

# 50 cops called as unruly crowd at strip club turns violent

City official owns the building – club cited for violations

BY TOM CARTER

**P**INK Diamonds, the troubled Jones Street strip club that has changed its name and spots but not its nature, got shut down in the wee hours Sept. 21 after 50 cops from four police districts quelled a mean crowd outside where fights broke out and guns were fired.

No injuries were reported, said police, who made no arrests but cited the club for violating the Good Neighbor Policy and not having an after-hours permit.

Building owner Terrance Alan, an Entertainment Commission member and its former chair, last year closed the same location after a half dozen shooting incidents outside that police connected to the club, which then was called The Vixen. One victim suffered brain damage.

The early Sunday morning melee at 220 Jones was the worst nightclub scene in Tenderloin Capt. Gary Jimenez's tenure as station commander. "We've sometimes had

to call in help in my two years, but not this many," Jimenez said.

Cops from Northern, Southern and Central stations, plus the TL, were summoned by Capt. David Lazar, the city's roaming night supervising cap-

tain. His patrol responded to a report of gunfire, stepped in and eventually shuttered the club at 2:30 a.m.

The night Pink Diamonds was closed, according to Jimenez, Alan was on the premises and spoke with Capt. Lazar. Alan is also founder and chair of the San Francisco Late Night Coalition, an industry group promoting the city's late night culture.

"He (Alan) agreed that the club didn't have an after-hours permit and needed one — that's a violation," Jimenez said. But later Alan refused to talk about the incident or the club's track record.

"I have no comment," Alan said when The Extra asked for his reaction. "It's not my business. I am the

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



PHOTO BY TOM CARTER

**Pink Diamonds, 220 Jones St., was the scene of a late-night melee.**

NO. 83

PUBLISHED BY THE SAN FRANCISCO STUDY CENTER

OCTOBER 2008

## HIGH-TECH MENTAL HEALTH

\$4.1 million for city network

PAGE 2

## HOW THINGS WORK

Boeddeker Park snit — all's well that ends well

PAGE 3



## BUZZ BEHIND BARS

People in jail can vote, too

PAGE 4

# CENTRAL CITY



SAN FRANCISCO

## HOT DOG POLITICS



PHOTO BY TOM CARTER

**Residents** pour through Boeddeker Park's gate and are offered free T-shirts by Ambassador Hotel social worker Rachel Thom (right), who helped organize the event.

# PARTY TIME

1-day voter extravaganza registers 136

BY HEIDI SWILLINGER

**P**OLITICIANS, pay heed: The sure way to potential voters' hearts in the traditionally low-turnout Tenderloin is through their stomachs. A block party at Boeddeker Park Sept. 20 to register voters featured live music, basketball, bingo and an inflatable bounce house for kids.

But it was the free food — including 800 pieces of chicken and 600 hot dogs and burgers — that drew most of the crowd of 1,400 and resulted in 136 newly minted registered voters.

Fourteen hundred meals in exchange for 136 voters may not seem like the most profitable trade, but Steve Woo was over the moon about it. "That's a huge amount for one day," said Woo, an organizer with TNDC, the party's main sponsor.

By comparison, he told of an earlier, much lower-key TNDC effort to promote civic participation that registered 250 over two months for the June election. Emily Lowe, field director at the San Francisco Democratic Party, said a recent five-day registration drive held during lunch hours at the Academy of Art University snagged 200 new registrants. Alec Bash, coordinator of

San Francisco for Obama, said his organization signed up roughly 300 new voters at the two-day Fillmore Jazz Festival in July.

Woo said TNDC planned to spend \$10,000 for the registration party but came in under budget, although the final receipts hadn't yet been tallied.

Tenderloin residents are notoriously absent at the polls. In the 2000 presidential election, for example, only 53% of the Tenderloin's registered voters cast ballots; in 2004, just 65% voted. Generally, only Bayview and Vis Valley are lower. Compare that with Noe Valley, where 74% voted in 2000 and 84% in 2004.

Why is the Tenderloin such a tough political sell? Residents and service providers rattle off the obvious answers: a highly transient and largely alienated population, health and legal problems, stress, apathy, ignorance of voting rights.

With its large number of immigrants, seniors, low-income and homeless residents, substance abusers and ex-convicts, the Tenderloin is in a constant state of churn, which makes staying current on voter registration more of a chore than it is for people who live at the same address for years on end, said Charles MacNulty, voter outreach manager at the Department of Elections.

Besides being a highly mobile population, each of the neighborhood's subsets faces additional challenges when it comes to voting.

Regulations vary throughout the nation, so homeless residents and former convicts may not be aware that in San Francisco they're allowed to vote. (See sidebar.) "Some people don't realize they actually

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



# \$4.1 million for mental health online network

## Revolutionary options for info sharing — consumers urge caution

BY HEIDI SWILLINGER

If all goes according to plan, a state-of-the-art billing system already in the works for the city department that provides mental health services to low-income and uninsured San Franciscans will morph into something much bigger and, by some accounts, better.

Using money generated by Prop. 63, the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) that voters passed in 2004, Community Behavioral Health Services hopes to turn its new electronic health record and billing system into an Internet portal where clients can review their records, schedule appointments and check in with their providers.

CBHS representatives met with a group of mental health clients and providers Sept. 17 to lay out the plan and recruit participants for a planning committee that will weigh in on the IT components of the new system.

The meeting took place at the Office of Self Help, an organization of mental health clients, many of whom raised concerns about how the new system will function, and, in particular, who will have access to it.

According to CBHS Deputy Director Alice Gleghorn, the city's new billing system was designed to dovetail with MHSA priorities. Prop. 63 was crafted to fund expansion of mental health services by imposing a 1% tax on California millionaires' personal income. A key component of MHSA is to increase consumer and family involvement in the mental health system. An electronic billing system that would also enable clients to access their records, review their doctors' orders and stay on top of their medications, for example, is in keeping with the MHSA mandates, says Gleghorn.

"We're replacing something that was just a billing system with a billing system and a community portal," she says. "Our system will be consistent with what the state has said its priorities are."

MHSA funds housing, workforce development and prevention and early intervention programs and pays for beefing up information technology. San Francisco plans to use \$4,148,350 of its share of IT funding to open the computer system to consumers, says Gleghorn.

Prop. 63 requires community input to plan services. The IT committee CBHS hopes to convene will create a wish list of features that mental health clients find helpful, and trouble-shoot those that raise concerns.

