

Tenderloin duty high on SFPD ladder to success

Neighborhood captains use it as steppingstone

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

THE Tenderloin Police Station is a proving ground for its captains, says Gary Jimenez, who headed it for three years, from 2006 to '09.

"It's a very challenging assignment [with] two main issues confronting the neighborhood — drug abuse and sales and quality of life," Capt. Jimenez wrote in an email to *The Extra*. "Successfully address these and he or she will have proven their ability to handle any task the city asks of them."

That will be good news for the neighborhood's new captain, John Joseph Garrity, promoted June 19. He's been a cop in the Tenderloin for 24 of his 28 years on the force — so long that he's worked as a sergeant or lieutenant under all of the last six TL captains, who give him an unqualified thumbs-up.

Some of his predecessors took big steps when they left the Tenderloin. Susan Manheimer, commanding officer of the Tenderloin Task Force from 1998 until May 2000, was named chief of police for San Mateo, a post she still holds. Her TL days were "the

best times of my life and career," she says, with the neighborhood "a microcosm of society's successes and failures that let me see how I could make a difference."

Her successor, Steve Tacchini, named captain just before the new TL station opened in October 2000, stayed two years. His Tenderloin tenure, he believes, was the basis for future advancements: "The neighborhood had huge problems, but it taught me about the complexities of working in a high-density, diverse community."

Tacchini's transfer in 2002 to captain of Central Station — a much larger station serving downtown, the

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A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN



PHOTO BY TOM CARTER

Otto Duffy has lived in SROs for 24 years. He understands the SRO culture — "It's depressing sometimes. I try not to think about it" — yet chooses to live in the most affordable housing in the city.

Home, sweet SRO

Residents who have lived this life for decades

BY TOM CARTER

SINGLE Room Occupancy hotels have a 200-year legacy in San Francisco. It's the cheapest living accommodations money can buy — the last refuge before homelessness, or the first welcome step up from it.

SRO rooms are little more than a large box. They measure on average 8 by 10 feet — not an easy space to live in. But they have suited laborers, seafarers, migrants, immigrants and, more recently, the homeless. Each floor in older SRO buildings used to have a community bathroom, and some still do, though many, due to the increased involvement of nonprofits and government agencies, now have a private toilet and shower, some a tiny kitchenette, plus social services and recent new rules that make SROs safer and protect residents' rights.

The city had an estimated 90,000 SRO units in 1930. Now 30,000 people are living in about 500 SROs.

Otto Duffy

IT was the best of times in 1986 when Otto Duffy lived in the Aarti Hotel at 391 Leavenworth St., TNDC's first SRO, purchased in 1981. The nonprofit now owns or manages 30 SROs and apartment buildings,

most in the Tenderloin.

Duffy had followed his friends to the Aarti — Jimmy Sugarek and Wade Wilson, who contributed to the long-gone Tenderloin Times, Paul Boden, who went on to the Homeless Coalition, and political activist Bruce Windrem, and Darryl Smith and Laurie Lazar, who started the Luggage Store Art Gallery.

Duffy was a forklift operator working down on the Peninsula. Kelly Cullen, who went on to become TNDC's executive director, had a room at the Aarti, too. And Darwin Diaz, who slept outdoors in Cohen Alley (now the TL National Forest), had done so many chores for the hotel he was soon invited inside to live. But Sugarek and Hudson were the main organizers of the self-styled, nonequity co-op and sparked activities such as group cooking for large, communal dinners.

Duffy is in his late 50s. He has a wispy black-and-gray beard like mutton chops gone wild. Born in San Francisco, he attended S.F. State in the early 1980s.

"There were a lot of upwardly mobile, functional people, and it was the most pleasant, hopeful hotel I ever lived in," he says of the Aarti.

But Duffy left in 1988 to live elsewhere when he got a raise to \$11.50 an hour. The job ended after four years and he returned to the Aarti in 1992 expecting to renew old times. But the movers and shakers were gone.

"When I came back the standard had changed. The cooking declined. People didn't have the money. Before, I'd go to farmers' market and bring back a bunch of vegetables and cook, and the next day, someone else would do it. The cooperative ener-

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PHOTO BY TOM CARTER

Capt. John Joseph Garrity greets well-wishers at a reception at the Infusion Lounge June 30.