

Shuttles' bus zone violations not cited

By **BRIAN RINKER**

TECH BUSES have illegally shared the city's Muni stops for years, but starting this summer, the city plans to crack down and charge the tech titans about \$1.06 for every stop they use, a fraction of the take if the city were to enforce the law the same for everybody.

Not only is it against the law for any vehicle to park in a red-curbed bus zone, it is illegal for all company buses and shuttles to use city-owned bus stops for private use. A citation costs \$271. Yet tech buses, infamously known collectively as "Google buses," have taken advantage of Muni zones with relative impunity dating back to 2004. Today, transports for 17 major tech companies dominate San Francisco's streets, shuttling uncounted thousands of workers from San Francisco to Silicon Valley and back.

The supervisors' budget analyst, in a recent report, estimated the shuttles

use 200 red-curbed bus zones around the city as pickup and drop-off locations 4,121 times every weekday. If the shuttles were cited each time they illegally pulled into a bus stop, the city would rake in fines totaling \$1,116,791 daily.

Of course, enforcing the law strictly would be akin to entrapment. So the S.F. Municipal Transportation Agency, which issues parking tickets, says it has a complaint-based policy

for citing bus-zone violations.

Over the past three years, police and parking control officers have issued 13,385 bus zone citations. Of those, only 45 were issued to commuter shuttles or buses, according to the budget analyst's report.

Another way of looking at that is that the city collected \$12,195 in bus-zone fines from commuter buses cited over three years while nonshuttle drivers paid \$3.6 million.

That is shockingly few citations even under the city's lenient shuttle enforcement policy, which SFMTA spokeswoman Kristen Holland explained:

"The practice of (parking control officers) has therefore been to issue citations to commuter shuttle buses that are using Muni zones when doing so is threatening the safety of bicyclists, pedestrians, or other drivers, or when doing so impedes Muni from entering or departing a zone or otherwise creates a hazard for Muni operations."

That policy apparently is largely ignored by meter minders if the observations of a Metropolitan Transportation Commission consultant cited in the budget analyst's study are accurate. The consultant noted that tech shuttles blocked traffic or a Muni bus an average of once every two hours.

One example the consultant noted was near the Glen Park BART station. Tech buses were unloading passengers in traffic, holding up other vehicles and endangering passengers 3½ times an hour because the buses, which can carry up to 80 passengers, didn't fully pull into the bus lane.

At Fillmore and Lombard streets, consultants spotted the private buses doing the same thing more than six times an hour. All are violations that result in citations for an average of about a dozen ordinary drivers daily.

Holland didn't explain the discrepancy in bus-zone enforcement. ■

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Vicki Mar Lane on Turk Street

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MILLIONS FOR STREET REPAIR

Tech buses take the heaviest toll

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CENTRAL CITY

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TECH SHUTTLES



PHOTO MARJORIE BEGGS

A single-deck chartered Bauer bus turns into a red zone on Stanyan Street off Frederick in the Haight. Residents say buses start circling the neighborhood as early as 6 a.m. weekdays.

Making sense of \$1 fee

Why the charge for Muni stops is ridiculously low

By **MARJORIE BEGGS**

HERE'S THE MATH: According to the S.F. Municipal Transportation Agency, 375 shuttle buses — behemoths like Google's double-deckers for Silicon Valley employees and modest transports like Academy of Art University's 20-seaters for staff and students — make an estimated 4,121 stops each weekday day, largely in Muni bus zones. When the rest of us are caught idling in those red zones, we cough up \$271.

The shuttle providers not only pay zip, they don't have to divulge how many shuttles they operate, stops they make or passengers they carry.

The city is hoping to change that. It's poised to launch an 18-month, \$1.7 million pilot program July 1 to determine the extent of the burgeoning private transportation sector. MTA says the pilot data will enable it to figure out what the shuttles actually cost the city: their effect on traffic, streets, the environment, pedestrian and bicycle safety, housing prices.

The caveat: The numbers MTA used to design the pilot program are best guesses, based on years-old information handed over voluntarily from some shuttle providers. Pilot proponents insist the program will turn the guesses into facts, giving the city justification — or not — for charging providers to use our streets.

A coalition of tenant activists and labor leaders wanted a full EIR that would have produced the same data and, perhaps, had more legal teeth. The Board of Supervisors shot that down in April. May 1 the coalition filed a lawsuit to block the pilot.

But if the pilot flies, program costs will be entirely offset by a \$1.06 fee collected from buses using red zones.

