

# GOOD NEWS for...

**CURRY CENTER SENIORS** They can choose gifts at 11 Walgreens stores in a growing holiday program that's caught the imagination of its donors. It works this way: At Curry's Eddy Street center, seniors write their first name on a card along with what they want, which may range from bed sheets to a rain poncho, deodorant or shaving cream. Volunteers from Home Instead Senior Care, an Omaha-based service provider operating in 15 countries, take the cards to Walgreens and attach them to ornaments on a small Christmas tree near the door. Customers wanting to donate to this "Be a Santa to a Senior" program choose a name from the tree, buy and contribute the specified item. When a name among 20 or so is snapped up, another takes its place. The store keeps the gifts until volunteers pick them up Dec. 25 to wrap and deliver to the Curry center, where caseworkers distribute them. Bigger items requested over the last three years have been donated by businesses like the law office of Bingham McCutchen LLP, which has popped for things like sweaters and jackets. Last year, 300 seniors received gifts, up from 200 in 2010. Participating Walgreens closest to the Tenderloin are at Market at Ninth, Market at Van Ness and Van Ness at Eddy.

**SRO RESIDENTS** Housing activists scratched the Tenderloin's long-standing itch to expand the campaign against the bedbug scourge, this time by improving reporting. Legislation the Board of Supervisors passed in October and was signed by the mayor Nov. 14 is designed to show how big the nasty bug problem is. It requires exterminators who treat infestations at buildings with tenants to report the cases monthly to the Department of Public Health. This hasn't been done before. Then, quarterly, DPH makes the data public on its Website by ZIP code — not by address. It also requires landlords to reveal to prospective tenants the last two years of a building's bedbug history. However, that's only if would-be renters ask for this. Richard May, a housing activist who helped draft the legislation carried by Supervisor Jane Kim, said the bill with landlord support originally had a one-year disclosure but was changed after activists argued that bedbugs can be dormant 18 months. And before, abatements weren't always known to DPH. Not reporting them now would warrant penalties. May said the measure is based on a New York law. Meanwhile, DPH launched a campaign to increase bedbug awareness: In November it provided 400 11 x 28-inch placards — 200 in English and 200 in either Spanish or Chinese — to Muni buses. With a picture of angry leg bites ("Can this happen to me?"), the posters exhorted riders to look around, take precautions, take action and visit the DPH's Environmental Health Website, [sfdph.org/dph/EH](http://sfdph.org/dph/EH).

**This December-January issue of Central City Extra will be current through January 2013. The next issue of The Extra will be February.**

## OBITUARIES

### J.L. MARRIBLE BIG MAN, HUGE HEART

More than 70 mourners filled the mezzanine community room of the Ambassador Hotel to say farewell to one of its most popular residents, the irrepressible extrovert, J.L. Marrible.

All the seats were taken and a dozen people stood, some leaning against the wall, a few sniffing as they remembered "the big man with the big heart" who could light up a room with his smile. To anybody who ever met him, it was clear the burly Mr. Marrible could get down with anybody, sincerely, passionately, and be the sort of man they could call friend.

He lived at the Ambassador nine years. Now, "it's hard to imagine" the Ambassador without him, someone said. Many nodded.

Mr. Marrible, originally from Arkansas, was an avid participant at the Listening Post, a small room just down the hall open weekday afternoons for residents to hang out and talk about their troubles and all with whomever's there and someone from Network Ministries, often Rev. Glenda Hope, who created the room years ago and was conducting Mr. Marrible's 12/12/12 memorial. It was common when Mr. Marrible wanted to make a point for him to say, "all eyes on me," his friends recalled and laughed. And his name, J.L., was what his mother gave him. It didn't stand for anything, they said.

"I've been in the Tenderloin 40 years and I've done hundreds of memorials," Hope told the group. "I can't remember but three or four where this many showed up. It says a lot.

"J.L. had opinions, you know," and again the mourners nodded, smiled, some laughed out loud. She continued: "He could be a royal pain sometimes. And I think that's okay. None of us is without sin. He was very out there. And I think that's why people loved him."



PHOTO COURTESY KELLY NOSS

**J.L. Marrible**

A dozen speakers mentioned how crazy Mr. Marrible was about his daughter, his only child, and that he also loved his son-in-law. Both were in the front row next to his girlfriend of five years, Kelly Noss. The daughter, Janise Washington, with her husband Andre Washington at her side, was dressed in white and dabbed her eyes throughout. They live in the Sunset and Mr. Marrible had visited them on Thanksgiving.

"He was feeling a little dizzy, recovering from the flu, but he ate everything on his plate," Janise Washington recalled afterward. She said she called him Nov. 28 and he was okay.

But Mr. Marrible died of unknown causes two days later, Nov. 30, in his sixth-floor room. He was 59.

He was "exuberant," one man said, "robust about life."

"He changed my life," said another.

A former Ambassador assistant manager said he had known thousands of residents over the years and Mr. Marrible was one of his favorites who, just being helpful and cheerful, "made my job a lot easier."

Two mourners read notes from others not in attendance and one read a poem.

"He was the only one to help me when I first came here," said a wom-

an. "He was so honest. And I thought if he could get over things, well, I could too."

Mr. Marrible sometimes went to Cecil Baker's room to pet Baker's cats, Charlie and Johnny, who once made the cover of Paws magazine. "And when I had trouble moving," Baker said, holding on to his red walker, "he would help me."

"When I lost my mother I felt so bad I didn't want to go on," said Horace. "But he talked to me and I felt better. Then once he did me a favor. When he got a plasma television he gave me his old one. It was so nice of him."

One man seemed to sum up Mr. Marrible's unusual gift: "He uplifted people," he said. ■

— Tom Carter

### SHERRY BAILEY A LOVING GRANDMOTHER

Sherry Bailey was a quiet person at the Ritz Hotel except around a few friends, and then she always talked about her family that got so much of her love and attention.

Mrs. Bailey would take BART or a bus from San Francisco to Daly City to see her daughter, Fantasy Silva, and her three grandchildren: Destinee, 15, Zurice, 5, and Daniel, 3.

"My mom spent a lot of time with me," said Silva. "She always came to see her grandchildren and sometimes stayed for weeks at a time. Once she stayed a year, and she paid her rent at the Ritz all that time."

Mrs. Bailey read the Bible and other books to the children and played with them. During the years Destinee was the only child she bought ice cream, also taking her to shows, concerts and parks. Recently, she was teaching the 5-year-old lots of new words.

"She had quite a vocabulary," her daughter said. "And they wrote things together."

"She was in love with her grandchildren and trying to give them what she thought was necessary to live their lives. She had a strong foun-

#### CENTRAL CITY



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