TENDERLOIN STAR

**The park’s best friend**

**Betty Traynor is dedicated to Boeddeker**

**BY TOM CARTER**

**Betty Traynor** frowned at Boeddeker Park’s faded clubhouse door Thursday, Oct. 13. Rec and Park had locked the door and shut down the park, forgetting that the regular 3:30 p.m. Friends of Boeddeker Park meeting, which she chairs, was to meet inside. But no way now.

In seconds, Traynor had taped a sign on the door directing people to the L.A. Cafe and was making a beeline down Jones Street, headed for a suitable meeting table, a handful of Friends of scurrying behind.

The scenario showed the park’s unpredictable access and Traynor’s determination to preserve and utilize the precious open space in the city’s poorest neighborhood. Traynor has been the park’s primary steward for eight years and a major reason Boeddeker is getting a $5 million makeover starting next year.

The park’s impending change stems from Trust for Public Land’s successful multi-year campaign to land state and foundation money. Boeddeker qualified as a TPL project because it was in the central city, underused, and Boeddeker Park is getting a $5 million makeover.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 4**
SEACC at 36: Free clinic in the works

BY ASH LE

Since it opened in 1975, the Southeast Asian Community Center has served more than 150,000 people, providing them services to meet their social, health and economic needs.

“SEACC has long been a leading advocate for the Southeast Asian community nationwide and a key player in transforming the Tenderloin into a more viable and livable community for families,” Executive Director Philip Nguyen told an audience of 120 at St. Mary’s Cathedral’s St. Francis Hall.

The event celebrated the nonprofit’s 36 years, introduced several new projects SEACC is hoping to launch, and recognized program supporters and volunteers.

“Look at our Immigrant Food Distribution Service,” Nguyen said. “Every Friday at 5 p.m., rain or shine, 20 to 30 volunteers help unload food from the San Francisco Food Bank’s truck, clean tons of fresh groceries, arrange them in order and distribute them to 200 households. In the past nine years, these volunteers, happy to make a difference in people’s lives, helped distribute 1.5 million pounds of dry foods and groceries.”

On the economic front, SEACC has provided technical assistance to 2,000 Bay Area businesses, made microloans — $5,000 to $50,000 — to 250 businesses, and created 550 new, permanent jobs, all programs the organization hopes to expand in 2012, Nguyen said.

New projects on the drawing board include a free medical clinic, a Southeast Asian Night Market and a Southeast Asian Village.

Health care for new immigrants has been a SEACC focus since its inception. AIDS/HIV prevention, smoking cessation, First 5 California (a health program for children under 5), and cancer-awareness programs are among those SEACC has sponsored.

Today’s health problems have been made worse by the recession, “which has cut off health insurance coverage for many laid-off workers,” Nguyen said. “They have nowhere to turn for even very basic services such as a sore throat or flu shots. Fortunately, we’ve received a generous commitment to address some of these problems from a physician in our community, Dr. Tommy Bui.”

Dr. Bui, formerly a medical school dean in Saigon, now Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, has pledged to head up a team of several doctors to operate a free outpatient clinic at SEACC, provide basic health training, medical consultancy and advisory information to those without insurance. Nguyen said, adding that SEACC will raise the funds to cover the costs of the facility, support staff and outreach.

The ideas for a Southeast Asian Night Market and a Southeast Asian Village are only on SEACC’s “radar screen,” now, Nguyen said. Both would be located in the Tenderloin’s Little Saigon, the two-block corridor of Larkin Street between Eddy and O’Farrell streets.

A mong those attending the Oct. 12 event were Supervisors Jane Kim and Eric Mar, and guest speakers Charles Phan, owner of the Slanted Door Restaurant, and John Nguyen of Imperial Investment and Development. Food was provided by the Tenderloin’s Ha Nam Ninh Restaurant and the Golden City Inn in SoMa.