Patient confidentiality is high on the list of issues to be addressed, judging by audience comments at the meeting at the Office of Self Help.

Fancher Bennett Larson, a senior staffer at Mental Health Clients' Rights Advocates, said in an interview that privacy is a major issue. An electronic record containing sensitive information about clients possibly would be seen not only by doctors, pharmacists and contract service providers — caregivers with a legitimate need for access — but also by data entry personnel, billing clerks and perhaps others with no pressing need to view a patient's personal information.

And don't forget, she said, patients who give

## Leg up for young job-seekers

Vietnamese Youth Development Center's free four-week job training course for 18- to 24-year-old men and women gives them a little boost getting into the work world.

Tech Tran, VYDC's employment program manager who teaches the course every other month — next one starts Oct. 8 — says he's helped 18 kids get jobs in the last year. About 15 students meet weekly for two hours, learning how to write resumes and cover letters, and how to present themselves in interviews. Tran also does one-on-one mentoring with them and takes them on field trips.

"We've gone to potential job sites, like the airport, and to job fairs, but also to places like SFMO-MA," Tran says. "This has to work for them, so I always ask group members where they want to go."

The course is open any young San Franciscan, though Tran would like this to be a resource for Tenderloin kids especially. "They don't have to have finished high school," Tran points out, "and they can be undocumented."

Classes are held at 166 Eddy. More info: tech@vydc.org or 771-2600 ext.107. ■

—MARJORIE BEGGS

## More millionaires swell MHSA fund

Next time you're at a party rubbing shoulders with millionaires, give them a great big "thank you." They're the reason mental health spending in California has skyrocketed since 2004, when voters passed Prop. 63 — the Mental Health Services Act.

Initially projected to produce \$1.66 billion by June 30, 2007, Prop. 63 has actually generated \$3.76 billion, providing the state with a bigger millionaire mother lode than Sacramento number-crunchers anticipated.

"The surprise was that the revenue generated far exceeded expectation," says Alice Gleghorn, Community Behavioral Health Services deputy director. "Each year they roll out what each county is going to get, and each year, it's gone up since 2004. So far, this seems to be a steady stream of revenue."

MHSA revenue outstripped projection because the number of Californians earning over \$1 million doubled from 25,000 in 2002 — two years before Prop. 63 passed — to 51,000 in 2006, according to Denise Azimi, spokeswoman for the Franchise Tax Board. It confounds predictions that the initiative would cause millionaires to flee the state.

Only about half the money the state has collected has been spent, a delay a state Department of Mental Health spokeswoman chalked up to the intricate mechanics of the initiative.

"Over \$3 billion has been made available, but counties have only drawn Projections put down \$1.6 billion," said Nancy Kincaid, another

er \$1.7 billion in state coffers by June.

Counties that apply for MHSA funding must address the measure's five components and navigate multiple phases of implementation.

"This wasn't an overnight thing," said Kincaid. "Quite a bit of infrastructure had to be put into place before counties could do what they wanted to do."

But Rose King, a policy consultant who helped draft Prop. 63, blames the funding logjam on a "complicated, expensive and unnecessary bureaucracy" created by the state Department of Mental Health. She says flaws in California's initiative process allow measures to pass without any way to determine the authors' original intent, resulting in interpretations — and misinterpretations — by the department.

Whether this mental health cash cow continues to flow at its current rate depends on whether California's millionaires stay put — and stay rich.

"It'll be interesting to see what happens in the wake of the fiscal crisis," Gleghorn notes.

Jack Lapidus, a San Francisco tax accountant "specializing in tax minimization for well-to-do individuals," said he expects MHSA revenues to "reverse down." He says only five of his 800 clients earn more than \$1 million.

Besides, he adds, "In that (\$1 million-plus) bracket, (the effect of MHSA) is minuscule compared with their federal taxes." ■

—HEIDI SWILLINGER

consent for others to see their medical and mental health records also have the right to withdraw their consent. "How would that be addressed under this new system?" asked Bennett Larson, who plans to apply for a spot on the planning committee.

Gleghorn pointed out that the new CBHS system would be subject to the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), which created privacy standards and set boundaries on the use and release of health records.

"There are a zillion levels of protections and safeguards" built into the city's new system, she said. "There are rules about who can look. We'll build in everything available to protect this system and keep it secure, but that doesn't stop people from worrying. But there are very good measures to protect this stuff."

Bennett Larson has other concerns. She sketched the scenario of a mental health care provider who decides his or her notes could be upsetting to a patient and electronically denies access. "How would that be addressed?" she asked.

Roy Crew, director of the Office of Self Help, shares her concern.

"Clinicians should understand that what they're writing likely will be reviewed by the client and their advocate," Crew said. "They have a responsibility to write their notes in a way that's not going to hurt a client. If they can't do that, they should surrender their license."

Crew also believes that clients should be able to respond to caregivers' observations. "What's more important is our ability as clients to put our information and responses into the same document files (that doctors and providers use). We want to have the ability to comment on what they say about us."

Crew also said provisions need to be made for teaching clients how to access their electronic health record. "Some of that (MHSA IT) money needs to go to training stations," he said.

In general, Crew supports an electronic health record because it could eliminate the need to dredge up one's medical and pharmacological history with every visit to a new provider.

"It means we won't have to repeat ourselves over and over for each program we participate in," Crew said.

Bennett Larson agrees — in theory, at least. "It sounds wonderful," she said. "But as a patients' rights advocate and consumer, I have a tendency to not be all-trusting. I've dealt with some of these difficulties — these are things that need to be considered."

## TO JOIN THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Mental health clients and providers who want to serve on CBHS' IT planning committee will have to attend six two-hour meetings over a three-month period.

"We want people with personal experience with the behavioral health system ... people who are committed and can make informed decisions," says Gleghorn.

To apply, send your name, address, phone number, email address and a brief description of your skill or experience to Frank Isidro/Nan Dame, Behavioral Health Information Systems, 1380 Howard St., 3rd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94103. Applications are due by Oct. 15. You can call Isidro at 255-3572 or email him at Frank.Isidro@sfdph.org. ■

Office of Self Help and Mental Health Clients Rights Advocates are sponsored by the Study Center.



