

Eminent domain takeover urged for blighted Sixth St. hotel

SOMPAC votes to buy Defenestration site in rare city action

BY TOM CARTER

SoMa's Defenestration, forever out the window but never off the wall, might now fall to an untimely death.

The kooky vision of furniture and appliances anchored on the walls of the gutted Hugo Apartments at Sixth and Howard streets faces the specter of eminent domain as a blighted property. In December, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency acquired the power to use eminent domain in the area. But it can only be applied as a last resort when an owner refuses to improve the digs or sell at a fair market price — both have been the Hugo owner's stance in the past.

Redevelopment has used the power only once in the last 20 years, the agency says, though eminent domain is getting more use nationwide. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled

in June that local governments could seize a private property even for the "purpose of a profit-making private redevelopment." It didn't even have to involve blight.

In Hunters Point some fear that Redevelopment will exercise that power and

displace people under an ordinance proposed by Supervisor Sophie Maxwell.

Defenestration has excited thousands of tourists and residents since 1997 when sculptor Brian Goggin, his friends and neighborhood helpers lashed two dozen household pieces — from couches to grandfather clocks — outside the Hugo's gaunt windows. Goggin called it Defenestration. It means throwing persons or things out of the window such as rolling pins, TV sets, Catholics (at Prague Castle) and, in "The Exorcist," Father Merrin, compliments of the devil.

Goggin nailed down the concept so cleverly that it has been SoMa's famous absurdity for 10 years. Gray Line tours make slow bus sweeps past the Hugo.

"They (the artists) have been praised for the beautiful job they've done," says Henry Kamilowicz, a SoMa business owner who serves on the 21-member South of Market Project Area Committee, an advisory body to Redevelopment. He says he knows people who might be interested in buying the building. They say they'd willingly keep Defenestration, at least some of it, "if tastefully done" in a rehabilitated or new structure. "Can you imagine?" he asks, delighted at the thought.

But, regardless of the legions who have looked up at the four-

"No one can deal with the owners. We've tried and tried."

Charles Range
SOMPAC MEMBER

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TOT PARK FINALLY FIXED

Reopens after being closed 5 months

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'I LIKE WASHING CLOTHES'

Laundromat opens — attendant on duty

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DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES TURN OUT

Central Committee hopefuls in TL

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City Hall stood tall, but shattered inside. Little around it survived in recognizable form.

CENTRAL CITY

EXTRA

SAN FRANCISCO

APRIL 18, 1906



PHOTOS COURTESY CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Downtown became rubble, the few buildings still standing were hollow shells.

Witness to destruction of entire central city

BY JACK LONDON

San Francisco is gone. Nothing remains of it but memories and a fringe of dwelling-houses on its outskirts. Its industrial section is wiped out. Its business section is wiped out. Its social and residential section is wiped out. The factories and warehouses, the great stores and newspaper buildings, the hotels and the palaces of the nabobs, are all gone.

On Wednesday morning at a quarter past five came the earthquake. A minute

later the flames were leaping upward. In a dozen different quarters south of Market Street, in the working-class ghetto, and in the factories, fires started. There was no opposing the flames. There was no organization, no communication. All the cunning adjustments of a twentieth century city had been smashed by the earthquake. The streets were humped into ridges and depressions, and piled with the debris of fallen walls. The steel rails were twisted into perpendicular and horizontal angles. The telephone and telegraph systems were disrupted. And the great water-mains had burst. All the shrewd contrivances and safeguards of man had been thrown out of gear by thirty seconds' twitching of the earth-crust.

By Wednesday afternoon, inside of twelve hours, half the heart of the city was gone. From every side wind was pouring in upon the city. East, west, north, and south, strong winds were blowing upon the doomed city. The heated air rising made an enormous suck. Thus did the fire of itself build its own colossal chimney through the atmosphere. Day and night this dead calm continued, and yet, near to the flames, the wind was often half a gale, so mighty was the suck.

Wednesday night saw the destruction of the very heart of the city. Dynamite was lavishly used, and many of San Francisco's proudest structures were crumbled by man himself into ruins, but there was no withstanding the onrush of the flames. Time and

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

GOOD NEWS for...

MAIN LIBRARY USERS The Board of Supervisors library advisory committee has weighed in on the planned \$5 million upgrade of the Main Library reading room and book borrowing system. Its conclusion: Be sure it's people-friendly this time. The committee advises renovating the dreary first-floor reading room and making it easier and faster to borrow books. Construction is to begin by midyear and end in early 2007. The first-floor layout is being rejiggered. Closed areas are now open and books taken out of storage are displayed in the reading room. The information desk will be larger and check-out automated. A king-size, superfast sorting machine will speed up book processing. The Library Citizens Advisory Committee wants to be sure the reading room encourages — well — reading, to say nothing of browsing or studying. It recommends more natural light, comfortable seating and brighter and warmer electric lighting, addressing a major failure in the 10-year-old, \$109 million edifice. Currently, the reading room has low ceilings and no windows or natural light because much of this area is below the sidewalk. Expect comfortable, easy-to-move work chairs throughout the library and clear direction signs at all entrances and on the upper floors. The committee urges more comfy seating around the atrium on all floors, as well.

