

Toxic waste aplenty on Treasure Island

Radium 226, PCBs, other poisons linger in the soil

BY MARK HEDIN

TREASURE Island, for many, invokes visions of adventure and buried pirate gold, thanks to writer Robert Louis Stevenson, onetime San Franciscan.

Perhaps Gavin Newsom was fantasizing thusly, when, in one of his latter acts as mayor, he agreed to pay the Navy \$105 million for the 403 acres of sand and sludge dumped into the middle of San Francisco Bay in the late 1930s and dubbed Treasure Island, to be home of the 1939 World's Fair.

The origin of the island's name could have come from the Stevenson book or because the landfill material, dredged from the bottom of the bay, arrived as river-borne debris from prospectors working upstream in the Mother

Lode. In any case, new fortunes are to be made in any \$1.5 billion project, and developers such as Miami's Lennar Corp. and politically connected Angeleno Ron Burkle's Kenwood Investments are poised to do just that on Treasure Island.

"There's no such thing as complete clean-up."

Saul Bloom
CEO, ARC ECOLOGY

Just weeks ago, the board of supervisors and Mayor Ed Lee enthusiastically and unanimously approved a development plan for Treasure Island that breathlessly calls for 8,000 new housing units — 1,600 of them "below market," the rest projected to sell for \$600,000 to \$900,000 each — a ferry terminal, sailboat harbor and other amenities, including 140,000 square feet of retail space to accommodate 17,000 new residents who will join the 2,000 islanders already there.

In mid-July, Citizens for a Sustainable Treasure Island, a group including former Board of Supervisors President Aaron Peskin,

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'CULTURE OF VIOLENCE'

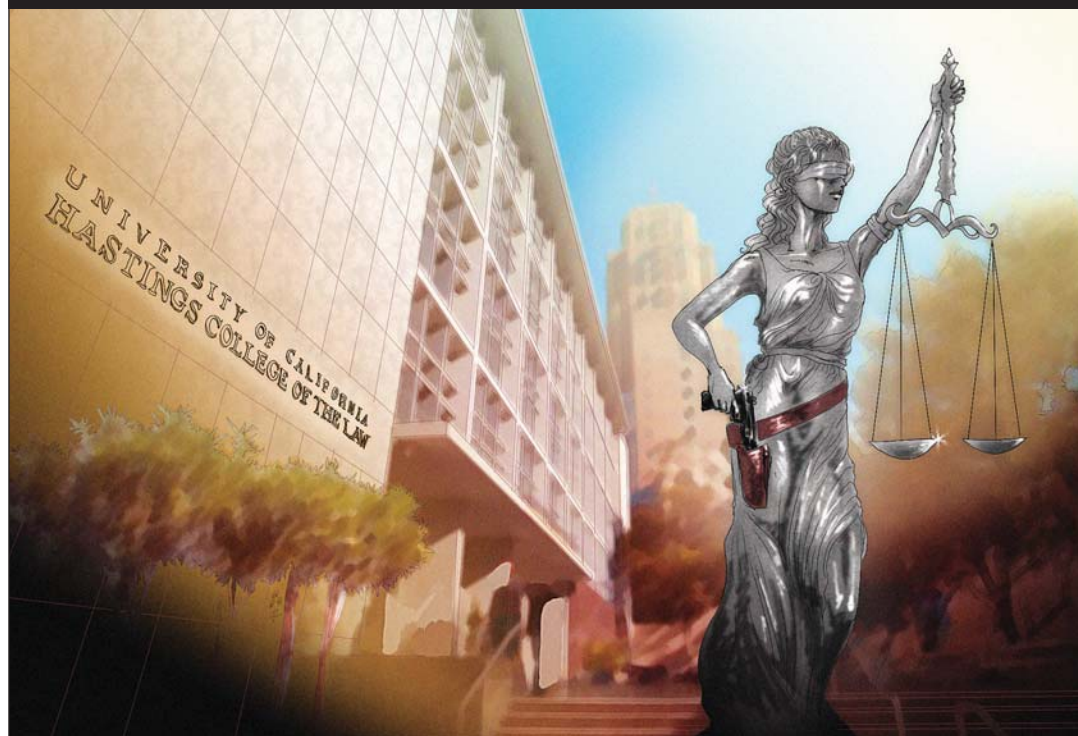


ILLUSTRATION BY AKIKO SMITH

Guards at the U.C. law school want to wear guns, which would increase their pay and benefits and enhance their careers in law enforcement. Some of their neighbors emphatically say no.

Battle of Hastings

U.C. law school security guards want to be armed

BY JONATHAN NEWMAN

ELEVEN Hastings security guards and their three management personnel have formally asked the law school's approval for the right to carry guns on duty. The request will be discussed Sept. 9 at an open meeting of the board of trustees.

When Hastings CFO David Seward told the Tenderloin Futures Collaborative in May that the guards wanted to be armed, many at the meeting went ballistic, with Rev. Glenda Hope leading the charge.

"I don't think we need any more guns on the streets, no matter who has them," said Hope in a recent interview. "If you have guns, you're going to use them, and they contribute to a culture of violence. I think Hastings' guards can react the same way the rest of us would — either intervene if they can do it safely, or call 911." Hope stated she is not a "pro-gun person."

Hope, the Network Ministries cleric who chairs the Collaborative, a major information forum for the Tenderloin, was not alone in her opposition to the proposal.

At the May meeting, Friar Tom West, St. Anthony Foundation representative on the Collaborative, contrasted the work dining room monitors do at the long lines for food, noting good training allows them to maintain order without weapons.

Glendon "Anna Conda" Hyde, a Tenderloin activist and newly appointed member of the Entertainment Commission, also spoke against arming the guards. More recently, he said, "If you give people guns, you're giving them guns to use. Why invite the ability for more violence when there's no just cause to do so? I think we see in recent (shootings) that more guns lead to more violence, and the violence is disproportionately against people with lower socio-economic means."

