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Western Edition HP JOURNAL

MAY 2012

Bridging San Francisco communities through nonprofit services

In This Issue...



MariNaomi of AAAWA,
Page 9



Phyllis C. Wattis,
founder of Wattis
Foundation, Page 5



Judge Donna Hitchins,
SFCASA story, Page 2

Contents

SF News Briefs	4
Neighborhood News	7
Community Voices	8
MarketPlace	12

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Urban Y establishes mentoring network for City youth

By Julie McCoy

Urban Services YMCA of San Francisco is improving the lives of at-risk youth in San Francisco by providing them with mentors, truancy intervention and after school programs. The Western Edition took a look at four programs that are being offered Urban Services YMCA, and how many youths are benefiting from them.

Building Futures Mentoring Program

The Building Futures Mentoring Program in Ste. 204 at 1426 Fillmore St. pairs at-risk youth between the ages of six and 18 with mentors, according to Regional Director Nick Wightman.

Some of the obstacles the youths are facing include truancy, depression, gang involvement, family problems and social problems.

"The biggest thing for the youth is whatever special thing they were referred for; we hope that improves," Wightman said. "Just having someone care about them is a huge part of their healing."

Mentors meet with youths



Jamel, a Building Futures mentor, shares his wisdom with a young mentee in early evening on the Embarcadero. Photo courtesy of Urban Services YMCA.

they are mentoring on an average of about once per week. Some of the many activities mentors do with the youths include venturing to Japantown for a meal together, visiting the de Young Museum, hiking, ice skating, or heading to the YMCA to swim or play basketball together.

Wightman pointed out that often mentors will use public transportation to take their mentees to various places. If the volunteers are driving, they need to have a clean driving record.

The goal is to make 180-200 mentor/youth matches this year, according to Wightman. Mentors need to be at least 23 years of age and are expected to fulfill their role for at least a year. They are provided with 15 hours of training that covers how to connect with youth and how to handle difficult situations.

Those who become mentors are "helping someone else's life just by showing up and sharing their own experience and wisdom," Wightman explained. "They feel

continued on page 11

SF Rock Project grows by leaps and bounds since 2010

By Mitchell Reber

For the last two years, the San Francisco Rock Project — SFRP — has been providing budding musicians of the Bay Area an outlet to hone their craft. This nonprofit music school focuses on teaching children ages from 8-18 the art of rocking with a mixture of individual and group lessons, eventually turning their protégés into full-fledged rock bands who play actual gigs around the city.

"What sets us apart is that we're a performance-based program," said SFRP Secretary Margo Graham. "Not only do the students get a weekly 45-minute private lesson, but they're also placed in a band and have a 3-hour rehearsal with the band each week."

The SFRP is divided into three skill levels. Students who are new to playing their instruments comprise The New Rockers, a group for beginners that eventually becomes the opening act for the other bands. For more advanced or experienced musicians, the SFRP's regular program provides its members with longer rehearsal times, more variety and difficulty of materials, as well as more live performances.

The most elite students in the SFRP can audition to be in the House Band, a group who plays in street fairs all over the city during the summer and even books private shows and parties. In each program, everything is done with the students in mind, starting with



Young rock project performer concentrates on chord progressions. Photo by Mike Griffin.

continued on page 8

Volunteer advocates help monitor and nurture foster children

By Loraine Burger

There are about 1,100 children currently living in foster care in San Francisco, often moving from one home to the next and changing schools an average of nine times by the age of eighteen. According to the SFCASA program, within two to four years after emancipating from foster care, approximately 51 percent of California foster children will be unemployed; 40 percent will be on public assistance or incarcerated; and 25 percent will be homeless.

Court-Appointed Special Advocates — CASA — are part of a program of an independent nonprofit organization that operates under the authority of the Judicial Council of California and rules of local courts, whose mission is to provide the abused and neglected children in the foster care system with trained community volunteers to speak on their behalf and in their best interest in the court room.

“The state does not do a particularly good job raising children,” said SFCASA Executive Director Sally Coates. “There’s a whole lot of research being done about the extent to which you should put a child in foster care versus leaving them home and bringing services to the family in the home, rather than separating parties.”

One case in particular came to mind for Coates when asked about the situations with which CASAs and their foster children are faced.

“We had one young woman who at age 16 was pregnant, and the foster family had done nothing in terms of prenatal care, including signing her up for the lunch program that was offered at school,” recalled Coates. “So she was 16, pregnant, not eating, and had no maternity clothes. When she was assigned a CASA volunteer, she was immediately given better food and a doctor. It’s those things that seem so obvious to many parents, and not obvious to some people in the foster care world.”

CASAs are assigned to a single foster child for an average of two years and 10 months, who visit the child on a weekly basis. The advocates help children with homework, attend sport-



A court-appointed foster care child in the courtroom (above); a foster care child with SF CASA advocate in park (below right); and Judge Donna Hitchins in courtroom (below left). Photos courtesy of SF CASA.

ing events, and bring them to appointments and extracurricular activities.

“When you’re a youth in foster care, and you may be moved from place to place or school to school, to finally have one consistent and caring adult in your life is extremely helpful,” said Coates. “It’s an anchor, really. Not only that, think about the emotional trauma of being removed from your family.”

Volunteers undergo 36 hours of classroom training to learn what it takes to be part of SFCASA, and an additional four hours of visits to court rooms and similar nonprofit groups. Professionals from a variety of fields attend the classes to educate the volunteers on topics from substance abuse to physical abuse. The volunteers become mandated abuse reporters, and are sworn in as officers of the court, which allows each volunteer access to medical and educational records of the child.

“That’s the biggest difference between CASA and Big Brother, Big Sister,” said Coates. “Being a CASA volunteer, you take on a huge responsibility. Every six months when a child’s case is called, the CASA writes a court report, and in many cases, that’s the first thing the judge will read because it’s the one person who’s been with the child objectively.”

Amanda Clarke, a Western Addition resident and event planner, decided to become a CASA volunteer after hearing about the experience from her sister who had joined CASA years earlier.

“One of the things I liked about CASA was the legal aspect of it. You can affect change in a way you couldn’t with Big Brother, Big Sister,” said Clarke. “One of the lawyers that presented during training explained it so well: the judge is going to make the most important deci-

sions within the National CASA Association. The San Francisco CASA was founded in 1991. That year, 11 volunteers graduated from the program.

Today, SFCASA has approximately 325 volunteers, consequently serving 325 foster children each year, with approximately 90 cases waiting to be matched to an advocate. Each case is referred to CASA by Unified Family Court, the Human Services Agency, or by children’s attorneys. While SFCASA grows each year, they still haven’t reached their goal of giving all foster children the opportunity to thrive.

“Some foster children are in situations that are working well, but at least half of them are not — if not more — so there are between 300-500 kids that we should be serving,” explained Coates. “We’d like to grow big enough that we can serve every



sion in this child’s life, but that person actually has the most power and the least information, and the family has the most information and the least power.

“A volunteer’s role is to meet all of these people and the teachers and social worker and analyze the whole situation and give a thoughtful report back to the judge, so the judge is more informed and can really see what’s right for the family.”

Clarke has been assigned a unique case in which she is a CASA volunteer for two children who are sisters, with whom she has been working for 18 months. She takes the girls, who are ages nine and 11, to dance lessons, swimming lessons in the summer, and to play outdoors. “They have a bright, wide range of interests,” said Clarke. “They’re open to pretty much everything.”

The CASA program was founded in Seattle approximately 30 years ago, and is now one of over 900 affiliate agen-

child in the foster care system that needs a CASA.”

“It’s really demanding,” said Clarke. “You need to be very dedicated to it; but it is by far the most rewarding thing I’ve ever done. Not to be too cliché, but I definitely get more out of it than I put in, and I think the children and CASA think I give a lot, too.”

SFCASA’s annual budget of 1.2 million dollars is raised every year through foundations, individuals, corporations, and two fundraising events. The next fundraiser, the Fostering Change Luncheon, will be held May 16 at the Four Seasons Hotel from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. SFCASA will be honoring Judge Donna Hitchins, who was a dependency court judge for 20 years. The event will be hosted by the Seattle Seahawks running back Marshawn Lynch.

More information about becoming an SFCASA volunteer or about making a donation, as well as the wish list, can be found at www.sfcasa.org.

