

February–March • 2017

By and for the Residents of Redwood Gardens

EDITORIAL

Since our last issue just a month ago, there have been a flurry of meetings. The newly elected “Liaison Committee” has written several letters to management on behalf of the residents. Two of those letters appear on page 5 and 6, printed at the request of the Liaison Committee.

The Committee has discussed whether and how to

hold closed meetings and still keep the rest of the residents informed. The solution so far is that the Liaison Committee will hold closed meetings as needed to discuss matters that are of a confidential nature, and also hold at least one open meeting every month. There has also been discussion about how and when to use audio recordings of closed meetings.

A closed meeting between the Liaison Committee and

management took place on February 17 and is reported here (Page 3). The staff of The Monthly believe that this kind of report is a reasonable way to keep residents informed. The Liaison Committee has said that it would much prefer to have a monthly scheduled meeting with management, but so far management has refused to make that commitment, arguing that one monthly meeting with Myra, open to all residents,

is all that is needed. However, Myra’s meetings (Page 2) have been far too short and contentious to be effective for the residents or, we feel, for management.

Another issue is the relative isolation of Redwood Gardens, a remote outpost 400 miles from CSI home base in Southern California. (See map, Page 3.)

Residents Council Meeting on February 14 *Robbery At Redwood Gardens*

By Vi McFall

ROBBERIES

Everyone was upset about the stories going around about recent robberies at Redwood Gardens. Folks thought that several burglars were apprehended on Friday, February 10 after entering a number of apartments.

It has since been deter-



Vi McFall

mined that only one woman was taken into custody after she talked her way into two or three unlocked units. “Remember me?” the intruder would ask as she walked uninvited into a resident’s apartment. “I used to work for you.” To read about one person’s encounter with the intruder, see article on Page 4.

Residents came up with a number of ways to keep Red-

wood Gardens safe from such intruders:

- Keep your apartment door locked.
- Don’t let strangers into your apartment.
- Use your peep hole to see who’s at the door.
- If you see an open door, knock on it to remind the occupant to lock up. Some folks have memory problems.
- Wait until outside doors close to be certain strangers do not enter the buildings. Most doors remain open for thirty seconds to allow for wheelchair and walker access.
- Make certain that people leave the building who don’t belong here.
- Have caregivers wear name tags.
- Put up signs advising residents to watch for intruders.
- Ask front office staff to pay more attention to camera monitors.
- Ask the city of Berkeley police to patrol the grounds. The UC campus police are not responsible for Redwood Gardens.

GARDENING PROBLEMS

Julia Gilden reported that she’s seen two women vandalizing newly landscaped plants.

She took photos and wrote to management about this. “If anyone is interested in doing a gardening audit with me, we could monitor the plants to be certain they’re thriving,” she said.

Jock Taft and Gail Penso asked for an update on gardening plots. Co-Chair Cynthia Johnson suggested that a gardening committee be formed to attend to the three plant areas in the courtyard: 1) garden plots, 2) trees and landscaping, and 3) personal plants outside people’s apartments. Carol Levy, Julia Gilden and Miriam Berg volunteered to serve on this committee.

TALKING CIRCLE

Stefen sent around a sheet asking for signups of those who wish to participate in a new Talking Circle, which he defines as “a tool for people desiring to commune at a deeper level.” For more information on Talking Circles, see his article on page 6 of the January 2017 Monthly.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Treasurer Julia Bazar reported that the Residents Council currently has a balance of \$3516.75 in its bank account.

LIAISON COMMITTEE REPORT

Stefen informed everyone that this committee was waiting to hear if CSI’s Senior Liaison officer Alex Kakavas would agree to a monthly meeting with them. They hoped to know the answer after their first scheduled meeting with Alex on Friday, February 17. (See Page 3.)

Diane Hira Rose asked if the committee would discuss with Alex the threats of eviction he has sent to certain residents. Stefen agreed that this was on the agenda. (See letter from Liaison Committee to Kakavas on Page 5.) The committee also hopes to obtain a copy of CSI’s agreement with HUD.

“The Liaison Committee has already met with Manager Myra Wallace,” announced Stefen. Highlights of that meeting

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4
“Residents Council Meeting”

Myra Wallace's February Meeting with Residents

Residents Alarmed At Loss Of Package Delivery Rumors of an Intruder

By Vi McFall

At her monthly meeting on February 15, Manager Myra Wallace confirmed that all package deliveries would cease as of March 1 of this year. "This decision was made by the Monrovia office," she announced. "I cannot go into details as to why this decision was made, however, if you object to it, you can write to Monrovia. Saane can give you their address."

Monrovia, California, located in the Los Angeles area, is where Redwood Gardens regional staff are located, including Alex Kavavas, the Senior Liaison to our residence and Myra's supervisor. (See Page 3 for map of CSI properties in California.)

