Bill’s Stadium Exemption Angers Berkeley Citizens

By RIYA BHATTACHARJEE

Some Berkeley city officials and residents are outraged that, despite questions raised by legislative staff in Sacramento, the University of California was able to convince lawmakers to add an amendment exempting Memorial Stadium on the Berkeley campus and other state historic structures from legal restrictions on building across earthquake faults to the state’s Omnibus Bill, which traditionally contains only non-controversial provisions.

District 4 Councilmember Jesse Arreguin contends that the “implied rule of an omnibus bill is that it can only include changes that are non-controversial.”

Opponents claim that the amendment poses a threat to the safety of Berkeley residents and are furious that it was passed in the face of pending litigation against the proposed projects at Memorial Stadium.

Arreguin on Monday proposed an agenda item for the Dec. 15 City Council meeting requesting Berkeley City Manager Phil Kamlarz to report on Berkeley’s involvement in SB113, also known as the Local Government Omnibus Act of 2009, which was signed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Continued on Page Twenty-Two

City Council Amends Noise Law, Remands Landmark to LPC

By RIYA BHATTACHARJEE

At its Tuesday meeting, the Berkeley City Council made some amendments to the city’s revised noise ordinance, remanded a city landmark back to the Landmarks Preservation Commission and sent off coat hangers to Congress to oppose the controversial Stupak-Pitts Amendment to Health Reform.

Noise ordinance

After listening to concerns

Continued on Page Twenty-One

UC Berkeley Protesters Return to Wheeler Hall

By RAYMOND BARGLOW

Special to the Planet

Having barricaded themselves in Wheeler Hall on Nov. 20, the last day of a three-day strike, UC Berkeley students who oppose cuts to public education in California returned to Wheeler Monday night, Dec. 7.

But this time the activists said that they were appropriating the space for educational purposes. Their avowed intention this week is to show that the university should rightfully be governed and run by those whom it directly affects: the students who learn in it, the faculty who teach in it, and the staff who provide services and maintenance.

This campus community has

Continued on Page Twenty-One

Instant Runoff Voting Machines Approved for Alameda County

By RIYA BHATTACHARJEE

California Secretary of State Debra Bowen approved the use of instant runoff voting equipment in Alameda County Friday, Dec. 4, clearing the way for its use in Berkeley, Oakland and San Leandro for the November 2010 elections.

IRV gives voters the option to rank their first, second, and third choice of candidates, eliminating the need for runoffs.

All three cities have approved IRV, or ranked-choice voting, for municipal elections, on the condition that the county comes up with an approved electronic counting system.

Bowen’s approval was necessary before the end of the year in order for IRV to be used in next year’s election.

Alameda County contracted with Colorado- and California-based Sequoia Voting Systems, which manufactured the nation’s first lever-based mechanical voting equipment in the 1890s, for the IRV technology.

Bowen hired Florida-based consulting firm Freeman, Craft, McGregor Group to test the IRV technology, including the system’s ability to accurately record, tabulate and report votes in ranked-choice voting elections, using the RCV rules which have been successfully used in San Francisco.

The IRV machinery has received mixed reviews from East Bay politicians up for reelection next year, with some calling the system “unfriendly” to incumbents and others contending that it will be difficult for immigrants with limited knowledge of English to navigate the system.

However, proponents of IRV have said that it will help new candidates and increase minority voter participation.

Councilmember Kris Worthington, who in 2004 sponsored a city initiative to make the city switch to IRV, said the new system would save tens of thousands

Continued on Page Nineteen

St. Clement’s Hosts Presentation of Nativity Scenes from Around the World

By KEN BULLOCK

Special to the Planet

About 250 Nativity crèche scenes from 81 countries will be exhibited at St. Clement’s Episcopal Church this weekend to benefit the Alameda County Food Bank.

The exhibit, at St. Clement’s Episcopal Church (2837 Claremont Blvd.) starts with a reception Friday evening and runs through Sunday.

The scenes, from the collection of Judy and Bob Davis, range from those with figures of less than an inch in height—one of the smallest is a walnut shell—to one with 18-inch clay camels carrying riders.

Judy spoke of how the Davis’ remarkable collection started.

“I grew up in the Methodist Church; I never had a nativity scene. In 1966, I thought it was time to have one! I bought the first in Mexico and set it up. In 1980, we went to the Passion Play in Oberammergau

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Continued on Page Fourteen
By RIYA BHATTACHARJEE

AC Transit’s Board of Directors may vote on whether to reduce bus service by 8.4 percent at its Dec. 16 meeting in the light of a severe budget deficit expected to reach $57 million by June. According to a recent memo sent to the board by AC Transit’s General Manager Rick Fernandez, the board “may adopt, modify, reject, or defer any of the changes proposed” at that meeting.

The protests surrounding the Marine Recruitment Center took place in 2008, with anti-war activists deliberately trying to “incite a riot.” According to the police report, Tang was trying to help World Can’t Wait member Raphael Schiller, who had been detained by police for illegally using a loudspeaker, when she pulled an object from her arm and wrapped her leg around him in order to “impede his activity and prevent him from running.”

Police Looking for Three Shooting Suspects

The Bay Area Crime Stoppers tip line is 800-222-TIPS (8477). Callers can remain anonymous if they wish.

By RIYA BHATTACHARJEE

AC Transit is estimated to save $9.6 million annually by implement- ing the draft 2009 Revised Service Adjustments plan, as a result of anticipated fare revenues.

Charges Dropped Against Marine Recruitment Center Protester

AC Transit to Consider Revised Service Cuts

By RIYA BHATTACHARJEE

Berkeley police are still looking for two suspects in recent shootings.

The Bay Area Crime Stoppers is offering a reward of up to $2,000 for information leading to the apprehension of the suspects in this case. The Bay Area Crime Stoppers tip line is 800-222-TIPS (8477). Callers can remain anonymous if they wish.

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**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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Dec. 17, 5:30-6:30pm
Whole Foods Market, Berkeley
(Ashby at Telegraph Ave.)
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**MOVING SALE**

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**BART to Hold Hearing on Police Chief Search**

Bay City News

BART Director Carol Ward Allen says the transit agency will hold a public hearing Dec. 17 to get input from the public on the criteria they think should be used in hiring a new police chief.

Ward Allen, who chairs BART’s Police Department Review Committee, said at Thursday’s board meeting that Bob Murray and Associates is to submit its recommended finalists for the job the week of March 1 and BART will conduct interviews later that month.

The consulting firm also helped in San Francisco’s search for a new police chief.

Current BART police Chief Gary Gee, who was criticized for his handling of the transit agency’s Police Department in the wake of the fatal shooting of unarmed passenger Oscar Grant III at the hands of former Officer Johannes Mehserle on Jan. 1, announced in August that he would retire at the end of the year.

Gee then immediately went on medical leave.

“BART’s Police Department is currently headed by Commander Maria White, who is now acting chief,” BART General Manager Dorothy Dugger said at the meeting. “One question very much under discussion is strengthening the role of the board in the selection process.”

Current rules call for Dugger to hire the new chief, but several board members have said recently that they think the board should be more involved.

The recruitment process for a new police chief is scheduled to end Feb. 1.

Bob Murray and Associates is to submit its recommended finalists for the job by the week of March 29 and the new chief is to start work April 1.

The public hearing will be at the Joseph Bort MetroCenter at 101 Eighth St. in Oakland at 6 p.m. on Dec. 17.

Ward Allen said the purpose of the hearing is to give the public a chance to discuss “the issues and challenges for the new chief.”

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**City College Hosts Another Meeting In Opposition to Budget Cuts**

By RAYMOND BARGLOW
Special to the Planet

A meeting and lunch were held Saturday at Berkeley City College as a follow-up to an early November meeting at which several hundred representatives of California schools gathered to organize against cutbacks to public education.

Participants agreed that even though the protest has the breadth of a social movement and draws support from every sector of education from pre-kindergarten through the university, and including adult education, it has not yet achieved the depth of a social movement in terms of numbers and unity.

Participants reported that successful organizing has been going on at their local campuses. They also reported that energy for fighting the cuts has somewhat ebbed as the school term winds down and students concentrate on their studies.

Organizer Joan Berezin, Global Studies Program coordinator at BCC, said she is hopeful that the movement will grow in the new year, and she sees unity as the key to success.

“Each sector of public education is kept in its own little box,” Berezin said, “and even often one sector is pitied against the other, scrumbling for meager funds. If we want to fight the cuts in education, we need to break the divide.” The current plan, she said, is to “organize an all-education fleet.”

Each year college. But now even that path-way is blocked.”

Continued on Page Twenty

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**Longfellow Arts and Music Classes at Risk**

By PAUL GACKLE

A hip, jazzed-up version of “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer” blared out of the classroom. Layers of students from all across Berkeley. But this year a perfect storm of variables has left a shortfall in the program’s budget, putting some of Longfellow’s one-of-a-kind classes, like the Jazz Band, at risk of being cut in January. Now, as midnights approaches, a group of parents are raising the funds needed to save the classes.

“If we get together and make our sentiments known, maybe the funds can be found,” said Minni Chin, one of the parents who is leading the campaign.

Soon after the state budget passed last spring, it became apparent that some of the most popular classes offered in Longfellow’s after-school program were in jeopardy.

First, the program cycled out of a five-year federal grant that had brought in roughly $50,000 a year.

Then, they received a cut in state grant money because of an after-school attendance shortfall (a point

Continued on Page Twenty-Six

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**By PAUL GACKLE**

The Longfellow Middle School Jazz Band, one of the at-risk classes, rehearses for the Winter Arts Fest.

