

Boeddeker Park makeover — the first look at architects' idea

BY TOM CARTER

IS Boeddeker Park ready for an extreme makeover? One may be coming. Kicking off the idea is a design by a collaboration of pro bono architects from three firms that would put a big lawn in the middle and a promenade around it. Usually fierce competitors, they warmed to improving a park that looks like a fortress.

Among the features unveiled at the Friends of Boeddeker Park meeting June 14 are a large circular lawn, a tiny revenue-generating cafe with one wall doubling as an outdoor movie screen, a long basketball and athletic court, a ramp leading up toward a garden and a new, second community building.

It's fantasy at this point and has no price tag.

"We're the first to see this initial plan," Friends Chairwoman Betty Traynor said before the PowerPoint presentation in the Police Community Room. "Maybe we can come up with some more ideas, but we need plans for any funding process and this helps us move forward. There's a whole community process we have to go through."

The architects got involved through Jacob Gilchrist, a Trust for Public Land project manager who, on the lookout for a community project, started attending Friends' meetings eight months ago. Ideas came and went, among them one for a golf green that actually lingered in the mix for a couple of months. In November, Gilchrist mentioned redesigning Boeddeker Park as a possible project to the trust's advisory board — the Bay Area Business Council — which has several architectural firms as members. Three jumped on board. And for the 13 designers who came forward, Boeddeker's sketchy Tenderloin reputation suddenly worked in its favor.

"They got excited," said Jennifer Worth, a trust project manager who helped with the presentation. "It was

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PHOTO COURTESY OF TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND

Putting in pro bono overtime on the park plan at architectural firm SMWM are Megan Walker, Tomer Mayon, Michelle Dubin, Eleanor Pries, Lisa Fisher, Steve Hanson.

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CENTRAL CITY



SAN FRANCISCO

CENTRAL CITY EXTRA SURVEY



PHOTO BY LENNY LIMJOCO

Frank Massis' Right Way market on O'Farrell Street has an attractive produce variety that he has increased over two years. He is on a smoke break outside his Econo Market across the street.

Where to get it fresh

24 stores stock Tenderloin's most fruit, vegetables

BY TOM CARTER

SMART people put the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables high on any health chart. A fresh food diet can ward off serious disease, save big money and lead to happier lives by helping people dodge preventable miseries and untimely death.

Fresh fruits and vegetables have long been a concern in the Tenderloin. They are in short supply. With a population of 30,000, the Tenderloin, San Francisco's lowest-income neighborhood, has no supermarket.

The neighborhood's most popular spot to find fresh produce has for 26 years been the bustling Heart of the City Farmers Market in U.N. Plaza. Open every Wednesday and Sunday, its fine and affordable commodities have been a godsend for the central city.

The Extra last year surveyed all Tenderloin stores that carried fresh fruits and vegetables and then updated the list in June. We found a few surprises, including a man who never leaves the TL to shop for perishables and happily gets 90% of them from one store less than a block from where he lives. We also found people who think nothing of hopping on Muni to shop better deals outside the hood.

But our main revelation was actual num-

bers. In canvassing 50 blocks, we found 24 stores that every day carry more than a dozen fruits and vegetables. (See map on P. 4.) About the same number of stores carry fewer fresh items, generally only potatoes, onions, apples and bananas.

Are these enough precious perishables for the Tenderloin's residents? And, more profoundly, could more availability and accessibility — with nudging — inch the neighborhood into better health? The first question is a concern of TNDC, the neighborhood's biggest low-income landlord, which is contemplating opening a grocery store in a future building at Eddy and Taylor. The second question concerns fresh food advocates, S.F. Public Health and the state Legislature.

Nothing matches the farmers' market for volume, obviously, but a few ethnic Asian stores have a surprisingly profuse variety. The store owned by the New Chiu Fong Co. at 724 Ellis St. offers at least a dozen fruits and more than 65 different vegetables (from beets and eggplant to many forms of squash and, seldom seen in these parts, jicama and chayote).

Two stores with the most fruit and veggies are in Little Saigon, one at 724 Larkin — the Hiep Thanh Food Market Corp. — and the New Chiu Fong Co. around the corner.

On a sunny afternoon in June, Sai Ung is at the cash register at Hiep Thanh checking out customers, most of whom are Asian. Stacks of produce in boxes and packaged goods occupy the front of the store and extend out the door. An old man buys two plastic cups filled with rice wine at \$1.50 each. Then two women push a red plastic basket containing a dozen items onto the

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GOOD NEWS for...

THE HOOD The Extra is preparing a resource guide for the Tenderloin and western SoMa. Funded by the Koshland Committee of the San Francisco Foundation, and advised by a group from western SoMa, the guide will be for neighborhood residents and service providers. Only resources in these two tightly defined neighborhoods will be included. To ensure your resource is in the guide, send pertinent info to john@studycenter.org. We don't want any helpful program to be left out.

TL TEENS Summertime, and the fish are jumpin.' At least eight Tenderloin teenagers hope they'll hop onto their hooks and into their boat. The eight signed up for the SFPD Youth Fishing Program that each summer takes boys and girls 12-17 from all over the city out on the ocean to fish for salmon. They leave before dawn, July 19, from Fisherman's Wharf. Boeddeker Park Director Rob McDaniels will be the escort. Each chartered boat sailing out under the Golden Gate Bridge will hold 14 kids and one supervisor, besides crew and cops. Kids bring their lunch, but all fishing gear and bait, like the trip, is free. McDaniels says he may make a second excursion before the program ends Aug. 17.

BLIND PEDESTRIANS Five Tenderloin intersections now have state-of-the-art devices to help visually impaired people cross the street safely, part of a \$1.6 million project of the Municipal Transportation Agency. The "accessible pedestrian signals" tick in tandem with "walk" symbols, have locator tones and pushbuttons that vibrate so they can be found easily on the poles. They even name the street aloud when held down for a few seconds. In two years, the TL will get another five of the devices, part of a project to install them at 80 intersections citywide. It was a first-in-the-nation agreement, said Linda Porelle, president of the S.F. Chapter of the California Council of the Blind, who called it "historic" with the Council and the Lighthouse for the Blind collaborating on the signal locations. Lighthouse Executive Director Anita Aaron said 1% to 2% of the city's population is sight-impaired. The signals in the Tenderloin are at Eighth and Grove, Hyde and Market; Grove and Van Ness; Market and Van Ness; Fulton and Larkin; and Market and Powell.

