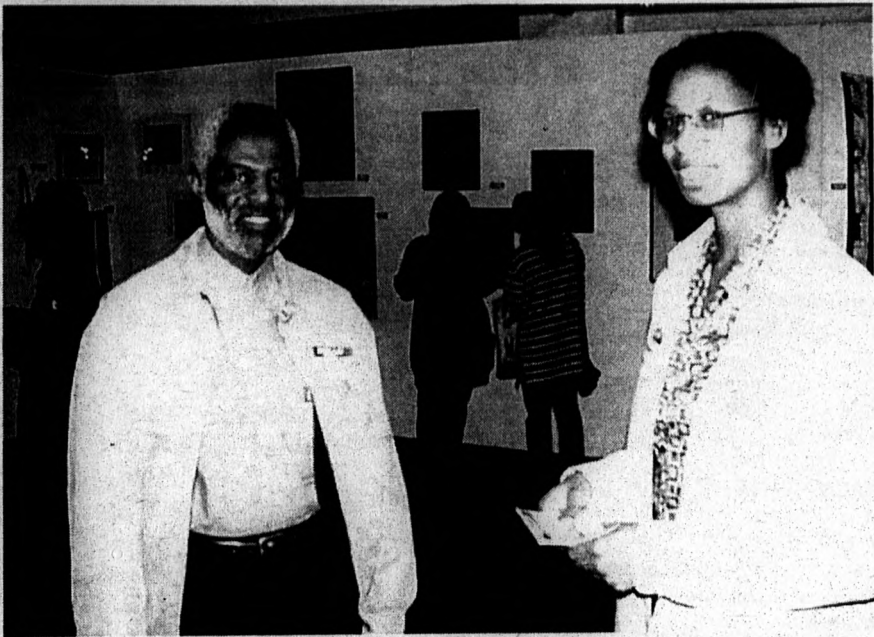


**Faculty & Staff Art Show**

Clinton Wakefield and Verndean Comage were among the many who attended Tuesday evening's opening of the UCSF Faculty and Staff Art show, sponsored by Impact! Presents. The show will remain through Friday with viewing times being noon to 6 p.m. daily. Go see!

**Part 2**

**Series Examines Unionization Efforts by UC Residents**

# Rebuilding the Local Residents' Union

## *A Mixture of Hope and Concern*

By Eric Chow

This summer, while the UCSF-Stanford merger was crumbling, another merger on a much smaller scale was being formalized. In May, the California Association of Interns and Residents (CAIR), a Northern California residents' union that includes more than a hundred UCSF residents, merged with a much larger national residents' union, the Committee of Interns and Residents (CIR). CAIR had previously been affiliated with Local 250, a large local union representing many hospital staff throughout the Bay Area. Both L. 250 and CIR are members of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) with 1.3 million members nationwide (350,000 in healthcare). As recounted in Synapse's October 28th issue, CAIR's four year affiliation with L. 250 had been rocky, and the past two years had been largely marked by court battles, arguing over who officially represented resident members. During this time, interest and membership in CAIR waned.

Supporters of the CAIR-CIR merger see it as a chance to combine organizations that have more similar goals. CAIR's 500 members join a forty year-old organization that boasts 10,000 members nationwide, mainly concentrated along the Northeast, but with chapters in Miami and Los Angeles as well. According to Dr. Andrea Cervenka (Internal Medicine, Santa Clara), CIR regional vice-president, "CIR's focus is on residents, whereas with L. 250, this focus was lost in the midst of unionizing nurses and other activities." Dr. John Chamberlain (Psychiatry-PGY3), one of UCSF's representatives to CAIR, notes that merging with CIR has "energized our group . . . and that [CIR] seems very committed to finding issues for residents to rally around." Chamberlain adds that, "Besides logistic support, the main thing they bring is ideas and experience." However, other people express caution. According to Dr. Jack Resneck (Dermatology-

PGY3), co-chair of the School of Medicine's Medical Training Staff Committee, "I see hope and concern in these new union efforts... [CAIR-CIR] needs to meet with housestaff and establish a track record of accomplishments . . . before they try to represent us on a broader level."

*"We want to cultivate the attitude that this is your organization. If residents are really interested, things will get done."*

— Greg Maron, CIR

CAIR's limited accomplishments at UCSF in recent years compared to its achievements at Highland (Alameda County) and Santa Clara County hospitals are the source of skepticism towards new union activities. While the union has negotiated contracts for its members in other counties, previous CAIR activities in San Francisco have been mainly confined to San Francisco General Hospital (SFGH). The legal entanglement with L. 250 the past two years exacerbated the sense that the union was ineffectual. Nevertheless, CIR organizer, Greg Maron, is optimistic. "We want to cultivate the attitude that this is [the residents'] organization. If residents are really interested, things will get done."

### **New Contract for Highland And Santa Clara Residents**

Maron cites newly signed contracts at Highland and Santa Clara as examples of what might come about at UC with CIR involvement. With CIR assistance, Highland residents ratified a new three-year deal after the previous contract had lapsed for almost two years. Their new contract features a 9% pay raise over 15 months—their first increase in seven years. Residents are now also

*continued on page 4*

### **Increasing Public Consciousness of HIV**

## The Status of AIDS in Iran

By Saam Morshed

There have been 1770 serologically confirmed cases of HIV infection in Iran as of October 1, 1999. Seventy percent of these cases occurred in intravenous drug using men. Transmission via sexual intercourse (heterosexual and homosexual) and exchange of contaminated blood and blood products make up 15% and 13%, respectively, of the total number of reported cases. The number of cases reported in women make up less than 5% of the total. These figures were released by Dr. Bahram Yeganeh, current director of the AIDS task force appointed by the Iran Ministry of Public Health, at the First Iranian International Conference and Workshop on AIDS (IICWA) that took place September 19-21, 1999.

Many conservative parties in the government and even the Ministry of Public Health credit the low prevalence of the disease, relative to Iran's Persian Gulf neighbors, to the strong religious beliefs and close family ties that guide Iranian life. However, this notion was recently challenged by local and visiting international AIDS specialists at the IICWA. These experts attest that poor public and physician awareness and initiative to identify new cases, and an absence of organized record keeping, likely mask a much larger prevalence of the infection. Using CDC algorithms taking these factors into account, Dr. Yeganeh and colleagues estimate there to be up to 20,000 individuals in

Iran infected with HIV. Experts also warn that a poorly managed blood supply, increasing injection drug use (especially among prison inmates), and rising sexual activity among Iran's multitudinous youth (55% of Iran's population is under age 20) are fuel that could feed a raging epidemic in the near future. What is most worrisome to many experts is that there has been no campaign to educate the population on the prevention of this or any other STD. Meanwhile, the Ministries of Public Health, Education and Culture continue to debate the moral and religious implications of publicly addressing controversial topics such as drug abuse and safe sex.

The first reported cases of HIV infection in Iran occurred in 1985 in a group of hemophiliac patients being transfused with clotting factors prepared in Europe. At that time, poor information and rumors regarding means of transmission precluded most physicians from seeing these patients. Dr. Minu Mohraz, Associate Professor Infectious Diseases and Tropical Medicine at the University of Tehran, was the first Iranian physician to take an active interest in seeing and treating AIDS patients at the Imam Khomeini Hospital in Tehran. She is regarded as the nation's leading expert on the management of HIV infection.

*continued on page 5*

### **Personal Perspective**

## A Visit to the Martin de Porres Soup Kitchen

By Cynthia Williams

As part of a class on "Urban Health" offered in the School of Nursing, students are required to conduct field visits at two sites where social and/or health care services are provided to poor urban populations. One of the sites I chose to visit was the Martin de Porres Soup Kitchen, located on Potrero Avenue in San Francisco. In addition to meals, Martin de Porres, a Catholic-run social service organization, offers appointments with a nurse-practitioner once a week, provides shower and bathroom facilities, and offers massages on certain days.

As I approached the site on my scheduled visit day, I realized that I had driven by numerous times, and though I had noted the scripture painted in large white letters on the wooden fence, "Blessed are the poor," I had never guessed what was behind it. The door in the fence was wide open, but when I peered inside the gate and saw the large number of raggedy-looking people in the court-

yard, mostly men, I immediately became fearful and turned away quickly. I decided to knock on the locked door just to the left of the wooden gate that appeared to be the employee entrance; after all, I was an "official" visitor.

Soon after I was let in, I was asked to fill in for a staff person who had called in sick and help hand out vitamins and other over-the-counter medicine at a table in the courtyard. As we set up the table and prepared to open for "business," we were immediately approached by several people, the same ones I had glimpsed through the gate. However, because I had entered the courtyard through the office and was now viewing them from my vantage point behind the table, I felt less afraid and more secure.