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

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

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

**E-MAIL:** centralcityextra@studycenter.org

**EDITOR AND PUBLISHER:** Geoffrey Link

**SENIOR WRITER/EDITOR:** Marjorie Beggs

**REPORTERS:** Tom Carter, Ed Bowers, Anne Marie Jordan, Phil Tracy, Heidi Swillinger

**DESIGN AND LAYOUT:** Lenny Limjoco

**PHOTOGRAPHER:** Lenny Limjoco

**CONTRIBUTORS:** Diamond Dave, Mark Hedin, John Burks

**DESIGN CONSULTANT:** Don McCartney

**DISTRIBUTION:** Leticia Sanchez and John Nuñez

**EDITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE:** David Baker, Michael Nulty, Debbie Larkin, Nicholas Rosenberg, Brad Paul, Tariq Alazraie

Central City Extra is a member of the  
SAN FRANCISCO NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSPAPER  
ASSOCIATION

# Much ado about just doing a job

*Activists learn when a tree's not a tree and a shrub can hide a crime*

BY TOM CARTER

A SPECIAL meeting held for angry neighborhood activists to call Rec & Park to task for removing trees in Boeddeker Park turned into a basic primer on why, when and how the department fixes routine problems with greenery.

The peaceful outcome was thanks to the activists — many of whom didn't bother to show up.

Even so, the session left a bad taste for the Rec & Park employee setting the record straight. He was "frustrated" that his routine work was questioned.

The strange interlude began with an outburst over trees at the Friends of Boeddeker meeting in the park clubhouse on Aug. 14.

Before committee Chair Betty Traynor could tackle the agenda, agitated resident David Baker insisted that the dozen people attending consider a burning nonagenda item — Rec & Park's recent removal of some trees and shrubs in Boeddeker. The brick planter along the sidewalk through the park was bare dirt now and Baker was furious. Traynor gave him the floor.

"Six trees and shrubs were removed and it took us all by surprise," said Baker, a longtime champion of Tenderloin trees. "It's outrageous. Full-grown, mature trees. And they didn't confer with us."

Traynor said it was a shame Steve Cismowski, Rec & Park's neighborhood manager, was on vacation, or he could explain. Traynor had routinely invited his supervisor, Justin Lyman, but he wasn't able to attend either. Lyman did send an email, which Traynor read aloud. It said the changes were to make the park a "visually safe and esthetically pleasing, sustainable landscape" and "fragrant, flowering shrubs" had been ordered for the planter.

Many on hand, including Traynor, were disappointed they hadn't been notified about the plan beforehand.

"No advance notice is disrespectful," said David Villa-Lobos, head of the Community Leadership Alliance.

"The trees gave shade so people could sit on

benches in comfort," said resident John Nulty. "Now you've made it not as pleasant. We need oxygen. Foliage is gone and it'll take years to get it back."

Park Director Al Wimberly said he was "shocked" to have no advance notice before workers swept in to clear the planter, but still, he was the only one at the meeting who favored the move.

"I like to know what's going on in my park," Wimberly said, "but it was good judgment in my opinion: 90% of the people in that corner are drug dealers and they hide dope from police in those trees."

"If it was up to police they'd tear down every tree in the neighborhood," Baker shot back.

The discussion veered to the \$3 million-plus renovation the park is in line for in three years. (See the August Extra.) Maybe to have made changes now was a waste of money, it was speculated.

"It's an extreme solution," said Elaine Goduti. "What brought it on?"

No one knew.

"The timing wasn't good," said Traynor.

"The right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing," said Nulty.

"Poor judgment," said Baker.

"There's been no input," said Villa-Lobos. "We should go to the Rec & Park Commission and ask for censure."

To hash it out, Traynor said, she'd arrange a meeting with Cismowski and notify everyone. She moved on to the next agenda item.

The meeting with Cismowski, announced widely in emails, was held Sept. 5 at the Antonia Manor at 10 a.m. Present were Traynor, Cismowski, resident Ed Evans and Villa-Lobos, who arranged the meeting. Tenderloin Capt. Gary Jimenez arrived later. Baker, Nulty and other critics didn't show.

The vegetation was removed at Boeddeker in two parts, Cismowski said, after it was discovered that a cherry tree and shrubs — thought to be innocuous — had been causing water leaks inside the community building for two years. Invasive roots had eaten through the waterproofing and were pry-

ing off the west wall, he said. So that vegetation was torn out to be replanted with greenery that grows low enough that the park's director can look out of the community building and see into the playground where children gather.

Also, the irrigation system in the walkway's 4-foot-wide planter didn't work and the planter was overcome by bay bushes, he said. Their "notorious root systems, destined for trouble after five to 10 years," had jammed against the planter's walls, endangering it.

"Weren't there five or six trees?" Villa-Lobos asked.

There were a couple of Pittosporiums in the planter giving "a modicum of shade" that technically were nontrees, Cismowski said. Rec & Park defines a tree as having a minimum 6-inch diameter at chest height. Furthermore, only when a "nonhazardous tree" is to be removed is the work posted and a contact telephone number listed for inquiries.

The new walkway vegetation will be colorful and grow low enough that police can see inside the park, he said.

Evans said Rec & Park should have communicated with citizens.

"We're hired to do a job because of our expertise in these matters," Cismowski said, "and it's quite frustrating when the community doubts our judgment — that gets challenging. And to rush to the Park & Rec Commission would be precipitous."

Cismowski then led the group outside and to the park a block away to examine the work being done. The group stopped briefly to gaze at the barren planter that would receive its plants the next week.

"They don't have the advantage now of hiding behind that," Jimenez said. "Thank you."

Villa-Lobos apologized for the others not showing up and quickly complimented Cismowski on his "good work" that had been questioned.

"That undergrowth used to have rats in it, too," said Traynor.

