

Visitor policy violated at most SROs

Residents' rights denied, many desk clerks extort a fee

BY TOM CARTER

It was prearranged. Jason Foley, who lives at TNDC's West Hotel, told the desk clerk at 8:30 p.m. that he would have an overnight guest. What he didn't say was that the friend, Allen White, and he were testing the West Hotel's version of the city's Uniform Visitors Policy, which is uniformly disregarded at most of the 503 SROs in the city.

White arrived at 11:15. He was stopped at the door by the desk clerk and the night manager. They wouldn't let him in. They said Foley hadn't followed the SRO's procedure.

On the contrary, White said, whipping out a copy of the 2007 Uniform Visitors Policy for SRO Hotels and citing the rule that proved his case. The manager stood firm and said the West's rules rule.

A passing police beat patrol stopped and got involved. But, White says, the cops did not believe him and sided with management.

White walked away disgruntled and disillusioned.

A fair and consistent SRO visitor policy has become White's passion, and the March 27 incident at the West is but a single example of his tireless effort. Confusion over the right of 30,000 SRO residents to have overnight visitors — just like apartment dwellers — is causing consternation throughout the SRO population.

Some hotels like the West have multistep procedures for residents to follow and — if they don't — their visitors are turned away. Others charge visitors \$5 to \$20, basically whatever the clerk thinks he can get away with.

The Uniform Visitors Policy, authored by Supervisor Daly six years ago, decrees rights to visitors. But the ordinance includes no practical enforcement and SRO residents are left helpless.

Daily abuses are seldom reported because of fear of retaliation, activists say.

"I go into SROs when I get complaints," says Sheryl Abbeduto, a veteran advocate with S.F. Mental Health Clients' Rights Advocates. "I take a copy of the visitors policy with me and it's the first thing I look for. If they don't have one up, I give them one and tell them to follow the law and get it up."

"Another common complaint is having to pay for guests."

To combat the problems, the SRO Central City Collaborative this month starts leafleting TL and SoMa SROs about the residents' right to have visitors. Also, the SRO Mission Collaborative is finishing a month-long survey of tenants' gripes in the 55 SROs in that neighborhood. Even before the results are in, the organi-

"(Ours) is not a satisfactory remedy. People want their rights, not so much the money."

Delene Wolf
RENT BOARD DIRECTOR

NO. 82

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CENTRAL CITY

EXTRA

SAN FRANCISCO

FRINGE FESTIVAL



PHOTO BY LENNY LIMJOCO

Barbara Michaels rehearses her street play, "The Doormen," in a doorway on O'Farrell Street.

Theater unleashed

4-wheel performance, gay sex with Dad, missives from Mission, and 45 plays more

BY HEIDI SWILLINGER

ALL the world's a stage, but people who like their theater on the edgy side need look no further than the Tenderloin and West SoMa for the next two weeks.

The 17th annual San Francisco Fringe Festival, a showcase for uncensored and

decidedly nonmainstream works, runs through Sept. 14. With 48 separate shows on the roster and a combined total of 286 performances, this is the biggest festival in recent years.

Play topics are all over the map — figuratively and, in some cases, literally. Most performances last an hour or less and take place in nine theaters scattered throughout the central city, but others are performed in nontraditional venues.

One offering, entitled "theatre that Moves," takes place in a van that tours some of the Tenderloin's hidden gems. The piece is the brainchild of Mercedes Segesvary, an employee of a San Francisco tour company whose owners let her use their van for the show.

During her years hauling tourists to Yosemite, Muir Woods and the Wine Country, Segesvary has closely observed passengers, as well as other tour drivers who congregate while their passengers take in the sights. She's come up with a comedy that highlights, in part, "all the things that can go wrong as a tour driver." The show came about when she realized how much energy she puts into her tour patter. "I'm not just driving," she says. "I'm also putting on a one-woman show."

"Doormen" is another site-specific performance set in doorways along a two-block stretch of the Tenderloin. Playwright Barbara Michaels leads the audience on a walking tour that explores how encounters with others can change our lives. (See sidebar.)

Many other plays are set in San Francisco. "Lost and Found in the Mission," by Rowena Richie and Susie Hara, is based



PHOTO BY LIZ PAYNE

Mary Ann Boyd won't hang it up even after having 51 jobs in her 47 years.

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GOOD NEWS for...

MACCANDO Tenderloin Youth Track Club got a boost at its annual awards dinner Aug. 23 when Elks Lodge No. 3 donated \$1,500 to the team. Lodge President Patrick Murphy made the presentation to coach Rob McDaniels, a Rec and Park director at the Tenderloin Children's Playground. Earlier in the year, the Elks Club named McDaniels its Citizen of the Year. McDaniels started the team for at-risk Tenderloin kids at Boeddeker Park four years ago. It has grown to 33 youngsters, ages 5 to 16, who compete in track meets around the Bay Area. Dozens of kids and parents went to the podium during the evening to tell how the team experience made a difference in their lives.

CYBERUSERS It's a year late, but the Tenderloin's computer Tech Lab, a collaboration of St. Anthony Foundation and S.F. Network Ministries, is set to open Oct. 3 at St. Anthony's new admin building at 150 Golden Gate. Forty to 80 people a day — from the two organizations' existing computer programs — are expected to use the new lab, which is free for TL residents and homeless people. During September, Network Ministries will continue to offer classes and drop-in hours at its Computer Training Center at 366 Eddy. St. Anthony's has already begun shifting over its clients, says Karl Robillard, Learning Center manager. "We've had a soft opening," he said, "to make sure everything is operating properly." The lab has 12 computers for classes and 16 for drop-ins. In a third area, selected St. Anthony clients will learn repair and maintenance on eight computers.

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

Making — then taking — umbrage Boeddeker shadow problem pretty lightweight

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

SHADOW and transparency — a familiar concept in the worlds of fine arts and computer animation — got a new twist at the August Tenderloin Futures Collaborative meeting.

Oluseun Oke, project manager of TNDC's planned affordable family housing development at the corner of Eddy and Taylor, presented the results of a shadow study — how the upper stories would cast their gloom on Boeddeker Park. The 130-apartment structure steps back from seven floors on the Taylor side, doubling that at its highest point.

Those last seven stories will create a shadow, Oke said.

"At the maximum impact, on Sept. 12 and March 30, the shadow will cover only 3,111 square feet of the park's total 41,373 square feet — less than half of 1% increase in shade over the year — and only in the northern portion of the park," he said.

That's the Ellis end of the park, the least used area of Boeddeker. It's locked, "with no programmed activity," says the fact sheet on the shadow study. Also, after 9:30 a.m., the study found there would be no shadow at all any day of the year anywhere in the park.

"That's the effect on the park," said Alliance for a Better District 6 President Michael Nulty. "Will you present those findings to Friends of Boeddeker Park? And what about the effect on the other four buildings near the site — the Alexander and Ritz hotels, which TNDC owns, Mercy's Presentation and an apartment building on Taylor? Will you do outreach to their tenants, too?"

Oke said Friends of Boeddeker Park was on the list for a presentation. He wasn't sure about tenants in the four buildings. The shadow study, conducted by TNDC and PBS&J, a U.S.-based international architecture and engineering firm, is part of the EIR process and is required by Planning Code Section 295, but it doesn't apply to the shading effect on buildings, only on Rec and Park sites, he explained. And no matter how little shadow is cast on a park, a developer has to request a conditional use authorization.

"We always want input from the community," said Tomiquia Moss, TNDC community organizing manag-

er, president of the North of Market/Tenderloin Community Benefit District and, come October, director of the new Community Justice Center. "We want to make sure the process is always transparent." That includes letting neighbors know about conditional use hearings.

"My role seems to always be presenting the contrary view, but I have to say this," said resident activist David Baker. "I'd like a more balanced presentation about this shadow issue. TNDC is self-interested. I don't feel there's anyone to champion the residents. And Planning isn't much help either."

Oke said he had come to the meeting to show the community that TNDC was being compliant with Planning regulations — "so you have a sense of what we're doing."

"But you are asking for an exception to the regulation, aren't you?" Baker asked. Oke nodded.

Nulty asked how many apartments in the upper stories would create the shadow. Implied in his question was the ethical dilemma: Does a shadow-free park trump housing?

"In those seven floors, it's 70 units, about half the project," Oke said.

Moss jumped in with more damage control: "TNDC can ensure that all affected buildings will be sent notices about hearings and presentations," she said. "We're working on how to bring residents more deeply into the process."

Baker, frustrated, got the last word. "That's good that it's transparent and that the community can comment, but the fact is that residents can't address the technical aspects of construction. We need alternative points of view."

Oke promised to return often to give updates.