Standing behind the table, I thought briefly about my initial reaction of fear, which had surprised me because I consider myself to be an understanding, sympathetic

*continued on page 4*



Dr. Minu Mohraz, Associate Professor Infectious Diseases and Tropical Medicine at the University of Tehran, was the first Iranian physician to take an active interest in seeing and treating AIDS patients

# Announcements

## Financial Aid Announcements

Financial aid packets for the 2000-2001 academic year will be mailed in early December to all students who are currently receiving aid. Please update your address or telephone number changes on the OAR website before early December; the financial aid packets will be mailed to whatever address is listed on the OAR website! (If you need to make updates, the web address is : <http://saswww.ucsf.edu/registrar/students/welcome.htm>). Students who are not currently on aid, but wish to apply for next year, should contact our office in early December for the financial aid packet. Student Financial Services is located at MY 201 (475-4131). The office is open Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to answer your financial aid questions.

## Disability Interest Group Noontime Film Series Continues

Join DIG on Tuesday, Nov. 16, 1999, from noon to 1 p.m. in S-178 for a showing of the film, "Face First," by Mike Grundmann, documenting the filmmaker's own painful memories of social isolation as a child with cleft lip and palate. His experiences led him to the organization, About Face, and to the three other remarkable people profiled in this video. Their stark anecdotes about the physical pain of corrective procedures, coupled with the psychological sting of ridicule and rejection, reflect the reality faced by all those who are seen as different. In order that we may be accessible to people with allergies, asthma, and chemical sensitivities, we ask that you not wear scented products. For more information on this meeting or to arrange accommodations, e-mail [alice@itsa.ucsf.edu](mailto:alice@itsa.ucsf.edu) or 415-502-7097.

## Year 2000 Chancellor's Award for the Advancement of Women

Nominations are now being sought for the 2000 Chancellor's Award for the Advancement of Women. This annual award recognizes one student/resident/postdoc, one faculty/academic, and one staff for their contributions to the advancement of women at UCSF. Each recipient will receive \$2000. Nomination forms are available on the Chancellor's Office website at [chancellor.ucsf.edu](http://chancellor.ucsf.edu) (under Chancellor's Awards) and are also available in the Chancellor's Office, S-126. Nominations must be received in the Chancellor's Office by 5 p.m. on Friday December 17. If you have any questions call 476-4223 or email [rweiller@chanoff.ucsf.edu](mailto:rweiller@chanoff.ucsf.edu)

## San Francisco Health Commission Special Public Hearing on Mt. Zion

There will be a public hearing at City Hall, Supervisors Chambers, on Tuesday, Nov. 16, 3:30 p.m., to discuss the possibilities of keeping Mt. Zion open. Residents are encouraged to come. Public welcome. For more info, call (510) 273-2240. Sponsored by CURE (Communities United to Reclaim UCSF).

## Chancellor Bishop Office Hours for Students and Postdocs

Chancellor Bishop will continue to hold office hours to meet individually with students and post-doctoral fellows on the following dates, all of which are for Wednesdays from noon to 1 p.m.; Dec. 15; Jan. 12; Feb. 9 and 23; Mar. 8 and 29; Apr. 12 and 26.

## Synapse Needs Writers

and photographers, graphic artists, people with story ideas, etc. All UCSF students are invited to attend our Thursday meetings at noon in MU 123W to help plan future issues and shape editorial policies. On-the-job training provided. Call 476-2211 or contact [synapse@itsa.ucsf.edu](mailto:synapse@itsa.ucsf.edu) for more info.

## UCSF Child Care Referral Service Child Care Board

The UCSF Child Care Referral Service has created a Child Care Connections board in the I-level back corridor of the MU. The board posts listings for share care, care exchange, nannies/sitters, and families seeking caregivers. For more info, call 476-2692.

## Notice from Office of the Registrar

Winter 2000 packets will be mailed to your local addresses on Nov. 12. Students who have a hold on their registration will receive a notification by postcard. In order to have a smoother registration for Winter 2000, OAR has an early in-person registration on Dec. 2. Students who are interested in having their receipts and stickers before they leave for the holidays, may register in-person on the indicated date. Regular in-person registration will take place on Jan. 3 and 4. Students who don't wish to wait in line on any of the in-person registration days may register by mail up until Dec. 22. On-line study list will be from Nov. 15 to Jan. 21. Please contact 476-8280 for questions about registration, and 476-5547 for questions about the study list.

The Student Activity Center Presents  
The UCSF STUDENT ENRICHMENT SERIES

## "Advanced Etiquette (or Tuning Up What Mom Taught Us)" Tuesday, November 16, Noon, Room N-217

OK. We all admit it. Polishing our etiquette skills doesn't occur to us until it is too late. We are introducing our partner to our advisor and forget whose name to say first. We try to focus on impressing our future employer at the final interview dinner but end up preoccupied, wondering which fork to use. Increase your social ease in the contemporary world of business and academia through the guidance of our experienced trainer and consultant.

Presenter: Syndi Seid, Advanced Etiquette Co., San Francisco



The UCSF Enrichment Series is a student fee-funded service designed to improve the quality of life & optimize the professional goals of students.

For more information, contact Maureen Conway, 502-2442, [mconway@osrmail.ucsf.edu](mailto:mconway@osrmail.ucsf.edu)

## Grand Rounds & Seminars

### A list of interesting talks

#### Thursday 11/11

Dept. of Ophthalmology  
S-214, 9:15-10:30 a.m.  
"Ocular Bartonellosis"  
Emmett Cunningham, MD, PhD, MPH

Dept. of Medicine  
N-225, 12-1 p.m.  
"Mind/body medicine: clinical approaches and applications"  
Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD

#### Friday 11/12

Dept. of Pharmaceutical Chemistry  
S-214, 11 a.m. - noon  
"Improving ligand affinity using endogenous proteins"  
Tom Wandless, PhD

#### Tuesday 11/16

Dept. of OB-GYN  
HSW-300, 9-10 a.m.  
"Male sexual dysfunction: what the gynecologist should know"  
Tom Lue, MD

#### Wednesday 11/17

Dept. of Surgery  
Toland Hall, 7-8 a.m.  
"Abnormal angiogenesis in the pulmonary circulation"  
Kirk Riemer, PhD

Dept. of Orthopedic Surgery  
N-217, 7-8 a.m.  
"Medicolegal skills for the practicing orthopedic surgeon"  
John Chase, MD

Endocrine Grand Rounds  
LPPI-190, 8:30 a.m.  
"SERMs for prevention of osteoporosis and breast cancer"  
Steven Cummings, MD

Brown Bag Lecture  
HSW-300, 12:10-1 p.m.  
"Saving heart attack victims"  
Barbara Drew, RN, PhD

Dept. of Neurology  
N-217, 5-6 p.m.  
"Neurology of tinnitus"  
Alan Lockwood, MD

#### Thursday 11/18

Dept. of Pediatrics  
HSW-300, 8-9 a.m.  
"The role of Na<sup>+</sup> transport and its regulation in vertebrate evolution"  
David Pearce, MD

Dept. of Medicine  
ACC-455 (400 Parnassus), 8-9 a.m.  
"Surgical & non-surgical therapies in ophthalmology: telling your patient what to expect"  
Dan Schwartz, MD

Dept. of Medicine  
N-225, 12-1 p.m.  
"Medicine and the underserved population"  
Reed Tuckson, MD

## BOOK REVIEW

### "Snow Falling on Cedars"

Reviewed by Terri T.L. Nguyen

by David Guterson  
New York: Vintage Books  
Paperback. 460 pp. \$14

What's going on? Are UCSF students so swamped with lectures and rotations that they never read for the simple pleasure of reading anymore? I haven't seen a book review on a good bedside novel in the Synapse for so long that I'm forced to believe that you're all reading scientific journals for fun and relaxation. If you will promise me that you'll read for at least 15 minutes every night before you go to bed—just for the pure, delicious gratification of reading itself—I'll promise you that new acquaintances will believe you to be a delightful, well-read intellectual (and I don't mean in that UCSF kind of way). To further convince you to read, I will cut to the core when differentiating between the absolutely-must-read-before-death books, the deemed-somewhat-worthy-to-read books, and the do-not-bother-to-waste-precious-neurons books. So let's get on to business.

