

# Crime climbs, arrests fall in Tenderloin

## Drug busts lead the way in 2005 report

BY TOM CARTER

IT was 7 p.m. sometime in mid-March when a man with two bullets in his back staggered a hundred or so feet down the sidewalk from the St. Boniface Church gate where he was shot collapsing at the door of the Tenderloin AIDS Resource Center.

TARC staff called 911. Police and an ambulance were there right away. Witnesses described the shooter to police, then rode in a patrol car to U.N. Plaza looking for the suspect. They spotted him and he was arrested. The episode didn't last 30 minutes.

Hank Wilson, TARC Community Center manager, told the story to the Police Commission when the commissioners met in the Tenderloin at 201 Turk St. on March 29. Wilson was illustrating how the community works with the police against serious crime in the area.

"People came forward at once," Wilson said, "and police were there at once. It's a great example of community policing. When multiple witnesses come forward, more will come."

The commissioners seemed impressed by this and the supporting comments of a half dozen other residents

who praised TL Capt. Kathryn Brown's approach to community policing while complaining about the relentless dope dealing and lack of cops on the street. Ultimately, the commissioners heard what they already knew: More uniforms equals less crime.

The strolling beat cop is practically a thing of the past in the Tenderloin. Brown says she can't staff the three TL foot patrol sectors because of budget constraints. Manning radio cars is first priority. Those officers frequently get out of their cars to be on the street, she says, although they can't venture far from their radios. Rarely, and only with overtime dollars, can Brown put a cop on a beat, she says.

Drug trafficking is the major reason the Tenderloin had the second most arrests among San Francisco's 10 police districts in 2005, though TL's population is a fraction of the others, according to statistics Capt. Brown presented to the commission. It was her annual neighborhood crime report, and she went over the highlights.

Figures showed crime in most categories up in 2005, and calls to the police were up, but arrests overall were down slightly.

TL police, sometimes working with the narcotics detail, the state Bureau of Narcotics, the FBI, DEA and other law-enforcement agencies, made 4,823 arrests in 2005, 6%

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PUBLISHED BY THE SAN FRANCISCO STUDY CENTER

MAY 2006

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# CENTRAL CITY



SAN FRANCISCO

## NEW HOPE FOR BINDLESTIFF



PHOTOS BY LENNY LIMJOCO

Bindlestiff board members Alex Torres (left) and Bryan Pangilinan in the Sixth Street theater.

# STIFFED!

## City knocked artists for \$1 million loop

BY TOM CARTER

SOUTHSIDE

THE threadbare band of young Filipino artists who in the 1990s gave life to Bindlestiff Theater in the grimy Plaza Hotel on Sixth Street couldn't have imagined how the plot would twist — and their fortunes turn — in their struggle to keep the space.

At one point in 2000, a sweet deal from

a nonprofit developer offered Bindlestiff a pristine 99-seat theater for \$1. But Mayor Willie Brown stepped in and nixed that. Months later, with the nonprofit developer out of the picture, the artists said they faced a bill of \$1 million. That's the amount Bindlestiff figured the Redevelopment Agency would eventually want for improvements to the theater shell, although the agency's estimate four years ago was \$750,000.

Now, all deals are off until Bindlestiff, the nation's only Filipino performing arts theater, gets a new contract from the Redevelopment Agency Commission. In a newfound relationship, Bindlestiff will be working with Redevelopment Agency staff to replace the three-year contract that expired Dec. 31. Then Bindlestiff will have to find nearly \$500,000, a renegotiated figure, to bring the new theater to fruition. To raise that amount, the first source they'll consider will be the Rincon Hill Community Stabilization Fund, which the Redevelopment Commission authorized the agency to pursue last month.

Meanwhile, the theater shell earmarked for Bindlestiff at 185 Sixth St. under the new 115-unit Plaza Apartments lies fallow like a high-ceiling bomb shelter.

In 2000, the agency, busy reviving the Sixth Street Corridor that passes for skid

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The box office is just behind the storefront of the theater at 185 Sixth St.



# GOOD NEWS for...

**150 PEOPLE AND COUNTING** A year ago, the Drug Overdose Prevention and Education (DOPE) project reported that it had trained more than 500 people to recognize overdose symptoms and how to respond, including using naloxone to reverse the overdose; 82 lives were saved. Today, DOPE says it's trained 200 more people and the number of lives saved by naloxone has jumped to 150. And more good news: S.F. Public Health reported in November that while statewide stats on fatal ODs ballooned 42% from 1998 to 2004, the number in San Francisco fell during those years from 178 to 144. "Death from drug overdose is at its lowest level in nearly a decade," DPH said. The reason was clear, the report concluded: "San Francisco has embraced a number of harm reduction practices . . . the first county in the state to publicly fund naloxone distribution." Information on DOPE training, (510) 440-6969 ext. 16 or [www.harmreduction.org/OVERDOSE](http://www.harmreduction.org/OVERDOSE).

**VOTERS WITH DISABILITIES** Four years into the Help America Vote Act, and San Franciscans with impaired sight and mobility will get a ballot-marking voting machine they operate themselves, ensuring privacy and independent voting. AutoMARK has a touch screen, zoom feature to increase font size, Braille touch pad, sip/puff device, and audio instructions and ballot selections in English, Spanish and Chinese. Under the act, every polling place must accommodate disabled voters with such machines as well as physical access to the site. An AutoMARK also is installed at City Hall on the ground floor, available to voters 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. starting May 8, when early voting begins. Information: Department of Elections, 554-4375.

**READERS WITH IMPAIRED SIGHT** The Library for the Blind and Print Disabled soon will have automatic doors, making the collection on the second floor of the Main Library a lot more accessible to sight-impaired patrons. The doors were funded from a bequest left to the Library for the Blind by Marge Falk. "Marge had been coming here for 10 or 15 years," says Martin Magid, the special library's manager. "I think she was completely blind by the time she passed away about five years ago." In her trust, she left \$70,000 to the Library for the Blind. The new doors cost \$19,000, and the rest of the bequest, says Magid, will be used as needs arise. Among the library's collections and many services are talking books, calculators, dictionaries and library catalogs; Braille signs and a Braille embosser (printer); closed-circuit televisions; descriptive videos for home and library use; large-print books and newspapers; and computers with screen magnification. Information and hours: 557-4253.