At the suggestion of the County Transportation Authority, MTA in late 2011 began surveying shuttle providers about routes and stops in the city, primarily to quantify the benefits of taking private vehicles off the road. The collection continued through the summer of 2012. MTA identified 17 commuter shuttles and 20 intracity van and buses and at least 200 red zones where many were stopping illegally.

Those 200 Muni stops form the basis for the buck-plus fee, yet no one in city government will say where they are.



PHOTO TOM CARTER

Apple workers fetch their bikes from a chartered bus stopped illegally in a red zone on Valencia Street at 25th Street.

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Tech shuttles make streets even meaner

Oversize vehicles bludgeon asphalt, causing millions in damage each year

By MARK HEDIN

TALK ABOUT A DAILY GRIND! Each motor coach that ferries tech workers to Silicon Valley and back damages San Francisco streets 7,774 times more than the average SUV, according to road maintenance experts.

Every mile that they drive on city streets eventually will cost \$1.08 in road repair, according to calculations by the Department of Public Works cited in a March 31 report to the Board of Supervisors on the shuttles' impacts.

The tech shuttles weigh 10-15 times more than the average SUV and do disproportionate damage to the streets — perhaps millions of dollars worth every year.

"The thing with buses is a lot of the weight is just on that one axle. The heavier the vehicle, the more the potential damage. There are forces that multiply many times over," Russell Snyder, executive director of the California Asphalt and Pavement Association, told The Extra. "Pavement that might last 100 years might fall apart in five if it's not designed right."

"Heavy buses and trucks lead to faster roadway deterioration," Rachel Gordon, DPW spokeswoman, wrote in an email to The Extra.

Muni and the double-decker buses that ply Valencia Street, Lombard and Van Ness and other routes through the city weigh between 27 and 31 tons, depending on whether they are empty or full, according to a Pavement Engineering Inc. report cited in the March 31 memo to Supervisor Eric Mar by budget and legislative analyst Harvey Rose. Only garbage trucks are more damaging than tech shuttles — the equivalent of 9,343 SUVs each, the report says. Big rigs are comparable to 4,526 SUVs and delivery trucks a mere 442 times as much, according to the data.

The \$1.08 that the DPW determined the average mile traveled by a shuttle on city streets will cost to repair is a minute portion of the \$1,045,000 it costs to reconstruct a milelong lane of city streets. But no other vehicle plying the city streets, save garbage trucks, stresses the roads so.

The Extra made numerous attempts to determine the extent of shuttle trav-

el on city streets to ascertain the cost of the damage inflicted and was met with a lack of data at every turn. Fred Brousseau, who drafted the policy analysis report for the Harvey Rose memo, suggested taking available data and estimating how many miles each bus might travel through the city on the average run. He suggested 6 miles per trip and immediately acknowledged that was low, since buses have to travel from their parking spots to begin their routes.

The Extra decided on 10 miles per trip. On city streets, the ride from outer Lombard Street to the 101 onramp on Cesar Chavez is 6 miles. And certainly some of those buses wind through many streets as they make their rounds. Once the GPS is aboard, the bus will be beaming all sorts of data. So 10 miles per trip may well prove an underestimate.

Of the 17 firms known to be running shuttles from San Francisco to Silicon Valley, the budget analyst cited a 2012 ICF International survey, conducted for the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, that obtained specifics on seven shuttle providers — Google, Apple, Genentech, Facebook, Yahoo, Netflix and Electronic Arts. ICF came up with 273 daily shuttle runs for a total of 8,030 passengers — an average of 29.49 per run. The report further says that there are about 35,000 passenger boardings



PHOTO TOM CARTER

The double-decker shuttle buses, like this one rolling north on Valencia past 24th Street, cost \$750,000 and can weigh more than 30 tons when loaded.

daily when both regional and intracity shuttles are counted. Assuming the same 29 passengers per trip, that's another 930 shuttle trips per day. Multiply 1,203 trips by the 10 mile-per-trip average, by 260 for the number of workdays in the year and the \$1.08 per mile in road repair costs, and the damage comes to \$3,378,024 per year.

The intracity shuttles that typically weigh 7-10 tons would, of course, contribute less damage.

San Francisco is in the midst of a three-year program to rehabilitate its 12,884 blocks, and the Department of Public Works claims to be repaving roads at an unprecedented pace — upward of 900 per year since 2011 when voters approved a \$248 million Road Repaving and Street Safety bond.