You won't squander your time with *Snow Falling on Cedars*. Set in 1954 on San Piedro Island, north of Puget Sound, the mysterious death of a local fisherman leads to the arrest and criminal trial of a Japanese American man named Kabuo Miyamoto. Painful and lasting memories of the United States' involvement in World War II for both the soldiers who fought and died and the Japanese Americans who were forced into internment camps create the tension that divide the residents of the island. The emotional division not only results in an accusation of murder, but also ends the innocent childhood love affair between a Caucasian boy, Ishmael Chambers, and a Japanese girl, Hatsue Imada. Love is not the only thing lost to San Piedro's residents. Vanished after the tragedies of war are a family's cherished farm land, long-held friendships thought to be rooted in trust, and even the purpose of life

for a vanquished soldier after he returns home from war. Paranoia and bitterness run rampant through the hearts of the islanders.

What makes reading this novel so worthwhile is that San Piedro Island is absolutely breath-taking and alive with David Guterson's exquisitely detailed imagery. I can see the "snow . . . like powdery dust devils, frosted puffs of ivory cloud, spiraling tendrils of white smoke" more vividly than I probably could if I were actually there. The story contains some of the most poetically picturesque scenes I've ever read. I am amazed at how lucidly I can breathe in the fragrance of the island's cedar strewn woods, taste its juicy sweet strawberries, and feel the bitter cold of its icy winter storm simply by reading Guterson's written words.

Guterson is also a master at intricately weaving together the past with the present. The story constantly shifts from events that occurred long before the war to the current situation of the murder trial and back again. For all characters we see their personal evolution, strengths and deficiencies of character, and the inner workings of their thoughts and prejudices. There are no minor players in the story because every person plays a direct role in the plot and setting. I was taken to such depths that I couldn't help but feel a true, intimate connection with each individual, even the ones that I didn't particularly like or respect.

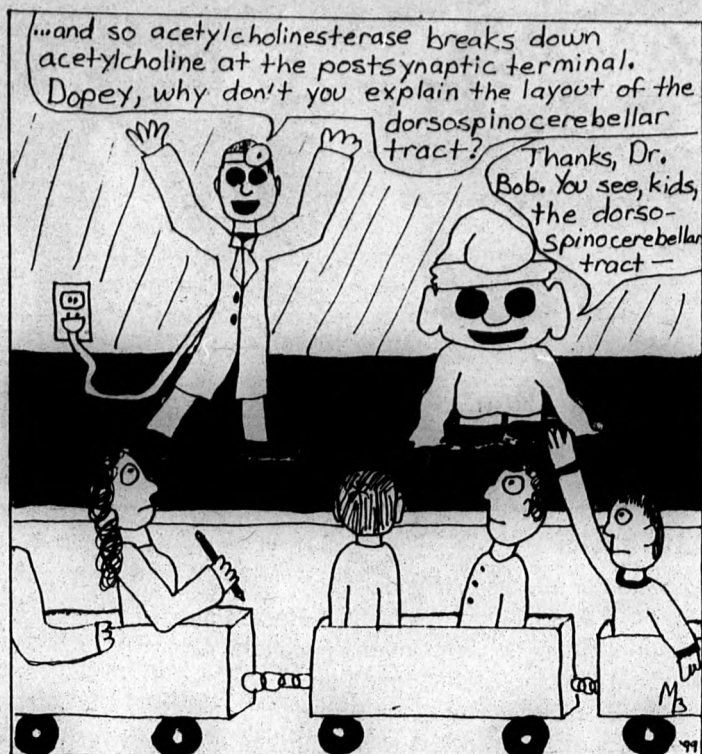
The only disparaging comment that I can make about *Snow Falling on Cedars* is that it is rather predictable. The

continued on page 7



# QUACK

By Melinda Burnett



Attendance at lecture has increased since they hired Disney's Imagineering team to remodel the lecture halls.

## Part of Continuing Series of Letters from Student Regent

# Be The Next Student Regent

Do you have ideas about how the budget of the University of California should be allocated? Have you ever wondered how the University of California appoints Chancellors? If you'd like to have a direct impact on higher education policy at the University of California, I encourage you to apply to be the 26th Student Regent.

Out of the 26 UC Regents, there is one Student Regent who serves a one-year voting term. The Student Regent is expected to be aware of and understand issues on all of the UC campuses and to look at issues from a broad range of perspectives, not just a student perspective. However, because the Student Regent is the only Regent who is currently a student, this person is also expected to bring a student's perspective to the table and to express student needs.

The duties of the student Regent include serving on several of the seven standing committees. I am currently on the Finance, Educational Policy, and Grounds and Buildings Committees, but committee membership differs for each student Regent from year to year. There are also additional task forces and other committees that some Regents also work on. For example I am a member of the Outreach Advisory Board for the University of California and I also attend the meetings of the University of California Students' Association.

In addition to the Regents' meetings, there are other activities that I have engaged in as the Student Regent. Since my term began in March, I have made numerous public speeches for the University of California and been a panelist at conferences. I have also hosted forums on diversity and the UC budget, and I will host a symposium to commemorate the Student Regent position in the Spring. I have written articles for all of the UC campus newspapers to help keep students informed and to get student input. Each Student Regent has engaged in different activities.

In the past few weeks, I have been visiting all of the UC campuses and have been frequently asked about the requirements to be the Student Regent. The only official requirement is that the Regent be a UC student during the entire term. Since the position was created 25 years ago, no two Student Regents have had the same background experiences. I would encourage students who are interested in applying for the posi-

tion to familiarize themselves with the major issues of concern on all of the campuses; visit all of the campus websites, call the student government officers; speak with your campus administrators, staff, and faculty; explore the University of California website at [www.ucop.edu](http://www.ucop.edu), the California website at [www.state.ca.us/s/](http://www.state.ca.us/s/); read the Master Plan of Higher Education; get to know the history of the University of California; and brainstorm ways that we can solve current and future higher education policy issues.

The process of applying to be the next Student Regent begins with filling out the application. You can even do this on-line at [www.ucop.edu/regents/](http://www.ucop.edu/regents/). If you are from northern California, your application will be sent to the southern California President's Commission who will sort through the applications. The southern California applications are sent to the northern California commission. The next step is an interview with the President's Commission in your area. After this step potential students regents are interviewed by the University of California Students' Association (UCSA). After this interview, USCA selects three candidates who will interview with the Board of Regents' Selection Committee. This committee is comprised of UC Regents who will then select one student to become the next Student Regent.

Being the Student Regent requires a large time commitment, but the bottom line is that it is a great way to learn more about the University of California and also an opportunity to help resolve problems within the UC system. If this sounds interesting to you, I strongly encourage you to apply. November 12 is the application deadline for the Student Regent position beginning in March of 2000 and continuing through July of 2001. Please respond to me if you have questions about the Student Regent position or about the UC Regents. You can also learn more about the position and ask me questions on Tuesday November 26, at 5 p.m., in 290 Cezar Chavez Center on the UC Berkeley Campus.

Michelle Pannor  
Regent  
University of California



## The Opposite of "To Merge"

# What Is The Antonym to That Dreaded "M" Word?

A lot of attention has been given to the UCSF Stanford merger in the last few years. With the recent announcement bringing a halt to the merger, discussions have led many to try to articulate the opposite of that dreaded "M" word. But people stumble over its opposite. It's like the language was invented without concern for a suitable antonym to the word in question. You see perfectly smart people come to the noun they want but can't really have—is it the "unmerger," the "dismerger," the "demerger?" Last week's merger article showed a photo of a scrawl on the wall of the stairwell in the School of Nursing which said: "Undo merger." A helpless voice with an albeit imperative but unhelpful verb. One wonders if they really wanted to say, "Undue merger." It's an adjective in that case, but perhaps more meaningful.

But what is it? What is the opposite of "to merge?" A search of the usual thesauruses simply directs one to the obvious synonyms like "combine" or "blend." Only from them can you derive the antonym. A visit to [www.askjeeves.com](http://www.askjeeves.com)—which seems to be able to answer just about any question posed on the planet—one types in "What is the opposite of 'to merge'?" and the answer produces nine matches—none of them an antonym to the word "merge." One reply does provide the mysterious link "Paranormal Story Archives, Paranormal Phenomena." Hmmmm.

### Back to Basics

There are some very good definitions of "to merge" out there. Webster's New World Dictionary says that to merge means "to lose or cause to lose identity," which is great—it's a verb which can be aimed and, depending upon the aim, determines the conqueror and the conquered. Did you lose your identity, gain an identity or keep your identity after merging? Well, fortunately I kept my identity . . . but it cost me a lot of money.

