

# CVIA NEWS

COLE VALLEY IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Volume XXII

SERVING ALL RESIDENTS OF THE GREATER HAIGHT ASHBURY

FALL 2009

## Skateboard Park Continues to Raise Controversy

In our last issue we reported on a small celebration on April 14 to mark a \$80,000 grant from the city to develop plans for a skateboard park at Stanyan and Kezar Drive. Looking at those present that day – one supervisor, one department head, one police captain, four commissioners, two heads of neighborhood organizations and the city’s self-described Godfather of skateboarding – one could easily think that, with that much city muscle behind it, the project was a shoo-in.

Then came the event of July 25. Without any notice to neighbors, there was a full-blown skateboard event at the location with loud speakers, blaring music and, of course, a group of avid skateboarders performing their moves on ramps. The on-line ad read: “Redbull Manny Mania Hits SF at Waller and Stanyan – Come watch skaters battle it out for two-wheel supremacy.”



Event on July 25 stunned neighbors.

Nearby residents heard the ruckus in their gardens and living rooms. Neighbors who had opposed the skateboard park all along were joined by new believers, most of them hooked into the email message board of the Haight Ashbury Improvement Association (HAIA),

where e-mails began flying back and forth.

Pity Ted Loewenberg. Wearing two hats, one as president of HAIA, the other as chair of the city’s Skateboard Commission, he is making a heroic attempt to stay objective and manage the flak. The July 25 event, he admits was out of line: the neighbors weren’t informed, the speakers were too loud, the sponsors and Rec and Park dropped the ball. But it was not, he insists, the fault of the skateboarders whose only desire was to do their thing and have fun in a city park. He softly chided those complaining who did *not* report the disturbance to the police and/or Rec and Park, which is absolutely necessary if any responsibility is to be taken in the future.

But it’s a hard pitch to make. The neighbors think that Redbull Manny Mania was a mere sample of what they can expect on a daily basis once the skateboard park is established, while others support the rights of young skateboarders to practice their sport. As the bumper sticker says, “Skateboarding is not a crime.”

—Karen Crommie

## Gav and Jen Settle In

The mayor and his missus have moved into 1581 Masonic Avenue and, face it, no matter what your politics, it’s kind of nice to know the Mayor and his wife, Jennifer Siebel Newsom, chose our neighborhood to live in. But exactly *what* neighborhood would



You can see the interior of the Mayor’s new digs at [www.socketsite.com](http://www.socketsite.com).

that be? One article describes it as Ashbury Heights, another Upper Terrace (which is the cross street) and another Parnassus-Ashbury Heights and still another Ashbury Heights-Buena Vista. What’s clear is that it is in the Greater Haight Ashbury and District 5. Buena Vista resident John Hooper told me, “I was just talking to two bicycle cops on Waller (about someone sleeping on the sidewalk in front of All Saints Church) and one of them said: ‘Well, things may be looking up now that the Mayor and his wife have moved



## Street Closure on Fair Day

**Cole closed between Carl & Grattan  
Parnassus closed between Belvedere & Shrader**

Four blocks will be closed to cars on **Sunday, September 20**, for the 7th Annual Cole Valley Fair. If you live in this area, you will not be able to park or access your vehicle from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. If you need to use a car parked in a garage or an off-street parking area, you’ll want to move it to an area outside of the designated blocks before the closure.

Grattan School has graciously donated their parking lot, which will be open the night before the fair and on the day of the fair, for your convenience.

We apologize in advance for the imposition and will offer you a discount on the fair T-shirts and posters. Contact us at [colevalleyfair@gmail.com](mailto:colevalleyfair@gmail.com) or 317-2074 with your questions or concerns. Thank you for your support.

### INSIDE

Blank Walls .....	9	Help .....	11
Board Minutes .....	8	Illegal Pruning .....	4
Booksmith News .....	7	Kids Day at Tullys .....	4
Carl Street Park .....	3	Letters .....	11
Chinese School Opens .....	5	Mervyn’s to Marshall’s .....	2
Cole Fair Volunteers .....	3	ParkScan .....	2
District 5 Cleanup .....	2	Police Forum .....	6
Farmers Market in Sunset .....	10	Postscripts .....	10
Haight Street Reform Group .....	7	Stanyan Trail Head .....	6
Headshop Ban .....	5	Whole Foods Project .....	5

hood.” Former CVIA president Carole Glosenger e-mailed, “I’m excited. I wonder if we’ll see him in the ‘hood — like at Cole Hardware buying light bulbs?” RescueMuni pointed out, “This makes the 6 Parnassus his new bus line to work. Will it keep it’s current route along Masonic and Frederick?” The original asking price for 1581 Masonic was \$3,300,000 but it was reduced to \$2,980,000 in May. The house has four bedrooms, herringbone-patterned wooden floors, balconies that face east and a Roman soaking tub.

Commenting on the real estate website Socketsite, Julie Peisner wrote, “I can just hear the Mayor (while running for Governor) telling people that he lives in a ‘middle class area’ in the ‘center of the city’ (in response to someone calling him a ‘rich kid from a rich neighborhood’).” Another contributor to the website, EH, posts, “I live around the corner from this house. Sadly, much as I like Newsom, I’d have preferred a lower-profile buyer. Masonic Avenue (at this point) is narrow, on a bus line, and the route from the Haight to Roosevelt Way/17th Street/Twin Peaks. Look for street closings and additional traffic on Buena Vista West and Ashbury.”

After the Newsoms moved into their new home in June, Matier and Ross reported that someone promptly defecated on their doorstep. They ended their article with “Welcome to the neighborhood, Gav.” If the Newsoms had moved on to Haight Street or it’s tributaries, it would ring true. But such indignities are unknown in the Heights. I prefer to think it was one of the pedigreed pooches from Buena Vista Park.

