

CVIA NEWS

COLE VALLEY IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Volume XIX

SERVING ALL RESIDENTS OF THE GREATER HAIGHT ASHBURY

WINTER 2006

Well, Did You Ever Think You'd See It?



Restrooms replaced in Panhandle near Ashbury.

Complete renovation at 1841 Page.

Building within a building at 1250 Haight.

Patience Really is a Virtue

Three neighborhood construction projects monitored in these pages ad nauseam over the last five years are finally under way.

The demolition and rebuilding of the Panhandle restrooms, on Rec. and Park's work docket for years, was accomplished in a few short weeks once the red tape was slashed by Panhandle activists working in conjunction with the department. The handsome building gives a whole new meaning to the word "prefabricated," which it is.

When visiting our lovely old Carnegie library on Page Street, who hasn't stopped to wonder about the derelict Victorian next door. Boarded up, condemned by the health department, the building was not only an eyesore but, in this time of inflated property values, an enigma. Under the supervision of Alex Deng, crews are now working both inside and out to make it habitable again.

Since being purchased by the Citizens Housing Corporation, The former Christian Science church has been caught up in a maze of entwined funding sources with various time constraints and a full measure of standard city bureaucracy. It's been over ten years since the Christian Science Church decommissioned the building, selling it to the Haight Ashbury Free Clinics, who bought it in a sweetheart deal for only \$625,000 but sold it when the cost estimates made adaptive reuse unfeasible. (See update on pg. 3.)

Bill to Control Pot Clubs Passes

Last November, the San Francisco supervisors rapidly passed an amended version of Ross Mirkarimi's "medical cannabis" bill, on a vote of nine to zero—with two supervisors absent.

The action was a swift denouement to a long and tortuous plot. It was made possible by late amendments that Mirkarimi made to the bill to placate critics on both sides of the issue. The amendments gave the sellers more breathing space in dealing with snooping from the feds, but, in effect, imposed a cap on the number of sellers at about 35 or so.

For sellers, Mirkarimi deleted the previous requirement that they must keep records of their transactions and be subject to regular inspections. He also grandfathered-in all continuously existing sellers under the provisions of the bill, which means the "dispensary" at 1334 Haight, in the rear of the Golden Triangle head shop, will remain.

For neighborhood advocates, he reduced the permissible sale per visit from half a pound to one ounce, and reduced the number of plants an individual can possess to 24 (down from 99).

He also required that all sellers must undergo a public planning review, where neighbors get a chance to put in their two cents (so-called "mandatory discretionary review").

The bill retains its earlier requirement that all sellers in continuous existence as of April 1 must obtain a permit within 18 months of the ordinance's effective date. Any sellers that started during the recent moratorium, still in effect, must cease operations.

The practical effect of these requirements is to create a virtual cap on the number of sellers, amounting to the 35 or so, that have been up and running continuously since before April 1.

If pot is smoked on the premises, the seller must be located at least 1,000 ft. from schools and other sensitive institutions. Other existing sellers cannot be located "on the same parcel" as sensitive institutions. The bill is unclear as to the footage involved in a "parcel."

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Any seller who begins business after the ordinance goes into effect, whether the seller permits smoking on the premises or not, must observe the 1,000-ft. rule. This proviso effectively rules out most of the city as possible sites for new sellers.

In arguing for the bill, Mirkarimi said "We've changed the terms



The Golden Triangle head shop at 1334 Haight St. has a medical cannabis dispensary in the rear of the building.

of the debate. . . We've tried to reconcile all needs."

Chris Daly, who criticized Mirkarimi in the past, today said Mirkarimi "did a good job." Michela Alioto-Pier thanked Mirkarimi for heeding her concerns about the number of plants allowed per person.

When the vote was announced, a roar of applause went up from the audience, from both the supporters and critics of the "medical marijuana" sellers.

The general feeling was that Mirkarimi had pulled off a practical compromise that most people could live with. Whether folks will feel that way a year from now, remains to be seen.

—Arthur Evans

N-Judah Service Changes

The Metro subway from the Embarcadero to the Church St. station will now close Monday-Friday at 10:00 p.m. instead of 1:00 a.m. Phase I of a project replacing the overhead-wire system that provides power for subway cars will take about one year. Phase II will replace the overhead-wire system between Castro and West Portal stations and will not effect the N-Judah service.

On Monday-Friday after 10:00 p.m., the N-Judah Metro rail lines only operate between Church/Market and Ocean Beach. Bus substitution will be provided between 4th and King and Market/Church. Riders board shuttles on Market St. at designated surface stops adjacent to Market St. subway locations. Transfer to/from the busses on Church/Market to/from the rail on Church/Duboce.

The last outbound Metro N-Judah leaves from the Caltrain Depot at 9:35 p.m. and from Embarcadero at 9:46 p.m. The last Metro inbound N leaves from Duboce/Church at 9:07 p.m. Bus substitution from Caltrain to Castro Station will run every 15 minutes to 12:41 a.m.; from Castro to Caltrain every 15 minutes to 12:55 a.m.

Monday-Friday service before 10:00 p.m. is not affected. Neither is Saturday and Sunday evening Metro rail service. All the stations in the subway close at their usual time at around 1:00 a.m. However, Saturday morning Metro service starts one hour later, at

7:00 a.m., instead of 6:00 a.m., for the duration of the project. Owl bus service is extended to 7:00 a.m.

Check for project updates to the N-Judah schedules at www.sfmuni.com. Rescue Muni and Castro-area neighborhood



N-Judah rail cars will be replaced by busses on weekends after 9:00 p.m.

organizations are requesting changes such as the 1:00 a.m. nights should be Friday and Saturday, instead of Saturday and Sunday; and running shuttles on one track underground as the work is done.

—Joan Downey

MTA Citizens Advisory Council

Haight Street Cleaners Gone

After 18 years of running the Haight Ashbury Street Cleaners, Jim Rhoads finally threw in the sponge. In a thoughtful letter to community members, he explained the pervasive issues that have plagued the largely successful program and announced the transfer of the street's cleaning services to a company called CleanScapes.

