said. “I think about what’s best for the community.” Despite the endorsement, he said, “If I have to go against Tom Bates I will”, noting that he and Bates had different positions on Bus Rapid Transit. “I’m a guy he knows he can work with.”

“Tom Bates was a wonderful State Assemblyman”, Worthington said. “As Mayor unfortunately he’s more concerned with the Chamber of Commerce.” “He believes”, Worthington said, “if you let them build everything they want, it will trickle down to us.”

“I am the only person (in the race) who will not owe one vote to the Mayor” if elected, he added.

Public Transit and BRT
The next question concerned funding for bus service in Berkeley and Bus Rapid Transit.

“I was the Berkeley City Council person who fought to get the funding for the San Pablo Rapid Bus and Telegraph Avenue Rapid Bus”, Worthington answered. He said “there are Bus Rapid Transit projects all over the country that do not take out two lanes of traffic”, as proposed by AC Transit for Telegraph Avenue, and suggested a modified BRT scheme might work, only having dedicated bus lanes during rush hour.

“I know BRT has been contentious in our neighborhood”, Rosales said. “BRT has to go back to the drawing table.”

“I don’t think I have a lack of understanding about BRT at all” Beier said. “The idea of having dedicated bus lanes in the center of Telegraph Avenue is a terrible idea.” BRT is “a 400 million dollar had idea for no environmental benefit and I oppose it”, he added.

City Employee Pensions
The next question was about the retirement benefits the City provides to City employees. They are, the questioner said, “way out of proportion to what the public can afford.”

“We all want to have a secure pension to live on in old age” Rosales said. “I’m not on the Council. I don’t know how they decided on the pensions. I would like it to be fair.”

“People think City workers are overpaid,” she added. “I don’t think so.”

“I think this is a really tough issue”, Beier said. While “the social contract is destroyed” and workers nationwide have lost access to pensions, with 401(k)s as an inadequate alternative, he said he was concerned about a combination of high pay and high benefits for City employees. “The contract should be you get low pay now and high security later”.

He said one of the first things he would propose on the Council would be to “hold all cost of living increases (for City employees) flat.”

Beier’s comment provoked a tart response from Worthington who said that while he “has proposed beginning baby steps to reform the pension process”, “one of the candidates has proposed illegal things”, apparently referring to Beier’s proposals to alter City compensation employee compensation agreements mid-contract.

Beier responded during his next answer period that Worthington “illegal” reference was referring to Beier’s proposal to reduce the benefit the City pays the Downtown YMCA for City employee memberships, in order to provide stop gap funding for Willard Pool operations.

Vacant Property
The next question was about the property owned by a Le Conte resident along the east side of Shattuck Avenue. The block long site has been largely vacant for many years. Can’t the City get him to do something with the property, the questioner asked?

Beier said that one approach with recalcitrant developers and property owners was, within the law, to “make it difficult for their next property” when they want something from the City.

Worthington noted he had “led the fight to get the Berkeley Inn site cleaned up” (referring to a different location and property owner, but also in District Seven at Telegraph and Haste) and that property had liens attached by the City. He said that eminent domain might be something to consider for the Shattuck Avenue property but, he stressed, “for that particular place only.”

Rosales said “there’s a lot of property in Berkeley that’s sitting empty.” “I keep hearing all sorts of reasons why it’s not happening.” She added, “I want to know why it is that we can’t do something at Haste and Telegraph”, the old Berkeley Inn site.

Steven Finacom has lived in District 7 since the 1980s. He endorsed Kriss Worthington the last time he ran for Council, and Worthington’s opponent, incumbent Carla Woodworth, when Worthington first ran against her. He lives near Ces Rosales and knows her as a neighbor, and knows George Beier through some neighborhood activities. He has not made a public endorsement in the election.

BAHA Election Information Available Online

In an effort to provide election information concerning preservation issues to its members and the voting public, the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association (BAHA) has published the following three items on its website.

Candidates’ responses to BAHA questionnaire
BAHA invited the 14 candidates running for City Council to answer three questions relating to pressing preservation issues. The questions are:
1. Do you support Measure R? Specifically, how do you think its enactment would affect historic resources in Downtown Berkeley? 2. Measure R would allow two mixed-use buildings and one hotel that could reach 180 feet in height and be located anywhere within the Downtown Core. Should Downtown Berkeley have any new buildings taller than 120 feet? Please elaborate.
3. The University of California is expanding beyond the campus. Should new UC buildings outside the campus conform to the City of Berkeley’s zoning laws as regards height and bulk? Ten candidates responded, and their answers are published on the BAHA website: http://berkeleyheritage.com/elections/candidates2010.html BAHA does not endorse candidates for public office.

BAHA endorses: Vote No on Measure R The reasons are outlined in a flier avail-
Berkeley Chamber of Commerce’s Committee On Government Affairs Presents Public Forums for City Council Candidates

Mon Sep 27 17:01:00 -0700 2010

Location of Public Forum of Sept. 27 and Oct. 4: Community Conference Room, Floor 3, Berkeley Public Library, 2090 Kittredge

Location of Public Forum of Oct. 12: Berkeley Repertory Theatre School of Theatre, 2071 Addison St.

Public Forum of Monday, Sept. 27, 2010, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.

District 4
Jesse Arreguin, Incumbent
Jim Novosel
Eric Panzer
Bernt Wahl

District 7
George Beier
Cecilia “Ces” Rosales
Kriss Worthington, Incumbent

Guidelines for Sept 27:
Each Council candidate will be granted up to 6 minutes to make a presentation.
Council candidate presentations will be followed by 45 minutes of Q&A

Public Forum of Monday, Oct. 4, 2010, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.

AC Transit, Board of Directors, District At Large (12:00 - 12:10 p.m.)
Jerry Ellis Powell
Joel Young, Incumbent

District 2
Anthony Di Donato
Jasper Kingetter
Linda Maio, Incumbent
Merrilie Mitchell Jesse

Stewart Jones
Jacquelyn McCormick
Gordon Wozniak, Incumbent

Guidelines for Oct. 4:
Each AC Transit candidate will be granted up to 3 minutes to make a presentation.
AC Transit candidate presentations will be followed by 4 minutes of Q&A.
Each Council candidate will be granted up to 6 minutes to make a presentation.
Council candidate presentations will be followed by 25 minutes of Q&A

Public Forum of Tuesday, October 12, 2010, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.

District 4 Candidates Focusing on Downtown Area Plan
Jesse Arreguin, Incumbent
Jim Novosel
Eric Panzer
Bernt Wahl

Guidelines for Oct. 12:
Each Council candidate will be granted up to 8 minutes to make a presentation on the DAP.
Council candidate presentations on the DAP will be followed by up to 20 minutes of comments by Downtown Berkeley stakeholders.
Stakeholder comments will be followed by 30 minutes of Q&A.

Priscilla Myrick announces candidacy for Berkeley, CA School Board Director

Tue Sep 28 15:05:00 -0700 2010

Public education advocate and veteran chief financial officer Priscilla Myrick has launched her second run for a slot on the Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) board in the November 2nd election.

Myrick, a passionate proponent of student literacy, is a founding member of the nonprofit group that created the WriterCoach Connection program in 2001. She has volunteered in Berkeley classrooms every week since then, helping students improve their writing skills. She has also collaborated with other California school board members on education issues.

“I have been impressed by Priscilla’s combination of ‘big picture’ thinking and sensitivity to how decisions make a difference to real people in the real world. Priscilla would bring those qualities to the Berkeley School Board,” says Ellen Wheeler, School Board Vice President of the Mountain View Whisman School District.

Of all the candidates, only Myrick has direct experience managing complex budgets. As a CPA and bioscience CFO, Myrick managed budgets of up to $300 million, three times the size of the BUSD budget.

“Priscilla Myrick is the only candidate with proven financial experience when Berkeley schools need it most,” says Patricia Kates, a Berkeley schools volunteer since 1991. “Priscilla has also spent thousands of hours with teachers and students and has a deep understanding of the challenges facing BUSD.”

As a member of the Berkeley High School Site Council and the 2020 Vision task force, Myrick helped develop plans to raise student achievement. “It’s time to implement those plans, objectively evaluate results, and target resources to programs that raise student achievement,” says Myrick.

“Our children are best served by a school board director who is willing to ask probing questions and defend academic standards.”

Mardi Mertens, Berkeley High School science teacher, agrees. “Priscilla Myrick played a critical role in saving AP science labs from being cut. Priscilla cares about all students and has the skills to make sure scarce funds serve students best.”

“My experience in the classroom and in financial management will bring to the Berkeley School Board a commitment to student achievement paired with results-oriented skills,” says Myrick.

Reader Opinion

Comparing Jean Quan with the Other Frontrunners in the Oakland Mayor’s Race

By Joyce Roy
Mon Sep 27 17:21:00 -0700 2010

Some assertions by Councilmember Jean Quan in her Sept. 20th commentary need to be corrected.

“Montgomery Wards or Cesar Chavez Learning Center” was a false choice. It could have been: The original handsome portion of the Montgomery Ward building reused for 540 units of housing, 20% affordable for teachers, AND a new Chavez Learning Center AND, because the site would have been leased to the developer, a cash cow for the school district. Both would have been developed with union labor by a very respected developer from San Francisco (not Seattle), Emerald Fund.

http://berkeleyheritage.com/docs/no_on_measure_R.pdf

Measure R - Claims vs. Facts
Retired city planner John English analyzes several key aspects of Measure R. For each of them, he compares proponents’ deceptive wording, as quoted from the voter’s pamphlet, with what the measure itself does or doesn’t prescribe. Mr. English’s analysis is published on the BAHA website: http://berkeleyheritage.com/berkeley_landmarks/dap_english09-10.html

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At the time, 2001, most elementary schools cost about $15 million; this learning center consisting of two K-5 schools with a total of 474 students cost over $50 million! That is $105,485 per student. The Robert F. Kennedy Community Schools in Los Angeles that has been in the news lately had a $578 million price tag for 4200 students, that is, $137,619 per student. So Oakland doesn’t have the honor of the country’s most expensive public school, probably just the most costly elementary school.

