

From Pastor Don

For this Christmas, the Consistory (the Commission Elders and the Board of Deacons) gave me a lot of gift options. I chose a special artist's proof of He Qi's *Moses Striking the Rock*. This image struck my fancy. I heard later that some on the Consistory were curious why I would pick that image from all the others. As I reflected on the reason, I thought it would be interesting to share this with everyone.

As most of you know, He Qi interprets scenes from the Bible using images that are evocative of decidedly Asian – specifically, Chinese culture and sensibilities. I have used He Qi's art numerous times for the sermon title slide each week in our services of worship. With the approval of the Worship and Nurture Committee I bought the digital rights to use many of He Qi's images in our services. I learned long ago that the images of our faith have been held captive by European artistic expressions

for so long that many people automatically think of Jesus as blond and blue eyed. Some people even think that Moses looks like Charlton Heston! I like this particular image of Moses, dressed in ceremonial costume with the green flags at his back and the crown on his head. It is a brilliant way to recast a biblical character into another cultural expression. The importance of his role and his standing as the leader of his people are on full display without the use of a single word to name him, instead, using the visual symbols from an Asian milieu.

I love the OT. Anyone in the School of Discipleship can tell you that the Old Testament is alive and full of meaning, and speaks about the same God that Jesus called "Abba." I also love the story of the Exodus. It is a central theme to our Christian faith. It has tremendous meaning for all of us. The story of God delivering the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and then working through Moses, Aaron and

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Pastor Don *(continued from page 1)*

the elders of Israel to lead them through the 40 years in the wilderness, is evocative of the journey we all take through this world -- the hardships we find and the daily miracles that sustain us. Ultimately the story of the Exodus is a lesson for us to rely on God even when we find ourselves in desert places, in marginal spaces, and in times when we are weary from change and uncertainty. In He Qi's painting we see the resplendent Moses, the hero and leader of his people, using a mallet and a wedge to open a cleft in the rocks from which a live-giving stream of water flows. At the top of the image an angel of the Lord can be seen hovering and watching; it almost appears that water springs from this divine source. The vignette comes from the Book of Numbers, chapter 19, and it is here that both Moses and Aaron are told that they themselves will not see the Promised Land. However, they must still perform their work to see to the needs of the people and their livestock, giving them the water of life.

I still consider myself to be a Transitional Minister. Whether or not the Designated Pastor Search Committee nominates me to the role, or if another candidate is nominated, I know that my time in any congregation is limited. But think about it. We are told in scripture that everything has a season. Whether a pastor is in place for 5 years or for 30, it is still a temporary relationship. Considering that PCC has been here for more than 165 years, there is no doubt in my mind that long after I am gone, whenever that is, the community of faith here will remain. The painting speaks to me on many levels. It speaks to the temporary and fragile nature of relationships -- Moses serving the people though he won't always be with them. The people complain about Moses, and Moses complains about them too. It shows that the thirst of people of faith has to be sustained; it shows the seriousness of being in leadership. Even in his robes Moses has to get his hands dirty. The angel in the background is a constant reminder that although we focus on the human actions, it is the sustaining power of God at work that really makes a difference. Don't mistake me as implying that I see myself as the Moses figure and that I see church members as the Israelites. As different and you and I are, culturally as well as in our positions in the faith community, we are all in this together. I might lead in the morning, but you will lead in the afternoon, and someone else will do so in the evening. All of us need the life giving water. Anyone of us is capable of following God's direction and striking the rock.

I invite you to imagine where, in what ways, and with whom do you find yourself in the role of leader? If Moses is an archetype, then all of us can try on his armor and robes and reflect on the places where we provide the life-sustaining water for thirsty people in the desert wilderness. Do you serve at the Food Pantry? Have you been on a medical, or other mission trip? Do you care for a family? In your work do you help and sustain others? Are you in a supervisory position? Do you work independently, regardless if others count on you? Perhaps you are at a stage in your life where you are retired, yet you have connections and community. Somewhere, somehow, in some segment of your life, you are Moses, be it for five minutes or five decades. You might be the person who has had a life changing meeting with the Lord, had a mountaintop or a burning bush moment, and then turned and walked back down to help pitch tents and gather stones as a servant leader. But we are also the Israelites. We need fresh manna every day. We are tired of this desert and want to get where we are going. And we all need the Water of Life, the wellspring of Divine power that will sustain us and refresh us.