If you have some good news, send it to [marjorie@studycenter.org](mailto:marjorie@studycenter.org) or [tom@studycenter.org](mailto:tom@studycenter.org).

## Pavilion morphs into housing only

*Glide, TNDC to replace dream with 2 buildings, 137 units*

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

**E**LEVEN years ago, North of Market Planning Coalition dreamed up the idea of a big-time development that would bring a small convention center, more housing and jobs into the Tenderloin. Called the Pavilion, it would sprawl along Mason between Eddy and Ellis and would cost "tens of millions of dollars," said NOMPC's Lower Eddy plan.

The Pavilion, with a \$67 million price tag, became the centerpiece of the Lower Eddy/Leavenworth Task Force, which got \$6.8 million from the city for the housing component.

The project's history was ragged: euphoric predictions of how it would stimulate the neighborhood's economy, disappointment when two housing bond measures failed that might have given it a boost, and continued assurances to the community that the Pavilion was still alive. By 2004, its budget had ballooned to \$250 million and included 10,000 square feet of retail space, 400 apartments, parking for 500 cars and 10,000 square feet of below-market rental space for nonprofits.

Then, a year ago at a Tenderloin Futures Collaborative meeting, Don Falk, now executive director of TNDC, a partner in the project, announced that the dream was dead though some housing was still feasible.

Glide Economic Development Corp., the nonprofit formed in 2000 to take over the Pavilion project, never was able to buy more than four of the 12 parcels involved, despite support from its other partners: the Mayor's Office of Housing, Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Fund, San Francisco Hilton, S.F. Convention Facilities Department and Parking Authority.

Last month, the Collaborative heard what will go into the lots on Mason: two buildings, one with 81 apartments for families, the other with 56 studios for the formerly homeless. GEDC owns both buildings, and TNDC is a partner in building the studios. After construction, it withdraws and GEDC becomes the sole owner.

Architects Larry Mayers of Michael Willis Architects, designer of Glide's Community House, and Tom Brutting

of the firm Hardson Kamatsu Ivelich & Tucker made the presentations. Also at the meeting to answer questions was Paula Collins, founder and CEO of real estate developer WDG Ventures, which also had been involved in the Pavilion project.

The family housing, Mayers said, will rise eight stories on Mason, then step back and go up six stories. The main floor has offices, a community room and classrooms, and the basement contains a 14-car garage. One-bedroom units will be about 700 square feet, two-bedrooms 1,000 square feet and three-bedrooms 1,200 square feet.

YMCA Director Carmella Gold asked why only 14 parking spaces. Mayers explained that inner-city projects are allowed many exclusions to the one unit-one parking space requirement.

"How's this building going to interface with what's going on around it commercially?" asked community activist Richard Allman.

Mayers said the lobby will have a lot of glass, "to make it more like a hotel lobby."

"Rents?" asked S.F. Rescue Mission's Chaplain Early Rogers.

"We're targeting this building at 50%-60% of the area median income," said Collins. "We want a range of rents, from that AMI down to very low for the formerly homeless."

Jim Thompson, property manager at 165 Turk, asked Collins about the façade: "Do you have plans to have minimal 'notches' in the front?"

She understood the question immediately: "Yes, we'll keep them at a minimum. There'll be no places for problems" — clandestine activities, dangerous or possibly illegal, that can be hidden away from streetlights and prowling police cars.

Brutting ran down specs on the other building: eight stories, ground floor: offices and conference room, 1,000 square feet of commercial space, a reception desk manned 24/7.

"The studios, each with its own bathroom and kitchen area, are 335 to 450 square feet," he said. "Every floor will have laundry facilities, and on each floor four studios will face the street and four will face the back."

Will both buildings go up simultaneously?

"The financing sources will be separate, so that may be impossible," Collins answered.

The family housing budget is \$40 million, the homeless studios \$22 million. The money will come from the city, tax credits and deferred loans from the state Multifamily Housing Program.

Lynn Valente, associate director of the Market Street Association, wondered about the two different populations, side by side.

"Children and the homeless — what are your thoughts about safe cohabitation?" Valente asked.

"The design can help and so will having good managers," Collins answered.

The word "Pavilion" was never mentioned by the Mason Street project principals, nor did anyone around the table raise its specter in their questions.

### WESTSIDE STILL LOOKING

"I'm here to update you on the trials and tribulations of trying to relocate three of our programs," began Abner Boles, executive director of Westside Community Mental Health Center.

For the third time in five months, Westside came calling at the Collaborative with news about its search to move three of its programs, now operated out of a building on Turk near Gough.

First it looked at a site on Golden Gate near Leavenworth. The Tenderloin community hated that idea and told Boles so at a December meeting.

That location fell through when the property owner, Paul Bochetti, who had told Westside he was willing to rent to them, decided to sell the building.

The next location was the Warfield Building.

"Turns out they're getting a better deal renting that ground-floor space to retailers," Boles explained. "Now we're looking at other sites — 1095 Market and an old church at Divisadero and McAllister. We need 23,000 square feet; we'll keep exploring, in and out of the Tenderloin — any place on God's earth that works and makes sense for the programs."

There were no questions for Boles. ■

**CENTRAL CITY EXTRA!**  
SAN FRANCISCO

*CENTRAL CITY EXTRA is published monthly by San Francisco Study Center Inc., a private nonprofit serving the community since 1972. The Extra was initiated through grants from the S.F. Hotel Tax Fund and the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund. The contents are copyrighted by the San Francisco Study Center, 1095 Market Street, Suite 602, San Francisco, CA 94103.*

**PHONE:** (415) 626-1650  
**FAX:** (415) 626-7276  
**E-MAIL:** [centralcityextra@studycenter.org](mailto:centralcityextra@studycenter.org)  
**EDITOR AND PUBLISHER:** Geoffrey Link  
**SENIOR WRITER/EDITOR:** Marjorie Beggs  
**REPORTERS:** Tom Carter, Anne Marie Jordan, Ed Bowers  
**DESIGN AND LAYOUT:** Lenny Limjoco  
**DESIGN CONSULTANT:** Don McCartney  
**PHOTOGRAPHERS:** Lenny Limjoco, Mark Ellinger  
**CONTRIBUTORS:** John Goins, Adrian D. Varnedoe, Diamond Dave, William Crain, Mark Hedin, John Burks, Eric Robertson  
**DISTRIBUTION:** Ed Bowers  
**EDITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE:** David Baker, Michael Nulty, Debbie Larkin, Nicholas Rosenberg, Brad Paul, Tariq Alazraie

Central City Extra is a member of the  
SAN FRANCISCO NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSPAPER  
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# Crime climbs, arrests fall in Tenderloin

*Police Commission hears stories of how cops, community cooperate*

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less than the 5,149 in 2004. Only adjacent Southern police district, which contains SoMa, had more arrests, yet the Tenderloin is 1% the size of Southern and has 5,200 fewer people.