This was the most idiotic, self-defeating action I have seen taken by the school district and the City. But I don’t expect a mea culpa from a politician. Look at Tony Blair who cannot admit that invading Iraq was a big mistake.

So said, I will be voting for Jean Quan for Mayor because the whole tally for her is more positive than for the other two frontrunners. As a councilmember, two issues that come to mind where she exhibited leadership was on use of herbicides on public lands and against locating a casino in Oakland. She is definitely hard working and I think with her experience and maturity, she can be a good mayor. At this time we certainly need someone who understands the City’s finances. She just needs to learn to shut-up sometimes and listen to people. But that is a problem with all three frontrunners.

Speaking of finances, an article in the Chronicle (9/25/10) on the municipal forum stated, “(Rebecca Kaplan) argued that...as a board member at financially crippled AC Transit, she has learned how to find money where others haven’t.” She helped crippled AC Transit by approving “creative fund swaps” to pay for imported buses with funds that could have been used for service. Now service is being cut to the bone and they are stuck with junk buses that are more costly to maintain than older American buses.

By serving on the AC Transit board, one can be an elected official without accountability. It is easy for Rebecca to misrepresent her actions on the board because who watches the board or even cares? Well, I have since early 2007 as self-appointed watchdog. She, along with most members, treated the agency’s funds like it was a big cookie jar, and riders are now paying the price. A few documented examples of her record:

* She convinced the board to pay her expenses to attend a conference that had nothing to do with transit
* She voted for a secret loan of $500,000 to the General Manager so he could buy a house, reported by Bob Gammon:
  
  I have heard that in her campaign for the council seat she claimed she never voted for the Van Hool buses. Until the early 2008 EB Express expose, she voted for every one of them, even making the motion for the 2007 contract extension:

  You should think twice before voting for Rebecca if you:

  * are elderly or disabled or concerned about their needs (she gave them a deaf ear when they complained about the Van Hool buses.)
  * are a member of a union or think we shouldn’t be shipping good jobs overseas (she did that every time she voted for a Van Hool bus.)
  * think public agencies should practice fiscal responsibility. But she has a very charming public persona that can be summed up with “can’t we just all get along.”

  Finally re the third frontrunner: I believe in Oakland, so I do not believe they will elect an un-indicted crook for mayor.

  Joyce Roy is an Oakland Activist.

**Jobs Seem to be the Issue in Richmond Mayor’s Race**

*By Tom Butt*

Mon Sep 27 18:59:00 -0700 2010

It’s interesting that the mayoral challengers have chosen to make this election about jobs, probably the one issue that the mayor has the least ability to influence. We are part of a regional economy that is well above the national average in unemployment, largely because of the bubble bursting in California’s overinflated housing market. This was not a city-driven phenomenon, nor will there be a city-driven solution.

Bates and Ziesenhenne couldn’t go with crime because crime overall has continued to drop at about 10% a year, and homicides are less than half of last year. You don’t want to criticize a positive trend.

They couldn’t attack fiscal mismanagement with a balanced budget, no lay-offs and Richmond hiring cops while other cities are laying them off. The mayor supported a $114 million settlement with Chevron that took the edge off a significant drop in real property and sales taxes that hit other cities hard. With Richmond arguably the most complex and challenging city of its size in the Bay Area, Richmond’s city manager’s compensation is below that of smaller cities such as San Ramon and less complex cities such as Vallejo, Berkeley, Santa Clara and Sunnyvale.

Even infrastructure is looking pretty good. Capital projects completed during Mayor McLaughlin’s term include the Honda Port of Entry, the award-winning Civic Center rehabilitation, Nevin Park rehabilitation and the Richmond Plunge rehabilitation. Add in the Ford Assembly Building as a unique public-private partnership. Street paving projects are going on all over town, and Richmond leads all other cities in Bay Trail construction. Planning for the Marina Bay railroad underpass is well underway, and have you noticed the landscaping on the Richmond Parkway?

Recent polls show that 60% of Richmond voters are pleased at the direction Richmond is going.

Accusations that the mayor doesn’t support jobs and economic development is a red herring that doesn’t stand up to scrutiny. No mayor can single-handedly bring jobs to Richmond, but a mayor does have the ability to affect perceptions. It’s no secret that the biggest job growth is in small businesses and the green economy. Like Willie Sutton who answered that he robbed banks “because that’s where the money is,” the mayor is looking at the economy sectors where the jobs are.

Big businesses, like Chevron, can take care of themselves – they don’t need a mayor to hold their hand. And they are not hiring, they are laying people off. Since McLaughlin took office, over 700 businesses have started in or come to Richmond, employing over 1,000 people.

Bates and Ziesenhenne have both maintained that McLaughlin will not meet with Chevron, like that’s some kind of litmus test for being pro jobs and “respecting” business. That’s patently false. I participated in at least one extensive meeting with the mayor and Refinery Manager Mike Coyle where a wide range of issues involving the City of Richmond and Chevron were discussed.

The mayor is also concentrating on those quality of life issues that make Richmond attractive for businesses and their employees, like public safety, neighborhood schools, parks and recreation opportunities. It’s worth noting that Bates opposed the City using some of the Chevron settlement money to stave off closing of Richmond schools, including Kennedy High School.

As far as the Point Molate casino being Richmond’s golden goose, we have been pursuing this dream for over six years, and it is no closer than it was in 2004. Even if by some miracle, it were to happen, any related jobs would be years – maybe a decade – away. And even so, there is no guarantee
that those jobs would go to Richmond residents.

So, c’mon voters, don’t fall for that phony Bates and Ziesenheim jobs line. They have no silver bullet that can dramatically bring jobs to Richmond residents. Richmond is doing well, and our unemployment rate, which has always tracked state and national trends, will go down when everyone else’s does. Meanwhile, we can make Richmond the best possible place to live, work and attract business, and that means keeping a successful and popular mayor.

It’s Time to Admit that the Iraq War was a Hoax

By Ralph E. Stone
Sun Sep 26 09:05:00 -0700 2010

Recently, President Obama announced the reduction of our military presence in Iraq to 50,000. What we now need is a U.S. acknowledgement that the Iraq war was a hoax on the American people and the world so the country can move on.

Let me recount some of the key events leading up to, and during the Iraq war debacle. It’s time to get angry all over again.

Democracy and Nation Building

What did we accomplish in Iraq besides the toppling of Saddam Hussein? Not much. America’s “mission accomplished” has created an unstable, economically devastated nation that will be yet another constant source of instability for the whole Middle East. Did the $53 billion we spent on reconstruction projects or “nation building,” work in Iraq? No. As the U.S. draws down in Iraq, it is leaving behind hundreds of abandoned or incomplete projects. According to audits from a U.S. watchdog agency, more than $5 billion in American taxpayer funds has been wasted -- more than 10 percent of the amount the U.S. has spent on reconstruction in Iraq.

Did we sow the seeds of democracy? True, Iraq has had elections, but its lauded democracy is tenuous at best. Elections do not necessarily mean democracy. Iraq has three large ethnic groups: the Kurds in the north; the Sunnis in the middle; and the Shi’ites, the most populous group, in the south. Given the ethnic and religious rivalry among these three groups and the ever presence of al Qaeda, there is little evidence that an Iraq democracy would last very long without a permanent U.S. military presence. And there is no evidence that democracy has taken root throughout the Middle East.

Weapons of Mass Destruction

George W. Bush and his minions intentionally built a case for war with Iraq without regard to factual evidence. They took advantage of the public’s hysteria over the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon to authorize an invasion and occupation of Iraq with no evidence that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Remember Scott Ritter, a chief United Nations weapons inspector in Iraq from 1991 to 1998, who publicly argued that Iraq possessed no significant WMDs. Similarly, Hans Martin Blix, the head of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission from March 2000 to June 2003, searched Iraq for WMD, ultimately finding none.

And remember the “Plame Affair,” where Valerie Plame was outed as a covert CIA operative allegedly in retribution for her husband James C. Wilson’s op-ed piece in the New York Times arguing that, in his State of the Union Address, President Bush misrepresented intelligence leading up to the invasion by suggesting without evidence that the Iraqi regime sought uranium to manufacture nuclear weapons.

In 2002, 156 members of Congress -- 23 Senators and 133 Representatives -- had the courage and common sense to vote against the Bush administration’s rush to an unprovoked attack and occupation of Iraq.

No WMD were ever found in Iraq.

Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda

The Bush administration alleged that there was a secret relationship between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda. Untrue. On April 29, 2007, this canard was finally laid to rest by former Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet when he said on 60 Minutes, “We could never verify that there was any Iraqi authority, direction and control, complicity with al Qaeda for 9/11 or any operational act against America, period.”

United Nations

Who can forget Secretary of State Colin Powell’s 2003, infamous presentation before the United Nations to “prove” the urgency to invade Iraq. Powell claimed that Iraq harbored an al Qaeda network, despite evidence to the contrary. He showed photos of an alleged poison and explosives training camp in northeast Iraq operated by al Qaeda even though this area was outside Iraqi control and even though U.S. intelligence agencies found no substantive collaboration between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda. Later, Powell acknowledged that much of his 2003 UN presentation was inaccurate. Hopefully Colin Powell will set the record straight in a tell-all memoir.

In 2003, a draft of a so-called eighteenth UN resolution, which would have set a deadline to Iraq to comply with previous resolutions to account for all of Iraq’s chemical and biological agents, even though the UN inspection teams found no evidence of such agents. The proposed resolution was withdrawn when the U.S. realized that it would be vetoed by the Security Council. Had that occurred, it would have become more difficult for the U.S. to invade Iraq and then argue that the Security Council had authorized the invasion.


On September 16, 2004 Secretary-General of the United Nations Kofi Annan, speaking on the invasion, said, “I have indicated it was not in conformity with the UN Charter. From our point of view, from the charter point of view, it was illegal.”

The Patriot Act

In the immediate aftermath of September 11, the Bush administration pushed through the restrictive Patriot Act. The Act provided sweeping power to government agencies to monitor the personal habits of not only those who had been identified as suspected terrorists, but anyone residing in the U.S. as well as U.S. citizens residing abroad.

