Armed gang members are entering our neighborhood and playing rough.

Residents organize: Safety chief concern

COMMUNITY meetings are the lifeblood of activists, and in March their pulse fairly raced. And April buzzed more than in March. For two or three months now, crime and safety has been Topic A in the Tenderloin.

Better than a half dozen community meetings addressed crime and safety last month. Familiar gripes took on a strident tone. Residents were more wary than usual, anxious, if not desperate, for solutions.

Their notorious high-crime neighborhood is experiencing a crime wave. There’s been a burst of gang warfare, drug crime, gang killings, bystander and pedestrian fatalities.

A three-month compilation of the latest Tenderloin station statistics shows dramatic jumps in all arrest categories across the board compared with the year-before quarter.

Residents talked of forming a neighborhood watch, getting merchants to help them fight crime, ride-alongs in police cars, walking with beat cops, and direct action at City Hall to ask the powers for help.

They vented pessimism over the revolving-door justice that lets convicted drug dealers out of jail. For the most part, they praised the police, especially the efforts of Capt. Gary Jimenez, now the permanent Tenderloin station commander.

Jimenez is on the edge of his seat these days, too. As he leans forward in community meetings, he reports eye-popping arrest figures. Then his voice rises as he tells the crowd that change is in their hands.

“You’re ready to be part of creating The New Tenderloin (TNT),” the flyer for an April 25 community meeting asked. “The Tenderloin Safety Plan KICK-OFF” shouted from the flyer.

A good 125 people showed up for the two-hour TNT event.

Clearly, the Tenderloin is a neighborhood on the move, perhaps as never before. Just how frayed are the nerves of a central city population beleaguered for years by a corrosive drug scene and careless auto traffic, and now experiencing deadly escalation?

On April 20, the dozen or so neighborhood activists, nonprofits and residents billing themselves as TNT hammered out ambitious anticrime measures in their community meeting and planned to take their mounting concerns to the Board of Supervisors. The group planned a march to City Hall on May 8, starting at 201 Turk St., stopping along the way at sites where gang killings occurred last month, “to show solidarity,” its flyer said. After a 1 p.m. press conference on the City Hall steps they planned to attend the 2 p.m. Board of Supervisors session.

“We won’t be on the agenda but...”

A peek inside

Professional and civic groups can arrange tours through the General Services Administration office, though. And if you’re curious about how this $1.44 million edifice looks and feels inside, and you’ve got a friend who is an employee, you might get a personal peek.

What people see inside ranges from impressive to spectacular. From the soaring, slanted support columns inside to the vistas of the city outside, from the Sky Garden on the 11th floor room to the Childcare Center on the main floor — which will be available to the public — the new Federal Building is built but not yet open to the public.

Another 15 engineers were scheduled for an afternoon tour after the chapter lunch at the California Culinary Academy. Friedman was at the building’s only entrance on an early May morning checking off names as 15 engineers arrived. Two building guards near the metal detector were turning anyone away who didn’t have business there.

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“The tour was so popular that we created a two more tours this year,” Friedman said.

Another 15 engineers were scheduled for an afternoon tour after the chapter lunch at the California Culinary Academy.

“We’re interested in energy-efficient and user-friendly buildings,” Friedman said. “This has natural ventilation and replaces the demand for mechanical cooling. It’s attracted
BY MARJORIE BEGGS

Tenderloin housing boom — ‘a speculation game’

The city’s with-it cutting-edge planners have fingered the Tenderloin as “the new mission,” the next place where hot things happen in a cool setting.

“That’s according to one of my younger, hip colleagues,” Peter Cohen, Asian Neighborhood Design’s community planning director, told the April Tenderloin Futures Collaborative. “What we’re seeing is an opportunity for a demographic not usually associated with the Tenderloin.” He was referring to the amount of new building going on in the Tenderloin, especially housing.

Cohen presented stats from two years of City Planning pipeline data — the number and type of residential and commercial projects on the drawing board, from Van Ness to Powell, Market to Sutter, in five phases from start to finish: pre-application (preliminary work), entitlement (permits in progress), entitled (permits approved) in construction, and completed.

The numbers are startling, Cohen said, from 19 projects in December 2004 to 54 in December 2006, a 200% increase in two years. Of the 18 projects, 12 had permits in progress, one had all permits approved, three were in pre-application and none was under construction. Nine were affordable housing projects and four market rate.