THE PLANET PG&E recently inaugurated "Climate Smart," a program that enables its customers to join the swelling ranks of carbon-neutral Californians by investing in greenhouse gas emission-reduction projects. By paying an average of \$5 a month extra on their utility bill, customers can invest in projects that reduce greenhouse gases. This in turn "balances out" the emissions that the utility creates in generating electricity and natural gas and helps make the customers carbon-neutral. PG&E hopes to fund projects that annually would reduce greenhouse gases by 250,000 tons. It has put up \$1.5 million to make its own offices climate-neutral, and hopes its customers will contribute \$20 million to the fund over three years.

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

Peek at mayor's court plan

Newsom's rep doesn't ask community for input

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

SAY the words — what are the Tenderloin's biggest problems? — and like magic people pile in to have their say.

More than 30 filled the room for the June Tenderloin Futures Collaborative meeting; attendance in April was 11 and in May the number had dropped to six.

But folks turned out this time because someone from the mayor's office was coming to talk about Newsom's controversial proposal for a TL/SoMa community justice center, aka community court.

In December, the mayor returned from New York gushing about opening something similar to Manhattan's Midtown Community Court, credited with helping to clean up Times Square.

Besides Newsom, the project's steering committee includes reps of Superior Court, Public Health, Human Services and the offices of the sheriff, police, pretrial diversion, public defender, district attorney and city attorney.

Julian Potter, deputy chief of staff in the Mayor's Office of Public Policy & Finance, gave the Collaborative a quick court overview, said she was there to hear neighborhood concerns. She posed no questions soliciting direct input about the court. Instead, she asked, "So what are the Tenderloin's strengths and its most pressing problems?"

"We're doing a lot of one-on-one to show other residents we care," said one of the 10 residents at the meeting, an impressive number for any TFC meeting.

"Our socioeconomic problems mean that we're survivors," said another resident. Compassion, diversity, accessibility and density were cited by others as strengths.

"We have a history of fighting problems — and we have fun events here," added the Rev. Glenda Hope, S.F. Network Ministries director and Collaborative chair.

Daniel O'Connor, St. Anthony Foundation community liaison, recalled: "A woman once told me that when people get to know your face here, they watch out for you."

And Carmela Gold, Central YMCA director, got the last word: "There are a lot of avenues for addressing problems."

Hands flew up when it came to the litany of neighborhood problems.

"People come from outside the neighborhood. I see Jaguars pulling up in the alleys all the time."

"There's rampant crack-dealing and the police do nothing."

"The Tenderloin has a history of being a marketplace that facilitates crime."

"It's not possible to separate the social problems from the crime problems."

"Young people are allowed to loiter and they harass residents."

"Services shouldn't be placed right next to where people can buy alcohol and drugs."

Michael Nulty, president of Alliance for a Better District 6,

bemoaned the fate of the existing community courts, coordinated by Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice and the district attorney's office.

"We have a lame-duck D.A. who hasn't done her job," Nulty said. "Why hasn't she supported the [existing] community courts? And the same with the mayor. They've left us out of the process."

Potter had started by summarizing the difference between the mayor's proposed court and the existing eight community courts — one of them serving the Tenderloin and SoMa.

"The mayor's version has a judge," Potter said. In the New York model, a law-breaker is brought to the center by police immediately, and the same day gets a public defender and appears before a judge. "The judge has different social service options for the law breaker," she said, "and there are consequences if he or she keeps showing up before the judge."

In the current community courts, residents volunteer to sit on panels that hear misdemeanor cases and hand down sentences, including restitution and community service.

A Superior Court FAQ sheet on the proposed center calls today's community court "not a court but rather a mediation program" to handle misdemeanors and will likely be "included in the list of services" available at the center. The sheet doesn't describe what kind of crimes the community justice center judge would hear, so The Extra asked Potter.

"It's really up to the neighborhood," she said. "Maybe it wouldn't be rape and murder, but it

could be felonies."

Potter closed by reiterating her claim that the center is a work in progress: It has no official name yet, its boundaries are "fluid," its location undecided. In May, Newsom, D.A. Kamala Harris and Superior Court Judge David Ballati looked at three sites: 50 U.N. Plaza, 245-259 Hyde and 150 Otis.

After the meeting, The Extra talked with resident Mark Ellinger, a TL/SoMa community court panelist.

"This is a really contentious issue, especially among those of us who've worked to make communi-

ty courts succeed," Ellinger said. "We've been struggling with the D.A.'s office and police about how they deal with quality-of-life crimes, asking them to funnel them through our courts, but we never got anywhere."

"I don't speak for everyone, but the D.A.'s office is turning its back on our courts and it's insulting to a lot of us. I'm fed up with it."

"We used to have 30 to 40 cases a month and needed extra sessions. The last few courts I paneled, we heard four or five cases."

Ellinger bristles: "I don't see any restorative justice in this model. It sounds punitive, and the idea of calling it a community justice center is just semantics."

The Board of Supervisors hasn't bought into the proposal yet, either. At the June 28 budget committee meeting, Supervisor Aaron Peskin called the proposal "all over the map" and asked for a formal plan before okaying the mayor's entire \$750,000 request to launch the court. The committee voted to put \$250,000 in reserve. ■

"We have a lame duck D.A. who hasn't done her job. Why hasn't she supported the (existing) community courts? And the same with the mayor. They've left us out of the process."

Michael Nulty
PRESIDENT, ALLIANCE FOR
A BETTER DISTRICT 6



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Gum never sleeps — Mayor turns trash into political hay

BY PHIL TRACY

MAYOR Gavin Newsom chose June 21, the summer solstice, to announce the results of San Francisco's first ever audit of street litter. Using the time-honored method of issuing a ringing denunciation to garner a headline, Newsom declared chewing gum to be public enemy No. 1 and decried McDonald's as the top repeat offender in the category of brand name litter.

The litter audit, which cost \$25,000, according to Mark Westlund, public outreach program manager of the city's Department of the Environment, was conducted from April 9 through 20. The audit made separate counts of large litter and small litter on 105 sites chosen randomly by computer. Five of those sites were in the Tenderloin: they yielded 3.7% total of the small litter, suggesting the neighborhood is pretty clean. Statistically, the hood should have hit 5% of the small litter total. There was no ranking of sites by large litter items.