Just about all her year-end TL crime statistics are related to drugs, she said. In introducing her report, Brown's word choice drew an unexpected laugh — albeit a dark one — when she said, "Narcotics is the most prevalent crime in the Tenderloin — and drug activity continues here with such enthusiasm."

## DEALERS COMMUTE TO TENDERLOIN

Tenderloin is known around the Bay Area as drug trafficking turf, Brown said. It attracts an increasing raft of "commuter" dealers from Oakland and Richmond. She cited the hot spots: Market Street, U.N. Plaza, and most Lower Eddy street corners.

Dealers commute to TL because the consequences of arrest "are minimal here," Brown said, a point that has been a consistent theme at her monthly police meetings. "They get arrested and are out the next day." Drug arrests, 25% of the TL total, were 2,224 in 2005, up 5.8% in a year.

"Almost as soon as officers leave the station, they are making arrests," Brown said. "I don't know how it's possible to make any more." Every officer averages about 34 drug arrests a year.

Brown's idea to clean up the scene is to clean up the addicts.

"Drug addicts bring a violent element to the neighborhood, and we as a city have to make rehabilitation available," she said. "It has to be mandated instead of jail time. It should be at the top of our priorities."

"When there are addicts, they create crimes," Brown said. "And the calls for service have gone up."

In 2005, Tenderloin police got 76,370 calls for service, a 6.5% increase over 2004.

Robberies increased over the previous year, 335 in 2005 compared with 288; aggravated assaults, 273, up from 254; homicides, 7, up from 5; stolen vehicles, 153, up from 144; and a spike in rape cases, 20, up from 9.

About half the assault cases resulted in arrests. But in other categories, unless an arrest is made at the crime scene, or soon afterward, the case is turned over to special units to investigate.

But there were half as many arson cases in 2005, just 5, compared with 11 in 2004, usually fires caused by the homeless, Brown said. And burglaries, down 22%, were 238 in 2005 compared with 306 in '04.

The Office of Citizen Complaints received 75 complaints from the TL in 2005, nearly half again more than the 53 in 2004. Use of force allegations were down by a third, to 31 in 2005.

## DIVERSITY REQUIRES SPECIAL HANDLING

Add to the addicts, the dealers who prey on them, the homeless, the poor, parolees, seniors, disabled and a rainbow of ethnicities and you have an unusual diversity that requires special handling, "tolerance, listening and compassion," Brown told the commissioners. Among the 90 TL station personnel at least one speaks: Armenian, American Sign Language, Cantonese, Gaelic, German, Italian, Korean, Spanish, Tagalog, Toisan and Vietnamese. And the way recruits learn the ropes in the TL, she

said, is not through Police Academy courses but by on-the-job training on the street where they also meet the "vibrant" law-abiding side of the neighborhood and its "hard-working" folks.

After TARC's Wilson concluded his comments with a plea for sidewalk needle receptacles, so "we'd see less of them on the street," most of the residents who followed continued with complaints. But they also praised the police presence and requested more foot patrols.

"I have never seen such aggressive drug peddling," said one woman who works for Clean City and employs people in recovery. "And it's in public places. We need to walk and play in the neighborhood."

Two store owners complained of "increased drug activity." One, turning to address the police brass in the front row, said: "It's your black eye. This thing goes on after you leave. I walk my kids on Taylor and when it's clean (clear), I thank you."

"To what extent is the community involved with arrests?" asked Commissioner David Campos.

"The community isn't reluctant to step forward," Capt. Brown said. "People are willing to say what they see."

"Would additional beats have a significant effect in reducing crime?" asked commission Vice President Theresa Sparks, chairing the meeting for absent President Louise Renne.

"Yes," Brown said, "Boeddeker Park is an example."

Dealers had returned to the park a few months ago, and citizen complaints led Brown to put an officer in the park five days a week. "In a month," Brown said, "it was pristine," sans dealers.

Commissioner Joe Marshall said the resident cooperation Brown gets is enviable.

"I'd like to hear this from other districts," he said. "I don't know what you're doing, but I'd like to see it elsewhere."

## SOLVING A LATE-NIGHT PROBLEM

One example of community policing Brown cited was at Ellis and Taylor. Presentation Senior Community and Glide are working through the Police Department to solve a late night problem. Presentation residents had complained about sidewalk encampments, noise and shooting up in the Glide parking lot.

"Glide is going to its budget committee for flood lights," she said. "And DPW is getting on board with sidewalk cleaning. It's all part of community policing. Our part is law

enforcement. But everyone puts something into the pie."

Within the last year, Brown said, U.N. Plaza has become a bazaar of stolen goods. Police have increased their patrolling and work in collaboration with the fencing detail. It's common for thieves to rip off department stores such as Macys, Neiman Marcus and The Gap, and sell the goods at the plaza within an hour. One recent arrest, she said, led to an apartment filled with stolen goods estimated at \$150,000, store price tags still attached.

Elaine Zamora, general manager of the North of Market Community Benefit District, told the commissioners that the Tenderloin is a victim of a self-perpetuating image. Zamora related a joke going around about how the mayor was jogging through the neighborhood and could see the drug-dealing all around him. The question arose: What can be done about it? The answer: Don't jog in the Tenderloin.

"The perception outsiders have," Zamora said, "is that it's okay to come to the Tenderloin and misbehave. We have to combat that on a daily basis."

Brown acknowledged Zamora and activists David Villa-Lobos, the brothers Michael and John Nulty, and Terrance Alan for their vigilance on behalf of the neighborhood. She in turn received a certificate of recognition for her work from Villa-Lobos' Community Leadership Alliance. From the Alliance for a Better District 6, she accepted a plaque honoring the Tenderloin Task Force which preceded creation of the TL police district and station in 2000. Brown was a Task Force sergeant in the 1990s.

As the meeting concluded, Sparks said the commissioners would take the neighborhood's sentiments to the mayor.

