

# Fire chief agrees to tone down

## Reaffirms her '05 order to limit loud air horns

BY TOM CARTER

**R**EKINDLING their three-year campaign to reduce noise pollution from fire trucks, the slow-burning residents of the Tenderloin got yet another promise from the fire chief that she would tune it down a notch.

Fire Chief Joanne Hayes-White tacitly agreed at a public meeting in March to enforce her general order of October 2005 to abate noise, her response then to public griping over ear-splitting air horns and sirens. Now, 2½ years later, she's responding to the same old complaint.

The chief said the department wanted to be a good neighbor, but didn't specifically say she would re-emphasize that order.

But two weeks after the March 20 meeting, Hayes-White said Deputy Chief Richard Kochevar had

"reiterated" the order to the department. So Battalion 3, the 1067 Post St. station that is the main focus of complaints, got the message. The station sends its response vehicles through the Tenderloin down Hyde Street. Last year its sole engine answered 7,439 calls, more than any station in the country.

In a phone interview April 2, Hayes-White told The Extra she knew the original order had been effective because complaints dropped. "We figured no news was good news," she said.

But noise complaints started picking up again late last year, despite reminders at battalion counseling sessions to tone down. She said no personnel had been reported internally for excess siren noise, an infraction that could lead to discipline.

The order, with her emphasis in boldface, acknowledges that "excessive use of apparatus air horns has adversely impacted members of the public...Until further notice, air horns are not to be used as a primary response warning signal. Air horn activation is to be limited to **'extreme'** (high risk) circumstances, **using short blasts only.**"

Hayes-White showed up in the Tenderloin with seven department officers at the Community Leadership Alliance meeting in the Antonia Manor called to find "solutions" to Fire Department noise, according to CLA announcements. The chief had attended the February meeting of the Lower Polk Neighbors when it addressed the same issue.

"Many of you are becoming familiar faces," the chief said, scanning the crowd of 30.

CLA Director David Villa-Lobos,

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## ST. ANTHONY'S 10-STORY SURPRISE

Senior housing plan gets way bigger

PAGE 2

## STARTLING NEWS ABOUT NOISE

Studies show major hearing loss, death

PAGE 7

# CENTRAL CITY



SAN FRANCISCO

## FOOD AID



PHOTOS BY TOM CARTER

Empress Hotel residents shop for free food at the weekly market designed for them.

# SRO shoppers

## Empress Hotel — pioneer in a growing trend

BY TOM CARTER

**G**EORGE Johnson was once like a character in the Jack London short story "Love of Life," the guy who narrowly escapes starving to death, then always overeats to make up for his deprivation.

Johnson, homeless and miserable off

and on for 10 years, typically gorged himself at free dining rooms, then stuffed his pockets with food because he didn't know when he'd get his next meal.

Not anymore. Every Thursday, as a resident of the Empress Hotel on Eddy Street, Johnson has his pick of free food that will last him for a week in his room that's handily equipped with a microwave.

"I don't have to stuff myself and think that tomorrow I won't have enough to eat," Johnson says, as he waits in the lobby to unload a Food Bank truck delivery.

Johnson partakes at the Empress, which is what the Food Bank's Deanna Sverdlov calls "the model pantry" among SROs. A pantry is a large, varied load that the Food Bank delivers to a site for distribution. By having a designated shopper, an SRO such as the Empress can add food items of its residents' choice on a weekly shopping spree at the Food Bank warehouse. It means more choice, less waste and it's gaining favor among the supportive housing SROs and the city department that helps fund them.

The Food Bank requires that at least half of the SRO's residents avail themselves of the giveaway and the hotel must have volunteers willing to undergo a brief training to learn about the Food Bank.

The Food Bank, operating on food and cash donations in its mission to end hunger in the city, distributes 28 million pounds of food a year through a network of 500 nonprofits — from senior services and soup kitchens to day care centers and children's recreation programs. The Food Bank makes 220 weekly and monthly pantry deliveries.

Sverdlov, a senior program coordinator,



Roberta Goodman (right) shops at the Food Bank for Empress residents.

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

**Mirkarimi takes aim at neighborhood papers**

**T**HE following letter is a response to Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi's repressive proposal to harass community newspapers that he introduced to the Board of Supervisors on March 18. Within 30 days, it goes to the City Operations and Neighborhood Services Committee. Paul Kozakiewicz, the letter's author, not only helped form and continues to tirelessly advocate for the San Francisco Neighborhood Newspaper Association, of which the Central City Extra is a member, his *Sunset* and *Richmond* district newspapers help to give all of us credibility for professional, often hard-hitting neighborhood news coverage.

**EDITOR:**

Another lame-brained supervisor with nothing better to do than propose a solution for a nonexistent problem. Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi last month proposed a \$100 to \$500 penalty for every instance where a free newspaper is delivered to a home on a newly created "do not deliver" list.

I've been publishing community newspapers in the Richmond and Sunset districts for almost 20 years. Of the 50,000 newspapers I deliver door-to-door monthly, I have seven people on my "do not deliver" list. That's how big this problem is.

It is up to my delivery service to do the job and not deliver to people who do not want a paper. It usually works, but sometimes a new "walker" will accidentally deliver to a home that does not want it. Am I to be fined \$100 to \$500 every time this happens, even though I have no control over the dozens of delivery people walking door-to-door with the local paper?

