

Candidates: First they speak their mind, then they eat cake

**Care Not Cash:
yes or no**

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development.”
Roger Gordon: “You dump trash, not people. But I hear what you’re saying. ... But I’m not going to try to run people out of town ... except maybe YOU!” Gordon said, pointing at the loud grumbler who had been repeatedly asked to quiet down. The audience clapped.

Daly said more services are needed: “District 6 has more of a lot of things ... and yes we have more services in this district. But I think there’s a fair argument to be made that we’re actually underserved by community-serving services.”

Michael Sweet: “The person who wrote this question is absolutely right, we are a dumping ground in a lot of respects. We need to spread it [homeless shelters and low-income housing] out into all of the neighborhoods.”

But Strunsky wasn’t buying it: “You don’t solve a problem by moving it around – you solve it by approaching it. ... We should be proud of every part of our district.”

While candidates were talking up consensus building and whether or not to shuffle services around, an emblematic vignette on the sidelines quietly occurred:

A District 6 voter in a wheelchair had positioned himself in the left aisle up front, close to the candidates. Halfway through the two-hour forum he rolled to the bathroom, leaving his jug of apple juice on a side table. As the bathroom door shut behind him, a pallid man with jittery hands, who was sitting toward the back, scurried up to the apple juice jug. He unscrewed the cap while whispering to everyone, but no one in particular, that he “only wanted a taste,” and poured some juice into a Styrofoam cup. He rushed back to his seat, leaving the jug’s cap off.

Next a woman in the back, who was reclining, not sitting, in a wheelchair, maneuvered herself to the temporarily vacated prime real estate near the juice at the front of the room.

A minute later, our man returned from the bathroom to find his spot had been usurped and his apple juice appeared to have been tampered with. He pursed his lips, but the lack of surprise on his face said that this District 6 resident endures a daily diet of hassles. He and his competitor for the front aisle site



District 6 supervisorial candidates face a packed house and tell where they stand and what they offer voters in the Tenderloin.

tried to reach the candidates’ magic answer/pill/medicine of “consensus.” But in the end, after a whisper match, the woman rolled out in a huff. Meanwhile, the show goes on.

Against the consensus-theme backdrop, an occasional verbal salvo was sent across enemy lines:
“So how do you choose [the supervisor]? I’d say ‘throw darts,’ but Chris is the biggest target here,” said Roger Gordon.

In his own defense Daly said, “Some may paint me as divisive, but I’ve actually forged a lot of coalitions in the last year and a half. I haven’t forged coalitions with downtown. Downtown hates me. They’re going to probably spend a whole lot of money to defame me, and that’s OK.”

He mentioned some alliances he’s forged, such as with: state Sen. John Burton, Assemblywoman Carole Migden and school board President Julie Wynn. “No, I don’t get along with the mayor – fortunately he will be gone next year. But I can work with Tom [Ammiano], I can work with Gavin [Newsom], I can work with John [Burton], I can work with people,” Daly said.

In his opening statement, Daly said of his stint as supervisor: “There’s been results – there’s been good news.” He listed some wins: \$2 million for senior services; improved quality of life in SRO hotels, including a renter protection ordinance that bans eviction threats; and successful working relationships with diverse coalitions, he said, such as the Bicycle Coalition, which resulted in bicycle lanes on Howard Street. He said he and his office helped save “working-class jobs,”

such as the laundry workers’ at Laguna Honda Hospital, and reform the city’s Planning Commission, which is in a state of emergency because the supes haven’t agreed to Mayor Brown’s four nominees.

“And with a full term I’m going to build on these wins. I will speak up at every turn for the folks who are shied away from, for folks who are not heard, for folks typically not invited to the table and I will make sure that there are seats there...”

The moderator announced that Daly was turning 30 that day and someone brought out a cake the size of a king-size pillow. The audience cheered, and cake for all was promised at the end of the affair.

“Happy birthday, Mr. Supervisor,” said Jenkins as he started his final statement. Then he made his own

points, “We need leadership from downtown. I propose that we get the business leaders to the neighborhood and we say, ‘Look, we want sustainable economic development on Sixth Street. I also believe we need to put a check on the nonprofits.’”

Power spoke of decreasing government intervention so that unencumbered market forces would solve the district’s economic woes. He quoted ex-President Clinton’s campaign catch phrase: “It’s the economy – stupid.”

Earlier in the forum Moye had declared that all the talk of politicians was just that; so his final pledge was succinct: “I’m not going to talk about it; I’m going to show you, you’ll see it – that’s it.”

The next forum should be in a larger room, said District 6 homeowner Jason Born, who is rehabbing an old South of Market Edwardian. He said he thought the forum was good, and he pronounced it successful. “It allowed each candidate to express their views on what they want to do for the district.” He hasn’t decided yet who he will vote for, but he said he wouldn’t vote for Daly and that two of the candidates impressed him: Gordon and Sweet.

Tracy Baxter, a member of the Democratic County Central Committee, came to hear what the candidates proposed. “While there are a number of good ideas coming from most of the candidates, I think that Chris Daly is head and shoulders above the rest of them,” Baxter said.