— SUE CAUTHEN

BUDDING ENTREPRENEURS Central city neighbors interested in starting or expanding a for-profit business can get a quick leg up by contacting Legal Services for Entrepreneurs. The nine-year-old project links volunteer attorneys from top Bay Area law firms with low-income people who can't afford one-on-one legal help. The attorneys provide free consultation on incorporation, trademarks, leases, contracts, employment issues and zoning, but not on disputes, claims or lawsuits. The length of the consultation "depends on the situation," says Robert Clarkson, a Hastings Law College student who is helping promote the services in the Tenderloin. Many pro bono lawyers so enjoy the work that it becomes an ongoing relationship, he added. "Doing outreach in the Tenderloin has been quite interesting. While there are language barriers and some suspicions about what's being offered — and about lawyers — once people understand they appreciate the assistance." LSE, which also runs free legal workshops for groups of entrepreneurs at community organizations, and offers services in English, Spanish and Vietnamese, is a project of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the S.F. Bay Area. Information: 543-9444 and www.lccr.com/lsehome.htm.

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

Westside finds another home

3 mental health programs may move to the Warfield Building

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

Westside Community Mental Health Center Director Abner Boles got a polite reception but no support when he told the Collaborative in December about plans to move three mental health programs into the services-saturated Tenderloin, on Golden Gate near Leavenworth.

Two members of Boles' staff returned in March with news of a new location for the programs.

"We're in negotiations now to locate the services at 988 Market — that's the ground floor of the Warfield Building, plus three floors above it," said Alys Herring, Westside director of operations. "Three programs would go there — adult crisis, adult outpatient and Assertive Community Treatment."

Those programs, which serve a couple hundred clients, currently operate out of space in a building at Turk near Gough that owner St. Paulus Church wants back. The idea of locating the program on Golden Gate fell through, Herring said, because the building is being sold.

"I think this new location is much more acceptable than the one on Golden Gate," said Chaplain Earl Rogers of the S.F. Rescue Mission.

Others agreed, citing the advantages of placement closer to public transit and commerce and a little more distance from the densely residential inner Tenderloin.

"We hope to get agreement with the Warfield owner [David Addington] by the end of March, build out in four months and relocate within six months," Herring said.

Reminded that Boles' announcement three months earlier had drawn fire, she was asked how people who opposed it could make their feelings known about the new location.

"After the property is agreed on and we complete contract negotiations, there will be Department of Public Health hearings," Herring said.

Added Westside Deputy Director

Duane Poe, not realizing that he was fueling an almost cold fire, "The challenge for nonprofits that deliver these services is to find appropriate space. The fact is, this is where many clients live and it's where landlords will rent to us."

Jim Thompson, property manager 165 Turk, wasn't letting go easily.

"I think what we're hearing is the chicken and egg," he said. "Do the services come first or the people? The Tenderloin has been appointed to be the place where these services and these people belong, and that puts us in a quandary. People in other neighborhoods need to invest in solving these problems, too."

TL resident Bruce Windrem wandered, perhaps wisely, off the topic of Westside's relocation, observing that there's a reason the central city draws "these people": "It's what we can afford. I'm labeled 'mental' myself, but this is going to stay a blighted neighborhood unless there's more opportunity for everyone."

Before closing the discussion, Collaborative Chair Glenda Hope, director of S.F. Network Ministries, gave the Westside reps an insightful parting shot:

"By having programs near where they live, people in other neighborhoods can learn about the needs of mentally ill people and how they can help."

SUMMER OF DESTRUCTION

As she's done regularly for almost three years, Paula Lewis, St. Anthony Foundation operations director, gave an update on plans for its new headquarters at 150 Golden Gate.

Final drawings are 75% complete, hazardous material abatement starts in April and demolition is scheduled for June and July.

"It's going to be hand-demolition — no blowup or wrecking ball — and will be minimally intrusive to the neighborhood," Lewis said.

The four-story building will come down in three stages: Utilities will be removed from upper stories and pushed to the center of the

building; the guts will be demolished from the inside; and the exterior will be removed brick by brick.

Many at the meeting raised concerns about trash accumulating, rodent control and sidewalk access during construction.

Elaine Zamora, Tenderloin Community Benefit District general manager, wondered if there would be security beyond the traditional fencing, especially during demolition. "Because of all the 'activity' in that location, I think you should have it," she said.

Alliance for a Better District Six President Michael Nulty asked if the site would be well-lit.

Lewis admitted she didn't have all the answers, but she made notes and promised to get someone from Nibbi Brothers construction to come to the next meeting to give folks the exact skinny. ■

LETTER

LETTER TO THE EXTRA

I was disappointed to see that in the Central City Extra you cited several liquor stores by name in the TL as locations I said were trouble spots. Yes, there are locations in the TL which are trouble spots and several of those locations have small markets and liquor stores close by. But often these are hard-working, struggling merchants who would love nothing better than to have their areas free of crime. By implying that I somehow connect the stores with the criminal activity at these locations does nothing but create mistrust between myself and the merchants I'm trying to work with and protect.

— CAPT. KATHY BROWN
Tenderloin Police Station

Editor: Reporter Tom Carter used the hot spot intersections furnished by Capt. Brown and visited the locations and was able identify the stores where crowds were milling about outside.

CENTRAL CITY EXTRA
SAN FRANCISCO

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NOW

The murals along the boarded-up ground level of the Hugo Apartments get changed every so often. These two sections of the east side of the building show almost the same spot, 2½ years apart. Now was shot March 29 and Then graced the cover of *The Extra*, Issue No. 29, in October 2003.

