

WHAT'S MAKING NEWS TODAY

Ceremonial reopening of Devil's Slide

Return of Bartmobile announced

Fajitagate charges at Police Commission

Salvation Army tools for school fundraiser



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HEART OF THE CITY

GIANT OPPORTUNITY Daniel Faddis of the Excelsior is San Francisco's Boy and Girl's Club Youth of the Year, selected by a board panel from the San Francisco Clubhouses. "It's great! I get to meet other great people from other clubhouses," Faddis said. He was honored by the Giants and was allowed to toss the first pitch of Wednesday's game against the Washington Nationals to Omar Vizquel. — Jason Steinberg/Special to The Examiner

Tell us who is doing positive things for San Francisco: goodtoknow@examiner.com



CITY HALL NEWS

City Hall hosts youth luncheon

Mayor Gavin Newsom and Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi will host an event to promote youth and the various community-based organizations that serve the population today at noon in the City Hall Rotunda. The event will include a light lunch and an opportunity to purchase gift baskets designed by the children. The event is open to the public. For more information, call (415) 554-6783.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Board to recommend selections for city agencies

The board will decide who is best to fill open seats on the Bay Area Library and Information System Advisory Board, the Lead Hazard Reduction Citizens Advisory Committee and the Western SoMa Citizens' Planning Task Force. The board will also recommend appointments to fill the eight vacant seats on the Assessment Appeals Board.

The board committee in charge of making the appointments meets today, 10 a.m., at City Hall, Room 263.

PUBLIC LIBRARY

Western Addition's library closing for renovation

The 1550 Scott St. branch is slated to reopen in the spring of 2008.

There will be a closing party from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. on Aug. 19. Food, music and entertainment will be provided during the last day. The project, which comes with a \$4.3 million price tag, will feature new furniture and bookshelves, better lighting, a designated teen area, more computers and wireless Internet access. There will also be a new entry with automatic front doors. The Western Addition renovation is part of a major capital improvement project backed by voters who passed a \$105.9 million bond measure in November 2000. There are five other branch libraries that are under construction: Sunset, West Portal, Marina, Glen Park and Noe Valley.

— Staff reports

TODAY'S TOP STORY » PARKS

S.F. golf courses plagued by red numbers

City's six facilities dealing with \$1.9 million deficit despite recent fee increases

By Sajid Farooq
Staff Writer

The City's troubled golf courses are expected to be in the red again this year despite an increase in some greens fees just two months ago.

The Recreation and Park Department needs to close an estimated \$1.9 million deficit in golf course operating costs, as well as other expenses, caused by a lack of revenue for the closing fiscal year, according to department officials.

"The deficit is based on the fact that the operating of the courses versus what we are bringing in is not equaling out," Recreation and Park Department spokeswoman Rose Marie Dennis said.

The City's six municipal golf courses — the Harding and Fleming courses at Lake Merced, Lincoln Park course, the Golden Gate Park course, Sharp Park in Pacifica and Gleneagles International Golf Course in the Excelsior district — have struggled to generate enough revenue since 2002.

San Francisco used \$16.6 million



The Recreation and Park Department are seeking ways to close an estimated \$1.9 million deficit in golf course operating costs four years after spending \$23.6 million to renovate Harding Park, above, and Fleming Golf Course. — Examiner file photo

of state grant funds designated for parks in poor or undeserved areas of The City in 2002 to complete a \$23.6 million renovation of Harding Park and Fleming Golf Course to prepare it for Professional Golf Association tournaments. The money was to be repaid, with interest, from a golf fund, made up of revenue generated from The City's six courses, within 25 years.

Since the renovation, the golf courses have failed to generate enough revenue to cover either operating costs or interest payments on the borrowed state funds. In June,

the Recreation and Park Commission voted to increase green fees at Harding Park by \$10 for the discounted rate paid by city residents and \$5 for nonresidents. The move was made to try to close at least some of the projected budget gap.

Harding Park, The City's jewel course and home of the 2005 American Express World Golf Championship, hosts more than 70,000 rounds of golf a year, according to Steve Schrader, the general manager of Kemper Sports who manages the course for The City.

But the lack of revenue has been

caused by a variety of reasons: bad weather, a lack of creative management and too much competition for the Bay Area golf market, according to some close to the scene.

There are more than 70 golf courses in the Bay Area for golfers to choose from, according to Isabelle Wade, the executive director of the Neighborhood Parks Council. Wade said she would like The City to explore alternate ways of managing its municipal courses or even consider decommissioning some of the less popular greens to save money.

State stem cell committee fast tracks grant program

By Bonnie Eslinger
Staff Writer

Feeling left behind in the race to advance stem cell research, California's stem cell institute, which has had its funding held up in lawsuits, gave quick approval Wednesday to a grant program for \$150 million recently authorized by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Although some members of the institute's Independent Citizens Oversight Committee expressed reservations about the limited scope of a staff-recommended grant program that would focus specifically on human stem cell research, the group eventually unanimously approved the plan in order to help the state remain competitive in the burgeoning scientific field.

Officially called the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine, the grant organization was approved by voters in 2004 through a ballot measure that authorized \$3 billion of taxpayer dollars for stem cell research in the next decade. However, subsequent lawsuits challenging the institute's constitutionality have prevented the

institute from carrying out its primary function: issuing research grants.

After President George Bush vetoed expanded federal funding of embryonic stem cell research last month, Schwarzenegger pledged state funds to jump-start California's research efforts.

Although scientists and patient advocates see promise in stem cells to cure diseases and repair damaged tissue in the human body, embryonic stem cell research remains controversial because it uses frozen human embryos, often obtained from the surplus at fertility clinics.

Several committee members, including Dr. Richard Murphy of the UC San Diego School of Medicine, expressed concern about the new grant program because it was only open to those working on human stem cells.

ICOC President Zach Hall noted that other forms of stem cell research can receive federal funds and that human stem cell research is picking up speed around the world — often funded by private institutions or philanthropic organizations — taking with it the "best and brightest" scientists in the nascent field. A broad research scope would attract too many applications, which

would slow down the institute's fast-track efforts to get moving on supporting research in California, he added.

"We're on training wheels here, the challenge of getting this stuff out at the same time we're trying to build our [institute's] infrastructure," Hall said.

With a grant plan approved, California's stem cell institute is expected to issue a formal request for applications for the research funding in August, with the first group of grant approvals coming in February 2007, Hall said.

Addressing a key concern that some stem cell critics have about how the human eggs might be obtained, the final draft for the institute's medical and ethical standards regulations approved by the committee Wednesday included new language that would not allow donors to be paid for eggs offered for research.

Susan Vogel, a representative for the Pro-Choice Alliance for Responsible Research, said if the committee had not adopted the language they would have "crossed over some very important bright lines."

beslinger@examiner.com