Prior to the Patriot Act, all wiretapping of American citizens by the National Security Agency (NSA) required a warrant from a three judge court set up under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA). The Patriot Act granted the President broad powers to fight a war against terrorism. Bush used these powers to by-pass the FISA court and directed the NSA to spy directly on American citizens on American soil without a warrant. The NSA was authorized by executive order to monitor phone calls, e-mails, Internet activity, text messaging, and other communication involving any party believed by the NSA to be outside the U.S., even if the other end of the communication was within the U.S.

Torture--The Thugs Are Us

On April 16, 2009, President Obama released four top secret memos that allowed the CIA under the Bush administration to torture al Qaeda and other suspects held at Guantanamo and secret detention centers round the world. Remember the Abu Ghraib torture and prisoner abuse? According to the memos, ten techniques were approved: attention grasp (grasping the individual with both hands, one hand on each side of the collar opening, in a controlled and quick motion); walling (in which the suspect could

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be pushed into a wall); a facial hold; a facial slap; cramped confinement; wall standing; sleep deprivation; insects placed in a confinement box (the suspect had a fear of insects); and waterboarding. In waterboarding the individual is bound securely to an inclined bench, which is approximately four feet by seven feet. The individual’s feet are generally elevated. A cloth is placed over the forehead and eyes. Water is then applied to the cloth in a controlled manner which produces the perception of suffocation and incipient panic.

In the now-discredited August 2002 memorandum from then Assistant Attorney General Jay Bybee to then White House Counsel Alberto Gonzalez narrowly defined physical torture as requiring pain “equivalent in intensity to the pain accompanying serious physical injury, such as organ failure, the permanent impairment of a significant bodily function, or even death.”

And we all remember former Vice President Dick Cheney’s comment that: “enhanced interrogation techniques” (a euphemism for torture) sanctioned by the Bush administration are not torture and dismissed criticism as “contrived indignation and phony moralizing.”

The CIA conducted renditions or extrajudicial, secret abductions and transfers of prisoners to Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Uzbekistan, and elsewhere, where torture was used.

Human torture is not only morally unacceptable - it is also a crime. Waterboarding, for example, is explicitly prohibited by the Convention Against Torture and the Geneva Conventions. By using torture, the U.S. became the thugs our enemies said we were.

Costs of the War

As of September 23, 2010, 4,421 Americans have been killed and another 39,902 wounded in Iraq. In addition, about 50,000 to 100,000 Iraqi civilians have died and another 2.76 million Iraqis are internally displaced and many thousands have sought refuge in other countries. Did these Americans and Iraqis die in vain?

Since 2001, we have spent $748.5 billion on the war. Imagine how much health care, social services, education, housing, fire and police, etc., this money could have purchased.

The fiscal year 2011 budget request for the Department of Homeland Security is $56.3 billion to give Americans the illusion of security.

Mea Culpa

I fantasize that mea culpas will be forthcoming from Bush, Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Alberto Gonzalez, Condoleezza Rice, and Paul Wolfowitz. Clearly, a public apology is due the American people, especially the families of those servicemen and women who lost their lives in this pointless war. Will this ever happen? Unlikely. Instead, we will probably get self-serving memoirs like Tony Blair’s A Journey: My Political Life, in which he praises George W. Bush as a man of “genuine integrity and as much political courage as any leader I have ever met.” Blair leaves out of the 700-page tome any mention of the January 31, 2003, meeting he had with Bush in which Bush proposed a plan to trigger the Iraq war through outright deceit.

Conclusion

The Iraq war was and is a hoax. The nearly decade-long U.S. occupation of Iraq has been in vain. Our misadventure did not serve our national interest. We are nearly bankrupt and less safe as al Qaeda continues to grow and Muslims around the world have lost their trust in us. Because of Iraq, the U.S. has lost the high moral ground and our standing in the world has plummeted. Until wrongdoing is admitted, we will be unable to move forward and regain our rightful place in the world.

The SOSIP Rejects Bicycle Safety Downtown

By Charles Siegel

Tue Sep 28 11:08:00 -0700 2010

The city is about to solicit public comment on a draft of the Streets and Open Space Improvement Program (SOSIP) for downtown Berkeley.

The draft includes many improvements that will make downtown more attractive to pedestrians, but it has rejected an improvement sorely needed by bicyclists: creating a safe bike route into downtown.

The pedestrian improvements deserve support. A principle of the plan is that immediate improvements will require zero net change in parking availability, and that more improvements will be made only after a parking management plan increases the availability of customer parking.

The most important pedestrian improvements are making the west branch of Shattuck Ave. between Center St. and University Ave. two ways, making the east branch of Shattuck a street for local traffic only, and widening the sidewalk of University Ave. between Shattuck and Oxford St.

This change will let us create an entire network of pedestrian friendly streets in downtown, with wide sidewalks, cafe seating, and plantings. This change will work for traffic without causing congestion. This change will attract more customers to downtown businesses. And this change will make the corner of Shattuck and University into a normal intersection, eliminating the dangerous conflict between through traffic and pedestrians.

Initially, the east branch of Shattuck will be used for added parking, needed to meet the plan’s net-zero-parking goal. Ultimately, it will be redesigned for pedestrians.

This change is just one of many pedestrian improvements in the SOSIP, which clearly will make downtown more attractive.

Initially, the plan had an equally important improvement for bicyclists. In the near term, it called for parking to be removed on one side of Milvia St. between University and Center, so a bicycle lane could be striped there. In the long term, it called for a plaza or shared space on the block of Milvia in front of City Hall.

The final draft of the SOSIP still has the drawings for the Milvia Bike lane, but it also has a cover letter that says: “Review also led to the following refinements within the draft document: Provide a bike improvement option for Milvia that does not eliminate parking on one side of the street.”

This vague talk about “a bike improvement option,” without any specific design, means that there will be no bike improvements in the foreseeable future.

Milvia downtown is currently very dangerous for bicyclists, because it is narrow and heavily trafficked. It is the only place in Berkeley where I have seen a bicyclist “doored” - thrown to the ground by an opening car door. There is currently no safe bike route to downtown, a major deterrent to bicycling.

Let me suggest specific near-term improvements for the Milvia Bike Boulevard that the SOSIP should include.

First, there should be required turns on this part of Milvia to reduce automobile traffic. For example, southbound traffic could be required to turn right onto Center St., and northbound traffic could be required to turn right onto University Ave (making the intersection with University safer as well as reducing traffic on Milvia).

San Francisco has implemented required turns on Market St., making it dramatically safer for bicyclists by reducing traffic. If they can do it on a major street in their downtown, Berkeley can certainly do it on a
minor street in our downtown.

Second, the bike lane on Milvia should only be delayed temporarily. The SOSIP satisfies the net-zero-parking goal by adding parking on the east branch of Shattuck temporarily, but it will remove this parking to improve that street for pedestrians after parking availability increases. Likewise, it should remove the parking on Milvia to make the street safer for bicyclists after parking availability increases.

San Francisco is planning to stripe bike lanes in 22 locations in the coming year alone, many involving loss of parking. Will Berkeley not only delay but completely reject the idea of stripping bike lanes on just two blocks to provide a safe bike route to downtown for the first time?

We could stripe bike lanes on Milvia by removing a grand total of eleven parking spaces, only a tiny fraction of the total amount of parking affected by the SOSIP.

The SOSIP does have other bicycle improvement that deserve our support, but it would be unfair to bicyclists if the SOSIP did not provide near-term improvements on Milvia, a designated bicycle boulevard that is the only potentially safe bicycle route into downtown.

It would also be a betrayal of the city’s environmental commitments. Berkeley voters overwhelmingly supported the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2050. Transportation causes about half of our GHG emissions. Bicycling is the simplest and cheapest thing we can do to reduce our emissions from transportation.

It would be outrageous if the city refused to encourage bicycling by providing a safe route to downtown.

Charles Siegel is an environmentalist and a bicyclist.

Journalism, Ethics, and the KPFA Board Election

By Don Goldmacher

Tue Sep 28 11:48:00 -0700 2010

KPFA Radio, America’s first listener-sponsored station, has an impressive history of groundbreaking journalism. Throughout its 61 years, the station has been justly famous for hard-nosed reporting, award-winning radio documentaries, cutting edge and wide ranging music, and coverage of some of the key events of our time—whether Iran Contra or the Iraq War.

It has also been no stranger to conflict. The conflict that besets the station today, however, could remake KPFA into something quite different than listeners have come to depend upon for decades. The outcome of the current local station board election will determine what the station will look like a year from now. And it will determine whether the KPFA programs that listeners tune into in the greatest numbers will remain at all-programs like Letters to Washington, Against the Grain, and even the Morning Show.

The slate that I am part of, SaveKPFA, believes that in a moment when professional reporting has become an endangered species in America, KPFA should set the standard for critical, ethical journalism. Consistently high quality programming takes labor and resources, as well as a commitment to fairness, accuracy, and a willingness to ferret out the truth. Radical journalism is ethical journalism.

Our opponents revile professional journalism and openly have stated that they would like to get rid of the unionized staff at KPFA. They have long argued for a mainly all-programs like Letters to Washington, Against the Grain, and even the Morning Show.

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The saving grace of the KPFA board election is that the KPFA Board will elect a slate of candidates that are determined to keep KPFA a public service broadcaster, that will hold the line on the sad and ongoing assault on KPFA by the Media Alliance and by the SOSIP candidates.

By Sally Hindman

Tue Sep 28 11:47:00 -0700 2010

When last I counted there were over 100 vacant commercial storefronts in our community. That’s a total of well over 200,000 sq. ft. of storefront space that sits unused for any purpose whatsoever in Berkeley on any given day. Calling commercial realtors and landlords to pitch ideas for use of vacant space does just about NOTHING to change the status quo. In the last three years I have made over eighty calls to commercial realtors and landlords proposing innovative, yet practical and aesthetically pleasing uses of space for exhibits of artwork by homeless and low-income participants in the program.
I run, Youth Spirit Artworks. When I’ve been lucky enough to get a call back I’ve have heard countless POOR EXCUSES for why it wouldn’t be possible to engage a space that’s currently for rent...even when the property has sat vacant for three or more SOLID years.

Berkeley can do MUCH, MUCH better!