Janet Lenihan was the first to object to the new ruling. "This edict is going to cause confusion and chaos, because the elderly and disabled will be hard-pressed to get to the Post Office to pick up their packages," she said. "If there is only one abusive resident, why do we all have to suffer? I think this is very mean-spirited of Alex."

"There is no bus service to the Post Office," added Kay Ogle. "Many of our residents receive their incontinence products by mail each month. Other residents use mail-order catalogs to purchase their vitamins, shoes and clothes. They will be unable to obtain these necessities."

Resident Alla Waite declared that Alex Kavavas' ruling was like a "Trumpian edict," which brought a murmur of assent from the residents.

"This is a perfect opportunity for the new Resident Liaison Committee to work

with management to rectify this serious problem," declared Diane Hira Rose. "It's a life and death matter when our people depend on medications they receive by mail. Alex allocated \$4000 to solve our courtyard cushion problem. It's quite possible that we can work with him to remedy this situation."

"You don't punish everyone for the behavior of a few," put in Julia Gilden. "Alex seems to over-react when there's a problem to be worked out."

Myra Berg then informed everyone that it will be up to each tenant to trace his or her packages. "Those packages that can fit on the table by the mail boxes can stay, but the mailman cannot go to the individual floors here to deliver your packages. Instead, he will put a notice of attempted delivery in your mail box. Package delivery is a courtesy, not a requirement of our lease," she said.

Eleanor Walden angrily urged everyone to "forget contacting Monrovia (CSI office in L.A.) and instead to go straight to HUD, the National Alliance of HUD Tenants, the Post Office, and the press!"

The discussion waged on hot and heavy for at least half

the meeting. Finally, folks were encouraged to learn that the residents' Liaison Committee would be meeting with Alex on Friday, February 17, and would attempt to negotiate with him about resuming package delivery. Many wanted to attend this meeting but were told it was a closed meeting—just for members of the Liaison Committee and management. Eleanor threatened to attend anyhow.

Jock Taft who is a member of this committee said they hoped Friday's meeting would be the first of ongoing monthly meetings with Alex. "We will report back to everyone" he added.

Intruder Caught In The Halls

The other hot issue of the meeting was that a stranger from outside was caught going into people's apartments when their doors weren't locked. Donna Miles encouraged residents to report strangers to the office. "That's how we caught this person," she said. "Someone reported it, and the police subsequently removed her from the building."

Many residents were upset that the staff had not informed them of the presence of an in-



Donna Miles, Myra Wallace and Saane Tuiono at the February 15 meeting.

truder. "I had to send for a copy of the police report to find out what's going on," complained one resident, "and it takes a couple of weeks to get the report." For a firsthand account of one person's encounter with the intruder, see the story on page 4.

"I walk the halls once a day, and Marcella walks them in the evening, but it's important to keep your doors locked," Donna advised.

Miriam Berg, who lives near the East Bridge entryway, reported that the door there frequently will not lock, and that a resident directory is needed at that location.

"We're implementing that," Myra assured her.

There were numerous complaints about the lack of staffing at the front desk. "You can always knock on my door if you see my sign inviting you to do so," Myra said.

As the hour-long meeting drew to a close, Myra fanned herself. "You guys make me sweat," she confessed.



Myra Wallace's open meetings are a step in the right direction, although at times the atmosphere is chaotic.

First Meeting of Our Liaison Committee with CSI

CSI comes with Lawyer; Challenges legitimacy of Liaison Committee; No concessions on package delivery.

By Miriam Berg and Stefen

The seven members of the Liaison Committee met with CSI management Myra Wallace, Alex Kakavas, Darla Huttinger—and Ken Schnur, CSI lawyer, for the first time on February 17, 2017. Eleven of us sat around a large table in the Community Room.

Status of Liaison Committee Challenged

We were immediately questioned by Ms. Huttinger about the Liaison Committee.

Huttinger asked about the Residents' Council and who we represented. We responded that the Liaison Committee represents the residents in communications and dealings with management, and that the Residents Council is made up of and represents all residents of Redwood Gardens.

Ms. Huttinger claimed that there is no such provision in HUD or CSI that states that all residents are automatically members of the residents' association, and that we have to implement an "enrollment system" for those residents who want to be members of the association, in other words an "opt-in, opt-out" system.

Liaison Committee member Stefen said after the meeting that he had never heard of such a thing, and in his opinion it would open the door for factions and friction amongst



**Saeda Khan
Strawberry Lodge**

residents. Saeda Khan at Strawberry Creek Lodge in Berkeley, said that HUD does state that

any building that wants to form a tenants' association automatically makes each and every tenant a member of the association. What is the truth here?

New Package Delivery Policy

A rumble of discontent was expressed by the residents and Miriam pointed out that the residents had never been consulted. In fact everyone agreed that the new policy would be a great hardship on all residents.