Two years later, with 54 projects on the books, 32 had permits in place and were ready to build. Market rate housing spiked to 26 projects.

Cohen said he wasn’t sure if the statistics signaled a “revival of urban living or just a niche trend — the desire of middle- and upper-middle-class people to live in the city” and especially, he said, in a dense neighborhood like the Tenderloin.

“Maybe it’s because living in the city is more sustainable, but these are just guesses on my part,” he said. “I’ve been watching these trends to see what’s changing, but it’s hard to interpret. The data come from Planning and there’s certainly some margin of error. The numbers are rough.”

Completed projects seem to move almost as quickly. There was only one in December 2004, three a year later and nine two years later.

“How many of these entitlements do you think go to the shovel?” asked Carmela Gold, YMCA executive director.

Cohen didn’t have figures at hand, he said, but at a recent meeting he was at the Mayor’s Office of Housing said of 6,000 housing units permitted only a small percentage were built.

Is this some kind of a speculation game? Cohen wondered. “Maybe, because many sponsors seem to go through the entitlements, they sell the property for a lot more money.”

Are entitlements forever? someone asked.

“I think they have a eight year length, but many extensions are allowed,” Cohen said. He plans to keep on tracking.

Meantime, to see a map of Tenderloin developments, go to TFC’s Web site, http://www.tlfutures.org/. links.php, and click on TL Development Tracking Database-March 2006. An up-to-date map should be posted soon, Cohen said.

FUTURES COLLABORATIVE

Keep on trackin’

THE HIBERNIA BANK

The long abandoned, elegantly domed bank will shine new lights down on the McAllister Street sidewalk beginning this month, according to property manager Edward Leong. People complained that, without lighting, drug dealers and other loiterers were attracted there at night. But the building became a historic landmark in 1981 and certain physical features can’t be altered, so the alteration permitting process dragged on for nine months. The Tenderloin Task Force police occupied the basement for nearly 10 years before moving to the new station at Eddy and Jones streets in October 2000. The bank has been empty since, and the surrounding area has attracted incontinent pigeons and street people. The bank’s Jones Street steps were used as a public toilet until they were sealed off in May 2001. A gate and flood-control screen to keep people and pigeons out of the entrance aloof we up in June 2004 — a consequence of a Department of Public Health violation. And police set up barricades in front of the steps in June 2005 to keep people off. The owner, Thomas Lin, a Buddhist sect leader from Berkeley also known on the sect’s Web site as His Holiness Grandmaster Lin Yun, bought the bank in 1995 for $550,000 grant from the state Department of Social Services. It is now a member of the San Francisco Neighborhood Newspaper Association.

LGBT SMOKERS

These Californians smoke way more than straight, according to statistics from the LGBT Tobacco Education Partnership, which in April received a three-year, $950,000 grant from the state Department of Health Services. Gay men smoke 50% more, lesbians smoke at triple the rate of all women and LGBT 18- to 24-year-olds at a rate of 44% compared with 18% for that age group at large.

The Partnership was formed three years ago to educate the LGBT community about the perils of tobacco. “The tobacco industry loves our LGBT community to death,” says Bob Gordon, Partnership project director, “targeting LGBT people, undermining our community’s health.”

The Partnership has launched a colorful ad campaign of its own: a rainbow flag with a cigarettet replacing one of the stripes, posing the question, “When did smoking become part of tobacco?” The Partnership works with Pride and health committees across the state, advocating for smoke-free outdoor events.

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

TENDERLOIN HOMING

For more information and a list of upcoming events, please visit tenderloinhousing.org.
Federal Building — state-of-the-art green

a lot of attention from the industry and it’s one of the most popular tour events we’ve ever had. The archi-
tects, mechanical and structural engineers and electri-
cians all worked together. It is an extremely green
building.’

The natural ventilation is controlled by actuators
that automatically open and close windows on floors
7 through 18, depending on the weather. Lighting
that automatically open and close windows on floors

Tour, though, are infrequent and limited to avoid
interfering with the 1,500 employees at work. Most are

with the Department of Labor but other departments
housed in the building are Defense, Agriculture,
Health and Human Services, Social Services and the
Office of Personnel Management. The Social Security
office is in the annex on Mission Street, and security
keeps the public from entering the tower.