THEN

PHOTOS BY LENNY LIMJOCO

Eminent domain urged as owner holds out for more money

► CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

story building's cartoon-like appendages for a chuckle, the Hugo is no laughing matter to SOM-PAC. The committee voted 8-1 at its March meeting to urge Redevelopment to buy the Hugo. The hollow-eyed structure looms over an intersection where palm trees now grow on recently widened sidewalks illuminated by bright new streetlights, the latest agency improvements for the Sixth Street Corridor.

Redevelopment has an expanded role for the area, roughly bounded by Harrison, Fifth, Seventh, and at its jagged northern boundary, Stevenson, Mission and Natoma. The agency's mission since 1990 has been to repair Loma Prieta earthquake damage in the area. It didn't have all the tools usually given to a Redevelopment area. That changed when the Board of Supervisors passed an amendment on Dec. 6 giving the agency full powers for a redevelopment project to address blight, incur more debt, create housing and use eminent domain.

Since 1996, SOMPAC slaved over the amendment. "We went around and around for years," says Marcia Ban, SOMPAC director. "There were financial and blight reports, the EIR, which was a long process, and the many, many documents that were required. And they worked on the language for eminent domain. It took a terribly long time."

SOMPAC wanted to battle the kind of blight the Hugo represents in the neighborhood. It's not just that Defenestration is deteriorating — the Department of Building Inspection got a complaint last year that it was hazardous. The longer the building is empty and unattended, the sadder it looks, the more windows are broken — DBI got a complaint about that last year, too — and more graffiti goes up.

"We passed a plan with this site in mind," said SOMPAC member Charles Range, SoMa Health Center's executive director, before the vote. "No one can deal with the owners. We've tried and tried. We even had (the owner) bring in an advertisement of what he'd take. But the price is so far out of range. We've been going through this for nine years, so why not take some action now."

The asking price two years ago was \$4 million for the 32,000-square-foot building, according to a Nov. 11, 2003, story in the Chronicle. The reporter interviewed Varsha Patel, daughter of David Patel, identified as the aging owner, who said he bought the property in 1964.

Assessor records show that the Hugo ownership among the Patels changed in 1998 when I.M. and Sumatai Patel turned it over to Branch Limited Partnership of Hillsborough, where Varsha Patel lives. The partnership owners were listed as Shataben and Ichharambai Patel. The latest assessor's valuation was \$400,589, quite low for the property even if the building is worth nothing.

Redevelopment paid \$1.8 million in 2000 for the lot diagonally across from it, then built the much-praised eight-story Plaza SRO that opened in March with 106 units.

"We've had discussions with the (Hugo) owner," said Mike Grisso, Redevelopment's South of Market project manager and liaison to SOMPAC. "They wanted a lot more than we thought the property was worth. That was a couple of years ago."

In September 2003, Redevelopment's project engineer for South of Market, Bill Carney, told *The Extra* that if the amendment passed there would be

a "limited range of properties" that could be acquired by eminent domain. It would be a last resort if owners refused to redevelop. "The Hugo Hotel is an example of a blighted structure," he said. "We'd like to see it productive."

The amendment approved by the Board of Supervisors allows the Redevelopment Agency to incur debt over an additional 10 years, strengthening its purchasing power, and says it can use eminent domain if owners don't address their blight or negotiate a fair market sale. The SOMPAC amendment advises the agency: Do it now.

Varsha Patel told the Chronicle her father, who owns among other properties the Ramada Limited at 240 Seventh St., grew wary of crackheads and feared for his safety in and around his own building. She said he wanted to develop the Hugo but didn't. Repeated efforts by *The Extra* to interview the Patels were the ignored. But what Varsha Patel told Chronicle reporter Carol Lloyd in 2003 could

SOUTHSIDE

be the same story today. Because little has changed — yet.

The Patels appear to be holding out for a Planning Department change that would boost the property value. Their 10,000-square-foot corner lot is zoned for a maximum height of 50 feet while the other three corners at Sixth and Howard are zoned for 85 feet, an allowance Redevelopment used when it replaced a two-story structure by building the Plaza. The Patels apparently believe their restriction is unfair.

"They say we haven't been cooperative," Varsha Patel told the Chronicle. "But I say, give me the height."

City Planning's East SoMa Plan would do that. A report in February, the latest from the Eastern Neighborhoods Community Planning Process, would rezone the Patels' southwest corner for 85 feet and increase its value. Insiders expect the plan to be adopted next February.

For Redevelopment to plow through the red tape to claim the Hugo with eminent domain before then seems as unlikely as Redevelopment's buying it this year, one committee member said.

"If the owner is willing to sell and we're willing to buy, we can move very fast," says Grisso. "So far, that's not been the case."

The Hugo was closed in 1987 after a fire, according to a Central City SRO Collaborative report. But a SOMPAC member, who says he knows the Patel family, says it wasn't until after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. Then it was gutted years later during seismic work. It was vacant for sure when Goggin launched his welcome, surrealistic touch on San Francisco's scab-

rous skid row.

But in recent years the neighborhood has changed its face, though it still struggles with its tough, crime-pocked complexion. Major change since January 2003 has come through the nonprofit Urban Solutions' Six on Sixth plan that offers businesses improvement loans through Redevelopment. Besides physical street changes, some area businesses have lost ugly wrinkles by using the loans for face-lifts.

An example is a half-block north of the Hugo. The Alder Hotel, a dismal SRO dump for years, got loans to upgrade its electrical system and renovated, painted and opened its boarded-up ground floor for attractive commercial rental space.

Encouraged by the trend, Raman Patel, no relation to the Hugo owner, spent \$1.5 million renovating the hotel he bought in 1992 next door to the Hugo at 1011 Howard. Patel added a story to make the oddly named Rayman Hotel four stories. It houses 85 formerly homeless seniors in the Mayor's Housing First program.