—Karen Crommie

## Improving Parks Online

In July, park lovers submitted over 100 reports to the ParkScan website to notify paint teams of graffiti, to compliment park staff, and identify maintenance or misuse issues. ParkScan is a community-initiated, web-based reporting system that has been tracking conditions in San Francisco’s parks and playgrounds since 2003.

Community members’ observations, once reported via the web-based form, are sent electronically to the city’s 311 system. A tracking number is assigned to each report, and the responsible department is notified by 311. The Recreation and Parks Department has provided a general range of response times for different types of conditions. Capital repairs are scheduled as budgets permit. 311 follows up for any reports that any agency has not “closed out,” based on the estimated response times. Neighborhood Parks Council also follows up as needed with both individual members of the public via email and with the RPD.

ParkScan’s advantage for park advocates and city staff is twofold: All data are trackable on ParkScan.org. Data do not disappear after the city closes out. This way, the user can produce customized, detailed reports of interest — per feature, per park, per district, or citywide. For example, we can find out the total number of observations made in a certain park or district during the past year. To create a customized report, go to <http://parkscan.org/search> and follow the directions on that page.

Without involvement in ParkScan, the city might not be aware of the most time-sensitive and pressing issues at our neighborhood parks. You can help ParkScan meet its goal of increasing this year’s number of reports by 25% over that of 2008. Please visit [www.parkscan.org](http://www.parkscan.org) today and help keep our parks clean and green.



## August 8 Cleanup Breaks Records for Participation

The sun shone on the 700 volunteers who participated in the District 5 Clean-Up on August 8. The main group met in front of the Harding monument at Fell and Baker streets at 9 a.m. and lis-



The Harding monument was one of several volunteer meeting points for the District 5 cleanup.

tened to speeches by Ed Reiskin, director of DPW, Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi, and a long line of other officials, ending with a brief

remark by one the Haight’s new shining lights of activism, Karen Grownney, who, along with Susan Strolis, organized Haight Ashbury volunteers.

The workers were given orange vests, brooms, dustpans, scrapers, shovels and paint, depending on the task they chose, and fanned out to work the neighborhood streets until noon when a spaghetti lunch was provided by DPW.



Left to right: Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi, Haight organizer Karen Grownney and DPW’s Mohammed Nuru.

## Mervyn’s to Marshall’s

Mervyn’s was one of the city’s first large clothing stores to go under when the recession hit. The space on the corner of Geary and Masonic which for so many years was a Sears, has been dark for nearly a year. On August 6, clothing giant TJX (owners of TJ Max and Marshall’s) announced that they had received city approval for



Marshall’s will replace Mervyn’s as the anchor store in the old Sears building on the corner of Masonic and Geary.

opening a combined Marshall’s and HomeGood store in that location. Even though the building houses several chain stores already, Marshall’s still had to go through the Planning Department because of the city’s stringent regulations on “formula retail” stores.

**START PRACTICING NOW TO COMPETE IN  
“PET TRICKS” AT THE FAIR ON SEPTEMBER 20.**

## Park Police Station Responds to Muni Park Complaints

In the last issue we discussed the problems caused by users of the small Cole Valley park owned by Muni at the opening of the Sunset Tunnel. Late night partying and loud conversations are just a few of the annoyances to residents of both Carl and Cole streets. CVIA president David Crommie contacted Captain Teresa Barrett and she responded with the following:

“Yesterday I met with Jacob Fewx who is a Transportation Security Inspector for the TSA (Transportation Security Administration). We discussed the fact that Carl and Cole park is a Muni park and not Rec and Park property. I also told him I wanted a fence for the Park



*Increased police surveillance has made a dent in late night carousing.*

that could be secured each evening. I explained my concerns about the tunnel’s security and told him how many drunk drivers go through the tunnel.

“I believe I have their attention now and I am going to be a pit bull about following up with him on funding sources for this project.

“The officers are doing walkthroughs at night but I will talk to the Lieutenant to ensure they get out of the car.”

At an earlier meeting of the Municipal Transportation Agency’s community advisory committee, Deputy Chief Antonio Parra was queried about the conditions at the Muni Park.

He said that, by checking the Park Station logs, he could confirm that officers have been patrolling there up to 5 times a day. They have made some arrests including an arsonist they had been looking for.

Parra said that they had looked into removing the concrete wall and was told that there is an art installation on that wall – so now they’re checking with the art commission to see if the wall can be removed. Everyone was puzzled as to what the art is.

They’re also trying to come up with an alternative way to handle the area under the handicapped ramps (used by illegal campers to stow their gear) other than covering them with a screen. That area is a safety feature called an “area of refuge” used to retreat to if someone is on the track when the train comes. Evidently there are these areas of refuge throughout the tunnel.

The panel queried Parra about installing additional lighting: would this cause more problems than it would solve? It might attract more dog walkers late at night which could also cause noise.

One might ask why the police should have to spend so many of their resources on patrolling that small park? Should a fence be built around the it? These are questions to ask if the problems continue.

—Joan Downey

## Be a Part of It: Cole Valley Fair Volunteers Needed!

Many people will be needed on September 20 to make the Cole Valley Fair a success. We especially need volunteers before the fair’s opening at 10 a.m. to make sure the setup for the vendors goes



*Lena Emmery assists exhibitors in lining up their vintage cars on Parnassus.*

smoothly. We attract high quality vendors partly because the Fair is well organized – let’s keep it that way.

The day starts at 6 a.m. when we work with the police and DPT to get cars towed (after trying to identify the owners), set up barricades, unlock

the dumpsters and port a-potties, post the Fair signs, and measure and mark the 94 vendor spaces. Hartmann Studios Rentals, who will provide canopies, tables, and chairs, needs guidance as to where to put everything.

