

Counting the homeless

Each person worth \$2,871 in biennial census for HUD

BY JONATHAN NEWMAN

THE Department of Housing and Urban Development last year gave San Francisco city agencies and private nonprofits \$18.7 million to assist the homeless. The city got about that much from HUD in 2009, too, based on the results of a biennial census of unsheltered homeless.

The \$18.7 million was based, in large part, on the 6,514 homeless counted in 2009 — roughly \$2,871 per person — though it's but a fraction of the total spent on services for the homeless each year.

In 2009, 1,167 homeless were counted in District 6, by far the largest concentration of homeless among the 11 supervisorial districts. District 10 was next largest with 444. District 11, which is farthest from downtown and borders Daly City, had the fewest homeless — 43.

This year's count took place Jan. 27 as more than 300 volunteers fanned out from four dispatch centers — Downtown (composed entirely of

District 6 plus Chinatown) Mission, Bayview and Sunset — combing 150 assigned routes throughout the city to note the homeless on sidewalks and alleyways, in Muni and BART stations, fast food joints, encampments and under freeway overpasses.

City workers counted the homeless in shelters.

Parks and freeway onramps were handled by the police and California Highway Patrol.

Nearly 20% of the routes — 29 — were in District 6. Of these, 16 were in the Tenderloin, the only city neighborhood to be blanketed by counters.

Longtime friends Bobbi Rosenthal and Rick Shelton are experienced volunteers. They've teamed together in past homeless counts. Tonight, Bobbi will drive; Rick will ride shotgun as spotter.

At 7 p.m. they join about 160 other volunteers, plus police, Rec and Park workers and Human Services Agency staff in Room 300, the Public Health Commission hearing room, at 101 Grove St., for a one-hour training and review of ground rules before beginning the census.

Ali Schlageter of the city's Homeless Coordinating Board lays it out: "Rule No.1: Don't be intrusive. Volunteers are to observe." She lightens the notably serious mood in the room with a joking reference to her failed effort to rename the night's count — "The World Champion Giants Count of the Homeless." Cory, but it cuts the ice.

Schlageter explains that trained survey workers, consisting of current and former homeless, will follow up tonight's census with one-on-one contact with the homeless to develop detailed information that will help city agencies craft specific services.

She reviews the categories on the tally sheet each team of volunteers carries to document the county,

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SAN FRANCISCO

TENDERLOIN



PHOTO BY LENNY LIMJOCO

At express computers, patrons search for materials at the Main Library, the Tenderloin's online lifeline for residents without computers or Internet access.

INTERNET LIMBO

Computer trainings and Internet access growing in Tenderloin

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

AN antenna sticking out of his backpack, Robert Damphousse spent six hours walking the streets of the Tenderloin collecting information for "The Wireless Landscape," his project for the Wonderland extravaganza.

In his backpack was a laptop loaded

with Kismet Wireless Network Sniffer, software that can detect wireless network traffic in the air — the radio waves carrying emails and all manner of Internet data back and forth from computers, smart phones, tablets and other digital devices.

Damphousse downloaded the sniffer's findings, and, using a GPS, created a neighborhood map with a dot for each network.

"Wi-fi is in the air around you, right now," he said, "but it's invisible. I show these maps to the public to help demystify some of the magic that is wi-fi."

In the 30 blocks he surveyed in 2009 — Larkin to Mason, Geary to McAllister — he found 1,200 unique networks and 3,000 access points that pull in information from the Internet and send it to computers. He says he might have missed 10% of the access points because they can't broadcast their signals as far as the street.

Those numbers don't translate into how many people are sitting in Tenderloin SROs, apartments, offices or hotel rooms with laptops connected wirelessly to the Internet, but, he says, they are typical for an inner-city area this size and suggest that the TL is not a digital desert.

Damphousse's survey helps define the extent of wireless activity in the Tenderloin. It may be typical, but numbers of computer owners with access to high-speed Internet suggest that the digital divide does persist in the neighborhood. For that information, the controller's office has the only game in town.

The controller's City Survey, biennial since 1996, asks a random sample of residents to answer a few demographic questions and to rate city services (streets, sidewalks, parks, transportation, libraries, safety)

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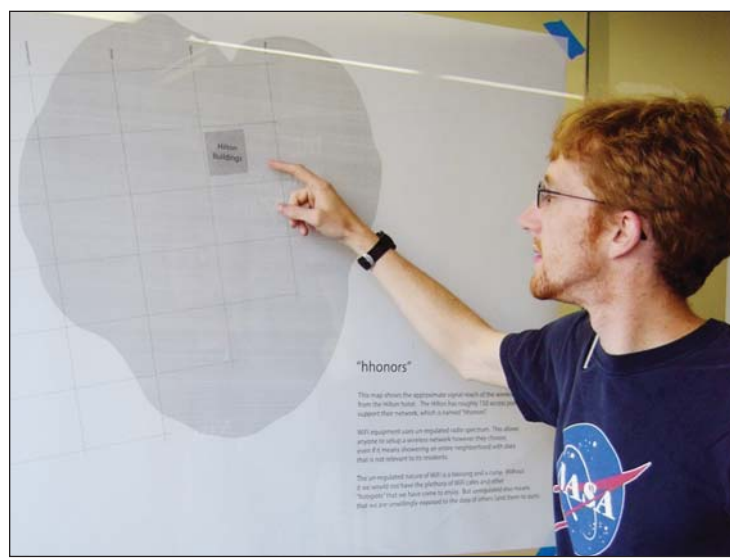


PHOTO BY MARJORIE BEGGS

Robert Damphousse traces the reach of the Hilton Hotel's network signal.

MY TAKE

Sherri W. Morr

On The Homeless

I USED to travel for work. Two weeks every month I was in a different city. I didn't love it, but learned that some cities are better than others. I was in San Francisco in February 2000, staying in Union Square at one of the boutique hotels.