San Francisco's Transportation Code Section 501.b has restrictions on large vehicles traveling on 170 particular stretches of road. For instance, vehicles weighing 3 tons or more are barred from

the curvy sections of Lombard and Vermont streets, the steep sections of Taylor and Jones, Gough between Jackson and California, and Fillmore between Broadway and Union.

Similarly excluded are narrow streets such as Grant Avenue between Green and Broadway, or Albion between 17th and 15th and the hilly stretch of Guerrero between 18th and Cesar Chavez in the Mission. Without providing specifics, a San Francisco County Transportation Authority report from 2011 stated that it had "identified six roadway segments where large shuttle motorcoaches weighing over 14 tons may be traversing these weight-restricted streets."

Despite the extent of damage from the shuttles, San Francisco taxpayers have little recourse. As the budget analyst noted, California Vehicle Code Section 9400.8 bars local jurisdictions from imposing "a tax, permit or fee" for the use of its streets, no matter how destructive a vehicle may be. ■

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CENTRAL CITY EXTRA

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Trans community gets a public face

Vicki Marlane's friend led campaign to rename key block of Turk Street

By TOSHIO MERONEK

“WE WERE FREE in the Tenderloin,” says drag performer, community activist and Vietnam vet Felicia Elizondo, who lived and worked in the neighborhood in the 1960s.

Elizondo, who later performed under the name Felicia Flames at Aunt Charlie's Lounge on Turk Street, says the TL was a place where transgender people could live relatively undisturbed by police and the rest of society.

She's mostly retired from the stage now, but busily campaigned for recognition of the trans community's contribution to local culture by getting the 100 block of Turk Street renamed in honor of famed local drag performer, and Elizondo's late best friend, Vicki Marlane. It was Marlane, nicknamed “the girl with the liquid spine” thanks to her trademark shimmy, who inspired Elizondo to take up performing.

And now Marlane is being honored by the renaming of that block of Turk, punningly, as Vicki Mar Lane, thanks to a Board of Supervisors resolution by D6's Jane Kim.

Beloved as a boundary-pusher by many in the local trans community, for decades Marlane performed every Friday and Saturday multiple times per night well into her 70s. She claimed to be the oldest continuously performing drag queen in the world. It wasn't until the 2000s that she started garnering wider acclaim: an SF Pride grand marshal crown in 2003; a profile in the New York Times and a feature-length documentary in 2009; a GLBT History Museum exhibition earlier this year.

OPENED THE DOORS

Marlane and others “opened the doors for us,” Elizondo says. If trans women like Marlane a generation ago “could wear dresses, why couldn't we dress like women, too? It was against the law, but we had to take a chance.” Getting an aboveground job as a transgender person was almost impossible — a reality that continues today for many — so performing in drag and turning tricks were among the limited ways they could make money.

The two entertainers knew of each other in the 1960s, but became friends in the '90s. Marlane encouraged Elizondo to join Aunt Charlie's long-running weekly drag revue, the Hot Boxxx Girls.

“I was so nervous the first time I performed, I walked out on the stage and fell on my face,” Elizondo remembers. But she stayed on there, performing covers (Tina Turner and Mexican singer Dulce María were favorites) until Marlane died in 2011 at the age of 76.

Elizondo inherited the drag legend's 75 dazzling stage gowns, many by Los Angeles designer Sue Wong. Marlane can be seen wearing a number of the dresses in a film about her life, “Forever's Gonna Start Tonight,” made a year before she died.

Elizondo gave some gowns to the local trans Latina organization ELLA for an upcoming benefit pageant. Others she donated to the GLBT Historical Society, which recently wrapped an exhibition on Marlane that Elizondo helped to curate.

“Vicki Marlane's life is emblematic of so many transgender and queer people, who discover their fullest selves in San Francisco and, in the process, become iconic inspirations for the rest of us,” says Don Romesburg, curator of the society's museum in the Castro.

A group of fellow Marlane fans and friends hatched the plan for the Turk Street renaming soon after her death,



COURTESY FELICIA ELIZONDO

Vicki Marlane graces a poster from her stage days at Aunt Charlie's Lounge, an LGBT landmark on the stretch of Turk Street to become Vicki Mar Lane.

commemorating her on the block where she entertained over the years. They gathered hundreds of signatures and raised \$2,500 for new street signage, but for several years they couldn't find anyone at City Hall to get behind the cause.

Enter Supervisor Jane Kim. “The camaraderie and community that was built by (the) shared struggle (of the trans community) is incredibly inspiring, and Vicki in particular was a mentor to other performers and transgender youth coming up in that scene,” says Kim. “It's time for a transgender icon and activist to have a place of recognition on our city streets, and this block is the perfect place to memorialize her legacy.”