Corporate Philanthropy

Fleishhacker Foundation enriches life for San Francisco residents

By Thomas Figg

The Fleishhacker Foundation is a family-run organization with deep roots in San Francisco, focusing on grant making in the areas of arts and education for the enrichment of San Francisco residents.

The foundation is in the middle of a 3-year literacy initiative concentrated in literacy support for disadvantaged K-5 public school students who are behind or are in danger of falling behind in reading.

Recent grantees include 826 Valencia and Reading Partners — two organizations adhering closely to the goals of Fleishhacker in bringing disadvantaged students up to grade-level proficiency by the end of the third grade — with students in this grade having been shown

Street off 8th street downtown; Robert Moses' Kin — a 17-year-old modern dance company founded by Robert Moses; and Southern Exposure — a local visual art gallery whose annual activities encompass up to 500 artists.

Mortimer Fleishhacker Sr., a banker and businessman, founded the Fleishhacker Foundation in 1947. He was involved in various philanthropic activities, including the Community Chest — forerunner to the United Way — and he served as a trustee for the University of California.

His legacy of supporting the improvement of San Francisco passed through several generations of the Fleishhacker family, from the original trustees to his son Mortimer Fleishhacker Jr., and his daughter Eleanor F. Sloss, and then to the current principal



Students at 826 Valencia participate in sessions with volunteer tutors to develop learning skills. Photo by Mike Griffin.

Geary Theater, where they continue to thrive today.

In 1976, the younger Fleishhacker died, and the management of the foundation was taken over by his sister Eleanor. He also left \$991,000 in his will to his wife Janet for charitable purposes, and with those funds a new foundation was created — the Janet and Mortimer Fleishhacker Foundation. Upon her death, the Janet and Mortimer Fleishhacker Foundation became the property of the Fleishhacker children — Delia Ehrlich, Mortimer III, and David — who decided to merge the two foundations in 1988 and enlarge the board.

By 1990, the foundation's assets totaled \$6.5 million, and grants were being concentrated primarily in arts and education. Today the foundation is worth approximately \$13 million.

The third and fourth generations of descendants of the senior Fleishhacker are the principle trustees. This is a family foundation, and 10 of the 12 current board members are from the family.

David Fleishhacker, a retired educator, joined Fleishhacker when the two foundations merged and has been president for over a decade. He is expecting to step down from that role as soon as the next generation takes over — all three of his children are involved with the foundation.

He stated that the most rewarding aspect of his involvement is watching his children and siblings gradually assert

their independence and display their skills within the foundation.

Fleishhacker spends his spare time during retirement performing research on the family's history, reading, or going to the theatre, symphony or ballet. He also is an amateur performer.

The future of the Fleishhacker Foundation and the family is close to his heart and will be an important topic of the family's retreat next fall — where keeping the family together, through working in philanthropy and annual reunions is a benefit of the family-centered foundation.

They get to enrich San Francisco while keeping the Fleishhacker family healthy and autonomous.

As the director of the Peace Corps in Afghanistan — where David Fleishhacker served in

1962–1964 — used to tell him, “The best policy is in enlightened self-interest.” The retired Fleishhacker declared that one should understand that it is not enough to want to do good. One should always be aware that doing good is in one's own interest. It should not be a burden, but a

life-enhancing experience. “Our foundation has tried to benefit others while enriching the lives of those who must decide on what causes should be served,” he said.

More information about the Fleishhacker Foundation can be found on their website, www.fleishhackerfoundation.org/.



Mortimer Fleishhacker Jr. (right) and William Ball, the founding artistic director of A.C.T., install the sign for A.C.T.'s new home on Geary Street. Photo courtesy of American Conservatory Theater archives.

by research to be at the critical age for gaining reading competency.

Located in the Mission District, 826 Valencia is a community-based organization that provides literacy help to about 5,000 children each year. Reading Partners is a growing agency, founded in 1999, which is focused upon providing reading clinics at the school sites of disadvantaged public schools.

Additionally, Fleishhacker's longstanding commitment to supporting the arts in San Francisco encompasses the fields of dance, film, music, theatre and visual arts. Supporting local organizations whose work is important to the Bay Area's reputation for artistic vitality is an integral function of the foundation.

Recent grantees whose activities help local artists create and present new works for art-minded audiences include CounterPULSE — a busy performing arts space on Mission

trustees. It is a family tradition.

The crux of the original foundation's value lay within a building owned by the elder Fleishhacker at the corner of Market Street and Van Ness Avenue. The building housed an automobile showroom on the ground floor and a dancehall on the upper floor. The rents generated from the building supported funds for worthy contributions.

After the death of his father in 1953, the younger Fleishhacker took over management of the foundation and established a board that made yearly contributions in the fields of art and music. He then sold the building in 1970 for \$1,250,000, and then turned the money over to an investment firm to increase the funds.

Fleishhacker was the key player, with a little assistance from Cyril Magnin, in bringing the American Conservatory Theatre to San Francisco and founding the American Conservatory Theatre Foundation — which set the theatre company up in the



Another foundation grantee — the Lorraine Hansberry Theatre at 450 Post St. — is the namesake of Lorraine Hansberry, who wrote “A Raisin in the Sun” at age 29. Hansberry's photo is via Google Images.

SF News Briefs

By Sam Felsing

Bay to Breakers

It won't be Halloween. It won't be an exhibitionist show. It won't be a fun run. Instead it will be combination of all three. The Bay to Breakers will happen on May 20.

The 7.46-mile race, this year sponsored by Zazzle, is not known for its exceptional running conditions. Instead, the race is famous because of the eccentric people who race in it. Runners are known to dress in everything from monkey suites to dresses. Sometimes, they do not even dress at all. Though nudity is not encouraged, costumes are. There is a costume contest after the race.

There will be six types of runners at the Bay to Breakers: Those can finish the race in 59 minutes; those who can finish in one hour and 15 minutes; those can finish in one hour and 30 minutes; those can finish in two hours; and those finish in over two hours. Each of the runners will have different starting points. The starting points are online at <http://zazzlebaytobreakers.com>. All runners will share the same finish line: the intersection of John F Kennedy Dr and Chain of Lakes Dr E in Golden Gate Park.

Registration for the Bay to Breakers can be done at www.zazzlebaytobreakers.com.

Bike to Work Day!

Ditch the car! Don't use BART or Muni, if possible. Just hop on a bike and ride. May 10 will be Bike to Work Day in San Francisco.

There are two ways that people can participate in Bike to Work Day. Of course, people can ride their bikes, or they can go to certain checkpoints — "Energizer Stations," as the event organizer, the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition, calls them — around the city and cheer on those who choose to ride. People can volunteer to be at the energizer stations by going to: <http://www.sfbike.org>.

The San Francisco Bicycle Coalition is the largest bicycle advocacy group in the city. The group on behalf of its 12,000 members works with City government and different community agencies to advocate for safer and more efficient bicycling conditions within the city. It works to promote a healthier lifestyle for San Franciscans.

According to the coalition's website, San Francisco loves bik-

ing, and an increasing number of persons are getting around the city by bike — which is a good thing for everyone. The coalition also advocates meeting a growing need for better bikeways that are safe, comfortable and continuous — bikeways that are fit for anyone from an 8-year-old to an 80-year-old. In the coalition's view, this is "Connecting the City!"



Carnaval!

Memorial Day weekend doesn't have to be so solemn. The San Francisco Carnaval will be happening from May 26 to 27.

Conceived 34 years ago by a group of local musicians, artists, and residents, the Carnaval was originally meant to only showcase Latin American and Caribbean art forms. It is now one California's largest multicultural festivals — though it still has a largely Latin and Caribbean flavor.

This year's Carnaval, which will take place in the Mission District, will include a parade and festival. The festival will begin on May 26, and will span seven blocks of Harrison Street. People attending the festival will be able to experience food, music, dance, art and performance from a number of different countries and cultures.

The Carnaval "Grand Parade" will begin at 9 a.m. on May 27 at the corner of 24th and Bryant Streets. It will include floats, musicians and performers from many different San Francisco multicultural organizations, including The African Outlet, the Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts, the Our Boys Steel Orchestra and the Mas Makers Massive.

To learn more about the Carnaval, visit <http://sfcarnaval.org>.

Art at the UN Plaza!

The United Nations Plaza in San Francisco was where one of the world's largest peace organizations was born. During the month of May, it will be where a long, ongoing performance art show, dubbed as the "Summer of Art", will take place.