TNDC ON A ROLL

Eddy and Taylor family housing is but one of TNDC's pending projects. The nonprofit developer is spectacularly busy in the central city. Alone and in partnership with other agencies, it's on a roll:

- At 650 Eddy, TNDC and Community Housing Partnership are constructing 36 studios and 47 one- and two-bedroom apartments for chronically homeless individuals and families, expected to be complete

next year.

- TNDC and Citizens Housing Corp. are building 150 one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments for low-income families, with 30 units reserved for homeless families, at 1400 Mission. Estimated completion date: 2012.

- Also, projected to be ready for occupancy that year are TNDC's 104 one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments for low-income families at 1036-40 Mission, with 18 units reserved for homeless families.

- TNDC and Glide Economic Development Corp. (Glide Housing) broke ground in May at 149 Mason St. — 56 studios for chronically homeless with extensive on-site supportive services. Move-in date: 2010.

- Also by 2010, TNDC expects to have finished renovating the 211-unit Civic Center Residence at 44 McAllister, the 22 studios and five one-bedroom apartments at 165 Turk, and the 55 studios at 249 Eddy.

- Way down the road, maybe six years, TNDC and Citizens Housing Corp. plan to build 130 units of family housing at Fifth and Howard. They've already acquired rights to build on the land, now a parking lot.

TNDC Executive Director Don Falk told The Extra that the big numbers "show TNDC's willingness to take big risks in the name of revitalization. Also, we now have enough of a track record to attract capital for many projects," he said. "Still, for the last 15 years, TNDC has always had at least 10 projects in progress." ■

Busted: The crime didn't pay

A neighborhood activist tipped the cops to a suspected gambling operation at 235 Jones St., according to Tenderloin police Capt. Gary Jimenez's Aug. 1 community newsletter. The station relayed it to the Vice Unit, which deployed a decoy officer.

"(He) won \$200," Jimenez wrote, "... and asked to cash in but was told to keep playing. I guess the decoy officer got upset when they would not pay him so he called in the arrest team who cited the operator, took the video gambling machines and the money." ■

—TOM CARTER

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Central city housing frenzy

3,500 new units are in works

TNDC's plans to build 653 new living units and renovate another 293 are part of perhaps the biggest building boom in the central city since it was leveled in 1906. Besides TNDC's developments, another 2,845 new units — affordable and market rate — are just completed or in the pipeline, plus sparkling new places to play, work and get social services.

The Salvation Army in July opened its Kroc Recreation Center and Railton Place's 110 apartments next door. By next year, a new YMCA center should be under way at Golden Gate and Larkin, a site it will share with Hastings' 430-car garage, already going up fast. When the Y moves from 220 Golden Gate to a temporary location, AF Evans and TNDC will begin renovating the old Y into 174 studios for the homeless.

St. Anthony Foundation opened its new admin offices at 150 Golden Gate in May and now is charging forward with plans to demolish 121 Golden Gate and construct a 10-story building to house its dining room, respite units for hospital discharges, a community room and six floors of senior housing — 90 studios and one-bedrooms. Unless it hits a snag, the building will be up by 2011.

Glide Housing started taking applications in June for its new apartment building at 125 Mason. The moderate rentals, at 60% AMI, start at \$1,056. By August, Glide had begun whittling down the 1,300 applicants for the 81 one-, two-, three- and four-bedroom apartments. First priority goes to tenants who work and live in the city. They'll move in around Oct. 1.

Mercy Housing has two big projects afoot: Its

10th and Mission development, expected to open next year, has 136 one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments for low-income families with 44 units targeted for homeless families. There'll be on-site case management, plus a 5,400-square-foot rec center for residents of all ages and neighborhood youth.

A second Mercy project, scheduled to open in two years, is at Ninth and Jessie — 107 studios and one-bedroom apartments for very low-income seniors with 27 units targeted for homeless seniors. The building will include a city-operated health clinic for residents and on-site case management.

At the other end of the housing scale, a private developer is constructing 31 market-rate condos, 17 studios and 14 one-bedrooms, at 168 Hyde. Across from Fox Plaza, 1 Polk soars 200 glassy feet, its 179 luxury condos set to open this fall.

Deeper in the Tenderloin, construction is planned to start next year on an eight-story apartment building at Turk and Jones. The 37 mostly market-rate one- and two-bedroom apartments at 180 Jones will replace a surface parking lot.

The big daddy of market-rate developments is Trinity Place, Angelo Sangiacomo's six interconnected buildings, three of them residential with 1,900 studios and apartments, on the half-block bounded by Eighth Street, Mission and Market. Market Street Association says it's the city's largest residential project in 50 years. The first residential building, under construction at 1188 Mission, has 440 units, including 360 studios meant to replace the much-fought-over rent-controlled studios of Trinity Plaza. ■

—MARJORIE BEGGS



PHOTO BY TERRANCE ALAN

Tomiquia Moss (front row, 2nd from left) with other community representatives at Red Hook in Brooklyn on a community justice center field trip in 2006.

TNDC's top organizer named Community Justice Center director

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

A MONTH after the Board of Supervisors gave the green light on funding for a Community Justice Center, Tomiquia Moss announced that she has been named the center's first director.

Come October, Moss will be at the helm of a multimillion-dollar program that will bring people who've committed nonviolent felonies and misdemeanors in the Tenderloin, South of Market and parts of Union Square to a special courtroom at 555 Polk St. A Superior Court judge will hear their cases, and social service providers will be on site to offer these minor offenders help so they can stay out of the criminal justice system.

Moss came to San Francisco four years ago from Denver, where she was a domestic violence counselor. She went to work for TNDC as the West Hotel's social worker, then moved up to community organizer and further up to TNDC community organizing manager. In August 2006, she and nine others traveled to Brooklyn to visit the Red Hook Community Justice Center, a field trip to help the mayor evaluate it as a model for a similar center in San Francisco.

"The mayor's office was looking for variety in who it sent, and I was chosen as a housing rep for the Tenderloin," Moss said.

In fact, she brought much more to the trip. She has a social work degree, 13 years of social work field experience and a master's in public administration from Golden Gate University.

"As a domestic violence counselor, I worked with the courts a lot, so there was definitely an overlap with the criminal justice system," she said.

After the Red Hook excursion, she joined an ad hoc steering committee that still meets monthly, and does outreach and promotion for the planned center. Superior Court judicial officers and admin staff recently interviewed her for the center director's position and made the appointment official last week.

"I think I'm going to bring a fresh perspective to this job," Moss said. "Having been part of the community that will be served by the center is worth gold — I don't work for the system. I'll be a community member advocate. I've also spent my entire career building bridges. At the center, I think I can do that between community folks, offenders, judges, the justice system."

Moss doesn't kid herself. She admits to being a little anxious going into the job.

"The biggest challenge will be being an advocate in a system notorious for not having a collaborative relationship with the community," she said. "I'll be swimming upstream in a system that has a narrow view of offenders — what I want to say is, 'Let's think about offenders in a different way.'"

When Moss returned from Brooklyn, she and others wrote about their hopes for San Francisco's nascent justice center, based on what they saw at Red Hook.

"People there felt it filled a [neighborhood] need," she wrote. "The judge that presides over the court has frequent contact with the community . . . [and] the prosecutor and public defender assigned to the court have consistent communication with the police department, probation and others in an effort to streamline services."

The bridges are waiting to be built. ■



PHOTO BY JESAL BHUTA

Tenderloin police Sgt. Gaetano Caltagirone talks with 7-year-old Fairy Dang about how learning to read well can help keep her safe on the street.

Getting booked by Sgt. C

Cops teach reading to help kids become street-smart

BY PETE VERRAL

TENDERLOIN police Sgt. Gaetano Caltagirone looked quizzically at a group of kindergarten to fifth-graders and asked, "What do you do when you see a stop sign?"

Several kids waved their arms and shouted, "You have to stop."

"That's right," replied Caltagirone, who told the kids to call him Sarge or Sgt. C when they see him on the street. "Learning to read helps you understand street signs and be safe on the street."

The exchange was part of a book read-along and street-safety event at Glide Foundation's After-School Program, which has 600 books donated by Hoopoe Books' Share Literacy Program in Los Altos.

Cops and firefighters visited the children at the Janice Mirikitani Family, Youth and Childcare Center Aug. 15 to reinforce the message that good reading and thinking skills help keep them safe on the street.

When one kid asked to see Sgt. C's gun, Sarge pulled a cartridge from his belt clip and adroitly turned the question into an example of good thinking.

"If you see a bullet on the street, it could be dangerous to pick it up," he said. "You should tell an adult right away."

During the read-along, the children heard "The Lion Who Saw Himself in the Water," by Afghan author Idries Shah.

