TOWER TALK
AROUND SAN FRANCISCO TOWERS

Sugar Caen[i]

This is a collection of vignettes, anecdotes, efforts at humor, and observations regarding residents, employees, events, conditions and triumphs in and around San Francisco Towers. This publication is undertaken responsibly and is never unduly critical. It is published privately and does NOT seek NOR carry approval of Towers management or any other agency. It is not intended to replace regular Towers' publications. Readers wishing to make comments, submit items, or stop receipt are encouraged to contact Sugarcaen00@gmail.com

Recalling Caen:

February has 4 Sundays, 4 Mondays, 4 Tuesdays, 4 Wednesdays, 4 Thursdays, 4 Fridays, and 4 Saturdays.

This will not occur again in the lifetime of any TT reader. It is said, that if you transmit this fact to at least 5 people, money will arrive within 4 days. (Here's hoping. :)

David Anger's birthday is February 29. He will be 21. Buy him a legal drink.

Of course, February also contains, Valentine's Day, one of Sugar's favorite times. Regrettably, like too many once hallowed holidays, its celebration is over-commercialized, and Sugar resents shortsighted marketers hijacking what otherwise should be a sweet time filled with romance and positive sentiment.

Speaking of Valentine's Day, a Sugar-gram from a correspondent, who chooses to remain anonymous, recounts at least a partial history of SFT romance.

Dear Sugar:

Your New Year's TT issue predicts 2016 will likely see a SFT wedding. That provoked me to consider how many weddings we have already had?

In the early days, Esther Friedman (East Tower) married Al Sellinger (West Tower). She moved to his apartment, gave up hers, and then when he died a few years later, she returned to her former name "Friedman" and stayed in the West Tower.

Connie and Bob Marvin visited friends at the Towers and then took a small apartment in the East Tower to use as a pied-a-terre as they often were in the City late at night various performances.

Not long after, Bob was taken ill, had to be in the City for daily treatments. The Marvins moved into SFT full-time. Bob then died. About the same time, Erika Little became ill and eventually died, leaving Fritz in a large apartment in the West Tower. He and Connie got together, married, and she moved to the West Tower.

Connie had too many clothes, shoes, and bags to move everything to the West Tower, so she moved, but continued to use the apartment in the East Tower as her clothes closet, guest apartment, etc.

Soon after, it became possible for Jack Bird and John Darby to be married -- they had moved in as partners, but when marriage became an option, they grabbed it. Jack and John were perhaps the only ones actually married within the

building, by the facility's chaplain, Mother Andrea, no less.

Earlier, Joan Casserly had moved into SFT and shortly thereafter, her ex-husband Mel Flyer came to visit a mutual acquaintance. The result was that he took a studio apartment here, moved in with Joan and they used the studio as his office and also as a guest room. Later, Mel and Joan remarried in a Buddhist ceremony in Redwood City.

I believe the only other marriage between residents was just this past year when Beth Sweetow and Joe Michels, long-time partners were married; I don't know where that ceremony took place.

Sugar appreciates the history and is sure that we have not seen the end of Towers' romance. There is hope for single Tower males who, in Sugar's observations, fare less well than single women. Sugar's just sayin

However, Valentines and romance are not for humans alone. Readers may recall the Valentine weekend sex tour at the SF Zoo. A former zoo docent reports to Sugar that the tour was known widely to be informative, racy, and fun. Why cannot this be renewed? Cannot be too costly.

Finally, in a Valentine vein; the following conversation is reported to have taken place between Towers' resident Mr. X, age 92, and Ms. Y, age 89, who are planning to marry. They go for a stroll and on the way enter a drugstore:

Mr.X: *"We're about to get married. Do you sell heart medication?"*

Pharmacist: *"Of course."*

Mr.X: *"How about medicine for circulation?"*

Pharmacist: *"All kinds."*

Mr.X: *"Medicine for rheumatism?"*

Pharmacist: *"Definitely."*

Mr.X: *"How about suppositories?"*

Pharmacist: *"You bet!"*

Mr.X: *"Medicine for memory problems, arthritis and Alzheimer's?"*

Pharmacist: *"I sure do."*

Mr.X: *"You sell wheelchairs, walkers and canes?"*

Pharmacist: *"All speeds and sizes."*

Mr. X: *"We'd like to use this store as our Bridal Registry."*

SFT Quiz

How many SFT staff have spouses or siblings employed here? Here is a beginning. Are there others?

Grace Tom (OPD) has a brother, Ben Tom, who works in Security. Sarah, DR Server, married Kidane, also from Ethiopia, who took a job with SFT Security. Lucy Ascalon, in OPD and a devoted Sugar fan, is married to Renato Ascalon, with Security. And, Renato has a sister, Pacita, who works in OPD. In the Dining Room, Delia, Hostess, has a brother, Carlos, who is a Server.

