

URBAN ACTION

A Journal of Urban Affairs

1998



URBAN

ACTION

1998

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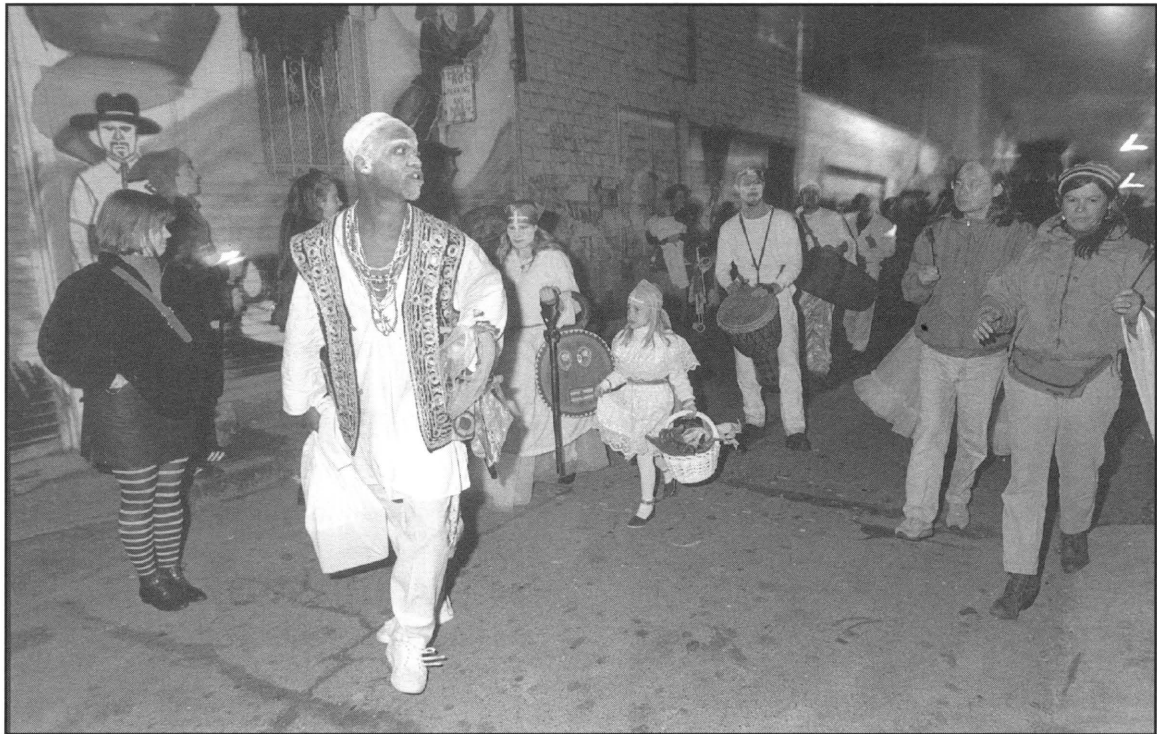
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Santeria priest Baba Ade Osun is leading a group of followers on the "Day of the Dead" to set up a shrine at Garfield Square in the Mission District in San Francisco.

FROM THE PHOTOGRAPHER:

As a photojournalist I am mainly concerned with my subjects, with the story behind the picture. The editors of Urban Action 1998 offered me a wide variety of stories that affect our daily lives in the big city. This presented me with the opportunity to go out and find the picture to the story. Many times I not only found the appropriate picture, I also found a new perspective on the urban environment we live in. Capturing these images was an educational experience for me and I hope it will be one for you too.

Christine Jegan
May 1998

Cover Photo: The Financial District as seen from the top of Coit Tower.

FROM THE EDITORS:

Urban Action 1998 presents San Francisco State University students research and prose, analysis and opinion. Urban Studies is the discipline that attempts, through a synthesis of many discipline strengths, to make the oft-chaotic city comprehensible. Perhaps the variety implicit in Urban Studies is the perfect metaphor for this year's editorial board. Political scientists, economists, and a broadcast journalist all joined with Urban Studies majors to produce Urban Action 1998, the 18th issue created by the SFSU program. The variety of topics and approaches in the journal articles reflects this diversity of perspectives as well. As the human animal becomes more and more an urban animal, interdisciplinary understanding becomes critical for all those seeking solutions to urban problems.

The editors would like to thank Raquel Rivera Pinderhughes, our faculty advisor, for her support and direction. We would like to thank the Urban Studies faculty for cajoling their students into submitting work to the journal. We thank our technowizards Marianna Marysheva and John Cassero for greatly improving our web site. We must give our humble gratitude to Atina Salih for her endless good humor and assistance. We extend our thanks to SFSU alum Christine Jegan for all her beautiful photographs. We thank our production coordinator Michael Martin and our copy editor Marina Melson of the San Francisco Observer for all their fine efforts. And finally, we thank all the SFSU students who bravely submitted their work for scrutiny; there would not be an *Urban Action* without their courage.

We hope the journal is as illuminating to read as it was entertaining to assemble.

The Editors
Urban Action 1998

FROM THE ADVISOR:

It is with great pleasure that I invite you to read the text and view the photographs in the 1998 issue of Urban Action, the annual student journal of the Urban Studies Program at San Francisco State University. This issue of Urban Action focuses on an array of issues ranging from ballot proposition reform to urban agriculture. As is always the case, this issue was produced entirely by students at San Francisco State University; students who volunteer to take on the responsibility of producing the journal in addition to their studies, their paid work, their family responsibilities. I find their spirit and teamwork inspirational and would like to take this opportunity to publicly congratulate this year's team for putting together an excellent issue. I would also like to thank Christine Jegan for the perceptive photographs she contributed to the 1998 Urban Action issue.

Raquel Rivera Pinderhughes
May 1998



The four sons of Doris Mansfield, Diego, Demarco, Caesar and Deandre, are playing at the waterfront next to 3Com Park a day before their move to Oakland, Calif. in April 1998.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of SFSU, the editors or the Urban Studies Program. Correspondence and requests for additional copies should be directed to the Urban Studies Program, San Francisco State University, 1600 Holloway Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94132. Phone: 415-338-1178 or e-mail: <urbact@sfsu.edu> For additional copies, please enclose a check or money order for \$5.00 (to cover postage and handling) made payable to Urban Action.

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POLICY

- 1 Reassessing Proposition 13: Case Study and Recommendation
Anthony Harris and Chris Pahule
- 7 Understanding Television Ratings
Ben McLintock

POLITICS

- 13 California Initiative Reform
Caryn Moore
- 20 San Francisco's Domestic Partners Law Examined
Marla Simpson

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- 29 Feeding the Cities: An Examination of Urban Agriculture
MaryRuth H. Bafrali
- 35 Touchdown or Fumble? A Question of Stadium Finance
Marcus Adams
- 41 Life and Death of the American Streetcar
Max Schweitzer

HEALTH

- 47 Geriatric Community Health Centers
Amy Schaible
- 55 Managed Care and the HMO
Ronald A. Sims

PROSE

- 62 On Moving to Daly City
Scott McMillin
- 64 can you tell me how ta get ta where the air is sweet
Ahimsa Timoteo Bodhrán
- 66 Un Cubanito and Carnaval in San Pancho...95 and 97
Fernando Socorro



Four Embarcadero Center in San Francisco with Jean Dubuffet's sculpture *La Chiffoniere* in the foreground.

Reassessing Proposition 13: Case Study and Recommendation

Anthony Harris & Chris Pahule

The consequences of passing Proposition 13 in 1978 has been far reaching and severely limiting on the states ability to spend money on much needed areas of the infrastructure. Public education, policing and libraries have been hard hit by many of the "loopholes" created by the legislation. In order to prevent the further backslide of funding, new policy proposals have been suggested.

Background

The roots of Proposition 13 are found in 1965. Elected tax assessors were caught taking bribes from businessmen in exchange for lower property tax assessment. Public outcry over the scandal prompted legislators to craft Assembly Bill 80 (AB 80). This legislation stated that communities had to reassess all property to at least 25% of the market value within three years.

During the 1970s, California experienced a huge increase in the price of houses. As the state's population grew supply could not keep up with demand. In the course of just a few years, the rate of increase in home prices went from 5% per year to as much as 5% per month.⁰

Homeowners began to call on state government to enact relief. Lawmakers agreed that there was a need to provide property tax relief, but they disagreed about the form relief should take. Some legislators believed there should be a package that provided relief to low and middle income homeowners. Others wanted a package aimed at middle and higher income homeowners. While debate continued in the State Assembly, two tax activists, Howard Jarvis and Paul Gann, began collecting signatures to place the initiative that would eventually become Proposition 13 on the 1978 ballot.

In June 1978 the California voters passed Proposition 13. This event signaled the beginning of a tax rebellion that was to spread across the country. The proposition was quite radical- it rolled back assessments to 1975 levels and capped the legal growth of those assessments at 2% per year. Additionally, the proposition states that reassessment can only take place when property changes ownership or major renovations are made to an existing property. Finally, it made it extremely difficult to raise property taxes by requiring a 2/3 majority to pass any legislation dealing with taxes.¹

Financial Problems Develop

Proposition 13 drastically cut the amount of property tax revenue local governments could raise. This money pays for public services like libraries, police, and construction and maintenance of schools. With the passage of Proposition 13 many public services had to be put on the cutting board. Children and lower-income citizens who often depend heavily on public services were affected the most harshly by the service cuts that followed Prop. 13.²

Although Prop. 13 did provide property tax relief for homeowners with rising taxes, the main beneficiaries were businesses that own commercial property. Because the language of the proposition did not distin-

guish between residential and commercial property, corporations were given a "loophole". As long as they did not sell their buildings, commercial property owners could continue paying property taxes based on 1975 property assessments. From 1978 to 1997, it's been estimated that the "loophole" corporations enjoy has cost California \$17 billion in lost property tax revenue.³ That lost revenue could have been used for public services.

This paper is designed to expose the inequity of Proposition 13 as it relates to commercial property through a case study. Two buildings of equal size, age, and location have been chosen to illustrate the "loophole." The analysis will detail the amount of money that could be generated if both properties were assessed at the same market rate and the array of services that the revenues could fund. We will also recommend a policy approach to dealing with the "loophole" in Proposition 13.

Case Studies

To gain perspective on the amount of property tax revenue being lost and the effects of those losses on public services, this report provides case studies conducted on two pairs of commercial buildings in San Francisco.

Before reading further it is important to understand how the California property tax is calculated. Local property taxes are assessed using the following formula: the assessed value is (value the county assessor assigns) multiplied by the tax rate. Example: $\$1,234,567.00 \times 1.98\% = \$24,444.43$ - the amount owed in tax. The first of the case studies examines two buildings that appear to be identical.

Embarcadero Center 1 and 4 are located in San Francisco's Financial District within three city blocks of one another. Both buildings house retail establishments on their first two levels and private offices on the remaining 43 levels. Although the buildings as presently configured have a difference of 170,398

useable square feet; they could be converted to house equal square footage.

Embarcadero Center 1 (EC-1) was built in 1970. The building currently has 914,264 square feet of usable space and an assessed value of \$59,078,029. Because the building

From 1978 to 1997, it's been estimated that the "loophole" corporations enjoy has cost California \$17 billion in lost property tax revenue. — Marie Nelson

has not been renovated or undergone a change in title, it is currently assessed using 1975 as the base year. The city will receive \$703,060.74 in property tax, or \$.769 per square foot- from Embarcadero 1 in the 1997-98 fiscal year.⁴

Embarcadero Center 4 (EC-4) was built in 1979. It has 1,084,662 square feet of usable space and an assessed value of \$197,216,753. This building was completed after Prop. 13 was enacted and did not benefit from the assessment rollback. However, it does benefit from the two percent cap on annual property tax increases. EC-4 will generate \$2,346,911.56, or \$2.16 per square foot, in commercial tax revenue for the city in the 1997-98 fiscal year.⁵

This second study examines parcel 3709 located in San Francisco on the south side of Market Street. The two buildings on this parcel house business tenants. Although the buildings have different architectural styles, they have similar useable square footage.

425 Market St. was built in 1973. This building has 996,760 square feet of usable space. Like Embarcadero 1, 425 Market was a beneficiary of the Proposition 13 legislation in having its assessed valued rolled back to the 1975 amount. Records for this building show that the building has not undergone any changes in title or renovations. This commercial property is currently assessed at \$23,170,714. According to 1997-98 tax information the owners of this property will pay the city \$275,763.68, or \$0.276 per square foot, in taxes for the 1997-98 fiscal year.⁶

50 Fremont St. consists of 914,037 square feet of useable space. Because this building was built in 1985, it didn't benefit from Proposition 13. Like 4 Embarcadero, 50 Front St. does benefit from the 2% cap on property tax increases. Because this property underwent a change in ownership in 1991, its assessed value of \$135,318,343 is more representative of the market value of this type of property. In the 1997-98 tax year the city stands to collect \$1,610,320.48, or \$1.76 per square foot, in property taxes from property owners.⁷

The difference in tax revenue collected by the city from Embarcadero Center 1 and 4 amounts to \$1,643,850.82. The difference in revenue collected by the city from 425 Market St. and 50 Fremont is \$1,334,556.80. Because the owners of Embarcadero 1 Center and 425 Market St. benefit from the commercial property "loophole" in Proposition 13, the City of San Francisco will lose \$2,978,407.62 in property taxes in the 1997-98 fiscal year on those two properties alone.

Alternative Uses for Funds

To put the loss of tax revenue in perspective we can consider them in terms of public services. With the difference in revenue described above the city could afford to provide the following public services.

More Police Officers According to Mike McDonough of the San Francisco Police Department's Recruiting and Retention Division, "The total expenditure for a police officer from the application process to the completion of the academy is conservatively estimated at \$55,000 per officer." When the previous number is added to the yearly salary of a rookie officer, the amount adds up to \$94,000 per officer for the first year. The revenue that could be generated from the example presented in this report shows that the City of San Francisco would be able to hire about 31 new officers. This is significant considering that of the 2000 officers currently employed "there [are] roughly only 800 actually on the street."⁸

Increased Number of Public School Classrooms According to the 1997 San Francisco Unified School District's Purchasing Office, it costs \$59,007.00 to fully equip a K-5 classroom, and costs \$62,222.48 to fully equip a middle school classroom. With the dollars lost to the disparity of taxes paid on our similar commercial properties the city could afford to fund and operate approximately 50 new K-5 classrooms or 46 new middle school classrooms, or any combination of the two.

Alternative Approaches to Property Tax Reform

In analyzing which property tax reform policy approach is best suited to California; three options are available that deserve attention. This section will outline those options and predict possible outcomes in each case.

Status Quo One option is to do nothing at all and maintain the status quo. This would leave Proposition 13 intact as the formula for collecting property tax. The state would continue to underfund programs and cut services due to a lack of financial resources. Businesses would continue to save millions of dollars because a clause in Proposition 13 allows them to avoid paying tax on the market value of their properties.

The only benefit from the status quo is that the businesses who have owned properties since 1975 do not have to pay taxes on the real value of their property. If commercial properties were being taxed according to their market value, or at a higher percentage tax rate, they might move their operations to locations where property taxes are relatively low. This could mean lost employment for communities where long-established businesses dominate the local economy. California could begin to be perceived as having an unfavorable business climate. This could lead to a downswing in the otherwise robust California economy.

Although low property tax is one part of creating an attractive business climate, there are many severe drawbacks to main-

taining the status quo. After Proposition 13 became law, local governments saw their budgets drastically cut. In order to make budgets balance they had to reduce services and cut funding for important programs. California has now reached the point that if nothing is done to revise Prop. 13 services will continue to decline, and schools will deteriorate more rapidly. By maintaining the status quo we would guarantee that the large number of people that depend on public services suffer while continuing to provide inequitable property tax relief for commercial property owners.

Split Roll

Another option is to create a split tax roll where a distinction is made between residential and commercial property. Under this alternative, commercial property would be taxed at a higher rate than residential property. This policy would increase the amount of revenue local governments receive through increased commercial property tax, while keeping taxes for homeowners low.

The obvious benefit of a split roll is the influx of new tax dollars local governments would receive; tax dollars they could use to improve their communities. Local governments could revamp their troubled schools with more teachers, new books, and after school programs. Communities could extend library hours, hire more police officers, and repave roads. Simply put, increased tax revenue for local governments benefits most people.

Although the increased revenue is the huge benefit of a split roll policy, there are many questions regarding its effectiveness. The California Constitution states that it is illegal to tax commercial and residential property at different rates. In order for there to be a new split roll, the California Constitution would have to be changed. This amendment would require a two-thirds majority to pass. Persuading two-thirds of the legislators in Sacramento to agree on anything as controversial as a

Constitutional amendment seems highly unlikely given California's highly partisan political climate. A split tax does not seem politically feasible.

Another flaw in a split roll policy is that all businesses- large and small- would be broadly labeled under commercial property. With commercial property taxes at a higher rate, small businesses that earn a narrow margin of profits would have to raise prices to cover the increased taxes. This could drive small businesses out of the market because they might not be able to compete with larger businesses that could afford to absorb a higher portion of the new taxes.

Periodic Reassessment

The final option in our analysis is to periodically reassess commercial property. This policy would also generate a large amount of new tax revenue for local governments. Under this policy, businesses would not pay taxes at a higher rate than presently, however, they would pay taxes at the current assessed value which would amount to relatively higher taxes for businesses.

The benefits from a policy that centers on reassessing property periodically are much the same as for a split roll policy. The most important benefit is that it would increase the amount of money local governments receive in property taxes. Recent research has failed to determine if more taxes would be paid under a higher tax rate or a periodic reassessment of commercial property.

Another benefit would be that since reassessing property does not involve raising taxes, the clause of Prop. 13 that requires a two-thirds vote to raise taxes does not apply. This is essential; it makes a reassessment policy more politically viable than the split roll policy.

The negative aspects of a reassessment policy are virtually the same as for a split roll policy. The greatest problem is that a reassessment policy could effect small

businesses disproportionately. As previously discussed, any new tax could lead to the perception of an unfavorable business climate in California. It is apparent from this analysis that there are fewer flaws in a periodic reassessment policy than in the other alternatives.

Objectives

When drafting a policy recommendation to adjust California's existing policy on commercial property tax many objectives must be fulfilled. First, the main objective is to increase tax dollars for local governments by collecting more tax dollars from commercial property. As previously noted, many of the public services provided by local governments have been cut back and are often under funded. Arguably, California's public schools have the hardest hit by inadequate funding. Districts have drastically cut basic school-related activities and services. Other examples of the results of under funding are scaled back library hours and reduced police presence. A reformed property tax policy must give a fiscal shot in the arm to local governments to restore and maintain existing public services.

Another objective is to increase the amount property tax revenue while not increasing homeowner's property taxes.

Prop. 13 was designed to provide relief for homeowners who faced astronomical property taxes, however, most of the relief went to commercial interests. The new policy should remain focused on the reason the existing policy was created and eliminate the "loophole" that benefits commercial interests. The goal is to create a policy that would maintain the status quo vis a vis homeowner's property tax, while increasing equity and revenues in commercial property taxation.

A final objective is to create a policy which is politically feasible. For any policy reform to occur, the proposed changes must be able to garner widespread voter support.