The Share Literacy Program, funded by the Kaiser Permanente Community Grants Program and Wells Fargo Foundation, uses "teaching stories" from Afghanistan, Central Asia and the Middle East. The stories were selected to entertain children, help them see things in new ways, and foster their perception, intuition and self-confidence.

After the read-along, Tenderloin Engine Company 3 firefighters showed the kids around a fire engine and its working parts. ■

Pete Verral is a freelance community outreach and media relations representative.

Proposition H Gives the Board of Supervisors a Blank Check To Issue BILLIONS in Revenue Bonds without Your Approval



“Proposition H takes away your right to vote on billions

of dollars in revenue bonds. It gives the Board of Supervisors the power to issue these revenue bonds in any amount to take over any utility without first seeking a vote of the people. It's an issue of fiscal responsibility – Proposition H takes away your ability to hold local elected officials accountable for how they spend billions and billions of dollars. Please join me in voting NO on Proposition H.”

– Senator Dianne Feinstein



“This measure gives the Board of Supervisors and the

San Francisco Public Utilities Commission the right to issue bonds in any amount, to take over utilities, without a vote of the people. That means politicians and unelected commissioners will have the power to borrow billions to take over utilities and force you to pay the cost. That is simply too much power to give to any group of elected and appointed officials.”

– Mayor Gavin Newsom

Proposition H will give this, and all future Boards of Supervisors, the power to issue revenue bonds in any amount to take over any utility, without a vote of the people. Before you sign over this tremendous new power to the Board of Supervisors, please check the facts.

No Accountability

Right now, bonds for initiatives of this kind must first be approved by the people. But starting in Section 9.107 of Proposition H, the language of the measure itself makes clear what the Board is trying to hide: “...no voter approval shall be required with respect to revenue bonds” [issued to finance the takeover of utility facilities].

It Will Cost Billions

According to the independent financial analysis prepared by the City Controller: “There are several possible methods for costing the purchase or construction of power facilities and estimates range widely. Under any method, the amounts are certainly substantial—likely in the billions of dollars...” Initial estimates put the cost of a takeover of just the PG&E electric system at more than \$4 billion.

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The financial burden of paying back a \$4 billion bond will fall on our shoulders. Our utility bills will go up, on average, by over \$400 a year for 30 years. That's just a preliminary estimate. The final figure could be much higher.

The Stop the Blank Check Coalition is now over 12,000 strong. It's a growing citizens' movement of San Franciscans who oppose Proposition H, the Board of Supervisors' \$4 billion plan to take over the PG&E power system.

Senator Dianne Feinstein, Mayor Gavin Newsom, Supervisors Michela Alioto-Pier, Sean Elsbernd and Carmen Chu, the San Francisco Fire Fighters Association, the Deputy Sheriffs' Association and the Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods are all united in opposition to Proposition H.



Get the facts before you give the Board of Supervisors a blank check

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Paid for by the Committee to Stop the Blank Check, No on H, a coalition of concerned consumers, small businesses, labor, community organizations and Pacific Gas and Electric Company.

Sharp move: Needle drop boxes working

TL Health, AIDS Foundation keep hundreds of used syringes off street

BY HEIDI SWILLINGER

To a casual passer-by, it looks just like a hole in the wall — or, to be more specific, a hole in the door. You'd never guess that it's actually a simple but controversial method for safely disposing of used syringes — the first 24/7, no-questions-asked drop box in the city.

And since it and two others were installed last winter, the number of used needles littering the streets of the Tenderloin has gone down by 37.

The drop box, a San Francisco AIDS Foundation initiative, has collected 1,000 syringes since going into action — rigs that might otherwise have ended up in the gutter or in the hands of an addict desperate enough to use someone else's needle with the potential to transmit HIV or hepatitis C.

Soon after the drop box opened at 117 Sixth St., Tenderloin Health installed boxes at either end of an alley in the Tenderloin called Continuum Way, located outside 255 Golden Gate Ave. between Leavenworth and Hyde. Although there's been no formal fanfare or advertising, the boxes are netting 800 syringes a month, according to Colm Hegarty, director of resource development and public relations.

Syringe-collection numbers are also on the rise at Tenderloin needle exchange sites, where IV-drug users can trade used syringes for clean ones. But rather than diverting collections from needle exchanges, the drop boxes may be drawing syringes that might otherwise have been disposed of improperly, say spokesmen at both Tenderloin Health and the San Francisco AIDS Foundation.

It's possible they are being used by people who don't want to be identified as IV-drug users. "You see addicts from all walks of life," says Daniel Madrigal, a health educator at Tenderloin Health. "IV use isn't strictly a homeless thing, or a black thing. We see young kids, businessmen, people who are completely functional and use substances intravenously."

Keith Hocking, director of volunteer-based programs at the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, estimates there are 16,000 intravenous drug users in the city.

No matter where the syringes are coming from, the fact that they are ending up in drop boxes rather than on the street or in a dumpster is good news.

The San Francisco Clean City Coalition, a non-profit that collects used needles from Tenderloin streets, reports that 650 fewer needles were found March through July, compared with the same period last year (see chart).

"The pilot needle disposal boxes appear to be making a noticeable difference in the Tenderloin, and warrants a conversation for further boxes in strategic locations," Clean City Coalition Director Gia Grant wrote in an email to the Central City Extra. "The presence of thousands of used needles in a dense neighborhood full of children and seniors merits the attention of a serious public health issue."



PHOTO BY LENNY LIMJOCO

This drop box for used syringes is one of two installed by Tenderloin Health on the outer wall of 255 Golden Gate Ave. The boxes have collected 800 syringes a month since February.

Gary Longoria, who has worked near Continuum Way since September 2007, agrees the drop boxes are making a difference. Longoria is also an IV-drug user — he needs insulin to manage the diabetes he's had since infancy. When he started working in the area, he was struck by the number of syringes in the street — the same type he depends on for survival.

"It's something I tend to notice," he says. "I used to see those all the time — but I'm not seeing as many since Christmas." The Continuum Way drop boxes were installed in February.

Adam Solorzano also sees the benefits. He's director of operations at JCDeCaux, the company responsible for maintaining the city's street toilets. Improperly discarded needles are particularly hazardous for the workers who clean toilets in the Tenderloin, says Solorzano. "We've had two needles in the last six years," he says. The injured employees, who no longer work for DeCaux, have been monitored regularly and appear to be in good health, he says.

Although Solorzano can't quantify, he confirms that his workers have noticed fewer needles being discarded at Tenderloin public facilities since the drop boxes were installed. "I definitely would encourage more (boxes)," he says. "Anything that would reduce that risk is a huge help."

Attitudes like Solorzano's are a vindication for health workers beleaguered by people who oppose drop boxes and other efforts to promote safe drug use. "There's a real case of 'not-in-my-back-yard,'" says Dave Ellison, spokesman for the San Francisco AIDS Foundation. "People think a box is going to draw needle users there." The reality is that the agency focuses on neighborhoods where IV users already congregate. "We don't come to neighborhoods where there are no drugs," he says. "We're solving an existing problem."

If all goes according to plan, the city will jump on the bandwagon and install two more drop boxes in a few months — one near Glide Memorial Methodist Church, and possibly one in the Mission District, depending on results of a study by the Department of Public Health.

"We've heard that the 24-hour (drop box) is working quite well," says Grant Colfax, DPH director of HIV prevention. In part as a response to a 2007 series of reports by San Francisco Chronicle columnist C.W. Nevius about the prevalence of discarded syringes, the agency is funding a survey of 1,000 city blocks. So far, Colfax reports, "Only one syringe was found where it was deemed to pose a significant hazard to the public." Still, he says, "We feel like syringe access obviously saves lives, and we need to make sure people have a safe way for disposing of syringes."

The drop boxes are the answer, as far as one IV-drug user is concerned. "If they're there, people will use them. If not, they just throw (their syringes) in the streets," says Jeffery, who asked to be identified by first name only.

Drop boxes' impact

Syringes collected in the Tenderloin by Clean City Coalition

	2007	2008
March	385	180
April	363	196
May	394	239
June	290 (plus 400 in boxes*)	262
July	288	205
Totals	1,720	1,082
	(plus 400 in boxes)	

*The 400 additional needles were in needle disposal boxes that were left on the sidewalk for pickup by Clean City. ■

About a year ago, Jeffery saw a JC DeCaux worker cleaning the facility at Civic Center. The worker reached into the toilet with a clawlike device and pulled out a handful of syringes. The sight surprised and disgusted him, and drove home the hazards that improper disposal can pose to other people. He says he's gone out of his way to deliver used rigs at drop boxes and needle exchange sites ever since. "I think there should be more drop boxes," he says. "I'm all over the city — not just here."

He says he's familiar with the NIMBY arguments used by people who don't want to improve safety for injection-drug users.