"The new growth won't jeopardize the integrity of the walls," Cismowski said. ■

# YOUR VOICE VOTE

## NOVEMBER 4, 2008 GENERAL ELECTION

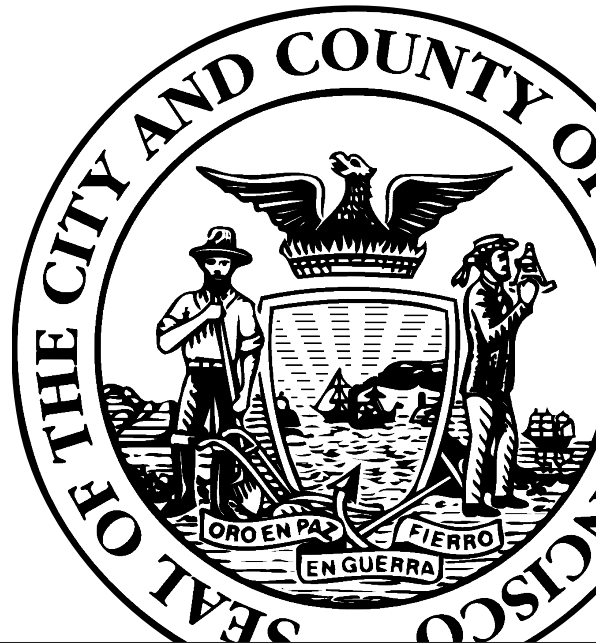
# REGISTER AND VOTE

**The last day to register to vote is October 20, 2008.**

You must re-register if you move, change your name, or want to change your political party.

To request a voter registration form or to find out if you are registered, call the Department of Elections at (415) 554-4375 or visit [www.sfgov.org/elections](http://www.sfgov.org/elections).

**Department of Elections  
City and County of San Francisco**





# 1,400 show up at TNDC v

► CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

have the right," says MacNulty, who calls the Tenderloin a "target area" for education efforts by the Elections Department.

## Felons, prisoners can vote, too

**L**AWS vary from state to state, but in California, it's pretty simple: You can vote even if you've been convicted of a felony or are on probation — as long as you've completed your prison term and are off parole.

"Your past convictions have nothing whatsoever to do with your voting rights," says Linda Evans of Legal Services for Prisoners With Children. "A lot of people think once you have a felony conviction, you can't vote. That's not true in California."

Alabama, Arizona, Delaware, Florida, Kentucky, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington and Wyoming apply the most stringent voting restrictions on felons in the nation, according to Kamy Akhavan, managing editor of procon.org, a Santa Monica nonprofit that explores social and political issues.

But to vote in California, you have to register — this year, by Oct. 20. Registrants must provide a state driver's license or ID card number, or the last four digits of their Social Security number.

You can also vote if you're in county jail as a condition of felony probation, have been convicted of a misdemeanor, or are awaiting trial.

Eileen Hirst, Sheriff Michael Hennessey's chief of staff, says the department's Prisoner Legal Services office has organized voter registration and education drives for years. "Sheriff Hennessey is a former prisoner rights attorney, so it has always been something we've paid attention to," she says.

Evans says San Francisco's jails have a good reputation for keeping prisoners up to date on their rights. "Mike Hennessey has done a great job," she says. "We've had people inside (the jails), and they say information is quite available."

Although the Sheriff's Department doesn't keep voter registration statistics, Hirst says the election is definitely creating a buzz.

"Just like this election has electrified voters at large, it's of great interest to people in jail," she says. ■

—HEIDI SWILLINGER

Language barriers can keep immigrants from voting, which is why organizers made a point of having literature in three languages and bilingual staff fluent in Chinese and Spanish at the block party sign-up tables, said Woo.

Disabled people may have trouble keeping track of deadlines for registration, or how to vote by mail, said Michael Nulty, head of Alliance for a Better District 6. They may not want to leave their homes to go to their polling places. "One real problem in this neighborhood is the stress factor," he said.

The Tenderloin also tends to attract people who, for myriad reasons, operate on the down-low — "people with reason to hide," said Nulty. "Voting is the last thing on their minds."

Nulty also said many residents decline to register because they don't want to be part of the city's pool of potential jurors, a contention backed up by TL resident Marty Leyva.

Resting against a brick retaining wall, his crutches at his side, Leyva said he showed up at the Boedekker party strictly for the food. "I have a low income," he said. "I can't afford food, so if it's being given out, I'm there."

Although he said he'd love to vote in November, he refuses to register because of a bad experience with the court system. When he was called for jury duty a few years back, Leyva said he asked to be excused because of his disability, a request that was granted. Believing that dismissal applied to all future service, Leyva ignored subsequent jury summonses. He discovered his error the hard way one day when he was stopped by a cop, who ran a check that revealed an outstanding warrant for missing jury duty. Leyva claims his infraction resulted in a trip to jail.

Although she declines to comment on specific cases, Ann Donlan, a Superior Court spokeswoman, said: "It's conceivable that a warrant could be issued in such circumstances, but highly unlikely."

But Leyva's not taking any more chances. Rather than risk a repetition, he stays out of the jury pool by sitting out elections. "I'm jaded about voting."



**Eddy Street** residents Dominciana Ferreira (left) and volunteer Angela Winn of the Health Department. It was

## Late night calls to Pink Diamonds

► CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

landlord, not the operator. I do not control operations. I won't comment until I verify and confirm the conflicting stories swirling around these events." He referred questions to Pink Diamonds manager David Muhammad.

"Pink Diamonds had nothing to do with the incident that night," Muhammad said later in an e-mail. He couldn't be reached for further comment.

### BAD AS NORTH BEACH

The incident rivals the nightclub street violence that plagues North Beach. Proposals to crack down on out-of-control clubs by giving the Entertainment Commission more power and oversight, increasing club security and giving police more authority on the sidewalk are pending before the Board of Supervisors.

The very next weekend, Pink Diamonds was in Dutch again. At 1 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 27, on a routine check, TL police seized the cash register after finding a woman behind a counter selling water, sodas and the high-energy drink Rock Star, which is advertised outside near the club entrance. Pink Diamonds doesn't have a license to sell food or beverages.

Police have noticed the club's clientele has changed from well-behaved voyeurs to rough ones with a penchant for violence.

### ARMED AND UNINHIBITED

"We believe the type attracted to that club have narcotics and firearms or whatever," Jimenez said. "They come armed and have no inhibitions about letting off a couple of rounds in the Tenderloin. But no one was wounded Saturday that we know about. And no officers were hurt."

He said the TL Police Station is preparing a complaint to take to the Entertainment Commission about the latest trouble, which didn't sit well in the neighborhood.

"Two-twenty-two is now becoming a problem," said Tenderloin CBD manager Elaine

Zamora. She lives a block south of the club on Jones. "I hear that noise on Fridays and Saturdays, even at my place. When they close at Suite 181 (a nightclub on Eddy Street) they come over to 220. They piggyback."

She said she was enlisting neighbors to voice their complaints at the next police captain's community meeting.

