

\$1.2 million for 6th St. SROs goes begging

Hotel owners don't apply for free loans from Redevelopment

BY TOM CARTER

THE Redevelopment Agency is canceling \$1.2 million in quality of life improvement loans for private Sixth Street SROs, which have a reputation for being little more than hovels.

The owners asked for the money four years ago but few have applied for it, though the loans were forgivable, meaning they didn't have to be repaid. So the \$1.2 million in improvements would have been essentially free.

The closure is a small step backward for the expensive drive to revitalize the seedy corridor that has seen many improvement programs since 1990 when Redevelopment came in to start earthquake recovery.

In recent years, millions of dollars have been spent on it. Redevelopment created the Plaza Apartments at Sixth and Howard, widened sidewalks and put palm trees on them, gave business start-up and façade improvement loans, a program administered for the agency by the nonprofit Urban Solutions. But the quality of life loan was a separate program.

Tenants, the Central City SRO Collaborative and 15 hotels pushed for the \$25,000-to-\$100,000 forgivable loans in 2002 and Redevelopment put up \$1.9 million for the program. A prime goal was electrical upgrades for the many SROs constructed after the 1906 earthquake. About 30 SROs are in the project area.

"The hotels helped write this but for some reason they decided they didn't want to invest," Mike Grisso, Redevelopment Agency project manager and liaison to the South of Market Project Area Committee, said in an interview.

Five of the original 15 SROs have gotten the loans.

A key reason the Redevelopment Agency Commission approved the program was to offer an incentive for owners to bring their hotels up to code so they could then take advantage of the forgivable loans. Redevelopment Executive Director Marcia Rosen emphasized the point at the commission's March 28 meeting.

"We heard a variety of excuses," Grisso said. "But too much paperwork, I don't buy. They had Urban Solutions to help them. It's disappointing."

A year ago, when it had become obvious that interest was very low, Redevelopment hired Urban Solutions, which contacted all the hotels. But it found the hotel owners didn't want to spend the money to bring their establishments up to code. Eligibility for the free money required having clear title — no pending code violations, liens or judgments.

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BOEDDEKER REDESIGN BROUHAHA

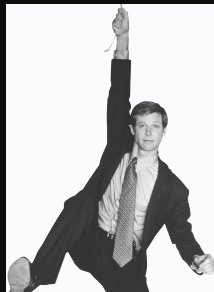
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CENTRAL CITY

EXTRA

SAN FRANCISCO

EXPLOSIVE BACK STORY



PHOTOS BY TOM CARTER

Francis Gabik (right) talks to his friend Jim Ayers about the bomb that closed Sixth Street.

Behind 6th St. bomb scare

SRO denizen tells how he came to have a live mortar shell in his room

BY TOM CARTER

"I GOT something to tell you," the old man said as he sat on a VA hospital bed. "I should've told you a long time ago."

"Jesus Christ," his friend, Jim Ayers, said, "don't tell me you've got a body stashed back in your hotel room."

"No," he said. "It's worse than that."

"What can be worse than that?" Ayers shot back.

Out came a bizarre story about the 87-year-old's 64-year-old Japanese "hot" bomb that had nestled in his Sixth Street hotel room for decades. The sudden telling of his secret led to the closing of Sixth Street for a few hours on Aug. 22 while the police bomb squad donned their protective clothing and gingerly entered the Lawrence Hotel, where the old man lived. Not long after, they hauled out a metal-encased explosive device.

The old man, Francis Norman Gabik, known as Gabby, had been in the merchant marine during World War II. U.S. troops were island-hopping in the South Pacific, engaged in dirty jungle fighting to wrest territory from the Japanese. Gabby and his merchant marine buddies, stationed on one of the islands, fixed beat-up ships and subs, and spent their off time drinking beer and goofing.

From his VA hospital bed, Gabby started telling Ayers about those times, how the superstitious natives were scared of the caves, how the Japanese had bunkers full of munitions and tunnels with stashes. For recreation in their off hours, the men could paddle rafts to the nearby tiny islands that had been cleared.

A week after the street-clearing bomb scare, Ayers was recalling his conversations with Gabby to The Extra. Ayers was sitting in a doughnut shop on Market Street, still amazed by the turn of events.

During the war Gabby and many merchant marine seamen rented rooms on and around Sixth Street, cheap places they'd come back to after shipping out to sea for awhile. He moved from another SRO into the Lawrence Hotel in 1964. Close by were Pandellis, Kellogg and Fernandez, his drinking buddies at the Frisco Club then below



Police removed a live mortal shell that had been in Francis Gabik's Lawrence Hotel room for 35 years.

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GOOD NEWS for...

NEIGHBORHOOD KIDS Sign up for a free eight-week, after-school ceramics course at Boeddeker Park and turn fantasies into art, starting in October. Ceramics instructor Ilana Crispi, who taught 6- to 13-year-olds in the park's first series ending Aug. 2, has limited the class to 10. "The kids have less inhibitions than adults," Crispi said. They learn about clay and ceramic firing in a 3-foot-high kiln. "It's not just about pottery," she says. Each creates a storybook while simultaneously working with clay, sculpting characters and drawing on flat pieces or cups or bowls. Then they present the finished story to the group. "Half lion, half tiger, half amazing," Crispi called one project. The classes are funded by the city Arts Commission. An earlier kids' video project also funded by a commission grant didn't get off the ground at Boeddeker. The format called for kids to interview oldtimers for their life stories and no seniors stepped forward to be interviewed. Information: Marina Shterenberg at Star Mountain Art, 235-9644.