Every Tuesday at noon during the month of May, actors, artists and dancers will perform new plays and dances in UN Plaza. The art show kickoff will be on May 8, with songwriters from Exit Café performing their new compositions. Also on May 8, actors from the Cutting Ball Theater Company will stage their new play, "Tenderloin." Dance artists from The Garage



will also be performing.

The "Summer of Art" performance series is a co-production of Denia Dance, People in Plazas, and Theatre Bay Area. More information about the performance art series can be found at <http://www.peopleinplazas.org/>.

Tell the City what's wrong!

Want to help San Francisco improve its image? Mayor Ed Lee just might be willing to listen. In April, Mayor Lee launched ImproveSF, a city sponsored website where residents can post suggestions on how to improve the city's many problems.

From time to time, Mayor Lee and other city officials will post to the site different city problems that need fixing. Site visitors will get to post suggestions on how to fix the problems, and will get to vote on the best user suggested solutions.

"With shrinking budgets and increasing demand on City services, ImproveSF allows us to engage the creative and entrepreneurial people of our City to help make it work better, smarter and more efficient," said Mayor Lee. "By

embracing innovation, we make San Francisco the 'Innovation Capital of the World,' and celebrate and reward the incredible talent and ideas that are fostered here."

In April, the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency asked site visitors to pick the agency's new colors and new logo. San Francisco designers, art students and graphic artists participated in the color/logo selection. The next city problem will be up on the site soon. People can visit the city site at www.improvesf.com.

Plant Sale at the Botanical Garden

The San Francisco Botanical Garden is holding its 45th annual plant sale on May 5 from 10 a.m. till 2 p.m., at the Botanical Garden in Golden Gate Park. Thousands of native, rare and unusual plants will be on view, many of which are exclusive to the SF Botanical Garden nursery. The plants are all said to be suitable for gardens in the Bay Area. Visit <http://www.sfbotanicalgarden.org/> for more information.



City and County of San Francisco
May 2012 — Monthly

Call for Artists: 2013 Art on Market Street Kiosk Poster Series Application Deadline: Wednesday, May 9, 2012, 11:59 p.m. (PST)

The Art on Market Street Program, which has commissioned new artwork by Bay Area artists on an annual basis since 1992, includes a bus kiosk poster series and other temporary projects that take place on San Francisco's main thoroughfare. For the kiosk poster series, the Art on Market Street Program commissions three consecutive 3-month poster exhibitions annually. Each poster series consists of a set of six original and related designs that are professionally reproduced and printed as six sets of posters, 68 inches high by 47 1/4 inches wide (trim size), for installation in 36 bus kiosks on Market Street between 8th Street and the Embarcadero. All artists' designs must be approved by the Arts Commission and are expected to be appropriate for a broad public audience.

Applications are available through SlideRoom, <https://sfgov.slideroom.com/>, an online application system. There is no charge to artists for using SlideRoom. First time users of SlideRoom: Please allow adequate time to learn the use of this system. Applications will not be accepted after the deadline.

For more information, please visit: www.sfartscommission.org, or contact Zoë Taleporos at 415.252.3215, or by email at zoe.taleporos@sfgov.org.

San Francisco International Airport

The Airport Commission has commenced the RFP process for the Airport Advertising Lease. The proposed minimum financial offer is \$7,500,000, with a term of eight years.

The Informational Conference will be at 10:00 a.m., May 10, 2012, at SFO Business Center, 2nd Floor, 575 N. McDonnell Road, San Francisco International Airport.

Please see <http://www.flysfo.com/web/page/about/b2b/conces/> for additional information, or call Gigi R. Ricasa, Senior Principal Property Manager, at 650.821.4500.

San Francisco International Airport

The Airport Commission has commenced the RFP process for Terminal 3 Common Use Club Lease at San Francisco International Airport. The Informational Conference, originally scheduled for 2:00 p.m. PST on April 24, 2012, at San Francisco International Airport, has been postponed until further notice.

If you have any questions, please contact Cheryl Nashir at 650.821.4500.

Notice of Funds Availability RFQ - Financial and Expanded Audit Services

First 5 San Francisco announces the Availability of Funds for Financial and Expanded Audit Services. Approximately \$30,000 is available for the period of 08/01/2012 to 12/30/2013, and renewable up to two years. Funding supports financial audit review, financial reporting and expanded audit services. Final awards and renewals are subject to availability of funds, grant terms, and rights.

The RFQ may be downloaded from www.first5sf.org or picked up in person, 9 a.m.—4:30 p.m., Monday—Friday, at First 5 San Francisco, 1390 Market St., Ste. 318, San Francisco. Proposals are due by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, May 15, 2012. Guidelines are noted in the RFQ.

For more information, contact Derik Aoki at derik@first5sf.org, or 415.557.9912.

The City and County of San Francisco encourage public outreach. Articles are translated into several languages to provide better public access. The newspaper makes every effort to translate the articles of general interest correctly. No liability is assumed by the City and County of San Francisco or the newspapers for errors and omissions.

Corporate Philanthropy

Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation gives major support for the arts in SF

By Julie McCoy

Longtime San Francisco resident Phyllis Cannon Wattis was a devoted fan of the arts. She loved to paint and also loved music, including jazz and opera. She supported many arts organizations throughout her life – in the area of fine arts, as well as the performing arts.

Wattis served on the boards of several arts-related organizations, including the San Francisco Opera, the San Francisco Symphony, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, where she was a strong supporter of these organizations.

“She supported organizations large and small,” noted her granddaughter, Carlie Wilmans. “She was very generous.” Wilmans added, “She recognized how the arts can change the way people think, the way the world works.”

When Wattis died in June 2002, she had set money aside that she wanted to be allocated to philanthropy, especially in the area of the arts.

Since then, Wilmans has carried on her grandmother’s legacy with the Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation, which provides grants to nonprofit organizations that are focused on fine arts and performing arts, including dance, music and theater. “It is a wonderful way to carry on her memory,” said Wilmans.

The foundation hones in on organizations that are doing cutting-edge work that is pushing the envelope, Wilmans explained.

according to Wilmans, who had the difficult task of narrowing the pool down to 50, out of which 15 actually received grants. “It’s rigorous,” Wilmans emphasized. “It’s competitive. We want the money to have a significant impact.”

Wilmans further stated that in order to receive a grant, a nonprofit must not only be focused on the arts, but must also hold an IRS extension letter or be sponsored by an IRS extension letter. An organization can receive a maximum grant of \$50,000.

The Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation will only consider proposals for support for a specific project or program. Applications will not be considered for general support, operating expenses, capital expansion, endowment funds, seed grants, scholarships, awards, or for research and planning.

The foundation is funded by the Wattis estate. It is required to give 5 percent of its value every year, according to Wilmans. In 2011, the foundation gave \$445,000 to 14 organizations. Wilmans felt that one of the challenges of running the organization is having limited resources, saying that there are a lot of organizations doing great work and she wishes the foundation could give money to everybody.

One organization benefiting from these grants has been the Black Rock Arts Foundation – BRAF – a San Francisco-based nonprofit that was established in May 2001 to promote public, community-based art installations. BRAF was awarded

tunity to share our vision in a natural, logical narrative format,” McCabe said. “Because our mission is so aligned with the foundation’s goals, it was easy to tell our story, outline our hopes for the future, and illustrate the value of our partnership with the foundation.”

BRAF’s civic arts program “is on a trajectory of a steady growth that would not be possible without the boost of funding the Wattis Foundation provided,” McCabe noted. “Because of their generous grant, we were able to jump on opportunities to collaborate with acclaimed artists – artists like Marco Cochrane, whose dazzling, monumental work Bliss Dance now stands on Treasure Island, and Kate Raudenbush, whose poignant, elegant work Future’s Past will be installed in the Hayes Valley neighborhood this spring.”

The foundation has “been instrumental to shaping the unique character of the Bay Area,” McCabe further added. “BRAF is deeply honored to be included in the legacy of Wattis Foundation’s funded organizations. We’re grateful for the foundation’s focus on funding high-caliber works of art that add to the enrichment of civic life in the Bay Area. We share the foundation’s commitment to highlighting the Bay Area as a cultural center of ground-breaking approaches to art-making and public exhibition.”

