

TOMMIE CRAIG
Postal worker, musician

To his new friends at the Ritz Hotel on Eddy, Tommie Craig was a quiet man with a terrific smile, but his youngest daughter remembered him as a hot musician who enriched her life with music and was crazy about James Brown.

Mr. Craig, who spent 15 years as an Army reservist and retired after 25 years with the post office, moved into the Ritz last October. On April 29, a month after he turned 54, he collapsed from a heart attack in the hallway. His friend Ward Loggins, who moved to the Ritz in January and lived on the same floor, found him. They knew each other from a Glide Recovery Circle program the year before. Police had sent Mr. Craig there after stopping him one day for drinking beer out of a brown bag on the street, Loggins said.

After a memorial attended by a half dozen friends, Loggins said that when he found Mr. Craig he had no pulse. The medics came and restored the beat but Mr. Craig died later at St. Francis Hospital.

"I wish I could have held on to him longer," Loggins said. "I was just getting to know him better. When someone said they'd remember him for his smile, they hit it right on the head. And he never said anything bad about anyone."

Loggins didn't know of his friend's love of music.

Mr. Craig's daughter Tommie, 31, arrived 45 minutes late with her grandfather Tommie Sr., believing that the 11 a.m. service was at noon. She said she and her sisters, Torina and Teresa, were immersed in music by their father. A good piano and organ player who never passed up a chance to play the theme from "Love Story," Mr. Craig encouraged his girls at an early age to play all his expensive records. And if there was a James Brown concert, "he was the first to get tickets," she said. "He started us singing, too."

The girls joined a gospel choir and also sang as a trio. "We were the Please, Please, Please girls," she said.

The week before, all three daughters, now in their 30s with six children between them, reunited to sing at their father's funeral at Duggan's Funeral Home. Mr. Craig was buried at Cypress Lawn in Colma.

— TOM CARTER

FRANK WALTER
Shuttle driver

The greatest joy of Frank Walter's life in the last few years was his job, driving a van for M&M Luxury Shuttle, said his friend of 10 years, Sherman H. Green.

"He drove that van up until last year," Green said. "It's what he missed most when he got sick. It was what got him up in the morning — it kept him going."

Mr. Walker died from cancer May 2. He was 74. A May 18 memorial for him was held at Civic Center Residence where he had lived for most of the last 20 years.

"Frank was always planning things, he had a lot of hope and energy, and he passed it on to everyone," Green told the mourners.

Hotel social worker Ken Stephenson remembers Mr. Walter as a cheerful person who picked up everyone's spirits. "He always told me about all the places he'd been in the world, the languages he spoke, his experiences in the military. And he loved Tommy's Joynet — it was his favorite restaurant."

His generosity was legend. One resident recalled that during a blackout Mr. Walker went out and spent \$35 on food, which he brought back to the hotel lobby and handed out to neighbors who didn't want to sit in their dark rooms.

"He was a really nice guy but also a feisty guy," said Sameera Thurmond, a Civic Center resident for

18 years. "He held his ground, and when people misbehaved, he'd say something to them."

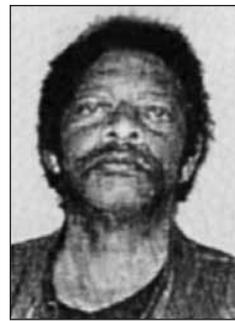
Another resident, J.R. Johnson, called Mr. Walker "a complicated man, pretty well-educated, who could go deep on some subjects." In his honor, Johnson, in a warm voice, sang "Precious Lord, Lead Me Home."

Stephenson reflected on the loss of Mr. Walker. "When I see the chair where he used to sit empty, or occupied by someone else, I'm going to miss his sunshine."

— MARJORIE BEGGS

MONTE MILLER
ANTHONY EISON
Formerly homeless

Monte Miller and Anthony Eison were remembered May 18 at a memorial at Civic Center Residence where both were tenants.



Anthony Eison

Mr. Miller, formerly homeless, had lived there for one year before he died on May 6 at age 56.

Mr. Eison, who died May 13, also had been homeless and lived at the hotel for only one month. He was 50.

Little was known about the two men. Hotel staff said that Mr. Miller was an avid fisherman who regularly went out to fish on the Bay.