Many of the "walkers" my service uses are from South and Latin American countries and do not speak English. They are humping their butts off here doing menial work to support families back home. Are we going to fine them, or their employer, for an honest mistake? Will they be fired or retaliated against? Are publishers to be held responsible for the actions of a subcontractor, even though we have no direct supervisory control over the delivery service's employees?

As well, I've had apartment managers who did not want the paper delivered to their buildings because they didn't want to pick up the extra copies. They would deny every tenant in the building a copy of the neighborhood newspaper because of their own personal reasons. Do I deny 30 families a community newspaper because one does not want it?

There are First Amendment issues here, and the 18 neighborhood newspapers that comprise the San Francisco Neighborhood Newspaper Association (SFNNA) have a stake in the outcome of the proposed legislation, yet we were not even consulted before this Draconian measure was introduced. It's hard enough for publishers to serve their communities without the supervisors giving a hammer to anyone who has an ax to grind with their neighborhood scribes.

I say kill this misguided legislation before it takes one thin dime from our city's budget to hire more lawyers or create a new bureaucracy at City Hall. ■

Paul Kozakiewicz  
Editor, *Richmond Review*  
and *Sunset Beacon*  
Trustee, SFNNA



2005 three-story rendering of 121 Golden Gate Ave.



2008 rendering of 121 Golden Gate at 10 stories.

**New St. Anthony offices open in May**

*Senior housing in the works now soars 10 stories*

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

**I**T'S been more than five years since St. Anthony Foundation announced it would raze 150 Golden Gate Ave., the former Knights of Columbus building, which it bought in 1999, and put up new administrative digs on the site. The five-story building opens in mid-May, Daniel O'Connor, St. Anthony's community liaison, told the Tenderloin Futures Collaborative in March.

All St. Anthony's offices and services from 121 Golden Gate — except the dining room and clinic — will move across the street.

St. Anthony now can start the second phase of its major project: demolishing and replacing 121 Golden Gate. But it will be far different from what was proposed just a couple of years ago.

As plans for both buildings were gestating, 121 was going to be three stories: food prep in the basement, dining room on the first floor, 17 units of permanent senior housing on the second and 17 respite units for people just discharged from the hospital on the third.

At the Collaborative meeting, O'Connor introduced Sharon Christen, housing developer with Mercy Housing California, which became a 121 project partner last year. Christen ran down 121's latest 10-story incarnation:

The dining room on the first floor and respite units on the second remain as planned. The third floor will be a community room for tenants. The building then rises another five stories, stepping back on its southern side to match the height of the Boyd Hotel next door, and going up another two stories. On floors four through 10 will be 90 one-bedroom and studio apartments for seniors, which Mercy will manage.

"The dining room is going to be 25% bigger than it is now, and there are other improvements," Christen said. The arcade — a covered walkway around the building's perimeter — will shelter people waiting to eat and will keep them off the sidewalk. The arcade's openings have roll-down closures for nighttime. Security cameras and lights are planned. People with disabilities waiting to eat will have a special room where they can relax until a place is available.

"We're applying to Planning for entitlements — conditional uses —

right now," Christen said. "We're going above the 40-foot height limit and there will be no parking."

The project will cost \$66 million, \$42 million of that for the housing and \$24 million for the rest of the building. Mercy will apply for federal Section 202 HUD grants, funding to assist very low-income elderly, she said.

Francis Aviani, St. Anthony's media and communications manager, told *The Extra* in an email that the foundation is still searching for funds for both buildings.

"We'll finish out our capital campaign for 150 and then launch the campaign for 121," she wrote of the Golden Gate addresses.

If there are no snafus with money or the Planning Department, 121 demolition is expected to start next year, construction on the new building in 2010 and completion in 2011.

St. Anthony's free medical clinic, which serves 12,000 poor people annually, will move permanently to 150 Golden Gate. The dining room, which serves 2,600 meals a day, will move there temporarily while 121 is under construction.

Before it's even opened, the new building at 150 has some environmental bona fides, according to Aviani.

"We believe 150 Golden Gate will be the first LEED-certified green direct service social services building in San Francisco," she

said. LEED — Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design — is a trademarked rating system of the U.S. Green Building Council, a nonprofit that encourages energy efficiency and responsible use of natural resources.

"This was important to the foundation," Aviani said, "both in terms of our Franciscan approach to environmental sustainability, and our understanding of the role that environment plays in the health of the community."

Almost 95% of the demolition waste was recycled, and much of the concrete and steel in the building contains recycled materials. An evaporative cooling system on the rooftop and other efficiencies will reduce annual energy use by 30%. Water use will be cut 20% by low-flow and low-flush plumbing fixtures. And carpet, paint and adhesives in the building contain compounds that emit only low levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) such as benzene and formaldehyde, which, as they evaporate, contribute to smog and may harm people with allergies.

Green is likely to be a consideration for 121 as well.

Meanwhile, Mercy and St. Anthony want to know what TL residents think of the new design for 121. Put in your 2¢ and more at a community meeting, April 8, 6-7 p.m., in St. Anthony's Poverello Room, 109 Golden Gate. ■



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## Community benefit district cleans, patrols Central Market

BY SONYA SVOBODA

CENTRAL Market Community Benefit District began providing services in February, more than a year after the CBD was formed.