"I hope you'll support us in putting more police on the street," she said, pretty much pledging what everyone wanted to hear. ■

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# New hope for Bindlestiff as city, theater renew relationship

► CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

row, bought the SRO hotel for \$1.8 million to build low-cost housing. Redevelopment appeared ready to award the contract to rebuild the Plaza to SoMa non-profit developer TODCO, the only outfit answering the request for proposals. TODCO proposed building 115 units and a theater it would sell to Bindlestiff for \$1.

"They could own the theater separately," John Elberling, TODCO CEO, said in an interview. "They talked it over and said yes. But it didn't go far."

The commission delivered a shocking 4-3 vote in October to reject TODCO. Then came an even bigger surprise at that same meeting. The commission voted to create its own nonprofit developer, the Public Initiative Development Corp., for the sole purpose of rebuilding the four-story Plaza, after 20 years of bidding low-cost housing to nonprofits.

Mayor Willie Brown had directed Redevelopment to become its own developer of low-cost housing, Elberling said.

"This was payback," he said. "Willie told Chantel Walker, the commission president, to vote it down." Walker, a Brown appointee, quit a few months later.

Elberling said he and the mayor were on opposite sides of the city's explosive downtown growth issue. Elberling supported the slow-growth Prop L in the 2000 November election. Brown vigorously fought it

when it was clear his own initiative, Prop K, was not going to win. Prop K would have doubled the prevailing limit on the amount of office space, and it had more exemptions than Prop L. Both failed.

"It's my personal viewpoint that Willie was sending a message to the nonprofit developers that didn't get behind him on Prop K when he made Redevelopment its own developer. He was saying this is what happens if you don't stay in line politically."

Calls over two days and an e-mail request for Brown's reaction went unanswered.

Bindlestiff and TODCO had the support of SoMa residents, and students and professors from S.F. State, Stanford and Cal. Two protest rallies against the commission action were held later in October on the steps of City Hall. But nothing changed.

In 2003, making way for construction, the agency kicked Bindlestiff out of the old Plaza and relocated it around the corner.

The Plaza Apartments were completed early this year and included what would be Bindlestiff's main floor entrance and box office space with the theater in the basement.

"We wanted them to move into it," says Mike Grisso, Redevelopment's SoMa project manager. "If it weren't for Bindlestiff, we wouldn't have built the shell. It would have been other new low-cost housing. But we want to support art projects."

Bindlestiff was to ante \$500,000 to \$750,000 for tenant improvements to equip and furnish the theater. So far, according to one board member, Bindlestiff has raised \$20,000.

This month, Redevelopment is expected to extend a grant agreement with Bindlestiff to the end of the year. The original three-year, \$300,000 grant earmarked \$75,000 to stimulate matching grants for the theater. The remaining \$225,000 was for moving expenses and to help Bindlestiff stay afloat during construction, hire architects, a project manager and a fund-raiser. It expired last December when Bindlestiff was in organizational disarray. About \$100,000 is left, Grisso says, but Bindlestiff can't have it until a contract is in place.

Meanwhile, the theater's activities barely support it. It has one paid employee, the manager, assisted by dozens of volunteers. It is "hanging by its fingernails on the edge of the arts scene," says SomArts Director Jack Davis. He has

## SOUTHSIDE

known the group since it began and last year he rented Bindlestiff the SomArts theater for its annual rock and roll show. "It's extremely healthy what they are trying to do," Davis says. "And they are doing a good job of keeping alive what they are doing in a distressed neighborhood, and reinventing themselves. But they've little resources to fall back on and economic pressures are squeezing people out. The Filipino population has even more elements threatening it, forcing it to leave the neighborhood. I've dealt with three or four generations (of staff) at Bindlestiff and they have my respect. It's a heroic struggle for them."

An extension would be a second chance and a ray of hope among other shards of encouragement that have surfaced in the last two months. The theater group is in recovery mode after being unable to contend with the theater buildout costs.

Bindlestiff is well situated in SoMa, where the Filipino community is estimated to be 30% of the population. The 3-year old Bayanihan House at Sixth and Mission, which Redevelopment rebuilt, using TODCO, has a ground-floor Filipino Cultural Center on the spot World War II Filipino veterans gathered socially when it was the Delta Hotel that was destroyed by fire. Across the street from Bindlestiff is Cher's Grill House, a Filipino restaurant for 11 years.

Three blocks away is Bessie Carmichael Elementary School where 59% of the enrollment is Filipino. Between Sixth and Seventh on Folsom, a SoMa park is being built on the old Bessie school site. There's a move to name it after Victoria Manalo Draves, a Filipina, who in 1948 became the first woman in Olympic history to win two gold medals in diving.

Since 1997, the original theater and the current, modest one at 505 Natoma off Sixth, have been a stage for Filipino original drama, film, puppetry, arts workshops and community outreach, plus a venue for visiting cultural activities. It was in 1997 that then-artistic director Allan Manalo "transformed the theater into the cultural epicenter for Filipino American performing arts in the Bay Area," according to the Bindlestiff's Web site.

But its origins go back to 1989 when a group of 15 Filipino actors, writers and artists formed Teatro ng Tanan (theater for everyone), to create and perform plays targeted for Filipino audiences. But TnT (a tease also on the Tagalog phrase tago ng tago, meaning always hiding illegal aliens) had no venue and worked out of an office on 16th Street.

By 1997, TnT had split up. Some members went to a residual group, Tongue in a Mood, and started looking for a theater space.

"We had heard of Bindlestiff theater and Chrystene Ells who founded it," says Alex Torres a director, writer, actor, musician and graphic artist, and a member of both groups.

Ells, a Canadian, had discovered the vacant storefront at 185 Sixth a few years before and fixed up the space to do theater, workshops and outreach to neighborhood kids. The Bindlestiff name was her creation, inspired by the environment. It's the opposite of a working stiff. It comes from the Depression and means hobo. Bindle is slang for bundle or bedroll; it's also a junkie's drug paraphernalia.

"It was a cool name," Torres says. "And yeah, we were hobo artists. It's our Bindlestiff now. It was a metamorphosis. But it's open to other theater. It would be hard to justify if it had a Filipino name. It's just theater and still Filipino-centered."

In 2002, Redevelopment was relocating hotel tenants. For Bindlestiff, it found a smaller venue at 505 Natoma, around the corner from the Plaza.

