



San Francisco Tomorrow

Working to Protect the Urban Environment

Issue 352

Will you want to live in San Francisco – Tomorrow?

May 2012

**You and your friends
ARE INVITED TO OUR ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER
Wednesday, May 16, 2012**

We will honor the following

SAUL BLOOM

FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ARC ECOLOGY

Presenter: Arthur Feinstein - Chair, Bay Chapter Sierra Club

JACK MORRISON LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

and

UNsung HEROES

CATHRINE SNEED - SF JAIL GARDEN PROJECT *Presenter: Ed Harrington, SF Public Utilities Commission*

KATHERINE HOWARD - SF OCEAN EDGE *Presenter: Mary Anne Miller, Former City Planner*

PARK MERCED ACTION COALITION *Presenter: Aaron Goodman, Architect*

Join us at

CASTAGNOLA'S

RECEPTION 5:30 PM DINNER 7:00 PM
286 JEFFERSON STREET - FISHERMAN'S WHARF

NO-HOST BAR

Served by Muni 19, 30, 47 & F Street Car

**If you haven't already done so, please mail your reservation by Friday, May 11, to Jane Morrison,
44 Woodland Avenue SF CA 94117 or phone Jane at 415-564-1482 by Monday, May 14.**

Yes! I/we will attend SFT's Annual Dinner, Wednesday, May 16, at Castagnola's.

Here is my check to SFT for dinner - \$60

Sponsor (one dinner) \$90 Patron (one dinner) \$120 to \$150

For dinner, I would like: Salmon Chicken Vegetarian Dish

Sorry, I am unable to attend but I am enclosing my donation of \$

Name Phone Email

Address City/ZIP

About Saul Bloom

Saul Bloom founded ARC ECOLOGY with a dream of bringing the nasty issue of toxics into the forefront of public attention and informing the community of the toxic hazards in their midst. On the San Francisco Bay are enough dirty sites to keep him busy for another twenty years.

At Bayview Hunters Point, he has been the EPA Community Technical Advisor on the Hunters Point Shipyard cleanup, reviewing superfund documents and interpreting them for the India Basin neighborhood. The most impacted site, the landfill partially offshore and underwater at Parcel 2, was proposed to be capped by the Navy. This parcel contains the shipyard's infamous dump that burned for several months in 2000 and is still not rectified. Nearby at Yosemite Slough, he has been serving on the EPA committee reviewing clean-up

strategies for the PCB-contaminated area. He has been collaborating with EPA on the Bayshore industrial area brownfield assessment. He is working with Sierra Club and Audubon to create new wetlands on Hunters Point Parcel E, a much cleaner portion of the site. He has been tracking the rebuilding of Alice Griffiths Housing to ensure that one of the City's worst public housing facilities becomes one that is protective of human health and the environment and provides current residents the promised new housing.

At Treasure Island, Arc Ecology's goals are to improve mass transit, ensure ferry service, increase the amount of affordable housing, ensure the highest level of clean-up by the Navy, and decrease the proposed height of new buildings to protect San Francisco's viewshed. Quite a tall order!

Presidio Heritage Center and Visitor Center

Dr. Brent Glass, Director Emeritus of the Smithsonian's Museum of American History, has been hired by the PresidioTrust to advise regarding presentation of the complex history of the Presidio to an array of audiences, helping to inform "heritage programming" throughout the Presidio. He is also working to help the Trust explore the potential of the former Commissary to become a museum and cultural institution. While these are distinct assignments, there is potential for significant synergy between them. Heritage programming is meant to include the Heritage Center in a broader program that will also involve other sites, as has been suggested so often by people involved in discussions about the visitor center, interpretation and related issues.

A decision on the location of the National Park Service Visitor Center has finally been made, says Craig Middleton, executive director of the Presidio Trust, to locate in a building currently occupied by the Bank and Post Office, near the Main Post, a site which would offer 4,500 square feet of usable space to orient visitors and explain and interpret the history of the Presidio.

HOTEL? Meanwhile, the Presidio Historical Association (PHA) and the Sierra Club have sued the Trust to protect the most historic heart of the Presidio, the Main Post, and asked the court to set aside the Trust's plan to build a fourteen-building hotel to be stretched along Graham Street just across the parade ground from the historic barracks. In addition, the Trust proposes to build a new multi-screen theater building and additional structures nearby (for a total of 70,000 square feet)

after removing the two remaining WWII buildings in that area.

