

# No on Prop J; Take Back The Democratic Party

Continued from Page 1

same goal of displacing low and moderate income people with wealthy people. The Prop J units will only be affordable to those making over \$100,000 a year. It relaxes zoning and affordable housing requirements and the creation of these high-rise monsters will bring gentrification roaring through our neighborhoods. You won't get evicted as quickly as you would have under Prop R, but you'll get evicted eventually under Prop J.

### State Initiatives

#### Yes on 56

A big reason for California's budget crisis is that every year a handful of conservative legislators hold the budget hostage, forcing cuts in services rather than needed increases in taxes. Prop 56 lowers the majority needed to adopt a budget to 55% from 67%. It also says legislators won't get paid until there's a budget.

#### No on 57

This is Arnold's bond. The state borrows money at high interest rates to pay off its debt. Our children have to pay the bond back, plus all the interest. It's irresponsible and costly.

#### No on 58

This requires state spending limits, an old Republican trick to cut services as much as possible.

### Democratic County Central Committee

The DCCC needs to be taken back. This board endorsed Republican Newsom for Mayor and has steadily been moving to the right. It has important influence over local legislation and tenants should not skip this part of the ballot. Here are our recommendations of candidates with good, strong pro-tenant credentials:

#### 13th Assembly District (Vote for 12) (East Side of City)

Greg Shaw  
Robert Haaland  
Bill Barnes  
Joe Julian  
Rick Galbreath  
Jonee Levy  
Michael Goldstein  
Tracy Baxter  
Gerry Crowley  
Kirsten Boyd  
Bruce Wolfe  
Sue Bierman

#### 12th Assembly District

(Vote for 12) (West Side of City; notes that the growing conservative influence on the DCCC is coming from the 12th District; we could only find 9 candidates worthy of endorsement)

Robert Pender  
Greg Kamin  
Jane Morrison  
Connie O'Connor  
Susan Hall  
Richard Hansen  
Steve Williams  
Dan Kalb  
Malik Looper

### Green County Central Committee

Though not as influential as the Democratic Committee, the Greens are a rising force in San Francisco. Here's our recommendations:

Chris Finn  
Sujung Kim  
Paul Quick

## Tenants Union Endorsements March 2 Presidential Primary

### San Francisco Measures

Prop A (Deferred Taxation) YES  
Prop B (Retirement Benefits) YES  
Prop C (Civilian Jobs In Police) YES  
Prop D (Equal Treatment of Domestic Partners) YES  
Prop E (Limit Ashcroft's Ability To Get City Records) YES  
Prop F (Deputy Sheriff Labor Negotiations) YES  
Prop G (Supplemental Pay For Employees In Military) NO POSITION  
Prop H (Budget Set-Aside For Education) YES  
Prop I (Replace Diesel Buses) YES  
Prop J (Housing For Wealthy) NO NO NO

### State Measures

Prop 55 (Education Bond) NO POSITION  
Prop 56 (Pass Budget With 55% Vote, Not 66%) YES  
Prop 57 (Pass Costs of Fiscal Crisis On To Our Children) NO  
Prop 58 (Strict State Spending Limits) NO

### Democratic Central Committee Endorsements

#### 12th AD

Robert Pender  
Greg Kamin  
Jane Morrison  
Connie O'Connor  
Susan Hall  
Richard Hansen  
Steve Williams  
Dan Kalb  
Malik Looper

#### 13th AD

Greg Shaw  
Robert Haaland  
Bill Barnes  
Joe Julian  
Rick Galbreath  
Jonee Levy  
Michael Goldstein  
Tracy Baxter  
Gerry Crowley  
Kirsten Boyd  
Bruce Wolfe  
Sue Bierman

### Green County Central Committee

Chris Finn  
Sujung Kim  
Paul Quick

### Other Races

State Senate-Carole Migden

## Fundraising Events for SFTU

We need to raise money in order to do battle with Gavin Newsom, publish the 8th edition of our Tenants' Rights handbook, and simply pay our rent just like you, so begun a series of fundraisers in 2004.

Our first, a rock and roll benefit at the Curve Bar on January 24th, was a success. With help from Judo Rodriguez, Sweet Polly Purebred (performing their hit single, "Gavin is the Landlord's Man"), Coup de Grace, and Poisin Jett Gunz, the SFTU raise over \$500. A big thank you goes out to Matt Shapiro of the Curve Bar for opening their doors to us, the bands involved, Susan Bryan for doing, well, everything, Dave Crow for being the MC, Leon Low for DJing, Joe McLaughlin for working the door, Amy Balint for publicity, and everyone who attended.

Our next rock & roll benefit will be on Feb. 25 at the Elbo Room. This gig will feature Motorhome, Blessing the Hogs, and Kill the Messenger. In March, we'll be having a show on Saint Paddy's Day, with Six Eye Columbia and the Auditorials at the Make Out Room. After that, well, you'll have to stay tuned, but more great events are on the way!