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**The BERKELEY DAILY PLANET**

Page 3
The Human Face of Education Budget Cuts

By DAVID BACON

Los Angeles, CA—Cesar Cota was the first in his family to attend college. “Now it’s hard to achieve my dream,” he says, “because the state put higher fees on us, and cut classes and services.”

Cota, a student at Los Angeles City College, was encouraged by the internship program of the Los Angeles College Faculty Guild to describe the human cost of budget cuts in the community college system.

“UC Davis and on to law school,” says city college basketball sent him to a pathway out of poverty. JaQay Carlyle, a mother of three teenagers, says city college basketball sent him to a pathway out of poverty. JaQay Carlyle, a mother of three teenagers, was encouraged by the internship program of the Los Angeles College Faculty Guild to describe the human cost of budget cuts in the community college system.

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Vietnam and U.S. military incursions into Cambodia—and four more years of carnage. Mr. Nixon, after all, was by no means the first president to have a bloodier political legacy, and he left no illusions about his presidency.

Forty years later, the election of President Obama made it appear as though nothing was if not an exercise in progressive illusion. Why else would one feel that sense of betrayal among progressives following Mr. Obama’s Dec. 1 speech at West Point, accounting his intention to engage 30,000 more American troops in the war in Afghanistan on top of the 32,000 already deployed?

This progressive disillusionment would not appear to have emanated from any special disingenuousness on the part of Mr. Obama during last year’s campaign. The president—as candidate—certainly presented as blank a slate as politically possible. No one could object to the concept of a president who was not a seasoned politician, and even the most ardent smart politics. But anyone who paid any attention during the campaign would have known that while Mr. Obama was a legendarily early detractor to the war effort in Iraq, it was my impression that he said almost nothing that was new or different enough that he did not consider it to be simply a no-win situation.
THURSDAY, DEC. 10

**Kol Hadashan Chanukah Celebration**

Celebration of Chanukah at Albany Community Center, 1301 Shattuck Ave. For more information, see www.albanycc.org.

**Berkeley Women in Black**

Weekly vigil from 11 to 1 a.m. at UC Berkeley, between Sproul Hall and Wheeler Hall. Our focus is human rights in Palestine. 548-6310.

**Stand Up for Peace**

Not a stand-up comic but a stand-up vigil every Friday from noon to 1 p.m. at the corner of Eucalyptus and Market. See www.theforcetoo.org.

SATURDAY, DEC. 12

**Holiday Pancake Breakfast**

From 7 to 10:30 a.m. at the Berkeley City Club, 2315 Durant St. For information and reservations and starting point call 529-2173.

**Climate Change Vigil**

Join us for a candlelight vigil and bike ride across the Bay Bridge, followed by bike ride to various locations in Berkeley. Dress for all weather, bring flashlights and bring a sign to support the fight against global warming. Meet at 10 a.m. at the NE end of the Bay Bridge. Cost: Free. 548-4915. www.berkeleycameraclub.org

**Holiday Tree Trim**

Make decorations from natural materials, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Alameda Community Garden, 7007 Mockingbird Lane, El Cerrito. Staff from the Berkeley Animal Services will provide crucial assistance to the animals from 3:30 to 5 p.m. at Alameda Community Garden, 7007 Mockingbird Lane, El Cerrito. Cost: $10-$17. Registration required. 849-2568. www.acigallery.com

**Radio Free Berkeley**

Time slots for DJ’s, 525-6155. www.radiofreeberkeley.org

**Holiday Night Market**

Visit three local hotels all decorated for the holidays, from 7 to 9 p.m. Reservations and starting point call 984-1029.

**Walk Berkeley for Seniors**

A vigorous pre-holiday calorie burner, fast paced with a lot of steps and great views. Information and reservations from the Berkeley Path Club at www.bpark.org. Meet at 10 a.m. at the Benicia Marina. Cost: $5. 540-1249.

**Tilden Men’s Ringers**


**Continued on Page 19**
Involvement: in mid-2011 we will begin a phased withdrawal. To complement the troop increase, the United States will try to work more effectively with Afghan security forces. There are roughly 190,000 members of the Afghan army and police. What Obama didn’t say is that his military advisers want to raise the number of Afghan security forces to 400,000 (240,000 would be in the army—generally regarded as a competent group).

Eighteen months from now, we’ll be able to judge the effectiveness of Obama’s Afghanistan strategy by the number of security forces; levels of safety within certain enclaves, such as Kabul and Kandahar; and the perceived level of corruption. The United States has concentrated 176 of 180 in the Global Rank for Corruption.

The president didn’t talk about opium. Afghanistan’s cash crop that generates about $3 billion per year. It’s 500 al Qaeda operatives. The Taliban will have to make a choice. They cannot tolerate a safe haven for terrorists whose location is known and whose lives are in the hands of the army. “This suggests that the Afghan army will have more U.S. military ‘advisers’ and there will be more drone attacks in the lawless areas harboring al Qaeda and Taliban forces.

The U.S. effectiveness in Pakistan differ from those in Afghanistan. Eighteen months from now, we’ll be able to judge the effectiveness of Pakistan’s police and counter-terrorism leverage. The various parts of the country—particularly the border areas; Pakistan’s Global Rank for Corruption; and the age of Pakistanis who say their country is headed in the right direction, only 18 percent think it is. Currently, 500 al Qaeda operatives are said to be in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Eighteen months from now that number should be drastically reduced.

In terms of U.S. politics, the president’s likely to vote for the local Democratic in 2010. If you are a conservative, you won’t be happy that Obama specified a timeline for U.S. involvement; on the other hand, you’re likely to vote for your local Republican in 2010.

If you are an independent, you probably were impressed with the president’s closing words: “I refuse to set goals that go beyond our responsibility, our means, or our interests. We simply cannot afford to ignore the price of these wars ... As we end the war in Iraq and transition to Afghanistan responsibility, we must rebuild our strength here at home.” If you are an independent, when you vote in 2010 you won’t be thinking about Afghanistan, you will be worried about the economy and the deficit. Given those circumstances your vote is likely to reflect your level of confidence that the President and his party are moving in the right direction.

If you are an independent, Obama’s Dec. 1 speech may have heightened your level of confidence. We will try to work more closely with Pakistan. We will provide $9.7 billion in security aid to Pakistan. We will watch the economy and reserve judgment.

Bob Burnett is a Berkeley writer. He can be reached at bobburnett@comcast.net.
**Homeless Suffer in Cold Weather**

Baby, it’s cold outside! Ask the regulars who spend their nights under blankets at the Berkeley deceased's home for mushrooms and avoid providing any low-cost units seems endless, so dedicated low-income housing looks like a better bet. However, programs which purport to stimulate investment in such projects by giving tax breaks are also notoriously gamed by investors. Public housing projects are plagued by shoddy construction, which results in buildings which self-destruct just about the time the tax incentives time out. And even technical low-income developers game the system on occasion.

In many ways this looks a lot like the current debate over health care. Ever more complicated and confusing oblique incentives to get what we need are proposed. When anyone with any sense knows that single payer—over health care. Ever more complicated and confusing oblique incentives to get what we need are proposed. When anyone with any sense knows that single payer—

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**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**GENERAL ASSISTANCE CUTS**

Editors, Daily Planet:

As part of our campaign against the general assistance cuts in Alameda County that the Board of Supervisors voted for last June, 3-2, we from the BOSS Community Organizing Team are planning to go to the Alameda County Board of Supervisors meeting, Dec. 10 at 930 a.m. at 1221 Oak St. between 12th and 13th, near Lake Merritt, to speak to the issue of the GA cuts at the public comment.

This is their last meeting of 2009. We are asking others to come join us. Some of the cuts—$40 for medical costs, $82 for shared housing—are already taking place, and next year they plan to implement the three month cutoff for the 7000 folks considered “employable” at a time when folks on unemployment keep getting extended as there are no jobs to be found in this economy.

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**OAK GROVE WOOD CHIPS**

Editors, Daily Planet:

To Jerry Sullinger, who is vexed to discover “treesitter” wood chips at Anna Head, for him a new low in town-gown relations—Jerry, thousands of citizens of Berkeley and environs, and the vast majority of Cal students, are delighted that the oak grove has been reduced to chips and a student/athlete facility is replacing it. And at only $5 a bushel, we all can buy enough to make into wonderful little mementos to give to fellow Cal fans at Christmas.

To Charlotte Honigmann-Smith, who wonders why Caryn Churchill’s “Seven Jewish Children” doesn’t express what she wants, and wonders about Ms. Churchill’s dramatic skills...Charlotte, Caryn Churchill was expressing what she wanted to say, not what you wanted, and she is not only a remarkably skillful playwright, she is an important playwright.

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**TEEN LIBRARY SERVICES**

Editors, Daily Planet:

My name is Jasmine Dominguez and I’m a student worker at the Central and North branch libraries. I love helping to organize and clean the libraries because I know those are temptations to get what we need are proposed. When anyone with any sense knows that single payer—

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*Continued on Page Twelve*
T he Alameda County Board of Super-
visors (BOCS) recently approved a
resolution that will cut an additional $231
if rent is more than GA grant; requiring landlord
to sign a W-9 IRS form and penalizing recipient up
than GA grant; isn’t?—cut $40 more if not receiving Medi-
ally $800-$900/month vs. the maximum
monthly grant of $336. Is this being “fiscal-
reform has the largest racial
of Dreamland for Kids Playground
the park was “closed.” Finally, new life
collection that rumors began to circulate that
shoreline collected trash from the neigh-
waterfowl, bird watchers, and boaters on
an excellent option for them.
other families in Berkeley, need to have
their children's lives are
no real stake in their children’s lives are
the ones making decisions for them.
We enthusiastically support REALM
the board as well. We would not only be
the educational momentum of high achievement and
pioneering reform Berkeley is known
and the 2020 Vision because our inten-
ded on achieving better results for
our kids, thereby providing opportuni-
ties and options for families who would otherwise
be left behind.
In sum, we believe that the employ-
ment of public charter schools like REALM could be
a right-wing conspiracy to privatize
education or, using outlandish rhetoric
even by Berkeley standards. The fact is
that the thousands of public charter
schools that exist throughout the coun-
try are extremely diverse in their goals,
populations, and performance. The
REALM public charter school, as with all public schools,
must be evaluated on its individual merits and vision.
The technicalities of Dreamland
sertion to serve the least advantaged chil-
due process requires that recipients are
entitled to notice and a fair hearing prior to
the Board of Supervisors found the money to keep
the Alameda County Animal Shelter open.