"I understand a person who doesn't shoot not wanting a (needle drop box) in their community," he says. "But people are going to shoot anyway. We need them." ■

Disposing of syringes in the central city

24/7 drop boxes:

- 117 Sixth St.
- Continuum Alley (outside 255 Golden Gate Ave.)

Needle exchanges:

- San Francisco AIDS Foundation: 117 Sixth St., 10 a.m.-noon Tuesdays; noon-2 p.m. Fridays; 3-11 p.m. Saturdays; 234 Eddy St., 6-8 p.m. Fridays; parking garage at 50 Ivy St., 7-9 p.m. Mondays
- Hemlock Alley, between Post and Sutter, 7-9 p.m. Thursdays;
- Tenderloin Health: 183 Golden Gate Ave., 6-8 p.m. Wednesdays; 2-4 p.m. Sundays
- St. James Infirmary: 1372 Mission St., 1-6 p.m. Tuesdays; and 815 Hyde St., Second Floor, 4-6 p.m. Thursdays ■

—HEIDI SWILLINGER

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My Spiritual Adventure in Civic Center Plaza *Charlie*

BY ED BOWERS

THIS lone art critic, feeling in the mood to philosophize about why the Tenderloin is a rich field of creativity, one day woke up with a hangover. That made me decide to write about the small group of mostly elderly Chinese Americans, who — 7 a.m. to 10 a.m., seven days a week, in Civic Center Plaza, where the bushy green trees are in front of the Slow Food Nation Victory Garden — present a handful of exercises meant to cultivate the spirit.

This effort of theirs has made them one of the most politically incorrect, oppressed and despised group of weirdos in Communist China, the country that sponsored the Olympics while brutally and discreetly — behind closed doors — torturing and ruining the lives of the innocent men, women and children who practice these simple exercises.

It doesn't get weirder than that.

THE BIZARRE HARMONY OF LIFE

Real artists are not religious, nor do they represent somebody's temporal or spiritual beliefs. That's why I love the Tenderloin. It's such a mass of contradictions that it cannot be reduced to anything even resembling an absolute. Improvised notes squeal everywhere and some of them are beautiful and many of them are gut-bucket dirty, but inside my mind their riffs resonate with a bizarre harmony full of life.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the mind is all there is; it brings existence into being and without it you are nothing. So cultivate intelligence and consciousness and enjoy it while it lasts, the cutbacks in education notwithstanding.

So I was walking through Chinatown with poet Charlie Getter on the way to the Beat Museum to see a guy who wanted to publish one of my crazy novels with the intention that afterward Charlie and I would hit the bars and have fun when we ran smack dab into a large Chinese parade.

I hate parades. I especially hate the large ones.

I know, "Everybody loves a parade."

But I don't. I am not everybody. I am only me and

parades cause me to turn into a Robert Crumb "SNOID," an old curmudgeon snarling to himself about jerks following each other off cliffs, celebrating war, and dancing to the tune of the same marching band that they've danced to since the beginning of death.

Parades bore me. But this parade was kind of sweet. The participants were decked out in colorful costumes, and the crowd appeared nonhysterical. Charlie and I found it easy to walk through the masses without being physically molested.

Then a smiling Chinese lady handed me a newspaper titled Falun Gong Today. The name rang a bell. I recalled reading somewhere that the Falun Gong practitioners were despised by the government of China.

THE WALKING WOUNDED

I like people who are despised by their own people. I can really relate to them since the American people must hate my guts. They put me through so much horse manure in 59 years that I am lucky not to have gone as insane as many of my friends. So I have respect for those who have had a similar experience.

Inside the Falun Gong newspaper were photographs of women being tortured, their faces burned off, Chinese citizens who'd had organs harvested with the unfortunate result that they were forced to give their lives involuntarily to save the politically correct, and lots of gory graphic depictions of starved and tortured individuals who happened to have been born in the wrong place at the wrong time so they experience insane amounts of pain.

OK. I see the same thing every day in the Tenderloin. Big deal.

Once they push you up against the wall and you have nothing to lose, then you become the most dangerous human creature on the planet and you do either good or evil.

The losers in the Tenderloin, though, are hypnotized into killing themselves because, with their unbecoming lifestyles, they occupy no place in this society that is run by highly respectable people. The most potentially intelligent people in San Francisco live in this stinking neighborhood; and they suffer from being ignored out of exis-



Ed Bowers, our art beat writer, even looks spiritual as he

tence and their wounds are mostly invisible.

So what's worse, mental or physical pain? Li Hongzhi, the founder of Falun Gong, seems to think it's mental. But I don't agree; I think it is six to one and half a dozen to the other, as the old cliché goes. Pain is pain, baby. I'm not a big fan.

THE QUEST BEGINS

Okay. Even with The Tenderloin Art Critic, self-interest is a No. 1 priority. So, after glancing at the carnage depicted in the newspaper, which to me was just another tedious example of "normal human life," I cut to the back of the paper for what I needed for myself.

Lots of plays for kids at Fringe

► CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

on scraps of paper they found in the Mission District.

Hara says she and Richie were intrigued by the mysterious origins of the handwritten letters, notes and even post-its they discovered around their neighborhood, ranging from a grandmother's letter to her granddaughter that Richie found in the floorboards while cleaning her apartment, to a piece of paper where someone scrawled, "I will work hard so I will change" 25 times. "There was something moving and touching about that," Hara says. "Who wrote these things? What does it say about them?"

She and Richie created a series of songs and scenarios based on their found objects, including a Cinderella-like vignette inspired by a single shoe found in the street.

Another San Francisco offering — "Tenderloin Christmas Hustler," by Jake Eastman, Demetrius Martin and Todd Pickering — definitively answers the question, "Is nothing sacred?" This send-up of traditional holiday entertainment fare was inspired by a Christmas theme party last year in the Tenderloin. According to Martin, Pickering had dressed for the event in red and green, as well as a liberal spray of glitter on his face. He then made his way through the neighborhood on foot. "I felt like a Tenderloin Christmas hustler," he remarked when he arrived at the party, and lo, a play was born.

The trio lifted characters from standard Christmas television show and films, rewrote lyrics to carols, and in general turned the holiday on its head. "We're having a ball in rehearsals," says Martin, who hopes to reprise a longer version of the show at another San Francisco venue at Christmastime. "We have more material than we can squeeze into 50 minutes," he says.

Many Fringe Festival plays are strictly for adults, but there are plenty of performances for children. "After-party" features acrobatics, juggling, dance, music, improv and puppetry by Pi: The Physical Comedy Troupe, for kids age 5 and older.

Ages 9 and up might also enjoy "51 & Counting," a musical by Mary Ann Boyd that looks hard and sometimes lightly at the 51 jobs she's held in her 47 years. Boyd, who lives in the Bay Area after several years in Seattle, has been a receptionist, waitress, substitute teacher; she's also cared for the elderly, tended

bar and sung telegrams for a living. Inspired by a suggestion from a local comedian and teacher, Boyd started writing "51 & Counting" in 2001, while living in Seattle. The play has been morphing ever since (she's had seven other jobs in the meantime), but the central theme is the same: She just wants to pay the bills, but she's driven in other directions by her alter ego, who wants much more. "It's about taking yourself seriously, rather than fitting into society or being what your family wants you to be," says Boyd.

The festival's Website notes which performances are appropriate for children in a detailed thumbnail sketch on each work.

Definitely leave the kids at home for graphic productions such as Alex Bond's "Late Night With the Boys: Confessions of a Leather Bar Chanteuse," or "Loving Fathers," Joe Besecker's look at two gay lovers who are sexually attracted to their own fathers. Edgy topics may raise eyebrows, but they are entirely in keeping with the fringe-festival concept, which is to encourage risk-taking, stretch boundaries and explore new ways of telling stories.

That's one reason S.F. Fringe productions are chosen by lottery, rather than traditional selection processes, says Christina Augello, EXIT Theatre co-founder and Fringe Festival producer. Augello hosts a lottery party each January, where submission titles are dropped into a hat. This year, 15 local, 10 national and 5 international works were selected for performance at neighborhood theaters; the other 18 offerings will be produced at satellite venues. "This is the biggest festival we've had in years," she notes.

"It's a unique concept, and promoting it is very important," says Augello. "A lot of people trying to break into the performing arts have a difficult time getting their work in front of an audience." They definitely need some luck — this year, the Fringe lottery attracted 147 entries, says Augello.

The total festival audience is 7,000 to 8,000 participants, and Augello believes low ticket prices are one reason why. Most tickets cost from \$7 to \$11, depending on whether purchased at the door or online. Five-show passes go for \$35, 10 shows for \$65.

For a complete list of performances, schedules and ticket information, visit the Fringe Festival Web site, www.sffringe.org. ■

Doors to pe

I'M on the corner of Mason and Eddy, swaying and hopping, walking in circles, talking excitedly into the air. Am I serenading the Honorable Bijou? I'm rehearsing for my solo show! "The Doormen" premieres as part of the 17th annual San Francisco Fringe Festival.