At 7 a.m. the vendors start arriving. Volunteers at all four intersections will greet the vendors and direct them to their booth space. A monitor at the Grattan parking lot will direct traffic there and pack in as many cars as possible — making sure that everyone has their booth location and cell phone number on the dashboard.

And we need to set up the CVIA, Fair, and Merchants’ booths, help mount the photo exhibit, and check that all the vendors arrived with the goods they promised.



*David Crommie helps Joan Downey set up CVIA booth.*

The morning crew will be treated to coffee and pastries.

During the Fair we need volunteers to walk around the fair to check that everything is going OK; help move barricades for vehicles to get through in an emergency; call for the CleanScapes person if there is a spill; arrange the tables and chairs — making sure that they are clean; and observe the booths: Are there any that stand out? Who do we want back next year; who don’t we?

After 5 p.m. we need volunteers to help pack up T-shirts and count the number left, remove signs, remove the photo display, and return barricades to the location from which they were delivered.

If you can help during any time during the day for a minimum two-hour stint, send an e-mail to [colevallyfair@gmail.com](mailto:colevallyfair@gmail.com) or call 317-2074. Each volunteer gets a 2009 Cole Valley Fair T-shirt or poster with artwork by Paul Madonna.

Joan Downey  
Cole Valley Fair Organizer

# Illegal Pruning is Killing Our Urban Forest

At an alarming rate, San Francisco is losing the environmental and aesthetic asset of its mature urban forest to illegal ‘pruning,’ or topping. Friends of the Urban Forest needs your help NOW. Please report these obvious and blatant acts to urbanforestry@sfdpw.org providing accurate information on the damaged tree address, company or individual doing the ‘job’ (if available) and, if possible a digital picture of the tree. CC: doug@fuf.net as well and we will help and follow up with the Bureau of Urban Forestry.



*We are all responsible for the skilled pruning of the street trees on our property.*

This topping is punishable by fine up to the actual ‘replacement value’ of the tree (Article 16, Sec. 811 of the Public Works Code). These trees do not grow back with viable new limbs as their attachments are weak and these branches ultimately fail leaving the entire tree with no structural value necessitating its removal.

The amazing variety and age mix of San Francisco’s urban forest has been analyzed by the USDA Center for Urban Forest Research in 2003. Since this time our City has benefited from a substantial number of new tree plantings through the DPW’s Bureau of Urban Forestry and Friends of the Urban Forest. Over 10,928 trees in the last five years have been planted in the public right of ways – street corridors/sidewalks.

The USDA study determined that our City was “...poised for substantial future benefits...” as the surveyed results found that the age distribution of our street trees had a much larger ‘younger tree’ population than middle-age or senior citizen class. This can be both a blessing and a curse, for the species mix and health of that younger population must be diverse and strong, and the middle-age and senior trees must continue to provide their ecosystem services. The small, younger trees currently provide very little environmental benefit, and we need to raise these youngsters to be healthy, long lived residences adding to the assets of our urban infrastructure.

Please save our large trees and be the eyes on our streets – these trees are a public asset and are owned by you!

With trees being removed every day due to construction, disease and various interest groups seeking to select a genetic balance they deem worthy in our public open spaces, we cannot afford this continued loss.

*Doug Wildman  
Friends of the Urban Forest*

*Note to Readers: We’ve all seen the trees around City Hall, on California Street and on the Music Concourse in Golden Gate Park where large trees are pruned very hard back to the same node or branch each year. This is called “pollarding.” It is a practice that is acceptable from an arboricultural standpoint when done properly, and to three Genuses in San Francisco– Platanus (Sycamore), and very rarely Ulmus (Elm) & Tilia (Linden).*

*The preceding article was reprinted from Friends of the Urban Forest’s summer newsletter, Treescapes with permission (www.FUF.net). Friends of the Urban Forest is a non-profit committed to the belief that trees are a critical element of a livable urban environment. Since 1981, they have offered financial, technical, and practical assistance to individuals and neighborhood groups who want to plant and care for trees.*

## Tullys Says Thanks

Kids Day at Tullys will take place on September 12 from 2 to 4 p.m. Children will be able to enjoy hot cocoa, story time, coloring



*Ever since it opened, Tullys has been a gathering place for Cole Valley dwellers of all ages.*

and other fun activities. This is Tullys’ way of saying thanks to all the parents and children that come to the store.

There will also be a “Welcome Back to School” morning on August 24 when children can come in between 7 and 8 a.m. and get a free kids cocoa and a cookie.

### Nominations for 2009-10 Officers

- President..... Lena Emmerly
- Vice-president..... Marianne Hesse
- Treasurer..... Joan Downey
- Recording Secretary..... Karen Crommie
- Special Projects..... Joan Downey
- Community Relations ..... Amy Blakeley

Voting will take place at CVIA’s Summer Social (Annual Meeting) on August 29 at Reverie Café from 3 to 6 p.m. Additional nominations may be made from the floor. Only members in good standing are eligible to vote. To hold office a member must have served at least six months on the Board of Directors. Two positions are currently open.

## Head Shop Ban Approved

Although the horse is clearly out of the barn, the Board of Supervisors on June 30 unanimously passed a three-year moratorium on new "tobacco paraphernalia establishments" in the Haight. This came as a response to the opening of the neighborhood's 13th head shop, GoodFellas, in the space formerly occupied by Discount Fabrics. "Enough already," said Jimmy Siegel and others who persuaded Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi to carry the legislation.

Not everyone agreed. In an article written by C.W. Nevius in the SF Chronicle, Booksmith co-owner Praveen Madan was quoted as saying very sensibly, "Would I like a moratorium saying that there would be no more bookstores? Of course I would. That's what we



*Responding to an overabundance of shops selling drug paraphernalia on Haight Street, Supervisor Mirkarimi spearheaded legislation placing a moratorium on new stores.*

are struggling with here. Do you really want the government to step in and decide which is a good business and which is bad? In a free market, if there are too many head shops, some of them will go out of business."