Innovative uses for vacant commercial storefronts are popping up all over the country. One example, in New Haven, Connecticut particularly stands out. “Project Storefronts” demonstrates the best of New Haven, creating low budget arts incubators for performances, education, retail and other creative businesses. Project Storefronts takes currently vacant retail space and turns that space into a showcase for artists and entrepreneurship.

According to “Connecticut Plus,” among the first storefronts to preview in New Haven is Detritus which opened its doors to the public August 27. Owner Alexis Zhangi developed her idea for a curated bookstore offering printed matter from local artists and writers alongside rare and sought after material from high profile publishing houses not yet available in the New Haven area. The bookstore will bring together many writers and poets at its upcoming readings and book events. It has a membership option as well as a retail operation. More than 200 people showed up for the opening and sales were brisk.

Additionally as “Connecticut Plus” describes, Crosby Street Presents (CSP) by entrepreneur Rob Sanchez is essentially a “pop up” gallery and performance space which showcases early and emerging artists in new media, photography and sculpture, offering very affordable ways to collect art. CSP will also formulate an emerging collectors night where artists and future collectors can come together. Work will be available across price ranges from local New Haven area artists as well as from NYC.

For those who enjoy the experience of seeing recycled goods recreated into new products, New Haven’s Upcycle Arts, started by entrepreneurs Ruben Marroquin, Lisa Spetrini and Alan Neider, is just the place. Upcycle Arts represents a variety of artists who offer re-stylized, recycled items for sale in a retail setting and it will also serve as a mini eco-boutique of products by award winning design team GG2G. Upcycle Arts will offer workshops, host gatherings for crafting groups and meet-ups for art special interest groups.

In Seattle, a creative, new program aims to transform Pioneer Square, allowing donating rental owners to “showcase their space” in an effective way. Artists will be able to use the space for at least three months. Countless more examples exist for exciting ways vacant storefronts are being re-envisioned to better communities across the land!

Both the City of Berkeley Office of Economic Development and the Downtown Berkeley Association have put energy into developing programs for vacant storefronts in the last two years. The Downtown Berkeley Association storefront exhibits have been a success in showing beautiful works of art by local youth and other artists. Additionally, the Office of Economic Development funded Youth Spirit Artwork’s “Visions of the Soul” art exhibit in South Berkeley this last year, a delightful effort involving over thirty local businesses in showcasing art window banners by underserved youth involved in YSA’s program. City staff and their budgets are stretched thin in these hard times so pockets of money to fund these initiatives on their side are limited.

Without leadership from commercial realtors and landlords, commercial district merchant associations can do nothing, even if they’re motivated to organize vacant space for creative community betterment. Last year my calls to literally every merchant association in Berkeley with the exception of the DBA produced NO creative use of vacant spaces for our arts organization, since staff people felt their hands were tied if owners of vacant storefronts and commercial realtors weren’t motivated to be generous.

It’s time for local entrepreneurs and commercial realtors to step up to the plate and develop creative solutions to the many wasteful and ugly vacant storefronts in our community! Berkeley arts and other organizations like Youth Spirit Artworks will gratefully spring into action with multiple potential uses of vacant space when we receive your call!

*Sally Hindman is the Executive Director of Youth Spirit Artworks

**Letters to the Editor**

**Where Have All the Drugstores Gone?**

Has anyone noticed that Berkeley is effectively without a decent drugstore? Ever since Longs left the area I have been increasingly dissatisfied with its replacement. I do not shop at Walgreens for the most part because they aren’t unionized and I don’t particularly like their selection. CVS has slowly and relentlessly substituted their brand for most of the merchandise I like to buy, nothing exotic just the usual brand name things I have bought for years and years. I ask the manager if for instance, they aren’t going to carry original Jergens lotion anymore and he says, “it isn’t on the shelf then we aren’t, CVS wants to sell their brand.” I have tried some of the CVS brand items and don’t like them. It feels like the USSR. No choice. There are no other drugstores in the area. Elephant Pharmacy went out of business and maybe it was because they were too specialized but I feel lost because there is a CVS on every corner but no place to go. I remember Bills Drugs, and Pay ‘n’ Save, and Payless, I even long for Longs! I want an independent drugstore that caters to the ordinary customer.

Constance Wiggins

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**Energy**

Renewable energy independence now! Please. Thank you.

Val Laurent

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**No to Marijuana**

Proposition 19 on the California ballot in November will legalize marijuana use for residents over 21 years of age in the state. Field polls show that voters in favor of this proposition are now gaining ground. There couldn’t be a worse time to pass a liberal law like this.

Who is going to enforce the law for users under 21? Even now, you see kids openly using the drug at high schools and no law enforcement is anywhere to be seen. Marijuana is a highly addictive drug because of the improved methods of cultivation used today. A good portion of our high school kids are losing their entire education because they are so zoned out they don’t care.

In my opinion, a vote in favor of Proposition 19 is a vote to destroy education for a good portion of our kids. I say shame on the voters of California.

Beverly Doane

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**A School on the Hill**

There has been a lot of dialog at Oxford Elementary School about racism and bigotry between parents. As a white father, disabled, I feel it is a lot deeper than racism.

And a lot deeper than just Oxford.

I have two little boys, they are very bright, good boys. They have never had a babysitter and maybe I have been a little over protective. But their innocence is refreshing.

They do not understand that when a bigot...
sees that our car is kind of dated, and our address is in the flats and they are snubbed for a play date. That it is not about them. It’s about the crappy soul of that parent. Personally I am happy my kids are not playing with kids raised by such creeps. But I know it hurts the boys, and hence it hurts me.

I hate going to Oxford events to stand next to such awful people. I relate more to the people of color that get the same rub.

Spare me your airs. They are a lot more smeller than you might ever imagine.

The next day at the bus stop I asked this lady what the kids were doing. She didn’t like how I had let the kids play and then stopped embarrassed. “Oh, yeah, my Mom does not like your Mom “ He blurted out “How could she not like my Mom? They have never even talked.” My little boy asked.

My son also asked him what they did after school and the poor kid answered “Nothing, it’s so boring.” I felt bad for both boys. It seems that living off of Ashby was all it took.

The lady didn’t like how I had let the plants (and yes some weeds) grow to ward off the dust and pollution that assails my plants (and yes some weeds) grow to ward off the dust and pollution that assails my house in a foreclosure sale. See, now I’m doing it for a long time now. Here we are 4th.

Then went on to say. “I’m sorry you had to see that. It’s painful to see someone you love and care for being rejected because of you. Be cause you are disabled. Because you don’t have much money. Because you live in a place where you are constantly fight for their well being. They suffer.

The next day at the bus stop I asked this Mother about this. At first she denied it. Then went on to say. “I’m sorry you had to hear that.”

I’m not. It’s not like we haven’t been feeling it for a long time now. Here we are 4th. generation Berkeleyans being snubbed by the Ghettobetterthans who bought up their house in a foreclosure sale. See, now I’m doing it. It’s very easy to get into the “better than” mindset. But it is not reality.

Reality is we are all just people. Reality is that our kids deserve to be able to play together. Reality is we are good people that work hard to make Berkeley and our world a better place, and so are a lot of other folks.

Dan McMullan

The Obsessed and Addicted

Tobacco addiction is a tragedy, but those who take mental shortcuts to make their points, and are unwilling or unable to get OFF the topic have THEIR issues to resolve.

Ove Offeness

People’s Blighted Park

Who should I contact concerning the “homeless” peeps who, once Peep’s Park is “closed” for the night come over to my front stoop? Public drinking, noise violations, drug use, every type of bodily excretion imaginable left behind, litter, and then sleep it off until the Peep’s Park opens again in the morning. Why are the peeps that are unable to care for themselves allowed pets, which also sprawl across the sidewalk and then run free and defecate wherever in Peep’s Park? As a law abiding tax paying life long (50+ years) resident of Berkeley I must say the current (last 10 years) have been abysmally, disgracefully, and shamefully negligent with concern to the south side of campus.

So much so that one begins to believe, that “Peoples Park” has become a needed protagonist for the City and the University. As I walk all over Berkeley I see much beauty and wonderful aspects of life in Berkeley that are certainly world class and easy to exalt positively. Then I return to my home on the South side through the trash waste blight infested area around “People’s Park” Despite claims of individual rights being abused one must look at “People’s Park” and realize that the physical place is not even a fading shadow of it’s once social presence. What exists between Bowditch, Telegraph, Haste, and Dwight is a mockery of People’s Park. I for one am disgusted; not with the “Homeless” who inhabit my front stoop every night smoking skunk weed and drinking Pabst & Old Grand Dad and then rolling around in their misery until 3, 4, 5 am and then sleep it off and aggressively panhandle in order to continue the cycle. Murder and Mayhem on the part of law and policy makers is not going to end the cycle. Murder and Mayhem that is what City and University are allowing and is what we all must live with because for some lame reason or other the people empowered to do the right thing refuse to do the right thing. This codependent acceptance on the part of law and policy makers is not healthy in the least for anyone. Let me take a stab in the dark here; as I see the beauty of the campus grounds and magnificent houses and parks within easy walking distance of “People’s Park” I realize that this abomination is necessary. The collateral damage caused by standard operating procedure is by far less costly than the financial/political repercussions from letting the vermin scatter like cockroaches into adjacent neighborhoods. If it walks like a duck and talks like a duck, it probably is a duck.

Erich Frisch
Berkeley Resident
UC Berkeley Staff

Republican Goals

With control of the House, the Republicans will make its goals include a permanent extension of all the Bush-era tax cuts, repeal of the newly enacted health care law, a cap on discretionary federal spending and an end to government control of the mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

They too must be won over and convinced to overextend themselves little by little. It is a gradual process of boom, then downturn, then bigger boom, then another downturn. And there is a rebound, for there are still people to be convinced that things will keep going up-indeed, must keep going up.

And one day, when and his people have prepared accordingly, the downturn will become a recession, the recession will become a depression, and the depression will become the Crash. It is the same thing that happened in 2008. They will never learn!

