

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SPECIAL EVENTS

Tenderloin Kids 4 Safety Poster Gallery. On display Oct. 8-31, in the children's section (second floor) of the Main Library, the 40 winning posters from the July kids' parade around Boeddeker Park. Information: 553-1155 or Jan@SFNSP.org.

Hotel Tenants Convention, Thurs., Oct. 14, noon-5 p.m., St. Boniface Theater, 133 Golden Gate. Sponsored by Central City SRO Collaborative; workshops to set an agenda for next year's efforts; lunch. Last year's convention drew 350 tenants from 150 hotels. Information: 775-7110.

Plans and Programs Committee, County Transportation Authority, Tues., Oct. 19 (formerly scheduled for the 12th), 10:30 a.m., Rm.263, City Hall. Information: 552-4800

2nd Annual Haunted House, Sun., Oct. 31, 118 Jones, 7-9:30 p.m., sponsored by North of Market Neighborhood Improvement Corporation and Bay Area Women and Children's Center. Volunteers needed to help decorate on Oct. 30 and to pass out treats and be scary on Halloween. Free for children and adults with children, \$5 for adults without children. Proceeds benefit the Bay Area Women and Children's Center. Information: 440-9611.

REGULAR SCHEDULE

HOUSING

Consumer Housing Group, 1st Thursday of the month, 6-7:30 p.m., Mental Health Association, 1095 Market St., Suite 408. Contact: 241-2926.

Tenant Associations Coalition of San Francisco, 1st Wednesday of the month, noon, 201 Turk Community Room. Contact Michael Nulty, 339-8327. Resident unity, leadership training, facilitate communication.

Supportive Housing Network, 3rd Thursday of the month, 3-5 p.m., 111 Jones. Contact: Belinda Lyons, 241-2929.

HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Health Board, 2nd Wednesday of the month, 6:30-8:30 p.m.,

CMHS, 1380 Howard, Rm. 537. CMHS advisory committee, open to the public. Contact: 255-3474.

Hoarders and Clutterers Support Group, 2nd Monday and 4th Wednesday of each month, 6-7 p.m. 1095 Market, Rm. 609. Contact: 241-2926.

CMHS Consumer Council, 3rd Monday of the month, 5:30-7:30, CMHS, 1380 Howard, Rm. 537. Contact: 255-3428. Advisory group of consumers from self-help organizations and other mental health consumer advocates. Open to the public.

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill-S.F., 3rd Wednesday of the month, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Family Service Agency, 1010 Gough, 5th Fl. Contact 905-6264. Family member group, open to consumers and the public.

SAFETY

Soma Police Community Relations Forum, 4th Monday of the month, 6-7:30 p.m. Location changes monthly. To receive monthly information by e-mail, contact Lisa Block, 538-8100 ext. 202. Lblock@iisf.org, or Jan Rasmussen, 553-1155

Tenderloin Police Station Community Meeting, last Wednesday of the month, 6 p.m., police station Community Room, 301 Eddy. Contact Susan Black, 345-7300. Neighborhood safety.

North of Market NERT, bimonthly meeting. Contact Tim Agar, 674-6142, or Lt. Juanita Hodge, S.F. Fire Department, 558-3456. Disaster preparedness training by the Fire Department.

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT

Alliance for a Better District 6, 2nd Tuesday of the month, 6 p.m., 301 Eddy. Contact Michael Nulty, 820-1560 or sf_district6@yahoo.com. Districtwide association, civic education.

Mid-Market Project Area Committee, 2nd Wednesday of the month, 5:30 p.m., Ramada Hotel, 1231 Market. Contact Carolyn Diamond, 362-2500. Market Street redevelopment on Fifth to Eighth street.

Tenderloin Futures Collaborative, 2nd Wednesday of the month, 10 a.m., Tenderloin Police community room, 301 Eddy. Contact Jerry Jai at 358-3956 for information. Network of residents, nonprofits and

businesses sharing information and taking on neighborhood development issues.