Nevius said, "Mirkarimi's legislation says the smoke shops 'contribute directly to numerous problems in the city, including violations of the peace, and health, safety, and general welfare problems.' That's a nice thought, but let's be honest, the problems on the sidewalks of the Haight are the seedy-looking guys who are panhandling, drinking and yelling at tourists."

—Karen Crommie

### Call for News

We need news items, articles, letters, opinion pieces. Please tell us what you know about Cole Valley and the greater Haight Ashbury: handwritten, typewritten, e-mailed or scrawled on a cocktail napkin. We want to hear from you! CVIA News: 624 Ashbury St. or [cviasf@aol.com](mailto:cviasf@aol.com).



## Hey, Where's Our Whole Foods?

Is the deal on or off? That's what Cole Valley residents are asking as they look at the eyesore parking lot on the corner of Stanyan



*The large mixed-use project intended for the corner of Stanyan and Haight has been scrapped.*

and Waller. After years of negotiations on every aspect of the four-story, mixed-use building with 62 units of housing and a Whole Foods Market, we heard the project was "on hold."

Jack Niles, reporting for the Haight Ashbury Beat, said, "Parking became the focal point of the debate (when) the Draft Environmental Impact Report detailed how the proposed development... would create more than 2,000 vehicle trips per day."

Then, there were rumors that the project had jogged back into life as Whole Foods, who once wanted 34,000 square feet of space, would settle for the smaller footprint used by the former tenant, Cala Foods. Cala's 23,600 square feet, was once thought "too small" to be commercially viable for the Texas-based Whole Foods but, times have changed. Even national chains have to find ways to exist on less profit.

Confirming this, Niles quoted spokesperson Vanessa Cornish saying that the company "is still interested in the 690 Stanyan location and is looking...to establish a natural and organic grocery store...in a remodel of the existing building."

But Mark Brennan, son and attorney for the property owner, John Brennan, is even more equivocal. In a e-mail on August 7 he wrote, "The proposed construction is dead," and went on to cite the many unreasonable delays, the difficulty of securing financing and city permit fees which "approach the \$5 - 6 million range — fees that must be paid before you even pick up a shovel. Right now we are attempting to negotiate with Whole Foods with regards to leasing the existing Cala store. It is too early to tell how that will turn out, but we will inform you as soon as we have something concrete to report."

Better than nothing, I say. And a lot less impact on the neighborhood. But I will still miss having all those market rate tenants taking a vested interest in that problematic corner.

—Karen Crommie

## San Francisco Magazine Gives Nod to Mt. Sutro Stewards

Back in April, the editors and readers of San Francisco Magazine were asked to pick the people, places, and things that make the Bay Area the best place to live, work, and play. The votes were tallied and the results reported in the July edition. Much to the delight of director Craig Dawson, the Mount Sutro Stewards were one of the best picks for 2009. [www.sanfranmag.com/story/be-selfishly-good](http://www.sanfranmag.com/story/be-selfishly-good).

## Reopening the Stanyan Street Trail head Not That Easy

The Department of Rec and Park held a meeting on June 16 to discuss the proposed reopening of the historic Stanyan Street Trail head leading into Mt. Sutro's Interior Greenbelt, a boon for the city's hikers. The meeting was two years in the making during which time Craig Dawson, head of the Mt. Sutro Stewards had met with groups from Cole Valley, the Inner Sunset and the Haight Ashbury, garnering support from all of them.

As nice an idea as it is to reopen this trail leading from Stanyan Street into Sutro Forest, it will disproportionately effect homeowners on either side of the trail. At the meeting, they stood firmly against the proposal. Their objections ranged from an increased danger of



*Even though Rec and Parks' entrance to the Stanyan Trail Head has been boarded up by neighbors, volunteers continue their work clearing the historic trails within Sutro Forest.*

fire to encouragement of vagrant campers to a loss of privacy as hikers passed along the side of their property.

Dawson says that these have always been issues and ones he has been addressing with UCSF for more than 12 years and actively managing with the Mt. Sutro Stewards for the last four years.

"One can't be expected to manage an area without access to it," says Dawson." His volunteer program has made huge progress in taming the wild open space adjoining UCSF by creating access to its trails and involving the community in his volunteer stewardship program with support from Rec and Parks' Natural Areas Program.

But the June meeting revealed the depth of opposition from those closest to the trail head. For 20 years they have successfully blocked the public access, by their own admission, by boarding up the Stanyan Street entrance. Now, as volunteers have cleared the old greenbelt trails and hikers have returned to Sutro Forest, their right to preventing public access to Rec and Park property is being questioned.

Chuck Canepa was at the meeting and tried to keep objective. "I felt that although some of the folks living near the Stanyan Greenbelt entrances are using these fire and safety issues to thwart the opening of the trail head but, there is merit to some of their concerns. The area has more than normal tree and branch hazards likely due to lax greenbelt tree maintenance.

"Also, the fencing separating adjacent private property destroyed by falling trees was removed by city workers, and not replaced. Is it the city or the private owners obligation to fence off the greenbelt to limit access to adjacent private land?" He asked. "If the city is responsible, simple cyclone fencing would make a durable, cost effective barrier with minimal visual impact."

Peter Brastow, founding director of Nature in the City, said,

"The good news is that some neighbors are willing to talk and offer reasonable requests such as ecologically-based fire management (thinning eucalyptus trees), reduction of the invasive plants that contribute to fuel load, and restoration of a more natural ecology with native trees and shrubs.

"This is a huge difference from the never-cut-down-a-tree-ever people who were at the Mt. Sutro FEMA project meetings a couple of weeks ago," said Brastow. While Craig (Dawson) is understandably frustrated with the stance of the neighbors with respect to access, several people (including myself) spoke to how their arguments against access are mostly illogical (that it will lead to increased hazards from fire, homeless, etc.), and that the overall sentiment in the city is strongly in favor of access."