Hyde, a board member of the Harvey Milk Club, added that the club's executive board voted unanimously to oppose the Hastings guards' request. "We have written a letter to Hastings, the board of supervisors and the mayor's office opposing this," he said. "We don't believe it's the right thing to do."

If the security guards achieve their goal, they will expand an already sizable group of armed personnel working for government agencies in the Civic Center, joining San Francisco deputy sheriffs at City Hall and the Superior Court on McAllister, the marshals at the Golden Gate Avenue State Building and Federal Protection Service security at four federal buildings.

The guards who patrol the Heart of the City Farmers' Market each Wednesday and Sunday are the only private armed guards in the neighborhood (see sidebar). Security personnel at the Art Institute of California-San Francisco's two locations on U.N. Plaza are not armed.

Frank Wu, Hastings chancellor and dean, let his board of trustees know last May that the guards felt "the need to better protect themselves in their employment." In

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PHOTO BY LENNY LIMJOCO

Signs like this on Avenue M indicate radioactive waste. Many other hot spots dot the island.

2,000 Treasure Islanders live with toxic waste

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sued to stop the project, pending a more thorough examination of the development plans.

Not long after the fair wrapped in September 1940, WWII broke out, and plans to build an airport on the site were scuttled. Instead, the Navy took the island over, trading for it land 20 miles south that subsequently became San Francisco International Airport. Prior to abandoning Treasure Island in the mid-1990s, the Navy used it for, among other things, chemical and nuclear warfare training.

There was no gold, but at least silver was buried out there, according to an environmental impact report on proposed development on the landfill. The silver came from a former Navy medical clinic that included X-ray and photo processing equipment. But in its 50-plus years of occupancy, the Navy also spread PCBs, dioxins, lead, asbestos, a passel of petroleum products, solvents of all sorts, metals of many kinds, arsenic and other poisons such as DDT, plutonium and radium 226.

Along the way, radioactive spills were, when acknowledged, cleaned up according to the standards of the day. However, documentation was haphazard and there was

Home at right on the northwest corner of the island is occupied. House at left is empty and fenced off, scheduled for demolition because of toxic contamination.



Contaminated soil on Avenue M is covered in black plastic to keep it from becoming airborne pending its removal.

more ignorance than awareness of the toxic risks. Recently discovered among the rubble, for instance, were lapel pins — souvenirs from the world fair — that contained radium, which in that more innocent era was thought to be a harmless way to make things glow. Now we know: The results are sometimes horrifying.

Under the terms of the Department of Defense's 1981 Installation Restoration Act, military properties were to be inspected for hazardous substances and, where found, risks to human health and the environment were to be cost-effectively reduced. In its assessments, the Navy identified 33 problem areas on the combined Treasure Island and Yerba Buena site and began work.

Arc Ecology, which is party to the Citizens for a Sustainable Treasure Island's lawsuit, has been involved with Treasure Island planning since the Navy decided to leave the base, and has monitored the cleanup at former military properties at Hunters Point, Alameda and the Presidio, as well as other projects worldwide.

"They're still working to do PCB remediation," says Arc Ecology CEO Saul Bloom, "but it's exponentially harder and more expensive to get through that last 10% of pollutants." The issue, he said, is the risk associated with prolonged exposure to even a small level of toxic material. "There's no such thing as complete cleanup," Bloom said. "The work typically is as good as the funding allows it to be."

For much of the island, the plan, basically, is to remove as much toxic material as possible and pave over the rest. "How do we protect the public from the excess cancer that we expect from the exposure?" Bloom asked, while allowing that "as compared to Hunters Point, Treasure Island is lightly contaminated but it still needs to be remediated. The problem is that because it's a shoal, it's harder to

clean up."

This work will be complicated by the fact that Treasure Island is so close to the San Andreas Fault and the perhaps even-more-ready-to-rock Hayward Fault.

The Navy determined in 1993 that it would close its Treasure Island facility in 1997. But before the military can transfer any of its property to civilian use, it has to complete the work mandated in the Installation Restoration Act. To date, the Navy has been able to transfer two large segments of Treasure Island to the city's Treasure Island Development Agency, an LLC that is a conduit between the city and developers

The Navy's cleanup work on 24 of the 33 problem sites has been supervised by California's Department of Toxic Substances Control, and, in the nine other cases, where the issue is petroleum contaminants, the San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board.

DTSC project manager Remedios Sunga and supervisor Denise Tsugi report that the Navy has satisfactorily cleaned up half of the 24 sites they are monitoring. It is possible, they said, that it will not be feasible to do some of the remaining cleanup work to the standard of "unrestricted land use," allowing everything from housing to day-care centers, that the Navy has met so far, and that "land-use covenants" — restrictions on future uses — will be required for some sites.

Some of the 2,000 people living on the island are already familiar with the concept of restricted uses. For instance, the TIDA prohibits its tenants from "gardening, digging or disturbing soil" in their own backyards.

Of the nine petroleum-contaminated sites, the Water Quality Control Board has deemed the Navy's cleanup work complete on eight. Work continues on the former seaplane maintenance area on the south side of Treasure Island, on Clipper Cove. Along the way, 50,000 tons of petroleum-contaminated soils have been excavated and removed. Work on the new span of the Bay Bridge

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PHOTOS BY LENNY LIMJOCO



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CENTRAL CITY EXTRA is published monthly by San Francisco Study Center Inc., a private nonprofit serving the community since 1972. The Extra was initiated through grants from the S.F. Hotel Tax Fund and the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund. The contents are copyrighted by the San Francisco Study Center, 1095 Market Street, Suite 601, San Francisco, CA 94103.

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Central City Extra is a member of the SAN FRANCISCO NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION, SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS, NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER, AND SAN FRANCISCO PENINSULA PRESS CLUB

Picnic area planned on former Navy dump site

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has interrupted some of the Yerba Buena remediation.