McCabe further noted, “BRAF’s public art installations in San Francisco have won the affection of residents and notable attention of city officials and other arts organizations. Our projects become cherished neighborhood centerpieces and unique tourist attractions, bringing joy and wonder into the daily lives of citizens and visitors. As BRAF’s reputation grows, more talented artists and trusted institutions reach out to us in interest of collaboration.”

The Berkeley Repertory Theatre – commonly known as the Berkeley Rep, and the home of emerging and established artists since 1968 – has also received grants from the Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation, one in 2006, and another in 2009, according to Development Director Lynn Eve Komaromi.



BRAF will be installing Kate Raudenbush’s sculpture “Future’s Past” at Patricia’s Green in Hayes Valley in May, with an opening reception on May 10. Photo courtesy of Mark Hammon of www.HammonPhoto.com.

The 2006 grant worth \$50,000 was for “To the Lighthouse,” a play adopted from a Virginia Woolf novel. “It was a new play,” said Komaromi. “We were premiering. They like to support more risky, cutting-edge work. It was a bold, new work, taking something that was a narrative and having it adopted for the stage.”

The 2009 grant was also worth \$50,000 and was used to “support the world premiere of ‘American Idiot,’ which went on to be the most successful show in our history, transferring to New York and nominated for several Tony Awards,” noted Komaromi. “The show is now on a national tour which will return to the Bay Area this summer. We were incredibly grateful for the foundation’s support on this groundbreaking work.”

The Berkeley Rep – which attracts an audience of 180,000, serves 20,000 students annually and hosts dozens of community groups – recently applied for renewed support from the Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation and was declined, which was disappointing, Komaromi admitted. She understands, however, that more and more nonprofits are applying for grant money in the current tough economic environment and that the foundation has limited resources.

continued on page 12



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The foundation has two grant cycles each year – one in the spring and another in the fall, according to Wilmans. Letters of inquiry are accepted in January for the spring grant cycle and in July for the fall grant cycle.

In 2011, the foundation received 200 letters of intent,

\$50,000 from the Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation in May 2011. These funds were put towards its civic arts program, according to Executive Director Thomas McCabe.

“The Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation’s clear and simple grant process gave us the oppor-

Eighth annual Asian Street Festival returns to Little Saigon in May

By Julie McCoy

From food and clothing to arts and crafts and performances, San Francisco's Little Saigon District will be bustling with all things Asian at the 8th annual Asian Heritage Street Celebration — AHSC — on the third Saturday in May.

On May 19th, the event will kick off with a Faces of Asia Cultural Procession organized by the Au Co Vietnamese Cultural Center.

Popular returning activities for people of all ages will include J-Cars; a children's area; a healthy living pavilion; a cultural procession; free film screenings, presented by the Center for Asian American Media; and performances by Asian American artists, DJs, and martial arts experts. The fair will also offer free hepatitis B screenings.

For the first time ever, the fair will feature celebrity cooking demonstrations — including a lesson from renown chef Martin Yan and Slanted Door's Charles Phan this year.

"We want people to have a fun time and to gain an understanding and appreciation of the diversity of the Asian American community — through food, cultural exhibits, performances, et cetera," said Community Relations Manager Angela Pang for the AsianWeek Foundation, which organizes the event.

Pang added that, "We hope the fair raises awareness of the Vietnamese community and helps kick-start the area's many Vietnamese businesses and that the fair will help transform Little Saigon into a tourist attraction like Chinatown and Japantown, that visitors 'must see' in the city."

The festival attracts 90,000 to 100,000 people each year, according to Pang. "We draw people of all ages and ethnicities, and also cross generations — from immigrants to second/third generation Asian Americans," she noted.

AHSC is supported by more than 250 local and community groups representing more than 625,000 members and associates, according to Pang. The festival operates on a budget of over \$100,000 with many contributions of resources from corporate sponsors to over

400 volunteers.

The first AHSC festival was held in 2005 and took place in Japantown to honor the Japanese community. The second year's festival showcased the Chinese community on Irving Street in the Sunset District; the third festival paid homage to the large Filipino community in the South of Market area; in its fourth year, the festival returned to Japantown; and in the fifth year it was held in Little Saigon/Civic Center, where it has been held ever since.

AHSC has been held in the Little Saigon/Civic Center area since 2009. "San Francisco is home to the second Little Saigon in the United States, a name officially given only four years ago to the two blocks of Larkin Street between Eddy and O'Farrell," Pang explained.

"Approximately 2,000 of the city's 13,000 Vietnamese Americans live in the Little Saigon/Tenderloin, with many arriving as refugees after the end of the Vietnam War in 1975. Vietnamese Americans have since made a home, creating schools, service centers and at least 250 businesses in the area."

Pang further added, "To pay homage to the Vietnamese community, the San Francisco Little Saigon Gate — two 8-ton granite and marble pillars, a symbol of peace, happiness and safety for the Vietnamese that have settled here — were erected last July. They now stand at the intersection of Larkin and Eddy streets."

The Little Saigon location also is ideal for the festival because it is easily accessible by public transportation, Pang noted.

Julia Yoon, owner of Seoul on Wheels, will serve a variety of Korean food at this year's festival, including galbi — boneless short ribs; bulgogi — rib eye beef; spicy pork; bulgogi chicken; sauteed tofu; kimchee fried rice; korritos — Korean barbecue burritos; and Korean barbecue tacos, which are

always a hit, she said.

Yoon, who is participating in the festival for the third time, said: "I love being part of the festival because being Asian-American myself, I appreciate

that the festival celebrates all of the different Asian cultures of the Bay Area." She added, "The Asian Heritage celebration is a great place for Asian vendors to proudly show off our cuisines, art and dance, which in turn helps grow our visibility."

Brandt Fuse, owner of Sumo Fish Design Co., will sell his

outlet for their creative side as well."

Bui further said, "We love the location and the theme of the Asian Heritage Street Fair. The location makes it easily accessible to all types of people from all over the world. It never ceases to amaze us that someone from halfway across the world



Asian-themed T-shirts at the festival. "I enjoy the vibe and atmosphere of local street festivals, and the AHSC is a fun event with a good mix of entertainment, food and artisan vendors," Fuse said. He is participating in the festival for the sixth time.

"It's a good venue for me as my artwork and T-shirts generally target a younger demographic interested in Japanese and Pan-Asian culture," Fuse added.

Jeff Bui, one of the partners in Bok Choy Apparel, will sell graphic T-shirts primarily designed by local Asian American artists at the festival, he said. The T-shirts have roots in Korean, Japanese, Chinese, and Filipino backgrounds.

"The goal of our company is to build community in the Asian American community, and to share the parts of our culture that we love with everyone, Asian and non-Asian," explained Bui, who is participating in the festival for the third time. "The Asian Heritage Street Fair is centrally located in Downtown San Francisco, allowing us to do just that," he added. We love to foster local artists, giving them an

is tickled by our designs. The theme is most aligned to our company since we have T-shirts inspired by many different Asian cultures."

The AHSC is just one of many festivals in which Bok Choy Apparel participates each year. "We participate in several street fairs in the Bay Area in order to get our name out in the community," explained Bui.

Taiwanese American Professionals — TAP — has participated in the festival since 2009, according to Community Chair Wilson Tsao.

"TAP is happy to participate in the AHSC because it's one of the largest gatherings of Asian Americans in the Bay Area," Tsao said. "Because May is Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, it's a great time to celebrate and bring attention to the success and contributions of Asian American organizations and communities throughout the Bay Area."

"TAP partners with and supports AsianWeek Foundation throughout the year, and we

continued on page 12

Neighborhood News

By Sarah Morgan

Alamo Square

Bay to Breakers — Sunday, May 20, 11 a.m.–1 p.m.

Alamo Square will be busy with runners at the annual Bay to Breakers on May 20 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Residents can volunteer to assist with monitoring race conditions and welcoming participants to the neighborhood. Each volunteer is expected to work one 2-hour shift. Contact Jarie Bolander at jarie@nopna.org if you wish to volunteer as a neighborhood ambassador.

Neighborhood Association Meeting — May 21, 7:30 p.m.

The Alamo Square Neighborhood Association will hold their monthly meeting at Chateau Tivoli on Monday, May 21. Doors open at 7 p.m., but the meeting will not begin until 7:30 p.m. The meetings are a time for residents to discuss plans, concerns and events for the Alamo Square neighborhood. For more information, visit Alamo Square Online, at www.alamosq.wordpress.com/.