However, the disputed



Darla Huttinger, CSI

packages if the resident is not at home.

Miriam explained that the Council and the Committee felt



Alex Kakavas, CSI

because the service began when Redwood Gardens began, and was grandfathered-in."

"State of Emergency"

Alex and Darla said that the policy had to be instituted in response to a "state of emergency."

We pointed out that the new policy would force residents, many of whom were elderly or disabled, to make difficult trips to the Post Office. Alex and Darla responded that the policy allowed the delivery services to deliver parcels to the apartments directly. Liaison committee members asked that this be spelled out more clearly, and that staff hold a workshop for the residents about it.

Will Kakavas continue to meet with Liaison?

We also asked if upper management would meet with us monthly, but CSI responded that that any such meeting would require management to travel from Southern California and the expenses would be deducted from the budget. So they said that the the monthly meeting convened by Myra on 3rd Wednesdays would be sufficient.

Need to see CSI Budget and the "Use Agreement" with HUD

We asked to see a copy

**CONTINUED NEXT PAGE
"Liaison meets CSI"**



The above map of CSI Housing Units in California (copied from the CSI website) shows that all but one of their 12 elder and disabled housing complexes are in Southern California in the Los Angeles area. That one exception is Redwood Gardens in Berkeley. Could it be that CSI is just too far away to manage the property in Berkeley?

package delivery policy remains, although management is planning to explain more about the new policy to residents. Management said that package delivery will not stop, it will just be re-directed to individual apartments instead of to the administrative desk. In other words, delivery agents will have to enter the building and be directed to specific apartments, with arrangements made for a neighbor to sign for

that CSI had an obligation to consult with residents before deciding and implementing policy.

In an earlier meeting, Bruce Moody pointed out that to call package delivery to the front office a "courtesy" is a misnomer. The front desk acts as a *conciierge*, which always includes package service. "It's a duty. It's part of the job. Besides, front office package service can't be removed

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
“Residents Council Meeting”

include the following:

- If staff at the office window are out to lunch, it’s okay to knock on Manager Myra Wallace’s door.
- Residents are making their own directory of telephone and apartment numbers, although staff has agreed to help. Miriam Berg is spearheading this project.
- An updated list of garden plots is being prepared.
- Myra is working on an

updated parking list.

Stefen reported that the Liaison Committee would hold both an open meeting and a closed meeting every month.

WILL TRUMP DO AWAY WITH HUD FUNDING?

Barbara Haber recommended that the Residents Council appoint a separate committee to stay on top of HUD developments at this critical time.

Janien Harrison has done research on HUD and has information if anyone is interested.

Her apartment number is 204.

Wyndy Knox-Carr let everyone know that she has been attending meetings of the City Council and Rent Stabilization Board and promised to report back to the Residents Council on these happenings. “Anyone who is harassed by their landlord has recourse with the Rent Stabilization Board,” she advised.

COURTYARD CUSHIONS

Diane Hira Rose reported that no one had come forward to be responsible for the new

cushions for the courtyard furniture. Stefen said he would bring up this issue with Alex. The new maintenance supervisor Cesar Vallecilla is open to doing the job.

MEMORIAL EVENT

Cynthia Johnson announced that some residents were interested in holding a special memorial to honor those who have recently passed. She said she’d post a sign to obtain volunteers to plan this event.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

“Liaison Meets CSI”

of the Use Agreement which defines the relationship of CSI to HUD. CSI said that it exists but they could not provide a

copy nor direct us to it. We also asked for a copy of the CSI budget for Redwood Gardens, but they said they couldn’t provide that either. We argued that the reason for wanting to know the Use Agreement was to find

out for ourselves exactly what are the responsibilities of CSI to HUD. The reason for wanting to know the budget was to be able to assess whether various improvements to our building were feasible, such as a second television room or an

exercise room or an art room. Miriam Berg, who worked for years as a fiscal manager of a local nonprofit, expressed her opinion that as a nonprofit organization CSI’s budget and contract document were matters of public record.

Resident’s Experience With Intruder

A strange woman—some witnesses thought she was a man—was apprehended in the halls of Redwood Gardens on the morning of Friday, February 10. A number of stolen items were confiscated from the woman’s pack, including several credit cards. One person describes her encounter with the intruder as follows:

It was Friday morning, and I had left my door ajar after returning from a brisk walk. Hearing someone knock, I went to the door and saw a woman, all in black except for a peach-colored cap. She was bent over, carrying a pack of some kind, and pushing sideways with her hips into my apartment.

“Good morning,” I said. “Can I help you?”

Still bent over and pushing

her way in as I weakly resisted, she asked with an endearing smile, “Don’t you remember me? I used to deliver vegetables here.”

I was intrigued, curious. “Have a seat,” I said, pointing to a chair close to the door. I sat facing her and asked, “What’s your name?”