Implementing the policy revision we suggest – periodic reassessment – would be a challenge. However, if small-business owners could be protected, perhaps through an exemption based on annual sales volume, a more level playing field in the assessment of commercial property taxes could help fund the public services California's growing population needs and wants. Homeowners would retain the property tax relief the voters approved in 1978, and the cities and counties of California could face the future on a more stable financial footing.

Notes

⁰ Marie Nelson. "The Summer that Elvis Died and Proposition 13 was Born". The Sacramento Bee. 6 April 1995, sec. B, p.3

¹ Marie Nelson. "The Summer that Elvis Died and Proposition 13 was Born". The Sacramento Bee. 6 April 1995, sec. B, p.3

² California Budget Project. pg. 41

³ County Assessor's Record

⁴ County Assessor's Record

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ McDonough, interview

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Understanding Television Ratings

Ben McLintock

With the passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, several changes took place in the television medium, although most of them do not directly affect the public. However, there was one provision that evoked a great deal of public discussion; the part requiring a rating system for television programming content. The article examines both the origins of the content rating system and how it is incorporated into television programming.

Over two thousand hours of television programming are broadcast every day in America. The typical American home has at least two televisions, and those sets are kept on an average of eight hours a day. Today, by the time a person in America reaches 18, they will have viewed an average of 18,000 hours of television.¹ Those 18,000 hours are the equivalent of continuously watching television for two years and half a month nonstop without sleeping, eating, going to school, working, or interacting with other people. This is a staggering portion of a young person's life span, 11.4% to be exact, when children are exposed to images that they, and their parents, do not have the power to directly influence.

Research has determined that by the time they reach high school, the average child has witnessed over 8,000 murders and at least 100,000 other assorted acts of violence on television. These violent acts include beatings, spousal and child abuse, sexual assault, and weapons used against people.² Another disturbing discovery is the level of violence in children's television programming. Children's programs can be up to five times as violent as the average prime-time hour of television.³ With researchers finding these conditions, it is surprising that nothing had been done prior to the Telecommunications Act to establish a rating system

for television programming. It is a strongly-held belief that television programs, when viewed over an extended period of time, have an influence on both children and adults.⁴ That power to influence a population, coupled with the immense network of distribution the television industry employs to broadcast their programming, gives the industry the power to shape the opinions, attitudes, values, and arguably the behavior of an entire population. While the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has, through legislation enacted by Congress, the power to regulate the economic actions of television networks and their subsidiaries, the federal government had never before passed legislation that, in any way, regulated or categorized the content of programming. That role changed in 1996 when Congress passed the Telecommunications Act.

The bill was coauthored by two senators, Exon, D-Nebraska, and Gorton, R-Washington, in 1994-95, was passed by Congress in 1995, then signed into law by President Clinton in the beginning of 1996.⁵ The bill was sponsored by Senator Pressler, R-South Dakota, Chairman for the Congressional Committee on Commerce.

The idea that drove creation of a rating system was that of providing parents with more information concerning the overall

content of the programs their children watch. The belief, supported by research, is that children who are exposed to violent imagery when they are unable to differentiate between a show and reality, or are exposed to violence on television for an extended period of time, become desensitized to violent behavior and are more likely to find violence as acceptable behavior.⁶ By using the rating system, parents would be able to make an informed decision regarding whether or not to allow their children to view shows. Parents could prevent their children from viewing programs they felt could be detrimental to their children's moral or ethical development. It was the belief of Congress that exposure to violent behavior on television is connected to the high levels of violence we experience in our country, and that the rating system was a way to reduce children's exposure to violence on television.⁷ Despite consumers' fears of categorizing television programming, the Telecommunications Act of 1996 is nothing new. It is nothing more than an amendment to a previous piece of legislation. The Telecommunications Act amends it is the original Communications Act of 1935. Congress felt that advances in technology had created gaps the 1935 legislation the law was never designed to regulate. When the Communications Act was written in 1933-34 its primary focus was the telephone, film, and radio.⁸ The television had been invented, but was more of a technological "marvel" at the time, not an everyday household appliance. When television became widespread, the judicial system ruled that it was subject to the regulations laid down in 1935. Provisions were included with the original law to include television.⁹ It was not until the proliferation of the Internet that the Telecommunications Act of 1996 was drafted. The Act amended the older legislation and formally included television under the jurisdiction of the older laws.

Other changes took the form of amendments in the wording in the Communications Act of 1935. Words such as "telephone"

and "telephone calls" were replaced with the words "telecommunications device" and "communication" by legislation in 1996. The general guidelines used to revise the 1935 Act was as follows:

"Title V: Obscenity and Violence: Subtitle A: Obscene, Harassing and Wrongful Utilization of Telecommunication Facilities. —Telecommunications Act of 1996: Revises provisions of the Communications Act of 1935 prohibiting obscene or harassing use of a Telecommunications Facility and communication. Increases the penalties for violations. Prohibits using a telecommunications device to: (1) make or initiate any communication which is obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy, or indecent with intent to annoy, abuse, threaten, or harass another person; (2) make or make available obscene communication; (3) make or make available an indecent communication to minors."¹⁰

Until the Telecommunications Act of 1996, television networks had, for the most part, abided by guidelines for decency set down by the FCC. However after the 1996 legislation was passed, networks were required to create a rating system to be broadcast each time an episode of a program was aired. If these requirements were not met to the FCC's satisfaction within one year of the bill being signed into law, the 1996 legislation authorized the FCC to fabricate their own rating system for the television industry. This has not happened as of yet, and the general guidelines the television industry set for rating television programming have been in place for over a year.

The system works in the following manner: All television programs are rated on a per-episode basis for the following criteria: violence, strong language, sexual language and sexual content. The rating assigned to a particular show is broadcast in the upper-left corner of the screen for the first fifteen seconds of all half-hour shows, and every half hour that elapses thereafter. All print publications that display television

schedules, such as TV Guide and newspapers, are required to print the rating assigned to a show as well.

Jack Valenti, CEO of the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) and designer of the rating system movies have used for decades, created the system in use by the television industry. A panel called the Oversight Monitoring Board consists of members from all segments of the television industry and revises the guidelines used to evaluate shows on a regular basis. The board consults with members of organizations such as the Center for Media Education, the Children's Defense Fund, Children Now, the National PTA, and others for additional suggestions. In an effort to measure the effectiveness the rating system the Peter D. Hart Research Associates and Public Opinion Strategies, two independent data gathering and research organizations, have been enlisted to conduct studies and surveys to detect any changes in the population's television-viewing behavior.

Interestingly enough, there are a few program formats which are exempt from the rating system. The rating system applies to all television shows including specials, mini-series, movies and other formats. It does not apply to news shows, sports broadcasts or unedited movies with an MPAA rating aired on a premium cable channel. The latter exception is logical in that such programming is already restricted in its availability; it is not accessible to individuals with antenna receivers, and viewers with cable or satellite reception must pay extra to view those channels.

The other two exemptions are less clear unless one knows how television networks make money. Until recently, the only programming television networks could own outright were news shows and the broadcast rights to sporting events. These are the only instances when the network directly controls both the contents of the program and the advertising time sold during the program. For shows like daytime soaps or prime-time dramas, the network sells air-

time slated for advertising during an episode, but has to buy the episodes from the company who produces them. Since news and sports broadcasts are not subject to the rating system, news stories which may con-

The ratings system does nothing to regulate the content of shows, it only evaluates them by established standards.

tain violent scenes and descriptions are shown with no warning rating. Inherently violent sports, such as football, can be broadcast in prime-time slots although shows with very similar themes that are included in the rating system may be restricted to time slots later in the evening. The argument for excluding news broadcasts from the ratings system is that they inform the public; rating a news show would require evaluating each and every news story independently and could be construed as a violation of the First Amendment right to a free press.

The rating system does nothing to regulate the content of shows, it only evaluates and measures them by an established standard to let viewers know what to expect when they view it. The rating designations are broken into six general categories: TV-Y for programs aimed at, and suitable for, all children; TV-Y7 for programs suitable for children over the age of seven; TV-G for programs that could be viewed by a general audience (the show is suitable for children and contains little or no violence, strong language, sexual language or situations); TV-PG for programs with parental guidance recommended (the show may contain scenes of infrequent coarse language, limited violence, and/or some suggestive sexual dialogue or situations); TV-14 for programs that may be inappropriate for children under the age of fourteen (the show may contain sophisticated themes, sexual content, strong language, and more intense violence); TV-M for programs directed at a strictly adult audience (the show may contain mature

themes, profane language, graphic violence and explicit sexual content). These categories have been updated since their inception by including additional indicators such as "V" for violence or "L" for offensive language, "S" for sex, "D" for suggestive dialogue, and "FV" for fantasy or cartoon violence along with the aforementioned ratings to more clearly convey the content of a show.¹¹ Of course, just because the shows are rated by age does not mean that the public follows the recommendation that accompanies a certain rating.

As with any national policy, it is effectively impossible to accommodate the views of the entire population. No one matures in the same manner or at the same rate. Few citizens hold identical views on moral ideology. What may be unsuitable for one person could be totally acceptable for another. Another problem is there are no feasible methods to guarantee that viewers will abide by the guidelines of the rating system. If parents choose to allow their children to view TV-M rated programming, there is not much the federal government can do. That is why the rating system is intended only to be an informative guide for parents to use in conjunction with their own judgment when deciding which programs their children can watch.

As with all social policy, some of the side effects caused by the ratings system will hinder rather than aid. With the way the law is worded, it could be construed as illegal for television stations to broadcast programs concerning certain medical issues to minors which legislators could consider indecent. Videos discussing illnesses like breast or testicular cancer, or issues like contraception and sexual education, could be banned from public schools because they could be rated as being unsuitable for young viewers. Keeping this information from children could deprive them of facts that could protect them from sexually-transmitted diseases, pregnancy and other issues that would drastically limit their life

choices. In some cases, ignorance will threaten their very lives.

Formal rating of television programs opens the possibility that parents could be held legally accountable for what their children watch and the behaviors that stem from programming they have seen. This raises the issue of what argument we as a nation find more compelling: that providing information could allow parents and children to make better, more informed decisions for themselves, or that not viewing certain negative behaviors on television will prevent them from being duplicated. It is a decision that is being made for us by policymakers, even as you are reading this paper.

There are good and bad points to the television rating policy, that it has been designed to be flexible and allows for shifts in public mores is a strong attribute. There are multiple public and private organizations that make up the members of the Oversight Monitoring Board that determines the ratings guidelines. The board is also responsible for implementing changes to the rating system. Since there are several groups involved, it would be difficult for any one of them to manipulate the system to their own advantage. The system is based on the preexisting rating system used for movies, making it easier for viewers to understand the system of codes used for the television rating system, which is another benefit.

Despite the strengths of the system there are also problems. That sports and news programs are exempted from ratings opens the possibility that other types of programming could be exempted as well. There is also the argument that there is more violence on the news than on most television programming. For sports events like football and boxing violence is an intrinsic, unavoidable component. Even arriving at a definition of "good, decent and proper" poses problems when most Americans are openly opposed to the idea of

someone else's definitions being imposed on them.

It could be a strength that the television industry voluntarily developed their own rating system. After all, who is better qualified to establish and implement the criteria by which television programming will be rated? Unfortunately, there is also the possibility that any organization creating a system of self-regulation will be unable to reach the level of balanced and fair evaluation needed to formulate a truly effective system.

Another problem is that for parents to screen what their children watch, they must be at home. With most families being dual-income or single-parent, many children are left home unsupervised for extended periods of time.¹² There is a saying "you can't have too much of a good thing." In terms of providing information to parents and children, the television rating system comes down on the good side of the scale. As long as the role of the television rating system and the Oversight Monitoring Board is one which evaluates the content of programming and not filtering it, there can be nothing foreseeably problematic with providing general guidelines for children. As previously discussed, the rating system was not meant to exist in a vacuum. It is intended to be an additional tool for parents and children to use when deciding if a show is suitable. The end result of the Telecommunications Act is that the final choice to allow, or not allow, one's

children to watch any particular television program still resides with parents.

While the aversion many Americans have expressed towards the television rating system is understandable, the intent of the rating system is not to censor programs, only to provide additional information. It is interesting that people resisted the idea of a television ratings system, claiming it would inevitably lead to censorship of television when the US has had a rating system in place for the movie industry since 1968 and few complaints are heard regarding censorship in films. Television programming isn't being taken off the air because of the rating system, as some individuals have claimed, but is only being formally categorized. After 1998, all televisions with a screen larger than thirteen inches will be equipped with the "V-chip" which will give parents even more control over what their children can watch.¹³ Individuals have expressed concerns that this represents censorship as well, but if it does, it isn't censorship by the government, it is censorship by the child's parents, an authority that the federal government is reluctant to intrude upon. After analyzing this part of the Telecommunications Act, it is likely that children in the future will find nothing odd about a television rating system, and they will probably still be soaking up an average of 18,000 hours of television before they reach age 18. Hopefully, improved quality of content will be the only difference.

Notes

- ¹ Federal Communications Commission Database. (1995). [Online]
Address: <http://www.fcc.gov/vchip/legislation.html#findings>
- ² Federal Communications Commission Database. (1995). [Online]
Address: <http://www.fcc.gov/vchip/legislation/html#findings>
- ³ The TV Parental Guidelines. (1996). [Online]
Address: <http://www.tvguidelines.org>
- ⁴ Telecommunications Act of 1996. (1996). S. 652. 104th Cong. 2nd Sess.
- ⁵ Telecommunications Act of 1996. (1996). S. 652. 104th Cong. 2nd Sess.
- ⁶ Telecommunications Act of 1996. (1996). S. 652. 104th Cong. 2nd Sess.
- ⁷ Thomas Database. (1996). [Online]
Address: <http://thomas.loc.gov>
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California Initiative Reform

Caryn Moore

A reform tool of the "good Government" movement in the early part of this century, voter-sponsored ballot initiatives have become a powerful agent for political change in California. The passage of a single initiative – the famous Prop. 13 – caused a dramatic reduction in state property tax revenues, and was partly responsible for the significant drop in per-pupil spending in California's public schools. Prop. 13, along with the more recent Prop. 187 (anti-immigration) and Prop. 209 (anti-affirmative action), are examples of the power California voters have in passing legislation. However, it is often the special interests and those with great wealth who exercise the power of drafting the legislation.

California is experiencing a substantial increase in the number of voter propositions appearing on the ballot. Each elections cycle voters decided the fate of new laws ranging from no-fault auto insurance, to legalizing medical marijuana, to limiting lawyers' fees. Due to this trend, policymakers must pay attention to voters on the subject of initiatives and make an effort to alleviate their anxieties. More than twice as many initiatives qualified for the ballot in the 1980s than in the 1970s; the rate of voter approval jumped from one-third to nearly one-half.⁰

The initiative process is the only way the citizens of California directly influence lawmaking. The initiative process allows people to draft their own laws, rally support for those laws, and get them on the books by a majority vote. The problem created by the surge in initiatives becomes obvious when one discovers that special interests increasingly dominate the initiative process. This is possible because they have the means to generate substantial funding. The initiative process was created to serve that voters. However, if the initiative process continues to become the new arm of special interests politics, then democracy in California stands to suffer.

Background

To get an initiative on the ballot, first you have to write a bill. Since initiatives often fail to withstand a court challenge, it is a good idea to have legal advice while drafting the bill. Proponents submit the law to the California Secretary of State, who reviews it and subsequently releases it for the next phase.

Next, the initiative is submitted to the voters. Since there are only 150 days to gather the signatures, gathering begins in a frenzy. Usually, paid signature gatherers are hired; this part of the campaign can be quite expensive. The ballpark figure just for getting an initiative qualified is \$1 million.¹ If enough valid signatures are collected and the initiative is successfully qualified, the challenge becomes "educating" the voters about the initiative. The entire process takes over a year to complete. Again, publicity can also be very expensive, because television and radio airtime in the state are expensive.

Last, the bill, if passed by the voters, must successfully stand up to a court challenge. "The fate of an initiative ... once in the courts, is often frustrating and difficult to follow since many of the legal events hap-

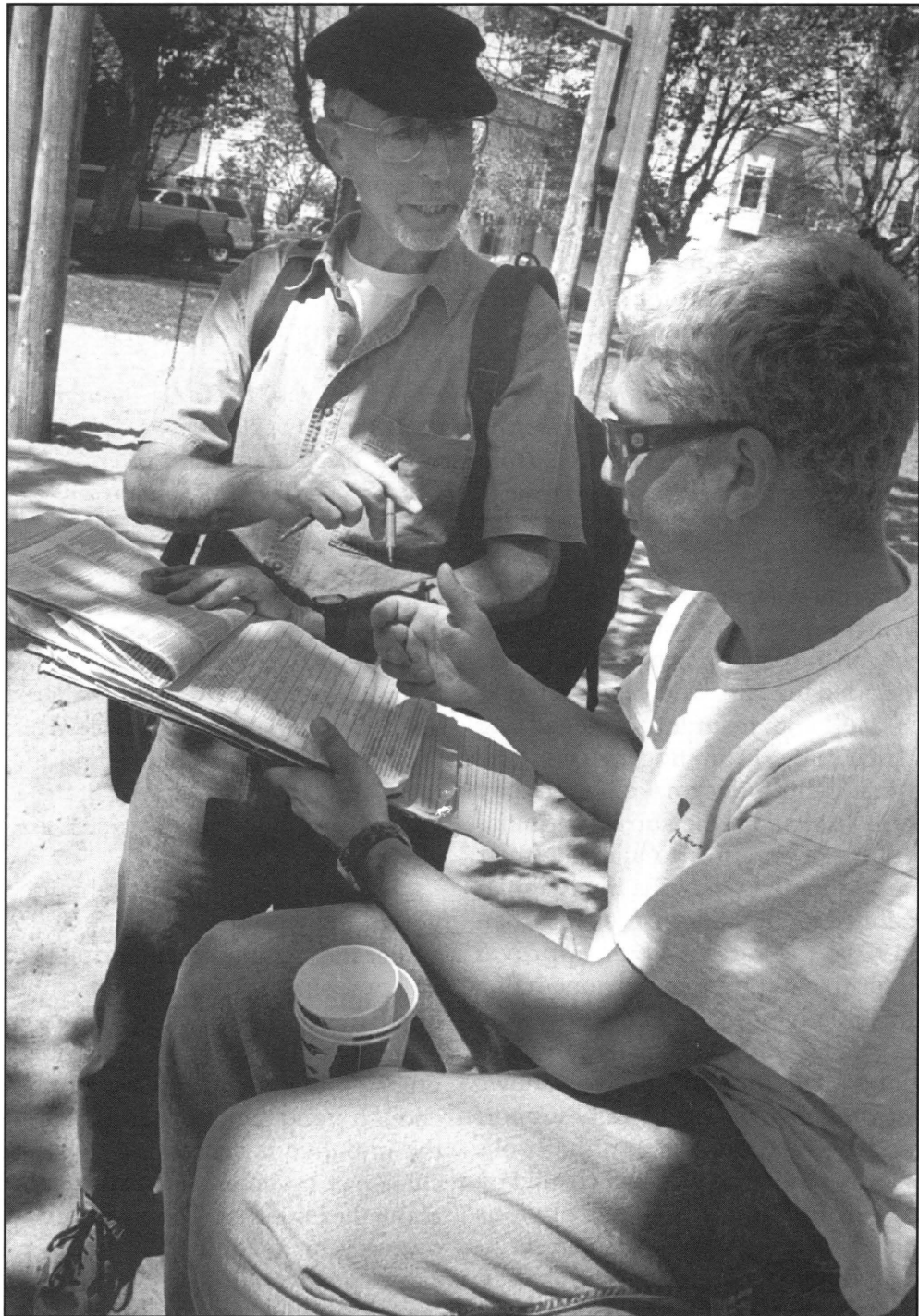


Photo by Christine Jegan

Stuart Jackson (left) is collecting signatures for ballot petitions at South Park in San Francisco.

pen so long after an election."² Voters have expressed annoyance at the significant number of California's initiatives voided by the courts. When this happens it seems as if all the money and effort spent on passing the initiative was in vain.

