One for the ages — Manor House becomes history

Mimi and team retire as TNDC scrambles to find a new eatery

by Tom Carter

A SPECIAL chapter in Tenderloin history ended sadly March 1 when the low-cost Manor House restaurant and its beloved manager, Mimi Yee, called it quits after 17 years of unparalleled service to the city’s poorest neighborhood. The closure left hundreds of poverty-level customers — some of them damp-eyed — wondering if anyone who followed could equal Mimi, yet feeling lucky to have had it so good for so long.

Mimi and her husband, John Yee, chef cook, were retiring because of his health, she told surprised customers over recent weeks. Plus she herself was “very tired,” she said, having been on her feet, moving constantly more than 10 hours a day, six days a week since 1996. Then she did the restaurant’s shopping on Saturdays when the Jones Street eatery was closed.

“I’m tired,” Mimi said the day before Manor House closed. She’s in her early 50s, her husband in his early 60s. “I’m not burned out, but if I don’t do it now, I will get burned out. And I want to do this before something happens.” She plans to go to school to improve her English.

Among her six employees, her “team,” were her sisters May and Shirley, also well-known to Manor’s regulars.

The last day, Thursday, Feb. 28, found a stream of well-wishers saying how much they will miss her, and others who hadn’t known of the closure and were shocked, dazed, even distressed.

“Who am I going to do?” one man demanded at the counter, sounding angry. “And what’s my brother going to do? Does he know?”

Tenderloin Capt. Joe Garrity barreled through the door at 12:20 p.m. with an armful of roses, giving one bouquet to Mimi and another to John. He chatted with a few customers and was gone in five minutes. Later, District 6 Supervisor Dave Tarter showed up.

Manor hours were 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., seven days a week. The restaurant’s shopping on Saturdays when the Jones Street eatery was closed. (By the way, another area eatery was also closed last week: the low-cost Central Market restaurant on Third Street between Market and Mission.)

“What’s it like living South of Market these days?”

Seven years ago, I was living at the Westerner on Third Street between Market and Mission. There’s nothing there now — the city tore everything out, but it took them three years after I moved before they started knocking things down. And it took me a long time investigating to find this place in Clementina Towers. You have to buy your own furniture here, but I had the money to buy it, not like some of those bums who go from check to check, drinking it up, and then there are the misers and drunkards with a couple of religious fanatics thrown in, and also several pretty nice people. You’d be surprised how many practically geniuses you find on the skids in San Francisco.

Tell us about coming to San Francisco. I came to this country when I was 17 and spent my first two years in Shiner, Texas, where I learned how to milk cows for $30 a month. Then I moved to Los Angeles and that’s where I got a few of these X-rated movie jobs and worked for Charlie Chaplin, a great guy to work for, and all that — I get a little tired of rehearsing that in interviews. When I first came up to San Francisco in 1925, I really didn’t live anywhere, just bawled around. But I do remember South of Market then, all small, ramshackle, broken-down rooming houses.
Central Market CBD plan awaits city OK

BY JONATHAN NEWMAN

H	HEARING THE NEGATIVE results from an arcane survey, the Central Market CBD has abandoned its 2012 plan to enure to a tax oil and triple its budget to $1.1 million — and enact its hopeful future modestly.

Now, the district wants to expand southward to Minna Street and west all the way to South Van Ness Avenue and down South Street to Folsom, include sections of Tehama and Clementina west of Fifth Street, taking in many Jan

The result is a decidedly more residential district than the all-commercial CBD to the north.

According to the plan, the CBD would cover a 1.5-mile radius centered on Market Street, with the city allowing a 50 percent expansion in development density.

The vote will be on a petition favored by owners holding properties with a combined 50% of the CBD area or the CBD itself by commercial property.

The draft expansion plan is being reviewed by the Office of Economic and Community Development and reviewed by the city attorney.

The city will mail the petition to the owners, who have 30 days to sign or reject the plan, which will be finalized by early next year.

