

**Enjoy
the spring!**

FREE - Please recycle!

Western Edition HP JOURNAL

APRIL 2016

Bridging San Francisco communities through nonprofit services

In This Issue...



Founder & CEO Rachel Caplan of the SF Green Film Festival, page 1



Executive Director Kate Hoepke, SF Village, page 2



President Lisa Gautier, Matter of Trust, page 10

Contents

SF News Briefs	3
Neighborhood News	7
Community Voices	8
MarketPlace	12

Cedric Moore	Publisher
Gretchen Quandt	Editor
Joe D'Arcy	Designer

Writers

Dani Clark, Rebecca Duran,
Sam Felsing, Paul Krantz,
Laurie MacDougall, Julie McCoy,
Jeffery Mendenhall, Peter Rapine,
Franklin Vaughn

Photographers

Paul Krantz, Peter Rapine

Columnists

Midgett, Erik Peper, PhD

The Western Edition now publishes quarterly. The next issue will be in July 2016. View the newspaper online, www.thewesteredition.com

Cherry Blossom Festival returns to Japantown in April



Previous Cherry Blossom Festival participants. Photo courtesy of Greg C. Viloria, www.nccbf.org.

By Rebecca Duran

In a gear up towards its 50th year, the 49th Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival takes place on April 9-10 and April 16-17.

To Greg Viloria, who has been a Japantown community liaison since 2013, it's amazing that an all-volunteer festival still exists after 49 years.

"It's a mix of us," Viloria said of the group. "A lot of us have Japanese connections, either in our family or previous lives, or some people have

lived in Japan even though they're not Japanese — people who really love the Japantown community and the Japanese culture."

Viloria added that their current committee of 44 people started as five, and the way he runs it is with three simple rules: 1) You have to make everyone at the festival feel happy. 2) You have to do your best. 3) You have to do things with joy.

This year, there will be four stages, including the newer stage

Sakura 360 — which means "cherry blossom" in Japanese.

This area, Viloria said, is geared towards the 18-30 demographic of anyone who loves Asian/ Japanese culture, and will showcase such activities as Kendama demonstrations — a Japanese toy with a ball and string — cosplay, and others.

"So, the reason it's called Sakura 360 is I found that Japanese culture kind of gets sent back to Japan," Viloria said. "It starts in Japan, then comes to the United States. We morph it and that morph goes back to Japan and may be adopted."

The main stage will consist of larger cultural traditions, while the area at the Japanese Cultural Community Center of Northern California and the building next to it will present traditional art forms of Japan, such as ikebana — forms of flower arrangement — washi ningyo — Japanese paper dolls — and bonsai.

At the Julia Morgan building, they will perform the traditional Japanese tea ceremony, which Viloria said is very unique. "I don't know of too many places you can come in one place and see Japanese culture

continued on page 12

Films that remind us of our priceless global heritage



The feature-length film "Born Free" opens the festival with its theme of the struggle for survival of African wildlife amid steadily eroding habitats. Photo courtesy of <http://www.greenvilmfest.org>.

By Peter Rapine

The 6th annual San Francisco Green Film Festival is about to kick off, and you do not want to miss it. The 2016 festival features the work of over 70 filmmakers and climate activists from around the world and runs from April 14 through April 20. With over 90 attending filmmakers and guest speakers this year's festival is set to be the biggest Green Film Festival to date. Each of the full-length feature films and short films presented by the San Francisco Green

Film Fest are eco-centered, which tackle the many faces and effects climate change has had around the world.

This year's theme is "Keep It Wild" — which focuses on the natural and untouched parts of our world. According to festival media, the theme is inspired by mass extinctions and wilderness losses all around the globe. The intent of the festival is to "explore and enjoy the wildlife and wilderness around us," because when we take part in our commu-

nities and local environments we become more interested in protecting these natural resources.

The mission of the festival is "to educate and connect communities through forward-thinking programs of environmental film and discussion." The San Francisco Green Film Festival — SFGFF — has showcased over 440 films since it's founding in 2011. Rachel Caplan the founder and CEO of SFGFF started the film festival with the intention of promoting

continued on page 9

Seniors

SF Village assists seniors and offers social and cultural enjoyment



[Clockwise from Top:]SF Village volunteers join a service circle; Volunteers gearing up for a day of service at the SFV office; group of volunteers and SFV staff person Keyatta Shade at Bonnie's home; SFV members participating in a private chocolate tasting at Dandelion Chocolate. Photos courtesy of Maya Kamath, <http://www.sfvillage.org/>.

By Julie McCoy

It is all about helping older adults and ensuring they continue to live meaningful and productive lives as they age.

San Francisco Village — a nonprofit, community-based membership organization at 3575 Geary Blvd. — connects older adults with volunteers and other resources that help make their lives better and easier, according to Executive Director Kate Hoepke.

"At San Francisco Village, we help people navigate the transition of people getting older," Hoepke explained.

If an older adult needs help around the house — for example, with laundry or light maintenance — SF Village can send a volunteer to take care of that. Additionally, if an older adult needs someone

"They trust us," Hoepke said. "That trusted relationship allows us to refer them to professionals."

SF Village also provides social connections for older adults. There are book and movie groups, lectures, ballet and jazz performances, museum tours and education classes for them to attend covering such topics as "How to Boost Your Brain Power."

SF Village's services are available to anyone 60 years of age or older, according to Hoepke.

Judy Jacobs, a volunteer who is also a member of SF Village, said she chose to get involved with the organization because, "I really wanted community. I wanted to build more community in my life — I had heard about this for ages. I knew I wanted to meet new people. What we all need is a sense of belonging. There is so much isolation."

Jacobs added, "I am a social being. As much as like I enjoy being alone, I enjoy being with other people. It's like starting a new school [when you first get involved with SF Village]. You don't know anybody yet and get to know people."

Jacobs appreciates SF Village because she is on her own and does not have any family members nearby. Her daughter lives 3,000 miles away in Brooklyn, NY.

SF Village is always trying to come up with something new, Jacobs pointed out. They are very interested in what people's interests are, so they pay attention to that. There are so many of us who are getting older and we need help.

"The main concept is to build community as you're getting older and finding close friends from it. It's so amazing to have something like this. It's wonderful. It's a new pace to go to."

Lynn Davis, another volunteer and member with SF Village, picks up people who are unable to drive. "I am not yet at the stage where I have called for assistance personally in my condo," she explained. "There are a lot of different volunteer potentials. I like the model they have."

Davis added, "Every chance I get, I talk about the village. That's how new members are intrigued by the village."

Steve Hayashi, who also is a volunteer as well as a member of SF Village, happens to be an engineer by trade and helps seniors when they have computer problems or need computer training.

Hayashi and his wife, Judy, also attend many of the educational offerings that SF Village provides. "It's been very positive," he said. "It's expanded our community. The community of folks we know."

In order to become a volunteer, it is necessary to fill out an application, attend a training session — which is offered once a month — and undergo a background check, explained Keyatta "Key" Shade, the manager of volunteers and members.

"Our country is aging. We are living a lot longer. There are a lot more of us. We are going to see San Francisco Village grow in our numbers and impact."

In 2016, SF Village plans to purchase some software that will allow it to serve a greater number of people. "Right now we don't have the platform to do that," Hoepke said.

The reward of running SF Village is in helping older adults with other people and resources they need, Hoepke explained. Meanwhile, the challenge is that older adults need help, but they are afraid to ask for it.

"They have judgment about what it means. They think it makes them less of a person, somehow weak. It's a false idea. Nobody goes through life on their own, Hoepke added."

Founded in January 2009 and celebrating seven years in business, SF Village is one of 350 villages that have been or are being created across the country, according to Hoepke.

Hoepke noted that about 50 percent of SF Village's budget comes from grants from private foundations and the city of San Francisco. "We're one of the few villages in the country that gets municipal funding," she said.

The remainder comes from membership fees and fundraisers. Membership costs just \$50 per month for an individual or \$62 for a household. Scholarships are available for those who qualify.

To date, SF Village has more than 375 members in 20 neighborhoods, according to Hoepke. The goal is to have 600 members by the end of 2018. Members are diverse in background and reflect the city's diversity. The number of Asian members is increasing, and Hoepke said she would like to see more African Americans take advantage of SF Village's services.