Problem

An interesting trend in the initiative realm is the growing distrust that the people of California feel about initiatives. In the August Field Poll Californians said they believed that special interest groups largely controlled initiatives, not the average people the process is supposed to serve.³ Californians went on to say that they overwhelmingly supported the initiative process itself, and expressed frustration at the courts for reversing the decisions of the voters.

Recently, it has become a popular tactic for special groups to pool their money, draft a bill serving their interests, and market it as legislation for "the people".⁴ What is distressing to the voters is the ambiguity regarding who actually writes and funds the propositions on the ballot.

An interesting case study of how the media covers initiatives is the upcoming June 1998 initiative that aims to eliminate bilingual education. A preliminary study by The Democracy Center reviewed the newspaper coverage of the issue from September to December 1997. Only a fraction of the coverage actually focused on the contents of the proposition.⁵ The majority of the coverage focused on the politics surrounding the issue. Keep in mind that during much of that time the voters had not had the chance to read the ballot pamphlet put out by the state. Voters have few other sources of information to turn to; it is essential that some other, early campaign-season, form of voter education become available for Californians.

The citizen's legal right to be informed about proposed legislation has attracted the attention of the 9th Circuit Court. The court ruled in *Bates v. Jones* that Proposition 140 (an initiative passed in 1990 that established term limits in California's legislature) would

not stand because voters were not properly informed of the legal implications of the law. Indeed, we see the same argument made in almost every controversial proposition passed by initiative. U.S. District Judge

Voters have repeatedly stated that they do not feel adequately informed about issues appearing on ballots. The partisan commercials that bombard the voters just before elections serve only to confuse them.

Claudia Wilken aroused questions with this ruling, most of which ceased when the court of appeals reversed her decision in November of 1997.

Regardless of legal wrangling, the main problem with California's initiative system remains. Voters do not have access to unbiased information about initiatives until just before the election. In the August Field Poll voters voiced overwhelming support for setting a limit on the amount of money that can be spent on initiative campaigns.⁶ In a market where those same voters get their ballot information primarily from campaign purchased media, options for reform remain narrow. "It is no accident that the airways are flooded with commercials that no one in their right mind would believe but, ironically, are many voters' primary sources of information".⁷

Objectives

The California Field Poll went on to say that, "seven in ten voters maintain that only a few or some of the ballot initiatives are understandable to the average voter."⁸ Confusion regarding the content of a proposed initiative tends to correlate to the amount of money that groups spend on that initiative. As the amount of money required for putting an initiative on the ballot increases, and the overall number of initiatives increases, so does the voters' confusion. Another sentiment expressed by the poll was that "the large majority of statewide ballot proposi-

tions today reflect the concerns of organized special interests rather than ordinary individuals."⁹ Clearly, the presence of big money in initiative politics is changing the democratic effectiveness of the process as well as the public's confidence in it.

The objective is to make changes in the initiative system so that all interests receive fair representation with less need for large sums of money. "Only a little more than half of the voting public (54%) say they vote on all the state ballot propositions presented to them at the time they are voting during statewide elections."¹⁰ Additionally, Californians need an increased understanding of the proposals on the ballot. California's goal is to increase the number of people voting on all ballot propositions to 75% by the year 2000.¹¹ Initiative reform is required to reach that goal.

Two alternatives for initiative reform are in legislative action or constitutional revision.

Legislative Alternatives for Initiative Reform Spending Limits

Legal limits on spending for initiative campaigns would reduce costs for initiative campaigns. Seventy-seven percent of California voters are in favor of placing spending limits on ballot proposition campaigns.¹² At the same time, those voters are also in favor of allowing paid signature gatherers to collect signatures. The answer is not to make paid signature gathering illegal. Instead, the focus should be on the amount of money that initiative campaigns spend on advertising.

Limiting the amount of money that a campaign can allocate for media exposure would grant opponents an equal playing field, regardless of their financial backer. On the other hand, limiting media exposure might actually work against the overall objective of increasing voter awareness. If campaigns faced limits in advertising expenditure, or if the number of advertisements were limited, the larger message might be

that government is not committed to voter education.

Disclosure of Large Donors

Another legislative alternative would be legislation requiring that all donations over \$1000 made to a campaign be listed both on the petition for signatures and the voting guide put out by the state. A list of supporters would show voters who had funded the initiative, and perhaps more importantly, who had not. In addition, this approach would be relatively inexpensive for the state. The extra costs are not taxpayer costs and meeting the new legal requirements should mean a minimal shot to campaigns. This proposal is likely to gain wide public support since it doesn't cost taxpayers anything; this is exactly the kind of quick answer the public wants in initiative politics.

A possible downside is that special interest groups are likely to oppose such a law. Recent initiative politics have demonstrated that once special interest group has enough money to run a media campaign, they can "become" whomever they want. Despite the fact that Californians are becoming more aware of bogus organizational names, providing groups with an incentive beyond those that already exist to mislead the public is not optimal democracy.

Better Publicity

When we consider publicity, the first thought is improving how campaigns publicize issues. However, better publicity is not solely the responsibility of the campaigns. In a democracy the state also carries some responsibility for voter education. The following three sections are descriptions of ways that the state, through legislative means, could improve the initiative process. By increasing publicity and making unbiased information more readily available to the voting public, the state can change the confusing facade of the initiative process.

The Internet

The World Wide Web could be a prime tool for giving Californians voter information. There are many potential advantages to using the Internet. First, the Internet is a resource currently under-utilized by the state. Providing a web page that people could access at their leisure- before the ballot pamphlet is available- would be convenient and relatively inexpensive. Second, the Internet is content-oriented but can also provide a nice, friendly format. The site could be designed to provide summarized information in a format likely to be more palatable to the voters than a 200 page voting guide that comes just before the election. Additionally, the Internet has no space confines. The official state World Wide Web sites could be linked to opponent's and proponent's sites, making it easy for both sides to voice their opinions. Lastly, the Internet is interactive. It puts voters in control of their own political education.

Unfortunately, the Internet could be misused. The state could only have control over the material it posted, and not over other sites. The links that lead to other sites could be misinterpreted as state-sponsored and thus run the risk on misleading voters.

Television

Many local governments realize that television is a good way to make information accessible to their citizens. With cable television programs, government is able to reach more people and provide an avenue for increased democracy. There is no real reason that this approach couldn't be applied to elections.

Government programs created specifically to inform viewers on the initiatives that will appear on a ballot, presented before an election, could increase voters' curiosity and encourage participation. Any initiative education program, in order to be effective, would have to be short and simple. Having been introduced to the is-

ssues on TV first, people might feel less intimidated by the huge quantity of information contained in the ballot pamphlet. The objective is not to replace the ballot pamphlet, but to encourage people to look at it by reformatting the same information and providing a preface to it.

A sure way to discourage viewing of a government-voting program would be to crowd too much information into a short period of air time. The emphasis would have to be on simply introducing the issues, indicating the implications of a positive or negative vote, and encouraging voter turnout. The state must take caution not to overload voters with too much information. If an attempt is made to include the entire ballot pamphlet the idea would be undermined.

Voters have repeatedly stated that they do not feel adequately informed about issues appearing on ballots. The partisan commercials that bombard the voters just before elections serve only to confuse them. This idea's main weakness is that a poorly-conceived television program could contribute to voter confusion and actually serve to disenchant our sparse voting population further.

Broadcasters might make the argument that a state sponsored election program inhibits free speech in our society. Logically, this argument fails because the program in no way prohibits advertisement by private entities. However, on an emotional level, Americans fear state control. Therefore, caution and discretion are essential to ensure that enlarging government voter education won't hurt California's chances for improved democracy.

Ballot Summaries

Often, the first time a person learns about an initiative is during the signature-gathering stage. But, since only a small percentage of people have to sign petitions for qualification, often only a minority of people are aware of an initiative until it gets

some media attention. Usually, this comes in the form of newspaper articles. Unfortunately, this attention usually covers the politics surrounding a proposal, as opposed to its contents. Through the newspaper coverage of the political jockeying around the initiative, people often get a skewed perspective. Then, paid commercials begin. Ballot initiatives that have support (read: money) on both sides can become extremely confusing. Finally, the ballot pamphlet arrives a few weeks before the election. Then those people who have tried to keep an open mind are confronted by a large amount of technical information. Considering this process, people that actually do read the ballot pamphlet deserve some credit.

This process should be improved. In the ballot pamphlet, the initial information presented is the text of the proposal, and what a "yes" and "no" vote means. If the state were to provide a summary of the initiatives slated for the next election, then all voters would have access to information before the commercials start. They would have a foundation, on which they could build solid, informed opinions. The ballot summary should include the initiative title, the statement that appeared at the top of the petitions, an indication of what the "yes" and "no" votes would mean, as well as a listing of large donors for the proponents and opponents. The ballot summary should be distributed at least three weeks before elections. This would give voters an opportunity to get familiar with the actual text of the initiatives they will be voting on before the majority of the media blitz.

The Bottom Line

Television and newspapers, grouped together as media, are the major sources of information for voters. To improve the Californian's political awareness government must use the media. Since statistics show that people use media as the major source of information for voting; it is obvi-

ous that government needs to catch up with society. The under-utilization of the media to communicate with viewers as voters has been addressed by "The Free TV For Straight Talk Coalition". The group, chaired by Walter Cronkite, has been the driving force behind pressuring television stations to give away free time during elections. Their campaign has been one of high-profile lobbying. Reforming California initiative politics requires an aggressive approach. The public owns the waves that carry television broadcasts in this country; the airwaves are only licensed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Although the FCC has been accused of corporate welfare, it has the authority to enforce a Supreme Court ruling that states: "a licensed broadcaster is granted the free and exclusive use of limited and valuable part of the public domain; when it accepts that franchise it is burdened by enforceable public obligations".¹³ That legal right has not been enough of a reason for the FCC to mandate that television stations actively encourage democratic participation.

Clearly, the FCC needs further encouragement. Motivation to provide free air time to political campaigns, equally and regardless of bias, can only be the result of strong governmental pressure. Local representatives must begin applying this pressure if there is to be hope that voter education can catch up with the 21st-century habits of voters.

In order to improve the public's trust and understanding of initiatives, the legislature must act now. California should use all aspects of the media to disseminate voter information. "There are two types of voters: those who absorb their information passively and those who actively seek their information."¹⁴ Clearly, those people who are not actively seeking information need initiative information delivered to them. As is stands, the great bulk of information they receive is biased; intentionally confusing, commercial messages common to mudslinging politics.

Notes

- 0 .J. Shultz, 14
- 1 .Schultz, 18
- 2 .<http://www.calgop.org/scvcr/pk0597.htm>
- 3 .Field Institute, California Opinion Index
- 4 .Blain, 5
- 5 .DiCamillo, Mark, Field
- 6 .California Opinion Index
- 7 .Blain, Joel
- 8 .California Opinion Index
- 9 .California Opinion Index
- 10 .DiCamillo
- 11 .DiCamillo
- 12 .California Opinion Index
- 13 .California Opinion Index
- 14 .Schultz, interview

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Currently, Caryn Moore is studying Political Science as SFSU. Her background in initiatives includes an internship with the Field Research Institute. At the Institute she helped draft the August Field Poll on initiatives, served as Assistant Director on an initiative campaign, and held an internship with Jim Shultz, author of The Initiative Cookbook.

San Francisco's Domestic Partners Law Examined

Marla Simpson

Segments of the population historically excluded from full participation in the political and economic life of the United States are increasingly demanding their rights. Gay and Lesbian couples who wish to marry are included in this trend. The passing of San Francisco's Ordinance No. 286-97 was done with the intention of reversing this trend, but may have unintended consequences.

In the fall of 1996, the City of San Francisco passed a new law, Ordinance No. 286-97. The Ordinance requires city contractors to do two things: 1) uphold non-discrimination policies based on a number of factors including domestic partner or marital status, and 2) extend the same benefits to registered domestic partners as those offered to married couples. Contractors who do not comply will be fined and, even more significantly, will lose their contracts. This law became effective in June 1997.⁰

The moral debate around the Ordinance has almost completely obscured the underlying economic story. According to Brad Benson, a representative from Supervisor Tom Ammiano's office, "As a civil rights issue people did not feel that cost was an important issue. This was a matter of conscience ... as a city we ought to just go ahead and make this statement [without considering the economic impact]."¹ The reasoning behind the legislation is that since same-sex couples are legally restricted from marriage, they are excluded from getting spousal benefits. Therefore, since registered domestic partnership is the marriage-equivalent for gay couples, it is discriminatory for contractors to provide unequal benefits to employees with spouses and those with domestic partners. Here is where the waters become a bit murky: roughly two-

thirds of domestic partnerships are not homosexual couples. For heterosexual couples with the option to become legally married, the marriage-equivalent argument falls apart. If instead the argument is based on discrimination between married and unmarried couples, where then does one draw the line? Shouldn't couples who do not live together receive the same benefits as those who do?

When one takes away principles and intentions, what is really happening here?

Three trends have fueled the push for providing domestic partner benefits; 1) the increasing proportion of non-traditional households, 2) the prominence of gay rights on the political agenda, and 3) the heightened importance of employer health benefits as a portion of overall compensation.

From 1940 to 1960, the percentage of households headed by a married couple remained at roughly 75% of all households. In the 1970s, 80s and 90s, the proportion of married couple-headed households dropped steadily, falling to only 56 percent in 1990.² As traditional families decreased, domestic partnerships conversely increased. While only a half-million couples reported themselves in domestic partnerships in 1975, this number jumped to more than 5.3 mil-

lion in 1996, including 1.7 million homosexual partnerships.³

It is not only rising numbers that has brought gay rights to the political forefront. Attitudes are changing too. Many countries, including Denmark and Sweden, offer official domestic partner status with accompanying legal rights to homosexual and heterosexual couples alike. While U.S. acceptance of same-sex relationships is still limited, surveys by the Human Rights Campaign and Gallup organization show that more than 85% of all Americans believe that non-discrimination policies and equitable benefits should be extended to non-traditional families, in particular those headed by gays and or lesbians. Acceptance is likely to grow as polls reveal that 75% or more of today's college freshman have no objection to the full legalization of gay relationships.⁴

Despite evidence of widespread and growing acceptance of gay relationships,

Despite evidence of widespread and growing acceptance of gay relationships, advocates have not managed to translate this into the desired outcome, namely the full legalization of gay and lesbian marriages.

advocates have not managed to translate this into the desired outcome, namely the full legalization of gay and lesbian marriages. As demonstrated by the virulent backlash in the wake of Hawaii's attempt to legalize same-sex marriage, (25 out of 50 states passed laws illegitimizing same-sex marriage) same-sex marriages remain a political improbability in the near term. Out of political necessity, same-sex marriage advocates have rallied behind the effort to expand recognition and marriage benefits to domestic partners. As a result, gay and lesbian advocates have spearheaded the push for marriage-equivalent benefits when, in fact, the majority of official domestic partnerships are between opposite-sex couples.

During the same interval that non-traditional households were increasing (1960 to 1990) health care costs skyrocketed. Health-related benefits that had accounted for 7% of payroll in 1983 had grown to 10.4% of payroll by 1991. Employer's contributions for all benefits, while representing only 10% of an average employee's compensation in 1960, totaled around 40% by 1992.⁵ Most of the value of the benefits applies directly to the individual, but about 5% goes to cover spouses and dependents.⁶

Developments that inspired Ordinance No. 286-97

Because the City views the Ordinance as an end in and of itself, rather than a means towards an end, no effort was made to measure the number of employees receiving spousal benefits before the Ordinance, the number of employees in domestic partnerships who would become eligible after the law or even the total number of employees working for City contractors. This has hindered my study. Furthermore, because the Ordinance applies to the whole staff of the company (not just those engaged in work for the city) and provides benefits to anyone registered as a domestic partner anywhere (not just in San Francisco) it is tremendously difficult to collect useful data.

As defined by the Ordinance, the term "domestic partner" applies to *any person who has a currently registered domestic partnership with a governmental body pursuant to state or local law authorizing such legislation*. In addition, the Ordinance limits the cost of providing domestic partnership benefits by requiring only that the employer pays only up to the same amount for the benefit as would be paid for an employee's spouse and by allowing contractors the contingency of offering a cash equivalent in place of the benefit if contractors have made a reasonable effort to provide the benefit without success.⁷

According to Cynthia Goldstein at the San Francisco Human Rights Commission, 16,000 organizations were contacted regarding the legislation, but estimates of the ac-

tual number of active contractors range from 10,000 to 12,000. To date, only about 5,000 organizations have submitted documentation.⁸

In organizations where domestic partner benefits are offered, the participation rate does not tend to be high. The participation rate when benefits are only offered for same-sex partnerships is only about one percent. For inclusive programs that cover a wider spectrum of partnerships, like the S.F. ordinance will provide, the rate is about 2-3%. Out of those who take advantage of the programs, most are in opposite-sex domestic partnerships. At Levi-Strauss, opposite-sex participation is around 60% (in S.F.) and among workers for the City of Seattle it is around 70%.⁹

Even before the Ordinance, some companies had already introduced domestic partner benefits. According to a 1993 survey of representatives from the Society for Human Resource Management, two percent of the companies offered health coverage to employees' domestic partners. A survey by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force during the same year counted 5% of respondents whose companies offered health coverage to domestic partners.¹⁰

Using these estimates as a guide, I tried to determine what the possible impact of the legislation might be. Because the estimates are so speculative, I have created three different scenarios. The first assumes a high impact, using the high estimate of the num-

ber of city contractors, a low estimate of companies already offering benefits, a high estimate of overall participation, and a high rate of gay and lesbian participation. The second estimate is based on fewer total city contractors, a higher percentage of contractors already offering equal benefits, lower overall participation, and a lower proportion of gay and lesbian participants. Finally, based on the number of contractors who have already submitted documentation, I have again calculated using the low estimates. The result is that between 95-353 organizations that do not offer domestic partnership benefits have employees who would be eligible for benefits equal to those for spouses. Of the contractors with eligible employees, an estimated 29-141 have employees with same-sex domestic partners. This number probably still overstates the actual number of firms that would be faced with increased costs. Many of the City's contractors, including a number of sole proprietorships, do not offer spousal benefits and would therefore not require a policy change to meet approval.

This is not to imply that the impact will be insignificant. The University of California (U.C.) recently approved a plan to offer spousal benefits to same-sex domestic partners; the cost is expected to be about \$6 million per year.¹ Still, it is important to understand that while the Ordinance will result in widespread policy changes, the number of contractors whose practices will change is considerably smaller.