I have some other interesting things on the walls in my office. Stop in some time and ask me about them!

With blessings,
Pastor Don

The Board of Deacons

by Eunice Bejar-Lee

The Board of Deacons reached out to support our Presbyterian Church in Chinatown Youth at College, by sending “**College Care Packages**” twice a year (October 2022 and April 2023). We sent to: *Tully Chan, Cody Ho, Ian Chan, Samantha Hum, Justin Wong, Tristan Kam, Jeff Go, Mari Fong, Rene Fong, Caitlin L Gong, Ella Vo, Dean Shin, Rob Hee, Elijah Wong and Alex Hum.*

We had fun figuring out and shopping what our students would like in their boxes. We included flavored ramen, Asian treats, flashlights for safety, cookies, cereals, chocolate, jerkies, laundry soap, bath soap, towels. We also considered special dietary and food allergies.

Some responses received from students were:

Dear Church Family *“Thank you so much for the care, thought, and care!!! Receiving this package in the mail made me feel so happy and loved. The yummy sweets, hat, and mini stapler were especially enjoyed and appreciated!! Thanks, and take care 🍷, Caitlin*

“Thank you so much, our deacons, as well as the church for the wonderful care packages for the college students. Caitlin’s friend, Ella asked me to say thank you for her. She said she has enough snacks now for the whole school year. Thank you for your labor of love”- Cindy Lee Gong (for Ella Vo)

Dear PCC Deacons, *“Thank you so much for the care package! I just received it earlier [today](#). It was such a nice gesture and reminded me of the family and community back home that PCC has provided me throughout my life. I especially love the jerky sticks! I haven't had them since I was a teenager. With love, Alex Hum*

Dear Church Family, *“It was such a wonderful surprise to receive your package in the mail last week!! I can't believe the thought and generosity that went into putting these together. The scented soap is my favorite thing that I have been sent while at college-- it made me so so happy to see. You really included all the best items, from instant noodles, to a full stock of energy bars, to a bit of spending money, and of course hot chocolate mix (WITH marshmallows!). That is some next level planning. I'll simply say the whole package just made my day! Thank you also for the sweet note and prayers. I'm very fortunate to have found great friends here, amazing professors, and an overall amazing and nurturing environment for living and learning. I really appreciate your comforting and kind message. (It reminded me of all the support and love I have back home. Thank you!!!*

Special thanks also to Auntie Eunice, who I heard put the package together...! The items were all so lovely and thoughtful! Much love and thanks”, Caitlin

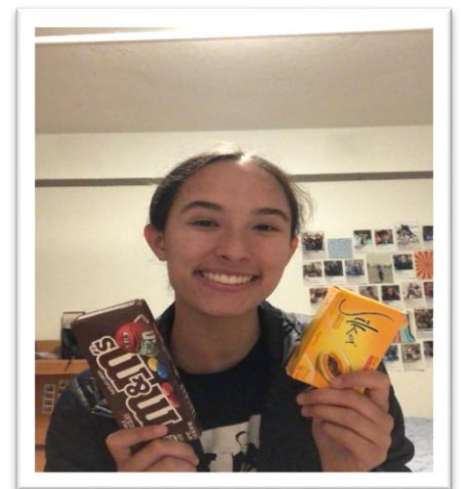
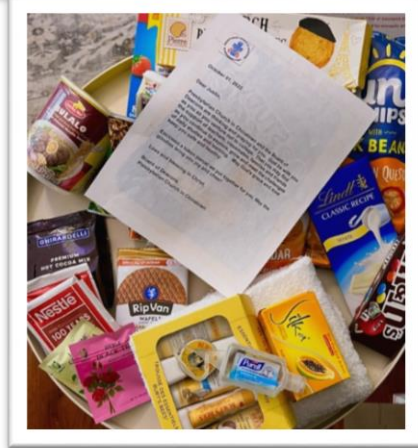
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The Board of Deacons *(continued from page 3)*

Hi Deacons, “*I just wanted to thank you guys for sending the care package. I really appreciate it and enjoyed the content inside. I know it takes a lot of time and work to make these care packages and I am grateful to have received one. Hope everyone is happy, healthy, and doing well. Best regards, Cody Ho, at U. of Hawaii.*”

Justin Wong (Heidi and Anthony) sends his thank you to us for the care package. (submitted by Deacon, Max Hum)

Keep our college students who are spread across America in our prayers! - *Board of Deacons*



Sharing Cheer on Valentines's Day

by Pam Jang



The gift bags contained lots of fun things - Target gift cards, bath and body lotions, chocolates, nail polish and lip balm. The formerly homeless women at SafeHouse expressed deep appreciation for being remembered on this special day.