The 220 Jones site was formerly a porn movie house. Alan bought the building, he said, "about 12 years ago." Several years ago it was Chez Paree strip club, a moral thorn in the side of the San Francisco Rescue Mission, its next-door neighbor. The mission's leaders railed publicly and often against the club, even sending young men and women to picket in front for weeks at a time.

In April 2007, Zamora, Alan and others formed The New Tenderloin activist group. Some 125 people showed up at the inaugural meeting. Alan led the discussion on violence. TNT in May marched to City Hall to dramatize its safety causes and submitted a list of five problem properties to the city attorney to investigate: 220 Jones St. was one.

### TNT TARGETED 220 JONES

Soon afterward, a string of shootings occurred outside that police traced to patrons of the place that had been renamed The Vixen. Seven people were shot from July to November, Capt. Jimenez said in an interview.

The Vixen expired a year ago, just days before police and city officials at the October TL Police Community Forum meeting reported the club had a batch of permit issues. It had been cited by three city departments. TL police permit Officer Miguel Torres said he had received "a lot" of residential complaints about The Vixen's late-night noise and violence outside.

The club then was under investigation as a public nuisance by police and the city attorney. Police thought 220 Jones was violating its entertainment permit. But a deputy city attorney found that it had no entertainment permit

and didn't need one.

"Initially, police thought they were in violation," says Deputy City Attorney Jerry Threet. "but they weren't."

Because of "escalating violence," then-Assistant City Attorney Neli Palma said at that October meeting, she had asked that the club close. It did "to the great relief to neighbors and police. We're skeptical that it can operate in a nonviolent manner," Palma said. "If it reopens it will need very, very tight restrictions."

### ALAN CLOSES THE VIXEN

Alan arrived at the meeting late and missed all discussion about The Vixen.

"At my insistence," Alan said after the meeting, "the club is closed until the issue of public safety is adequately addressed. And we're closed until we are in compliance."

Meanwhile, he said he was reporting progress to his lawyer, Mark Rennie, who represents many other nightclubs before the Entertainment Commission.

Almost six months later, in March 2008, the place reopened as Pink Diamonds and it was clear of violations. Alan said he had hired a new security company, installed metal detectors and instituted a dress code — "no caps or hoodies," a sign outside says. And it wore gaudy new paint — hard black and Pepto Bismo pink — "a gentleman's club now hiring dancers and employees," a sign read.

Soon Alan appeared at community meetings to introduce his new manager, David Muhammad, who was very polite, and together they profusely assured everyone that Pink Diamonds would be as peaceful and neighborly as a strip club could ever be.

Before this September, Pink Diamonds had a passable record, considering how the neighborhood at night has changed. Since April, the club has had 13 police calls for service, ranging from disturbing the peace to aggravated assault, records show.

# voter party — 136 sign up

Whether or not they're voting, Tenderloin residents — as voters in general — seem interested in this year's election, largely because the presidency is at stake. Many people at the Boedekker party are raring for change. "I think this election is going to get people out because of the economy," said Eileen, a former Tenderloin resident who wouldn't give her last name. "It's not getting any better for the poor

— they're getting tromped on," she said.

Alexia Gleaves, a homeless woman who last voted for Bill Clinton, says she registered today because she's fired up about Obama. "I'm voting this time because a black man is running — and a woman was running."

Both race and the economy are motivating DeForest Woods, who sat out the last two elections but plans to work the polls for this one. "We definitely need a change," he said. He reasons that Obama is the man to deliver it precisely because his status as a minority will keep him under such close scrutiny that missteps will be impossible. "This is a great opportunity to have your voice heard," he says. "I'm going to be out doing my part."

John McCain is not without admirers in the neighborhood either. Dominciana Ferreira, back in the Tenderloin after several years in the Philippines, came to Boedekker Park so she could register to vote for him, saying she believes McCain beats Obama for experience. Nathaniel Jones, a TNDC volunteer — he made cotton candy for the kids who showed up — also favors McCain and Sarah Palin.

Although many Tenderloin residents lean toward Obama, Jones believes apathy will keep them from voting. "I'm not seeing many people fired up — which is good for Republicans," he said.

Leyva echoes that concern: "People in the Tenderloin don't care whether things get better or not. They're so conditioned by the muck and shame of this area that they just don't care anymore. They see it as a lost cause."

It's a grim view, and party organizers certainly aren't unaware that cynicism and apathy are among the reasons for low turnout in the Tenderloin.

"The community is largely disenfran-

chised and disillusioned with the process of voting," notes Woo. He and other organizers say that re-engagement is a crucial first step to bring turned-off voters back to the civic fold.

The sunny day full of food and free T-shirts, entertainment and helping hands at the registrations tables ended up being a perfect lure for reconnecting residents with the democratic process.

"Just starting the dialog with people is a success," said Lillian Mark, who helped sign up new voters at a table sponsored by Glide Memorial United Methodist Church.

TNDC organizing manager Tomiquia Moss agreed. "I'm thrilled with how many people came," she said. "It reflected the true vibrancy of the neighborhood." ■



PHOTO BY TOM CARTER

Narina Cariaga get registration assistance from TNDC Cariaga's first time to register.

## Homeless voters live at General Delivery

**H**OMELESS San Franciscans have the right to vote, but — like everyone else — must register by Oct. 20. The registration form asks for mailing and street addresses. For mailing address, use "General Delivery, 101 Hyde St., San Francisco 94102." For street address, provide a street intersection (Turk and Leavenworth, for example).

You'll also need to provide a California driver's license or ID number, or the last four digits of your Social Security number (if you can't provide a number, the state can conduct a search to verify your identity, but it's a slow process).

You can pick up an absentee ballot at 101 Hyde St. as long as you have a driver's license, ID card, passport or some other form of government-issued identification, according to James Wigdel, Postal Service spokesman.

If you'd rather vote in person, Charles MacNulty of the Elections Department recommends casting your ballot at City Hall, outside Room 48. Early voting begins Oct. 6; hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mon.-Fri. Weekend voting starts Oct. 18; hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sat. and Sun. ■

—HEIDI SWILLINGER

# strip club make the cops see red

The figures pale by comparison with police action at Suite 181, considered the neighborhood's biggest nightclub headache (see the May 2008 Extra). The 181 Eddy St. site's noise and unruly crowds spurred two neighborhood meetings in the spring with residents, Entertainment Commission representatives, cops, and the club's owner and staff. Things improved, but the club's track record is dismal.