	High Impact	Low Impact	Current
Number of city contractors:	12,000	10,000	5,000
Contractors not in compliance before ordinance:	(98%) 11,760	(95%) 9,500	(95%) 4,750
Number of contractors affected based on participation rate in programs:	(3%) 353	(2%) 190	(2%) 95
Number of contractors with Gay and Lesbian employees directly affected:	(40%) 141	(30%) 57	(30%) 29

San Francisco is not the only city to impose economic sanctions on contractors as a public policy mechanism. Los Angeles, Baltimore, San Jose, Jersey City, St. Paul, Milwaukee and New York have all recently passed "living wage" laws, requiring city contractors to provide minimum standards of compensation and benefits.² In Los Angeles, where the "living wage" Ordinance was passed in April, a detailed economic study examined the cost, projected impact on poverty, impact on employment, costs to the city and effects on the private sector. Although the focus and the parameters of the living wage ordinance are different from the San Francisco legislation, the study does provide insight into the possible effects of the domestic partners ordinance. In the living wage study, Professors Williams and Sander flatly admitted that the Ordinance was likely to raise costs. The authors proposed three ways that Los Angeles might choose to handle the additional costs: 1) The city might decide to absorb the cost either by increasing revenues or reducing spending. 2) The city could make case-by-case judgments increasing contract amounts if the city concluded that the contractor could not absorb the cost. 3) The city could allow individual contracting departments to manage the new expense. In this case, the city would still eventually bear the cost through either higher contracting cost when departments are able to secure higher funding or lower services when they are not. Ultimately, the authors concluded, the number of jobs lost would depend mainly on the elasticity of demand — in other words, the city's willingness to absorb the cost.³

Thus, San Francisco is likely to face the same dilemma implementing the domestic partners ordinance. At least in the short-term, the direct costs will cause contractors to accept lower profits, pass on the costs to the city or cut production resulting in lost jobs.

Until now, I have assumed that contractors would attempt to comply by add-

ing domestic partner benefits to their payroll. But because the legislation is based on equality rather than provision, it is possible that contractors could choose to comply by eliminating spousal benefits instead. Whether or not contractors felt that they could remain competitive without offering spousal benefits would depend on the supply and demand for workers within the given industry.

With any given policy, the indirect costs and benefits will affect the overall benefit or loss to society. One of the most outspoken critics against domestic partner benefits has been Governor Pete Wilson. The Governor has fought vigorously against providing domestic partner benefits to U.C. employees. In September he insisted on a vote by the California Board of Regents before the plan could be approved. Right before the vote, he appointed three new regents, all who were opposed to the benefits plan. He objects to the plan for two reasons: 1) He believes that the decision could bring lawsuits against the university, and 2) *It puts the university in the position that they will be accused of having significantly devalued marriage.*⁴ If either of these occur, they might be seen as indirect costs of the legislation.

There are several arguments, however, which support the possibility that indirect benefits might also result from the Ordinance. In the Williams-Sander study, one of the indirect benefits discussed with regard to the living wage law was the possibility that increased wages might raise productivity. The authors proposed four ways that this might occur:

- If better benefits increased workers' work effort.
- If additional benefits reduced turnover, resulting in more experienced workers and causing the employer to invest more in training.
- If the additional benefits attracted more productive workers.

- If employers required more from the workers with the new benefits plan.⁵

Indeed, profit-minded companies like Apple Computer, Genentech, Levi-Strauss and Charles Schwab were offering domestic partner benefits even before the Ordinance was introduced.⁶ Lotus reported that the positive reaction to offering domestic partner benefits outweighed the negative three to one. Companies with gay-friendly policies tend to perform well generally. 1996 was the fourth consecutive year that the Stonewall Index comprising 36 gay-friendly companies outperformed both the Dow and the Standard & Poors Index.⁷

Another possible indirect benefit of the Ordinance is that it could have a positive effect on tourism. "Colorado's anti-gay Amendment Two battle and the boycott that resulted cost the state more than \$140 million. And Cobb County, Georgia, lost more than \$20 million when its condemnation of homosexuality prompted Olympic officials to move the volleyball competition elsewhere for last summer's Summer Games."⁸

Where are we now?

While it is still too soon to evaluate the long-term effects of the Ordinance, evidence of the short-term effects is already beginning to surface. The most publicized problem so far is administration. The Los Angeles study estimated that it would cost \$600,000 to create an administrative unit that could achieve a high level of compliance.⁹ No study of the domestic partner ordinance assessed the administrative costs. Not surprisingly, the Human Rights Commission is struggling to process the documentation. Out of roughly 5000 contractors who have submitted documentation, about half have been reviewed.¹⁰ The bottleneck is a real problem for City officials who need goods and services from vendors who have not yet received approval. Not only is productivity lost waiting and checking, but costs are also up.

Some City officials complain that they are paying high prices to purchase from vendors who are in compliance. The Department of Public Works reported a 17 percent jump in the price it pays for toilet paper (from 53 cents to 62 cents a roll).¹¹ Also as an outgrowth of the Ordinance, departments complain about intermediaries who buy supplies from the source and resell them to the city at high prices. The go-betweens often comply by not offering any benefits to any of their employees.¹² To ease the pressure, the board of Supervisors recently passed an amendment giving department heads the power to waive the requirements in certain cases.¹³

Also, many of the contractors who have not submitted documentation may have chosen to lose the contracts rather than comply. For example, Federal Express is rumored to be considering moving its operations to Oakland to avoid compliance.¹⁴

These developments conform to the options presented in the Williams-Sander study. The individual departments are paying higher costs, and through the waiver system, the city is deciding on a case-by-case basis to temporarily waive the requirements for compliance.

In the private sector, a few large national companies lobbied vehemently against the Ordinance. United Airlines has already filed a lawsuit against the city. Small- and medium-sized businesses have been less vocal. The Chamber of Commerce has remained on the sidelines during most of the debate. Initially, the Chamber expressed concern because access to domestic partner coverage was almost completely closed for small businesses. Prior to the Ordinance, few insurers offered domestic partner coverage to groups with fewer than 50 employees.¹⁵ However, as a result of the Ordinance, four of California's largest health insurance providers started offering domestic partner coverage. With 75% of the market offering coverage, other insurers are expected to extend coverage

in order to maintain their market share.¹⁶ It is possible that small businesses have protested less than large ones because the Ordinance affects different sized businesses disproportionately.

Ultimately, the success or failure of Ordinance No. 286-97 will depend on a number of things. Primarily, how are the goals of this policy defined? If the goal is to equalize benefits for the largest possible number of people in domestic partnerships, success would be rated by the number of employees working for organizations with equal benefits policies even if this resulted in fewer benefits - including fewer spouse and/or partner benefits overall. If the goal is to improve the economic lot of gays and lesbians generally, then success will depend on the amount of increased income to gays and lesbians. If the goal is to provide the maximum number of gay and lesbian domestic partners benefits previously offered only to married couples, the measure's success will depend on the increase in the percentage of same-sex couples receiving domestic partner benefits. Despite the city's response that the Ordinance was intended only as an equality measure, and in spite of the fact that the Ordinance itself includes opposite-sex couples, rhetoric from the board of supervisors implies that the legislation was

intended to raise the number of gay and lesbian couples receiving benefits that were previously reserved for married couples. As such, this case is a good example of how politics and legality confound the goals of policymakers. Between 60-70% of the spoils of this legislation will go to beneficiaries other than the intended population.

It is difficult to predict what the long-term effects will be without more concrete data. To the extent that there are additional costs associated with the benefits, the outcome will depend on two things: 1) the contractors' ability to absorb the costs, and 2) the contractors' ability to pass through the costs to either the city or to other clients. If both the supply and the demand are inelastic, the contractors are likely to respond by either lowering the quality of services to save costs, or by deciding not to contract with the city, in which case job loss could result. If, however, the indirect benefits of the program offset the costs by increasing productivity, attracting tourism business, and providing greater equality, then there will be net gain to society as a result of the Ordinance. Clearly, if the City were committed to this program, it would behoove leaders to consider the possibility of creating an administrative budget to process the documentation and a clear policy for handling additional costs.

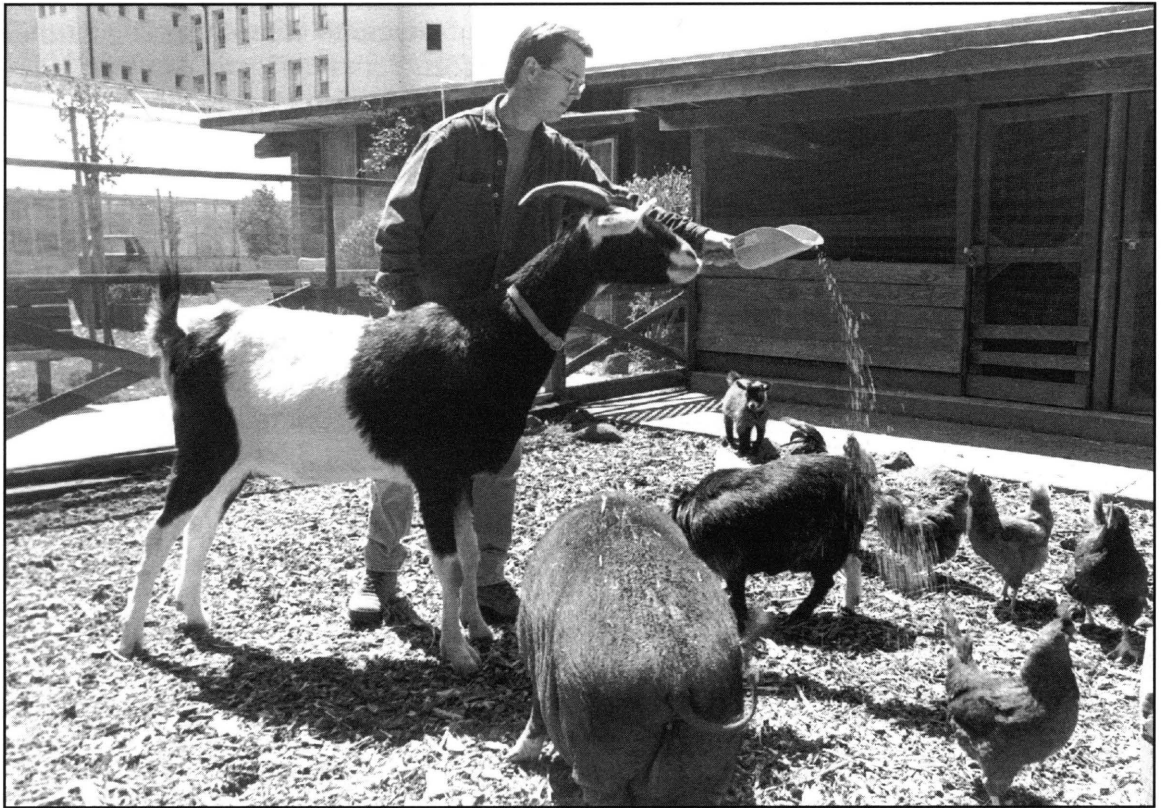
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Feeding the Cities: An Examination of Urban Agriculture

MaryRuth H. Bafra

Despite the polluted, concrete-covered environment associated with cities there is another part of city life that's seldom even noticed: urban farming. Even without most people being aware, the typically rural activity has crept into urban areas and become an important source of food and income. This article examines the practice of urban farming – in both the developing and industrialized nations – and its positive effects on the urban lifestyle.

To the post-industrial city dweller the term “urban agriculture” sounds like an oxymoron. In an era when the average grocery store vegetable in the U.S. travels 1,200 miles to market⁰, and only 1.3% of the U.S. population are farm operators,¹ we tend to forget that the food we eat is grown in actual soil. The accelerating growth rate of both global human population and that population's concentration in urban centers (see Table 1) is driving the expansion of urban agriculture all over the world.

In the pre-industrial era much of every city's food was produced at home for the same reasons urban agriculture goes on today: necessity and convenience. A 1996 study of urban farming performed by the Urban Agricultural Network for the United Nations Development Programme found that 200 million urban farmers worldwide produce approximately one-seventh of the world's food². The study describes citydwellers growing crops, rearing livestock, and farming fish in all of the urbanized regions of the world- developing and developed nations alike. They also found the world's urban farmers producing crops to sell as well as eat, providing themselves with income and employment along with their vegetables, poultry, and fish. In Calcutta alone, the researchers describe 20,000 people farming on the city's garbage dumps.

Urban farmers produce a wide variety of crops and grow them in a myriad of locales. The urban agriculturist grows fruit and vegetable crops, nuts, berries, spices, small livestock (fowl and pigs), fish, cereals (cassava and maize), even the occasional cow! Farmers plant in backyards, in alleys, on rooftops, along railway easements, in community gardens, and in unused public spaces. Fish are farmed in canals, and in the wastewater treatment ponds of developing nations' municipalities. Urban farming also includes commercial operations that grow food crops in city greenhouses. Urban commercial operations are typically small-scale and have multiple sites scattered throughout a city.³

Most urban farmers in both developed and developing nations are relatively long-term city residents and tend to be lower income females. It's likely that the same social and economic forces that draw citizens of developing countries into urban agriculture – namely decreasing food security and increasing income inequity – are at work, albeit in less dramatic fashion, in the developed nations. Additional psychological forces may draw developed world urban farmers to their plots. A desire to reconnect with the natural, cyclical realm of growth and harvest is leading residents of devel-

oped cities to sow and reap just as their urban predecessors did.

Two Patterns

Urban farmers in developed countries are typically better off than the poorest of the poor. However, it's unclear if a slightly higher income level allows residents to allocate resources to farming, or if this relative affluence is one of urban farming's effects. Urban farmers tend to have lived in the city long enough (an average of 10 years in Lusaka, Zambia⁴) to have gained access to the use of some land. Those who farm it rarely own the land. The farm may be formally-leased, privately-owned land informally "understood" by neighbors to be the farmers' to use or public space the farmers appropriate. The city farmers in developing nations tend to have some income from a full or part-time job flowing to the household.⁵ Although the capital requirement of farming on this small scale is low, some money is required for tools and initial seeds or plants.

The crops grown in developing world cities tend to be low value (to discourage theft), quick to mature (to minimize crop losses due to loss of land access), and hardy enough to thrive in uncontrolled conditions. The relative hardiness and short production cycles of poultry and pigs make them the ideal livestock animals for the urban farmer. Livestock consume household vegetable and cereal waste (peels and hulls), produce fertilizer for future vegetable crops, and ultimately provide protein (eggs and meat) to supplement diets that are often starch-dominated.

Perishable fruits and vegetables are good crops for the developing world's urban farmers. Fruits and vegetables have greater value than cereal crops both in terms of market value and micronutrients. For the farmer, these crops are available as in-kind income for home consumption; they also generate cash income via sales to fellow city residents.⁶

Urban farming provides flexible income. Farmers can choose to grow crops only when they can provide the required labor. Farming is compatible with childcare as well. Infants can "ride along" with family adults and older children can help with tasks while learning how to farm for themselves.

Additional benefits from urban farming accrued by developing nations include increased employment, higher in-kind incomes, and increased money incomes all potentially created without major government expenditures. Unfortunately, municipal authorities in many countries dislike the idea of a "rural-looking" city.

A pro-urban bias exists in many developing countries and often extends to official discouragement of the traditional agricultural practices authorities associate with the countryside.⁷ City farmers can face serious regulatory obstacles including fines, harassment, and even the confiscation of their products. The problem of official acceptance is second only to that of land access for the urban farmer in the developing world.

Policy supports for urban agriculture in the developing world could include designating public lands for community gardens, providing agricultural extension services (like soil testing), funding tool libraries, and even city sponsored micro-banks for that essential "seed" capital. (See Figure 2)

Although the evidence is scattered, surveys done for the UNDP project revealed that urban farming was providing 30% of the vegetable consumption in Katmandu in 1987, 45% in Hong Kong in 1982, 50% in Karachi in 1988, and 85% in Shanghai in 1981. Asia had the highest proportion of households farming, but surprisingly, North America was not far behind with an estimated 25% of households growing some of their own food.⁸

In the developed nations urban farming masquerades as "gardening." The need for in-kind and cash incomes or the immediate threat of hunger don't drive the farmer/gardener to their backyards so much as the desire to eat inexpensive, pesticide-

free foods. For many older Americans the urban garden is like a vestigial limb; it's a pale shadow of the family farm that may only be a generation removed in time.

The United States has a strong cultural tradition in agriculture. The back-to-the-land movement of the 60s and 70s was only one example of this pro-agrarian motif in American history. This recurring popularity of an agrarian ideal is with us now as gardening, presently the most popular leisure time activity in the US.⁹

The ideals inherent in the developed world's notion of farming may be the essential "crops" that their urban farmers produce. Since such a tiny portion of the developed world's populations are actually full-time farmers, few citydwellers know any. This disconnect allows an urbanized society to associate the terms "farmer" and "gardener" with positive symbolic attributes that may, or may not, have much to do with reality. It's arguable that, as a society, Americans have attributed qualities like "patient," "thrifty," "gentle," "hard-working," and

For many older Americans the urban garden is like a vestigial limb; it's a pale shadow of the family farm that may only be a generation removed in time.

"grounded" to the image of the farmer- all attributes seen as lacking or underdeveloped in the stereotypical urbanite.

On a symbolic level as well as the practical, physical level- the farming ideology is associated in the developed world with social and ecological sustainability. We believe farming is ecologically benign, regardless of the real environmental effects of large-scale commercial monocropping. The farmer/ gardener ideal encompasses attributes attractive to developed nation citizens; nations nervous about an overpopulated planet, a degraded post-industrial environment, and a vanishing resource base.

Almost all of the urban farming projects we see publicized in the US media are di-

rected at helping those portions of our population most similar to developing-world urban farmers. Certainly the stated goals of these programs are similar to the outcomes of developing-nation urban farming we have seen; to provide employment for homeless and low-income individuals, and to supplement the food supply for low-income families. Part of the appeal is practical, but in addition I believe they attempt to teach "remedial" gardening. Programs seem equally directed towards acculturating participants with those positive values we associate with farming, industriousness and responsibility, and producing actual crops. Public school gardens are the most popular urban farming education programs,¹⁰ make great biology teaching tools, and may serve to instill the values associated with farming in its participants.

What of the other urban farmers in developed cities, the well-heeled? Why do they grow crops in town? They garden for home consumption, for aesthetic pleasure, and perhaps most importantly, to reinforce for themselves a connection to "sustainable" ideals through the ritual of growing food.

Economic factors are encouraging people into the garden as well. Decreasing food security accompanies stagnant real income growth in developed world cities just like it does in those of developed ones. Urban agriculture acts as a defense against political and economic factors that are decreasing food security throughout the developing world.¹¹ Real wage reduction occurs in all growing cities when competition for housing and jobs pushes rents up and wages down. People with low or fixed incomes benefit from the in-kind income urban farming provides regardless of their geographical locale.

Reasons to Encourage Urban Agriculture

Rural-based commercial agriculture is entering a new phase worldwide. The benefits of increased cereal crop yields that followed the green revolution of the 1960s are

tapped out. Demand for grain continues to rise due to increasing human population and the greater domesticated animal populations that accompany higher incomes. As William Rees summarizes in his excellent article "Why Urban Agriculture,"

"Global food production seems to be stalling even as demand and prices rise at a rate unprecedented in the post-WWII period. Despite rising demand, per-capita grain production has actually been in decline since the mid-1980's as has the area of grainland available per capita. Indeed, some 86 million ha (hectares) of severely degraded land (twice the area of Canada's cropland) has been lost to production. Most potentially arable land on Earth is already under cultivation."¹²

He goes on to describe a similar decline in global fish catches since 1989 although larger and more sophisticated fishing fleets pursue the fish.¹³

Even as these trends continue, both developed and developing nations are building over much of their most productive farmland due to the continuing growth and urbanization of the human population. A study by the American Farmland Trust concluded that between 1982 and 1992 4.3 million acres of prime farmland were lost to production, mostly for suburban development, in the US alone.¹⁴

The historical evolution of most cities placed them near lakes, rivers, or seashores. Yesterday's transportation and hydropower needs dictate that today's suburban sprawl caps soil built from the nutrient runoff of millennia. California's Santa Clara County, better known as Silicon Valley, is a textbook example of prime, almost unmatched, agricultural land being subsumed under an impasto of tract homes and strip malls.