Rhoads cited a lack of participation by merchants, which had been around 50%, with paying-merchants subsidizing the cleaning of an entire street for those who declined to pay. At only \$25 per month for the average storefront, it's hard to understand why every merchant wouldn't have signed on.

He also expressed the need to have graffiti removal capacity; expand the service from five days a week to daily; and raise the price. He suggested a charge of \$3.00 per linear foot of storefront.

If given the necessary support, CleanScapes is well positioned to take over. The company currently provides cleaning services to the Jackson Square Historic District, the Ferry Building, Mission Bay, and to many branches of Wells Fargo. CleanScapes has a policy of hiring through the city's social services and has indicated a willingness to hire some or all of the crew formerly working with the Haight Street Cleaners.

Chris Husband, CleanScapes representative, met with CVIA last August and impressed board members with the company's level of commitment. We optimistically recommended that he approach Cole Valley's merchants with a proposal for a similar street cleaning program.

Those of us living near Haight Street will miss the faithful sweepers and the difference they made in the quality of our daily lives. Let's hope they all get rehired and that CleanScapes can find a way to include the removal of graffiti, illegally posted fliers, scribbles on street-cleaning signs and derelict newsstands. In our dreams, eh?

—Karen Crommie

Senior Housing Under Way

The project has come a long way since 2000, when we began working with the community on the idea of developing a “building within a building” at the vacant, historic Third Church of Christ Scientist, located at 1250 Haight Street.

Recognizing the importance the community has placed on preserving the exterior of the church—a community landmark for nearly 100 years—we developed a design that enables the shell of the church to remain, within which we will construct 40 units of independent,



Looing through the rear window, the temporary wooden bracing around the stained glass windows is visible.

affordable senior housing. Neighborhood input resulted in a number of improvements to the project design: reducing the amount of parking on site, adding landscape screening to the parking area to soften its impact, and adding as much open space as possible at the rear to increase the amount of green area in this dense urban neighborhood.

Since receiving approval by the planning commission and Board of Supervisors in March 2003, we have focused on obtaining financ-



In this privileged view, the rear of the ornate church is revealed to be as plain as an old army barracks. (Courtesy of Jack Fahnestock)

ing for the project. Thanks to the San Francisco Mayor’s Office of Housing and HUD, as well as the many letters of support that neighborhood residents and community organizations provided for our funding applications, we have secured and closed the financing necessary to proceed with the project. The financing will not only enable the renovation of the building and its adaptation into apartments, but it will also enable us to make the apartments afford-

able to very low-income seniors in our community.

We recognize that the start of construction brings about inconveniences to the surrounding neighborhood, particularly those that live or work close by. We would like to work with you to minimize these inconveniences to the extent possible.

*Kaori Tokunaga, Project Manager
Citizens Housing Corporation
kaori@citizenshousing.org
(415) 421-8605*

HAIA Continues to Grow

In the last issue of CVIA News, we reported that the venerable Haight Ashbury Improvement Association (HAIA) was reconstituting itself after some years of inactivity. Under the leadership of Cheryl Brodie and Richard Shadoian, the group has continued to gain momentum by hosting a jammed-packed Holiday party where Haight merchants rubbed elbows with resident activists over a prodigious buffet—schmoozing and boozing in the warm glow of Sarah and Steve Tabor’s lovely Oak Street home.

On January 15, HAIA held its first meeting at the Urban School to ratify bylaws. A board of directors was elected comprised of Cheryl Brodie (president), Richard Shadoian (resident chair), David Miller (owner of Braindrops and also merchant chair) Deborah Hall, (resident, and also secretary), Andy Esposito (executive with Wells Fargo, also treasurer), Sharon McAllister (resident), Bruce Sampson (owner of Kids Only), Susan Strolis (resident), and Michael O’Connor (owner of the Independent nightclub).

The rest of the meeting was devoted to a brainstorming session on remedies for the chronic problems of this complicated neighborhood. If some of it evoked a “been there, done that” response, one had to remember that a neighborhood’s health depends on fresh troops reinvigorating the old issues. HAIA is jumping in with both feet and has drawn the interest of many who have not been active for years. We all want a safer, cleaner neighborhood with resident-serving businesses, spiced with good restaurants and vibrant shops. In the fight to improve the greater Haight Ashbury, HAIA is a welcome new ally.

—Karen Crommie

Stop Sign at Frederick and Willard Effects Signal Timing

Richardo Olea of DPT reported that on August 25, 2005 the timing on the traffic signal at the intersection of Stanyan and Fre-



derick was increased to help alleviate the back up traffic that occurs on Frederick, mainly eastbound. Depending on the time of day, the light is now held 1 to 4 seconds longer than previously.

After these changes, we noted a slight improvement in the eastbound backup, especially during the 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. commute.

Last summer, fluorescent yellow-green signs appeared at the intersection (east and westbound) of Frederick and Willard, reminding vehicles to yield the right-of-way to pedestrians. On November 28, 2005, these signs were replaced by a stop sign. The effect on the traffic signal at the intersection of Stanyan and Frederick is to make the flow a little smoother. In my view, all this overflow traffic is due to the Waller Street closure.

—Estella Bercerra

Selected Police Reports from Park District Police Station

Methamphetamine Possession for Sale - Arrest Made

Monday, October 24, 2005; 00:34 a.m., 1556 Haight Street. A Midnight Watch Unit made a traffic stop on a van that had failed to stop for a red light at Haight and Ashbury. The driver, a known female drug dealer, did not have a driver's license on her person and was arrested for the traffic violation. A search of her vehicle resulted in the discovery of a large quantity of methamphetamine, hashish and cocaine. Not only was the lady dealer selling the narcotics but apparently is one of her own best customers, which is plenty of reason for towing her van and locking her up. This seemed the only way to keep the streets safe from her running down someone while she was high behind the wheel.

