

Rules over e-rides, taxis different as day, night

28 simple regs for app-hail firms, 71 dense pages for cab companies

By MARK HEDIN

E-RIDE COMPANIES have decimated the taxi industry in San Francisco and elsewhere while largely operating free from or in defiance of government regulation. A cease-and-desist order the state Public Utilities Commission served on Lyft and Sidecar in August 2012, for instance, was shrugged off by the companies. More than a year later, the PUC rolled over and established a handful of regulations for them, thus providing a degree of legitimacy.

But the PUC's short list of 28 requirements pales in comparison with what the taxicab industry has to comply with.

San Francisco taxis operate under a set of Municipal Transportation Agency regulations developed over decades and so extensive a Metro car could hardly haul them. The MTA's "Regulation of Motor Vehicles for Hire" document is 71 pages. It takes 1½ pages to describe the general scope and purpose of the regulations, then seven more to define all the terms in the 60-some pages of regulations that follow. These uncounted hundreds of regs are organized into 20 sections of rules and procedures governing commercial transportation of passengers.

"You would need to be an attorney or someone on the legislative side" to summarize all that's required of cab operators, Robert Lyles, SFMTA deputy spokesman, said. "There are several layers of regulations that taxis must meet to operate daily. We believe those regulations are in place to create a better experience and ensure the safety of both the operators and the riding public."

Robert Lyles
SFMTA

Drivers must begin and end their shifts at their company's place of business. They must conduct a safety check and communications equipment test prior to starting out. They not only need to be able to accept credit and debit cards, they have to have two ways to do so, should the first way fail.

Taxicabs cannot have 100,000 miles or more when they are placed into service, and must be retired when they reach 375,000. They have to be inspected annually by the SFMTA, or more often if the agency decides to. Besides having registration and insurance, they must provide a recent "Brake Certificate" at the time of inspection. Other regulations set standards for the condition of the cabs' upholstery, tires, hubcaps and even the size of allowable dents to the body of the cars and detail expectations of cleanliness.

Taxi companies also must maintain records "for at least six years" that include information on each driver and the shifts he or she works, including "GPS-generated origin, incremental, destination coordinates of each trip," the number of passengers, fares, fees, mileage, time of hire and discharge of each trip and more, such as

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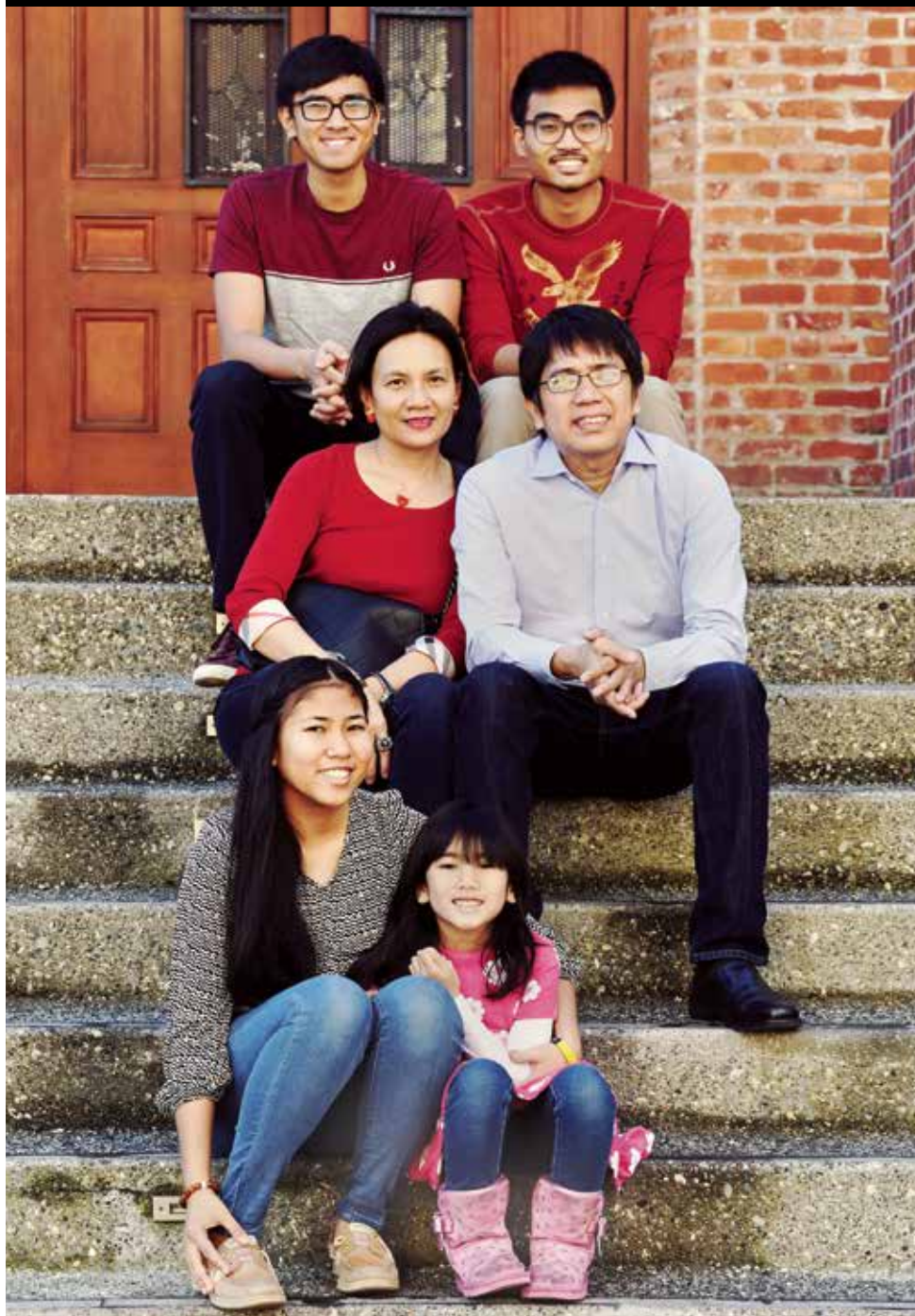