In 23 out of 38 weekends this year, from Jan. 1 to Sept 21, cops were at Suite 181 to make arrests or restore order, The Extra's study of Tenderloin police records found. The heaviest figures came from fights: a dozen cases of battery, on track to be 25% more than the club had in 2007, and four aggravated assaults so far. Also this year, four people resisted arrest and two others battled police. None of that happened the previous year.

For officials, Pink Diamonds has a confusing status in night time entertainment.

## CLUB'S STATUS 'WEIRD'

"We're looking into that," says the Entertainment Commission's Bob Davis. "It's a weird spot it falls into because it's not permitted by us. The police are investigating, too."

"I've had numerous discussions with Capt. Jimenez and it's a legal question — technically, they don't serve food or beverages. Last year, when we looked into The Vixen, the city attorney determined no permit was needed since it didn't serve food or drink. But last weekend Capt. David Lazar closed it."

Finding no permits for 220 Jones St. on Sept. 21, the police report said, the cops wrote Pink Diamonds two citations. The report also described the club's milieu: "numerous physical altercations and large amounts of noise due to the large crowds in the area."

"We have a couple of problems there," Jimenez says. "They have no after-hours permit. And the building owner makes it plain they don't need it, only one from the Fire Department. It puts us in a (strange) position."

"It's been explained to me several times," he continued, "and I still don't understand it — a girl dancing on a pole is not entertainment, but when selling (food or drink), it is."

Pink Diamonds' neighbors, residents in the 205 Jones St. apartments directly across the street, say the late-night mob scenes are maddening.

Lea Curry, a 10-year resident, describes the building's tenants as mostly working people, families, some with two jobs, some retired, most not speaking English very well. Several came to her a few weeks ago, she said, and begged her to do something about the club's noise.

"I work nights and live in back and wasn't really aware of it," Curry told The Extra. "But then I started noticing."

## 'YELLING, SCREAMING, CARS HONKING'

"The weekend before last there was a huge party outside, big crowd, boom boxes going, yelling, screaming, cars honking. What I've seen is the noise starts after 2 a.m., and at 3 a.m. the traffic is gridlocked. Inside security can't handle that."

"Sometimes it's open on Sundays and that spills over to early Monday."

She watched people drive and walk into the neighborhood and believed that a portion was a migrating crowd from Suite 181, but admitted she couldn't "guarantee" that.

"We're 70 feet away. That people should be kept up isn't right. We're often not perceived as a residential area. But we are. And if I lived in the front of the building, I'd be angry. I'm encouraging people to get involved."

Curry says she has known Alan 10 years. She says he's been a good neighbor with 220 Jones until recently. She readily credits him for working hard for community improvements over the years — he's recently been named to the advisory committee of the new Community Justice Center at 555 Polk St. — but she's disappointed by his stance now.

"I wrote him an email about the noise and he wrote back that none of the businesses were complaining," Curry said. "Well, they're closed at that time. It's a little tricky for me — I've known him a long time. He's always been caring about the neighborhood. Now he's blaming his tenant. I still think the ball falls on Terrance."

"Because he's the commissioner, who do we go to? Sounds like a conflict of interest to me."

Roy Castillo, a 14-year resident, was aware of Pink Diamonds' problems long before Curry. His second floor apartment faces the club.

"The noise started four or five months ago," Castillo said. "So many cars and motorcycles. Boom, boom, you can hear it. And the car radios. Two weekends ago (Sept. 21) I heard three gunshots and then the police came and surrounded Pink Diamonds. There was fighting and shouting going on."

Castillo speaks Tagalog. Five families in the 50-unit building, one with a small child, have come to him about the noise, hoping something can be done, he told The Extra. The families are scared to speak out because they know "an official" owns the property, he said, and they fear reprisals.

## 'IT'S TERRIBLE'

"They come to me," Castillo said. "They can't sleep. It's terrible. I wish the official lived here, too."

Weekends, Castillo watches the crowds form after 1 a.m. The line for Pink Diamonds extends down Jones Street. It wraps around the corner at the Antonia Manor apartment building at 180 Turk St. so he can't know how many wait. But he sees revelers leave Pink Diamonds 50-60 at a time and then more are admitted, he says. The basement and first floor capacity is 231, according to the Fire Department. The crowds continue until 4:30 or 5 a.m.

"I don't like to speak out either," Castillo says. "They might get back at me. But if we don't speak out it will cause more harm." ■



# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## SPECIAL EVENTS

**9th annual SoMaFEST**, Sat., Oct. 11, noon-4 p.m., Victoria Manalo Draves Park, Folsom St. between Sixth and Seventh streets. Family event includes performances, games for kids and adults, health screenings for children, UCSF Health Hut, youth job referrals, raffle. Sponsored by South of Market Community Action Network and city agencies. Info: Angelica Cabande, 348-1945.

**Free Tenderloin history walking tour**, Sun. Oct. 12, 9 a.m., conducted by neighborhood researcher Peter Field. Meet at corner of McAllister and Leavenworth. Highlights Tenderloin's heyday in the 1920s through the 1950s as the city's entertainment district, the mean streets of the '70s and '80s, the re-emergence as a restaurant and club neighborhood in the dot-com era. Info: City Guides tours, 557-4266, or [sfcityguides.org](http://sfcityguides.org)

**Grand opening of 125 Mason St.**, Glide's new affordable housing building, Oct. 26, 1-4 p.m. Block party, refreshments, entertainment by the Glide Ensemble and The Change Band; free.

**Tenant Associations Coalition 10th anniversary fundraiser**, after-elections celebration Nov. 5, Swig Bar, 561 Geary St. at Jones, happy hour starts 4:30 p.m., event 5 p.m. Info: 339-8327.

## COMMUNITY: REGULAR SCHEDULE HOUSING

**Supportive Housing Network**, 3rd 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 Tuesday of the month, 3-5 p.m., CBHS, 1380 Howard, room 537. Call: 255-3695. Advisory group of consumers from self-help organizations and other mental health consumer advocates. Open to the public.