Clean Streets and Community Guides began sweeping and patrolling Market, Stevenson and Jessie streets from Fifth to Ninth and a few strategic blocks north of Market.

By contrast, the Tenderloin CBD, started in October 2005, is huge — 29 square blocks, mostly residential. Central Market is largely commercial.

The CBDs have the same street sweeper service, the Clean City Coalition, which hires low-income and homeless people. Clean City, however, contracts with a two-person team to clean Central Market streets during the week and has a separate contract with MJM Management Group to clean on weekends.

MJM Management also contracts with the CBD to provide its Community Guides, a pair of brown-uniformed, police-trained men who patrol Central Market streets from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays.

The guides are CBD's response to its survey last spring of property owners' concerns, said Daniel Hurtado, executive director of the Central Market CBD. The respondents' chief complaints, he said, were alcohol and aggressive panhandling, along with

urine and feces on the streets. So, the Guides patrol the area, armed with a list of social services to refer miscreants to for help.

They also have been "trained on how to recognize criminal behavior and activities that warrant contacting the police," said Hurtado.

It's a different attitude in the Tenderloin.

"We do not have people on the streets," said Elaine Zamora, manager of the Tenderloin/North of Market CBD, "because it is a commitment to the neighborhood that we would not be a police to the neighborhood."

The Central Market CBD's annual budget is \$535,000. The North of Market CBD's budget is nearly \$1 million.

Not everyone within Central Market CBD's boundaries is aware of what the new organization is up to or convinced it can make changes.

"[The area] is definitely better than before, but the police need to do more work during business hours," said an employee of Oxford Street Men's Clothing & Accessories, located on Market between Fifth and Sixth streets. "Right outside are the homeless and people selling dope."

He said he'd never heard of the CBD.

At Café 36 on Fifth Street, employee Cony Judah agrees the streets are cleaner. "But homelessness hasn't improved — it will take more than the Central CBD." ■

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**Sat., April 19th at 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

**West Portal Elementary**, 5 Lenox Way at Taraval St. Wheelchair access through Claremont St. school yard. *Nearby Muni routes: 17, 48, K, L & M to West Portal Station*

**Thursday, April 24th at 6 p.m.-8 p.m.**

**Jewish Community Center**, 3200 California St. at Presidio Ave. *Nearby Muni routes: 1, 1BX, 2, 3, 4 & 43*

**Sat., April 26th at 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

**Dianne Feinstein Elementary**, 2550 25th Ave. at Vicente St. *Nearby Muni routes: L, 28 & 66*

**Monday, April 28th at 6 p.m.-8 p.m.**

**Southeast Community Facility**, 1800 Oakdale Ave. at Phelps St. *Nearby Muni routes: T, 23, 24, 44 & 54*

**Wed., April 30 at 6 p.m.-8 p.m.**

**City College Mission Campus**, 1125 Valencia St. at 22nd St. *Nearby Muni routes: 14, 26, 48, 49 & 67*

**Sat., May 3 at 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

**Jean Parker Elementary**, 840 Broadway St. at Powell St. *Nearby Muni routes: 9X, 12, 30, 45, Powell & Mason Cable Car*

**Monday, May 5 at 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m.**

**Visitacion Valley Elementary**, 55 Schwerin St. at Visitacion Ave. *Nearby Muni routes: 9X, 9BX, & 56*

**Sat., May 10 at 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

**Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy**, 4235 19th St. at Diamond St. *Nearby Muni routes: F, K, L, M, 24, 33 & 35*

**Monday, May 12 at 6 p.m.-8 p.m.**

**West Bay Conference Center**, 1290 Fillmore St. at Eddy St. *Nearby Muni routes: 5, 22, 31 & 38*

**Wed., May 14 at 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m.**

**Bessie Carmichael Elementary**, 375 Seventh St. at Harrison St. *Nearby Muni routes: 9X, 12, 14X, 19 & 47*

**Sat., May 17th at 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

**Mission YMCA**, 4080 Mission Street at Bosworth St. *Nearby Muni routes: 14, 23 & 49*

For more information, go online [www.sftep.com](http://www.sftep.com) or call 311



All sites are wheelchair accessible. Materials in large print will be available at the meeting. To request assistive listening devices, a sign language interpreter or other accommodations, please call 415.226.1313, TTY: 415.701.2323. Providing at least 72 hours advance notice will help to ensure availability.

Interpretation in Cantonese and Spanish will be provided. There will be a FastPass raffle at each meeting.



# Empress Hotel food giveaway a n

► CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

oversees 18 supportive housing pantries in the Tenderloin and 50 in all, including SoMa. Almost half of the TL's 36,000 population "live with the daily threat of hunger," according to a 2007 Food Bank survey. In such a frail population, hunger worsens chronic health problems and speeds the onset of disease.

"The Empress has good food and it's beautiful and dignified — set up in a farmers' market style," says Sverdlov. "There are some other programs that are close to it, but it's the best and my model."