Ironically, the soil quality in rural areas suffers from urbanization as well. Monocropping, the predominant mode of large-scale, commercial agriculture, degrades soil quality over time. Rees summarizes neatly again, "Removing people and

livestock far from the land that supports them prevents the economic recycling of phosphorous, nitrogen, other nutrients and organic matter back onto farm – and forest – lands. In short, as a consequence of urbanization, what were once local, cyclically integrated ecological production systems have become global, horizontally disintegrated throughput systems. For example, instead of being returned to the land, Vancouver's daily apportion of Saskatchewan mineral nutrients goes straight out to sea."¹⁵

Urban agriculture, by encouraging the return of food production to the good soil areas where the bulk of people live, the cities, and by encouraging the capture and recycling of city wastes, can help ensure that future soils and crops will be nutrient-dense. If we are what we eat, and if we want to keep eating well in the future, we need to eat foods produced where the overwhelming majority of us are, in the cities.

Further motivations for encouraging increased urban food production are the potential transportation fuel savings. Fossil fuel use for transportation produces about one-third of the global carbon dioxide emissions suspect in global warming. Since global warming will desiccate millions of acres of farmland, reduction of fuel use for food transportation should be a priority. In Britain, a relatively compact place, food-related transportation accounts for one-quarter of all trips!¹⁶ Locally-produced food requires less transportation. It requires less packaging, refrigeration, and preservation as well. Eating more locally-produced food will result in lower energy costs and a smaller waste stream.

One final benefit of urban agriculture is its positive impact on the preservation of "heirloom" species. Urban gardeners tend to grow more varieties of fruit and vegetables than commercial growers, then to save and exchange seeds with others. Older and less hybridized, usually "tailored" by natural selection to local conditions, the heirloom species grown by ur-

ban farmers help preserve the botanical genetic diversity (and accompanying disease resistance) evolved over generations.

In Conclusion

Urban farming is a practice that could ameliorate many of the problems (like increasing food prices and environmental degradation) that humanity will have to cope with in an ever-expanding urban environment. As new cities are built and older ones grow larger, the amount of ru-

ral farmland available for production will continue to shrink. Large scale monocropping is reducing the levels of nutrients in the Earth's soil that are essential for agriculture to flourish. Urban farming is much more than a way to get "back to nature" more than merely dabbling in the ages-old process of growing food. For more and more of us, urban farming may become a necessary economic activity. It is more than a hobby; it is an essential for future city health and survival.

Notes

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- ² UNDP study, 9
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Touchdown or Fumble? A Question of Stadium Finance

Marcus Adams

Throughout the country, taxpayers are being asked to help subsidize sport franchises and their stadiums. The question that must be asked about this transfer program to "well-heeled" owners is, "Are these subsidies really required and what benefits do tax payers get in return?" Marcus Adams, a junior in the Urban Studies program and sports enthusiast, examines this question and takes the reader through a comprehensive understanding of the politics that are played out in the "private vs. public" battle of financing sport stadiums. He uses the recent San Francisco 49er proposition battle that took place to demonstrate the pros and cons of publicly-financed sports stadiums.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper will be to discuss policy related to the building of sport stadiums and related projects. I will analyze not only the economic aspect but the social aspects related to stadium development. Social implications have become the "focus point" by both proponents and opponents when it comes to the financing of stadiums.

The major issue regarding financing is whether these projects should be funded publicly or privately. Proponents of "publicly" financed projects argue that the tax revenues brought into the cities by their stadiums (mainly the addition of luxury suites and personal seat license charges) will be an economic boon. These revenues could be added to the city's general fund for such services as childcare centers, education, and social service programs. Promoters also boast about the amount of jobs created by these stadiums and arenas/malls. Lastly, the "pride and community spirit" a new stadium will bring to a city is a carrot that proponents dangle before cities.

Proponents of "privately" financed stadiums are just as forceful with their arguments. The major point from the proponents is the established "wealth" of the owners of these sport franchises. They argue that these owners have the capital to finance a new stadium themselves and are just "greedy" and

anxious to take advantage of the shortage of sport franchises in major cities. The benefits of "jobs, tax revenue, and civic pride" are vastly overrated, they argue. The following is an in-depth look at these issues.

History

Contrary to the current trend of owners asking for public subsidies, private stadiums were once the fashion. Like a proud-to-be bride who makes her own wedding gown, franchise owners would build and finance their own stadiums. Current examples include Dodger Stadium, Busch Stadium, Joe Robbie Stadium, Carolina Stadium (Charlotte), Fleet Center (Boston), Core States Center (Philadelphia), and Rose Garden (Portland)¹. When this all changed is open to debate, but **how** it changed certainly is not.

Different terms have been coined – "franchise free agency," "stadium extortion," "corporate greed" – but they all have the same loose definition. With "expansion" impregnating the major sports (NFL, Major League Baseball, NBA) there became an abundance of teams without a home. According to an article in the January 16, 1996 *Investor's Business Daily*, "at least 30 major professional sports teams were looking for new places to play either in the cities where they were located or elsewhere." Owners,



3Com Park at Candlestick Point on San Francisco's southeast border may be torn down and replaced with a new ballpark. Construction plans for the site also include a large shopping mall.

well aware of this fact, can hold cities hostage and pit city against city, mayor against mayor, until their demands are met. In order to keep star players, owners argue they need "new" stadiums to increase revenue. Critics are quick to point out that as for es-

"Is the real reason people are against this proposal because the area is predominantly black, if so, then to vote 'no' is racist." – Mayor Willie Brown

calating salaries of star players, the owners have no one but themselves to blame. According to Richard Bierck in the June 3, 1996 US News and World Report, the old revenue ways of privately owned stadiums where owners sold tickets, paid players and kept the difference (and even the revenue producing television broadcast fees) are passé.

49er Gold?

In June of 1997, the top brass of the San Francisco 49ers decided to put before San Francisco voters a \$100 million lease-revenue bond issue to help finance a \$325 million stadium at Candlestick Point. The bonds would be paid back by tax revenues from the stadium and a \$200 million privately financed retail-entertainment mega-mall complex. This would prove to be a daunting task for a number of reasons:

1. Less than a year earlier the San Francisco Giants, after going before the voters four times inside and outside of San Francisco County unsuccessfully, decided to go the private-sector route to get their stadium initiative passed.

2. The "fickle" nature of liberal San Francisco voters and their disdain to help bankroll a millionaire who they perceive as asking for a corporate-welfare handout.

3. The location, Bayview/Hunters Point.

Team president Carmen Policy, early on in the campaign, pulled the "stadium extortion" play out of his playbook. "We are

not coming back for another vote and we expect the city to honor the legally-binding terms of the lease extension that you negotiated." Failing to gain public sentiment, Forty-Niner brass acknowledged they may have taken the popularity of their franchise for granted, displaying a perception of arrogance early on in the campaign. "Quite frankly, we dropped the ball," Policy would later say. When it was obvious that neither team loyalty nor popularity would sway voters, the 49ers looked in the playbook for other methods. "Ah yes," the 49er brass said to themselves in their huddle, let's get on the phone and bring in our surefire "secret weapon."

Da Mayor!

The 49ers figured that getting Mayor Willie Brown, a beloved San Francisco icon, on their side would be instrumental. Mayor Brown did indeed sign on to their campaign putting his reputation and word on the line. Brown thought, however, that a "stadium-only" initiative would not be a money-making venture so he insisted on the "mall" for increased revenue which the 49ers agreed on, albeit with trepidation. Brown made many comments and promises that are common among promoters of publicly-subsidized stadiums. Among them:

- "I wouldn't be for this stadium and the entire package if I didn't think it was a good deal..."²

- "...at no time did he [Senator Kopp, the opposition leader] introduce one measure that would create jobs there (Bayview-Hunters Point.) I'm proposing 10,000 new jobs, a 1000 for general assistance recipients."³

- "The city is putting up no more than \$100 million, every last penny of which will be paid for with the money generated by the project itself, along with the annual revenue we already bring in from Candlestick."⁴

- "Rather than adversely affecting the General Fund, the project will create a surplus of more than \$1 million to it each year, according to our financial analyst."

- "The retail/entertainment mall will feature a 30-screen cinema and a collection of "outlet" stores which will complement, rather than draw business away from, San Francisco's other shopping centers."

- "Is the real reason people are against this proposal because the area is predominantly black, if so then to vote "no" is racist."

Of course all the mayor's points are debatable and can be heavily scrutinized (which they were). We will now try to analyze them.

10,000 Jobs

Job creation is arguably the favorite perk that promoters of publicly-financed stadiums like to use. The 49ers proposal is supposed to provide 10,000 jobs. That figure, however, does have caveats. Only 50% of the construction jobs and 25% of the project's permanent jobs are to go to Bayview-Hunters Point residents. There is, at present, no guarantee of these percentages, only a "good faith effort" by developers and the 49ers to fill these quotas. These percentages come out 1,500 construction jobs, 1,600 mall jobs and 750 part-time jobs at the stadium, a far cry from 10,000. Commenting on this part of the proposition, the liberal-progressive weekly *San Francisco Bay Guardian* stated, "...even some supporters call those figures, (10,000 jobs, 6,500 of them full-time) optimistic, and critics contend that any jobs created will be low-paying, part-time positions."⁵ Cleveland State University professor Norm Krumholz, when speaking on Cleveland's sport franchise crisis, said "promoters like to point to all the jobs created by stadiums and arenas. But it's really peanuts, or rather peanut vendors. They're seasonal, temporary, low-income jobs."⁶ Cleveland got their new arena, the Gateway Complex, which taxpayers paid \$275 million in "sin" taxes to help build. "Voters were promised 28,000 jobs, but the city has lost 26,000 jobs since the stadium was approved."⁷ In what may be the most compelling comparison, the Franklin Mills mall in Philadelphia, which will be similar to Candlestick Mills here in

size and structure, employs fewer than 3,500 people, nowhere near the 6,500 projected for Candlestick Mills. A *San Francisco Chronicle* study of the mall found that "corporate representatives overestimated the number of jobs by at least 20 percent and that most of the jobs pay little more than \$1 above the minimum wage and come without benefits."⁸

Proponents of the mall point out that even if the amounts of jobs are inflated in comparison to what they have now, nothing, it is a plus. *San Francisco Bayview Newspaper* editor Willie Radcliff told me in an interview, "look what we have now, these people on the corner want to work and some of those jobs will be in construction which will be at union wages, you can't tell me what we have now is better." Renowned sociologist William Julius Wilson shares Radcliff's view on jobs in the urban ghettos. In his new book, *"When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor,"* Wilson laments that "in order to cure the long-term damage of joblessness to people in the ghetto, we need to come up with jobs, public or private sector."⁹

Revenue Makers

Mayor Brown and other promoters of publicly-financed stadiums tout that they will end up producing more revenue than taxpayers pay out in taxes. Opponents counterattack with a defensive blitz of facts:

- The original Candlestick park: San Francisco is just now paying off bonds on Candlestick, (3 Com) that originally were supposed to be \$5 million but ended up costing \$15 million to build and \$40 million in public money to repay principal and interest.¹⁰

- St. Petersburg, Florida's Suncoast Dome will have cost the city over \$30 million in debt service and maintenance before a major-league team finally calls it home in 1998.¹¹

- Oakland taxpayers' \$198 million bond issued to the Raiders is having trouble being repaid and the general fund may have to be tapped. (San Francisco Chronicle)

Mall Fever

The mall was a major source of contention in the 49ers proposal and in comparisons to similar projects the results are mixed at best. Philadelphia's aforementioned Franklin Mills mall attracts 18.5 million visitors year, more than visit the Liberty Bell, the Art Museum and city zoo combined. Annual sales are approximately \$300 million. Ontario Mills Mall in Ontario has been wildly successful.

Critics point out that San Franciscans are different breeds who tend to abhor mall and chain store concepts. "The chain store-anchored mall might even cause a net job loss by forcing small local businesses to close, thereby eliminating more full-time, better-paying jobs than it offers. Also, many mall jobs will merely be siphoned off from other parts of the city or be given to people who live out of town..." May 21-97 BG

Racism?

It was 1968 when noted anthropologist Hippler wrote in his research book of Hunter's Point, "Moves aimed at increasing the 'political awareness' of the inhabitants of Hunters Point and political 'education' movements imply somebody needs education, an attitude which irritates [sic] Hunters Pointers."¹² This statement still holds true today.

Many residents of the area and black leaders in the City felt there was a tone of racism in the campaign. When the *S.F. Bay Guardian* came out against the stadium, black community leaders were outraged. Alex Pitcher, President of the San Francisco Branch of the NAACP, wrote in a letter to the editor, "For decades the City has promised jobs for the Bayview...I don't need to tell you that none of these promises has ever materialized into a single job. Now the 49ers and the City are willing to commit to a real jobs package with a training component, from \$425 million in private sector finds and a \$100 million commitment from the City generated from the complex. Re-

markably, this plan is met with hostility from your paper."¹³

One might wonder if the "R" word reared its ugly head or were the residents going on false hopes?

Final Score...

Only time will tell how the stadium/mall will turn out. As far as the rest of the country and how voters feel about publicly financing stadiums, there seems to be a backlash. Pittsburgh and its surrounding counties just recently, overwhelmingly voted down a 00.5% sales tax to build a new stadium and arena. In June 1997, Seattle voters rejected to continue a 2 percent hotel-motel tax through 2020 to fund a new stadium, despite a successful season for the Mariners. (This was later overturned by the State Legislature.) Private sport complexes seem to be on the rise again. The 1997 Washington Wizards' basketball season was played in a new facility financed by its owner Abe Pollin. Other private complexes are in the works.

Thus far, the 49ers have yet to sign off on the Bayview-Hunters Point Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), a list of conditions Bayview-Hunters Point residents wrote up entailing promises of jobs, training, etc. "To date, the San Francisco 49ers have yet to sit down and negotiate with this committee," stated Cedric Jackson, member of the Bayview-Hunters Point MOU Committee.¹⁴ There has also been public conflict within the DeBartolo family and even allegations of gambling misconduct. And various lawsuits from local and national ad-hoc groups have stalled the plan as well. Did somebody say "Over-time"? Stay tuned

Notes

1. The Allegheny Institute for Public Policy. October 27, 1995
2. Investors Business Daily. January 16, 1996
- 3 San Francisco Bayview Newspaper. March 21, 1997
4. San Francisco Chronicle. June 1, 1997
5. San Francisco Bayview Newspaper. March 7, 1997
- 6 San Francisco Bay Guardian May 21, 1997
7. Fortune Magazine. January 15, 1996
8. The Detroit News. June 23 1995
9. San Francisco Chronicle. May 27, 1997
10. Time Magazine. September 2, 1996
11. San Francisco Bay Guardian May 21, 1997
12. Architectural Record. August 1996
13. Hunters Point, a black ghetto. Arthur E. Hippler
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The Life and Death of the American Streetcar

Max Schweitzer

The American streetcar played an integral part in developing cities beginning in the late 1800s and throughout the early half the 1900s. Prior to the invention of the first streetcar, cities were very compact and dense. Most people had to live as close to work as possible and because most work was very capital-intensive, workplaces were near the core of the urban area close to rail and port lines. As transportation technologies improved and increased, land could be developed further and further away from the core. Developers bought large tracks of previously undeveloped land and built homes that were to be served by transit. In San Francisco, the neighborhoods west and south of downtown – Pacific Heights, The Filmore, The Mission, Potrero Hill, The Richmond, The Sunset, and West Portal – were developed in this manner. This pattern of development was first made possible by the omnibus, a horse-drawn carriage either on wheels or tracks, then the cable car, and eventually the streetcar.

"The first streetcar line opened in 1888 in Richmond, Virginia. Frank Sprague, an assistant to Thomas Edison, invented the electric traction motor that was used to power the streetcars."¹ Soon after 1888, cities all over the world were quickly laying miles of tracks for streetcars. Many cities transformed from rural farm communities to large towns such as Los Angeles almost overnight due to the streetcar. These streetcars were, and still are, seen in most cities all over the world. But today, in America, most of the tracks and trains are long gone. Recently, however, there has been a very expensive "back to rail" movement.

The streetcar is environmentally very clean and energy-efficient. Because it uses electrical power from overhead power lines there is no burning of fossil fuels, thus there is no exhaust. Frequently, passengers enjoy riding streetcars much more than buses because they provide a smoother, quieter ride.

The American streetcar almost disappeared from most U.S. cities, except in the large eastern cities that had heavy rail investments, such as the elevated subway in Chicago or the subway system in New York,

Boston, and Philadelphia. Many cities that once had extensive networks are spending millions and, in the case of Los Angeles, billions of dollars to build new streetcar and subway systems. Rights of ways are being purchased and new light rail vehicles are appearing once again on American streets.

By the 1920's, American streetcar networks had reached the pinnacle of success. Downtown and central business districts were well served by streetcar lines. "Market Street in San Francisco had four tracks, two for the Municipal Railway and two for the Market Street Railway. Downtown was a busy and dense area where people from all over would ride the streetcar to recreate or work."² Movie houses, theaters, retail shops, financial institutions, and workplaces were all downtown all served by streetcar lines. A typical downtown scene would have hundreds of people moving from the streetcar to their destinations and back.

In the 1920's, new residential streetcar suburbs were finished or in planning. With the new fast transit service offered by the streetcar, those who could afford to leave oftentimes too crowded, expensive, loud,



Commuters after work in downtown San Francisco crowd onto the historic F-Line streetcar that runs along Market Street.

and dirty downtown residences could move to the new and cheaper residential areas that could not be served quickly by cable car or omnibus. "The "A" line from the San Francisco Municipal Railway which opened on December 28, 1912 ran from downtown Market Street west on Geary Boulevard to 10th Avenue."³ The area served by the "A" line to the west of downtown and the Western Addition had been nothing more than a few cemeteries and sand dunes years before. Soon the area was named the Richmond and was a booming residential neighborhood. Without the streetcar such development would have not been possible. The area was too far from downtown workplaces to be served by the slower cable cars, but the faster streetcars allowed for longer commutes.

At the same time as the streetcar boom, the private automobile was quickly gaining popularity. "By 1916, there were over 2 million cars on American roads and by 1920 the number reached 23 million. The automobile first appeared in the United States in the 1890s as a luxury vehicle for the rich."⁴ However, Henry Ford and his Model T, which was priced in the hundreds instead of the thousands, allowed many working Americans to buy a car. The Model T could be priced so low compared to the other cars because Ford used revolutionary assembly line manufacturing techniques that mass-produced autos and lowered prices.

With the easy availability of the automobile, new suburbs were created. New roads were built that extended cities further and passed up the residential streetcar neighborhoods. Cities were becoming larger and more spread out. New, previously undeveloped land that could be served quickly only by car were the new suburbs. What had happened with streetcars and city development was happening with cars. Developers were quickly buying the previously undesirable land and building it into residential suburbs.