Kathie Zatkin works for the Alameda County Animal shel-
try. We can no longer wait.

In sum, we believe that the employ-
ment of public charter schools like
are connected with this—parents and
lege and over 10,000 diverse families.
resents 18 faith congregations in Berke-
Church; Rev. Michael Smith; Pastor
art; Pastor Leslie White; Lutheran
McGee Ave Baptist Church; Church
Church; Rev. Odette Lockwood-Stew-
moments. We can no longer wait.

This letter was signed by Rabbi Men-
achem; Creditor Pastor Kelly Woods; Rabbi
Yoel Kahn; Congregation Neot Adam; Rabbi John Campbell; Congregation Beth El; Pastor Sarah
Isakson; Rev. Olette Lockwood-Stew-
what to do with the park or its activities.
Aquatic Park has come a long way from
the old boathouse and improve the park
infrastructure. Many other nonprofits
are dotted along the shoreline and pro-
vide services including habitat restaura-
tion, community rowing and paddling, and
more.

The community will have an opportu-
ity to enjoy the progress of Berkeley’s
Aquatic Park depth of the achievement
of Berkeley is fully in accord with
the Civil Rights Movement.

REALM will focus on critical think-
ing, the use of advanced technology,
and academic work in order to provide opportu-
nities for students to prepare themselves for
college as well as 21st century
jobs. REALM will be completely free
and rooted in Berkeley's public schools.

REALM's primary organizers and
supporters include BOCA, parents of
college-bound students; Berkeley's leaders;
people who have been working on
issues of equity in Berkeley for many
years and the Berkeley Federation of
students who currently attend—or have attend-
ed—Berkeley's public schools.

Pedestrian Bridge in 2002, and a leas-
ual commitment to ending the decades-
long history of inequality still plaguing our
schools. The 2020 Vision was for-
ormally endorsed in a joint resolution
passed by the City Council and School Board
in June 2004. During a rare joint
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Council, on Nov. 3, 2009, the consensus
was stated on the notice.

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...
I would like to offer a two suggestions for today’s job summit you are hosting at the White House. I think that President Franklin Roosevelt, when he authored the New Deal, and you have pointed out, who would lead in the green economy. We will be the leaders in the green economy. It would be a two cent fee for every share traded every day on the major exchanges. This would apply short sales. There would also be a four dollar a month fee on every security trading account.

These fees and surcharges on Wall Street speculation would be a disincentive for speculators. They would help to keep the banking and mortgage companies as well as the banks and mortgage companies get away with this.

First, I think the government should step in to protecting homeowners from mortgage rate adjustments that are coming due on millions of mortgages. Rates can skyrocket, making payments impossible for many. They have made it almost impossible for American families and forcing them into foreclosure, which is devastating to the families, a loss to the banks and mortgage companies and terrible for the economy.

But this funding mechanism to create a green energy grid would create tremendous wealth in the economy through well-paying jobs in scientific research, engineering, construction, maintenance, and management. It would help us make the leader in the green economy, and, as you have pointed out, who ever leads in the green economy, will be the economic leader of tomorrow.

By DAVID Z. WEINSTEIN

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Reforming the Democratic Party?

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Dear Editors, Daily Planet:

I understand that your Jewish readers made a decision to stop publishing articles by me. The reason, so I heard, is because your newspaper published an opinion piece that contained hate-speech against Israel.

With all due respect for freedom of speech, you don’t have to publish hate letters that even leprous African swine might not choose to send to you editors! I strongly support the Jewish community of Berkeley’s decision to launch an ad boycott against your paper, until you start screening out letters that contain hate speech! Zohar

Editor, Daily Planet:

Regarding the New York Times article concerning anti-semitism and the Daily Planet, it is my view with high probability that Becky O’Malley is being unfairly treated. She agrees to this or not. Of this I am quite convinced as are many others. If you support Bloody67, you regularly read the Daily Planet. The evidence for this assertion is how you have gotten a lot of pro-Palestinian (pro-Palestinian) writing to the Daily Planet. I am not anti-Semitic and I am not pro-Palestinian, but pro-Israel. I have always supported Israel. This is biased reporting by the Daily Planet vis a vis the New York Times. The Daily Planet’s response to the New York Times article at this website, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/1/28/business/media/28paper.html, is revealing. As an Israeli psychologist I am truly amazed at the level of distortion and misinterpretation that the New York Times is inflicting on its readers. The Daily Planet has not had the courage to publish the New York Times article at this website.

Editors, Daily Planet:

Editors, Daily Planet:

On whose payroll are Sinkin and Gertz?

Editors, Daily Planet:

For Ozzie Graham

Editors, Daily Planet:

As an Israeli psychologist who cares about the future of your children and mine. I must protest your preoccupation with Jewish matters instead of fighting world hunger, enslavement of women and planet pollution. No, you are not anti-Semitism. You are historical pawns, misguided by your own intellectual masturbations. When it comes to Jews, you are no different from countless idiots in human history who were preoccupied with the Jews instead of “Tikun Olam.”

Hey, you won’t hear from me again unless you ask for it, so I have handed me a copy of your Berkeley Daily Planet an hour ago and asked my opinion on the opinion letters on your page 11. I had to respond because of the horrid matter over the years transferred to UC Berkeley. I am sad to say that I feel that I had no impact on their values no matter how hard I tried to get them to tolerate views instead of the Jews.” I guess intellectual masturbation about Jews is a personal passion anyone who is anti-Semitic everywhere — the planet is dying. Shame on you all.

Dr. Eli Kanithary

Psychologist

Editors, Daily Planet:

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Editor, Daily Planet:

What has happened to your paper—after ultra-right wing Zionists on freedom of the press—has been going on for a number of years with Don Deane’s The Costal Post. Not only have advertisers been called to stop their advertising in the Daily Planet but town councils of various Marin cities have been lobbied to cut the paper’s circulation completely.

It is heartening to see so many Jews coming out against the infamous Gertz article on a functioning democracy.

Idea: Why don’t you two pro-Israel editors launch a joint investigative piece on just who is providing the money for the attacks?

On whose payroll are Sinkin and Gertz?

William Dgloz

Fairfax

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As an Israeli psychologist who cares about the future of your children and mine. I must protest your preoccupation with Jewish matters instead of fighting world hunger, enslavement of women and planet pollution. No, you are not anti-Semitism. You are historical pawns, misguided by your own intellectual masturbations. When it comes to Jews, you are no different from countless idiots in human history who were preoccupied with the Jews instead of “Tikun Olam.”

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two qualities patrons look for in a library. I love seeing new faces in the teen section and I fail to see any strategy in it. Therefore, I will continue my advocacy to end violence against women in Darfur and around the world. I urge my friends and family to do the same.

Andree Julian

LEGALIZE ALL DRUGS
Editors, Daily Planet:
What would happen if we legalized all drugs which would only be dispensed under medical supervision at a much lower cost, and in a much more controlled environment? Now the exhorbitant money and leave towns. The exhorbitant amount of money we spend on drug enforcement that could be used for drug prevention and rehabilitation. There would be plenty of money left for schools, health care, and the like.

Mary Barmuster

MEDICARE FOR ALL
Editors, Daily Planet:
Medicare for All will build on a very successful, popular program that we already have in place. We must be brave enough to stand up to the “insurance” companies and tell them that it is time to deliver quality care to all. Medicare for All will build on the successful, popular program that we have in place today.

Karen Hager

HEALTHCARE REFORM
Editors, Daily Planet:
The point of healthcare reform, which is underwritten by large insurance companies, is to create a healthcare system out of the hands of the insurance companies. In addition to that, it is now clear that putting capitation money into the system is better for the welfare of citizens results in wrongful illness and deaths.

Glen Kohler

DOUGHNUT HOLE
Editors, Daily Planet:
In the Medicare recipients fell into the “doughnut hole” responsibility for covering their entire drug costs, but many recipients have to pay their Medicare Part D premiums.

Bruce Wexler

SAN FRANCISCO

STRATEGY FOR AFGHANISTAN
Editors, Daily Planet:
I read and re-read President Obama’s speech on Dec. 2 at West Point announcing his strategy for Afghanistan and I fail to see any strategy in it.

Continued on Page Twenty-Five
Downtown Berkeley Offers Many Holiday Activities

As more and more people discover that the answer to expensive airfares and high gas prices is staying closer to home, the Downtown Berkeley Association (DBA) made things easier for Berkeleyans this week by coming up with a list of fun things you could do this holiday season without ever having to leave the city. Stay local, advises the DBA. Go to the movies, window-shop on College Avenue, stroll through downtown and finally get that $1 ice cream cone at John’s—the options are endless.

The DBA is calling it a “stayingcation,” an idea that has been around for ever but was officially christened when the recession reared its frugal head a couple of years ago. “If you’ll be in town for the holidays, for a ‘stayingcation’ with family and friends, remember that there’s always something going on downtown,” said DBA Operations Manager Deborah Badhia in an e-mail Monday. “Enjoy a walk through Berkeley neighborhoods on your way to a show, after the movies!”

