

GOOD NEWS for...

ART LOVERS The third annual 2 Blocks of Art continues Oct. 18, spotlighting Central Market's diverse creative community — 100 artists in 25 locations on Sixth Street between Market and Howard and, this year for the first time, along Market from Fifth to Seventh streets as well. Highlights of the 4-8 p.m. event are an outdoor photography installation by resident Rey Cayetano Jr., illustrated, life-size portraits of Central Market residents by Joel Philips, cutting-edge fashions by Hector Manuel, and Tenderloin-based dance company Theatre Flamenco performing to live music. Local talent also includes fashion designers, jewelry makers, illustrators and musicians. "Sixth Street has a long history of innovative arts and performance centers and galleries," says Tracy Everwine, project director at Urban Solutions, the area's prime nonprofit economic developer that produces the event. "2 Blocks of Art is an open house for the community." Lead sponsor of the free art walk is the city's Grants for the Arts. Restaurants, bars, nightclubs and theaters along the walk will discount food,

drinks and admissions. For a map of artists, venues, food and drink specials: urbansolutions.org.

TREE LOVERS The city is for the first time counting every tree. Volunteer tree census takers began fanning out over the city with their clipboards Sept. 30 to locate, count and measure all the trees for the Urban Forest Map. The inventory will help city planners and foresters manage trees, fight tree pests and disease and plan future plantings. Climatologists will use the data to document urban forests' effects on micro-climates. The survey ends Oct. 7. Kelaine Vargas, project manager, and Friends of Urban Forest staffers trained volunteers how to collect and enter data on the map. Anyone with a Web browser can enter or access information about specific trees (urbanforestmap.org), and Vargas expects to soon launch an iPhone app for the map. "There aren't official teams," Vargas said. "It is self-directed. We counted 250 new trees the first day but none in the Tenderloin. Any day of the year, though, anyone who thinks they've found a new tree can check it out on the map, and add it even if they don't know the kind." Some trees planted 100 years ago were not registered with the city, she said, and thousands of trees in the Presidio aren't on the map. "The city has no mechanism to do the counting, and hiring experts would cost millions," she said. The Department of Public Works and Friends of Urban Forest enter trees on the map when they plant them. Vargas wants to make the count an annual affair.



PHOTO BY JONATHAN NEWMAN

Muralist Mona Caron puts finishing touches on Trailhead at Market and McAllister, a new ground-floor business in the Renoir Hotel. She completed a larger mural, wrapped around a building at Golden Gate and Jones, in 2010.

MY TAKE

Calling All Poets to The Land of the Dead

BY ED BOWERS

SAN FRANCISCO'S history of great writing goes back a long way. I am a San Francisco poet and have chosen to live in the center of this literary city. The Tenderloin spirit, whether anybody wants to believe it or not, is a source of real poetry, all the more so because it is underappreciated.

A lot of people who'd be better off employing their imaginations to write horror movies have the impression that the Tenderloin is a Skid Row nightmare and that those who live here are somehow different from the rest of the human race, slightly defective people who have been exiled from those more worthy of attention.

And who is considered slightly defective? Well, that would include those too honest for their own good, who do not fit into the general game plan, which is getting more and more picky about who wins and who loses, and those who cannot compete in a culture that values money above all else. In a word, poets.

Real poets need real neighborhoods. The Tenderloin fills that requirement perfectly; people who live here actually walk around the streets and talk to each other. In many other neighborhoods often the only people I see on the street are headed for their cars or walking their dogs. True, those neighborhoods are quiet, but so is a graveyard.

On the other hand, the Tenderloin is alive with commerce, sociability, drama, comedy, and life with a capital L. Of course death with a capital D is implied by this, but that's the way it is everywhere; only difference is that in the Tenderloin life and death are not hiding discreetly behind locked doors. Both are out in the open on display, naked poetry for all to see. The Ten-



PHOTO BY LENNY LIMJOCO

Ed Bowers at the piano in the 21 Club.

derloin is The Midnight Sun with The Moon On Fire.

It does get weird here; you can enter a tavern and meet a man who thinks he's Elvis Presley or go into a church where homeless people sleep in pews surrounded by finely crafted stained-glass windows. The collective unconscious staggers and swaggers inside these avenues. On the corner of Taylor and Turk you can sit behind the picture window of the 21 Club and watch every variety of human being in the world walk or ride by on their way in or out of this zone. Many people may fear the Tenderloin, but it is a crossroads. Those who are going down or going up must travel here. City Hall and a law college are in the Tenderloin, and so are the shelters, bars, and drug gangs.

The Tenderloin is an honest place to live. No need to put on airs or try to impress others with your vast accom-

plishments. Just be yourself. Also, it is important to cultivate vision. You must not be fooled by appearances lest you be fooled. That which presents itself to you as beautiful may be a con, and that which appears ugly may be concealing a terrible beauty. What could be a better home for a poet? Poets must have vision that sees beneath the surface. That vision must be earned and the Tenderloin is a great University for poets to get their Ph.D.s in vision.

I am an editor of the Faithful Fools' "Living In The Land Of The Dead," an anthology of poems, many of them written by poets who live in the Tenderloin. Also, for two years I hosted poetry readings at the 21 Club and hope to do so again. More intelligent and sensitive people live in this zone than any other neighborhood I've

lived in within the United States of America, and as far as I am concerned it is Poetry Central. So there.

San Francisco has selected October as the month to celebrate poetry. That's wonderful. But don't forget: The soul of a city is where poetry is born. The soul of San Francisco is in Central City. Lit Crawl is currently being celebrated in San Francisco and poets are being invited to recite words they have carefully chosen to reflect their multifaceted diamond minds as they experience modern life.

So this is my invitation to all the poets of the world! Flock to the Tenderloin! You will not become poets sitting in the library of a college. You will become poets by really living your life. Come to the Tenderloin.

You're allowed to live here. ■

CENTRAL CITY

EXTRA!

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SAN FRANCISCO

CENTRAL CITY EXTRA is published monthly by San Francisco Study Center Inc., a private nonprofit serving the community since 1972. The Extra was initiated through grants from the S.F. Hotel Tax Fund and the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund. The contents are copyrighted by the San Francisco Study Center, 944 Market Street, Suite 701, San Francisco, CA 94102.

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