

# Honoring those who perished on the street

## Annual event set for winter solstice

By TOM CARTER

More than 100 people stood on the steps of City Hall in cold, pouring rain last Dec. 21 at 5:30 p.m. to give a final act of dignity to the homeless who have died on the city's unforgiving streets during the year in fair weather or foul.

As the name and age of each person was read, a Tibetan bell was struck, ringing out an eerie note that hung mournfully in the air, then faded into the night.

"It's a unique service that gives us pause to remember," says Michael Pappas, executive director of San Francisco Interfaith Council, which co-sponsors the memorial with Night Ministries. "I'm moved by it."

The memorial for the homeless will happen again — for the 26th time, same winter solstice day, same time, but across the street in Civic Center Plaza, where it also has been held in recent years. The public is welcome at this hour-long interfaith, nondenominational recognition of the dead. Organizers say about 100 names will be acknowledged and a few hymns will be sung and prayers offered.

The Health Department supplies the names, though some are John Does, and often the list is supplemented by friends of SRO residents who have died on the streets, or not.

"Yes, some have died nameless," says Rev. Maggie Henderson, pastor at Old First Presbyterian, who has helped organize the memorial. "But all these people had families. It's a sorrow."

Rev. Glenda Hope, the retired Presbyterian minister whose Network Ministries

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PHOTO: CENTRAL CITY EXTRA ARCHIVE

Rev. Glenda Hope, who pioneered SRO memorials, officiates at the memorial for the homeless in 2004.

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## D6 PARKS' RATINGS THAT FELL

6 are down in the district

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Celebrations throughout month

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# CENTRAL CITY



SAN FRANCISCO

## CONTROLLER'S RATINGS



The park feels larger than just an acre. It has something for everyone — winding paths for strolling, state-of-the-art play structures, benches for resting, visual delights of multibued, lush greenery, spacious clubhouse for indoor activities and a mural that mirrors the community.

# Boedddeker is No. 9

## Park tops 212 others in city ranking

STORY BY TOM CARTER  
PHOTOS BY LISE STAMPFLI

A CITY STUDY has again proved what Tenderloin residents have known for two years — that their new Boedddeker Park is top notch, a shining diamond in the rough.

A controller's office team has ranked Boedddeker in the top 10 among San Francisco's 221 parks for the second year in a row. It started in December 2014 when the park reopened after a \$9.3 million makeover.

The rating for the 2015-16 year, which came out in October, gave the 1-acre site a 96.1%, good for ninth place. The previous year, at 98.8%, Boedddeker ranked No. 2 in the city behind another recently renovated park, Cabrillo Playground. The Outer Richmond site is about the size of Boedddeker and repeated at No. 1 in the latest report, dropping slightly from 99% to 98.2%.

"It's great, but not surprising," Betty Traynor

said of Boedddeker's showing. For years she has been facilitator for monthly Friends of Boedddeker Park meetings and was the steady hand when Boedddeker was criticized as a poorly designed, thick-fenced fortress hiding drug dealing that scared people away. The regular meetings and Traynor's ability to listen to volunteers' suggestions and keep improvement projects on track were a factor influencing Trust for Public Land to spearhead the complete park redo.

Boedddeker, Traynor said, continues to improve with its programs for the young and old and also has flourishing gardens of plants, bushes and herbs in the north sector near Ellis Street. There doesn't appear to be safety issues, not like before.

Five years ago, the "Park Maintenance Standards" report ranked Boedddeker near the bottom of the list. It was about the time that Trust for Public Land's Jake Gilchrist began attending

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



## NOTES FROM THE TENDERLOIN

*Tom Carter, for many years The Extra's community reporter, has an additional talent as a writer.*

*The journalist who reported on "Murder in the Tenderloin," wrote the obituary for legendary AIDS pioneer Hank Wilson, the "Teresa of the Tenderloin," documented the cultural pluralism that makes the neighborhood its own Diverse City and has chronicled Boeddeker Park's transformation step-by-step from sordid to sensational, gets introspective in his newfound freedom as a writer.*

### Changing Steps

The new steps were stunning a week ago, their dark green thickness as velvety as Wimbledon lawn until a water main broke down the block. Workmen dug down to fix it and a brown river gushed my way, depositing mud the sun turned to dust. Everyone tracked it up, oh yes. Dust ingrained the treads, dirt darkened every corner. Beauty dies fast in a city.

