

OMG, earthquake
in 20 secs! Will
the next Big One
arrive by text?

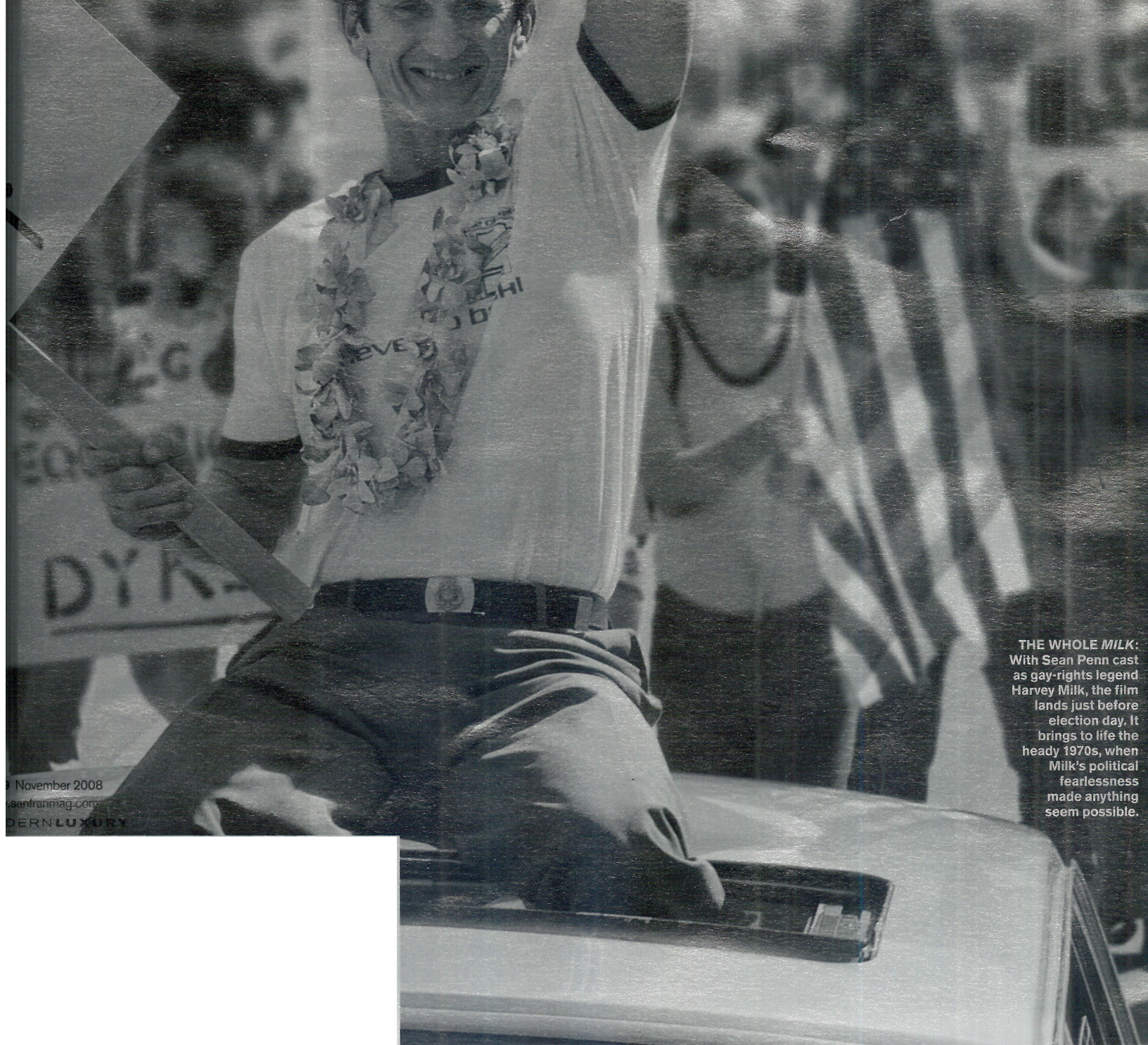
Defying
gravity: a
lean, green
hillside
house

Inside Milk

An only-in-SF tale of how the script, director,
and stars converged to make history—again

The
rustic
son of
Chez
Panisse

San Francisco



THE WHOLE MILK:
With Sean Penn cast
as gay-rights legend
Harvey Milk, the film
lands just before
election day. It
brings to life the
heady 1970s, when
Milk's political
fearlessness
made anything
seem possible.