Actually, the mayor was talking apples and oranges. Chewing gum was part of the comprehensive, statistically valid, 49-page "Street Litter Audit" while McDonald's designation comes by way of a subjective, 21-page "Branded Litter Survey," designed to demonize the enormously unpopular fast food chain. Facing no creditable opponent, the mayor has wisely elected to run against McDonald's litter and Safeway plastic bags.

In the case of chewing gum, the method the auditor selected — accumulated litter vs. fresh litter — ensured the age-old sticky enemy would hog the lion's share of vitriol for messing up the streets.

To paraphrase Neil Young, gum never sleeps. Adhere it to the sidewalk and it stays there forever: last night's gum lying side by side with gum from the Summer of Love. When the city chose that "accumulated litter" methodology over the "fresh litter" approach, for which the sidewalk is scoured

clean and fresh litter allowed to accumulate anew. It guaranteed gum would come in No. 1. Indeed, 946 pieces were spotted, handsomely outdistancing second-place "small glass."

McDonald's repeat offender title in the brand name litter category was more a question of semantics. With 3,812 pieces of large litter observed during the 12-day audit, the auditors could only muster up 53 identifiable items as coming from McDonald's. This represented 1.39% of the large litter observed and included cups, paper bags, Styrofoam containers, paper boxes and one item mysteriously listed as "other packaging," none of which totaled more than 15 items per category.

That number, 15, is important. On the very first page of the Branded Litter Survey it states, "Only a few soft drink beverage containers were brand-identified by auditors (20 containers in total). We deem this sample to be too small to be statistically valid for commenting on the distribution of soft container brands on San Francisco streets." Thus all the different subcategories of McDonald's-branded litter are so much statistically invalid campaign electioneering. Not to mention the rest of the Branded Litter Survey. Tootsie Roll beat Hersheys in the confectionery-candy wrap division: meaningless. The meaning of Trident's 3 to 1 lead in the gum wrapping category: nada. Even Muni's astonishing 43.1% share of the ticket/transfer/receipts litter is just so much garbage, statistically speaking.

Turns out San Francisco isn't nearly as dirty as people might think. The litter audit's executive summary makes the point that San Francisco averaged 23 items per site, compared to 21 small-litter items per site for Toronto, which has been counting litter and cleaning up for several years now. Most other audited cities average a small litter rate twice as high as San Francisco's.

There also are fewer cigarette butts on the

ground in San Francisco, where only 5.6% of small litter items were cigarette butts compared to 14.8% on the streets of Toronto. San Franciscans' well-known aversion to smoking is apparent in the litter on its streets.

Our litter also reflects the efficiency of our entrepreneurial scavengers. A total of six beer cans and 12 soft drink cans were found citywide, a testament to the industriousness of the homeless and little old Asian ladies.

Mark McKenney is a widely respected environmental consultant. His core proficiencies include litter auditing. He was project manager for a series of five litter audits done for Toronto between 2002 and 2006. He devised the methodology for the San Francisco audit and wrote the report.

He says he's not surprised by the findings. "California has a strong container-redemption law so you would expect low counts on the bottles and cans. It's well-known everywhere that San Francisco has some of the strongest anti-smoking laws. People who don't smoke don't drop cigarette butts on the ground."

McKenney says while the litter piece per site rate was relatively low, it was equally clear that some outlying areas "hadn't been cleaned in a very long time."

The good news is that because the method used in the city's litter audit is statistically valid, the audit can be replicated in the future and the city's progress in fighting litter can be charted with a fair degree of certainty.

Newsom included in the audit's announcement a pledge to reduce the city's litter by 50% over the next five years, so it's nice to know we have a handy way of checking whether that goal is attained. Let's hope the mayor's promise doesn't go the way of Willie Brown's pledge to "fix Muni in the first hundred days of my administration." ■

Architects show ideas for Boeddeker makeover

► CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

like they couldn't turn their back on it. It didn't just strike a nerve, it was their hearts."

The volunteering architects are Michelle Dubin, Lisa Fisher, Steve Hanson and Megan Walker from EDAW; Nancy Fleming, Raphael Justewicz, Conard Lindgren, Melissa McCann, Tomer Maymon and Makie Suzuki from Sasaki; and Sissily Harrell, Eleanor Pries and Deanna VanBuren from SMWM.

They were expecting to donate just a few hours but spent two weeks, not counting two Friends meetings and their half-day examination-tour of the park. Their aims were to make the park inviting, improve the main entrance, maintain security, enhance recreational facilities, provide multiple-use areas, activate the park's edges and use colorful material. They expect their plan to stimulate public input and more designs, Gilchrist said.

Mayor Dianne Feinstein no sooner renamed the then-7-year-old Central City park after Father Alfred Boeddeker at its reopening in 1985, than the 2.5-acre plot became a drug-seller's haven. Improvements during the 1990s — such as a new children's playground, new fencing and additional lawn — gave the park more spark. But drug dealing and loitering persisted. Police have toned the scene down and volunteers these days regularly spruce up outdoors and inside the community building. Still, the park is prone to relapses.

PARK SCARY TO SOME

Its design has been criticized as "defensive." The surrounding spiky, 6-foot-high fencing is uninviting, even foreboding. The only operating gate opens to a bench-lined, brick walk through the middle, called "the gauntlet" for its regular raucous crews of sedentary idlers. Some people are afraid to walk in, including one of the architects, a woman who has lived nearby for a couple of years but never set foot inside the park until she began work on the project.

Some complain that the park has too many sections, or pockets, and lacks a feeling of openness.

The architects' design splits the park into two districts and opens up the western half.

The design does away with the Eddy-Jones gate, the clock and outdoor toilet, and puts in four steps stretching about 12 feet along Eddy. But they don't lead anywhere and would no doubt be ideal for sitting. Fencing would separate them from a multiuse court, including basketball, running north the length of the park and fenced off from Jones. East of that, a large circular lawn with a walkway around, to resemble Yerba Buena Gardens, would be the park center. A playground would rim the western part of lawn.

CAFE AND OUTDOOR MOVIES

On Eddy, at the middle of the park's southern boundary, a small cafe would rise like a two-story kiosk, its north-west wall also to serve as an outdoor movie screen. Next to the cafe would be more steps up to the main gate, next to the existing community house, which would become two stories with activities on each floor.

From the main gate, a rising ramp would run north to the Ellis gate, dividing the park. A community building would be built at Ellis. In back of it, a large sloping garden area would expand toward Presentation Senior Community whose volunteers regularly join park cleanups and flower planting.