“And your country is an example, in which the one percent of the Americans, you know, are doing better and better and better, and the 99 percent is going down, in all sorts of manifestations. People living in their cars now and sleeping in their cars, you know, parked in front of the house that used to be their house-thousands of people. Millions of people, you know, have lost everything. But the speculators that brought about the whole mess, oh, they are fantastically well off. No problem. No problem.”--Chilean economist Manfred Max-Neef. Ted Rudow III, MA

U.S. Navy Expansion of Warfare Testing over Northern California Coast

How many readers of this newspaper know of the U.S. Navy’s intention to expand their Warfare Testing Range to the Northern Coast of California? Unfortunately, investigative reporting is hard to find now. Newspaper racks are disappearing and the daily papers that are left contain a large percent-
and as a regulated utility, the public traded company’s shareholders benefit from a guaranteed 11.35 percent return on equity, which is also above the national average of about 10.5 percent.

Given these facts, who do you think should pay for the aging infrastructure identified by PG&E?

But remember the 2003 record bankruptcy bailout that put ratepayers on the hook to pay PG&E’s creditors and resuscitate the corporation. It added to the $8 billion in previous bailout funds already paid to PG&E by its ratepayers since 1998, bringing the bailout total to over $16 billion. The bailout plan was approved by the CPUC and the Bankruptcy Judge despite accusations that PG&E’s officers siphoned $4 billion to its unregulated holding company, PGE Corporation, out of the $8 billion in “Competition Transition Surcharge” funds already paid to PG&E by its ratepayers between 1998 and 2000.

And to add insult to injury, just weeks after handing out $50 million in bonuses while on the verge of financial collapse, PG&E received the judge’s permission to award $17.5 million in additional payouts to the management team that guided the utility into bankruptcy.

Reportedly, State Senator Mark Leno with help from the consumer rights group The Utility Reform Network (TURN) is crafting a bill that would block publicly regulated utilities from seeking a rate increase to cover the cost from fires or other catastrophes that were the cause of their own negligence. Leno stated: “Ratepayers should not be on the hook to provide utilities with an open checkbook to cover excess expenses when catastrophic damages happen because the utility failed to do its job to protect the public.”

However, given PG&E’s history vis-a-vis the State, guess who’s actually going to pay for the repair of the aging infrastructure that PG&E neglected for decades? You guessed it. We ratepayers.

Ralph E. Stone

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Fear Republicans

Tea Party and Republican candidates are a scary bunch. What amazes me is that so many people want to restore power to the same people and party (GOP) that created our present problems. Add to this, Republicans are blaming Obama for everything, when, in fact, he caused none of it.

The midterm election is a choice between moving ahead and going back toad GOP agenda that has proved disastrous. We don’t have to guess how the Republicans will govern because we’re still living with the results of teatime the GOP governed.

Republicans want to regain power so desperately that they’ve made decision to do whatever they can to make certain that Obama can get as little of his agenda passed as possible. If Obama is successful in pulling the country out of the hole Bush put us in Republicans know they’ll lose again in 2012.

Ron Lowe

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Ecology Center Recycling Program - a Model Green Collar Employer

When the Ecology Center emerged as the first provider of curbside recycling services in 1973, all of the positions were volunteer. During the 1980s, we worked to institutionalize recycling to make it ubiquitous and mainstream. Even though the term, Green Collar job had not been coined at this time, the Ecology Center was well on the way to becoming a model Green Collar job employer.

An important component of our approach was to ensure that our recycling workforce had Union representation. Since 1989, the Ecology Center’s recycling workers have been members of the Industrial Workers of the World Local 670 (IWW). Over the past years, we have worked with the Union and employees to progressively improve the salaries, benefits and training programs for our recycling workers, making the Ecology Center a better place for its employees to work.

Over the past couple of years, the nation’s economy has been locked in the worst recession since the 1930s and we have witnessed rising unemployment and declining salaries and benefits across the Country. Despite these conditions, the Ecology Center has improved salary, health care, retirement benefits and overall working conditions for its recycling workers. In January 2010, we signed a three-year agreement with the IWW. As a non-profit, public benefit corporation, we have been able to do this as profits do not need to be distributed to owners and shareholders.

Specifically, over the last decade we have been able to do the following:

* Increase wages by over 70% from 2000 to 2010 (40% more than inflation)
* Add an employer paid retirement and savings plan
* Purchase safer vehicles with reduced soot emissions

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**I Have a Nightmare**

Rev. King had a dream. I, unfortunately, have a nightmare. What’s worse, my nightmare will likely be shared, in waking reality, by much of the world’s population in the decades to come. And my nightmare will prevent us from ever reaching Rev. King’s dream. You may well ask: What sort of a nightmare could be so terrible? How about an unpredictable growing seasons leading to periodic regional famines, resultant mass starvation, disastrous flooding, disappearing coasts and islands, increasingly frequent and more intense tropical storms, massive epidemics in the wake of these disasters and famines, unparalleled forced migration of millions of refugees in both hemispheres. And all of this in a world with nuclear weapons and other WMDs, a world obsessed with military solutions and so-called “homeland security”.

Make no mistake: there is no security for any homeland in my nightmare. My nightmare is the future of this planet if we do not make any serious effort to control our output of greenhouse gases NOW. Congress has totally failed us here. However, our state legislature and governor, in a rare moment of bipartisanship, did pass AB 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act, in 2006. This is an admittedly imperfect law that is at the same time the best existing step toward the control of these emissions in this country. However, Texas oil refiners, and their corporate and political allies, are trying to effectively repeal this vital law with Proposition 23.

If this passes, we may not see any serious climate laws passed in North America for years. Canada has already indicated they will abandon their regional and national attempts if 23 passes. In addition, a golden opportunity to encourage the creation of green jobs will vanish in the haze of pollution. The health of countless Californians will be negatively impacted by dirtier air, and the clean energy technologies we need to face the devastating effects of peak oil will become harder to attain. For the sake of our common future, please vote no on 23.

_Ben Burch_

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**Columnists**

**Dispatches From The Edge: The Real “Merchants of Death”**

_By Conn Hallinan_  
_Tue Sep 28 09:04:00 -0700 2010_

Accused Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout is a centerpiece for the book “Merchant of Death” and the model for the Hollywood movie “The Lord of War.” Washington apparently traded military hardware to the Thais in order to get him extradited from a Bangkok jail.

Major actor in the international arms trade, or a penny ante operator who can’t hold a candle to the real “merchants of death”?-the U.S., Russia, Britain, France, Italy, and immense corporations like Lockheed Martin, BAe Systems, General Dynamics, Dassault Aviation, Fimmecanica, Boeing, Rosoboronexport, and Northrop Grumman?

The global arms trade is a $60 billion yearly business, of which the U.S. controls nearly 40 percent, and a political and economic juggernaut that defends its turf with the ferocity of a junkyard dog.

Bout is like the guy you buy a Saturday night special from in a back alley. If you want something that will flatten a village you need a Massive Ordinance Penetrator from Boeing, or a General Atomics “Reaper” drone armed with Lockheed Martin “Hellfire” missiles.

The charges against him create an interesting juxtaposition.

The former Russian naval officer is accused of running guns to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC), the Taliban, and anti-government insurgents in Somalia. The U.S. has sent some $5 billion in military aid to the Colombian government to fight the FARC, has spent over $300 billion trying to defeat the Taliban, and props up the current Somali government.

There are arms dealers out there, but they are not sitting in a Bangkok prison. The 10 biggest arms exporters are-in order-the United States, Russia, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Spain, China, Israel, the Netherlands, and Italy. Sweden and Switzerland are close behind. This order shifts from year to year, but one thing never changes: the U.S. is always number one.

According to the Congressional Research Service, due to the current economic downturn, world arms sales dipped 8.5 percent in 2009. But “dipped” is a relative term. The price tag was still $57.5 billion, of which the U.S.’s 39 percent share came to $22.6 billion. Russia was second at $10.4, and France third with $7.4 billion in sales. Other countries split the rest.

Most of the trade-$45.1 billion-focuses on developing nations. Of the top seven arms purchasers in 2008, four of them-India, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Algeria-are countries that can ill afford to put money into weapons systems.

Brazil, Venezuela, Egypt, and Vietnam were also among the bigger arms buyers in 2009, and Iraq is planning to purchase $13 billion in U.S. weaponry. All are countries struggling with poverty.

The U.S. overwhelmingly dominates arms sales to the developing world. In 2008 it cornered 68.4 percent of such sales, and 45.1 percent in 2009. (10) It is currently negotiating a $60 billion arms sale to Saudi Arabia that will probably cost $120 billion when parts and maintenance is added in.

Arms sales many times parallel the foreign policy of the suppliers. When the U.S. sells arms to Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Colombia, Japan, and South Korea, it is arming its allies against regional antagonists, like Iran, Syria, China and Venezuela. Arms sales to places like Yemen and Somalia support U.S. allies caught up in civil wars.

But the arms trade is also an enormously profitable enterprise for the companies involved, and any effort to curb that trade brings on an assault of lobbyists and political action committees. Lockheed Martin, the
The companies have carefully spread their operations to scores of states, so that when an effort is made to cutback or eliminate certain weapons, some local congress member will rise to defend jobs in his or her district. When a move was made to cut the B-2 stealth bomber—an almost useless aircraft that cost $2.1 billion apiece—its manufacturer, Northrop Grumman, mobilized 383 congressional districts in 46 states to successfully save the plane.

In reality, military spending doesn’t create jobs, it kills them. According to a study by the Center for Economic and Political Research, military spending actually has a negative impact on economic growth. A one percent increase in defense spending—U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates’ current proposal—would, over 20 years, reduce GDP by 0.6 percent. That translates into approximately 700,000 jobs, with construction and manufacturing particularly hard hit.

While Gates talks about “efficiencies,” he is not proposing to cut the military budget, just trim things like health care and bureaucracy and shift those savings to support troops in the field.

“The long-term impact of our increased defense spending will be a reduction in GDP of 1.8 percent,” says economist Dean Baker. “The projected job loss from this increase in defense spending would be close to two million [jobs].”

The result of PACs and lobbying efforts by the arms companies is not only continued spending, but also expensive weapons systems that don’t work or are simply unnecessary. The U.S. currently has 11 aircraft carriers in spite of the fact that no other nation possesses even one carrier that can match the huge $6.2 billion Nimitz-class vessels in the U.S. fleet.

