

December chill brings complaints about cold

New, upgraded SROs make solutions easier

BY TOM CARTER

DECEMBER'S temperatures that dipped to the mid-30s sent shivers through the city as complaints about lack of heat by people in apartments, flats and hotels increased from a year ago.

It wasn't San Francisco's worst cold snap in history — 1932's second week in December had four days of bone-numbing 20- to 23-degree weather. And National Weather Service records over 97 years show January is actually San Francisco's coldest month by one degree. January's average low downtown is 51 degrees; December is 52.

Still, December's average was 46.1 degrees, chilly enough that the Department of Building Inspection

got 78 heating complaints, a third more than in 2008 when the average was just a half-degree less. Seven complaints came from Tenderloin and Sixth Street SROs, and at least a dozen more from the neighborhood got handled informally. Data show that more than twice as much of the grousing occurred during the first half of the month, when the snap hit, than in the second half.

Officials say that's not so bad, considering there are 500 SROs in the city — some 100 years old — and because DBI handles most problems swiftly. SRO renovations and new construction by nonprofits have improved conditions, too.

"Buildings are better built, and with Title 24 energy requirements more strict, newer buildings have fewer heat issues than older ones," says Rosemary Bosque, chief housing inspector.

"But these (heat) figures aren't unusual," says Bosque, who has worked in code enforcement 24 years and is a member of the Health Department's SRO Hotel Safety & Stabilization Task Force.

"Usually complaints are corrected very quickly," Bosque says. "They range from radiators, valves, timings not set right, thermostats, central heating and boilers. Most (heating systems) are time clocks that can be adjusted right then and there."

Heating isn't the pressing problem for SRO residents that bedbugs are, or leaky roofs in heavy rain, but a cold room means suffering when you shouldn't.

S.F. Housing Code Section 701 says apartment and hotel room heat must be at least 68 degrees for 13 hours daily — from 5 a.m. to 11 a.m. and from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m.

When DBI gets a complaint, it sends out an inspector. If the prob-

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HISTORIC TL MAP IN THE MAKING

Author-photog hired to handle project

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VALUE, AGE OF MID-MARKET

All 57 buildings 8th St. to 5th

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CENTRAL CITY

EXTRA

SAN FRANCISCO

8TH STREET TO 5TH



PHOTOS BY LENNY LIMJOCO

Despite assessed values in excess of \$375 million on these three blocks, the CityPlace parcels, above, reflect the area's persistent bleakness.

MID-MARKET

The shape it's in. Who owns it. What's next.

BY MARJORIE BEGGS, JONATHAN NEWMAN AND GEOFF LINK

WE call it the plywood parade — the relentless march up Market Street from Fifth to Eighth of boarded-up or erratically open storefronts, emptying offices in the upper stories and crumbling facades.

The three mid-Market blocks mostly look like hell.

The mayor knew that when he announced his Jan. 14 launch of a Central Market Partnership "to renew and coordi-

nate efforts" to fix up the area. His project extends from Fifth Street to Van Ness. Our look is tighter because Fifth to Eighth is the locus of the deteriorating retail scene. Owners have renovated a few of the 57 buildings along the three blocks, only to find the ground floors unrentable.

Of the 88 storefronts in these buildings, 27 — 31% — are vacant today.

Among the 27 empty storefronts on the three blocks are ones that make a big impression: Civic Center Pharmacy, the Grant Building ground floor, Merrill's Drugstore, Hollywood Billiards and the planned CityPlace complex.

Early last year, the owner of the Wilson Building next door to Pearl's was planning to convert the upper floors to residential condos, but work stopped in the midst of façade renovation. The building has had six liens against it in the last 18 months and is considered "troubled" by Fidelity National Title, which is involved in trying to move the property.