Some artists, like Torres, believed the money Redevelopment was asking for the new theater would amount to more than the \$750,000 high end the agency estimated.

"Bindlestiff was in the throes of raising \$1 million — that's the figure we were using — when things started going wrong," said Torres, a former member of the San Francisco Mime Troupe. "I was asked to be on the board but I declined. I thought it was foolish, facing that much money to raise."

"But they were young artists, and who were they to say anything? Maybe it was wrong people, wrong time. Reports weren't getting submitted. And I didn't understand how it could be so expensive. It seemed ostentatious. We were artists doing art in a small cheap place." He pauses. "Even so, we had to fly legit."

After being "out of the inner circle for a couple of years," Torres joined the board in 2005 after he had been asked to direct a play at the Natoma Street Bindlestiff. The board had a lot of new faces, he said. Some left. Eight now remain. He learned of the contract with the city and its December deadline when Bindlestiff was to have raised \$165,000. Bindlestiff didn't have it. All it had was a goal of \$465,000. It was the bare bones figure for lights, sound proofing, construction of bathrooms, dressing rooms and box office that the Redevelopment architects said were needed. It was

a step down from whatever \$1 million or \$750,000 would buy, but Redevelopment agreed to it.

Still, Bindlestiff was not yet credible.

"We want to support art projects," says Redevelopment's Grisso. "But they (Bindlestiff) need to build, too. That was the goal behind the grant agreement. We don't give out all the money. They've got to help. That was the case with Bayanihan House, too. They paid for tenant improvements."

In meetings that Grisso and Redevelopment Director Marica Rosen had with board members Torres, Bindlestiff manager Bryan Pangilinan and photographer-SoMa community organizer Angelica Cabande, the agency stressed how Bindlestiff needed to measure up to its responsibility. The agency could have cut the theater loose. But seeing that the three board members weren't going to give up, kept a possible future alive.

Things took an upward turn in March and April. The commission authorized Redevelopment staff to seek Rincon Hill mitigation funds for Bindlestiff and the Alice Street Community Gardens in Yerba Buena Park. The mayor's office granted Bindlestiff \$60,000 to develop a green room, or performers' waiting room, in the theater shell, but only after it secured a lease. On April 17, SOMPAC recommended to the agency that it extend the Bindlestiff contract and that the two staffs work together "to develop a new time line and appropriate milestones."

To board member Cabande, who was at the meeting, it represented "a new relationship," she said. "There had been a lack of understanding before. We want to be professional, we want a mutual relationship with both parties being accountable."

The next night the Redevelopment Commission, not yet in receipt of the resolution, appeared to have a change of heart, says Torres, who attended the meeting. Bindlestiff wasn't on the agenda but it was referenced through another item. "And the commissioners that were attacking us before were now smiling and speaking up for us," he says. "It was mind-boggling."

In early May, Bindlestiff was elected to a seat on SOMPAC.

Grisso says probably in mid-May he will ask the commission for the extension through December. But first, he'll establish with Bindlestiff its milestones — how much money it will raise by when.

"And we'll have to have a backup plan," Grisso says. "If it can't raise the money, it might partner with another (theatrical) group. In three years, they haven't had much success raising money."

The small unfinished lobby and box office space in the Plaza Apartments doesn't seem destined for a swirl



PHOTO BY TOM CARTER

Anino designer Roselle Pineda with shadowplay on wall.

of theatergoers. It's a dusty storage area now, cluttered with paint cans, a half-dozen plastic-covered mattresses and long rolls of carpet. Down the staircase, the barren mezzanine invites more imagination. It has another place for concessions, restrooms and a green room.

Continuing down to the basement, a cold, gray and unadorned cavern opens up. The theater is roughly 25 by 50 feet with 30-foot-high walls and is small, pristine and oddly awesome. It's meant to change color and become a black box theater to seat 99. Behind it will be dressing rooms and storage. Top to bottom, the theater's total area is 4,000 square feet.

Pangilinan said the theater would benefit many art groups, not just Filipino. "It will only improve the neighborhood. And it's an inspiration for it."

Meanwhile, across the street and into the alley, the operating Bindlestiff Theater was preparing that night to show the film "Florence at Laura" as a fund-raiser for its creators. The film is shadowplay by Anino, a group of a dozen multimedia artists from the Philippines who have been invited to participate in the 10th Annual World Festival of Puppet Art in Prague. The festival pays their expenses when they get there. The film is sort of a Romeo and Juliet theme but involves Christians and Muslim families. It is a free adaptation of the classic epic by 19th century poet Francisco Balagtas, considered the Tagalog equivalent of William Shakespeare.

The theater, run by volunteers from all over the Bay Area, has shows on weekends and rehearsals during the week. It seats about 50. Suggested donations that night were \$7 to \$15. ■



PHOTO BY LENNY LIMJOCO

In the operating Bindlestiff theater on Natoma, manager Pangilinan and Torres (right) get ready for the evening's fundraiser.

# Party central committees — where grassroots politics grows

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

The [Howard] Dean Democratic Club of Silicon Valley's Web site says it right out: "Some county committees are true kingmakers. . . . Others are toothless debating societies. . . . The county party central committee is the lowest form of elected office — but it is an elected office."

What do these committees do, and why are so many local pols or wannabes running in this June's primary for seats on them?

In District 13 — including the Tenderloin and SoMa — the Republican and Democratic central committees each has 23 candidates running for 12 seats and the term of office is two years.

In District 12, the western portion of the city plus Daly City, Republican voters have a choice of 22 candidates, Democrats 19. The Green Party has eight, Peace and Freedom one. Four other parties have committees but no candidates this year: American Independent, Libertarian, Natural Law and Reform.

## AGAINST WAR IN IRAQ

The Extra dropped by the monthly Democratic Central Committee meeting April 26 at the State Building auditorium to see if that committee was —

well — making kings.

The members seated on stage beneath the gold state seal slightly outnumbered the audience. They passed one resolution demanding the government stop funding U.S. troops in Iraq and sent it on to the Northern California Democratic congressional delegation. Another resolution condemned Residential Builders Association President Joe O'Donoghue for a poem he wrote attacking a committee member. Then they voted to support one of two candidates running for a Superior Court judgeship.

The committee also got an earful during public commentary from Richmond District Democratic Club activist Richard Hansen, who faithfully registers voters twice a month at Masonic Auditorium after citizenship ceremonies, a practice he likened to "shooting fish in the bottom of a barrel."