— Tom Carter

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# Homeless memorial

► CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

served the Tenderloin for decades, started the homeless memorial in 1990 and sponsored it until three years ago.

"The paper had reported that 16 people had frozen to death," she said, explaining the origin of the ceremony to The Extra in 2010. "We were just becoming aware of it. But 16 of us got together and walked to every spot — all in the Tenderloin — where someone had died.

"And we stopped there and were silent and someone slowly beat a drum. No one had a name. And then we moved on to the next place. At the end I said a prayer. And that was it."

Now, crowds of about 100 holding candles show up for the ceremony. Many

meet an hour ahead, at 4:30 p.m. at St. Anthony's, 150 Golden Gate Ave., for a brief remembrance, then march together to the Civic Center. Musicians might play at the memorial, or singers or choirs might sing, and the dead are acknowledged.

"Since Interfaith took it over, we have not been asked to co-sponsor and so have not been involved," Jennifer Friedenbach, executive director of the Coalition on Homelessness, said in an email.

The Coalition was a co-sponsor previously for 15 years. "Typically, about 100 people pass away homeless, and they either get the names from various service providers or from the medical examiner's office.

"The memorial in the past has been a time to honor people who have died without a home many of preventable causes, and many premature because of their housing status." ■

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- Causes of Death
- Rev. Glenda Hope: The Closer
- Murder in the Tenderloin
- Analysis of Those Who Died

These are some of the people who made living in the Tenderloin special: Leroy Looper, pioneer of supportive housing; Joe Jackson, union organizer who never stopped organizing; Steve Conley, champion of populist causes; Darwin Dias, fighter for the rights of the mentally ill; John Melone, feisty advocate for senior housing and health care; Jesse Morris, budding rock star; Hank Wilson, AIDS pioneer known as "Teresa of the Tenderloin"; and the dozens of other men and women who lived quietly — or not — in the neighborhood.

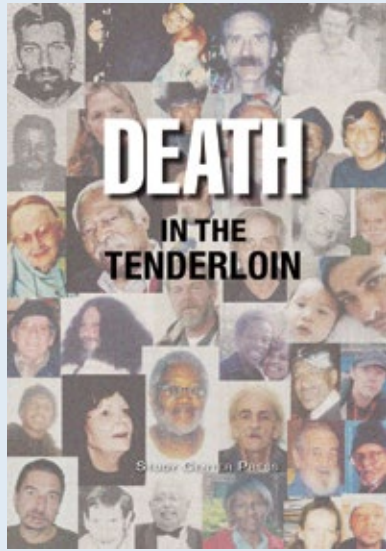
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<b>Hotel Isabel</b> located at 1095 Mission <b>CLOSED WAITLIST</b>	<b>SRO – 1 Person</b> Shared bathroom Unit amenities: sink, microwave, refrigerator, 2- burner stove, closet and single bed	1 person \$34,600/year No minimum income Closed	30% OF INCOME Requires a Certificate of Homelessness
<b>Bayanihan House</b> (Non-assisted units) located at 88 – 6th St. & Mission. <b>CLOSED WAITLIST</b>	<b>SRO – 1 Person or Couple</b> 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 \$607 Monthly rent \$607 Utilities included

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## CENTRAL CITY



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**PHONE:** (415) 626-1650

**FAX:** (415) 626-7276

**EMAIL:** [centralcityextra@studycenter.org](mailto:centralcityextra@studycenter.org)

**EDITOR & PUBLISHER:** Geoffrey Link

**SENIOR WRITER/EDITOR:** Marjorie Beggs

**COMMUNITY REPORTER:** Mark Hedin,

**REPORTERS:** Tom Carter, Jonathan Newman

**DESIGNER:** Lise Stampfli

**CONTRIBUTORS:** John Burks, Ed Bowers

**DESIGN CONSULTANT:** Don McCartney

**DISTRIBUTION:** Mark Hedin

**COMMUNITY CONSULTANT:** Michael Nulty

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# Boeddeker's a 9 — special, but down from 2nd place last year

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Friends meetings in search of underused, needy parks that could become a project if they had an active, supportive group of volunteers.

"When we started the planning back in 2006," says Gilchrist, now a supervising project manager with Rec and Park. "We were really committed to investing in the park for future generations of Tenderloin residents. We created some bold ideas for improving Boeddeker — the fact that the park received such high scores is a reflection of our commitment to listening to and integrating the ideas of our staff and partners."