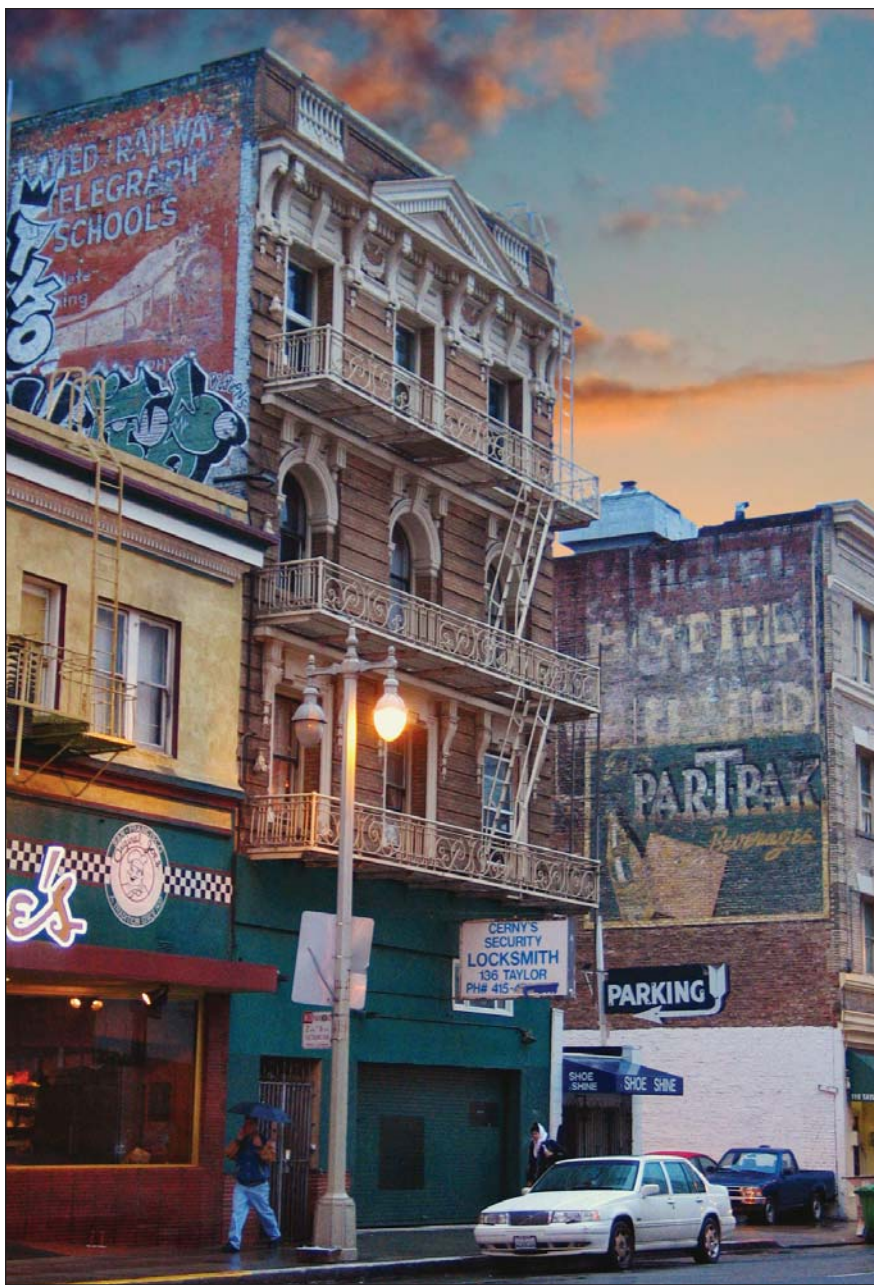
The recession may have pushed mid-Market over the edge to today's grim visage, but its decay was sealed at least 20 years ago.

Market Street was jumpin' in the 1970s. There were lots of people on the street, plenty of things to do. The St. Francis, Embassy and Strand theaters were operating, Merrill's was bustling, Hibernia Bank was opening new accounts. People came and went around here with great regularity — to an amusement arcade, the Market Street Cinema and, just off Market and



Pearl is getting ready to close its doors for good in February.

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PHOTOS BY MARK ELLINGER

The P. Dunphy Building next to Original Joe's, built in 1908, as seen at sunset.



Ed's Corner anchors 201-31 Ellis St., which also houses Thai Noodle Café and Hostel and Hamman Sultan Baths. The building was built in 1910, architect Smith O'Brien.

CBD to put TL on the map

BY TOM CARTER

To bring tourists and the curious from other neighborhoods to ogle the Tenderloin's architectural beauties, the TL Community Benefits District board has approved a \$2,400 grant to design a full-color map of the new Tenderloin Historical District, which it will sell.

The Uptown Tenderloin Historic District — 33 blocks north of Market Street — was added to the National Park Service Register of Historic Places Feb. 13, 2009. A TL history museum is planned to open in the Cadillac Hotel at Eddy and Leavenworth streets next year.

Photographer and CBD board member Mark Ellinger will design and produce the map. He wants it to be slick and professional, "similar to National Geographic maps." One side would be the map referencing historic buildings and sites. The other side would feature a selection of Ellinger's color images of historic buildings. He is the author of a photo book of old hotels in the TL and on Sixth Street called "Up from Down Under: The Hotel Project."

The CBD approved Ellinger's grant in November. It plans to distribute the map by mailing it to property owners and do other community-wide distributions, through hotel concierges, publications, libraries and the Tenderloin history museum.

"I believe it will bring a great

appreciation of the historic buildings to the residents and promote positive foot traffic throughout the Tenderloin," CBD Manager Elaine Zamora said in an email.

The CBD has 613 properties in 29 blocks — all within the historic district — whose owners pay an annual assessment. Last year the CBD operated on a \$1.2 million budget.

Zamora said the board expects map sales to eventually turn a profit. It will be the first product for sale for the CBD's fledgling publishing venture, but she didn't know how many copies will be printed or the cost. The CBD also intends to update and sell the neighborhood restaurant guide it printed three years ago and gave away, she said.

The restaurant guide was so popular that the supply was soon depleted, and Zamora said they're getting requests for a current edition. But at this time, she said, she had "no idea" about pricing of the map or the restaurant guide.

The prime mover in getting the historic district registered was Randy Shaw, Tenderloin Housing Clinic executive director. He's pushing now for contributions so the museum can open in 2011, he said, a year earlier than previously projected. The museum got a \$35,000 grant from the Fifth Age of Man Foundation and design will be coming pro bono from the architectural firm Perkins + Will. ■

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PHONE: (415) 626-1650

FAX: (415) 626-7276

EMAIL: centralcityextra@studycenter.org

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER: Geoffrey Link

ADVERTISING: Heidi Swillinger

SENIOR WRITER/EDITOR: Marjorie Beggs

REPORTERS: Tom Carter, Ed Bowers, Anne Marie Jordan, Jonathan Newman, Mark Hedin

DESIGNER: Lenny Limjoco

PHOTOGRAPHER: Lenny Limjoco

CONTRIBUTORS: John Burks, Diamond Dave, Phil Tracy

DESIGN CONSULTANT: Don McCartney

DISTRIBUTION: Office of Self Help

EDITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE: David Baker,

Michael Nulty, Debbie Larkin, Nicholas Rosenberg, Brad Paul, Tariq Alazraie

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Cold snap brings complaints, mainly from old SROs

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lem is confirmed, the inspector starts knocking on other doors to learn whether other tenants are troubled, too, then writes up a “notice of violation” stating the problem, difficulty, how to fix it, and a deadline for getting the heat working properly.