The etymology of "merge," from the Latin *mergere*, means to dip, immerse or plunge into water. Take the plunge! Farther back in history the word is traced to the Sanskrit, *majjati*, meaning "he dives." When he dives then he submerges. Does he lose his identity then? How about when he re-emerges? And at what cost? One supposes that it has a lot to do with just what one dove into. People dive into a lot of things: water, marriages . . . business deals.

**merge** (mürj), v., **merged**, **merging**. —v.t. 1. to cause to combine or coalesce; unite. 2. to combine, blend, or unite gradually so as to blur the individuality or individual identity of: They voted to merge the two branch offices into a single unit. —v.i. 3. to become combined, united, swallowed up, or absorbed; lose identity by uniting or blending (often fol. by in or into): This stream merges into the river up ahead. 4. to combine or unite into a single enterprise, organization, body, etc.: The two firms merged last year. [1630-40; < L. *mergere* to dip, immerse, plunge into water] —**mer'gence**, n. —**Syn.** 1, 2, 3. amalgamate, consolidate.

Webster's New World Dictionary says that to merge means "to lose or cause to lose identity," which is great—it's a verb which can be aimed and, depending upon the aim, determines the conqueror and the conquered.

It seems that to find the opposite of "merge" one needs to employ the basic, recommended synonyms to the word and just view them oppositely. In this way we could elect some rather useful stand-ins. I particularly like *disinosculation*, *discoalesce* and *disagglutinate*. Although they are heavy on the vowels, they are also quite snappy. You hear the headlines now: "Today Stanford and UCSF, the agglutinated agglutinates, disagglutinated." Sounds sticky.

We could forgo the prefixes and just use good, hearty antonyms to the word merger—like *caesura*, *fusion* or *cleavage*. "Looks like it's cleavage time between UCSF and Stanford." Or . . . it isn't.

How about basic, action words to turn a merger around. Affectionately referred to as verbs, they help flush out a noun's implicit metaphor. That's why you hear people wanting to "undo" the merger, like trousers that don't fit, or "call it off" like an angry dog. I suppose "stop" would be too straightforward. "Stop the merger?" Naw—not snappy enough and seemingly without metaphor. Let's just dissolve the merger, like an antacid tablet.

Well, there you have it. There's no easy way to unmerge a merger. You might call it an *amerger* or *anmerger* (because it was never a merger to begin with). So the next time you hear someone stuttering over the opposite of what it is to merge, don't get frustrated with them. Nobody knew what it was to merge in the first place, how would they know what the opposite is.

<http://itsa.ucsf.edu/~synapse>

## The "Synapse Information Center"

Did you know that Synapse has a website? And on the website there is an "Information Center" with an ever-growing list of interesting and relevant UCSF and Bay Area links? Take a look if you didn't know. The "Information Center" link is located on the lower left-hand side of the Synapse homepage.

You can find San Francisco and Bay Area entertainment and travel information, as well as Science-, Medical- and Health-related links. (If you happen to come upon a link which no longer works, please tell us know at [synapse@itsa.ucsf.edu](mailto:synapse@itsa.ucsf.edu)). And if you have a link which you think would be perfect for this list, please let us know that as well! This list has been compiled for your needs and interests and we think that it is particularly unique. Have fun!

## synapse

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## Residents' Union

offered signing bonuses, reallocation and educational allowances. The contract also established a \$75,000 "patient care fund" to be used at the residents' discretion, to "improve patient care" or "increase hospital efficiency." The fund was created from a small deduction of resident salaries. Per Dr. Susan Stroud, co-President of the Highland Association of Interns & Residents (HAIR), "We are quite pleased and especially excited about the fund. CIR's been a positive influence. It was very nice to have someone with national experience working with resident unions during negotiations."

*"[CAIR-CIR] needs to meet with housestaff and establish a track record of accomplishments . . . before they represent us on a broader level."*

—Dr. Jack Resneck, UCSF PGY3

Santa Clara residents also ratified a new contract this summer. They obtained a 13% pay increase over three years, boosted their educational allowance, and gained complete coverage for state licensing fees. At both Highland and Santa Clara, CIR helped form resident negotiating committees that decided on contract priorities. CIR staff served as advisors and spokespersons during negotiations. The residents negotiated separately from other SEIU affiliated hospital unions, but according to Dr. Stroud, "We collaborated, [receiving] office space and logistic support."

### Complex Situation at UCSF

Dr. Stroud notes that, "SFIRA has a tougher road . . . they have many more residents. Things are also more difficult when you're not based at one hospital." However, in addition to logistics, UC residents also face legal hurdles absent at Highland and Santa Clara. UC has not given collective bargaining rights to residents, arguing that residents are first and foremost students rather than employees. Only employees have the right to collectively bargain through a union. In an unusual twist, residents are recognized by San Francisco's health department as primarily employees, and thus have

the right to union representation at SFGH. This dichotomy has resulted in CAIR traditionally having a much stronger presence at SFGH, especially among Family Practice residents who are based solely at the General.

According to Associate Vice Chancellor Bill Neff, JD, residents at the General were very active even before CAIR's formation in 1985. Neff played an active role in university labor relations in the 1980s and recounted a time when residents actually held a work stoppage in the mid-80s, drawing the ire of then mayor Dianne Feinstein.

While residents are on the UC payroll when doing rotations at Parnassus, Mt. Zion, or the Veterans' Hospital, they are paid by SF County while at the General. This allows CAIR to deduct a small percentage from resident salaries while residents are at SFGH. Card carrying union members contribute 1% of their monthly salary, while non-members pay less (mandatory because the union has the responsibility of representing everyone, including non-members). However, if UC were to pay resident salaries at SFGH, residents would no longer be temporary county employees and lose their union privileges.

### Student or Employee?

In an effort to gain collective bargaining rights throughout the UC system, CAIR filed a petition before California's Public Employees Relations Board (PERB) two years ago, claiming that a resident's job description was more applicable to "employee" rather than "student." The right of most UC employees to unionize is guaranteed under California's Higher Education Employee Relations Act (HEERA).

Last week, PERB ruled in CAIR's favor, agreeing that residents are primarily hospital employees rather than students, and thus eligible for union representation and collective bargaining. UC now has twenty days to decide whether or not to appeal the PERB's decision. As of press, there has been no official word from the University. However, Vice Chancellor Neff cautions that even if the university accepts the decision, residents remain different from typical employees, "Academic matters would not be subject to negotiation, and the distinction between academic and work issues is not always clear."

from page 1



Highland residents rally for a new contract earlier this summer. COURTESY OF GREG MARON.

## ACRONYMS

- CIR: Committee of Interns & Residents
- CAIR: California Association of Interns & Residents
- HEERA: Higher Education Employees Relations Act
- MTSC: Medical Training Staff Committee
- PERB: Public Employees Relations Board
- PGY: "post-graduate year" refers to the number of years out of medical school; the length of residencies can last anywhere between 3- and 7-plus years following medical school
- SEIU: Service Employees International Union
- SFGH: SF General Hospital
- SFIRA: SF Intern & Residents Association

In addition, "PERB still needs to decide if the original petition [for union representation] is still active. The petition was submitted two years ago, and with the rapid turnover in housestaff, the board may require the submission of new membership cards. An election [to pick a union] will be held only if greater than 30% of housestaff show interest."

Nevertheless, CAIR-CIR is optimistic, saying through its press release, "The interns and residents at UCLA, UC San Francisco, and UC Davis are looking to join the University of California Association of Interns and Residents (UCAIR), an affiliate of the nationwide Committee of Interns and Residents (CIR)." However, because the timing of the PERB ruling was unexpected, "decisions need to be made soon as to where resources should be allocated," says Dr. Cervenka, CIR regional vice-president. She

adds, "UCSF and UC Davis are top priorities . . . but we need to improve how residents there feel about CAIR."

### Alternative Approach

In conversation with Michael Phelan, CIR's national organizing director, "organizing the UC system is one of our national goals." However, he and others admit that the new union is "just starting to put the books back on the shelf." Dr. Chamberlain says this year's agenda is quite modest, mainly "to get the message out and focus on trying to find what issues seem to be of concern to everyone." Besides deciding on how to proceed in light of the PERB ruling, CAIR-CIR hopes to renegotiate resident contracts at SFGH, which expired last year. Specific topics of interest include parking, wage increases, protecting continuity clinic

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## Soup Kitchen

person. I decided that it was due to being uncomfortable around such a large number of homeless people and not knowing what to expect. As I handed out the vitamins and other medicines, I was relieved to feel this fear melting away, replaced by compassion, a feeling I was much more comfortable with.