One morning, I gave my change from the purchase of coffee to a homeless man. He took it, then he started yelling at me. I kept walking and realized he was following, actually chasing me, saying, "Put your underwear on, put your underwear on." At first I ignored him, but when I got half a block and saw he was running after me, I was scared.

I saw an available taxi, and got in. He banged on the window as we drove off. My first thought as we drove away: Do I have on my underwear?



I WAKE UP in a strange city, thinking about the meetings, the appointments, finding a taxi to get to the correct address on time. I don't even think about my underwear. I was sure I had them on because, after 12 years on the road, I rarely forget to pack things. Oh, I've donated plenty of items to the hotel upon departure: cell phone charger, belts, even a terrific pair of blue suede sandals. But never underwear. First of all, I always bring extra, and, secondly, it's reflex to put on my underwear.

Why would he yell that at me?

When I told people this story, some laughed, of course, about the underwear. But few thought it was rare that a homeless person chased me up Powell Street yelling at me. It didn't matter what he was saying, they said; most likely he was crazy and should have been in a mental institution, or that he was drunk, or spaced out on drugs. I thought then that it taught me a lesson: Don't give to homeless people.

THEN, A FEW YEARS LATER, I moved to San Francisco, got an apartment at Third and Folsom, where numbers of homeless congregated practically on my front steps — the same men, every morning when I went out to walk to work. I came to smile, say good morning, and gave them all my extra food or leftovers, including plastic utensils and paper napkins. I came to think of them as my homeless.

Now, I no longer live downtown, but I do work for a non-profit serving the homeless. Several of its programs offer living space to get people off the streets. Community Awareness & Treatment Services (CATS) has served the needs of men and women on the street for more than three decades. CATS provides substance abuse treatment and medical respite; their vans pick up people who not even the police can help. CATS manages two buildings in the Tenderloin where people can live, maybe get jobs, turn themselves around, and no longer be the blight on San Francisco that so concerns all of us.

I didn't take this job because of my own personal experience of a homeless man chasing me. I didn't take it because I had a compelling passion to obliterate this issue.

I TOOK THIS JOB because, with 70 million Baby Boomers, some are sure to be affected by shrinking services. The homeless population is going to grow. Grow at rapid rates, for sure. Most importantly, I took it because the staff appeared totally dedicated, caring and smart about their own challenges. The program directors and the management know the population; they understand the emotional and medical needs. They are quick to present options instead of stereotypical innuendos. They are realistic, knowing no one really likes the homeless.

So many homeless people are victims of situations that they may not have created. They lost jobs, families, their lifestyle and friends. Once you lose all of that, plus your living space, you hit bottom, and turn to drugs and alcohol. They lose their identity, they have no good thoughts, and some don't even have memories. Their only community is others like themselves, others who too live on the streets, or in shelters, and find themselves hoping for a handout, or a space at a food program.

IT'S GETTING COLDER, and the rains have begun. An estimated 6,000 people are homeless and on the streets in San Francisco. Let's pay attention to them this year. I mean really pay attention. ■

Sherri W. Morr is development director at CATS.

"My Take" is a feature of The Extra that offers neighborhood writers an opportunity to reflect on life in the Tenderloin in 600 words or less. Email manuscripts to mytake@studycenter.org.

Counting the homeless in TL

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and clarifies the instructions to record encampments by the number of tents or makeshift structures, to recognize that abandoned buildings may house squatters and that a group of adults and children could constitute a homeless family. Don't ignore automobiles or RVs with covered windows. People live in them. "They're not permanent housing and could signal homelessness," she notes.

Lt. Henry Parra, SFPD homeless liaison officer, reminds the volunteers to work safely. "Encampments are often an effort by the homeless to create an area of security. Don't violate that security by barging in," he cautions, and gives them a phone number to summon a cop in a hurry, if trouble arises.

New Mayor Edwin Lee ends the training hour. He thanks the volunteers for their civic devotion and shares a childhood memory of Room 300 — where he and other city children received free TB inoculations in the 1950s — and mentions with pride that San Francisco's homeless programs served as models in the Obama administration's strategic plan.

Bobbi and Rick receive a color-coded map of their assigned route in the northernmost part of the Tenderloin, and an official tally sheet. They head out from the dispatch center. Bobbi slows her silver Toyota near the corner of Post and Hyde streets. Rick has spotted two men sitting on a street-level window ledge drinking from brown-bagged cans.

"Could be two," Bobbi says. She parks. Rick walks back up the block for a closer look. "No," he says upon return, "they're not homeless." Up close the men looked like they had permanent residences — new, pricey shoes, clean clothing, pulled-together looks.

Later, Rick walks Shannon Street, now brightly lit. The windows of the adjacent Hotel Adagio sparkle and its public rooms are filled with people eating and drinking. A couple of valets mill about the side parking lot. Rick notes a discarded mattress propped against a building and an ample crawl space behind the lot's dumpster, possible homeless sleeping sites when the area grows quieter.

Turning the corner, Rick sees a man panhandling outside Swig across Geary

Street. The panhandler approaches Rick. "Can you give me something for a sandwich, a cup of coffee? I'm homeless," the man says. He gets counted.

As they cruise west on Geary, they see four men, one in a wheelchair, on the corner at Leavenworth Street. A block away an older woman, slightly disheveled, walks slowly, a shopping bag hanging at the end of each arm. Not homeless, they decide — the bags full of groceries signal a home, a place to store and cook food safely. When they double back to Leavenworth the corner quartet is gone. Five people on the block, none homeless.

On Post near Jones, Rick spots an elderly man seated cross-legged on the sidewalk, his back against the front entrance of Thai Stick Restaurant. He's begging spare change from pedestrians. Rick counts him. As he rounds the block a second time, Rick looks into the Stop-N-Wash Coin Op Laundry. Inside, washers are humming; people are folding clothes. No one appears to be camped inside, though Rick knows from prior counts that such warm, unmonitored premises sometimes provide a temporary haven for the homeless.

