

CHRISTOPHER MARCUS HEVEY
'Painfully shy'

Christopher Marcus Hevey stirred plenty of curiosity when he moved into the Empress Hotel three years ago: Two beds had to be soldered together to accommodate his 6-foot-8, 300-pound body. Then, for the longest time, the young man hardly spoke to anyone.

He buried himself in his computer programs. Eventually, the residents connected and found him to be "truly a nice person," "a gentle giant who never complained about things" and, as one mourner said at Mr. Hevey's memorial Jan. 13, "the most tolerant person I've ever known."

On a table near a spread of apples and pound cake were framed pictures of Mr. Hevey that his mother had sent, a half dozen lighted candles and his emblazoned blue T-shirt that was found in his closet and nicely summed up his personality with, "Just shy not anti-social (you can talk to me!)."



Mr. Hevey died in a Palm Springs hotel on Christmas Day of unknown causes. He was 39. He had been visiting his mother, a nurse, who lives there. She had gotten him a hotel room, according to Roberta Goodman, manager of the Empress. Mr. Hevey hadn't responded to knocking on his door and when staff went inside, at the mother's request, they found his body.

"It's not clear what he died of," Goodman said. "And it takes weeks to find out causes."

Mr. Hevey, who used a cane, told his nurse that he had chronic pain but she didn't know why, she said.

Mr. Hevey was bright. He once worked for Time Warner as a computer expert, according to his mother, Goodman said. He was born in Australia and at 9 moved to the United States. He attended a Quaker school in the East and a military school in South Carolina. He had college scholarship offers, but turned them down because he wanted to go to flight school, though the family couldn't afford that.

The residents, though, knew him as a science fiction movie buff with oodles of state-of-the-art computer programs — yet he preferred wearing beaten-up earphones. He was a Trekkie and had all the episodes of the television show "The Prisoner," too, plus other collections that cluttered his sixth-floor room.

Mr. Hevey loved shopping for bargains, then telling the residents about them. But most often the stuff didn't interest them.

"He was painfully shy, but not impolite," said Robert Abate, who lived across the hall from Mr. Hevey. "I miss him."

Dorothy Streutker of Network Ministries conducted the memorial and at the end sang "Soft as the Voice of an Angel." ■

—TOM CARTER

RAUL VASQUEZ
'Loved his big family'

On the table at the front of the Camelot Hotel's community room were candles, a photo of Raul Vasquez and his wife, Benita, and a bright red T-shirt. Screened on it was "Rest in Peace Raul 1959-2008" with a photo of Mr. Vasquez as a dashing young man.

"The T-shirt was a Christmas gift from my son-in-law," said Benita Vasquez tearfully.

Mr. Vasquez died of alcohol-related complications right before Christmas in the hotel where he'd



Benita and Raul Vasquez

lived for three years. He was about a month shy of his 50th birthday.

At a Jan. 8 memorial, friends, hotel residents and staff gathered to remember Mr. Vasquez, who was born in Mexico.

"I met Raul and his wife here in San Francisco," said Edwin Valez. "I got to love him in a short time — I hope he understood my love."

Others said Mr. Vasquez was cheerful all the time, "a good servant," and someone "who had few words of English but was a very good person — I admired him."

Hotel Case Manager Sherman Woods got to know Mr. Vasquez quite well, he said. "Raul was a quiet man, but he was interesting. He had a big heart and he loved his big family."

Woods recalled that he didn't want to worry people. "When he was getting sick, I'd see him and before I even asked, he'd say, 'I'm fine, I'm fine.'"

Another Camelot resident said that Raul was nice to everyone. "That goes a long way here. I don't usually come to these memorials, but I'm here today to support Benita."

Raul and Benita Vasquez were not living together when he died, but they had had a long, productive marriage, she said: "We were married for 23 years and had eight children. We always had a couple of problems, but he was a good, good person." ■

—MARJORIE BEGGS

RAM NARAYAN

When Ram Narayan and his wife left Fiji and moved to San Francisco in 1994, they lived at the Helen Hotel at 166 Turk. Mr. Narayan soon began to manage the hotel, then rented an apartment across the street at 165 Turk, a 27-unit building owned by TNDC, where he lived for two years.

In November, Mr. Narayan spent three weeks in St. Mary's Hospital with a terminal illness, and on Dec. 14, he died in Fiji. Her was 71.

"His family knew he was close to death, and wanted to take him back to Fiji," said Patsy Gardner, 165 Turk's general manager.

At a Jan. 27 memorial for Mr. Narayan at 165 Turk, Gardner talked about how she felt a connection with him since they were both building managers.

"Ram was a big, strong man — proud, gracious, kind to all of us," she said. "And he also was a caring and giving man who loved his three sons and his wife."

One son also rents an apartment at 165 Turk. He and his mother had just returned from the funeral in Fiji. They attended the memorial and sat sadly, silently dabbing at their eyes, as Gardner spoke and the Rev. Glenda Hope officiated at the brief ceremony. A second son lives in Fiji with his wife, and a third son lives in Australia.