Q. Other national parks have hotels. Why shouldn't there be one on the Presidio?

Answer: The historic great lodges at Yosemite, Yellowstone and Grand Canyon, for example, were built where there was no housing for visitors. In comparison, the Presidio is surrounded by a city which has 33,000 hotel rooms. The damage to the National Historic Landmark that would be caused by this unnecessary facility cannot be rationalized by environmental or financial need. The Trust's Annual Report to Congress has stated that "the Trust's earned revenue has fully offset operating costs", as the original legislation enabling the national park to exist had stipulated. Furthermore, Middleton has repeatedly stated that the Trust would not be building the hotel for revenue, but to achieve "revitalization" of the Main Post.

Q. What about the recently announced Presidio Inn located in a rehabilitated historic building? Did the PHA and Sierra Club oppose that?

Answer: No. The new "inn" will provide rooms in a historic building that will be rehabilitated. Such repurposing is encouraged by preservation laws. The inn did not require any new construction in the historic landmark. On the other hand, the Trust's 14-building hotel obviously will require massive new construction. In addition, the Trust's inn was designed for the wealthy (rooms are \$300-\$500) rather than for middle class park visitors.

(See also SFT's March 2012 newsletter at the website sftomorrow.org.)

The new DOYLE DRIVE: What will it be like? Cars put in their place? We wish.

What will in fact happen to auto traffic in the Presidio? Will commute traffic on Presidio roads increase or decrease?

Will there be more noise, or less, for visitors to the Presidio?
Will the wider lanes, spread on the surface instead of overhead, make cars more or less intrusive than before?
Will Crissy Marsh habitat be affected for the better or for worse?
Will the tunnel give the feeling of connection instead of separation as we walk from the Main Post toward the Bay?

After all the studies have been done but the last concrete is not yet poured, the gains and the losses are still speculation. What do you think?

Beach Chalet Athletic Fields project: Persuading public officials to do the right thing

A decision regarding the **Beach Chalet Athletic Fields project** may be made as early as May 17, the day of public hearing at the Planning Commission and the Recreation and Parks Commission. The final EIR will be published May 7, allowing the public just ten days to review it before presenting it to the Commissions for approval. If the EIR is approved, project approval will follow immediately.

If this project is allowed to proceed, the rebuilt Beach Chalet Athletic Fields will:

- *RIP OUT a seven-acre natural grass meadow near the Beach Chalet and Murphy Windmill;*
- *Install OVER 7 ACRES OF ARTIFICIAL TURF and expand paving;*
- *Put 150,000 WATTS OF STADIUM LIGHTING in Golden Gate Park's west end on 60-foot-high standards; Impact Ocean Beach with spillover lighting that is on until 10:00 p.m., 365 days a year, right next to Ocean Beach and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area;*
- *Cut down over 50 trees that protect the park from ocean winds,*
- *Destroy wildlife habitat in an area bigger than Candlestick Park.*

SFT observes that children play soccer in daylight on natural grass fields (April 15 this year was opening day for school soccer and sunlight was available until almost eight). **Nighttime play is for adults at other City locations.** The privatization scheme which has City Fields Foundation building the fields for Rec and Park is primarily to serve Bay-Area-wide adult leagues that play at night.

No one disputes that the present fields have to be rebuilt and may be dangerous to children in their present condition but there are up-to-date ways to have grass playing fields that are gopher-free and safe for play. The full budget for this project has been quoted at between \$9.6 million and \$12 million. The Polo Fields in Golden Gate Park were renovated last year for \$1.4 million with new grading, irrigation, and sod. The smaller Beach Chalet fields could be renovated with the same basic construction with real grass and the left-over funding used for other fields for kids in San

Francisco. The cost of replacing the artificial turf is never mentioned. It wears out and has to be replaced after eight years. With the completion of all of the current artificial turf fields projects in San Francisco, the City - and the taxpayers - will have to pay to replace over 30 acres of artificial turf when they wear out. If Rec and Park doesn't have the money for replacement, the fields will be locked and closed. The Polo Fields in Golden Gate Park were rebuilt last year entirely with natural grass turf for one-fifth the cost of using artificial and possibly hazardous materials. And they play very well.

If you believe this is the wrong project in the wrong place, your help is needed NOW. Go to www.sfoceanedge.org for more information and ways to contribute time and cash for legal expenses and outreach.

We are like tenant farmers chopping down the fence around our house for fuel when we should be using Nature's inexhaustible sources of energy -- sun, wind and tide. ... I'd put my money on the sun and solar energy. What a source of power! I hope we don't have to wait until oil and coal run out before we tackle that. -Thomas Edison, inventor, 1847-1931

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Don't forget to make a reservation!
SFT's Annual Awards Dinner
May 16, 2012