Weekend Brunch
• As Coq’Ecalet 845-0433 Saturdays and Sundays, 7 a.m.-2 a.m.
• Bistro Liaison www.bistroliaison.com Saturdays and Sundays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
• La Note www.lanoterestaurant.com Saturdays and Sundays, 8 a.m.-3 p.m.
• The Sunny Side Café www.thesunnysidecafe.com Saturdays and Sundays, all day!
• Venus www.venusrestaurante.com Saturdays and Sundays, 8 a.m.-2:15 p.m.

Live Music and Late Night Out
• Anna’s Jazz Island www.annajazzisland.com Music for all ages, Saturdays, 5 p.m.-1 a.m.
• Beckett’s of Berkeley www.beckettsshinpub.com Live Music, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 p.m.-2 a.m.
• Bobby G’s Pizzaeria www.bobbypizzapizza.com Music, Saturdays, 8:30-10:30 p.m.
• FIVE www.bobbypizzapizza.com Open nightly until 11:30 p.m. or midnight
• Freight and Salvage Coffee House www.freightandsalvage.org West Coast Live, Saturdays, 10 a.m.-noon, Live Music on Weekends
• Jupiter www.jupiterbeer.com/jupiter Live outdoor music, Saturdays 12 p.m.-1:30 a.m., Sundays 1 p.m.-midnight
• Lot 68 Bar and Café at the Shattuck Cinema Live and DJ dance music, Saturdays and Sundays, 8 p.m.-2 a.m.

Community investing in itself
As we engage in our traditions of holiday gift-giving, why not consider giving to local non-profits that serve our community so tirelessly?
Make a donation to someone’s name, create a new tradition! This is about uplifting spirit, enhancing community growth and providing resolution in a time when these services are needed more than ever. Here’s a list to get started!

CONVENANT HOUSE CALIFORNIA serves at-risk and homeless youth living on the streets and offers them an opportunity to turn their lives around. If you’d like to help, please call Sheri Shuster at (510)379-1010, ext. 1004. www.covenanthouseca.org

Sponsor Healing Yoga classes for cancer survivors, seniors and at-risk youth.
Donation-based yoga at the Niroga Center. 1808 University Ave @ Grant. www.niroga.org/center/giftcards.order.php

COVENANT HOUSE CALIFORNIA serves at-risk and homeless youth living on the streets and offers them an opportunity to turn their lives around. If you’d like to help, please call Sheri Shuster at (510)379-1010, ext. 1004. www.covenanthouseca.org

THE EAST BAY COMMUNITY LAW CENTER (EBCLC) EBCLC provides vital legal advocacy and clinical education to promote justice and build a community that is more healthy, secure, productive, and hopeful.

SPONSOR HEALING YOGA classes for cancer survivors, seniors and at-risk youth.
Donation-based yoga at the Niroga Center. 1808 University Ave @ Grant. www.niroga.org/center/giftcards.order.php

SINCE 1975 LA PENA is a celebrated cultural center for the exchange of ideas through culture, art, and community empowerment. 3105 Shattuck Avenue (510)849-2568. www.lapena.org

39TH ANNUAL ALAMEDA HOLIDAY HOME TOUR Saturday, December 12, 9:30-4:30 p.m. Features distinctive homes, holiday tea, shuttle. Gourmet shop and craft boutique FREE, open to public. Proceeds benefit Alameda Family Services. Tickets $30 or $35 day of tour. Tour/tickets at Elks Lodge, 2255 Santa Clara Avenue near Oak Street in Alameda. More information, tickets at (510)629-6208 www.alamedaholidayhometour.info

CHRISTMAS TREES from Mendocino. No pesticides. Product of land restoration. $90 includes delivery in El Cerrito to North Oakland area. (707)357-1049 We Support the Planet!

BERKELEY ARTISANS HOLIDAY OPEN STUDIOS 100 Professional Artists, Craftspeople & Galleries Weekends 11/28 through 12/20 (510)845-2612 Maps in the Express or online http://www.berkeleyartisans.com

THE 2009 CHRISTMAS REVELS A Celebration of the Winter Solstice This year we explore the music, dance, folktales, and traditions of old Bavaria. Oakland Scottish Rite Center December 11-20 $15-$50 www.californiarevels.org or call (510)452-8800

ROCKRIDGE TWO WHEELS Piaggio and Vespa Sale $500 off msrp on all Vespa 150s. 3-year extended warranty for FREE. 0% financing available Call (510) 594-0789, ext. 1 and mention this ad.
Obergammerau and bought a hand-carved scene there. We collected wherever my husband went for business, with me accompanying him. The majority of our collection has been purchased in the countries of origin.

The Christmas season displays—always as benefits for food banks—were first mounted in 1997 and have continued every third year. This year will be the last; the Davises hope to place their collection, or a portion of it, somewhere as a gift. “One friend donated a collection to Loyola University in Chicago. The University of Dayton has some in their Marian Library,” Judy noted. “I’m a founding director of the Friends of the Creche, with over 400 memberships nationwide. We have a gathering yearly and a convention every other year.”

The origin of creche scenes is traditionally attributed to Francis of Assisi.

“What I like about them,” Judy said, “is their real basis in folk art. Each person in each country portrays the lifestyle of the holy family and the three kings as wearing their own garb—serapes or ponchos on Joseph in Mexico or Peru—or bringing different gifts—turquoise, rugs and pots from the Southwest, kava sticks from Samoua.”
Shotgun Stages Bertolt Brecht’s ‘Threepenny Opera’

By KEN BULLOCK Special to the Planet

leave it to the Shotgun Players to pro-
gram The Threepenny Opera, Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill’s Womar German cabaret musical, freshly updated to '70s punkiness, in place of a feel-good holiday show—though, amid high spirits, the attractively evil characters triumph over the more banal forces of order (or is it really due to the banality of that order?)

Sprawling over a great junk sculpture set by Nina Ball, with a set pumped up Kurt Weill’s fabled score, the 15 players, grand or grimy in Mark Koss’s costumery, order that they triumph? (or is it really due to the banality of that order?)

There is, in fact, a Yuletide tie-in with Brecht’s concept: gangster Mack the Knife (Jeff Wood), as Polly) as his bride in a stable (which the Shotgun production renders as a bank), an inverted holy family of money culture in a burglarized crèche scene.

THE THREEPENNY OPERA

Presented by the Shotgun Players at 8 p.m. Thursday–Saturday and at 5 p.m. Sunday through Jan. 17. Ashby Stage, 1901 Ashby Ave. $18-$30. 841-6500. www.shotgunplayers.org.

Later, after a rhyme and song begging forgiveness of mankind (adorably pickpock-
ted by Brecht from François Villon), a happy ending is provided when Macbeth is snatched from the gallows (here, The Chair—did England ever have one?)

given a title and income, any messy cruci-
fication then, of semiprofessional dancers. There working together. It’s got a helping mes-

Continued on Page Nineteen

The Sugar Plum Fairy Returns to Berkeley

By KEN BULLOCK Special to the Planet

T

he little angels in our Nutcracker are our 7- and 8-year-old students,” said Berkeley Ballet Theater Artistic Director Emerita Sally Streets. “It’s nice for young audience members to see someone their own age up on stage.”

Streets choreographed the theater’s Nut-
cracker—onstage this weekend and next at the Julia Morgan Thea-
ter on College Avenue—with her son, Robert Nichols, 25 years ago.

Berkeley Ballet Thea-
ter’s performances are family-friendly in many ways, from showtimes—matinées (often sold out) at 2, evenings at 7—to the intimate venue of the Julia Morgan Theater. “There’s a warm feeling in the audience—and there’s not a bad seat; none is far from the stage,” said Streets.

There’s also that “Berkeley slant” of social awareness to the story that Streets and Nichols tipped in, as Susan Weber, BBT’s associate artistic director, put it: the children in the story, taken from E. T. A. Hoffmann’s novella on Tchaikovsky’s ballet, “are homeless, cuddling in the cold, outside a shelter. The little girl has a dream of the fantastic events of the ballet—or is it a dream?”

Streets recalled the early days of their unique version of what’s become the Christmas classic of dance.

“It was built piecemeal,” she said. “We worked together. It’s got a helping mes-

THE NUTCRACKER

Presented by the Berkeley Ballet Theater at 2 and 7 p.m. Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays through Dec. 20 at Julia Morgan Theater, 2640 Col-


were no children in it at first. As we enlarged, we used the children from the school in the production. It started to become what it is today in the 1990s. And we continue to change something each year. New costumes, new variations. Shep-

herdesses and little lambs have been added to the scenario. We have extra kids this year, so two little black sheep have been incorporated into the dance.”

Streets originally made all the costumes for the show. She also recalled local archi-

test and artist David Ludwig painting scenery backdrops on silk, “which packed up easily.” Ludwig also served on the BBT board—and even danced the part of Scrooge.

“It’s a very accessible ballet,” Streets commented. “It’s not too long—and moves right along. There’s always a lot of children in the audience.”

The school and company website (www.berkeleyballet.org) features preballet classes, with parental participation; classes for children and adults, as well as the youth company, to give young dancers group production experience. “We pride ourselves on our young dancers doing all the parts,” Streets said. “The advanced stu-
dents take the lead roles. It gives them wonderful professional experience.”

Webber noted the cast ages run from seven years old through high school, and that “mostly male artists, from well-known Bay Area companies,” are often incorporated into the production.