## I WANT TO JOIN THE SFTU!

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_ DISTRICT: \_\_\_\_\_  
 PHONE: (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_  
 LANDLORD'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE MOVED IN: \_\_\_\_\_  
 # OF UNITS IN BLDG: \_\_\_\_\_ # OF BEDROOMS IN UNIT: \_\_\_\_\_ CURRENT RENT: \_\_\_\_\_  
 1 YEAR:  \$55 HOUSEHOLD  \$40 REGULAR  \$75 SUSTAINER  \$25 LOW INCOME  
 2 YEARS:  \$100 HOUSEHOLD  \$75 REGULAR  \$140 SUSTAINER  \$45 LOW INCOME  
**MAIL WITH YOUR CHECK TO: SFTU, 558 CAPP ST., SF, CA, 94110**  
**WE WILL MAIL THE HANDBOOK AND THE MEMBER PHONE NUMBER**

# Students Look At City's Housing Crisis

The one advantage that landlords have is that they have the Ellis act. This allows them to take their property off the market forcing the renter to move out. Landlords only need to give the tenants a 30-60 day heads up and all will be okay. Basically the only things needed to evict somebody are a reason and those famous 30-60 days.

*Justin Fong*

## Rent Crisis Cripples Tenants in San Francisco

Many people have said that San Francisco is the most expensive and most difficult place to live in the US. San Francisco is a haven for some people. They like the scenery, the diversity, it's laid-back nature, and the fact that it's so popular. But the city's popularity and limited space makes San Francisco extremely expensive, particularly during the dot-com boom that took place between 1997 and 2000.

In some areas, rent can be \$1200 for just a studio apartment. People have to work higher-paying jobs just to pay off the rent, and they resent that fact. Of course, most people here would rather own their own home to build equity and save money, but it's a dream that's far from reality. Most couldn't hope to afford homes that go on sale anywhere from \$300,000 to \$1.3 million. Their only choices are to either rent, or leave the city.

Unions and organizations have sprung up around the city to protect the rights of renters and make it a little easier to live here. One of these organizations is the San Francisco Tenants Union, which is a membership founded by tenants that offers such services as eviction protection, rent ordinance, and a counseling service.

One man from the union is Steven Shubert. He's the one that has informed me about the rent crisis in San Francisco, such as what's happening and why it's happening. "Renting is not a commodity, it is a right", he says.

*Tyler Smith*

## Don't Kick Me Out

Steven Shubert of the San Francisco Tenants Union says that all renters need rights. Since San Francisco has limited housing availability, renting has taken two-thirds of the percent for housing in San Francisco. He also says that San Francisco has the third most expensive housing in the U.S. A rent ordinance was passed by the Board of Supervisors in 1979. The rent ordinance consists of two parts: rent control and eviction control. This gave tenants more rights.

Many elderly and long term tenants are being evicted. Lola McKay, at the age of eighty-three, became a victim of eviction when her building was bought by new owners who wanted to raise the rent of the building.

Some people are happy to be renting. Anna Toy says that renting is okay as long as both parties are satisfied. Others like owning their own home. Gabriel Laureta says that owning a home would build up some equity.

*Matthew Laureta*

## Renting vs. Owning

When you have your own room, your very own personal space to do whatever you please, it is very natural. Most people in San Francisco either own their own home or rent it out. When you buy your own house and live in it, it is your "own personal space" and you do not have to worry about anything. However, renting your house is tough because if you do something the land lord dislikes, then you may get evicted and have no where to go.

Living in San Francisco may be one of the toughest places to live these days because of the house ration to number of people living in the city. There are not as many homes available for all people and if you got evicted in San Francisco, chances are you have no where to go and end up homeless.

Some people that get evicted out of San Francisco are the elderly. Since they are retired and have no jobs to help pay for rent, they cannot afford the bill of raising prices. One example of this kind of incident was with a woman named Lola McKay. She was eighty-something and was evicted from her life-long apartment because she could not afford the rent payment.

Steven Shubert from the San Francisco Tenants Union talked about how to prevent eviction and how there are renter rights. Examples of renter rights are rent control and eviction control. Mr. Shubert said that the tenants union is working on making petitions to allow more rights for renters.

Renting may be a lot tougher than owning your own house, but chances are, your lucky to have a home. Like I stated before, San Francisco does not have enough houses to supply all the bodies living in it.

*Sharon Cheng*

## Battle of Survival

Renters in San Francisco have no rights. Things seem to be getting worse and worse with the skyrocketing prices and the sluggish economy.

Steve Shubert of the San Francisco Tenants Union says that renting is one of the most unfair agreements you'll ever sign. He tells us that renters have almost no rights and many times have no idea of what they are signing.

