

VALENCIA BAY-FARER



Written by students. Read by all.

Free to kids

Help Needed in SF Bay: Pollution Crisis!

by Laila Zaidi, age 9



Courtesy of: http://www.boatingsf.com/photos/031106/IMG_4645_edited-1.jpg

There are now lots of things going on with our bay, including mercury dredging and too little rainfall. Mercury is the first enemy on the list, according to the San Francisco Estuary Institute and the regional monitoring program. Dredging here in San Francisco is crazy! It has been said that the long-term management strategy is to prevent dredging and coordinate dumping. Dredging is a very bad thing, but how can we get cargo ships in if the bay is not that deep? We don't know, but we are trying to stop dredging.

Now let's talk about mercury. I agree with my Mom that mining started the mercury problem, but what I want to know is how it got way worse. I think

that rain makes the bay higher, and it is also possible that rain decreases the amount of mercury. Even though we have the biggest estuary in California, it doesn't mean that people don't pollute it.

I think we are trying to make our bay a better place and that most people respect that, especially fishermen. In my opinion, nobody over-fishes in San Francisco, but in other areas this may not be the case. I also think that the people who sail every Sunday, or just people who really care, will help. One way to start helping would be to clean up a local beach. Sometimes, like when there was a large oil spill in the bay, people clean it up. Other times

they leave pollutants there.

Over the summer, San Francisco had a very low amount of rainfall. Maybe the pollutants don't increase with the rain, but maybe they do. As I said earlier, rain does make the bay higher and maybe that makes dredging necessary and so the cycle of pollution continues. It is my hope that this terrible pollution will end soon and that you will help to keep the bay clean.

School Garden Loved By All

by Georgia Brady-Tompt, age 8

Our Sherman Elementary School garden is my favorite place in the school, but it could be even better.

Garden Coordinator Linda Meyers explained the process of building the garden. First, a committee met to come up with greening ideas. Then, asphalt on the grounds was excavated. Next, soil was brought in. Pathways were created, and after that a waterfall pond was created.

Continued on page 4

INSIDE:

<i>News & Politics</i>	2
<i>The Environment</i>	4
<i>Arts & Entertainment</i>	7

Civil Rights Endangered

by Ailish Burden, *age 11*



Courtesy of: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/antinous/3032897712/sizes/o/>

On November 4, 2008, 52% of Californians voted to change the California constitution by adding the words “only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California.” Proposition 8 eliminated the right of same sex couples to marry in California.

In May 2008, the California Supreme court decided that marriage is a fundamental right under the California state constitution. Proposition 8 changed that by preventing gays and lesbians from marrying. It could possibly affect gay and lesbian marriages that have already occurred.

When asked how this proposition would affect her, Lori Amato said, “It would put me back at domestic partner status. This would mean eliminating over 1000 rights married people have. As an example, should this happen, my em-

ployer would no longer pay medical/ dental benefits for my wife. This amounts to approximately \$6,000 per year.”

Maria Pease, a therapist at UCSF and mother of two, says she “has some sadness that narrow-minded people felt they needed to exclude my family or pretend we are somehow less than them.”

Attorney Scott Wilkinson feels that “there is no small irony that in the same election we also passed Prop 2, that extended protections to farm animals by giving them larger cages, Californians voted in favor of chickens over human rights by something in the neighborhood of 16% of the raw vote.”

Although I see “No on 8” signs everywhere, there is still a huge and obvious prejudice against gays and lesbians. When asked how she felt about Californians, Amato said, “After all the strides we have

made towards acceptance it was sad to get a window into how the majority really feels. It appears that the majority were not able to see this as a civil rights issue, but one of religious beliefs. I believe that this is at the core of Prop 8.”

The constitution is supposed to protect people from prejudice, the opposite from what is currently happening with Proposition 8. There have been other constitutional civil rights issues, such as women getting the right to vote. It may seem obvious now that women deserve the same rights as men, but back then people didn’t think that way. Another example is when blacks and whites were legally prevented from marrying. The California Supreme Court abolished that law in the 1940s. If that had been put to a popular vote it may not have passed.