The owner can ask for more time. But ignore it and citations pile up, which can be expensive.

“We charge the owner \$170 an hour for the hearing officer’s time and \$104 an hour for a DBI administrator,” says Bosque. “It gets to \$1,000 pretty fast and that usually gets the owner’s attention.”

But a single complaint doesn’t mean the whole SRO is freezing. In December 2008, four TL and Sixth Street SROs had complainers. The Seneca Hotel at 34 Sixth St. had three complaints in 11 days. The fourth complaint came from a few doors away, the 102-year-old Baldwin House at 74 Sixth St. A Baldwin resident complained in 2009, too.

“I don’t know who it was,” said Antoinetta Stadlman, an 18-year resident and tenant representative who served five years on the SRO Task Force. “It could have been a window left open. But 90% of the time it’s something little that can be fixed, maybe by flipping a switch.”

The Baldwin, like many Sixth Street SROs, is nearly 100 years old. Those heating systems are erratic.

Now under new ownership, the Baldwin is being renovated floor by floor. Already the fifth floor “looks like the Hyatt,” Stadlman says, delighted by the transformation from its former seediness. But the work could have caused a heating problem somewhere, “a pipe or wire or something,” she says.

However, some cases can drag on, especially if there are many problems and a reluctant owner.

GETTING RESULTS

Michael Haight discovered a raft of problems after moving into the Admiral Hotel, 608 O’Farrell St., two years ago. After complaining to the hotel management to no avail, he heard of the Central

City SRO Collaborative and took his problems there.

Executive Director Jeff Buckley contacted DBI and the old, threadbare hotel was investigated during the summer. Building Inspector James Galvis found not just a heating problem — a damaged radiator valve knob — but 10 other code violations, from damaged walls and mildew to a broken window and a faulty electrical outlet, which he wrote up.

When owners George and Jenny Chang failed to correct the violations, they were summoned to a DBI director’s meeting Oct. 8. Their Permit of Occupancy could have been revoked, but instead they were given more time. They fixed all but two violations that involved shower repairs; that wasn’t good enough. On Dec. 15, the case was referred to the city attorney. And before it’s over, DBI will present the Changs with a sizeable bill for its time (including clerical hours) that’s still being calculated.

“Most of the things got fixed,” Haight says.

“But it’s an ongoing situation because this place is falling apart. I still don’t have adequate heat — the radiator is sporadic and I use a space heater now.”

Meanwhile, Haight says, he and the collaborative will seek a reduction in his \$800 monthly rent from the Rent Board.

PROBLEM ON MISSION STREET

Miguel Astudillo, who works with code enforcement and handles heating complaints for Central City SRO Collaborative, has been working on a case for six months — the Alkain

Hotel at 948 Mission St.

In mid-January, Astudillo met with 13 tenants of the privately owned SRO where 10 complained of heating problems, he said. They had mentioned them repeatedly to the owner, David Patel, with no results. Eventually, one of them got in touch with Astudillo.

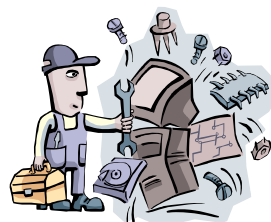
“Some have been without heat for a year,” he said. “But I got a call from the owner (in late January) and he said he’s now willing to work together. We’re going to file with the Rent Board, anyway.”

When Astudillo started his job 18 months ago, he thought he’d be fielding more heating issues than he has. Still, he had a dozen people from apartment buildings and TL and SoMa SROs come to him with complaints in December. He batted 1,000 with them — he didn’t have to file a complaint because all the heating problems got solved with phone calls to the owners and follow-up letters.

“But many who have problems don’t say anything and use their space heaters,” he says. ■

“But many who have problems don’t say anything and use their space heaters.”

Miguel Astudillo
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San Francisco

Developers say now-seedy mid-Market

► CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Seventh, the Main Post Office and the busy Greyhound Bus Station.

Foot traffic slowed down when the Greyhound Station closed in the mid-1980s, about the same time that the Civic Center was becoming a magnet for increasing numbers of homeless people. But it was the 1989 earthquake that drove nails in mid-Market's retail coffin. When the seismically unstable Main Post Office closed, a reason for people from all over to come into the area evaporated.

The dot-com boom of the 1990s gave mid-Market property owners a financial goose. Some renovated their aging buildings, investing in fancy build-outs to draw the exploding cyber industry.

A sales base review of real estate parcels between 1992 and 1999 shows changes in about half of the 57 properties on the three blocks. The sales base date registers a deed change — new construction, ownership or use. The property may have actually changed hands, or a new investor, partner or family member may have joined the deed.

A public records search doesn't explain why so many sales base changes happened in the Nineties, but besides the flush economy then, interest rates had dropped, opening opportunities for purchase or refinance that were unavailable when loan rates were in double-digits.

The popping of the dot-com bubble in 2000 deflated mid-Market retail once again. The 2008 recession made matters much worse.

Thirty-three buildings — more than half the three-block total — are at least a century old, including Odd Fellows, the Grant Building, the Renoir Hotel, Hollywood Billiards, and the St. Francis Theater and the other two properties that will be demolished for CityPlace. The oldest building, at 929 Market, went up in 1904. It's Shiekh Shoes' flagship store.

Today's paper value of all buildings on these three blocks and the land they're on, according to assessor's data, is \$375 million. That, of course, is vastly understated, at least in light of the near future, when this stretch turns around.