The largest area of the island still awaiting cleanup is known as Site 12. Its 90 acres stretch across the northern shore. The northeast corner was once home to the USS Pandemonium, a training facility for detecting and coping with radioactivity. Farther west, the Navy conducted radiation training and used the land to dump and sometimes burn its waste. Soil tests conducted there in 1999 reportedly turned up a shocking PCB contamination level of 19,000 parts per million — the EPA-mandated maximum is .22 ppm. More than 10,000 cubic yards of soil were removed and shipped off to Utah for burial in 2000, but soil tests conducted more than five years later found that PCB contamination was still more than seven times EPA's upper limit.

Remediation work is scheduled to continue there through 2018, when the land is supposed to become open space, with a group picnic area planned for an area currently fenced off by signs warning of radioactive contamination. Mere yards from these fences, the city continues to lease rental properties. It's fenced off, but when the spirit moves them, skateboarders, the homeless and late-night partiers all seem to make their way through the fences into the remaining structures.

Elsewhere on the island, evidence of toxicity and remediation efforts are plentiful. At 4th Street and Avenue M, for instance, across from a Little League diamond, sit mounds of soil covered in black plastic, awaiting removal. This is what's left of Building 233, which was demolished in January. It once housed the Navy's Radiation Safety School Training, and was the site of a spill of radium sulfate powder, or radium 226, which has a half-life of 16 centuries. Farther north up Avenue M, more



mounds of plastic-covered soil and blue bins for transporting it sit behind fences festooned with yellow radiation-warning signs.

Treasure Island, as landfill, will turn to jelly in a major earthquake on either fault, liquefying just like it did South of the Slot in 1906. The 7.1 Loma Prieta quake of 1989, its epicenter 60 miles away, produced sand boils and ruptured dozens of gas, sewage and water lines on Treasure Island and compacted the landfill, bringing the entire island about 6 feet closer to sea level. Current tenants, who pay the city \$10 million in rent every year, are warned in their leases of the "poor quality" of the soil underfoot.

To make the island seismically safe, the land will be compacted — by pounding the ground with heavy weights and adding new soil to the surface. Arc Ecology's Bloom maintains, however, that this procedure risks

spreading the "dirty soil" laterally and that as part of the plan to erect several high-rise buildings on the island, those buildings will all require basements and sub-basements to provide stability, which will be susceptible to the intrusion of soil gases, Bloom said.

Bloom cites changing attitudes in City Hall about accountability to the public and the city's cozy relationship with the Lennar Corp., savior of San Francisco's southeast, as key problems. "How hard will the city and Lennar push the Navy?" he asked. "The ethic of 'you made a mess, clean it up' isn't there anymore," he said. "The city doesn't really want to know, the Navy doesn't really want to tell and the developer's only interested in what's going to be a problem. Everybody wants to get on with their agenda." ■

This is the first in a series of stories about District 6's Treasure Island.

The northwest corner of Treasure Island, with its unbeatable views of the city skyline, was once a Navy dump site. Given both of those characteristics, it's sometimes referred to as "the hottest property in San Francisco."

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State law, many neighbors say no to g

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Joe Dunphy,
owner of Celtic Coffee
Company on
McAllister Street, says
of arming the guards:
"I'm not so sure. ...
Everybody's afraid
of crime in the
Tenderloin, but it's
the crazy behavior
that's more the
problem."

April, Wu surveyed Hastings students, faculty and staff to get their views on arming the guards, but the anonymous questionnaire failed to provide a consensus on the firearms question, although a slight majority of responders approved, according to Seward.

In addition to its 14 security personnel, Hastings contracts with the SFPD to provide an armed police officer to patrol the public edges of the campus four nights a week from 5 to 11:30 p.m. at an annual cost of \$110,000. Arming the security guards would end this

yearly expense, but substantially raise long-run costs for liability insurance, workers' compensation and the increased disability and retirement benefits earned by weapon-carrying employees, Seward said. Wu estimates the current costs of security could increase by \$200,000-\$400,000 annually.

Seward is trying to determine both campus and neighborhood sentiment on the request to add guns to the guards' current ordnance of handcuffs, Mace/pepper spray and batons. He knows the issue could be divisive.

"In the end, do you feel safer with armed guards, or less safe? And remember most of

them go home at 5 o'clock," Seward said. Judging by the response to his announcement of the guards' request at the Tenderloin Futures Collaborative meeting, many people would answer: "No."

Joe Dunphy, whose Celtic Coffee Company on McAllister Street is nestled between a Hastings residence/administration building and the School of Law, is undecided. "I'm not so sure. I'm comfortable with the police officers. Obviously, they have the training. I'm not certain what training the security guards would have with guns," he said.

Dunphy, a member of the Community Police Advisory Board that meets regularly with Tenderloin Station, believes crime is down in the area and when the federal building on U.N. Plaza reopens next year after renovation he believes the area will be even safer. "Everybody's afraid of crime in the Tenderloin, but it's the crazy behavior that's more the problem," he added.