A walk-through tunnel under the ramp would link the sections.

The score of people in attendance seemed stunned and excited by the plan. Some called it "amazing," another "lovely." But several had reservations.

"The steps will be an issue," said Elaine Zamora, the North of Market/Tenderloin CBD director, seeing them as a magnet for loiterers. "But it all has an amazing potential impact."

Putting up more buildings was not a good idea, one woman said, and Gilchrist agreed it was controversial. Eliminating the Eddy and Jones clock was questionable, another said, and getting rid of the green and gold JCDuceaux toilet there was a problem smothered in red tape. For example, after five years of public controversy, it is still undecided

where to put a Duceaux in the Haight-Ashbury, though the Department of Public Works has one of the Johns ready to go.

"It wouldn't cost the city anything to move it," Dan McKenna, DPW's deputy chief in charge of mapping, said of the Boeddeker commode. "We get one free move a year from the contract. But it is increasingly difficult to find a site that meets the guidelines, and it has to have the property owner's approval."

Following that is a public hearing after which the hearing officer makes a ruling. Then an appeal process puts it before the Board of Permit Appeals for a final determination.

"Ideally," McKenna says, "it could take six months. But we're still going on in the Haight-Ashbury after five years."

Gilchrist said a week later that the clock would go back into the plans and the architects would reconsider the toilet issue before redrawing a plan for a public meeting probably two months away.

At the June 14 meeting, Tenderloin Police Capt. Gary Jimenez asked if the park would be any easier to get into at night, which would pose a problem for his officers.

'WON'T LOOK LIKE A JAIL'

Security wouldn't require any more attention than it does now, Gilchrist said, but the park will "open up" and be easier to see into.

"Yes," agreed Worth, "and it won't look like you're in a jail."

Traynor was concerned that the cafe would compete with existing neighborhood stores. No one asked who would run it. This and other issues, Traynor said, would be grist for the "community process" when the PowerPoint presentation will be made again at another, larger meeting. First, she said, the Friends of Boeddeker must involve Rec and Park's capital division and also see what grants might be available through the San Francisco Parks Trust.

"But this (plan) is what a lot of contractors do ask for," Zamora said, "and it's the starting point we're looking for." ■

Stores with the most fresh items

- 123 Eddy
California Grocery
- 339 Eddy
Battambang Market
- 345 Eddy
Eddy Market
- 399 Eddy
Empire Market
- 405 Eddy
T & L Market
- 398 Ellis
The Ellis Food Center
- 401 Ellis
Star Light Market Food Center
- 595 Ellis
Servu-Well Market
- 483 Ellis
Red Sea Grocery
- 500 Ellis
Amigo's Market
- 724 Ellis
New Chiu Fong Co.
- 516 Geary
Bel-Cliff Market
- 669 Geary
Lifetime Liquor and Market
- 798 Geary
Geary and Hyde Liquor Grocery
- 398 Jones
Young-Ellis Food Center
- 724 Larkin
Hiep Thanh Food Market
- 225 Leavenworth
Asian Foods
- 300 Mason
Fred's Liquors Food Mart
- 67 Taylor
Grand Liquors
- 596 O'Farrell
Right Way Market
- 888 O'Farrell
Bread and Butter Market
- 726-28 Post
Food and Liquor World Super
- 201 D/253 Turk
Radmans Produce
- U.N. Plaza
Farmers Market

Governor puts Leno's health

► CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

counter, bean sprouts on top. Ung's fingers fly from item to keys and back. The total is \$9.15.

"We sell a lot of bean sprouts," says the 22-year-old San Francisco State student. He works five days a week, and he often speaks Teo Chiu, a Chinese dialect.

The stream of customers is steady, not crowded like on weekends, Ung says. He declines to be photographed and shrugs when asked how many customers he serves each day. He guesses 100, but the seven we counted over a 10-minute period would suggest a higher number.

His employer appears, a handsome Asian woman in a red short-sleeve tunic. She smiles at the questions and bursts into laughter when asked permission to take a photo. And no, she says, they do not have 200 customers a day.

Do her customers ask for items she doesn't have? "No," she says, "I have everything."

The New Chiu Fong Co. has a faded blue awning and ugly silver security screening imposed on its 25-foot storefront. Inside, the store goes back 80 feet, triple the size of Hiep Thanh.

The first third of the store contains an astonishing array of perishables. The rest of the store is dry, bagged and canned goods. But the owner isn't around and no one is talking.

'MY FAVORITE STORE'

It's a different story two blocks away at the Right Way, 596 O'Farrell St. An Asian woman who says she's not from the neighborhood surveys the colorful boxes of peaches, nectarines, cantaloupes, watermelons and mangoes outside, selects a pair of 2-for-\$1 mangoes and goes inside to pay. At the cash register, Kamal Alwadi smiles and says, "We sell everything."

"This is my favorite store," says Yves Nicolas, 66. "Very good prices." Nicolas shops at the farmers' market on occasion but never leaves the neighborhood to buy groceries. "Groceries are too heavy to carry," he says. "And this store is good for me. I live in the next block. It's the best. I come here all the time."

Across the street at the Econo Market, Frank Massis is at the cash register, behind him a wide selection of liquor bottles. He owns the Econo, the Right Way and the Mid City over on Geary. At midafternoon business is good but not hectic. He calls customers by name and makes change while talking on his cell phone,

speaking English, Spanish or Arabic. He works 12-hour days, six days a week. He's 35.

Massis bought the Right Way two years ago and in that time says he has increased the fruit and vegetable offerings by 35%.

"The demand was there," Massis says. "It sells. It's good quality and cheap. Did you see? Go look." He points across the street to the Right Way and steps outside for a smoke. "The big stores are closing," he says. "Too much overhead. Do you want something to drink?"

It is unlikely that a chain supermarket will land in the Tenderloin and iffy, at this point, that a smaller, full service grocer would take the risk, according to an analysis commissioned by TNDC.

The nonprofit, which operates 1,867 housing units in the Tenderloin — 1,211 of them SRO rooms — is seeking a loan from the Mayor's Office of Housing to buy the 22,000-square-foot parking lot at Eddy and Taylor. It wants to build at least eight stories of low-cost family housing.

On the ground floor, TNDC conceptualizes a full-service grocery, which it sees as a major economic development for the neighborhood. The mixed-use project wouldn't be completed before 2012, says Nick Griffin, senior project manager.