The dream that came true celebrated its second anniversary Dec. 15.

Each year since 2005, under a Charter amendment, a planning team from the controller's office has evaluated the city's parks based on the type of facility, size and the geographical area it supports. The team grades a dozen features, including restrooms, trees, table seating areas and children's play areas. Some parks have more such features than others.

As a whole, the eight District 6 parks didn't do too bad, either: 85.8%, up .3%

from an average of 85.5%, about the same as the previous year (see sidebar). That puts D6 in fourth place among the 11 supervisorial districts. The score was also a tad higher than the city average of 85.5%. A score of 85 is pretty good, the report said, indicating adequate maintenance.

A data shocker in the report was the Tenderloin Children's Recreation Center's score. The center on Ellis Street near Hyde plummeted 20.1 points in fiscal 2015-16 to 71.9% from its 92% score the previous year — continuing the slide from 96.1% five years ago. The report cited "litter, paint and rust/rot on play structures" as a common problem at parks with the biggest decreases.

By contrast, Boeddeker Park, long the ugly sister of Tenderloin playgrounds, nailed a perfect 100% for its playground feature for the second straight year, making it the all-city leader again. Its green and royal blue play equipment in the 2,800-square-foot children's playground includes a slide, swings and huge jungle gym, still pristine and resting on a comfortable surface made of 100% recycled rubber. Boeddeker offers full-court basketball. ■



## RATINGS FOR DISTRICT 6 PARKS

The eight parks in District 6, which serve 74,000 residents, did fairly well in the last evaluation by an inspecting team from the controller's office, although none showed the dramatic improvement from five years ago that Boeddeker Park has.

Boeddeker jumped 21.2 points from a 74.9% rating in the 2011 report to 96.1% in 2016, as the little fifth-of-an-acre Sgt. John Macauley Park at Larkin and O'Farrell streets moved up from 86.9% to 90% in the same period.

The biggest drops were at Tenderloin Recreation Center on Ellis Street, 82.8%, down from 96.1%, a loss of 13.3 percentage points; Gene Friend Recreation Center on Sixth Street at Folsom, 96% to 85.1%; Victoria Manalo Draves Park, nearby on Folsom, lost 8.4 percentage points, going from 96% to 87.6%.

The others: the 5.4-acre Joseph L. Alioto Performing Arts Piazza in Civic Center, 76.7% down from 80.8%; South Park, at 64 South Park Ave., 92.5%, down from 94%; and Turk-Hyde Mini Park 79.3%, down from 83.5%.

— Tom Carter



Far left, PE teacher Noah Blakely and his students use Father Alfred E. Boeddeker Park regularly, walking the half-block up from City Academy at 230 Jones. Here, they assemble at the high school regulation-size basketball court for class. Top, Seniors use the park for contemplation, tai chi workouts, walks and visiting friends. Above, The royal blue climbing structure is the centerpiece of the 2,800-square-foot children's playground. Left, Paths and stairs flanked by the park's verdant, terraced Celebration Garden lead to a golden ginkgo at the northeast end of the park, on Ellis Street.

## NOTES FROM THE TENDERLOIN

Ed Bowers has been poetizing in the Tenderloin for a long time. Bowers covered the neighborhood's Art Beat for *The Extra* for a while, then led poetry jams at the iconic 21 Club. His homage to that dive bar, "21 Poems for the 21 Club," was published by Study Center Press. Prolific Bowers became an award-winning journalist with his rhythmic riffs on Tenderloin National Forest, the Main Library and other neighborhood highlights on the front page of *The Extra*.

Here is the lead from a tome he shared at the Poetry in the Park event in October.

### Boeddeker Park

In the  
human world the  
Land of the Dead  
is where  
lost poems go  
to die  
  
outside  
Boeddeker Park.

The park was  
originally built  
by vultures  
as a nest  
composed of yellowed  
obituary columns,

their blind eyes and  
feathers

falling on

forbidden words.

Ancient spirits  
read their disembodied midnight  
poems,

outside,

beyond children and cops,  
around  
a merry-go-round  
tree

to prisoners of  
World War 3

glowing in the dark neonnights  
full of poetry,

illuminating its  
whispered curses  
in blank verse

shot from

Saturday night specials.

— Ed Bowers



Neighborhood poet Ed Bowers on Turk Street in 2015.