A LEGENDARY PERFORMER

Kim met with campaigners last year and in February introduced a Board of Supervisors resolution to get things moving with the street sign change.

“It's a teachable moment,” says Kim, “an opportunity to educate and share information about the history of the transgender community in the Tenderloin so that it becomes a larger community history.”

Supervisor David Campos agrees. “She was a legendary performer and was certainly an institution within the LGBT community,” he says. Marlane “worked very hard to empower the transgender community ... and I think that it makes sense to honor [her].”

Kim's resolution passed unanimously at the April 22 full board meeting. Kim and Elizondo hope to announce the renaming by this year's Trans March in June.

“We can no longer have the ‘T’ in ‘LGBT’ be silent,” Elizondo says, and the renaming is one way to challenge the cultural erasure — as a result of Kim's resolution, a shout-out to the public as well as the trans community.

Elizondo is an HIV-positive AIDS activist who, throughout the 1980s and '90s, cared for gay men with AIDS in hospice, but has mixed feelings because the gay community, she says, often has been unsupportive of trans people. Marlane, elected 2003 SF Pride Parade grand marshal, had for years before avoided the event because at her first one, in 1970, transphobes in the crowd had thrown trash at her as she was driven down the parade route.

“There's still no unity in our community,” Elizondo says with a sigh. She said SF Pride recently asked her to join its board, but she declined: “Since the lesbians and gays don't accept us, why in



PHOTO PAUL DUNN

the hell would I go into a board if there's gays and lesbians that, no matter what I say, will always bring me down?”

Now in her 60s, “I'm tired of fighting for my community,” Elizondo says. “I think it's time for them to stand up for themselves.” Many of her friends have moved out of San Francisco, and sometimes she thinks of leaving, too. “I'm tired of living in a matchbook apartment.”

Though Elizondo says she's ready to pass the torch, it's easy to get the sense that, like Marlane, she'll keep working it till the end. She recently dusted off her gowns to perform for LGBT seniors, was honored with a civil rights award by the Harvey Milk LGBT Democratic Club, and is helping with plans for a Marlane mural by local artist Laura Campos, to go along with the street name change.

Elizondo frequently has done speaking gigs and media interviews since appearing in “Screaming Queens,” the Emmy-winning 2005 documentary about the 1966 Compton's Cafeteria riot, when trans people fought back against police abuse in the Tenderloin.

Any regrets in life? she's asked. “Waiting until I was old before I got famous.” ■

Toshio Meronek is a freelance writer in San Francisco.



PHOTO PAUL DUNN

Felicia Elizondo, one of the noted Hot Boxxx Girls who is still performing, relaxes at home with companions Gypsy and Diamond and remembers her friendship with Vicki Marlane.

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Why so low: State law caps fee

City can only recover actual costs of administering pilot

▶ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

At the end of 2013, protesters began blocking the big buses at designated route stops, equating the shuttles with a host of social ills, from gentrification of neighborhoods to greed — billion-dollar tech companies contributing nothing to the cost of maintaining streets their buses travel ponderously.

Within weeks, the MTA board voted unanimously for a Commuter Shuttle Policy and Pilot Program. Its costs, estimated at \$1.7 million, will be paid for by shuttle providers who will ante up \$1.06 for each red zone stop each weekday for 12 months. For the final six months of the pilot, their fee will rise to \$1.10.

The calculation looks like this: \$1.06 x 4,121 stops per weekday x 260 days for the first 12 months, then \$1.10 x 4,121 x 130 days for the next six months.

Shuttle providers will be required to apply to MTA for a permit, display placards that identify their buses as part of the pilot, give Muni buses priority in the red zone, pay penalties for permit violations and agree to carry a GPS device on board that tracks routes, stops and distances traveled.

Protesters see the bus fee as scant repayment for the damage to the city's fabric. It is, however, a legal tit for tat: A 1996 state law, Proposition 218, restricts local governments from collecting fees totaling more than the cost of administering that service or program. MTA says it created the program, then calculated the maximum fee.

The budget is divided into labor — \$762,445 for existing MTA personnel, no new hires — and about \$1 million for consultants and hard costs, with almost half of that for the GPS devices.

Seventeen positions comprise the labor line items: A project director will put in 25% time, assisted by a project manager at 15% (312 hours) and an assistant director at 1.2% time (25 hours). Their hours logged may be small, but, we asked, why so many staff at the top?