Divisadero farmers market — every Sunday in May except May 20 — 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

Every Sunday residents and visitors can find fresh fruit and vegetables, fresh cut flowers and much more at the farmers market. The farmers market is open to all from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. at Grove and Divisadero Streets.

Bayview

BMAGIC “Literacy is Freedom” annual book fair — Wednesday, May 2, 10 a.m.–3 p.m.

BMAGIC’s annual book fair is set for Wednesday, May 2 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Bayview Opera House/Ruth Williams Memorial Theatre. The book fair is planned in hopes to exposing children to the joys and power of literacy. Children will enjoy reading circles, puppet and jewelry making workshops, face painting, musical performances and the opportunity to meet animals from the San Francisco Zoo up close and personal. Each child will receive a free book to take home.

Southeast Health Center Mammovan Day — Wednesday, May 9, 8:30 a.m.–3 p.m.

Women ages 40 and above can receive a free mammogram screening as part of Southeast Health Center’s Mammovan Day on May 9. Health screenings will be given by appointment from 8:30 a.m. until 3 p.m. To sched-

ule an appointment, call 415-671-7085.

ZDT performs “Food for Thought” May 9, 7 p.m.

Zaccho Dance, the acclaimed Bayview dance troupe, will perform “Food for Thought: Dances about Nutrition, Health and the Choices We Make” on May 9 at 7 p.m. The performance will be held at Z-Space — formerly Theater Artaud — at 450 Florida St., near 17th and Mariposa. Admission is based upon ability to pay.



Third Street Safety Working Group — Thursday, May 17, 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

The group plans to meet on May 17 at Renaissance Bayview, 3801 Third Street, Suite #616. They will discuss the perception of crime and the reality of crime to plan actions to make the community safer in the short and long term.

Dare to Dream ARTS Showcase — Thursday, May 17, 5:30 p.m.–7 p.m.

The community is invited to the Dare to Dream ARTS Showcase on May 17 at the Bayview Opera House. The showcase celebrates the achievements of more than 300 Bayview children who have taken part in the morning preschool and after school arts enrichment program.

Fillmore

Police Community Relations Forum — Thursday, May 10, 7 p.m.–8 p.m.

The Northern Police station at 125 Fillmore St. plays host to a community relations forum on May 10 from 7–8 p.m. The forum discussion will revolve around the police, City Attorney, District Attorney’s office and residents working together on safety issues. For more information, contact Captain Ann Mannix at 415.614.3400, or by email at Ann.Mannix@sfgov.org.

YMCA to hold silent auction — Friday, May 11, 6–11 p.m.

The YMCA’s Urban Services will hold a silent auction on May 11. Attendees will have the opportunity to bid on rare auction items and eat delicious food. The night begins around 6 p.m., with festivities winding down around 11 p.m. For more information about the event, contact the YMCA at 415.561.0631, or online at www.ymcasf.org/urban.

Fillmore farmers market — every Saturday in May, 9 a.m.–1 p.m.

Live jazz and fresh foods make O’Farrell and Fillmore

Streets a busy place to be every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. With its music, vegetables, fruits and crafts, the Fillmore farmers market is one of the best in the city. To learn more about the vendors, visit www.pcfma.com online.

Hayes Valley

Mo’Magic Community Meeting — Thursday, May 3, 11 a.m.–1 p.m.

Mo’Magic, a collaboration of various organizations and city agencies, is meeting May 3 from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. The meeting is open to the public and will take place on the third floor at the AAACC at 762 Fulton Street [at Webster]. For more information about the meeting, contact Sheryl at 415.563.5207, or via email at Sheryl@momagic.org.

HVNA Public Safety Committee Meeting — Monday, May 7, 7–8 p.m.

The Hayes Valley Neighborhood Association’s public safety committee is meeting Monday, May 7 at 7 p.m. to discuss safety in the neighborhood. Community residents are encouraged to attend and share their input on how to make Hayes Valley better for everyone. The meeting will be held at the Korean American Community Center. Contact Bob at safety@hayesvalleysf.org for more information.

Homestead Skillshare Festival — Saturday, May 26, 10 a.m.–6 p.m.

Everyone is invited to the Homestead Skillshare Festival at Hayes Valley Farm on May 26 to learn about coops, solar ovens, worm bins, water catchment and other homestead skills. The festival is designed to help educate, inspire and spread sustainable living and self-sufficiency practices. Attendees can either make a \$20 donation or volunteer two hours at the farm to receive admission. Kids are free, and the event is family friendly. For more information contact Mira at www.sfbace.org.



Japantown

Japanese Heritage Night with the San Francisco Giants — Friday, May 4, 7:15 p.m.

The Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California — JCCCNC — and the San Francisco Giants will celebrate Japanese Heritage Night during their game against the

Milwaukee Brewers on May 4. Before the game, a festival will be held in Seals Plaza from 5 to 7 p.m. To learn about special ticket pricing and the festival, send an email to programsevents@jcccnc.org.

Children’s Day Festival — Saturday, May 5, 11 a.m.–4 p.m.

JCCCNC presents their annual Children’s Day Festival in Japantown on May 5 from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. The annual event promises to be one filled with entertainment, food, culture and hands-on craft activities. For more information call, 415.567.5505.

Colma Japanese Cemetery cleanup — Saturday, May 19, 10 a.m.–Noon

In an effort to honor the past and to connect with the Japanese culture, JCCCNC has organized a youth and family community cleanup day at the Japanese Cemetery in Colma. To find out how you can be involved call, 415.567.5505.

Zumba at the JCCCNC, May 20, 10 a.m.—noon

Enjoy Latin dance and a healthier life style with Zumba’s high-energy workouts. A free Zumba workshop is being offered at JCCCNC on May 20 from 10 a.m. till noon, led by Noriko Rovner, with 20 years of dance experience. To reserve a spot at the workshop, contact the JCCCNC at 415.567.5505, or email programsevents@jcccnc.org.

NoPa

St. Cyprian’s Bazaar BBQ — Saturday, May 5, Noon–6 p.m.

St. Cyprian’s is working towards achieving their goal of starting a community kitchen. A Bazaar BBQ is the group’s first fundraiser to help raise awareness and

funds to create a space to feed people who are hungry. The BBQ will be at 297 Turk [at Lyon Street] on May 5 from Noon until 6 p.m. More information can be found online at www.cyprianscommunitykitchen.org.

Neighborhood volunteers for Bay to Breakers, May 20

The NOPNA board is asking neighbors to come out and help make the 101st Bay to Breakers “Fun for Everyone.” Volunteer to be a Neighborhood Ambassador as a great way to help out and make a positive impact on your neighborhood. Signups can be done at www.doitsports.com/volunteer2/jobs-by-date.tcl?event_id=214079.

Community Voices

SF Rock continued from page 1

the selection of the music.

"We put in a suggestion box to ask the kids what shows and songs they are interested in doing," said Graham. "We'll get everything from death metal to The Pixies to The Go-Go's to Led Zeppelin to The Who. You get all these kids' musical preferences, and they are narrowed down to just a few."



Participants in the San Francisco Rock Project try out their talents in the rock genre. Photos by Mike Griffin.

The idea to create the SFRP was first conceived when its predecessor, The School of Rock, closed down abruptly in June 2010. Faced with the loss of their children's favorite pastime, a group of six parents sprang into action, gathering the contact information for all School of Rock families and setting about creating a new, nonprofit music program — the SFRP.

Miraculously, SFRP managed to open its doors in time for the summer of 2010. "We opened the school in just 30 days," said SFRP President Ellen Hathaway. "We found a location, secured the teachers that were going to lose their jobs, and were able to keep every student that was a member of the School of Rock as a member of SFRP."

"It was a huge feat," said Graham. "We didn't have equipment, soundproofing, desks, chairs, computers, or anything. It was a really grassroots community-based startup, with all the parents bringing in our guitars, and our drums and our amps and everything we could to piece this place together."

Since that first summer program, the SFRP has grown by leaps and bounds. Last December the SFRP held their first annual fundraiser—a Rock Prom and silent auction MC'd by MythBusters co-host and SFRP parent, Adam Savage. The event was a major success, allowing SFRP to fill the program's remaining need for drums, guitars, amps, microphones, and PA

system equipment.