“Angel,” she replied. “I used to have long hair.” She pulled off her cap to reveal a hair net over closely cropped hair.

“How old are you now?” she asked, and when I told her, she exclaimed, “No Way! Show me your driver’s license.”

“You’ll have to believe me,” I replied laughing.

Looking around, she then inquired, “Do you need any help here?”

“Sure,” I said, “you can

help me make the bed,” which we did.

At last, growing a little uneasy, I suggested it might be time for us both to move on, and she said she would just use the bathroom and leave.

“Good,” I thought, and soon she came out with hands dripping wet and asked for a paper towel, which I gave her, and we then moved towards the door. She picked up her bag and went outside, but then turned to face me with two fingers raised in a “V,” saying, “Two dollars, just give me two dollars. I get paid later, and you’ll find them under your door tomorrow.”

I shook my head and closed the door sadly, firmly, and locked it. A moment later, I opened the door and looked

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9
“Resident Meets Intruder”

**CSI
CORPORATE STAFF**

Nancy Evans
General Manager

Anne Sackrison
National Operations Mgr

Mel Hudson
National Construction Mgr

Tim Braunscheidel,
Asst. Natl. Operations Mgr

Bob Kerns
CA Regional Mgr

Darla Huttinger
**CA Regional
Operations Mgr**

Alex Kakavas
Senior Liaison

Alan Davidson
Facility Mgr

REDWOOD GARDENS RESIDENTS' COUNCIL
LIAISON COMMITTEE
2951 Derby Street
Berkeley, CA 94705

January 3, 2017

To: Alex Kakavas, Manager
201 E. Huntington Drive, Suite 100
Monrovia, CA 91016

Electronic cc to: Alex Kakavas, Myra Wallace, Darla Huttinger,
HUD: Angela Morrison, Robin Thompson

Re: Threats of legal action and eviction to residents of Redwood Gardens

Dear Mr. Kakavas,

Your recent letter to Redwood Gardens Resident, Diane Rose, in which you asserted that she was in violation of her lease, threatened legal action, and implied the possibility of eviction, was an unacceptable and unnecessary way for you to deal with communications from her. A threat against one resident intimidates all residents. See page 2 for HUD regulations.*

This is not the first time you have resorted to this tactic. In the fall of 2015 you sent legal threats to Peni Hall, Eleanor Walden, Gary Hicks, Diane Rose, Carol Levy, the rationale for which remains unclear to this day.

To use the threat of homelessness against residents who have low incomes and are old or disabled, is a managerial abuse of power. It puts a chill on the exercise of first amendment rights. It intimidates most, and those who dare to risk your threatening use of power will react with the antagonistic attitude that comes from being bullied.

A regular, ongoing relationship between you and the elected representatives of Redwood Gardens Liaison Committee can ease long-festering tensions and resolve most conflicts in an equitable and respectful way, making life easier and more pleasant for you and residents.

We are eager to work with you and CSI to create a more functional conflict resolution and problem solving mechanism. We hope that you will meet us in this effort.

Sincerely and respectfully yours,

Redwood Gardens Residents' Council Liaison Committee (Signed by the 7 members)

***HUD Tenant/Management Relations Guidelines Working with Residents, 4.8a.**

(4) HUD Oversight states: "Repetitive complaints, including complaints regarding harassment of residents or residents associations who attempt to exercise their rights, should be viewed as an indicator that the project may be in trouble." 4.8(1)d states: "The following actions by owners/agents constitute impediments to residents or resident associations attempting to exercise their rights: (iii) Evicting, threatening to evict, withholding entitlements, or otherwise penalizing residents for organizing or asserting their rights."

The California Welfare & Institution Code 15656 also includes:

Emotional and/or psychological abuse typically is defined as an act that causes emotional pain, distress, or anguish. Common forms of emotional/psychological abuse include verbal assaults, intimidation, humiliation, threats, insults, harassment and treating senior citizens like children.

REDWOOD GARDENS RESIDENTS' COUNCIL,
LIAISON COMMITTEE
2951 Derby Street
Berkeley, CA 94705

December 16, 2016

To: Alex Kakavas, Manager
201 E. Huntington Drive, Suite 100
Monrovia, CA 91016

Electronic cc to: Alex Kakavas, Myra Wallace, Darla Huttinger
HUD: Angela Morrison, Robin Thompson

Re: HUD Management/Tenant Relations Guidelines

Dear Mr. Kakavas,

We are disappointed to receive your email of December 2, 2016, rejecting our offer to meet regularly with you or Myra Wallace. We experience this as discounting the legitimacy of our Residents' Council and Liaison Committee.

We are sure you are aware that we have the right to elect representatives to discuss, consult and negotiate with CSI and HUD about matters concerning our community as stated in the HUD Tenant/Management Relations Guidelines Working with Residents (Please, see attached page.) Our community is a vibrant and involved one. We are not a cooperative, but under CSI and HUD, we are entitled to a voice in our governance; we are entitled to shape that voice in a reasonable way that we believe can most effectively reflect our concerns and put forth our positions.

