

Gang Task Force steps up patrols in Tenderloin

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firing at him," said Quinn, who gave the tape to police.

"The shooter was firing over the head of a man picking out of a garbage can and the others," Quinn said. "And as he runs past the camera, you can see his arm and the gun."

To Capt. Jimenez it posed the obvious question: "What was the motive here?" he told The Extra he asked himself. "I called in the Gang Force. And they investigated and said, yes, it was gang-related."

The case represents a new twist in the neighborhood's dope-dealing fabric and a dangerous one. Gang members from other neighborhoods, usually armed, are trickling into the Tenderloin, police say. They are coming either because there's too much heat on their own turf or they want more money of their own without turning it back to their gangs, the common practice to fund a distribution of money, cars and guns.

East Bay commuter dealers, gang-affiliated or not, have operated in the TL a long time but they haven't claimed it for any gang. The Tenderloin is neutral turf. And that suits the gangs just fine, police say.

Now, the Gang Task Force has stepped up its plainclothes patrols of the Tenderloin to three or four times a week from one or two times.

"I requested it," Jimenez said. "The Tenderloin is a free-for-all and the gangs want to keep it that way. They respect the neutrality and police themselves, so to speak. If a gang tried to take it over, they'd shoot each other. We're lucky we haven't had more shootings.

"I'm not saying we have a gang problem — we can't show the connection. But yes, gang members are operating."

Gang members tend to be armed.

"It's not for offense but for defensive purposes," Jimenez said. "They keep a gun

close by, a lady friend across the street or someone else, in a window sill, in some vegetation.... There is the potential for violence."

Spotted coming into the Tenderloin are gang members from Bayview, the Mission, the Western Addition and SoMa, the captain said — the 11th Street Gang, Knock Out Posse (KOP) and Eddy Street Rock.

"But it hasn't been shown that the funds are going to the gangs," Jimenez said. "They're dealing for themselves."

Meanwhile, TL cops continue making arrests in impressive numbers. In 2005, the last year of complete figures, the station averaged 402 arrests a month, half again more than the 256 average arrests for all 10 police districts.

Drugs drive the figures like the station's buy-bust operation in January where police made 17 arrests in six hours, according to the station's e-mail newsletter. Total arrests for the month were 431, of which 293 were drug-related.

"All these numbers are not very impressive when you can see the drug dealing continuing on our street with apparent impunity," Capt. Jimenez wrote. But he assured the community the police were working hard to combat it.

Jimenez attends monthly Alliance for a Better District 6 evening meetings and emphasizes his desire to work with the community on solutions. At the Feb. 13 meeting, two members of the Gang Task Force were featured speakers in a Safety Forum that 35 people attended.

Inspectors Edward Yu and Scott Lau said the 25-member force makes about 300 gang arrests a year, and maybe 10% are in the Tenderloin.

A recent injunction on the gang in Bayview is causing some shifting, Yu said.

OBITUARIES

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been replaced by Dr. William Cobb Elementary. Their coincidental meeting at the Iroquois in 2002 flooded them.

"He was so handsome in school," Harris said. "We used to talk for hours about the old days. His brother died four years ago and he took it hard. He used to say, 'Stay focused and don't get sidetracked.' He lived by that."

But Mr. Palmer hadn't figured on bad health.

"I think he was in the Conard House Culinary School program when he got sick," she said.

—TOM CARTER

GHIA PARKS Transgender artist

When Ghia Parks moved into the Jefferson Hotel in 2003, she joined fellow tenants, all formerly homeless, in finally having a safe roof over her head.

"She was a regular at our coffee hour and would sit in the lobby, enjoying her coffee and doughnut," said Mary Catherine Flynn, a Jefferson case worker, at the Jan. 11 memorial for Ms. Parks. "She'd sit quietly at the end of the first-floor hallway and enjoy the fresh air. She had a quiet, pleasant demeanor and long, well-cared-for fingernails."

She also had a full beard.

"Ghia identified as a transgender," Flynn said.

Ms. Parks, who died in her hotel room Jan. 5 from unknown causes, was 58.

Assistant Manager Steve Williams found her. "She was someone who was always smiling and could always make you laugh," he said. "If anything was wrong, you wouldn't know."

Still shocked by Ms. Parks' death just six days earlier, several friends at the memorial said they'd seen her the morning of the day she was found.

"I'm going to miss her a lot," said Matthew, who didn't give his last name. "I was her neighbor for a year and half — she was a fellow artist, an amazing painter and weaver, and she had a supreme mind and wit. Ghia was truly exceptional, but she also was sweet and never arrogant."

Many people have stopped by the hotel to ask about Ms. Parks since she died, Flynn said. "You can tell that a lot of people cared for her."

"She's done her deed here on Earth," said Williams.

—MARJORIE BEGGS

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ANNOUNCEMENT

PUBLIC HEARING OF THE

RATE FAIRNESS BOARD

To Discuss the 2007 & 2008 SFPUC Water & Wastewater Rate Proposal

When: Wednesday, April 11, 2007
Time: 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Location: City Hall, Room 263
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place

Come join us at this special meeting of the Rate Fairness Board to discuss and hear public comment on the 2007 & 2008 SFPUC Water & Wastewater rate proposal which includes:

- Water & Wastewater rate increases
- Water Capacity Charge for new development
- Water & Wastewater system improvement projects
- Conservation programs to save you money

For more information, email rateinfo@sfwater.org or visit sfwater.org