The California Supreme Court agreed to listen to arguments to strike down Proposition 8. I hope that the Supreme Court gives back gays and lesbians their civil right to marry.

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Bloody Tug-of-War in Georgia with South Ossetia as Rope

by Albert Liu, *age 9*

Is South Ossetia going to be pulled apart by war? By bombs, grenades, and submachine guns? In April of 2008, NATO invited Georgia, formerly part of the Soviet Union, to join the alliance. This angered the Russian Federation.

As a result, the Russians joined the cause of South Ossetians wishing for independence. The Russian airforce started bombing raids while Russian troops poured over the border. Terrified Georgian citizens testified that Russian fighter jets flew past the borders. Georgia had previously carried several ground attacks on South Ossetia on August 7, 2008.

Is the U.S. somehow responsible? "Russia's army brought large num-



Courtesy of: <http://www.colorado.edu/ibs/waroutcomes/pics/ethnicMap.jpg>

bers of irregulars and mercenaries. They go around drunk, aggressive, and armed and do all these atrocities," announced Georgian president Mikhail Saakashvili on August 17, 2008. Russia blames the U.S. for inviting Georgia into NATO since Russia opposes NATO, which they see as part of the Cold War between the U.S. and the old U.S.S.R.

"U.S. administration policy is self-

ish and makes dumb choices," Russian president Dmitry Medvedev is thought to have said. He may have said this because the U.S. invited Georgia to join NATO when Russia is right across the border. The Georgian president said he believed 500 tanks and 25,000 troops belonging to the Russians were in Georgia. It was a loss for Georgia, but still some Georgians blame U.S. foreign policy.

Mission Mars: "Toxic" Rover to Roam the Red Planet

by Luis Arriaga, *age 10*

The Jet Propulsion laboratory in Pasadena, California is working on a new rover. It is called the Mars Science Laboratory, otherwise known as MSL. The supervisor is Randy G. Herrea. Herrea says that "the team is made up of more than six hundred people, including scientists who are currently working on the project, engineers, and other workers."

NASA wants to learn whether



Courtesy of: <http://nssdc.gsfc.nasa.gov/planetary/image/msl.jpg>

Mars is stable enough for life. The MSL will cost more than \$1.8 million. The MSL is being built in the jet propulsion laboratory, but some smaller parts are being built elsewhere. While working on the spacecraft, workers wear gear

called "bunny suits" because they don't want to contaminate Mars with anything.

You are probably wondering what the MSL is made of. The metals used are titanium, aluminum and lighter metals. The toxic substance used in making MSL is plutonium, which is poisonous. The vehicle uses hydrogen and oxygen for the take off from earth. During the cruise of the ship it uses hydrazine. When it reaches the surface of Mars it will use plutonium to land. The MSL is a rover, so it will analyze rocks and look for sign of present or past habitability. It also has a

Continued on page 7

“School Garden”—continued from page 1

Courtesy of Sherman Elementary School

Trees and vegetables were planted, a cob bench was built, and finally, a solar water fountain was installed.

The garden is used as a meeting place for morning assembly, and Meyers teaches all 20 classes how to garden. Parties are also held there.

The front part of it is asphalt but I think it should be grass. The upper part of it is a veggie garden. Next to it, in the upper-middle, are trash cans. In the upper-right corner there is a pond with bird-bath basalt around it. To the left of that is the butterfly garden. The herb garden is in the lower left corner and right below the trash cans is a flower garden. One more thing, there is a waterfall pond in the lower right corner.

There are about 200 types of

plants in the garden. Some of the plants include lettuce, tomatoes, gourds, zucchini, strawberries, broccoli, tot soy, bok choy and fruit trees such as fig, pear, apple, plum, lemon, lime and persimmon. Not all the plants are edible because some are poisonous.

There are animals in the garden as well. There was one fish named “Hillary,” one fish named “John McCain,” and a turtle named “Obama.” The fish died and the turtle escaped. The garden also has hummingbirds, mice, pigeons and many insects.