From the city's perspective, SF Village is a solution that meets the needs of those with mid-level incomes. Hoepke said, "The city is



who can pick up some groceries, or take them to a doctor's appointment, SF Village can send one of its volunteers to do that as well.

There are more than 300 volunteers, including non-members as well as members, who range in age from high school students to those who are older adults themselves. "They are a really important part of what we do," Hoepke explained.

Further, when an older adult needs a professional service, such as a financial advisor or a plumber, SF Village has a provider network through which it can make a referral.



"I am looking for someone who is looking for a meaningful experience, a memorable way for them to give back," Shade said.

Shade worked at Lighthouse for the Blind for eight years before joining SF Village, where many of the people he worked with were older adults, so it was an easy transition for him, he said.

SF Village will continue to grow as the number of older adults in the country continues to grow, Hoepke further emphasized. "We are an aging city," she explained.

continued on page 5

SF News Briefs

By Sam Felsing

Walk!

San Franciscans take an average of 8,242 steps a day, according to Fitbit — www.fitbit.com. Residents take more steps than citizens of any other U.S. city except New York. It is no wonder that www.Walkscore.com ranked San Francisco #2 on its list of the most walkable cities in the county. [New York, once again, ranked slightly above.] City residents should have no trouble then, for participating in this year's Walk to Work Day, happening on April 6.

Held each year by Walk San Francisco — the city's only pedestrian advocacy organization — Walk to Work Day is an effort to encourage healthier and more environmentally sustainable lifestyles among the city's residents. On the day, people are asked to simply add 15 minutes of walking to their daily commutes. Hopefully, they will enjoy the experience and then do it more often.

WALK TO WORK DAY

For those who need a little extra motivation to participate on April 6, Walk San Francisco will set up "Hubs" across the city, areas where walkers can collect such goodies as Clipper cards, tote bags and coffee. Prizes may also be rewarded to those who had the longest commutes, saw the most interesting sites during their travels, or had the best shoe bling.

To find out more, go to: <http://walksf.org/take-action/walk2work>.

Sí, Se Puede

In February of 1975, San Francisco played an important role in Cesar Chavez's quest for enhanced farm worker protec-

tions. It was in that city that several hundred members of Chavez's United Farm Workers Union — UFW — began their March to Modesto, a 110-mile walk to the E & J Gallo winery in the Central Valley. At the winery, the UFW marchers, joined by others from Fresno and Stockton, protested the winery's labor practices.

Nearly 15,000 people ended up participating in the march and winery demonstration, a showing of strength that helped the UFW put pressure on Governor Jerry Brown and legislators to act on farm worker rights legislation. Later in 1975, the California Agricultural Labor Relations Act was signed into law.

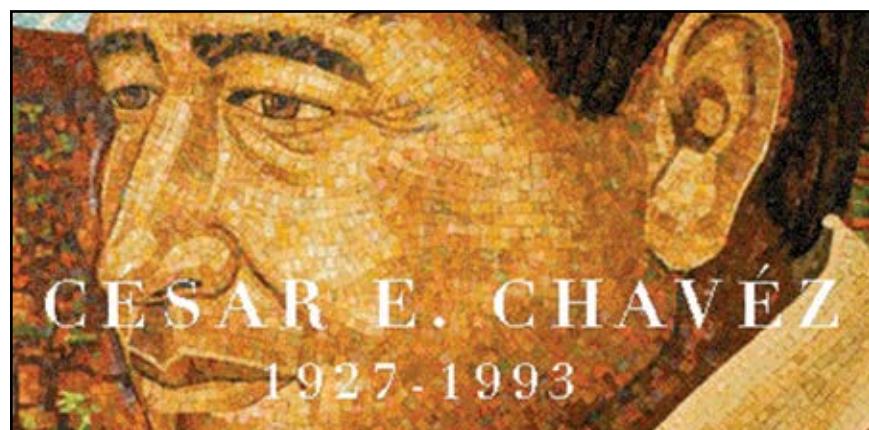
On Saturday, April 23, the city will honor Chavez by hosting the annual Cesar Chavez Parade & Festival. The parade is usually a mixture of dancers, school children, labor activists, politicians and more. It starts at 11 a.m. on the corner of 19th Street and Guerrero. The festival, which is held between Treat and Bryant

Streets, is an assortment of music and entertainment venues, as well as arts & crafts booths. It also starts at 11 a.m.

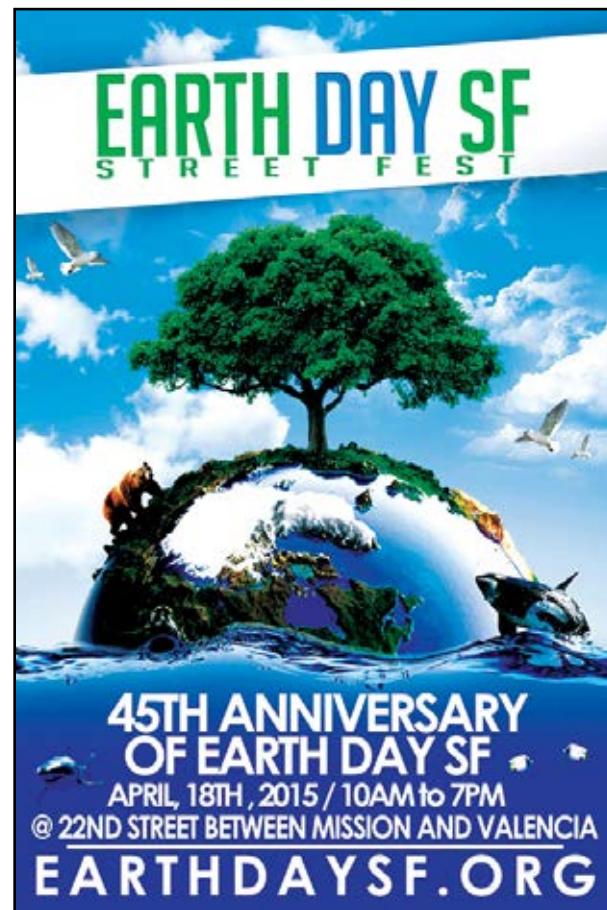
To find out more about Cesar Chavez, and the parade and festival named in his honor, go to: <http://www.cesarchavezday.org/index.html>.

Earth Day

It may seem like every day in San Francisco is Earth Day. From the city's efforts to produce zero waste by 2020, to its goal of transitioning to 100 percent renewable energy in the same year, to its recent attempt to divest from

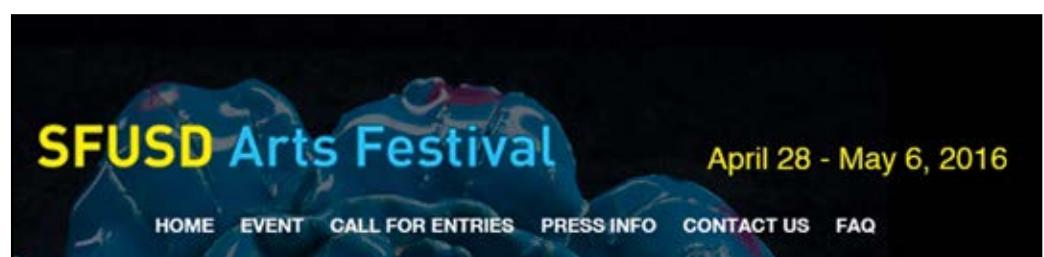


Cesar Chavez graphic via Google.com.



oil wells, the city has plenty of environmental consciousness. Yet, for residents who still feel like they need a specific day to contemplate the climate, nature, and habitats of the world, they'll get one.

On Saturday, April 23, the city will play host to the 46th Anniversary of Earth Day San Francisco. The day's festivities will begin with a Climate Justice Rally at Dolores Park at 10 a.m. Following the rally, Earth Day celebrators can participate in the Cesar Chavez Day Parade — happening at the same location at 11 a.m. — to help celebrate the famed civil rights leader's environmental justice work. After the parade, people can make their way to the Earth Day Street Fest at 22nd and Valencia Streets.



