

working to establish a Volunteers in Medicine clinic in San Francisco, a free clinic staffed by volunteer health care professionals. At Mt. St. Joseph's-St. Elizabeth's Epiphany Center for Families, she worked directly with drug-addicted babies to help provide for their care.

Through her support of CAMINOS Pathways, a nonprofit organization that provides Latina immigrants with computer and technology education, Janet consolidates several of her personal ambitions: supporting women, serving the vulnerable, and providing empowerment through education.

Needless to say, after learning all of this about the Reillys, we were a bit humbled as we sat down with them for their interview.

NORTHSIDE S.F.: Clint, depending on when a given person has met you, he or she might know you as an aspiring priest, an antique dealer, a political consultant, a commercial real estate mogul, an art collector, a mayoral candidate, a philanthropist, a free press advocate or a father — among other things. You just don't fit into a traditional category. Do you think that this makes it difficult for some people to understand you?

CLINT: It might, but probably less now than in the past. I think that today people are perhaps more multidimensional than they used to be. It's not uncommon to do different things, change careers and pick up a variety of interests. Certainly, I'm one of those people.

I was a political consultant for more than 20 years before I went into commercial real estate. I've now been in that business for over a decade, but I still have a strong interest in politics. The difference is that now I'm able to do it as a volunteer rather than as a paid consultant. And I find that it's very meaningful to me to be in that position. I'm able to take the experience and knowledge I gained in each field, and apply those lessons to business, public service, philanthropy, and political engagement. It makes every experience richer.

NORTHSIDE S.F.: Janet, you've been very active in San Francisco civic and charitable activities. What can you tell us about your experiences?

JANET: The sheer variety of challenges keeps it interesting. There are so many great institutions to get involved with in San Francisco, and they are all working tirelessly to make this city a better place to live, work and visit. Currently, I sit on the board of the Golden Gate Bridge District, and to be one of the stewards of this great San Francisco landmark is thrilling and humbling.

I'm also involved in a variety of

health initiatives and many women's political organizations, as well as a wide array of agencies focused on social service work. This is the work that I find most gratifying and inspiring.

NORTHSIDE S.F.: The Golden Gate Bridge suicide barrier is something you've taken a particular interest in. Can you talk a little about why it's so important to you?

JANET: I've been on the bridge board for five years now, and the suicide barrier has long been a topic of discussion and contention. But despite all the talk and public hearings, the reality of the situation is this: The Golden Gate Bridge — for all of its beauty and grandeur — is the number one suicide magnet in the world. Most people have no idea that someone jumps off that bridge, on average, every 10 to 14 days.



The good news is we're taking action. A draft environmental impact report will be released this summer. I feel confident we will finally get a barrier built. It's going to require the will of this board and the citizens of the Bay Area. It will be difficult and it might be expensive, but it's not impossible.

NORTHSIDE S.F.: You're obviously very passionate about this. Have people approached you with their personal stories?

JANET: Yes. I've heard many, many personal stories. It's particularly heart-wrenching when parents come to testify before our board that have lost children on the bridge. They are obviously devastated. It's an enormous tragedy. I don't think addressing the issue is just the "right" thing to do; I believe that it's a moral imperative.

NORTHSIDE S.F.: People in the City may not see it, but you now write a column that appears in II daily newspapers around San Francisco, a project that has grown out of your personal struggle to preserve media competition in the Bay Area.

What makes media competition so important to you personally?

CLINT: The catalyst behind my efforts to maintain newspaper competition is really quite simple. I believe that a functional, vibrant democratic society really depends on multiple viewpoints in order for the truth to emerge. In order to have multiple viewpoints in a democracy, you've got to have competing news sources covering the same events from different perspectives.

It's this clash of ideas and perspectives that our founding fathers envisioned when they created this democracy. So, the more that media ownership becomes monopolized by a handful of big companies in our country, the more our democracy suffers.

Already, we see a tremendous shrinkage of reporters covering local news. The lack of solid local news coverage means that voters

efforts to encourage and empower women — inform your charitable and political activities?