I like the garden and so do other kids. Someone from kindergarten said there was nothing that they didn’t like, and that person especially liked the pond. Another person from first grade said that they hate the hay and dirt, but they like

the pond and rocks. One second-grader said that he doesn’t like the flowers and the benches, but he likes the ponds. My friend, third-grader Dashiell Meyers-Holmes said he didn’t like the asphalt and he wishes it were grass. He does like the nature. Fourth-grader Cole Fellers likes everything about the garden. One fifth-grader said she liked the flowers, bench, ponds and trees. She also does not like the hay and dirt.

Some kids agree that they want to rip up the asphalt and make it into grass, and some other kids don’t. Meyers thinks the asphalt should be ripped up and turned into grass. She wants to make the garden greener because she says San Francisco has very little green space, and children need a place to play in or grow food.

Where The Wild Things Are: The City

by Liam Burden, *age 11*

An endangered Brown Pelican plunges into the ocean in the distance. A Presidio Clarkia flower sways in the coastal breeze on a bluff. A Peregrine Falcon swoops after a plump lazy pigeon on a street. At the edge of a parking lot there is a willow thicket in which warblers dart about in a feeding frenzy—you may think wildlife needs vast wilderness expanses to thrive, but in fact many native plants and animals flourish here in San Francisco.

On a recent walk through Glen Canyon Park, I was lucky enough to see a Coyote hunting, catching, and eating a gopher. You can also see Burrowing Owls, cozy in between the rocks underneath the parking lot at Lands' End. Or you can watch a Great Blue Heron hunt gophers in a soccer field. There is also a pair of Great Horned Owls that live in Glen Park that many people were able to watch raise their young. Depending on where you live, you can even step outside to see a Brown Pelican gulping down its catch.

When I asked Matt Zlatunich—an expert birdwatcher and all-around naturalist—where some of his favorite places to observe wildlife are, he answered, “The western portion of the Presidio. I’ve had many sublime wildlife experiences here, including encounters with Coyote, Southern Sea Otter, Bottlenose Dolphin and Lawrence’s Goldfinch.” In the Presidio, you can also see the endangered Western Snowy Plover, Townsend’s Warbler, Pacific Slope Flycatcher, Coyote, Cabbage White butterfly, and much, much more.

Another good place to observe wildlife is Heron’s Head Park. It is at the end of Cargo Way, off of Third Street. There you can see many species of shorebirds, including the Spotted Sandpiper, Killdeer, Least Sandpiper, Willet, and Greater Yellowlegs. The good (and bad)

thing about Heron’s Head is that it is not well known by the general public. So you will not usually see other people there. The Sutro Baths and Lands’ End is also very productive for observing wildlife. There you can see the resident Burrowing Owl beneath Luis’s Restaurant, Pigeon Guillemonts in the ocean, and Western Gulls everywhere. If you are lucky, Wandering Tattler and Tunstone can be seen on the rocks near the baths, and various songbirds can be seen on Lands’ End trail. In Golden Gate Park you can see various species of Warblers. In fact, recently a Black Throated Green Warbler was spotted at Stow Lake. A Hooded Merganser has been hanging out in Lloyd Lake in The Chain of Lakes. Coyotes have been seen there as well. Ocean Beach, Lake Merced and Fort Funston are excellent for wildlife observation too.

I asked Zlatunich what were some of the rarest species he has observed in San Francisco. He replied, “I’ve had many great wildlife experiences in the City spanning over several decades. Unfortunately, some of the rarest ani-



Courtesy of the author

mals are those that went from common to uncommon to rare (or gone) within my lifetime. In this category I can say that I have observed California Quail, Wrentit, California Red Sided Garter Snakes...” In fact, there are more endangered species (33) in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) than any other national park in continental North America. Though the GGNRA is not just San Francisco and not all of San Francisco is included in the GGNRA, San Francisco still makes home for many endangered species.