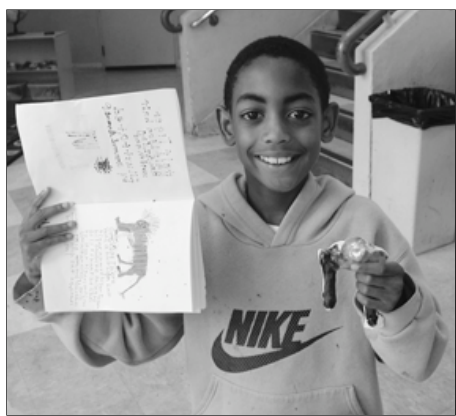


PHOTO BY STAR MOUNTAIN ART

Amani Grant-P from the Christian Academy shows the storybook he made and the ceramic sculpture to illustrate.

YOUR HEALTH The 12th annual Tenderloin Community Health and Safety Fair's list of free services doesn't disappoint: blood pressure checks; dental screenings for kids; hepatitis B screenings; Head Start sign-up; information on Medi-Cal, food stamps, tenants' rights, breast health, becoming an organ donor and emergency preparedness; massages from Care Through Touch; senior Bingo; children's games; art station and mandala-making project for all ages; raffle; bag lunch for the first 500 participants. "We also may have acupuncture," said fair Chair Andrea Jorgensen, "and California Pacific Medical Center will be giving flu shots if they're available by that date." More than 50 health and safety service providers — speaking seven languages, with interpreters available — will be at the event, Saturday, Sept. 29, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Tenderloin Community Playground, 570 Ellis. The popular fair last year drew 600 people and involved 100 volunteers, Jorgensen said. Fair sponsors are St. Francis Memorial Hospital, S.F. Hilton, Chinese Community Health Plan, S.F. Chamber of Commerce, S.F. Health Plan, Safety Network and Starbucks Coffee. Information: 474-0508 or andj001@sbcglobal.net.

If you have some good news, send it to marjorie@studycenter.org or tom@studycenter.org.

Leery of Boeddeker makeover

Chilly reception for park redesign that Trust for Public Land set up

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

IT has pretty colors and a thoughtful layout, but the proposed makeover for Boeddeker Park, unveiled in June at a Friends of Boeddeker Park meeting and vetted in The Extra in July, came in for some serious community criticism.

Friends Chair Betty Traynor was on hand for an Aug. 8 presentation before the Tenderloin Futures Collaborative along with Jacob Gilchrist, a manager of Trust for Public Land's Parks for People project who's coordinating the pro bono park design.

"Parks for People is looking at having Boeddeker be one of its projects," Traynor said. "The Trust met with the Friends, did a walk-through and created a model — it's a new vision for the park but it's just a proposed design for now."

Gilchrist passed out copies of a rendering of the design, describing the proposed renovation as "a big challenge," and went on to list some of the park's current problems, at least as the architects saw them: "When you're actually in the park, you can't see all areas of it, plus it has triangular spaces that aren't used well. Also, the closed gate on Ellis makes it feel significantly less safe, since you can't get out."

Ten Trust designers and another 15 volunteers from local architectural firms have contributed \$25,000 in pro bono services to get the plan this far, Gilchrist said. The cost to actually implement the design is unknown, he added, and he didn't clarify Parks for People's role in implementing the makeover, if the Friends and residents decide to go with this plan.

"Well... I'd like to know: What is the impetus for all this?" asked resident David Baker. "Is it just change for change's sake? Does it include concern for any of the people who live in the neighborhood? Does it exclude some people? Is it simply for beautification?"

Traynor attempted an answer: "Originally, the idea was to renovate the play area. But reducing the fencing was also a consideration."

The spiked 6-foot fence around most of the park gets replaced in the design plan by a fence that separates the basketball court from a playground west of the circular lawn and from a wide flight of stairs to the sidewalk.

"Without fences, the park will wind up being used by all those people who now are lined up outside," said resident Ed Evans, former member of the Mayor's Disability Council. But he conceded that the park needs to change. "Mercy Housing planned a picnic in the park — it was a tough sell, even with protections in place."

Other criticisms came from Steve Conley, TL Community Benefit District board member and executive committee member of Alliance for a Better District 6.

"I echo the issue of whether this is safer than what we have now," he said. "Also, do we really need the basketball court? The current one isn't that functional. And do we need a better place to



Artist's rendering of the pro bono redesign plan for Boeddeker Park.

play cards? The placement of the green lawn seems misplaced. This plan also closes off the view of the park from the police station — shouldn't the open area of the park be visible to the police?"

Collaborative meetings have shrunk from 90 minutes to an hour, and the 10 minutes allotted to the Boeddeker presentation were up before Traynor or Gilchrist could respond. As usual, the Rev. Glenda Hope, Collaborative chair, asked for a show of hands for continuing the discussion. The nays carried.

The next afternoon, at the regular Boeddeker Friends' meeting, park renovation again was on the agenda. Resident David Villalobos said seniors he'd talked to about the plan felt "blind-sided" by the designers, who hadn't consulted them. "They'd never dreamed of a complete redesign — they were 100% opposed."

Traynor said that the architects were, in fact, proposing a more elaborate design than she had expected. "I thought it would be just the play area," she said, "but they saw a bigger vision — it doesn't have the (current) closed-

in feeling and the nooks and crannies."

Reached a few weeks later, Traynor said next steps are to continue to present the plan to neighborhood groups like the Alliance for a Better District 6 and the benefit district as well as to SRO tenants and tenant associations.

"We're also going to do a short survey for adult users of the park," she said. "We'll ask them to respond to the design plan and also ask what they'd like to see in the park."

And down the line there'd be a meeting with Rec and Park's capital division to see how they view the project. "We'd need to see where we are on their list of parks scheduled for renovations — maybe we'd be part of their next bond issue." Rec and Park is proposing a \$185 million general obligation bond for the February 2008 ballot.