He tells us that San Francisco has a rent ordinance which is made up of rent control and eviction control. He says that though San Francisco has more laws to help renters than other places, it's still not enough for the nation 3rd most expensive housing. Shubert tells us that it's still not enough, land that there are loopholes in the ordinance. Shubert says that landlord may choose to sell their building, and new landlord may change whatever he wants.

Shubert and his group are currently trying to get an occupant law passed that gives renters permission to allow more people to live in the same building to help pay rent.

Many people would like to achieve the American dream, get their own house. Though this sounds a good idea, not everyone can afford it. On average a home in San Francisco cost around \$900,000.

*Michael Fang*

## Renter's Rights

"People in San Francisco need more rights," says Shubert of the San Francisco Tenants Union. More than half of San Francisco's population rents and if evicted, they might need to live on the streets. "They need more affordable housing and a place they can't get evicted from," says Shubert.

Many people come here even though San Francisco has the third most expensive housing in the nation. They were able to evict seniors and the disabled when they wanted to. This was what happened to 83 year-old Lola McKay who was evicted and maybe for this reason, died.

Many long-term tenants got evicted, so in 1979 tenants organized and the Board of Supervisors passed a rent ordinance. Tenants now have more rights in San Francisco. Even though these laws have passed, tenants get kicked out if the landlord takes their rental property of the market. This is still happening today.

*Donald Cheung*

## Article on Eviction

In San Francisco, 2/3 of the people are renters. San Francisco is one of the most expensive cities to live in right now. Because a lot of people want to live in San Francisco, the prices of houses and renting are high. San Francisco doesn't have much space and buildings can only be certain stories high. The price of housing in San Francisco is causing homelessness and eviction. Landlords can evict people for no certain reason.

In 1979, the rent ordinance passed to help renter's rights. The rent ordinance is to help with rent and eviction control. Landlords can only raise the renter's rent by a certain amount of percent every year. Also Landlords can only evict people for certain 14 reasons.

Many renters that lived in a place in San Francisco for a long period of time are getting evicted. This causes trouble for the renters. This happened to Lola McKay and Paul Clark. When Lola McKay was evicted, she died shortly after the eviction. Paul Clark lived in his apartment for a long period of time. His Landlord evicted him for not paying rent. He didn't want to move, so he took a pistol and shot himself in the head.

*Anthony Trinh*

## Washington Students Learn the Harsh Facts of Renting

Earlier this week, teens in an English class were exposed to facts about San Francisco's renting. Reading, listening, and watching videos about eviction and renting, they learned the reality of renting a place in the city. They also learned about the eviction problems, and realized the harsh world of living on your own.

Guest speaker Steven Shubert from SFTU explained to the class not only what he does, but the situation in the city. He explained that two-thirds of the population here rent and there is limited space. The reason for the high prices is not just dotcomers, but also that everyone wants to live here.

Mr. Shubert also explained the Rent Ordinance that passed in the 1970's. This Rent Ordinance has two parts: Rent Control and Eviction Reasons. For an eviction to happen, the landlord must have one of the fourteen reasons given.

Marina Koga, a parent of one of the students said, "If you cannot afford a place, move to another." Her daughter disagrees, "Too many people can't afford a decent place and that's not fair. Especially older people, they don't work, how can they get large sums of money?"

The students then had time to write about what they thought on the whole topic and what they would do to avoid such happenings in their life.

*Sofiya Kogan*

## Eviction: Is it really worth it?

San Francisco - What would you do if you were going to be evicted? Many people have suffered this problem throughout most of San Francisco. From all different ages, different ethnicities, and different areas throughout San Francisco. Landlords show no mercy, no matter how old you are.

Paul Clark, an 84 year old man who lived in San Francisco in the Richmond District, shot himself because he couldn't make the next month's pay and he missed the past few months rent.

Clark lived in the same apartment for 26 years, and through out that time, he could have bought that apartment building and even more. In December 1991, the money ran out, and after 26 years Clark couldn't make up the money he owed which was \$680.66. Clark tried to fight the eviction but it was tough and he was old. On January 4th he had an heart attack and on February 4th he had another one. After his death he still he owes a total of \$1,361.32.

*Travis Tam*

## Renter's Rights

All over the bay area, San Francisco is gaining population because of it's scenery and tourist attractions. It all started in the early 90's, the big economic boom came and it came to San Francisco. Housing prices went up ranging from \$700,000 - \$1,000,000+.

Steven Shubert from the San Francisco Tenants Union says, 'San Francisco's population is increasing and so is the amount of payment to afford a house in San Francisco'. The renters voice of Virgil Cruz says 'I would like to own our house here, but its not very affordable'

Long term tenants and renters are being evicted from their housing. During the year 2000, Lola McKay received a three day eviction notice from her landlord. She had the right to fight for her eviction because she felt that it wasn't right to evict an old lady. The Landlord wanted to evict her because they wanted to increase the payment of her housing. She later died at the age of eighty-three.

