



PHOTOS BY MARK DONEZA

Study Center celebrates its 40-year milestone of service to community

SAN FRANCISCO STUDY CENTER, publisher of Central City Extra, celebrated its 40th anniversary Feb. 27 at the Stern Grove Clubhouse.

The festive sounds of Latin jazz band, Bluezona, greeted the arriving partygoers, who eventually filled the Victorian.

A staff-made feast included lumpia, prawns, two kinds of pancit, chips with three dips, green salad, artichoke frittata, ribs, wings and lots, lots more with tres leche cake and tiny cream puffs for dessert.

But it was a night to honor Study Center's "Dozen for the Decades," board and staff members, all still active, who have made significant contributions to the agency since its beginning in March 1972 as a resource for neighborhood organizations. Honorees were:

Stas Margaronis, founder and board member, businessman

Elizabeth Denebeim, secretary-treasurer, former S.F. school board president

Marjorie Beggs, senior writer/editor

John Burks, president, chairman emeritus S.F. State Journalism Department

Richard Livingston, vice president, EXITTheater managing director

Reiko Homma-Truee, board member, former S.F. Community Mental Health Services director

M. Roy Crew, director, Office of Self Help

Fancher Larson, senior advocate, S.F. Mental Health Clients' Rights Advocates

Ben Fong-Torres, board member, author and broadcaster

James McWilliams, board member, advocate at S.F. Mental Health Clients' Rights Advocates

Edgar Mercado, board member, Warm Line supervisor, Office of Self Help

Tina Tong Yee, board member, former director of Cultural Competency and Client Relations, S.F. Community Behavioral Health Services

Also honored were Tom Carter, Central City Extra community reporter, who retired at the end of January, and Geoff Link, executive director, who has been at the Study Center for 39 years.

Two days after the party, San Francisco Study Center turned 41. ■

— Geoff Link



Top: Libby Denebeim, secretary-treasurer of the Study Center board, is presented her award by Executive Director Geoff Link. Libby was president of Study Center's 35-member Community Advisory Board in 1973. **Above**, President John Burks sits in with the band for a few hot licks during the party.

Central Market CBD plan awaits city OK

BY JONATHAN NEWMAN

HEEDING THE NEGATIVE results from an areawide survey, Central Market CBD has abandoned its 2012 plan to increase its turf six-fold and triple its budget to \$1.6 million — and recast its hoped-for future more modestly.

Now, the district wants to expand southward to Minna Street and west all the way to South Van Ness Avenue, down Sixth Street to Folsom, include sections of Tehama and Clementina west of Fifth Street, taking in many family-size apartment buildings and medium-scale condos.

The result is a decidedly more residential benefits district than the all-commercial cast to the current CBD.

Last April, the CBD's Steering Committee decided to explore expanding the district in a do-or-die bid to grow beyond its Market Street corridor that now runs only from Fifth to Ninth Street. Simply renewing the current boundaries would have given the district another seven years of life. But once it decided to expand, it needs two positive votes by prospective property owners in the expanded area or the CBD will go out of business May 31.

The first vote will be on a petition favored by owners holding properties with a combined 30% of assessments (plus \$1) in the newly drawn district. If the petition passes, District 6 Supervisor Jane Kim will request the supes' Government Oversight Committee to sanction an official ballot to create the new district. The ballot — the second vote in the process — must pass by a majority of those voting and that majority must represent at least 50% of the assessments. The ballot voting opens and closes in a 45-day period.

If the votes come in, the new CBD will encompass nearly 750 properties — largely the result of including multicondo buildings like Mission Street's Soma Grand. The overall area served by the district will triple in size and generate \$1.4 million in assessments.

The draft expansion plan is being reviewed by the Office of Economic and Workforce Development, city attorney and Supervisor Kim. All have had the plan since mid-February.

The CBD can't send the plan to property owners to approve or reject until the draft becomes final after City Hall signs off on it. Neither the mayor, city attorney nor District 6 supervisor has told The Extra when the review of the draft will be completed, though CBD officials expect to mail the petition by March 6.

A previous expansion plan was more grandiose.

In August, Central Market mailed 1,452 surveys to property owners, the majority with holdings south of Stevenson Street to the southern side of Howard Street, and 220 responded — "an extraordinary high response" rate

of 15%, said CBD Executive Director Daniel Hurtado. Only 23 — 10% — of the responses came from existing district members, with 20 solidly in favor of expansion, he said.

But resistance in the proposed expansion area, notably on the western end of Natoma Street and along the 10th and 11th Street corridors running south from Market, where two owners of a combined 23 properties opted out, doomed the bigger benefit district.

Bob Harms owns and manages nine properties in that area through his privately held company, Ares Commercial Properties. He answered the survey, letting the CBD know he was not in favor of expansion.

"I'm a small landlord and I try to keep my rents low and my tenants happy. I don't want to have to pass these extra assessments off on my tenants," he told The Extra. "Keeping the streets clean and dealing with graffiti — that's what the city should be doing. I mean that's why we pay the property taxes, isn't it?"

Stanley Saitowitz, who owns four properties on Natoma Street, was all in favor of expansion. "I would love to participate. I think it's a great idea people taking care of their own community. I'm sorry that we won't be included," he said.

The survey results, particularly the negative responses from owners with multiple properties, resulted in rethinking the expansion, so the map boundaries were redrawn more modestly, said Jim Chappell of MJM Management, the CBD's consultant on the expansion.

"The survey showed that owners along Howard Street didn't always feel connected to Market Street. They see their area as more South of Market," he said. "So, we want the existing CBD to expand with planned continuity and a sense of neighborhood."

"Owners on Tehama and Clementina and along Sixth Street are firmly behind the expansion. They want to see a return of community services, which disappeared when redevelopment ended. It's important. Whatever happens on Sixth affects Market," he said.

Central Market CBD provides community guides, street and sidewalk cleaning, including graffiti removal, and programs designed to aid economic development. The services provided and how often depend on the type of property and its location within the district. Market Street and Sixth Street will get more community guides and street cleaning than the less-heavily traveled Tehama and Clementina streets.

Not all CBDs provide the same services. Across Market Street, for example, the North of Market/Tenderloin CBD provides more tree-planting, needle and syringe pickup and graffiti removal, but no community guides, a service nixed by then-District 6 Supervisor Chris Daly when the CBD was formed. ■

CENTRAL CITY

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SAN FRANCISCO

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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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CENTRAL CITY EXTRA is a member of the SAN FRANCISCO NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION, SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS, NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER, AND SAN FRANCISCO PENINSULA PRESS CLUB