Lockheed Martin’s taxpayer funded F-35 Joint Strike Fighter—at $184 million apiece, the most expensive weapons system ever built—is, according to arms analysts Pierre Sprey and Winslow Wheeler, an overweight, underpowered turkey that is so complex it will likely spend most of its time in the repair shop. Lockheed Martin is already taking orders from foreign buyers.

Many companies have responded to the recession by buying up enterprises specializing in defense electronics, cyber security, and the hottest new thing: killer robots.

Countries all over the world are clamoring to buy General Atomics’ Predators and Reapers, BAE’s Tiranis, and Israel’s Harpy and Heron, the latter a mega beast the size of a commercial airliner and capable of carrying a wide range of weapons. Predators runs $4.5 million apiece and the larger, more muscular Reaper, $10.5.

The international arms trade will not even notice if Viktor Bout ends up behind bars. Men like Bout are shadowy actors that play on the margins. To have a real impact on the global arms enterprise will require confronting powerful corporations, with their lobbies and their PACs, as well as an immense military establishment.

But according to Frida Berrigan of the Arms and Security Project of the New American Foundation, the Obama Administration is “investigating” how to make the selling of military technology easier.

A number of NGOs, including Amnesty International, the International Network on Small Arms, and Oxfam, are working on an arms trade treaty that would try to keep weapons out of the hands of human rights abusers.

But “human rights abusers” is a slippery term. For the U.S., Venezuela is a human rights abuser and can’t buy U.S. arms, while Honduras and Colombia are okay, even though regimes in both of the latter countries have been accused of working with death squads. The most Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez can be accused of is a certain love of bombast and strong opposition to Washington’s policies in the region.

A United Nations conference on drawing up an arms trade treaty is set for 2012, although there have been no serious negotiations to date. But such a treaty will need to do more than just get a handle on some of the more odious practices currently underway, it most restrict and then move toward an eventual ban on the trade itself.

**Senior Power: Senior Powerless Moments**

*By Helen Ripper Wheeler
Tue Sep 28 11:08:00 -0700 2010*

Weary of incessant hazy lazy references to “issues”? And to euphemisms like your “twilight years,” “golden age,” “passing away”? As a noun, issues is a classy way to package problems, dilemmas, duties, chores.

An Issue in Aging Project is a requirement in an Introduction to Aging course. Like Gerontology 101 perhaps. The instructions provide some examples of issues in aging. All can be problematic: allocation of health care dollars, Alzheimer’s disease, arthritis, cognitive losses, cultural issues, depression, drivers’ licenses, employment, end-of-life decisions, family care-giving, Medicare, meeting social needs in later life, Medicare, poverty, Social Security, stereotypes and age discrimination, successful aging. Which would you do your project on? And how does one age successfully? To what does cultural issues refer? Whose end-of-life decisions? Family care-giving by and for?

**Had a Senior Powerless moment recently?**

Like the Consumer Reports article (October 2010, page 14) that contends that e-mail correspondence with one’s physician improves care, particularly for diabetes and hypertension, where ups and downs can be significant. Direct e-mail correspondence between patient and physician ceased when affiliation with medical groups took over. Like the hostile manager of a subsidized housing development who accuses an elderly tenant of being “confused.” Like the nursing home attendant responding to the patient’s buzzer 45 minutes later. Like the senior center, funded to provide “case management services,” that won’t define what it means and how an elder can get some of them. [The Case Management Society of America defines case management as: “a collaborative process of assessment, planning, facilitation and advocacy for options and services to meet an individual’s health needs through communication and available resources to promote quality cost-effective outcomes.”] Like the pseudo social worker who is literally and figuratively touchy. Research suggests this is counterproductive and that anger is a common response. Senior citizens are vulnerable; they don’t want to be constantly informed in one way or another that they are considered incompetent. Elderspeak often involves a singsong tone, slower speech and a limited vocabulary. “The elderly aren’t babies, so why talk to them that way?” Elderspeak sends a message that the senior citizen is incompetent, and begins a downward negative spiral for older persons, who react with decreased self-esteem, depression, withdrawal and the assumption of dependent behaviors.” [Psychologist Becca Levy’s 2008 Yale University study] Like the aged-care staff members who exchange ‘looks’ and impose a patronizing manner. Adults in all types of settings resent the condescending first name-calling habit, common in the “caring” occupations and professions, particularly where older people are concerned. At a conference on dementia in Sydney in June, Dr Stephen Judd, chief executive of aged-care provider HammondCare, referred to elderly residents...
of nursing homes as "voiceless citizens". The elderly in care can be under attack from two directions. That most important attribute -- a sense of individuality -- can be undermined by both excessive regimentation and methods of communication. Like the "closed door policy" of the senior center director. Like the town-and-gown (gown in this case is the University of California) policy that makes it impossible to access some organizations (e.g., American Medical Association) and some journal articles cited on the Internet unless one is affiliated and has a CalNet Authentication to enable logging in. True, these are not all necessarily totally powerlessness experiences. Change for the better can sometimes be effectuated if a senior citizen is willing to go out on the proverbial limb, to risk, and to pioneer. If one chooses not to go with the flow.

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Respect-for-the-Aged Day is a Japanese holiday celebrated annually since 1966 to honor elderly citizens. Beginning in 2003, it is held on the third Monday of September due to the Happy Monday System. This national holiday traces its origins to 1947, when Nomatanimura (now Yachiyocho), Hyōgo Prefecture proclaimed September 15 Old Folks' Day (Toshiyori no Hi). Its popularity spread nationwide, and in 1966 it took its present name and status. Japanese media take the opportunity to feature the elderly, reporting on the population and highlighting the oldest people in the country.

National Residents' Rights Week is October 3-9, 2010. Residents' Rights Week is designated by the Consumer Voice and is celebrated the first full week in October each year to honor residents living in all long-term care facilities, including nursing homes, sub acute units, assisted living, board and care, and retirement communities. It is a time for celebration and recognition offering an opportunity for every facility to focus on and celebrate awareness of dignity, respect and the value of each individual resident.

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Elders in the news:

California Watch reported on August 23 that State Attorney General Jerry Brown’s office has filed fewer new cases and has dismissed an increasing number of criminal cases against defendants suspected of elder abuse, while cutting back on surprise inspections to investigate violence and neglect in nursing homes. The review of data from the California Department of Justice shows that despite the unit prosecuting elder abuse enjoying steady budget increases in recent years, civil and criminal elder abuse prosecutions fell by about one-third under Brown. Brown’s office has cut back on elder abuse training for the state’s ombudsmen, police and district attorneys.

East Bay granny nannies from India are being exploited by U.S. employers, reports Sunita Sohrabji. Read her “Elder Abuse Hidden Among Indian Domestic Workers” [New America Media, September 18, 2010].

Researchers at Mount Sinai School of Medicine have found that the costs of care for patients with cancer who dis-enrolled from hospice were nearly five times higher than for patients who remained with hospice. Patients who dis-enroll from hospice are far more likely to use emergency department care and be hospitalized. [October 1, 2010 Journal of Clinical Oncology.]

“French couple 1st residents at old age home for gays in Rajpipla. A couple from France will be the first residents of the country’s first old age home for gays being constructed in Rajpipla on the banks of Narmada by gay prince and scion of Rajpipla’s royal family, Manvendra Singh Gohil. Moreover, this French couple will not just be mere residents, but are coming with plans to provide employment to their fellow occupants. The couple will cultivate spirulina (an algae fast becoming a popular health drug ingredient) near the home. With Gohil, they have in fact sowed the seed of this initiative by registering a company to run the project professionally but for a noble cause.” [Darsen Chaturvedi, June 27, 2010 The Times of India.]

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Attention, candidates... Running for election in the November election? You are invited to email to Senior Power (pen136@dsxxtreme.com) a statement of your “platform” in regard to senior citizens, e.g. housing, health, transportation, to be published mid-October. If you are running for re-election, please describe the highlights of your record on issues important to seniors.

Wild Neighbors:Notes from a Recovering Birder: The Redstart

By Joe Eaton

Mon Sep 27 18:47:00 -0700 2010
continued to flick its tail, flashing the yellow patches. At one point it was only a couple of feet away. Then it flew up into the trees near the house; I tried to track it but lost it in the leaves almost immediately. I never saw it again.

I was, of course, out there without a camera, even a cell phone (assuming I had ever figured out how to take pictures with the phone, which I had not.) There wasn’t even time to get Ron out to see it. But I know redstarts from back East; there was nothing else it could have been. The bird wasn’t a super-rarity; about 185 migrants are recorded in coastal California every fall. Good enough for me, though.

Those of us who think of redstarts at all tend to think of them as eastern birds. In fact, their breeding range extends west through the boreal forest to southern Alaska and interior British Columbia. When those western redstarts migrate, though, most of them head southeast. Some wind up wintering along the Gulf Coast and in peninsular Florida; the majority go on to the Caribbean, where they frequent mangrove swamps and shade coffee plantations.

That name is kind of a problem. American redstarts are members of the wood warbler family, probably closest to the Dendroica warblers like the yellow-rump. The original redstarts are small active Eurasian songbirds, either thrushlike flycatchers or flycatcher-like thrushes, with reddish-brown tail feathers. “Start,” according to Ernest Choute’s Dictionary of American Bird Names, derives from the Anglo-Saxon steort, meaning “tail.” (I remember reading somewhere that steort is cognate with arse.”) So, when some early British naturalist, probably Mark Catesby, encountered a small active American bird with (in the case of the adult male) orange patches in its tail, it became the American redstart.

The name stuck even after taxonomists realized that this bird was only remotely related to the Old World redstarts. And it was given by extension to a Southwestern bird, the painted redstart, which looked and behaved somewhat like the American redstart. True, it had white tail patches, but red plumage elsewhere. Then other similar species were discovered in Central and South America, with the white patches and no red plumage whatsoever. Precedent aside, it seemed silly to call them “redstarts”; so they became “whitestarts.” Some books now call the former painted redstart a whitestart.

All very well, but where does this leave the American redstart, which lacks white in the tail? I suppose “orangestart” might work for the male, although that sounds too much like a fortified breakfast drink. And it doesn’t do justice to the female’s yellows. Something for the American Ornithologists’ Union to look into, when they have some spare time.