Eric Man has owned and operated Em's Place, near Hastings on McAllister for 21 years. "Sure, it's okay with me (if the Hastings guards are armed)," he said. "They do good work and they've helped me many times. All day the students walk up and down and the guards have to look out for them. Most of the problem is

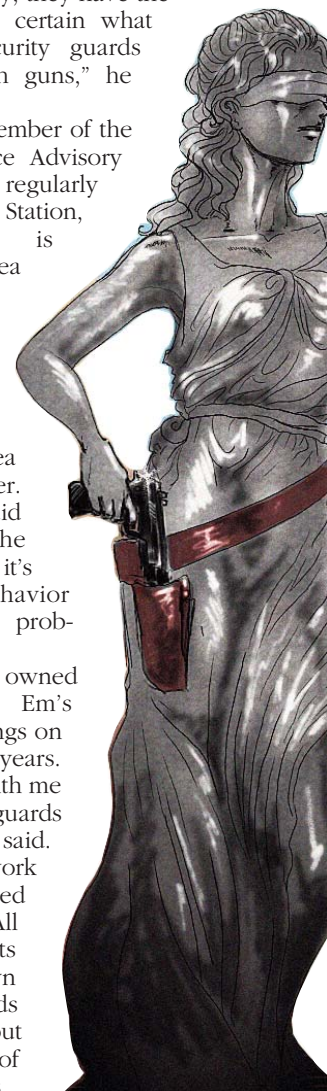


ILLUSTRATION BY AKIKO SMITH



PHOTO BY LENNY LIMJOCO

Armed pair patrol Farmers' Market

The only private guards in Tenderloin with guns

THE only armed private security guards in the Tenderloin are the two at Heart of the City Farmers' Market in U.N. Plaza, and it's merely incidental that they are armed.

"We weren't shopping for armed guards — it wasn't a deliberate action on our part," says Laura Brainin-Rodriguez, the market's board president.

Market Co-Manager Christine Adams says guns never entered the conversation when the market decided to double its security to two guards, in June. Though the guards have been armed all along, that's never been a consideration since the market first hired a guard 20 years ago.

"They wear them because they go on to other jobs where they have to wear them, or they come here from them," Adams says. "We never asked that they be armed — the fewer guns the better."

The only other armed guards near U.C. Hastings Law School, which is looking at what it will take to arm their 11 "peace officers," are in federal, state and court buildings, says Tenderloin Capt. Joe Garrity. The 11 Hastings guards, as institutional employees, are not contract personnel. The Hilton Hotel, other hotels and other businesses in the area don't have armed private security guards, Garrity says.

The market increased its guard force because Adams couldn't manage the panhandling and other disruptions while maintaining the market's food stamp exchange plus her other duties. "Too

much territory to cover," she says.

Brainin-Rodriguez says the market has "so many nooks and crannies" and "the sight lines aren't any good." With two guards, one can be stationed at each end of the market. "They're good, too, not heavy-handed."

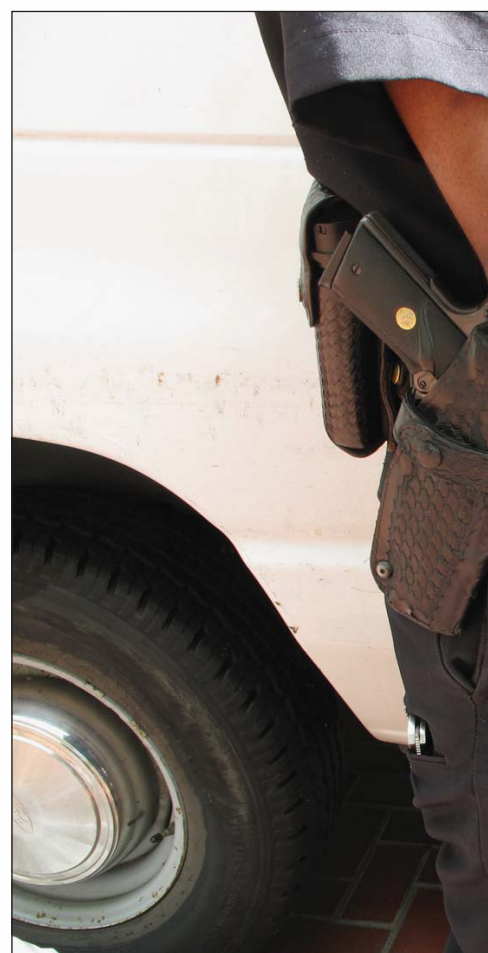
The two guards are Issak Atkins and Ken Hurst from AS Security in El Cerrito. Their salaries are paid from the farmers' stall fees. Hurst has been at the market "on and off" for 20 years, when a guard was first hired, and has never had to draw his gun. Atkins, at the market intermittently for 10 years, has never pulled his weapon at the market, either. They handle aggressive panhandlers, pickpockets and call for medical help when people are ill, they say, but no one problem predominates.

"Pickpockets are seasonal," says Hurst. "During the summer, wherever there are big crowds.

"Our job is to make things safe by our presence," he explains, standing with Atkins by the market's van one recent Wednesday. "The dope dealers stay across the street. Families come up and want their picture taken with us."

Both guards were once homeless. "We understand (the homeless) and can give them helpful information," Hurst says. "Communication is more important than the weapon on my side." ■

— TOM CARTER



Isaac Atkins, who has patrolled the Farmers'

Guns for Hastings guards

people arguing and shouting on the street, just acting up, but some have knives, too. I've got no problem, if they want to carry guns."

Neither Wu nor Seward has identified a particular crime on or near the Hastings campus that has spurred the security guards' request. Under a 1990 federal law, the Jeanne Clery Act, all institutions participating in federal student financial aid programs must publish an annual report on security policies and campus area crime reports. In its 2010-11 report, Hastings provided crime statistics for 2006 through 2009 for the campus and environs — roughly 500 to 600 feet from the campus edges, which extends to U.N. Plaza, the Hibernia Bank hang-out on Jones Street, the Golden Gate Avenue post office — a block or so beyond Hastings in every direction, some of the toughest turf in the hood. Hastings' report reflected a four-fold increase in auto break-ins and a 10-step surge in narcotic offenses. Some who follow crime statistics in the Tenderloin believe the majority of calls from campus to the SFPD involve domestic violence incidents.

Recently, off-campus thefts of students' iPhones and laptops in what Seward calls "smash and grabs" have increased, Seward said.

Armed or not, Hastings security guards are asked to maintain order, enforce laws, protect the 1,600 daily students, faculty,

staff and visitors as well as monitor U.C. property — and remain safe in doing so.