A special thank you to Marie and Nancy (bracelets), Pat Chan (Valentines gift bags and cards). Alycia Chu and friends also made Valentines cards for the Safe House staff, and Susie for delivering the bags.



Back row: Mary Wong Leong, Linda Lee, Susie Wong, Diane Go, Shar Hall, and Ruth Wu.

Front: Pam Jang, Lesley Kraechan and Pat Chan





PHOTO: NANCY CHEE

Members from the Chinese Congregational Church volunteer one Saturday a month at our Food Pantry!

We are now providing food each week for up to 265 seniors or adults with disabilities. The bags contain fresh produce, one protein like chicken or eggs, and one starch (rice or pasta). The San Francisco-Marín Food Bank reported that in 2022, PCC distributed over 204,000 pounds of food!

Contact Susie Wong or Jeanette Huie if you would like to volunteer and pack food or help with home deliveries. The pantry operates every Saturday from 9:30am-1:00 pm.

Jeanette Huie

***What Kind of Christianity, A History of Slavery and Anti-Black Racism in the Presbyterian Church* by William Yoo, published in 2022.**

A Book Review by Linda Lee, with credit for some comments to Mike Ferguson (Presbyterian News Service, see link below)

This book, even though only 200 pages, was difficult for me to read as I had to put it down every few pages. The truths within it, so clearly racist and capitalistic, describe the Presbyterian Church of the time as complicit with the system of Black slavery and oppression. It hurt my heart to read this history, but it's important for us to hear this and not try to hide behind our ignorance.

William Yoo, professor at Columbia Theological Seminary, paints a painfully accurate picture of the complicity of an overwhelming majority of Presbyterians in promoting, supporting, or willfully ignoring the enslavement of Black/African human beings during the 1830's and into Civil War years in the USA. Most Presbyterians knew of the widespread physical and sexual violence that enslavers afflicted on the enslaved, and either approved of it or did nothing to prevent it. Yoo quotes numerous articles of the times on the horrors of family separation, physical punishments and rape. He also notes that after the prohibition of importing slaves, enslavers needed to increase their supply of slaves, thus rape became an economic activity.

Most Presbyterians in the nineteenth century, whether in the South or the North, held racist attitudes toward African Americans and put those attitudes into daily application. In short, during that period when the Presbyterian Church was establishing itself as a central part of American life, most of its members were promoting slavery and anti-Black racism.

The book uses first-hand accounts from church leaders and theologians of the time, many of them enslavers. It also incorporates many references to Presbytery and General Assembly action or actual lack of action, and adopted policies or justifications related to slavery leading us to learn that the Presbyterian Church considered preservation of unity and economic status a higher priority than the call of Christ. Preachers, theologians and seminaries of the time proclaimed their rationales and Biblical defenses for preserving the system of slavery, choosing politics, power, and profit over the Gospel teachings.

There are also many references to clashes between the abolitionist Presbyterians and the majority, with those favoring abolition unable to have their overtures considered at General Assembly, over the many years covered in the book. Other references include outside observers from Europe, and first-hand accounts of escaped and/or freed Africans.

In today's world, we must choose to amplify the voices of truth, lifting up and confessing past sin. In this book Yoo describes a past that is repeated in our church's inability to lift up current systems of corruption and profit-over-people. *(continued on page 8)*

What Kind of Christianity

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You may want to search the internet for video discussions of the book with Dr. Yoo.

Here is a link to the Presbyterian Mission Agency's (PMA) Board discussion of the book (which includes a link to read the first chapter):

[Presbyterian Mission Agency Dr. William Yoo, a seminary professor and author, helps the PMA Board take an honest look at Presbyterian complicity in slavery and anti-Black racism | Presbyterian Mission Agency](#)

Additional comments from Irene Ng

Hi Linda,

You did an excellent review of the book! Thank you!