The behavior of the clients contributed greatly to this change in feelings. While I hadn't expected rudeness, I was surprised that nearly everyone who approached the table was exceedingly polite. They all patiently waited their turn, and at a minimum, said "please" and "thank you." One man began to ask for some medicine by saying "Gimme me some . . ." but then quickly corrected himself: "No wait, please can I have some ibuprofen?" Their disheveled, dirty physical appearance was clear illustration that life on the streets is very hard, and the atmosphere of the courtyard provided an oasis from that hardness. The courtyard was filled with lush vegetation, the food was plentiful and tasty. There were numerous benches that clients sat or slept upon. There was plenty of space to park bikes and shopping carts. Additionally, many clients seemed to know each other, and the bits of conversation I overheard illustrated that there was a strong sense of community. I also noticed that the clients were policing each other's behavior; when one man put the end of his cane on the table I was staffing, the man sitting next to him yelled at him to take it off.

The behavior and attitude of the staff also affected me greatly. It was clear that they were familiar with the majority of their cli-

ents, remarking, "It's good to see you, Mary," or "It has been a long time, John." Most importantly, the staff were interested in the lives of their clients, asking John about his health, and Mary about her family and how her drug rehab program was going. Not once did I observe a staff person respond in a judgmental way to a client, and, in fact, every single person was treated respectfully, and offered assistance and support.

*I know I am not alone in experiencing decreased sympathy and generosity towards the less fortunate, a phenomenon . . . described as "compassion fatigue."*

Over the course of my site visit, I realized that the behavior of the staff could be summed up quite simply: they were treating their clients like human beings. On the surface, this would seem to be such a simple behavior, and yet the recipients' appreciative response made it clear to me that they rarely experience being treated this way.

In reflecting on my own behavior towards street people, I had to admit that during the past few years my own actions have not reflected the compassion that I believe I have. I know I am not alone in experiencing decreased sympathy and generosity towards the less fortunate, a phenomenon journalists have described as "compassion fatigue," which results from being confronted with poverty, homelessness, drug use, community

violence, and child abuse on a daily basis. My experience at Martin de Porres illustrated to me how easily I become overwhelmed by the immense amount of suffering there is in our society, and I realized that, like many, I respond by tuning out in order to numb myself from that pain—a response which I now see has the unfortunate effect of decreasing my compassion. I am rarely ever able to look directly at a street person who is begging me for spare change, and have often had thoughts like "get a job!" as I steer a wide berth around them. When I read about yet another child who died from poverty or child abuse, I feel sad, but I rarely feel close to tears as I often do when I pass a dead animal by the side of the road.

Fortunately, this site visit offered me the opportunity to share in the lives of the Martin de Porres clients for just a short time, and by the end of the day, I realized that I, too, was able to see each person there as a human being. I could finally see past the layers of grime and ratty clothes, and recognize the suffering and hope that lay within that human being who stood before me, politely asking for some vitamins. My sincere hope is that I can carry this memory into future practice and everyday life by remembering that every patient I interact with and every homeless person I see is first and foremost a human being, and that is what matters most. Perhaps this memory will help me to avoid "compassion fatigue."

Cynthia Williams is a second year nurse-midwifery student.

from page 1

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## Residents' Union

time slots from competing work demands, needle safety, and patient care issues like re-expanding pharmacy benefits and possibly creating a patient care trust fund modeled after Highland.

However, even without union representation, residents have always had the right to request meetings with the administration to discuss any issue. Vice Chancellor Neff recalls meeting monthly with resident groups throughout the 80s and early 90s, terming it a "good working relationship." Last year, this arrangement was formalized by the creation of the Medical Training Staff Committee (MTSC). Operated under the auspices of the Office of Graduate Medical Education and Associate Dean, Susan Wall, MD, the committee has recruited interested residents and fellows from various departments and acts as a forum to address resident-fellow issues in front of invited members of the administration.

The Dean's office refused an interview with *Synapse*, releasing only this statement: "We strongly support the residents' choice in the matter of SFIRA and other residency unions. We are impressed with the work of the Medical Training Staff Committee in addressing this and other issues regarding residency." Dr. Resneck, co-chair of the committee, was more forthcoming, citing the preservation of moving stipends for incoming training staff and work on guaranteeing certain levels of ancillary staffing as some of the key issues addressed thus far. The current agenda has focused on working with a university taskforce to set resident work hour limits, establishing a debit card system

for Moffitt cafeteria, organizing a grand round series, and raising resident salaries at UCSF to adjust for the higher cost of living in San Francisco compared to other UC campuses. The state currently mandates that all UC residents earn the same salary.

At present, the MTSC meets monthly, with representatives from at least thirteen departments. However, Resneck acknowledges that having a union with attendant logistic and administrative support can be useful given the limited amount of time residents can devote to labor issues themselves.

CIR organizer, Greg Maron, was recently invited to appear before the committee. Resneck felt that the union seemed "somewhat naïve about details of [our] relationship to UC. Many aspects of our contract are not decided by UCSF, but mandated by the state, the VA system . . . there are complex multi-layered issues." Maron admits, "I met with a lot of skepticism because SFIRA hasn't been that effective . . . but we are going to do our best to get residents interested again. With forty years of experience, CIR brings tremendous opportunity to CAIR." On the need for broader resident participation, everyone agrees. Maron intends to set up departmental informational meetings to allow residents to find out more about the union. And Resneck says, "I do hope residents become more active in these issues and have a chance to educate any union of the conditions at UCSF."

*Eric Chow is a fourth year medical student currently attending Berkeley's School of Public Health.*

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## More Residents' Union Information

### Web Sites of Interest

**CIR:**  
www.cirdocs.org  
**UCSF Medical Training Staff Comm:**  
www.som.ucsf.edu/education/GME/housestaff/index.htm  
**SEIU's Nat'l Doctor's Alliance:**  
www.ndaseiu.org  
**NY's Doctor's Council:**  
www.doctorscouncil.com  
**Union of American Physicians & Dentists:**  
www.uapd.com  
**California Medical Assn:**  
www.cmanet.org  
**American Medical Assn:**  
www.ama-assn.org  
**Synapse Homepage:**  
itsa.ucsf.edu/~synapse

### UC Labor Relations Homepage:

www.ucop.edu/humres/labor/  
The UC Labor Relations site contains text of relevant labor laws and very readable summaries of collective bargaining process.

### Contact People

Call respective department for contact #  
**Medical Training Staff Committee:**  
Jack Resneck, MD (Dermatology)  
Sean Perini, MD (Radiology)  
Assoc. Dean Susan Wall, MD, 476-4562

### UCSF CAIR-CIR Representatives:

Colleen Townsend, MD (Family Pract)  
Taejoon Ahn, MD (Family Practice)  
John Chamberlain, MD (Psychiatry)

## AIDS in Iran

from page 1

"We were forced to rely on old textbooks and what little new literature would trickle in from the West to guide treatment of these patients," she recalls. "In the early days it was very difficult because there was tremendous fear about how the virus was spread and a huge social stigma and moral objection to those thought to have the disease, even though most patients at that time were hemophiliacs. Policy makers and physicians were calling for quarantine of patients. Nursing and housestaff refused to see our patients, forcing me and my colleagues to perform basic tasks like IV placement and blood draws. And refusal to treat patients from other areas of the country was driving very distressed patients to our hospital in Tehran. I remember two incidents where a patient entered the Infectious Disease ward and threatened me and the housestaff at gunpoint. They were understandably upset and it took a few minutes of talking to calm them down." She paused and smiled, "It was at that time that I knew that patient counseling would be a crucial component to managing the epidemic in Iran."

Management of HIV patients consisted primarily of supportive care until 1992 when Dr. Mohraz and her coworkers were finally able to convince the Ministry of Public Health, which is solely responsible for the import and subsidization of all drugs available in the country, to start importing AZT. Prior to that time, only wealthy patients, usually the hemophiliacs and those infected by transfusion of contaminated blood products, could afford anti-retroviral treatment. In the last two years, another antiretroviral, lamivudine (3TC), and the protease inhibitor (PI) saquinavir were made available. However, no other nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (RTI), non-nucleoside RTI's, or protease inhibitors are yet available, making alterations in combination therapy to battle emerging resistance impossible. Unfortunately, despite subsidies the cost of full treatment (2 RTI + 1 PI) is greater than \$2000, well above the means of the average Iranian AIDS patient. A lack of government or private support causes an unknown number of these patients to go with either incomplete therapy or none at all.