**Health & Wellness Action Advocates**, 1st Tuesday of the month, 5-7 p.m., Mental Health Association, 870 Market, 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 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: Alexandra Goldman, 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., 230 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 34. 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 District Manager 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 Sts. 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 Station community room, 301 Eddy. Call 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, room 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

**Budget and Finance Committee** McGoldrick, Elsbernd, Mirkarimi, Daly, Chu, Wednesday, 1 p.m.

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



# Central City Democrats

## Official Endorsements for November 2008 Election

### ELECTED OFFICIALS

U.S. President:	<b>Sen. Barack Obama</b>
Vice President	<b>Sen. Joseph Biden</b>
U.S. House District 8	<b>Rep. Nancy Pelosi</b>
California State Senate District 3	<b>Mark Leno</b>
California Assembly, District 13	<b>Tom Ammiano</b>
San Francisco Supervisor, District 1	<b>Eric Mar</b>
District 9	<b>David Campos</b>
District 11	<b>John Avalos</b>
Board of Education	<b>Sandra Fewer, Jaynry Mak, Jill Wynns, Norman Yee</b>
College Board	<b>Chris Jackson, Milton Marks, Steve Ngo</b>
BART Board, District 7	<b>Lynette Sweet</b>
District 9	<b>Tom Radulovich</b>
Superior Court Judge, Seat 12	<b>Gerardo Sandoval</b>

### CALIFORNIA PROPOSITIONS

1. High Speed Rail	<b>YES</b>
2. Standards for Confining Farm Animals	<b>YES</b>
3. Children's Hospital Bond Act	<b>YES</b>
4. Waiting Periods and Parental Notification for Minor's Right to Choose	<b>NO</b>
5. Non-Violent Drug Offenses	<b>YES</b>
6. Police Funding	<b>NO</b>
7. Renewable Energy Generation	<b>NO</b>
8. Anti-Marriage Initiative	<b>NO</b>
9. Criminal Justice System: Victim's Rights	<b>NO</b>
10. Alternative Fuel Vehicle and Renewable Energy Bonds	<b>YES</b>
11. Redistricting Amendment	<b>NO</b>
12. Veterans' Bond	<b>YES</b>

### SAN FRANCISCO PROPOSITIONS

1A. General Hospital Bond	<b>YES</b>
B. Affordable Housing	<b>YES</b>
C. No City Employees on Boards and Commissions	<b>YES</b>
D. Pier 70	<b>YES</b>
E. Number of Signatures For Recall	<b>YES</b>
F. Elections in Even Years	<b>NO</b>
G. Credit For Unpaid Parental Leave (Retirement)	<b>No Recommendation</b>
H. S.F. Clean Energy Act	<b>NO</b>
I. Independent Rate Payer	<b>NO</b>
J. Historic Preservation Commission	<b>YES</b>
K. Prostitution/Sex Workers	<b>No Recommendation</b>
L. Community Justice Center	<b>No Recommendation</b>
M. Tenant Harassment	<b>YES</b>
N. Real Property Transfer Tax	<b>YES</b>
O. Emergency Response 911	<b>YES</b>
P. Transportation Authority	<b>NO</b>
Q. Payroll Expense Tax	<b>YES</b>
R. Oceanside Water Treatment Plant Name Change	<b>YES</b>
S. Budget Set-Asides	<b>No Recommendation</b>
T. Substance Abuse Treatment	<b>YES</b>
U. Policy Statement Iraq	<b>YES</b>
V. Policy Statement JROTC	<b>NO</b>

("No Recommendation" means the 50% threshold was not reached.)

### Central City Democrats

The Democratic Club for those who live and work in District 6  
Chartered by the San Francisco Democratic County Central Committee  
George Dias, President

P.O. Box 420846  
San Francisco, CA 94142-0846  
Tel/Fax: 415-339-VOTE (339-8683)  
<http://centralcitydemocrats.blogspot.com>

**BRETT HACKETT**  
**'Amazing' — he'll be missed**

Brett Hackett told a friend that when he died, he didn't want any religious service. After Mr. Hackett died unexpectedly Aug. 18, the friend passed that message on to the management at the Hamlin Hotel, where Mr. Hackett had lived for a year.

A handful of hotel tenants and staff gathered in the SRO lobby Aug. 28 to remember Mr. Hackett with candles and refreshments. Per his wishes, there was no official service, and only a few people spoke.

"We didn't know much about Brett," said Vanessa Brown, the Hamlin's tenant services manager. Brown works with Community Housing Partnership, which took over Hamlin tenant services in April and management of the hotel in July. "He had a mother in Miami, and he was active in community events. He loved animals — he was a strong animal-rights person."

"Brett was a person who struggled so much with himself about his past," said Diane Robbins, a nurse practitioner who had cared for Mr. Hackett. "He also delved deeply into paganism, looking for solutions for himself, because he wanted to get better. He was a good man."

Hamlin resident Randy Lackey said Mr. Hackett loved music, especially rock and reggae, and came to the hotel's music appreciation meetings regularly.

"He was just a good guy," Lackey said, "respectable, quiet, cultured, and into mysticism."

Another tenant admitted that she had "had an aversion" to Mr. Hackett and called him difficult. "He just went on and on in meetings," she said, "but still — well, he was amazing and I guess I'll miss him."

Hotel management declined to comment about the cause of Mr. Hackett's death, and, in mid-September, the city Medical Examiner's Office still had no information. Mr. Hackett was 42 years old. ■

—MARJORIE BEGGS

**GYULLI MARTIROSYAN**  
**A long life with loving daughters**

Gyulli "Julie" Martirosyan, a Russian woman of remarkable health who was doted on by her daughters, died Aug. 26 soon after the onset of a heart condition. She was 91.

Mrs. Martirosyan experienced chest pain earlier that month and was taken from the Turk Eddy Preservation Apartments on Eddy Street where she had lived for several years to California Pacific Medical Center. Her condition improved but during rehabilitation she had a relapse and died.

"It was the first time she had ever been in a hospital," daughter Nina Sochilina said after a Sept. 10 memorial for Ms. Martirosyan at the apartment building. "And she had never even taken a pill before that."

She said Mrs. Martirosyan's father lived to 105 and her brother to 98.

Another resident of the 55-unit building, Chi Y. Tao, believed to have been the oldest person living in the Tenderloin, died in December, also of a heart condition at the California Pacific Center, 12 days after her 96th birthday.

Sochilina said her mother ate "only fresh vegetables, lots of fish, and she loved caviar, black and red."

Sochilina, who lives two blocks away on Turk Street, and another daughter living in San Francisco, visited their mother every day and were familiar faces to the residents. A third sister living in Israel visited in February, stayed a month, spending every day with her mother, Sochilina said.