Friends of Boeddeker Park, 2nd Thursday of the month, 5-6:30 p.m., Boeddeker Rec Center, 240 Eddy. Plan park events, activities and improvements. Contact: Betty Traynor, Neighborhood Parks Council, 621-3260 ext. 101.

South of Market Project Area Committee, 3rd Monday of the month, 6 p.m., 1035 Folsom, between 6th & 7th. Contact: SOMPAC office, 487-2166.

North of Market Planning Coalition, 3rd Wednesday of the month, 6 p.m., 301 Eddy. Contact 474-2164. TL 2000, jobs, neighborhood planning.

Tenderloin Merchants Association, contact Jamie Cutlip, 553-4433 ext. 22 or jamie@urbansolutionsf.org.

Boeddeker Park cleanup, 3rd Saturday of the month, 9-noon, organized by the Friends of Boeddeker Park. To RSVP to work or for information, contact Betty Traynor at the Neighborhood Parks Council, 621-3260.

Community Leadership Alliance, last Thursday of the month, 5:30-6:30 p.m., Tenderloin Police Community Room, 301 Eddy. Informational forum with monthly agenda of guest presenters and speakers, sharing news of upcoming events, proposals, resources. Contact David Villa-Lobos: 921-4192 or david_villalobos@sbcglobal.net

SENIORS AND DISABLED

Mayor's Disability Council, 3rd Friday of the month, 1-3 p.m., City Hall, Rm. 400. Contact: 554-6789. Open to the public.

Senior Action Network, general meeting, second Thursday, 10 a.m.-noon, St. Mary's Cathedral. Monthly committee meetings, 975 Mission #700. Fundraising, first Thursday, 2 p.m.; Pedestrian Safety, second Friday, 10 a.m.; Sr. Housing Action, third Wednesday, 1:30; Health, last Thursday, 1:30. Information: 546-1333.

OBITUARIES

PAUL REYNOLDS Diamond in the rough



Paul Reynolds, who came to San Francisco 10 years ago, died here Sept. 7. He was 58.

Mr. Reynolds' father, mother, brother, two sisters and sister-in-law attended a Sept. 13 memorial for him at the San Cristina Hotel, where he had lived for almost five years.

His sister-in-law played the guitar and led the 30 friends, family and tenants gathered in singing "Amazing Grace."

"Paul struggled in this world," she said afterward. "We want to thank all of you here for what you gave him. We have lots of wonderful memories of Paul. We live in the wine country and he'd come to visit and we'd eat lots of food, but he loved being here in San Francisco. You gave him a reason to come back."

Several tenants praised Mr. Reynolds for his generosity and goodness. All said he was quiet, but friendly.

One man recalled how he and Mr. Reynolds would stand outside the hotel, on Market Street and Golden Gate, and watch the passing scene. "We'd talk about what was happening on the block — not judging but just observing. He was a gentleman who always put the person in front of him ahead of himself."

A little gasp went up when his brother rose to share memories. "I don't want to scare you — I know we look a lot alike," he said. "Paul had a tough exterior that may have made him look a little suspicious. But he was good, and I know he felt comfortable here. He got the services that he needed, and all his friends were here."

Mr. Reynolds' youngest sister, who lives in Santa Cruz, called him "a walking contradiction" and said she knows she'll always look for him when she comes to the city. "He'll always be my diamond in the rough."

Paul Reynolds' family lived in Germany for seven years when his father was stationed there. "Paul was an 'Army brat,'" his father later told The Extra. "He learned to speak German at a very young age. He was a high school swimming team member and an avid skier. He never married."

Donna Scian-Byers lives in the neighborhood. "Paul was my best friend for 10 years," she said, tearfully, at the memorial. She passed around a picture of the two of them, looking happy in front of a Christmas tree, and recalled that his favorite song was the Rolling Stones' "Gimme Shelter."