CENTRAL CITY

EXTRA!

SAN FRANCISCO

CURRAN HOUSE



The Listana family gathers outside St. Patrick's after Mass. The family, from the Philippines, is the first one profiled in *The Extra's* series on diversity that shows the cosmopolitan Tenderloin to be a mini S.F. when it comes to diversity: Cecilia and Lorenzo Listana, center, with sons, above, Joseverino Paolo, 23, left, and Nicu, 21, and daughters Precious, 18, and Gabrielle, 7, below.

TL: DIVERSE CITY

By TOM CARTER

PHOTOS BY PAUL DUNN

LORENZO LISTANA can tell you something about changing fortunes. Thirty-five years ago, he was being tortured in a Manila prison, struggling to stay sane. It was near the end of the 10-year martial law era of Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos. A curfew stopped everyone at night and civil rights were nonexistent. Listana and 18 fellow student activists protesting the conditions were arrested and jailed.

"Yes, tortured, some of us every day for a month," Listana says. "Physically and mentally. It was hard. We were rounded up without charges."

"They let us go after six months, ya, ya," Listana says, emitting his characteristic punctuation, as a dismissive laugh that said good

riddance to rotten times.

Marcos fled to Hawaii in 1986 and Listana, with others, persevered.

"I was one of 10,000 people who filed a suit against him there. And we won."

Reveled by his victims, beset by illness, Marcos died in exile in Hawaii in 1989, enduring as Listana's dark memory of what a dictatorship can bring.

Now, at 54, Listana enjoys life in the country of his dreams with his very active family — his wife and four children — in a three-bedroom apartment on the eighth floor of Curran House, while working as a community organizer, a job he loves.

"And I have a community here," he says with satisfaction.

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EDITORIAL

Tech could color the Tenderloin green

Friends of the Urban Forest is, as on past occasions, organizing a tree planting in the Tenderloin June 13, helping property owners prepare the sidewalk and plant and maintain the trees. How many trees get planted — Urban Forest's forecast is around 50 — depends on the economics and esthetics of the property owners who must purchase the trees and maintain them, at least until the city finds funds to take that over (see the March Extra or Hoodline.com).

Much of the property in the neighborhood is owned by absentee landlords, so the TL isn't likely to get much TLC from owners who live elsewhere. But what if the Twitter tax break companies, and other prosperous newbies, pitch in and take this opportunity to make this a real re-greening of the Tenderloin?

It's \$135 to plant a tree through Friends of the Urban Forest. How about 1,000 trees to really make a difference? 20 trees per block. That would transform the Tenderloin.

To plant them all at once would be overwhelming and unwise. But make that a goal to be achieved over, say, two years, phasing them in block by block? That's enough greenery to make trees a pleasant part of the landscape, boost the Tenderloin's tree canopy significantly, and make trees so common people would come to expect them and respect them instead of picking on the poor isolated few.

Tech at least should step up and make this next tree planting meaningful. Please call Phil Pierce, 268-0773, or email him at phil@fuf.net and place an order. Thank you. ■



DIGITAL ILLUSTRATION LISE STAMPFLI

NEWS COMMENTARY

#Oops! Press gives Twitter huge break



This is from the front page of the Feb. 21. Oakland Tribune.

BY MARK HEDIN

WITH THE FAIRNESS of the Twitter tax break seriously in question, an error in the firm's favor appeared in a front-page story in late February in all of the Bay Area News Group's major papers — every Bay Area daily except the Chronicle and Examiner. Reporter Heather Somerville reported that in fiscal year 2013-14, Twitter donated \$360 million to 19 nonprofits.

Would that it were so. In fact, Twit-

ter, which went public that year, is only claiming to the city that it provided \$360,000.

So it's just a story of a budget-cutting news organization running identical stories on the front pages of all the regional papers it owns, while declining to support an adequate team of fact-checkers — known as copy editors in the news business. The story appeared on the front page of the Oakland Tribune, San Jose Mercury News, Marin Independent Journal and Contra-

Costa Times, to name a few.

Somerville, reached by phone at the offices of the Oakland Tribune March 19, said she was unaware of the error.

She quickly got back to The Extra in an email: "Thanks for catching that. We clearly should have; \$360 million would have been an obscene amount of money. It should be corrected online this evening and a print correction running tomorrow or Saturday." ■

ERRATUM

In the February issue of The Extra, the last name of Portland, Ore., research librarian Tony Greiner was misspelled. The Extra regrets the error. ■

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Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD)

REVISED Notice of Public Hearing and Availability of Draft 2015-2016 Action Plan, Including Preliminary Funding Recommendations

The Draft 2015-2016 Action Plan, which includes preliminary funding recommendations for the CDBG, ESG, HOME and HOPWA programs, will be available for public review and comment from **March 26, 2015 through April 24, 2015**. A public hearing to receive comments on the Draft 2015-2016 Action Plan is scheduled for **Tuesday, March 31, 2015 at 6:00 PM** at 1 South Van Ness Avenue, 2nd Floor Atrium Conference Room. For more information, please visit www.sfmohcd.org or call 415-701-5500.