My show is an outdoor walking tour; the first stop is Bijou is my first stop. Today's invisible audience is great. They laugh with me through a short tale of good intentions, folly and grace. I take a quick bow to the lamp post and off we go to Ellis. Each tour stop is an actual doorway or portal in the neighborhood near the EXIT Theatre.

The deep theme of "The Doormen" is that lovers and others change our lives for the good by metaphorically opening doors for us. The reality is many or most of these doors are life passages we must then cross over alone or, at least, without "the doorman." Getting to and through each door, then closing it, can feel joyful, trying or even tragic.

The friend taught you to cook, then years later you open a restaurant. The co-worker's challenging style inspires you to strengthen your spine, now you're a manager. The ex-showbiz guy tells you things about yourself that got in the way of your love, now you have a meditation practice. None of these people cross the threshold with you, but they had the key. I hope to convey that with thanks, wit, laughter and sass in my show.

I don't need a permit to perform outside the city streets, but I've needed to re-site the tour a few times. Some outdoor spaces are public and some are private, sometimes by a matter of inches. My show about transition is going up in a neighborhood full of transition. A big, elegant condo complex is rising next to the Hotel Bijou on Mason. SRO residents are sometimes described as being "in transition" — though some may live in a hotel for years. Boeddeker Park

Charlie Parker was right, so I'm making moves with the Falun Gong



PHOTO BY LENNY LIMJOCO

exercises with Falun Gongers in Civic Center Plaza.

After years of studying various esoteric systems I knew that Falun Gong was a branch of qigong, which cultivates the primordial energy of the Universe. I needed a little shot of that right now to prop me up. So I was going get it if it was the last thing I ever did!

Once an addict, always an addict.

On Page 14, photographs of beautiful white men and women were shown doing Gong exercises. Also on the page were phone numbers I could call to learn how I too could be a beautiful white man doing these movements.

So I called the proper number and connected with an extremely frenzied Chinese woman whose voice resonated with such stress that it squawked like she was in a

compound surrounded by Hells Angels on speed who just love to bifurcate screeching Chinese women and bury them in holes and then smoke a joint to celebrate their victory for God and America.

"GO TO CIVIC CENTER PLAZA! SEVEN O'CLOCK!"

"Excuse me, what did you just say?"

She heroically repeated herself, and I finally got it.

And now I'm doing it. I am performing these exercises in Civic Center Plaza two to three times a week surrounded mostly by Chinese people. I must stick out like a banana in a bowl of mandarin oranges. Tourists from all over the world take our picture. Great propaganda for American diversity!

When I don't show up, the sweet people who have practiced this dangerous path that could get their organs harvested in China are concerned, and actually seem to miss me if they haven't seen me in a few days. That's more than I can say about most of my friends.

Well, no pain, no gain.

SPIRITUAL PURPOSE OF EXERCISE

I now occasionally find myself standing in Civic Center Plaza doing The Falun Standing Stance Exercise, which is extremely painful and which I attempt to avoid by not showing up on time to do it.

This exercise involves placing your arms up in the air for a long period of time as though you are under arrest, perhaps by government officials who want to burn off your face. The spiritual purpose of this painful exercise is to burn off karma.

Now that is art. Art is created out of pain.

You don't get to where you want to go either in a painting, a song, or poem, unless you pay your dues. Charlie Parker was right. Unless you experience it, it will not come out of your horn.

I will return to do Falun Gong in the plaza, though I am absent today. With any belief system or spiritual practice or theory, I am like a dog I once had who left for six months, then returned dirty as a skunk, asking for food and affection, then finally left for the final time to die alone.

I would suggest this practice for anybody in San

Francisco who wants to see dozens and dozens of people walk by them in a purposeful manner. If you really want to see people in this city, then just stand there and do your exercises. You will appear to be doing nothing comprehensible, while the others will appear to be going somewhere extremely meaningful.

In my opinion, all appearances are artistically deceptive. But that's just me.

I think it would be a kick and a half if hundreds of San Franciscans, stressed out by their stupid workaholic lives, took time out to cultivate themselves. And it's free!

NO STRINGS ATTACHED

My instructor, Judy, has given me hundreds of dollars worth of lessons for nothing, no strings attached. She is a nice, middle-aged Chinese woman who has been a faithful follower of this program for 10 years, and is an excellent instructor who has taught me the subtly slow movements with precision. She can pick up on any mistakes I make from 10 yards away.

So what more can you ask for in a city that is overcharging you to live your life? You get exercise, make a statement for individual rights, tweak a totalitarian government, get to observe hundreds of different people walk back and forth in front of you, and cultivate yourself!

I find this practice extremely healthy and good. So give it a try. It's an adventure in consciousness.

But I warn you: I have no allegiance to anything other than people who mind their own business, allow others to be themselves, and are wise and compassionate in their dealings with others.

If this group got famous and powerful and started to rule the world, I would be like Jean Genet when asked what he would do if the Palestinians he was supporting became dominant.

"I would repudiate them," he said.

I suppose that's why he was a real artist.

In the meantime, I really like these people and I think they should be supported. They're cultivating the human spirit! Go on down and work out with them.

Maybe I'll see you. Maybe I won't. ■

Perception open on Tenderloin streets

up for renovation. Literal and symbolic doors in the Tenderloin are opening and closing like a neighborhood rhythm section.

Doorways are for going places, so my show walks the sidewalk. My audience of 16 is about

the number a sidewalk can hold. That's 32 shoes per show en route. Guests are greeted at the EXIT Theatre (156 Eddy) by my box office assistant who doubles as traffic and safety watch on the tour. Over an hour or so, we visit six doorways

for lively and poetic tales loosely based on my life's real "doormen."

Then it's back to the EXIT to catch another of the Fringe's 48 adventurous shows. ■

—BARBARA MICHAELS



PHOTO BY LENNY LIMJOCO

Barbara Michaels

rehearses "The Doormen" in the doorway of the Hotel Bijou on Mason at Eddy.

"The Doormen" will be performed at 7 p.m. Sept. 3 through 6 and Sept. 10 through 13, and at 4 p.m. Sept. 6, 7, 13 and 14. The show begins and ends at the EXIT Café, 156 Eddy St. Tickets cost \$7.

W?NDER

what to do when you're done with these?



FREE NEIGHBORHOOD DROP-OFF LOCATIONS

HOUSEHOLD BATTERIES** FLUORESCENT LIGHTS* PAINT (LATEX ONLY)* ELECTRONICS		Cole Hardware	70 4th St	(415) 777-4400
		Rainbow Grocery	1745 Folsom St	(415) 863-0620
		Green Citizen (Fees may apply)	591 Howard St	(415) 287-0000
		Discount Builders Supply	1695 Mission St	(415) 621-8511
		Peerless General Supply Co.	156 Leavenworth St	(415) 673-2348
		City Lights	1585 Folsom St	(415) 863-2020
		Sports Basement	1590 Bryant	(415) 437-0100
		Goodwill	citywide	sfgoodwill.org
	Walgreens	citywide	walgreens.com	

*limit 5 lights and/or 5 gallons per visit

**lithium batteries must be taped on the ends


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MARK MATTHEWS
Full house at his memorial

About two dozen chairs were set up in the meeting room at Tenderloin Health. On a white board at the front of the room, friends had left messages under the heading "Remembering Mark."

"We'll miss Mark's stories," wrote one. "Rest awake in peace," wrote another.

Before the July 24 memorial for Mark Matthews even started, people were crying and comforting each other. By the time it was in progress, there was standing room only.

"Mark was a humble, sweet, somewhat withdrawn man," said a Tenderloin Health case manager. "It made you want to help him. He had pain and stress — and now he has none anymore."



Two clients who knew Mr. Matthews spoke about his physical addictions and how they felt about his passing.

"Some of us who are users tend to withdraw and spiral down," said James. "Mark did that, but he's in peace now."

"Mark fed me — and he encouraged me to get off drugs," David told the mourners.

After the memorial, Mr. Matthews' former wife, Desiree Buckley, said he had been a security guard for a while in San Francisco, but she shared few other details of his life.

"I just loved him very much," she said tearfully. "He had a heart of gold and would give you the shirt off his back."

Mr. Matthews died July 1. He was 42 years old.

The memorial also honored the lives of two other Tenderloin Health clients who died in July, **Vincent Ricca** and **Edward Howell**. ■

—MARJORIE BEGGS

TESSA MCCAULLEY
Suicide at age 26

Tessa McCaulley had friends of all ages, and a handful of them came to remember the sweet but troubled young woman who took her own life Aug. 17. She was 26.