Even with Rec and Park money, the Friends still would have to raise private funds to renovate Boeddeker Park according to Trust for Public Land's plan, Traynor said. ■



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PHOTO BY TOM CARTER

Nighttime cabbies are blessed, too

THE annual blessing of the taxicabs and their drivers by Fathers Floyd Lotito and Jorge Hernandez of St. Boniface Church took place at night for the first time since the rite started in 1999. About 125 cabbies were blessed Aug. 29. Then, the next noon, about that many more received the blessing. Ulisses Correa was the driver of this Yellow Cab from which Father Lotito is seen performing the customary ritual. Not only the drivers and their cabs got blessed, but many drivers also held up a medal, rosary, Bible or picture of a loved one for the priest to say his prayer over. The drivers at each ritual received a free box lunch from the Taxi Association. They had their choice of beef or turkey sandwich. ■

—TOM CARTER

Web of deceit: TL organizer victim of cyber-stalking

Yahoo no help in halting defamatory postings on message boards

BY JOHN GOINS

MICHAEL Nulty, president of the Alliance for a Better District 6, says he's been the target of defamatory attacks on Yahoo message boards and that Yahoo has done little to help him. In fact, since last year, Yahoo has done a lot to hurt Nulty's online organizing, among the neighborhood's pioneering netroots efforts.

Nulty believes Rick Hauptman, former interim president of Central City Democrats, which Nulty helped create last year, is impersonating him on the Internet, using the moniker Michaeln94109. Hauptman was kicked out of the group in April.

"He's already alienated me with the Central City Democrats," Nulty, club treasurer, said. "He's belittled me and said things like 'you're crazy,'" said Nulty, an award-winning mental health advocate.

Nulty said that he discovered the Yahoo ID Michaeln94109 on several message boards that he subscribes to, checked the computer profile and found the profile update with his name, Michael Nulty, on it.

The message boards: Shotwell_eshout, NorthMissionNeighbors, starting-nonprofit, sfplanning, SanFranciscoCalifornia, Justice4Bessie and Undemocratic-California have all received postings using Nulty's name, said Nulty, winner of the Mental Health Association's Champion Award in May and the Mayor's Disability Council Award for Excellence last year.

"The combined subscribers of the above message boards is 1,404," Nulty wrote in an e-mail to The Extra.

He said that this has been going on since April and referred to a particularly offensive message board posted as: "Bipolar (BP) Democratic Club. There needs to be a Democratic Club for all of us. Michael." The moniker Michaeln94109 was listed as the creator of the message board.

"It caused me a lot of grief," said Nulty, also a Central City Extra Editorial Advisory Committee member. Nulty is not the only one who feels harassed by Hauptman. According to a July 26 article in the Bay Area Reporter, Tim Durning, the treasurer of the Harvey Milk Club of which Nulty is a member, has filed a complaint against Hauptman, the club's recorder, for "sending harassing e-mails."

Nulty launched a formal complaint to Yahoo to prevent such incidents from happening again.

Yahoo delivered its stock response to Nulty's complaint: "Yahoo has many users worldwide, and due to the popularity of cer-

tain aliases, similar subscriber IDs are created." It then, more hopefully, said that "impersonation is a serious offense and a violation of the Terms of Service (TOS)." Section Six of Yahoo's TOS states:

"You agree to not use service to: (a) upload, post, email, transmit or otherwise make available any content that is unlawful, harmful, threatening, abusive, harassing, tortious, defamatory, vulgar, obscene, libelous, invasive of another's privacy, hateful, or racially, ethnically or otherwise objectionable ... (c) impersonate any person or entity..."

Nulty provided the big search engine with the information it required in order to take action.

And then he waited.

But the abuse continues and Yahoo, with its corporate tentacles stretching to China, has been unable or unwilling to stop it.

"As of today, I have not heard from Yahoo about my complaint about impersonation and harassment by profile: Michaeln94109. And the profile and message board created by Michaeln94109 are still posted on the Internet," Nulty said.

A recent Web search by The Extra revealed that Michaeln94109 was still posted on Yahoo under the name Michael Nulty. The BPDemocraticClub was also found using Michaeln94109.

Lawsuits involving Yahoo message boards abound.

According to an Aug. 6 article in E-Commerce Times, L.A. corporate lawyer Stephen Galton "sued Yahoo, charging the portal didn't do enough to help him stop personal attacks against him on its message boards," Keith Regan reported.

"Galton is leaving the suit open for others to join, proposing to establish a class action suit on behalf of California residents who — since 2000 — have been targeted by abusive messages on a Yahoo board and denied information about their attackers," Regan wrote.

Nulty said that Hauptman had tried to subscribe to another of his message boards,

Alexander Tenants Association, as Rick Hauptman, and to Nulty's twin brother, John Nulty's message board under Michaeln94109.

But "I have the ability to instantly remove his posting," Nulty said.

Unfortunately for Nulty, his Yahoo problems in maintaining message boards as a forum for low-income residents and community activists hit a peak last May when the boards he created suddenly and mysteriously disappeared, destroyed by Yahoo. The damage was immense.

"That was 6½ years of work, eight Yahoo groups, 8,000 subscribers," said Nulty.

Foul play?

"We appreciate your report of possible abuse in Yahoo Groups," Yahoo replied to Nulty then. "We have investigated your report and have taken appropriate action as per Terms of Service." But there was no apology, disclosure as to what happened or who might have caused the destruction of his work. And no replacement of the lost data.

"Please know that Yahoo is unable to disclose the action taken on another user's account with a third party. We are not able to make exceptions to this rule," Yahoo wrote.

And after two more such paragraphs, "Have a nice day!" ■

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by Friday, September 20, 2007



Fringe Festival — take a

BY ED BOWERS

MY life is theatre, a constant drama; therefore, I enjoy the rational theatricals created inside the private minds of playwrights attempting to touch others also desperate to be understood, or even forgiven.