She also mentioned BBT’s excitement over their new artistic director, Ilona McHugh. “She was with American Ballet Theatre, and has had a tremendous per-

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

‘THE BRONTE CYCLE’ CONTINUES

John O’Keefe’s The Bronte Cycle, Part 1 was performed

Monday night by an enthusiastic Subterranean Shake-

speare cast of nine, directed by Diane Jackson, on a

unique version of what’s become the

Christmas classic of dance.

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“it a very accessible ballet,” Streets commented. “It’s not too long—and moves right along. There’re always a lot of chil-

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THE BERKELEY DAILY PLANET

McHugh. “She was with American Ballet

The motto on BBT’s website reads, “Where all may dance.”

Continued on Page Nineteen

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PALOMA’S HAWAIIAN HOLIDAY

Paloma, the Bay Area-based Hawaiian music duo that brings together beautiful vocal harmonies and slack-key guitar, will celebrate the release of its new CD, “The Song Within the Song.” Saturday with music, hula dance-

ing and special guests at the Berkeley Federation of Uni-
tarian Universalists, 1924 Cedar St. Show begins at 8 p.m., doors open at 7:30. Admission is $10 advance at www.brownpapertickets.com, $12 at door. For more information, www.pulamamusic.com, or 526-8099.

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Books

BART

Bart

supposed to be there two hours."

him. He has Parkinson’s, and was only

sit on his lap and take a picture with

BART station for six hours. Ali was

line four deep, from the bookstore, back

Oakland store five years ago.

"It looked like the United Nations

By KEN BULLOCK

"It’s important to raise funds for the

of poetry books.

items for sale: Kinaras, candles, posters

beauty, leading him to invite visiting

open "scouting trip" to the city offered to put

All the other elders looked

jumped up, went to the mic, and said

very smart. "The er’s— the long-winded preachers and

at her … Ralph Ellison was a classmate …

thought, what else could my parents have become?"

When the Richards moved to San

Warren, ‘Angelo’s stepfather,” she said. “Our family lived with them a while.

Dad passed in August 2000.”

And all the other elders would truly

wished he was there! So witty and

there, not saying anything! Very smart. But

William wouldn’t stop himself. He

jumped up, went to the mic, and said

My mother had him sitting up

around over the years, mostly due to the

Richardson reeled off a list of names of

Richardson said. "Now B&N’s with-

Richardson reeled off a list of names of

books, which found its way into the

Learning the business and still run the

stores. Raye Richardson “had a big part in

in the community.”

Mothers in the community, and surviv-

of the community.”

The Richardson children grew up

"They’re so boring People’s Bazaar in the 1970s,

mythology section, and helped in planning the

association and helped in planning the annual

the strikes there, my parents put the

Department anywhere, at SF State.

"black people forced out of San Francis-

Everybody feels it,” Richardson said,

by redevelopment, it was no longer a

African American cultural and political

by redevelopment, it was no longer a

Marcus Book Stores followed the exo-

The Richardson children grew up

bookstores nationwide.”

about 80 percent of black books were

Marcus Book Stores continue to

“carry everything we can afford to carry,

Famed Oakland artist Woody John-

when Braithwaite opened. The late poet

Reginald Lockett, another old friend, had

her mother’s beloved handpicked stock

of poetry books, including famous State of California

did a lot of political work, a lot with

and political work, a lot with

would tell our story?”

Books Hosts Benefit Extravaganza

By KEN BULLOCK

By BY KEN BULLOCK

"It was in perfect shape, with parch-

name pages sewn together, and a picture of

_index for a course in Black Studies—as

now books—in October 2007, said “I

found the hand-toolered leather-covered pro-

Tuskegee Institute, where he was an instruc-

Alone; former San Francisco Laureates
devorah major and Jack Hirschman. Alamada’s poet

Poet Laureate of San Francisco, Rujed and

Philosophy and Opinions of Mar-

were here—the publishers wouldn’t

sell. There’d be no contracts for Black

"talking,'” she said, "it’s too soon to tell.

"What we need to do is get all of the

When the State Offices Building was

It was at a difficult time, difficult even

The poems-musicians of the

"I’m at ‘then some’!” Braithwaite

"Dad had learned lithography at Tuskegee.

"Our family lived with them a while.

Raye Richardson recalled his irrepressible sense of

humor, leading him to invite visiting

Muslim leader Malcolm X “down to the

corner barbecue joint for some pork

not saying anything! Very smart. But

William wouldn’t stop himself. He

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**FRI., DEC. 11**

**AURORA**

“Aurora Theatre” Fat Pig through Dec. 13, at 2087 Addison. Tickets are $15-$35. 525-8824. auroratheatre.org

**BERKELEY BLACK REP**

Russian Christmas Carol, Fri. and Sat. at 8 p.m., and Sun. at 2 p.m. at the Julia Morgan Center for the Arts at 2040拍脉 Ave. Tickets are $30.54-$88.469.8989.

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It is a film in which Keaton essentially steps aside for a moment and allows his audience, examining the film itself before taking it by the hand, leading us through the looking glass of Keaton’s movie, as Walter Kerr said, “simultaneously brilliant film comedy and brainy film criticism.

Sherlock Jr. shows at 7 p.m. this Saturday at the Castro Theater as part of the San Francisco Film Festival in the 35th annual winter event. The day also includes screenings of the Wilder film at 11:30 a.m.; the U.S. premiere of the original, uncut version of Abel Gance’s J’acuno at 2 p.m.; and at 9:15 p.m., West of Zanzibar, one of several collaborations between the great Lon Chaney and director Tod Browning, best known today as the man who gave us Freaks.

Sherlock Jr. opens with Buster as a movie theater projectionist who dreams of being a great detective. But when a rival frames Buster for stealing from a watch with his best girl’s father, Buster is unable to unravel the crime to prove his innocence. He retreats to a coffeehouse in the rain, and forlorn, and after setting the reels in motion for a movie called Hearts and Pearls, he falls asleep.

Thus far the film retains the classical form of the great silent comedies, and though he closes the film in a conventional fashion, it is a unique take on the Christmas tale without spoken words. Fri.-Sun. at 7:30 p.m. at First Congregational Church of Berkeley, 2354 Channing Way, at Dana. Tickets are $5-$10. For reservations call 894-1696.

Hericet Entertainment “It’s a Bloomin’ Twofor” 2 one-act musicals, “Bozical” and “Happy Pants” Fri. and Sat. at 8 p.m. and Sun. at 2 p.m. at Live Oak Theater, 1301 Shattuck Ave. Tickets are $15-$22. 525-5054. www.hericetnow.com

“Reality Playthings” experiments in experimental art at Temescal Arts Center, 511 48th St., Oakland. For reservations call 531-8714.

Songshot Players “The Three-penny Opera” Thurs.-Sat. at 8 p.m., Sun. at 5 p.m. at The Ashby Stage, 1901 Ashby Ave., through Jan. 17. Tickets are $15-$40.

“The Stone Wise” Fri. and Sat. at 8 p.m. and Sun. at 6 p.m. at Berkeley City Club, 2315 Durant Ave., through Dec. 20. Tickets at the door are $15-$30.

147-3929.

Dame Gillian Wiseman at 8 p.m. at The Gaia Arts Center, 2116 Allston Way. Tickets are $35.

William Fawcett’s a la mode who gave us the great Lon Chaney and director Tod Browning, best known today as the man who gave us Freaks.

Continued from Page Seventeen

Buster Keaton Jr.: Brilliant Film Comedy, Criticism

I t’s The General, 1926, Buster Keaton’s best-known work, shows the great comedian in what is perhaps his most famous and memorable role, the Wilkins boy, who, by his adept use of the nature of the medium. Keaton’s own melodrama—his rival, his dreams as a series of dissolves show the look of his life and loves, his relationships, his action, his competing desires, his connections to the world around him.

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A male writer wants his girlfriend’s opinion of a story he’s written. The writer is in the States; the woman is in question is in Cairo. The text could be obliquely about their relationship, or at least his attitude about telephoning, with Arabic women in particular. What are her thoughts? “I’m not even brutality.” he says. The writer受邀 for the Audience for Yusef Al-Galudi’s acerbically funny dialogue, The Review, which premiered at Theatre Arturda during Golden Thread’s ReOrient Forum: Middle East Center Stage last weekend, never saw or heard more than a few tossed-off snippets of radio’s satire. But they did get the impact of Shadeyeh’s image of Keaton piloting his car across a

Golden Thread Breaks Ground with International Skype Play

By KEN BULLOCK Special to the Planet

Review

According to Mrs. Pinter’s Old Times for TheatreFIRST and Bernard

Instant Runoff Voting Machines Approved for Alameda County

Continued from Page Fifteen

Worthington said the Berkeley City Council would soon vote on how much money the city would be spending toward educating citizens about IRV. He attempted to explain the IRV system in layman’s terms: “When you vote, you can say my first choice is candidate A, second choice is Yogi Berra and third choice is Minnie Mouse,” he said. “You only get to vote for three people. If the first choice gets dropped, you get to vote for the second choice; if the second choice gets dropped, your vote will transfer to the third person.” Under the current system, if no candidate gets 50 percent of the votes, a brand new election is held and there is a run-off election for the top two voters.

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Shotgun Stages Bertolt Brecht’s ‘Threepenny Opera’

Continued from Page Fifteen

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December 10-16, 2009 Page 19

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The Berkeley Daily Planet

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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But meanwhile, as Buster dreams, his
domesticated into Sherlock Jr., is able to pass

The Berkeley City has spent more than that see Keaton riding atop the handlebars of the street; leaps through a window and is

And there’s much more: A masterly dis-

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Brecht wrote with admiration of

And she: “I’m not even brutality.” the writer

continues from Page Sixteen

The songs provide the brightest moments of the production. The ensemble

continues from Page Sixteen

continues from Page Sixteen

Continued from Page Fifteen

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Gogol’s

Civil election when you can resolve elections

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According to Cowan, and proceedings were over within minutes. “The Moore appealed to a court a judgment in April 2009,” Cowan said, “under which the drug and criminal activity at and around the property was adjudicated to be a nuisance,” Cowan said. “It was more than that.” The motion said Moore lives at the house with “numerous members of her family and their associates, most of whom are known drug users and dealers” and that the Berkeley Police Department “consistently receives calls regarding unlawful drug and criminal activity at and around the house.”