The city passed a rent ordinance. The ordinance is made up of two parts, rent control and eviction control. Law's in San Francisco are being lobbied and assuming that they will pass these law for more control for Renters Rights.

*Daniel Guillermo*

## Renter's Rights Against Eviction

San Francisco is the most expensive place to live in because it's popular. A lot of people want to live here but there is little space. People get evicted because other people pay more money to live here.

San Francisco has rent ordinances (laws) which covers rent control and eviction. Other places don't have rent ordinates because there are more houses. Eviction happens to everyone, even to people who are retired like Lola McKay. Renting is a commodity (buy and sell like a product), it's a right even if you can't buy a house. In the nineties, not only did they have rent control but seniors/handicaps cannot be evicted. So why was Lola McKay evicted? If the landowner wants to do something to their property, they have the right to do this.

"You can get help", says Steve Shubert, from the San Francisco Tenants' Union. They write their own laws and bring attention to unfair situations. Also, they do building organizations as well. Most people are volunteers who are not paid to be there.

Instead of renting, many people want to own their home. But Renee Khamphakdy, the owner of Thepin Thai Cuisine (restaurant) says, "I save my money when I rent. If I owned my own home, I would be spending a lot of money."

So what can we do to stop eviction? We can fight back by making laws and voting.

*Tina Khamphakdy*

## Evicted

San Francisco is one of the three most expensive places to rent. 2/3 of the people living in San Francisco rent. The rent is this high due to the lack of space.

Back in the 1990's when the dot.com's started and grew the rent started to double around San Francisco.

In 1970 the landlord of the International Hotel on Kearny street wanted to destroy the building which housed old Asian and Filipino people. The people then protested to stop the destruction of the Hotel.

The group S.F.T.U. (San Francisco Tenants Unit) started, helping people who rent understand their rights for renting. The group S.F.T.U. also prevent getting people getting evicted and get laws passed on housing.

Steven Shubert came in our class on October 7, 2003 and from the San Francisco Tenants Counseling. Shubert talked about what the group does and talked about protesting against the unfair housing laws. And he talked about getting laws passed in the court or by the people voting.

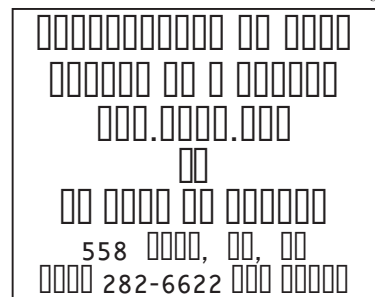
Paul Clark was 84. Clark lived in the same one-bedroom apartment for 26 years. Clark was 2 months behind the rent and the landlord wanted Clark evicted. The landlord was a wealthy Los Gatos couple. They took the case to court and Clark had to vacate the premises within a month, April 1. On March 15 in the apartment he was about to lose, Paul Clark took out a pistol and shot himself in the head.

Lola McKay was in her 80's. She has been living in her same apartment for over 20 years. Lola suddenly got evicted. She got evicted and had to live in nursing homes and soon died in the year 2000.

People living in the Mission area in San Francisco are also being evicted. The people in the Mission share the same things and culture and now landlords are trying to break up the Mission.

Mrs. Lee owns her own home. She finds that owing a home is a good way to make money by renting space to other people. She does not know anyone that has been evicted. "I think it is bad (eviction) because it makes people go out and find another home."

*Willie Fong*



# High School Students Look At Renting

Two-thirds of the students jammed in the George Washington High School classroom raise their hands when Steven Shubert, volunteer coordinator of the San Francisco Tenants' Union (SFTU) asks, "Who is planning to move out when you're eighteen?" Out means out of a parent's home.

Renting is going to be expensive, said a sober Shubert. "San Francisco is the third most expensive city in the nation, next to New York and San Jose. Some of the students echo the word San Jose in disbelief.

Shubert describes how a rent ordinance was established in San Francisco and what it means for the students. "In 1972, the owners of the International Hotel decided to turn a residential hotel for mostly elderly Chinese and Filipino men into a tourist hotel. People organized and fought... San Francisco has more rights than most places in the state. They have a rent ordinance established in San Francisco. The rent ordinance includes two parts rent control and eviction control."

Shubert warns that the battle isn't over. Even now The San Francisco Tenants' Union is doing counseling and trying to change "occupancy laws so that current occupants can add others. Married couples can't even live together as it is today."

George Washington High School English teacher, Barbara Brewer and former tenant counselor arranged for Shubert to speak to her class. She's been interested in tenant's rights since her landlord made a huge legal rent increase in 1999.