The competent and reasonable members of the Liaison Committee are elected by the residents and mandated by them to carry on discussions and negotiations with CSI management. The proposed process offers you and the residents the opportunity to benefit from a more organized and consistent, less chaotic manner of communication. We think you will be relieved to have fewer residents coming with complaints, accusations, and time consuming arguments. Meeting with a tenant Liaison Committee will save you time and energy. Other HUD Senior Housing facilities in Berkeley and elsewhere use this Liaison Committee model in relations of management companies and residents' associations. We recommend contacting SAHA (Satellite Affordable Housing Associates) at (510) 350.7238 in Berkeley to see how they handle the tenants' association matters at Strawberry Creek Lodge in Berkeley.

Your suggestion to remain with Myra's half hour monthly meeting with all interested residents is a positive (though far too short) way for her to give out basic information, and hear at least superficially, a few questions or concerns of residents. It is not a substitute for ongoing regular discussions and negotiations to resolve serious ongoing issues.

Many residents experience CSI -- by its failure to consult, and by poor decisions -- as creating a hostile atmosphere for discussion and resolution of problems. We hope that you can see the wisdom of your joining us to foster mutual respect and productive cooperation.

We do not accept your discounting of our by-laws, our election, and our attempt to foster a productive relationship with CSI. We are sorry that our energy has to go into fighting for our very right to represent our community to CSI. We would much rather begin the important work with you and Myra, however we will do what is necessary (including contacting CSI supervisors, HUD, City of Berkeley, legal counsel, and the media if necessary) in order to exercise our right to representation of our choosing in our consultation with CSI.

We hereby re-submit our request that you and/or Myra meet with the Committee monthly.

Sincerely and respectfully yours,

Redwood Gardens Residents' Council Liaison Committee (Signed by the 7 members)

Before The Fall: Install Grab Bars; Use a Tub Sponge

By Bruce Moody

Here's two tricks you can perform without breaking a leg, an arm, a skull.

Grab Bars

The previous tenant of my apartment took baths. She had one horizontal grab bar low on the long wall of the tub. She had one vertical just outside the shower curtain by the faucets. She had a grip attached to the outside edge of the tub to lift her off the john.

But I don't take baths. I take showers. So I couldn't use any of hers. They were out of reach.

I asked Vernon to install three more grab bars. One horizontal on the long wall at elbow height. One horizon-

tal on the short wall at elbow height. And one vertical just outside the shower curtain, so I can get out safely.

Every time I move in the shower I hold onto one of those fine bars. That's what I do before the fall. Because I don't want you to fall either, I encourage you to put in an order for grab bars in your shower, too. Figure out beforehand how many you need. Staff put in what I asked for. They are happy to do it for you. They don't want you to fall either.

The Tub Sponge

I clean my tub every time I use it.

"Criminalities!" you protest. "Who wants to do it every time!"

"Not Me," say I. But I don't want to fall in the tub. And I also like to keep the tub clean. So here's what I figured out.

I keep a blue rectangular rough-sided sponge in the shower, and, with the water on, before I leave, I drop it on the bathtub floor. I hold onto one of my grab bars. I stand on one foot. And I put the other foot on that sponge, and I rub it all over the floor of the tub. It cleans it up real good. And I don't have to bend over!

Soap slick builds up quickly and almost invisibly. So I know I have to clean the tub every time, or one day I will fall down hard and hurt myself badly. I feel real smart about being so smart. I encour-

age you to be smart too. Use the one-foot, grab bar system of slick removal. It'll help you to not fall too.



Extra grab bars installed in bathtub increase safety.

Windmill Palm

By Bruce Moody

Among our trees in our Redwood Gardens Courtyard stands this evergreen beauty, *Windmill Palm*. You'll find it by facing the South Central exit and looking to the right of the Podocarpus, our celebrity tree from last month. There it grows – green and bold – easy to find among trees that have lost their leaves.

You may identify it by its swirl of 3-foot leaves – and branches which also swirl. I don't know which gave it the name of Windmill Palm, but, if you prefer, it is also known by its pen name, *Trachycarpus fortunei*.

Like many of our fine Redwood Gardens residents,

it comes from China. It may grow 30 feet tall and be 10 feet wide. As it grows tall, you might notice that its trunk is wider at the top than the bottom. And it may also grow dense black fiber that falls off from its lower extremity.

Do go out and say "hello" to Windmill Palm. Make it happy. Like most of us, it thrives on attention.

When you visit it, you may discover that it is one of a whole family of Windmill Palms growing there. See how many you can find in your Courtyard. Maybe make one your pet.



Windmill Palm on the south-central side of the courtyard.