“These positions are titles associat-



PHOTO TOM CARTER

ed with staff classifications, not necessarily specific individuals' roles in the project,” Kristen Holland, MTA public relations officer, wrote in an email.

Other project “positions” are two transit planners working quarter time, an assistant engineer, an accountant and a student design trainee, all 15% time.

The biggest single labor cost is for eight parking control officers. Working quarter time, they'll log 4,160 hours at a hefty \$44.67 an hour plus fringe benefits, for a total of \$307,205, almost 20% of the total program budget. A senior controller officer will spend 520 hours overseeing them.

The Extra asked MTA to explain the eight officers' duties and how so few can oversee 200 stops.

“(They) are responsible for enforcing parking regulations ... GPS feeds (will) focus this team's efforts,” Holland said, without explaining what that entails.

The staff positions total only 3.41 FTE. Holland wouldn't comment on whether the low FTE was unusual for 18 months of work and a \$1.7 million program: “Budgets and staff for (MTA) pilots vary based on the particular needs of the projects.”

In the nonlabor category of the budget, the costliest item, \$405,000, is for onboard GPS devices, \$60 a month for 375 vehicles. Holland couldn't say if the \$60 tab was rental or purchase, insisting that two months before the pilot is scheduled to start, none of the plan costs and fees are final.



PHOTO MARJORIE BEGGS

A double-decker behemoth, above, cruises up Frederick Street in the Upper Haight. Left: A worker gets out on Valencia Street with freshly cleaned laundry.

She did give us a brief explanation of what the GPS devices will do: “Provide feeds to MTA, allowing for auditing, follow-up on complaints, focusing enforcement, and understanding operational activities (e.g., hot spots for delay). All commuter shuttles will be required to share data, regardless of

whether they're operating within the city or regionally.”

The Extra wondered if MTA had worried that the \$1-plus fee might raise some hackles. Holland responded, “The MTA's interest is to recover all costs allowed by law.” Period. ■

1st 'Google bus' protest — egged in '08

Private shuttles on San Francisco streets were a subtle presence 30 years ago when vans started carrying employees and students from one business or institution site to another. The vehicles didn't use red zones, just the white zones in front of their buildings, which most still do today.

In 2004, a white Google bus ushered in the era of intercity commuter shuttles. It made two stops in the city and carried 155 employees down to Silicon Valley daily. Yahoo buses came a year later, then Genentech, Apple, Facebook, Netflix, Electronic Arts, eBay and LinkedIn added buses.

By 2012, MTA said it knew of 20 employers offering intracity shuttles and 17 sponsoring regional bus services for tens of thousands of employees daily.

In the Haight in 2008, frustrated resident Richard Beggs, in the first known direct action taken against a tech shuttle, egged an idling Google bus on his narrow residential street. The bus, early for its pickups in a red zone a block away, had stopped for a few minutes, a pattern that continues to this day.

The egging didn't do much more than make a little, blobby mess. When more shuttles started appearing over the next few months, Beggs called Google headquarters to complain.

“I was told that Google had no transportation office or coordinator,” he says. “The person denied any knowledge of shuttles and insisted, ‘We're not a transportation company — sorry, I can't help you.’”

Beggs — this reporter's husband — says today that Google and other shuttles ply his street starting at 6 a.m. and sometimes run every few minutes until mid-morning. The reverse drop-off commute begins around 6 p.m. and ends four hours later.

“When I stand in my first-floor living room and there's a bus outside, it fills the entire window,” he says with irritation.

Google has come a long way from denial. It's proud of its fleet, even if wary of protesters who've blockaded their shuttles in the city and the East Bay. According to its Website, Bay Areawide “5,000 Googlers take the shuttle to work on any given day ... 1.8 million rides in 2012.” ■

— Marjorie Beggs

Supes scrutinize shuttles

Report offers ideas to reduce impacts

The pilot may be delayed not only because of the lawsuit filed May 1 by protesters, but because the Board of Supervisors wants to look harder at the larger issue of the shuttles' impact. At Supervisor Eric Mar's request, the supes' budget and legislative analyst, Harvey M. Rose Associates, produced an independent report on the private shuttles and released it at the end of March. (Rose Associates works with 22 other California cities besides San Francisco.)

The budget analyst's report summarizes five years worth of various agencies' shuttle studies, then lays out eight actions the supervisors might take, if they wish, to mitigate the shuttles' impacts.