Maryrose Beggs of Central City Extra contributed to this story.
Ranked-choice adds a wild card to mayor's race

Complicated ‘instant runoff’ system faces 1st high-profile test

By Mark Hedin

NOCe you've decided which candi-
date to vote for, the most confusing
aspect of the upcoming Francisco mayoral election process is its ranked-
choice voting system.

It's designed to provide an “instant runoff” to spare the city the cost of a runoff elec-
tion between the top two candidates in the initial round.

This month's mayoral race promises to put this system, not quite a de-

bate, to the test.

“There's a lot of misinformation out
there," said Denise Van Alstine of the Department of Elections direc-
tor since early 2002, said that because no
voting equipment then available could accommodate ranked-choice voting, the sys-
tem was not a factor when Gavin Newsom
defeated Ammiano and Matt Gonzalez to be
the mayor that November.

Ranked-choice voting also applies to this year's races for sheriff and district attor-
ey — if any candidate wins outright majority (50% plus at least one) of first-
choice votes.

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS

The ballot has room for you to make three choices — a first, second and third.

Each ballot includes space for voters to
write in a candidate for any of the three
major parties as well as two write-ins. 

Candidate Ellsworth "Ell" Jennison got
2,150 first-place votes, 53 less than Sweet, 5
fewest first-place votes is eliminated, and his or her votes are redistributed to the second-
choice candidates named by those voters.

In a crowded election where there's no clear preference among voters, this process may
have to be repeated many times before a winner is determined.

An example of how complicated it can
generate last year in the District 10 race for
supervisor. Twenty-one candidates split

Fewer than 18,000 votes, and Jeanette Sweet, who got the most first-place votes — 2,150
— had only 12.07% of the total, from a vastly
fewer first-place votes than Tran, was
selected as the city's mayor by direct elec-
tion rather than through a runoff.

Candidate Ellie Ellsworth Jennison got
the fewest first-place votes, 68, so those voters would second and third to the candidates
Jennison's supporters named as their second
candidate. Six went to Tony Kelly, six to Nyese
Quan, as Kaplan and Quan
did.

Lawyer Jim Parmilelo, repre-
senting Ron Dudum, who was
beaten by Ed Jew in his 2006 bid to become supervisor in the
Sunset's District 4, unsuccessfully

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

from the Crissy award in 2009 received a cleanup crew that proud member of Betty Traynor CENTRAL CITY EXTRA / NOVEMBER 2011

Parks Council staffer. She was assigned in 2003 adults to 15. Still, Rec and Park sometimes clos- and pared the weekday hours that it is open to

That is, when the park was open. Recent budg- acity. Its low-lying shrubbery and fenced, war- efence and up-and-down levels hampered visi- 

Anthony's Dining Room.

Boeddeker who founded the nearby St. 

ker Park, named after Franciscan Father Alfred Boeddeker Park, or Boeddeker Park, is located in the Tenderloin neighborhood of San Francisco. It is named after the Franciscan Friar Alfred Anthony, who was instrumental in the establishment of the park in 1870.

The park is a popular gathering place for people of all ages. It is a oasis in the midst of a bustling urban area, providing a green space for relaxation and recreation.

The park is open to the public 24/7, and no permits are required for use. Visitors can enjoy picnicking, playing sports, or simply enjoying the peaceful atmosphere.

Boeddeker Park is home to a variety of trees and shrubs, including oak, cherry, and almond trees. The park also features a playground, a basketball court, and a tennis court.

The park is managed by the San Francisco Parks and Recreation Department, which is responsible for maintaining the park and ensuring its cleanliness and safety.

The park is a favorite spot for local residents, as well as visitors from out of town. The park is a popular destination for families, friends, and individuals seeking a break from the city's hustle and bustle.

The park is a testament to community involvement and dedication, with local organizations and individuals working together to maintain and improve the park's beauty and functionality.

Boeddeker Park is a testament to the importance of green spaces in urban areas, providing a vital resource for physical and mental health.