At less than half of Sverdlov's pantry drops shoppers help specify the items, something she wants to change. Selections made at the warehouse based on residents' requests avoid the waste when pantries contain only whatever items the Food Bank has on hand.

"I'm assessing the Tenderloin's needs now," Sverdlov says, "and I want to add three to five pantries. But we're only opening pantries that will shop."

**E**ACH week, Empress Hotel General Manager Roberta Goodman takes the T-line to Third Street, gets off and walks a few blocks to the Food Bank. It's the poor man's Costco, a sprawling warehouse with a 60-foot ceiling at 900 Pennsylvania Ave. in Dogpatch, hard by Interstate 280.

She grabs a flatbed cart for her typical Wednesday morning shopping spree and wheels it sharply to the left, down an uncrowded corridor, past stacks of boxed and canned food to the bread bin on the east wall. But at 9:45 a.m. she's running a little late and the bin is practically empty.

"Luck of the draw," Goodman says, arching an eyebrow and selecting a dozen loaves while eyeing the pita bread. "But it's always an adventure here.

"Some people want the white bread," she adds, "but pita is always popular. Maybe more bread will show up before we leave.

"I pick a combination of healthy (foods) and what people like. I have one person who can't do any soy, and just about everything has it. Some are lactose intolerant and I'm careful about sugar for the diabetics."

Ever since she and resident Robert Abate collaborated on the Empress' food giveaway a year ago, Goodman has spent an hour each week shopping at the Food Bank. Part of her mission is to get the hotel's 82 formerly homeless folks up and running and leading active lives. She works for Delivering Innovation in Supportive Housing (DISH), under contract



**Empress General Manager** Roberta Goodman hugs a case of organic food from the Food Bank delivery volunteers, such as the one next to her, take the delivery inside to the community room, where residents take

with the Department of Public Health.

Residents recall November 2005, when Prince Charles and his then-bride, the Duchess of Cornwall, visited the Empress, hand-picked for them as a shining example of Mayor Newsom's Housing First program. Charles was intrigued by conversations with the formerly homeless residents, and the SRO got its 15 minutes of international fame.

"We had to ask people in the hotel what they needed most," shopper Goodman says, as she moves on to the Food Bank's protein bars. "Food was high on the list. So we've tried to create a regular institutional program that sup-

ports them. It was a success from the first day."

San Francisco has the highest priced groceries in the nation and the Tenderloin has the lowest per capita income in the city. No supermarkets exist in the TL, and pricey mom-and-pops, top-heavy with snacks, eat right through a wallet.

**G**OODMAN swings open a massive steel door to find a cavernous refrigerator practically empty. Sverdlov says the Food Bank seldom if ever gets meat donations, and across the board, donations are down, she says. "Short-coded" items with expiration dates and dented cans are increasingly going to secondary markets like FoodsCo and dollar stores, she says. The Food Bank does receive short-coded donated items and will distribute food beyond their expiration dates, based on guidelines set by the Food Marketing Institute.

"Last week, I was lucky and found some salami," Goodman says. "Usually there's cheese and cottage cheese and yogurt and milk in here."

There are considerations. Not everyone has teeth, and some won't eat certain products. Such "customized" shopping made the program a hit from day one, she says.

Her choices are also weight sensitive. The Food Bank charges 18 cents a pound for everything but bread, which is 4 cents a pound. She avoids many canned items. But once she determines a theme for the day — a key item like tostada shells — she selects supporting items that make it easy to build a meal. Canned diced tomatoes, chiles and chili beans go onto the cart. She did pasta last week.

The next day, when the Food Bank delivers the order to the Empress, it will heap on free bonus bread and fruits and vegetables, usually stuff that perishes quickly like lettuce and bananas and always potatoes and onions. But you never know what will arrive.

Goodman buys by the case, expecting a turnout of up to 60, an impressive 75% of the Empress' residents. She sets quantity limits per resident to keep the shopping fair.

On her cart's growing stack go 48 protein bars in two cases, eight-to-a-box Krunchers chips, mini Triskets and Tamara sauce — last

**Goodman** and a volunteer place items on covered tables and arrange them in an appetizing fashion.





# Model for healthier eating in SROs



PHOTOS BY LENNY LIMJOCO

...y truck to the sidewalk. Once unloaded, she and the ...e what they want.

bulged with gigantic potatoes, another with 50 pounds of bright orange carrots, and boxes of yams and frozen spinach. The volunteers hefted the load onto the sidewalk, then onto a cart that made several trips back to the community room where Goodman creates the market.

Helping today is lanky Denny Johnson, 53. He's been at the Empress six months. He pauses in the lobby. The food he'll get today, he says, will last a week.

"I have something to eat whenever I run out of money because of what she's done," Johnson says of Goodman. "She puts a lot into it, and it helps us, believe me. This is one of the best places I've ever been. If you don't get along here, you don't want to."

Before the delivery, George Johnson, 47, is also waiting to help unload. He told *The Extra* about moving in to the Empress two years ago and said the latest positive turn in his life is the food giveaway.

Born on a Paiute Indian reservation in Nevada, Johnson always had trouble holding a job. He was homeless for 10 years before he ran into a social worker who helped change his life.

"All the (homelessness) time was bad," Johnson said. "I struggled to learn where to get food and find a shower. Some places I took food out, but it wouldn't last but a day."