Aside from endangered species and native birds, there are many accidental or migratory birds that land in San Francisco because San Francisco is positioned in the middle of a major migration route. The wind blows the birds off-course during migration and so they land in unlikely places. Recently, a Red Throated Pipit from Alaska was sighted at Crissy Field.

So wildlife is out there, you just need to tune your senses and look around.

Ruins Might Be Ruined in Machu Picchu

by Marco Ponce, age 9

Machu Picchu was built around 1460. It was abandoned less than 100 years later. Machu Picchu is a city built of stones and rocks. It was a king's city. The people had to work. Some gathered food, some had to train to be warriors, and some sat and watched.

People go there now because it is really famous. In fact, "more than 300,000 people a year make the trek to Machu Picchu," according to John Roach. It is good that people get to recognize Machu Picchu's ruins because it has a beautiful, rich history.

However, geologists at Kyoto University have discovered that Machu Picchu is going to have landslides. Because of tourism, Machu Picchu is at risk of falling into the Aguas Calientes, a river at the bottom of Machu Picchu.

People cause landslides by walking up the Inca Trail, littering as they pass by, according to John Roach. He also says that if the Peruvian Ministry of Industry puts a cable car that runs to the top of the mountain, the number of visitors will go up to 400,000 a year!

If the Ministry of Industry puts a cable car in, there will be more landslides, but in my opinion there is another way. If we use chair lifts, there will be fewer landslides and less of an impact. More people will travel from all over the world to Machu Picchu to see the ruins of South America's Aztec Incas in a way that is safe for the land.

On July 7th 2007, Machu Picchu was voted one of the seven wonders of the world. When they said Machu Picchu was one of the wonders of the world, everyone got excited. People were screaming so hard that they almost cried.

Since then, people really recognize Machu Picchu. People go there to see what the Incas left behind and people also see the ruins and artifacts. People go there because of the customs and the rich history of the Incas. They also go there because it's a beautiful place. Veronica, a tutor at 826 Valencia, told me that she loves it. According to Veronica, the ruins were one of the most incredible sites she has ever seen.



Courtesy of: http://farm3.static.flickr.com/2208/2517547287_99d15258ca_b.jpg

It's sad and strange that people have been destroying Machu Picchu. In the past, people who were not from there (the Spanish) destroyed it. Today, people who are not from Machu Picchu are again destroying it. I feel sad and at the same time mad because people are destroying the hard work of the Incas. I hope that people don't cause damage and that tourists can visit Machu Picchu without destroying it.

People go crazy for Chi-WOW-huas

by Anna Barbas, age 8

Chihuahuas are being adopted and loved by more families because of the movie *Beverly Hills Chihuahua*. There are some special things about Chihuahuas. They have whiskers on their chin and snout, a thin tail, small nose, and big, pointy ears. They are loyal, courageous, curious and aggres-



<http://www.lulubellechihuahua.com/chihuahuas-images/lulubelle-long-haired-chihuahua.jpg>

sive. You should probably watch out for them when you go to bed, because they like to hide under covers.

The average height of Chihuahuas is 6 to 10 inches. The biggest would be 12 to 15 inches tall. Some Chihuahuas have long coats and others have smooth coats. Chihuahuas come in many different colors: golden, brown, black, white and blue. Some are even spotted.

So, consider going out and buying yourself a Chihuahua!

Mission Music Lover Unveils All

by Emma S. Sanford, age 9



Led Zeppelin

Do you remember closing yourself in your room and rocking out to awesome oldies? I don't. I'm only nine. But Lee Paiva Sinclair does (Sinclair is my upstairs neighbor and landlady, and I have known her forever.) This Mission resident is both a lover of music and a musician.

Now in her 60s, Sinclair, who has dyed blond hair and hazel-brown eyes, took an early interest in music. When she was a teenager she enjoyed the Beatles, Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin, Almond Brothers, and Chicago. Sinclair liked hippie music too, but she didn't love punk rock. "I like the idea of punk rock but it gives me a headache," she told me. I agree.