TENDERLOIN
a green dream toilet

JIN STARS

Park’s most ardent advocate

wouldn’t sit down. She picked up a broom. Some brought grandchildren. It was often genius, when Boeddeker fell off the People in Plazas Beautiful, the city’s Challenge program, S.F. Rec and Park, won a Community Hero Award May 2, 2009, from the Civic Field Project in the Presidio. “Rosemary and sage replace needles and syringes,” the center’s website said of their work. Then he suggested the CBD ask merchants to open their bathrooms to the public. “We’ve been trying to do that for a year,” said Hilliard. “We’ve approached St. Anthony, but they’re not willing to do it.” Merchants have liability concerns, Tenderloin Capt. Joe Garrity pointed out. People use a bathroom to shave and bathe, he said, and merchants ‘don’t want certain people in there. ‘What if someone ODs in there? Some are locked in. It’s a big issue.’ He was certain, ‘If outdoor toilets would be damaged and vandalized.

Security, safety and privacy are key issues, Bucknum said. “With JC Decaux (toilets), no one knows what’s going on inside,” he said. Then he suggested placing the toilets on a Sutter Street sidewalk or in an alley. “It’s not appropriate,” she said. “And I wouldn’t use it.” Bucknum said placement of the toilets was as important as design and he hoped ‘the right people’ would show up to watch in the outreach meetings.

“I think very highly of Betty and I am honored to work with her on park issues,” Zamora says. “She worked tirelessly to assure that Boeddeker (would be renovated). She continues to work hard to assure that funding and support is in place and the renovation is successful.”

Hilliard says the park redesign “would not be happening” if not for Traynor, who describes as ‘completely unassuming and dedicated.’ She recalled an afternoon three years ago when she, Traynor, Zamora and Capt. Gary Jimenez worked on the clubhouse.

“She cleaned as if it were her own home, spraying down and scrubbing surfaces, mopping and organizing,” Hilliard said.

“At the end of the workday, she compiled a list of items that needed replacing and used Friends of Boeddeker Park funding to promptly replace those items. If I recall, the list included a carpet for the reading area, books and sports equipment.

“I don’t know if anyone ever noticed the cleaner clubhouse, or new items, but I know those acts served our community in an important way.”

“Traynor’s father was a Muni driver. The family lived in Daly City before moving to the Outer Mission under a rule — new then, but discarded years ago — mandating city employees live in San Francisco. Whichever school Betty attended, though, her mother was a constant volunteer. At school functions, even into her Mercy High School days, Traynor’s mother’s baked-goods booth sold out first and famously made the most money.”

“She eventually started her own small, academic research company in 1982 that published reports on funding available for bio-medical science, arts and humanities.

VOLUNTEERS WHEREVER SHE GOES

When she moved the business to the Redstone Building on 16th Street, she soon became its tenant organizer, a cog in the movement for its historic landmark status and coordinator of the neighborhood association. After 20 years, though, the Internet was taking over, subscriptions to her reports were drying up and she retired.

It hardly meant slowing down. In 2005, besides her Boeddeker commitment, she joined the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom and became part of the planning for Kid Power Park on Hoff Street near 16th Street where she was community garden coordinator until 2010.

Recent months have brought a confusing, shifting park scene for Traynor. On one hand, Boeddeker is at its lowest point of use. On the other, the renovation eventually will bring a stunning open space improvement in the middle of the Tenderloin. Unknown is whether amenac city coffers can recover and restore park staffing. Rec and Park Director Phil Ginsburg has vowed to keep Boeddeker open. But at what level?

“We’ll keep meeting while Boeddeker is closed,” Traynor says. “We need to work on a plan for now and for the opening. Maybe we need to research other parks, too, and see what they’re doing. I don’t want (Boeddeker) to die. And with a possible change of mayors, who knows?”

Traynor believes a combination of dedicated volunteers and staff can keep the park open, and maybe a nonprofit organization can figure in.

“We’ve got to be creative — unless a miracle happens with Rec and Park and they can hire staff. People deserve to have Boeddeker.”