School Burglary

Tuesday, January 24, 2006; Between 7:15-8:00 p.m., 1351 Haight Street. As if the schools weren't having enough troubles, some shortsighted thief decided that he should own all of the school computers, not the kids. Somebody (maybe more than one) broke into the principal's office at Aim High Academy and stole 35 Apple iBook computers, worth approximately \$50,000. During the theft, the school custodian heard someone in the principal's office and called school security. School security then called police. Officers responded, including a search dog, and were met by the custodian. The building was searched and the suspects, along with the computers, were gone.

Aggravated Assault with a Skateboard

Wednesday, January 24, 2006, 9:10 p.m., 1821 Haight Street. Officers responded to Haight and Stanyan Streets on a report of an assault. Upon arriving they located the victim who told them he attempted to collect an outstanding debt of five dollars from a known suspect. The victim told the officers that his request for his five dollars to be paid back resulted in a verbal argument inside a commercial business. The victim said that before he knew it the suspect had struck him in the head with his skateboard, causing a laceration to the left side of his head. The victim told the officers that the suspect fled into the McDonalds parking lot where he lost sight of him. The officers immediately summoned medical help for the victim. Numerous officers from Park Station responded to the immediate area in an attempt to locate the suspect, but they were unsuccessful.

Felony Warrant Arrest

Wednesday, January 25, 2006, 6:00 p.m., Oak and Cole Streets. Officers went to the above location on the report of homeless people harassing passersby. They got there and found a group of local homeless partying as usual. They were not happy being 'harassed' by the cops. A computer check showed that one of the visiting homeless was wanted so badly that he will be going all the way back to Manhattan as a result of an outstanding warrant. It's very unusual that a jurisdiction that far away will actually extradite a fugitive. Must be a bad dude! He won't be missed as we have enough of our own desperados.

Felony Stupid Arrest

Thursday, January 26, 2006, 6:30 p.m., 1800 block Haight Street. Our local beat officer was called to the above block of Haight Street, surprisingly, on the report of drugs being sold. While conducting an investigation at the above address a 'rocket scientist' walked by the uniformed officer lighting and smoking a big pipe of marijuana. Right out of a Cheech and Chong movie the guy walks

out of his cloud of smoke and into the officer's handcuffs as he was now under arrest. Dude was carrying a backpack that the officer searched. Inside was found enough drugs to rival any pharmacy. He had, of course, the usual massive quantity of marijuana, but he also had 44 pills of Klonopin, alas without a prescription. Also found were packaging for sales materials comprised of a scale, baggies, and ties. Finally, this officer found used and clean needles and cooking spoons consistent with heroin use. Other officers took him to the station for booking and while en route noticed the guy was very fidgety. At the station one officer noticed that the guy's hands were clenched in a fist and instructed him to open his hands at which time was found six balloons heroin. What was he thinking? He must have been high!

Attempted Robbery

Friday, January 27, 2006, 9:58 p.m., Haight and Stanyan Streets. Victim was walking, with her baby in a stroller, in front of McDonald's when a suspect (described as a white male, 24 to 25 years, 5'4", 160 lbs., wearing a black jacket, black baseball cap, khaki pants, and white tennis shoes) grabbed her cell phone. He was not able to immediately gain her phone so he pushed her backwards. She did not lose her balance and was able to get away from the would-be robber. Victim reported no loss and no injuries.

Sex Offender Failing to register and Park Code Violation

Sunday, January 29, 2006, 10:25 a.m., Alvor Lake. Officers noticed an individual seated on a planter box inside Golden Gate Park and in possession of a slingshot, a violation of the city's Park Code. The officers stopped to investigate. The suspect became belligerent and refused to comply with the officer's lawful directions. Assistance was summoned to restrain and disarm the subject. A computer check was made which revealed that this individual was a registered sex offender in Illinois but had failed to register as required in California. This reprobate was then booked.

Mass Arrest of Marijuana Dealers

Wednesday, February 1, 2006, 2:00 p.m., Haight and Stanyan Streets. Park Officers and several undercover officers from Narcotics Detail converged on this area that is known as the golden marijuana and pharmaceutical triangle. The result of the officers 90 minute effort (not including time to write the reports, book the evidence & prisoners) was **seven felony arrests** charging all with conspiracy and sale of marijuana. One poor guy was charged for violating his stay away order from this area and bemoaned not listening to the judge's warning. This is not the first time this type of operation has been run in the vicinity and each time the results were very similar.

Hot Prowl (somebody was home) Burglary

Wednesday, February 1, 2006, 8:00 p.m., Unit Block of Upper Terrace. Victims came home and heard some loud sounds coming from a room above them. They were startled when a subject (described as a black male wearing a black puffy jacket, black jeans, and black beanie style hat) came bounding down the stairs on his way to the garage. While still in shock three other subjects, same description, followed. All four suspects left the house via the garage. One roommate was home during the burglary but only heard the running down the stairs. The loss so far was small consumer electronics. Nobody was hurt.



Would you like a copy of this newsletter sent to a neighbor? Leave a message at 431-1414 with their name and address and consider it done.

UFO on Frederick Street

A new business is in the process of gestation at 225 Frederick near Ashbury. If one defines the "birth" of a business as the appearance of a new sign on the front of its building, then the period of gestation has indeed been a rather long one. The "fathers" of the business, brothers Resat and Berge Turget, took over in mid 2003 the lease of a Palestinian owned grocery store that had functioned for many years, primarily as a late night liquor store. The brothers obtained their own lease in 2004, and in 2005, began to

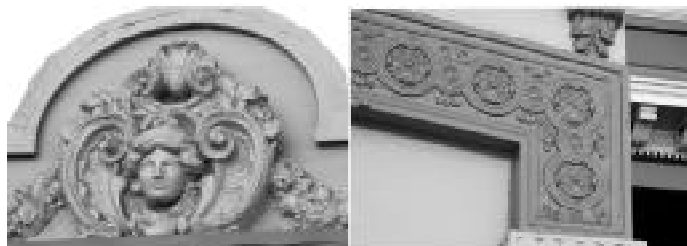


The small store is newly painted and poised for the installation of a sign proclaiming "Urban Fresh Organics Market."

relatives on the East Coast. After they made their way to the West Coast, their parents joined them from Turkey where their Dad had owned a pharmacy in Istanbul. The parents now live about nine months in San Francisco and three months in Istanbul.