"Then I met a social worker who helped me out and got me SSI. She got me in a recovery program and when I graduated she got me in here two years ago. I really admired her. She's in South Africa working now. If I ever see her again I can show her that her efforts were not in vain."

Before May, when the food deliveries started, Johnson hit the junk foods pretty hard. When he went shopping, it was for unhealthy snacks. Now he's making healthier choices because of the food put in front of him. He says his consciousness has been raised, though he confesses succumbing to an occasional Hi Ho. He thinks he's probably eligible for food stamps but says there's no need because he's eating so well.

"This has upgraded a part of my life," Johnson says. "And it has allowed me resources so I can take care of myself. What's that saying, 'Feed him a fish and it's for a day, but show him how to fish and feed him for a lifetime.'"

"A lot of the time, I don't want to leave. It's overwhelming out there, chaotic, too much for me to handle on a daily basis. I used to be homeless. Now I spend most of my time in my room. Kinda ironic."

Another volunteer is Gregory Shaw, 54, a three-year resident. He has mastered chicken, fish, eggs, bacon — which he buys himself — and vegetables in his microwave. But the pantry food doesn't excite him and doesn't last him as long as it does the others.

"May I be candid?" Shaw asks. "It depends on your needs, but it lasts me about two days. It's the same stuff week after week and there are some things I won't eat. There's seldom any meat — hot dogs and jerky sometimes. Not that I'm not grateful. If it weren't for this, I'd be back at Glide and St. Anthony's more often."

Shaw is a Vietnam veteran who once owned his own home. He has worked as a cemetery operator, truck driver and shipyard rigger. But he fell on hard times. In 2001, he had the "cabbage" heart operation — five coronary bypasses — and he has mental issues, too, he says. Yet, he is handsome, well-dressed and appears fit.

"I got a new life through Care Not Cash," he says of the mayor's program that brought him to the Empress. "The food here helps quite a bit, especially on weekends and in rainy weather. It frees us to eat healthier. And it's self-help."

Back in the community room, a large green "Empress Food Market" sign is a wall backdrop for the shopping that will start at 1:45 p.m. and last for two hours. Goodman is arranging items on tables shaped in a horseshoe, calling on her aesthetic bent to construct towers of boxed foods. She puts other foods in attractive baskets and scatters produce as if it had spilled out of a cornucopia. She's especially fond of the red Radio Flyer wagon on the floor, now

laden with potatoes nearly the size of footballs. Items have limit signs and the two-potato limit, even if eaten every day, could last a week.

The Empress pantry was actually started by the hotel's tenant representative Randy Wilson three years ago, explains Abate, who stopped by. But it consisted of just the baseline Food Bank delivery drop, not the customized shopping that Goodman and Abate added last May.

"It was hit or miss before," Abate said. "We never knew what bags we were getting and there was some waste. But what Roberta has now is unique. It's a model the way it's set up, and she has the space for it."

The Department of Human Services, which hired Abate as a shopper last year, has 25 SROs in its Housing First Master Lease program; 17

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

## Food Bank pantries in Tenderloin

**T**HE Food Bank, according to its Website, delivers to these 37 pantries in the Tenderloin. The Aranda, Elk, Empress and Mentone/Coronado (one delivery) hotels are the newest additions.

### PANTRIES SERVING NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTS

Southeast Asian Community Center  
Tenderloin Self-Help Center  
Turk Street Corps, Salvation Army

### PANTRIES SERVING FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

Curran House  
Tenderloin Elementary School

### PANTRIES SERVING SENIORS

Alexander Residence  
Antonia Manor\*  
Boeddeker Recreation Center  
Dorothy Day Community\*  
Eastern Park apartments\*  
Maria Manor  
Marlton Manor  
St. Anthony Foundation  
Vietnamese Elderly Mutual Assistance

### PANTRIES SERVING ADULTS IN SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

111 Jones Street Apartments  
Ambassador Hotel  
Aranda Hotel  
Cadillac Hotel  
Civic Center Residence  
Dalt Hotel  
Elk Hotel  
Empress Hotel  
Franciscan Towers  
Glide Community Housing Inc.  
Indo Chinese Housing  
Mentone, Coronado hotels  
Pacific Bay Inn  
Plaza & Ramon Apartments  
Ritz Hotel  
Sierra Madre & Klimm Apartments  
Tenderloin Housing Clinic — Hartland Hotel  
The West Hotel

### PUBLIC MEAL PROGRAMS

Glide Community Food Program  
St. Anthony Dining Room ■

\*Operates two pantries

# Food shoppers a growing trend at SROs

► CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

are Care Not Cash hotels. Some have community kitchens, others just microwaves in individual rooms. DHS had four hotels on the pantry delivery route and increased its contract with the Food Bank to add six more, plus Abate's shopping job to cover the 10. But SRO space varies and some markets are no bigger than a walk-in closet.

"We really get a lot of bang for our buck," says DHS Housing and Homeless Deputy Director Scott Walton. "For every \$1 of ours, we get \$8 in food. The pantries get set up like little farmers' markets. And the program helps build community in the buildings."

The Empress is in the Department of Public Health master lease program for housing.

