

Tot park reopens

Rain drags out repair of dangerous building next door

BY TOM CARTER

The Hyde and Turk Mini Park that children's advocates created four years ago as a haven for Tenderloin preschoolers reopened in late March after being closed five months because of concrete falling from the adjacent Cosmopolitan Apartments.

A Rec and Park spokesman said parents had complained that deteriorating concrete along a corner of the six-story building at 225 Hyde overlooking the park's north end might fall on the children.

"It's a 1920s building and that style of construction with the rebar so close to the concrete would never meet today's standard," said Jeff Lance, the Cosmopolitan's property manager.

The 70-foot-square park, bright with red and yellow playground equipment, features a 4-foot-high stationary wooden locomotive with two cars. Adults aren't allowed in unless accompanied by children. The park was locked on Oct. 31.

Scaffolding went up Dec. 2 and Lance said then that the \$100,000 job by Saarman Construction Inc. would take "several weeks." Bad weather delayed the work.

Rec and Park created the "tiny tot" park from a parking lot in spring 2001. A committee chaired by Women's and Children's Center Executive Director Midge Wilson started lobbying the city for a tots park in 1992. The city purchased the lot and the playground was designed by John Thomas of the Department of Public Works. ■

OBITUARIES

MELVIN BARNES Extremely private person

Lyric Hotel clerk Jim Yarborough remembers the last time he saw Melvin Barnes, a resident since 2000.

"It was shortly before he died. He asked me for change for a \$50, which by pure luck I had," Yarborough said. "Joy [Joy Harvey, Lyric case manager] took a few of his dollars and went out to get him some oatmeal. While she was out, he said to me, 'I'm leaving — I'm going home.' I think he knew he was going to pass on soon."

Mr. Barnes died in the hospital Feb. 14. He was 58.

Hotel residents at Mr. Barnes' Feb. 23 memorial knew little about him except that he was an extremely private person.

"He was a fair person, a good person to talk to, but one who didn't talk about what he was going through. He held it in," said Willie, who's lived at the Lyric for four years.

Anthony, another fellow tenant, agreed: "He kept in a lot of stuff."

Lyric Program Director Melissa Blizzard said Mr. Barnes had family in Milwaukee, two sisters, a brother and a son.

"He just didn't say much and he didn't show how much he was suffering," Blizzard said. "Still, we enjoyed the little we did get to know him. He was a really good person who cared about others. He must have

known the end was near because he called his family."

— MARJORIE BEGGS

LING KUAN HUANG Seamstress born in China

For the four children and two cousins of Ling Kuan Huang, grief was fresh at her Feb. 27 memorial. Her family joined 25 other mourners at the Alexander Residence, where Mrs. Huang had died just five days earlier. She was 72.

Born in China, Mrs. Huang came to San Francisco 15 years ago and was a seamstress at a clothing factory on Market Street. Her husband, said one cousin, had died many years ago.

The Rev. Glenda Hope of S.F. Network Ministries conducted the memorial, but seven people who shared memories of Mrs. Huang spoke at length in Cantonese, which was not interpreted.

Resident Jeanette Whitacre, the one person who spoke in English, said, "I didn't know her personally, but she did have a very warm smile and I hope she rests in peace."

After the memorial, Teresa Suen, the Alexander's activities coordinator, told The Extra that Mrs. Huang's fellow residents had emphasized her kindness.

"They said she helped other people in the building," Suen said, "and that she was always friendly and always smiling."

As a token from Mrs. Huang's family, everyone attending the memorial received a piece of candy and a small red envelope containing a coin or a small bill and another candy, a Chinese tradition, Suen explained. ■

— MARJORIE BEGGS



Melvin Barnes

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