Mimi's stables, Mary Ling, enjoys an orange 2006 when Manon House was featured in The Extra. Mimi’s stables, Mary Ling, takes an orange in 2006, when Manon House was featured in The Extra. Mimi’s stables, Mary Ling, takes an orange in 2006, when Manon House was featured in The Extra.
Kaici — A Beat marching to his own bold beat — sold his paintings cheap to pay the rent

THERE IS THE CASH REGISTER looks like Popeye's posey-faced older brother. He speaks in a Count Dracula accent so gruff, so thick, I assume he's a joke until I discover it isn't. Popeye presides at a North Beach gallery a few doors down from City Lights Bookstore, serving up salty insights concerning Beatnik art and Beat philosophy to gawking tourists.

Popeye's rant is multidirectional — he talks against God, against the folks. We and WE always returning to the disposable quality of the art he adores, the hikes and the folks who buy it. "But anyway," he cackles, "it's cheap; we're not going to pay much for it."

Popeye is the first we come to, when the ninnies go home — all the kids come out to catch the train. After they clear out, the boys come back and work from 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. I had a half pound of pizza. The prices range from $2.99 to $8.99, $5.99, $5.95, priced according to the size of each painting, cheap even by early standards. No sign of such a revival has yet appeared.

To this day, there are said to be competing collectors who have started away hundreds of Kaici's hoping to reap millions should a Kaici Revival ever occur. No sign of such a revival has yet appeared.

At his peak, Kaici painted as fast as he could. The small South of Market apartment was jammed with dozens of completely painted canvases. He raid ed dumpsters all over town, seeking anything he could paint on: plywood, boxes, caskets, "in the best Kaici's, the tension is palpable."

When I came up to San Francisco in 1923, I really didn't live anywhere, just bummed around. But I do remember South of Market then, all small, ramshackle, broken-down rooming houses with at least three or four bootleggers on every block.

There were about 10 employment offices around here, but mostly they'd ask you out of San Francisco. When you come out here, you find there weren't any jobs any how, so they'd ship you wherever they'd like, to lumber camps and ranch hands. Guys would use it as free transportation. Then, in winter time, this place would fill up with hobo camps and whole bunches of hobo boys. Some hobo boys and ranch hands and people who work in camps or itched byches in Southern California. Around November, they'd all flock here and take all these other rooms. They'd throw in a few dollars in their pockets and they'd rattle them. They'd see a garage that they'd get their jollies shaking their pockets in for change — well, it's the nature of the beast.

BEAT ARTIST

Kaici recalls early days before it was SoMa

When you were broke in Los Angeles, you could eat for nothing, and they wouldn't give you anything. I came here and the first restaurant I went to was The Ocean Inn on Howard Street, where there's nothing standing now, there were 59 restaurants on one block.

They had asked, “Do you cater to low-income people?” They had said, “What the hell does that mean?” Look, this was a place of cheap restaurants where you could get four eggs and a fried potato, two pieces of toast and some coffee for 10¢ or 15¢. During the Depression, it got even cheaper. On the corner over there was the Niagara Hotel, run by Germans. It had a saloon, probably a bootlegger and maybe a bookie, there, but there were an employment office on the corner.

Did they cater to low-income people? This language. If anyone asked them how, “Do you cater to low-income people?” They'd have said, “What the hell does that mean?” Look, this was a place of cheap restaurants where you could get four eggs and a fried potato, two pieces of toast and some coffee for 10¢ or 15¢. During the Depression, it got even cheaper. On the corner over there was the Niagara Hotel, run by Germans. It had a saloon, probably a bootlegger and maybe a bookie.

Frank Kaici in front of Clementine Towers in South of Market, where he lived on the seventh floor in a $225-a-month apartment — complete with a balcony.

Frank Kaici, South of Market Beat artist (1904–1983)
Randi Givens lived at the Ritz Hotel for two decades and had many visitors during that time. Her father, Mr. Stringfellow, who had lived near Mr. Givens on the first floor, was a good guy and a crackerjack bar pool player. A crackerjack bar pool player, he won trophies and awards, and in his room the day before he died. Leaving the hotel she told Venisse that he had said he wanted to die at his home—"a fortress that was once the launching pad for a children's track team, fell into virtual disuse in recent years, open only 15 hours a week because of Rec and park budget cuts. Now, it is swept away. A $6 million renovation will create a new park and fancy glass clubhouse by mid-2014. The question looms as to how it will be staffed for greater use. The top view from the fifth floor of the Windsor Hotel on Eddy Street, was taken in 1977-78 under a CETA contract.  