Now, as Dawson sees the possibility of the Stanyan Trail Head access slipping away, he is asking his partners, Rec and Park, UCSF, the Natural Areas Program and Nature in the City to increase their advocacy to re-open the trail head and restore Adolph Sutro's Historic trail through the Interior Greenbelt.

Dawson is also supported by the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council and the Sierra Club in addition to CVIA and the Haight Ashbury Neighborhood Council.

—Karen Crommie

## POLICE COMMUNITY FORUM



Captain Teresa Barrett holds community forums the second Tuesday of every month (except December) from 6 to 7:30 p.m. She and her staff review criminal activity, park events, and the general safety concerns

of residents. It's a good way to stay in touch with what's going on.

**September 8, October 13, November 10**  
**Mark Your Calendars**

**Grand Opening**  
**of the**  
**Chinese Immersion School**  
**at De Avila**  
**San Francisco's newest public elementary school**  
**Saturday, August 22, 2009**  
**11 a.m. to 1 p.m.**  
**1351 Haight St.**  
**Please use the Waller St. entrance**  
**Lion Dancing**  
**Kung Fu Demonstration**  
**Light refreshments will be served**  
**Please RSVP at: 469-0296**

## News from the Booksmith

We started a summer internship program by accident when Evan Hanlon, a senior at Harvard walked in looking for a summer job in 2007. We enjoyed working with Evan so much, that when the next summer rolled in and we got an opportunity to hire Sam Reider from Columbia it was a slam dunk. Sam turned out to be another star. This year's summer intern Lilli Paratore comes from the neighborhood. She lives on Belvedere street, has just graduated from Waldorf, and is planning to start college at Reed in the fall. Here is a brief report from Lilli about her experience working at the Booksmith.

*"The shelving cart is self-replenishing. That's one thing I have learned working at The Booksmith this summer. Not only that, but I now know where the 'High Seas' subsection of History pillages is, and I am beginning to realize just how much foresight, innovation, and plain old hard work it takes to run a thriving independent bookstore.*

*"For my entire life, family members joked that I ate books. My dad would incredulously ask, "Did you read every word?" whenever I had completed my latest conquest. I would smile and nod, thrilled at the prospect of visiting a bookstore to peruse for my next adventure of imagination. Now that excitement about books and reading is my job, and if I am lucky, I can pass it on to a customer who is just beginning to experience infinite range of what books can offer.*



Lilli Paratore

*"There's something about stepping off the dingy Haight Street sidewalk, and into the silent atmosphere where the bookshelves glow with an aura that makes you want to stop, browse and read until closing time. Every day I walk up and down the aisles suppressing the urge to read the backs of all our books, making lists of ones to take home and devour; it's a wonder I get any work done.*

*"The Booksmith offers more than books however. The staff welcomed me graciously, never doubting my capabilities or aptitude. They patiently answered all of my novice questions, and even asked me some of their own. Leaving for college in August, I feel like The Booksmith has taught me more than I can know just yet. But I do know that my time here has shown me how to deal with people in the real world; to accept that situations are almost never ideal, but by working to create options and solutions, an opportunity will open and let you in, with just enough space to drag a pile of unforgettable books with you."*



Sarah Vowell

Here are the highlights of a few upcoming events. On August 20th, local film star and activist **Peter Coyote** will give a talk about his memoir. On August 24th, we host the next **community forum** to hear personal stories of homelessness from two well respected writers. On August 31st, we host our first e-book reading with **Kemble Scott** who just released his e-book *The Sower*.

On October 15th bestselling author and social commentator **Sarah Vowell** will talk about her book *The Wordy Shipmates*. On October

23rd internet celebrity **Gary Vaynerchuk** will give a talk about using social media. In other news, the first **Book Swap** was a smashing success, so we will be hosting this on a regular basis as a monthly event. The next Book Swaps are scheduled for September 18th, October 9th, and November 20th. The **Found in Translation book group** keeps finding wonderful new works of translated literature to read and welcomes new participants. The group meets fourth Thursday of every month. All events start at 7:30pm. Please visit [www.booksmith.com](http://www.booksmith.com) for a complete listing.

—Praveen Madan and Lilli Paratore

## A New Groundswell for Haight Street Reform

It's been a few years since we have seen someone fired up about the vagrant kids sprawled all over Haight Street. Andrea Amaraggi, a young homeowner and her husband Elie, both with impressive organizing skills, have held several meetings recently to discuss a plan of



The Haight Street Cleanup Task Force is a new attempt to improve the safety and health of our vulnerable neighborhood.

action. With the stated objectives of "improving the conditions along Haight St. for residents, merchants, and visitors by reducing quality of life degraders such as panhandling, trash, vagabonds, street kids, etc, through education and prevention programs." A second phase will be



Elie Amaraggi compiles list of neighbors concerns at a task force meeting held at the Park Branch Library last month.

to actually make Haight Street more attractive. Working closely with the Amaraggis are Karen and Kevin Growney, Jonathan Kevles, Les Silverman, Aleks Petrovitch, Susan Strolis and Kent Ueyhara. If you wish to join their efforts contact Andrea at [amaraggi@gmail.com](mailto:amaraggi@gmail.com).

## CVIA Board Minutes

The following is a summary of what took place at the CVIA board meetings over the last three months. Those wishing to bring a neighborhood issue before the Board are welcome to do so. Meetings occur the first Monday of every month at 7:00 p.m. in the home of a member. Call 431-1414 to learn the location.

