TOWER TALK

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An Open Letter to Melody Mitchell's Successor

James W. Guthrie

Dear Mr. or Ms. Melody Successor:

Our outgoing Director mentioned publicly that a head hunting firm searching for her successor would be informed that the Towers was a challenging assignment.

Melody is assuredly right. Our 300 or so residents comprise a sometimes combustible combination of retired high powered professionals, socialites, celebrities, dilettantes, polymaths, princes and princesses, and an assortment of tightly wound individuals used to being in charged themselves, sufficiently worldly to know when situations are not quite right, and quite capable of expressing opinions, even when such are not solicited.

Virtually every SFT resident has a list of Towers' services or conditions that he or she wishes were somehow better or different. For example, month after month, the Food and Beverage Committee receives literally dozens of Dining Service comment cards complaining of X, Y, or Z, and suggesting a menu item or wait staff component be altered or added. Similarly, monthly fee raises, marble floors in the lobby, gas fireplaces in public rooms, and threats to decertify Skilled Nursing exemplify conditions capable of eliciting powerful resident passions.

Regardless of the topic, but particularly if it touches politics, for every ten SFT residents, there are twenty opinions. There is no end to resident views regarding solutions to the homeless problem, neighborhood crime, traffic noise, or Van Ness Avenue renovation.

A few residents have prepackaged one-size fits all solutions that they hydraulically volunteer for any contentious issue. Impeaching President Trump and firing ESC CEO, Kevin Gerber, are among favorite all-purpose remedies.

However, there is another vastly unsung side to us. And, this unheralded facet is truly beneficent.

It is difficult to imagine, short of a gathering of Nobel Laureates, a greater amalgam of intellect, creativity and worldly accomplishment than the collectivity that resides at SFT.

There is so much that is "right" about the Towers and its residents that it is impossible easily to encapsulate all that is positive. Here is a sampling. Much more could be added.

Rosemary McLeod has an Outpatient staff of apprentice angels. Their level of competence and compassion is difficult to describe, but hardly a soul among us has not benefited from their tireless concern for our wellbeing. The Maintenance Department is filled with technicians and craftsmen who address mechanical and electrical issues quickly and thoroughly. The Flower Committee provides us with weekly displays of arrangement artistry that add inestimably to our daily wellbeing. The semiannual second floor displays of resident and staff art are difficult to match short of a museum.

One incident vividly captures SFT resident generosity. A plea for community assistance to the local convenience store operator and his family, elicited sixty-five pledges of financial aid within three hours of being distributed.

This leads to a modest suggestion. Dear Mr. or Ms. Melody successor, view SFT residents not as a bottomless reservoir of potential irritations, but rather as a treasure chest of successful experience, analytic ability, unending compassion, and remarkable creativity. Treat residents with the dignity and civility their lives deserve and you might well have professional success and a fulfilling personal experience otherwise unmatched in your career.

Rediscovering Treasure

Paul Sedway

A plan has been approved for Treasure Island in San Francisco Bay for 8,000 new residential units accommodating 20,000 to 25,000 residents, and construction is underway. Four 40 to 60 story

towers punctuate the plan, and unlike the San Francisco "mainland" form, they are directly on the waterfront. The project is scheduled to be completed in 30 years.

The project area has a rich land use history. Most recently it was a naval station and before that an exposition. It is still covered with many structures from its Navy days, and was slated to be a redevelopment site until that process was abandoned. So the city created a Treasure Island Authority to administer the transition.

The San Francisco Exposition of 1939 and 1940 was meant to commemorate the openings of the Golden Gate and Bay Bridges. Site selection had narrowed down to Yerba Buena Shoals or the Presidio, and the former was chosen because it could later be transformed into an airport for the Flying Boats of Pan Am. The island was created using WPA financing. When war broke out, the Navy instead moved in and stayed for 55 years.

More recently the federal government offered all or part of the island to any Federal agency that could use the land; the Department of Labor acquired the center of the island for a Job Corps training center.