The brothers have been operating the business even before its official birth, of course. Among the more noticeable changes they have made is the provision of space at the front for a small café. Pastries, sandwiches and Tully's coffee are available. They have also upgraded their wine department with the help of a sommelier friend whose brother writes for Food and Wine magazine. The façade has been painted in tones of gold.

A semi-official "store naming contest" with customers as contestants was conducted several months ago. "Buena Vista Market," after the nearby park, was a leading contender among neighborhood cultural conservatives, but wasn't feasible as the brothers have a



The original Greek owner, "Mr. Cosmos," added decorative touches to the simple one-story building.

café and there is already a very famous Buena Vista café in North Beach. "Two Brothers Market" was another suggestion. Restat can't remember the other suggestions, "some of which were too vulgar."

Some time after the official opening, the brothers plan to initiate a free delivery service, accepting orders by phone and on-line. They also hope to begin wine tastings, with hors d'oeuvres, every 45 days or so.

The new business is just the last in a long line to occupy the site, as the building dates back to the early 1900s, at least. Restat has been told it was built by a Greek immigrant with the name of "Mr. Cosmos." With his Old World taste, Mr. Cosmos had the façade decorated with elaborate plasterwork. Near the top, a Greek Goddess peers out from a wreath design. The building was originally constructed as a grocery store, and that is what it has been for most of its life, but Restat has been told by long time neighborhood residents that it also served a stint as a car repair facility, and that during Prohibition, an illicit gambling and drinking establishment operated in the building's basement.

—Douglas Hall

Sting on Stanyan

The Examiner reported (January 16, 2006; "SFPD: Beware, deadly drivers," by Marisa Lagos) that "San Francisco police made pedestrian safety a priority in 2005, ticketing nearly twice the number of drivers who violated walkers' rights than the year before."

We checked with Park Station's Captain John Ehrlich who reported that citations "went from 3770 in 2004 to 3932 in 2005," adding that, "We were down in tickets for speeding, right of way, and red lights but up for stop signs." While that's only a 4% increase in 2005 from the year before, he did report that a pedestrian right-of-way operation was conducted in January. Said Ehrlich, "Plainclothes officers walked back and forth across Stanyan at Beulah in the crosswalk. Uniformed officers then issued citations for motorists failing to yield. We had 13 citations in an hour." With more such operations to come, the police also intend to increase the citing of jaywalking pedestrians.

—Joan Downey



Berge Turget (above) and his brother, Resat, are changing the former deli and liquor store to a friendly meeting place with carefully selected vegetables, meats, and fine wines.

change the nature of the business. If all continues to go as planned, the business should be born in April or May with the appearance of a large sign over the street door, saying "Urban Fresh Organics" or UFO Market.

Inside will be a nice selection of organic fruits and vegetables, as well as a meat department featuring Niman Ranch products. A few months later fresh seafood will be added. Local producers will be emphasized, such as the Ciao Bella line of gelato. Local artists will be given free, high wall space for painting display. There will be an opening party to which the neighborhood is invited.

This is the young brothers' first business. Resat (30) has always wanted to own his own business. He is a graduate of the University of San Francisco and a dot.com boom veteran, an experience that gave rise to a desire to escape the corporate world: "I wanted to get into retail. It's more fun dealing with people (than machines)." Berge (29) is a recent graduate of San Francisco State.

They came to the United States young, Resat at 14, to live with

Mirkarimi Backs MacIntyre

Dr. Martin MacIntyre, a well-respected park neighbor and co-founder of the Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods, has been assembling data on the Recreation and Park Department's (RPD) lack of control over events they book into Golden Gate Park. They do not enforce the requirements of their contracts regarding amplification levels, park use fees, or alcoholic beverage restrictions. And, worse, the RPD Commission seems to condone the practice by waiving statutory requirements to producers who claim a portion of profits go to a "good cause." Some speculate that because these collected fees go into the general fund, not directly to RPD, the political will is compromised. This, however, is not an excuse.

While the city loses thousands of dollars every year, the scheduling of large events shuts out park visitors from venues such as Sharon Meadow and the Polo Field, at the same depriving them the quiet enjoyment of the surrounding park areas because of the dissonant blast of over-amplified sound. During the Summer and Fall, CVIA members report hearing this cacophony as far away as Buena Vista Park.

Despite a projected \$80 million budget shortfall in the next fiscal year, the recent RPD audit, conducted for the Board of Supervisors by Harvey Rose, skimmed over the habitual failure of both the RPD staff and commission when it comes to extracting statutory fees from events producers. As if that isn't bad enough, complaints made to the SFPD about excessive amplification are met with indifference. MacIntyre, and colleague Doerte Murray, feel that, in spite of detailed documentation presented to the city, no one is listening to them. Once again, the citizens of San Francisco are expected to accept a level of governmental inefficiency that no other city would tolerate.

Finally, supervisor Ross Mirkarimi was persuaded to enter the battle. Below is his letter to Harvey Rose with copies to his fellow supervisors while the audit was taking place.



District 5 Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi

"I strongly suggest that you factor in Mr. MacIntyre's opinion on how RPD administers its compliance and fee collection process for permitted events and event sponsors who remain scofflaws. Based on a flurry of data that I've examined, sometimes very confusing due to poor record maintenance and an absence of management control on RPD's end, I also suspect that the city is losing significant revenue."