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DERNLUXURY

Welcome to the neighborhood: Sue Gardner in San Francisco's tech center, South Park

Q&A

Kiss of the spider woman

Armed with an arachnid tattoo, Wikipedia's new executive director is bent on ensnaring even more users in the nonprofit's far-reaching web.

Since taking over Wikipedia last year and moving the company from Florida to an office near San Francisco's South Park, the diminutive **Sue Gardner**, a 41-year-old recovering goth and former journalist, has worked to help the DIY online encyclopedia to—in her words—“grow up.” After it was reported that a Wikipedia exec had been convicted of theft and drunk driving, Gardner instituted background checks for employees; following criticism of site founder Jimmy Wales's expense claims, she set up a reimbursement policy. With 300 million page views per day (and only 21 employees), Wikipedia has Silicon Valley insiders salivating over how much the company would be worth if the site started selling ads and monetizing itself: One estimate is a cool \$7 billion. As the organization gears up for its blowout annual fundraiser this month, Gardner spoke with us about acclimating to San Francisco, the pluses of staying nonprofit, and her grand plans for the company.

How are you and Wikipedia adjusting to San Francisco? It's great for us, the concentration of high-tech people here. Even your dry cleaner talks to you about Google stock. We've been going out and brazenly introducing ourselves to everyone—like Timothy Wu of ZeroDivide, Craig of Craigslist, the chair of KOED, the TechSoup people. We have shared interests with small nonprofits, like the Electronic Frontier Foundation. And then we have certain similarities to organizations with campuses, like Google and LinkedIn. We can move in a lot of circles.

What are your plans for Wikipedia? We just had our annual conference at Egypt's New Library of Alexandria, and we've made a big jump in articles published in Arabic. We want to grow in the Middle East. Currently, we reach about 1 in 24 people in the world; I want us eventually to be getting to 1 in 3.

You're already among the world's top 10 most visited websites, the only nonprofit— Actually, it's top five now.

Either way, you're sitting on a gold mine. How do you—and the founders—resist the temptation to sell? For a nonprofit, the question is always, what would you do with the money? In a for-profit setting, that's not hard: You buy a yacht and a house and a car, and it's fabulous. But we want to grow cleverly so that we're around in 50 years, in 500

years. In two or three years, we'll be able to paint a really vivid picture of what we think we can do in the world. And then there'll be an ask; we'll need money to fund that work.

What about the site's potential as a news-gathering organization? It's not potential; it's already there. There are Wikipedians awake everywhere. I watched the Virginia Tech massacre play out online. I was at a conference, with no access to broadcast media, and the discussions the Wikipedians were having online—the double-sourcing, the triaging of information, the assessments of credibility—were as good in quality, as rich and thoughtful, as I've seen in a professional newsroom.

On a different note, the spider tattoo on your right hand, what— What was I thinking, right? This predates tattoos' becoming trendy and normal. I was 18 or 19, and it was a two-for-\$25 deal in an Edmonton, Alberta, tattoo parlor. My boyfriend got the other \$12.50 spider tattoo. My father is an Anglican minister, and my mother was a public-school principal, so if you put those two together and grow up in a small town, you're going to get a tattoo or bleach your hair or get pregnant, have ill-advised sex, something. From the menu of options available to me, a tattoo wasn't too bad. ■ **ALEC SCOTT**

PHOTOGRAPH BY JADE OLSON