Now, their fully stocked headquarters, located on the corner of Harrison and 1st Streets, has two rehearsal rooms and enough equipment to run two bands playing at the same time. In addition, they have a drum room with two sets of drums — one for an instructor and one for a student — a guitar room with two amps, and a bass room with two amps.

"It's a hangout," said Graham. "If a kid's lesson is on a Friday and their rehearsal is on a Saturday, they still come in on Wednesday and Thursday because this is just their clubhouse. It's keeping kids off the street and out of trouble. They have a safe place to come and hang out and be around like minds."

This upcoming season, SFRP students will perform a Weezer and Flaming Lips show at Café Du Nord on June 10, and a British Invasion show featuring songs from the Rolling Stones, The Beatles, The Who, The Kinks, and The Animals at Bottom of the Hill on June 17.

In addition, they are offering six summer camps starting mid-June that include daily one-on-one private lessons on gui-



tar, bass, drums, keyboards and vocals, as well as group rehearsals. Each camp will culminate in a final show at a music venue in SF.

"Watching kids take risks and try new things is probably my favorite part," said Hathaway. "To see someone who is terrified to sing get up in front of 150 people and sing a song for the first time is so amazing, and my hat is off to them because a lot of grownups are way too scared to do that kind of thing."

More information on the San Francisco Rock Project can be found at www.sfrockproject.org/.

Midgett's Corner

What are you waiting for — and why?

First I will list some reasons for what you might be waiting for. Second, why you are waiting. Lastly; some possible solutions or suggestions about your dilemma which might help in your decisions to get out of the waiting and why period. Then maybe you can have more spontaneity in your immediate or future life.

Here are some of the following reasons that hold you back from living for the moment: self

—esteem; money; what friends and family, or significant others will say; people; visual expressions from family; also time, age, health and fear.

Self-esteem: Some individuals will not go to the movies alone because their friends could make fun of them — possibly saying, "Why do you go to the movies or dinner alone? Don't you have any friends?" Someone may be sitting next to you and wanting to hold a conversation, giving you that sad look as if you're lonely. You are afraid to move or say, "This is my alone time."

You may feel that you are not worthy of a vacation.

Money: Do you need money to take a solitary walk on the beach or sit in the park with a good book? Are you always thinking you need to pay a bill, and never spending any on yourself?

Time: You have bad time management; you are not spontaneous.

Age: You think you are too old to do fun things that you did when you were younger.

Health: Although you get a good bill of health from the doctor, you dwell on unnecessary issues that might happen if you take a risk and just "do it."

Fear: What is the worst that can happen?

I called one of my friends in the city. I asked her if she would like to take a ride to Monterey, I would pay the gas and lunch. I knew of a nice fish place along the route. Girlfriend knew I have these moments, and she — being young, age 55, and as adventurous as I am — she is always ready to go.

If you have spontaneous friends, your life shouldn't be boring. Also having a variety of friends in your life, especially adventurous ones, is the best. Those individuals can keep you young mentally and physically.

Especially if your conversations are always lively and

inspiring, yet you know how to have a quiet time with friends and enjoy the scenery. My joy is to view water such as a lake or the ocean, and trees.

I always plan scenic routes which are relaxing for my mental health.

Some of the experiences are personal, such as information from friends and individuals I have chatted with. Do you fit into any of the categories I mentioned? Do

you need to make some minor or major changes in your life?

The following can be taken away from you gradually or quickly: time, your job, money, sunshiny days, good friends, your health if it is good or fair, the weather, your eyesight, living space, marriage, live-in lover, your car or children. Then you need to ask yourself what are you waiting for — and why?

How many times have you said, "I will do it tomorrow?" Why is tomorrow different than today? What is your time management today? What is your fear? Have fun!

Mary Midgett is the author of "New York Flavor with a San Francisco beat." *The San Francisco resident is available to do presentations and seminars on social and family negotiations; also on parenting, self-esteem, social and intimate relationships. She can be viewed on YouTube: "Midgetts host of older black women's issues."*

For more information, visit www.Marymidgett.net, or drop her a line at Midgettscorner@aol.com.

Correction:

The April Young Life story is corrected to read that only volunteers and staff need to undergo background checks and sign the statement of faith. This does not apply to youths wishing to join the organization.

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Asian American women artists bring cultural heritage to the arts

By Mallory Emerson

The Asian American Women's Association — AAWAA — is a local nonprofit organization dedicated to the visibility and documentation of Asian American women in the art world. Since 1989, AAWAA has grown in the Bay Area and across the nation to ensure that women artists of Asian heritage are fully represented in the arts.

Two women have played key roles in the foundation of this association. Flo Oy Wang and Betty Kano founded the organization to promote a community for Asian American women artists and to serve as an outlet of personal expression for those of Asian heritage and culture from the perspective of a woman.

AAWAA supports a range of media, including sculpture, painting, poetry, writing, visual arts and journalism. In addition to supporting Asian American women artists, the organization also provides education to traditional art museums and establishments on the underrepresentation of Asian American women



(Clockwise from top): Cynthia Tom's surrealistic "Circus Series: Leaving Too Soon" is part of her work exhibited at famed San Francisco locations, such as the de Young; "Dance of the Inner Spirit" is a fiber sculpture by Nancy Hom in 2010 on exhibit at the Driftwood Salon; book cover of "Cheers to Muses: Contemporary Works by Asian American Women"; "Nasturtium" from The Garden series in felt, wood, wire and burlap, by Vivian Truong.



artists in American art history, where they work to promote an open representation of such artists in mainstream galleries, publications, and museums.

AAWAA has impacted the Bay Area through many different programs and exhibitions. One of the most intriguing programs is called "A Place of Her Own," which is designed to help women express their opinions on the question, "If you had a place of your own, what would it be?"

The program is modeled to give women the freedom of personal expression without the limitations brought on by parental or cultural training, such as the needs of women often being set aside; however, through this program, women can use the arts as a means of discovery, realization and expression while focusing solely on themselves.

This year AAWAA has developed the program into an

exploratory creative workshop series open to the public. Asian American women of all artistic backgrounds are encouraged to join the workshop to focus on what is important to herself alone. The social service initiative of "A Place of Her Own" is to provide a safe nurturing environment for Asian American women to express their feelings without fear of cultural backlash, explore subconscious memories, cultivate intuition, and use these creative outlets as a means of healing powers.

Cynthia Tom, curator for the association, explained the main goal of these programs and of the organization by saying, "We are providing vehicles to showcase and document their work; growing community; and giving them permission to vocalize their ambitions, pain, frustrations and needs."

AAWAA has featured many artists over the past 20 years. These artists have gone on to exhibit their art at museums such as the de Young and other local museums.

One such artist, MariNaomi spoke of her first experience with AAWAA. She said, "I first heard of AAWAA in 2005 or so, and I joined up immediately. I am half-Japanese, but I grew up in a very white area, plus the art

scene I was a part of was predominantly Caucasian and male, so the idea of meeting other female Asian-American artists was intriguing to me.

"The ladies of AAWAA are so diverse with regard to mediums, experience and styles," MariNaomi said. "It exposed me to a lot I wouldn't have otherwise been privy to. And they are so supportive of one another!"

Currently, the AAWAA is preparing for their latest show as a part of the Emerging Curators Program titled "Hungry Ghost: Yearning for Fulfillment" which features 38 local visual and literary artists. The

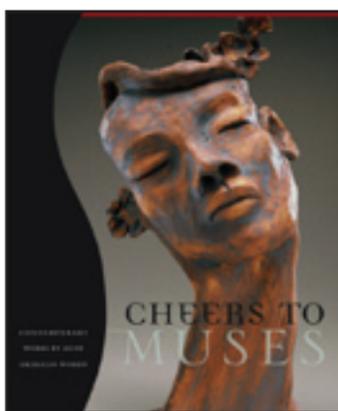
show is based on *The Hungry Ghost*, a concept based in Buddhist and Taoist beliefs in which a lost soul is burdened by unmet needs and wanders looking for fulfillment. The ghost, driven by greed and desire is constantly roaming its surroundings, searching and feeding.

The artists were asked to interpret the culturally rich metaphor through various media — such as sculpture,

photography, poetry, mixed media illustrations and essays. They expressed their answers to the questions: How do we crave acceptance and fulfillment? What feeds us? The major themes of the show are food and family, identity and isolation, consumption and compulsion.