Plays are a ritual. As in life, the actors are assigned roles; repeat performances result in them becoming one with the part. This ancient art form should be presented in a suitable environment: unpretentious, and surrounded by those who live in fear of being cast out. The audience is everything.

The Tenderloin is the perfect environment for the birth of creativity, just as the Lower East Side was in the '50s and '60s. EXIT Theatre has picked up on this and is running it full throttle through one of the most merciless and defeated zones in the city.

This is the most comfortable place I have ever seen a play. People can dress as they are, purchase hot saki and saki martinis as well as Anchor Steam beer for \$3.50, plus a miniature pizza, take these comfort items into the the-

ater, relax and watch the show. It couldn't be more relaxed.

Most in the audience were in their late 20s to early 60s, and did not look like they lived in the neighborhood. I'm glad of that. The Tenderloin is lonely for respect and attention from the majority.

People at large write off the Tenderloin as a zone where losers are exiled; they should understand that art is the science of perceiving what others do not already know, and that a rough neighborhood is precisely the source from which that lonely knowledge arises. When you see something so differently from other people that it hurts, you are a real artist, marginalized to the outskirts of normal life — unless, of course, they make a religion out of you. Then you are in trouble, and so is everyone else.

Now for the show, hosted by Mark Romyn, who is in charge of the Thursday night comedy club at The EXIT. He started out with a song about Spider Man, implying that this crude comic book character is a jerk full of heroic hyperbole. Amusing. I admire people who can sing and think at the same time; it's hard enough doing one thing. Besides, I can't sing.

Then came the main event — five-minute excerpts of seven 50- to 60-minute plays that are part of this year's San Francisco Fringe Festival.

The first presentation was "Adventures of a Substitute Teacher" by Steven Karwoski. It dealt with children who are emotionally retarded, throw spit wads at each other, and force their teachers to channel the drill instructor inside who becomes violently angry and screams at his students like a crack addict smoking vitamin pills. From what I gather it was a metaphor for human history. Entertaining.

Next was "& billions more." Two guys are sitting side by side, one is in his underwear. They are both worried about a black hole swallowing them. It's a stoner play. The two guys play off as opposites of one another, but it becomes clear after awhile that the guy in his underwear doesn't want to die in his underwear.

I hate repeating words. I never

thought I'd be forced to write the word underwear more than once. Therefore, RIPE Theatre, which created this piece, is an evil genius. Besides, the play was kind of funny in a stoner kind of way. I should know.

During this performance, to my horror, I realized that the serrated knife issued me to cut my miniature pizza was just inches from the back brain of the woman with big hair in front of me. The people who run The EXIT must have unlimited faith to hand out sharp objects to screwups like me. Commendable!

The next presentation, "Shopping as a Spiritual Path," was written by Terri Tate, who has a great sense of humor regarding her mouth cancer. Having tasted a variety of cures for her illness, Tate finally decides to be honest with herself. She comes to the conclusion that bargain shopping made her feel far better than anything else; it was a spiritual path, leading to the final sacrament, the calculation of savings.

This piece is insightful and funny. It is particularly relevant in these very materialistic times with nonstop shoppers, extremely sick people.

Next was Amy Tobin's "Organic Boxed Chicken Stock." A song was sung in this that wondered what trees, sitting there by the river, think. "Nothing has changed," they stated. That's all I remember about this one. I'd like to see it again to pick up the details.

Then there was a comfortable intermission.

Right: "Adventures of a Substitute Teacher," entertaining metaphor for human history by Steven Karwoski.

Center: "Class Notes," amusing standup monologue featuring Kurt Bodden.



PHOTO BY GREG SLICK. CENTER PHOTO BY KURT BODDEN



PHOTO BY SARAH MCKEREGHAN

Stoner play "& billions more" features (left to right) Mark Rachel, Deborah Wade, Noah Kelly.



"Organic Boxed Chicken Stock" by Amy Tobin might

a romp on the wild side

Go to a fancy theater and it's "I'll Show Mine If You Show Me Yours" time, with everyone making their fashion statements and mumbling inanities like neurotics in a Woody Allen movie. But this intermission was laid back and fun.

Soon, Mark Romyn returned to introduce the next Fringe sample.

First was "Class Notes," a standup monologue by Kurt Bodden about his being a Harvard graduate. Bodden's routine was amusing. I hope he develops it a bit more. I found college to be among the most decadent of my life experiences, and could relate to much of what he said.

"Once you're in, you're in. There's no pressure," Bodden revealed about the academic standards of this prestigious school where the movers and shakers of America learn how to rule the roost. That explains a lot.

D i d n ' t
 G e o r g e
 B u s h

graduate from Yale?

Next a Korean man came out and performed "Korean Badass" by the Asian American Theatre Company and Stevie Lee Saxon. Maybe the Korean man was Stevie Lee Saxon. I don't know. He was very loud and visually commanding. I don't remember what he said, but all I could think about during the performance was that he could really get his act across if he became an Elvis Presley imitator, got up on stage with a gold lame outfit and a guitar, and began singing

what it is like to be a Korean bad ass in America. He looks perfect for the part.

That might not be nice, but it must be understood that for over a year I have been living with people who yell a lot, so it is my natural inclination to ignore anybody with a loud voice. My housemates are bad asses too, but they're not Korean.

The final presentation was "RM3," a world premiere of a new musical presented by UpMarket Production and RC Stabb. One of the actors who plays a politician looks almost exactly like Mayor Gavin Newsom. He sings in a well-trained Broadway voice.

"My philosophy keeps me walking when I'm falling down. I'm crazy, but I get the job done," he croons.

This musical is relevant to San Francisco politics and should be further inspected for insight. Catch it in its entirety when presented in full at the Fringe.