TNDC's study by Ventura Partners, concluded in May, said that, given the neighborhood and store size, a "mainstream grocery" wouldn't be interested and that turning the entire 17,000-square-foot ground floor into a market "isn't warranted financially."

The big chains, operating on thin profit margins, require more space — typically 30,000 square feet — and different demo-



Shown are the locations of 24 Tenderloin stores that stock a dozen Heart of the City Farmers Market, the cornucopia at the bottom of the

graphics than exist in the city's lowest-income neighborhood. Plus they want lots of parking. Working from a Planning Department list of grocery stores, Ventura interviewed 20 owners but found little interest. Only Evergreen Produce Market, at 2539 Mission St., showed interest. One retail real estate consultant, expert in grocery projects, said it would take a "Herculean effort" to bring a big store to Eddy and Taylor.

But the report did recommend setting aside 5,000 to 8,000 "flexible" square feet for a grocery. Perhaps set it up as a separate deeded parcel to attract a commercial investor. Ventura Partners recommended turning the remaining 9,000 to 12,000 square feet into condominiums, a plus for any grocer-operator wanting the whole space to help secure investment funds.

TNDC invited a select group of residents, business owners and nonprofit employees to a briefing on the Eddy and Taylor report and a discussion at the Ambassador Hotel, 55 Mason St., on July 10. The goal, said Executive Director Don Falk in an e-mail to the group, is to help TNDC decide "whether — and if so how — to proceed at this site."

What could affect the Tenderloin's need for produce is dormant state legislation that's waiting to be funded. San Francisco Assemblyman Mark Leno's measure would give attractive incentives for mom-and-pop grocers in poor California neighborhoods to stock fresh fruits and vegetables, and would give rebates to food stamp holders who buy fresh. But the \$500,000 first-year funding for the pilot program is stymied; Gov. Schwarzenegger didn't put the money in his 2007-08 budget.

The Legislature passed Leno's AB2384 last August. The governor signed it in September.

"Why would he sign a bill if he's not going to put money in it?" asks Ken Hecht of



PHOTOS BY LENNY LIMJOCO

Farmers Market manager Christine Adams (center) is shown with vendor Julie Phan who has been selling her Tulare and Sacramento County farm fruit at the market since 1984. The first to arrive and the last to leave, Phan hires the homeless to help unload her truck. Photo at the bottom of p. 5 shows a disabled customer purchasing mushrooms at the longtime singular mushroom stand.

My food law on back burner



or more fruits and vegetables, plus the granddaddy of them all, the map. Asian food stores are indicated with a leafy logo.



The Right Way grocery on O'Farrell Street attracts loyal residents. One customer finds what he needs here without leaving the neighborhood. Clerk Kamal Alwadi says, "We sell everything."

what he bought. In San Francisco, two-thirds of those eligible for food stamps aren't signed up, Leno said. In the 94102 Tenderloin ZIP code, the participation rate was less than 18%, according to a December 2004 report from the San Francisco Food Alliance.

Gwen Smith of Literacy for Environmental Justice on June 27 attended the first meeting in Sacramento of 40 grocers, retailers, health department and food stamp officials to discuss the creative details of Leno's Healthy Food Purchase Pilot Program.

The bill is designed after LEJ's Good Neighbor program that's been working in Bayview-Hunters Point since 2003 to reverse the alarming trend that merely 5% of the food sold there was fresh. The program found mom-and-pop groceries willing to stock fruits and vegetables in return for help putting in refrigeration, the funding for which came from donations and S.F. Department of Environment grants.

"Studies show that the first of the month the food stamps go quickly," Smith says, "and by the second week people are not eating healthy. Money can go only so far. The whole idea is that if you buy produce, you get more."

"So if you buy \$1 worth of produce, you get 60 cents back."

Those figures aren't in AB2384, but they were discussed at the Sacramento planning session, she says. "We are extremely hopeful we'll get the funding."

When it comes — presumably before Leno's seven-county pilot project's 2011 repeal date — federal funds will be used at the mom-and-pops to stock, store and market produce. Because

Leno is from San Francisco, the county should get favored status and Bayview-Hunters Point and the Tenderloin would be first in line for incentives. ■

City College journalism student Doug Ablgren and Study Center Executive Assistant JohnDavid Nuñez contributed to this report.

Farmers market: No expansion

FARMERS Market shoppers at U.N. Plaza seem to want more of a good thing but the market won't likely add another day to its Wednesday and Sunday schedule.

"I shop here at least once a week and I'd do more if it were open another time, an evening maybe — I love it, it's fresh and cheap and the heartbeat of the city," said eight-year TL resident Christopher Hagenmeir. The United Air Lines flight attendant had just bought several bags of produce at one of the four Busalacchi Farms produce stands at the market.

Over by the Cipponeri fruit stand, where the cherries were nearly sold out at 2:15 p.m., Garland Hall, TL resident and manager of the Ambassador Hotel, says he comes to the market at least once a week.

"I could do 75% of my shopping here if I had to," Hall says. "If it were open more, I'd come." Like Hagenmeir, he takes public transportation to shop deals elsewhere.

Christine Adams, the farmers market manager, says she tried 20 years ago to add another day and it didn't work.

"We had a third day, Fridays, and it really interrupted Wednesdays and Sundays," she says sitting in her white van parked on a walkway behind the booths. "It meant we lost half the Sunday business. It cut into Wednesday, too. But now we've got enough."

If all the vendors were selling out, she says, she would consider it. She won't add vendors that sell lunch either, because she doesn't want to compete with local restaurants.

"We had the tamale lady with us before the Mexican restaurants opened around here," Adams said. A taqueria is nearby on McAllister and two more are at Sixth and Market streets.

One other trend occurring is the declining use of food stamps, now the Electronic Benefits Transfer card.

"Most of the business here is low income," Adams said. "A lot of people come with just \$1 or \$2."

The market used to process about \$5,000 a day in the paper food stamps before converting to EBT cards in August 2004. During that summer it processed \$1,000-\$2,000.

"Now it's about a third of that," Adams says. "And I have no idea why." ■

—TOM CARTER



ROBERT BRUCE BROOKS
MAP dispatcher

Robert Bruce Brooks, stern and unsmiling, was the smart, dependable dispatcher dedicated to sending Mobile Assistance Patrol vans out in the dead of night to rescue drunks, addicts and anyone unfortunate enough to be incapacitated.