April 28 - May 6, 2016

District will hold its SFUSD Arts Festival from April 28 to May 6.

Held in the Asian Art Museum in the Civic Center, the SFUSD Arts Festival is a celebration of student creativity in the visual, literary, media and performing arts. For nearly a week, artwork from children in kindergarten through those in 8th grade will be on display in the museum. While the visual art will be on display daily, visual and spoken-word performances will only take place on April 28 and May 2-6.

Though the exhibit is run by the San Francisco Unified School District, students from private schools and community art groups within the city are also welcome to participate.

To find out more, go to: <http://www.sfusartsfestival.org>.

More than 250 artists make up the Hunters Points Shipyard Artists organization — HPSA. The artists work in two studio locations — one in Islais Creek and the other in Hunters Point — and specialize in crafts such as costume, etching, printmaking and sculpture, to name a few. Three times a year, the artists open up their studios for the public to enjoy their works.

On April 23-24, HPSA artists will hold their "Open Studios" where members of the public can come and view many of the fine pieces of art created by HPSA members. On both days, visitors can view HPSA works from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. To find out more about the event, go to <http://shipyardartists.com/>.

SFUSD Arts Festival

Art is important to young people's lives. Students who take part in some artistic endeavor can learn inventiveness, cultural awareness and decision-making. They can even improve their motor skills, language development and visual learning skills. To recognize the importance of art for children, and the youths who practice art, the San Francisco Unified School

The street festival will be an assembly of environmentally themed exhibits and performances. Attendees will be able to witness and partake in a Celebrity Chef Showcase, a Sustainable Green Fashion Show, an Eco Carnival, and a D.I.Y. workshop, among many other events and activities.

To find out more about Earth Day San Francisco, go to <http://earthdaystreetfest.com/>.

Open Studios

With all the talk about artists being displaced from San Francisco as of late, it may be hard to believe that the city's Hunter's Point neighborhood and the nearby Islais Creek area house the largest community of artists in the United States.

Change learned behavior and increase energy by changing thoughts

By Eric Peper, PhD

Are you full of pep and energy, ready to do more? Or do you feel drained and exhausted? After giving at the office, is there nothing left to give at home? Do you feel as if you are on a treadmill that will never stop, that more things feel draining than energizing?

Feeling chronically drained is often a precursor for illness; conversely, feeling energized enhances productivity and encourages health. An important aspect of staying healthy is that one's daily activities are filled more with activities that contribute to our energy than with tasks and activities that drain our energy. Similarly, Dr. John Gottman has discovered that marriages prosper when there are many more positive appreciations communicated by each partner than negative critiques.

Energy is the subjective sense of feeling alive and vibrant. An energy gain is an activity, task, or thought that makes you feel better and slightly more alive — those things we *want to* or *choose to do*. An energy drain is the opposite feeling of being less alive and almost depressed — those things we *have to* or *must do*, often something that we do not want to do.

In almost all cases, it is not that we have to, should, or must do — it is a choice. Remember, even though you may say, I have to study, it is a choice. You can choose not to study and choose to drop out of school. Similarly, when you say, I have to do the dishes, it is still a choice. You can choose to do the dishes or let the dirty dishes pile up and just use paper plates.

Energy drains and gains are always unique to the individual; namely, what is a drain for one can be a gain for another. Energy drains can be doing the dishes and feeling resentful that your partner or children are not doing them, or in anticipating seeing a person whom you do not really want to see. An energy gain can be meeting a friend and talking or going for a walk in the woods, or finishing a work project.

When patients with cancer start exploring what they truly would like to do and start acting on their unfulfilled dreams, a few experience that their health improves, as documented by Dr. Lawrence LeShan in his remarkable book, "Cancer as a Turning Point." So often, our lives are filled with things that we **should**

do versus **want to do**. In some cases, the lives we created are not the ones we wanted but the result of self-doubt and worry, I did do this, my family and friends won't like me, or I am not sure I will be successful, so I will do something that is safe. Just ask yourself the question when you woke up this morning and most mornings this week, "How do you feel?" Did you feel happy and looking forward to the day?

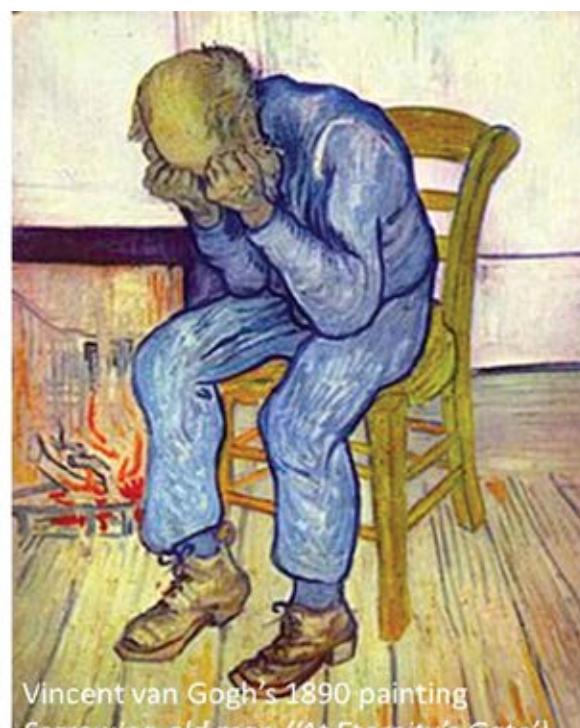
these obstacles such as trading tasks with others — I will cook if you clean the bathroom; setting time limits; giving yourself a positive reward after finishing the task — a cup of tea, a text or phone message to a close friend, or watching a video in the evening.

— Develop new ways how you can increase energy gains, such as doing exer-

self, "I have to do, should do, or must do _____. Keep repeating the phrase for a minute.

Then change your internal phrase, and instead say one of the following phrases, "I choose to do," "I look forward to doing," or "I choose not to do _____. Keep repeating the phrase for a minute.

Now compare how you felt. Almost everyone feels slightly less energy and more depressed



Vincent van Gogh's 1890 painting
Sorrowing old man ('At Eternity's Gate')



<https://rocketnews1.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/hope.jpg>

Explore strategies to decrease the drains and increase the energy gains.

Use the following exercise to increase your energy:

- For one week monitor your energy drains and energy gains. Monitor events, activities, thoughts, or emotions that increase or decrease energy at home and at work. For example, some drains can include cleaning bathroom, cooking another meal, or talking to a family member on the phone, while gains can be taking a walk, talking to a friend or completing a work task. Be very honest — just note the events that change your energy level.
- After the week, look over your notes and identify at least one activity that drains your energy and one activity that increases your energy
- Develop a strategy to decrease one of the energy drains. Be very specific how, where, when, with whom, and which situations decreasing the tasks that drain your energy. As you think about it, anticipate obstacles that may interfere with reducing your drains and develop new ways to overcome

cise, or completing a task.

- Each day, implement the behavior to reduce to one less energy drain and increase one energy gain, and observe what happens.

Initially it may seem impossible, but many students and clients report that the practice made them aware, and increased their energy so that they had more control over their lives than they had thought. It also encouraged them to explore the question of what was it that they really wanted to do? So often, we have energy drains because of convention, habit and fear — which make us feel powerless and suppresses our immune system, thereby increasing the risk of illness. In observing the energy drains and energy gains, it may give the person a choice. Sometimes, the choice is not changing the tasks, but how we think about it. Many of the things we do are not MUSTs; they are choices. I do the work at my job because I choose to benefit of earning money.

How your internal language impacts your energy*

Sit and think of something that you feel you have to do, should do, or must do. Something you slightly dread such as cleaning the dishes, doing a math assignment. While sitting, say to your-

when thinking, "I have to do," "should do", or must do." When the phrase is shifted to, "I choose to," "I look forward to doing," or "I choose not to do it," they feel lighter, more expanded and more optimistic. When university students practiced this change of language during the week, they found that it was easier to start and complete their homework tasks.

Watch your thoughts; they become words.

Watch your words; they become actions.

Watch your actions; they become habits.

Watch your habits; they become character.

Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.