"I do know that Anthony was very glad to be here at the Civic Center Residence," said hotel social worker Ken Stephenson. "I think he was on the right path and was trying to bounce back, but it came too late." Mr. Eison is survived by a sister in Oregon and a mother in Sacramento.

— MARJORIE BEGGS

Strike 2: Thief gets 6 months, gets out, gets busted again

BY TOM CARTER

THE slippery live-in thief, who returned after three years to steal from the Grant Building, copped a plea and took a strike for burglary earlier this year only to get out of his six-month sentence early because of jail "credits."

A few weeks later Ronald Salkin, 42, was back in jail, nabbed for trying to break into the Cathedral Hill Hotel. Now, according to the district attorney's office, he faces a second strike and two years in state prison.

Salkin has been the subject of several Extra stories for his extended and brazen downtown thievery three years ago when he all but lived at night in the Grant Building, and for his surprise return that got him jailed in January for a robbery bust. In April, he took a deal from the district attorney's office just as his hearing date was about to be set in court. Salkin accepted a felony strike and six months in county jail, avoiding a trial that could have led to a couple of years in state prison. He had been arrested for driving a stolen car that had stolen property from the Grant Building in the trunk.

When The Extra checked up on Salkin's whereabouts in mid-May, the sheriff's office said Salkin was not in prison. The DA's office said he had been released early on jail "credits," and informed The Extra that Salkin had then been nabbed June 1 at 5:35 p.m. trying to break into the Cathedral Hill Hotel. He's being held on \$75,000 bail.

"He has serious liabilities now," said Assistant DA Mario Jose Jovel, who prosecuted Salkin the last time. The DA will be going for another strike, first- and second-degree robbery and two years in state prison, he said.

Salkin had dodged a sentence in 2002. For months, he practically lived in the Grant Building at 1095 Market, using master keys to get in at night. He'd pull up porn sites on office computers and have phone sex during binges that also included stealing cameras, petty cash, cell phones, videos and, once, a bicycle from the mostly nonprofit tenants. More than a dozen offices were hit. He dined on fast foods, napped on office furniture, then left his trash behind as he slipped away before the morning workers arrived.

Finally, Salkin was surprised and nabbed by Roy Crew, director of the Office of Self Help, and a friend early that Martin Luther King Day. Crew's office losses were estimated at \$5,698.

Salkin got a suspended sentence. He was ordered to make restitution and get counseling at Glide. But he skipped out on all of it.

Then this January, the Grant Building again experienced after-hours losses of cameras, computers and monitors. The victims once more included the Self Help office and the San Francisco Study Center, publisher of The Extra.

Salkin's sentence carried three years of probation and stay-away orders at the Grant Building, 611 Second and 401 Van Ness, all sites he stole from. If he is spotted within 150 yards of these places he can be arrested. He was also ordered to pay restitution.

"Six months?" Crew exclaimed then when informed of the sentence. "Restitution? I'm still waiting for it from the last time."

Weeks later, Crew was nonplussed to hear that Salkin was released without serving the full six months. And told that Salkin had been arrested shortly after his release, Crew reflected: "I just hope the prosecution is smart enough to call us as character witnesses against him." ■



TENDERLOIN AIDS RESOURCE CENTER

Outreach and Community Events June 2005

"Under the Umbrella"

TRANNYWEEK 2005

June 6 - 10, 2005

TARC's 4th annual Transgender Celebration

HIV Education Forum

Topic: Adherence and Resistance to HIV Medications

Speaker: Ruben Gamundi

Date/Time: Wednesday, June 15, 6:00 - 7:30 pm

Location for Forums: 175 Golden Gate Ave. (St. Boniface Marion Group Room); light meal will be provided

Client Advisory Panel CAP

Come talk with Alexander Fields, Consumer Board Representative; Tracy Brown, TARC's Executive Director and program managers about plans for TARC. Also provide input on new services and how we can improve.

Date/Time: Wednesday, June 8, 11:30 am - 1:00 pm;

Wednesday, June 29, 11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Volunteer for TARC

Orientation: June 15 - 17, 5:30 pm - 8:00 pm;

June 19, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm (lunch provided)

183 Golden Gate Ave.

You must pre-register for volunteer trainings. Stop in or call Ned at (415) 934-1792.

For the current groups' schedule or more information, call 415.432.7476 or go to www.tarc.org

TARC TENDERLOIN AIDS RESOURCE CENTER
health promotion • social services • HIV housing