In 1992, 31 of Moore’s neighbors filed a small claims lawsuit against her alleging that she had allowed her home to become a “focal point for the sale and distribution of narcotics.” Although Moore appealed, she lost and was ordered to pay $155,000 to neighbors. She later filed for bankruptcy and never paid the settlement.

Moore was sued once again in 2006 and the court ordered her to pay $70,000 to neighbors. Although neighbors did not show up at the hearing because they feared retaliation, most were relieved by the judge’s decision. Cowan said former Mayor Shirley Dean, who worked to resolve the problem as mayor, had shown up in court with her husband by providing them with services.

“We were able to get the property repaired and cleaned up for a while, but it didn’t last,” she wrote. “The situation on Oregon Street represents the failure of our city and ourselves. The homes that are rightfully and normally expected by residents anywhere and any place. When a city falls down, it is very disheartening. It is undeniable that that neighborhood and its residents feel as if and in fact, are being treated as if they are invisible. In this case, the record screams with accounts of murders, shootings, two small-claims prosecutions, and three small-claims judgments that were upheld in favor of the neighbors by Superior Court judges, police departments, drug dealing and possession arrests. There is absolutely no doubt that 1610 is a problem. In the most recent court appeal, the owner of the property herself legally admitted that her property did indeed constitute a nuisance!”

I sure hope this means the city will take responsibility for public safety issues and public nuisance issues instead of placing the burden on neighbors,” said one neighbor, who spoke on condition of anonymity. “(The city) wouldn’t do anything for a long time, and then just as we were about to deal with it.”

Osha Neumann, a Berkeley attorney who provided assistance to Moore when her neighbors filed a small-claims action, called the whole thing a “sad, difficult situation.”

The allegation was that the house was the center of a lot of drug activity,” Neumann said. “It was extremely complicated to figure out how much was actually related to her. She had a large extended family. There were several people who were always in and out of that place.”

Neumann said Moore came to him while she was serving as the chair of the Ashby Flea Market. He recalled that Moore’s husband was disabled. “She raised a lot of issues,” Neumann said. “She was a grandmother who tried to deal with a complicated situation. It was tragic all around. There was no social solution to the issue.”

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Human Face of Budget Cuts

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Organizers were the appropriate target for protest actions. At the University of California, researchers into university finances by UC professors has shown that the administration has much better alternatives available than cutting classes and staff and raising fees. Hence, the organizers argued that when UC President Mark Yudof counseled the protesters to take their complaints to Sacramento, he was being a little bit naive about the leadership that his own administration has provided.

In California’s community college system, on the other hand, some of the protest organizers said there is not much else they can do. That can be removed in order to restore funding for valid educational purposes. For example, the record screams with accounts of the high-paid administrators at De Anza College and a Peralta Community College Trustee, who was present at the BCC luncheon, said, “We’re not going to change until we change the state budget process and we do away with minority decision making in the Legislature. Until that happens, we are screwed.”

Moore and her husband by providing them with services.

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A Paeon for Ruth Stout

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continued from negotiations with Schadel’s union, the California School Employees Association. “They tell us we don’t need to see it,” Schadel fumes. And while the state only mandates a 5 percent cut in funding, the university is proposing a whopping that to 7 percent. “They’re balancing their budget on classified employees and on unclassified employees. It’s really disheartening if you have any confidence in their ability to make good decisions. If they won’t show us the evidence of their credibility, then they’re telling us the truth about the need to do all this,” said one professor.

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Human Face of Budget Cuts

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The Berkeley Daily Planet

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December 10-16, 2009
City Council Amends Noise Law, Remands Landmark to LPC

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from the public, the council made amendment to the city's revised noise ordinance. It rescinded its first reading from Nov. 17 and allowed for two changes proposed by Councilmember Jesse Arreguin.

Berkeley Mayor Tom Bates, who is on vacation, will bring up two changes proposed by Councilmember Jesse Arreguin.

The city's updated noise ordinance loosens sound limits for music venues and clubs. The council also passed new limits which make enforcement easier.

Arreguin said that he was concerned about a section of the changed ordinance which gave city staff the discretion to determine whether it's feasible for the person violating the ordinance to mitigate the problem.

Arreguin's amendments give people the right to appeal staff's decision to the city manager within 30 days.

City Councilmember Gordon Wozniak said he would like the city to address noise violations on weekends, when the city's noise control officer is not at work, as well as dealing with other noise complaints that rise above the income earners. The barrier to doing this, he says, is political: "Those 2 to 3 percent of the population run things in California. There are also the people who contribute disproportionately to political campaigns, and they are represented on the Board of Regents.

Meister issued a challenge to advocates of public higher education, asking them to demonstrate why the state should maintain its commitment to affordability. The university has never fully lived up to that commitment, Meister said, and until it does, the city must continue to repudiate it entirely. Only students who are wealthy enough to pay for their own education, he argues, can stand on its own, not because there's some vague association with Bernard Maybeck, but because they are the only ones who can make the university's financial transparancy transparent, and to restore public trust that the university will serve all Californians."

Following Meister's talk, those inside Wheeler auditorium were urged by UC police to leave. The group discussed whether or not to comply with this demand, and voted to stay. A widely shared sentiment was that "This building is really our building—it should serve those of us being educated, not the police or the administration—so we should be able to remain here."

"Not everyone agrees with this conception of the autonomy of the learning community. Brian Puganowski, who has a bachelor's degree in chemistry from UC, objects that "Even with the drastic cuts made by the state government, the UC system still receives a great deal of money from the state, and it's foolish to think that the state should have no say in how that money is spent."

Protesters make the case, however, that a university community that empowers a measure of self-determination serves the public interest better than the Board of Regents does. They say, moreover, that higher education is most likely to yield independent-thinking, creative citizens if it is self-motivated and participatory.

Near midnight on Monday, the police backed down on their threat to take action against the students, and about 70 of them bedded down for the night in the space that they are calling an "open university."

Raymond Barglow

Protesters took over UC Wheeler Hall again this week and unfurled a giant banner from the balcony.

Choosing to consider the appeal by UC Regents themselves instead of the university administration, the council remanded the Landmark Protection Commission's decision to issuing an erroneous use permit to the Berkeley City Council. Monday night's vote is the latest in a string of decisions that have been criticized by local activist groups and community members. The council remanded the Landmark Protection Commission's decision to issuing an erroneous use permit to the Berkeley City Council. Monday night's vote is the latest in a string of decisions that have been criticized by local activist groups and community members.

Continued from Page One

Students at Wheeler Hall were absent from the meeting. This most recent action began on the steps of Wheeler at 2:30 p.m. Monday when Professor Meister from UC Santa Cruz addressed the students in Wheeler auditorium. He talked about the university representing its financial situation to the world. "The administration is telling us that the problem is so serious that global factors, nothing can be done."

Meister says, though, that research he and his colleagues are doing shows that university finances indicates that the crisis has been manufactured by the UC Regents themselves, and that there is no assurance that revenue from the hikes in student fees will be used to restore classes, jobs, or services that have recently been eliminated.

According to Meister, UC is adopting the pricing model of private universities: education will receive one, Meister says. As at Stanford, so at UC. But local architect David Tractenberg, who spoke on behalf of the building's owners, said that the applicant made "every effort to convince people that Maybeck was the architect."

"It's intentionally misleading," he said. "It's praise for a building next door (1001 University Ave.) which simply looks like Maybeck, but which has some technical errors. It's worth pointing out that the LPC plays an important role, but this kind of sloppy action damages its reputation."

"We strongly support health care reform but it is unconscionable that this should come at the expense of a woman's reproductive rights. A policy which sacrifices women's rights and protections cannot be labeled 'reform.'" Please reconsider your vote and do everything possible to ensure that the health care bill that comes out of the conference committee does not take us back to an era of coat hangers and back-alley abortions."
Schwarzenegger on Oct. 11, 2009. Both the Senate Local Government Committee and the Assembly Committee on Local Government introduced an omnibus bill—also known as a “clean-up bill”—as a more expedient way to streamline local government law.

But a lawsuit by the Panoramic Hill Association, a neighborhood group that has sued the university for proposing to build on the Hayward Fault, makes the amendment controversy more acute. Arreguin said, and thus inappropriate for inclusion in the Omnibus Act.

He directly affects the whole purpose of the lawsuit and the parties of the lawsuit, he said. The suit is currently waiting to go before the state appellate court.

UC Berkeley spokesperson Dan Mogulof defended the university’s decision to request the amendment. “It really depends on how you define controversy,” Mogulof said. “We rarely see anything in the state or the city that’s non-controversial. There’s little controversy over a project that desires to spend private funds to make a seismically unsafe structure safe.”

Mogulof added that the provision would only apply to retrofitting existing structures and not new construction.

The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act prohibits new projects in defined earthquake fault zones, but allows for an “alteration or addition” to a project “if the value of the alteration or addition does not exceed 50 percent of the value of the structure.”

The retrofitting and expansion of Memorial Stadium itself would begin, according to an approximate list of buildings on the campus to have been included in an omnibus bill. Compared to the other items in SB 113, your request looks more substantive.

