

# Guest Opinions

## What will we talk about?

By Sarah Walsh

I'm worried about conversations. What will we talk about when the rent goes down?

Since returning to the city of my birth nearly two years ago, there have been two fundamental commonalities that I share with my fellow San Franciscans. These are the two ice breakers, the conversation jump starters, which seem to provide a kind of camaraderie amongst the masses. They are the two questions that connect me to my peers, my co-workers, and the guy sitting next to me on the 22 Fillmore line.

"Yeah I've got a new place down on 16th and Valencia." "Oh yeah, how much are you paying." "It's a deal, just \$2000 for a one bedroom." "Oh that's sweet man."

I have been wondering if this will be the story of San Francisco for days to come? Will our conversations remain so predictable? Recent events have led me to believe otherwise.

In my neighborhood alone, I have seen five newly empty apartments in the past few weeks and they are not being filled. I live in what my roommates and I have designated as "non specific heights", just bordering the classic

Victorian homes on the hill. Although I live at the bottom of Pacific Heights, when I look up hill, I remind myself that I am surrounded by many young entrepreneurs who have embraced the dot com bandwagon. And it appears that they are leaving town.

Does this mean that the Mission will go back to its rightful owners? Will my roommate be able to go to her favorite dive bar without fear of encountering a "suit"? Will the Western Addition hold on to its few remaining BBQ joints, instead of allowing the well manicured hand of Pacific Heights to reach further into its underbelly? Will my friends

apartments and into more reasonable living spaces?

And then there are the conversations I mentioned earlier. Will we have to come up with more inventive ice breakers, new opening lines at bars and clubs?

I for one have plenty to talk about. I've come up with a few conversation suggestions. Try these on for size. "Did you know that there were 5.3 million people newly infected with AIDS in 2000?" "Did you know that our current President never wanted to even be the Governor of Texas, but actually the Baseball Commissioner?" And finally for those of you who aren't finished with this one yet, "And what about this Eminem character, is he really worth all the hype?"

A skeptical Jenny at Metro Rents, a roommate and rental listing agency, told me, "Yes, supply has gone up relative to demand. We aren't seeing the dramatic increases in rent that we did in 1998 and 1999, but the cost of housing hasn't decreased substantially yet." (Key word YET)

I look forward to the future. I find comfort in knowing that should I leave my current home, I may actually find another one. I will worry less about the possibility of eviction. I will invite my friends to move here, who would love to, but stay away in fear of high rent.

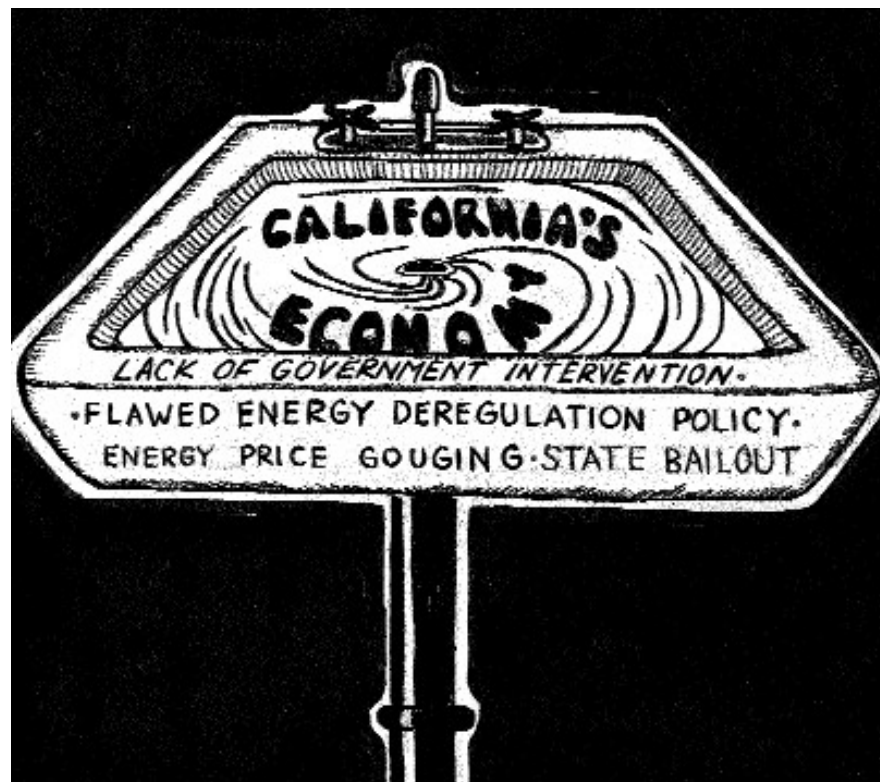
Yes, San Francisco I have a dream. We could reclaim the South of Market as a place for artists and their studios. We could rent out the new spacious live work spaces to families living in overcrowded Mission Street apartments. We could invite the Church of John Coltrane back to its rightful home of the last 25 years, at 315 Divisadero, which they had to leave last year when their rent doubled.