If the Hugo's owner rejects a reasonable offer from Redevelopment, the property becomes a candidate for eminent domain because the building is vacant, dilapidated and the owner has failed over many years to correct it. But Grisso cautions that the committee action is advisory, not a directive, which Redevelopment could ignore. If it didn't, the agency would need Redevelopment Commission approval to use eminent domain.

The Hugo is also more than a platform for Defenestration. It's a showcase for dozens of colorful and often amusing murals painted on its Howard and Sixth sides at sidewalk level.

"It's an icon in the artist community," committee member David Wilbur said. "I'd like the PAC to make sure it stays the center of the artistic legacy of the building." ■

This story is part of Central City Extra's expanded regular coverage of South of Market issues, people and concerns. The Extra's Community Calendar also includes items of interest in SoMa. We have assumed the community news responsibilities of the Southside Newsletter, a project funded by the Kosbland Committee of the San Francisco Foundation.



Defenestration seems to turn the Hugo Apartments inside out.

Eyewitness to the destruction of the central city

▶ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

again successful stands were made by the fire-fighters, and every time the flames flanked around on either side, or came up from the rear, and turned to defeat the hard-won victory.

An enumeration of the buildings destroyed would be a directory of San Francisco. An enumeration of the buildings undestroyed would be a line and several addresses. An enumeration of the deeds of heroism would stock a library and bankrupt the Carnegie medal fund. An enumeration of the dead—will never be made. All vestiges of them were destroyed by the flames. South of Market Street, where the loss of life was particularly heavy, was the first to catch fire.

Before the flames, throughout the night, fled tens of thousands of homeless ones. Some were wrapped in blankets. Others carried bundles of bedding and dear household treasures. Sometimes a whole family was harnessed to a carriage or delivery wagon that was weighted down with their possessions. Baby buggies, toy wagons, and go-carts were used as trucks, while every other person was dragging a truck. Yet everybody was gracious. The most perfect courtesy obtained. Never, in all San Francisco's history, were her people so kind and courteous as on this Wednesday night of terror.



Market Street Bank at Seventh and Market was still standing. Now it's the Grant Building.

At nine o'clock Wednesday evening I walked down through the very heart of the city. I walked through miles and miles of magnificent buildings and towering skyscrapers. Here was no fire. All was in perfect order. The police patrolled the streets. Every building had its watchman at the door. And yet it was doomed, all of it. There was no water. The dynamite was giving out. And at right angles two different conflagrations were sweeping down upon it.

Surrender was complete. There was no water. The sewers had long since been pumped dry. There was no dynamite. Another fire had broken out

further uptown, and now from three sides conflagrations were sweeping down. The fourth side had been burned earlier in the day. In that direction stood the tottering walls of the Examiner building, the burned-out Call building, the smoldering ruins of the Grand Hotel, and the gutted, devastated, dynamited Palace Hotel.

The following will illustrate the sweep of the flames and the inability of men to calculate their spread. At eight o'clock Wednesday evening I passed through Union Square. It was packed with refugees. Thousands of them had gone to bed on the grass. Government tents had been set up, supper was being cooked, and the refugees were lining up for free meals.

At half-past one in the morning three sides of Union Square were in flames. The fourth side, where stood the great St. Francis Hotel, was still holding out. An hour later, ignited from top and sides, the St. Francis



Market Street, patrolled by police, was in flames. This is the view at Stockton Street.

PHOTOS COURTESY CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

was flaming heavenward. Union Square, heaped high with mountains of trunks, was deserted. Troops, refugees, and all had retreated.

It was at Union Square that I saw a man offering a thousand dollars for a team of horses. He was in charge of a truck piled high with trunks from some hotel. It had been hauled here into what was considered safety, and the horses had been taken out. The flames were on three sides of the Square, and there were no horses.

Also, at this time, standing beside the truck, I urged a man to seek safety in flight. He was all but hemmed in by several conflagrations. He was an old man and he was on crutches. Said he: "To-day is my birthday. Last night I was worth thirty thousand dollars. I bought five bottles of wine, some delicate fish, and other things for my birthday dinner. I have had no dinner, and all I own are these crutches."

I convinced him of his danger and started him limping on his way. An hour later, from a distance, I saw the truck-load of trunks burning merrily in the middle of the street.

On Thursday morning, at a quarter past five, just twenty-four hours after the earthquake, I sat on the steps of a small residence on Nob Hill.

With me sat Japanese, Italians, Chinese, and negroes—a bit of the cosmopolitan flotsam of the wreck of the city. All about were the palaces of the nabob pioneers of Forty-nine. To the east and south, at right angles, were advancing two mighty walls of flame.

The old Mark Hopkins residence, a palace, was just catching fire. The troops were falling back and driving the refugees before them. From every side came the roaring of the flames, the crashing of the walls, and the detonations of dynamite.

I passed out of the house. Day was trying to dawn through the smoke-pall. A sickly light was creeping over the face of things. Once only the sun broke through the smoke-pall, blood-red, and showing quarter its usual size. The smoke-pall itself, viewed from beneath, was a rose color that pulsed and fluttered with lavender shades. Then it turned to mauve and yellow and dun. There was no sun. And so dawned the second day on stricken San Francisco.

An hour later I was creeping past the shattered dome of the City Hall. Than it there was no better exhibit of the destructive force of the earthquake. Most of the stone had been shaken from the great dome,

leaving standing the naked framework of steel. Market Street was piled high with the wreckage, and across the wreckage lay the overthrown pillars of the City Hall shattered into short crosswise sections.

