

GOOD NEWS for...

THEATER-LOVERS The peripatetic 10-year-old Bindlestiff Studio, with performances of emerging Pilipino and Filipino American artists, will stop its wandering early next year and finally move into a long-term venue. In August, the Redevelopment Agency unanimously approved a \$52,000 loan to Bindlestiff for constructing a ground-floor, "black box" theater space in the Plaza Apartments at Sixth and Howard streets. Redevelopment bought the property in 2000, razed it in 2003, and financed the new structure, 106 affordable studios, that opened in 2006. The 2001 resolution authorizing Redevelopment's purchase named Bindlestiff as the new building's permanent, ground-floor tenant, but the theater group was unable to raise funds. Under the terms of the Redevelopment loan, Bindlestiff has to make the space available to other performers at least half the time.

REAL DO-GOODERS The city's Community Challenge Grant Program makes awards twice a year to residents, businesses, community groups and nonprofits for neighborhood physical improvement projects, especially those that create green spaces, gathering places, public art and other community amenities. Grant awards and matching requirements depend on size and duration: A small six-month project can get up to \$10,000 but must find a 50% match; a six-month, medium-size project grant runs from \$10,000 to \$25,000 and requires a 25% match; for large, one-year projects, grants are \$25,000 to \$100,000 with a 25% match and proof of successful past projects. Residents or business owners can form a committee or group to implement a project, but they need a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization to serve as their fiscal sponsor. The last day to submit applications for this round is Sept. 30. Last round's recipients included the Vietnamese Elderly Mutual Assistance Association, awarded \$12,370 for its Little Saigon Beautification Project, and the Polk Street Commercial Corridor/Larkin Street Youth Services, which received \$15,000 for the Polk Street Corridor Community Clean-Up Project. In that round, program grants city-wide totaled \$500,000. Information: www.sfgov.org/ccg or Lanita Henriquez, program manager, 554-4830.

If you have some good news, send it to tom@studycenter.org or marjorie@studycenter.org

SRO mail suit faces test

P.O. wants it tossed, saying city has no right to sue

BY JONATHAN NEWMAN

A FEDERAL lawsuit filed by the city attorney in May that challenges the U.S. Postal Service's suspension of individual mail delivery to SRO residents — even where their buildings provide designated mailboxes — is about to be tested.

Sept. 4 the Postal Service will ask U.S. District Judge Jeffrey White to dismiss the case, according to Jack Song, the city attorney's deputy press secretary, arguing the city has no legal authority to sue on behalf of SRO residents.

The city's lawsuit — filed jointly with the Central City SRO Collaborative, the San Francisco Tenants Union and the Housing Rights Committee of San Francisco — says that the suspension policy unfairly discriminates between SRO residents and other apartment dwellers and violates the Postal Service's own regulations. Instead of responding to those charges, the Postal Service will press the narrow argument that the city of San Francisco lacks the legal standing to sue a federal agency in this instance.

The suspension of individual mail delivery in SROs, announced by the Postal Service in December, is one of its efforts to remedy "fiscal shortages," a self-described \$7 billion revenue loss. In the past year, USPS has closed or consolidated nearly 700 administrative centers nationwide, offered early retirement to 150,000 postal employees, reduced the number of collection boxes and raised the cost of first-class postage. In early

August, the Postal Service released a list of hundreds of post offices under review for closure or consolidation, including three in San Francisco: Bernal Heights, McLaren Park and the new Federal Building.

Although the Tenderloin's main postal facility at 101 Hyde St. was mentioned for possible closure on the Postal Service Website, it didn't make the final list.

"These are tough economic times for everyone," said James Wigdel, USPS spokesman in San Francisco, in a phone interview. "The Postal

Service has to address revenue losses and is looking at everything, including routes, schedules and retail operations. Hyde Street is not on the list for possible closure." The USPS, he added, doesn't comment on lawsuits.

Stephen Collier, lead attorney for the Tenderloin Housing Clinic, which represents Central City SRO Collaborative, San Francisco Tenants Union and the Housing Rights Committee of San Francisco, said, "We have opposed the request to dismiss. We don't think the USPS will be successful." ■



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Boeddeker remake forges forward

TWO architectural drawings of improvements residents are dreaming up for Boeddeker Park will be available at the remaining Trust for Public Land outreach meetings at the clubhouse as the park's renovation plan continues to unfold.

The Trust's Jennifer Worth made the announcement at the Aug. 13 Friends of Boeddeker Park meeting. One drawing is based on changes costing \$3 million, a sum already secured. The other reflects an \$8 million upgrade, although that amount now seems iffy.

The first designs, available at the Aug. 20 outreach meeting, will be redrawn to reflect input from Sept. 16, Oct. 3 and Oct. 20 meetings.

The Trust's Jake Gilchrist, who got the park renovation project rolling several years ago, said later that the state Prop. 84 bond funds voted in 2006 aren't available yet. The Trust planned to apply for the maximum allowable \$5 million, but the neighborhood's suggestions wouldn't cost that much and state bond sales are in abeyance because of the stale economy.

"Our goal is to start construction in 2010 and be complete in 2011," Gilchrist said. "The state isn't selling bonds and we can't wait beyond Jan. 1. People are engaged and we have momentum."

Even if the state snaps to in time, the Trust might be going for just \$4.5 million, which could be good. "We don't want the park over-cluttered," Gilchrist said. "And whatever it is, it will be a community design." ■

—TOM CARTER



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