Brewer and Shubert planned the presentation as well as introductory activities so that the students might begin a service learning project with the SFTU. Students interviewed parents about renting and eviction, viewed a segment of the documentary, *Boom: The Sound of Eviction*, a film about the dot.com boom and its impact on renters in San Francisco and read an article about elder eviction.

While students sympathized with the plight of elders being evicted, there were few questions at the end of the two classroom periods. The tenth graders quickly left after class. "But students expressed their understanding in articles they wrote. And some said afterward that they felt they knew more about renting," said their teacher. "I have polled them about service learning projects. I don't want to force them to work on tenant issues. The three most popular issues are homelessness, world hunger and litter, but someone wanted to organize a protest for renters rights. Another wanted to petition for cheaper shoes and clothing," says Brewer. "Developing projects will be the creative challenge."

Following are articles written by the students.

## Renting in San Francisco

Ms. Brewer's class was exposed to rental rights in San Francisco.

Guest speaker Steven Shubert who came from the "San Francisco's Tenants Union" said that San Francisco is one of the most expensive cities to live in and San Jose is the second. This organization helps people with their rights. If more people protested then it would help others see that the rent is too high in San Francisco. There are 14 reasons that the landowners can kick you out. This is why we have a lot of homeless in San Francisco.

Two thirds of the people are renting in San Francisco and the city is getting over populated, but people like living here anyway.

Lola McKay, a citizen of San Francisco was living in the Mission district. She was evicted because condominiums were being built where she lived. This made her stop her everyday routine and she died at 80 years of age. This is an example of a woman who was a senior and was evicted for building purposes.

*Claudia Ponce*

## Renting in San Francisco

The main problem with renting in San Francisco is so many people want to live here. So many different races and cultures want to live in our beautiful city, but we are running out of space. The main causes of this problem were landlords got greedy, elderly tenants were treated unfairly and renters in general didn't have many rights.

It all started in the 90's when the dot comers moved in. Landlords realized they could evict their current tenants and get new tenants that would pay more. This put many elderly on the street and changed most peoples lives for the worst. Because the elderly had been renting longer they were the first ones to be evicted. Instead of spending their last days in peace, they were either homeless or barely holding on financially. This put a tremendous amount of stress them, and people like Lola Mc Kay and Paul Clark couldn't take it. Enough people got evicted and were unhappy that they decided to do something about it. An organization started called the San Francisco Tenants Unit. The SFTU improved renter's rights and helped (s) with other renting and land owning problems.

Since the SFTU started both tenants and landlords are treated more fairly. Not many people think about how much stress renting or land owning can be.

And because 2/3 of the occupants in San Francisco are renters, it puts a lot of pressure on everyone. Even though it isn't as bad as it was years ago, renters are still treated unfairly.

*Adena Jochnowitz*

## "An Increase in Rents" - Evict or not to?

Two thirds of San Francisco's population are renters. Unfortunately, not everyone gets a place to stay. This causes

people who rent to be evicted. The STFU is on the case to help those in dire need of housing.

Steven, Shubert, of the San Francisco Tenants Union, says that San Francisco is the third most expensive places to buy, or rent houses and apartments.

To help out with this situation, a bill is being passed, that allows the number of occupants in a rental to be increased, meaning that the least number or occupants is "1". Evictions are sometimes impossible to change, not in San Francisco. Citizens such as Paul Clark and Lola McKay, lost their lives because of the increasing rents these past years. Many lose their house and others simply move on. But why is San Francisco such a populated city? People come to San Francisco for its views, attractions, and its thriving cultures. Lola McKay, a citizen of San Francisco, living in the Inner Mission was evicted by her landlord. Condo's were being built where she lived, and was forced to move. Due to stress from her eviction, she dies at age 80.

Paul Clark, another renter of his apartment for the last 25 years, was also evicted. It seems that his landlord had no faith that Paul would pay on his agreed date, since rents are increasing. He fires a pistol aimed at his head, losing his life at age 84. These two victims show that the elderly are morally to suffer after or during their eviction.

Pei Zhen Chan, a local working mother who owns her house, says that she once rented, and was also evicted. "Evictions shouldn't exist," she quotes. Even though she too is a landlord, her chances of evicting someone is likely to be zero, for she has no intention to evict anyone. If you want to stay in San Francisco, live in warmth, peace, and success, think about where to get your hands on 1.3 million dollars, and think about the possibility of you getting evicted if you decided to rent.

*Alex Chan*

## Renter's Right

The students of Ms. Brewer's fourth period English class learned about renter's rights. San Francisco has two-thirds of its population as renters, said Shubert, from the San Francisco tenancy union.

Shubert said that San Francisco is one of the three most expensive places to rent a home. Some people, who had been living in their apartment for a long time, were being evicted. This happened to Lola McKay, who was eighty-three, and she died fighting her eviction.