San Francisco Arts Commission

Arts Commission Street Artists Program: Refund of Fees for Honorably Discharged Veterans.

If you are an honorably discharged Veteran and a resident of California who participated in the Street Artists Program between January 1, 2009 and July 1, 2014, you may be entitled to a refund of your street artist fees paid to the Arts Commission during that time period. Refund claims must be submitted in person or postmarked by July 1, 2015. Please visit sfartscommission.org/street_artists_program for more information about eligibility and instructions on how to file a refund claim.

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CENTRAL CITY

EXTRA

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PHONE: (415) 626-1650

FAX: (415) 626-7276

EMAIL: centralcityextra@studycenter.org

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Geoffrey Link

SENIOR WRITER/EDITOR: Marjorie Beggs

COMMUNITY REPORTER: Tom Carter

REPORTERS: Brian Rinker, Mark Hedin, Eric Louie, Paul Dunn, Jonathan Newman

DESIGNER: Lise Stampfli

PHOTOGRAPHERS: Mark Doneza, Paul Dunn

CONTRIBUTORS: John Burks, Ed Bowers

DESIGN CONSULTANT: Don McCartney

DISTRIBUTION: Mark Hedin

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT: Sophia Heller

COMMUNITY CONSULTANT: Michael Nulty

ONLINE PARTNER: Hoodline

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Taxi regs encyclopedic, e-ride rules like a brochure

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the driver's ID and shift start and end times and other vehicle data — but “not including personal customer information.” As of April 30, 2013, all of this had to be transmitted electronically “with a default setting of every six seconds.”

Legally operating one of the city's 1,900 cabs requires that either the driver — or whoever he or she is leasing the cab from — owns a taxi medallion, which not long ago cost \$250,000. To increase the number of cabs, the SFMTA recently cut the cost in half for the 200 new medallions it's in the process of issuing. To even be eligible to buy a medallion, cabbies must have driven at least 800 hours a year for four of the past five years and have been on the SFMTA waiting list that closed in December 2009.

In March The Extra repeatedly asked Uber, Lyft and Sidecar to tell us how many drivers they have working in San Francisco. None replied. However, Lyft representative Emily Carter, speaking at a Mayor's Disability Council hearing in September last year, said Lyft had 10,000 drivers operating in the city then — too many, she suggested, to realistically require an extensive training program.

SFMTA regulations detail such particulars as a minimum age for drivers (24); a citizenship requirement; a prohibition on gifts or gratuities from drivers to permit holders; the maximum time a cab can be parked on a city street (four hours); drug testing; rules on staffing and dispatching; lost-and-found property; vehicle maintenance; spare vehicles; compliance with greenhouse gas reduction efforts; workers' compensation; accident reporting; a plan for public emergencies; and a requirement that all telephone calls be answered within six rings, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year; and be answered in a certain (professional) manner.

(Taxi companies must document) the number of passengers, fares, fees, mileage, time of hire and discharge of each trip and the driver's ID and shift start and end times. ... All of this has to be transmitted electronically “with a default setting of every six seconds.”

For the e-ride newbies, Lyles said, “there aren't significant regulations” at all.

Uber, Lyft, Sidecar and other app-hailing companies, don't answer to the SFMTA. They're the responsibility of the California Public Utilities Commission, which also oversees charter buses, shuttles and limos.

In September 2013, the CPUC, more than a year after demanding that Lyft and Sidecar cease-and-desist, an order they ignored, issued 28 rules for “TNCs,” or transportation network companies, the agency's name for the new transportation system.

E-companies pay but a \$1,000 fee to apply for a three-year permit that precludes them from owning the vehicles or fleets of vehicles whose operation they direct, but allows “no limit to the number of drivers that utilize the app under one permit,” according to the CPUC's 10-page “Basic Information for Transportation Network Companies and Applicants.” So Uber got its multibillion-dollar business started for \$1,000. Three-year permit renewals cost \$100.

The handful of regulations include requiring the e-ride companies to check their drivers prior to allowing them “on the platform” and quarterly thereafter. They are barred from hiring

drivers with more than three points on their DMV driving record or any major violations such as reckless driving, hit-and-run or driving with a suspended license in the previous three years, or any DUIs in the past seven years.

The transportation network companies, or TNCs, as officials call them, must also provide \$1 million-per-incident commercial liability insurance for drivers and vehicles “while they are providing TNC services.” This last bit of verbiage became a point of contention in the New Year's Eve 2014 death of 6-year-old Sofia Liu, when Uber said that because its driver who hit the girl and her mom in the Polk Street crosswalk at Ellis Street did not have a passenger at the time, it was not liable in the death, although it fired driver Syed Muzzafar.

The PUC's regulations also call for a 19-point vehicle inspection covering lights, locks, steering, windshield viability and other basics, and a driver training program, useless because it comes with no specifics on what is to be covered. Companies are required to file reports on a regular basis, including one on how they intend to address the gap in making transportation available to disabled clients, something they've been slow to get around to while fighting for access to more lucrative fares,

such as to and from the airport.