— Frank Outlaw

References:

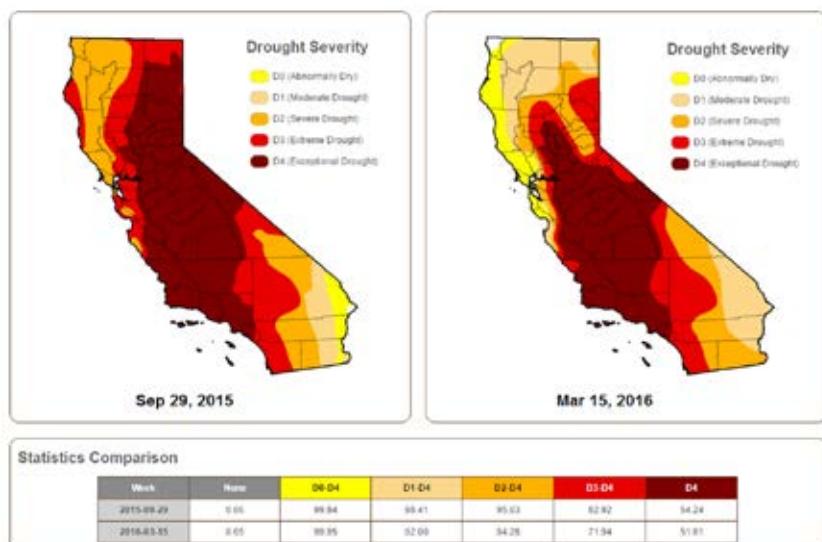
Gottman, J.M. & Silver, N. (2015). *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*. New York: Harmony.

LeShan, L. (1999). *Cancer as a Turning Point*. New York: Plume

*Adapted from: Gorter, R. & Peper, E. (2011). *Fighting Cancer-A Nontoxic Approach to Treatment*. Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 107-200.

Learning and Education

California drought update for March 2016 in Northern California



Source: National Drought Mitigation Center

By Franklin Vaughn

The image above shows the change in drought severity from the start of the California water year through March 15, 2016. Although storms spawned by the strongest El Niño since 1950 have dramatically improved drought conditions in Northern California, Southern California received comparatively little relief this rainy season and remains desperately parched. Extreme to exceptional drought conditions persist for nearly all portions of the state south of the San Francisco Bay Area.

The numbers are thrown into stark relief when one compares not just the statistical precipitation data based on geographic area, but on the percentage change of the total state population impacted by drought. Viewed from this perspective the data tells a more unsettling story. At the start of the water year, 20,206,624 residents, or 54.24 percent of the state's population, were experiencing D4 — the most extreme — drought conditions. By March 15, 2016 that number had dropped only to 19,227,388, or less than a 3 percent drop. Even more troubling, six months into the rainy season the total number of Californians affected by drought has actually gone up: 37,231,403 people impacted at the start of the water

year versus 37,235,021 people as of Mar 15, an increase of 0.01 percent. Admittedly, this is not a huge increase but the unsettling takeaway is that after the biggest El Niño in 65 years this number did not go down.

There is some good news. While a drier than average February took a toll on the Sierra snowpack, it has significantly recovered, reaching 102 percent of average snow depth in March, compared to 90 percent at the end of February, and a dismal 17 percent of average this same time last year. The Tahoe Basin reported fourteen inches of precipitation in March, more than double the March average, and 50–85 inches of snow. The chart below from the National Weather Service — NWS — shows the dramatic difference in the extent of the snowpack from March 2015 on the left, versus March 2016 on the right.

This bodes well for a near, or better than, average spring runoff and a replenishment of reservoirs and underground aquifers. But not everyone is happy about it. On March 11, the office of Senator Dianne Feinstein issued a sternly worded statement calling on federal agencies to pump and store as much water as possible from the California Delta, within the bounds of biological opinions. The statement reads:



Web links for weather illustrations are [Clockwise]: 1) National Drought Mitigation Center: <http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>; NWS: <http://www.weather.gov/>; and NOAA: <http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/>.

"Between January 1 and March 6 last year, 1.3 million acre feet of water flowed through the Delta and 651,000 acre feet were pumped out. During the same period this year, 2.8 million acre feet of water flowed through the Delta, but only 627,000 acre feet were pumped out.

"Pumping less water even though river flows more than doubled means 180,000 to 200,000 acre-feet of water was allowed to flow out to the sea instead of being captured and stored — enough water to supply 360,000 homes for a year. It's inexcusable that pumping levels have been reduced without sufficient evidence of fish mortality, even while biological opinions would allow more pumping."

"January flows topped 50,000 cubic feet per second and peaked again in mid-February above 42,000 cubic feet per second. But rather than pumping as much water as possible under the biological opinions, pumping levels were ratcheted down for an entire month between mid-January and mid-February."

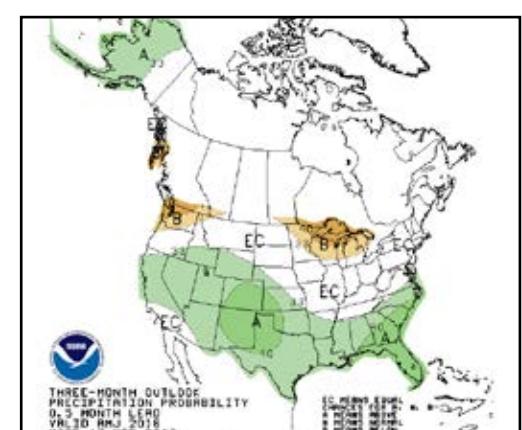
Emphasizing the impact lower pumping has on California agriculture, Feinstein's statement continued:

"Just last week I met with 25 emerging leaders in California's agriculture industry. One young farmer

from Firebaugh told me that both he and his father lost their farms because of the drought, farms that employed 450 workers who harvested 4,800 acres of cantaloupes and honeydew melons.

"There are real-world consequences to the decisions being made in the Delta. That's why we need to make sure we're using every possible tool make the right choices. Basing pumping decisions on better science and real-time monitoring is the least we can do."

Based on an accurate 30-day precipitation outlook released by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration — NOAA — for the month of March, there is good reason to expect that the agency's 90-day seasonal precipitation outlook will also prove out. If so, Northern Californians can expect above normal rainfall levels for the next three months. The image below shows a 3-month outlook of precipitation probability valid through June 2016.



continued from page 2

looking at SF Village as this cost-effective option for aging, middle-income people."

SF Village's next fundraiser is its "Transforming Lives and



[L-R]: SFV member Janey with a technology volunteer; SFV member Bonnie receives phone tips from volunteer. Photos courtesy of www.sfvillage.org/.

Community" luncheon, which will be held on May 10 from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Julia Morgan Ballroom, 465 California St.

The event will honor Louise Renne, a lawyer in her late 70s — who still practices and was a significant force in the renovation of Laguna Honda Hospital — as well as Lewis Butler, chair of the Board of Trustees of Oakland-based California Tomorrow.

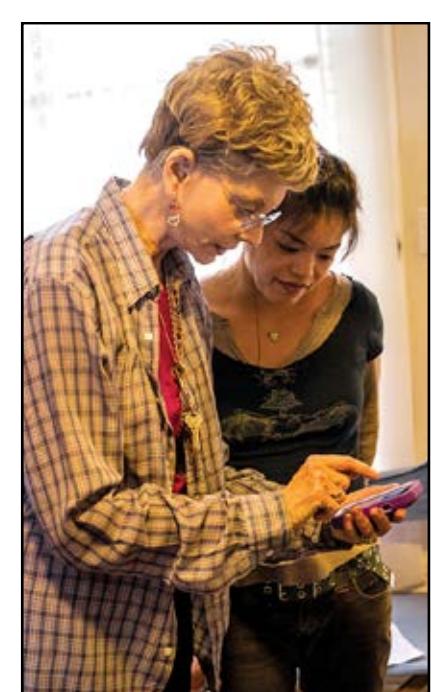
In June, SF Village will hold a series of community outreach meetings at which any San Francisco resident can

come and learn more about the organization and its services, according to Hoepke.

The future looks bright for SF Village, which Hoepke said is "leading an effort to create a California Coalition that would strengthen our impact, increase our visibility of our model and develop sustainability."