Finally, Romyn returned to offer people the opportunity to become volunteers for EXIT Theatre, an offer I might take him up on if my life becomes anything less than a war zone. Currently, there is no front door to my residence. Two of the macho men with whom I share this space knocked down the door twice in one day in a fight over a French woman. The door is dead. But THEY live. Now that's theatre in the Tenderloin!

Everyone should get out more. They should come down here and stop regarding my neighborhood as a communicable disease. The opportunity to see the baby in its crib, the beginning of great art, awaits anyone with the guts to venture here to see it. EXIT Theatre offers a professional, fun and relaxed environment for developing artists to present their work and develop it in front of an audience.

Support it! That's an order. But nobody listens to me, so I'm begging.

There are two kinds of people; those who

live their lives watching their paint dry, and those who take chances.

The audience is as much a part of the creative process as the playwright or the producer. I strongly encourage anyone who wishes to participate in a truly positive aspect of the San Francisco Tenderloin to contribute to it by patronizing EXIT Theatre. Come to the Fringe Festival. It's cheap, entertaining and comfortable.

At the very least, you will have fun. Plus, this show gave me a brainstorm. How about a play that would be presented in front of an audience of actors who stab each other for 15 minutes, while the actors on stage do absolutely nothing but witness the carnage, much like the U.N. observing in Darfur.

It doesn't get any better than that.

That's show business. ■

Political musical "RM3" features (left to right): Mayor Newsom lookalike Ricardo Rust, Gabriel Grilli, Stephen Pawley and Anna Ishida.



PHOTO BY KELLYN MCKEEVER



PHOTO BY KEVOM CARNES
 not need more than one viewing.



PHOTO BY JO ANNE SMITH
 Nonstop shopper Terri Tate in "Shopping as a Spiritual Path."



PHOTO BY SEAN POSEY
 "Korean Badass" Stevie Lee Saxon looks perfect for the part.

\$1.2 million for Sixth Street SROs goes begging

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SOUTHSIDE

"The agency can't loan money to a hotel that's breaking the law," Grisso said. "We're trying to make them responsible."

Those SROs not in violation may have legal, but nevertheless woefully inadequate, electrical systems. The city's electrical code only demands that a building be up to the code specifications required the year in which the hotel was built. Overloading with modern appliances, microwaves, televisions, hotplates and computers have caused building-wide blackouts in some of the SROs.

Vacant Hugo rejects Redevelopment offer

THE Hugo Apartments, vacant at Sixth and Howard streets for 20 years, has turned down the Redevelopment Agency's purchase offer and now must present a plan to reopen, or find another buyer who will, by Sept. 28.

"We made an offer to the Hugo's owner and there wasn't a response, so we go into the next phase," Mike Grisso, agency project manager and liaison to the South of Market Project Area Committee, announced at SOMPAC's Aug. 20 meeting.

SOMPAC had urged in March 2006 that Redevelopment try to buy the 75-unit Hugo, best known for its whimsical "Defenestration" art project that has attached household furniture and appliances over its walls as if they've been flung outside.

The agency made the offer in April, Grisso said later. If the price — which wasn't divulged — was accepted, Redevelopment would tear the Hugo down and build affordable housing, or renovate. The Chronicle reported three years ago that the Hugo's owners turned down \$4.7 million from a buyer who wanted to build market-rate condos. Sixth Street insiders put the value at up to \$4 million.

"We didn't hear by July 27 and we consider that a rejection," Grisso said.

The owner is the Brand Limited Partnership in Hillsborough, according to the assessor's office, the I.M. (David) Patel family. If the partnership decides to keep the Hugo, it must demonstrate it has the experience and finances for a feasible plan to get it up and running, Grisso said.

If the blighted property remains vacant, Redevelopment could start eminent domain proceedings, a power it gained in 2005 when the Board of Supervisors converted it from earthquake recovery in the area to full redevelopment responsibilities.

The Hugo, named after writer Victor Hugo, fell vacant after a fire in 1987. The Defenestration project went up 10 years later after the artist Brian Goggin got a handwritten note of approval from the Patels to undertake the unique furniture installation. ■

—TOM CARTER

Redevelopment hoped the owners of those inadequate hotels would step forward and apply.

The agency will send the hotels memos in mid-September announcing the program will close in 90 days, "in case anyone wants in," Grisso said. Otherwise, the leftover \$1.2 million will go for affordable housing, possibly, he said, toward the purchase of the blighted Hugo Apartments that bear the whimsical art project, Defenestration. (See sidebar.)

The Redevelopment action came as a result of SOMPAC's 12-2 vote Aug. 20 to end the program after Raymon Smith, Housing subcommittee chair and SRO tenant, reported the loan program hadn't produced results. SOMPAC had been debating the demise of the program since March. Some members wanted it to have more time but others had lost patience.

"We've wasted a lot of time on this," said John Melone, representing Senior Action Network on the committee.

"Having \$1.2 million sitting there doing nothing is a waste," said Grisso. "It makes more sense to close the program. It's good public policy to do it."

The SROs approved for loans were: Hillsdale Hotel, \$100,000 for elevator; Sharon Hotel, \$25,000 for utilities upgrade; Shree Ganeshai Hotel, \$25,000 for utilities upgrade; Alder Hotel, \$100,000 for electrical; and the Baldwin Hotel, \$100,000 for elevator. The most recent to enter the pipeline, and not yet approved, is the Winsor Hotel, \$40,000 for new windows.

For the 15- or 25-year loans, a hotel must keep a certain number of units affordable for the life of the loan for it to be forgivable. If a hotel is sold before the expiration date to someone other than an immediate family member, the loan is due, and with penalties. Code compliance loans were also available, for conditions not yet cited, but owners had to match the amount.

The Baldwin, an old, threadbare hotel with a cage and gate style elevator, is an example of the program at work. Its 15-year loan is exclusively for the elevator upgrade (not required by code) and it must keep 10 rooms affordable. Meantime, the hotel plans to upgrade the electrical system, replace doors, do repairs and paint the place.