Does that sound like a lot? It's a drop in the bucket compared with what taxi companies handle.

Taxis also must comply with guidelines governing the color schemes, signage and lights that identify taxis. The number of taxi permits issued, too, is subject to a no-more-than-annual revision.

All cabs are required to be equipped with, among other things, a flashlight for night shifts and a security camera “manufactured after December 31, 2006.” They have to allow passengers to split the tab any way they choose, but cannot charge more than the fare shown on the Taximeter and must issue a receipt if asked.

City Hall has encouraged Uber, Lyft, Sidecar and the others to take over the ride-for-hire industry here, which has led to frequent stories of public abuse by their relatively unprepared drivers and unregulated vehicles.

The Department of Motor Vehicles in January issued an advisory stating that vehicles used for ride-hailing must obtain commercial license plates. The companies quickly cried foul. Lyft complained that “to get commercial plates would essentially treat peer-to-peer transportation the same as a taxi,” according to a Chronicle report. So the DMV immediately backed down.

Contrast the taxis' hard-and-fast charges with Uber's notorious “surge pricing” that saw the company quadruple its rates during a hostage situation in downtown Sydney, Australia, on Dec. 15 until public outcry shamed it into a U-turn.

But a few days earlier, in San Francisco, passengers were charged 3.8 times the usual rate during the heavy rains that month, and similar rules go into effect whenever demand goes up, such as for popular concerts in Golden Gate Park. ■

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City's diversity shines on 1 of the toughest blocks in the Tenderloin



Lorenzo Listana, a Curran House resident since 2005, is the community outreach coordinator for the TNDC, which owns the building.

➤ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The community is Curran House, a picture of diversity. According to TNDC's 2014 figures on Curran households, Latinos, Asians and African Americans are each 26.5% of the resident population that totals 150 to 200. Whites are 4.6%, "other" 14% and 1.5% are "unknown."

Curran's polyglot scene keeps evolving. Listana said that just recently, he met a new family from Honduras in the complex's communal laundry room.

Listana works with his Curran House neighbors and, by extension, the 3,400 residents in TNDC's 31 buildings of low-income housing, mostly poor folks whose annual incomes typically range from \$5,000 to \$20,000. At Curran House, rent is based on income, allowing up to \$70,000 for large families. The Listanas pay \$1,222 a month.

'WE FEEL SAFE'

The modern building with 14 facade balconies, winner of 10 architectural and affordable housing awards, is a half-block north of Taylor Street Center, a four-story halfway house for 210 men and women, former state prisoners working toward their eventual release. The neighborhood is rife with drug-dealing, too. But the Listanas are unfazed. "We feel safe," he says.

He supervises two staffers who work with TNDC residents in group meetings and one-on-ones, encouraging them to stand up for their rights, pursue a better quality of life and to form or join community organizations that seek social improvements. In other words, engage well and evolve positively.

The first TNDC group that Listana played a major role in creating was the East Tenderloin-TNDC Resident Council, sworn in last year at City Hall by District 6 Supervisor Jane Kim (see The Extra, July 2014). Two more resident councils have been formed since. Listana supervises a third staffer who identifies residents to train for leadership roles.

Devoted to his tasks and always cheerful, Listana seems a natural for the job.

"TNDC is a catalyst, a proactive organization," he says. "They don't just wait. They act when they see a need." What gratifies him most about mobilizing people is when they feel empowered. "They get to express their feelings. It makes a difference in their daily lives — if we

are organized, then we can improve the community."

Listana also coordinates the cultivation of the 3,500-square-foot Tenderloin People's Garden at McAllister and Larkin streets, a city-owned power station plot that TNDC leased and transformed to raise their residents' healthy-food consciousness.

In the middle of a concrete jungle, a cadre of 380 volunteers have tilled its tidy rows since 2010, and the emerald patch has responded, bearing tons of picture-perfect vegetables for volunteers and other TNDC residents.

In his free time, Listana takes on a traditional Filipino activity. As a founding member of the Tenderloin Filipino-American Community Association, he organizes workshops for the residents and TNDC staff to make Parol lanterns to be carried in an annual parade South of Market before Christmas.

Each large, boxy lantern symbolizes a different theme. For example, one wrapped in rope indicates a community bound together. Competing with up to 32 other Filipino organizations at Yerba Buena Park in the Parol Lantern Festival, Listana's group won the best-lantern contest in 2010 and 2012 and finished third last year.

THE AMERICAN DREAM

As a young man, Listana imagined the United States as a land of opportunity where he could get a fine education for his children, education having been in his father's dreams, too.

Listana grew up in Daraga in Albay Province, a 10-hour bus ride south of Manila. It's a hot, sticky, farming community of 115,000, average temperature 81 degrees, rain year-round. The community had large populations of Filipino, Chinese, Spanish, some Koreans and Indians, and many intermarried, Listana says. He knew diversity and pockets of poverty.

His father, an imaginative man of action, was an inspiration.

"My father was the first of eight children to graduate from high school," Listana says. "He became an entrepreneur. He opened a shop and sold crafted goods made from abaca fiber. We were the first to export out of Daraga in the late 1960s. "He sent all of his nine children to school and he helped his siblings, too."