Mr. Narayan often attended social events at 165 Turk, Gardner said, but he always attended memorials. "Always — and he had a way of uplifting others." ■

—MARJORIE BEGGS



CHRISTINE CANTROVICH
'The heart of a lion'

Christine Cantrovich was toughened for life by her abusive marriage and divorce 40 years ago but it couldn't hide her gentle streak of goodness, her friends said at her Dec. 6 memorial.

A half dozen mourners recalled the ways the 5-foot-1 redhead who weighed barely 100 pounds left an endearing footprint at the Ambassador Hotel where she lived since June 2005. Ms. Cantrovich was found dead in her fifth floor room on Oct. 27 during a welfare check. She was 60. Cause of death is pending.

Ms. Cantrovich told several residents in intimate conversations about her failed marriage that had hardened her. Yet she went out of her way to bring residents groceries and give them cards on holidays, efforts, one resident said, that ensured she had friends.

"I used to call her Sunshine, because that's what she was to me," said one man. "But she was feisty and I never knew where I stood with her. She'd go weeks without talking to me. She was a strong woman, though, and she wasn't scared of anything."

Intestinal problems hospitalized Ms. Cantrovich several times this year, according to Porter Davis. He said a contentious neighbor she fought with didn't help her condition. The person vacated the hotel earlier this year and she improved. But Ms. Cantrovich's health continued to decline.

"She used to start every conversation with 'Please don't be angry,'" said Cecil Baker. "She called me the Thursday before she died and said she had blood in her stool. I advised her to go to the hospital and offered to call for her. But she said no, it was just the heat."



"I felt so bad. But it was her decision. She had a problem with reality. She had been abused a long time. She was a very good woman who did things for a lot of people."

Assistant manager Garland Hall said in his two years at the Ambassador, during which he'd witnessed more than a dozen deaths, no one's passing had matched the outpouring of flowers, cards, notes and post-its that amassed outside Ms. Cantrovich's door.

"She was frail and birdlike," said desk clerk Jasmine Gillette. "But she had the heart of a lion." ■

—TOM CARTER

LOUIS O. GUZMAN,
A troubled man

Temperamental Louis O. Guzman likely got more respect at his memorial than he got in his 14 years living in the Turk Eddy Preservation Apartments. Cantankerous and combative, he was difficult to be around. He constantly complained and swore and tried to hustle his fellow residents for money.

"I told him once, 'Mr. Guzman you can't go out on the street talking that way to people — you'll get beat up or killed,'" said manager Patsy Gardner. She said he shot back, "That's why I've got this cane!"

Mr. Guzman died Nov. 1 at St. Francis Hospital two weeks before his 84th birthday. In declining health for a year, he shed weight his slim 5-foot-6 frame could ill afford. But he had refused to see a doctor and ate less and less, and only sweets, Gardner said. When he was too weak to leave his room, an ambulance crew came and carefully lifted him out of bed. "Maybe he weighed 70 pounds," Gardner said.

Seven residents from the 20 occupied apartments paid their respects at Mr. Guzman's Nov. 12 memorial. A few recalled he had asked them for cash and others said he wanted to sell them things they didn't want, like the two old bicycles in his room. He was always trying to make some money, they said.

Ten years ago he introduced himself to Betty Dominguez, a 24-year resident, as "Antonio."

"So that's what I called him — it was my husband's name," she said. "I just learned he was Louis. He was a handsome man. But when I last saw him, one side of his face had atrophied."

Gardner spent more time with Mr. Guzman than anyone because of his complaining and the problem his filthy room became. He ranted that people continually knocked on his door, and "no one did" Gardner said. "We had our fights." No matter what room he occupied, she said, he had trouble with his neighbors.

He irritably nagged Gardner about when rent was due — "It's always the first, Mr. Guzman," she'd say. "Once he got three months ahead with payments. I had to tell him to stop (paying)."

Mr. Guzman left Hawaii 59 years ago. He has a sister there and a brother in the East Bay. It's believed Mr. Guzman worked in construction at one time. He railed against government and disliked handouts but drew SSI and Social Security, totaling barely \$900 monthly. Still, on a few occasions he sent his sister \$75 money orders, Gardner said.

"Not many saw that side of him," said the Rev. Glenda Hope, who conducted the memorial.

"He used to call me the Queen of Sheba," Gardner said, "And sometimes he'd buy me little cakes, because he had a sweet tooth. I'd accept them but later I gave them away. I don't eat sugar."

Mr. Guzman's filthy room got out of control and was grounds for eviction. And the new rug he was given showed burn holes right away from his smoking. Gardner knew the only way he could get assistance was if he was declared too frail to clean the room himself. So she took a reluctant Mr. Guzman to a doctor.

"And he cursed me the whole way," she said, "but I just ignored him. Then, when we got inside the office he cursed the doctor, and we got thrown out."

"But on the way out, a nurse said to me maybe she could help. And she did. And Mr. Guzman got a house cleaner. I didn't want to evict him." ■

—TOM CARTER