Hoepke, who has two daughters who are in their 30s, envisions a time when it will be just as natural for them to enroll in a village as it is to enroll in Medicare.

For more information about SF Village, visit <http://www.sfvillage.org>, or call 415.387.1375.



Community Events

A community garden blossoms in Bayview with fresh local produce



[Clockwise from top]: Volunteers in Florence Fang Asian Community Garden sow seeds into newly built planters; thriving plants attract local bees. Photos by Paul Krantz. [Below, left]: The Asian Week event calendar notifies volunteers of workdays in the garden.

By Paul Krantz

It has been two years since community officials and Bayview residents gathered for the inaugural ground breaking of the Florence Fang Asian Community Garden, and in that time local volunteers have united to turn the dream of a flourishing garden and community space into a reality.

"The goal of this project has always been to build community and to create a space for gathering," said Outreach Manager Susan Ma for the SF Office of Economic and Community Development Volunteer Leadership Team. "We checked in with neighbors and community organizations about what would make the most sense for them — what kept coming up was this idea of a community garden that reflected the growing Asian community in Bayview."

The garden is located at 1 Diana St. on a lot that sits on top of the tunnel that the Cal Train runs through.

Although there is plenty of room for growth, it is easy to see that the Florence Fang Asian

breaking, and just recently a food pantry program had been established and will continue each Saturday starting at 7 a.m.

"Our volunteers have been so giving and determined in contributing their time and effort," said Volunteer Landscape Designer, Rose Le. "There is always a regular of 8–10 volunteers we see every volunteer day."

Many of the regular volunteers are senior citizens who are immigrants, or come from Asian descent. For some, gardening and growing vegetables traditionally cultivated for Asian cuisine is a way of reconnecting with their heritage, or even their childhood.

"I think one reason the Asian Community Garden is really important is because our neighborhood is located far from Asian grocery stores and produce markets," said resident gardener Faheem Carter. "Now families from the community can take home the traditional Asian crops that we are growing such as yu choy sum, mei qing choi and molokhia."



Community Garden is already achieving this goal. Bi-monthly volunteer work days have continued since the garden's ground-

If one were to stop for a minute in the middle of the garden, one might first notice the profound quiet of photosynthetic organisms

existing. However, given a minute to look around at the garden's surroundings, one will start to notice how the encompassing cityscape is alive with constant movement. A honeybee buzzes in quick circles around a cluster of flowers. Just beyond the garden, a truck passes



by on the nearby street. A passenger train pours out of the tunnel underfoot and zooms away. Far out in the distance, a line of cars move across a distant overpass. Clouds soar by overhead, and between them jet plane trails zig-zag through the sky.

Similar to many others in San Francisco, the scene around the Florence Fang Asian Community Garden is one of constant motion — a fitting image for a garden project that is transforming both the physical land that it sits on and the way in which local community members interact.

As vehicles continuously roar by on the nearby streets, the space of the garden continues to move steadily in the direction of accomplishing its mission —

to provide fresh produce and a healthy living space for its local community. As the days spin by, the physical space of the garden is becoming greener, more vibrant, and more cherished by neighbors and volunteers. Where what was recently a vacant dirt lot, there is now an impressive number of planter boxes artistically laid out over the earth; each boasting a burgeoning mass of edible flora. To see one small piece of an urban environment used for cultivating a connection to nature, food and community is a beautiful sight.

As the Florence Fang Asian Community Garden continues to develop, it serves as a valuable reminder that space is what we make of it. The lot — now owned by Caltrain — had just been sitting vacant in recent years, but it had previously been used as farm land from 1902 until its sale to a construction company in 1988. Construction was ultimately limited to a portion of the lot, leaving the rest of the lot available for the manifestation of the Florence Fang Asian Community Garden in 2014. The reclamation of this piece of land for public space and food production sets an example of the potential for positively transforming spaces in San Francisco's neighborhoods.

For those who are interested in getting involved, coordinators with the Florence Fang Asian Community Garden are constantly seeking motivated volunteers to lend a hand with building up and maintaining the garden. Join the effort to create a green space that will help new immigrants lead healthy lifestyles, and grow and share fresh produce. Volunteer days are held on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of each month, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., with the exception of rainy days. Common volunteer tasks include: weeding, raking, clean-up, watering, mulching and planting.

Volunteer inquiries can be sent to Teddy Fang at tfang@asianweek.com, or by phone at 415.515.5851.

Neighborhood News

By Laurie MacDougall

Alamo Square

San.ko.fa, a free photography exhibit, at the African American Art and Culture Complex, running through mid-April on Tuesdays through Saturdays, 12 noon to 7:00 p.m.



San.ko.fa explores identity and the African Diaspora through images of present moments that honor the past. It features the work of Bay Area photographer Jessica Cross and South African photographers Moeketsi Moticoe and Max Mogole. The title of the exhibit comes from sankofa, a Ghanian word associated with a proverb which translates as: "It is not wrong to go back for that which you have forgotten." The exhibit is on view at the Sargent Johnson Gallery, at the African American Art and Culture Complex, 762 Fulton St. For further information, visit the website at www.aaacc.org.

Alamo Square Park will be shut down for extensive renovations for nine months starting in April.

Alamo Square Park, beloved by tourists and San Franciscans alike, will undergo a \$4.3 million renovation to update the irrigation system, build an ADA-accessible restroom, and landscape the entire park. The whole park will be fenced off and inaccessible from April to the end of the year, a short-term inconvenience that will result in considerable long-term benefits. The outcome of the project will be significant reduction in water usage from improved irrigation design, the installation of "smart" controllers, and the planting of lawn alternatives such as no-mow grasses that are native to the western U.S. It will also include the installation of free Wi-Fi for the entire park, donated by Google as a 2-year pilot program.

Back on Track San Francisco tutoring for K-12 students, at Third Baptist Church, Mondays through Thursdays, free

Do you know someone who would be a great tutor? Or a student who needs one? Back on Track SF is a free one-on-one tutoring and academic mentorship program for underserved

K-12 students. Volunteer tutors and students from diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds meet at regular times after school for personalized assistance. Back on Track also offers a variety of enrichment activities and field trips, and families are provided resources and training, encouraging them to become active partners in their children's growth. Back on Track is located at 1399 McAllister. For more information, or to sign up either to tutor or be tutored, visit the website at www.backontracksf.org, or call 415.346.9316.

Bayview Hunters Point

3rd on Third celebrates Earth Day, Friday, April 15, 5–8 p.m., 3rd Street, McKinnon to Palou, free

Every third Friday of every month, the Bayview Opera House presents 3rd on Third, a community celebration focused on kids, families, grown-ups, and fun for everyone. This month will feature 3rd on Third's Earth Day celebration, with exhibits and activities and music focused on the theme. The Kid Zone is located on Mendell Plaza at 3rd and Oakdale, with earthy delights, events and activities for the whole family, including live music, a photo booth, face painting, performances and more.



The 2015 3rd on Third Earth Day celebration featured hayrides pulled by horses, and grazing goats. This year expect more along the same lines. Other blocks along 3rd Street will feature live music for grown-ups, and local eateries offering restaurant specials for \$5. For more information, visit the website at <http://www.3rdonthird.com>.

Free workshop for entrepreneurs, Wednesday, April 13, 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Do you want to start your own business? What do you need to know? Where should you start? Start with this free seminar, presented by the Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center Bayview, designed for new or potential small business owners. Learn the seven keys to success for small businesses, common misconceptions about owning a small business, local resources to help your small business get going and growing. The workshop will be held at

Renaissance Bayview offices, India Basin Plaza, 1325-B Evans Ave. For further information, visit the website at www.rencenter.com, or call Kismeth Harris at 415.647.3728.

Literacy program needs volunteer reading tutors at Bret Harte Elementary School

Volunteer tutors needed. For more information, see program description below, or to sign up, visit the website of the program at <http://www.readingpartners.org>.

Fillmore

Literacy program needs volunteer reading tutors at Rosa Parks Elementary School

Want to change lives? Become a reading volunteer. You'll be trained in a proven, structured curriculum to help students learn specific skills necessary to become proficient readers. It's simple, and it works. A site coordinator is always available to answer questions, assist with the materials and solve problems. For more information, or to sign up, visit the website of the program at <http://www.readingpartners.org>.