Mr. Brooks was 20 years in recovery himself. He knew that helping people in need gave them another chance to recover and perhaps find a better life. The ubiquitous MAP vans, a program of Community Awareness and Treatment Services, help with homeless outreach, scraping people off the streets and taking them to facilities where services are available. During his eight years with MAP, he worked the graveyard shift.

Mr. Brooks died May 20 at the Western Addition home of his significant other, Martha Johnson, where he lived since moving from a Turk Street SRO. He had suffered heart problems for several years. He was 60.

On June 7, a day after his funeral, a dozen friends and co-workers gathered at a memorial for him at CATS' 39 Fell St. offices in a second-floor conference room above where he had worked. They remembered him as a dependable worker, even self-sacrificing, but sometimes cantankerous and opinionated. Two women said they admired his ability to show up and do his job but his "his-way" attitude had alienated them.

Max Haptonstahl, MAP program director, said Mr. Brooks "was a seminal figure in establishing our 24-hour dispatch" and in maintaining a high standard for the city. Mr. Brooks handled the graveyard shift's calls — usually from six to 15 of MAP's total 125 daily calls — while monitoring and transmitting radio calls to the vans. Haptonstahl later explained that, although the graveyard shift has fewer calls than other shifts, the night-time calls are more critical "as far as preventing homeless deaths." Early morning is when people on the street are "most vulnerable," he said.

MAP driver Jack Harris Jr., who worked under Mr. Brooks for two years, said he thought he was "odd" at first but got used to his personality. As soon as



Robert Brooks, left, with his idol Smokey Robinson.

Harris got to work, Mr. Brooks started talking to him, always emphasizing a professional attitude.

"He said no matter what kind of situation I got into out there to use my better judgment and deal with it — not call him — and get the result to him and he'd back me 100 percent," Harris said. He paused. "And when I walked through that door he could tell at a glance when I wasn't feeling good, and we'd do a process on it. It's hard to accept he's not here."

Born in Philadelphia, Mr. Brooks went into the Army after high school, serving in Vietnam and Taiwan in the mid-1960s. According to obituary notes on a table holding two bouquets and a display of 10 large color photos, he bounced around Los Angeles after the service until resuming his education. He was graduated from Los Angeles Technical Trade School in 1980, then moved to San Francisco and got a job with Multi-Services Center North. He received a BA degree from San Francisco State in 1989 at age 43. In 1998, he joined MAP.

"Robert was most proud of the fact that he was clean and sober over 20 years," the notes said. "His sobriety allowed friends to see the real Robert."

He was known as an avid reader and a computer buff and was considered quite knowledgeable. He impressed people with his "encyclopedic" recall of old films and popular music — admiring Smokey Robinson above all singers — and appreciating people who contributed to the African American culture.

One of two framed pictures showed Robinson with his arm around Mr. Brooks' shoulders.

"Robinson was in a grocery store somewhere in town," said Haptonstahl, "and someone pointed at Robert and said, 'That's your biggest fan.' So Smokey walked over to Robert

and somebody took their picture."

But Haptonstahl said there was a side of Mr. Brooks few knew. He was surprised, after eight years of knowing him, to see among the several pictures of Mr. Brooks with his companion and her two daughters that he was smiling. "I just learned, too, that he taught the daughters how to swim," Haptonstahl said.

Mr. Brooks was buried in the 500-acre National Veterans Cemetery in Sacramento.

—TOM CARTER

DAWN MILLS
Family caregiver

The unexpected death of 27-year-old Dawn Mills had come as a shock to the small group of mourners who gathered at the Ambassador Hotel on June 11 to pay their respects.

Ms. Mills, the caregiver of her mother, Genevieve Mills, who lives at the 55 Mason St. hotel, died on Memorial Day four days before she was to be married, and in the presence of her mother. Her mother said that "she was injected with battery acid." On the street that means she got a "hot shot," an injection of poisoned dope.

"She was murdered!" said Ms. Mills' fiance, Abdul Azim Diab. "And I know who did it."

A spokesman for Southern Police Station declined to comment on the case or even confirm that it was under investigation.

"Her death hit me so bad I punched holes in the hospital wall. I had to be restrained," said Diab, a thin man, 69, who looks much younger.

A spokesman for the medical examiner's office said the cause of Ms. Mills' death had yet to be determined pending the toxicology report.

Ms. Mills, who was born prematurely Dec. 7, 1979, at San Francisco General Hospital, was a resident of the Camelot Hotel on Turk Street, said her mother. She weighed 1 pound when she was born, her mother said.

"She was a good sister," said her brother, Kenneth Nutter. "Any time she needed help I was there for her."

"She was always helping somebody," said her mother, who uses a wheelchair and respirator. "She took very good care of me. She loved to draw and paint."

"She was an artist," Diab said. "She loved to draw angels."

"Grief comes because we love and we care," said the Rev. Glenda Hope, who presided over the memorial.

"She had a great personality, a great spirit," said one mourner.

Diab said he and Ms. Mills were to be married June 1. "She was a ball of fire," he said. "She'd tell me things and I'd do it right away."

Ms. Mills is survived by an 8-year-old son, three sisters and a brother.

"I lost my best friend, but those things come and go," said Diab. "But she's still here."

—JOHN GOINS



TENDERLOIN HEALTH
a continuum of care

Outreach and Community Events July 2007

Health Promotion Forum
Topic: Harm Reduction and Substance Use
Speaker: Anna Berg, ASW, Harm Reduction Therapy Center & Steve Harlow, MFT, New Leaf
Date/Time: Tuesday, July 17, 12 pm - 1:30 pm

HIV Treatment Forum
Topic: Knowing Your Numbers, Part II
Speaker: Nina Grossman, Tibotec Pharmaceuticals
Date/Time: Monday, July 16, 3 pm - 4 pm

Client Advisory Panel
Come talk with Tenderloin Health's Board Client Representative(s) and program managers about plans for Tenderloin Health. Also provide input on new services and how we can improve.
Date/Time: Wednesday, July 11, 11:30 am - 1 pm; Wednesday, July 25, 11:30 am - 1 pm

Volunteer and Intern for Tenderloin Health
Orientation: Sunday, July 15, 12 pm - 6:30 pm
220 Golden Gate Ave., 3rd Floor
lunch provided
You must register for volunteer trainings.
Stop in/call Emilio (415) 934-1792.

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

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New night life: trying out the techno-bars

BY ED BOWERS

THREE techno-bars have sprouted in the most technologically unappealing area in America, the San Francisco Tenderloin and Sixth Street. This scene is happening because young people need to get together to meet; not only are they lonely, there also is a biological imperative.

