

May 8, 2015

LEAH GARCHIK

## How dry is it? Even tears are scarce



Reader Nicole Bilotti, a master of puns, offers the climate-based setup line, "So I was out dusting my car..." Her own version of the complete sentence: "So I was out dusting my car when a hatted venture capitalist offered to spit on my trunk for \$10,000 each."

Care to try other drought-related propositions? "So I was shopping the SkyMall en route to New York, and realized even the folks in first class couldn't order rain." "So I use gray water for household needs, but I shower so quickly there's enough only to clean the lens of my sunglasses."

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From F&B and Mission, the inside stories.

► Tony Bravo was on BART headed to The Chronicle the other day when the train stopped and a voice announced, "We're delayed. There's a five- to 10-inch piece of the track gone missing ahead." His response: "That's just irresponsible."

► The train was stalled so long, he said, that by the time he got to the office, his cold pressed juice was at room temperature.

► Early Tuesday evening, Carla Marinucci and other staffers crowded to the third-floor window when they heard "blood-curling screams" outside. In the

hazy sleep across the street was a young woman writhing on the ground while a man choked her. Passersby ignored them.

► Reporters watched in horror as the man left her and walked calmly westward down Mission Street. He was followed only by Teryon Davis, who is with Corporate Security Services and was on duty in The Chronicle lobby. Davis rushed across the street to lead the man to a hotel lobby down the street. Security officer Aquarius Abalos tended to the victim.

► Summoned to the scene, police-aided by Davis arrested the man in the hotel. The alleged thief had shot the woman with a stun gun so he could snatch her cell phone, witnesses said.

► Canadian, child rights advocate, leader and all-around beloved nice guy Michael Pritchard had a small heart attack a few days ago, and is scheduled to have triple bypass surgery Friday, May 8. Friends and admirers wanting to wish him well have taken to Facebook. "It's unfair for a heart so big to give its owner such a rough time," wrote one. Reporter Kevin Fagan, who's written about

Pritchard several times, says other comedians call him "St. Mike." All good thoughts to you, Mike.

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Good works and good money:

► Beginning this weekend and through the end of May, the Style A Gallery in Sausalito will be showing, selling large-scale assemblage paintings by Stuart Sheldon, created from book jackets. Among the Bay Area authors whose jackets are in the works are Anne Lamott, Po Bronson, Chip Cooley, Peggy Orenstein, Michael Chabon and Leonard Shlain. Sheldon's also made use of the first manuscript page of his unpublished memoir, which he is hoping will serve as a query letter to possible agents. Portions of the proceeds from art sales will go to La Jolla, the Writers' Center, San Valencia and the ongoing Bay Area Book Festival.

► At the Berkeley Symphony gala at the Crocker-Hartman, the concertmaster was none: Randy Newman, who came at the invitation of Executive Director Rena Maazel to sing four songs. Maazel herself played violin to accompany an orchestra who was also part of the entertainment.

► Meanwhile, at the Community Music Center gala, which honored

longtime supporters Fred Levin and Nancy Livingston, a chorus of 8- to 12-year-olds sang "Somewhere Over the Rainbow." Savvy organizers scheduled that — irresistible, eye-moistening — just before the fundraising auction.

► With typical modesty, actress-director Joy Curlin, honored at the Aurora Theatre's fundraiser, shined the light on someone else. Praising the company's artistic director, Tom Ross, she said he inspired the Aurora "to make words on a page into an event that will be remembered and talked about. Because then it's gone! You can't record us and watch us in your pajamas, you have to be there! Well, you could come in your pajamas. It is Berkeley."

► Curlin also recalled being confronted by an audience member during an intermission of a play she'd directed. "This is the worst play I have ever seen," he said. "I would leave now, but the people I'm with are enjoying it."

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