



Walter Mencken's

SD ON THE QT

Almost factual news

AMERICA'S SINFULLEST CITY?

CCDC Proposes Boosting Downtown Economy by Designating Failing Hotels and Empty Condos as Sites for Legalized Prostitution

"Bring back the Stingaree!"

BETWEEN THE SHEETS IN AN EXTREME WOW SUITE, W HOTEL SAN DIEGO: It wasn't that long ago that downtown San Diego was known more for XXX theaters, massage parlors, and tattoo joints than for fine dining, cool clubs, and trendy boutiques. But even those tawdry days of the '70s pale in comparison to the early 1900s, when a part of downtown known as the Stingaree played host to a host of prostitutes, drug dealers, and gamblers.

Of course, all that changed with the creation of the Centre City Development Corporation (CCDC) in 1975, which had as its mission the creation of a thriving, healthy downtown San Diego. The CCDC proved highly effective, and the passing years have seen the construction of Horton Plaza, the convention center, and Petco Park.

So it may come as a surprise to some to hear that a recent CCDC report on new



Good times ahead? Spec ad for the financially troubled Vantage Pointe condominiums.

economic initiatives called for an inquiry into the use of downtown's growing number of failing hotels and vacant condo towers as sites for "legalized, regulated, and properly taxed sexual services." Noted properties mentioned in the report include the recently foreclosed W Hotel and the largely vacant Vantage Pointe condominium complex — luxury operations that have foundered during the recent economic downturn.

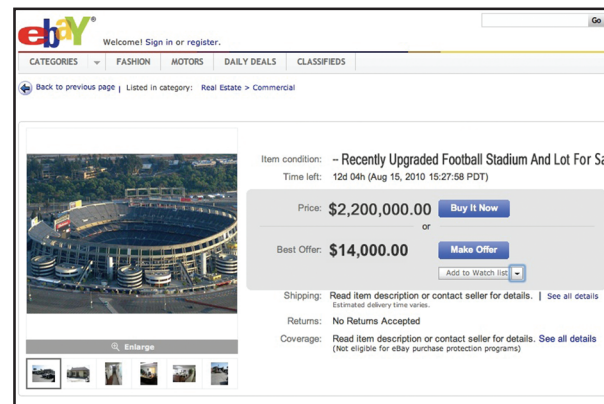
But the surprise fades when you pause to remember that urban redevelopment is largely a matter of economics. The anonymously authored report notes that "Economic rejuvenation relies, first and foremost, on providing people a place where they'll want to go and spend their money. That starts with desirable goods and services — obviously not an issue in this case — but it also includes atmosphere. If people



W is for whore?

like the place they're in, they're more likely to open their wallets. Fifty years ago, 'Stingaree' was a dirty word. Today, things have changed."

As evidence, the report cites Stingaree, the swank Sixth Avenue restaurant/nightclub that has adopted the neighborhood's once-pejorative name. "And they're not alone. The Gaslamp Strip Club on Fifth may be a steak joint, but their signage is pure va-va-voom. Madame Cora's Marble Room is done up to look the way it did when it was an actual brothel. To say nothing of Hooters or the Tilted Kilt or the original F Street Adult Boutique or Hustler Hollywood. It's clear that consumers are charmed by downtown's naughty history. What they don't want is the crime and danger that can be associated with that naughty-



Also available: some swampland in Florida.

RESERVE NOT MET: Chargers Place Qualcomm Stadium on eBay, but Pull It Due to Lack of Interest.

Recently remodeled stadium receives 3 bids in first 9 days; best offer is \$14,000 plus bus fare to Los Angeles.

ness. And that's precisely what legalization and regulation will avoid. Our girls won't need pimps; they'll have the City of San Diego watching out for them."

"Our city can learn something from Las Vegas on this one," the report concluded. "Their '90s foray into family-friendliness gave them a temporary boost, but ultimately, they learned that if people want decency, they'll stay in the suburbs and host cookouts in the backyard. Trips to town are for cutting loose — 'What happens here, stays here' is maybe the best slogan an urban center ever had. San Diego — a port city, a Navy town — has a proud history of prostitution, one that can be revisited, cleaned up, and turned into a major profit center. And the economic impact could spread beyond downtown to the larger community. Think of all the girls who could work their way through one of our fine colleges or universities!"

A public forum on the report will be held in the usually empty lobby of Vantage Pointe on Friday, August 13, at 6 a.m. Coffee and donuts and strippers will be provided by Pure Platinum Gentleman's Club.

TRENDY TIPPLE TAX

City imposes additional ten-cent charge on any cocktail costing over \$15 or employing vodka filtered more than three times.



San Diego ABC chief: "If people are such pretentious wastrels that they're willing to drop that kind of coin on a lousy cocktail, then I don't care if it was made from the 80-proof flop sweat of Bacchus himself — they can damn well pay an extra dime. We're in a recession here, people!"

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WHO PLAYS WHO

CCDC EDITION



Keenan Ivory Wayans benefited the black community by creating *In Living Color*.



CCDC vice-chair **Robert McNeely** opposed a community-benefits agreement for Ballpark Village.



John Lithgow lent his talents to the wicked Lord Farquaad in *Shrek*.



Bill Shaw is the treasurer for CCDC.



Bob Saget starred in *Full House*, a show about nine people from three nuclear families living under one roof.



CCDC chair **Fred Maas** developed master-planned communities.