And it will turn around, probably before this century's Twenties come roaring into town.

MARCHING DOWN MARKET

The face of Market Street changes from its commercial source at Castro, where it thrives with small businesses, on its way to the Bay. Vacant storefronts begin to pepper the blocks after Van Ness. At Polk, the venerable, incomparable, stand-in-line sandwich shop Quincy's, a neighborhood fixture for decades, is shuttered. Directly across Market on Tenth, there's a huge hole where several buildings were razed in 2007 to make way for 720 luxury condos that were never built, victims of the recession. The ground floor of the blocklong, wholesale furnishings bazaar San Francisco Mart is vacant except for Walgreens at Ninth.

Market starts to look really bad at Eighth Street. The north side is fine with the Orpheum, Academy of Art and the open space of U.N. Plaza. But the south side misses Trinity Plaza's Moon Star restaurant at the corner. Toward Seventh are the shell of the Strand Theater, closed in 2003, and a hole where the Embassy Theater once entertained.

Seventh Street is anchored by the historic Grant Building, the only thing left standing on the block April 19, 1906. Across the street is the Renoir Hotel, 158 rooms over four storefronts, of which only the doughnuts-and-sandwiches shop at Jones is a consistent business.

Ten of the 21 buildings up to Sixth Street are a century or more old; it's the biggest block, the heart of mid-Market, home also to Market Street Cinema, a tribute to the demand for nonnuisance sex shows, and Kaplan's, a retail landmark in the neighborhood for decades.

The block from Sixth Street to Fifth, on which CityPlace is seen as a sort of Westfield's western annex, is the most venerable — 18 of the 21 buildings are at least 100 years old. CityPlace will replace three centenarians.

THE MOGUL OF MID-MARKET

David Rhoades, development and operations director for Urban Realty Co., scoffs at timid developers who don't see mid-Market's potential — "an obvious great location."

Urban Realty isn't timid: It's the mogul of mid-Market, owner of 14% of the buildings in these three blocks, and almost 30% of its assessed value. Urban Realty owns 949, 943 and 935 Market St. — the old St. Francis Theater, the Social Security Administration building and a little, nondescript structure in between — all scheduled for demolition to make way for CityPlace.

That 375,700-square-foot, five-story retail development spanning 275 feet on Market Street — about a third of the block from Sixth to Fifth — will be the jewel in Urban Realty's mid-Market crown when it's done in a couple of years. Now in the draft EIR stage, there's little opposition to the project except to the 201-car underground parking garage with its entrance on Stevenson. CityPlace will have about the same square footage as Bloomingdale's, which sits inside the 1.5 million-square-foot Westfield San Francisco Centre that opened in 2006.

CityPlace will be pitched, Rhoades says, to "value-based consumers" who shop at "value-based retailers, like Ross and Marshalls, the only retail segment of the economy that's currently prospering." Stores, their number not even estimated yet, will be offered "big, efficient floor plates" and low rents, he added.

The shoppers? They're the ones "who now drive to Colma to shop," Rhoades said.

Urban Realty's crown is oversized, if not yet glittering. Besides the three CityPlace parcels, Urban Realty's portfolio includes 901 Market, the five-story building at the corner of Fifth that houses Marshalls; 925 Market, a two-story structure that Rhoades says will be used



The new Federal Building looms behind the block with the shell of the Strand and the National Hotel.

as CityPlace's construction offices; 974 Market, a vacant one-story building on a lot that stretches back to Turk Street; the completely vacant 972 Market, former home of Maxferd's pawnshop with 29 rooms and 15 baths in the upper stories, probably an old rooming house; and the boarded-up 966 Market. Also, down a block, at the corner of Fourth Street, is a ninth Urban Realty holding, 799 Market, home of Ross assessed at \$42 million, an indication of how Market Street properties gain value on the way to the Ferry Building.

The money for the nine Urban Realty properties — which total about \$150 million in assessments — comes from Commonfund, an investment company headquartered in Connecticut. Urban Realty calls it its "capital partner" in mid-Market, helping it "over two years . . . discreetly acquire nine properties in seven separate off-market transactions." Commonfund, reported by S.F. Business Times in 2007 to be worth \$35 billion, invests money for educational institutions, foundations, health care organizations and other large nonprofits.

"We work with these guys, because they're good guys, socially responsible," Rhoades said. Urban Realty looks for areas where the market is low and invests in developments that make things "better off than when we came to the block."