### June

Location: Home of Marianne Hesse. Date: June 1, 2009

- Reviewed last meeting's resolutions, discussed current Haight issues, heard reports from committee heads and from delegates to the Kezar Advisory Committee, the Coalition for S.F. Neighborhoods, the MTA citizens advisory committee, UCSF citizens advisory committee. Welcomed member Annie Armstrong, Andrea Amaraggi, Cole Roberts, and Neighborhood Parks Council founder Isabel Wade.
- A meeting will be scheduled between neighbors and the manager of the Haight Ashbury Food Program to address problems stemming from the weekly food pantry.
- Discussed the proposed skateboard park on Waller and Stanyan. Ted Loewenberg, president of HAIA, has recused himself from community discussions since he is president of the Skateboard Commission. Mike Garrity will be point person for HAIA in further dialogue.
- Joan Downey announced that CVIA's summer social (and annual meeting) will be held at Reverie Café on August 29. Joan and Karen Crommie will meet with owner Roger Soudah to discuss, food, beverages and costs.
- Discussed the termination of plans for the Whole Foods project on Haight and Stanyan.
- Discussed strategy and logistics for CVIA's "Santa in Cole Valley" project (children's photos with Santa) scheduled for December 6. Postal Chase's Maryo Mogannam has offered his store for the setup, Photographer Loic Nicolas is very well organized and will post the photos on line so that families can order from there. Possible Santas: Rick Karp (Cole Hardware), Craig Newmark (Craigslis.com) and David Morse (Beulah Street resident). Cole Valley Antiques will loan a large chair, Cole Hardware will donate a decorated Christmas tree and board members will stage area and distribute numbers with photo appointments to minimize standing in line. Publicity will consist of mention in the CVIA's November newsletter, Cole Hardware's newsletter, CVIA website, fliers to merchants for posting.
- Officers were nominated for election to be held at CVIA's Summer Social on August 29. Lena Emmery has been nominated for president, Marianne Hesse for vice-president, Joan Downey will continue as treasurer and special projects chair. Amy will continue as web coordinator with Joan as backup. David and Karen Crommie will continue publishing the CVIA newsletter.
- Supervisor Mirkarimi's legislation capping the number of head shops in the Haight will be heard on June 15. Members are encouraged to attend the meeting which begins at 1:00 p.m.
- Joan Downey reported that ISCOTT (Interdepartmental Committee on Traffic and Transportation) approved CVIA's application for permission to close Cole Street and reroute the busses during the Cole Valley Fair.
- Artist-writer Paul Madonna has asked that we extend his deadline for submitting artwork for the Cole Valley Fair poster until July 1.
- Jury for fair applicants will take place at the Emmery-Canepa home on July 1 at 5:00 p.m. Dinner will be brought in.
- Adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

### July

Location: Home of Joan Downey. Date: July 6, 2009

- Reviewed last meeting's resolutions, discussed current Haight issues, heard reports from committee heads and from delegates to the Kezar Advisory Committee, the Coalition for S.F. Neighborhoods, the MTA citizens advisory committee, UCSF citizens advisory committee. Welcomed Andrea Amaraggi and Elie Amaraggi and Dmitri Vardakastanis.
- From 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Board reviewed applications from artists wishing to purchase booths, or perform at the Cole Valley Fair (Sept. 20). Dinner was served.
- Andrea and Elie Amaraggi reported on the new "Haight Street Task Force" which is an attempt to improve the experience of the street by bringing merchants together around common goals and interviewing street kids, determining those who need help and those who habitually trash the neighborhood. Specifically, they are looking into ways to abate panhandling, infraction reporting procedure, contacting social services to give assistance, improving food distribution services by involving restaurants. (See article on page 7)
- Lena Emmery, representative to the Kezar Advisory Committee discussed the use of Kezar track by commercial fitness organizations. She will investigate their compliance with Rec and Park use permits.
- David Crommie reported on efforts to find a temporary library during the scheduled closure later in the year. He said that the committee headed by Joey Cain (HANC), who had been scouting for locations possibly available in the Divisadero Street area, now thought a portable building placed closer to the library might be the most plausible.
- Reviewed Paul Madonna's design for the Cole Valley Fair poster and T-shirt. There was enthusiastic approval. Minor changes will be communicated to him by fair organizer Joan Downey.
- Discussed nominations for acknowledgement at the CVIA's summer social. Continued to next meeting.
- Adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

### August

Location: Home of Karen and David Crommie. Date: August 3, 2009.

- Reviewed last meeting's resolutions, discussed current Haight issues, heard reports from committee heads and from delegates to the Kezar Advisory Committee, the Coalition for S.F. Neighborhoods, the MTA citizens advisory committee, UCSF citizens advisory committee.
- CVIA treasurer Joan Downey reported a balance of \$2,384.
- Lena Emmery, delegate to the Kezar Advisory Committee reported on the daily use of the Kezar track by commercial exercise groups. Any for-profit entity using the park must gain a permit to operate. These groups have none. Rec and Park is currently working on a program to require permits for these various "boot camp" groups.
- Discussion of Summer Social arrangements with Reverie Café owner Roger Soudah who is providing wine this year in addition to finger food. Agreed that Chuck Canepa will provide ice and soft drinks; Karen Crommie will provide table cloth, case of beer, plates, forks, plastic glasses, name tags; David Crommie will provide CVIA banner, election copy, notices, announcements; Carole Glosenger will provide floral centerpiece; Cole Valley Fair organizer Joan Downey will bring Fair posters, volunteer sign-up sheets.



■ Agreed that due to the closeness of the Fall edition of the CVIA newsletter to the date of the Summer Social (Aug. 29), special invitations should be sent out to each member. David and Karen Crommie to print invitations and address envelopes, Carole Glosenger and Lena Emmery to stuff and stamp.

■ The board's officer nomination slate will consist of President-Lena Emmery, Vice-President-Marianne Hesse, Treasurer-Joan Downey, Recording Secretary-Karen Crommie, Community Relations - Amy Blakeley, Web maintenance - Joan Downey.