Nomenclature aside, she (or he-male American redstarts take two years to molt into the adult orange and black) was an extremely nifty bird, and it was a pleasure to meet her. That’s the good thing about birds: a flying creature can, in theory, turn up almost anywhere, whereas it’s almost certain that I will never encounter a moose or wolverine while taking out the garbage.

## Arts & Entertainment

### Don’t Miss This: September Song

*By Dorothy Snodgrass*

**Mon Sep 27 17:51:00 - 0700 2010**

Ah yes, the days do indeed grow short when you reach September. Hopefully, many of you took in some of the exciting musical and theatrical events occurring this week, such as the wonderful Cal Performances “Free for All,” this past Sunday. People lined up for hours in the hot sun to attend free performances at Zellerbach, Hertz Hall and Lower Sproul Hall. (Which accounts for my sunburn!)

Another upcoming event not to be missed is the always delightful Women’s Faculty Club reception on Thursday, September 30, 3:00 - 5:00 in the Stebbins Lounge, featuring soprano Angela Arnold and pianist Michael Seth Orland, playing music by Mozart, Debussy, Bach and others. A dessert buffet will follow in the dining room.

Not to be overlooked is the very popular Wednesday Noon concert series at Hertz Hall, 12:15 to 1 p.m. These concerts have been the delight of Bay Area audiences for years.

Theatre devotees have been treated to superb plays at Berkeley Rep and Aurora Theatre this month. Mandy Patinkin, well known actor, gives an inspired performance in “Compulsion”, the Berkeley Rep play, as a writer obsessed with the determination to obtain rights for a stage version of the Anne Frank diary. Adding to the powerful mood of the play is the highly effective use of puppets lowered to the stage. Both Anne Frank and her father, Otto Frank, are shown as puppets.

Another moving play is the Aurora Theatre production of “Trouble in Mind” by black playwright and actress, Alice Childress, in a civil-rights comedy drama.

Thanks should be showered on our great Berkeley Public Library for offering so many stimulating and imaginative programs — due largely to Debbie Carton, Music and History Librarian, whose Wednesday series, “Playreading for Adults” attracts an ever-growing audience. It meets from 12 - 1 p.m. in the Fourth Floor Reading Room. On Thursday, October 21st, the Berkeley West Edge Opera will preview highlights of its upcoming production, Handel’s “Xerxes” in the Fifth Floor Art and Music Room.

If comedy is your thing, you might try Saturday Night Comedy at the Marsh, 2120 Allston Way, Berkeley for an all-female lineup with Ann Randolph, Emily Levine and Betsy Salkin. Tickets for the October 2nd 8 p.m. show are priced $15 to $35.

The Alta Bates Summit Foundation will sponsor its 19th Annual Celebrity Tennis Classic and Casino Royale with Martina Navratilove and Gigi Fernandez at the Berkeley Tennis Club and Claremont Resort, with proceeds supporting the lifesaving work of Thunder Road Adolescent Treatment Center. The program runs Saturday, Oct. 2nd, 9 a.m. - 10 p.m. Cost of admission is $20 - $175. (Remember, this is a worthy cause.)

Always an enjoyable affair is the Montclair Village Fine Arts and Crafts Fall Festival, with 90 professional artists participating. This show, at Mountain Blvd. and LaSalle, takes place October 2 and 3, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

For a purely social event, the Hillside Club at 2286 Cedar Street, Berkeley, hosts an afternoon tea party with light refreshments and a chance to read, play cards, or simply socialize on Tuesdays at 3 p.m.

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No doubt I’ve missed a whole raft of outstanding events taking place in our Bay Area, but I trust I’ve mentioned the really good ones.

## Around and About the Bay Area

*By Ken Bullock*

**Mon Sep 27 18:59:00 - 0700 2010**

Tilt!: Pacific Pinball Museum, the Alameda nonprofit, spearheaded by Berkeleyites including Mike Shiess, Melissa Harmon and Larry Zartarian, which aspires to become “the Smithsonian of Pinball,” emphasizing
education and enjoyment with their 650 plus collection of games, is producing the fourth annual Pacific Pinball Exhibition this weekend, all day and evening on Oct 1, 2, and 3, at the Exhibition Hall of the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Marin Civic Center, with more than 300 pinball machines from the 1920s on, set at free play, plus special guests: the Australian author of the Pinball Encyclopedia (dating the game back to its predecessors in the 17th-18th century) and an inventors panel, including one guest, the former chief inventor from Atari Games.

This year’s theme is the science of pinball, with exhibits on magnetism, AC-DC current, perpetual motion, and the difference between randomness and chaos. That’s not to say there won’t be pinball art: over a half-dozen huge murals by local artists will be hung, of the art from the painted backglasses of old pinball machines. On the Exhibition poster is the 1915 Panama Pacific Exhibition statue of The star maiden, the 16 foot bronze original now gracing the lobby of City Corp in San Francisco, the image of Audrey Munson, “Venus of the West,” looking as though balanced on a pinball rather than a two-foot diameter brass ball. There will also be clinics, tournaments, restoration clinics, antique games and rarities—and more vendors than ever. $15-$45 (daily tickets and weekend passes) www.pacificpinball.org

In Search of the Sacred will be discussed Friday at 7 by its author, the eminent Dr. Seyyid Hossein Nasr, who headed the Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy and was closely associated with many renowned specialists in Islamic spirituality, including Sufism: Fritjof Schuon, Henri Corbin, Toshihiko Izutsu, William Chittick and others. Dr. Nasr was the first Muslim to deliver the Gifford Lectures. The book is autobiographical, discussing among other things intellectual life in Iran under the Pahlavi regime and the Iranian Revolution. On Saturday at 6, Dr. Nasr will address “How to be a Muslim in America Today,” the roots and effects of Islamophobia, at 6 p.m. Hamza Yusuf and Jason van Boom will moderate. $5-$10 each day; $15 both. Islamic Cultural Center of Northern California, 1433 Madison, near 14th (and the Main Library), downtown Oakland. 832-7600; icnc.org

Arts & Events Listings

Stage-San Francisco Through October 10

AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER

“Scapin,” by Moliere, through Oct. 10, 8 p.m. Tue.-Sat.; 2 p.m. Wed., Sat.-Sun. Check website for exact dates and times. Directed by Bill Irwin. $10 and up; check website for special deals and events.


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 taletellers. $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.


THE MARSH

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


VICTORIA THEATRE


Classical Music-East Bay Through October 10

CAL PERFORMANCES All performances in Zellerbach Hall unless otherwise noted.

“Beethoven: The Complete Sonatas for Cello and Piano,” Oct. 10, 3 p.m. David Finckel, cello, and Wu Han, piano. Concert takes place in Hertz Hall. $42; half price for children 16 and under.

Zellerbach Hall, University of California, Berkeley, Bancroft Way at Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley. (510) 642-9988, www.calperformances.net.

CROWDEN MUSIC CENTER

“The Danish Masterpieces,” Oct. 10, 4 p.m. Works of Debussy, Brahms and more. $15; free for children under 18.


LESHER CENTER FOR THE ARTS


LIVERMORE VALLEY OPERA

“Don Giovanni,” Oct. 2 through Oct. 10, 8 p.m. Sat.; 2 p.m. Sun. Mark Shreshinsky directs this adaptation of the classic Mozart opera. $39-$64.


Classical Music-San Francisco Through October 10

CALVARY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH


DAVIES SYMPHONY HALL


GOLDEN GATE PARK MUSIC COURSE

“Golden Gate Park Band” Oct. 3, 1 p.m. Works by Roger Nixon, Aram Katchaturian, Henry Fillmore and more. Free.

“Golden Gate Park Band” Oct. 10, 1

Ninth Avenue and Lincoln Way, 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.

ONGOING CHILDREN’S PROGRAM -- “Doing and Viewing Art,” For ages 7 to 12. Docent-led tours of current exhibitions are followed by studio workshops taught by professional artists/teachers. Students learn about art by seeing and making it. Saturday, 10:30 a.m. to noon; call to confirm class. Free with museum admission. (415) 750-3658.


$6-$10; free for children ages 12 and under; free for all visitors on Tuesdays. Tuesday-Sunday, 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Lincoln Park, 34th Avenue and Clement Street, San Francisco. (415) 750-3600, (415) 750-3636, www.legionofhonor.org.

MOST HOLY REDEEMER CHURCH

100 Diamond St. at 18th Street, San Francisco.

OLD FIRST CHURCH
Duo Revirado, Oct. 8, 8 p.m. Works by Giuliani, Machado, Piazzolla, Moalem, Jobim, Dorham and others. Thomas Yee, violin, Jose Rodriguez, guitar.

Agave Baroque, Oct. 10, 4 p.m. Works by Buxtehude, Lawes, Marais, Matteis, Purcell, Schmelzer and Uccelini.


SAN FRANCISCO CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC
Voice Department Recital, Oct. 7, 8 p.m. Vocal masterworks will be presented. Free.

Nicole Paiement, Oct. 9, 8 p.m. Works by Philip Glass, Marnie Breckenridge and Laura Schwendinger. $15-$20.

$15 to $20 unless otherwise noted. Hellman Hall, 50 Oak St., San Francisco. (415) 864-7326, www.sfcm.edu.

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA
“Aida” by Giuseppe Verdi, through Oct. 6. A bitter love triangle plays itself out against a backdrop of war and cultural oppression in this compelling tale of competing loyalties and forbidden passion. Sung in Italian with English supertitles. Sept. 10, 8 p.m.; Sept. 16, 7:30 p.m.; Sept. 19, 2 p.m.; Sept. 24, 8 p.m.; Sept. 29, 7:30 p.m.; Oct. 2, 8 p.m.; Oct. 6, 7:30 p.m. $20-$320.

“Werther” by Jules Massenet, through Oct. 1. A new production of the Massenet’s strongest and most involving tragedy, with Tenor Ransom Vargas and mezzo-soprano Alice Coote. Sung in French with English supertitles. Sept. 15, 7:30 p.m.; Sept. 18, 8 p.m.; Sept. 22, 7:30 p.m.; Sept. 26, 2 p.m.; Sept. 28, 8 p.m.; Oct. 1, 8 p.m. $20-$360.