The next day, I took a casual walk-around with a
friend, an employee who wished to remain anony-
mous. After leaving the low-ceiling security area and
entering the long lobby and looking to the right, the
whole place opens up, vertically and horizontally. To
the left, a metal stairway that becomes marble-like ter-
nazzo at the landing turn, leads down to the confer-
ce center area. To the right on the main floor, a
large information screen will be on a metal-mesh door
that can be pulled across the floor to seal off the rest
of the 605,000-square-foot tower.

At the west end of the main floor, another wide
terrazzo stairway leads to the second floor. It too is
divided by a railing and people on one side can sit on
the steps and have lunch. Terrazzo, which has the
appearance of marble, consists of concrete and mar-
brine in it. When polished it takes on a classy look.
But workers polished the floors too much, making
them beautifully shiny but also dangerously slick
when wet. So they had to dull them down for safety,
though they don’t appear dull.

The public can rent the facilities downstairs after
4 p.m., including meeting rooms and an auditorium
without a stage that can be divided in half, and is
due for audio-visual equipment. A fitness center nearby is
free for employees now. In June it will start charging
membership and be open to the public.

As for air conditioning, the temperature was per-
fect when I was there. It wasn’t always so, I was
told. Some employees earlier this year wore coats at
work. Things have improved but the perfection-seek-
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ADA elevators go to every floor, but regular ele-
vators stop at every third floor. So employees and the
public have to use metal stairs, making them walk up
and down one or two flights. Every third floor,
though, has some sort of common and roomy relax-
tation area. Bathrooms on all floors are in the middle,
not at the end of a floor.

The outer offices of a floor have grand, expansive
views of the city, and the airy illusion of no ceilings.
Inner offices are spacious and some will have large
communication screens on their walls.

It’s very quiet. Sound-masking systems are insu-
olated in the attractive row lighting of the outer offices.
Windows on floors 7 through 18 open automati-
cally through green-flap actuators on the building’s
north side. They control temperature. The windows
below are the usual kind.

Looking south, the views of the city and the bay
— even through the vast scions of panel screens —
are spectacular on a sunny day. North, City Hall seems at
your fingertips.

There are two west parts of the building.

The place to hang out — and soon to party — is
the Sky Garden on the 11th floor. It’s like a Sky Bridge
with aspirations. Roughly 50 by 60 feet, it has more
southern exposure, making it warmer than a Sky
Bridge. Its gaudy vending machines are tastefully hid-
den in a walk-in closet, too. When it gets potted trees
and ferns, it will be dandy. But when it gets its sur-
rounding neon lights turned on, it will be spectacular
— and a famous nighttime vision for freeway travel-
ers in the south.

But landscaping and completing the Sky Garden,
even the use of conference facilities downstairs, won’t
breathe life into the place that the Childcare Center
startup will.

As for air conditioning, the temperature was per-
fect when I was there. But it wasn’t always so, I was
told. Some employees earlier this year wore coats at
work. Things have improved but the perfection-seek-

Even so, it’s going to be one amazing federal
building.
It's cool. You get a great view. You see the City Hall and S.F. Bay.
— Amy Delrosario

I haven't made up my mind whether I like it.
— Steve Larson

It's a big building, very elegant. I came here to check on my SSI.
— James Neylaney

This is the first time I've seen it. I'm going through nostalgia. This used to be the site of a greyhound station. Interesting.
— Christine Dorothea-Miris

The jury is still out. My office is on the 18th floor. It is really quite warm, which is surprising since it's supposed to have this cutting edge ventilation system. I just don't know how long lasting and durable these various systems are going to be. It's an experiment. If you like the industrial look I'd think you'd enjoy it. You know, architecture is all about experimentation.
— Chris Lee

The building is beautiful. I don't know about the inside. I just got here. I'm in a treatment program. I'm recovering today. I came here to get my SSI card.
— Christine Johnson and Rosanna Eingon

I'm not real sure. I'm just here to support a friend of mine. Seems all right.
— Chris Treadwell

I haven't made up my mind whether I like it.
— Steve Larson

Too much glass. If an earthquake comes a lot of people will get hurt.
— Tanya Dove

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The Federal Building and how it grew

Photos by Lenny Limjoco
Interviews and photos by Doug Ahlgren

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TENDERLOIN Health remembers 13 homeless at memorial

TENDERLOIN Health resumed its group memorial, April 25, commemorating the lives of 13 “street people who had shared the neighborhood’s dire living conditions and died since December in poverty and, in many cases, disease.”