■ Discussed details of the "Santa on Cole" project on December 6. Carole Glosenger is comparing rental prices for two Santa suits and purchase of four sets of beards and moustaches. Project is ongoing. Rick Karp (Cole Valley Hardware) has volunteered to do one stint as Santa, while Craig Newmark will do one if in town, David Morse (Beulah Street resident) has also offered to do a stint.

■ The rest of the evening was spent discussing details of the Cole Valley Fair: Decided on ordering only black T-shirts – to follow the same size distribution as last year (children's size added if design works on small field), placing an order for 300 posters (Paul Madonna to autograph first 25). Board volunteer assignments were made. Discussed new Merchants' Booth which will display names of the sponsoring merchants (Carole G. and Joan Foder to assist with signs). This booth will also be the location of free raffle tickets and 4:00 p.m. drawing for merchant-donated premiums/gifts.

■ Adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

**CVIA Executive Board:** Amy Blakeley, Chuck Canepa, David Crommie, Karen Crommie, Joan Downey, Lena Emmery, Carole Glosenger, Douglas Hall, Marianne Hesse.

## Blank Walls: An Opportunity?

Blank walls are a problem in the neighborhood. The temptation for graffiti is just too overwhelming in an area drawing such a high population of youth. For that reason, residents have been emailing suggestions for covering the wall on the southwest corner of Haight and Masonic where Generation X dress shop is housed (formerly Reckless Records).

The head of the Haight Ashbury Improvement Association's beautification committee, Susan (Pip) Strolis has suggested a mural in coordination with the SF Arts Commission's new program called "Street SmART," which connects "exceptionally artistic" former



*Southwest corner of Masonic and Haight Streets invites tagging.*

graffiti vandals with private and property owners to create new murals on the exterior walls of their properties. Wrote Susan in an email to HAIA members, "It would be nice to have a historical reference to the Haight's past ... (but) hopefully keeping away from the 60s for a while."

Meanwhile residents of Cole Valley are discussing another blank wall, this one at the corner of Carl and Cole, along the side of the Laundromat. As the N-Judah emerges from the tunnel, it is the first stop in Cole Valley. "There should be some well-designed mural



*The wall at the northeast corner of Carl and Cole greets passengers disembarking from the N-Judah.*

that welcomes people to the Cole Valley neighborhood," said CVIA board member Douglas Hall. Although possible themes abound, Cole Valley's early history as a dairy farm with a large pond and big black and white cows might be one.

—Karen Crommie

## CVIA Summer Social

For Members Only\*

Saturday, August 29, 2009



848 Cole Street

3:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Platters of small-plate delicacies and fine wines by Roger Soudah

Contribution: \$10 per person

Limited capacity, reserve now.

Send a check to:

CVIA, P.O. Box 170611, SF 94117

or leave a message at 431-1414  
to tell us you're coming.

\* Your guests are welcome, of course.

# Inner Sunset Farmers' Market Big Success

The Inner Sunset Farmers Market opened with much fanfare on Sunday, June 7 with Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi and other notables speechifying and posing for pictures. The stalls are located in the



*It didn't take long for Inner Sunset neighbors to make the new farmers' market a regular part of their Sunday morning.*

small space between 9th and 8th avenues, just south of Irving and will be there every Sunday from 9 a.m. to 1p.m. until November 22nd.

The protected space, which doubles as a city parking lot during the week, also sports a Community Bulletin Board. Neighbors are encouraged to post relevant information. Special credit should go to the Inner Sunset Park Neighbors for making this a reality. CVIA member David McNeil remarked recently, "Not only is the produce



*The outdoor bulletin board has become a clearinghouse for neighborhood events and community projects.*

wonderful, there is a friendly community feeling about the whole thing." Now where are those plans to have a farmers' market at the end of Waller Street?

—Karen Crommie

# Postscripts

Kezar stadium users are becoming increasingly concerned about the daily use of the track by commercial exercise groups. Apparently Rec and Park has noticed, too, and is currently working on a program to require permits for these various "boot camp" groups



which could cost as much as \$500 a year depending on the size of the group. Naturally, there will be community outreach meetings before the plans are finalized.

\* \* \*

Don't say we didn't warn you. If you self-identify as a tree-hugger, you will want to familiarize yourself with UCSF's wide-ranging projects involving tree-clearing in Sutro Forest. There will be a series of public meetings in the fall. The projects are fully described on the CVIA website <http://cviasf.org>.

\* \* \*

Have you found a stray cat in Cole Valley? There's a new online blog with a wide variety of information both for cat owners and those who have found lost felines. Go to <http://colevalleycats.blogspot.com> and read about the hapless tabby named Henry. Another entry calls Cole Valley "Cat Heaven" and thinks cat owners should exchange tips on solving the many problems of keeping a cat in an apartment.



*"Little Girl" photo courtesy of Cole Valley Cats*

There are names of cat nannies and veterinarians and numerous heartwarming letters of gratitude from those whose cats have been returned. — including Sadie Valeri's "Little Girl" (pictured above). Note: If your attempt to get on to the website opens up "Blogspot," which asks you to sign in, just reenter the address and try again. There is no obligatory login for Cole Valley Cats.

—Karen Crommie

## Cviasf@aol.com

Please contact us by e-mail if you have an issue to bring up, a newsletter article, address change, or an update to your membership information. Send us *your* e-mail address if you want to be notified of upcoming meetings and events of importance to our neighborhood.

**VOLUNTEER TO WORK TWO HOURS AT THE FAIR ON SEPT. 20th. [colevalleyfair@gmail.com](mailto:colevalleyfair@gmail.com)**

# Letters

Dear CVIA:

I am still sickened by the fliers being dropped on door steps and blowing around the neighborhood.