Several recommendations to MTA are stated as “inputs,” for example defining what rate of shuttle-Muni bus conflict is acceptable. Other options are “requests” — such as that during the pilot program shared red zones be allowed only on streets without bicycle lanes. Some requests are more dramatic: that MTA require shuttle providers to sign community benefit agreements with the city to lessen any negative effects the pilot identified. Another is that voters be given the chance to impose a special tax on some or all shuttle providers.

One appealing suggestion is that shuttle providers find a central location in the city for loading and unloading their employees, rather than indulging them in a few minutes' walk to a red or white zone near their home.

“It's up to MTA as to the extent to which they incorporate the (supervisors') input,” says Fred Brousseau, principal at Harvey M. Rose Associates and author of the report.

Sometime in May, the Land Use Committee is going to consider the report, Brousseau says. “The supervisors will look at the options for action we suggested, not the details of the pilot program. It will be a forum to discuss impacts, and they will take public testimony.” ■

— Marjorie Beggs

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JACK SNOOK Community activist



PHOTO ALISON L. MOY

With live guitar music playing almost imperceptibly in the background, more than two dozen people, including Supervisor Jane Kim, gathered in the Jefferson Hotel's community room to remember resident Jack Snook. He was, said a friend, a "cool, interesting, sweet, genuine guy," and many of the mourners were openly emotional during the April 7 memorial.

Mr. Snook had lived at the Jefferson for six years before his March 30 death at age 52, and he was an integral part of the hotel community. But his friendships extended throughout the neighborhood because of his activism.

"I was introduced to Jack when I started my campaign for supervisor in 2010," Kim said. "He asked a lot of really good questions about why I thought I

could be a good supervisor for the Tenderloin, and he worked with our office for the last four years." Issues included bedbug abatement and legislation to make landlords accountable, tenants' rights and Safe Passage, the program to help Tenderloin kids navigate their neighborhood safely.

Kim added that when someone passes, we learn to cherish those who are still with us. We remember once more "how precious life is," she said.

Mr. Snook was part of the successful 2012 campaign to pass Proposition C, which established a city-financed trust fund to increase affordable housing. He also participated in the community coalition organized to force California Pacific Medical Center to be more responsive to citywide and neighborhood needs in its bid to construct a new hospital and medical center on the edge of the Tenderloin at Van Ness and Geary.

"Jack had a deep intellect and political activism, always asking about the best systems, the best laws for getting things accomplished," said James Tracy, Community Housing Partnership organizer. "He also did everything with grace and humor. He fought for housing for everyone, not just for himself, and he always worked to get people off the street."

Zen Buddhist priestess Jana Drakka, who officiated at Mr. Snook's memorial, began the service by inviting mourners, one at a time, to approach a table serving as an altar at the front of the room. It held a large bouquet of spring flowers, a candle and two small, shallow bowls. Mourners, she said, could remember Mr. Snook by taking a tiny pinch of incense from one bowl and putting it on burning charcoal in the other, a symbol that life is ephemeral.

Drakka performed the ritual first, facing the altar, bowing slightly, gently

putting the incense on the charcoal. A dozen mourners, including Supervisor Kim, solemnly followed her.

Afterward, guitarist Nathaniel Tuli-ao led the group in three choruses of "Amazing Grace" and sang solo "Because He Lives." Drakka then asked people to share their memories of Mr. Snook.

"We were both from Chicago, so we had that in common," said one neighbor. "He'd had a tough life, a lot of struggles, but he was still a fun guy and he did great organizing work, especially for Prop. C. One of his jobs was to knock on doors of everyone here at the Jefferson and make sure they voted."

Another said Mr. Snook was "a funny, perky, most humble guy, and such a gentleman." A third said he and Mr. Snook came to the Jefferson at the same time, six years ago. "We grew together in this place. This hotel is no. 1 in the Tenderloin — it's where I learned to be a part [of the community]."

Mr. Snook, who grew up in Chicago, was one of four children and his family still lives there. His parents were by his side when he died, said Marla Smoot, Jefferson case manager. She had few other details of his life but knew that he had attended San Francisco State University and worked in the city's public school classrooms in some capacity.

His art was a source of joy, Smoot wrote in an email after the memorial. "He made collages out of magazine clippings and pictures and made them on anything he could find, backs of posters, wooden surfaces, his walls, anywhere."

Drakka concluded the memorial, reminding everyone to remember Mr. Snook and "his joyous, beautiful smile that was like a light, shining." ■

— Marjorie Beggs

RICHARD PEREZ Died in his room

Nobody seemed to know Richard Perez very well. He had been at Arlington Residence a year and kept to himself. That's pretty much what his sketchy obituary was going to say, until near the end of his memorial when it all changed and Mr. Perez, for better or for worse, sprang to life.

