

Mayor's office issues a dark decree

Repaint 2 colorful city playgrounds

BY TOM CARTER

THOSE freshly painted rainbow hues decorating the north and south playgrounds of Civic Center Plaza Park are about to be swiped by the dark brush of the mayor.

It seems that just after the playgrounds on Larkin at McAllister and Grove were finished in crowd-pleasing flourishes in early April, Mayor Newsom's office phoned the Rec and Park Department April 13 with a directive to repaint the playgrounds "opera blue" to match the City Hall dome.

Opera blue is the color of the park's lamp posts, a hue perfect for a Batmobile or evening wear.

Repeated phone calls to the mayor's office were not returned. On a trip to City Hall, The Extra was told that whoever was responsible for the opera blue order couldn't be found.

The fencing around the playgrounds is red, orange, yellow, green and blue. The north playground equipment is royal blue, the southern interior green and bright yellow.

"One guy painted the fences," said Joe Padilla, Rec and Park's head painter. "I gave him a little break between the jobs because it's tough on the knees. It took about three weeks or more. Basically, it's primary colors to make it inviting. I did it (the playground) at Boeddeker Park in July, too, and it looks really nice. You know, I got grandchildren and stuff."

"The purpose," said Rec and Park supervisor Robert Nastor, "was to brighten it up." He recalled that conservationists opposed installing the playgrounds 10 years ago, but when they were finished the park's drug dealers moved out.

Nastor, now at Lincoln Park, worked at Civic Center Plaza 10 years and had the rainbow color scheme in mind five years ago. He thinks the current park gardener, Thomas Wang, saw his old notes and promoted the idea.

"This paint is more inviting now," Nastor said, "and I think it will attract more families. I wanted the fence moved out to include more grassy area, too, but that fell by the wayside. I can't believe the mayor's office would want to change this. I have heard no public complaint. I could understand if

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LENNY LIMJOCO

One of two rainbow-hued playgrounds ordered to be repainted.

NO. 46
PUBLISHED BY THE
SAN FRANCISCO
STUDY CENTER

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2005

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CENTRAL CITY

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\$345,000 SAVED



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CARL ANGEL

The 2004 report on city government recycling efforts is due June 1.

Greening of City Hall

Government offices struggle to keep up with recycling goals

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

JUAN-Tomas Rehbock, a senior IT business analyst for the S.F. Public Utilities Commission, is a recycling advocate's dream: When he eats an orange at work, he takes the peels home so he can put them in a green compost cart. Few paper-pushing city departments compost, which is why Rehbock totes his peels home.

His small effort won't do much to reduce the 80,000 tons of waste that city government generates annually or the \$3.5 million it pays to have garbage dumped in the Altamont landfill.

But Rehbock is a great role model for the 600 PUC managers, engineers, customer service reps and others who work at 1155 Market. He's their recycling coordinator, and his job is to get on their case about recycling and reusing everything possible.

A resolution the supes passed last August urges every city department to recycle paper, cans, bottles, batteries and toner cartridges, and departments with food service to compost, all in an effort to reach 75% diversion by 2010 and 100% by 2020.

Diversion is a measure of how much waste is being recycled, reused or composted, rather than going to landfill. A rate of 100% doesn't mean that no garbage is being generated, but that everything possible is being captured from the waste stream.

The Department of the Environment, which monitors the city's progress toward ever-

greater diversion, calculates that San Francisco as a whole diverted 63% of its waste in 2003, the highest for any comparable U.S. city.

But DOE estimated city government's rate at 54%; the supes' resolution followed, which also ordered every department to name a recycling coordinator and all 27,000 city employees to get with the program.

Julia Chang, Environment's city government recycling coordinator, says that waste reduction and recycling have saved the city more than \$345,000 in the last few years.

"If all departments fully participated, we could achieve hundreds of thousands more in savings," Chang added.

This month, Chang is collecting the departments' 2004 annual surveys, documenting everything they recycle, compost and reuse. Depending on the size of the department and its activities, the eight-page waste audit can take an hour – or days – to complete.

The survey is relatively new. In 1992, the city enacted its Resource Conservation Ordinance in response to the state Integrated Waste Management Act, which required all cities and counties to halve their waste by 2000. An amendment to the ordinance in 2000 mandated all departments to document waste reduction and report annually.

Until then, there was no way to know how much was being recycled. And today, despite efforts by committed, energetic DOE staff, the numbers are still incomplete.

SOMEONE WHO KEEPS AT IT

The S.F. PUC leases offices around the city, but its biggest operation is at 1155 Market, where the department occupies 140,000 square feet on 11 floors.

"I'm environmentally conscious, so I was selected for the coordinator's position when we moved in here a year and a half ago," Rehbock

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