It's 11 p.m. After three hours and five passes of the three square blocks in the assigned route, driving and walking, Bobbi and Rick head back to the dispatch center. On the way, at the edge of their assigned route, they make an obvious call — a large man in tattered coat is pushing a shopping cart topped by busted luggage. His sneakers appear to flap.

"We counted three," Rick tells the HSA worker, who takes his tally sheet and his phone number in case any questions arise when the information is reviewed. Six volunteer hours to count three homeless people. It breaks down to nearly \$8,700 of expected HUD money for permanent housing, temporary housing and outreach services as a result of Rosenthal and Shelton's efforts.

Walking away from the dispatch center Rick sees four people asleep on the sidewalk a block away. They are not on his assigned route. "I know someone has counted them already," he says.

The results of the city's biennial homeless census will be known by April, says Schlageter. ■

CENTRAL CITY
EXTRA!
SAN FRANCISCO

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JOSEPH SOLDIVELA
Dentist, poet, songwriter

Joyful Joseph "Doctor Joe" Soldivela was a poet, songwriter and singer who gladly shared his gifts, thereby becoming the life, if not the patriarch, of the Hamlin Hotel where he lived 10 years.

The retired dentist was in his third-floor room watching the John Wayne version of "True Grit" with his visiting son, Greg, when he stood up and said he was an hour late taking his heart medicine. He walked to the medicine cabinet, dropped to one knee, fell over and died.

"I went to him and a neighbor came," his son said after Mr. Soldivela's Feb. 3 memorial. "But I couldn't do anything for him. He hadn't been sick, but he had heart problems. The paramedics were there immediately."

Mr. Soldivela died Jan. 28. He was 78. His son, who visited his dad once or twice a week, said he had auditioned for the Hamlin annual talent show the day before. Mr. Soldivela played the ukulele and four-string guitar and sang the songs he composed. He had won the contest twice and one year came in third.

"He wrote songs and poetry about things he thought about ever since I was a child," his son told the 14 mourners. "I liked the way he thought. He was a good father and a good friend. He taught me don't hit women, spoil 'em. And he spoiled me and my mother. But I'm at a loss here. He was one of my favorites."

The Hamlin desk clerk said Mr. Soldivela always had something nice to say and liked making people laugh. One day he called her and said if he

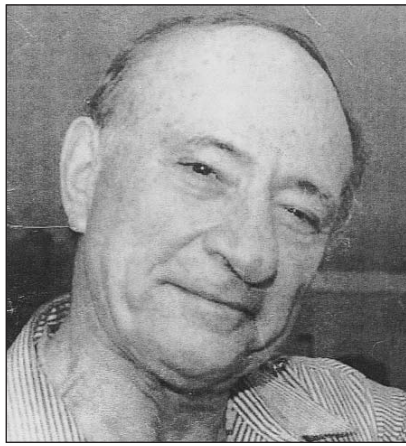


PHOTO COURTESY HAMLIN HOTEL

Joseph Soldivela

won the talent show contest he'd take her to dinner. And he did.

"A charming ladies' man," someone called him.

"He was more than a loving person," said another mourner. "He was an awesome person."

"Yes, a great man, my family man," said another. "He liked Joe Louis, I liked Ali."

"He was the patriarch of the Hamlin," his neighbor from the third floor piped up. "He leaves a big hole. And who's going to fill it?"

Mr. Soldivela was born in Los Angeles and got a degree from UC Berkeley but his son didn't know where he went to dental school. And he didn't know how long his father had a dental practice at Portola and Evelyn streets. Mr. Soldivela's wife died in 1997, he said.

After the memorial, a short, wiry woman burst into the community room carrying a guitar case and a large piece of cardboard. She couldn't

stop crying. Through her tears she said she was Joni Perkins, Mr. Soldivela's wife, but then corrected that to "girlfriend."

"He proposed to me but we weren't married," Perkins said. She first met Mr. Soldivela in a shelter in 1998 and they had hit it off.

She lives on the fourth floor and said they were together a lot, loved going out to the Olive Garden in Stonestown to eat. "He wrote a song about me and sang it in the talent show," she said. It won third place.

Perkins cried as she taped the cardboard to the wall near a piece of butcher paper some residents had signed as farewells to "Doctor Joe." The cardboard had information about the day's memorial on it, separate pictures of the smiling Doctor Joe and Perkins, and a poem Mr. Soldivela had written about his own death, "When I Am Gone."

*When I am gone, release me,
and let me go
I have so many things to see
and do
you mustn't tie yourself to me
with too many tears
but be thankful we had so many
good years.
Though you can't see or touch
me, I will be near
and if you listen with your heart,
you'll bear all my love around
you soft and dear. ■*

— TOM CARTER

ROY LINEROTH
Glide volunteer

Bad health is one thing, bad luck is another. Roy Linderoth had both.

Mr. Linderoth had emphysema and breathing problems, yet found the strength to volunteer regularly at Glide Memorial Methodist Church a block and a half from the Ritz Hotel, where he lived. Recently, his days were bright as he eagerly awaited a handsome check from the government.

"We went to Glide together," said his friend Bill Harlan at Mr. Linderoth's memorial Jan. 28 at the Ritz. "He was a good worker, a very good man and a dedicated volunteer. We did giveaways at Thanksgiving time."

But Mr. Linderoth's infirmity apparently caught up with him Jan. 23, when he was found dead in his first-floor room. He was 62.

The timing was unfortunate. Craig Martinez, one of four mourners, who had put a bouquet of roses on the table, said Mr. Linderoth was expecting a retroactive government check, which he thought might be SSI, of "about \$10,000."

Martinez said Mr. Linderoth often wasn't feeling well and had lost some weight but was energized by the thought of the incoming money, although he didn't tell Martinez what he might use it for.

"The check was to come the next week," Martinez said. "He was excited." ■

— TOM CARTER

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Computer literacy, Internet access

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as a way of measuring and improving them. In 1998, when the survey added two questions about computers, 60% of respondents said they had one at home but less than half could get onto the Internet.