"It is very frustrating because we would like to treat many more patients than we are able to. But it's not just the lack of medicines. We don't have the laboratory capabilities to measure viral loads or serological tests to diagnose opportunistic infections. We don't have the kind of social awareness or government support needed to properly battle this epidemic," says Dr. Mohraz with a weary expression of concern. "I'm not very optimistic. We missed our chance to really get ahead of the epidemic by denying that it existed and even now there is great reluctance to take the necessary steps to prevent its further spread."



The Ministry of Public Health has recently responded by cooperating with the WHO "Sentinel Survey" project in sponsoring multiple centers nationwide for screening of high-risk individuals. Dr. Yeganeh and colleagues are also collaborating closely with UN AIDS efforts to improve case detection and tracking in the Middle East.

*"I remember two incidents where a patient entered the Infectious Disease ward and threatened me and the housestaff at gunpoint. . . It was at that time that I knew that patient counseling would be a crucial component to managing the epidemic in Iran."*

During my most recent trip to Iran in October, I was surprised to see taped excerpts of the IICWA televised, the commentator enthusiastically speaking of the need for more of such events to boost public awareness. Two weeks later I was walking towards my departure gate in Tehran's Mehrabad Airport when I caught a glimpse of a macabre billboard showing a skull with an image of the earth forming the back half of its calvarium. Translated it read, "AIDS: Do you know how you can become infected?" Again I was both surprised and mildly impressed by this, the first public information announcement on the topic that I had seen after three months in Iran. I asked a newspaper salesman nearby how long this billboard had been posted and he said about nine months. One might argue that this represents an insufficient and misdirected effort (surely for every one billboard in the airport there should be dozens posted throughout the city). However, this may also be a sign that the forces that be are publicly allowing more open discussion on the topic and that the persistent efforts of the likes of Dr. Mohraz and Dr. Yeganeh are slowly paying off. I was inspired by their stories and those of their patients whom I had the opportunity to visit on the AIDS ward at the Imam Khomeini Hospital, and anticipate that more Iranians will be educated as they begin to hear about them.

*Saam Morshed is a fourth year medical student at UCSF working on clinical international health projects in Iran, Ecuador and Peru. This work was made possible, in part, by a generous grant from the Rainer Fund through the UCSF Department of Pediatrics.*

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## Food Reviews

Cinema Paradiso

### Foreign Cinema

2534 Mission St. (at 21st Street)  
(415) 648-7600

By Vivian Valentin and The Limster

Stepping out of the mean streets of the Mission and into Foreign Cinema was like watching a hard-edged Scorsese movie turn into a velvety European film. Among the run-down, graffiti-worn shops on Mission Street, there is a white unit with a large silver door and no sign. On both sides of the door, magnified images of spoons gleam at pedestrians. The choice of location for such a flashy restaurant is curious—a dot of gloss and polish in the midst of grubbiness. The Limster couldn't help but wonder if this was accidental or if Foreign Cinema intended to create the feel of an oasis by juxtaposing the abrasive street existence outside with its own interior high-life; he had not seen such a contrast of wealth (and lack thereof) in such a short stretch of street in quite a while. It's hardly surprising that Foreign Cinema has provoked community activists while cultivating a sleek see-and-be-seen clientele.

Foreign Cinema is a concept restaurant; it screens foreign art films over dinner. Showtimes are around 7pm and 9pm from Sunday to Thursday and at about 11pm on Fridays and Saturdays. A hallway lined with small white candles, reminiscent of a chapel, receives the visitor. The moving pictures are projected onto a large white wall in an outdoor dining area that provides the best vantage for the movie.

Vivian was seated in this outdoor area during her two visits. During her first stop for dessert, she and her friend were seated at a cocktail table, close to the concrete wall serving as a screen for a Fellini film. In the absence of a heater unit above the table, the wind chilled their bones, blew away their



At Foreign Cinema, patrons watch films while eating dinner.

napkins and kept putting out their candle. The subtitles were helpful, since speakers for the film's sound were only provided at the dinner tables, but even patrons within an earshot of the speakers seemed more involved in their conversations rather than in listening to Italian babbling.

On their second visit for dinner, they got seated at a bulky wooden table resembling a picnic table. The heating unit above this area kept them comfortably warm, and the adjustable side speakers emitted French dialogue from Rene Clement's *Purple Noon*. Handsome Alain Delon's glances caught Vivian's attention from time to time, but she did not attempt to follow the story line as the film was about halfway over by the time they were seated following a 45-minute wait. It is noteworthy that several large tables in the outdoor area seat around ten people, so large groups won't feel cramped.

There's also an elegant indoor wood-metal-concrete dining room with high ceilings and a windowed wall that allows some access for viewing the film; The interior portion of the restaurant has a raw, but elegant atmosphere. The cement walls are left uncovered, the pipes and plumbing exposed, but it looks rugged rather than unfinished. A simple elegance pervades the decor, exemplified by the plain white tablecloths. Vivian took special note of the lamps that look like giant bouquets of pearls hanging from the high ceiling.

The sophisticated movie lineup at Foreign Cinema is drawn from all over Europe, but the food is decidedly French. As an appe-

tizer, the Limster selected an extremely smooth foie gras terrine with toasted brioche (\$12) worth its weight in fat. This decadent terrine could easily be mistaken for a slab of rich butter if not for its glib liver flavor. Along with his dinner buddy, he also sampled the escargot casserole (\$8), served in a miniature iron pan. These snails had a lovely garlic and herb flavor, but were slightly chewy. The Limster would have preferred gastropods with a more meaty crunch, like the version served at Le Charm.

Entrées led the Limster and his companion to a lobster and monkfish Bouillabaisse supported by a small number of mussels and clams (\$18) as well as the filet mignon (\$19). The Bouillabaisse had half a lobster tail sharing the limelight with a moderately sized fillet of monkfish, both soaking in a lagoon of broth that was richly endowed with the crustacean's flavor. The various species of aquatic life in this dish were all well-executed, providing tender flesh and coherent flavors. Nevertheless, the Limster wished that they were a bit more generous with the shellfish—this dish only had one or two mussels and clams. As for the filet mignon, it arrived with shoestring fries and a slab of parsley butter and was grilled to a satisfying tenderness. Overall, the Limster rated these entrées very good specimens, but not transcendental; he reserved that description for the desserts.

Vivian and her companion chose mouthwatering Beaujolais (\$6.50) and Rosé (\$8) to accompany their meal. The small entrees arrived on big round plates, with gourmet decoration. The focus was certainly on quality rather than quantity. But the portions were adequate and the meat, cooked to perfection, was tender, juicy and flavorful. The Roasted Sonoma duck breast with black Mission figs (\$18) was delicious, but the Rosemary marinated lamb loin with Jabron potato gratin (\$19) would be Vivian's recommendation.

To the Limster, the chocolate soufflé (\$7) reigns over the dessert menu like a darkly

seductive Cleopatra (Liz Taylor, step aside). Each mouthful sent the dark chocolate insides, hot and velvet, swirling around bits of the cakey edges. This delectable combination of textures played luxuriantly over one's tongue like a sleek pair of black cats. If there's a better chocolate soufflé, he hasn't had it.

The Limster also found the trio of fruit sorbets (\$5) ambrosial. Dancing with vibrant colors, this is what the Three Graces would be if they were metamorphosed into dessert. Peach was thick with fruity fragrance. Raspberry had a pulpy feel and was deliciously jammy; in fact it was almost like eating cold raspberry jam. The last of the trio, the lemon, was pleasantly demure, giving off a gentle tang that provided a charming balance to the rich fruitiness of the other two flavors. It was a delightful surprise to see relatively ordinary desserts acquire such new heights. These desserts may not dazzle visually, but taste-wise they are peerless, driving Foreign Cinema up to a high spot on the Limster's list of dessert stops.

Vivian and her companion found the French dessert menu as foreign as the film. But after a translation from their waitress, Vivian chose strawberries soaked in sweet dessert wine. Imagine a giant wine glass filled with shiny red strawberries soaked in sweet liqueur, topped with soft fluffy whipped cream. The sight painted a smile of anticipation on her face. The first bite escalated the joy! The sweet ripe strawberries infused with tangy alcohol gathered the juices in her mouth. On her second visit, she tried the spicy ginger cake with macadamia nut ice cream, which left her taste buds screaming with joy.

Showing intellectual movies over dinner is a lovely concept, but the Limster found himself confronted with clanking cutlery and the imposing height of waiters and patrons that moved about the dining area. With this array of distractions, it was hard for him to devote the amount of attention these sophisticated movies deserved.