His social worker, Clarke Martin, and his across-the-hall fourth-floor neighbor, George Golden, were two among seven mourners who spoke early at Mr. Perez's April 1 memorial in the hotel's upper lobby. Mr. Perez died in his room March 28 of unknown causes. He was 61.

"He kept things close to the vest," Martin said, "and never caused problems. I was impressed he was sober. He came from Walden House and he had a parole officer. He would wait for her, but she never showed up for appointments. He was very anxious about it, but I told him not to worry. He had some family in San Jose, a brother, and he had been happy they had reconciled and I was touched deeply about that."



COURTESY ARLINGTON RESIDENCE

Golden knew him from the times Mr. Perez would knock on his door to say he was leaving the building.

"And he'd knock on my door when he got back and I'd look over there later — he kept his room clean and neat — and he'd be asleep in his chair with the door open," Golden said. "I said, 'Better shut your door or people will take things.' He said, 'They're welcome to it.'"

Mr. Perez had terrible back pain, both men said, and he used a cane.

"But he didn't want to talk about his personal life," Golden said, or much of anything. Golden knew that he had girlfriends, but they didn't visit. Mr. Perez was planning to go to San Jose, but when Golden hadn't heard from him for several days he got worried and notified Clarke, who then went to Mr. Perez's room and found him dead.

"I miss him for not checking in with me," Golden concluded. "It was (our) ritual."

It was nearing time for Rev. Paul Trudeau, who conducted the memorial, to say final prayers when Bret Mossteller arrived late. In no time, Mossteller was on his feet giving depth to Mr. Perez's life, telling how he had been a neighborhood activist all his life, fighting the good fight against injustice, getting arrested at demonstrations, spending a lifetime in and out of jail since he was 16, and suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder ("everybody in prison got it").

"He just kept getting arrested," Mossteller continued, speaking fast and sometimes waving his arms emotionally. "But Jan. 21st, he was notified he'd get his certificate of discharge from the government in 90 days and he'd no longer be on parole, man. You can say there's no such thing as freedom, but there is. He was really happy, man."

Mossteller said Mr. Perez came down to his second-floor room five days a week to watch movies with him. He liked Mossteller's cat, never complained about anything, was "caring and giving," and "walked with an air of 'you're not going to push me around, man.'"

"He's a great guy who did a lot of good for a lot of people," Mossteller said, and sat down, having bestowed the last credits when they were due. ■

— Tom Carter

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The North of Market / Tenderloin Community Benefit District invites qualified community members to apply for a Board of Director's seat!

To learn more about Board membership, contact our office at: info@nom-tlcbd.org or 415-292-4812

Serving as a Board of Director member is a rewarding volunteer opportunity allowing individuals to help navigate and oversee the organization's mission and goals for the North of Market / Tenderloin neighborhood and community. Qualified applicants must be a North of Market / Tenderloin property or business owner, or resident.

Applications are accepted up until the Annual Board of Director's meeting and elections, June 16th, 2014, 4 PM at 134 Golden Gate Ave., Suite A, San Francisco, CA 94102. All NOMTLCBD meetings are open to the public.

The North of Market / Tenderloin Community Benefit District (NOMTLCBD) exists to facilitate the transformation of the Tenderloin into a cleaner, safer, more vibrant neighborhood. nom-tlcbd.org

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

ARTS EVENTS

DIVAfest at EXIT Theatre. May 1-24, Kirstin Hersh's "Rat Girl," adapted by Stuart Eugene Bousel, EXIT Stage Left, 156 Eddy St.; May 2-24, "At the White Rabbit Burlesque," EXIT Theatre, 156 Eddy St.; May 3-23, "Pas de Quatre," EXIT Studio, 156 Eddy St. Info: theexit.org.

Thursdays@Noon Films. Main Public Library, Koret Auditorium, noon-2 p.m. Baseball themes this month: May 8, "Bull Durham" (1988); May 15, "Eight Men Out" (1988); May 22, "Damn Yankees" (1958); May 29, "Field of Dreams" (1989).

Free Family Concert. S.F. Girl's Chorus, Main Library, Koret Auditorium, May 10, 2-3 p.m. ensemble of 60 girls, ages 8-13, directed by Laney Armstrong.

Children's Art Workshop. Mother's Day, May 11, 2-4 p.m., Main Library, Children's Center. Children 5 and up bring a photo or poem of mom to add to the miniature book that you'll make for her. Free workshop by Children's Multicultural Museum artist Andrei Glase. Info: Librarian Jim Jeske, 557-4554 or sfpl.org.

