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A scheduling conflict for park, Gonzodome

By Leigh Weimers
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You'd think that when the Guadalupe River Park and Gardens folks announced -- in September -- that the park's grand opening would be held this coming Sept. 10, that would have pretty well nailed that date. But no. Look what city staffers working on plans for a grand opening of the new City Hall picked as their date: Sept. 10.

That will have to be adjusted, of course. I'm not particularly jazzed about the opening of the Gonzodome, but the river park has been in the works for decades, will be enjoyed by a lot more people, and deserves an exclusive opening. And San Jose still deserves some sort of master calendar where people can check to avoid schedule conflicts.

APPLE CORPS: Always a local angle, even in New York. For instance, **Melody Seiley** of Scotts Valley was there last week, participating in a trivia contest on the ``Live with Regis and Kelly'' show, and ended up winning a new Pontiac Montana SV6 sport van. **Regis Philbin** and **Kelly Ripa's** show even is paying the taxes on it, unlike some others.

Local jazz saxophonist **Geoff Roach** also was a winner in the Big Apple, but it cost him \$100,000. Roach, who leads the group Octobop, was high bidder on the sax played by jazz legend **Gerry Mulligan**, offered at the recent auction of musical memorabilia by Guernsey's auction house. Proceeds went to the Mulligan family's foundation for music scholarships, prompting widow **Franca Mulligan** to write Roach, ``When I asked Gerry (before he passed away) what he would like to do with his instruments, he said, `They have been so much a part of myself, I would like to have them played, not just be a showpiece in a museum.' I am very grateful that Gerry's wish came true." (You can catch Octobop - and the sax -- Saturday at Savanna Jazz in San Francisco.)

San Jose artist **Sonya Paz** was in the Big Apple last week, showing her work for a second time at the big Artexpo exhibit at the Javits Convention Center. Paz also introduced a series of wristwatches -- ``Art, Captured in Time." You're in the big time when you have your own watch line.

And New Yorker **Rachel Sheinkin**, who co-wrote TheatreWorks' recent holiday hit musical ``Striking 12" with GrooveLily members **Brendan Milburn** and **Valerie Vigoda**, has a new musical, ``The 12th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee" moving to Broadway on May 2 (it's currently at Second Stage). Sheinkin and GrooveLily will be back in the Bay Area for TheatreWorks' New Works Festival at the end of April, performing yet another new musical: ``Wheelhouse," an autobiographical tale of three tunesmiths in desperate need of a tuneup as they travel across America in a Winnebago.

IN PASSING: I was sad to return from vacation to learn that a couple of the city's most stalwart citizens -- **Dick Barrett** and **Sandy Ellenberg** -- had passed away. Barrett, my former columnist colleague here at the Merc, will be remembered for his wit and his art (fellow watercolorist **Charlotte Britton** is working on a memorial program at the Triton Museum). And Ellenberg leaves other lasting memories -- in the smiles of the needy children whose faces his reconstructive surgery restored. It doesn't get much better than that.

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