An eighty-four years old man, Paul Clark, had been living at his apartment for twenty-six years and was evicted by his landlord. He shot himself to death when he knew he have to move.

In 1979, the Board of Supervisors passed a rent ordinance. The rent ordinance gave more rights to the renters. The rent ordinance comes in two parts. The rent control and the eviction control. Rent control limited the amount of money increased each year. That means that they can not raise the rent too high. The eviction control limited the reasons for landlord to file an eviction to the renters.

"There are just too many people living in San Francisco," said Yu Lian, a person interviewed. She stated "We can be evicted anytime". But being evicted is not as easy as it sounds. It also brings a lot of other problems to the renters as well.

*Karen Li*

Before the Rent Control Law and the 14 "Just Causes" for eviction hadn't been established, thousands of San Franciscans were evicted by greedy landlords seeking to raise rents.

San Francisco is one of the cities that many people want to come and live in. However, the houses are limited here. 2/3 of the people who live in San Francisco are renters. In 1970's, the landlords treated renters badly: increasing the amount of rent as much as they want, evicting renters by unreasonable reasons.

As long as the number of renters is increasing, many renters are evicted. Paul Clark was an 84-year-old man. He paid rent by pension checks and shared rent with his roommate. Since one of the checks stopped coming, and his roommate left, he had a problem paying rent. Therefore, he was evicted by the landlords for not paying rent several months. Eventually, Paul shot himself days before evicted. The greater the number of renters, the more the protests come up. As the Rent Ordinate has been established, it controls the rent and eviction reasons. The renters can only be evicted by one of the fourteen "just causes". The unfair days have been passed.

"I feel happy that I own my house!" a landlord Zo\_Pang said. "It is a good way to get money easily if rent one part of the building to other, especially in San Francisco." That's what she does: she uses the rent to pay the payment of cell phone, electricity charges, etc. instead of save an amount of money for the payments monthly.

*Vivian Zhang*

## Rental Rights were exposed at Washington High School

On October 14, 2003, Steven Shubert, a representative from the San Francisco Tenant Union (SFTU) came in to talk about renting in S.F. San Francisco is one of the three most expensive places to rent in the United States because of the overwhelming population and limited spaces.

Some people actually think that renting is good. Mrs. Tan, a married woman said, "I feel that renting my house is okay because I don't need to get a lot of money to put into the house when I rent it."

However, seniors think renting is good at the beginning, but towards the end, it can be a disaster. Paul Clark, an eighty-four year old man killed himself because of all the stress of an eviction. He didn't want to leave his home after twenty-six years. On March 15, in the apartment he was about to lose, Paul Clark took out a pistol and shot himself in the head.

A landlord, Betty Lee said "As a landlord myself, I have to evict a family to repair the building." But not all landlords evict because of this reason.

The SFTU is there to help renters about their rights in renting and they also have counseling if renters have problems with their landlords.

Since San Francisco is one of the most expensive places in the United States, two thirds of the people living at San Francisco rent their homes.

With a population this big and limited spaces available, most people rent instead of buying their home.

*Elaine Cen*

## Renters' Rights of San Francisco

Watch out San Francisco! The housing prices are rising dramatically. The people of S.F are complaining of how high the prices go up. There isn't a home that's less than \$500,000. Today, renters already make up 2/3's of S.F's population. There needs to be affordable housing where evictions won't happen.

San Francisco has the 3rd most expensive housing rents, says Shubert of San Francisco Tendency Union. The tenants who have lived a long time in their homes are being evicted. Since the dotcoms moved to the Bay Area, they bought most of the land and caused many housing problems. People such as Lola McKay has been evicted at the age of 83 and afterwards died.

In 1979, the people were finally standing up for themselves. The tenants organized and the Board of Supervisors agreed to pass "The Rent Ordinance." This rent ordinance was to control the cost of rent and eviction. In order to get evicted, landlord can only kick you for 14 reasons. The Rent Ordinance gave the tenants more rights and a better price for homes.

But, there is still a flaw in that law, such as the clinically old and sick people can still be evicted. The landlords can sell off the house anyone who can afford it and the tenants can't do anything about it. The elderly can not stand up to this kind of stress; they have been living in the homes for years and will not like to be apart from it. Many protests were held to stop these terrible events.

Everyone in SF wants to own their own home. My neighbor said "I can only afford so much a month for the house. I have to support my children and buy food. The rent is gone overboard and simply finding a cheap apartment is far too difficult." Angry and sad tenants still walk the streets demanding a political right to do something serious about this mess.

*Garrick Leung*

## Students Learn About Renting In San Francisco

Steven Shubert, a representative for San Francisco's Tenants Rights, made a presentation to students at San Francisco's George Washington High School on October 14th regarding the rights of tenants and landlords. The presentation was intended to keep the future of the city informed.