Of course I understand that smart people make money off of need. I do not judge this. It is simply a fact.

Probably the last place I would ever go in my life, before I ascend to heaven or hell, would be to a techno-bar because I hate the music. It's called "house music," and should stay there.

But that's only perception. It's not a fact. For all I know this marching-band, bass-based, repetitive jive, resulting in a numbing effect that inspires nothing, is as profound and valuable to the future of life as an amoeba.

The music in these clubs just sounds so square that it makes me scared that my parents are taking over the world. It is the John Philip Sousa music I listened to on my record player in 1955, or the jungle music in Tarzan movies that white people thought black people danced to.

All these clubs are supposedly based on music that is supposedly music. But underlying these simple-minded rhythms is a speed-infused rage that's sad and scary.

So now that I have done the music review of these clubs, I'll attack the ambience. Oh, did I say attack? I must control myself.

The truth is that the inside of these establishments is gorgeous, 19th century decadence at its best, and each club is an individual with its own personality. Conformity is the essence of evil, so subtle individuality is their saving grace.

PLAY-BAR: 101 Sixth St.

The first time I came here was with Veronica. We were drinking martinis at a table when I looked toward the bar. A scantily dressed woman was sitting on a stool with her pants so low that I could see inside her body.

Club Six permit suspended for noise

BY JOHN GOINS

THE survival of Club Six, one of the city's trendiest dance clubs, took a turn for the worse June 5 with the Entertainment Commission's unanimous vote to suspend owner Angel Cruz's entertainment permit because of continuing complaints from nearby residents about ear-splitting noise and heavy vibrations generated by the club's powerful speakers at night.

The suspension will be held in abeyance for 120 days so Cruz can operate and doesn't go belly-up while he attempts to rectify his problem. It also means that the bartenders, DJs, security guards and janitors who work for him will remain employed, and the bands, artists and music promoters who consider him a rare patron will get work.

Cruz is an early player and a major one in the central city's late-night club scene that also includes the Play-Bar and Anu on Sixth Street and the 187 Eddy Club and the Crash Club on Mason Street, and Etiquette on Market, weekend magnets for hundreds of young people from around the city and the Bay Area.

Cruz has hired sound engineer Charles Salter to solve his humongous problem: booming speakers shake the old brick building at 60 Sixth St. where the club, and the Lawrence Hotel above it, are housed.

The suspension came with a caveat: any sound violation during the 120-day grace period will tack on another 60-day suspension. And after that 90 days, ending with Cruz's permit permanently revoked upon further violations, Entertainment Commissioner Terrance Alan said in a phone interview.

Alan, who owns the building on Jones Street between Turk and Eddy where adult Club Vixen operates, said Salter is a first-rate sound engineer, and the improvements will be expensive.

"It's one of the most expensive things a club

"Is this my imagination or is that girl wearing her pants so low that I am being sucked into a black hole?" I asked Veronica.

"No, that is not your imagination," she replied. That's when I got the idea to do this article.

Techno-bars are dance bars, black holes notwithstanding. They are variations on a theme. By example, both bar maids at the Play-Bar were named Elizabeth, but one spelled it with an "s". Go figure.

The dance floor at the Play-Bar can be a lot of fun for people who want space to dance because while we were there it was empty.

Strobe lights give the floor a '60s effect. A double helix radiates on the ceiling and there's a pole on the stage that want-to-be lap dancers can practice on. The lighted painting on the wall over the dance floor appeared to be a depiction of a god rising out of hundreds of ice pipes that unfortunately I have seen people I care about use to turn themselves into demons.

There sure were a lot of sexy women in this bar. Most of them wore high heels. I have flat feet and my main job is walking around a condominium counting burned-out light bulbs, so I can sympathize with the efforts they're making to be attractive while enduring massive amounts of pain.

The Play-Bar is a pleasant, friendly place for people in their 20s and 30s to get together. Soon there will be a dance floor in the basement and the bar will be renovated and given a different name. Life is change. Simply being here is not enough.

Aaron Lacs is one of the owners, as well as the bartender I talked to when I visited this establishment. He's a good bartender and a nice guy with an existentially meaningful life.

I got a laid-back, friendly feeling from this place.

owner can do," Alan said. And in Cruz's case it could be tricky, he said. "There are no blueprints for that old building and the sound system wasn't scientifically installed."

The closure of a popular business on Sixth Street where people from different communities can earn a living, be creative and enjoy themselves is no small thing. Alan said he was concerned about the club's employees and the lost income. "The real social cost is that the employees suffer. And the club brings a mix of folks to the neighborhood."

And what of the club's relationship to the people who live in the neighborhood, particularly those who can't sleep at night?

"I think Paul Hogarth wrote a good article characterizing their angst," Alan said, referring to the managing editor of Beyond Chron.com, who is also a legal counselor and organizer for the Tenderloin Housing Clinic, which produces Beyond Chron, the daily online opinion and features publication.

"Sixth Street residents ... organized around the basic need to get some sleep," Hogarth wrote, it had nothing to do with trying to rain on the night life parade in San Francisco.

Alan said the commission heard testimony from about 100 people at the June 5 hearing, most of them asking that Club Six remain open. "The Entertainment Commission doesn't have any villains," he said. "Overall, the city does benefit from night life." The Extra previously quoted Cruz saying he had already invested well over \$100,000 in sound improvements and \$1 million in the club. He declined to comment further on the cost of improvements, or say what he is paying Salter.

Cruz said he was disappointed in the commission's ruling. "I saw a total of seven residents at the hearing," Cruz said. "I saw only two people from the Lawrence there." When asked what impact his club has had on Sixth Street, Cruz said, "The facts speak for themselves. I've done a lot of good there. Look at my track record. I bring revenue to this city. But anything worthwhile is not easy." ■



PHOTO BY ED BOWERS

At Play-Bar: Veronica is flanked by Elizabeth (left) and Elisabeth.

A black street person dressed in a red vest was sitting at a table by himself, obviously lonely, and they didn't kick him out.

A-plus.

ANU: 45 Sixth St.

I took a beautiful woman with me and we ended up here. People treat you differently when you are with a beautiful woman. The only thing that does it better is money.

Her name is Veronica Josephine Faraday, and I interviewed her for The Extra a long time ago when she existed under a different name. We both live in the Tenderloin. Neither one of us comes here just to visit techno-bars. We are citizens. This fishbowl is where we breathe, and probably where we will die.