We appreciate the supervisors intervention in this matter and hope he will continue to monitor the financial accountability of the department so that these practices will finally come to an end. In the meantime, Dr. MacIntyre fearlessly continues his campaign in the name of all of us who want accountability and fairness, not to mention peace and quiet.

—Karen Crommie

cviasf@aol.com

Please contact us by e-mail if you have an issue to bring up, a newsletter article, address change, or an update to your membership information. Send us *your* e-mail address if you want to be notified of upcoming meetings and events of importance to our neighborhood.

New Move to Ban Traffic in Park on Saturday

Now that the parking garage beneath the DeYoung Museum is open, some of those who earlier advocated closure of the park's JFK Drive on Saturdays have renewed their efforts under a banner of "Healthy Saturdays." The proposal closing the broad thoroughfare for a second day each week was defeated at the ballot box in 2000, mainly because the DeYoung and the Academy said they would lose admissions due to inaccessibility. "With the recent



Now that the underground garage is open, is it time to take another look at Saturday closing of JFK Drive?

completion of the garage, this has changed," says CVIA's Joan Downey who, along with a other park- and pedestrian- rights advocates, are working with Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi to revive the idea.

Chris Duderstadt, who has closely followed, with some dismay, the long process of rebuilding DeYoung and its privately-funded parking lot with essays both on his website and printed in this newsletter, writes:

"As Americans become more sedentary and childhood obesity becomes epidemic, we must provide every opportunity for our citizens to put healthy enjoyable recreation into their lives. Healthy Saturdays will double the opportunity for the public to safely bike, roll, run, or walk on a portion of JFK Drive in wonderful Golden Gate Park; to get healthy without a membership, a reservation, or a special invitation. How? By simply replicating the traditional auto free section of JFK found on Sundays, on Saturdays as well."

"Healthy Saturdays will not reduce access to the Park as no area affected is more than a four minute stroll from an open thoroughfare. It will create over a mile of public recreational space and encourage our citizens to put safe healthy recreation in their lives on a regular basis."

You can check Duderstadt's website at www.sfpix.com/

—Karen Crommie

Green Meters

Four 2-hour meters have been converted to 30-minute meters on Cole St. This change was requested as a result of a meeting CVIA organized with the merchants and DPT. The purpose is to provide more turnover parking to reduce the double parking on the street. It took six months, but who's counting?

—Joan Downey

Call for News

We need news items, articles, letters, opinion pieces. Please tell us what you know about Cole Valley and the greater Haight Ashbury: handwritten, typewritten, e-mailed or scrawled on cocktail napkins. We want to hear from you! CVIA News: 624 Ashbury St. or cviasf@aol.com.

Fair Called into Question

With admirable courage, Capt. John Ehrlich asked City Hall to delay the hearing for a street-use permit requested by the Haight Street Fair until he could call a community meeting for ideas on how to improve this annual event. His concern was the bite it takes out of Park Police Station's budget to provide police protection to the some 60,000 visitors to the fair—35 officers were assigned to last year's fair at the cost of \$19,000. Having determined that the need for police is directly related to the amount of alcohol consumed, Capt. Ehrlich advocated confining alcohol consumption solely to "beer gardens" (roped off areas). He felt this would provide a chilling ef-



At an intense community meeting, Haight Street Fair producer Pablo Heising heard both criticism and praise for his management of the annual event.

fect on the source of what he estimates to be 90% of the alcohol consumed at the fair: retail stores. A beer garden, he reasoned, would eliminate the "anything goes" attitude that prevails throughout the day because officers could confiscate any booze not consumed within the designated area.

At a meeting on December 1st that packed the community room of the Park Branch Library, bitter complaints were aired by merchants who said that Haight Street shops are blocked by vendor tents; greasy smoke from the food stands blows in from the street; there is a failure to adequately clean the sidewalks afterward; and, in many cases, merchants are forced to close their shops, thereby losing all the income from a potentially profitable midsummer Sunday.

Residents in turn complained about the side-street private parties with their blasting music and aftermath of garbage; the over amplification of the stage bands; the difficulties of accessing their homes due to barricades; and the failure of landlords to keep tenants and

their drunken pals from gathering on their roofs—thereby endangering themselves and those below. One resident even had the temerity to ask to see the an accounting of the money earned by this non-profit and the community benefit derived from its receipts.

Fair producer Pablo Heising, who was naturally miffed that the Captain had held up his permit, was clearly on the defensive, and mustered his forces to combat the perceived disrespect shown him. Dutifully, each supporter attested to Heising's nearly 20 year record of producing the fair and the importance of the yearly event to the image of the neighborhood. Brian Mahoney, owner of Martin Mack's bar and restaurant was particularly irritated by the questioning of Heising, exhorting any neighbor who complained about the fair to "go live in Marin."

In spite of the identified problems, on January 17, the city issued a street-use permit to Heising for this year's fair scheduled for June 11. The boilerplate document contains a list of legal obliga-



As the consumption of alcohol increases, rooftop parties become more dangerous.

he must fulfill, from liability insurance and indemnification to permits for sound amplification, toilets, stage, cleanup, fire suppression, emergency medical plan, disability access to stages, recycling, bicycle parking and, of course, permits from the Department of Health and the ABC. It also lists a reimbursement to the SFPD for police services (estimated at only \$5,316) and all Muni

fees connected with substituting diesel buses for electric ones (estimated at \$ 1,500.00).

As interesting as it was, the document nowhere listed remedies to the complaints of the neighbors and merchants. That was accomplished at a subsequent meeting with Supervisor Mirkarimi and Capt. Ehrlich, in which Pablo Heising agreed to make a list of property owners on Haight Street (and four or five buildings nearest Haight, on each of the side streets). They will be sent a letter from the Park Station notifying them that private parties taking place on Fair day cannot emit amplified music louder than the level of the ambient sound at that particular location.

—Karen Crommie



Although the Fair pays to sweep Haight at the end of the day, the trash from side-street parties (Ashbury shown above) is left for neighbors to clean up.