The development is controversial, with a lawsuit already brought and rejected. Among the key contentions is access: the site happens to be in the middle of the Bay, with the only existing vehicular connection being the congested Bay Bridge.

Other objections relate to risk. The National Research Council has forecast a mid-range rise of San Francisco Bay water level of 36 inches by 2100, with a high estimate of 66 inches. San Francisco will be called upon soon to repair or rebuild its seawall, and probably will have to reconfigure its Northern and Eastern waterfront. Query whether the city needs a new vulnerable edge to fortify, even one that has been raised three feet?

There are some other immediate problems that are inherent in islands. My planning consulting firm encountered these in dealing individually with four notable islands: Alcatraz, Ellis, Governors, and Boston's Harbor Islands. Their main problems were lack of urban services and retail, transportation access, and wind. Treasure Island has all three problems — and a few others, including land subsidence, seismic risk (from liquefaction) and use compatibility with the Job Corps center.

Because of the prevailing winds from the northwest, which can be fierce at times, the plan is rigidly rectilinear, with the streets laid out so that they provide a wind buffer for most residents.

On the plus side, the project would provide needed housing and spectacular views of the San Francisco skyline, offers the pleasure of ferry service, and obviously has an interesting natural setting. A central feature is Building One, a remnant of the Fair and the early planned air terminal, which became an administration building and is now a museum.

So the jury is still out on this development. But the good news is that there are no neighbors around to complain about high density and overcrowding, although the seagulls are yet to be heard from.

Where We Failed, They May Succeed

Peter Hertzmann

As I stood in Civic Center Plaza on Saturday [March 24th], I thought back to the anti-war marches and protests of fifty years ago. Although we were able eventually to raise awareness of the war, it wasn't until the 1974 midterm elections that a new Congress in 1975 voted to reduce war funding. In 1976, twelve years after the first significant anti-war protests, all U.S. funding for the war in Vietnam ceased. This new Congress was not a result of the youth of America protesting as much as it was a reaction to the resignation of Richard Nixon, the Gulf oil crisis, the fall of Saigon, and fifty-eight thousand war dead.

There are many reasons I think today's protesters will be successful in achieving their goals. Whereas we were demanding a total end to a war that was supporting large swaths of the American economy, today's activists are requesting a set of

controls that limit aspects of a much smaller economy. Although their opponents try to position the protesters as being anti second amendment, not a single speaker at the rally I attended or those I saw later on television sought to repeal the second amendment. Their goal s are to effectively limit access to gun purchases by those deemed unqualified to own guns and to limit sales to pistols and rifles appropriate for hunting and target shooting.

These goals appear to fall well within the *District of Columbia, et al. v. Dick Karvin Heller* decision of 2008. In his majority opinion, Antonin Scalia found that "the Second Amendment right is not unlimited. It is not a right to keep and carry any weapon whatsoever in any manner whatsoever and for whatever purpose: For example, concealed weapons prohibitions have been upheld under the Amendment or state analogues. The Court's opinion should not be taken to cast doubt on longstanding prohibitions on the possession of firearms by felons and the mentally ill, or laws forbidding the carrying of firearms in sensitive places such as schools and government buildings, or laws imposing conditions and qualifications on the commercial sale of arms."

The protesters' goal of outlawing guns designed for warfare seems to be well within Scalia's opinion. A similar stance can probably be made for accessories that make ordinary guns more like the current prohibited class, but this can be murky. Currently, guns that can fire more than one bullet with a single trigger pull are illegal and have been for decades. An off-the-shelf AR-15 can only fire a single round per trigger pull and is legal in most states. By adding a bump stock, the trigger finger is held in a single position, and the recoil repeatedly moves the gun against the finger to cause rapid firing. Some systems can achieve as high as 800 rounds per minute. The Department of Justice under the Obama administration interpreted the action as multiple trigger pulls and refused to classify a bump-stock equipped rifle as a submachine gun. The current Department of Justice recently took an opposite view and has proposed the outlawing of bump stocks. If the proposal is promulgated, a lawsuit will quickly follow.