Digital glossary

A NETWORK is two or more computers or other digital devices that are linked to share information. A third of the 1,200 network names Robert Damphousse found in the Tenderloin look like cyber-jumbles — “1qzAsNet2xl” or “2WIRE138,” for example — that probably were randomly assigned and perhaps suggested a business, not an individual. The rest incorporate names, like “davidsnetwork,” or are cute takes — “frazzzychik” or “MYBLUE-HEAVEN.”

A single network name can represent one computer and printer in an apartment or it can be as vast as “hhonors,” the Hilton Hotel’s network name. The Hilton, at 333 O’Farrell St., has 150 access points — 5% of those Damphousse sniffed out — with a heart-shaped network signal that blankets the Tenderloin, reaching above Geary down to McAllister and from Leavenworth past Mason. Wireless users within the network’s boundaries need a password to tap into it.

A CCESS POINTS usually are boxes that sit on a desk or are mounted on walls. Damphousse compares them to cordless phone base stations that must be plugged into a telephone jack to use the phone cordlessly. The access device connects with a cable or phone line, either directly or through a router or modem, then operates as a two-way antenna, pulling in information from the Internet as radio waves and transmitting them, wirelessly, to devices such as laptop computers, smart phones and printers.

Damphousse couldn’t “hear” those transmissions because he’d set his sniffer to survey passively, not actively. “Passive scanning is like reading the TO and FROM addresses on an envelope, not opening it to read its contents,” he said. ■

— MARJORIE BEGGS

Seats at the Main Library’s desktop computers and laptop stations often are filled. “Libraries have become THE place where anyone can get access to online information,” says a librarian.

Jump to the 2009 survey and — no surprise here — the numbers had shot up: 84% had computers and 82% had some kind of Internet service at home, 80% of it high speed, also called broadband. For comparison, a nationwide Department of Commerce and Federal Communications Commission survey in February found that 68% of American households have broadband.

In 2009, the city sampled 2,770 San Franciscans via mailed questionnaires, phone interviews and online queries. Most responses

are reported by supervisorial district and city-wide, though the controller’s office can “geocode” the data, refining the numbers by neighborhood, which it did at The Extra’s request.

Using SFPD district boundaries for the Tenderloin (the triangle formed by Larkin, Geary and Market streets), the survey found that 63 of the 101 respondents (61%) had computers at home, compared with 76% in the Southern police district, which includes SoMa. Overall, District 6 residents had the fewest home computers in the 11 supervisorial districts.

Asked if they used their home computer to surf the web, 56 of 103 Tenderloin respondents (55%) said yes, far fewer than in the Southern district, where 78 (77%) had Internet at home.

Another question asked those with home computers and Internet was whether their connection was high-speed, dial-up or wireless. In the Tenderloin, 46 people (83%) had a high-speed connection, 2 (3%) had dial-up and 13 (24%) had wireless. The percentages total more than 100% because many people have both wired and wireless connections. (At home, for example, this reporter has a wired DSL, or digital subscriber line, from AT&T as well as a wireless “Airport” base station that allows friends and family with laptops to use my Internet connection.)

The survey also parsed the data for poor and older residents citywide, not by supervisorial district. The results: They’re still falling through the digital cracks — 36% of people 60 and older and 38% of those in households with incomes below \$25,000 have no home computer. (According to the 2000 census, almost 1 in 5 TL residents is over 62, and 15% live below the poverty level.) For access to high-speed Internet, only 42% of seniors and 41% of low-income residents citywide have it.

NEWSOM’S SPIN ON FREE WI-FI

Such statistics have started a rush of city projects to get more San Franciscans computer- and Internet-literate. In December, among Mayor Newsom’s final press releases was one crowing that free wi-fi had been installed in 33 public housing sites, 6,000 units citywide, giving the residents wireless access to the Internet. Turns out it wasn’t that big a deal.

In reality, says David Rosario, Housing Authority information technology director, the project simply extended existing fiber optics cables to buildings where access points allow users to connect to the Internet. Tenants with laptops can sit in a courtyard or in a “hot spot” in a community room where an access device provides a wireless signal.



James Gordon, seated, 13-year resident at 111 J broadband services from Lee Davenport, One Econ

“The signal strength will vary from unit to unit,” Rosario said. “I’d say we’re enabling the buildings with wi-fi technology, but not assuring it to each tenant.” The project cost a modest \$250,000 because it piggy-backed on fiber optic installations going on throughout the city. “To get high-speed access into every apartment would cost millions of dollars.”

The supes passed a resolution in October supporting the goal of assuring that 90% of city residents have high-speed Internet access by 2015, and directing the Department of Technology to report back by April on how it will achieve that.

And last year, the city snagged a \$7.9 million federal grant — a three-year project to help 25,000 seniors, disabled and low-income adults and ESL youth get access to computers at community rooms, schools or other sites where they can learn how to email, surf the Web and, especially for youth, create high-end digital media.

Three city departments — Technology, Aging and Adult Services, and Children, Youth and Their Families — will coordinate the project with 11 other public and private partners. The grant is expected to create 200 new jobs, mostly trainers, and includes more than \$600,000 to buy computers for new labs or to upgrade existing ones.

“Our focus is on ‘teaching to function,’” said Sybil Boutlier, Department of Aging senior analyst. She cites the example of a grandmother learning to use Skype, a software program for making free or low-cost voice and video calls over the Internet. “She may learn nothing else but Skype, but with it she can see and talk to her grandchildren in Taiwan or Mississippi, and that will make a huge difference in dispelling her sense of isolation from family.”

Boutlier says Aging and Adult Services’ piece of the project includes placing 200 new computers at 48 sites citywide this year. To help its clients get jobs, Conard House will put a couple of computers at each of its eight supportive housing residences in the TL and SoMa as well as at its two case management centers.