"Some of the guards make a career of their campus security work. Others use their work as a step to careers in federal and local law enforcement," Seward noted in an interview. For the latter, the more hands-on experience in fighting crime and bearing firearms, the better the chances for career advancement.

At the Collaborative meeting Seward cited the current rules governing the engagement of Hastings officers. If crime happens on the public right of way and does not involve a member of the Hastings community, the guards are directed to notify the SFPD and remain alert. If they gain the right to carry weapons, the guards could choose to intervene directly, he said.

Tenderloin Station Capt. Joe Garrity says arming the Hastings "peace officers," a legal designation, wouldn't necessarily ease his burden. But, "it's not my choice," he said. "It's their property. They have a union, a board and the penal code, and it would be a long process to change it." He keeps a Hastings map and binder that has scores of phone numbers and outlines protocol for responding to any campus incident. "We have a very good working relationship with them," he says.

In 1995, as part of the state's Government Reorganization Plan, sections of the California Penal Code were amended to clarify the definition of peace officers and the range of their authority, including the right to carry firearms, if authorized by their employers. The duties of certain DMV personnel, water and railroad district guards, for example, were reclassified. But Penal Code section 830.4(d) remained in place and it limits the peace officer authority of "security officers of Hastings College of Law," specifically stating they are not authorized to carry a gun either on or off duty.

Bill Palmini, chief of the U.C. Hastings Public Safety Officer Association, did not return repeated phone calls asking for comment on the association's request to arm its members. ■

Tom Carter and Heidi Swillinger contributed to this report.



PHOTO BY TOM CARTER

Market for 10 years, has never had to pull his gun, nor has the other guard, Ken Hurst.



Should Hastings security guards be armed?

Asked at Hyde and McAllister streets near Hastings



Mary L., Tenderloin

I'm almost against it, because of the neighborhood. People get robbed and mugged, and there are domestic squabbles around here. If there are guns, things happen. And there are children at the YMCA around the corner and all around this neighborhood. There could be a stray bullet — anything could go wrong. Sometimes changes like this aren't good.

Kevon DeHart, Tenderloin

I say yes, arm them with guns, but unloaded. Have the bullets in a separate case. They don't need a loaded gun until something happens. You never know when there could be a terrorist attack, and you've got to protect the students. They're youngsters.



Mia Carter, Tenderloin

Hastings is a school, and I don't think at a school they should be walking around carrying guns. People are accidentally pulling their guns and killing people all the time. I think the SFPD is enough — they are trained for that. I'm a student at City College, and I'd feel very uncomfortable if there were guards carrying guns on campus there.

David Davis-Crawford, Tenderloin

No one should be armed with guns because people get killed, or they mistake their tasers for guns like in the BART shooting. If they have guns, people in the neighborhood will feel unsafe, and then they'll start carrying guns too. It'll also put out a bad vibe. I don't want to be around here with that.



Shawna Jourdan, Tenderloin

I don't think Hastings should arm their security guards. We don't need any more armed idiots running around the city. We already have problems with armed security like transit cops, and people end up getting killed sometimes. We don't need any more of that.

Craig F., Mission

As long as they're inside the building, I don't have a problem with them being armed, because their job is to protect their property. But if they go outside the building, they shouldn't be allowed to have guns. The cops already have guns — if Hastings wants that, they should just hire a cop.



Del Geronimo, Livermore

Yes, they should have guns because these are dangerous times, and the most important thing is national security. I know San Franciscans will think they're being militarized, but that is not the point. You've got to be safe. That's very important to me.



Faithful Fools: Parish of the streets

Rev. Kay, Sister Carmen's ministry crosses social boundaries, links rich with poor

BY BRIAN RINKER

IN the heart of the Tenderloin is Faithful Fools Street Ministry. The two-story purple building at 234 Hyde St. is in an area affected by drugs, homelessness and poverty, but Faithful Fools is a place of hope, healing and love. Co-founders Rev. Kay Jorgenson and Sister Carmen Barsody are trying to change the world one person at a time.

The Fools is a parish of sorts. Its mission statement reads: "On the streets we find our common humanity, through which celebration and healing occur."

It offers yoga, meditation, Bible readings and discussion groups. However, the Faithful Fools' most famous programs are their street retreats, where people from outside the neighborhood can experience living on the streets. The retreats begin with one-day outings that end in the evening, followed by a reflection and discussion session. The one-day retreats are in part to ready participants for a weeklong experience when they go out alone and fend for themselves. They start on the steps of Cathedral Hill and descend into the Tenderloin.

"Walk toward the pain. Befriend it, and you will be healed," Rev. Kay says.

Each retreat costs \$45 to \$200, with a sliding scale for affordability. All other programs are free. The Faithful Fools is supported by donations and grants, pretty much operating day to day, hand to mouth.

Jorgenson, 80, and Barsody, 50, named their ministry Faithful Fools because the fool is a link, able to cross boundaries between rich and poor. The fool is always in between.

"We are the fools," Jorgenson says. Their goal is to create a community without boundaries or class.

The Faithful Fools' programs include writing, poetry and artist workshops. People can come in off the street and relax or talk with someone. The Fools' No. 1 priority is building personal relationships. Yet, sometimes people bring their street attitude inside and situations get heated.

On a recent Friday morning, Jorgenson was upstairs in the library drinking coffee. An argument erupted in the discussion room. The rising voice of Stone, a homeless man who is a frequent visitor, could be heard booming down the hall. Stone was yelling at Jorgenson's 52-year-old daughter, Andrea, who helps out.

"You can't tell me to leave! You don't even live here. You live in a big house in Diamond Heights!" Stone roared. Standing in the middle of the room yelling, he is wearing a long dirty blazer, ball cap and dark aviator sunglasses. His face is tanned. His beard is unkempt.