Free performance of live Russian, Ukrainian and Gypsy music, at the Western Addition Branch of the SF Public Library, Saturday, April 23, 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Join musicians Grigoriy Krumik and Clark Welsh for a concert at the Western Addition Branch of the SF Public Library. Krumik is a native of Ukraine who plays and teaches bayan, a type of accordion, and Welsh is founder of the San Francisco Balalaika Ensemble. Both perform throughout the Bay Area and internationally, and are frequent performers at the annual Russian Festival. Their lively renditions of folk and traditional music will enliven your afternoon. The concert will be held in the main hall of the library branch, at 1550 Scott St. To learn more, call 415.355.5727. All ages are welcome.

Free internet and computer use open to the community at the Prince Hall Computer Learning Center, between 10:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., Mondays through Fridays

Need access to a computer to write a resume and cover letter? Want to do research on the Internet for a project or a job opportunity? Young and old are welcome to the open resource lab from 10:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. every week, Monday through Friday. This open access is offered free to the community, and all the Prince Hall computer systems feature the most up-to-date Microsoft software available. On-site help is also available to write that resume, and print that cover letter that will make an impression.

Hayes Valley

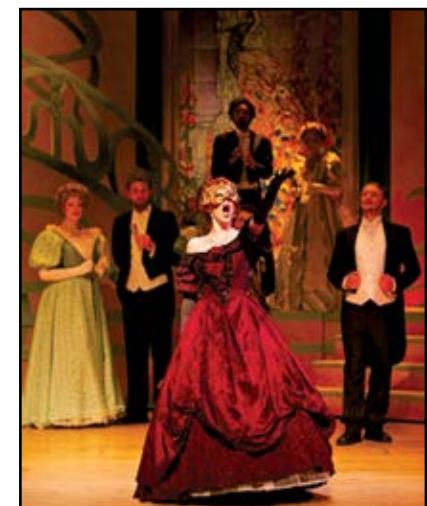
Visit the new bee mural on the back wall of 342 Hayes St, anytime, free.



This stunning 3-story-high up-close-and-personal depiction of a single bee gathering pollen has just been completed. It covers the back wall of 342 Hayes St., and can be viewed from the 200 block of Ivy St. Artist Shawn Bullen worked with National Geographic photographer Anand Varma to create an experience that will raise awareness of the plight of bees throughout the world, and appreciation for their beauty and industry.

Queer Youth Meal Night, Tuesday April 5, 12, 19, and 26, 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., at the San Francisco LGBT Center

Every Tuesday evening, the Center hosts its Youth Meal Night, a safe space to meet with LGBTQIA friends, enjoy a free dinner, watch a movie, play board games and get connected to the center's community of resources, find clothes and shoes you need in the free community closet, and take advantage of the rapid HIV testing provided by the St. James Infirmary. Youth Meal Night is held at the center, located at 1800 Market St., at the corner of Octavia. For more information, visit the website at www.youth@sfcenter.org, or call Yvette at 415.865.5555.



Recital of opera scenes, performed at the Conservatory of Music on Saturday, April 23, 7:30 p.m.–9:30 p.m., and Sunday, April 24, 2:00 p.m.– 4:00 p.m., admission free

For drama and emotion, it's hard to top Carmen and Don Giovanni. But the most compelling thing about opera at the Conservatory of Music is watching young singers, coached by seasoned professionals, develop their chops in meeting the unique demands of the art form. The evening will feature an exciting range

continued on page 11

Learning and Education

continued from page 1

community activism and making environmentally conscious films in order to spark larger debates within our local and global communities about the seriousness of climate change.

In the 2016 festival are featured eight films made by Bay Area youths, 11 world premieres and eight full-length feature films. Thirty percent of the films in this year's festival are from Bay Area filmmakers while 40 percent are films directed by women, which number Caplan was excited to say has risen since the founding of the festival.

SFGFF is set to open at the Castro Theater on April 14, with the showing of Oscar nominated director Josh Fox's film, "How to Let Go of the World." The film uncovers the parts of the world that will not be changed by global warming, and what we should do to care for those places. This is a slightly different approach that was taken in highlighting the issues of climate change, since the discourse usually surrounds those places that will be badly affected. Josh Fox will be in attendance as SFGFF kicks off the 6-day-long film fest.

The flagship event of 2016 is the screening of the film "Born Free" in celebration of its 50th anniversary. Born Free is an iconic film for the role it played in helping make conservation mainstream as it was one of Hollywood's first feature-length films that addressed issues about sustainability and conservation. The film focuses on the big cats of Africa and their struggle to survive in an ever-changing environment.

Rachel Caplan described the film as, "the mother-of-all-cat-videos, which captured the hearts and minds of the world long before YouTube came about." Virginia McKenna — the film's star — will be in attendance at this flagship event.

"American Ascent" is the centerpiece of the Green Film festival



Founder and CEO Rachel Caplan on the left, with Mark Decena, Director of "Not Without Us." Photo by Peter Rapine. [Below]: African American climbers of Mt. Denali in "An American Ascent."

and is the story of nine African American explorers on their quest to climb America's highest peak, Mt. Denali. "American Ascent" is a powerful film, not only because "there has never been an expedition like this before," but also in highlighting the importance of the film's message that "their goal is not only to summit, but to prove that the outdoors are for everyone."

That is a message that gets right to the core values promoted by SFGFF — that we are all part of

a global community, and that the issues of sustainability and conservation do not belong to a selected group, but to everyone. Some films take direct aim at the issues we face, while others explore the wonder and natural beauty that can still be found in every corner of our planet.

The closing ceremony of the festival will feature the world premier of Mark Decena's "Not Without Us." A feature-length film, it follows seven climate activists and their attempts at rais-

ing awareness of the world's climate issues at the United Nations Climate summit, The Conference of Parties.

The Conference of Parties, better known by its abbreviation COP21 — as it is the 21st such talk — was held in Paris in December 2015, where many of the world's leading emitters of fossil fuels and many non-governmental organizations met to address the ever growing issues of climate change.

This film personalizes the issues of climate change. It shows how people around the world are

fighting for a better future for their local communities, with a mind for a greater global discussion. The film culminates with the COP21 summit in Paris, where a deal was made between 196 "parties" to cut the global emission of fossil fuels.

"Not Without Us"— in Mark Decena's words, "blows the lid off the mainstream narrative surrounding the climate talks held at COP21." Mark Decena said, with regard to the agreement made by parties at the COP21 conference, "It was bullied and made for the U.S.," referring to its unbinding legality, as well as the inability of the United States to take legal action against itself as a leading contributor to climate change.

The filming of "Not Without US" was, for a lack of a better term, "hijacked by the terrorist attacks," which rocked the country just weeks before the COP21 climate talk. The film beautifully evolves in real time as real world events unfold around the director and his crewmembers. The attacks on Paris only heighten the importance of "Not Without Us," and the message of all those around the world fighting every day to raise awareness of the real life dangers of climate change. The film is inspiring and heart wrenching — and, from what I have seen, an embodiment of the Green Film Festival's mission.

The festival is made possible by the dedicated work of the artists, the speakers and the volunteers, and it is brought to the public with the help of SFGFF's donors and sponsors. These include: Wells Fargo, Google, ARUP, Autodesk, Kaiser Permanente, the Business Council on Climate Change, and the San Francisco Department of the Environment.

More information about the specific films and their venues can be found online at www.green-filmfest.org, where you can watch trailers and read more about each of the films featured in the 2016 Green Film Festival.

continued from page 8

World Arts West is seeking up to 100 volunteers to usher the event and offer logistical support. World Arts West also provides two internships throughout the year. These internships focus on the office support that keeps the

organization and festivals going. Interested parties can sign up to volunteer by sending an email to volunteer@worldartswest.org, or by applying for an internship through the website.

The San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival is sponsored by Arts Works, Grants for the Arts, Creative Work Fund, Walter and Elise Haas Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, Osher Foundation,

and many other individual donors.

For more information about The San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival, and World Arts West's classes and performances, please visit www.worldartswest.org.