Baxter doesn’t live in District 6, but as a life-long resident of San Francisco she’s had a front row seat to shifts in the city. “I’ve watched the Tenderloin make this transition from a place that very poor people could still live out decent lives to a place where the very poor are imperiled by other elements that live here.” That, she said, affects all San Franciscans.

It was nightfall outside the Tenderloin police station, but the sidewalk was crowded with people eating cake. ■

For information on the Alliance for a Better District 6 candidates’ debate scheduled for early September, log onto <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/District6inSF> or call 820-1560.

Editor Geoff Link contributed to this report.

“What have you accomplished in the community that has changed or improved the lives of others?”



DALY
“In 1995 I co-founded a nonprofit organization on 16th Street called the Mission Agenda ... an organization that goes into residential hotels, works with folks in various hotels to empower them, build their leadership so they can take ownership over their own lives. And once I got into office the first thing I did was call up the city attorney and asked him to draft an ordinance to ban the collection of visitor fees in residential hotels. I’m very happy to report that it is now illegal for any hotel operator to collect visitor fees.”



DUNN
“We’re fighting one man and it’s Mohammed; we need one man, George Washington, to lead us back. This is what I’ve been thinking about the whole year – you know, I came up with this housing,” he said, holding up a model of a tetrahedron, “incidentally, this is fireproof, this is all glass and steel.”



JENKINS
“I’m proud of the efforts that Jim Thompson and I took to open up this police station. And when they said they weren’t going to have a community room, which we’re all present in tonight, we went back and fought for that ... as well as the day that we held hands around Boeddeker Park and told the drug dealers and some of the folks out there that we’re not going to put up with it anymore. Today you can walk out probably two, three, in the morning and have a conversation right in front of Boeddeker Park – I think that’s a hell of an accomplishment.”



GORDON
“I got \$750,000 to improve businesses in the first two blocks of Sixth Street. I went to the Redevelopment Agency and said, ‘Look, you’ve got all this money and you have all this power; you’ve got to give up eminent domain except on Sixth Street, and you have to make money available to existing businesses and don’t do the credit check, just do the business check ... This is how you reconstruct neighborhoods, bit by bit, the city investing with people willing to invest in their neighborhoods, their communities, themselves.’”



MOYE
“I want you guys to know this is a community about to blow for positive change...people who really want to say, ‘Look, you been doing this for year in and year in and year in and now I got to elect somebody and the same things are going to happen?’ No, these people want dramatic change quickly and I’ve done four years of research on these people and I’m going to bring that to you.”



POWER
“The thing that I think that I’ve done that is the most important to this district was getting on the ballot and offering an alternative. We have a terrible problem in this city where whenever we’re faced with a problem of any nature we say the solution must be more government...”



STRUNSKY
“I’ve never held an elective office, so my most important accomplishment to me is more of an individual, one-on-one basis, being in my current job [as assistant district attorney]. I think some of the examples are situations where I’ve gone out to a residential hotel and given somebody a stay-away order and realized that that’s going to help protect them from someone. I think those kind of moments are very important to me and I treasure them greatly.”



SWEET
“I currently serve as the vice chair of the Rincon Point South Beach Citizen’s Advisory Committee and in that position and working with that committee as I’ve done the last four years, we’ve had a lot of accomplishments in my neighborhood that I’m proud of – all revolving around securing financing to fund programs that help improve our neighborhood.”

SWEET Yes: *It is becoming clear to me that the fact that San Francisco is the only city in Northern California that’s giving the kind of cash grants, \$390 a month, that we are giving is encouraging people to come to San Francisco. ... I don’t have a problem with the city providing benefit to people not as well off as I am, what I do have a problem with is seeing that money going to uses that I don’t condone.*

STRUNSKY Yes: *I think it’s dangerous when you say let’s make our programs worse or less appealing to people so that we don’t attract people... [but] I think the evidence is very clear and from what I do at work every day that a lot of that money’s going to subsidize people’s substance abuse problems and that’s an incredible burden on the system.*

POWER No: *I wholeheartedly support the idea of taking cash out of this system; however, I believe there are some fatal flaws to the Care Not Cash plan that will cause more pain than gain. I would prefer a much simpler, gradual decline of the cash payment over the course of five years and at the same time that we’re taking the cash away from individuals that the city supports, we should take the cash away from the nonprofits that the city supports over the same time frame.*

MOYE No: *Let me get down to the nitty-gritty of it; take this money away from the people, it’s going to hurt them, it’s going to hurt them hard.*

GORDON Yes: *Care Not Cash is not about saving cash – it’s about fixing a system that’s broken... the way we solve people’s problems today is not working.*

JENKINS Yes: *I see what happens on the 1st and 15th of every month...but I can tell you that, just as someone else [Gordon] has mentioned, that, just because you receive a GA check doesn’t make you a drug user. ... It’s sad that we have to compete on the ballot for a solution to deal with this homeless issue. This is something that could have been dealt at the Board (of Supervisors level)...*

DUNN No: *Where does all this hardness come from? This is a shadow we’re casting over the homeless right now. They’re not all drug addicts, they’re human, man, they’re our brothers, HELLO! ...it’s cruel.*

DALY No: *We have structural poverty, structural unemployment...and I think in government we have an obligation to take care of people. So I support care, but do not support Care Not Cash. It’s poorly drafted and politically motivated.*