Eleanor, Friends, Family Sing of Labor and Change



Saturday February 17 in the Community Room, our own Eleanor Walden brought folk singer George Mann who sang well and led us all in singing songs of labor. On the right, the camera caught an emotional moment. Eleanor says "...behind me is my daughter Kaylia Bravo, Hali Hammer, and Patrick Fahey." Love was surely there. Thank you Eleanor. --King Collins

By King Collins

Eleanor Walden has brought us activists here at Redwood Gardens to the point where we can see the big picture. She reminds us that we are one of several other housing

complexes in Berkeley with very similar economic circumstances.

Eleanor and Gary Hicks were instrumental in setting up our residents association.

The Monthly will continue

to carry the names of the eleven other sister housing complexes in Berkeley. In the future we intend to research these places and have stories about them.

I purchased a very interesting DVD from George Mason

called *Union Man*. It's about an old-time organizer by the name of Julius Margolin. I'll play it one evening in the Community Room. Below are some stills from the video.

12 HUD Multifamily Housing Units in Berkeley

Amistad House

2050 Delaware Street
510-548-5189

Margaret Breland Apartments

2577 San Pablo Avenue
510-665-5659

Harriet Tubman Terrace

2870 Adeline Street
510-843-0134

Sacramento Senior Homes

1501 Blake Street
510-649-1547

Oregon Park

1425 Oregon Street.
510-848-8554

Helios Corner

1531 University Avenue
510-981-9802

Redwood Gardens

2951 Derby Street
510-549-2210

Lawrence Moore Manor

1909 Cedar Street
510-704-8557

Strawberry Creek Lodge

1320 Addison Street
510-841-8330

Stuart Pratt Manor

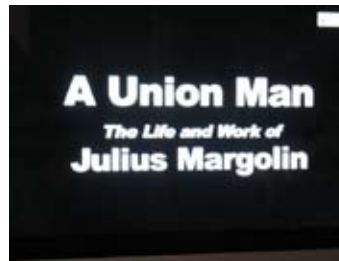
2020 Durant Avenue
510-704-9886

Mabel Howard Apts.

1499 Alcatraz Ave.
510-658-7492

Shattuck Senior Homes

2425 Shattuck Avenue
No phone number as yet



Mental Masturbation

By Vi McFall

“Mental masturbation” is the derogatory term a resident recently used to describe the meditation practice of a few residents who have been sitting silently for half an hour every evening in the northeast lobby of the first floor of Building A. The resident who used this derogatory term lives near the northeast lobby and seems to resent the meditators practicing there. She recently interrupted the meeting asking how the mental masturbation was going.

Anywhere from two to seven people show up at 7pm to sit silently for thirty minutes after which some linger to talk for about fifteen minutes. Before practicing in this area, one of their members went door-to-door to make certain that nearby residents were agreeable to having them practice there.

At that time, no one objected, however some folks may have changed their minds or were not home when the survey was conducted. One resident of the area did tell a meditator that he considers the northeast lobby as an extension of his living room, so possibly he considers the meditators as uninvited guests.

Certainly someone has been removing the extra chairs



Meditation Lobby: Chairs and cushions keep disappearing.

and cushions the meditators have brought into the area to accommodate their growing numbers. This lobby has seating for only five people, so the meditators have tried a number of times to add a couple of extra chairs, but these have always disappeared overnight. Some of the missing chairs and cushions have been spotted outside the north entrance.

The vibes recently became so dark in this area that the meditators decided to move back to the northwest lobby of the first floor where they meditated for a year prior to the move. The lighting can't be lowered in this area, and several nearby doors to the outside frequently slam shut loudly, however these disadvantages are more bearable than having their chairs removed and their practice labeled “mental masturbation.”

* * *

Love Song

I hear other names for You – The Inviolable One, God, Allah, Wakantanka, Higher Power, The Ineffable. But why bother, when You call to me by no name at all and I come.

Neither of us have a word for each other save Us.
And even that is nobody's business but Ours.

So let's forget such partitions as names and discuss this April day within, which captures birds in flight and all their eggs and songs in one straight deed of liberation.

The mighty have fallen around this peace. But let's not get into that, when every moment is roses, and the scent You gives off tastes in my nose like Now. Like Forever. Like Now.

All I want from You is nothing. Peace is a dance, after all. Peace moves. Peace laughs. And Peace's discussion is boughs of trees, light, carriages, actors at their bent, bravery in and out of action, for after all, what, what, what in this world is possibly not roses?

~ ~ ~

— Bruce Moody

This poem won an Honorable Mention in the 2017 National Love Poetry Contest.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4 “Resident Meets Intruder”

both ways. That's when I noticed a small brass candleholder with a white candle missing from the shelf beside my door.

I ran to the office to report a stranger wandering the halls. In no time, the police arrived and Angel was apprehended on the second floor. I could hear her screaming and yelling “I didn't do anything!”