CVIA Board Actions

The following is a summary of what took place at the CVIA board meetings the last three months. Those wishing to bring a neighborhood issue before the Board are welcome to do so. Meetings occur the first Monday of every month at 7:00 p.m. in the home of a member. Leave message at cviasf@aol.com or call 431-1414 to learn the location.

November

- Reviewed last meeting's resolutions, discussed current Haight issues, heard reports from committee heads and from delegates to 5Together, the Kezar Stadium Advisory Committee and the Coalition for S.F. Neighborhoods.
- Reviewed progress in efforts to incorporate. Amy Blakeley to continue work of former board member Nancy Corsaut.
- Elected Richard Shadoian to be CVIA's representative to 5Together.
- Discussed buying a table at the CSFN annual dinner. Decided the CVIA delegate would instead participate as an individual.
- President David Crommie reported on a recent neighborhood meeting on the proposed Haight Street Decaux toilet. Arguments presented caused him to change CVIA's long-held opposition to the toilet's currently permitted location in front of a multiunit residential building. In view of the present stalemate and dire need for this facility he was persuaded that it was time to change CVIA's position and voted for its installation at the northwest corner of Masonic and Haight. This was the subject of a heated discussion but the board acquiesced to his judgment, still holding the hope of its installation on the 1300 block of Haight where it had been briefly installed in 1995 and which, the board still considers the most preferable location.
- Lena Emmery, rep to the Kezar Advisory Committee reported the defeat of the latest attempt to sell alcoholic beverages at Kezar.
- Richard Shadoian announced a 5Together-sponsored tour of the Office of Emergency Services and discussed the need for a district-wide emergency plan coordinating the many different neighborhoods.
- Motion by Joan Downey (seconded and passed) that any such plan for D-5 would be fully integrated with NERT.
- Discussed the recent reconstitution of the Haight Ashbury Improvement Association under the leadership of Cheryl Brodie and Richard Shadoian. It was the consensus that this organization will provide a needed voice for residents living in proximity to Haight Street (with all its chronic problems) and a forum for interacting with its merchants. We agreed to support them and participate as individuals, without relinquishing any of CVIA's concern and responsibility to its own members, many of whom live adjacent to the Haight Street commercial corridor. How this will effect the existing Haight Street Merchants organization is unknown.
- Joan Downey reported that the newly built UCSF housing at 145 Irving is without any garage space because UCSF claimed that the students living there would not have cars and would use public transit. Discussion followed as to whether building residents should be allowed to apply (and receive) residential parking permits (letter J).
- Amy Blakeley expressed the need for CVIA to have other events during the year in addition to the annual Summer Social. All agreed—so long as she was willing to take the initiative.

December

At its holiday dinner, the board passed a motion (6 to 3) to support the closing of JFK Drive to traffic on Saturdays.

January

- Reviewed last meeting's resolutions, discussed current Haight issues, heard reports from committee heads and from delegates to 5Together, the Kezar Stadium Advisory Committee and the Coalition for S.F. Neighborhoods. Discussed a range of community problems facing the Greater Haight Ashbury in the new year.
 - Treasurer Marianne Hesse announced a large influx of new members who joined during the Heart of Cole fair.
 - Lena Emmery reported that a group representing lacrosse teams, sponsored by Budweiser, wants to sell beer at its games in the Kezar Pavilion—with consumption confined to the building. They also want to increase maximum attendance to 5,000.
 - Joan Downey reported that the new campaign by Golden Gate Park activists to ban cars from JFK Drive on Saturday (in addition to Sunday) is called "Healthy Saturdays."
 - Joan Downey lead a discussion of topics of concern for a proposed meeting with Rec and Park general manager Yomi Agunbiade: over-amplification of park events, homeless encampments, recycling center location, number and jurisdiction of park patrol (rangers), bicycle racks, etc.
- CVIA Executive Board Members:** Amy Blakeley, Chuck Canepa, David Crommie, Karen Crommie, Joan Downey, Lena Emmery, Carole Glosenger, Douglas Hall, Marianne Hesse, Richard Shadoian.

Message to all CVIA Members

There is information a Community Disaster Plan for District 5. This project began through the work of SF 5Together and has the support of the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services, the Office of Emergency Services and Homeland Security, and the Office of Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi.

If you participated at the recent Saturday, January 21, "Developing a Community Disaster Plan Workshop," we want to again thank you very much for making that such a productive session. A follow-up meeting has been scheduled.

Date: Wednesday, February 22, 2006
 Time: 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
 Location: Office of Emergency Services and Homeland Security, 1011 Turk Street (between Gough and Laguna)
 Parking: Street parking is available

If you did not attend the first meeting but intend to go to the second, it is advised that you request an electronic copy of 2006 Draft Community Disaster Plan for District 5 by contacting Robert.Stengel@sfgov.org and asking for "the plan." We encourage everyone to take some time to review the plan before the meeting. If you have comments about the plan, please contact emergency planner Rob Stengel prior to the February 22 meeting at his email address above; by calling 558-2746; or by faxing him at 431-7500.

Neighbors Hear the Case for Steep Hike in Garbage Rates

At January's Community Forum hosted monthly by Park District Captain John Ehrlich, Bob Besso, the city's recycling czar made the case for a steep rise in garbage rates over the next five years. Assuming the Ratepayers Board will approve the request, on July 1, the household charge for basic service will increase by 38 percent, from \$19.08 (for a single 32 gallon can) to \$26.37 in the year 2011.

As if that isn't bad enough, there will be an important change in recycling service. Beginning Feb. 8, State law prohibits disposal of what they call Electronic Waste: computers, cell phones, batteries, switches containing mercury, as Besso put it, "Anything with a cord or a battery." We are already prohibited from placing things



Norcal says a 38% rise in basic service is the price for maintaining a collection and recycling system that has become a national model.

deemed "hazardous" from the black can—things like leftover paint, motor oil, paint thinners, spray cans, and old garden products, such as pesticides and fertilizers. This new prohibition will send us to one of several specialized facilities such as HMR at 435-23rd Street. Phone: (415) 647-6071, Web site: www.hmrgroup.com. E-mail: nguyen@hmrgroup.com.