Abate says the lure of food is a socializing influence. It brings people together who tend to isolate themselves. They mingle and talk, though some seem unable to partake.

"Some only come to the door and turn back," Abate says. "But you see (social) growth here and when they volunteer it might be the beginning of their getting out of here, like leaving the nest."

The volunteers get to shop first at 1:45 p.m.; they fill their bags and leave. The rest start at 2 p.m. They enter about one per minute into a room that now has the visual flair of Whole Foods and the friendliness of Trader Joe's.

Goodman checks off names on a roster to keep a count and doesn't let the room get crowded. The bread is gone by 2:15 when hip-hop and soul singer Mary J. Blige's voice fills the room from a CD player in the corner.

A few announce they are shopping for



PHOTO BY LENNY LIMJOCO

**Despite** his heart operation, resident volunteer Gregory Shaw hefts a 50-pound bag from the Food Bank's weekly delivery.

other residents and that's okay. There's a loud argument outside the door over who comes in first. Goodman steps outside and quells it and the process resumes.

The residents usually comment gleefully on what surprises them, the peanut crunch bars, the size of the potatoes in the red wagon, the Shrek gummies. The experience is like looking under a Christmas tree.

At the end of the marketing day, 61 of

the hotel's 82 residents had shopped. Everything was gone, except a few boxed items that would be recycled the next week. In the unlikely event they are continually ignored, they end up in Goodman's Halloween basket.

"What I'm glad about is that the two new residents from last week came down and another person I hadn't seen in a long time," says Goodman. ■

## TENDERLOINHEALTH

a continuum of care

### Outreach and Community Events April 2008

#### Health Promotion Forum

Topic: Disability Housing Options and Rights

Speaker: AIDS Housing Alliance and Tenderloin Housing Clinic

Date/Time: Tuesday, April 22, 12 pm - 2 pm

#### HIV Treatment Forum

Topic: Newly Diagnosed

Speaker: Jenni Vanderlaag, Gilead

Date/Time: Monday, April 21, 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, April 9, 11:30 am - 1 pm;

Wednesday, April 23, 11:30 am - 1 pm

### Volunteer and Intern for Tenderloin Health

Orientation: Sunday, April 13, 12 pm - 6:30 pm

220 Golden Gate Ave., 3rd Floor

lunch provided

You must register for volunteer trainings.

Stop in/call Emilie (415) 437-2900 ext. 234.

For a schedule of our current groups or for more information call 415.431.7476 or go to [www.tenderloinhealth.org](http://www.tenderloinhealth.org)

## Central City Democrats

The Chartered Democratic Club for District 6



AND

## TACPAC

Tenant Associations Coalition Political Action Committee

FPPC # 1241868

Endorse the following candidates for June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2008 State Primary Election



State Senator Carole Migden, District 3

(with Howard Dean, Democratic National Committee Chair)



Supervisor Tom Ammiano

Candidate for California State Assembly District 13



Supervisor Gerardo Sandoval

Candidate for San Francisco Superior Court Seat 12

PLEASE JOIN US FOR ELECTIONS OF OFFICERS AND GENERAL MEMBERSHIP ENDORSEMENT OF CANDIDATES AND BALLOT PROPOSITIONS FOR THE JUNE 3 PRIMARY

Annual Meeting of the Central City Democrats  
Wednesday, April 16, 2008 at 6:30PM  
201 Turk Street, Community Room (corner of Jones St.)

Paid for by Central City Democrats, George Dias, President  
P.O. Box 420846 San Francisco, CA 94142-0846  
(415) 339-VOTE (339-8683)



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# Fire chief to tone down central city sirens

► CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

who chaired the meeting, said her order, once effective, was "lax now."

"We're asking the chief to communicate with her station (No. 3)," he said at the beginning. "That's pretty much it."

The chief sympathized with the complainers but said the department is bound by its mission to get to fires as quickly as possible to save life and property. The department needs loud warnings.

"We want to make sure we announce ourselves," Hayes-White said. "It can be challenging to get things out of our way at intersections."

Reducing noisy full alarm Code 3 responses down to the quieter Code 2 responses, Deputy Chief Kochevar said, requires a 911 determination and communicating the downgrade to the department so it can immediately slow up and reduce the siren and horn noise.

"Ours have about 123 decibels," he said. "The sound bounces off the buildings, though."

An ambulance siren at 10 feet is 120 decibels and 15 seconds of exposure over eight hours can cause permanent hearing loss, according to the University of Michigan Health System Web site. (See sidebar.)

In the future, the officials indicated, it may be possible to synchronize stop lights to automatically change to favor the path of response vehicles. In February, Hayes-White sent a letter to the Polk Street Neighbors saying she was willing to analyze any Department of Parking and Traffic study for such a plan.

"It might be confusing to the public, though," the chief told *The Extra* later. "I've asked the deputy chief to follow up. There may be other districts outside of the city using it."

A white-haired man in the front row grew impatient with the explanations and reminded the meeting that the discussion was to be about air horns, sirens and levels of noise.

"And if you're telling me the (noise) level isn't high-pitched, you're trying to pull a big one," he said. "I've lived here 50 years, and it didn't used to be this bad. I have to do like this now when they go by." And he stuck his fingers in his ears.