Eastern Park Apartments, 201 units for low-income seniors at 711 Eddy St., will build a ground-floor cyber cafe where customers can get training. The San Francisco Senior Center at 481 O’Farrell St. also is slated for computer labs and training, as are seven Adult Day Services central city locations and public housing sites at 350 Ellis St. and 666 Ellis St.

Projects like this come after years of false starts. Newsom began hatching plans for free citywide wi-fi back in 2004, and in 2006 was negotiating with Google and Earthlink to provide it. A tentative agreement was signed in January 2007, but eight months later Earthlink



PHOTO BY LENNY LIMJOCO

growing in Tenderloin



PHOTO BY MARJORIE BEGGS

Jones, gets pointers on connecting his laptop to free wi-fi at the Tenderloin Tech Lab.

pulled out and the deal fell through. That same year, a Google-funded pilot outfitted nine TNDC SROs with DSL, rooftop radio antennas and — to pull the data deep into the building — wireless repeaters on each floor. The project never was completed. It's unclear what happened.

"We had two Meraki repeaters on each floor and some, but not many, of us residents took advantage of them," recalled community activist Michael Nulty, who lives in TNDC's Alexander Residence. "Both repeaters on my floor are gone now, probably stolen, and Merakis on other floors are gone as well." So is the free wi-fi.

Nulty got his own AT&T DSL line: "It's reliable — the other never was — and I need a reliable connection to do my community work."

Executive Director Don Falk says TNDC tried to "make [free wi-fi] work in our existing portfolio. As I understand it, the challenge is not in getting the signal to the building — that's relatively straightforward and not terribly expensive. The challenge is in getting the signal from the building roof through concrete walls into individual units."

One TNDC building is wired for residents. Curran House, TNDC's 67-unit family housing at 145 Taylor, opened in 2006 touting high-speed Internet access — though not free access — as a resident perk. Every unit was built with a hard-wire connection that residents can use with cable or Internet access services that they buy. The same kind of wiring is going into TNDC's new housing for the homeless at 220 Golden Gate Ave., the old YMCA building, Falk said, "but we haven't decided whether to do wif-fi/free Internet for tenants."

Another nonprofit developer, Community Housing Partnership, hasn't wired any of its seven District 6 residential buildings, except for use by office staff. "But we do get a lot of residents asking about it," said James Tracy, CHP community organizer.

One is David Elliott Lewis, who's lived at a CHP building for three years. He has a Gateway computer and pays Comcast to stay digitally connected for his social and political activities.

Lewis estimates that 10 to 15 residents in his 74-unit building have computers with an Internet connection, and believes more people in the Tenderloin have Internet access at home than one might expect. "Everyone I know in District 6 is connected — some are in survival mode or have very low incomes, but they still manage to keep online," he said. "It's a matter of how you spend whatever money you have."

Compared with other nonprofit developers, Mercy Housing's buildings are Internet hotbeds. Marlton Manor at 240 Jones and Padre

Apartments at 241 Jones have five computers for residents; 205 Jones has 14, though these are used mostly by kids from the Boys and Girls Club down the street. In a joint effort, the club runs the lab and maintains the Mercy-owned computers, serving about 40 kids a day plus an occasional resident.

Housing Developer Sharon Christen says Mercy is committed to wiring all its properties, and last fall its Tenderloin buildings became a showcase for a new program called We Are Now Connected.

One Economy, a nonprofit headquartered in Washington, D.C., got a \$28.5 million stimulus grant to subsidize broadband services in underserved communities from the Department of Commerce's Broadband Technology Opportunity Program, the same funding source as the city's three-year program.

We Are Now Connected will eventually be in 31 states, but its kickoff was here in the Tenderloin, for residents in Mercy's buildings at 111, 205 and 240 Jones, 300 apartments in all. No computer giveaways, but for two years, residents can get free wireless email and Internet access via AT&T, plus online search training. For three years after that, each household pays \$10 a month for the Internet connection.

Tenderloin residents Josh Farria and Damien Ramos were hired by One Economy for a year to help make Mercy residents computer- and Internet-literate. They'll train a couple of residents to take over as trainers when they leave.

At the Oct. 21 program launch at 111 Jones, Ramos, who lives at the Marlton, said he and Farria had started training residents even as the network connections were being installed. "I've worked with about five residents so far," Ramos said, "and a couple consulted with me about what computers they should buy."

By February, One Economy had trained 190 residents, whose major interests are in learning how to set up email accounts and surf the Web for job, education and health information. From mid-January to mid-February, 420 residents logged onto the Net, either in their apartments or in the buildings' common areas.

Christen says Mercy will wire future housing for broadband from the get-go. The first may be the St. Anthony Foundation-Mercy collaboration at 121 Golden Gate Ave. — the planned 10-story building with the dining room at ground level and residential units upstairs that will replace the existing structure.

Mercy will offer free Internet "regardless of whether [the buildings] serve very low-income, single-person households, people with special needs, seniors or families," Christen wrote in an email. "We believe everyone will be using the Internet a lot for basic needs and feel strongly that [they] should have full access to digital services in their homes."

COMPUTERS THE PUBLIC CAN USE

Central city residents without computers or with laptops and no Internet service have two options: The Main Library and the Tenderloin Tech Lab.

Some of the library's 240 computers are dedicated to specific uses: The 21 at the children's center are for kids only; the Library for the Blind and Print Disabled has 14 fitted with features for various disabilities. The fifth-floor training center — offering 30 computer classes monthly and a twice-weekly job-search lab — has 21.

That lab is always filled, says Michelle Jeffers, library spokeswoman. So, too, is the once-a-month Job Resources on the Internet class. Nearly 500 people a month attend computer classes at the Main.

On a Thursday morning, The Extra stopped by to count heads. On the third floor, all eight express computers — you must stand to use them and there's a 15-minute limit — were in use, and a man was waiting. Another 24 people tapped away or surfed at the stationary computers at the sleek wooden library tables, and seven more were using their own laptops, either plugged in at special stations or connected to the library's wireless network.