This new love for cars competed directly with the streetcar. People no longer had to commute with others in a perceived

small uncomfortable train; they could now buy their own car and be completely free from the train. As a result public transit ridership decreased; people were buying cars and not riding the streetcars. Transit companies were faced with a financial crisis. Should they raise fares to offset the lower ridership and upset those that still used the system or do they keep fares the same and accept revenue losses or do they try to fight the auto competition and win back riders? Transit companies did whatever they could to remain afloat. In some instances local government intervened and provided subsidies and assumed control and in other instances companies went broke.

The antagonists to the transit industry were the auto and oil industries. Gas prices were extremely low (about 13 cents in 1930) and new roads and parkways were being built quickly. The relative affordability of the auto enhanced the appeal of the private auto and further weakened the transit companies. In 1936 the Golden Gate Bridge and in 1937 the Bay Bridge opened in San Francisco. These two bridges opened and sped development of land east and north of San Francisco to residential development served by the car.

In 1929 the stock market crashed and the Great Depression began. Millions of Americans were unemployed and hungry, giving rise to great urban problems. Before the market crash, transit companies were competing and losing riders; the Depression was the final blow to many streetcar lines. Americans were not spending their hard-earned money to ride transit. However, the auto remained in the hearts of suffering Americans. People who could not afford homes would sleep in their cars, driving from city to city while looking for work. In John Steinbeck's "Grapes Of Wrath", he describes the plight of farmers in drought-ridden Oklahoma and Texas driving west to California looking for work during the Depression. This lifestyle was a reality for many.

The Depression lasted through the 1930s up to America's involvement in World War II. The war effort was a huge infusion of capital into the American economy. Jobs were created and people again were working. The transit companies that were still

Many cities that once had extensive networks are spending millions and in the case of Los Angeles, billions of dollars to build new streetcar and subway systems.

around began to gain ridership. Employees were spending their money to ride public transit to go to work and times were good again.

After World War II America was faced with a serious housing shortage. The past twenty years had experienced little residential development due to the financial crisis. With millions of American soldiers returning to home, the U.S. government created Federal Housing Administration and Veterans Administration housing loans. These loans were to be used to help millions of Americans by new homes. Many of the homes that were sold were located in the suburbs. This new residential location preference of many Americans did not have nor could support public transit. As a result, a large majority of these new suburban residents were completely dependent on the private automobile for their transportation. The governmental support for suburban residency allowed many Americans to leave the city that put a huge financial burden on transit companies.

In 1933 the career of Roy Fitzgerald and his brothers made a huge impact on streetcar services. "The Fitzgeralds had been operating an inter-city bus company from Chicago to Paducah, Kentucky when they were persuaded by a General Motors (GM) salesman to purchase a struggling transit company in Galesburg, Illinois."⁵ GM had been trying unsuccessfully for years to convince

transit companies to convert to buses over rails and felt they needed a purportedly independent bus operator to handle the conversions. The salesman said GM would be happy to help the Fitzgerald's financially under the condition that Fitzgerald convert the Galesburg transit system from streetcar to GM buses. This was the first of many cities that fell victim to their relationship.

Fitzgerald and GM's checkbook proceeded to victimize East St. Louis and Joliet, Illinois, then moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma; Jackson, Michigan; Montgomery, Alabama; Beaumont and Port Arthur, Texas; and Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Fitzgerald had purchased all these companies and converted every single one of them from streetcars to buses.

At this point Fitzgerald and General Motors had created a prolific company. In 1936 Roy and GM executives decided to form National City Lines and go public, but nobody was interested and Roy was only able to raise 1.9 million in public stock. Needing more money, GM met with Greyhound and Firestone executives and worked out contractual agreements. "This relationship was a violation of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act which prohibits companies from joining together to restrain or sabotage competition. The conspirators invested 10 million dollars in National City Lines and continued their business."⁶

In 1937, they wanted to expand to western states and needed another investor. Standard Oil, Phillips 66, and Mack Truck joined in the conspiracy under the agreements that National City Lines had to buy 42.5 percent of their buses from Mack Truck and 42.5 percent from General Motors (another Sherman violation). Also under agreement was the requirement that all buses, tires, and petroleum products be purchased from the conspirators, that any new transit company Roy Firestone bought must use their products.

"National City Lines moved west and bought the rights to and converted transit systems in Butte, Montana; Fresno, Oakland, Stockton, and San Jose, California; Ports-

mouth and Canton, Ohio; Terre Haute, Indiana; and St. Louis, Missouri."⁷ The companies financed everything and did all they could to hide their involvement. Companies used fake names and hid employees that were involved. National City Lines used the alias American City Lines and Pacific City Lines which was used to purchase Glendale, Pasadena, and Long Beach and convert them from rail to buses.

In "1941 the cities of Sacramento, California; Salt Lake City, Utah; Portland, Oregon; Tampa, Florida; Mobile, Alabama; Baltimore, Maryland; El Paso, Texas; and Spokane, Washington were all taken over."⁸

By 1944 most investors left and were taken to court. In 1949 at a federal court in Chicago after more than a month of deliberations, a jury convicted all the corporations and several executives involved of criminal antitrust violations for their part in the demise of street cars; their convictions were upheld on appeal. What is sad to note, however, were the fines paid. U.S. District Judge William J. Campbell sentenced the guilty corporations to pay fines of \$5,000 each and the guilty individuals to pay \$1!!!

The National City Lines conspiracy deeply affected streetcars and streetcar companies. People did not like to ride buses as much as they enjoyed rail. The buses were loud, dirty, and uncomfortable. As more lines were converted, transit agencies lost more passengers. Although San Francisco was not bought, there were many lines converted from rail to buses. The first streetcar line in the city, the "A" line, was converted along with many others. Those that were not converted were spared by private right-of-ways that were too costly to deal with."⁹ The current Muni Metro or streetcar lines, the J, K, L, M, and N, all had these right-of-ways that spared their demise.

National City Lines drove the stake into the heart of struggling transit companies. Already under threat from the popu-

larity of the private automobile and the financial crisis of the Great Depression, streetcar systems were surviving. When National City Lines offered thousands and millions of dollars to struggling transit companies, transit officials took the money and sold their systems.

"The effect of this conspiracy greatly affected urban areas. The buses that replaced the streetcar were never as popular as the streetcars and transit ridership dropped."¹⁰ Conversely, the ownership of the automobile continued to skyrocket and American cities and roads became more congested than before. Air quality in these urban areas suffered with the Los Angeles area becoming the poster boy of the effects of the automobile and smog. The quality of life without the great vast networks of streetcars is not as good and people are starting to realize this. San Jose and Sacramento within the past ten years have invested millions in a streetcar network. Los Angeles is currently spending billions to build streetcar and subway lines.

Streetcars and public transit are a great service to dense urban areas because they can move many people quickly and efficiently. Unfortunately the suburban sprawl that has become increasingly more and more common cannot be served by mass transit well. This land use development then must rely on the private automobile and perpetuate the problems caused by the auto.

Cities are better places to live when transit systems are in place. This is true especially when the systems are clean and are efficient electric rails. These systems that were once a part of most cities are making a comeback as evidenced by cities such as Portland, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Jose, Los Angeles, and San Diego. Although, this comeback is extremely expensive and does not have the number of passengers needed to warrant such investments, the infrastructure and capabilities are worth every penny in the long run.

Notes

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- 2 Stindt, Fred A.: "San Francisco Century Of Street Cars." Fred A. Stindt: Kelseyville, 1990
- 3 *ibid.*
- 4 Hanson, Susan: "The Geography of Urban Transportation." New York: The Guilford Press, 1995
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Geriatric Community Health Centers

Amy Schaible

As the American population continues to age, the issue of long-term health care for the elderly will become an ever-important topic in our government and our lives. This paper addresses the medical accommodations which will be required for an aging population and what one organization, OnLok SeniorHealth Program, is attempting to do to meet the rising demands for effective and affordable health care for older individuals. This paper is dedicated to the older person residing in all of us.

I will never forget Mrs. Cora Jackson, nor her daughter Jackie. Their lives, within the arena of our country's current health system, will trouble me for years to come. In Laurie Abraham's book "Mama Might Be Better Off Dead," an old, sick woman is the nerve center of the narrative; the story's weaving account connects trial after trial of hurdling barriers to adequate health care. For me, however, the pulse of the book stirs something I hold deep in my heart: respectful concern for the quality of life our nation's elderly population.

Through my volunteer work at the 30th Street OnLok Senior Center, I have observed a dramatic contrast in the provision and application of health care at this facility compared to the care accessed by Mrs. Cora Jackson. For example, Mr. Smith (pseudonym) is a 76-year-old diabetic. Two years ago, after the amputation of his right leg, he enrolled in On Lok's SeniorHealth program. To join the plan requires that Mr. Smith be over 55 years of age, have state certification that he is eligible for nursing home care, and live in San Francisco.

Since he has Medicare and Medical, there is no out-of-pocket cost to Mr. Smith; moreover, while at On Lok SeniorHealth, he continues to receive his Social Security and SSI checks. Therefore, Mr. Smith can live in his own apartment and still have access to

physicians specializing in the care of the elderly, nurses, home care, social workers, physical therapists, drivers, dieticians and recreational therapists.

The comprehensive services available to Mr. Smith are primary medical and specialty care as needed such as cardiology and neurology, nursing care, inpatient and outpatient care, pharmacy, physical therapies, home health and personal care, social services, meals as necessary, transportation and emergency medical transport, acute hospital and nursing home care, and medical specialists such as dentistry, optometry, podiatry, and psychiatry.⁰

I have witnessed Mr. Smith and other participants at this health center easily access these services from dedicated and efficient professionals. However, in recalling Mrs. Jackson's experiences accessing health care, I am hard-pressed to find any similarities.

Medicare spent \$120,000 for hospital care during the last six months of Cora Jackson's life.¹ Reimbursement for Mr. Smith's health services, meals, medications, and transportation is a capitated \$2,100 per month (Flores-Williams, 1994). Even a math simpleton such as myself can calculate that the \$120,000 spent on six months of acute care hospitalization and institutionalization,



Gloria Schumacher, a volunteer at the San Francisco Senior Center at Aquatic Park, serves approximately 60 meals provided by the Salvation Army to fellow senior citizens up to five days per week.

could have paid for nearly five years of quality long-term care.

For many Americans, the question of affordable, quality health care is dubious at best. For all Americans, the event of aging (whether we admit it or not) is real. Hence,

Is it possible that the community-based health center for the elderly is what this nation needs in order to provide for the challenges of a demographic trend?

the probability of affordable, quality health care in old age poses a real problem.

The United States has experienced a profound increase in the proportion of older persons relative to the total population. There are 31.2 million older adults, 12.6% of the population, and this number is projected to increase to 66 million by the year 2030, 21.8% of the population. The most dramatic increases are occurring in the population of individuals 85 years and older, who by the year 2040 will number approximately 12.25 million.²

Consistent with these demographic trends, American society is approaching a long term care financing and service delivery crisis. In the short term, more than 8 million Americans aged 65 and older are expected to need some form of long term care by the turn of the century.³

In light of this information, is it possible that the community-based health center for the elderly is what this nation needs in order to provide for the challenges of a demographic trend? If so, then how did a program such as the On Lok program start? What are its origins and how did it evolve? Can other cities implement service programs similar to On Lok SeniorHealth?

With these questions in mind, I began my research.

Research Approach

Joyce A. Post is a librarian at the Philadelphia Geriatric Center and writes a column called "Internet Resources on Aging." Appendix A has a table of Internet resources

that Post (1996a) considers the top ten sites on aging. Taking into account that there are over 800 Internet sites on aging, this is no small feat. Appendix B includes a table that lists sites for data sets and statistics, and as Post comments, "...a recent report of the Task Force on Aging Research recommends that more effort be made to promote the use of government data files (1996b).

National Historical Background

The Older Americans Act was passed by the U.S. Congress in 1965. The Act brought the special needs and concerns of older adults to national policy level. Some of its objectives include the best possible physical and mental health, full restorative services for those requiring institutional care, and efficient community services. The Older Americans Act (OAA) also established state Units of Aging. In 1973, Area Agencies on Aging were created to implement local programs. These programs are defined in Title III (Grants for State and Community Programs). And, from this action, a national aging network emerged⁴.

State Historical Background

In 1989, a conceptual model of a community-based system of care (CBSC) was developed by the California Department of Aging. It recognized the interdependence of community-based long term care, the traditional system of basic services for older persons, and the existing system for persons in long-term care institutions. The model recognizes the emphasis of the OAA to target persons with special needs, particularly low income minority older persons. It also recognizes California's economic, geographic, and ethnic diversity, and allows local communities to develop a CBSC unique to their community.⁵

History and Evolution of On Lok SeniorHealth

The Development of the Program of All-inclusive Care for Elderly Adults (PACE):

In the past 10-15 years, only a small number of long-term care delivery and financing innovations have emerged from either private or public sectors.⁶ Among the most promising is PACE. PACE is the only program that integrates acute and long-term care service delivery and finance.⁷

One can trace the beginnings of the PACE model of community-based long-term care to the beginnings of On Lok. In 1971, Marie-Louise Ansak and community leaders, believing that day health and social services could enable their neighborhood's frail elderly to delay or even avoid nursing home placement, collaborated to develop a program for the frail elderly in Chinatown and North Beach. Grant funding from the Administration on Aging and the State of California Department of Health Services initiated On Lok's freestanding community adult day health center, which was the beginning of the development of the PACE model.⁸

In 1974, On Lok became the first program in the state to receive Medicaid reimbursement for adult day health services. In 1975, On Lok added a social day care center and expanded in-home care, home-delivered meals and housing assistance. Hospital and skilled nursing facility services became part of On Lok's health care package in 1980.⁹

Cost of care was 15% less for On Lok participants compared with the traditional fee-for-service care system. But there was no simple way to finance such a system. However, federal legislation in 1983 allowed On Lok to test a new financing system based on a fixed monthly per-person reimbursement from Medicare, Medi-Cal. In 1986, On Lok successfully completed tests of its service delivery and capitated funding model and was granted continuing Medicare and Medi-Cal waivers through federal legislation (Public Law 99-509). On Lok has had no cost overruns and each year has placed 5% of operational revenues in a risk reserve fund.¹⁰

In 1987, funding from the Robert Wood Johnson and Hartford Foundations allowed

On Lok to provide technical assistance to organizations across the country interested in replicating the On Lok model. On Lok chose six sites to launch the replication, using selection criteria that assured diversity in provider type such as community versus institutional setting, state environment and participants' ethnic background. By 1990, the first-time replication sites of the On Lok model received waivers from the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) and each PACE site assumed increasing risk under Medicare and Medicaid capitation financing over 3 years.¹¹

The first and largest PACE organization, On Lok, now serves about 440 enrollees through four centers in San Francisco. The number of PACE providers has grown steadily since 1990. As of December 1995, PACE was fully operational with both Medicare and Medicaid capitation in 11 cities. Programs in eight other cities had launched PACE with Medicaid-only capitation, as a prelude to obtaining dual waivers, and another 31 organizations had begun exploring the feasibility of developing this model.¹²

Today, On Lok is a nationally recognized model of community-based long-term care and is the prototype for PACE. There are now 60 sites in 40 states replicating the PACE model of care.¹³

The PACE method of financing is prepaid, capitated financing from Medicare, Medicaid and private individuals. The provider is at full risk for covered services. The payers are Medicare and Medicaid. It now becomes apparent to me that our government's effort to contain the costs of health care and the impact of the 1996 welfare overhaul may jeopardize the access to service of PACE organizations nationwide. When federally-mandated welfare reform goes into effect this summer, I predict that budget cuts and funding restrictions may hamper any new strategies concerning the expansion and operation of geriatric community-based health centers.

There are some questions that still need to be addressed regarding the care of our

elderly. Is a government-financed program required in order to ensure adequate long term care for our nation's population? Can we borrow from the experience in the Canadian provinces of Manitoba and British Columbia, where long-term care is part of the basic health care entitlement regardless of age or income?¹⁴ Is a national health insurance program the most viable way to secure long term care?

Because I cannot be totally removed from the idealistic element of myself, I confess to a subjective admiration of the PACE program model. The government already funds these programs via Medicare and Medicaid. I advocate that universal coverage for preventive, acute, and long-term

service through a public insurance program is a feasible approach to access the quality of health care to which our elders deserve. Indeed, through the pooling of funds in existing public programs and with new federal revenues raised through progressive taxation, there may exist a ray of hope for the PACE organizations.

It was a practical, down-to-earth person who said, "You have to pay the price of old age if you want to live a long time." For those of us planning to live a long and healthy life, we would do well to give a nod to Mrs. Cora Jackson, to quality long-term health care, and to a national insurance health plan that assures universal coverage.

Notes

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- ³ Travis & McAuley, 1994
- ⁴ San Francisco Coalition on Aging (SFCOA), 1994
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ Somers & Livengood, 1992
- ⁷ Weiner, 1994
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ On Lok, 1997
- ¹⁰ Vladeck & Clauser, 1993
- ¹¹ Kane & Miller, 1992
- ¹² Eng, Pedulla, Eleazer, McCann & Fox, 1997
- ¹³ On Lok, Inc. 1997
- ¹⁴ Kane & Kane, 1985

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Appendix A: Internet Resources on Aging — Top Ten Web Sites

Maine Bureau of Elder and Adult Services

<http://www.state.me.us/beas/dhsbeas.htm>

Nebraska Agelink

<http://age1.ndoa.state.ne.us>

Michigan Aging Services System

<http://mass.iog.wayne.edu>

Directory of Web and Gopher Aging Sites

<http://www.aoa.dhhs.gov/aoa/webres/craig.htm>

Mid-Florida Area Agency on Aging

<http://www.mfaaa.org>

GoldenAge.Net

<http://elo.mediasrv.swt.edu/goldenage/script.htm>

LTC Today

<http://www.longtermcaretoday.com>

Seniors on the Net: Home Pages of Cyber Citizen that Rock

<http://elo.mediasrv.swt.edu/goldenage/seniors.htm>

The ALZHEIMER'S Page

<http://www.biostat.wustl.edu/ALZHEIMER>

ALZHEIMER e-mail discussion group

ALZHEIMER@WUBIOS.WUSTL.EDU

Appendix B: Internet Resources on Aging — Data Sets and Statistics

Gerontological Society of America

<http://www.geron.org>

Demography of Aging Centers

<http://www.psc.isa.umich.edu/aging/otheraging.html>

U.S. Mortality Estimates and Projections

<http://arrow.qal.berkeley.edu/data/mortality>

National Long Term Care Survey

<http://cds.duke.edu/nltcs/nltcs.html>

Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics

<http://www.census.gov/population/www/age.html>

"The Elderly Population"

<http://www.census.gov/population/pop-profile/elderpop.html>

Population Projections

<http://www.census.gov/population/projection-extract/respop1.html>

National Center of Health Statistics

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchswww/nchshome.htm>

"Profile of Older Americans: 1995"

<http://www.aoa.dhhs.gov/aoa/pages/profil95.html>

Online Statistical Information on the Aging

<http://www.aoa.dhhs.gov/aoa/stats/statlink.html>

National Aging Information Center

<http://www2.ageinfo.org/naicweb/drsdb.html>

Statistical Information on Older Americans

<http://www2.ageinfo.org/naicweb/data.html>

Amy Schaible is a graduate student at San Francisco State University. Long committed to improving care for the elderly; she is also an accomplished poet.