He said in the letter that he intended to send the proposed amendment to more than 125 reviewers for comment. He added that if the amendment had been a separate bill, as a policy committee consultant he would have wanted more than just reviewers. That committee is already on the state Register of Historic Resources, and of those, how many were owned by the state, in order to determine where the amendment might apply.

He said, “I don’t know what we are exempting.” Detweiler wrote. “I don’t want you to be surprised or disappointed if some more sensitive objects (or even raises an eyebrow).”

When reached Wednesday, Detweiler said he was “not sure that it’s going to survive the review process. … Our motto is ‘if it’s not consensus, it’s not omnibus.’ If anyone raises an eyebrow, even if they don’t object to the substance, the request doesn’t go into the committee’s omnibus bill. Sometimes a reviewer will say, gee, that’s a fine idea but it deserves more attention than getting stuck into an omnibus bill. Compared to the other items in SB 113, your request looks more substantive.”

Mogulof said that construction on Memorial Stadium itself would begin after the UC regents voted on approving it in January. The adjoining Student High Performance Athletic Center, which is being built on the former site of the stadium’s oak grove, does not benefit from the amendment because it would still straddle an active fault and does not connect to the stadium, he said.

Arreguin’s memo says that the university requested that the Senate Local Government Committee pass the amendment to “specifically enable the university to move forward with” the Memorial Stadium projects.

Campus officials started planning seismic and disability-access improvements after a 1998 seismic study gave it a “poor rating.”

In a recent e-mail to the committee, UC’s Senior Legislative Director Happy Chastain wrote that the university believes that Alquist-Priolo “is vague regarding exemptions for state entities.”

She said that there was ambiguity in how the act applied to retrofitting Memorial Stadium.

A Nov. 13 internal e-mail between Skinner’s legislative director Liz Mooney and her senior field representative Maha Ibrahim, after the bill was passed, shows that Mooney had not been notified of the Senate Local Government Committee’s amendment.

She said that the Building Standards Commission, the Sierra Club and League of Conservation Voters had not expressed concerns about the exemption.

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The coming week is likely to see most individuals split into two distinct groups or teams, each dealing with circumstances and developments in ways that are defining and, for the time being at least, unchangeable. On the one hand, there are those who will say, “Look what I did today” -- those who take charge, make things happen, enjoy the fruits of their labors, or even accept willingly any negative results they may have brought about. On the other hand, there are those who will say, “Look what happened to me today” -- those who prefer to look at the world in a passive, reactive and often disappointed fashion: “Look what happened to me today” is what they say.

Regardless of which group someone may find himself or herself in at this time, there is much to be learned as a result. Indeed, almost every endeavor, every activity, every circumstance and every development is likely to turn a microscope on each individual, revealing heretofore undiscovered details deep within.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 7) -- You may be unusually hard on yourself, but the truth is that you're overlooking a few things of which you can be proud.

(Cap. 22-Dec. 21) -- You can learn a great deal through experimentation -- what works with what, and why.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 6) -- Concentrate on keeping things simple and uncluttered, moving forward at a pace that you can sustain throughout the week.

(Cap. 7-Jan. 19) -- You can take your cue from those who have succeeded in the past, but be sure to update techniques to suit you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 3) -- You may be looking more deeply at issues and situations, coming up with more truths than you are used to seeing.

(Feb. 4-Feb. 18) -- What you do is likely to be judged by those who have been there before. Individuality counts for much.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 5) -- You may be surprised that others do not respond to your ideas -- or the execution of them -- as you expected. Is it really your best work?

(March 6-March 20) -- You're in the mood for something a little decadent, and no one is going to stop you from indulging a bit.

ARIES (March 21-April 4) -- Even though you are following the rules to the letter, there's still a little room to show off your individual style.

(April 5-April 19) -- You can't get around the way things are today -- unless you're willing to change them from the ground up.

TAURUS (April 20-May 1) -- Something you thought would be a slam-dunk is likely to take far more time and effort than you or anyone else expects.

(May 2-June 21) -- You may find as you try to map out a strategy to compete with the best, but in fact you are pressed and only to amble but to lose, Class June 20: Potential is high at this time, but your own attitude may be holding you back. Drive is high to lighten up.

CANCER (July 22-Aug. 7) -- It's a good week to focus on endeavors designed to benefit others, and to share the limelight with prominent others.

(Aug. 8-Aug. 21) -- You may be responsible for a great deal more than you had planned. Scheduling is key.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 7) -- It's a good week to focus on endeavors designed to benefit others, and to share the limelight with prominent others.

(Sep. 23-Sept. 27) -- You know what you're doing when you choose your tools; you want only the best, to make the best.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) -- If it's adventure you're after, you may have it, but you won't want to go down this road on your own. Choose your companion carefully.

(Lib. 13-Sept. 26) -- You may feel as though you're ill-equipped to compete with the best, but in fact you are pressed and only to amble but to lose, Class June 20: Potential is high at this time, but your own attitude may be holding you back. Drive is high to lighten up.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 4) -- You're likely to find your inspiration at an unusual place -- and, in the end, it's likely to take shape in an unusual way.

(Oct. 5-Sept. 22) -- You know what you're doing when you choose your tools; you want only the best, to make the best.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 7) -- Not everyone is going to play by your rules, and you must be determined from the beginning to make it out to get you. (Nov. 8-Nov. 21) -- You are likely to surprise your rivals -- and your critics -- by turning in a performance that can't be beat.

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Complete the grids so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1-9 inclusively. The answers to these puzzles can be found on the following page.
LETTERS

Continued from Page Twelve

The speech follows classic form. President Obama reviews eight years in the inciting action of Sept. 11, 2001, details his plans for averting potential objections and ends with a patriotic peroration. It was well written, well reasoned and although Obama's delivery was smooth it was neither passionate nor arousing this prompting my suspicion that deep down the president was not at all sure his plans would work. My view of the speech may be biased because I am absolutely opposed to sending more troops; I want the president to order the young men and women who are there home.

In the end, the speech does not actually elaborate an honest-to-goodness military strategy which means that Obama's strategy must be something other than military.

The core elements of his strategy, he said, were: "...a military effort to create conditions for a transition; a civilian surge that reinforces positive action; and an effective partnership with Pakistan." The first is rotten—we’ve been trying for over eight years. The second element is vague and the third is wishful thinking.

The word "strategy" evolved from "stratagem" which, in the 16th century, meant a trick to surprise the enemy (Oxford Concise Dictionary of English Etymology). Obama’s speech lays out an un-surprising stratagem, not a strategy. I hope the trick works, but I doubt it will.

Marvin Chachere
San Pablo

MIDTERM ELECTIONS

Editors, Daily Planet:

The midterm elections are going to be a nightmare of negative reaction from progressive voters. Many of us feel so disenfranchised and defrauded. The Public Option is the core value of any progressive voter. That and the freedom of a woman to choose. But you already know all this.

Victor Miller
Alameda

HEALTH CARE

Editors, Daily Planet:

It is time to provide quality, affordable, health care—insurance reform for all Americans. While Medicare needs audit and investigators to eliminate fraud—as do our banks, brokerage houses, etc. Medicare equalizes or improves comparison health between USA and other developed countries. It’s time.

Sheila Leonard
Alameda

COPENHAGEN CONFERENCE

Editors, Daily Planet:

Over the past few weeks much media attention has been directed to the Copenhagen Conference on climate change that will be useless even if every “emission controlling” action gets roaringly approved. First simple point on this is that growing populations will thwart projected goals unless fuel burning is maintained at present levels restricting the fulfilling of the needs of the next generation because no one has any meaningful proposals on getting control of that heat energy—we can turn to our massive ever-mounting messes of organic wastes and sewage solids and make them a resource for generating some renewable energy and removing some energy and carbon from recycling in the biosphere. A process called pyrolysis can be applied to these messes to stop them from being allowed to biodegrade to reemit GHGs and toxics and drugs in the messes greatly reducing costs and pollution problems in handling the messes. The process forms inert charcoal removing recycling carbon and energy from the biosphere as that is rotten—we’ve been trying for over eight years. The second element is vague and the third is wishful thinking.

Julie Keitges
Fremont

MEDICARE FOR ALL

Editors, Daily Planet:

We do not need a bail out for the insurance companies. We don’t need to forced to buy their faulty, worthless products at ever increasing costs. We need access to real health care. Medicare for all is the only way to do this so simply and swiftly. Sixty percent of all U.S. citizens want this and are willing to pay taxes to achieve it.

Julie Keitges

GET FUZZY

Darby Conley

Answers to the Sudoku puzzles from the preceding page.

1. 4 6 1 8 2 7 3 9 6
   2. 3 5 6 1 4 8 7 9 2

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Copenhagen...the term “greenhouse” makes it sound sort of serene. Copenhagen...more of a fish stew shop really.

Julie Keitges

Fremont

Answers to the Sudoku puzzles from the preceding page.

1. 4 5 1 8 7 9 2 6 3
   2. 2 5 9 1 8 3 7 6 4
We can't have a jazz band and no home- work center.

For almost 15 years, Jeff Narell has pro- vided kids without any musical experience the opportunity to learn how to play an instrument in his steel drum classes. Steel drums, or steel pans, is a form of music that originated in the Western Caribbean; panists create a full range of beats, rhythms, pitches and melodies by pounding on recycled oil drums in an assemble, like a percussion orchestra. At Longfel- low, the kids get to choose songs—any- thing from Michael Jackson to TV show tunes—and Narrell arranges them to percussion melodies for the band to play.

"Kids who don't have the money or training to take part in the other musical offerings at the school take my class," Narell said. "Most of these kids have never played before and then they are out performing in only a few months. To lose that, I'll find another school where I can teach, but a lot of these kids will be deprived of their only musical experi- ence."