Listana went away to Manila to college. Democracy, affordable education and human rights weighed heavily on



Joseverino Paolo Listana, 23, left, and brother Nicu, 21, attend Mass at St. Patrick Church on Mission Street on a recent Sunday.

his mind. Eventually, after marrying Cecilia, his wife of 25 years, and starting a family, he envisioned a better life in the U.S. where his children could benefit from good schools, and he planned for it.

Cecilia came to the U.S. first. She got a job in SoMa with Aeroskin California Inc., a wet suit maker, and had an apartment there.

In 2005, Listana arrived with their two boys and daughter. He immediately had a stroke of luck that has enhanced his family's well-being.

"It was like I won the lottery," he says, still wide-eyed at the memory.

He did, in fact, win the lottery. But it was for low-income families applying to live at Curran House. His was the eighth name drawn for one of the 14 studios, 15 one-bedrooms, 14 two-bedrooms and 24 three-bedroom units. Ten of these are for formerly homeless families, and 10 are subsidized by the federal government as Section 8 housing.

"I got to choose our unit," he says. "Otherwise, we couldn't live in San Francisco, or we'd have to live with relatives." He has four family members in the city. "I have a nice place compared to people who have been here (San Francisco) a long time and can't find their way out of poverty."

At the time, he worked part-time at Aeroskin, as a youth counselor at Burrell Place and as an administrator at another group home for disabled children.

Getting hired to help with the 2010 census led to another piece of luck. Steve Woo, then coordinator of TNDC's Community Organizing Department, became his supervisor. Listana and six other Filipinos traversed the neighborhood, knocking on an estimated 5,000 doors, encouraging residents to fill out the census questionnaire.

"I didn't know that there were a lot of Filipinos here," Listana recalls. "I went to different SROs and saw their situations. Some were not fit for human beings. Some didn't have electricity. I was shocked. It wasn't my idea of America, that poverty was a part of the

city, and rich people just a block away. I knew about poverty. And here it was the same!"

At one place he saw 10 people living in one room. The grandmother had to sleep across four straight chairs.

That experience led him to organize the neighborhood Filipino American group. Woo was impressed and hired him as a TNDC community organizer.

"He was in charge of the canvassers and he was a hard worker, a good organizer," said Woo, now a senior planner at Chinese Community Development Center. "He's a good guy, smart, passionate about helping the community. He's a good father, too. Four children? I don't know how he balances it all."

BUSY SCHEDULES

The Listana kids are realizing the family's education goals. Paolo, 22, the oldest, just graduated from San Jose State with a degree in business administration. Niku, 21, is majoring in computer programming at San Francisco State.

Precious, 18, the oldest girl, is valedictorian at Sacred Heart Preparatory where she's a three-year veteran of the debate team and on the Student Council. Gabrielle, 7, attends Presidio Knolls, a Chinese immersion school in SoMa, which Precious also attended.

Schedules are so tight that the family doesn't have much time for outings together. Both girls are involved with the Tenderloin Boys and Girls Club, and Precious has a host of other commitments.

But Sundays find them all walking to SoMa's St. Patrick's Catholic Church across from Yerba Buena Park to attend 12:15 p.m. Mass. Precious has been an altar server since 2007 and reads Prayers of the Faithful and parish announcements from the lectern. Afterward they go to lunch, often to Inay, a Filipino restaurant in the Metreon food court.

"But my concern is more profound and deep than just for Filipinos, it's about social justice," Listana was saying at the table one Saturday after lunch in their apartment. He is for the entire neighbor-



Above, clockwise: District 6 Youth Commissioner Precious Listana, center, helps facilitate a youth forum at Boeddeker Park with Curran House residents' representative Sharen Hewitt, left, and Treasure Island resident Aquarius Porter. Nicu Listana, 21, Lorenzo and Cecilia Listana's second-oldest son, washes dishes after lunch in the family's Curran House apartment. Precious, 18, and Lorenzo (not seen) chat in the family's living room as sister Gabrielle "Gabby" Listana, 7, plays games on her computer. **Below left,** Gabby peeks in the family's workroom. **Below right:** Listana, left, meets with TNDC staff Guled Muse, center, and Siu Cheung.

TL's diversity emerges in Extra's new neighborhood series

BY TOM CARTER

IN THE HEART OF SAN FRANCISCO, amid its 195 U.S. census tracts, the gritty Tenderloin, disparagingly known as the city's armpit, is nonetheless a paragon of diversity. As data from the four census tracts (122-125) that comprise the neighborhood show, diversity is more than race, though that's the common perception.

A good guess why the TL is blessed this way is because it's our poorest neighborhood. If you're impoverished or low-income, the Tenderloin, with its chorus of nonprofits bolstering the city's social safety net, is the place to go for a helping hand. The middle class and wealthy, of course, settle comfortably in other enclaves.

Central City Extra went looking for a microcosm of the Tenderloin's diversity, to visit the residents and ask how they get along in the cauldron, hear their stories, learn of their experiences, see if there's a lesson there.

We found our prize in census tract 125.01, the third most congested area in San Francisco, home to 5,335 people. The most congested is just across Taylor, and next is tract 122, near the hood's northwest corner. Our microcosm is Curran House

within the tract bounded by Taylor, Turk, Leavenworth and Ellis streets. It's on Taylor, just up the block from a blue, five-story halfway house for ex-cons. A half-block away is the notorious intersection of Turk and Taylor that the cops call "ground zero for drugs and violence."