The Tenderloin locations with the highest number of incidents of human waste, according to Clean City’s 2010 computerized incident reports:

1. Dodge Street, 123 incidents
2. Continental Mail Mail Company, 106
3. Shannon Street, 103
4. 445 Leavenworth Street, 82
5. Breen Place, 80
6. Willow Street, 73
7. 541 Eddy Street, 66
8. 241 Jones Street, 66
9. 55 Hyde Street, 63
10. 366 Eddy Street, 58
LEROY LOOPER
Pioneer of supportive housing

From City Hall to San Quentin, regardless of the community cross-section that he’d served gath-
ered at the Cadillac Hotel in early October at the home of Branch Looper, whose vision had transformed the site from a slated-for-demolition relic to a home for the homeless. Mr. Looper, a former addict and convicted criminal who dedicated himself to helping others, died Sept. 11, three years after he’d made a speech. He was 80.

Mr. Looper rose from a life of crime to start Reality House West. “There was no other program like it,” Kathy Looper says. “Who would think a former convict who dedicated himself to helping others, lived in the site from a slated-for-demolition building as it was gradual-
ly being turned into a supportive housing facility may prove to be his most significant and enduring achievement,” wrote Tracy Ann Higley in the site’s newsletter. “More than anything, I wanted to succeed where so many have failed,” Mr. Looper wrote.

LEROY LOOPER Pioneer of supportive housing

Fix a broken window, it was simply boarded up.

Kathy Looper and Brad Paul, then assistant to the North of Market Planning Coalition, believe that speculators, including Don Fisher of the Gap, who who had also had a stake in the Cadillac, had bought the hotel in anticipation of rising real estate values. Zoning ordi-

nances of the time — later revised after Mr. Looper and Paul, among oth-
ers, made it an issue — allowed for much bigger buildings and in theory, the hotel could eventually be demolished and replaced with much bigger — thus pricier — properties, as had occurred in what is now the Yerba Buena area South of the Slot. But the Cadillac was going to seed, and the parole, they could be placed in a pro-

am. ‘More than anything, I wanted to succeed where so many have failed,’” Paul said that Mr. Looper taught him many surprisingly simple secrets to succeeding where so many have failed. One key, Paul said, was the simple act of praising.

People think criminals are crazy,” he said Mr. Looper explained to him. “They’re not. They’re basically good people. When people come to town to see where the city is telling them it’s OK to operate, they go to the storefronts, graffiti and trash” do just that, he said.

As the first floor over the Cadillac, he got a big push broom. The dealers moved down the street. “People think criminals are crazy,” Paul said that Mr. Looper then began hosing down the sidewalk. That would keep them away for a few more hours. “I wasn’t going to waste money again. Paul said, merchants up and down the block were following suit and things started improving.

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LONNIE BOWLEN
Reversal of fortune

Lonnie Bowlen liked good food and good clothes and, with his job as a legal documents printer in the Financial District, he could afford them.

At age 16, when Mr. Bowlen left his Baytown, Texas, home for San Francisco, the city of his dreams, he was determined to make good. His O’Farrell Street apartment was the evidence — it had a fine stereo, tons of CDs, a handsome dining room set, candle holders, two chocolate Samoan cats, an all-lowercase painting and, near the windows, hanging crystals waiting for the right light to dazzle. Topping it off, Mr. Bowlen had a favorite visitor, the love of his life, his daughter Shalena from his seven-year marriage.

Mr. Bowlen’s job fueled his middle-class lifestyle. He loved working, didn’t miss a day in 20 years nor was he ever late, his daughter said before his Sept. 15 memorial at the Coronado Hotel where he had lived 14 months. Shalena, with her mother, Pamela Stringer, had driven down from the service from Oregon, where they both live. She said as a teenager visits to her father were fun-filled with trips to Fisherman’s Wharf. Pier 39 and Macy’s on Union Square. He bought her gifts and gave her trips to visit beauty parlors. “He didn’t wait for birthdays,” she said. “He was just thoughtful and generous, regardless of what he had or didn’t have.”