LISE STAMPELL

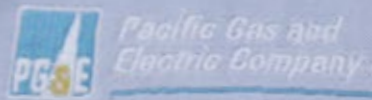


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# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## SPECIAL EVENTS

**Glide holiday events**, 330 Ellis: Dec. 17, Toy Giveaway, 9-11:30 a.m.; Dec. 24, House of Prime Rib luncheon, 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.; Dec. 25, Christmas celebrations: breakfast, 7:30-9 a.m.; celebrations, 9 and 11 a.m.; Christmas meal, 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m.; Dec. 30, Nia: Kwanzaa Celebration, 4-6 p.m., music, games, storytellers, drumming, holiday meal.

**Fine Forgiveness Program**, Jan. 3-Feb. 14, SF Public Library waives late fees on all returned books, CDs, DVDs and other materials, regardless of how long overdue. During its last amnesty program, in 2009, SFPL received more than 30,000 overdue items and waived \$55,000 worth of fines. Info: [sfpl.org](http://sfpl.org).

**Demonstration Gardens** 8th birthday party, open house, Jan 6, 4-8 p.m. 333 Golden Gate Ave. Visit with Cafe Society artists, environmental justice interns, garden stewards, friends and family. Gardens are a program of Faithful Fools Street Ministry and Hastings College of the Law. Info: [demonstration-garden.org](http://demonstration-garden.org).

## ARTS EVENTS

**F\*ck U! In the Most Loving Way**, an exhibition of 52 artists speaking out against misogyny, sexism and discrimination, presented by the Northern California Women's Caucus for Art, Dec. 17-Jan. 21, 2017, Arc Gallery, 1246 Folsom St. Hours: Wed. and Thur., 1-6 p.m., Sat., noon-3 p.m., closed Dec. 24 and 31. Info: [ncwca.org](http://ncwca.org).

**The Last Christmas: A Holiday Action Musical**, PianoFight, 144 Taylor, various dates through Dec. 23. When oil companies threaten to drill in the North Pole, Santa embarks on a mission to save his workshop and Christmas. Dates and tickets: [eventbrite.com](http://eventbrite.com).

**Hedda Gabbler**, EXIT Theatre and Cutting Ball Theater, 277 Taylor St., Jan. 19-Feb. 26. Henrik Ibsen's masterpiece directed by Yuri Urnov. Tickets: [web.ovationtix.com](http://web.ovationtix.com).

**Thursday@Noon**, films at the Main Library: Dec. 22, "Dial M for Murder" (1954); Dec. 29, "Back to the Future" (1985); Jan. 5, "The Day the Earth Stood Still"

(1951); Jan. 12, "Them" (1954); Jan. 19, "Incredible Shrinking Man" (1957) and "Attack of the 50-Foot Woman" (1958); Jan. 26, "Invasion of the Body Snatchers" (1956). Info: [sfpl.org](http://sfpl.org).

## 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 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 Ligia Montano, 546-1333 x315.

**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](http://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: [pwwf.org](http://pwwf.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, 3 p.m., Kelly Cullen Community Building, 220 Golden Gate Ave., 2nd floor auditorium or 5th floor gym. Public invited to discuss legislation that

encourages corner stores to sell fresh food and reduce tobacco and alcohol sales. Info: Jessica Estrada, [jessica.healthyretail@gmail.com](mailto:jessica.healthyretail@gmail.com), 581-2483.

**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 IMPROVEMENT

**Alliance for a Better District 6**, 2nd Tuesday of month, 6 p.m., 230 Eddy St. Contact Michael Nulty, 820-1560 or [sf\\_district6@yahoo.com](mailto: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 month, 3 p.m., 519 Ellis St. (Senator Hotel). Contact: 563-3205, x115, or [centralcitysafehaven@gmail.com](mailto: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.

## 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.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**Artist Blond Jenny's pigment print** "What did we learn?" at the Arc Gallery exhibition, through Jan. 21.

**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](http://www.sdaction.org).

## DISTRICT 6 SUPERVISOR

**Jane Kim**, chair, Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee, Transbay Joint Powers Authority Finance Committee and S.F. County Transportation Authority Vision Zero Committee; temporary member, Budget and Finance Committee; member, Association of Bay Area Government (ABAG). Legislative aides: April Veneracion, Barbara Lopez and Ivy Lee.

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