The eight-story Curran House is one of Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corp.'s 31 low-income hotels and apartment buildings in the central city. Built in 2005, it is named after Sister Patrick Curran, a Franciscan nun who was executive director of St. Anthony Foundation in the late 1990s. It has won 10 architectural awards for the design sensibility that it's brought to the concept of affordable housing. The Extra begins its series with the story of Lorenzo Listana and his Filipino family. They live in one of 67 apartments housing people from five continents and dozens of countries. Sharen Hewitt, the building's former tenant foreman, describes them all simply as "beautiful people." She provided introductions to enable the series undertaken by The Extra's longtime community reporter, Tom Carter, and award-winning photographer Paul Dunn. ■



hood. As he has said before, "We would like this community improved, but with us in it. We want to be included in making the community better."

Cecilia and Paolo were out somewhere. Precious was listening, and Gabby was curled up on the sofa she uses as a bed at night, her nose in her dad's iPad, a birthday present from Cecilia. When everyone's home, the family speaks mostly Tagalog.

"She (Gabby) likes Brainpop," Niku offered from the sink, where he was washing the lunch dishes. "Anything basic that has to do with science or math."

Precious had delivered a speech the week before at the Don Fisher Boys and Girls Club on Fulton Street as she vied to become the citywide club's Youth of the Year. She was interviewed by five judges.

"The speech was about my challeng-

es as an immigrant and how the (TL) clubhouse helped me see the Tenderloin as my home," she says, her half-inch-over-5-foot frame perched on the sofa's arm. "If I can take advantage of my opportunities, I can step up and be a leader. I have developed into that kind of person, and I am positive that they (the judges) got that message."

She didn't win, but as a finalist she picked up a \$2,000 scholarship to further her education.

Her leadership is a matter of record, and where it will lead is anybody's guess. She is on the San Francisco Youth Commission, representing District 6, chosen over other candidates by Supervisor Kim after interviews and written testing. The commission advises the mayor and the supervisors of the needs of young people throughout the city.

The day before, she had helped organize and host a Youth Commission meeting at Boeddeker Park with about 60 in attendance.

'I WAS INTIMIDATED AT FIRST'

Precious now awaits a result that could complicate her commission commitment. In October, she was one of 160 students chosen from around the world to read their papers written on food security at a four-day Global Youth Conference in Iowa.

Standing in front of the predominantly white crowd, she realized she was the only Filipino.

"I was intimidated at first," she says, "But I got through it." She paused. "I decided not to take it as a problem. And I could start conversations on my own. It was an opportunity to represent myself and get to know people." That "value," she

says, is something her parents promote.

The paper was entitled "Gender Inequality in Somalia Prevents Food Security," one of 19 topics covering 50 countries that the organization offered to interested students.

"We were all connected by the subject," Precious says. "I did have help from my teachers."

While there, she applied for a two-month, all-expenses-paid Borlaug Ruan internship. It's a World Food Prize program that places high school students in 31 of the world's agricultural research centers from Bangladesh to Brazil to expand their study and inspire careers in science, agriculture and global development. Precious thinks she did well and, if selected, would choose India or Ethiopia to go to study.

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

SEE OUR PROGRESS in San Francisco

Jesse Cottonham Human Performance Senior Specialist

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PATRICK MURPHY Controversial pioneer blogger

Patrick Murphy, onetime tenant activist, pioneer City Hall blogger and 20-year resident of the Alexander Residence, died Jan. 26 at age 65.

Mr. Murphy worked as a general assignment reporter for the Richmond Independent and its successor, the Berkeley Daily Gazette. After he arrived in San Francisco in 1981, he filled that same position at the San Francisco Chronicle.

Mr. Murphy is often remembered for his role in preserving low-cost housing in the Tenderloin.

In 1996, the private owners of the Antonia Manor, Maria Manor, Marlton Manor and Alexander Residence announced they intended to sell and would terminate the federal subsidy for Section 8 housing to entice buyers, threatening rents affordable to the low-income. Hundreds of Tenderloin units would become market rate under new ownership. Mr. Murphy and others began organizing the Alexander's residents, urging them to recognize their pending displacement and petition local politicians to step in and prevent the sale.

Mr. Murphy began publishing an in-house broadside, The Alexander Sentinel. Neighborhood tenant councils formed, redevelopment funding materialized and nonprofits stepped forward with long-range plans to stabilize housing.

In 2000, nonprofit Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corp.'s purchase of the Alexander helped ensure low-income housing in the TL for the next 99 years.

WENT ONLINE IN 1997

Mr. Murphy was president of the Alexander Tenants Association and later served as a member of the Board of Directors of the Housing Rights Committee of San Francisco. His tenant organizing pamphlet became the District 6 Sentinel and, in 1997, the online San Francisco Sentinel. Initially, as publisher, editor and often sole reporter, he promoted the San Francisco Sentinel as a progressive voice of local politics and issues. He relished the role of gadfly, tweaking big business and championing the outsider.

His editorial style could be snappish, often caustic, and with his trademark bowtie, sometimes worn with spats, top hat and cane, he became an easily recognized presence at City Hall. But the politics and tone of the Sentinel began to change as the century turned 21. Mr. Murphy ran afoul of the powers-that-be, and got accused of news play for pay, which, of course, he denied.