I am impressed that Yoo has 26 pages of notes to document his writing.

Horrid to read: The plight of 4 million enslaved persons in 1860, to the approximately 390,000 enslavers, which do not appear in textbooks. In 1839, Horace Moulton, a white Methodist pastor in Massachusetts estimated that he consumed the same amount of food as 46 enslaved persons in 1 week!

So much to learn: e.g. The slave trade from the northern U.S. to the southern states called the Second Middle Passage. On evangelization to the enslaved: Belief that the religious condition was unrelated to the civil condition. Baptism did not result in an enslaved person's freedom. The freedom which Christianity gives was completely religious in nature, that is, freedom from the bondage of sin and Satan, and not on an enslaved person's civil status.

I thought the ending of his book was too curt. I wished he concluded with what he said in one of his webinars, that he wanted the book to be uplifting and liberating; to help us know better.

Thanks again for lending me this book.

Jesus Christ has risen. He has risen indeed!

The Cantonese Worshipping Community has signed a contract with Rev. Grace Song as the temporary Presbyterian pastor for the purpose of providing pastoral services as temporary supply to the Cantonese WC.

We held a Holy Thursday Service on April 6 via Zoom led by Rev. Song. There were Hymns, Prayer and Meditation. Scripture readings were arranged in the order of aloneness, betrayal, denial, accusation, suffering, crucifixion and death, as well as the reading of the last seven words of Christ. Her sermon was titled *He Died for Us*. All participants were inspired by the service.

To celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Easter Sunday service had scripture reading, choir singing and praying. We invited Rev. Raymond Yee as the guest speaker; his sermon was *The True Meaning of Easter*. Rev. Yee has been an evangelist participating with Christian short-term mission throughout other countries and regions for over 30 years.



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Cantonese Worshiping Community Update *(continued from page 9)*

I would like to share an article written by Matthew Wong, one of our Cantonese WC members, and my son. He is still in Massachusetts now, waiting to attend his graduation ceremony in May. Matthew will stay in the East Coast for a few more years since he just accepted a job offer over there.

From Matthew Wong

From two weeks ago, Friday to Sunday (4/7/2023 - 4/9/2023), it was a time of celebration for Christ's resurrection from the dead, the fulfillment of our salvation through grace.

This year, traditional Jewish Passover coincided with Christian Easter, an interesting point since they sometimes do not, due to the two celebration's alignment to differing calendars (Passover being designated of the Hebrew Calendar, a lunisolar calendar). This coincidence reminded me of God's very promise and grace during the first Passover to the Israelites, securing their inheritance to and influence for the Promised Land by sparing their lives the night He called to plague Egypt with the death of their firstborn. And this promise God left unchanged, but fulfilled presently through His own son, Christ, to open the very gates to this Promised Land, Heaven, officially, for all believers of Christ. Not to mention, Jesus was celebrating Passover before his capture and crucifixion, where he performs the act of remembrance through sharing of bread and wine for his disciples of God's great plan, which us Christians put heart to remember every Sunday. We can see that, although both holidays occur at different times, they are both times of remembrance through celebration for one eternal promise, given in the past and fulfilled in the present.

As I walked around my school campus the following week from Easter Sunday, I noticed the trees near the fountain blooming white flowers (apparently they are Serviceberries,



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from Matthew Wong *(continued from page 10)*

which change color depending on the season), a blend of features and color that I hadn't seen after the countless weeks of cold and snow before. This reminded me also about the unique relationship between Easter and the start of spring.

Christianity adopted the day of Easter from its Germanic pagan origins of celebrations for the goddess of spring, Eostre, the new growth and birth to be had after winter. Conveniently, Jesus's death and resurrection would coincide with this very turn of seasons. For Christians, we can look at the blooming new season as God's provision and a calling for the refreshing of our faith. As days grow longer and natural germination occurs around us, I can't help but be reminded about God's gracious supervision for our lives. Although we "are co-workers in God's service" (1 Corinthians 3:9), both physically on this earth and spiritually as Paul speaks about in this reference, God is the one who completes the very work we set out to do: "So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow." (1 Corinthians 3:7). There is an element of the cycle from patience to victory in the recorded stories of the Bible as well as our own accounts in working for God's kingdom, an assurance that completion and rejoicing will be brought out through God. More so, when we are reminded of our inadequacies to do these good works alone, yet Jesus would suffice that imperfection in full to bring us into sainthood, we can't help but be reminded of how much God loves us and allows us to take part in his goodness and victory. And in the season of spring, he reminds us about the completion of his works and to celebrate with Him. And from the outpouring of this love and support from God, we are moved by the Holy Spirit to let everyone know this very true grace.