Continued on page 7

## Fiction

### A Letter from the Arts and Literature Editor

Dear Fellow Writers and Members of the UCSF Community—

Today's publication of Arthur Cheung's *Straight On 'Til Morning* marks the debut of the Synapse Literary Supplement. As Synapse's Arts and Literature Editor, I would like to extend an open invitation to my fellow writers to submit work for publication in this forum.

UCSF has no literary magazine, and it is my hope that this publication can provide a suitable forum for the publication of fictional works. With luck, the Synapse Literary Supplement will grow to become an insert similar to the Times Literary Supplement.

Both poetry and prose are welcome, as are literary reviews. Subject matter can be of any sort, medical or non-medical; we invite the submission of works of all genres, from historical fiction like Arthur's work to science fiction to contemporary short stories. Longer works can be serialized, and shorter ones published whole. We welcome both novices and accomplished writers.

I am working to build a community for fiction writers at UCSF, and to that effect I am putting together Humanitas, a workshop open to all UCSF students who are interested in exploring creative writing, receiving feedback on their work, and providing feedback to fellow writers. Meetings will be held once a month, where works-in-progress will be workshopped and enjoyed. No workshopping or writing experience is required—we welcome both novices and accomplished writers. All forms of prose fiction—short stories, novels, drama—are fair game (poets we refer to Poets on Parnassus). Work definitely does not need to be medically related, and all genres are welcome.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me by email at mwong1@itsa.ucsf.edu or synapse@itsa.ucsf.edu, or by phone at (415) 759-7433.

Regards,

Moiraine Sage Wong, MS II

### Straight On 'Til Morning

By AHC

*It was 1941—Franklin Delano Roosevelt had just been re-elected, and America was still in a tizzy from the tanglement that the Great Depression had left us. Those searching for a reason to enter the war would soon find it in the bombing of Pearl Harbor. And those searching for the regularity of a humble life would soon lose it to a devastating demonstration of human potential—both in human hatred, and in human love.*

*FDR together with Winston Churchill signed the declaration of war against Japan on December 8, 1941, effectively declaring war on the rest of the Axis Powers, and entering the United States into a war on many fronts. As a result, America sent 3 million service men to Europe and the Pacific that year, 4 million the following year, and another 9 million the two years after that.*

*The first of them landed in January 1942 at the white cliffs in Northern Ireland, just as Hitler and his Third Reich completed the capture of East Africa and devastated the high sea with their U-boat offensive. Here we begin our story of a thousand days... about a young man named Nemo...*

February 19, 1942

My Dear Natalie,

Nine days at sea, and I've only seen water until earlier today when we woke up to seagulls, which meant land was only about a day off. I miss you already. My shipmate Ernest has told me though that will soon change as one of the Navy's intents is to break us down only to build us back up into battle machines. I can assure you that you are a main reason I fight this war, along with mother, Dennis, and Belinda. For freedom they tell us—peace and freedom; that we'll fight this war to end all wars. And I'm well aware of all the reasons they give us, but what is more meaningful to me now that I am approaching the European front is that hopefully we're creating for a better tomorrow, hopefully. Why we're doing it is easy, but how... I can't tell you.

It reminds me of university sometimes, when I studied quantum. Ask me how Schrödinger worked, I similarly can't tell you, but the equation gave us television and broadband radios, and insight into X-rays that can look through our skin and at our bones. Maybe we enter Schrödinger once more, Natalie. And maybe we can look back one day and say to ourselves we did the right thing that year we pledged to enter the Second World War.

But one thing that takes my mind off the war is the food—there is something to be desired, but the cooks really deserve credit for repackaging it in a semi-pleasing manner for subsequent consumption. I have come to enjoy the shepherd pie. Though slightly dry, it reminds me of the meat mash potatoes we used to have at Columbia. Those were the days weren't they—of Central Park, light humor, and autumn leaves swirling around our feet. How I long for this already. Let us go ice-skating at Rockefeller after all this is over—and let us... just be.

Your soldier at attention,  
John Nemo  
Ensign, US Navy



## Foreign Cinema

from page 6

The kitchen at Foreign Cinema displayed a convincing degree of competence and the food was as high-concept as the movies. However, at that price, the Limster expected something grander, and with the exception of the desserts, found himself slightly disappointed. One could easily have equally good or better fare at Fringale for less.

This refined marriage of food and movies was high-brow but with a strange detachment. Personally, the Limster wished that his Foreign Cinema experience was more visceral than cerebral. If they had screened *Like Water for Chocolate*, *Eat Drink Man Woman* or *Big Night* over dinner, he would be eating out of their hands.

The Limster feels that he can still recommend Foreign Cinema for those with deep pockets. But not for a movie over dinner. He would go there only if they were screening something he'd seen before, so that he could catch the more memorable scenes and reappraise the movie, rather than attempt to savor it for the first time. Accept that the movie is part of the décor — there for ambience, just like the lamps and furnishings, and you won't be disappointed. And instead of dinner, the Limster would do what Vivian and her friend did on the first of their two visits — linger there for supper and sample the bar menu, or stop by for drinks or dessert. Oysters, cocktails and the chocolate soufflé would be perfect for a decadent late-night splurge, especially since the bar food and cocktails are available till about 1am.

## Video Café

5700 Geary Blvd. (21st Ave.)  
(415) 387-3999

### By The Limster

At the other end of the price and culture spectrum is Video Café, a 24-hour diner out in the Richmond. If Foreign Cinema was *La Dolce Vita*, this place would be *There's Something about Mary* — a bit low-brow, but quite entertaining nevertheless. Instead of a central projector, several large screen TVs adorn the walls, all showing Hollywood fare in synchrony.

The food at Video Café matches the movies perfectly. They serve the usual range of diner fare, from breakfast stalwarts like omelets and pancakes to the usual dinner suspects such as burger, fries, roasted chicken and salads. This is not the place for a gourmet, but the food was competent and unpretentious. Service was a tad slow, but watching the movie while waiting made it more palatable.

The mushroom cheeseburger with fries (\$4.95) was relatively generic and perhaps a bit modest with the meat but was otherwise acceptable. The fries were not too greasy and the portion wasn't stingy. Overall, I felt that it was on par with a few diners I've been to. It wasn't bad, but it won't unseat the version at Kezar by a longshot. I would probably get the burger and fries again if I'm there the next time, even though they were rather ordinary.

My buddy picked up the roast chicken dinner (\$6.95), and that was an excellent deal. It came with a yummy homestyle veggie soup with lots of chunky vegetables. The chicken arrived with a side of mushroom rice (you could opt for fries or mashed potatoes instead of rice) and a sweet honey dip reminiscent of

the sugary sauce that often comes with Vietnamese imperial rolls. Getting half a chicken for under \$7 is quite a good deal and the chicken was surprisingly good. I was expecting to see a dried out bird, but this chicken was moist and supple. Video Café scores a quite few points for that good chicken dinner.

For dessert (and an excuse to see Bruce Willis blow up Jeremy Irons in *Die Hard With A Vengeance*), I got a milkshake. This milkshake was thick and creamy, and like any diner worth its salt, came with a backup serving in the steel container that was used to put the shake in the milk. There were one or two rare lumps in this shake and it wasn't as smooth as those at Mel's, but for this amount of milkshake at \$2.45 (which costs a good third less than Mel's), I'd still get it if it was stirred and not shaken.

Obviously Video Café is not really defined by the quality of its food. It's more about relaxing over a familiar movie with a familiar plot and chowing down on a familiar dish with a familiar taste in the wee hours of the morning, when standards tend to dip. You can actually follow the movies here, even with the mild distractions, because they belong to the family of formulaic Hollywood flicks reincarnated as video rentals. Although you probably won't miss much if you look down occasionally to cut yourself a chunk of meat, I would recommend ordering something that you could eat with your hands, like a burger or sandwich. That way, you can keep your eyes peeled on the screen and guffaw at one-liners from Arnie or chuckle at Samuel L. Jackson's fluid banter. And the best part is that you can do this with your mouth full, because the prevailing etiquette at Video Café does not dictate otherwise.

Mindless entertainment can be very comfy sometimes, and this is where I would go if I needed that. Video Café makes a great late-night hangout for chilling after a boisterous evening or a hard week of cerebral burnout. It would certainly be a good destination to nurse a pre-hangover after a pub crawl in the Richmond, especially with entertainment that doesn't require too much higher cognitive function.