She was wearing two handsome rings he had given her, unpolished dark stones in silver settings, perhaps, she suggested, reflecting a style from his quarter Cherokee lineage.

About three years ago, Mr. Bowlen was mugged after work in the Financial District. He gave the robbers all his money but they beat him badly anyway. He was out of work for a couple of months. His employer refused to hire him back. Mr. Bowlen tried and tried — he didn’t want charity, just his job, he said. But it was no go.

Then Mr. Bowlen couldn’t make his rent. He became despondent and walked away from it all, leaving everything behind, his daughter said. He was on the street and homeless. One day he took a bad fall, fracturing his hip and shoulder. By then, he hadn’t been in touch with his daughter for four years.

A social worker visited Mr. Bowlen in St. Francis hospital. The worker found Shalena on Facebook and wrote to her what had happened. The daughter contacted her grandmother, Ann, Thoms, Mr. Bowlen’s mother-in-law who divides her time between Novato and Tucson. Thoms said that after her daughter’s divorce Mr. Bowlen didn’t see Shalena for several years until she and her mother were living in Rohnert Park. Then Shalena reunited with her father in San Francisco and the visits began.

“She was the happiest part of his life,” Thoms said.

After Mr. Bowlen’s fall, Thoms was the only family member to visit him in the hospital. She said she asked him, “Do you think I’ll ever get to work again?”

After Mr. Bowlen recovered, the worker moved him into the Coronado, July 26, 2010. The hotel provides housing and support services to 65 formerly homeless people referred through the Human Services Agency.

On Sept. 8, 2011, Clarence Johnson, a case worker, found Mr. Bowlen dead on the floor of his hotel room. Cause of death wasn’t known, but Mr. Bowlen suffered from gastrointestinal problems, staff said. He was 54.

At the memorial, his SRO friends among the 14 mourners said what a nice guy he was, always smiled and said hello. One man said to Shalena, “You really loved your. Ex-marital Dala property manager, said “He was truly a model tenant.”

Three color photos of Mr. Bowlen in his apartment from a dozen years ago were framed on a table with a half-dozen candles. One shows him smiling under his bushy black moustache, sitting next to his happy teenage daughter.

Mr. Bowlen had problems as a child and as an adult, his mother-in-law said at the memorial, but they wanted them kept private.

“He had a very difficult life but he was a very good person.” Stringer said. “He was strong in many ways. He knew all kinds of people and got along with everyone. He didn’t like when people got treated wrong. But then, as the older Lonnie, he got quiet and didn’t know where that turning point came.”

Shalena Bowlen, now 27 and an elementary school teaching assistant in McMinville, Ore., said afterward she hadn’t had the means to visit her father and had not seen him in five years, but she had fond memories of her San Francisco visits.

He had three windows in his apartment and hanging pieces of stained glass and crystals,” she said. “At a certain time of day, the room was filled with rainbows.”

— TOM CARTER
COMMUNITY: REGULAR SCHEDULE

HOUSING
Supportive Housing Network, 3rd Thursday of the month, 3-5 p.m., Dorothy Day Community, 54 McAllister. Call: 421-2926 x304.
Tenant Associations Coalition of San Francisco, 1st Wednesday of the month, noon, 201 Turk St., Community Room. Contact Michael Nulty, 339-8327. Resident unity, leadership training.

HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH
CBHS Consumer Council, 3rd Monday of the month, 5:30 p.m., 730 Howard St., room 537, 255-3965. Consumer advisors from self-help groups and mental health consumer advocates. Public welcome.
Health & Wellness Action Advocates, 1st Tuesday of the month, 5:30-7 p.m., Mental Health Association, 870 Market St., Suite 928, 421-2925 x506.
Healthcare Action Team, 2nd Wednesday of the month, 1010 Mission St., Bayview Health Center, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Focus on increasing supportive home services, expanded eligibility for home care, improved discharge planning. Light lunch. Call James Chiosinni, 700-0188 x304.