Philippine Medical Mission 2023, Are Short Term Medical Missions Beneficial?

by Kimball Wong

Three years ago, at our last medical mission to the Philippines, a group of student volunteers posed the question if short term medical missions are actually beneficial to the community or does it just give the volunteers a feeling of self worth. With some hesitation due to COVID, uncertainty of how this medical mission would differ and the above underlying question, Vivien and I decided to again volunteer as part of the 2023, medical mission with the Philippine Medical Society of Northern California. We had over 150 volunteers, most from the United States join together to provide varied medical services to the community of Pangasinan. For 1 week, we bring our skillset to provide health care to a large lower socioeconomic community. Our makeup includes doctors of multiple disciplines, surgeons, nurses, dentists, optometrist, pharmacists, therapists, psychologist, medical students and of course 1 Chiropractor (me). There are also many support staff who provided technical, bio-medical, security, statistics and logistics expertise. The setup includes outpatient services at a local gymnasium and surgical services at a local hospital.



In order for all of this to happen, planning and organization begins over a year ahead of time. It also requires the support of the local government from the governor, the mayor, the police and the department of public health. The community needs to have the infrastructure to accommodate our large group of volunteers. All the volunteers pay for our own flights, hotel accommodations and supplies used during the week. During our first medical mission in 2019, I was able to organize a team to provide rehabilitation services, a combination made up of Physical, Occupational Therapy and Chiropractic. This year I anticipated a challenge as our PT from my past two medical missions was not attending. Our first day, I was delighted to find out I had a local Physical Therapist willing to work with us for the week. Post mission trip, we are still in contact as we are following up with some support for a young surgical patient our team worked on.

There are many stories that would take more time than I can share on this page, but I would like to share one observation. I saw many patients of all ages that had suffered injuries or had conditions like strokes. I usually would ask them how long ago their stroke or injury occurred and had they had any treatment. The answer was usually the same; none. In the Philippines, most outpatient services are self pay. It is a small amount by our standards but a large amount to many of the locals. Chronic conditions, that often can be managed here at home with follow up care, often go untreated. This leads to permanent disability, inability to work and provide for their families and
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often depression. One such case I managed involved a middle aged person with bilateral trigger fingers which led to both of his hands being contracted. He shared the pain and inability to do things like work which resulted in suicidal thoughts. After doing what we were able, we referred him to our mental health counselor for a consult.



Vivien initially began her week doing triage, getting past and current medical histories checking vitals, and then referring to the appropriate dept. The hospital team were short on clinical nurses to help manage all of our post op. surgeries that she was asked to work at the hospital for 2 days. Being retired for more than 8 years, she was reluctant but willing to adapt and help where needed. Her skills came back quickly and she felt it was a rewarding experience working with a great team. Being able to communicate in Tagalog proved very beneficial.

It is easy to see how major things like a surgery, vision improvement by getting new glasses or having their first eyeglass can have an immediate effect on one's life. (Thanks Dr. Terry Chan, for collecting and prepping the hundreds of glasses you donated). Intangibles like showing our concern for their well being, a willingness to come from somewhere far away to offer our services, and compassion to their conditions, can have an effect on a participant's life.

Back to the question: Are short term medical missions beneficial? My answer to that is a yes. Serving in different parts of the world shows concern, offers hope, and enables those we touch to improve their health status. Ongoing dialogue with the local practitioners gives support to those working with the community and shows that our concern for them continues beyond the week we were there. For more information of our group which include hundreds of photos, check pmsnc.org. Warning, some of the pictures are graphic.

Celebrate the Gifts of Women Sunday

April 16th is a day on which we honor women who answer God's call to leadership and service. Women's Fellowship planned the service of worship for this day.