For students who do have experience playing instruments, the Longfellow Jazz band can be a stepping stone toward careers in music. Graduates of the Longfellow band have a tradition of going on to play at Berkeley High School, which has one of the country's most renowned high school jazz programs. From there, some have received scholarships to attend world-class music schools, like the San- hattan School of Music and the Berklee College of Music. Eventually, many will play in any of the live music exper- ence in the Bay Area.

"This will really hurt Berkeley High and the whole music scene," said "Lumumba" Jackson, instructor of the Longfellows Jazz Band and a well-respected Bay Area percussionist. "It is time to make the Longfellow Jazz Band a cornerstone in the Bay Area musical heri- tage."

The quality of Longfellows's after school performance arts program is a reflection of the vision and dedication of Tina Lewis, the school's music coordinator, through last June. Lewis said one reason why she's promoted performance arts is because they often provide students who tend not to do well in regular classes with another resource for learning.

"If arts can support stu- dents in an academic way," she said. "Often times these kids are disenfran- chised by the learning process. They think, 'I can't do this.' Over and over again it's been proven that music can stimulate the brain. People who are deprived in music tend to learn. Art is education."

Last spring, when it became apparent that funding for some of the arts classes would be cut, Lewis rallied a group of par- ents to form a sub-committee of the PTA dedicated fund to support the arts. The par- ents, including the author of this piece, then took the issue to the Haas Foundation and sent out letters to over 200 local busi- nesses seeking donations. The request led to make the Winter Arts Fest, the arts enrichment program's annual showcase, a fundraiser. The show starts at 6:30 p.m., Thursday December 10 and will feature performances by the student orchestra, the Dance Club, the Drama club, the Steel Drum Band and the Jazz Band. Attendees will be also be able to purchase concessions shopping at the gift sale or win a number of prizes in the raffle. The arts committee is seeking contributions from anyone who can't make it out to the performance, but still want to support the program.

The committee hopes to raise another $8,000 to continue Jazz Band and Steel drums in January, but they will need even more funds to keep the school's many after-school programs alive. Narell Jackson saying the classes will require philanthropy from those who want to pro- tect Berkeley's tradition of producing rich cultural art. "We need community support. There are so many jazz lovers in the city of Berkeley who must want to help these children out. We need their help to enrich these kids," he said.

Lumumba" Jackson, instructor of the Longfellow Jazz band, said the program is a major inducement (duh!), and someth- ing our environmental community has been fighting for, lo, these many years. "My belief is that arts can support stu- dents in an academic way," she said. "Often times these kids are disenfran- chised by the learning process. They think, 'I can't do this.' Over and over again it's been proven that music can stimulate the brain. People who are deprived in music tend to learn. Art is education."

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Little Green Legislative Update

Continued from Page Twenty-Seven

times their own cost for the power they generate on their roofs. This created a real solar fever, and solar panels were flying off the shelf at about nine times the rate of ours. In a country one third our population, that means their sales were essentially 27 times that of ours on a per capita basis. Clearly, allowing peo- ple to make money by generating power is a major inducement (duh!), and some- thing our environmental community has been fighting for, lo, these many years.

The specifics of how one would be paid (time of use issues, etc.) is not clear. The devil is always in the details, and nothing in my reading has yet shown me precisely how these calculations will be made. What was clear was that the legis- lation intends to treat homeowner-earn- ers the same as all other earners of solar power, excesses its quite a good thing from my substantial distance.

The second bill to pass was SB 32. Germany was coming up on a year's worth of research because the German people have taken green very seriously for a long time. One of the things that have definitely shown that Germany is the number one export economy in the world, so, appar- ently, they are green doing something right. Our system, on the other hand, can't make lots of money, I suspect it does require a more even distribution of wealth, and this is also true for Ger- many. SB 32 is the grandchild of the German Renewable Energy Sources Act, which helped solar generating systems do their "fed-in" tariff (which is what SB 32 is).

A "feed-in" tariff is a set of economic incentives designed to support the development of environmentally friendly energy generation and use. The Euro- pean Commission has said that, "...adapted feed-in tariff regimes are generally the most efficient and effective sup- port, in terms of promoting renewable electricity."

Using mechanisms known as "tariff degression," energy rates are initially mandated at a higher rate for various green energy sources (photovoltaic, wind, etc.) to come up against the cost of start-up costs and gradually decrease as the source becomes more economically viable. To be able to "feed-in" the power, and this seems quite a good thing to me."

In short, this new bill will adjust rates for various green providers so that they can compete against the cost of their equipment over a course of years (20 keeps coming up as the number, but this is a graduated system in which new Green energy generations are encouraged to start standing on their own as early as possi- ble.

So bully for Gloria Negrete McLeod (who authored this legislation), our state senate from Chico and a great grand- mother of 15!

Sadly, Senate Bill 14 was vetoed by the Governor. This bill, authored by Rep. Vic- tor Joe Simitian of the 11th district, among others, would have required that energy service providers (ESPs, no joke; doncha love it?), publicly owned utilities (POUs) and investor-owned utilities (IOUs) write to us. Lastly, as much as possible, at least 33 percent of their energy from renewable sources (wind, geothermal, solar, etc) by 2020.

Now, the current standard demands that by the end of next year, we reach 20 percent and with another 10 years to go another 13 percent. It’s a sorry condition in which we can’t manage to make a set of improvements as meager as this in another whole decade. How many more glaciers will have melted by this time? Where will sea level be? It’s clear that 2020 is coming up on us like a wave, and this is where the challenge is, is not burning them, its being green doesn’t mean you are depleting your energy generation and use. The Euro- pean Commission has said that "well- done, that is a major inducement (duh!) and some- thing our environmental community has been fighting for, lo, these many years."

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A Little Green Legislative Update

By MATT CANTOR

The first and most important bill passage was AB 201. The bill was supported by Environmental California (those people lately greening of California.

The bill is very complex, and even reading the Legislative Council’s Digest made me want to climb under my desk and hide, but it appears as if, assuming one completes a course in economics from Yale, that as of Jan. 1, 2011, your electrical provider will be required to pay you back for extra electricity that you generate, just as if you were one of those big, nasty electrical generating facilities. You'll bear with me, I'll give you a complete passage of two additional bills that would pass if they’d been appreciated.

Bill 5 is very complex, and even reading the Legislative Council’s Digest made me want to climb under my desk and hide, but it appears as if, assuming one completes a course in economics from Yale, that as of Jan. 1, 2011, your electrical provider will be required to pay you back for extra electricity you generate, just as if you were one of those big, nasty electrical generating facilities. You'll bear with me, I'll give you a complete passage of two additional bills that would pass if they’d been appreciated.

The German government has been doing this for years, and those of you who have been reading your birdcage lining for some time will remember that the German government was, several years back, paying its citizenry at a rate roughly eight years.) is having a good career, and it just got a lot better. This is the stuff that govern- nors are made of.

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Matt Cantor owns Cantor Inspections and lives in Berkeley. His column runs weekly.
Just as it’s getting cold and nasty out, I see the third movement in the street-tree symphony is well underway: Chinese pistache trees are resounding with color. After the young tupelos’ blast and the short, single-note fanfare of ginkgoes, their fiery crescendo will give way to the sustained theme of sweetgum for the rest of the winter; hopefully before I run this metaphor completely into the ground.

The Chinese pistache, *Pistacia chinensis* (big surprise), was introduced to the West by the legendary British plant hunter Ernest H. “Chinese” Wilson. It would be a stretch to say he discovered it, since the Chinese were well aware of its existence and virtues. In his memoir *A Naturalist in Western China*, which we happen to have in the house because Joe is a sucker for books whose titles start with A (or The) *A Naturalist in …*, Wilson writes that his Szechwanese hosts called it *huang-lien shu*, cooked and ate its young shoots, and used its logs, especially those with a natural fork, as the rudder-posts of boats.

Aside from its sheer gorgeousness, it’s valued in California as rootstock onto which the commercial pistachio, *P. vera*, is grafted. Wilson, a native of Chipping Campden, went to China in 1899 in the service of Veitch and Sons Nurseries. The elder Veitch had warned him: “My boy, stick to one thing you are after and do not spend time and money wandering about. Probably almost every individual plant in China has now been introduced into Europe.” Dead wrong. Wilson returned to England with 35 Wardian cases’ worth of plant material, including many species new to “Western” science. Among the 1,500 Chinese plants he brought into the horticultural trade are royal lily, paperbark maple and kiwifruit. Later forays for Boston’s Arnold Arboretum took him to India, Australia, New Zealand, the American tropics and East Africa. After all that, Wilson died young, in a motor vehicle accident near Worcester, Massachusetts.

Lately, Chinese scientists have called Chinese pistache “a superior species for biomass energy with high oil content in seeds.” This might be horticultural boosterism; I don’t know. The seeds are really small; there are lots of them but only on female trees and usually in significant quantities only after the trees are 15 to 20 years old. They’re in the berries that turn blue when ripe—look for them now, because they contrast with the remaining foliage—and birds eat them.

Beware of picking them, however. They have the same potential for skin irritation as the rest of the *Anacardiaceae* family. Relatives include *P. terebinthus* (formerly a source of turpentine), and *P. lentiscus* and *P. cabulica*, both sources of mastic, an edible resin used as chewing gum (which one masticates, see) and a flavoring agent.

Chinese pistache is considered invasive in Texas, probably because of those bird-dispersed seeds. The California Invasive Plants Council started looking hard at the species in 2006 but, as far as I know, hasn’t listed it yet. It’s “established” in Butte, El Dorado, Sacramento, Yolo, Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego counties. Oddly enough, it’s not considered invasive in Florida.