

Tenderloin cops try new tack on dope dealers

Enforcing state law that focuses on selling near schools

BY TOM CARTER

POLICE are tightening the squeeze on drug dealers near the Tenderloin's elementary schools.

Tenderloin Station Capt. David Shinn told the Tenderloin Futures Collaborative on Oct. 8 that he is stepping up efforts to enforce the "1,000-foot rule" for schools and would use more cops in sting operations.

A 1988 state law, enacted in response to growing juvenile drug traffic, says that dealers arrested for selling within 1,000 feet of a school can get an additional five years tacked on to their convictions. Although arrest reports "red flag" the violation, it is up to the district attorney's office to prosecute for the added years.

The Tenderloin's elementary schools are Tenderloin Community School, 627 Turk St., and DeMarillac Elementary, 175 Golden Gate Ave.

However, there are about 4,000 children in the Tenderloin, according to the station's July 2003 report to the Police Commission. Unfortunately, Shinn said, "child care facilities are not covered."

Tenderloin station officers made about 5,000 arrests last year. More than one-third were drug busts and many more, such as burglaries, robberies and assaults, were drug-related, Shinn said, making drug activity the area's leading crime by far.

An "absolutely embarrassing" piece by a Chronicle columnist that highlighted how easy it is to score drugs off the street angered Shinn. "She's lucky my officers weren't there because they would have arrested her," he said. "It may have been investigative journalism but she was definitely committing a crime. If I had been there, I would have arrested her myself."

After learning of Rush Limbaugh's four-year addiction to painkillers, and that the popular right-wing commentator had his maid buy the stuff in a parking lot, Joan Ryan wondered what our local scene could be like. She checked with some local addiction experts and found that buying drugs in the Tenderloin is about as easy as buying French postcards in Paris.

So on Oct. 13, Ryan sauntered up Golden Gate Avenue on her lunch break on a mission to buy prescription drugs illegally. She ended up on Turk Street where she scored seven tablets of Vicodin for \$21, she wrote in the next day's paper.

Ryan would not have been hard to spot for a pinch. She was dressed like a jaunty suburban mom in red Gap T-shirt, black slacks, heeled sandals and carried a red pocketbook. A conviction could have meant a fine, probation and community service, or a lesser combination of that if she has no priors.

"The entire transaction, from talking to the first guy at U.N. Plaza to

"She was definitely committing a crime. If I had been there, I would have arrested her myself."

Capt. David Shinn
ABOUT COLUMNIST
JOAN RYAN

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This idyllic scene in Sea Cliff is repeated throughout the neighborhood.

CENTRAL CITY

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POINT OF VIEW



PHOTOS BY LENNY LIMJOCO

This crowd scene at Jones and McAllister is repeated throughout the neighborhood.

Dedicated armpit

Poet takes aim at politics of TL gentrification

BY ED BOWERS

AT the corner of Sixth and Market, in front of a hamburger joint, a pack of angry young people with cell phones are hanging out, blocking the door of the establishment, and wandering in and out, back and forth with the kind of assertion and confidence that comes from knowing you're not alone in the universe, you're backed up by a gang of thugs.

A friend said that if I wanted to perform a service to the community, I should observe

the drug dealers and write about how bad they are for business. But I feel rather silly doing it. I can't help thinking that anyone, short of Ray Charles or Helen Keller, would be blind to the fact that there are a number of drug gangs and drug dealers in the Tenderloin. It's sort of like telling the authorities that water is wet.

Do the citizens of this sophisticated city think that the young women and men who should be in school, but who are lingering in front of bars and restaurants, doing business on cell phones and placing little white rocks into their mouths, are talking to their mothers, or sucking on Altoids in order to soften them up for strangers with bad teeth?

Water is wet and guns were built to kill. Surprised? I'm a great investigative reporter. I state the obvious.

So on Saturday at around 11:30 a.m., I'm walking down Jones Street to the corner of Ellis to meet a friend in a bar, and under the azure sky the streets are exploding with debauchery, madness and enterprise.

"It doesn't get any better than this!" I thought.

You see, I don't care if people take drugs. Maybe more than one-third of Americans are on anti-depressants with depressing side effects that turn them into drones. I understand why some people would prefer to choose their own poison.

Besides, illegal drugs are good for the economy. The prisons get filled with slave labor, the social workers remain employed, the homeless activists get more clients, movies and television shows get titillating material, cops and prison guards get hired, politicians get platforms. And low-rent Betty Ford clinics make out like bandits.

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