The two San Francisco sisters arrived at the memorial with two large pizzas, fresh cantaloupe and orange juice for the 13 friends and acquaintances attending.

"I knew her," said one mourner. "She said her name in English was Julie. She couldn't speak much English and I didn't understand her. But it didn't make any difference. She'd touch my face and say, 'I love

you.' And I could tell she did. I'd visit in her room and she'd show me all her family pictures."

One man, a neighbor, said he went to the grocery for her once and she kissed him on the cheek, an affection he still treasured.

Another man thanked the sisters for the "wonderful care" they gave their mother who was "always smiling."

The mourners recalled that Mrs. Martirosyan once wandered off on public transportation and ended up lost at Ocean Beach, before police found her. After they brought her home she kept smiling as if nothing had happened, they said.

Mrs. Martirosyan was Armenian, born in Tehran, Iran, but grew up in Azerbaijan, then part of the U.S.S.R. She was the mother of five girls and a boy. She left the country at the outbreak of the Armenian-Azerbaijan war, 1991-1994. After temporarily living in Moscow, she was granted political asylum in the United States. In 1994, her daughter said.

"You could tell that she loved people by her body language," said one woman. "We all miss her." ■

—TOM CARTER

**JOHN "MIKE" MCKENNEY**  
**Craftsman, not artist**

By all accounts, Mike McKenney was a unique Tenderloin resident. He lived at the San Cristina Hotel for 13 years, longer than most other tenants. His room was "a masterpiece of organization and creativity," said Yusef Shakuur, tenant services counselor. He'd built a loft for his bed, decorated his room to make it a showplace, and on his hallway door and all around it he'd mounted art work and found objects.

Mr. McKenney also owned a car — one of only 19% of Tenderloin residents who do (citywide it's 75%), according to a 2004 Urban Solutions survey. He used his car to visit his mother, father, brother and sisters in Redding. He was an avid camper and fisherman, and loved to build things.

After spending five days in the hospital, Mr. McKenney died Aug. 27 of complications of alcoholism. He was 50 years old.

At his Sept. 11 memorial at the San Cristina, his picture was flanked by two large bouquets, candles and crosses, all sitting on a lace-draped table.

"Having Mike's memorial on this emotional day reminds us of what a good man we've lost," said neighbor Ben Wynn. "He did things for this hotel all the time — you needed a bench for the kitchen? He'd build a bench. He was skilled, intelligent, and I'm going to have a hard time getting used to him not being here."

Another neighbor, Mark Anthony, called him a "people person and a live wire," and yet another, Joseph Bolden, considered him an artist.

"But he'd argue that he was a craftsman, not an artist," said Bolden, who has lived at the San Cristina for 14 years. "Sometimes in the hallway we were like two bears passing in the woods — we'd just grunt hello — but other times we'd talk."

There were no barriers between Mr. McKenney and neighbor Earl Gadsden, another car owner, though they were as different as could be, Gadsden said. "Those of us who have vehicles, we'd play hopscotch finding the few parking spots. He'd watch out for the meter people and let me know."

"Mike was a guy you could get eye-to-eye with. He listened to you; he cared about you. A week before he passed, we embraced. He was crying. I told him everything was going to be okay."

Resident Joseph Sierra said



PHOTO: BRETT VAUGHN

Mike McKenney's decorated doorway at the San Cristina.

Mr. McKenney lent him tools. He was strong-tempered but a hard worker who tried to show others how to avoid the mistakes he'd made in his own life.

The stories about Mr. McKenney finally got to be too much for Tenant Services Supervisor Lucinda Walls. "The hardest part of this job is when you know someone is suffering and you can't do anything," she said, crying. "Mike was not a forgettable soul. And we were like his extended family."

When Mr. McKenney's parents visited him in San Francisco and saw where he was living, his father told Walls that he finally understood why his son had chosen to stay at the San Cristina.

"He saw that this was his family, too," Walls said. "And that's the lesson for me: You have to cherish the time you have with people. Let people help you. Today was my closure and now I have to let it go."

The 20 people in the room burst into applause. ■

—MARJORIE BEGGS

**Election Day is November 4th.**  
**There are 34 measures on your ballot.**  
**Where do you get information you can trust?**



**League of Women Voters of San Francisco**

**Busy?**  
**Vote-By-Mail**

**The last day to request a Vote-By-Mail ballot is October 28, 2008.**

**The last day to register to vote is October 20.**



**(415) 989-8683 / www.SFvotes.org**



# Finally, Some Truth in Labeling.

## Official Ballot Label on Proposition H

Shall the City: evaluate making the City the primary provider of electric power in San Francisco; consider options to provide energy to San Francisco residents, businesses and City departments; mandate deadlines for the City to meet its energy needs through clean and renewable energy sources; establish a new Office of the Independent Ratepayer Advocate to make recommendations about utility rates to the City's Public Utilities Commission; and **allow the Board of Supervisors to approve the issuance of revenue bonds to pay for any public utility facilities without voter approval?**

The official ballot label shows Prop. H takes away your right to vote on bonds.

## After You Read the Label, You Won't Buy **Prop. H.**

Prop. H gives this Board of Supervisors, and all future Boards, the **power to spend billions to take over any utility without voter approval.** Join Dianne Feinstein, Gavin Newsom, San Francisco Fire Fighters Local 798, the Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods and SPUR in voting **NO on Proposition H.**



*"Prop. H will give politicians and unelected commissioners the power to borrow billions to take over utilities without a vote of the people. And San Franciscans will be forced to pay the cost."*

—GAVIN NEWSOM,  
San Francisco Mayor



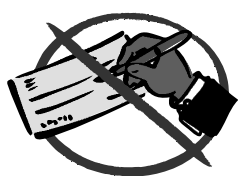
*"Prop. H is financially irresponsible. It will put the city billions of dollars into debt, which will be passed on to ordinary San Franciscans through increased electricity bills – \$400 more a year on average."*

—ROB BLACK,  
SF Chamber of Commerce



*"Prop. H does something totally unprecedented: it takes away our right to vote. It gives the Board of Supervisors the power to issue revenue bonds without voter approval to take over utilities."*

—ANNI CHUNG,  
Senior Advocate



[www.StopTheBlankCheck.com](http://www.StopTheBlankCheck.com)

# Vote No on Prop. H

Paid for by the Committee To Stop the Blank Check, No on H, a coalition of concerned consumers, small businesses, labor, community organizations and Pacific Gas and Electric Company.