Randi Stringfellow was recognized for his extraordinary life, and his passing was mourned by many. His life emerged as extraordinarily full, and there were no words to describe his impact. 

Randi Stringfellow was born in Missouri, and his influence extended far beyond the Ritz Hotel. He was a character of the Tenderloin and a true friend to many. His death was a loss for the Tenderloin, and his legacy will continue to inspire and motivate those who knew him. His memory will live on, and he will be remembered with great affection and respect. 

The Tenderloin is a vibrant neighborhood in San Francisco, and Randi Stringfellow was a beloved and respected member of the community. His contributions to the Tenderloin and the city of San Francisco will be remembered for years to come. 

Beat artist Frank Koci minces no words

The Tenderloin at its Most Tender

"It's never over while one person remembers you." 

"Today is a gift, that's why it's called the present." 

"All of us have a lot of grief in the Tenderloin." 

"Death in the Tenderloin," from Studio Color Print, offers a close-up view of the city's favorite music hall since 1923. They were recognized for their innovative and engaging shows, and their audience loved them. 

"You're missing out on something great. So much music they could drink or laugh too much about it."

"The Tenderloin at its Most Tender."

"You can't not go to the Tenderloin."
SPECIAL EVENTS
Recital date bike meeting. Thu., March 21, 4 p.m. City Hall, Rm. 421. 1. First of DPW’s informational workshops with public comment on Recology’s request to increase rates for collecting and disposing of trash, recyclables and compostables by more than 25%. Info: sfdpw.org/ratechanges.
Launch party to unveil Epicenter-SF.org, new calendar and directory Website to promote mid-Market arts, culture, community events, and nightlife. March 28, 5-7 p.m. Auran-Steff Arts, One Grove St. The project, a collaboration between the Central Market, Civic Center and North of Market/Tenderloin GBs, is supported by the Office of Economic and Workforce Development and the S.F. Arts Commission. RSVP at info@epicenter-SF.org.

ART EVENTS
WritersCorps Live at the Contemporary Jewish Museum, March 7, 6:30-7:30 p.m., 736 Mission St. Free. An evening of intergenerational readings featuring WritersCorps students, teaching artists, and writer Tumor Amery (West of Kabul, East of New York and Games Without Rules). Info: shortconnession.org/WC/LiveatContemporary.
Eugene Ionesco’s The Chairs. Cutting Ball’s productions, through March 31, at 8 p.m., on Taylor St., 277 Taylor St. The play follows an elderly couple who pass their time in an abandoned seaside building playing private games and telling each other half-remembered stories. Info: cuttingball.org/the-chairs-962.
Concerts at the Cadillac, 380 Eddy St., free concert series. Sat., March 16, 12:30-1:30 p.m.: CAVALISA, 380 Eddy St., free concert.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR
with Cava Menzies, piano and vocals, and Lisa series. Sat., March 16, 12:30-1:30 p.m.: CAVALISA, 380 Eddy St., free concert
writer Tamim Ansary (West of Kabul, East of New York
ART EVENTS
Market, Civic Center and North of Market/Tenderloin
March 28, 5-7 p.m., Kunst-Stoff Arts, One Grove
calendar and directory Website to promote mid-Market
recyclables and compostables by more than 23%. Info:
workshops with public comment on Recology’s request
NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT
Alliance for a Better District 2. 2nd Tuesday of each month, 6-7:30 p.m. 230 Eddy St. Contact Michael Nulty, 339-8327. Resident union, membership.

Lecture at the Main Library celebrates the baycity of the S.F. Arts Commission

COMMUNITY: REGULAR SCHEDULE
HOUSING
Tenants Associations Coalition at San Francisco,
16 Wednesday of each month, room 201 Turk St., Community Room. Contact Michael Nulty, 339-8327. Resident union, membership.

