TOWER TALK

Around San Francisco Towers

Sugar Caen

Editorial

In what now seems like eons ago, the March 31 2016 meeting involving SFT residents and Episcopal Senior Community (ESC) officials took place. Attendance was high, comity prevailed, queries were posed, handouts were distributed, and possibly, there is now more understanding among all involved.

However, Sugar cannot see much material change. There is only one fact that is certain, and another condition that is highly likely.

(1) For sure, as of April, SFT residents are paying a 3.45% fee increase.

(2) Similar increases will take place every year far into the future.

In reaction, SFT residents seem to align along two axes: (1) "Activists." Those favoring steps to reduce or mitigate fee increases, and (2) "Statists." Those accepting of increases, comfortable with the status quo, and indisposed toward active resistance.

Activists' strategies include aggressively questioning the Presbyterian "affiliation," circulating legally reasoned protest petitions, participating in the Episcopal Bishop's suit against ESC, suggesting SFT generated "profits" be returned to residents, Gandhi-like civil disobedience, and economics-based suggestions for mitigating future labor cost increase.

Statists contend entry contract provisions are preemptive and, thus, there are no effective grounds for protests, there is an understandable human desire to avoid conflict, a view that residing in the Towers is quite comfortable and should be treasured, and a sense that one's silver years should be peaceful.

Thus, while SFT residents may be splintered into two or more, occasionally squabbling, camps, ESC executives need adopt only one simple strategy to prevail, *patience.*

They can anticipate and easily weather cyclical resident dissent. Some SFT activist dissenters may hold logical positions and perhaps even occupy a moral high ground.

Regardless, ESC executives hold virtually all the consequential high cards. The only chink in their armor may prove to be arrogance.

A meeting with the Episcopal Bishop is scheduled for early May. Sugar implores the Bishop to insist that "Episcopal" no longer be used in the title of the operating organization.

"Enterprising" could replace Episcopal. Such a substitution would add transparency for applicants and, as a bonus, obviate any need to change the email URL. "ESC-SFT" still would work.

Stay tuned, but Sugar predicts little will change.

SFT Master Plan: A Contrary View
Richard Wilmington[1]

It would be beneficial to step back and take a longer view of our current Master Planning efforts. We may be forgetting or confusing our priorities.

"Memory Care" has long been proclaimed as a high priority for SF Towers. Regrettably, there is little apparent progress toward this goal.

Conversely, the Master Plan Committee, in considering a proposed Bistro, is already specifying operating details e.g., hours, cold cases, and menus.

Comprehensive care and social programming for skilled nursing patients and independent living residents, particularly those who have cognitive issues, remain as an unaddressed elephant in the room.

Location and space seem to be prime issues. An attractive possibility for Memory Care is the Mezzanine. This area was originally intended as a secure area with double rooms and related program space. If renovated attractively, it could comfortably serve those with memory care needs.

A rejoinder has been "*SFT needs space for skilled nursing to take outside patients who provide income.*" Really?

Food Service. The Spring Lake Village bistro has been proposed as a model for optional SFT food service. Readers familiar with Spring Lake know this is a rural facility. There are few and only remote dining options.

Conversely, SFT is situated in one of the city's most convenient spots. A café with good food is already operating in our building. Other restaurants and coffee shops are within a few blocks (shorter than Spring Lake Village residents walk from their cottages to their bistro).

If the objective is to attract younger applicants, and remove the pressure for enlarging an SFT café, how about rethinking the requirement that men wear jackets? (A visit to the Opera or Symphony or a cruise on a Seabourn or Silversea, suggests our children's generation eschews coats and ties.)

The gym. Some believe it to be lightly used and already well equipped. The massive and time consuming construction required to reconstruct the top level of the main entry to accommodate more fitness activities seems excessive

Finally, others and I contend that insufficient concern is being given to the potential disruption of our lives in pursuit of elusive and unsubstantiated assumptions about future retiree preferences. Can we not pause before it is too late and re-examine our priorities?

There are indeed uncertainties about the future. However, there is one thing we know firmly; many potential retirees will suffer dementia and need a comfortable and safe environment in which to spend their closing days. Properly focused, SFT can fill this need.

It is asserted that alcohol does not solve personal problems. However, Sugar sees no evidence that milk solves problems either. *Just sayin.*

[1] Sugar welcomes editorial submissions and reader reaction. Publication does not imply endorsement.