He and a young woman sitting in the back asked if the noise was causing damage to their hearing. The woman, who has lived near Leavenworth Street for 15 years, said she wondered if her hearing loss could be due to high-frequency emergency horns, because fire trucks pass by so frequently.

The experts at the table had no response and were saved by the bell. A cell phone rang and three fire officials shot out of their seats and left for a potential high-rise fire at First and Howard streets.

A sore spot that continues to aggravate residents is the number of runs that are medical and nonfire-related, more than 70%, according to the Fire

Department estimate. The department absorbed the city's paramedic division in 1997 and now, unless it's designated nonemergency and medical, a 911 call gets both a fire engine and ambulance, even a false alarm, which, of course, they don't know till they get there.

Someone suggested getting rid of call boxes, but Hayes-White was quick to say they are essential for people without cell phones.

There were 884 false alarms in Station 3's response area in 2007, down 14% from 2006, according to department figures.

"Why not send only an ambulance?" asked TL resident Michael Pedersen, who has kept abreast of the noise issue for three years.

"People are opposed to that," answered the chief. "If it's a fire, an ambulance can't stop it."

"But it's such a small chance," he said.

"We could argue it," she said. "But at the end of the day we look at what our role is. And yes, there are many false alarms from call boxes. Pull the hook and we get notified."

Erica Byrne, a Leavenworth Street resident who works on Market Street, puzzled the department's remaining panel by showing that under the California Vehicle Code a vehicle responding to an emergency doesn't have to sound a siren.

"Are you aware that using the siren isn't required?" she asked the panel, then walked up front to show them a copy of the code section that spells it out. Byrne taught vehicle laws and regulations for six years at the South Zone Fire Engine Academy.

It's a common mistake to think that sounding a siren is required, she said. After the meeting, Byrne said she was disappointed in the department's lack of knowledgeable responses to questions about health.

Many of the topics were discussed at length June 14, 2005, when 70 people attended an Alliance for a Better District Six forum on sirens. It was suggested then that a study be conducted to examine the effects of the sirens on people. A 19-member Siren Abatement Committee was formed.

At a subsequent Alliance meeting, a representative from Supervisor Daly's office attended and said the supervisor was willing to listen to the predicament but needed data to work from, and then he could meet with the committee.

## Study shows noise can kill

**B**ECAUSE of the pounding that people's ears get from wailing sirens along the emergency response route of Station 3's fire engine — the nation's leader with more than 7,400 trips last year — the Tenderloin is a ripe study ground for the World Health Organization.

The WHO, which released startling new evidence last year on the effects of noise pollution, looks for households with abnormally high exposure to noise. Then it compares their death and disease rates to rates in quiet neighborhoods.

Last year's study, prompted by a swell of complaints, suggested that the long-term exposure to mere traffic noise could account for 3% of deaths from heart attack in Europe. Worldwide, 7 million die annually of heart disease. So, 210,000 were "dying for some quiet," according to an article on the study in *New Scientist* magazine in August. And European cities don't use the high-powered sirens that San Francisco does.

"Until now," the article says, quoting a London audiology professor who worked on the study, "noise has been the Cinderella form of pollution and people haven't been aware that it has an impact on their health."

Also quoted was EPA spokesman John Millet.

"We've always acknowledged that noise can exacerbate serious health problems over and beyond damage to hearing," Millet said. It "causes a wider array of health issues including cardiovascular impacts, blood pressure, even heart attacks to those who were susceptible."

But the agency's Office of Noise and Abatement and Control was discontinued in the early '80s to hand off the problem to local governments. ■

—TOM CARTER

But the committee never met. Michael Nulty, then the Alliance co-president and a committee member, said no one stepped forward to be chair. Pedersen also served on the committee.

"The committee formed a Sirens in SF message board," Nulty said. "It's only accessed by its (130) members, though."

Sirens in the Tenderloin remain an issue as long as people say they are suffering. A *Chronicle* story that appeared on SFGate March 26 on the topic drew 260 e-mail responses and three more the next day. ■

## Big noise can mean hairy hearing losses

**A**N engine siren at 123 decibels hurts most people's ears and can cause hearing loss. Noise levels at concerts where volume often exceeds 120 decibels can damage your ears in 10 seconds, according to the University of Michigan Health System Web site. "Gunshots, at 160 decibels or more, literally tear the inner ear," it says.

A person is born with 30,000 very fragile hair cells in the inner ear which change sound waves into nerve impulses that go to the brain. Once destroyed, the hairs can't be replaced. Loud and sudden noise destroys them — like a hurricane knocking down a tree — and so does chronic noise.

"As noise exposure is repeated," the Noise and Hearing Loss article says, "more cells are damaged and the hearing loss becomes permanent. The loss may go unnoticed for a while because it causes very few obvious symptoms. The first ... is the loss of the ability to hear higher-pitched sounds, such as birds singing. Sounds may become distorted or muffled and it may be hard for you to understand speech."

The article advises that if you are in a noisy room and can't be heard by a person an arm's length away, leave the room to save your ears. And in trying times, ear plugs are the best protection against hearing loss. ■

—TOM CARTER

## Police room to reopen after asbestos problem

**T**HE Tenderloin Police Station Community Room, closed since November because of floor damage, is expected to be available for meetings by April 29 when the captain's forum on food safety is scheduled, Capt. Gary Jimenez announced in March.