➤ CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



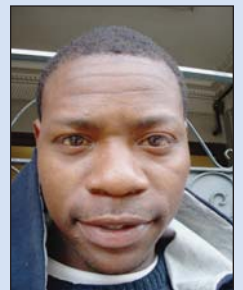
What do you use the Internet for?

Asked of Tenderloin residents at various neighborhood locations



Roberto Bune

I haven't used it. I wouldn't mind learning, but I haven't had time. I'd like to, though. I'd like to use it to get in touch with my parents — I lost my mom's number and it's unlisted. I could use the Internet to try and find it.



Jeremy Wilson

I use it for job searches. I found a job on the Internet through City Build, a carpenter academy. I contacted them by email and they called me in for an interview and enrolled me in school for two semesters. Now I'm a carpenter at Peck and Hiller.



Remo Rivera

Occasionally I use it for general information and exploring. There aren't that many computers in the Tenderloin, but I don't use them much anyways because I'm always out here on the street.



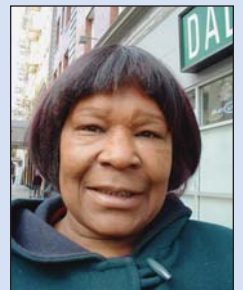
Jamie Lynn Westgate

I use it at the library mostly, for email and to look up information. It's been good because it's helped me learn — I dropped out in seventh grade. I've been using the Internet to get my GED and find grants for schooling. I'm also using it to look for an apartment and a roommate.



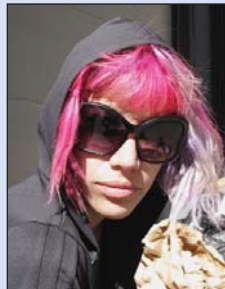
Kreshna Kouma

I don't use it. Haven't learned. I don't have interest in it. I'm so busy smoking cigarettes, eating food and doing illegal drugs I don't have time for it.



June Johnson

I don't use it because I don't have the knowledge or training yet, but I'm going to start training next week — my case manager is setting me up for it. I want to be able to use the Internet to set up some kind of business.



Amy S.

I use the Internet on my phone to access Facebook. I got in touch with my family — I hadn't talked to them for eight years. They'd been looking for me. I talk to them a lot now. I found out my sister got married.



Derrick Adkins

I use it mostly for job searches, but I haven't had any luck with that. I think it's bad, because of the hidden job market inside this computerized world. I try to apply for a job and they make you fill out a survey or try to sell you something. It's very frustrating when you're looking for a job and you can't even put in your resume. Meanwhile, you've got people out here starving.

TL Tech Lab has trained thousands

► CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Damien Ramos, left, and Josh Farria confer as they prepare to train residents at Mercy Housing apartments in the Tenderloin, part of One Economy's nationwide program to bring broadband to underserved communities.

All express computers on the fourth floor were busy, too; one woman was waiting. Eighteen patrons were at the desktop computers while eight laptop users nearby worked, played or browsed.

Such usage was pretty typical for a Thursday, according to the librarian at the fourth-floor Arts, Music and Recreation Center desk. "But the weather's nice today," he said, "so it may be a little low. Sunday's always a huge day, with almost every computer booked."

Using their library card, patrons can book an hour on a computer ahead of time either from inside the library or from out-

side, if they can find online access. On slower days, users can do "walk-up bookings."

Users are all over the page in terms of their technical skills. "They run from zero to very skilled," the librarian said. "But whichever, libraries have become THE place where anyone can get access to online information, and that's changed the way we do things. As librarians, we're book people, but we're also being called upon sometimes to do tech support."

That's okay with him: "A lot of people are using the place, and that's what's important."

After the library, the 2-year-old Tenderloin Tech Lab at 150 Golden Gate Ave., operated jointly by S.F. Network Ministries and St. Anthony Foundation, has the most computers available to the public in the central city — 37, all with high-speed Internet connection. Open Monday through Saturday, the lab has 18 computers in the drop-in area, 12 in the classroom and seven in the hardware repair area, used for people who want to learn to repair PCs.

Damien Ramos, from the Mercy One Economy project, was a recent repair student at the lab. Besides making him a more effective go-to guy for Mercy residents with balky computers, he hopes his repair chops will help him to get work when his One Economy contract ends.

On any day, more than 100 people either drop in or take one of the Tech Lab's 13 classes. Staff track every sign-in, more than 60,000 since the lab opened. And all new patrons are asked how they want to use the lab: 33% say to search for jobs, 17% to apply for entitlement programs, 16% to browse social network sites, 13% to build or maintain Websites and 6% to keep up online businesses.

Among its classes, the lab's most popular is basic computer skills, a three-week, two-hour, four-day-a-week session. Network Ministries Associate Director Salena

Bailey says there's always a waiting list.

"I've seen an increase in the clients who have smart phones that they know how to use really well, but they have a hard time using a PC," Bailey said. "Social networking is big now. Our students are not only interested in the possibilities of connecting with others but have real, and possibly paranoid, ideas about privacy on Facebook and the Internet in general."

While the digital divide in the Tenderloin and across the country continues to be a source of concern, researchers are confirming that the have-nots — those without wired desktop computers and high-speed Internet at home — are increasingly turning to cell phones and wireless laptops to become "haves."

A May 2010 report from the Pew Internet & American Life Project found that 59% of American adults own desktop computers, 52% own laptops and a whopping 85% own cell phones. And to get online, more than half (59%) use either laptops or cell phones, up from 51% a year earlier.

Karl Robillard, St. Anthony's manager of communications and outreach, who operates the Tech Lab with Bailey, says they don't have any stats on wireless use among their clients. "But we have observed an anecdotal trend in our students asking questions about mobile and sms [short message service, better known as texting] technology."

The real divide may come from a combination of not understanding how to navigate the Internet, whether from stationary or portable devices, and insufficient trainers to help newbies.