This section of the city, with the exception of the Mint and the Post-Office, was already a waste of smoking ruins. Here and there through the smoke, creeping warily under the shadows of tottering walls, emerged occasional men and women. It was like the meeting of the handful of survivors after the day of the end of the world.

On Mission Street lay a dozen steers, in a neat row stretching across the street, just as they had been struck down by the flying ruins of the earthquake. The fire had passed through afterward and roasted them. The human dead had been carried away before the fire came. At another place on Mission Street I saw a milk wagon. A steel telegraph pole had smashed down sheer through the driver's seat and crushed the front wheels. The milk cans lay scattered around.

All day Thursday and all Thursday night, all day Friday and Friday night, the flames still raged.

Friday night saw the flames finally conquered, though not until Russian Hill and Telegraph Hill had been swept and three-quarters of a mile of wharves and docks had been licked up.

The great stand of the fire-fighters was made Thursday night on Van Ness Avenue. Had they failed here, the comparatively few remaining houses of the city would have been swept. Here were the magnificent residences of the second generation of San Francisco nabobs, and these, in a solid zone, were dynamited down across the path of the fire. Here and there the flames leaped the zone, but those fires were beaten out, principally by the use of wet blankets and rugs.

San Francisco, at the present time, is like the crater of a volcano, around which are camped tens of thousands of refugees. At the Presidio alone are

at least twenty thousand. All the surrounding cities and towns are jammed with the homeless ones, where they are being cared for by the relief committees. The refugees were carried free by the railroads to any point they wished to go, and it is estimated that over one hundred thousand people have left the peninsula on which San Francisco stood. The Government has the situation in hand, and, thanks to the immediate relief given by the whole United States, there is not the slightest possibility of a famine. The bankers and business men have already set about making preparations to rebuild San Francisco. ■

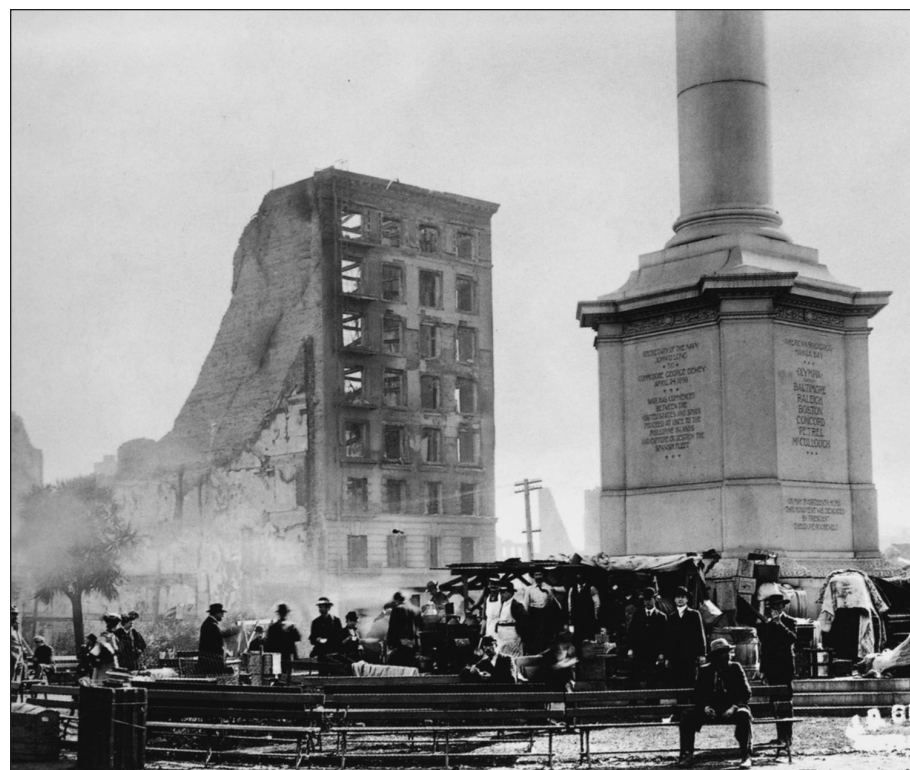
The full text of this edited excerpt from the May 5, 1906, issue of *Colliers Magazine* is in the anthology Jack London's *Golden State*, published by Heyday Books and available at the California Historical Society museum store on Mission Street near Third. The photographs are courtesy of the California Historical Society



The aptly named Majestic Theatre at 1281 Market St. was turned to rubble.



Golden Gate Avenue and Larkin Street after the quake, before the fire.



Union Square became packed with refugees housed in government tents.



This was what Van Ness Avenue between Bush and Pine streets looked like.



All that was left of the Jackson Brewery at Folsom and 11th streets.

Tot park reopens

Rain drags out repair of dangerous building next door

BY TOM CARTER

The Hyde and Turk Mini Park that children's advocates created four years ago as a haven for Tenderloin preschoolers reopened in late March after being closed five months because of concrete falling from the adjacent Cosmopolitan Apartments.

A Rec and Park spokesman said parents had complained that deteriorating concrete along a corner of the six-story building at 225 Hyde overlooking the park's north end might fall on the children.

"It's a 1920s building and that style of construction with the rebar so close to the concrete would never meet today's standard," said Jeff Lance, the Cosmopolitan's property manager.