Although the long-term goals of March For Our Lives appear easier to achieve than my generation 's goal to end the war in Vietnam, success is still a long way away. Instead of spending the time between now and the midterm elections being typical teenagers, the protesters will need to dedicate their time to the cause. The cause will need to become their social lives.

Many of the speeches that I heard during the march targeted current Congressional politicians up for re-election in November. Although Congress is an excellent goal, the protest should also focus on local and state politicians. Many times in our history, a national change was built up from the states.

In the 2016 election cycle, the National Rifle Association donated $1,085,100 to political campaigns. Republican politicians received 99% of the money. So far in the 2018 cycle, about a third of that total has been donated. Only one senator and one congresswoman received more than $10,000 from the NRA and not much more. Since the student protest movement has already received some sizable donations, maybe they could offer politicians to match or even double the NRA contribution if they didn't accept it.

A much harder goal to achieve is the education of single-issue voters who neither understand the Second Amendment and the rights it conveys nor comprehend that limiting those rights and gun control are very different subjects. Even with an unlimited budget, six months is too short of a time to change so many minds. Twelve years of Vietnam-War protesting failed to convince most Americans about the threat of Communism.

Entre Nous

Sugar Caen

Austin and Van Ness are, once again, bickering, Let's listen.

IT'S OK IF YOU DISAGREE WITH ME. I CAN'T FORCE YOU TO BE RIGHT.

Aus: Are you not sick and tired of the fear mongers and naysayers among us. There is so much that is right about SFT, and yet a few residents obsessively cry "WOLF" day after day.

Van: REALLY! I hadn't noticed. What falls under your "fear mongering and nay saying" rubric? I know Teddy Roosevelt in the June 4, "Arsenic and Old Lace" play blows his bugle a lot, but you must have something more substantive in mind.

Aus: Here is an example. The Transportation Committee is on its high horse insisting residents go on silly ass floor-by-floor corridor tours informing them of what to do in emergencies. The last emergency around here occurred when the luncheon buffet salad plates were put in the warmer instead of the cooler.

Van: At the risk of bursting your "best of all possible worlds" bubble Dr Pangloss, I suggest you go on what you think is a silly ass safety tour. Your "Highness," while not really royal, resides on a high floor, and it is unlikely that fire ladders will be here in time to rescue your gorgeous self. You really should know about escape routes and safety procedures. I, as your "Prince Charming," am getting a little old to rescue you myself.

Aus: Firemen are usually rather hunky. I just might get lucky.

Van: Given your recent weight gain, any fireman attempting to rescue you had better guard against getting a hernia. Just sayin'.

Aus: OUCH!

Van: I apologize. That was below the belt. Ha Ha. Seriously though. Please take the safety tour. I love you and want nothing bad to happen,

Senior's Exam

Sugar Caen

Sugar is only recommending this test to the brightest of Tower Talk Readers. It will keep that dreaded disease that effects your memory at bay! You only need 4 correct answers out of 10 questions to pass.

1. How long did the Hundred Years' War last?
2. Which country makes Panama hats?
3. From which animal do we get cat gut?
4. In which month do Russians celebrate the October Revolution?
5. What is a camel's hair brush made of?
6. The Canary Islands in the Pacific are named after what animal?
7. What was King George VI's first name?
8. What color is a purple finch?
9. From where do we obtain Chinese gooseberries?
10. What is the color of the black box in a commercial airplane?

Remember, you need only 4 correct answers to pass.

ANSWERS TO THE QUIZ

1. 116 years	6. Dogs
2. Ecuador	7. Albert
3. Sheep and Horses	8. Crimson
4. November	9. New Zealand
5. Squirrel fur	10. Orange (of course!)

What do you mean, you failed? Me, too!

(If you try to tell me you passed, Sugar is suspicious.)

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