Another reason the hotels said they didn't buy into the program was because the loan cap of \$100,000 was too low to accomplish much, Smith said hotel owners told him. Redevelopment wanted a \$500,000 loan cap originally. But the hotel owners and the Central City SRO Tenderloin Collaborative wanted it lower so more hotels could participate.

The demise struck a nerve for Luis Barahona, an activist who has worked three years at the SRO Collaborative after being a tenant organizer at the Seneca Hotel for two years. With a \$1 million redevelopment loan some years ago, the Seneca became the pilot program for the SRO loan program.

"I am super disappointed," Barahona said. "There's a tremendous need for this kind of upgrade. But the issue isn't resolved by any means. I'm going to have to reorder my priorities to lobby for an extension beyond the 90 days."

Asked if he was hearing continuing complaints about power failures from SRO tenants, he said no, that tenants seem to be inured to the problem and now take blackouts for granted. Not so in the Tenderloin, he said, where he does hear complaints. He hoped a similar program could be started there, he said, although the TL is not a redevelopment area.

The hotels didn't respond well because of the small size of the loans and voluminous paperwork, Barahona said. The experience of the Sharon Hotel, he said, set a bad example.

"It took a long time for the Sharon to get its loan," he said. "Because of the process, a lot of the owners were turned off. It was overwhelming for them. There was tremen-

dous intent at first. But too little money for the effort. I don't know whose fault the Sharon was. It's a cumbersome process."

Redevelopment's Jeff White, who processed the loan applications, said there wasn't anything burdensome about the paperwork. Because a consultant had helped "streamline" the application and process for this program, it was far less demanding than what the Seneca handled or that other programs require, he said.

"The Hillsdale owner applied for a loan in 2006 and it was approved that year," White said. "And the work was completed that year. The owner didn't find the paperwork too cumbersome. We also had at least three meetings with the Independent Hotel Owners Association and we were available at every meeting of the PAC's Housing subcommittee to answer questions."

"If the owner was motivated, it happened."

"The interest was there," he added. "We tried everything. It was a bit of an experiment." ■

OBITUARIES

CHESTER RAY MARRABLE, JR. Tenants' group president

The Alexander Residence was set for a grand sendoff on Aug. 27 for Chester "Que" Ray Marrable, Jr., a tenant association president, ex-Marine and an unforgettable character who put a smile on the Tenderloin.

At 4 p.m., the community room swelled with the 1960s gospel hit "Oh Happy Day" by the Edwin Hawkins Singers.

On two tables in front were candles, bouquets, 10 cards and two handmade booklets of sympathy notes from dozens of residents addressed to "Que" and "Duchess," his wife.

Nearby were three tables laden with food, compliments of the family. More than 30 residents dipped into buckets of fried chicken, rolls, macaroni salad, crackers and dips, cookies and cakes, then took their seats.

A white and yellow sheet cake with "in Loving Memory of Chester Marrable" waited to be cut after the Rev. Charles Davis gave the memorial service for Mr. Marrable, his brother-in-law.

Ill in recent years, Mr. Marrable died in his room Aug. 16 from complications of heart and kidney diseases and diabetes. He was 59.

At noon, the Rev. Davis had conducted a "Home Going Celebration" at Duggan's Welch Mortuary on 17th Street. Mr. Marrable's brothers served as pall bearers. Copies of the program were available with Mr. Marrable's picture on front, showing him in a brown Stetson hat, dark glasses, sporting an earring and mustache, and blue scarf above his navy pea coat.

The Marrable family came to San Francisco from El Dorado, Ark., in 1956. Mr. Marrable had two sisters and eight brothers. He served in Vietnam and was a janitor until he became disabled. He and his wife lived in the Alexander 20 years and their 26th wedding anniversary was coming up in November.

By 4:30 p.m. the Rev. Davis hadn't shown up. "He was called away on an emergency and can't make it back here," his wife said, as she directed people to the food.

Mrs. Marrable, who took care of her husband for five years, was eating at a table with friends, tired from her grief and the day's events.

"He was funny, a real character who could make you laugh," she said of her husband. "He liked sitting outside and talking. He loved people and music. He was an all around good person. I liked everything about him."

—TOM CARTER



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Old man and the bomb — scare on Sixth Street

► CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the Lawrence; now it's Club Six.

Ayers said Gabby had described the bomb in his room as standing about 20 inches high. The device was about 10 inches in diameter with side fins and a plunger at the top and a decal marking it as Japanese. He said Gabby, a career master plumber, said he had ignored it for years but in 1989 got it out to fiddle with. It quickly dawned on him that a tweak one way or another might blow him to bits and who knows what else. So he put the thing in a corner, draped rags on it and a piece of wood to shield it from any falling object. And the bomb stayed put until Aug. 22, 2007.

That was his story. But it wasn't clear how the deadly explosive got into Gabby's room in the first place.

Gabby and Ayers were at the VA hospital out on Clement Street because Gabby was sick and Ayers had taken him there. Ayers, 65, is a short man of action and former bartender with a gift of gab. He worked at Gradys at Sixth and Jessie streets until it closed, then a couple of doors away at the Arrow bar for two more years until it closed. And although he had known Gabby 17 years, and for most of that time lived in the Lawrence two doors away, they didn't become good friends until five years ago.

EATEN BY BED BUGS

Ayers checks in with him every couple of days and on Tuesday, Aug. 22, when he knocked at Room 35 and was invited in, he could hardly believe his eyes. He beheld an awful sight. Gabby's hands and feet were swollen to what seemed to be five times normal size. One side of his face was swollen, both arms were red and the scarlet sheet that was his back had turned luminous red.

"Jesus Christ," Ayers said, "what happened to you?"

