

Tenderloin Democratic Club turns 10

‘The CCD is central to the health of this community’

BY MARK HEDIN

CANDIDATES AND POLITICIANS, their reps and supporters, community activists and the merely curious gathered at the New Delhi Restaurant on Ellis Street on the evening of April 19 to celebrate Central City Democrats’ 10th anniversary.

Besides the milestone, the evening also served as the group’s “Meet & Greet” event for the June 7 election, and dozens of candidates for seats on the Democratic County Central Committee, advocates for various ballot measures and other positions all showed up.

Even the Department of Elections was present, with two staffers manning a table to register voters.

CCD, with about 300 members, is one of 31 Democratic clubs chartered by the DCCC, the Democratic Party’s official presence in the county of San Francisco, home to 250,000 registered Democrats.

“We work with the larger party,” chairwoman Leah Pimentel told The Extra, citing the convention delegate selection process, voter registration and outreach and fund raising, although she said it does not directly fund campaigns. But DCCC’s highly coveted endorsements help inspire donors.

The dozens of DCCC candidates are running to represent one of the city’s two Assembly districts, the 17th, which stretches from North Beach to Hunters Point and includes the Tenderloin, and the 19th District, which goes from the

Marina into Daly City.

After being introduced by CCD President Dennis Isner, New Delhi owner Ranjan Dey turned the spotlight to the evening’s keynote speaker, Anh Nguyen: “She is one of my heroes,” he said.

“I’m just gonna speak from my heart,” Nguyen said, putting her notes aside. “I think the CCD is central to the health of this community and San Francisco. I see a lot of exclusion,” she said, drawing a bead on the political establishment. “This community has been systematically excluded from participating in the process. They were abandoned long ago to a pervasive sense of hopelessness.”

She cited statistics documenting the demise of small businesses in the neighborhood (from 700 in 1996 to 300 now) and the displacement of the immigrant community responsible for cultivating many of those businesses when job opportunities were denied them.

She herself, she said, has this year been terminated from her job at the Tenderloin Economic Development Project “for organizing,” and then lost her tiny apartment at 620 Eddy St. for making improvements to it, despite having been previously authorized to spruce up the illegal one-room unit, that, she said, the landlord is now trying to bring to code.

She also cited studies showing that if the poverty level of a community hits 20%, an inexorable slide follows. “We’re (Tenderloin) at 50%.”

Michael Nulty, primary organizer of

the CCD and its vice president of political affairs, introduced DCCC officers and members, several of whom he called up to pose for a group photo after a toast “to another decade of democracy” and the blowing out of candles on some of Isner’s cupcakes. Nulty showed off the CCD’s just-received certificates of appreciation from state Sen. Mark Leno, Assemblyman David Chiu and the Board of Supervisors. Finally, keynote speaker Nguyen was presented with a Community Impact Award from the TL’s Tenant Associations Coalition.

In the back of the room, trays of New Delhi’s veggie samosas and pakoras with mint or tamarind sauces, and Isner’s tiny red-velvet muffins, disappeared at astonishing rates as the mingling commenced.

Besides New Delhi, other sponsors included the Central Tower Market, Daldas Grocery, Emo’s Place Rotisserie, Golden Kim Tar Restaurant, the Market Street and North of Market Business associations, Tip Top Market, Opera Plaza UPS Store, the Green Cross, TAC PAC, Little Saigon Hair and Nails, Lisa for Hair, Glass-thetix and City Rent-A-Car. ■



COLIN HUSSEY

Anh Nguyen, keynote speaker at the 10th anniversary celebration, was honored by the Tenant Associations Coalition with its Community Impact Award. “Unlike many, she actually talks the talk and walks the walk about the issues in the neighborhood,” Michael Nulty of the TAC said.

MY TAKE

Futures Collaborative needs moderator

TENDERLOIN FUTURES Collaborative has been around for 15 years serving as a forum for residents, nonprofits and businesses to update and discuss neighborhood development. The need for the forum continues as our neighborhood goes through growing pains, struggling with an influx of middle-class residents, high-end businesses and market-rate housing.

Because of scheduling conflicts and other commitments, I have decided to stop moderating the monthly Tenderloin Futures Collaborative meetings effective May 1; therefore, future meetings would be suspended.

Since February 2010, I have brought the resources of the Alliance for a Better District 6 to assist in the administration of TFC and have voluntarily helped to manage the operations. I have asked various nonprofit groups if they would take over facilitation and keep the meetings active, but none has come forward. Over the years, TFC has continued with the facilitation assistance of St. Anthony’s

Foundation, Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corp. and San Francisco Network Ministries.

Under my administration, TFC has established a members-only Google group and Facebook page. I designed meeting signs and other documents, reached out to new segments of the Tenderloin, brought the media and videotaping of the meetings to YouTube with the help of Alliance for a Better District 6 member Susan Bryan, established an independent TFC contact number, continued the meetings in a neutral and safe location, and always started the meetings on time.

I hope someone or another neighborhood entity will volunteer and bring the resources to re-establish ongoing monthly meetings. Until that happens, Alliance for a Better District 6 members will still post community announcements on the Facebook page. For inquiries, please contact me, (415) 820-1560 or sf_district6@yahoo.com. ■

— Michael Nulty



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