The service at 187 Golden Gate is where Tenderloin AIDS Resource Center was located before merging with Continuum to make Tenderloin Health. Both nonprofits had held group memorials regularly. But TARCG had suspended them for six months before Tenderloin Health was formed, then continued them periodically. But TARC had suspended them for six months before Tenderloin Health was formed, then continued them periodically.

More than 50 of her friends celebrated her life at a memorial. Ms. Flores died March 13 of complications of AIDS. Ms. Flores died March 13 of complications of AIDS. She was a lovely lady,” Rosales said. She was a lovely lady,” Rosales said.

A bright light burned out at the San Cristina Hotel when Linda “Suzu” Chiare died in her room of complications from AIDS on Feb. 27. They packed a small room off the hotel lobby. A dozen stood along the walls. “I look at this gathering and know this was quite a woman with a legacy of love of life and drawing people into the larger community,” said the Rev. Glenda Hope, who officiated, said.

Several people at the memorial had attended a wake for Ms. Flores the previous day, held by her family — two daughters, a son and a father. “She was a lovely lady,” Rosales said.

Several fellow tenants mentioned the kindness of Ms. Flores, who had lived at the Iroquois for just nine years and inspired a host of tenants to join the ant board in 1993, soon after the hotel reopened. Alternately cantankerous and loving, she became the first board president, served nine years and inspired a host of tenants to join the board and speak up for their rights.

As supervisor here, I looked out for a few people on a regular basis, took them to the store. She is very much someone who will be missed.”

Case worker Roger Blad said that she used many of the services offered by the hotel, but still seemed to care more for others than herself. “I knew Patricia for 50 years,” said another case worker. “She looked out for a few people on a regular basis, took them to the store. She is very much someone who will be missed.”

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“I’m concerned about personal retaliation,” said one man in the Violence group.

“You don’t have to worry,” a woman said in reply. “They’re killing each other.

“Why are some people victims and others aren’t” came a question.

“I remember when I was young,” said a tall black man. “The frailest got picked on. I think the elderly should be given badges so they wouldn’t be preyed upon.

“Whenever I’m followed,” said one woman, “I pull out a can of Mace and let them see it. But sometimes they throw things at you.”

At the Drugs session they talked of boycotting businesses that don’t follow good practices.

“Get legislation passed for more foot patrols,” said activist Michael Nutty, standing and practically shout- ing to be heard. Close the loopholes on littering and ask the courts to cooperate. Hold the judges responsible.

The groups voted on their lists. Tops for the Safety group was to meet with Chris Daly and other super- visors to get TL crosswalks repainted. Next was put- ting volunteer crossing guards at schools near streets.

The Drugs session hit off the biggest challenge: getting the $100,000 signatures on a “strongly worded” peti- tion saying the TL wants a higher quality of life and is not a “containment zone,” or dumping ground, for the poor and needy. Signers didn’t have to be TL resi- dents, either. The petition would be delivered to the supervisors the day of the march. It was ready to be circulated May 2.

The Violence group aimed to make cards identi- fying merchants as partners with violence victims. The residents would be put in the merchants’ windows. And they were going to organize escorts for kids to walk through hearing. Close the loopholes on littering and ask the courts to cooperate. Hold the judges responsible.

A delighted Capt. Jimenez came to the front of the room and applauded the group.

POLICE CAPTAIN: ‘GOOD LUCK’

“This is the best and most impressive of all the community groups I’ve gone to,” he said. He promised to discuss the group’s solutions with his lieutenants.

“Good luck at City Hall,” he said. “Your support means a lot to me and the officers who work here.”

Seniors and parents in the neighborhood contin- ued to rail about speed and reckless traffic. They often bring up the death of two youngsters killed in traffic last year near Little Saigon. Then the April 3 Muni bus fatality at Leavenworth and Ellis height- ened tensions. The Transportation Authority’s Tenderloin-Little Saigon Neighborhood Transpor- tation Plan published in May zooms the problem into focus. It’s the first sort of transportation plan that could be applied to developing a three- to five-year Violence Prevention Strategic Plan. Conducted by the Mayor’s Office on Public Safety, the plan is designed to provide a strategic approach for preventing violence and crime. The plan gives details of the problem and identifies the services needed to address the problem.

Jimenez’s April 27 newsletter report. A surveillance camera was shot in the head at the doughnut shop at Golden Gate and Hyde. An eyewitness said the man was killed in the Golden Gate Avenue area.