Gabby was being eaten by bedbugs they later learned after Ayers rushed him to the hospital. Two doctors, a nurse and a social worker attended to him, Ayers said, and they started him on antibiotics. The nurse said she was going to call the Department of Public Health about the hotel. Gabby's clothes, she said, would be burned.

"The hotel doesn't take care of people unless I do something," Ayers said. He is the Lawrence Hotel tenant representative to the Central City SRO Collaborative. The VA hospital, with Gabby's consent, gave him the power of attorney for Gabby's welfare.

Gabby told him the bomb story the next day.

"Is it live?" Ayers asked.

"I think it is, Jim," Gabby said. "Do what you have to do. I'm afraid it'll go off."

Ayers called the police dispatcher about 12:30 p.m. and got the bomb squad. He gave them the details, the room number and said the thing had been in the Lawrence since 1972 so it's probably safe enough. Okay, they said, we'll be right over.

He said they arrived in 10 minutes. Eight patrol cars and the bomb squad showed up.

The hotel and some of Sixth Street were evacuated.

The hotel was swarming with cops. Ayers took out his keys to Gabby's room. The police were searching the rooms and told him not to go in because they were looking for a bomb. He said he was the one who had called in and he had been in the room where the bomb was "a thousand times and it's not going off."

When he unlocked the door, he said, the cops were peeking around the corridor at him. Then they wanted to call Gabby to find out exactly where the bomb was and what it looked like. Gabby's description matched what Jim had told them earlier over the phone.

BOMB IN A BAG

The cops found the bomb in a bag. They told Ayers it was live. They put it in a container and eventually let it down on a rope from a window into a container on the bed of a truck in the alley. They took the yellow danger ribbons down and the truck backed out of Jessie. It left Sixth Street with a two-squad car escort in front and two cars in back, Ayers said.

"One of the bomb squad told me it could have taken the whole side of the building off," he said.

The Lawrence Hotel didn't want Gabby back, Ayers said, and maybe that was good. Gabby got a pacemaker eight months ago, the hotel has no elevator and the steps to the second floor are steep.

Ayers spent \$85 on new clothes for Gabby and three days on the phone before finding him a place on Sutter Street for \$1,515 a month that served three meals a day. In mid-September Gabby's niece is coming to take him to Florida to live with her. Until then, Ayers would pay his bills and make sure he takes his medicine.

Gabby had worried that he might be treated as a terrorist but Ayers said a police sergeant had assured him there wouldn't be any repercussions. Everyone was safe and that's what mattered.

The Extra visited Gabby at his new digs eight days after all the excitement.

He's a chipper old salt with so many missing teeth that he's a bit hard to understand, though he was eager enough to talk. The swelling had gone down. He was in his underwear and glad to see Ayers, who had brought him some toiletries. We referred to the bomb as "the device."

Here's the way Gabby tells it: "My room was being repainted in 1972 and I had been away for a time. When I came back I found it under my bed. I don't know who put it there."

The bomb had a decal on it identifying it as made in Japan in 1943, he said. He figures one of

his buddies had somehow got hold of the relic in the South Pacific, moved it to Hunters Point shipyard, then brought it by cab to stash at the Frisco Club. Then, when he wasn't around, it got sneaked into his room.

'NOW THEY'RE ALL BACK'

At the time, Pandellis bartended at the Frisco. Kellogg lived in the Lawrence. And Fernandez had recently moved into the Ford Apartments on Mission Street.

"But nobody ever told me they put the bomb in there," he said. "And now they're all dead."

Fernandez died in '72 of a stroke. Kellogg died in Truth and Consequences, N.M., in 1984 and Pandellis sometime before that in Oklahoma.

Gabby recalled the time he got out the bomb to tinker with.

"I was going to cut it in half and make it into a big ashtray," Gabby said, and seemed surprised at his own actions. Then he talked about cordite, fine gunpowder, mercury and other sorts of explosive ingredients that could be in a bomb, and was obviously glad he made the right decision. He was grateful, too, that Ayers had finally brought an end to what could have turned into a horrific incident.

Police spokesman Steve Mannina said the bomb squad protects its "tactics" in these matters. He only said the retrieved bomb was "a mortar shell that is propelled and explodes on impact," and it was disposed of.

"I thought the local authorities might go after me as a terrorist," Gabby said.

But Ayers jumped right in.

"I talked to the TAC Force sergeant and he said, 'You tell him he has my word that nothing will happen. There's nothing to worry about and he can sleep peacefully.'"

So can Sixth Street.

Meanwhile, back at the hotel, Ayers started thinking about another kind of bomb. He had a bedbug fight on his hands. ■

TENDERLOIN HEALTH

a continuum of care

Outreach and Community Events September 2007

Health Promotion Forum

Topic: Veterans in our Community

Speaker: Johnny Baskerville, Swords to Plowshares and Veterans Affairs

Date/Time: Tuesday, September 18, 12 noon - 1 pm

HIV Treatment Forum

Topic: Learning about Body Fat Changes

Speaker: Ruben Gamundi, Bristol-Myers Squibb

Date/Time: Monday, September 17, 3 pm - 4 pm

Client Advisory Panel

Come talk with Tenderloin Health's Board Client Representative(s) and program managers about plans for Tenderloin Health. Also provide input on new services and how we can improve.

Date/Time: Wednesday, September 12, 11:30 am - 1 pm;

Wednesday, September 26, 11:30 am - 1 pm

Volunteer and Intern for Tenderloin Health

Orientation: Sunday, September 9, 12 pm - 6:30 pm

220 Golden Gate Ave., 3rd Floor

lunch provided

You must register for volunteer trainings.

Stop in/call Emilie (415) 934-1792.

For a schedule of our current groups or for more information call 415.431.7476 or go to www.tenderloinhealth.org



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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SPECIAL EVENTS

Cadillac Hotel turns 100. Wed. Sept. 19, 380 Eddy. Evening celebration includes a variety of pianists on the hotel's 1884 Steinway, refreshments.. Time to be announced. Information: 673-7223 ext. 2.