"But we have a problem," he told the committee: 36% of California's population is Latino, yet only 14% are registered to vote. Now, he said, pending federal legislation would make "11 to 12 million of them felons. Why aren't Democrats speaking on this issue?"

The Extra missed the latest Republican committee meeting May 3 but got highlights from Mike DeNunzio, District 13 chairman, running again this year and also trying to unseat Rep. Nancy Pelosi.

"The most important resolution we passed at the committee meeting," DeNunzio said, "was a request

that came to us from Bob Okin — he's the chief psychiatrist at S.F. General. He wanted us to ask Mayor Newsom to ask the Department of Public Health for interim funding for the hospital's trauma center, whose state funding was cut out this year."

It passed, he said, "more or less unanimously."

## IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL POLITICS

In an earlier interview, DeNunzio, who ran unsuccessfully for supervisor in District 3 in 2000 and has been on the GOP Central Committee since 1998, told The Extra why local politics are so important to him.

"The chair has to be the official voice of the party," he said. "San Francisco has 45,000 registered Republicans, only 11% of the voters, but the city also has 120,000 declined-to-state registered voters and some of those are closet Republicans. When Newsom ran against Matt Gonzales, a Green, our party turned out

and that's the only reason Gonzales was defeated. We need to build the party, one step at a time."

Generating local resolutions is essential. "Recently, on the immigration issue, we reminded Newsom that he swore to uphold the law, and we did the same thing with same-sex marriage. These are grassroots resolutions. I want to see sophisticated, articulate people who can describe the Republican message and have the energy to do the work."

Marc Salomon, a registered Green since 1991 and incumbent Green Central Committee member who's running again this year, also tried for supervisor in 2000, in District 6.

Salomon finished eighth in a field of 16 and called it his "master's degree in San Francisco politics." Two years ago he worked on Matt Gonzales' mayoral campaign.

Greens have to register more youth and people of color, he says, work best done by the central committee. "It takes grassroots work and we haven't dealt with it in the past. We do a lot of running for and winning elections and spending time on issues. And we're a volunteer operation with no models. There hasn't been a significant new party in a hundred years. So there are



David Villa-Lobos



Mike DeNunzio

forces plotting against us, too."

Unlike DeNunzio and Salomon, David Villa-Lobos, running for a District 13 Democratic Central Committee seat, is a newcomer to elective local politics. A Tenderloin resident for 25 years, his focus has been on quality-of-life issues in the TL and SoMa, he says. He was a precinct captain for Newsom in 2003 founded the Community Leadership Alliance, which brings together city officials and residents at neighborhood meetings. This year, he chartered the Civic Center Democratic Club.

"The central committee has no District 6 representation," Villa-Lobos says. "I've followed this for years and go to just about every monthly meeting. I want to strengthen the voice of impoverished people. Committee members are good people, but they don't have a clue about what life is like in these neighborhoods."

## REGISTERING VOTERS

Republican Jennifer DePalma, central committee incumbent, ran against Pelosi two years ago, worked on President Bush's campaign, the Gray Davis recall and the Schwarzenegger election. A cum laude Princeton graduate with a law degree from the University of Chicago, she believes the committee's job is to sponsor candidates and do outreach, letting Republicans and decline-to-state voters know how

they can help.

Once a week, usually Saturdays, she's at an information table in the Marina or at the Ferry Building, working to register voters and passing out Republican literature.

"We're a small number of Republicans [in the city], but not as small as you think," she says. "Outreach is what we do best — we're very good at the nuts and bolts and we grow our volunteer base. We go to neighborhood fairs and we're at Masonic Auditorium for the citizenship swearing-in ceremonies. There are many nationalities and they have strong family values. So we're there to register them. Being there makes you happy to be an American."

Bruce Windrem is another first-time Democrat on the central committee lineup. He's held no offices here but did run for the central committee in 1992, for the Board of Supervisors in 2000, though he didn't make it to the ballot. However, in Portland, Ore.,

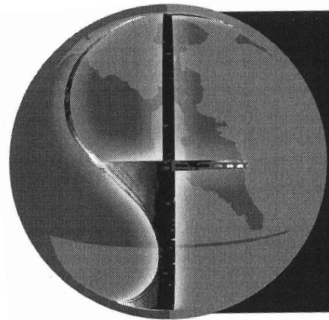


Jennifer DePalma

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



# CELEBRATE!



## SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

San Francisco Bay Area

**J**oin the US Small Business Administration and the San Francisco Small Business Commission as we celebrate National Small Business Week from May 15 – 20. We'll have networking parties, forum seminars and neighborhood events to salute entrepreneurs' daily hard work.

### Highlights Include:

- City Hall Kick-Off Event, May 15, 6:00 p.m. Our networking evening to meet new customers and find plenty of leads. We'll also be featuring Flavors of San Francisco, with tastings from outstanding local restaurants, and a Resource Fair. For more information, go to [www.acteva.com/go/cityhall](http://www.acteva.com/go/cityhall).
- How To Start A Business, May 16, morning, afternoon and evening classes available. Workshops held in various neighborhoods, including the Ocean View, Mission and Bayview Districts, and the LGBT Center on Market. Topics covered will include management, financing and resources. For more information, go to [www.acteva.com/go/cityhall](http://www.acteva.com/go/cityhall).
- Leveraging Technology To Grow Your Business, May 17, 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., San Francisco Hilton, 333 O'Farrell. Cost of event: \$25. Lunch provided. Brought to you by Microsoft. For more information, go to [www.sbtechnologyinstitute.org/sbdctap/ms.htm](http://www.sbtechnologyinstitute.org/sbdctap/ms.htm).
- Financing for Your Small Business, May 18, 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.; SF Chamber of Commerce, 235 Montgomery St. Discover the right way to seek financing for your business. We'll discuss loan proposals, financing options and programs for your company's financial health. For more information, go to [www.acteva.com/go/cityhall](http://www.acteva.com/go/cityhall).
- The San Francisco Chamber of Commerce Grand Expo Marketplace, May 17 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. San Francisco Design Center Concourse featuring a reception with more than 100 exhibitors. For more information, go to [www.sfchamber.com](http://www.sfchamber.com).
- Be sure to look for your local merchants' association to wrap up the week with parties in your neighborhood to salute their members. Check with your merchants' association to see what they're planning for Friday night, May 19. For more information, visit [sfgov.org/sbc](http://sfgov.org/sbc).