Bailey says the biggest hurdles for the lab's new clients are deciphering computer lingo and their own anxieties about "breaking" the computer.

"We always start our classes," she said, "with the mantra that one isn't born with the knowledge of how to use a computer." ■



PHOTO BY MARJORIE BEGGS

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LARRY ENTRIKEN
Lives on in memory

"Community activist, gentle soul, friend to all," is the way a flyer promoted Larry Entri-ken's Jan. 21 memorial at the William Penn Hotel on Eddy Street, where 35 of his friends and family gathered and bore out the claims.

"Helpful," "easy to be around," "smart," "giving," "humorous" and "very, very kind," they called him.

Mr. Entri-ken, who had lived 20 years in the Haight, once had his own Tradesman construction company but fell on hard times, became homeless, then was housed by the city. He was found dead in his William Penn room Dec. 30, apparently from liver problems, his family said. Mr. Entri-ken was 51.

The unusually large turnout was a testament to Mr. Entri-ken's popularity. Speaker after speaker mentioned his wit and his desire to help people. He once volunteered to write fundraising proposals for San Francisco First, a Department of Public Health program to get homeless families and individuals into permanent housing with supportive services. A beneficiary of the program himself, he took a preparation course. But his efforts were snarled in red tape and Mr. Entri-ken never got the grant.

"I was always impressed that he wanted to give back," said Russell Bermann, head of Vocational Services at the South of Market Mental Health Clinic where Mr. Entri-ken was a client. He was also part of the Power Program, where clients are interviewed, then selected for a team where they can choose an area of work to pursue, with the goal of becoming employable and having a higher quality of life, possibly even leaving the mental health system.

"But choosing grant-writing to get money for us wasn't that simple," said Eileen Turner, who worked with Mr.

Entri-ken. "Too many layers and glitches to get through."

Dan Entri-ken, Mr. Entri-ken's father, a professional singer from Manhattan, attended the memorial with his wife, Deegee Brandemour.

"I wanted to see the faces here today," he said. "It gives me a great deal of peace to see them."

His father said Mr. Entri-ken had been "a master of humor" even as a kid, but had nearly drowned at age 6.

"To me, he seemed a happy child," he said, "but we all have struggles with life. Now, he struggles no more."

Mr. Entri-ken came to San Francisco in 1983. His father didn't know what had become of the construction company or how his son became homeless, nor did others. But two years ago, through San Francisco First, Mr. Entri-ken became a William Penn resident. He called his parents regularly. His stepmother said he told her he had felt like "an outcast" when no one contacted him after his grandmother died.

"I talked to him a lot after his father's heart attack," Brandemour said, "and he said he was drinking. I told him he was always welcome (with us) and we appreciated his reports."

Mr. Entri-ken last saw his father in 2004 in Los Angeles. He called his father on birthdays, Father's Day, when the Giants had their World Series victory parade, Thanksgiving and Christmas. The last time he called, no one was home.

"I still have his voice on my answering machine from Christmas," his father said. "He talked about a possible job. I don't know, maybe it was wishful thinking." He paused. "But it's never over while one person remembers you." ■

— TOM CARTER

GARY MAGUIRE
Musician

Gary Maguire narrowly missed his 15 minutes of fame as a musician. The 6-foot-5 drummer once tried out for the Jefferson Starship band and had just about everyone's vote, Stephanie Olson, his wife, said after Mr. Maguire's Jan. 21 memorial at the Coronado Hotel, where he and his wife had lived six months.

"Grace Slick liked him and the others in the band wanted him, too — he could play all the instruments but excelled at the drums — but the execs didn't," she said. "So he didn't get it. If he had, I told him he wouldn't have lived very long, leading that kind of life."

As it was, Mr. Maguire didn't have a long life. He died at the hotel Jan. 6, presumably of liver complications. He was 49.

A half dozen mourners were at the memorial and remembered with affection the tall man with a raspy voice. One elderly woman called him "a beautiful person." Olson sat in the front row sobbing. She could only manage a few statements through her tears.

"As all of you know, I loved him very, very much, and his forgiveness, and most of all his love for me," Olson said of their 10 years together. "He was my dearest friend, among other things. I'd like to say a lot. There is so much I can remember."

But Olson couldn't continue and sat down.

After the memorial, as the social services staff prepared plates of food in the next room for the mourners, she gathered herself and talked more about Mr. Maguire who, she said, "died from alcohol."

His several generations of family were from South San Francisco, she said, and he knew a lot of people. He worked in construction for a while,

and then was homeless with her for several years. Even so, they made the best of it. Once, when they had a little cash, they took bicycles to Woodside and rode around looking at fabulous houses.

"We walked everywhere together and did a lot of talking," she said. "Gary was the only man in my life I could be completely honest with. My best friend."

The city's Homeless Outreach Team got them into the Coronado and Mr. Maguire changed a little. He was cheerful enough indoors but not out in the hood, where danger lurked. He was sensitive about cruelty and injustice.

"If he saw some guy hurting a woman he'd step in and beat the shit out of him," she said. "He was outraged at abuse. And you didn't see as much of his soft side here."

Among her fondest memories is when they were homeless in Burlingame and bought a big six-man tent — Olson, 39, is 6-feet tall herself — and pitched it by the railroad tracks. They had nothing but each other.

"We'd lie there and talk about nothing and everything. He was so happy and generous. There was nothing he wouldn't do for me. And nobody bothered us."

Mr. Maguire's pack of cigarettes went missing one morning. She said squirrels got it. He said rats, then showed her where they were in the bushes, and they laughed over it.

"We had no water or electricity," she said. "But I was so happy to be with him and wake up to the songbirds."

She paused and, growing sorrowful again, looked forlornly toward Mr. Maguire's photograph on the table in front.