The 70-foot-square park, bright with red and yellow playground equipment, features a 4-foot-high stationary wooden locomotive with two cars. Adults aren't allowed in unless accompanied by children. The park was locked on Oct. 31.

Scaffolding went up Dec. 2 and Lance said then that the \$100,000 job by Saarman Construction Inc. would take "several weeks." Bad weather delayed the work.

Rec and Park created the "tiny tot" park from a parking lot in spring 2001. A committee chaired by Women's and Children's Center Executive Director Midge Wilson started lobbying the city for a tots park in 1992. The city purchased the lot and the playground was designed by John Thomas of the Department of Public Works. ■

OBITUARIES

MELVIN BARNES Extremely private person

Lyric Hotel clerk Jim Yarborough remembers the last time he saw Melvin Barnes, a resident since 2000.

"It was shortly before he died. He asked me for change for a \$50, which by pure luck I had," Yarborough said. "Joy [Joy Harvey, Lyric case manager] took a few of his dollars and went out to get him some oatmeal. While she was out, he said to me, 'I'm leaving — I'm going home.' I think he knew he was going to pass on soon."

Mr. Barnes died in the hospital Feb. 14. He was 58.

Hotel residents at Mr. Barnes' Feb. 23 memorial knew little about him except that he was an extremely private person.

"He was a fair person, a good person to talk to, but one who didn't talk about what he was going through. He held it in," said Willie, who's lived at the Lyric for four years.

Anthony, another fellow tenant, agreed: "He kept in a lot of stuff."

Lyric Program Director Melissa Blizzard said Mr. Barnes had family in Milwaukee, two sisters, a brother and a son.

"He just didn't say much and he didn't show how much he was suffering," Blizzard said. "Still, we enjoyed the little we did get to know him. He was a really good person who cared about others. He must have

known the end was near because he called his family."

— MARJORIE BEGGS

LING KUAN HUANG Seamstress born in China

For the four children and two cousins of Ling Kuan Huang, grief was fresh at her Feb. 27 memorial. Her family joined 25 other mourners at the Alexander Residence, where Mrs. Huang had died just five days earlier. She was 72.

Born in China, Mrs. Huang came to San Francisco 15 years ago and was a seamstress at a clothing factory on Market Street. Her husband, said one cousin, had died many years ago.

The Rev. Glenda Hope of S.F. Network Ministries conducted the memorial, but seven people who shared memories of Mrs. Huang spoke at length in Cantonese, which was not interpreted.

Resident Jeanette Whitacre, the one person who spoke in English, said, "I didn't know her personally, but she did have a very warm smile and I hope she rests in peace."

After the memorial, Teresa Suen, the Alexander's activities coordinator, told The Extra that Mrs. Huang's fellow residents had emphasized her kindness.

"They said she helped other people in the building," Suen said, "and that she was always friendly and always smiling."

As a token from Mrs. Huang's family, everyone attending the memorial received a piece of candy and a small red envelope containing a coin or a small bill and another candy, a Chinese tradition, Suen explained. ■

— MARJORIE BEGGS



Melvin Barnes

100 YEARS LATER



SAN FRANCISCO RISING

1906 EARTHQUAKE AND FIRE COMMEMORATION

Join Mayor Gavin Newsom in celebrating the enduring spirit of the City of San Francisco

Traditional Memorial at Lotta's Fountain on Tuesday, April 18, 2006 at 4:30 am (Market & Kearny Streets)

Other Centennial Event Information: sfrising.org Emergency Preparedness: 72hours.org

Johnson & Johnson

Pacific Gas and Electric Company

WELLS FARGO

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Young's Market Company

THE ESTATES GROUP

See's CANDIES

TIMBUK

WINE

Laundromat opens in long-vacant laundry

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

For six years, the storefront at 372 Ellis was a hell hole, vacant except for the rats running freely and electrical wires hanging from the ceiling. Today, it's Blue Water Wash — a pristine, 30-washer, 30-dryer laundromat.

Why did owner Jeff Cleary take a 10-year lease in the heart of the Tenderloin?

"There are a lot of people here but not many clean, nice laundromats," he says. Cleary previously owned a laundromat in the Sunset District, on Taraval and 32nd Avenue. He sold that business and took on this new venture, sensing an unfilled need, he says.

Blue Water Wash, on the ground floor of a five-story, 32-unit apartment building, formerly was Ellis Street Laundry. Cleary says the space was vacant for so long because the building owner had a tough time finding a tenant. Besides rats and wires, there was a car parked in the middle of the floor.

"When I took over the lease in October 2004, the front of the building basically wasn't there," he says. "I think one of the tenants just drove her car in and left it there."

Blue Water's a sea change from that. Painted in crisp, nautical white with blue trim inside, the 1,800-square-foot space is well-lit and has gleaming new front-load washers in four sizes, a bank of dryers, big metal tables for folding laundry, colorful pictures above the dryers done by kids from the Tenderloin playground, and a mezzanine around three sides of the room where Cleary plans to add an Internet café. He redid the storefront in classy Deco-style glass brick that lets natural light into the space.

Neighbors seem happy with the new

business, which opened March 1, especially because they've had to wait so long for it, Cleary says. He was just about ready to open when a series of plumbing leaks from the floors above destroyed much of his work, even causing several sections of his ceiling to collapse.

When Urban Solutions surveyed ground floor uses for its *Tenderloin Neighborhood Profile* in 2004, it tallied 12 coin-op laundromats between Market, Van Ness, Post and Powell streets. Cleary says only new buildings and some renovated SROs in the TL have their own laundry facilities, leaving lots of people with dirty clothes and few places to get them clean.