Jorgenson gets up and shuffles down the hall. Short, she walks hunched over, making her appear more diminutive. Her presence may seem meek, but the woman exudes compassion and strength. Into the discussion room she went, and her presence commanded respect. Without a word she looked disapprovingly across the room at Stone. Instantly he stopped his tirade, heaved his cloth grocery bags full of knickknacks over his shoulder and made ready to leave. But not before apologizing to Jorgenson.

For people who live in cramped SROs, and for people who don't have a room, the streets become



PHOTO BY TOM CARTER

Rev. Kay Jorgenson (with microphone) and Sister Carmen Barsody greet an overflow crowd at the Faithful Fools to celebrate printing of the fourth edition of the Tenderloin anthology, "Living in the Land of the Dead."

their living room. Sometimes tensions are strained and people get frustrated. But no one has ever been violent or stolen from the Fools, they say.

"Space is a privilege," says Barsody, referring to life in the Tenderloin. "We provide the space and encouragement, and allow people to find their own potential."

In mid-July, Faithful Fools released its fourth anthology of creative writing and visual arts titled appropriately, *Living in the Land of the Dead*.

"The arts are a primary source of connecting," Barsody says.

Richard Kamlar, chair of the visual arts department at the University of San Francisco, is a Faithful Fools regular. He teaches "artist citizenry," a collaborative effort between an artist and the needs of a community. Every semester for 12 years, Professor Kamlar has brought his students down to the Faithful Fools from USF, another rich institution up on a hill. Kamlar says artists think outside the box, they have the imagination to solve problems that seem insolvable.

"The students begin to understand the need for art in a range of communities," says Kamlar. The students then reflect on their experience at the Faithful Fools, and overall, he says, his students consider it one of their best experiences ever.

Jorgenson belongs to the First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco and was the Unitarians' social justice minister from 2002 until she retired in 2006. In 2009, the Unitarian church bestowed on her the title of minister emeritus.

Rev. Fred Rabidoux, Unitarian minister for pastoral, said the church is very supportive of Jorgenson and Barsody's work. Many church members have gone on retreats and some have interned at the Fools.

Rabidoux, a member of the Fools' first board of directors, found the Fools' retreats enlightening and profound experiences.

"It is amazing to think that this ministry has existed this long affecting people's lives," said Rabidoux. "It's remarkable."

Barsody, a Franciscan nun from Little Falls, Minn., spent seven years in a convent in Managua, Nicaragua. Living among the poverty, gangs and domestic violence, she learned firsthand what it felt like to be in the middle of the action. She saw strength and commitment in people who didn't have their basic needs met yet still got up and celebrated life every day.

"The human commitment to life inspired me," said Barsody. From that moment on, the struggles of the impoverished would be her struggles too.

Both women, though dedicated members of religious organizations, maintain that the Faithful Fools is not a religious organization, but a charitable and educational tax-exempt nonprofit.

Both are from Minnesota. They formed their alliance in 1998 on the streets of the Tenderloin. Jorgenson had come out West from Minneapolis, where she had been a minister in a Lutheran church and a member of a mime troupe before that.

Barsody was on sabbatical, living in the Berkeley hills, when they were introduced. Both were concerned about the great divide between rich and poor and that chasm's attendant prejudices. They wanted to do something about it.

"We needed to put our faith where our mouths are, so to speak," says Jorgenson.

April 1, 1998, they declared the founding day of the Faithful Fools Street Ministry. Yet it took two more years of walking the streets and conducting countless street retreats before they decided it was time to house their parish. In 2000, over teriyaki chicken inside their makeshift office at All Star Donuts and Burgers on Golden Gate Avenue and Hyde Street, Rev. Kay and Sister Carmen threw their fate to the wind. They walked outside, took a right on Golden Gate and wandered around, only taking right turns, until they were standing outside their present-day location. At the time it was a copy shop owned and operated by Ramesh Patel, a Tenderloin star of old.

Patel already knew who Jorgenson and Barsody were, and he offered them his business and building for \$650,000. Patel didn't want a down payment, only a handshake, but the pair gave him all the money they had, a whopping \$500. A neighborhood businessman who found out about the deal offered Patel \$100,000 more, but he refused, says Barsody. She remembers Ramesh's response, "Greed tempts, but my conscience is clear." Patel trusted them and was patient.

During the next seven months after the Fools and Patel made their deal, Jorgenson and Barsody managed to scrape together \$150,000 from donations and low-interest loans from Catholic nuns. Now the Fools have only \$100,000 left to pay, they say.

Since the beginning, Jorgenson and Barsody have lived at The Fools, but recently Jorgenson has moved in with her daughter to make room for someone new.

Throughout the years they have embraced and accepted the community for what it is. They understand the duality of human nature and try not to judge.

"Our lives are simply a response to the needs that present themselves," says Barsody.

And as long as there is person with a story to tell, there will be someone at The Fools wanting to listen. ■



Brian Rinker writes for *The Guardsman* at City College.



PHOTO BY BRIAN RINKER

Sign outside Fools' building.

TENDERLOIN STARS



THERE are 30,000 of us in the Tenderloin, each unique in special ways. *Central City Extra's* new regular feature, *Tenderloin Stars*, captures the personality, humanity and, often, strangeness of our remarkably diverse populace. These are the people who make our neighborhood great.



Modest proposal for improv theater troupe

BY ED BOWERS

THE idea for this project was inspired by director John Cassavetes' first movie, "Shadows," made in the late '50s. I was impressed by its beautiful cinematography as well as the dialogue, which had an organic quality to it, a lack of pretension. It allowed the viewer to suspend disbelief and become absorbed in the characters and their situations and points of view. At the movie I watched for the scriptwriter's name so I could catch more of his work.

To my shock, a notice came across the screen stating that most of the dialogue was improvised by the actors. Truly impressive.

The actors were not playing themselves; this was not a documentary or a reality TV show, but a theatrical presentation. Much as a jazz band might honor the emotional essence and melody and harmonics of a love song, yet through improvisation add a precious aspect of their consciousness to it, the actors in "Shadows" had interrelated and spontaneously played off one another to get to the essence of their characters. Their medium was words.