JANET: Yes, I think there's a lot of truth to that, but it goes beyond women's issues to charity and public service in general. At the beginning of our marriage we made a commitment to one another that family, charity and public service would always be at the center of our lives. This was something we both felt very strongly about and obviously still do. I think it has made us a stronger couple, stronger people individually and certainly stronger members of our community.

NORTHSIDE S.F.: Janet, you're actively working to empower women at the level of state government. Can you tell us a little about your efforts?

JANET: I'm heavily involved with an organization called The California

state level tend to get lost somewhere in the political ether.

NORTHSIDE S.F.: Clint, what was the climate like at the time you first started managing high-profile campaigns for women?

CLINT: Today, it's easy to take it for granted that some of our most important elected officials are women because we have Nancy Pelosi as Speaker of the House, Dianne Feinstein as a U.S. Senator and many other prominent female leaders from the Bay Area.

But in the early years when Dianne Feinstein was a political pioneer, it was a very tough road for female candidates. We had to work that much harder in those days because there was still a lot of bias against women. In many ways, people like Dianne, Nancy and Louise Renne — among other great San Francisco leaders — have broken down those barriers for women. We shouldn't take that for granted.

NORTHSIDE S.F.: Janet, are you going to run for office again?

JANET: I hope to run again, yes. I think that being an elected official is a great way to effect real change. I would be honored to serve in some capacity.

NORTHSIDE S.F.: Clint, you spoke earlier of your volunteer political involvement. What are you doing now?

CLINT: Given the problems our country is currently facing, I think that now, more than ever, it's crucial that we support strong leaders like Nancy Pelosi, Hillary Clinton and Jackie Speier. We do all we can to support them and help them succeed.

NORTHSIDE S.F.: You've devoted significant time, energy and resources to restoring the Merchants Exchange Building, a San Francisco landmark. How has the building changed, and what's going on there today?

CLINT: The Merchants Exchange Building has been at the heart of San Francisco commerce for much of the 20th century. I bought the building in 1995 and decided to rebuild it from the ground up, and it has been tremendously rewarding to see this San Francisco icon rejuvenated for a second century at the heart of the City.

One of the really fun things about the building is the Julia Morgan Ballroom on the 15th floor, which used to be the Commercial Club, the biggest men's club in the City. Now it's actually an event center that hosts many of the greatest celebrations the City has to offer, from weddings to corporate parties to nonprofit events. It's fun to own a piece of San Francisco's history. ❖

... a functional, vibrant democratic society really depends on multiple viewpoints in order for the truth to emerge. In order to have multiple viewpoints in a democracy, you've got to have competing news sources covering the same events from different perspectives.

have less information with which to make vital decisions about the future of their local communities. So, the battle to maintain newspaper competition is very important to me.

NORTHSIDE S.F.: Would you say that it's the most important battle you've fought since you stopped managing campaigns?

CLINT: Actually, no. I think the most important thing I've done in the last 10 years is the work I've done at Catholic Charities. Here's a group that helps more than 40,000 people in need every year. As president of the board for five years, I was blown away by how indispensable the organization's service is. With cutbacks in the safety net of social services, organizations like Catholic Charities have become the providers of last resort to our most vulnerable citizens.

NORTHSIDE S.F.: Janet, you've long been a strong advocate for women's issues and Clint was one of the first people to run high-profile campaigns for women in California. Does this bond between you — your

List, which was founded about five years ago to raise money and awareness for women running for statewide office. For being such a new organization, it has been incredibly successful. As you may know, women are seriously underrepresented in the state legislature. More than half of the California population is female, yet women make up only 30 percent of the State Assembly and 25 percent of the Senate. We're working hard to change that.

And we all know, when women are present, the conversation itself changes. There is no substitute for having a woman's point of view represented fairly and accurately.

NORTHSIDE S.F.: Why the focus on state politics?

JANET: As a woman who has run for state office, I have seen how difficult it is to get people to focus on politics at the state level. We tend to be focused on national politics, which is very exciting and enjoys nonstop media coverage. We also tend to be engaged with local government, which is more intimate and allows us to get to know our representatives personally. But elections at the