"One nearby laundromat has 10 machines, but only five of them work. Some places are really expensive, too," Cleary says. "I think I'm a little lower-priced than my competitors."

Blue Water charges \$1.75, \$3.50, \$4.25 and \$5.50 a load for washers, depending on their size: The 19 smallest ones hold up to 20 pounds of laundry, the largest one 75 pounds — "fits two king-size quilts with room to spare," Cleary says. Dryers cost 25 cents for 10 minutes.

Blue Water Wash opens every day at 7 a.m., closes at 11 p.m. and there's always an

attendant on duty. Of the four attendants, who work in shifts, three live in the neighborhood, Cleary says.

Cleary likes to think that more and more neighbors will come to share one of his abiding pleasures: "I really like washing clothes. If the machines work well, the store is clean, and people have a nice, hassle-free place to do their wash, hopefully our customers will feel the same way." ■



PHOTO BY LENNY LIMJOCO

Jeff Cleary has a 10-year lease for his Blue Water Wash, just down Ellis Street from Glide.

SOUTHSIDE

SoMa Health Center plans to move, nearly double in size

The \$6-a-day parking lot on Seventh Street between Howard and Folsom will make way for a \$27 million South of Market Health Center and 49 units of affordable family housing. Groundbreaking begins next February.

The federally funded center for people who can't afford health care will move 1½ blocks from the converted warehouse that it has occupied for 31 years at 551 Minna. The center and Mercy Housing California are the project sponsors.

The health center treats 5,000 patients a year now, 40% of them dually diagnosed men, many from the Sixth Street corridor. About 15% of all clients come from the Tenderloin, according to Marilyn Griffin who heads the center's capital campaign.

With the addition of the new center, the number of patients served is

expected to jump to 8,000 a year, or 30,000 visits.

The new clinic will occupy the first two levels (20,000 square feet) of the five-story building. It will have 16 exam rooms (up from eight), five dental rooms (now there are two), an X-ray lab and pharmacy.

The three stories above the clinic, plus a separate four-story building that will be built at the back of the lot and face Moss Street, will contain 49 units of affordable housing for families below 60% of area median income.

Mercy Services Corp. will manage the units, 15% of which will be three-bedroom apartments and the rest one- and two-bedrooms.

Mercy Project Manager Rosalba Navarro says the project, called Westbrook Plaza, will be complete 16 months after construction starts. ■

— TOM CARTER

California

California is a garden of Eden, a Paradise to live in or to see.

But believe it or not, you won't find it so hot if you ain't got no do-re-mi.

— WOODY GUTHRIE



TENDERLOIN AIDS RESOURCE CENTER Outreach and Community Events April 2006

HIV Services Forum

Topic: All About Medicinal Marijuana

Speaker: Sean Lackey, Hope_net

Date/Time: Wednesday, April 19, 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm

Health Promotion Forum

Topic: Acupuncture and Nutrition

Speaker: Quan Yin, Healing Arts Center

Date/Time: Wednesday, April 26, 2006, 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm

Location for Forums: TARC, 191 Golden Gate Ave. light meal will be provided

Client Advisory Panel

Come talk with Alexander Fields, Consumer Board Representative; Tracy Brown, TARC's Executive Director and program managers about plans for TARC. Also provide input on new services and how we can improve.

Date/Time: Wednesday, April 12 11:30 am - 1 pm; Wednesday, April 26, 11:30 am - 1 pm

Volunteer for TARC

Orientations: Sunday, April 9, 10 am - 5 pm (lunch provided)

Sunday, April 23, 10 am - 5 pm (lunch provided)

183 Golden Gate Ave.

You must register for volunteer trainings. Stop in/call David (415) 934-1792.

For current groups' schedule or for more information call: 415.431.7476 or go to www.tarc.org

TARC TENDERLOIN AIDS RESOURCE CENTER

health promotion • social services • HIV housing
For more information visit www.tarc.org

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SPECIAL EVENTS

Earthquake and fire centennial event, free walking tours of the Barbary Coast every Saturday in April, 10 a.m.-noon. Guides tell stories of tragedies and triumphs along the route. Meet at the Old Mint, Fifth and Mission. More information at www.sfhistory.org.

Financial literacy workshops, two free sessions plus light refreshments, 11 a.m., police station Community Room, 301 Eddy, sponsored by Northeast Community Federal Credit Union. April 12: How to Do Your Budgeting; April 19: How to Manage Your Credit. Information: 434-0738.

Boeddeker Park Family Fun Day, Sat., April 22, 1-5 p.m. Barbecue, skits, children's entertainment and giveaways of Easter baskets, clothing and food. Sponsored by the San Francisco Lighthouse Church. Information: 440-4464.

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

CMHS Consumer Council, 3rd Monday of the month, 5:30-7:30, CMHS, 1380 Howard, Rm. 537. Contact: 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. Contact: 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 homecare and improved discharge planning. Light lunch served. Contact: Aaron Wagner, 703-0188 x304.

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

Mental Health Board, 2nd Wednesday of the month, 6:30-8:30 p.m., CMHS, 1380 Howard, Rm. 537. CMHS advisory committee, open to the public. Contact: 255-3474.

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

SAFETY

Crime and Safety Committee, meets bimonthly on the Wednesday after the first Monday, SOMPAC, 1035 Folsom, 6 p.m. Information: 487-2166 or www.sompac.com.

North of Market NERT, bimonthly meeting. Contact 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 Lisa Block, 538-8100 ext. 202 lblock@iisf.org.

