

LOCAL NEWS

NEWSMAKERS

JACKIE SPEIER

The Congress member will hold a town hall Friday for residents with questions about the Sept. 9 gas line explosion in San Bruno. Officials from PG&E, the National Transportation Safety Board and the California Public Utilities Commission will be on hand. The meeting starts at 6:30 p.m. at St. Robert's Church, 1380 Crystal Springs Road, San Bruno.



STEVE YOUNG

Today, the former 49ers quarterback will help kick off a fundraising and food-collection drive in San Carlos for Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties. The food bank has set goals of raising \$11 million and collecting 1.7 million pounds of food, making it one of the largest food drives and fundraisers in the country.



THE 3-MINUTE

INTERVIEW

Bhodipaksa

The Scottish-born Buddhist and author of the recently released "Living as a River" will be leading a Halloween costume-meditation class on "Surviving the Zombie Apocalypse" at the San Francisco Buddhist Center at 6:30 p.m. Sunday.



Who are the zombies you are referring to? We are the zombies. A lot of the time we aren't as conscious as we like to think we are. We like to think we think our thoughts but we let our thoughts think us; thoughts often take us to places that aren't healthy for us.

How can meditation prevent us from becoming mindless zombies? It helps us to develop a quality called mindfulness, which is the ability to stand back from experience and observe it.

What will you teach people in your class? I will teach them to pay attention to their breath and to their bodies. Doing this teaches us to get out of our heads.

Your book was just released. What is it about? It's about the mistaken ideas we have about ourselves, and it's a book about learning to embrace change. We often cling to a fixed idea of who we are and what we are capable of in life. True security comes from not clinging. — Sarah Haughey

WORLD SERIES 2010



The real thing

1. Champagne bottle and cork used after Giants won NLCS were verified
2. After every save, Trevor Hoffman submits his jersey, his hat, his glove and his cleats for authentication
3. A few bottles of ginger ale used in the Texas Rangers' on-field celebration following ALCS title were tagged
4. The ball hit by Brian McCann to win the 2010 MLB All-Star Game for the National League, which gave the Giants home-field advantage in the World Series, was authenticated
5. The dirt from the pitcher's mound is collected and tagged
6. Bases are swapped out at least twice for each MLB regular-season game for authentication

Source: MLB

GETTY IMAGES FILE PHOTO

Memories: Any part of the Giants' postgame celebrations, such as this Champagne bottle popped open by Jeremy Affeldt, is subject to official certification.

Staff keeps eye on relics of game

Authenticators ensure veracity of memorabilia

By Mike Aldax
Examiner Staff Writer

It could happen to the ball Tim Lincecum pitches, the glove Cody Ross wears, the bat Aubrey Huff swings, the base Andres Torres swipes and even the bottle of Champagne that pops after a World Series victory.

Just about everything during this World Series — down to a single shard of broken bat — could be slapped with a special hologram sticker as part of Major League Baseball's memorabilia authentication program.

If it could be significant for Cooperstown, the record books or the souvenir market, it will be verified, codified, documented and branded to make sure the item can be proven to be the

real McCoy.

MLB has beefed up its staff of authenticators for this World Series to ensure the legitimacy of all game-used memorabilia. The program began in 2001 after an FBI investigation found that as much as 75 percent of memorabilia on the market was fake.

To distinguish the real from the imposters on the open market, MLB staffs every game with authenticators who have the responsibility of documenting and tagging any possible item removed from the field after play. The authenticators are all either active or retired law-enforcement officers.

Every item receives a sequentially numbered hologram that is tamper-proof, said Michael Posner, a veteran collector who oversees the program. Every item that is tagged must be personally witnessed by an MLB authenti-

cator from the moment the item leaves the field of play or locker room to the moment it is catalogued and branded with the hologram.

Home run balls that enter the stands cannot be authenticated, for example, because the authenticator can not be guaranteed of a continuous line of sight. It's all about maintaining the chain of custody.

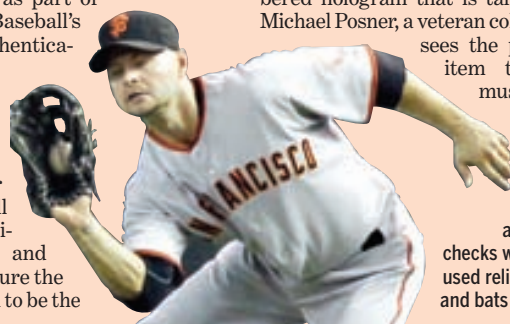
"In the postseason, there's a lot of interest in what's going on and what's coming off the field," Posner said. "It's recording history. It really protects the game. Our game really is a history."

Anything, and practically everything, can be tagged. After New York Yankees slugger Alex Rodriguez hit home run No. 600, his bat, batting gloves, jersey, cleats and even the bases he stepped on were authenticated. The bases are swapped out several times every game to be tagged.

The Champagne bottles and corks used during the Giants' National League World Championship celebration were authenticated. Even the dirt from the pitcher's mound is put into a sealed container and is thoroughly authenticated.

Since the program began in 2001, MLB has authenticated more than 3 million items.

maldax@sfexaminer.com



Equipped:
A team of authenticators checks whether game-used relics such as gloves and bats are the real thing.