Nonprofit News

Matter of Trust spotlights recovering from environmental disasters

By Jeffery Mendenhall

In The City that Can, chatter recoils to action for the ecological public charity, Matter of Trust.

Behind the organization's work are solutions, solutions that not only impact the health and vitality of the Bay Area's ecosystem and ecology, but solutions that tackle global issues such as excess, environmental clean-up, and ecological restoration.

Lisa Gautier, founder and president of Matter of Trust, described her organization as a kind of catalyst for other nonprofits, agencies, and individuals aspiring to engage and mobilize. In the process, Gautier said green-jobs and many other opportunities are created.

"We are not a think-tank," Gautier said. "We take ideas and implement them into action. We also fiscally sponsor projects that support our mission. In this way, we are like an incubator for ideas and programs that relate to ecology."

Gautier established Matter of Trust in 1998 and the nonprofit received 501(c)3 public charity status in 1999. The organization receives grants and in-kind donations to support many of its programs. Over the course of its 18-year existence, Gautier said her nonprofit has always remained debt free, liability free, and litigation free.

A recurring theme in all of Matter of Trust's work is stewardship. Through a myriad of 29 active programs, stewardship is at the heart of the nonprofit's research, development, and campaign apparatus.

Several programs have withstood the test of time and have remained pillars of the organization's staying power. These include the Excess-Access program and the Clean Wave program.

Excess-Access is a free program that essentially matches those wanting to get rid of an item to those who are in need of that item in a certain geographic location. The original platform was developed by Gautier's husband and co-founder, Patrice Olivier Gautier. He is currently on the Board of Directors at Matter of Trust.

The service is Matter of Trust's longest running program. Excess-Access is accessible on the Web at www.excessaccess.org. The service is also compatible with mobile devices.

"We work pro bono on these initiatives," Gautier said. "We found that people are so desperate to get rid of stuff. Our service helps to reduce unwanted items from being thrown in the street."

According to Gautier, the program will soon be divided into six



[Above]: Matter of Trust staff San Francisco December 2015. [Below]: bundle of hair and fiber for making oil recovery mats. [Page 11]: Soil restoration by vermicomposting. Photos courtesy of www.matteroftrust.org.

departments. The first two departments to roll out will be food and compostables, and arts, crafts, and music. The other departments to phase in include: dorms, computer and office, manufacturing and scrap, and disaster relief.

As with the programs genesis, Excess-Access's continued success has weighed heavily on support from its varied partnerships, in-kind donations, volunteers and interns.

Program Coordinator Betty Cheng said that its online presence is only one part of Excess-Access. This is true for many of the other programs at Matter of Trust.

"We receive a lot of help and feedback from many nonprofits, businesses, tech-savvy individuals, high-schoolers, and retired and elderly to name a few," Cheng said. "Our manpower needs create a number of green jobs and other opportunities."

Cheng explained that in one instance, a company had a surplus of tents it needed to dispose of. Excess-Access provided the option to this company to give away pallets full of tents to the public.

In another example, Gautier said as part of the Excess-Access Food and Compostable department, the organization is currently a fiscal sponsor of the Sonoma Food Runners. The Sonoma Food Runners works towards diverting food waste from the food-service

and hospitality industries to individuals in need.

Such sponsorships and partnerships fuel further green-job creation according to Gautier by creating demand for delivery drivers to move things, and distribution centers to store them.

Excess-Access works hand-in-hand with Matter of Trust's second oldest program, Clean Wave.



Clean Wave helps the environment by using excess hair, fur, and other fibers to create hair mats. Hair mats in turn are used to help in the event of natural disasters such as oil spills and at beaches by soaking up the oil.

Currently, Matter of Trust collects excess hair and fur from places such as salons and pet groomers and sends them to a facility in New Mexico where the hair mats are made. This collection may in turn reduce the impact of fibers collecting and clogging storm drains.

Cheng said that Matter of Trust is in the planning phase of not only creating bicycle routes for youth to help collect excess hair and fur, but to open a hair mat facility in San Francisco. Down the line Gautier said that she hopes to open several more hair mat facilities in other strategic regions in the U.S.

Currently Matter of Trust is the only entity creating hair mats for this purpose.

Cheng said that another pilot program is planned in partnership with the Port of San Francisco. In this program, hair mats will be used to clean up oil leaks from vehicles and

other sources in the event of water run-off caused by storms. Gautier said that storm drain testing for hair mats has already taken place in Texas.

Gautier said her nonprofit is further interested in the concept of green business and hopes that the Clean Wave Program may serve as "a great green business model in the future."

In 2014, Matter of Trust launched the Global Compost Project. According to Gautier, The Global Compost Project aims to find solutions and to educate individuals and organizations on a number of critical environmental themes.

Some of these environmental themes include: restoring carbon to the soil, facilitate composting, reducing greenhouse emissions caused by methane in landfills, and recycling.

The Global Compost Project christened its initiative with a film contest in 2014 that brought in nearly 800 submissions from all over the world, dubbed The Global Compost Film Contest according to Cheng.

Cheng said that the goal of the contest focused on making a viral video about composting. The San Francisco Green Film Festival served as a partner.

continued on page 11

Neighborhood News

continued from page 10



The Global Compost Project, the documentary film *Racing to Zero*, and the film contest were later promoted at the 2015 United Nations COP21 Climate Change Conference in Paris, France by Gautier during multiple events. *Racing to Zero* examines solutions to waste management practices. It is set in San Francisco and chronicles waste diversion tactics in pursuit of the cities 2014 zero waste pledge by 2020. Matter of Trust is a presenting partner, with the Gautiers — Lisa and Patrice — holding producer credits.

Cheng said that these initiatives helped to not only raise money for Matter of Trust, but garnered awareness and sparked interest in composting.

One future solution Gautier said she would like to see implemented on a broad scale is to require all food containers to be compostable. "It doesn't make sense not to do this," she said. "It doesn't take much to restore the soil through composting."

Gautier continued, "There is too little carbon in the soil, while there is too much carbon in the air. The system can reboot itself

with as little as 1 cm of compost on the land."

Demonstrations on how soil can reboot itself through composting, or how hair mats can soak up oil have been on display at various Matter of Trust functions, while the outreach associated with the nonprofit and other initiatives that have engaged the public, such as the film contest, has further spurred interest from many walks of life.

David Duckworth, IWS Instructor with The ARC San Francisco, said his clients have benefitted greatly from the experience at Matter of Trust by learning new skills while at the same time discovering fundamentals of ecology.

The ARC is a nonprofit that engages individuals with developmental and physical disabilities to meaningful skill building work and activities. Duckworth said his clients have been participating once a week and have assisted in a variety of tasks.

One of Duckworth's clients, DK, had this to say about the experience: "I like that they reuse stuff. For example, they reuse bottles and other stuff, like, nutshells. They reuse everything reusable instead of throwing it away. I am glad because I am worried about ecology. I like the personnel. How they are friendly to our group, and they try to help when we are looking for something to do."

Obviously the positive impact Matter of Trust aspires to have on the environment mirrors the positive impact Matter of Trust has on those engaged with the nonprofit.

More information about the organization can be found on the website at <http://matteroftrust.org>, by calling 415.252.1177, or by sending an email to team@matteroftrust.org.

continued from page 7

of repertoire with piano accompaniment. The Conservatory's Café Crème offers a menu including beer and wine two hours before performances. For further information, visit the web-site at www.sfcm.edu, or call 415.503.6275.

Japantown

Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival, April 9–10, and April 16–17, on Post Street between Laguna and Fillmore Streets, free

The 49th annual Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival will, once again, completely take over the blocks and businesses between Fillmore and Laguna Streets on Post Street for two weekends. Over 200,000 people are expected to attend this dazzling display of the Japanese culture and traditions, considered the second largest festival celebrating the blooming of cherry blossoms in the country — needless to say, first place goes to Washington, D.C.

So many enjoyable things will be available to do and see, that it is impossible to name them all. Vendors will be charging for their food goods and some retail products; and some specialized events will require a fee, but everything

else is free, including cultural performances, martial arts, live bands, and the annual Queen Program.