"It gets worse every day," she said. ■

— TOM CARTER

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

ARTS EVENTS

ARTery Project, S.F. Arts Commission's series of mid-Market art events, fairs, exhibitions and performances: Sat., March 12, 6 p.m.-midnight, opening of *Bullet Train*, artists from S.F. and L.A., at the luggage store, 1007 Market St. Fri., March 25, 5-7 p.m., Central City Hospitality House, 1009 Market St. ground floor, opening of *Identity Project*, new multimedia works by artists in the Community Arts Program. Sat., March 26, 7-10 p.m., Gray Area Foundation for the Arts, 55 Taylor St., reception for *TRANS-MUTATIONS*, collaborative projects by graduate students from UC Santa Cruz's Digital Arts and New Media and Arts & Physics Research Lab programs..

COMMUNITY: REGULAR SCHEDULE HOUSING

Supportive Housing Network, 3rd Thursday of the month, 3-5 p.m., Dorothy Day Community, 54 McAllister. Call: 421-2926 x304.

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

HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

CBHS Consumer Council, 3rd Monday of the month, 5-7 p.m., CBHS, 1380 Howard St., room 537. Call: 255-3695. Advisory group of consumers from self-help organizations and other mental health consumer advocates. Open to the public.

Health & Wellness Action Advocates, 1st Tuesday of the month, 5-7 p.m., Mental Health Association, 870 Market St., Suite 928. 421-2926 x306.

Healthcare Action Team, 2nd Wednesday of the month, 1010 Mission St., Bayanihan Community Center, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Focus on increasing supportive home and community-based services, expanded eligibility for home care and improved discharge planning. Light lunch served. Call James Chionsini, 703-0188 x304.

Mental Health Board, 2nd Wednesday of the month, 6:30-8:30 p.m., City Hall, room 278. CBHS advisory committee, open to the public. Call: 255-3474.

National Alliance for the Mentally III-S.F., 3rd Wednesday of the month, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Family Service Agency, 1010 Gough St., 5th Fl. Call: 905-6264. Family member group, open to the public.

SAFETY

Neighborhood Emergency Response Team Training (NERT). Central city residents can take the S.F. Fire Department's free disaster preparedness and response training at neighborhood locations. www.sfgov.org/sffdnerf, or Lt. Arteseros, 970-2022.

SoMa Police Community Relations Forum, 4th Monday of the month, 6-7:30 p.m. Location varies. To receive monthly email info: Meital Amitai, 538-8100 x202 or mamitai@iisf.org.

Tenderloin Police Station Community Meeting, last Tuesday of the 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, 1st Wednesday of the 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 the month, Hotel Whitcomb, 1231 Market St., 3 p.m. Information: 882-3088, <http://central-market.org>.

Friends of Boeddeker Park, 2nd Thursday of the month, 3:30 p.m., Boeddeker Rec Center, 240 Eddy St. Plan park events, activities and improvements. Contact Betty Traynor, 931-1126.

Gene Friend Recreation Center Advisory Board, 3rd Thursday of the month, 5 p.m. Board works to protect SoMa resources for children, youth, families and adults. Gene Friend Recreation Center, 270 Sixth St. Information: Tim Figueras, 554-9532.

North of Market/Tenderloin Community Benefit District. Full board meets 3rd Monday of every other month, 5:30 p.m., 134 Golden Gate Ave., 292-4812.

SoMa Community Stabilization Fund Community Advisory Committee meets 3rd Thursday of the month, 5:30 p.m., 1 South Van Ness, 2nd floor atrium. Info: Claudine del Rosario 749-2519.

South of Market Project Area Committee, 3rd Monday of the month, 6 p.m., 1035 Folsom St. Health, Safety and Human Services Committee meets monthly on the 1st Tuesday after the 1st Monday, 1035 Folsom, noon. 487-2166 or www.sompac.com.

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. Information: 928-6209.

Tenderloin Neighborhood Association, 2nd Friday of the month, 842 Geary St., 5 p.m. Nonprofit focuses on health and wellness activities to promote neighborly interactions. Info: tenderloinneighborhood@yahoo.com.

SENIORS AND DISABLED

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

Senior Action Network, general meeting, 2nd Thursday of the month, 9 a.m.-noon, Universal Unitarian Church, 1187 Franklin St. Monthly programs, 965 Mission St. #700: Senior Housing Action Committee, 3rd Wednesday, 1:30 p.m. Call for health program and Senior University: 546-1333 and www.sfsan.org.



Please join us for an Open House to celebrate the 2-year anniversary of the

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4-6 p.m.
March 10, 2011
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Speaking program at 4:30 p.m.
Opening Remarks by
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"Any Door Is the Right Door"

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Office of Self Help is a Wellness and Recovery Center. All of our staff are consumers, peers with those we serve.

Drop in or call us. Check us out.

Other programs in the neighborhood also can be the Right Door for you:

Bay Area Addiction Research and Treatment
1111 Market St., 1st Fl., 863-3883

CATS (Community Awareness Treatment Services)
1171 Mission St., 2nd Fl., 241-1199

Central City Hospitality House
290 Turk St., 749-2100

Community Vocational Enterprises
818 Mission St., 3rd Fl., 544-0424

Family Service Agency — Full Circle Family Program
1010 Gough St., 474-7310, Ext. 315

Hyde Street Community Services
134 Golden Gate Ave., 673-5700

Independent Living Resource Center
649 Mission St., 3rd Fl., 543-6222

Larkin Street Youth Services Youth Clinic
1138 Sutter St., 673-0911, Ext. 259

S.F. Mental Health Clients' Rights Advocates
1095 Market St., Suite 618,
552-8100 or (800) 729-7727

SAGE (Standing Against Global Exploitation)
1385 Mission St., Suite 300,
358-2719

Swords to Plowshares
1060 Howard St., 252-4788

Tenderloin Health
255 Golden Gate Ave., 437-2900

Westside Crisis
245 Eleventh St., 355-0311



Office of Self-Help Drop-In Center, 1095 Market Street, Suite 202
This behavioral health education message is underwritten by Bank of the West.

575-1400