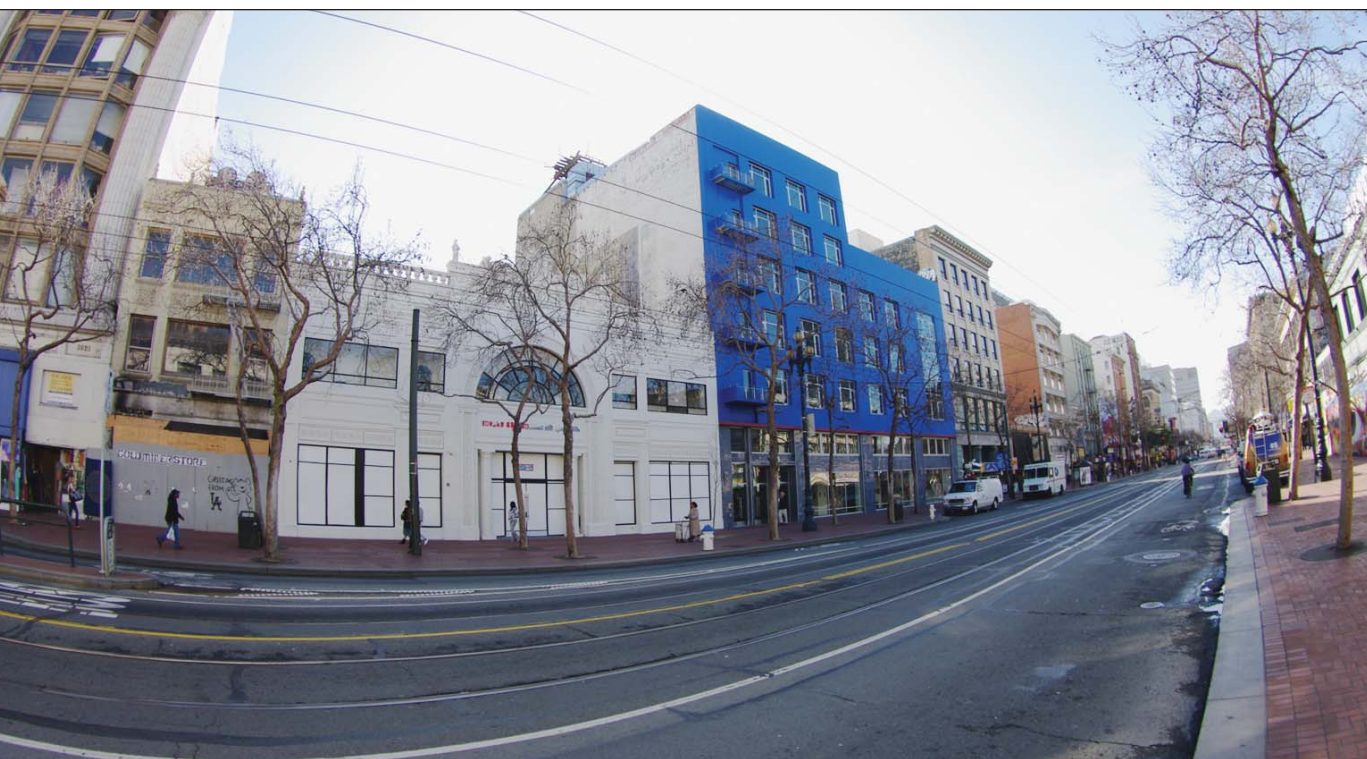
CityPlace, one such development, Rhoades says, is located right in the middle of one of the city's "pioneering" markets — perhaps a euphemism for risk coupled with opportunity.

HOLLYWOOD BILLIARDS, WARFIELD

When mid-Market changes for the better, David Addington plans to be there.

On a rainy day in January, he sat inside

Below: A strip of empty storefronts on the south side of the street between Sixth and Seventh include the two-story 1023 Market, the still unfinished Superb Art Museum of America and the blue facade 1035 Market, which was renovated in the last 10 years but never found a retail tenant. **Bottom right:** A colorful anti-graffiti mural hides the long-vacant Hollywood Billiards storefronts on the north side of the block. Showdogs is just out of sight at far right.



is a place of opportunity



ole left by the demolition of the Embassy Theater, to the right, and the Odd Fellows Hall at far left.

Showdogs — the upscale wurst shop at the corner of Market and Taylor that he co-owns with the owners of Foreign Cinema, a Mission District hot spot — and watched homeless and bedraggled people stumble through the downpour.

“I am going to make this a better place to live and work,” he said.

How? “We’re sitting in one” — Showdogs is the kind of commerce that will help turn the tide, he said.

Addington talked generally about the area’s condition and future but shared little about plans for his own two big mid-Market properties: the Warfield, which he acquired in 2005, and the Hollywood Billiards building at 1028 Market that he bought the year before.

A prospective tenant for 1028, a major art store, has pulled out of negotiations, he said. His plans to erect two shining, multistory “blades” that say “Warfield” won’t happen; the \$2 million tab is too steep right now, he said. He is moving forward with plans to open a restaurant in the Warfield and convert the building’s upper floors to commercial condos.

In August, Addington filed preliminary conversion plans for 23 commercial condos. He’s since changed that, he said, to seven commercial condos, one per floor, “so a business owner can step out of the elevator into his own space.” Upstairs commercial tenants would help stabilize the street’s ground-floor commerce, he suggested.

Two disappointments have damped Addington’s optimism: last year’s defeat of Proposition D that would have allowed mid-Market commercial signage — “signage is crucial for retail,” he still insists — and the evaporation in 2006 of the Mid-Market Redevelopment Plan, a 10-year effort to revitalize the area that died in the supervisors’ Land Use Committee. After he bought his properties, Addington spent two years as an active member of Redevelopment’s Project Area Committee.

“When I came here six years ago, the streets were dangerous and scary,” he said. “Now they’re not quite as bad. The mayor and police chief were here last week announcing their ideas for the area. Our efforts have reached the attention of people who can make a difference.”

He believes CityPlace and Angelo Sangiacomo’s Trinity Place at Eighth and Market will have an “enormous” effect. But, in almost the next breath, he tells what happened to his mother-in-law recently: On a rare, nice day, she was eating in Showdogs’ outside area when a woman approached and asked for money. When his mother-in-law said no, politely, the woman got angry, lifted her shirt and exposed her colostomy bag.

“Now,” he asked, “what do you think the other people eating their hot dogs are going to remember? How good the food was or the colostomy bag?”

The city is responsible for helping “scary people” like this woman and getting rid of the people who deal drugs openly, right in front of Showdogs, he says. Poverty and homelessness aren’t keeping mid-Market down. “We’re facing an issue of bad behavior, where a single, antisocial person can affect all the merchants around.”