Managed Care and the HMO

Ronald A. Sims

A new phenomena has overtaken the health care industry called "managed care." HMOs (Health Maintenance Organizations), who often supply insurance and services to patients, have come under fire by both those in and out of the medical community. With so many Americans switching to managed care programs, it is vital to get a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics behind "managed care programs," from their effectiveness to ulterior options. Urban Studies major Ronald Sims provides us with a brief but extensive look into these issues.

Introduction

In just a few years, the economic structure of medicine has been turned upside-down. The engine driving this revolution is 'managed care', which requires each patient to have his or her own "gatekeeper" doctor who decides what services – surgery, visits to a specialist, treatments or tests, their health plan will pay for. Gatekeeper doctors follow rules laid down by the health maintenance organization (HMO), often a health insurance company. Health Maintenance Organizations have been rapidly growing in the United States throughout the 1990s. HMOs enroll a group of participants who pay a monthly fee. The HMO then agrees to provide any necessary health care services through its contracts with numerous physicians and hospitals.

"More than 50 percent of the employed insured population is enrolled in a managed-care organization."⁰ Most physicians are now linked together in groups, either associated with a hospital or independent. They have done this in order to bargain with giant insurance companies. Hospitals look for the most money they can get for each day of in-hospital care, and many are merging with other hospitals to create medical giants able to better bargain with the insurance industry.

With such a large number of people moving from a traditional fee for service where the insurance would pay for each service provided to a capitated set fee for all services provided by the managed care program, many problems have arisen. The following issues are examples of some of the key problems with managed care.

Quality of Care

Many worry that as more patients are drawn into HMOs and other managed care plans, financial factors will increasingly influence doctors' clinical decisions. Consumer advocates worry that doctors will deny patients needed services so the doctors can keep their cost in line with an annual budget. The New England Journal of Medicine summarized these concerns in an editorial. "Managed-care plans involve an inherent conflict of interest. On one hand, they pledge to take care of their enrollees, but on the other, their financial success depends on doing as little for them as possible."¹ Many HMOs pay doctors a flat monthly fee to provide all the care a patient needs. These payments often cover the cost of services provided by specialists and even hospitals. In addition, some HMOs pay bonuses to doctors who help keep cost under control with techniques like limiting tests and procedures, reducing hospital admis-

sions, and curbing referrals to specialist.² Alternately, some HMOs withhold a portion of the doctors' pay and then distribute it at the end of the year if they have met certain goals for spending, productivity and performance.³

Profit vs. Non-profit

The majority of all people enrolled in HMOs are in plans run by for-profit companies. Some of these HMOs are run by large well established insurance firms, such as Prudential and Aetna while others are newer, independent companies like U.S. Healthcare, based in Pennsylvania or FHP Inc., based in California. Together, they have eclipsed the older nonprofit groups like Kaiser Foundation of California that pioneered the creation of HMOs by underpricing them and often providing extra services like longer office hours.

Doctor groups and their patient list, medical laboratories, and other patient-care services, have totaled \$20 billion in 1995, up from just \$6 billion in 1992.⁴ Combined with the \$22 billion in pharmaceutical deals, health care mergers surpassed in value those of any other industry for 1994, according to the Securities Data Company, a research firm in Newark.⁵ As they take over a larger share of insured patients, the for profit HMOs are forcing the rest of the system to emulate their practices, with private doctors and nonprofit hospitals joining new groups researching for ways to market their services and cut cost. As HMO's and medical groups swallow each other, fewer, larger systems are taking over the market. The object is to gain the best position for signing up insured patients. No one is chasing after the uninsured whose plight may actually be worsening as financially strapped hospitals cut back on charity care.

Loss of Safety Net Providers

Alameda County is one of thirteen California counties converting to a managed care version of Medi-Cal. Medi-Cal is a state health care program for Californians who

are needy, aged, blind, or disabled. Traditional Medi-Cal programs will be phased out. Eventually Medi-Cal recipients will have to join one of the two competing health plans. The local Initiative (mainly public hospitals and clinics) or the state approved private HMO. Medi-Cal patients are a vital source of income for public health care providers, and losing them could mean certain death to the institution. "Even though most of the people who come to Highland are not covered by Medi-Cal, it is the income from Medi-Cal patients that helps subsidize the cost of treating the uninsured."⁶ Some public hospitals such as Highland, in Oakland, receive federal money in the form of disproportionate share, or SB855, funds. This money, which is intended to sustain hospitals who serve mostly indigent patients comes to about \$35 million a year for the state of California. Alameda County has made a number of moves to cut cost, such as hiring freezes, reducing overtime and the use of temporary nurses. "Most poor people, unless they're mothers, don't get Medi-Cal. The only place they can come is the community clinics or the county hospital."⁷

Objectives

In the United States 150 million people have signed up for HMOs or other managed care plans. These patients now account for 40 percent of the \$1 trillion spent annually

In the United States 150 million people have signed up for HMOs or other managed care plans. These patients now account for 40 percent of the \$1 trillion spent annually on health care.

on health care (Parade). The following objectives are designed to focus on changes needed in the managed care system in order for it to viably address current issues such as quality of care, Profit vs. Non Profit, and loss of safety net providers.

1. Prohibit HMO's from making a specific payment to a doctor or a physician

group as an inducement to reduce or limit necessary service to a patient.

Necessary treatments should be discussed and implemented based solely on the judgment of the doctor and the patient without any outside financial incentives. The HMO annual budget should include cost of all necessary treatment. This may entail a non subjective third party cost/benefit analysis. The goal would be to include cost for all treatment deemed necessary, including hospital treatment, doctor consultation and prescriptions in overall annual budget.

2. Administrative and management costs should be reduced. Reducing the amount of monies paid to the HMO administration and management, and funneling those monies into the annual medical budget would increase quantity of services.

3. Increase patients access to treatment information. Denying a patient information about a treatment is unethical. All treatment options should be discussed with the patient even if that treatment is not offered by that HMO.

4. Require doctors to carry insurance limiting the amount of money they can lose on any one HMO patient. Otherwise, the doctors might have a financial incentive to skimp on care.

5. Measures to ensure that consolidation by hospitals or doctors does not amount to the illegal infringement of competition. Companies like Columbia (A large for profit corporation) should not be allowed to use their large amounts of capitol to buy non-profit organizations and therefore large sections of the market. Legislation may be needed to ensure against an oligarchy of providers dictating health care premiums.

6. Increase levels of patient awareness. Consumers should be able to know what financial incentives their doctors are working under.

7. Increase subsidies to reduce the impact of Medi-Cal's transformation into managed care for poor public hospitals and private hospitals serving large numbers of patients who are uninsured or on Medi-Cal.

Loss of these safety net institutions could result in less access to health care for the poor.

8. Increase HMO's responsibility to charity care. While HMOs are obtaining a sizable share of the market, greater public responsibility should be given to them to ensure the needs of the uninsured are realized.

9. Regulation to make sure that adequate medical care would remain available in depressed neighborhoods. In the long term the market should provide the right number of beds to the right number of patients.

10. Provide Incentives for Medi-Cal patients to stay with public hospitals.

Public hospitals have more experience with the indigent and immigrants as well as established drug and alcohol programs.

Alternatives

There are many options available considering America's health care situation. The past decade has proven that managed care is a key option to the traditional "fee for service" system. While managed care has been hailed as a successful market driven reform, it is important to analyze other options that have been suggested.

1) The Clinton Universal Health Care Act

In 1994 the Clinton administration proposed a universal health plan. Enrollment would be based on citizenship, offering a comprehensive benefit package, community ratings and open enrollment. Three types of plans would be offered. One type would be having a health maintenance organization providing all services to subscribers. A second would be a traditional fee for service system. The third alternative would be a hybrid or combination plan. In the private sector employers would pay 80% of the premiums and employees would pay the difference between cost of the plan selected and employer contribution. In the public sector

the government would offer subsidies for small business and the unemployed / low income. Medicaid programs would be folded in (cease to exist), but Medicare would remain. A regional alliance would negotiate contracts with plans to provide mandated benefits, collect premiums, enroll subscribers, pay plans and monitor to ensure accountability. Clinton's plan was based on the idea of market competition to hold down cost using capitated payments and capped premium increases. Consumers would be able to choose a plan based on price. Clinton's plan also offered global caps for payments to plans, premiums, and premium increases. The plan offered structured competition by prohibiting cherry-picking (picking only the healthiest people), reducing benefits, offering open enrollment, standardized benefits, community premiums and risk adjusted payments. "Individuals who are self employed could purchase private coverage or participate in the publicly sponsored purchasing pool. Tax deductions for the self employed would be increased from 25% to 100%."⁸

Benefits

- Increases health care access to citizens
In 1995 18.7% of Americans were uninsured, 84% of these uninsured consisted of working families or dependents of workers.
- Based on the idea of Market Competition, consumers would be able to choose from which plan/provider they would like.
- Offered structured competition
The Plan prohibited cherry picking (picking the most healthy), reducing benefits, offered open enrollment, standardized benefits, community premiums and risk adjusted payments.

Costs

- No provisions for immigrants
- Plan was vague about offering health services to illegal/legal immigrants.

- Not Politically Viable
- Plan created more government and did not have bipartisan support or the support of the market.

2) Single Payer

Around the same time the Clinton proposal was being offered, California was forming legislation to offer a single payer plan (Prop.186). This plan offered full benefits to California residents. An expert advisory board would be established to set up guidelines for all care reasonable and necessary for diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of illness for the provider to follow. The budget would consist of Californian's current health care spending including current Federal, State and Local government programs, employer contributions, individual contributions, and an added cigarette tax of \$1 per pack. A global budget would be set for the system as a whole, each region and health facilities.

Maximum administrative cost would be 4% and earmarked accounts would be set for prevention, innovation, 1% capitol allocation, displaced worker retraining, and a reserve fund.⁹ Cost control would come from the elimination of administrative and other waste, negotiated fees and prices, global budgeting and devolution of specialized services. The plan would be administered regionally by an elected health commissioner. The Commissioner would be advised by appointed Medical Policy Advisory Board and would have independent consumer oversight.

Benefits

- Would increase health care access to residents.
- All residents would be eligible.
- Would control health care cost.
- Plan would eliminate administrative and other waste, negotiate fees and prices, have global budgeting, and would regionalize specialized services.

Costs

- Plan would create government control over Health market. Under times of economic stress the government has shown its willingness to cut social and health services. The plan would be run by the same state government charged with administering other much criticized services such as education and welfare services.
- Plan would add significantly to the labor cost of firms currently not offering health insurance.
- Would force every business to offer insurance.
- Would potentially exclude necessary medical treatments to non residents.
- Did not have the support of the medical industry or residents of California.

3) MSA-(Medical Savings Accounts)

MSAs were approved for a limited test in 1996. MSAs are used in conjunction with high deductible insurance. Funds may be used to cover medical expenses including mental health, vision, and dental care- tax-free. MSAs are offered by several firms, including Merrill Lynch, Time Insurance, and Wells Fargo. Currently the MSA option is restricted to a small group of self-employed, uninsured and small business people and 390,000 Medicare recipients.¹⁰

Benefits

- Would allow consumers freedom to choose health care providers. With MSAs, consumers would be allowed to choose where and when his/her medical dollar would be spent.
- Could increase the role of doctor autonomy.

By supporting a more traditional fee for service systems. Choosing an MSA would allow the consumer to visit doctors not in the HMO system.

Costs

- Would not increase access to uninsured.
- Would only benefit people who were employed, or on Medicare.

Recommendations

I believe a market driven health reform like the Clinton Universal Health care act would be the best alternative to the status quo. This would act to increase access to all citizens, while not stifling competition or technology.

In an interview with Debbie LeVeen, an Urban Health Policy Professor at San Francisco State University, she stated that the growing dissatisfaction the middle class has with managed care may lead to a consumer revolt that could lead to a universal health plan. She believes the past failure of such measures was due to a lack of an effective campaign. America will have to decide how much to spend on health care and tough decisions will have to be made. I believe the consumer should have the right to choose between providers. Piecemeal changes within the system are a step in the right direction, but not enough. In 1996, Clinton signed into law the Health Coverage Availability and Affordability Act. The new law ensures the portability of health benefits even for those with pre-existing conditions, increases tax deductions for the self employed, and offsets the expense by phasing out the interest deduction for corporate-owned life insurance loans. Also Clinton demanded the expansion of Medicaid to include all children.

A universal plan would take health care out of the hand of the insurance companies, and give some autonomy back to the doctors. Public hospitals would no longer be in danger of losing important subsidies, and a greater number of people would have access to care. A universal

system would create more government "The Clinton Plan would have created 59 new federal programs, expand 20 others, impose 79 new federal mandates and make major changes in the health code."¹¹ Universal Health care changes should come by changing the way that health care is financed, not delivered, which is an important aspect in the health care debate.

The managed care system is far from perfect. New pressures are leading to changes as state legislatures and Congress consider laws to regulate HMO practices. At the same time, HMO trade groups are pushing for industry wide care standards. It seems at this time universal health care is unlikely, however, health advocates will continue to fight for health care reform.

Notes

- ⁰ Davis, 1994
- ¹ Ibid
- ² Ibid
- ³ Ibid
- ⁴ Eckholm, 1994
- ⁵ Ibid
- ⁶ Slater, 1995
- ⁷ Ibid
- ⁸ Foxalert, 1996
- ⁹ Farley & Lingappa, 1995
- ¹⁰ Holleran, 1997
- ¹¹ Skocpol, 1995

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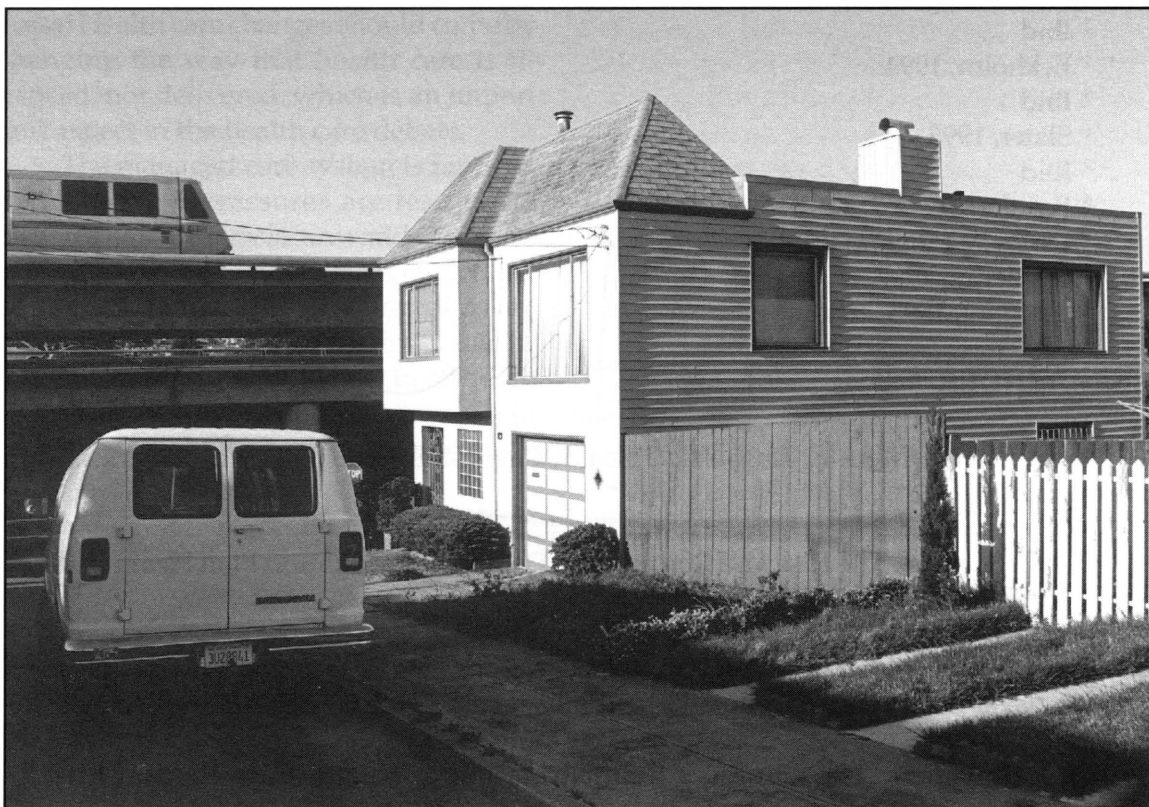
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Ronald Sims in a senior in the Urban Studies program and his interests are in health care policy.



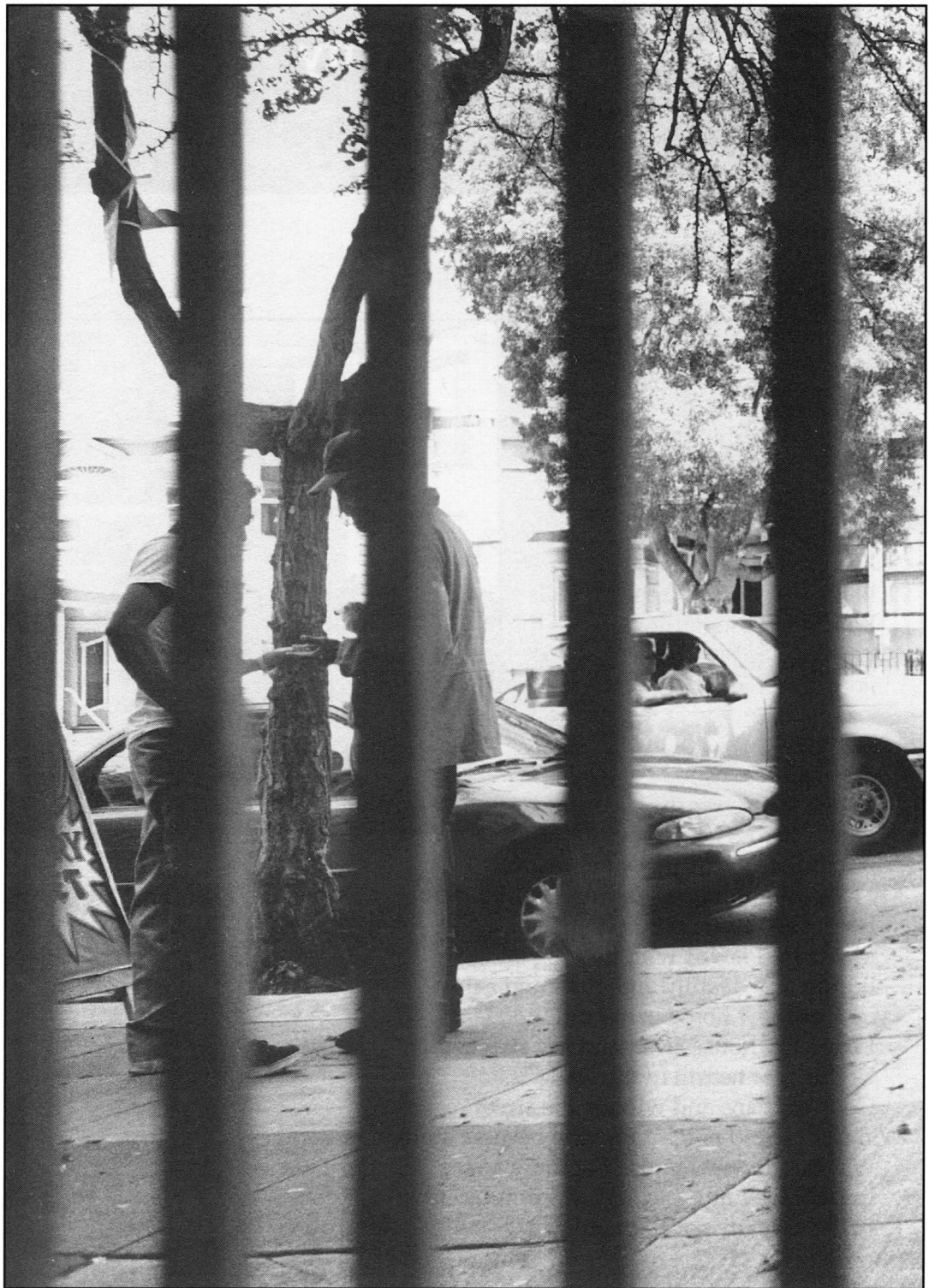
Daly City, California

On Moving to Daly City

Scott McMillin

My old home was dusty and mildewy
Full of hayfevers and colds
Breezes came through the walls
Windows to look three feet to the house next door
My new home is big and bright
Sunny and light in garden and house
Fireplace and breakfast nook
Dining room and living room
My old neighborhood was old and alive
Dealers on the corner
Artists across the street
Burritos and bars just steps away
My new neighborhood is young and dead
Everyone is pale skinned
Manicured lawns with nothing amiss
Boring and deathly and quiet and safe
I want my new home in my old 'hood
I want my house clean and my streets dirty
Goddess of hearth in the walls
Gods of chaos and wine in the street
Without my old neighborhood I become stodgy
Without my new house I become angry
In Daly City my spirit grows complacent
In the City my spirit grew.