**F**inally, come out and shop. Area businesses will be setting up Saturday Sidewalk Sales all over San Francisco as part of the celebration, thanks to the organizational support of the SF Small Business Commission.



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Sponsored by the US Small Business Administration and the SF Small Business Commission

**KATHLEEN FITZPATRICK**  
A caring nurse

The Aranda Residence lost its welcoming angel when Kathleen Fitzpatrick, a nurse who thought more of helping others than herself, died in San Francisco General Hospital on March 24 of meningitis, pneumonia and hepatitis. She was 53.

A dozen friends who gathered at her memorial remembered the 5-foot-3, 90-pound woman as the first to greet newcomers to the Aranda with a sweet smile, a card and a gift basket of food that she prepared. She told them they could stop by anytime at her room on the fifth floor where she invariably offered them food. But the friends also didn't hesitate to say how stubborn Ms. Fitzpatrick was, a characteristic that no doubt worked against her in the end. As a nurse, she could give pills but wouldn't take them.

"She was one of the sweetest, most loving and stubborn people I ever knew," her common-law husband of 15 years, John Wells, told the group. "She was always giving and caring - she'd almost rather look out for someone else than herself."

In the newly remodeled six-story Aranda, a DHS master lease hotel run by the



Tenderloin Aids Resource Center, Wells said he first met Ms. Fitzpatrick at Murio's Trophy Room bar, a Haight Street institution.

"She was a live-in caretaker nurse five days a week," he said. "She

had weekends off and shopped at the Cala across the street."

Their budding romance flourished with hikes and picnics in Golden Gate Park. Wells, a graduate of the Marine Cooks and Stewards School in Calistoga, fried their picnic chicken. "She liked to shop for antique plates, too," he said.

They moved into the Aranda 10 years ago, shortly after she surprised him by quitting her job.

After contracting HIV and hepatitis C, she steadfastly ignored her medications despite her failing health, Wells said. Even case workers couldn't get her to take the meds. When Ms. Fitzpatrick went into the hospital in February, she was unable to speak. She wrote notes to Wells when he visited. She died six weeks later.

— TOM CARTER

**MASAHIRO OKADA**  
Sensitive artist

Masahiro Okada was kind and soft spoken, a man of 40 who kept to himself,

caused no trouble and was much appreciated by the his fellow residents at the Star Hotel on Mission Street. He was also more deeply troubled than his social workers could see. No one guessed that he was a gifted artist, either, and only a few knew he was gay.

Whatever Mr. Okada's inner turmoil was, it ended on March 28, nine months after he moved to the Star. He hanged himself in his third-floor room. He was discovered by the janitor, along with his easels and scores of pictures of beautiful flowers drawn in a "delicate Japanese style," said someone who had seen them. The suicide sent a shock wave through the hotel.

"This took a big chunk out of me," said desk clerk Patricia Abrams in the dimly lighted room off the lobby where a dozen mourners sat before a table with a single candle and a blurry picture of Mr. Okada on it. "He was always so kind to everyone."

"I lost it for a day or so," another said. "Quiet, unassuming people are taken for granted in this society," one man said, his tone matter-of-fact but bordering on bitterness. "We're a winner-loser society and winner take all. There's no effort to look beyond the surface. He barely made the radar."

The Department of Public Health had already started grief counseling at the SRO hotel when the Rev. Glenda Hope agreed to officiate at Mr. Okada's memorial. She leaves the Tenderloin for such services maybe three times a year, only if requested. And the "special circumstances" here were compelling, she said. By coincidence, a cameraman filmed the memorial as part of a history project on San Francisco Network Ministries that the Rev. Hope and her late husband founded 34 years ago in the Tenderloin.

"Sadness, confusion, pain, grief and fear," she said, "when they come to you, name them, and let them go."

Michael Saunter, a mental health worker, rose and said he had worked with Mr. Okada in a Mission Mental Health Clinic program. Saunter said the death that freed the troubled man brought up sadness and joy in him, a poignant ambivalence found in a song that an old Japanese woman taught Saunter as a child. The song was about winter ending and cherry blossoms beginning to bloom. He sang it in Japanese in a deep bass voice that resonated and filled the still room.

DPH case worker Galileo Mendrano had known Mr. Okada eight months, he said, since around the time he moved into the Star. He got to know Mr.

Okada fairly well and was shaken by the suicide. Mendrano believed he had attended a Japanese University to study art and wasn't sure if he had any work history. He was gay and had gay friends, Mendrano said, but he "was very private about that"



and belonged to no gay associations. His parents, who live in Japan, apparently couldn't handle it.

"He wanted to patch up his relationship with his parents, bring it (being gay) to acceptance and he struggled with it," Mendrano said. "He became a Christian four or five years ago."

Afterward, the Rev. Hope and three others went upstairs to bless No. 318, Mr. Okada's room. But by posted order of the medical examiner they couldn't enter. The Presbyterian minister explained that sometimes she blesses a room to make it right for those who feel a suicide room is "bad luck," or even "haunted."

She and the three others put their hands up high on the door in the narrow hallway, a scene the cameraman recorded. Mr. Okada was seeing the "beauty of the world without any filters," the minister said, and it was okay for him "to go into the hands of a loving God."

Property manager Lois Butler said later that Mr. Okada's art work found inside was turned over to his visiting parents who gave it all to one of his friends. ■

— TOM CARTER

## Tenderloin benefit district seeking board members

The Tenderloin Community Benefit District, which cleans and beautifies the neighborhood using a special tax on property owners, has been operating with a 22-member interim board of directors since it was formed in August. Now it's getting ready to elect a permanent board of 15 members. The number of interim members who will apply is unknown, said Elaine Zamora, benefit district manager, but she expects seats to be open.


The by-laws and the city legislation that launched benefit districts require that 20% of the board be people who rent or lease businesses, including nonprofits, within the district boundaries.

"There aren't any required percentages for the remaining members," Zamora said. "But the by-laws committee looked at that 20% for businesspeople and suggested that 60% be property owners and 20% residents and at-large members."

Using those percentages, the board is required to have nine property owners and three each of business renters and residents.