Veronica was wearing a tuxedo suit and looked androgynous, very "Cabaret" and appropriate to the environment, or so we thought. But this scene is extremely old-fashioned. This new generation is the '50s, ignoring the wars, loving their solidified concepts, and just wanting to be happy though terminally miserable.

I was buzzing around like a bee, absorbing the nectar of ambience, while Veronica was sitting on a chair minding her own business. At least that's what I thought. When I reconnoitered with her later she had a story to tell.

"This Beck-looking, art school child started caressing my hair! So I stood up and said sternly, 'Do I know you?'"

"Then he held out his hand. I did not shake his hand! And then he said, 'I like your lines and bone structure.'"

"And I said, 'You like my lines and bone structure? Then pay me!'"

The little man who patted Veronica on the head got a wake-up call.

The Anu has art on the wall. Some of it depicts ancient scenes of people listening to real music like when Miles Davis played the Black Hawk without the aid of techno.

There was lots of dancing at the Anu. There is nothing wrong with any bar that encourages dancing. The Anu is full of the desire to dance.

Nothing is entertaining about the oblivion dancing on Sixth Street, but the Anu tries.

Not to encourage people to drink, but I highly recommend the house-made, fruit-infused vodka sold at this dance bar, which makes a great martini at the reasonable price of five dollars. A vodka cranberry made with swill costs three dollars in most bars around here.

ETIQUETTE: 1108 Market St.

There's a tendency for young people now to want to go way back to the 19th century; they're scared of the future and feel violated by the freshly laid-to-rest past. Recently, I spent two years in Texas, and the young hipsters there loved 19th century poetry.

Much of the décor in these techno-bars is elegant black vinyl, cold as the ice heads and crack

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SPECIAL EVENTS

Concerts Beginning Friday July 20 from noon to 1 p.m. and continuing every Friday through August, free piano concerts at the Cadillac Hotel, 380 Eddy, co-sponsored by the Tenderloin/North of Market Community Benefit District.

COMMUNITY: REGULAR SCHEDULE HOUSING

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

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

HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

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

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

Healthcare Action Team, 2nd Wednesday of the month, Quaker Center, 65 Ninth St., noon-1:30. Focus on increasing supportive home and community-based services, expanded eligibility for home care and improved discharge planning. Light lunch served. Call James Chionsini, 703-0188 x304.

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

Mental Health Board, 2nd Wednesday of the month, 6:30-8:30 p.m., City Hall, room 278. CBHS advisory committee. Call: 255-3474.

National Alliance for the Mentally III-S.F., 3rd Wednesday of the month, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Family Service Agency, 1010 Gough, 5th Fl. Call 905-6264. Family member group, open to consumers and the public.

SAFETY

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

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

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

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT

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

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

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

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

Friends of Boeddeker Park, 2nd Thursday of the month, 3:30 p.m., Boeddeker Rec Center, 240 Eddy. Plan park events, activities and improvements. Contact: 552-4866.

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

Mid-Market Project Area Committee, 2nd Wednesday of the month, 5:30 p.m., Ramada Hotel, 1231 Market. Contact Carolyn

Diamond, 362-2500. Market Street redevelopment on Fifth to Tenth streets.

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

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

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

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

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

SENIORS AND DISABLED

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

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

SUPERVISORS' COMMITTEES

City Hall, Room 263

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

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

Sampling the new night life: the techno-bars

► CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

addicts who panhandle cigarettes outside their doors. I like decadence, but I try not to let my guard down around it; I regret it when I do.

The sign painted on the entrance says, "Love Will Solve All Your Problems." Underneath it, upside down, there is the statement, "Love Will Only Let You Down."

The 19th century didn't believe that, but people do now. Bless evolution.

Etiquette has an interior design with black glow-in-the-dark cubicles that appear larger than life and are tastefully laid out from an architectural point of view. A lot of money went into creating this scene.

Veronica and I took refuge in a cubicle with an ashtray. "How civilized," I said. "I can smoke here. This is like the past." But appearance is one thing, essence another. You cannot go back in time without consequences.

"There's no smoking in here," I heard from one of the managers, who developed a sour face when later he was forced to mop up the vomit of a young woman who threw up on the floor because she drank too much.

I liked Etiquette's ambience. Grungier than the

other clubs, its sound system played Kurt Cobain singing "Lithium."

Veronica and I danced to '80s and '90s superhits while the other customers talked. I got the best feel from this club, culturally, as far as my musical tastes go. The barflies here were dressed more casually than in the other bars and were not making a great effort to appear as anybody other than themselves.

"I'd come back here again," said Veronica, giving it the ultimate good review.

Veronica and I departed soon after the young girl chucked up her bar bill. You don't see that much in dive bars. The people there are professionals. But the Tenderloin is a multitiered school. Soon these people will learn.

CODA

After viral exposure to the techno-bars, I walked Veronica back to her hotel, and again we passed the Play-Bar where we ran into the owner, Aaron Lacs, having a cigarette on the street surrounded by his customers also having a cigarette on the street.

Lacs is sincere and well-meaning. He told me, "Music is everything to me. I love to make money. But I want everybody to have a good time."

"I love music too," I said. "Do you like Eric Dolphy?"

"I don't know who he is," the bartender answered honestly.

"He was a jazz saxophonist," I replied.

Lacs said he'd like to find a jazz sax player to play along with the music at his club. Did I know any?



PHOTO BY ED BOWERS

Etiquette: Living it up at the neighborhood's newest dance club.

POSTSCRIPT

Now I'd like to issue an invitation.

I like these clubs and I am inviting every crack whore, heroin addict, ice head, and mentally deranged derelict to enter them now! Take back your neighborhood and support its businesses!

Have fun! They can't kick you out if you have three dollars for a drink. Turning your back on these establishments could be fatal. This might be the last time you get eye to eye with half-naked women in high heels before you croak or go to jail for the rest of your life.

I currently have an idea of introducing the music of Yusef Lateef to these club owners. This extremely experimental jazz musician was way ahead of his time and if they cut his music up with techno the result would be interesting. Lateef is still alive. He's in his 80s and might get a kick out of this idea.

Do not be critical of the present. It is the future. Work with the now and see what happens. The only other choice is to die.

Or return to the 19th century.

Or, if you play jazz saxophone and can play the scales, see Aaron Lacs at the Play-Bar. You might have a future. ■

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