Scott McMillin will receive his Masters in Economics (Applied) in May of 1998.



A view of Masonic Street in San Francisco's Haight Ashbury neighborhood on a Saturday afternoon.

can you tell me how ta get ta where the air is sweet

Ahimsa Timoteo Bodhrán

*for the former residents of the former Haight Street projects
from a former neighbor*

from	lived	c	my
my	in	other	window
window	or	windows	with
with	been	with	the
the	ta	bars	bars
bars		on	on
on	i'll	em	it
it	admit		
		i	i
I	people	can	can
can	go	c	c
hear	by	wall	my
but		chipped	clipped
cannot	cars	n	piece
c	honk	grey	of
			sky
the	kids	risin	
street	laugh	high	n
		ta	it
this	scream	a	do
street		clipped	b
round	from	piece	mine
the	my	of	
corner	window	sky	even
from	with		tho
the	the	often	it
projects	bars	blue	do
	on	when	
buildings	it	not	
i		raining	
have	i		got
never	can	from	bars

© 2/15/94 - 8/24/97 Ahimsa Timoteo Bodhran

Ahimsa Timoteo Bodhran's work has also appeared in *XY FILES*, *maganda*, *Evergreen Chronicles*, *Response*, *Masque*, *Coming of Age*, *Expressions*, *two girls review*, and *Haight Ashbury Literary Journal*. A graduating senior in Women Studies at SFSU, he currently lives in Oakland, where in addition to editing both a men of color-loving-men of color anthology and a men of color survivors anthology, he is at work on his first book, *Yerbabuena/Mala yerba, All My Roots Need Rain: mixed blood poetry & prose*.



The murals on the Women's Building in San Francisco's Mission District illustrate different aspects of women's lives in the past and present.

Un Cubanito and Carnaval in San Pancho...95 and 97

Fernando Socorro

May 31, 1995

I am going to start a journal. I am Home. I live here. This is the way I feel.

On May the 28th, I went to Carnaval in the Mission. I was feeling such mixed emotions, as I think of it now, similar to so many other times when I have been faced with my Cuban and/or American allegiances. This is new, a new world. Brave. Bold. I am facing a blank volume, and I have the courage and willingness to script in the pages.

...

The first impression I got was that it was a very lame imitation of the Calle Ocho Street Fair, which is, I think, a million strong running amok on 8th St. for about a mile and a half. "Calle Ocho" is so crowded that many people, including myself, shun it. All the booths and stages for performances! Way too much Cubanity to handle, too large a dose, but the crowds still keep swelling, overflowing. Every other major festival and street fair (the Coconut Grove Art Fair is enormous) is just about the same, back HOME. Here I was in Carnaval, walking among the spectators, on the sidelines of the parade, just as the hands on my watch brushed past 11:00 AM, and I was saddened by the meager showing and the tardiness of the parade. I kept walking on and seeing nothing but small groups of people, hanging out, waiting to see Carnaval. This was the most popular street fair in San Francisco? All of a sudden Home was not the groovy place I had been living in.

Surprise...

...eventually the parade fell in stride, and I was able to maneuver the ripples of spectators with an ease that became refreshing in its novelty. I began to appreciate it for what it was: something different. Something new. By the time I got to the end of the parade route (actually the beginning, which was fascinating, because I was able to see some of the participants setting up) and then on to the stretch where the stages and booths were, the whole situation was mine.

At one point I stopped to see a group of children who were singing an old Cuban standard. Their float was a decorated truck (as were most of the other floats) and when I looked up I noticed that there was a Cuban flag hanging from one of the lampposts. Needless to say (but I will anyway), I was grateful for the Ray-Bans that provided me with privacy while letting my emotions overpower me in public. After I composed myself (y muchos would argue that I never have been composed, that I am always in a state of de-composure), I sauntered down to the street fair section of Carnaval.

At many of the booths I stopped and bought all sorts of cositas and t-shirts or picked up all kinds of information for my family back HOME. My niece apparently has gotten a kick out of most of the stuff I've sent her already. I want them to get a sense of my Home. I even compared notes with a young woman at one of the booths who moved here from Miami six months ago.

And speaking of speaking, I love hablando Español to the Latins here on the West Coast, they freak badly (and by the way, I don't do it on purpose, I happen to enjoy speaking my native tongue whenever possible, although tambien I feel that all foreigners should learn English, at least functional, there goes another Cuban/American dichotomyism). In Miami I would speak in Spanish to clerks at counters and others and they would answer me in English. Perception is such a wondrous thing. Since I can "pass for white" people only see the Gringo facade. Here they answer me in Spanish, but they try to assess why I don't have a typical Gringo accent and where my accent is from, since my pronunciation is not Mexican or any other of the more common local Central American styles, and I try to keep my Cuban enunciation at bay so they can understand me better (coño, no joda', the way we talk, if I spoke to them that fast and furioso, there is no way they would understand, just as I have trouble when others get too Mexican on my ass).

I had fun except for the one real, tangible shock to my system, which came when I had to walk through the entrance of the booth promenade and was checked for weapons with a metal detector. I was especially saddened when a little boy, three years old at the most, wanted to have them use the equipment on him too. It made him feel adult. It made me feel fear.

Home.

May 25, 1997

The semester from El Carajo is over! I finally finished all my research papers (three, one a comparison of Christopher Columbus' writings vis a vis the presentist point of view of Howard Zinn, and two on Cuban women of the Independence movements from 1808 to 1878; one an academic historiography, the other my "margin scribblings" of the whole process of hunting down the scant data I could exhumate - can you say "AY AY AY AY

AY!" while your eyes bug out and your conga drum hits the floor because you have pressed both your hands to your face, yet again... "Mira que tiene cosa..."). The only things left were three finals, a piece of cake (I'd just finished one which gave me a choice of three questions to answer, and I chose the one about the Fidelista regime's successes and failures in dealing with a feminist agenda. It was supposed to be two pages, minimum; I wrote seven (a facilita A) and I'd already bagged an A- for another course, no final necessary!)

Bueno, that was on Friday the 23rd. I would be traveling later on in June, July, and August while I was out of school on vacaciones, but right then and there I wanted to enjoy my Home. No, San Pancho may never be HOME for me as Miami is HOME, but my life here is so good and there is so much to do and see (I remember when I first got here, to live, being told that I would get over it, that I would eventually not be so flabbergasted by the sights and sounds of the City, but were "they" equivocando! I still enjoy the view from my apartment of the fog rolling in over Twin Peaks and onto the City, riding the cable cars whenever possible, and I still look for the Golden Gate while on my way to work - I work about 1 1/2 miles from the GG and can see the tips of it on my way to work, for a few seconds). Pues, I figured I would treat myself; on the following Sunday, the 25th, I was going to go to Carnaval. A little explanation: Carnaval aqui is a street fair and parade, but it ain't a combination of the "Calle Ocho" Street Fair and the OBowl. De 'so na'. The parade portion consists of many frolicking people, strutting and stomping and moving and grooving to lots of percussion, played by musicians that march (or ride) along and just have fun. It is not una produccion to promote tourism and highlight the metropolis as is the OBowl. The parade route is about three miles long, down narrow four lane streets that were made for the lighter traffic of long ago (mas o menos like la "Calle Ocho," but a bit more densely-constructed, with a constant two-, sometimes

three-story facade of old buildings that line the streets on both sides) when this city had a lot more rail transportation. It is a party, held together by sweat, fiery homemade salsa, and a lust for letting loose and exposing lots of flesh to (hopefully) el Papi Sol (hey, it can always be the usual layers of living brume, although the Mission is one of the sunniest areas of the City). Likewise for the street fair portion of it.

Like "Calle Ocho," *vaya*, for this festival they have the booths and stages and vendors *hasta la pare' de 'nfrente* in the ol' wazoo, lined up along both sides of a thoroughfare. Unlike the Miami-Cuban version, it is only about 7 blocks long, has many booths that are for socio-political proselytizing, for promoting social service agencies and their programs, or for pitching merchandise; *muchísimo* t-shirts, handicrafts (groovy or otherwise), and "ethnic" (African, Jamaican, or Indigenous) wares. There is also a more diverse mix of cultural cuisine, and there are the weapons checkpoints that freaked me so badly two years ago. When you sum up the whole shebang, though, it is all very casual, very (dare I say it) "California" (or actually very much the rest of the United States' image of "California," don't get me going in that direction). You know, very relaxed (or more to the point, it's *un ligero relajó*).

The Mission is one of the older areas in the City. There are still some phantasmal remnants that have been stripped down to their essence or built over and transformed to comply with modern and changing ethnic and cultural tastes. It was originally ranches and farms all surrounding Mission Dolores, which is still intact and beautiful. The area's transformation from a rural to an urban environment also saw an ethnic and cultural shift from the Spanish and Mexican roots to an Irish working class neighborhood that sprawled and thrived. Later, around the mid 40's, there was an influx of Mexican emigres that saw another *cambio* in the *barrio*, and today you can walk down the streets of the Mission (a bizarre little San Pancho

quirk is that even when the Latin residents of the City speak of the section in their native tongue, they refer to it as "la Mission" and not "la Mision"!...?) and feel the sun, el calor and el sabor Latino. Pero, no, this is not my sabor Latino, it is not so much "azuca'..." as it is **molé**. There is a hodgepodge of nationalities there, with Mexican culture being the most dominant (the same as Cuban culture is in Little Habana, although it may be more appropriate to call it Little Haba-nagua; get it? Little Habana/Managua=Little Haba-nagua!). The other major difference is in the architecture and density of the area (which is a reflection of the City) – *mucho* Victorians and Edwardians and high population density, with *mucha gente* all living tight and layered on top of each other. You don't have individual houses surrounded by large lawns which separate them from each other as you do in Miami. It ain't We'chester.

I very rarely go to the Mission because it is a bit of a shock to me; I feel as if I am in a foreign country. On top of the Latin culture mix that is so very different from the one I'm used to back HOME, there are a lot of all too groovy kids that live in the area because it is cheaper (the rents out here are unbelievable!). As of late there has been a gentrification (Yuppiefication) of the Mission, with many *coolísimo* coffeehouses and all-too-new eateries and bistros popping up. But it is also the only place where I can go and get my rations of malta (several brands are available—oye, if I can't get guarapo, may as well get the next best thing!) and some other Cuban goodies to eat (they are hard to find, but I've found a store close by that keeps my culinary nostalgia at bay—I had some classmates over for a lunch/study session a few weeks ago ...you should have seen them *jamarse* the Cuban Crackers and dulce 'e guyava, sitting on the floor, papers and books all in disarray around them while they two-fisted and scarfed down the Cuban Treasures I'd offered!). And for me the greatest thing about the Mission is that it is within walking distance (although, come to

think of it, several of the City's great hoods are within walking distance—aqui we walk a lot). The Mission is also an area where many people do not feel very safe; there are a couple of corners that are teeming with shady characters, and there is a very depressing public housing unit that covers about half a block (aqui in San Pancho we don't have the typical big city ghettos, especially for blacks, as we do in Miami; there are some housing developments scattered around the city - of course, not in the Marina or Pacific Heights or Nob Hill, jamas! The Black American population is comparatively small, and there is violence from all the ethnic groups to be considered; it is not a problem that is apopposite to any one group—I know many people who are frightened to venture into the very white, black-leathered, tattooed, pierced and spiked Haight, an area that when I do venture there I feel that maybe the touchy-feely, good floral vibrations which are longed for and adulated were just a youthful, drug induced mass hallucination – and of course the media and the public's perception of the residents of the Mission as "others" who sneak in from South of the Border does not ameliorate the situation a bit). Y'all have to keep in mind, too, that San Pancho is all of seven by seven miles square, and a lot of that area is covered by parks; we are packed tight (which is very easily the topic for another scripting).

Bueno, ya, on to Carnaval. The day was beautiful, crisp, and warm. OK, warm by San P standards (out here if the mercury sneaks over 60 and the sun is out, throngs of sun worshipers hit the "beach," the parks, the roofs and any other spot exposed to the sunshine to languish in the sol, and there are a lot of legs peeking out of shorts and lots of denuded upper torsos, with men bare chested or in tank tops and women in halters or bikini tops - claro, en Miami if the mercury slumps to under 70 we drag out the "hivre" wear: sweaters, jackets, cords, and flannels), the tem-

perature was about 65 at 10:30 a.m., maybe "shooting up" to 72 by noon! Te imaginas en Miami, en Mayo, the temperature and la humeda'! I packed my camera in my backpack and enough film (I never carry enough film, I can shoot pictures of anything and everything) and trotted my butt out to the Mission.

The parade was due to begin at 11:00 a.m. Of course, I first strolled on to Mission St. and 16th, which is almost at the end of the parade route, at around 10:45, and there were barely any oglers (yet). I took the same route that I had walked the last time I had been to Carnaval two years prior. This time around I expected not to see too many people, because I knew the reveling had started about a mile- and-a-half away, but the street was already barricaded and there were some folks making sure that they had a good view by lounging on lawn chairs, street trash receptacles or newspaper vending machines. Tu sabe', any surface to plantar las nalgas, there are no OBowl-style bleacher lined boulevards here. Eventually, as the marchers and musicians wiggle up Mission St., the crowds would build (pero not swell, never swell). The route is intelligently set up so that it forms a rectangle, beginning and ending on the same street (Bryant) and it runs a distance of about three miles. I cannot get over the fact that you can actually walk around the sidewalks during Carnaval. Anyway, I decided to saunter towards the starting point of the parade, 24th and Bryant, cutting through the residential area, but not until I scoped out some killer photo ops on Mission (which I took advantage of, especially a stereotypical treasure: a man sitting on the sidewalk as the crowds walked by, catching some rays, his back propped up against the wall, legs stretched out, bare feet spilling out of his jeans, as his big straw sombrero protected his pants

from the sun - may be a politically incorrect image, but I had to... ..does
art imitate life imitate stereotype

life
imitate stereotype imitate art
stereotype imitate art
imitate life

art imitate life

life?)

When I hit the parade on 24th St. and Florida at about 11:15, "Carnaval" had already begun to roll along. Vaya! The color and music and people created such a rush of emotion for me, not overpowering as two years ago when my emotions gushed right out of my tear ducts (actually more or less in the same spot, I just realized), but close. I ambulated up the street to Bryant, where the paraders were all in a row, chomping at the bit, practicing their shaking and shimmying while basking in the sun and the photographer's attention (especially two beautiful and almost nude young women, one with an elaborate head-dress that exposed a beautiful back, from neck to heels, with only a shining metal string separating her cachetes—how'd she do that?... ..tu think?... ..!!! that's gotta be a pain in the butt—and the other woman with *casi na'a* on except her thong, head-dress and strategically-placed dabs of body paint). Also, there are quite a lot of kids participating in the *Lain strut-a-thon*, and although I have not seen the Chinese New Year Celebrations in Chinatown, I would guess that Carnival and Chinese New Year are the only two street events where children can really share and shine. *Esta* is a city for *adultos*. Anyway, my favorite thing about all the parade's *aqui* in San Pancho is that *cualquiera* can just walk around the area for setting up (*te lo dije*, this is all too casual-isimo), with the participants rehearsing and waiting for their turn at strutting (or rolling, if it's a float or other ve-

hicle). I got to see the real parade, my way, at my pace. There were so many interesting junctures that I decided to snap and walk, and become a part of the fun (I even caught myself dancing on a brick - that's for all you Cubans - think about it - in the middle of the street).

The paraders were mostly White, while the rest of the participants were of Indigenous or miscegenated origins, and some Black. They were all bopping to Latin, Brazilian or Jamaican tunes; there were a few Indian folk representations, some Creole dancers and music, but mostly white folk showing how ethnic they can be, too (for some reason many of *los Americanos* - you know who I mean - take up causes and embrace cultures other than their own and appropriate them. I have seen way too many blond Rastafarians out here, maybe because they feel, as a young *Americana* said to me a while back, that claiming that one is of British stock is not all that interesting—to which I replied that pride in one's ethnicity is important, no matter where the roots may lead, especially when you consider how fascinating British history is, warts and all, and how dorky it is to pretend to be something you are not. Why is it sort of acceptable for Anglo Saxons to try to pass for darker, more *sabroso* ethnicities, yet it is frowned upon for non-whites to try to "pass" by all the ethnic groups, even when a non-White individual's upbringing has been outside the more common cultural parameters of their ethnic group?). Bottom line, though, is that everyone was having fun, with no anger, violence, or bullshit.

Despues de an hour and a half of taking in the paraders and their observers I went to the street fair portion which was about seven blocks long, with barricaded streets and secured entrances (this time I was prepared for the reality check at the entrances with the hand-held metal detectors, but I still felt uncomfortable with the stark confrontation with *la realida'*). Claro, there were *mucho* booths, and the ubiqui-

tous major domestic beer sponsored stages, one at each end of the "fairgrounds." I waded through the oglers and stragglers, and took in all the sights, none of which, by the way, was Cuban, Nicaraguan, Columbian, Haitian, or Venezuelan. Like I said two years ago (and keep being reminded of constantly), this is another world.

I took up the parade trail ass backwards again, going to the end of the route, 16th St. and Bryant, and I made it just as

the vanguard of revelers was dancing towards me up 16th. It was a bit after 2 p.m., and I noticed as I walked up 16th that the crowds were thin, but as I neared Mission St. their numbers began to increase (pero not swell, never swell).

Aaahhhh.

I had fun. I took pictures. I walked a bit. Hasta I danced in the streets!

Then I turned my back on "Carnaval" and walked home. As I said two years before, I am Home. For now...

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