In 2005, then-Supervisor Chris Daly wrote that Mr. Murphy offered him editorial rights over any stories about him in the Sentinel in exchange for \$1,500. Daly refused. Mr. Murphy denied the allegation and went on to wage a campaign to remove Daly from office.

Liberal local media voices accused Mr. Murphy of allowing front groups for downtown interests to co-opt his publication and attack Daly without substantial facts. Mr. Murphy countered that his campaign against Daly was based on a desire to return civility to politics.

Mr. Murphy later weathered a series of controversies, among them that the Sentinel was a front for Chevron and "Google bombed" its articles attacking environmental groups and indigenous natives of the Amazon delta who were suing the oil giant for pollution and murder. Critics charged that Mr. Murphy's missives were artificially promoted to the front of online searches by powerful public relations firms working on Chevron's behalf. Internet monitoring groups linked Mr. Murphy to Don Solem & Associates, a public relations firm representing Chevron.

Mr. Murphy sometimes posted the work of other journalists to the Sentinel site without attribution. A number



LUKE THOMAS/FOGCITYJOURNAL.COM

Patrick Murphy, a champion of low-cost housing and pioneering blogger, had a polarizing personality.

of local bloggers questioned his journalistic ethics.

Diagnosed with emphysema and cirrhosis in 2010, Mr. Murphy blogged: "I've thoroughly enjoyed every cigarette I ever smoked, but now I'll be smoke-free." He joked that readers should send money to defray his medical expenses and fund his emigration to Israel. He had converted to Judaism the year before.

Mr. Murphy sold the The Sentinel Website in 2013 to Seth Martinfield, who had taken over publishing the site a year earlier.

A memorial was conducted at the Alexander for Mr. Murphy on Feb. 26. Rabbi Natan Fenner of the Bay Area Jewish Healing Center presided, leading Mr. Murphy's friends and fellow Alexander residents in the Kaddish, a traditional Jewish prayer to help the soul of the departed in its journey upward.

"We often talked about his loss of faith and how he was drawn to Judaism, the aspects of the religion that were activist and worldly and that allowed him to believe in God and accept human limitations," the rabbi said. "Patrick had a hard childhood, but he said it helped him to forge his own path. He was an iconoclast and a critical thinker, and he had a particular style and voice that affected people, whether they agreed with him or not."

JOURNALISTIC MENTOR

Chris Roberts, editor of SF Evergreen, a new monthly magazine devoted to the business and culture of marijuana, recalled meeting Mr. Murphy in the early 2000s: "I saw the city as a place to find a tribe, find a community. I wanted to break into journalism and Pat showed me the ropes, told me who was who, and hired me as a journalist and photographer for the Sentinel, although I know he was as broke as me. He was real San Francisco."

Fellow Alexander resident Michael Nulty remembered how Mr. Murphy used his media abilities in the early efforts to bring changes to Tenderloin housing. "What he wrote got people to understand the problems of the Alexander's tenants and of other neighborhood tenants, too. He knew how to activate people politically and that led to good things like redevelopment grants and tenant councils," Nulty said.

h. brown, a neighborhood activist and onetime mayoral candidate, remembered that immediately after the attacks of 9/11 he sent Mr. Murphy a

hastily written diatribe calling on the U.S. to nuke Mecca. "He posted it. I was floored. He never edited me, but he was my mentor," brown said.


Joe Lindsey, who knew Mr. Murphy for 31 years, called him "my special friend. He helped me with my problems. He called me Truman Capote and I called him Norman Bates — I thought he resembled the actor Tony Perkins."

After the memorial, some people



stayed, talking in small groups, mostly about politics. A reporter reminded Sheriff Ross Mirkarimi of old gossip that he and Mr. Murphy had fallen out during Mirkarimi's years as a supervisor.

"Never happened," Mirkarimi said. "Pat and I always stayed friends. He used to hang out in my office for hours. It was very collegial. When he converted, I told him I was proud of him." ■

— Jonathan Newman



HOUSING APPLICATIONS ARE BEING ACCEPTED FOR THE KNOX AND BAYANIHAN HOUSE





The Knox **Bayanihan House**

Please go to 241 6th Street, San Francisco, CA for applications

The TODCO Single Room Occupancy (SRO) Housing Waiting List is open for the **Knox and the Bayanihan House**. If your name is currently on any TODCO Housing Waiting List and you would like information on your current status, please call the TODCO Marketing Office at **415-957-0227** on Fridays' only.

Building	Size & Amenities	Max/Min Household Income Limits	Rent as of Feb. 1, 2015
The Knox SRO located at 241- 6th St. & Tehama is accepting applications and has an OPEN WAITLIST	SRO – 1 Person or Couple Room size: 10 ½ x 18 (Semi-Private) bathroom 7 x 7 Unit amenities: sink, microwave, refrigerator, 2-burner stove, closet, single bed Building amenities: small gym, library, private lounge, roof top garden, community kitchen, laundry facility, 24 hour staff & surveillance	1 person \$34,600/year 2 person \$39,520/year Minimum income of \$1,374/month	Move-in deposit \$687 Monthly rent \$687 plus utilities
Hotel Isabel located at 1095 Mission CLOSED WAITLIST	SRO – 1 Person Shared bathroom Unit amenities: sink, microwave, refrigerator, 2- burner stove, closet and single bed	1 person \$34,600/year No minimum income Closed	30% OF INCOME Requires a Certificate of Homelessness
Bayanihan House (Non-assisted units) located at 88 – 6th St. & Mission. OPEN WAITLIST	SRO – 1 Person or Couple Room single: 10½ x 12, shared bathroom Double occupancy: 12x12, shared bathroom Unit amenities: sink, microwave, refrigerator, 2-burner stove, closet, single bed Building amenities: community kitchen, 24 hour staff & surveillance, laundry facility	1 person \$30,275/year Couple \$34,580/year Minimum income of \$889.40/month	As of Jan. 1, 2015 Move-in deposit \$590 Monthly rent \$590 Utilities included