The main issue was how renters in San Francisco had very little rights, and that the landlords have the power to evict and raise rents as they please. They use lopsided contracts with little eviction restrictions. It is also extremely difficult to find affordable housing in the city, as rents increase, while wages and apartment availability decrease.

Other topics covered in the presentation included why the city is one of the most expensive to live in, the rent ordinance, housing right in the past, the Ellis Act, and the Tenants Union. The problems plaguing renters were attributed to the popularity, diversity, small land size, and the "Dot Com" boom that affected the city.

Before the presentation, each student conducted an interview with two adults. The interview was based on the rights of renters, and how the adults felt about the rights.

*Andrew Lobo*

## Renters Rights

People all around the world set out to get a part of the San Francisco lifestyle. Some succeed while some "crash and burn", but they're not alone. There are more than twenty-five thousands tenants in San Francisco. There has to be a way they can protect themselves from greedy and selfish landlords. That's why they have the San Francisco Tenants Union. They inform renters and their rights about being a renter and helps fight evictions.

Renters aren't able to keep up with the sky rocketing rents and low wages they receive. This happened to Lola McKay who was 83 years old, and was still trying to be evicted. She lived there almost her entire life, but one day her landlord wanted to take the property off the market and sell it. Lola McKay didn't get to see the end of her fight against eviction. She died trying to fight it. Lola McKay was 83 years old.

The San Francisco Tenants Union is trying to pass laws that allow married/life partners to live together even if the landlord allows only one person to live in the vicinity. In order to pass laws they must present their ideas to the Board of Supervisors and the board must agree on which laws to put into the ballot.

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## Anti Demolition Ordinance Passes

The Board of Supervisors—by a veto-proof margin of 8-3—adopted a strong anti-demolition ordinance sponsored by Sup. Chris Daly. The law prohibits the demolition of sound, rent controlled housing of 20 units or more. It includes a specific definition of sound housing so developers and landlords can not use loopholes to get around it. Increasingly, landlords have been realizing that rent controlled housing can be demolished, and an equal or greater number of units can be built to replace the demolished units—with those new units not covered by rent control under state law exempting newly constructed buildings.



Tenants rally outside of City Hall in support of Daly's Anti-Demolition ordinance.

The Daly ordinance does not address all cases of demolitions, with buildings with 2-19 units still at risk. However, it stops the worst cases, most notably over 300 evictions in process at Trinity Towers.

The three Supervisors who voted against the anti-demolition ordinance were Tony Hall (who used the opportunity to call for repeal of rent control entirely!), Fiona Ma and newly appointed Michela Alioto-Pier.

## Rent Board Reform Topic of March 13 Meeting

Last year's failed attempt to reform the Rent Board, via election of Rent Board Commissioners, will strategize ideas for 2004 at a tenant meeting tentatively set for Saturday, March 13. Ideas on the table will include elections but also scenarios for reform via changing how Commissioners are appointed. Also on the table will be re-thinking what the Rent Board does; in particular, looking at ideas to strengthen its functions as the regulatory body for the real estate industry as well as expanding its scope beyond rent controlled buildings. To keep updated on this issue, see [www.sftu.org](http://www.sftu.org).

## 2004 Annual Rent Increase: 0.6%

With inflation continuing to run low, the annual rent increase effective March 1, 2004 through February 28, 2005 is 0.6%. The annual increase is calculated as 60% of the Bay Area Consumer Price Index (CPI).

## 2004 Security Deposit Interest: 1.2%

Effective March 1, 2004 through February 28, 2005, the interest owed tenants on security deposits is 1.2%. The Board of Supervisors currently has before it a technical amendment to change the index on Security Deposits to Treasury 6 Month CD Rates (the previous index was discontinued; the new one matches it, though). The ordinance is pending now but should be easily approved and will be retroactive so that the 1.2% will take effect on March 1.

## NO on Prop J

# Vote March 2!

It's been election after election after election recently and now there's yet another one: the March Presidential Primary also contains important local measures and races.

Most notably on the ballot is Prop J—put forth by the Chamber of Commerce and Gavin Newsom to further transform San Francisco into a city for the rich, with no place for the rest of us. Prop J relaxes existing zoning and affordable housing requirements to enable the construction of high-rise luxury condos and apartments. This so-called "workforce housing" measure won't provide for any housing affordable to people who work. Teachers, firefighters, and police won't even make enough to afford these units which will be priced at 120% of median income. Remember how the explosion of live work lofts brought gentrification to neighborhoods? That memory will pale compared to what Prop J will do. It will make all housing more expensive and put all tenants at risk of eviction (as developers buy up and demolish existing housing in order to build new Prop J units).