Applications, due May 29, describe duties as a minimum of four to six hours a month of meetings and "proactive volunteer work on behalf of the district." Board members' terms are for two years. Information: 440-7570 or ezamora@sbcglobal.net. ■

— MARJORIE BEGGS



**TENDERLOIN AIDS RESOURCE CENTER**  
**Outreach and Community Events May 2006**

**HIV Services Forum**  
Topic: What You Should Know About Hep C  
Speaker: Andrew Reynolds, SF City Clinic  
Date/Time: Wednesday, May 17, 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm


**Health Promotion Forum**  
Topic: STDs and Me  
Speaker: Andrew Reynolds, SF City Clinic  
Date/Time: Wednesday, May 24, 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, May 10, 11:30 am - 1 pm;  
Wednesday, May 31, 11:30 am - 1 pm

**Volunteer for TARC**  
Orientations: Friday, May 19, 10 am - 5 pm (lunch provided)  
183 Golden Gate Ave.  
You must pre-register for volunteer trainings. Stop in/call Emilie (415) 934-1792.

For current groups' schedule or for more information  
call: 415.431.7476 or go to [www.tarc.org](http://www.tarc.org)



**TENDERLOIN AIDS RESOURCE CENTER**  
health promotion • social services • HIV housing  
For more information visit [www.tarc.org](http://www.tarc.org)



# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## SPECIAL EVENTS

**Bike to Work Day**, May 18, annual and national celebration of bicycle commuting. Twenty-three energizer stations in the city with free snacks and goodies. Morning celebration at City Hall, 8-8:30; after-work party with refreshments and raffle, 111 Minna off Second Street, 6-9 p.m. Information: 431-BIKE.

**Fifth Annual Sixth Street Fair**, June 10, Minna Alley off Sixth, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Two stages of live music, street performers, free haircuts and manicures, dozens of social service providers, free disaster preparedness kits, hot dogs and bags of groceries. Games, face-painting and a bouncy house for the kids; chess and bridge matches for seniors. Information: Lisa Block: 538-8100 x202.

**Hope and Healing in a Time of War**, through June 24, SomArts Cultural Center, 934 Brannan, Tues.-Fri., 2-7 p.m., and Sat. 1-5 p.m., free. Co-sponsored by Asian Pacific Islanders Cultural Center and Queer Cultural Center, the exhibition demonstrates visual artists' role in spreading hope in increasingly violent times. Information: SomArts863-1414

## 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 p.m., 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 St., Suite 928.

Contact: 421-2926 x306.

**Mental Health Board**, 2nd Wednesday of the month, 6:30-8:30 p.m., City Hall, room 278. CMHS advisory committee, open to the public. Contact: 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. 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, SOM-PAC, 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.

**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**, 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@com-cast.net.

**South of Market Project Area Committee**, 3rd Monday of the month, 6 p.m., 1035 Folsom, between 6th & 7th. Contact: SOM-PAC 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, 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 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.

## The making of grassroots politicians

► CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

where he lived for 13 years, he was a precinct committee person, representing about 600 registered voters.

"California has 33 million people and 80 state Assembly members," Windrem says. "Oregon, by contrast, has three million people, 60 state representatives and precinct reps. We're one of the few states that doesn't elect precinct committee persons — but we really should."

Windrem, a mental health and patients rights activist who was board chairman of the Oakland Drop-In Center, wants to change the structure of the central committee.

"It should establish permanent precinct captains — give them moral support to be the eyes and ears of the party," he says.

James Soderborg is running a low-profile campaign for a seat on the Republican Central Committee in District 13.

"I'm not on any Republican slate and I haven't gone after any endorsements," he says. "This is an experiment — I'm trying to see what I can achieve without the party."

Soderborg, a stock exchange member, was on the Contra Costa County Central Committee six years ago, appointed to fill a vacated seat. After moving to San Francisco, he ran for a seat here in 2004 and won — the top Republican voter-getter that year — but had to leave halfway through the term. Now he's trying again.

"On the Republican ticket in the city, it's hard to take the reins," he says, "but we can

influence what's happening, especially getting more people on city commissions to get a better balance. We add diversity."

Sue Bierman is running once more for a seat on the Democratic Central Committee, but says she doesn't remember how long she's been on it.

"I don't write these things down — maybe I should, but I don't."

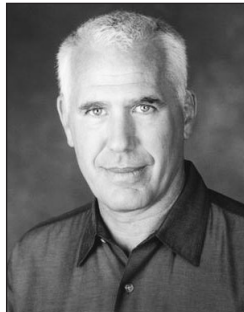
Her involvement in local politics spreads far and wide: Supervisor from 1996-2000; planning commissioner for 16 years; formerly on the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, the S.F. Bay Conservation and Development Commission, and the S.F. County Transportation Authority. Currently, she's on the Port Commission.

The Port Commission's Web site says she's been a central committee member since 1974. In 2004, she was the top Democratic vote-getter.

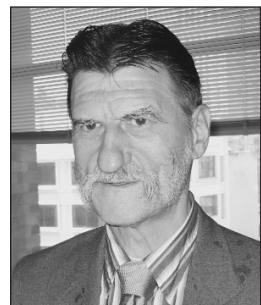
"I'm a good Democrat and the central committee is a place where we can pass resolutions that speak to a lot of problems," Bierman says.

The central committee's job is like no other, she adds. "People these days are so busy, and the media don't carry as much as they should about grassroots politics. People are always telling me how much they like our slate cards and other information because they have no other source of information. That's our main job: to inform people."

Nationally, Bierman says, the committee "has its hands full with trying to change things. I worked hard against Bush, and it's sad that our candidate couldn't unseat him. We do have to keep trying to get good people." ■



James Soderborg



Bruce Windrem

## June 6, 2006 Primary Election

# CENTRAL CITY DEMOCRATS ENDORSEMENTS

### Assembly District #13 Democratic County Central Committee

**Sue Bierman**

David Campos

Gilbert Criswell

Rick Galbreath

**Michael Goldstein**

**Rick Hauptman**

**Joe Julian**

Raphael Mandelman

Holli Thier

**Bruce Windrem**

### State Senate District 8

Leland Yee

### State Assembly District 13

Mark Leno

### Superior Court Judge Seat 8

Lillian Sing

### San Francisco Ballot Issues

No on Proposition D (Laguna Honda Hospital)

This is the official slate of endorsements of Central City Democrats

P.O. Box 420846

San Francisco, CA 94142-0846

centralcitydemocrats@yahoo.com

(415) 339-VOTE (8683)