Emergency benefit for Street Spirit newspaper Editor Terry Messman and Ellen Danchik, Thurs., Sept. 20, 7 p.m., Berkeley Friends Church, 1600 Sacramento St. at Cedar, Berkeley (2 blocks from the North Berkeley BART station). Donations requested, sliding scale, starting at \$10, but no one turned away for lack of funds. Art sales, light refreshments, poetry reading, performance art and music. Information: freedomvoices.org/streetspirit.

8th anniversary party, Alliance for a Better District 6, Tues., Oct. 9, 6 p.m., 222 Club, 222 Hyde. Door prizes, entertainment, refreshments. Invited guest speaker Assemblyman Mark Leno. Information: 820-1560.

COMMUNITY: REGULAR SCHEDULE HOUSING

Supportive Housing Network, 4th Thursday of the month, 3-5 p.m., location TBA. Contact: Alecia Hopper, 421-2926 x302.

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

HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

CBHS Consumer Council, 3rd Monday of the month, 5:30-7:30, CBHS, 1380 Howard, Rm. 537. Call: 255-3428. Advisory group of consumers from self-help organizations and other mental health consumer advocates. Open to the public.

Health & Wellness Action Advocates, 1st Thursday of the month, 1-3 p.m., Mental Health Association, 870 Market, Suite 928. Call: 421-2926 x306.

Healthcare Action Team, 2nd Wednesday of the month, Quaker Center, 65 Ninth St., noon-1:30. 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.

Hoarders and Clutterers Support Group, 2nd Monday and 4th Wednesday of each month, 6-7 p.m. 870 Market, Suite 928. Call: 421-2926 x306.

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, 5th Fl. Call 905-6264. Family member group, open to consumers and the public.

SAFETY

Safety for Women in the Tenderloin, every 3rd Wednesday, Central City SRO Collaborative, 259 Hyde St., 4-6 p.m. Informal, friendly environment, refreshments, gender sensitive to LGBTQ community and sex workers. Discuss how to make Tenderloin SROs safer for women. Information: Leanne Edwards, volunteer campaign coordinator, 775-7110, ex. 102.

North of Market NERT, bimonthly meeting. Call Lt. Erica Arteseros,, S.F. Fire Department, 970-2022. Disaster preparedness training by the Fire Department.

SoMa Police Community Relations Forum, 4th Monday of the month, 6-7:30 p.m. Location changes monthly. To receive monthly information by e-mail, contact Meital Amitai, 538-8100 ext. 202 or mamitai@iisf.org.

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

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT

Alliance for a Better District 6, 2nd Tuesday of the month, 6 p.m., 301 Eddy. Contact Michael Nulty, 820-1560 or sf_district6@yahoo.com. Districtwide association, civic education.

Boeddeker Park cleanup, 3rd Saturday of the month, 9-noon, organized by the Friends of Boeddeker Park. To RSVP to work or for information, Call Betty Traynor at the Neighborhood Parks Council, 621-3260.

Central City Democrats, meets four times a year, 301 Eddy St. Community Room. Addresses District 6 residential and business concerns, voter education forums. Information: 339-VOTE (8683) or centralcitydemocrats@yahoo.com.

Community Leadership Alliance. CLA Community Advocacy Commission monthly meeting, City Hall, Room 034. Subcommittee meetings and informational forums held monthly at the Tenderloin Police Station Community Room. Information: David Villa-Lobos, admin@CommunityLeadershipAlliance.net

Friends of Boeddeker Park, 2nd Thursday of the month, 3:30 p.m., Boeddeker Rec Center, 240 Eddy. Plan park events, activi-

ties and improvements. Contact: 552-4866.

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: 538-8100 x202

Mid-Market Project Area Committee, 2nd Wednesday of the month, 5:30 p.m., Ramada Hotel, 1231 Market. Contact Carolyn Diamond, 362-2500. Market Street redevelopment on Fifth to Tenth streets.

North of Market Planning Coalition, 3rd Wednesday of the month, 6 p.m., 301 Eddy. Call: 820-1412. Neighborhood planning.

North of Market/Tenderloin Community Benefit District, 1st Thursday of the month, noon. Call Elaine Zamora, 440-7570.

SoMa Leadership Council, 3rd Wednesday of the month, 6 p.m., The Arc, 1500 Howard St. at 11th. Emphasizes good planning and good government to maintain a diverse, vibrant, complete neighborhood. Contact: Jim Meko, 624-4309 or jim.meko@com-cast.net.

South of Market Project Area Committee, 3rd Monday of the month, 6 p.m., 1035 Folsom, between 6th & 7th. Health, Safety and Human Services Committee meets monthly on the first Tuesday after the first Monday, 1035 Folsom, noon. Information: 487-2166 or www.sompac.com.

Tenderloin Futures Collaborative, 2nd Wednesday of the month, 10 a.m., Tenderloin Police community room, 301 Eddy. Call at 358-3956 for information. Network of residents, nonprofits and businesses sharing information and taking on neighborhood development issues.

SENIORS AND DISABLED

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

Senior Action Network, general meeting, second Thursday, 10 a.m.-noon, St. Mary's Cathedral. Monthly committee meetings, 965 Mission #700: Pedestrian Safety, third Wednesday, 10 a.m.; Senior Housing Action, third Wednesday, 1:30; Information: 546-1333 and www.senioractionnetwork.org.

SUPERVISORS' COMMITTEES

Budget and Finance Committee Daly, Duffy, Ammiano, Mirkarimi, Elsbernd, Wednesday, 1 p.m.

Land Use Committee Maxwell, Sandoval, McGoldrick, Monday, 1 p.m.

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