"I was blessed to know her and to have the opportunity to see her happy," said Theresa Brooks at the Aug. 26 memorial. "I didn't kick it with her, but we talked and, despite our age difference, I could say things to her I couldn't say to anyone else."

Ms. McCaulley and Brooks, gray-haired and attractive, both had lived in TNDC's Eighth and Howard apartment building for three years, site of the memorial.

Larry Freeman, Ms. McCaulley's next-door neighbor, said, "I didn't kick it with her either, but she had a sweetness that many of us have lost. And that's how I'll remember her."

Another friend, Kimberly Bowen, said she was honored to have known Ms. McCaulley.

Throughout the memorial, her parents sat in stunned grief, her father's shoulders heaving with silent sobs. When he was able to speak, Bill McCaulley, who lives in San Francisco, thanked people for coming. "And thanks for being good friends to Tessa," he said. "She was a great daughter — we had good times together and good vacations. She was troubled, but she really loved the world. I'll always think I could have done one more thing for her."

McCaulley said he'd seen his daughter shortly before she took an overdose of prescription drugs. Though she had attempted suicide other times, he said he felt guilty. "We missed the signs," he said.

After the memorial, Ms. McCaulley's mother, Robin McCaulley, who lives in Florida, said her daughter was born in Ft. Lauderdale and came to San Francisco in 2002. She worked for a while at the Clay Theater, but had "emotional disabilities from two serious accidents. She just couldn't take the pain. But she always expressed the pain in her life."



MCCAULLEY FAMILY PHOTO

Ms. McCaulley was an amateur artist, her mother said. She appeared online in creative YouTube videos, and several years ago was one of the early models on SuicideGirls, the edgy and provocative burlesque Website, which is not about suicide. It was begun in 2001 by a young woman in Oregon as part of a photography class project.

On Aug. 20, Ms. McCaulley's sister posted an announcement of her sister's passing on the Website. ■

—MARJORIE BEGGS

TERRY DILLARD
Survived '90s at Ambassador

In its wildest days, the Ambassador Hotel was an important way station in the troubled life of Terry Dillard. And whatever his shortcomings, Mr. Dillard made faithful, lifelong friends there.

Eight of them gathered July 22 at Mr. Dillard's memorial at the Ambassador and remembered him as a "kind, caring person" who survived the ravages of the hotel's sex and drug era of the 1990s. TNDC bought the rundown hotel in 1999 when it was reeling from an AIDS epidemic, renovated it and changed the milieu.

"I remember the great card he made for me," said Mary Monihan, a nurse who worked with the hotel's residents during that time. "It was like a kaleidoscope, the colors, and very beautiful. I've thought of it ever since I heard of his passing."

"He worked on it all night," said his good friend Cecil Baker.

Mr. Dillard died July 4 at St. Francis Hospital where he was being treated for kidney problems. He was 45. "All his organs shut down," said Baker who had seen Mr. Dillard through a battle with pneumocystis in the 1990s.

Mr. Dillard came from a family of 14 in Arkansas. He left home when he was 14 and never learned to read or write very well. He worked for a while in a chicken processing plant before his wanderings took him through New Orleans and into California. Eventually, he landed in the Tenderloin. He was 6-foot-2, had black hair and lived off and on at the Ambassador with friends, but was basically homeless.

"I knew him here since 1990," Baker said, "He was nice-looking — of course he was god to me. It was the first time I felt love, and I couldn't handle it. I ran away (to Fresno)."

But longtime residents say Ambassador tenants never stay away very long.

"Everybody comes back to their master, the Ambassador," Baker said. "It wasn't just the drugs and sex, it was family."

Baker brought a tray of brownies to share.

"Terry once said, 'I don't want you to ever say, I can't live without you.' And I said, 'I'll never say that. I'll say I don't know how to live without you.'" ■

—TOM CARTER



BELOW MARKET RATE HOMES AVAILABLE

Studio unit(s):	With Parking*:	\$219,056 – \$223,768
	Without Parking:	\$169,056 – \$173,768
1 bedroom unit(s):	With Parking*:	\$244,947 – \$256,161
	Without Parking:	\$194,947 – \$206,161
2 bedroom unit(s):	With Parking*:	\$281,389 – \$283,639
	Without Parking:	\$231,389 – \$233,639

Buyers must be first time homebuyers and income eligible. Households must earn no more than the maximum income levels below:

Person(s)	1	2	3	4	5
Max Income	\$66,000	\$75,450	\$84,850	\$94,300	\$101,850

Call for info on larger households

Applications are due at 74 New Montgomery no later than 5pm on Friday, October 3rd

Please contact The Montgomery at 415.512.7474 or visit: www.themontgomerysf.com/affordablehousing for an application & more information.

*Two (2) parking spaces will be offered according to lottery rank for \$50,000. Units available through the San Francisco Mayor's Office of Housing and are subject to resale controls, monitoring and other restrictions. Visit www.sfgov.org/moh for program information.



PHOTO BY MARK ELLINGER

JEOFILIN ROH
Community Activist
1951-2008

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SPECIAL EVENTS

TL Block Party and Get Out the Vote, Sat., Sept. 20, 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Boeddeker Park. Food, games, music, voter registration tables manned by various organizations, sponsored by TNDC. Info: Monique, 928-1072.

Community Health and Safety Fair, Sat., Sept. 27, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Tenderloin Community Playground, 570 Ellis. Free health screenings and information about MediCal, food stamps, emergency preparedness and more. Children's games, raffle, entertainment, free lunch bag for first 500 attendees. Seven languages spoken. Sponsored by S.F. Hilton, St. Francis Memorial Hospital, Calif. Pacific Medical Center; support from NOM/TL CBD, TNDC, Calif. Transplant Donor Network. Info: Katy Broner, 592-2714.

Ballot measure forum, Wed., Oct. 1, noon, 201 Turk St. Hosted by Tenants Associations Coalition. League of Women Voters will discuss S.F. and statewide ballot measures, and Department of Elections will talk about hiring precinct workers. Info: 339-8327.

COMMUNITY: REGULAR SCHEDULE HOUSING

Supportive Housing Network, 2nd Thursday of the month, 3-5 p.m., location TBA. Contact: Kendra Fuller, 421-2926 x304.

Tenant Associations Coalition of San Francisco, 1st Wednesday of the month, noon, 201 Turk Community Room. Contact Michael Nulty, 339-8327. Resident unity, leadership training, facilitate communication.

HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

CBHS Consumer Council, 3rd Tuesday of the month, 3-5 p.m., CBHS, 1380 Howard, room 537. Call: 255-3695. Advisory group of consumers from self-help organizations and other mental health consumer advocates. Open to the public.

Health & Wellness Action Advocates, 1st Tuesday of the month, 5-7 p.m., Mental Health Association, 870 Market, Suite 928. Call: 421-2926 x306.

Healthcare Action Team, 2nd Wednesday of the month, Quaker Center, 65 Ninth St., noon-1:30 p.m. Focus on increasing supportive home and community-based services, expanded eligibility for home care and improved discharge planning. Light lunch served. Call James Chionsini, 703-0188 x304.

Hoarders and Clutterers Support Group, 870 Market, Suite 928. Call for dates and times: 421-2926 x306.

Mental Health Board, 2nd Wednesday of the month, 6:30-8:30 p.m., City Hall, room 278. CBHS advisory committee, open to the public. Call: 255-3474.

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill-S.F., 3rd Wednesday of the month, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Family Service Agency, 1010 Gough, 5th Fl. Call: 905-6264. Family member group, open to the public.

SAFETY

Safety for Women in the Tenderloin, every 3rd Wednesday, Central City SRO Collaborative, 259 Hyde St., 4-6 p.m. Informal, friendly environment, refreshments, gender sensitive to LGBTQ community and sex workers. Discuss how to make Tenderloin SROs safer for women. Information: Alexandra Goldman, volunteer campaign coordinator, 775-7110 x102.

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

SoMa Police Community Relations Forum, 4th Monday of the month, 6-7:30 p.m. Location changes monthly. To receive monthly information by e-mail, contact Meital Amitai, 538-8100 x202 or mamitai@iisf.org.

Tenderloin Police Station Community Meeting, last Tuesday of the month, 6 p.m., police station Community Room, 301 Eddy. Call Susan Black, 345-7300. Neighborhood safety.

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT

Alliance for a Better District 6, 2nd Tuesday of the month, 6 p.m., 230 Eddy. Contact Michael Nulty, 820-1560 or sf_district6@yahoo.com, a districtwide improvement association.

Boeddeker Park cleanup, 3rd Saturday of the month, 9-noon, organized by the Friends of Boeddeker Park. To RSVP to work or for information, call Betty Traynor, 931-1126.