Atomic Warhead was shot in the head at the doughnut shop at Golden Gate and Hyde. An eyewitness said the man was killed in the Golden Gate Avenue area.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SPECIAL EVENTS
Myths & Facts About Medicare. last of a four-part series, May 16, 4:30-5:30 p.m., Morrison Hall, 2215 Hayes St., co-sponsored by S.F. Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program and St. Mary’s Medical Center. Open to the public. Information: 546-2089. Reservations: 750-5800.

Free walking tours of Tenderloin. Sun, May 20, 9 a.m., meet at Eddy and Powell (western Tenderloin) and May 27, 9 a.m. at Leavenworth and McAllister (western Tenderloin). Tours led by Peter Field, who is researching the Tenderloin history from its earliest days. Information: City Guides, 557-4266.

EXIT Theatre, DIVAfest 2007. through May 26, 6th annual theater festival dedicated to new work by women writers. For program and locations: www.thetreex.org/divadivafest07.html.

Springtime in the Tenderloin. Celebrate spring on May 12 on Jones Street between McAllister and Golden Gate Avenue from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. It’s a free event for Tenderloin kids and families and will have a petting zoo, a princess, arts and crafts, music, a hula hoop contest and a Mr. Geoffshow Show, all compliments of the North or Market/TL Community Benefit District. You can also make your own spring bonnet.

COMMUNITY: REGULAR SCHEDULE
HOUSING
Supportive Housing Network. 4th Thursday of the month, 3-5 p.m., location TBD. Contact Monica Hopper, 421-2906 x302.

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 Monday of the month, 5:30-7:30, CBHS, 1130 Howard, Rm. 537. Call: 250-3428. Advisory group of consumers from self-help organizations and other mental health consumer advocates. Open to the public.

Healthcare Action Team. 2nd Wednesday of the month, Quaker Center, 69 North St., noon-1:30. Focus on increasing supportive home and community-based services, expanded eligibility for home care and improved discharge planning. Light lunch served.

Call James Chiosinni, 703-0188 x304.

Hearders and Clutterers Support Group. 2nd Monday and 4th Wednesday of each month, 6-7 p.m. 160 Market, Suite 928. Call: 421-2906 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: 225-3474.

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 906-6264. Family member group, open to consumers and the public.

SAFETY
Crime and Safety Committee meets bi-monthly on the Wednesday after the first Monday. SOMPAC, 1035-Folsom, 6 p.m. Information: 487-2166 or www.sompac.org.

North of Market HERT. bi-monthly meeting. Call Lt. Erica Averinos, S.F. Fire Department, 970-2022. Disaster preparedness training by the Fire Department.

SFPD 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 Mental Amits, 538-E100 x202 or mantai@SFPD.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. 2nd Tuesday of the month, 6 p.m. 301 Eddy. Contact Michael Nulty, 820-1560 or sf_disability@comcast.net. Community.org.

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 at the Neighborhood Parks Commission. 301 Eddy St.

Central City Democrats, meets four times a year, 301 Eddy St. Community Room. Addresses District 6 residential and business concerns, voter education forums. Information: 339-1970 (MPS) or centralcitydemocrats@yahoo.com.

Community Leadership Alliance. CLA Community Advocacy Commission monthly meeting, City Hall, Room 004.

Subcommittee meetings and informational forums held monthly at the Tenderloin Police Station Community Room. Information: Danielle Villalobos, admin@CommunityLeadershipAlliance.net.

Friends of Boeddeker Park. 2nd Thursday of the month, 3:30 p.m., Boeddeker Rec Center, 340 Eddy. Plan park events, activities and improvements. Contact: 552-4886.

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

Mid-Market Project Area Committee. 2nd Wednesday of the month, 9:30 a.m., Ramada Hotel, 1231 Market. Contact Carolyn Diamond. 362-3209. Market Street redevelopment on Fifth to Tenth streets.

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. 1st Thursday of the month, noon. Call Elaine Zamora, 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 Meke, 624-4309 or jim.mekelo@comcast.net.

South of Market Project Area Committee. 3rd Monday of the month, 6 p.m., 1035 Folsom, between 6th & 7th. Call: SOMPAC office, 487-2165.

Tenderloin Futures Collaborative. 2nd Wednesday of the month, 10 a.m., Tenderloin Police community room, 301 Eddy. Call at 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: 504-2789. Open to the public.