The bright spot? “Fiddler on the Roof” opened Jan. 27. That’s going to bring thousands of hungry people to mid-Market.”

ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST

While Mayor Newsom was on Market at Taylor in mid-January announcing his incentives to revitalize the main drag, across the street 13 employees of Pearl’s were getting more somber news: The arts supply store, a highlight of mid-Market retail for 15 years, was going out of business in a month.

General Manager Joni Marie Theodorsen, a Bay Area native with Pearl’s for four years, said business has been down for two years and then Christmas was awful. But, she said, not just San Francisco, the whole nation is in the tank. The 16-store Pearl Arts & Crafts chain is also closing seven other stores. “We’re not one of the top sellers,” she said, “but certainly not the worst.”

A week later, Theodorsen told The Extra the store would stay open perhaps into February. With a half-off sale, already many shelves were bare.

She said she wasn’t surprised that the San Francisco store would be closed, “but I didn’t think it would be this soon.” ■

Mark Hedin contributed to this report.

The fisheye lens adds a surreal quality to our Market Street photos while showing more storefronts than a normal angle lens could. It seems appropriate for the distorted feel of these blocks.



PHOTOS BY LENNY LIMJOCO

Buildings on Market Street, Eighth to Fifth

Address	Built	Land	Improvements	Sales Base
Market (South) Eighth to Seventh				
1169 Market	1960	\$5,432,742.00	\$462,787.00	1994
1155 Market	1983	\$25,522,052.00	\$8,489,664.00	1994
1145 Market	1990	\$335,489.00	\$13,710,384.00	1993
1133 Market	1906	\$2,870,608.00	\$1,849,334.00	2005
1127 Market	1917	\$730,439.00	\$730,439.00	1999
1125 Market		\$1,363,953.00	\$0.00	1998
1115-19 Market	1920	\$834,489.00	\$185,989.00	1999
1111-13 Market	1920	\$791,924.00	\$791,924.00	1994
6(26) Seventh	1909	\$799,645.00	\$304,625.00	1994
Market (North) Hyde to Seventh				
1182 Market	1925	\$3,043,355.00	\$8,169,986.00	1999
1170 Market	1983	\$664,373.00	\$7,955,827.00	1999
1130 Market	1982	\$8,333,604.00	\$5,555,736.00	2008
Market (South) Seventh to Sixth				
1095-97 Market	1905	\$8,160,000.00	\$1,020,000.00	2009
1089-93 Market	1920	\$603,455.00	\$212,433.00	2007
1083-87 Market	1912	\$1,517,876.00	\$2,639,791.00	1994
1075-77 Market	1913	\$1,611,946.00	\$1,332,955.00	1999
1067-71 Market	1924	\$832,506.00	\$1,456,180.00	1993
1063 Market	1909	\$563,080.00	\$375,386.00	1993
1059-61 Market	1910	\$6,242,400.00	\$1,456,351.00	2007
1053-55 Market	1908	\$446,429.00	\$266,329.00	1994
1049 Market	1907	\$326,089.00	\$195,651.00	1995
1043-45 Market	1907	\$1,790,298.00	\$2,220,502.00	2001
1035 Market	1912	\$1,933,522.00	\$3,034,048.00	2001
1035 Market	1912	\$3,437,375.00	\$4,244,448.00	2001
1025-29 Market	NEW	\$4,257,176.00	\$1,463,958.00	2008
1023 Market	1907	\$936,360.00	\$468,180.00	2007
1019-21 Market	1909	\$542,520.00	\$447,428.00	1994
1011-13 Market	1909	\$395,954.00	\$137,055.00	1994
1007-09 Market	1911	\$328,218.00	\$358,057.00	2001
1001-05 Market	1908	\$1,030,572.00	\$716,888.00	1993
Market (North) Seventh to Sixth				
1100-12 Market	1909	\$1,023,178.00	\$5,385,183.00	1994
45 McAllister	1906	\$486,959.00	\$261,738.00	2000
1072-98 Market	1911	\$2,075,057.00	\$2,536,183.00	2003
1066 Market	1966	\$1,380,213.00	\$197,163.00	1985
1028-56 Market	1907	\$4,877,709.00	\$2,090,446.00	2005
1000-26 Market	1913	\$2,059,826.00	\$6,734,742.00	1992
Market (South) Sixth to Fifth				
995-97 Market	1908	\$6,372,450.00	\$3,121,200.00	2007
991-93 Market	1908	\$337,837.00	\$506,767.00	1985
979-89 Market	1907	\$14,880,897.00	\$7,428,456.00	2006
973-77 Market	1908	\$9,363,000.00	\$2,601,000.00	2008
969 Market	1909	\$774,029.00	\$696,625.00	1996
949-61 Market	1910	\$14,071,618.00	\$0.00	2006
943 Market	1909	\$5,462,100.00	\$520,200.00	2007
935-39 Market	1907	\$5,520,403.00	\$4,471,525.00	2005
931-33 Market	1907	\$1,104,080.00	\$469,233.00	2004
929 Market	1904	\$540,997.00	\$231,856.00	2007
925 Market	1910	\$1,061,208.00	\$716,315.00	2006
923 Market	1907	\$787,280.00	\$337,404.00	2004
901-19 Market	1912	\$40,325,904.00	\$26,530,200.00	2007
Market (North) Taylor to Mason				
988 Market	1922	\$6,367,248.00	\$2,971,382.00	
972 Market	1909	\$4,032,058.00	\$189,425.00	2006
976-80 Market	1910	\$1,238,692.00	\$1,195,464.00	2004
974 Market	1912	\$1,353,040.00	\$811,824.00	2006
966 Market	1907	\$4,059,120.00	\$0.00	2006
950-64 Market	1907	\$895,813.00	\$674,949.00	1994
Market (North) Mason to Fifth				
944-48 Market	1907	\$3,672,000.00	\$2,448,000.00	2009
942 Market	1907	\$2,545,867.00	\$9,370,956.00	2001
TOTAL		\$222,347,032.00	\$152,750,571.00	

SOURCE: S.F. ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

JOSEPH JACKSON
Activist, SEIU janitor

When someone commented on Joe Jackson's faithful attendance at Coast Hotel memorials — as the Rev. Glenda Hope once did — he'd quip:

"If you don't go to your friends' funerals, they won't come to yours." It amused Mr. Jackson to quote the Yogi Berra paradox, tongue-in-cheek.