Two policemen came to my door and were very concerned and polite when questioning me. They showed me a table covered with credit cards and other items, but no candleholder was there.

“It could still turn up,” once policeman said.

Later they escorted me to the squad car to identify the suspect. Without a doubt, it was Angel, crying in the back seat. I was glad she couldn't see me through the one-way glass window.

I assured the police that I hadn't been threatened and that nothing had been taken from the bathroom or anywhere else in my apartment. Yes, a small brass candleholder had been taken from the shelf outside my door, but I hadn't seen Angel take it, and mysteriously, it reappeared the next day.

“Angel, may Heaven help you. I feel that, at heart, you are a good person. Sadly, the next time we meet will be in court, as I've received a summons to appear.”

The Deputy District Attorney notified the three residents at Redwood Gardens who'd been summoned to appear in this case that the defendant had pleaded guilty, so no one had to appear in court. The defendant will serve one year of a two-year sentence.

* * *

Great Black Acting At Redwood Gardens—Hurray!

By Bruce Moody

This country is unthinkable without African Americans.

If so, why is their contribution to our culture so taken for granted?

We see the Warriors play basketball, and it is clear that Steph Curry is some sort of Bodhisatva, and Joe Louis and Jackie Robinson we loved in place. No one had to wake up to them after they died. They were as present as bread – right there on the radio.

But what about cultural areas outside of sport and song? What about great black acting, and its pioneers, such first Oscar winners as Hattie McDaniel, Louis Gossett Jr., Sidney Poitier, and Halle Berry. Aren't they heroes too?

The sad thing for black people may be that they had to have heroes. For those heroes were heroes not just of their accomplishments but of their skin color. To have to have such heroes is to be shamed for being born.

Anyhow, I write to invite our African American residents and all residents of all extractions to attend the Great Black Acting Series, which still continues, and will continue until it is exhausted, if it ever will be.

I choose the films not because of the skin color of the artists, but because I love great acting and because, since I was a baby, I loved black people. Of course, I do love their skin color, and I also love what's inside it. So that's why I chose them –for their skin color. The outside and the inside.

And the best way for me to get to know that is from individual actors acting truly.

Great black American acting was going on long before the work of those fine actors listed above. Long before Jeffrey Wright other dignified, well-spoken actors had big ca-

reers for themselves on television, film, and stage – Richard Roundtree, Robert Guillaume, and especially Roscoe Lee Brown famous for his beautiful voice and marvelous elocution. And what about Canada Lee? Do you know who Canada Lee was?

Under FDR's Federal Theater Project, he played Banquo in Orson Welles' black *Mac-*



Canada Lee in *Native Son*

beth, Caliban in *The Tempest*, and then Bigger Thomas in the stage play of Richard Wright's *Native Son*, also directed by Orson Welles. It made him a star. He was a hit on the Broadway stage in many plays and the plays toured the country. He played the villain in John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* – *in whiteface!* He went to Hollywood and made *Body and Soul* with John Garfield, and Hitchcock's *Lifeboat*, and finally, *Cry The Belovéd Country* with Sidney Poitier.

Canada Lee had started life as a juvenile concert musician, then a teenage jockey, where he learned the mortal danger of being black from lethal jockeys on the track. He went into boxing and became a contender for the American Welterweight

Championship, but lost the use of one eye, and had to leave the ring – the ring – again an arena of lethal black prejudice at that time.

After that, he became a successful actor. But his real calling was as a black civil rights activist. A brilliant speaker, he accepted invitations everywhere. So much so that he was eventually blacklisted.

Although he spoke at communist rallies, he never spoke in favor of communism, never considered joining the party. He was the greatest advocate of racial justice of his day and of ours – but who has heard of him – or his fine work as an actor and the battles he fought in performing it?

Because of his democratic principles, his acting career suffered, for, like Paul Robeson, he stuck to his guns on Negro rights.

For instance, he was mightily abused during the making of *Lifeboat* by Walter Slezak, who plays the rescued U-boat captain, and who bated and bullied Lee. Our good Southerner Tallulah Bankhead was the only cast member to stick up for Lee. This was crazy

behavior on the part of the clueless Hitchcock. Now laughed at as a coon, Canada Lee, who had been the first actor hired, had only taken the job because he insisted that the part make clear that he played a professional seaman, that the rank be named, and that the part not be written in Ebonics or as an Uncle Tom.

Yet when a psalm had to be recited over a burial at sea and they came to shoot it, Uncle Tom is what he was told to play, to make it minstrelsy. He refused, and what they got instead was Canada Lee's marvelous voice simply speaking the psalm. Listen for it.

We have a rich heritage of black acting in America. Canada Lee was its greatest pioneer for the justice for black people and for dignity of black roles. Yet the Canada Lee version of *Cry The Belovéd Country* exists for rent in no U.S. library any more. So we probably won't see Canada Lee in our series. If you want to know more about him, the Berkeley library does carry his biography, *Becoming Something*, by Nora Z. Smith.