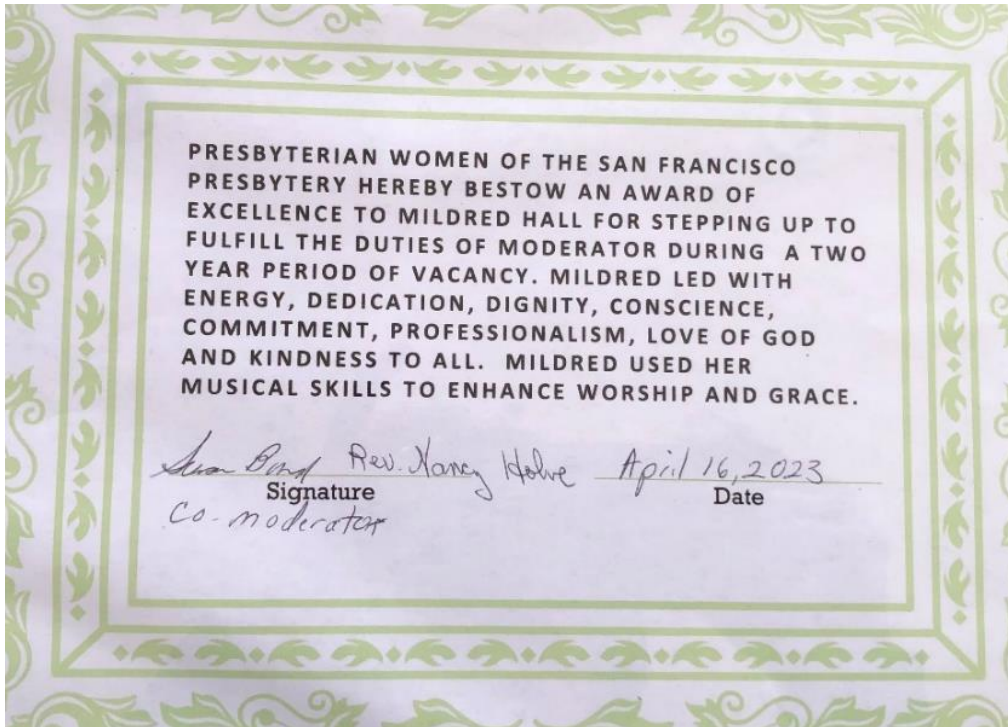
Congratulations to Mildred Hall on being honored by Presbyterian Women of San Francisco Presbytery during our April 16th service of worship this certificate was presented to Mildred by Co-Moderators, Susan Bond and Rev. Nancy Holve.



Mildred (front left) --- Tea Time in Fellowship Hall

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Award to Mildred Hall (continued from page 14)



Sunday, May 28 – Pentecost

Sunday, June 11 – Pride Service

Sunday, June 18 – Juneteenth Service

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Happy Spring everyone.

We are finally having some sunny days with light wind. Some of our church family and friends been traveling. Wayne, Marie, Terry and Lianne been to Hawaii and now they are on a river boat touring France. I hope Terry is able to try out his French that he was learning.

Irene and her friend Sue went on a tour to Savannah. They walked through the historic districts, cooked some low country food, and enjoyed a concert of Johnny Mercer songs. Irene said it was a little too early and cold to see the azaleas and other flowers in bloom.

I went to Las Vegas for my Spring Break. It was packed with people. I was able to get tickets to see two evening shows. I saw Beatles LOVE, a Cirque du Soleil show, with Beatles music in the background. It was a fun show. The other show was with Shin Lim, a good card magician. He won the show, *American Got Talent* in 2018. I highly recommend this show. Not sure where he will be because the Mirage Hotel has been bought by Hard Rock Cafe.

Brian Linden, husband of Jeanee Quan, wrote his own autobiography. He and Jeanee are doing book tours in China. They have traveled over 7,000 miles and gave over 40 talks and media interviews with 50 organizations. Brian signed over 2,000 books. They will be traveling in May to Sichuan, Chongqing, and Guiyang. How exciting! I hear the book was only written in Chinese.

Remember the rainy and windy day on March 21? When I got off the 1 California bus going up to Clay Street and Polk, the two streets were uprooted from the sidewalk. Two cars were hit by one tree. The MUNI bus shelter was damaged. The following day the two cars were towed away and the tree was cut a little. The sidewalk will be repaired in the near future. I can't believe what happened. Now, MUNI is using diesel buses. The wires attached to the poles are down too. Who knows when MUNI can make these repairs.



1st day



2nd day

All repaired now >