Later on, she listened to a lot of

music coming out of Great Britain: Sinead O'Connor, Pacific Fuze, and the Cocteau Twins. "It's like I was waiting for that music to come," Lee said. Current bands she enjoys are Coldplay and Houdini.

Sinclair is not only a passive listener but also a former band member. Lee was in a band for 12 years. It was called Her Majesty the Baby. She was the lead singer and bass player. The band produced one bluesy jazz album. Artifacts of this time in her life can be found in her apartment. Sinclair's apartment has an instruments room with a guitar, saxophone, and trumpet. She also has a Her Majesty the Baby poster, and in it Sinclair is wearing a black beanie with her shoulders slumped, her face looking tired and bored, surrounded by her band members with their arms crossed, and in the top left corner a baby like Maggie Simpson (sorta). It's kind of funny. Every time I see it I laugh.

Lee said she'd like to be in a famous band, depending on how much power she had. I would too. Would you?

"Mission Mars"—continued from page 1
chemical laboratory to do experiments with. A computer on earth will direct the experiments. MSL will do atmospheric, soil and chemical composition tests.

The MSL will depart for Mars in October 2009 and will take ten to eleven months to get there. It will travel at an average of 25,000 mph. There are twelve teams in

charge of instruments. The teams will look at data daily. Each day they will decide what do in the next day's session. The Rover has a radio on it, so it can transmit data to earth or to the orbiting spacecraft that will then send it to earth.

The Rover will stay on Mars forever.

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ABOUT 826

826 is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting students ages 6 to 18 with their creative and expository writing skills, and to helping teachers inspire their students to write. Our services are structured around the understanding that great leaps in learning can happen with one-on-one attention and that strong writing skills are fundamental to future success.

DVD Review: *The Twilight Zone*

by Kacey Medina Peréz, age 10

The Twilight Zone is a television series from the 1950s and 60s that is now available on VHS and DVD. It usually features people, animals, or war and other dimensions. To me, it is the top, number one TV show of all the scary shows I know.

The *Twilight Zone* is a famous show that has been copied by newer shows like *Family Guy* and *The Simpsons*. Unlike modern shows like *Family Guy*, there are very few bad words used in *The Twilight Zone*. The show begins with Rod Serling, the creator of the show, talking. I usually skip this part because I want to see the episode.

One of my favorite episodes begins with a woman who is lost. She is in another dimension and there is no one else around. Then she finds a man. The man is unhappy because he thought that the woman was his wife, and the woman is unhappy because she thought that the man was her husband. But they are just strangers.

They start fighting because they don't want to be together. They go to this movie theater and they see posters there. Then he drops her onto the ground and he puts his hand on her mouth and starts attacking her and then she says, "Let me go, let me go!"

The man takes his hand off her mouth and asks, "Who are you?" She doesn't want to speak. She doesn't say anything. Then, he looks at the poster in the movie theater and sees that he is hug-



http://www.freewebs.com/two-tv/twilight_zone1.jpg

ging the woman in the poster. He tells her that she and him were never meant to be together. Still, she doesn't say anything. He starts following her, and she screams in his face, "Stop following me!"

The woman finally starts talking and tells him that she came out of the forest. Then he says, "Well, go find someone else to help you go home." She says, "I can't because you're the only one." He replies, "There's nobody else in this place." And she says, "Yes, there's nobody else." And he says that he is going to help her and that if his wife has died, he will marry the woman. And then they start helping each other.

They go to a store and break the glass with a gun that the man got from a skeleton, and then he and she start shooting at each other

(she also got a gun from a skeleton). He breaks the glass from another store with the gun and steals a dress, then tells her to put it on. She says that it isn't going to fit. He tells her to try it on. So she takes the dress and tries it on and he says, "See, it does fit you." And she tells him that she won't just be lying around there with him because she doesn't want to him that much. And he says "Well, I don't know what to do, but you have to find somebody else in another place."

I recommend that you rent *The Twilight Zone*, because it's kind of interesting. It's not as good as *Family Guy* or *The Simpsons*, but it is much scarier. If you're afraid of the dark, this show will scare you if you are alone.