Many businesses and companies in the neighborhood will join the festivities by hosting special events during the two weekends as well. Just a few examples indicate the variety of activities on



hand: the opportunity to participate in a traditional tea service in an authentic tea room at The Japanese American Association of Northern California — Nichi Bei Kai Cultural Center, 1759 Sutter St.; an exhibit of Japanese swords at the National Japanese Heritage Society, 1684 Sutter St.; and the Grand Parade on Sunday, April 17, beginning at City Hall and concluding in Japantown. [And every little girl will want to visit the Hello Kitty Truck at the Hello Kitty Kid's Corner on Post Street.]

For more information, about these and the many other events, activities and fun things to do at the Cherry Blossom Festival, check the website at www.sfcherryblossom.org for updates and details.

NOPA

Free community dinner, prepared by the Gardening Class at University of San Francisco, Thursday, April 7, 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Every Thursday evening during the school year, the USF Gardening Class prepares a community dinner for all the neighbors who appreciate a delicious, and super-fresh, meal. Students do the cooking, using produce that they've nurtured and harvested themselves, right off the vine, so stop by and see what they have to offer and meet some neighbors while you're at it. The meal will be prepared in the Community Kitchen and served in the Downstairs Community Hall at St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church, located at 2097 Turk St., at Lyon Street. For further information, email fr.tom@stcypriansf.org.

Panhandle Park Community Workday, Saturday, April 9, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

The second Saturday of each month, neighbors meet to keep the Panhandle clean for visitors. Meet at the Bulletin Board near

the playground (near Masonic and Fell). Bring your gardening gloves.

Divisadero Farmers Market, every Sunday in April, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

The Divisadero Farmers Market offers seasonal, organic fare, and artisanal goods such as empanadas, jams, humus and flowers. CalFresh/EBT is welcome at this, and all Pacific Coast farmer's markets. Visit the information booth for tokens that will double your CalFresh food dollars up to \$10. The Market is located on Grove Street between Divisadero and Broderick Streets. Visit www.pcfma.com/divisadero for more information.

NOPA Board continues March survey during April for protected bike lanes along Fell and Oak Streets

The Board of the North of Panhandle Neighborhood Association wants your opinion about the proposal to install a dedicated bike lane along the Panhandle, to be protected by parked cars and a painted buffer with pedestrian islands, from Baker Street to Shrader Street. They value your input to help determine requests for improved infrastructure in the community. By taking the survey, you can help show your support for the plan. Details can be viewed and the 2-minute survey can be taken at <http://bit.ly/panhandlebikelane>.

Community Events

continued from page 1

like this without going to Japan," he said.

Other events include origami — paper folding — which Viloria said is very popular, and the 70's/80's feel of the Webster Stage.

A new aspect to the festival is an interactive art display from an artist whose work Viloria said was displayed at the equivalent of the Tokyo. The emphasis, he added, is oneness and a wish for peace; and that everyone who attends who the festival will contribute to the artwork.

The Hello Kitty truck will be returning, as well as NBC 11 as a sponsor. The Golden State Warriors will make an appearance as well, though Viloria does not presently know the details.

According to festival tradition, the opening ceremony will contain the breaking of the sake barrel and a toast, as well a performance from Taiko Dojo.

The parade takes place on the last weekend in April — starting at the Civic Center and ending in Japantown — and usually has around 40-60 floats and vehicles in it.

Going into its 50th year, Viloria explained how a celebration of culture morphed into a festival over the years.

"It's kind of interesting how things are passed down," Viloria said. "There's nothing that written down. It's just that as people start to do this thing in the festival they learn it by doing — and as they learn by doing, that's where the knowledge gets transferred."

Seichi Tanaka Sensei from Taiko Dojo, who immediately comes to Viloria's mind, is someone who has watched and participated in the festival throughout all of its 49 years and whose son now participates as well.

Rich Hashimoto, who has been a co-chair for around 15 years, has attended and participated in the festival for 30-plus years.

While the festival started in 1968 with the initial one-weekend grand opening of the Japanese Cultural and Trade Center showcasing traditional Japanese cultural performances, it evolved into a two-weekend event to accommodate performers from Japan to participate, Hashimoto said.

Now there are approximately 2,500 performers that come for the second weekend, while cultural organizations and dance groups from cities such as Sacramento, San Jose, and San Mateo also perform in the parade.

With the festival showcasing modern Japanese pop culture incorporated with the traditional, Hashimoto explained how it has remained a preservation of the cultural community in San Francisco.

"The Japanese community had been uprooted numerous times, including the war redevelopment, and each time it kind of shrank in square footages or acreage — that's why it's important to me we retain what we have left," Hashimoto said.



Co-chair Quillan Rusky, who has attended the festival since childhood and has been volunteering for 10, said that the overall tone definitely stays the same.

"The festival as a whole is kind of, in a way, for various groups from the community to come together even though they wouldn't normally interact," Rusky said. "It's a way to kind of bring in people who don't live in the city anymore or aren't able to



[Above]: Festival drummers from SF Taiko Dojo; photo via Google. [Below]: Queen candidates for 2016; photo courtesy of Michiko Maggi.

be in Japantown regularly; they kind of come down two times a year, including the other festivals, and kind of bring them back to the community and kind of open it up to others who are just finding it.

Michiko Maggi, director of marketing and public relations for the Queen Program, said this 49th year is the largest tentative pool they have had in 15 years, and also a diverse one.

"What's really nice about the Queen's program is that it brings all sorts of Japanese American women together and really develops them as leaders and community builders," Maggi said. "After their coronation, then they'll be in the community volunteering throughout the year."

The program started when pageants were popular, but has since evolved to a more community-driven program.

An on-stage interview portion will include Jana Katsuyama as master of ceremonies, from KTVU, which will include questions on current events and politics, Maggi added.

During coronation night, the candidates will come together and have a kimono presentation and partake in odori, a traditional Japanese dance — this year in donated kimonos from

the Frujito Kimono Company in Japan.

The night also includes an evening gown, question-and-answer session, speeches, and a creative expression, Maggi said.

The highest score is appointed to the queen, who then receives a free trip to Japan. "She gets to represent the Japanese American community in Japan, which is incredible," Maggi said. "The rest of the group will go throughout the year after their coronation to all the different Northern California events for Japanese Americans in the community and help volunteer and fundraise."

When Maggi went with Kelly Yuka Walton in 2013, they were able to see Fujiyasu Kimono Company and other cities in Japan, including Hiroshima, Fukushima, Osaka, Tokyo, and Kyoto.

"I had never been to Japan," she said. "So, to be able to experience that with another one of my court members was life changing."

With this being the 49th year, it is important to try to get some runway for the 50th, especially in terms of getting people to know what they're doing, according to Viloria. This means expanding the program with more sponsors and volunteers, which people can find out more about on the festival's website.

"It's all volunteer and donations," Viloria said. "It's all sponsor driven; we pretty much break even every year. When you're at that edge, sometimes, we just don't know what the next year is going to be like. We have a lot of people who have really good hearts. They make it happen somehow."

More information about the Cherry Blossom Festival can be found at <http://sfcherryblossom.org/>.

MarketPlace

Danielle (Dani) Clark — Writer
liberatemymadnessdc@gmail.com

Joe D'Arcy — Designer
joedarcy1@gmail.com

Rebecca Duran — Writer
Rebeccaduran6@gmail.com

Sam Felsing — Writer
samfelsing@hotmail.com

Leland Fox — Photographer
lelandfox2@gmail.com

Breana Rae Flores — Photographer
breanaf@sbcglobal.net

Michael Griffin — Photographer
michaelgriffinphotography@gmail.com

Claire Kirshner — Photographer
cKirshner@gmail.com

Paul Kenyon Krantz — Writer
pkkrantz@usfca.edu

Laurie Macdougall — Writer
oddock@earthlink.net

Jeffery Mendenhall — Writer
jeffery.a.mendenhall@gmail.com

Mike McCoy — Photographer
mmccoy912@aol.com

Julie (Gordon) McCoy — Writer
Juliegordon111@comcast.net

Peter Rapine — Writer
p.rapine@gmail.com

Frank Vaughn — Writer
f.vaughn@comcast.net