SAFETY
Neighborhood Emergency Response Team Training (NERT). Central city residents can take the S.F. Fire Department's free disaster preparedness and response training at neighborhood locations. www.sfgov.org/sffdnert, or Lt. Arteseros, 970-2022.

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT
Alliance for a Better District 6, 1st Wednesday of the month, 6 p.m., 230 Eddy St. Contact Michael Nulty, 820-1560 or sf_district6@yahoo.com, a districtwide improvement association.

Friends of Boeddeker Park, 2nd Thursday of the month, 3:30 p.m., Boeddeker Rec Center, 240 Eddy St. Park events, activities and improvements. Contact Betty Traynor, 931-1128.
Gene Friend Recreation Center Advisory Board, 3rd Thursday of the month, 5 p.m. Works to protect SoMa resources for all residents. Gene Friend Rec Center, 270 5th St. Info: Tim Figueiras, 554-9632.

South of Market/Tenderloin Community Benefit District, full board meets 3rd Monday at noon. Call 292-4812 for location or check nontri-did.org.

SoMa Community Stabilization Fund Advisory Committee, 3rd Thursday of the month, 5:30 p.m., 1 South Van Ness, 2nd floor. Info: Claudia del Rosario 749-2519.

South of Market Project Area Community Housing Subcommittee, 1st Wednesday of the month, bimonthly 6 p.m., 1033 Folsom St. Health, Safety and Human Services Committee 1st Wednesday after the 1st Monday bimonthly, 1033 Folsom, 6 p.m. 487-2166 or www.sompac.com.

Tenderloin Futures Collaborative, 3rd Wednesday of the month, 11 a.m.-noon, Tenderloin Police Community Room, 301 Eddy. Presentations on issues of interest to neighborhood residents, nonprofits and businesses. Information: 928-6299.

Tenderloin Neighborhood Association, 2nd Friday of the month, 842 Geary St., 5 p.m. Nonprofit focuses on health and wellness activities to promote neighborly interactions. Info: tenderlionneighborhood@yahoo.com.

SENIORS AND DISABLED
Mayor's Disability Council, 3rd Friday of the month, 1-3 p.m., City Hall, room 278. Call: 554-7970. Open to the public.
Senior Action Network, general meeting, 2nd Thursday of the month, 9 a.m.-noon, Universal Unitarian Church, 1187 Franklin St. Monthly programs, 965 Mission St. #700: Senior Housing Action Committee, 3rd Wednesday, 1:30 p.m. Call for health program and Senior University: 546-1333 and www.san.org.

DISTRICT 6 SUPERVISOR
Jane Kim
Chair of Rules Committee, member of Budget & Finance Committee and Transportation Authority. Legislative Aides: Matthias Mormino and Viva Mapi. Jane.Kim@sfgov.org, 554-7970

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SPECIAL EVENT
Holiday Party, Dec. 6, 6-9 p.m., Swig Bar, 561 Geary St. Awards ceremony, refreshments, door prizes and special guests sponsored by Alliance for a Better District 6, Central City Democrats and North of Market Business Association. More info: 820-1560.

ARTS EVENTS
Hospitality House’s 8th Annual Art for the House auction and sale, Nov. 18, 6-10 p.m., 839 Larkin. One-of-a-kind pieces from Shooting Gallery artists, artists in the Community Arts Program and others. Free, open to the public, with complimentary wine, beer, soft drinks and hors d’oeuvres. Info: Daniel Hlad, 749-2184 or dhlad@hospitalityhouse.org.

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Communities are formed around shared interests, like art, music or dance. At Latin Night at U.N. Plaza, instructors from Rueda Con Ritmo, perform Nov. 3 and Ryan Mead, dance instructor, and Sidney Weaverling, perform Nov. 3 at Latin Night at U.N. Plaza.