Central City Democrats, meets four times a year, 301 Eddy St. Community Room. Addresses District 6 residential and business concerns, voter education forums. Information: 339-VOTE (8683) or centralcitydemocrats@yahoo.com.

Central Market Community Benefit District, board meets 2nd Tuesday of the month, 989 Market St., 3rd Fl., 3 p.m. Information: 882-3088, <http://central-market.org>.

Community Leadership Alliance. CLA Community Advocacy Commission monthly meeting, City Hall, Room 34. Subcommittee meetings and informational forums held monthly at the Tenderloin Police Station Community Room. Information: David Villa-Lobos, admin@CommunityLeadershipAlliance.net.

Friends of Boeddeker Park, 2nd Thursday of the month, 3:30 p.m., Boeddeker Rec Center, 240 Eddy. Plan park events, activities and improvements. Contact Betty Traynor, 931-1126.

Gene Friend Recreation Center Advisory Board, 3rd Thursday of the month, 5 p.m. Board works to protect SoMa resources for children, youth, families and adults. Gene Friend Recreation Center, 270 Sixth St. Information: 538-8100 x202.

North of Market Planning Coalition, 3rd Wednesday of the month, 6 p.m., 301 Eddy. Call: 820-1412. Neighborhood planning.

North of Market/Tenderloin Community Benefit District. Call District Manager Elaine Zamora for times and dates, 440-7570.

SoMa Leadership Council, 3rd Wednesday of the month, 6 p.m., The Arc, 1500 Howard St. at 11th. Emphasizes good planning and good government to maintain a diverse, vibrant, complete neighborhood. Contact: Jim Meko, 624-4309 or jim.meko@comcast.net.

South of Market Project Area Committee, 3rd Monday of the month, 6 p.m., 1035 Folsom, between 6th & 7th Sts. Health, Safety and Human Services Committee meets monthly on the first Tuesday after the first Monday, 1035 Folsom, noon. Information: 487-2166 or www.sompac.com.

Tenderloin Futures Collaborative, 2nd Wednesday of the month, 10 a.m., Tenderloin Police Station community room, 301 Eddy. Call 358-3956 for information. Network of residents, nonprofits and businesses sharing information and taking on neighborhood development issues.

SENIORS AND DISABLED

Mayor's Disability Council, 3rd Friday of the month, 1-3 p.m., City Hall, room 400. Call: 554-6789. Open to the public.

Senior Action Network, general meeting, second Thursday, 10 a.m.-noon, St. Mary's Cathedral. Monthly committee meetings, 965 Mission #700: Pedestrian Safety, third Wednesday, 10 a.m.; Senior Housing Action, third Wednesday, 1:30; Information: 546-1333 and www.senioractionnetwork.org.

SUPERVISORS' COMMITTEES

Budget and Finance Committee McGoldrick, Elsbernd, Mirkarimi, Daly, Chu, Wednesday, 1 p.m.

Land Use Committee Maxwell, Sandoval, McGoldrick, Monday, 1 p.m.

TENDERLOINHEALTH

a continuum of care

Outreach and Community Events September 2008

Health Promotion Forum

Topic: "Curb the Butt," TLHealth's Smoking Cessation Program

Speaker: Eileen Norman of TLHealth, and others

Date/Time: Tuesday, September 23, 12 pm - 1:30 pm

HIV Treatment Forum

Topic: Keys to Success — Part 2

Speaker: Jennie Vanderlaag, Gilead Sciences

Date/Time: Monday, September 15, 3 pm - 4 pm

Client Advisory Panel

Come talk with Tenderloin Health's Board Client Representative(s) and program managers about plans for Tenderloin Health.

Also provide input on new services and how we can improve.

Date/Time: Wednesday, September 10, 11:30 am - 1 pm;

Wednesday, September 24, 11:30 am - 1 pm

Volunteer and Intern for Tenderloin Health

Orientation: Sunday, September 14, 12 pm - 6:30 pm

240 Golden Gate Ave., 3rd Floor

lunch provided

You must register for volunteer trainings.

Stop in/call Emilie (415) 437-2900 ext. 234.

For a schedule of our current groups or for more information call 415.431.7476 or go to www.tenderloinhealth.org



PHOTO BY LENNY LIMJOCO

Teaching assistant Alexandria Hollett (second from left) joins her fourth-grade De Marillac Academy students for a workout at the Salvation Army's gymnasium.

PE program finds Salvation

SALVATION Army's fancy new facility on Turk Street has turned out to be a physical-fitness boon for students at the De Marillac Academy just around the corner. The school is renting Sally Ann's new pool, dance studio and gymnasium, allowing it to amp up its physical education program. Previously, fourth- through eighth-graders at the tuition-free school had to exercise at the school's handkerchief-size playground or schlep up the street to the YMCA. "We were grateful for the opportunity," says president Michael Daniels, but scheduling constraints made the Y's facilities available only 10 hours a week. At Salvation Army, De Marillac students will be able to focus on fitness 30 hours a week. Nearly half the school's 106 students live in the Tenderloin; roughly 20 come from SoMa. More than 1 in 4 central city children is overweight, according to a 2002 report by the Davis-based California Center for Public Health Advocacy. "The impact on families in the neighborhood will be tremendously positive," says Daniels. ■

—HEIDI SWILLINGER



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Real Estate grabs U.N. Plaza arts and antiques market

BY HEIDI SWILLINGER

CITY Hall has taken over the Antiques and Artisans Market at U.N. Plaza, and Mary Millman isn't happy about it.

In fact, Millman — who established the market nine years ago and has managed it as a private concern ever since — is livid. She says the city used tactics she considers high-handed, wresting a smooth-running, three-day-a-week operation from her in an effort to stanch record-high budget shortfalls.

The city, in the person of John Updike, assistant director of real estate, says it's not about the money. The real issue, he says, is that the market needs new

blood and the city can do a better job of managing what is, after all, public property.

Millman and Updike also differ on other issues.

For instance, for years Millman paid \$50 each market day — from \$600 to \$700 a month — to Rec and Park, which had jurisdiction over U.N. Plaza. She says that arrangement lasted until the department notified her that it would no longer manage the plaza, referred her to the Department of Public Works and stopped cashing her checks. She ultimately stopped making her payments in 2006.

She believes Updike took advantage of her confusion about rent payments and used it to spearhead an effort to get the Board of Supervisors to revoke

her permit last month — a few days after Millman says she made good on her past-due payments.

Updike acknowledges that Rec and Park did a poor job of pursuing payment from Millman. "Both parties goofed up," he says. "We're not going to hold that against Mary."

Millman and the city differ on how much she charges market vendors to sell their wares under canvas canopies she provides. She says \$45 to \$50; Updike says vendors pay \$35 to \$75.

Millman says they also disagree on how much revenue the market can reap. The city thinks the antiques market and Farmers' Market combined could bring in \$579,150. Millman she says she's never grossed more than \$110,000 a year; the Farmer's Market made \$187,000 in 2007 (see the May 2008 edition of Central City Extra).

She says the city plans to raise vendor fees. But Aug. 28 Updike assured a group of vendors at an open-air meeting at the market that the city won't raise rates. He added a caveat: "We do want to make sure it's a fair market rate." He said any profits will be plowed back into the plaza.

He and other city staffers asked the vendors to fill out forms listing how much they pay in rent, how much space they need, and the status of their business tax and seller's permits. Updike says the city hadn't been able to gather exact data about the inner workings of the market until Millman's permit was revoked.

Long story short, according to Millman: "They're confiscating my business. And the worst thing is the fraud and character assassination they did to accomplish this. I think this is illegal."

Long story short, according to Updike: "Money is the least of the issues. It's one of better coordination."

David Seward's long story short is a mixture of Millman's and Updike's. Seward is chief financial officer at Hastings College of the Law, and he has spoken to city officials on Millman's behalf. "The initial perception was that the city had issues with contractual nonperformance," he says. "But it seems the real driver here is the city's belief that it can run these operations better."

The only thing Millman and Updike appear to agree on is that Millman has done a great job of turning U.N. Plaza into a much nicer place than it was in 1999, when it was rife with crime, litter and homeless campers. "It was awful," says Millman. "People who weren't there then don't really know how bad it was."

Seward, who has worked in the neighborhood for 25 years, backs her up. He says others made efforts to improve the plaza, but didn't have staying power. "The Farmers' Market and the Antiques and Artisans Market have been the only operations with the commitment and perseverance to make a difference at that plaza," he says.

Updike acknowledges that Millman deserves credit for improving the atmosphere. "Mary has done a terrific thing. She needs to be thanked," he says. "But a decade later, it seems to be getting a little tired. We hope to bring new energy." ■

City to unveil help-for-hoarders plan at mental health conference

BY HEIDI SWILLINGER

IF you're among the 1 in 30 San Franciscans who have a problem with hoarding, take heart: You're in the right city to get help.