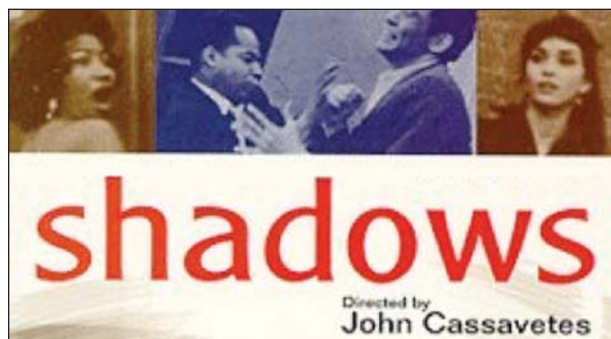
I began to wonder why improvisational theater isn't widespread, especially in a city like San Francisco, with a reputation for attracting writers, poets and painters who transcended conventional limitations of form and content and took chances, experimented and came up with an original expressive medium. I was perplexed that improvisational theater had not already been done to death.

The purpose of art, like science, is to allow people to see in a way that they never saw before. Once the world was flat, now it is round. Once a Picasso painting would have been laughed out of the gallery, now it is worth millions of dollars. Taking chances, experimenting, failing and succeeding are keys to this artistic process, and I believe that all these means to creating a work of beauty and insight are contained in the process initiated by improvisational theater.

The Faithful Fools, which is hosting an improv event this month, is a perfect venue for improvisational theater because of the large variety of people participating in its programs. People of all ages and races and cultures come to The Fools, and I bet quite a few would be interested in a creative project where they could be full participants in its creation.

Improvisational acting, which compels the actor to look deeply inside to sense the point of view of the character he or she is playing, is a powerful means of self-discovery and a shortcut to empathy.

An actor who mimics character and parrots an author's words has talent and is not to be disrespected. But an actor who must explore the self to understand the character of someone else, and speak for that character through his own words is experiencing an adventure in consciousness and creativity that may or may not succeed but is always worth the attempt.



The writer would provide the basic direction and plot of the piece and perhaps write brief sections of dialogue, which like chord changes in jazz, would act as springboards for the actors to improvise.

The director must have an intuitive and intellectual understanding of the project and be able to inspire the actors to delve deeply into themselves to express characters different from who they are.

The project should be fun. Nothing is more tedious than an adventure that takes itself too frivolously or too seriously.

So that's my proposal. ■

Aug. 29th @ 6:30 PM
Tightrope improv
Location: Faithful Fools
234 Hyde St.

Call Ed Bowers' cell for info:
(415) 368-8116

OBITUARIES

GEORGE KISSACK A real man, a good man

Affable George Kissack was living on borrowed time the years he lived in the Plaza Apartments. Maybe it was the finest chapter of his life. Penniless, but happy and loved by his friends, the thin, 5-foot-8 man who used a cane, ignored the past and lived each day laughing and joking.

A black man stood at Mr. Kissack's July 7 memorial and gave a good account of the friend he had smoked hundreds of cigarettes with over a couple of years while swapping jokes and yukking it up.

"He was a good man, a straightforward man who told it like it was. Once some of us were outside and he stuck his head out and said, 'Whew, there're too many black men out here, I'm outnumbered,' and he went back inside."

The men outside had laughed, and the 14 mourners who heard the story laughed, too.

"When I heard he died," the man continued, "it hurt me, like when you lose a family member, that kinship. He was one of the few real men I've met living here."

Not a lot was known about Mr. Kissack other than he was from Seattle and had a brother there. In September 2007, he moved into the year-old \$22 million Plaza Apartments at 6th and Howard streets which were planned

originally for low-income residents but switched by Mayor Newsom before construction was finished to become housing for the chronically homeless. Social worker Joanna Menendez said Mr. Kissack, an alcoholic, had been homeless in Golden Gate Park for many years and had prostate cancer when he arrived at the Plaza. He had been given two to three months to live. But he lived almost another four years.

"He was really happy to be here," Menendez said.

Mr. Kissack's cancer returned in May, and he was taken to Laguna Honda Hospital, where he died June 20. He was 66.

"He was compassionate," a white man said. "He was more concerned about other people than he was himself. He was a very good man who brought smiles to a lot of faces."

Menendez read some of her written thoughts about knowing Mr. Kissack.

"Knowing his death was coming I was reluctant to let him into my heart," she read. "But I couldn't. He knocked on my door a couple of times a day, and he appreciated me being here."

She visited him once at Laguna Honda in his last days and accidentally saw a tattoo on his lower left leg. Its crude lettering spelled "Sally." She asked who Sally was. A tall, beautiful girl he danced with as a youngster in Seattle, he said. He had inked the purple tattoo himself, he said. It must have been painful to make his memory of her visible on his calf forever. A touching story, Menendez said.

"It took sickness to find out about Sally," she said stifling a sob. "Too often it's just momentous occasions when these things come out. But let's try not to keep our Sallys secret, and share more of ourselves." ■

— TOM CARTER

SOUTHSIDE



Manor Advocates Endorse



Your vote counts on November 8th

Remember to vote for leaders who support renters rights.

Ranked choice endorsements from Manor Advocates

Rank choice endorsements

Mayor Candidate
John Avalos
1st choice
Leland Yee
2nd choice
Cesar Ascarrunz
3rd choice

District Attorney
Maurice Chenier
1st choice
David Onek
2nd choice
Sharmin Bock
3rd choice

Sheriff
David Wong
1st choice
Ross Mirkarimi
2nd choice
Paul Miyamoto
3rd choice

This endorsement slate is by Tenant / Civic Leaders who have resided in District 6 neighborhoods for over fifteen years and engaged in preserving affordable housing. Each of us won many victories on behalf of our community. When hearing about other endorsements ask yourself if these people even support the most basic need we all share, which is decent housing for everyone.