In his justification for the higher rates, Besso pointed to the city's mandate to divert 75 percent of all garbage away from landfill into some kind of recycling by 2010. It isn't cheap being green. The blue can recyclables are taken to a plant at Pier 96 where they are sorted on long conveyer belts and squashed, baled and shipped to various destinations for final reuse. Construction debris meets the same fate at a plant near Candlestick. Organic materials from the green cans are graded and processed near Vacaville and sold as compost, mainly in Sonoma County. Although these efforts are successful, every day the city still sends tons of refuse to landfills near Altamont simply because people will not take the time to utilize their blue and green bins.

Even greater cost than the recycling efforts is the cost of labor. In spite of the new hydraulic dump trucks (at \$500 a pop) that reduced the number of workers needed on each route, the garbage companies' 800-employee staff still takes up 61 percent of the budget. Says Besso, "We pay our employees very well and we expect them to perform very well. And if they don't, please let us know."

—Karen Crommie

Tax on Neighborhood Beautification Withdrawn

On July 23, 2005, the Board of Supervisors passed legislation (#179-05) adding a tax of \$3 per square foot of "sidewalk encroachment" on homeowners who place benches, statuary, railings or containers of trees or flowers on their sidewalk. The minimum tax for this was \$100 regardless of the size of the encroachment.



Ashbury Street neighbors were astounded to learn they were taxed \$540 for this sidewalk beautification. (Photo: Wayne Lanier)

In spite of the "Clean and Green City Summit" in 2005, which promoted sidewalk landscaping, tree planting, less concrete and more greenery as healthy and important for making the city more habitable, anyone who got a permit for sidewalk enhancement, was taxed for encroachment area shown on the permit drawing.

This "Tree & Beauty Tax" would not only have a chilling effect on any attempts to install potted trees or improve the pedestrian experience by sidewalk beauty, but would have actually reduced existing greenery, as homeowners discover that quickly removing these amenities would save them a minimum tax increase of \$100.

This encroachment fee was a Stealth Tax, revealed by the wording of the ordinance which states it would be added as a line-item to the homeowner's tax bill.

When the tax bills went out, the Supervisors were inundated with the complaints of outraged homeowners and, fortunately, acted quickly to stop further billing.

—Mary Helen Briscoe

SAVE THOSE LAST THURSDAY NIGHTS

Captain John Ehrlich holds community forums every month except December. Plan to attend each month from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Park Police Station, 1899 Waller at Stanyan.



March 2 - How the Police Department interfaces with the homeless population (date changed from February 24)

March 30 - Youth, drugs, and Alvord Lake.

April 27* - Disaster planning for our neighborhood: Where do we gather after "the big one?"

*Location to be determined. Call Sgt. Mike Niland at 242-3032 for address.

Postscripts

The long battle to prevent the demolition of a small house at **450 Frederick**, believed to be historically significant by some, ended in a compromise as the owner



agreed to scale down his plans for a three-unit building to just two units. Showing impressive tenacity, the highly organized group of neighbors succeeded in forcing the owner to underbuild in a district zoned R-3. A blow for those concerned with property rights but a pyrrhic victory for the preservationists who, although they didn't

save the old house, managed to clip the value of the property by one-third. Maybe it was about blocking views after all.

UCSF will offer a new series of classes, open to the public, that helps gain insight into the great medical discoveries. “**Understanding the human Genome and the Future of Medicine**” will meet Tuesdays starting February 22. All classes will be in the Medical Sciences Building lobby, 513 Parnassus.

The **Lycée Francais** on Ashbury Street will hold its annual gala on March 10th. This year's event will be “Under the Big Top” (did you know the first circus took place in France in 1770?). There will be French food, creative entertainment and, most important, a vente aux enchères (auction) where you can indulge yourself in a wide range of auction items and contribute to the school at the same time. Tickets are \$90 each. RSVP by March 3 to **Nathalie Reznick** at 661-5401, ext. 230. The prestigious school, which is an authentic, accredited French lycée has a new headmaster, **Alain Cuzin**, whom we warmly welcome to our neighborhood.

Aim High Academy, a remedial junior high school that has been operating in a section of the now defunct **William DeAvila Elementary School**, will be moved to **Luther Burbank**, which means the large building and playground with entrances both on Haight and Waller streets (between Masonic and Central) will now be completely



empty. This eliminates the argument against the placement of the proposed self-cleaning toilet at the section of extra-wide sidewalk in front of its Haight street entrance—the location where the De-caux toilet was originally erected in 1995.

Hamilton Family Shelter's 20-year lease with the **Hamilton United Methodist Church** runs out and they may choose to relocate to a larger facility. The church's mainly Tongan congregation is growing and with it their need for more space for youth programs. The Haight Ashbury Food Program, which is in the church building proper, is also being looked at but, for now, will continue its four-day a week lunch program.

The times they are a changin'. Not only have the **Haight Street Merchants** decided to support an end to the moratorium on new



beer and wine permits, the **Haight Ashbury Neighborhood Council (HANC)** is breaking with its long-held policy by supporting the **Red Vic** movie theatre's application to serve liquor. Welcome to Sin City.

Maryo Mogannam is going over his books to see if the Heart of Cole Fair is sustainable. While the income from last year's fair was enough to pay the bills, the fees required by the city (permits, police, DPT, Muni) were so high that there isn't much cushion for this year's fair. We'll have a full report in the next issue. Speaking of Maryo, on February 1, he turned over **Cole Foods** (815 Cole St.) to new owners.

If you live east of Masonic you probably remember the Great Gas Leak of January 5th. Just before 11:00 a.m., a **PG&E** crew accidentally broke a gas main at Baker and Page forcing evacuation of three square blocks. **Sheila Borges** told the Chronicle's Patrick Hode that the loud hissing noise "...sounded like a jet engine." Fortunately, the rupture was repaired within an hour.