SRO – 1 Person
In the unit there is a sink, microwave, refrigerator, 2-bedroom, 2-bath, kitchen, 24-hour staff & surveillance, laundry facility
1 person
$14,069 a year
No Minimum Income
30% of INCOME
Requires a Certificate of Homelessness

Bayview Houns
$14,069 a year
No Minimum Income
30% of INCOME
Requires a Certificate of Homelessness

SFB – 1 Person
• Cooperator - 30 units 1-2
• Double 32 units
In the unit there is a sink, microwave, refrigerator, 2-bedroom, 2-bath, kitchen, 24-hour staff & surveillance, laundry facility
1 person
$10,275 a year
$5,000 to $6,000
$150 to $200

Open "WAIT LIST"

Building
SRO/Occupancy Limit
Max./Min. Income Limit
Rent
Hotel Isabel
1995 Mission Street
(San Francisco Project)
Based Section 8
March 28, 2013
SRO – 1 person
1 person
$14,069 a year
No Minimum Income
30% of INCOME
Requires a Certificate of Homelessness

Bayview Houns
16 Wednesday of each month, room 201 Turk St., Community Room. Contact Michael Nulty, 339-8327. Resident union, membership.

Please go to 241 6th Street, San Francisco, CA for applications.
The TODCO Housing wait list is open for the BAYVIEW HANTS AND THE HOTEL ISABEL. If your name is currently on any TODCO Housing Waiting List and you would like information on your current status please call the TODCO Marketing Office at 415-957-0227 on Fridays only.

HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH
CBOH Consumer Council. 3rd Monday of month, 5-7 p.m., 1080 Howard St. room 537, 250-3668, Consumer advisors from self-help groups and mental health consumer advocates. Public welcome.
Healthcare Action Team. 2nd Wednesday of month, 7-9 p.m., 1070 Mission St., San Francisco Bay Area Consumer Cen- ter, 21st floor, 12:30-1 p.m. Focus on increasing supportive home services, expanded eligibility for home care, improved discharge planning. Light lunch. Call James Chornosin, 703-0186 x404.
Mental Health Board. 2nd Wednesday of the month, 6:30-8:30 p.m., City Hall, room 276. CBOH advisory committee, open to the public. Call: 250-3474.

SAFETY
SFO Police Community Relations Forum, 41 Monday of each month, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Location varies. To receive monthly email info: sfo-3100@2022.
Tenderloin Police Station Community Meeting monthly meeting. March meeting will be held
Monday, March 18, 6 p.m., police station Community Room, 331 Eddy St, with Supervisor Jane Kim and staff speaking to the community. April resumes regular schedule. last Tuesday of month. Call Susan Black, 345-7350. Neighborhood safety.

Tenderloin Neighborhood Association. 2nd Friday of month, 642 Grant St, 5 p.m. Nonprofit focuses on health and wellness activities to promote neighborhood interactions. Info: tenderloinneighborhood@yahoo.com.

SENIORS AND DISABLED
Mayor’s Disability Coalition. 3rd Friday of month, 1-3 p.m. City Hall, room 400. Call 554-6789. Open to the public.
Senior Action Network, general meeting, 3rd Thursday of month, 6 p.m., University Union, 1186 Franklin St. Monthly programs, 965 Mission St. #470. Senior Housing Action Committee, 3rd Wednesday, 1:30 p.m. Call for health program and Senior University. 546-1303 and www.san.org.

DISTRICT 6 SUPERVISOR
Jane Kim, chair of Rules Committee, member of Budget & Finance Committee and chair of Tuesday Joint Forces Authority. Legislative aides: April Vanegas, Sunny Angelo and Mathias Merino. Jane Klimkait@gmail.com 554-7970

Please call 241 6th Street, San Francisco, CA for applications.

The TODCO Housing wait list is open for the BAYVIEW HANTS AND THE HOTEL ISABEL. If your name is currently on any TODCO Housing Waiting List and you would like information on your current status please call the TODCO Marketing Office at 415-957-0227 on Fridays only.

GOLD QUALITY AWARD
for Multi-Cat FRIENDLY™

San Francisco Health Plan
5 Years in a Row
Childhood Immunization
(888) 205-6552
www.sfh.org

For More Information, Call Your Health Plan. San Francisco Health Plan is a health plan that is run by the City and County of San Francisco. This is not a fee-for-service plan for Medicare beneficiaries. In the event of a conflict between the policy and the plan documents, the plan documents control.

TDD: (415) 345-4470

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Central City Extra / March 2013

8