Your vote counts on Nov. 8, 2011

This is a paid advertisement not affiliated with any candidate campaign. Paid for by Manor Advocates (advocating since 1997) October 24, 2011 last day to register to vote in this election.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SPECIAL EVENTS

Sunday Streets, Tenderloin/Civic Center, Aug. 14, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Car-free streets for people to get out and get active strolling, skating, cycling or just people-watching. For planned activities and events: sundaystreetsf.com.



Sunday Streets

Central City Democrats endorsement meeting: Mon., Aug. 15, 6 p.m., 201 Turk St. Community Room. Public meeting to meet and ask questions of candidates for November election. Info: 339-VOTE(8683).

ARTS EVENTS

Shhhhh! Silents in the Library, Main Library, Sun., Aug. 7, 2 p.m., Koret Auditorium, lower level, An afternoon with silent film star "Baby Betty," a.k.a. Diana Serra Cary, who signed to a million-dollar contract at age five in the 1920s. Includes a short film and book signing.

Bed Bugs Exhibit, Main Library, Business, Science, and Technology Center desk, 4th floor, through Aug. 15. Documents, photos, graphics on display, plus a list of print, Web and contact resources to take home.

People in Plazas noontime concerts, Tue., Aug. 16, Boeddeker Park, noon-1 p.m. Teddy Strong, T Mamboband, playing salsa and Afro-Cuban rhythms.

Witching Strains: Art Hickman and Sweet Jazz in San Francisco, through Aug. 31, Main Library, History Center Exhibit Space, 6th floor. Bandleader Hickman's "sweet jazz" evolved into the big band sound; exhibition includes sheet music, photographs and ephemera.

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 services, expanded eligibility for home care, improved discharge planning. Light lunch. 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/sffdnert, 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: 538-8100 x202.

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 at noon. Call 292-4812 for location or check nom-tlcbd.org.

SoMa Community Stabilization Fund Advisory Committee, 3rd Thursday of the month, 5:30 p.m., 1 South Van Ness, 2nd floor. 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.

DISTRICT 6 SUPERVISOR

Jane Kim

Chair of Rules Committee, member of Budget & Finance Committee and Transportation Authority
Legislative Aides: Matthias Mormino and Viva Mogi
Jane.Kim@sfgov.org, 554-7970



GET CONNECTED

CENTRAL MARKET COMMUNITY BENEFIT DISTRICT

All CMCBD Meetings are open to the public.

Help us create a clean, safe and inviting Central Market. Get connected to the Central Market Community Benefit District (CMCBD).

All CMCBD meeting notices and agendas available at the San Francisco Public Library and at www.Central-Market.org.

Learn more about the CMCBD's Board of Directors Meetings and Committees, and how you can get involved.

415 957 5985 | www.central-market.org

CMCBD Board of Directors Meetings

Second Tuesday of Every Month, 3-5 p.m.,
Hotel Whitcomb, 1231 Market Street, Second Floor

The Central Market Community Benefit Corporation (CMCBC) is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) community-based organization formed in 2006 to provide programs and services to improve the quality of life experienced in the public realm of San Francisco's Central Market Community Benefit District (CMCBD)

City and County of San Francisco For Papers August, 2011

Concession Opportunity at San Francisco International Airport

San Francisco International Airport is accepting proposals for the T3, BAF Hub Food and Beverage Kiosk Lease. The Lease is comprised of a 300 square foot space for a dessert, snacks and/or juice/smoothies kiosk. The MAG for the first year is \$14,400. Proposals must be received by **3:00 p.m. on Friday, August 19, 2011**. Additional information, including submittal instructions, is on-line at <http://www.flysfo.com/web/page/about/b2b/conces/>. For more information please call Frishtah Affi, Principal Property Manager, Revenue Development and Management, at (650) 821-4500.

Protect your family, and install a CO detector now. You may save a life.

Did you know that 500 people a year die in the United States from carbon monoxide poisoning? We've had such fatalities right here in San Francisco.

The good news, though, is that a new State law took effect July 1 – and that law requires homeowners to install immediately carbon monoxide detectors. Like a smoke alarm, these devices warn you with a piercing whistle that you and your family need to get out of the building and call 911 for emergency services.

Carbon Monoxide is invisible, colorless and tasteless. It takes technology to make you aware of its presence.

The Mayor's Office, the Fire Department and the Department of Building Inspection want you to act immediately, and install carbon monoxide detectors to protect your family. Visit our web site – www.sfdbi.org – to download an Information Brochure and to view a YouTube video.

Department of the Environment

Get Comfortable with Energy Savings!
Homeowners around San Francisco are getting up to \$7,000 for home improvement projects that save energy. The average participant has saved 35% of their energy usage and now has a healthier, quieter, and more comfortable home. One resident received \$6,000 from the program, and only had to pay his participating contractor \$1,200 out of pocket. To find a participating contractor or get more information visit www.SFEnvironment.org/sfhip or call 415-355-3769.

Not getting the financial child support you need from your child's mother or father? Have friends or acquaintances in this situation? We can help!

The San Francisco Department of Child Support Services offers the following Free services:

- Establishment of an order for monetary child support, health insurance, medical expenses and child care costs.
- Modification (increase or decrease) of existing orders.
- Collection of unpaid child support, with interest.

Consultations please call (415) 356-2754 or e-mail us at sfdcss@sfgov.org

San Francisco Department of Child Support Services, Karen M. Roye, Director
Main Office is located at 617 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94105
Open Monday - Friday, 8:00 AM-5:00 PM., www.sfgov.org/dcss

The City and County of San Francisco encourage public outreach. Articles are translated into several languages to provide better public access. The newspaper makes every effort to translate the articles of general interest correctly. No liability is assumed by the City and County of San Francisco or the newspapers for errors and omissions.

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