Opera preview lecture. Main Library, Koret Auditorium May 28, noon-2 p.m. Opera Guild musicologist talks about "Show Boat," S.F. Opera performances June 1-July 2. "Show Boat" music by Jerome Kern., book and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein, based on the novel by Edna Ferber.

REGULAR SCHEDULE

HOUSING

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

HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

CBHS Client Council, 3rd Tuesday of month, 3-5 p.m., 1380 Howard, Room 515. Consumer advisers from self-help groups and mental health consumer advocates. Public welcome. Info: 255-3695. Call ahead as meeting location may change.

Healthcare Action Team, 2nd Wednesday of month, 1010 Mission St., Bayanihan Community



PHOTO: SERENA MORELLI

Pas de Quatre, part of DIVAfest, at EXIT Studio through May 23.

Center, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Focus on increasing supportive home services, expanded eligibility for home care, improved discharge planning. Light lunch. Call James Chionsini, 703-0188 x304.

Hoarding and Cluttering Support Groups, weekly meetings at various times, conducted by Mental Health Association of San Francisco, 870 Market St., Suite 928. Info: 421-2926 or mentalhealthsf.org/group-search.

Legal clinic, 4th Thursday of the month, 507 Polk St., 10 a.m.-noon. Legal help for people with psychiatric or developmental disabilities who need help with an SSA work review, sponsored by People with Disabilities Foundation. Sliding-scale fee. By appointment only: 931-3070. Info: pwndf.org.

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. 255-3474.

Tenderloin Healthy Corner Store Coalition, 4th Thursday of the month, 3 p.m., Kelly Cullen Community Building, 220 Golden Gate Ave., 2nd floor auditorium or 5th floor gym. Public meetings to discuss legislation that encourages corner stores to sell fresh food and reduce tobacco and alcohol sales.

Info: Jessica Estrada, jessica@vydc.org, 771-2600.

SAFETY

SoMa Police Community Relations Forum, 4th Monday of each month, 6-7:30 p.m. Location varies. To receive monthly email info: 538-8100 x202.

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

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT

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

Central Market Community Benefit District, board meets 2nd Tuesday of month, Hotel Whitcomb, 1231 Market St., 3 p.m. Info: 882-3088, http://central-market.org.

Friends of Boeddeker Park. Meetings continue during park renovation, 3rd Thursday of the month,

3:30 p.m., Un Cafecito, 335 Jones St. Info: Betty Traynor, 931-1126.

Gene Friend Recreation Center Advisory Board, 3rd Thursday of month, 5 p.m. Works to protect SoMa resources for all residents. Gene Friend Rec Center, 270 Sixth St. Info: Tim Figueras, 554-9532.

North of Market/Tenderloin Community Benefit District. Full board meets 3rd Monday at 4 p.m.. Call 292-4812 for location or check nom-tlcbd.org.

Safe Haven Project, 4th Tuesday of each month, 3 p.m., 519 Ellis St. (Senator Hotel). Contact: 563-3205, x115, or centralcitysafehaven@gmail.com.

SoMa Community Stabilization Fund Advisory Committee, 3rd Thursday of month, 5:30 p.m., 1 South Van Ness, 2nd floor. Info: Claudine del Rosario, 701-5580.

Tenderloin Futures Collaborative, 3rd Wednesday of the month, 11 a.m.-noon, Tenderloin Police Community Room, 301 Eddy. Presentations on issues of interest to neighborhood residents, nonprofits and businesses. Info: 820-1412.

SENIORS AND DISABLED

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

Senior & Disability Action (formerly Planning for Elders/Senior Action Network), general meeting, 2nd Thursday of month, 9 a.m.-noon, Universal Unitarian Church, 1187 Franklin St. SDA Housing Collaborative meeting, 3rd Wednesday, 1 p.m. HealthCare Action Team meeting, 2nd Wednesday, 1010 Mission St., (Bayanihan Community Center). For info about SDA's Survival School, University and computer class schedules: 546-1333, www.sdaction.org.

DISTRICT 6 SUPERVISOR

Jane Kim, member, Land Use Committee, School District, Transportation Authority; chair, Transbay Joint Powers Authority Board of Directors; vice-chair Transportation Authority Plans & Programs Committee

Legislative aides: Sunny Angulo, Ivy Lee and April Veneracion

Jane Kim@sfgov.org 554-7970

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