TDD: (415) 345-4470 

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SPECIAL EVENTS

Tenderloin tree planting organized by Friends of the Urban Forest. Now's the time to sign up for the June 13 event. Buy a tree if you're a property owner — fuf.net/eform — or volunteer to help. Contact Caitlin@fuf.net, 415-268-0773.

Youth Resource Fair, April 11, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Moscone Center, 747 Howard St. For youth 16-24, the free fair features practice interviews, help with resumes and employers like Starbucks, Target, and Levi's on site conducting interviews for summer jobs. Visit 2015sfsummerjobs.eventbrite.com to sign up.

Tenderloin Sunday Streets meeting, April 15, noon, City Hall Room 278. Come with ideas for making the July 12 annual event a success. Info and map of route: sundaystreetsf.com.

Central City Democrats, meeting and 9th anniversary celebration, Apr. 28, 6 p.m., 201 Turk Street Community Room. Award ceremony, guest speakers, board elections, door prizes, light refreshments. Co-sponsored by North of Market Business Assn. and Tip Top Market. Info: 339-8683.

ARTS EVENTS

"The Name of the Monster," by Aren Haun, April 3-11, EXIT Studio, 156 Eddy St. A satire of the Hollywood system, focusing on a special-effects artist, presented by Slacker Theater. Tickets and times: brownpapertickets.com.

Music at the Main, Main Library, Koret Auditorium, noon-1 p.m. April 4, Dreaming of Li-Po, concert and commentary: Shoko Hikage, koto and bass koto; Cynthia Baehr, violin; and Hyo-Shin Na, composer. April 7, Cypress String Quartet.

"Bitch and Tell: A Real Funny Variety Show," April 10-25, EXIT Stage Left, 156 Eddy St. Standup to slapstick, magic to storytelling, circus to improv presented by Footloose. Tickets and dates: eventbrite.com.

"Untitled (This is a metaphor, No. 3)," a 20-foot inflatable dancing figure by Jeremy Mende, S.F. Arts Commission Galleries window installation site, 155 Grove St., through June 5, viewable 24/7 from the sidewalk.

Gratitude, A Benefit Concert for Veterans, Apr. 26, 5 p.m., 491 Post St., Academy of Arts University



ERIC PARTHUM

Drea Lusion performs in *"Bitch and Tell"* at EXIT Stage Left on April 11, 17, 18.

Morgan Auditorium. Brahms, Mozart and Sibelius by S.F. Conservatory of Music students. Free for soldiers and veterans with military ID or in uniform. Tickets and info: concertgratitude.eventbrite.com.

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 Cen-

ter, 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: pwdf.org.

Mental Health Board, 3rd Wednesday of the month, 6:30-8:30 p.m., City Hall, room 278. CBHS advisory committee, open to the public. Call: 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.healthytetail@gmail.com, 581-2483.

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, 3rd Thursday of the

month, 3:30 p.m., park Clubhouse, Eddy and Jones. 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.

Tenderloin Community Benefit District. Full board meets 3rd Monday at 5 p.m., 55 Taylor St. Info: 292-4812.

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 Ang

Jane.Kim@sfgov.org 554-7970

Listana family

► CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Getting the internship would mean District 6 wouldn't be represented on the Youth Commission for two months. And that, she says, could be a problem. But her year on the commission would be up before college starts in the fall. She dreams of attending Harvard, but would gladly settle for UC Berkeley.

Her father's deep-seated feelings for inclusion seem to have influenced his daughter's attitude about track at her high school. She was on the track team for three years and the cross country team four years, forgoing her senior year

of track because of her growing organization obligations. (Precious is also vice president of the Keystone Club of the TL Boys and Girls Club whose high school members research and report on social topics such as teenage suicide and Internet addiction.)

"Cross country is more team-oriented," she says. "That's the way we made it (so) to strive a little harder. There's no 'I' in cross country. It's more of a family. Every person counted. It's more my sport."

There are dozens of activities that bring the mix of Curran House residents together periodically, from tending the rooftop's 22 fruit- and vegetable-bearing planter boxes to celebrating an array of ethnic holidays.

But it can't be taken for granted that

bias doesn't show up someplace, sometime.

Precious recalls that when she arrived in the United States at age 9, "it was a cultural shock." She was used to being surrounded by Filipinos. At the Chinese immersion school she was "bullied" for her accent, which she has since lost.

"I had a lot to learn," she says, "and it was a blessing in a way. It made me more understanding of different lifestyles. Riding the elevator (here) people always acknowledge each other and say, 'Have a nice day.' My friends are shocked at that. But it's very beautiful. And I love the diversity of this place."

"It's the microcosm of the Tenderloin," her father said. ■



MARJORIE BEGGS

Listana votes ballot boxes for TNDC resident council elections in May 2014.

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