At the January Community Forum (Park Police Station), **Deputy City Attorney Ernest Llorente**, assigned to the Haight, said that there were both civil and criminal charges pending against the owner of **43 Downey St.**, after years of complaints by neighbors.

Calvin Welch, displaced by the sale of 409 Clayton, is running his San Francisco Information Clearinghouse out of 405 Shrader. I guess that goes for the Council of Community Housing Organizations and his various other endeavors, too.

What's going on at the Haight Ashbury Free Clinics? After three calls requesting the most basic information about future plans for their Haight facilities, I gave up. During one conversation, they went so far as to tell me that their community relations person was named



Corey Black. When I asked to have his/her number, I was told, "I can't look it up right now." The source of my curiosity comes from the recent closing of their building at 409 Clayton, home to various HAFC programs and administrative offices over the years (as well as Calvin Welch's base of operation), and a donation appeal I received in the mail from the "San Francisco Community Clinic Consortium." It described the work of the 15 clinics under its umbrella, one of which was HAFC. I was asked to provide a "donation of \$500, \$100 or even \$50." The brochure that accompanied it referred to their support by the SF Chamber of Commerce, who, of course, is interested in having the general public subsidize the healthcare that their members don't provide. There are rumors that they will moving from 529 Clayton and 1696 Haight in June but I can't confirm it. They sure ain't talkin' to me. —Karen Crommie

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CVIA Officers

- PresidentDavid Crommie
- Vice PresidentLena Emmery
- TreasurerMarianne Hesse
- Membership.....Lena Emmery
- Community Relations Amy Blakeley
- Special Projects.....Joan Downey

CVIANEWS is published quarterly as a forum for residents of the greater Haight Ashbury neighborhood. The views expressed reflect those of the writers. Contributions for the Spring edition should be sent before May 1st to 624 Ashbury St., San Francisco, CA 94117 or kcrommie@aol.com. We encourage submissions from anyone interested in our neighborhood. Send questions or comments to the above address or call 431-1414.

Editor.....Karen Crommie
 ProductionDavid Crommie
 Editorial Assistance..... Joan Downey

Help

- Emergency..... 911
- Disturbance553-0123
- Blocked Driveways & Parking on Sidewalks553-1200
- Abandoned Vehicles.....781-5865
- Health Department255-3610
- Litter Patrol (sofas, mattresses, etc.)695-2017
- Graffiti and Illegal Sign Removal 28-CLEAN
282-5326
- Street Lighting554-0730
- Mayor Gavin Newsom.....554-6141
 City Hall - Room 200
 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
 S.F., CA 94102
- Chief of Police Heather Fong.....553-1551
 Hall of Justice - 850 Bryant St.
 S.F., CA 94103
- District Attorney Kamala Harris 553-1741
 Hall of Justice - 850 Bryant St.
 S.F., CA 94103
- Captain John Ehrlich242-3000
 Park District Police Station
 1899 Waller St.
 S.F., CA 94117

San Francisco Board of Supervisors

City Hall - Room 244
 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
 San Francisco, CA 94102

Telephone: 554-5184 FAX: 554-5163

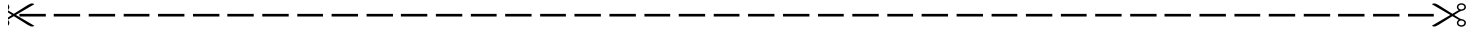
District	Telephone	Fax
1. Jake McGoldrick Jake.McGoldrick@sfgov.org	554-7410	554-7415
2. Michela Alioto-Pier Michela.Alioto@sfgov.org	554-7752	554-7483
3. Aaron Peskin Aaron.Peskin@sfgov.org	554-7450	554-7454
4. Fiona Ma Fiona.Ma@sfgov.org	554-7460	554-7432
5. Ross Mirkarimi Ross.Mirkarimi@sfgov.org	554-7630	554-7634
6. Chris Daly Chris.Daly@sfgov.org	554-7970	554-7974
7. Sean Elsbernd Sean.Elsbernd@sfgov.org	554-6516	554-6546
8. Bevan Dufty Bevan.Dufty@sfgov.org	554-6968	554-6909
9. Tom Ammiano Tom.Ammiano@sfgov.org	554-5144	554-6255
10. Sophie Maxwell Sophie.Maxwell@sfgov.org	554-7670	554-7674
11. Gerardo Sandoval Gerardo.Sandoval@sfgov.org	554-6975	554-6979

BECOME A CVIA MEMBER

Membership in the Cole Valley Improvement Association is open to anyone interested in the greater Haight Ashbury. CVIA's mission is to promote a sense of responsibility and mutual respect throughout the district; preserve the character of its architecture; support the police department in law enforcement efforts; encourage neighborhood-serving business; and be construc-

tively involved in San Francisco's governmental process. Annual dues are \$20.00. Membership provides contact with other responsible neighbors, a quarterly newsletter and participation in an active forum for effecting change. If you would like to become a member, please send in your dues with the form below.

Please clip and mail the coupon below to CVIA, P.O. Box 170611, San Francisco, CA 94117



Yes! I'd like to become a CVIA member!

Here's my check for \$20.00 made payable to: COLE VALLEY IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION Renewal

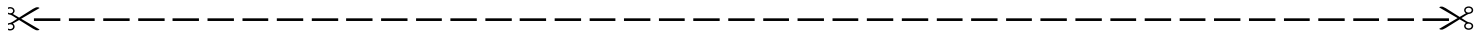
NAME _____ E-MAIL _____

ADDRESS _____ PHONE _____ FAX _____

What I like about the neighborhood: _____

What I dislike about the neighborhood: _____

I would like to help, and this is what I can do: _____



Cole Valley Improvement Association
P.O. Box 170611
San Francisco, CA 94117

CVIASF@aol.com