Since I wasn't getting any kind of significant support from your organization or from Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi, I took it upon myself to produce labels that said "please post no fliers or bills" and hand them out, along with a cover letter titled "The Last Flier You Should Ever Receive" to my neighbors on Cole Street.

I was told by Mr. Mirkarimi that it is illegal for the fliers to be posted if a resident posts a placard saying "Post No Fliers or Bills."

Many of the residents went ahead and affixed those labels to their railings and front doors and I think it actually may have helped some - but not enough. The fliers continue to come (now, in some cases, illegally) and they continue to blow around the street.

I have talked with several people in the neighborhood who have expressed their dismay at the situation so I know that I'm not alone in feeling disgruntled about this.

The apathy has to stop. Please encourage people to call the restaurants that dispatch these fliers and tell them we don't want them in our neighborhood, we won't support their restaurants, they are wasting their money and trashing our environment.

Joe Caccamo



Would you like a copy of this newsletter sent to a neighbor? Leave a message at 431-1414 with their name and address and consider it done.

**CVIANEWS** is published quarterly as a forum for residents of the greater Haight Ashbury neighborhood. The views expressed reflect those of the writers. Contributions for the Winter edition should be sent before November 1, 2009 to 624 Ashbury St., San Francisco, CA 94117 or kcrommie@aol.com. We encourage submissions from anyone interested in our neighborhood. Send questions or comments to the above address or call 431-1414.

Editor .....Karen Crommie  
 Production.....David Crommie  
 Editorial Assistance .....Joan Downey

## CVIA Officers

President.....David Crommie  
 Vice President .....Lena Emmery  
 Treasurer .....Joan Downey  
 Membership .....Lena Emmery  
 Community Relations .....Amy Blakeley  
 Special Projects .....Joan Downey

# Help

- Emergency ..... 911
- Disturbance .....553-0123
- Blocked Driveways & Parking on Sidewalks ....553-1200
- Abandoned Vehicles .....781-5865
- Health Department .....255-3610
- Litter Patrol (sofas, mattresses, etc.)..... 311
- Graffiti and Illegal Sign Removal..... 311
- NextBus ..... 311
- Street Lighting..... 554-0730

**Mayor Gavin Newsom .....554-6141**  
 City Hall - Room 200  
 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
 S.F., CA 94102

**Chief of Police George Gascón.....553-1551**  
 Hall of Justice - 850 Bryant St.  
 S.F., CA 94103

**District Attorney Kamala Harris.....553-1741**  
 Hall of Justice - 850 Bryant St.  
 S.F., CA 94103

**Captain Teresa Barrett .....242-3000**  
 Park District Police Station  
 1899 Waller St.  
 S.F., CA 94117  
 Teresa.Barrett@sfgov.org

## San Francisco Board of Supervisors

City Hall - Room 244  
 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
 San Francisco, CA 94102

Telephone: 554-5184 FAX: 554-5163

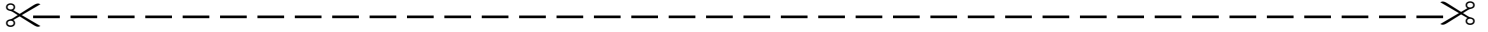
District	Telephone	Fax
1. Eric Mar Eric.L.Mar@sfgov.org	554-7410	554-7415
2. Michela Alioto-Pier Michela.Alioto@sfgov.org	554-7752	554-7483
3. David Chiu, Board President David.Chiu@sfgov.org	554-7450	554-7454
4. Carmen Chu Carmen.Chu@sfgov.org	554-7460	554-7432
5. <b>Ross Mirkarimi</b> <b>Ross.Mirkarimi@sfgov.org</b>	<b>554-7630</b>	<b>554-7634</b>
6. Chris Daly Chris.Daly@sfgov.org	554-7970	554-7974
7. Sean Elsbernd Sean.Elsbernd@sfgov.org	554-6516	554-6546
8. Bevan Dufty Bevan.Dufty@sfgov.org	554-6968	554-6909
9. David Campos David.Campos@sfgov.org	554-5144	554-6255
10. Sophie Maxwell Sophie.Maxwell@sfgov.org	554-7670	554-7674
11. John Avalos John.Avalos@sfgov.org	554-6975	554-6979

### BECOME A CVIA MEMBER

Membership in the Cole Valley Improvement Association is open to anyone interested in the greater Haight Ashbury. CVIA's mission is to promote a sense of responsibility and mutual respect throughout the district; preserve the character of its architecture; support the police in law enforcement efforts; encourage neighborhood-serving business; and be

constructively involved in San Francisco's governmental process. Annual dues are \$20.00. Membership provides contact with other responsible neighbors, a quarterly newsletter and participation in an active forum for effecting change. If you would like to become a member, please send in your dues with the form below.

Please clip and mail the coupon below to CVIA, P.O. Box 170611, San Francisco, CA 94117



## Yes! I'd like to become a CVIA member!

Here's my check for \$20.00 made payable to: COLE VALLEY IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Renewal

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

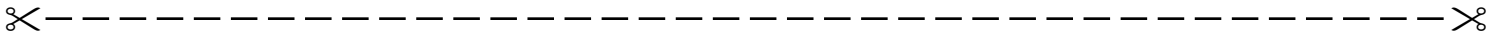
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ FAX \_\_\_\_\_

What I like about the neighborhood: \_\_\_\_\_

What I dislike about the neighborhood: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to help, and this is what I can do: \_\_\_\_\_

*Dues paid to CVIA are not deductible as charitable contributions but may be taken as a business expense. Any amounts greater than the membership dues may be taken as a charitable deduction. Contact your accountant regarding your tax law.*



**Cole Valley Improvement Association**  
**P.O. Box 170611**  
**San Francisco, CA 94117**