— MARJORIE BEGGS

LEE THIBIDEAUX Fixture in gay community

I strolled down Turk Street to the corner bar, hoping to share a few words with patrons and bartenders about my late friend, Lee Thibideaux. The day had been set aside by his old employees in remembrance of him, and I was pleased for his sake that the bar was filled, but nonplussed, as I'm phobic about crowds. So I walked on, still resolute to make some statement of my affection for this good man.

Ten years ago I moved to San Francisco desperately seeking work. Poverty pushed me into the Tenderloin, with its plentiful supply of cheap housing. Work I found, but the ghetto environment of the Tenderloin was a rude, and indeed, frightening, shock to someone with a rural and suburban past. Walking the streets was like "running the gantlet," with gangs of drug dealers and other unsavory men standing around, silently staring with predatory eyes. Seeking understanding and a possible refuge I ducked into the nearest bar, and there I met Lee Thibideaux.

"Leeona," as he was known, was the main bartender in a bar whose time had passed. Many nights we sat talking sports (he was an ardent 49er and Giants fan), politics and social issues (he actively supported the Tenderloin Tessie Foundation and the Night Ministry), and the state of the world in general and as it so grotesquely manifested itself, just outside the barroom door. We also talked about Berkeley, where we had both been in college, and about family trials and tribulations. Leeona offered advice, sympathized, and encouraged me to resist despair. He was a stabilizing force at a time I could have gone mad.

Many others benefited from Leeona's kindness, sound advice, opportunities for casual work, weekly plates of spaghetti, the frequent free drink, and many more things.

Leeona bought the bar and turned it around. The crowds returned, for he was well liked and highly regarded. I rejoiced at my friend's success, even though the press of his new commitments meant that I saw him less and less. And now he is gone.

Good-bye, Leeona, "and flights of angels sing thee to thy rest."

Lee Thibideaux, aka "Mr. Leeona," passed away Aug. 19, 2004. He was born and raised in Louisiana, served his country in the military, and was a longtime fixture in the gay community of San Francisco.

— DAVID ROMES

ERIC VILLATORE 'Mr. Smiley'



Eric Villatore's friends at the San Cristina Hotel said he knew he didn't have long to live.

"He knew he was going for a few months before he died," said a neighbor. "He was really sick, and he went around saying good-bye to us." Mr. Villatore died Sept. 24 in his room at the San Cristina where he had lived for five years. He was 48 years old.

At an Oct. 4 memorial, people shared memories of the man one hotel staff member called "Mr. Smiley." "He'd come into my office and always had a nice thing to say. Sometimes he'd had too much to drink when he was smiling, but still, that smile was a gift."

On the seats set up for the memorial were two single-spaced typed pages about Mr. Villatore, in Spanish. His sister, who lives in London, had sent them to the hotel and asked to have them distributed at the memorial.

"As an elder sister," she wrote, "I always had to look after you. I had to carry you wherever I went, though I was thin like a pin and you were a chubby baby. I thank God I have an opportunity to apologize for the things I did to you in my innocence like leaving you at the anthill while I was playing on the swings at the playground."

She noted his "adventurous spirit" when he was growing up, his ownership of a tailor shop, his travels to Mexico as a young man and his return to El Salvador. "God wanted us to take different ways," she wrote, "but we were always thinking of each other."

Several of Mr. Villatore's neighbors recalled his consistent generosity and friendliness. "He always wanted to feed you, loan you things, give you cigarettes, have good times together," said one man. "I never had a drinking buddy — and never thought I wanted one — but we did have fun. He was a big oak tree, spreading his roots all over."

Said another neighbor, "I have to tell this story about Eric. I only knew him a few months, but one night I was a little short on cash and I asked him for \$2." She paused in her story, to get the pace right. "So he said to me, 'I don't know you. I'll give you \$1.'" She paused again for the laugh. "He was a teacher until the day he died."

— MARJORIE BEGGS,
WITH TRANSLATION BY RUMI ETO