Memorials were close to Mr. Jackson's heart. Before one a few months ago, he distributed copies of two Central City Extra obits on the SRO's Care Not Cash residents. He had asked the newspaper's permission and said he believed in the dignity the obits bestowed on the have-nots. He had been the first to encourage memorials at the Coast.

Such was the sensitivity of a man who was something of a paradox himself. As a promising English graduate student, articulate and mannerly, he later chose a janitorial career and became a life-long activist to improve conditions for the worker and the poor.

Mr. Jackson died Dec. 9 of heart problems at S.F. General, where he had been hospitalized 3½ months. He was 70.

Mr. Jackson lived at the Coast for 24 years, longer than any resident. He assumed the guardianship of the SRO and its formerly homeless tenants while he took on other community issues, attended neighborhood meetings and advocated at City Hall hearings.

"I know if he were here today — and I feel he is — he'd want to quote Joe Hill — 'Don't mourn, organize,'" said Joan Jackson, his former wife.

She was among 20 mourners, including the Jacksons' 40-year old son Neil, who sat in a semicircle in the community room Dec. 23 remembering the passionate Mr. Jackson. When Mrs. Jackson said she had worried about Joe's eating habits, one woman assured her that she made sure he ate a good meal every day. Another said he was crazy about her meatloaf.

"Oh, I'm thankful," Mrs. Jackson said. "But he didn't take care of himself and that's why he's not with us now."

Mr. Jackson was born and raised in Pasadena and met his future wife when he came to school in

San Francisco. "I knew him 50 years," Mrs. Jackson said, "and we discovered the city together. Oh, it was so much fun. And he was an incredibly smart guy."

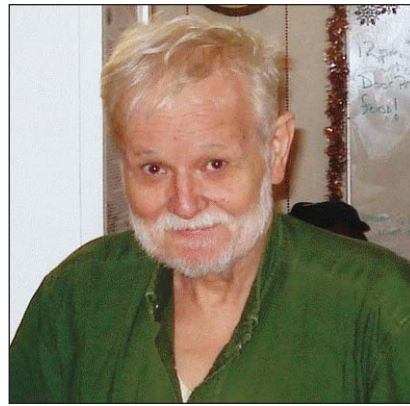
She passed around a photo of him taken in his parents' backyard in Pasadena when he was 21, just before he came to the city. The mourners marveled at his good looks.

In the mid- and late-1960s Mr. Jackson went to City College — growing his activist beard in 1964 — then to San Francisco State where he earned a B.A. in history. His professors encouraged him to pursue creative writing in graduate school, which he did, as a teaching assistant. By then he was immersed in political issues.

On Aug. 28, 1968, he was in Chicago's Grant Park with 10,000 demonstrators during the Democratic National Convention. Thousands of police charged in, clubbing, gassing and arresting Yippies. Mrs. Jackson watched the television news fearfully. But her young husband wasn't bashed or carted off to jail and the experience, she said, became "a high point in his life." In November, she was glued to the radio during the 1968 S.F. State student strike over the need for diversity. But Mr. Jackson, then a graduate student and strike leader, eluded jail again. His labor friends said later the experience turned him into a lifelong activist.

Mr. Jackson soon dropped out of school and took a job as a janitor. He became an activist in SEIU Local 87. Mrs. Jackson became a librarian in Mill Valley. Her husband was an indefatigable speaker and champion of leafleting. Unhappy with the leadership, his enthusiasms led him to form a dissident rank-and-file group called Workers for a Strong Union. It got him temporarily kicked out of the union.

Another memorial for Mr. Jackson was held in the 240 Golden Gate Ave. union hall a week earlier,



Joseph Jackson, 70



Joseph Jackson, at age 21.

FAMILY PHOTO

his widow said, and his old cronies assembled to remember the fiery labor leader.

Tenderloin Housing Clinic, too, planned a memorial Jan. 21. Mr. Jackson had gone to Sacramento with the nonprofit group to protest Life Line telephone costs, his wife said.

After coming to the Coast Hotel, Mr. Jackson was known for keeping abreast of political topics affecting the residents. He could scarcely wait to launch into the issues with anyone who would listen, they said. Several residents said they learned from him. "Yes," said one man, "we gotta stick together. He kept saying that. He was a pleasant soul and politically motivated. He could light up and spark a dialogue."

Support Services Manager Scott Ecker said Mr. Jackson was suspicious of him when Episcopal Community Services began its staffing at the hotel, "until he realized we were all on the same page. Then we were fine."

In a final paradox, Mr. Jackson became a new man in the hospital.

"They shaved off his beard and cut his hair," his wife said. "His son had never seen him without a beard — and I fell in love with him all over again."