"How to Grow Old," An imagined dialogue involving Cicero and Cato.
(*Thanks to WSJ via Trevie Pope*)

Those who lack within themselves means for a blessed and happy life will find any age painful. But for those who see good things within themselves, little imposed by nature will seem troublesome. Growing older is a prime example.

Everyone hopes to reach old age but when it comes, some say it crept up upon them faster than expected.

First of all, who is to blame for such poor judgment? Does old age steal upon us any faster than youth does upon childhood?

Would growing older really be less a burden if one were approaching 800 rather than 80?

I follow nature as the best guide and only her like a God.

Since she has carefully planned the other parts of the drama of life it is unlikely that Mother Nature would be a bad playwright and neglect the final act.

And, this last act must take place as surely as the fruits of trees and the earth must some day wither and fall.

A wise person knows this and accepts it with grace. Fighting nature is as pointless as the battles of the giants against the gods.

Political Comment

Party nominees are still formally undecided. Indiana and California primaries will be decisive. However, Clinton and Trump appear to be finalists. If these are indeed the competitors, Donald Trump will be the next US President. Sugar will suspend detailed commentaries and polling results for another month.

All that Sugar stated in the April TT issue regarding electoral unpredictability, dirty campaigning, declining influence of campaign financing,[2] and voter disaffection still holds true.

However, something worthy of comment has emerged, Sugar refers to the disturbing revelations in both parties regarding the previously unsung influence of "unpledged" delegates.

The Chair of the Republican National Committee went so far as to proclaim that the choice of nominees belongs to the Party, not to the people. This is unmitigated arrogance.

For Democrats, Sanders could win a majority of pledged delegates and still be displaced by Hilary-leaning unpledged "Super Delegates."

Under either of the above conditions, the will of the people is subverted. Those in power should remember that under our brand of democracy, it is the electorate, not those who govern, who are empowered.

Any efforts to dilute the electoral majority's choice(s) should be strongly resisted, to the point of open rebellion. Patrick Henry and Thomas Paine would countenance no less.

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[2] Regarding campaign financing it is interesting to note that Bernie Sanders spent $300 per each NY primary vote. Trump spent 13 cents per each NY primary vote.

Observations About Education

Once, we worried about our K-12 public education. Now, we have cause to be concerned about what was once California's pride, postsecondary schools. Some facts about UC and CSU

On April 5, unionized State college faculty went on strike. They had not received salary increases for eight years. The CSU board, thankfully, generated increases of almost ten percent over the next two years. Otherwise CSU (San Jose State, SF State, etc.) faculty would continue to consider community college positions because the pay is much better.

Berkeley, UCLA, Davis and other high rated UC campuses have been found by the state auditor to be denying entry to qualified California residents, favoring admission for applicants from other states and overseas. Through this ruse, UC management is able to benefit from higher out-of-state tuition revenues.

Qualified California applicants are shunted to UC Merced and Riverside, campuses seen by many as less desirable. Our grandchildren, even if highly qualified, are disadvantaged. Alumnae legacy is now meaningless.

Governor Brown is intensely aware of the issue and is seeking means to correct the situation. However, the root problem is money. State appropriations for our once proud post secondary institutions have fallen badly. The solution is in higher appropriations from the state legislature.

Humor

The following is said to have taken place in a Baja Oklahoma beauty salon.

A woman entered brandishing a handgun. She pointed her weapon at a the ceiling and yelled:

I have a Colt 45 and 9 rounds in the clip. I am mad as hell. I want to know who here is sleeping with my boyfriend.

A voice from the back said:

Go home honey. You don' t have enough ammo.

April High Points

Golden State Warrior record victories.

Joan Tayler's De Young floral display

SFT Council elections

April Disappointments

Seder

Rockwell Crane dismantling (Now 5/21)

Obsolete expressions

Don't touch that dial," "Carbon copy," "Hung out to dry." Heavens to Betsy!

James Guthrie produces Tower Talk (TT) under the nom de plum of Sugar Caen. This is a collection of vignettes, anecdotes, efforts at humor, and informational items regarding residents, employees, events, and conditions in and around San Francisco Towers. This publication is published privately and does NOT carry approval of NOR rely upon resources from Towers management. It has no commercial content and is not intended to replace regular Towers' publications. Those wishing to comment or stop receipt may contact Sugarcaen00@gmail