The protracted problem originated with a roof leak that dripped onto the floor. Upon inspection it was found that the flat roof wasn't to blame; it was a clogged drainpipe that soon got fixed. Meantime, a crack in what the captain called the cheap concrete floor below had been fed by the leak and the floor swelled and buckled.

Nothing was done about it for weeks because of budget shortages, the department was told. Then Chief Heather Fong talked to Mayor Newsom, who made \$29,000 available, Jimenez said.

Workers came to fix the floor but

discovered asbestos underneath.

"The guys walked off the job," Jimenez said. "We're at the mercy of a bunch of contractors."

The captain assigned Officer Leo Kiang to monitor the situation. Kiang said he called everyone involved with the project twice a day at the Department of Building Inspection and the Department of Public Works. In February he said there was "no end in sight."

Finally, a concrete contractor was given the job to "encapsulate" the asbestos, which meant putting down another floor but using a higher grade of concrete. He missed his scheduled date but days later completed the job.

"We now await the tile contractor to arrive and lay a new floor," Jimenez said at his March 25 meeting held at 111 Jones St. "We hope it'll be ready for the April meeting." ■

—TOM CARTER

# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## SPECIAL EVENTS

**2008 San Francisco Pedestrian Safety Summit**, April 8, 9 a.m.–4 p.m., North Light Court, City Hall. Municipal Transportation Agency-sponsored panel presentations and discussions of pedestrian safety initiatives. Information: [sfmta.com/cms/whome/PedestrianSafetySummit2008.htm](http://sfmta.com/cms/whome/PedestrianSafetySummit2008.htm)

**Central City Democrats annual meeting**, April 16, 6:30 p.m., 201 Turk, election of officers and endorsements of June 3 primary candidates and ballot propositions. Information: 339-8683.

**Neighborhood Arts Festival**, celebrating 40 years, April 21–May 3. April 21, 7–9 p.m., Mapping Survival: Arts organizations discuss strategies on creating something out of nothing, S.F. State University, Cesar Chavez Student Center, Rigoberta Menchu Hall, 1600 Holloway. April 23, 7–9 p.m., The Money and the Madness: Individual artists discuss pros and cons of accepting public and private funds, International Hotel Manilatown Center, 868 Kearny St. May 2, 7–10 p.m., Poetry Potluck: A reading by Neighborhood Arts poets, San Francisco's poet laureates, and today's poet activists, Glide Memorial Church, 330 Ellis. May 3, 1–5 p.m., 40th Anniversary Bash: A half-day celebration featuring the 40th anniversary reunion with founding members of the program, SomArts Cultural Center, 934 Brannan St. All events are free. More information at <http://sfartscommission.org>.

**Community Justice Center forum**, April 24, 6 p.m., 180 Turk St., Antonia Manor Community Room, first quarterly meeting to track the progress of the new center, sponsored by Community Leadership Alliance. Information: [admin@CommunityLeadershipAlliance.net](mailto:admin@CommunityLeadershipAlliance.net)

**Free 2-hour walking tours of the Tenderloin by City Guides' Peter Fields in two parts**: May 4, TL's early days (meet at 9 a.m. at Powell, Eddy and Market), and May 11, the 1920s to the present (meet at 9 a.m. at McAllister and Leavenworth). Information: [www.sfcityguides.org](http://www.sfcityguides.org) or 557-4266.

## COMMUNITY: REGULAR SCHEDULE HOUSING

**Supportive Housing Network**, 2nd Thursday of the month, 3–5 p.m., location TBA. Contact: Kendra Fuller, 421-2926 x304.

**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 p.m., 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 Tuesday of the month,

5–7 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 p.m. Focus on increasing supportive home and community-based services, expanded eligibility for home care and improved discharge planning. Light lunch served. Call James Chionsini, 703-0188 x304.

**Hoarders and Clutterers Support Group**, 870 Market, Suite 928. Call for dates and times: 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 Ill-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 x102.

**Neighborhood Emergency Response Team Training (NERT)**. Central city residents can take the S.F. Fire Department's free disaster preparedness and response training at any neighborhood location. See Website for schedule and training locations, [www.sfgov.org/sffdnert](http://www.sfgov.org/sffdnert), or call Lt. Arteseros, 970-2022.

**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 x202 or [mamitai@iisf.org](mailto: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](mailto:sf_district6@yahoo.com), a districtwide improvement association.

**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, 931-1126.

**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](mailto:centralcitydemocrats@yahoo.com).

**Central Market Community Benefit District**, board meets 2nd Tuesday of the month, 989 Market St., 3rd Fl., 3 p.m. Information: 882-3088, <http://central-market.org>.

**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](mailto:admin@CommunityLeadershipAlliance.net)

**Friends of Boeddeker Park**, 2nd Thursday of the month, 3:30 p.m., Boeddeker Rec Center, 240 Eddy. 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: 538-8100 x202

**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**. Call Elaine Zamora for times and dates, 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@comcast.net](mailto:jim.meko@comcast.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](http://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](http://www.senioractionnetwork.org).

## SUPERVISORS' COMMITTEES

 City Hall, Room 263

**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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