Mrs. Jackson remained afterward, talking to residents and fitting faces to the names her husband had mentioned during her hospital visits. ■

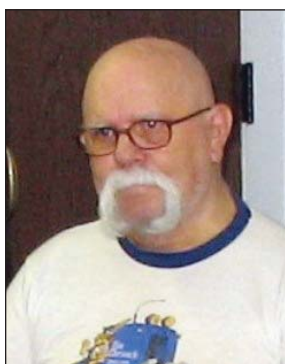
—TOM CARTER

JAMES GOMBOS
Not what he seemed

In the Padre Apartments basement are a laundry room, a management office, a comfortable common room with a small kitchen, and, at the end of the hall, an apartment. That's where James Gombos lived for seven years and where he died Nov. 19. He was 70.

Ten people gathered in the common room Dec. 3 to remember their friend and neighbor — a man, they all said, who worked hard to look and sound gruff in order to cover up gentleness and the sense of humor underneath.

"Like a jelly bean," is how Sister Lorna Walsh, Mercy Housing community operations manager for the 41-unit Padre, described him. "Soft and delicious inside and crackly and hard outside."



James Gombos looked and sounded gruff, but wasn't.

"It's strange to be down here without him, to think of him being gone," said Jennifer Fu, one of two resident services coordinators at the Padre, an apartment building on Jones just south of the Tenderloin police station. "He took care of the plants out back and always checked to make sure the property was secure. He could be grumpy and harsh, but he was sweet under that tough exterior."

Resident Charles Dobson said that every time he came down to do his laundry, Mr. Gombos, who could hear the washer running, stopped in at least twice.

"First he'd stick his head in to say hello, then come by another time to talk more," Dobson said. "If he liked you, he'd express what was ailing him — and you'd try to help him iron out his problems. I think he really liked the camaraderie of this place."

Gombos almost lost his apartment. A year ago, he was frying potatoes and set the place on fire, gutting it. Walsh said she spent months "fighting for his rights" so he could return to his refurbished apartment, and she won. "Without that, he might not have made it back. He wasn't that aggressive, but we wanted him back here."

Bingo at the Padre was among Mr. Gombos' favorite activities. "He was so happy when he won

and so very angry when he lost," recalled Michael Cooper, the other resident services coordinator.

Cooper said that despite Mr. Gombos' increasing debility, he spent hours at the Kroc Center computer lab.

Ed Evans, who has lived at the Padre since 1992, said he was with Mr. Gombos when he died. Evans called their relationship "special." Mr. Gombos would just walk into his apartment to chat. If he wasn't feeling well, Evans would shop for him.

"He'd come to me and say, 'I have a problem.' Then he'd ask, 'How should I handle this sweepstakes mailer?'" Evans said. "We teased each other a lot, and I worked at getting past the gruff exterior. There'll be a hole in my life now."

For the memorial, Cooper read a passage from Seneca, the Roman philosopher and statesman:

"In the presence of death, we must continue to sing the song of life. . . . Let us not be gripped by the fear of death. If another day be added to our lives, let us joyfully receive it, but let us not anxiously depend on our tomorrows. . . . Let us make the best of our loved ones while they are with us, and let us not bury our love with death." ■

—MARJORIE BEGGS

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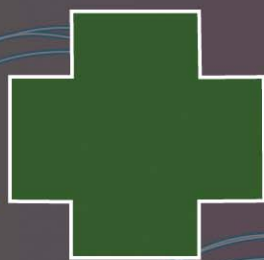
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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SPECIAL EVENTS

13th annual Vietnamese Lunar New Year Festival, Feb. 7, 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Larkin Street between Eddy and O'Farrell. Little Saigon celebrates Tet, the Year of the Tiger, with crowning of the Festival queen, food, music, pageantry and plenty of firecrackers. Information: 351-1038.

COMMUNITY: REGULAR SCHEDULE HOUSING

Supportive Housing Network, 3rd Thursday of the month, 3-5 p.m., location TBA. Contact: 421-2926 x304.

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

HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

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

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

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

Hoarders and Clutterers Support Group, Mental Health Association, 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 St., 5th Fl. Call: 905-6264. Family member group, open to the public.

SAFETY

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

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

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

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT

Alliance for a Better District 6, 2nd Tuesday of the month, 6 p.m., 230 Eddy St. Contact Michael Nulty, 820-1560 or 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. Information: 339-VOTE (8683) or centralcitydemocrats@yahoo.com.

Central Market Community Benefit District, board meets 2nd Tuesday of the month, Hotel Whitcomb, 1231 Market St., 3 p.m. Information: 882-3088, <http://central-market.org>.

Community Leadership Alliance. Monthly meetings and informational forums, Tenderloin Police Station community room. David Villa-Lobos, admin@communityleadershipalliance.net.

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

Gene Friend Recreation Center Advisory Board, 3rd Thursday of the month, 5 p.m. Board works to protect SoMa resources for children, youth, families and adults. Gene Friend Recreation Center, 270 Sixth St. Information: 538-8100 x202.

North of Market/Tenderloin Community Benefit District. Call District Manager Elaine Zamora for times and dates, 292-4812.

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.

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

Tenderloin Futures Collaborative, 2nd Wednesday of the month, 10 a.m., Tenderloin Police Station community room, 301 Eddy St. Call 358-3956 for information. Network of residents, nonprofits and businesses 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 of the month, 9 a.m.-noon, Universal Unitarian Church, 1187 Franklin St. Monthly programs, 965 Mission St. #700: Senior Housing Action Committee, third Wednesday, 1:30. Call for info on health program and Senior U: 546-1333 and www.sfsan.org.

Ground Zero Poetry Reading

at 21 Club, Taylor & Turk

8 p.m., Wed. Feb. 10
Ed Bowers, emcee

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