Also notable, though most people will tend to ignore it, is the race for the Democratic County Central Committee. Though officially just the governing body for the local Democratic Party, the DCCC is an important force in heavily Democratic San Francisco. Legislation which goes to the Board of Supervisors or on the ballot as an initiative usually gets voted on first by the DCCC and if the DCCC does not support it, the legislation is usually dead. Further, the Democratic Party can put money and resources behind a ballot measure, San Francisco Republicans have effectively given up on the Republican Party (since being labeled a Republican is a killer). Over the years, Republicans have gone undercover, posing as Democrats and are increasingly gaining control of the local Democratic Party. Ten years ago, for example, tenant measures would be supported by the DCCC on votes like 22-3; in recent years, we've still won, but now the votes are more like 14-11. The same has been true with other progressive measures. Don't ignore the DCCC races. They're actually important for tenants.

Also big on the ballot is Prop I, which will replace noisy and polluting diesel buses and Prop H, which will ensure San Francisco schools get adequate funding in the budget battles each year. There are also some important state measures: Prop 56 will lower the supermajority needed to adopt a state budget to 55% from 67%. The current two-thirds requirement for a budget has resulted in the Republican minority being able to block state budgets every year and gives the Republicans veto power over new taxes or cuts in areas like California's bloated prison industry.

Following are the Tenants Union endorsements:  
**San Francisco Initiatives**

### Yes on Prop A

Allows the Board of Supervisors to adopt a deferred taxation plan for city employees, in which workers could deposit payment for unused vacation and sick time. Good for the workers; no cost to the city.

### Yes on Prop B

Puts Public Defenders, Assistant District Attorneys and Investigators into same retirement plan as Sheriffs, Police, and Firefighters. Again, good for workers and there's no cost to the city.

### Yes on Prop C

Allows civilians to fill certain jobs in Police Departments, such as clerical. Will save the city money and makes sense.

### Yes on Prop D

Expands the existing Domestic Partnership law to allow the city to register Domestic Partnerships for people who live outside of the city. Also gives the Board authority to expand Domestic Partnership benefits to keep them equal to any new marriage benefits.

### Yes, Yes on Prop E

Requires that any requests from the federal government (i.e., John Ashcroft) for city information be responded to by the Board of Supervisors rather than Department heads. This will prevent individual Department Heads from caving into pressure or intimidation and will let the city officially resist giving out information on individuals.

### Yes on Prop F

Puts Deputy Sheriffs in same labor negotiation classification as Police and Firefighters. It's simple reorganization with no cost to city.

### No Position on Prop G

This measure will extend the time for which the city gives employees on military leave supplemental pay. Right now, the city pays such supplement for 180 days and the Board of Supervisors can extend it every 180 days. The measure allows the Board to vote just once to extend it indefinitely. We labored hard on this one. On one hand, many working-class people who joined the reserves anticipated peacetime service and getting a little extra money and some government benefits. Then a war mongering president came along and they're now in Iraq. They deserve every break they can get. On the other hand, providing this supplemental pay means that San Francisco is subsidizing some amount of the real cost of war. Right now, that cost is assessed and reviewed every 180 days. This measure means San Francisco writes a blank check to help support the war on Iraq. A tough call; we couldn't decide.

### Yes on Prop H

Prop H provides for a budget set-aside for public education each year. We already do that for libraries. Prop H is supported by teachers and parent groups and ensures the education budget will get its fair share in the budget.

### Yes on Prop I

MUNI has been resisting getting rid of its diesel buses, even though they are noisy and cause much pollution. In particular, diesel buses are seen as a major cause of high asthma rates in the southeastern part of the city, where such buses are on almost every line. The measure requires replacement of diesel buses purchased before 1991 and will also require all new MUNI buses to meet the same clean air standards which apply to all other city departments (but which MUNI is now exempt from).

### NO, NO, NO on Prop J

Remember Prop R in 2002? That measure sought to transform some 80,000 San Francisco apartments into condominiums. Put forth by the Chamber of Commerce and downtown business interests, the underlying motivation of Prop R was to change the population of San Francisco: Get rid of low and moderate income renters and replace them with upper income condominium owners. The proponents of Prop R envisioned a new city populated by more conservative, property-owning, wealthy individuals. Gone would be the artists, the students, the families, labor-union members, the elderly, and all the other people who fight the downtown agenda. Prop J is Prop R's step-child. It has the

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## Changes In State Laws In 2004

A number of new laws affecting tenants took effect on January 1, 2004. Most notably, unlawful detainer (eviction) filings will not get reported on a tenant's landlord record for at least 60 days after filing, and, if the tenant prevails, never get reported. Also, landlords must now provide receipts or documentation of costs for most security deposit deductions. For these and other changes, see the Tenants Union web site <http://www.sftu.org>.