San Francisco, site of an annual conference on hoarding this year on Oct. 29 is where a groundbreaking effort to tackle the issue is in the works.

Hoarding, as defined by the Mental Health Association of San Francisco, which sponsors the annual conference, is the compulsive accumulation of possessions and an inability to discard them, even when they can pose health hazards, threaten relationships or result in eviction.

Family Service Agency clinician Judy Hirsch estimates there are 25,000 compulsive hoarders in the city.

The behavior is sometimes linked with depression and attention-deficit disorder. Some people realize that clinging to their possessions is causing them problems but can't change; others are unaware, says Hirsch. "It's a hidden problem in many cases."

Compulsive hoarders often collect things others consider junk. Marlo Tellschow, who leads an MHA peer support group, has worked with people who save yogurt containers, intending to recycle them, or junk mail, planning to pass items on to people they think can use them. Tellschow, who tends to obsessively save papers and printed material, says she routinely clips stamps off envelopes, a practice she started after seeing a sign somebody posted requesting canceled stamps. Hoarding, she says, "often starts with a worthy goal, but it gets out of control."

Hoarding, an ancient problem, only recently has been recognized as a mental health issue. MHA started focusing on it in the mid-1990s, when a surge of clients began facing eviction because of hoarding, says acting Executive Director Lisa Brabo. MHA's first conference was in 1997, held in a

meeting room at the Main Library. This conference will be at the Westin Market Street hotel, and Brabo expects professionals from across the nation to attend.

Compulsive hoarding can result in fires; people get hurt when they stumble over their belongings; dust from the clutter can cause asthma; mice and rats often thrive in the mess.

With the consequences of hoarding so far-reaching, the city has established a task force to study the issue. Social service providers, health care workers, mental health experts and attorneys, along with residents who compulsively hoard and are working to change their behavior, began meeting last summer.

Christiana Bratiotis, a doctoral candidate at Boston University who is studying how U.S. cities are coping with hoarding, says fewer than 50 cities have convened task forces, and not all are adequately funded. "San Francisco is studying it in a meaningful way," she says. "I don't know of another task force model around the country that has been so comprehensive."

Task force members will unveil at the conference their recommendations for creating a community support system to address hoarding. Other topics include clinical and self-help strategies.

The conference is open to people who hoard, the people who love them, and the people who interact with them for health, safety and legal reasons.

FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

The Mental Health Association conference on hoarding and cluttering will be held Oct. 29, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Westin San Francisco Market Street hotel at 50 Third St. The conference costs \$95, but scholarships are available for low-income people. Application deadline for scholarships is Sept. 19. Access forms online at www.mha-sf.org, or visit the MHA office at 870 Market St., Suite 928. ■

Residents' rights violated at most of the SROs

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zation's Jorge Portillo knows what's sure to show up, especially from residents of low-end fleabags that pay clerks minimum wages.

"Some SROs are charging (overnight) visitors and some are restricting the visitor rights — which is what tenants are afraid of," Portillo says.

His counterpart in the Tenderloin, lead tenant organizer Peter Masiak, says education is his goal. Leafleting comes first, then meetings that he'll organize with owners, police and tenants.

"We're trying to get an educational campaign going to make hotel owners and police aware of tenants' rights," Masiak says. "Most know there aren't supposed to be fees. Beyond that, they don't know."

The fees caused an outcry eight years ago. It was a rampant practice of desk clerks to charge guests up to \$20 for an overnight visit. Hundreds of complaints went to then City Attorney Louise Renne.

The Board of Supervisors created the SRO Hotel Safety and Stabilization Task Force in 2001 to fix the problem. The task force approved the visitor policy. It was adopted by the board in 2002.

The policy outlawed overnight visitor fees and, among other things, allowed SROs to suspend overnight visitor privileges for a month, if a tenant didn't follow the rules. The policy made police the enforcement arm and the Rent Board the administrator, and allows a tenant to file a complaint with the Rent Board and possibly get a rent reduction.

But it rarely happens.

"To be honest, not a lot of them (come to the board), one or two a year, not as many as could be," Delene Wolf, the board's executive director, says. "(Ours) is not a satisfactory remedy. People want their rights, not so much the money."

"The policy is fabulous, though," Wolf added, "a great improvement. It's one of the most satisfying things we've done at the Rent Board and I'm proud of our role. But there's no enforcement power."

It's not easy to deal with the sketchy SRO population. Some hotels are owned by nonprofits, others by private businesses or by the city. Tenants occupy 8- by- 10-foot rooms without kitchens or bathrooms, if they are among the many 70-year or older hotels. Low-income pensioners and welfare recipients are mixed with physically and mentally disabled, addicts and formerly homeless. Ex-cons gravitate to SROs.

But a difficult population doesn't trump rights. And Allen White had been attentive to them since serving on a Rent Board advisory committee on the visitor policy a few years ago. A former Bay Area Reporter writer, and for 10 years Glide Memorial Methodist Church's media coordinator, White knew the rules weren't being followed in many SROs. He wanted to test the system, and see how and where it broke down.

"It was a deliberate visit to test the law," Foley told The Extra of White's prearranged visit in March. "We knew what we'd encounter."

The visitor policy White branded that night was the latest version, amended Oct. 23. It says:

"The visitor does not have to be present at the time the (overnight) request is made and the visitor's name need not be provided until the visitor arrives at the hotel, after which time the visitor shall have the same in and out privileges as the resident." But on the West's wall was the 2006 version, stating the opposite — an SRO guest had to be present and named when the tenant made the request.

The Rent Board put the amended policy on its Website in late January and notified the advisory committee to spread the word to "come and get" copies at the board's 25 Van Ness Ave. office, Wolf said. It was available on 11- by 17-inch sheets in seven languages. The updated version is to be "prominently" posted "on a minimum size of 11- by 17-inch by the entrance or in the lobby."

White went to the Tenderloin Police Station the day after his test at the West. The cops told him they couldn't do anything, it was a civil not criminal matter, a policy, not law. Wrong, Allen said. Under the S.F. Police Code, Sec. 919.1(b), "any operator, employee or agent of a Residential Hotel" who violates any provision of the policy is guilty of an infraction and can be fined from \$50 to \$500. But the cops wouldn't make a police report, White says.

A week later, White emailed a four-page report and cover letter about the West incident to Police Chief Heather Fong. It specified four sections of the Uniform Visitor Policy that were violated in the Administration and Police codes. Fong said she was filing a police report with the General Works section.

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SRO crusader helps bring TNDC into compliance

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White went to the General Works section at 850 Bryant St. two weeks later.

"They said they deal mostly with felonies and that the report was filed away," White says. "So it dies. I understand the priorities."

While there, he stopped in to see Deputy Chief David Shinn. He knew Shinn from his days as Tenderloin captain when White was with Glide. "We talked," Allen said. "He said he had to go to the police attorney to consult on this."

That was late April. By the end of July, White hadn't heard anything back.

Tenderloin Capt. Gary Jimenez said he isn't aware of any visitor policy complaints in his 22 months at the station. He also admitted he wasn't aware of the updated policy.

In May, White began an email dialogue with Liz Orlin, TNDC's chief operating officer, and at one

point saw her in person. He recounted the incident in which the West managers said TNDC had rules that supersede the Uniform Hotel Visitor Policy.

Orlin responded that TNDC has its own house rules included in a tenant's lease form, signed by the tenant, but was updating the rules and would contact him when they were done.

Hearing nothing from Orlin by July 21, White followed up with an email. He reminded her that TNDC still didn't support the amended policy because the old copy remained on the West's wall.

Orlin apologized for not getting back and said all TNDC building managers had been given the Oct. 23, 2007, 11- by 17-inch policy in June and were asked to display it prominently.

The Extra checked three TNDC hotels in late July and 14 non-TNDC hotels at random in the Tenderloin and on Sixth Street. No TNDC hotel had the policy properly displayed and its Franciscan Towers at 217 Eddy St. had nothing up. By contrast,

the Windsor House, a non-TNDC hotel at 238 Eddy St., not only had the current policy the right size posted next to the reception desk, it had additional versions in four foreign languages. "My idea," said General Manager Avon Curtis. It was one of seven of the 17 SROs checked that were in compliance.

The West's policy still had the 2006 rules, framed, high up on a lobby wall, in tiny type on an 8½- by 10-inch sheet.

The Extra contacted Orlin.

"As far as I know we're complying," Orlin said. "We're constantly updating house rules and we don't intend to have any rule that supersedes the Uniform Hotel Visitor Policy. And none now supersedes it."

Told that the 2006 rules were still up at the West, she said: "If the compliance manager was made aware of that, he would take care of it. So this is what we need to know."

And some time later it was done. ■

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