With regard to following the flick, Video Café works out much better than Foreign Cinema because the screens are closer and the movies at Video Café can still chug along even if you miss a bit of the scene or dialogue. Video Café is comparable to other places with a similar price range; with the movie thrown in, it makes a pretty good deal. On the other hand, I've been to a few places (Fringale for instance) whose French offerings are just as good if not better than Foreign Cinema's, for the same price or less. Although it might be hard to compare apples and oranges, I felt that Video Café provided better value and was more satisfying than Foreign Cinema. There is a time for a burger and fries and a time for escargot. If I wanted a burger, Video Café wouldn't be a shabby choice. If I wanted escargot, I'd head for Le Charm, not Foreign Cinema.

I suppose that little theatre in a little village may not hold a candle to its big city counterparts with big screens, big speakers and big chairs. Nevertheless, the little guy can sometimes be more endearing. In my humble opinion, this is such an instance.

## Snow Falling

characters come alive so profoundly that I understood so fully their complexities and weaknesses. I found myself anticipating the course of each character's role in the story and worst of all, I was correct at almost every turn. It's unfortunate that because Guterson is so talented at bringing Ishmael, Hatsue and the other San Pedro Island residents to life, he subsequently makes them less interesting and all the more predictable.

Our nation's embarrassment over how it treated its citizens of Japanese descent during World War II has long held up wonderful works of fiction. *Snow Falling on Cedars*

brought me back to that unspeakable time and allowed me to witness the effects of the racism and prejudice that Japanese Americans must have endured from their own neighbors, countrymen and government. The historical backdrop is vital to the story because it is the war that affects each individual so profoundly, causing their lives to veer off in such unanticipated courses. I look forward to more fiction about Asians in America.

Although *Snow Falling on Cedars* began flying off the bookshelves back in 1995, I chose it for a review because the movie

## MU Calendar

### Impact! Presents© General info, 415/476-2675

#### Cole Hall Cinema

Fall 1999 lineup includes "Tarzan," "Charade," "The Night of the Hunter," "The Blair Witch Project" and more! Located in the Medical Sciences Building, 513 Parnassus Ave. All films are subject to change. \$1 validated parking at the UCSF Parking Garage. Tickets are \$2-3.50 and available at the door 1/2 hour before show time. Cole Hall Cinema Hotline at 476-6932 for updated information before coming to the cinema.

#### The Chancellor's Concert Series

Thursdays thru Nov. 18. 12 noon-12:15 p.m.: Seating and lunch; 12:15 p.m.-12:45 p.m.: Concert time. Cole Hall Auditorium.

#### The Music of the New Millennium

Featuring The Gospel Choir at UCSF. Wednesday, Nov. 17, 1999, 6:30 p.m. Cole Hall Auditorium, 513 Parnassus Ave. Admission: \$8- General Public, \$5- UCSF Staff, \$3- Students/Seniors over 65 yrs. Don't miss this celebration featuring some of the Bay Area's best vocalists guided by musical director Jeffery Williams. For more information call Impact! Presents at 476-2675.

### Outdoors Unlimited General info, 415/476-2078

#### Wilderness Medicine Seminar

Saturday, Nov. 20, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Fundraiser for the Wilderness Medical Society. Hosted By Outdoors Unlimited, University of California, San Francisco Medical Campus, Health Sciences West 301 (HSW), Parnassus Campus. Topics are: Hypothermia and frostbite, Jonathan Laine, M.D., FACEP; Fractures and dislocations, Joseph Serra, M.D.; Immersion hypothermia and Drowning, Eric Weiss, M.D., FACEP; Going to high altitude, Gordon Benner, M.D. Wilderness medical kits and improvisation, Eric Weiss, M.D., FACEP. Registration at the Door: \$40 (\$30 w/o book). (Book is the *Wilderness Medical Society's Practice Guidelines for Wilderness Emergency Care*). Advanced Registration: \$35 (\$25 w/o book) (prior to Nov 12). \$5 discount for members of the Wilderness Medical Society, Sierra Club, National Ski Patrol, UCSF students and employees and Outdoors Unlimited Volunteers (send proof of membership). 6 CEU Credits Available for Nurses and EMT's for \$10. To register: send check (make payable to UC Regents) to: Wilderness Medicine Seminar, Outdoors Unlimited, Campus Box 0234A - UCSF, San Francisco, CA 94143. For more info call Bobbie Foster at 415/476-0417.



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adaptation will debut in January 2000. It will be the first film by director Scott Hicks since the release of his Oscar winning film *Shine*. Ethan Hawke will star as Ishmael Chambers and newcomers Rick Yune and Youki Kudo will portray Kabuo and Hatsue Miyamoto. I will undoubtedly race to the theatre to see the characters of my imagination materialize on the big screen. And since this will be a film by the same person that directed the marvelous movie *Shine*, I'm hopeful for the screen version. But remember... always read the book before seeing the movie. You won't be disappointed!

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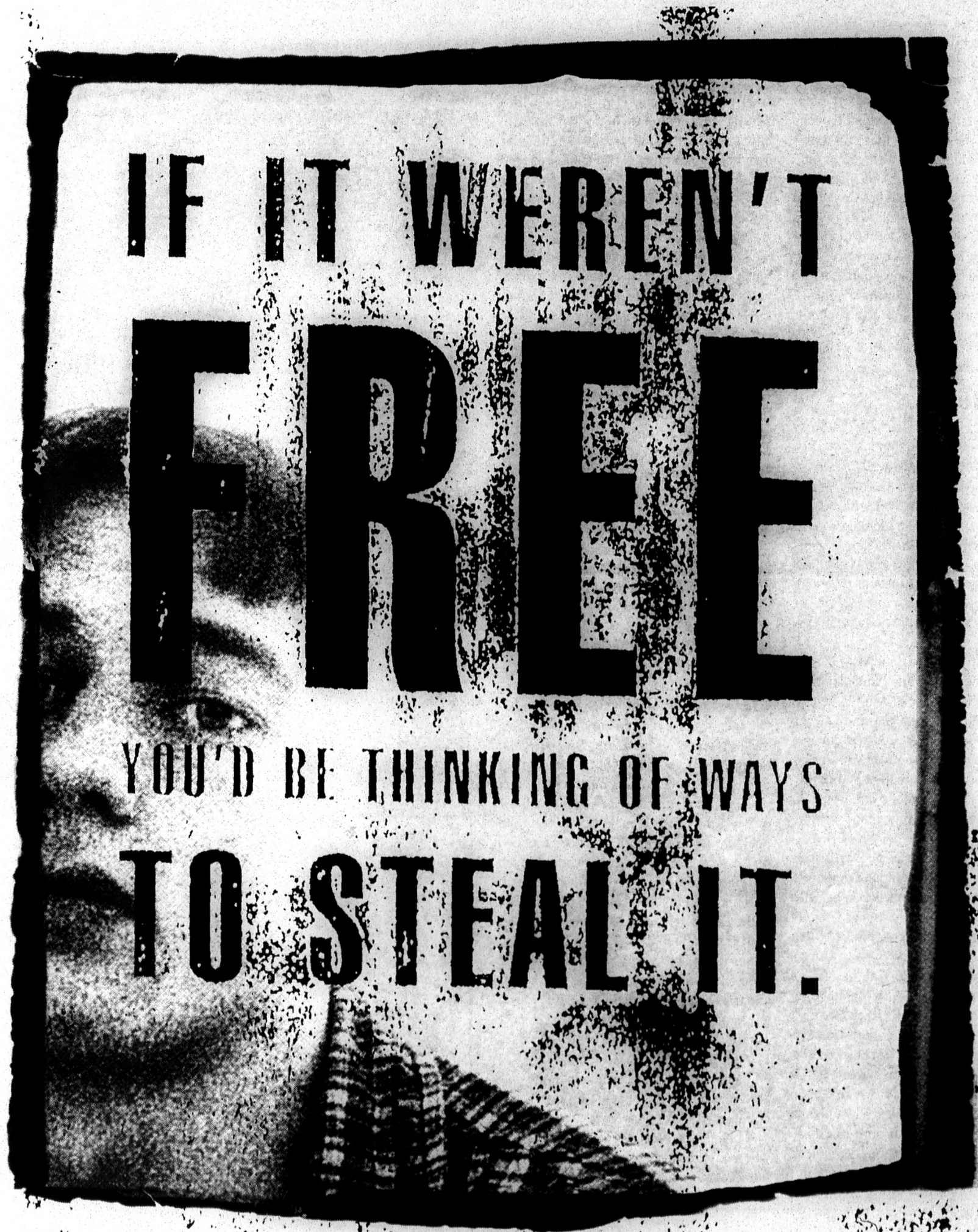
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