Tenderloin Police Station Community Meeting, last Tuesday of the month, 6 p.m., police station Community Room, 301 Eddy. Contact 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, contact Betty Traynor at the Neighborhood Parks Council, 621-3260.

Community Leadership Alliance, a chartered democratic organization. Quarterly informational forums with guest presenters and speakers, sharing news of upcoming events, proposals, resources. Meetings are first Thursday in Jan, April, July, Oct. Location information: David Villa-Lobos, admin@CommunityLeadershipAlliance.net

Friends of Boeddeker Park, 2nd Thursday of the month, 5-6:30 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: 554-9532

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 street.

North of Market Planning Coalition, 3rd Wednesday of the month, 6 p.m., 301 Eddy. Contact: 820-1412. TL 2000, neighborhood planning.

North of Market/Tenderloin Community Benefit District, 1st Thursday of the month, noon, 111 Jones conference room. Interim board meeting. Contact Elaine Zemora, district manager, 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. Contact: SOMPAC office, 487-2166.

Tenderloin Futures Collaborative, 2nd Wednesday of the month, 10 a.m., Tenderloin Police community room, 301 Eddy. Contact Jerry Jai 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. Contact: 554-6789. Open to the public.

Senior Action Network, general meeting, second Thursday, 10 a.m.-noon, St. Mary's Cathedral. Monthly committee meetings, 975 Mission #700. Fundraising, first Thursday, 2 p.m.; Pedestrian Safety, second Friday, 10 a.m.; Sr. Housing Action, third Wednesday, 1:30; Health, last Thursday, 1:30. Information: 546-1333.

SUPERVISORS' COMMITTEES City Hall, Room 263

Budget Committee Daly, Dufty, Peskin, Thursday, 1 p.m.

City Services Committee McGoldrick, Dufty, Ma, first and third Monday, 1 p.m.

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

Big candidate turnout for Democratic forum in TL

BY TOM CARTER

Democrats at a March 15 forum in the Tenderloin described their "party of hope" as adrift but moving closer to a navigable course after beating Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger-supported initiatives in November.

Candidates for the District 13 Democratic County Central Committee also said their goal is taking back the Capitol, Congress and throwing President Bush and the right wing out of the White House. Voters turned back initiatives on teacher tenure, union dues, redistricting and school funding.

Committee member and candidate Robert Haaland, a transgender man who received the fourth highest number of votes when elected two years ago, said "last November was about real people coming together," but it wasn't enough. The party needs diversity, he said, and "think tanks" to determine people's needs. "Seventy-five percent of my people don't have jobs," Haaland said. "We're the beacon for the left agenda and for the things that are of everyday concern."

Other major candidate concerns were affordable housing, health care, the environment, ethnic leadership and the need to pull the Green Party and independents into the Democratic circle.

Nineteen of 23 registered candidates for the County Central Committee showed up at the TL police community room, nearly outnumbering the audience. Even so, the candidate turnout was a success for the seven sponsoring groups.

The candidates are vying for 12 seats on the June 6 primary ballot. Ten incumbents are seeking reelection. Meeting monthly, the committee endorses state and local candidates and ballot measures and passes resolutions that it takes to the state Democratic Convention. It also registers voters and gets out the vote.

Moderator Richard Allman, a former committee member, allotted the candidates four minutes each

for statements. Some floated proposals. Rodney Hauge favored lowering the voting age to 15 and allowing age-based, weighted voting with someone over 100 getting 12 votes. Jordanna Thigpen called Democrats "the party of hope," and said Central Committee fund-raisers throughout California could raise a \$1 million war chest.

Chairwoman Leslie Katz, a former supervisor (1996-2001) who got the second highest number of votes two years ago, said Central Committee meetings are sometimes "contentious." But she was proud that the committee successfully fought the governor's "mean-spirited initiatives." Responding to a question, she admitted minority representation in the party is low. "Actually, we haven't done a good job of recruiting others into politics."

Rick Hauptman, North Mission Neighborhood Alliance co-president, recalled working for the Johnson-Humphrey ticket in 1964 but said the party left him, a feeling voiced by several other candidates and two audience members.

Laura Spanjian said she was encouraged by the way sometimes-feuding LGBT groups had unified to defeat Schwarzenegger's initiatives. She had been disillusioned, too, that the party had left her. But the 58% voter turnout in November, she said, was higher than expected. "People didn't think we could do it," she said, adding, "and there was not one lesbian issue on the ballot. If we can do that to defeat things we can do even better to win things."

The Tenderloin's Bruce Windrem got the evening's biggest applause after suggesting the district should emulate Oregon where "grassroots" politics are closer to the people. "When I came here 16 years ago," Windrem said, "I couldn't stomach the (Democratic) platform. People need a say in the platform, like in Oregon. And the party needs to be in touch all year, not just during a crisis. We need to take back control of the necessities like food and transportation. We need to be our own party."

But no one got a simple message across better than Sue Bierman, the final speaker. The former supervisor, who got more votes in 2004 than any committee member, admitted being a "little selfish" for running again. But "I love being on this committee." Its main job, she explained, is distributing its slate of recommendations.

"People don't know how to vote," Bierman said. "And if we do anything, we better get those slate cards out."

The sponsoring organizations were: Alliance for a Better District 6, Central City SRO Collaborative, North of Market Planning Coalition, North Mission Neighborhood Alliance, TACPAC, Tenant Associations Coalition of San Francisco and Tenant Rights Association. ■

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