But remembering the treasure of pleasure we have in our American Heritage of great black acting, let's gather and enjoy it together as it continues monthly. You can't be a cultured person without it, can you?

It will play along with our American comedy series of Ernst Lubitsch; *The Two Power Dancers Of American Musicals*: Rita Hayworth and Cyd Charisse; Bette Davis in comedy, and any great acting performances you can think of to tell Cynthia or me about.

But in the meantime— Ethel Waters and Quvenzhané Wallis and *Fences* and *Moonlight*.

* * *

Passed On: Paul Elias Taylor

By King Collins

Paul died in February. I didn't know him real well but I liked him and we did some work together. It was a poetry book called *Thump!*. I did the page layout for it. According to a biographical sketch, Paul was always writing something, and he called himself "El Dormido." He wrote for the *Kansas City Blues Society* monthly publication. He contributed to the online music web site, *theZone.org*.

Once a '60s political activist, then a counter culture maven, a ballet/modern dancer, a tax expert, an IT guy, he followed a persistent but sidelong walk out of darkness towards the light, studied creative writing and poetry at Berkeley City College and was in the process of curating a poetry collection for the Bay Area Alternative Press, and he was working to revive a literary journal at Redwood Gardens. Paul wrote and read poetry throughout the East Bay writing community.

* * *

THE LAST DOLPHIN

Paul Elias Taylor

The last dolphin beached at 5:46 AM Tuesday morning along the California Coast where the Pacific Palisades used to be. Deconstruction workers clearing the debris field from the base of the crumbling cliffs told reporters they watched the dolphin dance on its tail, flip double somersaults until it leaped onto the rocks at the north end of the coastal slide zone. Oceanographers at the UCLA marine reconstruction center reported acid burns and thin lacerations on the animal's body. The animal's eyes were clouded by cataracts.

The stampede onshore of the fish still left in the Catalina Channel ended before the flames died out on the burning ocean.

* * *

That's a sad song, Paul. And we're sad you are gone.

--king collins



Paul Taylor

"He was always writing something."

New Residents

Anita Perman, #121

Susan Runyan #346

REDWOOD GARDENS STAFF

Myra Wallace
Manager

Donna Miles
Assistant Manager

Andrea Brown
Service Coordinator

Saane Tuiono
Office Administrator

Marcella Logwood
Jason Thomas
Rebecca
Night & Weekend Desk

Fred Altamera
Emergency Response

Cesar Vallecillo
Head of Maintenance
and Janitorial

Vernon Wallace
Assistant Head of Maintenance

Fred Altamera
Jason Thomas
Maintenance and Janitorial

David Branco
Groundskeeper

Upcoming Events at Redwood Gardens

MARCH 2017

- March 3, Friday, 3:00pm, Emergency Meeting, Residents Council, Community Room to discuss Package Delivery and Set Agenda for next meeting. All residents welcome.
- March 10, Friday, 2:30pm, Residents Council Meeting, all residents, Community Room
- March 13, Monday, 2:30pm, Fresh produce delivery.
- March 15, Wednesday, Food Bank, Community Room. 12 noon.
- March 15, Wednesday, 11:00 - 12:00 noon, Myra Wallace's Monthly Manager's Meeting, Community Room, .
- March 24, Friday, 4 - 5:30, Liaison Committee Monthly Open Meeting in the First Floor Northwest Lobby, below the library.

Please send events and corrections to
The Calendar c/o The Redwood Gardens Review
2951 Derby St., #328 or vimag@att.net

MARCH WARRIORS GAMES

2: Thursday 5-8pm
5: Sunday 12:30-3:30pm
6: Monday 4:30-8pm
10: Friday 5-8pm
11: Saturday 5:30-8pm

14: Tuesday 7:30-10pm
16: Thursday 7:30-10pm
18: Saturday 7:30-10pm
20: Monday 5:00-8pm
21: Tuesday 5:30-8:30pm

24: Friday 7:30-10pm
26: Sunday 5:00-8pm
28: Tuesday 5-8pm
29: Wednesday 6:30-9pm
31: Friday 7:30-10pm

Cole Hardware Senior Discount

Within walking distance of Redwood Gardens lies one of the great hardware stores of the world – Cole Hardware.

They're at 5533 College right past the BART, near Zachary's and Trader Joe's, and opposite Pendragon Books.

They are beautifully supplied with cheerful, experienced help.

Since you are a senior, they offer a 10% discount on all purchases. Moreover, on your birthday, they will give you ½ your age off in a discount of a single item.

Phone: 510-230-0145.



This is what we call the "East-side dirt parking lot." Parking is one of the big issues at Redwood Gardens.

REDWOOD GARDENS REVIEW
AND MONTHLY

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