Yes San Francisco, I have a dream. Let us find something else to talk about, as we wait for the prices to plummet.

the chance is that we'll see the kind of change in these attitudes that we've been fighting for at some point in the near future.

The protests that are so closely associated with campuses like UC Berkeley have become synonymous with progressive attitudes, but the reaction to the Horowitz ad bears no resemblance to the idea of moving forward. The logic in these protester's display in opposing the right to freedom of speech is actually nonprogressive, something akin to standing still or being stuck on autopilot, and this sort of narrow-mindedness is exactly what caused their anger in the first place.

## Politically Speaking.....by Ron



## The Melting Snows of Kilimanjaro

By David O'Connell

Guardsman Staff Writer

Mt. Kilimanjaro has long stood a solitary watch over the sweltering equatorial jungles, the Great Plains, and the parched desert of the Great Rift Valley of East Africa. In the Rift Valley, the ground is cracked and broken like shards of discarded pottery, but in the shadow of Kilimanjaro the land is fertile, well watered, and one of Africa's richest coffee growing regions. For ages, its once unchanging snows gave the land below a steady stream of glacial runoff.

Unfortunately, recent scientific evidence shows that the snows of Kilimanjaro are hardly immutable. In fact, the legendary glacier that caps Kilimanjaro is melting away so rapidly that scientists say it may disappear completely in 20 years, with disastrous effects on both the environment and the tourism industry.

The cause of this disaster is Global Warming, which according to Professor Lonnie G. Thompson of Ohio State University, has claimed..."82% of Mt. Kilimanjaro's ice since 1912" in... the hottest century in 1,000 years."

This melting of Kilimanjaro's glacier forebodes regional disaster that could have serious effects on the supply of drinking water, crop irrigation, and hydroelectric production. According to Thompson

the glaciers are like natural dams. They store the snow in the wet season and they melt in the dry season and bring water flow to the rivers."

Should the ice cap melt completely, the region surrounding Mt. Kilimanjaro may very well join much of the East African landscape in its six-month battle against the ravages of the monsoon dry season. Its loss could also sound an irrevocable blow to Tanzania's tourism industry. "Kilimanjaro is the number one foreign-currency earner for the Tanzanian government. Twenty thousand tourists go there every year to see ice at three degrees south of the equator."

Finally, one such as this writer—who has actually gazed in person at the majesty of this 19,000-foot Mountain—can't help but feel an even greater loss here. As Hemingway once noted in his masterwork *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*, the native Masai tribe referred to its summit as "The House of God." One who has caught a glimpse of the mountain could hardly disagree with the Masai. If there are divine intersections on Earth, then certainly this snowy peak is one of them. That is why its loss is not merely a Tanzanian loss, nor an East African one, but perhaps the decline of Kilimanjaro's ancient white cap signifies much more—the loss of one of our greatest natural cathedrals.

## Too Much

cont. from P8

use intimidation if we really want what we believe in.

Rather than fighting fire with fire, we need to learn to treat the perpetrators of these hate speech incidents like a little brother who doesn't know any better. The people who turn into bigots usually do so because they already feel intimidated, so shouting at them will only push them away even further. The sooner we learn to stop reacting to their hatred with anger and instead start responding to it with reason, the better