“Le Nozze di Figaro,” by Mozart, through Oct. 22. Nicola Luisotti conducts. Sung in Italian with English supertitles. Sept. 21, 8 p.m.; Sept. 23, 7:30 p.m.; Sept. 25, 8 p.m.; Sept. 30, 7:30 p.m.; Oct. 3, 2 p.m.; Oct. 5, 7:30 p.m.; Oct. 10, 2 p.m.; Oct. 16, 8 p.m.; Oct. 22, 8 p.m. $20-$360.


SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY

“Beethoven’s Symphony No. 7,” Oct. 7 through Oct. 9, 8 p.m. Michael Tilson Thomas conducts. $15-$140.


SEVENTH AVENUE PERFORMANCES


ST. MARY’S CATHEDRAL
“Sunday Afternoon Recitals,” 3:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted. Sept. 5: Travis Baker.

Sept. 12: Christoph Tietze.


Galleries-San Francisco Through October 10


Not Listed By Venue, www.artspan.org

GEORGE KREVSKY GALLERY
“Summer Reading,” through Oct. 2. Works by Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Helen Bergruen, Ken Kalman, Rockwell Kent, Clifford Odets, Man Ray, Raymond Saunders, Ben Shahn and others.

Free. Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. 77 Geary St., San Francisco. (415) 397-9748, www.georgekrevskygallery.com.

LOST ART SALON


Popmusic-East Bay Through October 10

924 GILMAN ST. All ages welcome.

Filthy Thieving Bastards, Oct. 3, 5-10 p.m. $10.

Stone Vengeance, Hatchet, Evil Survive, Oct. 8, 7 p.m. $10.

$5 unless otherwise noted. Shows start Friday and Saturday, 8 p.m.; Sunday, 5 p.m. unless otherwise noted. 924 Gilman St., Berkeley. (510) 525-9926, www.924gilman.org.

ALBATROSS PUB
Whiskey Brothers, 9 p.m. First and third Wednesdays. Free.

Gaucho, Oct. 2, 9:30 p.m.

Free unless otherwise noted. Shows begin Wednesday, 9 p.m.; Saturday, 9:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted. 1822 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. (510) 843-2473, www.albatrosspub.com.

ASHKENAZ
Cumbia Tokes, Oct. 1, 9:30 p.m. $10-$13.

Kabile, Oct. 2, 9 p.m. $12-$15.

Alphabet Rockers, Oct. 3, 3 p.m. $4-$6.
Gamelan Sekar Jaya, Oct. 3, 8 p.m. $10-$12.

BECKETT’S IRISH PUB
Jaques Ibula, Oct. 1.
Paul Manousos, Oct. 2.
The Adrian Gormley Jazz Trio, Oct. 7.

BLAKE’S ON TELEGRAPH
The Shure Thing, Sun House, Fat Opie, Oct. 1, 9 p.m. 18+. $10.
Ejector, Triple Cobra, Club Crasherz, The Coloring, Oct. 2, 9 p.m. 18+.
Bozone, Automatic Band, Oct. 9, 9 p.m. $10.
For ages 18 and older unless otherwise noted. Music begins at 9:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted. 2367 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley. (510) 848-0886, www.blakeson-telegraph.com.

CAFE TRIESTE
True Margrit, Oct. 1, 7 p.m. $10-$15.

FREIGHT AND SALVAGE
“Freight Open Mic,” Tuesdays. $4.50-$5.50.
Tito y su Son de Cuba, Oct. 2. $18.50-$19.50.
Vishten, Oct. 3. $18.50-$19.50.
Niamh Parsons and Graham Dunne, Oct. 4. $18.50-$19.50.
City Folk, Oct. 8. $18.50-$19.50.
Roy Rogers & The Delta Rhythm Kings, Oct. 9. $22.50-$23.50.
Music starts at 8 p.m. unless otherwise noted. 2020 Addison St., Berkeley. (510) 548-1761, www.freightandsalvage.org.

GREEK THEATRE
Train, Oct. 1, 8 p.m. $39.50-$55.
Arcade Fire, Oct. 2 and Oct. 3, 8 p.m. $46.
Jack Johnson, Oct. 5 and Oct. 6, 6:30 p.m. $59.50.
Maroon 5, Oct. 10, 6 p.m. $39.50-$59.50.

JAZZSCHOOL
Kim Nalley, Oct. 1, 8 p.m. $18.
The Wayne Wallace Latin Jazz Quintet, Oct. 2, 8 p.m. $18.
San Francisco Bourbon Kings, Oct. 3, 4:30 p.m. $15.
Riff-Raff, Oct. 8, 8 p.m. $10.
Joshi Marshall Project, Oct. 9, 8 p.m. $12.
Debbie Pories Quintet, Oct. 10, 4:30 p.m. $15.
Friday and Saturday, 8 p.m.; Sunday, 4:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted. 2087 Addison St., Berkeley. (510) 845-5373, www.jazzschool.com.

JUPITER
“Americana Unplugged,” 5 p.m. Sundays. A weekly bluegrass and Americana series.

STARRY PLOUGH PUB
The Starrty Irish Music Session led by Shay Black, Sundays, 8 p.m. Sliding scale.
Maurice Tani Band, Pete Anderson, Oct. 2, 9 p.m.
For ages 21 and over unless otherwise noted. Sunday and Wednesday, 8 p.m.; Thursday-Saturday, 9:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted. 3101 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. (510) 841-2082, www.starryploughpub.com.

UPTOWN NIGHTCLUB
Planet Booty, Oct. 2, 9 p.m. $10.
Child Abuse, Oct. 7, 8 p.m. $10.
Undead Boys, Loose Lips, Oct. 8, 9 p.m. Free.

YOSHI’S
Chante Moore, Oct. 1 through Oct. 3, 8 and 10 p.m. Fri.-Sat.; 7 p.m. Sun. $28-$40.
Hristo Vitchev Quintet, Oct. 4, 8 p.m. $14.
The Mel Martin All-Star Big Band, Oct. 5, 8 p.m. $16.
John Abercrombie, Oct. 6 and Oct. 7, 8 p.m. Wed.; 8 and 10 p.m. Thu. $10-$16.
Mary Stallings, Eric Reed Trio, Oct. 8 and Oct. 9, 8 and 10 p.m. $12-$22.
Dan Marschak, Oct. 10, 7 p.m. $10.
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.

Professional Dance-San Francisco Through October 10

COUNTERPULSE

DANZHAUS
“This Dance This Place,” through Oct. 2 and Oct. 7 through Oct. 2, 8 p.m. Thu.-Sat. Choreography by Lizz Roman. $20, www.lizzromananddancers.com.

ODC DANCE COMMONS PERFORMANCE ART COMPLEX
“ODC/Dance: Architecture of Light,” through Oct. 2, 8 p.m. $20-$35.
351 Shotwell St. (between 17th and 18th streets), San Francisco. (415) 863-6606, www.odcdance.org.

PALACE OF FINE ARTS THEATRE

PENA PACHAMAMA
“Flamenco Thursdays” with Carola Zertuche, 8:30 p.m. Thursdays Music and dance with performers of traditional flamenco. $10.
Brisas de Espana Ballet Flamenco, 6:15 and 7:15 p.m. Sun. $10-$15.

SAN FRANCISCO CITY HALL
Free unless otherwise noted. 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, San Francisco.

ZACCHO STUDIO

Readings-East Bay Through October 10
BOOKS INC., ALAMEDA
Barbara Tomblin, Oct. 8, 7:30 p.m. “Bluejackets and Contrabands.”
Free. Readings at 7:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted. 1344 Park St., Alameda. (510) 522-2226, www.booksink.net.

BOOKS INC., BERKELEY
Manal Omar, Oct. 4, 7 p.m. “Barefoot in Baghdad.”
Hardy Green, Oct. 5, 7 p.m. “Company Town.”
James Howard Kunstler, Oct. 6, 7 p.m. “Witch of Hebron.”

DIESEL, A BOOKSTORE
Steven Kotler, Oct. 3, 3 p.m. “A Small Furry Prayer: Dog Rescue and the Meaning of Life.”
Mark Christensen, Oct. 6, 7 p.m. “Acid Christ.”
Michael Krasny, Oct. 10, 3 p.m. “Spiritual Envy.”
5433 College Avenue, Oakland. (510) 653-9965.

MARTIN LUTHER KING CIVIC CENTER
“Watershed Environmental Poetry Festival,” Oct. 2, Noon-4:30 p.m.
2180 Milvia St., Berkeley. (510) 981-7533, www.ci.berkeley.ca.us.

MOE’S BOOKS
“Four Irish Poets,” Oct. 5, 7:30 p.m.
Patrick Cotter, Gerry Murphy, Leanne O’Sullivan and Billy Ramsell.

MRS. DALLOWAY’S
Mary Catherine Bates, Oct. 1, 7:30 p.m. “Composing A Further Life.”
Deborah Fallows, Oct. 2, 7:30 p.m. “Dreaming in Chinese.”
Marie Dern, Oct. 3, 4 p.m. “Jungle Garden Press.”
Rebecca Solnit, Oct. 6, 7:30 p.m. “A Paradise Built In Hell.”
Georgia Pellegrini, Oct. 7, 7:30 p.m. “Food Heroes.”
Tom Hudgens, Oct. 9, 4 p.m. “The Commonsense Kitchen.”
2904 College Avenue, Berkeley. (510) 704-8222.

UNIVERSITY PRESS BOOKS
Peter Stekel, Oct. 4, 6 p.m. “Final Flight: The Mystery of a WWII Plane Crash and the Frozen Airmen in the High Sierra.”

Stage-East Bay Through October 10

BERKELEY REPERTORY THEATRE
“Compulsion,” through Oct. 31, 8 p.m. Tue. and Fri.; 7 p.m. Wed.; 2 and 8 p.m. Thu. and Sat.; 2 and 7 p.m. Sun; check website for special matinees. A new play featuring Tony and Emmy Award-winning actor Mandy Patinkin. $14.50-$73.

BOUNCE by Joseph Young
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