

July 2001

### Do's and Docents, Bird Cages of the Past (The Elevators and Elevator Operators of City Hall)

City Hall elevators in 1916 were beautiful birdcages where you, as a passenger, could look over to the next elevator and view other passengers going up or down. Today we still have the original elevators of 1916, gone are the glass doors the brass gates and mesh screening.

If you have great curiosity of the original elevators of the past era give the Docent Program a call and we'll schedule a peek-a-boo tour with Building Operations to look inside the freight elevators. Hidden behind the heavy fabric are the beautiful birdcages that reflect a slice of history of City Hall. These elevators are now designated by Building Operations as freight elevators. The heavy fabric is used to protect these freight elevators from various cargo. These same freight elevators are electrically operated with overhead traction. All elevators hold a passenger capacity of 16 people and weight capacity of 2500 lbs. - 3000 lbs.

In the passenger elevators the magnificent brass monogram of San Francisco has been enlaced into the hardwood vertical grain red oak flooring for all to see (and step on).

January 1916, when City Hall first opened its elevators, there were elevator operators and an official starter controlling the flow of passengers.

The experience of riding in one of these elevators at one time was heightened by the personality of the operator and their appearance.

Elevator operators of City Hall were attired in a military like uniform representing the era and naturally accompanied with lace oxford shoes, which had to be highly polished. Hands were always encased in white cotton gloves that truly were spotless. The hairstyle was always a neatly controlled short haircut topped with a simple hat. Jewelry was almost nonexistent except for a fresh white carnation pinned to the lapel.

History for thought as we ride these elevators each new day.

### Art in City Hall

by Rupert Jenkins, SF Arts Commission Gallery Director  
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Another month, another reception! This month we celebrate "Insights" - an annual juried exhibition of works by blind and visually impaired artists sponsored by the Rose Resnick Lighthouse for the Blind. Join us for a very special reception Thursday, July 12th, 5.30 - 7.30 p.m.

Also opening that evening will be a series of photographs of San Francisco in the 1950s taken by local photographer Joe Humphreys, and "That Word - ART," a large word sculpture by Gyongy (pronounced Ginge) Laky constructed of twigs and tree branches.

Continuing exhibitions include "Ed Kashi Jumps with WritersCorps"; "Artist as Homeless - The LGBTQ Youth Photography Project," coordinated by Tom Morgenson, and "In the Heart of the World: Photos of the Zapatista Insurrection" presented by Galeria de la Raza.

Special tours for sight impaired visitors can be arranged in advance by contacting me or by calling 554-6080. Regular docent tours on Mondays also include the ground floor art spaces. To be added to our e-mailing list write to me at the above email address. See you on the 12th!

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### Pesticide Reduction at Home

Not everyone has room in the backyard for a herd of goats. And it may be a little implausible for most people to use propane-powered torches like the ones we use in Golden Gate Park. But there are many simple things anyone can do to reduce pesticide use, whether in the garden or inside the home.

Most of us have an overwhelming urge to grab a can of bug spray when we see a trail of ants in the kitchen. But spraying just leaves dead bugs to clean up and fills your kitchen with noxious fumes - while doing nothing to address the real problem. There's a massive colony of ants nearby with a fertile queen and hundreds of thousands of worker ants ready to make another foray.

So instead of spraying, use ant bait. Baits are better because the ants will carry the bait back to the colony and feed it to the queen and fellow workers. Look for commercial products that use boric acid, which is deadly to ants but easy on humans. You can also make your own simple ant bait from the recipe below.

If you have a snail problem, the best solution is iron phosphate. It does the job on snails, but won't harm pets the way traditional snail pellets can. We've had great success in Golden Gate Park with a product called Sluggo, which has iron phosphate as an active ingredient. All you have to do is put Sluggo in a snail trap or half-buried margarine container, and the snails will come. Some people use beer to bait snail traps, but we prefer Sluggo because beer gets moldy.

To keep weeds from taking over your flowerbeds and vegetable gardens, you have many non-chemical options to choose from. One of the most effective of these is covering the open dirt between your plantings with mulch. You can use any of many natural products including small rocks, wood chips, or cocoa hulls, which smell like chocolate! Some sprouted weeds will break through the mulch, but these will be easy to pull out because the mulch weakens the weeds' root systems. The mulch blocks light from reaching the soil, so weaker weeds will not germinate.

You might also consider putting weed cloth beneath your topsoil as a weed buffer. Like mulch, weed cloth prevents weed seeds deep in the soil from reaching the light of day. Weed cloth comes in all shapes, sizes and materials, and can be cut to fit your flowerbeds, or to go around trees and shrubs. Ask your local nursery to help find the best product for your specific needs.

You could use cardboard in place of weed cloth, which like cloth allows water to drain through into the soil. Cardboard is quickly biodegradable, however, and will allow weeds to break through much sooner than fabric. Don't use plastic instead of cloth or cardboard because it blocks water and can suffocate the roots of the plants you're trying to protect!

City gardeners have also had good luck using corn gluten, a natural herbicide that doesn't allow seeds to germinate. Lay it thick in the areas you want weed free and work it into soil.

Finally, if you're going to use a chemical pesticide, take a look at the warning labels and read the directions carefully. If you see "DANGER" on the package, you can be certain that you've picked up one that contains the most toxic chemicals available on the market. Put "DANGER" back on the shelf and try one labeled "CAUTION." You'll still need to be careful using it, but the active chemicals will be less toxic - and chances are it will work just as well.

### City Store Hours

City Store is open from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. City Store staff hours are 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

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**July Community Events at City Hall**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30 <u>Samoan Flag Raising Ceremony</u>	31				

Thursday, July 12

5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Art Reception

Location: Ground Floor

Number of Guests: 50

Contact: Howard Wong

Friday, July 20

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

Youth Game Ceremony

Location: Rotunda

Number of Guests: 100

Contact: Howard Wong

Monday, July 30

11:00 AM - 2:30 PM

Samoan Flag Raising Ceremony

Location: Rotunda &amp; NLC

Number of Guests: 120

Contact: Howard Wong

If you have questions regarding any of the events, please contact our Events Office at 554-6079.