Wei Ming Dariotis wrote a poem for the exhibit, called "White Snake Woman in San Francisco." Wei Ming explained her time with the organization saying, "I've had a long association with AAWAA as an artist and organizer — over a decade now. To me, AAWAA is a powerful community of Asian American Women Artists of very diverse identities. Many, like myself, are of mixed heritage. We are queer, straight, married, wealthy, poor students, and from a variety of ethnic groups representing Asian American diversity. To me, AAWAA is an important home for my art. I often feel inspired to create art specifically for AAWAA exhibition, like the latest show, *Hungry Ghost*."

More information about AAWAA can be found on their website at www.aawaa.net/.



Education and Learning

TechCollective — a profitable employee-owned business cooperative

By Thomas Figg

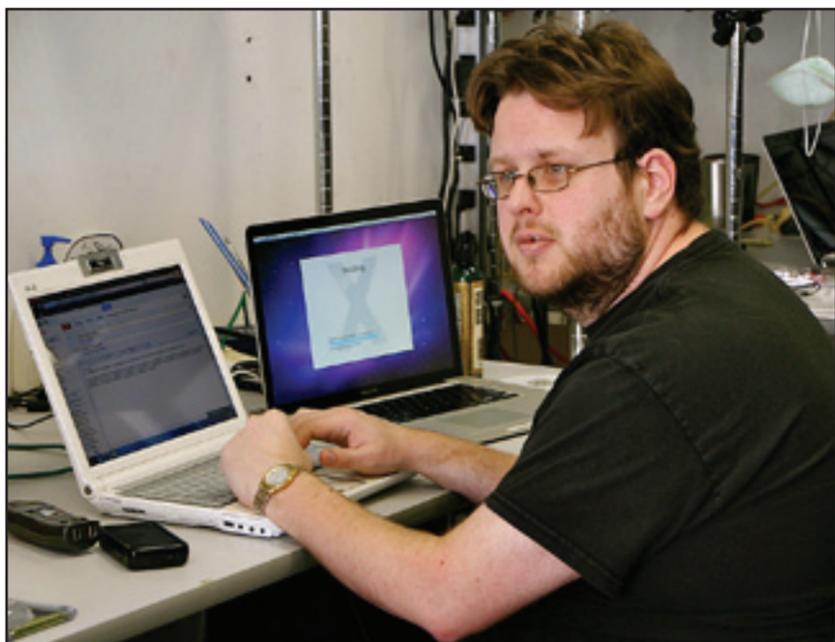
Taran Ramage sits behind his desk located at the rear of the office, strategically overlooking the work benches where technicians at TechCollective — an IT support company — work diligently on componentry.

It looks like your average capitalist scene — with a boss overlooking the workers — using their labor as a commodity for profit. However, unlike most other IT support companies in the Bay Area, and around the country for that matter — there is no boss.

Ramage is the senior technician, but he is no boss, and the other employees are his equivalent. TechCollective is a worker-owned company. They sell their labor and share the profit — equally. As far as Ramage knows, there are only a dozen or so worker-owned technology support companies in the country, and only two of them are full-service: TechCollective in San Francisco, and C4 in New Orleans.

Established in 2007, TechCollective, located at 263 San Carlos St. in the Mission District, provides a full range of technology support and consulting services. They specialize in the technology needs of individuals and small to medium-sized businesses and other organizations — especially nonprofits.

TechCollective is the brainchild of Yochi Gal, an Israeli immigrant, who brought the worker-owned concept to San Francisco from his homeland. Gal and three other disgruntled “techies” — Jason Luong, Billy Fang, and Sven Maier, all foreigners — founded the company five years ago.



The founders opened TechCollective as a California Consumer Cooperative Cooperation, also known as a co-op. The organization consists of a one member, one vote structure, where each worker is an



TechCollective computer technicians at work include (clockwise from top) Thomas Puhek, Taran Ramage and Joonas Siltanen. Photos by Claire Kirshner.

equal owner. At the end of the year, profits can be rolled into the company, and doled out to each worker-owner as a tax-free patronage — similar to corporate dividends.

Ramage joined the organization three and one-half years ago. Of the original founders, only Luong is still there, but the legacy of a social work environment continues. Currently there are six worker-owners, five men, and one woman — Sara Sakamoto. There have been as many as ten.

New worker-owners must first work as an employee for six months, and then they must be unanimously voted in by all existing worker-owners. All other decisions made within TechCollective require only a

majority vote.

The worker-owners practice a collective mentality, and cooperate in a democratic setting, making sure that they treat customer's right, as they each have a personal stake in the success of the company.

It is also important that they are happy, and the crew holds regular meetings to openly communicate about what works, and what can be improved. They might not make as much as the top paid technicians in the field, but they say it is worth it. After all, they are going after sustainability and democracy instead of “pure cynical commerce,” which they call the corporate world.

TechCollective's company motto reads: “HERE TO FIX YOUR COMPUTER, NOT MAKE YOU FEEL STUPID.” Customers seem to like it. The organization earned a five-star rating on Yelp, with over 200 reviews. Many reviews say the worker-owners are down to earth at TechCollective.

TechCollective worker-owners also teach their clients that technology should be for everyone, and they suggest free products, such as Linux “open-source” programming when appropriate.

The company is fiscally successful. Almost all of the original funding sources are paid off, and the book is in the black, as of last year.

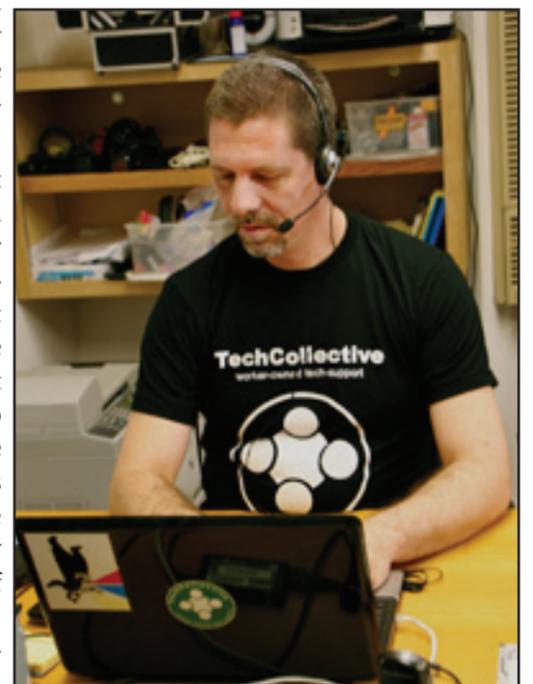
One of the company goals is to ensure all workers are happy, so they encourage humor on the job — “geek” humor especially, much more so than your casual office humor. They are encouraged to be themselves at work, and they do not hold anything back. “Nothing is sacred,” Ramage said.

They are there to get the job done and make some money, but in a sustainable and healthy way. This makes TechCollective an appealing place to work.

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2012 as the International Year of the Cooperatives, intending to raise public awareness of the invaluable contributions of cooperative enterprises toward poverty reduction, employment generation and social integration.

The year 2012 also highlight the strengths of the cooperative business model as an alternative means of doing business and furthering socioeconomic development.

The worker-owned concept is working so well for TechCollective that they are developing more sophisticated



services including web-design and instructional services. They are also charting their expansion with an eye towards the East Bay.

However, they never forget their primary mission — to provide good jobs for technicians. The worker-owner cooperative model can be used for any line of work, and it is better for you —the worker.

“You can Occupy your Job,” Ramage said.

More information about TechCollective can be found at www.techcollective.com/.

Nonprofit News

Urban Services Y continued from page 1

valuable in a way they might not otherwise," he said. He pointed out that the program has support groups for mentors.

According to Wightman, the Building Futures Program has been around for 20 years and is in five states: California, Maryland, Tennessee, Arizona and Ohio. More information can be found about the program by contacting him at 415.561.0631, Ext. 102, or send an email to mentoring@ymcasf.net.

Truancy Intervention Program

The Truancy Intervention Program, located in the heart of San Francisco's Western Addition neighborhood at 1426 Fillmore St. in Ste. 204, provides long-term case management services for truant youth and disconnected young adults up to age 25, according to the program director, Tacing Parker.

In addition, the program provides enrichment activities — for example, parent workshops and gender-specific groups — as well as information, referrals and advocacy.

