

# TENDERLOIN AWARD-A-THON

Marjorie Beggs

## Who's who in housing help TAC celebrate 3rd anniversary

About 40 people sat politely at Tenant Associations Coalition's 3rd Annual Event and Awards Ceremony, waiting for the honorin' and appreciatin' to start.

Scheduled to kick off at 12:30, the Nov. 7 celebration in the Tenderloin police station's community room was running late. The pièce de résistance of the event, the 68 mayoral certificates of appreciation for tenant leaders and activists, still hadn't been delivered by the mayor's office.

"Well, we should get started," TAC Program Director and co-founder Michael Nulty finally said around 1 p.m., nodding to the audience composed of city pols, staff members and agency reps as well as TL folks. "A lot of people are on paid time and they need to get their money's worth."

Nulty recapped TAC's history — a grass-roots networking organization formed to bring together low-income tenant leaders in buildings citywide, advocate for tenants' rights, improve living conditions and preserve affordable housing. TAC now has 50 members, most representing hotels and agencies in the Tenderloin.

With no mayoral certificates in sight, emcee, TAC member and mayoral and supervisory candidate J.R. Manuel introduced "a champion of citizen rights," District Attorney Terence Hallinan, who ably filled the next half

praised all the activists present, then introduced Assistant District Attorney Mike Menesini who, just before Christmas, will open the city's first Community DA Program office at 135 Sixth St., a storefront in the Sunnyside Hotel.

"The idea of the program is to marry post-correction prosecution with human services," said Menesini, also the mayor of Martinez for the last 18 years and a former Contra Costa County district attorney.

What he means is that people down there who are on probation or parole can get health and housing help at the same time because he'll be sharing the space with public health workers and Tenderloin Housing Clinic staff.

It was nearly 1:30 — no delivery yet from the mayor's office — so Nulty decided to start the presentations by giving Hallinan a TAC commendation.

Next up: Jeff Adachi, whom TAC has endorsed for public defender. He praised TAC's work: "There can be no justice without housing." He graciously received his commendation from Nulty.

Then Supervisor Leland Yee told the audience that it was the Tenderloin activists' pushing the city to clean up their neighborhood that "first stirred my interest in neighborhoods." TAC, he said, is important to the entire city, and so he presented Michael Nulty, then John Nulty and



Michael Nulty, left, and John Nulty accept kudos for TAC from Belinda Lyons, program director of the Mental Health Association's Supportive Housing Advocacy Project. Seated: Assistant DA Mike Menesini.

less community struggles. . . [and] your current dedication to improving living conditions, preserving affordable housing, and fighting for the rights of tenants."

In return, Michael Nulty gave a TAC commendation to Yee, an Assembly District 12 candidate. "That's the west side," Leland Lee said, "but I won't forget the east side. We're family and we'll always stay together."

1:50 p.m.: A mayor's aide slid in unobtrusively with the piles of mayoral certificates of appreciation — each on v. fancy pa-per with the mayor's seal inside an official-looking black folder.

San Francisco Redevelopment Agency Director Marcia Rosen spoke with warmth about early meetings of TAC and her pride in its accomplishments, then began presenting the long-awaited certificates — first to TAC for "outstanding work in the community," then to Michael Nulty personally: "Your role as a tenant leader is inspiring and commendable," read the certificate.

Only about 15 people were present to receive their appreciation certificates, but feelings stayed high. The awards, Rosen said, "recognize that there are homes and people underneath what look like real estate trans-

actions in the office."

The commending and recognizing and speeches continued. Supervisor Chris Daly presented TAC with another supervisory commendation, this one signed by all the supes. Nulty gave Daly a TAC commendation.

NOMPC President Garrett Jenkins spoke about his concerns — "Where do we go from here?" — and his dismay at encountering "nonprofit development organizations that are more concerned about themselves than the tenants." Jenkins received his TAC commendation and, like all the other awardees, stood for a picture.

Rebecca Bovee of the Housing Rights Committee gave TAC an award for "standing up to landlords," and Nulty gave Bovee a commendation for her role in helping to form TAC. Belinda Lyons, program director of the Mental Health Association's Supportive Housing Advocacy Project, presented TAC with both an MHA Distinguished Service Award and a certificate of appreciation from her project.

Other speakers and presenters included Victoria Tedder, housing counselor at the Independent Living Resource Center; Jeoflin Roh, Central City SRO Collective; and Tom Azumbrado, HUD director of

management for multifamily housing, who said, "It's a joy to be part of your celebration."

Moving up the political ladder, emcee J.R. Manuel presented Michael Nulty with a letter from Sen. Dianne Feinstein, commending TAC for its "indispensable contribution," "strong voice for families, disabled tenants and seniors," and "outstanding record of conduct, performance and dedication." The letter, Manuel explained, had come in by Fed-Ex because the anthrax scare had temporarily halted outgoing Washington, D.C. mail.

Michael Nulty handed out more TAC commendations — to tenant leader Paul Goercke from Maria Manor, support services coordinator at Chinatown Community Development Center Marilyn J. Isabell, and, finally, to his brother, John.

"He's one of the people," Michael Nulty said, "who goes to a lot of different meetings. He sits there and is a presence, as a tenant, to let agencies know: The tenants are watching."

And the awards ceremony thus was concluded. The audience, much diminished in numbers but not spirit, had refreshments.

*Central City Extra*, by the way, got a TAC commendation, too for, trying to be where the TL action is, Nulty said. ■



TAC founding member and Altamont leader Bernard Schertzer holds up his mayoral certificate of appreciation, presented to him by S.F. Redevelopment Executive Director Marcia Rosen.

hour by talking about community problems.

A neighborhood needs strong citizen participation, Hallinan said, something he saw a lot of in this gathering. He

finally Susan Bryan from NOMPC with supervisory certificates of honor.

Nulty's certificate lauded his "25 years of dedication for advocating on behalf of count-

in the Tenant Associations Coalition of San Francisco. He was 49.

A valued member of the St. Boniface congregation, Mr. Gaines also volunteered with the Stop AIDS Project, doing outreach and planning and implementing social events. To help ailing tenants with pets who want to maintain their independence and avoid institutionalization, he worked with Pets Are Wonderful Support (PAWS). And

he never forgot his neighborhood — he sat on the fund-raising committee of Alliance for a Better District 6.

Mr. Sullivan died Nov. 30 at his home in the Alexander Residence. Active in the residence's tenant association, he served several terms on the tenant council, which eventually incorporated as a nonprofit organization. Under his guidance, Alexander residents established cash bingo. Mr. Sullivan even vol-

unteered his name to be used on the bingo license, which is registered with the San Francisco Police Department.

Mr. Sullivan, a member of St. Boniface Church, was one of 68 tenant leaders honored at the Nov. 7 Tenant Associations Coalition anniversary event, receiving a mayoral certificate of appreciation for his role in helping fellow tenants.

### IN MEMORIAM

The Tenderloin recently lost two long-time tenant activists — David Lewis Gaines and Lawrence Sullivan.

Mr. Gaines died the last week of September at his home at the Civic Center Residence, a TNDC-owned supportive housing site. Always working to improve conditions for fellow tenants, he graduated from the Supportive Housing Network's Tenant Leadership Training and actively participated