Speaking of Dining Room; new pastry chef is terrific. Sugar knows.

Mail Box

January's TT issue provoked 19 responses, more communication than Sugar can handle. Thus, several reader emails will of necessity be noted in March.

The following paraprosdokians were contributed by one of Sugar's fans.

Since light travels faster than sound, some people appear bright until you hear them speak.

If I agreed with you, we'd both be wrong.

We never really grow up — we only learn how to act in public.

War does not determine who is right, only who is left.

I didn't say it was your fault. I said I was blaming you.

In filling out an application, where it says, "In case of emergency, notify……..I answered "a doctor."

I used to be indecisive, but now I'm not so sure.

Via email, Geraldine Clifford characterized Sugar's list of 2015 major accomplishments as shallow. She suggested the 2015 opening of SFT Council meetings to wider resident access was a matter of substantially greater consequence. She proclaims added openness in SFT governance contributes to communal engagement and an enhanced sense of felicity among Tower residents.

Sugar concurs. Good point.

Speaking of Geraldine Clifford, not all readers may be fully informed regarding the luster of her University of California professorial career as one of the nation's most prominent historians of education.

She recently received an additional encomium. Her history of women teachers received a favorable review in the Journal of American History, a premier outlet for scholarship. Geraldine's new book is in the Towers' Library and it makes a good present for residents who have a teacher offspring or relative.

An Aside: History Can Be Fun

Speaking of history and historians, Sugar has a lesson.

The U.S. Standard railroad gauge (distance between rails) is 4 feet, 8.5 inches. This unusual measurement results from 19th Century tramways, precursors to English railroads. Tram construction craftsmen used jigs to determine wheel spacing. They followed patterns matched to the ruts left by Imperial Roman war chariots. If wheel spacing did not fit deep chariot ruts, carriage axles were imperiled.

English expatriates designed U.S. Railroads. Therefore, United State' standard gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches is derived from original specifications for Imperial Roman chariot. Imperial Roman chariots were fashioned to accommodate the rear of two warhorses harnessed laterally.

Final twist to the story: Space Shuttles were fitted with booster rockets (SRB) assembled in Utah. SRB engineers would have preferred to make boosters larger, but SRBs had to be shipped by train to launch sites. Railroads from the factory ran through mountains and the SRBs had to fit through train tunnels.

Tunnels are slightly wider than railroad tracks, and, as you now know, train tracks are as wide as two horses' behinds.

So, a major design feature of what is arguably the World's most advanced transportation system, the Space Shuttle, was determined by circumstances originating over two thousand years ago.

Getting back to mail, among responses to Sugar's rant regarding homelessness was Olivia Guthrie's:

Dear Sugar:

What struck me immediately upon reading your rant was that you are suggesting housing for only about 1/3 of the street people. There are over 6,500 homeless in the City and despite all efforts to reduce that number, including buying them a bus ticket out of town; the number has remained constant for over 10 years.

One of our priorities is to take care of the mentally ill who have no place to go. We need to reopen mental hospitals around the State making sure they are not the snake pits of the past. Realistically, we do not have enough doctors and other health care workers to accommodate what I estimate to be at least 1/3 to 1/2 of the homeless. (Maybe more). The costs would be enormous and could the State find this money. It would be a tremendous undertaking and it would take private as well as State and Federal funding to do this. The way we treat our mentally ill is a national scandal.

Secondly, what do we do about the drug addicts especially the heroin addicts whose numbers are rising all over the U.S. The recidivism among addicts is discouraging. I don't know what we can do about that except trying to stop drug traffic and we have had little or no success doing that

The City spends something over $23 million now to care for the homeless. Starting by building some housing for them would certainly be a step in the right direction. I would like to see someone like Zuckerberg step up with a big donation as well as the Getty's and other wealthy San Franciscans. It's time to stop wringing our hands and claiming nothing can be done.

Sugar's Learning

The initial issue of TT contained a reader letter complaining about a SFT resident who talked too much about himself. Sugar sympathized, removed all names, and suggested placing the TT article in the offender's mailbox. Six recipients had the article placed in their boxes. This ignited a firestorm of criticism directed at Sugar. Complaints went all the way to the Director's office.

Sugar learned two lessons. First, do not take up personal issues. Second, there may be more than one resident perceived as talking too much.

Sugar congratulates the Nominating committee on a TERRIFIC slate of qualified Council candidates. Readers should be sure to vote.

Be alert for next month's "fabulous" "March Madness" issue. A feature will be a must read comparison of Sugar and John Rothman. Also, the Around SFT quiz will have delicious rewards for winners.

Stay sweet.

Sugar

---

[i] "Sugar Caen" is a *non de plume* that bears no relation to any Towers' residents