Students are referred into the program by schools, teachers, family members and probation personnel for services, Parker explained. Once referred, both students and their parents or legal guardians must be willing to consent to services.

"We meet our students where they are, and that can be in our office, their schools, home, community, et cetera," Parker noted.

How does the program help people who are habitually and chronically truant to turn their lives around?

"Collaboration is key," Parker explained. "We meet them where they are, and we work in collaboration with the youth, family, providers — including city agencies, schools and community. Building a trusting relationship is essential. We work with our youth to build a rapport with them. Many youth do not trust adults they do not know. Many of them have been let down. Often young people are told what they are doing wrong. Instead we focus on what they're doing right and highlight the strengths each young person possesses. Everyone has a gift — it's a part of our commitment to help the student discover it."

According to Parker, the Truancy Intervention program has countless success stories of students it has helped over the years. For example, one girl was referred to the program nearly two years ago. She was lacking at least one academic year, depressed and severely chronically truant. She had far more than 50 unexcused absences and was unmotivated to attend school. Upon entering the program she had a GPA of 0.0.

However, this had changed. "After many conversations, interventions, etcetera, she called me the other day and came by to let me know she has a 3.3 GPA, has solidified part-time work, totally loves her school and is excited about graduating next year," Parker explained. "Although she'll be one year behind in her graduation, she says it's better late than never."

Parker further noted, "Rewards like this is what helps us continue to do the work we do. Not only is it her, her family's and our reward, but it's a reward to the entire city and society because she will be able to positively contribute to her community."

According to Parker, Urban Services YMCA has been providing truancy intervention work since 1999 through various city grants and donations. "I see our program continuing to provide the services for our youth and families," she explained. "We are hoping to further build our programming by including more pathways to careers and vocational opportunities and higher education."

Parker can be contacted for more information on the Truancy Intervention Program at 415.437.1700, Ext. 11, or by sending an email to aparker@ymcasf.org.

IDA B. Wells High School After School Program

The Ida B. Wells High School at 1099 Hayes St. is an alternative school for ages 16 and older, according to the school's website, <http://www.sfusd.edu/en/schools/school-information/ida-b-wells.html>.

"They're here for a reason," explained the site coordinator, Yolanda Cuellar-Hernandez. "It's not a traditional school."

The IDA B. Wells After School Program has an "achievement lab" with computers and books for students to use. Students can also get help with homework and applications for schools and jobs.

Additionally, students can participate in Cyber High through the program, which allows them to take courses online that they are missing, according to Cuellar-Hernandez.

Juniors and seniors can also participate in a college course offered by San Francisco State University, titled Step-to-College through the Ida B. Wells After School Program. Once a week for a full semester, instructors take students to San Francisco State University, where they can meet students there and use the university's library.

Students can also participate in recreational activities, including soccer, empowerment groups, weight training, dance,

sewing, skateboarding, photography, cooking, a video game club, and field trips to places like Ripley's Believe it or Not in downtown San Francisco.

"It's all about encouraging kids the kids to do other activities. Keeping them here, keeping them safe, and helping them out as much as possible and getting them involved with their community as well," Cuellar-Hernandez said.

Without the program, the youths "wouldn't have things to do after school," Cuellar-Hernandez pointed out. "I don't know where they'd be without it."

For more information about the IDA B. Wells After School Program, contact Cuellar-Hernandez at 415.355.7796, or email her at ycuellar-hernandez@ymcasf.net. See www.ymcasf.org/urban/ to find out more about the programs.

Malcolm X Academy Elementary After School Program

Malcolm X Academy Elementary, a public elementary school in the San Francisco Unified School District — SFUSD — at 350 Harbor Rd., has an after school program held from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., according to the site coordinator, Kevin Wilson.

The program provides an online program known as EPGY — Education Program for Gifted Youth — through which students become not only more technologically savvy but improve their math and language arts skills. Students work on EPGY during the school day as well.

"This online program is not only interactive but engaging," Wilson said. "I believe it's key."

The Malcolm X Academy After School Program also has a Mandarin program through which students learn Mandarin, according to Wilson.

Currently, 100 youths are enrolled at the Malcolm X Academy Elementary, and of those, 75 are enrolled in the after school program on a daily basis. The only requirement is that when students agree to attend the after school program that they participate three days a week. "Anything lower than that, you wouldn't get too much from the program," Wilson said.

The after school program continues into the summer with the Malcolm X Academy Summer Heritage camp, which offers such things as an environmental justice class and a science class.

The camp is a mix of academics and fun. The youths spend three days off-site, doing field trips to such places as the zoo, theme parks and natural habitats, and two days a week on-site. "We try to make summer as hands-on as possible," Wilson emphasized.

Sixty percent of students at Malcolm X Academy Elementary are African Americans, 30 percent are Pacific Islanders, and the remaining 20 percent are Caucasians and Asian Americans.

Malcolm X Academy Elementary has five staff. Three are currently enrolled in college, while the other two are older, with families. Two of the five have children who attend the school. "Our retention rate in terms of staff is phenomenal," Wilson said.

Call 415.695.2426, or send an email to kwilson@ymcasf.org for more program information.



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Corporate Philanthropy

Wattis Foundation continued from page 5



“The funding environment has become increasingly competitive in this new economy, and I can only imagine how challenging it is for foundations like Wattis to choose which organizations to support when there are so many that are worthy,” Komaromi noted.

In conclusion, Komaromi noted, “I think it’s great that Carlie represents the next generation of philanthropists. Her grandmother left quite a legacy. It’s wonderful to see this new generation of philanthropists that are supporting the arts community. The great thing about the Wattis is that they are investing in risk-taking – they’re encouraging artists to take risks. That’s important.”

Museum of Modern Arts, the California College of the Arts, and the American Conservatory Theater – A.C.T., a large nonprofit theater company in San Francisco that offers both classical and contemporary theater productions.

In addition to her responsibilities with the Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation, Wilmans also runs the 500 Capp Street Foundation. “I don’t know how many hours I log,” she said. “It’s fun. I love it.”

In congruence with her grandmother, Wilmans has always been interested in the arts.

Wilmans holds site visits with organizations that are new to the foundation or have had a recent leadership change. She also sits on a number of boards, including the San Francisco



She holds a degree in art history from Sonoma State University and studied pre-Columbian art at the University of Texas at Austin.

Phyllis C. Wattis was born and raised in Utah. She attended the University of California at Berkeley in the 1920s and lived in San Francisco from 1936 until her death on June 5, 2002 at age 97.

What would Wattis think if she were alive today? “She’d be proud,” Wilmans said. “We’re keeping her intentions alive and I can’t think she wouldn’t be proud.”

More information about the Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation can be found by visiting www.wattisfoundation.org, or by calling 415.986.1571.



Wattis Foundation grantees include (clockwise from top left) SFMOMA; A.C.T.; California College of the Arts; and the 500 Capp Street Foundation. Photos via Google Images.

Asian Street Festival continued from page 6

are happy to bring the focus on Taiwanese culture to AHSC every May. AHSC is a great event — not only for our members to gather with other Asian American organizations in the Bay Area, but also to further spread the culture and awareness of Taiwan to the community.”

Tsao further added, “As a nonprofit vendor, TAP embraces the opportunity to invite all festival attendees to learn more about our organization and what

we’re all about. Anyone who attends the festival is there to join in on the celebration of Asian heritage so we’re proud to be a part of it and share the TAP story and Taiwanese culture.”

Those who stop by the TAP booth “can expect to learn more about Taiwanese culture and the TAP organization,” according to Tsao.

“They will hear information about Taiwan and its culture, see examples of our past events, chat

with TAP members at the booth, find out about how they can get involved, and take part in a fun Taiwanese activity. Our members are enthusiastic to interact with visitors of our booth so we invite everyone to stop by.”

TAP — which participates in a number of Asian festivals — is hosting the 20th Annual Taiwanese American Cultural Festival in Union Square on May 12, exactly one week before the street festival in Little Saigon.

Other festivals in which TAP participates include the San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival — SFIAAFF — the nation’s largest Asian American film festival; the SF International Dragon Boat Festival; and the Asian American Donor Program’s event — AADP Laugh for Lives.

“These festivals all showcase unique parts of Asian American culture, just as AHSC does, so TAP is happy to support and be a part of each one,” said Tsao.

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